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## Letters of a Learned Lady



Sophia Elisabeth Brenner. Copper engraving in Brenner's *Poetiske Dikter* (1732).

Studia Graeca et Latina Lundensia 14

Elisabet Göransson

# LETTERS OF A LEARNED LADY

Sophia Elisabeth Brenner's Correspondence, with an Edition of her  
Letters to and from Otto Sperling the Younger

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*Ad familiares*



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### List of abbreviations

ATA	Antikvarisk-topografiska arkivet
Cph	Det kongelige bibliotek, Copenhagen
GKS	Den Gamle kongelige Samling (Cph)
KB	Kungliga biblioteket, Stockholm
Link	Stifts- och landsbiblioteket, Linköping
NKS	Ny kongelig Samling (Cph)
RA	Riksarkivet, Stockholm
Skara	Stifts- och landsbiblioteket, Skara
UUB	Uppsala universitetsbibliotek
VA	Vitterhetsakademiens bibliotek, Stockholm
VHS	Vetenskapligt humanistlatin under stormaktstiden



## Chapter One

# SOPHIA ELISABETH BRENNER'S CORRESPONDENCE

*I confess that I wrote most of my poems before I had seriously considered what fortunate position of the planets, what victorious, calm and in every way prosperous times and government, what noble, powerful and enlightened benevolent and lenient benefactors and promotorers are required and needed when a righteous and absolutely perfect poet is about to be produced.*<sup>1</sup>

The words are Sophia Elisabeth<sup>2</sup> Brenner's (1659–Sept. 14, 1730) in the preface to the first published volume of her collected poetry, generally referred to as *Poetiske Dikter* (in the present work abbreviated *PD 1713*). Accompanied by a collection of laudatory poems and complimentary letters written by illustrious men and women from all over Europe, her poems, written on different occasions in Swedish, German, Latin, French and Italian, were presented in an impressive book, generously provided with illustrations and printed in different fonts.<sup>3</sup> The book comprised 262 pages with Brenner's poems on weddings, funerals and other events, directed to men, women and children, members of the Swedish Royal House and the higher nobility as well as to members of Brenner's own family and to her personal friends. In short, this was the collected work of a "perfect poet".

By 1700 the road to the acceptance of female erudition had been cleared, and the concept of learning and women was rarely presented by that point as something strange or inappropriate. Moreover, emancipatory ideas had been put

<sup>1</sup> Translated from Sophia Brenner's Swedish preface to *Sophie Elisabeth Brenners Uti åtskillige Språk /Tider och Tilfällen författade Poetiske Dikter Af henne sielf å Nyo öfversedde/ samt med dertill hörige kopparstycken förökte*, Stockholm 1713, (= *PD 1713*). A picture of the title page of this book, a copper engraving made by Brenner's husband Elias, is added at the end of this book.

<sup>2</sup> Sophia Elisabeth Brenner herself vacillated in the spelling of *Elisabet/Elisabeth*, both in Latin and in Swedish (I have chosen the English spelling of the name here). This means that the reader will find both spellings in the letters by Brenner in the present edition.

<sup>3</sup> The collection of laudatory poems and letters entitled *De Illustri Sveonum Poëtriâ, Sophia Elisabetha Brenner, Testimoniorum Fasciculus* (= *TF*), edited by Urban Hiärne, was printed separately. There is no date of the publication, but one of the eulogies was written in 1713, which accordingly must have been the year it was printed. *TF* was appended to some of the volumes of *PD 1713*.

forward and debated. But Sweden, a country of military and economic power, was lacking an equivalent to the learned women of other countries such as “the miracle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century”, the Dutchwoman Anna Maria van Schurman, who was renowned for her multilingual abilities, scholarship, poetry and vast correspondence. Sophia Elisabeth Brenner filled this gap, and her words above reflected reality. She was quickly acknowledged as an author and as an erudite woman and was eagerly helped and promoted by learned men within Sweden and abroad. The marketing process was successful: at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Brenner was already famous all over Europe. When Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz discussed her in his letters with other learned men in 1697, he stated that she had been known to him for some time; her poems and letters were copied and spread as soon as they were written.<sup>4</sup>

Sophia Elisabeth Brenner wrote and published poems over a period of fifty years. To date, she has not been the subject of a biography and only in the past decades has her authorship and her role as the first Swedish spokeswoman for female rights been discussed. Until now, her correspondence has not been collected or studied.<sup>5</sup>

V. Lindgärde is currently preparing an edition of Sophia Brenner’s poetry, and further studies on Brenner as a poet are in progress. The present work is based on an inventory of all the preserved letters to and from Sophia Brenner. Her correspondence is presented in a critical edition of her letter contact with the Dane Otto Sperling the Younger and in English summaries of the other preserved letters to and from Brenner. Her letter contacts is discussed and highlighted in different ways in chapters 1 and 2.

This chapter contains a brief biography of Sophia Brenner followed by an overview of earlier research (chapter 1.2). Following this, we trace Brenner’s professional life, her network, and her promotion and role as a linguistic patriot as it appears through her preserved correspondence (chapter 1.3–1.9). The most extensive of her letter contacts, the one she had with the Dane Sperling, is edited, translated and discussed in chapters 2 and 3. Literary models for this correspondence will be taken up as well as the view on women revealed in these letters.

In her letters Sophia Brenner appears to be very conscious of her role and very clear over her ambitions. As we will see, this is not the first time Brenner is studied with focus on this aspect (see chapter 1.2, where von Platen’s contribu-

<sup>4</sup> Most of Brenner’s poems were published separately. See further in chapter 1.9.

