

LEATHER AND RELATED MATERIALS WORKING GROUP NEWSLETTER – JULY 2018

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Newsletter Editor: Theo Sturge and Laurianne Robinet

FROM THE COORDINATOR

Dear members, dear colleagues,

Here comes the summer and with it, the annual newsletter of the Leather and Related Materials Working Group !

Since our last newsletter a year ago, a lot of things took place. The triennial conference in September in Copenhagen was a real success with more than 1000 participants from 58 countries (a record), a remarkable organization, high quality presentations and a beautiful location. It was also the opportunity to celebrate the 50th anniversary of ICOM-CC and the presentation of the “History project” that came back

on the evolution of the Working Group and the people involved in the adventure. The conference was also occasion to launch the online publication platform that provide open access to all the article of the last three triennial conference, and this will continuously be enlarged.

In the Leather and Related Materials Working Group session the four presentations and three posters have attracted a lot of interest and stimulated many exchanges and discussions. The “Business meeting” was the opportunity to discuss with the members present the orientation for this triennial period and the main wish to have an Interim Meeting for the Working Group on its own... So, I am delighted to announce that the next **Interim Meeting** of the Leather and Related Materials Working Group will take place **in Paris on the 6th and 7th of June 2019**, and will be organized jointly by the Research Center for Preservation (CRC) and the ethnographic museum (musée du Quai Branly). More information to come, but **save the dates !**

Now I let you enjoy the newsletter filled with fascinating projects and events.



Laurianne Robinet

Coordinator of the ICOM-CC Leather and Related Materials Working Group

THE IDENTIFICATION OF 'SHARK SKIN' ON BOOKBINDINGS AS LEATHER OR PARCHMENT

Herre de Vries

Having worked in the conservation of books for over ten years, I have come across many interesting materials used in the manufacture of books. One of these is shagreen or 'shark skin' as it is known in the international book trade, with 'haaienleer' (shark leather) being a commonly used term among Dutch curators and conservators. As part of an MA in Conservation at the University of Amsterdam I have written a thesis about these so-called shark skin bindings [figs. 1 and 2].



Fig. 1: Two seventeenth century bindings in shagreen, 1769 D 312 en 1769 G 10, National Library of the Netherlands. And, below

Historically and in modern literature not related to books, it is mostly called shagreen instead of shark skin or shark leather. The shagreen on bookbindings can have several differences in characteristics. Sometimes it is more greyish white beneath the black surface and other times there is the typical brown or red brown colour of leather below. It can feel both hard as parchment and softer like leather. Certain types can react to moisture the way parchment does, becoming very soft and flexible while being tough and hard again after drying.

In order to better understand this material with its pebbled granular surface the MA research focused on the relationship between those macroscopical observations and the actual microscopical identification of shagreen. In total 94 bookbindings from 1600 till 1900 were studied in the National Library of the Netherlands and Ets Haim – Livraria Montezinos. It was possible to sample 85 of these bookbindings for cross section analysis. Each institution holds a set of samples of the shagreen from their bookbindings.

The thesis was written in Dutch and a scientific article based on the thesis is currently in preparation. A copy can be obtained from the author: h.de.vries@restauratie-na.nl



Fig. 2: A nineteenth century binding in shagreen, 1769 B 1, National Library of the Netherlands.

Two blog posts have been published about the research:

<https://www.kb.nl/blogs/boekgeschiedenis/haaienleer-of-segrijn-luxe-en-mysterie>
and
<http://www.restauratie-na.nl/haaienleer-mysterie-tipje-sluier-opgelicht/>

Summary - A Study of the Relationship between Macroscopical Observation and the Microscopical Determination of the Shagreen on 94 Bookbindings from 1600 till 1900.

Part of the books bound between 1600 and 1900 are covered in a material which is called shagreen or shark leather. It is not, however, tanned or otherwise preserved shark skin and during treatment it can have both leather- and parchment-like properties. Parchment and leather respond differently to the treatments executed by conservators. The understanding and prediction of such material properties is a prerequisite for well thought through conservation decisions. Thus far the knowledge to execute the needed identification of shagreen has been lacking.

This thesis answers the question whether the visual properties that conservators associate with leather and parchment, are adequate indicators for identifying shagreen as a leather or a parchment. It demonstrates the relationship between those macroscopic properties and the microscopic image of the material which actually tells us what treatment the material has undergone during production.

It can be concluded from historical literature that shagreen on bookbindings can have two different origins. On the one hand it was made from horse, donkey or mule hides through a very crafty process [fig. 3]. On the other hand it was made from goat leather through an unspecified process that gave the leather a shagreen-like pebbled surface.



Fig. 3: Photograph from the *Turkestan Album* (1871-1872): pressing the seeds into the stretched skin. From: Part 3 plate 27, number 127, Library of Congress reproduction number: LC-DIG-ppmsca-12250.

The material properties of the shagreen on 94 bookbindings from the collections of the National Library of the Netherlands in The Hague and the library of Ets Haim – Livraria Montezinos in Amsterdam, are described. Based on the appearance and colour of the fibre mass and the presence or absence of a flaking surface layer, 52 are identified as parchment (55 %) and 24 as leather (26 %). Besides these two groups another 18 shagreen bindings are described as having both leather and parchment-like properties (19 %).

Through the analysis of the vertical cross sections of the shagreen on 85 of the 94 bookbindings 36 bindings are identified as parchment (42 %), 14 as leather (17 %) and 35 as hybrid (41 %) [figs. 4-6.]. The microscopic image of this hybrid group shows both the layered two-dimensional fibre orientation typical of parchment and the more three-dimensional orientation known of leather. The samples identified as leather had actually been described as having leather-like properties during the macroscopic analysis. The same held true for the samples identified as parchment. However, the hybrid samples are present among shagreen macroscopically identified as parchment as well as among those identified as leather. This means the terminology of the macroscopical description, as it was done in this study, is not refined enough to actually identify the hybrid types.

