

# When Words Fail – The Limits of a Thesaurus

Nicholas Pickwood

University of the Arts, London, United Kingdom

**Abstract** The Language of Binding thesaurus is an extremely effective resource to describe historical binding structures, as it is centred around the scope notes which describe the single concepts (features, components and materials) from which bindings are made and about which there is little disagreement. Difficulties, however, can appear when single concepts are joined together to create compound descriptions of whole structures in order to create a structural typology that will allow whole bindings to be classified according to type. The question of what is or is not an adhesive-case binding illustrates these problems, requiring meticulous discussion and clear logical thinking to achieve a useful result.

**Keywords** Thesaurus. Bookbinding. Adhesive case bindings. Three-piece case bindings. Inboard bindings.

It is a relatively straightforward matter to identify and describe most of the features and components of historical bookbindings. When it comes to names, there will be some disagreements, mostly associated with a reluctance to abandon familiar and traditional usages, but to a large extent this difficulty has been overcome in the Language of Bindings Thesaurus<sup>1</sup> by its structure, centred around the scope notes which describe each single concept, and which allow multiple terms to be attached as labels to each of the concepts, all of which can then be used to search for the required scope note. Problems can, however, appear when concepts are combined, as they must be,

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1 [www.ligatus.org.uk](http://www.ligatus.org.uk).

to define whole structures with the aim of creating a structural taxonomy that will allow bindings to be classified according to type. These types will be defined both by the combinations of objects and features identified as single concepts in the thesaurus, as well as by the manner in which those features or objects are combined. While the former is usually uncontroversial, the latter will, by definition, often require a measure of interpretation of the physical evidence, from which different conclusions may be drawn, as one person's logic clashes with another's, and received traditional and sometimes tenaciously held ideas complicate the process of finding agreement.

It is with this in mind that I propose to discuss in some detail in this paper one particular type of binding that came to dominate commercial bookbinding, primarily in Germanic countries in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, but which has shown itself to be quite difficult to place within the existing taxonomies. I am encouraged to do this in response to an argument put forward in 2022, which I believe has misunderstood either the structural logic of this binding or the terminology used to describe it (Pattison, Patten 2022). It concerns the identification of two very different types of binding: on the one hand what were traditionally known as 'case bindings', in which a case-type cover, with or without boards, was attached to a sewn bookblock by means of adhesive alone (and therefore given the name 'adhesive-case bindings' in the LoB thesaurus),<sup>2</sup> and, on the other hand, books 'bound in boards' in which the boards were attached to the sewn bookblock 'before' the cover was added, which would result in inboard bindings.<sup>3</sup> The former are described as adhesive-cases, to differentiate them from laced-attached cases,<sup>4</sup> which include laced-case<sup>5</sup> and tacketed-case bindings.<sup>6</sup> When adhesive cases have separate boards, those boards are typically attached to the bookblock as part of the case. This crucial distinction in the use of boards in binding structures is, however, not always clear-cut.

This was very forcibly brought home to me when a particular binding type, John Newbery's bindings 'in the vellum manner', which I had long believed, from the absence in the examples that I had seen of any visible evidence of board attachment and their case-like opening characteristics, to be the first commercial adhesive-case bindings in the English booktrade (Pickwoad 2012, 126-7). These were subsequently conclusively shown by the American researchers Todd Pattison and Graham Patten to have had their boards attached to the

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<sup>2</sup> <http://w3id.org/lob/concept/1191>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://w3id.org/lob/concept/1395>.

<sup>4</sup> <http://w3id.org/lob/concept/1412>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://w3id.org/lob/concept/4103>.

<sup>6</sup> <http://w3id.org/lob/concept/3061>.

outermost endleaves of the sewn bookblocks before the books were covered (Pattison, Patten 2019, 234-8). This was something they discovered by lifting the pastedowns of an example of one of these bindings to find out how it was made.<sup>7</sup> It is now clear that the board-attachment of these bindings was carried out by adhering the boards, a couched-laminate paper board (typically made from rope-fibre), to the outermost endleaf<sup>8</sup> on each side of the sewn, rounded and backed and ploughed bookblocks, before the books were covered. The boards were drawn back a little from the joints of the bookblocks to create the spaced joints<sup>9</sup> that allow joint grooves<sup>10</sup> to be formed in the quarter green-stained parchment covers that were used on these bindings. These bindings do not have endbands. Whilst the use of green-stained parchment (at this period more typically used for stationery bindings) for the quarter spines seems to have been almost universal, the sides might be covered with either a marbled paper or a glazed coloured paper, often dark blue [fig. 1].

The resulting cover does, of course, have many resemblances to a case-type cover, to the extent that Newbery advertised as a selling point the ease with which the cover could be removed and replaced if soiled in use (Roscoe 1973, 394), suggesting that the replacement cover might well have been attached using a casing-in technique as is used to make adhesive-case bindings.<sup>11</sup> A complicating factor, which certainly confuses their identification, is the practice seen on editions such as Newbery and Carnan's *A Description of England and Wales. Containing a Particular Account of Each County, etc.*, of 1769, of bringing the extensions of the transverse textile spine linings (which seem to have been used on the larger volumes) at head and tail through a slit made in the outer fold of the endleaves, so that they lie above the turn-ins, where spine-lining extensions would be

