



## **Wheellock Rifle, circa 1670, Coat of Arms of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen.**

Attributed to Hans Heller.<sup>1</sup>

Length: 122,5 cm.

Length barrel: 86 cm.

Provenance:

- I. Gun gallery of the Dukes of Saxony-Weimar at Ettersburg castle.
- II. Auction at Gallery Fischer 24th June 1963 (consignments of Hearst and Kindig among others).

Octagonal sighted rifled barrel with a couple of engravings near the chamber, notch and sight (brass). Plain lock plate, engraved and profiled wheel-cover made of brass, hammer and spring engraved and cut, an applied putto in half relief (brass); the butt with decorative nails and iron scrollwork inlays, some ornaments carved out of the wood, on the cheekpiece an oval plate etched with the arms of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, side plate with an iron spring; the trigger guard with three notches for the fingers; a felt covered stick with a wooden handle inserted in order to protect the barrel from rusting.

The present butt shape is a French type that was adapted by German gunmakers from about 1650 on. Despite the new form still the trigger guard with notches and the side plate as typical German features continued to be used.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding the design of the butt and the other parts this wheellock rifle resembles the works of Hans Heller bearing his mark. Hans Heller had produced a substantial share of the rifles preserved at the gun gallery of Ettersburg castle near Weimar so that his workshop was probably located there.<sup>3</sup> Due to its provenance and stylistic features an attribution of the present work to the Oevre of Heller seems plausible.

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<sup>1</sup> Heer, E. (1978): Der Neue Stöckel, p. 515.

<sup>2</sup> Hoff, A. (1969): Feuerwaffen II, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> Heer, E. (1978): Der Neue Stöckel, p. 515.

## **Condition**

There is an old repair from the time of usage visible near the fore end of the butt. This wheellock rifle is in an untouched condition and original in all parts – an exceptional state of preservation which sets this work apart from the majority of comparable examples.

## **Ettersburg Castle**

Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Saxony-Weimar founded Ettersburg castle as a hunting seat between 1706 and 1712. The splendid gallery of rifles of the Dukes of Saxony-Weimar survived the centuries in this location nearly flawless in an extraordinary condition, until its pieces were sold in a couple of auctions and privately in the early 20th century.

Ettersburg castle is famous for the literate-artistic circle that met here regularly in the late 18th century. Among others people like Wieland, Goethe, Herder, the teller of fairy tales Johann Karl August Musäus and the actor Corona Schröter came to this place. Anna Amalia chose Ettersburg as her summer residence and Friedrich Schiller finished his work Maria Stuart in this estate back in 1800.

This cultural tradition continued in the 19th century and attracted a number of famous guests.









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