

Writing to Jefferson from Louisiana on October 18, 1823, Trist says: "I avail myself of the first opportunity that offers to return your catalogue, the absence of which will have proved, I fear, a greater inconvenience than can be compensated by the copy I have made." Jefferson replied on his eighty-first birthday, April 13, 1824: "The catalogues, printed and ms. were safely received. The last has given you more trouble than I ought to have subjected you to. It is very precious to me, and I am thankful to you for it."²¹

Comparing the 1823 and 1815 catalogs reveals that their entries match exactly (though in a different order), with no additions and only very few apparently accidental deletions. Accordingly, the Trist catalog could not have been produced without a copy of the 1815 printed catalog on hand. But while Gilreath and Wilson interpret the "manuscript" catalog Jefferson cites here to be the manuscript *copy* that Trist made (i.e., the 1823 Trist catalog), we believe that Jefferson instead refers to his original 1783 manuscript catalog.

The manuscript catalog returned by Trist was, Jefferson writes, "precious to me." It is unlikely that a manuscript copy of a printed catalog Jefferson owned in triplicate would qualify as precious, however significant its arrangement.²² The 1783 catalog, on the other hand, was indeed precious, given its long tenure as Jefferson's primary reference tool and bibliophilic companion at Monticello; this catalog was the only remaining record of a cherished collection of books that Jefferson no longer owned. Equally suggestive, Trist observes to Jefferson in his letter of October 18 that he is returning "your catalogue" and worries apologetically that its "absence" had inconvenienced his soon-to-be grandfather-in-law.²³ The 1783 catalog, a working document for Jefferson's library at Monticello, would have been closely associated in Trist's mind with Jefferson himself (hence "your catalogue"), while the absence of a single copy of the 1815 printed catalog (which reproduced Watterston's alphabetical method of organization rather than Jefferson's own) would not have inconvenienced Jefferson.

We might follow Gilreath's and Wilson's line of reasoning and assume that Trist's "your catalogue" refers to a copy of the 1815 printed catalog that Jefferson annotated or "marked" for the purpose (and which, Gilreath and Wilson write, "is presumed lost"). However, records at the Library of Congress show that the 1823 Trist catalog has always been bound with the same copy of the 1815 printed catalog it is bound with today, one completely devoid of annotation. The surviving physical evidence in the binding of the unannotated 1815 catalog with the 1823 catalog strongly suggests that Trist did not use a "marked" copy of the 1815 printed catalog, but rather two catalogs: (1) Jefferson's separately

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

22. Jefferson's correspondence reveals that he owned at least three copies of the 1815 printed catalog. See his letter to George Watterston on March 2, 1816: "I received three copies of the Catalogue from mr Millegan for which I thank you" (*Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-09-02-0366>). One of these copies was bound with the blank leaves that would become the 1823 Trist catalog, a second was likely retained, and a third was sent to Joseph C. Cabell with a letter from Jefferson in which he complains about the 1815 catalog's alphabetical reorganization ("Thomas Jefferson to Joseph C. Cabell, 2 February 1816," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-09-02-0286>).

23. "Nicholas Philip Trist to Thomas Jefferson, 18 October 1823," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3820>.