Binding descriptions within a universal collective catalogue

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Abstract: From several years ago, at the University Complutense of Madrid, there is a research group working on an idea of developing a textual and graphic contents management tool capable of bringing together bibliographic descriptions of artistic bindings from various institutions, following the same descriptive format for all of them. Such development should be carried out within a free software environment by using PHP programming language, MySQL as database system, and finally including Dublin Core (DC) descriptive metadata. This Artistic Binding Union Catalogue (CCEA), worldwide pioneer, is being developed within the objectives of several research projects: Santander/ Complutense (2007-2008), Plan Nacional de I+D+I (2009-2011), Plan Nacional de I+D+I (2012-2014) and group BIBLIOPEGIA (research group on bindings and old books), and where some entities are also interested in participating such as, among others, the Spanish National Library, the Historical Library "Marqués de Vadecilla" (University Complutense of Madrid), the Cathedral of Toledo, the Regional Library of Castilla-La Mancha, the Historic Library of the City Council of Madrid, the Library of the Royal Academy of History and the Library of El Escorial.

1. Introduction
Bookbinding has always been a very important part of the book and, that's the main reason why it must be studied, not in an isolated way as a minor art but as the group of constructive and decorative techniques than enrich the content of the book as a whole work. The global study of book bindings with regard to digital tools enables representing the documental analysis and its decorative and constructive techniques. The aim of this brief paper is to show the few databases that study bookbinding together with other digital resources as virtual exhibitions and institutional blogs or workshops, finishing with a proposal of a

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collective bookbinding catalogue that is already being developed by *Bibliopegia*, the research group of the Complutense University of Madrid.

When researchers start studies of historical and artistic book bindings there is no available tool containing not only the bookbinding placed in an institution, but the collections of different institutions such as ecclesiastic, university, historical, libraries of royal academies, private collections, national collections (in our case, Spanish and international institutions), with a standard description and the images of the different parts of the bookbinding. This mixed group of entities contain among their collections, many book bindings done in different periods, places, with different owners and origins that means a rich group of binding works that could enable the researcher any study about bookbinding.

In the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM), the research group named *Bibliopegia*, specialise in bookbinding and antique books, has been working for some time in achieving a tool capable of keeping descriptions of several institutions together with an exhaustive cataloguing and indexing through keywords as well as the control of authorities and images of each one of the parts of the bookbinding. This tool, named Union catalogue of Artistic Bindings (CCEA), remains in the UCM servers, nowadays in development and it's made under the premises of the universal access through the internet, for the users doing daily searches and also for the technique people that deal and work with these records, in any moment and from any place. The institutions that include their collections in this union catalogue receive the different passwords necessary for the management of these items. A general administration works from the UCM, responsible for the management of the whole system and of all the documental items.

2. Features

The present guidelines established by the UCM for the CCEA database are:

1. The universal access via internet will be possible through the UCM server, dedicated to the management of the data and to administrate the searches. The people collaborating will enter from any place in any moment, so that in a free way will have the possibility of consulting the information provided.
2. The UCM database was designed in MySQL (a management system of databases), as a relational manager and the development setting is written in PHP (a language of programming), simple and easy programming language. Both settings have been carefully selected as they don't incur an economical expense for the development of the project.
3. The project, designed by UCM includes descriptive metadata Dublin Core (DC) for those labels of this format that can be associated to the information registered in CCEA.

4. Simple or advanced searches will be possible using the combination of simple data (for example, comments about the binding techniques) or controlled (for example, craftsman or decoration techniques)

5. In the results obtained, hipertextual navigation will be possible (for example, through links) and the visualization of the images of the bindings.

