

*Bibliotheca Collinsiana,
seu Catalogus Librorum Antonji Collins Armigeri
ordine alphabetico digestus*

<i>Preface</i>	p.	163
<i>Abbreviations of the places of publication</i>	»	166
<i>Catalogue (1720)</i>	»	171
<i>Later acquisitions (1720-1729)</i>	»	354
<i>Appendixes (titles not in the catalogue)</i>	»	502

Presented here is an edition of the manuscript catalogue for the library collection of Anthony Collins (1676-1729), the first compilation of which was completed in 1720.¹ In the following nine years, however, Collins expanded his library enormously, almost doubling the number of works.² He

¹ The volume is held in the university library of King's College, Cambridge (Keynes MSS. 217, 'Bibliotheca Collinsiana'). In 1977 the catalogue was given some much-needed restoration (the pages were cleaned, the cuts and holes patched and it was rebound in leather), which has helped to preserve it in its entirety and make it more readily consultable. Two sheets of the catalogue seem to have been removed at some stage: one between pages 531 and 532, the other between 537 and 538. The numbering of the final pages (541-564) is patchy.

² Collins was a renowned bibliophile, and at the time of his death his library contained over 10,000 titles, four times more than those in Locke's possession and many more than the 6,906 volumes indicated by James O'Higgins. Although larger and more broad-based private libraries existed elsewhere in Europe, in the British Isles, if one excludes the libraries of Thomas Rawlinson and the Count of Oxford, perhaps the only other comparable one was the Bodleian Library. Yet in 1674, more than seventy years after it was established, the famous Oxford library, "the glory of our university and kingdom in its kinds", held barely 20,000 books and manuscripts. See James O'Higgins, *Anthony Collins: The Man and His Works* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), p. 24: "On Collins' death, in 1729, the library contained some 6906 items, and, consequently, more volumes"; *ibid.*, note 8: "In assessing the number of books, by any given author, which Collins possessed, it is more convenient to use the manuscript catalogue". O'Higgins presumably limited himself to adding together the 3,451 lots advertised for sale in the 28 days of the first auction of Collins' library (18 January-24 February 1731), the 2,222 texts *in octavo formaque minori*, the 821 *in*

noted new titles on the even-numbered pages of the catalogue, which he had wisely left blank for later additions. He wrote in the new entries next to the authors already listed, being careful to maintain the alphabetical order wherever possible, though this is sometimes inexact and discontinuous.³ The inaccuracies that occur most frequently in these later additions can be attributed to the increasing difficulty of entering the continual and substantial acquisitions in the right order. It is also possible to discern various abrasions and erasures, and, in some cases, possibly for reasons of space or to replace titles that had been removed, the entries of the first version are interspersed

quarto, the 399 *in folio* and the 13 subscription books sold in a later auction (10 March-16 April 1731). The two auctions were held "at St. Paul's Coffee House in Paul's Church-Yard, . . . beginning every Evening at Five a Clock." See *Bibliotheca Antonij Collins, Arm.; Or, A Compleat Catalogue of the Library of Anthony Collins, Esq., deceas'd: containing a Collection of Several Thousand Volumes in Greek, Latin, French, and Spanish; in Divinity, History, Antiquity, Philology, Husbandry, and All Polite Literature; and especially many curious Travels and Voyages; and many rare and valuable Pamphlets*, by Thomas Ballard (London, 1731), 2 pts. "We know from the sale of Anthony Collins' library that while an average of almost eighteen items were advertised each of the twenty-eight days of the second part of the sale, close to 125 books were actually sold daily" (Stephen Snobelen, "The Library of Samuel Clarke," in James Dybikowski ed., *Samuel Clarke: Special Issue [Enlightenment and Dissent 16 (1997)]*, pp. 185-197: 188). "In his chambers at Lincoln's Inn and his house in Harley Square, Collins collected the third largest private library in Britain, of about 10,000 volumes. . . . When Collins's library was sold in 1731, fifty-six days were required to auction 6,893 lots, some of which included ten to twenty items" (Frank H. Ellis, "What Swift Did to Collins's Discourse of Free-Thinking and Why," in *Eighteenth-Century Contexts. Historical Inquiries in Honor of Phillip Harth*, ed. by Howard D. Weinbrot, Peter J. Schakel, and Stephen E. Karian (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), pp. 81-95: 90, 94).

³ Examples of erroneous indexing: see *Catalogus Librorum Antonji Collins Armigeri ordine alphabetico digestus* in Giovanni Tarantino, *Lo scrittoio di Anthony Collins (1676-1729). I libri e i tempi di un libero pensatore* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2007), nos. 7591, 7787, 8480 (homophonous variant), 9798, 9799.

with titles published after 1720.⁴ In an appendix to the catalogue there are two jumbled lists of titles, for the most part anonymous, one on the odd-numbered pages and the other on the even-numbered ones.⁵ The works by anonymous authors are followed by other clusters of titles, most of which are grouped according to the initial of the authors' names or are by the same writer. It is not clear whether these were preliminary notes for a planned reordering of the catalogue, prevented by Collins' death, or whether they were volumes he had loaned or borrowed.

