

The Costumes Of Ottoman Women

Ottoman Woman's Dress in 16th century

Dress of Muslim women in the Capitol City



When studying 16th century writings, pictures, local and foreign sources for information about women's costume, we see that in the street, the long mantle, (ferace) the yashmak, and on some occasions, the veil were worn.

The mantle was open at the front, full cut in the body and sleeves, with skirts to the floor, the collar changing with the times, but in the 16th-17th century close to the neck or in a soft V shape, the skirts split on each side of the front opening, and was worn when going out into the street. With the mantle was worn the veil or yashmak. This was a white covering usually in two pieces, one passing from the head to the chin and the other, cross wise, from the chin to the head, the edges could either hang over the mantle or be tucked into the collar. It is stiffened with starch if worn by rich or aristocratic women.

The foreign information regarding women in the first quarter of the 16th century, is taken from a book written by Giovanantonio Menavino, a Genoese, who was taken as a slave when very young, and sold to the Ottoman palace in 1501. During the reigns of Sultans Beyazid and Yavuz Sultan Selim (1512-1520) he was a page in the palace. In August 1514 after the Battle of Chaldiran he escaped and went back to his country. In his book that gives information about the first fifteen years of the 16th century. He says that women wore a dress of fine cloth called a 'barami', when they went out into the city they wore a veil of horse hair, and that poor women and slaves did not wear this mask, so their eyes could be seen,

Pieter Coecke van Aelst (1502-50), the Flemish artist and engraver, came to Istanbul with ambassador Corneille de Schepper and a delegation of Flemish cloth merchants in 1533. The work of this artist on the subject of the Balkans and Istanbul contains only six prints. This designer of Gobelin tapestries engraved views of Turkey to sell to the Ottoman palace. In the

engraving that has Istanbul as its subject, there are lively children in the foreground, musicians and six female figures. The female slaves carrying bundles have tied their face covering in such a way as to expose their eyes and nose. The women walking in front of these slaves are wearing veils. The artist's depiction of the dress of the women bears out what Menavino had written.

Guillaume Postel, (1510-81) who was the first professor of Hebrew and Arabic of the College of France and at the same time gave Greek and mathematics lessons, wrote the first French book on the Arabic language. King Francois the First (1515-47) sent him to Istanbul together with the first French ambassador Gabriel d'Aramon in 1535. The King, who said that Postel was a most experienced traveler, wanted Postel to gather information about the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic religion, and to write about the East for the library of the French Court. Postel in his travel book gave this information about dress: "The materials used are gold and silver satin, brocade, damask and many kinds of silk. These are the fabrics chosen by the rich and the city aristocrats, the city poor and villagers dress very badly. The dress fell without folds to the ground. The Turks cover their heads with scarves tied around the brow. From the hotoz (a ring made from twisted fabric and worn on the top of the head) there hung a piece of material, about a foot in length, of gold or silver, sometimes a mixture of both; this was arranged in such a way so as to partly conceal the face, the remaining section was covered with a veil of thin serge, taminy or silk and decorated with embroidery. All the women wore a covering of good white material when they went out into the city. This covering made it impossible to distinguish one woman from the other, to the extent of husbands not being able to recognize his wife. Both men and women wore shoes that were fastened over the instep, and tight in the toe. All of these were worn by city aristocrats. Tartars were dressed very much as the Turks, and one of the most popular headwear was a type of hunting hat. These generally were high and pointed, and were tied to the head with thin silk materials. Choice of material here reflected the prosperity or taste of the wearer, as in the Polish people.

Luigi Bassano, an Italian, who, it is thought, between 1537- 1541 was trained in the Enderun (The Royal Training School) as a page. On returning home he entered the service of Cardinal Rodolfo Pio di Carpi in Rome, and wrote about daily life in Istanbul during the reign of Sultan Suleyman (1520-66). Bassano writes about Turkish woman's street dress thus: "When they go out into the street they wear a white linen sleeved robe which reaches to the ground, over a short jacket or dullimano. Neither men or women wear gloves. Around the head and then the eyes and the neck they wind a scarf of 'ormisi' (thin material). So as to be able to see people, but not be seen they use a strip of material about a hand span in width over the eyes, this they keep in place with three hairpins on the forehead. When women meet on the street they raise this cover to kiss each other. As Turkish men are so jealous they like their women to be covered entirely.

The years following 1535 were very important in political relations between The Ottoman Empire and France. The French King Henry the Second (1547-59) sent an ambassadorial deputation of trained experts to Istanbul, for them to study a range of subjects together with aspects of the lives of the inhabitants. This deputation was headed by the French Ambassador Gabriel d'Aramon, who had come to Istanbul for the second time, and it included Nicholas de Nicolay (1517-830) who's travel book contains rich pictorial material that gives the most information of all the foreign publications on 16th.century Ottoman dress. Coming to Istanbul in August 1551 and staying one year, Nicolas de Nicolay faithfully recorded Turkish dress, it is clear, that as he was trained as an artist in his youth he drew the illustrations himself. Also the correctness of his work underlines the fact that he must have consulted experts. In his book Nicolay explains his sources, and drawing techniques. He formed a friendship with one of Barbaros Hayrettin Pasha's former eunuchs, Zafer Aga from Ragusa who had been raised at court from childhood. He helped Nicolay with the drawings of the costumes, They employed two street women as models and adorned them with costumes bought from the Bedestan (clothes market). These women accepted this more respectable profession of modeling for a fee, and posed in resplendent court clothes. The first edition of this book was first published in

Turkish, and because it was such an important document it was translated in to many languages. Nicolay's prints gained in value and in Nurenburg in 1572 a German version was printed with pictures copied from the first edition and coloured. It contains sixty prints, mainly examples of Nicolay's prints of Turkish costumes.

In the street dresses described by Nicolay the common features are that the bodice of the ferace (upper gown) was tight, the front buttoned to the waist after which it was left open. Full cut and have either long or short sleeves. Covering the neck and head is yashmak with long fringed ends that hang down the back. In the depiction of Turkish women in the street with children the women are not wearing veils. There is no difference between the dress of boys and girls apart from the head wear. A Turkish woman wearing a long or short sleeved outdoor mantle (ferace) made of light summer material, with a veil edged in metal thread embroidery, a yashmak with fringed ends, and a fez like head dress combined with a decorated bordeaux coloured veil, is the typical city lady. From the 16th to the 19th. century artists loved to depict "A Turkish Woman Going to the Baths", showing her wearing the long sleeved outdoor mantle, the very long fringed yashmak going around the neck and falling down the back, the veil fixed to the fez-like head dress. Wearing shoes, which are yellow, the colour, which is special for Muslims and carrying a neat bundle with a crescent moon and star design, which contains articles that she needs, this is a picture of the imagination. Menavinos depiction of a young woman, who, even though her face is covered by a veil that hardly conceals her unhappy expression or her dark skin and ugly slave's face, was more truthful.

The author of a travel book known as 'Viaje de Truquia' is in dispute. In the first printing in Madrid 1905 the editor Manuel y Serreno Sanz says that it was written by Crisobel de Villalon, editors of several following printings say the same. In an edition of 1980 the writer is said to be a Knight of Malta, Juan de Ulloa Pereira, whereas the research of Marcel de Bataillon states that the writer was a doctor by the name of Andreas Laguna. It is in the form of a conversation between three people. Pedro who is a writer in the book, tells his friends Juan and Mata about women's

dress in Istanbul in the year 1552. "The colour and material of the full garment that women envelop themselves in can change, some this colour and some that, some silk and some wool. Apart from the women's headdress, the men and women dress the same. They do not change their fashions in the way that we do. If the man gets up early he can put on his wife's costume, or if it is she that rises early, she can put on his. When a garment is ordered from the tailor, there is no trouble about the style of it, and they never use any embellishments. The top garment is lined with a thin material. The tailor does not take measurements; he just talks to the customer and shows him another garment as a model. The tailors are very cheap and very good. One person sews the complete garment, which makes it long lasting and it sits well on the figure. (In many places in Europe at this time several people would be involved in the making of a garment, and therefore it was often badly put together, and therefore well sewn cloths were gained in value.) Turkish women wear their hair long and falling onto the shoulder, and on the forehead it is shorn in the manner of our priests. On their heads they wear a smart four-cornered 'hotoz' (cap), that is embroidered with metal thread, and lightly stiffened to prevent wrinkles. It is buttoned under the chin, and a square scarf (yemine) is placed over it without it covering the front. Over this is thrown a metal thread embroidered tulle. Around the forehead a crown like broad band of braid is tied. The tulle goes around the neck several times and they are constantly arranging it. Even the poorer women wear ornaments of precious stones such as gold necklaces, bracelets, and earrings, because they are so cheap, but they do not like brooches. It has been noticed that even when going to the public baths they can have upon them gold and jewels to the value of 2000 duka. There, sable and pine marten are as available as sheep skin to us. All over Turkey Christian or Muslim, people who do not wear fur when it gets cold are very few. If you go out to look for fur you will learn about every known variety in the world. A good pine marten is 20-30 Spanish dollar (riyal), sable is 100-150, mole 7 riyal, a gray rabbit that resembles marten or a long haired soft field rat 4, male fox 3, lamb 2, or the cheapest of all at 1 duka, jackal, which is very popular, and resembles male fox. Women usually ride on horseback or in a sedan- like closed vehicle; they will never ride on a mule. They do not ride side saddle, but sit astride as the men do."

Hans Dernschwam (1494-1553) who worked for a company that collected information about foreign countries, came to Istanbul in 1553 and in his travel writings says that when women went into the street they wore a round headdress with a small button at the front. This was made of silk and decorated with gold thread embroidery. Around the sides of this cap they tied a scarf of good quality plain muslin or of a thicker white material, to the ends of this which hung down in the front they fixed a thin silk net tulle about a hands span in width, which covered the face, but did not prevent them from seeing because of its transparency. On top of the women's garment was a smart jacket of a type also worn by men, which had ties in front in place of buttons, and was without a collar. Apart from those worn by poor people, this jacket was made from velvet or silk, and beneath it they wore full cut baggy trousers, usually made of taffeta. On their feet they wore yellow, red, blue or brown leather shoes, with heels, the toes of which were much narrower than European shoes, with nailed soles and very easily slipped on and off. He wrote that the female servants and slaves wore all enveloping white capes that left only the eyes visible.

