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### The Global World of Tatar Book Culture

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آن جهان رونی که دانی من بیچاره را تو  
وروی که دوستان جمع کردم و از سر تا قدم

# The Global World of Tatar Book Culture

kitaphane.tatar.ru

Kitaphane  
کتابخانه

برای سپاس از دو استاد  
مصحح جناب نبودی و کوران و کران و پیم  
مؤلفان و شایسته جمیع دانشمندان

# The Global World of Tatar Book Culture



Kazan. 2021



More than ever before, the Muslim cultures of Russia need a historical restart. There is still much to take inspiration from: our past conceals rich experiences, ones that could trigger the creation of new multifaceted cultural models. The movement of history inspires us to rediscover the Muslim globality alongside its linguistic plurality and openness to the wider world. In fact, staying connected to global circulation of ideas has always been part of Muslim worldview and found expression in a wide array of subjects, most notably literature. Tatar manuscripts in Persian, produced on Dutch paper with watermarks of foolscap, constitute a demonstrative example for the cosmopolitan and interconnected character of Muslim cultures in Russia. In order to find answers for questions that inflict our contemporary age and surroundings, we must first recover the questions from the past and how people engaged with them.







## IMPERIAL CULTURE IN THE GOLDEN HORDE, 13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES

The Globality of Muslim written culture in the region goes back to the Middle Ages, the era when one was able to travel without any disturbance between the banks of Dunay and the Pacific Ocean, an area united within the boundaries of a single state. Symbols of statehood on coins and gravestones have preserved a rich worldview of people of the past. Some of these symbols are still in use today: the image of snow leopard, the knot of happiness, the paradise garden and the saying qutlugh bulsun or 'be happy'. The dialog of cultures, as a norm, was the main feature of those days. Imperial order brought the best of world cultures together.







## THE WORLD OF MUSLIM AESTHETICS, 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES

We are accustomed to judge books according to their content. However, Muslim cultures also attach a great value to the outer appearance of books, styles of handwriting, design of bindings and the selection of paper for writing. The period between the fall of Kazan in 1552 and the imperial turn towards the churchification of Islam in the Russian Empire under Catherine the Great (1788) was marked by the flowering of Islamic aesthetics in manuscript production. The Tatars copied Persian texts on Dutch paper and left their notes in Russian, making the entire endeavor a true symbol of transcultural cosmopolitanism.







# تاریخ حکایت

## وہ اندک شیخ

It has become common knowledge that during the period spanning the fall of Kazan in 1552 and the mid-eighteenth century the Muslim culture of the Volga-Urals was in decline. However, during the course of these two centuries, the Tatar manuscript tradition took a new shape. The surviving book manuscripts demonstrate high standards of manufacturing and sophistication both in terms of aesthetics and content. It was during that period when Tatar copyists developed a special style of writing, one which was significantly different from later styles. The taste for beauty (dhawq) can be felt in the ornaments in bindings, in lines running like ants, and in stylization of Arab letters. The European paper would add value to those books. The era of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was when Persian culture was central to Tatar intellectual production. This culture's history can be gleaned from the language use, repertoire of literature and the design of manuscript books.

◀ Durr al-majalis, 163 fols., copied in the second half of the 17th century. Acquired from Nurullin in 1959. Kazan University Library, Ms. 1037F.



# Qisas al-Anbiya

A marginal note in Russian in the Tatar copy of Qisas al-anbiya' 1680. Probably, this note needs to be understood as a letter-sign for 117. If this is a date, then it's the year of (7)117 or 1608–1609 CE. Dates in Old Russian would always be written under line, which is the case here. The first letter must be [r] meaning 100, the latter is [z] which is 3. The only problem poses the sign in the middle. We read it as [a], but this symbol would then mean ten and not one. 10 must have been written as [i]. Here it should be a mistake (consultation by Ivan Puzyrev). If our reading is correct, then the function of this date remains unclear, because paleographically the Dutch paper in this manuscript goes back to 1680.

This is an early example of using the Russian language in Tatar books shows some extent of integration of two cultures already in the 17th century.

Qisas al-anbiya', 197 fols. Copied in 1680. Acquired from 'Abdullah Nurullin in Kaianovo village, Perm region, in 1973. Kazan University Library, Ms. 6759T.





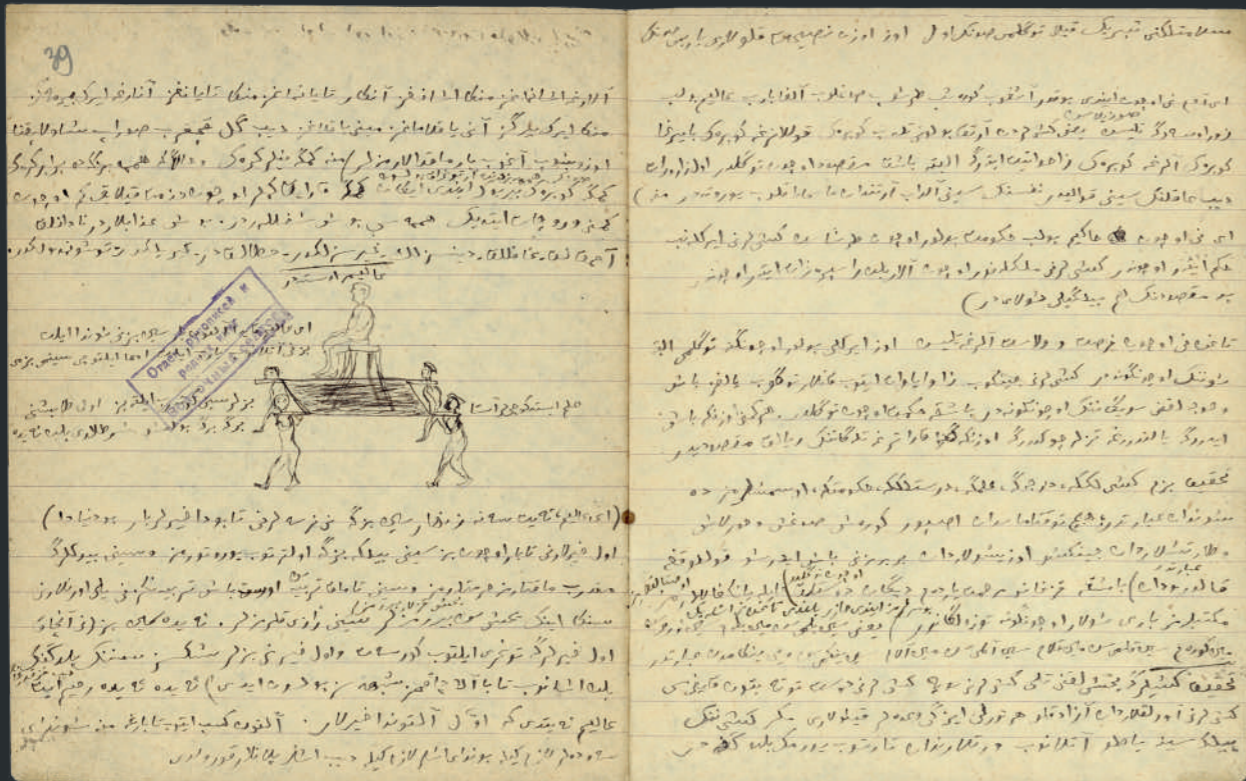


## KNOWLEDGE TRIUMPHANT, 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES

Thanks to the union of thinkers and merchants, a broad network of business and education was quickly constructed, where money and knowledge fueled each other. This network became a product of transregional contacts and circulation of texts in Russian, Arabic, Persian and Turkic languages. Not surprising therefore that the Muslims of Russia learned the Arabic grammar in Persian and wrote Russian words in the Arabic script. The general move was developing from the translation of separate classical texts into Tatar towards the creation of original works in the fields of traditional sciences (law, logic, grammar) and esoteric knowledge (Sufism, magic and medicine).







