

Poster

**"The conservation of textile bookbindings: What approach for the paper conservator?" - Presented at the XIIIth Congress IADA – Berlin, 12-16 October 2015**

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Mots-clés: reliure textile  
- restauration - IADA  
Congress

Keywords: textile  
bookbinding - restoration -  
IADA Congress

En octobre 2015, Cécile Brossard du Service Restauration de la BnF a présenté son travail sur la restauration des reliures d'étoffe, lors du XIII<sup>e</sup> Congrès [IADA](#) (International Association of Book and paper Conservators) à Berlin (consulter [ici le programme](#) de ce congrès).

Bien que rare, ce type de reliures est pourtant bien représenté dans les collections de la BnF.

Le poster présenté lors de ce congrès, ici publié (**v. page suivante**), propose une méthodologie visant à aider le restaurateur de reliures, non familier avec le matériau textile.

Il pourra ainsi appréhender le traitement de conservation-restauration le plus adapté pour une reliure recouverte de tissu, en fonction des dégradations qu'elle présente.

Un article publié dans le n°. 34 (janvier 2017) d'[Actualités de la Conservation](#) reprend en détail cette méthodologie et sa mise en œuvre pour la restauration de reliures textiles appartenant aux collections de la BnF.



# THE CONSERVATION OF TEXTILE BOOKBINDINGS WHAT APPROACH FOR THE PAPER CONSERVATOR ?



(BnF) Bibliothèque nationale de France

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XIIIth IADA Congress / Berlin / 12-16 October 2015

## INTRODUCTION

Books covered with textiles (satin, velvet or damask...) constitute a challenge for book conservators. First of all, they need to understand textiles and adapt their technical approach with the help of an historical fabric specialist and a textile conservator. We can choose between different treatments according to the textile degradations.

## PREPARATORY STEPS BEFORE CONSERVATION TREATMENT

1. Detailed description of the binding and its decoration.....to use the right textile vocabulary
2. Technical examination of the structure of the textile covering.....to understand how the textile is attached to the boards
3. Damaged areas identification (nature, localisation, extent).....for the choice of the conservation treatment
4. Literature about specific materials and techniques.....to ensure the validity of the conservation project
5. Weaving and fibre identification.....to use the proper conservation fabrics
6. Adhesive and dye analysis.....for the compatibility of the conservation products
7. Testing of the conservation method : needle or adhesives .....to select the appropriate conservation technique

## AND THEIR AIMS

## HOW TO DEAL WITH DAMAGED TEXTILE BINDINGS → 4 APPROACHES

Each approach involves dust removal, preservation boxes, handling recommendations, limited consultations and digitisation when possible (see reliures.bnf.fr)

### I. NO TREATMENT, ONLY PRESERVATION BOX / Preventive conservation (ICOM)

#### When the textile is in a very bad condition : very deteriorated weaving

For completely frayed fabric or fabrics where only warp / weft yarns remain.

- An adapted box is made with preservative materials. The inside of the box may be upholstered but must be smooth in the case of metal decoration to prevent snagging.

### II. EXTERNAL PROTECTION WITH A CREPELINE / Remedial conservation (ICOM)

#### When textile coverings are in a bad condition : fragile weaving

For velvet coverings with a powdery condition of velvet pile or fabric coverings with very fragile and brittle silk.

- The fragile covering is overlaid with a dyed silk crepline which is held by sewing at the turn-ins (herring stitch).



Silk damask binding mock-up

### III. COVERING STABILISATION / Remedial conservation (ICOM)

#### When simple consolidation is required

For detached textile areas and detached embroideries.

- The covering is stabilised with stitches and/or little patches of adhesives, without addition of fabrics.  
Example : 17th embroidered binding :



Rés. g B 3, BnF-RLR  
Horae diurnae breviarum romani



#### Satin covering :

- Weaving : satin
- Decoration : embroideries with silk threads, metal braids, gilt silver spangles and pearls.
- Fibres : silk for warp and weft yarns, and for embroidery threads

- Condition : many detached or lost decorations and some corroded metals

- Method of stabilisation : the detached elements have been sewed to the original satin with a little curved needle and a dyed silk organzine.



