

May 12, 2020

RE: 2020 National Collegiate Book Collecting Competition Submission

Dear Sir or Madam,

Enclosed, I am pleased to offer for consideration of the National Collegiate Book Collecting award my submission, entitled “The Baron Colchester: Recreating the Library of a 19th Century English Parliamentarian and Country Gentleman in Substance and Subject.”

I am the recipient of the Jerome P. Webster Book Collecting Prize, which was awarded in May 2020 by Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. I am presently a junior at Trinity, majoring in History and Public Policy and Law, with a minor in Religious Studies.

A table of contents of the collection follows:

- *Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary, Morell's Abridgement*. Alexander Jamieson, ed. London: A. & R. Spottiswoode, 1828.
- Bentley, Richard. *A Dissertation Upon the Epistles of Phalaris: With an Answer to the Objection of the Hon. Charles Boyle, to which are added, Dr. Bentley's Dissertation on the Epistles of Themistocles, Socrates, Euripides, and others; and the Fables of Aesop; as originally printed: With Occasional Remarks on the Whole*. London: W. Bowyer and J. Nichols, 1777.
- Bohun, W. *The Law of Tithes; Shewing Their Nature, Kinds, Properties and Incidents; by whom, to whom, when, and in what Manner payable; how, and in what Courts to be sued for and recovered; what Things, Lands or Persons are charged with, or exempted therefrom. With the Nature, Incidents and Effects of Customs, Prescriptions, Real Compositions, Modus Decimandi, Libels, Suggestions, Prohibitions, Consultations, Custom of London, &c*. London: E. and R. Nutt and R. Gosling, 1731.
- *The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the Use of the Church of England: Together with the Psalter or Psalms of David Pointed as they are to be sung or said in Churches*. Edinburgh: Adrian Watkins, 1756.
- Blackstone, William Henry. *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. Christian Chitty, ed. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1893.
- Creasy, E.S. *The Rise and Progress of the English Constitution*. London: Richard Bentley, 1858.

- Dickinson, Rodolphus. *A Digest of the Common Law, the Statute Laws of Massachusetts, and of the United States, and the Decisions of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, Relative to the Powers and Duties of Justices of the Peace, to which is subjoined an extensive Appendix of Forms.* Deerfield: John Wilson, 1818.
- Egan, Pierce. *Real Life in London or the Rambles and Adventures of Bob Tallyho, Esq. and His Cousin, the Hon. Tom Dashall, Through the Metropolis; Exhibiting a Living Picture of Fashionable Characters, Manners, and Amusements in High and Low Life.* London: Jones and Co., 1821. 2 vols.
- *The History of the Reign of Queen Anne, Digested into Annals. Year the First. Containing, Besides other Memorable Transactions, a Particular and Genuine Account of the Late Expedition into Spain; and the Proceedings of both Houses in the last Session of Parliament.* London: A. Roper and F. Coggan, 1703.
- Gibbon, Edward. *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.* Dublin: W. Allason, et al., 1819. 12 vols.
- Gillies, John. *Memoirs of Rev. George Whitefield: Revised and Corrected with Large Additions Improvements to Which is Appended an Extensive Collection of His Sermons and Other Writings.* New Haven: Whitmore & Buckingham, and H. Mansfield, 1834.
- Hume, David. *The History of England: Complete in Two Volumes with Portraits &c.* Philadelphia: McCarty and Davis, 1832.
- de Lolme, J.L. *The Constitution of England, or An Account of the English Government; In which it is compared with the Republican Form of Government, and occasionally with the other Monarchies in Europe.* London: G. Robinson and J. Murray, 1781.
- Moore, John. *A View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany: with Anecdotes relating to some Eminent Characters.* Boston: Belknap and Young, 1792.
- de Rouvroy, Louis. *Memoirs of the Duke of Saint-Simon on the Reign of Louis XIV. And the Regency.* Bayle St. John, ed. London: Chatto and Windus, Piccadilly, 1876. 3 Vols.
- Scott, Joseph. *A Geographical Dictionary of the United States of North America, Containing a General Description of Each State, Embellished With A Handsome Map of the United States.* Philadelphia: Archibald Bartram, 1805.
- Shepherd, Richard. *The Ground and Credibility of the Christian Religion in a Course of Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford at the Lecture Founded by the Rev. John Bampton, M.A. Late Canon of Salisbury.* London: Lockyer Davis, 1788.
- William, Nelson. *The Rights of the Clergy of that Part of Great-Britain, Call'd England. As Established by the Canons, the Common Law, and the Statutes of the Realm. Being a Methodical Collection Under Proper Titles, of All Things Relating to the Clergy, Which Lie Dispersed in the Volumes of Those Laws, but Chiefly of Such Things Which Depend on Acts of Parliament, and Upon Solemn Resolutions of the Judges in the Courts at Westminster, in Cases Concerning the Rights, Duties, Power and Privileges of the Clergy.* London: John Hooke, 1715.

