



# COMING TO TERMS WITH THE LANGUAGE OF BINDING

Nicholas Pickwood  
Ligatus Research Centre

The University of the Arts London  
23 June, 2015

# BOOKBINDING AND THE CONSERVATION OF BOOKS

A DICTIONARY OF  
DESCRIPTIVE TERMINOLOGY

Matt T. Roberts  
and  
Don Etherington

Drawings by Margaret R. Brown



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Washington  
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# KNEEP EN BINDING

een terminologie  
voor de  
beschrijving van de constructies  
van oude boekbanden

voor het  
*Belgisch-Nederlands Bandengenootschap*  
samengesteld door

W.K. Gnirrep J.P. Gumbert J.A. Szirmai

# KB

Koninklijke Bibliotheek  
Den Haag  
1992

# sewing guards

**Preferred label:**

sewing guards

Narrow strips of sheet material, most often thin parchment and often obtained as waste from the leaves of medieval manuscripts, folded along their length, and either inserted into the centres of gatherings and sewn through to reinforce the spine folds of the gatherings or placed outside to reinforce the outside of the gatherings on the spine. Also known as sewing stays (Clarkson). Sewing guards were introduced at the same time as paper-leaved gatherings, as it was thought that paper alone would not be strong enough to prevent the sewing thread tearing through the gatherings of bound books with paper leaves. It was a time-consuming part of the binding process and was gradually abandoned in the last quarter of the fifteenth century as the quantities of printed books to be bound increased and it was realised that the reinforcements were not actually necessary.

**Alternative label:**

sewing stays

**Hierarchy:**

[+] guards

[-] sewing guards

**Broader concept:**

guards

**Top concept:**

objects

**Concept uri:**

<http://w3id.org/lob/concept/3282>

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objects

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<http://w3id.org/lob/concept/3282>









REPLACED BY A  
PRINTED LABEL  
WITH  
10/11

1

*Pink-stained*



1

2

*Pink-stained / alum-tawed*





1

2

3

*Pink-stained / alum-tawed / split-strap*



1

2

3

4

*Pink-stained / alum-tawed / split-strap / double*



1

2

3

4

5

*Pink-stained / alum-tawed / split-strap / double / sewing supports*





# adzes

**Preferred label:**

adzes

Long-handled tools with a curved blade set perpendicularly to the handle; used for dressing wood. The use of the adze leaves characteristic shallow curved depressions on the surface of the timber.

**Source:** AAT

**Additional reference:** <http://vocab.getty.edu/aat/300023553> (modified)

---

**Hierarchy:**

[+] tools and equipment

[-] adzes

**Broader concept:**

tools and equipment

**Top concept:**

objects

**Related concept:**

adzing

**Getty AAT:**

adzes

**Concept uri:**

<http://w3id.org/lob/concept/4059>

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adzes

**Concept uri:**

<http://w3id.org/lob/concept/4059>

# Hierarchy

actors [+]

attributes [+]

features [+]

materials [+]

objects [+]

places [+]

symbolic objects [+]

techniques [+]



# Hierarchy

actors [ + ]

attributes [ + ]

features [ + ]

materials [ + ]

objects [ - ]

bindings [ + ]

components [ + ]

concertina books

enclosures [ + ]

tools and equipment [ + ]

{books by trade category} [ + ]

places [ + ]

symbolic objects [ + ]

techniques [ + ]

bindings [+]  
components [-]

- attachment components [+]
- board attachment components [+]
- board components [+]
- boards [+]
- bookblock components [+]
- bookblocks [+]
- bookmark components [+]
- bookmarks [+]
- cover components [+]
- covers [+]
- enclosure covers
- endband components [+]
- endbands [+]
- envelope flap components [+]
- fastening components [+]
- fastenings [+]
- furniture (components) [+]
- labels [+]
- linings (components) [+]
- seals (components)
- spine components [+]

