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STEEL SABER, ENGRAVED AND OVERLAID WITH GOLD, WITH A HILT INLAID WITH SILVER

INDIA; C. 1800

L: 86 CM

We do not know precisely when the characteristic Islamic saber was introduced, but work to develop this weapon had at least begun in the 13th century. The early Arab swords were heavy, had straight blades, and were carried in a harness over the shoulder and not in a belt around the hips like the saber.

Sabers of this type (*talwar*) – with a slightly curved blade, a hilt with a large circular pommel, and a sword guard with prominent knobs – are known in large numbers from India from the 17th to the 19th century. As the saber became more widely used as a decorative weapon, the blade was ornamented with increasingly exquisite motifs. The gold-contoured engravings on this blade present a selection of hunting animals and their prey, a pair of mythical creatures, and a riderless horse.

Published in:

P. S. Rawson: *The Indian sword*, Copenhagen 1967, pl. 11;
Kjeld von Folsach, Torben Lundbæk and Peder Mortensen (eds.):
Sultan, Shah and Great Mughal: the history and culture of the Islamic world, The National Museum, Copenhagen 1996, cat.no. 173;
Ravinder Reddy: *Arms and armour of India, Nepal and Sri Lanka: types, decoration and symbolism*, London 2018, p. 105;
Kjeld von Folsach, Joachim Meyer and Peter Wandel: *Fighting, Hunting, Impressing. Arms and Armour from the Islamic World 1500-1850*, The David Collection, Copenhagen 2021, cat.no. 92;