This study shows that the properties of the cross section of shagreen which can be assessed by conservators on a macroscopical level can roughly be used to determine whether or not one is dealing with a leather- or parchment-like shagreen. Because it is not yet possible to identify the hybrid type using these properties, additional care needs to be taken when treating shagreen. Shagreen types which look much like leather may actually behave like parchment during treatment, and vice versa.

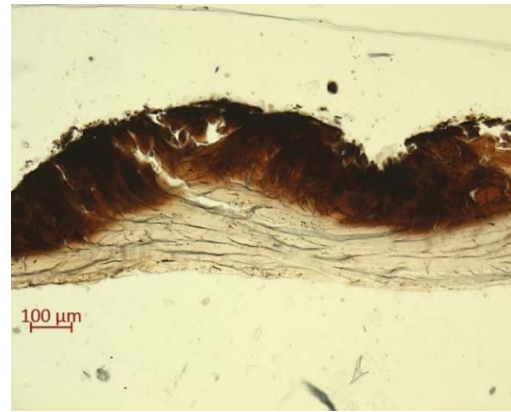


Fig. 4: Cross section of sample 61-National Library-1769D18: shagreen with a smooth fibre mass, a light grey colour below the black surface and without flaking, microscopical identification: parchment.

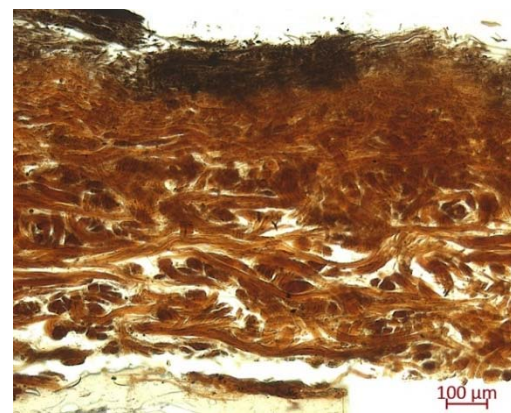


Fig. 5: Cross section of sample 35-Ets Haim-22G7: shagreen with a fibrous fibre mass, a red brown colour below the black surface and with flaking, microscopical identification: leather.

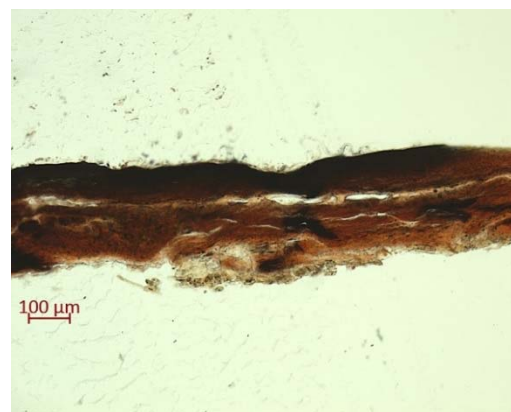


Fig. 6 Cross section of sample 74-National Library-1769B5: shagreen with a fibrous fibre mass, a brown colour below the black surface and without flaking, microscopical identification: hybrid.

Herre de Vries is a practising conservator of books and related objects made of leather, parchment or paper. Together with Elizabet Nijhoff Asser he owns the Amsterdam-based studio RNA-Restauratie, www.restauratie-na.nl. h.de.vries@restauratie-na.nl

INTRODUCTION OF NATURAL MATERIALS IN LEATHER CONSERVATION TO CONTROL FUNGI

Nitin Kumar

Introduction

Conservation is an interdisciplinary field, involving major of science fields, to fields associated with arts. Each has their own significant inputs and has helped art conservators to find solutions in tricky situations. The same is true for leather conservation. Leather artefact is as unique as any other museum object. Be whatever reason, it is important to safeguard this material of antiquity (in itself) be it in any form. On top leather being an organic material in nature, conserving leather made objects could be a challenge. It is vulnerable and prone to be attacked by a plethora of problems, under favourable conditions. One such problem is that of Fungi.

As conservator it is not necessary that we have solution to all the problems. We have been borrowing methods and materials from other fields and tuning them accordingly to cater to our problems. But it is not necessary that all the methods could be applicable as borrowed. The fungicides- the use of chemicals in the field of Art Conservation is harmful due to their impact on art objects and the health of the museum staff (Crook and Burton, 2010; Sterflinger, 2010; Strang and Dawson, 1991). The use of dimethylfumarate (DMF) has been deemed unfit for human health in many countries and has been banned (Kuneva, 2009). Another fungicide ethylene oxide (another popular fungicide) has to be used under strict supervision, as it requires special chambers and is deemed toxic (Rakotonirainy and Lavédrine, 2005).

Under such circumstances, first it is important to be ready for worst case scenarios and second- keep looking for alternatives, such as natural materials. Natural materials, like Essential Oils (EO), fatty oils, etc. have the potential to be anti-fungal agents and their application in other fields have been found to be promising. So there use in the field of conservation could be a welcome move.

Use of Natural Materials in Other fields

Essential oils and their volatile constituents are used widely to prevent and treat human diseases. The possible role and mode of action of these natural products against prevention and treatment of

cancer, cardiovascular diseases including atherosclerosis and thrombosis, as well as their bioactivity as antibacterial, antiviral, antioxidants, etc. has been effective (Edris, 2007).

The same plant can provide a band of substances with a very broad range of application due to their different chemical structures. The use of gums, tannins, resins, etc. is already there in Art and art conservation. Their side effects have been found to minimal on objects, as well as on human health. Apart from being cost effective, literature has also cited that carvacrol is significantly less cytotoxic than conventional antifungals (Ahmad et al., 2011). They are metabolized and excreted quickly. Natural phenols which form majority of antifungal compounds of essential oils, tend to be contrarily described in literature as, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antifungal, anticarcinogenic, compounds, etc. (Kokoskova et al., 2011) (Ruberto and Baratta, 2000). Plant essential oils and extracts may have a role as pharmaceuticals and preservatives (Hammer K. A. et al., 2001) and as an effective inhibitor of storage fungi (Mishra and Dubey, 1994).

