

The Spanish bookbinding in the Royal academies: binders, workshops and different typologies (18th – 20th centuries)

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Abstract: The research project that we are now announcing has been granted by the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness of Spain and deals with "The Spanish Bookbinding in the Royal Academies: binders, workshops and different typologies (18th -20th centuries)". The main goal of our project is to search, analyze and identify all the bookbinders who worked for the eight more relevant Royal Academies in Madrid.

To carry out this research, we have to look at all the account books, expenses and minute books conserved during (18th - 19th and mid. 20th centuries). Later we will identify all the bookbindings that are located in the different Academies.

The final aim of the research is to fill out the gap left in the Spanish scientific production of an essential part of the History of Books and Bookbinding.

Keywords: Binders / Archives / Royal Academies / History of Bookbinding / 18th century / 19th century / 20th century

1. Background and current status

The study of bookbinding has not always played an essential role in the history of books in Spain. It's quite unusual to find library catalogues (in paper and online) or even databases that deal with this exhaustive and detailed description of our bibliographic heritage. Less information is offered about its creators, the bookbinders, which is a starting point for any serious study on bookbinding, not only to determine who is the creator of a particular work, but also because it allows us to connect workshops, artists and style trends.

The only publication on bookbinders and, therefore, the starting point of our work, is the one by Vicente Castañeda (1958).

The study deals with the biographies of Madrid's bookbinders from the 13th to the 20th centuries, both of prestigious bookbinders and of artists considered then as minors. To carry out his study of the bookbinders, conceived as architects of a minor art and subsidiary of the Fine Arts, Castañeda consulted as academician to the Royal Academy of History on minute book, bundles and account books of the academy. However, he did not record the primary sources and the documentation he used, as was normal in this period. Also, he limited himself to the documentation he had in the RAH, which makes it necessary to review this work with the documentary sources of the other institutions on which he worked and an update of all the materials that allow updating the biographies of the other leading bookbinders.

Another work of Castañeda (1935), pertinent within our project as a bibliography, where different labels of the binders were added to the works from the end of the 18th century up to the beginning of the 19th. These labels contained relevant information such as the binders name, the workshop address and even if they belonged to the royal chamber court. They were usually stuck in the flyleaves of the bindings.

Matilde López Serrano was another of the authors whose work involved the search of biographical data of Spanish bookbinders. She was the Head of the Palace Library from 1939 until the end of the 80's and was one of the first researchers in Spanish bookbinding. One of the principal works on bindings was her doctoral thesis, *La Encuadernación española en los siglos XVIII y XIX*, presented in June 1936; the first one in Spain on the subject. Unfortunately, during the Spanish Civil War the copy kept in the library of the Faculty was probably used as a brick in a defensive wall. A significant number of books ended up the same way. Its loss has created a critical gap in the history of bookbinding as this work would have provided the rest of the researchers with an excellent opportunity to know about other binders of the time and their works. Though the editor Santiago Saavedra recently acquired the personal file of Matilde López Serrano, no information about the thesis or the bibliography used for that work appears in it. The most important work of López Serrano (1972), gives some information about Spanish binders' biographies and the decorative styles used in Spain from the early goldsmith bindings of the 12th and 13th centuries up to the 20th.

López Serrano had previously published numerous works on Spanish bookbinding and bookbinders (1942, 1975, 1976).

She has left us a large number of specific articles that deal with bookbinders who worked in Madrid during the second half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century, all of them relevant artists, some of whom worked for different monarchs as Chamber bookbinders. Today some of their works can be found in the Royal Library of the Royal Palace in Madrid.

One of her first works, after the completion of her doctoral thesis was published in 1937. In the next decade it was followed by other works (1945) where she provides valuable information about Juan Gómez, Juan Pérez, Antonio de Sancha and the Menoyre family.

During the 1940's and 50's, López Serrano published different articles about bookbindings and bookbinders who had worked for various kings of the Spanish monarchy. The most remarkable (1940) in which Antonio de Sancha is specially mentioned and a second article (1945) in which Antonio de Sancha and his son Gabriel are featured. The next publication (1950) deals with Pascual Carsí, Gabriel de Sancha and Santiago Martín were all of them are highlighted. All these articles were published in *Archivo Español de Arte*.

