THE TIPU SULTAN COLLECTION
London  Wednesday 25 May 2005

AUCTION
34-35 New Bond Street
London W1A 2AA
Wednesday 25 May 2005
at 10.30 am

EXHIBITION
Friday 20 May
9 am to 4.30 pm
Sunday 22 May
12 noon to 4 pm
Monday 23 May
9 am to 4.30 pm
Tuesday 24 May
9 am to 4.30 pm
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC ART DEPARTMENT

LONDON
Edward Gibbs
Head of Department
020 7293 5032
Dalya Islam
020 7293 5155
Holly Brackenbury
020 7293 5112
Fax 020 7293 5986

CONTENTS
The Tipu Sultan Collection, Lots 1-64 14
Important Notices relating to this Sale 120
and Safety at Sotheby’s Notice 120
Sotheby’s Authenticity Guarantee 121
Guide for Prospective Buyers 124
Warehouse, Storage and Collection Information 127
VAT Information for Buyers 128
Sotheby’s Conditions of Business 130
Guide to Client Services 133
Directory of Specialist Departments 134
Directory of International Offices 136
Absentee Bid Form 139
Guide to Absentee Bidding 140
Sotheby’s Board of Directors
INTRODUCTION

"The dreadful fate of Tippoo Sultan cannot be contemplated without emotions of pain and regret; but I trust it will serve as a salutary lesson to the Native Princes of India, and will prove the danger of violating public engagements, and inviting foreign invasion, for the prosecution of schemes of ambition and hatred against the British Power."

The Right Honorable Earl Mornington, Governor General of India, 11 May 1799

"Better to die like a soldier than live a miserable life dependent on the infidels... I would rather live two days as a tiger, than two hundred years as a sheep."

Tippoo Sultan, Tiger of Mysore (1750-1799)

HAYDAR ALI AND TIPU SULTAN

Haydar Ali (1722-1782) and his son Tipu Sultan (1750-1799) came to power in South India in the 1760s by seizing the state of Mysore from the family of Wodeyar, the hereditary Hindu rulers. By conquest they extended their territories and conducted four wars against the East India Company and British troops. In the second of these in 1782, Haydar Ali died and was succeeded by Tipu. The Third Mysore War was concluded with the Treaty of Seringapatam, in February-March 1792, which forced Tipu to cede territory and exact substantial reparations. Tipu was also forced to surrender two of his sons, Abdul Khaliq (aged 10) and Muiz ud-Din (aged 8), as hostages to deter him from further resistance. The episode of the handing over of the two boys to Lord Cornwallis was to inspire a number of British history paintings of the subject. The boys were duly returned to their father in 1794, but Tipu continued to defy the British and in April 1799 sent an ambassador to the Ile de France proposing an alliance with the French Republic against their common enemy. The British intercepted the reply from 'Bonaparte' addressed to "Citizen Tipu' in which Napoleon is "full of the desire of delivering you from the iron yoke of England". The discovery of this intrigue led directly to the Fourth Mysore War, which culminated on 4 May 1799 with the storming of the fortress of Seringapatam by the British army under General Sir David Baird. Tipu died in the confusion of the battle and later that evening his body was identified by General Baird accompanied by Colonel Arthur Wellesley (the future Duke of Wellington). When news reached the British authorities, Lord Harris declared, "Now India is Ours!"

THE STORMING OF SERINGAPATAM

"My Lord, it is with the greatest pleasure I inform your Lordship, that on Saturday the 4th instant, about half past one in the afternoon, the breach was assaulted and in less than an hour our troops were in possession of the whole of the rampart of Seringapatam... The death of the Sultan, who was shot through the head, and bayoneted in three parts of his body as he attempted to make his escape, the possession of his whole family, treasures and jewels, which were secured from ravage and plunder, by the accidental circumstance of the Palace not having been taken possession of until the fury of the storm was over... No account has yet been taken of the treasure, but from what has been seen it must be immense." (From Major Blauston, to the Right Honorable the Governor General Earl Mornington, dated Seringapatam, 6th May 1799)