<sup>5</sup> Apart from some letters, see further in chapter 1.2.

tion is presented). Brenner's correspondence does however provide evidence for her professionalism to an extent that it becomes very clear that she was indeed a professional author (in the sense that she wrote on commission and was normally paid a certain amount of money for her poems).

This dissertation falls into two parts, the study of Brenner's correspondence from a contextual point of view on the one hand, and Brenner's exchange of letters with Otto Sperling the Younger on the other hand. This particular correspondence is, as M. Alenius observed, "...in many ways unique, being a Nordic and Neo-Latin correspondence, with correspondents from either sex, consisting of almost 30 letters over a period of more than ten years."<sup>6</sup>

### 1.1 Biography

In 1680, at the age of twenty-one, Sophia Elisabeth Weber married the widower Elias Brenner. The daughter of a German merchant who immigrated to Stockholm and a Swedish mother, Sophia Brenner was fortunate to have gotten the opportunity to study German and Latin in a private school and later on at home. She explained in full detail the circumstances behind her education in an autobiography which was written in German and included in the posthumously published second volume of her collected poetry.<sup>7</sup> By emphasising that her education was only the result of mere chance, she tried to prevent misogynist reactions to the publication. In almost every work where she has been presented, the story about how she came to learn Latin has been repeated: she was sent to a private school to learn to read and write German at the age of four, listened in to the boys' Latin lessons and helped one of them who was having a hard time learning his Latin grammar and vocabulary. As the teacher noticed this, he asked her parents for permission to teach her Latin, too. Even though she complains about the fact that she was not allowed to read anything more than Christian texts and envied the boys who read all the classical authors, she nevertheless had learnt so much that she was able to continue her studies by herself. A few years later, when she was being tutored at home together with other children, again the teacher received permission from her parents to teach her Latin. Brenner's first known poem, written in Latin in 1676, was addressed

<sup>6</sup> Alenius 1988: 176.

<sup>7</sup> *Andra delen af Sophiae Elisabet Brenners Poetiske Dikter Uti åtskillige Språk/ Tider och Tillfällen författadel och Efter des Död i Liuset framtedde*, Stockholm 1732 (= *PD* 1732): 1ff ("Kurze Lebens-Beschreibung").



to this teacher, C. A. Zellin.<sup>8</sup> Not long after that, she married: contrary to the usual situation, this was the first step towards fame and celebrity for Sophia Brenner. In her autobiography, she praises her husband, Elias, for having provided her with all kinds of literature and for having helped her to acquire knowledge also of French, Italian and Dutch.

Elias Brenner, the son of a clergyman from Storkyro, Österbotten (Finland), was a painter, heraldist and scholar with a burning interest in antiquities and numismatics. From the beginning of the 1680's he collected material for his *Thesaurus Nummorum Sueco-Gothicorum*, which was first published in 1691.<sup>9</sup> His expenses for engravings connected with this work were substantial, and he was never compensated for the costs, in spite of several appeals to the Royal House.<sup>10</sup> He supported himself and his big family as a miniature painter and from 1693, also as an assessor at the Board of Antiquities. The family was constantly growing, but many of the children died young. Only six of the 15 who were born in the marriage lived to adulthood. There were, furthermore, two daughters from Elias' first marriage (which lasted between 1676 and 1679, the wife probably dying in childbirth).<sup>11</sup> During the 1690's the family seems to have been quite prosperous.<sup>12</sup> Still, Elias Brenner's expenses for his continued ambitious work within numismatics were high; he employed a person to make most of the copper engravings (even though he himself did the most important ones).

During the first decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Sophia Brenner was very productive. The plans for publishing her collected poetry had probably been made already in the beginning of her career, but due to the effects of the Great Nordic

<sup>8</sup> PD 1713: 8.

<sup>9</sup> Biographies on Elias Brenner were written by N. Dal (*Specimen biographicum de antiquariis Sveciae, in quo Johannis Hadorpii, Eliae Brenneri et Islandorum curae enarrantur*, Stockholm 1724) and by E. Aspelin (*Elias Brenner en forskare och konstnär från Karlarnes tid*, Helsingfors 1896). Regarding the publication of *Thesaurus*, see Aspelin 1896: 63–73. Elias Brenner is generally recognised as the “father of numismatics” in Sweden. Not until two hundred years later were his results surpassed by other scholars. See also Wiséhn 1995 and Wiséhn & Sundquist 2006.

<sup>10</sup> See further below.

<sup>11</sup> Fifteen children were born in the marriage (see Brenner's “Kurze Lebens-Beschreibung”). Six children were born in the 1680's, only two of whom lived to become adults. Two of the six children born during the 1690's survived, and two out of three born after 1700. Three of the daughters had married before 1717, when Elias Brenner died. In other words, Sophia Brenner had five children at home to feed when she was widowed.

<sup>12</sup> As the family was managing quite well with its double salary, Elias Brenner bought the house “Jupiter no. 1” at the corner of Hornsgatan and Repslagaregatan in Stockholm in 1694; the price was 12,500 “daler kopparmynt” (see Lagerqvist & Nathorst-Böös 2002 for further information regarding Swedish coins and their value). Elias Brenner was the owner of a house already before 1694, at Köpmantorget in the Old City of Stockholm.

