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ASTROLABE QUADRANT, ENGRAVED BRASS

SYRIA, DAMASCUS; 730 H =1329-1330

H: 15.5 CM

The quadrant (which in principle is a quarter of an astrolabe) was used to measure the height of a number of selected stars on a number of selected latitudes in order to determine the time.

A detailed inscription tells us that this quadrant was made by Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Mizzi for Sulayman ibn Muhammad ibn Sulayman in Damascus in the year 730 H (1329-1330). Al-Mizzi, who was trained in Cairo, was employed in the Great Mosque in Damascus as a *muwaqqit* (an astronomer who determined the exact time for the daily prayers). In earlier times, it had primarily been the muezzin's job to keep track of the time for the calls to prayer, but after the 13th century, professional timekeepers were employed at important mosques. Al-Mizzi wrote several treatises on astronomical subjects.

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