

INTRODUCTION

The name *Khorasan* is Persian and means 'where the sun arrives from'. The name was given to the eastern province of Iran during the Sassanid Empire. Ancient geographers and historians divided Iran ("Iran-Shahr") into eight segments of which the most flourishing and largest was the territory of Greater Khorasan.



Khorasan was the largest province of Iran until it was divided into three provinces on September ۲۹, ۲۰۰۴. The provinces approved by the parliament of Iran on May ۱۸, ۲۰۰۴ and the Council of Guardians were Razavi Khorasan, North Khorasan, and South Khorasan.

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

With an area of ۲۸,۱۷۹ km^۲ and a population of ۸۶۷,۷۲۷ the province of North Khorasan is located in northeast of Iran and shares ۲۲۰ km border with Turkmenistan. Bojnord is the centre of the province and other townships are Jajarm, Garmeh, Esfarayen, Mane-o-Samalqan, Shirvan and Farouj.

North Khorasan province is bounded to Razavi Khorasan Province from the east and south, to Golestan Province from the west, and to Semnan Province from the southwest corner. Kopet-Dagh Mountain ranges on the north forms the frontier with Turkmenistan. Geographically, two major landform can be seen in North Khorasan namely, the flat plains to the south and mountainous terrains to the north.

Province's main rivers are the Atrak and Kal-e Shur Rivers to the north and south of the province respectively. The Atrak River begins in the mountains of North around Shirvan and Quchan and flows ۵۶۳ km (۳۵۰ miles) westward draining into the southeastern corner of the Caspian Sea. The Atrak River irrigates many lands in the Artak Valley in Farouj, Shirvan, Bojnord and Mane-o-Samalghan townships. Kal-e Shur system originates from east of Esfarayen and flows westward and to the south of

Jajarm turns toward south and pours into marshlands of Dasht-e Kavir or the great Central Desert.

North Khorasan province contains many historical and natural attractions, such as mineral water springs, small lakes, recreational areas, caves and protected regions, and various hiking areas. A total number of ۱۳۰۰ historical relics have been recorded in the province by the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism organization. Artak river valley is rich in historical mounds and tells while most of the historical monuments and buildings are from the Qajar era, as earthquakes continue to ravage older monuments in this zone. The majority of Historical buildings and monuments has been recorded in south of the province in Jajarm and Esfarayen townships.

North Khorasan has a heterogeneous population, consisting of different ethnic groups such as Fars, Kurds, Turks, and Turkmen tribes whose cultural mingling has made the name of 'Treasure of Cultures' becoming for the province. Bojnord as the capital city of the province is mostly famous for multilingualty, because many people speak at least ۴ different languages including Persian, Tati dialect of Persian, Khorasani Turkic, Kurmanji Kurdish and Turkmen.

The unique geographical setting of the province with majestic mountains and beautiful rivers has created astonishing and attractive landscapes with rich flora and fauna. More than ۲۰۰ plant species are known and different herbal types are growing in the foothills, including yarrow, amaranth, borago officinalis, origanum, shallot, etc. Protected areas of the province have retained a good variety of wild-life: panthers, brown bears, wolves, wild-cats, antelopes, ibexes, moufflons, eagles, vultures and other kinds of wild-beasts. Some of the popular attractions of North Khorasan are Besh Qardash (five brothers) and Baba-Aman Parks, Salouk Protected Area, Miandasht Wild-life Refuge, Ayyub mineral water spring, Rowain and Esfidan Villages, Shahr-e Belqays Medieval site, Mofakham cultural-historical complex (archaeological and ethnographic museum) Qal'eh-i-Jalalu'd-Din, congregational Mosque of Jajarm, and Espakhu temple.

HISTORY

The province of North Khorassan has witnessed the rise and fall of many dynasties and governments in its territory throughout history. Archaeological studies in the province have resulted to the discovery of more than ١٠٠٠ ancient sites and monuments which belong to different periods, from



the present era down to the Neolithic period. This long cultural sequence indicates to the importance of the region throughout the history. According to the historians and ancient geographers the area which is now occupied by the North Khorassan Province has always been one of the most flourishing territories of Iran, and therefore was one of the focal points for residence of the Aryan tribes after entering Iran from the central Asian steppes.

ETHNIC GROUPS

Ethnically speaking, the population of North Khorasan is extremely varied. It consists principally of Persians, Turks, Kurds, Torkmen, and Baluch.

Persians. The Persians appear to have been the first ethnic group to populate the province, but, in time, they mixed with an increasing number of foreign invaders and, as a result, their proportionate number was reduced. There were groups of Persians who had emigrated from various provinces of the realm to Khorasan “after the Turkmen raids were stopped by the Russian occupation of Transcaspia.”

Turks. The Turkic influx into the province has apparently been started with the Saljuq invasions of the ١١th century. The principal Turkic tribes in the province are the Boghayri and Grayli. The Boghayri dwell in a region southwest of Qučān. During the reign of Nāder Shah, two of Boghayri leaders participated in tribal rebellions, Man□ur Khan Beg and Mohammad Taqi Khan. According to Edward Yate , in the ١٨٩٠'s, one group of Boghayri, numbering some ٨٠٠ families, was located in Bām, and another

group, called Saraḡsi and numbering some ۵۰۰ families, was located in Safiābād. The Grayli dwell mostly in various districts of Shirvan as well as Jajarm townships.

Kurds. The Kurds of Khorasan, known as Kormānj and their language is called Kormanji. The main Kurdish inhabited cities in North Khorasan are Bojnord, Shirvan, Esfarayen, Farouj, Ashkhane, Mane-o-Samalqan,



Raz. Most of the Kurds in North Khorasan province claim descent from tribes that were transferred to the province from western Persia by the Safavids for the purpose of protecting the northeastern frontier of the country from inroads by Uzbek, Shaybanids and Turkmen tribes. According to Ivanov, some of these tribes were moved as early as the middle of the ۱۶th century. But by far the largest transfer was carried out by Shah Abbas I at the very beginning of the ۱۷th century. The principal Kurdish tribes of North Khorasan are the Shadlu and the Za'faranlu.

The Shadlu dwell in northern Khorasan. They were transplanted from western Persia by Shah Abbas I around ۱۶۰۰ and were first settled in an area to the north of the present border of Persia. When raids by Turkmen and other marauding tribes forced them to move into the Persian hinterland, they settled in and around Bojnord. There, until the beginning of the reign of Reza Shah, they formed a principality that extended about ۹۰ miles from east to west, and about



۵۰ miles from north to south. This included the Township of Mane-o Samalghan on the Atrak River in the north, and the township of Jajarm and Esfarayen in the south. Until ۱۸۳۲-۳۳ the Za'faranlu and Shdlu formed a unified tribal confederacy under the Za'faranlu *ilkāni*, but when during that year Reza Qoli Khan, the confederacy's *ilkāni*, rebelled and the Shdlu leader, Najaf Qoli Khan, did not come to his aid when requested to do so, the two tribes split. After that, the Shdlu had their own *ilkāni*. In

۱۹۲۹ the Shdlu of Bojnord alone numbered some ۷۵,۰۰۰ individuals, all of whom were sedentary. In ۱۹۳۲-۳۳ they numbered some ۱۸,۰۰۰ households. According to British Naval Intelligence, in ۱۹۴۵ they numbered around ۱۵,۰۰۰ families, all of which were sedentary.

