



ČĀDOR (GARMENT) I. IN EARLY LITERARY SOURCES

i. In Early Literary Sources

At least as early as Achaemenid times Persian queens were hidden from the people. Plutarch, discussing the reign of Artaxerxes (r. 404-359), writes that Queen Stateira was beloved by the common folk because the curtains of her carriage were always up, and thus the women of the people were permitted to see and greet her (“Artaxerxes,” 5; cf. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 6.4.11). The fact that women of royalty were carried in curtained carriages gave rise to a motif in Persian narrative literature, the most celebrated example of which we find in the epic of *Viš o Rāmīn*, with material dating from the Parthian era. There (p. 93), *Viš* is not only sitting behind curtains (*parda*) but also wearing a veil (*neqāb*) on her face (cf. *Baḳtīār-nāma*, ed. Šafā, pp. 5-6).

In the Pahlavi texts *čādor* is mentioned in at least two cases: in the *Rivāyat ī Hēmīd ī Ašawahištān*, a 4th/10th-century Zoroastrian legal text (ed. Safa-Isfehāni, p. 33.9), *čādor* is mentioned, together with the *sarband* and *wāšmag*, as a female head dress worn by Zoroastrian women; in the *Mādayān ī Yōišť ī Friyān*, a Pahlavi text (6th century?) based on (lost) Avestan texts (cf. *Yt.* 5.81-83), we read (3.56) that Hufriyā, the sister of Yōišť, a Turanian Zoroastrian, and the wife of Axt, an opponent of the new, Zoroastrian, faith, put on a veil (*čādur*) when she was requested to answer the question whether the pleasure of women is from dress and housewifery rather than being with



their husbands.

Persian classical texts provide us with a wealth of passages in which we find women of different periods and different classes covered with either *čādor* or other forms of head dresses. For instance, when Šīrīn's conversation with the new king and her stepson Šīrūya is over, she removes her *čādor* to show him that it was her beauty—unseen by others—that worked like magic upon the dead king, Kōsrow Parvēz, and nothing else (*Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, IX, pp. 2940 v. 534).

Veiling was not limited to women but was practiced also by the Persian kings. Ebn Eshāq (d. ca. 150/767) relates in his *Sīra* (I, p. 42) that Kōsrow Anōšīravān (r. 531-79) came into the audience hall to receive Zuyazan of Yaman covered, and only when he was seated on the throne under the hanging crown was his veil removed. Kōsrow Parvīz's head was veiled when he was brought to the house where he was to be confined during his last days (Dīnavarī, ed. Guirgass, p. 112; Ṭabarī, I, p. 1046).

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