Trends in Publications Affecting Binding and Conservation

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THE EARLIEST PRINTED books are not easily distinguished from their manuscript predecessors. The printers attempted to imitate in their first type faces the prevalent book hands of their locality and used the same papers as those available to the scribes. Binders continued to practice their craft as they had for centuries. The original purpose of bindings was to protect the visible cords and sewings of the books. Since leather was the only suitable material available and a scarce commodity in the 15th century, many manuscripts and incunabula were frequently only half covered with skins, leaving the wooden boards bare. As economic conditions permitted, leather was used to cover the outside completely. Occasionally, other materials found temporary acceptance, but until the first quarter of the 19th century a "bound book" generally meant one covered in animal skin. "Fine bindings" or "hand-book bindings" are still produced today, even in the United States,[1] but they were displaced from the general market by three inventions made between 1820 and 1832: the use of cloth as covering material, the casing-in method and the gold-stamping on cloth, which made the mass production of books possible.

Other inventions helped in the establishment of mass-production methods. Earl Stanhope invented the iron hand press in 1798 which was later improved by the cylinder press of König in 1814. The stereotype plates of William Ged were used in the United States around 1812, the Fourdrinier paper-making machine made its American appearance in 1827, and William Church's composing machine was in use here by 1830.[2] From these early beginnings the industry developed over the next one-hundred years by adding refinements to its processes. Mechanization was introduced during the second half of the 19th century, but basically the changes were minor. The book-cloth used during the 19th century was usually drab in color and variations came

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about primarily through different grains. More striking effects were achieved through the use of colored inks. The cloth was starch filled or coated and rather susceptible to deterioration. These shortcomings were at least partly eliminated when pyroxilin replaced starch in the more expensive materials as a coating and impregnating medium.

The comparatively inexpensive production of cloth-bound books became the standard product of American and English publishers, but were also widely adopted in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and the Scandinavian countries. The countries of the Romance language group did not follow this lead wholeheartedly. Leather bindings were more slowly abandoned, but publishers never assumed as completely the task of having a larger percentage of their products bound as in the United States. These publishers mainly rely on sewn, paper-covered editions. They have the advantage of lower price and give the customer the choice of either economizing or having his books bound to specifications, standing eventually in uniform bindings on his shelves. Public or semi-public libraries in these countries usually have their books bound by small binderies, using even today a minimum amount of the machinery considered standard equipment by our commercial binderies.

Specialization in book production increased during the late 19th and 20th centuries and we find today at least a dozen different types of binderies.[3] The following may be listed:

1. Edition binderies, where books are mass produced for publishers.
2. Pamphlet binderies, specializing in the production of shorter publications such as magazines, pamphlets and paperbounds, using various methods like stitching, stapling, and perfect binding.
3. Trade binderies which work for printers or other binderies, but not for individual customers.
4. General or job binderies which do various commercial jobs for customers and the trade.
5. Blank-book binderies, specializing in non-book materials.
6. Commercial or library binderies, specializing in binding and rebinding of various types of materials for all types of libraries.
7. Binderies within libraries, owned and operated by and working exclusively or primarily for their own institutions.[4]
8. Prebinders who specialize in acquiring sheets from publishers and putting them into particularly sturdy covers for heavy library use.
9. Mechanical bindery equipment producers who manufacture devices that permit the gathering of loose leaf sheets by various methods.

10. Hand binderies where high-class art bindings are done. Some of these expert craftsmen are found in large commercial binderies.

Items 6, 7, and 10 are discussed by other contributors to this issue.

The federal and state governments also contribute to the various types of binderies. The Government Printing Office Bindery does work for the federal government and various libraries in and around Washington, D.C. It was subjected to a study in 1953 which indicates that "binding by the Government Printing Office Bindery costs 265 per cent as much and takes 237 per cent as long for completion as required by commercial binderies. However, it should be noted that these data do not take into account either size, grade, or special work." [5] Another type of bindery run by government agencies is the prison bindery; there seems to be little in the literature on this subject except occasional references of commercial binders to the effect that prison binderies represent unfair competition and turn out inferior work.