Application in Art Conservation and ongoing Project

The use of essential oils in the art conservation has been very limited and has been applied in traces. Gatenby and Townley, 2003 has reported about the use of tea tree oil in museum to control fungi.

In my initial research I tried to study the efficacy of essential oils against few common fungi species and how the leather will behave upon application of oils. The results have been found promising. Few of the oils can be used as effective fumigant. The oils are not only easily available, but are also cheap and has minimal to no health impact on humans.

The research is still undergoing and the results will be discussed soon.

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NEW GILT LEATHER PANELS IN FRENCH MUSEUMS

Céline Bonnot-Diconne

Recently two new gilt leather wall-hangings were restored to be exhibited permanently in two different museums.

The first one is exceptional. Known today as the « **Battle of Gilboa** », it was acquired on the Parisian art market by the musée de la Renaissance in Ecoeu in 2015. The scene is developed onto eight large panels. As written in the Bible (1 Samuel 31 1-13), the king Saul is committing suicide after its defeat in a battle and the loss of his three sons. Unfortunately, the original border panels are lost. But we know for sure that this tapestry is one of the complete set mentioned in 1909 by an antique dealer in Dijon. Its reappearance was a nice surprise, especially since the loss of three tapestries of the same series in the fire of the castle of Lunéville in 2003. It is 225 cm high by 328 cm wide (one panel is 112 x 83 cm). The story of this decor is unknown, but it could be dated from the first half of the 17th century and have been made in the south Netherlands. It is painted and punched (with 10 different punches). Badly damaged by ancient restorations and a frame presentation, it was restored by the 2CRC and reinstalled on the wall of the “Grande Salle du Roi” in Ecoeu in December 2017 (fig. 1-2).



Fig. 1: « **Battle of Gilboa** », gilt leather, punched, first half of the 17th century. After conservation.



Fig. 2: « **Battle of Gilboa** », gilt leather, punched, first half of the 17th century, musée national de la Renaissance, Ecouen, France.

<http://musee-rennaissance.fr/objet/la-bataille-de-gelboe>
https://twitter.com/chateau_ecouen/status/940871145204649984

The second tapestry is completely different but not less interesting. Known today as the “tenture aux serpents”, it was conserved in the collections of the musée Estienne de Saint Jean (musée du Vieil Aix) in Aix-en-Provence.

A large quantity of panels was kept in storage. In 2016, a complete study of this batch showed that at least one surface (8 m²) could be restored. Three different types of panels are normally assembled to compose this decor. The “border” panels are made of two types of embossed and painted gilt leather: basket and flowers are represented on horizontal borders and interweaved **snakes** between flowers are on the vertical borders. The “main” panels are very special as they are not gilt: there are no silver leaves on the leather which is only embossed and green painted in the background. This wall-hanging still conserves its leather loops and the restoration project was very respectful of this technical detail, hanging the tapestry the same way onto the wall of the museum. Thanks to Mr J-P.Fournet, this tapestry can be attributed to a local workshop: André Reynier known as “Manolly” and could be dated from 1668. The restoration ended in January 2018 by the reinstallation at the 1st floor of the museum (fig. 3-4).



Fig. 3: “Tenture aux serpents” gilt leather, embossed, 1668?, musée Estienne de Saint Jean, Aix-en-Provence, France.



Fig. 4: “Tenture aux serpents”, musée Estienne de Saint Jean, Aix-en-Provence, France. Left: Example of a vertical border panel with snakes painted on gilt leather, right: Example of a main panel with green painted background on “ungilt” leather.

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BOOK & GILT LEATHER

Julie Tyrlik

Summary of Conservation Master Thesis - Institut national du patrimoine (France).

The collection of the *École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts (ENSBA) de Paris*, in France, has more than 500 incunabula¹. Most were donated to the collection in 1925 by the fabric manufacturer and collector Jean Masson (1856 – 1933). Among these, MASSON 838 is atypical (Fig. 1). It is an exemplar of the second edition of the *Mirouer de la redemption de l'umain lignage*, one of the first French illustrated printed books, printed in 1479 by Martin Huss in Lyon.



Fig 1: MASSON 838 (before conservation treatment) – Upper and lower board © Inp / E. Itié

The first sewing, made on five alum tawed sewing supports (split straps), and probably contemporary of the printing, is still on the book. After the loss or destruction of the plates at an unknown date, the supports were cut to the textblock thickness, and a new cover was made. It is composed of two parts of polychrome embossed gilt leather, both made from sheepskin², and attached together with hand-made stitches. The cover has been attached on the textblock with three calf leather straps³ (Fig. 2).

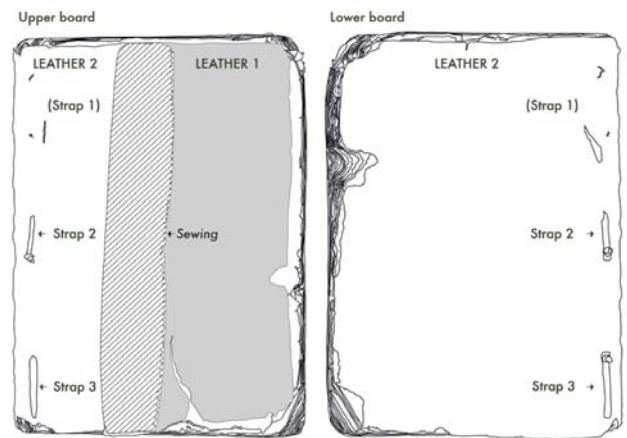


Fig. 2: MASSON 838 - Composition of the cover: two parts of leather and three straps.

Thanks to the expertise of Jean-Pierre Fournet (Fournet 2004), the two leather parts originating from two different panels have been attributed to French manufacturers from the South of France (Fig. 3). They can be dated to the end of the 17th or the beginning of the 18th Century.

Despite the rarity of gilt leather in books, two types of main typologies have mainly been encountered during the project: either the leather is used as a classic board cover, or to form a flexible classic cover. In this last case, the textblock was mostly sewn through the cover (Koldewej 1995). Unfortunately, due to the lack of knowledge about gilt leather in the library field, and because of the difficulty to identify them, only a few of these books have been located in French public collections.

