



ČAK

ČAK, (< Middle Pers. *čak* “document”; *Mādayān*, pt. 1, 73.14, 74.3), legal document, testament, money draft, check. The Middle Persian word *gty*, *gtky*, apparently meaning “testament,” is a loanword from Semitic, cf. Babylonian *giṭtu*, Syriac *geṭta*, also borrowed in Armenian as *ktak*, *ktakaran* (Back, p. 215; Gignoux, p. 22; Henning, p. 41 n. 3; Szemerényi, p. 420). The Arabic form *šakk* (plur. *šokūk*) must be a loan from Persian (with regular Ar. *š* for Pers. *č*) rather than from Aramaic/Syriac. (Eng. *check* is probably related to *check* in *checkmate*, ultimately from Pers. *šāh*, and has nothing to do with *čak*, see, e.g., *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, Oxford.)

The Persian word *čak* is found as early as Ferdowsī (especially in compounds such as *čak ferestādan/neveštan/setadan/dādan*; *Šāh-nāma*, Borūķīm, ed., VIII, pp. 2270 l.57, 2271 l.72; IX, p. 2753 l.1366; Baḷ'amī, ed. Rowšan, I, pp. 58, 60, 535; II, pp. 1191, 1214; *Loğat-e fors*, ed. Dabīrsiāqī, p. 87; Sanā'ī, in *Farhang-e jahāngīrī* I, p. 284; Dehķodā, s.v.) but later went out of use until it was used again in the 13th/19th century in the meaning “check” under the influence of European banking practice and terminology (Etteħādīya and Sa'dvandīān, I, pp. 262, 385; Fāteħ, p. 86; Ķosrowpūr, p. 15). However, the terms *softa* (promissory note), *ħawāla* (draft, money order), and *barāt* (draft) are still used beside *čak* (Benedick, pp. 65-70)

Arabic *šakk* was used after the Arab conquest of the Middle East in the meaning of money draft (Jacob, pp. 280-81). It was even used as a verb, *šakka 'alā*, to denote the writing of a money draft (Mez, p. 447). Although still used in this sense in the 4th/10th century the word, meaning money draft, was being



supplanted by terms such as *kaṭṭ-e šarrāf* (Nāṣer-e Kōsrow, *Safar-nāma*, p. 128) and *softaja* (Spuler, pp. 408, 410-11). According to K̄vārazmī (p. 59) *šakk* was a technical financial term, designating a payment order which showed the name(s) and number of the recipients, the amount due to each of them, and the seal of the ruler authorizing the payment. *Šakk* or, more commonly, the plural form *šokūk* continued to be used in the general meaning of legal document (Schacht, pp. 78, 82 n. 1, 193), e.g. in Il-khanid (Naḳjavānī, II, pp. 187, 237, 238, 240), and Timurid times (Roemer, p. 148: *Ketāb-e šokūk wa sejellāt*). In fact, Naḳjavānī refers to a *šokūk* as one of a number of legal (*šarʿī*) documents such as *qebālāt*, *hojaj*, and *waṭāyeq* (ibid., II, pp. 187, 238, cf. p. 240). The term *šokūk-e amlāk* also occurs, meaning property documents (ibid., p. 237); it was still used in this sense in the 11th/17th century, as is clear from the *Šokūk o sejellāt-e teymūrī*, the title of a manuscript written around 1060/1650, which contains among other things a *waqf-nāma* (Horst, pp. 23-49).

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