

## ACCOUNT OF BOOKS

Printed by

John Lettou.



**O**F the family and occupations of this printer, I am not able to give any particulars in addition to those which have been mentioned by Ames; and from him literally transcribed by Herbert. Lettou is supposed, from his name, to have been a foreigner: of what country is uncertain; but ‘probably he was encouraged to come over by Caxton and Hunt, with Rood, Machlinia, and others, from some part of Germany, to settle, and promote the art of printing, in this kingdom.’

I have little doubt that if Lettou learnt the art of printing abroad, he came over into this country from a want of employment on the Continent, arising from his extreme unskilfulness in the typographical art. His name does not occur in any foreign colophon which I have had an opportunity of examining; and it will be seen, in the sequel, that there is most probably only two books extant, to which it is *exclusively* attached. So indifferent an artist stood little chance of success, without the aid and alliance of a more skilful workman; and he seems to have been taken into Machlinia’s office (although his name stands first in the partnership) chiefly with a view of

obtaining support in the humble capacity of a labourer. His types are rude and broken; and formed upon none of the models which the Mentz, Cologne, and Venetian printers might have supplied him with. From what foreign office both he and Machlinia obtained their founts of letters, it seems very difficult to ascertain, or to form even a rational conjecture. Some of the early Lyons and Milan books have the closest resemblance to them, of any which have come under my own observation.

Pursuing the arrangement of Ames and Herbert, the first article to be noticed under the head of this printer is the following:

65. QUÆSTIONES ANTONII ANDREAE ord. Minor. super XII libros Metaphysicæ emendatæ per ven. fratrem magistrum Thomam Penketh ord. fr. Augustin. *Per me Johan Lettou ad expensas Willmi Wilcock impressus* A. C. MCCCCLXXX. Folio.

The first part of this title is given from Bishop Tanner's *Bibliotheca*, p. 589, note b: the latter (commencing with the Italic letter) from Ames, who is copied by Herbert. The book itself, according to Ames, "is among the books of Magdalen College, Oxford, A. V. S. as appear in Bishop Tanner's MSS." Herbert refers only to the *Bibliotheca*, as just cited, and adds—"I have inserted this article after Mr. Ames, having no opportunity of seeing the book;\* but am apprehensive it is incorrect, not only by introducing the diphthong character, which I do not find used so early even by

\* The first impression of this work, with a date, is the Vicenza edition of 1477; which appears to have been the second book printed at this place: the first being printed in 1474, under the title of "*Dita Mundi*," by Leonard Achates: this latter has escaped Panzer, in the fifth volume of his *Annal Typog.* p. 510. Consult Santander's *Bibl. Choisi, &c.* vol. i. 305, ii. 53, 4; who seems to have borrowed his information from Maittaire's *Annal. Typog.* vol. i. 373; La Caille, p. 39; and Fabricius's *Bibl. Lat. Medicæ et Inf. Ætat.* vol. i. 322, 8vo. edit. Several other foreign editions of this work were published abroad in the 15th century; but in support of Lettou's edition, it must be observed that both Denis and Panzer refer only to Herbert. Panzer adds, "Primus hic est Londini impressus liber;" but how correctly, may be seen from the preceding volume.

*Exposit. super Psalt.]* JOHN LETTOU.

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the foreign printers, but in the incongruity of the words “quæstionibus emendatis,” unless allowing for some omission.” It is evident that Ames was in error; as no such words are to be found in the title.

The book is in the library of Magdalen college, and the following is the colophon of it; as kindly transcribed for me by the present very learned President of the same college.