Thanks to the prestige of Bukharan scholarship, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Islamic scholarly occupation became a life ambition for a wide a range of Tatars. Entire generations of young people would travel for decades in search of knowledge, bringing the cutting-edge knowledge of the period in question from Bukhara, Kabul and Samarkand. Their mothers would sing to their children: “you will go to madrasa; if you study good, you’ll become a scholar.” In autobiographical writings of ‘Ussam Khanzafarov from the 1940s, the status of scholars is portrayed philosophically and in a slightly peppered manner. On the drawing, the scholar is pictured lifted by ‘the seekers of knowledge.’ The commentary reads:

*Oh you the scholar, bring us to a place of gold,  
Lead us there, but who is the leader? You or us?  
We bring you there on our arms,  
With a condition to split it together.*



◀ The diary of ‘Ussam Khansaverov, in Tatar. Khujand (Tajikistan), 1940s – 1950s. Kazan University Library, Ms. 1849T.



فصل في سنن المجاهدة	٤١	فصل في طلب الحوائج	٤٢	فصل في سنن ضيافته الاخوان	٤٣
فصل في سنن النكاح والاداء وصوته	٤٤	فصل في سنن شتى في مصاحبة الاصحابيات	٤٤	فصل في حقوق الوالدين	٤٤
فصل في حقوق ذوي الارحام	٤٥	فصل في حقوق المالئق والخدمه	٤٥	فصل في حقوق سائر الخلق	٤٥
فصل في حقوق البيهايم	٤٦	فصل في سنن الام بامر وف وانهى عن امته	٤٦	فصل في حقوق القمصان	٤٦
فصل في سنن الجهاد	٤٧	فصل في سنن المبتلى	٤٧	فصل في سنن المعياد	٤٧
		تم الفهرست	تم الفهرست	تم الفهرست	تم الفهرست
		تم بيد الفقير الحقير	تم بيد الفقير الحقير	تم بيد الفقير الحقير	تم بيد الفقير الحقير

391r. (328)

ТАТАРСТАН БИЛЛИ КИТАПХАНАСЭ  
КУЛЬЯЗМАЛАР  
ҖӨМ СИҖӘК КИТАПЛАР БУЛҖЕ  
НАЦИОНАЛЬНАЯ БИБЛИОТЕКА РТ

Handwritten Arabic text in two columns, likely a legal treatise. The text is dense and includes some red ink markings. There are significant stains and damage on the right page.

▲ A legal treatise in Arabic, copied by Muhammad 'Arif b. mullah Muhammadi al-Mamsawi al-Burnashi in 1878. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 391G.

◀ Muslih al-Din Sa'di, Gulistan. In Persian. Copied by Rahmatullah b. Rahman-Guli, 18th century. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 400F.





▲ The Qur'an, copied in the 17th and early 18th centuries. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 590G.



▲ Muhammad Sharif Bukhari, Risala al-khaqqaniyya. In Persian. Copied by 'Abd al-Wahhab Akhuni b. Hasan b. al-Muhammad at the madrasa of Qatash Qaran in 1131/ 1719. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 70F.

حکایت





Translations of classical literature from Persian and Arabic into Tatar at the turn of the nineteenth century were an important source of knowledge for Muslims of Russia. While in earlier times the poetry of Sa'di and the ethical books of al-Ghazali had been copied in the original with rare interlinear commentaries in Tatar, the spread of madrasa education and literacy led to the creation of full Tatar translations of classical texts. In fact, this meant the adaptation of cultural models on the level of everyday language.

# وزیر سگ بنگزار اولشکن

◀ Pand-nama-yi 'Attar, in Persian with interlinear translation into Tatar, late 19th century. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 4338T.



# تعمیر کتب



- ▲ Rishta-yi jawahir, in Ottoman. Copied in 1257/1841. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 767T.
- Manzarat al-jawab. A critique of Sablukov's translation of the Qur'an, in Tatar, late 19th — early 20th century. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 583T.



حرف باهوه فی الجملہ مضمون ان لاناہ ولفی الی

لا وایا الدینا شیء لقا بالزواجا

روایا ناوینک رونا رونا کس جیور رونا رونا معصیت معاند در معانی الحقی  
 دینانک کو خرابی معصیل لایطولو و و صیت و سخن ارمان کثرت ما تنقض و  
 و سرور یا نیک بالقلبات یعنی ہوا رفتنک ہر طرف کیرلسہ اوقی وضوی  
 سخن ہوا رفتن ہر طرف شک ہنشی و ہر طرف خاک و ہر طرف شک مار مار ناچار  
 موجود ہوا رفتن کچھ ما ماست و کچھ ناچار و مستی ناچار و

لا بیشت لیا طین خیر وین لا بیشت العا ہر

مثنوی الحقی ہنیت باطن نہ پندار و در خیر و در عین شک کھنوی چہ ہا اید و فقی  
 ہنسی رہ اید باطن مرین اولو خیر و در ظاہری خراب تو کچھ اید وین اولو کون  
 ہنیت ہر مکان خلقت ہر شے جو خیر ہا قیامی اید کسک اید ہر خار صیت  
 حضرت مثنوی کسک نور سر و شریف اید ہر نور تو کھان ادریشک ہا تو و راستی  
 و راستی ہر نور ہوا ہنیت اشک اوستی جیفا اطلقی اولو فقی ظاہر و صیت کسک  
 بیولا کسک کھان ہر و اشک اشک اطلقی بساط شط کسک ہر شے کھان اطلقی اشقی  
 مثنوی ہنسی و در ظاہر کھان خیر و باطن اید و فقی اولو دینت ظاہر و ہر جہان

لا و ال العا ہون من موت العلیا ہ

اھون اسما علیا سند و در معانی الحقی خیر کسک اولو اسما ہر موت کھان و ہنیت  
 مع الی اتر نفس اود و فقی صیت اولو اشک اولو کھان اید و کسک ہنیت  
 کھان فقی لیسہ کھانیت خیر و باطن اید و کھان ہنیت کھان اولو فقی ہر جہان

حرف



87

ماہ ایلریس می آخر بہار

۱	۱۱	۲۱
۲	۱۲	۲۲
۳	۱۳	۲۳
۴	۱۴	۲۴
۵	۱۵	۲۵
۶	۱۶	۲۶
۷	۱۷	۲۷
۸	۱۸	۲۸
۹	۱۹	۲۹
۱۰	۲۰	۳۰
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۱۳	۲۳	
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۳۰		
۳۱		

تعمیر القباب بمجران

تیر ماہ اول تابستان

95

۱	۱۱	۲۱	۳۱
۲	۱۲	۲۲	۳۲
۳	۱۳	۲۳	۳۳
۴	۱۴	۲۴	۳۴
۵	۱۵	۲۵	۳۵
۶	۱۶	۲۶	۳۶
۷	۱۷	۲۷	۳۷
۸	۱۸	۲۸	۳۸
۹	۱۹	۲۹	۳۹
۱۰	۲۰	۳۰	۴۰
۱۱	۲۱	۳۱	۴۱
۱۲	۲۲	۳۲	۴۲
۱۳	۲۳	۳۳	۴۳
۱۴	۲۴	۳۴	۴۴
۱۵	۲۵	۳۵	۴۵
۱۶	۲۶	۳۶	۴۶
۱۷	۲۷	۳۷	۴۷
۱۸	۲۸	۳۸	۴۸
۱۹	۲۹	۳۹	۴۹
۲۰	۳۰	۴۰	۵۰
۲۱	۳۱	۴۱	۵۱
۲۲		۴۲	۵۲
۲۳		۴۳	۵۳
۲۴		۴۴	۵۴
۲۵		۴۵	۵۵
۲۶		۴۶	۵۶
۲۷		۴۷	۵۷
۲۸		۴۸	۵۸
۲۹		۴۹	۵۹
۳۰		۵۰	۶۰
۳۱		۵۱	۶۱

