

**On a copy of Albertus Magnus' De secretis mulierum, printed by Machlinia :  
communicated to the Society of Antiquaries / by John Ferguson.**

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*Loft Part 39*  
*10.*  
ON A COPY OF

ALBERTUS MAGNUS'  
DE SECRETIS MULIERUM,

PRINTED BY MACHLINIA.

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COMMUNICATED TO THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES

BY

PROFESSOR JOHN FERGUSON, M.A., F.C.S., F.R. HIST. SOC.



WESTMINSTER:

PRINTED BY NICHOLS AND SONS, 25, PARLIAMENT STREET.

1886.





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DE SECRETIS MULIERUM,

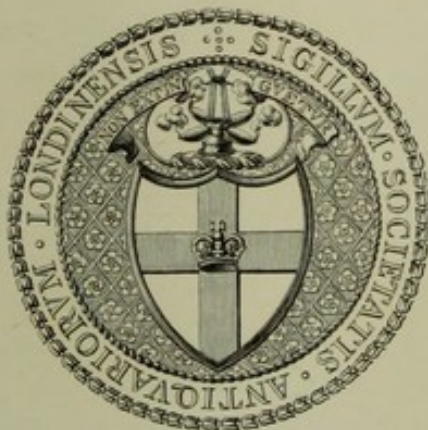
PRINTED BY MACHLINIA.

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FROM  
THE ARCHAEOLOGIA,  
VOL. XLIX.

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ON A COPY  
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ALBERTUS MAGNUS' DE SECRETIS MULIERUM.

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1. WHEN collecting materials for the third part<sup>a</sup> of my *Bibliographical Notes on Histories of Inventions and Books of Secrets*, I observed in the sale catalogue of the duke of Hamilton's library a copy of the well-known tract, *De Secretis Mulierum*, usually ascribed to Albertus Magnus. The following description of it was there given :

“ALBERTI MAGNI SECRETA MULIERUM, wants A 1 (a blank leaf) and several leaves mended, sold therefore with all faults, red morocco extra, borders of gold, gilt edges, by J. Mackenzie, sm. 4to. s. l. & a.

\* \* \* An edition, in a manuscript note, stated to be “printed by Machlinia, see Ames” but certainly not the production of that printer. It contains 49 leaves commencing with signature A ii, and ending on reverse of F x with *Finis hujus tractatuli venerabilis Alberti magni secreta expliciunt mulierum*. It is not mentioned by Brunet, Hain, and other bibliographers.

At the sale<sup>b</sup> I acquired this volume without any difficulty, not much caring at the time by whom it was printed, so long as it was a copy of an undescribed edition. Besides the manuscript note quoted in the catalogue, the fly-leaf contains the words *excessively rare*, and the previous price. From the pains expended on repairing it, the volume has evidently been considered a valuable one. On the back it has Machlinia's name, so that a former owner was of opinion that it was by that printer. A book by Machlinia being one of the greatest rarities, it has now

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<sup>a</sup> Read to the Archæological Society of Glasgow, December 18th, 1884.

<sup>b</sup> May 1st, 1884.



become of interest to me to know whether this one is by him or not. I have investigated the matter with the following results.

2. As William de Mechlinia, or Machlinia, flourished about 1480—1486, and as the present volume has all the appearance of having been printed in the fifteenth century, I expected to find it in Hain's *Repertorium Bibliographicum*; but though that writer gives a long list of the early editions of Albertus Magnus this one is not among them. Hain either considered it subsequent to 1500, or, which is much more likely, he did not know about it at all. It is not mentioned by Panzer, or by Graesse, or by Atkinson,<sup>a</sup> who quotes the *Liber Aggregationis*, to be immediately described.

3. From Ames,<sup>b</sup> Herbert,<sup>c</sup> Dibdin<sup>d</sup> and Johnson<sup>e</sup> one gathers what little is on record about this printer: how he came probably from Mechelen; his connection with John Lettou; the books they printed conjointly and severally.

