PART 4

Libraries, Private and Public

Loss and Meaning. Lost Books, Bibliographic Description and Significance in a Sixteenth-Century Italian Private Library

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The concept of 'lost books' can have different meanings and inflections: the loss of a work (or group of works) by a single writer of which no original or copy (manuscripts or printed editions) or fragment survives; the loss of individual physical volumes, in other words, of copies of books; and the loss of an entire library, private or institutional (which can of course mean the loss of works as well as of notable individual copies of books). In all such cases, along with the actual books information and knowledge are lost as well to a greater or lesser extent.

The loss of individual copies or of an entire library can lead to the loss of information about the owner who acquired and possessed them. This is a common phenomenon in all periods. From Roman times to the twentieth century, obscure provincial men of letters, writers and scholars have owned libraries which have disappeared completely after their owners' deaths leaving no trace which can ever be recovered. In cases where the library as an entity has been dispersed but the copies which once belonged to it have survived, information about the owners frequently survives. The nature and significance of their lost libraries can be reconstructed using a variety of methods, for instance, surviving accounts, either direct or indirect, of a particular owner's habits of acquisition and interest in books. Our knowledge of the original collection can be reconstructed through the material evidence found in the copies themselves, as shown by the numerous studies based on tracing, identifying and recording notes of ownership, bookplates, stamps, bindings, etc. "because every copy of every edition of every book is evidence of a host of human interests and activities...since it continues long after the movements of the book trade that brought each book into existence".¹

In literature, as early as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the fictitious losses of invented books are satirised in mock-serious lists. What underpins

¹ Nicolas Barker, *Form and Meaning in the History of the Book. Selected Essays* (London: The British Library, 2003), p. 270.

such satires is the conviction that the loss is compensated for by the number of books which remain in circulation. Such losses can afford to be mocked because they only affect the strange creatures who are scholars.² But books, along with the structured collections of books which we call libraries, can be regarded as irreplaceable when they are seen as the expression of a given culture which they represent and express; when they are understood to be an integral and essential part of human memory, of which they are also of course a metaphor.³ If books are a reliable historical testimony to a certain historical culture, geographical region or individual, then their loss may be perceived as pluri-dimensional, affecting various levels of information. The material and economic loss means that it becomes impossible to acquire a full understanding of the historical context in which the owner/user of the library and his contemporaries existed.

Within this paradigm, the loss of books (texts, editions, copies) is tantamount to losing knowledge and memory: the owners of libraries together with the contents of those libraries are swallowed up by oblivion; what is removed or just disappears is irrecoverable in a way that amounts to both a cultural and intellectual loss, in other words of knowledge and of thought.⁴ The loss here spells a kind of moral damage, an affront to the sense of individual identity, comparable to the penalty of *damnatio memoriae* inflicted by Roman law which entailed the cancellation of someone's name and memory for posterity.⁵

- 2 Thomas Browne, *Certain miscellany tracts* (London: Charles Mearne-Henry Bonwick, 1684), pp. 193–215: *Tract XIII Museum Clausum, or Bibliotheca Abscondita*: among the lost bibliographical delights there is the list drawn up by Irish scholars of libraries in existence before Noah's Flood. On imaginary libraries and the history of ideas cf. Dirk Werle, *Copia librorum. Problemgeschichte imaginierter Bibliotheken 1580–1630* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2007); Paolo Albani, 'Cataloghi di libri immaginari', *L'oggetto libro* 2001, 6 (2002), pp. 200–215; Howard Phillips Lovecraft, *I racconti del Necronomicon* (Rome: Tascabili Immaginario Fanucci, 2002); *Necronomicon: storia di un libro che non c'è: a cura di Sergio Basile* (Rome: Fanucci, 2002).
- 3 Harald Weinrich, 'Metaphora memoriae', in Harald Weinrich, *Metafora e menzogna: la serenità dell'arte* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1976), pp. 31–48; Douwe Draaisma, *Metaphors of Memory. A History of ideas about the mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- 4 Peter Burke, *The Italian Renaissance. Culture and Society in Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 2: "By culture I mean essentially attitudes and values and their expression and embodiments in artefacts including texts and practices".
- 5 James Raven (ed.), *Lost libraries. The destruction of great book collections since antiquity* (Basingstoke-New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Matthew Fishburn, 'Books Are Weapons: Wartime Responses to the Nazi Bookfires of 1933', *Book History*, 10 (2007), pp. 223–251. On the connections between books, identity and destruction cf. Fernando Baéz, *Nueva historia universal de la destrucción de libros. De las tablillas sumerias a la era digital* (Barcelona: Destino, 2011); Lucien Xavier Polastron, *Livres en feu. Histoire de la destruction sans fin des bibliothèques* (Paris: Denoel, [2004]).