War and the plague which struck Sweden in 1710, the printing process was concluded only in 1713. The economic situation for the family was the subject of constant concern for both Elias and Sophia Brenner; quite a few of their letters include comments on this.<sup>13</sup>

Elias and Sophia Brenner probably hoped to be relieved financially by the publication of *PD* in 1713, which was the first Swedish book ever to be sold by subscription,<sup>14</sup> but Sophia Brenner herself seems to have been disappointed by the sale of the book, as can be seen in her letter No. 36 to Erik Benzelius the Younger (see further in chapter 1.6). Sophia Brenner's role as a professional poet will be further discussed in chapter 1.9 below, but a general observation here is that it was obvious that the family's economy was bolstered through Brenner's poetry. Sophia and Elias could not afford to send their son Carl to the Academy, and Elias Brenner's expenses for his numismatic studies continued as did his ambitious work, regardless of the severe economic situation for the family. Elias and Sophia Brenner were supported by a number of more prosperous friends and patrons. Via their letters, Brenner's poems and portraits painted by Elias Brenner, we can determine that the family spent at least some time at Nils Gyldenstolpe's mansion Noor and Mårten Knutsson Törnhjelm's Malmövik, not far from Stockholm. On these occasions, Sophia Brenner wrote poems<sup>15</sup> and Elias painted portraits of the benevolent hosts. Aspelin noted that Elias did

<sup>13</sup> One effect of the start of the Great Nordic War (by the attack on Sweden by a coalition of Sachsen-Poland, Denmark and Russia in 1700) was that civil servants received only half their salary, which was moreover paid in promissory notes, which were not valid as money. See Aspelin 1896, 96–103, 120–122, and 135 regarding Elias Brenner's repeated requests for compensation for his expenses. His economic situation must have become extremely difficult indeed, observes Aspelin, (page 135), since he complained over his debts and creditors when times were so hard, and asked for money which would suffice to feed his family. As he still did not receive any money, he asked the King to buy his collection of coins instead. He died before the King answered, but then it was decided that the collection was to be valued and purchased. We can find evidence that the assets of Elias and Sophia Brenner in 1711, the year after the plague, was indeed scanty from the register made for censor purposes in the City Archives (Stockholms stadsarkiv). It appears that the family had two employees, one of whom served for food and clothes, while the other received 30 "daler kopparmynt", and furthermore, that the family did not own a carriage of their own, nor any funds, which Assessor Brenner regretted to say ("Qvarteret Jupiter, det större Assessoren wälborne Hr. Elias Brenner bebor Sitt eget Steenhuus med sin Fru, som har i tjenst Drängen Hans, som tienar för Maat och Kläder, piigjan Brijta – niuter i löhn 30 D Kmt, ingen Wagn /.../ Inga frucht, eller ofruchtbara Capitaler, utan beklagar Sig Hr. Assessoren sielf Öfwer sin egen torftighet.", quoted from Wiséhn & Sundquist 2006: 87).

<sup>14</sup> See further in chapter 1.7.3.

<sup>15</sup> "Öfver den ... Store Linden" (on the ... great lime tree) at Törnhjelm's estate, *PD* 1713: 212ff., and "Minne Öfwer den ... amerikanska aloen" (Memories of the ... American aloe) at Gyldenstolpe's Noor, *PD* 1713: 222ff.

not seem to be paid for his portraits, since he only painted his personal friends.<sup>16</sup> Against this, I would argue that it seems probable that the portraits and poems in question were produced at least as means of payment for the hospitality the family enjoyed, which would have been important for them during these hard times when it was difficult to get food on the table. Elias appealed in vain for payment of his State salary.

The two were truly a learned couple – two intellectuals and artists – a rarity for the times, and they seem to have had a common professional agenda, which will be further explored below in chapter 1.7 and the following. The Brenner family home on Hornsgatan in Stockholm was a cultural meeting-place. Men of learning and students (some of whom carried the letters between Sperling and Sophia Brenner) on cultural pilgrimages through Europe came to visit the learned couple. Sometimes, their visits inspired Sophia Brenner to write a poem, as was the case in May 1690, when two Countesses Palatine (of Pfalz-Kleeburg), Katarina and Maria Elisabet, came to visit the Brennens.<sup>17</sup> Learned Swedish men acted as promoters when they went abroad, receiving copies of Sophia Brenner's poems and letters and bringing them to foreign countries for other celebrities to see.

From 1709 onwards times were hard in Sweden, and Sophia and Elias Brenner suffered from the effects of the Great Nordic War. The desire for peace and renewed prosperity is often expressed in Brenner's poems from this time; we can see it also in a letter from Elias Brenner to Eric Benzelius the Younger, written in the beginning of 1710.<sup>18</sup> During the summer of this year, the plague reached Stockholm. Sophia Brenner was taken ill, but recovered.<sup>19</sup> Elias collected information concerning the effects of the plague, and estimated the number of deaths during two months' time (Sept–Dec.) to 18,000 people in Stockholm: that is, almost one-third of the city population at the time.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Aspelin 1896: 110.

<sup>17</sup> *PD* 1732: 17–18. The Countesses were sisters, and lived in Sweden (see *Index personarum*).

<sup>18</sup> Printed in Aspelin 1896: 168.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*. E. Brenner does not say explicitly that Sophia Brenner caught the plague, but that is very probable (the letter is dated Oct. 11, 1710).

<sup>20</sup> Brenner 1766: 122 (*Kort Förteckning uppå de namnkunnigaste Pestilents-tider i Sverige af gamle och nya skrifter och documenter sammanfattad af Elia Brenner 1711*). Ilmoni (1849: 343) estimated the population at the time to ca. 60,000. According to the city magistrates, the total mortality of the plague in Stockholm in 1710 was ca. 20,000 (*ibidem*). Lundström (1971: 33) confirms these numbers: according to him, at least 20,000 people died in Stockholm during the plague in 1710. Similar fatalities were noted in Copenhagen, both capitals having a higher mortality rate than in the London plague of 1665.

