

AMIR MOHTASHEMI



Khanjar with Gold-Inlaid Jade Hilt

North India or Deccan, Late 18th to early 19th century

Gold, Jade, watered steel, and velvet over wood

39 cm long (the dagger), 41.5 cm long (with sheath)

Stock no.: A6083

Provenance: US private collection, purchased in New York in 1979.

A fine 19th-century khanjar or dagger with a jade hilt of typical pistol grip form with scrolled quillons. The recurved plain watered-steel blade is housed in a wooden scabbard with velvet overlay. Jade panels are also applied at the locket and chape. Floral vines have been carved into the jade throughout, then inlaid with a thin layer of gold. Finer details such as the veins of the leaves and pistils of the flowers are etched into the gold. This decoration recalls bidriware, an inlay technique originating in the Deccan, leading to speculation that such daggers were made in Hyderabad.¹

A khanjar in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (accession no. [36.25.679](#)) features similar flush inlay in a white hardstone hilt. It has been dated to the 19th century, Mughal or Deccan. A hilt of green nephrite jade in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (accession no. [02583\(IS\)](#)) is inlaid with the same technique. It has been dated to ca. 1780–1790 and attributed to Mughal India.

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