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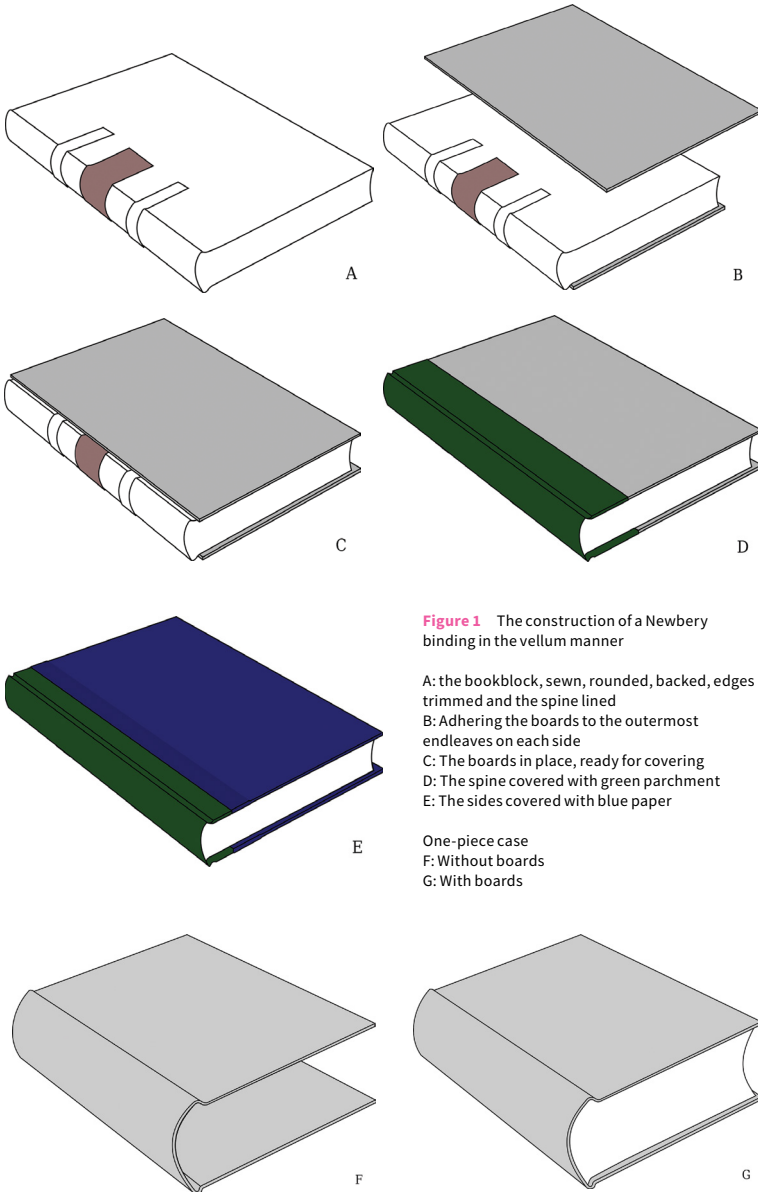
**7** Having performed the somewhat controversial process of lifting the endleaves of some examples in order to see how they are made, the authors rather confusingly advise against the practice (Pattison, Patten 2019, 235 fn. 16).

**8** Whether this should be called a waste sheet, as Pattison and Patten choose to call it, is another question, as the term has traditionally been used with a rather different connotation, not simply as the outermost leaf of an endleaf gathering, as they define it (2019, 235 fn. 16), but to act as a protective, non-structural leaf that could be disposed of before the binding was completed (Roberts, Etherington 1982, 279). In the Newbery bindings, the leaves to which the board is adhered are necessarily an integral part of the structure and conjugate with a conventional sewn free endleaf and not a separate disposable insertion; describing it as a waste sheet could therefore be thought somewhat misleading.

**9** <http://w3id.org/lob/concept/3246>.

**10** <http://w3id.org/lob/concept/1402>.

**11** As Newbery boasted in 1774 that fewer than 100 bindings out of 14,000 sold had been so treated, it is unlikely that examples will be found to confirm exactly how the re-covering was done (Roscoe 1973, 394).



**Figure 1** The construction of a Newbery binding in the vellum manner

A: the bookblock, sewn, rounded, backed, edges trimmed and the spine lined

B: Adhering the boards to the outermost endleaves on each side

C: The boards in place, ready for covering

D: The spine covered with green parchment

E: The sides covered with blue paper

One-piece case

F: Without boards

G: With boards

found in typical adhesive-case bindings. The difference in appearance of these extensions and those of the central transverse linings is now clear to me – the pattern of the weave of the latter is slightly less clearly defined, as it lies under two thicknesses of paper, while those at head and tail lie under only one. This is a valuable addition to our knowledge of the pre-industrial development of bookbinding, and I am grateful to Pattison and Patten for having brought this to light. These bindings should not be included in the canon of adhesive-case bindings.

A number of other conclusions that Pattison and Patten have drawn are, however, I think open to question, and appear to derive from their discovery of the use of elements of endleaves and spine-lining extensions to attach boards before books were covered (i.e. creating inboard bindings). This process, used throughout the Germanic world from the sixteenth century and in Italy and, as we have seen, by Edward Newbery in England in the eighteenth century, is well known and the process is named in the LoB thesaurus as ‘sewn-endleaf board attachment’.<sup>12</sup> When such books come apart, especially though prolonged damp storage, the covers can separate from the bookblocks in single units that much resemble the cases of adhesive-case bindings, and evidence of how the boards were attached must always be looked for. This is most often found either in the form of elements of the endleaves and/or the spine lining extensions adhered to the boards under the turn-ins of the covers, i.e. adhered to the boards before the books were covered, or of those same elements being cut short at head and tail to allow for the turn-ins. These are among the most conspicuous distinguishing features of inboard bindings with sewn-endleaf board attachment.