Viewing American book production over the last quarter century in terms of bindings and types of publications is fraught with difficulties. Statistics are sketchy and available figures are difficult to correlate when compared to statistics in such countries as Great Britain and Germany, where book production and exports enter more decidedly in the nation's economic development. Leon Carnovsky, in a paper presented at Beloit College, Wisconsin, in 1953, states that "anyone who spends much time reading the current literature of book publication turns away with a sense of considerable pessimism on the part of the book publishers themselves. Everything seems to militate against the buying of the books—the automobile and bridge in one decade, radio and television in another. Publishers complain bitterly about the industry's hazards and poor rewards, and attribute their remaining in business at all to sheer idealism and love." [6] In addition to public apathy Carnovsky lists the following detriments to more extensive publishing: the need to concentrate on books most likely to become best-sellers, which will earn subsidiary rights from the film industry or paperback reprinters, and on texts which will be widely adopted; the lack of regular bookstores throughout the country (less than 2,000 in 1952); the extensive number of book clubs; and the competition from paperback books.

The Gallup Poll made a study on reading habits in various countries in 1950. The percentage of those affirmatively answering the question, "Are you now reading any books or novels?" resulted in the following breakdown: [7]

Country	*Per Cent*
United Kingdom	55
Norway	43
Canada	40
Australia	35
Sweden	33
U. S. A.	21

Book production per 1,000 inhabitants during 1953 offers a similar picture, equally uncomplimentary to the United States: [8]

Country	*Number of titles per 1000 inhabitants*
Norway (1952)	83
Switzerland (1953)	76
Netherlands (1953)	73
Denmark (1953)	72
Belgium (1952)	55
Austria (1953)	52
Sweden (1953)	51
Portugal (1952)	49
Finland (1952)	43
United Kingdom (1953)	36
West Germany (1953)	33
France (1953)	28
Japan (1952)	21
Italy (1953)	18
Spain (1952)	12
Turkey (1952)	11
U. S. A. (1953)	7

These figures raise the question of how profitable it actually is to publish a book. According to Robert Frase's "Economic Trends in Trade Book Publishing," the publisher's profit in 1951 on an average adult trade book amounts to only 0.4 per cent of the retail selling price.[9] In personal contact with publishers and editors this author has had the impression that many of them, particularly in the hard-bound trade book field, are in the profession mainly because they are fascinated with it, and that they are investing a good percentage of their savings in other more profitable and secure enterprises.

As no best-seller formula has yet been devised there is a constant search among publishers for a new author or the rediscovery of an old one who will sell. There is an increasing tendency towards publication in the field of sex, sadism, and the smoking gun, particularly in the paperbound field,[10] but in competition with the inexpensive book of enduring value it has been found that the three S's do not necessarily sustain high sales consistently. Boosted by demands from schools and the steadily increasing college population, many a serious title

keeps on selling constantly and thus outselling the sensational novel in the long run.

As publishers are not able to predict the sales of a book accurately, they seek production economies through new materials, methods and machinery. All these attempts point in one unmistakable direction: sooner or later, natural products will be replaced by synthetics. While the last decade is frequently referred to as the atomic age, one may wonder if actually the use of plastics has not changed our daily living habits since the last war considerably more than atomic power. Book production seems to follow this general trend. The basic ingredients for the manufacture of books are board, glue, paste, thread, paper, and cloth. Metals always played a minor role, and where they were used as staples or in spiral bindings, plastics are rapidly winning out over wire. Boards still dominate the field and will continue to do so for a while, according to Daniel Melcher, publisher of *Library Journal*, who keeps a very close check on the development of the physical book. Binders boards are not superior to plastics, but decidedly less expensive. Preferred thread is now made of nylon because of its greater strength and resistance to decay. Paste and glue have undergone revolutionary changes and animal glues are being increasingly replaced by cold and hot-melt adhesives. The advantages of these synthetics are many: their quick drying quality permits assembly-line procedures and eliminates temporary-storage problems; they are almost impervious to moisture and changes in the weather; they hardly dry out and do not get brittle, and are resistant to mildew, fungi, and insects. If hot-melt adhesives have not been as widely used so far as these advantages would recommend, it is due to their high price, and the inexperience and hesitance of the binders to experiment with the fast-setting hot-melt materials (5 seconds versus 4 hours) with high melting points (300-350° F. compared to 140° F.) or to acquire new machinery. Hot-melt adhesives based on poli-vinyl acetate were developed during 1944 and the following years, when W. F. Hall, one of the largest paperback manufacturers, approached Du Pont for the perfection of an adhesive material that would speed up and improve their production. Cold adhesives reported on in October 1955 by Alfred Cahen at the Book Manufacturers Institute indicate that their use strengthens leather or paper by 50 to 100 per cent; they don't warp or break, give permanent flexibility and are water resistant.[85] These adhesives are being used extensively in the paperback field where they considerably improved the techniques of perfect binding.[11, 12]

