

Dispositifs inédits d'artillerie mécanique défensive dans le Deccan du XVI^e siècle

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Abstract

Starting from the second half of the 15th century, written sources give evidence for the circulation of firearms in the Deccan. Intensification of their use and production throughout the 16th century show original patterns relating to the artillery as well as to the fortifications in the area. In Europe, the spreading of firearms since the 14th century caused the gradual dismissal of mechanical artillery and led to its disappearing from conflicts as early as the 16th century, whereas in India, its use for defending and attacking strongholds continued until the early 17th century. The structures which are studied here for the first time bear unique witness for permanent constructions specifically designed to support counterweight engines. In a context of globalization, this support to fire artillery sheds a new light on the organization of defence in the fortifications of the Deccan. By singling out the case of the fortress of Gulbarga (Karnataka), this article relies on extant archaeological artefacts to assess their operational features and chronology.

Keywords: Deccan; fortifications; trebuchet; mechanical artillery; firearms; Gulbarga; Daulatabad; Naldurg; Bijapur; Adilshahi; Nizamshahi; poliorcetic.