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These studies bring together in one volume Mirjam Foot's scholarly contributions to the history of bookbinding which were published in the last twelve years. The author is Director of Collections and Preservations in the British Library and an international authority in her field. Although such a short review cannot do justice to this monumental work, an overview of the most important sections should be useful.

Divided into seven parts, the collection of articles begins with a general essay on the contribution of the History of Bookbinding to the History of the Book. The evolution of bookbinding styles and techniques is shown to be often the result of an increase in readership, which in turn increased book production, while reducing allowed production time. This process resulted in less time-consuming and cheaper bookbinding techniques. Also contained in this section is the transcription of seventeenth and eighteenth-century price lists of English trade bindings, followed by a short discussion of modern bindings acquired by the British Library.

The next two sections, dealing with the late medieval tradition in bookbinding and gilt-tooled bindings, are understandably the most detailed and technical, and represent the more conventional approach to the study of bookbinding. The author's profound knowledge of fifteenth and sixteenth-century bindings is evident as she guides the reader through monastery and lay workshops of England, the Netherlands and Germany. In a long and fascinating survey of English bookbinders of the late medieval tradition, Foot describes not only the tools and their attribution to particular binders but also the binding structure which has often been overlooked by early historians. Another article examines in depth the influence of Dutch and Flemish bindings on British designs, and studies the effect of the monastic revival as well as the development of the printed book on the structure and appearance of bookbindings. Although much of the information and the conclusions are her own, the author never misses the opportunity of citing previously published sources and always gives credit to her predecessors. The section on gilt-tooled bindings is made up of twenty-seven short articles each dealing
with a particular binding, and with most of the examples taken from the holdings of the British Library. These articles were previously published in *The Book Collector* in the series English and Foreign Bookbindings. The bindings date from the end of the fifteenth-century to 1864 and range from early anonymous works to later ones signed by well-known masters — Roger Payne, Devers, James Scott, Gabriel de Sancha, William McKenzie, and others.

The next section contains a description of the Olga Hirsch Collection of decorated papers. A survey of this remarkable collection of over 3,500 sheets of decorated papers, mainly endpapers and wrappers, allows the author to review the different techniques involved and list some of the major European producers.

Foot's expertise and interest are not only limited to the bindings themselves but also to the collectors and collections. An important series of articles deals with bookbinding patronage in England. Although less evident and important than in France, the patronage of printers, publishers, authors, monarchs and private and institutional collectors supported the bookbinding trade. The author then surveys two large historical collections, the Henry Davis collection and the Herzig August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, Germany. Henry Davis made a gift of his decorated bookbindings to the British Museum Library [as it was then called] in 1968. He died in 1977. Davis collected bindings from many countries and all periods, and he had the best private collection of French eighteenth-century mosaic bindings with examples by Monnier, Pasdeloup, and Derome along with a good selection of sixteenth-century Parisian bindings commissioned for some of the great collectors of the time. Foot describes other highlights from this collection of bindings from England (including a twelfth-century Romanesque binding), Scotland, Ireland, Italy, Germany, and even from the Orient. Although most of the treasures date from the fifteenth to the nineteenth-century, Davis also collected twentieth-century works of some of the great names in the history of English and French bookbinding. The August Collection has not yet been completely surveyed, and the author, by her own admission, leads us through only a small sample of the collection. This library was founded by Duke Julius of Brunswick during the sixteenth century and was continued by his heirs. The largest holdings are of monastic bindings which were incorporated into the ducal library after the secularization of monasteries. Most of the bindings are German and many cover manuscripts.

The last section is devoted to problems of preservation and to the conflict which often arises between the binding historian and the conservator. Foot's treatment of this delicate subject is both sensible and honest. She explains both sides of the argument, the necessity for preserving bindings in their original state but also the necessity for making books last and available to the public. This discussion is at the same time a very thorough survey of the different types of physical evidence crucial to the bookbinding historian: from end-leaves to shelf-marks, and from recycled boards to sewing structures.

The book is well illustrated with nearly 150 black-and-white photographs, printed on coated paper, and sturdily bound. The detailed table of contents provides easy access to the different sections while an index of bookbinders and collectors/collections can easily assist the reader looking for a particular reference.
Studies in the History of Bookbinding is certainly the most up-to-date work on the subject available today. Covering the production of many countries and periods, the text is general enough to be useful to most librarians, collectors, dealers, and scholars of the book. Although precise, technical and heavily footnoted, Foot's prose is neither boring nor pedantic and is often sprinkled with lighter remarks such as 'The history of English decorated bookbinding starts with a bang' [p. 96].

In her introduction, the author states 'There is no greater conversation killer than an admission to an overriding interest in the history of bookbinding' [p. 1]. Anyone reading this book would certainly welcome the opportunity of having a long conversation with Mirjam Foot.

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Essentially, this is a collector's guide (hence the title) and not a proper bibliography. It is, however, quite useful as such, and anyone interested in collecting first editions of classic mystery writers should have a copy. A revision of the first edition of 1988, this new edition includes seventy-seven additional authors, mostly writers who have come into prominence since the initial publication. The scope of this new edition has also broadened. While the first edition stuck closely to the typical 'English Body-in-the-Library' detective story, this edition includes some of the more prominent writers of the American school of hard-boiled fiction, authors such as Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. As well, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is represented here for the first time, an appearance sadly lacking from the earlier book.

This is really the first book of its kind. Several checklists of crime fiction exist, the most important being Allen J. Hubin's Crime Fiction, 1749–1980: A Comprehensive Bibliography, plus supplements (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1984, and later), but nothing with the slant of being a guidebook for collectors has been attempted before. The first edition was quite handy, and this edition is much improved.

The book is laid out as an easy guide to collecting, geared toward the novice. Introductory chapters include 'Approaches to Collecting,' a basic 'what is it and why do I want it' chapter, 'Forming a Collection,' an overview of where first editions of detective fiction can be purchased [suggestions include antique markets, auctions, church sales and yes, of course, dealers' catalogues], and what a collector should focus on [first editions in dust wrappers preferred, please!]! 'Maintaining a Collection' is a simple instructional on how not to ruin valuable books,