
Condition Assessment and Treatment Report

item bibliographical data

Historia de Mirabilibus Gestis
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OXO NII, E Theatro Sheldoniano, M.DCC.XX [1720]

structure and appearance

14.7 cm x 22.5 cm x 5 cm
Calf tightback binding; boards have double line of gilding and blind decorative stamping. Full gilt spine. Red label on spine. Board edges gilt with a decorative roll.
Sewn on 5 raised cords. 3 colour endbands. Textblock edges gilt

condition assessment

Binding: Front board almost detached. [figures 1, 2] Back board leather deteriorated, attached by laced in cords. Loss of leather at head and tail of spine; spine darkened and some cracking. [figure 3]
Textblock: Textblock edges dirty.

treatment proposal

The problem in treating this item is to reattach the front board without causing disturbance to the full gilt spine. Following consideration of several methods, it is proposed to:
Slit leather over cords only. Oversew linen braid around original cords. Lift leather along spine edge of both upper and lower boards. Fray braid onto surface of both front and back boards. Consolidate losses on spine using leather or Japanese paper as is deemed appropriate by the behaviour of the materials. Consolidate inner joints using Japanese paper.

final treatment

Textblock dry-cleaned.
The leather lifted along the spine edge of the upper and lower boards.
Leather on the spine of the textblock was consolidated using Klucel G (2% w/v IMS). The leather was lifted from the cords. [figure 4]
SCMC (4% w/v) poultice applied to clean the cords. The cords were then dampened from the outside, and linen braid was oversewn over each cords. [figures 5, 6]
The linen braid was frayed out and adhered to the boards using EVA. [figure 7]
The endbands were no longer held at the middle tie-down, and so but attached only at the beginning and at the end of the textblock. The endbands were reinforced using 40/3 thread, with 5 tie-downs; more tie-downs would have caused a weakening of the paper. The head and tail were consolidated using medium weight Japanese paper. [figures 8, 9]
Hewit's semi-aluminium tanned leather was toned using Hewit's aniline leather dyes.
Both tinted Japanese paper and thinly pared leather were tried as coverings for the cords along the exterior of the spine. The paper cockled and did not adhere well. 3 pieces of leather were cut into a 'dumb-bell' shape, to lie straight over the middle cords with wider 'anchors' on the boards. [figure 10]
The tail was covered, with the leather extending over the bottom cord. A new endcap was formed, and the book was tied up and pressed (5 minutes). The head was covered, with the leather extending over the top cord. A new headcap was formed, and the book was tied up and pressed (5 minutes). [figure 11] The book was tied up, and allowed to dry under weight overnight.
Small piece of leather were pared very thinly to offer protect to the joints, as there was a complete loss of leather and the joint of the textblock was exposed. [figures 12, 13]
The lifted leather from the upper and lower boards was re-adhered to the boards using paste. The book was pressed for 10 minutes to encourage adhesion. [figure 14]
The book was allowed to dry under weights overnight.
