

2023.053

Call #: Isl. Ms. 242

Library: SCRC

Title: Murakkaa (calligraphic album)

Date: 1886 or 1887

Place of Pub.: Istanbul

Pub./Manufacturer:

Calligrapher: Hasan Rıza Efendi

### **Textblock**

Dimensions: 261 x 328 x 8

Sewing: none; textile and leather hinges attached with adhesive

Paper Type/Quality: smooth, burnished handmade paper adhered overall to board "leaves"; the text panels are framed with two different paper types; the outer frame is of smooth orange paper with gold flecks and the thinner, inner frame is of pink paper; the leaves are edged with red textile with fringed edges; gilding overall, both within and bordering text

Endsheets: independent pastedown and endsheet of smooth orange paper adhered overall to boards and first and last pages

Inscriptions/ID marks: [UNIV. OF MICH. 242] stamp on upper and lower endpages; graphite on upper pastedown and endsheet; graphite page numbers in the corner of each page

**Image/Design Technique:** calligraphy and illuminations

Medium: writing ink, black (likely carbon-based); illuminated panels and rosettes painted with gold, pink, green, blue, red, and white paint

Inscriptions/ID marks: none

### **Binding**

Dimensions: 261 x 329 x 15

Covering: thin, dark purple (almost black) leather (goat)

Spine: flat; boards attached over spine with two-piece technique; leather and textile for covering; no spine linings

Title/Label: none

Endbands: none

Boards: dense, paper-based boards

Decoration: gold-stamped scalloped octagonal piece on upper and lower boards (filled with vegetal decoration emanating from a central floral motif) and rosette accents (at the apices of the scallops, forming pendants); line gilding around margins; additional gold tooling and gilding elements

Current Housing: Fabric covered, drop-spine box

Previous Treatment: Repair to spine with toned mulberry paper

### **Historical Context**

A murakkaa or muraqqa is an album of calligraphy samples or miniatures. Muraqqa is Persian for “that which has been patched together.” Albums were often presented as gifts for milestone celebrations such as a wedding or coronation. They were also passed down amongst calligraphers for study. They developed by the late 15th c., starting primarily as collection albums made of assemblages from other works. Albums take on two basic forms: the book (simple album) form and the bellows (accordion) form. Calligraphy for a muraqqa was done on ahar paper, which is paper varnished with egg white and alum and burnished. The paper was pasted onto a larger laminated paper board followed by border strips of marbled, dyed, or painted paper. Goldwork, lines, and tooling were added at the end. Traditionally the leaves were attached with thin strips of skiver leather, which was also added to all the leaf edges for protection.

This manuscript was executed by Ottoman calligrapher Hasan Rıza Efendi, a master of naskh and thuluth. Naskh was one of the first Islamic calligraphy scripts to develop and often was used for everyday scribal use due to its easy legibility. Thuluth is an elegant, cursive script known for its sloping lines and use in headings, titles, and epigraphs.

### Sources

“Muraqqa.” 2023. *Wikipedia*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muraqqa>

Zakariya, Mohamed. 2013. “An Ottoman Murakka and the Birth of the International Style.” *God is Beautiful and Loves Beauty*. Eds Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, 5-29.

### Condition Report

#### Description of Book:

- Full leather-bound manuscript album with six leaves of thin board. The calligraphy is written in black ink on paper which is mounted overall to a secondary support of thin board and framed with orange paper. The written area is divided into an upper panel accommodating the large line of thuluth and centered lower panel carrying the more compact lines of naskh.
- The illuminated panels consist of rectangular panels filled with various swirling vegetal patterns on fields of gold, blue, light pink, etc. and surrounded by frames in blue, green, light pink, red, etc. flanking mainly the lines of naskh. The entire written area is surrounded by heavy gold and light pink frames with narrower gold rules surrounding panels within. There are textual dividers in the form of illuminated rosettes with accents in green, pink, blue, white, etc.
- The cover is attached with the two-piece technique, overlapping at the spine.
- The book opens vertically, with the spine at the top edge.

#### Binding:

- There is some minor splitting of the leather covering where the upper board attaches to the spine. The lower board shows similar signs of splitting that have not completely split to outer covering.
- There are some minor losses and scratches to the leather grain layer and gilding overall.

#### Textblock:

- Three of the leaves (3-5) have fully detached.
- The leather and fabric hinges for leaves one and two have minor tears at attachment points.
- There is some loss to the leather hinge for the final leaf.
- Page 10 has losses to the orange paper and red fabric along the gutter. Page 8 has similar losses to a lesser extent.
- There is some minor cracking and flaking of the gold and green media, particularly on pages 1 and 2.
- There are minor streaks of ink on the orange paper margins of pages 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 10.

#### Treatment Proposal

- Purpose of treatment: Item is vulnerable to further damage. Item is going on loan. Treatment is intended to stabilize the item for gentle handling and to reduce the risk of material loss/dissociation.
- Consolidate flaking media with gelatin.
- Reattach leaves with concertina-style repair of medium-weight toned mulberry paper and wheat starch paste.
  - Repair would wrap around the back edges of the leaves and join the leaves to each other
  - The paper would be toned red to match red textile
- Repair splits to leather with toned mulberry paper and wheat starch paste.
- Attach fills to orange paper losses with toned mulberry paper and wheat starch paste.

#### Treatment

- Consolidated paint on pages 1-2 with gelatin.
- Created concertina guard with 12g usumino paper toned with golden acrylic (Naphthol Red Light).
- Adhered concertina guard and orange fills (G Naphthol Red Light, WN Azo Yellow Orange) with wheat starch paste.
- Revised treatment to a series of v-hinges—warping of boards placed too much stress on concertina structure.
  - Removed textile lining and concertina guard.
    - Textile fragments saved and stored in separate enclosure.
  - adhered lightweight mulberry paper to cover spine and to textblock spine.
  - Adhered v-hinges made of one layer of red toned 12 g usumino, two layers of toned kozo
- Treatment photography

#### Materials:

- usugami (12 g)
- kozo
- wheat starch paste

- Acrylic paint

Time: 15.75 hrs

Start Date: 7/28    Finish Date: 8/25