

THE QUARTERLY

The Journal of the
British Association of Paper Historians

Nº 107

July
2018

NEW CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE ONLINE DATABASE FIL-DPZ

Gema Sancho Monllor

Fil-DPZ, watermarks database, has been developed and new tools have been added, something possible due to the collaborative work between the Department of Graphic Document Restoration and the Department of History Research from the School Workshop of Restoration DPZ XIV, Zaragoza. There are several changes, such as the incorporation of new sections in our catalogue form of watermarks and improvements in the online search method in order to find a watermark according to specific criteria. Moreover, we included a new resource that explains the traditional papermaking in the 17th and 18th centuries. For its design, we used the pictures and the text written by Jérôme de La Lande, even though we included more terms in order to make it easily accessible. Finally, this useful tool has been completed by an illustrated glossary, which aims to contribute to the knowledge of papermaking; this is based largely on some specific literature, along with other works, and has been added in order to explain and ratify the value of the technical vocabulary and terms used.

Introduction: What ancient and modern documents hide inside ...

Like amber, which encloses an insect and has an aesthetic appeal, some ancient and modern documents contain watermarks that are a representative mark of the paper's quality. If you place a light behind either the amber or the paper sheet, and look through, the treasure hidden inside appears to the spectator.

Watermarks are this visible imprint, usually made by metal wires during the papermaking process. Widely used since its appearance in the second half of the 13th century in Italy,¹ they were a distinctive sign of the paper mill² that allowed customers to determine the quality and guarantee of paper³ and to distinguish it from the competition. In addition, some watermarks were also used to identify the type and format of paper made by different makers (e.g. Fools Cap).

Watermarks and Fil-DPZ

As an essential element for Paper History, the usefulness of watermarks is great, and in addition to serving as a tool of documentary authenticity, its importance comes from the support for historical research as a dating resource.⁴ However, it should be remembered that it is not a totally reliable element if we do not take into account that the watermark can appear in a common copy in which the date of the original document is preserved. It may also be frequent to find date changes in order to avoid taxes to the state, or imitations and forgeries of watermarks in order to identify a particular higher quality paper.⁵

Since the creation in 2013 of the Fil-DPZ website, our work has aspired not to be just a database that collects watermarks from the documents of Zaragoza province (Spain), thanks of our work in the School Workshop of Restoration from the Provincial Government. In addition, it is a useful tool for the spread of our research on these paper documents and widens the knowledge of Paper History, not only for the specialist but for any interested parties. We have studied the world of papermaking and watermarks in detail, and finally, we grew our knowledge sufficiently to understand the difficulties of this topic. In addition, we wanted to establish a small contribution in order to encourage others to venture into this exciting discipline.

The result of our continuous work makes possible the innovations and changes in Fil-DPZ database. To realise this project, it has been necessary to learn from our experience and a close work collaboration between the Department of Graphic Document Restoration and the Department of History Research has been essential. In this process it has been necessary to define accurately our main aims and needs and, using the correct tools, not only in the catalogue for the watermark and document,



BOOK REVIEWS



La Marca Invisible Filigranas Papelleras Europeas en Hispanoamerica

José Carlos Balmaceda

Published in Spanish by CAHIP (Conservación Análisis Historia del Papel), Malaga, 2016. 701 pages. Illustrated in Black & White and colour. Available from CAHIP: order via email: caipcentro@yahoo.es ISBN 978-84-617-7215-5 Price: 40 euros (plus 35 euros Post and Packing), payable by bank draft.

José Carlos Balmaceda, a conservator-restorer and historian of paper, has published extensively on paper and watermarks. His new catalogue of European watermarks found in use in Spanish America is an extensive and very important addition to the published reference material on European watermarks.

The use of this book is not restricted to students and researchers into Spanish American history, the watermarks recorded from several European countries, including Germany, France, Holland, Great Britain and Italy, include marks from many different papermakers, and include some examples which have not been recorded anywhere else.

Despite the book being published in Spanish the catalogue information is well described and easy to comprehend, even for a non-Spanish speaker. The watermarks come from documents in archives in Spain and Argentina and each of the 2009 watermarks reproduced is captioned with a set of data including the original corpus number, the documentary background, the place of origin of the document, the date of the document, file number, the folio or page number, the dimensions of the folio, its place of origin, ie the region or community and country, and the reduction of the original size of the watermark (where relevant).

Spain provides, as one might expect, the largest cata-

logue of watermarks, which are broken down by province such as Andalucía, Catalonia, Valencia, Aragon, La Mancha, Leon and Navarre. There is one watermark from North America: from Crane and Co in Dalton, Massachusetts. European marks include papers from Germany, France, with particularly large catalogues from Great Britain and Italy. The British watermarks provide some surprises: for example the sheer number of different papers found in archives in Buenos Aires from relatively small provincial English paper mills, such as Thomas Hyde at Cheddar in Somerset (38 different watermarks between 1809 and 1811), Griffith Jones in Hertfordshire, John Bates from Buckinghamshire, Alex Pirie, William Joynson, Wiggins Teape.

Besides these watermarks from individual British papermakers there are also watermarked papers made for manufacturing stationers, such as ALFA MILL FINE, BASKERVILLE VELLUM WOVE etc, and marks from publishers such as the Glasgow firm of Cameron and Ferguson, printers such as De La Rue and Howard & Jones and unexpected firms such as Mawson, Swan and Morgan of Newcastle, who became renowned for their photographic collodions for printing photographs. The catalogue of Italian watermarks is particularly good on the watermarks in a huge amount of different papers from Genoa.

Balmaceda was responsible for the restoration workshops of books and documents of the Teacher's Library of the Municipality of the City of Buenos Aires, and of the Parliamentary Museum of the Senate of the Argentine Nation. Nationalized Spanish he has lived in Spain since 1991. He has published several books resulting from his historical research, among which are more than fifty articles on the history of paper, manufacturing in South America, Spain and Italy and watermarks, published in national or international congress proceedings and in specialised publications. In the V Congress of the History of Paper in Spain (2003), he received the "José Luis Asenjo" research prize awarded by ASPAPEL and the Hispanic Association of Paper Historians. He is a founding member and has been on the board of directors of the Hispanic Association of Paper Historians (AHHP) since 2005 and has edited the excellent quarterly electronic publication *Boletín CAHIP* since it was founded in 2008.

It is very important that the English speaking world is made aware of all the research being published in other countries, such as Holland, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, regardless of the language the work is being published in. English speaking academics are all too often completely unaware of the work being done in other countries. The various national Paper History Associations, other research groups and private individuals in Europe are producing some very good work, researching various aspects of our compelling subject, much of which, given the international nature of the paper trade throughout its history, has considerable relevance to those of us here in Britain. Several of these publications have been reviewed in previous editions of *The Quarterly*.¹

Peter Bower