

Twentieth-century book production and book conservation

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Fig 1 R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company. All the king's men couldn't put Humpty-Dumpty together again: the hand bindery at Donnelley's. (Chicago: Lakeside Press/R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company, 1925).

Introduction

The growth within the field of bookbinding to incorporate the greater precepts of, what is now accepted as, the field of book conservation reflects historically ongoing movements within the fields of publishing, library science, and education. A survey of literature contemporary to the early twentieth century, as well as that written in later years, reveals that this time was a period of consolidation, resulting in discussions observable through published reports, monographs, and journal articles; the establishment of schools with lasting reputations; and the standardization of government regulations and industry standards as pertaining to both the trade/manufacturing and collections/museums aspects of book production (Fig 1).

Nineteenth century: foundations

The parallel concepts that art education would both improve domestic industrial products and also improve the taste of the population led to a restructuring of vocational education in the nineteenth century. In 1840 Sir Henry Cole,¹ became assistant keeper at the Public Record Office (PRO) of England and Wales, with the duties of overseeing repair work. As discussed in Bearman's paper on the development of bookbinding and book conservation ethics, Cole's principles were to save the items with the minimal amount of intervention; the ethics which he applied to the cleaning and restoration of damaged and valuable materials were influenced by his training in the Record Office environment. Following his tenure at the PRO, Henry Cole became quite influential in the establishment of schools of art and design. In 1854 he was officially appointed to the head of the Department of Science and Art, a subdivision of the Board of Trade,² which controlled all art and design education.

The Report of the Select Committee on the Government School of Design (1849) which led to this expansion, reflected many of Cole's opinions. Not only was the head of the PRO a man who was demonstrably involved in the active conservation of books and documents, interested in overseeing the system, but he was also involved in the conceptual basis behind the Schools of Design. This was a broadly applied commercial approach to all manufactured and industrial products and to the establishment of the school systems, the examples of bookbinders being referred to directly in the 1836 evidence given by Henry Sass for the Report of the Select Committee on Arts and Manufacturers.³

Similar vocational education movements were afoot throughout Britain. In 1854, John Ruskin was one of the teachers at the newly founded Working Men's College, the aim of which was to give: 'manual workers some opportunity of satisfying the human instinct for knowledge and beauty.'⁴ This reflects a growing philosophy of work present in the mid-nineteenth century and popularized by the education reformer Froebel.⁵

By 1884, the need to increase scientific and technical instruction within the schools was formally acknowledged in the Report of the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction (The Samuelson Report).⁶ The increase of emphasis from simply desk-based study to actual hands-on work was seen in other institutions: the Municipal School of Art in Birmingham, founded in 1881 and oriented to actual bench work, and the London Central School of Art and Design, founded in 1896 by the London County Council, advised by William Morris and W.R.

¹ F. Bearman, 'Conservation Principles and Ethics: Their Origins and Development,' *IPC Conference Papers London 1997*, ed. J. Eagan (Leigh: The Institute of Paper Conservation, 1997) 83–89.

² C. Ashwin, *Art Education: documents and policies 1768–1975* (London: Society for Research into Higher Education, 1975) 39.

³ 'I can illustrate in certain instances the necessity of knowing the principle of perspective in trade, for upholsterers, for bookbinding, etc: I wanted some cases made to contain my sketches, which I call my Hours of Idleness, and I wanted them in the shape of a large book, inscribed as "Sketches." I went to a bookbinder; ... [I] took a sheet of paper, and drew the geometrical figures; then I drew the perspective views of this book or box, open and shut, and he was perfectly satisfied, and no further conversation took place; ... I am delighted with the result, ... I only made drawings for that which was a very difficult thing, and I could not explain by language, and he has finished it in a manner beyond my expectation. ... Do you think such attainments are uncommon?—I think so; but they accelerate trade and commerce uncommonly.' Report of the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures, 'Minutes of evidence 1836. qq 208–215: the evidence of Henry Sass'. Ashwin, 21.



Fig 2 Report of the Committee on Leather for Bookbinding edited for the Society of Arts and the Worshipful Company of Leathersellers by the Rt. Hon. Viscount Cobham and Sir Henry Trueman Wood. (London: Bell, Society of Arts, 1905).

Lethaby, with the intention of providing craft training for artisans, were the only schools formally providing instruction in production techniques.

Bookbinders were involved in research beyond merely bench work throughout this time, as demonstrated in the field of paper fiber research. The reaction of contemporaries at the dawn of the nineteenth century upon the introduction of machine-made paper was quite favorable: the availability of a reliable and regular supply of paper was a welcome change, as previous stocks had been subject to great market variations.⁷ The new paper was also viewed as being of a more consistent color and quality, with less waste. John Murray⁸ was one of the founding researchers into the field of paper deterioration at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and he blamed the presence of acids from bleaching and alum rosin sizing, rather than only the changing fiber content for its poor quality. However, it was to be another hundred years before the role of acidity as the primary cause of paper deterioration gained acceptance, first among chemists, and later among librarians.

