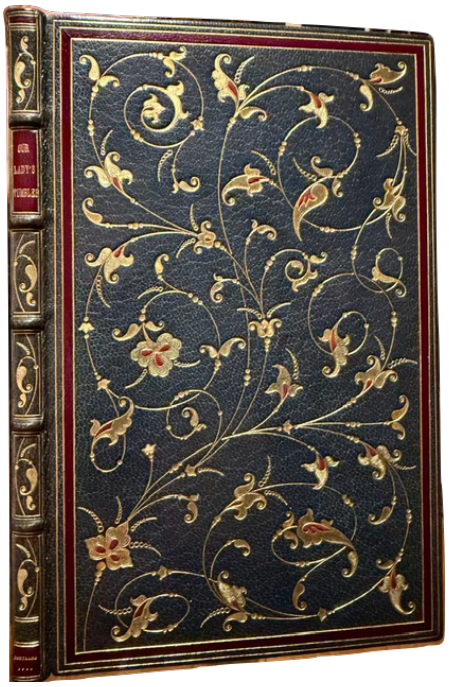
Lovely Zaehnsdorf binding added to the Bishop Collection

Philip R. Bishop

THIRD DRAFT OCT. 14, 2026



This account related to a newly acquired Zaehnsdorf binding is rather straight forward, with but a few observations on discoveries.

On May 15, 2026 I secured a lovely Zaehnsdorf binding through Peter Harrington of New York. In particular I worked with Dr. Sophia Critchley, Gallery Manager/Rare Book Specialist, who upon getting the book in her hands shared that "this copy [of Mosher's *Our Lady's Tumbler*] has such a lovely Zaehnsdorf Binding!" She got nothing but agreement from me. After receiving an invoice, I put a check made out to Peter Harrington Ltd. in the mail and received the happy news on May 19th confirming that my check was indeed received and that it would ship the next day or so. In a couple days the package arrived with the book and the following description from Harrington:

WICKSTEED, Phillip H (trans.).
Our Lady's Tumbler.
A Twelfth Century Legend done out of Old French into English. Portland, Maine: Mosher Press, 1900.

Notes

Second Wicksteed edition, one of 450 copies printed on Van Gelder paper, in a contemporary Zaehnsdorf "exhibition binding" indicating work by the binder executed to the highest standards in both choice of materials and in the forwarding and finishing.

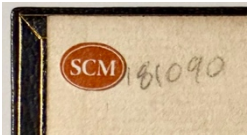
This translation is based on the anonymous Old French poem "Del Tumbeor Nostre Dame", composed around the 1230s. The poem tells the story of a tumbler who, after joining a monastery as a lay brother, finds himself struggling to participate in the Latin liturgy. In an act of heartfelt devotion, he performs his acrobatics in private before a statue of the Virgin Mary. Wicksteed's translation was first published in London in 1894.

Provenance: Mrs Etienne Boegner, sale, Christie's New York, 20 April 1979, lot 233 -- Stephen C. Massey.

Description

Octavo. Title page printed in black and red, initial letters printed in red. Contemporary blue levant morocco by Zaehnsdorf, red labels to spine lettered in gilt, raised bands, compartments tooled with gilt foliage, covers elaborately tooled with gilt foliage and red morocco onlay, red borders and triple gilt fillet to covers, grey morocco doublures and free endleaves, gilt Zaehnsdorf exhibition stamp to rear free endpaper, top edge gilt.

Gift inscription in blank ink on blank prelim. Couple of marginal marks and spots to contents: a fine copy.



Massey's ownership label

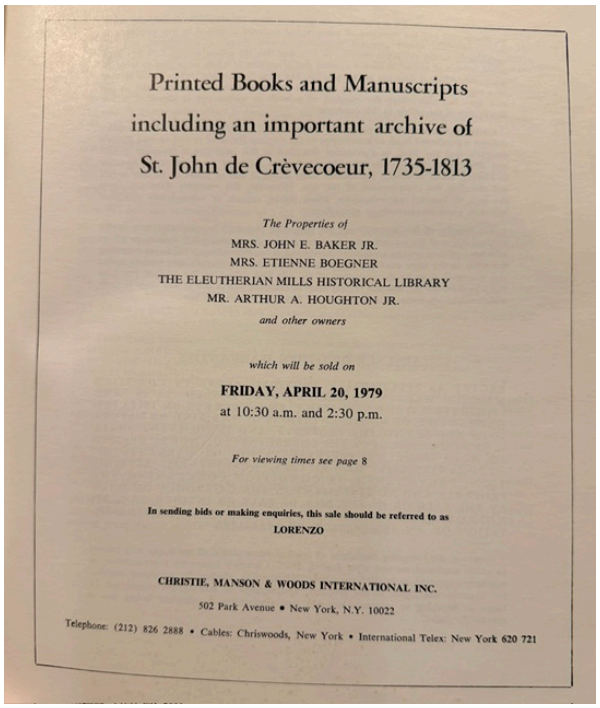
After a few days I wrote to the long time owner and fellow Grolier Club member, Stephen C. Massey, indicating that this binding on *Our Lady's Tumbler* (Mosher, 1900, 2nd ed.) carries his small oval SCM on the verso of the front leather flyleaf. The book's description indicates provenance as being from the Mrs. Etienne Boegner sale, Christie's New York, 20 April 1979, lot 233, and then his name Stephen C. Massey. I found out that Massey had transferred a selection from his library for retail sale through Peter Harrington of New York.[1] That Zaehnsdorf binding was with him from 1979-2026.


