



HEYDAR ALIYEV FOUNDATION



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The Azerbaijani Carpets

Azerbaijan has been famous for its arts for centuries, with carpet production traditionally playing a leading role among them. For the Azerbaijani people carpet-weaving is an integral part of the local culture that encompasses the nation's rich spiritual world, deeply-rooted perceptions and aesthetic values. For millennia, the Azerbaijanis were born and spent most of their lives on carpets. And on the carpets did they pass away.

The origins of carpet-making tradition in Azerbaijan are traced to the period of Bronze Age. Both written sources and archaeological finds clearly indicate that back in the II millennium B.C., artifacts made of carpet fabric were already manufactured in the territory of Azerbaijan. According to historic data and records by European travellers, Mediaeval Azerbaijan was one of the major carpet hubs of the Orient.

In Azerbaijan, carpet weaving was primarily a women-dominated art, with the traditions and skills carefully passed over from one generation to another. It is widely believed that in those good old days there was not a single woman in the area incapable to weave a carpet. No surprise, a carpet set known as dast-khaly-gebe was an integral part of each girl's dowry. The set comprised 3-5 pieces of carpet works, and the owner was supposed to be personally involved in the making process. This centuries-old tradition was another factor encouraging the tradition of carpet weaving in Azerbaijan and turning it into one of the major forms of popular art in the country.

By the mode of production, the Azerbaijani carpets are divided into piled and cut-pile types. The latter ones include carpet works like 'palas', 'jejim', 'shadda', 'kilim', 'zili', 'varni', 'sumakh' and 'lady'. Since times immemorial, types of cut-pile works widely used in local domestic life were 'khurjun' (weathercock), 'mafrashi' (carpet-type chest), 'chul' (horse cloth), etc. As far as the most popular piled carpets are concerned, these were 'dast-khaly-gebe', 'khalcha', 'khaly' and 'gebe'.





Abundant nature and diverse environment together with a set of historic, economic and social factors nurtured an enormous versatility of the Azerbaijani carpets. Each region of Azerbaijan was known for the signature carpets and carpet works typical for that particular area. The major carpet schools of Azerbaijan took centuries to consolidate, and were known after each respective area, such as Guba, Shirvan, Baku, Ganja, Gazakh, Garabagh, Nakhchyvan and Tabriz.

With their rich compositions and elaborate designs, the Azerbaijani carpets were widely popular in the Mediaeval Europe. The German and British envoys of the XVI-XVIII centuries were raving about artistic value of local carpets, whereas the famous European artists of the XIV-XV centuries tended to portray them on their canvasses. For instance, the Azerbaijani carpet of ‘Mughan’ design (the Garabagh school) adorns ‘Madonna Enthroned’ by Hans Memling (1433-1494). Pattern of the Gazakh school may be found on Carlo Crivelli’s ‘The Annunciation, with Saint Emidius’ (1430-1495), whereas Zeyva carpet (the Guba school) stands out at ‘Madonna with Canon Van der Paele’ by Jan van Eyck (1395 - 1441).

The best samples of Azerbaijani carpets are currently exhibited at the world’s leading museums and galleries, such as the Metropolitan (New York), the Textile Museum (Washington DC), Louvre (Paris), the Victoria & Albert Museum (London), the Museum of Turkic and Islamic Works, the Topkapy Museum (Istanbul), the Museum of Oriental Art, the History Museum and the Armory Museum (Moscow) and the Arts Museum (Kiev).

‘Mughan’ type carpet (the XIII century, Garabagh school), one of the earliest samples of the carpet art, is nowadays exposed in the Museum of Turkic and Islamic Works in Istanbul, whereas ‘Dragon & Phoenix’ composition (the Gazakh school) manufactured in the XV century is among the exhibits of Pergamon, Berlin.