- structures [+]
- supported structure components [+]
- tool components [+]

supported structure  
components [-]

pierced  
sewing  
supports [+]

sewing  
support  
elements

sewing  
support  
stiffeners

sewing  
supports [-]

Kapitalbünde

{sewing supports by  
formation} [+]

{sewing supports by  
number of  
elements} [+]

{sewing supports by  
position} [+]

{sewing supports by  
structure  
techniques} [+]



supported structure  
components [-]

pierced  
sewing  
supports [+]

sewing  
support  
elements

sewing  
support  
stiffeners

sewing  
supports [-]

Kapitalbünde

{sewing supports by  
formation} [+]

{sewing supports by  
number of  
elements} [+]

{sewing supports by  
position} [+]

{sewing supports by  
structure  
techniques} [+]

sewing  
support  
stiffeners

sewing  
supports [-]

Kapitalbünde

{sewing  
supports by  
formation} [-]

flat sewing  
supports

folded  
sewing  
supports

laminated  
sewing  
supports

reverse-twist  
supports

rolled sewing  
supports

split-strap  
sewing  
supports

## reverse-twist supports

### **Preferred label:**

reverse-twist supports

Double supports in which the twist in each element is different, even though they are made from a single length of twisted material. All recorded examples have been made of cord and they would appear to have been made by the binders who would take the necessary number of thick threads, hang them over a hook with an equal length on each side of the hook, and twist the group on the right side clockwise to give an S-twist, and the group on the left anticlockwise to give a Z-twist (this comes naturally when it is carried out). The technique has only been recorded on Germanic bindings, probably from the south of the German-speaking area, in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.



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## Hierarchy:

[+] {sewing supports by formation}

[+] double sewing supports

[-] reverse-twist supports

## Broader concept:

double sewing supports

## Top concept:

objects

## Concept uri:

<http://w3id.org/lob/concept/1544>



starch paste	-
stationery bindings	archival bindings, blank-book bindings, ledger bindings
stationery books	-
steep bevel	-
stencilled decoration	-
stencilled paper	-
stencilling	stenciling
stencils	-
stepped joints	-
stitched bindings	-
stitched change-over stations	-
stitched flayholes	sewn flayholes
stitched structures	-
stitched through a cover (bindings)	-
stitched within a cover (bindings)	-
stitched without a cover (bindings)	-

# stationery bindings

**Preferred label:**

stationery bindings

The bindings found on books made to be written in, such as ledgers, account books, etc. A variety of structures were used for these books (e.g. laced-case, tacketed, springback, etc.), but they were all intended to serve the same purpose. In eighteenth-century England, the binders who made these books were known as 'vellum binders', as parchment was the predominant covering material used on these books at that time.

**Alternative label:**

archival bindings

blank-book bindings

ledger bindings

**Hierarchy:**

[+] {bindings by external presentation}

[-] stationery bindings

**Broader concept:**

bindings

**Top concept:**

objects

**Related concept:**

stationery books

**Concept uri:**

<http://w3id.org/lob/concept/3045>

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## Search

The Language of Bindings Thesaurus (LoB) is a thesaurus of bookbinding terms for book structures dating from the ninth to the nineteenth century. This project has been partially [funded by the AHRC](#). Contributions to the thesaurus have been made by a number of [Contributors](#) during 3 workshops.

## Who's online

There are currently 0 users online.

*COMING TO TERMS:  
GUIDELINES FOR THE DESCRIPTION OF  
HISTORICAL BOOKBINDINGS*



External sewing supports



Secondary tacketts



Longstitch



be very hard to identify by visual means alone.

#### APPLICATION

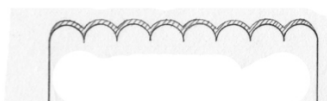
- 6.3.3 Paste (made from starch) will usually be applied in a thin layer, but *glue* (made from animal protein) could be applied in varying degrees of thickness. The type and thickness of application of *adhesive* may be significant, as there appears to be a marked tendency for British and Spanish binders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to use thick layers of a dark, animal-based *glue* on the *spines* of their books, especially those in *laced-case parchment* bindings. German and Low Country binders typically used much thinner *glue* layers, whereas Italian and French binders are much more likely to use *paste* rather than *glue*.