Many connections between artisans, chemists, and librarians were secured with the Report of the Committee of the Royal Society of Arts on the deterioration of paper, published in 1898.⁹ This report was more wide-reaching than the chemical literature with which it was contemporary, as it presented its findings in a language and method which was accessible to those without chemical knowledge. As a result, however, the 1898 Report reinforced traditional assumptions about deterioration (fiber content, bleaching, and air pollution from gas lamps)¹⁰ which ignored the potential chemical reactions within the paper itself. Further communication across international borders occurred with a conference at the Vatican Library on restoration in 1898;¹¹ through these proceedings, silking and lamination spread as techniques throughout Europe and the USA.

1900–1925: growth of a profession

The 1900 Board of Education Act merged the Science and Art Department (from the Division of Trade) with the Education Department to form the Board of Education, the result of which was that art entered the general syllabus requirements of education, greatly affecting the nature of vocational education.¹² Similarly, in the USA, educational theorists discussed vocational education in terms of both community growth and personal development:

‘We are trying to base the work of the school upon the life out of school, and to help the child base his life out of school upon his life in school. This makes our problem a social one, reaching out to the whole community.’¹³

In Europe, and especially in Germany, the potential of handcrafts in relation to society was quite marked, especially in the writings of Walter Gropius, whose 1923 *Art and Technology – A New Unity* described the program unifying art and craft at the Bauhaus: ‘The wall of conceit that separates the artist from the working man must disappear, ... Away with the snobbery of art.’¹⁴

A syllabus from 1910 demonstrates the application of these educational and vocational theories to the discipline of bookbinding. The introduction is careful to warn that: ‘Two years of the most faithful work is but a beginning’, and the advanced course covers traditional bookbinding, judging and purchasing leather, paper, and textiles, page repairs, and a full course of library binding.¹⁵

The deterioration of nineteenth century leather was of great concern to librarians and bookbinders in the beginning years of the twentieth century. Following the investigations of the Royal Society of Arts into the causes of paper decay, in 1900 a committee was established to study the nature of leather decay. An expanded copy of this report was published in 1905 and the information was again republished by members of the committee.¹⁶ The causes of leather decay were divided between issues of manufacture and issues of storage. While the Report stated that the main cause of decay in leathers was technical: ‘ignorance in processing leather’ as opposed to: ‘intentional production of inferior skins’,¹⁷ one can only expect such a caveat in a study which was funded by a grant from the Leatherseller’s Company. Regardless, one of the major causes in leather decay was also a major cause of paper decay: the presence of acids in the skins,

4 A. Mackmurdo, ‘History of the Arts and Crafts Movement’, unpublished typescript, quoted in C. Goldstein, *Teaching Art: Academies and Schools from Vasari to Albers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 259.

5 W.A. Baldwin, *Industrial-Social Education* (Springfield, MA: Milton Bradley Co., 1907) 49–50.

6 Ashwin, 59.

7 M. Plant, *The English Book Trade: an economic history of the making and sale of books* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1939) 330.

8 J. Murray, *Observations and experiments on the bad composition of modern paper; with the description of a permanent writing ink, which cannot be discharged* (London: G and WB Whittaker, 1824) cited in: S. Roggia, *William James Barrow: A Biographical Study of His Formative Years and His Role in the History of Library and Archives Conservation From 1931 to 1941* (New York: Columbia University, 1999). <<http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/byauth/roggia/barrow/>>. Accessed January, 2007.

9 D. Cockerell, *Bookbinding and the Care of Books: a textbook for bookbinders and librarians* (London: The Artistic Crafts Series of Technical Handbooks, 1948 [reprint] [1901 first edition]). Plant, 338.

10 Roggia.

11 Roggia.

12 Ashwin, 63.

13 Baldwin, 27.

14 W. Gropius, quoted in M. Kentgens-Craig, *The Bauhaus and America: First Contacts 1919–1936* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999) 108.

15 S. Freeman, A syllabus of a course on elementary bookmaking and bookbinding (New York: Columbia University, 1910)

16 Report of the Committee on Leather for Bookbinding, eds. Sir H.T. Wood, and The Rt Hon Viscount Cobham (London: Society of Arts, 1905). W. Hulme, *Leather for Libraries* (London: Sound Leather Committee of the Library Association, 1905).

17 Cockerell, 271.

specifically sulphuric acid as a residue of the dyeing process. (Fig 2)

Further reports were conducted throughout the early years of the twentieth century; the continued problem of leather decay was once again addressed in 1920 with the formation of the British Leather Manufacturers' Research Association. This association developed the concept of the PIRA accelerated aging test for durability of leather, a test which observes the reaction of a sample of leather to sulphuric acid.

Douglas Cockerell's 1901 book was written for two distinct audiences to more closely align the needs of librarians with the practices of bookbinders. He summoned: 'that men of good education should be brought back into the productive crafts.'¹⁸ Cockerell communicated both the reports of the Society of Arts on the deterioration of paper (1898) and leather (also published in 1901), and a great proportion of the publication is dedicated to the issues which effected the longevity of materials. The appearance of a specification for library bindings had a great effect upon the trade, and these specifications were to remain the standard throughout the twentieth century.