‘Sheikh Safi’, a true masterpiece of the Azerbaijani carpet art with a breathtaking overall area of 56 square meters, woven in 1539 in Tabriz (an ancient town of Southern Azerbaijan, nowadays North-Western Iran), is among the most renown exhibits of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, whereas ‘Khile-Buta’ composition made in 1801 in Khila village (now Amirjan, the Baku School) is adorning Moscow’s State History Museum.

In 1967, the Carpet Museum, the first of its kind in the world, was established in Baku. Today the Museum is named after Latif Karimov, a famous scholar, artist and renown expert in carpets and applied arts. The Museum currently holds the complete collection of carpet works of the XVIII-XX centuries featuring all carpet schools of Azerbaijan.

On November 16, 2010, Azerbaijan’s carpet art tradition was included in UNESCO’s Intangible World Cultural Heritage List.



Hans Memling. 'Still Life with a Jug with Flowers'. XV century.
'Mughan' carpet. Garabagh, Azerbaijan.



'Mughan' carpet. Garabagh, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum.



'Zili' carpet. Shirvan, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum.





Hans Memling. 'Madonna Enthroned'. XVI century.
Museum of Art History (Kunsthistorischesmuseum), Vienna.
'Mughan' carpet. Garabagh, Azerbaijan.



'Mughan' carpet. Garabagh, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum.



Yan van Eyck. 'Madonna with Canon Van der Paele'. XV century.
Groeninge Museum, Bruges.
'Zeyva' carpet. Guba, Azerbaijan.



'Zeyva' carpet. Guba, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum.





The Guba Carpet School

The region of Guba is by far the largest carpet hub in Azerbaijan. Located in the country's north-east, it comprises the mountainous, foothill and level ground areas.

The mountainous carpet production cluster includes villages like Gonaghkand, Khashi, Jimi, Afurja, Erfi, Sekhub, Budug, Qyryz, Jek, Khan, Salmesoyud.

The foothill cluster consists of villages like Fyndughan, Amirkhanly, Alikhanly, Khalfalar, Gyando, Piramsan, Biliji, Shahnazarli, Pirebedil, Zeyva, Zohrami, Sumagoba, Khyrdagul-Chichi, Syrt-Chichi, Dere-Chichi and Sabatlar.

In the level ground area, the carpet production was centered around the Shabran valley including Chay Karakashly, Adji Karakashly, Susinli Karakashly, Sarvan, Davachi, Mollakamally and other villages.

The Guba carpets encompass more than 30 various compositions featuring multiple designs, complex geometrical patterns and moderate color gamut. The patterns comprise stylized vegetal and animalistic motifs. The fringe is a particularly remarkable part of the Guba carpets. With its intertwined patterns, it oftentimes occupies a large part of the middle area. Carpets from Guba feature small but very elaborate ornament motifs together with medallions of various shapes and highly stylized vegetal elements placed in staggered order, with blue, ochreous yellow, white dark blue and brown as dominant colors.

The Guba carpet compositions like 'Alpan', 'Gonaghkand', 'Alchagul-Chichi', 'Khyrdagul-Chichi', 'Gymyl', 'Pirebedil', 'Zeyva', 'Biliji', 'Ugah', 'Afurja', 'Ordudj', 'Jimmi', 'Gedim Minare', 'Syrt-Chichi' and others feature a very high density of knots, elaborate structure, complex patterns, refined shapes and harmonious color combinations. Besides piled carpets, Guba is also known for cut-pile works like sumakh, palas and other rugs.

Density of the Guba carpets varies 40x40 to 55x55 knots in a square decimeter, thus reaching 160-300 thousand knots per square meter.





'Ugah' carpet. Guba, Azerbaijan. Late XIX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 4029



'Gedim Minare' carpet. Guba, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 5124





‘Shahnazarli’ carpet. Guba, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 5655



'Gonaghkand' carpet. Guba, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 333



'Gymyl' carpet. Guba, Azerbaijan. Late XIX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 1559

The Shirvan Carpet School

The Shirvan carpet hub is located in north-eastern part of Azerbaijan comprising the towns and districts like Shamakhy, Maraza, Aghsu, Kurdamir, Geychay, etc. Carpets of Shirvan are large in size and have a high density of knots.

