



# Newsletter

Issue 2  
July 2021

Welcome to the second issue of the CERL Bookbindings WG Newsletter

## Message from the Chair



Since the last issue of the Newsletter, colleagues around the world have struggled to adapt their activities to working at home and on Zoom and other platforms.

In some ways this has been a tedious business but on other levels it has broadened our perspectives and allowed us to promote bookbindings in new ways. The CERL WG for Bookbindings has been able to meet a couple of times on-line and the two open events on May 25 and 27 respectively attracted approximately 200 persons. Both events were held on Zoom with two live presentations, the first one by Bettina Wagner from Bamberg, “A Mediaeval Horn Binding and its Modern Reproduction—the Bamberg Psalter.” The second live presentation was by Elizabeth Quarmby Lawrence from the University of Edinburgh presenting “Edinburgh Women Bookbinders of the Arts and Crafts Movement.” This newsletter also contains Elizabeth Quarmby Lawrence’s article on the same topic as her presentation, “The Bindings of the Edinburgh Arts and Crafts Club, and the Guild of Women Binders.”

Alongside these two live presentations a set of films were made available on CERL's YouTube Channel at

<https://bit.ly/2SLhNR6>. Contributors are Philippa Marks, Nicholas Pickwood, and Eliana dal Sasso.

Alberto Campagnolo’s and Rachel di Cresce’s presentation can be found at

<https://bit.ly/3hosKAN>.

Athanasios Velios’ presentation can be found at <https://bit.ly/3jy9H9t> and Andrew Honey’s and Matthew Holford’s presentation is available at <https://bit.ly/3yb4TuC>.

All these presenters participated during the events and answered questions and I wish to thank them warmly for their contributions. Hopefully there will be more such events in the autumn.

Stretching out virtually has given us the opportunity to learn more about the Belgisch-Nederlands Boekbanden Genootschap (the Belgian-Dutch Bookbindings Society), established already in 1984.

In this newsletter Daniël Ermens, the society’s Vice-President from the University of Antwerp, presents the society and its activities, for example their contributions of translations of Dutch bookbinding terms to the ever-important work on a multilingual glossary of bookbinding terms, *Kneep en binding* being the most influential.

Book edges represent one of the most beautiful parts of bindings, while also being one of the most over-looked features of a book, especially when they are not gilded, sprinkled, coloured, or embellished by other means. However, they can reveal a wealth of information on the book’s significance. Lieve Watteuw, head of the Book Heritage Lab at Leuven University, has, together with Malou van Peer, made an on-line exhibition on the theme of book edges where one can both study different edge treatment techniques and see beautiful examples of gilt edges, gauffered edges, sprinkled edges, and many more.

Bookbinding and book history arouse an increasing interest in many countries as libraries find new ways to promote their special

collections. Collections with interesting bindings exist in many places and one is the Hammersmith and Fulham Early Children's Book Collection at Roehampton University Library with approximately 1200 books. Here the bookbinding scholar finds an interesting array of publisher's bindings, often in excellent condition. In this Newsletter they are presented by Anna Gialdini from the Bruno Kessler Foundation Library in Trento and Kornelia Cepok at the University of Roehampton.

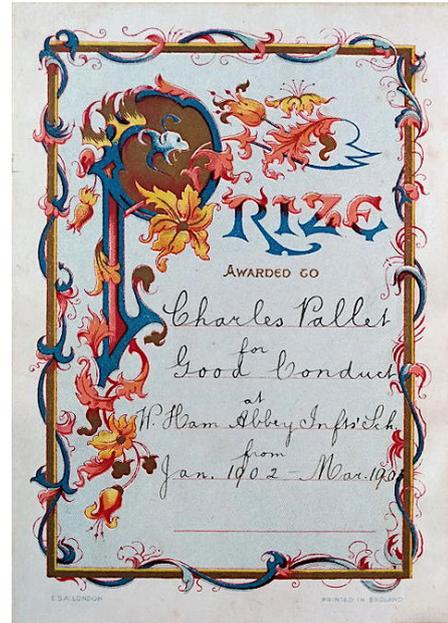
Bookbindings from the Piemontese region in Italy have been described in an ambitious project, and in Timoty Leonardi's short report we get some insights into the project. Timoty is the project manager at the Biblioteca Capitolare in Verona.