If I may answer any additional questions relative to the collection, I can be reached via telephone at or via email at . Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Brendan W. Clark '21

Webster Book Collecting Prize Essay

Brendan W. Clark

20 February 2020

The impetus for this collection, as mentioned in the appended bibliography, was Bentley's *Dissertation Upon the Epistles of Phalaris*, which I acquired in August 2012. This particular edition was formerly owned by the Lord Colchester, Speaker of the House of Commons of Great Britain, who amassed a considerable library with an emphasis on the classical, liberal arts education ubiquitous to the landed gentry in Georgian and Victorian England. Inspired by Colchester's ambitions for the "ideal library" and working in part from a catalogue of his collection in the British Library, I endeavored to assemble my own collection, expanding the range of texts across two centuries, from 1700 to 1900, though staying true to the particular works he selected.

Certain editions, of course, go beyond the scope of Colchester's collection and life: for instance, de Rouvroy's edition of the *Memoirs* was published years after his death. Still, a version of de Rouvroy was in Colchester's library, as a titular work of the then comparatively recent history of France under Louis XIV. Moreover, American editions would likely have not been the primary objective of Colchester's collection, though he does make mention of a fascination with such editions in his catalogue and by his death in 1829, he had amassed a respectable collection of early American editions.

Thus, my collecting has centered on Colchester's broad vision of topic and my own proclivity for decoration and the divergent binding practices that developed across the centuries. In this sense, the collection is a miscellany of sorts: classical works that would have appeared in Colchester's collection are acquired, with some latitude afforded to the specific editions. Different skins, different gilding, and different practices in the collection demonstrate the

attention and costs associated with bookbinding throughout this period. Further, my interests also lie in how the ownership (or lack thereof) of particular texts can illumine the quality and completeness of a library. For Colchester, it seems that the subject matter was as important as the edition: his collection was first and foremost concerned with assembling a collection of the classical, historical, philosophical, and religious texts that had a significant impact on thinking within the Western world. It is in this spirit that I have pursued my own collection modeled on Colchester's.

Certainly, some of the texts I include, such as Bohun's *The Law of Tithes*, may at first glance appear rather Plebian (in their practical quality) to an aristocratic audience like Colchester's. Still, they bear inclusion for the context they provide: Colchester's career as both a statesman and an aristocrat meant that he was simultaneously confronted with questions of practical law as much as questions of philosophy. In this sense, the volume does not appear out of place and conveys a sense of the insight that a library can afford into one's character and passions. Colchester's career as a barrister may have also, perhaps, informed his interest in the law. Similarly, Colchester's possession of Nelson's *Laws of the Clergy* attests to his interest in religious law, a subject with which he appeared concerned and familiar considering the extensive selection of texts on church law included in the catalogue.

Further, binding practices and quality within my collection vary greatly. For instance, Shepherd's *Ground and Credibility of the Christian Religion* is a volume of unparalleled quality that speaks to late 18th century bookbinding practice. Morocco is one of the most prized of all materials, both for its durability and exoticism as a leather. In this edition of Shepherd's text, the educational importance of the text and its limited printing suggest that it was designed for a particularly erudite audience.

