

# *Authenticity in Historical Clothing: 16<sup>th</sup> C. Ottoman Turkey Class I: Research*

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One of the first steps to creating more authentic clothing is to start doing research. You do not have to become completely authentic in your costume all at once. Think of authenticity as a journey—your clothing becomes more authentic one step at a time. Perhaps you start with upgrading your textiles for your gomlek and salwar, or you use historical techniques to create a garment. The more research you do, the more you will know about creating authentic clothing. There are many extant imperial garments from this period housed primarily in the Topkapi Saray Museum, thanks to the custom of saving imperial garments in the treasury after the death of the sultan.

## **Finding Sources:**

You're ready to begin your research, but where do you even begin? Although research can be intimidating at first, with a little practice and patience, you will soon be zooming through the internet, the library or dashing about a museum. The best sources are actual extant garments—actual clothing that was made and worn during the Ottoman Empire. The next best sources are analyses of extant garments by subject matter experts followed by contemporary art.

## **Web:**

The World Wide Web is a great resource. Museum catalogs, library catalogs and art catalogs are online and searchable. There are many European reenactment groups and other SCA members that have great websites. Use these websites for background information and as jumping off points. If the websites list bibliographies or references, scan the lists to see if there are sources that are new to you. Try to read those books and come up with your own opinions. People interpret information differently—do not be afraid to think of your own theories or conclusions.

## **Keywords:**

One of the easiest ways to search the web is using a keyword search. Keyword searches for Renaissance clothing can include the specific type of clothing, for example: gomlek, salwar, kaftan, caftan, 16<sup>th</sup> century kaftan, Suleyman, Suleyman the Magnificent, Selim....

For a specific search, use quotation marks around your text phrase. For example, "Ottoman kaftan" would only return searches on Ottoman kaftans. You can also use a combination search like: 16<sup>th</sup> century "Ottoman kaftan".

### ***Museums:***

Many of us do not have the means to fly off to Istanbul or Bursa for a research project. Fortunately, many museums work to create traveling exhibitions. Keep tabs on local museums to see if any traveling exhibitions excite you. Others museums have digitized their collections, so you search and view artifacts online. Several American and European museums have Ottoman artifacts. Some museums with online catalogs/exhibitions are the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Louvre, the Hermitage, the Smithsonian, and there are many others. Also, museum exhibitions often print books or allow others to write books about their collections, artifacts or are associated with an exhibit, which are usually very good and reputable resources.

### ***Libraries:***

Most of us have access to a public library and many have access to a college or university library. These are institutions that are supported by your taxes, so use them! The days of card catalogs are long gone, and you search for books using an online catalog. The catalog screens are usually very intuitive. If you cannot find what you are looking for or are not sure where to begin, librarians are very helpful. Libraries also have computers where you search the web.

Even with keyword searches, sometimes it is hard to tell exactly what book you are searching for. Fortunately, similar books are grouped together. So, I use the catalog as a guideline, if I do not know exactly what I am looking for. Find a promising book through the catalog and look through the books surrounding it on the shelves. I have found some of my best resources this way.

One of the joys of our society is that so many of our populace are really interested in research and learning. Many members have highly specialized personal libraries and are more than happy to share that information. Ask around and see if anyone might have the book you are looking for. If you do find someone who has the book, bring your note-taking gear, because some (understandably) are reluctant to let a \$100+ or rare book out of their home.

### ***Art:***

Researching costume through art can be a bit tricky and requires a costume historian to understand some art history of the period. Sixteenth century Ottoman portraiture was very stylistic compared to the very realistic European court paintings of the same period, yet the colors are bright and vivid.

### ***Books:***

There are many books available on Turkish art and costuming. It is very important to be able to discern well-researched and qualified sources vs. those that make interesting suppositions and leaps. Victorian authors are notorious for trying to make the history fit *their* ideas and values. The more you read, the better you will be at discerning well laid out research to mere supposition.

## **Tracking Your Resources:**

Now that you have started your research, how are you going to keep track of all the great new information? There are several tricks that make note-taking—and reading your notes months later—easier.

### ***Note Taking:***

When you start finding your nuggets of information: write them down! At a minimum, paraphrase the information (or if you can't think of a better wording, jot your notes as a quotation), note the author, title, copyright date and page number. If you find something interesting—but it is not related to your current research, make a note of it. You would be surprised how quickly information can hide when you are desperately looking for that one thing you “think you remember seeing”.

