

## An Unique Binding.

**I**n the Bodleian Library at Oxford is a remarkable and most probably unique binding, which I have permission from the authorities to reproduce in the pages of THE BRITISH BOOKMAKER, in the hope that it will not only prove

of interest to the subscribers, but also elicit an explanation of some of the monograms introduced in the border of the binding.

The book is referred to by Mr. W. Salt Brassington in the Introductory Chapter to his recently-published work on the "Historic Bindings in the Bodleian Library," but is not included in his illustrations.

The book is a small quarto,  $8\frac{3}{8} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$ -in., and contains an illuminated manuscript on vellum, with a curious miniature portrait of Queen Elizabeth, and entitled "Hymn à très haute, très puissante, très vertuose, et très magnanime Princesse Elizabeth, Reine d'Angleterre, France, et Irlande, et présente à sa Majestie par Georges de la Motthe, gentilhomme François, 1586."

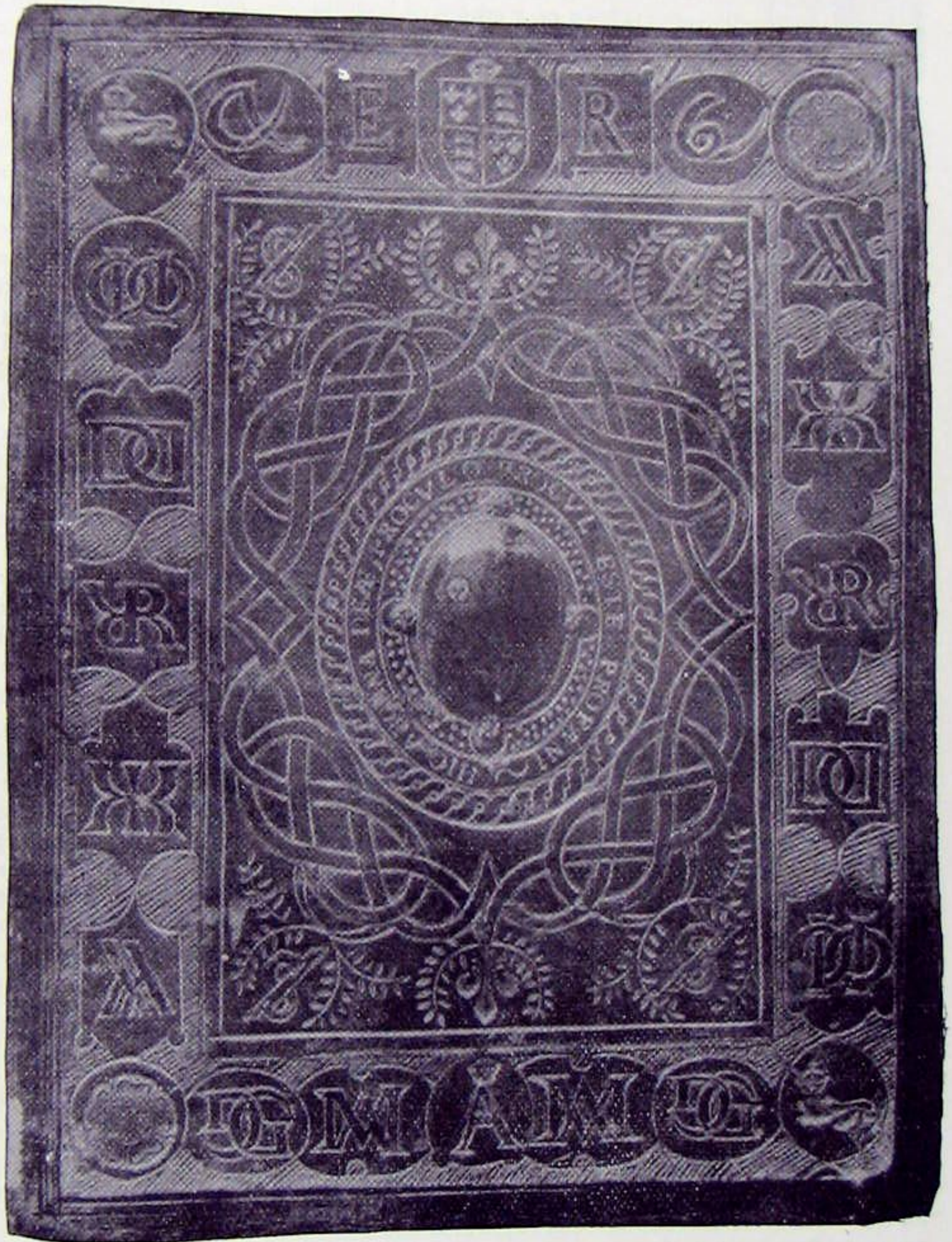
This Georges de la Motthe was a French refugee, then residing in England, and this binding was probably executed by one of his compatriots, as many Huguenots were settled in England at that period. [See a paper on "Bookbinding in England," contributed by Mr. W. Salt Brassington to the Catalogue of bindings exhibited at Nottingham in 1891.]

The cover is of brown leather, inlaid with various coloured moroccas. In the centre is a device in translucent enamel covered with a crystal, and having around it, on the obverse side, the motto—"Hic arcana deæ procul O procul este profani."\* While on the reverse cover the motto is—"Hæc sola evolvit mortali vulnera mortis."† At the four corners of the inner panel is the letter S, standing as I suppose for "sovereigne." At the top and bottom corners are the crowned "lion passant" and "Tudor rose."

\* "Here are secrets of a goddess! Aloof! O profane ones! Stand aloof!" Among the Romans it was customary, before the performance of any sacred rite, to warn off the uninitiated or profane.—See Dryden's *Virgil "Æneid,"* book vi., 368.

† "This alone will take away from a mortal the wounds of death."

In the centre of the upper part is a shield bearing the royal arms, temp. Elizabeth—viz., quarterly, 1st and 4th France, 2nd and 3rd England, surmounted with the crown; while in the centre of the bottom border is the letter A, also crowned, for "Angleterre." In the upper part, on either side of the royal arms, are the letters E and R (Elizabethæ Regina), and on the sides of these latter are Greek symbols (as I take



them) for "Alpha" and "Omega." The reversed letters G and M, at the foot, are evidently intended for the initials of the author's name—Georges de la Motthe.

The meaning of the monograms on the sides of the cover, which appear to include the Greek "kappa," "lambda," and "phi," is a complete enigma to me, and which I hope some of your readers may be able to solve.

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