The Za'faranlu dwells in northern Khorasan, having been transplanted there from western Persia around ۱۶۰۰. According to Yate, they were first settled in an area to the north of the Atrak River, but during the reign of Shah Hosayn I (۱۶۹۴-۱۷۲۲) they moved into a mountainous region south of the Atrak that was less exposed to attack from tribes beyond the Persian border. In their new habitat they occupied a swath of territory that stretched from Reza Abad, ۱۵ kilometers northwest of Shirvan, to Chenaran, ۶۰ kilometers northwest of Mashhad, and included the towns of Shirvan and Quchan, and they displaced the Gerayli who had been living there. From the time of Shah Abbas I to the beginning of the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi, the Za'faranlu leaders were hereditary governors of Quchan and headed a principality that stretched about ۹۰ miles from east to west and about forty miles from north to south. In ۱۹۲۹ around ۵۰,۰۰۰ Za'faranlu lived in the Quchan Township and some ۱۲,۰۰۰ of them lived in the Shirvan, roughly ۱۳,۰۰۰ of them being still nomadic. According to British Naval Intelligence, in ۱۹۴۵ some ۱۰,۰۰۰ families of them lived in the Quchan district and around ۲,۴۰۰ families lived in the Shirvan Township, ۲,۶۰۰ families of them being still nomadic. Nowadays, most of Kurd population of the province are sedentary living in various villages of the Atrak river valley.

Turkmen. Most of the Turkmen tribes of north Khorasan dwell in Jargalan district of Bojnord and Maneh along the lower Artak Valley. This area is famous for its original Turkmen horses which are well-known for their mythical speed, endurance and beauty. Horse training and horse riding is popular among Turkmen tribes of the region who have regular horse riding competitions. The principal Turkman tribes of North Khorasan are the Tekke, the Goklan, and smaller clans such as Nokhorli, Garkat, Caraq, Morchali, Zadli.



North Khorasan province has nearly ۱,۰۰۰ Turkmen horses. Turkmen horse show and racing competitions are being held every year in fall in Bojnord.



THE MUSIC OF THE BAKHSHIS OF KHORASAN

“Bakhshis” are among the most famous and prominent Dotār-players of Khorasan. They perform epic and Sufic stories through local music and story-telling. They are farmers and highly respected by particularly the inhabitants of the Northern Khorasan and generally the Iranian Traditional Music and folklore lovers.



The music of Bakhshis is played in the northern regions of Khorasan Province, around the cities of Bojnourd, Shiravan, Ghouchan, Esfarayen and Darre Gaz, and, with some differences, in the Turcoman Region.

Bakhshis constitute one of the major groups of musicians of Northern Khorasan. Their performances consist of playing Dotār (the regional long-lute type instrument with two strings), singing and story-telling. The story-telling part is performed through declamation, singing, and ordinary and narrative speech, accompanied by improvisation.

The Bakhshis perform in Kurdish and Turkish, in addition to the ordinary Khorāsānī dialect of Persian prevailing in the region.

In order for the Dotār players to be regarded as Bakhshis, they are required to acquire specific morals defining their roles. The music is transmitted orally among generations. The melodies and poems are selected based on the performer’s perception of the event. The themes include epic and love-stories, among others. Bakhshis perform, especially, in cheerful ceremonies, although a number of other celebrations respect their presence.

In Khorasan of today a special music known as the music of “Bakhshis” is widespread. It is played by a master-musician playing Dotār (the regional long-lute type instrument with two strings). The music constitutes the local music of the region, played as solo, and accompanied by improvisations.



Bakhshis sing epic and Sufic poems, containing mythological and historical themes. Presently, they perform in various gatherings of the locals, both cheerful and mourning; in the past other types of celebrations were attended by them, too. They perform their Maghams in Turkish, Kurdish, Turcoman and Persian. The contents the music of Bakhshis consists of legends, and historical and ethnic narrations containing epic, religious and romantic themes, performed as singing, ordinary speech, and citation in a repetitious manner. The events of the story are cited; and the poems are sung. Accordingly, the music of Bakhshis can be considered as a combination of music (vocal and instrumental) and verbal dramatic arts.

In certain areas of North Khorassan including Bojnord and Darr-e Gaz Turkmens, Kormanj Kurds and Turks tribes have lived together for a long time and their music have intermingled and resulted to a a music that can be seen in Dotar and song of the late "Oliyagholi Yeganeh", the Great Turkmen Bakhshi. The music of north of Khorassan has always been exchanged with the Turkman music in some ways. In fact, the influence of Turkmen music on the music of north of Khorassan is mainly within the music of "Bakhshis" and Dotar, not "Ashiqs" because the Ashiqs always narrated the original music of Kormanj. If the turkmen music and Dotar has influenced the Bakhshis' music and Dotar in the north of Khorassan, in turn, playing Ghoshmeh (a blow instrument, a type of double reed) that is not originally a Turkmen instrument, has been widespread among a part of Turkmens. This proves the influence of Kurdish Ashiqs' music on the Turkmen music.



BAKHSHI:

In Persian, the word “Bakhshi” derives from the gerund “Bakhshish” meaning “granting”, conveying the impression that the Bakhshi is an exception in character, whom God has granted a gift. Accordingly, “Bakhshis should be able to sing, play, versify, narrate and make their own musical instruments.”

MAGHAM:

Bakhshis play regional Maghams, and their music is known as Maghami. Magham consists of pieces of instrumental and/or vocal music, influenced by the regional locals’ culture and beliefs. “Magham” is a popular word in other regions of Iran and some neighboring countries. However, the content and performances define Bakhshis music as especial in identity, while enjoying shared roots with the traditional music of the region, and the Repertory of Iranian Traditional Music, as well.

TYPES OF MAGHAMS:

The common Maghams of Bakhshis Music are as follows:

Navāyī: Navāyī is the most widespread Magham of the music of Bakhshis. It is diverse, vocal, rhythmless, accompanied by Sufic poems. The performer shall not be known a Bakhshi, unless he is competent in playing Navāyī. Modulations are observed in variations of Navāyī.

Tajnīs: A Turkish Magham, Tajnīs enjoys many intricacies which mark competent Bakhshis once performed. Tajnīs is vocal and rhythmless, accompanied by Sufic poems. In comparison with Navāyī, Tajnīs is poorer in its varieties. Modulation in variations of Tajnīs are also popular.

Gerāyelī/Gerye-ye Leylī (Leyli’s cry): Gerāyelī is a sorrowful Turkish magham, with poems narrating breakaways. The chanson enjoys rhythmic and rhythmless parts.

Shākhātāyī: A Turkish vocal and rhythmic magham, with sorrow in the vocal section, and cheer in the rhythmic one. Shākhātāyī embraces many varieties; and its long poems present religious themes.

Loy: Loy is an antique magham, belonging, specifically, to Kormanj Kurds of Northern Khorasan. It is a vocal and instrumental magham, with romantic and describing content.