رومیہ ۱۱۴۱

رومیہ ۱۱۴۲

رومیہ ۱۱۴۳

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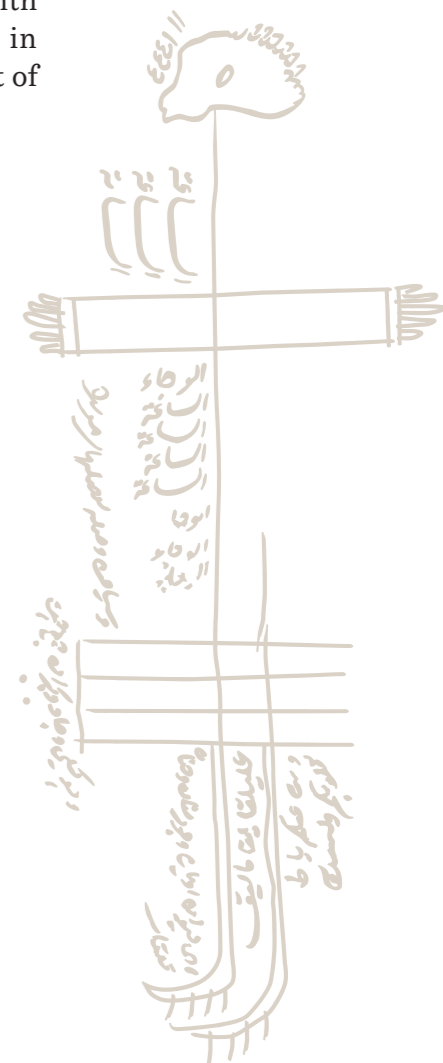
رومیہ ۱۲۰۰

▲ A calendar composed during the second half of the 18th century. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 1063T.





The magical and medical texts among the Tatars guaranteed close communication with nature, bodies and the inner world of the individual. Theory and theology of magic flourished on the basis of circulation of texts from the Indo-Persian and Arab-Persian traditions, two traditions rooted in the Hellenist heritage of the Mediterranean. Tatar magical practices and texts grew out of this rich and diverse soil, resulting in the production of numerous manuscripts during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Naturally, professional skills in this field were regarded not as something alien, but as part of a longstanding tradition of scholarly training.



◀ A magical treatise in Tatar, late 19th century. Kazan University Library, Ms. 6641T.





في كتابه في الطب...  
 واداءه...  
 في كتابه في الطب...  
 واداءه...

في كتابه في الطب...  
 واداءه...  
 في كتابه في الطب...  
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في كتابه في الطب...  
 واداءه...  
 في كتابه في الطب...  
 واداءه...

# العلاج

- ▲ A medical treatise in Arabic, copied in the Near East in the 18th century. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 653G.
- ▶ A genealogical chart, 1860–1880. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 1869T.





▲ A collection of magical texts in Arabic, Persian, and Tatar, composed in the early 19th century. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 623F.



▲ A chapter on dreams in a hadith collection. Copied in 1175–1209/ 1762–1795. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 749T.



اللَّهُ وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ فَأَوْلَائِكَ  
مَنْبِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ❀ مَا يَفْعَلُ  
اللَّهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا ❀ لَا يُحِبُّ  
ظَلِيمًا ❀ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا ❀  
سَوْءًا ❀ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا قَدِيرًا ❀  
رِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ

## ALTERNATIVE GLOBALITIES: EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

By the 20<sup>th</sup> century cultural models of multiple modernities started to take shape in the Volga-Urals region. Each of these models had its own vision of globality. The change of scripts from Arabic via Latin to Cyrillic can be understood in this context as a personal quest within a broad range of alternatives, as well as a performance of globality on the linguistic level. The Arab-script print for the Tatars turned into a transnational business endeavor, symbolizing the rise of nationalism. Thus, amidst these changing historical conditions, there was an inherent need to reform the Arabic script. Many Tatars identified the Latin letters with progress on a global scale. The new Tatar alphabet in Cyrillic, in turn, bound strongly to the Russian culture.









باش روللەردە: خان نىك قازانغان ئارتىس - قاسىم شامىل، نانكە جان - فاتىما خانىم ئىلىسكا  
 كىرا - رۇقەييە خانىم قوشلوۋىسكايا، سالا - د. سەلىمجانف، حامام - كەمال III ھىم باشقا  
 ئىلىسرنى سەھنەگە قويا رىژىسسور: ش. شامىلسكىي. ئىسپىكتاكلنى ئالب بارا: كوگوش

ئىلىسەر دىلگىنى شەرق كۆپلەر ئىسالىد سەيداشف

By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Tatar print in Arabic letters turned into an international industry. The publishing houses in Kazan, Orenburg, Astrakhan, St Petersburg and Ufa made print broadly accessible to readership across the Russian Empire and beyond. The Tatars achieved great progress in what is now called the book design. These achievements are apparent in the periodicals of that period: their style of letters, margins and the title page reveal the rich experience of producers. The Muslims of Russia gained a vast access to foreign literature in a variety of languages: many books were imported during the hajj, as well as from educational trips to the Ottoman Empire, India, and Central Asia. The literature in Arabic, Persian, Ottoman and Central Asian Turkic languages was published by the Tatars. The commercialization of this global culture guaranteed its sustainability. Arabic letters were perceived by the people of the region as a symbol of literacy, religious prescriptions and bookish tradition. Thus, we can argue that the Arabic letters were synonymous with the Tatar book culture. That was the reason why many Tatar intellectuals only proposed to reform the script, leaving intact the rest of the cultural heritage that bolstered the language.

A poster. Director, the drama by Adel Kutuy, Kazan, 1926. Gazhur publishing house.