‘*Excellentissimi sacre Theologie professoris Anthonii Andree ordinis fratrum minorum super duodecim libros Metaphysice quæstionibus per venerabilem virum magistrum Thomam Penketh ordinis fratrum Augustinensium emendatis finis impositus est per me Johannem Lettou ad expensas Wilhelmi Wilcock impressus anno Christi, MCCCCLXXX. Two leaves appear to have been torn from the beginning of it.*’

66 EXPOSITIONES SUPER PSALTERIUM. *Impresse in civitate Londoniensi ad expensas Wilhelmi Wilcok per me Johannem lettou. Anno xp̄i M. cccc. lxxxxi. Folio.*

The copy of this work in the Bodleian library, [Q. 1. 2. 7. Auctar.] is a very fine one; containing 291 leaves of text, with a full index of 55 leaves. It begins on sign. A ii. and has neither numerals nor catchwords. The colophon is thus: *Expliciunt Reverendissimi doctoris Valēcii sup. psalteriū hucusq; expōnes. Impresse,* &c. as above. There is no copy of it in the library of the Inner Temple, as Ames and Herbert assert; although it was formerly in the curious collection of John Ratcliffe.

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# John Lettou

AND

# William Machlinia.



THE first book, described by Ames and Herbert as being executed by these printers in conjunction, is *LITTLETON'S TENURES*: a work which, says Mr. Bridgman,\* “ is justly esteemed as the principal pillar on which the superstructure of the law of real property in this kingdom is supported ;” and on which the Commentary of *LORD COKE*, as it appears illustrated by the learned labours of Francis Hargrave and Charles Butler,† Esqrs. may be ranked among the profoundest legal disquisitions which the lawyers of any age or country have produced.

\* *Legal Bibliography*, 1807, 8vo. p. 203.

† *Thirteenth* edition, 1794. 8vo. 3 vols. Lord Coke's preface, or Proheme, which immediately precedes the text of Littleton, and in which he dedicates the work ‘ To GOD, His COUNTRY, and the READER ’—forms one of those ancient specimens of composition, which pleases us not less by the simplicity of its style, than by the interest of the matter. The account of Littleton is grave, simple, and impressive.

*Littleton's Tenures.*] LETTOU AND MACHLINIA. 5

67. TENORES. *Nouelli Imp̄ssi p[er] nos Johem lettou et Willm̄ de Machlinia ī Cītate Londinarū iuxta ec̄cam oīm. sc̄or.\* Folio.*

FIRST EDITION of Littleton's Tenures.† It has no title; the above being a copy of the colophon. On the reverse of the first leaf we have "Incipit tabula hujus libri;" being the head of the table of the chapters of the work, which is divided into three books. Then commences on the recto of the second leaf, "Tenant en fee simple est celuy qi ad trēs ou teñtz a tener a luy et a sez heirez a toutes iours et est appelle en laten feodū simplex," &c. The table, says Ames, gives the beginning tenure by the directing letter, or signature, to the binder for folding the sheet, at the bottom of the leaf; as a i, a ii, a iii: then four leaves blank; after, b i, b ii, b iii, b iiii, &c. to the end. All the signatures (if I can charge my memory) run in eights except the first, which has only seven leaves. The first book of the tenures ends on the reverse of the fourth leaf after sign. a iii; the second book, on the recto of the fourth leaf after sign. c iiii: the third, on the reverse of the third leaf after sign. c iii. The colophon is at bottom—"Expliciunt Nouelli," &c. as above. This book has neither numerals nor catchwords. The omission of the

\* That is "Impressi per nos Johannem Lettou et Wilhellum De Machlina in Civitate Londiniarum juxta ecclesiam omnium sanctorum."

† "Lord Coke supposes the French edition in folio, printed (without date) at Rouen, by W. le Tailleur for R. Pinson, to have been the *first*; a copy of which is in the Inner Temple Library," Bridgman's *Legal Bibliography*, p. 201. From the period when Pynson commenced printing, and from the silence of foreign bibliographers respecting the date of this foreign edition, there is no ground to suppose that it was anterior to the above. Indeed Lord Coke's own words do not warrant the conclusion assigned to them by Mr. Bridgman—Coke says that the Rouen edition was "*the first that he had seen.*" Consult Middleton's *Dissertation*, 4to, 1735, p. 13; but more particularly the note to the eleventh edition of Lord Coke's Commentary as extracted at p. xxxiv. of the thirteenth edition by Messrs. Hargrave and Butler. The reasons assigned by the editor of the *eleventh* edition for the antiquity of the Rouen edition of the Tenures, namely for its being printed in 1477, do not appear to be conclusive. This editor was ignorant of the history of printing at Rouen. Mr. Butler says that the date of the first edition of Littleton "has not yet been settled, and perhaps cannot now be settled, with any degree of precision." Pref. p. xxii.



printed initial letters was to be supplied by the skill of the illuminator. The type is barbarous and broken; and the text crowded with abbreviations.