However, admittedly limitations of cost prohibit me from always locating Colchester's precise edition. While this same edition of Shepherd's *Ground and Credibility* is included in Colchester's catalogue, I often settle for less extravagant bindings or simpler editions in the interest of cost. To that end, you'll also find in the collection volumes that had a relatively low cost of production in simple leather or, later in the Victorian period, partial leather. Interestingly, Victorian editions make use of different colors and marbling to convey a sense of the prestige and value of books as objects to be prized and not merely read, diverging from the Georgian practice. Here, then, the collection demonstrates the change in bindery practices that developed throughout the 19th century.

The collection's future growth will focus on deepening the intellectual arenas around which it has been forged: classics, law, philosophy, and religion. The legal strengths of the collection lie with British civil law in the 18th century, which is why the collection should expand to include civil law treatises of the 17th century, affording better context to the issues that the 18th century treatises seek to address. Certainly, Colchester's catalogue lists many 16th and 17th century treatises on Roman law which are presently beyond my purchasing capabilities. Further, acquiring early statute books would allow the collection to include works on the increasing formality and uniformity within the English court system (*cf.* the reforms of Lord Mansfield). Here, then, the collection would benefit from editions which represent the breadth of Colchester's legal interests.

Separately, the collection *in toto* does not account for the wide classical historical and literary texts apparent in the Colchester catalogue. From my own position as an undergraduate history major, obtaining Colchester's editions of works by Herodotus, Thucydides, Epicures, and Demosthenes, *inter alia*, are a more immediate priority. For instance, one of Colchester's prized

sets in the catalogue was his multi-volume 1570 Greek edition by Henri Estienne of Herodotus' *Historia sive Historiarum* (the *Histories*). This ten-volume set, bound in morocco, is scarce, though individual volumes can on occasion be found at reasonable cost. Estienne, among other 16th century French and Italian publishers, are outside of my collecting scope. Certainly, however, I hope to expand that portion of the collection throughout my life. Obtaining a few of those volumes would, at the very least, be more representative of Colchester's classical collection.

Colchester's philosophical texts of the 18th century, however, are difficult to come by because of their prominence and widespread popularity. First French editions of Rousseau's *Émile, ou De l'éducation* and Voltaire's *Lettres philosophiques sur les Anglais*, which were included in Colchester's catalogue, are expensive and scarce in the present day. Indeed, understanding that Colchester's collection had thousands of volumes by the time of his death, the development and replication of the collection is arduous and slow. Still, many of the historical, legal, and religious texts are relatively accessible to the amateur collector. Victorian editions, in particular, can be acquired without considerable effort and in large quantities. While it may appear as something of an impossibility to fully recreate Colchester's collection, it does seem likely that a representative sample of significant editions and works could be obtained, and in this way the spirit of his collection maintained.

Webster Book Collection Prize Annotated Bibliography

Brendan W. Clark

20 February 2020

Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary, Morell's Abridgement. Alexander Jamieson, ed. London: A. & R. Spottiswoode, 1828.

This text, in lambskin with a gilt binding, depicts the advancements of modern bookbinding by the early 19th century. Specifically, *Ainsworth's* is prized here for its well-preserved Bradel binding, renowned for the additional flexibility afforded to the book by its hollow back. Latin, as the *lingua Franca* of the aristocracy in the 18th and 19th centuries, would certainly have been frequently deployed and referenced by a Parliamentarian like Colchester and *Ainsworth's* may have been frequently deployed in the translation of classical texts.

Bentley, Richard. *A Dissertation Upon the Epistles of Phalaris: With an Answer to the Objection of the Hon. Charles Boyle, to which are added, Dr. Bentley's Dissertation on the Epistles of Themistocles, Socrates, Euripides, and others; and the Fables of Aesop; as originally printed: With Occasional Remarks on the Whole.* London: W. Bowyer and J. Nichols, 1777.

