

son's shelving numbers recurs across the 1823 Trist catalog, and for good reason: if a sequence of titles of the same format was ambiguous in the 1783 catalog, Trist no doubt knew that transcribing them in the order in which they were shelved would (in most cases) preserve Jefferson's chronological-analytical arrangement.

While the examples detailed here do not fully account for the similarities and points of divergence between the 1783 catalog and Trist's copy, they reveal much about how and why Jefferson enlisted Trist to compile the 1823 catalog. Not only do these notes and markings demonstrate that Jefferson undertook a final, belated revision of the 1783 catalog (most excisions, annotations, and additions dating from this period appear in slightly darker ink or pencil), they also show an apparent and complex dialogue between the 1823 Trist manuscript and the 1783 catalog. This is a crucial point: it was a dialogue, and the 1823 Trist manuscript could have been produced by means of collation. This, we admit, is a radical argument, given that it removes some agency from Jefferson and grants agency to Trist. But to suggest that Trist played a sizable role in interpreting and converting the arrangement of Jefferson's scheme as represented in the 1783 catalog in compiling his 1823 manuscript is far from baseless: during this period Jefferson was occupied with a variety of projects concerning the foundation of the university and himself acknowledged that his skill for library classification and recondite questions of epistemology had atrophied with time: in a letter sent to Augustus Elias Brevoort on 24 March 1824 Jefferson described changes he'd prefer to make to his original system of arranging books but concludes by remarking, "these are speculations in which I do not now permit myself to labour. [M]y mind unwillingly engages in severe investigations. [I]t's energies indeed are no longer equal to them."³⁶

If Jefferson's notes in the 1783 catalog were not intended for Trist, for whom were they penned? While Jefferson may have intended them as notes to himself, perhaps to guide the completion of his lost 1812 fair copy, the consistency with which these instructions are executed in the 1823 Trist catalog suggests that they were written to aid Trist, with some of the arrangement left to Trist's informed discretion. Another possibility, potentially coexistent, is that Trist had written instructions from Jefferson in some form other than an annotated copy of the 1815 printed catalog. These might have taken the form of a list of rules elaborating Jefferson's "chronological-analytical" system, or notes that would have prescribed, at least in outline, how the entries in the 1815 printed catalog were to be reordered.

Our interpretation of the evidence, rather than disproving or refuting Wilson and Gilreath's argument, simply offers an alternative account that relies less on Jefferson's direct involvement, more on Trist's informed resourcefulness, and notably does not require the existence of a methodically annotated copy of the 1815 printed catalog. This last point raises the crucial question: if such a copy text did exist, with ordinal numbers next to each entry in the 1815 printed catalog, why would Jefferson require Trist's assistance? The task would have been reduced to mere copying, something that could be done relatively quickly and by anyone in Jefferson's household possessing an abundance of patience and an even hand.

36. "From Thomas Jefferson to Augustus Elias Brevoort Woodward, 24 March 1824," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-4139>. [This is an *Early Access* document from *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series*. It is not an authoritative final version.]