



HEYDAR ALIYEV FOUNDATION

CULTURAL HERITAGE OF



A Z E R B A I J A N

*Manuscripts*



**HEYDAR ALIYEV FOUNDATION**







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سروزی که از هم جدا شد  
سپهرین شکم خوش و زیور  
خویش صورت از موئی  
قدش از شاخ المذبح  
حیه سر از کلاه  
انیداری بوسه  
کاج خوشی بزم و درخت  
بیت از سر و دست  
و اما آن الا که شمشاد دو  
پرو و کجا بپوشد  
درین پرو و خوشی  
علاقی است از کلاه  
سپهری درخت تاج  
و بخت نامی حکمت  
خون است و در غرض  
نیز به بولام  
شست خنجر و مال  
و درین رسم ملک



سوره الرحمن المم

بر دایمان زبیر گاهی دست به ایمان حکمتی آبی وضعت که در هر عهده او که اوضاع  
و پریشانی و خوشی و کجاست گمان کرد و خداوند که در این کارها مختلف اوضاع  
زما است از حق پنداری و سعادت مندی نمود و در هر کسیتی بوی که کند که بر او  
مرگم و رفت با تمام حرات است و به کان پرو و درخت تنهای محکمان  
زمره و شراب به شیرین سازد و در حال حال تا این فال علیحضرت  
قدرت قصاتون بکند حیرت و از زبان و کس و درخت زویش را نام و رنگ  
مظهر قدرت الهی روح به شکست شامی از نده است که بوی که بوی که بوی که  
بخت جان آبی زواری جسم آینی و بوی که بوی که بوی که بوی که بوی که



صورة من فوايد

سنة الفجر طالع سنار والبرق طالع منع مشرط

الشم  
أضواء الساعات

صورة الشدخ الذي يستخرج رأس الحمار

د

صورة لولاب دالة الالابل

صورة منضج بطرير

هذه الأكل ما كثر أنواعها وكان يجمع عند الصانع كان





## *Manuscripts of Azerbaijan*

The earliest Azerbaijani manuscripts date back to the 1st millennium BC, however majority of them were written down during the Middle Ages. The medieval Azerbaijani manuscripts feature a slightly modified Arabic script. Since the very old times, large libraries were found in most of the Azerbaijani cities. The stacks of the library at the Maragha Observatory alone (13th century) numbered to 400,000 volumes. The figure looks impressive even today! Regretfully, most of these books were lost over time; however some of them were preserved to this day at the Manuscripts Institute in Baku. The Institute of Manuscripts at the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan is nowadays the major hub and research centre for medieval manuscripts. The Institute is a depository of 12,000 unique works written in Azerbaijani, Turkish, Uzbek, Persian, Arabic, Georgian, Russian, Hebrew, and other languages.

The collection includes treatises by medieval scholars in multiple fields varying from medicine to astronomy, mathematics to poetry, philosophy to law and history to geography.



The concept of the Azerbaijani culture is not restricted to the territory of today's Republic of Azerbaijan. It implies the rich historic and cultural heritage created for centuries in a broader geographic and historic context. The cultural legacy originally established in the greater area of indigenous Azerbaijan happened to find itself within the borders of various states as a result of political and historic developments of later periods.

The formation of a commonly-shared cultural identity and heritage in these areas was bound with the Azerbaijani population historically residing in the territories in question. E.g. urban centers like Tabriz, Ardabil, Iravan, Zanjan, Maragha, Qazvin, Khoy, Urmiyye, Shamakhy, Ganja, Nakhchivan, Beylagan, Barda, Darband and others were among the major Azerbaijani medieval cultural hubs. Back at that time, the scholars of Azerbaijani descent created a number of valuable works in their mother tongue, as well as in the Farsi, and Arabic languages, thus making tangible contribution to the culture of the Orient.

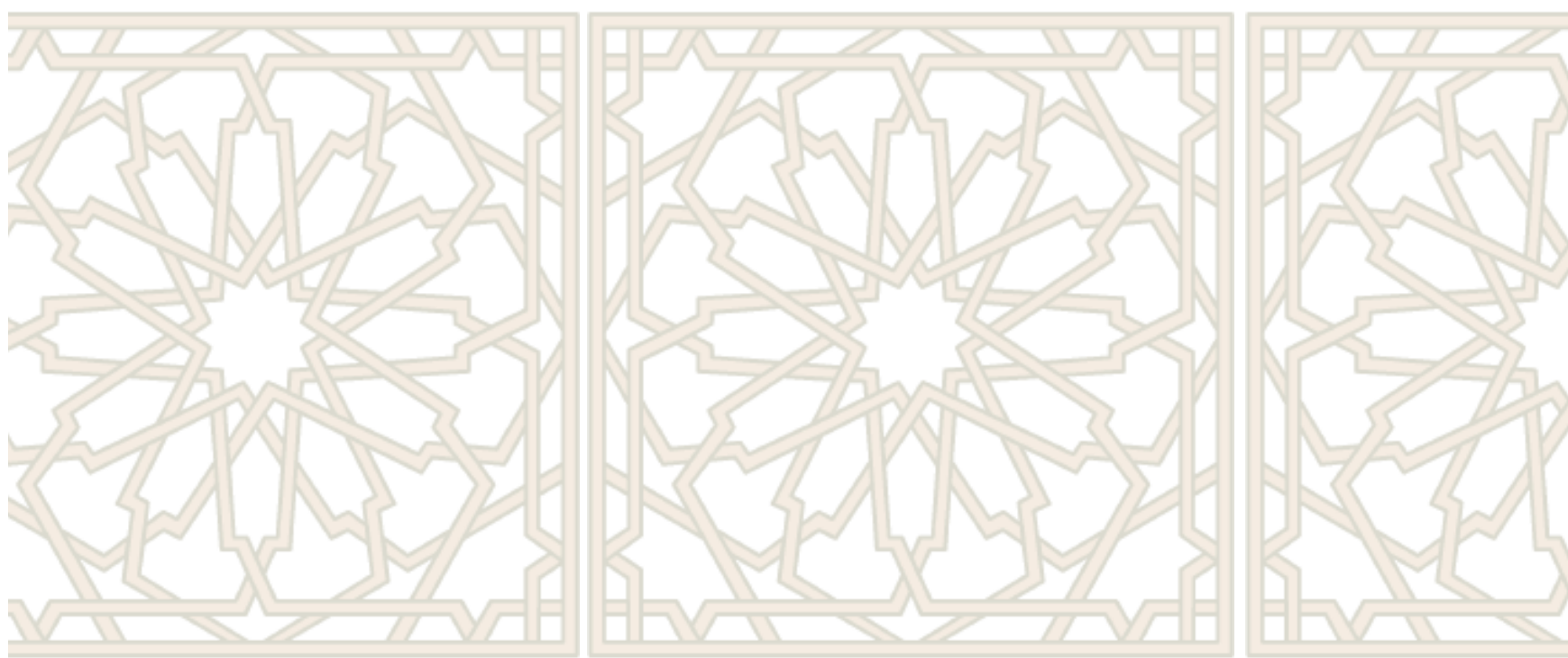
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Nizami Ganjavi, "Khamsa", 17th century. Collection of the Manuscripts  
Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences

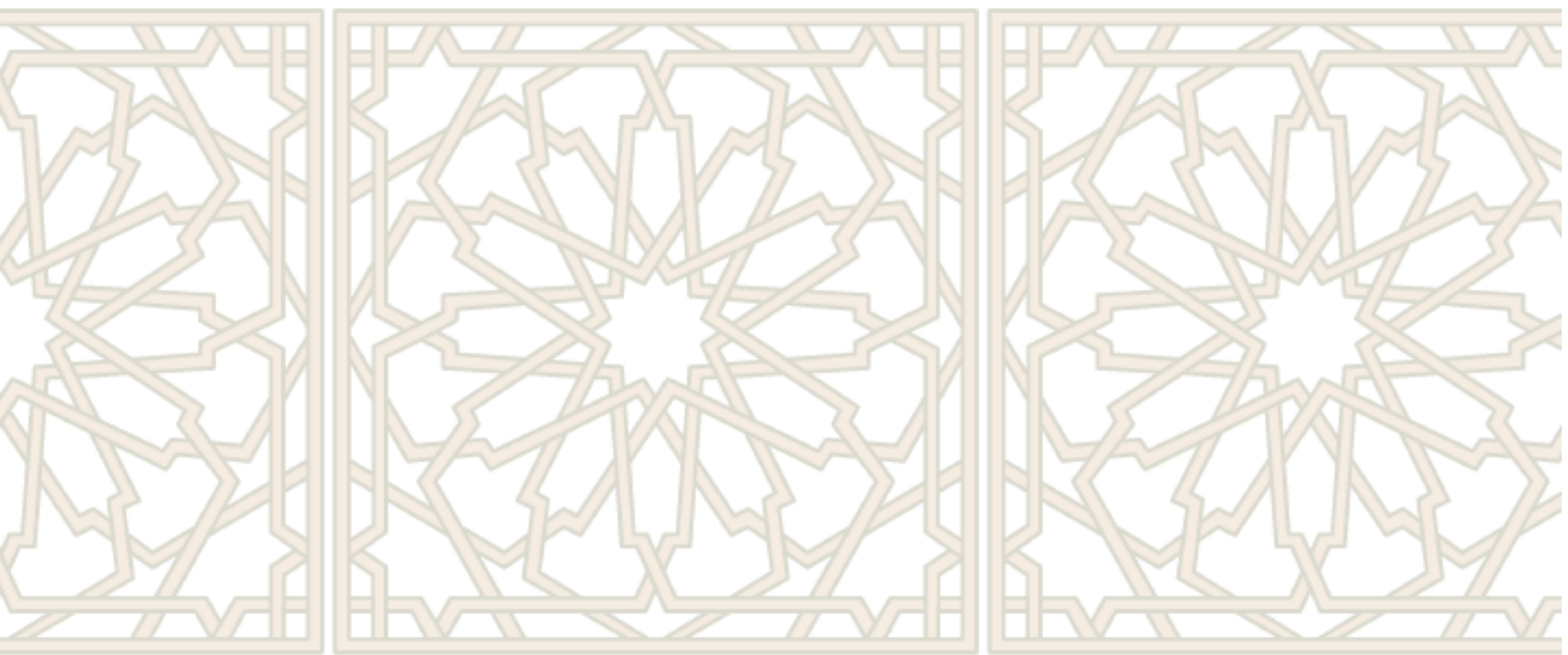












*History of Written  
Culture in Azerbaijan*



Ancient Akkadian cuneiforms



## *Cuneiforms*

Back in the ancient times, way before the invention of printing press, people used to handwrite books and other documents. Cuneiforms of Sumer, Babylon, Akkad and Assyria, as well as the Egyptian papyrus scriptures are believed to be the world's oldest written artifacts.

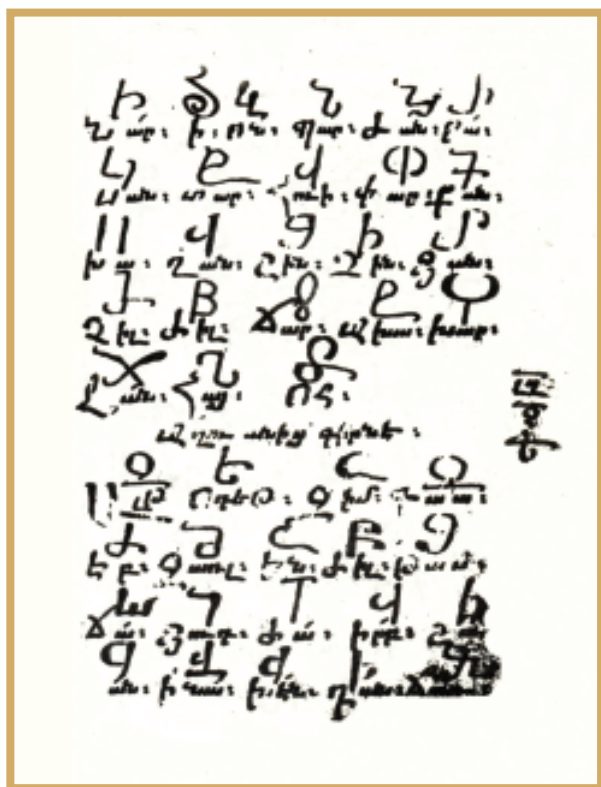
The oldest written work discovered in the territory of Azerbaijan and dating back to the 1st millennium B.C. is an agate, a precious stone with the name of Assyrian King Adadnerari engraved upon it. The age of the find is estimated at 807-788 B.C. The Kingdom of Manna that existed in the area of South Azerbaijan in 9-7 centuries B.C. was also known for the written culture of its own.



# The Alphabet of the Caucasian Albania

The State of Caucasian Albania located in the territory of Azerbaijan in the 4th century B.C. - 7th centuries A.D., had a specific alphabet of its own as of the 4th century A.D. Archaeological excavations in Mingechevir revealed texts hewn in the Albanian script onto the surface of stone constructions, as well as into candlesticks and other utensils. For a very long time, the Albanian alphabet was considered almost lost, as there was virtually no chance to decipher it. However, back in 1937, Georgian scholar Ilia Abuladze discovered the Albanian alphabet comprising 52 letters in manuscript series MS reference No.7117 at the Ancient Manuscripts Institute in Matenadaran, Armenia.

The Liturgical Calendar is one of the oldest Albanian hand-written books created in the language of the Utis, one of the Albanian tribes. The manuscript was discovered in 1996 by another Georgian scholar, Zaza Alexidze, at St. Katherine Monastery in Egypt. Consequently, the book was translated from the Uti language and published.



The Alphabet of the Caucasian Albania







# *The Runic Alphabet of the Turks*

The Turkic runic alphabet has a visual similarity with the ancient runic and ogamic inscriptions of a number of Germanic peoples, the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings among them. The oldest runic written finds date back to the 3rd century A.D. Angular in shape, the old runic inscriptions were dominantly based on straight lines, with limited use of circular and oval-shaped elements. The old runic scriptures were semi-consonant, i.e. missing part of vowels. The alphabet featured 4 vowel and 34 consonant letters together with a number of sound combinations. Brands of the ancient Turkic tribes are viewed among the possible sources of runic inscriptions. The historic sources provide evidence of the runic alphabet back in the 7-11th centuries A.D. Hewn upon stone, bone and metal, the old Turkic runic inscriptions, signs and texts were mainly found in Mongolia, China and Central Asia. Some texts written on paper were discovered as well.

The oldest Turkic Runic inscription carved into stone is known as Ongin Memorial. Majority of researchers date it back to either 692 or 689 A.D. Other ancient written monuments are old Turkic texts written in the name of “Gultekin” and “Bilge Khagan”.

According to the early medieval sources, back in the beginning of the 6th century A.D., the Arran-based (Caucasian Albania) bishop Kardast came up with the alphabet for the Huns residing in North Azerbaijan and South-West Dagestan.





A text written in Gultekin and Bilge Khagan names







## *The Arabic Script*

With Azerbaijan's conquest by the Caliphate in the late 7th century A.D., Islam and the Arabic script became prevalent in the area. With its 28 letters, the Arabic alphabet was slightly modified by ethnic groups of the Farsi and Turkic origin. The Arabic script was used for 1300 years in Azerbaijan, to be replaced by the Roman in 1922. Activities in this field resulted in the Resolution adopted by the First Congress on Turkic Languages, held in Baku in March 1926, concerning introduction of the Latinized alphabet in all Soviet Republics and areas that had been previously using the Arabic script. During 1922-1929, Arabic script was used along with the Latin in Azerbaijan, to be fully phased out by the latter in 1929. A number of medieval Azerbaijani literary works written in the Arabic script are preserved to this day.