Stephen C. Massey



We talked on the phone for a short while, and Massey reminded me that he bought the binding at the Boegner sale in 1979 (Massey founded the Printed Books & Manuscripts department of Christie's New York in 1977) specifically because he loved the binding, not because it was on a Mosher imprint. He kept it in a case at his New York apartment which contained some of the treasures he acquired over the years. This binding was often taken out and shown to guests Massey had over to the apartment. So for 46 years it was personally shown by Christie's Number one man, but as all things move along, Massey decided it was time to let it go and so it worked its way through Peter Harrington, Ltd. eventually to land in the

Bishop Collection. Massey congratulated me on acquiring it. Of course I'm always thrilled when some past owner is not only identified, but is actually able to be consulted.



Printed Books and Manuscripts
including an important archive of
St. John de Crèvecoeur, 1735-1813

The Properties of
MRS. JOHN E. BAKER JR.
MRS. ETIENNE BOEGNER
THE ELEUTHERIAN MILLS HISTORICAL LIBRARY
MR. ARTHUR A. HOUGHTON JR.
and other owners

which will be sold on
FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 1979
at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

For viewing times see page 8

In sending bids or making enquiries, this sale should be referred to as
LORENZO

CHRISTIE, MANSON & WOODS INTERNATIONAL INC.
502 Park Avenue • New York, N.Y. 10022
Telephone: (212) 826 2888 • Cables: Chriswoods, New York • International Telex: New York 620 721

Speaking of past owners, this copy in Zaehnsdorf binding was *perhaps* kept by Mrs. Etienne Boegner at the famed Old Westbury family house on Long Island, although examination of the Christie, Manson & Woods International, Inc. April 20, 1979 auction catalogue makes the provenance before Massey somewhat unclear. The auction house lists several properties from which the sale was comprised including Mrs. John E. Baker Jr., Mrs Etienne Boegner, The Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Mr. Arthus A. Houghton Jr.., "*and other owners.*" There was a sizable portion of the sale just for Bindings, Fine Printing & Private Press Books (lots 204-234) indicating "*The Properties of MRS ETIENNE BOEGNER and other owners*" brake down as follows:

— BINDINGS (lots 204-213)
— FINE PRINTING & PRIVATE PRESS BOOKS (lots 214-234)
— PRINTED BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS (lots 235-328) specifically identified as being from "The Property of MRS. ETIENNE BOEGNER."

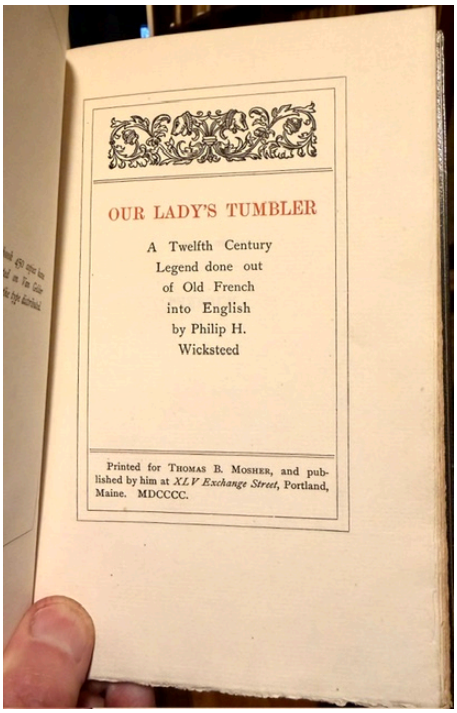
The binding section included a number of excellent examples, two being from The Club Bindery, and eight from The Doves Bindery, several of which bore the bookplate of Edith Rockefeller McCormick (two others with Edith Rockefeller McCormick/John Saks or Willis Vickery/John Saks bookplates), and were pictured on the colored frontispiece to the auction catalogue. There is no ownership designation in the FINE PRINTING & PRIVATE PRESS BOOKS section which included at tail end the three lots devoted to the Mosher Press (lots 232-234). This is the area of the catalogue in which we find the listing for the Zaehnsdorf binding (lot 233) immediately preceded by a rare copy of Buchanan's *The Story of David Gray* (Mosher, 1900), one of just four printed on pure vellum (lot 232), and followed by a catchall (lot 234) of eight other Mosher titles (two in fine leather bindings). But it is on lot #233 which is our focus, that being for the Zaehnsdorf binding bought by Massey which is described as follows:

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233 MOSHER PRESS. Our lady's Tumbler. A Twelfth Century Legend done out of Old French into English by Philip H. Wicksteed, Portland, Maine 1900, *8vo, grey levant morocco gilt overall pattern of stylized red and gilt foliage, red border, matching morocco doublers and free endleaves gilt ruled, t.e.g., by* ZAEHNSDORF, LIMITED EDITION, one of 450 copies.

Although one cannot say with complete confidence that this Zaehnsdorf binding is from Mrs. Etienne Boegner's holdings, there are some signs that it very well could have been. Although Steven Massey didn't specifically say that it was, h\e indicated that it was *from* the "Mrs Etienne Boegner, sale, Christie's New York, 20 April 1979, lot 233 - Stephen C. Massey." As I previously discussed, this sale was

comprised of books from several sources, so there remains some possibility that it may likely have been from Arthur A. Houghton Jr.[3] Arthur A. Houghton Jr.'s books (specifically named to lots 427-431 and on the title page) may have included the Mosher material which also involved the other bindings (lots 204-213). Houghton was very much interested in English literature, as well as other subject areas, with the far greater sale of his personal library having also been handled by Christies of London in 1979/80 as catalogued in those two volumes of his auction in England. I have personally seen one Mosher book, Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel* (1901) printed on vellum with Arthur Houghton's AHA bookplate in the back pastedown, so I know he did collect at least one Mosher on vellum. The rare *The Story of David Gray* on vellum in the New York Christie's sale was lot 232 and the very next lot was our copy of *Our Lady's Tumbler* (lot 233); however, this Zaehnsdorf binding does not carry Houghton's bookplate.

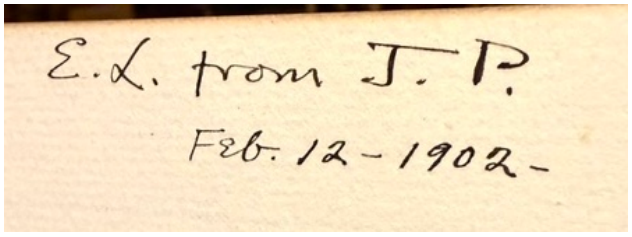

OUR LADY'S TUMBLER

A Twelfth Century Legend done out of Old French into English by Philip H. Wicksteed

Printed for THOMAS B. MOSHER, and published by him at *XLV Exchange Street*, Portland, Maine. MDCCCC.

Of course, the other likely ownership candidate would be Mrs. Etienne Boegner who lived in the house called Old Westbury on Long Island. The house was built for John Shaffer Phipps (1874-1958) in 1906. John was heir to the Phipps fortune and owner of Grace Shipping and a director of then U. S. Steel Corporation (now USX). His children included three boys and a daughter Margaret (Peggie) Helen Phipps (1906-2006) who in 1951 married Etienne Boegner (1908-1985), a French businessman and diplomat who was the first President of the Protestant Federation in France. Apparently they lived in Old Westbury where she lived practically her whole life. She was quoted as saying "I was born on November 17, 1906. I was brought to Westbury when I was about two months old and I have lived here ever since. Westbury House and I are twins, both having come into existence in the same year" and "Westbury House was home to all of us. Though we went to Palm Beach every winter and spent part of the summer in England, Scotland, Canada, or New England, it was at Westbury that we had our roots and grew up."[2]

There is an intriguing insight which may vouche for or at least suggest the binding came from Mrs. Etiene Boegner: this being a brief inscription "E.L. from J.P. Feb. 12-1902-" which appears on the fourth flyleaf in the front of the book (just before the half-title). That J.P. may indeed be Mrs. Etienne Boegner's father,