#### THE THICKNESS OF THE ADHESIVE LAYER

- 6.3.3.1 A more detailed record should attempt to record the thickness of the adhesive layer.

##### THIN

- 6.3.3.1.1 The *glue layer* follows closely the profile of the *gatherings* on the spine in a thin coating of the *paper* or *parchment*.



6.13 A thin layer of adhesive

##### MEDIUM

- 6.3.3.1.2 The *glue* fills the space between the *gatherings*, but the individual *gatherings* are still clearly visible beneath the *glue layer*.



6.14 A medium layer of adhesive

##### THICK

The *glue layer* is sufficiently thick to obscure the individual *gatherings* and appears as continuous layer across the *spine*.

6.3.3.1.3



6.15 A thick layer of adhesive

#### SPINE—COVER CONNECTION

The covering material on a binding can either be adhered to the *spine* of the *bookblock*, making what is known as a *tight back*, or it may not be adhered to it and will arch away from the *bookblock* when the book is opened, creating a *hollow back*. The moulding of the *covering material* over *raised bands* is not always an indication of a *tight back*, as some *laced-case bindings* in *parchment* will be found with the *parchment* shaped over the *raised bands* with a *natural hollow*. This is a feature of some Italian *laced-case bindings* with *boards* from ca 1650 to ca 1750 (see APPENDIX III, A3.6.4.2).

6.4

#### TIGHT OR HOLLOW?

The first question to ask therefore is whether the book has a *tight back* or a *hollow back*.

6.4.1

#### UNINTENTIONAL RELEASE OF TIGHT BACKS

Damp storage conditions and weak *adhesives* will often release the covers of *tight-back bindings* (see APPENDIX III, A3.6.4.3).

6.4.2

#### NATURAL OR ARTIFICIAL?

If the book has a *hollow back*, it may be either a *natural hollow back* or an *artificial hollow back*.

6.4.3

be very hard to identify by visual means alone.

#### APPLICATION

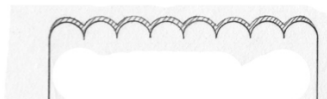
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#### APPLICATION