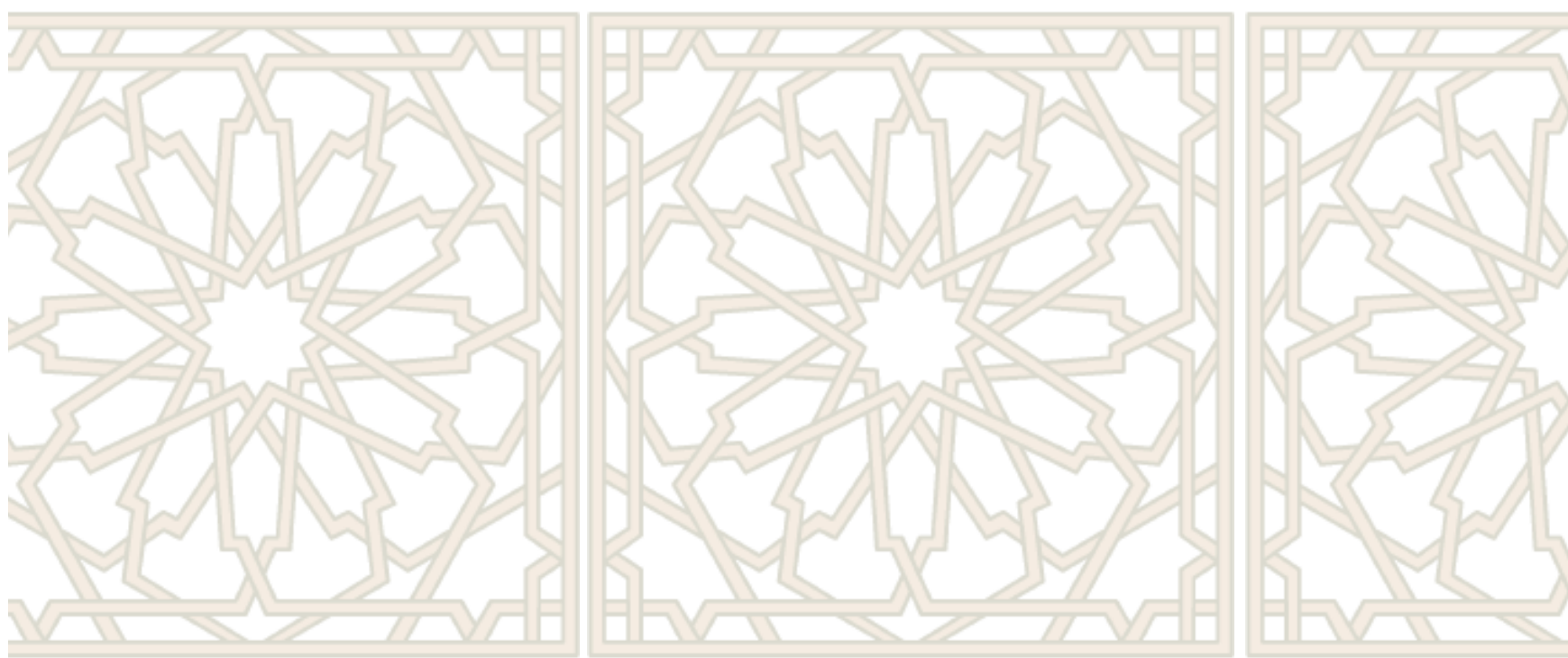
الرُّكُوتِ أَحْكَمْتَ أَمْرَهُ قُمْ  
فَصَلِّ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَيْرٍ  
الْأَتَعْبُدُ وَاللَّهُ إِلَهُكُمْ  
مَنْ تَدْعُو وَتَسْتَعِينُ وَأَنْ تَسْتَغْفِرُوا  
رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ يَمْتَعِكُمْ  
مَنْعًا حَسَنًا إِنْ أَجَلَ مَسْمُومٍ  
وَيُؤْتِي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرَهُ  
فَصَلِّهِ وَلَنْ تَوَلَّوْا قَائِمِي إِخْدَابٍ  
عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمَ كَبِيرٍ

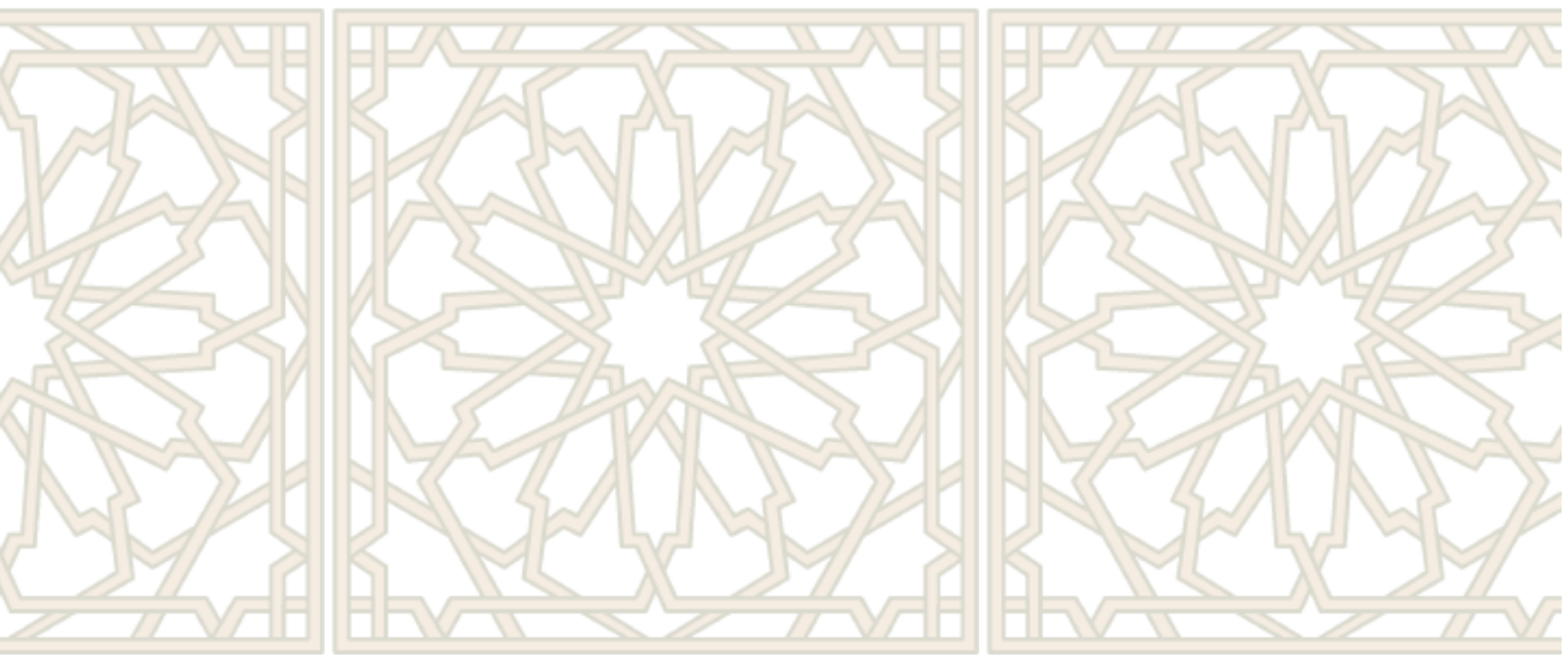


قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ  
الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنِ ارْتَدَىٰ  
بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ  
يَعْتَدُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا أَفَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ  
تُوكَيْدُ الْوَكَيْلِ وَأَتَّبِعْ مَا يُوْحِي إِلَيْكَ  
وَأَصْبِرْ حَتَّىٰ يَخْرُجَ إِلَيْكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ  
خَيْرٌ رَّاكُم مِّنْكُمْ  
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ









*History of Hand-written Books  
in Azerbaijan*





A page from Shahnameh Manuscript.  
The Tabriz Miniature School, 1520-1535

## *History of Hand-written Books in Azerbaijan*

The culture of book printing has deep roots in Azerbaijan indeed. The most important elements of book printing, i.e. written culture and alphabet, had undergone a number of historic milestones in Azerbaijan. Cuneiform, prevalent in the country's territory way before Christ's birth, was then replaced by the Albanian script in the early 5th century A.D. Books written in the Arabic script started appearing in the territory of Azerbaijan as of the 8-9th centuries A.D. These included fiction, religious and scientific works. The books written down by professional scribes were either handed over to the customers or offered for sale. Production of hand-written books in Azerbaijan was closely related with access to paper. The emergence of first paper-making workshops in Tabriz in the 8-13th centuries provided a strong impetus to copying old books and valuable works. One of the most ancient works of this kind preserved to this day is Comments to Qur'an by Tabari, re-written in 1220-1225 and currently kept at the National Library in Paris. The manuscripts written down by calligraphers in the 13th century include Iskandarnamēh by Nizami Ganjavi (copied in 1233, the manuscript is currently stored in a private library in Tehran), The Treasury of Mysteries by the same author (copied in 1239, nowadays cherished at the Indian Office, London), Sharhi-Divani-Haman by Khatib Tabrizi (copied in 1256), as well as The History of Mongols by Alaeddin Juveyni (1290) and Manafil al-Heywan by Ibn Bekhtushi (1297-1298), both kept in renown museums and libraries. Both the autographs and hand-written manuscripts of scientific and fiction works by various Azerbaijani authors written down in later centuries are cherished as valuable rarities in a number of libraries throughout the world. 792 manuscripts of Khamsa (The Five Poems) by Nizami Ganjavi, and almost 800 works by Fuzuli may be found in stacks of the world's leading museums and book depositories.

Unique 15-16th century manuscripts of Kitabi Dede Gorgud, a 1300 year-old epic story, currently adorn collections of the Dresden and Vatican Libraries.

The first printed book by an Azerbaijani author was geometry treatise entitled Tahriri





عزمین گان شده او کوهرش  
 کوهرش را شب کوهرین  
 او سنده پیش کش آن سفر  
 خوشه کز و سبیل تر ساختند  
 نایب او را به قدر قدرت  
 دمنه نوش از دم سبیلبری  
 جود کان تر شکر دمنه رخت  
 یوسف دلوی شده چون آفتاب  
 نایمجل نخت شریا زوه  
 از کلان دوضه باغ رفیع  
 شب شده دورایت تبارش کوف  
 نان کل و آن بر کن کان باغ دات  
 مشراب خوانده و سبیل سما  
 ستر کو اکب قدمش می درید  
 بود سپهر از پد نایب سرش  
 کا و فلک برد و کا و زمین  
 از سلطان نایب و زخمز اکبر  
 سنبله را بر اسد انداختند  
 دمنه شمشیر ترا و بدست  
 بر دم این عفریت غلو فری  
 زهر ز غلامه خواست کرمخت  
 یوش موی شده زان دلو آب  
 لشکر کل طیمه بهر اذ ده  
 ربع ز سبیل فته رنگ رفیع  
 کل شده سروایت بهار شکر  
 دیده او سره ما ز باغ دات  
 عشر قدم خواسته از انبیا  
 صفت ملاک علمش می کشید

Eclidis by Nasreddin Tusi, a renowned scholar of his time. The book was published in 1594 in Rome by the Medici Printing House. Subsequently, it was also interpreted into Latin and published in London in 1657. Publishing Azerbaijani books by printing abroad took place in later ages as well. In 1604, The Book of Persian Don Juan by Oruj-bey Bayat, a 17th century historian and diplomat, was published in Valladolid, that-time capital of Spain. The French version of Rashid Bek and Saadat Khanum story by I.Qutkashenly was published in Warsaw in 1835. In 1831 and 1844, the Persian and Russian versions of Qanuni-Qudsi by A.Bakikhanov saw the light in Tbilisi, whereas Mirza Kazembek's Grammar of the Turkic-Tartar Language saw the light in Kazan and St.Petersburg in 1839 and 1846 respectively. N.Tusi had his ethic work of Akhlagi Nasiri published in Persian in Bombay in 1851, and the collection of verses by Mirza Shafi Vazeh was published in German in Berlin the same year.



۱۰ حکایت اُغوز نامہ رضائب کس و عیسیٰ ۱۰ ۱۰ ۱۰ ۱۰ ۱۰ ۱۰ ۱۰ ۱۰  
 حضرت رطمانہ بیگم بیات بویندن قورقوت اذ لور ار قوشیدی اُغوز که ایچید تمام  
 ولایتی کلایر اولدی ایلام بایندیله سوز لر سوبلیدی برکون قورقوت انا ایندی آخر زمان  
 کرو خانیق قاییده دگه نیکه الدن دن المیه قیامت قویبا آخر زمان اولیجی ددی میدی بوچود  
 کی عثمان تسلیم دلاشته سور لوپ سید پور و دخی یجه بوک بکن سوز لر سوبلیدی قورقوت  
 انا اُغوز قوشدک منکلین حل ادردی هر ازل اوله اکا طاشیجه ایشلر اولدی نیکم اول  
 یور و بولایدی دخی برکون دده قورقوت جوشه کلوبا اُغوز کلایر ایچین صوخیج  
 لیش ایلر و سیمعت بویندن سوبلش کور لم ادردی خانوم ندریمش الله اده و نیجه ایشلر  
 اقلان قادر تکی و بر نیجه ان ایمل اولندن باز اوله قول باشده قد کلان اجل و عد این نیجه  
 نیکه اولن اولن احم دینلر و چقان جان قیامت اولما نیجه برو کلان برکشوق قوه طاع بوم  
 ر نیجه مال اوله یوردور طلب ایدر میسیندن ارنو عین خاتم یه تلان اولر شوب  
 صولطان دکنر طولر کلان کلایر نگی سوز کو کلان بوجه دوشن ازل دولت دور

A miniature from Treasury of Mysteries  
Written down by Mirali Tabrizi, 1338





Collection of the Manuscripts Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences

# The Azerbaijani Libraries

The first libraries appeared in Azerbaijan during the early states' period. Upon introduction of the alphabet in Caucasian Albania back in the 5th century A.D., a number of works by ancient authors were translated into the Albanian language, at small libraries attached to churches or schools. Upon Azerbaijan's takeover by the Arabs in the 7th century, libraries were established within mosques and schools (medrese).

As the sources go, more than 1 million manuscripts were stored in the territory of Azerbaijan during the medieval period. Several types of libraries used to exist in the country at that time, such as court libraries, clerical libraries, scientific libraries at elementary schools, universities, hospitals, observatories, as well as private libraries. Court libraries included the Shirvanshah Royal Library (Shamakhy, 12th century), the Tabriz libraries (13th century), as well as court libraries of Aggoyunlu, Garagoyunlu and Safavi states (14-16th centuries). The court library in Tabriz founded by Shah Ismayil Safavi (Khatai), Azerbaijan's recognized state and public figure of the 16th century, had a special role to play, with the Royal Decree (Farman) on Libraries signed by its benefactor in 1522.

Nasreddin Tusi's library at the Maragha Observatory (13th century) with 400,000 books was among the largest book depositories of its time. Meanwhile, in the 14th century, stacks of just one library at Rab'i-Rashidi neighborhood of Tabriz boasted above 60,000 volumes. The library at Sheikh Safi Tomb in Ardabil was of a particular significance among religious libraries of that period. As the records go, some renowned medieval poets like Nizami, Khatai, Bahmaniyar, Khatib Tabrizi, Abu Wafa, Qatran Tabrizi and others had private libraries of their own.

