



CROWN IV. OF PERSIAN RULERS FROM THE ARAB CONQUERORS

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Despite the collapse of the Persian empire in 30/651 and the abhorrence of imperial titles and regalia in early Islamic traditions (Madelung, p. 84), Omayyad and 'Abbasid governors, as well as the rulers of Ṭabarestān, continued to employ on their coins the iconography of the coins of the Sasanian rulers Kōsrow II (590-628) and Yazdegerd III (632-51), thus perpetuating familiarity with Sasanian imperial crowns for a further two centuries (see [arab-sasanian coins](#)). On coins the Muslim caliphs and governors were usually depicted wearing turbans (Pers. *dastār*; Ebn Esfandiār, I, p. 283), for example, the reverse of two coins of 'Abd-al-Malek from about 75/695 (Walker, p. 25; Miles, 1975, p. 365, pl. 25 no. 5; *EIr.* II, p. 226, pl. II/3, 9). Occasionally a curved cap with a pellet projecting from the top (as on a coin of the late 7th century; Walker, p. 24, pl. XXXI/5; Miles, *Camb. Hist. Iran*, pl. 25/4; *EIr.* II, p. 226, pl. II/10) was worn. In northern and eastern Iran local dynasts continued to wear modest versions of the Sasanian crown. Examples include depiction of a 9th-century Sogdian king wearing a round cap adorned with wings and topped by a crescent, on a silver plate in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg ([plate xxvi](#);



Survey of Persian Art, pl. 218; Azarpay, pp. 171-72 fig. 61); representation of a Sogdian king, possibly Dēvāštīč (early 8th century), wearing a winged diadem around a tall hat bearing a device reminiscent of a fire altar, on a fragmentary mural from Panjikant (Azarpay, fig. 30); another representation of a king wearing a stepped crown ornamented with a surmounting diademed globe, on a silver plate (with a Pahlavi inscription) found at Maltzeva, Perm (now in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, *Survey of Persian Art*, pl. 208B; Harper, pp. 140-41 fig. 47); depiction of an enthroned Sogdian ruler wearing a low cap with wings flanking a crescent on a large stone, on a silver plate also in the Hermitage (*Survey of Persian Art*, pl. 208A; Bahrami, pp. 14-15 fig. g); the image of a king wearing a crown resembling that of Ǫosrow II but without the globe, on a silver plate from Qazvīn (now in the Iran Bastan Museum, Tehran; Bahrami; 1946, pp. 73-76; Harper, pp. 115-17, pl. 43); representation of a king with a low, stepped crown bearing a crescent in the center (*Survey of Persian Art*, pl. 230B; Erdmann, p. 104, pl. 68); and a dirham minted at Ǫvārazm in the name of the governor Faḏl [b. Yaḥyā the Barmakid], with an image on the obverse wearing a diadem of precious stones tied with ribbons falling behind and, above it, a crown formed from a wide band, probably of metal, latticed and bordered in pearls, ca. 179/795 (plate xxvii; Miles, *Camb. Hist. Iran*, p. 366, pl. 26/1, facing p. 377). In addition, in literary sources there are references to the crowns (*tāj*) of a dynast from Gorgān in 98/716 (Ṭabarī, II, p. 1326) and of the Samanids (Ṭabarī, III, p. 2204) and to an “imperial crown” (*tāj-e šāhanšāhī*) sent by al-Manṣūr to Espahbad Ǫoršīd of Ṭabarestān (ca. 131/748; Ebn Esfandiār, I, p. 175). The Zaidis of Ṭabarestān wore the traditional hat of nobility (*kolāh*; Ebn Esfandiār, I, pp. 282-83, 293). The Ghaznavid sultan Mas‘ūd I (421-32/1030-41) was invested by a representative of the ‘Abbasid caliph with a crown (*tāj*), a necklace (*ṭawq*), and a sword (*šamšīr*; Bayhaqī, ed. Fayyāż, pp. 52-53). The Ghaznavids wore crowns under their turbans (Bayhaqī, ed. Fayyāż, pp. 423-24), but the shapes are not known.

