

ISLAMIC PATTERNS

SWORD WITH SCABBARD

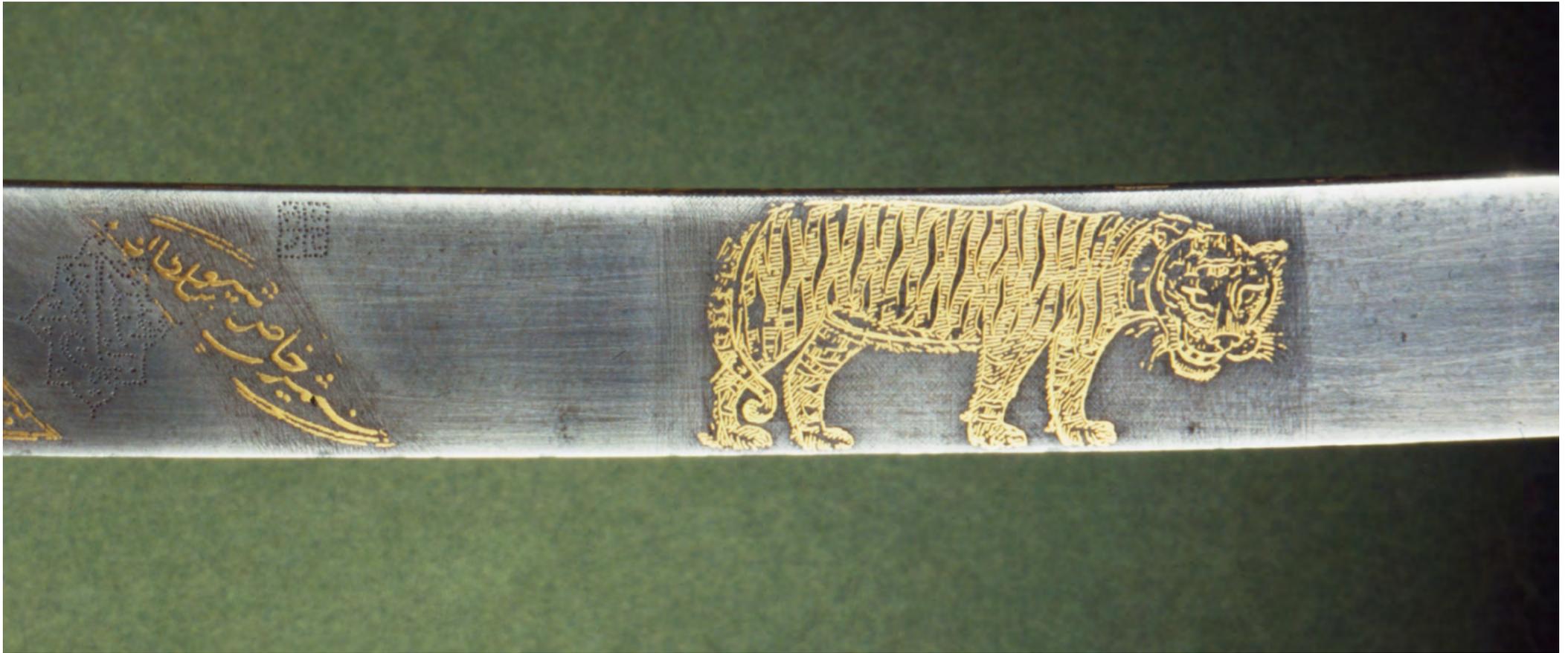
This sword (tulwar) was once thought to have belonged to Tipu Sultan of Mysore (1753-1799). Tipu Sultan, known as the 'Tiger of Mysore' and often associated with images of tigers, ruled in southern India from 1782 until his death in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War in 1799.

The hilt is made from jade and is decorated with foil-backed rubies and diamonds. The steel blade bears the maker's signature 'Asadullah' and a series of inscriptions overlaid in gold, including one to the effect that 'this is the sword of Tipu'.

However, this blade was made later than the hilt, and was likely added on later by a merchant who saw a gap in the market for looted goods belonging to people like the Sultan; the inscription was likely added to make a bigger and better sale. The tiger is depicted in a more European style than the popular Indian style that was more common at the time. It can indeed be traced back to a European print.



