

**Abstract:**

The *Commissioni Dogali* are official Venetian documents written on parchment and issued by the Venetian Republic Chancellery and by the Doge of Venice during the *Serenissima* government.

*Commissioni* volumes bound in the sunk-panel style (in Italian *a cassettoni*) began to appear in Venice in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and they were concentrated in the last third of that century, with some examples at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The sunk-panel binding structure firstly developed in the Middle-East during the 15<sup>th</sup> century and was probably imported in Venice by Persian and Turkish craftsmen from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, the Venetian examples are a sumptuous fusion of Eastern and Western elements and patterns.

The boards were composed by two layers of paste-laminate material: the lower one was cut full size, but the external one was carved following decorative patterns made of interlacing bands and Middle Eastern shapes. Finally, the two layers were pasted creating a sunk-panel.

A fine leather was applied over the boards to the external surface, precisely molding it on the carving following all border shapes. The decoration was developed by gilding, painting and, finally, varnishing the entire surface.

Evidence of the Western binding structure can be found in the endbands, the sewing and other elements, typical of the *Commissini Dogali*.

The conservation treatment (2016) of a 16<sup>th</sup> century sunk-panel *Commissione Dogale* held by the Marciana National Library, Venice, permitted to investigate the internal structure of this type of binding, giving fascinating information about the creation methodology.

This proposal aims to present the Venetian sunk-panel binding features referring to the manuscript It. VII, 1869 (=8134), but also focusing on how the main variants involved in the production of this type of bookbinding lead to a particular result. For example, a number of carving styles have been found and each creates a different arrangement of the panel.

The information about different structures, design styles and used materials were organized in a systematic sheet, which aims to be adopted to describe all specimens.

The project was developed in collaboration with the Marciana National Library, Venice: the Institution allowed the author to study the sunk-panel *Commissioni* held in its collections, carrying out the research during the internship she attended as final part of her Master's Degree in Paper, Book and Photography Conservation (DASLQ01), Fine Arts Academy of Bologna, Italy.