When cloth began to replace leather as the preferred covering ma-

terial it brought in its wake the casing method which simplified binding and reduced its cost greatly. Adopted in America between 1825 and 1835,[18] this operation was not mechanized until the first decade of the present century and some leather was still being used for half-leather bindings up to that time. The manpower shortages of the first World War speeded the introduction of case-making machines and robbed leather of its last position as it proved unsuitable for machine production. Starch-filled and coated cloth came into favor and embossed-leather imitation finishes helped preserve memories of the passing age. Pyroxiline (synthetic rubber base) coated or impregnated cloth was used for the more expensive lines until vinyl, a plastic, was introduced. It gave covers greater wearing qualities and resistance to abrasion, water, grease, and smudges.

During the second World War the shortage and high price of cloth turned publishers' attention to papers.[14] Paper producers, anxious to take advantage of this situation, turned out new products, based on art-craft papers which they coated or impregnated with pyroxiline and ethyl plastics. They supplied a great variety of colors and textures and introduced grains imitating leather and cloth. At the same time, these papers were considerably cheaper and permitted savings from two to four cents per book, as quoted in 1949.[15]

Plastic-coated cloth coverings have been improved in their ink receptivity for letterpress and lithographic work which has recently been used extensively in the manufacture of preprinted cloth. Previously, the inks used in these reproductions came off easily, were susceptible to scratches and had to be covered by various coatings and lacquers. The new preprinted cloth covers introduced by Row Peterson & Company in 1954 use a dying process of the impregnated cloth and obviate these disadvantages.[16]

The latest and most promising development in bindings for hard-cover books involves an electronic casing-in method [17] which requires the use of only one machine, does not rely on adhesives, and uses plastic sheets. This technique seems to promise speed-ups of three to four times the usual casing-in time and a stronger binding which binders could order ready-made from manufacturers.

Another newcomer in the plastics field is a synthetic paper announced by Du Pont and said to be three to ten times stronger than rag or pulp paper. It is made of a mixture of nylon, dacron, polyester, and acrylic fibers. It is supposed to be resistant to chemical and bacteriological decay, as it absorbs very little moisture and is less affected

by light and temperature changes than ordinary paper. At the present time it is still so expensive that its use is not practical.[18]

Consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of new binding methods and materials, have to be related to production costs which rose 80 to 90 per cent while the price of books rose only 20 per cent since before the war. Since these figures were given by Daniel Melcher in *Publishers' Weekly* in 1947,[19] there has been some increase in both costs and prices. The change in the prices of books can be ascertained from the following table: [20]

	Novels	*Biography*	*History*
1941	$2.58	$3.30	$3.98
1949	2.86	3.98	5.06
1953	3.29	4.67	6.04

A breakdown of the manufacturing costs of the average $4.00 book in 1947 shows the following expense for binding: [19]

	Cents
Cloth	4
Boards	1
Case-making	2.5
Casing-in	2.5
Folding	3.5
Smyth sewing	5
Finishing	5

Of this total of 23 cents for binding costs, a large amount is spent on labor, and any means by which costs can be cut even by a fraction of a cent are important, if one considers that the retail sales price of a book, to be profitable, should be from four to five times the cost of its production (binding, printing and paper),[19] and that the publisher's profit margin is very small. The publisher's net profit, after taxes and excluding the profit from sales of rights, amounted to 0.4 per cent of the retail price in 1951.[19] For these reasons, the savings made by using paper instead of cloth for covering purposes are of great importance; they may amount to 3 or 4 cents per book and could require new machinery and handling procedures. However, this investment, as well as in most cases the higher cost of the item, should be more than balanced by the more efficient production.