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#### MEDIUM

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#### THICK

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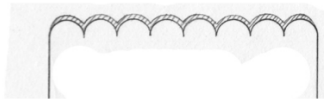
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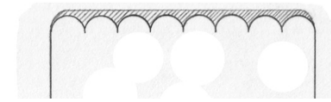
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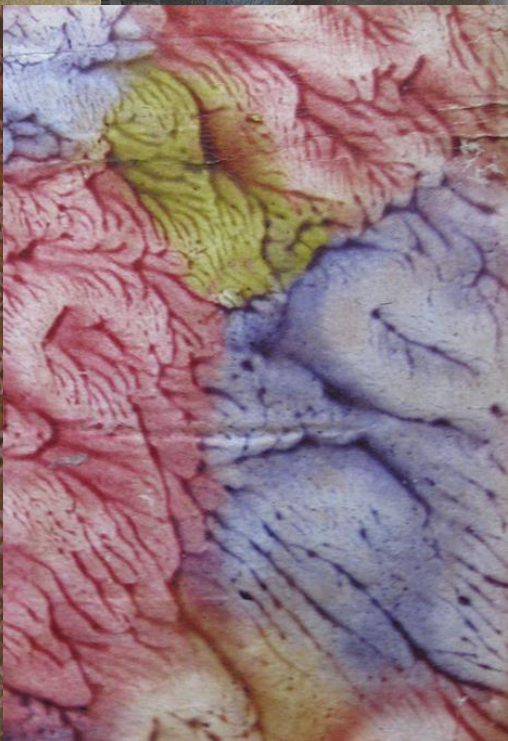
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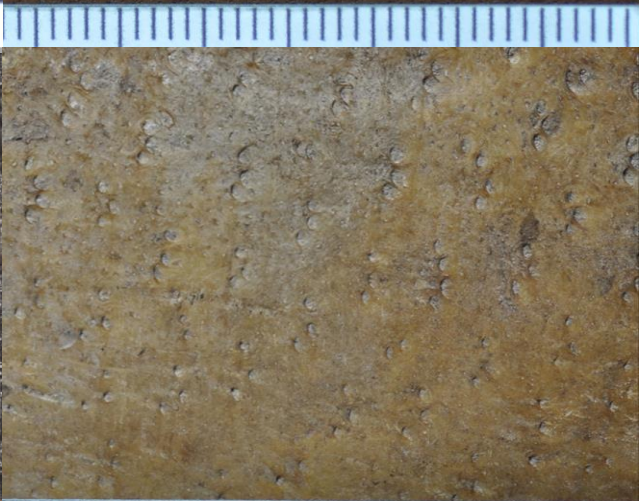
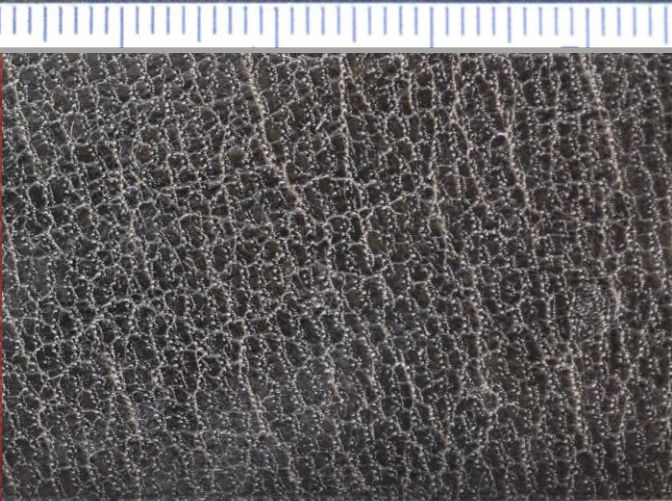
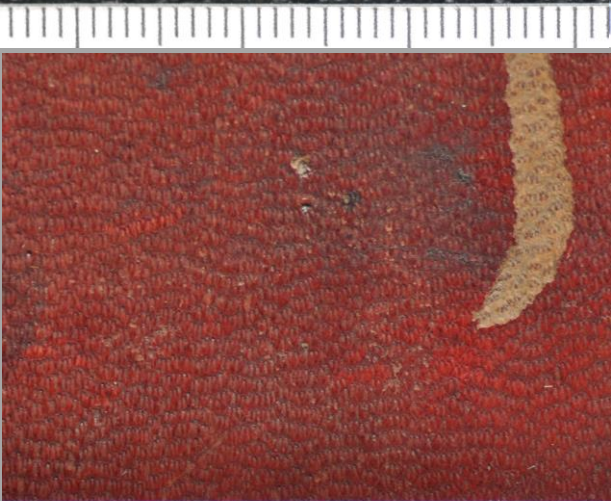
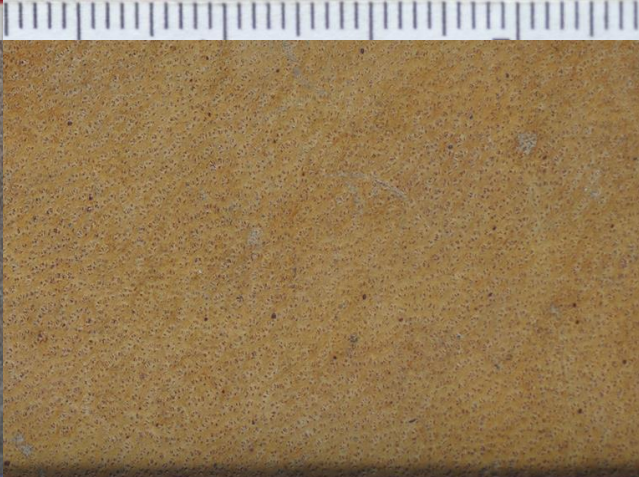
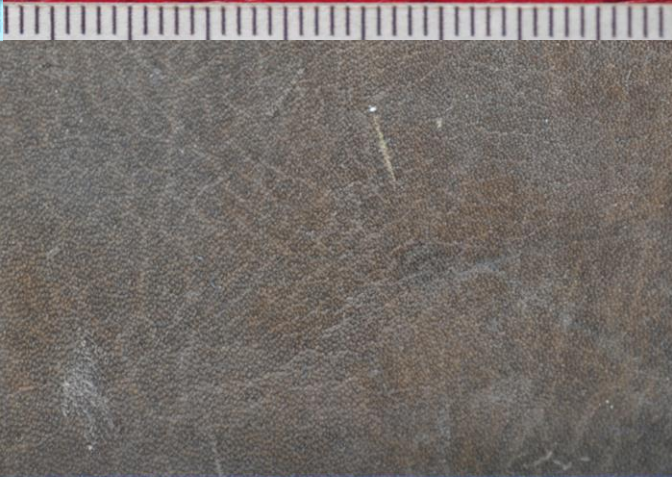
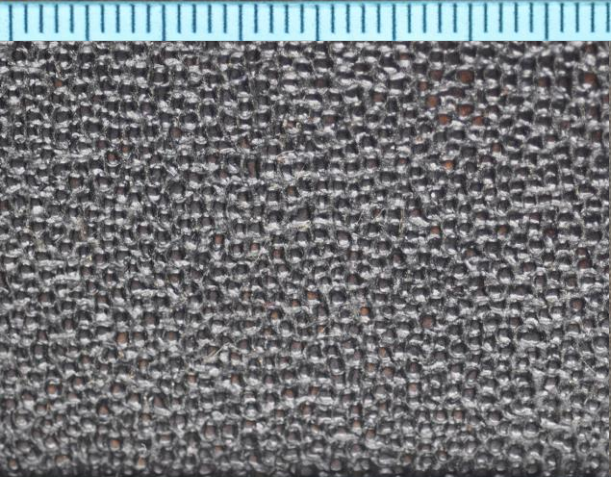
#### NATURAL OR ARTIFICIAL?

