

Important Turban Helmet

Central Asia

1501-1722 A.D.

Bronze, Silver

H: 32cm

A fine steel turban helmet made from one piece of steel, rising to a central point with a shaped finial. The fluted swelled section struck with the Ottoman Court Arsenal mark of Saint Irene. There are two silver inlaid bands of Arabic inscriptions in Thuluth around the skull and above the eyes. The two Arabic inscriptions in large cursive script decorating the helmet are a variation on the benedictory inscriptions and popular sayings usually found on Turkic helmets of the period. These inscriptions are not always fully decipherable, for example that found on a late 15th century helmet in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York could translate as 'Power (or Sovereignty) the Sultan, the knowing, Sovereignty, complete (complete sovereignty) [..?] the mass (the crowd?), the blesses, the world' (accession no. 04.3.461). The second of these helmets bears the name of Khalilullah, a ruler of the Shirvan-Shah (1418-1463) or an Aq Qoyunlu prince (1441-1478).

The text on the present helmet can be partially translated as reading: “Glory to our lord … contentment … contentment …” On the lower band. And the upper band reads: “Glory is in obedience, contentment in …” A closely related helmet at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London dated to the early 16th century, bears an inscription which starts with the same words 'Honour to our master the Sultan' and follows with 'Lord of the Peoples' necks, of the Kings of the Turks, the Arabs and the Persians' (accession no. 399:1, 3-1888). Two other comparable helmets are in the Furussya Foundation in Vaduz. They are attributed to Iran, Anatolia or Caucasus and dated to the 15th or 16th century (Bashir

Mohamed, ed., L'Art des chevaliers en pays d'Islam, Milan, 2007, cat. 309 and 310). The second of these helmets bears the name of Khalilullah, a ruler of the Shirvan-Shah (1418-1463) or an Aq Qoyunlu prince (1441-1478).

Literature:

The Dikran Kelekian Collection, Parke-Bernet Galleries Inc., New York, 17 December 1953, Lot 249.

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