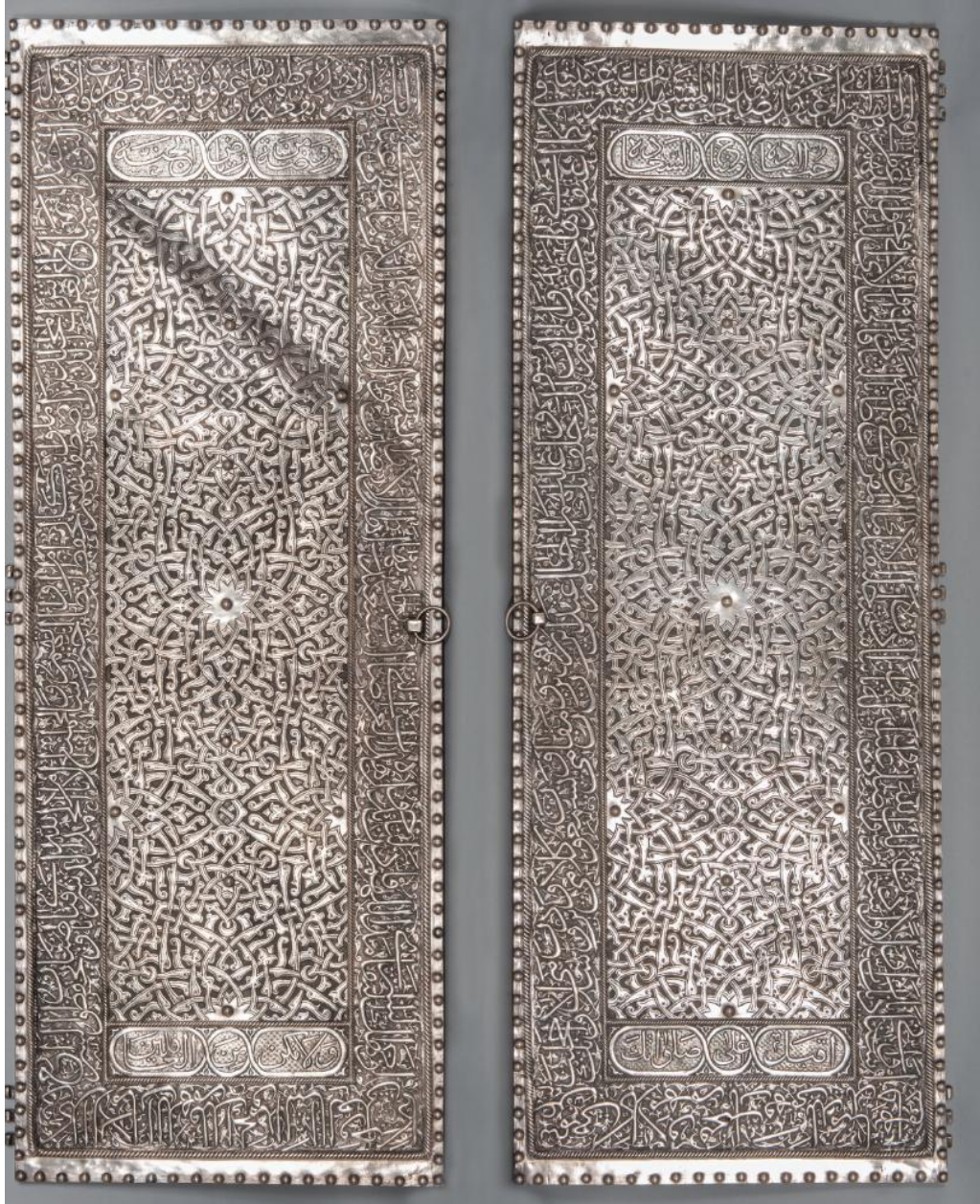


Basic Detail Report



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Title Pair of Inscribed Silver Doors with Arabesques and Vegetal Ornaments

Date 18th - 19th century

Medium Silver

Description This pair of small metal hinged doors once marked the entrance to a shrine in Iran. The central panel of each door is elaborately ornamented with a field of dense, interlacing arabesques radiating from a 12-pointed star pattern. Each of the doors is inscribed with lengthy Arabic inscriptions, beginning at the upper right corner and extending around the perimeter. The inscriptions request permission to enter and make a visitation to the shrine. Cartouches within the central panel are also inscribed in Arabic; The bottom left inscription contains part of a sura (verse) of the Quran, (7:205), reading: *نَيْلِفُغْلَ نَّ م نُّ كَاتَ اَلَو* “and be not among the negligent.” The reverse side of the door is engraved with a star-and-cross design, resembling a pattern frequently occurring in Ilkhanid ceramics. The door is signed by Muhammad Amin al-Kirmani (perhaps the silversmith). Silver-covered doors were made for shrine complexes, called *āstānas*, during the Qajar period, especially by craftsmen of Isfahan. Visitation to shrines, or *emāmzādas*, is central to Shi’a Islam, which has been the official religion of Iran since the rule of the Safavid dynasty (1501–1736). People at all levels of society participated in these pilgrimages. Those who could travel abroad visited important shrines, such as of ‘Ali at Najaf or the shrine of Husayn in Karbala. Less well-to-do people might visit local shrines, which were present in every town or village.

Dimensions Each door: 41 7/8 x 15 1/2 x 1 11/16 in. (106.4 x 39.4 x 4.3 cm)