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, Turkey

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



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.



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.



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, Turkey

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



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, Turkey

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.



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.
