



A Pair of Ottoman Textile Panels

Circa: Ottoman Empire, 18th/19th century

Ottoman Empire, 18th/19th century

18cm high, 18cm wide (7 1/4 x 7 1/4 inches)

Stock no.: A4630

These two striking square pieces of Ottoman embroidery in heavily padded gold gilt thread on gold silk was most likely part of a pouch or purse, perhaps used during pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina. The high-quality design is ornamented with sequences, floral decorative elements in four corners, and Arabic inscriptions in the central medallion. The inscriptions express the *Shahada* ("The Testimony") declaring belief in the oneness of God (*tawhid*) and the acceptance of Muhammad as God's prophet, which is one of the five pillars of Islam. The right fragment reads *lā 'ilāha 'illā llāh* ("There is no god but Allah") whilst the left fragment reads *muḥammadun rasūlu llāh* ("Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."). The embroidery throughout is in the *dīval* style, which was the major Ottoman embroidery style.¹

There is a similar Ottoman textile, but without Quranic inscriptions, on the covers of the *Bayram Tahtı* ("Festivity Throne") which was used by the Ottoman sultans in the Topkapı Palace.²

Footnotes

1. Sumru Belger Krodts. 2000. *Flowers of Silk & Gold: Four Centuries of Ottoman Embroidery*. Washington D.C.: Merrell Publishers. p.42.
2. See, Cengiz Köseoğlu. 1987. *Topkapı: The Treasury*, translated and edited by J.M. Rogers. London: Thames and Hudson. p. 61, ill.2.