Coptic bookbindings are the speciality of Eliana dal Sasso from The University of Hamburg, Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures. Her article in this newsletter outlines her doctoral project on the topic. Among other things it proposes a typological classification of Coptic bookbindings, striving to understand several aspects of the archival function of the bindings.

Please also find information on the Ligatus Summer School in September with an application deadline July 30.

If conditions allow, we also hope we can have a workshop where we can attend in person to retrieve what we missed on the scientific examination of books planned for Brussels in 2020.

Finally, if you are interested in our work, or if you wish to publish a short notice in a forthcoming Newsletter, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



Children's book price label

#### In this issue:

Edinburgh Guild of Women's Binders  
Book Edges  
The Belgian-Dutch Bookbindings Society  
Publishers Bindings in Roehampton Library  
Bookbinding Census in Piemonte  
Ethiopian Bookbindings  
Ligatus Summer School

### The Bindings of the Edinburgh Arts and Crafts Club, and the Guild of Women Binders

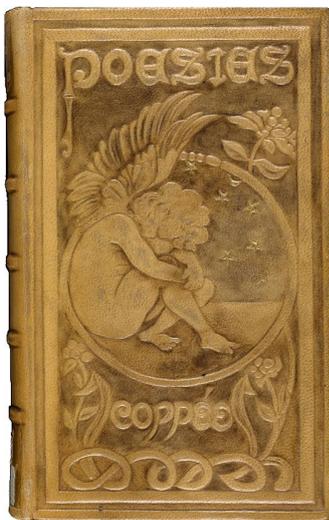
To add to an existing small collection, the University of Edinburgh has recently acquired a bookbinding in a style typical of a group of women binders working in Edinburgh at the turn of the twentieth century.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a number of women, mostly from the educated middle classes, inspired by the Arts and Crafts Movement, took up bookbinding. While some of them were hobbyists, others were very serious about their work, although they struggled to gain thorough technical

instruction, or to be taken seriously either by the men in the professional binding trade or the artistic world.

By way of compensation, they were able to express their creativity free of the expectations of others and could experiment and develop techniques of their own—some of which were highly effective. The best of their work is creatively equal to anything produced at the time.

In Edinburgh a group of craftswomen produced leather bindings worked in a distinctive



technique developed by Annie S.

Macdonald (1849-1924). The book would first be covered in a thick but minimally treated goatskin. Worked damp, the design was executed by working into it with a very fine tool, creating a design in relief. Sometimes the

François Coppée, *Œuvres*, tom. 5, (Paris, 1891). Bound by an unknown member of the group

bindings have some areas coloured to emphasize the design, or a few highlights are gilded. Each of the women developed her own style, though the group's work has some features in common—they tended to make illustrations rather than patterns, and often included lettering in a distinctive chunky style. Sometimes the bindings are signed, often in a roundel on the lower board, but often they are not. The group led by Annie Macdonald was formally known as the Edinburgh Arts and Crafts Club; she had organised bookbinding classes for women taught by professional binders from the firm of A. & J. Constable, thanks to a personal connection with W. B. Blaikie, one of the owners. She taught her own technique to anyone who was interested

and promoted the work more generally. She was instrumental in making the connection with Frank Karlake, of the Hampstead Bindery. He initiated The Guild of Women Binders in 1898 as a commercial vehicle for selling the work of women from all over the UK. Groups of women were binding books in locations as diverse as Kirkby Lonsdale, Leighton Buzzard, and Chiswick. Shortly afterwards Karlake opened a Guild workshop in Hampstead that trained women in both forwarding and finishing, and operated as a commercial bindery, giving work to any of the women who wanted to stay on. Some women used the training to enable them to set up on their own. The work of several of the Edinburgh women was included in the Guild's exhibitions, including both Annie Macdonald and Phoebe Traquair. The Guild lasted only until 1904, although many of the women who had exhibited with it remained active as bookbinders long afterwards.

Other members of the Club in Edinburgh included Phoebe Traquair (1852-1936), well-known as an artist in other media, and Jessie Rintoul MacGibbon. Bindings by members of the group are held in small numbers by libraries in the UK and U.S.A. They come up for sale occasionally.

Edinburgh bought one binding by Phoebe Anna Traquair a few years ago, and in recent years have found two on the shelves in Special Collections,



which were put there long before the library catalogue had the capacity to include binding descriptions. One is likely to be work of Jessie MacGibbon.

