



Ottoman Floor Spread (sofra bezi)

Turkey, Late 18th - early 19th century

148cm diameter

Woven silk with silver thread

Stock no.: A4900

This circular *sofra bezi*, or floor spread, is decorated with bouquets of flowers and European-style bows. The centre of the textile is marked by a single blossoming flower, from which four bouquets extend. The remaining space consists of two concentric bands, each filled with evenly spaced bouquets positioned in a clockwise direction. Between the bands are thin chains of single flowers with bows, the outer two running clockwise and the innermost counter-clockwise.

Sofras were traditionally rectangular in shape and used in urban Ottoman households as a dining space on the floor. Trays and stands could then be placed on top for serving food. Circular varieties, *sofra bezi*, like this example became more commonly used by the mid-late eighteenth century.

Click [here](#) for a similar example from the Textile Research Centre, Leiden, Digital Encyclopaedia of Decorative Needlework. See also Mackie, p. 335, fig. 8.53.

Literature:

Mackie, L. *Symbols of Power: Luxury Textiles from Islamic Lands, 7th-21st century*, Cleveland Museum of Art, 2015.