The Daylamite Mardāvīj b. Zīār, who attempted to “restore the Persian empire” (Ṣūlī, apud Madelung, p. 86) and ordered the preparation of the *ayvān* of Ǫosrow at Ctesiphon (see *ayvān-e kesrā*) for his habitation, adopted a crown like that of Ǫosrow I Anōšīravān (531-79; Mas‘ūdī, *Morūj* IX, pp. 27-28; ed. Pellat, secs. 3599-3600), “a great crown studded with gems” (Margoliouth and Amedroz, *Eclipse* IV, p. 359) and “topped with the most beautiful pearls and sapphires” (Ṣūlī, apud Madelung, p. 86). He was murdered in 323/935, but his goals were partially achieved by his kinsmen, the *Buyids*, whose commemorative coins and medallions attest their political ideology. For



example, on the reverse of a silver piece minted in Moḥammadīya (Ray) in 351/962 Rokn-al-Dawla (335-66/947-77) is represented wearing a bejeweled diadem with a huge rosette in the center, surmounted by a globe embraced by a pair of eagle's wings; he is identified by a Pahlavi inscription (plate xxviii; Miles, 1964). A medallion of 'Azod-al-Dawla (338-72/949-83) bears "striking" analogies to Sasanian portraiture in both imagery and titulary (Sourdel-Thomine and Spuler, pp. 226-27 no. 203; cf. art in iran vii, p. 607a). On another medallion, known only from a cast, a ruler is shown enthroned and flanked by two attendants; his crown is low and crenellated (plate xxix; Bahrami, 1952, p. 18, pl. I.3), an early version of an ultimately Sasanian type that would become most characteristic of early Islamic rulers. The medallion, issued in Baghdad in 364/975, bears the names of the 'Abbasid caliph al-Ṭā'e' (363-81/974-91) and the Buyid prince 'Ezz-al-Dawla Baḳtīār (356-67/967-78). Rokn-al-Dawla and other Buyid rulers are also depicted on "portrait" coins with crowns similar to those mentioned above (Miles, *Camb. Hist. Iran*, pp. 375-76).

A small, decorated, and slightly pointed cap encircled by a band with large stones on the front covers the head and long braids of Saljuq and K̲v̲ārazmšāh princes represented on pottery and metalwork and in miniature paintings (e.g., *Survey of Persian Art*, pls. 243, 516, 517, 651, 661, 667, 668, 673B, 707, 773, 1308, 1316, 1339; see iii, above). In only one instance is such a figure identified as a prince, however, a representation on the famous "Freer battle plate" of Sultan Jalāl-al-Dīn K̲v̲ārazmšāh on horseback among his magnates (all identified) in combat with the Mongols at a city gate (ca. 625/1230; plate xxx).

After the Mongol invasion. The Mongols introduced cone-shaped hats with two slits at the base, which allowed the sides to be turned up as brims of various sizes, exposing the interior fabric and color (e.g., *Survey of Persian Art*, p. 2239 fig. 746, pl. 851). At the same time the turban remained fashionable, as is attested in miniature paintings (e.g., *Survey of Persian Art*, pls. 843, 845, 848, 850, 851). Mongol rulers are represented fairly realistically in Chinese portraits (e.g., Morgan, pp. 58: Čengīz, 113: Ögedei, 119: Qubilai) but anachronistically in illustrated Persian manuscripts, particularly of *Tārīḳ-ejahāngošā* (ed. Qazvīnī, I, opposite p. 146: enthronement of Ögedei, II, opposite p. 252: enthronement of Möngke; Eqbāl, pp. 148: Ögedei and two of his sons, 156: Mögke, Qubilai, and Hülegü, 158: Tolui, 182: Hülegü; Morgan, pp. 164: Abaqa and his son Argūn, 166: Geīkātū, 168: Ġāzān). Heroes from the *Šāh-nāma* (*Survey of Persian Art*, pls. 827, 829, 835, 836B, 837, 838, 850) are also depicted as contemporary rulers, wearing the turban ornamented with pearled bands, a cap with an