The Shirvan carpets feature busy and elaborate decorative elements in the shape of highly stylized vegetal ornaments and birds. Normally the weavers tend to fill up the open areas with geometric medallions portraying animals, birds, trees and insects.

The Shirvan carpet school presents over 30 compositions of piled carpets. The middle part of these carpets is adorned with an elaborate fringe comprising several stripes. The Shirvan carpets are generally known for a warm color gamut, with red, blue, ochreous brown and dark brownish black as dominant dyes.

The most recognized compositions for piled carpets include ‘Arjiman’, ‘Jamjamli’, ‘Gabystan’, ‘Maraza’ and ‘Kurdamir’. The region of Shirvan was also known for its cut-pile rugs, such as ‘palas’ and ‘kilim’, manufactured primarily in Pashaly and Udulu villages.

Cut-pile carpet works of Shirvan included ‘chuval’ (sack), ‘khurjun’ (saddle bag), ‘mafrash’ (woven bag), ‘chul’ (horse cloth), etc.

The Shirvan carpets had a high density (45x45 to 50x50 knots in a square decimeter) and the pile 3-4 millimeters high.





'Pirhasanli' carpet. Shirvan, Azerbaijan. 1913.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 1136



The Shirvan Carpet School



'Arjiman' carpet. Shirvan, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 6770



‘Shiralibey’ carpet. Shirvan, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 7624



'Jamjamli' carpet. Shirvan, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 1889



'Ovchulug' carpet. Shirvan, Azerbaijan. 1922.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 322



◆ The Shirvan Carpet School ◆



'Gabystan' carpet. Shirvan, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 4859



'Shamakhy' carpet. Shirvan, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 404

The Baku Carpet School

The Baku carpet weaving hub comprises the following settlements of the Absheron Peninsula: Novkhany, Nardaran, Bulbula, Fatmai, Mardakan, Qala, Amirjan (Khila), as well as the administrative district of Khyzy with villages like Gaady, Khil, Keshi, Fyndyghan. Hence most of the carpets crafted in this area are named after the places of their manufacture, like 'Khile-Buta', 'Khile-Afshan', 'Novkhany', 'Surakhany', 'Qala', 'Baku', 'Goradil', 'Fatmai', 'Fyndyghan', 'Gaadi', etc. The region of Baku was also known for cut-pile rugs, such as 'palas', 'kilim', 'zili', and cut-pile carpet works like 'heyba', 'chanta', 'khurjun'.

The Baku school of carpets features soft texture, bright colors and elaborate patterns. Geometric and vegetal motifs dominate the patterns. For instance, 'Khile-Buta' composition outlines 'buta', the most popular element in Azerbaijan's decorative art. The origin of 'buta' dates back to the Zoroastrian traditions when it was used as a symbol of the fire cult.

By artistic style and technical features, the Baku carpets may be divided into two categories.

The first one, including 'Khile-Buta' and 'Khile-Afshan' compositions, is close to the Tebriz school, but interpreted in a very local and site-specific manner.

The second category has greater semblance with the Shirvan carpet school. This holds true with compositions like 'Surakhany', 'Novkhany', 'Fatmai', 'Goradil', 'Qala', and 'Baku'. These compositions feature large rectangular medallions with projecting angles along the central axis. Ridges of medallions are often decorated with hook-shaped elements. Inner part of medallions is adorned with various motifs and stylized vegetal portrayals. Despite geometric shapes, the fringes retain their vegetal elements.

The overall color gamut of this group of carpets is typical of the nature of Northern Absheron. The area was traditionally famous for pomegranate, saffron, almond, figs and grapes, so the weavers used pomegranate peel, fig and grape leaves and onion skin to dye the wool. This explains prevalence of red, purple, dark and sky blue and green colors.

