

## REVIEWS

Mark R. Godburn, *Nineteenth-Century Dust-Jackets* (Pinner, Middlesex: Private Libraries Association; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2016). 215 pp. ISBN 978 0 900002 88 5 (Private Libraries Association); 978 1 58456 347 1 (Oak Knoll Press). £50.

*Reviewed by Patrick Spedding*

G. Thomas Tanselle's *Book-Jackets: Their History, Forms, and Use* (2011), is described by one Amazon reviewer as "An Invaluable Reference for Bibliophiles," but Mark R. Godburn's *Nineteenth-Century Dust-Jackets* seems to have the better claim to the attention of bibliophiles. Almost every element in the production of Godburn's book is beautiful: the cloth binding, rich paper stock, the elegant typesetting, wide margins and numerous colour images are all designed to appeal to the bibliophile in ways that Tanselle's *Book-Jackets* is not. Notwithstanding the unappealing dust-jacket on *Nineteenth-Century Dust-Jackets*—ironically, the only unappealing element of the book—Godburn's account of the history, forms and use of his subject also appears better designed to appeal to bibliophiles than Tanselle's. Godburn is a collector/dealer, whose passion for his subject, a specialist area of collecting, has led him to make a useful contribution to book history. Unlike Tanselle, he is not an academic and, though he has produced a book of some use to scholars, it appears that he has approached his subject with bibliophiles and book-collectors in mind, rather than scholars or scholar-collectors. Of course, *both* Tanselle's *Book-Jackets*, the product of over forty years of research, and Godburn's *Nineteenth-Century Dust-Jackets*, the product of two decades of collecting and seven years of enquiry (13), are valuable works of reference. And, together, they represent a significant expansion of our knowledge about the early history of the dust-jacket; as such, they will be used by bibliophiles and book-historians alike.

Godburn's book is divided into seven chapters and includes two appendices. The first three chapters cover the origins of publishers' jackets, sealed wrappings and early flap-style jackets; the following three chapters cover the development of the modern dust-jacket in the mid- to late Victorian period, with a section on the many jacketed books in the John Murray archive, and a chapter devoted to Lewis Carroll's use of dust jackets. A final chapter, "End of an era," sketches out developments in the first decade of the twentieth century. The appendices list jacketed books that survive in the John Murray archive (163–76) and jacketed books from before 1871 (177–80). Two hundred of the 216 jacketed books in the Murray archive are from the 1880s and 1890s, so the appendices are somewhat complementary. There are 110 illustrations; many of these are full-page, and all of them are sharply focussed, well illuminated and in impeccably balanced colour. As a result, the reader has no difficulty identifying the grain-patterns on cloth

bindings (such as those on 58, ill. 28) or reading the fine-print advertising on the jackets (148, illustrations 97 and 98).

Godburn's historical account is almost always clear and sensible, explaining the likely origins and functions of the early paper coverings, and the topics discussed are well organised. There were only a few times I was confused by an explanation, felt there was an obvious opportunity not taken for the discussion of a related topic, or the subject was misplaced. An example of the first is the explanation (49) for the difference between "three-flap style" and "single-flap" jackets, which requires an illustration or a diagram. Strictly speaking these jackets ought to be called six- and two-flap jackets, since this is the total number of flaps on the jackets concerned. The key to these otherwise-cryptic terms being the fact that single- and triple-flap refers to the number of flaps for each of the two boards on a hard-cover book. As an example of the second type—missed opportunities—Godburn skims over the subject of trade-bindings, and the development of almanac slipcases (17–18), raising and dismissing both with sweeping statements covering the periods from the Middle Ages (slip-cases) or the mid-seventeenth century (trade bindings) to the Romantic period. Since Godburn's focus on the subject is so fleeting, he cannot be said to have entirely ignored recent work on the subject of trade bindings, such as Stuart Bennett's *Trade Bookbinding in the British Isles, 1660–1800* (2004), but there is certainly more material to be explored in relation to the development of the jacket. Developments in the mid- to late eighteenth century, which are relevant to the appearance of the earliest jackets, might include: printed wrappers (intended to be discarded) on periodicals and works sold in parts; printed stiffened wrappers (intended to be retained) on children's books; and printed paper titles and labels (intended to be retained) on works published in boards; and the trade sale of matching-patterned leather slipcases in the mid- to late eighteenth century. These topics are given little or no attention. Finally, an example of a misplaced topic is the multiple discussions of books issued as box-sets (63–66, 93–95 and 132–36), which may have benefited from a separate and more complete treatment.

