



Inv. no. 7/1996

MAGICAL SEAL, CAST BRONZE

IRAN; 14TH CENTURY

The mirror-image inscription translates as, “Abu Isaq, the sheikh, the guide – may God sanctify his soul.”

Abu Ishaq (963-1033) founded a Sufi order and was considered to have supernatural powers that could protect others. In 1347, when the globetrotter Ibn Battuta visited Abu Ishaq’s cloister in Kazarun, he recounted that sailors who feared bad weather or attacks from pirates “insured” themselves against mishap by buying magical documents sold at the cloister. The documents bore the impression of seals like this one.