



In the frame of project BBinding, supported by Leonardo da Vinci Programme of EC

Report on the exploration of existing bookbinding, old photos restoration and paper preservation practices, training courses and curricula in Bulgaria, Italy, The Netherlands and Austria

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I. Introduction

The project “Binding design and paper conservation of antique books, albums and documents” /BBinding/ aims at providing modern training materials and tools for vocational training for bookbinding and paper preservation. It is supported by Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo da Vinci sub-programme of the EC. The project is being implemented by a partnership of five organizations from four EU countries: Bulgaria, Italy, the Netherlands and Austria.

As a first step in the project the partners had to explore the situation in their countries regarding the existing training materials, courses, university programmes, businesses and practices in the main project fields: bookbinding, paper preservation and photos preservation. The idea of this research was to use the findings as a basis for the development of 8 training modules in the frame of the project: 1/ Bookbinding; 2/ Paper/parchment maintenance and preservation; 3/ Photographs maintenance and preservation; 4/ Artistic bookbinding; 5/ Green approaches in paper production; 6/ Entrepreneurship and intercultural learning; 7/ E-learning approaches to bookbinding and paper preservation; 8/ Computer-aided design (CAD) of bookbindings.

The research findings and conclusions have been summarized in this report. It begins with a brief outline of the scope and methodology applied. Then, there is a comparison of general data gathered for the partner countries. Finally, an outline of the situation for each partner country is provided.

II. Scope

1. Aim

The main aim of the research is to explore the existing training materials, courses, university programmes, businesses and practices in bookbinding, paper and photos preservation in Bulgaria, Italy, the Netherlands and Austria in order to use the findings as a basis for the development of 8 modern training modules on those topics.

2. Key areas of research

The project partnership focused on the following areas of research:

- existing VET in bookbinding/old photos restoration/paper preservation;
- status-quo of the bookbinding/old photos restoration/paper preservation services;
- existing training materials /e.g. manuals, textbooks, online tools/ on bookbinding/old photos restoration/paper preservation;

3. Target group

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The project target group, considered during the implementation of the research, comprises:

- bookbinders (self-employed) and workers in small bookbinding workshops/ateliers;
- unemployed workers from former large bookbinding workshops or printing factories;
- unemployed individuals willing to develop their entrepreneurship and professional skills in the area;
- young artists who are willing to develop artistic bookbindings;
- vocational trainers in the binding ateliers or team leaders in the restoration sections in libraries/archives.

4. Participants

The research has been implemented in Bulgaria, Italy, the Netherlands and Austria by the following partner organizations in the BBinding project:

- Central Library of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences /CL BAS/ - Bulgaria
- Student Computer Art Society /SCAS/ - Bulgaria
- Fratelli Alinari. Fondazione per la Storia della Fotografia – Italy
- Stichting Restauratie en Educatie – The Netherlands
- Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz – Austria

III. Methodology

1. Development of a template questionnaire

SCAS (Bulgaria) developed a common questionnaire to be filled in by each partner when conducting the research in their country. The questionnaire contains 6 basic questions and its aim was to guide the partners what information they should search for. The results of the questionnaire are used to provide a basis for comparison of the situation in the different countries. In addition to the filled in questionnaire each partner had to outline the research results in a short summary report for their country.

Here is the questionnaire:

<p><u>Questionnaire</u></p> <p>Exploration of existing bookbinding/old photos restoration/paper preservation practices, training courses, curricula</p> <p>Name of partner organization:</p> <p>Country:</p>

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1. Is there vocational education and training in your country in the field of bookbinding/old photos restoration/paper preservation?

- a/ yes;
- b/ no, there are only university courses in such disciplines;
- c/ no, there is almost no courses in such disciplines

If “yes” please name a few VET schools, VET centers etc. that offer such training

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If “no, there are only university courses in such disciplines”, please name a few universities and the respective bookbinding/old photos restoration/paper preservation programmes there

.....

2. Are there any associations or organizations of bookbinders or restorers in your country?

- a/ yes;
- b/ no;

If “yes” please name a few:

.....

3. Where, in your country, can one ask for bookbinding/old photos restoration/paper preservation services?

- a/ bookbinding ateliers/workshops;
- b/ bookbinding and/or paper restoration sections in libraries;
- c/ bookbinding sections of printing companies;
- d/ other /please name/

4. Are there any training materials /e.g. manuals, textbooks, online tools/ on bookbinding/old photos restoration/paper preservation in your mother language?