There are numerous reasons why books are lost: accidental, beyond our control, like fires or shipwrecks, or planned.⁶ Sometimes the loss is the unforeseen consequence of actions which are not aimed at destruction (such as a bequest which does not go to plan); on other occasions, it is the result of a deliberate intention to destroy, sometimes a collective one as in wars but also individual thefts and depredations. Finally books are removed, prohibited, sequestered as part of an institutional and ideological strategy of control.

The loss of books also occurs when, as physical objects, they are worn and destroyed by excessive handling.⁷ If their contents are not valued or the material production itself seems cheap, as is often the case with ephemera, copies easily end up being thrown away.⁸ Lack of space to house books often means that copies regarded as redundant are eliminated. There is too a natural dispersal with the passage of time whereby single libraries with a unitary meaning are broken up and the books end up scattered among a myriad of chance owners.

Some of these patterns and procedures of loss can be found – echoed rather than exactly replicated – in an unusual and complex case of book loss in late Renaissance Italy. The following analysis of the case takes account of the modern conceptions of libraries as meeting-points, real or imagined, for an intellectual community, as networks capable of diverse ramification and as cultural capital but above all the idea of an individual library as the personal expression of a coherent bibliographical plan.⁹ In addition to the interest of

- 6 What has happened, for instance, to much literature from classical times? What about Varron's *Disciplinarum libri*, on which see Sergio Alvarez Campos, '*Disciplinarum libri IX*' de M.T. Varron. *La primera enciclopedia de la cultura occidental* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1957) or the various private libraries belonging to Ligurians who worked abroad and which were sent back by sea and partly lost in shipwrecks? The *Ars Signorum vulgo character universalis et lingua philosophica* of George Dalgarno or the *London's Dreadful Visitation, or a collection of all the Bills of Mortality for the present year, 1664, with the Weekly Assize of Bread* (London, 1665) were, for instance, almost completely destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666, cf. Fernand Drujon, *Destructarum editionum centuria* (Paris: Société des Bibliophiles Contemporains, 1893) nos. 7 and 55; Drujon, *Essai bibliographique sur la destruction volontaire des livres, ou Bibliolytie* (Paris: Maison Quantin, 1889).
- 7 Peter Garside, James Raven and Rainer Schöwerling (eds.), *The English Novel 1770–1829. A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) calculate a loss of 10% for this type of material.
- 8 Malcolm Walsby, 'Book lists and their meaning', in Malcolm Walsby and Natasha Constantinidou (eds.), *Documenting the early modern book world. Inventories and catalogues in manuscript and print* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 1–25.
- 9 Leslie Howsam and Jane McLeod (eds.), 'Book Networks and Cultural Capital. Space, Society and the Nation. Réseaux du livre et capital culturel: territoire, société et nation', in Marie-Pier Luneau (ed.), Josée Vincent (dir.), *Mémoires du livre. Studies in Book Culture* ([Sherbrooke]:

the case itself, it might give rise to a reflection, in general, on the different meanings and status of bibliographical loss and, in particular, on the not always straightforward relationship of lists and inventories to the actual (lost or surviving) copies they describe.

This lost sixteenth-century library is an Italian collection only in terms of its intended geographical location, but it came into existence within a Hispanic-Austrian political context and its formation was inspired by Imperial ideological and institutional values. It was built up by drawing on the resources of the German-speaking commercial book world; its intellectual and typographical content reflected central European culture.¹⁰

In 1574 the agents employed by Alfonso del Carretto marquis of Finale opened the chest of books which had just arrived from Vienna where Carretto was living in exile. They found that 21 books were missing out of the 118 which had been packed (and indicated on the accompanying list which Carretto had with foresight included with the volumes). They had somehow been lost – perhaps stolen or removed because of censorship regulations – during the five years they had taken to arrive in Liguria from Austria.¹¹ But this was just the

Groupe de recherche sur l'édition littéraire au Québec, 2009), vol. 2, – Groupe de recherche et d'étude sur le livre au Québec n. 1 (2010), DOI: <10.7202/045311ar <http://www.erudit.org/revue/memoires/2010/v2/n1/>>; Leslie Howsam, 'What Is the Historiography of Books? Recent Studies in Authorship, Publishing, and Reading in Modern Britain and North America', *The Historical Journal*, 51, 4 (2008), pp. 1089–1101; Leslie Howsam, *Old books and new histories. An orientation to studies in book and print culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); David Pearson, 'The English Private Library in the Seventeenth Century', *The Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, 13 (2012), pp. 379–399; Alfredo Serrai, 'Storia della biblioteca come evoluzione d'un'idea e d'un sistema' in Alfredo Serrai, *Sistemi bibliotecari e meccanismi catalografici* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1980), pp. 38–67; Alfredo Serrai, 'Storia delle biblioteche Bibliotheca', *Rivista di studi bibliografici*, 1 (2003), pp. 22–28; Serrai, *Breve storia delle biblioteche in Italia* (Milan: Sylvestre Bonnard, 2006); Pierre Bourdieu, 'Le champ littéraire', *Liber: revue européenne des livres*, 7 (1991), pp. 1–83; Pierre Bourdieu, *Les règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire* (Paris: Seuil, 1992), trans. Randal Johnson (ed.), *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).

