



Ceremonial Double-Bladed Axe (tabar)

Date

1800s

Primary Maker

Persian

Medium

engraved crucible steel, iron, silver, with silver and gold false-damascening (koftgari)

Description

Double-bladed, crescentic head, of watered steel sharpened on the outer edge of blades, which curve into sharp, inwardly turned points. Both identically decorated & all 4 faces the same. At the base with carved and engraved maze of floral tendrils framed by a gold, koftgari, scalloped border which also follows the perimeter of the blade itself as a thin line. At the center of the cartouche is a lobated triangle with a silver flower at center, framed with gold, and drawn out at the sides into peacock's heads, with a lobated square above, and a leafed trilobate below. Extending from the point of the cartouche, and reaching out to the cutting edge, is an irregularly triangular cartouche, with with a carved bird and foliage motif. The blades are slid into the grooves of an iron block of more-or-less rectangular section, slightly curved on the front and rear faces, with recessed fillets at the base of the blades. Both faces have a carved pair of birds amidst foliage, in a superimposed square/lobated lozenge frame, itself bordered by gold koftgari tendrils. This block is pierced longitudinally, where it fits onto the hollow shaft of steel. There is a ring-like, gilded collar beneath the block, and a gilded, domed cap above. This is pierced at the top, and fitted with an inserted spear-head finial of iron. This is irregularly triangular at the base, with rounded corners, and is pierced with triangular, and teardrop-shaped holes. It projects upward in a straight quadrangular spike which tapers to a sharp point. The surfaces of the finial are decorated with koftgari tendrils which produce dragons' heads flanking the base. The shaft is long and tubular, extending straight over its length, without taper, to a deep, domed cap that is slightly flattened. The shaft is closed up along one side, with a brass-brazed seam, and is decorated with axial running bands of silvered koftgari tendrils within thin silvered lines, and at the top and bottom the shaft is encircled by a texture-patterned gold koftgari motif of lobated lozenges, each charged with an eight-pointed star.

Dimensions

27.3 x 97.2 x 29.5 cm (10 3/4 x 38 1/4 x 11 5/8 in.), 3 lb, 8 oz (weight)