



Calligraphic Punch Dagger (katar)

Deccan, 19th century

Iron and steel

41cm long

Stock no.: A5317

The slim, triangular blade has a reinforced point, a median ridge as well as two fullers on either side.

The H-shaped hilt of iron has two straight concave arms that protect the side of the hand and wrist, which are attached to the double baluster-shaped grip. The entire hilt is damascened in silver, with floral motifs on the inside and Arabic inscriptions on both inside and outside of the arms, as well as less elaborate vegetal panels on the double-grip.

The *katar* is probably the best-known type of dagger from India, and it was not used elsewhere. With the thickened point and the transverse grip, this style of dagger is designed to effectively penetrate chainmail and other protective armour parts in close combat. *Katars* are repeatedly depicted in Indian manuscript paintings from the sixteenth to nineteenth century. It was used by all armed men, even if it appears to have been particularly widespread in the upper strata of society. This example is special for the slender but thick, heavy blade with heavily reinforced point and fullers, as well as the inscription that covers the handle.

Inscribed with Arabic/Persian inscriptions including quotations from the Qur'an, the Nadi 'Aliyyan Quatrain and the names of the Fourteen Innocents (Muhammad, Fatima and the 12 Shi'i Imams)

Exterior of Side A

الله محمد علي

God, Muhammad, 'Ali

ناد عليا مظهر العجائب

تجدد عونا لك في النوائب

كل هم وغم سينجلي

بعظمتك يا الله يا الله بنبوتك يا محمد يا محمد بولايتك يا علي يا علي يا علي

Call upon 'Ali, the manifestation of wonders,

You will find him a comfort to you in crisis,

Every care and sorrow will pass,

Through Your greatness, O God, through your prophethood, O Muhammad, O Muhammad, through you guardianship O 'Ali, O 'Ali, O 'Ali!

نصر من الله وفتح قريب وبشر المؤمنين فالله خير حافظا لا فتا الا على لا سيف الا ذو الفقار

“Help from God and a speedy victory. So give the glad tidings to the believers!” (Qur'an 61:13). “But God is the best in protecting!” (Qur'an 12:64). There is no hero but 'Ali, no sword by Dhu'l-Faqar.

Interior of Side A

الله محمد قل هو الله احد الله الصمد لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا احد

God, Muhammad. “Say, He is God, the One and Only; God the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him” (Qur'an 112).

Exterior of Side B (damaged)

الله محمد على فاطمه حسن حسين ... مولاي ... مظهر ... امام زين العابدين امام محمد باقر امام جعفر صادق امام موسى كاظم امام موسى رضا امام ... محمد تقى امام على نقى امام حسن عسكري امام محمد مهدي آخر الزمان ... الله ... على

God, Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, Husayn ... master ... manifestation ... Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, Imam Muhammad Baqir, Imam Ja'far Sadiq, Imam Musa Kazim, Imam ('Ali ibn) Musa Riza, Imam Muhammad Taqi, Imam 'Ali Naqi, Imam Hasan 'Askari, Imam Muhammad Mahdi of the end of time ... God ... 'Ali ...

Reference:

Elgood, Robert. *Rajput Arms and Armour: The Rathores and Their Armoury at Jodhpur Fort*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. New Delhi: Mehrangarh Museum Trust in association with Niyogi Books, 2017.

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