With the death of Tipu and the finding of his body by Baird and Wellesley, a night of looting followed. The town of Seringapatam was stripped of whatever valuables could be found. The British military authorities acquired the contents of the Tipu's palace, and Wellesley was appointed to regain control, which he did..." by the greatest exertion, by hanging, flogging, &c." The act of taking a town by storm, as opposed to its surrender, meant that the seizing of booty was permissible, but within certain prescribed limits. The previous Governor General, Lord Cornwallis, had issued the following statement in 1791: "The Commander in Chief is also prepared to decline, that he considers all property, in places taken by assault or desert, to fall to the captors; and in consequence of the recommendation of the Committee, it is pleased to order, that when persons shall apply to the Officer commanding at such places, for leave to dig up treasure, jewels, or other valuable effects, it shall be granted, under the express condition of one-half being retained as salvage, and delivered to the prize Agent, on account of the Army; and they, or the persons acting for them, are to be informed, whenever such applications are
made, that they may be present, when the treasure or effects are dug up. Persons not claiming as proprietors, but giving information of secret property, are to be allowed one-fourth of the treasure, or value of the effects, discovered in consequence of this information. The order to be sent to the places taken from the enemy, and made public, by beat of tom-tom, in the Bazaars and Pettahs, and in Camp."

(Extract from General Orders by Lord Cornwallis, 11 August 1791; signed P.A. Agnew, Military Secretary to Commander in Chief)

Tipu’s palace was renowned for the array of arms and armour accommodated there. The Scottish drayman Beaton recorded that “in his palace was found a great variety of curious enamels, daggers, flintlock pistols, and blunder-busses; some were of exquisite workmanship, mounted with gold, or silver and beautifully inlaid and ornamented…” It is recorded that after the conquest of Seringapatam, “These were taken 928 pieces of cannon, including mortars and howitzers, 424,000 iron balls, 520,000 lbs. Of powder and 99,000 pound of arms; while in the magazines and storehouses was found an armament of various munition in the same proportion.” (Grant, J., Caisse’s History of India, London, 1808, p.344).

The treasure and jewels were prodigious and included curiosities such as the extraordinary gold inscription box offered as lot 65, Exotic: East meets West, 25 May 2005. Many of the riches were dispatched to the Directors of the East India Company in London, including the mechanical ‘Main-Tiger-Organ’ now in the Victoria & Albert Museum. Other items were distributed to individuals who had particip-
ated in the siege and passed through the hands of their descendents, later to be acquired for the Tipu Sultan Collection. Many of the objects collected in jewellery and coin, Tipu maintained a superb and varied library of more than 200 volumes. They were catalogued by Charles Stewart in 1800, A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental Library of the Late Tipoo Sultan of Mysore, Cambridge: The University Press. On p.97, in the section on Arts and Sciences, Stewart adds the note: “It appears that Tippe was an Encyclopaugist and Patron of the Arts, and it is stated that Forty Five Books on different Sciences were either completed, or translated from different languages, under his immediate Inspection or Assisption.”

Tiger of Mysore

Today, across the sub-continent, Tipu Sultan is regarded as a nationalist hero identified with the struggle for independ-
ence. He is revered as the man who stood up to the British, dying sword in hand defending the gates of his palace against the imperialist oppressor. His tomb at Seringapatam has become a place of pilgrimage and to many, both Muslim and Hindu, he is both a national hero and a saint, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi “an embodiment of Hindu-Muslim unity.” In general British historians have not praised the achievements of Tipu. In the wake of the siege and his brutal death, the British enthusiastically demonised him as the embodiment of Oriental despotism (“Tippe was a cruel despot, and inferior in military tal-
ants to his father.” Encyclopædia Britannica, 11th Edition, 1910-1911). In fact, Tipu was an enlightened and cultured ruler, who had been an ally of the East India Company; would probably have been praised for his religious toler-
ance, progressive policies and keen patronage of the arts. He was above all a man of courage and pride who could have compromised and saved his kingdom under the British umbrella, as many Indian rulers did, but instead chose death before dishonour.

