



## ‘ABBĀS, ḤĀJĪ

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‘ABBĀS, ḤĀJĪ, a signature found on a number of pieces of metalwork from Iran; three different individuals or workshops should probably be distinguished.

1. A craftsman working in steel, who signs himself ḤĀjī ‘Abbās, is known primarily from a dervish’s bowl in the collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. A. Welsh (*Shah ‘Abbās and the Arts of Isfahan*, New York, 1973, no. 41) translates the relevant part of the inscription on this piece as follows: “Made by the most humble ḤĀjī ‘Abbās, the son of the late Āqā Raḥīm Yarāqasāz in the year 1015 H.” From this inscription it is evident that ḤĀjī ‘Abbās came from a family of steel-workers, and that he was producing such objects during the first quarter of the 11th/17th century. The object is of cut steel with overlays of gold and silver. A similar but less colorful object also bearing this signature is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (no. 405-’76, *Survey of Persian Art*, pl. 1393C). Comparison of these two bowls with other objects of the period, for example the helmet and vambraces bearing the name of Shah ‘Abbās (D. Barret, *Islamic Metalwork in the British Museum*, London, 1949, pls. 38b., 39) suggests that ḤĀjī ‘Abbās was one of a group of craftsmen who decorated ceremonial armor as well as less prestigious pieces, and also points to the imperial capital, Isfahan, as the site of his workshop.

2. The name ḤĀjī ‘Abbās also appears on stylistically later pieces, which appear to form two groups. The first includes a macehead (*Museum für Islamische Kunst: Katalog 1971*, Berlin, 1971, pl. 82), a cock and a pigeon in the British Museum (nos. 78.12-30.752 and 753; L. A. Mayer, *Islamic Metalworkers and*



*Their Works*, Geneva, 1959, pl. I), and two *qalyān* bowls in the Victoria and Albert Museum (nos. 3-1882 and 498-'76; *Survey of Persian Art*, pl. 1393A). The British Museum pieces have gilt decoration, and the cock is also inlaid with silver. The *qalyān* bowls, however, have applied steel thread with gilded surface, thus giving relief decoration. The craftsman's signatures are in all cases rendered in attractive *nasta'liq*.

3. The second group of later objects with the signature of ḤĀJĪ ‘Abbās consists of dervish bowls with incised decoration and some gilding. It includes a piece published by G. Wiet (“L'épigraphie arabe de l'Exposition d'art persan du Caire,” *Mémoires présentés à l'Institut d'Égypte* 26, 1935, p. 18, pl. X), one published by Mayer (*Metalworkers*, pl. IVb) bearing the name *pesar-e ḤĀJĪ ‘Abbās*, and many examples which have appeared in recent years on the art market and in the sale rooms (e.g., Sotheby's catalogue of 22/11/76, lot 132). The decoration and the inscriptions are much cruder on these objects than on the other group, and they are presumably more recent, though both are probably to be attributed to the Qajar period. It is uncertain whether these craftsmen actually bore the name ḤĀJĪ ‘Abbās or only used their 17th century predecessor's name to gain prestige.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Given in the text.