Paper-covered books in the form of pamphlets, tracts, and chapbooks have been in existence since almost the beginning of printing, and cheap reprint or popular editions in serial form can be traced back to the early 18th century. Inexpensive reprints were paper-wrapped and paper-labelled and eventually showed covers with full printed descriptions similar to the title page information.[21] About 1820 the

paper covers were pasted on boards and this originally temporary binding became eventually a permanent cheap covering. But popular literature continued to use primarily paper covers and found widespread acceptance in the many 19th century "libraries" in the United States and Great Britain, paving the way for the "dime novels" and "yellowbacks," the predecessors of today's paperbacks and comics which crowd the display racks of newsstands, drug, and chain stores, as well as the best bookstores and libraries.

The present wave of paperbacks goes back to 1935 when Sir Allen Lane in Great Britain launched successfully a series of serious, yet popular, inexpensive paper-covered reprints, the Penguin Books, which were mass-distributed through magazine rather than trade channels. This was followed in the United States by Pocket Books in 1939. Since the mass audience had to be captured and kept, production costs had to be reduced to a minimum while the product had to be attractively packaged. This resulted in the use of paper pulp and perfect binding. Perfect binding is not a new process; it is entirely different from regular binding and its results have frequently been less than perfect. Actually, adhesive binding would be a better name for this technique. The pages of the book are properly assembled, the back of the signatures is sliced off, the whole spine dipped into glue or hot melt adhesive, the paper covers are slapped on and the paperback is bound.[22] Perfect-bound books cannot be rebound by machine and hand-sewing is not only costly but frequently impossible because of the narrow margins and poor quality of the paper. Sir Allen Lane has always used stitching for his paperbacks. He indicated last November that he was at least considering a change to perfect binding due to recent technological advances and improved adhesives. He never considered using perfect binding before because he wanted to give his customers a good product content as well as productionwise.

Depending on the quality of the glue and the proper consistency, a perfect-bound book may last for quite a while. Libraries have reported as many as 31 circulations for one paperback, but some have come apart after the second reading. At a test of paperbound books made at the Huntington Public Library in 1954, the number of circulations averaged 9.6.[23] The opinions of the library profession as to the content, appearance and binding of paperbacks is divided. The Brooklyn Public Library has made extensive use of them and is circulating them widely. The opinion of other public librarians are brought together in the first issue of the *PLD Reporter*, entitled *Public Library Use of Paperbound Books*.[24] Mrs. Elizabeth O. Stone reported on her

three years of experience with paperbounds in a college library in the August 1955 issue of the *Library Journal*.[25] The literature on library use of paperbounds is as yet not extensive enough to permit final conclusions.

Perfect binding, which has been used for soft and hard cover books, was tested by the National Bureau of Standards. Regular and perfect-bound books were subjected to accelerated aging, flexing, loading, and pulling of pages and resulted in loosening of pages and sections, cracked bindings, and cover failures. The data showed that perfect bindings, when suitable adhesives are used, are not inferior to comparable sewn bindings. The best paper for perfect bindings is soft absorbent paper, too weak to stand a load concentrated at the stitching. Hard, non-absorbent paper does not lend itself well to perfect binding, though it is occasionally used on inexpensive reprints in hard covers. The pages will not loosen any sooner than in soft covers, but all the pages together tend to break loose from the inflexible cover.[26] The fact that paper pulp, which is suitable for perfect binding and less so for sewing, is used in the less expensive paperback lines, provides one of the great library problems. Even with the improved binding, the paper will get brittle as soon as the news print and therefore poses a problem of conservation. This situation changed to some extent with the launching of Anchor Books by Doubleday in 1953, which was rapidly followed by similar trade and text book publisher lines of paperbacks like: Anvil Books (D. Van Nostrand Co.), Beacon Paper Books (Beacon Press), Evergreen Books (Grove Press), Harvest Books (Harcourt, Brace & Co.), Image Books (Doubleday & Co., Inc.), Meridian Books (Noonday Press), Modern Library Paperbacks (Modern Library, Inc.), Vintage Books (A. A. Knopf, Inc.), Viking Paperbound Portables (Viking Press). These publications, with a price range of 65 cents to $1.95 (in 1955), are printed on stronger paper stock which will probably last as long as the average hardbound book. They are perfect bound, but apparently somewhat more carefully produced and capable of withstanding more circulations. Their existence undoubtedly did not influence the Huntington Study, as they had come into wider general distribution only after the data were collected. In absence of a better name, these series are referred to as quality paperbacks, which is not entirely fair because many other firms like Pocket Books, Bantam, Dell, New American Library, Popular Library, and others previously produced series with titles of similar literary merit, though they were physically inferior. Another designation now used is "not-mass-distributed paperbacks," which again is

