

renewed upon this subject, please to let me know your commands, and I shall very readily obey them.

E P I S T O L A

Ad Excellentissimum Comitem DE GAZOLA, &c. &c.
de Collatione Hebraicorum Manuscriptorum Veteris Testamenti.

CUM nos Britanni, Comes Excellentissime, orbi litterato nuperimé enunciamus, nos hodie novam suscepisse sancti et antiquissimi istius Fœderis editionem, magni Cardinalis XIMENIS quasi classico et exemplo accensi: ita et in eundem finem rationes publice proposuimus, et é prelo edidimus, collationem manuscriptorum sacri textûs Hebraici solummodo spectantes.

INCREDIBILE est dictu quo ardore et benevolentia tantum opus ab omnibus fere nostrorum hominum ordinibus statim excipiebatur. Academia, Oxonia, Cantabrigia, Dublinia suffragia sua perquam libenter detulerunt; nec votis tantum inanibus prosecutæ sunt, sed auro et argento oblati liberaliter adjuvarunt. Idem dicendum est de Archiepiscopis, Episcopis, Decanis et Capitulis, Collegiis, et ut ne singulos memorem de permultis non minus propter religionem et doctrinam eorum insignibus, quam per stemmata et fastos majorum.

QUAMPRIMUM igitur, Comes Excellentissime, inceptum et consilium hoc divulgari coepit, tantus ardor et cæteros Britannos apud exteras regiones aliosque populos peregrinantes corripuit, ut confestim manuscriptos codices Hebraicos ubique delitescentes exquirerent, eruerent, et felici quâdam indagine aucuparent.

AT ne exteri quidem, ne eorum gloria et laudi detrahâ, tanto operi, tam latæ et universæ utilitatis in rempublicam, in gene-

ris humani commodum et ornamentum excogitato, ne ipsi exteri pro suis viribus, pro suâ humanitate nobis defuerunt; Præcipue Romæ, Florentiæ, Bononiæ, Mediolano, Genuæ, Venetiis, Byzantii.

IN urbe vero ROMA, ubi artes et litteræ humaniores tantâ olim ubertate floruerunt, nec hodié desertæ sunt, primi ordinis nobiles, et etiam ecclesiæ Catholicæ Romanæ principes, suum operi auxilium et patrocinium humaniter et urbane præstiterunt. Eminentissimus Cardinalis *Passionéi* liberam collationis licentiam a summo et S. S. Pontifice obtinuit, et Vaticani fores confestim patefecit: hodieque omnes in celeberrimâ illâ Bibliothecâ Hebraici manuscripti per Anglorum manus accuratissimé excutiuntur in ipso palatio, et dum vivus aderat, sub Eminentissimi Cardinalis auspiciis et ductu.

SED quorsum omnis tendit hæc oratio me rôges forsân Comes humanissimé? Aperiam statim, si modo mihi vestram expetenti veniam eam clementer dederis. Tendit, vir doctissime, ut eundem Angli in Hispaniis indulgentiam inveniant, quam a sanctissimo Papâ, et celsissimo Cardinalium Collegio ROMÆ obtinuerunt: Teque, Comes Excellentissime, patriæ meæ nomine oro et obtestor, ut eandem nobis veniam et collationis licentiam in his terris patefacias, quam ubique alias terrarum orbis habuimus.

FREMANT licet Monachorum coenobia, et clament Sacri Officii subsellia, tamen cum liberum patriæ meæ spiritum et animum mecum asportaverim, tibi Comes Litteratissime liberrime dicam quod sentio: quanquam enim nos Christiani in diversa ierimus momenta fidei, tamen *eandem* ambo *fidem* profitemur, ad *easdem* sacras *scripturas* provocamus: Æqué et communiter amborum interest eisdem ex quibus haurimus fontes puros putosque conservare. Quis etenim vel sanus vel sobrius malit eam illam ignorantiam, eosque errores, qui ex oscitantia librariorum libros sacros invaserint, de sæculo ad sæculum perpetuare, a generatione in generationem consecrandos tradere? Eam quam hodie licentiam Romæ Britannis Papa præstitit, *Matrito* certe non detracturus erit. Sed in eo non moramur.

REGIS tantummodo licentia et auctoritas nostræ causæ, nostræ quæstioni expetitur. Quis autem adeo fidens inventus erit, qui hanc causam et quæstionem humillimè per Ministros suos ad Regem Catholicum deferat? Excellentissimus Legatus noster Britannicus rei politicæ solum invigilat, neque his curis alienis vel tangi vel impediri possit. Si de me dicerem, qui tantum vile quoddam litteratorum nostrorum in hac quæstione instrumentum sim, et tanquam exilis patriæ meæ vox, hæc me nunquam ausurum susceptorumve non diffiteor.