López Serrano also wrote monographic articles about Royal bookbinders (1942, 1943, 1946) such as Antonio Suárez, Santiago Martín and Antonio de Sancha. Another article published in *Revista de Bibliografía Nacional*, in 1946 referred to the Sancha family.

Another two articles were dedicated to the bookbinder Gabriel Gómez. The first of these was published in the journal *Coleccionismo* and the second was published in *Revista de Bibliografía Nacional*, both in 1945.

Also, in 1970 another work published in the journal *Reales Sitios*, dedicated to the bindings of the “*Guías de forasteros*” was made by the bookbinder Miguel Ginesta Clarós.

An article written in 1978 in the journal *Bulletin du bibliophile*, deals with binders in the first half of the 19th century. In this journal some information about Antonio Suárez and other vital binders such as Santiago Martín, Pedro Pastor and Francisco Cifuentes appears. Another article in the journal *Reales Sitios* (1967), gives us different information about Antonio Suárez as the creator of the curtain style. Finally, information about Agustín Durán is found in the article in *Revista Bibliográfica y Documental* (1947).

Matilde López Serrano's work (1951) on the bookbinders of the late 19th and early 20th centuries titled, *Don Ramón Miquel y Planas*, and moreover, an article (1951) titled *El encuadernador catalán del siglo XIX Pedro Doménech*.

Another paper (1950) includes information about the binders Emilio Brugalla Turmo, Antolín Palomino Olalla, César Paumard. And finally, the article *La encuadernación artística española actual* (1954), provides biographical data of the bookbinders Emilio Brugalla Turmo, César Paumard, Antolín Palomino Olalla, Josefina Díez Lasaleta and José Galván Rodríguez.

Apart from the works of Matilde López Serrano, we cannot forget the monograph of Pedro Vindel (1935) which is possibly the most important in the second half of the 18th century in Spain.

In more recent times, we have the catalogue of the exhibition titled, *La encuadernación española actual* (1986), which includes a brief biography of the Spanish bookbinders who exhibited at that exhibition. Another work, *Enciclopedia de la Encuadernación* (1998), includes terms on bookbinding and small biographies of bookbinders from the 15th century to bookbinders' contemporaries of the late 20th century who are still active today.

Dolorés Baldó Suárez (1999) wrote an essential work for the knowledge of bookbinding and bookbinders of the 20th century.

We cannot forget the great work that the Royal Library is undertaking with the creation of a large database on bindings, which includes biographical data of the bookbinders identified or who have signed their works (<http://encuadernacion.realbiblioteca.es/>), or the dissemination of the work carried out with the exhibition titled, *Grandes Encuadernaciones en las Bibliotecas Reales (S.XV - S.XXI)*, from April to September 2012, where a large number of artistic bookbindings of the Library were exhibited, most of them with the identified bookbinders.

Concerning similar studies in other countries, Ernest Roquet (1970) published a book, which includes small biographies of French bookbinders from the 15th century to the first of the 19th century.

Not all the necessary work for our project is on bookbinders since we might also find information on who the works and bindings, together with the heraldic superlibris stamping and exlibris in the guards were intended for. To identify those former owners, it is necessary to consult other sources on heraldry in the binding such as the work by Valentín Moreno Gallego (2008), and the second one, carried out by Juan Antonio Yeves Andrés (2008).

Despite all these publications and studies, mostly focused on the significant figures of our country's bookbinding, a methodological review is necessary to enable linking the information about binders with the identification of new bindings. The leading researcher of the project together with the members of his group is discovering more information.

More urgent is to study all the other minor workshops and the lesser known binders who brought out half-leather bindings. Some of these were paperbound covered with marble or xylographic paper, in flexible parchment or Roman style, marbling paste, Spanish, Valencian, etc., and because of these there are hardly any studies and information to trace the history of Spanish bookbinding from the 18th to the 20th centuries.

2. Departure hypothesis, general objectives

We ignore almost everything about binders working in the Royal Academies. A complete study of binders who worked for the Royal Academies in Spain is still a pending subject. Only a few notes compiled by Vicente Castañeda (1958) in the Royal Academy of the History Archive and some other notes about binders of the Spanish Royal Academy have been undertaken to date.

As this global study has not been done, acquiring only a few contributions, it's necessary to start a comprehensive archival search of tasks and transcription of the minute book, bundles and accounting books of the oldest eight Royal Academies in Madrid. We have to retrieve as much as possible about orders and payments from binders, engravers and book sellers, all of it related to binding production.

