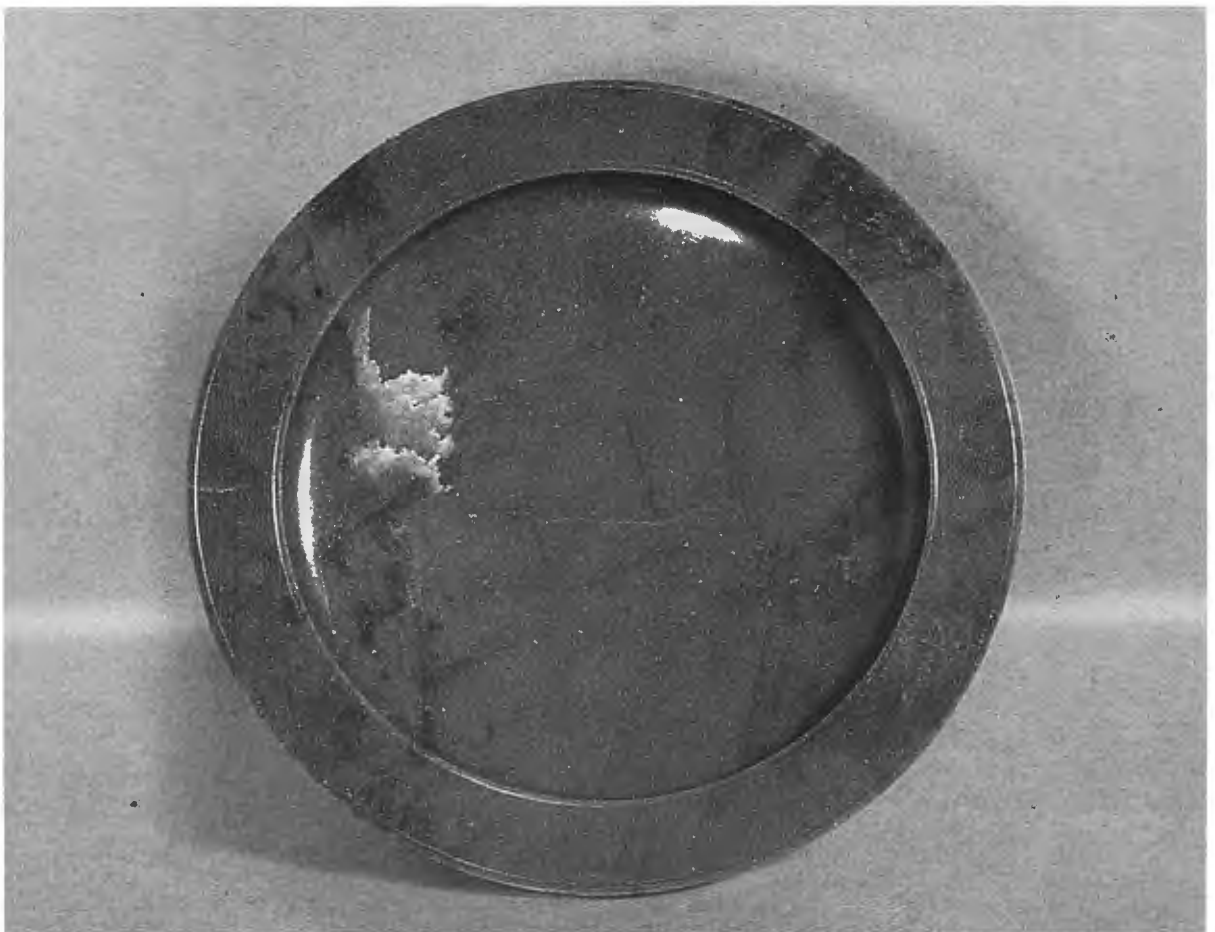


Inception and Maturation in Mughal Jades

Stephen Markel

MUGHAL jades, apart from contemporary architectural embellishment, were the primary form of sculptural expression in northern India during the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. Surviving in greater numbers than any other type of decorative art object from the Mughal period,¹ exquisite drinking and dining vessels, weapon hilts, and various other luxury items were carved, or more accurately, laboriously abraded and polished, from blocks of nephrite jade imported from Central Asia.

The stylistic evolution of early Mughal jades in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reflects the individual tastes and aesthetic sensibilities of the four ruling emperors, in the same manner that painting and architecture received varying emphasis and direction under these mighty Mughal monarchs. Only a few jades survive from the



1. Salver. North India, Mughal. C. 1575-1600. Dark green nephrite; 41.1 centimetres. Cleveland Museum of Art, 76.73. Photograph: courtesy Cleveland Museum of Art. This footed salver and the plate in fig. 2 replicate, in jade the porcelain dishes exported from China to the Islamic world, such as that shown in fig. 3.



