



# CLOTHING XXVI. CLOTHING AND JEWELRY OF THE TURKMEN

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## CLOTHING

### xxvi. Clothing and jewelry of the Turkmen

Until the 1970s the clothing and jewelry of the Turkmen formed the most elaborate tribal costume still used in Persia. For men it had consisted until the 1920s of a tight-sleeved robe (*dōn*) of striped silk worn over loose white cotton trousers (*balaq*) and a calico shirt (*köyne*), then caught at the waist with a sash (*qušaq*), and worn with a cylindrical black sheepskin hat (*telpek*) over a skullcap (*börk*). Under Persian restrictions on men's clothing (see xi, above) the silk *dōn* was replaced by a Western frock coat or jacket and trousers, worn with a flaring astrakhan *telpek* in Russian army style. Men did not use jewelry except in the mountings of weapons and harness. The silk for the *dōn*, and for women's clothing, was woven locally on pit-treadle looms, still in use among the Göklen in 1349 Š./1970. The *qārma dōn* worn by men over forty years old differed from the *qırmızı dōn* of their juniors in having an additional white stripe. Even with modern rural dress, the feet are wrapped in white woolen puttees (*dolaq*) and shod in tall boots (*ēdik*) for riding or moccasins (*čarıq*) for work on foot. Summer slippers are called *čoqay*. Protection against heat or cold is given by a loose camel's-hair mantle (*čēkmen*) or a long-sleeved



overcoat of lambskin or sheepskin (*ičmek*), turned fleece outward in wet weather. As elsewhere, women retained tribal dress, despite the changes (plate clxiv).

The principal women's garment is a shift (*köyne*), formerly of silk, now replaced by synthetic fibers; a raspberry red was common in the hand-woven material, sometimes with shot effects. The selvage stripe of the narrow cloth (ca. 33 cm) was used to emphasize the cut, in which gussets inserted between the rectangular pattern pieces gave a full garment widening to the bottom. The cuffs and neck opening, deep enough to allow suckling, are still embroidered. The rows of coins sewn on the front earlier in this century had vanished by 1349 Š./1970; by 1353 Š./1974 the cut had become much narrower, with a high waist. The length, to within 20 cm of the heels, allows display of the heavy embroidery reinforcing the cuffs of the drawers (*balaq, julbār*) worn underneath. These are made so that the baggy cotton upper part can be detached, when worn out, from the cuffs, which are made separately as dowry items, some 40 cm deep and tapering sharply toward the ankle. The ornament used to be in two broad rows of contrasting motifs with narrower borders, but lack of time due to education for girls reduced it to one. Shoes, worn on bare feet, have been modernized but formerly had broad toes and wedge heels (*kövüş*). The topcoat (*čabit*) used until recently by the Yomut for formal occasions was of velvet, with short sleeves and a high waist; it was left open at the front, where revers showed as elaborately machined facings. Another type was of red striped silk, with long sleeves and cuffs. The Teke used golden yellow or blue as well with contrasting handworked embroidery. The present headdress for a married woman is a carefully folded paisley headband (*āldarñi*) knotted at the front and draped with a block-printed silk headcloth (*yağlıq*) that can be used as a *yaşmaq* (veil) to show respect for senior men; earlier this was worn under the headband, which was itself formerly knotted at the back with pendant tails. When going out a woman covers the headdress with a large shawl (*čarğat*), once made of silk but now of a floral print with a long macramé fringe. Girls simply wear an embroidered skullcap (*börk, takye*) with the same shift and drawers. The array of embroidery, differing slightly in color range and motifs from the Yomut and Göklerñ to the Teke and Ęrsārñ, is most fully developed on a mantle with vestigial sleeves (*čırpı*), still worn by Teke women, draped by the left armpit from the crown of the tall formal headdress (plate clxv); a version with full sleeves is called *kürte*. The color signifies age and status. The Yomut version, *bürenğek*, was simpler, in green silk set off with red. All had embroidered tendrils around the collar.



This headdress, some 20 cm high, is of silk wrapped around a cylindrical framework of rushes: It was still worn by the Teke in the 1970s (called *sommaq*; cf. Ērsārī *boğmaq* and the earlier Yomut *kasaba*; [plate clxvi](#)) for special occasions, mounted with a curved rectangular plaque of silver (*eğme*) in front or a series of smaller, linked plaques (*öwürme*). Such Teke work is generally fretted, overlaid with parcel gilt within sinuous chased outlines, and set with carnelians; Yomut work is often stronger in contour and embellished instead with small lozenges or lunettes of gilt repoussé. The Teke coat is faced with closely set rows of bossed silver disks (*čapraz*) ending in a large fretted lozenge (*čañña*) as a clasp on each side at hip level. Long, cuff-like silver bracelets (*bilezik/bezelik*) are made of four to eight repeated sections. The face is framed by long temple pendants, triangular (*tenečir*) or pear-shaped (*adamlıq*). Formerly a heavy collar (*buqaw*) masked the throat with interlinking pendants or a single fretted lozenge (*gönjük*); in the 20th century this gave way to a large collar stud (*gulyaqa*), closing the shift. The two braids of a married woman, worn behind the shoulders, may be covered by a set of ladder-like linked plaques (*šac monjuq* or *sačlıq*) or a characteristic heart-shaped pendant (*asıq*) or pendants of various sizes. Amulets can be housed in a tube, often below a triangular figure (*tumar*). Girls' caps are crowned with a domed silver finial (*qupba*) and these of small boys with a rectangular plaque (*doğa, depebent*), while the back of the boy's shirt (*kürte*) is festooned with small talismans—especially those representing a bow and arrow (*oq-yag*), sword, adze, or ax—and disks (*bēzbent*) on the shoulders.

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