Lettou, it seems, was the first printer in London, as distinguished from Caxton, who was in Westminster. He had already printed two books—rather indifferently according to Dibdin—when Machlinia, who had more skill, went into partnership with him. Two books—one bearing both their names—issued from their house beside All Saints church, after which Lettou's name disappears. Machlinia, however, continued printing, and his work was done in Holborn, near Fleet Bridge. He is thus the second printer in London, and the fourth or fifth in England. The books assigned to his press are thirteen in number; of these four have his imprint, the rest are ascribed to him on internal evidence.

4. Few copies of any of his works exist. Ten are in the British Museum,<sup>f</sup> two or three are in the Bodleian, half a dozen are enumerated in the *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*,<sup>g</sup> there are some in the Public library at Cambridge,<sup>h</sup> a copy of the *Speculum Christiani* is in Trinity college,<sup>i</sup> there, and possibly other specimens

<sup>a</sup> *Medical Bibliography*, London, 1834, p. 68.

<sup>b</sup> *Typographical Antiquities*, London, 1749, pp. 76—78.

<sup>c</sup> *Typographical Antiquities*, London, 1785—90. Vol. i. pp. 111—116; vol. iii. p. 1773.

<sup>d</sup> *Typographical Antiquities*, London, 1812, vol. ii. pp. 4—30.

<sup>e</sup> *Typographia*, London, 1824, vol. i. pp. 212—219. In *A Bibliography of Printing*, by Bigmore and Wyman, London, 1884, there is no notice of Machlinia under the letter M.

<sup>f</sup> *Catalogue of Books . . . printed in England . . . to the year 1640*, London, 1884, vol. iii. p. 1765.

<sup>g</sup> Dibdin, *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, London, 1815, vol. iv. pp. 383—94.

<sup>h</sup> Hartshorne, *The Book Rarities in the University of Cambridge*, London, 1829, p. 144.

<sup>i</sup> Robert Sinker, *A Catalogue of the fifteenth-century printed Books in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge*, Cambridge, 1876, p. 3, No. 8.



may be discovered in some of the college libraries, when their contents have become better known.\*

5. Additional proof of the scarcity of Machlinia's work is easily got. In a catalogue of rare and valuable books, No. 53, issued by Messrs. Ellis and White, there is a perfect copy in admirable condition of the *Chronicle of England*, priced at 500 guineas. In the course of their description, it is remarked, that "examples from the press of William de Machlinia are much more rare than from that of Caxton." As confirmatory of this it may be observed that in his very remarkable *Catalogue of English Literature*, No. 355, issued last year, Mr. Quaritch has nine Caxtons, but only one Machlinia, an imperfect copy of the aforesaid *Chronicle*, which, nevertheless, is valued at 135*l.*, and he adds: "Specimens of the press of William of Mechelen, and of Julian Notary, are amongst the very rarest products of the early English press." Still further, as exhibiting the extreme rarity of these books, I may state that, in the Hunterian library in the university of Glasgow, although there are books in it by Caxton, W. de Worde, Pynson, Julian Notary, and the St. Alban's printer, I have not detected one by Machlinia. In other libraries, so far at least as I have been able to ascertain from their catalogues, no copies are to be found. Even in Dibdin's time, they were most uncommon, and to his surprise were much sought after, in spite of what he considered their want of interest. For Dibdin gives Machlinia but scant praise as a printer, and considers his work far inferior to that of Caxton and Wynken de Worde. It must be confessed that the *Chronicle*, which I have seen, is not—as a typographical specimen—either very beautiful or attractive.

6. Among the books printed by Machlinia, and authenticated by having his name and address, is the *Liber Aggregationis* of Albertus Magnus. Ames was ignorant of this book, and the first allusion to it that I know of was by Herbert. In his "Corrections and Additions" to Ames (p. 1773) he describes it pretty fully, and gives the collation—*a-d* 8, *e* 6, *f* 4, *a* i being a blank leaf, and *f* ii verso containing the colophon, followed by two leaves. He mentions two copies, one in the British museum, the other in his own possession.