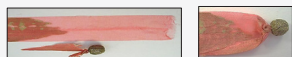
#### Ribbons supposedly used as bookmarks :

- Weaving : taffeta
- Fibres : silk

- Condition : stained, with losses and fragments



- Method of textile conservation : After flattening, ribbons have been treated by sewing them (running and couching stitches) with a little curved needle and a dyed silk organzine on a textile support, a dyed silk crepline :



#### Preservation box :



Former inappropriate preservation box



New preservation box with three compartments

### IV. COVERING CONSERVATION TREATMENT / Restoration (ICOM)

#### When textile coverings present losses of fabric

For materials damaged by age, usage or by a previously deteriorated repair.

- The conservation treatment is based on the addition of a new fabric to restore missing areas.  
Examples : 15th brocaded damask binding and 15th velvet binding :



Latin 6520, BnF-MSS  
De animalibus libri virginti sex  
by Alberti magni



Français 19088, BnF-MSS  
Le livre du trésor  
by Brunetto Latini

#### Damask covering :

- Weaving : 5-point-satin base damask with a green and beige striped selvedge (fore-edge turn-in)
- Fabric position : with grain direction
- Decoration : metal brocaded gilt threads
- Fibres : silk (warp and weft yarns)
- Metal analysis : gold plated silver alloy with copper
- Adhesive analysis : starch paste and protein glue
- Dye analysis : cochineal

#### Velvet covering :

- Weaving : cut pile velvet with a green selvedge (tail turn-in)
- Fabric position : against grain direction
- Fibres : silk (warp, weft and pile yarns)

- Condition : Damask binding : water damage, stains, losses on cords, joints, corners and clasp traces, many detached gilt threads and some corroded metals  
Velvet binding : worn velvet, spine textile replaced by leather, separated back board

#### → Restoration fabric

- Selection : a preservative material, as close as possible to the ground weaving  
for the damask : cotton satin instead of silk satin (too shiny)  
for the velvet : canvas instead of velvet (wear and tear velvet), linen instead of silk (too shiny)
- Dyeing : with synthetic colouring agents (validated by the BnF laboratory). Ideally, contact dyeing professionals; for example, we worked with the dyeing workshop of the Manufacture des Gobelins (Paris).

- Method of textile conservation : with adhesive and needle :



1. Spine lining conservation with a natural canvas linen (bias direction which is stronger) and starch paste



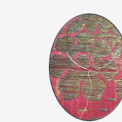
2. New textile covering with dyed cotton satin (same direction as original fabric) and starch paste



The spine lining linen is spaced from the restoration fabric to avoid over thickness



3. Adhesive re-integration of the historical textile with Klucel G 20 % (w/v) in ethanol validated by the BnF laboratory



4. Sewing of the detached gilt threads with a little curved needle and dyed silk organzine

## CONCLUSION

It is essential to get advice from textile professionals and adapt the treatment according to the covering material.

### MATERIALS AND PRODUCTS

- Restoration textiles : Fabrics : silk crepline, cotton satin, linen canvas / Thread : silk organzine
- Dyeing products : Irganolite colouring agents
- Adhesive for re-integration : HPC (Klucel G®) 20% (w/v) in Ethanol, brush application (on spine and joint)

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Bouvet S., Buisson N., Kumar C., Le Bourg E., Rotier V. (BnF Laboratory), Cussel Bouquet S. (Textile conservator), Quetion M. H. (Responsible for textile analysis, MTAD and CETA), Hermant M. (BnF-MSS Curator), Le Bars F. (BnF-RLR Curator), Trivier F. (Dyeing workshop of the Manufacture des Gobelins)

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