On the first editions of the chemical writings of Democritus and Synesius / by John Ferguson.

III.—*On the First Editions of the Chemical Writings of Democritus and Synesius.*

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[Read before the Society, 19th November, 1884.]

1. Democritus, the oldest known writer on chemical topics, is the nominal author of a tract in Greek, entitled Φυσικὰ καὶ Μυστικά, which is contained in most of the Greek alchemical Manuscripts.* Some of the older historians of chemistry tried to identify him with the Greek philosopher of the same name, but there is no evidence to support such a view. From a variety of considerations, however, it is probable that he flourished not later than the third or fourth century A.D., so that the subject about which he wrote cannot be considered an absolutely modern one. His curious tract has never been edited in the original language; its contents are known only through a Latin translation, executed in the sixteenth century by an Italian named Dominico Pizimenti. As no more ancient alchemical writer than Democritus is known, this writing of his would be of the greatest importance, were it not rendered almost useless by its obscurity. Familiar words and expressions are indeed constantly employed, but it is questionable if they have the meanings attached to them now, or carry the same meanings throughout the tract itself. The whole work bears the

* These manuscripts are described in full by Dr. Kopp in his great work; *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Chemie*, Braunschweig, 1869, 8vo, Parts i.-ii., which contains all that is at present known about the Greek alchemists and their writings. As the first portion of the present paper is simply an abridgment of Dr. Kopp's results, I make this reference to his work once for all, to avoid constant quotation. For the same reason I curtail reference to the older writers as much as possible, as they are all to be found in Dr. Kopp's notes. A paper by myself, giving a sketch of Dr. Kopp's researches and a list of the MSS., was printed in the *Proceedings* of this Society for 1876, vol. x., pp. 368-89. It is the existence of that paper which has induced me to submit to the Society the present communication also, one so entirely technical in detail and limited in interest, that it can appeal to only one or two specialists.

stamp of an esotericism, the aim and the interpretation of which are alike a puzzle to the historian.

2. Over and above the difficulty of interpretation, there is nearly as much in ascertaining precisely such apparently commonplace and obvious matters as the date when the translation was first printed, and the number of editions of it which appeared. Dr. Kopp, who has gone into these questions most minutely, has not been able to arrive at a definite settlement of them. In his survey of the statements made by the different authorities he has found them at such variance with one another that he has been constrained to believe that the descriptions of the various editions could not have been written from inspection of actual copies. As he himself has succeeded, after great trouble, in seeing a copy of only one edition, all that he has been able to do for the others has been to compare the statements of different writers, and to get from them what seem to be the best conclusions under the circumstances. Subsequent inquirers are under a deep obligation to him for the amount of labour he has thus spared them.

3. Of Pizimenti's translation, the number of editions quoted incidentally by Dr. Kopp from the various authorities is considerable. They are as follows:—Rome, 1570; Padua, 1572, 1573; Cologne, 1572, 1574; Frankfurt, 1592, 1613, 1673; Nürnberg, 1717.

For the edition of 1570 there is the authority of Conring. Dr. Kopp, however, attaches no importance to it; he does not criticise Conring's statement about it; he does not apparently think it worth while to consider even the possibility of its existence, for he looks upon this date as an error. I shall consider it below (§ 11).

The Padua edition of 1572 is mentioned by Ducange, by Grässe, and by Mullach. Dr. Kopp considers this date also erroneous.

It is the Padua edition of 1573 which is reckoned by him the first or oldest, and he gives the following title:—"Democritus Abderita de arte magna sive de rebus naturalibus; nec non Synesii et Pelagii, et Stephani Alexandrini et Mich. Pselli in eundem commentaria. Dom. Pizimentio Vibonensi interprete. Patavii, 1573.

After much searching and trouble, Dr. Kopp succeeded at last in finding a copy of this extremely rare book in the University Library at Göttingen; the very volume, I suppose, described by Beckmann, who was professor of Technology there towards the

end of last century. The title and date of it are given with actual or approximate accuracy by Fabricius, Hoffmann, Beckmann, Brunet, and Grässe; but Dr. Kopp has adduced abundant evidence to show how very scarce the book is, and how little it is known.