THEMES:

The following provide Bakhshis Music with its common themes:

(EPIC): “Kūroghlī”: An epic-historical story, narrating the gallantries of a hero named Kūroghlī in his battles against the rulers of his time;

(HISTORICAL): “Shah Esmail”, narrating the gallantries of Imam Ali, the first among the Imams, utilizing the life story of Shah Esmail, founder of the Safavid Dynasty;

(RELIGIOUS): “Ebrahim Adham”, the religious-Sufic life story of the Sufist, Ebrahim Adham;

(ROMANTIC): “Leyli & Majnoun”, the love-story of Majnoun, and his beloved, Leyli.

DOTĀR

The only musical instrument accompanying the music of Bakhshis Dotār: a long-lute with two strings. (“Dotār”, in Persian, means an instrument with two strings). Traditionally, the strings were made of silk; and Bakhshis used to determine the desired thicknesses. Since around forty years ago, however, metal strings of desired diameters started to be employed instead.



Bakhshis consider one string as male, and the other female. The male string remains open, while the female one is being used to play the main melody. The harmony provides the music with its unique character.

The five fingers play the role of the plectrum. The bowl is pear-shaped, and is made of berry wood, as a unibody. The tall and slim handle/neck is made of stronger apricot wood. Bakhshis Dotār's hold ١٢ to ١٤ frets. Nowadays nylon has been substituted for the traditional sheep intestine as the material.

PLAYING SKILLS:

Khorasani Dotārs are played in different pitches. The major factors responsible for the variations include the diverse musical habits of the inhabitant ethnicities, and the verified “maghams” on the region. The two main pitches are, however, the, so called, Turkish and Kurdish pitches.

Through the former, Navāyī, Tajnīs, Gerāyelī, and Shākhātāyī, among others, are performed, and, through the latter, Loy, Allāh-Mazār, Jafargholī, and the like.

TRANSFER:

Nowadays, Bakhshis music is transferred through traditional and modern methods:

The Traditional method consists of chest-by-chest training between the master and the pupil.

Under this, Bakhshis train only male family members or home-villagers. The musical skills and ethical merits of the regional culture are, both, respected.

The Modern method has become popular for no more than two decades. Here, the master trains a wide range of students of both genders with different cultural, age, and educational backgrounds. The classes are unofficial, however. The training method is still oral and chest-by chest; however, the playing skills are respected more than the ethics.

The only requirement for youngsters, in both methods, is the ability to hold the instrument.

SOCIO-CULTURAL FUNCTIONS:

The Music of Bakhshis of Khorasan transfers history, culture, ethical and religious fundamentals among generations. The fact proves the prominent and highly respected social status of Bakhshis. Their social role exceeds being a mere narrator, and defines them as judges, mediators, healers, etc. Therefore, Bakhshis act as guardians of the ethnic and regional cultural heritage of the community.

An eastern region of the present-day Iranian territory, Khorasan houses Khorasani's, Afghans, Tajiks, Turcomans, Kurds, Baluches and Turks. The Kurds and Turks were moved into the region, centuries ago. They continue to introduce their own traditional culture, while adopting the regional ones, too. The mingled cultures continue to encourage interactions to enrich cultural diversity on the region.

ARTS and CRAFTS

Due to different climatic regions and the existence of various tribes in North Khorasan, the province is distinguished by a broad variety of Handicrafts. Various styles of clothing, carpet and kilims, musical instruments, wood and metal-works, embroidery and etc. are produce in the province. Clothing styles of North Khorasan Province are recognizable in design, color, and decoration. Although at present traditional and local dress has largely been supplanted by modern, Western-influenced



styles, particularly in the cities and neighboring villages, in the recent past, and even now in the more remote villages, it has been possible to record the older traditions. The Kurdish traditional man's shirt is of red or white silk, without a collar and with either a front opening or a slit on the shoulder, fastened with buttons and loops. Over it a jacket is worn. The full trousers, of calico or other cotton, are constructed with a gusset. The ankle-length overcoat is made of brown or black lamb's wool, with a wide collar and an opening in front. On their feet men wear woolen stockings and wrap their ankles and calves with bands which known as *Paytāva*. The traditional shoes are made of leather and called Charogh. The Turkmen clothing and jewelry is also of the most elaborate tribal costume of the province. Men of Turkmen usually wear a tight-sleeved robe (*dōn*) of striped silk worn over loose white cotton trousers (*balaq*) and a calico shirt (*kōyne*), then caught at the waist with a sash (*qušaq*), and worn with a cylindrical black sheepskin hat (*telfek*) over a skullcap (*bōrek*). The principal Turkmen women's garment is a hand woven dress (*kōyne*), usually of silk in red. rows of coins usually are sewn in front of this dress.

Kilim weaving:

Kilim is in fact a type of nap-less rug made by weaving warps and woofs together. Kilim is one of the oldest types of rugs made and used by man; researchers believe it to be ٧٠٠٠ years old. Fibers used in Kilims are mostly natural and are used in rugs or for decoration. Patterns of Kilims are under effect of the traditional culture and natural geographical environment of where weavers live. In most villages of the province weaving is not done according to a drawn pattern, but according to mental patterns which are more varied. Kilims are woven one sided and bi-sided, and are used as carpet cover, table cover, Jawal (woolen sack),



Saddle-bag, mat, margin rug, traveller's rug, tapestry Kilim, bedding wrapper, back pack, slipcover, ladies shoes and purse, socks, gloves, and kneepad.

Sofreh Kurdi (Kurdish table cloth):

Many of Kurdish mores have been transferred to the greater Khorasan during Safavis' time by Kurdish tribes moving to this area. The most common art of Kurdish tribes is weaving a type of Kilim named Sofreh Kurdi, which narrates the story of weaver's life. This art belongs to Khorasan; Sofreh Kurdi is woven by women from Kurdish tribes of this province, which is common in Bojnord, Maneh and Samalghan, Shirvan, Farouj, and Esfarayen. Being made of wool, Sofreh Kurdi comes in different sizes: ١٠٠*١٥٠ cm, ١٠٠*١٢٠ cm, and



۱۰۰*۲۰۰ cm^۲, and has very beautiful patterns with deep concepts and meanings that have roots in beliefs of this area. The patterns of these hand-woven materials are very much varied, mostly including abstract patterns of plants, animals, and geometric patterns, and are based on the three shapes of square, triangle, and circle.

Jajim and Palas:

Jajim is a thick, striped, colorful, hand-woven material mostly woolen, similar to Palas or Kilim, and like other hand-woven materials it is used as carpet. Jajim is totally weaved at once, and has varied colors and patterns. It comprises symbols and meanings



such as the weaver being young, and the hope for a bright future.



Palas is also a type of woolen Kilim used as a carpet suitable for protection from coldness, warmth and damp of the ground since long time ago, and that is why it is used for covering tent floor of North Khorasan tribes and for making nomadic tents, and also in rural houses. Weaving of “Pich” Palas specifically belongs to North Khorasan province.

