Revisiting the Library of Edward Gibbon*

Richard Virr

Abstract

Edward Gibbon's (1737–1794) library was fundamental to his historical work and he could not have written his great history *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1778) without it. His library continues to attract interest and attention, and two documents held in Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University Library and Archives, not previously known to scholars, provide new information about the books that Gibbon owned. These are an invoice from his London bookbinder, Joseph Hall, for 1773–1776, and an invoice from his Lausanne bookseller, Jules Henri Pott, for 1793. The article provides transcriptions of these two documents, examines their contents, and discusses their importance for our understanding of Gibbon's library.

Résumé

La bibliothèque d'Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) a joué un rôle fondamental dans son travail historique, et il n'aurait pu rédiger sans elle sa riche histoire *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1778) (*Histoire de la décadence et de la chute de l'Empire romain* : traduction de l'anglais publiée en 1819). Sa bibliothèque continue de susciter l'intérêt et l'attention, et deux documents conservés à la Division des livres rares et collections spécialisées, Bibliothèque et Archives de l'Université McGill, auparavant inconnus des chercheurs-boursiers, fournit de nouvelles informations sur les livres que possédait

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Gibbon. Il s'agit d'une facture de son relieur à London, Joseph Hall, pour la période 1773–1776, et d'une facture de son libraire à Lausanne, Jules Henri Pott, pour l'année 1793. L'article présente une transcription de ces deux documents, examine leur contenu et discute de leur importance pour notre compréhension de la bibliothèque de Gibbon.

Introduction

Edward Gibbon's library was fundamental to his historical work and he could not have written his great history *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1778) without it. The total number of books that Gibbon owned can only be guessed at, but it must have been in the neighbourhood of 10,000 volumes. While Gibbon's library continues to attract the interest of scholars, and attention from book dealers, and readers, our knowledge of his books is largely due to Geoffrey Keynes who in 1940 published a catalogue of his library.¹ Two documents held in Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University Library and Archives, not previously known to scholars, provide new information about the books that Gibbon owned. These are an invoice from his London bookbinder, Joseph Hall, for 1773–1776, and an invoice from his Lausanne bookseller, Jules Henri Pott, for 1793. The Hall invoice is for books that Gibbon acquired after settling in London and beginning work on the history. The Pott invoice is for books Gibbon acquired in the last months of his life just before leaving his home in Lausanne for London.

Gibbon was born in 1737 at Putney, Surrey. He suffered from poor health during his early years, and after a stay at Bath to improve his health, he was sent to Magdalen College, Oxford, at the age of 15. He was unhappy, and later rued his 14 months there as the “most idle and unprofitable” of his life. On 8 June 1753 Gibbon converted to Roman Catholicism, and within weeks of his conversion, he was removed from Oxford and sent to live under the care and tutelage of Daniel Pavillard, Reformed pastor at Lausanne, Switzerland. It was here that he made one of his life's two great friendships, that

¹ Geoffrey Keynes, *The Library of Edward Gibbon: A Catalogue of his Books* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1940); *The Library of Edward Gibbon: A Catalogue of his Books* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1950); and *The Library of Edward Gibbon: A Catalogue* (Godalming, UK: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1980). References are to the 1980 edition unless otherwise specified.

of Jacques Georges Deyverdun. Just a year and a half later, after his father threatened to disinherit him, he reconverted to Protestantism on Christmas Day, 1754.

Gibbon returned to England in 1758, and he published his first book, *Essai sur l'Étude de la Littérature* in 1761. He served in the South Hampshire militia, and then in 1763 he embarked on the Grand Tour. When in Lausanne he met John Baker Holroyd (later Lord Sheffield) his second great friend. He returned to London in 1765. It was during this time on the continent that the Roman history had its origins and Gibbon records the occasion in his *Memoirs*: "It was at Rome, on the 15th of October 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the bare-footed friars were signing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind. But my original plan was circumscribed to the decay of the city rather than of the empire: and, though my reading and reflections began to point towards that object, some years elapsed, and several avocations intervened, before I was seriously engaged in the execution of that laborious work."²

On the death of his father in 1770 and the settlement of the estate, Gibbon moved in 1772 to London to 7 Bentinck Street, where he installed his library, and began the writing of the Roman history, the first volumes appearing in 1776. From 1774 until 1780, Gibbon was the Member of Parliament for Liskeard in Cornwall. In 1783, he removed to Lausanne to live with his friend Georges Deyverdun, where he would remain except for a short interval in London to oversee the publication of the final volumes of the history. Deyverdun's death in 1789 left Gibbon alone in their home until his return to England in 1793 on the death of the wife of his friend Lord Sheffield. Gibbon died the following January.³

Gibbon made no provision for the preservation of his library in his will; instead, he instructed his executors to sell his Lausanne library⁴ and it was dispersed. In 1777 Gibbon had a catalogue of his library prepared and this gives almost 3,300 volumes (3,226+) and 1,920 titles. This catalogue is in the British Library. Ten years later, in 1788, Gibbon wrote in his *Memoirs of My Life and Writings* of his

² Edward Gibbon, *Memoirs of My Life and Writings* in *Miscellaneous Works* (Basel, Switzerland: J. J. Tournaisen, 1796), vol. I, 127. See also *Memoirs of My Life*, edited by Betty Radice (London: Folio Society, 1991), 149.

³ For these biographical notes, see the Encyclopædia Britannica online: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edward-Gibbon> (consulted 13 July 2018).

⁴ Keynes, 27.

