



## HOMĀY ČEHRZĀD

**HOMĀY ČEHRZĀD** (or Čehrāzād), a Kayānid queen; she was daughter, wife, and successor to the throne of Bahman, son of Esfandiār (qq.v.), according to the Iranian traditional history. The length of her reign is given as thirty years in the *Bundahišn* (ed. Ankelsaria, 36.8; tr., p. 308) and historical sources, and as thirty-two years in the *Šāh-nāma* (ed. Khaleghi, V, p. 511, v. 312) and *Bahman-nāma* (p. 603, v. 10,437). Only one Pahlavi source, the *Bundahišn* (ed. Ankelsaria 33. 8; tr., p. 275) has a report on her: during the reign of Vohuman (Bahman) “there was scarcity, the Iranians fought among themselves, and there was no man of the ruling dynasty who could rule; they seated Vohuman’s daughter Humāé [Homāy] on the throne of sovereignty.” She reigned for thirty years (ibid., 33.8; tr. p. 307). Islamic sources (collected and discussed by Christensen, 1932, pp. 149-51; Yarshater, 1983, pp. 471-72) agree in general with this report but vary in some details. Thus her name appeared as *Ḳomāni* (Biruni, p. 121; Ṭabari, I, p. 687; Dinavari, pp. 27-28), *Ḳomāy* (Ṭa’ālebi, *Ġorar*, p. 389), and *Ḥomāya* (Mas’udi, *Moruj*, ed. Pellat, sec. 553), all various transcriptions of the Mid. Pers. *Humāg* (Yarshater, p. 471; cf. Arm. Hmayeak: Hübschmann, *Armenische Grammatik* I, p. 47), which derives from Old Ir. \**Humāya-* attested in Av. *Humāiiā-* (the name of a daughter of Vištāspa in *Yt.* 13.139), Elamite (from OPers.) *ú-ma-ya* (Mayrhofer and Schmitt, 1977, p. 51). The meaning of the name is disputed (E. Benveniste interpreted it as “fortunate,” R. Schmitt as “possessing good thought,” and M. Mayrhofer as “with good skills”; see with literature Hinz, p. 125). Her epithet is given as *Čehrzād* (*Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, V, p. 483, vv. 140, 146), which is a shortened form of *Čehrāzād* “of noble birth,” given by most authorities (Ṭabari, I, p. 689;



Biruni, pp. 121, 123; Ta'ālebi, *Gorar*, p. 389; Ebn Balḳi, p. 15; *Mojmal*, ed. Bahār, p. 54). The form *Šehrāzād* in Ṭabari, I, p. 688 and *Fārs-nāma*, p. 15, represents a Parthian variation; see Christensen, 1932, p. 149, n. 2). According to Mas'udi (*Moruj*, ed. Pellat, sec. 553) and Ya'qubi (*Tāriḳ* I, p. 179), *Šehrāzād* was the epithet of her mother, while Ḥamza Eṣfahāni (p. 38) gives her the additional name *Šemirān* (cf. Semiramis; Eilers, p. 59).

Ferdowsi describes Homāy as “talented, educated, and wise” (*Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, V, p. 483), and gives the following story (ibid., pp. 487-512; also found in Ṭabari, pp. 689-90; Maqdesi, III, pp. 150-52; Bal'ami, ed. Bahār, pp. 687-892; and in the two versions of *Dārāb-nāma*, q.v.): she was her father's favorite, and Bahman married her in accordance with the accepted Zoroastrian tradition and chose her as his successor. He also designated the child she was expecting as the legitimate heir to the throne. After Bahman's death, Homāy gave birth to a boy; in order to keep the throne for herself, she secretly gave him away to a wet-nurse and announced that the child had died. She eventually had him put in a wooden box and sent down the Euphrates (or the Kor River in Fārs, according to Ṭabari I, p. 689 and Bal'ami, ed. Bahār, p. 689). The child was rescued by a washerman or a miller, who called him Dārāb. Dārāb grew up, was recognized, and eventually ascended the throne. Homāy's marriage to her own father is doubted by some authorities (e.g., Ebn al-Balḳi, p. 54, who claims that she died a virgin), probably due to their reluctance to record an incestuous marriage, which is a highly serious taboo in Islam. An altogether different descent for Homāy is given in the epic narrative *Bahman-nāma* (pp. 95-180; cf. *Mojmal*, ed. Bahār, pp. 30-31). Bahman was driven out of Iran by the conspiracy of his first wife, a princess of Kashmir) and lived incognito in Egypt, where he met Homāy, the warrior daughter of Hāret, the king of Egypt. After several hand-to-hand combats with her, he married her and regained his throne with her help. Later, when Bahman felt his time had come, he appointed Homāy as his successor, and she reigned justly (*Bahman-nāma*, pp. 591-603).

Many of the events associated with Homāy's reign evidence merger of the traditional history of the Kayānids with that of the Achemenid dynasty (Christensen, 1932, p. 152; cf. Yarshater, 1983, pp. 470-73). Thus she is said to have waged war with the Greeks (*Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, V, pp. 497-507), and employed Greek (*rumi*) architects that she took prisoner to build several monuments (such as the palaces of Hazār-setun, i.e., Persepolis) in Eṣṭaḳr in Fārs (Ta'ālebi, p. 690; Dinavari, pp. 27-28; Ḥamza, p. 38; *Mojmal*, p. 55). Also the



stories told of the two Dārās (Homāy's son and grandson) are grounded on a combination of the ancient Iranian myths with Greek and Jewish legends. A related tradition fabricated a brother for Homāy, called Sāsān, who was represented as the rightful heir to Bahman, in order to link the Sasanians to the Kayānids and thereby establish their legitimacy as successors of those ancient kings.

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