



## BĀNBIŠN

**BĀNBIŠN**, Middle Persian “queen.” The Pahlavi ideogram for *bānbišn* is *MLKTA* (see *Frahang ī pahlavīk*, chap. 12, l. 4, where the variant *b’nbwšn*, *bānbušn*, is listed). In Manichean Middle Persian the word is spelled *b’nbyšn* and it was borrowed into Armenian as *bambišn* (Hübschmann, *Armenische Grammatik*, pp. 116f.). A substandard form *bāmbušt* was borrowed into Sogdian (Gershevitch, pars. 1246, 1518) and from there found its way into Uigur and Chinese (Henning, 1940, pp. 17f.). The Old Persian ancestor of *bānbišn* is not attested but must have been *\*māna-pašnī*, corresponding to Avestan *damaṇō.paθnī* “mistress (of the house),” from Old Iranian *\*dmāna-paθnī* (see *AirWb.*, col. 1093; Kent, *Old Persian*, p. 32; Tedesco, pp. 64-66; Benveniste, 1954, p. 301). The genuine Sogdian form is *’vāmban* “lady” (variously spelled, see Gershevitch, pars. 14, 43, 304, 449, 466, cf. also Skjærvø, p. 70 n. 14). The initial *b-* of *bānbišn* is likely to be due to analogy with *bānūk* “lady,” attested from Old Persian times as a loanword in Elamite *ba-nu-qa(-na-be)* (Hinz, p. 423).

In the Sasanian inscriptions, *bānbišn* (written MPers. *MLKTA*, Parth. *MLKTE*) “queen” matches *šāh* “king” (*MLKA*). The title is found in Šāpūr I’s inscription on the Ka’ba-ye Zardošt, dating from 262/3 (Greek *basilissa*), as the title of a certain Dēnak. Corresponding to *šāhān šāh* (MPers. *MLKAn MLKA*, Parth. *MLKYN MLKA*) we have *\*bānbišnān bānbišn* (*MLKTAn MLKTA*) as the title of Šāpūr I’s daughter Ādur-Anāhīd and Pāpak’s daughter Dēnak. There are also Xwarranzēm, the *šahr bānbišn* “queen of the empire” (MPers. l. 25), Šābuhrduxtag, the *Sagān bānbišn* “queen of Sakas” (l. 25), Stahryād “the



queen” (l. 26), and Dēnak, the *Mēšān bānbišn* “queen of Mesene” (l. 30) (see Henning, 1954, pp. 43f.; Gignoux, *Glossaire*, pp. 28, 57; on Sthly’t see Gignoux, in *Iranisches Personennamenbuch*, p. 160; differently Lukonin, pp. 16ff.).

The title *MLKTA* *MLKTA* is found on a Sasanian coin, applied to Wahrām II’s spouse (Lukonin, pp. 11, 39, 48), and on a Sasanian seal, where it is again applied to a certain Dēnak (Herzfeld. p. 75).

In Manichean Middle Persian and Parthian texts we find a *Sagān bānbišn* (MPers., M 3 R 17-18; Henning, 1942, pp. 949, 951 n. 4), a *šk’n b’nbyšn* “the Arsacid queen” (MPers., Sundermann, 1973, p. 47, l. 856), and *[šhr]d’r b’nbyšn Xwdws* “the sovereign’s queen Xudōs” (Parth., Henning, 1943, pp. 73-74). The last occurrence suggests that the Middle Persian form *bānbišn* was used also in Parthian.

Sogdian *p’mpwšt* is found as the title of the queens of Abaršahr (Sogdian, Sundermann, 1981, p. 41, l. 436); in other Sogdian texts the same title symbolizes the virtue of patience: “and a queen from whom crowned sons are born” (*ty p’mpwšt ckn’c y’yμφrt jwn jyynd*, M 133 V II 14-16, and *ty pcm’k p’mpwšt kyy y’yμφr wyšpšt zndy*, IB 4981 e 3-4, both texts unpublished).

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