“chosen library of between six and seven thousand volumes.”⁵ In the meantime, he had moved from London to Lausanne, and had left a considerable part of his library behind. A catalogue of the Lausanne library exists; it is on the verso of playing cards.⁶ This catalogue is also at the British Library. Geoffrey Keynes’s catalogue of Gibbon’s library details the complex story of the fate of Gibbon’s books. It is only necessary to mention here that Keynes’s work was prompted to no small extent by the final dispersal of parts of the library in a sale at Sotheby’s in London in 1934. For his reconstruction of the library, Keynes used the two catalogues (the 1777 one and the playing cards), and a number of sale catalogues. These included Dr. Schöll’s two catalogues, 1832 and 1833, Evans’s 1833 auction catalogue, the Jarvis Library auction catalogue of 1851, the Sotheby’s sale catalogue of 1934, and the Howe catalogue of 1936.⁷

The information provided by many of these sources was at best rudimentary, and at worst decidedly cryptic: abbreviated titles, shortened forms of personal names, and truncated imprint information, all of which are common in older catalogues and book lists. The playing card catalogue, for example, provides the author’s name, a short title, place of publication, format, and date.⁸ However, determining what title each entry represents traditionally has required a wide knowledge of published works generally, specialized subject knowledge, and a spark of inspiration. Despite the problems, Keynes’s published catalogue provides a great deal of information about the books—most have been identified as to edition and sometimes there are notes of bookplates, bindings, and current owners. According to my count, there are 2,873 entries for monographs, serials, government documents, and maps and 600 entries for tracts bound in composite volumes in Keynes’s catalogue.

When Keynes’s catalogue was published in 1940, the attention of most people was occupied elsewhere, and many copies of the book were destroyed in the Blitz. A reprint was issued in 1950 by the Bibliographical Society, London. A new edition—a photolithographic copy of Keynes’s own annotated copy—was issued in 1980.⁹ This new edition included some new information from a manuscript catalogue of Gibbon’s library held at the Morgan Library in New York, which

⁵ *Memoires of My Life*, 190. See also Radice, 178, and Keynes, 23.

⁶ Keynes, 23.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

also contained several corrections. However, it did not take account of the 1975 article by Bernard Breslauer on Gibbon's Lausanne bookbinder in which he identified a number of additional titles that had been in Gibbon's library.¹⁰ Nor did this new edition make use of the two documents at McGill that are the subject of this study.

The Hall Invoice

The first of these McGill documents is an invoice from the bookbinder Joseph Hall for work done for Gibbon between 1773 and 1776. The Hall invoice (MSG 0573) was acquired in April 1931 from Goodspeed's Book Shop, Boston, for \$5.00. It was listed in the 1962 catalogue *European & American Manuscripts*¹¹ where it was item 71 in the "Non-Canadian Miscellany." It covers work done almost immediately after Gibbon settled into his house in Bentinck Street in December 1772.¹² Hall was a bookbinder, bookseller, and stationer located in the Strand, London, and active between about 1761 and his death in 1780.¹³ The invoice consists of one folded foolscap sheet with entries on three pages and with a docket on the fourth. The latter reads: Edw^d Gibbon Esq^{re} | per | £25.17.2. A transcription of this invoice is provided in the appendix of this article. In all, there are 85 entries for some 239 volumes bound at the cost of £25.17.2.¹⁴ The work that Hall did falls into three groups: 19 unspecified bindings (5 entries), 6 volumes of pamphlets and tracts (3 entries), and 77 identifiable titles. It is these latter that are of particular interest.

Although everything listed in the invoice should be found in the Keynes catalogue, as the latter has as one of its key components the catalogue Gibbon had prepared of his library in 1777, there are problems. Identification and matching is not always straightforward. Because there is no detailed discussion in Keynes's catalogue of the extent of the bibliographic information contained in the 1777 manuscript catalogue, it is not clear how much of the published bibliographic information comes from Gibbon and how much is the

¹⁰ B. H. Breslauer, "Valentin Kraer, Gibbon's Bookbinder at Lausanne," *Book Collector* 24 (1975): 97–105. See below for further discussion.

¹¹ McGill University Library, Special Collections I (Montreal, 1962).

¹² Keynes, 19.

¹³ British Book Trade Index (<http://bbti.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>) consulted 11 May 2018.

¹⁴ Compare this amount with the £134 12s Gibbon spent on bookbinding in the single month of July 1785 (Keynes, 23).

result of the identifications made by Keynes and his collaborator R. A. Skelton. In most cases, this lack of precision on Keynes's part does not matter a great deal but in some cases, it does call into question the published identification. Some examples will be found in the discussion that follows. The two compilers would have been working with bibliographic information that was at times rudimentary. The same is true of the Hall invoice, the entries are very brief—literally “key words”—and it is probable that many of the 1777 catalogue entries are equally brief. The entries in the invoice follow a standard format: date, brief author/title, number of volumes if more than one, format, binding—usually calf with gilt lettered spines—and cost.

Most identifications are fairly straightforward, as in the case of the second item on the invoice (see the transcription in the appendix). The entry for 21 June 1774 (no. 2) reads: “Pagii Critica 4 vols f^o. C Gilt” (see Figure 1). This is easily identified as “Pagi, A. Critica historico-chronologica in universos annales ecclesiasticos Baronii, Antwerp, 1727,” on page 211 of Keynes. Other entries require a close reading of the catalogue. For example, item 5, “Mellieurs Contes 8^{vo} C G^l” takes some work to identify. In this case, persistent reading of the published catalogue eventually turned up the correct entry: “[Sautreau de Marsy, C.S.] Recueil des meilleurs contes en vers, Geneva, 1774” on page 246. The same situation presents itself with item 6, “Egyptiones & Chirses [*sic*] 2 vol 12^{mo} C. G^l.” This proves to be “[Pauw, C. de]. Recherches philosophiques sur les Égyptiens et les Chinois, Berlin, 1773,” on page 215.

Edw. Gibbon Esq.			To Joseph Hall Esq.	
July 29	1 vol annual Register half double	1. 6		
June 21	binding Pagii Critica 4 vols f ^o C Gilt	1. 1.		
	d ^o Voyage de montagne C Gilt 4 ^o	3. 6		
	d ^o Solles de Dorat 8 ^{mo} C Gilt	2. 6		
	d ^o meilleurs contes 8 ^{vo} C Gilt	2. 1.		
	d ^o Egyptiones & Chirses 2 vol 12 ^{mo} C Gilt	1. 6		
August 23	d ^o Nouvelles de Voltaire 24 Tom 4 ^o C Gilt	4. 4.		
Octob 27	d ^o Histoire des Indes 7 vol 8 ^{vo}	11. 8		

Figure 1. The top portion of page 1 of the Hall invoice, 1773
(Rare Books, McGill University Library).