- a/ yes, a lot of textbooks and manuals;
- b/ yes, just a few textbooks or manuals;
- c/ yes, textbooks, manuals and online tools as well;
- d/ no;

If “a”, “b” or “c”, please name some of those materials.....

.....

5. How would you describe the nature of the training materials on bookbinding/old photos restoration/paper preservation in your country?

- a/ both theoretical and practical;

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- b/ more theoretical than practical;
- c/ more practical than theoretical;

6. What is the level of the learners for whom the existing training materials are made?

- a/ mostly university students;
- b/ mostly for vocational education and training;
- c/ mostly for students in the secondary schools;

2. Methods applied

Methods of collecting information:

- desktop research by each partner organization in the respective partner country in the key areas described above;
- observations and experiences by experts in bookbinding, libraries leadership, paper and books restoration from the partner organizations;

Methods of analyzing the information:

- content analysis – on the basis of the multiple-choice and open questions from the questionnaire; description, analysis and synthesis of the answers from the questionnaire and the summary reports provided by each partner;

IV. Nowadays bookbinding, old photos restoration and paper preservation practices, training courses and curricula in Bulgaria, Italy, The Netherlands and Austria

1. State of the vocational education and training in bookbinding, old photos restoration and paper preservation

In **Bulgaria** there is one VET school called “National VET School for Polygraphy and Photography”. There are different programmes in the school such as polygraphy, photography, graphic design, computer graphics etc. Although there is no separate programme wholly dedicated to bookbinding or paper/photos preservation, in the frame of some of the programmes there are classes on techniques of bookbinding, elements of the binding etc.

In **Italy** there is vocational education and training in the fields studied. However, training in photography restoration is part of the paper conservation courses alongside with conservation of drawings, prints, books, paper materials, digital images and cinema. In order to acquire a professional qualification for conservation and restoration the Italian law requires a certificate from a 5-year course in one of the two schools that are approved by the Italian government: Istituto Centrale per il Restauro e la Conservazione del Patrimonio Archivistico e Librario – Scuola di Alta Formazione, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Rome or Alta Scuola di

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Formazione e Studio – Opificio delle Pietre Dure, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Florence. In the 5-year programme the part relating to photography is very limited, with digital and film.

In the **Netherlands** there is no ‘official’ national education (VET)/diploma but many courses are offered by handbookbinders: short courses on one technique or complete courses. These courses are often populated by elderly people and the interest of young people is small. Stichting Handboekbinden is one non-profit organization offering courses and training in bookbinding.

Regarding the disciplines of “restoration and conservation” the traditional bond between bookbinder and book restorer disappears: the restorer becomes a researcher/scientist not just a craftsman whilst handbookbinding gets more and more like a hobby. The only way to become a ‘qualified’ restorer is, since 2007, through an academic path in the Universiteit van Amsterdam (UVA).

In **Austria** there are only university courses in the fields studied. In the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna there are courses on prints and drawing conservation, there are some courses on book conservation and basic courses on photo conservation. Students of those programmes can get deeper knowledge via various forms of cooperation.

2. Other courses, trainings and curricula (outside VET) offered in bookbinding, old photos restoration and paper preservation

In **Bulgaria** there are several university courses related to the project topics. There is a special Conservation Department in the National Academy of Art. There is a MA course there on “Restoration”. In the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication in Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” there is a programme (Bachelor degree) on “Book Publishing” in which special courses on books design are included. This, however, has only little to do with bookbinding or paper conservation. Most of the students who have graduated from those programmes lack enough practice on the subject.

In **Italy** university courses in bookbinding, old photos restoration and paper preservation are offered in University of Arezzo, Bologna, Firenze, Cassino, Genova, Pisa, Perugia, Palermo, etc. Alinari has been organizing for many years specific courses on photographic materials held by renowned teachers from prestigious international institutions such as Rochester Institute of Technology as well as courses of specialization in photography conservation with teachers from Alinari, Opificio delle Pietre Dure MiBac – Ministero per i Beni e le attività culturali, Università, Museo di Fotografia Contemporanea di Cinisello Balsamo, Atelier de Restauration et Conservation de la Ville de Paris (ARCP), Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica, Rome, Mibac.

In the **Netherlands**, as mentioned above, restoration is taught only at a university level in the University of Amsterdam (UVA) in a seven-year Master degree course. The whole path consists of three steps: 1/ Bachelor in Humanities or Science with a mandatory Minor “Conservation and Restoration” (one year, total Bachelor is three years); 2/ Research program Master “Conservation

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and Restoration of Cultural Heritage” (two years; after this you are ‘restoration expert’ and 3/ Post-initial path (two years; specializing and practical experience possibly together with Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (SRAL); after this you can call yourself ‘restorer’.