Dr. Middleton says that this edition “was probably published, or at least put to press, by *the Author himself*, who died *ann.* 1481.” See his *Dissertation on Printing*, 1735, p. 13. I have seen three copies of this very rare and valuable book; that in the Public Library at Cambridge, [A. B. 3, 16.], in the Inner Temple Library, and in Earl Spencer’s collection. Mr. Alchorne’s copy is now in the possession of Mr. Johnes.\* A fifth is in the library of the Right Hon. T. Grenville. Usually subjoined to this first edition of Littleton’s *Tenures*, is found

#### 68. VIEUX ABRIGEMENT DES STATUTES. Folio.

Of this work I have seen several copies: three in the Public Library at Cambridge (A. B. 3, 16, 17, 18); one in Lord Spencer’s collection; and a fifth in the possession of Mr. Ford, of Manchester, bookseller. It is so barbarously printed, (with the same rude types as the preceding) that it is rather difficult to give an accurate description of it. There is no title, unless the words “*Incipit Tabula hujus libri*” are to be taken as such. The table, arranged in alphabetical order, occupies four leaves. The body of the work commences on the recto of signature A i.; and ends on the reverse of the fourth leaf, after signature N iii.; in eights: comprehending 108 leaves. A full page contains 40 lines. The work has neither numerals, catchword, nor colophon. At the end of the last article, *Outlawry*, [“*Utlagarie*”]—“*In novis ordinacib̄s. A°. V. C. 11. et puis ē rpell Anno xv. de m̄ le Roy.*” Ames says that, ‘at the end of each section is mentioned the year of the king’s reign, and the last mentioned,

\* Herbert adds a whimsical extract “from the papers of the late Thomas Baker, of St. John’s college, Cambridge”—about a palpable error of Sir William Dugdale, in supposing this book of Lettou and Machlinia “to have been printed by them in the reign of King Henry VIII. in these words”—*Nec non tempore ejusdem regis Henrici octavi, in civitate Londiniarum, juxta ecclesiam omnium Sanctorum impressum per Johannem Lettou et Wilhelmum Machlinia, in folio. Originales Juridicales, cap. xxiii. p. 58.*—upon which Mr. Baker very wisely remarks—“*Sed melius inquirendum.*”

*des Statutes.*]      LETTOU AND MACHLINIA.      7

that he observed, is 31 Hen. VI. or 1452.' Although no printer's name is subjoined to this work, it seems unquestionably to be the production of Lettou and Machlinia, from its conformity, in every respect, to the preceding article.

Mr. Bridgman seems to mention two Abridgments of the Statutes of 1481, by Lettou and Machlinia; making the copy in West's Catalogue, n°. 3416, the second; but this latter is only the same book, the date being gratuitously added. Mr. Tomlins, in his Introduction to his account of the printed Records and Statutes, &c. supposes it to have been printed before 1481. Besides the foregoing copies, there is one in his Majesty's library, and another in that of the Inner Temple.

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## ACCOUNT OF BOOKS

Printed by

**William Machlinia.**

MES, who is literally followed by Herbert, has given as scanty an account of this printer as of his partner Lettou. He supposes him to be a foreigner, and that he “ might come from a city of that name [Mechlin], formerly belonging to the Emperor of Germany, and take his name from thence. It seems,” continues Ames, “ that he and his partner were the first printers of law in this kingdom ; yet after all my searches, I cannot find they had any patent for so doing.” The reader will consult vol. i., page 354 ; from which it may be inferred that Caxton was probably as early a law printer. As to the additional appellation of MACLYN, or MACKLYN, [the first subjoined by Ames, the second by Herbert,] there seems to be but the slender authority of one colophon for adopting it.

Before we describe the books printed by Machlinia, whether of those which expressly bear his name, or of those which, from their close resemblance to his works, may be safely classed among them, it may be necessary to premise a few general remarks upon the style of his typography, and on his character as a printer.