The database has three parts: a) data management, b) search, c) visualization of the results

a) Data management: the managers of the centres will have the access documents (user name and password) to start, modify or finish the contents, textual information or images, but only those records that belong to their centre.
The general administrator of the UCM will be able to manage any record of any centre that includes its descriptions and images of the CCEA. In this case, the manager will find a screen that will permit him doing all the different operations (start, modify, cancel) of all the records, appearing in the first place the bibliographic description of the binding that will include an hypertextual link to the bibliographic description included in the OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) of the proper institution. This link will be reciprocal, that means, from the OPAC of each institution it will be possible to access to the CCEA using another link that will appear together with the bibliographic description, making possible that both catalogues will be interconnected so that the user can obtain the complete bibliographic information from the OPAC with the description and images of the binding. Likewise, standard tables will be used to do the index of the bindings and later retrieval of the records.

b) Search: Refers to the tools used for the search, where the user will have different options to do the searches. One of the options is called *controlled search* that has to do with the normalized (standardized) descriptions, located in descriptor (keyword) tables that describe each part of the binding that is the index of the binding. The user will be able to select, in the table of each one of the elements, the information they are looking for. The other search options have to do with the search of fields of free text, calling this type *simple search* or *advanced search*.

c) Visualization of the results: It starts with a first screen showing the main image of the binding and its topographic call number, offering the user the option of selecting the description of those that want to obtain more information. Once they select one or several records, a second screen will appear, seeing first a gallery of images of that binding, starting by the main image of the cover; each image will become larger if you click on it. Later, the bibliographic description of the binding will appear, where it will be possible to access to the bibliographic

record of the OPAC. Afterwards an abbreviated description will be visualized, that will proceed of the normalized terms located in the different tables of each one of the parts of the binding. In case the user requires more information, it will be possible to access to a new screen where the fields in free text of *origin, materials, constructive techniques, decoration, state of the decoration* will be visualized as well as observing a gallery of images with all kind of details of the decorative elements of the binding, as finishing tools and gilding rolls. It will also be possible to see the information about the date of construction, the size in mm. the decorative style, the origin of the work, as well as information about heraldic emblems and normalized authorities linked with the bindings as antique owners, bookbinders, paper workshops or gilders.

The tools' interface is in Spanish and English and we are working towards providing it also in German, Portuguese, Italian and Catalonian, including the descriptors used for the index.

3. Related projects
This project started in 2006 and at the ending of 2014 the researchers could consult part of the tool of the CCEA. To catalogue the bindings we have based our work in the different areas and fields included in the descriptive record appeared in the doctoral thesis entitled *Análisis documental de la encuadernación española*, read in 2001 in the Complutense University of Madrid and published by AFEDA (Association for the promotion of art bookbinding) in 2002, together with a bibliographic repertoire of all the works published until that date about Spanish bookbinding and a thesaurus of bindings with more than 1.200 terms. Using this card we started cataloguing binding of different institutions within programs and competitive research projects.

- The first of this projects, promoted by the UCM, took place in the Historical Library of the UCM, in 2004, with the title "*The artistic book bindings of the Complutense Library: documental analysis*" (PR3/04-12378), where 443 artistic bindings were catalogued and digitized from the 15th to the 19th centuries.
- The second project took place during the period 2007-2009, sponsored by the banks Santander/Hispano and promoted by the UCM, with the title "*Book bindings of Toledo's Cathedral: cataloguing and diffusion*" (PR41/06-14969), where more than one thousand artistic bindings were catalogued from the 15th to the 19th centuries.
- The third competitive project, sponsored by the Ministry of Science and Innovation within the R+D program, took place during the period 2009-2012 with the title "*Study, identification and automated cataloguing of the artistic*

bookbinding of the Historical Library of the Complutense University of Madrid and of the Municipal Historical Library of Madrid" (FF12008-02604/FILO), where around 300 bindings, belonging to the *Guerra* collection, acquired by the UCM previously, were catalogued and around 500 bindings of the 19th and 20th centuries of the Municipal Historical Library of Madrid were also catalogued. Among these, we want to point out 300 bindings that were signed by Emilio Brugalla from the *Lope de Vega collection*.