These considerations are of particular importance in the pursuit of my interest in the early history of adhesive-case bindings, the forerunners, if you like, of what was to become the dominant commercial binding from the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and it would perhaps be useful to explore the LoB definition of the word ‘case’ a little further before continuing, as part of my difficulty with the Pattison and Patten paper is the very precise and rather limited definition they offer for this component, which they seem to apply only to the typical nineteenth-century case, composed of boards, spine inlay and cover, declaring that the case must be covered before it is attached to the book (2019, 233).<sup>13</sup> They do not, therefore, accept uncovered one-piece

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<sup>12</sup> <http://w3id.org/lob/concept/3513>.

<sup>13</sup> The spine inlay appears to be called, rather confusingly, the spine piece, which term they also use (as does the LoB thesaurus) for the folded and creased component of the *gebrochener Rücken* binding discussed below.

cases<sup>14</sup> attached to bookblocks by adhesive alone [fig. 1f] as adhesive-case bindings, stating, without explanation, in a paragraph headed “Case binding”, “that adhering a text block into any form of uncovered boards is not casing in” (Pattison, Patten 2022, 233). This immediately brings us to a further terminological question, which is the definition of the word ‘boards’. In the LoB thesaurus these are defined as separate pieces of rigid or semi-rigid material, of which one is placed on each side of a bookblock. For a binding with wooden boards, this is, of course, the only possible definition, but must clearly be applied to boards made from paper as well. In the antiquarian booktrade, however, the word ‘boards’ has come to be used of any paper-based material found under a cover, whether or not it goes around the spine, despite the illogicality of using a plural noun to describe a component made from one piece of material.

Is this, however, what Pattison and Patten mean by the word ‘boards’? They cannot, presumably, be referring to uncovered in-board bindings with separate boards, as these, as they correctly make clear in their article, belong to an entirely different structural type, which, in LoB, is called ‘inboard bindings’ (i.e. with boards attached before covering) and which they call ‘covered in-boards’. It should be pointed out, however, that this latter term does not allow for books that are bound to the point of attaching boards but which were not covered, a state in which it was possible to buy books from the 1470s onwards. Pattison and Patten do, however, clearly accept the concept of the one-piece case as it applies to laced-case bindings in parchment or cartonnage, but describe them somewhat confusingly as “any bindings in which the completed case (not bare boards) is laced in after covering”, making the cover, however defined, a necessary part of a case. In a limp laced-case binding in parchment, the cover is the case, and *vice versa*. If that one-piece case is attached by adhesive alone, without lacing sewing-support and/or endband slips or secondary tackets through it, how can it not be an adhesive case? The examples made from paper board (usually, in northern Europe, a couched-laminate board) are often found without any coloured or decorated paper added to them, making them the only cover, which must, therefore, be described as primary covers, and any further decorative cover will, by definition, be a secondary cover, whether pasted on before or after they are attached to the bookblock.

From the evidence of surviving examples, it is clear that the use of adhesive to attach one-piece covers to sewn bookblocks dates back at least to the 1520s (Pickwoad 2012, 117-30). In the Germanic world in the seventeenth century, one-piece case bindings with cases of couched-laminate board of varying thicknesses, but all with natural

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<sup>14</sup> <http://w3id.org/lob/concept/1460>.



**Figure 2a** Catharina Dulcis, *Schola Italica*, Cologne: Peter Henning, 1641. Herzog August Bibliothek P 0954 Helmst 8°. One-piece laced case, cartonnage cover



**Figure 2b** Girolamo Brussoni, *Il carrozino alla moda*, Venice: Giovanni Recaldini, 1658. Herzog August Bibliothek, A: 120.38 Eth. One-piece adhesive case, cartonnage cover

hollow backs, become more and more common, and are found widely across Europe in the eighteenth century, being often found in France, occasionally in Italy and infrequently in England, either with secondary covers of marbled or coloured paper over primary covers of couched laminate board or with the primary cover alone. In the Germanic versions, otherwise identical cases could be attached either by lacing the sewing support slips through the joints of the cases or by adhesive alone [fig. 2], which shows the identical nature of the covers and the choice they therefore offered in how they were attached to the bookblock. The one-piece adhesive-case construction was described by Johann Gottfried Zeidler in his *Buchbinder Philosophie* in 1708, in which he describes cutting out the cover to a size that will allow it to be folded around the whole book (“Und weil die Pappe umb das gantze Buch herumb gehen soll”) (1708, 100), creasing the joints of the cover and using paste to attach the cover to the bookblock. He describes it as the simplest and most inferior type of binding, and makes it clear that in his opinion the sewing support slips should not be laced through paper covers, only those of parchment. Its inclusion in his book, however, acknowledges that these bindings were a standard part of the German bookbinders’ repertoire, and thus within the booktrade as a whole.