SIN autem patronum aliquem invenero, qualem te Comes Excellentissime, sub cujus umbra protegar; et ut verum dicam præstantiorem potioremvæ nec velim, nec potuerim: Quippe tu, qui architecturæ et pingendi artes præcipuo quodam amore semper fovisti; ita cæteras scientias, et litteras humaniores publicis studiis, publicâ benevolentiam adeo profecutus sis, ut parum sciam ad cujus Patrocinium vel Musæ vel Gratia potius confugerent: sub tali Ægide, sub hâc Minervâ, causam hanc et partes mihi honorifice delatas me non deserturum fateor, et quoad potuerim executurum.

VALE, Vir doctissime, et te D. O. M. per multos annos sospitem fervet, et si mea ulteriora vota sit fas adjungere.

SIT tibi † POESTANÆ gloria prima rosæ.

† He is publishing the Ruins of the Ancient POESTUM.

L E T-

were then the most famous Universities, the Hebrew, Arabic, and
 Chaldean languages should be taught.

There was done with so much spirit at SALAMANCA, that
 from thence, as from the FOUNTAIN, many Princes went
 forth; men who understood all the Oriental Languages incom-

LETTER XVII.

and many Professors were waiting in SALAMANCA, as you may
 see in M. Gibbon's Letters, p. 215.

*An EPISTLE to CHARLES CHRISTOPHER PLUER, chargé
 des Affaires from the Court of DENMARK to that of MADRID,
 written originally in Latin by Don GREGORY MAYANS, and
 containing the present State of the HEBREW and ARABIC
 Learning in SPAIN, and where the principal MSS. in those
 Branches are to be found.*

THE ARABIC and HEBREW languages have always greatly
 flourished in SPAIN; nor is this extraordinary, for the HE-
 BREW contains the SCRIPTURES, and has interpreters, though
 for the most part very trifling, yet highly skilful in that lan-
 guage.—Add to this, that the wealth of SPAIN ever attracted the
 avarice of the JEWS, whose numbers increased so much, that
 their sons were even admitted to holy orders, until they were for-
 bid by some statutes, particularly that of TOLEDO, in 1547. This
 statute became necessary, for there were found in one single town,
 of the diocese of TOLEDO, fourteen clergy, all JEWS but one; and
 in many other places a similar discovery was made of their in-
 crease.—There is no doubt, but that these JEWS not only studied
 and improved their own language, the HEBREW; but even the
 most learned CHRISTIANS learnt eagerly that language, in order
 to convert the JEWS, especially after the Council held at VIENNA,
 in the year 1311, as we may gather from the first CLEMENTINE,
title De Magistris, where it was ordained, that in the Univer-
 sities of PARIS, OXFORD, BOLOGNA, and SALAMANCA, which
 were

were then the most famed Universities, the *Hebrew*, *Arabic*, and *Chaldic* tongues should be taught.

THIS was done with so much spirit at SALAMANCA, that from thence, as from the TROJAN Horse, mere Princes went forth; men who understood all the *Oriental Tongues* incomparably well. Nevertheless in the time of FERDINANDUS NONIUS, the parent of Greek learning in this country, *Chaldee* and *Arabic* professors were wanting at SALAMANCA, as you may see in N. CLEUARD's *Epistles*, p. 235.

As to the *Hebrew*, it is well known what hatred and aversion hath always subsisted between the JEWS and us CATHOLICS; from whence it happened, that this hatred, which should have been confined only to the perfidy of that people, hath been absurdly exerted against the innocent *Hebrew* tongue itself, and its learned Professors.

How much prejudice the study of the HEBREW created against ANTO. of LEBRIXA, a man of most eminent learning, you may learn from his *Apologia*, which is a scarce book; you may see some extracts of it in my *Specimen of a Library*, p. 33. The Letters of LEWIS VIVES will also tell you the ill treatment JOHN VERGERA, and other eminent Hebræans, met with here on account of their knowledge of the *Hebrew*. Read the complaints only of B. A. MONTANUS upon this subject, in his *Commentary de Varia Hebr. Lib. Scriptione et Lectione*, where he is treating of the discordance or agreement of different versions.

WHEREFORE, although Cardinal XIMENES first set the example, and roused the minds of the Spaniards to the study of the Eastern Languages, and particularly of the *Hebrew*, yet as patrons and rewards for it failed after his death, and the prejudice ran against it, that most useful study began to be looked upon as a mark of infamy.

UPON this account, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, it was warmly disputed among the Spaniards, whether or
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no the *Rabbinical Writings* ought to be read at all: This question was warmly debated and fully explained by JOHN MARIANA, in his *Defence of the Vulgate*; there he tells us, ch. 26, that scarce thirty scholars could be found in all SPAIN, to whom the *Rabbinical Writers* could be of any use; and he adds, that his countrymen were not then so much addicted to the dry study of the Languages, as to stand in need of prohibitions, but rather of incitements. It is remarkable too, to observe what he wrote in his tract *De Rebus Societatis*, ch. 6.

