EXTERIOR OF THE FRONT COVER OF A BINDING
887 A.H.—1483 A.D.

The interiors of the covers are reproduced in Plates XI and XII

Size: 26 by 17.5 cm. Decoration in painting on lacquered pasteboard and in block-stamping with gilding. The surface of the cover was overlaid with a coat of chalk, covered by black lacquer. On this foundation extremely delicate and minute blossoming scrolls were painted in gold to form the outer border and the field of the central panel. Over this was spread a protecting coat of transparent lacquer. The inner border, the medallion with its two pendants, and the corner pieces were all stamped with similar though less minutely delicate patterns and gilded. The exterior of the back cover is identical in its decoration. The exterior of the joint contains a Persian verse in lacquer painting which praises the Mathnavî in poetical form.

The inclosed manuscript of Mathnavî by Djalâl al-Dîn Rûmî was completed in the year 887 A.H. (1483 A.D.), in Herât. The illuminated Shamsa medallion on the title-page bears the ex libris of the last Timûrid Sultan Hûsain Bâkara (1469–1507 A.D.). The lacquer decoration of the cover is certainly contemporary with the other parts of the binding and with the manuscript itself.

INTERIOR OF THE FRONT COVER OF A BINDING

887 A.H.—1483 A.D.

The exterior and interior of the covers are reproduced in Plates X and XII.

Brown leather over pasteboard. Decoration chiefly in leather filigree against a dark blue, painted background, though there is some blind and gold tooling. A narrow braided band outlines the delicate filigree border of flying ducks and flower scrolls. A second narrow band of an intertwined design frames the central panel which is filled with an amazingly elaborate landscape scene executed in filigree. In the lower right hand corner a duck is swimming, the water being indicated by means of bands connected with the body of the bird. Above it flies another duck. Two foxes play under an adjacent tree. Two antelopes and a flowering tree occupy most of the center of the scene. In the upper part two apes are at play. The sky is indicated by ducks on the wing and by stylized cloud bands. There are two small rectangular sections at the top and at the bottom of the central panel, each of which is filled with "grotesque" flower scrolls bearing two heads of bulls and two ape heads in symmetrical arrangement.
INTERIOR OF THE BACK COVER AND FLAP OF A BINDING

887 A.H.—1483 A.D.

The exterior and interior of the covers are reproduced in Plates X and XI

Brown leather over pasteboard. Decoration in blind tooling, gold stamping, and leather filigree. The filigree design of the border of the cover consists of arabesques with repeating shield motifs picked out in gold. Similar filigree patterns against the usual blue painted background decorate the corner pieces of the central panel and the round medallion with its pendants. In the four rectangular spaces at the top and bottom appears the reciprocal motif of flower stems, alternately on a blue, and on a gold background. The delicate floral design, executed in gold stamping around the medallion, is practically identical with that done in lacquer painting on the exteriors. The joint is divided into three sections, the central one of which is decorated with compartments containing arabesques, inscriptions, and a hare, all executed in filigree. The border of the flap is decorated with a flower scroll pattern, and in the five-sided panel, against a blue painted background, a dragon surrounded by flowery stems is biting at a cloud band.
EXTERIOR OF THE BACK COVER AND FLAP OF A BINDING

About 905 A.H. — 1500 A.D.

The interior of the cover is reproduced in Plate XIV

Size: 26 by 16.5 cm. Black leather over pasteboard. Decoration in embroidery. The border consists of flying birds alternating with stylized cloud bands in blue and violet silk threads on a background of delicate tendrils similarly executed in gold. Floral arabesques fill the medallion, its two pendants, and the corner pieces of the central panel. The front cover has exactly the same decoration, and the flap is identical in every detail to corresponding sections of the covers. The joint is divided into two parts containing a Turkish verse on the background of a scroll design.

The binding incloses a manuscript of Gharāib al-Sighār by the famous Turkish poet and statesman, Mir 'Alī Shīr Nūstā'ī, who was the vezir of the last Timurid Sultān Husain Bākara. It is undated, but the colophon is signed by the calligrapher Sultān 'Alī al-Kāimi, who was a contemporary of the poet.

Formerly in the Library of İldiz Palace, now in the Library of the University of Istanbul. Inventory No. 2782/32.
INTERIOR OF THE BACK COVER OF A BINDING

About 905 A.H.—1500 A.D.

The exterior of the cover is reproduced in Plate XIII

Decoration in leather filigree, gold stamping, and lacquer painting. The wide border is decorated with elaborate filigree arabesques on a blue painted background, and the flower scrolls of the central medallion, pendants, and corner pieces are likewise done in filigree work against the same blue ground. A scroll pattern and cloud bands in gilded relief embossing fill the remainder of the central field. At the top and bottom of the panel are rectangular sections ornamented with gold in lacquer technique.
EXTERIOR OF THE BACK COVER AND FLAP OF A BINDING

840 A.H.—1437 A.D.

The interior of the cover and flap are reproduced in Plate XVI

Size: 26.5 by 17 cm. Brown leather over pasteboard. Decoration in blind and gold tooling. The border is divided into angular sections symmetrically arranged, which are filled with delicate flower scrolls and rosettes. The medallion, its pendants, and the corner pieces of the central panel are outlined in gold and filled with arabesque designs. An identical composition and ornamentation appear on the exterior of the front cover. The half medallion of the flap is of a different shape, and the field around it is covered with flower stems in blind tooling, but in other respects the decoration of the flap corresponds exactly with that of the cover. Gold tooling produced the entire ornamentation of the joint — the border of interwoven design, the thin braided fillet which divides the joint into two elongated and rounded compartments, and the Persian verse inscribed in them.

The binding encloses a manuscript of a Persian anthology. The colophon states that it was executed in the year 840 A.H. (1437 A.D.), in the city of Yazd, but does not mention the name of the calligrapher. Türk ve İslam Asarı Müzesi. Inventory No. 1530.
INTERIOR OF THE BACK COVER AND FLAP OF A BINDING

840 A.H.—1437 A.D.

The exteriors of the cover and flap are reproduced in Plate XV

Brown leather over pasteboard. Decoration in leather filigree, and in blind and gold tooling. The outside border and the corner pieces of the central panel are enriched with an intertwined design of admirable composition, partly picked out in gold. Similar decoration appears in the small rectangular sections of the joint and in the border of the flap. Filigree arabesques of various patterns form the rest of the ornamentation. The backgrounds are mostly blue, the one exception being the gold background of the flower stems around the medallion of the flap.