

Object Summary



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Polychrome, Gilded, and Mirrored Wooden Doors with Vegetal Motifs

19th century

Syria (Damascus)

Ottoman

Wood, polychrome pigments, mirrored glass

Overall: 99 3/4 x 73 in. (253.4 x 185.4cm)

These ornate, gilded shutters are located in the qa'a, or reception hall, of the Ottoman gallery. At home in Damascus, they would have concealed a wall closet called samandara in Arabic. In traditional Syrian homes, rooms served multiple purposes. Both rich and poor families ate, entertained guests, and slept in a single space. During the day, items such as bedding and clothing were stowed away. Large cupboards such as these could accommodate larger items such as mattresses and blankets. The doors of this samandara are decorated with gilded vegetal and architectural designs embellished by mirror glass. This style, influenced by European taste, is known as "Ottoman Baroque" in Syria, which was under Ottoman rule between 1516 - 1918 CE.