Dibdin incorporates Herbert's note with Ames' text, but in so doing makes a mistake. He says, "it contains 41 leaves in the whole, from *a* to *d* in eights; *e* six; and *f* three. The colophon, on the reverse of sign. *f* ii, is as follows: . . . . The two remaining leaves, or three pages (for the last is blank) consist of directions . . ." It is quite obvious from this that signature *f* must have contained

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\* Dibdin (*Typ. Ant.* vol. ii. p. 30) mentions a copy of the *Chronicle of England* in the library at Osterley Park. That library also has been advertised for sale since the above was written.



four and not three leaves; and that, including *a i* (which is blank), the book has 42 leaves when complete. Subsequently Dibdin gave a more exact and detailed account of this book.<sup>a</sup>

7. Of the *Liber Aggregationis* I know of only five copies. Two are in the British museum, one imperfect, the other perfect, which I have collated; the third is in the Selden collection, now in the Bodleian, which I have also seen;<sup>b</sup> the fourth is in earl Spencer's library; and the fifth, with "W. Herbert" written on it, is the historical copy, and has come into my possession from the Syston Park library.

8. This book was unknown to Hain, and the account of it given by Herbert, and repeated by Dibdin, is incomplete, while that given by Dibdin himself is not readily accessible. As it is of prime importance for settling the authenticity of the *De Secretis Mulierum*, a somewhat detailed description of it is indispensable.

9. Folio 1 is blank. It is wanting in the museum and Herbert's copies; it is contained in the Spencer copy.

Folio 2 *a* (with signature *a ii*)—

■ Liber aggregationis feu liber secre  
toꝝ Alberti magni de virtutibus herbaꝝ  
lapidum ⁊ animalium quorum d' ■ Li  
ber primus de viribu squarum d' herbaꝝ

Icut vult phs in pluribus locis. Ois  
scientia de genere bonoꝝ est. Verūtamē  
enim operatio, aliquando bona, aliquan  
do mala prout scientia mutatur ad bonū  
⁊ ad malum finem ad quem operatur Ex  
quo ocluduntur duo, quorū vnum ⁊ primum est. q sci  
entia magicalis non est mala. &c.

Folio 40 *b* (signature *f ii b*)—

■ Albertus Magnus de Secretis  
nature Explicit Necnon per me  
Wilhelmum de Mechlinia Jm  
pressus Jn opulentissima Ci  
uitate Londoniarū Juxta  
pontem qui vulgariter dicitur  
Flete brigge

<sup>a</sup> *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, London, 1815, vol. iv. p. 392, No. 898.

<sup>b</sup> By the kindness of F. Madan, Esq., M.A.



**C**ribit philosophus philosophorum primiceps quarto ethicorum. homo est optimum eorum qui sunt in mundo. Et mundus sumitur hic per omnes continentis in sexa actiuorum et passiuorum scilicet per elementis et elementatis

Isto presupposito probatur propositio sic. Quid est optimum cuius generacionis cause sunt nobilissime. sed sic est de homine 9<sup>o</sup> et ratio patet quia effectus sortitur nobilitatem ex causis. Ratio probatur de materia hominis. unde materia hominis secundum medicos ponitur esse mensuratum mulieris cum spermate viri. quia illa ambo intant spem hominis / sicut lac coagulat sub materia casei. Sed philosophi naturales ponunt quod menstruum mulieris sit materia et semen viri sit effectus: ita quod semen viri sic se habet ad menstruum mulieris / sicut artifex ad artificium ut attestatur Auezois septimo methaphisice in de generationibus de ideis. Item philosophus quinto methaphisice capitulo decimo dicit quod sperma viri ad causam effectum reducit. Et quocumque modo dicatur semper patet quod materia hominis est excellentissima et inter omnia semina nobilissima. Secundo probatur. Quid est optimum quod in suis partibus assimilatur corpore nobilissimo. sed hoc modo est hoc modi ergo et. Ratio patet quia assimilatio sequitur naturam rei. Ratio probatur: quia homo assimilatur celo quantum ad duodecim signa zodiaci quorum

