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- Small Shoes for Small Books
- Calligraphy and Type
- Carrageenan Size and Timing
- Care and Conservation of Manuscripts 20
- Review of *The Untold Story of Books*

And more...

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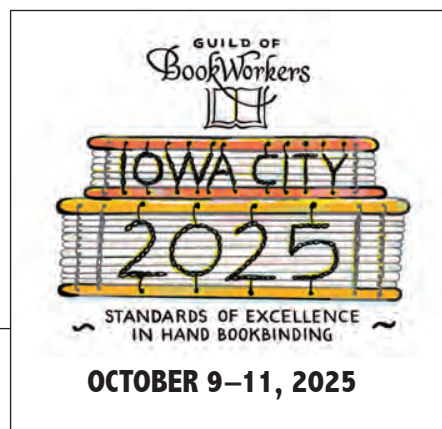
Cover Photo: Paste papers created by the students of Stacy Gabriel's class in the Midwest.



The Guild of Book Workers (GBW) is a national organization representing the hand book crafts. There are regional chapters in *New England, New York, the Delaware Valley, Washington DC, the Midwest, California, the Rocky Mountains, Texas, the Northwest and the Southeast*. Membership is open to all interested persons and includes a print copy of this Newsletter, among many other benefits. To become a member, please visit the GBW Website:

guildofbookworkers.org The GBW Newsletter is published six times a year by the Guild of Book Workers, Inc., 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10175.

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Letter from the President

DEAR MEMBERS

I am pleased to announce that registration for the 2025 Standards of Excellence Seminar will be opening soon! I am looking forward to seeing many of you in Iowa City in October. We have four wonderful presenters and great tours planned, so please keep an eye out for information on the website for more details about the seminar and to register.

The 2025 elections will be open from July 1st through 31st. We will send all members in good standing an email with the ballot and a link to where you can submit your vote.

Our two recipients of the inaugural Mid-Career Award have recently been chosen and will be announced via email. Thank you to everyone who submitted an application! We are so grateful to our wonderful panel of judges and the very generous grant from the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation. More about the judges and award recipients will be shared on our website (and in the August Newsletter), so check back soon!

As always, please reach out to me with any questions or comments, president@guildofbookworkers.org.

Cheers,

Kate Levy, President



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Letter from the Editors

WELCOME TO SUMMER, DEAR READERS!

We have some vacation reading for you in this issue! Our regular correspondents share the fruits of their travels, literal and imaginary. Conservation Correspondent Nicole Alvarado tells us about travelling all the way to Copenhagen to attend an annual conference on the care of manuscripts. Barbara Adams Hebard urges us to travel to the library, rather than the bookstore, if we wish to peruse the latest book on publishing history. Read her review of *The Untold Story of Books* to find out why. Marbling Correspondent Iris Nevins shares her journey to understand how the resting time of your size can affect the quality of your marbling, and encourages us to experiment rather than following conventional wisdom.

Our esteemed Standards Chair Jennifer Pellecchia went on a journey of her own, preparing for this year's Standards. As she tells us in her letter, "This will be the first Standards meeting in Iowa City since 1986." The last time we were there, presenters did not include web links, digital video, or PowerPoint presentations. Our website has a link to the handout from Scott Kellar's 1986 seminar on protective enclosures. It appears to be typed (not word processed!) and the suppliers' contacts are street addresses and telephone numbers. Although we grumble about social media's adverse impacts on culture, the world wide web has its upsides for book people: online supplies, resources, and community. Calligraphy Correspondent Beth Lee's article in this issue, comparing and contrasting hand lettering and type, explores both the positives of technology (being able to see other artists' work via Instagram, for example), and the negatives: in a world filled with type, it takes real effort to learn about the joys of lettering by hand. But it's a trip worth taking.

But wait: there are a few more summer treats for you in this issue! Todd Pattison and Graham Patten travelled back in time to 18th-century Venice, or at least the book that they examine in their article came from the city of Doges. Read on to learn about a variation on the adhered-boards binding, which may have been stronger than the more common version. Lastly, John Nove tells us how he developed a protective "shoe" for scaleboard bindings, keeping them safe on their journeys on the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association's shelves. (Okay, maybe that one stretched the metaphor a bit far.)

We hope you will journey far this summer, whether in space, time, or imagination.

Standards

DEAR FRIENDS,

At the time of this writing, I've just returned from a short but enjoyable trip to Iowa City! I'm excited to share details for the 2025 Standards of Excellence Seminar in Hand Bookbinding, which will be held from October 9th–11th. This will be the first Standards meeting in Iowa City since 1986, and I am so grateful to Lisa Muccigrosso for chairing this year's local host committee, and leading us back to the Hawkeye state after a 39-year hiatus! The seminar hotel, the Graduate by Hilton Iowa City, is well situated near the beautiful campus of the University of Iowa, where we will be in the able hands of Giselle Simón, Julie Leonard and their many colleagues and students at the University Libraries and the Center for the Book for open houses, demos, and tours. In addition to the Guild's Night Circus exhibition, the Old Capitol Museum will host our welcome reception on Thursday, October 9th.

To learn more about the schedule, our presenters for 2025, (with a sneak preview of their incredible work), and to register, please visit our website by using the QR code below. Standards registration will be open until September 8th, 2025, though early registration is encouraged.

I look forward to seeing many of you in October!