Education and final exam including two levels (“Basic Bookbinding” and “Bookbinding”) are offered in Vereniging Handboekbinderijen (Association of Dutch Handbookbinderies) in which about 45 companies with 100 employees are involved.

In **Austria**, except for the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, there are some further education courses in bookbinding and paper/photos restoration offered. Such courses are available in the European Research Centre for Book and Paper Conservation-Restoration. Its aims are to do research in the field of book and paper conservation-restoration and to communicate the research results to those who can apply them. Horn Centre also offers the highest level of further education. The idea being, that new techniques which originate from research activities are then implemented in the practical work of the conservator-restorers. To do so an educational structure is needed. At the moment the courses being offered are intended to further the expertise of colleagues. Later there will be courses aimed mainly at conveying research results. Courses offered will be at the highest level, and will not be repeated. The courses are all intended for further professional development. Several of the large Austrian libraries and archives are open for volunteers. Also the European Research Centre for Book and Paper Conservation-Restoration takes volunteers either before or while their studies as conservator restorers. The European Research Centre for Book and Paper Conservation-Restoration sends the volunteers also to partner organizations in Germany, China, Japan and USA.

3. Bookbinding, paper/photos preservation and restoration as a trade

In **Bulgaria** one can ask for bookbinding services in some small bookbinding workshops/ateliers. However, they are not too many because there is not much demand for this kind of service. The existing one-man workshops usually offer two kinds of book bindings – so-called traditional (which can be simpler and cheaper or more sophisticated and thus more expensive) and artistic. Nevertheless, there is almost no variety in the bindings offered. According to the old bookbinders this trade is under a serious threat of completely perishing because there are almost no education and training offered for young people who would like to pursue such a career path. Books, paper and photos restoration and conservation services in Bulgaria are also offered by the biggest libraries – “St. St. Cyril and Methodius” National Library and “Ivan Vazov” Public Library in Plovdiv.

In **Italy** one can ask for bookbinding and paper preservation services in bookbinding ateliers/workshops, in bookbinding and/or paper restoration sections in libraries or can also turn to a freelance restorer. There is also an association of restorers called “ARI Associazione Restauratori d’Italia” (www.ari-restauro.org).

Photography restoration in Italy is operated by both public and private institutions. The Italian private entities are represented by the Alinari workshop and the public entities by “Craf. Centro

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di Ricerca e Archiviazione della Fotografia”, Spilimbergo, Italian Ministry of Culture: only a section in a Courses for Paper Restoration and “BNCF, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze”: Paper and Book Restoration Laboratory with a restorer who also works on photography.

In the **Netherlands** one can ask for bookbinding and paper preservation services in bookbinding ateliers/workshops and also in the so-called printing on demand services (POD).

Regarding the bookbinding as a trade there are about 335 (2010, Central Bureau of Statistics) small and bigger bookbinding companies: from a one-man bindery making 3 books per week to industrial binderies like “Hexspoor” with 70 people making 35 million books a year. A search on the Yellow Pages on “handbookbinderies” yields about 150 companies, most of them are one-man or family firms.

When it comes to restoration, the situation is a bit different. The profession is free: anybody can call himself “a restorer”. This has had a bad influence on the profession. Many bookbinders without any knowledge of historic bookbinding techniques, art history and whatsmore have “restored” books and other objects but in fact ruined them by discarding the old bindings, cutting books or impregnating them wit hall kind of plastic polymers. The last 20 years restorers try to professionalize the trade: several institutions were born, like Restauratoren Nederland, Art Restorers Association and Restauratoren Register. The most important one is Restauratoren Nederland.

In **Austria** there are associations both for conservators and for bookbinders - Österreichischer Restauratorenverband (for conservators/restorers) and Buchbinder Landesinnungen (for bookbinders). Basically if one needs some bookbinding or paper restoration services in Austria, they should ask freelance experts restorers or bookbinders.

4. Training materials available in bookbinding/paper and photos preservation

There is a lack of training materials on bookbinding in **Bulgaria**. All existing training materials are old-fashioned and have to be updated. There is one rare textbook published in 1958 called „Специална технология за книговезци“ (“Special technology for bookbinders”) by Angel Spasov, Dimitar Panov and Malin Dimitrov. It is a special edition published for the VET school for graphics at that time. There are also some textbooks for the use of bookbinding machines but those are not in any way related to the hand-bookbinding. There are some books published in Bulgarian language on: history of bookbinding styles and ornaments of old books, for example, but again they focus on researchers’ work in the field and are more academic than practical.

