

Institution: UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON
Unit of Assessment: 34
Title of case study: Ligatus Research Centre at the University of the Arts London
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Researchers at Ligatus have developed new methodologies for recording historical evidence in books and documents. These have altered the way conservators, historians and archivists work and improved the care of world cultural heritage. Their work has impacted on a range of public and private institutions and included cultural managers, museums and galleries, and libraries.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Ligatus is a Research Centre at the University of the Arts London (UAL) conducting world-leading research in the fields of bookbinding history and documentation, with projects in libraries and archives of significant world heritage value. The underpinning research was undertaken at UAL by Professor Nicholas Pickwood and Dr Athanasios Velios (Research Fellow) and made possible by the Centre's successful record in obtaining funding from both public and private bodies. The key research findings that underpin the impact are as follows:</p> <p>Focus on ordinary bindings <i>The evidence contained within the materials of ordinary (everyday) bindings, hitherto disregarded by scholars, can provide significant historical information.</i> The techniques and materials used to bind books for the ordinary reader (i.e. not fine bindings for an elite audience) are important because they can give evidence of the social, economic and cultural context of individual books not available elsewhere. Ligatus's first project surveying the contents of the monastery of St Catherine, Sinai, Egypt (the oldest monastic library in the world) set documentation standards in this area. Who: Professor Nicholas Pickwood. When: 2000–2004</p> <p>Complete collection surveys <i>It is important to undertake conservation surveys of complete collections rather than surveys with a random sample.</i> A complete survey ensures that exceptional items are not missed by the sampling process. Such items can have an impact on costs and affect the prioritisation of conservation resources. Based on this idea, Ligatus developed a survey methodology for the library of the St Catherine Monastery in Sinai, a World Heritage site. The project funded by the St Catherine Foundation and the Headley Trust, was the most detailed condition survey for a whole collection of this size (3,307 bound manuscripts). Who: Professor Nicholas Pickwood. When: 2000–2004</p> <p>Semantic documentation for conservation <i>In conservation documentation, all published data can be unified under a single framework.</i> Conservation data is largely inaccessible because it takes too long to retrieve. Semantic technologies (tools – typically software – which focus on concept terms and their meanings) allow better contextualisation of data from distributed resources for machine searching, thus speeding up the retrieval of more representative results. Publishing conservation data online using semantic web technologies can allow such querying. Ligatus created a schema and terminology for recording library collections semantically (St Catherine's Library Conservation Project and AHRC Bookbinding Glossary project) and then led the development of a 'thesaurus' of bookbinding terms (AHRC networking project: <i>Language of Bindings</i>). The idea of the unified framework was also used in the project <i>Classification of Conservation Web Content</i> for the IIC (International Institute of Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works) funded by the Getty Trust. Who: Professor Nicholas Pickwood, Dr. Athanasios Velios When: 2004–2011</p> <p>Creative archiving <i>Archivists should be recognised as domain experts and provide access to artists' archives through</i></p>

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an interpretation layer thus addressing the post-modern concerns on partiality. Adopting the techniques developed for the semantic documentation of collections, and considering the archive as evidence, this work proves that there is value in the partiality of the archivist because the archivist is a domain expert. This research was showcased in the AHRC project *Archive As Event* on the classification of John Latham's personal papers (supported by the Henry Moore Foundation and the PRS for Music Foundation). Here the archive was first studied by the archivists and then a new classification system based on Latham's theory and practice was developed and utilized to organise the archive.

Who: Dr Athanasios Velios **When:** 2008–2010

3. References to the research

Key outputs and associated awards listed below:

1. Pickwood, N. (2004) The Condition Survey of the Manuscripts in the Monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai, The Institute of Paper Conservation, *The Paper Conservator* (28), January 2004, pp. 33-62. This journal article proves that complete surveys of collections are important. UAL on request.
 2. Pickwood, N. (2008) Recording medieval bindings – The role of the conservation survey, with reference to work currently under way in the library of the monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai. In: *Colloque Reliure*, 2008, pp.47-59. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers. This chapter reinforces the above point. Listed in REF2.
 3. Pickwood, N. (2009) Bookbinding in the 18th Century. In: *The Cambridge History of the Book Volume V, 1695-1830*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. This chapter illustrates the importance of ordinary bindings to historic research. Listed in REF2.
 4. Pickwood, N. (2011) Library or Museum? The Future of Rare Book Collections and its Consequences for Conservation and Access. In: *New Approaches to Book and Paper Conservation*, 2011, pp. 113-130. Austria: Horn. This chapter highlights the importance of the materiality of the book (material culture) and re-enforces the historical value of bindings. UAL on request.
 5. Velios, A. (2011) Creative Archiving: a case study from the John Latham Archive, *Journal of the Society of Archivists*. vol.32, issue 2, December 2011. Routledge. This journal article introduces the concept of Creative Archiving and explains the value of subjectivity in the archiving process. Listed in REF2.
 6. Velios, A. and Pickwood, N. (2012) The digitisation of bookbindings. In: *Digitizing Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture*. Iiter: Gateway to the Middle Ages and Renaissance; ACMRS (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies). This chapter introduces the value of semantic documentation in historic bookbinding and conservation. Listed in REF2.
- UAL, PI: Pickwood, N. *Saint Catherine's Library Conservation Project* (2000–2004). £323,259. St Catherine's Foundation.
 - UAL, PI: Pickwood, N. *Saint Catherine's Library Conservation Project* (2000–2004) £6820. The Headley Trust.
 - UAL, PI: Pickwood, N. *An English and Greek terminology for the structures and materials of Byzantine and Greek bookbinding* (10/2005–09/2008) £157,450. AHRC.
 - UAL, PI: Pickwood, N. *Language of Bindings Network* (09/2011–01/2012) £35,993. AHRC.
 - UAL, PI: Velios, A. *Reanimating John Latham through Archive as Event* (05/2008–09/2010) £165,933. AHRC.

4. Details of the impact

Focus on ordinary bindings.

Indications of both significance and reach of this research are given by examples of prestigious bodies that have adopted this approach. A major project at the Derry and Raphoe Diocesan library (accessible on the University of Ulster McGee Campus, funded by the HLF) was based on this finding (2007–2011). National Trust libraries have adopted this finding for more than a decade, and

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Norwich Cathedral and Lambeth Palace Libraries are also undertaking projects to describe bindings from their collections. Giles Mandelbrote, Librarian and Archivist, Lambeth Palace writes that interaction with the Centre has a *'profound impact on the way in which Lambeth Palace Library has organised its conservation work over the past three years and on our plans for the future.'*

Complete collection surveys.

The significance of impact is given by the discovery of exceptional items within collections as a result of this approach, such as a page from the *Codex Sinaiticus* (the oldest extant version New Testament in the world) in the library of St Catherine's Monastery in 2009. News of this discovery reached a wide audience via coverage including The Guardian, The Economist, The Independent, La Repubblica, and on the BBC. Further evidence of both significance and reach is given by the finding's adoption by a large survey of manuscripts on Mount Athos, the largest monastic community in the world and World Heritage site, as well as the adoption by smaller libraries, such as the Wellcome Trust library for the survey of their Arabic manuscript collection. Father Justin (Librarian, St Catherine's Monastery) writes: *'Ligatus [...] continues to carry out important work that has had a profound impact in the study and appreciation of manuscripts, their complex history and evolution, and the implications of the study for the greater appreciation of this and the heritage that is preserved here at St Catherine's Monastery.'*

Semantic documentation of collections.

This process informs documentation methodologies and following recognition of its value, Ligatus developed a network of institutions (*Language of Binding Network*, funded by the AHRC) to produce a thesaurus of bookbinding terms involving a range of institutions in the UK and Europe (including Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen; Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel; Biblioteka Narodowa, Warsaw; and Patrimonio Nacional, Real Biblioteca, Madrid). Ligatus has completed a project with the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC), where semantic documentation is used by IIC's audience, contributing to a sharp increase in website traffic. Google Analytics reports an increase from 45,545 unique visitors in 2011 to 65,904 in 2012. Jo Kirby Atkinson, IIC Secretary-General writes: *'The potential that Ligatus has opened up for the documentation of conservation content cannot be overstated.'* This type of documentation has also been utilised by the Wellcome Trust Library and described by their Asian Collections Librarian Dr Nikolaj Serikoff as an *'ingenious design'*.

Creative archiving.

