

The Azerbaijan Museum in Tabriz

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Photographs by Asgar Mahdoudi¹

Azerbaijan Museum, Tabriz

The plan of establishing the Azerbaijan Museum dates back to 1927. Construction of the present building began in 1958, and in 1962 it opened. Located next to the Blue Mosque on Emam Khomeini Avenue, the museum was designed by André Godard, the Director of the National Museum in Tehran, and constructed by Ismail Dibaj [Fig. 1].

The Azerbaijan Museum is one of the most important in Iran. It is the first and oldest museum in the northwestern part of the country and is considered the second archaeological museum in Iran. The exhibits include objects from different archaeological sites throughout the country and cover the full chronological span of its history, thus making the museum truly a national one. This essay provides an overview of the collection and places the objects in their historical context.

The pre-historic and early historic periods in the collection

On entering the Azerbaijan Museum, visitors first see ceramics dating from the 5th millennium



BCE (the Neolithic age), discovered at Ismailabad near Tehran. The skilled artists of the Neolithic age decorated their pottery with black lines or abstract patterns [Fig. 2].

At the start of the Neolithic age in Iran, some 9000 years ago, some people adopted a settled lifestyle instead of moving regularly from one place to another. These people began producing food and making stone tools such as lances, scrapers, chisels, and perforators. According to anthropological and archaeological studies, the Neolithic age in Iran witnessed several stages of development: a) gathering food; b) gathering and storing food; c) producing and settling in rural areas (Madad 2008, p. 3). These developments continued in the 5th and 4th millennia BCE.



Fig. 1 (left). Tabriz and the Azerbaijan Museum.

Fig. 2 (above). Bowl from Ismailabad, 5th millennium BCE.

Some of the objects on display in the Azerbaijan Museum from this period were discovered at Shahdad and Shahr-e soukhte. The ancient site of Shahdad is located on the western border of



Figs. 3, 4. Jar and beaker from Shar-e Soukhte, 4th millennium BCE.



the Lut plain. It covers an area of 60 km². Its oldest remains date back to 5th millennium BCE and the artifacts found on the site, especially the figurines, are comparable with those of equivalent date from southern Mesopotamia. This evidence proves the close relationship between this region and its western neighbors. It seems this region was the capital of "Arat" (Madad 2008, p. 11). Shahr-e soukhte, located about 57 km along the road from Zabol to Zahedan, is one of the largest Bronze Age sites in the east of Iran. The most famous ceramics of Shahr-e Soukhte are a kind of ware known as "Turkmen" or "Kovite" that is similar to the pottery from Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. The common wares are plain beakers, flasks, and bowls [Figs. 3, 4] (Madad 2008, p. 11).

The collection also includes from the 3rd millennium BCE several stones in the shape of handbags or weights, decorated with animals or plant patterns and used in ritual ceremonies [Fig. 5]. Made of serpentine, these stones come from the important site of Jiroft (Kerman). Other Bronze Age objects include wares dating to the 3rd and 2nd millennium BCE discovered by archaeologists on the southern bank of the Araxes River, the border between Iran and Azerbaijan. While made for ordinary use, these wares are impressive evidence of the skill of the potters.

Among the most important anthropomorphic sculptures in the museum is a figurine of a woman, undoubtedly representing a goddess

Fig. 5. Ritual object from Jiroft, 3rd millennium BCE.



connected with fertility [Fig. 6]. It was found at Rostamabad in the north of Iran and dates from the 1st millennium BCE. The most interesting and important showcase in the museum highlights another discovery dating back to the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE. It shows the skeletons belonging to a young couple, laid out in the position of their burial with their grave goods as they were discovered in 1999-2003 near the Blue Mosque in Tabriz [Fig. 7].

Next to a showcase featuring bronze tools made in Lorestan in the 2nd millennium BCE is a display of gold ornaments which were probably made by artists of Manna or Media [Figs. 8, 9, next page]. The kingdom of Manna ruled in the region of Media (the present Azerbaijan) from the beginning of the 1st millennium to the early 7th century BCE. Manna was the economic and cultural center of Media. Agriculture flourished in the region; the people of Manna were skilled in art,



Fig. 6. Image of a goddess from Rostamabad in northern Iran, 1st millennium BCE.

architecture, metal work, and pottery. Their gold work is especially noteworthy; valuable examples have been discovered through the surveys in Zivie, Hasanlu, and Qelaichi (Madad 2008, p. 26).

