

## Conservation Treatment of a Seljuk Qur'an

### Grant Outcomes



### Outcomes from the Treatment of a Seljuk Manuscript in the Collection of the Turkish General Directorate of Foundations

The paramount goal of this project was the stabilization of the condition of this important Quran, which is the oldest manuscript in the Vakıf Genel Müdürlüğü collection and possesses calligraphy and illumination of the highest quality. Before treatment it was unable to be exhibited or handled safely and even in storage was vulnerable to further damage and loss. During treatment, tears, breaks, losses in the textblock and binding were repaired. The manuscript was also re sewn and given new endbands and so now operates comfortably as a codex again, as when it was first made.

The study of the manuscript during treatment has revealed at least two, possibly three, earlier bindings to the manuscript not previously known. The use of stamps in the illumination of the manuscript is also more extensive than we have ever documented before. Additionally, the style of the illumination has a three dimensional quality that we have never observed before nor seen mentioned in scholarly literature.

Three young conservators on the staff of the Ankara Vakıf Eserleri Müzesi (Ankara Museum of Works from Religious Foundations) were able to work with us on various stages of the project. They learned basic techniques in manuscript conservation such as dry cleaning, removal of old repairs, repair of tears with remoistenable tissue, and removal of adhesive residues and other remnants from the binding.

The Vakıf authorities involved in the project were exposed to a new approach to conservation. Detailed pre-treatment reports and communications ensured that they knew exactly what was to happen during treatment and why, and that the process always had their complete approval. They were encouraged to visit the treatment whenever they wanted in order to see the progress being made. Every effort was made to explain conservation methodology to them and the importance of using reversible treatment methods and the highest quality repair materials. This has generated a greater awareness of the needs in the rest of the manuscript collection.

The grant provided by TIMA was used to support the conservators during this rather lengthy treatment and to purchase supplies such as paper and leather for the project.

The documentation we are providing for the project in the form of a condition report/treatment proposal, treatment report and photographs taken before-, during- and after-treatment are extensive and detailed. Once on the TIMA web-site they will provide a model for what such a conservation treatment project entails, which may be useful for other conservators and institutions undertaking similar projects. Aspects of the manuscript's treatment and study will also be developed further when the project is presented in the TIMA conference (as per the terms of the grant). That presentation will be directed towards a more general audience and will highlight what can be learned about a manuscript while it is treated.