

# A M I R M O H T A S H E M I



**Khanjar with Silver-Inlaid Jade Hilt**  
India, possibly Hyderabad, 18th century

Jade with silver inlay, watered steel

45 cm long

Stock no.: A5967

Provenance: UK private collection, purchased in 1999.

A fine pistol-grip khanjar with jade hilt, inlaid with a silver grapevine design and a carnation at the base of the hilt. It has a long, single-edged, recurved watered-steel blade. Khanjar hilts are the most commonly surviving Deccani jade objects with silver inlay.<sup>1</sup> However, the use of a grapevine pattern is very unusual. The most common pattern for silver inlay is carnations, such as examples in the British Museum, London (accession no. [1878.1230.883](#)), and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (accession no. [36.25.667](#)). Only two other daggers with jade hilts inlaid with grapevine patterns are known. The first, exhibited in *Splendeurs des Armes Orientales* (Paris, 1988)<sup>2</sup>, is identified as belonging to the first half of the 18th century due to its dense pattern. The second, whose more sparse decoration places it in the mid-to-late 18th century, is in the Los Angeles Country Museum of Art (accession no. [M.76.216a-b](#)).<sup>3</sup>

The grapevine motif is more frequently used in bidri ware, a technique practiced in the Deccani cities of Bidar and Hyderabad whereby silver is inlaid into a soft zinc alloy. A bidri huqqa base with grape inlay is in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art ([M.2001.101](#)) and a spittoon is in the Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad.<sup>4</sup> Based on this combination of the Mughal medium of jade with the Deccani technique of

silver inlay, it has been suggested that daggers like this one were made in the Hyderabad region.

[1] Markel, Stephen. 'Non-Imperial Sources for Jades and Jade Simulants in South Asia', *Jewellery Studies* 10 (2004), pp. 68–75: p. 72.

[2] Missillier, Philippe, and Howard Ricketts. *Splendeur des armes orientales*. Paris: ACTE-EXPO, 1988, p. 113, cat. 192.

[3] Markel. Op. Cit., p. 72.

[4] See Singh, Malavika (ed.) *Treasures of the Salar Jung Museum*. New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2013, p. 114.