Dennis E. Rhodes, ed. *Bookbindings & Other Bibliophily: Essays in Honour of Anthony Hobson*. Verona: Edizioni Valdonega, 1994. 368 pp.; \$125.00 U.S. (cloth). ISBN 88-85033-26-1.

This multilingual collection of essays, with its slightly ungainly title, celebrates the seventieth birthday of A.R.A. (Anthony) Hobson, for many years head of Sotheby's book department in London, and well known as a scholar of bookbinding history. Like his father, G.D. Hobson, Anthony Hobson has made substantial contributions to one of the more recalcitrant subdisciplines of the history of the book, and one notorious for inaccurate scholarship. (It was Paul Needham, I think, who once remarked in print that pretty much all of the literature on binding published before 1920 should be assumed to be wrong and misleading.) Hobson has published three major works: *French and Italian Collectors and Their Bindings* (1953, published as a Roxburghe Club book and thus very difficult to find), *Apollo and Pegasus* (1975), and *Humanists and Bookbinders* (1989). He also wrote *Great Libraries* (1970), a picture book which nevertheless contains a good deal of original research and observation.

This kind of *estschrift* is difficult to appraise in detail, as the contents are on quite disparate topics, and a series of twelve mini-reviews would prove rather tiresome. The book as a whole is certainly handsomely produced and does honour as an object to Mr. Hobson. Dennis Rhodes has commissioned or collected some interesting and important essays, though as editor he might have demanded a more consistent style of apparatus and cleaned up the occasional bit of clumsy prose ('that very ornamentally aware time,' for example, from Giles Barber's essay on 'French Eighteenth-Century Bindings At Oxford'). And since I seem to be nit-picking, I might mention as well that the photograph of an Ethiopian binding on p. 190 is incorrectly dated 1450; it should be 1974.

These small cavils aside, there is a great deal to be learned from this collection of essays. Four articles seem to me the most important: Lotte Hellinga's 'Peter Schoeffer and the Book-Trade in Mainz: Evidence for the Organization,' Piccarda Quilici's 'Legature del Piccolpasso e legature Viscontee nella Biblioteca Ambrosiana di Milano' (though my rudimentary Italian made this a demanding read), Jan Storm van Leeuwen's 'Some Observations on Dutch Publishers' Bindings Up Till 1800,' and Jeanne Veyrin-Forrer's 'Notes sur Thomas Mahieu.' Hellinga's essay follows up on some important work done by Vera Sack on Peter Schoeffer, and examines many copies of Schoeffer imprints in order to demonstrate that not only was the idea of publishers' bindings familiar to this fifteenth-century printer, but that decoration was carried out at an assembly-line level as well. Quilici's essay (like Barber's mentioned above) studies a group of bindings in a particular place, in this case the great Ambrosian Library in Milan. Van Leeuwen explores pre-1800 Dutch books looking for examples of publishers' bindings, and details a number of interesting instances, from the Blaeu atlases to late eighteenth-century 'paperbacks.' Veyrin-Forrer has dug into French archival collections in order to provide some documentary evidence about Thomas Mahieu, with Grolier, one of the greatest of all French collectors

and the commissioner of some celebrated sixteenth-century bindings.

The remaining essays vary in interest, though none is negligible. Manfred von Arnim describes the five Grolier bindings in the Otto Schäfer collection. The illustrations of these bindings are unfortunately rather lacklustre. Elly Cockx-Indestege looks at some of the surviving correspondence of the Flemish book-binding historian Prosper Verheyden, citing by way of tribute a letter in which G.D. Hobson is described as 'een schat van een vent, zo6 aandachtig om U voort te helpen,' a man worth his weight in gold, who cannot do too much for you. Georges Colin studies and provides a list of gold-stamped printers' and booksellers' marks on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century books, but concludes that 'il faudrait en connaître davantage pour mieux comprendre leur fonction.' Mirjam Foot looks briefly at several magnificent bindings executed for Anne de Montmorency (1493–1567); David Shaw at some books, all of them by contrast in plain serviceable bindings, known to have belonged to William Warham, Archdeacon of Canterbury in the early sixteenth century; and Bent Juel-Jensen at three Ethiopian bindings. And finally, Dennis Rhodes writes about British book collectors who bought books in Italy, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. (What else besides bibliophily could possible connect John Dee and Sir Richard Colt Hoare?).

Good bookbinding scholarship demands an uncommon combination of skills: bibliographical knowledge, sound technical knowledge, and art historical training. Anthony Hobson possesses these skills to a high degree, and the essays gathered in *Bookbindings & Other Bibliophily* demonstrate that many of his well-wishers, friends, and colleagues do as well. As more and more work is carried out and the days of anecdotal and impressionistic writing about binding recede further into the past, one hopes that Mirjam Foot's comment (in her *Studies in the History of Bookbinding* (1993)), that bookbinding is considered 'an eccentric subject' even among bookish people, will become untrue and out of date. Certainly this collection demonstrates that 'the eccentric subject' is an intricate and essential part of book history.

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Robin Myers and Michael Harris, eds. *A Millennium of the Book: Production, Design & Illustration in Manuscript & Print, 900–1900*. Winchester: St. Paul's Bibliographies; New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 1994. xii, 196 pp.; \$30.00 U.S. (paper). ISBN (UK) 1-873040-25-3; ISBN (U.S.) 1-884718-0708.

Fearlessly embracing ten centuries of western European book production as its theme, this collection of essays touches on many aspects of the manuscript and