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MARBLE TOMBSTONE CARVED WITH A *TULUTH* INSCRIPTION

WESTERN INDIA, GUJARAT, CAMBAY: *SALKH JUMADA AL-AWWAL*  
699 H = FEBRUARY 22, 1300

H: 73.1; W: 36.8 CM

Gujarat was known for its white marble, and finely carved stone was exported from the harbor city of Cambay all the way to the west coast of Africa, southern Arabia, and Java. The marble was used locally for architectural elements and tombstones like this one, erected to a member of the al-Bammi family who probably belonged to the prosperous merchant class in Cambay.

The inscription, from *sura* 3 (along the edge) and *sura* 86 of the Koran, was carved in an impressive *Tuluth* script. At the top is a motif that is beloved throughout the Islamic world, a lamp in a niche, but here it was designed in a way typically used on marble work from Gujarat. The niche is flanked by architectural elements and half trees that reflect the influence of local Jain and Hindu art.

Published in:

*Epigraphia Indica: Arabic and Persian supplement, 1971*, New Delhi 1977, pp. 6-7, pl. 1a;

David James et al.: *Islamic calligraphy / Calligraphie islamique*, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Genève, Genève 1988, pp. 164-165;

Christie's, London, 8/10-2015, lot 10 A;

Joachim Meyer, Rasmus Bech Olsen and Peter Wandel: *Beyond words: calligraphy from the World of Islam*, The David Collection, Copenhagen 2024, cat. 114, p. 285;