However, in other cases there are difficulties in identification. For example, for item 48, "Heineccio Elementa Jur. Civiles 8^{vo} C Gilt." Keynes lists two editions with similar titles on page 147: "Heinecke, J.G. Elementa juris civilis secundum ordinem Institutorum, Leyden, 1751" and "Elementa juris civilis secundum ordinem Pandectarum, Utrecht, 1772." However, the invoice suggests that it is the first title that is meant, the second title is in two volumes. More problematic is the identification of item 76: "Smiths Nations 2 vols 12^[mo] C G^t neat." The difficulty here is the format. Keynes on page 252 lists "Smith, Adam. An Inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of Nations, 2 vol., 4^o London, 1776." In this case the invoice is probably wrong, as there is no recorded edition of Smith in 12^{mo}. Finally, items 42 and 78 presents two possibilities: "Chandlers Travels 4^o C G^t." This could be either "Chandler, Richard. Travels in Asia Minor, Oxford, 1775" or "Travels in Greece, Oxford, 1776" on page 92. One entry has proven to be unidentifiable: item 52, "Richard [?] 2 vol. 18^{mo} C Gilt." The only entry in Keynes that approximates this is on page 237: "Richard, Jérôme. Histoire naturelle, civile et politique du Tonquin, Paris, 1778." But from the date, this is clearly impossible, and the format is also wrong. This work by the Abbé Richard does not appear in the 1777 manuscript catalogue of Gibbon's library, appearing only in the Lausanne catalogue and in the Schöll sale catalogues. The only thing that is certain is that Gibbon had a work in his library that his binder identified by the name Richard.

There are more significant difficulties in identification. Item 50, "Lettere di Barretti 12^{mo} C Gilt" might be identified with "Lettere familiari, Venice, 1763" on page 63 of Keynes, but the number of volumes and the format are wrong. Even greater difficulties are posed by entry 69, "Countess du Basne [?] 12^[mo.] C G^t" (see Figure 2). There are two possible identifications: "[Choisy, F. T. de.] Historie de Madame la comtesse Des Barres, Amsterdam, 1735" on page 95, or "[Mairobert, M.F.P. de.] Anecdotes sur la comtesse Du Barri, London, 1775" on page 188. In both cases the format matches and the answer will depend on how one reads the handwriting of the invoice. A final example presents a situation where no reading of the printed catalogue could provide an answer; what is item 71 "Aptatus melivitanus demy f^o Calf G^t neat"? This title was only identified by a keyword search of "melivitanus" as "Optatus, Saint. De schismate Donatistarum, Paris, 1700" on page 209 of the catalogue.

The Hill invoice also documents Gibbon's purchase of "odd" volumes, either as ongoing additions to a series or as single volumes

1776		Brought Forward	£ 20. 2. 2
1	Solindeng Voyage En arabic 4 ^o 4 ^l to pattern	3. 6	
2	Grafte Poems 4 ^o 4 ^l gilt	4. 2	
3	Nolo Annual Register & double list of Registers	1. 6	
4	Oeuvres de Bayle 4 vols 8 ^o new backs gilt	10. 2	
5	Bentley Vie de marcel de medice 3 vols 8 ^o 8 ^l gilt	5. 2	
6	d ^o Douglas Peckens 2 vols 8 ^o 4 ^l gilt	3. 4	
7	d ^o Gentile du Bassin 12 d ^o	1. 4	
8	d ^o L'Esprit monomenteur 12 ^{mo} d ^o	1. 4	
9	d ^o L'apologie melvitarque demy 8 ^o 4 ^l gilt	7. 2	

Figure 2. The top portion of page 3 of the Hall invoice, 1776
(Rare Books, McGill University Library).

that had become available. These include item 7, “Oeuvres de Voltaire 24 Tom 4^o C Gilt.” Keynes on page 279 has “Collection complete, Geneva 1768–1777; note: vol. i–xxiv have book-plate, Bentinck Street catalogue,” but clearly only some volumes of the complete set were being bound in 1774. And item 19, “Mem. de L’Acad de Belles lett^d 2 vol 4^o C G^v” appears in Keynes, page 44, as “Mémoires littérature, vol. 1–43, Paris, 1736–86.” Another example concerns Buffon. His works appear in the invoice as items 31 and 35: “2 vols Buffon 4^o C G^t patten,” and “1 Vol Buffon C G^t Patten 4^o”; these are Keynes page 81, “Buffon, G.L. Le Clerc, comte de. Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière, 35 vol., Paris, 1749–88.” Clearly, Gibbon is purchasing volumes as they appeared. He was also purchasing “second-hand” titles not in the best condition. The four-volume edition of the *Oeuvres diverses* (1727–1731) of Pierre Bayle (item 66) had to be re-backed (on Keynes page 65).

The Hill invoice also suggests that Gibbon did not always keep track of his purchases, with the result that there are duplicates. It would appear that he purchased two copies of items 23 and 24, “L’Empire Russe 12^{mo} C G^v” [Keynes 52, “Anville, J. B. B. d’. L’Empire de Russie, son origine, et ses accroissemens, Paris, 1772”], and “L’Empire Turc 12^{mo} C G^v” [Keynes 52, “Anville, J. B. B. d’. L’Empire turc considéré dans son établissement et dans ses accroissemens successifs, Paris, 1772”]. These titles also figure in the invoice as items 32 and 33.

