

## Wedding Garments in the Ottoman Empire

Special items of clothing help to mark milestones in life in a way that takes into account their significance. Nowhere is this concept more evident than with traditional wedding attire, specifically the gown the bride wears on her wedding day. The classical wedding dress mirrors popular cultural norms and values, while also retaining a strong measure of tradition reflecting time-honored customs.

Jewish brides in the Ottoman Empire traditionally wore robes, known as *kaftan*, or *entari*, of velvet or silk which were embroidered with silver or gold threads. The name of the flowing robes was *primer vestido*. These dresses were generally decorated with flower patterns, and would match the other fabrics in the bride's trousseau. Oftentimes, after being used, the wedding dress would be donated to the synagogue and tailored so as to be used for the *parohet* curtains, which covered the ark where the Torah scrolls were kept.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jewish brides began to adopt the European custom of wearing white bridal gowns, reflecting the more general trend of westernization taking place.