In 1712, Elias Brenner was raised to the nobility by King Charles XII.<sup>21</sup> He continued to work on his second edition of *Thesaurus* until his death in 1717.<sup>22</sup> Sophia Brenner probably received his salary for two years after his death,<sup>23</sup> although she still seemed to have been very worried by the continued difficult economic situation.<sup>24</sup> In 1723 she addressed the four Estates in a versified petition for the salary due her husband, in which she again referred to debts which had to be resolved. The "Sekreta utskottet" – counting among its members Sophia Brenner's eager promotor Eric Benzeliuss the Younger – decided that she was to be granted the money and moreover decreed that she was to receive an author's pension from the state of 200 "daler silvermynt" every year (as the second Swedish author ever).<sup>25</sup> Brenner thanked them for this in her long poem on the Passion, "The Most Sacred History of the Passion of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Poetically Rendered", which she had been working on for a couple of years.<sup>26</sup> She continued to write poems until her death in 1730. In 1732, her nephew Carl Ludwig von Schantz published the second posthumous edi-

<sup>21</sup> Aspelin (1896: 134) presumes that this was a gesture on behalf of the King to compensate for the financial aid which had been promised Elias but never received.

<sup>22</sup> The work was continued by Nils Keder, but not completed until 1731.

<sup>23</sup> Aspelin 1896: 103. He concludes this by the fact that the position of assessor was free for two years, until Carl Ludwig von Schantz was appointed. It should be added that the very same man married one of Brenner's daughters in 1720, which probably indirectly was a way of relieving the widow financially: in other words, it is probable that Sophia Brenner – to a certain extent – continued to benefit from the salary from Elias' former position.

<sup>24</sup> See Brenner's letters concerning economic and personal matters (chapter 1.6), all written after the death of her husband. Moreover, Aspelin suggests that Sophia Brenner sold (or donated) Elias' own unprinted manuscripts (Aspelin 1896: 116). The catalogue of the library containing 772 items was written by Sophia Brenner and sent to Benzeliuss, who probably took it upon himself to print it; the library was then sold at an auction in September 1717 (Aspelin 1896: 124). Elias Brenner's valuable collection of coins was bought by an English merchant, Walter Grainger, in 1721, and, after Grainger's death in 1729, purchased by a Russian foundry owner (Aspelin 1896: 122–123; regarding the details of Elias Brenner's career, manuscripts, library and collection of coins, see the appendix in Aspelin 1896, "Anmärkningar": 141ff, in particular 150–156). Sophia Brenner demanded a substantial royalty for the right to print Elias Brenner's second edition of *Thesaurus* and was granted a smaller amount of money (see chapter 1.6, comments to letter 51).

<sup>25</sup> Frihetstidens utskottshandlingar, Sekreta utskottet R2413, ärende 355. Another poet, Gustav Lithou, was the first to receive an author's pension of 300 "daler silvermynt" three years earlier, in 1720. This amount of money was equal to a scholarship at the university. The Swedish "daler silvermynt" from this time were not in fact silver, but copper.

<sup>26</sup> The full Swedish title of the poem is *Wärs Herres och Frälsares Jesu Christi allrä heligaste Pijnos Historia Rijnwis betrachtad*. The poem contained 375 stanzas and was sold by Brenner herself at her home in Stockholm according to a notice in the paper *Stockholms Post-Tidning* in 1728 (Westman Berg, Lindgärde & Alenius 1993: 332).

tion of her collected poetry, containing a section similar to the one in the first volume.

## 1.2 Brenner as a poet, learned woman and letter writer in earlier research

During her lifetime and after her death Sophia Brenner was a celebrity. She was mentioned or discussed in letters written by leading intellectuals of the time such as the Swedish Bishop and polyhistor Erik Benzelius the Younger<sup>27</sup> and Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz.<sup>28</sup> Brief presentations of her and her work appeared in learned journals of the time, such as the Swedish journals *Holmia literata* and *Acta literaria et scientiarum Sveciae*, the French periodical *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres* and the German *Acta eruditorum*; she was of course also included in the frequently published catalogues on women.<sup>29</sup> Thanks to one of her promoters, Johan Gabriel Sparwenfeld, a reference to her appeared as early as in 1692 in *Giornale de' Letterati*, and in 1700, the German Sebastian Kortholt dedicated his work *Disquisitio de poetriis puellis* to Brenner with a poem in her honour: during Queen Christina's reign, Kortholt begins, Sweden harboured the Muses. Now, Brenner stands out as their prime successor; like Rudbeck, Kortholt considers the northern countries the true home of the Muses rather than ancient Greece.<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, the fame and reputation Sophia Brenner held during her lifetime vanished during the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and she was barely ever mentioned in the handbooks of the history of literature. The Romanticists dismissed her as just one of many writers of occasional poetry. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, opinions became more varied and positive as scholars began to reflect upon her as a representative of her time. In 1896, E. Aspelin published a biography of Sophia Brenner's husband Elias: some biographical information about Sophia can be gathered from his book.<sup>31</sup> However, proper research on Sophia Brenner was not conducted until the beginning of the 1970's. With her book *Kvinnosyn i Sverige. Från drottning Kris-*

<sup>27</sup> Editions of the letters to and from Benzelius were published in 1979 and 1983 by A. Erikson & E. Nilsson Nylander.

<sup>28</sup> See Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe. R. 1* (1923–). See further in chapter 1.9.

<sup>29</sup> See Woods & Fürstenwald 1984: 19.

<sup>30</sup> Kortholt 1700. This theme was very popular: see Helander 2004: 411ff.

<sup>31</sup> Aspelin 1896.