4. The next edition to be considered is that contained in a Cologne reprint of the treatise on Secrets by Antoine Mizauld, entitled: *Memorabilium . . . Centuriæ Novem.* About the date of this book much confusion prevails. Dr. Kopp, who himself has not seen any Cologne edition, has compared all that has been said by the different authorities, but has given up the attempt to reconcile their conflicting statements. The following are the two chief points:—

(1) Both Fabricius and Lambeck say that it appeared at Cologne in 1572. Believing, as he does, that the Padua edition of 1573 is the oldest, Dr. Kopp feels naturally very sceptical about one of 1572, and remarks that if one there be, in all probability it is of a different translation from Pizimenti's.

(2) Reinesius—followed by Dufresnoy, Hoffmann, Gmelin, and Schmieder—quotes an edition of 1574 only. Conring, who, as mentioned above, says that the translation first appeared in 1570, adds that it was reprinted at Cologne four years later, thus indirectly confirming the statement of Reinesius.

5. Besides the 1574 edition just mentioned, Dufresnoy quotes the following:—Frankfurt, 1592, 1613 and 1673, but without saying definitely whether these are reprints of Mizauld's and Democritus' tracts, or of Democritus' alone. If he mean that these are joint editions, Dr. Kopp points out that copies of Mizauld, Frankfurt, 1592, 1599, and 1613, which he has examined, do not contain Democritus. I have likewise examined a copy of the 1592 edition, and can confirm Dr. Kopp's statement with regard to it. As to the edition of 1673, Dr. Kopp does not speak, he apparently not having seen it. If, however, Dufresnoy mean the latter, Dr. Kopp has been equally unsuccessful in seeing copies of Pizimenti's translation by itself, printed at Frankfurt and having any of these dates.

Schmieder is more definite than Dufresnoy, but he is probably on that account more inaccurate. He gives the title of the Padua edition, 1573, and adds immediately: "the same text was copied in the newer editions: Coloniæ, 1574, 16.; Francofurti, 1592, 1613, 1673, 8." Here no notice is taken of Mizauld's book at all, and one would be led to believe that these were reprints of

Democritus alone, from the Padua edition direct. All this seems to me very doubtful; if there be a Cologne 1574 edition it is most likely a reprint of Mizauld with Democritus; while of the other dates, the only copies known want Democritus. My own opinion is that the editions of 1592, 1613, 1673, need not be taken into account until actual copies of Mizauld with Democritus, or until separate editions of Democritus alone with these dates be discovered, an event which I think will never happen.

6. The last edition mentioned by Dr. Kopp is that printed at Nürnberg, in 1717. He himself has not seen it, but he quotes it from Hoffmann, and observes that its title is different from that of 1573. It is very remarkable, as showing the doubt hanging round the whole subject, that even respecting this almost modern edition there is contradiction, for while Hoffmann gives the title in Latin, Dufresnoy, and after him Schmieder, say that it was in German. Dr. Kopp is unable to decide who is right.

7. It would appear, therefore, as if, of the several editions mentioned during the last three centuries, only one—that of Padua, 1573—were properly authenticated by competent authorities, Beckmann and Dr. Kopp.

The foregoing summary is requisite for the proper understanding of what I have discovered lately on this subject.

8. In the course of certain researches, not immediately concerned witlr Democritus, I was led recently to investigate Mizauld's *Memorabilium Centuriae Novem*, of which a copy of the Frankfurt edition, 1592, had come into my hands (§ 5). Looking for other editions, I found first in Sir William Hamilton's Collection, now in the University Library, and, thereafter, in the Hunterian Library, copies of Mizauld's work printed at Cologne in 1572. On examining the two copies, I observed that they both contained the tract of Democritus, with the commentaries, translated by Pizimenti. The following is a detailed description of the book :—

Title: Antonii Mizaldi Mon- | luciani Galli, Medici, | Memorabi- | livm, Sive Arca- | norvm omnis Ge- | neris, | Per Aphorismos Di- | gestorum, Centuriæ IX. | Et, | Democritvs Abderita, De | rebus Naturalibus & Mysticis. | Cum | Synesii, et Pelagii | Commentarijs. | Interprete de Græca lingua, | Dominico Pizimentio Vibonen- | si, Italo. | Præfatio, | In omnes hosce libros. | Coloniæ, | Apud Ioannem Birckmannum | Anno D.M.LXXII. | Cum Gratia & Priuilegio Cæsar. Maiestat. |

$5\ ^{2}/_{16} \times 3\ ^{1}/_{16}$ inches. Signatures in twelves; ff. 52 unnumbered and 2 blank, 245 numbered, 1 blank. Printed in italics.

Collation:—f. 2 recto: De Mizaldi | Arcanis, Nec Non | Graecis in Demo | critvm, Ceteris- | qùe, Chemiæ scripto- | ribus, | Præfatio, | Ad Clarissimvm No- | bilitate, doctrina, prudentiaqùe virum, | Thomam Redingervm | Silesivm. |

This preface ends on f. 32 r. with the words: comparatur. Vale. Calen- | dis Martijs. M.D. | LXXII. Vbio- | rum Colo- | nia. | (·.·) | *followed by a scroll ornament. On f. 32 v. begins* Index Rervm, *which ends on f. 51 v. Then follows f. 52 r.* Praefationis errores incvria ad- | missos, sic corrige. | *ending f. 52 v. Ff. 53 and 54 are blank. This ends the introductory matter which is not numbered. The text of Mizaldus' treatise then begins on leaf A, f. 1, and goes down to the recto of f. 212. Verso is blank.*

F. 213 contains the title to the chemical tracts as follows:—

Ex | Venerandæ Græcæ vetustatis de ar- | te Chymica, relliquijs *(sic).* | Democritvs | Abderyta, De Arte | Sacra: Sive, De Rebvs | naturalibus & my- | sticis | Necnon | Synesij, & Pelagij, Antiquorum | Philosophorum: in eundem, | Commentaria. | Interprete | Dominico Pizimentio Vibo- | nens, Italo. *Small scroll ornament.*

F. 213 verso is blank. F. 214 recto contains Pizimenti's preface, which ends f. 218 recto with the words: Stephani Alexandrini, Olympiodori, | & Pelagii cõmentaria, in eundem | Democritum propediem ex- | pecta. Datum Romę. | Calend. Septemb. | M.D.LXX. | (·.·) | *The catchword is* Ex. *Then f. 218 v. begins:* De Rebvs Na- | tvralibvs et My- | sticis Demo- | criti. | Natvra natura | gaudet: &c., *which ends f. 227 verso:* omisi, | cùm liberè in alijs ætiam | meis scriptis pertractarim. | In hoc scripto | valete. | (·.·)

F. 228 recto: Synesii Phi- | losophi ad Dio- | scorvm in Librvm | Democriti. | Scholia. | *with a scroll ornament. It ends f. 238 verso.*

F 239 recto: Pelagii Philo- | sophi De Eadem | Divina, et Sacra | arte. | *Ends f. 245 verso. A blank leaf ends the volume.*

Two things follow of necessity from this description: 1°, the Padua edition of 1573 cannot be the first, as Dr. Kopp with the materials at his command quite legitimately inferred; 2°, Dr. Kopp's supposition that if there were an edition prior to that of Padua, 1573, it could not have been one of Pizimenti's translation, is disposed of by the statements on the title-pages.

9. Pursuing my researches still further, I found in the British Museum no copy of the 1572 edition, but another printed also at Cologne by Birckmann, in the following year, 1573. I at first thought that this might be simply a re-issue of the remainder of the previous edition, with a new or re-dated title-page. On examination, however, I found this was not the case, but that it was a veritably new edition. As it is entirely unknown, and has

never been mentioned by any writer on the subject, the following account of it may be given :—

Title: Antonii Mizaldi Mon- | luciani Galli, Medici, | Memorabilivm, Sive Arca- | norvm omnis ge- | neris, | Per Aphorismos Di- | gestorum, Centuriæ IX. | Et | Democritvs Abderita, De | rebus Naturalibus, & Mysticis. | Cum | Synesii, et Pelagii | Commentarijs. | Interprete de Græca lingua, | Dominico Pziimentio Vibonen- | si, Italo. | Præfatio, | In omnes hosce libros. | Coloniae, | apud Ioannem Birckmannum | . Anno. D.M.LXXIII. | Cum Gratia & Priuilegio Cæsar. Maiestat. | *5 $^{2}/_{16}$ by 2 $^{12}/_{16}$ inches. Signatures in twelves: ff. 45 unnumbered, 245 numbered. Printed in italics.*

Folio 2 recto: De Mizaldi Arcanis...Præfatio, *ends f. 31 verso. Folio 32 recto:* Index Rerum *to f. 45 recto. 45 verso is blank. There is no table of Errata. The text begins on A, f. 1, and goes down to f. 212 recto. Verso is blank.*

Fol. 213 recto: Ex | Venerandæ Græcæ vetustatis de ar- | te Chymica, relliquijs (*sic*). | Democritvs | Abderyta, de Arte | sacra: Sive, De Rebvs | naturalibus & my- | sticis, | Necnon | Synesij, & Pelagij, Antiquorum | Philosophorum : in eundem, | Commentaria. | Interprete | Dominico Pizimentio Vibo- | nensi Italo. | *Small scroll ornament.*

Folio 214 recto: Pizimenti's address, which ends f. 218 recto: Romæ, Calend. Septemb. M.D.LXX.

Folio 218 verso: Ex Rebvs Na- | tvralibvs et My- | sticis Demo- | criti.

Folio 228 recto: Synesii Phi | losophi ad Dio- | scorvm in Librvm | Democriti. | Scholia, (˙.˙) | *followed by large scroll ornament.*

Folio 239 recto : Pelagii Philo- | sophi de eadem | Divina et Sacra | arte (˙.˙) | *ends f. 245 verso.*

Comparison of these two editions shows that, though identical in some points, they differ materially in others ; for example, in the preliminary matter, which occupies 52 ff. in one copy, and 45 ff. in the other; in the absence of a table of errata in the 1573 edition, and in many details of typography, which show that the type must have been taken down and set up again before the 1573 edition was printed off.

10. The discovery of these two editions, however, has more important bearings. It introduces new difficulties, and makes the construction of a complete and authoritative list by no means so simple as at first sight appears.

Seeing that the edition of Padua (1573) has to cede the first place to that of Cologne (1572), a difficulty is created thereby which cannot, with our present knowledge, be well got over.

It seems to me rather improbable that a translation by an Italian should be published for the first time at Cologne. It

seems equally improbable that it should appear as an appendix to a quite different work by a Frenchman, which had been published at Paris six years earlier. I cannot help thinking it likely that there must have been an earlier edition printed, one would expect, in Italy. Two such are mentioned.

Ducange, as has been seen above, quotes a Padua edition of 1572. He never saw it, however, and could not tell whether it was in Greek or in Latin. Dr. Kopp, knowing only the Padua edition of 1573, naturally enough considers this to be an error of Ducange, but I am not at all sure that it is so. It seems just as likely that there were two editions at Padua in 1572, 1573, as that there were two at Cologne in 1572, 1573, both of which I have seen and just described. If so, it is reasonable to suppose that the Padua edition of 1572 was the earlier; but in that case Birckmann must have got a copy before March 1, 1572. For in his preface, which has that date, he says that when he had got half through the printing of Mizaldus' book, Joannes Metellus Sequanus sent him the tracts of Democritus and the others, and requested them to be added, which he did. Now, Sequanus is the person to whom Pizimenti addresses his translation from Rome on September 1st, 1570. The question then arises—Was the copy which Sequanus sent printed or manuscript? Birckmann does not say; but as he does say that he got Mizaldus' book also from Sequanus, we may assume that it was a printed copy, probably of the Paris edition, 1566. It is plausible to infer that the other was also printed.

11. The evidence in favour of the *possibility* of such an earlier edition is twofold—First, There is the date of Pizimenti's translation just referred to: Rome, Sept. 1st, 1570. If finished then, it would be curious if it was not printed till Sequanus sent the MS. to Birckmann, who brought it out in 1572. But if that be so, there may be possibly no Padua edition of 1572 at all, and that of 1573 may be a reprint from Birckmann's.

Secondly, Conring, as has been already mentioned, speaks of a 1570 edition at Rome:—"Supersunt verò ijdem illi Democritei libelli hodieque; *ἀνέκδοτοι* tamen hactenus, nisi quod unum eorum cum Synesii & Pelagii scholiis Latinè à se versum, Romæ seculi superioris anno septuagesimo ediderit Dominicus Pizimentius; quam editionem in Germania quarto anno pòst Coloniæ Agrippinæ cum Mizaldi Memorabilibus alii expresserunt."*

* De Hermetica Medicina. 1669. p. 29.

This seems precise enough; the originals remain unpublished hitherto, excepting that Pizimenti published at Rome in 1570 a Latin translation of one of them, which was reprinted four years later at Cologne. There is certainly no evidence here of Conring having seen a copy, and he may be merely inferring from the date of the dedication that there was an edition of 1570. I do not know of the existence of any copy of this date, but there is nothing against it when there is so much doubt as to the date of the first edition.

12. As for a 1574 Cologne edition, we have the word of Reinesius, of Conring, and other later writers, already quoted. I have seen no copy, and no mention of one in any catalogue. Its existence, however, is quite possible.

Of the reprint of Mizaldus, Frankfurt, 1592, I have already spoken. It does not contain Democritus. The reprints of 1599, 1613 certainly, and of 1673 probably, do not contain it, and there is no proof that there are separate editions of Democritus with these dates.

13. Nothing more was heard of Democritus till the year 1717, when the tract was reprinted. Dr. Kopp has failed to see it; but I have been more successful, and the following is a description of the copy I have had before me:—

Title (printed in red and black): Democritus | Abderyta Græcus | De | Rebus Sacris | Naturalibus et Mysticis. | Cum Notis | Synesii & Pelagii. | Tumba | Semiramidis | Hermeticæ *(sic)* Sigillatæ, | Quàm | Si Sapiens aperuerit, | Non | Cyrus, Ambitiosus; | Avarus, | Regum ille thesauros, divitiarum inexhaustos, | quod sufficiat inveniet. | H.V.D. | Norimbergæ. | Apud Hæredes Joh. Dan. Tauberi, | M.DCC.XVII. |

Small 8vo, pp. 63, and a page of advertisements.

Pizimenti's Preface, p. 3; Democritus, p. 10; Synesius, p. 19; Pelagius, p. 32, ending p. 38; after which comes the Tumba Semiramidis.

This is a reprint of the Latin. Dufresnoy says, in so many words, that it is in German, and Schmieder makes the same assertion, either of his own knowledge or following Dufresnoy. I am unable to say whether there be a German translation of this date or not. There is nothing impossible in the book appearing simultaneously in both languages, but the statement may also have arisen from confusing the two tracts ascribed to Synesius, as I shall show presently. Dr. Kopp does not express any opinion.

After 1717 the book passed into oblivion, so far as I know, until Dr. Kopp reprinted it in his *Beiträge* in 1869, from the Padua edition of 1573. This reprint was confined to Democritus.

14. The list of editions to which this research has conducted me is rather larger than what Dr. Kopp has been able to muster. It is as follows:—

Date.	Place.	Authority.
1570 (?), ...	Rome (?), ...	Conring.
1572, ...	Cologne, ...	Ferguson.
1572 (?), ...	Padua (?), ...	Ducange.
1573, ...	Cologne (previously unknown),	Ferguson.
1573, ...	Padua, ...	Beckmann, Kopp.
1574 (?), ...	Cologne (?), ...	Reinesius, Conring.
1717, ...	Nürnberg (in Latin), ...	Ferguson.
1717 (?), ...	Nürnberg (?) (in German), ...	Dufresnoy, Schmieder.
1869, ...	Braunschweig, ...	Reprint in Kopp's *Beiträge*.

15. Everyone who has examined the Φυσικὰ καὶ Μυστικά has been compelled to give up the interpretation of it. It is obscure in the highest degree; the only thing that seems tolerably certain is that it deals with transmutation. *How* transmutation is to be effected it does not tell us, or if it does, it is in language which we cannot interpret. Indeed, we cannot form any idea of how the writer regarded the problem.

This obscurity seems to have been felt at a very early date, for the next oldest extant chemical writing is the commentary by Synesius, professing to explain the Democritean philosophy. It need hardly be added that, like other works of the same kind, it is as obscure as the original.

Regarding the author's life, the age of the commentary, the absence of an edition of the Greek text, the editions of Pizimenti's translation, everything that has been said about Democritus may be repeated. The older writers tried to identify Synesius with the Bishop of the same name, but that is undoubtedly wrong. The author of this commentary was subsequent to him by an interval, possibly by a wide interval, of time.

Of the writing itself we know only through Pizimenti's translation, and as it accompanies Democritus' tract in the actual editions of Cologne 1572 and 1573, Padua 1573, and Nürnberg 1717, it is most probable that if any of the doubtful editions exist the tract of Synesius will be contained in them. Dr. Kopp has not reprinted this commentary.

16. But there is another point of interest connected with Synesius. A tract, purporting to be by him, was printed in the modern languages.

In a foot-note (*Beiträge*, p. 151, nr. 28) Dr. Kopp says :—

"Giebt es auch Uebersetzungen in's Englische und in's Deutsche? Wo Fabricius (Bibl. gr., vol. xii., p. 769) der lateinischen Uebersetzung des Pizimenti erwähnt, fügt er bei : Ejusdem argumenti scriptum Synesianum ex codice bibl. caesarea versum anglice exstat ad calcem Basilii Valentini in anglicam conversi linguam Lond. 1678 et germanice curante Frid. Rothscholzio Altdorf 1718. Ich kann beide hier citirte Schriften nicht nachsehen."

I have been again more lucky than Dr. Kopp, for I have not only seen these two editions, but I have seen no fewer than nine editions, including a number in French, which Dr. Kopp has somehow missed.

The French is the oldest edition of the work I am acquainted with. It appeared at Paris in 1612, in a thin 4to volume, along with the works of Artephius and Flamel, under the title: *Trois Traictez de la Philosophie Natvrelle, non encore imprimez*, translated by P. Arnauld. I have seen three copies having this date; two are alike, the third is different, so that there must have been two issues of this book. One issue contains pp. 103; the tract of Synesius occupying pp. 94–103. The other contains pp. 98; the tract of Synesius occupying pp. 89–98. In 1659 there appeared a new edition of the second issue. Finally, it was included in the collection of alchemical tracts, entitled *Bibliotheque des Philosophes Chimiques*, published at Paris, 1740–41, tom. ii., pp. 175–194. The English translation was printed at London in 1678. Though appended to Basil Valentine's *Triumphant Chariot of Antimony*, it has a separate title-page: *The True Book of the learned Synesius, a Greek abbot, taken out of the Emperour's Library, concerning the Philosopher's Stone.* It was probably translated by Richard Russell. It was reprinted at London by Francis Barrett in his curious collection of alchemical tracts so recently as 1815.

The German version was executed by Roth-Scholtz, and was printed, along with the works of Sendivogius, at Nürnberg, in 1718 by the heirs of Joh. Dan. Tauber. It will have been observed that the 1717 edition of Democritus and Synesius was printed by the same people, and indeed it is advertised at the end of this translation. It is possible that the statement by Dufresnoy and by Schmieder respecting a German translation of Democritus and

Synesius in 1717 may be due to confusing the two tracts of Synesius, and then assuming that Democritus had also been translated. This is mere supposition, however. Synesius was included in the translation of Flamel's works by Johann Lange, of which I have seen two editions printed at Vienna—one dated 1751, and the other 1752.

17. The fact is, however, that what passes under the name of Synesius in these modern versions is not the Commentary on Democritus, edited by Pizimenti. Whether by Synesius or not, it is a totally different production, and, as the name of Geber occurs in it, it may doubted if the tract is of any great antiquity, or if we have got it in a form devoid of recent interpolations. One noticeable thing about it is that there is no version of it in Latin, so far as I know; for Dr. Kopp's remark, above quoted, rests on the supposition that the English and German translations are from Pizimenti's version, which is not the case. I am not in a position to say anything at present about the origin and author of these works; they must wait until the two ancient writers whom we have been considering are better known.

18. Corresponding to the list of the Democritus editions already given, the following for Synesius may be useful:—

Commentary on Democritus.

Date.	Place.
1572, ...	Cologne.
1573, ...	Cologne.
1573, ...	Padua.
1717, ...	Nürnberg.

For the doubtful editions, see §§ 5 and 14.

"The True Book."

French—1612, ...	... Paris.		
1612, ...	... Paris.	...	2nd issue.
1659, ...	... Paris.	...	
1740, ...	... Paris.	...	Richebourg's Collection.
German—1718, ...	... Nürnberg.		With Sendivogius.
1751, ...	... Vienna.	...	With Flamel.
1752, ...	.. Vienna.	...	With Flamel.
English—1678, ...	... London.	...	With B. Valentine.
1815, ...	... London.	...	Barrett's Collection.

On the First Editions of the Chemical Writings of Democritus and Synesius. By Professor FERGUSON.

POSTSCRIPT.

1. IN consequence of my not having beside me the copy of the 1573 edition of Mizauld's *Memorabilia*, when the account of it given in § 9 was printed, two or three mistakes have slipped in, which I take this opportunity of correcting.

In the third line of the title, the word "Memorabilivm" ought to be divided "Memorabi- | livm," as in the 1572 edition, § 8.

In the sixteenth line of the title, "Pziimentio" ought, of course, to be "Pizimentio."

Lastly, in the twentieth and twenty-first lines, "Coloniae, | apud" ought to be "Coloniae. | Apud"

2. In § 15 it is said that there is no edition of the Greek text of the Commentary on Democritus by Synesius. This is an error. It was printed by Fabricius, with Pizimenti's Latin translation, in the *Bibliotheca Græca*, Hamb. 1717, vol. viii., pp. 233-248.

3. A translation of this Commentary into German was made by Dr. Fried. Jos. Willh. Schröder, and was printed in his *Neue Sammlung der Bibliothek für die höhere Naturwissenschaft und Chemie*, Leipzig, 1775. It occupies pp. 431-454, and its title is as follows:—

Die hieroglyfischen Fragmente des Demokritus; oder des Egyptiers Synesius Commentar über die Bücher des Demokritus von der Tinctur des Goldes und Silbers; an den Priester Dioskorus.

In a note Schröder warns his readers not to confuse this Synesius and the "Commentary" with the supposititious abbot Synesius and the "True Book" which passes under his name. In this he is without doubt correct. He says, however, that the "Commentary" is the oldest genuine Greek alchemical tract extant, and that the author flourished 250 years B.C. In this he is without doubt wrong.

4. Of the "True Book" itself I have met with other two editions.

In 1682 P. Arnauld's collection was re-issued with the following title-page:—

Philosophie Natvrelle de Trois Anciens Philosophes Renommez Artephius, Flamel, & Synesius, Traitant de l'Art occulte, & de la Transmutation metallique. Derniere edition. Augmentée d'un petit Traité du Mercure, & de la Pierre des Philosophes de G. Ripleus, nouvellement traduit en François. A Paris, Chez Laurent d'Houry, sur le Quay des Augustins, à l'Image Saint Jean. M.DC.LXXXII. Avec Privilege dv Roy.

It is a thin 4to of 106 pages. *Le Vray Livre* of Synesius occupies pp. 89-98, and at the foot of p. 98 is the date, *6 Avril, 1659.* So that, although professing to be a new edition, this seems to be merely the surplus copies of the edition of 1659, to which Ripley's tract has been added and a new title-page prefixed.

5. The German translation of Flamel and Synesius by J. Lange (§16) was first printed at Hamburg, "In Verlegung Adolph Härtels, Anno 1681." In this edition there are two titles; the first, which is printed in red and black, is dated 1681; the second, 1680. The translation of Synesius is contained in pp. 89-109.

These different books, which I have recently examined in the British Museum, fall to be inserted in their proper places in the list of editions of Synesius given in § 18.

6. In § 8, in the twentieth line of the title of Mizauld's work, "Coloniæ" ought to have been printed "Coloniae."

Glasgow, *May 8th, 1885.*