One-piece adhesive case binding, however, presented the binder with a dilemma. To be rigid enough to support the book when upright on a shelf, the board may be too stiff to allow the book to open easily

[fig. 4a]; when thin enough to open easily, it may not be rigid enough to support the book on the shelf. The binding which appears to have been designed to avoid the shortcomings of the one-piece case is what I call the three-piece adhesive-case binding [fig. 3], but which Pattison and Patten place with their adhered-board (i.e. inboard) structures. We all agree on the components from which these bindings were made, and we agree on how they were made; our disagreement comes in how we interpret this evidence and therefore where we place them within the taxonomy of binding structures. What I call the primary cover consists of two rigid boards, usually of couched-laminate paper but occasionally of scaleboard, and a spine piece, usually of a thinner, more flexible, couched-laminate board, which is shaped around the spine of the sewn, rounded and backed bookblock and which connects the two boards. When complete, this composite component, by this time attached to the bookblock, acts as fully-functioning cover, which I therefore describe as the primary cover, and does not need a further cover to do so. In all the examples that I have seen, however, they have been covered with coloured or decorated paper which I identify as a secondary cover, and that was clearly always the intention. Because Pattison and Patten believe that these bindings have an adhered-board construction, my secondary cover is their primary cover, but this identification leaves out of consideration the spine piece that connects the two boards across the spine.

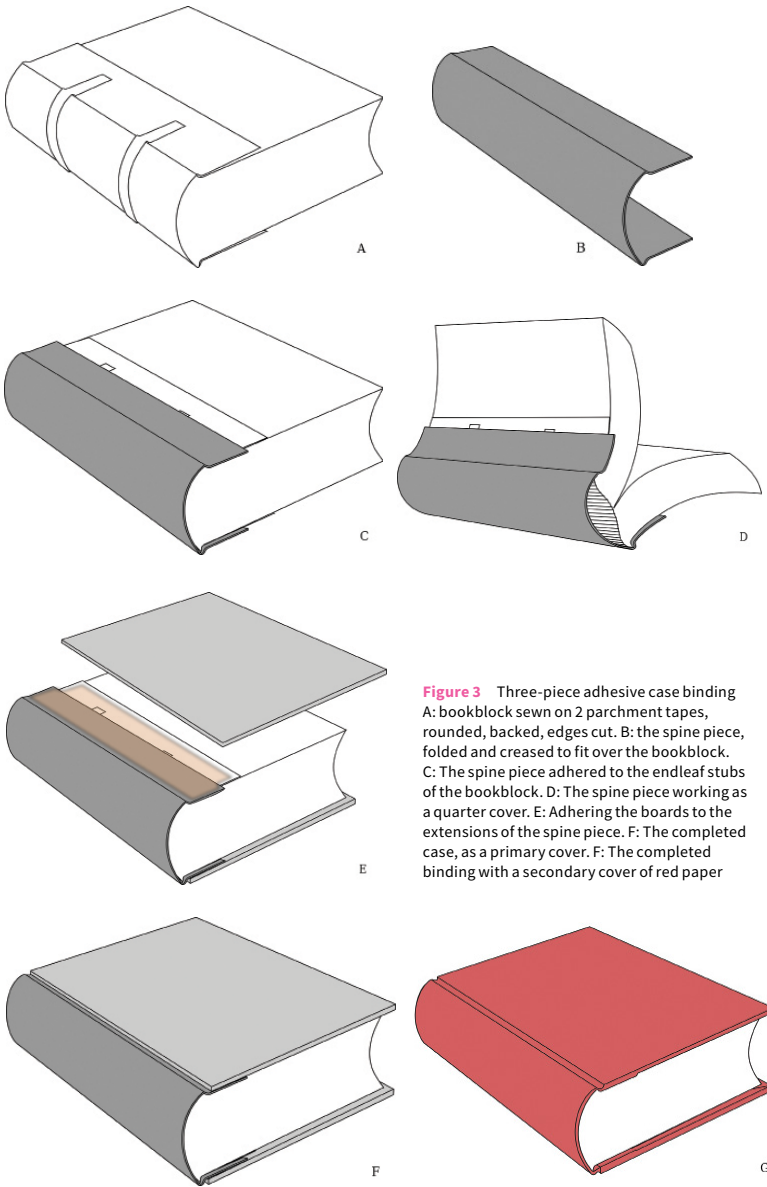
I see the spine piece, known from an early date in Germany as the *gebrochener Rücken*,<sup>15</sup> as the critical core of the structure of this binding, and here I find myself at variance with Pattison and Patten's account of the structure. In their Figure 18, they show two alternative forms of construction (2022, 249). In the first, to make what they call the 'intermediate structure',

the boards were attached to each other first [by means of the *Zusammenhängepapier*], the boards and the *Zusammenhängepapier* were *then* [italics added] attached to the text block through the use of a waste stub of the endpapers, the binding was covered in marbled paper, and finally the pastedowns were adhered.

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**15** Pattison and Patten use the German term *Zusammenhängepapier* for the spine piece, which the historical spine piece exactly resembles, but the term itself seems to have been used only from the early twentieth century (it does not appear, for instance, in Bauer's account of how to make these bindings dated 1899 (Bauer 1899, 137-41)). Bauer does describe what was to become a common feature of *Zusammenhängepapier*, which was an additional piece of thin card adhered to the inside of the spine of the *Zusammenhängepapier* to reinforce it. I have not observed this reinforcement in three-piece case bindings made before the first quarter of the nineteenth century, though they would not necessarily be easy to observe in well preserved examples. I am grateful to Almuth Corbach for helping me to understand historical and current German practices with respect to these bindings.