somewhat misleading as many have enjoyed comparatively high sales and are at least partly distributed through non-trade outlets. Their initial print orders range from 15,000 to 20,000 copies while the less expensive lines are usually produced in lots of 150,000 to 200,000 copies.

Some paperbacks, including those that shade over into the textbook field, like Dover and Anvil books, as well as some of the regular popular lines are original publications. While some of them appear simultaneously or after some time in hardbound editions under a trade publisher's imprint (many Ballantine Books), others, like Gold Medal Books, never reach this stage. They, like Dell First Editions, actually specialize in paperback originals, and while many are not of any literary merit, the acquisition of some of the originals, new translations, and anthologies is in many instances important to libraries which intend to make the record of book production, bound and unbound, available to their readers. There are limited possibilities of acquiring some of these paperbacks in bound form through the prebinding services of the Library Binding Service.[27] Some firms, such as Penguin, and, for a limited time, Pocket Books, in its Collectors Editions, brought out several of the most popular titles or those which the publishers considered most worthy of preservation on better paper and in bound form (cloth for Penguin, paper boards and cloth backs for Pocket Books).

Discussions with several paperback publishers, a commercial edition binder and three reprint publishers in the spring of 1955 indicated a more promising approach. If librarians were willing to get together and decide which original paperbacks they would like to purchase in cloth-bound format on good paper in quantities around one thousand or even somewhat fewer copies, the publishers may cooperate in assuming the responsibility of getting library editions produced. At that time, the plans of the Committee on Reprinting of the American Library Association Board on Acquisitions of Library Materials were not yet available, but the mere mention of these plans which are to provide "a recognized channel through which libraries can notify publishers of their reprinting needs so that publishers may secure information to gauge probable sale of reprints," [28] aroused a good deal of interest and seems to be the only feasible way to get selected paperbacks in permanent form into libraries. If titles in dual format were thus made available, the advantage of inexpensive paperbacks for mass consumption and the permanent copy for preservation could be combined.

In 1955, the "coming of age" of the paperback industry was demonstrated by several publications. The R. R. Bowker Company brought out the first bibliographic tool exclusively devoted to paperbacks, *Paperbound Books in Print,* an index to 4,500 inexpensive reprints and original editions with selective subject guide, scheduled to appear three times a year.[29] The Paper Editions Book Club was established in Palo Alto, California, and the same firm issues a magazine of "the best in paperbound books" called *Paper Editions.*[30] Production of paperbound books increased from 6 million copies sold in 1940 to 95.5 million in 1947 to 240 million copies in 1953.[30] Sales volume in 1954 was generally up about 4 per cent over 1953,[31] and while there was a crisis in paperbound sales in the spring of 1954 due to an overloading of the market, the situation improved considerably last fall and the addition of the new paper-covered trade book lines at higher prices and even wider distribution should result in an increase in sales figures for 1954 and 1955.

