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PLAQUE, OPENWORK STEEL SURROUNDED BY A FRAME OF SIX SMALLER, PARTIAL-GILT PLAQUES MOUNTED ON A GILDED COPPER PLATE

IRAN; MID-16TH TO END OF 17TH CENTURY

H: 14.8; W: 42.5 CM (WITH FRAME)

“And of his brother, the lion of God, called Ali,” reads the inscription in majestic *Thuluth* calligraphy over the filigree-like tendrils. The phrase is part of an Arabic poem praising Muhammad, Fatima, and the 12 imams who are revered by the Shiites. The plaque, together with others of different shapes, embellished the door in a Shiite shrine.

In most cases, only the central and most beautifully executed openwork plaques have survived. This piece is quite unique in having preserved both the gilded copper plate and the six pieces riveted to it that made up the frame.

Published in:

Kjeld von Folsach, Torben Lundbæk and Peder Mortensen (eds.): *Sultan, Shah and Great Mughal: the history and culture of the Islamic world*, The National Museum, Copenhagen 1996, cat.no. 265;

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Kjeld von Folsach: *Art from the World of Islam in The David Collection*, Copenhagen 2001, cat.no. 526;

Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom (eds.): *Cosmophilia. Islamic Art from the David Collection*, Copenhagen, McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, Boston 2006. cat.no. 32;

James W. Allan: *The art and architecture of Twelver Shi'ism: Iraq, Iran and the Indian Sub-continent*, London 2012. p. 103, pl. 3.18;

Jonathan M. Bloom: “Art and architecture” in Farhad Daftary, Amyn B. Sajoo and Shainool Jiwa (eds.): *The Shi'i world: pathways in*

*tradition and modernity*, London 2015, fig. 11.7, pp. 243-244;