

AMIR MOHTASHEMI



Royal Talpur Sword

Sindh, Pakistan, Late 18th – Early 19th century

84cm high

Stock no.: A4699

This sword has a tulwar hilt with a curved blade. The iron hilt is covered in gold with incised vegetal decoration. The grip is slightly bulbous, the quillons short with rounded ends, and the languet rectangular in shape with six punched squares. The knuckle bow extends from the quillon to the pommel disk, curling back on both sides to form two opposing decorative heads. The blade is curved, single-edged and damascened, and bears two sections of gold nasta'liq calligraphy. The first line, partly obscured by the hilt, reads:

‘Sarkar Mir Subedar Khan Talpur’

Mir Subedar Khan Talpur (d.1846) was the son of the ruler Mir Fath ‘ali Khan Talpur (d.1801), from the Talpur ruling house of Hyderabad. The Talpur Dynasty ruled Sindh (present-day southeast Pakistan) from the late 18th to the early 19th century. Mir Fath ‘ali Khan Talpur became the first official ruler of Sindh, under Afghan sovereignty, following the battle of Halani in 1783.[1] Mir Subedar Khan is possibly the same person as the poet who composed a versified history of the Talpur dynasty called the Fathnama.[2]

The second section of calligraphy, in the cartouche next to the hilt, reads:

‘Work of Asadallah Isfahani’

Asadallah Isfahani is traditionally considered to be the most celebrated Persian sword maker. Despite his name appearing on many blades, very little is known about him. Dated examples bearing his name range from the 15th to the early 19th century, suggesting the continued use of his name was a sign of

quality.[3]

For comparative examples of this type of sword, see the Royal Armouries Collection, Leeds, Accession Number XXVIS.135; and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession Number 26.35.1a, b, and published in Alexander, pp. 182-83, No. 69, for a Persian example with the same signature of 'Asadallah Isfahani'.

Literature:

Alexander, D. G. Islamic Arms and Armor in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2015.

Askari, N. Treasures of the Talpurs: Collections from the Court of Sindh, Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi, 1999.

Storey, C.A. Persian Literature: A Bio-Bibliographical Survey, II, 3. M: History of India, Luzac and Co., London, 1939.

[1] Askari, pp. 13-14

[2] Storey, pp. 658

[3] Alexander, p. 182