2. Plate. North India, Mughal. C. 1575-1600. Dark green nephrite; 24.1 centimetres. National Museum, New Delhi, 58.14/43. Photograph: Stephen Markel.

3. Salver. China, Ming, Xuande period (?). C. 1426-1435. White porcelain with cobalt blue underglaze decoration; 43.5 centimetres. Idemitsu Museum of Arts, Tokyo, 5954. Photograph: courtesy Idemitsu Museum of Arts. Inscribed on reverse: "On 3 Rabi I year IV of the reign, corresponding to A.H. 1072 [27 October 1661], inspected. Value: Rs. 700." Additional inscriptions: *tabvils* (certifications of conveyance to a new official), and a Devanagari inventory record.

reign of Akbar (r. 1556-1605) and it is not until the reigns of the two great aesthetes of the dynasty, Jahangir (r. 1605-1627), and, particularly, Shah Jahan (r. 1628-1658), that the art-form achieved its full development. Jade artefacts continued to be produced under Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707), but late in his rule suffered a decline in artistic inspiration and execution, leading ultimately to the stereotyped forms of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Given the substantial number, technical sophistication, and imperial patronage of early Mughal jades, they clearly warrant serious art historical consideration.

THE PARADOX OF MUGHAL JADES

Anyone attempting even a casual perusal of the late sixteenth and seventeenth-century Mughal historical sources relating to jades is immediately struck by a peculiar paradox. Curiously, the official Mughal court histories and imperial memoirs prior to Aurangzeb's reign reveal an almost total lack of references specifically mentioning jade or jade objects.² This is in stark contrast to the numerous surviving jade objects that were produced for the Mughal court and the various descriptive accounts by visiting Europeans attesting the existence and popularity of jade and jade objects.

How is one to rectify this dearth of literary notice with the plentitude of extant jade objects and the European accounts? Especially since daggers and swords, presumably often fitted with jade hilts, are with gem stones and jewellery the most frequently mentioned as items of presentation by or to the emperors, and that trade caravans are known to have regularly arrived in Mughal India from Central Asia and China conveying jade and other foreign treasures.³

The answer may lie in the nature of how jade was used by the Mughals. Jade served a widely versatile function analogous to that of clay in ancient and rural societies or



4. Detail of Folio from the *Baburnama*, Showing *Babur Entertained by Badi-uz-Zaman-Mirza in the Jaban Ara Garden in Herat* [in 1506-1507]. North India, Mughal. C. 1593. Opaque water-colour and gold on paper; 26.4 x 5.3 centimetres (overall). The Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow, 577 II. Photograph: After *The Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow* (Leningrad: Aurora Art Pubs., 1988), p. 187, no. 195. Large dark green serving dishes, such as those shown here, are occasionally depicted in Mughal paintings and presumably represent vessels made of jade.

plastic in modern times. As such, perhaps its very commonality caused it simply to be overlooked by court historians and biographers, for it was the "object" of presentation rather than its specific "medium" that was considered significant to record for posterity.⁴

Furthermore, one must remember that Mughal court historians, like those in the service of other Muslim dynasties, were not recording the imperial events and activities for the sake of future art historians. Rather, they were entrusted with chronicling and promoting the glory of the emperor and the empire. Thus, when we read of the extravagant jewelled daggers recorded as presentation objects in the Mughal courts, it must be assumed on the basis of the extant examples that many of these daggers had jade hilts and that the historians simply did not specify the medium of the hilts, just as they did not bother to record that the blades were often made of the finest watered steel forged in Damascus, Syria.⁵

Yet, this interpretation of "commonplace usage", by its very nature, calls into question the traditional view that the salutatory poetic inscriptions found on Jahangir's wine cups,⁶ which constitute the majority of such epigraphs, are merely indicative of the rarity of jade during the period. Rather, when taken as a corpus, the inscriptions on the cups stress the glory of the contents as well as that of the container. This is a particularly telling point considering Jahangir's well-known fondness for intoxicants. A perhaps more accurate appraisal of these inscriptions is that only certain, particularly favoured objects used personally by Jahangir and Shah Jahan, such as wine cups for the former or thumb rings and drinking vessels for the abstinent latter, were graced with the honorific epigraphs.

