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Trade Bookbinding In The British Isles, 1660-1800

Stuart Bennett

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. excellent bookBy Mark FloresExcellent for book history lovers.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Original Once MoreBy Adam DouglasIt's always nice to see a received idea get a good kicking, and this book does just that. As a trainee antiquarian bookseller, I was admonished never to describe a hand-bound book before 1800 as being in its "original binding". It was argued that 18th-century English books were originally sold unbound. Individual customers supposedly commissioned bespoke bindings for themselves. It was always a faintly ludicrous scenario (as if every literate gentleman had his own personal bookbinder toiling away in a garden shed somewhere), and Stuart Bennett thoroughly exposes it here. By the time he's finished, you will be thoroughly convinced by his thesis that in Britain at this time probably 80% of books were sold already bound, in various categories of trade bindings, from simple sheep up to expensive red morocco, with varying degrees of gilt decoration, and priced accordingly by the bookseller. It's well-argued, well-illustrated and well over-due. The next step will be for scholars to identify specific bindings and tools associated with the various publishing houses, but they will be building on the groundwork laid down here.

First edition. This book is the first illustrated guide to this complex and controversial subject. In 1930, in *The Evolution of Publishers' Binding Styles*, Michael Sadleir declared that "the bookseller-publisher of the decades from

1730 to 1770 issued his books either in loose quires, or stitched, or a most in a plain paper wrapper." This view is still generally accepted. Bennett, however, presents new documentary and visual evidence that books were predominantly sold ready-bound in sheep, calf, and goat as well as boards and wrappers. Over 200 color illustrations show what these bindings looked like, and how their styles evolved. 176 pages. cloth, dust jacket. small 4to..