



National treasury

BREAST ORNAMENT WITH A CASE FOR THE KORAN



THE BACK COVER PAGE OF THE "IRS-HERITAGE" MAGAZINE USUALLY CONTAINED PHOTOS OF OUTSTANDING WORKS OF AZERBAIJANI ART IN WORLD MUSEUMS. STARTING WITH THIS ISSUE THE MAGAZINE WILL BE ACQUAINTING THE READERS WITH THE BEST KNOWN MASTERPIECES OF AZERBAIJAN'S BIGGEST NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY.





*Late 19th century, Shirvan.
Material– gold, color glass, pearl
Manufacture technique – “shebeke” (filigree).
National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, Special Fund*

The Special Fund of the museum, established in 1957 with the aim of collecting and storing historical objects made of precious metals and stones, stores a unique work of art made by Azerbaijan jewelers of Shirvan region in the late 19th century – the female breast ornament with a case for the Koran.

The multilayered object consists of a case, a crescent with a star fixed above it and a fringe of pendants below. The case was opened and a piece of sura from the Koran put into it. Jewelers created the masterpiece using exquisite openwork and the “shebeke” (filigree) technique. The

fine wire creates exceptional artistic effect and lightness. The twisted filigree swirls are complemented by granulated peas which impart prominence to the object. The wire work and granulated peas required a lot of skill and purity of soldering – even an experienced eye can not see the connections between the wire and peas.

Jewelers reached great heights in the art of cutting colored glass, which required knowledge of the physical properties of materials, complex calculations of the angle of incidence and the angle of refraction of light rays. Green glass in the form of a solar symbol on the

top star, red glass in the form of a jewel in the center of the case and pink glass on the bottom star are all placed in “yuva”, or “nests”.

The object was also an amulet. A sura from the Koran protected people from disease and hardship. Kept in a rectangular case, it guarded the wearer from four sides of the earth, using four elements and four seasons. The pendants in the form of the holy Muslim crescent and star were invoking signs intended to deter the forces of evil not only with their appearance, but also with the sound by striking against each other during movement. ✦

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