Thus, the general objective is to locate all the news, notes, payments related to the bindings that appear in the primary archival sources for their subsequent transcription and study. Then the task is to locate the bindings that are available in the libraries that have been referenced in the notes to enable us to make a *corpus* of bindings and biographical news of the binders.

We guess that most of the binders we are going to find are unknown, as the bindings related to these workshops are modest but it is helpful to better understand the work of these workshops. Research will help us find information on placements, the prices applied, the amount of work done, the periods of time working with the Royal Academies, the relations with the printers and the suppliers of raw material, etc. The primary aim is to know the history of each one of the Royal Academies and give a realistic view of the art of binding in Madrid.

3. Specific objectives

To complete the general purpose several specific aims are proposed, some about the bookbinders and others about the bindings themselves, including their working tools, are considered documents to be published independently.

A) Bookbinders:

- a) Compile all news, notes, receipts related to the bindings made in Royal Academies.
- b) Study of the news and payments of each binder in each Royal Academy, to cross reference the information later of each binder in the other Academies. This task will enable us to know the total number of works done, the books that were bound, typology of the bindings, materials, prizes, etc.
- c) Create a binders' database containing all the information appearing in the receipts and notes written in the accounting books

- d) Prepare and publish a biographic dictionary of all the binders who worked for the Royal Academies.

B) Book Bindings:

- a) Create a database of all the binders with identified bindings, where information regarding the techniques of work (including the constructive ones), materials used, types of bindings, decorative elements and state of conservation practised in their workshops.
- b) Create an image database of bindings that have been identified and analyzed.
- c) Create a super libris, exlibris and annotated manuscripts database of previous holders that will permit reconstructing the history of the book.
- d) Study and publish the binding features of each workshop, adding a corpus of structures and decorative motifs used by each binder. This will help to find more bindings of those workshops in other libraries.
- e) Dissemination of the results via scientific publications (books and articles).
- f) Prepare an exhibition with its correspondent catalogue, including all the project results. The archive documents belonging to the eight Royal Academies and the bindings associated and linked to that documentation will be shown.
- g) Prepare a Seminar for the discussion and pooling of knowledge with other professionals that keep Antique books and Bindings in their libraries.

4. Methodology

The method that is going to be followed consists of three different steps. First, the search of all the archive documents. Second, the search of all the works and the bindings in the library storage of each one of the Royal Academies and finally the dissemination of all the results obtained.

A) The first step will be the research, transcription and creation of the archival source databases of each of the Royal Academies:

1. Consulting the archives for accounting books and minute book of each of the eight Royal Academies:
 - 1.1) Record each new note related to the bindings - books or bundles signature, page, payment number, etc.
 - 1.2) Select the notes associated with the binders or other people involved in the work - payments, orders, debts, etc.
 - 1.3) Select the notes indicating which bindings were entrusted or given as a present to some people - kings, nobles, academics, etc.
 - 1.4) Scan or photograph each one of the documents found.
2. Transcription, study and analysis of all the data from the archive sources:

- 2.1) Transcription of each one of the news, notes and payments found.
 - 2.2) Record the binder's data and previous holders that appear in the sources.
 - 2.3) Record the binding's data - title, author, year, number of items, prices, etc.
 - 2.4) Record other data relating to other tasks that were ordered to the binding workshops - reams of paper, portfolios, paper cutting, etc.
3. Input all the information obtained from news and payments into databases once the transcription has been done:
 - 3.1) Creation and maintenance of a binders' database to include books or bundles signature, number of payments, binding type, title and author of the work, number of bindings ordered for each job and prices.
 - 3.2) Creation and maintenance of previous holders' database or those people who ordered the works or received them as a gift.
 4. Consult external archives i.e. protocols, church, Historical National Archives, etc., for all those documents that will help to find biographic data of the binders working for the different Royal Academies.

B) The second step deals with finding, studying and digitizing all the bindings referred to each binder that appear in the account books and minute book.

