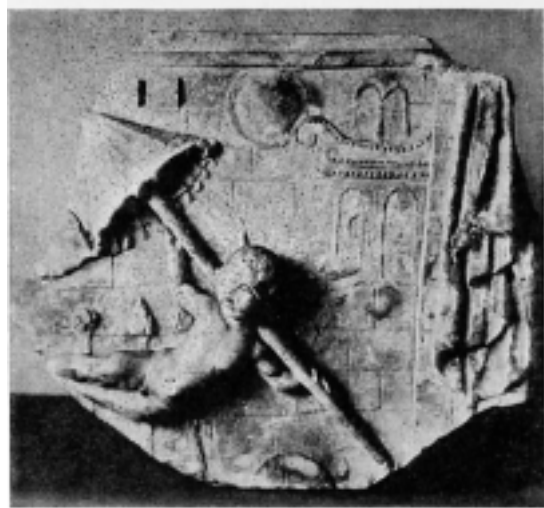




Marie Thérèse d'Autriche.
Reine de France & de Navarre.

QUEEN MARIE THÉRÈSE, WIFE OF LOUIS XIV, WITH A PARASOL.



ROMAN MARBLE IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF
ART. HELLENISTIC PERIOD—THIRD TO FIRST CENTURY
B. C.

SOME NOTES ON THE UMBRELLA

BY G. SAVILLE SELIGMAN

THE burning rays of the sun and the damp chill of rain are enemies of those whose business or pleasure takes them out of doors. One must be protected from the "elements" as much as possible. For many centuries not much ingenuity was expended on this subject in our occidental countries. The traveller was content to leave his protection to his hooded cloak.

The oriental civilizations were more ingenious. In very ancient times they imagined the parasol, and from that to an umbrella for rain was an easy step.

How and when did this latter arrive in Europe? It was known in Italy before the seventeenth century as was in fact the case with most of the accessories of costume. In France the umbrella was hardly seen before the middle of that century, and for a long time it was confused with the parasol.

The Greeks and Romans used a *pluvial*, a large cloak with a hood made of thick heavy material. It is this garment that we find later in France



DETAIL FROM AN APULIAN VASE OF THE FOURTH CENTURY B. C. IN THE BERLIN MUSEUM. ACCORDING TO JUVENAL SUCH PARASOLS WERE ALSO USED FOR RAIN.

worn by both men and women, and called a *cape* or *chape*, *cageule*, *caban*, or *balandreau*.

In Venice in the fourteenth century the Doges wore the *cappuccio*, a sort of hood which was also called *capirom da Piega* (rain-hood). In speaking of the Doge Mario Barbarigo, Marino Sanudo says, "he wears a black hood in the antique manner while all the other Venetians wear caps and *berets*."

In France, in the Middle Ages the cape was closed and could only be put on by passing the head through the opening in the middle, like the Mexican poncho. This custom however was not universal as there were cloaks that opened at the side. The common people wore a short cape falling to the knees and called the *cageule*. This important part of the costume did not escape coming under the sumptuary laws. In the twelfth century Louis VII forbade prostitutes to wear these capes so that they should not be mistaken for married women. Other laws forbade lepers to wear capes open in front as such capes were worn by the other riders. The lepers were ordered to wear their cloaks closed.

Caps and hats that were made to protect the head from the inclemencies of the weather were made of leather and this custom lasted into the eighteenth century. In 1595 we read that Henry IV ordered for himself a raincoat trimmed with taffetas.

The *cape* and the *balandreau* as raincoats were perpetuated until the eighteenth century.

The umbrella made its appearance in France in the first half of the seventeenth century. It is mentioned for the first time in the writings of Tabarin, published in 1622. At that time and long afterward, persons of high social position and especially ladies, used them. An umbrella was a cumbersome object with a frame of reed, wood, or whalebone. The earlier ones are covered with linen, then later with silk taffeta, or oiled silk or cotton cloth waxed. They were eighty centimetres or more long and weighed several pounds. They were carried by a footman or page walking behind the person who wished their protection.

Furetière, as early as 1650, remarked on the custom of using a parasol as a protection from rain. It is, he says, "a small portable piece of furniture with a round top which is carried in the hand to protect the head from the ardour of the sun's rays. It is made of leather, of taffeta, or of waxed

linen. It is hung at the end of a stick and may be folded or spread by means of a few ribs of whalebone which sustain it. It serves also as a protection from rain, and then some call it '*parapluie*' instead of parasol."

The umbrella became really practical in 1710, thanks to the Sieur Martin who made them only 180 grammes in weight, and made so they could be doubled up into little cases to be put in the pocket.

If the use of this convenience became more general toward the middle of the eighteenth century, the nobles and the rich merchant class jealously kept to the use of the mantle or cloak especially in places of social gathering, the fashionable parks and outdoor meeting places, because to have carried an umbrella would have shown the lack of a carriage.

Even in London with its rainy climate, the umbrella was at first some-



DR. ALEXANDER WOOD, THE FIRST PERSON
IN EDINBURGH TO CARRY AN UMBRELLA—
FROM JOHN KEY'S SKETCH IN 1784

what looked down on. In 1778 a certain John Macdonald,* a footman who wrote some memoirs, describes how when he was carrying a very handsome silk umbrella which he had brought back from the continent, people called out to him, "Hey, Mr. Frenchman, why don't you take a carriage?" His sister was obliged, one day when she was walking with him, to leave him in order to escape the insults of the populace which his umbrella drew on him. There was a sort of cabal organized by the drivers of public carriages who thought umbrellas a menace to their business. But by dint of the continued use of umbrellas by foreigners in London, the custom grew until by the end of the eighteenth century one could count almost as many umbrellas as there were Londoners.

*Memoirs of an Eighteenth Century Footman—John Macdonald. 1745-1779. With an Introduction by John Beresford. Edited by Sir E. Denison Ross and Eileen Power. London, Geo. Routledge & Sons, Ltd.

EDITOR'S NOTE

IN AN article in the *Revue de l'art Chrétien* for January, 1884, M. Charles de Linas gives a study of the use of umbrellas in antiquity from which the following notes were taken.

In Egypt fans or flabella were used for sun, as well as canopies, but there is no trace of anything resembling a parasol.

In Assyrian sculptures kings are shown standing on their war-chariots accompanied by a servitor holding a parasol above the head of the master. This object seems to be made of a striped fabric, is conical in shape edged with a fringe, and supported on ribs somewhat like those on our umbrellas (see Botta, *monuments de Ninive*, pl. CXIII).

No Hebrew or Chaldean term in the Bible could be clearly applicable to the idea of a parasol. One must come down to Herod Agrippa 49 A. D.—a person assuredly touched by the Greek and Roman. A small bronze of his period shows on one side three ears of wheat and on the other a clearly drawn umbrella. In appearance the parasol of Agrippa is not far, with its dentated edge from the ceremonial pontifical “pavillon” as represented by the painters of the seventeenth century. It was Pope Alexander III (1159–1181) who first conceded to a bishop the honors of the parasol. In *The Knights of Aristophanes*, Agoracrite says to Demos that his ears spread like a parasol, and in *The Birds* there is a passage in which a comic character orders his slave to carry a párasol over him to hide him from the sight of the gods.

In Rome the use of parasols was considered effeminate;—a young slave holding an open sunshade walked behind the Roman ladies. The same author shows illustrations taken from manuscripts of the tenth to the fourteenth century preserved in the British Museum and also reproduces the ceremonial umbrellas of the Emperor of Morocco, the “Cheik” of Borneo, and the king of Dahomey.