Other writers were also producing preventative texts and descriptions of treatments to better educate amateur collectors (Fig 3). William Blades describes the delicate balance between conservation work and unreliable repair work eloquently, and leaves the collector more assured (through the use of this book) to better judge the quality of a bookbinder:

'When valuable books have been evil-entreated, when they have become soiled by dirty hands, or spoiled by water stains, or injured by grease spots, nothing is more astonishing to the uninitiated than the transformation they undergo in the hands of a skillful restorer. The covers are first carefully dissected, the eye of the operator keeping a careful outlook for fragments of old Mss. or early printed books, which may have been used by the original binder.'¹⁹

During this same period, Davenport's published chapter on 'The Repairing and Binding of Books for Public Libraries'²⁰ reflected both the benefit of having binding work performed in-house, but the necessity (and difficulty) of adequate supervision.'²¹

This was a time not only of professional communication, but also of recognition of the possibilities of the book as an object in its own right. Artists used stained glass, tapestry weaving, painting, and sculpture²² alongside page layout, typography, printmaking, and book production; whether using ephemeral publications, publishing manifestos, or cheaply producing large runs of polemical tracts, the early twentieth century used the commercial production methods of traditional publishing to spread an avant-garde message. One of Marcel Duchamp's 'altered found books', was a variation on his readymade concept of the teens.²³ The Russian Futurist Kamenskii continued this thought in 1918 calling for the destruction of the book in art and instead: 'turn directly to the art of life.'²⁴

1925–1950: if you build it, will they come?

Local ambitions to incorporate bookbinding training in the school age curricula were established in the 1920s, as Employing Bookbinders of America surveyed all operating courses, and published their response as *A Course in Bookbinding for Vocational Training*. The purpose of the elementary course was to prepare for advanced training in high school and university. While only two dozen courses on bookbinding were located in a nationwide survey, the advanced courses were performing: 'much rebinding of school, library, and commercial work.'²⁵ (Fig 4.)

The concept of professionalism within traditionally artisan fields was also growing, with a profession defined as:

'an occupation possessing a skilled intellectual technique, a voluntary association, and a code of conduct.'²⁶

'The antithesis to a profession is an avocation based upon customary activities and modified by the trial and error of individual practice. Such an avocation is a Craft.'²⁷

In 1936 Gropius consulted on the Report of the Committee on Advanced Art

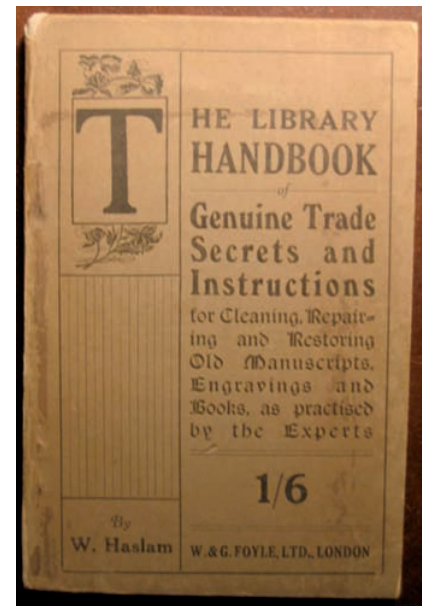


Fig 3 W. Haslam, *The Library Handbook of Genuine Trade Secrets and Instructions for Cleaning, Repairing and Restoring Old Manuscripts, Engravings and Books, as Practised by the Experts* (London: W. & G. Foyle).

¹⁸ Cockerell, Editor's preface, x.

¹⁹ W. Blades, *The Enemies of Books* (London: Elliot Stock, 1902) 105–6.

²⁰ C. Davenport, 'The Repairing and Binding of Books for Public Libraries', from E.W. Hulme, et al. *Leather for Libraries* (London: The Sound Leather Committee of the Library Association 1905) 39–48.

²¹ Davenport, from Hulme, 42.

²² R. Castleman, *A Century of Artists Books* (New York: MOMA, 1994) 73.

²³ For *Unhappy Readymade*, a geometry textbook was hung on a balcony until it was destroyed by wind and rain: the book was one copy of many existing; it became a singular object only through the context of destruction. B. Spector, 'The Book Alone: Object and Fetishism', cited in T.A. Eaton, *Books as Art* (Boca Raton: LA Museum of Art, 1993) 40.

²⁴ He declared poetry and thoughts be put on, among other things, fences, factories, roofs and clothing. N. Gurianova, 'A Game in Hell, Hard Work in Heaven: Deconstructing the Canon in Russian Futurist Books', cited in *The Russian Avant-Garde Book 1910–1934*, eds. M. Rowell, and D. Wye (New York: MOMA, 2002) 30.

²⁵ Employing Bookbinders Of America, *A Course in Bookbinding for Vocational Training: Part One Elementary Section* (New York: Employing Bookbinders Of America, 1927) 3.

²⁶ B. Kay, *The Development of the Architectural Profession in Britain: a sociological study*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960) 14.

²⁷ Kay, 14.

