



The purchases of a seventeenth-century librarian

Citation

Salem, Adriana R. 1947. The purchases of a seventeenth-century librarian. Harvard Library Bulletin 1 (2), Spring 1947: 241-244.

Permanent link

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:42674311>

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New Balet Entitled Howe to Wyue Well by Lewys Evans, of which the only known copy is in the library of the Society of Antiquaries. It may be by the schoolmaster Lewis Evans and, if so, is of particular interest, for it is one of the earliest surviving printed ballads which are truly ballads and written in ballad metre. The scholar who corrected and augmented several of the Purfoot editions of John Withal's *Shorte Dictionary* was almost certainly the schoolmaster, and it may have been he who wrote *The Abridgement of Logique*, of which the only recorded copy, lacking the title, is in the Bodleian (attributed by Colonel

Frank Isaac, in unpublished notes, to the press of Henry Denham, ca. 1569).

If one of Evans's two translations had to be lost, it is something of a pity that the second, with its repulsive subject matter and sensational tone, should have been the one to survive — not that Evans's version of the first, to judge by his treatment of the second, would have been a great addition to the canon of Tudor translations. In any event, the surviving portion of the 'fyrste twoo Satars' is a very welcome foundation piece to the Harvard collection of English translations and editions of Horace.

WILLIAM A. JACKSON

The Purchases of a Seventeenth-Century Librarian

THE letter quoted below (from a collection of autographs deposited in the Harvard College Library) is an interesting document for the history of libraries and of book-collecting. The writer, Antonio Magliabechi (1633–1714), keeper of books for Cosimo III de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, was gifted with a miraculous memory,¹ and possessed an insatiable thirst for learning. His

¹Of many examples, perhaps the most famous is the following, given here in the words of Joseph Spence: 'One day the Grand Duke sent for him after he was his librarian, to ask him whether he could get him a book that was particularly scarce. "No, Sir," answered Magliabechi, "it is impossible; for there is but one in the world; that is in the Grand Signior's library at Constantinople, and it is the seventh book on the second shelf on the right hand as you go in."' — *A Parallel, in the Manner of Plutarch, between a Most Celebrated Man of Florence and One, Scarce Ever Heard of, in England* (Strawberry-Hill, 1758), pp. 25–26. Spence's work, one of the early publications of the

knowledge became so encyclopedic that the most eminent scholars from all parts of Europe sought his advice, but, because of his eccentric habits, his friends were few. Ugly in appearance, he lived in an ill-kept house, so deeply intent on his work that he often failed to eat or undress.² He assembled for himself a collection of books which he bequeathed to his patron; this library of more than 30,000 volumes,

Strawberry Hill Press, was written to secure financial support for Robert Hill, a self-taught and indigent tailor and schoolmaster, whose learning and reputation are compared to Magliabechi's.

²'When any one went to see him, they most usually found him lolling in a sort of fixed wooden cradle, in the middle of his study, with a multitude of books, some thrown in heaps, and others scattered about the floor, all round him; and this his cradle, or bed, was attached to the nearest piles of books by a number of cobwebs: At their entrance, he commonly used to call out to them; "Not to hurt his spiders!"' — *A Parallel*, pp. 30–31.

known as the Magliabechiana, formed, with the Laurenziana, the nucleus of the present Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence.

The letter in question, written on both sides of a sheet, bears no address or date. The recipient may have been the Grand Duke; however, Magliabechi was also custodian of books for a number of other bibliophiles in Florence, including the Cardinals Leopoldo and Francesco Maria de' Medici and the Canon Lorenzo Panciatichi.

Ill:mo: Sig:re: Sig:re: e Prôn Colend^{mo}
Mandai l'altro giorno a V S: Ill:ma, il Catalogo de Libri nuovi, stati alla Fiera ultima di Francofort, non le potetti già mandare, l'Indice di quelli che dalla detta Fiera aspetta il Lanou, che da esso, non mi fù, come mi aveva promesso, inviato. Credo bene che me lo debba assolutamente inviare, questa Settimana, et io subito che l'aurò ricevuto, prima di mostrarlo ad'altri, lo manderò a V S: Ill:ma. Sabato scriverò aldetto Lanou, commettendogli per V S: Ill:ma: l'Ireneo, e l'Opera di Lionardo da Vinci, circa [?] al prezzo, credo che la dourebbero mandare assolutamente per fiorini 9, benchè la mettino 10, e ben vero, che gli scriverò, che non la mandi, se non è in carta grande, come ella mi scrive. Il Ricettario era veramente tenuto bene, et io già l'avevo comprato per V S: Ill:ma: 2 lire, ma nel registrarlo, trovai che vi mancava interamente un foglio, cioè il g, onde non lo volsi. A Stefano ne stato dato uno da vendere, dal . . . ,⁴ il quale ancora esso e ben tenuto, ma mi pare che la margine sia più tosto tagliata troppo, oltre a che bisognerebbe farvi rimpastare le gvardie, con il verderame, poiché intarla grandemente, con tutto ciò hò detto a Stefano, che non lo venda senza mio ordine. mi accenni ella pertanto, quello che vuole

³The abbreviation for this word occurring in the original has been regularly expanded.