Between 1554-62, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq (1522-1592) of Flemish stock, came to Istanbul three times as Austrian Ambassador, and wrote to a friend in a letter that if women were forced to go out they were covered to such an extent that he thought they were ghosts! Women could see other people only from behind a thin muslin or silk veil, and it was impossible for a man to see any part of a woman's body. The Danish artist Melchior Lorichs (1527-1583) who came to Istanbul with Busbecq and stayed until 1559, left documents concerning Ottoman daily life under Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, Amongst his drawings is one called 'Four Turkish Girls' which depicts the figures wearing long mantels, fez like head dresses with trailing fringed or unfringed ends, and long decorated yashmaks, all of which carry the essence of the time.

The French traveler Phillippe du Fresne-Canaye, (1551-11610) who was in Istanbul 1573 thought that women's street dress was far from smart: " Women who are going to the public baths pass through Pera with female slaves carrying their bundle of necessities. Usually they wear a cape of black or red; it is

unusual to see one of a different colour. In the street they wear blue, red or yellow boots with nailed soles. They carefully hide the face with thin camel hair dyed black, and cover the neck with an embroidered shawl, so that it is impossible to separate the pretty women from the ugly. Because one cannot see the face it is only possible to get any idea of their beauty from the voice or from their slender elegant hands. Even though they do not wear gloves it is not always possible to see the hands because they hide them beneath the dress. The garments are so heavy and wanting in beauty that any feeling of strong passion is deadened. But on reaching home they throw off this comic garment, lift the cruel veil that covered the eyes, and are left in such a beautiful gown that one thinks a golden dawn has chased away the darkness of night and brought the light of day. Without doubt these woman are softhearted, sensitive and gentle. They wear garments made of gold thread work on silk. Because they have black eyes they use several ways of dyeing the hair black, but this black hair is no less bright than the yellow plaits of the women of Venice. Unlike French women they do not make forelocks or curls, but allow a lock of hair to rest on mid cheek. They do not wear stockings, and have on both the wrist and ankle an expensive gold bracelet. They have gilded headdresses with high plumes. They open the corsage to a modest degree, but they do not confine the breasts as the French women do, nor push them up to make them look bigger as do the women of Venice. They wear clothes not so much as to look different, but to cover themselves."

In the travel writings of Joachim Sinzendorf who worked as a chaplain in the Imperial Embassy in Istanbul between the years 1577-81, he says that the women wore a pair of baggy trousers made of transparent silk or of another good quality material, and over these a loose garment of the same thickness of red, yellow, or blue material. Over this they would wear a tight decorated silk mantle reaching to the knees. Then again on top of this a jacket of silk damask. On the head they would wear a small silk hat decorated with gold coins and surrounded with black silk braid. To this was attached a semi-transparent veil to hide the face. Aristocratic women always wore a veil outside the house; their greatest pleasure was to wear good clothes and to appear

attractive in them when out walking. Poorer women appeared covered from head to toe in a silk cape.

Fynes Moryson (1566-1629) who witnessed the years 1596-97 in Istanbul gives this information in his travel book: "Women wear clothing made from thin silk, and decorated At the wrists and skirt hem with silk needlework and their necks are left bare. Their mantles have long sleeves and are tight across the chest and are also embroidered. Their stockings and shoes are often of a light colour, shoes of leather are sometimes gold or silver, and if the woman is the wife of a richer she wears jewels for decoration. Their hair is plaited in an unusual way, and then decorated with pearls, gold flowers, jewels and ornaments worked in silk." Like the other foreigners Moryson thought that men and women's garments were very much alike. He writes again and again that wherever he traveled in the Ottoman lands he never saw a woman out doors with an uncovered head. Then he goes on to say: " Around their waist they pass two or three times a wide sash of silk or linen, or sometimes a thin leather belt with a gold or silver buckle. In place of trousers they wear a long woolen dress, a chemise being worn over this. As underclothing thin beige cotton or linen long pantalets that are very clean, they do not wear garters for their stockings. For their clothes they usually obtain thin satin or georgette from England or Venice, or Damascene silk. Their coats they get from England, and because tight clothing does not let in the cold and loose clothing does not let in the heat they line the coats with black rabbit fur. Because Christians wear often, Muslims are not fond of black."

There are some differences in observations made by foreigners in the 16th century that are to be found in libraries in Vienna and Dresden; such as mantles being buttoned double breasted, and the way in which yashmaks are attached to the headdress. Here the yashmak is said to have been fixed to the headdress and to have covered both the nose and mouth and to have ribbons to tie it round to the back of the head where they hung free.

The Turkish miniatures produced by Ottoman artists are as valuable as documentation of Muslim and non-Muslim women's place in society as they are in other subjects, and as records of costume they are important. The 16th century palace poet

Lokman b. Seyyid Huseyin al-Asuri al Urmevi's 'Shahnam-I Selim Han' written in Persian verse form relates the events of the years 1566-74 in the reign of Sultan Selim the Second. The manuscript was encribed by Hattat Ilyas Katip in 1581 and comprises 158 sheets and 44 miniatures. One of these miniatures which is recorded TSMK A. 3595, depicts some women telling their problems at the 'Divan' or council meeting at Court. Amongst many men we see two women wearing white yashmaks. The woman in front is wearing a pink mantle and has a child on her lap, and holds the hand of the other woman. The woman wearing a dark blue mantle has her head turned to one side and seems to be talking to her neighbour. The woman in pink who is standing in front of The Grand Vizier and other Viziers has a tuft of hair showing around one ear. The woman's face being so open shows us that the rules were not so strict then as we imagine them to have been.

The miniatures of 'Surname-I Humayan' depict the magnificent wedding, held in 'Sultanahmet Atmeydan' in 1582 by Sultan Murat the Third (1574-95) for his son Mehmed the Third (1595-1603) and which lasted 52 days and nights. A team under the direction of Nakkash Osman prepared these miniatures. In this manuscript (TSMK H.1344) comprising 432 sheets and 427 miniatures. The left page shows the Sultan and his heir apparent watching the festivities at the Ibrahim Pasha Palace, whilst the courtiers and embassy personnel are on the right together with the populace. There are some women to be seen amongst a group of people watching a procession of Bath Attendants and Hairdressers. Standing in the front row they are wearing mantles of various colours and some of them are veiled. In previous miniatures veils are rarely seen, so it can be surmised that this fashion spread from Arabia.

Women wearing similar costumes also appear in the miniatures of the 'Hunername'. This two-volume work (TSMK H. 1523-24) was written by Seyyid Lokman, and prepared by Nakkash Osman and his team. In the miniature depicting Sultan Suleyman Han hunting near Bagdat in the spring, two women are seen presenting him with a basket of pomegranates. The women are wearing white, and the woman holding the basket full of pomegranates is talking to an old man with a moustache. The

yashmak around her head and shoulders is tied in such a way as to leave her eyes and nose uncovered. In another section of this work there are four women, this pictures a dispute, and one of the women is in an cart drawn by two oxen, and she has a child on her lap. Another woman on the left that has her hands extended and is talking, has some hair escaping from her yashmak. The two women on the right have their hands tucked into the sleeves of their mantles and are standing quietly by. As it was obviously not forbidden for women to use their hands when talking, it would seem that these two women hid their hands in their sleeves out of respect. The outer clothes and the way that the yashmaks are tied, as well as the fact that all the women's' faces are uncovered are all very important clues to dress of that time.

The Costumes Of Ottoman Women

Ottoman Woman's Dress in 16th century

House Dress



From the descriptions of garments that have come down to us, we know that women in the house wore baggy trousers that could be one of many types, a long sleeved chemise of 'buruncuk' (a roughly pleated cotton) a cardigan like jacket and an either long or short over-robe that could have sleeves and usually without a collar. This was open at the front. The trousers could be tight or full, of many different lengths between the knees and the ankle. Both tight and loose were buttoned at the bottom, and this button could be used to adjust the trouser to the leg. There was also to be found a type of long stocking sewn from a material known as 'kalchin'. The 'shalvar' trousers came to 5 cm above the waist and were tied with a thin sash threaded through the top, the embroidered ends of which hung down in front and were embroidered (uchkur).

The first written foreign source for the 16th century, was by the Italian Mevavino, he gives information about the house dress of women: The women's chemise is very like that of the men, but the neck sleeves and all the edges are embroidered. Most of them are made of taffeta and in the lively colours that they loved

most, red, green or other colours. The edges of the garments are decorated with raised silk embroidery, and are lined with a thin material. The upper robe (entari) is narrow at the top, the neck quite deep, and is open from top to bottom. At the waist is a silk embroidered sash with a metal gold belt over it. On the feet are very smart coral (or other colours) shoes decorated with Moroccan gold thread work. The Turkish woman's hair is long and usually plaited. On their heads and falling as far as the shoulders is a braid plaited from taffeta, and on top a headdress covered in many gold and jeweled ornaments, known as a 'fechel' which was a sign of aristocracy. That is the main dress of the older women of the house married or widowed aristocratic ladies. The other women have a headdress with a three hand span high pointed crown, rather like a unicorn horn." This is similar to one in a drawing of Turkish woman thought to be by Bellini that is in The British Museum. After this it was not used by Anatolian women, but was appropriated by Syrian women.

The information given by the other 16th century observer Bassano about housedress agrees with the pictorial sources especially when dealing with head wear. He writes thus: "In Turkey, the women, especially Christians, Turks and Jews, wear very decorated silks, and like the men, long floor length jackets, Baggy trousers, and shoes with nailed soled boots. Their chemises are of thin sailcloth of white, red, yellow, turquoise and such like colours. Sitting upright on the head a small round cap covered in silk or satin (atlas, orμισι) or damask, and of all sorts of colours. Some women fix under this a scarf of velvet or brocade (brocchato), and some wear this scarf with a white cap, and another silk cloth over that. This cloth was half a hand span in width, this I have seen also in other countries. Their belts are of silk, and the men's belts are called 'kushak' (sash). The women love to wear rings, bracelets, and gold neck chains, but are not fond of earrings."