a ij

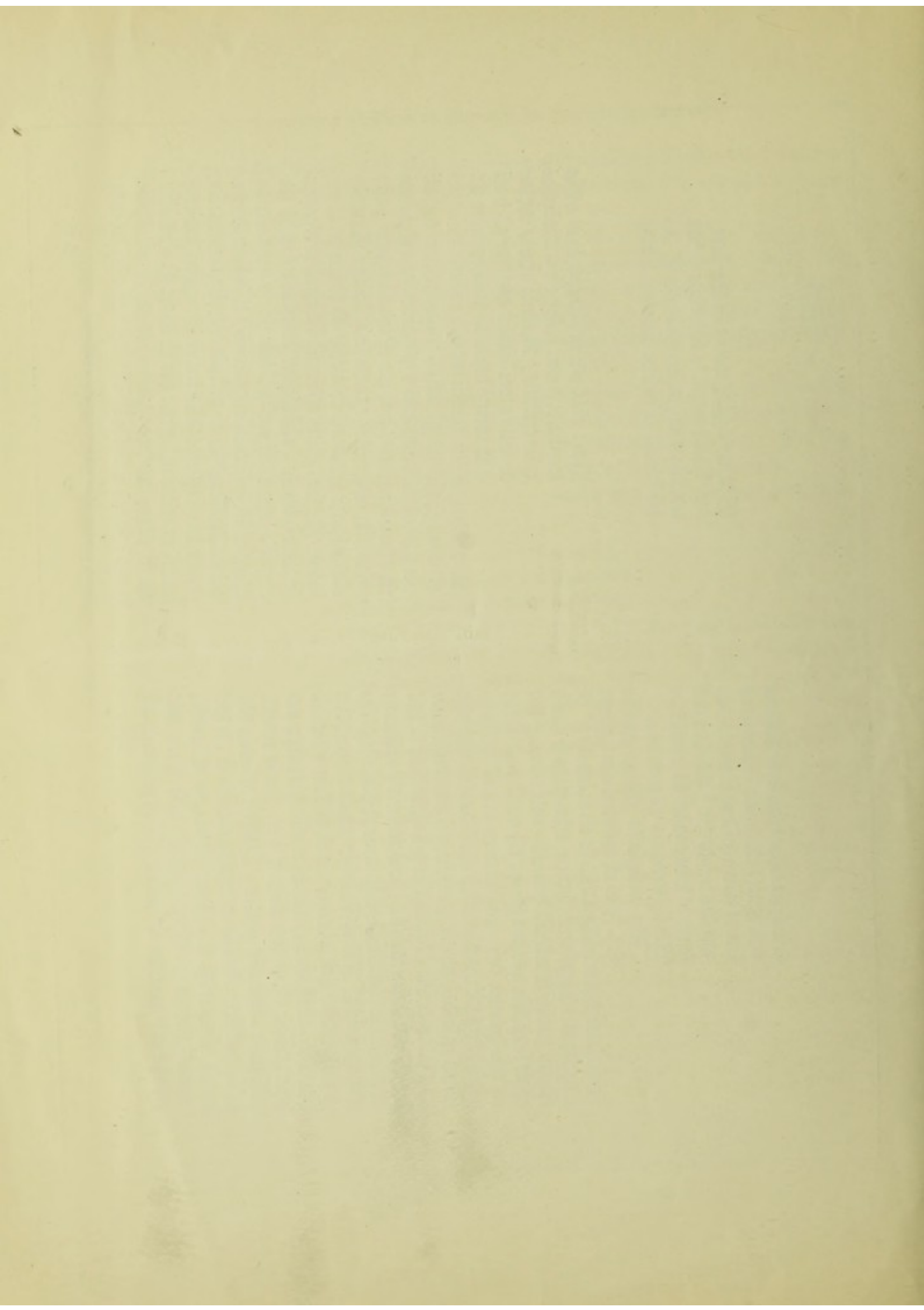
*W. Herber*

**L**iber aggregationis seu liber secretorum Alberti magistri de virtutibus herbarum lapidum et animalium quorumdam. **L**iber primus de viribus quarundam herbarum