*The Psalms of David*, (London, 1862), binding decorated by Phoebe Anna Traquair, Guild of Women Binders.

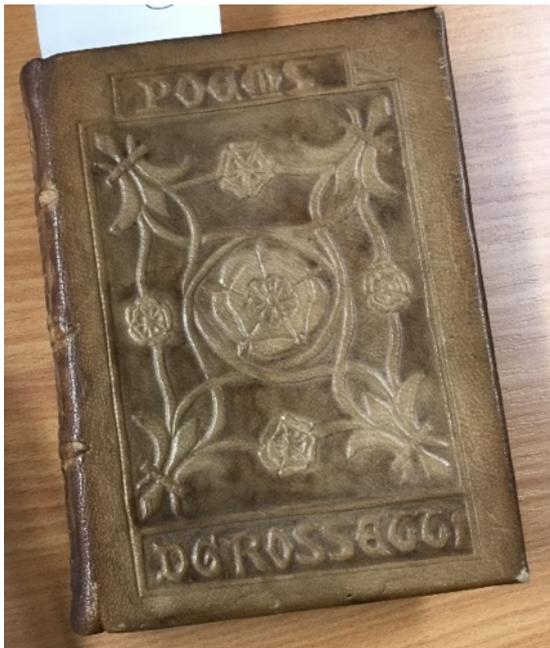
The most recent purchase is signed by Johanna Caird Ross, the daughter of an Edinburgh architect, known to have been a friend of members of the group, though otherwise unknown as a binder.

Bibliography:

Marianne Tidcombe, *Women Bookbinders: 1880-1920*. (Oak Knoll Press, British Library, 1996).

Elizabeth Cumming, Phoebe Anna Traquair, *HRSA (1852-1936) and Her Contribution to Arts and Crafts in Edinburgh*, 1986. Thesis (Ph.D.), University of Edinburgh, 1987. <http://hdl.handle.net/1842/6973>

By Elizabeth Quarmby Lawrence, Rare Books Librarian, University of Edinburgh



D.G. Rossetti, *Poems*, (Leipzig, 1873), binding by Johanna Caird Ross.



### Book Edges. Blanc, Inscribed, Gilded and Coloured. Exploring Book Edges in the KU Leuven Libraries and other Belgian Collections. Online exhibition

Book edges are fascinating parts of books: they provide the first sight of a book's pages and content, mediating between the finished text block and the bookbinding. They can be straight, slightly wavy, inscribed, gilded, coloured and decorated in a variety of ways, showcasing the book's content, its authorship, the owner's wealth and the binder's skill. Edges can be perfectly smooth and shiny, but also friable, worn, and ragged. They are apt to change through the centuries as they may be cut over and over again with each rebinding, perhaps for each new owner. The edges are intriguing witnesses to how books were read: thumbmarks indicate the pages often consulted and turned-down corners mark favourite passages. They mirror how the book has been used by readers and owners and how it was kept over the years, affording insights into the organization of early libraries.

The online exhibition created in September 2020, explores the collection of the "Preciosa" of the Library of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Leuven (Maurits Sabbe Library, Belgium).

Link: <https://bit.ly/3AlvWoN>

By Lieve Watteeuw, Head, Book Heritage Lab – KU Leuven

## The Belgian-Dutch Bookbindings Society (Belgisch-Nederlands Boekbanden Genootschap)

The Belgian-Dutch Bookbindings Society was founded in 1984 when a group of book historians recognized the need for the study of bookbindings in the Low Countries. In its 37-year existence the Society has always focused on the primary goal the founders – Jos Hermans (University of Groningen) and Jan Storm van Leeuwen (Royal Library, The Hague) – had set themselves: to disseminate the knowledge about bookbindings by stimulating research into binding techniques and decorations. Since 2018, the diminishing attention to bookbindings in libraries and universities made it adopt a second goal: to stimulate the interest in bookbindings in general among book historians, librarians, book conservators, and the wider public.