*tina till Anna Maria Lenngren*, R. Nilsson was the first to thoroughly describe and discuss Sophia Brenner's views regarding the nature of women, their education, marriage, and role in society, especially as reflected in her poetry.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, Nilsson discussed Brenner's own education, her knowledge of books on female education and her awareness of learned women.<sup>33</sup> Brenner quite often discussed marriage in her poems, and Nilsson concludes that she made herself a spokeswoman for women even here. Brenner emphasises the important role of women in marriage and also the way they can have an indirect influence on society via their marriage. The choice of husband should be made by the woman herself, in Brenner's opinion.

Brenner's rhetorical strategy in presenting herself as a poet and learned woman was also discussed briefly by Nilsson in view of Brenner's preface to the first volume of *Poetiske Dikter* (published in 1713). Her fluctuation between confident self-esteem and the frequent use of words reflecting her modesty is, in Nilsson's opinion, not a reason to consider the modesty as merely rhetorical artifice. She might just as well have felt both uncertainty and self-confidence, depending on the reactions she got as a woman of learning.<sup>34</sup>

In 1985, M. von Platen published *Yrkesskalder – fanns dom? Om tillfällespoeternas försörjningsfråga*, focusing on the question of to what extent writers of occasional poetry in Sweden were professional authors in the sense that they wrote poems to earn their living. von Platen dealt at some length with Brenner's status as a learned woman<sup>35</sup> and pointed out that her knowledge of Latin and other languages was important for her fame. von Platen defined six criteria for professional writers of occasional poetry and applied these criteria to the different writers under discussion.<sup>36</sup> He claimed that even though it seems as if

<sup>32</sup> Nilsson 1973, 140–177. See also Nilsson's article "Lärda kvinnor i Sverige. Om uppfattningen om kvinnan under 1600- och 1700-talen med tonvikt på Sophia Elisabeth Brenner, Hedvig Charlotta Nordenflycht och Anna Maria Lenngren" (Nilsson 1985).

<sup>33</sup> Nilsson 1973: 156–157. In her presentation of Sophia Brenner's views, Nilsson mentions and sometimes quotes from Brenner's letters to Otto Sperling the Younger, Erik Benzelius the Younger, Petrus Hedengrahn and Petrus Hesselius. See further in chapter 2.3.

<sup>34</sup> Nilsson, 173: 159–160.

<sup>35</sup> von Platen 1985: 101–118.

<sup>36</sup> 1. The poet's production is dominated by occasional poems. 2. A high percentage of addressees belong to the nobility and the higher nobility. If the social distance between the poet and the addressee is large, it is more probable that the poet has received a remuneration. 3. The poet addresses foreign envoys with an occasional poem. 4. The poet writes poems on the occasion of weddings and funerals which take place at a distant location. 5. The poet has written more than one poem for the same occasion. 6. A small percentage of the poet's occasional poems is addressed to persons within the clergy. von Platen 1985: 90.

Sophia Brenner wrote most of her poems to express her appreciation without expecting to get paid, there are nevertheless several facts that point to her as also being in part a professional writer. One of the criteria set up by von Platen is that there is a social distance between the writer and the recipient. Two-thirds of Brenner's production of poems was addressed to higher strata in society.<sup>37</sup> von Platen is of the opinion that Brenner's poems to the Polish king and to the city of Vienna in 1683<sup>38</sup> were written with payment in mind. The fact that Brenner's poems are printed together with poems by other authors at the end of the funeral sermons also suggests that she was a professional writer, according to von Platen. Furthermore, the fact that her production consists of mainly occasional poetry, that she seems to have written poems anonymously, that the addressees of her poems are sometimes to be found outside Stockholm, and that she once writes two poems for the same occasion, are consistent with several of von Platen's criteria for professional writers.<sup>39</sup> He also quotes from the travel book of the Dane Jacob Bircherod. Bircherod paid a visit to Sophia Brenner during his stay in Stockholm and related her complaints about printing costs, which according to Brenner were so high that no one wanted to pay for them. von Platen is of the opinion that this gives us a picture of the professional writer complaining that business is down due to a generally bad economic period.<sup>40</sup>

Another aspect of Sophia Brenner as writer and learned woman which von Platen pointed out is how her reputation spread. He argues that the fame Brenner enjoyed already in 1701 was due to promotion, considering that Brenner had published a fairly limited number of poems at that time. Undoubtedly, von Platen says, there was an organized promotion behind the eulogies,<sup>41</sup> at least behind the ones Brenner received from abroad. von Platen suggests that the "promoters" were her husband, Elias Brenner, Urban Hiärne and Nils Keder. The fact that there is an almost total absence of laudatory poems and letters from abroad written later than 1713 is, according to von Platen, indicative of this process.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> von Platen 1985: 109. It might be added that since Elias Brenner was raised to the nobility in 1712, there was not a marked social distance.

<sup>38</sup> *PD 1713*: 39 and *PD 1732*: 96, respectively.

<sup>39</sup> Besides this, von Platen observed that Brenner was especially prolific during 1723, when she had financial problems and asked the State to pay her the salary due her husband. Counted by the number of poems written each year, however, Sophia Brenner was not particularly productive in 1723 compared to for instance the first decade of the century.

<sup>40</sup> von Platen 1985: 107. See further in chapter 1.9.

<sup>41</sup> Published by Hiärne in *TF* [1713].

<sup>42</sup> von Platen 1985: 117.