Turkmen carpet and rug:

Turkmen carpet is a hand-woven art of North Khorasan Turkmen women mostly found in Jargalan area and Turkmen-settled areas of Bojnord and also in Maneh and Samalghan, and it has eye-catching and beautiful patterns. Geometric shapes and angular lines in Turkmen carpet patterns mostly belong to nomadic people, and are woven subjectively in different Turkmen



patterns including: Yumuti, Shanei, Akhal, Chahar Ghab (Four Panels), Ghazal Gaz, and Ghashoghi.

Turkmen cushion:

Another beautiful hand-woven material weaved by Turkmen women is Turkmen cushion which consists of ١. Palas, and ٢. nap side. The nap side has a black tape, and the Palas side has a red tape sewed together to form a sack. The black tape covers the sewing, and the sack is filled with soft wool, cardboard, carton, or sponge, and is used as backrest.

Turkmen cushions are much similar to rugs, and come in different sizes (lengths) including: ٥٠ cm, ١٠٠ cm, and ١٥٠ cm. Four prevailing colors used in Turkmen cushions include: red, golden, black and white. The patterns on the cushions are called Golche (florete) and Ghara Naghsh (black-pattern).

Charogh (farmers' footwear):

According to Dehkhoda Persian dictionary, Charough is a Turkish word for a type of footwear made of leather, tied to the leg using thick and long strings.



Charogh is a kind of fine shoe made of good red leather, fastening with laces and decorated with tassels. Ordinary shoes (čārogh-e Khām) are made of untreated skins from the heads of cows. Women's Charogh is made of single pieces of red calfskin turned up at the toes and decorated with silk tassels and a buckle on top. In the house women wear a kind of slipper called *Komokht*.

This traditional footwear of North Khorasan has been used since long time ago, but unfortunately there is no exact date of its initial use at hand. The oldest instances of Charogh available belong to ٧٠ years ago, while the oldness of this type of footwear goes back to long time before that.



Charogh with its specifications and special appearance has been used in north east of Iran including Bojnord since long time ago, and since the residents of this area are mostly Kurds and Turks, it could be assumed that this footwear belongs to this area. Red is a lively and joyful color, and has a high place in beliefs of people of this area, thus it is used in most handicrafts of this area especially in Charogh.

This footwear has been made in two types, one with less delicacy, and fewer decoration and needlework suitable for low-income people, and the other made of high quality leather with more delicacy, decorated with needlework using colorful silk threads, and engravings on the leather.

Traditional weaving:

This art has been part of the lives of people residing this area and has been very popular long time ago providing a large amount of primary materials needed for production of clothes in the province. Some of these materials such as Chador Shab (bedding wrapper), towel, etc. are still being produced in Jajarm and Esfarayen. The large ones are used as bedding wrapper, and the small ones are used as table cover and curtain.

In addition to Chador Shab, silk materials are also woven in this province, but as the price of the primary materials are high, they are only used for special ceremonies such as weddings.

Choukhe:

In most Persian dictionaries Choukhe is defined as type of woolen clothing. Choukhe is a handicraft of Khorasan province, especially North Khorasan which has been less popular during recent decades. Choukhe is usually made of lamb's wool or camel's wool, and after the woolen threads are produced Choukhe is weaved on a ground weaving frame by first fastening the woofs. Choukhe is being used in



making waistcoats, wrestling suits (Choukh overcoat), leggings, Jacket and pants, etc., and due to cold weather and geographical conditions, men used it as clothing in winter. Usually young and strong tribe men who have been mostly athletic and hardworking people placed an order for a Choukh overcoat, and as a rule wore it for wrestling, and that is why this type of wrestling is known as wrestling with Choukhe. The main reason for wearing this clothing is its strength, since no other cloth is as strong as Choukhe is.

Traditional designing:

Iranians have been attentive to plants and animals since long time ago, and have used their patterns in their crafts, in a manner that those patterns have been formed based on religious thoughts and understandings, and many of those patterns have turned into



symbols of their beliefs, and by passage of time we can observe the changes happened in these patterns. At first they used to draw the natural patterns simpler, but later on these drawings took specific meanings, and by becoming simpler they both got away from the nature, and took up a new pattern based on shape and components of the object, such as straw crafting, crockery, fabric, carpet and Kilim, etc. which have angular and rolling lines. The patterns drawn on the crockery of ancients have been an introduction to designing and decorating more complex crafts with natural patterns and designs. These patterns have at first been the reflection of farming activities, and the primary lives of the people living in the Iranian plateau, which included patterns of mountains, lands, the sea, and plants. Also the crockery discovered from areas like Shoush, Silak, Khorvin, Lorestan, Zeynaviyeh, etc. contained patterns with various straight, angular, and curvy lines.

Weaving socks:

Socks are mostly produced and used by nomadic tribes. These types of local socks are also called Korki (woolen) socks, or Kurdish socks. They mostly contain geometric patterns, and the colors used include: red, dark blue and yellow. The threads used in weaving socks are made of lamb's wool.

**Korki (fuzzy) hat:**

Korki hat is a fuzzy, woolen hat which has an ear flap, thus it is locally called *Kolah Goushi* or the ear covering hat. This art belongs to Daragh, Garmeh and Jajarm cities; its primary material is goat's fuzzy hair, and it is used totally raw with no dyeing. Weaving procedure is quite simple and it is done by 2 wooden sticks, without using any machinery or special tool.



Some of its unique qualities are resistance against cold and humidity, which are the reasons for it to be still used.

Felt making:

Felt is a material produced by matting the fibers and wools together by heat and pressure. This material is mostly produced in Raz and Jargalan area; no dyeing is done, and it is produced in cream and brown, and the patterns are mostly in red.

For creating the patterns geometrical shapes and motifs are used and spiral moves are done. Hats, overcoats, rugs, etc. are produced by felt



Miniature:

Miniature means something shown smaller than it is. Any piece of art which is small and delicate is called miniature.

In miniature painting the images are not similar to the real world. There is no volume or light and shade in miniature painting. The colors used in this art are the reflection of artist's tender feelings, and are mostly used for expressing the feelings inside which have roots in purity of human nature.

**Wooden Moarragh (mosaic work):**

Anything veined is called Moarragh. Moarragh as an art is creation of beautiful patterns and designs by cutting the wood in shapes and arranging colorful



pieces of woods on a background made of wood or black polyester. Wooden Moarragh is a young art in Iran with a history of ۲۰ years; its origin is unknown, but it has existed in countries like China and India in different types.

Wooden Moarragh is in fact the art and technic of choosing the wood, cutting and painting; it is the pattern created by putting the pieces of woods together, and it comes in two types: embossed Moarragh, and flat Moarragh.

Traditional embroidery:

Traditional embroidery is the art of decorating plain cloth with colorful threads using needle and hook. The artists demonstrate a beautiful combination of patience and art by sewing delicate stitches on textile.



Traditional embroidery is one of the broadest realms of traditional arts,

and it has an appropriate place in North Khorasan due to diversity of ethnic groups including Kurmanj and Turkmen. Turkmen women perform embroidery on shirts, pants, cuffs, hats and traditional clothing belts in many patterns using silk and golden threads. Kurdish women also do delicate needlework on cuffs, shirts and around the collar.

