



Gold Inlaid Shield Bosses

India (Deccan), 17th - 18th century

Steel with gold inlay

Stock no.: A2957a

These four bosses are made of steel with gold inlay, and each originally adorned an Indian dāhl (shield). They are decorated with the inscriptions of the 99 Names of God, with the central bosses surrounded by leaves; the flanges (outer edges) are star shaped. The bosses had a practical function, that of concealing the rivets protruding from the interior of the shield, where the handgrips were fastened. Painted portraits of the Mughal period show rulers and noblemen holding weapons and shields, the latter depicted in black and gold.

Notes:

India excelled in damascening, the inlay and the outlay of steel with precious, usually gold decoration. Manuel Keene, *Treasury of the World. Jewelled Arts of India in the Age of the Mughals*, London, 2001. p. 86. See also catalogue entry 7.7 on page 89.

Salman Kaoukji, *Precious Indian Weapons and Other Princely Accoutrements*, London, 2017.