

A M I R M O H T A S H E M I



Kulah Khud (helmet)

Circa: 19th century

Qajar Persia, 19th century

Steel

59cm high

Stock no. 3434

This steel helmet is decorated with alternating rows of lobed medallions and pendants, raised and set above chiselled arabesque patterns. A band containing six calligraphic cartouches with alternating roundels bearing bird motifs surrounds the lower part, from which the chainmail hangs. Topped with a spike, this helmet has two plume holders and a sliding nose guard. The calligraphy and decorative devices are highlighted with gold overlay.

The *naskhi* inscriptions in the six cartouches translate to:

“This jewelled helmet on the head of the hero

Is more beautiful than the crown of king [and] a diadem,

What a helmet this helmet is! From the mountain ...

O helmet surely you are polished ...

O helmet surely you are shining sun or a goblet (?),

Like (?) water from a green sea.”

Another helmet from the Qajar era in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession Number 02.5.7, bears a similar decorative composition to the present example. Although it lacks the chiselled

arabesque patterns, there are more figural imagery on the medallions and pendants, and on the ends of the nose guard. Further examples with slight varying decorative schemes can be found at The British Museum, London, Accession Numbers 1878,1230.772 and OA+.6203; and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Accession Number 91.1.749, illustrated in Alexander, pp. 116-18, Cat. No. 42.

Literature:

Alexander, D. G. *Islamic Arms and Armor in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2015.