



Pair of Gold Shield Bosses

India, 18th century

Gold, precious stones

5.5cm diameter each

Stock no.: A5700

These two lavishly decorated jewelled bosses originally adorned an Indian *dhal* ("shield"). The gold bosses are framed by rubies in the style of red petals followed by two bands of bud motifs decorated with rubies and emeralds which surrounds the central band of diamond rosettes to complete the floral motif.

In addition to adorning the exterior of a shield, bosses had a practical function, for Indian shields were fitted with a pair of handgrips fastened to the interior of the shield by means of rivets; hence the bosses served to conceal the rivets on the front of shields.¹ An Indian shield with very similar gemset gold bosses is held in the Wallace Collection, London (accession no. [OA1976](#)). The rhinoceros hide shield, dated to 18th-century sind, likely predates the bosses. However, it gives an indication of what these magnificent bosses would have looked like *in situ*.

Footnotes

1. Salam Kaoukji. 2017. *Precious Indian Weapons and Other Princely Accoutrements*. London: Thames & Hudson. p.427.