The Society acknowledged the need for coherent terminology and systematic description guidelines. From the start working groups consisting of Society members set themselves the task to provide these tools. This resulted in seven important publications between 1991 and 2011, the most influential being *Kneep en binding* (Shoulder and Sewing Support) in 1992. This book provides a terminology for the technical and structural aspects of historic bookbindings up to 1830, explaining over 300 items, and providing Dutch synonyms and English, German and French translations. In 1994 it was followed by *Sierpapier & marmering* (Decorated Paper & Marbling). This glossary of decorated paper and marbling as binding decoration provides a terminology of stylistic details on bookbindings up to 1850. Many terms on bookbinding decoration and its stylistic and historic aspects can be found in *Spespaneel en drakenstempel*, published in 2011, which offers an illustration to practically every term. Both publications also offer equivalents of the terms in other languages. *Spespaneel* complements the first publication by the Society (in 1991), which provides a system for the

organization of rubbings of bookbindings: *Boekbandstempels: systeem voor het ordenen van wrijfsels*. *Sluitwerk* on clasps and other kinds of fastening, which was published in 2004, completes the terminology series, for now. All the terms provided in these publications can be applied when describing bindings. In *Leidraad bij het beschrijven van een boekband* (Instructions for the Description of Bookbindings), published in 2002, the Society offers researchers a tool when collecting reliable data on bindings. It offers short instructions (and a form) for the registration of basic data, and long instructions for making more in-depth observations.

Most of the publications mentioned above can be found on the Society's website: <https://boekbandengenootschap.nl/publicaties-van-het-boekbandengenootschap/> and the missing ones will be available soon.

The Society has had a scholarly approach to bookbindings from the outset but has always recognized the importance of its work for a wider public. Regular meetings of specialists were open to anyone with an interest in bookbindings. Over the years several conferences and many workshops, 'toogdagen' and 'Bandensalons' (bindings salons) have inspired large numbers of researchers, book conservators, librarians and bookbinders. At the 'Bandensalons' of recent years, the opportunity was offered to take the discussed bookbindings in the hand and view them closely. To stand out more, the Society created its own website, and recently its communication team has decided to generate followers and likes on social media. The more people know about bookbindings, the more relevant these often-neglected artefacts become.

At present the Society counts about 80 members, among them book historians, book conservators, librarians, bookbinders, and bibliophiles. Starting out as a small group of like-minded book historians, it has developed into an official organization with a board. President Elizabet Nijhoff Asser and the six other board members not only try to honour the

Society's legacy but intend to extend it as well. For the next years challenging plans are scheduled: adding a volume on nineteenth- and twentieth-century terminology to the series of publications, making a concordance or editing and adapting *Kneep en Binding* to the language of the bindings thesaurus *Ligatus*, providing digital access to binding collections, and working together with schools, universities, and book-related associations to provide courses on bookbindings and book history. Above all, we look forward to working together with bookbinding specialists in other countries to deal with the challenges our specific field of research has to face in these digital times.

By Daniël Ermens, Vice President of the Belgian-Dutch Bookbinding Society  
University of Antwerp

[daniel.ermens@uantwerpen.be](mailto:daniel.ermens@uantwerpen.be)

Website: <https://boekbandengenootschap.nl>

Follow us on:

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/BNBoekbandengenootschap>  
<https://bit.ly/3h8gAfT>

Twitter

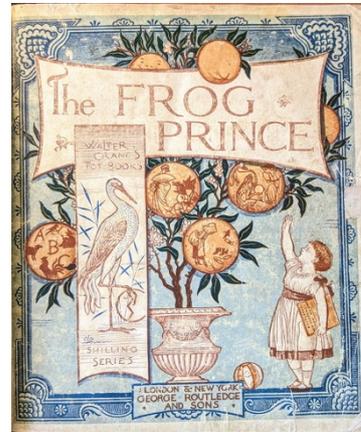
<https://twitter.com/BNBoekbandenge1>

Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/bnboekbandengenootschap>  
<https://bit.ly/3yfb4cn>



## Publishers' Bindings at the University of Roehampton Library, London



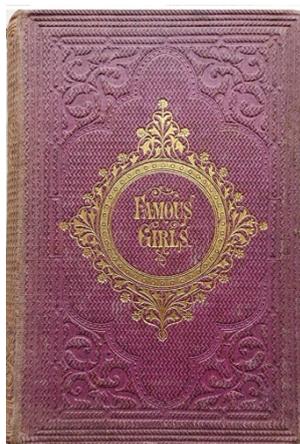
The Foyle Special Collections and Archives at the University of Roehampton focuses primarily on the University's areas of strength in teaching and

research. Some of the specialisms of the collection are therefore Early Childhood Education, Froebelian teaching practice and children's literature, as the University prides itself in its long history of education and children's literature programmes. The Children's Literature Collection (CLC) comprises the Hammersmith and Fulham Early Children's Book Collection, the Bratton Collection, the Street Children Collection and hundreds of historical and contemporary children's books.

