

Conservation Condition and Treatment Proposal for BY Memorandum Book

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Overview

This volume is a parchment manuscript relating to York city dating from 1371 to 1596. The manuscript, along with additional documents, was later bound into a single full parchment binding sometime in its history (likely late 19th – 20th century). Both the original manuscript and its later binding are in very poor condition. The original manuscript pages have been severely water damaged during Victorian era floods (drawn from information related to its partner volume A/Y) with the majority of water damaged pages having some medium to high degree of stiffness and gelatinisation. Approximately one-half of the water damaged pages also have significant loss or fading of text. Historic repairs were made with heavy parchment and use of hot animal glue on the spine, creating stress points throughout the textblock that are further damaged during use. The re-binding style is not ideal for this type of textblock and has broken down, with split upper and lower joints and detached endpaper construction, all of which is causing undue stress onto the original manuscript sections.

In order to prevent future loss of information and historic content during use, this manuscript requires a full conservation treatment. Repairs to the manuscript should be done to complement its partner, the AY Memorandum book, which was split into smaller sections (based on academic content) and rebound in conservation-friendly limp vellum style bindings. Due to the smaller amount of gatherings in this binding, it can be repaired and rebound as one volume unless the content dictates two bindings to be more logical.

It is also proposed that while the manuscript is disbound, all pages be digitised. This will reduce the use of the physical object unless necessary and aid in any future transcription efforts, as well as long-term preservation. Digitisation can be completed through a variety of local specialists including the British Library Boston Spa.

Proposed treatment Overview

1. Gentle surface cleaning of manuscript
2. Disbinding, retaining the cover
3. Digitise manuscript pages
4. Remove old damaging repairs where necessary
5. Repair the spine folds, damaged edges, and other parchment damage using alum tawed goldbeaters skin (caecum) with gelatine to create sympathetic repairs
6. Gentle tensioning of bifolio where necessary
7. Using packed-style sewing, re-sew volume (along with new endleaves) on alum tawed thongs to support to the textblock without additional adhesives. (To match A/Y volume).
8. Sew primary endbands in linen thread on alum tawed thongs.
9. Create a new limp laced case binding in natural calfskin parchment.
10. Create a new labelled drop-spine board and cloth conservation box for long term storage
11. Complete a full condition and treatment report to retain with the binding.

Estimated total cost: £11,452.35

Detailed condition Report



Object details

Reference No: B/Y E20A

Title: *City of York: Register of Various Memoranda Relating to City (1371-1596)*

Dimensions: 243 x 320 x 90 (w x h x d)

Binding cover:

The binding is a modern split board construction with integral hollow and full parchment as the covering material. The binding is not contemporaneous with the textblock and manuscript. The cover has a red leather label which is gold tooled with the volume's title. There are two additional shelf marks that have been ink stamped directly onto the spine parchment with the reference number (B/Y) and shelf mark (20A).

The binding is in poor condition. The parchment covering material has split along the joint of the upper and lower board and is detaching from the spine of the binding. There is surface and ingrained dirt (from handling) along the spine as well as the board edges. The corners are bumped through the binding.



Figure 1 binding damage detail at lower board and tail

This binding style is inappropriate for the parchment textblock as it is putting severe strain on the edges of the original parchment bifolio. Hot animal glue used to apply the spine linings during binding has caused some cockling through the textblock gutters and damage to the parchment.

Textblock and endpapers:

There are 26 gatherings, varying from three to six bifolio in each gathering, along with many single leaves that have been guarded on parchment stubs and hooked into the gatherings. Each leaf is marked along the centre bottom with the number. The total number of leaves is 250. The textblock is sewn on three parchment tapes in an all along sewing style. The textblock is lined with linen, leather, and paper, which has then been inserted into the split boards.

The textblock is in poor condition with surface and ingrained dirt throughout. The edge of many leaves have small tears or breaks. A majority of the textblock has been water damaged, from the lower edge to past mid-way up the textblock. On these areas, the parchment is cockled, stiffened and gelatinised, with fading or complete loss of the text. There are areas of text that appear friable and need further examination under magnification.



Figure 2 Loss of text due to abrasion (r) and water damage (l)

Previous repairs made to the textblock, particularly the heavy parchment guards and spine edge repairs have caused severe strain and adding stress points when turning the leaves of the binding. On many bifolio there are clear signs of damage from the heavy repair guards causing the original parchment to hinge along the guard edge.



Figure 3 Heavy parchment guards and repairs causing stress points when turning pages

There are thick parchment patch repairs throughout the textblock, as well as several discoloured glassine paper repairs to the parchment. The endpapers are handmade laid and wove papers made with marbled paper and sewn through the cloth joint.

