

The Morris Collection

<u>Catalog no.</u>	<u>Description</u>
C152	<p>15th. Century Italian Wrought-Iron Swivel Gun in the form of a Serpant</p> <p>Markings: On top of breech near vent: "VALOROSO SCOPIECTO FERISCI EL PETTO" and a date "14__" (unreadable).</p> <p>Measurements: Bore dia: 0.8 in. Length overall: 40$\frac{1}{2}$ in. Bore length: 23 in.</p> <p>This is the earliest firearm in the collection, dating from the late 15th. century. It is an extremely unusual and classical work of art as well as being an effective-looking weapon. The gunsmith or blacksmith who hammered this piece into its present intricate, nearly perfect serpant shape was a gifted artist. The scales, fin detail, and head of the mythical beast are executed with the most lifelike technique. Pieces of this quality and magnificence are valued as much for being a work of art as for being an unusual weapon. The writer has not located or observed other weapons of this type for purposes of comparison.</p> <p>The barrel is octagonal in cross-section. The muzzle is a serpant's head with open mouth showing teeth. The tiller of the piece is of the form of a long, gracefully curved fish tail culminating in a very wide tail fin. Long, thin trunnions are provided for mounting. It is mounted on an old, finely crafted oak stand, with a wrought iron yoke which fits under the trunnions.</p>