This text is from the personal collection of Charles Abbot, the Lord Colchester, who was Speaker of the House of Commons from 1802 to 1817, as evidenced by his bookplate on the front endpaper. Colchester's collection and personal interest in bindings was the initial inspiration for the collection and, thus, this edition is of critical value. Here, Bentley's well-regarded *Dissertation* is bound in a contemporary calfskin and, though the gilt decoration is worn, the suppleness of the leather and the quality of the edition remains evident.

Bohun, W. *The Law of Tithes; Shewing Their Nature, Kinds, Properties and Incidents; by whom, to whom, when, and in what Manner payable; how, and in what Courts to be sued for and recovered; what Things, Lands or Persons are charged with, or exempted therefrom. With the Nature, Incidents and Effects of Customs, Prescriptions, Real Compositions, Modus Decimandi, Libels, Suggestions, Prohibitions, Consultations, Custom of London, &c.* London: E. and R. Nutt and R. Gosling, 1731.

Bohun's *The Law of Tithes* is one of the earliest texts in the collection and its well-worn spine affords insight into how British publishers produced texts designed for commercial and practical use. Rather than a gilt binding for aristocratic consumption, Bohun's treatise was one of the earliest leather-bound treatises designed for barristers to bring with them to court. Bohun's binding is double-reinforced, demonstrating its added stability, and this edition was noted in Colchester's catalogue.

The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the Use of the Church of England: Together with the Psalter or Psalms of David Pointed as they are to be sung or said in Churches. Edinburgh: Adrian Watkins, 1756.

Appreciated for its importance as a mass-published edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*, this illumines our understanding of the simple, cheap calfskin used on books which had widespread publication. This edition is also notable for its double reinforced end boards, affording a certain durability no doubt necessary for a book consulted every Sunday during an Anglican service. Certainly, the *Book of Common Prayer* would have been among the important library texts for an Anglican like Colchester.

Blackstone, William Henry. *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. Christian Chitty, ed. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1893.

Blackstone's *Commentaries* was the leading treatise on British law in the 18th and 19th centuries and was particularly influential in shaping the early Anglo-American legal system. Though not an original Chitty edition as Colchester's was, this later edition is bound in the publisher's roan or sheepskin and has red and black gilt morocco labels with a hubbed spine. Blackstone would have been the cornerstone of a well-rounded British legal library and this edition is representative of the late Victorian fascination with roan.

Creasy, E.S. *The Rise and Progress of the English Constitution*. London: Richard Bentley, 1858.

Valued here for its depiction of an early painted leather calfskin, this late edition of Creasy's *Rise and Progress* depicts the advancements made in leather binder by the Victorian era. Its binding is quasi-limp—evoking a sense of the medieval practice of “limp bindings” and its colorful boards reflect attempts in the Victorian era to differentiate leather practices from earlier, simple editions. The colorful boards also suggest a sort of whimsy about the ideal of the book itself which had begun to take hold in bibliographic circles by the middle of the century.

Dickinson, Rodolphus. *A Digest of the Common Law, the Statute Laws of Massachusetts, and of the United States, and the Decisions of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, Relative to the Powers and Duties of Justices of the Peace, to which is subjoined an extensive Appendix of Forms*. Deerfield: John Wilson, 1818.

Dickinson's *Digest* demonstrates one of the most common forms of calf binding: polished calf. Polished calf is easily susceptible to tears and rips in the leather, as evidenced by the many marks across the text's end boards. As a publication designed for use in the civic service, the *Digest* mirrors other early American legal texts and demonstrates the practical use of cheap bindings in American texts designed for a commercial audience. It is unclear how an edition of Dickinson ended up in Colchester's collection, though it is recorded as a late addition.