The Hammersmith and Fulham Early Children's Book Collection consists of about 1,200 books in English and other languages, of which about 180 have been catalogued according to AACR2 and DCRM standards, with RDA access points (the rest is uncatalogued except for a typewritten catalogue which covers most of the collection). It consists mostly of books and periodicals printed between the late eighteenth century and the early twentieth century; one book is an algebra exercise manuscript, titled 'Numeration' and dated to the eighteenth century on a palaeographical basis; the collection also includes a copy of Johann Buxtorf's *Lexicon Chaldaicum et Syriacum* (1622). The collection grew within the Fulham Public Library context first; it was assembled in 1931-1932 for the first time on the occasion of an exhibition of children's books. In 1943, one of the exhibitors (Mr Cater) donated a collection of about 300 items to Fulham Library out of

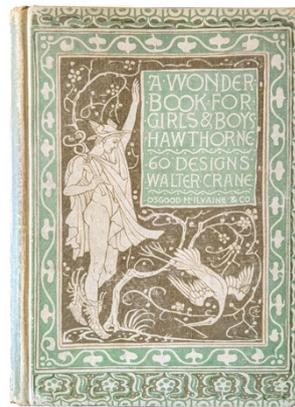
concern that children's books would otherwise not be preserved, after which the collection grew organically to its current size through donations. Talks of the collection moving to the University of Roehampton first started in 2013, and the collection was moved to the University in March 2015 thanks to the support of the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature (NCRCL) and the Department of English and Creative Writing, on the basis that it would complement and enhance the existing collection of historical children's books of the Bratton Collection, the strength of which lies in beautifully bound nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century children's novels.

The collection is open to researchers and students, and in the past, it has mostly attracted the attention of children's literature scholars. Bindings, however, constitute a particularly interesting aspect of the collection: most books retain their contemporary "publishers' bindings" in excellent condition. The transition to ready-made bindings is generally considered to be one of the markers of the "second revolution of the book" in the nineteenth century; the new relationship between publishers and binderies (which created cheaper, but aesthetically pleasing, products) was one of the driving forces that shaped the printing industry at the dawn of the industrial era, as shown by Kristina Lundblad for the case of Sweden in her book, *Bound to be Modern. Publishers' Cloth Bindings and the Material Culture of the Book, 1840-1914* (New Castle: Oak Knoll, 2015).



The new techniques meant that books could be placed on the market with a variety of binding options for all pockets; a copy of Jules Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon* in the collection (London: Ward, Lock, & Co., [ca.

188-?] contains a list of prices for Verne's works in translation, depending on the binding ("In very handsome cloth-binding, gilt edges" or "In plainer binding, plain edges", priced about 50% cheaper) and whether the full text and coloured boards were present. The nature of the Hammersmith and Fulham Collection, which was assembled to showcase variety and does not often include multiple copies of the same edition, does not allow for an analysis of such variety, however, the collection does include a wide range of the binding techniques and materials used at the time.



Very often, publishers' bindings were covered in cloth, as are most of the books in the Hammersmith and Fulham Collection (67.6% of the volumes catalogued so far). Thanks to a number of new techniques for treating, dying, decorating, and gold-blocking and blocking in colour, book-cloth (specifically designed for covering books, and simultaneously cheap and strong) became very common. Paper was also frequently used: some of the paper-covered books in the collection have been re-bound in the twentieth century to preserve their contemporary covers. Finally, several volumes are in calf-covered bindings tooled in blind or gold, and preserve binders' tickets, mostly for binders based in London, such as Edmonds & Remnants, Burn and Company, J. Rowbotham.

In addition to publishing and bookbinding history, the collection offers an incredible opportunity to investigate the history of children's book ownership in the period covered by the collection: about 10% of the volumes (including some single issues of periodicals) have labels or inscriptions indicating that they were presented to their young owners as prize books, and many more have ownership inscriptions. As shown by Lauren O'Hagan in her monograph, *The Sociocultural Functions of*

*Edwardian Book Inscriptions. Taking a Multimodal Ethnohistorical Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2021) (which also looks at bindings), book inscriptions lend themselves to multidisciplinary research, and are an inestimable source of information for a time in history when momentous changes in both education and industrial practices were making books more widely accessible than ever.