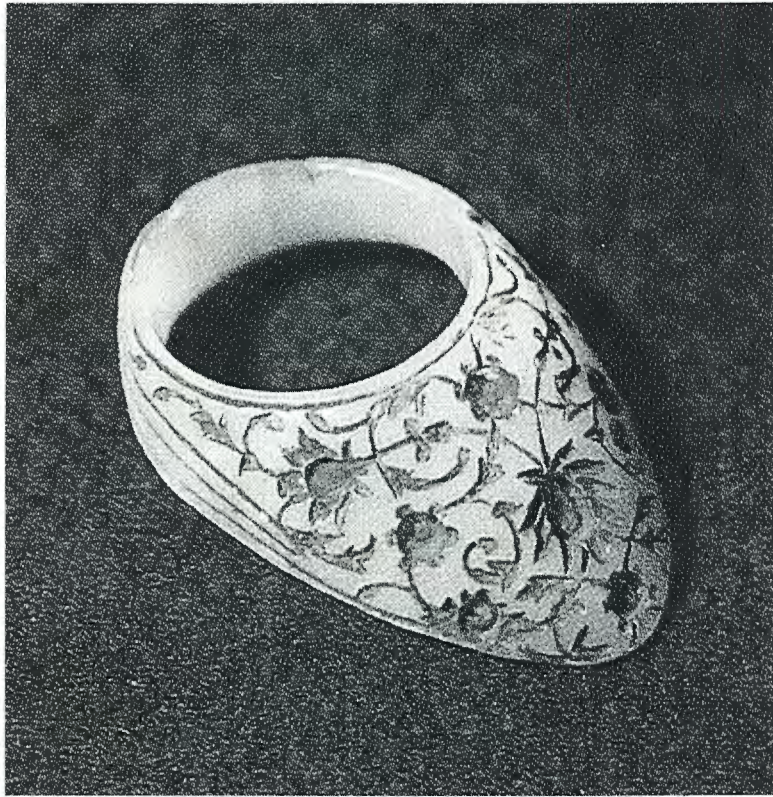
To conclude with the subject of inscriptions on Mughal jades, it seems that by the late seventeenth century the practice of inscribing jades had gone out of fashion, as inscribed jades made during the reign of Aurangzeb date only from the early years of his rule. Accordingly, it may be illuminating to note an observation made by the seventeenth-century French jewel merchant, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, that Aurangzeb "cares little for [precious and semiprecious] stones and loves gold and silver much better".⁷

JADES UNDER AKBAR

The existence of works of jade dating from the reign of Akbar may be inferred through the well-known visit to the imperial court in 1563 of a Central Asian jade merchant, Khwaja Mu'in, who was the overseer at the main jade-bearing river in Kashgar.⁸ Significant also in this regard is the account of an English merchant befriended by Jahangir, William Hawkins, who reported that in 1609 the royal treasury at Agra contained some twenty-five kilogrammes of uncut jade and five hundred drinking cups, that included fifty elaborate ones made of a single piece of jade or other precious minerals, a substantial number of which were likely to have been made during Akbar's reign which had ended only four years earlier.⁹

Surprisingly, however, only a few extant Mughal jades can be plausibly attributed to the reign of Akbar. These works share the stylistic characteristics of thick vessel walls, a generally stout form and heavy features, and rudimentary ornamentation, if any. Two other stylistic traits also suggest an early date, although neither is in itself conclusive. First, the archaic imitation of the traditional shapes of Timurid or Chinese metal or ceramic vessels coupled with the absence of floral forms or decoration, a style which was also continued through the early years of Jahangir's reign. Second, the use of dark green jade, as opposed to the pale green shades of jade popular under Jahangir and the white jade favoured especially during the reign of Shah Jahan that paralleled the emperor's preference for white marble as an architectural medium.

On the basis of these foregoing stylistic characteristics, two previously unpublished jade vessels with these same distinctive features can also be attributed to the reign of Akbar: a large dark green jade footed salver in the Cleveland Museum of Art (figure 1) and a dark green jade plate in the National Museum, New Delhi (figure 2).¹⁰ Both dishes replicate the forms of Chinese porcelain dishes known to have been avidly collected and used by several of the Mughal emperors,¹¹ such as a Ming salver inscribed with a Mughal inventory notice dated 1661 in the fourth year of Aurangzeb's reign (figure 3).¹²



5. Archer's Thumb Ring of Salim. North India, Allahabad, Mughal. *C.* 1599-1604. White nephrite with red pigment, formerly inlaid with gem stones set in gold; 4.5 x 3.2 centimetres. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, 3/5718. Photograph: Stephen Markel. Inscribed with the name Shah Salim [Jahangir's pre-regnal name]. This is the earliest known inscribed Mughal jade. It was originally graced with a Safavid-inspired arabesque in gold and gem stones.

6. Wine Cup of Jahangir. North India, Mughal. 1612-1613. Fine-grained dark green hardstone (quartz and chromian muscovite); 7.3 x 12.2 centimetres. Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence. Helen M. Danforth Fund, 84.163. Photograph: courtesy Rhode Island School of Design. Inscribed with the name Jahangir, the date AH 1021, and numerous poetic verses (see Markel, "Inscribed Works," pp. 26-27).

Similar green serving dishes are occasionally shown in contemporary Mughal paintings, such as in this detail of a folio from the *Baburnama* from *circa* 1593 showing the first Mughal emperor Babur (r. 1526-1530) at a garden feast in Herat (figure 4).¹³ The green serving platters depicted in the painting presumably represent tableware made of dark green jade, as they distinctly differ from the light green tableware with formed side walls and covers shown in various Mughal paintings which might be interpreted as being East Asian green celadon ware.¹⁴ However, no such celadons have yet been discovered in a Mughal context.

