



Banjaluka Felt Prayer Hanging

Western Ottoman Empire, 19th century

183.5cm high, 127cm wide

Stock no.: A3064

This large rectangular, embroidered and appliqué felt textile hanging or panel on grey ground has a central motif of a small Tree of Life flanked by two flower stems on each side and a hanging lamp placed within a mihrab, a prayer niche. The outer border has stylised fish scale motifs, the wide border scrolling flower motifs on yellow ground and the inner border also depicts fish scale designs, popular in the Ottoman decorative arts. The central niche is enclosed by vegetal and floral scrolls. Above the mihrab, there is a beneficent Turkish inscription interspersed with small flowers and abstract designs. Banjaluka was well-known for its embroidered and appliqué hangings, and the pieces made during the Ottoman period show both European and Ottoman decorative styles. Many of the textiles were placed on a wall and used during prayer as qibleh cloths. The design on this textile, a niche with a hanging lamp, would have emphasised the setting of the prayer. It has been suggested that the large felt wool textile panels were used in campaign tents as qibleh cloths. The decoration on this textile is unusual. See a woollen appliqué and embroidered textile panel, dated to pre-1800, in *Ottoman Embroidery*, pp. 140-41, where the main design is also on grey ground and some of the motifs are very similar to those on this textile.

References

Roderick Taylor. *Ottoman Embroidery*, 1993.