The Baku carpets feature very high technical qualities, such as high density of knots, soft texture, high quality wool, thorough workmanship and elaborate manufacture. Density of knots varies from 40x40 to 55x55 per square decimeter which makes 160-300 thousand knots per square meter. Some carpets have almost 350 thousand knots per square meter.





'Khile-Afshan' carpet. Baku, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 7311



The Baku Carpet School



'Chiyi Palas'. Baku, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 4027



'Khile-Buta' carpet. Baku, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 385



'Khile-Afshan' carpet. Baku, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 490

The Baku Carpet School





'Surakhany' carpet. Baku, Azerbaijan. Late XIX - early XX centuries.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 543



The Baku Carpet School



'Surakhany' carpet. Baku, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 7157



The Ganja Carpet School

The Ganja carpet hub is located in the north-western part of Azerbaijan comprising the city of Ganja with adjacent villages, as well as places like Gadabay, Goranboy, Shamkir and Samukh. Ganja retained its role as the local carpet production center.

Back in the X-XI centuries, Ganja was widely famous for its silk and wool textile and high quality carpets. What made the Ganja carpets so distinct was veracity of patterns, diversity in compositions and refined lines. The local carpets feature large medallions with symmetric ornaments in the middle. It is this optic game that makes the Azerbaijani carpets look extremely dynamic.

The Ganja carpets include about 20 compositions. In old days, carpets of 8 different compositions were woven in each village. Places like Ganja, Samukh and Fakhraly were known for compositions under the same names. ‘Gedim Ganja’ and ‘Fakhraly’ designs are the best examples of the Ganja carpets. ‘Fakhraly’ carpets were normally small in size and are used as prayer rugs (namazlyg). The middle area of these carpets is oftentimes pointed with a vaulted or circular arch (mehrab).

What makes the carpet even more eye-catching and fresh-looking is the white background of the middle fringe and colors of some decorative motifs in the middle.

The Ganja carpets are generally large in size (3,2x1,6 meters), although some smaller works are also typical of the area (like 1,6x1,0 meter). Density of knots varies from 25x25 to 40x40 knots per square decimeter. Pile height ranges from 5 to 7 millimeters.



The Ganja Carpet School



'Gadabay' carpet. Ganja, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 1820



'Ganja' carpet. Ganja, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 5928



'Chayly' carpet. Ganja, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 2223

The Ganja Carpet School





'Gedim Ganja' carpet. Ganja, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 2198

The Gazakh Carpet School

The Gazakh carpet school encompasses the administrative district of Gazakh in the north-west of Azerbaijan, together with adjacent Azerbaijani-populated villages in Georgia (such as Borchaly, Garayazy, Garachop, Gachagan), and, until the recent time, the Azerbaijani villages of Armenis (Bambal, Lambaly, Ijevan, Garagoyunlu). The most popular compositions of this group include ‘Borchaly’, ‘Shykhly’, ‘Gaymagly’, ‘Gachagan’, ‘Salakhly’, ‘Garayazy’, etc.

The Gazakh carpets feature large medallions depicting highly stylized totemic animals, a velvet texture of dark blue, red or green wool and a moderate coloration.

The Gazakh school of carpets has 25 compositions with very diverse patterns. ‘Gazakh’, ‘Salakhly’, ‘Kemerli’, ‘Demirchiler’, ‘Gaymakhly’, ‘Daghkesemen’, ‘Borchaly’, ‘Garagoyunlu’ are just a few to mention.

Excessively geometric medallions and portrayals of totemic animals constitute the signature element of these carpets. The color combination is mild, like ochereous brown with grass green, or yellow with black, or white with reddish tones. A very tender and soft quality of local wool enables the weavers to accomplish this harmony.

The Gazakh carpets of larger size (4,5x2,1 meters) are known as ‘gebe’, whereas smaller rugs are called ‘gazakhcha’. A relatively low density varies at 30x30 knots per square decimeter.





