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## A PRINCESS AS HEBRAIST.

IT is a peculiar circumstance that, at the time of the revival of letters in Germany, a comparatively large number of women, especially such as belonged to royal houses, occupied themselves with the study of Hebrew. Thus we find that Maria Dorothea, the consort of the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, had advanced so far, that she was not only able to refer to the Hebrew Bible, but was also able to read and understand it<sup>1</sup>. Elizabeth, daughter of the unfortunate Frederic of the Palatinate, understood Hebrew; as also did Maria Eleanora, the wife of Charles Ludovic of the Palatinate, the same who offered Spinoza the chair of philosophy at the University of Heidelberg. Johann Cocceius wrote his Hebrew dictionary for Maria Eleanora. One of the most prominent of these royal Hebraists, who were one and all contemporaries of that bright "Star of the Century," Anna Maria Schurman, was the Princess Antonia, daughter of Duke Eberhard of Würtemberg, who was blessed with a numerous offspring. Although it may be an exaggeration when it is averred that she read the most difficult Rabbinical books, and, what is more, that she understood the mystic Cabbala so well that she even surpassed many Rabbis, and indeed could shame a number of them<sup>2</sup>, one thing is certain, that she had obtained a good knowledge of the Hebrew language and its grammar. M. Esenwein, who was Dean in Urach, and afterwards professor in Tübingen, wrote as early as July, 1649, to his master Johann Buxtorf, in Basle, that Antonia, "who had already been well grounded in the Hebrew language, and the reading of the Bible, was burning with desire to learn also the art of reading the Hebrew text without vowels<sup>3</sup>," and, three years after, he wrote to

<sup>1</sup> A brief account of female Hebraists was given by M. Steinschneider, *Hebr. Bibliographie*, XX, 66 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *Hebr. Bibliographie*, XX, 67.

<sup>3</sup> "Antonia, fundamentis in Ebraea Lingua et lectione bibliorum hebraicorum haud perfunctorie factis, artem sine punctis legendi addiscere ardet." The letters of Esenwein and others, who are named here, are found in the collection of Buxtorf (father and son), in the town library of Basle (G. i. sqq.).

Buxtorf that "the Princess was aglow with incredible love of the holy tongue, and had already made such progress with it that she had, with her own hands, put vowels to a Hebrew Bible written in rather large letters by some copyist, and had, besides, acquired a considerable knowledge of Hebrew grammar<sup>1</sup>."

The fact that Antonia, who never had a Jewish teacher<sup>2</sup>, took a great delight in the study of Hebrew, is also attested by Philipp Jacob Spencer, who had also been a pupil of Buxtorf's, and who, profound scholar though he was, inclined rather to overwrought pietism. During his temporary stay at Heidelberg he was on familiar terms with Princess Antonia, and together they studied Cabbala, as he mentions himself in a letter to Buxtorf of July 16, 1662, adding that she really deserved the affection of scholars<sup>3</sup>. Antonia had a great regard for Buxtorf, who, on his part, did not fail to send her his works through his pupil, Professor Esenwein of Tübingen, as tokens of respect and admiration. After she had received the *Cusari*, Esenwein wrote to Buxtorf, on February 21, 1661: "Our Antonia wishes ardently to compare your *Cusari* with the most beautifully written copy, left by Weinmann, who was famous as preacher at our University and as a Hebrew scholar<sup>4</sup>." This was probably the same copy which Reuchlin had bought at Rome for his own use, and which was afterwards presented by Antonia to her brother Henry<sup>5</sup>.

We have already mentioned that Antonia occupied herself with the study of the Cabbala; and evidence thereof is even now preserved in the Royal Library at Stuttgart. At that place there is an *Unterschiedlicher Riss zu Sephiroth* ("Diagrams to the Sephiroth"), containing Cabbalistic diagrams, some few of which are interpreted in Hebrew and German, as mentioned by the Librarian in the MS. catalogue. These diagrams were drawn by the Princess Antonia of Württemberg, who delighted in Cabbalistic and Rabbinical lore.

<sup>1</sup> "ut maiorem Bibliorum Ebraicorum partem a manufactore quodam literis Ebraeis maiusculis sine punctis scriptam punctis suis propria manu eleganter vestiverit, adeoque Grammatices sacrae cognitionem haud perfunctorie hauserit."

<sup>2</sup> "Praeceptorem Iudaeum nunquam ipsa habuit," also is written in a letter of Spencer to Buxtorf.

