

N. G. McBurney
*early printing & manuscripts
of the Islamic world*

List III
*From a Kurdish Naqshbandi
to Bombay nasta'liq manuals*

2020



19th-century Kurdish Sufi's critical notes
on the commentaries and super-commentaries
elicited by a medieval epitome of Islam

1. al-Baghadi, Diya' al-Din al-Shaykh Khalid; al-Siyalkuti and others. **Ta'liqat: hashiyat mawlana Diya' al-Din al-Shaykh Khalid 'ala hashiyat al-Siyalkuti 'ala al-Khayyali; Risala fi tahqiq al-iradah al-juz'iyah.** [Istanbul], [no printer], Dhu al-Qadah 1259 AH (November or December 1843 CE).

First edition. 8vo (21 x 16 cm), printed Arabic text; pp.(1)-147, [1, blank], with printed frames and headpieces. Printed on watermarked European laid paper. Bound in original blind-stamped Ottoman roan with flap, doublures of thicker grey paper, flap lined with marbled paper. Boards worn but sound, several splits to flap, holding firm. Contents clean and fresh. Manuscript Arabic title on lower edge, contemporary French bio-bibliographical note on front free endpaper.

£650

[images](#)

Critical notes on the various commentaries elicited by a renowned 12th-century epitome of Islam composed by Najm al-Din al-Nasafi (d. 1142 CE), best known from the commentary of al-Taftazani (d. 1390 CE), which was absorbed into the corpus of texts used for theological study. The notes are followed by a short treatise on free will.

The present notes and subsequent treatise on free will were the work of the prominent Naqshbandi Shaykh, Diya' al-Din Khalid al-Baghdadi (d.1827), a Kurd from Shahrazur who travelled to northern India where he was initiated into the Naqshbandi order at Delhi by Ghulam 'Ali Dihlawi (d. 1824 CE). After his return to the Ottoman empire, his eponymous strand of the Naqshbandi, the Khalidi, went on to play a prominent role in the political-religious life of the empire during the 19th century.



Unrecorded lithographed guide to Persian calligraphy;
a unique example of this genre

2. [Calligraphy.] **Qita'at-i nasta'liq. [English title]: Kita't-i-Nasta'lik, being a sure guide to Persian good-hand writing. Containing a series of appropriate and carefully lithographed copies in red ink to be written over and imitated. Nos. I-III [all published].** Bombay, published by Khan Bahadur, H.G.M. Munshi & Sons, lithographed at the Bombay City Press, 1888-1905.

Three volumes, oblong 8vo (16.5 x 24.5 cm), lithographed Persian text in red with English headings and titles; pp.12; 8, 8 [duplicate]; 8, 8 [duplicate]. Third volume in *safīna* format. In original coloured paper wrappers. Persian titles on front covers, English titles on rear covers, English guide to writing in Perso-Arabic scripts on front inner wrappers, parallel English and Persian book lists on rear inner wrappers. Wrappers soiled, chipped, and detaching, with early tape repairs, but contents in very good condition. Second volume has been partially completed in black ink, with transliterations and English definitions added intermittently.

SOLD

[*images*](#)

A great rarity: a set of lithographed calligraphic manuals, issued first by the prolific bookseller and publisher Hajji Ghulam Muhammad Munshi (d. 1896), and subsequently by his heirs. This guide comprises three numbers. The first offers “Complete letters of all shapes and all the combinations of two letters with meanings”; the second, “Words of three letters with meanings, rules of combinations, and figures”; and the third, “Verses with pronunciation”, lithographed in the *safīna* format characteristic of Persian verse anthologies. Each number is available with duplicate plates, as demonstrated by two of the three volumes in this set. The pages are lined to allow a student to copy each exemplar faithfully.

The study and practice of calligraphy in the Islamic world, including India, had remained the province of tutors well into the 19th century, whether the would-be student was a European or native speaker. This guide thus represents a pivotal moment - the point where a printed guide might compete against centuries of calligraphic tradition. We have been unable to trace any comparable examples of printed Persian or Arabic calligraphic manuals from this period or earlier, a contrast to the marked popularity of printed calligraphic manuals for European languages.

