

ANTONIO TERUZZI

PAPERBACKS

In the western culture, binding books demonstrates how art is important for books' covers as it shows a fine artistic expression and artisan's skills. Holding book's fascicles all together and presenting the book to the reader enables the existence of reading itself and the preservation of the most representative human knowledge symbol. What is more, studying a book's binding usually means identifying its origins, understanding deeply the different paths the book has followed, verifying what kind of tastes and clients there were in a specific time as well as comparing all the different books producing centers. In fact, covers, images, sentences, words, sounds and senses are all enclosed in the book's binding.

Books binding is the last step of the book's material production and its history.

At the beginning, books binding is a small cardboard called by historians paperback binding or in French "*d'attente*" and in Italian "*d'attesa*", that from the XVIth century has always been the basic form for holding together the book's fascicles that in the following years will be modified by its future possessors. We are talking about a done form but at the same time a paperback. In fact, paperback binding is the opposite to the definitive bindings, i.e., from the great monastic bindings, passing to the Gospel covers and to the most valuable bindings belonging to the most important clients' private libraries.

According to these ideas, we could probably consider Antonio Teruzzi's new artistic expression as paperback or, in other words, waits, representing in this case not the book's binding but the book itself because this book that has waited for a change receives a new form that does not damage its history but that encloses it. We can find a great range of books starting from the books the artist has chosen from his own bookshelf together with the ones coming from bazaars or small markets. What is more, several editions of recently published books, old books, History books and uncut books join this long list that also includes books full of comments, scrawled by students that did not use them for studying, endpapers full of private thoughts, symbols, numbers and letters that we will never understand or even pages recently signed by respectful people. In short, books that have already lived but that are still waiting.

Books binding means a direct contact with the book and its content, i.e., it belongs to the book itself and cannot be admired alone: nothing can explain nor an *opac* (On-line Public Access Catalogue) either a digital copy this unique union. What is more, books binding represents the most hidden art because it only comes out if the book to which it belongs reveals itself. In fact, in every library's shelf, every binding is waiting with the book its own reader.

Books binding does not interpret luxury but the inside meaning of the book, that is why the legend accompanying the image is not a museum but a real bibliography legend, i.e., binding's history represents the reading's history.

In Antonio Teruzzi's artistic production, books binding can be brought closer to the continues *variatio* of other kind of materials used as bindings as for example the barrel's

wood. Dante's *mezzule e lulle* are an egregious example as some time ago they contained a sense: wine.

Antonio Teruzzi's poetic art is specially based on the front cover whose own binding appears with great respect and waits for the book's opening, for the reader and what is more, it waits with the book. It is a kind of wait full of creative tension and knowledge that points to other waits; a wait that, in its own metaphor, means time, life, lasting. The book and its binding express two fundamental moments of the human thoughts becoming knowledge, i.e., memory and wait. In fact, all these books represent not only a new library but above all a human's metaphor, the “mind's everlasting place” having an indissoluble link with books.

Boezio's *Consolatio* invites us to reflect deeper on this metaphor and not to fix our attention on the external aspect of the book: “nec bibliothecae potius comptos ebore ac vitro parietes quam tuae mentis sedem requiro, in qua non libros, sed id, quod libris pretium facit, librorum quondam meorum sententias collocavi”. *I am not looking for the ivory or glass walls of your library but for your mind's last place where I have not put the books but their real value, i.e., the essence of the books that some time ago were mine.*

In fact, we can say that Antonio Teruzzi's works, i.e., “Paperbacks” show the essence of those awaited things. In other words, books in general are not white because even modern books' covers follow a determined graphic project, a publishing line, a message transmission. Antonio Teruzzi's paperbacks do not represent a past, they represent a new reading. They match the art signs found in the books of a library with the whole human life sentiments and thoughts:” an everlasting wait memory”.

by Raffaele Deluca