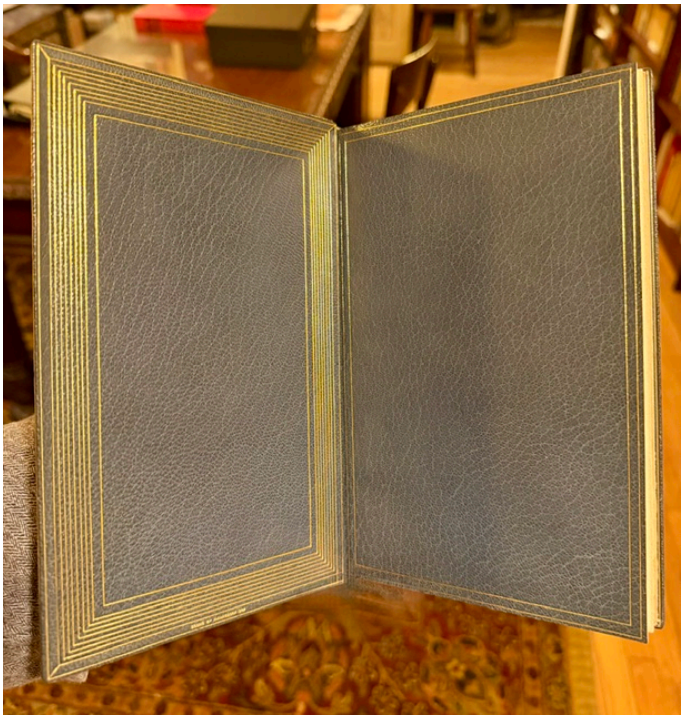

E. L. from J. P.
Feb. 12 - 1902 -

John Shaffer Phipps, who at that time was still a Batchlor. I have not firmly identified to whom initials E.L belong. nor how it was that the inscribed book came back into the Phipps family hands. It has been suggested that the E.L. in John Phipp's social orbit may have been Elinore Livingstone, a member of New York & Long Island society (John Phipps's brother married into the Livingston family). Another possible suggestion is that of Emma Loeb. The Phipps and Loeb families were very intertwined through industrial finance, art patronage and on charity boards during the Gilded Age. John Phipps certainly had plenty of opportunity to purchase or to commission a Zaehnsdorf binding during his many trips to London, or through upper-end dealers in America who procured such lovely bindings for customers. I can't conclusively say this copy belonged to Mrs. Boegner through the

family, I lean to it as a good possibility as opposed to being from Arthur A. Houghton, Jr. at the Christie's April 20, 1979 sale.

The following images (left to right) are of the front inner leather doublure and conjugate leather laminated "endpaper"; a close-up of the binder's name at the bottom of the doublure; and to the far right the Zaehnsdorf medallic gold stamp at bottom of the back leather "endpaper" depicting a medieval binder/apprentice seated at a sewing frame. Its use is explained in Frank Broomhead's *The Zaehnsdorfs (1847-1947) – Craft Bookbinders* (Middlesex, England: Private Libraries Association, 1986), "This mark is a small oval tool apparently used, along with other similar stamps, as a quality mark on the superior bindings produced by the firm." (p. 73).









I also shared pictures of the binding with Nolan Goodman and Jeff Stikeman, two fellow Grolier Club members and collectors of superb bindings themselves. I pointed out that it's a bit unusual for a Zaehnsdorf binding, particularly in its use of title / imprint labels on the spine and the tooling of the doublures. I don't have anything quite like it and it seems to me to be a useful addition to the other Zaehnsdorfs in the collection. Both gentlemen promptly responded. Nolan, himself a fine binding connoisseur, remarked that it's a "really pretty binding, Phil! Glad you snagged it. I really like the onlays within the fleurons—that's not something I've seen much of previously." —May 15, 2026 email from Nolan Goodman. Likewise, Jeff Stikeman, fellow Grolier member and another superb collector of bindings by his ancestor, Henry Stikeman, commented: "Refreshing to see those tools used in such a novel way. Almost always used in a Grolier pattern, they work here in a way that is really pleasing to me. And the twining viny gouge tooling is much lighter and better than we often see. It usually looks forced or the tangents are all badly handled. There's a binder posting progress shots on Instagram of a similar idea, and the curves are all unnatural and clunky. Congratulations on "the get", Phil. I envy your