1. Location of the bindings described in the payments of each binder.
 - 1.1) Search the reference works in the library catalogues of the Royal Academies.
 - 1.2) Search the works and their bindings in the storage of each one of these libraries.
 - 1.3) Note the different constructive materials (decorated paper, leathers, parchments), type of binding (paper bound, half-leather binding, all parchment, leather with marbled pastas) and the constructive techniques (kind of sewing, the variety of flyleaves, headbands, Bradel structures or three pieces.)
 - 1.4) Note the structures and decorative motifs (plates, pallets, tailpieces, gilding rolls), whenever these bindings offer this information and their conservation state.
 - 1.5) Digitizing and editing all the images appearing on the covers, flyleaves, spines, etc. of each binding as well as the superlibris, exlibris and notes about previous holders, prices, libraries, etc.
2. Feeding databases previously created with the binding images:
 - 2.1) Creation, input and maintenance of a binders' database to include title, author, binding type, date of binding, materials used, constructive techniques, structure and decorative elements.

- 2.2) Creation, input and maintenance of a previous holder's database (exlibris, superlibris, annotated manuscripts referred to previous owners)
- 2.3) Creation, input and maintenance of an image database with the bindings found and linked to each binder, organised by Royal Academy and binders.

C) The final step consists of the study and dissemination of the data of each Royal Academy obtained, not only of the information of the archival sources but also of the bindings found in each binder.

1. With all the data of each binder, a biographic dictionary of the binders that worked for the Royal Academies will be done.
2. Different and independent studies of the binders and the type of bindings will be published in books and articles.
3. An image repository with all types of bindings and their decorative elements will be prepared, with the unique target of helping to find and identify other bindings in other institutions.
4. An exhibition and the publication of its catalogue will be undertaken to show the project results. The archive documents of all the eight Royal Academies and their bindings related and linked to those documents will be presented in this publication.
5. A Seminar or work session to discuss with other professionals and holders of antique books and bindings.

5. Impact of the research

This project will have a meaningful impact because it will allow us to know all the binders and artisans who worked for the Royal Academies, unknown till this date, including all the hidden workshops. It will also help to improve the history of the Royal Academies, as an undertaking like this has never been done before. It will help researchers to link the binding typologies found in the Royal Academies with others kept in other institutions and learn the customers of the different workshops in Madrid.

It will permit the writing of biographies about these unknown binders, the prices of their works, the works done and also the orders of other types such as portfolios, sheets cut, sales of paper reams, etc. It should make it possible to identify which were the main workshops in Madrid.

The results of this project, *La encuadernación española en las Reales Academias: talleres y tipologías ligatorias (S. XVIII-XX)*, will be disseminated through different publications, such as journals with significant impact and books. Moreover, an exhibition will be held with materials corresponding to the different Royal Academies and some other bindings referred to in the payment receipts, showing how similar the bindings were of the same workshop deposited in various institutions.

The project will also offer the opportunity for two doctoral theses, which have already started, apart from final Master dissertations and last Graduate works. The correspondence between binders and the bindings found will also make possible the enrichment of the authorities in the bibliographic registers of the automatized library catalogues. The 700 label of the MARC21 format will include the binder and in the code for the subfield \$e, the functions will be indicated; that is binder (enc.), gilder (dor.), engraver (grab.), illustrator (il.) and/or previous holder (ant. pos.). This information will also be included in the bibliographic records of the collective catalogue of Spanish bibliographical heritage, an instrument that serves to control our heritage established by the Law 16/1985 of historical heritage.

There will also be a national and international impact as several members of this project belong to the recognized research group Bibliopodia of the UCM specializing in the study of bindings. This group has different collaboration agreements signed with Spanish institutions (Casa de Alba, Casa Velázquez, Institut del Teatre de Barcelona, amongst others) and foreign institutions (Biblioteca Nacional de México, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla-México, Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia, Archivo General de la Nación de Colombia) with which many studies of the bindings held in their institutions, most of them of Spanish origin, are being carried on. Most of these got there due to freeing of ecclesiastical seizures.

With this project (REALES ACAD-ENC) we will be able to establish a catalogue of workshops, binders, decorative motifs, materials and we will also be able to compare with the bindings of other institutions not included in this project. Certainly we will enrich these bibliographic records with the assessment and valuation of their works and we will have a broader knowledge of the history of Spanish and Madrid's binding, apart from the history of books.

Therefore, REALES ACAD-ENC has an international relevance and will be an essential tool for the researchers and the institutions previously mentioned.

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