



Extended Abstract

Short Article

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Yalak: A Term in the Field of Textiles

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Introduction

Research on old Persian texts, especially those not yet published, and careful examination of manuscript variations allow for a more precise understanding of the form and the meaning of certain words and terms. Identifying these words and terms is important not only for the correction and completion of dictionaries but also for anthropological reasons. Collecting and explaining these terms can be a preparation for compiling specialized dictionaries. Sharaf al-Din Shafarvah Isfahani is a poet in AH 6th/13th century whose divan has not yet been published. This divan is significant from linguistic, lexical, anthropological, sociological, historical, and geographical perspectives. One area of focus for Shafarvah is various types of textiles, and one of these types is “yalak” which is examined in this article.

Methodology, Review of Literature and Purpose

In this article, the meaning of the term “yalak” is investigated in different languages using the method of critical editing and with the help of secondary Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and Latin sources, while paying attention to manuscript variations. Then, Persian texts in which “yalak” appeared are mentioned, and the errors in these examples are corrected. Based on this evidence, the meaning of “yalak” is explained. The mixture of meanings and the confusion of explanations about “yalak” prompted the author to write about it. No one has addressed the topic of this article before.

Discussion

Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and Latin sources agree that “yalak” is a type of textile; however, they have different opinions about its type, characteristics, and who wore it.

“Yalak” has the following meanings in Persian sources:

- a) A short, collarless and sleeveless felt or woolen jacket, specifically worn by Sufis and stablemen
- b) A type of hat for dignitaries, an earflap hat
- c) A crown for kings
- d) A veil, a face cover
- e) A garment of Kurdish women.

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And in Arabic sources, it has the following meanings:

- a) A short-sleeved vest
- b) A sleeveless cloak to cover the chest, a windbreaker
- c) A garment specific to Egyptian women
- d) A garment from the Mamluk era
- e) A garment of the Berbers of Tripoli
- f) A garment for gifting.

In Turkish sources, it has the meaning of “waistcoat.”

And in Latin sources it has the following meanings:

- a) Vest
- b) Formal clothing of the Jews of Tangier.

We see this term in old Persian texts, including in the poetry of Shafarvah and Suzani, and later in the poems mentioned in *Rawdat al-Safa* of Naseri and the *Divan* of Azar Bigdeli, as well as in verses from Mohtasham Kashani and Mir Haj Heravi. Shafarvah’s verse is as follows:

قبا بسته سرو از عطای جزیت یلک دوخته بید ز انعام عامت

Two points are understood from this verse:

- It appears that the willow tree has on its head a hat which also covers part of its face. This appearance of the willow does not confirm the meaning of “yalak” as a jacket because the leaves of this tree also cover the head of the tree, and if “yalak” here meant a jacket, the head of the tree should not have had leaves.
- “Yalak” is a general bounty of the praised great individual who has bestowed it upon those below him. This fur hat (made of marten fur) was usually worn by dignitaries, which is a confirmation of its value.

Conclusion

From the definitions and evidence that the sources have provided for “yalak,” these results emerge:

The name “yalak” was applied to various types of clothes and had different forms and uses in different periods and geographies, including:

- A short, collarless, sleeveless felt or woolen jacket, specifically worn by Sufis and stablemen; and from its material and wearers, it is clear that it was a cheap garment.
- A type of hat for dignitaries, an earflap hat. It was made of marten fur, and from this material, it is clear that it was a valuable clothing. We only found this meaning for the term “yalak” in Persian sources.
- A short-sleeved vest.
- A sleeveless cloak to cover the chest, a windbreaker.
- A garment for women (including Kurdish and Egyptian women).
- Formal clothing of the Jews of Tangier.
- A garment of the Berbers of Tripoli.
- A garment of the Mamluk era.

The poetic evidence mentioned in Shafarvah’s poem supports the meaning of “a type of hat, an earflap hat.” Other meanings such as “crown of kings or veil and mask” which are mentioned by some dictionaries for “yalak” are incorrect, and the evidence does not support them. Furthermore, the root of “yalak” is apparently Turkish.

Keywords: Critical correction, clothes, yalak

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