The Keynes catalogue is also responsible for the creation of at least two ghosts, or at least a phantom and a real ghost. Item 37, “Œuvres de Rousseau 3 Vol 12^{mo} C GI^{re}” was identified by Keynes on page 240 as “Rousseau, J. J. Œuvres diverses, Amsterdam, 3 vol. 1734.” No such work by Jean-Jacques Rousseau is recorded and the date is far too early for someone born in 1712. Clearly this is the widely held edition of Jean-Baptiste Rousseau the playwright and poet (1671–1741). A true ghost is item 75, “Letters De Clement 2 vol. 8^o C Gilt” identified by Keynes on page 98 as an edition of the letters of Popes Clement VIII and IX (1592–1605, 1667–1669) dated 1775. In fact, these volumes are the last parts of J.M.B. Clement’s nine volume *Lettres à Monsieur de Voltaire*, published over 1773–1776 and probably acquired by Gibbon in parts, which may account for some of Keynes’s confusion. The complete edition of Clement’s *Lettres à Monsieur de Voltaire* is the following item in Keynes’s catalogue.

The Hall invoice provides clear evidence for Gibbon’s book purchases in the little over three years that it covers. These were years that the history was being written and that Gibbon was a member of Parliament. Many of the titles were clearly acquired to support of the writing of the history; among others, see for example, nos. 2 (Pagi), 26 (*Historiæ Augustæ scriptores*), 36 (Abû al-Fidâ), 49 (Mosheim), and 71 (Optatus). At least twelve of the acquisitions were most probably acquired to support of his parliamentary duties; for example, nos. 16 (American Tracts), 20 (Parliamentary Reports), 21 (Pownall’s British Colonies), 45 (Election Laws in Scotland), 46 (Remarks on Acts 13th Parliament), 53–58 (various tracts), and 68 (Douglas Elections). The volumes of the *Annual Register* were for general reference. Even more titles reflect a general interest in the culture and literature of the day as the Louis-Sébastien Mercier novel (85) makes clear. But there were also copies of Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey* (51), Gray’s poems (64), as well as various continental authors including Jean-Baptiste Rousseau (37). Gibbon was also acquiring ongoing publications; there are a number of volumes of Buffon listed in the invoice (31 and 35), as are the first 24 volumes of the 30-volume Geneva edition of Voltaire, only completed in 1777 (7). Gibbon was a very active acquirer and user of books and was interested in their appearance: neat calf bindings with gilt spines filled his shelves.¹⁵

What this invoice permits, is an extended view of Gibbon’s book buying during a defined period. This is something that the catalogue

¹⁵ Breslauer, 99.

does not allow for, as it only provides a overview of the complete library. It also gives a better sense of just how varied Gibbon's interests were because of its limited timeframe. Gibbon was very much an omnivore when it came to acquiring books.

The Pott Invoice

The second document from the McGill collection is an invoice dated May 1793 from the Lausanne bookseller Jules Henri Pott for titles supplied to Gibbon from the first of the year. The Pott invoice was part of the autograph letter collection formed by Mrs. Charlotte (J. B.) Learmont (b. 1845) of Montreal and received by the library at some time before her death in 1934. Her collection of some 500 items focused primarily on authors of the 19th century. It also contained another Gibbon item, an invoice dated 14 July 1786, from the Lausanne lumber merchant Charles Guyaz for shelving, no doubt for books. These items are part of the Autograph Letter Collection, Rare Books and Special Collections. Pott was one of Gibbon's principal booksellers in Lausanne, but only three other invoices have been preserved, dated 1784–1786, 1786, and 1788–1789.¹⁶ B. H. Breslauer, in his article "Valentine Kraer, Gibbon's Bookbinder at Lausanne," suggests that the dearth of evidence for acquisitions in the latter years of Gibbon's life, after 1789, may be due at least in part to the completion of the *Decline* in 1787 and the publication of the final volumes in London in 1788.¹⁷ He writes, "There are few references to continued book purchases in his correspondence ... there were only about thirty works published after 1789 in his library, apart from some continuations of earlier publications," and after June 1789 "both booksellers and binders bills cease."¹⁸ The McGill invoice for 1793 suggests a rather different picture of Gibbon's continued interest in his library; perhaps he also continued to buy books between 1789 and 1793.

The invoice is for four titles and covers the period 28 January to 6 March 1793 (see Figure 3). The titles are as follows (all amounts are in "argent de France"):

¹⁶ Breslauer, 97, note 5. They are in the British Library Add MS 34, 715.

¹⁷ Ibid., 100.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Figure 3. The top half of the Pott invoice, 1793
(Rare Books, McGill University Library).

- 28^e Janv. 1. Viaggi di Gemelli 8°. 9 vol. fig. £36
1. Mazzuchelli scrittori d'Italia fol. 6 vol. 84
2^e Mars 1. Tiraboschi storia della letteratura italiana tome 7^m pars
3^m 8
6^e 1. Scriptores erotici graeci tomus 1^{us} 8 [?] 4.1

These titles are respectively as follows:

1. Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Carreri, *Agguenta a viaggi di Europa*, Venice, 1719, 9 vols. This is a standard collection of travels, so it is surprising that Gibbon only acquired a copy in 1793.
2. Giammaria Mazzuchelli, *Gli scrittori di Italia*, Brescis, 1753–1763, 6 vols. Mazzuchelli's (1707–1765) bio-bibliography had only reached the end of the letter “B” at the time of the author's death.
3. Girolamo Tiraboschi, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, Modena, 1786–1790, 10 vols. Only this title on the invoice appears in the Keynes catalogue (page 268), and Gibbon was clearly acquiring it in parts. He also had Tiraboschi's *Histoire de la literature d'Italie* (Berne, 1784) in his library.¹⁹

¹⁹ Keynes, 268.

4. Christoph Wilhelm Mitscherlich, *Scriptores erotici Graeci*, Bipont, 1792–1798, 3 vols. Mitscherlich's (1760–1854) work is evidence of Gibbon's continued interest in Greek literature; only volume one of this edition of love stories and erotica was published in his lifetime.

Of these four titles, two—Gemelli and Mazzuchelli—were older publications (1719 and 1753–1763); the other two were recent. The Tiraboschi had finished publication in 1790 and the Mitscherlich was in the process of being published. These purchases do not suggest a flagging interest by Gibbon in his library; in the space of a little over a month he had added four titles comprising 10 volumes to his library. Clearly, both older materials that he had not yet acquired, and new publications were of interest. Furthermore, that three of the titles do not appear in the Keynes catalogue adds to the importance of this invoice.