Jennifer Pellecchia, Standards Chair

STANDARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

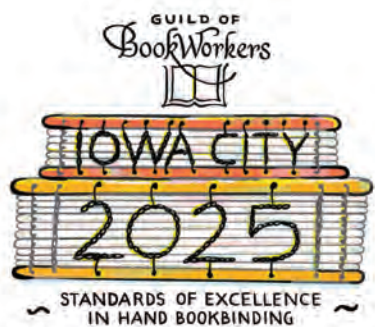
The Guild of Book Workers (GBW) offers scholarships to attend the Standards of Excellence in Hand Bookbinding. The scholarship consists of one year of Guild Membership, a waiver of seminar registration fees, lodging costs for four nights at the conference hotel, and the cost of the Saturday evening banquet dinner. Scholarship recipients will be asked to volunteer a small amount of their time during the seminar to assist the event organizers, presenters, or other Guild volunteers.

The Scholarship Committee requests a short statement and two letters of reference. The statement should describe what you hope to get out of the seminar, how attending might impact your work, and how you plan to share what you have learned with others.

The letters of reference could come from an instructor, supervisor, or client and need not be lengthy.

You can apply through the GBW website. The application process opens May 10th, with all applications due by July 1st, 2025.

Please direct questions to Todd Pattison at vicepresident@guildofbookworkers.org.



**SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS
ARE NOW OPEN!**

STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE 2025

October 9th – 11th, 2025

Graduate by Hilton, Iowa City, IA

PRESENTERS

Coleen Curry

*An Art of Its Own: Dyeing and
Texturing Leather for Design Binding*

Islam Aly

*From Tradition to Transformation:
The Evolution of a Book Artist's Practice*

Katherine Beaty

*Postcards from Italian Archives:
Medieval Stationery Bindings in the
Italian Peninsula*

Mary Uthuppuru *Fun with Box Making*

REGISTRATION

Early Bird Registration: June 1st – July 15th

Regular Registration: July 15th – September 8th

Limited to 150 people — waitlist will be available

Chapter Reports

DELAWARE VALLEY

In early March the Delaware Valley Chapter (DVC) visited the Othmer Library of Chemical History at the Science History Institute to see some of their sample books. This visit was in preparation for our exhibit that will be held there this fall. DVC members will create their own sample books in response to things from their collection.

In early May, some DVC members made some glorious marbled paper under the tutelage of Leslie A. Grossman of Parhelion Works at Historic Rittenhouse Town. It was the perfect spring day.

MIDWEST

On a bright and sunny Saturday in April, a small coterie of Guild members got together for the annual chapter gathering. This year, we gathered at Squirrel Haus Arts in Minneapolis. We had a number of gracious and knowledgeable instructors: Stacy Gabriel (Paste Papers), Susie Cobbledick (Paper Washing), Amanda Degener (Washi making), and Sherelyn Ogden (Paper Repair). The day was filled with good fun, good cheer, and good food. Many thanks to the instructors and all the participants who travelled from all over to attend.



Paste papers created by the students of Stacy Gabriel's class in the Midwest.

A Venetian Variant in Adhered-boards Binding

by Todd Pattison and Graham Patten

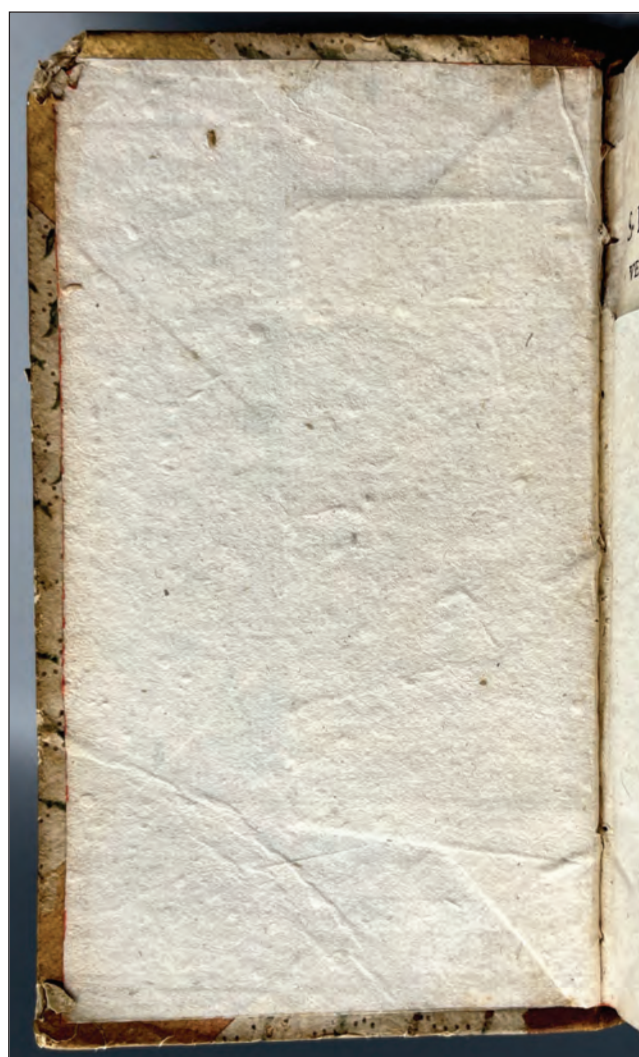
In an adhered-boards binding, the boards are attached to the text block using adhesive rather than by lacing in, but in contrast to a case binding, the boards are connected to the text block before covering begins. This is typically done by attaching a torn stub of the outer leaf of the endsheets to the boards, although sometimes the entire leaf is used rather than tearing it to a stub. This method of board attachment creates a rigid connection that often extends along the entire spine edge of the board. However, because part of the board attachment ends up being cut at the head and tail to allow for the turn-ins of the covering material, the binding structure can be weakened in these areas.