'Gaymagly' carpet. Gazakh, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 659



'Borchaly' carpet. Gazakh, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 7818



'Borchaly' carpet. Gazakh, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 1138



'Shykhly' carpet. Gazakh, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 599





'Gachagan' carpet. Gazakh, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 836



'Shykhly' carpet. Gazakh, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 8612



'Garachop' carpet. Gazakh, Azerbaijan. Mid-XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 8615

The Garabagh Carpet School

Located in Azerbaijan's south-west, the region of Garabagh encompasses the mountainous area and the valley. The Arabic historians like Al-Muqaddasi, Al-Masudi report of this area as a large carpet hub since the X century onwards. In the XIX century, Garabagh was playing a leading role in Azerbaijan's carpet production. Shortly prior to this, in 1750, Panakhali-Khan, ruler of the Garabagh Khanate (Duchy), founded the town of Panakhabad (Shusha) which was destined to grow into a recognized center for carpet production in the South Caucasus since the very outset. While studying the Shusha carpet works of that period, the Russian researcher Y. Zadgenidze mentioned that the Azerbaijani town of Shusha was second to none in the Caucasus by the quantity and quality of carpets and palases manufactured. He wrote: "...almost all carpet production in Shusha is concentrated in the tartar (i.e. Azerbaijani) households, and this reveals the historic and social roots of this phenomenon..."

The Garabagh carpet school embraces about 50 various compositions, some of them developed as a result of interpretation of certain Tabriz patterns, such as 'Godja', 'Achma-yumma', 'Balyq', etc. In the past, places like Jabrayil, Khanlyg, Lenberan, Gubadly, Barda, Aghdam, Dovshanly, Minkend, Chanakhly, Baghyrbeyli, Muradkhanly and others were also known for substantial carpet production. The local carpets feature diversity of compositions, geometric vegetal elements and bright eye-catching colors. Vegetal motifs together with large lozenge-shaped medallions are widely used in the ornaments. In the meantime, the region was also known for a large number of pictorial carpets, such as 'Atly-itly', 'Pahlivan', 'Shir'. Besides this, Garabagh produced a number of cut-pile rugs like 'kilim', 'zili', 'verni', etc.





‘Dast-khaly-gebe’ carpet set consisting of 3-5 pieces was among the Garabagh’s signature works. Carpets of this region are known for their large size (up to 25-30 square meters). Spacious local residential premises with large oblong rooms were among the major reasons for this. ‘Khaly’, the middle work of the set, was both long and wide, flanked with two narrower carpets (gebe-kenary) to the left and right. The whole composition was crowned by kalleyi, completing the oblong rectangle of the floor.

The Garabagh school of carpets includes the following compositions: ‘Barda’, ‘Khangarvand’, ‘Godja’, ‘Buynuz’, ‘Daranur’, ‘Achma-yumma’, ‘Shabalytbuta’, ‘Lamberan’, ‘Khantirme’, ‘Malybeyli’, ‘Lampa’, ‘Bulut’, ‘Baghchadaguller’, ‘Nalbakigul’, ‘Khanlyg’, ‘Garagoyunlu’, ‘Gubadly’, ‘Gasymushaghy’, ‘Bahmanly’, ‘Mughanly’, ‘Talysh’, etc.

Due to the exceptional quality of the local wool, the Garabagh carpets feature a high, thick and fluffy pile. Density varies from 30x30 to 40x40 knots per square decimeter, which is equal to 90-160 thousand knots in a square meter. Meanwhile carpets with 200 thousand knots per square meter were not uncommon. Thick pile and colorful compositions convey the message of Garabagh’s abundant nature.





'Mughan' carpet. Garabagh, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 2232

The Garabagh Carpet School





‘Godja’ carpet. Garabagh, Azerbaijan. The XIX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 495



'Atly-itli' carpet. Garabagh, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 5843



'Malybayli' carpet. Garabagh, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 4453



The Garabagh Carpet School



'Shabalytbuta' carpet. Garabagh, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 7780



'Tirmasayaghy' carpet. Garabagh, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 1960



The Garabagh Carpet School



'Aghajly' carpet. Garabagh, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 7471

The Nakhchyvan Carpet School

Since times immemorial, Nakhchyvan has been among Azerbaijan's most ancient artistic, commercial and cultural hubs. The area was particularly famous for its applied and decorative arts, carpet weaving one of them.

