

AMIR MOHTASHEMI



Indian Helmet (Taup)

Lahore, Punjab, Late 18th to early 19th century

Steel with gold koftgari

18 cm diameter

Stock no.: A6081

Provenance: Spanish private collection

A steel helmet or taup of hemispherical fluted form with koftgari decoration. It has an octagonal plume holder, attached to the top of the helmet by a petalled dome. A noseguard with large lotus-shaped finials is attached to the front of the helmet by a square loop and held in place by a hook. Two smaller plume-holders are attached with flattened lotus bud finials to either side of the noseguard. An aventail of butted iron mail with brass edges is attached to pierced holes around the base of the helmet.

The helmet is richly decorated with flat gold inlay or koftgari: the three plume holders are decorated with chevrons; the edges of the lobed panels are decorated with acanthus leaves; the base of the helmet is decorated with two registers of vegetal lattices. The finials of the noseguard are inlaid with clusters of flowers. A helmet in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (accession no. [O.10A-1904](#)), attributed to North India, 19th century, has a very similar form. It has a comparable petal-shaped finial, as well as a similar noseguard.

Two further examples, both from Lahore, early 19th century, are in the Wallace Collection, London (accession nos [OA1453](#) and [OA1927](#)). Both helmets are decorated with similar borders around the lobes of the helmet. A Punjabi helmet in the National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh ([A.1875.29.90](#)), has a similar border to the base of the helmet. This example is dated to the 18th century.