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MEDALLION, TAPESTRY, SILK AND GILDED LAMELLA OF ANIMAL
SUBSTRATE SPUN AROUND COTTON

IRAQ OR WESTERN IRAN; 1ST HALF OF 14TH CENTURY

DIAM: 69 CM

This textile is unique in every respect. It is a tapestry, a technique that in the period was otherwise used primarily in Mongol China, where it was called *kesi*. The fact that the “gold thread” is animal in origin and spun around cotton, however, points in the direction of a western weaving center. So does the iconography.

In the center is an enthroned prince flanked by a Mongol prince or general and an Arab or Persian vizier. These figures, in turn, are surrounded by lotuses, etc., animal friezes of the type known from Islamic metalwork, Mongol warriors in roundels, and a readable Arabic inscription.

The textile was probably made by or under the supervision of Chinese weavers in il-Khanid Iran or Iraq.

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