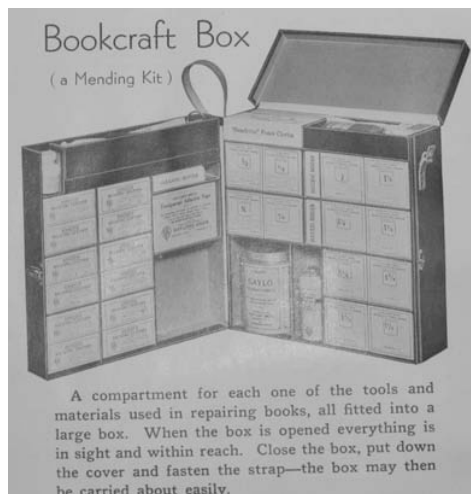


Fig 4 From D.M. Kidd, *Bookcraft; an industrial art subject, on book repairing for schools and libraries* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Gaylord Bros. Inc., 1928).

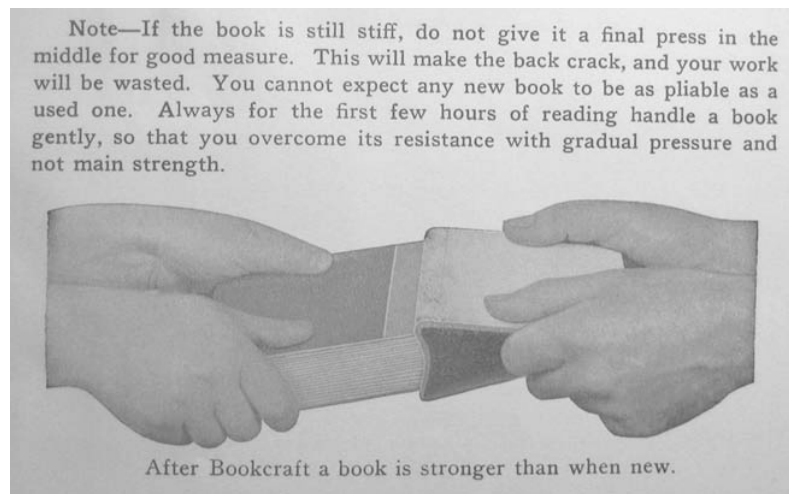


Fig 5 From D.M. Kidd, *Bookcraft; an industrial art subject, on book repairing for schools and libraries* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Gaylord Bros. Inc., 1928).

Education in London (The Hambleton Report),²⁸ which surveyed the balance of fine art, design, and applied art, with the underlying question of orienting design training with industrial or fine arts. Ten years later, the concept of a broad-based background in arts and crafts were reflected in the Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 6 *Art Education*:

'The more a student learns about branches other than that in which he is a specialist, the more useful knowledge he will be able to bear on his special subject.'²⁹

This affected bookbinding education in the examinations for the National Diploma in Design by the Board of Education.³⁰ It should be noted that only 46% of students on List B passed in 1946, and it was list B which contained the coursework in bookbinding. (Fig 5)

During the 1930s, research interest in conservation continued. Co-operation in the USA combined the resources of the Library of Congress, National Archives Administration, and the National Bureau of Standards. In 1907, a German article on paper deterioration was translated into the English-language *Chemical Abstracts*. Both this article and others were included in a bibliography for librarians published by the New York Public Library in 1929.³¹ The results of Swedish research from 1924–26 indicated that fibre was but one aspect of paper deterioration, and laid equal blame on environmental conditions (such as light and humidity) and chemical deterioration. Additionally, the Swedish Government Testing Institute explored, for the first time, the nature of acidity in relation to paper deterioration³² (such as the use of sulphuric acid when processing linen), as opposed to the English school of thought, which held that all chemical deterioration agents came from the external environment. By 1929, the recommendations from both the Swedish and German study were taken into account within the United States Bureau of Standards,³³ although there is no record that the research entered the British body of knowledge. In 1940, Morris S. Kantrowitz, a paper chemist for the Government Printing Office (US) published a report entitled *Permanence and durability of paper: an annotated bibliography*.³⁴

William Barrow, who later gained prominence through his study of acid neutralization in paper, spent the 1930s experimenting with cellulose acetate lamination,³⁵ one benefit of this process was the effect that it had on the observations of artificial aging on paper. Barrow and his contemporaries found that modern papers which were washed and alkalinized prior to the laminating process would not darken, whereas untreated papers often became illegible from darkening. This echoes further developments within the study of materials science as it applies to bookbinding and conservation work.

28 Ashwin, 74-6.

29 Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 6 *Art Education* (London, 1946): 33–34 cited in Ashwin, 81.

30 Ashwin, 83. Candidates were required to take either one subject from a list A or two subjects from list B.

31 W. Herzberg, 'Future of our printed works', cited in *Wochenblatt fuer Papierfabrikation* vol 38 (June) Sosman, R. B. (trans) *Chemical Abstracts* 1907, vol. 1:2634; from Roggia.

