

Object Summary



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Polychrome Wooden Panels with Arabic Poetry Inscriptions

Dated 1271 AH (1854-1855 CE)

Syria

Ottoman

Wood, polychrome pigments

Overall: 132 x 44 1/2 in. (335.3 x 113cm)

These ornate wooden panels lining the Ottoman Gallery are decorated using a technique called 'ajami, a style of decoration that flourished in private Damascene homes during the rule of the Ottoman empire. In this technique, gesso is applied to the woodwork in relief, painted with washes of brightly colored glazes, and illuminated with metal leaf. The panel above the doors contains an Arabic inscription in gilded thuluth script: The eras marvel about you as you rise high (above) Oh heaven unreached by other heavens (below) The inscription is part of a poem by Abū 'Abdallāh Muhammad ibn Sa'īd al-Shanhājī al-Būṣīrī (1211-1294 CE). Al-Būṣīrī was a Moroccan-born Egyptian poet known for his poetry in praise of the Prophet Mohammed. The verse is continued on panels throughout the room.