

REVIEW

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For obtaining the educational and scientific degree Doctor in scientific field 3.5. Social Communications and Information Sciences, Media and Communications (Visual Communication) Doctoral Program

With a dissertation on the topic: “Innovative Design and Experimental Structures in the Victorian Book (1800-1900) –Relief Design Binding Technology by Owen Jones for “The Psalms of David. The Victoria Psalter“

Presented by Malina Gospodinova Belcheva-Handjieva, tuition-freedoctoral student in the Department of Press Journalism and Book Publishing at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication

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I. General characteristics of the dissertation:

The exposition of the dissertation is presented in a volume of 350 pages, of which 240 pages of main text, structured in an introduction, four chapters, conclusion, references with 363 titles (47 in Cyrillic and 316 in Latin), appendices with a volume of 108 pages, contained 104 photographs. The study is illustrated with 25 diagrams and 43 illustrations and photographs, 6 tables.

II. Relevance and significance of the problem developed in the dissertation.

The topic of the research in the dissertation of Malina Belcheva is interesting and relevant in terms of the modern reading of innovative book design, created more than 170 years ago, during which years the printing technologies, information media, a complete change in communication and information infrastructure of society, as a consequence and to some extent the cause of changes in society as a whole. As a concrete consequence of these changes is the approach of the so-called elite art to the general public, to which art at first glance belongs the topic of the dissertation research - the study of technology for creating and preserving a unique object of intangible cultural heritage - special binding and making of a Victorian psalter. Changes in public attitudes towards the preservation of such unique sites make the topic relevant from a modern point of view, and clarifying the circumstances for the creation of this design by analyzing official evidence of the technological level of the era and specific works that turn from craftsmanship into masterpieces of art, also arouses interest as a subject of scientific research. The answer to the question of disseminating information about unique cultural heritage sites is contained in the new tools - applications in the online media environment, in which emerging visual technologies reproduce reality, but also create conditions for constructing new - augmented and virtual reality.

III. Brief analytical characteristics of the content. Purpose, object, subject and methodology of the research.

The doctoral student specifies the specific purpose of the research: ... study of the technology of the relief design of bindings and presentation of historical, bibliographic, artistic and structural research of the "Psalms of David". The dissertation examines the book from the Victorian period to its preservation today in the collections of the Ryerson & Burnham Library, comments on the circumstances surrounding its entry into the museum, describes the bindings and the book body, and examines the materials and patents for this innovative album binding style. “

III. Brief analytical characteristics of the content. Purpose, object, subject and methodology of the research.

As noted in the Introduction, the subject of the study is Owen Jones's embossing technology for the book of Psalms of David. Victoria's Psalter. Dedicated to Queen Victoria.

The subject of the research is considered in two main aspects: the research on the technology of "Psalms of David" - the method of creating the binding and the book body, and the second aspect - a comprehensive analysis of materials and techniques for building the binding,... paper technology, the skin, the decoration and the variants of connecting the book body with the covers during the restoration interventions performed in the past.

The formulated two research theses are considered in theoretical and empirical aspect:

1. Research of the technology of relief design, binding and presentation of historical, bibliographic, artistic and structural research of the "Psalms of David".
2. Study of the book “Psalms of David. Victoria's Psalter from the Victorian period, to its preservation to this day in the collections of the Ryerson and Burnham Library, a study of bindings and the book body, materials and patents for the design of this album style binding. Traditional research approaches have been applied in the research: bibliographic - research of relevant sources, which include specific sources - patent information, archival; bookkeeping methods - extraction and systematization of data and facts, which are specified by applying qualitative and quantitative methods for analysis and evaluation of materials, good practices, applied methods for making embossed printing on leather, techniques and technologies of restoration of unique editions in the evolution of methods, materials, equipment; historiographical, culturological - systematization of data and facts are the creation of museum collections with objects of intangible cultural heritage and the evolution of technologies for their preservation, preservation, access, not least - their socialization.

The research is successively presented in the four chapters of the dissertation.

Chapter One provides a brief overview of the history of the Victorian book. Structure and design of the book during the Victorian era. The characteristics of the Victorian era and the causal links between changes in the technological base of society, society itself and its relations in the transition from feudalism to the industrial nineteenth century: manufacturing, creating a favorable environment for economic development and increasing military power of Great Britain and its role as a world hegemon. It is shown that along with economic prosperity, rapid development in the field of culture and building cultural institutions, catalyzed by the organized Grand Exhibition of Industrial Achievements in London in 1851. The focus of research in this chapter is the reflection of the development of technology on the emergence and establishment of new styles in art, such as Art Nouveau and the Neo-Gothic style in art and architecture also had an impact on book publishing. It has been shown that the development of book design is based on "the desire of publishers and editors to attract and challenge the reader and provide him with clearer and more understandable content."