10 Anna Giulia Cavagna, *La biblioteca di Alfonso II Del Carretto. Libri tra Vienna e la Liguria nel XVI secolo* (Finale: Centro Storico del Finale, 2012).

11 Archivio di Stato di Milano [Milan, State Archive], Fondo Studi, p.a., cart. 19, *Notta de i libri che sono in cassa qua in Vienna 1569 ... Adì 1 agosto 1569 inventario delli libri sono in questa cassa che ora si manda ... n° 118. 1574 li 7 giugno si sonno trovati libri 97*. Among the works, which disappeared, there were classical Latin texts, educational works, and Christian homiletics by J.L. Vives and Angelo da Bitonto, legal texts by Raimundus de Penafort, István Werboczy.

beginning: in the following years the whole vast library created by Carretto was destined to disappear.

During more than twenty years of exile, Carretto acquired, in Vienna and in the other Imperial cities, a total of 1,083 printed and manuscript works. The printed volumes came from diverse centres of printing, including Italy. He sent them back to his native Liguria in regular instalments to be kept in the family castle where he planned to establish the dynastic library and where he hoped eventually to return but where, on the contrary, he was destined never to revisit.¹²

The traces of Carretto's political and military activities can be found in many archives across Europe but there is no surviving sixteenth-century source which speaks of his large library. Even his enemies and political opponents in their bitter attacks on him never refer to it. For centuries, all knowledge was lost of the vast collection – even of its very existence. The recent critical edition of a rediscovered document, which lists the contents of the library, has brought it back to virtual life but the books which made up the library appear still to be lost and unavailable for research. Yet, while the material existence and form of the library may be irrecoverable, the recently discovered document paints a vivid picture of the nature and extent of Carretto's cultural initiative. It is a remarkable listing in which the unusually detailed descriptions of copies and printed editions allow us to identify with certainty the 'works' Carretto possessed in his library; he himself unhesitatingly uses the term 'library' ('libreria' in the title of the document) to denote the collection.

The list enumerates the books together with the other objects (works of art, museum pieces, natural curiosities, military items and furniture) in chronological sequence as they were sent from Vienna to Liguria. It is in effect a topographical-chronological catalogue which records the transfers of books from Austria to Liguria. Since Carretto did not keep the library with him in Vienna, it is a record not so much of physical presence as of absence; from its very inception therefore it was in a certain sense a 'virtual' library, one which as Carretto's list reveals was nevertheless devised according to a plan.¹³ The list includes sporadic indications in the nature of diary entries referring to personal

12 Over a third of the volumes in Carretto's library which he acquired in Austria and Germany were printed in Italy; a third of the editions come from French-speaking countries, Switzerland and the Netherlands; the remainder was printed in Germany, Austria, Poland, Bohemia and other Imperial territories. Anna Giulia Cavagna, 'Germania e Impero in una biblioteca italiana del XVI secolo', *Gutenberg Jahrbuch*, (2014), pp. 226–238.

13 Riccardo Castellana, 'Il mondo assente. Breve storia del catalogo negativo', *Intersezioni*, 29, 3 (2009), pp. 223–338.

matters or logistical arrangements. There are convincing indications, in the wording of the document, to support the hypothesis that Carretto intended to publish – or at least to publicise – the document, once the entire collection was back in his homeland, as a way of preserving or communicating public memory of the library.¹⁴

A crucial difference between this list-cum-catalogue and all the other library or bibliographical listings produced throughout Europe in the early modern period known to me is the quality of its bibliographical descriptions. The absence of the physical books in Vienna prevented any reference to the objects themselves and persuaded Carretto to make his listing dense with reference back to the missing printed copy.