No attempt has been made here to offer a philological reconstruction of the manuscript text. The main concern has been to identify titles and authors with certainty. The original arrangement of the entries has been maintained, despite some discontinuities in the alphabetical order, so that anyone looking through the manuscript can readily identify the interventions that were made. Generally speaking, each entry comprises the name and surname of the author, personal details when necessary, the title of the work, the number of volumes when specified by the author, the format, the place of publication (usually abbreviated),

⁴ Examples of titles published after 1720 but listed on the odd-numbered pages of the catalogue: Keynes MSS. 217, pp. 39, 62, 92, 260-264, 328, 341, 425. Examples of cancellations: *ibid.*, pp. 29, 38, 71, 96, 112, 163, 174, 192, 194, 236, 243 [244], 258, 311, 318, 345, 353, 365, 369, 404, 406, 412, 430, 434, 467, 469, 519, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 543 (unnumbered page), 556 (unnumbered page), 564 [563]. Annotations in another hand: *ibid.*, pp. 16, 107, 366, 426, 526.

⁵ On the last page there is a slanting note that is hard to decipher: *Jurieu / Lowthorp & Jones / Gussemps [?] / Canon of the O. and N. [Testament?] / Colonia [?] / Larner [?]*. I am only able to establish with certainty a reference to the volumes of the *Philosophical Transactions* edited by John Lowthorp and Henry Jones, and another, plausible, one to Louis Ellies Du Pin, *A compleat history of the canon and writers, of the books of the old and new testament* (London: 1699-1700).

the year of publication and the library marking. The manuscript items are preceded by an evident sign (★).⁶

A range of investigative and bibliographic research tools were adopted to identify the works. The most prevalent ones were: the auction catalogue compiled by Thomas Ballard for the sale, in January and March 1731, of a large part of Collins' collection; the on-line electronic catalogues of the major European national libraries; the collections in *Early English Books Online* (EEBO); the *English Short Title Catalogue* (ESTC); and the merged national, academic and specialist library catalogue of major UK and Irish universities and national libraries (COPAC).

The names of the authors have generally been completed, without reproducing the Latin or Saxon genitive. This further disrupts the alphabetical order, but enables an immediate identification of the authors. Many instances of homonymy have been cleared up with the addition, where necessary, of personal details. When a work appears without the name of the author, the title is placed in alphabetical order. Where there are a number of titles by the same author, the order is apparently casual. The additions, and question marks indicating an unidentified or dubious entry, are enclosed in square brackets and are in Roman type. Constraints of time and resources have made it impossible to prepare an index of names relating just to the catalogue – though this would make it more readily usable – or to add opportune references when the same works appear on more than one occasion (under the name of the authors, and perhaps of each of them when collective volumes are concerned; of the translators; glossators; titles; or subject, as in the case of biographies or legal proceedings). Observations made in the future by scholars

⁶ See *Catalogus Librorum*, nos. 357, 2775, 3588, 3806, 4740, 4966, 5339, 5340, 8172, 8495, 8555, 9678, 9908, 9911, 9912, 10726 and *Lo scrittoio di Anthony Collins*, pp. 70, 106, 123, 126, 139.

using this working tool will hopefully make it possible to produce a revised version free from errors, misunderstandings and gaps.

The abbreviations have generally been written out in full, with the exception of cases of intuitive understanding or common usage (e.g.: Bp, Mr, Ld, agt, Gr. & Lat., notis. var., s.l., ed., etc.) and of recurrent places of publication, which are specified in a separate table (pp. 166-169). The handwriting and punctuation have been slightly modernized. Capital letters have been used sparingly. Titles have been written out more fully to enable certain identification. Where a succinct title used by Collins appears particularly significant or impossible to add to, the original title has been included in a footnote. The format of the volumes, which is almost always listed, often contradicts modern classification criteria. However, the author's description has been reproduced, in part to encourage further investigation of the extent to which the format had a bearing on how the books were arranged on the shelves and on the calculation of their auction price.⁷

The publication dates are the ones indicated in the manuscript. When appropriate (only a limited number of cases), these dates are accompanied, in square brackets, by suggested corrections. In many cases, the date indicated is a year later than the known publication date. This can be explained, in some cases, by possible reprints, perhaps lost, of booklets and pamphlets written for specific occasions, and, in others, by the continuing use in England (until 1752) of the Julian calendar, which, as is known, had ten more days than the Gregorian calendar and began on 25 March.

⁷ For example, the large-format and bulky volumes are often indicated with a 'B'. Some works, including a large number of atlases, are marked by a triple 'x' (see *Catalogus Librorum*, nos. 218, 544, 823, 1105, 3414, 3693, 3945, 4941, 4954, 6334). Of the titles that are not in the catalogue, some of the entries are prefaced by an 'x' that is not, however, a library marking (*ibid.*, nos. 10368, 10380, 10487, 10498, 10504, 10596, 10600).

Of course, one cannot discount the possibility of an error on the part of the cataloguer. Careful examination of the library markings might make it possible to piece together the physical arrangement of Collins' library and to achieve, in ideal terms, what Jean-Louis Wagnière, the friend and secretary of Voltaire, managed to do when, in accordance with the instructions of Catherine II, he reconstructed the Ferney library at the Hermitage.

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