Recently, we came across a variant on the adhered-boards technique on a copy of *Lettere di S. Francesco di Sales Tomo Terzo* (Venezia: Simone Occhi, 1777). The volume is bound in quarter leather, with paper-covered corners and a block-printed paper covering the boards. The spine has a gold-tooled leather label and gold lines alluding to sewing supports. A volume number surrounded by an oval tooled in gold appears in the third panel down from the top, and the other panels feature a central decorative tool in gold. The text edges are decorated with a sponge pattern done in three colors. When we examined the leather along the outside of the boards, we were unable to locate where the sewing cords could have been laced into the boards, so we suspected that the stub underneath the pastedown was used as the primary board attachment. We also noticed curious triangles at the head and tail ends of the half sheet stub underneath the pastedowns (see figure 1). There is a distinct horizontal line where the triangle has been divided from the stub, which first caught our attention and alerted us to the possibility that this was not just a normal stub put up underneath a pastedown. This variant is significant as it allows the covering material to be turned in at the spine without compromising the strength of the board attachment. It can also be seen as an intermediate or transitional structure between in-boards and case binding. Adhering the triangles down after the turn-ins have been worked is equivalent to adhering a full stub during casing in.

The binding in question is an odd volume in a private collection, so after much discussion, we decided to lift the pastedown carefully from the back board in order to determine exactly how the boards were attached and why the triangles were cut into the stub. Humidification and local applications of moisture were used to lift the pastedown, allowing it to be adhered back in place at a future date if desired. With the pastedown lifted we could see that the triangles slightly overlapped the larger stub at the cut edge. The sewing cords are also evident

underneath the stub right at the board edge, indicating that they were never laced into the boards, and that it is indeed an adhered-boards construction. We then lifted the triangles, using the same technique, to better understand why the binder cut them from the stub.

With the triangles lifted, it became clear that there were two stubs put up onto the board, since there were two layers of triangles, very similar in size and shape but not exactly the same. The endsheets consist of two folded sheets of paper, creating



The front pastedown of the volume showing the stub and the cut triangles at the top and bottom of the stub.

four leaves, three of which are attached to the boards: the two stubs and the pastedown. The fourth leaf forms a single flyleaf at the front and back of the text. With three leaves adhered to the boards, the sewing of the endsheets has been covered up. Cutting the triangles away from the stubs shortened the stubs, allowing for space to turn in the covering leather without cutting slits at the head and tail (see figure 2). After the covering was completed, the triangles were then adhered to the board, strengthening the attachment at the head and tail. Creating a stronger attachment of the boards appears to have been a priority of the binder, since they used two layers of stubs for the attachment instead of the more typical one; the addition of the triangles is consistent with that goal.

The identification of this variant adhered-boards construction highlights the need for further study of this binding technique. One key question is whether the use of triangles cut from the adhering stub was a practice limited to Northern Italy, or if it was more widely adopted across Europe. It's also possible that this method was used by a single binder or specific bindery and did not spread beyond that context. Nevertheless, the technique

suggests that at least one binder recognized the potential downsides of using a paper stub to adhere the boards and then cutting it at the spine ends to facilitate the turn-ins. The manipulation of the boards during the covering process, combined with the necessary cut for the turn-ins, could have led to further tearing of the adhering leaf, ultimately weakening the board attachment. The cutting of triangles, therefore, appears to be an elegant solution for maintaining maximum strength in the hinge area. Future research may shed more light on the broader use and development of this innovative binding method.

TODD PATTISON is Conservator at American Ancestors in Boston, MA. He studies book structure, publishers' binding and the industrialization of bookbinding in America.

GRAHAM PATTEN is the senior conservator at the Boston Athenaeum. In his artistic pursuits, Graham often focuses on dynamic sculptural and mechanical elements, and enjoys merging these features with innovative book structures.



The back pastedown and stub triangles lifted, showing plenty of space to turn in the covering material.

Small Shoes for Small Books

by John Nove

The recently-published final volume of *Suave Mechanicals*, edited by Julia Miller (1), includes an essay I wrote about the scaleboard bindings in the Schoolbook Collection of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA) in Deerfield, Massachusetts (2). Considered to be among the earliest still-extant historical societies in the country, the PVMA's Schoolbook Collection was assembled in the last quarter of the 19th century and has sat undisturbed since then. It consists of 652 schoolbooks, of which 62 had scaleboard bindings. Like *Surveys of Scaleboard Bindings* by Julia Miller (3) and Renee Wolcott (4) from more than a decade ago, my article examines the books' physical features as well as their content and date/place of publication. But unlike Miller's and Wolcott's studies, which were an amalgam and overview of books held in many institutions and by private collectors, mine focused on a single, intact historical collection. The essay's title, *Like a Fly in Amber*, references how this collection was "frozen in time." The collection's timelessness presented a unique opportunity to examine a cohesive group of scaleboard bindings, as well as to compare them with their non-scaleboard schoolbook shelf-mates.

Having handled the PVMA Schoolbook Collection's scaleboard bindings for examination and photography, I emerged with a new appreciation for their fragility, especially their covers. I realized that the retrieval and use of these scaleboard books in the future would involve substantial contact and abrasion between them and the adjacent books—both scaleboard and not—on the shelves. For that reason I set out to design and construct appropriately-sized "book shoes" which would protect the bottoms and sides of the scaleboard bindings. The shoes would also provide a labelling surface for catalog numbers, replacing the original system which used adhesive tape to affix a visible book-mark to the interior of a book's back cover. The shoe design would also provide a "window" to allow examination of the spine and external features of the book without having to unfold a more traditional protective four-flap enclosure. My structure is

a variation on a design described in a Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) on-line preservation leaflet, which was inspired by a 1999 shoe structure devised by Clarkson and Ogden. It also considers Wolcott's insights into conservation structures to specifically house scaleboard bindings (4).

