



## Art Conservation *and preserving portraiture*

The rare, leather-bound book had suffered many indignities long before it became a treatment project this year for Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC) Fellow Victoria Wong. The early 19th-century volume, accessioned by the Winterthur Library in 2012, was covered with dust and grime due to long exposure to a poorly ventilated heating system and was losing its fragile cover because the leather was deteriorating and pulling away from the boards.

It also had lost a number of its colorful and valuable illustrated plates, likely during the time someone cut off and re-sewed the binding and then re-attached the covers with rubber cement. Each of the pages with the remaining illustrations had also been punched out with the name of the book's previous owner, the Wilmington Institute Free Library, to ensure that they, too, would not be taken. Indeed, although it was titled: *Picturesque representations of the dress and manners of the Turks: illustrated in sixty colored engravings, with descriptions*, there was little about the book that remained picturesque. More critically, its condition meant it could not be used by researchers visiting the library.



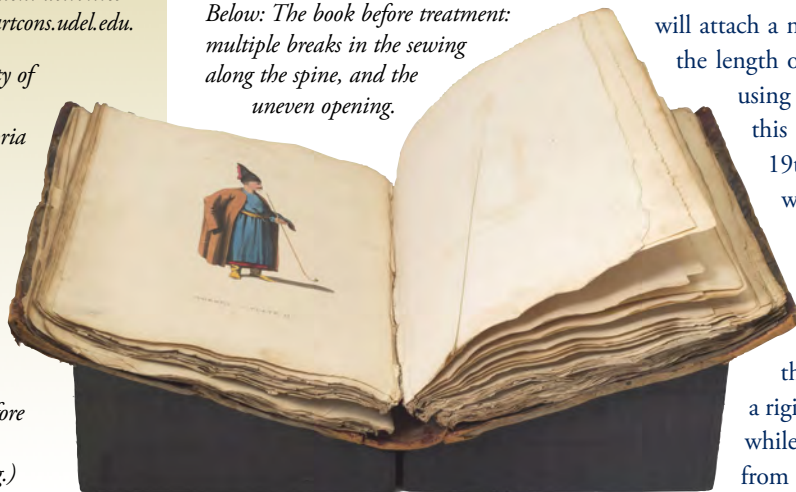
Victoria, a library and archives major with an emphasis on books, planned to restore the volume to a useable condition, but not necessarily to its former condition or appearance when new. So, for example, after determining that it was almost impossible to know how the book was originally bound because of the damage it had sustained when the binding was cut and re-sewn, she elected to make a more practical type of repair. She first removed the rubber cement and separated the pages. Next, she will attach a narrow strip of Asian paper to each page edge along the length of the spine, and adhere these strips to one another using a mixture of natural and synthetic adhesives. While this was not the way the book was put together in the 19th century, it will keep it intact so that researchers will be able to handle, study, and learn from this book.

Victoria's treatment will also include cleaning the leaves using dry methods, such as lightly rolling with pieces of eraser to remove as much grime and dirt as possible. Once her treatment is complete, the book will be returned to the Winterthur Library in a rigid, corrugated box that will provide adequate support while shelved and help prevent additional deterioration from external elements.

### ARTC Spotlight—January 2018

The University of Delaware's Art Conservation Department educates and trains professional conservators who are well versed in the treatment, analysis, documentation, and preventive conservation of individual artifacts and entire collections. For more news about our students and other department activities visit our web site at [www.artcons.udel.edu](http://www.artcons.udel.edu).

Top: Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation Fellow Victoria Wong cleaning book pages with eraser crumbs, being careful to protect the inks of the illustration during treatment. Above: Victoria cleaning book pages with cosmetic sponges. Top right: Details of hand-colored plates, before treatment. (Photos: Cassia Balogh and Victoria Wong.)



Below: The book before treatment: multiple breaks in the sewing along the spine, and the uneven opening.