

DAVID AARON



Talpur Gun

1823 to 1833 A.D, the barrel probably late 18th Century.

Made for Mir Murad Ali Khan Talpur, Sind, North India

Steel, gold, enamel, wood

Wooden case: 144.5 x 14 x 29.9 cm

This rifle comprises a pattern-welded steel barrel, with a wooden stock and butt, embellished with gold mounts decorated with polychrome champlevé and painted enamels.

The rifle has a wooden stock, with a fish-tail butt, possibly in rosewood, with gold reinforces decorated in champlevé and painted enamels at each corner of the butt. These have floral decoration with blooms in opaque pink, white and blue, with translucent green, each framed by a circle of translucent blue. On the lower fitting is a short engraved inscription reading: 'Kandawala'.

There are appliqué circular gold and enamel plaques with eight-pointed stars in the form of florets on each side in the centre of the butt. At the narrowest point of the stock is a gold band, with a raised moulding having enamel decoration of

pink chevrons against an opaque white ground, and a translucent green edging.

On the right side of the stock towards the lock is a gold fitting having two sockets, now empty, for the pricket set, originally secured with gold chains or wire, used to keep the vent clean, decorated with a chevron pattern in red and white enamels, now damaged, and the border with translucent green enamels.

The breech cap is luxuriously decorated with gold, having enamelled floral decoration in opaque pink, blue yellow and green with a series of individual blooms, each framed by a circle in translucent dark blue, having five on each side and three in the centre. The gold extends down the back of the cap behind the barrel with similar floral enameled decoration.

The lock is decorated with overlaid (koftgari) gold. There is an animal, probably a tiger, on the lock plate under the touchpan, and to the left side of the lock plate a running Saluki dog facing right looking over its shoulder, with a border of hatched horizontal and diagonal lines. The cock is similarly decorated with floral scrolls. The touch pan and the cover are also decorated in gold. The trigger guard is of gilded steel, and there are two loops for the sling, one in gilded steel, the other towards the foresight, with enamelled gold.

The octagonal barrel is of pattern welded steel, etched to bring out the pattern. The rear sight is raised above the surface of the barrel and cusped. It has a deep sighting notch, with gold across the top edge. There is heavy gold overlaid decoration on the top of the barrel in front of the rear sight, with arabesque scrolls. On the left hand side of the barrel is an inscription in gold written in cursive script reading:

‘Sarkar Mir ‘Ali Murad Khan Talpur. Help O ‘Ali!’

There are three gold capuchines around the barrel, all decorated with polychrome champlevé enamels of floral designs, having blooms in opaque pink,

white and blue and translucent green, each bloom framed with a translucent dark blue circle. The central capuchine has a quatrefoil on the top with four blooms and a sling loop below also with enamels, the other two both have trefoils with three blooms. There is further heavy gold overlay with scrolls at the fore sight. The original ram rod has gold overlay decoration with a wavy pattern of lines.

The rifle has a fitted wooden case.

Literature:

Islamic Art and Manuscripts, Christie's, London, Tuesday 10th October 2000, Lot 221