
Condition Assessment and Treatment Report

conservator	Stephanie Gibbs
owner	Guildhall Library / Peter Whitehead

item bibliographical data

Prince Arthur / An Heroick / Poem / in Ten Books

by / Richard Blackmore, M.D. / and / Fellow of the College of Physicians in London

The 3d edition corrected

London: printed for Awنشam and John Churchil at the / black Swan in Pater-Noster-Row /

MDCXCVI [1696]

additional item data

Inscription on title page in iron gall ink [illegible] Kelly October 2, 1823

structure and appearance

Binding:

Raised cord tightback binding. Boards are either pressboards or pasteboards.

Style of binding is 18th century as evidence by sprinkled calf in rectangle design with blind tooling. Tooling pattern of double line around board edge, two rectangles of blind lines, 'cottage roof' of dashed line between corners of the rectangles, blind tool at each corner. No tooling on spine. Gilt decoration along edges of boards. Red leather label on spine between cords 1 & 2 (from head). Leather turn-ins untrimmed. Outer side of boards lined in brown paper.

Textblock:

Red sprinkled edges; the edge decoration was done while book was in boards and before covering, as evidenced by red spots seen on the boards underneath the leather losses. Sections of 2 bifolia (4 pages). Endsheets of 1 folia sewn with textblock. Sewn on 6 raised cords, all laced in.

condition assessment

Binding: [figures 1, 2]

Front board detached. While the back board is still attached, this attachment depends on the cords alone, as both the leather and paper joints have split. Leather delaminating from the board along the edges and at the corners. Boards delaminating at corners. Spine original to binding, although original red label has been 'rewritten' in white ink.

Textblock [figures 3,4]:

Edges of textblock very dirty. Ink markings throughout text. Front flyleaf is detached from the textblock. Back joint very weak.

treatment proposal

Dry clean textblock and binding.

Consolidate leather using aluminium alkoxide.

Lift leather from spine: as no tooling or label information to save, do not need to salvage original spine leather. Lift leather from boards along spine edge. Lift leather as necessary along board edges and corners for consolidation of corners and edges of boards.

Tone new calf leather to match original using aniline dyes. This new calf will be used to replace losses to the original leather at the corners and edges of the boards, and for the new spine.

Sew over and around original sewing cords using linen braid and cotton thread. Splay linen braid onto the boards, attaching with EVA adhesive.

Repair losses in detached flyleaf; using a tinted Japanese paper flange to attach the flyleaf to the board over front joint and underneath the pastedown. To reinforce the back joint, use tinted Japanese paper hinges underneath the sewing and over the endpaper.

Resew endbands if evidence suggests they were originally present.

Reback the textblock as a traditional tightback binding.

additional treatment notes

Minor mould damage was discovered during dry cleaning of the textblock. As this was not extensive (only located in the gutter of a few leaves), various cleaning methods were used but the volume did not require disbinding to treat. The final treatment method used to remove the mould was a chemical sponge.

final treatment

While in boards, dry-cleaned the head, tail, and foredge of the textblock using a chemical sponge and white eraser. Dry-cleaned individual pages of textblock.

Evidence of endbands located from examination of the textblock: 3 (discoloured) blue tiedowns in textblock and impression of endband at tail; as the tiedown thread was quite thick, it was probably composed of linen (not silk).

Front flyleaf (detached): dry-cleaned using chemical sponge. Head, tail, and foreedges supported using RK1 Japanese 'spider' tissue. Medium weight Japanese paper [PO5] was tinted using watercolours, and adhered to spine edge of flyleaf using starch paste. The join was supported using a layer of spider tissue. The flyleaf will be reattached to the textblock after rebacking.

Individual pages of textblock dry-cleaned using chemical sponge; significant dirt deposits along the edges as the pages are unevenly trimmed.

Water damage at the head of the textblock resulted in mould growth in the gutter of pages 78-79 and 88-89. Several methods were used to remove mould spores:

1. brush away [smear larger spores]
2. use of vacuum pump with water trap [insufficient pulling action to remove spores]
3. microspatula to lift spores [lifted larger deposits but not smaller]
4. chemical sponge [tackiness of sponge lifted all deposits very cleanly]
5. IMS/water 50%/50% [used to clean remains after use of chemical sponge]

Page tears at p 154, 242: re-adhered using paste, supported with RK1 Japanese 'spider' tissue.

Back endpapers: pieces of [PO5] Japanese paper were tinted using watercolour. Strips were then inserted underneath the sewing thread (between cords). Paste applied to the tinted paper

after in placed into position on endpaper. [figures 4, 5]

Lifted pastedown from front board to enable reattachment of flyleaf using paper hinge.

Due to the extreme thinness and brittleness of the leather, it was consolidated using aluminium alkoxide. Lifted leather along foredge and corners to repair / consolidate boards. Leather lifted along spine edge of both boards to enable reattachment of textblock to boards.

Spine leather removed, and the spine of the textblock cleaned using 4% SCMC poultice.

The spine rounding and backing was redefined using starch paste and a bone folder.

Endbands were formed using a front-bead style over a vellum core. They were sewn of blue and white cotton, with tiedowns every 8 sections (due to thinness of sections).

The reattachment of the textblock to the boards was formed of linen braid oversewn to the original sewing cords. The same sections were used as for the endband attachment; 60/3 cotton sewing thread was brought through the sewing hole and around the new braid. This attachment was not done at all sewing stations due to the weight of the book (not heavy) and the projected use of the book (minimal), but only at 4 of the 6 cords.

The boards were reinforced at the corners and edges using hemp cord. The hemp cord was frayed out into strands, pasted using starch paste, worked into place and shape, and held using bulldog clips and blotter until dried. [figures 6, 7, 8]

The new leather used was Hewit's semi-aluminium tanned calf, toned using Hewit's aniline leather dyes. This leather was used for the leather replacement along corners, edges of boards, and the spine. The leather was pared for the rebacking and for the leather replacement along board edges. These replacements included corners and raw board edges (from degraded / missing original leather). Strips of the new leather were pared thinly and pasted to cover losses on boards (reforming turn-ins). [figures 9, 10]

The textblock was reattached to the boards following consolidation and covering of all board edges and corners. For the reattachment, the linen braids were frayed out and attached to boards using EVA. Medium weight [PO5] Japanese paper was adhered over the spine between cords using starch paste. The paper was then brought over the joint and adhered onto boards using starch paste. [figures 11, 12]

The leather was pasted out and attached to spine of book for a traditional tightback style reback. The book was tied up in a press and allowed to dry overnight. [figure 13]

The original leather lowered onto boards using EVA. Klucel G (2% w/v in IMS) was used to consolidate the grain of the original calf that was disturbed by being lifted and then adhered: the original leather had been pared paper thin, and thus retained no strength. Even though it was lifted with the paper board lining sheet, it was still liable to cracks when lifting away from the board and during rebacking. Following consolidation, losses in the leather were toned using watercolours. The covering leather was then given a thin coat of microcrystalline wax to consolidate the surface and act as a surface protectant. [figure 14, 16, 17, 18]

The joints of the book were opened, and the front flyleaf was attached to the textblock by inserting the flange underneath the front pastedown. Two layers of [PO5] Japanese paper tinted with watercolours were used to reinforce the front joint of the textblock following reattachment. The reattachment was done with the front board 'open' as for an 'open pasted endsheet'. [figure

15]

The front and back pastedowns which had been lifted to allow the turning in of the new leather were re-adhered to the boards using paste.