IN DETAIL



DATE 18th century

MATERIALS Gold, steel, jade, rubies, diamonds

SIZE 88.5 cm length

PLACE India

MAKER Asadullah Isfahani

IN DETAIL



RESEARCH & DISCUSS

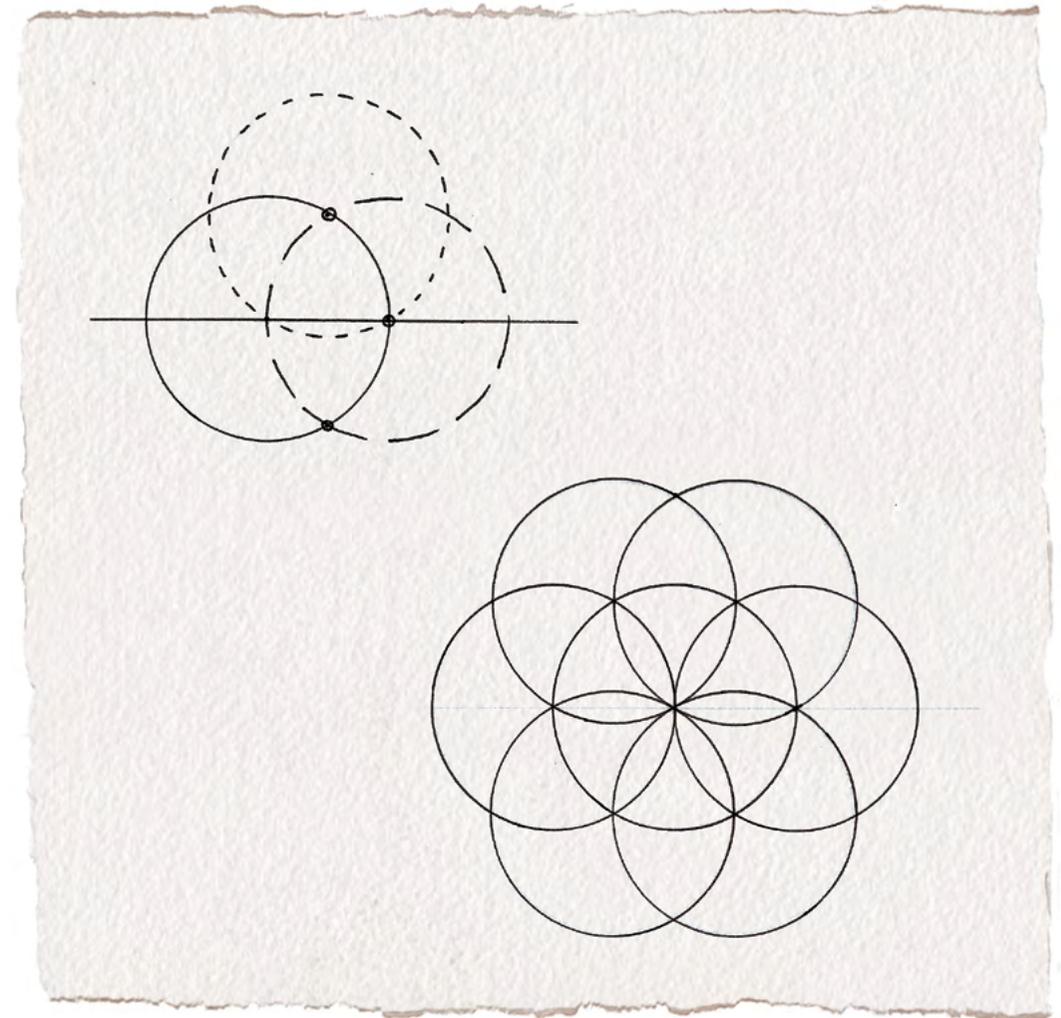


- Find out more about Tipu Sultan. Who was he, and why is he a celebrated figure in Indian history? Why is he known as the 'Tiger of Mysore'?
- 'Tipu's tiger' is an object at the Victoria and Albert Museum: <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/tipu-tiger> What does this tell us about Tipu being an Indian hero and the British occupation of India?
- After Tipu Sultan was defeated, many of his treasures were looted and sent to England. Some are now in museum collections. What can this tell us about the British empire and how soldiers at that time behaved in other countries?
- Compare how tigers, or other animals and plants, are depicted in different cultures, traditions, time periods and regions of the world. Can you draw a tiger according to different design styles? Draw one in your own style, or any popular form of illustration today.