**S**icut vult philosophus in pluribus locis. Disscientia de genere bonorum est. Veritatem enim operatio / aliquando bona / aliquando mala prout scientia mutatur ad bonum et ad malum finem ad quem operatur. Ex quo concluduntur duo / quorum unum et primum est. quod scientia magicalis non est mala. namque per eius cognitionem potest evitari malum et persequi bonum. Concluditur etiam secundum / quod ex quo effectus laudatur propter finem atque vituperatur / etiam finis scientie aliquando malus / puta quando non ordinatur ad bonum vel ad virtutem / Ex hoc sequitur quod scientia vel operatio aliquando bona vel mala. Quia igitur magicalis scientia seu cognitio bona est ut presuppositum est / et mala aliquantum existit in speculatione rationum / et in speculatione naturalium secundum quod ab antiquis authoribus examinavi et precepi / imo et egomet Albertus ut in pluribus veritate inueni et veritatem suppono quo ad aliqua ex hereticis libro / et libro Alcorat. Primo narabo de quibusdam herbis / post de quibusdam lapidibus et tercio de quibusdam animalibus et de virtutibus eorumdem

a ii





Folio 41 a—

v T autem qui legeris que superius [sic] notata sunt  
 vberiore fructum capias : volumus cōmu-  
 nem regulam ⁊ breuem tradere ad sciendum ortum Lu-  
 ne secundum epactam ꝯc.

Folio 42 a ends—

co post addito quinqꝫ Quinqꝫ dabis signo quo lune ince-  
 pit origo Et sic est finis

Folio 42 b is blank.

It is without date. It is a small quarto, with signatures *a* to *d* in eights, *e* six, *f* four, 42 leaves in all; no pagination or catchwords; Gothic character; 27 lines to the page; the printing is  $3\frac{6}{16}$  inches broad, by  $5\frac{4}{16}$  inches long. Spaces are left for the insertion of ornamental capitals by hand.

10. Dibdin says, "This book is printed in the same type as the '*Revelacion*';<sup>a</sup> and is the most elegant specimen of Machlinia's press with which I am acquainted. The registering of the pages is regular, the margin broad, and the paper excellent, both in tint and quality. Herbert's own beautiful copy was purchased by Mr. Triphook, at the sale of Dr. Combe's duplicates in 1808; and it is now in the collection of the marquis of Blandford. Earl Spencer has also a copy." That was published in 1812. In 1815 he again described it, as has been already mentioned.<sup>b</sup> In 1819 this same copy of Herbert's realised 7*l.* 10*s.* at the sale of the marquis of Blandford's library.<sup>c</sup> After the lapse of sixty-six years it is used once more for bibliographic purposes.

<sup>a</sup> That is: *The Reuelacion of a Monke in the Abbey of Euishamme*. This remark is preposterous, and its accuracy is questionable. Dibdin says here that the type of a book with Machlinia's name actually at it is the same as that of a book without a printer's name, ascribed by Herbert to an unknown printer, who, Dibdin assumes, was Machlinia! The following notable succession of statements is got from Dibdin. The type of the *Liber Aggregationis* is the same as that of the *Reuelacion*, which is printed with type of the same character as that of the *Nova Statuta*, but ruder. (This by the way does not tally at all with Dibdin's praise of the elegance of the *Liber Aggregationis*.) The *Nova Statuta* type is said to be similar to that of the *Statuta*, which is said to be the same as that of the *Speculum Christiani*, which is one of the books with Machlinia's imprint. Therefore the *Reuelacion* must be similar to the *Statuta* and to the *Speculum Christiani*. Now Herbert had a leaf *kk iiii* of the *Statuta*, and he says that its type is very different from that of the *Speculum Christiani*. The facsimile of a page of this leaf is given by Dibdin, and the type is not at all like that of the *Liber Aggregationis*. The *Liber Aggregationis* therefore cannot, as Dibdin says, be printed with the same type as the *Reuelacion*. The *Reuelacion* cannot be like three books which are unlike one another. There must be confusion somewhere.