The object was in poor condition and so the conservation project mostly focused on remedial cleaning. Amongst other deteriorations, we noticed the presence of mud on the cover and the paper. The opening of the book was limited by the transversal sewing structure. Nevertheless, it was decided at the beginning of the project to preserve the majority of the unique aspects of the book. The first leather strap (*Strap 1*, Fig. 2) has been repaired and the missing section replaced, and the cover stabilised.

¹ Literally meaning « cradle » (of printing), the word *incunabulum* was designated to the first printed books, printed before 1501.

² Results obtained by Mass Spectrometry at the laboratory of the CRC (Laurianne Robinet and Sylvie Heu-Thao).

³ Results obtained by Mass Spectrometry in the York University ZooMS project (Sarah Fiddymnt); before the conservation treatment, *Strap 1* was incomplete.



Fig. 3: Correlation that can be made on the types of gilt leather. Top: Gilt leather conserved in Sorgeat's church (France) – Bottom: Leather 2 on MASSON 838.

A specific part of the project was dedicated to an evaluation of the possible use of softblasting for leather cleaning and as an option for mud removal⁴. The softblasting method was assessed using starch powders (wheat, rice), cellulose powder and microcellulose powder (MCC) on different leather and by testing different cleaning parameters. The experiments gave promising results for the cleaning of leather in particular on the flesh side of the leather. Microcellulose powder was the most efficient for mud elimination, however, the mud/dirt residue was difficult to remove completely, particularly when irregularities were present. Based on these experiments, it was decided not to use this method to clean the surface of the gilt leather cover, due to the presence of numerous irregularities. Instead, the

mud was removed by mechanical cleaning and ultra-pure buffered water.

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E. Koldewij, « Bookbindings and Folders Made of Gilt Leather » dans *I.C.O.M. Working Group n°10, Conservation of Leathercraft and Related Object, Interim Meeting*, Amsterdam, 1995, p. 38.

Acknowledgments

Alexandre Leducq, librarian, manuscript and ancient printed books department, ENSBA, Paris, France, **Coralie Barbe**, book & paper conservator, Paris, France, **Céline Bonnot-Diconne**, leather conservator, 2CRC, Moirans, France, **Laurianne Robinet**, leather conservation scientist, CRC, Paris, France, **Jean-Pierre Fournet**, Art historian, Paris, France, **Eloy Koldewij**, Senior Specialist Historic Interiors, Netherlands, **Anne Genachte Le-Bail**, analytical scientist at INP, Paris, France, **Sigrid Mirabaud**, analytical scientist at INP, Paris, France, **Sarah Fiddymment**, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at BioArCh, University of York, UK, **Bert Jacek**, book conservator, University of Applied Sciences, Köln, Germany.

The complete thesis can be download on the website of the Inp (<http://www.inp.fr/Ressources-documentaires/Base-des-memoires>), by asking ID and password at: documentation.oeuvres@inp.fr

Étude et conservation-restauration d'un incunable couvert de cuir doré repoussé polychrome (1479; Paris, École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts). Évaluation des possibilités de nettoyage du cuir par projection de particules douces, Mémoire de fin d'études en vue de l'obtention du diplôme de restaurateur du patrimoine dans la spécialité arts-graphique & livre, 2017.

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⁴ Based on first experiments made by Bert Jacek, book conservator, University of Applied Sciences, Köln, Germany.

LEATHER NEWS FROM IBERIA PENINSULA

Franklin Pereira
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1 – Ana Caldas, from Portugal, was chosen to participate in the 2^o “LETHES-ART” bi-annual international contemporary exhibition, taking place in the village of Ponte de Lima, in the north of Portugal; this year’s theme is ‘Cartography of Cultures’, with an extensive use of historical buildings and public places of the medieval village; the exhibition started in 1 July and closes in 30 September.

Her piece, “In the path of Love”, is a sculpture in leather, silk brocade, semi-precious stones, and silver jewellery. The inspiration takes in account the house as an open and receptive space, as well as an intimate space. It’s an imagination piece, with a strong futuristic and multicultural character, basing itself in the visual and symbolic culture of the sacred spaces. The ancestry of leather allows to create a base, an “earth support” that strengthens the idea of a house as our second skin, having in itself past and memory. The leather piece, with a diameter of 40 cm, rests in a metal stand, 115 cm in height. More information on the Internet: www.anamoraiscaldas.com and <https://www.letthesartpontedelima.com/en/>

2 – Once again, for several days in May, took place the 6th Annual Leather Meeting in Allariz, northeast Spain, organized by the Leather Museum team. It’s already the 6th edition, besides the four ones that happened before (two in Allariz, one in Cordoba, another in Valladolid), and the meetings are proving that a group of some 60 interested people, mostly young and always changing, can meet annually and learn several types of leathercraft.



Fig. 1: “Urban Portrait” by José Bernardo

An exhibition in the village hosted pieces from 6 arts and crafts schools where leather is taken into account: Igualada, Burgos, Cordoba, Jerez de la Frontera, Madrid and Vigo – ornamental, decorative, utilitarian (including horse gear), creative works from students.

“Urban Portrait” was the solo exhibition by José Bernardo, from Mexico, using scraps and leather dust (Fig. 1). Shoe patterns and sandal making was a 3-day workshop lead by Alex Casado (Fig. 2) and Sara Montero, from Madrid.



Fig. 2: Shoe patterns and sandal making workshop

One-day workshops involved batik and tool making by José Villar (from Silleda) (Fig. 3), and Fernando Sousa (from Ponferrada), dyes and feather making (Tandy Leather team), home-made pressed textures using several grains, natural textures and artificial ones (by Pepe Pereira, from Pontevedra), and leather buckles (by myself).



