

# The Ottomans | Art in the Spaces of Prayer

'According to tradition the depiction of living beings in a mosque is not appropriate.'

Mosques as sacred places of Islam maintained their characteristics throughout the centuries both in terms of their architecture and in the various elements of the interior architectural space and decoration. The 'God' in Islam has no concrete form and, according to tradition, the depiction of living beings in a mosque is not appropriate. When the practice of prayer is added to these concepts, the Qur'an, which consists of the words of God and his teachings, inspired the artist in the decoration and furnishings for the interior of the sacred place.



**Name:**  
Süleymaniye Complex

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 957–64 / AD 1550–7 Classical Ottoman

**Details:**  
Süleymaniye, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**  
Being the place of prayer, mosques were adorned with decorative arts in all aspects.

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**Name:**  
Tile panel in the shape of a tympanum

**Dynasty:**  
About Hegira 980 / AD 1573 Ottoman

**Details:**  
Calouste Gulbenkian Museum  
Lisbon, Portugal

**Justification:**  
A tile-panel from the Piyale Pasha Mosque in Istanbul represents a most distinguished example of 10th- / 16th-century architectural decoration.

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**Name:**  
Hanging lamp

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 956 / AD 1549 Ottoman

**Details:**  
The British Museum  
London, England, United Kingdom

**Justification:**  
Lamps like this were custom-made for the refurbishment of the Dome of the Rock, undertaken by Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent.

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**Name:**  
Lantern

**Dynasty:**

During the reign of Sultan Bayezid II (hegira 886–918 / AD 1481–1512) Early Ottoman

**Details:**

Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**

Produced for Sultan Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512), this lamp shows the influence of Mamluk art.

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**Name:**

Siyer-i Nebi ('Biography of the Prophet')

**Dynasty:**

mid hegira 11th century / AD 17th century Ottoman

**Details:**

Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**

This manuscript containing the life story of the Prophet Muhammad and the history of Islam enriched with pictures was brought to the Museum from the library of Pertevniyal Valide Sultan Mosque.

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**Name:**

Hanging lamp

**Dynasty:**

About hegira 917 / AD 1512 Ottoman

**Details:**

The British Museum  
London, England, United Kingdom

**Justification:**

A lamp showing the blue-and-white aesthetic that was popular in the early years of the Iznik ceramic tradition.

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