If the book has a *hollow back*, it may be either a *natural hollow back* or an *artificial hollow back*. 6.4.3











## 5.1.1.8.1 Raised sewing supports

### 5.1.1.8.1.1 Flat parchment supports

### 5.1.1.8.1.2 'Sewing cords'

### 5.1.1.8.1.3 Number of elements per support

#### 5.1.1.8.1.3.1 Single raised sewing supports

#### 5.1.1.8.1.3.2 Double raised sewing supports

##### 5.1.1.8.1.3.2.1 Double supports with single slips

##### 5.1.1.8.1.3.2.2 Identifying double supports

##### 5.1.1.8.1.3.2.3 Recessed double sewing supports

##### 5.1.1.8.1.3.2.4 Double sewing supports sewn as one

#### 5.1.1.8.1.3.3 Kapitalbünde and halfbands

##### 5.1.1.8.1.3.3.1 Single bands on a bevel

#### 5.1.1.8.1.3.4 Triple sewing supports

#### 5.1.1.8.1.3.5 Paired single raised sewing supports

## 5.1.1.8.2 Recessed sewing supports

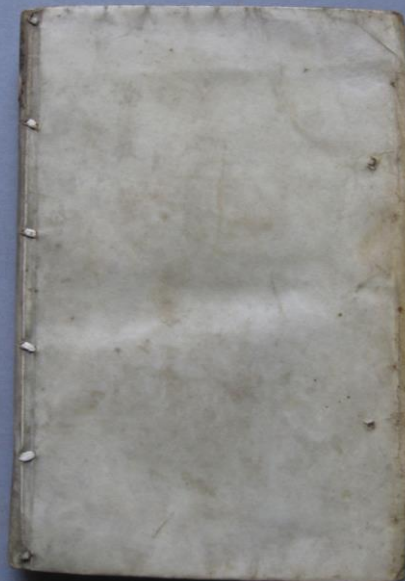
### 5.1.1.8.2.1 Partially recessed sewing supports

