



VELLUM OVER BOARDS

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Brief History:

- One of oldest materials in use for covering books
- Has been used for pages, covers, spine linings, ...
- Used on limp and longstitch bindings
- Worked like leather over cords...
- Used on case bindings
- Generally poorly described in English language manuals and publications

Properties / Structural Issues:

Pro:

- Very durable and well wearing
- Aesthetic Qualities, translucency allows for design work beneath material.

Con:

- Extremely hygroscopic, i.e. reacts strongly to changes in temperature and humidity.
- Expands and contracts very strongly warping covers. Difficult to control.
- Hinges will contract, material crack, and tearing along turn-ins.

Adhesives:

Paste, PVA, PVA/Paste Mix: All have advantages, and disadvantages.

Paste preferable when lining paper to vellum (in case of underpainting...). as there is less chance to see brush strokes when dry. Will need to be dried under pressure for extended period of time to allow for stabilization before continuing. Needed for working of headcaps.

PVA has less moisture meaning vellum won't expand as much and dries more quickly. Good for putting down vellum in spine area, adhering lined vellum to boards.

PVA/Paste Mix: more working time.

Case binding "Solution:"

Based on German Case / Bradel binding.

Can be used with lined and unlined vellum.

Lined vellum easier to work with especially if using underpainted/underlaid designs... Hides shade/color differences in materials which can/will show through. Can be more "safely" used with PVA or other non-waterbased adhesives as streaking/brush strokes will not show through paper.

Unlined is easier to work, especially at headcaps and turn-ins as vellum will soften easier and mold better.

Board structure helps control warpage.

Vellum pulls on "weaker" cardstock allowing counter linings on "stronger" board to counter act pull.

Vellum essentially drummed on.

Textblock Preparation:

Same as for German (Bradel) case binding.

Make endsheet. Depending on size, kind of endsheet paper/material, or whether its a full vellum or ¼ vellum binding there are two different endsheet styles I like to use. The first is a double-folio with tipped-on contrast folio and tipped on cloth hinge which is hooked around the endsheet section, which I generally use for ¼ bindings. The other is a double-folio with tipped-on contrast folio which is then lined with a thin cloth and hooked around the endsheet section, which I like to use for full vellum bindings. The endsheet is "made" by tipping fore-edge down. This ensure greater flexibility. A loose guard will then be put around first and last "text" sections.

Glue/paste up spine; round and back to 45° angle. When backing make sure that depth of shoulder is 2x thickness of board.

Forwarding: line spine with Japanese paper along entire length; line with thin cloth between sewing supports and kettle stitches; decorate edge; sew endband; apply hollow.

Assembly Steps:

Make Boards: (Techniques described in Wiese, and what I learned as apprentice in Germany.)

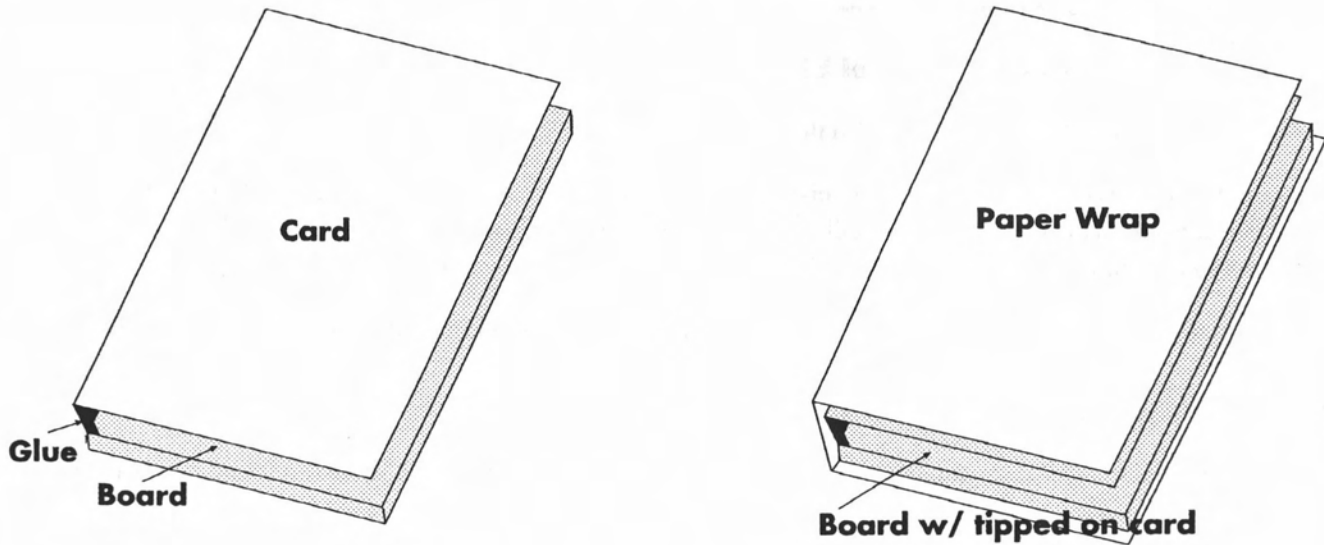
Cut to slightly higher and wider than needed in each dimension.

