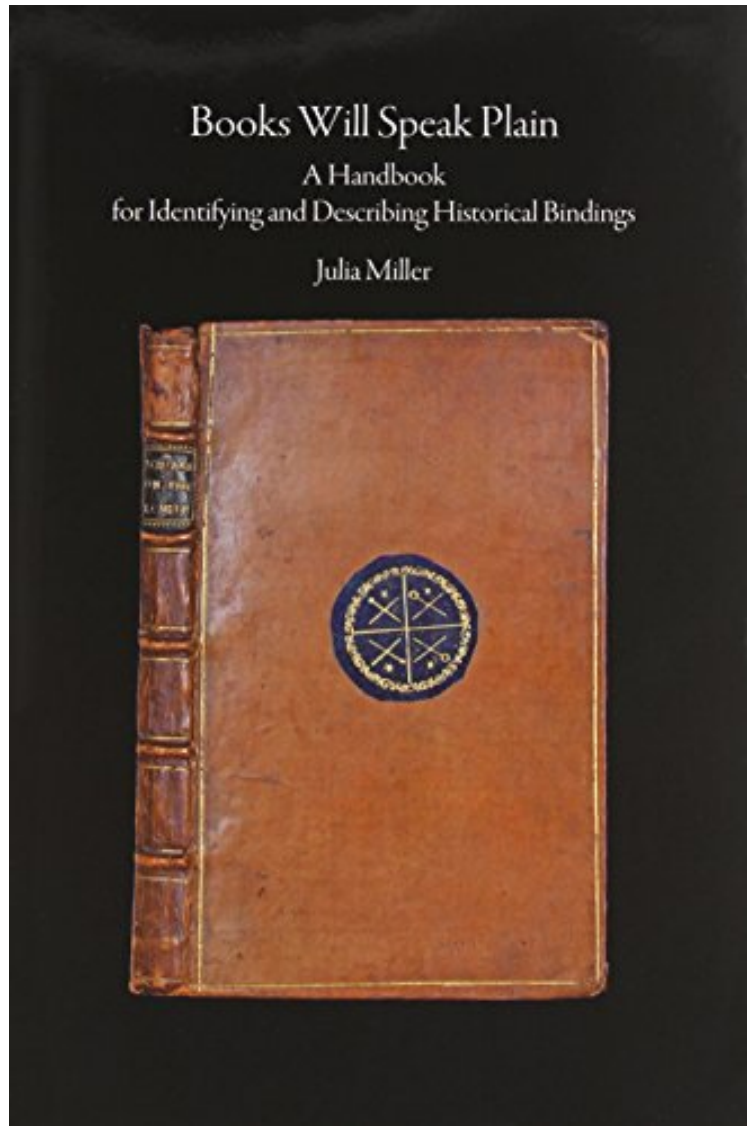


Books Will Speak Plain: A Handbook for Identifying and Describing Historical Bindings

Julia Miller

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luparaconBeing involved in bookbinding and interested in old books and binding I was delighted when I received this book. After over a month I am still spending time daily reading it. need to add that it comes with a dvd full of color pictures for all the bw pictures in the bok. I strongly recommend it to anyone having interest in books histoy and bookbinding. A must to have. 13 of 14 people found the following review helpful. A Masterwork! By Gabe K This review was originally published on booksellerlabels(dot)com. This is a truly monumental work, and I don't use that term often. This is the type of reference book that is so packed with rich details on the history of the book, it's hard to put down. Its scope is massive, yet well presented by the author. Chapters include: The Early History of the Codex; The Medieval Manuscript Book and Beyond; 1450 to 1800, The Book Changes Radically; The Book from 1800 to 1900; Identifying Binding Materials and Applications; Describing Historical Bindings--a Template for Action; The Task Ahead and Conclusion; and lengthy appendices. the publisher: "Books Will Speak Plain is published at a time when the historical book is at risk of being ignored, put away, and forgotten. This handbook combines an overview of the history of the codex with basic information about many of the materials and structures found on historical bindings. The book also includes description-survey guidelines and is supported by a variety of appendices. The text is illustrated by 374 images, many in color, and close to 1,500 color images on the accompanying DVD represent structural and decorative elements from a variety of bindings made before 1900. The book's focus on primarily non-luxury bindings adds depth to an often-neglected segment of the history of bookbinding. Preservation is at the heart of Books Will Speak Plain. We have already lost too many historical bindings because their importance was not understood and appreciated. This book is a call to action to urge custodians of every kind of historical book collection, public and private, to assess the physical character of the historical bindings in their care and record the changes that have accrued to those bindings during their passage through time. This book is a resource that can be used to recognize binding variations that have long been overlooked and to document such bindings for future scholars. All bibliophiles, including bookbinders, curators, private collectors, librarians, catalogers, antiquarian booksellers, book-history scholars, and conservators, will find Books Will Speak Plain an invaluable resource." As for bookseller labels, the coverage is slim but present. There are a handful of images of bookseller labels, bookbinders' tickets and shared bookseller/binder labels, as well as information on bound-in binder and bookseller advertisements, and engraver, designer and binder signatures. One of my favorite images is for a label from "M'Kee Robertson's Book Shoe Store, Hagerstown, MD." The book is heavily illustrated with black and white photographs and drawings and includes two lengthy color sections. The aforementioned DVD is itself a monumental work. It not only gives color versions of the book's black and white images, it contains an additional 1000+ well-described images--including several bookseller labels and binders' tickets. I was able to magnify the images to 400% on my laptop and still retain a clear picture. Of course, the real importance here is the giant leap forward in book preservation and documentation--and it is a joy to behold. 510 pages, 7 " by 10 " hardcover (rust-colored cloth) with dust jacket and accompanying DVD.

Based in part on materials in the William L. Clements Library.