*The Foyle Special Collections and Archives are open by appointment.* <https://bit.ly/3we2ttC>  
*A video interview on the topic of the Hammersmith and Fulham Collection is available on the Children's Literature Collection webpage on the University of Roehampton Library website.*  
<https://bit.ly/3hdwobs>

By Anna Gialdini, Librarian, Bruno Kessler Foundation and Kornelia Cepok, Archivist, University of Roehampton



The Bratton Collection

## De libris compactis. Legature di pregio in Piemonte



The census of the bookbindings in a number of selected libraries in the city of Alessandria was completed in January. Thanks to the financing and coordination of the Regione Piemonte

(sette settore Promozione dei Beni Librari e Archivistici, Editoria ed Istituti Culturali) and the management of the Centro Studi Piemontesi, the project allowed for the electronic description of 200 bookbindings on the SIGECweb platform of the Italian Ministry of Culture (MiBACT). Specifically, bookbindings from the Biblioteca Civica, Museo Civico, Museo Etnografico, Archivio di Stato, Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile, Istituto per la Storia della Resistenza e della Società Contemporanea in Provincia di Alessandria were catalogued. Additionally, 10 significant bookbindings belonging to the Centro Studi Piemontesi in Turin, coming from a donation, have been catalogued.

For those of us who study books and observe not only the text they contain, but also their material features, performing a survey in the storage rooms of libraries and historical archives is a unique opportunity to see what is normally not visible in the catalogues: the bookbinding. What can be defined as “the dress of the book” can provide significant information about the history and sometimes the unexpected paths which brought the individual items into our libraries.

At present, 2,300 bindings belonging to the provinces of Turin, Asti, Vercelli and Alessandria have been included in the SIGEC system. Activities will continue in 2021 in the province of Alessandria.

The project team includes Maria Luisa Russo (Field Manager for Research and Safeguard of Malian Manuscripts at the University of Hamburg), Silvia Faccin (Curator of Manuscripts and Rare Books at the Biblioteca Capitolare in Vercelli) and Timoty Leonardi (Project Manager at the Biblioteca Capitolare in Verona).

Links: <https://bit.ly/3h8i2iq>  
<https://bit.ly/2TszaGB>  
<https://bit.ly/3AghEGd>  
<https://bit.ly/3xcQVbB>  
<https://bit.ly/3hwuTK6>

By Timoty Leonardi  
Fondazione Biblioteca Capitolare of Verona

## Research Project: Bookbindings as Archival Instruments. Defining, Ordering and Transmitting Knowledge in Christian Egypt (4th-11th Centuries)

Manuscript cultures represent one of the core research areas of the Universität Hamburg. Researchers from various disciplines collaborate at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) within the Cluster of Excellence “Understanding Written Artefacts” <https://bit.ly/3jCpzI0>

to study how the different cultures respond to common issues related to writing, producing artefacts that reflect their cultural diversity.

The cluster is structured into five interconnected research fields: artefact profiling, inscribing spaces, creating originals, formatting contents, and archiving artefacts, which investigate different aspects of the writing practice.

The research field “Archiving Artefacts” studies the cultural practices related to archiving larger bodies of written artefacts. To this research field belongs the doctoral project “Bookbindings as Archival Instruments: Defining, Ordering and Transmitting Knowledge in Christian Egypt (4th-11th Centuries)” led by the author and supervised

by Professor Alessandro Bausi and Professor Paola Buzi. The project aims at proposing a typological classification of Coptic bookbindings and providing an understanding of their archival function, that is, their role as instruments to preserve the memory of selected contents, declaring their ownership, their function, their prestige and possibly ordering them according to their intellectual value.

### First Steps in the Research

The research on Coptic bindings took its first steps within the ERC-granted project PATHs, “Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths. An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature. Literary Texts in Their Original Context. Production, Copying, Usage, Dissemination and Storage,” headed by Prof. Paola Buzi. PATHs, through the *Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature*, a research tool based on a web database (<https://atlas.paths-erc.eu>), which grants access to an in-depth knowledge of the Coptic literary production between the 3rd and 13th centuries. Each manuscript (codicological unit) is linked to all the available information about works, titles, colophons, and places related to it. The codicological features of the units are described following a detailed protocol that includes a section on bookbinding which expands progressively.

