

# Object Summary



## **Mother-of-Pearl Inlaid Wooden Chest with Floral Motifs**

19th century

Syria

Ottoman

Wood, mother-of-pearl, metal wire and hardware

Overall: 41 1/2 x 65 x 27 1/2 in. (105.4 x 165.1 x 69.9cm)

This wooden chest is intricately decorated with inlaid mother-of-pearl, covering its top, front, sides and base. The front of the chest is decorated by an elaborate central roundel flanked on either side by flower-and-vase motifs. The rectangular chest rests upon a scalloped apron. This type of chest was a decorative, but utilitarian object used that would have been found in the reception room of Syrian homes in the 1800s, where rooms of the home served multiple purposes, such as receiving visitors, dining,

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and sleeping. The chest may have been used to stow away bedding and other textiles during the day. Towards the end of the 1800s and early 1900s, European and North American tourists and dealers avidly collected these inlaid items. Doris Duke probably purchased inlaid furniture on her visit to Syria in 1938, although this wooden chest was purchased at auction from the collection of the famous newspaper publisher, politician, and businessman, William Randolph Hearst.