The Golden Age of Iran began in 550 BCE with the establishment of the Achaemenid Empire by Cyrus. Many consider that Achaemenid Iran was the center of civilization and culture in Asia and the ancient world, with prosperous agriculture and commerce and the development of scientific and geographical knowledge. Cyrus's decree at the time he conquered Babylon is considered to be the first declaration of respect

for Human Rights. The invasion of Alexander of Macedonia brought to an end the 230 years of Achaemenid rule; his successors established the Seleucid state. With the rise of the Parthians in

northeastern Iran around 250 BCE, the Seleucids were gradually driven out. The Sasanian dynasty eventually replaced the Parthians and ruled for more than four centuries until the time of Yazdegerd III and the Arab



Fig. 7. Burial of a couple, 1st millennium BCE, excavated near the Blue Mosque in Tabriz.



Figs. 8, 9. Necklaces probably made by Manna or Median artisans, early 1st millennium BCE.



Photo (right) copyright © 2010 Daniel C. Waugh

invasions which established Islamic rule (Madad 2008, p. 32). Some of the most significant items in the collection of the Azerbaijan Museum illustrate these long and important chapters in the history of Iran.

Among the best known of Achaemenid artifacts are gold or silver rhytons, drinking vessels used for wine in ritual ceremonies [Fig. 10].

Characteristically shaped to include an animal protome, a rhyton was perceived as a symbol of nature and a means of obtaining power from

Figs. 10 (left). Achaemenid silver rhyton.

Fig. 11 (below). Ceramic Parthian rhyton with the protome of a goat.



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Figs. 12a, b. Parthian stucco reliefs from the Zahak fortress in Hashtroud.

follows the techniques of previous eras, the ceramics often decorated with complex or simple lines, triangles, and circles (Kiyani 2008, pp. 29–31). Two of the noteworthy objects in the museum from the Parthian period are stuccos from Zahak fortress in Hashtroud (a county in eastern Azerbaijan) [Fig. 12].

The Sasanian rulers sponsored major architectural projects, proclaimed their rule in monumental sculpture, and presided over a flourishing production of luxury goods. Sasanian ceramicists improved on previous techniques [Fig. 13]; their wares were commonly greenish or bluish and often decorated with stamps or carving, the patterns imitating those on stucco work and cloth (Tiwhidi 2007, p. 31). Sasanian glass was prized even as far away as China and Korea [Fig. 14, next page]. Vast quantities of silver coinage were minted, the coins being one of the standard currencies of the age. Silver was also widely used for making dishes and jars. The most important and best known Sasanian metal objects are the gilded silver ones depicting



Fig. 13. Sasanian ceramics.



Figs. 12a,b; 13 photo copyright © 2010 Daniel C. Waugh

natural forces. It is believed that such vessels, originally called *takouk*, originated in Iran; when they were brought to Greece they came to be termed rhytons. Rhytons also were produced in ceramic, the wares of the Achaemenid period having blue, green, creamy or white, black, orange, and brown slip.

Parthian rhytons are also part of the museum’s collection [Fig. 11]. Parthian pottery largely



Fig. 14. Sasanian glass flask.

hunting, festivals, and fighting scenes [Figs. 15, 16]. These wares are engraved and embossed; some of them bear Pahlavi inscriptions (Tiwhidi 2007, p. 33). Sasanian dishes depicting the Royal Hunt have been found in the fur-producing forests far to the north in the Ural Mountains of Russia, where

they provide evidence of early medieval trade connections with Iran. The interesting examples in the Tabriz Museum, some of which do not have exact parallels in authenticated Sasanian silver dishes, still require technical analysis to confirm their provenance and dates.

Exhibits from the Islamic period

While the museum's Islamic collection is displayed on the second floor, an exception

Figs. 15, 16. Gilded silver dishes, purportedly from the Sasanian period.



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is one of its prize exhibits, to be seen near the entrance on the ground floor: a slab of marble known as the "Besem Allah Stone" belonging to the late Islamic period [Fig. 17]. It is the work of an Iranian artist, Muhammad Ali Quchani in 19th century. The Ottoman government commissioned him to make it as a grave stone for the Prophet Muhammad. However, after trying unsuccessfully for eight years to receive his payment, the sculptor transported the three-ton slab from Istanbul via Georgia, Armenia and Nakhjivan to Tabriz, where he died before he could take it on to Mashhad. The stone was placed on his own grave but recently was transferred to the museum for conservation. On the stone are inscribed poems appreciating the Prophet Muhammad in three languages, Persian, Arabic, and Turkish.