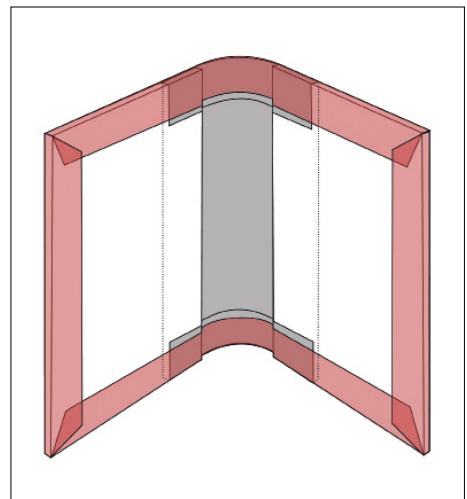
**Figure 3** Three-piece adhesive case binding  
A: bookblock sewn on 2 parchment tapes, rounded, backed, edges cut. B: the spine piece, folded and creased to fit over the bookblock. C: The spine piece adhered to the endleaf stubs of the bookblock. D: The spine piece working as a quarter cover. E: Adhering the boards to the extensions of the spine piece. F: The completed case, as a primary cover. G: The completed binding with a secondary cover of red paper



**Figure 4a** Johann Joachim Becher, *Natur-Kündigung Der Metallen. Mit vielen curiösen Beweissthümen, natürlichen Gründen, Gleichnissen, Erfahrenheiten, und bißhero Ohngemeinen Auffmerckungen vor Augen gestellet; zur Erhaltung der Warheit, Erläuterung der spagirischen Philosophi, und Gefallen der Liebhabern*, Franckfurt am Mayn: In Verlegung Martin Hemsdorffs, 1705 (Huntington Library, Library, 716760).  
One-piece adhesive case binding with cut and coloured edges



**Figure 4b** Johann Jakob Schmidt, *Biblischer Physicus, Oder Einleitung Zur Biblischen Natur-Wissenschaft*, Leipzig: verlegt Jacob Schuster, 1731 (Huntington Library, 705267).  
Bound in boards with sewn endleaf attachment, cut and coloured edges, stuck-on woven endbands and a quarter cover of couched laminate board under a full secondary cover of blue paper



**Figure 4c**  
The Pickering case of 1825, with quarter lining (grey) connecting the two boards, and turned in at head and tail

To me, this would appear to describe making a completed three-piece case (but here called an ‘intermediate structure’) as a primary cover before casing-in the bookblock, because it is not only the boards that are being attached to the bookblock (which would indeed make an inboard, or ‘adhered board’ structure) but a composite component that covers the spine as well as the sides. After it was attached to the bookblock (i.e. cased-in), it could be covered with a coloured or decorated paper, as a secondary cover (Pattison, Patten 2022, 249).<sup>16</sup> Pattison and Patten, however, state that this composite component only becomes a case if it is covered before it is attached to the bookblock, which to me makes no structural sense, as in purely structural terms it works as a case whether or not it is covered, and whether it is covered before or after casing-in (Pattison, Patten 2022, 243). It is the nineteenth-century ‘boards and cover case’<sup>17</sup> that must be covered before casing-in, as it is the cover, which in this structure is the primary cover, which holds the separate boards and spine inlay together.

The alternative structure that Pattison and Patten show in their Figure 18 illustrates the order of work that is more often associated with this type of binding. In this, the spine piece is the first component of the cover to be attached to the sewn, rounded and backed bookblock [fig. 3a]. It was cut to the height of the boards and very carefully measured and creased to clip snugly over the joints of the bookblock [figs 3b-c]. It was attached to the bookblock by adhering it to the outer endleaf or endleaf stub on each side, trapping the sewing support slips, if they were not cut off, between the extensions of the spine-piece and the outside-hook endleaf stubs. Importantly, this essential component of the cover, which creates what can be seen as a functional, if somewhat unusual, ‘quarter cover’, was attached to the bookblock ‘before’ the boards were added, and the binding is not therefore an inboard binding [fig. 3d]. It is as if a one-piece case has been cut back on each side, and the bookblock has been cased-in to this quarter cover.<sup>18</sup> The boards are then adhered to the outsides of the spine-piece extensions and to as much of the endleaf stubs and sewing-support slips as may project beyond them [figs 3e-f]. In some

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**16** Figure 18c shows the *Zusammenhängpapier* adhered to the boards, which Pattison and Patten call the ‘Intermediate structure’, before being cased-in, ready to be covered off the book.

**17** <http://w3id.org/lob/concept/4395>.

**18** It is somewhat analogous to the spine covering found on quarter covers on inboard bindings, which conform to the essential qualification of a cover, which is that it extends across the spine and onto the sides of the bookblock or boards. I think it is generally accepted that the quarter cover on such bindings ‘is’ the cover, especially where the bindings have no additional covering material used on the sides of the binding, as in the south German and north Italian bindings in quarter covers with otherwise exposed wooden boards, commonly found in the second half of the fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth centuries.

examples, these components do not project beyond the extensions, and the only visible attachment is to the spine piece, making it clear that this is the primary process of board attachment, via the spine piece and not to the endleaves. What is, I believe, clear from following the order in which the components were assembled using this method is that this is not an ‘adhered-board construction’ as described by Pattison and Patten, because that would require the boards to have been adhered to the endleaves ‘before’ the spine piece, as part of the cover, was attached. It is an example of how the simple naming of parts (which is the primary purpose of the thesaurus) shows its limitations, and the interpretation of those parts becomes all important.