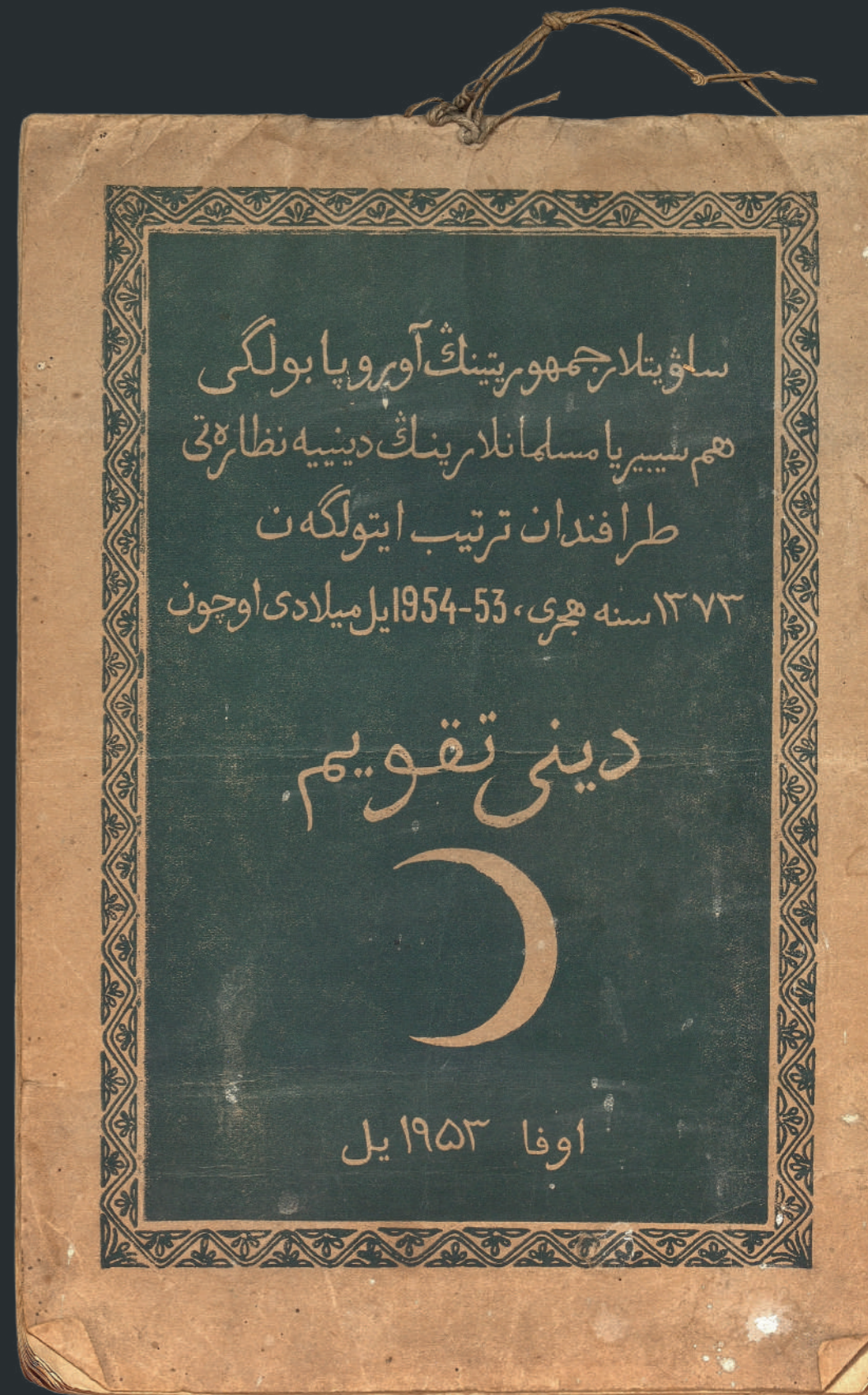






▲ The printed Qur'an, early 20th century.

► 'Abd al-Rahman al-Hajji-Tarkhani. A collection of sermons. Astrakhan, 1908. The publishing house of A. I. Umerov & Co.



دينى تقيم

اؤفا ۱۹۵۳ يىل





◀ Qazan mükhbire, a Tatar-language periodical, published in Kazan between 1905 and 1911. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan.

▲ G. Tuksaev, The Golden Cockerel. Kazan, 1909, 15 pages. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan.

Aq Yul, a Tatar-language literary periodical for children, published in Kazan between 1913–1916. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan.



**TATAR DƏVLƏT AKADEMİƏ TEATRİ**

Galaktionof uramı, 13, telefon № 16-33.  
1933-34 nce jı DRAMA TEATRİ SEZONİ AÇILU UNAJ BELƏN QULJA

**NOJƏBR**

**7,8**

**ILKƏNSE**

Komedia 8 kartinada.  
At qazanqan artis K. Tencurin əsərə.  
Rezissjor S. Bulatof postanofkass.  
Xudoznik P. T. Speranski oformleniəse.  
Muzıjka-kompozitor Salix Səjdəşef oformleniəse.  
Dirizor-M. B. Şajevic.

Baş rollərdə qatnaşucılar: Batrxan-(at qazanqan artis) Mutin, Nurettin-Əbçəlilef, Əlizzətəf, Davət-Şamilski, Dilbər-İlskaja, Bulatova, Misvax xaçi-(at qazanqan artis) Soltanof, Urazikof, Roqia-Arapova, Saliaskarova, Asrav-Sul'və M., Fəttax-Uralıski II, Sənqət-Səlimçanof, Safin, Zəjnettın-Qasıjm Şamil, Qasıjmof, Gəlnar-İbrahimova, Niaz-Səqitof, Saxıpgərəj-Kamal III, Rauza-Şəripova, Xəzrət-Barief, Fətxi-Xəsisof, Xatın-Alieva, Naum Paxomovic-Qolməmət, Negin-Ziaettinof, Əjolan Əkə-Axmadiəf.

Sənqət eşləre çitəkcesə Riza İŞMİRAT.  
Postanofka xəzərleğə mədire-Gatof X. Administrator-Rezissjor-Canıs M.  
Rezissjor yardımcesə-Əmutəjəf.  
Biletlər profsojuzlar zəjafkəsə vujınca Teatr kassasınnan skidka vələn satıla.  
Kassa açılq: irtən səqət 11 dən 2 qə qəder, kiç səqət 5 tən 9 oja qəder. Spektakl başlanə səqət 7-30 də.  
3-ncə zvanoktan suñ tamaşacılar zalqa kertelmilər.  
Teatr direktorı RAMAZANOF. Baş administrator QUDAŞEF-GASPRINSKI.

17 18 23 **BANKROT** Qalaskar Kamal əsərə.  
Komedia 3 pardada.  
At qazanqan artis rezissjor K. Tencurin postanofkass.  
Xudoznik P. T. Speranski oformleniəse.

10 8 **KONSERT** Kompozitor Səjdəşefnən kicəsə.  
(IRTƏN BALALAR)

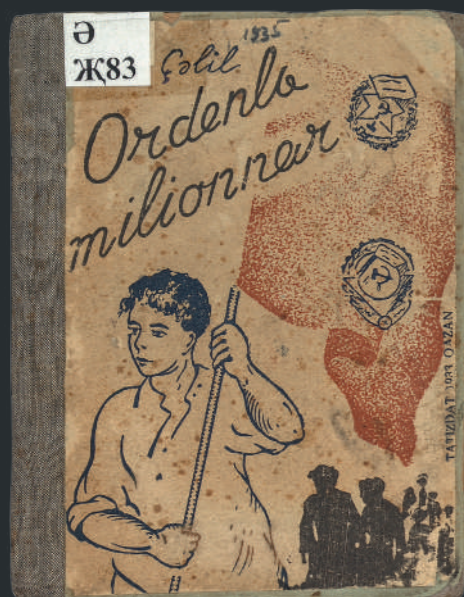
14 15 20 28 **QANDYR BUJY** At qazanqan artis K. Tencurin əsərə.  
piəsə 5 pardada.  
At qazanqan artis rezissjor K. Tencurin postanofkass.  
Xudoznik P. T. Speranski oformleniəse. Kompozitor Salix Səjdəşef muzıjkass.

11 12 21 29 **MƏKƏR HƏM MƏKƏRPƏT** Şiələr əsərə. At qazanqan artis Z. Soltanof tarixməsə.  
Tragedia 5 pardada.  
Rezissjor Bulatof postanofkass.  
Xudoznik P. T. Speranski oformleniəse.

While the Arabic letters served a tool of Muslim models of globality, the Latin script promised a new world of progress and secularity. In sharp to from the Arabic letters, which cannot adequately reflect the richness of Turkic phonetics, the Latin script was seen as a suitable alternative for the development of national cultures. Between 1927 and 1939 the Latin script became official among the Tatars as well as other Muslim peoples of the Soviet Union, mirroring similar developments in Turkey. The use of Latin script echoed the dreams on a world revolution, a shared language for Turkic peoples, and the fundamental modernization of national cultures. Latinization promised the proximity of the Turks and the West, the home of Latin letters. The arrival of new script and the creation of a modern image for Tatar book culture resulted into a rupture with the industry of Arabic script press in Russia. This triggered the production of different literary repertoires, different cultural orientations and, in general, an alternative globality that Tatars carved for themselves through the Latin letters. Entering into the same water of script reform for the second time, however, did not work: attempts to re-Latinize the Tatar script at the turn of the 21st century did not succeed.

A poster. Zhilkənsəzlər by Kərim Tinçurin. Kazan, 1933.

