

Spanish Exiles at Constantinople

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NOTES.

MALACHI II. 11; PSALM LXIX. 5.

IN Malachi ii. 11 I should suggest the reading **וְכָה אֵל בֵּית אֵל גִּבֹּר**. The reading gives a true parallel — “for Judah had defiled the sanctuary of God, which he should love, and came into the house of a strange god.”

In Ps. lxix. 5, for **מַצְמִיתִי** I propose to read **מַצְמֹתִי**, the plural of **צֶמֶה** *a lock of hair*. This emendation again restores the parallelism, for **שְׁעֵרוֹת רֹאשִׁי** would be synonymous with **צִמּוֹת**.

H. ISAACS.

SPANISH EXILES AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

NOT the least fascinating of a manuscript's charms is the self-consciousness of its colophon. A colophon reveals the personality of the scribe, his preferences, weaknesses, and vanities. But it may also occasionally throw sidelights on the wider world outside the writer's garret, and help to make history or at least to correct historical records I venture to publish two such colophons of the fifteenth century which may prove of interest. The first is subscribed to a beautifully written Hebrew Massoretic Bible¹, begun in Toledo but finished in Constantinople in 1497. I acquired this in 1888 at Perim Pasha near Constantinople of the widow of the Karaite Haham, Isaac Krimski. After its first removal from Spain, four hundred years ago, and until it came into my hands, it does not seem to have moved five miles from the spot where it was written. Even its binding, of sumptuous green morocco, is characteristically Turkish. Its original owner's name, however, had been carefully erased till resuscitated by the application of a solution of tannic acid. There is something pathetic

¹ The MS. is inherently valuable for its glosses, and is referred to in *J. Q. R.*, IX, 676.

about the erasure, for the owner belonged to a famous family¹, ruined, no doubt, in the expulsion from Spain. Probably he was forced to sell his treasure, but ashamed to let it be known that one of his name had ever parted with a book. The scribe was an Ibn Jachja, and his family was no less famous than his patron's, only more prosperous.

The second colophon concludes a work of less inherent importance nowadays—a medical book on Fevers, translated probably from the Arabic². But it has travelled much farther afield, for I found it in Teheran in 1896. And the historical information it conveys is of almost startling novelty. Graetz and our other historians have grown eloquent in describing the farsighted magnanimity which prompted Sultan Bajazet the Second to extend hospitality to the Jews expelled from Spain. But though he reigned for more than thirty years and was otherwise quite unlike the Sultans of to-day, there has always seemed something extraordinary in the fact that an Eastern potentate should have proved himself thus tolerant out of mere love of abstract justice or economic reason. The concrete personal motive seemed lacking. With such a motive our colophon supplies us. It was the influence of the king's physician, Rabbi Joseph Ha Cohen 'the valiant man of works, the wise and perfect man.' Graetz³ records the names of sundry Jews who doctored Bajazet's successors, but Joseph Ha Cohen is not on the list, nor does he figure in Landau's *Geschichte der Jüdischen Aerzte*⁴. He is a new aspirant to our national Pantheon.

Both MSS. evidence the fact of the immediate settlement at Constantinople of Jews exiled from Spain in 1492. Both were finished within five years of that ominous date.

I.

נכתב הספר הזה שיש בו ארבעה ועשרים ספרי הקדש על יד המשכיל
ר' אברהם כאלוף נ" ע במדינת טליטלה אשר בספרד ונשלם בירח ניסן
שנת חמשת אלפים ומאתים וחמשים ושתים לבריאת עולם להחכם
השלם ר [יעקב אבאיוב] נר"ו בן החבר הנכבד כ"ר [שמואל] זל' האל
יזכה להנות בו הוא וזרעו וזרעו עד עולם ובשבעה לחדש אב
מהשנה הנזכרת יצאו מבוהלים ונרושים בדבר המלך גלות ירושלם אשר
בספרד וסימניך בוא יבוא ברנה נושא אלומותיו: ואני חיים ו' חיים

¹ These Aboabs generally spell their name אביב.

² It is T 23 of my Persian Collection: vide *J. Q. R.*, X, 598.

³ *History*, IX, 33.

⁴ Berlin, Karger, 1895.

כתבתי מקצת המסורת והפלוגות שנת נ'ז'ר' אלהיו על ראשו לפרט במדינת קוסטנטינה ישע יקרב.

