

The Ottomans | Court Life

'The harem was a sacred and private place and entry was not permitted by anyone but the staff.'

In Enderun, there were kiosks and coastal palaces. At the entrance was the Arz Odası (audience hall), where the sultans welcomed ambassadors, viziers and other high-ranking officials. The harem was a sacred and private place and entry was not permitted by anyone but the staff. It was under the control of the sultan's mother, or Valide Sultan. She lived there along with the sultan's children, his favourites, and his concubines (called ikbal and odalisque). Although they all lived in material luxury none of them were allowed to sit next to the sultan or go out of the palace without his permission.



Name:
Topkapı Palace

Dynasty:
Construction began in hegira 9th century / AD 15th century, during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II (his second reign: AH 855–86 / AD 1451–81); the last addition was made under Sultan Abdülmecid I ['Abd al-Majid] (r. AH 1255–77 / AD 1839–61) in hegira 13th century / AD 19th century Ottoman

Details:
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

Justification:
Built to commemorate the re-conquest of Baghdad, this beautiful kiosk has a gorgeous view of the Golden Horn.



Name:
Kaftan

Dynasty:
Second half of hegira 10th / AD 16th century Ottoman

Details:
Topkapı Palace Museum
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

Justification:
This exquisite kaftan belonged to Prince Bayezid, son of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent.



Name:
Kaftan

Dynasty:
Late hegira 10th century / AD 16th century Ottoman

Details:
Victoria and Albert Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:
A kaftan such as this would have been worn by an Ottoman prince.



Name:
Chimney piece

Dynasty:
Hegira 1143 / AD 1730–31 Ottoman

Details:
Victoria and Albert Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:
A tiled fireplace from the study in the palace of the vizier, Fuad Pasha.



Name:
Rosewater bottle

Dynasty:
Hegira last quarter of the 10th century / AD 16th century Ottoman

Details:
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

Justification:
Bottles like this one were used for serving rosewater at gatherings and ceremonies.



Name:
Ewer and basin set

Dynasty:
Hegira 1286 / AD 1870 Ottoman

Details:
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

Justification:
A gilded ewer donated to the tomb of the Queen Mother, Pertevniyal.