The foreign observer Postel says that all the women wore inner chemises of taffeta or cotton, which they washed with soap. Schweigger notes that women at home wore wide trousers of silk or another good quality material, and on top of this a loose gown of the same thickness of good quality cloth in red, yellow or blue.

Over this gown a tight fitting knee length silk embroidered coat was worn.

Nicolay's engraving "A Turkish Woman in House Dress", reflects the characteristics of the period; the fez like headdress with muslin draped around it and tied under the chin. The woman is depicted with her hands in the pockets of a knee length coat that is V-necked and made of a white material with a blue design, and has half-length sleeves. The open edge of this coat shows that it has a yellow lining edged with green. Beneath this garment there is seen a long gown down to her heels, and it is of red, white, blue and yellow striped cloth. A sash of yellow with black stripes has been passed twice round her waist, and she is wearing yellow shoes with heels.

Dated 1560-1570 and registered TSMK.H2168 is a miniature describing a young couple, and dress of the girl gives information about Ottoman house dress of the second quarter of the 16th century. The long and full rough pleated cotton chemise that reaches almost to her ankles is collarless, and embroidered with gold thread. Under this chemise can be seen red and white striped trousers and red slippers. The young girl has over the chemise a yellow patterned cardigan like jacket, with half sleeves. This jacket is of red cloth, and hip length, the front having cross over fastening. She has a blue sash at her waist with fringed ends. On top of her long black hair there is an embroidered fez-like headdress. This is to be found in TSMK, and it bears a strong resemblance to a miniature in The British Museum's Binney Collection (T65 16K) which is dated at the end of the 16th century and is known as "Young Woman in Blue". The two young women wear the same style fez, long sleeved cotton chemise, and trousers. Even the pose is the same, but the woman in Binney Collection miniature shows that the blue patterned collarless, front opening to the waist gown is long, long not short. Each of the figures holds a black yellow-fringed handkerchief in the left hand. Because she is wearing yellow shoes we understand that she is a Muslim; her hair that is parted in the middle, her eyebrows and the shape of her face are very like the girl in the other picture.

The second printing of Nicolas de Nicolay's travel book was published in Venice in 1580, and had seven additional drawings.

According to the permit given by Henry the Second for it to be printed in France dated 1567-68; these new prints were not prepared especially for Nicolay's Turkish travel book. Of these designs one entitled 'A Turkish Woman in Her House' inspired many painters of that period. A woman in an album of Lambert de Vos dated 1574, in an illustration by Jacopo Ligozzi, and in a picture in another album by Pietro Berellini dated 1591, apart from small details are all very much alike. In all three the woman is sitting crossed leg on a small carpet, and looking sideways, near the carpet is a pair of 'nalin' (raised pattens). Ligozzi liked to put an animal into his drawings that he thought represented the east, so here we see a dog cleaning itself of fleas. All of the women wear the same ornaments: in the ears and round the neck a necklace, and earrings to match, bracelets on the arms, one also on the ankle, and a belt at the waist. The women wear feathers of different lengths, and the height of the cap is also different. The headdress of the woman in Bertelli's album is the same as that in Nicolay's Palace Woman engraving. In Lambert de Vos's version the woman's gown has a design of yellow clouds and three spots (chitemani) on a green background and unlike the others is fastened cross over fashion with frogging, but the buttons are the same. In Bertelli's picture from under the hem of her pink gown her bare leg emerges to draw one's attention. Finding the Turkish women far from smart in the street the French traveler Fresne-Canaye comments that on reaching their home they were completely charming when seen in a beautiful gold embroidered silk gown. Fresne-Canaye's description calls to mind the woman in the picture by Ligozzi.

The Turkish Woman in the album from Bremen wears a headdress that is of the smartest models worn during this century. The lady is wearing a collarless open fronted gown with elbow length sleeves, the material of which has a large pattern, and emerging from the neck and sleeves is a transparent chemise. In her right hand she is holding a carnation, and with her left she is lifting her skirt as if to show her unusual trousers. Over her slippers, which are the same colour as her dress, she is wearing pattens, which are not very high, and she has two white handkerchiefs hanging from the black belt at her waist.

Sultan Murat the Third wanted Darir of Erzurum's life of the Prophet Mohammed. "Siyer-i Nebi", that was written in the 14th century, to be copied. The miniatures of this work were not completed until after the death of the Sultan, so it was presented to his son Mehmet the Third. Apart from some men's costumes the artists knew nothing about the costume and objects of the time of Mohammed, therefore the 814 miniatures in six volumes were prepared with the characteristics of the period in which they lived. In the second volume of this work, registered as TSMK H.1221 and comprising 499 sheets, in a scene depicting the decoration of Hatice's house before the coming of Mohammed to ask for Hatice's hand in marriage, the room has the characteristics of a Turkish room. The different coloured gowns, trousers, buckled belts, fez like headdresses and the white covers on these headdresses worn by the women all reflect the details of the 16th century Ottoman Muslim women's house dress.

Dress of the Palace Women

Ottoman administrators lived in Topkapi Seraglio and the part where women lived, was called the Harem-i Humayun. In addition, the section where men were not allowed was called the Harem in Muslim countries. Women living in Topkapi Harem had to obey a hierarchic order that determined their rank and importance of degree in the Seraglio. In this hierarchic order, the Sultan's mother was known as Valide Sultan. His daughters as Sultana and various other names were given to the other women. Sometimes the woman most loved and who had given birth to a boy was called Haseki Sultana, and all of the women of the Sultan were called Haseki. Kadin Efendi was usually title given to the rest of Sultan's women. The women, taken to the Seraglio and who grew up there, were called Ikbal if they are with child by the Sultan. They were called 1st Ikbal, 2nd Ikbal, and 3rd Ikbal. And so on. The Muhallefat notebook in Topkapi Palace Archives shows that Shahin Fatma Hatun was Sultan Mustafa 11's (1695-1704) Ikbal. To find the first Ikbal in Mustafa 11's period shows us that Ikbals became important by the end of 17th century. After this Ahmet 111 had 1, Mahmud 1 had 4, III. Mustafa had 1, III. Selim had 1, II. Mahmud had 4, Abdulmecid had 6, and Abdulhamid 11 had 4 ikbals. At the bottom of the hierarchic order there were the girls called Cariye or Odalik

(odalisque) who had been taken prisoner or given as a gift to the Sultan by statesmen. Cariyes, living in Harem, were separated into three groups; unskilled, qualified, and skilled. In Turkish, Acemi, Kalfa and Usta. Cariyes taken into the Harem were educated by the Kalfa. Those that had learnt the Seraglio customs and had finished their unskilled period were called Gedikli. They took a salary from the Royal treasury. The Seraglio woman had to spend all her time in the Harem and live in the hierarchic order, and her dress was more elaborate than normal women's apparel. The fabric used for Seraglio dresses had been woven according to the designs of artists known as Hassa Nakkash, in special workshops. The fabrics, known as kadife, kemha, çatma, diba, seraser, atlas, serenk, canfes and tafta were preferred for Seraglio dresses that had all the qualities of Ottoman women's traditional dress. In 16th century, known as the Classical Period, the Ottoman Empire was in a very strong position politically and economically. They produced the most beautiful textiles as a symbol of the power of the empire. With the golden and silver threads mixed in the silken cloths, the value of these materials increased much more. In addition, cloths and ready-made dresses were coming from Venice, Genoa, France, and textile centres of Europe and also from India, China, The Far East and The Near East. It is known from Ottoman resources that Beyazid 11 had assigned 1500 akçe and two sable furs to his women and his daughters every year. Nicolay says that the main difference between the Seraglio woman and the ordinary woman was how they covered their heads. He writes that instead wearing a simple hat like the ordinary women, the Seraglio woman wore a crown. On and behind this crown there was attached a small pleated crepe, and a band of taffeta that went round the head dress the ends of which fell to the shoulders and a cordon was tied twice around the crown. He adds: "The neck, which is usually uncovered, is adorned with a rich necklace. Dresses are embroidered with gold and made of pleated cloth. Women do not show their bodies but the dress gives an outline of this. They left half of their legs uncovered; and wore a kind of stocking, that was not pulled up completely and did not cover the feet. The top part is adorned with pearls. This undoubtedly shows that this dress has the target of adornment. This was a dress that they wore when they were presented to Sultan and did not wear on other occasions."

The most attractive part of the dress in Nicolay Haseki Sultan Print is the headdress. This hat is called a "crown" in the caption under the picture. From under the crown, a piece of cloth edged with braid falls down to the waist. The front of the outer garment is open down the front, and the inner dress is ornamented with a black on yellow design, and the collar is v-shaped. The ends of the skirt are tucked into the thick green-white belt, so that the lining of the blue outer coat and the ornamentation of the shirt under it can be seen. The shirts were of three different designs and were usually white. This and the green lining of the upper coat were important in indicating the degree of the woman in the palace, and undoubtedly show the position of the Haseki Sultan in the Harem. In the Seraglio Woman print, the artist showed only one woman's dress from the many in the Seraglio. The only thing in common between the two pictures is that they both have the same necklace. If we imagine that Nicolay made this drawing from Zafer Aga's descriptions of the dresses taken from the Bedesten, it is possible that such a detail as this was overlooked. It is interesting that a yellow chemise can be seen through the collar, whereas as seen under the short sleeves they are red. Possibly this was a mistake in the colouring done in 1572. The woman who has a silken sash in place of a belt has on her naked feet a pair of pattens. The headdress of the other woman, who is wearing a felt covering on her legs instead of baggy trousers, is very different in style to the usual fez like ones of the period.