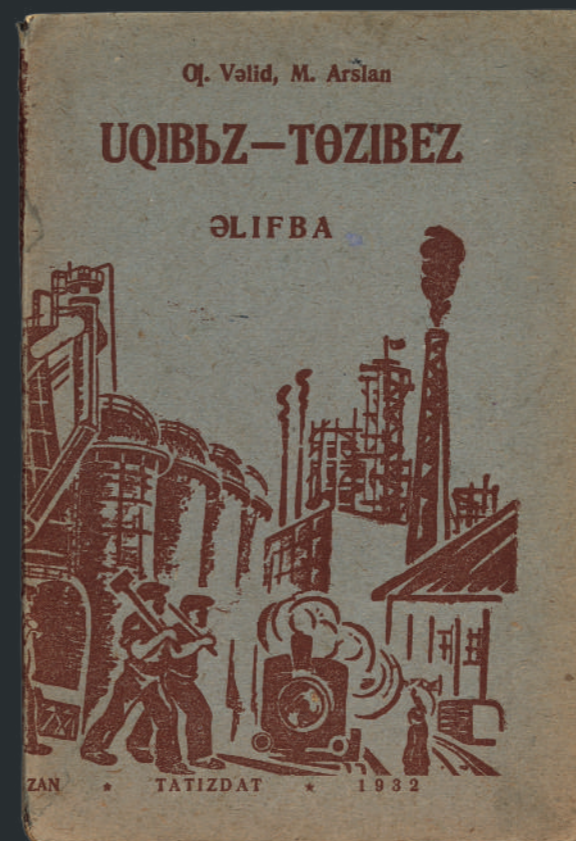




*Ordenle millionner*

▲ Musa Jalil, Milliony ordenonostsev: sbornik stikhov. Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1934, 122 pages. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan.

'Abdullah Tukay, Miyaubikä. Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1935. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan.



▲ M. Valid, M. Arslan, Bukvar' dlia rabochikh. Moscow, 1931, 56 pages. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan.

Kh. Badigov, Bukvar'. Kazan, 1936, 72 pages. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan.





# ӘФӘНДӘ ӨЙЛӘНЭ

Көмәгә 3 парда, 4 күрүнештә.

Әсарне сәхнәгә куючы ТАССР ның атказанган сәнгать эшлеклесе **Ширьяздан Сарымсаҡ**.  
Спектакльнен художнигы **Мөзгүн Сүтүшев**.

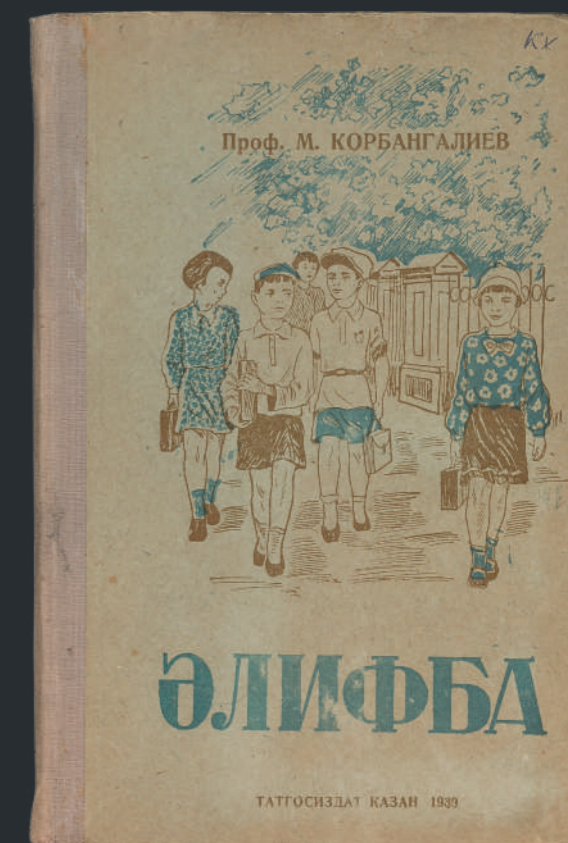
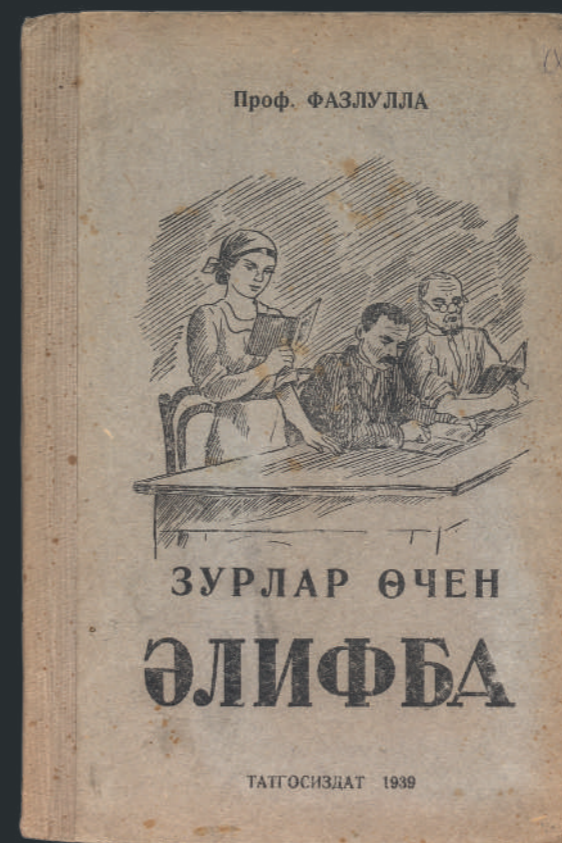
The Cyrillic script has defined the form and content of Tatar book culture for less than a century. The Tatar alphabet received six additional letters that were meant to compensate for the loss of access to the centuries-long written tradition. The implications of this transformation were that millions of people became illiterate, since their knowledge had now little value in Soviet society. The Cyrillic script strongly restricted the opportunities for the Tatar national culture solely to the available repertoires of the Russian space. Yet, in a sense, that moment also reflected an alternative globality, one realizing through the prism of the Russian world. This does not mean, however, that the turn to Cyrillic made other options and code-switching impossible. Each of the three scripts remained in active use, symbolizing the various visions of globality and the place of Tatar culture in the world.

◀ Poster. Chyn mäkhäbbät, Kazan, late 1930s.