As mentioned in my *Suave Mechanicals* article, while the height of the bindings ranged from four to seven inches, their thickness fell roughly into one of two distinct size groups. For that reason, shoes of two sizes were constructed, a smaller one with a $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide spine, and a larger one with a $\frac{7}{8}$ " wide spine. For the scaleboard bindings in the PVMA Schoolbook Collection, only some of the "one-size-or-the-other" shoes were a perfect fit, but each still served a protective function.

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4. Wolcott, Renee *Splintered: The History, Structure and Conservation of American Scaleboard Bindings*. The Book and Paper Group Annual 32, 2013: 56–79

JOHN NOVE is proprietor of the Grey Seal Bindery in South Deerfield, Massachusetts. A graduate of the Bookbinding Program at the North Bennet Street School in Boston, he specializes in the conservation and repair of books and documents for private clients and institutions, including the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA), whose collection of schoolbooks inspired this essay. He also creates one-off books and enclosures. Contact him at nove.john@gmail.com.

CONSTRUCTING A (LARGE) BOOK SHOE MEASURING 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ " X 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " X $\frac{7}{8}$ "

(Note: the material used to construct the shoes was 19 pt. Perma/Dur heavy-duty folder stock, available from University Products, Holyoke, MA).



FIGURE 1

- Cut a rectangle measuring 7" tall (one shoe height + one spine width = $6\frac{1}{8}$ " + $\frac{7}{8}$ ") by $9\frac{7}{8}$ " wide (two shoe widths + one spine width = $2 \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ " + $\frac{7}{8}$ ").
- Draw a line across the long dimension of the rectangle $\frac{7}{8}$ " (= one spine width) from the bottom edge to form the base of the shoe. Board grain should run top to bottom.
- Draw two lines, centered and running top-to-bottom, and $\frac{7}{8}$ " apart (= one spine width), to create the back of the shoe.

continued on next page

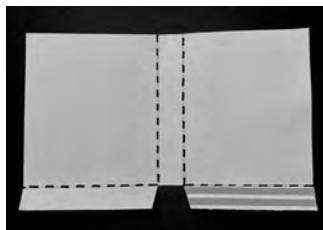


FIGURE 2

- Cut either side of the square bottom-center tab to allow folding (cutting the tab at a slight angle, as shown in the photo, makes for easier folding).
- Cut across the top of the tab to completely remove it.

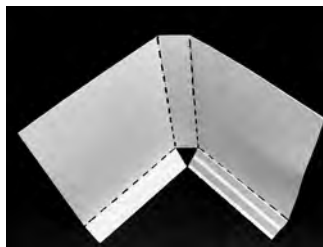


FIGURE 3

Fold along all the scored (dotted) lines and rub them with a bone folder. Apply double-sided tape (like 3M #415) to one of the bases (shown on the right side of the shoe in the photo).

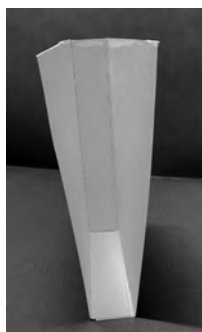


FIGURE 4

Align both bases one atop the other and adhere them with the tape. Be sure the two sides of the base meet evenly and are perpendicular to the spine. Rub the taped-together base with a bone folder.



FIGURE 5

- Cut a T-connector (the small piece shown in the photo) out of a piece of the same stock. This small rectangular piece should measure $2\frac{5}{8}$ " (= three spine widths wide) by $1\frac{7}{8}$ " (= 1" + one spine width tall). Score all the lines and cut away the two $\frac{7}{8}$ " x $\frac{7}{8}$ " corner squares to make the 'T'.
- Attach the T-connector by first gluing (with PVA) the remaining central leg to the interior base of the shoe as shown in the photo. Hold it in place with a small weight. When dry, fold up the two arms of the T and glue them to the outside of the shoe, holding them in place with a rubber band until the glue dries.



FIGURE 6A

A completed shoe and its book.



FIGURE 6B

All sixty-two scaleboard bindings in the Schoolbook Collection were shod, labelled with their call numbers and re-integrated into the PVMA Schoolbook Collection.

Calligraphy and Type

In lettering education, there is a learning track that should never be skipped. At the beginning of the trajectory, we are working our way up to technical perfection. While we never fully achieve that, we do gain a solid understanding of the structures and trappings of the main formal hands. As we continue to learn, we begin to see that letters do not exist in a vacuum; we begin to make those letters “talk” to one another within the word, paragraph, and layout. Building on proper form and pleasing harmony, we can finally start to improvise—I had been learning calligraphy for two years—through a mediocre community college class and on my own—before I realized that the connection between the letters and their placement on the page was at least as important as the shapes of the letters themselves.

The self-taught student is at a real disadvantage here. We see type so much more often than we see hand lettering that we can forget that, in calligraphy, the placement of each letter is a decision. And sharpness at the scale of most type that we see in books is not attainable for the beginning student. Writing with a fluid medium is a very different procedure from print processes. Unique, drawn characters are not the same as a family of 52+ stamped images.

The rise of vectorized images has led to a new appreciation for

hand lettering. Brush lettering and cursive typefaces dominate font bundles currently on sale. In a world full of letters made by the same vectorized process, type designers want to disguise these ubiquitous tools. And still, people intuit the difference between the stamped, industrial sameness of type and the holistic harmony of a community of handmade letters on the page.