Fig. 3: Batik and tool making workshop

The launching of the books “Skin with Skin: transfiguration and transcendence” (Ana and myself) and “From Cordoba to Portugal: gilt leather trade in the 16th century” took place at the leather Museum, as well as a talk by Nelson Gomez Callejas, from Venezuela – former teacher of Fine Arts School in Colombia –, on his experiments with mixed techniques (dyes, ball pens, gold foil, embossing, modelling) on leather.

At the ground floor of the Leather Museum there was a market: USA centered Tandy Leather stall, Ivan Rios, a tool maker from Vigo, and Curtidos Queiro from Pontevedra, showing tools, dyes and hides.

3– In Cordoba, Juan Garcia Olmedo had a solo exhibition “Diptych of Córdoba... and related pieces”, taking place during February at Bailío Palace-Live Library of Al-Andalus; besides the main piece, there were 4 others, inspired in the cultures that left imprint in Cordoba: Roman, Islamic, Judaic and Christian, and also another pieces, “Gaza” and “Damascus, a jasmine city?”. Juan Olmedo has frequent exhibitions, like “From wall covering to guadamecil” in 2016, “Protagonism of the field” in 2011, and several awarded pieces (in 1993, 98, 2001, 2004 and 2006) in art, craft and painting contexts. Interviews can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MA6hDFN3OfE> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NzyXXMApMLg> His webpage: <http://www.garciaolmedo-cuero.es/>

4 – Also in Cordoba, Rafael Pulido Jurado had the exhibition “Iberian Imaginary”, at the Royal Botanic Gardens, in May. He’s a former leather teacher at the local Arts and Crafts School, from 1996 to 2000, and in 2016, and since then he is teaching wood and stone work at the craft school “Dionisio Ortiz”, also in the heritage city. His sculptures are made in stone, wood and leather – uniting the genesis of Matter with imagination, symbolism and myths from the Iberian mind. More in the Internet: <https://www.facebook.com/rafael.pulidojurado> and <https://rpulidojurado.blogspot.pt/2018/04/imaginario-iberico-esculturas.html>.

THE CURRENT USE OF LEATHER IN BOOK CONSERVATION

Christine McNair

American Institute for Conservation pre-conference
Tuesday, May 29, 2018, Houston, Texas

I recently had the opportunity to attend the pre-conference symposium on the current use of leather in book conservation. Quite provocatively, the symposium description included the questions: “Should conservators continue to employ leather using traditional book repair techniques on leather bindings? Should we abandon the use of tanned skins in favor of more chemically stable materials?”

The session began with David Lanning of J. Hewit & Sons offering a virtual tour of the Hewit leather factory. He introduced the processes and machinery used during leather manufacture at Hewit’s, and spoke to the structure of the skins and how that relates to the end products. He discussed as well certain post-manufacture techniques and processes applied to leather.

The next speaker, Dawn Walus discussed the historical methods used to preserve leather bindings at the Boston Athenaeum, one of the oldest libraries in the United States. Her presentation included examining previous repairs done at the Athenaeum before the establishment of the conservation department in 1963, specifically the use of Liquick, an unstable form of artificial ‘painted’ leather that was used in the collection. Preliminary work has been done on the identification and removal of Liquick by conservation staff.

Book conservators *Holly Herro* (National Library of Medicine), *William Minter* (Pennsylvania State University Libraries), *Kristi Wright* (National Library of Medicine), *Katie Wagner* (Smithsonian Libraries), and *Laura McNulty* (intern, National Library of Medicine) presented the results of the leather discussion group, formed in 2016 to exchange observations on leather and leather dyes traditionally used in conservation. They provided a fascinating review of various environmental conditions, animal husbandry, and changes to tanning processes that may have impacted the quality of leather produced since the industrial revolution. The panel also spoke of the wide range of previous tests used historically to indicate quality, as well as just how long there has been concern about the standards used in leather production. The

discussion group is currently reviewing questionnaires on leather completed by bookbinders and tanners, reviewing the efficacy of former tests (PIRA for example) to determine leather stability and using XRD, SEM, FTIR, ICP, GCMS, and other testing for stable and unstable skins, both historic and contemporary.



Fig 1: David Lanning reviewing samples with participants

James Reid Cunningham, a private practice conservator who previously worked at Harvard University and the Boston Athenaeum, presented a talk entitled “Love It or Hate It” wherein he compared methods of binding repair he uses in his daily work, specifically focusing on the differences between private and institutional practice. He made the argument that few treatments of a leather binding are truly reversible. For example, if a kozo mend fails – it may skin the hair side of the original leather, even if it is generally a less obtrusive repair than a reback.

Émilie Demers presented her MA research from Queens University on how Japanese paper’s physical strength is impacted by the application of acrylic paint, Cellugel, SC6000 (now known as SC7400), and PVAC – as some of these materials are commonly applied during Japanese paper repairs of leather bindings. She presented preliminary results of her study, which focused on fold endurance. Preliminary results indicated that toned Japanese paper with Cellugel and the toned Japanese paper with Cellugel, SC6000 and PVAC both decreased drastically in strength after ageing.

Sarah Reidell (Head of Conservation, University of Pennsylvania Libraries) presented on the evolution of a technique she introduced along with Grace Owen-Weiss in 2010. The technique was formerly

referred to as ‘cast composites’ – she now prefers to use the term ‘textured fills’. The technique involves the use of custom silicone moulds from a sacrificial texture to reproduce the surface grain of leather using a laminate process of acrylic media and paper. It offers a sympathetic repair when working with highly textured grain.

Sékolène Girard (Library of Versailles) presented on her attempt to create a commercially available synthetic leather based upon past BEVA research. Called SINTEVA Cuir, it is a form of neutral ‘faux-leather’ that she believes is more neutral and less invasive than contemporary leather in book repairs. Her initial testing indicates SINTEVA is stronger than a Japanese paper joint repair though the SINTEVA will still break before the original material. She anticipates publishing more extensively on her approach with this material in the near future.

“The Full Toolkit Approach to Leather” was presented by Katherine Kelly, Dan Paterson, and Shelly Smith from the Library of Congress speaking to how leather is used in the conservation division, focusing primarily on methodology, but also their review of older treatments. Presenters spoke about historic and recent treatments where leather was used as the covering material or primary repair material, as well as examples where other materials were chosen. They advocated for a range of materials being necessary for the ‘toolkit’ of the contemporary conservator.