<sup>3</sup> "Antonia . . . virorum doctorum mereri amorem."

<sup>4</sup> "Antonia nostra summo desiderio flagrabat cum ei exemplar Ebraicum elegantissime scriptum a cl. Weinmanno, concionatore quondam aulae nostrae et Philologo Ebraeo satis claro, relictum ad manus sit, quod cum impresso gestit conferre."

<sup>5</sup> Spencer saw this copy in the private library of Duke Frederic of Württemberg.

This conjecture gains certainty from a letter appended to the MS., which bears the heading :

שלום עד בלי ירח  
עבודתי עד בלי כח

“Illustrious, Exalted Princess, Gracious Lady!”

and which concludes thus :

ובכן אקוד מול פני שְׁרָתִי ואומר ירים ה' את קרנך כבבת עין יצרך

“Zültz (?), July 19, 1653.

PASTOR M. WILHELM KOCH<sup>1</sup>.”

The praises of the learned Princess, who, by her example, had given such a stimulus to the study of Hebrew, were not unfrequently sung in Hebrew poems by the clergy of Suavia, and by Hebraists of high standing. The following poem in honour of “the celebrated Princess Antonia,” with the acrostic מווערטעמברג דוכסום אנטוניה, translated from Hebrew into Latin by Johann Martin Rebstock, Pastor in Laufen, was sent as a curiosity to Johann Buxtorf, and is still preserved in manuscript among his collection :

*Laus illustrissimae Principis Antoniae.*

Fama in aulis Magnatum celebratur,	את שמה נודע בשערים
Bonitas et clementia illustratur,	בחסד ובאמרי שְׁפָרִים
Nomen in aeternum laudatur.	יגדל שמה לרור דורים •

Corona Dei in ipsius capite fulget,	גזר אלהים על ראשה
Laus, honor, fides et charitas resplendet,	הוד והדר חסד ואמת לבושה
Et in omnia saecula nitet.	לעולם לא יכבה אֶשָׁה •

Puritas instar favorum mel stillan- tium	טהורה ומתוק מרבש ונופת צופים
Decus Wirtembergiae principum,	בה תלוי מגן אלופים
Miserorum asylum et refugium.	המחויקים ידי רבים •

Gloria illius magnificatur,	וגדול תפארתה
Dominatio exaltatur,	ותחרומם ממשלתה
Principatus ut sol illustratur.	כצאת השמש בבורתה •

<sup>1</sup> Communicated by Dr. Stössel, Rabbi in Stuttgart.

In forma speciosa,	נְחֻמָּד בִּיפִיטָה
In sermone graciosa,	הַצֶּק חֵן בְּשִׁפְתוֹתֶיהָ
In omnibus nationibus gloriosa.	בְּכָל הָעַמִּים נוֹדֵעַ תְּפָאֲרָתָהּ •
Faciei puritas illuminat,	יֵאִירָה פָּנֶיהָ זֶךְ חוֹהֵר
Instar lucis coruscat,	אוֹרָה מְזוּהֵר
Ut ipsum caelum fulgurat.	כְּעֵצֶם הַשָּׁמַיִם לְטוֹהֵר •
Castitas electa,	הַצְּנוּעָה וְהַיִּשְׁרָה
Ut luna pulchra,	בְּלִי קֶץ וְנִמְיָרָה
Ut sol pura.	יִפָּה כְּלַבְנָה וְכַחְמָה בְּרָה •
Suavis fortitudinis currus,	דְּוֵרֵי צֶחַ וְאֲדוּם דְּגוּל מְרַבְּבָה
Aspectus ut flamma splendidus	מְרַאֲיָה כְּאֵשׁ וְלֹהֶבָה
Benedictus ipsi Dominus.	יְבָרְכֶהָ הָאֵל בְּשִׁפְעַת טוֹבָה •
Ut ignis absque fumo lucet,	כְּאֹוֹר נֹוֶגֶה בְּלִי עֵשֶׁן
Ut rosa inter flores fulget,	כֵּן תְּצִיץ צִיץ פְּרַח שׁוֹשֵׁן
Ut vapor gloria surget.	שְׂכִינְתֶיהָ תַעֲלֶה כְּקִיטוֹר הַכְּבִשָּׁן •
Odor sicut cassia et cinnamon,	כְּקָנָה וְקַנְמוֹן
Fecundus ut granatum,	רִיחָה כְּאַפְרָסְמוֹן
Suavis ut ros in Hermon.	וְכַטְל תְּרִמּוֹן •
Vestis textilia	סְכוּתָהּ בְּבִגְדֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
Sicut Saronis lilia,	כְּבַחְצֵלַת הַשְּׂרֹוֹן
Sic et sermonis consilia.	לֶה נֹאֵה לְרוֹן
	בְּנֵיב שְׁפֵתִים וְגִרּוֹן •
Inhabitans caelorum culmina	וְהַשִּׁיכֵן בְּשָׁמַיִם מְעֹלָה
Iungat gaudiorum iubila	יוֹסֵף שְׂמֵחָה וְצֹהֵלָה
Et avertat malorum nubila.	וְיִשְׁמְרָה מְכַל מַחֲלָה •
Erigens collapsos,	סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים
Colligens contritos	בְּפִרְיֵי קוֹדֶשׁ הַלְּלוּיִם
Super rivales plantatos.	כְּאֵלּוֹנִים עַל פְּלָגֵי מַיִם שְׁחוּלִים •
Laudem permultam audiet,	כְּהוֹלָל שְׂמָה מִמְרַחֲקִים
Aquam vitae hauriet,	דוֹלָה מַיִם חַיִּים מִבְּאֵרוֹת עִמּוּקִים
Quae iusta sunt perficiet.	עוֹשָׂה מְשַׁפֵּט וְחוֹקִים •
Columna est firmissima,	וְלִי הָעִמּוּדִים
Oratio iucundissima,	אֲמִרָה נְחֻמָּדִים
Prae auro et argento electissima.	מִכֶּסֶף חָהָב הַצְּנִיפּוֹת וְהַרְדִּיּוֹת •