### Date and Provenance of the Coptic Bookbindings

A preliminary census of Coptic bookbindings, published in 2020 in the proceedings of the third conference of the project PATHs, brought to light a corpus of 209 Coptic bookbindings on which the doctoral project can base its inquiry. The corpus consists of both bindings certainly associated with ancient manuscripts and covers detached from the original manuscript that are all that remain of the codicological unit. The bindings date from the 4th to 11th centuries, thus covering the period in which the distinctive features of the Late Antique and early medieval Egyptian codices were developed up until the moment when strong Islamic influences appeared in Copto-Arabic manuscripts.

The bindings, together with their

manuscripts, have been discovered in Egypt mostly (but not exclusively) in the ruins of ancient monasteries. Excavations were carried out by archaeologists but also by treasure-hunters. That is why some manuscripts in European and non-European institutions have a dubious or unknown provenance.

The codices, or their fragments, were then acquired by missionaries, antique dealers, and scholars so that today they are scattered among several collections around the world. PAThs' Atlas gathers the 209 censused bindings in one virtual location and for each of them provides a description, a bibliography, references to images in publications, and a link to digital images if they exist.

### **Fragmentary State of Preservation and Lack of Documentation**

Even though the census is a significant step onwards in the research, the doctoral project still has to face two main issues: the fragmentary state in which bindings have been preserved and the lack of proper recording—even more so, considering that photographic documentation is unusual. Since their rediscovery in Egypt, the scholarly interest has been focused on the study of the intellectual content of the manuscripts rather than on their bookbindings. As a consequence, the bindings have been the object of invasive interventions designed to facilitate the handling of the leaves. Thus, even codices acquired in almost perfect condition were disbound, the boards composed of written papyri of old discarded, and books were split to read their content, but most often the process has not been recorded. As regards the documentation, Coptic bindings have been described by a few scholars and conservators who devoted themselves to specific collections or manuscripts. As a result, the quality of the descriptions is heterogeneous and identical features are described using incoherent terminology. A systematic study and description of the extant Coptic bindings is then urgently required to avoid the loss of further information and to foster a deeper understanding of the Coptic manuscript culture.

### **Methodology: The Power of Standards**

For this purpose, a protocol for the recording of bookbindings has been set-up by formulating a standard survey to document the features of this bookbinding tradition. The terminology has been selected from the structured vocabulary the *Language of Bindings* by Ligatus (<https://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/>). Bookbinding records are preferably collected from the first-hand examination of the bindings; when this is not possible, from digital reproductions, photographic, and bibliographic documentation. The surveyed data will be organised and investigated through PAThs' Atlas, enriching the section dedicated to the bindings' descriptions. The study of the information collected in this preliminary phase will allow recognition of recurring patterns and make it possible to group the bindings accordingly to propose a typological classification of Coptic bookbinding. The research output, linked to its context, will disclose how materials and techniques varied in bookbinding manufacture in relation to temporal and local factors.

Furthermore, the set-up of a good documentation practice, based on a standardised terminology and methods, will allow the combining of bookbindings records from different projects' databases, thus fostering the research from a comparative perspective.

The data on Ethiopian bookbindings recorded by the project Beta maṣāḥəft (<https://betamasaheft.eu>) are structured similarly and therefore are the first candidates for comparative analysis. The project (complete title, Beta maṣāḥəft: Manuscripts of Ethiopia and Eritrea - Schriftkultur des christlichen Äthiopiens und Eritreas: eine multimediale Forschungsumgebung) headed by Prof. Alessandro Bausi, aims at creating a virtual research environment that will manage complex data related to the predominantly Christian manuscript tradition of the Ethiopian and Eritrean Highlands.

### **More than a Protective Function**

By proposing a typological classification of Coptic bindings, the study aims at answering

questions such as: which material and techniques were available for bookbinding manufacture and which reasons were behind the choice of specific solutions? Also, the project interrogates the function of bindings beyond the protection of the leaves and will permit to highlight how specific designs and materials inform on the prestige of a manuscript, its use, and the context in which it has been produced or transformed.