The invoice adds to our understanding of Gibbon's buying practices. The Keynes catalogue records that Gibbon had the complete Tiraboschi *Storia* in 10 volumes. What the invoice suggests is that he was buying it in parts, unless he had a specific reason for wanting a separate copy of volume 7, part 3. Neither we nor Keynes can know for certain from the evidence in-hand, but the invoice suggests the former. It also confirms and complements the impression of Gibbon's book buying practices that were revealed by the Hall invoice. The Pott invoice suggests that there is still more to learn about the contents of Gibbon's library.

A final remark about this invoice is worth making. Gibbon passed it for payment on 5 May 1793, five days before he left on what was to be his final trip to England. He arrived there at Dover on 2 June to join his friend Lord Sheffield, the death of whose wife in April was the reason for the trip. Gibbon would die in London on the following 16 January 1794. These four titles may well have been the last that Gibbon acquired for his library.

Conclusion

These two invoices provide important information about Gibbon's library. They make it possible to update some of the entries in the Keynes catalogue, and perhaps, more importantly, to increase our knowledge and understanding of the contents of Gibbon's library; of

how he acquired books and how he had them bound for his shelves. Furthermore, having a more complete picture of Gibbon's library adds to our understanding of the contents of libraries, both personal and institutional, in the 18th century.

Gibbon's library continues to attract our interest because Gibbon himself is one of the more engaging figures of the 18th century. His history of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* still attracts readers even 250 years after its first publication. This is largely, I believe, due to the personality of the writer and his command of English prose. And this attraction continues to move readers' interest from the volumes of the history to the writer himself, and to the books in his library. Volumes from his library are always so-identified in booksellers' catalogues and in auction catalogues and have found their way into libraries around the world.²⁰ Documents such as the Hill and Pott invoices not only add to our understanding of Gibbon's library but also contribute to our appreciation of the man himself. In many ways the most modest of authors, Gibbon still commands our attention and provides opportunities to undertake new explorations of the man himself and of his library.

Author Biography

Richard Virr, PhD, joined Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University in 1984, and from 2006 to 2016 was Chief Curator. He retired in February 2017. He also taught Descriptive Bibliography at McGill for twenty years. He is currently a collaborator on the *La bibliothèque du Collège royal de La Flèche* website based at UQAM. He was co-curator with Professor Brenda Dunn-Lardeau (UQAM) of the 2018 exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, "Resplendissantes enluminures : Livres d'heures du XIII^e au XVI^e siècle dans les collections du Québec / Resplendent Illuminations: Books of Hours from the 13th to the 16th Century in Quebec Collections."

²⁰ Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University Library and Archives has one volume from Gibbon's library: C.G.M Denina, *Discoro sopra le vicende della letteratura*. 8°. Glasgow: Foulis, 1763 (Keynes, 109). Calf; Gibbon's armorial bookplate, with a few references in Gibbon's hand in the lower margins. Bentinck Street catalogue; Hodgson's, 21 Jan. 1937, lot 438 (Elkin Mathews); Sotheby's, 26 June 1948, lot 166. McGill: ZY D41 Cutter. Acc no.: 447645.

Appendix

Invoice from Joseph Hall, 1773–1776, MSG 573

One folded sheet of laid paper/ 4 leaves (33 x 22 mm). Watermark: Pro Patria [VRYHEYT] (cf. Churchill, 93) no text / Countermark: Crown in circle with letters E S (?).²¹

This is a simplified quasi-facsimile transcription of the Hall Invoice. Square brackets are used to indicate added words and words represented by ditto marks. Each entry is followed, also in square brackets, by the relevant entry in Keynes's catalogue. The numbers in the left-hand column have been added for reference purposes.

[1 ^r]		Edw ^d Gibbon Esq ^r . To Joseph Hall Cs ^t [?]			
[No]	[Date]	[Title]	[Cost]	[£]	[s] [d]
	1773				
1	July 29 th 1774	To binding 1 vol Annual Register Calf double Lett ^d [Keynes, 50 (Annual Register. vol. 1–27. Index to vol. 1–23. 8°. London, 1761–87)]		1	6
2	June 21	[To] binding Pagii Critica 4 vols f°. C Gilt [Keynes, 211 (Pagi, A. Critica historico-chronologica in universos annales ecclesiasticos Baronii. 4 vol. fol. Antwerp, 1727)]	1	1	
3		[T. b.] Voyages de montaigne C Gilt 4° [Keynes, 200 (Montaigne, M. de. Journal du voyage de M. de Montaigne en Italie. 4°. Rome and Paris, 1774)]		3	6
4		[T. b.] Fables de Dorat R 8 ^{vo} C G ^t [Keynes, 113 (Dorat, C.J. Fables. 8°. The Hague, 1772)]		2	6
5		[T. b.] Mellieurs Contes 8 ^{vo} [C G ^t] [Keynes, 246 ([Sautreau de Marsy, C.S.] Recueil des meilleurs contes en vers. 8°. Geneva, 1774)]		2	

²¹ W. A. Churchill, *Watermarks in Paper in Holland, England, France, etc. in the XVII and XVIII Centuries and their Interconnection* (Amsterdam: M. Hertzberger, 1935, c1965), LXIII.