⁴Space left blank in the original.

ch'io faccia. Il Radero, credo quasi assolutamente chele debba toccare, ma come ella mi scrive, con il Tani ci vuole pazienza, io fratanto non tralasciò d'intendere ogni giorno, quando mi trovo a Librai, se ci fosse altri che ne avesse voglia, ma però sottomano, e per adesso, non sento che ci sia alcuno. Il Sig Dati hà avuto appunto oggi una bambina, ch'è quante nuove io le possa dare. Con che supplicandola a non mi risparmiare, in qualsivog cosa, che conosca potere della mia debolezza restar servita, le bacio umilissimamente le mani, e la riverisco.

Di V S: Ill:ma

Umilis:mo: et Oblig:mo: Servitore

Antonio Magliabechi

Monsù Niccolò mi hà mostrato un Indice di Libri che gli vengono di Parigi, trà quali certamente che ce ne sono molti squisiti, e ben vero, che non solamente, non mi hà voluto concedere, che io lo copi, ma eziandio mi hà instantemente pregato, a non dire ad alcuno, che egli aspetti Libri Oltramontani. La cagione che lo muove a questo, è veramente ridicola, poiché non vuole, per quanto mi dice, che se i Libri per disgrazia andassero male, la gente lo burlasse. Io però, o in una maniera, o in una altra, copierò questo Indice, e le lo manderò. Se bene i Libri, non credo che possino arrivare, se non trà qualche Mese.

Avevo già scritto questa Lettera, quando tornando a Casa per sigillarla, e portarla a Casa di V S: Ill:ma, hò trovato, che da lei mi era stato regalato un mazzo di tordi, certamente che resto ogni giorno più obbligato, et insieme più confuso, per i favori che da lei ricevo, conoscendo particolarmente, di non avere appresso V S: Ill:ma, merito di sorta alcuna.

This letter may be translated as follows:

Very Illustrious Lord and
Most Worshipful Patron

The other day I sent to Your Lordship the Catalogue of new Books from the

latest Frankfort Fair.⁵ I could not send the List of those which Lanou⁶ expects to get from this Fair, as he did not send it to me, although he had promised to do so. I trust that he will surely dispatch it to me this week, and as soon as I have received it, I will send it to Your Lordship before showing it to anyone else. Saturday I will write to the said Lanou, commissioning him on behalf of Your Lordship for the Irenaeus⁷ and the Work by Leonardo da Vinci;⁸ as for [?] the price, I believe that they should certainly send it for 9 florins, although they put it at 10; be sure I shall write to him, as you told me, not to send it, if it is not a large-paper copy. The Ricettario⁹ was indeed in good condition and I had already bought it for Your Lordship for 2 lire, but in collating it I found that a whole leaf was missing, namely the g, so I didn't want it. Stefano has been given by . . . one copy to sell, which also is in good condition, but it seems to me that the margin has been rather too closely trimmed; besides, the end-papers should be repasted, with verdigris, as it is very much worm-eaten. In spite of all this, I have told Stefano not to sell it without my telling him; therefore could you let me know what I should do? I rather think

⁵Evidence of a book trade in Frankfort may be found as early as the year 1485. No place was so favorably situated at the crossroads of the intellectual and commercial world. The book trade attracted to Frankfort dealers and publishers from important German towns and from all other countries of Europe, though mainly France, Italy, and the Netherlands. The first catalogue of new books for sale at the fair appeared in 1564 and was issued regularly thereafter. (See James Westfall Thompson, *The Frankfort Book Fair*, Chicago, 1911.)

⁶Probably a bookdealer, like Stefano and Tani, mentioned below.

⁷Possibly St Irenaeus, the theologian, Bishop of Lyons, whose works had been published in Basle in 1526.

⁸The 1561 French or Italian edition of the *Trattato della Pittura*?