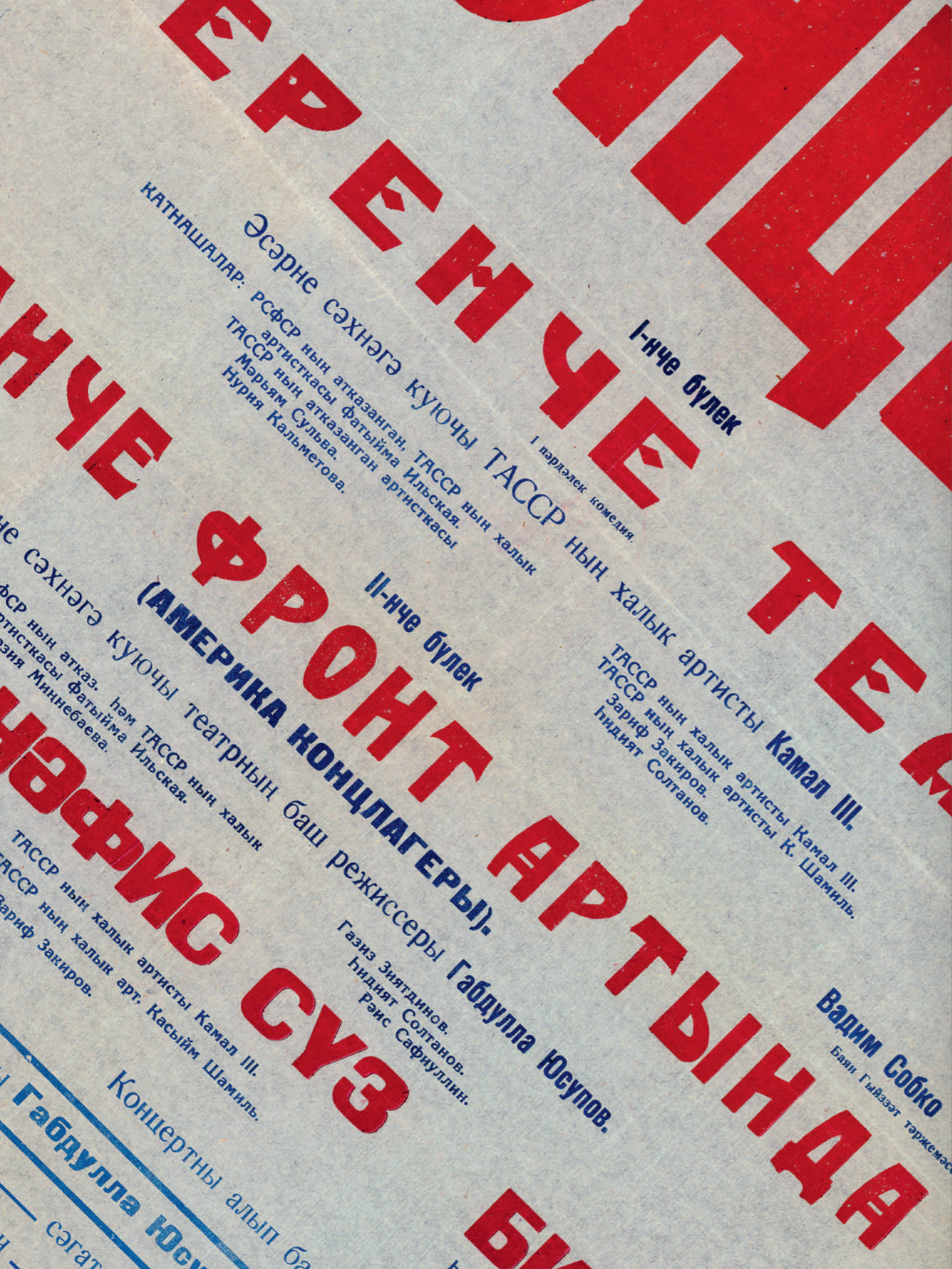
▲ Tukaev A. Shurale: skazka. Kazan, 1921. 16 pages.  
The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan.



▲ Fazlulla M. Bukvar' dlia vzroslykh.  
Kazan': Tatgosizdat, 1939. 94 pages.  
The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan.

Kurbangaliev M. Bukvar', Kazan', 1939. 100 pages.  
The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan.





## CANONS AND COUNTER-CULTURE IN THE ERA OF LATE SOCIALISM



Discoveries and losses were central to the development of the new Tatar culture during the arduous path to Soviet modernity. Now the Tatars became focused on themselves, significantly altering their language and values. Soviet-style nationalism now was streamed through a cascade of new forms and institutions, whether it was via the alphabet or the drama theatre. As a result, by the era of Brezhnev's Stagnation, the golden standard of Soviet national culture completely marginalized previous experiences. Fortunately, alternatives were still alive among both Tatar migrants abroad and Tatars in the Soviet state, such as Zainap Maksudova, a school teacher who continued to preserve and study the old Tatar literature.



# چايات

روستى، ئاقتىمۇ كۆرۈنۈش

كىشىلەر ئۈچۈن

1924. يىلى مەي

12، نومۇر

شەرەفىي ھاچى تىراگىدىيەسى.



شەرەفىي ھاچى - مەنئىب كېلىم سىزنىڭ نەپەرلىرىڭىزنىڭ قۇرئان ئوقۇپ تاشىدىمۇ،

باقتا ئىش يوق ئىندى بىزگە ھەزر، قالدى نەقەت يىغىلار ئۆگەرگە. (شەرەفىي ھاچى تىراگىدىيەسى، دېگەن شېئىر نەقەت: 1)

# چايات

“The tragedy of Sharafi hajji. He says: ‘In longing I have arrived to your graves to recite the Qur’an and kiss the stones. We have no other business now, except to cry upon you’”

The cover of a popular journal Chayan from May 1924 draws a picture of a dramatic turn. Sharafi hajji finds no better experience than to visit the grave of the former Tatar periodicals (Yuldiz, Il, Ang), recite the Qur’an and cry. At the time the sun of the new proletarian press raised over the horizon: Eshche, Tatarstan, Kommunist, and Pravda. The new Soviet culture aimed to replace all other alternatives. The whole industry of professional Arab-script book culture in Russia got marginalized. One hundred years ago this caricature could be perceived as a satire, but today we see the tragedy in its totality. With the skyfall of Pravda, how can we find the graves of Yuldiz?





▲ Saifullin G. Bukvar'. Kazan: Tatgosizdat, 1946. 139 pages. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan.

The Soviet Tatar nation was formed on the basis of the Cyrillic script, new dictionaries, grammar and even phonetics. A brand new linguistic infrastructure came into being in order to bolster the nation-building process: opera and drama theaters, creative unions, a net of national schools and university chairs. Similarly to other national cultures of the Soviet Union, the Tatar culture was given the symbolic space which the genre of



socialist realism delineated with little original content, though with much hope for integrating the Tatar nation and language into the Pan-Soviet community. In the established Soviet canon, the link with the homogenizing proletarian project was obviously more important, than alternative cultural options. Tatar books in Cyrillic, backed with the support of a state-funded publishing house, has materialized into a new vision of Tatar culture.





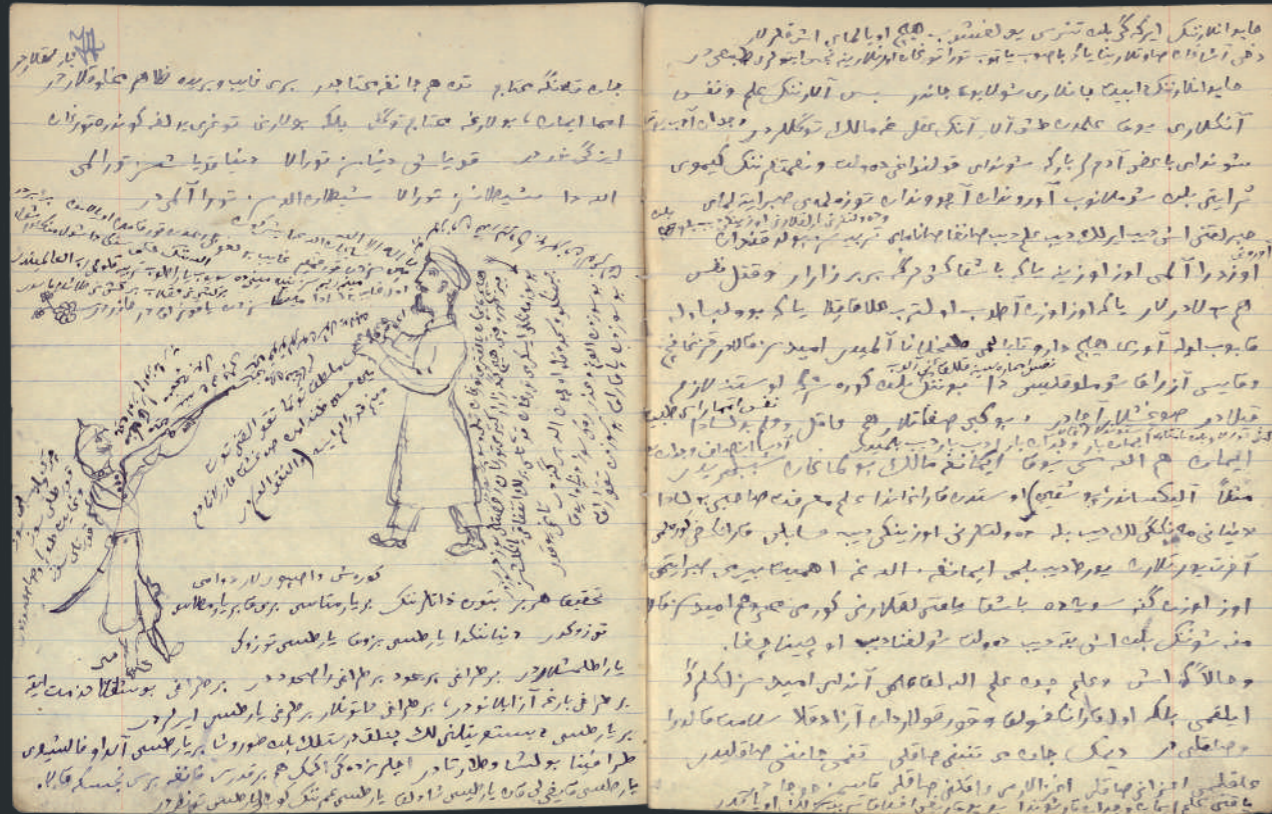
لو لو غلا  
 اور مفا... جیل... حبیب...  
 صود و...  
 اولی