32 T. Burns, 'A serious and universal evil: the early scientific study of paper deterioration' in *Works of Art on Paper, Books, Documents, and Photographs*, eds. V. Daniels, et al (London: The International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, 2002) 39–40.

33 Burns, 40.

34 Technical Bulletin No 22 (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1940).

35 Roggia.

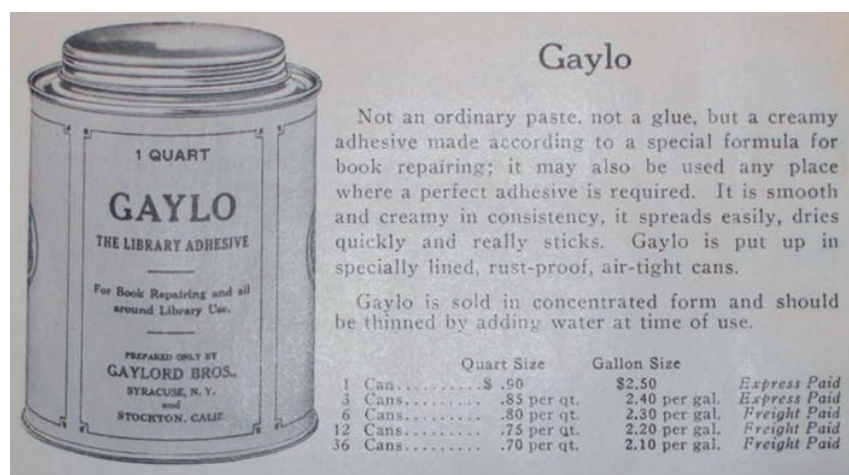


Fig 7 From D.M. Kidd, *Bookcraft; an industrial art subject, on book repairing for schools and libraries* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Gaylord Bros. Inc., 1928).

The stated aims of Lydenberg's book were to provide a preservation manual for personal libraries and to describe repair so that owners may better select a binder.³⁶ *The Preservation of Leather Bookbindings*, written by H.J. Plenderleith, simplified the chemistry of deterioration to make it palatable to bookbinders and librarians, stating that all leathers treated with potassium lactate:

'... now survive the severe conditions of the test which before caused such obvious disintegration, and they are unchanged in appearance. By this simple means impermanent leather is made durable.'³⁷

Further publications from the US Government Printing Office intended to educate librarians and bookbinders include the 1933 *Preservation of Leather Bookbindings*, researched by The Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, and the 1941 *Flexible Glues for Bookbinding*. (Figs 6 & 7)

During the 1930s and 1940s, not only was European research being studied in the USA, but avant-garde art was introducing new ways of looking at fine arts and objects, including books. Three exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, embraced these movements: an exhibition featuring *livre de luxe*; an exhibition entitled *Machine Art* (1934); and an exhibition on *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* (1936); each of these topics incorporate the finely bound book as a form of art.³⁸ In 1939 Andre Breton, who led the Surrealist movement, wrote:

'...one should write directly on articles. ... let everyone be able to read from things.'³⁹

While this research was active within the bookbinding community and the arts community, the application of this knowledge had not reached the vast majority of library collections, prompting Pelham Barr to state in 1946:

'There is a need for reorienting administrative thought on the whole subject of book conservation and binding; consideration of binding and book conservation as they are today are not enough. ... [Conservation] applies to any library collection, whether it be of Egyptian papyrus, of the third-grade classroom library in an Iowa village, or of a university's incunabula.'⁴⁰

1950–1975: enter the librarians

In 1960, the narrowly defined NDD (UK) became a Diploma of Art and Design, which raised the vocational qualification to a first degree standard. In 1974, it was formalized as a BA with honours.⁴¹ The principles of the new diploma course echo many of the movements within professional fields to broaden a traditionally narrow scope into a more multi-disciplinary approach.

While many bookbinders and librarians embraced the new technologies and research, due to economic pressures, public libraries performed many repairs in-house, with little distinction between those items which could safely be treated by an amateur and those which necessitated a more professional treatment.

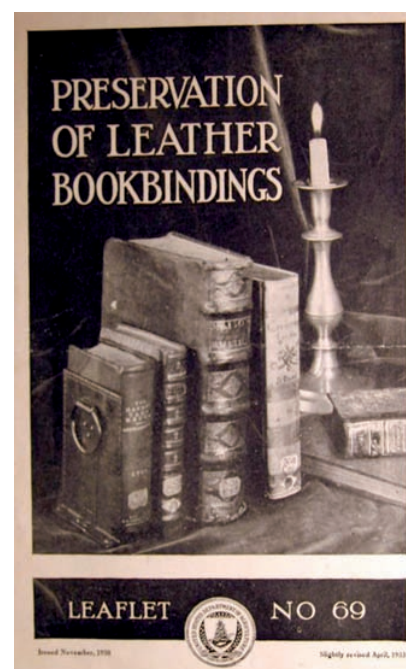


Fig 6 R.W. Frey and R.P. Veitch, *Preservation of leather bookbindings* U.S. Dept. of Agriculture leaflet; no. 69 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1933).

³⁶ H. Lydenberg and J. Archer, *The Care and Repair of Books* (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1931) 14.