Tip on cardstock along spine edge.

Wrap with 80lb paper around board, turning around board only at spine edge.

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Trim board to proper height.

If vellum is unlined, color edges of boards to match (approx) that of the paper used on boards/spine.

Make Spine Piece:

Measure spine and cut strip of cardstock to exact width and slightly longer than board height.

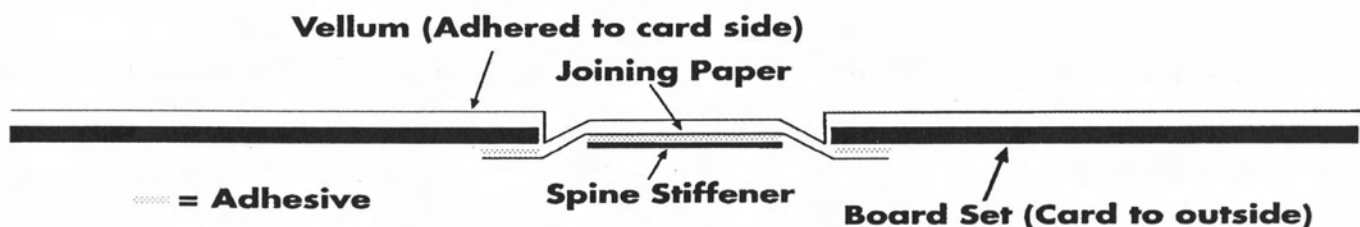
Cut connecting strip of 80lb paper (should be same stock as that used for wrapping board to width of spine strip + 6cm and slightly longer.

Apply PVA to spine strip and center on connecting strip.

Rub down with bone folder and accentuate edge of spine strip.

Assemble boards and spine strip/connector leaving ca. 7mm gap (depends on thickness of material and size of book).

Round spine and fit cover to book. Mark fore-edge with a pencil/knife and trim fore-edge.



Covering:

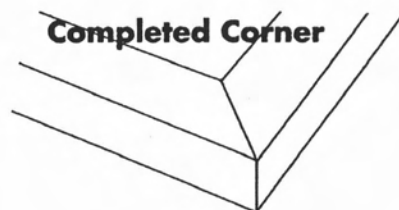
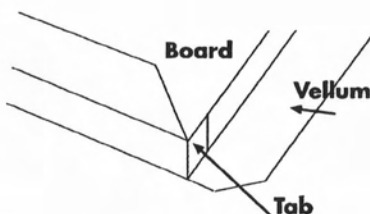
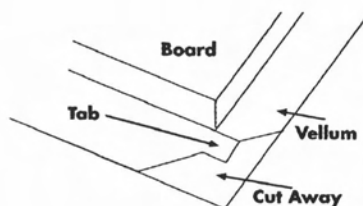
Adhering spine.

Lightly dampen vellum from grain/hair side (to aid in working into spine/groove and to reduce chance of strike-through from PVA), and apply adhesive to spine area of vellum only. Prepare spine insert of thick blotter with piece of thin Reemay/ Hollytex. The thickness of this spine insert needs to be more than thickness of board and cut to exact width between boards. Put in press. This assures that vellum is well adhered to spine strip.

Adhering sides.

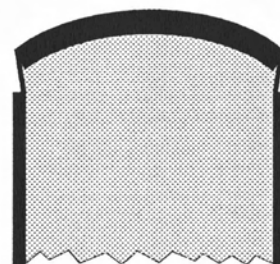
Using bone folder rub vellum along edge of board. Lightly dampen vellum on front side (to reduce chance of strike-through from PVA), fold back on self, put waste paper underneath, apply adhesive, and lay on board ensuring that vellum is tight along edge of board. Put in press. Use casing in boards to ensure crisp edge along board. Repeat on other side.

Turn-ins.



Begin turn-ins; make cuts at corners; and complete.

Begin molding headcaps. Headcaps should be evenly wide along entire length; using a narrow pointed folder/spatula tuck extra at ends down, and into groove.