The Cleveland salver and New Delhi plate can be compared with a well-known small dark green jade jar belonging to The Guennol Collection, currently on loan to The Brooklyn Museum, which may have functioned as an ink-well¹⁵ and has been attributed to *circa* 1575-1600.¹⁶ Indeed, when compared with Jahangir's ink-well dated 1618-1619, now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,¹⁷ the formative nature of the Guennol jar is apparent through its less developed form and decoration.

JADES UNDER JAHANGIR

The initial Akbari examples notwithstanding, it took the enlightened artistic genius and patronage of Jahangir for the production of Mughal jades to begin in earnest. The earliest extant inscribed Mughal jade is a well-known archer's thumb ring, now in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi (figure 5). The ring is inscribed on the inner face with the name "Shah Salim", which is generally interpreted as referring to Jahangir while still a prince, since his given, pre-regnal, name was Sultan Salim. The white jade ring was once



7. Knife Handle. North India, Mughal. *C.* 1610-1620. Pale green nephrite jade, formerly inlaid with gem stones set in gold; 8.6 x 1.6 x 1.3 centimetres. National Museum, New Delhi, 45.15/8. Photograph: Stephen Markel. This elegant jade handle of a small knife (*kard*) was once enriched with gem stones set in a gold lattice-work of cusped quatrefoils.

8. Dagger Hilt. North India, Mughal. Early seventeenth century. Rock crystal hilt inlaid with gem stones set in gold, gold quillon inlaid with gem stones, steel blade; 33.7 centimetres (overall). The Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, OP-5287. Photograph: After A. A. Ivanov et al. *Oriental Jewellery. From the Collection of the State Treasury, the State Hermitage Oriental Department* (Moscow: Art, 1984), no. 112.

inlaid with gold and set with gem stones in an incised floral arabesque pattern recalling Safavid designs and lapidary technique.

Salim's ring can be generally dated to *circa* 1600 on the basis of the name of Salim and the style of decoration. The use of the title "Shah" indicates further that it was made during the period of Salim's revolt against his father Akbar between the second half of the year 1599 and November 1604, when he set up his own independent court at Allahabad, assumed the title of "Shah" (King), produced several illustrated manuscripts, and reportedly even issued his own coins. The paintings produced for Salim in Allahabad frequently exhibit a distinct Iranian flavour due to the influence and guidance of the Safavid master Aqa Riza, who was the leading artist and director of an atelier which included painters, calligraphers, architects, masons, and, apparently, lapidaries.¹⁸ Taken together, the use of the title "Shah" and the Persianate ornamentation of the thumb ring suggest that it was made for Salim in Allahabad between 1599 and 1604, perhaps in honour of his declared independence.¹⁹

Furthermore, even though Salim's thumb ring was technically created during the reign of Akbar, its close association with Salim/Jahangir and its vastly different style of ornamentation compared to the aforementioned jades attributed to Akbar's reign preclude it from being very helpful in further determining the general stylistic characteristics of Akbari jades. Rather, its importance lies more in its ability to enhance our understanding of Jahangir's aesthetic sensibilities and the evolution of jades produced under his patronage.

The earliest surviving Mughal jades which bear dated dedicatory inscriptions were



9. Pen-nub Dryer (?) of Jahangir. North India, Mughal. 1626-1627. White nephrite, silver mounts and black pigment; 6.2 x 1.5 centimetres. Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay, 66.18. Photograph: courtesy Prince of Wales Museum of Western India. Inscribed with the name Jahangir and the date AH 1036. The suggested function given in the title for this object accords with the official record of the Prince of Wales Museum and was originally suggested by Rai Krishnadasa. Many writers, including the present one, now follow Robert Skelton in believing that it was a perfume phial.

10. Dagger Hilt. North India, Mughal. *C.* 1625. White and dark green nephrite; 11 x 5.1 centimetres. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, 3/5741. Photograph: Stephen Markel. This striking two-tone dagger hilt fashioned in the form of a blossoming iris flower and leafy stem is unusual for Mughal jades which, unlike Chinese jades, virtually always feature a uniform colour of the stone.

created for Jahangir within two years of the beginning of his reign. As is well known, Jahangir actively collected fifteenth-century Timurid and Chinese vessels and had them inscribed with his titles and poetic verses. The jade wine cups made early in his reign consciously imitated the forms of these earlier metal and ceramic vessels, as is evident from the jade-like wine cup now in the Rhode Island School of Design (figure 6). It is inscribed with Jahangir's name, a date corresponding to 1612-1613, and several poetic verses in praise of the emperor and the cup itself. Fashioned from fine-grained quartz and chromian muscovite rather than nephrite jade, the cup is a rare example of an early Mughal jade simulant. The form of the cup is borrowed from sixteenth-century Ming dynasty Chinese porcelain vessels.²⁰

Although Jahangir's early inscribed jades are extremely interesting and crucial for an understanding of the development of Mughal jade carving, they are well known and frequently published. Therefore, in lieu of duplicating earlier efforts,²¹ a previously unpublished jade that may also be attributed to the early years of Jahangir's reign will now be discussed.