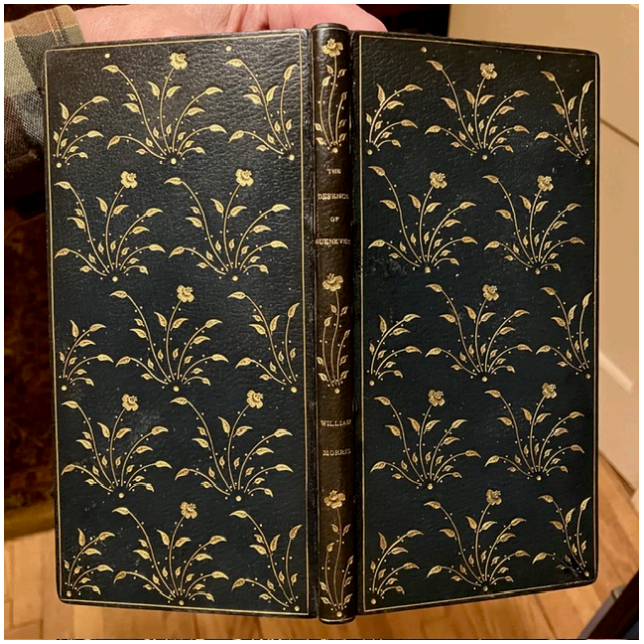
collection. Always have."—May 15, 2026 email from Jeff Stikeman. Lastly, books-on-books author, Pradeep Sebastian, remarked on this binding and on an earlier copy my essay: "Beautiful, beautiful binding. The essay itself is a supreme example of a bibliographical entry: description, provenance, background, acquisition story, and illustrations. A deep dive. I can't remember another fine or rare book in a library/collection that has been so closely scrutinized and written up. Your Mosher Collecting is proving again and again to be an invaluable resource and guide for collectors, scholars and bibliographers. The Mosher connection to fine bindings has been a wonderful rabbit hole to go down in your recent line of collecting." [4]

The Zaehnsdorf binding on *Our Lady's Tumbler*
now joins other Zaehnsdorf bindings in the Bishop Collection,
many of which are shown below:









NOTES

[1] "Stephen C. Massey is an independent adviser, appraiser, and consultant in the field of printed books, manuscripts, and graphics. He is the fourth generation of his family to specialize in this area and has more than 50 years of experience in valuing, cataloguing, and selling; including appraisal work for estate tax purposes, insurance, charitable contribution, family division, and estate planning. He has been a licensed auctioneer since 1981 and is USA representative to Peter Harrington Antiquarian Bookseller, London. Mr. Massey joined Christie's London in 1964 as a cataloguer in the Books & Manuscripts department. By 1975 he had been promoted to senior cataloguer and in that year he moved to New York as a specialist at Christie's Madison Avenue. In 1976 he founded the Printed Books & Manuscripts department of Christie's New York, Park Avenue and 59th Street, which started conducting sales in the U.S. in 1977. Positions held at Christie's New York include, successively, vice president (1977-1987), member of board of directors (1978-1990), senior vice president (1987-1996), International department head (1988-1991), and senior international consultant (1997-1999). He has been independent since 2000… Mr. Massey is a native of London, England. He resides in New York City. He is a member of the Association Internationale de Bibliophilie, the Grolier Club, the Garrick Club, and the Old Book Table." --From Massey's write-up (and picture) on the Antiques Road show website. Since leaving Christies of New York Massey started working with Pom Harrington as an international consultant who succeeded his father, Peter Harrington, based in Chelsea, Mayfair as well as remaining an independent advisor and appraiser. Peter Harrington recently expanded internationally and has now located to an Upper East Side Gallery near the Park Avenue Armory on East 67th Street, and it is from there that the Zaehnsdorf binding on *Our Lady's Tumbler* was procured.

[2] These quotes were taken from the History section of the Old Wesbury Gardens website at https://www.oldwestburygardens.org/history/

[3] The others listed as owners in the sale were Mrs. John E. Baker Jr. (who had a section entirely devoted to her husband's books (lots 329—426), the Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, and "A Swiss Gentleman" whose collection surrounding St. John de Crèvecoeur was also sold at the same auction (lots 147-187). These are all presumed as unlikely candidates for the Zaehnsdorf binding.

[4] Pradeep Sebastian, an ardent bibliophile and fervent book collector, is the author of the delightful collection of essays entitled *An Inky Parade—Tales for Bibliophiles*. Hachette India 2024; the novel *The Book Hunters of Katpadi: A Bibliomystery*. Hachette India 2017; and two other essay collections, *The Book Beautiful—a Memoir of Collecting Rare and Fine Books*, Hachette India, 2023, and *The Groaning Shelf and Other instances of Book Love*. Hachette India, 2010. He is the co-editor of the forthcoming anthology from Hachette in 2027: *Romancing the Book: Essays on Browsing, Collecting & the Rare Book Trade*.

THIRD ROUGH DRAFT
October 15, 2026