The tendencies in the Victorian book publishing in the aspect of the technological innovations of the epoch, traced for the Victorian book in the history of the book printing of the XIX century, are briefly traced. Special attention is paid to the elements of the Victorian binding, the materials used for the paper production from wood, the technology for its production in the XIX century. In sub-item papier-mâché the history and technology of making papier-mâché, its characteristics, structure and basic qualities, as well as the techniques for its production - manual and machine techniques are specially traced.

The development of printing technologies in the XIX century, the information carriers used, as well as the materials and technologies for the production of bindings are systematically presented in the chronology of printing technologies and production of book editions in Tables 1 and 2, and the creation and improvement of The impact relief press by Joseph Tuvénin (1820).

These aspects are presented in the historical overview of the creation of the library collection at the Museum of Fine and Applied Arts of Chicago (The Art Institute of Chicago) and its exhibits. The expansion and enrichment of the museum's collections is traced, showing the similar catalytic influences of the World's Fair in Chicago, dedicated to the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America (the Columbus Exhibition), including the creation of the Ryerson and Burnham Library and its enrichment. collections, restoration work, the introduction of bookplates and other approaches that improve the maintenance of collections in the library and their profiling in the field of "art, theory, practice, history".

The maintenance of the collections is traced briefly in the next century, and the large donations were noted, which allow a complete restoration of the original collection of 600 volumes of unique editions.

Chapter Two presents decoration technology and patents associated with the bindings of the Psalms of David.

The technologies for the bindings have been traced for more than 80 years, marking the main materials, the technologies by which they are processed and obtained, traced the patents of F. Lake, as well as patents that are close in time and characteristics to his .

To this end, the doctoral student has studied the patent archives of the British Library, the British Museum, the National Archives, the Victoria and Albert Museum, consulted with librarians who lead the special collections of the libraries of the University of Rochester, the University of Buffalo, including restorers and restorers. the field of embossing and design technologies.

She summarized the results by concluding that John Owen used three types of patents to make the bindings of the Psalms of David: two patents by F. Leake, who invented the method of engraving and printing designs on leather, and William Hancock for rubber bindings. The patents used to restore the edition almost 70 years later - by Joel Leprethur for stub binding bindings - are also traced. Owen Jones designed the illustrations and bindings for the Psalms of David, but used other authors' inventions and patents to make the other elements of the book body: the rubber gutta-percha binding, the impact embossing press, the stub binding patent with extended connection. The patents, methods, technologies, apparatus and processing of the materials used to create the bindings and the book body of the Psalms of David, as well as the subsequent restorations, are traced in detail and systematized in technological and chronological accordance (Table 3).

Chapter Three presents a "Description, History and Study of the Psalms of David", which provides a historical overview of the prerequisites for the design of the publication. The biography of Owen Jones, his work and achievements in the field of printing technology (improvement of lithography and the emergence of chromolithography), the creation of the covers and the overall production of the edition of "Psalms of David", which are presented in the

context of his achievements and in architecture (the design of the Grand Exhibition in London), in publishing and design, including the presentation of his other design masterpieces of books. In the presented researches of the doctoral student on the prehistory of the first edition of "Psalms of David" autographed for Queen Victoria by Jones himself, the main events related to the donation of the unique edition by D. E. Woodhead to the Museum of Fine and Applied Arts in Chicago - "Ryerson and Burnham". The restoration of the 1903 edition and later is also described. The technology of the book research and the restoration process is presented in detail, which is oriented towards historical, bibliographic, artistic and structural study of the book from the period of its creation to its preservation in the museum's collections. The library-bibliographic description of the book is presented in detail, as well as the technology of the bindings, decoration and typography of the Psalms of David, the condition of the book body and the bindings, the history of the binding of the book body. The changes in the original are traced in detail, based on archival materials - notes, etc., which have been studied and systematized in detail, covering a period of more than a century (1903 - 2012). The equipment and methods of research of the separate stages of the restorations and restoration of the original ornaments and illustrations with new technologies, materials and methods are described, as well as the imposed changes in the book body in order to preserve its integrity.

It is concluded that, unlike other preserved books created with technology from 1861, the original has been preserved thanks to innovative experimental technologies used to perform the design of the original edition, as well as appropriate restoration materials and methods for restoration and transition to album structure of bindings.

Chapter Four presents the study of copies of the first edition of the book, describing album-style models of bindings traced to the evolution of emerging technologies in the nineteenth century and their refinement in the second half of the century. The album structure of the bindings is presented in detail, including with chronological tracking of publications and progress in the improvement of the technologies for making this type of bindings. The styles of album structures have been studied and a classification has been made according to researchers and binding designers (Richard Horton, Jane Rutherford) and peculiarities of bookbinding and overall editing, and an innovative model for building the book structure in the Psalms of David has been described. with diagrams reflecting the individual stages of the production of the publication (connecting the illustrations, the binders, the book body, the movement of the book back and the distribution of tension, etc.). Copies of the first edition of the book are presented, including statistics, data and comparative analysis. The changes made during complete and partial separation of the covers and the back from the book body were traced, a comparative analysis was made between emblematic bindings for the first edition of the book, as well as the differences in the leather of the bindings, the structure of the book, materials, including used by Owen Jones for the first edition of the book, illustrations, features of the bindings, structure of the book body, bookbinding features of the technology, the gold plating used, the publisher's logo. The documentary evidence for restoration, documentation - current restoration protocol, documentation of the restoration process are also systematically described.