- The fourth and last project, still valid, is also sponsored by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness within the R+D program. It has been granted for the period 2012-2014 and its title is "*Study, identification and automated cataloguing of the artistic bookbinding of the Library of the Royal Academy of the History*" (FF12011-25324). At this time, one thousand artistic bindings from the 18th to the 20th centuries have been catalogued. Among them we can find relevant collections as the *Guías de Forasteros* or the bindings signed by Emilio Brugalla.

The cataloguing of the works is being done by the CCEA administrators, who introduce, check and validate all the data and images attached to each record. They also create the authorities and descriptors of the thesaurus for indexing the bindings. The students and former students of the Master Course in Libraries, specialized in Bibliographic Heritage of the Faculty of Documentation of the UCM, collaborate in these tasks. Their work is very important as they can link their Final Master Works with this type of research projects, studying, digitizing and cataloguing concrete collections of different institutions giving as a result the following works:

2009: Study and cataloguing of the book bindings with signature belonging to the *Guerra* collection of the UCM.

2010: Study and cataloguing of the book bindings signed by Emilio Brugalla within the *Lope de Vega* collection.

2010: Study and cataloguing of the book bindings of parchment belonging to the *Guerra* collection of UCM.

2011: Study and cataloguing of the book bindings with plates of the UCM.

2012: Study and cataloguing of the book bindings of the *Guías de Forasteros* of the Royal Academy of the History.

2013: Study and cataloguing of the book bindings signed by Emilio Brugalla of the Royal Academy of the History.

2014: Study, digitizing and cataloguing of the book bindings of the middle ages of the Royal Academy of the History

2014: Study, digitizing and cataloguing of the book bindings of the Library of the Royal Academy of Arts San Fernando

2014: Study, digitizing and cataloguing of the book bindings of the *Vicente Castañeda* collection of the Palace of Liria.

All these records have been done following the automated cataloguing of the CCEA, their indexing, digitizing and treatment of the images of the bindings.

There are also some doctoral students (PhD Students) that are doing their doctoral thesis about artistic bindings, within these research projects, and include their records in the CCEA.

All those institutions that wish to enter into the union catalogue project must sign a collaboration agreement with *Bibliopegia* research group (of the UCM), where the different tasks to be done by each part will be assigned, as well as the possibility of publishing the results of the works, and/or doing exhibitions as a way of diffusion of the projects.

At the present time, in the CCEA, the following institutions are participating:

> Historical Library of the UCM
> Library of the Royal Academy of History
> Municipal Historical Library of Madrid
> Library and Archives of the Cathedral Chapter of Toledo
> National Library of Mexico
> Library of the Royal Academy of Arts San Fernando
> Library of the Palace of Liria – Foundation Casa de Alba

We are seeking the collaboration of other Corporations such as one with the National Bank of Spain, for cataloguing a selection of artistic bookbinding, the Metropolitan Cathedral of Valencia in collaboration with the Valencian Institute of Conservation and, the Casa de Velázquez and Joanina Library at the University of Coimbra (Portugal). We have also established contact with other relevant institutions like the Library of the Monastery of El Escorial and National Library of Spain.

4. Conclusions

In the union catalogue that is being developed, artistic book bindings, antique or contemporary, are being included. These belong to Spanish institutions or foreign countries like the National Library of Mexico, kept by the UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico), or the Joanina Library in Coimbra (Portugal). The CCEA is not only a tool for old books but for the study of the artistic book bindings.

The development of this catalogue will suppose an important advance in the research possibilities within the area of the Spanish bookbinding and history of the book.

As this database is the first one with these features, it will place the Spanish institutions in the same level, or even higher, than others from different countries with similar tools were they have described the book bindings with the images.

The database will also permit doing research and different studies about the origins of the collections studying the *superlibris* and property marks that appear in the covers, spines, edges of the cover of the books and endpapers.

It will be possible to follow the work of the bookbinders located in Spain and the location of their workshops. Studying the different types of decorative motifs used in finishing tools, gilding rolls and plates will also be possible.

Finally, comparative studies of the different decorative styles were the ornamental decoration of the institutions appear will also be feasible.

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