Prebinding establishments owe their existence to the unsuitability of edition bindings for heavy library use and librarians' preference for neat-looking books. There are several firms engaged in this work in which the H. R. Huntting Co., Inc., has pioneered. Prebinding "has grown up quietly alongside the older practice of rebinding." [32] The prebinders purchase sheets from publishers and provide a stronger binding which lasts about four times as long as the edition binding. Some libraries insist on prebound books even when sheets are not available from publishers, necessitating removal of the original bindings by the prebinders. The strength of the prebound book lies in the way it is sewn (Singer side-stitching for width of ½" to ⅝", and oversewing for heavier tomes),[33] and in the heavy buckram used for covers. Prebinders usually supply any in-print book the average library wants. The H. R. Huntting Company acts as wholesaler for publisher's bindings as well as prebinding and will get the librarian "any book of any publisher in any binding." [33]

Prebinding methods have changed little over the years, except that the oversewing is now done by machine instead of by hand. The typical buckram bindings, without decoration except the descriptive lettering on the front cover and spine, are not particularly attractive, and lately several steps have been taken to improve the appearance of prebound books. The Huntting Company has introduced "Plasti-Kleer Economy Bindings" which use the original publisher's dust jacket covered by a plastic jacket fitted to the book.[33] Hertzberg New Method, Inc., with their Treasure Trove Covers and Library Picture Covers

provide cloth bindings illustrated by the silk screen process or by printed designs adapted from illustrations in the book.[32]

The demand for prebound books is especially large among children's librarians who find the average edition binding unsuitable for young readers. In response to their demands, Aladdin, Crowell, Doubleday, Scott, and Simon and Schuster, as well as some other publishers have issued some of their children's books in two editions, a regular trade edition and a library edition with reinforced bindings, Singer or McCain side-sewn, for which they charge little more than their own added cost. If publishers have not gone any farther into this development, it is due to the inability of most edition binderies to engage in oversewing, and to the considerable financial risk for publishers who cannot accurately anticipate the demands for any book, let alone the demand for its library edition.

A great variety of materials in pamphlet or unbound book form held together by some adaptation of the ring-book mechanisms, loose-leaf-type covers and spiral bindings, enters libraries every day. It seems hard to believe that this type of gathering has only been prevalent for the past twenty years. The first U. S. patent on wire type bindings was issued to the German inventor Ludwig Staab in 1924, but the first true spiral binding was patented ten years later by the Frenchman Samuel Groener. His invention had a coil with the end locked in place. In 1934 the first comb-type plastic binding was patented.[34] Their use steadily increased after the war with the greater production of plastics.

The main advantage of the loose-leaf-type mechanism and the spiral binding lies in the fact that the book held together in this fashion will lie perfectly flat on a table. For this reason, manuals, cook books, etc., lend themselves to this process. The loose-leaf mechanism permits flexibility of content insertion and removal of pages, a feature of value in publications aiming to be kept up to date. The plastic spiral binding held together by individual rings has its main usefulness in calendar type publications where one page only is visible at one time and the others are completely folded back.

The comb-type spiral wire binding seems to have retreated in favor of the plastic type in the past few years. These can be adapted to a wide range of thickness, pages turn freely and are in alignment, the binding itself is very cheap and the large variety of available colors makes it possible to blend it with the cover papers and printing. During the last few years the plastic has been made sufficiently strong to withstand damage in shipping and normal use. The outstanding dis-

advantages seem to be that careless use permits the shedding or tearing of the leaves and that in spite of the attractive colors a mechanically bound book just does not look like a book. Some of the manuals and magazines printed on heavy, smooth paper stock are attractive and hold up well in this form, but so far no regular trade book of this binding type has been developed.[34]

The evaluation of binding problems for American libraries caused by foreign book production and import would require statistical data of book production by categories of bound versus unbound books. Yet, when turning to statistical data in this area which is of importance as a yardstick of cultural values, all roads quickly seem to lead into a terrain of quicksand. Speaking only about the United States, Robert W. Frase, economic consultant to the American Book Publishers Council, has this to say: "The two most important single things anyone would want to know about the book business in this country are the numbers of titles published each year, and the number of copies of books sold each year, with an appropriate breakdown in each case for *classes* of books (e.g. textbooks, encyclopedias, general books, etc.) and *types* of books (e.g. biography, history, poetry, fiction, etc.). Unfortunately, this fundamental information does not exist." [36] *Publishers' Weekly* gives a yearly tabulation of new and reprint titles, broken down by types, but does not mention the number of copies sold. The U.S. Census of Manufacturers gives information on the number of copies, but this cannot be related to the information in *Publishers' Weekly*.[36]