As of the 1840's, ethnic public libraries started appearing in Azerbaijan, together with private libraries of some outstanding public figures of that time. Libraries of Abbasqulu-Agha Bakikhanov and Mirza Fatali Akhundov were among them. In the second half of the 19th century, public libraries and reading rooms started mushrooming in Azerbaijan. Public libraries were opened in Shusha, Shamakhy and Baku in 1859, 1868 and 1887 respectively. It should be noted that only three libraries were functioning in Baku in 1887. Rapid development of oil industry in the city in the late 19th century brought about a number of technical libraries in the area, followed by numerous charitable associations founded by local intellectuals in 1905-1907. This provided a new impetus to printing activities, libraries and reading rooms. During the Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920), the first democratic state in the Muslim Orient, the Sabir Library together with the library at the State University of Baku were established. By 1920, 965 school libraries were functioning in Azerbaijan, 50 out of them operating in Baku and adjacent areas, whereas another hundred scattered in the countryside.





وهذه صورة اجناس الخالب الحمار وتكون اوسط دور ذلك  
والمعار تكون الطف وهذه صورة المشتار يسط  
التي تشق وسلجها السلع والاورام وهي ايضا من انواع منها  
الكبرى ومنها الصغرى وهذه صورة مشرطه كبيره

وتكون اخرى سطانده الطف منها على هذه الصفة  
وتكون اخرى صغره الطف من الوسط طانده يكون الاشعار  
التي تسوقها طاده والاطراف الاخر غير حاده وانما جعلت  
لذلك ليسيعان بها في سلج السلع عند خوف قطع عرق  
او عصب فليست تلس بها الحبل او تحلل الراسه فذلك من الحرقه  
عند حرق الورم وهذه صورته كخارص وهي ايضا من انواع  
مجاهل ومنها اوساط وفيها صغار

هذه صورة الخلع الشعر والوسط الطف منه راسا والصغير  
على هذا القياس يكون كل واحد الطف من الاخر يصنع من نحاس  
شبه المروود ويحمله وفي الطرف الآخر يضر شقفه المبضع  
بحسه منه كحكي اليد اظفار الخارج متى احس حماركي صورته  
المبضع التي تدس من الاصابع عند ربط الاورام لا يشتر بها













The Reading Hall of the Vatican Apostolic Library



## *Medieval Azerbaijani manuscripts at the Vatican archives*

A number of manuscripts by the Azerbaijani authors are currently cherished at the Vatican Apostolic Library. The very concept of “the Azerbaijani manuscripts” implies not only the manuscripts written in Azerbaijani, but also the works created by authors of the Azerbaijani origin in the Arabic, Farsi and other languages. Research conducted by F.Alakbarli in Vatican in 2011 revealed 60 old manuscripts by the Azerbaijani authors written in the Azerbaijani, Turkish, Farsi and Arabic languages.



The Vatican Apostolic Library



Productions by Nizami, Fuzuli, Nasimi, Shabustari and Sukhravardi, as well as other so far unknown medieval Azerbaijani authors were discovered.

These include hand-written works by scholars from the ancient Azerbaijani region of Shirvan, such as Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Ali Shirvani's, *Nafhatul Yaman fi ma yazul bi-Zikrihi ash-Shajan* (Winds from Yemen: Poetry and Prose Collection), Muhammad bin Mahmud bin al-Hadji ash-Shirvani's *Razvat al-Atr li-an Yartad al-Attar* (The Pharmacist's Fragrant Flower Garden), Abdul-Majid Shirvani's *Kitabi-s-Sihri* (The Book of Mysteries), and other valuable studies.

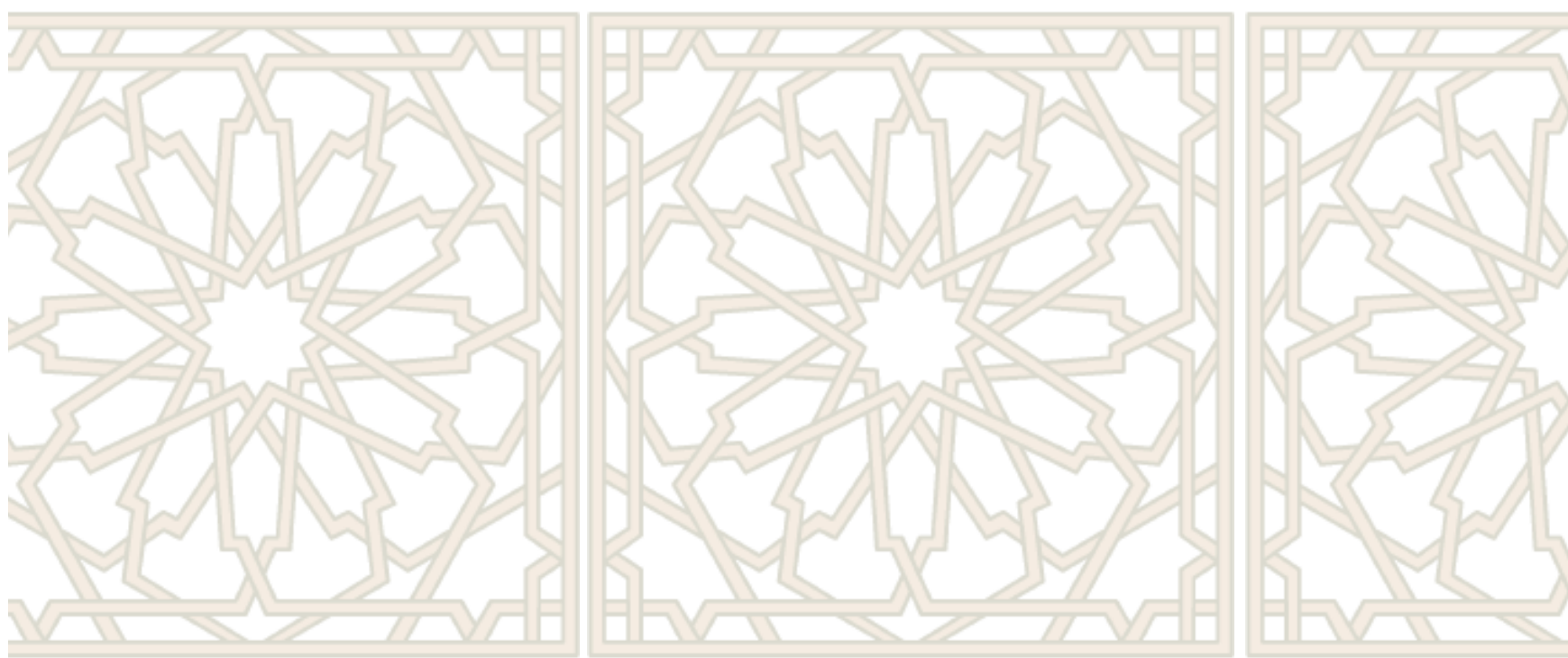




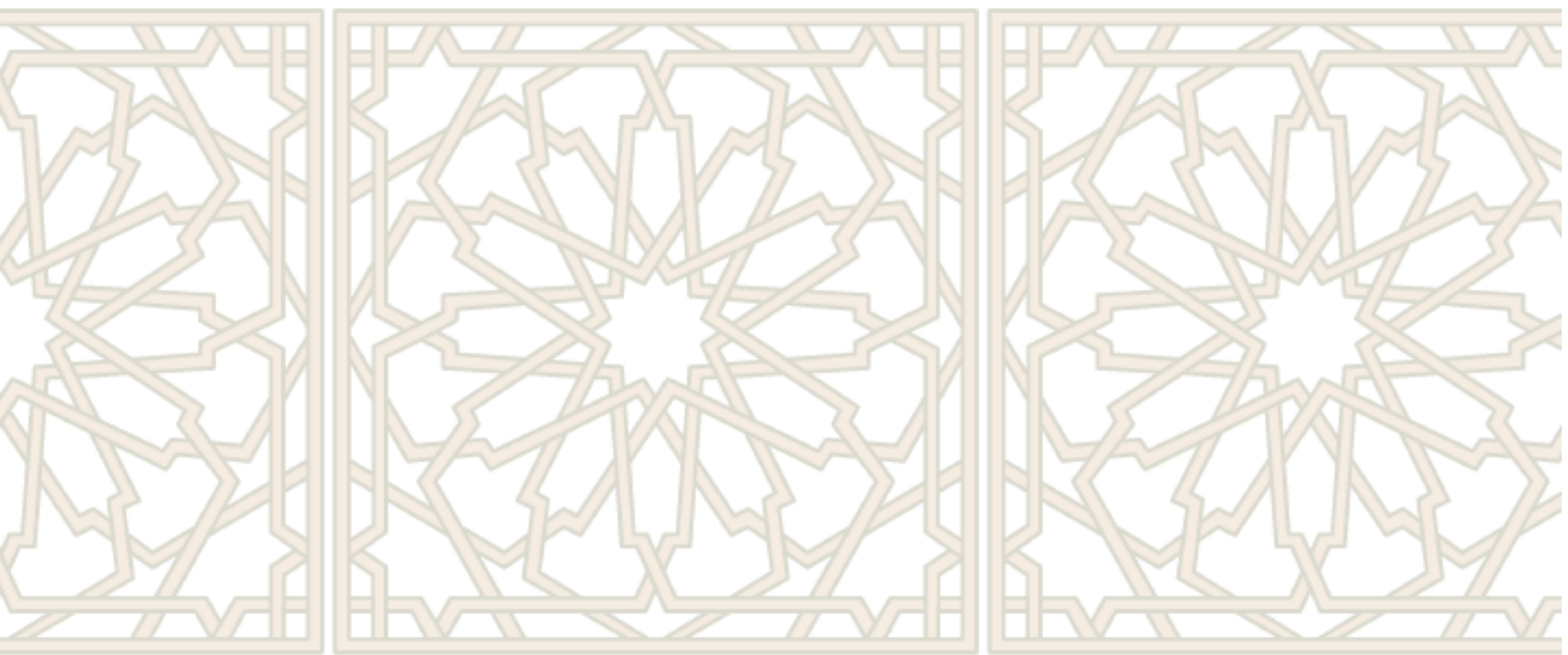


A miniature from "Haft Behisht" by Amir Khosrov Dahlavi. 1579 – 1580. The collection of the Manuscripts Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences









# *The Art of Calligraphy*

Handwritten text in Persian script, likely a calligraphic work. The text is written in a highly stylized, cursive style (Shikasta) and is arranged in a dense, flowing pattern across the page. The ink is dark, and the background is light-colored paper. The text is written in a single column, starting from the top right and moving downwards. The calligraphy is very fluid, with many loops and flourishes. The text is a famous poem by Rumi, known as the "Masnavi-ye Ma'ani". The specific lines visible are:

بازم که در این عالم غفلت  
مرا در این عالم غفلت  
بازم که در این عالم غفلت  
مرا در این عالم غفلت  
بازم که در این عالم غفلت  
مرا در این عالم غفلت  
بازم که در این عالم غفلت  
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بازم که در این عالم غفلت  
مرا در این عالم غفلت

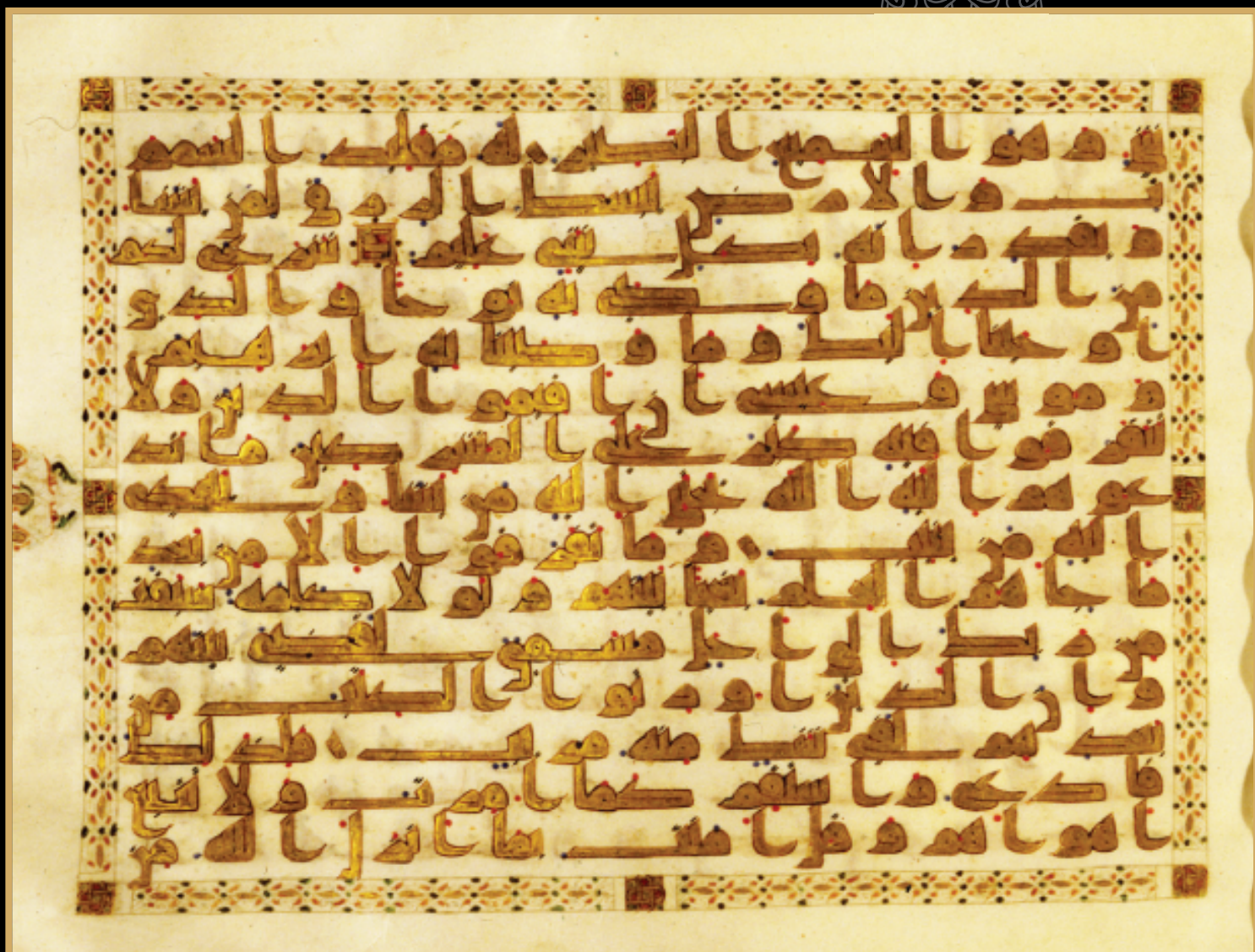
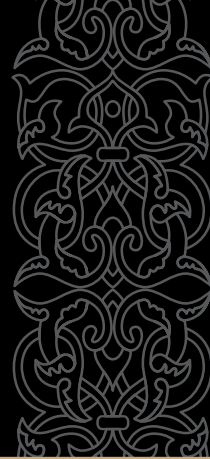




## *Arabic Calligraphic Styles*

Manuscripts were written by calligraphers. There were several basic writing modes (calligraphic styles), such as kufi, naskh, nastaliq, shikeste, shikesteyi–nastaliq, thulth, rika, muhaqqaq, tuqi, taliq, etc. Three out of them (nastaliq, shikeste and shikesteyi–nastaliq) were developed by calligraphers of Azerbaijani descent.