An analysis and assessment of the possibility for universalization of the documentation and the necessary steps for the creation of such, the choice of content and method of preparation of documentation, high-tech documentation systems are described. The study results in an assessment of the general condition of the book and the degree of degradation of the cover, skin, paper, illustrations, how to connect and build the book body, bindings and bindings.

The doctoral student's research covers institutions associated with research of old editions with unique characteristics - about 40, of which they consulted the doctoral student in the study of

copies of the first edition of the book, focusing on four main groups of questions on which the research was conducted: the general condition of the book; specific questions on the degree of degradation of the cover, skin, paper and illustrations; the way of connecting and building the book body; binders and bindings.

The data from these institutions (37 institutions from 5 countries) are systematized according to the above 4 groups of criteria for assessing the different degree of degradation.

The doctoral student concludes that for the successful complex restoration of the original edition of "Psalms of David", stored in the Museum in Chicago, for each stage of the restoration the latest technologies and selected successful approaches are applied, which is evident from the preserved other copies of the same period, which have different degrees of degradation

In the final part of the dissertation the doctoral student summarizes the conclusions made for each chapter, which outline a study of 3 main problem areas:

1. Conducting the first comprehensive theoretical study of the relief binding design of the book "Psalms of David" from the special collections of the Ryerson and Burnham Library at the Museum of Fine and Applied Arts in Chicago.
2. A systematic review of research publications, administrative and technological documentation from public and private archives, patents studied, analyzed and based on the features of the Victorian book in the context of the history of inventions in book printing during the nineteenth century. , bookbinding technologies and techniques, the emergence and establishment of technologies for decoration and bindings, the history of papier maché, their structure and technologies, with a focus on embossing and making bindings on this technology.
3. The research approach and tools used - historiographical, cultural-historical, descriptive, comparative analysis and evaluation, and last but not least - visualization, allow to reveal the causal links between the successful implementation of the restoration and its sustainable survival over time. Psalms of David ”: the newly created Victorian-era album structure that meets modern requirements for the restoration of folio format books is potentially applicable to surviving copies of Owen Jones' first edition in public collections in Europe, America, Australia and New Zealand. .

IV. Critical notes

The final text of the dissertation has been refined in accordance with the notes made from the preliminary discussion.

V. Evaluation of the abstract.

The presented abstract reflects synthesized, clearly and accurately the content of the dissertation.

VI. Publications on the topic.

The doctoral student has presented 3 scientific publications, which are on the topic of the presented dissertation, published in foreign scientific journals, collections of international scientific forums, thematic collections of scientific articles.

VII. Citation.

The citations in the dissertation are 363 in number (described in the bibliography of the dissertation), which is an indicator of a huge amount of literature studied, thematically related to the developed problem. The exhibition shows erudition, maintaining an up-to-date level of awareness of current research on the topic of dissertation research, in-depth knowledge of the

main cultural characteristics of the era, technological development and key issues of theory and practice of bibliography in the nineteenth century.

The cited sources are presented in accordance with the rules for bibliographic description and bibliographic citation.

VIII. Conclusion.

The evaluation of the performed research, reflected in the dissertation work, is positive: research work has been carried out, as relevant sources have been studied, systematized and evaluated.

The work is structured in the sequence of the adopted approach of the research, the arguments substantiating the hypothesis, the object and the subject of the research, the identification of the innovative technologies used for the creation of the unique edition of the Psalms of David, patents studied, huge volume of documentation, created more than a century and a half ago.

The applied approach is in compliance with the requirements for scientific research and shows the ability to formulate a thesis, consistent and logical presentation of the arguments for the conclusions. In addition to extensive practical experience in the restoration of rare and valuable books, the doctoral student also has the necessary theoretical training to study relevant sources, systematize information, find a basis for classification and outline trends in book publishing practices and Victorian books.

The illustrations fully illustrate the research, giving it multifacetedness and illustrating the conscientious work of the doctoral student. The maintained communication at a high professional and research level with the most authoritative libraries, museums, universities in 5 countries show high erudition and professionalism, consistency in pursuing the set goals and maintaining active communication in the course of the dissertation research.

The dissertation is of contribution in scientific-theoretical and practical terms.

With the presented arguments I give a positive assessment for the performed dissertation research and I suggest to the respected scientific jury to award Malina Belcheva the educational and scientific degree "DOCTOR".

Sofia, February 5, 2021

Signature: