NOTES ON
BIBLIOKLEPTOMANIA

By LAWRENCE S. THOMPSON

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Notes on Bibliokleptomania

By Lawrence S. Thompson

"SI L'ON veut me séduire, on n'a qu'à m'offrir des livres."[1] Seguier probably coined this aphorism in an egotistical mood, but the temptation has been an almost universal one. There are few bookmen who have not succumbed, at least in a minor sort of way, notably in the matter of delinquency in returning borrowed books. When some patient legal scholar compiles the Pitaval of biblioklepts, the roll call will look more like a learned congress than a police show-up.

In spite of the great interest always shown in individual sensational thefts, only two authorities have paid any serious attention to the problem of the biblioklept as a larger phenomenon. However, both Albert Cim's *Amateurs et voleurs de livres*[2] and Gustav Bogeng's essay, "Buch und Verbrechen" in his *Streifzüge eines Bücherfreundes*[3] are essentially pleasant *causeries* rather than attempts to give a broad survey of the problem as a whole and to touch upon all of its implications. Still, what Bogeng calls a "Pitaval of biblioklepto-mania" would be a worthy task. Possibly when bibliothecal caution has compelled us to observe the last rites of sepulchre on the open-shelf system, somebody may have time to compile a register of all hitherto recorded thefts from public libraries; but no matter what precautions may be taken, as long as there are collections, public and private, and collectors — *et amici* — biblio-klepts of some sort will be with us.

Just as no attempt is made in the present study to record any but the most important cases, so also must there be a definite limitation on the amount of space devoted to certain aspects of bibliokleptomania. The psychological, legal, and sociological implications alone would provide ample material for

Note: Dr. Thompson's article is presented here for the enlightenment of those whose duty or pleasure it is to protect their books. His review of centuries of thievery indicates that librarians, clergymen, scholars and military men should be watched with special care, and that library patrons in general are a menace. Although this conclusion is not unusual among the guardians of public and private collections, the majority will, we hope, continue to make access to books as uncomplicated and unrestricted as cataloguing processes and reasonable precautions will permit.

To paraphrase a recent advertising note: "Nothing in this study is intended to promote the theft of books in those states in which it is illegal." — Editor.

[1] Quoted by Ludwig Traube in *Vorlesungen und Abhandlungen*. Munich: C. H. Beck, 1909–1920. I, p. 39.

[2] Paris: H. Daragon, 1903.

[3] Weimar: Gesellschaft der Bibliophilen, 1915. I, p. 158–212.

ten years' worth of dissertations in some of our library schools. Viktor Gardthausen devoted some of the best years of his life to unravelling problems arising from Christian Friedrich Matthaei's light-fingered habits in Moscow,[4] and some of Léopold Delisle's friends said that his outstanding accomplishment was his work on the Affaire Libri.[5] A complete bibliography of the reports, pamphlets, and articles about Libri would fill a small volume. The problem of thefts from the open shelves of public libraries is responsible for hundreds of columns of platitudes in the ALA *Proceedings* and the *Library Journal*, although E. W. Gaillard[6] and Isabel Ely Lord[7] have come out with valuable and constructive ideas on this matter. These and other frequently discussed aspects of bibliokleptomania will be given no special treatment here but rather will be dealt with in the same relative proportions as other aspects which have not received exhaustive attention.

The moral questions posed by book theft are considerably more difficult than those involved in deciding the guilt or innocence of a bank robber or kidnapper. Tallemant des Réaux stated categorically in his *Historiettes* that book theft is not true theft if the books are not resold.[8] Hans Bohatta follows substantially the same line of reasoning as Tallemant when he says that book theft proper is taking another's property in order to profit by it, whereas taking a book merely because its possession is coveted belongs more in the realm of bibliomania.[9] However, he does admit that this is a distinction without a difference as far as the victim is concerned. Elsewhere Bohatta states that "The bibliophile is the master of his books, the bibliomaniac their slave."[10] Heinrich Treplin, handling the problem from a purely legal viewpoint,[11] has no difficulty in deciding for himself that without exception any illegal conversion of a movable object, including books, belonging to another, is theft.

[4] *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Universitäts-Bibliothek zu Leipzig*. Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1898; *Katalog der Handschriften der Universitäts-Bibliothek zu Leipzig*, vol. III, reviewed by Karl Krumbacher in the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, VII, 1898, p. 626.

[5] *Les manuscrits des fonds Libri et Barrois, rapport adressé à M. le Ministre de l'instruction publique, des cultes et des beaux-arts*. Paris: H. Champion, 1888.

[6] "The Book Larceny Problem," *Library Journal*, XLV, 1920, p. 247–254, 307–312.

[7] "Open Shelves and the Loss of Books," *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, II, 1908, p. 231–253. (Discussion, p. 253–254.)

[8] Bogeng, *Die grossen Bibliophilen; Geschichten der Büchersammler und ihrer Sammlungen*. Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1922. I, p. 501; Max Sander, "Bibliomania," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, XXXI, 1943, p. 160.

[9] "Bücherdiebstahl," in Karl Loeffler and Joachim Kirchner, eds., *Lexikon des gesamten Buchwesens*. Leipzig: Karl W. Hiersemann, 1935–1937, I, p. 296.

[10] "Bibliomanie," ibid., I, p. 195–196.

[11] "Das Bibliotheksrecht," p. 609, in Fritz Milkau and Georg Leyh, eds., *Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft*. Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1931–1940, II, p. 599–634.

The motives of the book thief are as varied as his methods. However, it is possible to divide book thieves into two broad categories, namely, criminals and bibliomaniacs. The criminal steals either from greed or need.[12] Bibliomaniacs may either be private individuals acquiring the books of others for their own collections, or they may be politicians seeking to aggrandize national or university libraries through presenting them with the fruits of conquest or confiscation. Fortunately, the latter type seems to be disappearing, and even the Nazis, for all their reputations as enemies of books, have had relatively few substantiated charges of book theft made against them, at least during the first four years of war. The finest examples of conquerors turned bibliomaniacs belong to the days when wars were fought primarily for territorial gain and considerations of dogma rather than for economic reasons.

This classification of book thieves should not be accepted as hard and fast. Certainly, however, the matter is not so simple as Max Stois would have us believe when he tells us that the only two motives of the book thief are "Gewinnsucht" and "wirkliche Not."[13] The idealistic Bogeng seems inclined to believe that intellectual ambition rather than material covetousness is the primary cause of bibliographical crime.[14] Gaillard points out that in the case of librarians, who are perhaps the most serious offenders, deep-seated motives for theft may be entirely lacking and that thefts by these individuals may often be attributed to the operation of the simple equation Temptation-Opportunity.[15] The complexity of the motivation of a bibliographical criminal is patent to those who wade through the interminable controversies of the Affaire Libri or study the career of T. J. Wise. Sometimes we are inclined to be excessively generous with these individuals simply because such a noble pursuit as book collecting is the ultimate cause of their crime, but it must be admitted that they are nevertheless criminals and, as Bohatta says, it makes little difference to the victim what their motives were.

While there are many bibliomaniacs who are above suspicion as book thieves, Bogeng has struck a note of truth when he remarks that, "There is no deep abyss separating Bibliophile Purgatory from Bibliophile Inferno."[16] An excellent example of a bibliomaniac who slipped from grace is the most

[12] Cim, op. cit., p. 62–105, lists Aymon, Libri, and Harmand among those whose sole or chief motive was monetary gain, but his judgment is debatable in each of these cases.

[13] "Das gestohlene Buch," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, XLIV, 1927, p. 174.

[14] *Die grossen Bibliophilen*, I, p. 502.

[15] op. cit., p. 253–254. Another interesting finding by Gaillard is his correlation of delinquent fines (and subsequent loss of the borrowing privilege) with the rate of theft in public libraries.

[16] *Streifzüge eines Bücherfreundes*, I, p. 168.

famous of his clan, Antoine-Marie-Henri Boulard, a distinguished member of the *corps législatif* during the First Empire. He filled up some five entire houses with from 600,000 to 800,000 volumes, baled or packed in boxes, most of which he had never seen. When the collection was auctioned off in 1828–1833, it played havoc with the Paris market. While virtually everyone who has occasion to mention Boulard dismisses him as a "harmless bibliomaniac," Cim, who had access to many oral or otherwise fugitive traditions of nineteenth-century French bibliophily, offers good evidence to prove that Boulard had "itchy fingers" whenever he saw a volume that could not be bought and excited the acquisitive instincts in him.[17]

Two other types of collectors' and libraries' Nemesis who border on criminality are the absent-minded borrower and the biblioclast. Cim speaks of "emprunteurs indélicats" in very strong terms: "Le fait est que les emprunteurs ont été de tout temps et partout, et bien plus que les rats, les souris, ou les mites, bien plus que l'eau et le feu, la terreur des bibliophiles."[18] Charles Lamb's essay on "The Two Races of Men" (borrowers and lenders) tells how the library of the gentle Elia, whose treasures were "rather cased in leather covers than closed in iron coffers," suffered from the depredations of "those mutilators of collections, spoilers of the symmetry of shelves, and creators of odd volumes." Lucia Borski informs us that in Renaissance Poland the love of books was so great that people sued each other for not returning them.[19] Although the librarian can discipline his delinquent readers with (frequently uncollectable) fines, legal redress is unfortunately seldom available in modern times.

The biblioclast is perhaps even more hateful than the biblioklept, for the result of his work is far more disastrous. The biblioklept will at least save books for posterity, but the biblioclast destroys them forever. Time will heal the ill feeling against Libri, but it can never restore the damage caused by Savonarola's wild mob when it destroyed the Laurentian's copies of Petrarch, Pulci, and other "witty authors" in the religious orgy known as "The Burning of the Vanities." But worst of all is the biblioclast who is also a biblioklept. Andrew Lang felt so strongly about this form of animal life that he created

[17] op. cit., p. 21–23. Bogeng, *Die grossen Bibliophilen*, I, p. 500, considers Boulard to be quite harmless. See also Sander, op. cit., p. 160–161, for an amusing account of Boulard. There is no evidence to indicate that Boulard's Anglo-Saxon counterpart, Richard Heber, was not always very scrupulous in his methods of acquisition.

[18] op. cit., p. 3.

[19] "A Short History of Printing in Poland," *Bulletin of The New York Public Library*, XLVII, 1943, p. 84.

for it the name of "book ghoul."[20] History is full of examples of book ghouls, and the conclusive evidence of their activities is only too often at hand. Cim informs us that a well-known book thief, Dr. R... of Lyons, never stole entire volumes but only parts of books with which to complete his own imperfect copies.[21] Firmin Maillard tells the story of a member of the Institute who haunted the shop of Père Lefèvre under the Colbert Arcade of the Bibliothèque Nationale and not only never bought any books from old Lefèvre but actually tore out leaves containing pertinent passages so that he could make notes at his leisure.[22] A similar case occurred at the Iowa State College Library in 1943 when an overly enthusiastic aluminum chemist sabotaged hundreds of irreplaceable serials by tearing out all articles pertinent to his particular investigation.

Perhaps the most curious tale of any book ghoul is that told of Theodor Schwisow by Johannes Lemcke of Hamburg.[23] In 1936 Schwisow was apprehended for book mutilation, and when his quarters were searched incidental to his arrest, hundreds of copper engravings stolen from the libraries at Hamburg and elsewhere were found. He was tried, convicted, and sentenced, but in 1938 he was released from prison. Within two years he was again arrested for stealing copper engravings from the libraries of Hamburg, Rostock, and Göttingen. He had been ordered to replace the prints he had stolen from the Municipal Library at Frankfurt a/M, and this he proposed to do by removing the same prints from copies of the books in other libraries.

It is difficult to believe that the wicked old shoemaker-biblioclast John Bagford was not also a book thief; for in making his *Atlas typographicus* and his collections of paper specimens, bookplates, etc., he certainly must have seen many a volume which he desired but could not purchase. If we are wrong in suggesting that Bagford was a thief, then we are simply making a false conjecture rather than damaging an innocent man because Bagford must surely be sitting in the same corner of bibliographical hell occupied by the Grangerizers and Mathias Flacius (Vlachich). Flacius, the distinguished Lutheran polemicist and historian of the German Reformation,

20 *The Library*. London: Macmillan, 1892. 2nd ed. p. 56–57.

21 op. cit., p. 51.

22 *Les passionés du livre*. Paris: Émile Rondeau, 1896. p. 6–7. Maillard (p. 7) also tells the story of MM. de Quatremère, perhaps not thieves but surely among the most reprehensible of biblioclasts. They tore up twenty copies of one rare book in order to complete a single imperfect copy.

23 "Bücherdiebstahl," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, LV, 1938, p. 375; and a note in the section entitled "Kleine Mitteilungen," ibid., LVII, 1940, p. 359.

would go to the monasteries disguised as a monk and commit any variety of bibliographical crime which struck his fancy. Preferably he stole the coveted volumes; but whatever was too heavy to take in its entirety he removed with what German bibliophiles bitterly call "das Flacianische Messer" *(cultellus Flacianus).* He would take not only individual leaves but also entire sections. He had a particular taste for engravings.[24]

Repulsive as Flacius is, he is surely a grade higher than the peddlers of initials cut from the parent manuscript. Flacius was at least a creative scholar and saved from oblivion a rich harvest of satirical Latin verse in his *De corrupto Ecclesiae Statu Poemata* (Basel, 1557), but he who strips a manuscript of an initial is taking something which can never be restored. As William Blades remarked, it would seem that the man who cuts an initial from a manuscript is so embittered by the realization that he can't take his library with him to the next world, he is determined to ruin it for his mortal heirs.[25] It may have been ignorance on the part of the choir boys at Lincoln Cathedral who put on their robes in the library and while waiting for the signal to "fall in" amused themselves by cutting out illuminated initials and vignettes;[26] but "Professor Rapisar," who played havoc with some of the Vatican's most valuable illuminated manuscripts, is an entirely different case.[27] One day in the nineties of the last century a "Professor Rapisar" presented himself at the Italian Ministry of Public Instruction in Rome and offered for sale a number of rare miniatures taken from eleventh-century manuscripts. The clerk whom he approached recognized the miniatures as coming from Vatican manuscripts, and he declined the offer and notified appropriate officials in the Papal State at once. Meanwhile it was discovered at the Vatican Library that numerous miniatures were lacking from one especially valuable eleventh-century manuscript. The thief, who turned out to be one Rapisardi from Biancavilla in Sicily, was apprehended, and those miniatures which he had not already sold to second-hand dealers (for a fraction of their true value) were recovered. Some forty-one miniatures had been cut from the eleventh-century manuscript, of which thirty-nine were recovered. He had

[24] Heinrich Klenz, "Gelehrten-Kuriositäten. I. Büchernarren und gelehrte Bücherdiebe," *Zeitschrift für Bücherfreunde,* N. F., V, 1913, p. 49–54; Ernest P. Goldschmidt, *Medieval Texts and Their First Appearance in Print.* London: The Bibliographical Society, 1943; *Supplement to the Bibliographical Society's Transactions,* no. 16, p. 39, 77–79.

[25] *The Enemies of Books.* London: Elliot Stock, 1902. Rev. and enl. ed. p. 120.

[26] ibid., p. 115–116.

[27] Note in the section entitled "Mittheilungen aus und über Bibliotheken," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen,* XII, 1895, p. 136–137.

also cut some seven miniatures from a manuscript of the *Trionfi di Petrarca* as well as a magnificent portrait of Laura (sold in Florence).

The repercussions of this incident were quite serious. For several weeks the Vatican Library was completely shut down, and when it reopened the regulations applying to readers were much more rigid than before. But the most tragic result of the incident was the death of the able prefect of the Vatican Library, Monsignor Isidoro Carini. Carini, supposedly on his way to high places in the Church and an intimate of the Pope, was allegedly reproached severely by the latter for his carelessness in permitting Rapisardi to get away with his bold vandalism. The unfortunate Carini was injured profoundly by the reproach, and it was said that he atoned for Rapisardi's transgressions with his own death. Some said that his demise was the result of a severe stroke caused by his nervous condition, but others argued that it was from poison administered by his own hand. The latter rumor was so strong in the Papal City that the *Osservatore Romano* was compelled to take official cognizance of it.[28]

* * *

The history of bibliokleptomania goes back to the beginnings of libraries in Western Europe, and undoubtedly it could be traced back even further through the history of Greek and Oriental libraries. Carl Wendel points out that early Roman libraries were largely composed of Greek works simply because the first Roman libraries were stolen from Greece by Roman generals.[29] When Perseus was dethroned, Emilius Paullus took the Royal Macedonian Library as the general's share of the plunder.[30] When Mithridates of Pontos, that most stubborn of the enemies of the Republic, finally succumbed to the forces of M. Licinius Lucullus, the Roman took Mithridates' library and set it up in his plantation at Tusculum where it was freely available to scholars.[31] Another notable example of a Greek library stolen by a Roman general is the collection of Apellicon of Teos, taken by Sulla and

[28] O. H[artwig], "Monsignor Isidoro Carini," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, XII, 1895, p. 198–200, and Léon Dorez, "Mgr Isidoro Carini, Préfet de la Bibliothèque Vaticane," *Revue des Bibliothèques*, V, 1895, p. 83. Gallic delicacy (if not piety) forbade Dorez to mention the circumstances of Carini's death.

[29] "Das griechisch-römische Altertum," p. 33–35, in *Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft*, III, p. 1–63.

[30] "Stealing a Whole Library," *Publishers' Weekly*, CVI, 1924, p. 970–971.

[31] Wendel, loc. cit.; Plutarch, *Lucullus*, XLII; Isidore, *Etymologiae*, VI, sec. 5, 9.

later used by Cicero.[32] The more usual type of book thief who makes off with single volumes was also plentiful in Rome. Cicero complains that his trusted slave Dionysius absconded with several valuable manuscripts from his personal collection.[33]

Legend has it that the early Christian communities were also cursed with book thieves.[34] However, "the praiseworthy humility and virtuous tolerance" of St. Anastasius toward a book thief recommends perhaps a bit too much for the present day librarian or bibliophile. Father Anastasius had a complete parchment Bible worth all of eighteen florins which was abstracted from his cell by a lay brother to whom Father Anastasius had shown the volume. While the latter missed the book, he did not have an investigation conducted lest the thief be apprehended and, upon being tried, possibly add to the sin of theft that of perjury. The lay brother went on to the next town and offered the Bible to a prospective buyer for sixteen florins; but the buyer took the book on approval and went to Father Anastasius, the local authority, and asked him for his opinion as to its value. Father Anastasius said merely, "It is a good book and worth the price." When the lay brother was told that Father Anastasius had been consulted and had not exposed him, he was moved to repentance. He withdrew his offer of sale and went forthwith to Father Anastasius with tears in his eyes, begging the saintly man to take his book. At first Father Anastasius refused, but when the lay brother told him his soul would have no peace if he could not get rid of the stolen book, Father Anastasius took it back; but he also took the lay brother into his hermitage, and the two lived together until the Blessed Anastasius passed to his reward.

Lupus of Ferrières was always keenly aware of possible depredations by book thieves, and probably with good reason, for he mentions in a letter to Gottschalk, "The quaternions you found someone had stolen from me . . ."[35] A well-known expression of Lupus' mortal dread of bibliomaniacal hijackers

[32] Wendel, loc. cit.; J. W. Thompson, *Ancient Libraries.* Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1940. p. 28–30. The library originally belonged to Aristotle.

[33] *Ad fam.* XIII, 77.

[34] *The Legend of Saint Anastasius,* translated from the German by Theodore W. Koch. Evanston, Ill.: Charles Deering Library, Northwestern University, 1938. "Reprinted from The Northwestern University Alumni News, January, 1938."

[35] *Ep.* LXXIII: 145. Cited in J. W. Thompson, *The Medieval Library.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939. p. 98–99. See also Ludovic Lalanne, *Curiosités bibliographiques.* Paris: Paulin, 1845; *Bibliothèque de la poche,* no. 3, p. 41.

is found in his letter to Hincmar of Rheims who had requested the loan of Bede's commentary:

> I was afraid to send you Bede's commentary on the apostle in accordance with the works of Augustine, because the book is so large that it cannot be hidden in one's cloak, nor comfortably carried in a hand-bag, and even if one or the other could be done, one would have to fear meeting some band of villains whose greed would surely be kindled by the beauty of the manuscript, and it would perhaps be lost thus to both you and me. Accordingly, I can most securely lend the volume to you as soon as, if God will, we can come together at some safe place and will do so.[36]

Book theft was a most serious crime in the eyes of the medieval man. The most effective measure he could think of to protect his books was bibliotaphy, but surely this can be excused as a far lesser sin than book theft, particularly in a day when books were rarer and offered a greater temptation than they do today.[37] Strict loan regulations reminiscent of Lupus' niggardliness, actual concealment of books, and, above all, chaining were the medieval librarian's immediate administrative measures against the book thief. But perhaps the most widely used weapon against book thieves in the Middle Ages was the curse. G. A. Cruewell, who has dealt with this subject exhaustively,[38] has cited numerous examples from oriental manuscripts to show that the curse was not a Christian invention. The first example which he finds in the Western Church is a document relating to a gift of Theotrude to the Abbey of St. Denis in 627. Subsequently the curse gained in popularity as an effective measure against book thieves and continued to be used until the introduction of the printed book. Its disappearance is probably due to the decreased value of books which made their loss somewhat less important and also made them more easily available by honorable means to would-be thieves.

There are innumerable rather quaint examples of the curse.[39] The monastery of St. Maximin de Micy threatened the book thief with damnation along with Judas, Ananias, Caiaphas, and Pilate. The two great medieval schools of writing, the Cistercian monastery at Clairvaux and St. Albans,

[36] *Ep.* LXXXV: 160–161. Cited in Thompson, *The Medieval Library*, p. 97.

[37] Bogeng, *Die grossen Bibliophilen*, I, p. 503.

[38] "Die Verfluchung des Bücherdiebes," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, IV, 1906, p. 197–223.

[39] Examples noted in this paragraph are taken from John W. Clark, *The Care of Books*. Cambridge: The University Press, 1901. p. 77–79.

specifically invoked anathema. Thus St. Albans manuscripts frequently end: "Hic est liber sancti Albani quemqui ei abstulerit aut titulum deleverit anathema sit." Most interesting is a quaint specimen in verse in a breviary now in the library of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge:

> Wher so ever y be come over all
> I belonge to the Chapell of Gunvylle hall;
> He shall be cursed by the grate-sentens
> That felonsly faryth and berith me thens.
> And whether he bere me in pooke or sekke,
> For me he shall be hanged by the nekke,
> (I am so well beknown of dyverse men)
> But I be restored theder again.

The express threat of excommunication was not at all uncommon. Cim lists numerous manuscripts containing threats to excommunicate the thief or to have him stricken from the Book of Life, and he cites Ludovic Lalanne's authority to support the tale that in the reading room of the Vatican Library there is a marble tablet on which is inscribed a decree of Sixtus v excommunicating anyone who removes even a single book without the Holy Father's permission.[40] Edward Edwards informs us that as late as 1752 Pope Benedict xiv issued a bull threatening book thieves with excommunication in order to protect his Polish library.[41]

Closely related to the curse in medieval manuscripts is the condemnation of thieves in bookplates.[42] This condemnation generally takes the form of a fairly gentle warning to potentially delinquent borrowers. Thus David Garrick (who, incidentally, was silly enough to lend his best Shakspere quartos to the slovenly Samuel Johnson) had an elegant but realistic quotation from the fourth volume of *Menagiana* on his bookplate: "La première chose qu'on doit faire quand on a emprunté un livre, c'est de le lire afin de pouvoir le rendre plutôt." A much more common and less original admonition to possible borrower-thieves is: "Gentle reader, take me home; I belong to John Marks,

[40] op. cit., p. 63–65.

[41] *Memoirs of Libraries.* London: Trübner & Co., 1859. II, p. 547 (note).

[42] For a full discussion of this matter see W. J. Hardy, *Book-plates.* London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1897, 2nd ed. p. 162–177. The material contained in this paragraph is taken from Hardy.

20 Cork Street, Cork." Caveats vary from the gentle reminder of Michael Lilienthal (translated from the Latin by Hardy):

> Use this book, but let no one misuse it;
> The bee does not stain lilies but only touches them.

to the vigorous uncompromising Renaissance doggerel:

> My Master's name above you se,
> Take heede therefore you steale not mee;
> For if you doe, without delay
> Your necke . . . for me shall pay.
> Looke doune below and you shall see
> The picture of the gallowstree;
> Take heede therefore of thys in time,
> Lest on this tree you highly clime!
>
> [Drawing of the gallows]

One of the most interesting aspects of book theft in the Middle Ages is the curious idea of the medieval man that to borrow a book in manuscript and make an unauthorized copy of it constituted embezzlement. The most celebrated case of this type is the quarrel between St. Columba and his teacher, Finnian of Moville, as related by Adamnan.[43] Columba copied a psalter which Finnian had lent him, and the latter claimed not only the original but also the copy as his property. The dispute became so violent that it was carried to King Diarmid, who supported the claim of Finnian, saying that the copy should go with the book "as calf must go with the cow." A bibliophile of Columba's stature could hardly be expected to take this Solomonian judgment lying down; and accordingly he and his followers fought a battle to get back the transcript and paid for their boldness by being forced into exile.

Joshua Bloch cites rabbinical authority to show that the scriptural passage, "Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry" (Proverbs VI, 30), was applied to those who stole words of sacred texts by

[43] Karl Christ, "Das Mittelalter," p. 119, in *Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft*, III, p. 90–285, and Ernest A. Savage, *The Story of Libraries and Book-Collecting*. London: George Routledge & Sons, n. d., p. 43–44. Savage thinks that the volume in question was the *Leabhar Cathach* ("Book of Battle"), now in the possession of the Irish Academy.

transcribing them from copies belonging to others.[44] In connection with his discussion of this matter, Bloch cites from Immanuel ben Solomon of Rome an interesting tale of two medieval Jews who fell out because one entrusted his books to the care of the other, and the latter betrayed his trust by copying some manuscripts during the former's absence. On the other hand, Bloch points out that there is considerable evidence to prove that many Jews were also more than willing to permit their manuscripts to be copied.

Although books became cheaper with the invention of printing, and, as has been pointed out, thus removed some of the book thief's motivation, the intensified thirst for knowledge in the Renaissance created new hazards for libraries. In Bodley's Library even the Benefactors' Register was "cheined to the deske, at the vpper broad Windowe of the Librarie."[45] Few scholars who traveled in foreign parts came back with empty hands.[46] Poggio Bracciolini, who discovered so many valuable manuscripts in the monasteries of Germany, Switzerland, and France, did not always use the most honorable methods of acquisition; but one is tempted strongly to forgive almost any bibliographical peccadillo to the savior of Quintilian, Valerius Flaccus, and Ammianus Marcellinus. As to his methods, he says of one manuscript: "In manicam conieci," but we know that he also managed to get hold of larger ones. Cardinal Bessarion had unusual methods of collecting manuscripts from the moribund Greek monasteries of Southern Italy of which he was the nominal chief, but Gardthausen excuses him as the rescuer rather than the looter of the property of these degenerated foundations. When the riches of the Levantine and other Near Eastern monasteries were discovered in the first half of the nineteenth century, much the same type of thing occurred *(infra)*.

As we pursue the book thief into modern times, he begins to assume familiar characteristics and to follow known patterns of behavior (although it must not be assumed that any criminal specialty ever becomes stereotyped). Book thieves may now be classified fairly accurately by profession. Heading the list of professions which have produced notable book thieves is that of the librarian. Close on the heels of the librarian come the clergyman and the scholar. As a big operator, the professional thief ranks considerably behind

[44] "The People and the Book; on the Love, Care and Use of Books among the Jews," p. 305–307, in Deoch Fulton, ed., *Bookmen's Holiday: Notes and Studies Written and Gathered in Tribute to Harry Miller Lydenberg*. New York: The New York Public Library, 1943. p. 275–315.

[45] Quoted from the Statutes. See *Trecentale Bodleianum*. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1913. p. 34.

[46] There is a good treatment of this matter in Viktor Gardthausen, *Handbuch der wissenschaftlichen Bibliothekskunde*. Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1920. 1, p. 177.

the librarian and the clergyman. Indeed, the librarian rivals the despoiling conqueror and the confiscating revolutionary in the proportions of his thefts. If Count Libri had only been left unmolested a few more years, he might probably have been able to steal as much as had been confiscated during the French Revolution. The two most fearsome book criminals of all, Don Vincente and Pastor Tinius, were Catholic and Protestant clergymen respectively. When we are given an adequate history of Jewish libraries, many a rabbi will probably be exposed and join the ranks of gentile clerical book thieves; and when Indian bibliography progresses beyond its present primeval state, many a *sadhu* will probably be found to have secreted an occasional palm leaf in his loin cloth.

French librarians got the hang of the book theft business not too long after modern libraries began to take form in that country. Pierre de Carcavi, appointed by Colbert as "gardien de la Bibliothèque du Roi," robbed the Bibliothèque Royale of many valuable duplicates.[47] By the nineteenth century Gallic genius had developed book theft into a profession, but it took an Italian to make a fine art of it. Guglielmo Bruto Icilio Timoleone, Conte Libri Carrucci della Sommaia,[48] descendant of the poet Feo della Sommaia who was a friend of both Petrarch and Boccaccio, played such havoc with French libraries in the 1840's that Léopold Delisle was still untangling Libri's obscure cataloguing as late as 1898.[49]

The story of Libri is too well known to repeat in detail. It will be recalled how the young Florentine nobleman held a university degree at the age of seventeen, was professor of mathematics in Pisa at the age of twenty, and was forced to flee to Paris for political reasons before he was thirty (1832). There he soon became famous and influential, winning appointments as professor of mathematics at the Collège de France, chevalier of the Legion of Honor, member of the Institute, editor of the *Journal des Savants,* and inspector in the public school system. He was a well-known figure at the book auctions, and by 1841 his reputation as a bibliophile was enough to justify his appointment as secretary of a commission to make an inventory of the manuscripts in the public (i.e., not private) libraries of France. Immediately he began to "collect"; and although several accusations were made against him early in his career as a book thief, he was protected by the

47 Cim, op. cit., p. 65–66.

48 There is a good introductory bibliography on the enormous mass of Libri literature in Bogeng, *Die grossen Bibliophilen,* III, p. 246–247. The basic document in the Affaire Libri is Léopold Delisle's *Les manuscrits des fonds Libri et Barrois.*

49 "Les vols de Libri au Séminaire d'Autun," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes,* LIX, 1898, p. 379–392.

lack of proper cataloguing and the confused political conditions of the day. After a six-year career as a "collector," he decided to have his sale. He auctioned some of his printed books in Paris, but his big haul was the £8,000 he received from Lord Bertram Ashburnham for some 1,923 manuscripts.[50] Unfortunately for Libri, he had been very careless about removing the stamps of some of the victimized French libraries, and the authorities were compelled to take notice. In 1848 he fled to England, taking with him a considerable library which he later auctioned at Sotheby's and Puttick and Simpson, always carefully concealing the provenance of the books and manuscripts and frequently concealing his own connection with the sale. In 1850 he was sentenced *in contumaciam* by a French court to ten years at hard labor. Toward the end of his life he returned to Italy, and in 1869 he died in Fiesole.

The remarkable aspect of the Affaire Libri is not so much the magnitude of the crime as the vehemence of the controversy arising out of it. For ten or fifteen years after his conviction Libri was vigorously defended by such famous names as Gustav Brunet, Laboulaye, Achille Jubinal, Paulin Paris, Paul Lacroix, Guizot, Victor Leclerc, Alfred de Vailly, and Mérimée.[51] Libri cleverly wove into his defense the political troubles arising from the fall of Louis-Philippe. In 1861 he entered an appeal for a reversal of his sentence but was unsuccessful. When Mme. Mélanie Libri, sister of Baron Double, addressed a petition to the French Senate to set aside the judgment in the same year, Attorney General Dupin, already famous as a punster, remarked: "Dans cette affaire Libri, il y a des gens qui agissent vraiment avec une légèreté de. . . colibri!"[52]

Inseparably connected with the name of Libri is that of Joseph Barrois, one time deputy of the Département du Nord.[53] After purchasing from Libri a large number of manuscripts which Libri had stolen from the Bibliothèque

[50] For a concise account of Ashburnham's relations with Libri see Seymour de Ricci, *English Collectors of Books and Manuscripts (1530–1930) and Their Marks of Ownership*. Cambridge: The University Press, 1930. p. 131–138. The great bulk of the Ashburnham manuscripts, excepting only the 996 items in the Stowe Collection, were stolen property. In addition to his large purchase from Libri, Ashburnham paid Joseph Barrois *(infra)* £6,000 for 702 stolen items in 1849. When Ashburnham died, his heirs found few libraries willing to purchase manuscripts with such shady pedigrees. The Libri manuscripts ultimately went back to Paris and to Italy; but most of the Barrois manuscripts were not sold until 1901, when Sotheby disposed of them for over £26,000 to the Bibliothèque Nationale, the British Museum, the Boston Public Library, and the Morgan, Walters, and Fairfax Murray Collections.

[51] Cim, op. cit., p. 81.

[52] ibid., p. 89–90.

[53] Delisle, *Les manuscrits des fonds Libri et Barrois;* Bogeng, *Die grossen Bibliophilen,* I, p. 458, and III, p. 224–225 (bibliography); De Ricci, loc. cit.

Nationale, he transported them clandestinely in international commerce from France to England and sold them in 1849 to Ashburnham at the very moment when Libri was being tried in France *in absentia*. Cim argues that Ashburnham was not aware of the source of the manuscripts,[54] but it is difficult to believe that any collector or librarian in Western Europe was not currently posted on the sensational trial resulting from Libri's exposure.

The Libri scandal was one of the favorite topics of conversation of Auguste Harmand, for thirty years municipal librarian at Troyes.[55] Harmand was always delighted to have an opportunity to describe Libri carrying a large brief case and wearing a flowing topcoat in which he would conceal pilfered manuscripts. But not until almost a generation after Libri's depredations had been exposed was it discovered that Harmand was in the same business when the concierge of the library at Troyes caught him in the act of altering the library's stamps. He had covered up his tracks so neatly by removing entries from the catalogue that even Ludovic Lalanne and Anatole de Montaiglon could not find a record that many of the stolen volumes had actually belonged to the library at Troyes. It is interesting to note that Harmand attempted to follow Libri's example for the legal defense of a book thief by attributing his denunciation to political considerations; but he was not quite as successful as his master in the trade, and he was convicted and sentenced to four years in the penitentiary.

German librarians no less than their French confrères have been known to convert feloniously the property in their custody. They range from stack boys[56] to university librarians, and some of their thefts have been almost as significant as Libri's in respect to the scale on which they were conceived. An important pioneer among German librarian-biblioklepts was Christian Friedrich Matthaei, whose "Drang nach Osten" actually penetrated within the gates of Moscow and netted him at least sixty-one manuscripts taken from various Muscovite libraries.[57]

[54] op. cit., p. 93, note 1.

[55] The best discussions of Harmand's activities are found in Maillard, op. cit., p. 115–120, and Cim, op. cit., p. 94–98.

[56] A brief note in the column "Mitteilungen aus und über Bibliotheken" in the *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, XVIII, 1901, p. 183, informs that a stack boy in the Buchgewerbemuseum in Leipzig, was given two weeks in the workhouse for six thefts.

[57] The complete account of Matthaei's activities has been worked out by Oscar von Gebhardt, "Christian Friedrich Matthaei und seine Sammlung griechischer Handschriften," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, XV, 1898, p. 345–357, 393–420, 441–482, 537–566 (also issued as a separate by Harrassowitz in 1898; reviewed by Karl Krumbacher in the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, VIII, 1899, p. 560–561). See also Gardthausen, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Universitäts-Bibliothek zu Leipzig*.

In 1789 the Russian historian Karamsin was inspecting a Euripides manuscript in the Kurfürstliche (later Königliche, now Staats-) Bibliothek in Dresden. The manuscript looked familiar to him, and, knowing that it had been purchased by the library from Matthaei, he was at a loss to figure out where and how the latter had acquired it. But the question as to the provenance of the manuscript remained a mystery for over a century until Oscar von Gebhardt unraveled the whole affair in his brilliant series of articles in the *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* in 1898. Briefly, the facts of the case are that Matthaei was in Moscow on two occasions, ultimately dying there while occupying the chair of classical philology at the University of Moscow, and that during his first sojourn had held appointments of trust in various Muscovite libraries and had abused his position by committing innumerable thefts. The extent of his depredations has never been ascertained precisely due to the poor state of the catalogues in most of the victimized libraries; but it is known that he sold sixty-one manuscripts to the Kurfürstliche Bibliothek in Dresden and to the university libraries in Leipzig, Leiden, and Göttingen. To Matthaei's credit, it must be stated that his sole motive was not money, but that research problems also entered the picture, for he did not sell the manuscripts until he had exploited them fully. Perhaps for this reason Matthaei had the untidy habit of stealing only portions of manuscripts rather than entire volumes. Accordingly, there arose from this circumstance an Augean stable of confused manuscript pedigrees; but fortunately Gardthausen and Gebhardt have been able to straighten out most of these problems satisfactorily.

German librarians were still considering Russian libraries fair game for booty in the following century; but Alois Pichler[58] was caught in 1871 after having stolen some 4,000 volumes from the Imperial Public Library in St. Petersburg and was sent to Siberia. Pichler was a native of Burgkirchen in Upper Bavaria and had established a solid reputation as a theologian and a classicist before receiving the St. Petersburg appointment. It is of interest to note that when he was apprehended, his thirty-six-year-old female cousin was also taken into custody and sentenced to four months in the workhouse for harboring. This is the only harboring violation in connection with book theft which is known to have been prosecuted, although harboring and receiving are almost as common as the substantive crime. In 1873 Prince Leopold of Bavaria interceded with the Czar on Pichler's behalf, and the librarian was released. He returned to Bavaria where he settled in Siegsdorf near Traunstein, but he died shortly thereafter.

[58] Klenz, op. cit., p. 53.

Denmark must share Germany's guilt for producing Daniel Gotthilf Moldenhawer, professor and librarian at both Kiel and Copenhagen in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[59] After Moldenhawer's death in 1823 the great bulk of his collection of manuscripts and books, most of which had been acquired by means of which his heirs would not be proud, became a part of the Royal Library in Copenhagen. Moldenhawer made extensive trips all over Europe and spent considerable time in Paris where he investigated the monastic collections. Hans Schulz has cynically but correctly remarked that there is a remarkable correspondence between what Moldenhawer sought in Paris and what his collection was later found to contain.[60]

In spite of the economic distress of post-war Germany, there is but one recorded account of a large scale theft by a librarian, and he an Austrian.[61] Joseph Urdich, a subordinate in the University of Graz Library, was caught because a bank could not understand why such large deposits were being made by an impoverished librarian. Urdich made heavy inroads on an extremely valuable collection of some 20,000 volumes deposited in the basement of the University of Graz Library and not yet catalogued. He covered up his tracks carefully by falsifying accession entries, substituting uncatalogued books for catalogued ones and giving them shelf marks of old ones (another argument in favor of our Anglo-Saxon "Dogma der systematischen Aufstellung" so bitterly opposed by many German librarians!). He was no bibliophile. When he had stolen a book he would invariably tear off the old binding and replace it with a new one. He was probably one of the first Austrian Nazis, for when he was unable to eradicate fully all signs of ownership, he would burn the book. On one occasion his religious scruples hampered his operations. He had sold a stolen copy of St. Birgitta's *Revelationes* (Nuremberg, 1500) to a German dealer for RM 300.--, and the latter had in turn sold it to a Swiss dealer for 15,000 francs. But it was subsequently discovered that the book was imperfect, and it was returned to the thief. Inasmuch as it was written by a saint, Urdich hesitated to burn it and therefore returned it to the shelves. Some of Urdich's spoils found their way to America. One citizen of the United States who will remain anonymous purchased Konrad

[59] Ada Sara Adler, *D. G. Moldenhawer og hans Haandskriftsamling*. Copenhagen: J. L. Lybecker, 1917. (Copenhagen thesis.)

[60] Review of Adler's thesis in *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, XXXIX, 1918, p. 790–791.

[61] Louis Karl, "Incunables et livres précieux volés à la Bibliothèque de l'Université à Graz," *Revue des Bibliothèques*, XL, 1930, p. 191–194. See also "Thefts of Rare Books," *Libraries*, XXXVI, 1931, p. 137–138.

Celtes' edition of Hrotswitha of Gandersheim's *Opera* (Nuremberg, 1501) for 1,650 Austrian shillings.

Other European countries which have produced criminal librarians in modern times are Italy and Spain. One Passini, secretary of the University of Parma Library, was jailed in 1885 for stealing 5,000 of the library's 80,000 volumes, among them numerous early Italian imprints.[62] In Spain the arrest of one Antonio López-Santos, an employee of the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, and his mistress (named Maria Madalena!) nearly precipitated a national scandal in 1930.[63] López-Santos was apprehended after it had been discovered that he was guilty of stealing certain etchings from the Biblioteca Nacional which subsequently appeared in the possession of a Berlin dealer; and in the search of his quarters made incidental to his arrest, several valuable works on the conquest of Peru belonging to the Biblioteca Nacional were also recovered. It was further revealed that López-Santos, supposedly a poverty-stricken library assistant, had a neat credit of some RM 80,000.-- in a German bank. This scandal was probably responsible for later attacks on Rodríguez Marín, the director of the Biblioteca Nacional, in *El Sol,* liberal Republican paper. Rodríguez, a leading Spanish Germanophile in World War I, at which time he made many enemies, was accused of maladministration and incompetence by *El Sol.*

Private collectors are no more immune to the temptations of books than are librarians. Although it is questionable whether some collectors have been reduced to theft by love of books or money, they have as a class at least produced no such vulgar thieves as Urdich and López-Santos. Among collectors neither age nor rank give immunity to the "amiable weakness" of bibliokleptomania, which claims such eminent victims as Catherine de Medici (who stole Marshal Strozzi's library), Innocent X, Bishop More, and Sir Robert Cotton.[64] The collector stops at nothing to gain his ends, and if we may believe the delightful fiction of Dr. Rosenbach,[65] his ingenuity surpasses that of all other book thieves.

The prototype of the collector-biblioklept is perhaps Sir Edward Fitzgerald.[66] Born of an illustrious English family, wealthy, and with powerful

62 Item in the column "Vermischte Notizen," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen,* II, 1885, p. 294.

63 Camille Pittolet, "À propos de récents vols de livres en Espagne avec quelques souvenirs sur la bibliothèque Colombine," *Revue des Bibliothèques,* XL, 1930, p. 40–58, and "Vols à la 'Biblioteca Nacional' de Madrid," ibid., p. 203–204.

64 G. C. Kapur, "The Problem of Book Losses in Libraries," *Modern Librarian,* Lahore, VIII, no. 1, Oct. – Dec., 1931, p. 18.

65 A. S. W. Rosenbach, *The Unpublishable Memoirs.* London: John Castle, 1924.

66 Cim, op. cit., p. 25–26.

political ties within his family, he started out on a promising diplomatic career which, however, never came to fruition. He began his infamous hobby by stealing books of his friends. On one occasion his wife caught him stealing from the library of a castle in Northumberland and denounced him, but he escaped the net of justice and fled to France. Here his unfortunate passion pursued him, and towards the middle of the nineteenth century he was well known among Parisian *bouquinistes* as *l'Anglais*. They tolerated his minor depredations on their stock, but one day he overstepped the bounds of their patience when he appropriated a polyglot Bible. He was apprehended and sentenced to two years in the penitentiary.

Perhaps for the very reason that France is the happy hunting ground of the collector and the biblioklept, French librarians have adopted severer administrative measures against thieves than are found in any other country, and likewise French librarians have shown remarkable ingenuity in protecting their holdings. A particularly sly fellow was Louis Paris, for many years librarian at Rheims.[67] One day he received notice of a prospective visit from M. Béquet, inspector of the University, and Edme Courtois, ex-member of the Convention. Forewarned of Courtois' unenviable reputation as a book thief, Paris resolved to be on his guard during the visit. When they arrived, Paris showed them through his entire library, not omitting the case of incunabula. After a few minutes in the room where the incunabula were shelved, he suddenly noticed that his Lucius Annaeus Florus, which had been in place when they entered, was missing. At first he pretended to take no notice of it, but it was still missing after the tour of the library had been completed. In his despair, Paris turned to his two guests and, frankly declaring himself to be a suspicious man, told them that one of the three – perhaps himself – had stolen the precious volume, and proposed that all three turn their pockets inside out. Paris and Béquet had nothing in their pockets other than the miscellaneous assortment of junk carried by most Frenchmen, but the highly annoyed Courtois was caught red-handed and had to surrender the book to its lawful owner.

Perhaps it is unjust to group clergymen together as a class of book thieves and to rank them second only to librarians in their zeal for their hobby; for, as Pierce Butler indicates[68] in past ages men were churchmen only by con-

[67] ibid., p. 55–58.

[68] *The Origin of Printing in Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940. p. 19. Butler refers only to the Middle Ages here, but it might not be amiss to extend to, or perhaps even through, the nineteenth century the period when the Church was a refuge for learned men of all varieties.

vention, actually they were statesmen, legislators, diplomats and administrators. Perhaps one is influenced too much by the tradition of the preacher's son who became the village drunkard or of the divinity student who made bathtub gin in his dormitory room; but the fact remains that clergymen rank high as accomplished book thieves. Out of respect to the cloth we will omit the history of individual biblioklepts in the Middle Ages, virtually all of whom were clerics, and include only those wayward sons of the modern Church who might as well have chosen some other profession to disgrace. In further reverence to the Church it should be emphasized that Innocent x was merely Cardinal Pamfilio when he first acquired his lifelong grudge against the entire French nation.[69] It began when a Gallic collector detected the future pope abstracting a book from his library and had made so bold as to ask him to put it back. Pamfilio, highly indignant, denied the theft vehemently — so vehemently that the stolen book dropped out from beneath his voluminous cardinal's robes.

One of the most celebrated clerical thieves of the seventeenth century, Jean Aymon,[70] can be blamed on neither the Roman nor the Protestant Church, for he was a renegade in ecclesiastical as well as bibliographical matters. This misguided genius completed his studies for the priesthood under the canonical age, and Innocent xi had to write out a special dispensation for him in which, among other things, the Holy Father said: "Vitae ac morum honestas, aliaque laudabilia probitatis et virtutum merita." Aymon had hardly donned the cloth before he was up to his neck in trouble so serious that he found it expedient to renounce the Church of Rome for a Protestant pastorate in Holland and to break his vow of celibacy and take a wife. But he was no more able to stay out of difficulties in the Protestant Church than he was in the Catholic Church; and accordingly he began to intrigue to return to France and to the bosom of the Church of his fathers. Excluded from France as a Huguenot, he wrote to Nicolas Clément, custodian of the Bibliothèque du Roi in Paris, urging him to intercede in his behalf and at the same time offering for sale the celebrated herbal of Paul Hermann at a bargain price. Fagon, the superintendent of the Jardin Royal, was consulted in the matter of purchasing the Hermann herbal and advised to the contrary; but through further chicaneries, Aymon was able to prevail

[69] Kapur, op. cit., p. 18; Sander, op. cit., p. 160.

[70] Gardthausen, *Handbuch der wissenschaftlichen Bibliothekskunde*. Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1920, i, p. 177; Cim, op. cit., p. 66–80; J. C. F. Hoefer, *Nouvelle biographie universelle*. Paris: Firmin Didot frères, 1852–1866. iii, p. 900; Jean-Barthélemy Hauréau, *Singularités historiques et littéraires*. Paris: Michel Levy frères, 1861. p. 286–324.

upon Clément to get him permission to return to Paris. Aymon told the gullible Clément that he had a *magnum opus* to write on the iniquities of the Protestant heretics based on material gathered during his temporary apostasy, and under this pretext he was able to gain entry to the library entrusted to Clément's care. Aymon soon got on Clément's nerves, and the latter was delighted one day when the renegade failed to show up. But his joy was short lived, for he soon got a note from a French agent in The Hague stating that Aymon was in that city attempting to dispose of the precious manuscript of the *Dernier Concile de Jérusalem tenu par les Grecs au sujet de la transubstantiation* (1672 and 1673)[71] and several other valuable pieces which he had feloniously taken from the Bibliothèque du Roi. After much confusion, many charges and countercharges, Aymon finally sought a court judgment in The Hague directing the stolen property to his legal possession; but in 1709 Dutch justice finally decided that the *Dernier Concile* rightfully belonged in Paris. But in the meanwhile the poor Clément had had a nervous breakdown and lived only three more years to enjoy custody of the book. A curious epilogue to Aymon's thefts is a letter of Philippe de Stosch returning a book stolen by Aymon from the Bibliothèque du Roi and sold to Stosch but belatedly recognized.[72]

A Protestant clergyman of the seventeenth century whose guilt as a book thief has been the subject of considerable debate was the Dutch philologist Isaak Vossius.[73] Klenz and other Germans have argued consistently that Vossius stole not only the Codex Argenteus but also other valuable manuscripts when he parted company with Queen Christina upon her abdication. But Wieselgren, Grape, and von Friesen argue that the young queen, unaware of the true value of the Codex Argenteus inasmuch as her education had been almost exclusively classical, gave it to the Dutchman as a reward for his services as her librarian and tutor. There is no conclusive proof to support the arguments of either side; but those who have seen and admired the Codex Argenteus, aside from its inestimable philological value, will find it difficult to understand how anyone could willingly part with it. Taken by the Swedes at Prague in 1648, it became a part of the Queen's library,

[71] Published in 1798 in The Hague as *Monuments authentiques de la religion grecque.*

[72] H. Omont, "Les vols d'Aymon à la Bibliothèque du Roi et le Baron de Stosch," *Revue des Bibliothèques,* I, 1891. p. 468–469. Stosch's collection was later acquired for the Vatican by Cardinal Passionei *(infra).*

[73] Klenz, op. cit., p. 52: Harald Wieselgren, *Drottning Kristinas bibliotek och bibliotekarier före hennes bosättning i Rom.* Stockholm: Kunglige boktryckeriet, P. A. Norstedt & söner, 1901. *K. Vitterhets, historie och antiqvitets akademiens handlingar* n.f., XIII, 2; Anders Grape and Otto von Friesen, *Om Codex Argenteus. dess tid, hem och öden.* Uppsala: Svenska litteratursällskapet, 1928; *Svenska litteratursällskapets skrifter,* XXVII. p. 174–176.

but Vossius took it with him when he left Sweden in 1654. In 1662 Count Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie, seventeenth-century Swedish Maecenas, bought it from Vossius and presented it to the University Library in Uppsala where it is still retained today.[74] After Vossius died in 1689 in Windsor, where he was a canon, the remainder of Vossius' manuscripts passed to his native city of Leiden.

The eighteenth century produced the most celebrated (and perhaps the least repulsive) of all clerical book thieves, Cardinal Domenico Passionei (1682–1761).[75] Appointed director of the Vatican Library in 1755, he quickly made a reputation for himself by his learning and ability. In Frascati he had his own private collection numbering 60,000 volumes in 1721, not one of which was by a Jesuit. It included the collection of printed books formerly owned by Cassiano del Pozzo and numerous other valuable items whose source was never discussed by Passionei. The facts are that Passionei misused his office in the Church in order to secure books for his private library.[76] When he was in Lucerne as papal nuncio in 1721, he spent much of his time visiting Swiss abbeys, but he rarely left them without looking like a stuffed sausage for all the volumes concealed beneath his flowing cardinal's robes. Or he would inform the prior that he had important researches to make in the library; and, in order "not to be disturbed," he would lock himself in, whereupon he would select the rarest volumes and throw them out of the window to a waiting flunkey. Perhaps because Passionei was so well aware of the possibilities of theft as a means of acquisition, he was extremely careful of his own collection. He described it as his seraglio, and, carrying the figure further, he had the bad taste to call his librarian, none other than Johann Joachim Winckelmann, his eunuch![77] After Passionei's death his collection was sold for 30,000 scudi to the Augustines, and ultimately it found a home in the Biblioteca Angelica. Cardinal Schiara bought Passionei's prints and presented them to Empress Maria Theresa.

Passionei was not the only Vatican librarian who had an imperfect conception of the laws of "mine" and "thine." On October 13, 1810, Paul-Louis Courier wrote to M. Clavier complaining that Vatican manuscripts "s'en

74 Even this was not the end of the tribulations of Ulfilas' famous book, for during the nineteenth century someone stole ten leaves from the Gospel of St. Mark; but fortunately they were later recovered. Grape and von Friesen, op. cit., p. 174–176.

75 There is an introductory bibliography on Passionei in Bohatta's article in the *Lexikon des gesamten Buchwesens*, II, p. 623. See also Sander, op. cit., p. 160.

76 Karl Justi, *Winckelmann; sein Leben, seine Werke und seine Zeitgenossen*. Leipzig: F. C. W. Vogel, 1866–1872. II, p. i, 97; and Cim, op. cit., p. 12–15.

77 Lalanne, op. cit., p. 189–190.

vont tout doucement en Allemagne et en Angleterre."[78] According to Courier, the pillage was begun by one Father Altieri, a Vatican librarian, who sold the manuscripts "comme Sganarelle ses fagots."

Nineteenth-century France produced a clerical book thief ranking second only to Passionei. The Abbé Chavin de Malan[79] operated with the smooth tongue of a confidence man worthy of comparison with Aymon, and soon he won himself a place as the *enfant gâté* of such high prelates as the Archbishop of Paris and the Bishops of Orleans, St. Claude, Langres, and Rennes. With this backing and the excuse that he needed to get at the sources for his *Histoire de Dom Mabillon et de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur*, he was able to prevail on M. Robert, decrepit and complacent director of the Bibliothèque St. Geneviève to give him the key so that he could work there on Sundays. He made good use of his Sabbath labors, at least from his personal standpoint. He was even able to secure the aid of a "commissionaire" to help him cart off the seventeen solidly bound folio volumes of the *Oeuvres* of Denis le Chartreux to his quarters. Altogether the Abbé's *Histoire de Dom Mabillon* cost St. Geneviève some 514 volumes. Later Chavin de Malan turned out to be as great a renegade as Aymon, for he renounced the Church and wed his own cousin. To support his wife he prevailed upon M. de Falloux to get him a job as grand ducal librarian in Luxemburg, but when his wife died he returned to the Church and continued to amuse himself in libraries.

Apropos of the *Histoire de Dom Mabillon* the barefaced Abbé wrote: "Tout l'argent que je pouvais avoir, je l'employais à acheter les ouvrages de Dom Mabillon et de ses confrères; c'était de bien grands sacrifices pour ma pauvre bourse, mais aujourd'hui que je contemple ces chers volumes à leur place d'honneur dans ma bibliothèque, j'ai oublié toutes mes privations..."[80] He disposed of the *Oeuvres* of Denis le Chartreux by presenting them to the Abbé Cruice, director of the school of Cannes, but when Cruice discovered their true source he restored them to St. Geneviève. The bulk of Chavin de Malan's collection was purchased by the dealer Demichelis who, in turn, sold the books to the British Museum and American collectors.

Another abbé whom Cim protects with the simple designation of "B..." terrorized the *bouqinistes* of the left bank with his thefts around the turn

[78] Cim, op. cit., p. 20–21.

[79] Bohatta lists the more important references on Chavin de Malan in the *Lexikon des gesamten Buchwesens*, I, p. 339. Particularly important are Maillard, op. cit., p. 110–115, and Bogeng, *Streifzüge eines Bücherfreundes*, I, p. 177.

[80] Maillard, op. cit., p. 114.

of the century.[81] He was frequently denounced, but he would always become highly indignant, reproaching the poor shopkeeper bitterly for his blasphemously suspicious nature that made him distrust a clergyman. But when he extended his activities to the specimen collection of the École des Mines, positive action was taken by state authorities. His house was raided, the specimens located and returned; and the thief retired to Normandy where he died shortly thereafter.

In nineteenth-century Germany one of the most serious recorded cases of book theft was that of Wilhelm Bruno Lindner,[82] professor of theology in the University of Leipzig and author of several theological works as well as four volumes of poems. His father was the well-known pedagogical theorist Friedrich Wilhelm Lindner. In 1860, twenty-one years after he had received his first appointment on the Leipzig faculty, he was caught in the act of stealing rare books from the University of Leipzig Library. Tried and convicted, he was stripped of his professorship and sentenced to serve six years in the penitentiary, of which he actually served three. In 1876 he died in Leipzig in disgrace.

In the United States, librarians have had a considerable amount of trouble with ministers of the Gospel and with theological students. W. F. Poole remarked that he had been annoyed especially by clergymen who unlawfully coveted the books in libraries of which he was custodian.[83] A. R. Spofford reported that antiquarian dealers in Boston had caught ministers stealing pamphlet sermons and that, as of 1900, the Union Theological Seminary had lost 1,000 volumes.[84] One Funk, a notorious Chicago book thief of the 1880's, went to Cambridge and secured admission to the divinity school, but his record was disclosed when he attempted to get his bond signed, and he committed suicide a few days later.[85] In 1904, Frederick A. Bates, once a minister at Narragansett Pier, R. I., was caught with $3,500 worth of books stolen from the Boston Public Library, Boston University Library, Brown University Library, Andover Theological Library, the Brockton Public Library, and several others.[86]

The fate of the unhappy Funk suggests that bibliokleptomania may lead to crimes involving considerably greater violence than simple book larceny.

81 Cim, op. cit., p. 125–127.

82 Klenz, op. cit., p. 53.

83 Cited in A. R. Spofford, *A Book for All Readers.* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1900. p. 138–139.

84 ibid.

85 M. A. Bullard, "Book Thieves," *Library Journal,* x, 1885. p. 380.

86 "Books Stolen from Public Libraries," *Library Journal,* xxix, 1904. p. 76–77.

Two of the most notorious criminals of the nineteenth century, Johann Georg Tinius, learned German Protestant theologian, and Don Vincente, once a brother of the Cistercian cloister at Poblet (near Tarragona) in Spain, were driven to murder by their insane bibliomania.

Don Vincente[87] once saved the rich library of his cloister from spoliation by robbers by surrendering other treasures to them. Subsequently he appropriated the library for himself and established an antiquarian shop in Barcelona, but he never parted with a valuable book and sold only the less important ones in order to live. It is said that he never read his books. Life might have continued very simply for the renegade, but complications arose in 1836 when the dealer Augustino Patxot outbid him for possession of a copy of Lamberto Palmart's *Furs e ordinacions fetes par los gloriosos reys de Aragon als regnicols del regne de Valencia* (Valencia, 1482), at the time of the sale believed to be a unique copy. The ex-padre grieved so over losing the prize and became so enraged that he murdered Patxot and nine of his customers in order to get possession of this and other books. During the course of the trial Don Vincente became raving mad when he learned that a second copy of the *Furs e ordinacions* had been located in Paris. However, he was found guilty of murder and executed.

Johann Georg Tinius,[88] hero of the Reclam crime thriller, *Der Pfarrer und Magister Tinius, ein Raubmörder aus Büchersammelwut*,[89] became minister in Poserna (near Weissenfels) in 1809. He was twice married, had four children, and led an exemplary personal life. However, in 1813 he was arrested, and after a long drawn out trial he was convicted and sentenced in 1823 to twelve years at hard labor. In spite of his insistent denials, it was proven that he had committed at least two murders in order to secure money to spend on his large private library, variously estimated at from 17,000 to 60,000 volumes. It was sold at a legal auction in 1821. In 1835 Tinius was freed from prison; and in 1846, ostracized by all, he died in Graebensdorf (near Königswusterhausen) where he had been making a living as a hack writer.

[87] For bibliography see Bohatta's article in *Lexikon des gesamten Buchwesens*, III, p. 522, and Bogeng, *Die grossen Bibliophilen*, III, p. 248. See also Sander, op. cit., p. 155–158. Andrew Lang, op. cit., p. 54–56, gives an account of Don Vincente in his inimitable style; and Cim's version, op. cit., p. 28–50, is also well worth reading. Of course, no one interested in Don Vincente will fail to read Flaubert's masterful tale entitled "Bibliomanie," which was inspired by the Spanish priest.

[88] For bibliography see Bohatta's article in the *Lexikon des gesamten Buchwesens*, III, p. 401, and Bogeng, *Die grossen Bibliophilen*. See also Sander, op. cit., p. 158–159.

[89] Leipzig: Reclam, 1914; *Universalbibliothek*, no. 5816.

Close on the heels of clergymen and occupying third place among biblioklepts are scholars. Indeed, if we take into account the fact that many librarians and clergymen stole books and manuscripts for purposes of research, this category of book thieves may prove to be the largest of all. It should also be noted that frequently the scholar surpasses the iniquities of the biblioklept and reveals himself also as a biblioclast. The excision of encyclopedia articles by readers too indolent to take notes is not a phenomenon restricted to school and public libraries.

One of the earliest of modern scholarly book thieves was Friedrich Lindenbrog (or Lindenbruch)[90] who died in Hamburg in 1648 as a highly respected lawyer. When studying in the Bibliothèque de St. Victor he played havoc with the manuscript collection by indulging in the practice of taking home a manuscript a day and converting it to his own private and exclusive use. Early one morning he was arrested while still in bed (a technique strikingly similar to modern police raids), but he was freed a few days later when Pierre Dupuy (Puteanus) vouched for him. Klenz, in justice to Lindenbrog, notes that some sources attribute this story not to Friedrich Lindenbrog but rather to his older brother, Heinrich, who died in 1642 while serving as librarian at Gottorp.

Perhaps the most delightful tale in the annals of book theft is that of a friend of Diderot whom the encyclopedist chose to call "le petit Chose."[91] "Le petit Chose" was in fact a little man who had had the good fortune to meet the famous writer; and in order to curry favor with the great man, he regaled him with gifts of rare and valuable books. Diderot accepted them and was rather proud to display them to his friends, but he was puzzled as to their origin. After questioning "le petit Chose" in detail, he finally discovered that they were stolen. Diderot insisted that the little man return them to their proper owners; but the latter informed the encyclopedist that this was impossible inasmuch as the books had belonged to the Abbé de Gatient, a canon of Notre Dame who had died a few days previously and whose library had been placed under seal. "Le petit Chose" had been the Abbé's secretary. Naturally, Diderot attempted to restore the books to the heir of the Abbé de Gatient, but when the heir was located, he refused to accept the books. Diderot was compelled to retain them, and with them

90 Klenz, op. cit., p. 52. See also Karl Halm, "Friedrich Lindenbrog," in Rochus Freiherr von Liliencron, ed., *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie*. Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1875–1912. XVIII, p. 692–693. This article (which includes a short bibliography) makes no reference to the alleged theft. However, the unsigned article on Heinrich Lindenbrog, ibid., p. 693, attributes the theft to him but goes on to say that he always denied it.

91 Cim, op. cit., p. 15–18.

he kept "le petit Chose" as his librarian. The latter cared for the collection until it finally passed into the hands of Catherine the Great.

One of the most fruitful sources for accessions of nineteenth-century European libraries were the "explorations" of the Near East. In the interests of bibliographical piety it might be well not to go too deeply into the careers of Baron Tischendorf, Henry Tattam, and other explorers of the Levant and the Near East, for there are already a sufficient number of manuscript thieves in these regions convicted by history. Perhaps most notorious of all was the Russian Bishop Porfyrii Uspenskij,[92] who is definitely known to have committed the grossest abuse of the confidence of some of his orthodox coreligionists. Strzygowski states that anyone who has followed Uspenskij's trail in the Near East will find numerous mutilated manuscripts which might be completed from fragments preserved in the Public Library of St. Petersburg (Leningrad). A great scandal was caused among Byzantinists in 1899 when a precious gospel of John Keliot preserved among the relics (not in the library) of the Pantokrator Monastery on Mount Athos disappeared. Only after a long search was it discovered that it had been sold in Athens; and so indignant was the Patraiarchal Synod in Constantinople that it roused itself sufficiently to have the culprit punished.[93] Authorized agents of occidental libraries have also committed grave breaches of propriety in the Near Eastern monasteries. There are uncomplimentary rumors concerning the legitimacy of the means used by the famed Egyptologist Heinrich Karl Brugsch in "collecting" from the Sinai region manuscripts which were ultimately acquired by the Preussische National- (Königliche) Bibliothek in 1866.[94] Considerably more slippery than Brugsch was one Minoïde Mynas,[95] a Greek either by birth or by profession, who was commissioned by the French government to visit certain Levantine monasteries. He brought back numerous important manuscripts, among others the fables of Babrius and a treatise by Philostratus. These two, however, he did not turn over to the French

92 Gardthausen, *Handbuch der wissenschaftlichen Bibliothekskunde*, I, p. 178; J. J. Tikkanen, *Die Psalterillustration im Mittelalter; Band I, Die Psalterillustration in der Kunstgeschichte; Heft 1, Byzantinische Psalterillustration, mönchisch-theologische Redaktion.* Helsingfors: Druckerei der Finnischen Litteratur-Gesellschaft, 1895, reviewed by J. Strzygowski in the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, VI, 1897, p. 422–426.

93 Sava Chalindaros, "Brief über die Begebenheiten auf dem Athos im letzten Jahrzehnt," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, IX, 1900, p. 322–326.

94 Catalogued in Wilhelm Studemund, Leopold Cohn, and Karl de Boor, *Verzeichniss der griechischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin.* Berlin: A. Ascher, 1890–1897; *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, XI. See introduction to second part (on an unnumbered leaf) by Karl de Boor.

95 Maillard, op. cit., p. 120–121.

government but sold to the British Museum, which, according to Maillard, purchased them with guilty knowledge.

Toward the latter part of the nineteenth century Italy was particularly cursed by book thieves. Not only Libri, Passini, and Rapisardi illuminate the annals of book theft in Italy, but also there have been several Germans accused by the Italians of violating the hospitality of Italian libraries. Most notorious of all was the case of Gustav Hänel,[96] distinguished professor of law at Leipzig who died in 1878 and left his fine legal collection to the University of Leipzig Library. Federico Patetta accused Hänel of having committed a *fatto turpe* in the acquisition of the valuable Codex Utinensis, but R. Helssig defended Hänel ably and even tried to prove that Patetta had made his charges in a fit of nationalistically charged rage. Patetta answered with a flat denial of Helssig's implications and demanded the return of the Codex Utinensis. Further exchanges of notes degenerated into an academic squabble.

The continent proper was not the only haunt of scholarly book thieves. M. Hyamson tells the story of how as a youth he was sent to catalogue a library which had been bequeathed to a public institution in England, only to discover upon his arrival that a noted scholar, a friend of the deceased, was calmly writing his name into every volume of any possible interest to him.[97] Pittolet reported that a twenty-eight-year-old student named Samuel Lavega Santo Tomás working in the Biblioteca de San Isidro stole in whole or in part all the sources for his dissertation on Roman sarcophagi.[98] The most amusing book theft of modern times occurred during the last days of St. Petersburg.[99] It seems that a noted Jewish scholar who had worked for long years in the Asiatic Division of the Imperial Public Library had been caught in the act of stealing certain valuable manuscripts. It was late in the last war, and the Kaiser's armies were battering at the gates of Courland and Ingermannland; but Czarist justice shook off its lethargy, arrested and

[96] Federico Patetta, "Come il manoscritto Udinese della così detta 'Lex Romana Raetica Curiensis' e un prezioso codice Sessoriano siano emigrati dall' Italia," *Atti della R. Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*, XLVI, 1910–1911, p. 497–511; R. Helssig, "Der Erwerb des Codex Utinensis und einer anderen Julianhandscrift durch Gustav Hänel," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, XXIX, 1912, p. 97–116; Patetta, "L'esodo dall' Italia del Codex Utinensis e la sua rivendicabilità," *Atti della R. Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*, XLVIII, 1911–1912, p. 738–762; Helssig, "Nochmals der Erwerb des Codex Utinensis durch Gustav Hänel," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, XXIX, 1912, p. 510–519.

[97] "Biblio-kleptomania and How to Check It," *Library World*, XVIII, 1906, p. 207–208.

[98] op. cit., p. 42–44.

[99] I am indebted to Joshua Bloch, Chief of the Jewish Division of The New York Public Library for this story.

indicted the subject and brought him to trial. On the stand as a witness in his own defense he argued that it was absurd to charge him, a respectable patron for thirty years, with theft and that even if he had stolen anything, then the fact that the librarians were so careless as to allow him to get away with it justified leaving in his custody any such stolen property, for he could take far better care of it. He was acquitted.

Some of the thieves discussed in the preceding pages have stolen primarily out of the desire for personal gain, but most of them have at least had some pretense to a higher reason for acquiring specific books. While librarians, theologians, and scholars may frequently have more laudable purposes than the common thief, the latter exercises greater care in preserving intact the physical entity of the book, which to him is a matter of dollars and cents.[100] Nevertheless, a thief with no intellectual pretensions is in general considered to be on a lower level than his confrères with doctoral titles.[101] In the early 1900's there was M. Thomas, chevalier of the Legion of Honor, who had access to the Lesoufaché Collection of the Bibliothèque de l'École des Beaux Arts by virtue of his position as government architect and stole from it hundreds of volumes which he subsequently sold in Germany.[102] Thomas was a scoundrel in other aspects as well. He had been deprived of his position as architect of the Grand Palais because of obvious errors in his work, although he had been allowed to retain a similar position with the National Archives. In the latter capacity he stole hundreds of ancient carvings, pieces of iron-work, and other *objets d'art* and converted them to his own private use in his chateau in Sologne. Friedrich Viktor Loth,[103] with aliases, a Prussian "Referendar," stole books around the turn of the century from German libraries. He was actuated by motives no more edifying than those of Thomas. He was accustomed to go to the University of Leipzig Library, register under the name of O. Peters, and conceal books on his person at the opportune moment. In the search of his quarters (rented under the name of Dr. Röder) incidental to his arrest it was revealed that he had also robbed the University

[100] But sometimes, as in the case of Urdich, a concatenation of circumstances may make a biblioclast of the biblioklept. Very recently there was a possible case of where one common book thief destroyed far more volumes than he could ever have preserved. There is an ugly and fantastic rumor to the effect that a certain South American library which recently was razed by fire was deliberately destroyed by one of the librarians who had stolen so many rarities from it that he felt compelled to burn the remainder in order to cover his tracks.

[101] A book thief who combined all the worst features of his clan was a patron of the Astor Library who tore sixty pages from the *Revue de Paris*, converted them unlawfully to his own use, and to cap the climax committed plagiarism by translating the criminally abstracted leaves and selling the translation to *Appleton's Journal* as an original article. See Spofford, op. cit., p. 137.

[102] "Paris Bibliothèque de l'École des Beaux Arts," *Library Journal*, XXXII, 1907, p. 239.

[103] Uncaptioned anonymous note in *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, XVIII, 1901, p. 278.

of Halle Library (using the alias of Rother), the library of the Leipzig Bar Association, and the Leipzig Chamber of Commerce Library (as Dr. phil. O. Schröder). About the same time that Loth was active one Berthel[104] was stealing many valuable items from the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels and selling them to German dealers. However, one Munich dealer refused to allow Berthel to dupe him into buying stolen property; and when the latter offered for sale books which were known to exist only in Brussels, he immediately notified officials of the Bibliothèque Royale. Librarians in Brussels were able to identify the thief in short order and take appropriate steps to put a stop to his activities.

One of the most notorious bibliographical scandals of the nineteenth century was due apparently to some common thief who was able to get at the treasures of the Biblioteca Colombina in Seville.[105] This once noble collection was started by Fernando Columbus, son of the Admiral, who collected books and manuscripts throughout the Netherlands, France, England, and Spain. In due time this collection of some 15,000 to 20,000 items was incorporated as the Biblioteca Colombina in Seville. It grew slowly, for bibliokleptsnibbled at it constantly and stunted its growth. Accordingly, it is no surprise when we note that in 1870 the Biblioteca Colombina had barely tripled its original size. About this time the thefts increased at a rapid pace, and in the winter of 1885 and 1886 large quantities of *cosas de España* traceable to the Colombina began appearing in the second-hand shops and on the auction blocks of Paris. The name of the thief was never disclosed, but on the basis of a careful investigation it was surmised that he was some individual who had complete and unhampered access to the shelves. Hartwig published an enlightening although somewhat sarcastic reaction to the whole affair. He bitterly remarked that the prelates of the Cathedral in Seville would not honor a formal request from a respected German scholar for international interlibrary loan of a manuscript but paid so little attention to their treasures in their own country that a thief was able to remove them by the crate.[106]

[104] L. Stainier, "Le Contrôle de la restitution des ouvrages donnés en lecture à la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique," *Revue des bibliothèques et archives de Belgique,* II, 1904, p. 253–263.

[105] Gaillard, op. cit., p. 8–9; Pittolet, op. cit., p. 44–55; Henry Harrisse, *Grandeur et décadence de la Colombine.* Paris: Les Marchands de Nouveautés, 1885, 2nd ed.; "Extrait de la *Revue Critique,* nº du 18 mai 1885." Colombiana as well as the contents of Fernando Columbus' library seem to have a special attraction for thieves. The New York Public Library copy of the pictorial (1493) edition of the Latin translation of the Columbus letter enjoys the reputation of being unique, thanks to a thief who removed the only other known copy from the Brera Library in Milan early in the nineteenth century. See Wilberforce Eames, ed., *The Letter of Columbus on the Discovery of America.* New York: The Lenox Library, 1892. p. vi, note 2.

[106] O. Hartwig, "Zur Geschichte der Colombina in Sevilla," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen,* II, 1885, p. 330–331.

A curious twist in the annals of book larceny occasioned by the lush twenties (and its bumper crop of confidence men) has been analyzed by John T. Winterich.[107] Pointing at the resurgence of interest in Americana, he emphasized the increased danger to public libraries which were keeping on open shelves thousands of valuable Americana which had been little more than booksellers' plugs a generation previously. Even a near illiterate could learn the few basic rules for priority of printing and be fully equipped to despoil small public libraries of unrecognized treasures on their shelves. Winterich is perhaps too charitable in excusing librarians for not being diagnosticians of rare book values. Many choice items might be enjoying a better fate today if our library schools had given a bit more instruction in this type of diagnostics.

Perhaps the most sensational book thief of the 1920's in America was one Joseph Francis de Vallieres d'Or, "M. D."[108] Claiming to be the heir to three unsettled English estates, he rented the residence of General David L. Brainerd at 1825 Q Street, Washington, D. C., in 1922. On January 2, 1924, he folded up his tent and stole away — with some 500 rare and valuable books and manuscripts from the General's private collection together with engraved plates from other books and even a few original paintings stripped from their frames. Upon discovering his loss, General Brainerd immediately printed a notice in *Publishers' Weekly* urging dealers to be on the lookout for his property. Six months later a young woman appeared at William J. Campbell's office in Philadelphia offering for sale certain autographs of Washington, Franklin, and Burns, and watercolor sketches signed by John Trumbull, all of which were immediately recognized by Mr. Campbell's son, John J. Campbell, as the missing property of General Brainerd. It turned out that the young woman was the innocent tool of the thief who, under his alias of "Dr. d'Or" had hired her as a "bookkeeper" and included among her duties the disposal of the stolen property, explaining that he had inherited it. "Dr. d'Or" was subsequently apprehended on the basis of information supplied by the young woman.

The Great Depression of 1929–1941 was highly productive of book thieves. On several occasions *Publishers' Weekly* printed strong editorials pointing out the seriousness of certain thefts and urging libraries to place more restrictions on the use of rare and valuable books. In 1936 especial indignation was expressed at recent thefts of books valued at from $25,000 to $40,000

[107] "Book Thieves' Vade Mecum," *Bulletin of the Massachusetts Library Club*, XXIII, 1933, p. 3–6.
[108] "Stealing a Whole Library," loc. cit.

from the Library of Congress and other libraries.[109] In 1937 a Newark second-hand dealer was found in the possession of large numbers of books stolen during the preceding four or five years from various public libraries in New England and New Jersey.[110] It was pointed out that although the books had evidently passed through the hands of several owners before reaching the Newark dealer, no one seemed to have recognized them for library property or as being of any special value. Yet nearly all still had the marks of ownership intact, and a number of them were first editions of New England poets.

Particularly notorious among the thieves of the Depression was "Dr." Harold B. Clarke, with aliases Gordon Forrest and Rodney Livingston.[111] On June 8, 1931, he was apprehended in a hotel room in Revere, Massachusetts, that looked like a bookbinder's workshop. At the time of his arrest he was found busily engaged in the obliteration of the marks of ownership of the libraries he had victimized. Some thirty American first editions and Western Americana were recovered in his room. He confessed to having stolen some $8,000 worth of books from the Harvard College Library; and in his confession he included fantastic tales about a gigantic ring of book thieves whose actual existence was never proven. Another serious offender was Stanley Wemyss, apprehended on September 21, 1936, as a result of the work of William Mahony, special investigator of the Newark Public Library.[112] Wemyss had stolen three rare pamphlets valued at $50 from the Newark Public Library. After three unsuccessful attempts at suicide, he finally confessed to an eight-year-old career as a book thief in public, university and research libraries. A serious case in 1937 was that of eighty-four-year-old Dr. Milton Miller of Philadelphia, an alumnus of the University of Pennsylvania, who stole some 175 volumes from the University of Pennsylvania Library and from the Mercantile and Free Libraries of Philadelphia.[113] He was caught when he offered ten books for sale to Richard Wormser, who noticed the library marks and reported the matter to the police.

In the United States today the most serious error a book thief can make is to steal books or manuscripts worth $5,000 or more and transport them across a state line. Such a crime constitutes a violation of the National Stolen Property Act, and to violate this statute will set the FBI as well as local

109 "Recent Arrest of Cincinnati Bookseller," *Publishers' Weekly*, CXXX, 1936, p. 1630.
110 "Stolen Books," *Publishers' Weekly*, CXXXI, 1937, p. 1406.
111 "Rare Book Thief Caught," *Publishers' Weekly*, CXIX, 1931, p. 2791–2792.
112 "Notorious Book Thief," *Library Journal*, LXI, 1936, p. 859–860.
113 "Book Thief Caught," *Publishers' Weekly*, CXXXI, 1937, p. 2179.

peace officers on the trail of the biblioklept.[114] Evidently this statute was unknown to William John Kwiatowski, with aliases Thomas E. Cleary, William Potter, William Johnson, Elmer Potter, Walter Grelanka, Edgar Guest, Dr. Kent, H. Thompson Rich, William Cleary, George Kock, and Douglas Coleman,[115] and his accomplices, Edward Walter Kwiatowski (his brother), Joseph Biernat (his brother-in-law), and Donald Lynch, with alias Professor Sinclair E. Gillingham, when they engineered the theft of the Chapin Library's first folio on February 8, 1940.[116] The Kwiatowski brothers and their brother-in-law, Biernat, prevailed upon thirty-six-year-old Lynch to dye his hair gray, forge a letter of introduction from the president of Middlebury College, and assume the alias of Professor Sinclair E. Gillingham. Lynch successfully carried out his rôle, gained admission to the Chapin Library, and, using the ruse of substitution employed by Dr. Rosenbach's thief of *The Unpublishable Memoirs*, got possession of the coveted folio. Lynch had been promised an even $1,000 for his part of the job, but his niggardly accomplices doled him out only enough to keep him quiet. Beset by domestic troubles, Lynch took to strong drink to forget his difficulties; and on June 30, 1940, while resting in the arms of Bacchus in an Albany, New York, bar, he was arrested for drunkenness. Taken to the station, Lynch bitterly confessed his part in the crime and exposed the Kwiatowskis and Biernat.

FBI agents conducted an investigation to corroborate Lynch's confession, and on July 7, 1940, they arrested William John Kwiatowski, Edward Walter Kwiatowski, and Joseph Biernat and searched their homes. William John was not located at first, but persevering agents finally pulled him out from under a pile of laundry in the corner of a closet in his parents' home. The missing folio was not located in the course of the search, but other valuable books stolen from various libraries were found and returned to their respective owners. The thieves vigorously denied their guilt, but nevertheless they were indicted by a Federal grand jury on September 12, 1940. Prior to the return of the indictment, however, the defense attorney appeared in the office of the United States Attorney in Albany, New York, and reported

[114] Federal law also forbids receiving and pledging of stolen property transported in interstate commerce and in the case of pledging, the property need not be valued at more than $500.

[115] However, this was not William John Kwiatowski's first brush with Uncle Sam. In 1936 he had been arrested and sentenced for a violation of the postal laws in connection with an attempt to sell a stolen volume by use of the United States mails. He was given another sentence in 1936 for violation of the copyright laws committed when he attempted to sell as his own a magazine article plagiarized from a copyrighted publication.

[116] For a full account of this case by the Assistant United States Attorney who prosecuted it, see Robert M. Hitchcock, "Case of a Missing Shakespeare," *Esquire*, XVI, December, 1941, p. 93.

that one morning when he came to work he found the missing folio on his desk. He stated that he had no idea of how it had found its way to his office but that he did want to surrender it to the government for return to Williams College. Less than a month after the indictment was returned the defendants were arraigned before United States District Judge Harold Burke at Rochester, New York. Edward Walter and William John Kwiatowski were sentenced to two years, Joseph Biernat to eighteen months, and Donald Lynch to three months in a Federal penitentiary designated by the Attorney General.[117]

The device of substitution was about the only feasible one for removing such a bulky tome as a first folio. However, thefts of an even more monumental nature (in regard to size) have been recorded. It is said that during the 1920's a certain rabbi clothed in the flowing robes still used by Eastern European Jews was able to cart off in a few hauls the entire *Jewish Encyclopaedia* owned by the American Library in Paris. Cim cites other examples of the difficult science of purloining heavy reference works in many volumes.[118] Gaillard reports that one bookseller lost several copies of *Webster's International Dictionary* in a single afternoon.[119] In the matter of numbers of volumes stolen by any one individual, there have probably been few thieves who have surpassed the totals of Libri, Pichler, and Passini. Possibly worth mentioning, however, is the thief who took 1,500 volumes from the Worcester Public Library[120] and the one who removed 1,000 from the University of Aberdeen Library between 1933 and 1936.[121]

The literature dealing with the problem of theft in public libraries is far too voluminous to discuss in detail here. Fundamentally, theft in public libraries is an administrative rather than a bibliographical problem. It is not likely that theft from a public library will cause as much grief in straightening out manuscript pedigrees as did the thefts of Libri and Matthaei. The basic studies for an introduction to the problem of theft in public libraries are Gaillard's article on "The Book Larceny Problem,"[122] and Isabel Ely Lord's speech at the Minnetonka Conference of the ALA on the question of "Open

117 Edward Walter Kwiatowski's sentence was suspended, and he was placed on probation for two years.

118 op. cit., p. 130–136.

119 "Book Thieves: An Incident and Some Suggestions," *Library Journal*, XXIX, 1904, p. 308–309.

120 Robert Kendall Shaw, "The Perfect Bibliomaniac," *Library Journal*, LVII, 1932, p. 1062–1063. Included in the haul were three volumes of the *New Century Dictionary*, Holbrook Jackson on bibliomania, Blades' *Enemies of Books*, and *Condemned to Devil's Island*.

121 Haakon Fiskaa, "Store boktyverier fra universitetsbiblioteket i Aberdeen," *Bog og bibliotek*, III, 1936, p. 244.

122 loc. cit.

Shelves and the Loss of Books."[123] One rather interesting device of public libraries to get back books from non-willful delinquents is the "Conscience Week."[124] Some private collectors with forgetful *amici* might well consider the adoption of a similar policy.

From the standpoint of the prevention of book theft one of the most serious obstacles is the unwillingness of libraries to prosecute known thieves.[125] Many college and public libraries boldly post the state statutes protecting their property; yet when they catch a thief, they are afraid to prosecute him for fear of the unfavorable publicity to which they might be exposed. Exit control is the most prevalent device for prevention today, and it is used by many small public libraries as well as large research libraries.[126] Many libraries follow the practice of placing their stamp on a certain fixed page of each book so that if that page is mutilated by eradication of the stamp or perforation, the book can still be identified as the property of a particular library. Thus any book whose page 97 shows signs of tampering most probably belongs to the Bibliothèque Nationale or to the Brooklyn Public Library. Cim cites the case of the clever young man who appropriated an engineering treatise from St. Geneviève and carefully removed the stamp from the usual position on page 41; but unfortunately for him, it was a two volume work bound in one, and he forgot page 41 of volume II.[127] Unquestionably the most effective device for protecting a library was the practice of a Hague collector who was ever happy to show his collection of Elzevirs but insisted that all visitors put on a full length robe without sleeves or any other apertures.[128]

123 loc. cit. As the result of an epidemic of theft in the libraries of wartime Britain, there have been some recent valuable contributions by English public library authorities. Especially important is Robert Lewis Wright Collison's "Crime in Libraries," *Library World*, XLIV, 1941, p. 133–135, a survey of library protective law in the United Kingdom and a tabulation of recorded thefts showing the nature of the losses in English public libraries. See also Wright's "Universal Practice," *Library World*, LXIV, 1941, p. 65–66, and "Stop Thief!," *Librarian and Book World*, XXXI, 1941, p. 74.

124 "Conscience Week," *Library Journal*, LXVI, 1941, p. 361. Many strays also return in the course of book drives such as the Victory Book Campaign sponsored by American librarians early in the war. See Jesse Cunningham, "Victory Books A.W.O.L.," *Library Journal*, LXVII, 1942, p. 375.

125 Ruth Anne Bean, "Theft and Mutilation of Books, Magazines and Newspapers," *Library Occurent*, Indiana State Library, XII, January – March, 1936, p. 12–15. A refreshing contrast to this pusillanimity was the attitude of S. Green, "Capture of a Notorious Book Thief," *Library Journal*, V, 1880, p. 48–49.

126 See Ralph Munn, "The Problems of Theft and Mutilation," *Library Journal*, LX, 1935, p. 589–592. *Horrible dictu*, Munn reports that our schools are actually teaching innocent children to be Grangerizers under a so-called "project method"!

127 op. cit., p. 101.

128 ibid., p. 58–59.

Book thieves prefer libraries to bookstores as the scene of their operations principally because the danger is less, although there are several other factors at work such as the greater susceptibility of the librarian to the confidence man, the greater accessibility of the books, and the wider variety which is available. But there have also been many accomplished operators in the bookstores. Paris seems to be one of their favorite haunts.[129] One nineteenth-century Parisian book thief became such a well-known nuisance among the *bouquinistes* that they got together and refused to tolerate him any longer. Accordingly, on the day after each "successful" theft he would receive a bill from his victim setting forth author, title, and price of the missing book. At the Hôtel des Ventes he would be stopped at the door and asked whether or not he had taken this or that volume "by error." "Ma foi, oui!" was the invariable and always unembarrassed reply, and the volume(s) would be immediately and unceremoniously restored. One worthy female devotee of Paul Bourget who apparently lacked either the means or desire to buy this author's works became known among the dealers on the left bank as "la dame au parapluie" for her unusual place of concealment. Again there was a hunchback who cultivated a passion for first editions of novels. He would drop his cane in the expectancy that it would be picked up in deference to his affliction; and as the clerk leaned over to retrieve it, the hunchback would slip several desired firsts into his portfolio. An old trick in the book stores is to present a priced book to the cashier claiming it came from the three-for-a-quarter counter. Some of the higher class confidence men can get away with this. Somewhat less worthy is the device of sending the clerk to the rear of the shop while the patron helps himself to the books shelved in the front.

One aspect of book theft which has been mentioned in passing is the matter of confiscation by the state, either in the course of conquest or of revolution. Confiscation has been such an important means of acquisition for libraries in the past that a full discussion of this topic belongs in reality to the history of libraries. In modern Europe there has been so much confiscation by national governments that any attempt to restore all books and manuscripts to their original owners would amount to a veritable migration of the peoples.

It has already been noted that early Roman libraries were almost invariably stolen from Greece by Roman generals. This custom was one of the first lessons learned by the Renaissance from antiquity. Catherine de Medici revealed few scruples in taking Marshal Strozzi's library. The Royal Library in Stockholm acquired its most notable treasures as the result of Swedish

[129] ibid., p. 24–25, 107–116.

campaigns in Germany, Denmark, Poland, Bohemia, and Moravia during the Thirty Years' War.[130] His Protestant Swedish Majesty robbed every cloister or Jesuit College of any item whatsoever to which he attached the slightest value and sent it back to Sweden. Thus the famed Codex Giganteus ("Gigas Librorum") in the Royal Library and the Codex Argenteus were originally acquired in this manner. On the other hand, the collections robbed from Würzburg (1631), Olmütz (1642), Nikolsburg (1649), and Prague (1648) were subsequently taken out of the country by Queen Christina upon her abdication and are now in the Biblioteca Reginae in Rome.

The great raids on the ecclesiastical libraries began in the latter part of the eighteenth century and lasted for over a hundred years. Upon the expulsion of the Jesuits from Bavaria the Königliche (now Staats-) Bibliothek was considerably enlarged by the addition of the books from the suppressed houses; and to add insult to injury, the collection was moved in 1784 to the building once occupied by the Jesuit College. Again in the nineteenth century this same library enjoyed tremendous gains resulting from the secularization of monastic collections. The Vienna K. K. Hof- (now National-) Bibliothek acquired many of its rarities during the reign of Joseph II by the addition of monastic collections from Styria, Carinthia, and Tyrol. In 1835 monastic property throughout Portugal was nationalized, and the books and manuscripts were divided among the National Library in Lisbon, the Oporto Library, the Evora Library, and the University of Coimbra Library.[131] Unfortunately, these acquisitions are still to be catalogued satisfactorily, and numerous manuscripts in Portuguese libraries are crying for collation and editing.

But no library in Europe has ever profited from confiscation as much as the Bibliothèque Nationale and other Parisian state libraries during the French Revolution. Much of the credit for saving the books from the dissolved monasteries from destruction is due to H. P. Ameilhon, librarian of the Arsenal, who was instrumental in organizing a commission to group and allocate the libraries taken from the monasteries. During the Revolution the Bibliothèque Nationale doubled within a few years by the addition of libraries of émigrés and suppressed ecclesiastical foundations. The Mazarine is said to have added some 50,000 volumes taken from the monasteries. During the Napoleonic wars the policy of confiscation was extended to other

130 There is a brief survey and bibliography by Edgar Breitenbach in his article "Stockholm" in the *Lexikon des gesamten Buchwesens*, III, p. 341.

131 Margaret Burton, *Famous Libraries of the World*. London: Grafton, 1937; *The World's Great Libraries*, II, p. 316.

countries, but at Vienna in 1815 the French were made to return all the books stolen by their emperor. Until Amgot gives us an authoritative report, we cannot be sure of what the Nazis have stolen in the present war. It is said that they have raided the Royal Library in The Hague and the Turgenev Library in Paris, but no unequivocable proof is available.

Libraries and nations have long memories about confiscations. The Imperial Public Library at St. Petersburg was greatly enriched in 1794 by the addition of 250,000 books and 10,000 manuscripts from the Załuski Library in Warsaw, all stolen by General Suvarof.[132] But under the Treaty of Riga in 1920 the Bolsheviks were compelled to make good the misdeeds of the Czars over a century previously and return the stolen books. In our own country many Southern state archives are said to have been indiscriminately plundered by carpetbaggers during the Reconstruction; and as late as 1912 the Virginia State Library was able to identify as its property many items from the Benson J. Lossing collection of manuscripts then being offered for sale by the Anderson Galleries.[133]

[132] Arundel Esdaile, *National Libraries of the World: Their History, Administration, and Public Services*. London: Grafton, 1934; *The World's Great Libraries*, I, p. 147–148.

[133] "Virginia's Stolen Manuscripts," *Library Journal*, XXXVII, 1912, p. 391.