There were no uniform shared rules for bibliographical description in the second half of the sixteenth century. Yet the descriptive criteria adopted in this list are precise, consistent and exhaustive: the names in headings are exact, the titles are given in full and accurately transcribed, the formats are correct; the place and date of printing together with the name of the printer/publisher are given complete, accurately copied from either the title-page or colophon. Moreover – and even more remarkably – for a very large and consistent number of the editions which are listed, the descriptions include the names of dedicatees and the details of privileges.¹⁵ The only other known example in the sixteenth century, earlier than Carretto, of the conscious, albeit inconsistent, recording of dedicatees' names in printed editions is found in the auto-bibliography compiled by Kaspar Brusch, a humanist poet from Bohemia who worked in Imperial court circles.¹⁶ Carretto owned a copy of this book and

14 Luca Gaurico (d. 1558) printed the catalogue of his books he donated to the city by founding the public library, see Dennis E. Rhodes, *Studies in early European printing and book collecting* (London: The Pindar press, 1983), pp. 221–235.

15 For example ff. 9r–v: “Comentariorū in genealogiam Austriacam libri duo Autore Wolffgango Lazio Vienn[ense], ac Gijmnasij vienn[ensi] primario professore et super intendente, cum Ces. M. Privilegio ad deceniū, Basileae per Io: Oporinū et Nicolaum episcopium 1564. Intit: inuictis. Rom: Ces: Ferdinando primo, et Maximiliano Secundo”; or f. 105r: “Il Cauallerizo di Claudio Corte da Pauia, nel qual si tratta della[qua]nt[it]a de caualli delle razze del modo Et di tutto q[ue]llo ch[e] a Caualli et a buon Cauallerizo s'appartiene. Con privilegio. In Venetia App[re]so Giordani Ziletti 1573”.

16 Cf. Kaspar Brusch, ‘Lucubrationcularum Elenchus Basileae Congestus in Calendis Iuniis anni à nato Christo 1553’, in Engelbertus Admontensis, *De Ortu et fine Romani Imperii liber. Cum Gasparis Bruschij...praefatione* (Basel: Oporinus, 1553), pp. 152–164; Pier Paolo Vergerio, *A gl'inquisitori che sono per l'Italia. Del catalogo di libri eretici, stampato in Roma nell'anno presente* (Tübingen: heirs Ulrich, 1559), p. 15; Adalbert Horawitz, *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, herausgegeben von der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. 111 (1876), pp. 453–455; Jürgen Beyer and Leigh T.I. Penman,

in all probability had read it but in his own catalogue he devised his own style of citation which is far superior to Bruschi's.¹⁷

In 1584, just a year after Carretto's death, François Grudé de La Croix du Maine published his *Premier volume de la bibliothèque...Qui est vn catalogue general de toutes sortes d'Autheurs, qui ont escrit en françois depuis cinq cents ans*, which, very inconsistently and with no obvious criterion of selection, unless from motives of personal flattery, occasionally records some paratextual element in the editions which are listed.¹⁸ The detailed bibliographical descriptions found in the catalogue of Carretto's library, which include such paratextual elements as dedications and the names of the authorities which granted privileges, are directly connected to the political motives which led to the creation of the library, intended to gather and organise information which could be useful in the deployment of Carretto's diplomatic strategies.

In order to understand this better, we need to summarise briefly the military disputes in which Carretto found himself entangled. He was the ruler of a small territory on the Ligurian coast bordering on, on one side, the Genoese Republic and, on the other, the Piedmontese lands belonging to the Savoy dynasty. He held the territory as an Imperial fiefdom; in other words, his legal right to rule over the small State of Finale derived from the Hapsburg Emperor, to whom he owed obedience.¹⁹ But others coveted the enclave of Finale: the Spanish for military reasons, since it was an unavoidable strategic corridor through which their troops had to pass on the way to the Spanish-held territories of Lombardy and Flanders, and the Genoese for economic and maritime claims which were based on ancient but still applicable Mediaeval concessions. The two powers fomented rebellions within the Marquisate and besieged the territory, forcing Carretto to flee into exile in Vienna in 1558. Contemporary political propaganda vilified him as an "ignorant tyrant", a reputation which persisted even as late as the nineteenth century in the account of a French traveller to the region (an account which was also known in England since it was published there in translation). The traveller describes the territory of

'Printed autobibliographies from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', in Walsby and Constantinidou (eds.), *Documenting*, pp. 161–184, at pp. 166–168.

- 17 For example, the work which Bruschi lists as "De omnibus Germaniae episcopatus, opus magnum, cuius antea Epitome prodit, uel Epitomes potius Tomus primus" is more fully described by Carretto who also owned a copy: "Epitomes de omnib[us] germaniae episcopatus continens annales Archi/piscopatus Maguntinij, item Babemburgensis episcopatus etc. 1549. Impre. Norimberge".
- 18 Alexander S. Wilkinson, 'Lost Books Printed in French before 1601', *The Library*, 7th ser., 10 (2009), pp. 188–205.
- 19 The term "Stato di (del) Final" is found in all the relevant official documents of the period.

