



BĀNŪ

BĀNŪ, originally “lady,” now also in common use as an alternative to *kānom* “Madam, Mrs.” (from Turkish *xan-ım* “my lord”). The Middle Persian form of the word was *bānūk* (*bānūg*). Compounds with *bānū* include *kad-bānū* “mistress of the house” (Pahl. *katak-bānūk*) and *šāh-bānū* “shah’s wife, queen,” the latter introduced under the Pahlavi dynasty to replace Arabic *maleka*. *Bānū* is found as a component in women’s names such as Arjomandbānū (d. 1630, wife of the Mughal emperor Šāh Jahān; Justi, *Namenbuch*, p. 22b), Bahravarbānū (Justi, p. 60b), Gowharbānū (Justi, p. 112b), Jahānzēbbānū (d. 1705, granddaughter of Šāh Jahān; Justi, p. 115b), Kadbānūya (Justi, p. 150b; cf. the numerous Southeast Iranian place names in *-ūya*), Mehrbānū (Justi, p. 205a), Parībānū (name of a fairy in *Thousand and One Nights*; Justi, p. 246b), Šahrībānū (“mistress of the empire;” Justi, p. 276b; Eilers and Schapka, I, p. 233.8, II, pp. 284.7, 285.11), Tājībānū (Justi, p. 318b), Zarbānū (Justi, p. 381b). It is not always clear in these cases whether *bānū* is part of the name or a title.

Alone or as the first component of names are Bānū (cf. B’nwky on the intaglio of a Sasanian seal, Ph. Gignoux, *IPNB* II/2, p. 55 no. 185), Bānūdoḵt (?), the mother of Ƙosrow I, and Bānū-Gošasp (cf. Gošasp-bānū), the daughter of Rostam (Justi, pp. 62f.).

Armenian *banuk* shows that the Mid. Pers. pronunciation was *bānūk*, not *bānōk*. Nevertheless, the word appears to belong to the large group of hypocoristic names in *-ōk*. The Pahlavi ideogram for *bānūk* given in the *Frahang ī pahlavīk* is *MRTA*, from Aramaic *martā*, cf. the name Martha in the New Testament. In the Nisa documents and the Sasanian inscriptions, *bānūk* is



represented by the ideograms *MROTA* (Mid. Pers.); and *MRATY* (Parth.), in which the *ayin* and the *aleph* are graphic intrusions. Similarly, the masculine counterparts Mid. Pers. *xwadāy* and Parth. *xwadāw* are represented by *MROH(Y)* (Mid. Pers.) and *MRAY* (Nisa), originally perhaps from Aramaic *mar'ēh* and *mar'ī* “his/my master” (see, e.g., Henning, “Mitteliranisch,” p. 36).

In the inscription of Narseh I at Paikuli (Mid. Pers. l. 9, Parth. l. 8: Humbach and Skjærvø, p. 35) the goddess Anāhīt is called “the lady,” just as Ištar was known among the Babylonians and Assyrians as *Bēltum* or *Bēlit* “lady,” or *Bēltī* “my lady.”

No precursor of *bānū* is found in Old Iranian. Most probably it is a hypocoristic abbreviation of Mid. Pers. *bānbišn* “queen,” originally “mistress of the house” (cf. Av. *dāmanō/nmānō.paθnī*, Pashto *mērman[a]*, Morgenstierne, pp. 44, 47; ideogram Mid. Pers. *MLKTA*, Parth. *MLKTH*, Aram. *malkəṭā*). The second element of *bānbišn* has been dropped in the same way as, for instance, in the name Šahrū from Šahrbānū. The etymology proposed by Dehḡodā (*Loḡat-nāma*, s.v. *Bānū*), deriving *bānū* from *bān* “protector, possessor” is untenable.

Modern dialects have forms deriving from Persian *kadbānū* in the sense of “mistress of the house,” thus Bakṭiārī *kaivenū* or *kēivenū* and Kurdish *kaivānū* (Lorimer, p. 106b).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

W. Eilers and U. Schapka, *Westiranische Mundarten aus der Sammlung Wilhelm Eilers I: Die Mundart von Chunsar*, Wiesbaden, 1976, II: *Die Mundart von Gāz*, Wiesbaden, 1979.

Horn, *Etymologie*, p. 41 no. 178.

H. Hübschmann, *Armen. Etymologie*, pp. 116 no. 98, 117 no. 100.

Idem, *Persische Studien*, 1895, p. 25 no. 178.



H. Humbach and P. O. Skjærvø, *The Sassanian Inscription of Paikuli III/1*, Wiesbaden, 1983.

D. L. R. Lorimer, *The Phonology of the Bakhtiari, Badakhshani and Madaglashti Dialects of Modern Persian*, London, 1922.

G. Morgenstierne, *An Etymological Vocabulary of Pashto*, Oslo, 1927.

P. Tedesco, *BSL* 26, 1925, p. 64.

Search terms:

□□□□ banoo bano banou