

authoritative in the intervening decades.¹⁸ Their case regarding the rediscovered catalog rests on three arguments. First, Gilreath and Wilson contend that the 1823 catalog derived from a now-lost annotated copy of the 1815 catalog, writing that Trist compiled the 1823 catalog after Jefferson sent Trist

a copy of the 1815 printed catalog that he [Jefferson] had annotated to indicate his intended order for the books. Trist then compiled the manuscript catalog ... and sent it, along with Jefferson's annotated copy of the printed catalog, back to Jefferson when the job was completed. Though Jefferson's marked 1815 printed catalog has not been found and is presumed lost, we now have the Trist manuscript copy that was precious to Jefferson because it reclaimed the results of an important undertaking that had nearly been lost—his painstaking and distinctive ordering of the books in his magnificent library.¹⁹

Second, Gilreath and Wilson suggest that the primary motivation behind Trist's manuscript was to "reconstruct" Jefferson's "original" order erased by Watterston. Although they do not elaborate on its potential applications after Jefferson received it in late 1823, they do note that "[i]t is not surprising that Jefferson's thoughts should have turned to book catalogs in 1823 since he was actively engaged in organizing the University of Virginia library."²⁰ Third, they conclude that the Trist manuscript's longstanding association with the University of Virginia was a "mistake," allowing only that it "may have been intended for its collections." In what follows we reevaluate these points in turn, beginning with the question of the copy text Trist used to create the manuscript catalog in 1823. New evidence suggests that Gilreath and Wilson's pathbreaking scholarship tells only the first part of a fascinating narrative, one that ends with the formation of the University of Virginia's first library and its installation on the shelves of the University's Rotunda.

THE COPY TEXT OF THE 1823 TRIST CATALOG

In reading the Jefferson-Trist correspondence from 1823 and 1824, Gilreath and Wilson reasonably assume that Jefferson provided Trist with a copy of the 1815 printed catalog to transcribe. As they record in *Thomas Jefferson's Library*:

18. The Library of Congress catalog entry for the Trist manuscript in question paraphrases Gilreath and Wilson, stating that "Trist apparently worked from a copy of the printed 1815 Library of Congress catalogue specially marked by Jefferson in order to restore, in place of its alphabetical arrangement of each subject category, the original order of entries that Jefferson preferred" (Thomas Jefferson and Nicholas Philip Trist "Catalogue" [1823], Manuscript/Mixed Material, Thomas Jefferson Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Z997 J48 J44 1823, <https://www.loc.gov/item/87204942/>). In similar terms, the Thomas Jefferson's Libraries project at the International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello writes that "Jefferson commissioned Nicholas Philip Trist to recreate a list of the books sold to Congress in the order he had originally defined," citing Gilreath and Wilson ("Trist Catalogue," <http://tjlibraries.monticello.org/tjandreading/trist.html>, accessed April 7, 2021). Tay has recently noted that Trist's 1823 manuscript served Jefferson as a reference list "as he began to plan the library collection for the University of Virginia," though does not explore how these catalogs were textually linked or related. ("Forming the Body of a Library," 221 n32). We return to this point below.

19. Gilreath and Wilson, *Thomas Jefferson's Library*, 6.

20. Ibid.