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DAGGER WITH GILDED BRONZE HILT, SET WITH A FEW RUBIES

INDIA, VIJAYANAGAR OR DECCAN; MID-16TH CENTURY

L: 42 CM

Sultan Ali Adil Shah of Bijapur (1558-1579) was depicted several times in contemporary miniatures with a dagger similar to this one.

The zoomorphic hilt was clearly influenced by Hindu art, and it is in fact possible that the dagger was booty taken from Vijayanagar, which the united Deccan sultans conquered in the battle at Talikota in 1565.

In an elegant, flowing style, one side of the hilt is made up of quite a large lion holding a little elephant between its front paws, while a phoenix and a dragon with a long tail are engaged in a battle of life and death on the other side.

The guard consists of two phoenixes whose heads are turned toward the steel blade.

Published in:

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