You see this difference most clearly in letters made by John Stevens (for instance, [instagram.com/p/DCfv4CS59s/](https://www.instagram.com/p/DCfv4CS59s/)) or Elmo van Slingerland (for instance, [instagram.com/p/C3XwBU1C3wl/](https://www.instagram.com/p/C3XwBU1C3wl/)) and others at this level of expertise. The integrity of the letters’ structure, embellishments, and placement work together to produce a feast for the eyes.

Both artists teach online workshops from time to time. They are excellent calligraphers as well as excellent teachers. Just seeing either of them make the strokes and choose the placement is an education.

BETH LEE As a book artist and calligrapher, Beth Lee is most interested in that magic edge where symbols, marks, and patterns shimmer into transmitted meaning. She edits *Big Sky Scribes*, Montana’s statewide journal for amateur and professional calligraphers and artists.

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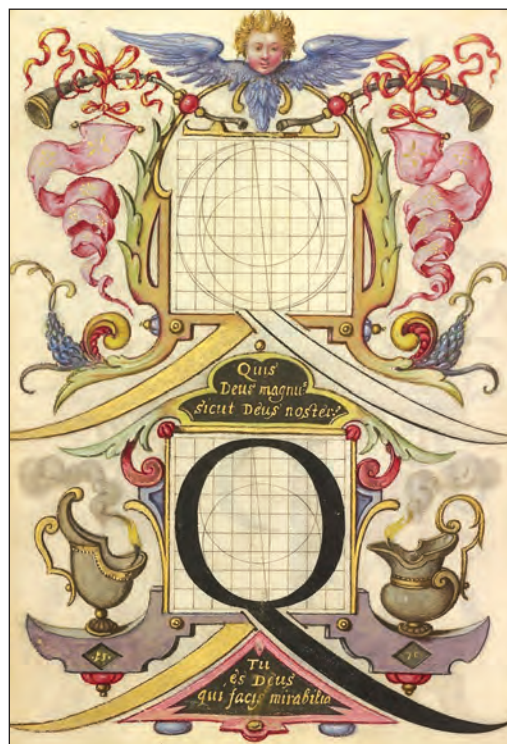
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“The letter Q” from *Guide for Constructing the Letters*, Joris Hoefnagel (c. 1595), courtesy of the The Public Domain Review (bit.ly/gbw-art023).

Carrageenan Size and Timing

In a past article on *Skipping Steps and Shortcuts*, I wrote a bit on making your size right before marbling with very little “ripening” or settling time. I received some comments about how wrong this is, when I mentioned it to some other marblers. There is no “wrong” if it works, and sometimes “wrong” can even work better for some.

It is accepted practice to make your size the day ahead, and let it rest at least 12 hours or so. I have even suggested this for ages, and written it in books and articles. Is it wrong? No, it actually works best for most marblers, but it is good to have an open mind, and to try different ways to see if they might be better.

I’d like to not only re-visit the “what if you can’t” make your size ahead idea, say a sudden rush order, or even if you wake up one morning and feel the urge to marble, but have nothing prepared. Or... if you are in the midst of an order and you need to start over. I’d like to write about what happened while I was marbling a few weeks ago. It really shows you never stop learning, there is always yet another “learning experience”.

So, I was in the midst of a very tricky order for double Spanish Moire papers. They give the word “tricky” a whole new meaning, when you not only need to match the colors in each paper to the others, but also fold them in squares to make the ripple effect, and put them under boards until they reach the ideal point of being semi-flattened, so the ripples on each paper match the others. To say I was stressed was an understatement. I like a challenge, but I was stressed and tired too. I had made the size the evening ahead, all was going well, other than the difficulty of matching these papers. There were a handful of rejects, the waves were too large or the color a little too light or dark.

Then I made the fatal (for marbling anyway!) mistake I ALWAYS cautioned students about, and scolded them for doing, and that was picking up my little bottle of ox-gall, thinking it was the brown paint... and squirting it into the size! There seems to be no amount of cleaning the size afterwards that will make it work again. The only thing I was thankful for was that I had just finished those difficult Moire papers, 16 of them, well matched. But I had a few other smaller orders to complete as well, and needed to make some stock. Now the size was ruined!

I took a deep breath, dumped the size out, and whipped up a new batch, using the hottest tap water. If you start with hot water, one quart, and a tablespoon of carrageenan, you are—the rules say—supposed to then put it in a bucket and add in a quart of cold water, stir, and repeat as needed to fill your tray. I was pressed for time, and always thought that the hotter the water, the faster the little lumps will dissolve. So I used hot water only.

It certainly would not be ready immediately, so I poured it

into my tray, and went to do a few other things. I came back in 45 minutes to check, and it was very bubbly, and had a few little lumps at the bottom. I skimmed and skimmed the bubbles, and squished the few little lumps. The size was still pretty warm. By no means room temperature. It was clear enough, and I tried it... and out came the most amazing papers. I had not seen the likes of them for depth of color, and texture to the paints, in about 38 years. I’ve been marbling 47 years.

What happened? Let me back track a bit. I used to marble at my old house, in a shed attached to it. I used to get up early, make the size, and marble a few hours later. I always used all hot water. I was never taught to marble, so didn’t know any better. It just worked. I always thought my older papers had more depth and life, the pebble sort of patterns had a more 3-D effect, and the Spanish waves were just subtly better.