Some of sewing jobs done in this province include: needlework on fur coat and Charough, filigree, weaving (a type of) pompons, (golden or silver) lace sewing and silk sewing, chain sewing; some of Kurdish sewing jobs of this province include: Sonboleh sewing, clinquant sewing, and ribbon sewing.

Traditional ornaments:

Traditional ornaments are supplementary to local and traditional clothing, and are representations of mores, customs and culture of people of this province, in a manner that in joyful ceremonies such as weddings, they decorated bride's horse using special ornaments.



North Khorasan Turkmen artists make special ornaments using gold, silver, tin, turquoise, jadeite, agate, colorful glass beads by tools such as anvil, hammer, sandpaper, file, pliers, wire cutter, drill, etc. using their talents and special skills, while preserving specialties and nobilities of this area.

Making traditional musical instruments:

Since music as an element in ceremonies, celebrations, and different customs has had a special place in local, religious and national culture of this country and this province, making musical instruments has



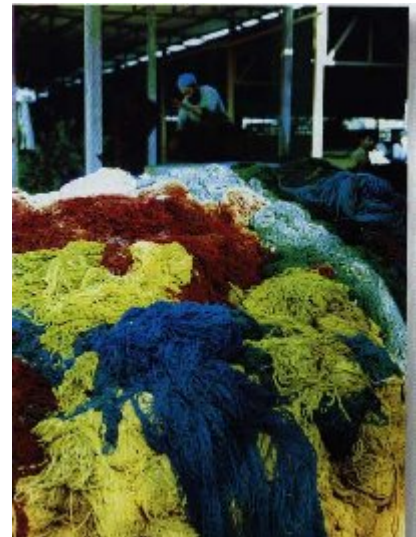
had a high place, and professional artists are actively involved in making Iranian musical instruments. Some of the local musical instruments of this province include: Dutar, Sitar, Dhol, Sorna, Dayereh, Kamancheh, and Ghoshmeh.

It is good to mention that Dutar (with eleven to fourteen frets), Sitar and Kamancheh are chordophone instruments, and Ghoshmeh and Sorna are aerophone instruments. Ghoshmeh is a noble instrument of this province which has seven bands (with double holes on each) on the above side, and one band below the instrument, and the body is made of wood.

These musical instruments are mostly made of walnut tree, service tree, mulberry tree, and maple tree, and their other parts are made of ram's horns or bones.

Traditional dyeing:

Dyeing fibers, soft wool, and cotton or silk and wool fabric, using natural materials with plant or animal origin, through ancient and traditional methods is called traditional dyeing.





Due to popularity of different hand-woven materials in this province, suitable weather conditions, existing of various plants and popularity of animal husbandry in this area, this art/industry has a significant history in this province. Although there are differences in traditional dyeing in different areas, it has a specific formula and is the result of hundreds of years of Iranian people's experience who have added colors to their lives by being inspired by the nature.

For some of plant pigments madder, chamomile, grape leaves, mulberry leaves, malicorium (pomegranate rind), saffron, onion rind, etc. are used, and kermes (cochineal) is used as an animal pigment.

Wooden Monabbat (carving):

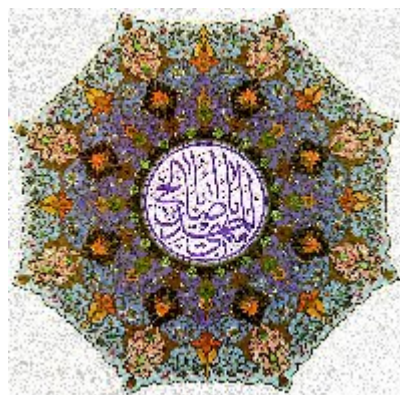
Monabbat means to grow plants, and this name is used because artists carved patterns of plants on the wood. Wooden Monabbat history is as old as human history, because it started when human started to use the wood, and human life has not been separated from that. Aside from social and personal beliefs that are the basics for Monabbat art, social needs and the type of people's lives has not been ineffective in using this art.



Due to suitable weather conditions and variety in plants and trees, and the possibility to find many types of woods in North Khorasan province especially in Roeyn village there has been many wooden Monabbat workshops in Esfarayen city.

Tazhib (Gilding) and Tasheir (fine gold inlaying):

Tazhib (gilding) means covering thinly with gold and creating patterns by inspiration of the nature, but completely abstract, well-ordered, and geometrical, decorated with black lines and gold plate, and



completed by colors such as vermeil, lazuli, venetian ceruse and saffron.

Tasheir comes from the word sha`r (Arabic), meaning hair. In this art decorating is done as thin and delicate as a hair, and patterns of plants and animals are drawn on margins of handwritten manuscripts, books and paintings.

Nivpey (half-pattern): Weavers of nomadic tribes sometimes use half a pattern in weaving materials which is known as Nivpey.

PLACES TO SEE

Tepe Pahlavan

As one of the oldest settlement sites of North Khorassan province, Tepe Pahlavan is situated to the south of Jajarm town. The site consists of a high



central mound that rises about 14 meters above the plain and is surrounded by a fortification wall, covering an area of ۷.۵ hectares. Preliminary archaeological studies show that the site was a production site which was likely related to the exploitation and processing of local resources in Chalcolithic period.

Congregational Mosque of Jajarm

According to geographers and historians of the early Islamic period the town of Jajarm was a frontier borough on the road to Gorgan from Nishapur and the emporium of Gorgan as well as Qumis and Nishapur. During Ilkhanid period, the town of



Jajarm was significant enough to mint gold coins and boasted magnificent public buildings including Caravanserais and several mosques. Jājarm congregational Mosque is the earliest historical mosque of North Khorassan province which is now situated in the centre of the older part of the town. Construction date of the mosque is not exactly known, but historical sources refer to a now lost inscription in which a date of ۶۰۷ A.D was mentioned.

Qal‘eh-i Jalalu’-d- Din

Some ۶ km to the north-west of Jājarm, midway to Garmeh is a stone fortress crowning a round, rather high isolated lime-stone rock which overlooks the Jājarm plain. The fortress has a hexagonal plan to which ۶ towers is attached, ۱۳ meters in height. There is a deep well in the middle of the fort which once served as a water supply for the settlers. Additionally, many

storage



jars embedded in the walls of the upper floor of the fort. The fortress dates back to ۱۳ century A.D. After restoration and rehabilitation of the fort, it is now transformed into a museum.

Shahr-i- Belqays

Shahr-i- Belqays or town of the queen of Sheba is the local name for ruins of medieval town of Esfarayen in North Khorasan Province. Shahr-i- Belqays



is located ۳ kilometers to the south of the modern town of Esfarayen. It is a large archaeological complex consisted of a huge, fortified fortress with a trench around it and outside the fortress a walled town with many buried buildings and structures some of which including some of the renowned Timurid poet Shakh Azari are still standing, while the others such as Menar tepe, possibly remains of the town's old congregational mosque, and Bazaar are razed to ground. The most



distinguished and magnificent building of the complex is the fortress which has a rectangular plan measuring ۱۳۵×۳۷۰ meters. Exact date of construction of the fortress is uncertain, but archaeological soundings and excavations suggest different reconstructional phases, of which the last phase concerns to Safavid period. During Safavid period, town of Esfarayen was frequently sacked by Shibanids of transoxiana and suffered much from Uzbek and Turkmen raids. According to historical records, the town of Esfarayen was attacked by Afghan invaders in ۱۷۳۱ and the settlers abandoned their houses and moved a few kilometers to the north and settled in the village of Mianabad that later on extended and developed into a modern town which was renamed Esfarayen.

