



Tiger Palanquin Ornament

India, 18th century

Kingdom of Mysore

20cm long

Stock no.: A4452

This hollow gilt-copper head of a tiger was most probably the finial for an elaborately decorated palanquin. Originally it would have been covered with gilt decoration and the eyes most probably inlaid with semi-precious stones. On the forehead of the tiger, there appears a boteh motif. The tiger has its mouth slightly open with its tongue protruding through ferocious teeth. Many members of Indian royalty used tigers as a symbol of power and the iconography of tigers appears on many royal objects. The most prolific iconographic depiction of tigers was by the court of Tipu Sultan (1750-1799), also referred to as The Tiger of Mysore. He used the tiger emblem on his weaponry and royal regalia including his throne. There are distinct similarities between the tiger motif used in Srirangapatna and this tiger head - including the depiction of the tiger's facial features and the *bubri* motif engraved on its body. A similar pair of palanquin finials in the Victoria & Albert Museum London (accession no. [IPN.2599](#)) is dated to 1780-1800 Mysore.