Melchior Lorichs was a Danish artist, who has come to Istanbul with the Austrian ambassador; Busbecq stayed in Turkey between 1555 and 1559. The Turkish image and dresses found in his prints are less exaggerated and more realistic than Nicolas de Nicolay's drawings. In the Sultan's portraits, drawn by Lorichs in 1579 and 1581, he gave much attention to details of the head ornaments and garments. The ornamented fez of a type belonging to 16th century is adorned with plumes and various ornaments made of strings of small and large pearls and other valuable jewels. The print, that shows a group of Turkish women performing the ritual prayer service of the Muslim religion known as 'namaz' shows that Lorichs who has seen men performing this, had used his imagination and thought that women did the

same. The woman, who is obviously more important than the other women, and is wearing a patterned dress and has an ornament in her hair, has her hands joined together not on the chest, but on the stomach like the men.

The drawings including a group of 16th century Seraglio women in an album from the Vienna Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, carries the impression of having been painted to reflect the features of the garments. In the composition there are three women and a little girl in the front row whose faces are turned away from the onlookers and two figures who have their backs turned. In this composition, the young ladies are wearing dresses in various colours, made from the fabric ornamented with medallions and carnations, which reflects the characteristics of female dress in 16th century. Some are wearing high-heeled pattens; some slippers and all of these Seraglio women have tassels on their belts. The women in the back row have been depicted with their heads turned in order to make their napes more easily seen. They wear white chemises over coloured baggy trousers, over which there are patterned overdresses. One of these ladies has tucked the ends of her dress into her belt thus showing the yellow lining of the coat edged with thick green braid. The red trousers, transparent shirt, and red coat that the woman on the left is wearing displays a complete colour composition. The little girl in the composition may have been drawn to show that children's dresses were the same as the women's. In the print called 'The Sultan's Favourite and Harem Women' from the same album, not only garments but also a room of the Harem and belongings have been depicted. Fabrics of the 16th century are on the walls, belongings and dresses. A white cloud and three spot design on dark blue on the dresses of a sitting women, was one of a favourite designs of the Seraglio. The dagger that was important for women in the Seraglio, can be seen in both of the two women's belts. Although the women waiting to serve, who hold their hands together in front, are wearing pattens, the three women sitting on the edge of the Divan, are wearing attractive slippers.

In an album, dated 1588, from The Bodleian Library Oxford, the Haseki Sultan's garment is quite magnificent. The head dress is shaped like a fez and is adorned with precious jewels. Together

with the earrings, necklace, thick belt with a dagger, all display a nice completeness.

Thomas Dallam, an organ-maker, was in charge of taking and placing an organ in the Seraglio that Queen Elizabeth 1 of England sent as a gift to Mehmet 111. . Dallam writes in his book that he saw some of the favourites of the Sultan, and at first he thought they were pages but when he saw hair decorated with tassels of pearls hanging down their backs he realised that they were women, and adds: " They were wearing linen baggy trousers to the knee and the cloth was so thin that their bodies could be seen through it. They had on little waistcoats in blue, red or in two other contrasting colours. The feet of some were naked; some were wearing Spanish leather boots. There were gold chains around their ankles and some wore thick-soled 11 or 12cm high-heeled shoes. Their wavy hair was plaited with pearls, and fell to their shoulders from beneath their headdress. They had on necklaces with big pearls and jewels, and jewelled earrings.

In the archives of Topkapi Museum that have come down to us today there a dress belonging to Ayshe Sultana, who was the daughter of Murat 111 and Safiye Sultana. This belongs to the last quarter of the 16th century. It is printed with a design of three silver spots on blue combed cotton 'canfes'. It is collarless, and is deeply décolleté in front and is buttoned with silk loops and silk buttons to the waist. The sleeves, neck and skirt are edged with the same material in orange. Two pieces of cloth were added to each side of the front and back panels of the skirt (these were known as 'pesh') and it is 130cm. in length. On Ayse Sultan's death, some of her dresses and silver ornaments were stored in the Seraglio. A headdress made of silver thread 'seraser' is decorated with blue silk carnations and beige flowers and there is six-leaved flower ornamented with metal thread on it, and it has an orange lining.

Information has come down to us from the time of Murat 111 in Palace account books dating from 1503-4 concerning fabrics, colours and the form of women's' dresses. For example, a dress made of 'firenze' velvet ornamented with red and a dress with a gold fabric skirt was given to Cem Celebi's daughter. Another

dress of gold 'atlas' and 'firengi' velvet lined with taffeta was recorded as having been given to Hatice Hatun's daughter Hanzade Hatun. In addition, it was written that women's dresses made of a thick silken cloth, called 'Bursa chatmasi,' with gold skirts lined with taffeta, were sent to widows and daughters as condolences.

The Dress of Non-Muslim Women

It is obviously known that people of Ottoman Empire were always free to follow their own religious beliefs. The central system of Ottoman Empire always worked on the principle of protecting the consumer without harming the producer and insisted on a balance in price and quality. The price and quality of ready-made caftans were controlled, and those who cut down on materials were punished. For example, caftans had to conform to standards such not being too short in the sleeves or skirt, enough lining had to be used, and the facings of the neck, sleeves or skirt had to be sewn and not glued. Facings that were cut on the cross could put up the price of the garment for example. The Palace controlled Muslim and Non-Muslim populations garments alike; all street dresses, the shape, cloth, quality, and colours were all under consideration, and were controlled by laws and 'firman'.

A law was sent from the Palace to the Istanbul Chief Judge of Istanbul in 1568, proclaiming that it was forbidden for non-Muslim women to wear silk-bordered caftans, caftans from 'atlas', 'ala' baggy trousers, 'ala' cotton gauze and shoes that Muslims wore, known as 'içedik' and 'bashmak', because their buying them had made the prices rise. The quality and type of fabric used for garments of non-Muslim women's dress were also defined in another law issued from the Palace to the Istanbul judge. Another law that was decreed was that non-Muslim women should wear 'fistan' instead of 'ferace', their baggy trousers should only be light blue, and that they should wear 'shirvani' and 'kundura' instead of 'basmak' on their feet. They should not wear 'seraser' collars and 'arakkiye' head dresses like those worn by Muslim women, if they did wear them they should be made of 'atlas. Armenians should dress like Jewish people but should wrap coloured scarves around their heads, Armenian women should wear 'fahir fistan' instead of 'ferace' and slippers.

In the law that was sent to the Istanbul Judge from the Seraglio, it is said that non-Muslim had not obeyed the laws, they should be warned and reminded not to wear the garments of the Muslims.

Nicolay says that Greek and foreign women's dress is exceedingly magnificent and adds that "they are not only beautiful and care about their dress, but also adorn themselves when going to the Turkish Baths and Church and wear all their jewels. Townsman and tradesmen's wives wear garments made of fez coloured (dark red) Bursa silk and velvet, damask, satin with lace edges and gold buttons. The less well off wear taffeta and Bursa silk. Young girls and new-married women wear round hats about 5cm made of fez-coloured satin and decorated with a length of silk sewn with precious stones and pearls. Their 'ferace' are green like the Turkish women's. Older women the same but with less decoration. Their dresses are made of white linen. Widow's 'ferace' were saffron yellow" Nicolay says that these clothes are sold in the Bedesten and two points draw ones attention; " Despite the laws, sometimes non-Muslim women wear clothes just like the Turkish women, and valuable cloth has also a wide market outside the Seraglio."

The Greek girl's housedress in Nicolay's print is a chemise of rough pleated muslin with a round neck, and an ornamented over dress with a deep square neck. The headdress shaped like a fez is made of velvet. The necklace, bracelets and the braid around the hat make a nice completeness. The lady has shoes with ties; because her dress is not open at the front, it does not give an idea whether there are baggy trousers or not. The Greek girl from Pera wears as a street dress a 'ferace' with pockets, one button, short sleeved and full from under the waist; an under dress is seen through the 'ferace's' sleeves, and a large scarf covers the neck and hangs down to the waist. Under this big yellow scarf, a white cloth, covering the head and the neck of the lady, attracts attention; as the travellers had noticed she had no veil.

We find descriptions of the magnificent dresses of the Catholic Italian and Levantian women of Pera in Nicolay's book. Nicolay criticizes their spending too much money: " These women, who seek a special position in society, walk about head decorations

reminiscent of poppies, and with dresses covering all of their body to the heels. Usually, they carry all their wealth on them; there are no bourgeois or tradesmen's wife who do not wear a dress made of velvet or satin when they are going to the city or hamam. The gold or silver buttons make the dresses of patterned Bursa silk or taffeta even richer. The dresses, that the foreign women in Nicolay's description and the Greek women in the Vienna album wear, are quite different from the street dresses of Turkish women.

Gerlach, a foreign traveller, mentions that Armenian women also wear skirts over baggy trousers as Turkish women do, but Armenian women wear nice white tulle veils instead of black. Dernschwam says that rich Jewish women wear dresses made of pure silk, and wear valuable gold and jewels. It attracted the attention of all foreign travellers that Greek women spend all their wealth on silk and especially embroidered materials, and that they look much more magnificent than other non-Muslim women. Fresne Canoye writes that: "Greek women do not wear veils in the streets and they like being looked at. They have a style that reminds one of the magnificence of Ancient Greece. Unlike the Turkish women, who do not use make-up, Greek women use very bright eye shadow. They go out very rarely but stand in front of the windows. If they realize that they have been seen, they will quickly disappear.

Ali b. Amir Bayk Shirvani in Ramadan 1558 copied miniatures of Süleymanname that are registered as TSMK H. 1517. Originally drawn by Hungarian Nakka Pervane. There are 69 miniatures that tell the events of the period of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman. In the depiction of The Meeting of Devshirmes (soldiers that came from other nations) the Master of the Devshirmes is seen sitting on the left of the picture with a servant on a very decorated seat. The Master of Devshirmes is holding in his lap money for a journey. These coins were called 'hil'al baha', 'kaput bedeli' and 'kulakçesi. The attendant near him is writing information about the Devshirmes. At the front right of this there are Christian children carrying bags and wearing red coats and conical hats. On the other side of the stone seat there is a group of men and women. Although there are men and male attendants around, the women are not wearing 'feraces' and non-Muslim women are

waiting in the garden with colourful dresses wearing dresses with open collars. Their hair is partly covered with materials in different colours. These miniatures and descriptions by foreign travellers prove that in 16th century non-Moslem women wore comfortable and open dress even when with men.