THE same MARIANA, being consulted by the *Inquisitor General* concerning the *Rabbinical Writers*, answered, that he thought that the THALMUD, with its Glosses, ought to be forbidden to be read, as it had been already forbidden; and that RABBI MENAHEM, a *Recanate* upon the *Pentateuch*, ought to be prohibited also; and likewise the book ZOHAR, written by SIMEON BEN-JOCHAI, which book the JEWS vulgarly imagine was written before the time of CHRIST. MARIANA adds, that he believes, that there are many other *Rabbinical Writings* which he had never seen or heard of, the reading of which ought not to be permitted even to the learned: And he then gives us a list of such *Rabbinical Writings*, as wise men might read with the permission of the *Inquisition*.

WHEREFORE when the reading of the *Rabbinical Writings* was thus forbidden, it is no wonder that their MSS. disappeared so totally, as not to be found in private libraries.— Nay even the printed *Rabbinical Works* were not to be had in the Booksellers shops: In so much, that only a few of them are to be seen in the Library of the ESCURIAL, in that of the church of TOLEDO, and in that of the College of SAN ILDEPHONSO at ALCALA DE HENARES.

THERE are however in some of our Universities the professors chairs still remaining, in order to fulfill *nominally* the academic constitutions. In my time I remember two instances, when a Professor's chair in one of them was to be filled up, that not one of three candidates was able to read a chapter of the Hebrew Bible

Bible off hand. And yet, in the Universities of SALAMANCA, and VALENTIA, we have public Professors of *Hebrew*; but these have no pupils; for how can that be learnt which is not taught. — This therefore is the true state of the case, the study of *Hebrew* in SPAIN was revived by XIMENES, and died with the disciples of the great MONTANUS.

As to the ARABIC language in this country, I will be somewhat more diffuse upon that subject, because there are more monuments and MSS. of it remaining, but which remain so, as to be almost hidden treasures. The MOORS extended their Arabic language in proportion as they enlarged their conquests in SPAIN, as you may see in ALDRETI'S *Origin of the Castilian Language*, chap. 22.

IT is no wonder therefore, that there were many in SPAIN who were not only ambitious of glory in arms, but in letters; especially during the fierce contentions of so many petty rival Kings, and in a country the most fruitful of great geniuses. The ARABS in SPAIN chiefly studied Philosophy, Mathematicks, and Physick: In the *first*, principally Logic and Metaphysics; in the *second*, Arithmetic and Geometry; in the *third*, Botany and Chemistry.

ABU-NAZAR, AL-PHATAH, a native of HISPALIS, or SEVILLE, who wrote about the State of Learning in SPAIN, has told us how many, and what great men among these *Arabs*, have left works behind them in that language.

EBN ALKHALIB MAHOMAD, BEN ABDALLAH left likewise, in four large folio volumes, an *Arabico-Spanish-Bibliothèque*, containing the lives of the several Caliphs, Generals, Philosophers, Poets, and learned women, among the *Arabs*, who lived in SPAIN. These two last mentioned excellent works, are both of them still existing in the Library of the ESCURIAL. See to this purpose, *Nic. Antonii Bibliothec. Hispan.* num. 8, 9. the Preface to which work is a very learned performance.

AMONG

AMONG the Kings of SPAIN, ALPHONSUS THE WISE is almost the only one who had any regard for the Arabic language: By his order ABRAHAM ABENZOHAR translated out of Arabic into the Spanish, HAZALQUI's book of *Judicial Astrology*: And JUDAS, the son of MUSCE, translated the entire book of HALI, the son of ABENRAGEB, upon the same subject, which was afterwards translated into Latin by ÆGIDIUS DE TEBALDIS. Besides, JUDAS, the son of RABBI MOSES HACKEN, a canon of TOLEDO, translated into Latin, by the order of ALPHONSUS, the Astronomical Works of AVICENA, from the Arabic: And the same Prince ordered the book, concerning all kinds of *Astro-labes* and their use, concerning the number and distances of the stars, to be translated from the *Chaldee* into the Spanish tongue. This book that great man HONORETES JOHANNES ordered to be transcribed from the Library at ALCALA DE HENARES, and to be deposited in that of the ESCURIAL.

THE University of SALAMANCA contributed greatly to the increase of Arabic learning; for in that University there were eminent Professors of Physic, who studied and followed the systems of the Arabs: For the Arabs first raised that necessary art into repute in EUROPE, when it was fallen to a very low ebb. These men first introduced the true practice of their art, by uniting the knowledge of the causes of distempers, with the prudent application of the properest remedies.

BUT when things were come to that pass, that the *Christians* began to apprehend that the *Moors* would subdue their conquerors in their turn, they took all the precautions to be secure against them, which fear naturally inspires. This was done many ways. It only belongs to my present subject to say, that the use of the *Arabic* tongue was forbidden to the *Moors* of GRANADA, as FERDINADO VALOR tells us in that eloquent speech, in which he complains with great address, of the persecutions of his countrymen. See *Did. Hurt. de Mendoza, in his Hist. of the War of Granada, Book 1. Sect. 7.*