Back in the Middle Ages, writing styles used in the Orient varied a lot, with special rules applied to the use of each style. Naskh, taliq and thulth were prevalent in Azerbaijan and Central Asia until the 15th century. Meanwhile, scribes and literary persons occasionally used other writing styles as well. Created in the 14th century, the calligraphic style of nastaliq succeeded in replacing other writing modes and becoming a dominant writing style in Iran, Azerbaijan and Central Asia within a very short period of time. It goes without saying that high demands were put forward towards the quality of calligraphic styles in the course of creation of elaborate artistic manuscripts. Manuscripts written by the same high-class style from the beginning to the end were considered the true state-of-the-art works. Colored ink, India ink together with dyes, liquid gold and silver were used in the course of producing manuscripts richly adorned with addresses, front page pictures, miniatures and other decorations. While preparing illustrated manuscripts pursuant to orders of high-ranking public officials and gentry, joint efforts of representatives of three occupations were used. These were calligraphers, miniature artists and bookbinders.



Sample of the Kufi script



# Kufi

Kufi is the oldest name for the Arabic writing style based on straight lines and angular figures. One of kufi's users was Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib who was the first to write down the Holy Qur'an using this very style.





سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ  
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ  
تَسْتَعِينُ  
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ  
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

إِنَّا نَعُوذُ بِكَ

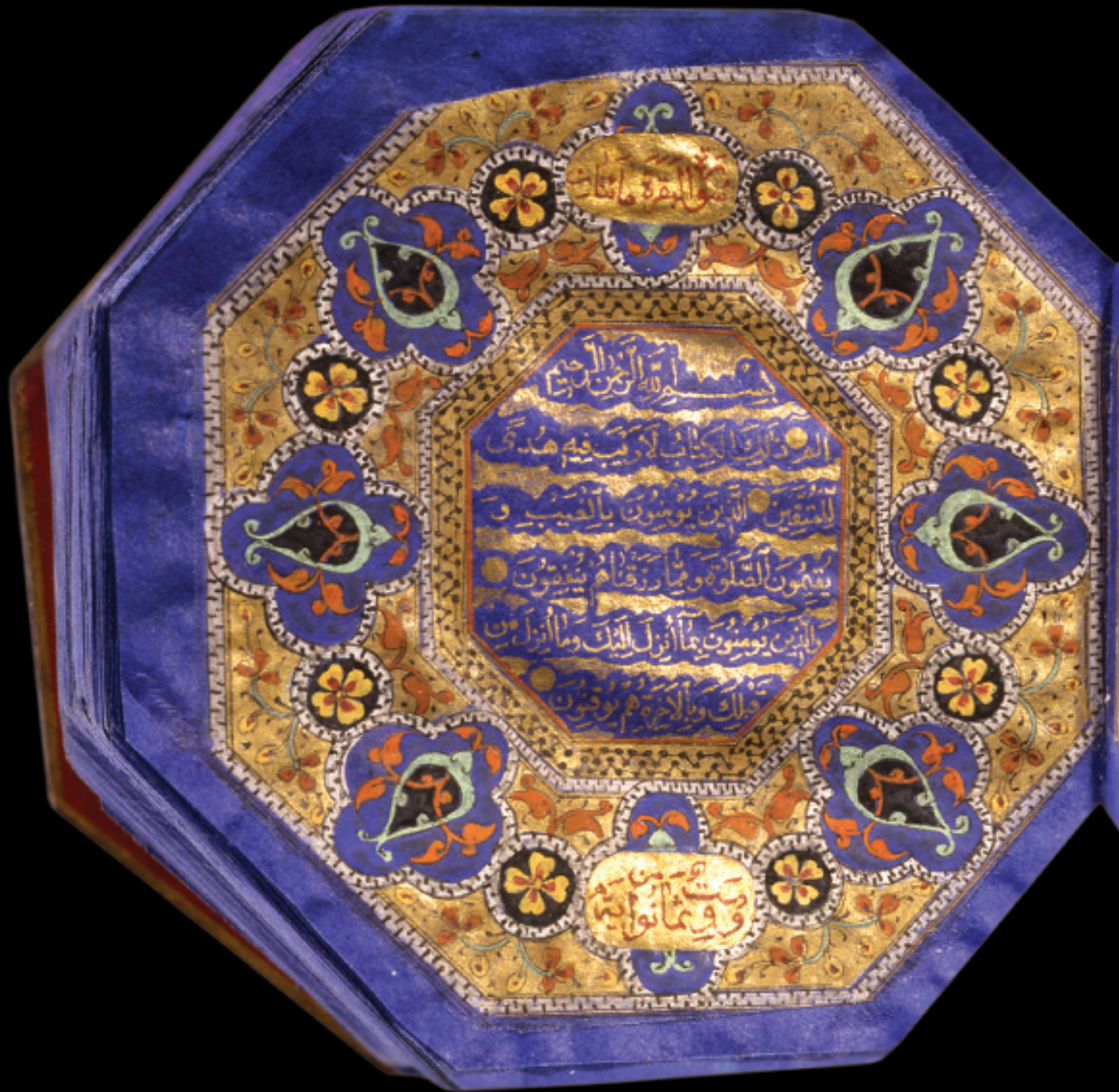


# Naskh

In later period, renown calligrapher Ibn Muqlah reworked kufi into a new calligraphic style known as naskh. Since the writing style he invented was more elegant and legible, it gradually supplanted kufi. The very name 'naskh' stands for 'replacing' or 'eliminating' in Arabic. It is this style that is nowadays used while publishing the Holy Qur'an.



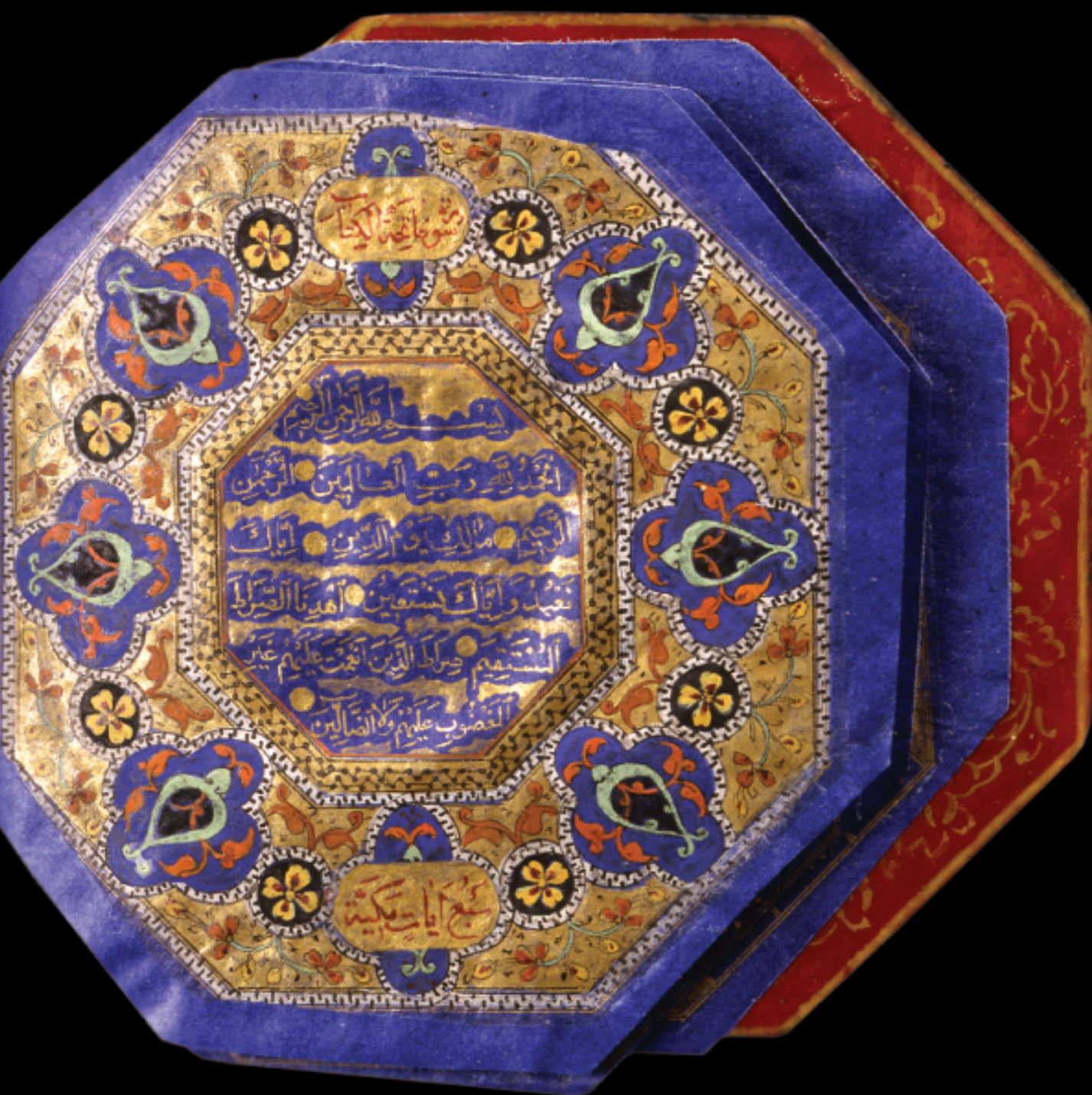
Samples of the Naskh script. Qur'anic verses (ayats)



Octagonal Koran written in Naskh on blue paper. Safavids. 8.3 × 8 cm

Octagonal Koran is unusual because of its shape, its small format, and its paper dyed blue and written in gold Naskh. It includes the name of the person who commissioned it, al-hajj Abd al-Samad al-Musawi. The name of the calligrapher is Abdallah ibn Muhammad Hussain ibn Ali al-Mazandarani. The lacquer binding, decorated with flowers and leaves and various friezes. The David Collection, Copenhagen, Denmark







بنقال یوسف پغمبر است و جاء و جلالت

شکوه و شوکت شایسته و پس و جلالت

بجز مصر همان گشت صاحب این فال

نزار فیض بر ده زمان ز فضل و کمال

ای صاحب فال بدان واکاه باش که حضرت یوسف پغمبر علیه السلام بنقال تو بر آمده است

که بر اوران حاجت بنزد او آمده اند این فال دلیلت بر دولت و پیادت و اقبال

بدن حاجات و نیکو شدن مهمات و مقهور شدن دشمنان و خوشحالی و تسان

اگر چه خد روزه پیش ازین الما و از آرزوهای پسندیده و خصوصا از یاران مشفق اما خاطر

جمع دار که پریشانی از طاعت پیرون رفت و بعد ازین روز بروز است از هم بهتر

خواهد گذشت و جمع خویشان و اقربا و دوستان را بتواستی حاج خواهد بود و ترا

خداست تعالی قدرت بر حصول مراد است و مقصود است ایشان خواهد داد اما

باید که همه پس اعتماد کنی و با مردم نما از موده احتلاط نمائیت و در میان



# Nastaliq

The three calligraphic styles most popular in the Islamic world, Iran in particular (i.e. nastaliq, shikeste and shikesteyi-nastaliq), were developed by calligraphers of Azerbaijani origin. It is broadly recognized that the development of nastaliq writing style by calligrapher of the 14th century Hoja Mirali Tabrizi became a milestone not only in the history of calligraphy, but also the high art in general. This writing style presents a combination of naskh, the style applied in writing down Qur'anic texts, and the shorthand style of taliq prevalent in clerical and business correspondence.

Along with other prominent scribes, works by Sultan Ali Meshedi (1432-1520), a recognized calligrapher, were of a particular importance in the development and broad dissemination of nastaliq in the 14th – early 15th centuries. In later period, this style was furthermore upgraded by Mir-Ahmad Qazvini, another famous Azerbaijani calligrapher who lived at the time of Shah Abbas Safavi's reign. During the period of 14-19th centuries, irrespective of contents, destination and size, almost all manuscripts in Azerbaijan, Iran, Central Asia and Eastern Turkestan were written down in this particular writing style.



