



LEATHER REBACKING

James Reid-Cunningham

TOPICS:

1. Cleaning leather bindings with dry cleaning sponges and vinyl eraser crumbs.
2. Consolidating degraded leather bindings using 2% Klucel G in isopropanol; “Red Rot Cocktail” (equal parts SC6000, 2% Klucel G in isopropanol, isopropanol); spray fixative such as Krylon.
3. Discussion of methods of improving board attachment, including inner hinges of handmade paper or Japanese tissue; extended linings of cotton or heavyweight kozo paper; and joint tacketing.
4. Leather Rebacking: This is the most common historical technique for the repair of leather bindings, but it is also the most difficult. The handout on leather rebacking goes into exhaustive detail about the process, with many photographs. Here is a simple outline of the steps in the process:

Face the spine with heat set tissue using isopropanol.

Lift the spine.

Clean off the spine and remove linings with a poultice of wheat starch paste.

Lift leather along the spine edge of the boards.

If the board is loose, lift the pastedowns along the spine edge of the boards. If the board is attached, lift the pastedowns only in the area of the turn-ins.

Add new headbands if necessary.

Line the spine with tissue or paper as needed to control the opening of the textblock.

Stain an oversized piece of repair leather using Hewit’s Leather dyes.

Trim the repair leather to size and pare it.

Reback the volume with the repair leather inserted underneath the original leather.

After leaving the leather to dry overnight, put down the lifted leather with Jade 403 PVA

After the PVA is dry, plate each board individually between sheets of plexiglas in a standing press.

Clean the remnants of the original spine linings off the original spine using a Dremel tool.

Reattach the spine with Jade 403 PVA.

Remove the heat set tissue facing by moistening it with isopropanol.

Do color touch-ups using medium density acrylics acrylic.

Final finishing may involve polishing and tooling; re-sizing with 2% Klucel-G in ethanol or red rot cocktail; or polishing with SC6000 or Renaissance Wax.

Formulas:

Wheat starch paste: mix one part powder to four parts distilled water and microwave, stirring periodically, until the solution turns translucent. Allow to cool and strain before use.

4% Methyl cellulose: Heat 100 ml distilled water to almost a boil. Mix 8 grams cellulose powder and stir into a slurry. Add 100 ml of cool distilled water and stir well. Allow to gel overnight if possible.

PVA mix: Mix Jade 403 PVA and 4% methyl cellulose (recipe above).

Red Rot Cocktail: Mix equal parts: SC6000 wax; 2% Klucel G in ethanol or isopropanol; and ethanol or isopropanol. Apply with cotton.

2% Klucel-G in alcohol: Stir 2 gm. Klucel-G into 100 ml. ethanol or isopropanol. Stir until none settles to the bottom.

Suppliers:

Talas: <http://www.talasonline.com>

Hiromi Paper: <http://www.hiromipaper.com>

Siegel leather: <https://www.siegelleather.com>

Materials used during the workshop:

Zen Shofu Wheat Starch Paste (from Talas)

Klucel_G (from Talas)

Methyl cellulose (from Talas)

Jade 403 PVA (from Talas)

Mylar 3 mil (from Talas)

Dry cleaning sponge (from Talas)

Magic Rub or Staedtler Mars white vinyl eraser (from Talas)

Hewit leather dye and fixative (from Talas)

SC6000 (from Talas)

Renaissance Wax (from Talas)

Kozo papers used during the workshop:

HP-02 Usu Mino 16 gm. (from Hiromi)

HM-55 Yukyu-shi Thin 16 gm. (from Hiromi)

Yame Kozo Hadaura 16 gm. (from Talas)

Sekishu Natural: 30 gm. (from Hiromi)

Okawara 60 gm. (from Hiromi)

Leather used during the workshop:

Undyed calf and goat from Hewit (sold by Talas)

Undyed calf and goat from Siegel

Leather splitting Hohenforst Splitting Co. 518-725-0012

Miniature drill bits size #56-61 from MicroMark <http://www.micromark.com/>

Dremel tool using bit #952

https://www.dremel.com/en_US/products/-/show-product/accessories/952-aluminum-oxide-grinding-stone

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