The greatest strength of Godburn's book is the scores of early wrappers he enumerates, describes and provides images of, and the many primary sources he quotes at length. It is not clear what the total number of wrappers encompassed by his study might be, but 63 books with dust-jackets published before 1871 are listed in an appendix (177–80), of which 36 are marked as having also been listed by Tanselle. Of the 27 not listed by Tanselle, only 11 are examples of British and American practice—the focus of Tanselle's study—so Godburn's list represents an increase of more than 23% for the period during which the modern dust-jacket developed in Britain and North America. Unfortunately, the list stops at 1870; though Godburn's book extends to 1910, items in the list are not numbered, and no locations are provided (a subject I discuss below), limiting the usefulness of

the list either as an indicator of the scope of Godburn's study or as a guide to the primary material upon which it is based. Godburn has uncovered important primary sources for his study, many of which are extensively referenced. He frequently provides long—and useful—quotations from contemporary sources, both in-text and in footnotes, concerning such subjects as slip-covers (141) or the Louis de Meuleneere collection (201, n. 36). Godburn has also made extensive use of the John Murray archive (as noted), and the Carrol–Macmillan correspondence for his account of the jackets used on Carrol's books.

The most obvious weakness of Godburn's book—from the perspective of any reader wanting to learn more about any of the many fascinating examples he gives—is the lack of locations for the vast majority of the jacketed books he describes. More often than not, a book will be mentioned, the notable features of the wrapper will be described, and if there is a footnote at all, it will lead the curious reader only to the title and imprint details of the book. As is the case with his appendix of "Jackets to 1870," no information is provided about where the (often) lone copy of the book which retains its jacket is located: whether it is in Godburn's own collection, or that of another private collector; whether it is held in any public or private institution; whether it is a book Godburn or someone else has seen exhibited for sale; or whether there is any documentary evidence for the information he provides. The following examples are typical, and could easily be multiplied: when discussing manufactured jackets (23), Godburn instances surviving examples on a set of *The History of Scotland* (1762)—the footnote (186, n. 18) provides author, title and imprint information for the book, but not a location, nor does it direct the reader to a photograph of the books concerned, which appears on page 21 (ill. 4). The caption to this illustration, however, acknowledges Princeton University Library as the supplier of the image, so it seems likely that this is where the set resides. On the same page, Godburn states that "several examples ... survive" of "manufactured jackets with the rules of the library printed directly on them" (23) but gives no examples and there is no footnote to this statement. Shortly afterwards (25), Godburn mentions two sets of sheets that survive in contemporary loose wrappers. In one instance, the unbound sheets are wrapped in a folio-sized bifolium, in the other, in a scrap of hemp. In the first instance, the location for the set is provided (186, n. 23), in the second, no location is offered (186, n. 22). Because of the lack of locations, there is no way to learn anything more about most of the books Godburn describes. As a result, his book is a dead end. His study almost certainly cannot be replicated, and the evidence he gathered scrutinised by others; scholars, collectors, hobbyists and enthusiasts alike can only quote what Godburn himself has said about each of these items and trust that nothing has been missed, misinterpreted or inadvertently misrepresented by him.

Godburn also makes several claims and generalisations, many of which are undoubtedly accurate, without offering any relevant information that might support those generalisations. So, for example, he quotes a claim made by Robin de Beaumont which is not footnoted (32). It is possible that the statement appears in an article listed in the Periodicals section of the bibliography—but there is no reference to that article in Godburn’s text or in the surrounding footnotes, and it is likely that many readers would miss this reference anyway. The Periodicals section of the bibliography (182–85) has been arranged in such a way as to thwart the curiosity of the reader: entries contain author, title, periodical and date—as usual, but *unusually*, lack any page range—and they are arranged chronologically, by *periodical*. Having no clue to when or where de Beaumont’s statement was recorded, the determined reader must scan the entire bibliography in the hope [1] that de Beaumont is named as the author, or in the title, of an article, and in the hope of [2] locating said article in Godburn’s “Select” bibliography. Elsewhere, Godburn states that “less than one percent” of books issued with jackets have survived (13) and refers to the single jacketed survivor from an edition of 1250 copies as demonstrating a “better [rate of survival] than for most nineteenth-century books” (78). If Godburn has any information relevant to the survival rate for book jackets, beyond that scattered throughout his text, he does not supply it, nor does he summarise the relevant information at any point in the text. In another place, he warns that “most” transparent wrappers found on nineteenth-century French books “were added later by French antiquarian book dealers” (56) and that “many” such books are “covered by transparent jackets that were often added later” (143)—a claim he attributes to the “Parisian book scout Martin Stone” (191, n. 10 and 201, n. 36), who died in 2016. It is unclear what proof Stone might have had for this claim, but no evidence is provided to the reader.

The strengths of this book are likely to appeal to every reader—the extensive use of primary materials, the clear account of the subject, the attractiveness of the book itself—while the weaknesses are likely to trouble only the specialist. Notwithstanding these weaknesses, however, both the bibliophile and the specialist will likely benefit from Godburn’s book.

Lucien Reynhout and Benjamin Victor, *Librorum Studiosus: Miscellanea Palaeographica et Codicologica Alberto Derolez Dicata. Bibliologia* 46 (2018). 394 pp. ISBN 978 2 503 57572 8. €80.

*Reviewed by Rodney Thomson*

*Festschriften* generally fall into one of three categories: one type is organized by a particular subject or field in which the honorand has made his/her mark; another consists of offerings of the honorand’s pupils and friends, without a