The Costumes Of Ottoman Women

Ottoman Woman Dress in 17th Century

Street Dress of Women Living in the Capitol City



Dress of Muslim Women Living in the Capitol City

There is not much difference in street dress between 16th and 17th centuries. While there were still traditional 'ferace' and 'yashmak', the 'hotoz' and the fez had changed to the ones that were wider on top and narrower at the bottom. Many travellers noticed this. The French traveller, Du Loir who was in Istanbul in 1639 gave the best information of the 17th century. He wrote: " When women go out of the house they wear an over garment, something like a coat, as do the men, the sleeves of this are so long that only the tips of the fingers can be seen. The front edges are crossed over. Their hair is hidden under a white cloth. Another cloth below this covers the nose which only old women allowed to leave uncovered. Young women are not allowed to show their eyes, so they cover them with a black veil made of horsehair.

The artist George La Chapelle came to Istanbul in 1641 with the French Ambassador, Jean de le Haye, who was sent to The Ottoman Empire for the renewal of the trade privileges. La Chapelle found the depictions of Turkish women by Nicholas de Nicolay in the 16th. Century very exaggerated. He published his own book called 'Recueil de divers portraits des principales dames de la Porte du Grand Turc'. The seventh engraving in this

book is a description of a Turkish woman standing in front of an Istanbul scene. Her yashmak which she had wrapped over her hoots and that also covers her face leaving only her eyes uncovered, is very thin. Her skirt reaches to beneath her knees and shows her boots that are without heels. . The sleeves and collar of her overdress are adorned with big buttons. These ornaments they are as elegant as those used today. In this artist's another print, called " A Turkish Woman Riding a Horse", a woman sitting on a horse side saddle as European women did, and unlike the description of the travellers of the previous century, the woman is wearing a dress with a deep décolleté which leaves her neck and breast uncovered despite the fact that she is out of doors. She is holding an umbrella in her hand, and perhaps the only truthful object is the 'hotoz' headdress.

Ottoman historian Prof. Franz Taeschner in 1925 published an album that he had bought from an auction in 1914. It had 55 coloured illustrations. The original may have been stolen or destroyed by bombing in the safe where it had been put during the Second World War, so could not be used for an intended second edition. In the forth picture " A Fountain and Goldfinch ", there is a fountain which is an example of Ottoman Architecture. Some men are taking water from the fountain, and a gold finch and a donkey are drinking from it also. A woman who has come there to take water is wearing a 'ferace' and a 'yashmak' tied over her Hotoz. In the same album an illustration called 'A Woman Going to the Hamam' attracts attention to the woman's 'hotoz'. The yashmak that she has tied over her 'hotoz' leaves only her eyes uncovered. From under her 'ferace' her dress, her coat and her boots can be seen. She is holding a handkerchief elegantly in her right hand. There is a servant woman near helping to carry her belongings, however her dress is much plainer and the yashmak leaves her eyes uncovered.

French traveller Jean Thevenot who was from a prosperous family, set off on 31st May 1655 from Roma and arrived in Istanbul 2nd December. After having stayed in Istanbul for nine months, he travelled to Bursa, Izmir and the Aegean Islands. He then went to Jerusalem. He wanted only to see these mysterious eastern countries and learn new things. He has no political or commercial aims. In his travel book his comments about women,

he differs in some of his observations from Du Loir who had been in Istanbul in 1638, and makes some additions. "Women wear 'feraces' like men when they go out. The sleeves are so long that their fingers can not be seen. They always hold one edge of their 'ferace' to keep it closed. Their shoes are like those of the men'. When they go out they put on a gilded hat. This hat is high and it is wide at the top. When they are walking on the street they cover their eyes with a veil. Another long veil begins under the eyes covering their nose and mouth. It is not polite to go out with uncovered hands so they wear sleeves that cover them.

The traveller Cornelious De Bruyn (Coneille Le Bruyn) from Netherlands, who was in Istanbul in 1678, described the dress of the women: "

Besides the 'ferace', when they go out, women also wear something that is nicer to look at, called a "kirkie". However in winter they wear a felt or fur jacket or coat instead. It is tight and has narrow sleeves lead to the wrists. Rich women wear this lined with black linings made of sable fur. This costs 300-400 eku. In a sales book of 1640 it is written that the head of a sable (best quality) costs 12000, the lowest quality costs 4000, a sable skin (best quality) costs 11000 and the lowest quality costs 4000 akce.

In the Silvestra album dated 1680 denoted on the cover as having been presented by the Duke of Bourgogne, there is a depiction of a young Turkish woman in profile who is wearing a 'hotoz. She has a tasselled 'yasmak' very like those seen in the 16th. Century. It is tied over her 'hotoz', and she has left only her eyes uncovered. She shows her inner dress by opening her mantle which is closely buttoned down the front. . She wears high heeled boots.

The French traveller Francois Aubry de La Motraye who set off from Paris in 1696 and travelled for 26 years, came to Istanbul in 1689. In his book of travels in two volumes he writes that woman in Istanbul covered themselves from head to toe when they went out, wearing very long 'feraces' made of woollen cloth and he added that these are so long that they cover the fingers. However when the woman who is covered like that outside, takes off her 'ferace', all the beauty of her dress is seen.

Local written and illustrated evidence confirms these writings and drawings of the travellers. In the document TSMK.H 2132/4 a description of a woman of the Capitol City is a good example of the dress of prosperous woman who lived in the city during the 17th. Century. From under the long sleeved full chemise of rough pleated muslin that is floor length, pink baggy trousers can be seen. Over this chemise there is a dark red waistcoat open at the front made of 'seraser', a kind of cloth, thickly embroidered in with a large leaf design. The street garment of the woman who lives in the capitol, is a green dress with sleeves to the elbow, and is fastened down the front with buttons and loops to hip level. An ornamented knife sheath and a purse are hanging down from an orange belt which has a buckle adorned with precious stones. She is wearing a dark yellow cloak tied around her chest that hangs down past her hips. This cloak is a kind of street garment called in some sources as a 'kapaniche'. It is understood from her yellow shoes that she is a Muslim. The 'hotoz' which is narrow at the bottom and wider at the top is peculiar to the 17th. Century, and is the same as was described by Thevenot. A long tasselled cloth hanging down from the 'hotoz' and covering the nape of the woman neck is red and has black tulip design on it. There is a similar 'hotoz' in Topkapi Palace Museum.

In a book of the price controls, written in 1640, it is mentioned that 'ferace' are made of woollen cloth, and women's caftans are of tweed. The women's 'ferace' which is made from 287 cm of cloth, being 161.5 cm in length, 59.5 at the waist, and 272 cm the skirt hem, costs 1450 Akçe. The one which is 153 cm in length costs 1380 Akçe, and one of 144.5 length costs 1310 Akçe. Another, 136cm long costs 1240 Akçe. The 'karkashone' woollen cloth, which has 7 colours, one that has 59.5 cm waist, 272 cm for skirt and 16.5 cm for length costs 930 Akçe. And the one with the length of 153 cm costs 895 Akçe, the one with the length of 144.5 costs 860 Akçe and the one with the length of 136 cm cost 820 Akçe.

House Dress

In the 17th. Century the housedress of the women had many special traditions. Rich women preferred ornamented and

ostentatious dress. This is understood from paintings by local and foreign artists and also from written sources. There is information about Muslim and Non-Muslim women's apparel in the Estate Accounting books of The Edirne Military Inheritance Documents of 1545-1659. In a document which is dated January 1605, it is written that the bequest of Meryam Hatun, the daughter of the Financial Director Mustafa Efendi, and who was also the wife of Sergeant Pervis, included: a gold belt studded with jewels, silver shoes, a gold mohair cap. A silk girdle, an ermine edged red satin 'nimtane'(a short chemise), and a rabbit skin edged 'nimtane'. The bequest of Mustafa Aga's daughter Fatma Hatun who died in 1636 included; a purple 'ferace' made of woollen cloth, a red waistcoat, a white taffeta waistcoat, sashes ornamented with gold, another sash decorated with pearls, a purple gown, a gown from Damascus, a red satin gown, a blue satin gown with pearls and silver buttons, a gold head dress plume, a golden cover for the nape of the neck, and a sash worked with pearls. These objects prove that women gave great importance to dress and jewellery.

In 1615, the Italian writer and traveller Pietra della Valle sent a letter to his friend in Italy. In this letter he wrote that the women adorned themselves with ostentatious jewellery. He added that there were never any garments that were not decorated with gold buttons, gold pins or jewels. The writer Flaman tells of scene that he had witnessed when a Turkish artist was painting a picture of a woman wearing Turkish dress. "The women's dress was plain and she was wearing no jewellery. This is a summerhouse dress that I have seen several times when I looked through a window. It is a kind of white chemise, which is of very loosely woven transparent cloth, full and long it has sleeves that change in fullness and decoration according to fashion. Beneath this light coloured garment there are pantalets from waist the ankles, and she wears stockings of a firm multi-coloured weave. They also wear a waist length blue satin inner shirt which has a lining of thick cotton. This is buttoned in such a way as to conceal the beauty of the breasts, and it is tight at the waist. The tight sleeve covers then upper half of the arm and the inner sleeve falls from inside it to the wrists. They wear garments that are thigh length, which draw attention to the hips. Moreover, Della Valle writes about a beautiful and gentlewoman called

Ismisham who wore plentiful jewellery, and she wore a long outer dress made of the thinnest 'kemha' which is a silk cloth woven with metal threads. He goes on to give more details of this top garment; the sleeves of the inside shirt are as long as those of the outer garment, but can be pulled out and folded over the top sleeve at the wrist.