"This book, in which are the twenty-four books of scripture, was written by the hands of the learned R. Abraham Caliph in the city of Toledo which is in Spain. And it was finished in the month of Nissan, 5252 Anno Mundi, for the most learned R. [Jacob Aboab¹], son of the esteemed R. [Samuel]. May the Lord permit him to meditate therein—him and his seed and his seed's seed for ever. And on the seventh² of the month of Ab, in the selfsame year, the exiles of Jerusalem which were in Spain went forth dismayed and banished by the king's command. May they come back with joy, bearing their sheaves. And I Haïm Ibn Haïm have written therein part of the Massora and the variants³ in the year 5257 in the City of Constantinople. May salvation be at hand!"

II.

והניעה העת להפסיק הדברי' והרופא האמתי זכנו לראות בטובו השלם וילמדנו ללמוד וללמד לשמור ולעשות והנה היתה השלמת כתיבת הספר חמור הזה על יר צעיר הלומדים נגרש מהסתפח בנחלתו ואל אחוזת אבותיו לא ישוב אברהם בכה"ר יצחק ז"ל ו' ריסוס מגרוש ספרד פה העירה מקעשי⁴ בחמשה לטבת משנת רנ"ו ליעקב שמחה לפרט האלף הששי • ונכתב במצות איש החיל רב פעלים החכם השלם ר' יהוסף הכהן רופא המלך הגדול אבייסיר י' ישמרהו ויחייהו • והנה הכותב מודיע לכל המעיין בספר הזה במצאו שניאה באיזה (?) הלשון או הענין אל יאשימהו לא היה בשלו הצעיר הזה כי אם בספר אשר ממנו הועתק אשר היה מלא שגויות ובלבולים בלשו' ובענין על כל צדותיו • וגם המעתיק אשר העתיקו

¹ These Aboabs generally spell their name אברהם.

² This date corresponds with July 31, 1492, and does not accord with that of the more tragic ninth of Ab about which Abarbanel moralizes, vide Graetz, VIII, 358. But it is a curious coincidence that the Karaites regard the seventh of Ab as the date of the destruction of Jerusalem, and fast on that day instead of on the ninth. The fact that my MS. was in the possession of Karaites "*donne à penser*."

³ i.e. the differences between *Ben Asher* and *Ben Naphtali*.

⁴ I have not been able to identify the city of מקעשי, notwithstanding numerous inquiries in Turkey and elsewhere. It can hardly be Magnesia, which is transliterated מגנישה (Neubauer, 987) in a MS. of 1592, and is so written to this very day. It must have been comparatively near to Bajazet's capital.

מלשון הלועזים ללשונינו הקדושה מקצת זה כי לא היה שלם בלשונינו
והנה נתקן זה בכל צדי האיר . . העברה כמו שיראה מתוכו והרן אותו
לכף זכות יוכה לראות אפריון ובבא גואל לציון :

"The time hath come to finish: and may the true Physician enable us to witness his perfect goodness and teach us to learn and to teach, to observe and to perform. Now this fair volume hath been completely written by the humblest of students, an exile from his inheritance, who will never return to the home of his fathers, Abraham the son of R. Isaac Ibn Risus of the Spanish exile, here in the town of Makesia¹ on the 5th Tebet, 5246. And it was written to the order of the valiant man of works, the wise and perfect man, Rabbi Joseph Ha Cohen, the physician of the great king, Bajazet, may the Lord preserve him and keep him alive!

"The scribe warneth all who may look into his book that if mistakes be found in its diction or its matter the fault should not be imputed to him, the humble scribe, but to the book from which he copied it, for it was full of errors and passages corrupt as to both language and contents. Moreover the translator who did it into our holy tongue from the vernacular hath part of the blame, for he was not perfect in our language. But the book hath been corrected throughout with all possible diligence, as may be seen, and may he who judgeth with charity be permitted to see the restoration of the Temple and the advent of the Redeemer unto Zion!"

E. N. ADLER.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON JOB XI. 6.

THIS verse is translated by the Authorized Version: "And that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom, that [they are] double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee [less] than thine iniquity [deserveth]."

The difficulty which the verse presents is found chiefly in the middle clause. With regard to this clause the Revised, diverging from the Authorized Version, translates the Hebrew כִּי כְפֻלָּים לְתוֹשָׁיָה "That it is manifold in effectual working." This rendering was probably influenced by what follows in verses 7-9: "Canst thou by searching find out God?" &c.; "It is high as heaven: what canst thou do? deeper than Sheol: what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

¹ See note 4, p. 528.