Work in this area has extended reach to new constituencies within contemporary fine art, archiving practice and publishing, specifically the Whitechapel Gallery, the John Latham Archive and the publishers Book Works. The methodology was tested during the AHRC project on the John Latham Archive and showcased at the exhibition *Anarchive* at the Whitechapel Archive Gallery (58,472 visitors, reviewed by the Arts Forum, 09/2010 and discussed at Resonance FM, 08/2010). During 2010 the publisher Book Works worked with Ligatus, via a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP), to develop an on-line digital archive utilising this methodology. Jane Rollo, Director of Book Works writes we *'have now built an online archive that our users find both comprehensive and stimulating'* and that *'visits to our website continue to rise each month'*, and acknowledging *'the huge contribution that Ligatus has had in the conceptual development and implementation of our archive.'*

Professional community impact.

Active community building with a wide range of individuals and organisations has been a fundamental aspect of Ligatus's work, and key to extending reach and transferring knowledge developed in the Centre. The St Catherine's Project was the largest of its kind, which saw 35 people from nine countries participating, *Language of Bindings* involved 30 European participants, and Ligatus Summer School has attracted 100 delegates since 2007 from conservation and palaeography backgrounds. Conservators usually work alone or in small groups and Ligatus's work has nurtured a strong community of professionals who see the Centre as a common reference point for their work. Evidence of impact is given by individuals who have worked on past Ligatus projects and have gone on to adopt Ligatus's approaches in new roles outside of the Centre's

work. The reach of this community has *'made the approaches pioneered there [Ligatus] more easily transferable, and has led to the acceptance of these skills in a wide range of institutions'* as Andrew Honey, Bodleian Libraries conservator who has worked on Ligatus projects, including the St. Catherine survey, writes and continues, *'approaches to documentation pioneered by Ligatus have been accepted in most major museums and libraries'*. Georgios Boudalis (Book Conservator, Museum of Byzantium Culture, Thessaloniki) writes of the St Catherine's project to *'myself, and many colleagues [...] the experience changed the way we perceive and value historic books.'* Giles Mandelbrote, Librarian and Archivist, Lambeth Palace states that working with Ligatus has served to stimulate *'best practice among its staff and in helping to develop fruitful new partnerships with other institutions and groups.'*

A strong indicator of significance is given by positions and advisory roles held by Ligatus members and recognition from the professional conservation community. Velios became the webmaster of International Institute for Conservation (IIC) in 2009, a critical post responsible for all content of the Institute including the oldest conservation journal (*Studies in Conservation*). In 2012 he was invited to join the Getty International Terminology Working Group, contributing to the development of the Getty vocabularies used by museums and libraries worldwide. Pickwood's work at St Catherine's monastery has received major recognition in his field. In 2008, he delivered the British Library's Panizzi Lectures – one of the most important annual series of bibliographical lectures in the UK. In 2009, he received the Royal Warrant Holders Association Plowden Medal Conservation Award, the most prestigious award in the profession in the UK and one of the most prestigious awards worldwide. He was elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 2009 and became a member of the Norwich Cathedral Library Advisory Panel in 2009. In 2010 he became a member of the Library and Collections Committee of the Society of Antiquaries. Since 2011 he has also been a member of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Advisory Panel for Libraries and Archives at Lambeth Palace.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Focus on ordinary bindings:

1. Statement from Librarian and Archivist, Lambeth Palace Library. UAL on request.

Complete Collection Surveys:

2. Discovery of the oldest fragment of the *Codex Sinaiticus* widely reported, for example:
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/fragment-from-worlds-oldest-bible-found-hidden-in-egyptian-monastery-1780274.html>
http://www.economist.com/node/14030145?story_id=14030145
3. Statement from Librarian, St Catherine's Monastery. UAL on request.

Semantic documentation of collections:

4. Statement from Secretary-General, International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works. UAL on request.

Creative Archiving:

5. Statement from the Director of Book Works publishing. UAL on request.
6. Information in relation to the *Anarchive* Exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery Archive
<http://www.whitechapelgallery.org/exhibitions/john-latham-anarchive>

Professional Community Impact:

7. Statement from Book Conservator, Conservation and Collection Care, Bodleian Library. UAL on request.
8. Evidence of Professor Pickwood's Panizzi Lectures (2008) *Reading Bindings: Bindings as evidence of the culture and business of books* <http://www.bl.uk/whatson/events/panizzi.html>
9. Plowden Medal awarded to Professor Pickwood at <http://www.royalwarrant.org/about-us/plowden-medal-conservation-award> and <http://cool.conservation-us.org/byform/mailling-lists/cdl/2009/0438.html>