In 1988, some of Sophia Brenner's letters were presented and discussed by M. Alenius. She published an article entitled "Love at first (w)ink. A fragment of Otto Sperling's Neo-Latin correspondence", in which she made a survey of Sperling's correspondence with learned women, and focused on a presentation of the exchange of Latin letters between Sperling and Sophia Brenner.<sup>43</sup> Having listed Sperling's female correspondents, she observed, "To his Latin correspondents Otto Sperling was almost affectionately related. His letters become sparkling with joy and enthusiasm when he writes in Latin to a woman."<sup>44</sup> Alenius describes how the exchange of letters between Sperling and Brenner was initiated and continued, Sperling asking for and receiving Brenner's written autobiography, but also asking for and receiving information about other learned Swedish women. Declaring that there was more to the correspondence than merely conventional praise and exchange of information, Alenius also points out Sperling's encouragement of Brenner by exhorting her to continue to write; she concludes her presentation by bringing into focus the personal relationship developing between them.

In 1993, in an article co-authored by Alenius, Westman Berg and Lindgärde, Alenius presented Brenner's and Sperling's correspondence.<sup>45</sup> Alenius here stresses the importance of the knowledge of Latin for a learned woman. Knowing this classical language made these women part of an exclusive group, and by using Latin in her letters, the learned woman had considerable freedom to express personal feelings. Karin Westman Berg and Valborg Lindgärde described Brenner as a poet and learned woman and summed up the research on Sophia Brenner so far.<sup>46</sup>

During the 1990's, research on Sophia Brenner's poetry was conducted mainly by V. Lindgärde and A. Jönsson. In Lindgärde's dissertation *Jesu Christi Pijnos Historia rijmwijs betrachtad: svenska passionsdikter under 1600- och 1700-talet*, Brenner's poem on the Passion was analysed together with other poems in the same genre.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, Lindgärde published an article on Brenner's wedding poetry, more specifically the idea and conception of love presented by Brenner in her *epithalamia*, "Ett sött gift. Kärlekens bild i Sophia Elisabet Brenners bröllops-dikter",<sup>48</sup> and, together with Jönsson, an article on different

<sup>43</sup> Alenius 1988: 164–184.

<sup>44</sup> Alenius 1988: 172.

<sup>45</sup> Westman Berg, Lindgärde & Alenius 1993: 336–340.

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>47</sup> Lindgärde 1996.

<sup>48</sup> Lindgärde 1999: 39–77.



themes in Brenner's poetry: "Vår nordiska Sappho. Antikt och modernt i Sophia Elisabet Brenners diktning".<sup>49</sup> In 1998/1999, Arne Jönsson published an article about Swedish poems, taking up the rare *Agave Americana*, one of the authors of these poems being Sophia Elisabeth Brenner: "En främling i det svenska landskapet: om en *Agave americana* i Uppland på stormaktstiden."<sup>50</sup>

A. K. Kaminsky discussed and analysed the poem Brenner received from Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (printed in *TF*), and observed that it was a revised version of another poem by Sor Juana.<sup>51</sup> Unlike Kaminsky, Jönsson (2004) suspects that the author of Sor Juana's revised poem was not Sor Juana, but Johan Gabriel Sparwenfeld.<sup>52</sup>

In 1997 H. Hannibal published an article on Brenner's funeral poems, "Dødstanker: om Sophia Elisabet Brenners sørgedigtning".<sup>53</sup>

Sophia Brenner's autobiography, which was published in *PD* 1732, iff, was examined by S. Müller in an article, "Herren sargar och läker, han slår och hans hand helar": Konfliktbewältigung in den autobiographischen Texten von Marta Hagman (1765), Sophia Elisabet Brenner (1722) und Christina Regina vom Birchenbaum (1651)".<sup>54</sup>

Among the letters printed and analysed by S. Hansson in *Svensk brevskrivning* is the letter from Brenner to Margerithe Catrine Spiker in 1715.<sup>55</sup> She concluded that Brenner composed her letter systematically and formally, and in this way showed off her education. Hansson points out that even though this letter belongs to the category *familiaria*, the style is characterised more by seriousness and modesty than by the usual wit and gallantry. Brenner's erudition is displayed through the composition and shaping of the letter. Hansson defines it as being a combination of an answer to an *accusatoria* letter and a *nunciatoria* letter aimed at giving information. According to Hansson, Brenner deliberately mixed the two kinds of letters, thus elegantly hiding her rhetorical

<sup>49</sup> Jönsson & Lindgärde 2000: 567–578.

<sup>50</sup> Jönsson 1998/1999.

<sup>51</sup> Kaminsky 1990: 31–53.

<sup>52</sup> Jönsson 2004: 342. Jönsson & Lindgärde 2000: 573, showed that two other eulogies in *TF* were revised versions of poems sent to other people as well. The author of one of these poems was a certain "Gusman", whose identity has been unknown. However, in Zedler there is a certain Peter von Avila y Gusman (see *Index personarum*). I suspect that he was the author of the poem to Sor Juana (which was perhaps revised and included in *TF*).

<sup>53</sup> Hannibal 1997: 18–37.

<sup>54</sup> Müller 2000: 1–20.

<sup>55</sup> Hansson 1988: 171–176. In *Svensk brevskrivning* Hansson examines Swedish letter writing between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in theory and practice set against a European background. Brenner's letter to Spiker is No. 66 in *Table 1* in the present dissertation.

ability and creating the impression of a spontaneous letter. Brenner introduces one *causa* but eventually incorporates it in another one. According to Hansson, in this way Brenner conceals her effort to achieve an elaborated style.<sup>56</sup> By disguising her learning she manages to make her letter flow naturally in accordance with the new ideals of letter writing, which focused on exactly this, “elaboration in disguise”.

In 2000, the present author published an article emphasising Brenner's reputation and ambitions as a linguistic patriot and a multilingual woman, as illustrated by the letter she received from Magnus Gabriel von Block in 1706.<sup>57</sup> In a previous study by Stina Hansson (*Svenskans nytta, Sveriges ära. Litteratur och kulturpolitik under 1600-talet*). Hansson drew attention to the fact that Sophia Brenner from the year 1706 onwards wrote her poems almost exclusively in Swedish, and discussed the circumstances behind this change.<sup>58</sup> See also Arne Jönsson “The Battle of the Muses. Language Policies and Literary Polemics in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Sweden”.<sup>59</sup>

In “Letters, Learning and Learned Ladies – An Analysis of Otto Sperling, Jr:s (1634-1715) correspondence with Scandinavian Women” published in *Suppl. Hum. Lov. XVIII*, I have presented some aspects of the correspondence between Brenner and Sperling in order to create a basis for a discussion of the character of their communication and of the positions they held. It was suggested that the image Sperling wanted to project of himself in his correspondence was that of a patron.<sup>60</sup> Brenner and Sperling came to know each other at least to some extent as the twelve-year-long correspondence proceeded, and the correspondence served several functions for them. Sophia Brenner in particular seems to have assumed that the letters would be copied and/or published.<sup>61</sup>

### 1.3 Some comments on the inventory of letters

In the present work, an inventory has been made of all letters written and received by Sophia Brenner. In all, 72 letters have been found, 43 of which are written by Brenner. The letters and their sources are presented in tabular form

<sup>56</sup> Hansson 1988: 176.

<sup>57</sup> No. 43 in *Table 1*. Göransson 2000: 301–308.

<sup>58</sup> Hansson 1984: 93ff.

<sup>59</sup> Jönsson 2004.

<sup>60</sup> This can also be seen in his letter contacts with other Scandinavian women (Cille Gad and Anne Margerethe Qvitzow), Göransson 2002: 199–223.

<sup>61</sup> Göransson 2002: 222. Letters written at this time were as a rule circulated; copies were made during this process.

below (*Table 1*). Letters I–XXVI in the table are the letters sent between Sophia Brenner and Otto Sperling, which have been edited. The remaining letters to and from Sophia Brenner are numbered 27–72.

A number of libraries and archives were personally visited or contacted in the search for the letters. In Sweden, apart from the major libraries and archives and their databases, this included also county and city libraries containing collections which might harbour letters to or from Brenner. Abroad, major libraries (and some archives) in Denmark, Germany, Finland, Austria and Russia were contacted or visited.

Unfortunately, Sophia Elisabeth Brenner's private archives seem to be lost, and therefore not a single letter to her has been preserved in its original form. Even though I have not made a full investigation of the genealogy of this family, some efforts have been made to determine whether there might be documents in the possession of modern relatives of Sophia and Elias Brenner, but unfortunately, nothing has come of this.<sup>62</sup>

On the other hand, a total of 34 original letters written by Brenner have been preserved: in many cases, they have been kept in the (often) famous recipient's archives. Thanks to prints, copies and drafts, quite a few letters to and from Sophia Brenner have come down to us. As many as 19 letters (eight of which were written by Brenner) have been printed in different contexts. Moreover, eleven of the letters in her correspondence have been preserved as copies; for seven of these, the copies are the only sources for the letters. We are also lucky to have Sperling's drafts of the letters he sent to Sophia Brenner: for 13 of the 16 letters he wrote to her, the drafts are the only source. In the following, more detailed comments will be made on the different sources for the letters. Moreover, I have made observations on missing letters, that is, letters I believe to have existed or to which I saw references in preserved letters. They have been listed in *Table 2*.

<sup>62</sup> In the beginning of this project started, I was in contact with M. von Platen who had done research on Sophia Brenner. When I made the inventory, I found some letters and copies of letters which have not been known previously. Recently, an article was published by Wiséhn & Sundquist (2006) entitled "Elias Brenner – minnesutställningen 1947". This article provided information regarding the contents and planning of an ambitious exhibition of different items connected to Elias Brenner at Kungliga mynkabinettet (KMK) in Stockholm. Interestingly enough, there had been paintings and some documents of the family which, as it appears, had been borrowed from C.J. Fahlcrantz in Stockholm. I am greatly indebted to Mr. Stig Pettersson, who helped me find the relatives of the late Mr. Fahlcrantz. They were not able however to find these documents.

A letter, which is usually defined as a written message from one person to another, can be long or short, written in prose or versified. *Table 1* contains different kinds of letters: we find for instance two versified letters, one from Sperling to Brenner (No. III), and another from Brenner to an anonymous Count (No. 60); furthermore, there are laudatory and dedicatory letters, as well as Brenner's introductory "letter" to the sonnet in *PD 1713*: 45–46, and Hiärne's introductory letter or preface to *TF*. Brief notes or testimonials by Brenner have not been included in *Table 1*; however, I have found the following:

UUB<sup>63</sup>, Barthelson 565, (May 25, 1721, Swedish): traveller's letter of credit..

KB, Autografsamlingen, R.34:143 (May 19, 1727, Swedish): traveller's letter of credit.

RA, Sjöholmsarkivet, Autografsamlingen (March 26, 1729, Swedish): note of appointment.

### Copies

Several copies or transcriptions were made on the request of the archive secretary Elias Palmskiöld (1667–1719). He was employed at the National Archives in Stockholm and beside his work he had copies made of important documents, which later on became "Palmskiöldska samlingen" (purchased by UUB in 1724).