Finale as “formerly a powerful and tyrannical marquisate. The last of its princes, Alfonso Del Carretto, was expelled by the people”.²⁰ And again, almost a century later, in 1912, English readers could still find an identical negative judgement on Carretto, whose “proverbial libertinism” had caused him to be “driven from [his] States by the incensed inhabitants”.²¹ These gentlemen travellers were unaware they were merely repeating the version of historical events constructed by the powers who had come out on top.

For over twenty years in Vienna Carretto pleaded for aid, with varying results, from no fewer than three successive emperors (Ferdinand I, died 1564; Maximilian II, died 1576; Rudolf II, died 1612) in countering the hostile attitude of some diplomats and in reconquering his feudal lands by military force. In seeking to put himself into the Hapsburgs’ good books and to become familiar in court circles, Carretto fought for the Hapsburg in their wars against the Ottomans and followed the court as it moved between the various Diets, in the process acquiring a certain personal familiarity with Maximilian II (at the Emperor’s funeral ceremony, Carretto was among the few courtiers allowed to carry the coffin).²² With the Emperor’s consent, Carretto exploited his extremely tenuous family links dating back to the tenth century, with the dukes of Saxony; he formed a personal friendship with the Prince Elector Augustus, a Lutheran and like Carretto a collector of works of art and other objects.²³

- 20 Antoine Claude Pasquin Valery, *Historical, literary, and artistical travels in Italy, a complete and methodical guide for travellers and artists...corrected and improved edition by C.E. Clifton* (Paris: Baudry’s European Library, 1839), p. 698: “an industrious trading and populous town surrounded by marvellously productive plantations of olives and orange-trees [...] in a highly cultivated district, [it] was formerly a powerful and tyrannical marquisate. The last of its princes, Alfonso Del Carretto, was expelled by the people”.
- 21 Frederic Lees, *Wanderings on the Italian Riviera. The record of a leisurely tour in Liguria* (London: Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1912), p. 164.
- 22 Alexander Koller (ed.), *Nuntiaturen des Orazio Malaspina und des Ottavio Santacroce. Interim des Cesare Dell’Arena (1578–1581)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), pp. 25–26, 83, 347; Helmut Goetz (ed.), *Nuntiatur Giovanni Delfinos (1572–1573)* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1982), p. 156; Almut Bues (ed.), *Nuntiatur Giovanni Dolfins (1573–1574)* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990), pp. XXXVIII, 250, 269, 400, 611; Alexander Koller (ed.), *Nuntiaturen des Giovanni Delfino und des Bartolomeo Portia (1577–1578)* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2003), pp. 255.
- 23 Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Court Culture in Dresden. From Renaissance to Baroque* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002); J.J.L. Haspels, *Royal Music Machines, vijf eeuwen vorstelijk vermaak* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2006), p. 197, for the mechanical galleon with moving parts, also described by Neil MacGregor, *La storia del mondo in 100 oggetti* (Milan: Adelphi, 2012); Margrit B. Krewson (ed.), *Dresden. Treasures from the Saxon State Library* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1996), pp. 78–109, 243; *The Diplomatic Correspondence of Thomas Bodley, 1585–1597*, online: <<http://www.livesandletters.ac.uk/bodley/bodley.html>>.

The Italian orchestrated a systematic campaign of self-promotion, through research into his dynastic genealogy and by collecting; by having a new coat of arms prepared, with the permission of the court chancellery, which displayed more prominently his family's Germanic roots; and by imitating the style and manners of the court. This involved, for example, putting together a small domestic portrait gallery containing images of various Hapsburg Emperors and other leading members of the dynasty and of the Dukes of Saxony and having emblems specially made for him by famous artists such as Ottaviano Strada.²⁴ Carretto reshaped the image of his dynasty by supplying information to the polygraph authors Natale Conti, Luca Contile, Giovan Carlo Saraceni, Francesco Sansovino and commissioning from them new biographies, intended as propaganda for his cause, of his ancestors and relatives.²⁵ He also used the medium of print to shape opinion by composing flattering paratexts. Apart from one brief return to Italy he lived in Vienna until his death in 1583, leaving the question of his invaded feudal territory unconcluded. The issue was finally resolved, in 1602, some twenty years later, when the Spanish purchased the territory from the last Carretto heir and installed a military occupation, in the process taking possession of and dispersing documents and archives.

