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CASE AND 14 SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, STEEL

IRAN; 17TH-18TH CENTURY

H: 12.5 CM

The most famous Arabic treatise on surgery by the Spanish physician Abu al-Qasim al-Zahrawi (known as Albucasis in Europe) from around the year 1000 includes detailed descriptions of operations on tumors, amputations, and dental treatment, for example bridges using gold and silver wire.

A compact set of surgical instruments like this one was probably for travel use. When they are placed correctly, the case can hold all 14 instruments: a folding razor, pliers, two files, three different tweezers, a chisel, a probe, a knife, a saw, a mirror, and two handles with screw holes.

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Kjeld von Folsach, Torben Lundbæk and Peder Mortensen (eds.):

Sultan, Shah and Great Mughal: the history and culture of the Islamic world, The National Museum, Copenhagen 1996, cat.no. 74;
Kjeld von Folsach: *Art from the World of Islam in The David Collection*, Copenhagen 2001, cat.no. 600;