

AMIR MOHTASHEMI



Persian Helmet (Kulāh-Khūd)

Safavid Persia, 18th century

Gold overlaid steel

73cm overall height, 19.5cm diameter

Stock no.: A5334

This type of helmet is commonly known in Persian as a “kulāh-khūd”. The watered steel hemispherical bowl is slightly elongated, a characteristic commonly associated with earlier helmet types. The bowl ends at the top with a protruding spike. Riveted at the front of the bowl is a screw bracket that secures a sliding nose protector (damāghak) with lobed finials. Above the bracket on each side are rivetted two small plume holders (jā parī) with flattened lobed bases. A long mail aventail, intended for neck protection, attaches through holes around the rim of the bowl. The mail’s lower edge ends in four long triangular points and two shorter ones.

The spike base is damascened with foliate scrolls, and the spike had gold decoration which is now faded. The bowl is decorated with gold overlay of radiating lines that lead to the palmettes and the concentric band that encircles the rim. Inside the band are cartouches with inscriptions in Persian verses (not all deciphered):

این خود مرصع بسر مرد دلاور

خوشر بود از تاج کی و افسر قیصر

ز آهن بود [و] گشته مرصع بزر و سیم

همچون فلک هشتم از آرایش(?) اختر

... سر بر فلکی

... این شپهر فرخنده

القصه بود بر سر سلطان جوان بخت

این خود چو خورشید از کوه زند سر

This inlaid helmet on the head of a courageous man

Is finer than the Kayanid crown or Caesar's diadem.

It is made of iron and inlaid with gold and silver,

Just like the eighth heaven (it) is (decorated) with the ornament(?) of stars.

(Its) head, on a firmament ...

This auspicious one, (flying) on royal wing ...

In short, on the head of the fortunate sultan

This helmet rises like the sun over the head of the mountains.

Another gold damascened cartouche at the base of the spike repeats the cartouche from the base of the helmet:

این خود مرصع به سر مرد دلاور

This inlaid helmet on the head of a courageous man

The nose protector is damascened with foliage and scrolls throughout, while the bases of the plume holders are inscribed:

عمل / کلبعلی / ابن اسد الله

Work of Kalb-'Ali ibn Asadullah

Though, this attribution is possibly anachronistic.

Comparative Material:

Several [helmets](#) from the Wallace Collection (e.g. OA2336) have the same inscriptions.

Missillier, Philippe, and Howard Ricketts. Splendeur des armes orientales. Paris: ACTE-EXPO, 1988. Cat.94, p.65.

Reference:

- Alexander, David G, Stuart W. Pyhrr, Will Kwiatkowski, and Cynthia Clark. Islamic Arms and Armor in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015.
- Moshtagh Khorasani, Manouchehr. Arms and Armor from Iran : The Bronze Age to the End of the Qajar Period. Tübingen: Legat-Verlag, 2006.
- Missillier, Philippe, and Howard Ricketts. Splendeur des armes orientales. Paris: ACTE-EXPO, 1988