Carretto's library plays an important part in his wide-ranging propaganda campaign, waged in an effort to enhance his reputation and create a positive and modern image of himself.²⁶ The library was created as a kind of defensive bulwark for his State as well as a more traditional means of study.²⁷ The books

- 24 Octavius Strada, *Symbola Romanorum imperatorum (imperii) occidentalis ac orientalis, regumque Hispanorum, Gallicorum, Anglorum...principum*, manuscript in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek [Bavarian State Library], Hss. Cod.icon. 425, [S.I] f. 94r, which can be seen in *CodIcon online. Codices iconographici monacenses* <<http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/~db/0001/bsb00011848/images/index.html?id=00011848&fp=193.174.98.30&no=&seite=199>>. Among the works of artists he bought there are also paintings by Costantino de Servi who was well-known in England; cf. Caterina Pagnini, *Costantino de' Servi: architetto scenografo fiorentino alla corte d'Inghilterra (1611-1615)* (Florence: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 2006).
- 25 Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron (eds.), *The politics of information in early modern Europe* (London-New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 1: "we call political information whatever may be thought or said about events connected with the government of states and with cities and their people".
- 26 Private libraries with a celebratory or propagandistic function are cited as early as 1581 by Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia, città nobilissima et singolare descritta in XIII libri* (Venice: Giacomo Sansovino, 1581), p. 138. For a wide-ranging definition of propaganda cf. Burke, *The Italian Renaissance*, p. 131; Robert W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk. Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994²), pp. xxi-xxii.
- 27 Paul Nelles, 'The Library as the Instrument of Discovery: Gabriel Naudé and the Uses of History', in Donald R. Kelley (ed.), *History and the Disciplines. The Reclassification of*

Carretto acquired were required to gather information and evidence of various kinds in order to demonstrate the legitimacy of his right to rule over Finale. It was a way of constructing and affirming his identity within the network of European nobility, an intellectual response to his political problems, a tangible demonstration of his ties to the Hapsburg dynasty and the nobility of the Imperial court. The library served in effect as a contemporary *Almanach de Gotha*. It was for this reason that in his catalogue Carretto recorded, by extracting them from the preliminary pages of the volumes in his library, dedications addressed to monarchs, churchmen, noblemen and patricians of his acquaintance (such as Fugger and Trautson) who he thought might be diplomatically useful to him or who might help him in his political battles.

The choice of the supplementary information he transcribes from the books is entirely based on the social status of the dedicatee. Carretto records the dedications addressed to all those who wield or represent power in those publications which in the sixteenth century more or less explicitly mediate a discourse of political authority. These included books on historical, legal, political and Imperial matters in a whole gamut of contemporary modes, from the legislative to the literary, comprising annals, genealogy, iconography, festivals and ceremonies. It is significant that he never transcribed dedications addressed to humanist scholars, 'gentle readers', women and obscure professionals, seeing them as irrelevant to his purposes.²⁸

Carretto's physical examination of the books in order to memorise the names of the influential personages mentioned there shows his wish to enter into some kind of dialogue with those protagonists of the international political scene who interested him. He uses these paratexts as the epistemological mirror of his own condition. In other words, the completeness of Carretto's bibliographical entries is not mere mechanical meticulousness; it is an act of selection, the result of an attentive analysis of the constituent parts of an edition and a sifting of those considered to be useful, and as such a remarkable exhibition of bibliographical awareness and a forerunner of recent developments in cataloguing. The paratexts referring to the European nobility are filleted out from the context of the editions much as the Renaissance method of *ars excerpendi* singled out interesting *loca* in a text, in accordance with an approach to reading of books which saw the activity as a way of defining the individual.²⁹

Knowledge in Early Modern Europe (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1997), pp. 41–57.

28 Cavagna, *La biblioteca*, pp. 142–150.

29 Ross Atkinson, 'An application of Semiotics to the Definition of Bibliography', in *Studies in Bibliography*, (1980), pp. 54–73, in particular p. 62 on the theories of Charles S.S. Pierce.

Thus Carretto's choice of books for his library is based on his perception of them as vectors of social relations but that this was his intention is only made clear through an analysis of the rediscovered document.³⁰ It is only Carretto's catalogue which shows us unequivocally how his library organised and mediated the knowledge he wanted, as a system of relations which was based from the outset of his collecting on a deliberate bibliographical plan. Only by means of the descriptions of books and accounts of consignments which are found in the documents can we fully understand how Carretto's library (like any other worthy of the name) is much more than the mere bringing together of editions and volumes. If his books had survived whereas the catalogue of them had been definitively lost his purposes in building up the library would remain much less accessible. In this hypothetical case, a modern catalogue which reconstructed Carretto's library by bringing together and describing the copies from it which survive would apply modern criteria of bibliographical description and indicate the presence of paratexts in all sorts of editions and thus lose the link, so evident in his own catalogue, between his diplomatic and military situation as a displaced feudal ruler and his decision – an ingenuous one no doubt but applied with unfaltering determination – to record only the paratexts in those editions of a political or historical content, which mentioned the leading personalities of the Imperial and European ruling classes. In other words, the exhaustive recording of the paratextual apparatus of dedications and privileges which might be found in a modern catalogue would lead us to see them only as editorial and commercial features of the publication and hide the fact, in the case of Carretto, that they are expressions of his political and ideological leanings. The true reason why these books were chosen by him to form part of his library would be lost.

