



## ASADALLĀH EŞFAHĀNĪ

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**ASADALLĀH EŞFAHĀNĪ**, a signature borne by hundreds of fine blades, which is occasionally followed by dates ranging from the 17th to the 19th century (L. A. Mayer, *Islamic Armourers and Their Works*, Geneva, 1962, pp. 28-29). Nothing is known about the craftsman (or rather craftsmen) who is, in Mayer's opinion (p. 26), one of "the finest of all Persian swordsmiths." Could this have been a generic name? Failing positive evidence, the question must remain open until a systematic review of the available material is undertaken. The frequent occurrence of the formula *banda-ye Šāh-e Welāyat* in a separate cartouche has somewhat confused the issue. It has so far been understood to designate a Shah—'Abbās, Esmā'īl, Solaymān, Ṭahmāsp—which would be contrary to all known forms of Iranian usage on metal (see A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, London, 1978). It is more probably the standard Shi'ite cliché: the servant of the King of Trusteeship (i.e., of 'Alī), followed by the patron's name.