Robat-i- Qarabil

Caravanserais or *Robāts* were roadside inns, where travelers could rest and recover from the day's journey. Due to its strategic location, the province of North Khorasan had a complicated network of trade routes such as the road of Gurgan to Nishapur along which, according to historians were built eight Robats by the Timurid vizier of Sultan Hosein Baiqara. Robat of Qarabil is located near the motorway of Bojnord to Gorgan on the



suburb of a village of the same name. Robat of Qarabil is made of stone and mortar and has a rectangular plan with a large portal on the south wall. The Robat has two courtyards both open to the sky and the inside walls of the enclosure is outfitted with a number of identical niches or chambers to accommodate merchants and their servants, animals, and merchandise.

SARDAR MOFAKHAM CULTURAL-HISTORICAL COMPLEX

In the late 19th century, during the Qajar period and under the reign of Naser-ud-din Shah, a large garden and a complex of buildings inside was constructed by the order of Yar Mohammad Khan-e Shadlou, the 10th Ilkhani of Bojnord. Located to the north of Bojnord the complex was originally consisted of several parts. The entire complex was a



rectangle with area of approximately six hectares divided into three parts: the western and central parts served as the outer or semi-public areas (*birun*), and eastern part as the inner or personal area (*anderun*). A main axis running through outer zone organized with two other secondary axes into a Persian garden layout. The eastern part was differently organized along the north-south direction with some dense clusters of construction. Saham al-Dowlah constructed several buildings of the complex during his life, including the *Hoz-Khaneh* (pool house) and main pool in front of it, the *Ayeneh-Khaneh* (the Mirror Pavilion), an Orangerie and marble bath in central part, the *Ali*



Qapu as main entrance complex, service buildings (storehouse, stable, house of servants, house of gardeners and prison) at two sides of it between central and western part, a three-storied palace or *Qasr*, and *Palang-Khaneh* (house of leopards) as private zoo in western part, a

pavement on main axe of complex through both west and middle parts and the Emarat-e-Ichhari as the personal residence with an organic-shaped pool called Daryache-ye-Masna'i, houses of wives and family, kitchen and inner bath in east part. Ayene-Khaneh and Emarat-e-Ichhari are the only remaining parts of the complex today.

MIRROR HOUSE (AYENE-KHANEH)

Ayene-Khaneh is a two-storey building facing north. It consists of a central part and two wings. Central part is covered by tile-work including the two ornamental solid minarets on each side, a main door on lower level, a main window on upper level at the central axis of the building and two smaller windows that have been hidden by a tile-work screen. Two other parts include staircases without ornament.



The mixture of the realistic and abstract images and expansive use of the yellow and the red colors are recognizable as common characteristics of Qajar period tile-work. Two armed soldiers stand guard at both sides of main entrance and two others kneel to shoot, are and looking at the combat of a Lion and a Dragon in the middle of the facade. There was an inscription strip beneath with the name of Saham-ud-Dowlah. It is now simply covered by white and blue tiles. A figure of Lion and Sun has been also replaced with the same tiles just in the middle of a circle at the top of the main



window. Two taller minarets are covered by inscription in square kufic of Mohammad in yellow and black. Between two minarets at each wing, there is an image showing a Lion killing a Bull.

It seems that the building served as

a reception hall for important Iranian and international guests and as another entrance for the complex in last years of Yar Mohammad Khan.

EMARAT-E MOFAKHAM



Emarat-e Mofakham or Ichari is also a two-storey building oriented north-south with the main, southern façade overlooking the inner part of the complex. Northern façade looked out on the now missing organic-shaped pool and its island. These two façades have tile-work but two

others do not. At the lower level there is a porch with thick columns. The plan is a rectangle separated into three parts by two corridors. The staircases and entrances are located in side wings. The upper level plan is organized much like the lower plan, but northern rooms are bigger because there is no northern porch. The largest rooms located at the centre are called the Mirror and the Museum Rooms. The upper level porch columns are round and also have curved tiles.

The patterns of the tile-work of these columns are not identical but symmetrical in whole plan. It is not clear who was the architect for the entire complex, or the individual buildings, although a later comment attributes it to Momtazen al-Dowleh Shafaqi, first modern – educated Iranian architect.

Both of the above described buildings, Ayne-khaneh and Emarat or Ichari, are restored and now transformed to museums of Manuscripts and archaeological-ethnological museums respectively.

Bachokheh Wrestling Tournament

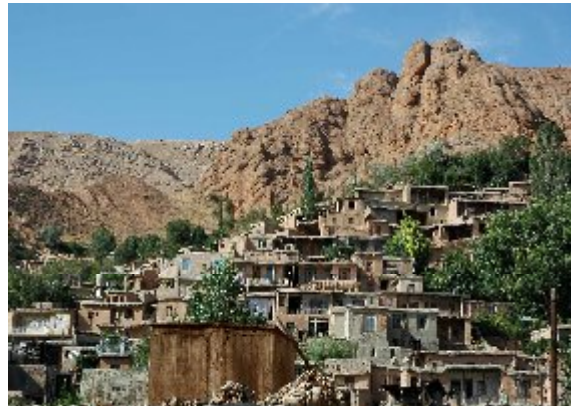
Esfarayen is home to a wrestling tournament called *Bachokheh*. This tournament is unique because it is held in the open air at a place called *Gowd-e Zaynal Khan*. Bachokheh wrestlers from all over Iran congregated annually in ۳ April at Esfarayen for the big wrestling tournament that held at the



end of *Nowruz* vacation. The winners usually are rewarded in kind with ram, horse, camel, carpet, etc. This event is inscribed in the list of Iran's Intangible National Heritage.

Historic fabric of Rowain Village:

The village of Rowain is one of the well-known touristic attractions of the province and located some ۲۸ km to the north of Esfarayen, ۵۲ km to the southeast of Bojnord and is accessible via an asphalted road both from Esfarayen and Bojnord. Rowain is situated in one of the most scenery



valleys of the southern skirts of Aladagh Mountain range on the right bank of Rowain River at an altitude of ۱۶۷۰ meters above sea level. Rowain's architecture is unique. The buildings have been built into the mountain and are interconnected. Courtyards and roofs both serve as pedestrian areas similar to streets. In many parts, Rowain does not allow any motor vehicles to enter, due to its unique layout. The spectacular architecture of Rowain is popularly known as "The yard of the above building is the roof of the below building". Buildings are mostly ۳ stories made of adobe, lumber and stone. A small living room, big guest room, winter room, hall, WC and balcony are usually found in ۱st floor. A cold closet, barn and stable are located on the floor

below, which are connected to the upper floor by several narrow steps inside the building. The people of Rowian speak Tati dialect of Farsi language and are Shiite Muslims. Historical name of the village is Rouin Dezh and it is possibly founded before the invasion of Mongols to Khorasan.