Egan, Pierce. *Real Life in London or the Rambles and Adventures of Bob Tallyho, Esq. and His Cousin, the Hon. Tom Dashall, Through the Metropolis; Exhibiting a Living Picture of Fashionable Characters, Manners, and Amusements in High and Low Life*. London: Jones and Co., 1821. 2 vols.

This text, in outstanding blue calf, was published by the storied bookbinding dynasty of Rivere and Son. Robert Rivere was renowned for the quality of his bindings and was frequently retained by members of the aristocracy, such as the Duke of Devonshire, to bind family records and restore the bindings of editions in the Duke's collection. While my edition has suffered some unfortunate water damage, the gilding work and the hand-painted illustrations remain a testament to one of English bookbindery's most significant figures in the late Georgian and early Victorian period.

The History of the Reign of Queen Anne, Digested into Annals. Year the First. Containing, Besides other Memorable Transactions, a Particular and Genuine Account of the Late Expedition into Spain; and the Proceedings of both Houses in the last Session of Parliament. London: A. Roper and F. Coggan, 1703.

The *History* is the earliest text of the collection and is valued for its intricate, engraved leather spine. While the engraving's gilt has worn away, the grooves in the detailed pattern reveal decoration styles popular at the end of the seventeenth and start of the eighteenth centuries. More expensive than the simple gold, rectangular gilding in an edition such as *Ainsworth's*, this volume is a testament to the luxurious binding practices that characterized late Stuart England.

Gibbon, Edward. *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Dublin: W. Allason, et al., 1819. 12 vols.

Critical to the collection for the edition's Irish origins and complete status as a set, Gibbon's *History* was (next to the Bible) one of the most popular and consequential texts of the late 18th century, popular in historical, philosophical, and religious circles. This twelve-volume edition is unique especially for its decorative gilt bindings, uniform dentelles, and its two-tone, two-piece calfskin cover. Oddly, despite the eminence of the Allason printing house, the case and the spine are constructed separately and, perhaps to save costs, the casing in of the boards is often not uniform.

Gillies, John. *Memoirs of Rev. George Whitefield: Revised and Corrected with Large Additions Improvements to Which is Appended an Extensive Collection of His Sermons and Other Writings*. New Haven: Whitmore & Buckingham, and H. Mansfield, 1834.

Valuable to the collection as an example of an early American and Connecticut printing, Whitefield's sermons reflect their status as a widely consumed, popular text. As one of the most significant preachers of the Great Awakening, Whitefield's works would have been popular in both America and England. While this particular volume is not explicitly referenced in Colchester's collection, Whitefield was certainly a subject of interest to Anglican clerics, particularly for his embrace of the Methodist tradition against his Anglican education, and some sermons by Whitefield are mentioned in the catalogue. Whitefield's volume is simplistic in its binding, though evidence of primitive gilt work is apparent, demonstrating—perhaps—an American effort at replicating English bookbinding practices.

Hume, David. *The History of England: Complete in Two Volumes with Portraits &c.* Philadelphia: McCarty and Davis, 1832.

Hume's four volume *History of England* is bound in soft leather and demonstrates the American disposition toward simple leather binding popular during this period. Its simplicity belies the quality of the leather, indicative of a high quality. Still, the Scottish philosopher's *magnum opus* condensed into four large volumes (unlike the fourteen-volume edition in Colchester's collection) seems indicative of an American attempt to make major works available in simple, quality bindings at a reasonable price.

de Lolme, J.L. *The Constitution of England, or An Account of the English Government; In which it is compared with the Republican Form of Government, and occasionally with the other Monarchies in Europe*. London: G. Robinson and J. Murray, 1781.

Important in its own right as a foundational legal text popular with America's founding fathers, de Lolme's *Constitution* is prized here for its clear and well-pronounced hubbed spine. "Hubbing" was originally devised as a practical way of hiding the strings that unite the boards, however, in de Lolme's case the hubbing appears decorative (at least in the second and fourth instance). Here, this edition of the *Constitution* appears designed as a showpiece: a legal treatise that could proudly be displayed on the shelves of a barrister or lawyer. Further, de Lolme's account of the English government was contentious at the time—and certainly a subject of interest to a Parliamentarian like Abbot.