Fashioned of pale green jade and once inlaid with gold and precious gem stones in an elegant arabesque, a small knife handle in the National Museum, New Delhi (figure 7), is carved in the Iranian style of hilt typically found on an Indo-Islamic straight-bladed dagger known as a *kard*. A close parallel for the decoration of the hilt can be found on numerous contemporary rock crystal dagger hilts inlaid with a similar bejewelled arabesque, such as an early seventeenth-century example now in The Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (figure 8).²²

Late in the reign of Jahangir, presumably after his inspiring visit in the spring of 1620 to the lush flower-filled valleys of Kashmir, an innovative and refined style of jade carving began to appear that featured floral and vegetal forms in place of the prototypical shapes derived from ceramics and metalware. This floral style of Jahangiri jades is best exemplified by a small inscribed perfume phial or pen-nub dryer made in the shape of a flower bud, which is dated 1626-1627 and is now in the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay (figure 9), and by a contemporary two-tone jade dagger hilt in the form of a flowering iris with foliate stem now in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi (figure 10). Although of a completely radical appearance compared with Jahangir's jades previously discussed, even without the inscription on the perfume phial, the attribution of these two works to a late period in the emperor's reign would remain discernible through their powerful forms and bold carving while their floral conception indicates a date no earlier than *circa* 1620-1625.

JADES UNDER SHAH JAHAN

As accomplished as Jahangir's jades are, it was during the reign of his successor Shah Jahan that the full artistic potential of the medium was realized. Mature Shah Jahani jades are characterized by a sophistication of technique and an elegance of form unknown in works created for his father. Some time shortly before the middle of the seventeenth century, Shah Jahan's jades began to display a more delicate manner of execution that allowed for an even greater subtlety of form and motif.

Shah Jahan's jade artisans continued the use of floral imagery begun under Jahangir and increased its utilization throughout the entire spectrum of the arts produced for him. An exquisite spinach green jade bowl probably dating from *circa* 1640-1650, now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (figures 11a,b), is a superb example of the delicate workmanship and refinement of Shah Jahani works of jade from this period, but has yet to achieve the extraordinary finesse of carving found on vessels created closer to the end of the emperor's reign.

Shah Jahan's artists also augmented the choice of motifs derived from the world of nature, especially the dagger hilts fashioned in the form of animal heads, which, as far as it is known, first appear in Mughal painting in *circa* 1610-1615.²³ Perhaps the most powerful representation of the genre is a well-known hilt that portrays a nilgai, the slate-blue wild buck antelope of India (figure 12). Dating probably from the same decade as the jade bowl and now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the sensitivity of the rendering of the antelope's head, lily blossoms, and acanthus leaves epitomizes Shah Jahani jade carving.



11a. Bowl. North India, Mughal. C. 1640-1650. Spinach green nephrite; 5.7 x 15.9 centimetres. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M. 76.2.2. Photograph: courtesy LACMA (Steve Oliver). The ultra-smooth finish and sophisticated craftsmanship of this vessel typify Mughal jade working at its finest.

11b. Detail of Base. This dramatic view shows the translucency and modelling of the delicately worked jade.

The quintessential articulation of the art-form under Shah Jahan is his renowned white jade drinking vessel dated 1656-1657 now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (V & A), London (figures 13a,b).²⁴ An indisputable masterpiece, this often-published cup harmoniously combines disparate stylistic elements derived from European, Chinese, and indigenous Indian artistic traditions.²⁵

Although this vessel is frequently singled out as the epitome of Mughal jade working, at least one other known vessel (and presumably additional, now perished ones), can rival it in elegance and technical virtuosity. Dating probably from the same period and perhaps even created by the same artist or workshop, the little-known white jade cup is in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (figures 14a,b).²⁶ The vessel is fashioned in the form of a lobed leaf, with foliate handles on the sides and a supporting foot replicating a raised lotus blossom with curled petals. Despite the obvious differences in design and motif between the two vessels — the Taipei cup terminates in a vegetal handle in place of the goat head of the V & A cup and the Taipei cup has long, tapering leaves on its underside instead of the acanthus leaves found on the V & A cup — the sublime quality of the carving of the lotus petals with their naturalistic venation and textured surface suggests an identical source of origin for the Taipei cup.

Many examples of similarly shaped vessels survive from later periods and perhaps even earlier,²⁷ but only these two Shah Jahani works exhibit such a mastery of form and sensitivity of expression.