In the Mundy Album of 1618 in The British Museum as well as examples of a variety of flowers and plants made in a collage technique, there are also depictions of men and women in various costumes. There is a woman in the description called 'Hatuncuk' (Little Woman). In this album which is important as a document describing the dress of Ottoman women in 17th Century, this woman is holding a wineglass and she has yellow shoes from which we understand she is a Moslem. She has covered her high silver 'hotoz' (tantura) with a hand painted square scarf (yemini) and then tied it under her chin. She also has a blue 'kasbasti' a band that goes round the forehead. She is wearing a gauze inner chemise over her white baggy trousers ('shalvar'). Over this chemise she has an outer garment which has a blue leaf designs over silver. This garment reaches to her hips and has long sleeves. This dress, which has golden buttons, is longer than her shirt. The lining, which has black stripes on green, appears to be worn and frayed. The pointed ends of the sleeves that cover the upper half of the arms were very fashionable at that time. Over this she wears a dark blue short jacket without sleeves. She had tied her white silken waist sash in front and she holds a handkerchief of the same cloth in her hand. In the description of a woman going to Turkish Bath in the album of Teachner there is also a similar handkerchief in that woman's hand.) In the same album there is another example of a young woman's housedress. She is wearing blue baggy trousers with a black medallion design and white slippers. She has no inner shirt. Her red dress is seen through the front opening of her brown upper garment. It is also apparent that she is wearing yet another under dress of silver with dark blue medallions, as this can be seen under the sleeves that reach to her elbows. Her upper garment is light brown and has a thin collar. The front edges are ornamented and buttoned, and the belt which looks as if it is made of gold hangs down from her waist. She had tied a dark blue 'kasbasti' worked with gold on the edges of her

'tantura' . Her side locks of hair can be seen near her cheeks. She has wrapped her white 'yemeni' around her left shoulder and holds the end of it in her right hand. The representation of this woman is surrounded with stuck on jonquils, which denote that she is a noble lady.

We now take information about housedress of 17th Century from the Frenchman Du Loir who was in Istanbul in 1639. " All women wear under garments down to the under their chemises. As do the men. These are according to the season of velvet, wool, embroidered satin or of a thin clothe. They always wear a little cotton shirt called 'giupon' with the housedress. Richer women wear another shirt that is a speciality of Iran. All women wear a fitted jacket over this 'giupon'. Over this they wear a tight belt which is dropped below the stomach at the front to show off the figure. . This belt is adorned with silver, gold and jewels. The jacket is buttoned to the neck with buttons ornamented like the belt. It is loose fitting at the breast. They have daggers at their belts".

A description of the dress of a young woman can be seen in Topkapi Palace Museum (TSMK H.21350) belonging to the 17th Century. The inner shirt is without a collar and has very wide sleeves. Like the one described by Du Loir in his book of travels, the upper coat is without sleeves and has a V shaped collar, and has golden buttons. Her baggy trousers and slippers are seen below her shirt. Her belt is adorned with gold bosses is the most attractive part of her dress. She has tied it in an original way. Her headdress, which was popular in the beginning of that century, has a 'sorguch' , (a decorated pin) and is narrow at the top.

The information about the housedress in the book of Jean Thevenot who lived in 1655 is nearly same as that of Du Loir, who was in Istanbul in 1639. " Women wear under garments over their naked skin. These pantalets reach to the ankles. They are of velvet, wool, satin or brocade according to the season. They then wear a shirt and over that they have another little quilted shirt, called a 'giupon' and again over hat they have a 'doliman' (another type of overdress). They have belts that are adorned with silver or golden disks, and little daggers hang down from these belts. They have red woollen headdresses to cover

their heads at home. These are like our night-caps but they are very long, and are edged with pearls. These caps completely cover their ears and are secured with a handkerchief made of a thin cloth which is adorned with silken flower embroidery."

In the travel book by Dutchman Corneille le Bruyn who was in Turkey in 1678 there are details about women's headdresses. He mentions that of the 210 prints all but eight of them he did himself "at risk of my life". He also made the prints of the headdresses that he described. Unlike other travellers, he wrote about women living in Izmir. He says that women wear 'shalvar' as did as men. The noble and rich women wore belts adorned with jewels and silver or golden brooches. He found hair styles of the women interesting. He describes the headdresses that he has depicted. "The women have a free and magnificent style in the way of they adorn themselves. Their 'tarpous' headdresses are tied to their heads with many embroidered scarves of different colours. Between these scarves are many jewels, the value of which change in accordance to the wealth of the woman. To this they add many flowers by way of extra decoration. This is and made in such a way as to not be spoilt if taken on and off for many days. They can change the design of it at will, spending much time over it. Sometimes they find that wearing this 'hotoz' annoys them, because it is very heavy. The white dress that they wear out of doors is edged with braids of gold when worn by noble women. In winter they wear furs over this dress."

The French traveller La Motraye who was in Istanbul in 1699 writes that women are t with gold and jewels even in their homes. As they take off their 'ferace', their bright and beautiful dresses are disclosed. The pearls and jewels on their belts, bracelets, necklaces are almost as beautiful as their ornamented dresses. At the request of The French Ambassador Marquis de Ferrid, Rreccueil de Cent Estampes depicted people who lived in Istanbul between 1707-1708, in an album known as 'Recueil de Cent Estampes Representat Differentes Nations du Levant.' In it the only picture executed by the artist La Matraye copied Vanmour from the book of travels. It was published in 1727. The print that was made by the artist William Hogarth, shows women in the harem . In another print, Vanmour has described an Armenian bride, and a Greek bride, a girl from the island of

Naksos, The Princess of Eflak, and some Greek women. These figures are brought together in front of an example of architecture and give the impression of a wedding group.

In the 17th century, artists who called themselves 'Bazaar Artists' began a tradition of depicting the lower classes. And this became very popular in Istanbul. They had shops in the bazaar and they painted anything that people wanted. The albums, which were made by these professional artists, are in different museums around the world because the customers were generally foreign. Women, guards, and workers living in The Seraglio were depicted in some albums. To the foreigner The Ottoman Empire was a mysterious place. There are explanations in French or in Italian at the bottom of these pictures to draw the attention of a possible purchaser. The album in IDMK Registration no; 2380 from the years 1645-1650 was also made by these artists. It was painted in watercolours and gold and silver paint. There are no explanations on the cover or first page of this album of 125 pictures. The pictures are framed with a thin black line. Above the pictures there are one or two lines of writing, and below a word or two in Italian. Some of them have also a word or two in Ottoman. There are 19 descriptions of women in this album that was given to IDMK in 1952. The hats and dresses of eleven women musicians playing instruments are similar to the one in an album of 1688 which is in The Paris Bibliotheque Nationale Cabinet des Estampes N.Od. 6, that shows Fazil Heyet saz players. Again, an album by one of the bazaar artists that is in Italy shows gypsy singers, female musicians and a bride with a red veil sitting on the right in the album of the 17th Century and the dresses are much like the ones in the IDMK album. The fact that there are similar dresses in these albums which were made by different artists who lived in the same century proves that they were influenced by each other.

Wearing traditional Ottoman dress 'The Young Woman from Istanbul' is in an album that is in the Laurenziana Library in Florence. The pointed ends of the sleeves of her red dress which has a stand up collar and shows the fashion of the time. The sleeves of her of her inner dress that are blue show through sleeves of the coat below her skirts, her 'shalvar' can be seen.

Around the waist of her top dress which is unbuttoned over the breast there is a belt decorated with bosses which has an ornamented knife sheath hanging from it, The way that her hair is covered is very different from the other headdresses of the time. The end of a black band tied around her forehead falls down to her hips. The woman is holding a flower in her hand, and she has tufts of hair escaping from her headband.

The legend of Faruk and Huma in IUK T 1975 was written by Sherif in the period of Sultan Mehmed 111. Comprising of 224 hand printed pages, many scenes of council meetings can be seen in the miniatures. There are young couples and female slaves called 'cariye' serving and trying to amuse them. Beside their dress it also shows the musical instruments and the kitchenware of the 17th century. The dresses of women include shirts in different colours with no collars and with short sleeves; inner dresses can be seen through the sleeves, also head dresses and various belts. These belts are like the one decorated with golden bosses in "The Young Woman" TSMK H 2135. The 'yemeni' and 'kashbasti' hanging down from their head dresses are the same for every woman in the composition. This imparts information about the way of covering hair at that time.

Dress of Palace Women



The dress of women in the Seraglio was as ostentatious and magnificent in 17th century as it always had been. In a picture that was painted by an artist from a northern country, there is a woman holding a rose in her hand wearing a day dress. She is worn a long transparent chemise with a deep V neck and with loose sleeves over her white silken shalvar which is fairly tight. . Her red quilted cotton coat with sleeves to the elbows, is fastened with ornamented buttons and it is long enough to cover her hip. She has a headdress of a type that was in fashion in the first half of the 17th Century made of patterned 'seraser'. She wears a gold belt at the waist, and on her head a gold and jewel embellished black plume. She has rings on both of her little fingers, earrings, and three gold chains

round her neck. All of which show that women who lived in the Seraglio were interested in jewels. On her bare feet she is wearing high wooden shoes that could be used in the house or in the garden, and she reflects the fashions of women between 1610-1645.

In a picture by La Chapelle a Turkish princess is in front of a mosque and in the background is an Istanbul scene of the Bosphorous and many sailing vessels. The princess is wearing light soleless boots ('mest') and a shalvar made of patterned cloth. The loose sleeves of her long transparent chemise, which is buttoned to the waist is seen beneath the outer garment, which is buttoned to the waist with fabric loops. The knitted belt at her waist has a large ornamented buckle. Her 'hotoz' has scarves wound around it and it is narrow at the bottom, wider at the top. This is a different way of covering hair of the women in The Seraglio. There is an oil painting called 'A Woman from the East' in Pokrajinski Museum in Ptuj (Slovenia) This painting was inspired one of of La Chapelle's illustrations. The headdress is the same. Her jewels and her dress are as magnificent as a Sultana would have worn. All the other eastern women in other pictures in the same museum are Sultanas, whom foreign artists have seen in travel books enriched to make them so much that they became Sultanas of the Imagination.