### 5.1.1.8.2.2 Thin raised sewing supports and smooth spines

### 5.1.1.8.2.3 Counting recessed sewing supports

### 5.1.1.8.2.4 Adhesive recesses

## 5.1.1.8.3 External sewing supports

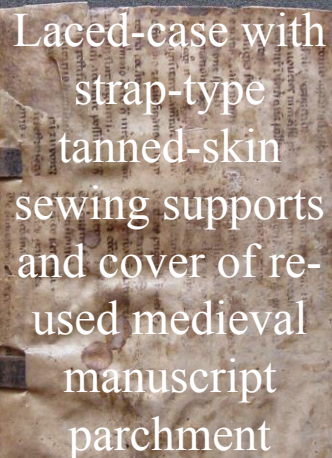






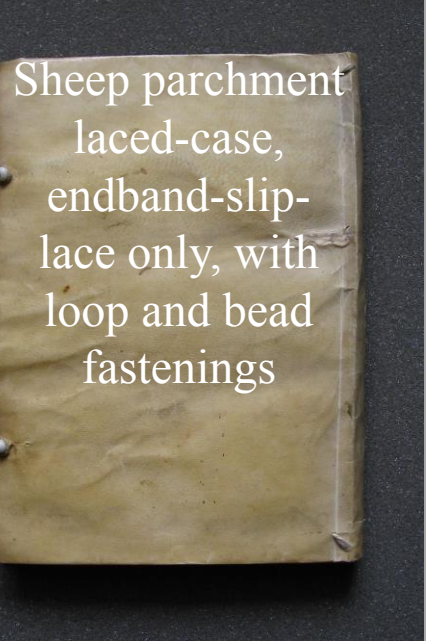
Sheep parchment  
laced-case with a  
cover lining

FRENCH




Laced-case with  
strap-type  
tanned-skin  
sewing supports  
and cover of re-  
used medieval  
manuscript  
parchment

ITALIAN




Sheep parchment  
laced-case,  
endband-slip-  
lace only, with  
loop and bead  
fastenings

SPANISH



One-piece calf-  
parchment adhesive  
case with an  
envelope flap from  
the right side

GERMAN



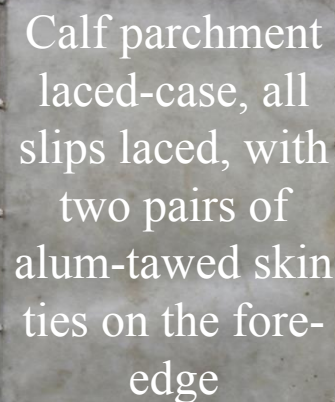
Reversed goat-  
parchment laced-  
case with turn-in  
lacing only, with  
two-colour paired  
ribbon ties

ITALIAN



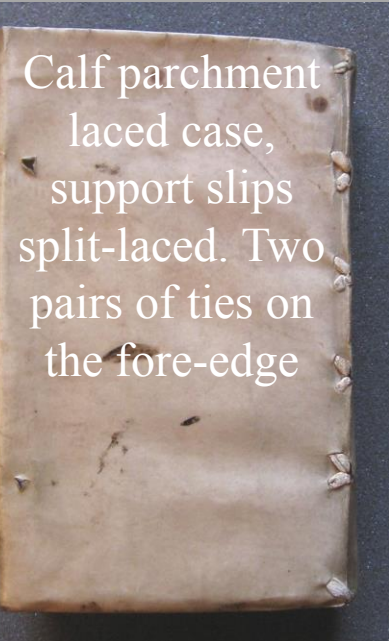
Longstitch  
through guard  
with full goat  
parchment cover

