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“PILGRIM TILE,” FRITWARE

TURKEY, IZNIK; C. 1600

H: 34.5; W: 29.5 CM

Tiles like this one were presumably made as souvenirs for those who had completed the pilgrimage to Mecca, the *hajj*.

The painted decoration shows a stylized plan of the Holy Mosque in Mecca, with the Kaaba in the center of the courtyard. Paradoxically, the Persian poem at the bottom of the tile places greater emphasis on a pure heart than on the physical pilgrimage. “Bring your heart in your hand; it is more important than a pilgrimage / A single heart is better than a thousand Kaabas / The Kaaba was built by Khalil [Abraham] son of Azar / The heart, in contrast, is scrutinized by the Majestic, the Greatest [God].”

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