As Pattison and Patten make clear in their account of these bindings, they

behave very much like a case binding with the spine of the binding hinging [sic] away from the text block at the shoulder when opened. (Pattison, Patten 2022, 245)

I would argue that this is because they ‘are’ case bindings, even though the case may be constructed on the book. I have seen one example, of which, unfortunately, I cannot find my record, where the case actually consisted of a thin one-piece case which had separate boards adhered to each side of it, thus creating the same mechanical advantage as provided by the more common three-piece case with a spine piece, and shows clearly the cover-function of the more usual spine piece [fig. 1g]. Whether or not the three-piece case made in this manner should be considered as an entirely different structure or as a variant type of adhesive-case binding is open to discussion, but I do believe that they should not be described as inboard, or adhered-board bindings. I have recorded one very unusual variant of this structure which is an example, perhaps, of the exception proving the rule. In this binding, the boards ‘were’ adhered to the endleaves first, and the spine piece was added afterwards, with its extensions adhered to the outer surface of the boards. This would in fact make the spine piece, however unconventional, a quarter cover, under a full secondary cover of blue paper [fig. 4b].<sup>19</sup> This curious construc-

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**19** Johann Jacob Schmidt, *Biblischer Physicus: oder Einleitung zur biblischen Natur-Wissenschaft und deren besondern Theilen--aus dem Grund-Texte--vorgetragen--. Zusamt dem biblischen Hyperphysico von den Wunderwercken der H. Schrift, mit Kupffern und vollständigen Registern ausgefertiget*, Leipzig: Verlegts J. Schuster, 1731 (Huntington Library, 705267). This book has cut and coloured edges and stuck-on woven endbands, giving it a higher level of finish than is often found. Quarter covers under full covers can be found in such diverse places as some Romanesque bindings in Ghent and some eighteenth-century Oxford bindings with quarter parchment spine coverings under full covers of marbled paper.



A

**Figure 5**

A. Left side of the binding on Johann Hirts, *Orientalische und exegetische Bibliothek*, showing the laced sewing-support slips. 1773, Jena

B. Jakob Böhme and Johann Angelius von Werdenhagen, *Ψυχολογια vera*. 1632. Amsterdam: Apud Iohann lanssonium

- i. Right side of the binding showing the cream paper secondary cover.
- ii. Inside the left cover, showing the endleaf-stub case attachment and the spine-piece extension.
- iii. Stuck-on endband with a secondary sewing through a parchment lining.



Bi



Bii



Biii

tion makes it clear why the spine piece, as described above, can be thought of as a quarter case. In a variant type of the three-piece case binding, of which I have now recorded a number of examples, the sewing support slips were laced through the joints of the spine piece before the addition of the boards [fig. 5a].<sup>20</sup> It is, of course, a process that turns these bindings into laced- rather than adhesive-case bindings, but one which emphasises their affinity to case binding in general. Similar structures are occasionally found in France in a variation of the *reliure Bradel* (see below), sometimes with spine pieces made of parchment. The terminological question is whether the three-piece case constitutes a primary cover in itself, to be decorated with a coloured secondary cover, or whether you consider the coloured paper to be the primary (and only cover). The latter approach then leaves the spine piece of the three-piece cover in a sort of structural limbo, as it was added to the bookblock before the boards and is, as I would see it, turned into the central component of a three-piece primary cover by the addition of the boards.

Arriving at a definitive classification of these bindings is clearly a complex matter, and to a large extent it depends on where you are coming from. Pattison and Patten had done extensive research into adhered-board structures, one of which was the Newbery binding I began this article with, and taking in the very many, and very well-known early modern Germanic binding structures (which include Flemish bindings from the southern Netherlands) where the boards were secured to their bookblocks by adhering them to elements of the endleaves and/or spine lining extensions before the books were covered. They did not include the equally common Italian binding structures first made in the mid-eighteenth century where the boards were adhered to the central portion of stubs consisting of elements of the endleaves and the spine lining extensions, cut across towards head and tail to allow the covers to be turned-in across the joints. They do, however, describe in convincing detail a particularly American take on what look like bookcloth-covered adhesive-case bindings, but which turn out to be bound in boards, because the boards were adhered to elements of the outermost endleaves or the spine-lining extensions before the books were covered. They were occasionally made in Britain in the 1820s and 1830s, at a time when the classic type of boards-and-cover case binding was still being developed,

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**20** For example, Johann Friedrich Hirts, *Orientalische und Exegetische Bibliothek... Vierter Teil*. Jena: Fickelsherr, 1773 and John Milton, *Paradise Regain'd. A Poem in Four Books. To which Is Added Samson Agonistes; And Poems Upon Several Occasions, With a Tractate of Education...* The Eighth Edition. London: J & R Tonson, etc., 1743 (both Author's collection, the latter with uncut edges and inscriptions in a German hand).



but British examples are not that common.<sup>21</sup> As Pattison and Patten explain, they are typically revealed by the spine lining extensions or elements of the endleaves lying under the turn-ins of the cover, and therefore, of necessity, being adhered to and attaching the boards before the book was covered. As we have seen before, the almost identical external appearance of the English and American examples belies a profound difference in construction. Why the technique caught on so comprehensively in America and not in England is an interesting question. Pattison and Patten argue that the introduction of the arming press and gold-blocking in the USA brought about the use of adhesive-case binding (2019, 292-300), but while this may have been true of the USA, the connection is not necessarily so clear-cut as they maintain, as bookcloth-covered adhesive-case bindings were made in England some six years before the introduction of the arming press, despite the doubts they raise over the evidence I have published of such bindings being made for the London publisher Samuel Pickering from June 1825, in which the boards were held together by what I call a quarter lining, which is a piece of strong paper that is adhered to the outside of the spine edges of the boards, and is turned in over them at head and tail [fig. 4c].<sup>22</sup>