The descriptions of these 'lost books' in the catalogue show us how the mercantile and subordinate relationship of a book's author to the patron, who financed the publication, is mirrored, at a subsequent stage, in the putative relationship of the reader who has acquired the book – Carretto the aspiring courtier pursuing his suit at the Emperor's court – with the grand personages to whom the book's dedications is addressed. The books which go to make up a library are not merely sources of knowledge and information for the library's owner; the library itself, as a structure which has been assembled, arranged and described, creates new meanings, as Carretto's catalogue shows us. The loss of a library as an integral whole is therefore the loss of a particular form of knowledge, of a particular possible interpretation of the world. The intellectual

30 Natalie Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), p. 192.

project which lay behind the library, rooted in a specific time and space, and where a mass of associations are accumulated which would otherwise escape us, is lost. The disintegration of a library counts for far more than the loss of the individual books which went to make it up.

In the case of the lost books and the lost library belonging to Carretto, however, we find a curious paradox. The fact that no known copies from his library appear to survive does not spell a complete loss of information on the library and does not prevent us from understanding the plan which lay behind the collection. The numerous other copies which still survive of the works in Carretto's library, testimony of what could be described for the period as mass production, together with the descriptions in the document allow us to preserve the peculiar nature and character of his bibliographical plan. The catalogue, drawn up in order to preserve a record of the books which were sent back to Italy, reveals the governing idea behind the library better than any single surviving copy from the collection could. The loss of the material objects has served to highlight the way books exist not only to be read but also in this case to create a kind of virtual political space where in the pages of the books on the shelves of one's own library the ruling classes and the ruled can encounter each other.³¹

Other losses, however, were incurred with the lost library of Alfonso Del Carretto. Some are irreparable while others are not; some pose methodological questions. The loss of unique copies is irrecoverable: for example, the contemporary medical manuscripts Carretto owned or his personal notebook. The disappearance of this autograph manuscript which contained summaries of the books Carretto had acquired and read, compiled according to the best-known sixteenth-century reading methods, means that information on a fundamental aspect of Carretto, his cultural interests and activities, is lost to us. This *libro verde* or "green book" as it is described would have been an invaluable source for our knowledge of Carretto as both writer and reader and helped us to understand far better than we can at present his intellectual character.³²

On the other hand, the fact that no copy has yet been found of a 1569 Venetian edition listed in Carretto's document may reflect a shortcoming in

31 Leah Price, 'Reading. The State of the Discipline', *Book History*, 7 (2004), pp. 303–320; Pollie Bromilow (ed.), *Authority in European book culture. 1400–1600* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013).

32 Francesco Sacchini, *De ratione libros cum profectu legendi libellus, deq. vitanda moribus noxia lectione, oratio* (Rome: Bartolomeo Zannetti, 1613), f. 1x; Ann Blair, 'Note Taking as an Art of Transmission', *Critical Inquiry*, 31, (2004), no. 1, pp. 85–107; Ann Blair, 'Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1550–1700', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 64, (2003), pp. 11–28.

the catalogues and bibliographies available today. The edition was a guide to postal services – a practical genre subject to a very low survival rate – and there is no reason to suppose the entry in Carretto's list is a bibliographical ghost. While there is no surviving copy of this edition, the bibliographical accuracy and reliability of the catalogue is enough to assure us that it did once exist, even without the subsequent confirmation of its publication when it reappears in a slightly later library inventory.³³

It would be interesting to try to calculate how frequently and how early such a phenomenon occurs in the history of European libraries and compile a database of 'missing books' in other words: of books which are only known to us today, because they are mentioned in documents, but which we also know, on the basis of the reliability of those documents, to have actually existed in individual libraries. We could then begin to compare the numbers of such books (paying due attention to the distinction between copies and editions as well as the various subject matter covered) with the scholarly calculations of the possible percentages of generic 'lost editions' from the bibliographical record.³⁴ Carretto's incunables, for example, of which until recently nothing was known in so far as they were his personal copies recorded in an unknown catalogue, can certainly be included in the generic statistical tallies of irrecoverably lost