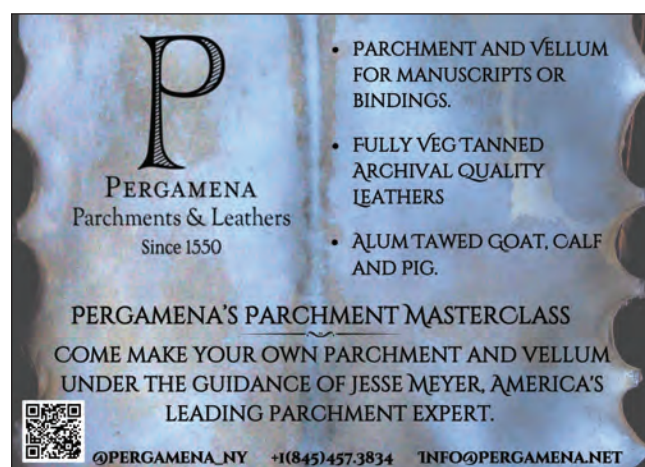
By 1987, my orders were outpacing my small home studio, and I rented a factory space in town. I even had an employee, to do the aluming and setup work. But it was half an hour from home, so I would go in the day ahead, and make up the size, and come in and marble the next day. It was how everyone else was doing it, so, why not? It’s not that it didn’t work, it was fine, but there was a little something different, not quite as much depth to the papers. It was a very subtle difference, and honestly most people couldn’t tell, but it always bothered me. I attributed it to the different water chemistry in town. I kept on with the same routine until 1993, when we moved to the farm, and converted the barn, and I had a home studio again.

After moving, I carried on in the new place. More hard water. I still made the size with all hot water, but also tried the one hot quart, and then the one cold quart, always experimenting. I still missed the little extra zip to the earlier papers at the old house, though. I never thought to try making the size the same day. I worked on a four-sheet tray nearly all the time (it’s actually only twice as fast, not four times), but it held an awful lot of size to be getting up and making it first thing in the morning. So I kept on making it the evening ahead. All was well, except I figured I just must have had amazing, though hard, water (taboo to work with hard water according to the rules!) at the old house. I should mention I also tried distilled water, rain water, and spring water, with the same results. This new space, where I still marble, also has very hard water. I adapt to it—it needs a little extra size powder, I find. A rounded tablespoon rather than a level one.

So last week, I decided that this needs more looking into. I re-created what I used to do, working in a single tray and using all hot water, and I made the size about 1½ hours ahead. It was still a bit warm. It seemed the papers got their old depth and

texture back. It was like Old Home Week. They had that little extra oomph I had been missing for decades. So, whether using the single tray or the large four-sheet tray, from now on this is the way I will make my size. Sure, it does work fine if the size is made the day ahead. I doubt many non-marblers would see the difference, but I do, and it is more satisfying.

I don't want to give the impression that this is the only or best way to make your size, it could be particular to my water and water chemistry and other environmental factors. It is also a bit of a pain, especially if you take a while to wake up, like I do! Who wants to make their size early in the morning, really? I don't, but will, for the sake of the art! It may not work for everyone, but might be fun to experiment with. There is never just one right way. It was an interesting discovery for me, and I wanted to report on it in case any of you who marble would like to try it. Timing for resting the size is one of the variables in marbling I had never really thought about before.



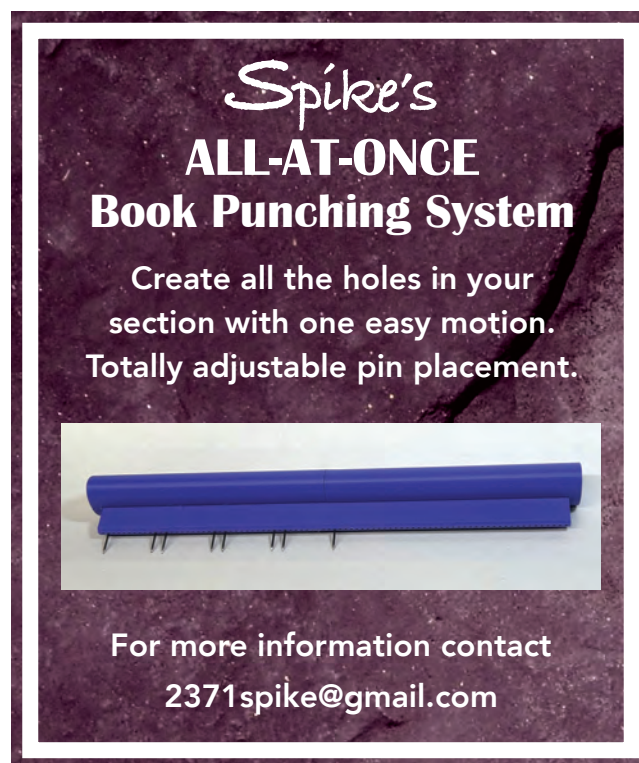
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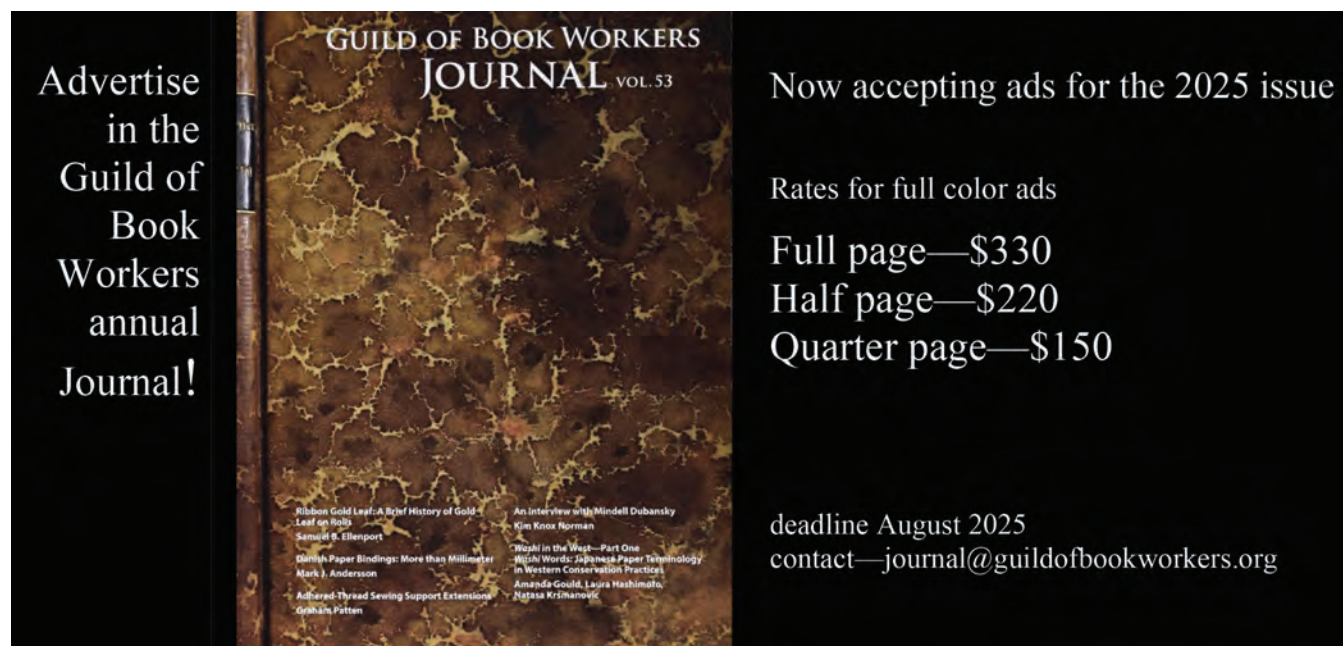
IRIS NEVINS is a self-taught marbler, and began marbling in 1978 as a hobby. Much to her surprise, bookbinders started buying her papers, and it became her full time career. She has written four books, plus reprinted a facsimile edition of Nicholson's *Manual of The Art of Bookbinding*, with 18 marbled samples tipped into the marbling section. Iris is also a Celtic Harper, and Guitarist. She plays professionally, teaches both instruments and builds harps. She also makes Ancient Style and Celtic Jewelry.