The data on world book production reflect the American picture. The *Unesco Bulletin for Libraries,* January 1954, gives a survey of the number of titles published by 27 countries in 1952 (Russia is not listed). Six of these countries published more than 9,550 titles:[37]

United Kingdom	18,741
Japan	17,306
West Germany	13,913
U. S. A.	11,840
France	10,410
Italy	9,679

The Library of Congress collected data on the same subject listed in the *Library of Congress Information Bulletin* of October 25, 1954, but the figures do not compare with the above because there is no standard definition for what is considered a book and the Library of Congress admits that the data can be "added and compared only with an attitude of unconcern for elements of statistical validity." [38]

Various interpretations may also be given to what constitutes a pamphlet and how many reach United States libraries is anybody's guess. Imports of books and other printed materials in thousands of dollars over the past few years give the following picture:

1944	5,634
1946	11,783
1948	13,694
1950	13,958
1952	18,986
1953	18,999 (preliminary)[39]

A breakdown by country of origin clearly shows the dominant position of Great Britain, which accounts for approximately 60 per cent of the books imported into the United States and, together with Canada, supplies about two-thirds of American foreign book needs.[40] This is significant because British and Canadian books published in English are about as frequently clothbound as American trade books and pose the same binding problems. Their paper stock does not bulk as heavily and actually, American publishers would just as soon use similar paper, but they feel that the average American customer expects a substantial package if he pays four or five dollars for a title.

The countries of the Romance-language group consisting of France, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Argentina, and Mexico which account for approximately 13 per cent of imports by dollar value in 1952, publish their average book sewn on good paper, but in paper covers. As a rule, they only bind encyclopedias, dictionaries and similar reference books. Since their books are inexpensive in comparison to American or even British books, the book dollar will buy more copies but these require additional binding expenses. Countries of the Germanic language group, including West Germany, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, accounted for approximately 16 per cent of imports by dollar value in 1952 and generally have a higher percentage of clothbound or paper-boarded books. West Germany which published very few clothbound books in 1945 had a remarkable comeback in its book production and improved the quality of its bindings probably to prewar levels. The cloth used by all European countries is rarely up to American strength or standards but since foreign books do not get the same wear as American titles this difference will be equalized in every day usage. Other countries, like Israel and Japan, show a strong preponderance of paperbound books in their products.

To corroborate the above information, the heads of the two largest New York book importing firms were consulted. They said that the

largest percentage of the books that are sold to American libraries unbound or that have to be bound for their customers come from France, Italy, Spain, and South America.

There are three ways in which libraries can handle unbound imports:

1. Have them bound in the United States by library binders according to American standards.
2. Have them bound by the importers.
3. Have them bound by the exporter or a binder in the country of origin.

The best product will undoubtedly be obtained through the first procedures, but it necessitates separate handling of the invoices, the paper work connected with binding orders and the handling of the shipments to and from the library. The second method may or may not result in equally good bindings, will cost approximately the same, but save the library a good deal of paper work and handling expenses. The third method gives the same advantages as the second (i.e., one invoice will cover the cost of the book and the binding), the binding costs will be considerably cheaper, possibly as much as 50 per cent, the postage will be somewhat higher, and the quality of the cloth or paper used considerably poorer.

The shape of books to come will be increasingly influenced by technological developments in books production. Rising costs of printing and publishing may have a diffusing effect and force books into the covers of magazines, articles into the field of separates, and cloth bounds into paperbacks. Foreign imports of unbound materials and increasing production of American paperbounds will stretch the libraries' book budget and shift an increasing load on the binding budget. Plastics and electronic developments have left their marks on the book as we know it today, and photomechanical reproduction methods and audio-visual materials are competing by giving information traditionally contained in books, just as pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers, and separates have done in the past. Actually, all these are merely containers of knowledge and while they should be attractive, useful and durable, the content rather than the format is what is important for our civilization.

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