By Eliana Dal Sasso  
University of Hamburg  
Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures

## Ligatus' Summer School 2021

<https://www.ligatus.org.uk/summerschool/2021>

<https://bit.ly/3wbjxR9>

20-24 September and 27 September - 1 October 2021

Deadline for applications: 30 July 2021  
Successful applicants will be contacted by mid August 2021

Apply here:

<https://www.ligatus.org.uk/summerschool/node/add/application>

<https://bit.ly/3qFL5gt>

The Ligatus Summer School 2021 will be co-organised with the Saint Catherine Foundation. Due to the ongoing uncertainty surrounding travel and even small gatherings of people, we have come to the conclusion that this year's summer school will have to be conducted online. Participants will therefore need to have access to a computer and the Internet with Zoom video-conferencing software installed. Further information regarding software for the second week of the course (Linked Data) will follow.

## Background

The contribution that bindings can make to our understanding of the history and culture of the book is often neglected, but they can offer insights into the study of readership, the book trade, and the provenance of books that are often not available elsewhere. In order to realise this potential, it is important to learn not only the history of the craft but also how to record observations in a consistent and organised way. Librarians, cataloguers, conservators, book historians, book collectors and all scholars who work with early books can benefit from understanding the structure and materials of the bindings they encounter and from knowing how to record and describe them. Clear descriptions of bindings are invaluable for the management of library collections, pursuing academic research and making informed decisions about conservation. They are also important for digitisation projects, as they can radically enrich the potential of image and text metadata. It is our belief that bindings should be seen as an integral part of the book, without which our understanding of the history and use of books is often greatly circumscribed. The main purpose of the Summer School is to uncover the possibilities latent in the detailed study of bookbindings. Both courses offered in this Summer School look at bindings from different geographical areas and from different aspects.

## Week I (20 – 24 September 2021): European Bookbinding 1450-1830

Tutor: Professor N. Pickwood. This course will follow European bookbindings from the end of the Middle Ages to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, using the bindings themselves to illustrate the aims and intentions of the binding trade. A large part of the course will be devoted to the identification of both broad and detailed distinctions within the larger groups of plain commercial bindings and the possibilities of identifying work from different countries, cities, even workshops without reference to finishing tools. The identification and significance of the

different materials used in bookbinding will be examined, as well as the classification of bookbindings by structural type, and how these types developed through the three centuries covered by the course. The development of binding decoration will be touched on, but will not form a major part of the discussion. The course consists of ten 90-minute sessions with Powerpoint presentations (over 800 images will be shown). Actual examples of bindings will be examined in the afternoons from Prof. Pickwoad's own binding collection.

### **Week 2 (27 September – 1 October 2021): Identifying and Recording Bookbinding Structures of the Eastern Mediterranean**

Tutors: Dr Athanasios Velios and Dr Georgios Boudalis. This course is divided into two interconnected sessions. In the first section, with Dr Georgios Boudalis, the focus will be on the major structural and decorative features of the different bookbinding traditions that have developed in the eastern Mediterranean—including the Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Georgian and Islamic—with a special focus on the Byzantine and post-Byzantine bookbindings. The aim is to follow the evolution of these closely related bookbinding types and establish their similarities and differences in lectures, slide shows, and demonstrations of real bookbindings from collections in Thessaloniki. This part of the course will consist of six 90-minute presentations from Monday to Wednesday. The second part of the course, taught by Dr Athanasios Velios, will focus on the methodologies and techniques that can be used to record bookbindings. In particular: a) Linked Data, the semantic web and the CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model (CRM); b) standardised vocabularies for book descriptions and relevant standards (Language of Bindings and SKOS); c) the development of database schemas for book descriptions; d) mapping bookbinding description databases to CIDOC-CRM and publishing Linked Data. This session will consist of a combination of presentations and hands-on workshops in groups.

### **Course Fees**

Course fees are £250 per person per week. Please note that course fees cover only the tuition and an electronic copy of the course book *European Bookbinding 1450-1830*.

### **About the Saint Catherine Foundation**

The Saint Catherine Foundation and its related organizations in the USA and Switzerland support conservation work at Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt. The foundations in London, New York, and Geneva collaborate with leading universities, museums, libraries, and other institutions on cultural, educational, and fundraising events and initiatives in Europe, the US, and beyond. Partners include the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the British Library in London, the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt. The Foundation has been collaborating with Ligatus researchers over the past 20 years.

### **About Ligatus**

Ligatus undertakes work in the history of bookbinding, book conservation, archiving, and the application of digital technology to the exploration of these fields. Ligatus's main research projects include the conservation of the books in the library of St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai, the development of the Language of Bindings (LoB) thesaurus of bookbinding terms and the Linked Conservation Data project.