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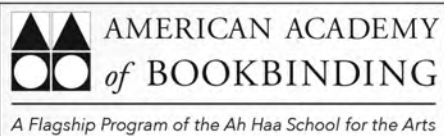
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Care and Conservation of Manuscripts 20

In April, conservators, librarians, archivists, curators, and scholars gathered in Copenhagen for the 20th International Seminar on the *Care and Conservation of Manuscripts*, hosted by the University of Copenhagen and The Royal Danish Library. The intention of this seminar is to “promote collaboration and share knowledge on the conservation of manuscripts and early printed books”. A total of 58 presentations were given over three days. Forty-five of the sessions were held in tandem in 23 time slots at the University of Copenhagen, and the remaining 13 sessions were held at the auditorium in The Black Diamond building of The Royal Danish Library.

Presenters from across the globe spoke about items in their care. The presentations covered a range of topics, including treatments on manuscripts and early printed books, studies and surveys of whole collections, case studies on unique or under-studied material culture, and pigment analysis and study of illuminations or miniatures. There were a number of talks highlighting Islamic collections. Parchment was another hot topic, both as a covering material and as textblock leaves and scrolls.

While not all talks discussed conservation treatments of these manuscripts in the modern sense, they all had a distinct element of care involved. Some speakers explored ways that manuscripts were historically protected and preserved by the communities that make and use these texts today. Others discussed how these collections are now being cared for hundreds of years after their production, either in libraries, museums, or the monasteries and community places that created the manuscripts. Many speakers emphasized that connecting with community members for

input, guidance, and support is an invaluable component to the success of the work of conservators and preservation stewards at institutions. Having said that, it was also made clear that no one group or community can or should speak for the entirety of their larger region, religious background, or race. It is important to ensure that the proper community is found and consulted when possible.

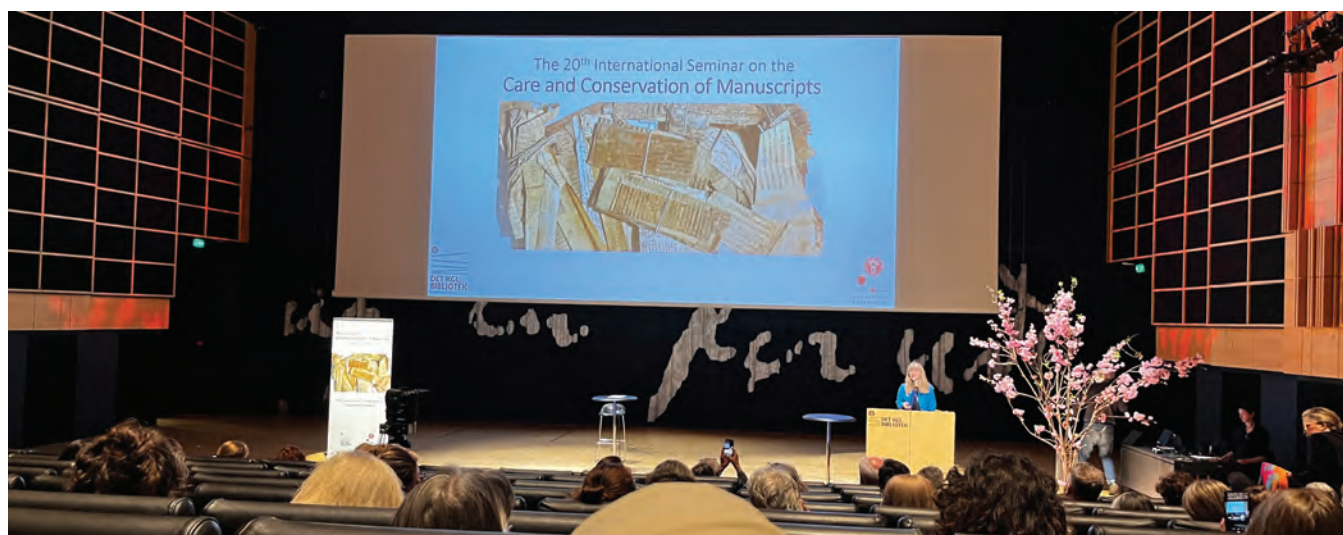
This seminar does not just focus on a niche area in the evolution of the book. It also allows those who care for these items and collections to share information outside of the presentations, make connections with people who are already doing the work you plan to begin at your own institution, gain new colleagues from across the world, and reconnect with old friends. This was my first experience at this seminar, and I am eager to return for the next one, to see what new innovations, discoveries, and techniques will be shared on the care and conservation of manuscripts.

