

Ligatus Summer School 2018 - Athens

15-19 and 22-26 October

Applications now open.

[www.ligatus.org.uk/summerschool](http://www.ligatus.org.uk/summerschool)

The 2018 Ligatus Summer School is to be hosted by the National Library of Greece in Athens

**\*Background\***

The contribution that bindings can make to our understanding of the history and culture of the book is often neglected, but they can offer insights into the study of readership, the book trade, and the provenance of books that are often not available elsewhere. In order to realise this potential, it is important to learn not only the history of the craft but also how to record what is seen in a consistent and organised way. Librarians, cataloguers, conservators, book historians, book collectors and all scholars who work with early books can benefit from understanding the structure and materials of the bindings they encounter and knowing how to record and describe them.

Clear descriptions of bindings are invaluable for the management of library collections, pursuing academic research and making informed decisions about conservation. They are also important for digitisation projects, as they can radically enrich the potential of image and text metadata. It is our belief that bindings should be seen as an integral part of the book, without which our understanding of the history and use of books is often greatly circumscribed.

The main purpose of the Summer School is to uncover the possibilities latent in the detailed study of bookbinding. Both courses offered in this Summer School look at bindings from different geographical areas and with a different approach.

\*Week 1 (15-19 October), European Bookbinding 1450-1830\*

Tutor: Professor Nicholas Pickwoad

This course will follow European bookbinding from the end of the Middle Ages to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, using the bindings themselves to illustrate the aims and intentions of the binding trade. A large part of the course will be devoted to the identification of both broad and detailed distinctions within the larger groups of plain commercial bindings and the possibilities of identifying the work of different countries, cities, even workshops without reference to finishing tools. The identification and significance of the different materials used in bookbinding will be examined, as well as the classification of bookbindings by structural type, and how these types developed through the three centuries covered by the course. The development of binding decoration will be touched on, but will not form a major part of the discussion.

The course consists of ten 90-minute sessions with Powerpoint presentations (over 800 images will be shown). Actual examples of bindings will be examined in the afternoons, primarily from the National Library collections, but visits are also planned to the Gennadius Library, and the library of the Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, in Piraeus.

\*Week 2 (22-26 October): Identifying and Recording Bookbinding Structures of the Eastern Mediterranean\*

Tutors: Dr Athanasios Velios and Dr Georgios Boudalis

This course is divided into two interconnected sessions.

In the first section, Dr Georgios Boudalis, will focus on the major structural and decorative features of the different bookbinding traditions that have developed in the eastern Mediterranean – including the Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Georgian and Islamic – with special focus on the Byzantine and post-Byzantine bookbindings. The aim is to follow the evolution of these closely related bookbindings and establish their similarities and differences during lectures, slide-shows and demonstrations of real bookbindings from local collections. This part of the course will consist of six 90-minute presentations from Monday to Wednesday.

The second part of the course will be taught by Dr Athanasios Velios and will deal with the methodologies and techniques that can be used to record bookbindings. This session will focus on:

- \* Linked Data, the semantic web and the CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model (CRM);
- \* standardised vocabularies for book descriptions (Language of Bindings and SKOS);
- \* the development of database schemas for book descriptions;
- \* mapping bookbinding description databases to CIDOC-CRM and publishing Linked Data; and
- \* photographic records and workflows for large collection surveys.

A part of these sessions will be devoted to the actual recording of specific bindings. This session will consist of a combination of presentations and hands-on workshops.

### \*Course Fees\*

Course fees are £300 per person per week.

Please note that course fees cover tuition only. Participants are responsible for arranging their own travel, accommodation, meals etc. during the School.

### \*About the National Library\*

The National Library (NLG) has been collecting the written cultural heritage of Greece in parallel with the history of the Hellenic Republic since 1829. The year 2018 marks a historic moment for the library with the relocation of its premises from the monumental 1904 Vallianeio building in the centre of Athens to its new home in the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center.

Since its establishment, the library has developed a collection of unique cultural value, with close to two million items. The collection of manuscripts numbers more than 5,000 bound volumes on both parchment and paper, that date from the 9th to the 20th century, of secular and theological content, preserving unique illuminations and texts, mostly in Greek, making the NLG one of the greatest treasure houses of the manuscript heritage of Greece. The collection includes hundreds of thousands of printed books, dating from the 15th century to the present day. The collection of rare printed material runs to about 18,000 volumes, and includes incunabula, early printed books and pamphlets, that are notable for their rarity as well as their historic and/or artistic value. Among these there is an important collection of early and original binding structures from different bookbinding traditions, covering many centuries

of European bookmaking history.

The classes will be held within National Library, with visits to other Athenian libraries.

**\*About Ligatus Research Centre (University of the Arts London)\***

Ligatus is a research centre of the University of the Arts London (UAL) with particular interest in the history of bookbinding, book conservation, archiving and the application of digital technology to the exploration and exploitation of these fields. Ligatus's main research projects currently include the conservation of the books in the library of St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai and the development of the Language of Bindings (LoB) thesaurus of bookbinding terms.