

# University of Iowa Libraries Conservation Treatment Report

Call Number	Smith Miniatures Collection BP100 1300	Publication Date	~14 <sup>th</sup> c.
Title	[al-Muṣḥaf al-sharīf] [المصحف الشريف]	Publisher	
Author	unknown	Conservator	Katarina Stiller
Date Examined	10/2/23	Contact	
Date Returned	11/30/23	Language	Arabic
Selection Method		Barcode	31858066745047
Format	manuscript	Photography	
Housing	cylindrical case in clamshell box	Ownership mark	

**Context** “Mushaf” refers to the compiled, written pages of the Qur’an. “Qur’an” refers to the specific “revelation that was read to the Prophet Muhammad.” Producing miniature manuscripts of the Qur’an is a longstanding tradition, with the oldest known miniature Qur’an approximately dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The development of photolithography in the 19<sup>th</sup> century enabled the production of printed miniature Qur’ans. In Islamic art, octagons often refer to the number eight which symbolizes regeneration and renewal. Octagons are often used in Islamic architecture, such as the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. Geometric shapes are an essential element in Islamic art and are used to represent the unity, order, and harmony of the universe.

## Sources

“Miniature Quran.” 2015. National Library of Scotland.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20160228204227/http://www.nls.uk/exhibitions/treasures/miniature-books/quran>

“Use of Geometric Shapes in Islamic Art and Symbols.” 2023. Signs Mystery <https://signsmystery.com/islamic-art-geometry/>

## Media

- Black ink. Handwritten in Arabic framed in black and gold lines.
- Graphite on verso of last section.

**Support** (3.7 x 3.4 x 3.1) cm

- Octagonal-shaped textblock with handmade paper.
- Textblock edges have traces of gold.
- Pastedown is black with gold painted decoration.

**Binding** (3.4 x 3.5 x 2.6) cm

- Octagonal-shaped book with chevron endbands.
- Front board made of several layers of laminated paper with upper layer being black and gold in design and coated in resin.
- Spine is flat and covered with leather.

**Case** (4.3 x 4.3 x 4.3) cm

- Cylindrical-hinged case with scimitar-shaped metal clasp closure.
- Exterior covered with red leather. Interior lined with pink textile and bottom has additional layer of thin tissue.
- “Stanley Marcus” paper label on interior.

## Presence of Foreign Substances

- Some discoloration to textblock, particularly near edges.
- Some staining to textblock.
- Overall surface dirt.

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## Conservation Treatment Report

### Structural Change (Book)

- First section is fully detached. Back pastedown and cover missing.
- Leather spine covering is lifting somewhat near front board.
- Minor loss from insect damage on front pastedown.
- Some media loss from abrasion throughout textblock.

### Structural Change (Case)

- Abrasions to leather resulting in minor loss, particularly along hinge, edges, and around clasp.
- Minor abrasions to textile lining resulting in minor loss around edges.

### Treatment Proposal

1. Surface clean with soft brushes or cosmetic sponges, avoiding media.
2. Hinge on detached section with Asian-style paper and wheat starch paste (v-hinge to adjacent section—spine not readily accessible).

### Housing Proposal

Rehouse book in custom 4-flap for easier handling. Rehouse book and case in custom clamshell box. Line in ethafoam with cut inserts for both book and case. Line ethafoam with Tyvek or Hollytex for smoother surface. Standard miniature book housing is 5.5" high/2.5" spine/3.75" width—may need to extend width to more comfortably accommodate both book and case.

### Treatment

Objective: Stabilize and rehouse for frequent use.

1. Before treatment photography. (1.5 h)
2. Surface cleaned cover and textblock edges. (10 min)
3. Attached detached pages with guards of Usu-Gami (9 gsm) and wheat starch paste. (1 h)
  - a. The book's small size made it important to consider material bulk from new repairs, which would more quickly affect the overall opening than a larger format book would. Because of this, a lighter weight repair paper was used.
4. After treatment photography (1 h)

### Materials

- Wheat starch paste (Aytex P)
- Usu-Gami paper (9 gsm)

### Housing

Cloth-covered clamshell with Ethafoam inserts wrapped in Tyvek

- This is a high use item for classes and with scholars, so it was especially important to design housing that would reduce wear on the object and case. The book and its case would be housed separately though in the same overall enclosure to reduce wear on the case from handling and prevent dissociation.

### Hours

Examination, Documentation, and Treatment	3 h 10 min
Housing or Mounting	3 h

**Total Treatment Hours** 6 h 10 min

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