A recent work on Tipu, “Sunset at Seringapatam” by Mohammad Moienuddin, includes the following passage: “A true secularist, Fathullah Mohamed or Tipu Sultan Shaheed, Tiger of Mysore, promulgated reforms (dacoits) which set out procedures and created an admirable administrative structure that stood the test of time, which later became the model for the British administration to adopt in their domain. As a commander of the army, he foreshadowed the strategic value of naval power to check the entry and advance of aggressors from across the seas. He developed an army which, in discipline and sheer fighting capability, could match any in the world. A military strategist par excel-
ence, he designed armours, weapons and rocketry and autho-
ised a treatise on military practice and warfare, Fath-ul-
Mujahidin, to be written.

Tipu Sultan provided social security for his subjects. The treeless deserts prouugated by him show that he foresaw rural development as the springboard for economic develop-
ment. A department of animal husbandry was set up which bred strains of draught cattle, bullocks and horses. He recognised the importance of ecology and conservation and developed horticulture, sericulture and the new land use

TIPU SULTAN COLLECTION

The Tipu Sultan Collection was formed over a period of 20-30 years by Mr Robin Wighton, a gentleman dealer-collec-
tor based in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. Robin Wighton was Tipu-obsessed. His home in Stratford, where the col-
lection was housed, backed on to the River Avon where he kept a boat painted with tiger-skin stripes. As the collection grew, Wighton set up a private museum to dis-
play the major pieces and make them known to a wider audience. The Arts and Armour Museum was only open for 5½ years. Wighton then sold the collection to the City of Avon and the collection gained further exposure through a number of articles and other publications by Robin Wighton and was loaned to two major exhibitions devoted to Tipu, First at the Zamalee Gallery, London, 1990, and second at the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1999, both curated by Anne Buddle, a notable authority on Tipu. Other pieces were exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum, The Indian Heritage, Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule, London, 1982, pp.138-9, nos. 462-466.

THE BUBRI MOTIF

Tipu’s personal emblem was the tiger. All his belongings and many of those of his courtiers and soldiers were ornament-
ed with tiger stripes or Bubri. The Bubri was adopted in about 1760 and continued in use until his death in 1799. Tipu’s love of tigers was matched only by his hatred of the British. His name in Cenarese means ‘tiger’, and he was given the name by his father, Hayder, in honour of a Muslim saint, Tipu Mustafà, visited by his pregnant mother. The tiger thus symbolised his own name, as well as linking him to the prophet Ali, who was given the title ‘Lion of God’ by the Prophet Muhammad, and to his own father, whose name ‘Hayder’ can mean ‘lion’ or ‘tiger’. The name, letter or tiger stripe motif featured on every item at his court: objects were made of tiger form (such as the celebrated ‘main-Tiger-Organ’), his infantry and police guard wore tiger-striped uniforms painted these quarters. The main passage leading to his bedchamber was guarded by four tigers.

LONDON, 29 MAY 2005 • 9
THE FIREARMS OF TIPU SULTAN

The characteristics that link all of the surviving firearms pro-
duced in Nusayrā within the reign of Tipu Sultan have been
diligently identified and explained by Robin Wiggington in his
fine and comprehensive survey of the group, an area of
study which spanned a great many years. Wiggington’s work
was published under the title ‘The Firearms of Tipu Sultan
We would not presume to improve upon the published work
and we can therefore do no better than to quote Wiggington
in his coverage of the following points:

“What makes Tipu’s firearms truly unique in their design,
both superficially and physically, is the incorporation of the
bubri. Although the tiger stripe as an art form was widely
used throughout the world of Islam, and notably in India,
from very early times, Tipu’s particular pattern of stripe was
very much his own.