Project cost breakdown

Staff time

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| - Surface cleaning | 1.5 hours |
| - Disbinding, retaining cover and title page of binding | 5 hours |
| - 59 bifolio requiring the removal of inappropriate repairs and new guarding with alum tawed goldebeater's skin (cacum), tensioning of pages as needed. Examination and consolidation of inks where needed. | 155 hours |
| - 33 folio requiring mending for tears on bottom and foreedge | 38 hours |
| - Resewing, endbanding, and creating new binding cover | 10 hours |
| - Creating a board and cloth drop spine box to preserve the new binding | 6 hours |
| - Writing of final report | 7 hours |

Staffing costs

222.5 hours @ £30.28 per hour
£6,737

Additional costs:

Rental of studio at the Borthwick Institute, University of York 31 days @£110 per day
£3410

Total materials (incl. ones already owned by Explore) £760

Total additional costs £4,360

Contingency (5%) £545.35

Grand Total project cost (excl VAT) £11,452.35

Conservation condition and treatment proposal, B/Y Memoranda Book
Version 1, March 2018

Textblock makeup, condition, and notes for treatment:

The majority of leaves have water damage and some loss/fading of text throughout, with severe damage noted. Some bifolio may require gentle tensioning during treatment. Examination to areas of water damaged text under magnification should be carried out, with the possibility of consolidation as required.

26 gatherings

- 1- (Folio 1-12) 6 bifolio
Folio 1 – edge tears
Folio 4 – removal and repair of semi-detached parchment patch
- 2- (13-16) 2 bifolio
Folio 13-16 - repair to spine edge
- 3- (17-22) 3 bifolio
Folio 18-19 - repair to spine edge
- 4- (23-26) 2 bifolio. Severe water damage throughout, including complete loss of the majority of text on 3 leaves
Folio 23-26 - repair to spine edge
- 5- (27- 39) 6 bifolio. Loss of text and offsetting, severe water damage.
Folio 27,28, 34- repair to spine edge
33,33 – tear repairs, removal of old patches and repair
- 6- (39-50). 6 bifolio. Loss of text and offsetting, severe water damage.
Folio 39,40,41,42 - repair to spine edge. Tear repairs on edges.
39 – tear repairs, removal of old patches and repair
- 7- (51-59) 1 hook guard + 4 bifolio.
Folio 51, 54-55 - removal of guarding and repair
51- tear repair
- 8- (60-70) 5 bifolio + 1 hook guard. Severe water damage and loss of text
60,70 - repair to spine edge
64 – tear repair
- 9- (71-82) 6 bifolio. Severe water damage and loss of text
71- repair to spine edge
73- repair to patches
- 10- (83-96) 7 bifolio
83-85 - repair to spine edge
94, 96- tear repairs
- 11- (97-104) 3 bifolio. Severe water damage and loss of text.
97,98,100 - repair to spine edge
- 12- (105-116) 6 bifolio.
105,116 - repair to spine edge

- 115, 116 – tear repairs
- 13- (116A – 124) 1 hooked guard + 4 bifolio. Severe water damage and loss of text.
116, 117, 120 - repair to spine edge
117,124 – tear repairs
- 14- (125-134) 5 bifolio
125, 127, 133- repair to spine edge
127,134 – tear repairs
- 15- (135-142) 4 bifolio. Media loss and offsetting. Some friable inks.
135 -137 - repair to spine edge
- 16- (143-150) 4 bifolio. Media loss and offsetting. Some friable inks
143-146 - repair to spine edge
150 – tear repairs
- 17- (151-160) 4 bifolio. Severe water damage and loss of media
151 - repair to spine edge
- 18- (161-176) 2 bifolio. Severe water damage
161 - repair to spine edge
- 19- (177-188) 1 hooked guard + 6 bifolio
186 - repair to spine edge
167, 170, 175, 176 – tear repairs
- 20- (189-199) 5 bifolio + 1 hooked guard
189, 198 - repair to spine edge
190, 192, 197 – tear repairs
- 21- (200-210) 5 bifolio + 2 hooked guards. Severe water damage.
200,210 - repair to spine edge
- 22- (211-220) 4 bifolio + 2 hooked guards
211,215,216,219 - repair to spine edge
211 – 215, 219, 220 – tear repairs
- 23- (221-224) 4 hooked guards
221 - repair to spine edge
222 – tear repairs
- 24- (225-228) 2 bifolio
225,228 - repair to spine edge
- 25- (229-238) 4 bifolio + 2 hooked guards
234, 236 - repair to spine edge
238 – tear repairs
- 26- (239- 250) 5 bifolio + 2 guards
239,240,244,245,246- repair to spine edge
240,242,244,247 – tear repairs