Ultimately the conclusion generally presented in the symposium was that leather had a place in book conservation, though perhaps it couldn’t be relied upon for the structural needs of a repair. Of interest however, was the multifaceted look at both the idea of leather as a structural element -- can it be replaced with another type of material? How does that material behave over time? How have our previous repairs held up? And although there were papers discussing alternative materials to leather in the symposium (Japanese paper repairs, cloth interior structural elements, synthetic leather, ‘textured fills’) there was no argument made that those materials should entirely replace leather. Rather the argument was made that conservators need to have a nuanced understanding of what they are doing and why.

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Conservator – Books, textiles, archaeology, objects and paper; Canadian Conservation Institute, Department of Canadian Heritage / Government of Canada -

DRUM MAKING WORKSHOP: CAC 2018 CONFERENCE

Helena Neveu and Amandina Anastassiades

The 44th Annual Canadian Association for Conservation (CAC) Conference 2018 took place in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, May 10-12 at Queen's University, which is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory. A two-day drum making workshop was held May 8-9 for 15 participants as part of the pre-conference activities. The workshop was facilitated by Helena Neveu, a talented and prolific Ojibway hand-drummer and educator.

To prepare for the workshop, Helena began in November 2017 by gathering together fresh deer hides from local indigenous hunters. Queen's University Art Conservation students, who had spent the fall term studying the ethics, properties, processing, deterioration, and the conservation of skins with Assistant Professor Amandina Anastassiades, then had the great privilege of working under Helena's instruction to transform the fresh hides into rawhides, to be used in the Drum Making workshop. Preparation of the rawhides was a two-week process that included soaking in lime water followed by de-fleshing, de-hairing, dyeing (rotten walnuts, cream of tartar, beets) and drying (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1: Neveu (left) with students drying hides.

On day one of the CAC workshop Helena led participants through the creation of their own hand drums, following Ojibway traditions. The raw hides were pre-soaked for 48 hours. Participants cut drumhead rounds from the hides and punched 16 holes along the perimeter following the four directions (4D). Long strips of hide cut from the same skins were strung through the holes with an elaborate tying procedure, securing the drumheads to cedar frames, again following the 4D (Fig. 2). The

13-facet octagon frames were pre-made by Helena, and were constructed with lap joints and hide glue. The hide and strips were kept wet during cutting and assembly. The drums were dried on open-air racks for 24 hours (Fig. 3).

Day two opened with a Cultural Sensitivity Training session led by Queen's University artifacts' conservation student Paige Van Tassel who is Ojibway and Cree. Special guest Molly Hartin, a retired teacher and collector shared family stories and a sampling of artifacts from diverse indigenous origins. In the afternoon, workshop participants had the great honour of participating in Big Drum teachings and a dancing circle led by Elias, Roderick, and Albert's drum group, and accompanied by singer Lori. In closing, participants had the opportunity to birth their own drums guided by Helena, following traditional Ojibway practice. It was an incredible two days and all were touched by Helena's spirit, wisdom, and generosity.



Fig. 2: Tying drums

About the facilitator...by Helena Neveu

Hand drumming is a cultural tradition close to my heart.

Helena Neveu is an Ojibway woman from the Batchewana First Nation of Ojibways in Northern Ontario. Helena dedicates her time to youth, woman and the community, helping them to strive for their own personal excellence. She is committed to the healing of the people and our future generations. Helena has the honor and pleasure of facilitating workshops focusing on this growth. It is her belief that for our future generation of leaders it is vital that they are given the chance to strive for their own personal excellence with the support and guidance through positive role modeling and direction.

Along with her commitment to her people, Helena enjoys singing. She is one of the original members of the Eagle Woman Singers. She is passionate about singing, a tool she uses for spiritual and emotional healing. Helena loves her aboriginal culture and roots and believes that within our ways our laughter keeps us real. Trials and tribulations, Helena has had her share, but from it all she has learned from every teaching and every experience. Helena will say that the Sweat Lodge and the hand drum have helped to make her the woman that she is today. She has been honored to share her gifts with those who appreciate them.



Fig. 3: Finished drums drying

Review from the facilitator....

I am grateful to be writing to you today and how do I start to explain the feeling I had when I was chosen to facilitate the drum making workshop for the CAC Conference for Art Conservation. Our relationship began last year when I was approached by Amandina Anastassiades, a Professor at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario to facilitate a drum making workshop at the conference. As we spoke I could see her enthusiasm. She showed me how her students had studied the exact theory of the practical experience I do, so the students processed deer skins to rawhide for the purpose of the bigger picture: the conference. Not only did they make their own drums, they made their own rawhide as opposed to just buying it from the hide house. Every participant had something material to take away in the end as well as a new thought, friend and experience.

The first thing I always do is give thanks to the Creator and put down tobacco for all of us. I was warmed by all who attended, and they were extremely diligent in their crafting of their drums. I strive to be results oriented. We had a diverse group of conservators and community members with only one little mishap of a cut finger, sorry Amandina. The event smoothly went on in Indian time. I knew the

creator was insuring our event and ceremony held were to be a success.

The two days were filled with presentations of Artifacts presented by Molly Hartin, a retired teacher and collector. Molly shared her family story and allowed the group to view some of her things and actually try on the headdress. It was spectacular. Another presentation given by Paige Van Tassel was cultural sensitivity training and I can't say enough about the importance of this. I felt myself getting teary a few times. Extremely cutting to the soul. Chi Megwitch Paige for opening my eyes on how I think.

On the second day we had a big drum come and we sat outside and had a round dance. There is something about watching everybody dance and laugh and smile as if nobody is watching.

Finally, we finished the conference with a birthing/awakening ceremony. I always look forward to this as this is where the group will play their drums for the first time and I love to watch the expressions and the people dance. It is so fulfilling. Watching the children wide-eyed and us crying when we had to leave only says this event was unbelievable, spectacular and super cool. In closing I would like to thank all who attended, my students at 4D who recommended me and Amandina for her kind heart...