NATURAL SIGHTS

Environmentally, North Khorassan province has a varied climate and is composed of vast expanses of flat plains to the south and mountainous terrains to the north and contains forest and steppe zones with different vegetation coverage. Due to its geographical



characters, the province is endowed with wonderful Geotourism and rural tourism potentialities as well. The province contains many natural attractions and beautiful sights including Salouk protected area and Miandasht Wild-life Refuge, both rich in animal and plant biodiversity. A considerable part of the National Park of Golestan is also located in northwest of the province. Scenery villages of Darkesh in Mane-o-Samalghan, Esfidan and Mahnan villages in Bojnord, Zoeram, Gelyan and Namanlou villages in Shirvan, Roein and Bidvaz villages of Esfarayen, and Mayvan and Khosraviyeh in Farouj are among the most beautiful, recreational places of the province. Other popular attractions of North Khorasan are Besh Qardash (five brothers) and Baba-Aman Parks, both a few kilometers to the south and east of Bojnord respectively. To these one may add several mineral water springs including the Ayyub mineral water in Bojnord Township and Mehmanak mineral water in Mane-o-Samalghan.

A) Forest zones and Protected Areas:

B) certain parts of North Khorasan are covered with lush forests of broadleaf woods (oak trees) including the Caspian Hyrcanian Mixed Forests ecoregion and Almeh and Ghourkhoud steppe-forest zone both in Mane-o-Samalghan Township.



Salouk and Sarigol National Parks in Esfarayen, protected area of Golul and Sarani in Shirvan, Miandasht Wild-life Refuge in Jajarm, and Forest park of Goynik in Raz-o-Jargalan district are all rich in animal and plant biodiversity and are among the most attractive places for tourists

C) Mountainous regions: a considerable part of North Khorasan is mountainous

terrain with mild climate to the north and semi-arid to arid climate to the south.

Kopet-Dagh and Aladaq are the major mountain ranges stretching to the north and south of the province respectively.

Green mountainous valleys with perennial rivers such as Baz Khaneh stream, Roien River, Darkesh River, Gelyan stream, etc



and beautiful waterfalls like Izi, Hamid, Oghaz, and Biyar waterfalls as well as artificial pools of dams such as Shirin Darreh dam, Bidvaz and Barzu dam are among the most popular recreational places of the province. Foothills and mountainous valleys of Aladagh, Bahar Mountain, and the north faces of Salouk ranges (Tabar, Shoghan, Gerivan, Asadli villages) with lush green meadows and beautifully landscaped gardens are among the most scenery places of the province. Moreover, there are several caves in the mountains of the province including the Bidak cave, Gesk, Kaftarak cave, Pustinduz cave, Ganj-Kuh cave all of which have good potentials for cave tourism. Aladagh

and Kopet-Dagh mountain ranges, especially Misino, Salouk, Ghorkhood, Yaman Daghi, and Boz Daghi mountains are suitable for mountain sports like rock climbing, hiking and winter sports.

D) Geothermal and natural mineral water

Springs: Mineral and geothermal waters of North Khorassan with mental and physical health benefits normally use for therapeutic bathing and/or enjoyment from drinking and provide attractive tourism and economic opportunities for the province. Among the geothermal waters of the province one may refer to Ayyub spring and Mehmanak spring. Mineral waters are Besh Ghardash (five brothers) in Bojnord, Makhtoumi in Shirvan, and Garmak Gharajeh in Bojnord.



Salouk Protected Area:

This region was designated protected area in ۱۹۷۳. Salouk protected area has an area of ۱۱۶۷۷ ha and is located in the west of Salouk national park in North Khorasan Province. The altitude range of ۱۱۴۰-۲۷۸۰ m and mean annual precipitation and temperature of ۲۸۰ mm and ۱۲°C, respectively have resulted in a



temperate semi-arid climate. The region is rich in animal and plant biodiversity. The dominant plant species is worm seed which forms the vegetation cover of the area along with scattered juniper forests and species such as barberry, astragal, prickly thrift, ephedra, dog rose, giant fennel, fig, and black thorn. The main animal species are goitred gazelle, urial wild sheep, wild goat, wolf, leopard, hyena, jackal, stone marten, large-toothed souslik, common fox, chukar partridge, see-see partridge, owl, and different sandgrouses and larks. Juniper stands, eye-catching valleys, plant and

animal biodiversity, Pish-qaleh fortress (or Qala'e Salouk) and proper access roads have paved the way for tourism in the region.

Miandasht Wild-life Refuge:

Located near the city of Jajarm in North Khorasan Province, northeastern Iran, this ca. ۸۵۰۰۰ hectares area was designated as a wildlife refuge in November ۱۹۷۳ by the Iranian Department of the Environment (DoE). The area is composed of vast expanses



of flat plains with rolling hilly areas which have divided the reserve into northern and southern halves. The region is scarred with a thick net of dry river beds and depressions, and intermingled with clusters of small hills and plateaus. Hilly

regions inside the reserve form a core zone covered dominantly with shrubs, and some low mountain ridges form the southern borders. A seasonal salty river, the Jajarm Kalshur forms the northern boundary, providing a useful refuge for wildlife. Since ۱۹۷۳ Miandasht has been under protection to conserve its rich biodiversity which includes many animal species such as Wolf, Cheetah, Asiatic Wild Ass or Onager, Persian or Goitred Gazelle, Wild Sheep. Ground birds like Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Crane and Houbara Bustard, see-see partridge occur and breed in high numbers, particularly in northern half of the area.

OLD TREES

As natural and cultural heritage, old trees are very important in conservation of biology cycle, and have a distinguished place in local culture and rituals. They are the remnants and symbols of the plant life that once covered the region. Province of North



Khorasan is distinguished for having a large number of old trees and especially is unique for being endowed with a vast diversity of tree species from different families from broadleaf and conifers.

Some of the most important old trees of the province are as follows: Sanoubar Naza Ali (*populus nigra* sp.) to the northeast of province, in the vicinity of Nazar Ali village to the north of Shirvan Township. The tree with a ۷۷۰ cm of trunk circumference is supposed to be the oldest of its specie in Iran (about ۳۰۰ years old).

Ors-e Sarani (*Juniperus excelsa* sp.), located to the northeast of Shirvan Township near the village of Sarani on the border of Turkmenistan. The trees' trunk circumference is about ۸۵۰ cm according to which a date between ۲۷۰۰-۳۰۰۰ years was estimated for the tree.

Arche-ye Garmeh (*Juniperus excelsa* sp.), located in an intermountain valley to the south of Kouh-e Qozlogh in Garmeh Township. The trees' trunk circumference is about ۶۷۰ cm according to which a date between ۲۰۰۰-۲۳۰۰ years was estimated for the tree.

Chenar-e Kotalli (*Platanus orientalis* sp.) located on the south outskirts of the village of Kotalli in Jajarm Township. The trees' trunk circumference is about ۱۸۰۰ cm that according to calculations must have about ۱۰۰۰ years old.

