

The Unintended Effects of Some Book Treatments on Original or Early Binding Structures and Materials

The treatment of bound materials in special collections has become more conservative over the past half century. Today, book conservators choose treatments that safeguard physical information intrinsic to early bindings. The treatments focus on mending and stabilizing book structures, which lessen the need for invasive treatments such as rebinding or rebacking covers. However, in repairing rather than replacing older structures and materials, the book conservator is often challenged by the binding's deteriorated condition, which can range from slight to considerable. At the Ransom Center, we have found that the repair of one binding structure can stress and, in some cases, break adjacent deteriorated binding components. This presentation will discuss problems that

typical repairs can cause, such as a new break in the sewing structure or stiffness in the spine, which changes how a book opens and how the pages turn. Techniques used by Ransom Center conservators to minimize stress to older components to preserve early structures and materials will be described using case studies.

OLIVIA PRIMANIS
Senior Conservator
Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX
primanis@utexas.edu