Samples of the Shikeste script

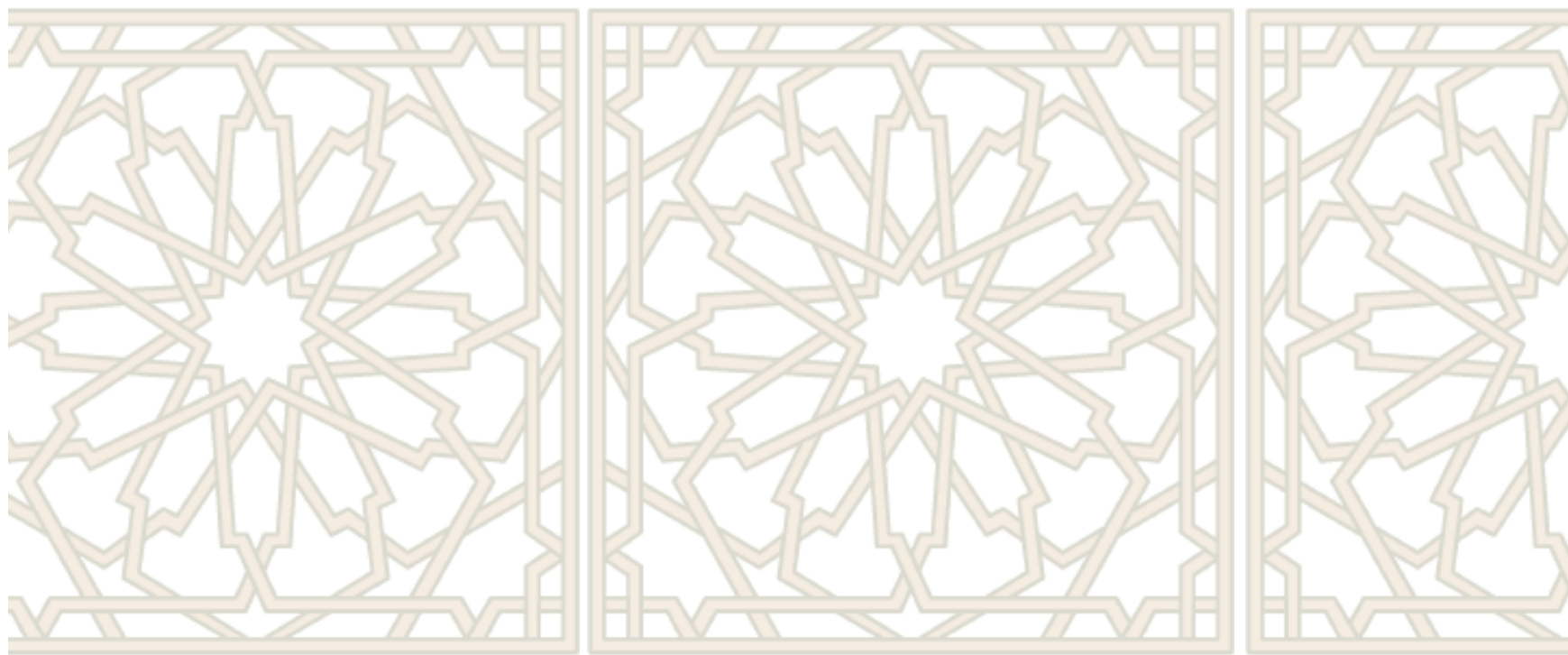


# Shikeste

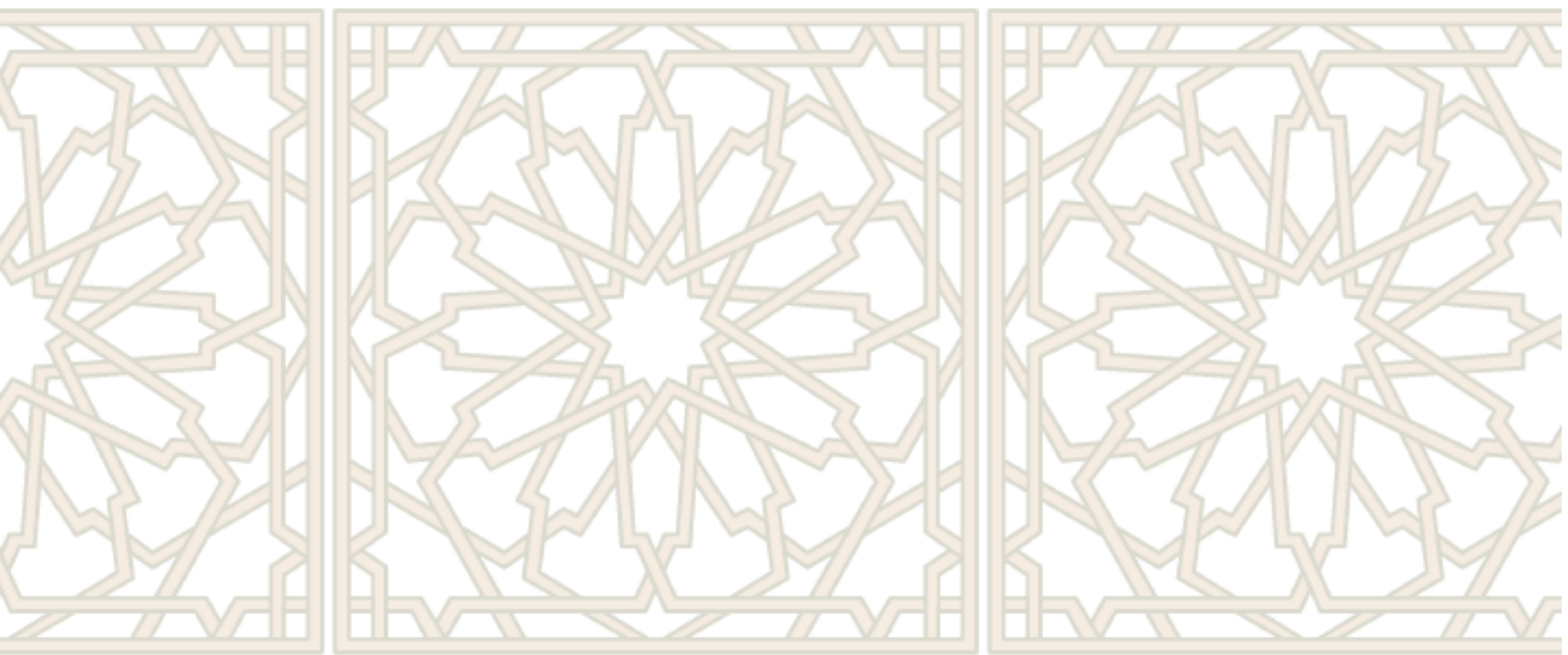
The invention and development of Shikeste writing style, oftentimes referred to as ‘the bride of the Islamic world’, is something owed to another Azerbaijani, Murtuzaqulu Sultan Shamlu, who succeeded in making a tangible contribution to the writing tradition not only of his own ethnic group, but also all those using the Arabic script. According to Mirza Abdul-Muhammad, one of that-time annalists, “Murtuzaqulu Khan (Sultan) was one of the most influential Safavi emirs (rulers) and military commanders. For a while, he was the ruler of Herat hoisting the flag of culture and education there. It was the sharpness of his mind and wealth of imagination that enabled him to invent the writing style of shikeste and train his secretary Mirza Shafia to use it...”

# Shikesteyi-Nastaliq

This writing style presenting a synthesis of Shikeste and Nastaliq calligraphic styles was also developed by Murtuzaqulu Khan. This fact is supported by Burghei Qumi in his Tazhkira1'i Muhtakirat (The Founders' Biographies).



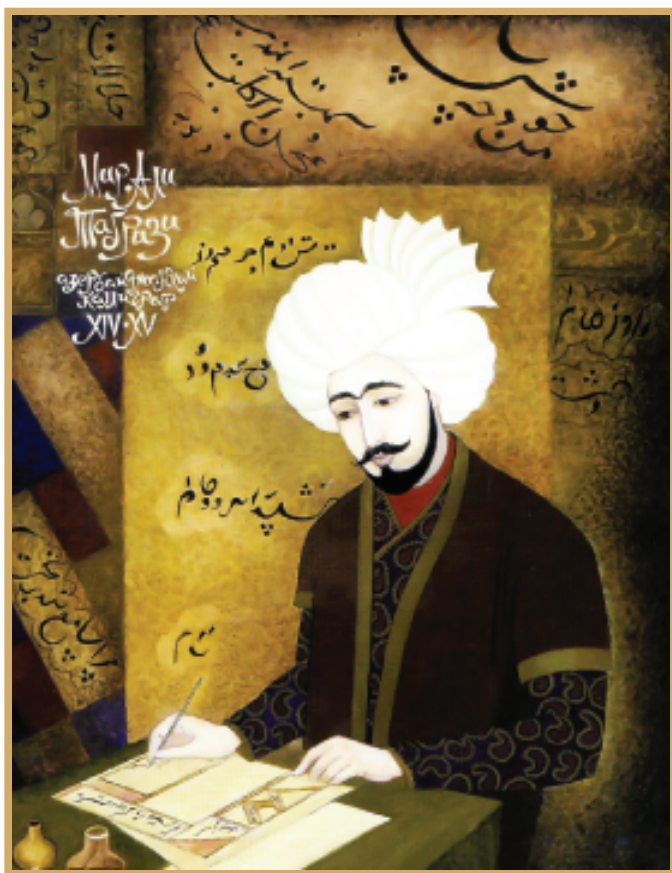




*Recognized Calligraphers  
of Medieval Azerbaijan*

# Mir Ali Tabrizi

Hojja Mir-Ali ibn Ilyas Tabrizi (died c.1420) is one of the renowned Azerbaijani calligraphers and the founder of nastaliq writing style. Scholars, biographers and authors of medieval treatises on calligraphy mentioned Mir-Ali Tabrizi as the founder of Nastaliq style. Soon this mode of calligraphy phased out the six classic writing styles and became prevalent all over the Orient. The first disciple of Mir-Ali to master the new writing style he had created was his son Mir-Abdullah, later known as Shakari Gelem (the Sweet Pen). Jafar Tabrizi, one of the leading Azerbaijani calligraphers of the 15th century, was among Mir-Abdullah's students. Manuscripts by Mir-Ali Tabrizi are currently stored at the museums of London, Tehran and St.Petersburg.



Mir Ali Tabrizi. 14-15th centuries



هنگامی که زلفت پرخ برآمد.

جمل آن کرده خود پرده در می نیست

سویں سو سال کی تاریخ

فاخر دی تو صاحب نظر آنست و لی

مت خفاک درت بر بصر نیست که

بزرگوار ابرار عیسیٰ مریم

ملایسی کیوں اندر دلمباری

چونکہ یہ ایک نیا ہیرو ہے

کعبه در چو نمایی که بعبه خانیست  
 حرم کعبه منجلیک است  
 منون چشم تو بوقت ملک الدار  
 بیان مردم عالم کنونیست  
 خیال سفل از دل بون بکونیم  
 بنظر از دل داغهاست نیست  
 غم که بر لب  
 غم که بر لب

تاریخ اربعین و زیارتنامه





Manuscript by Jafar Tabrizi  
 16th century



# Jafar Tabrizi

Jafar Tabrizi (1395-1480) was one of the most recognized Azerbaijani calligraphers specialized in nastaliq, taliq and thulth writing styles, as well as the mentor of a number of outstanding local artisans. As one of the most renowned calligraphers of Horasan and Turkestan in the 15th century, Jafar Tabrizi in his turn was trained in nastaliq by another famous Azerbaijani expert, Mir-Abdulla Tabrizi, also known as Shekeri-Qalem (Sweet Pen) among his peers. Jafar Tabrizi's life coincided with the period of Central Asia's takeover by Amir Timur. After working at the court of Miranshah, Timur's son, in Tabriz for a while, Jafar Tabrizi accompanied by a group of other artisans left for Herat to join the court of Timur's other son, Shahruh. There he enjoyed a tremendous support of Shahruh's son, Prince Baysungur. It was this care and support that won Jafar Tabrizi his pen name Baysunguri. According to Parviz Kazemi's research, while staying at the royal court of Prince Baysungur (Baysungur Mirza), Jafar Tabrizi succeeded in writing down Firdovsi's Shahname (1430), Saadi's Gulistan (1427), Nizami Ganjavi's Khamsa (1431). These manuscripts are currently cherished in leading museums and libraries of Paris, Dublin, Tehran, Istanbul and St. Petersburg.

According to medieval sources, at the same period, Jafar Tabrizi was also running a small library and workshop involved in manuscripts' production. Apart from calligraphers, the workshop employed miniature artists, gilders, tanners, restorers and bookbinders. Excellent mentor and manager, Jafar Tabrizi was instrumental in the library's development, presenting regular performance reports to Baysungur Mirza. One of these reports, dated June 1427, is currently kept at the Topkapı Palatial Museum in Istanbul. Along with description of the activities undertaken, the report names 18 miniature artists, calligraphers, bookbinders and gilders operating at the library. Besides nastaliq writing style, Jafar Tabrizi succeeded in mastering the six classic writing styles and taliq calligraphic mode. Even though famous as the master of nastaliq, he was even more proficient in old classic writing styles. At that time, two types of nastaliq style were prevalent, i.e. the large and the small ones. The large nastaliq was normally used on qita, a piece of paper attached to the cardboard decorated with secular verses and sketches. Small and medium nastaliq was generally used for writing down poetic verses. Small nastaliq got furthermore developed in Herat in the second half of the 15th century. In later period, this writing style was known as herati among local artisans, with Jafar Tabrizi recognized as its founder. Poetry was another passion of Jafar Tabrizi that won him a great deal of recognition. He was an author of an epitaph to Baysungur Mirza, and poetic pieces dedicated to Shahruh and his sons Princes Baysungur and Ala ad-Dovle. Jafar Tabrizi passed away in Herat at the age of 65.

# Ali Reza Tabrizi

Ali Reza Tabrizi (real name Nizam ad-Din Ali-Reza) is one of Azerbaijan's most outstanding leading lights in culture of the 15th century, a recognized master of nastaliq and naskhithulth, fluent in seven other writing styles., a renown calligrapher, miniature artist, painter and poet. Ali Reza Tabrizi spent his youth in Tabriz. Upon takeover of Tabriz by the Ottoman Turks in 1585, Ali Reza left for Qazvin for permanent residence. There he took part in the construction of the major local mosque. Besides this, he produced some highly artistic copies of Qur'an and was involved in teaching practices. Soon, Ali Reza was hired by Sardar (Vice-Roy) of Horasan Abdul Mansur Farhad Khan Qaramanlu. Subsequently, pursuant to the Royal Decree of Shah Abbas, Ali Reza was appointed the headmaster of the Royal Library. Following the ruler's order, he succeeded in compiling an album encompassing the most remarkable works of calligraphy and miniature art of its time. Writing his poetic eulogies (medhiyye) under the name of Shah Navaz, and very successful in the Royal Court's diplomatic affairs, Ali Reza was awarded the honorary title of Abbasi. In 1602-1604, while in Meshed, Ali Reza was involved in adorning the Tomb of 8th Shiite Imam Musa Ar-Reza. Very high level of performance resulted in Ali Reza's being commissioned by Shah Abbas to decorate interiors of mosques and administrative buildings in Isfahan. Later on, versatile inscriptions in thulth style were performed by him on the doors of the Maqsud Bey, Sheikh Lutfullah and Shah Abbas Mosques. A number of manuscripts by Ali Reza are preserved to this day. These include Hatifi's Teymurmane (written down in 1568), records of conversations between Shah Tahmasib 1 and Turkish Sultan Suleyman 1 (written down in 1601-1602 in nastaliq), Sohbatul-Abrar by Abdurrahman Jami (1613), Mehri-Shafai (1616), etc. Ali Reza was also involved in compiling the design of the Maragha Observatory. According to one of the chroniclers, Mirza Sankhlakh, Ali Reza lived to the age of 125, and was decorated with the title of Sheikh-ul-khattat (the Sheikh of Scribes).





## Mir-Imad Qazvini

Mir-Imad Qazvini, actual name Mir-Muhammad Ibn Huseyn Hassani Qazvini (1553/54-1615), also known as Imad Al-Mulk (Pillar of the State), was among the best calligraphers of the 17th century. Mir-Imad was born in Qazvin. He spent his childhood and youth in Tabriz studying nastaliq calligraphic style and trained by a virtuoso calligrapher Movlana Muhammad Huseyn Tabrizi.



Manuscript by Mir-Imad Qazvini. 16th century



Manuscript by Mir-Imad Qazvini. 16th century

Upon Azerbaijan's conquest by the Ottoman Empire, Mir Imad got a chance to travel to a number of countries within the Empire, including the Holy Mecca. Back in his homeland, he served at the court of Farhad Khan. After the latter one's death in 1599, he moved to Gilan and then Qazvin to study the art of calligraphy. Shortly after, Mir Imad moved to Isphahan, that-time capital city of the Safavi Dynasty where he was employed at the chancery of Shah Abbas 1. However, discontent with prevailing atmosphere resulted in his leaving of the royal court very soon. Upon return to native Qazvin, he resumed tutoring, still remaining in harsh opposition to the policy of Shah Abbas. This could not go unnoticed. As the story goes, Shah Abbas called in Magsud Bey, the leader of local royalists, claiming to put end to Qazvini's activities. As a result, tattered dead body of Mir Imad Qazvini was found in one of the streets of his hometown on August 26, 1615.







Manuscript by Mir-Imad Qazvini. 16th century



# Mirza Huseyn Bey Salar

Mirza Huseyn Bey Salar (1824-1876) was a poet and a calligrapher. Born in Shusha in 1824, he was first trained by his father and then at religious school (medrese). Mir Mohsun Navvab mentioned him in his most famous memoirs (tazkire). Salar was the pen name he used while writing poetry. He also re-wrote Garabagname by Mirza Adygozal. Mirza Huseyn Bey Salar passed away in 1876.





## *Mirza Ismayil Mahzun*

Mirza Ismayil, the son of Meshadi Qasym Merdinli-Javanshir (1828-1894), was both a poet and a calligrapher. Born in Shusha in 1828, he mastered the craft of perfumes production run by his father and continued his studies at medrese. As an educated person he got the title of 'mirza' (i.e. scribe or literary person). He was mentioned by Mir Mohsun Navvab, Muhammad-Agha Murtazazadeh and Firudin-Bey Kocharli. Mirza Ismayil Mahzun passed away in 1894.





Khamse by Nizami. 1627.

