

Paper Splitting: A Paper Strengthening Process

ABSTRACT

Paper splitting is a paper strengthening process known since the nineteenth century. It was originally used by restorers to separate recto and verso of double-sided prints or drawings. Today, it offers sophisticated treatment methods employed for the strengthening of weakened paper. During the past thirty years paper splitting was developed as a mass treatment at the university libraries in Jena and at the Deutsche Dächerrei in Leipzig. The process is now available commercially at the Zentrum für Bucherhaltung, also located in Leipzig. The history of paper splitting is outlined and the contemporary process is described from first-hand observations and from interviews with the conservators at Leipzig and Jena. The authors document their observations on selected papers that were strengthened through the paper splitting process.

The history of paper splitting and a detailed description of the modern splitting process appeared under the title "Paper Splitting: History and Modern Technology" in the *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 39.3 (Fall/Winter 2000). It includes a review of technical evaluations of the process and presents observations on three artifacts which were strengthened by splitting to improve their physical stability. A bibliography on the subject appears on the website of Buffalo State College's Art Conservation Department under "Web-Accessible Projects": <<http://www.buffalostate.edu/~artcon/>>.

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