Pattison and Patten include these bindings within their adhered-board group by assuming, without, apparently, having examined an example of one, that they were made in the same way as the American examples, with adhered boards, claiming that they are

consistent with adhered-board bindings that we have seen with paper lining the covering material, not those with a Zusammenhängpapier used to connect the boards. (Pattison, Patten 2019, 309-10)

The argument once again comes down to the order in which the identified components were assembled, and this is, perhaps, impossible to know. The quarter linings are visible under the glazed calico covers

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**21** For instance, Henry Robert, *The History of Great Britain, from the First Invasion of It by the Romans Under Julius Cæsar. Written on a New Plan... The Sixth Edition. In Twelve Volumes*. London: Printed for Baynes and Son... And the Other Proprietors, 1823 (Lambeth Palace Library, B42 H39); Michael Russell, *View of Ancient and Modern Egypt*. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, Tweeddale-Court; and Simpkin & Marshall, London, 1831 (Author's collection) and *A Brief History of the Versions of the Bible of the English and Roman Churches*. Dublin: William Curry, Jun. and Co., 1830 (Author's collection). Although they are not commonly recorded in Britain, it is possible that of the many examples of cloth-covered bindings published in books and articles about the designs on the covers, an unknown number may have been made this way.

**22** The Pickering advertisement, dated 25 June 1825, is to be found in the eighth volume of this eight-volume set where it was pasted to the inside of the left board, giving a very precise *terminus post quem* for the binding. The other seven volumes have laced-on boards. See also Pickwoad 2012, 127-8.

on the outside of these bindings and usually project beyond the turn-ins of the cover on the insides of the boards.<sup>23</sup> Pattison and Patten argue that this paper was adhered to the inside of the bookcloth before the book was covered, citing as evidence a copy of a Boston edition of 1833, in which a piece of printed paper waste was used in a similar position but which evidently lies over the outer endleaf to which the boards had been adhered before covering (2019, 110-11 figs 107-9). The photographic evidence is convincing, but what I do not find so convincing is the claim that these paper quarter linings ‘must’ have been adhered to the bookcloth before the bookcloth was adhered to the boards, as a means of making it easier to handle the bookcloth after the adhesive had been applied. It might equally well be argued that the quarter lining was adhered to the book first to stabilise the board attachment to make it easier to cover the books with the bookcloth.

In the Pickering binding of 1825, however, no element of the sewn single-fold endleaves was available to attach the boards to, the extensions of the overall spine linings lie over the turn-ins of the bookcloth cover and there is no evidence of the adhesive-spot attachment that Pattison and Patten have found on American bindings (2019, 280-7). As they make clear (304) it is often difficult to work out the exact order of construction of these bindings, and it is hard to know whether the ‘quarter lining’ (as I call it) or the “reinforcing paper [...] or lining” (as they call it) found on the inside of the cover across the spine and on the back edges of the boards was first adhered to the back edges of the boards or was pasted to the bookcloth before the bookcloth was folded around the boards. Either way, the binder had to find a way of avoiding getting adhesive on the inside of the spine area of the lining so that it would not stick to the spine of the bookblock. Pattison and Patten describe how it would be straightforward to apply adhesive to the inside of the cover and the reinforcing paper and then insert a spine inlay between the spine edges of the boards placed on the inside of the bookcloth cover before turning in the book cloth (2022, 315). This would prevent the adhesive on the bookcloth and reinforcing paper adhering to the spine of the bookblock, so creating the natural hollow back that is a vital feature of case-bound books.

It can be seen that the 1825 Pickering case also has a spine inlay, cut to the height of the boards and lying under the turn-ins of the quarter lining at head and tail. As the boards were not at this point

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**23** Pattison and Patten equate the quarter lining on the Pickering bindings with a *Zusammenhängpapier*, used to connect the two boards before they were covered, but they differ because the spine piece (the *Zusammenhängpapier*) is adhered to the inside of the boards and the quarter lining (of the Pickering binding) is adhered to the outside and is turned in over the edges of the boards, and does not have the characteristic joint grooves of the former.



attached to the bookblock, the turn-ins would almost certainly have been made off the book, though whether the quarter lining would have been adhered to the outside of the boards while they were held in place on the bookblock, with the spine inlay either inserted as this was done or placed on the adhered quarter lining while it was lying on the workbench cannot be known. It would also be possible, as Pattison and Patten suggest, to place the quarter lining onto the bookcloth before applying adhesive to it and then adding the boards and the spine inlay, but the result would be the same. It would also be possible for the boards and quarter lining to be placed on the book to be covered with the bookcloth, a procedure that might make the handling of the joints somewhat easier. Whether or not, therefore, you describe the boards and quarter lining as a primary cover and the bookcloth as a secondary cover is a moot point and one possibly not worth discussing, as it would make no difference to the status of the Pickering binding as an adhesive-case binding, but the unknowable order of its construction might determine whether or not the quarter lining should be considered as a *Zusammenhängpapier*.