### ***Note Compilation:***

After you have taken your notes, compile them by subject or category. This can involve retyping your notes loosely into a document, or writing them into a loose structure onto a piece of paper. As you are compiling your notes, this is a good time to double check them to make sure they are legible and descriptive enough to be usable. Verify you have reference information for your notes.

### ***References or Giving Credit Where Credit is Due:***

General information that everyone knows does not have to be referenced, but specific information should be referenced. For example, the fact the Henry VIII was the King of England in the 16<sup>th</sup> century is common knowledge, that he hypothetically had eighty pairs of shoes, including football shoes, should be referenced. The formats are different, but the information is essentially the same: author, title, copyright date, publisher and publisher location.

## **Documentation:**

Now that you have spent so much time researching your clothing, documenting your research can have surprising benefits. If you document your project, you can look back a year or more later and remember some of the finer points of the project. Plus, it is amazing how quickly documentation can turn into a class handout—so you can teach your findings to others!

### ***Creating a cohesive document:***

#### **Headings/Subheadings:**

Headings and subheadings organize your work. You can create a living outline which will become the structure of your document. Think of the major topics you would like to discuss. If you researching a garment, topics could include textiles, design, construction techniques and decoration.

### **Filling in the Details:**

After you have set up your headings, start filling in the details. As you start writing you can edit your heading/subheadings or come up with new ones. Add pictures, tables or other media that can help explain your findings.

### ***Bibliographies/References:***

Reference pages and bibliographies both keep track of what sources you used in compiling your research. There are several different formats for making bibliographies and references like MLA and APA. A bibliography is a list of every source you read during your research for that project. A reference list contains the sources that you directly quoted or cited during the text of your document.

MLA Style: <http://www.liu.edu/cwis/CWP/library/workshop/citmla.htm>

APA Style: <http://www.apastyle.org/>

### **Citations:**

Some methods use footnotes and other use a reference like (de Brétigny, 2006) to directly mark quotes or paragraphs. When you paraphrase a paragraph, you can use one footnote or citation for the whole paragraph. If you quote text, each quote should be cited, and the citation should include a page number.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> de Brétigny, *Authenticity in Historical Clothing: Renaissance Europe. Class I: Research*, p. 4.

## Recommended Reading:

### **General:**

Brend, B. (2003). *Perspectives on Persian painting*. London: Routledge Curzon.

Scarce, J. (2003). *Women's costume of the Near and Middle East*. London: Routledge Curzon.

Scott, P. (1993). *The book of silk*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Titley, N. (1983). *Persian miniature painting and its influence on the art of Turkey and India*. London: The British Library.

### **Ottoman Art:**

Atil, E. (1987). *The age of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent*. Washington D.C.: Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art.

Atil, E. (1980). *Turkish art*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Bağcı, S. and Z. Tanindi. (2005) "The Art of the Ottoman Court". In D. Roxburgh (ed.), *Turks: A journey of a thousand years, 600-1600*. London: Royal Academy of the Arts, pp. 262-271.

Raby, J. (ed). (2001). *Ipek, the crescent and the rose: Imperial Ottoman silks and velvets*. London: Azimuth Editions Limited.

Rogers, J. M. (1986). *The Topkapi Saray Museum: costumes, embroideries and other textiles*. London: Thames and Hudson.

*Style and status: Imperial costumes from Ottoman Turkey*. (2005). London: Azimuth Editions Limited and the Smithsonian Institution.

## **Web Resources:**

### ***General:***

Archeological Sewing--<http://heatherrosejones.com/archaeologicalsewing/index.html>

The Atlantian Minister of Arts and Sciences Home Page: <http://www.scalinks.com>

### ***Ottoman Links:***

Dar Anahita. <http://home.earthlink.net/~lilinah/courtyard.html#PersOtto>

The Red Kaganate. <http://www.geocities.com/kaganate/>

### ***Museums:***

The Topkapi Saray Museum-- <http://www.ee.bilkent.edu.tr/~history/topkapi.html>

The Victoria and Albert Museum--<http://www.vam.ac.uk/>

The Louvre--[http://www.louvre.fr/llv/commun/home\\_flash.jsp?bmLocale=en](http://www.louvre.fr/llv/commun/home_flash.jsp?bmLocale=en)

Musée national du Moyen Âge (The Cluny)--<http://www.musee-moyenage.fr/ang/>

The Museum of London--<http://www.molg.org.uk/english/>

The Metropolitan Museum of Art--<http://www.metmuseum.org/>

The Smithsonian Institution—<http://www.smithsonian.org>

- Style and Status Ottoman Imperial Costumes Interactive site--  
<http://www.asia.si.edu/exhibitions/online/styleAndStatus/>