After the fall of the Sasanian empire, some parts of Iran, especially near the coast of the Caspian Sea, continued to be influenced by the previous artistic styles and techniques, especially in metal work and ceramics. Dramatic changes in Islamic ceramics developed in many other centers, as has been demonstrated from archaeological research in Nishapur, Raay, Gorgan, Siraf, Estakhr, Takht-e Soleiman, Soltaniya, Fesa, and Susa. The Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad (749-1258 CE) promoted important cultural projects, but it was often under the regional dynasties in Iran such as the Samanid (892-998), Ghaznavid (997-1186),



Fig. 17. The “Besem Allah Stone,” carved by Muhammad Ali Quchani, 19th century.

and Al-e Bouie (932-1055) that we see some of the most important innovations in design (Tiwhidi 2007, pp. 144-46). The museum’s exhibits illustrate very effectively the originality and achievements of Iranian ceramicists (Karimi 1985, p. 9).

In the first three Islamic centuries, slipped or plain ceramics often were decorated simply but elegantly with Kufic inscriptions [Fig. 18a]. Generally, the decoration had been on the inner edge and very center of the wares. One characteristic of this style was to leave a substantial area empty around the design. The inscriptions are prayers, proverbs, and sentences attributed to Prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali or literary men (Karimi 1985, p.

Fig. 18a-18d. 10th-century bowls made in northeastern Iran.



Fig. 18a photo copyright © 2010 Daniel C. Waugh



16). In the 3rd and 4th centuries AH the use of slip, either colored or white and creamy, became common especially in the northeast of Iran (Neyshabur, Samarqand, Gorgan, and Lashkari bazaar) [Figs. 18b-d]. Some of the ceramics made in Neyshabur were slipped and decorated with black or dark brown, the decoration commonly being birds, stylized flowers and, above all, Kufic inscriptions.

The Seljuk period (1040–1157) was one of the bright eras for the Islamic arts: architecture, metal work [Fig. 19], weaving, brick work, stucco, etc. all flourished. The ceramicists of the late Seljuk period were inspired in part by the ceramics of Song China. Making the body of the ceramics out of a composite of quartz, clay and glass produced a result that rivaled the Chinese kaolin-based porcelains. Visual effects were produced by the use of lapis lazuli, colored glazes, and stamped and stylized patterns ranging from geometrical designs and Kufic inscriptions to fauna and flora. The range of colors was very broad: blue, black, brown, yellow, lapis lazuli, green, turquoise ... (Kiyani 2001, p. 34). Some of the most striking new designs were on what we call Mina'i ware [Fig. 20]. The overglaze multi-colored paintings on Mina'i ceramics include different miniature scenes. The Seljuk designs are not in the style of

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Fig. 20. Mina'i-ware dish.

the school of Baghdad but rather follow the style of Iranian painting and include scenes from the *Khamse* of Nizami, from the *Shahname*, and so on. (Tiwhidi, 1999, p 279).

Lustre-glazed ceramic wares became widespread in the Seljuk, Khwarazmian, and Ilkhanid periods (11th - 14th centuries CE). Only a few centers mastered the complex technique for producing lustre wares (Tiwhidi 1999, pp. 274–

79). Caiger-Smith has described the production of glazed wares as follows: To make lustre-glazed ceramics, it is necessary to add flux material and flint to the clay. Developed probably in Egypt in the Fatimid Period, this technique was welcomed in Rakka (Syria) in the 12th century CE. It was then improved in the late 13th century in Raay and further developed in Kashan, both of which were centers for innovation. The potters there covered wares with white tin slip and fired them and then painted them with metal oxide. In the last stage, they used smoke

Fig. 19b. Candlestick, Seljuk period.



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Fig. 19a. Incense burner, 11th century. Analogous to example in Los Angeles County Museum of Art Inv. No. M.81.241.1<http://collectionsonline.lacma.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=image;hex=M81_241_1.JPG>.

in the kiln to turn the brown painting green or golden in color (Caiger-Smith 1973, pp. 128-30).

