succeeds admirably, and is a fitting testament to the influence of John Shearman, the tutelary spirit presiding benignly over the whole.

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David Pearson. *English Bookbinding Styles 1450-1800: A Handbook*. London, New Castle (DE) : The British Library, Oak Knoll Press, 2005. Pp. xii, 221.

David Pearson's guide to identifying English bookbinding styles from the mid-fifteenth to the turn of the nineteenth century is both completely accessible and completely authoritative. It will satisfy those who want to learn how to date and describe bindings and also those who want an account of the field written by one of its best scholars. This guide fills a gaping hole in the literature because previous approaches have focused on individual binders and workshops, or have analyzed the structure of bindings, or have emphasized the fine end of the market. Pearson bases his work not on exceptions but on general trends, and analyzes ordinary bindings rather than simply the high end of the market.

The reader's comprehension is facilitated at every turn, from the opening helpful list of key points about bookbinding, from the hand press era on. The first chapter, "The Meaning and Interpretation of Bookbindings," notes that since every binding of this period was a handmade object, its manufacture and purchase involved a number of choices that reflect something about the book, the binder, and the owner. It would have been illuminating to hear further analysis from Pearson on these topics, but in raising these and other excellent questions he argues for binding's central role in book history. Pearson claims that most bindings can be dated on stylistic grounds to within twenty years on either side, and by the time readers have finished this book this skill seems within their reach.

The second chapter, "Materials and Construction Techniques," is packed full of useful information on how bindings were put together, beginning with a comprehensive diagram of the mechanics involved in forwarding. The chapter includes detailed information on the different types of covering materials used (including a clear distinction between the often confused vellum and parchment), the different types of boards to which the covering was attached, how books were sewn together, and how end bands, clasps, ties, furniture, and end leaves functioned. In each of these sections he gives thorough descriptions, dates the popularity of the material or practice, points out generalizations and exceptions, and occasionally includes practical tips (such as that tapping a board with a fingernail can reveal whether it is wood or pasteboard).

The third and fourth chapters treat decorative styles on the covers, spines, and edges of permanent bindings. Usefully laid out as a chronological development from the late medieval to the early nineteenth century, Pearson's account touches on all the major styles, from the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century diaper design, to the introduction of rolls, panel stamps and gold-tooling in the early sixteenth century, to

the late sixteenth-century centrepiece design, to the “cottage roof” and “drawer handle” patterns of the Restoration, to the distinctive early eighteenth-century Harleian style, to the Neo-classical forms in later eighteenth-century luxury bindings. He also brings to light little-studied trends, such as the use of panel stamps from c.1570-1630 (in contrast to the much better known early sixteenth-century variety). He points out interesting shifts in taste: in the Tudor period it was rare to see even an inexpensive binding with only blind fillets for ornamentation, but the plain bindings of the mid-seventeenth century showcased this simple decoration. Pearson provides the same chronological sweep for spines and edges, tracing, for example, the inception of spine labelling, attributable to the change in shelving practices in libraries during the seventeenth century.

Chapter five traces the stylistic development of tool shapes over time. Pearson has grouped together tool shapes which are typical of succeeding generations, providing the caveat that there is always a mixture of newer and older styles in circulation at any one time. The visual tracings of all of these designs are invaluable, and Pearson does an admirable job of verbally describing subtle differences that the untrained eye cannot see without help. It is fascinating to learn of the ebb and flow of particular styles; for example, “all-over” small tools were used on covers late in the fifteenth century and reappear in the Restoration. Pearson’s work on cheap and temporary bookbindings is particularly exciting since he is bringing much ephemeral material to light. He notes that it is difficult to gauge this end of the market since the survival rates are lower, and since pamphlets with flimsy covers might have been rebound. Books could be bound cheaply in vellum and parchment, in paper wrappers, and in paper or canvas over boards.

We learn from Pearson that socially and financially, printers and booksellers were at the top and bookbinders at the bottom of the hierarchy in their related trades. It is hard not to feel chagrined on behalf of the craftsmen whose labour we have admired throughout the book, but Pearson demonstrates that those binders who diversified into bookselling could live quite well. William Wiginton, for example, advertised himself in the mid-eighteenth century as a bookbinder and stationer who bound all types of books, refitted gentlemen’s libraries, and draped paper hangings in rooms (which Pearson suggests we might consider his foray into interior decorating). The author also provides details of workshop operation and highlights the growth of the little-studied provincial bookbinding trade.

Pearson’s section on stationery bindings at the end of the third chapter points out some important distinctions between blank books and printed books (for example that the use of vellum to cover printed books declined after 1640 but was still common on stationery bindings throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries). Further information on the binding of manuscripts would have been welcome; for example, what were pre-bound blank books used for, besides accounts? Is there any evidence that people would write on unbound quires of paper that were then brought to binders, or did they tend to write in pre-bound notebooks?

Throughout the book, the hundreds of illustrations, including a generous selection in colour, are extremely useful for seeing changing styles across the centuries. The diagrams are consistently clear and useful, and the appendices are superb: one summarizes the main stylistic changes of binding style in diagram form, another provides colour plates of a variety of typical bindings at fifty-year intervals, the third proposes some ways forward in standardizing how bookbindings are described and recorded, and the fourth acknowledges the value of previous work identifying individual tools and workshops. From its introductory remarks to its annotated bibliography (including internet resources) Pearson's text proves that it should be considered the standard guide to early modern bookbindings. After studying this invaluable book, readers will feel that they have been given the tools to analyze and describe early bookbindings with confidence, and they will also be convinced of the field's importance.

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Caroline Campbell and Alan Chong, ed. *Bellini and the East*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005. Pp. 144.

This is the catalogue for the exhibition "Bellini and the East," which was held at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, and at the National Gallery of London in the first half of 2006. As such, it is both less and more than its title promises. It is not a newly-researched monographic study of Gentile Bellini, scion of the leading family of painters in Venice, who in 1479 travelled to Constantinople at the invitation of Mehmed II. But neither is it only a study of a single painter in his relation to the sultan's court. It embraces in broadest terms the relations between Venice and Constantinople in those early decades following the city's fall to the Turks. Moreover, it is richly illustrated with the paintings, coins, drawings, engravings, and book illustrations that made up the exhibition. While the focus of exhibition and book is the time span between two major Ottoman conquests—of Constantinople in 1453 and of Cairo in 1517—it includes some earlier and later works that establish the context.

For too long, Venice and Constantinople/Byzantium/Istanbul occupied separate scholarly worlds. Each had scholars producing work of high quality, but the works occupied historiographical traditions that were largely self-contained. Certainly authors described the connections and influences of each city on the other, but largely in passing and as a border presence; these authors spoke fundamentally to their own academic peers, and not to those in the other city. Yet this miscast the symbiotic relationship between the two—the two cities were thoroughly wrapped up in each other politically, economically, and culturally for centuries before and after 1453. Venice originated as a military outpost of the Byzantine Empire, and became the city's short-lived master after engineering the crusade/sack of 1204. Ironically, the