SOME OF THE MOST CELEBRATED MEN OF NORTH KHORASAN PROVINCE

BADR JĀJARMĪ

Malek-al Shoara Badr-al-din ibn Omar, a ٧th/١٣th-century poet who enjoyed renown in his own time. Born in Jājarm, he received his education in *adab* in that province and later moved to Isfahan where he entered the service of Khaja Baha-al-Din ibn Shams-al-Din Mohammad Jovayni, the governor of Isfahan and Eraq-e Ajam. At Isfahan he met and made friends with the poets Majd Hamgar and Emami Heravi. He learned much from Majd Hamgar, who was his senior in years and standing; this probably explains why compilers of tazkeras (biographical anthologies) have described him as Majd Hamgar's pupil.

Jajarmi was Khaja Baha-al-Din's panegyrist and also wrote poems in honor of the latter's father, the kāteb-e divan, Khaja Baha-al-Din Mohammad Jovayni, and uncle, the historian Ata-Malek Jovaynī. It seems that he spent almost all his life as a poet in the service of the Jovaynī family. He died on ٢٩ Jomada II ٦٨٦/١١ August ١٢٨٧, shortly after Majd Hamgar and Emama. A marthia (elegy) written by Badr Jajarmi on the death of Sad-al-Din Hamawi in ٦٥٠/١٢٥٢ contains expressions of devotion which suggest that he may have been a disciple of that shaikh.

Of Jajarmi's poetry, estimated by Nafisi at ٤,٠٠٠ verses, a large number is quoted in various tazkeras, mostly in the *Mounes al-ahrār* (comp. ٧٤١/١٣٤٠) of his son Mohammad b. Badr Jājarmī. Altogether this work contains ١,١٢٢ verses by him, including ٢٠١ from a treatise on limb spasms (*ekhtelājāt-e aa'zāa'*) which he wrote and ٣٢ about powers of the moon, the rest being qasīdas, ghazals, mosammats and robāā'īs and other quatrains.

In content, Jajarmi's oeuvre comprises eulogies, elegies, chronograms, oaths, and jests. It is mediocre poetry for the most part, displaying some sort of poetic artifice, such as the question and answer form, the repeated word-play (*tajnīs-e mokarrar*), the acrostic, the divided metaphor (*taqsīm*), the use of words consisting solely of undotted letters throughout a poem, etc. All these frills attest to his bent for rhetoric, of which

he was indeed the foremost contemporary master. Worthy of mention is his Persian verse rendering of a well-known Arabic qasida by Abu'l-Fath Bosti.

MOHAMMAD IBN BADR JĀJARMĪ

Persian poet and anthologist. His father Malek-al-Shoa'rā Badr-al-Din Omar Jājarmi (d. ٦٨٦/١٢٨٧), a poet from Jājarm, had moved to Isfahan. There, Badr-al-Din entered the services of Khaja Baha-al-Din ibn Shams-al-Din Mohammad Jovayni, the governor of Isfahan and Erāq-e Ajam in the Il-khanid kingdom.

Mohammed was a poet himself, but his fame rests only on his *Mounes al-ahrār fi daqāieq al-asha'ār* ("The Free Men's Companion to the Niceties of Poems"), a voluminous anthology which is his only surviving work and the only source about his life. In the *Mounes* he includes eight of his own poems, none of which can be dated from before the death of the Il-khanid Abu Saa'id in ٧٣٦/١٣٣٥.

An incomplete illustrated autographed copy of this anthology dated Ramadan ٧٤١/February-March ١٣٤١ is among his survived works that scholars convincingly argue that the manuscript was written and illustrated in Isfahan.

The *Mounes al-ahrār* is divided into thirty chapters (*bāb*), according to criteria of form or content, and begins, like thematically arranged *divāns*, with chapters containing poems devoted to praises of God and the Prophet and those of ethical content. The majority of the chapters contain almost exclusively *qaṣidas*, while separate chapters are devoted to strophic poems (*mosamma'āt* and *tarji'āt*, respectively), "fragments" (*moqattaa'āt*), *ghazals*, *robā'is*, and isolated single verses (*fardiyāt*).

Even if the *Mounes al-ahrār* offers a rather idiosyncratic choice of poems (the extensive quoting of his own father is an example), it gives an idea of what was known and loved in Isfahan at the time. Moreover, it is an important source because, unlike most works belonging to the *tazkera*-genre, it gives the full text of all the

poems (although no particulars on the authors) instead of excerpts. Of many of the poets mentioned here no manuscript of a *divān* older than this autograph is extant.

ĀZARI TUSI

Nur-al-din (or Fakhr-al-din) Hamza ibn Ali Malek Esfarayeni Bayhaqi was a Shi'ite Sufi poet born in Esfarayen, where his father was of some importance under the Sarbadars. He showed an early inclination toward poetry and soon gained the favor



of Shahrokh after a competition with Khaja Abd-al-Qader Udi, in which he was required to compose *qasīdas* in the manner of Salman Savaji. He was promised the position of poet-laureate at the Timurid court but, about the same time, came under the influence of the Sufi, Shaikh Mohyi-al-din Tusi Gazali. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca with his teacher; and, while there, he wrote *Sa'y al-Safā*, a history of the Ka'ba with description of the *Hajj* ceremonies. On the return journey Shaikh Mohyī-al-din died at Aleppo, and Azari then became the disciple of Shah Ne'matallāh Wali. He made the pilgrimage again with the latter, from whom he received the Sufi's cloak (*kherqa*).

Azari then traveled to India. In ۸۳۲/۱۴۲۸-۲۹ he became attached to the court of Ahmad Shah Bahmanī in the Deccan, and the king bestowed on him the title of poet-laureate. Azari began work on a history of the dynasty, the *Bahman-nāma*. He eventually sought permission to return home but promised to continue work on the history. By the time of his death he had carried it down to the reign of Sultan Alā-al-din Homāyoun Shah; other poets, such as Naziri and Same'i, continued the project. On his departure from India, Azari received a gift of ۶۰,۰۰۰ silver tankas, five slaves, and a robe of honor.

Azari returned to Esfarāyen and spent the remaining thirty years of his life in seclusion. He largely turned from the writing of panegyric to verse in praise of the Prophet and his descendants. He also had built, and provided endowments for, houses and hospices to serve dervishes, the poor, pilgrims, and students. When the Timurid Sultan Mohammad b. Baysonqor passed through in ٨٥٠/١٤٤٦-٤٧ (after Shahrokh's death, on his way to assume the rule of Fars, Eraq-e Ajam, and Mazandaran), he called on the revered Sufi elder. Azari offered advice but declined a bag of gold. In ٨٥٢/١٤٤٨-٤٩ Azari had another royal interview in Esfarayen, with Ulugh Beg. Azari died there in ٨٦٦/١٤٦١-٦٢ and was buried in one of his foundations.

Azari's other literary works were: *Mafātīh* (or *Meftāh*) *al-asrār*, written in ٨٣٠/١٤٢٦-٢٧, apparently lost; *Jawāher al-asrār*, an abridgement of the preceding, done ten years later; *Toghrā-ye homāyūn*; and *Mathnawī-e mer'āt*, comprising *Tāmmat al-kobrā*, *Ajāeb al-donyā*, and *Sa'y al-safā*. The third of these has been tentatively identified with an *Ajāeb al-gharāeb* in the Majles Library, Tehran by Aqa Bozorg Tehrani.