Respect,
Helena Neveu,
Batchawana First Nation

Helena Neveu and Amandina Anastassiades
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CONFERENCES

THE CONSERVATION OF LEATHER BOOKBINDINGS

Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA
November 5-9, 2018

Sponsored by the Southeast Regional Conservation Association (SERCA), this week-long intensive workshop will introduce students to a wide variety of current techniques used to conserve leather bookbindings. bookbinders, technicians, and conservators who wish to learn, expand, or refresh their treatment skills are all welcome. Previous bookbinding or conservation experience is required.

Detached boards are the most common area that leather bookbindings fail, and all five primary methods of treating this will be taught: mechanical sewing extensions and tacketing, inner hinge repairs, interior-board repairs (both splitting and slotting), outer joint repairs, and several styles of rebacking. Many treatments involve a combination of these techniques. Questions concerning methods of consolidating older leather, the archival qualities of modern leather, and leather dyes will be discussed. A variety of methods to pare, consolidate, and lift leather will be introduced. Since a sharp knife is crucial to success in any leather work, sharpening will also be taught.

Students should bring six to eight non-valuable leather bound books to treat. Participants will be taught how to pare leather with a knife, use a board slotting machine, a modified 151 spokeshave, a variety of lifting knives and tools, and a double edge razor blade paring machine. There will be individual consultations with students before the workshop to discuss treatment goals for their chosen books and determine if extra materials or tools might be required. Decision-making based upon the actual books will be discussed. The primary goals of this workshop are to equip participants with a more nuanced understanding of the pros and cons of currently practiced leather conservation techniques, gain supervised experience while performing them, and feedback when they are completed.

Application: Registration is limited. Participant selections will be made by the SERCA Board of Directors via the following order: SERCA members (new or renewing), practicing conservators in the

Southeast, and other qualified applicants. Applications are due Friday September 14th, 2018.

To apply, please send your resume and one paragraph stating why this workshop would be useful in your conservation career to: Kim Norman, Head of Library Conservation at Emory University (kim.norman@emory.edu)

Cost: \$900 for existing SERCA members, \$925 (including \$25.00 SERCA annual membership fee <https://sercaconservation.org/membership/>) for new and renewing SERCA members. Payment taken after review of applications.

Instructor Bio: Jeffrey S. Peachey is an independent book conservator (<https://jeffpeachey.com>) and toolmaker (<https://peacheytools.com>) based in New York City. For more than 25 years, he has specialized in the conservation of books for institutions and individuals. Jeff is a Professional Associate in the American Institute for Conservation who has taught book conservation workshops internationally. He was recently awarded fellowships to support his current research into 19th century bookbinding from the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center (Italy) and Rochester Institute of Technology's Cary Collection (New York). Jeff is Visiting Instructor for the Library and Archives Conservation Education Consortium of Buffalo State University, New York University, and the Winterthur/University of Delaware. His latest publication is "Ausbund 1564: The History and Conservation of an Anabaptist Icon".

PUBLICATIONS

CUIR DE RUSSIE - MEMOIRE DU TAN

Authors: Sophie Mouquin with Elise Blouet

Editor : Monelle Hayot Eds
Date of publication: June 2017
Language : french
Number of pages: 143
ISBN: 1096561018

Synopsis: When she came across a Russian leather fragment that had spent 200 years under water in the Metta Catharina ship which sank in 1786, Elise Blouet, leather conservator is conquered by its strength and beauty. The legend states that the Russian leather was created as a coincidence: a cossack riding in the steppes would have rubbed his boots against the bark of the birch trees and thus waterproofed them. Russian leather was born.



In the years 1920, Paris was Russian. Hermès created a range of objects made of leather, Russian style, which accompanied the elegant life of a refined society. In 1924, Coco Chanel invented the costumes for the Russian ballet of Diaghilev and the perfume *Cuir de Russie*, feminizing a fragrance that seduced many perfumers. The Hermès museum and conservatory unveiled their treasures for this book. With Elise Blouet, Andrew Parr, an English tanner and the expertise of Marc Stoltz, Hermès, faithful to its visionary quality, this exceptional leather is reborn and celebrated in the secret of its workshops, the love of beautiful material and the expertise of the hand.

PELE COM PELE

Authors: Ana Caldas and Franklin Pereira

Date of publication: October 2017
Language : Portuguese and english
Number of pages: 136
ISBN: 978-989-52-0343-7

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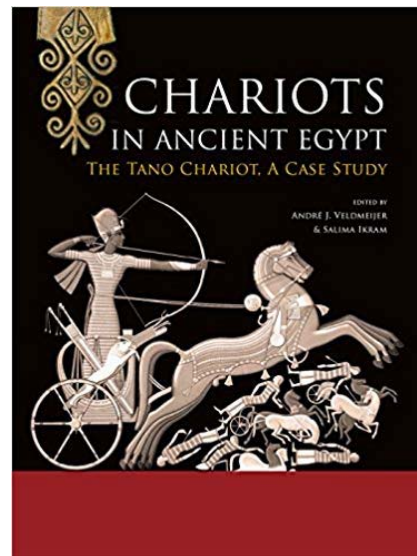


Synopsis: Skin with skin, transfiguration & transcendence unveils the inquiries and creations in leather of Ana Caldas and Franklin Pereira, reliving the most luxurious method of work of the peninsular medieval period: the guadameci - not repeating models, but instilling new visions and artistic possibilities. The authors add other artifacts from their journey, revealing how leather can be a matter of unique and original plastic expression when there is glow of the hands and imagination.