³⁷ H.J. Plenderleith, *The Preservation of Leather Bookbindings* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1946, 1970 [reprint]) 18–19.

³⁸ M. Kentgens-Craig, *The Bauhaus and America: First Contacts 1919–1936* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999) 78.

³⁹ A. Breton, 1939 cited in J. Munro, and H.G. Fletcher, Exhibition Notes, 'French Book Art/ Livres d'Artistes: Artists and Poets in Dialogue, exhibition at the New York Public Library May 5 – August 19, 2006' from *The dialogue between Painting and Poetry: Livres d'Artistes, 1874–1999*, ed. J. Khalfa (Cambridge, England: Black Apollo Press, 2001).

⁴⁰ P. Barr, 'Book Conservation and University Library Administration', *College and Research Libraries* 7 (July, 1946): 214–219.

⁴¹ The Report of the National Advisory Council on Art Education (The First Coldstream Report). 1960. Ashwin, 93–99.

While the American Library Association published bookbinding standards in 1951, the discussion of standards within in-house repairs was a very brief component, limited to a statement of potential damages:

'The well intended practice of mending a book in order to keep it in circulation a little longer often impairs rather than improves the appearance of the book. Not infrequently the process is even injurious. Valuable books are too often seriously damaged in the attempt to mend them at the library.'⁴²

Other publications in the 1950s incorporated this new multidisciplinary approach with advances in materials science. In 1956, Laurence Town⁴³ provided recipes for aqueous deacidification treatments for the non-professional. In 1958 Sydney Cockerell described adhesives and philosophies of conservation work:

'There are a number of plastic adhesives which are remarkably strong but they are still relatively new compared with the age of books, and their durability is not known yet in terms of hundreds of years. A number of these adhesives are difficult to re-dissolve without the use of powerful solvents. This is a disadvantage from an archivist's point of view as it means that it may be difficult to remove repairs from valuable books. It is always possible to make a mistake in repairing and it may be serious if it cannot be corrected.'⁴⁴

One book that was published for library repair staff in 1956 demonstrates that communication within the field of library science had not yet reacted to these developments, instead reinforcing the idea that bookbinding, even for a town's historical or valuable collections, was a simple craft, capable of maintenance by any library staff member:

'It is wise to consider that the repair techniques advocated here will often make it impossible for a binder to work on a book. His screams will be heard for miles.'

'Leather bound books ... are beautiful; they are valuable and usually quite irreplaceable. ... Leather is, you see, a natural product, not an artifact. It's skin. Skin needs oil to stay soft and pliable. ... There is a technique which can be employed to render even the driest, most perished leather soft, pleasant to handle, and perfectly usable. [Materials include] one can neat's foot oil ... one jar saddle soap ... one colorless paste shoe polish. ... When you're dealing with the irreplaceable, a slight additional expense is very well justified.'

'Lawyers and doctors customarily have valuable libraries, often bound in solid leather, which cost the devil and all. ... A mender [at the local library] might agree to handle the job on her vacation or in her spare time.'⁴⁵

Meanwhile, S. Cockerell emphasized the ways books could be repaired, so that curators could both perform simple repairs themselves and give clear instructions when sending items to binders. The aim was to close the gap between the librarian or collector and the craftsman; to bring them together by showing why it is advisable to do particular things to books in certain conditions, and why some procedures have not proved practical or economical for the preservation of books. The principle in Cockerell's own workshop was that:

'Every contemporary part of a valuable book and binding must be preserved. All repairs must be neat and tidy though not invisible. ... All repairs must be carried out as far as possible in such a way that they may be undone without damage should this be necessary.'⁴⁶

Carolyn Horton's manual began with the statement that:

'Librarians generally are not well informed about the preservation and repair of library materials. Formal professional training in binding and restoration is not given in this country, and even informal instruction is available only in large metropolitan centers. Publications on the subject do not provide the detailed and authoritative information necessary for unskilled people to perform conservation activities. As a consequence, preservation and restoration work is usually done by people with insufficient training and skill in conservation techniques.'⁴⁷

⁴² L. Feipel and E. Browning, *Library Binding Manual* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1951) 3.

⁴³ L. Town, *Bookbinding by Hand* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956).

⁴⁴ S. Cockerell, *The Repairing of Books* (London: The Sheppard Press, 1958) 33.

⁴⁵ B. Byrne, *Mending Books is Fun!* (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company, 1956) 9, 96-97, 133.

⁴⁶ S. Cockerell, 40.

⁴⁷ C. Horton, *Cleaning and Preserving Bindings and Related Materials*. Pamphlet 1 of a Series. Conservation of Library Materials: LTP [Library Technology Program] Publications No. 12. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1967) 3.

1975–2000: librarians and bookbinders unite!