6		[T. b.] Egyptones & Chirses [<i>sic</i>] 2 vol 12 ^{mo} C. G ^t [Keynes, 215 ([Pauw, C. de.] Recherches philosophiques sur les Égyptiens et les Chinois. 2 vol. 12°. Berlin, 1773)]		1	6
7	August 23	[T. b.] Oeuvres de Voltaire 24 Tom 4 ^o C Gilt [Keynes, 279 (Voltaire, F.M.A. de. Collection complete des œuvres. 30 vol. 4°. Geneva 1768–1777); note: vols. i-xxiv have book-plate, Bentinck Street catalogue]	4	4	
8	Octob ^{re} 27	[T. b.] Histoire des Indies 7 vol 8 ^{vo} [Keynes, 234 (Raynal, G.T.F. Histoire philosophique et politique des établissemens et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes. 7 vol. 8°. The Hague, 1774)]		11	8
9		[T. b.] Essay on Language 8 ^{vo} [C Gilt] [Keynes, 199 ([Mitford, William.] An Essay on the harmony of language. 8°. London, 1774)]		1	8
10		[T. b.] State of Poland 8 ^{vo} [C Gilt] [Keynes 180 ([Lind, John.] Letters concerning the present state of Poland. 8°. London, 1773)]		1	87
11		[T. b.] Observation de Clement small 8 ^{vo} [C. Gilt] [Keynes, 98 (Clément, J.M.B. Nouvelles observations critiques sur différens sujets de littérature. 8°. Paris 1772)]		1	6
12		[T. b.] Annual Register for 1773 C lett ^d pattern [Keynes, 50]		1	6
13		[T. b.] Henry's History 4 ^o Calf double lett ^d [Keynes, 148 (Henry, Robert. The History of Great Britain, 5 vol. 4°. London, 1771)]		4	
14		[T. b.] 1 vol. ditto lett ^d only [Keynes, 148 (Henry, Robert)]			6
15	Nov ^r 12 th	To binding Opera di Goldoni 11 vols 8 ^{vo} Vell Gilt [cf Keynes, 136 (Goldoni, C. Delle commedie, 17 vol. 8°. Venice 1761)]	1	7	6
	1775				
16	Febry 4 th	[T. b.] ½ ditto 3 vol American Tracts 8 ^{vo} Cutt & lett ^d [cf. Keynes, 269]		3	
17		[T. b.] a Pamphlet		1	6
18	March 4	[T.] binding History of manchester 4 vol. C G ^t [Keynes, 283 (Whitaker, John. The History of Manchester, 2 vol. 4°. London, 1771, 1775); there is also a 2 nd edition corrected, 1773, London, John Murray, also in two vols., but 8°.]		3	6

19		[T. b.] Mem. de L'Acad de Belles lett ^d 2 vol 4° C G ^t m leaves [?] [Keynes, 44 (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Mémoires de littérature, vol. 1-43. 4°. Paris, 1736-86)]		9	
20		[T. b.] Parliamentary Repts 8 ^{vo} C G ^t [cf. Keynes, 213-214 where 15 publications are listed; this is possibly: Report from the Select Committee appointed to try the merits of the petition complaining of an undue election for the borough of Hindon, Wilts. fol. London, 1775, but the format doesn't agree]		1	8
21		[T. b.] Pownells British Colonies 2 vol 8° [C G ^t] [cf. Keynes, 229 (Pownall, Thomas. The Administration of the colonies. 8°. London, 1774)]		3	4
22		[T. b.] Messieurs Itien D'Anville 8° [C G ^t] [Keynes 52 (Anville, J.B.B. d'. Traité des mesures itinéraires. 8°. Paris, 1769)]		1	8
23		[T. b.] L'Empire de Russie 12 ^{mo} [C G ^t] [Keynes, 52 (Anville, J.B.B. d'. L'Empire de Russie, son origine, et ses accroissemens. 12°. Paris, 1772)]		1	3
24		[T. b.] [L'Empire] Turc 12 ^{mo} [C G ^t] [Keynes, 52 (Anville, J.B.B. d'. L'Empire turc considéré dans son établissement et dans ses accroissemens successifs. 12°. Paris, 1772)]		1	3
25	May 6	[T.] ½ binding Novaes Orbie Gryacia Cutt [Gilt?] Lett ^d [Keynes, 140 (Grynaeus, S. Nouus orbis.regionum ac insularum veteribus incognitarum. fol. Basle, 1555)]		3	
26	[May] 12	[T.] binding Historiae Augustea f° C Gilt [Keynes, 59 (Augustan History, Historiae Augustæ scriptores sex. C. Salmasius recensuit. fol. Paris, 1620)]		6	6
27		[T. b.] Walpoles Painter 4° [C Gilt] [Keynes, 280 (Walpole, Horace. Anecdotes of painting in England, 5 vol.4°. Strawberry Hill, 1762-71)]. One vol. only?		3	6
28		[T. b.] Johnsons Journey 8 ^{vo} [C Gilt] [Keynes, 161 (Johnson, Samuel. A Journey to the western islands of Scotland. 8°. London 1775)]		1	8

29		[T. b.] Jones's Poeseos Asiatic 8 ^{vo} [C Gilt] [Keynes, 163 (Jones, Sir William. Poeseos Asiaticæ commentariorum libri sex. 8 ^o . London, 1774)]		1	8
		Carried Forw ^d £	10	8	6
[1 ^v]	1775	Brought Forward £	10	8	6
30	May 26	To binding 4 Vols Hist de France 12 ^{mo} C G ^t [Keynes, 196 (Mémoires particuliers pour servir à l'histoire de France. 4 vol. 12 ^o . Paris 1756)]		5	
31		[T.] binding 2 vols Buffon 4 ^o C G ^t Patten [Keynes, 81 (Buffon, G.L. Le Clerc, comte de. Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière. 35 vol. 4 ^o . Paris, 1749–88)]		7	
32	June 7	[T. b.] Empire de Turc 12 ^{mo} [C G ^t] [Keynes (1940), 52, (Anville, J.B.B. d'. L'Empire turc considéré dans son établissement et dans ses accroissements successifs. 12 ^o . Paris, 1772)], a second copy? See #24.		1	3
33		[T. b.] Empire de Russie 12 ^{mo} [C G ^t] [Keynes, 52, (Anville, J.B.B. d'. L'Empire de Russie, son origine, et ses accroissemens, 12 ^o . Paris, 1772)], a second copy? See #23.		1	3
34		[T. b.] Letters de Sévigné 1 vol 12 ^{mo} C Extra [Keynes, 249 (Sévigné, Marie de. Lettres nouvelles ou nouvellement recouvrées. 12 ^o . Paris, 1773)]		1	8
35	[June] 14	[T. b.] 1 Vol Buffon C G ^t Patten 4 ^o [Keynes, 81 (Buffon, G.L. Le Clerc, comte de. Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière. 35 vol. 4 ^o . Paris, 1749–88)]		3	6
36	[June] 20	[T. b.] Abul feda Mohammedis G ^t f ^o Calf Extra [Keynes, 43 (Abû al-Fidâ. De vita et rebus gestis Mohammedis. Latine vertit J. Gagnier. fol. Oxford, 1723)]		6	
37	Aug st 1	[T. b.] Oeuvres de Rousseau 3 Vol 12 ^{mo} C G ^t [cf. Keynes, 240 (J.J. Rousseau, Œuvres diverses, Amsterdam 3 vol. 12 ^o . 1734; but this is clearly not Jean Jacques Rousseau but Jean Baptiste Rousseau]		4	
38		[T. b.] Sleidens memoire 4 ^o C G ^t Pattern [Keynes, 252 (Sleidanus, J. Histoire de la Réformation, 3 vol. 4 ^o . The Hague, 1767)].		3	6