<sup>b</sup> *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, London, 1815, vol. iv. p. 392, No. 898.

<sup>c</sup> White Knights Library, Sale Catalogue, London, 1819, part i. p. 6, No. 134.



11. I come now to the work *De Secretis Mulierum*. The only copy of this book printed by Machlinia is mentioned by Herbert. After his account of the *Liber Aggregationis*, to which I have already alluded, he proceeds as follows:—

“To my copy of this book [*i.e.* *Liber Aggregationis*] is prefixed another, printed on the same types. It wants the title-leaf; but has this head-title, in ancient writing, ‘Albertus magnus de secretis Nature et de miraculis Mundi.’ and at the end of the introduction, ‘Titulus. ¶ Incipiunt Secreta mulierum & virorum ab Alberto magno compofita.’ The text is commented on, paragraph by paragraph, but no intimation who the commentator was, unless perhaps, in the title-page. Contains g 7, in eights. On the last page, ‘Finis huius tractatuli venerabilis Alberti magni, secreta expliciunt mulierum.’ It must have had another leaf, but whether blank, or not, I cannot say, knowing of no other copy. Quarto. W. H. +”

Dibdin never saw a copy, and could add nothing to this; there is none in the *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*; Johnson, Watt,<sup>a</sup> and Lowndes omit it altogether, and I have encountered no notice of it elsewhere.

12. In order, therefore, to settle the authenticity of the Hamilton copy, four questions must be considered.

- 1°. Why is there a discrepancy in the collations of Herbert and of the sale catalogue?
- 2°. Is Machlinia really the printer?
- 3°. How many copies are known?
- 4°. Where is Herbert's copy now?

13. 1°. A careful inspection of the Hamilton copy after I got it, and comparison of the text with that in a more recent edition, showed me that some leaves must be wanting, and that to conceal this defect as much as possible a signature had been very carefully erased. It was impossible therefore to say how much had been lost or to identify it from Herbert's account, and I could only wait for an opportunity of comparing it with another copy. This I fortunately got in the British museum, and found that the missing leaves were vii and viii in signature *f*, and i, ii, and iii in signature *g*. I further found that both copies wanted *a* i and *g* viii, in all likelihood blank leaves. The complete register, therefore, must have been *a* to *g* in eights, or fifty-six leaves in all. Herbert's copy had fifty-four leaves; the museum copy has fifty-four leaves; my own copy has forty-nine leaves, and is imperfect. This explains the discrepancy.

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<sup>a</sup> *Bibliotheca Britannica*, Edinburgh, 1824, vol. ii. (authors) 629u.



14. The following is a detailed account of this book, the only one extant.

Folio 1, probably blank, is wanting in my own and the museum copy.

Folio 2 *a*, with signature *a ij*—

Cribit philosophus philosophorum prin-  
ceps quarto ethicorum. homo est op-  
timum eorum qui sunt in mundo. Et  
mundus sumitur hic p omnibus con-  
tentis in spera actiuorum ⁊ passiuorū  
scilicet p elementis ⁊ elementatis

Isto presupposito pbatur ppositio  
sic. Illud est optimum cuius genera-  
tionis cause sunt nobilissime. sed sic est de homine g<sup>o</sup> rī  
Maior patet ꝯc.

Folio 2 *b*, line 17—

Titulus

● Incipiunt Secreta mulierum ⁊ virorum ab Alberto  
magno composita.