arcaded half-crown in front (originally the upturned brim), or Chinese-inspired winged headdresses (plate xxxi). Crowns were sent by Georgian kings as gifts to the Il-khanid court, and a crown said to be more magnificent than that of *Abaqa* was ordered by the historian Jovaynī while he was governor of Iraq (Spuler, *Mongolen*³, pp. 367, 348). A Turkic hat with extended brims surmounted by a pearled and feathered apex is worn by Tīmūr in a painting from Samarqand (ca. 808-12/1405-09; Lentz and Lowry, p. 102 fig. 37; cf. the posthumous portrait of Tīmūr from a *Zafar-nāma* manuscript illustrated in Shiraz in 839/1439; Lentz and Lowry, p. 105 no. 30). Oloğ Beg, son of Šāhroḡ, is shown wearing a similar crown in a painting from Samarqand (early 15th century; Lentz and Lowry, p. 90 fig. 33). *Bāysonḡor* is depicted in a copy of *Kalīla wa Demna* made in Herat in 833/1429 (Lentz and Lowry, pp. 67, 111 no. 21) with the “arcaded” crown surmounted by a heart-shaped apex. On the other hand, from the beginning of the 16th century there is a portrait of “Solṭān-Ḥosayn Mīrzā,” perhaps intended as a representation of Solṭān-Ḥosayn Bāyqarā in his earlier role as crown prince (Lentz and Lowry, p. 243 no. 136; see *EIr.* V, p. 783 pl. XCVII), wearing a turban wrapped around a low cap adorned with feathers. This type of headgear had already been fashionable for court officials in the 15th century; the caps were often red (Lentz and Lowry, pp. 61 no. 5.17, 110-11 no. 21, 105 no. 30, 250, 283 no. 140, 264, 266 no. 147; *Survey of Persian Art*, pl. 851).

From the early Safavids to the Qajars. During the struggle for political and ideological supremacy in Persia Solṭān-Ḥaydar and later his son Shah Esmāʿīl I (907-30/1501-24) endowed the red felt cap with a new significance: The opening was narrowed to fit snugly around the forehead and the tip (*gol* “flower”; for a naturalistic form of the *gol*, see *Survey of Persian Art*, pl. 902) elongated into a “bottleneck”; the inside was often reinforced with metal (to serve as a helmet); twelve vertical gores (*tark*), symbolizing devotion to the twelve Shiʿite imams, encircled the hat; and a white turban of silk or wool was then wrapped around it in twelve bands. This entire headgear was called *tāj*, and only the military followers of the early Safavids were entitled to wear it; they were accordingly called *Qezelbāš* (lit., “red heads”). Various ornaments such as plumes and feathers were added to the *tāj*, as befitted the wearer’s position (for details, see Falsafī, 1332 Š./1953, I, pp. 159-60, 209-12). From the Safavid period on, the portraits of Persian kings were painted by contemporary Persian, Indian, and European artists. The Safavid shahs wore the *Qezelbāš tāj*, often with elaborate ornaments (for contemporary portraits of Shah Esmāʿīl and Shah Ṭahmāsb [930-84/1524-76] painted by Cristofano



dell'Altissimo before 1568 and now in the Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, see Falsafī, *Čand-maqāla*, facing pp. 40, 16 respectively). Shah 'Abbās I (996-1038/1588-1629) wore (usually back to front!) a simple white turban on private occasions but either a green *tāj* or a boat-like hat with heavy feather ornamentation on official and festive days (plate xxxii; cf. Falsafī, 1332 Š./1953, II, facing pp. 16, 17, 136, 264, III, facing pp. 2, 80, 136, 168, IV, facing pp. 1, 88, 96, 136; for a portrait of Šafī I [1038-52/1629-42] wearing a bejeweled turban, see Falsafī, *Čand maqāla* II, facing p. 216; for one of Shah 'Abbās II [1052-77/1642-661 with the Qezelbāš *tāj*, see II, facing p. 308).

Before ascending the throne Nāder Shah (1148-60/1736-47) wore a silk turban around a tall hat, which tapered slightly and was pleated in such a way that four triangular tips projected (Falsafī, *Čand-maqāla*, facing p. 160). After his conquest of Delhi he wore it encrusted with rows of pearls and large stones (Falsafī, *Čand-maqāla*, facing p. 184; Robinson, p. 225 [pl. 3/19]). Karīm Khan Zand (1163-93/1750-79) and his successors wore a turban (called *šāl*) adorned with jewels around a tall *kolāh* (Diba, p. 247 fig. 5).

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