Moore, John. *A View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany: with Anecdotes relating to some Eminent Characters*. Boston: Belknap and Young, 1792.

Moore's work is referenced in Colchester's catalogue and is an example of personal, semi-autobiographical tracts on culture and travel that became popular among the well-connected elite in Georgian England. The binding, while worn, demonstrates a higher grade of polished calf with what seems almost an applique of wax, ensuring that the cover does not suffer the scratches common to many volumes of cheaper leather.

de Rouvroy, Louis. *Memoirs of the Duke of Saint-Simon on the Reign of Louis XIV. And the Regency*. Bayle St. John, ed. London: Chatto and Windus, Piccadilly, 1876. 3 Vols.

The *Memoirs* is an excellent representation of a three-quarter bound mid-Victorian bindery. The spine demonstrates an excellent application of gold tooling and its condition makes this three-volume text a cornerstone of the collection. The *Memoirs* is indicative of the attractive, yet reduced cost semi-leather bindings in vogue by the middle of the century and is among a sect of classical texts that would have been front and center in a collection such as Colchester's.

Scott, Joseph. *A Geographical Dictionary of the United States of North America, Containing a General Description of Each State, Embellished With A Handsome Map of the United States*. Philadelphia: Archibald Bartram, 1805.

As one of the earliest American editions in my leather collection, Scott's *Geographical Dictionary* is unique for its tree calf pattern—a practice dating from 1775—whose leather marbling is designed to represent the trunk and branches of a tree. The *Geographical Dictionary* also retains an early raised wax seal on the spine which is of interest as a probable rudimentary mark of ownership. Colchester recorded this volume and perhaps perused it with interest, especially as its full-color maps include renditions of the newly acquired Louisiana territories.

Shepherd, Richard. *The Ground and Credibility of the Christian Religion in a Course of Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford at the Lecture Founded by the Rev. John Bampton, M.A. Late Canon of Salisbury*. London: Lockyer Davis, 1788.

Bound in morocco, the most prized of binding skins for its gilt-retention qualities, Shepherd's work is an excellent demonstration of marbled morocco. Further, Shepherd's volume retains a clear, decorative dentelle, which exemplifies the ubiquity of detail in expensive volumes produced in limited quantities. This work is one of the finer volumes of the collection and its specific focus in defense of Anglicanism would have likely appealed to Colchester's aristocratic, educated audience.

William, Nelson. *The Rights of the Clergy of that Part of Great-Britain, Call'd England. As Established by the Canons, the Common Law, and the Statutes of the Realm. Being a Methodical Collection Under Proper Titles, of All Things Relating to the Clergy, Which Lie Dispersed in the Volumes of Those Laws, but Chiefly of Such Things Which Depend on Acts of Parliament, and Upon Solemn Resolutions of the Judges in the Courts at Westminster, in Cases Concerning the Rights, Duties, Power and Privileges of the Clergy*. London: John Hooke, 1715.

Nelson's work, one of the oldest in the collection, is directly out of Colchester's catalogue. Certainly, Colchester's interest in law was fostered by books such as these which constituted a significant portion of his collection. This second edition is in exceptional condition, with the intricately engraved border still extant and the hubbing of this volume is undoubtedly practical, in contrast to the de Lolme edition *supra*. The Nelson edition's label also suggests the value of its bindery: gilt lettering and a gilt date (1715) given on the front suggest that the book was designed both for reference and for display in a distinguished legal library.

National Collegiate Book Collecting Contest Photographs

Brendan W. Clark

12 May 2020

Dear Sir or Madam,

Below, you will find a selection of images that best represent many of the items within the collection. When applicable, I have included both exterior photographs of the books as well as interior photographs of the title page and frontispiece.

I am happy to provide additional photographs of other materials not featured below.

Very truly yours,

Brendan W. Clark '21
Trinity College

