Regardless the domination of Soviet visions of progress, alternative ideas and practices continued to develop until the Perestroika. How can one think of Tatar history and literature beyond the national framework? Zainap Maksudova (1897–1980), the schoolteacher, devoted most of her life to teaching the Russian language, but never ceased collecting and studying the old literature. Her house was full of manuscripts and rich legacy of book tradition, a tradition which Maksudova regarded herself as part of. Thus, she wrote her notes, comments in pen made in the old books themselves: for Maksudova, the cultural legacy of the past was not a waste. Rather, it was an entry into a long-standing history of cultural links that Tatar culture had with the entire world, links transcending chronological and administrative boundaries. Maksudova habitually wrote monographs in the Arabic script, studied the reception of imported texts in Tatar literature and, in so doing, preserved the world of ancient wisdom. Tatar globality, therefore, constituted for her a treasure of great universal and emotional values.

◀ Zainap Maksudova's comments on the collection of Turkic poetry of the early 20th century. The National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 18369-202.



# مازرتار

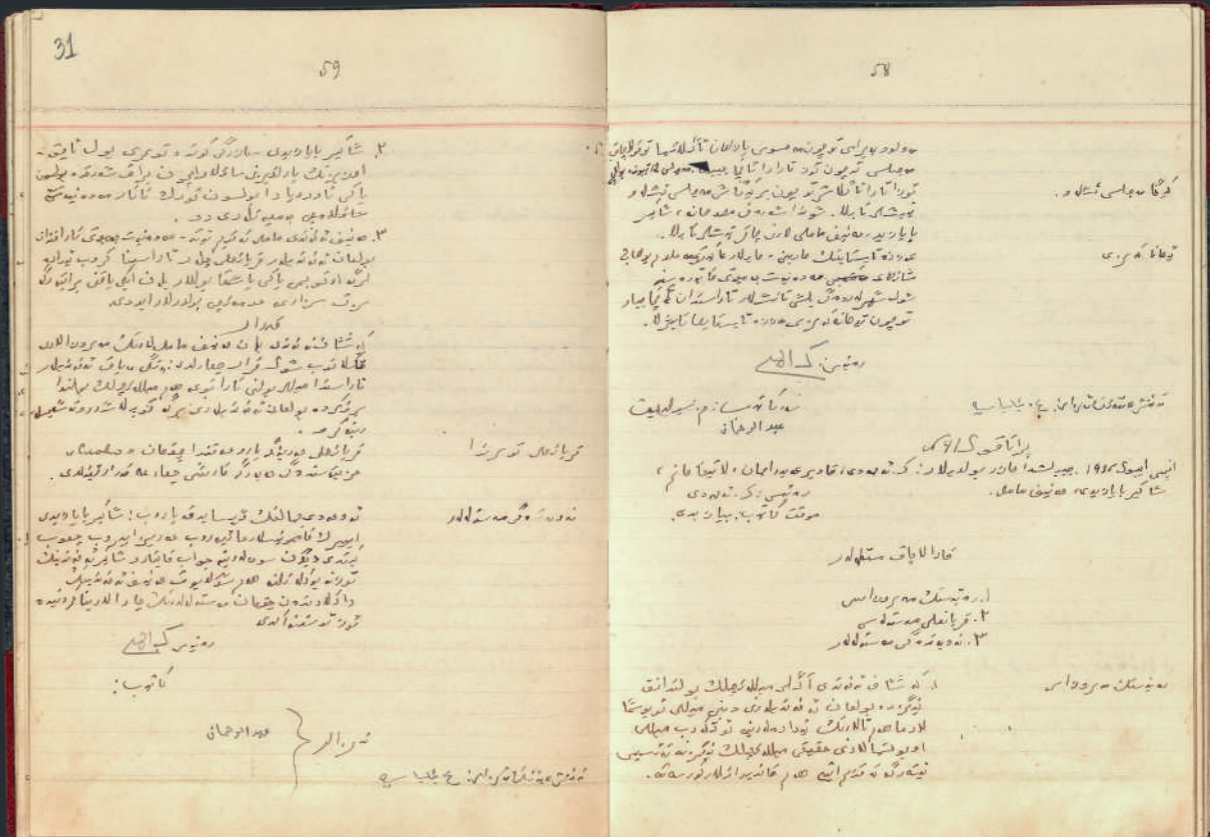


“I am not afraid of you; I am only afraid of the Unseen God. His judgement is equally fair to me and you. My God is your and mine Creator. Even though He is Unseen, He is closer to me than you. Oh, brother, put down your gun. Embrace your piety! My intentions are good; I do not want to fight. My only weapon is [the verse of the Qur’an 59:18] ‘be afraid of God.’” These words accompany an illustration in the diaries of ‘Ussam Khansafarov, composed in Khujand.

The 20th century was, indeed, a time of not only various challenges, but also of a wide-array of choices between multiple strands and actions. While some of the options would become marginalized and others got forcefully eliminated, others were still widely circulated. The range of choices in the realms of self-fashioning depended on the context in question, but one always had a choice. People were always able to selectively espouse a range of alternative elements from several centuries of Tatar globality.