Collection of the Manuscripts Institute  
under the Azerbaijan National Academy  
of Sciences



چگونه است چون که می خیزد  
 می چون سر کمان کور شتی  
 می چون بوس لب فدا و  
 شود در زین چشم شده  
 بدان میستش از آید  
 گویای که خوشی مان بوش  
 و یکس با بوش شوی  
 و بسید که شکا می خیزد  
 ملک است از دماغی

از خون که بر جان من ریخته  
 برودستی جو خجسته اوردی  
 و دانش از بسکه بر نهاده  
 زخو روی دشت و دشت  
 که در از از فرستی منی به  
 بدنامی که بکشدان بسوی  
 که خوشتر زن بود که بی  
 و زمان صد گرگ تو بهی  
 بنال جواب با سواد ای

دوستان منی خاکستار  
دو رخ چون مندره اندر  
پنج کسی بر روی تبه  
بعد از نوری پرستش آمده  
از طرف برود آید  
شده است می بر روی  
کمان بر و زار می کنند  
کافی دید بر جای



ولی چون غل متی رسید  
فصل جمده و خلا در دلا او  
بگویم که شکرت کرد  
به خورشید تابش رو  
بهشتی شری از جان  
مستاز و چون کل برود

کمان آقا و کمان داور نشین  
که مردم جان و چارو ساز  
طبریز تیر سیم و عکاست  
کلی از صد بهار عکس  
ولی نام طبع سرخ نوشته  
نزار و رخسار یک بخان

در آن روز در مسجدی بدو  
 مروی آمد ظرفی پخته بود  
 جوهری که بود در دهنش  
 می گاه بسته تیدان  
 بانه فرو و بختی چو  
 خورشید می تابید

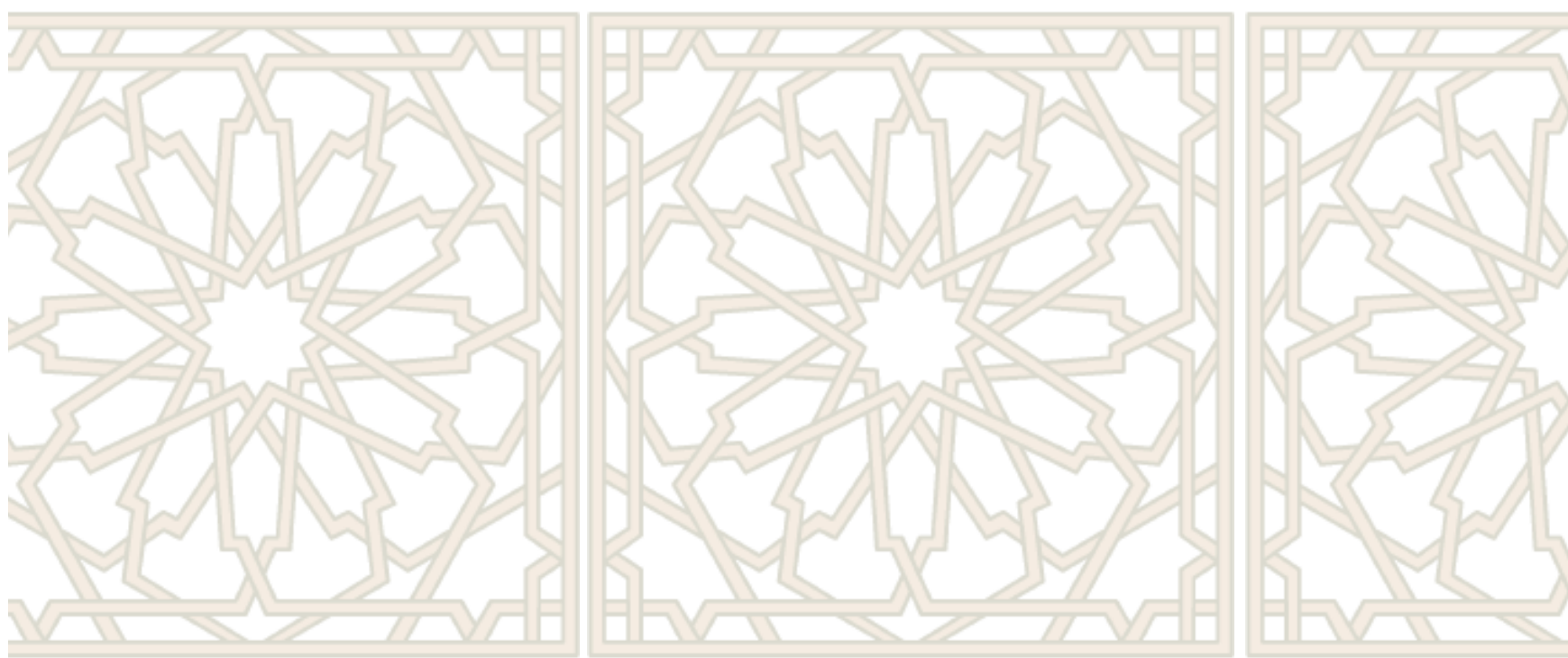




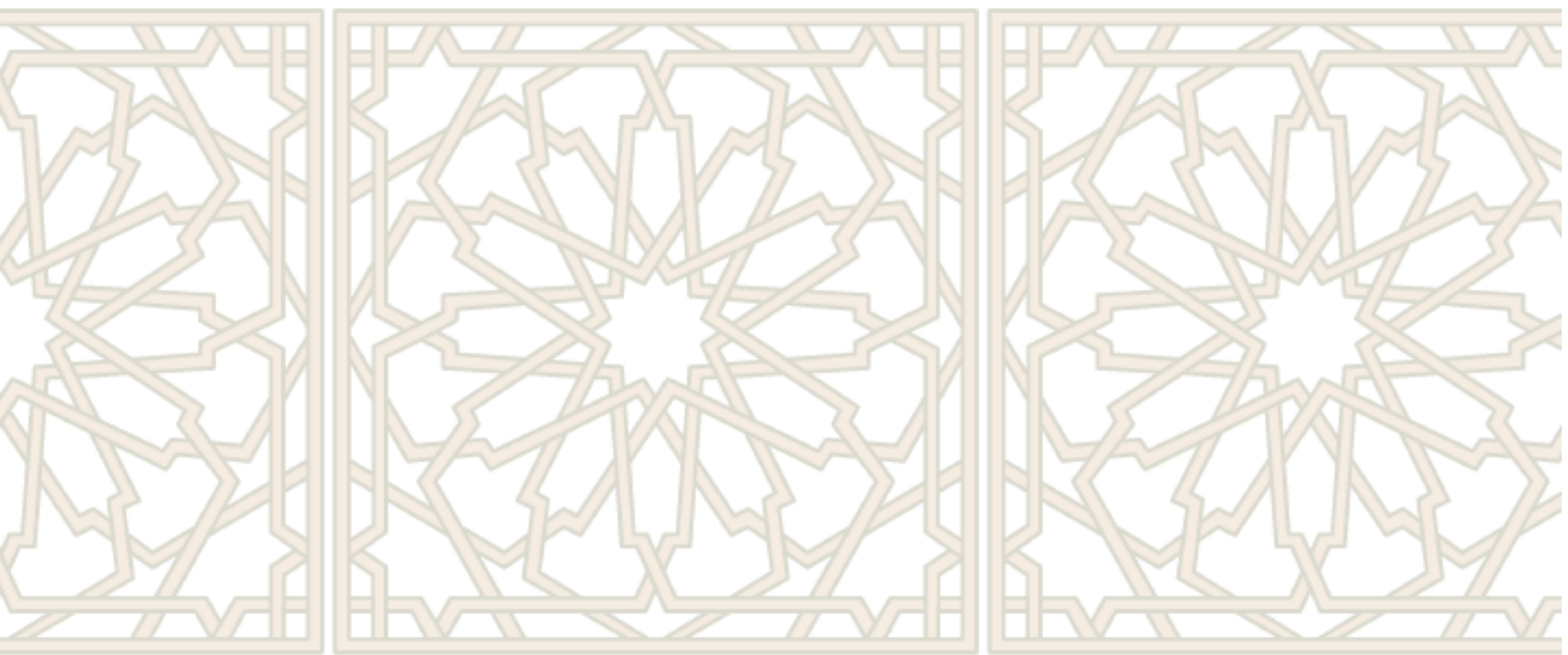












*Book Production  
and Stationery*



Manuscripts by medieval calligraphers.

Collection of the Manuscripts Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences



## Book Printing

Back in the Middle Ages, hundreds of thousands books were issued by the Oriental calligraphers, artists, painters, illustrators, designers, gilders, proof-readers, restorers and bookbinders.

The whole craft of book production in the Orient is inseparably linked with worldwide recognized 15th century calligrapher of the Azerbaijani descent Jafar Tabrizi (1395-1480). While heading a tiny workshop specialized in writing manuscripts, J.Tabrizi produced the work entitled *The Report* (*Arzadasht*). 135 millimeters in width and 460 millimeters in height, the book is written in Farsi using Arabic script. It was written with no dots, on a bright yellowish paper of local production. A volume of *The Report* with pages attached thereto was preserved to this day. The copy belonged to Sultan Yagub, the ruler of the Azerbaijani state of Aggoyunlu in 1478-1490. Written in a very elegant manner, adorned with colored illustrations and verses, it is currently kept at the Topkapy Palatial Museum in Istanbul.

According to the researcher Parviz Kazemi, while *The Report* with sections on book printing, decoration, architecture and interior design was compiled, 9 large books were being manufactured at the library and workshop. Their completion including writing, illustrations, marginal notes, decoration and binding involved 25 artisans. The work of book printers, tent, textile, felt makers and tanners, as well as epitaph writers and other artisans had to be examined by Jalal Tabrizi. Active involvement of renown book printing experts from all over the Orient in production of these books, besides the local experts of Herat with its more than two million residents, was mentioned in *The Report* of J.Tabrizi. Artisans like Jafar from Tabriz, Shamsaddin Muhammad from Herat, Azhar from Tabriz, Soltanali from Meshed and others are mentioned among the calligraphers, painters, illustration artists, bookbinders, gilders, and other craftsmen. Some of the painters, like Qiyasaddin Naqqash, Khalil Mirza and Kamal Behzad, were involved in the creation of a series of worldwide renown works.

Books stored in the Royal Library were written in the Arabic, Persian, Turkic, English and other languages. Even though exact number of books produced by Jafar Tabrizi starting from the very early age, i.e. 1417, and all the way till the death of Baysungur Mirza in 1433 and his own decease, is so far unknown, the names of the majority of them are available. These were Treasury of Mysteries (1417), Khamsa (The Five Poems) (1420), Khosrov and Shirin (1421) by Nizami Ganjavi, Djung (Selected works) by Sultan Ahmad Jelairi (1424), Gulistan (Flower Garden) by Saadi (1426-1427), Nuskhat Al-Arwah (Delight for the Soul) by Huseyn Saadat (1427), Djung by Baysungur Mirza (1427), Shahname (The Book of Kings) by Firdousi (1427-1430), Kalila and Dimna by Abdulmaali Nasrullah (1431), Divan (Poetic Collection) by Khafiz (1431-1432) and other works. Exquisite books produced by Jafar Tabrizi and his contemporaries in Herat are a clear indication of a very high level of calligraphy, book binding, miniature art and other crafts related thereto. Some of these works are stored in book depositories of Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, Russia, the US, the UK, France and other states. The most renown places of their current storage include the Manuscripts Institute and the History Museum at the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, the Museum of Topkapy Palace (Turkey), the Library of Gulistan Palace (Iran), the Saltykov-Schedrin Library (Russia), the Metropolitan Museum (the US), the Louvre (France).







Manuscripts by medieval calligraphers.  
Collection of the Manuscripts Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences







Tools used by medieval calligraphers

## *Size and Format of Books*

The standards used by book artisans while selecting the format for this or another book are nowadays hard to imagine. According to Parviz Kazemi, the art historian, format of majority of the books varied between 20 by 30 or 30 by 20 centimeters. Illustrated poetic albums and collections had a special format of their own. Depending on contents and destination, they were called djung, beyaz or mejmua. Being thin and long in shape, the books were generally very portable. Depending on the books' ultimate use, the shape was determined by the authors.





## Reed pens

Special skills were required to produce kalam, pens made of reed. Rush selected for manufacturing pens was first soaked in water unless it got the color of dark oak. Upon initial processing, reeds were cut off with a small hole pierced at the nodule and the edge sharpened by a special knife, gelemterash. The right side of the reed, unsi, was supposed to be slightly thinner than the left side, wahshi. Special knives made of bone or horn (naykat and gelemkat) were used while cutting the reed. Finished pens were processed by sand to get rid of oil, and then tested. If a dot left by a pen was of an appropriate shape, the pen was considered good.



A pen case, pen and inkpot. Collection of the Manuscripts Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences

## *Ink*

Medieval Azerbaijani calligraphers normally used ink or Indian ink. Indian ink was generally manufactured of soot and squeezed cherry, whereas ink was produced of alum and nutgall. The recipe of highly resistant black and colored ink for calligraphy was very complex and included multiple components. For instance, high quality ink was made of soot, nutgall and beetroot. Aromatic substances varying from rose water to concentrated ambergris, known for its strong scent, were added to ink while writing fiction manuscripts.

According to prevalent beliefs, ink comprised the four basic elements, such as soot resulting from fire, mixed with earth, dissolved in rose water and dried by air. Combination of these four elements (water, fire, earth and air) was viewed as the sign of perfection. Calligraphers draw the line only once, never outlining a written letter repeatedly by ink or Indian ink, as this would compromise the beauty of the original writing style. They also used to put a silk cocoon into an ink-well, so that the reed pen would absorb the needed amount of ink. Properly saturated pen was instrumental in making the written text nice as it was.







An inkpot. Collection of the Manuscripts Institute under the  
Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences

# Paper



Paper was the main attribute of hand-written books in the medieval Islamic Orient. According to the scientific sources, technology of manufacturing paper from bamboo and mulberry tree was developed in China by Tzai Lun back in 105 A.D. However, archaeological excavations in China held in 1978 revealed remnants of paper above 2000 years of age. As a result of laboratory studies, it was established that the paper in question was manufactured some 150 years prior to Tzai Lun and was made not of bamboo but of hemp. Subsequently, paper was used in the areas of Central Asia adjacent to China. The first paper production was arranged in Samarkand. In the 7th century A.D., technology of paper production was picked up by the Arabs upon the region's takeover, and replicated in Syria and Egypt. The way of paper to Europe was two-fold. The first was from Morocco to Spain and then further to France. The second route included Egypt, Italy and Germany. The first paper production in Europe dates back to 1151 in Spain, and 1276 in Italy. Historic evidence indicates that in Azerbaijan writing paper was first manufactured in Tabriz. That being said, it is still hard to identify the manufacturing place for the Oriental paper used in each manuscripts' production. The Oriental and European types of paper vary in thickness, rigidity, brightness and other features. The most distinct feature of the European paper, unknown to the Oriental one, is watermark, also known as filigree in a number of languages. The very word 'filigree' is of Latin origin meaning 'jewelry crafted of thin wire'. Economic and cultural links of Azerbaijan with Europe increased significantly in the 15th century to get a greater impetus during the following centuries. Trading routes passing through the country's territory were used as channels to deliver various types of watermarked European paper that enjoyed a high domestic demand. That was the reason why paper of Italian, French, Dutch and Austrian origin was frequently used in Azerbaijan in the course of hand-written books' production.