*The Year Book.*] WILLIAM MACHLINIA.

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Machlinia unquestionably printed with at least three different casts of letters; of which the more elegant specimens are those of the ‘SPECULUM XPIANI,’ and ALBERTUS MAGNUS ‘DE SECRETIS MULIERUM’ Machlinia is always superior to Lettou, and some attempt at proportion and beauty may be seen in his register, or press-work; but he is not only far beneath Wynkyn de Worde in every point of good printing, but is frequently below Caxton; whose broad and bold types seem not to have suited his meagre taste. His paper is not generally so good as that of his contemporaries; but in the subsequently mentioned work of ‘Albertus Magnus,’ and in the ‘Nova Statuta’ he has shewn himself not indifferent to the niceties and beauty of his art. The paper is excellent, the margin broad, and the register exact. His character, as a printer, or rather the avidity with which his books are purchased, must be estimated more from the paucity than the intrinsic excellence of his works. His law publications are necessarily valuable; but his fame in the department of the Belles Lettres, or General Literature, may be easily calculated from his ‘SPECULUM’ and ‘MONKE OF EVESHAM;’ two works, of which it is difficult to say whether the vapid insipidity of the one, or the marvellous nonsense of the other, be entitled to harsher censure. The residence of Machlinia, when he printed on his own account, appears to have been in Holborn, in the neighbourhood of ‘Fleet-bridge;’ when in partnership with Lettou, ‘near All Saints church.’

As there is no date affixed to any of his books, we may pursue the order of Herbert; considering the ‘Nova Statuta,’ and the ‘Revelation of the Monk of Evesham,’ as the productions of his press.

69. THE YEAR BOOK xxxiii. xxxv. and xxxvi.  
Hen. vi. Folio.

It begins on sign. a i. ‘De Termino hillarii anno henrici sexti.’ On the 5th leaf, after sign. h iiiij ‘Explicit. annus xxxiii. Henrici sexti.’—Then, at sign. a i: ‘De Termino Michaelis anno regis h. vi. xxxv.’; on the third leaf after sign. e iij: ‘Explicit annus xxxv. Henrici Sexti’—Then at sign. a i: ‘Michaelis xxxvi. Henrici Sexti.’

On the third leaf after sign. e iij (reverse): ‘Explicit annus xxxvi. Henrici sexti Termino Micahelis.’ Publ. Libr. Cambr. A. B. 3. 15. Bishop More’s collection.

This volume has been imperfectly described by Herbert, who has implicitly followed Ames.\*

#### 70. YEAR BOOK xxxiv. Hen. vi.

Ames mentions this book on the authority of Thomas Rawlinson’s Catalogue (1732), n°. 2670; he had seen two or three leaves of it, but all without the printer’s name, or place of abode. Herbert, in his Additions, p. 1773, says, that ‘the late John Baynes, Esq. of Grays Inn, had a copy with both Machlinia’s name and place, “*Emp’nte p. moy williā Machlyn en Holborn.*”

#### 71. TENORES. *Nouelli Impressi per me Wilhelmū de Machlinia in opulentissima Civitate Londoniar. juxta pontē qui vulgariter dicitur Flete brigge. Folio.*

This edition of Littleton’s Tenures, printed by Machlinia alone, begins, as the former one, with the line ‘Incipit tabula huius libri’ on the reverse of the first leaf; and is followed by the heads or chapters of the Three Books, with references to the leaves, according to their signatures. The work begins at sign. a i; and terminates on the reverse of sign. i vi;—there being six leaves to every signature. At the end we have ‘*Expliciunt Tenores novelli Impressi,*’ &c. as above.

This work, which is slightly mentioned by Herbert, vol. iii. p. 1773, is printed with a type exactly like that of the plate of the fac-simile; and a full page contains 40 lines. The different chapters or sections commence with a blank space, for the illumination of the capital letter, which is printed in a small character, at one corner. It has neither numerals nor catchwords. Herbert notices a copy in the collection

\* The ‘STATUTES PASSED IN THE FIRST REIGN OF RICHARD III.’ which next follow, were also printed by Caxton; see vol. 1. p. 354.