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978-1-108-02482-2 - *An Inquiry into the Nature and Form of the Books of the Ancients*

John Hannett

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### **An Inquiry into the Nature and Form of the Books of the Ancients**

John Andrews Arnett was the pseudonym of John Hannett (1803–93), a printer and a pioneer in the study of modern and historical bookbinding methods. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Form of the Books of the Ancients* was published in 1837, following the success of *Bibliopægia*, his manual of bookbinding techniques. Having outlined the various ways in which written records were kept, and the development of the codex and of printing, Hannett devotes most of the book to the history of bookbinding. The book is well researched and illustrated, with many quotations from earlier works to support his clearly written narrative. Wills and accounts often describe books in terms of their binding, providing a way of following changing fashions in book coverings. He examines bindings from continental and oriental sources as well as English examples, before discussing modern binding practice and practitioners.

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# An Inquiry into the Nature and Form of the Books of the Ancients

*With a History of the Art of Bookbinding,  
from the Times of the Greeks and Romans  
to the Present Day*

JOHN HANNETT



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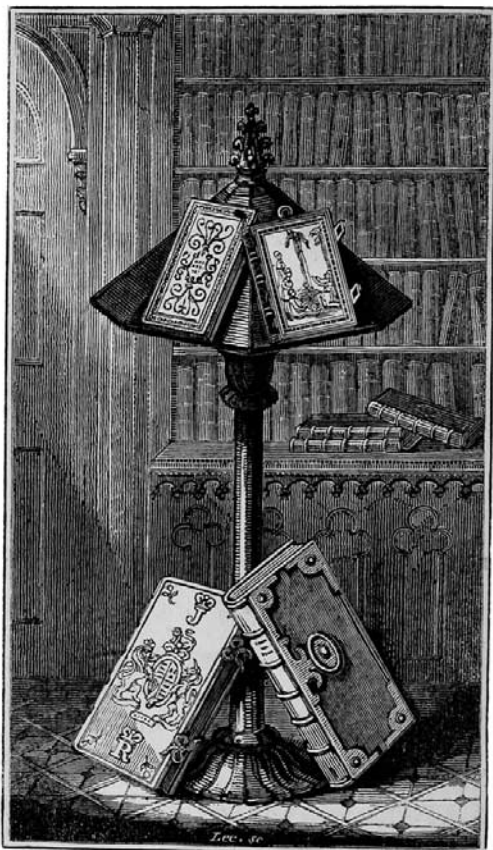
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## ANCIENT BINDINGS.

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WITH A  
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OF THE  
ART OF BOOKBINDING,  
FROM THE TIMES OF  
THE GREEKS AND ROMANS TO THE PRESENT DAY;  
INTERSPERSED WITH  
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES TO MEN AND BOOKS  
OF ALL AGES AND COUNTRIES.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS.

BY JOHN ANDREWS ARNETT.

LONDON:  
RICHARD GROOMBRIDGE.  
EDINBURGH: OLIVER AND BOYD.—DUBLIN: CURRY AND CO.  
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## P R E F A C E.

THE following work aspires to the rank of a historical and chronological record of the art and science of composing books, and their subsequent embellishment,—a subject so intimately connected with literature, as to have ever been a matter of much speculation to the antiquarian and man of letters, as well as of great interest to the artist and general reader.

To the perusal of the works of Ames, Palmer, Stower, Hansard, and Johnson, on the History of Printing, may a desire to collect the dispersed records of the much older Art of Book-binding, and to perpetuate the still existing specimens of the talent of early times (many fast hastening to, and all in progress of, decay), be said to have arisen, and the appearance of the present work be attributed. To effect this object, the slight notices of the form of books, and remarks on their embellishment, found in numerous publications devoted to bibliographical subjects, to the histories of countries, of a people, or of individuals, have been collected. These, as now arranged in chronological order, and embodied with a historical record and dissertations founded on personal inspection of many ancient bindings, will, it is presumed, be found to possess an interest and variety not hitherto attached to the subject.

Where an opportunity of consulting the works to which allusion has been found made by others, has not occurred, references have been given to the parties citing them; but in all other cases the original authority. The references to the labours of such as have incidentally toiled in the same field will be found throughout scrupulously recorded; as also to the productions of those, who, in a more extended manner, have devoted their time and talents to the subject. These are, the Rev. T. F. Dibdin, D.D., and the Rev. T. H. Horne, B.D. To the former gentleman, thanks are particularly tendered for the ready permission granted to copy some of the engravings, and make use of extracts from his valuable works. In the composition of the following pages, it has, on two occasions, been necessary more particularly to refer to them, viz. the *impressed*



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## PREFACE.

*calf bindings* of the fifteenth century, and the *French bindings* of the same period. On this department of the History of Book-binding, the Doctor has been so diffuse, that little could be added. Such other specimens and remarks are therefore introduced, as were necessary to connect the style with the introduction of others; and various incidental matter relative to the characters of Grolier, De Thou, and the French Binders of their times; a preference being given to the Doctor's own statements, to any dishonest garbling or re-writing of this portion of the work.

To the Rev. T. H. Horne, thanks are also due for several valuable suggestions; and like acknowledgments to Sir S. R. Meyrick, the Very Rev. G. Gordon, Dean of Lincoln, the Rev. C. H. Hartshorne, the Rev. H. H. Baber, of the British Museum, the Rev. W. Cureton, of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, T. Thomson, Esq., of the Record Office, Edinburgh, J. B. Nichols, Esq., Mr. John Martin, Mr. John Bohn, and Mr. C. Knight, for hints, or assistance rendered in the pursuit of the following inquiries.

The illustrations for the early portion of the work, have been engraved principally from the "Antiquités d'Herculanum," by David. The others from sources named in the text, or from drawings made of existing bindings in the British Museum, &c., by Mr. James Lee, by whom nearly the whole of the engravings have been executed.

The work has been composed at intervals of leisure, from more serious occupations; and, if not embracing all the elegance of style by some desired, it is trusted will be found at all times clear and perspicuous. To this end, the object throughout has been to avoid all technicalities and vague speculations; to keep the truth of history and the value of utility constantly in view, without running into unnecessary diffuseness. The subject, it is presumed, will thus be found to address itself to every class of readers; and intimately connected as it is with literature, in all ages and countries, the frequent reference necessary to be made to the possessors of collections, and many scarce books existing in good preservation in public and private libraries, will, it is hoped, alike constitute an additional claim on the attention of the ANTIQUARIAN and BIBLIOGRAPHER.

April, 1837.