JADES UNDER AURANGZEB

Early Aurangzebi jades closely follow the stylistic norms set by mature Shah Jahani works. The crucial difference between the start of Shah Jahan's patronage of jades and that of Aurangzeb's is that while Shah Jahan's artists purposely modified his father's style of jades to match his own personal taste, Aurangzeb's jade workers at first merely perpetuated the existing style.



12. Dagger with Nilgai's Head Hilt. North India, Mughal. C. 1650. Dark gray-blue nephrite hilt, steel blade; 38.1 centimetres (overall). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Alice and Nasli Heeramaneck Collection, Gift of Alice Heeramaneck, 1985, 1985.58a. Photograph: courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The deep gray-blue hue of this jade hilt is especially appropriate for representing a nilgai, the often hunted antelope of India whose coat is of a similar colour.



13a. Cup of Shah Jahan. North India, Mughal. 1656-1657. White nephrite; 6.4 x 18.7 x 14 centimetres. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IS 12-1962. Photograph: courtesy Victoria and Albert Museum. Inscribed with the name of Shah Jahan and the date AH 1067. Perhaps created for Shah Jahan's grand darbar marking his third decade of rule, as suggested by Cary Welch, this well-known work of art represents the epitome of Mughal jades.

13b. Detail of Base.



14a. Cup. North India, Mughal. C. 1655-1660. White nephrite; 4.9 x 21 x 14 centimetres. National Palace Museum, Taipei. *T'ien* 312. Photograph: courtesy National Palace Museum. The style of modelling and delicacy of expression suggest that this jade may have been fashioned in the same workshop as the cup shown in figs. 13a,b.

14b. Detail of Base.



15. Detail of Dagger Hilt of Aurangzeb. North India, Mughal. 1660-1661. Pale green and burnt-orange nephrite hilt, steel blade inlaid with gold; 34.9 x 5.6 centimetres. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M. 76.2.7a. Photograph: courtesy LACMA (Steve Oliver). Inscribed with the name of Alamgir (Aurangzeb) and the date AH 1071. The unusual shape of the mouth of the hilt accords precisely with the distinctive inlay pattern of the blade, thereby suggesting that the current hilt and blade are the original matching components and that the hilt can thus be assigned the same date as the inscribed blade. This attribution is also supported by the style of the hilt.



16. Dagger and Sheath. North India, Mughal. *C.* 1675-1700 (sheath fittings: *C.* 1800). White nephrite hilt and sheath fittings inlaid with gem stones set in gold, steel blade inlaid with gold, velvet covered wooden sheath; 42.9 x 7.6 x 2.9 centimetres (overall). Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M. 71.1.35a, b. Photograph: courtesy LACMA (Steve Oliver). Inscribed with a nonsensical "decorative" script. After the pristine style of ornamentation generally favoured during the reign of Shah Jahan, dagger hilts returned to the more ornate style of decoration with inlaid gem stones set in gold that was popular during Jahangir and Akbar's times.

In the light of the close stylistic similarities, it seems obvious that the jades made at the beginning of Aurangzeb's reign must have been made by the lapidaries employed by Shah Jahan, as is the case with a jade dagger hilt dated from the second year of Aurangzeb's reign now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (figure 15). Made of pale green jade with areas of burnt orange, the hilt is finely rendered in the form of a horse's head and neck. It is dated 1660-1661 by an inscription on the presumably contemporary blade that declares it to be the personal dagger of Alamgir (Aurangzeb).²⁸ The hilt is proportionally somewhat thinner than Shah Jahan's nilgai hilt, which also suggests a slightly later date.

Jades made later in the reign of Aurangzeb reintroduce the more ornate style of decoration with inlaid precious metals and gem stones that had been favoured under Jahangir, since the lapidary technique of inlaying costly stones was restricted to jewellery and architectural embellishment during the reign of Shah Jahan. This revived decorative fashion can be seen in numerous weapon hilts from the period, such as this opulent example dating from *circa* 1675-1700, now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (figure 16),²⁹ and also in a number of portraits of the emperor.³⁰ Significantly, a visiting European, François Bernier, writing in 1665, documented this fashion of embellishment by recording that contemporary jades were "inlaid with strings of gold, and enriched with precious stones".³¹

Another noteworthy feature of this dagger hilt is the design of its butt — hook-shaped with a rounded terminal — which was derived from the Western European-style of pistol butt used for pistol butts and sword hilts in the weaponry traditions of Ottoman Turkey and Safavid Iran.³² The pistol-butt hilt form was introduced into the Mughal artistic repertoire early in Aurangzeb's reign,³³ and may have inspired the creation of Indian dagger hilts made in the visually similar shape of a parrot's head.³⁴

By the end of Aurangzeb's long reign, works of jade had been standardized into the set forms on which the later eighteenth and nineteenth-century jades were patterned. Myriad examples from this period bear witness to the continued production of jade objects, and although superb jade working again effloresced in the late eighteenth century at the Awadh court of Lucknow,³⁵ it is the mid-seventeenth century that must ultimately be regarded as the zenith of Mughal jade working.

