



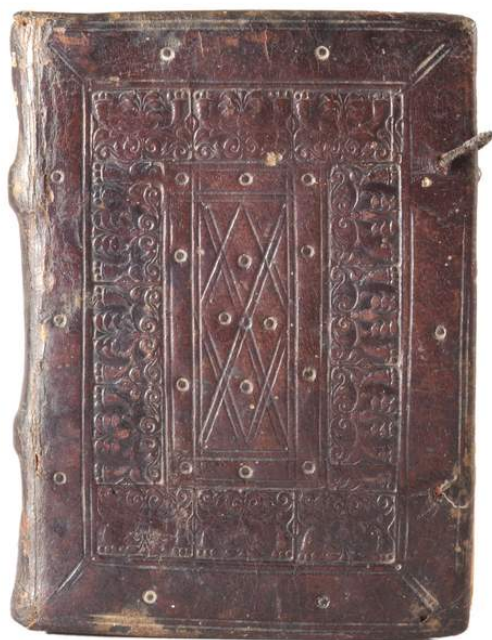
Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany: Johann Schott, 1503 at Princeton Univ.

## Leather Bound Book

### By Baroness Kaleeb the Green Eyed

This is the first time I have done a leather bound book in the style of packed straight single cord supported sewing and it is the first time I have used a research assistant. Julie Stubbs has been my research assistant. She has done the bulk of the book binding research and the finding of good sources. I easily found the sources in *Before the Mast* on my own. Ms. Stubbs taught a class at our local Arts and Sciences meeting on book binding. It was co-taught with Mr. Lemaster. He did the leather embossing and stamping section of the class. I have been long interested in how books were bound, but not interested enough to figure it out myself. At this point I have verified the research of Ms. Stubbs and it was done well. I now know enough about what the cover of my book should look like to proceed with the embossing step of my book binding class homework.

In looking at the examples of extant leather bound books it is easy to see the books which used an embossed book cover. They tend to have strips of pattern, repeated motifs and border designs. These designs were engraved into a brass plate and used as an embossing pattern. I have chosen to create a design for William's book cover entirely by hand. Because I only intend on making a single book cover, this is the fastest way to accomplish the task. In period book covers were works of art and often done as single pieces. The wealth of the cover tends to be reflected in the contents of the book. Toward the later part of the 1500's when books came down in price, covers began to be manufactured using a brass plate embossing technique.



Venice: Aldo Manuzio, 1497, Princeton University

The Mary Rose find had several books. They all appear to have been personal possessions, often stored in locked trunks. Archaeologists have speculated that the books were probably personal religious books, but they do not know. None of the insides of the books survived, just the covers and tiny bits of the spines. William does not have much use for a personal devotional book, he might get some use out of a blank book. Blank books are a deviation from the standard medieval book.

My book has 10 linen paper quires of 3 pages each. It is sewn together with handspun linen tread, which has been waxed with beeswax. The larger threads which anchor the spine are a 12 ply handspun linen. The cover of the book is a lightweight goat skin leather. It was chosen due to the size of the book being small. A medium weight skin would have been too bulky to turn the corners neatly. The boards inside the covers are a birch plywood from the craft store. It was close to the correct size and shape for the class. When glue was used in the book binding process it would have been a water soluble glue. I used Elmer's school glue, as it was recommended by the class teacher. I wanted to learn bookbinding, not how to render glue.





Most of the following steps needed to complete the book involve the words glue, clamp and dry. The steps are fairly straightforward from a website on Carolingian book binding (see bibliography.)

I embossed the back of the book after it was all assembled to make the cover look as neat as possible. The practice in period would have been to emboss the whole cover then assemble the book.

*Before the Mast*, color plate 16 and p. 131