⁹A book of medical prescriptions or a recipe book.

that you should take the Rader,¹⁰ but, as you write me, with Tani one must be patient; in the meantime, every day, when I am at the booksellers', I keep on trying to learn, but inconspicuously, if anyone else might want it, but up to now I haven't heard of anyone. Signor Dati¹¹ just today had a baby girl, which is all the news that I can give you. With this, praying that you do not spare me in anything whatsoever, since you know that my feeble talents are at your service, I kiss your hands very humbly, and I am very respectfully,

Your Lordship's

Most Humble and Obligated Servant
Antonio Magliabechi

The postscript is revealing, as it shows how, in order to get the books he wanted, Magliabechi was ready to use rather doubtful methods:

Monsieur Niccolò¹² has shown me a List of Books he is getting from Paris, among which certainly there are many marvellous ones; indeed, not only did he not want to let me copy it, but he even begged me earnestly not to tell anyone that he is expecting Books from over the Alps. The reason which induces him to do so is really absurd: he says that if, through ill luck, the Books should not turn out well, people would laugh at him. But I, in one way or in another, will copy this List and send it to you. However, I do not believe that the Books can get here for some Months.

I had already written this letter, and gone Home to seal it and take it to Your

¹⁰Perhaps a book by Mathias Rader, a Jesuit and a theologian, who died in 1634.

¹¹Carlo Dati, born in 1619, a learned philologist and scientist, pupil of Galileo, was a friend of Magliabechi, and of many other eminent men of his time, such as Heinsius and Milton. A member of the Accademia della Crusca, he published in 1667 a *Vita de' Pittori Antichi*.

¹²Monsù Niccolò may have been a colleague, and possibly French, as his title seems to indicate.

Lordship's House, when I found that you had sent me as a present a bunch of thrushes.²² Really I feel every day more obliged, and also overcome, by your

²² This was not only a delicacy for Magliabechi, but a help for his daily diet, which

Lordship's kindness, as I know very well I am unworthy of it.

ADRIANA R. SALEM

is said to have been, for years, three hard boiled eggs and a sip of water.

Napoleon to His Mother: The First Draft of a Letter Written from School

AMONG the manuscripts recently acquired by the Harvard College Library through the gift of W. B. O. Field is one of the earliest known documents in Napoleon's handwriting, written to his mother shortly after his father's death, which occurred in February 1785. As the result of some researches concerning this document, it now seems likely that it is not a letter, but rather the first draft of one. An attempt is here made to show how this conclusion was arrived at.

The manuscript reads as follows:

Ma chere Mère,

Ce n'est qu'aujourd'hui, que le temps a un peu calmé les premiers transports de ma douleur, que je m'empresse de vous témoigner l'amour que m'inspirent les bontés que vous avez eues pour nous, consolez-vous, ma chere mère, les circonstances l'exigent; nous redoublerons de soins et de tendresse pour vous, heureux si nous pouvons par notre obéissance, vous dédommager de l'incalculable perte d'un époux chéri, et nous, d'un père vénéré qui n'a même pas eu la triste joie de mourir près de son épouse et entouré de sa famille. mais l'Être suprême ne l'a pas permis, et sa volonté [sic] est immuable. je termine ma chère mère, ma douleur m'y oblige, en vous priant de calmer la vôtre. mon attachement et ma reconnaissance pour tout [sic] vos bienfaits est proportionnelle dans mon coeur,

ma santé est parfaite et je prie Dieu tous les jours qu'il vous gratifie d'un [sic] semblable, présentez mes respects a Zia Gertruda Minana Saveria et Minana Fesch

votre affectionné,
Napolione de Buonaparte

In various works dealing with Napoleon's youth, though not in any of the major collections of his correspondence, appears a letter closely resembling the text of the Harvard manuscript. The occasion for the printed letter, the death of Napoleon's father, is the same as that of the manuscript, and the wording is in part identical. Nevertheless, the printed letter cannot be a reproduction of the manuscript, as will be clear from an inspection of its contents.

Paris le 29 Mars 1785.

Ma chère mère,

C'est aujourd'hui, que le temps a un peu calmé les premiers transports de ma douleur, que je m'empresse de vous témoigner la reconnaissance que m'inspirent les bontés que vous avez toujours eues pour nous. Consolez-vous, ma chère mère; les circonstances l'exigent. Nous redoublerons nos soins et notre reconnaissance, et heureux si nous pouvons, par notre obéissance, vous dédommager un peu de l'incalculable perte d'un époux chéri. Je termine, ma chère mère; ma douleur me l'ordonne, en vous priant de

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