ACTIVITY Creating a flower pattern

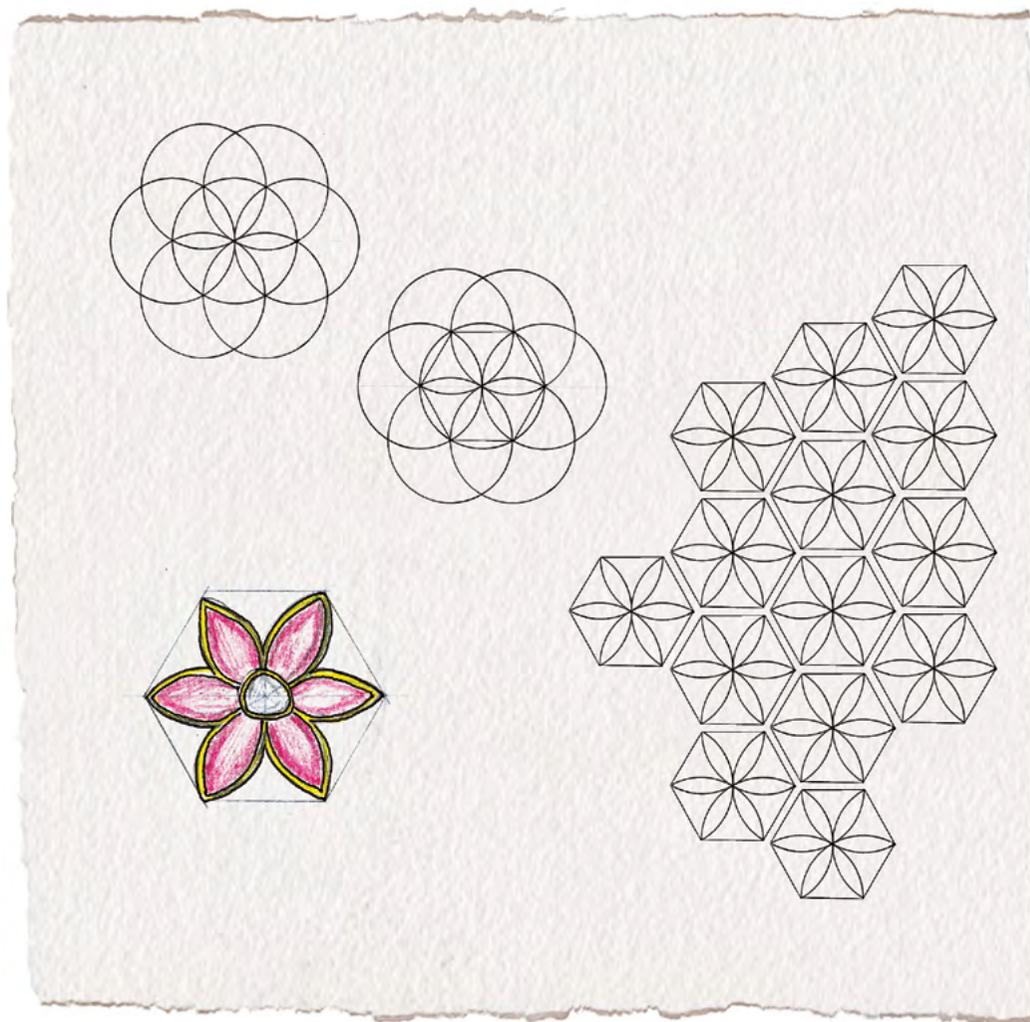
You could sketch out a floral pattern and try to evenly space the petals by eye, but it can also be done much more accurately using a compass, pencil and ruler.

- Draw a horizontal line with a ruler.
- Open the compass to a radius of 3 or 4cm, depending on the size of your piece of paper.
- Place the compass point on the line, and draw a circle.
- Mark out where the circle crosses the line. Place the compass point on that mark, and draw a circle.
- Mark out where the two circles cross each other. Place the compass point on that mark, and draw a circle.
- Repeat these steps until you have 6 circles intersecting around the first middle circle you drew.
- You should now have a 6-petal flower in that first circle.



ACTIVITY Creating a flower pattern: part 2

- Mark out the points of that inner circle. If you draw a line joining them up, what shape do you get?
- Those inner petals can be the basis of our flower. You can use them as they are or adapt them and make them wider.
- Add outlines and colour if you like.
- The 6-petal flower made up of circles can be repeated and repeated, giving us a construction grid that can be the basis of many hexagonal patterns. Drawing the grid and using different sheets of tracing paper on top, how many patterns can you create?



ACTIVITY Design a hilt

Design your own hilt or handle of an object, using floral patterns. Make sure to include:

- A stylised flower inspired by flowers found in nature and in your local environment
- Symmetry
- An even distribution of motifs within the space

