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Ottoman Dagger (kard)

Ottoman Turkey, 18th Century

jade inlaid with gold steel gilt silver leather

31cm long

Provenance: French private collection since the end of 19th century

Stock no.: A5509

A dagger or kard with a hilt of jade inlaid with symmetrical gold foliage and floral scrolls and a slim, tapering, single-edged wootz blade resting within a leather sheath. Typically worn on the left side of the belt, kards were used as a covert weapon. Highly decorative models like this one, however, would likely have been purely ceremonial. Kards were generally fitted with smooth, rounded handles of precious stone, bone, or ivory, for the tactility this afforded their user. A blackened silver chape and throat are applied to the sheath, featuring richly decorated with floral vines and scrollwork. The tip of the sheath terminates in a gilt silver-fluted rosebud with a chevron collar. An Ottoman kard in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (accession no. [36.25.727a,b](#)) shows clear similarities in form. Its dimensions are close to those of the present example, measuring 31cm in its sheath. Its handle is of dark green bloodstone, a semi-precious stone not dissimilar in appearance to jade. The sheath has gold lobed mounts applied at chape and throat, terminating in a rosebud finial.

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