NOTES

1. The Mughals were Central Asian warriors who conquered northern India in the early sixteenth century to establish a mighty kingdom lasting until the mid-nineteenth century, which was visually characterized by such grand monuments as the Taj Mahal (1632-1643), and highly refined paintings and decorative arts.
2. Even the numerous notices of ornate vessels and jewelled daggers mentioned in Jahangir's memoirs are remarkably silent in specifically mentioning jade, apart from a notable reference to a Timurid jade jug of Ulug Beg (1394-1449) that the emperor had inscribed with his name. See A. Rogers, H. Beveridge, trans. and ed., *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (1909-1914, 3rd edition, 2 vols. in one, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978), vol. 1, p. 146.
3. Described by François Bernier, a French physician and traveller in India in 1656-1668. See François Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire A.D. 1656-1668*, trans. A. Constable (London: Oxford University Press, 1891; reprint of 2nd ed., Rev. V. A. Smith, New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint, 1983), p. 426.
4. Mughal literary references often specify, for example, the presentation of a "jewelled" dagger or sword. This more detailed description of the object, however, should be regarded more as a proclamation of the extravagant value of the gift than just a report of its medium *per se*.
5. Detailed records of the Mughal ateliers have either perished or remain unpublished. Further research in this direction may yield fruitful results, especially the archival records stored in Bikaner of the former Rajasthani courts, such as Amber where Mughal lapidaries reportedly migrated in the late seventeenth century.
6. See Stephen Markel, "Fit for an Emperor: Inscribed Works of Decorative Art Acquired by the Great Mughals," *Oriental Art*, 21:8 (August 1990), pp. 22-36.
7. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Baron of Aubonne*, 2 vols., trans. V. Ball (2nd edition, W. Crooke, ed., London, 1925; reprint edition, New Delhi: Oriental Books, 1977), p. 111.
8. Abu-l-Fazl, *The Akbar Nama of Abu-l-Fazl*, 3 vols., trans. H. Beveridge (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, Bibliotheca Indica, 1897-1921; reprint ed., Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1989), vol. 2, pp. 300-303.
9. William Foster, ed., *Early Travels in India, 1583-1619* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), pp. 102-103.
10. Compare also a dark green jade plate in Teng Shu-p'ing, *Catalogue of a Special Exhibition of Hindustan Jade in the National Palace Museum*, trans. D. M. Kamen, exh. cat. (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1983), pp. 180-81, pl. 28; and a green platter shown in a Mughal painting from a *Bustan of Sa'di* manuscript dated 1605-1606 in Abolala Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection*, exh. cat. (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), p. 342 cat. 137 e.
11. Large porcelain serving platters were created by Chinese factories as export ware for the Middle Eastern markets because of the communal dining habits of the Muslim clientele. See John S. Guy, *Oriental Trade Ceramics in South-East Asia Ninth to Sixteenth Centuries* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 28. For a discussion of such dishes acquired by the Mughal emperors, see Stephen Markel, "Jades, Jewels, and Objets d'Art," *Romance*