The dual-language format suggests that the *Qita'at-i Nasta'liq* was intended equally for the European and Indian market, with the edition statements indicating sustained popularity. No. I, dated 1905, is the 74th thousand, No. II (1888), 6th thousand, and No. III (1905), 16th thousand. H.G.M Munshi issued a periodical guide to Persian from in the early 1880s, *Mudarris-i Farsi*, and this guide may have sprung from that project. He also published an autobiography in 1893, which survives in a single copy at the British Library, one of the sources for Nile Green's *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean 1840-1915* (2011).

Our guide includes evidence of use by a previous owner in the second volume, with the Persian text copied with a thick pen and a confident hand and a finer pen used to offer variant translations and transliterations.

No other examples, sets or individual volumes, located in institutional holdings.



3. [Calligraphy.] **Qita'at-i nasta'liq. [English title]: Kita't-i-Nasta'lik, being a sure guide to Persian good-hand writing. Containing a series of appropriate and carefully lithographed copies in red ink to be written over and imitated. Nos. I-III [all published].** *Bombay, published by Khan Bahadur, H.G.M. Munshi & Sons, lithographed at the Bombay City Press, 1905.*

Three volumes, oblong 8vo (16.5 x 24.5 cm), lithographed Persian text in red with English headings and titles; pp.12; 8, 8 [duplicate]; 8, 8 [duplicate]. Third volume in *safina* format. In original coloured paper wrappers. Persian titles on front covers, English titles on rear covers, English guide to writing in Perso-Arabic scripts on front inner wrappers, parallel English and Persian book lists on rear inner wrappers. Wrappers soiled, chipped, and detached from second and third volumes, but contents in very good condition.

SOLD

[images](#)

See previous entry for details. This set differs only in the absence of any manuscript completions and that all three volumes are dated 1905. No. I is the 74th thousand, No. II, 50th thousand, and No. III, 16th thousand.



Polychromatic North African manuscript of prayers and devotional poetry

4. al-Jazuli, Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad bin Suleiman. **Dala'il al-khayrat...** [*North Africa*], by an anonymous scribe, [*second half of the 19th century*].

8vo (20.5 x 18.5 cm), Arabic manuscript on wove paper; ff.164, viii; 9 lines of black *maghribi* per page, diacritics in red, within triple-ruled frames of blue and red, section headings with penwork frames in blue, green, yellow, and red ink, important words written in the same set of coloured inks, ff.24v and 25r with coloured diagrams depicting the Prophet's mosque at Medina, pink paper slips bound in to protect section headings and diagrams. Contemporary North African morocco binding with flap, stamped in gilt and blind, red morocco doublures. Binding detached from text block but present. Somewhat rubbed, otherwise in good condition. Front free endpaper missing, rear free endpaper present. Quires of text block loose but sewing structures and top headband present and holding. Manuscript title on lower edge, Arabic prayers in a different hand written on rear blanks.

£1,250

[images](#)

A charming manuscript copy of a popular Arabic prayer manual, the *Dala'il al-Khayrat*, compiled by the Moroccan mystic Muhammad bin Suleiman al-Jazuli (d.1465 CE) in the 15th century, whose popularity endured over the next five centuries, first in manuscript, then in print. Our copy concludes with the equally famous devotional poem on the Prophet's mantle by al-Busiri, *Qasida al-Burda*.

Jazuli composed his manual at a time of political anarchy in Morocco. Portuguese incursions along the coast and increasingly grim news of the Muslim kingdoms on the Iberian peninsula cast a grim light across the Muslim world. Yet the *Dala'il* became a touchstone of Muslim devotion. Manuscript copies of the text were equally a feature of North African scribal practice and Ottoman court culture, with examples known even from Southeast Asia. This popularity has persisted well into the present century. As Jan Just Witkam notes in an article on the text's iconography ("The battle of the images: Mekka vs. Medina in the iconography of the manuscripts of al-Jazuli's *Dala'il al-Khayrat*", in *Beiruter Texte und Studien 111* (2007), p.67), he was able to find ten different printed editions in the course of a short walk in Istanbul.

The diversity of ligatures apparent in our manuscript is characteristic of *maghribi* scripts, while the highly effective use of coloured inks to achieve a poor man's illumination is evident even in much earlier North African manuscripts of the text. For a comparable 16th-century manuscript, see MS 1984.464 in the Harvard Art Museums, part of the bequest of Philip Hofer, whose *mise-en-page* is remarkably similar, down to the style of triple-ruled text frames. The anonymous scribe of our manuscript displays a bold hand in the size and scope of his stroke, but the unevenness of their line suggests an older copyist. The use of negative white space to mark out text in the section headings is particularly neat, and the overall effect of the scribe's stylistic choices is a vibrant text whose words appear at times to leap from the page. The size of this manuscript suggests it was intended for personal use. Smaller copies of the *Dala'il* were often carried as talismans.

