

# AMIR MOHTASHEMI



## Mughal Katar (Punch Dagger)

Lucknow, India, 18th century

Steel

40cm long

Stock no.: A5751

Provenance: US private collection since the 1970s or earlier.

A fine katar with a double-edged blade with a wide sunken fuller containing a cypress tree and lotus flower motif. The watered-steel blade has been highly polished, creating contrast between the patterned ricasso and fuller and the bright tip. This type of blade is seen on several Katars from Armoury at Jodhpur Fort, now in the Mehrangarh Museum Trust (accession nos UBP/14, ARM/76/715, ARM/76/815, ARM/76/294).<sup>1</sup> The hilt is of H-shaped form, with ridged decoration. The distinctive single crossbar comprises a pair of clasped hands. A katar in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (accession no. [36.25.746](#)) features a similar ridged hilt, with a crossbar formed from a pair of fish rather than hands. It is dated to 18th-century Mughal India, and the twin fish motif, known as *Mahi Maratib*, suggests that the dagger was made in Lucknow. The intertwining of the fish and the way in which their forked tails attach to the hilt shares great technical similarities to the way in which the hands of our dagger clasp and join to the hilt with split acanthus leaves. Though the hand motif is unusual, a sword made in 18th-century Lucknow held in the Wallace Collection, London (accession no. [OA1405](#)) features an enamelled silver hilt with a hand at the pommel, touching thumb to forefinger.

[1] Elgood, Robert. *Rajput Arms and Armour: The Rathores and Their Armoury at Jodhpur Fort*. Vol.1 of 2. New Delhi: Mehrangarh Museum Trust in association with Niyogi Books, 2017. pp. 694, 696, 714, 715.