Another description by La Chapelle is a young women that the text under the picture tells us is Souveraine d'Athenes. Our attention is drawn to her velvet caftan which is lined with fur and her plumed "sorguch" (large decorated hat pin).The artist knew that Greek women considered dress and jewels very important. Using his imagination. He made a very elegant picture. This woman wears a dress similar to the one of the woman from the seraglio who was described in the preceding description. She wears slippers adorned with gems and 'nalin' that is like bath pattens.

There is a picture in Venice at the Museo Correr by a Turkish 'Artist of the Bazaar' which depicts Sultan Mehmet 1V entering the harem, to see his favorites, and the women welcoming him. The whole album tells of events which happened in the reign of Sultan Mehmet 1V (1648-1687). The above mentioned picture

called ' Sultan Mehmet Enters the Harem and is Welcomed by the Women'. There are six women women musicians and favorites near the arched door that the Sultan has not yet gone through. In another part there are three men, who are palace officials and a black eunuch. The tops of trees behind the roof are seen and branches can be seen through the curtains of the windows. The womens' dresses in harem have the characteristics of that period. While five of the women's headdresses are same, the sixth woman playing a saz in the second row has a different type of head gear. They wear bright belts most probably made of gold. They have yellow shoes to notify that they are Muslim.

Corneille Le Bruyn says that he had found several pictures of women in The Sultan's Seraglio which he presents in his travel book and adds "Apart from the hat made of fur or felt, there are a big, round 'platiin' similar to those worn by Jewish women. This hat is raised over the forehead and it has a feather on each side. Huge bunches of black feathers at ear level hang down to the on to chest. Some of these hats have tassels ('tarpush') on the ends of the ties as was mentioned before. All kinds of jewels can be attached to these hats. Nosegays of gold flowers are made only to adorn these hats. In the middle of every bunch of flowers there are gems. Women who wear real carnations and other natural flowers are encountered."

There are two hand painted fabrics 'yazma' in Paris Bibliotheque Nationale Cabinet des Estampes. The one registerd N. Od. 6 entitled "The Sultan Being Presented with Coffee in His Apartments" The Sultan is sitting opposite the women servants called "cariye" one of whom is kneeling to offer him coffee and others cooling him with a fan called a 'yelpaze'. He leans back against a cushion of the divan and a black eunuch 'harem agas' is standing near him. One of the women servants is kneeling down and offering the sultan a coffee cup called a 'fincan' from a round tray. Three more servants are standing by. The dresses of three girls are similar to each other except the colours. Their headdresses are the kind of the seen in the second half of the 17th Century. The headdress is same as the womens' playing instruments in the description of the welcome given to Sultan Mehmet 1V to the harem from Venice which was mentioned

above. They are wearing dresses of which the necks are cut so deep that they do not conceal the breasts. The edges of the inner dress show from under the outer garment. The length is to the waist and it is open at the front. The Sultana has a red caftan lined with black fur over her shoulders. Her headdress is of a very different style from the ones normally seen in this period. There is another cloth; Registration N. Od. 7 This is called 'Haseki Sultana'. i.e. 'The Favorite Wife of the Sultan'. Regarding dress this cloth is not very different from the first. It is very like Le Bruyn's descriptions. Henna on the Sultana's fingers and an amulet around her neck must have been added as elements peculiar to The East. The Sultana sits cross-legged, with the white skirts of her chemise around her. She has one hand on her knee in a dominant manner. Her dress has pattern of flowers on a dark blue fabric and the buttons are open at the front. Her caftan is lined with fur and is worn on the shoulders, and of a yellow pattern on red fabric. Bracelets are around her wrists and she has a belt that matches these. The headdress and dress of the slave who is standing opposite the Sultana and cooling her with a fan called a 'yelpaze' , are same as the slaves hat and dress in the preceding picture. There are flowers in various vases that reflect Turkish decoration. These are on a mother-of -pearl tripod. The patterns of the cushions and pillows reflect that period's fabric design.

The information, that illustrated and written sources give us, prove that the women from the harem aive importance to jewels and decorative objects. These women were faithfully using such things as embroidered fabrics, mirrors being imported, from Italy even during the Ottoman-Vienna wars. Non-Muslim merchants still carried out their orders and continued in this trade.

The Album of Ahmet 1, was prepared by Kalender Pasha. There are miniatures describing daily life, and social life in that period. The album dated 1603-1618 and registered TSMK B. 408. There is a miniature called "Wedding in the Harem Garden" In the garden there are many spring flowers amongst cypress trees, near a pool are the bride and groom and servants. In the centre of the composition there are two ducks swimming the pool. On the left side of the pool there are women playing tambourines and lutes, and two young girls preparing to dance with finger cymbals in their hands. At the right side of the pool there are a

couple sitting side by side on a sofa, and slaves are serving to them. The dresses of the women are of different colours but the same style. The dresses have no collar and are open at the front, their cuffs are short and are floor length, and some of them are patterned. From the sleeves of all of them a different inner sleeve appears, of different colours. The women's garment in the harem with their belts and conical hats give information about the dress of women in the harem during the first years of the 17th Century. On another page of the same album there is description of: "Seraglio Women in the Garden". These women of the harem are wearing garments that are same as those in the preceding miniature, but their hats are less pointed. A slave is massaging her ladies feet who is sitting on a sofa in the garden and reading a book. There are no features that show a difference between the slaves and their ladies fabrics. In an album which was the production of 17th Century Turkish 'Bazaar Artists' registered IDMK 2380, is of 109 leaves. There is a description in of "Head Haseki (Favorite) Woman" with a script in Italian. This woman is wearing a transparent chemise with a V neck and a long, green dress with a gold gilded cloud pattern. She wears slung on her shoulders a 'seraser' caftan, which is lined with fur in black and brown stripes. There is a dagger in a decorated sheath that she has inserted into the golden belt round her waist. She has a round fan in her hand called a 'yelpaze', which foreign travellers often mention. High on the head is the 'hotoz' with a plumed pin, which is like the headdresses in Corneille Le Bruyn's pictures and in Turkish artists' albums. It is understood that this kind of headdress was widespread in that century. The bride, the Haseki Woman and the dancing girl wear this kind of 'hotoz'. This proves that women showed an interest in fashion whichever social status they belonged to.

The dress and headdress that belonged to Hanzade Sultan daughter of Sultan Ahmet 1 (1603-1617), is one of the few women's dresses which have come down to us today. The dress is made of pale rose 'gezi' silk fabric. Its bodice is very tight and open at the front with no collar and short sleeves, and it is 147cm. long. It is constructed like the men's garment called an "entari" and it is tightly fitting above the waist. Silk tread "ibrishim" buttons fasten with loops up to the waist. The dress

has pockets at the side seams; its wide skirt has two extra panels at the back and front known as 'pesh'. This is a kind of gusset sewn to the skirts to make it fuller. The edges of the round collar, sleeves, skirt and inside edges of the open front are bound with with apricot 'canfes' fabric. The inner part of dress is covered with a thin white cotton fabric lining. The dress had been labeled to the effect that the dress belonged to Hanzade Sultan. The headdress used in the first part of 17th Century was sewn from 'seraser'. Its length is 24.2 cm. its top diameter is 8 cm and bottom diameter is 19cm. It is shaped is like the headdresses in the descriptions of European artist's and in Ottoman miniatures. There is a label on it to show that the headdress belonged to Hanzade Sultana and was ordered especially for her.

Another dress and hat, that belonged to Kaya Ismihan Sultana daughter of 1V (1623-1640), is also an example of womens garments of the mid 17th. Century. The dress was sewn from yellow-beige silk fabric that has a flower bouquet pattern of damask on a satin background. It has a small upright collar, open at front and has short sleeves and it is 119.3cm. in length. There are pockets in both side seams of the skirt has the extra side gussets 'pesh'. The skirt edges and sleeves are lined with silk 'canfes' in the same colour. It has eight large pear shaped silk covered buttons to the waist. There is another dress similar to this one, that belonged to the sister of Kaya Ismihan Sultana, Rukiye Sultana, in TSM collection. Headdress like the one of Kaya Ismihan Sultan can be found in almost all the foreign and local descriptions at second half of the century. It is tight on the lower edge and wide at the top. It was made from a dark chestnut coloured fabric with a plant pattern on a gold 'seraser' background. It is 18cm. in length, the top being 20cm. in diameter, and the bottom 10.5 cm. The is lined with with thin blue cotton lining. It was sized with a special glue to keep its shape.

Dress of Non-Muslim Women

The laws concerning the dress of non-Muslims in Istanbul continued in 17th century. A firman was send to Istanbul's judges from the Palace in 1630. It this it was written that non-Muslim women must not wear garments that were like those of Muslim women. they must not were high 'arakiyye' shoes or

'parush chuha' broadcloth. La Chapelle came to Istanbul in 1641. He depicted Jewish, Greek and Armenian women in pictures with scenes of Istanbul and the Bosphorus in the background. In the engravings known as 'The Greek Woman', 'The Jewish Woman' and 'The Greek Woman in Mourning' the distinguishing features are collars of the 'ferace' (a long full coat) and the shape of the head coverings. The Greek woman's dress, over her baggy trousers, is buttoned with silk buttons to the waist and open below that. From the décolleté neck of the over dress a pleated collar shows. Only one of the four big buttons, widely spaced on the front, is fastened. A wide belt with a buckle and decorated with gems is tied below the buttons. A band around the forehead called 'kashbasti' is tied in an elegant form. A kind of cap called a "tepelik" sits on this band. A crest with gems is on one side. Four rows of pearls hang down from the other side of tepelik. The pearls that are at the end of each string, match the pearls of the earrings. This headdress is carefully adorned to attract attention. It also verifies foreign travellers observations about the Greek womens' love of dressing..