Unlike Azerbaijan and Turkey, the number of manuscripts written on paper of European origin in Central Asia and Eastern Turkestan was comparatively small and primarily dating to the 19-20th centuries. As for the first use of the European paper in Azerbaijan and Turkey is concerned, it goes back to the late 14th century. The number of manuscripts written on paper of European origin increased rapidly as of the 17th century. As Parviz Kazemi notes, several types of paper were produced for manuscripts. The most prevalent one was referred to as kaghyze nimkatani. Hemp fiber was viewed as the major raw material for paper production. The raw material was first placed in a water-operated mortar. The granular mass was then washed, pressed and processed with certain amount of potash and lime. The mass was then mixed, dried and placed into the mortar again. The process was repeated several times. Once the mass was prepared, casting of paper sheets started. Casts for paper sheet's production comprised a grid and a net. The grid was made of mulberry tree, whereas the net consisted of thin parallel stripes of horsehair. To make a paper sheet, a grid covered with net was immersed into the mass. Dried sheets of paper were then taken out and cut by knife. To add gloss to the paper, floury starch was applied to each side of the sheet. After the sheets were dried out they were smoothed out by a special shell on a pear tree board. Paper for manuscripts was dyed in various tints. Colored paper was normally used for writing down fictions, whereas other manuscripts were mainly written on rough grey kaghyze nimkatani type paper.

# Bookbinding

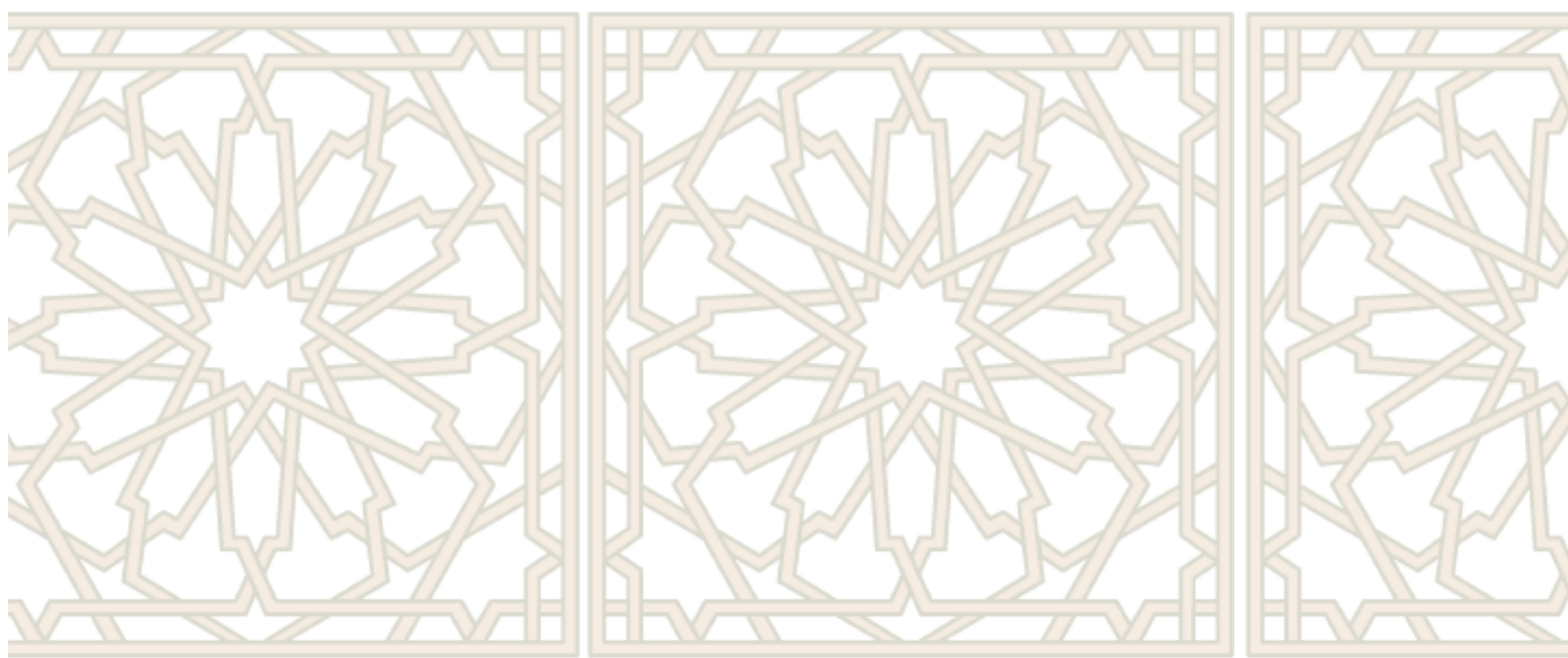
Binding, as an important integral part of each book, was manufactured separately. One of Azerbaijan's deeply-rooted crafts, book-binding was in its heyday in the 18-19th centuries. Peculiar features of book binds crafted in Azerbaijan and Central Asia made them truly unique among similar works manufactured in other areas of the Muslim Orient.

Binds of books of Azerbaijani origin vary in type, shape and material. Some of them feature leather or cardboard covers, wood-carved binds made of eastern plane, as well as silver cast covers. However, leather binds were dominant. In fact, there were two types of leather binds. The first type used the whole piece of leather stretched upon a cardboard. The second type, known as 'muqavva', was a half-leather binding with a back. Inner side of books with this type of binding, highly prevalent in Azerbaijan, were made of specially processed pieces of male animals' skin. Leather of this type was known as 'saur' or 'savra'. Colors of leather binds varied, with special preference given to brown, green, red and yellow. Cardboard for binding was generally made by means of sticking together several sheets of writing paper. Binding cardboard was painted by oil color and covered with varnish. Oftentimes binding cardboards were adorned by fringes, impresses, medallions and other embossed patterns. The major book-binding hubs of Azerbaijan were located in Shamakhy, Ganja, Barda, Tabriz and Ardabil. In Central Asia, as of the second half of the 19th century the best book-binders were those from the Khanate of Kokand. The local name for this trade was 'sahhaf' ('saof') or 'muqavvasaz'. It was far not uncommon for book traders to be involved in bookbinding. As of the 18th century, names of artisans were normally written on the binds. Binds varied from 24-27 centimeters in height and 17-18 centimeters in width. In some rare cases, books of larger format (30-45 cm high and 27-28 cm wide) were produced as well.

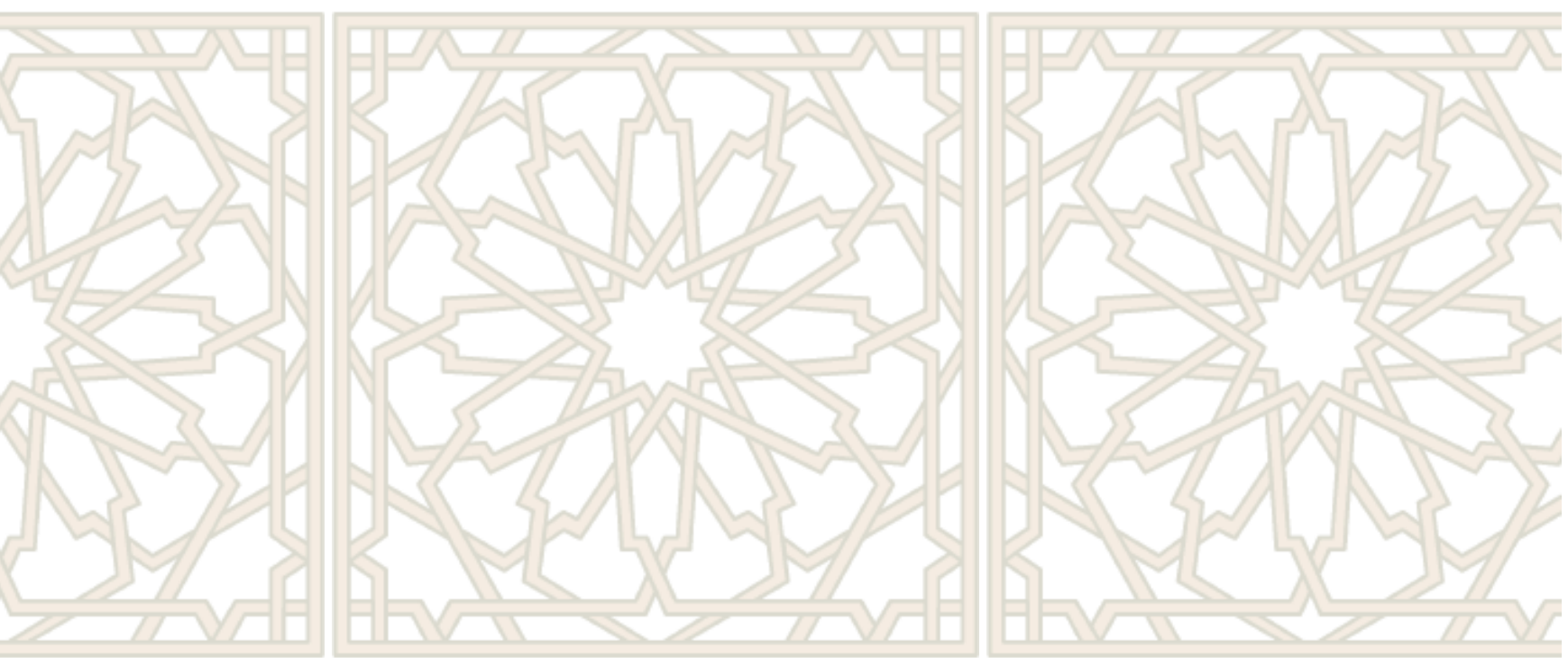












*Azerbaijani Manuscripts  
and UNESCO's  
Memory of the World Programme*

# History of the Manuscripts Institute

In various historic periods, including the first half of the 20th century, attitude towards the Azerbaijani manuscripts used to be quite ruthless indeed, so that most of them were destroyed under various preposterous grounds. This was the reason why, during the First Pan-Azerbaijan Congress on Local History in 1924, a group of intellectuals realizing the horror of destruction of Azerbaijan's and other nations' written legacy passed a decision to collect all hand-written old books, and documents to store them in a special library. The initiative launched in 1929 resulted in collecting the historic documents first at the library of the then Azerbaijan Studies Association and then handing them over to various institutions within the Academy of Sciences.

Majority of medieval manuscripts currently kept at the Institute originate from private collections of some renown Azerbaijani intellectuals of the late 19th-early 20th centuries, such as Abbasqulu-Agha Bakhykhanov, Mirza Fatali Akhundzadeh, Abdolqani Efendi Khalysqaryzadeh, Huseyn Efendi Gayibov, Bahman Mirza Qajar, Mir Mohsun Navvab, etc. The Institute's mission is to collect manuscripts, unique editions and historic documents all over Azerbaijan. The Manuscripts Institute currently occupies the building of the former Russian-Muslim Girls School named after Empress Alexandra. Founded in 1898-1901 by Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev, a famous Azerbaijani philanthropist, the school was the first secular institution for girls of its kind all over the Muslim Orient (building designed by Joseph Goslavski (1865-1904)). Upon declaration of Azerbaijan's independence in May 1918, Taghiyev donated the building to the Parliament of the first Republic of Azerbaijan. However, after Azerbaijan's annexation by Communist Russia in 1920, the building was handed over for a short while to the Soviet (Council) of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies. Later on, it housed the Supreme Council (Parliament) of the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan. In 1950, in response to ever-increasing number of manuscripts stored and the need to maintain special regime and microclimate for their storage, the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan came up with the initiative resulting in the resolution of the Cabinet of



The building of the Manuscripts  
Institute under the Azerbaijan  
National Academy of Sciences





Ministers of the then Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan to establish the National Manuscript Fund (NMF). Since the 1980's the National Manuscripts Institution was functioning as an academic institution. In October 1986, the Manuscripts Institute was established within the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan. In 1996, following Decree of Heydar Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Institute was named after Muhammad Fuzuli, an outstanding poet and intellectual.

Today, the Muhammad Fuzuli Manuscripts Institute is one of the richest hubs of the Oriental written works recognized throughout the world. In the meantime, this is the only national institution specialized in storing and preserving the ancient Azerbaijani manuscripts.



# *Collection of the Manuscripts Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences*

At the moment, more than 60 thousand documents of various type are cherished at the M.Fuzuli Manuscript Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. About 12 thousand out of them are hand-written books. Bearing in mind that each book comprises 4-5 separate works on average, the overall number of hand-written volumes is about 40 thousand. Other units stored include historic and early texts, personal archives of prominent Azerbaijani figures in culture of the late 19th – early 20th centuries, lithographic and old printed books, periodicals, photos and Xerox copies, microfilms, as well as modern books related to various fields of studies in Azerbaijan. 390 ancient manuscripts on medicine currently stored at the M.Fuzuli Manuscripts Institute shall be mentioned in particular. 363 out of them are the medical manuscripts written down during the 9-19th centuries. 71 manuscripts are composed in Arabic, 71 in Turkic, and the rest in Persian. Sources in the Turkic, Arabic and Persian languages encompassing the millennia-old history of Azerbaijan and other countries of the Muslim Orient are currently stacked at the Institute, with special microclimate maintained for their survival. The institute's stacks boast of works or samples of almost all classic authors of the Orient.



Abulmajid Majdud ibn Adam  
Sanai "Hadigatul-hagigat" 1625.  
Collection of the Manuscripts  
Institute under the Azerbaijan  
National Academy of Science





مردم دانه چو که باشد :  
تا قوت دل ز کین نه فرورد

که از و باد باشد باشد  
کی تن زوی شجاعت نمود



نصلي به ذکر الله والصلوات على سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه وسلم  
الحمد لله الذي جعلنا من اهل البيت ائمة من الكثر على ختم  
بر که امروز قبله مطب باشد | و آنکه فردا اش جای دور باشد

ادبی را

ادبی را درین کهن بر رخ  
شده و جانور ز کار آمد

کرمی نام معده و تم نمکشی  
چون سکه که به آب شرم برد

کم خوشش تم خور و بطشت  
کم خوشش مرد گردنی باشد

بهر کم خور و دست بی آبی  
این بود زیک آن باشد غم

چون خوری شش پیل پایی  
کم خوری ز دهن فلانست و نمیر

خط زادر آهوب اندر ویر  
هر که بسیار خوار باشد او

بازد نمانی که کم خوار است  
متجرب کی شود بعلم غریب

خوار اندک فرون کند حلت  
خوار بسیار کم کند علت

هم ز مطب و دست بر دوش  
تنباید مرا و نار آمد

کم طوق تا طوق کم نمکشی  
نار خلق آب نان کرم برد

هر که ببط و دست و فلانست  
مرک و دنان ز خوردنی باشد

دهن منند و و فلان اعراب  
این نه چار و آن نه اندک غم

کم خوری جسد بی پایی  
بر خوری جسم خواب است

داردش در صلح و خوار  
و آنکه بسیار خوار باشد او

بحقیقت بدان که کم خوار است  
جربطو غریب قلب آداب

خوار بسیار کم کند علت  
خوار اندک فرون کند علت



# *The Canon of Medicine* *by Abu Ali ibn Sina*

The most valuable medical manuscript cherished at the Institute is the 12th century version of The Canon of Medicine by Abu Ali ibn Sina (980-1037), also known as Avicenna in the West. The manuscript written down in 1143 is considered the most reliable copy of the original work dating back to 1030. The Canon of Medicine is recognized as the most profound encyclopedic work on medicine, second to none both in the East and the West. Translated in the 12th century from Arabic into Latin by Gerard of Cremona (1114-1187), the book was used as an everlasting manual on medicine in the European universities for centuries. The work became so famous that Michelangelo had the following saying regarding its author: “Better be wrong supporting Avicenna than be right supporting others”.