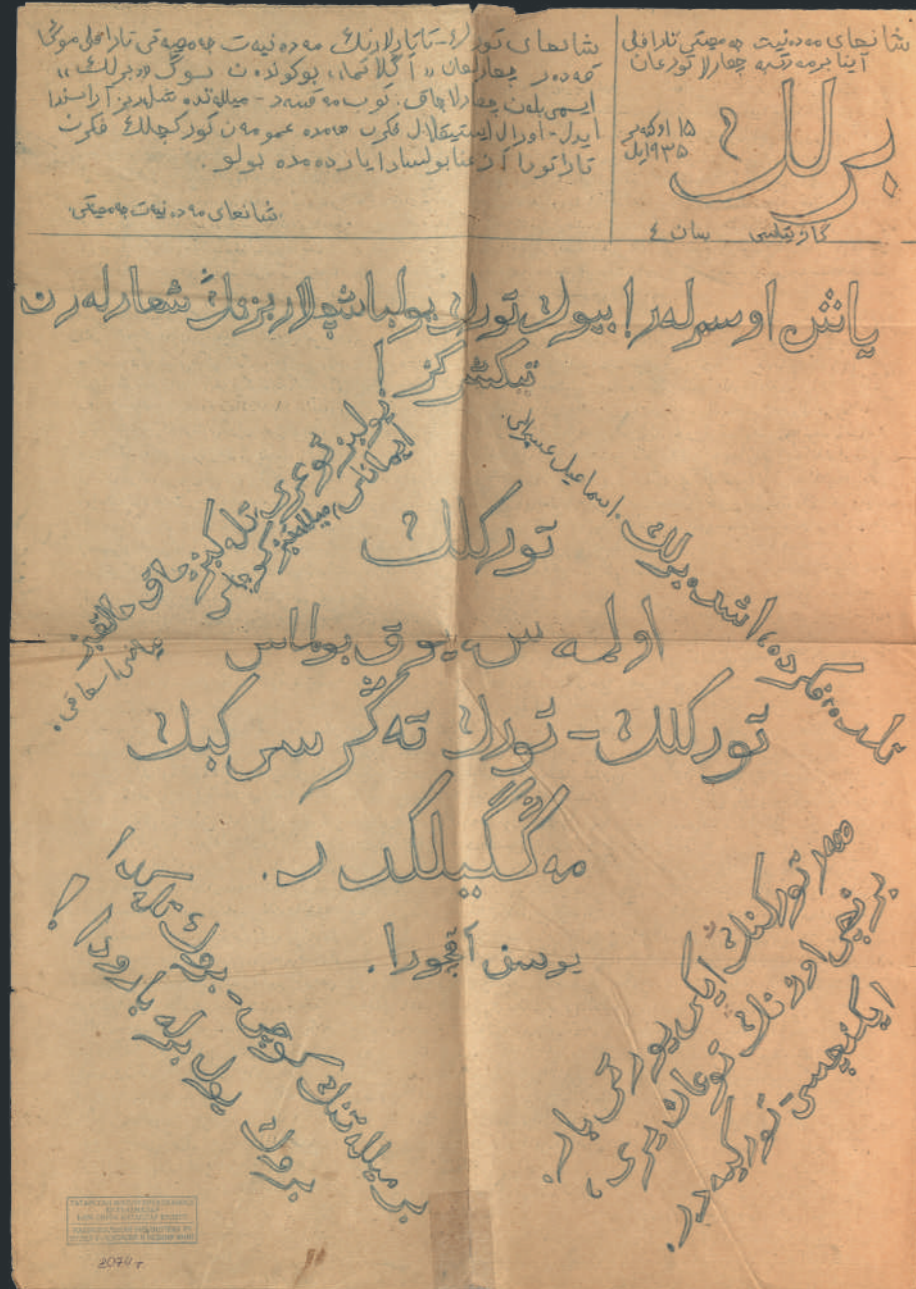
◀ The diary of ‘Ussam Khansafarov, in Tatar. Composed in Khujand (Tajikistan), in the 1940s–50s. Kazan University Library, Ms. 1849T.



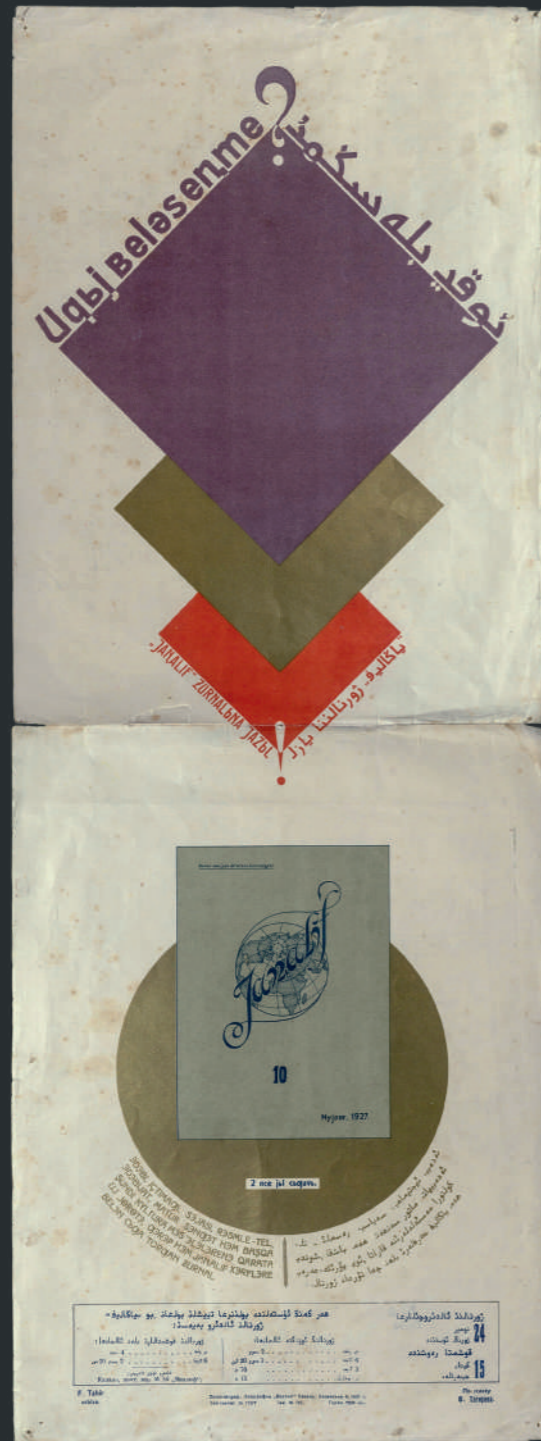


▲ The protocols of the meetings of Shanghai Turko-Tatar society, 5 September 1934-8 July 1936. The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 685T.

◀ The newspaper Berlek issued in Shanghai (no. 4, 1938). The National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ms. 2074T.







# ايپير - تاتار سيكسياسى كۇرەستە يىللارنىڭ

At any point in human history humans are free to choose from the wide range of cultural experience and archives which their predecessors have cultivated. How to overcome the traditional approaches to cultural production? How to avoid being a slave of others' opinion and interpretation? How to liberate your own memory from the threat of museification and turn it into a space for experiments, brave decisions and new creative combinations?

It is up to us to decide. The constructivist work by Faik Tagirov (1906–1978) may stimulate some of us to overcome the hegemony imposed by aesthetical models. Others may re-discover the harmony of living with nature, taking inspiration from ancient texts on medicine, magic and garden culture. The advantage of our contemporary world of globalities lies with our freedom to choose from alternative scenarios, most notably from the rich and multifaceted experiences of our ancestors. Our past does not provide with one single answer to each question, because the past is an endless space of both answers and questions.

◀ Poster "Do you know how to read? Subscribe for the journal Yangalif" by Faik Tagirov. Kazan, 1927. The National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan.









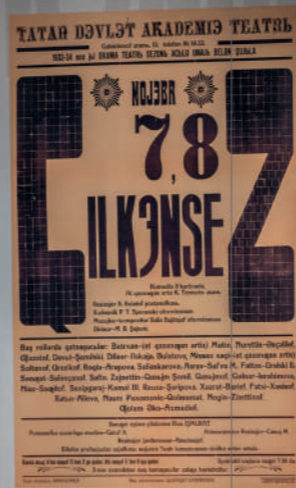




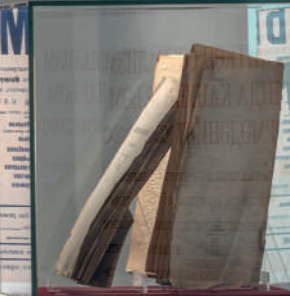




Informational text panel with a red circular icon at the top.



Informational text panel with a red circular icon at the top.





## The Global World of Tatar Book Culture

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### Produced by:

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### Partners:

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the Lobachevsky Library of Kazan Federal University,  
the National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan,  
the State Television and Radio Company 'Tatarstan',  
the University of Amsterdam






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Designed by Il'ia Ovsianikov



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فوق رفیق کوهانی تا ایجا که در باخار و

در غرقه غرقاب کناه خوشی غرقیم بدین

در کوه دانی بمنه و کمال و کوه

سی بود که در نظر او از عرشش تا تخت او

از آن از اقلیمهای آمدن و برور صومعه

ن افتادگی همه را صحت می شدگی بهر زمان