- of the *Taj Mahal*, exh. publication by Pratapaditya Pal et al (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), pp. 166-69 and Markel, "Inscribed Works," pp. 34-36.
12. *In Pursuit of the Dragon: Traditions and Transitions in Ming Ceramics* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 1988), p. 79, cat. no. 19. Unpublished translation of the Mughal inscription by Wheeler M. Thackston, Harvard University.
13. Detail of "Babur Entertained by Badi uz-Zaman-Mirza in the Jahan Ara Garden in Herat [in 1506-07]," *The Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow* (Leningrad: Aurora Art, 1988), p. 187, cat. no. 195. For the account in Babur's memoirs of this evening of entertainment, see A. S. Beveridge, trans. and ed., *The Babur-nama in English (Memoirs of Babur)* (London, 1922; reprint ed., London: Luzac, 1969), pp. 302-304.
14. Light green vessels can be seen in a number of Mughal paintings. See, for example, Alice N. Heeramaneck, *Masterpieces of Indian Painting: from the Former Collections of Nasli M. Heeramaneck* (n.p.: By the author, 1984), pp. 175 and 195, pls. 143 and 163.
15. *The Guennol Collection*, vol. 2 (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982), pp. 68-70.
16. Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory*, exh. cat. (New York: The Asia Society Galleries, 1985), pp. 116 and 155, cat. no. 75.
17. Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and Culture, 1300-1900*, exh. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), p. 194, fig. 122.
18. For a discussion of Salim's Allahabad studio, see Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Grand Mogul: Imperial Painting in India 1600-1660*, exh. cat. (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1978), pp. 17 and 33-41; and Asok Kumar Das, *Mughal Painting during Jahangir's Time* (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1978), pp. 40-69.
19. It is evident that Salim's thumb ring could not have been made in the primary centres of jade carving, such as Agra or Delhi, as the royal artists working there were still in the service of Akbar. This attribution to a sub-imperial workshop may also explain why the inscription on the thumb ring is cruder than is usual in imperial epigraphs.
20. Compare the bowls in *Imperial Taste: Chinese Ceramics from the Percival David Foundation*, exh. cat. (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art; Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989), p. 67, cat. no. 37.
21. See Markel, "Inscribed Works."
22. Anatoli A. Ivanov et al., *Oriental Jewellery. From the Collection of the State Treasury, the State Hermitage Oriental Department* (Moscow: Art, 1984), cat. no. 112, pls. 180 and 181.
23. For the earliest known painted representation of an animal-headed hilt, see the portrait of Jamal Khan Qarawul by Murad dating from c. 1610-1615 from the Kevorkian Album, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (acc. no. 55.121.10.29r), In Stuart Cary Welch et al., *The Emperors' Album: Images of Mughal India*, exh. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), pp. 133-34, cat. no. 26. Perhaps the earliest extant animal hilt is a lion-headed jade hilt dated 1602 by an inscription inlaid in gold on the blade and recorded therein as the work of Saleh, now in the Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad (acc. no. XLIX-328). However, as I have not been permitted to examine this weapon in person and because, if not for the inscription, the hilt would stylistically be dated to the mid-seventeenth century, its usefulness in this context remains doubtful. See M. L. Nigam, "The Mughal Jades of India," pp. 76 and 78; and G. N. Pant, "Indo-Islamic Arms and Armour," in *An Age of Splendour — Islamic Art in India*, Karl Khandalavala, ed. (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1983), p. 55, fig. 8.
24. This jade vessel is traditionally identified as a wine cup on the basis of comparisons with Jahangir's vessels identified by inscription as wine cups. However, as Shah Jahan was a teetotaler except for a brief period of his life between 1616 and 1622, this vessel must have been used for other, non-alcoholic beverages. See Wayne E. Begley and Z. A. Desai, *The Shah Jahan Nama of 'Inayat Khan* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 6 and 9.
25. See Robert Skelton, *The Shah Jahan Cup* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1969).
26. No dates were proposed for any object in the otherwise excellent catalogue of the exhibition in which the Taipei jade cup was first published. See Teng, *Hindustan Jade*, pp. 198-99, pl. 37.
27. For a leaf-shaped white jade vessel generally attributed to c. 1625-1630 now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (acc. no. M. 76.2.1), see Markel, "Jades, Jewels," pp. 145-47, fig. 150; and Stephen Markel, "Carved Jades of the Mughal Period," *Arts of Asia*, 17: 6 (Nov-Dec 1987), p. 124, fig. 86. For a post-Shah Jahan era attribution of the vessel, see Robert Skelton, "Islamic and Mughal Jades," *Jade*, R. Keverne, ed. (London: Anness Pub., 1991), p. 287. Recent research by the present writer, however, suggests that the alternative possibility of an eighteenth-century Qianlong period Chinese origin for the Los Angeles vessel should not be excluded.
28. For a discussion of the synchronism of the hilt and blade, see Markel, "Jades, Jewels," p. 155.
29. The gold inscription on the blade is nonsensical and, thus, merely "decorative" (Simon Digby, personal communication to the writer, September 12, 1988).
30. See, for example, the portrait of Aurangzeb hunting in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, (Ms. 11, no. 27), which was most recently published in Welch, *India*, pp. 268-269, figure 176.
31. Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, p. 423.
32. For the Middle Eastern weapons, see, for example, Howard J. Ricketts, *Splendeur des armes orientales*, exh. cat., translated with additional information by Philippe Missillier (Paris: ACTE EXPO-EPAD, 1988); and Anthony North, *An Introduction to Islamic Arms* (Owings Mills, MD: Stemmer House).
33. Cary Welch (*India*, p. 271) argues for a Deccani origin of this hilt form, while Susan Stronge favours a Mughal genesis (Mildred Archer et al., *Treasures from India: The Clive Collection at Powis Castle* (New York: The Meredith Press, 1987), p. 42, cat. no. 18). Both writers apparently disregard the European and Middle Eastern sources for the hilt form.
34. For example, see an eighteenth-century North Indian dagger with a parrot's head hilt in The David Collection, Copenhagen (acc. no. 27-1977).
35. For an example of the high quality of Lucknow jades, see an inscribed and inlaid jade sword hilt dated 1786-1787 in Ricketts, *armes orientales*, p. 133, cat. no. 221. For a survey of Lucknow decorative arts, see Stephen Markel, "An Indian Scabbard Chape in the Cincinnati Art Museum and Related Luxury Arts of Lucknow," *Arts of Asia*, March-April 1993, forthcoming.