## *Surgery and Surgical Tools by Abulqasym Zahravi*

The M.Fuzuli Manuscripts Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences is proud to keep the 30th volume of Surgery and Surgical Tools by Abulqasym Zahravi (12th century). Abulqasym Zahravi, born in Spain during the period of the Arabic conquest, was a highly recognized Arabic scholar indeed. He was known as Albukasys or Abulkasys in Europe where his works were in a very high demand. The manuscript provides information and illustrations to surgery tools used some 800 years ago.

## *Khamisa by Nizami Ganjavi*

One of the most valuable documents cherished at the Institute is a full version of the collection of five poems (Khamisa) by Nizami Ganjavi, a 12th century genius of the Azerbaijani poetry. The work was written down in 1636 by Doust Muhammad ibn Darvish Muhammad Darakhtichi in nastaliq style. What makes this manuscript truly unique is that Doust Muhammad succeeded in adding the oldest notes to the Khamisa version he re-wrote. Headlines of verses are adorned with nice colors and gilded ornament together with miniatures performed in the style of the Isfahan school. The first miniature to Khamisa dates back to the 15th century. Nizami's verses were decorated by artisans from Shiraz and Herat.



Nizami Ganjavi, Khamisa manuscript of 17th century. Collection of the Manuscripts Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences





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Nizami Ganjavi, Khamsa, written in 17th century.

Collection of the Manuscripts Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences



## *Zakhireyi-Nizamshahi by Rustam Jurjani*

A unique manuscript of Rustam Jurjani's Zakhireyi-Nizamshahi constitutes a true pride of the Institute. What makes this work of the 13th century particularly valuable is that its only surviving copy is kept in Baku. The work narrates of various treatment technologies and hundreds of medicines.



## *Irshadul-Muhtaj by Muhammad bin Abubakr ash-Shafi*

Another noteworthy work among the manuscripts is Irshadul-Muhtaj (Sharhul-Muhtaj), a treatise on law written in the 15th century by Muhammad bin Abubakr ash-Shafi. The work provides interpretation to another work on the Muslim law (fikh) styled Minhajut-Tibin by Imam Muhiaddin abu Zakariya Yahya bin Sharaf an-Navai Ash-Shafii, another recognized legal expert of the 13th century. The copy of Irshadul-Muhtaj kept in Baku is all the more important as it was written down by the author.

## *Kitabu-t-Tanjim by Hojja ibn Adili Ibray*

Kitabu-t-Tanjim is a unique Azerbaijani manuscript of the 15th century dedicated to astrology. The author, Hojja ibn Adili Ibray, explains the impact of stars, planets and constellations on human fates together with information on astromancy. Use of multiple definitions in astronomy, astrology, geography, philosophy and ethics is a clear indication of a high level of development of the Azerbaijani language back in the 15th century.





Rustam Jurjani, Zakhireyi-Nizamshahi. 13th century  
Collection of the Manuscripts Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences

# *Arwah ul-Ajsad "The Spirit of the Flesh" by Shamsaddin ibn Kamaladdin Kashani*



Another valuable medical manuscript stored at the Institute is *Arwah ul-Ajsad* (The Spirit of the Flesh) by Shamsaddin ibn Kamaladdin Kashani. The author provides broad comments on each and every medicine available, from very simple to very complex ones. The Manuscripts Institute stores a number of books illustrated by miniatures, including *The Orchard of Truths* by Sanai (1625), *The Eight Heavens* by Amir Khosrov Dehlevi (1579), *The Seven Beauties* by Nizami Ganjavi (1636), *Divan* by Urfi (the 17th century), *Divan* by Hafiz Shirazi (1584), *Leyli & Majnun* by Maktabi (the 17th century), *Nushaferin & Gevhartaj* by Amirshahi (1829), *Divan* of 1573, and *Divan* by Muhammad Fuzuli (the 17th century), etc. These very diverse miniatures depict scenery of hunting, listening to music, dancing, feasts, fishing, battles, as well as numerous landscapes.





Mirza Muhammad Mehdi khan Astarabady, Tarikhi Nadiri ("History of Nadir Shah").  
 Manuscript: beginning of 19th century. Collection of the Manuscripts Institute under the  
 Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences



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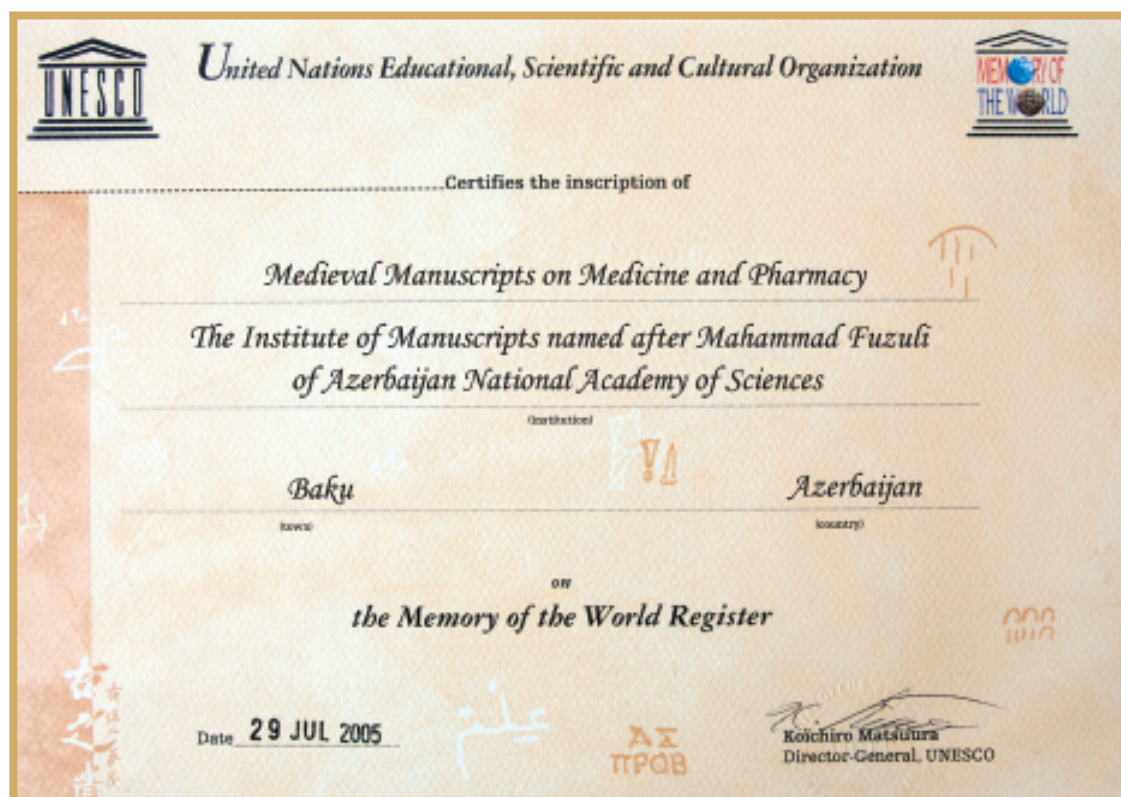




Jalaladdin Rumi, Masnavi 17<sup>th</sup> century. Miniature by  
Sadig bey Afshar. Collection of the Manuscripts Institute  
under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences

## Manuscripts in the UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme

Memory of the World Programme has been conducted by UNESCO as of 1992. One of the Programme's major objectives is to discover and preserve the irreplaceable documentary heritage of universal value. The focus of Memory of the World is to uncover and protect written memorabilia valuable not only for separate nations or states, but also for the whole of humankind. On July 29, 2005, UNESCO officially listed three medieval manuscripts on medicine from the Manuscripts Institute under the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Memory of the World Register. The manuscripts in question are listed below.



Certificate of the Memory of the World Register



## Rustam Jurjani's Zakhireyi-Nizamshahi (13th century)

This work of the 13th century is particularly valuable due its only surviving copy being kept in Baku. This book imitates the famous medical book “Zakhireyi-Kharazmshahi” by Zeynaddin Jurjani. The Baku copy of Rustam Jurjani's manuscript is unique and is not found in other manuscripts deposits in the world. In any case, its name is not shown in any known catalogue of the world.

The date of compilation is not known, but the manuscript was copied in the 16th century (954 by Hijra). The book provides descriptions of pharmaceutical properties of medicinal herbs, animal substances, minerals and complex medicines. It influenced the development of medicine and pharmacology in Persian-speaking countries and those areas where Persian was in use. It was partially researched in Azerbaijan.

## Ibn Sina's Al-Qanun fit-Tibb (The Canon of Medicine, 11th century)

One of the oldest manuscripts of the “Canon of medicine” by great medieval scholar Ibn Sina is kept at the Institute of Manuscripts in Baku. The book represents the second volume of Canon, which was copied in 1143.

Abu Ali Ibn Sina (980-1037) was a prominent scholar and physician from the Middle Ages. He deeply influenced development of medicine in the entire world, including East and West. Ibn Sina was known as Avicenna in medieval Europe, and wrote almost 450 treatises on a wide range of subjects, of which around 240 have survived. In particular, 150 of his surviving treatises concentrate on philosophy and 40 of them on medicine.

The “Canon of Medicine” translated in the 12th century from Arabic into Latin by Gerard of Cremona (1114-1187) was used as an everlasting manual on medicine in the European universities for centuries.

الانسان المفاصل الوردى للفرس مع السمع وهو الوردى اعصاب العنق الوردى  
 نافع للطحال والاسهال اعصاب الفم الوردى من نافع من عسر البول في السقبة  
 رطل المثانة ويجمع الكلية **في جفرة** قال قوم ان قوته قوة الاسديج وقال  
 اخرون قوته قوة الشاذنج الطبع الاصح انه جار باس وكما في اخر الثانية  
 وما قيل غير ذلك فعن معرفة الانفعال والخواص عندهم فيه اقوى من  
 جدره وعند الاخر جدره اقوى من قبضه الحساج والفرج يدرم الحار والبارد  
 في الفرج ومنع جحر النار والحمى اعصاب الراس منع كمال الانسان **في جاج**  
 الطبع جاز في الاول باس في الثانية الزينة خلوا الانسان ونبت الشجر ا  
 طين من الزينة في الانفعال والخواص فيه قبض ولطافة اعصاب الراس  
 سقى الاربعه اذا غلبه وخلوا الانسان اعصاب العين خلوا العين ورميها بها  
 فالحجر اقوى اعصاب الفم المسحوق والمجروش منه نافع جدا للحياة الثانية  
 والكلية اذا سقى شراب **في رنب** الهامة ضباب في فاق مستديرة  
 الشغل ما ين غلط المسئلة الى غلط الاقلام سود الى الصفرة وليس له كثر طعم ولا رائحة  
 والقليلة من الرائحة عطرية ان رجته وقوته قوة جوزة الكنة الطف منه قليلا وقد  
 يقوم بدلا عن الورد في الطبع جاز باس في الثانية والخواص فيه قبض  
 ويخلل للرباع اعصاب الراس يعط بالما وهو الورد للصراع الباردة اعصاب العنق  
 نافع للعبة والكبد الباردة اعصاب الفم يغفل البطن **في بل** حار  
 وطبعه الاول ودرجته في طوره اعلى الانفعال والخواص منفتح يخلل مرخ  
 ويخلل من الابواب الموصلة في الناعمة سهولة ودخانه محقق





المشابه ولحم الكبد و اجود الاصفر البشبح الارمني الزمعي الصنابي الرقني  
 كما نه تلو اصفر الطبع جاز في الثالثة يابس في الثانية الخواصر كل معق لواع  
 والامر منه اجود من الطلوق في الزينة خلط الشعر وهو مع الرايح لرا الغلب  
 الجراج والقروح وضع بالسم على الجراحات الادام والشرع السجم والرمز  
 الجرب السعفة الرطبة والعفن وجرق الجلد ويطبخ بالمر القمل واما الدم وبالزفت  
 لانا الاظفار وقد سئل بالزفت القمل اعصا الرايح القير وطبخ المحدثه  
 وضوضا من الامر المأكلة في الفم والانت في جها اعصا القير سفي السفي  
 باوما الى وما العسل وجمع الرايح للسعال المزمن وقصا القير وقيد على في حيت  
 الربوة اعصا القير يطبخ مع دهن الورد للشرع والبواسير في المعية السموم  
 المسققات **رب السج** اصناف خمسة اسنج في شكله  
 زهم في الخنجر لفته مثل الحبة مسك ذهابه وكيف ساجي اسنج خفيف طيب  
 لمن طجلي الى الحبة ووردي في قير وشبهه بالصوف العويخ خفيف وخامس قطرت  
 الشغل امليس الظاهر حسن الباطن لا الحبة له الطبع جاز يابس في الثالثة  
 الافعال والخواص منق الاوساخ جال مجرة والثالثة الطف من غيره الزينة  
 مجرة وحوضا الثالثة لدا الغلبة الفطري يستعمل في جلوش الشعر ومنع البوق  
 والاسنجيان ينحلان في العسولات في ادوية البثور البنية والكلف  
 والآثار في الوجه والثاني جلا للشعر والاملس او فوق الحالا الاسنان وهو الحيلة  
 شوب الحالا الاسنان الادرام والثورة الاملس على الادرام المسامية والورد  
 للخنزيرة الجراج والقروح منع من الحرب المسرج والقواي خصوصاً الاسفنجيان

فطرت امره العويخ استبان كسوم  
 بالسم والنفط في الحبة والورد  
 حصة من الحبة

## Abdulqasym Zahravi's Surgery and Surgical Tools (12th century)

The 30th volume of a comprehensive book about "Surgery and Surgical Instruments" by Abdulqasym (Abu al-Qasim) Zahravi (12th century) is kept in the M.Fuzuli Manuscripts Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. This unique manuscript in Arabic is one of the rarest and most ancient manuscripts of this book in the World. The book contains pictures of approximately 200 medieval surgical instruments. Zahravi (who died in 1013) is the only medieval author who has provided pictures of so many surgical instruments and explained methods of their application. This work influenced the development of surgery in the Muslim Orient and Europe. Abulqasym was born in Andalusia (Spain) when this country was under the Arab rule. During many centuries Zahravi's book was the most authoritative textbook on surgery both in the East and the West. In medieval Europe, Abu al-Qasim was known as Abulcasis or Albucasis (the latinized form of "Abulkasim")



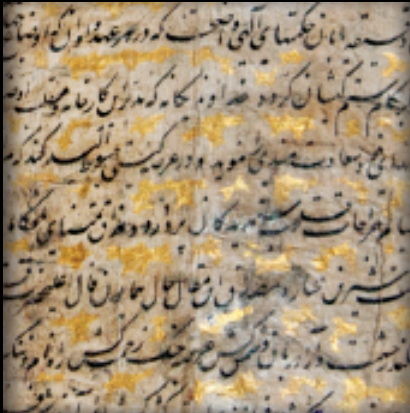
Manuscript of Surgery and Surgical Tools work by Abulgasym Zahravi. Collection of the Manuscripts Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences





Manuscript of Surgery and Surgical Tools  
work by Abulgasym Zahravi. Collection of the Manuscripts  
Institute under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences

CULTURAL HERITAGE OF



AZERBAIJAN

*Manuscripts*

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