In **Italy** there are just a few textbooks and manuals dealing with paper and books restoration, written in Italian. These textbooks are more theoretical than practical and are direceted both to university students and to VET. In general there is a lack of training materials related to photos preservation and restoration. During the Restoration Fair in Florence in November 2012, an e-book has been presented “Il Restauro della Fotografia, materiali fotografici e cinematografici,

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analogici e digitali”, edited by Barbara Cattaneo. Other existing books include L. Masetti Bitelli, R. Vlahov (a cura di), “La Fotografia, tecniche di conservazione e problemi di restauro”, Analisi, Bologna, 1987, S. Berselli, L. Gasparini, “L’archivio fotografico. Manuale per la conservazione e la gestione della fotografia antica e moderna”, Zanichelli, Bologna, 2000.

In **the Netherlands** the situation is different with a lot of existing textbooks and manuals on the topics in question and especially in bookbinding. However, it’s vital to note that there are no available online tools for bookbinders. Some of the textbooks and manuals are written in Dutch but a vast majority is translated from other languages (English, French, German, Spanish, and Italian). The existing materials in the Netherlands can be defined as more practical than theoretical and most of them are designed for VET rather than for university students. Here are a few examples: Jeff Clements, “Ambachtelijk boekbinden”, Karli Frigge, “Zelf boekbinden”, J.C. Blanckstein, “Boekbinden”.

In **Austria** there are a lot of textbooks, manuals and online tools for bookbinding and books/paper conservation. These could be described as both theoretical and practical but are directed mostly to university students, lacking proper training materials for VET. Here are several of the existing materials on paper and books conservation Otto Wächter, “Restaurierung und Erhaltung von Büchern, Archivalien und Graphiken” (1982), Wolfgang Wächter, “Buchrestaurierung” (1980), Karl Trobas, “Papierrestaurierung” (1980). There are training materials also on bookbinding, including “Fachkunde für Buchbinder”, Österr. Gewerbeverlag, (1951), Johann Gottfried Zeidler, “Buchbinderkunst” (1978) and others of the kind. As one can easily notice most of the materials have been published more than 20, even 30 years ago.

V. Conclusions from the research and expectations about improvement of training materials and courses in bookbinding/paper and photos preservation.

1. Identified needs

- **A need for improving and maintaining professionalism** in the field of bookbinding because of a lack of proper training - knowledge of historic bookbinding techniques, art history etc.
- **Lack of updated modern training materials** (especially online tools) written in partner languages and targeting vocational education and training.
- Lack of **practical training materials** for the new generation of bookbinders - the traditional bond between bookbinder and book restorer disappears: the restorer becomes a researcher/scientist not just a craftsman. Also, a lot of people, and especially young people, who are artistically oriented, want to start developing small artistic objects (e.g. decorated notebooks, boxes, paper etc.).

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- **Lack of practical experience of restorers** (especially those working on photographs restoration) with the original material.

2. Expectations from BBinding project

BBinding project will improve vocational training for bookbinding and paper/photos preservation by:

- Transferring and further adapting the existing training materials (from the Netherlands, Austria, Bulgaria and Italy) for bookbinding and paper/photos preservation.
- Producing 8 training modules, module-based manual, e-learning materials and tools for bookbinding and paper/photos preservation which will empower the bookbinders, paper restorers and unemployed workers.
- Training trainers and team leaders from the restoration sections of libraries, archives and ateliers.
- Developing entrepreneurship, ICT, green skills and intercultural learning skills of the target group.
- Raising the awareness in partner countries about books, documents and photographs preservation.

3. Project influence and impact on the bookbinding and paper/photos preservation sector in VET

The project will:

- Increase the capacity of bookbinders and small workshops via providing them modern training materials and tools.
- Provide assistance to young entrepreneurs and unemployed people from former binding sections of print factories and increasing their capacity and possibilities for informal learning in bookbinding and paper/photos preservation.
- Empower VET providers in the area of bookbinding and contributing the development of open and distant learning in the field.
- Modernize the training tools and approaches in the field.
- Offer VET providers new training tools for entrepreneurship, ICT, green skills and intercultural learning in the field and thus will fill in the gap of such skills in the area of bookbinding and paper/photos preservation.

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- Raise the awareness of VET authorities about the future of jobs related to written heritage preservation (bookbinding, paper and photography restoration).