The miscommunication between the library administrators and bookbinders finally began to reach resolution with the growing establishment of library training programs, notably the book conservation administration program at the Library School of Columbia University (now at the University of Texas):

“The conservation of books, manuscripts, and related materials stands, it seems to me, on the threshold of an era of recognition which it should have been accorded long ago.”⁴⁸

Nonprofit organizations, such as the Northeast Document Conservation Center (USA) also assisted with the education of librarians and library staff, and numerous publications and seminars began to appear which attracted all aspects of the community. Seminal studies of the growth of the field of conservation,⁴⁹ bibliographies,⁵⁰ conferences, and monographs⁵¹ added to the communication which was finally taking place between librarians and book conservators. However:

“There is a remarkable contrast between the level of conservation technical expertise and the knowledge of library requirements. The Cambridge 1980 Symposium, for example, brought into focus the extensive range of technical expertise and scientific knowledge which exists internationally. It also underlined how little this scholarly progress and scientific research impinges on libraries.”⁵²

The twentieth century has seen the development of variations of binding structures for long term archival use, from library bindings to pamphlet structures. The field of conservation, however, has had difficulty in acknowledging the structural validity of an object which is seen as representing a ‘degradation’ in the binding process, rather than a changed type of binding deemed suitable for modern collection requirements.

The field of conservation reacted to the growing capabilities of research chemists by further tailoring chemical research to problems of ever greater specificity and chemical complexity. Rather than focusing solely on widely applicable solutions to library challenges, modern research provides depth on special problems, such as The Canadian Conservation Institute’s⁵³ consolidation of *Le Surréalisme en 1947 [Priure de Toucher]* using Parylene; or the general introduction of phytate treatments and bleaching solvents.

As the twentieth century ended and the twenty-first began, conservators, who now saw themselves as cross-trained professionals rather than bench-trained craftsmen, began looking at practices from the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century with a critical eye. Through the benefit of hindsight, the aging characteristics of earlier ‘miracle products’ such as cellulose acetate and cellophane could be observed, and previous practices with chemical treatments, either to remove staining and decay or to prevent degradation, were called into question. While basic techniques have remained unchanged for many years, the introduction of new products is an area which then, as now, seems to promise limitless possibilities, even though long-term effects may be only partially understood or aging results misinterpreted. The philosophy of working upon contemporary items has extended beyond the museum or library sector and into the world of insurance and copyright; the conservator’s choices have been brought to the public’s attention and to that of private collectors.⁵⁴

‘I’m still surprised that things do change. I can’t believe it, quite. Some of those stories are 50 years old. My old paperbacks are all yellow and crumbly. Am I that yellow and crumbly, I ask myself?’⁵⁵

Reflected in the above quote we see the major thread which will run through any discussion about the longevity of twentieth century products. Observing any change in a product of one’s own lifetime causes a reaction often out of proportion to the actual amount of observed change, as the benchmarks for comparison are too recent, and it is difficult to distinguish rationally between the product which is aging from the ‘brand new’ product currently available.

While modern libraries struggle with whether and how to repair a paperback binding to render it suitable to return to a circulating collection (as opposed to

48 *Library and Archives Conservation: The Boston Athenaeum’s 1971 Seminar on the Application of Chemical and Physical Methods to the Conservation of Library and Archival Materials, May 17–21, 1971*, eds. G. Cunha and N.P. Tucker (Boston: The Library of the Boston Athenaeum, 1972).

49 S. Ogden, ‘The Impact of the Florence Flood on Library Conservation in the United States of America: a survey of the literature published 1956–1976’, *Restaurator* 3 (1979): 1–36. Also P. Darling and S. Ogden, ‘From problems perceived to problems in practice: the preservation of library resources in the U.S.A. 1956–1980’, *Library Resources and Technical Services* 25 (January, 1981): 9–29.

50 G. M. Cunha and D. Grant, *Library and Archives Conservation: 1980s and beyond* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1983).

51 L. Young, *Bookbinding and Conservation by Hand: a working guide* (NY & London: R.R. Bowker Company, 1981). Also J. Greenfield, *Books: their care and repair* (NY: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1983).

52 F.W. Ratcliffe, *Preservation policies and conservation in British libraries. Library and information research report number 255* (Boston Spa, England: British Library, 1984) 1.

53 D. Grattan, and R.S. Williams, ‘From ‘91 to ‘42’: Questions of conservation for modern materials’, in *Mortality Immortality: The Legacy of Twentieth Century Art*, ed. M.A. Corzo (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 1999) 67–74.

54 For example, *From Marble to Chocolate: the Conservation of Modern Sculpture*, ed. J. Heuman (London: Archetype Publications, 1995). *Modern Works, Modern Problems?* ed. A. Richmond (Leigh: Institute of Paper Conservation, 1994). *Conservation of historic and artistic works on paper: proceedings of a conference, Ottawa, Canada, October 3 to 7, 1988*, ed. H.D. Burgess (Ottawa: Canadian Conservation Institute, 1994). M.A. Corzo, ed. *Modern Art: Who Cares?* eds. I. Hummel and D. Sillé (Amsterdam: The Foundation for the Conservation of Modern Art and the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, 1999). *Contemporary Art: Curation, Collection and Conservation*, eds. C. Gogarty, and Z. Reid (Dublin: Irish Professional Conservators’ and Restorers’ Association, 2001).

