MONTEFIASCONE 2026

Arevik Grigoryan

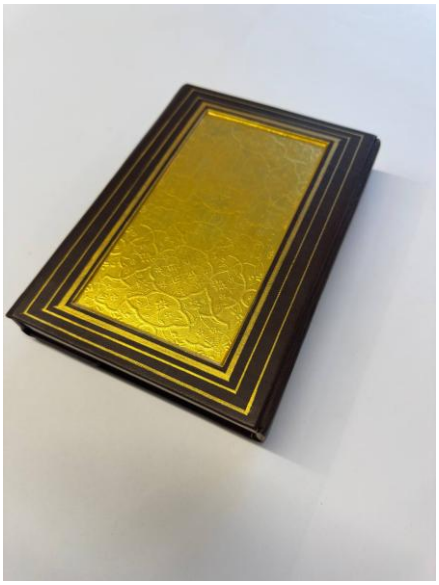
Safavid Bookbinding · 13–17 July 2026

It was a valuable privilege to spend a week at the Montefiascone Summer School in Italy!

From July 13-17, I had the honor of attending the Safavid Bookbinding course as part of the Montefiascone Project 2026, made possible by the Nicholas Hadgraft Memorial Scholarship, generously awarded by Conservation By Design (CXD).

Hands-on work during the Safavid Bookbinding course.

This experience deepened my understanding of Islamic bookbinding traditions and gave me the chance to learn hands-on — from preparing text blocks to sewing, making the beautiful endbands, board attachment, and all the intricate details of the leather covering, filigree and gilding.



1. Finished front cover.

2. Open binding and interior.

3. Fully opened binding.

THE COURSE

Learning through making

Preparing and working the covering material.

It was also a wonderful experience to learn alongside wonderful fellow conservators from around the world — learning together and learning from each other.

As a book conservator and senior restorer at the Restoration Department of the Matenadaran – Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Armenia, I will apply all the knowledge and expertise I have acquired to my professional practice.

A week of traditional techniques, close observation and practical making

Board preparation.

Building the structure.

Finishing the cover.

I am truly grateful to Conservation By Design and the Montefiascone Project for this incredible opportunity, and to lecturer Alison Ohta and instructors Fatos Aslanoglu and Marina Pelissari for their generosity, expertise, and inspiring guidance throughout the course.

My sincere thanks to Cheryl Porter and Tatevik Davtyan!

REFLECTIONS

An unforgettable experience

Truly an unforgettable experience and a big step forward in my journey as a book conservator!

NICHOLAS HADGRAFT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Conservation By Design (CXD)

Montefiascone Project 2026 · Safavid Bookbinding