ITALIAN



Calf parchment  
laced-case, all  
slips laced, with  
two pairs of  
alum-tawed skin  
ties on the fore-  
edge

ENGLISH



Calf parchment  
laced case,  
support slips  
split-laced. Two  
pairs of ties on  
the fore-edge

FLEMISH





# THE DECORATED PAPER PROJECT









*Curiöse Discourse Von dene Wundern der Natur, Leipzig, 1700*



This project aims to compile a database of described and photographed decorated papers in order to provide a reference collection and a tool to assist any user in the identification and recording of decorated papers.

- Search papers
- Visual glossaries

### Technique

Choose some options

### Material by function

Choose some options

### Paper material

Choose some options





This project aims to compile a database of described and photographed decorated papers in order to provide a reference collection and a tool to assist any user in the identification and recording of decorated papers.

- Search papers
- Visual glossaries

## Technique

block-printing

brush-colouring  
coloured fibres (techniques)  
dabbing (techniques)  
engine-colouring  
metal-leaf embossing  
paste-decorating  
sprinkling (techniques)  
surface-colouring (techniques)

## Material by function

Choose some options

## Paper material

Choose some options







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- [Search papers](#)
- [Visual glossaries](#)

### Technique

block-printing ✕

### Material by function

Choose some options

### Paper material

Choose some options





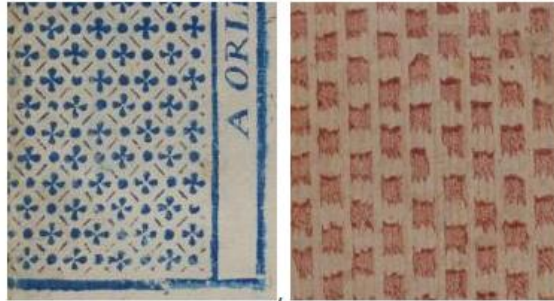
[Home](#) > [Visual glossaries](#)

- [Search papers](#)
- [Visual glossaries](#)

### Visual glossary

**Paper material**

[Visual glossary techniques](#)



#### block-printed paper

Paper produced using the technique of block-printing. They were very popular in Italy, where the Remondini family of Bassano produced a wide range of designs in the eighteenth century, but were also made in most other European countries, including Germany (where they were known as Kattunpapieren) and France, where they were known as Dominotier papers, with Rheims and Orléans as the major centres of production.



#### brocade paper, Brokatpapier

Alternative labels include: Dutch gilt paper, gilt paper, Augsburg paper. A type of decorated paper which may use more than one technique, but which is distinguished by being partially or completely covered with sheets of metal leaf and a slightly embossed surface. The embossing was created by means of the engraved metal plates which were also used to transfer the metal leaf to the paper; this was done by applying pressure in a copperplate printing press through a felt blanket or other soft material. The pattern created by the plates can either be metal-leaf embossed, where the metal leaf remains only in the depressions created by the raised parts of the plates, or blind-embossed, where the metal leaf covers the entire surface of the paper which is then simply embossed with the same type of plate. The paper used can be uncoloured, already coloured or decorated with a variety of techniques including stencilling, hand-painting, brush-colouring, etc.

[Home](#) + [Visual glossaries](#)

- [Search papers](#)
- [Visual glossaries](#)

## Visual glossary



**Brocade paper, stencilled in multiple colours**  
Image 3 of 3

Paper which has been purposely altered with a relief texture.



duced a wide range of designs in (papieren) and France, where

chnique, but which is  
s created by means of the  
plate printing press through a  
ns only in the depressions  
en simply embossed with the  
ng, hand-painting, brush-



<http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/>