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Krupp, Andrea. *Bookcloth in England and America, 1823-50*. New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press; London: British Library; New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 2008.x, gzpp.Illus. \$35.00 (ISBN 978-1-58456-213-9; BL: 978-0-7123-5007-5).

Reviewed by Clive Hurst

The study and classification of publishers' cloth bindings was firmly established in the early 1930s with Michael Sadleir's *The Evolution of Publishers' Binding Styles, 1770—1900*, and John Carter's *Binding Variants*. During the subsequent seventy odd years the description of patterns and colors has become an expected feature of the bibliographies of Victorian writers and book histories of the period (though sadly it has not yet been deemed worthy of most library catalogues). Major problems arise, however, as a result of the characteristic exuberance of the designers and manufacturers of the cloth itself: there seems to be no end to the variety of patterns invented, far beyond the nomenclature available to pin them down; and the colors, I suspect, will long elude satisfactory description comprehensible to every person who reads it. The digital option certainly makes things easier, and the slim volume under review is based on the Library Company of Philadelphia's Database of Nineteenth-Century Cloth Bindings, as is the soon to be available Catalogue of Nineteenth-Century Bookcloth Grains online. It comprises an authoritative brief history, which is especially interesting on the relation of British material and design to that of the relatively young American trade, accompanied by some 250 photographs, mostly in color. These will clearly be the most useful aspect of the book, which first appeared in these pages in 2006 (100, no. i [2006]: 25-87). It is interesting to note how numbers have grown since then: 116 grain patterns there identified on American imprints, have now become 137. Comparing the black and white photos with those in color is a salutary exercise: the latter are generally much more realistic, giving rather more of the feel of the original article, but occasionally the monochrome image does help in showing the detail of the weave. What is astonishing is the numbers themselves: so many differences are here identified, in a handy and affordable format. I am sure that "Krupp" will soon become a standard reference, and booksellers will soon delight in noting of their latest offering that its cloth is "not in Krupp."

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