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9th International
Multidisciplinary
Congress

Creation,
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05th - 07th
October 2023

SEVILLE
SPAIN

Metamorphosis and transformations in Western Europe's codex morphology

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Abstract

Interpreting the proposed concepts of «transformation» and «metamorphosis» from the standpoint of the codex and the Western binding structures allows us to view these beyond simple technical solutions. In this sense, their progression is analyzed as an organic process of structural and formal development, resultant from the adaptation to different contexts of use and preservation, and to which linguistic values not usually associated with the codex's materiality can be attributed. The operative concepts, commonly used based on a biological assumption, are applied here not strictly but figuratively, in conjunction with the book in the sense of book-as-artifact, although also referring to the book as a literary entity. Either way, both are embedded in socio-cultural processes.

Keywords: codex, bookbinding, codicology, history of the book, morphogenesis