Lustre-glazed ceramics were produced in three phases: the first belong to the 9th - 10th centuries CE, the second phase to the 11th - 15th centuries, and the last phase to the 16th - 18th centuries. Researchers believe that the first period of making these wares coincided with that for producing colorful slipped ceramics in the 9th - 10th centuries CE. Pope thought that the production center of these ceramics was Raay and classified them as a kind of colorful slipped ceramics. Ernst Kühnel considered them colorful glazed ceramics whose production antedated that of other kinds of ceramics. The first glazed ceramics were decorated with a complex colorful slip, which became bright and glazed after firing. Bowls were the common wares and their decoration mostly is flowers and Kufic inscriptions. The earlier wares differ from the later ones in patterns, style of writing, and colors. In this second phase the calligraphy is in Naskh script, there is figural

imagery, and gold is the common color [Figs. 21a-d]. The third phase of producing lustre-glazed ceramics happened after the Ilkhanid period. At this time, ceramics – for example high necked jars – were brownish or reddish and the forms often more decorative than functional (Tiwhidi 1999, pp. 263, 274, 277).

The Mongol invasion of Iran caused widespread destruction; many cities such as Neyshabur, Raay, and Gorgan were left in ruins. Gradually, the Mongol Ilkhanid rulers came to appreciate Iranian culture. They chose Maragheh, Tabriz, and Soltaniya as their capitals and developed them as commercial and artistic centers. As peace returned, potters resumed making ceramics following the previous styles. The techniques of manufacture were like those of the Seljuk period

Fig. 22a-d. 13th-century lustre-ware bowls.



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Fig. 22. Tile from Gorgan, 13th century (Ilkhanid period).

but the designs now were different. Ilkhanid patterns were often complex, including lotuses, dragons, phoenixes, clouds, rabbits..., much of this displaying the influence of Chinese art. The colors on the ceramic wares included gold, lapis lazuli, turquoise, and ochre. The use of glazed tile on buildings became common, although the color palette was less varied. Surfaces were often covered with mosaics made up of star-shaped tiles fitted together with those having a cross shape, called Chalipa or Shamse [Fig. 22] (Kiyani 2008, pp. 48–50).

Gold-decorated tiles were not commonly used in the early Islamic period. They became more common for architectural decoration in the late

Figs. 24 a, b. Safavid blue-and-white wares, 17th century.



Seljuk and Khwarazmian periods, and their use became widespread under the Ilkhanids. The patterns on the tiles are fauna and flora, geometrical designs, poetry, proverbs, etc. (Kiyani 1997, p. 136).

By unifying the country, the powerful Safavid rulers in the 16th and 17th centuries CE created conditions for a great flowering of the visual arts, especially under the patronage of Shah Abbas I (r 1587–1629). There were important centers of ceramic production in many regions. In many ways, Safavid ceramics of the 16th through early 18th centuries CE are the epitome of Iranian ceramic art. Their technical quality was very high, and there was a great deal of stylistic innovation. This period is probably best known for the exchange between Iranian and Chinese techniques and designs. Shah Abbas I thought that Europeans should not have to buy porcelain from China but could get its equivalent from Iran. To compete with the Chinese wares, he brought in 300 Chinese potters and settled them in Iran. A result of this collaboration was the production of white ceramics decorated with cobalt blue [Figs. 24a, b], in imitation of the Chinese blue-and-white porcelain which was exported in such large quantities from the Ming Empire. The Chinese porcelains continued to be much sought after by rulers in Central and Western Asia. Shah Abbas accumulated one of the most famous collections, which he then donated in 1611 to the Safavid family mausoleum in Ardabil (Savory 1980, pp. 125–29). The collection included more than 1200 items, a small sampling of which can now be viewed in the Azerbaijan Museum [Figs. 25–28]. Some 19 of these Chinese porcelains,





Chinese porcelain from the collection donated to the Ardabil shrine by Shah Abbas I.

Fig. 25a (left). Mei-p'ing vase. Early 15th century (Ming Dynasty). Fig. 25b (above), Shah Abbas's seal, added in 17th century.



Fig. 26 (right). Ewer. Ming Dynasty.



Figs 27a, b (left and right). Bowl, Ming Dynasty, mid-16th century.



Figs. 28a, b (below). So-called "Kraak porcelain" dish, late 16th-early 17th century (Ming Dynasty, Wanli period).





including some of the finest examples, were transferred to the museum from Tehran in 1966.² Other examples are displayed at Ardabil (a day's drive from Tabriz), with the main collection in the national museums in Tehran.

