

REVEREND AND DISTINGUISHED SIR;

FATHER IN CHRIST:

This book, bequeathed to me by an intimate friend, I destined for you, my very dear Athanasius, as soon as it came into my possession, for I was convinced it could be read by no one except yourself.

The former owner of this book once asked your opinion by letter, copying and sending you a portion of the book from which he believed you would be able to read the remainder, but he at that time refused to send the book itself. To its deciphering he devoted unflagging toil, as is apparent from attempts of his which I send you herewith, and he relinquished hope only with his life. But his toil was in vain, for such Sphinxes as these obey no one but their master, Kircher. Accept now this token, such as it is and long overdue though it be, of my affection for you, and burst through its bars, if there are any, with your wonted success.

Dr. Raphael, tutor in the Bohemian language to Ferdinand III, then King of Bohemia, told me the said book had belonged to the Emperor Rudolph and that he presented the bearer who brought him the book 600 ducats. He believed the author was Roger Bacon, the Englishman. On this point I suspend judgment; it is your place to define for us what view we should take thereon, to whose favor and kindness I unreservedly commit myself and remain

At the command of your Reverence,

JOANNES MARCUS MARCI,
of Cronland

PRAGUE, 19th August 1665?

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Fig. 3—Translation of Letter

(Tiltman 1968)