CHARIOTS IN ANCIENT EGYPT: THE TANO CHARIOT, A CASE STUDY

Authors: Andre J. Veldmeijer, Salima Ikram, Lisa Sabbahy

Editor: Sidestone Press
Date of publication: April 2018
Language : English
Number of pages: 590
ISBN: 978-9088904677



Synopsis: Chariots, the racing cars of the ancient world, first appeared in Egypt about 1600 BC, and quickly became not only the preferred mode of transport for royalty and the elite, but also revolutionised military tactics and warfare. Remains of chariots have been found in Egyptian tombs Tutankhamun's tomb contained six chariots, which tripled the number of ancient Egyptian chariots known before the discovery of his tomb. However, none of the chariots was complete, as all lacked their leather casings, which were only known from images on tomb and temple walls.

In 2008, the Ancient Egyptian Leatherwork Project (AEFP) working in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, found a cache of several trays of red and green leather containing some 60 large leather fragments. Some of these had been noted before, but the find had been largely ignored and buried in the depths of the museum. This remarkable object entered the museum in 1932, a purchase from the Tano family, reputable dealers at that time, hence the nick-name Tano Chariot .

The Tano leather all came from a single chariot, including portions of the bow-case, the body's casing and the horse housing. The leather is elaborately decorated in appliquéd green and red or beige leather. Parallels for some of these fragments are found in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung in Berlin, many of which, until their appearance in this volume, are unpublished. This includes the chariot leather from the tombs of Amenhotep II, III, Tuthmose IV and Tutankhamun.

This book presents the Tano material with fully illustrated, detailed descriptions. Chariot related texts and technological analyses together with detailed comparisons with other chariots and associated leather remains help provide possible dates for it. The find is put into context with chapters on relevant hieroglyphic texts, and a study of representations of chariots that help identify the various parts, and highlight the role of the chariot in Egyptian religion, propaganda, and culture.

The Tano Chariot leather, despite being unprovenanced, is a unique find, which reveals a great deal about ancient Egyptian leatherwork technologies, warfare, weapons, and chariotry.

FURRIER TANNER NOTIONS AND TECHNIQUES VOL. 1 FURS: TANNING OF A FOX SKIN

Author: Rosario Andronaco

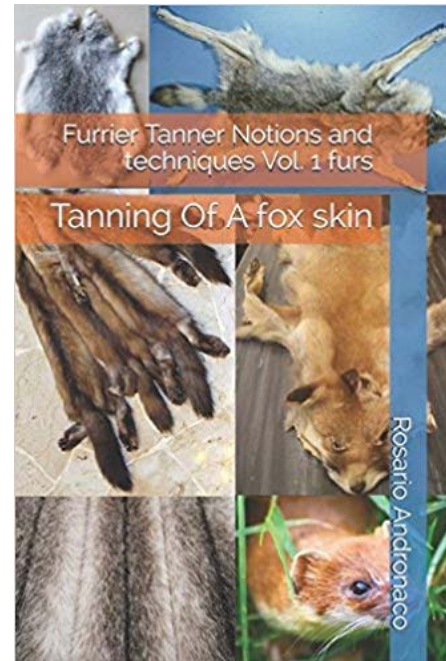
Editor: Independently published

Date of publication: December 2017

Language : English

Number of pages: 107

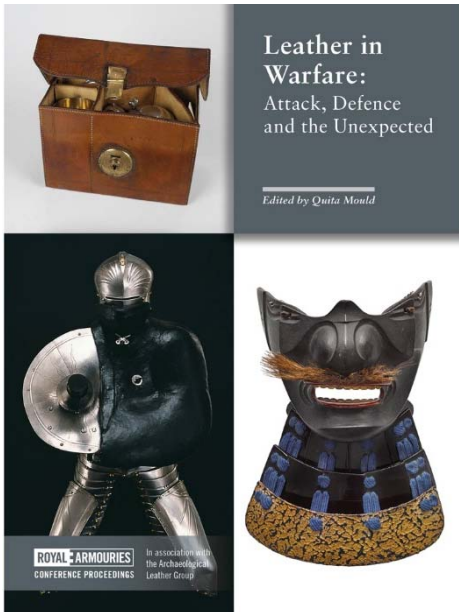
ISBN: 978-1973574149



Synopsis: Like taxidermy, the fur trade treats the leather processing in order to preserve them over time. The purposes of this conservation are many. The main purpose that I will describe is always that of study. Another purpose is the ornamental use such as carpets and furs for clothing. In this book I will discuss the methods and techniques of tanning at the amateur level. The difference in processing in leather for taxidermy and fur, consists of two fundamental factors. In taxidermy the skin of the animals must be kept soft from the exit from the tanning and throughout the assembly process. Subsequently, with the drying of the specimen, the skin stiffens, favoring the stability of the specimen in the established position. In fur instead, the skin will have to remain soft even after drying. This book was written in simple language to be accessible to everyone. Attached to the writing of this book there are 26 films for a total duration of 92 minutes. Please note: there may be grammatical errors given my poor command with foreign languages (original language: Italian)

LEATHER IN WARFARE: ATTACK, DEFENCE AND THE UNEXPECTED

Editor: Quita Mould
Date of publication: 2017
Language : English
Number of pages: 221
ISBN: 9780948092763



Synopsis: Leather in Warfare is a collection of papers from a conference jointly organised by the Archaeological Leather Group and the Royal Armouries Museum. It draws together authors from a range of disciplines and nationalities, and offers a fresh perspective on the varied use of this versatile material throughout history.

Contributors – several of whom are Royal Armouries staff – cover issues as diverse as Romano-Egyptian ceremonial clothing, Roman campaign tents, the equipment of the medieval swordsman and Japanese Samurai, Mamluk lamellar armour and European plate armour, the buff coat of the English Civil War and the fish skin helmet of the Pacific Island warrior.

The volume is an important overview of the functions played by leather and skin products in warfare, and provides a useful starting point for those wishing to study this fascinating topic in the future. It is recommended to specialists and enthusiasts alike.

Newsletter submission

Suggested items:

- * *Notes on new materials*
- * *Comments on old materials*
- * *Short notes on new ideas, tips and tools*
- * *Recent or ongoing projects*
- * *Courses and conferences*
- * *Recent publications including master thesis*
- * *News and updates*
- * *Anything else you can think of !*

Please send contributions to:

theosturge@leatherconservation.co.uk

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