55 E. Brockes, ‘Making Hay [An Interview with John Updike]’, *The Guardian*, 1 June 2004, section G2:2.

simply replacing it with a new copy), the question of when and why an item moves from having textual importance to artefact importance for twentieth century materials has yet to be determined. Scientific advances have made working with contemporary materials a more successful undertaking, but the creativity necessary to adapt treatment proposals to working libraries is still developing; the treatment of artistic artefacts, which must continue to fill a research function, will continue to challenge both the conservator and the curator.

Summary

The growth within the field of bookbinding to incorporate the precepts of book conservation reflects historically ongoing movements within the fields of publishing, library science, and education. The changing parameters of this dialogue reflect similar patterns in many crafts and traditional vocational subjects in response to an industrialized and specialized economy. A survey of literature contemporary to the early twentieth century as well as that written in later years reveals that this time was a period of consolidation from the rapid changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution and Victorian economic boom. The twentieth century saw the wide-scale co-operation between manufacturing, academic, and craft disciplines researching and discussing their consumer inheritance from previous generations, with results from these discussions observable through the published reports, monographs, and journal articles; the establishment of schools with lasting reputations; and the standardization of government regulations and industry standards as pertaining to both the trade/manufacturing and collections/museums aspects of book production.

Résumé

Le développement de la reliure pour intégrer les préceptes de restauration du livre reflète les mouvements historiquement en cours dans les domaines de la publication, des sciences libraires et de l'éducation. Les paramètres en évolution de ce dialogue reflètent des modèles similaires dans beaucoup de métiers et de domaines à vocation traditionnelle en réponse à une économie industrialisée et spécialisée. Un examen de la littérature contemporaine du début du vingtième siècle aussi bien que celle des années suivantes révèle que cette époque était une période de consolidation des rapides changements apportés par la révolution économique et par le boom économique Victorien. Le vingtième siècle a vu la coopération à grande échelle entre des disciplines industrielles, académiques et artisanales recherchant et discutant leur héritage consumériste des générations antérieures, avec des résultats de ces discussions observables à travers la publication de rapports, de monographies et d'articles de journaux; l'établissement d'écoles avec de sérieuses réputations et la standardisation de normes gouvernementales et des standards de l'industrie se rapportant tant aux aspects commerce/ industrie et collections/musées de la production des livres.

Zusammenfassung

Der Trend innerhalb des Feldes der Buchbinderei, die Ideen der Buchkonservierung/restaurierung einzuführen, reflektiert die historisch gleichzeitig stattfindende Bewegung in den Feldern der Publizistik, Bibliothekswissenschaften und Erziehung. Die sich ändernden Parameter

dieses Dialogs reflektieren ähnliche Muster, die in vielen anderen handwerklichen und kunsthandwerklichen Berufen als Antwort auf eine durchindustrialisierte und sich spezialisierende Arbeitsweise auftreten.

Eine Untersuchung der Fachliteratur des frühen zosten Jhds zeigt, daß dies eine Zeit der Konsolidisierung nach jenen Veränderungen war, die die industrielle Revolution und der Viktorianische Boom mit sich gebracht hatten. Das 20te Jhd sah eine weit verzweigte Kooperation von Akademie, Manufaktur und dem Handwerk, ihre Konsumerbschaft vergangener Generationen zu untersuchen und zu diskutieren. Die Resultate dieser Diskussion waren sofort evident durch die Publikationen von Reportagen, Monographien und Journalartikeln, das Entstehen von Schulen mit langanhaltend gutem Ruf und der Standardisierung der Regierungsrichtlinien und Industriestandards der Herstellungs-, und der Sammlungsaspekte der Buchproduktion.

Resumen

Este documento describe el abordaje para la conservación de 27 grabados del artista japonés Hiroyuki Tajima (1911–1997), considerado el mayor exponente del Expresionismo Abstracto, a través de su experimental uso del bloque de madera.

Las condiciones naturales y de almacenamiento en el estudio de Tajima han fomentado el crecimiento de hongos, manchas, oxidación de los aceites y deformación de los elementos tridimensionales de sus obras. Dada la complejidad y el tipo de materiales utilizados por el artista, se realizó una ambiciosa investigación antes de recomendar algún tipo de tratamiento. Anteriores profesionales asociados con Tajima, proporcionaron valiosa información sobre la combinación de tintes, guaches y aceites que solía utilizar. Esto fue corroborado por las traducciones de sus diarios y anotaciones personales facilitados por su esposa que permitió establecer un record del método y de los materiales que usaba. El resultado del examen visual, de la prueba de humedad examinada con microscopio estereobinocular, los análisis de fibras, y el uso de rayos ultravioleta, proporcionaron un conjunto de información que pudo ser discutida con colegas y que ayudó a establecer un programa viable y efectivo de conservación y almacenamiento.

Biography

Stephanie Gibbs received the MA degree in Book Conservation from West Dean College. She has studied privately with design bookbinders in both the UK and USA, and held internships at the National Library of Scotland, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art: Dean Library and Archive, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. She is currently a conservator in private practice, specializing in book conservation and design book bindings.

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