The seminar is held every other year in April at the University of Copenhagen. Proceedings are published for every seminar by the Museum Tusculanum Press, which also has back issues available for purchase.

Care and Conservation of Manuscripts: nors.ku.dk/cc/

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NICOLE ALVARADO is the Book & Paper Conservator at the UCLA Library Preservation & Conservation Department.



The 20th International Seminar on the Care and Conservation of Manuscripts, April 2025

The Untold Story of Books: A Writer's History of Book Publishing

Michael Castleman, Los Angeles: The Unnamed Press, 2024

Short, enthusiastic blurbs by 38 authors fill the first three flyleaves of this book. These authors refer to the friendly, entertaining, and humorous tone of the book, but also mention the extensive research done by the writer to create such an informative account. An Amazon review (not in the flyleaves) states, "Michael Castleman's *The Untold Story of Books* is the first and only history of publishing told from a veteran author's point of view."

Castleman touches briefly on the era of hand-made books, but then moves quickly to the mechanization of book production and the rise of publishers. His description of this evolution, from Gutenberg to the aforementioned Amazon, is aimed at authors, aspiring authors, booksellers, industry professionals, and booklovers in general. Although non-fiction, this book could be a "beach read" because of the clear and friendly writing style.

The narrative is organized into three sections which he describes as "distinct book businesses": *Hand-crafted Publishing from Gutenberg to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, *Industrial Publishing from World War I to 2000*, and *Digital Publishing from the Millenium to...*. Along the way, he peppers the story with interesting and sometimes fun facts. The reader is alerted to these asides by text printed within gray-toned boxes. Unfortunately this visually unattractive feature is repeated throughout the book. Possibly Castleman originally envisioned the boxes printed in various colors. Faced with the reality of production cost, he went for a lesser option, ironically just the sort of publishers' money-saving choice so frequently reported by him.

Castleman describes changes in materials over time, such as the transition from leather to cloth on covers, the development of more dependable glue, and the move from wooden boards to cardboard. All were features which resulted in lower overhead for publishers and lower prices for consumers. He bemoans the fact that these changes were not particularly helpful to authors, however. Castleman asserts that the authors did not gain income through any publishing innovation in history, even the newest forms of digital publication.

In this history of publishing, undoubtedly readers are going to come upon facts seen elsewhere. But they will also find tidbits that are not as commonly known. For example, your reviewer knew of Mathew Carey as the printer of the first Catholic Bible in America. It seems Carey was also credited with bringing about major changes in printing, by organizing a group of fellow printers to offer monetary prizes for the best American-

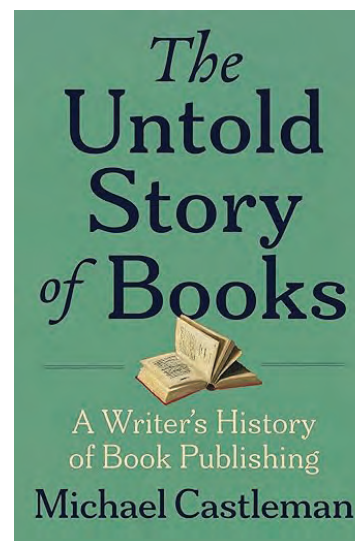
made ink (to avoid expensive imports) and for the best paper made from new material (sadly, wood pulp).

Among these interesting, readable facts, there are some irritating flaws in the book. For example, when talking about Margaret Fuller (1810–1850) as America's first newspaper book-review editor, Castleman rather oddly describes her death by drowning as occurring in "a boating accident," making it sound like a canoe


overturned. Fuller, her husband, and her child were among the many passengers who drowned when the ship *Elizabeth* sank off Fire Island, New York. Additionally, it was annoying to find, when spot checking the index, that page numbers cited for reference were not always accurate. You will not find Margaret Fuller on page 76, to highlight just one example.

Although Castleman has focused his story on the past, present, and future challenges for authors in making a living within the publishing industry, this is the moment to put in a plug for libraries. Hardworking GBW members should save their money for other books more relevant to their field. If you do want a "history of the book" for casual reading, ask your library to purchase this one—and be guilt-free when thinking about the author's royalties.

BARBARA ADAMS HEBARD was trained in bookbinding by Mark Esser at the North Bennet Street School. After a long career as Conservator at the Boston Athenaeum and Boston College, she now is the Preservation Coordinator at Brandeis University. She is a Fellow of The International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, a Professional Associate of The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, and was a long-time member of GBW.



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Slotted spine quarto from the AAB course review (page 26)

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