



**CONDITION AND TREATMENT REPORT**

**Date:** 24 October 2018

**Acc./Loan no:** 69-21-2b

**Object:** Book case

**People; Country:** Ethiopian Orthodox

**Materials:** Hide

**Reason for conservation report:** Straps require treatment



**DESCRIPTION**

Crafted from flat pieces of tanned leather and stitched together using hide to form a pouch with accompanying cover. Three thin lengths of leather overlap each other end-to-end by 1.25-inches and are stitched to form one long continuous strap. The cover slides up the pouch's strap through slits in excess material that folds over the spine and text block fore-edge; the same applies for the pouch. The folded leather is stitched down with thin strips of hide. A long strap allows the case (with accompanying book) to be worn or hung. All stitches are executed in a running stitch.

L x W x H: 51 x 14 x 5.5cm

**CONDITION**

Overall, the pouch and cover leather are in good condition. The strap leather is misshapen and stiff. Before treatment, the cover was not removable due to the misshapen strap. Outer surfaces of the cover and strap are darker in areas where the object was handled and/or exposed to UV. Edges, corners, and high spots are lightly worn and appear shiny. A section of the strap is folded onto itself, causing the outer layer of the leather to split at the crease. There is also a tear in the strap half-way through the leather. One side of the cover has a diagonal surface scratch and a pin-hole size puncture. The puncture is from the outer surface and goes inward, and does not appear to be insect damage. During treatment, the pouch was found to be in good/stable condition.

Previous repair: The top (shoulder) portion of the strap near the original join is torn and disconnected on a diagonal. The two ends were butt-joined and wrapped with masking tape, which was then in-painted. The tape has since failed and the two ends are no longer attached. The masking tape is still attached to one end, while the other has a marked amount of dried adhesive residue.

Examined by: Janelle Batkin-Hall

Date: 24 October 2018

## **PROPOSED TREATMENT**

Surface clean with a soft brush and variable speed HEPA vacuum. PLM of hair(s). Humidify and re-shape the strap. Assess the condition of interior surfaces after humidification. Remove masking tape carrier and adhesive residue. Rejoin the strap using toned Hollytex and Beva 371 film. Create housing that will properly support the strap.

Beva 371 was chosen for its strong, yet flexible, heat-activated bond to leather. Aging tests have shown little change in its tensile strength.\*

Hollytex was chosen for its high tensile and tear strength, it is acid-free, resistant to acids, and is dimensionally stable in all directions.\*\*

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## **TREATMENT**

1. Normal illumination photographs taken to document the BT condition.
2. Surface cleaned with a sable brush and HEPA vacuum.
3. Humidified strap using felted Gortex and damp blotters, avoiding the masking tape repair.
4. Removed the masking tape with tweezers and the adhesive with cotton swabs very lightly dampened with ethanol.
5. Humidified the torn strap ends using felted Gortex and damp blotters. Dried between blotter paper and while molded around a large glass beaker to coax the straps into a semi-circular shape.
6. Toned 1.5mil Hollytex with Golden Acrylic paints in burnt sienna, burnt umber light, raw umber, and raw sienna.
7. Attached Beva 371 film to the Hollytex using a heated spatula.
8. Rejoined the strap ends and stabilized the strap tear with thin strips of the Hollytex/Beva heat-set at 40°C.
9. Created a custom support tray for permanent storage.
10. Took AT photos.

Conservator: Janelle Batkin-Hall

Date: 8 November 2018

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## **Photographic Documentation**

Digital BT (bt1 through bt6)

Digital DT (dt7 and dt10)

Digital AT (at11 through at18)

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## **Exhibition Recommendations**

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## **Exhibition Record:**

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## **ANALYSIS**

### **PLM of Hair**

One hair was removed from the cover and mounted onto a glass microscope slide using Meltmount. Using a Zeiss Axioplan D-7082 PLM microscope with transmitted light and under 200x and 400x magnification, the hair appears to be bovine. Further analysis is needed to reach a conclusive identification.

\* Kronthal, L., J. Levison, C. Dignard, E. Chao, and J. Down. 2003. Beva 371 and its use as an adhesive for skin and leather repairs: background and a review of treatments. *Journal of the American Institute of Conservation* (Summer, 2003): 341-362.

\*\* Hollytex. 2019. CAMEO (Conservation and Art Materials Encyclopedia Online). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Accessed March 21, 2019. <http://cameo.mfa.org/wiki/Hollytex>.