

Basic Detail Report



Slipper

Date

1850 - 1900

Medium

Leather, ribbon, thread

Description

Lady's slipper with a flat rounded sole. It is oval-shaped with a pointed toe, a tassel at the front and back, and red ribbon trim round the lip. Decorated with red, green and gold thread, sequins and ribbon. There is a grey silk floss pom-pom on the toe that was originally red. These women's slippers come from the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. The wealthy woman who wore these slippers would have made very few journeys, as public space in the Ottoman Empire was almost exclusively masculine. Women's mobility was severely limited and in the nineteenth century, they were banned from the streets and markets by the Emperor's decree. These slippers represent a life of limited mobility, but great comfort. Wealthy women lived together in groups and had rich lives in the seclusion of the home. These slippers are made of soft velvet, embroidered with intricate floral motifs and embellished with sequins, silver thread and pompoms. It was not considered appropriate for unmarried girls to wear silver and gold, so we can guess these belonged to a married woman. Within the sprawling, diverse Ottoman Empire of the nineteenth century, shoes were used to distinguish ethnicity as well as social class. Imperial edicts defined who could wear what. Purple slippers were designated for Jews, red for Armenians, and yellow for Muslims. But the higher quality yellow leather used for shoes and boots was much coveted, and high status yellow boots were often worn illegally by aspirant members of other faiths. This style of footwear did travel, however, and gained international popularity in the last years of Victoria's reign. French and British women seized upon the fashions in art, architecture and clothing for the 'oriental'. Turkish slippers were recommended for the boudoir, and the colours and patterns of Constantinople were used in interiors.

Dimensions

Object/Work: 250 x 70 x 80 mm