Safavid potters also imitated the monochrome Chinese wares known as celadon [Fig. 29]. Their clay was a kind of kaolin and their slip was bright brown, blue, and especially olive. This kind of pottery has stamped patterns in the inner flat surface and edges (Tiwhidi 2007, pp. 274–79).

Ceramic innovation in Iran continued in the Qajar period in the 19th century CE, where we see examples using lapis lazuli color in the background and stylized decoration with bright slip [Fig. 30] (Kiyani 2008, p. 68).

Fig. 30. Porcelain dish, Qajar period.



Fig. 29. Chinese celadon dish. Early Ming period.

The numismatic collection

The Azerbaijan Museum has an important numismatic collection, containing seals and coins from various periods of Iran's history [Fig. 31]. Some of the coins, while minted in adjoining regions, moved along the trade routes through Iran. Thus there are examples of Roman, Graeco-Bactrian and Kushan coins. Coinage may offer valuable information about national customs and beliefs. Ruler images may tell us about dress; Sasanian coins, for example, show a distinctive crown or headdress for each member of the ruling dynasty. Coins can reveal a great deal about religious belief. Following the conquests of Alexander the Great, it was common to depict Hellenistic deities: for example, Athena and Nike

Fig. 31a. Coin of King Menander I of Bactria, 155–30 BCE. Obverse: head of Athena in a helmet; reverse: Nike holding a wreath. The inscription on the obverse is in Greek (not legible here); on the reverse (somewhat better visible) is in Bactrian.

Fig. 31b. Tetradrachm of Kushan King Kujula Kadphises (ca. 30–80 CE). Obverse: Bust, imitative of Hermaeus, Greek legend; reverse: Hercules, holding club and lion skin, Kharosthi legend.

Fig. 31c. Coin of Kushan king Vasudeva I (190–230 CE), shown standing on obverse; reverse: Wesho (Shiva) standing with a bull.

Fig. 31d. Coin of Roman Emperor Diocletian, Cyzicus mint, 295–99 CE. Reverse shows emperor receiving Victory on a globe from Jupiter.

Fig. 31e, f. Achaemenid period coins of satraps Zelun and Maze.

Fig. 31g. Silver tetradrachm of Parthian king Phraates I (r. 176–71 BCE).

Fig. 31h. Silver drachm depicting Sasanian King Bahram II (r. 276–93 CE), his queen and his son.

Fig. 31i. A coin issued in the name of Sasanian Queen Buran (629–31 CE).

Fig. 31j. Silver drachm of Sasanian King Yazdegerd III (r. 632–51 CE).

Fig. 31k. Arab-Sasanian coin issued by 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad, ca. 680 CE.

Fig. 31l. Dirham of Sati Beg, a woman, who briefly was enthroned as the Ilkhanid ruler in 1338–39 CE.



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31g
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Fig. 31m. Coin of Qajar King Nasr al-Din Shah (r. 1848–96).

on a 2nd-century BCE Bactrian coin [Fig. 31a]; Hercules on a 1st-century CE Kushan coin [Fig. 31b]. Roman coins which circulated in the Middle East might depict Jupiter [Fig. 31d]. Sasanian coins generally showed a fire altar on the reverse, reflecting the fact that Zoroastrianism was the official religion [Figs. 31h, 31j]. With the advent of Islam, human images were replaced with Arabic script invoking the Prophet Muhammad and quoting from the Quran.

The inauguration of an Iranian coinage is generally considered to have been the work of Darius I (r. 522–486 BCE); Iranian imperial issues continued down through the reign of the last Achaemenid king Darius III (r. 336–30 BCE) [Figs. 31e, 31f]. The gold coins are generally known as darics or *dareikoi* (the term the Greeks used for them), that is, coins of Darius. Silver coins were called *siglos*, “shekel.” The coins generally depict the bust of the ruler on the obverse and a seated figure representing the ruler and holding a bow on the reverse (Pope 1930, Vol. 6, p. 2673).

While there are no known gold coins in the Parthian era, all the silver ones, without exception, follow the Attic Standard adopted by the Seleucid rulers of Syria. According to Percy Gardner (1981, p. 3), “The coins of Tiridates, and even Mithradates, are of tolerably pure silver; those of the later kings of a very debased mixture.” All the drachms issued by the Arsacids, from first to last, as well as the earlier tetradrachms, are of a uniform type, with the bust of the ruler on the obverse and on the reverse an image of Arsaces, the great founder of the empire, seated and holding in his hand a strung bow [Fig. 31g].