Nakhchyvan, Shahbuz, Ordubad and Julfa were the old-time centers of cut-pile and piled carpet works, made of either wool or silk.

As in Garabagh, 'dast-khaly-gebe' carpet sets were also woven here varying from two to twenty square meters in size. A signature carpet works for Nakhchyvan though were the long stripy narrow carpets adorned with geometric, vegetal and zoomorphic ornaments. A whole series of so-called 'dragon-type' Nakhchyvan carpets of the XVIII century, very rich and diverse in terms of composition, is currently exhibited in Istanbul.

Size of the Nakhchyvani carpets may reach 25-30 square meters with the density varying from 30x30 to 40x40 knots per square decimeter (i.e. 90-160 thousand per square meter), and the pile 6-10 millimeters high.





Carpet. Nakhchyvan, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 4376





Zili. Nakhchyvan, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 7981



Carpet. Nakhchyvan, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 730



Carpet. Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 6193



Shadda. Nakhchyvan, Azerbaijan. Late XIX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 8421





'Ajami' carpet. Design by Latif Karimov. Azerbaijan. 1948.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 6174

The Tabriz Carpet School



The Tabriz Carpet School located in the South Azerbaijan (nowadays north-west of Iran, where the area is known as Western Azerbaijan and Eastern Azerbaijan provinces) comprises cities like Tabriz, Ardabil, Maragha, Marand, Khoy, Urmiiye, Zanjan, Geresu, Geriz, Sarab, Ahmadabad, Mirish, Akhar, Salmas, Goravan, Senna, Garadagh, etc.

The Tabriz carpet tradition was strongly influenced by the local miniature school of the XVI-XVIII centuries. The period in question is also known as the golden age for the carpet art in the Orient, with its masterpieces nowadays cherished in a number of museums throughout the world. Among the most prominent works of this kind one should mention the famous 'Sheikh Safi', also known as The 'Ardabil' Carpet. Woven in 1539, it is nowadays exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Another work of art, known as 'The Hunter', the XVI century, is kept at Poldi Pezzoli Museum, Milan.

The Tabriz carpets feature an enormous composition and ornament diversity, refined vegetal motifs, elaborate décor of the central medallion and elegant lines of patterns.

The school embraces the following recognized compositions: 'Tabriz', 'Bakhshayish', 'Garaja', 'Geravan', 'Heris', 'Lechek-Turunj', 'Dord Fesil' (Four Seasons), 'Afshan', 'Shah Abbasy', 'Aghajly', 'Ovchulug', 'Ardebil', 'Sheykh Sefi', 'Shahabbasi', 'Sarabi', 'Zenan', 'Mir' and 'Achma-yumma'.

Tabriz and Ardebil were known for the largest and densest carpets. The highest density reached 80x80 to 100x100 knots per square decimeter, whereas the largest size ever was 56 square meters.

Height of pile in the Tabriz carpets varies from 2 to 15 millimeters, while overall density ranges from 25x25 to 100x100 knots in a square decimeter. Recently some custom-made carpets with pile up to 40 millimeters were crafted as well.



Fragment of a carpet. Tabriz, Azerbaijan. Late XIX - early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 6541



The Tabriz Carpet School



'Lampa' carpet. Tabriz, Azerbaijan. The XIX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 2516



'Aghajly' carpet. Tabriz, Azerbaijan. Early XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 2335



The Tabriz Carpet School



'Lechek-Turunj' carpet. Tabriz, Azerbaijan. Late XIX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 6561



‘Lechek-Turunj’ carpet. Tabriz, Azerbaijan. Mid-XX century.
The Latif Karimov Azerbaijan State Carpet and Applied Arts Museum. 7643