

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK CONSERVATION and HISTORICAL BOOKBINDING

Tutors: Flavio Marzo and Giovanni Pagani

Language of instruction: English

Cost: € 1700,00 (not including accommodation)

3rd June – 28th June 2019

This course is taught over two 2-week modules. The first module covers the Introduction To Book Conservation. The theoretical component includes discussions on books, terminology, and book structure, structural and decorative components, active and passive environmental parameters, risk-based analysis of individual books and collections, and customized storage. The practical component includes making facsimiles of unsupported Islamic-style book-bindings, western style half leather bindings, limp parchment binding, and modern western case binding.

The second 2-week module includes theoretical components of the craft of archival/stationary bindings, preservation and preventive conservation approaches, and pest and mold identification and intervention. The practical component includes making a facsimile of a full leather archival binding with flap and straps with leather sewing and 'tacketed straps', end-bands, and the execution of different typologies of conservation enclosures.

Module 1: First two weeks

Theoretical -

Introduction to book conservation:

- Conservation versus Restoration, understanding the balance and the relationship between 'conserving and restoring' objects of historical value.
- Environmental parameters and what is an environment.
- Standards (international and national) and approaches to storage and working environments when books and archival material are stored or used within ('active and passive' environments)
- Handling 'risks-based analysis', and how it works within libraries, and within a 'fit for purpose' approach (reading rooms, digitization, storage).

- Storage and customized housing solutions, fragments, bound objects, single sheet/loose objects
- Documentation and its purpose, examples of different levels and the possible use/outcome of conservation treatment documentation forms, condition assessment and survey.
- Planning for treatments and steps in 'restoring/conserving' a book

Book components and its terminology:

- Materials and elements within a book structure, the mechanical dynamics and the elements that make the books a moving complex object.
- The terminology and the way to record the single components within the overall object/book.
- How to describe verbally and visually a highly complex object for documentation purposes within a 'fit for purpose' approach.
- The steps in binding a book and how to recognize them, from the sewing and its variances to the steps to 'round' a spine, 'trim' the edges and make the end-bands.
- How to read features like lacing and identify covering materials, animal species and the different board materials (pulp-laminated board, type of wood and way to cut it etc.)
- Decorations and fastenings, introducing styles and historical signatures within tooling techniques and other decorative features.

Practical -

Historical book structures/facsimiles:

- *Unsupported sewing structure (Islamic style):* The bookblock will be sewn with a link-stitch sewing on 4 sewing stations. A spine lining of linen will be applied to secure and stabilize the book-block. Islamic end bands (primary and secondary sewing) will be executed at head and tail. The full leather cover will be made in two halves with front flap and overlapping spine.
- *Western supported half leather style binding:* The bookblock will be sewn on 4 double cord supports with packed all along sewing. A parchment or linen spine lining will be applied between the supports (panels). Western end bands with primary and secondary sewing around cord cores will be made at head and tail. The supports will be laced through the boards. Attaching the spine lining on the inside of the boards will reinforce the board attachment.

- *Limp parchment binding*: The paper bookblock will be sewn on 3 single alum tawed support with all along packed sewing. A spine lining of Japanese paper will be applied to the spine to secure the book block. End bands with primary sewing on alum tawed cores will be made to be laced. A soft/limp cover with alum tawed leather ties will be constructed and applied to protect the book block.
- *Modern western case binding, sewing on tapes*: The paper bookblock will be sewn on 3 linen tapes with all along, 'French style' sewing. A linen cloth spine lining will be placed to secure the book block. Two false end bands will be adhered to the spine at head and tail. A full cloth case cover will be made to cover the book block.

Module 2: Second two weeks

Theoretical -

- Pests and Mould: identification, monitoring and intervention: Theoretical and practical.
- The craft of traditional archival/stationary bookbinding, the materials, the tools, the sewing structures and the assembly processes of those elements.
- Archival/Stationary Bindings Components, its terminology and peculiar conservation/preservation approach
- Preservation and preventive conservation approaches and methods, along with overview of the history of archival book making.

Practical –

- Historical book structures/facsimiles
- Full leather archival binding with flap and straps with leather sewing 'tackets' and 'tacketed straps'.
- Full parchment archival binding with flap and straps with leather sewing 'tackets' and 'tacketed straps'
- Bespoke housing for books
- Execution of different typologies of conservation enclosures, including book-shoe with book support, four-flap folder, full cloth 'drop-back spine' box.

All the exercises, both theoretical and practical, will be enhanced and supported by the unique opportunity to work with original historical bindings from the Benedettucci collection. The programs are aimed at two types of students: those that are looking into possibly becoming professional book conservators, and those who,

because of their careers require better knowledge and insight into the care of books and bound material within libraries, archives or museums.

For those planning to become conservators, these weeks will help give a good understanding of what conservation of books and library/archive material encompasses. For those already dealing with library and archive environments, the course will enhance skills and knowledge in analysing the nature of bound material, understanding the state of conservation, and best practices in handling, storage and conservation of library and archival materials. Nowhere else will you find similar workshops that offer the opportunity of full immersion within a conservation/restoration studio, as well as an historical library.