33 Giovanni L'Herba, *Poste di diuerse parte del mondo con tutte le fiere notabili che si fanno per tutto il mondo, et una breue naratione delle sette Chiese di Roma, con il viaggio di S. Iacomo di Galitia* (Venice: Giacomo Piccaglia, 1569); Vatican Library, ms. Vatican Latin 11278, f. 166v: "elenco dei libri di frate Agostino di S. Angelo del convento della Comunità di S. Angelo diocesi di Messina", cf. Diego Ciccarelli (ed.), *La circolazione libraria tra i francescani di Sicilia* (Palermo: Officina di studi medievali-Biblioteca francescana, 1990, 2 vols.), v. I, p. 439. Guides and manuals for the postal services have a high rate of loss: cf. Wilkinson, 'Lost Books Printed in French', p. 199. On the rates of loss for publishing genres and the 'dispersion aberrante' of copies in relation to the print run cf. Jean François Gilmont, *Le livre & ses secrets*, préfaces Francis Higman, Monique Mund-Dopchie (Geneva-Louvain-la-Neuve: Droz-Faculté de philosophie et lettres, Université catholique de Louvain, 2003), pp. 301–320; Oliver Willard, 'The Survival of English Books Printed Before 1640: A Theory and Some Illustrations', *The Library. The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, 23 (1943), pp. 171–190.

34 Jonathan Green, Frank McIntyre and Paul Needham, 'Shape of Incunable Survival and Statistical Estimation of Lost Editions', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 105, 2 (2011), pp. 141–175. Bookseller catalogues, for example, almost always survive in single copies, cfr. Claire Lesage, Eve Netchine and Veronique Sarrazin (eds.), *Catalogues de libraires 1473–1810* ([Paris]: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 2006), as is also frequently the case with almanacs: cf. Christian Heyden, *Schreibkalender...Auff das Jar M.D.LXXVI* (Nuremberg: Nikolaus Knorr, 1575), copy for sale by the Libreria Alberto Govi in their catalogue 2–2014.

editions on which no information exists. But might the discovery of their specific presence (and therefore, for the reasons we have seen, vouched-for existence) in Carretto's list affect the generic statistical model as this has usually been applied? In other words, is the concept of survival limited to the actually material sense in which we normally understand and use it or does survival within the bibliographical record – the recorded memory of an edition – count as well?

The worst losses are when no traces at all are left meaning that no information can ever be recovered and all hypotheses are in vain. Examples of this kind of loss can also be found in Carretto's library. As an assiduous reader he must have kept books in his residence in Vienna. We know that he decided at the last moment to keep certain medical and pharmaceutical works with him instead of sending them to Liguria, but he probably also possessed a library, or the nucleus of one, for everyday use: a domestic collection of various books which would have accompanied him on his travels with the Imperial court as it moved from one city to another, or of books which he kept permanently in his Vienna residence. While nothing is known about the contents of such libraries, it is almost certain that they existed, as the survival of an unusual manuscript, an armorial album depicting Carretto, the members of his family and his ancestors, which he commissioned from an unidentified artist in Vienna, would seem to suggest, for it is not listed in the catalogue of books sent to Liguria and most probably never went there. It may have been removed from Carretto's Viennese residence after his death in 1583 by his heirs or acquaintances; much later it emerged onto the antiquarian book market, where it was acquired by a private collector who later, in the twentieth century, donated it to an American library.³⁵

All these different kinds of losses from Carretto's library may help us to reflect further on the connections between the material loss of books, the loss of information, and the loss of cultural memory. They might lead us to consider in what circumstances and under what conditions the very absence of the physical volume might paradoxically encourage a greater bibliographical and heuristic attentiveness; just as scarcity or inaccessibility can even stimulate a more scrupulous sifting of the evidence resulting in a greater knowledge of the printing and commercial history of an edition; just as the white spaces between words used in printing create the meaning of sentences and of the book as a whole.

The case of Carretto's library, surviving only in the form of his descriptive catalogue compiled in view of the absence of the books he acquired as he

35 Harvard College Library, *Houghton Manuscript Typ.* 298 (Hollis, 007482784).

prepared to send them back to Italy, shows us how books and the libraries of which they form part do not merely represent or transmit knowledge but also shape and interpret knowledge, creating new meanings just as the social use of language shapes our ideas.³⁶ In attempting to reconstruct libraries by navigating between different degrees and kinds of loss and survival, we should remember that we are, to paraphrase Montaigne's words, "interpreting interpretations [as much as] interpreting things".³⁷

36 Mark Bevir, 'Mente e metodo nella storia delle idee', *Intersezioni*, 21 (2001), pp. 213–242.

37 Cf. Michel de Montaigne, *The essays of Michel Eyquem de Montaigne translated by Charles Cotton; edited by W. Carew Hazlitt* (London: Reeves & Turner. 1877), cap. XIII *Of Experience*, p. 381; first edition *Les essais de Michel seigneur de Montaigne* (Paris: Abel l'Angelier, 1595), lib. III, cap. 13 *De l'Experience*, p. 196: "il y a plus affaire à interpreter les interpretations qu'à interpreter les choses, & plus de livres sur les livres que sur autre sujet".