39		Thunia Opera 7 vols f ^o Red leaves, fresh Gilt Lett ^d etc. [?] [Keynes, 267 (Thou, J.A. Historiarum sui temporis libri CXXXVIII. 7 vol. fol. London, 1733)]		17	6
40		Xenophon 5 vols 8 ^{vo} [Red leaves, fresh Gilt Lett ^d] [Keynes, 286 (Xenophon. Opera quæ extant omnia. 5 vol. 8 ^o . Oxford, 1700-03)]		2	6
41	[August] 22	binding Woods Homer 4 ^o C Gilt [Keynes, 285 (Wood, Robert. An essay on the original genius and writings of Homer. 4 ^o . London, 1775)]		4	6
42		[T. b.] Chandlers Travels [4 ^o C Gilt] [Keynes, 92 Chandler, Richard. Travels in Asia Minor. 4 ^o . Oxford, 1775)]		4	
43		[T. b.] Viaggio in Dalmazia sm 4 ^o [C Gilt] [Keynes, 127 (Fortis A. Viaggio in Dalmazia. 2 vol. 4 ^o . Venice, 1774)]		3	6
44		[T. b.] Chesterfields Letters 4 vols 8 ^{vo} [C Gilt] [Keynes, 94 (Chesterfield, P.D., Stanhope, earl of. Letters to his son. 4 vol. 8 ^o . London, 1774)]		8	
45		[T. b.] Election Laws in Scotland 8 ^{vo} [C Gilt] [cf. Keynes, 285 (Wright, - . 'On the election laws.' 8 ^o . Edinburgh, 1773)]		2	
46		[T. b.] Remarks on Acts 13 th Parliam ^t 8 ^{vo} C Gilt [Keynes, 180 ([Lind, John.] Remarks on the principal acts of the thirteenth Parliament of Great Britain. 8 ^o . London, 1775)]		2	
47		[T. b.] Traite des Loix Civiles 8 ^{vo} C Gilt [Keynes, 221 ([Pilati de Tassulo, C.A. de.] Traité des lois civiles. 2 vol. 8 ^o . The Hague, 1774)]		2	
48		[T. b.] Heineccio Elementa Jur. Civiles [8 ^{vo} C Gilt] [Keynes, 147 (Heinecke, J.G. Elementa juris civilis secundum ordinem Institutorum, 8 ^o .. Leyden, 1751)]		2	
49		[T. b.] Moshemii Disertation 2 vols 12 ^{mo} [C Gilt] [Keynes, 202 (Mosheim, J.L. von. Dissertationum ad historiam ecclesiasticam pertinentium volume primum (alterum), 2 vol. 8 ^o . Altona and Lubeck, 1767)]		3	

50		[T. b.] Lettere di Barretti 12 ^{mo} [C Gilt] [cf. Keynes, 63 (Barretti, G.M.A Lettere familiari a' suoi Fratelli. 2 vol. 8°. Venice, 1763;)] but this is unlikely as both the number of volumes and format are wrong.		1	6
51		[T. b.] Sentimental Journey 2 vols 12 ^{mo} [C Gilt] [Keynes, 257 (Sterne, Laurence. A Sentimental journey through France and Italy. 12°. London, 1768)]		3	
52		[T. B.] Richard [?] 2 vol. 18 ^{mo} [C Gilt] [cf. Keynes, 237 (Richard, Jérôme. Histoire naturelle, civile et politique du Tonquin. 2 vol. 12°. Paris, 1778,)] but the date is impossible.		2	6
53		½ binding 1 vol. Tracts 8 ^{vo} Cutt & Lett ^d		1	
54		[T. b.] 4 folios Gilt and lett ^d Cleaned &c		10	
55		[T. b.] 3 [folios gilt] & pieced up [?] back		10	
56		[T. b.] 4 Quartos [& pieced up [?] back]		8	
57		[T. b.] 6 Quartos [& pieced up] Cleaned		9	
58		[T. b.] 2 8 ^{vo} [pieced up Cleaned]		1	
59	[August] 28	[T.] binding Description de France f° Calf Edges [Keynes, 182 ([Longuerue, L.D. de.] Description historique et géographique de la France ancienne et moderne, 2 vol. fol. [Paris], 1722)]		8	
60	Octob ^{re} 2	[T. b.] Sigonii Opera Omnia 6 vols demy f° Calf Gilt [Keynes, 251 (Sigonio, C. Opera. 6 vol. fol. Milan, 1732–1737)]		2	5
61		[T.b.] Sanchez de matrimonio f° C G ^t [Keynes, 245 (Sanchez, T. Disputationum de sancto matrimonii sacramento tomi tres. fol. Amsterdam, 1617)]		7	
62		[T. b.] Homera Opera small f° [C G ^t] [Keynes, 152 (it is not clear which this might be, but the best possibility as it is a folio is: Homer. Homeri quæ extant omnia, cum Latina versione. fol. Geneva, 1606)]		6	
		Carried Forward £	20	2	2
[2 ⁷]	1776	Brought Forward £	20	2	2