When Ardashir I (r. 224–41 CE) overthrew the last Parthian “great king,” he began to issue an imperial coinage that departed from the Hellenized Parthian models. The portraits on the Sasanian coins are distinctly Iranian, each

ruler having his own style of crown; the reverse normally depicts a Zoroastrian fire altar [Fig. 31j]. It is remarkable that Sasanian rulers did not commemorate any historical events on their coins, even though they did so in various rock reliefs. The nearest approach to medallionic pieces is the occasional commemoration of a son on the coins, and in the case of Bahram II (r. 276–93 CE), his queen as well [Fig. 31h]. The bust of the king with his wonderful headdress and the elaborate treatment of hair and beard gave the artist ample material; the reverse shows the altar and its attendant priests (Pope 1930, Vol. 2, pp. 816–17). The inclusion of the queen is an indication of the high respect for women in the Sasanian empire; there are even coins issued by a Queen Buran (r. 629–31 CE) in her own name [Fig. 31i].

In the first decades after the Arab conquest, coins of the new Islamic rulers adapted existing models with their human imagery. Thus we have “Arab-Sasanian” coins depicting Yazdegerd III but with a Kufic inscription added on the edge [Fig. 31k]. With rare exceptions, the monetary reforms of Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan in the 690s CE resulted in the replacement of all figurative imagery with Arabic inscriptions. The example shown here from the Ilkhanid period is of particular interest in that it is issued for another female ruler, Sati Beg [Fig. 31l]. In Iran, this proscription of imagery then lasted until the 19th century, when beginning with Qajar King Fath Ali Shah (r. 1797–1834) the practice of depicting the ruler on coins resumed [Fig. 31m].

Sculpture and epigraphy in the collection

The courtyard of the museum displays a range of sculpture and epigraphy from different periods of Iranian history [Figs. 32–35]. While not illustrated here, petroglyphs are to be found in many places in Iran going back to remote antiquity. They have pictograms, ideograms, linear or proto-Elamite script, or Pahlavi, Arabic and Farsi inscriptions. The images of animals are among those with a religious or ritual significance, antelopes, mountain goats and rams being of particular importance. (Nasiri’fard 2009).



Fig. 32 (upper left). General view of courtyard.

Fig. 33 (left). Anthropomorphic sculptures, ca. 1st millennium BCE, Ahar.

Fig. 34 (lower left). Ilkhanid gravestone, Eastern Azerbaijan.

Fig. 35 (above). Ilkhanid architectural decoration from Ali Shah Mosque, Tabriz.

Fig. 36 (below). A sandstone grave marker carved in the shape of a ram, from Khwaje, near Tabriz.

young people who were martyred in war. In the grave statuary, the size of the horns (the number of circles) correlates with the age of the dead person) (Fathi 2010, pp. 9-12).

The horns of the ram connect it to the sun. Therefore it embraced a wide range of important connotations: power, bravery, modesty, and fertility. The ram is the symbol of the beginning of the year, and by extension the development of new ideas or the sunrise of a new period. Rams also embodied the spirit of ancestors. In Azerbaijan in particular, it was common to apply the epithet of the ram to heroes. Moreover, it was common there in early times to place ram [Fig. 36] or lion statues on graves of heroes or



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Tabriz, in the heart of northwestern Iran, was one of the most important cities in the long history of the Silk Roads. At various times it was a political capital, a flourishing commercial emporium, and the center of significant cultural endeavors whose impact spread far beyond the Middle East. To visit the Azerbaijan Museum is to open doors into both the region's importance and the millennial history of Iran and its culture.

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Notes

1. Mr. Mahdoudi's photographs, which are copyrighted by the Azerbaijan Museum, have been supplemented, as noted, by those taken by Daniel Waugh.

2. [*Editor's note:*] See Misugi 1981. Although he apparently examined all of them, Misugi describes only half a dozen of the Ardabil

porcelains now in Tabriz, including the ones depicted here in Figs. 25 and 27. There are two very similar vases to the former (his A 265) in the Ardabil collection (his Nos. A.69, A.70). For another example of an almost identical one, with a full bibliography, see <<http://elopedelart.canalblog.com/tag/15th%20century/p30-0.html>>. Misugi notes regarding the Ming bowl shown here (Fig. 27; his Cat. No. A.263) that it has an "apocryphal Hsüan-te basemark."