This copy's separated and text block make it particularly useful to anyone interested in understanding the physical structures of a modern Islamicate flap binding. GAL II, pp.252-3, S II, 359-60.



Astonishingly rare map of independent Baku

5. Stanin, S.A. (**A plan of existing and projected development in the governorate of Baku, published by the Department of Statistical Valuation.**) *Baku, lithographed at the Kaspii Press, [last quarter of] 1918.*

Lithographed map (sheet 58.6 x 76.3 cm), 200 *sazhen* to one British inch (1 : 16,800), Russian text, contemporary manuscript title in Azeri on reverse. With fold marks and pin holes at corners, otherwise in very good condition

SOLD

[*image*](#)

A previously unrecorded map of Baku, likely produced to aid in the de-nationalisation of property seized by the Baku Soviet, lithographed at the press of the foremost Azeri newspaper, *Kaspii*, whose publication from 1881 to 1919 spanned the meteoric rise and fall of the city as the epicentre of the oil boom and the evolution of nationalist, pan-Islamic, and pan-Turkic thought in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The map divides the city into numbered plots, with built structures in red and unbuilt plots uncoloured. Parks and squares are green, while the Caspian is a light blue. Rail lines and piers are delineated, emphasising Baku's role as an industrial and commercial hub, and the impression is of a prosperous, well-ordered city.

In truth, Baku was a shattered city by the summer of 1918. The cosmopolitan mixture of local magnates, international speculators, and multi-ethnic working population had proven volatile at the turn of the 19th century but exploded in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. An uneasy equilibrium prevailed between revolutionary and nationalist forces until March, 1918, when savage ethnic violence erupted between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in the city. The Armenians, supported by Bolshevik soldiers, succeeded in driving much of the Muslim population from Baku. *Kaspii's* editorial offices and its stock of books were burnt.

The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) was declared at Ganja in May, but its National Council remained a government-in-exile until September of 1918. The ill-fated British Dunsterforce spent much of August and early September frantically trying to draw together an anti-Ottoman and anti-Bolshevik force from the disparate factions of Baku, but failed. On 14 September Ottoman forces, accompanied by representatives of the National Council, recaptured Baku as the final episode in the grand imperial dream of a pan-Turkic expansion into the Caucasus and Central Asia. The bloody events of March found their counterpoint in reprisals against the city's Armenian population. Baku became the capital of the nascent ADR, albeit under Ottoman occupation, until the armistice of 30 October saw Ottoman forces replaced by an Allied command in early November.

Kaspii was intimately connected with the nascent republic, whose foundation was the work of the Musavat, the Azerbaijani nationalist party active in Baku from 1911. The party's leadership was composed of plutocratic intellectuals, and it remained avowedly secular while maintaining a strong association with reformist Islam and pan-Turkism, and enjoying popular support from devout Azerbaijani Muslims.

Similar contradictions were apparent in the Russian-language *Kaspîi* whose editorials and press promoted Azeri education and culture. The paper and press had been purchased in 1897 by the Azerbaijani oil tycoon Haji Tagiev; Ali Mardan Topchubashov, whom he installed as editor, went on to serve as the ADR's representative at the Paris Peace Conference in 1918.

This map must have been published in the final months of 1918, after Baku became the capital of the ADR and *Kaspîi* resumed printing, most likely to document the de-nationalization of property seized by the Baku Soviet. The map's vision of the city asserts Baku's place as the capital of the new nation, unmarred by shelling, siege, and ethnic violence. Despite this optimistic vision, the ADR failed to hold a single election during its brief, tumultuous existence. Caught between the hostility of neighboring nascent nation-states, Soviet Russia, and Allied indifference, Baku was recaptured by the Soviets in 1920 and the brief dream of a democratic state died with it.

Kaspîi is represented in western institutional collections only by microfilm. Books and other items produced by the newspaper's press, although documented, are correspondingly rare, a rarity in part explained by the destruction of the editorial offices in 1918. We know of no other maps produced by the press. This map remains an important witness to a pivotal moment in Baku's history.

No other copies located.