The classic bubri is an S-shaped figure, wide at the middle
with a hollow centre, and with re-curving ends of equal size.
It is sometimes decorated with pellets. Gold silver bubris
were inlaid in his gun and pistol barrels and were cast in
relief on his bronze cannon and mortars, (as ewomed by many
lots in this sale). Elsewhere this ornament was used in
diverse ways from adorning his golden tiger throne down to
the cotton uniforms, ‘tiger jackets,’ of his infantry. Massive
bubris were employed in running borders on tort hanging,
elephant trappings, and even sword hilt.

Expanding this bubri theme further, the plantain plant
was used to great effect. It, too, was engraved on gun and pis-
tol barrels but with its leaves actually adapting the bubri
shape and often enclosing calligraphy (see lots 9 and 10).
Also it was carved in relief on the wooden stocks usually at
the barrel tang and comb, where clusters of its pendulous
fruit would again adapt the bubri shape.

Another motif which is frequently found upon his arms in
particular is also derived from the tiger. It is the cipher writ-
ten in Arabic ‘Rezaollah Al-Djaffar’ meaning ‘The Victorious
Lion of God’ or ‘The Lion of God is the Conqueror’, of
course referring to himself. When the Arabic characters in
this statement are carefully arranged and then mirrored they
resemble remarkably well the face of a tiger.

A device found on his firearms is a curious either heart-
shaped or rectangular shield with four quarters containing
the four letters ‘HIID’ which stand for Haydar, his father.
The device is either inlaid in gold or silver, or engraved, and
like the tigers face motif, it served as a type of armorial bear-
ing. It is known as a talismanic ‘magic square’ and is similar
to the shield-shaped badges of The Honourable East India
Company which also contains letters, and with which it is
sometimes confused.

In regard to the firearms of Tipu Sultan which are Tipuesque
in character, and which were mostly made in Seringapatam,
the following five features are generally to be seen. These
features of design are unique to his Royal and Public
Workshops and are not to be found elsewhere, except for
No.2 which is a little used European pattern.

1. The S-shaped cock is of his unique design, being formed of
one large bubri terminating at the throat, with the head of a
tiger holding the flet in its jaws. In the case of the Seringapatam Matchlock the slow match is positioned
instead of the flet, in a similar manner.

2. The circular sectioned tail-like grip of the small of the butt
sweeps downwards, belly-like, to the butt-plate through
which it is carried in outline.

3. The comb of the butt is carved with a simple volute or con-
voluted tendrils which may be formed in sympathy with the
’small’ carving at the barrel tang. This ‘shell’ connects two
elaborated bubris running downward on either side of the tang,
and these bubris represent the fronds of the plantain plant.
In nature, these cluster among the leaves like cucumbers.

4. The thin iron ramrod is threaded at the tail for securing
clamping tools and a worm. At the other end just behind the
fattened head of the ramrod is a turned swelling through
which is bored a hole. This hole was for receiving a small
bar which would assist in turning the ramrod when a change
was being withdrawn.

5. The ramrod pipes are exceptionally short, being of almost
astigmatic section.

Gun and even pistol barrels were ideal for portraying scenes
of extended chase along each side. Gold and silver cheetahs or
tiger are seen bounding through thickets of stylized flow-
ers and foliage in pursuit of antelope and deer (see lots 56
and 57). The top flat of the barrel was invariably retained
primarily for a recurring form of decoration—calligraphy.
Starting at the breech tang, the Arabic numerals 313 are
frequently found either inlaid in gold, silver, or engraved.

This calligraphy is usually inlaid in the barrels in gold but it
may be engraved against a damascened sheet of gold or sil-
er. The whole composition is arranged and symmetrically
balanced and is contained within borders of pellets or lines
with cusped arches and other artistic devices.”

Lot 35 'ööghthead motif composed of mixed Arabic calligraphy. The 'Victorious Lion of God.' This was sold by Tipu as a form of dynastic coat and is found on many of his weapons and military banners.

Lot 82 detail of point.