Mane, meridie et vespero	ערב ובקר וצהרים
Manus aperta misero	עושה צדקה עם דלים ורקים
Tenia, contrito ac oppresso.	חלושים וגבורים •
Spiritus sapientiae,	רוח חכמה ובינה
Monilia prudentiae	עמה שוכן כאכן פנה
Hic habent arcem residentiae.	נושא אלמתיה ברנה •
Clementia ipsius Thronus,	כיוב ונכון ככא עולמים
In fide vera bonus,	בחסד וברחמים
Quem celebrabit colonus.	אליה ידרושו גוים ועמים •
Scientia hic subtilior,	עמה דעת ומזמה
Melle longe suavior	טוב ומתוק טעמה
Et manna caeli gratior.	כמן הנשלח מן השמימה •
Sermo ex ore prolatus,	מניך שפתיה ושיח אמריה ערבה ומתוקה
Dulcedine roboratus,	יערוף כשמך הטוב שריתו בו דבוקה •
Balsamo non minus odoratus.	
Cantici iucunditas	בשיר וכשבחה
Qualis myrti amoenitas	פרי עץ הדר ממנה צמחה
Tristibus est hilaritas.	לענומים ולמרי נפש אם הכנים שמחה •
Heroinae fuere multae praeter hanc,	רבות בנות עשו חיל והיא עלות על כלנה
Sed existit nulla supra hanc,	תשועות חן חן ילין במחנה •
Omnes gratia infra hanc.	
Laudes eius quis enunciet?	גדולתה ותהלתה מי ימלל
Laudibus illam quis superet?	אין גומרים עליה ההלל
Magna praeda gratiam non vincet.	שש אנכי על אמרותיה כמוצא שלל •

We may not be too hard on the poet for his arbitrary use of uncommon words. Who was he? An Italian Count, who lived for several years in Würtemberg, Charles Filibert, Count of Candel, from whom some letters to Sybil, daughter of Duke Johann Friedrich of Würtemberg, are still extant in MS., but who is otherwise unknown. We only know that his mother had been born a Jewess.

Antonia studied Cabbala till a few years before her death. When she "held in 1673 the so-called Turrin Antoniam, or dedicatory address on occasion of the erection in the church of Deinach (Teinach)

of the Tablet of Instruction voted by Her Grace, and sprung from the Cabbalistic tree of mysteries," Johann Christian Rumetsch, Rector of the High School of Spiers, honoured her with a long laudatory poem, to which he added numerous learned notes<sup>1</sup>.

M. KAYSERLING.

<sup>1</sup> Speyer, *Math. Metzger*, 1673. Dr. Stössel writes to me that the royal library at Stuttgart possesses also a book from Raith, entitled *Turris Antonia, oder Einweihungsrede bei Aufrichtung der von Antonia in der Kirche in Deymach gestifteten Lehr-Tafel* (fol.)