Final Steps:

Place piece of mylar on top of endsheets, and fit textblock into cover. Let dry between casing-in boards and under weight. Be patient as parchment dries and stabilizes.

Trim out.

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Casing-in:

I make my vellum bindings with a hollow and sometimes lace vellum slips through at joint.

Apply adhesive to hollow and fit book in snugly. Place in press with casing-in boards or plexi-rods to make sure case is tight around spine.

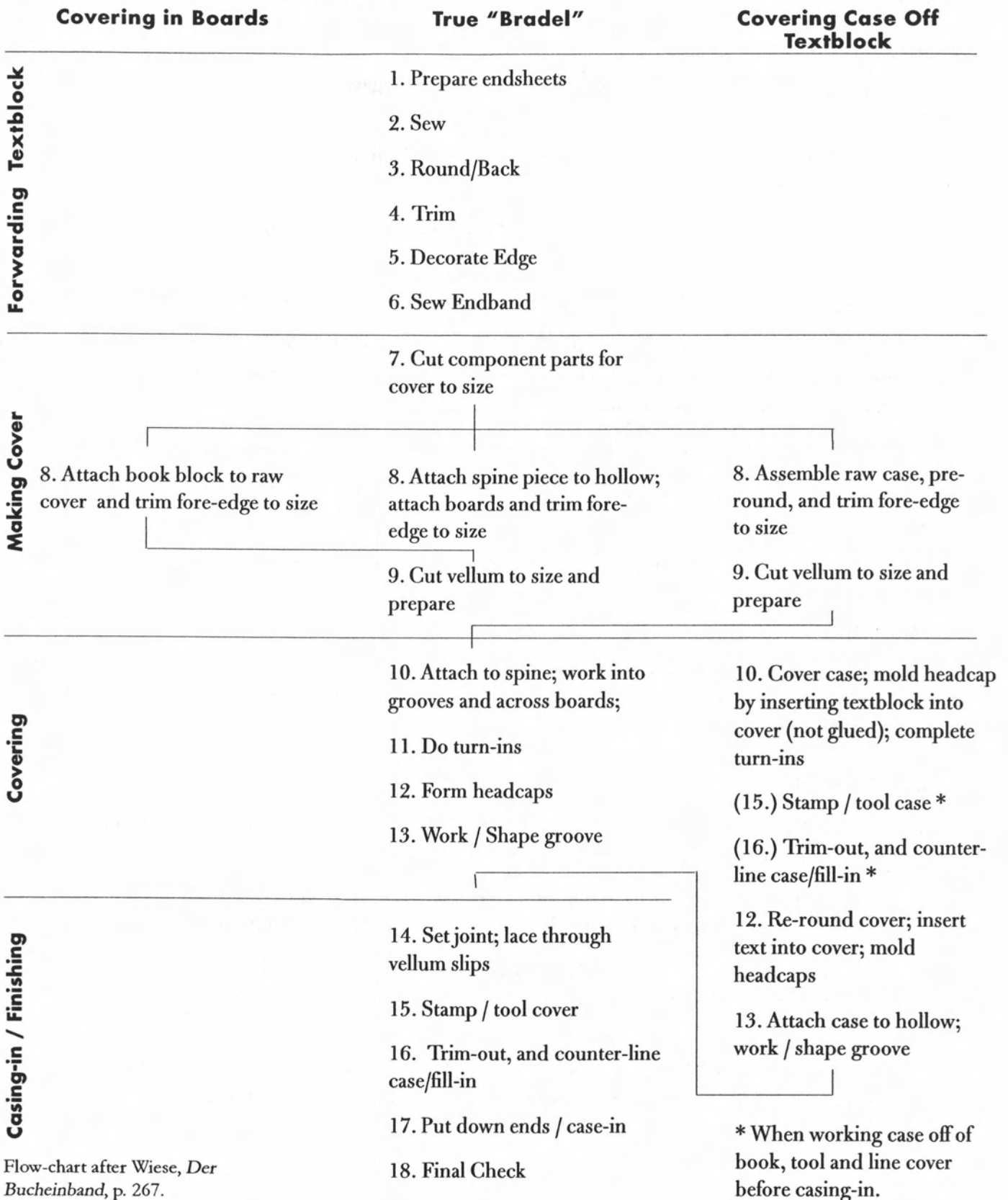
Cut slits for slips and lace through.

Counterline board with paper to help pull in board (be aware that board sheet will also exert pull. Again, patience is important.

Put down endsheets as for regular case binding.

Notes:

Vellum Binding Flow-chart: For full vellum, adaptable to ¼ vellum



Flow-chart after Wiese, *Der Bucheinband*, p. 267.

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