63	Januy 2	To binding Voyage En Arabie 4° C G ^t to pattern [Keynes, 207 (Niebuhr, C. Voyage en Arabie. 2 vol. 4°. Amsterdam, 1776–80, 1st vol. only)]		3	6
64		[T. b.] Grays Poems 4° C Gilt [Keynes, 138 (Gray, Thomas. Poems. To which are prefixed memoirs of his life and writings by W. Mason. 4°. York, 1775)]		4	
65		[T. b.] 17 Vols Annual Register C double lett ^d & Registerd to pattern [Keynes, 50]		1	6
66	[January] 5	[T. b.] Oeuvres de Bayle 4 vols f° new backs & Gilt [Keynes, 65, (Bayle, Pierre. Œuvres diverses. 4 vol. fol. The Hague, 1727–31,)]		10	
67	[January] 15	[T.] binding Vie de marie de mediese 3 vols 8 ^{vo} C G ^t [Keynes, 54 ([Arconville, M.G.C.T. d'.] Vie de Marie de Médicis. 8 vol. 8°. Paris, 1774)]; an incomplete set.		5	
68		[T. b.] Douglas Elections 2 vols 8 ^{vo} C G ^t [Keynes, 113 (Douglas, Sylvester. The History of the cases of controverted elections during the first session of the fourteenth Parliament of Great Britain. 2 vol. 8°. London, 1775)]		3	4
69		[T. b.] Countess du Basne [?] 12 ^[mo] [C G ^t] [Keynes, 188 ([Mairobert, M.F.P. de.] Anecdotes sur la comtesse Du Barri. 12°. London, 1775)] but possibly 95 ([Choisy, F.T.] de Historie de Madame la comtesse Des Barres. 12°. Amsterdam, 1735)]		1	4
70		[T. b.] Severne monomenteis 12 ^{mo} [C G ^t] [Keynes, 248 (Severini, J. Pannonia veterum monumentis illustrata. 8°. Leipzig, 1770)]		1	4
71	[January] 25	[T. b.] Aptatus melivitanus demy f° Calf G ^t neat [Keynes, 209 (Optatus, Saint. De schismate Donatistarum, fol. Paris, 1700)]		7	
72	Febry 10	[T. b.] Macphersons Papers 2 vols 4° C Gilt [Keynes, 186 (Macpherson, James. Original papers containing the secret history of Great Britain., from the Restoration to the accession of the house of Hanover. 2vol. 4°. London, 1775)]		7	6
73		[T. b.] [Macphersons] History 2 vols 4° C Gilt [Keynes, 186 (Macpherson, James. The History of Great Britain. 2vol. 4°. London, 1775)]		7	6

74		[T. b.] Dalrimitives annals of Scotland 1 vols 4 ^o Calf Gilt [Keynes, 106 (Dalrymple Sir David. Annals of Scotland. 2 vol. 4 ^o . Edinburgh, 1776, 1779) first volume only]		3	9
75		[T. b.] Letters De Clement 2 vols 8 ^o C Gilt [Keynes, 98 (Clement VIII, Pope and Clement IX, Pope. "Lettres de Clément 8 ^{me} & 9 ^{me} ". 8 ^o . The Hague, 1775. [not identified.]), but far more likely is: Clément, J.M.B. Lettres à Monsieur de Voltaire, 9 vol. in 3. 8 ^o . The Hague, 1775]		3	9
76	July 10	[T. b.] Smiths Nations 2 vols 12 ^[mo] C G ^t neat [Keynes, 252 (Smith, Adam. An Inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations. 2 vol. 4 ^o . London, 1776)] note discrepancy in format		9	
77		[T. b.] Mickles Lusiad 4 ^[o] [C G ^t] [Keynes, 87 (Camoens, L. de. The Lusiad, translated by W. J. Mickle, Oxford 4 ^o . 1776)]		4	
78		[T. b.] Chandlers Travels 4 ^o [C G ^t] [Keynes, 92 (either: Chandler, Richard. Travels in Greece. 4 ^o . Oxford, 1776)]		4	
79		[T. b.] Campbells Philosophy 2 vols 8 ^{mo} [C G ^t] [Keynes, 87 (Campbell, George. The Philosophy of rhetoric. 2 vol., London, 1776)]		4	
80	Aug st 26	[T. b.] Whistons Memoirs 8 ^{vo} C lett ^d [Keynes, 283 (Whiston, William. Memoirs, London, 1773)]		1	6
81		[T. b.] Voyage de mandelsto [sic] f ^o C Extra [Keynes, 189 (Mandelslo, J.A. Voyages celebres et remarquable, fait de Perse aux Indes orientales, Leyden, 1718)]		6	
82		[T. b.] Voyage D'Oleasius folio [C Extra] [Keynes, 209 (Olearius, Adam. Voyage, fait en Moscovie, Tartarie, et Perse, Leyden, 1718)]		6	
83		[T. b.] Kercselich de Regnis Dalmatic f ^o [Keynes, 167 (Kercselich, B.A. De regnis Dalmatiæ, Croatiaë, Slavoniaë, Zagreb, 1771)]		5	
84	Sept ^r 13	[T. b.] Bibliographie Instructive 7 vols 8 ^{vo} C Extra [Keynes, 82 (Bure, G.F. de. Bibliographie instructive, 7 vols. Paris, 1763–1768)]		14	

85		[T. b.] L'an 2440 8 ^{vo} [C Extra] [Keynes, 196 [(Mercier, L.S.) L'An deux mille quatre cent quarante, rêve s'il en fût jamais. 8 ^o . London, 1772)		2	
		£	25	7	2
[2 ^v]		[Docketed] Edw ^d Gibbon Esq ^r £25.7.2			