



Mughal Gem Set Jade Hilted Khanjar

Mughal India, 18th century

Jade, gold, silver, precious stones, watered steel

38cm long (overall), 24.5cm long (the blade)

Stock no.: A5847

Provenance: Australian private collection since at least 1990.

The *khanjar* is a double-edged dagger with a slightly recurved blade and a pistol grip hilt. The distinctive pistol-grip can be traced to the southern Deccan, where it developed from hilts in the shape of parrot heads.¹ No weapons with a pistol grip hilt appear in the Windsor *Padshah-nama*, considered the best source for weaponry of Shah Jahan's reign, suggesting that they were popularised during the reign of Shah Jahan's successor, Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707).²

This *khanjar* has an unusual hilt with alternating silver and gold chevron inlay. Each side of the pommel is set with a roundel of rubies and emeralds around a rose cut diamond, perhaps designed to emulate the eyes of a parrot. Between these 'eyes' is a smaller, oval-shaped medallion of rubies and emeralds around a teardrop diamond.

The double-edged watered steel blade is carved at forte with an arabesque.

A *khanjar* with a very similar hilt, featuring jade inlaid with silver chevrons and a jewelled roundel at the pommel, is published in Robert Hales' *Islamic and Oriental Arms and Armour* and dated to the 18th century.³

[1] Welch, Stuart Cary (ed.) *India: Art and Culture 1300-1900*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art,

1985, p. 178.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Hales, Robert. *Islamic and Oriental Arms and Armour*. London: Robert Hales C. I. Ltd., 2013. p. 22
cat. 55.