The Armenian woman's garment is different from the other non-Muslim womens' dress which were described by La Chapelle. The legs of her baggy trousers are wide and are tucked into her short boots. She wears a chemise which was woven from raw silk crepe called 'bürümcük ' (rough pleated) over her trousers. Her chemise has long cuffs and reaches her knees. On top of this is a waistcoat to the navel and a jacket with short sleeves that is longer than the waistcoat. The jacket has buttons at the front and its edges, vents and cuffs are edged with fur. A transparent yashmak, which was first wound around a little cap little tepelik, then falls to the waist. This Armenian woman with elegant clothes posed in front of a scene showing both sides of the Bosphorus. There is another Armenian woman in the Mundy Album dated 1618 in The British Museum. She wears a blue dress that shows through the front opening of her dark coloured 'ferace' that buttons to the waist. She is in traditional Ottoman clothes with her white shalwar. She has a belt made from thick fabric, round her waist. She has a little 'hotoz' cap formed like a fez which was widespread in the 17th Century. The traveller from Holland Corneille Le Bruyn gave information belonging to the second half of the 17th Century. He writes that Jewish women's

garments in Izmir were similar to the womens' garments Greek Islands, but their veils were different. And he continues: " They put on a kind of disc that is made from tin or copper, on top of the 'hotoz'. It is covered with white satin but it can also have a gold or silver brooch attached to it. . Their hair put in a little bag made from colourful silk fabric and hung behind the head. There wear many pearls, around their necks which are so tight that give the impression of a solid block of pearls. Turkish , Greek and Jewish women have to veil when they go out, to conform to the countries laws. They wear a white mantle over whole body. There is a crepe or black tulle covering their faces. If necessary, they can lift this tulle. The tulle is transparent, so it does not obstruct the sight. When the weather is wet they wear yellow boots like men, but usually they wear shoes called 'papuch' or backless slippers. French and European people can wear whatever they want and they follow their own countries fashion. Although Jewish peoples' garments are the same as the Turkish, their hair styles are different. They often wear violet and their mantles have to be black."

There is a registration dated 23rd December 1651 in an estate notebook that belongs to Edirne Military Kassam. There is some information about a deceased non-Muslim woman's estate whose name was Müshkani: "Among the dead ' a red satin 'kürdiye' that is covered with squirrel fur, a brown 'kürdiye' with marten fur; red, yellow, green, 'keshan' caftans,a white 'kemha' caftan, a mantle of 'arakiyye' fabric, a gilded silver thread material called 'sirma çaprast', a hair ornament of pearls, a silver chain belt, and a tiara.



Muslim Woman's Ceremony Dress

With no doubt , the wedding- dress has been the most important ceremony dress of a woman in any religion. Even the shape, cloth, colour chosen for the wedding dress has changed, the target has never changed : a dress which shows a woman beginning a new life , is different than the others.

So that , the wedding - dress and the veils of brides have changed in time being. According to the information we

took from visual media, although the wedding- dresses has not had a special model until the half of the 19th century , red, has been the colour chosen for the veil which covers the bride's face.

The first pictures of bride , that have been able to reach to our time , belong to 17th century. The first one is description of a bride in the dress album, page 112. Bride's outfit has displayed at the rope stretched on the wall behind the bride, sit cross-legged on a blue cushion. Bride plume has placed to two sides of the hat called "terpus", which is like a fez. Its bottom part has shaped as a tight disk and its top part is wide. And we have already met this in the recent descriptions. The veil that is tied at the top of the terpus, has two parts. The top part is short as to cover the face and the second part lies down to the floor. It is written on the picture in Italian that "Bride's face is covered by veil and the groom takes it off when he first comes in the room.

The second sample that belongs to the 17th century is the Bride Ceremony, and this sample is in the Taeschner Album. In the Bride Ceremony there are six women in usual dresses without any black veil, five boys and the bride in the veil that covers her face and the whole body. Bride's veil is five - leaved budded ornamented. And its head part is high and rectangle-shaped.

The bride descriptions in the foreign sources in the 18th and 19th centuries are similar with each other. The wedding-dress in the dress album of Dalvimart's, is like a bag on the bride, and is made of the cloth that is gilded ornamented on red. The head part is pictured with a jewelled crown and from the middle jewelled tin, gilded bride wires are put on up to the floor. In Petropalos album, Bride's dress is similar with the recent one generally; but its colour is pink and the bride wires lie down to her navel. In such a dress , bride has no chance to see around and a woman with a black veil covering her face accompanies and directs the bride by holding her arm.

A French artist Castellan, has described the Turkish Bath of the bride's which still protects its traditionality in Anatolia in our time. In Ottoman architectural, in Turkish bath which has been drawn carefully, women whose bottom part is covered by aprons and a young woman with accompanying the bride has been

described. Bride's dress is an exact copy of the one in Dalvimart's drawing; there are high pattens on her feet which Ottoman women wear in Turkish bath and in the garden.

Another situation that attracts foreign observers, is the the bride ceremony where the bride is taken to groom's house. In Pietro Bertelli's album , 1591, the horses legs that the bride is sitting on, appears below the ornament and covered mosquito-net; four men are walking by holding the stick on the mosquito-net. The figure of the seraglio woman on the horse appears only when the mosquito-net is taken off in Nicolay's description. To make such an experiment for an artist who has never seen the bride in the mosquito-net, shows his power of imagination.

In the Bride Ceremony of Vanmour's description, in an area full of trees, the bride on a horse in the mosquito-net which is made of transparent cloth, in front of her a group carrying a wreath, behind her the women exist. Ladies worn at door mantles in different colours, tied white veils leaving her faces uncovered. The Bride Ceremony description, in La Motroye's book of travels, has the signature of the famous English artist, William Hogarth. In the description of the group in the horse area, there is the wreath carriers and the musicians in the front, woman and man figures behind the mosquito-net. The men on the horses playing javelin, paste sellers and the women walking normally are used to enrich the composition.

Refia Sultan is Mrs. Gülmecal's daughter, Abdulmecid's second wife, who was born in 1842 in Besiktas Palace. Leyla Saz has seen her wedding in 1857. She describes Refia Sultan's dark blue, ornamented with pearl and diamond flowers, furnished with lacework, fastened from round waist, three skirted wedding-dress : "The silken tulle shirt, appearing from the large collar and arms, was furnished with lacework. She had wide gloves. Her shoes were also made of her dress's cloth. Her thin veil was in same colour and ornamentary with the dress. As jewellery, there were a high crown that Sultan Abdülmeçid had it made, necklace, earrings and bracelet. The bride wires were gold gilded. A quite thin white feather instead of a plume. Despite her traditional dress, Refia Sultan's wearing white gloves shows that the western effect starts at the details.

For wedding dress, Ottoman Seraglio has preferred red, the

dynastic colour, and the people of Ottoman have preferred firstly red, than purple, blue as colour. Although the colour of the wedding- dress has changed, the veil has always been red until the middle of 19th century. Naime Sultan, II. Abdulhamid's daughter, born in Dolmabahce Seraglio in 1876, have been the first to disturb the tradition and have worn a white wedding- dress when she married with Mr. Kemalettin, Gazi Osman's son. Ayse Osmanoglu, who had seen this wedding at the age of nine, wrote that a fur, worked with gold thread and diamond, was hanging down from the wedding dress's shoulder. It was a long, four skirted, ornamented with diamond buttons down from the chest. There was a belt with a golden buckle round its waist, and she added that many people complained about her white wedding-dress. After this, brides, at first Sultans have started wearing the wedding dresses that they have them made in their favourite colour and have been the first of the white wedding- dress fashion. In the seraglio collection, there is a wedding-dress and two wedding-dress coats that have the qualities of the ends of 19th century.

The information about the dresses and jewellery that saraglio women wear in 19th century show that the dresses that have the qualities of western style are preferred. Abdulmecid's fourth woman, Mrs. Perestu brings up II. Abdulhamid whose mother has died at an early age. When II. Abdulhamid becomes Sultan, he gives the pride called Mehd-i Ulya-yi Saltanat-i Senniye to Mrs. Perestu who have brought up him with real mother love. II. Abdulhamid's daughter Ayse Osmanoglu describes Mrs. Perestu's ceremony dresses like this: "She has worn four skirted dress, made of heavy cloth on ceremony days, has put on the marks called Hanedan-i a-li Osman, Sefkat and Mecidi, has worn tuft that ornamented with mosquito-net on her hair dyed with henna, has put on the emerald tin called Mother Crown and has put the emerald tins made of same pieces on two sides. There have been a girdle around her waist that is made of same cloth or shawl. She has worn white buck-skin shoes. There has been a valuable ruby ring on her right hand's little finger. She has not put on anything else. A jacket worked with thread has been there on this dress, this was called Salta in the seraglio. Despite ceremony, she has worn a one skirted dress made of good quality cloth, a Sulta with same colour on this and her ornamented tuft"

Non-Muslim Woman's Ceremony Dress

The evidence of the ceremony dress of the non-Muslim woman can be seen on the album which is written by Vanmour who had come to Istanbul with the minister of the France , Marquis de Ferrid. With the wedding dress the Greek girl, wearing shirt, shalwar, dress and coat that are the parts of the traditional dress, is sitting on the sofa. The belt and the necklace which consists of chains in different sizes might be the other parts of the ceremony dress. The most interesting thing about the dress is the hat. Two dark tufts near the head attract the attention. Also the gilded threads which comes to her chest over from her head, does not cover the girls face sitting silently.

The Armenian girl taken to the church for the wedding ceremony, is in the bag shaped dress that seen in the Muslim bride drawings. Bride's dress covers her face and all her body. There is a necklace round her neck and a belt round her waist. Her hat is disk-shaped like Greek bride's. The women's faces that will take the bride to the church, are covered with white veils like they were in other descriptions seen on Muslim women's faces.

With her ceremony dress the Jewish woman is figured sitting in a closed area like the Greek bride. Her shirt is worked with gold-thread she is sitting with a conceited manner with her dress, her big buckled belt and her sable gown on her shoulder. Under the disk-shaped hat her veil worked with thread attracts attention. The common quality of the ceremony dresses' of three non-Muslim women is the disk-shoped hats.