I have likened the quarter linings found on the Pickering cases to the identical component often found on the publishers' inboard bindings (with laced-on boards) covered in paper that were extensively made in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and were still being made in the 1820s, often by then with natural hollow backs created by spine inlays, and it probably provided the idea of the quarter lining for the Pickering case.<sup>24</sup> It is perhaps relevant in this connection that the first seven volumes of the Pickering eight-volume edition of the works of Doctor Johnson, which have laced-on boards, have quarter linings of this sort, with spine inlays, whereas it is the eighth volume, the last to be printed, which is in the adhesive-case binding with the quarter lining and the dated advertisement pasted in.

All of the above may appear to be a rather abstruse and obscure structural and terminological discussion, more suited to medieval scholasticism than modern book history, and therefore better left to one side, if it were not for the fact that adhesive-case bindings transformed the commercial, not to say industrial, production of books in the nineteenth century. The three-piece binding was also phenomenally successful, being produced in vast numbers in the Germanic

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**24** Such a quarter lining is described in Pattison, Patten 2019 (314, fig. 111) under a cover of ungrained cloth on an inboard binding with a tight back on volume 11 of what would appear to be (the edition is not given) the 34-volume edition of *Autobiography. A Collection of the Most Instructive and Amusing Lives Ever Published, Written by the Parties Themselves, etc.*, London: Hunt & Clarke; Whittaker, Treacher & Arnot, 1826-33. That the binding is English is shown by the price on the printed title label on the spine given in shillings and pence. The use of this green cloth on such bindings in England in the 1820s was not at all uncommon.

world, which includes, in addition to what is now Germany, Scandinavia, and Austria, much of eastern Europe, the Balkans, and from the later eighteenth century, England, where it was probably introduced by the many German bookbinders working there at that time, and came into its own with the production of Christmas books in the 1820s, following the London publication, in November 1822, of Rudolph Ackermann's *Forget-Me-Not. A Christmas and New Year's Present for 1823*, which brought the German tradition of the decorative *Taschenbuch* to a British audience. Pickering's first attempt in 1825 at a bookcloth-covered adhesive case was relatively short-lived, as he or his binder moved on to the 'boards and cover' case by 1828,<sup>25</sup> with the publication of *Mrs Dallaway's Manual of Heraldry for Amateurs*,<sup>26</sup> which was covered in the same glazed red bookcloth as the 1825 Johnson. This was the type of adhesive case that went on to dominate nineteenth-century book production.

The three-piece binding was also very popular in France from the end of the eighteenth century, where it was called '*la reliure Bradel*', named after the French bookbinder Alexis Bradel, with whom this style of binding is closely associated in France, even though the design of the binding was developed some hundred years earlier in the Germanic world, a fact stated quite clearly by Edouard Fournier in 1864 (1864, 219) and by Emile Bosquet in 1903 (1903, 266). It remained in use in France until well into the twentieth century.<sup>27</sup>

Exactly and where and when these bindings were first made remains unknown, but a small Amsterdam edition of 1632, once in an aristocratic library in Hungary, is probably the earliest that I know of [fig. 5b i-iii].<sup>28</sup> I do not believe that it was bound as early as 1632, but the binding with its curiously decorated edges and secondary cover of glazed cream-coloured paper together with stuck-on endbands with a secondary sewing through parchment linings argues for a probable

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**25** The boards and cover case can be found on some of the earlier nineteenth-century French bindings found on almanacs, such as *Le Petit Phenix: Almanach d'un nouveau Genre*, Paris: chez Janet, not after 1818, where the boards and the spine inlay are made of the same two-sheet lamination of thick paper and the cover of paper (Author's collection).

**26** Harriet Dallaway, *A Manual of Heraldry for Amateurs*. London: William Pickering, Chancery Lane, 1828. I am grateful to Amanda Hall for letting me examine her copy of this edition.

**27** By this date, the construction of the binding could be simplified by making the three-piece case as a separate, composite primary cover, to be given a decorative secondary cover before casing-in the bookblock. This is described by Bosquet 1903, 268.

**28** Jakob Böehme and Johann Angelius von Werdenhagen, *Ψυχολογία vera I. B. T. (I. B. Teuton. [i.e. Jacob Boehme]) XL. quæstionibus explicata, et rerum publicarum vero regimini... applicata, a Iohanne Angelio Werdenhagen*. Amsterdam: Apud Iohann Ianssonium, 1632 (Author's collection, with the nineteenth-century bookplate of Comte Etienne Karolyi inside the left board).

date in the second half of the seventeenth century. The boards were made from three laminations of a coarse couched-laminate board, the spine piece was first adhered to the outermost endleaf stub at each end of the book, and then the boards were adhered to the spine piece extensions. The head and tail ends of the endleaf stubs were then torn away to allow for the secondary cover of cream-coloured paper to be turned-in across the joints.

I hope that this paper has shown firstly how careful we need to be when analysing a binding and secondly how a thesaurus, an essential tool in the descriptive process, is only part of the answer, and that it is an understanding of how the components and features of a binding are used that will allow us to differentiate between very similar-looking bindings coming from diverse structural traditions, and allow them to be placed accurately within a general taxonomy of bindings. I believe I am right in my conclusion that these three-piece case bindings are genuine adhesive-case bindings, with the boards attached to the spine piece extensions after the spine piece itself was attached to the book, but believing is not proof. It may be that this form of construction needs to be given its own place within the taxonomy, somewhere between inboard and case bindings, but at the moment, for the reasons given above, I see it as a variant form of adhesive-case binding and certainly not as an inboard binding.

The debate will, I am sure, continue.

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