Textus ꝯc.

Folio 55 *b* ends—

sanctorum exstat omnium per infinita secula seculorum

A M E N

● Finis huius tractatuli venera-  
bilis Alberti magni. secreta expli-  
ciunt mulierum

It is without date, place, and printer's name. It is a small quarto, with signatures *a* to *g*, in eights, fifty-six leaves in all, when complete; no pagination or catchwords; Gothic character; twenty-seven lines to the page; the printing is  $3\frac{6}{16}$  inches broad, by  $5\frac{4}{16}$  long. Spaces are left for the insertion of ornamental capitals by hand.

15. 2°. The evidence that this book was printed by Machlinia is not far to seek. To make quite sure I compared the *De Secretis* with the museum copy of the *Liber Aggregationis*. The briefest examination showed that, as Herbert originally observed, the two books have been printed with the same type, in the same style, and of the same dimensions of page; the workmanship is, in fact, identical, and the *De Secretis*, though it wants Machlinia's imprint, is undoubtedly from his press. The museum authorities are of the same opinion.



Besides the typographical identity there is additional confirmatory proof. Herbert, and after him Dibdin, enumerate the water-marks in the paper of the *Liber Aggregationis*, a dog, a hand, and a p. These marks are in the museum copy and in Herbert's, they are contained in the museum copy of the *De Secretis*, and the copy of the latter which I have has the same marks. There is no doubt therefore that this book is another genuine example of Machlinia's best printing. That it escaped the keen eyes of the skilled book-hunters at the duke of Hamilton's sale is due to the very inaccurate description given in the catalogue, and to the too positive and quite erroneous assertion that it was certainly not from Machlinia's press. Thanks to these blunders, this all but unique volume, one of the very rarest in the history of English printing, was sold for less than what must have been the cost of the binding!

16. 3°. The answer to the third question has been already given in the preceding. Two copies only are known.

17. 4°. The fourth question naturally arises, Is one of these copies Herbert's, or is his a third copy, which has entirely disappeared? Herbert's certainly does not now precede his *Liber Aggregationis*, and they seem to have been separated prior to 1808, perhaps by Herbert himself.

In favour of Herbert's being the copy now in the British museum is the fact that the latter is complete, as Herbert's was.

But there is, I think, much stronger evidence that my own copy of the *De Secretis* was that which belonged originally to Herbert and was described by him. Both Herbert's *Liber Aggregationis* and my own *De Secretis* have the capitals rubricated, the *De Secretis* more completely than the other; but in addition there are several flourishes in red at the end of each paragraph of so unmistakable a character that they must have been executed by the same hand. These seem to me to identify the two copies beyond all question. In this case Herbert's copy, after it was separated from the *Liber Aggregationis*, must have been utterly neglected, leaves were lost and the corners were wasted. Ultimately it came into the hands of some one who, recognising its value, had it most carefully mended and sumptuously bound.

If it be as I suppose, these two books of Herbert's, after having been divorced for well nigh a century, have sought each other out and have been reunited in a most unexpected manner.

18. To conclude: In addition to their being among the very first books ever printed in London, to their age—they are just 400 years old,—to their excessive

rarity—five copies of one and two copies of the other are known—to their formerly belonging to such famous collectors as Herbert, the marquis of Blandford, the duke of Hamilton, Sir J. H. Thorold, and possibly others besides, to their being the actual examples on which Herbert based his descriptions, these volumes have this distinction that they are the last representatives of the only Latin editions of these curious treatises by Albertus Magnus which were ever printed in this country. All the other editions, not far short of a hundred, were printed abroad.

In every respect, therefore, intrinsically and historically, they are full of the greatest interest and value.

*Postscript.*—To the copies mentioned in § 4 must be added one of the *Speculum Christiani* in the duke of Devonshire's collection. (*Catalogue of the Library at Chatsworth*, London, 1879, vol. iii. p. 416.)

University of Glasgow, January 19th, 1885.