Some of the copies were probably made as a part of the process in which Brenner's benefactors in different ways helped her to become famous. The elaborate Latin letter to the Danish Bishop Thomas Kingo, written in 1696, has been preserved in the original in Det kongelige bibliotek (=Cph) as well as in two identical copies in UUB and Link(öping), respectively. A letter preserved in three copies only was also written by Brenner in Latin and sent to the young student Petrus Hesselius. Brenner treats the subject *feminae doctae* in the letter, which was probably the reason why it was copied several times. Two letters written by Otto Sperling the Younger are preserved both in drafts in Cph and in copies in UUB. A copy of the first letter from Brenner to Sperling is kept in the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel.

### Drafts of letters

All the letters Sperling sent to Brenner are preserved in his own drafts in Cph. Only three of his letters to her exist in other versions, viz. as transcriptions (two) and in print (two). Copies of the drafts of Sperling's letters were made during

<sup>63</sup> See the list of abbreviations.

the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by a librarian at Det kongelige bibliotek (to be found in NKS 2123).

### Edited and printed letters

As mentioned, 19 letters have been printed before in different contexts:

In 1686, rather early in her career, Brenner sent Olof Rudbeck the Elder a congratulatory letter (No. 64) that was printed with the eulogies which were appended to his famous work *Atlantica* (Sophia Brenner being the only Swede among the congratulants).

Eleven of the letters were published in *PD 1732* (edited by Brenner's son-in-law C.L. von Schantz), most of them in the section with laudatory poems and letters to Brenner (except for two letters by Brenner, one to Dirichsen (No. 46) and another to Keder (No. 55); these were printed among Brenner's poems).

The introductory letter (No. 59) to a sonnet to A. W. Königsmarck was published in the first volume of *PD 1713* as well as Brenner's dedicatory letter to Ulrica Eleonora the Younger (No. 70).

Letter No. 44 written by Brenner in 1699 and sent to Elias Brenner (who was on a journey) was published in a weekly newspaper in Stockholm in 1757.<sup>64</sup>

In 1699 Petrus Hedengrahn put forward a dissertation entitled *Mulieres Philosophantes*. In between the title page and the dissertation were printed three eulogies written by Hedengrahn, one of which dedicated to Brenner. On the next page followed a letter in Latin from Brenner (letter No. 50) in which she praises Hedengrahn and presents other Swedish learned women. This letter is a revised version of letter II which Brenner sent to Sperling in 1697.

Sperling's versified letter III was published in *TF* (which accompanied *PD 1713*). Brenner sent a brief laudatory letter in Latin (letter No. 63) to Anna Sisonia Morian, which was printed before her panegyric speech to King Charles XII, published in 1715. As mentioned before (see chapter 1.2), S. Hansson has edited and examined Brenner's letter to her friend Margerithe Catrine Spiker in 1715.<sup>65</sup>

### Missing letters

Considering that Sophia Brenner's private archives are lost, it can be assumed that there were quite a few letters received by her that have not been preserved. Many letters written by her could also be lost, even if the chances of preserva-

<sup>64</sup> *Allahanda*, second part, Stockholm 1757: 97–98.

<sup>65</sup> Hansson 1988: 171–176.

tion here are higher, given the fact that they were oftentimes kept in the addressee's archives, for instance those of Sperling and Eric Benzeliuss the Younger. I have found evidence (in the form of references to them in extant letters) of the existence of at least 15 more letters, now lost, five of which were written by Brenner. *Table 2* presenting these missing letters is appended below.

To my knowledge, Sophia Brenner sent letters to or received letters from at least 27 persons, but there may have been several other letter contacts as well that I have not traced. For instance, we have evidence that she wrote a poem on the coronation of the Tsarina Catherine I in 1724, and that in 1725 she was asked by a Russian diplomat to write another poem to celebrate the memory of Tsar Peter the Great.<sup>66</sup> It would not be surprising if she sent letters together with the poems. However, I have searched in vain for these poems and the possibly existing letters.

#### 1.4 Tables: Preserved and missing letters

Brenner corresponded with at least 27 persons. *Table 1* presents the sources (draft = D, original = O, copy = C, or print = P) for each letter in Brenner's correspondence. The letters are numbered from I to XXVI and 27 to 72, beginning with the 26 letters edited in the present work, *viz.* the Brenner-Sperling correspondence, and continuing with letters to and from Brenner's correspondents in alphabetical order. Libraries, archives etc. are abbreviated according to the *List of abbreviations*.

*Table 2 Missing letters* is of course tentative; I have simply made a list according to references to lost letters in the letters I have found. The table has been arranged in a similar way as is *Table 1*. However, the column with language and date is only a suggestion on my side. I have concluded what language the missing letters would have been written in, and the year, from the contents of the preserved letters. The column presenting the contents of these missing letters is of course also tentative, for the same reasons.

<sup>66</sup> See further in chapter 1.9.

# LETTERS OF A LEARNED LADY

Table 1 Preserved letters

No	Sender	Recipient	Language / date	D	O	C	P	Source
I <sup>67</sup>	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / Sept. 15, 1696	I			I <sup>68</sup>	<i>PD 1732: 138<sup>69</sup></i> Cph, GKS 3092 V:2 4°, No. 37 <sup>70</sup>
II <sup>71</sup>	Brenner	Sperling	Latin / March 29, 1697		I	I		Cph, GKS 3092 II:2 2° Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Germany, Cod. Guelf. 38 Noviss. 2°
III	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / June 21, 1697	I		I	I	<i>UUB, Palmsk. 332: 62ff.</i> Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 156 TF, folia B1-B2
IV <sup>72</sup>	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / August 17, 1697	I		I		<i>UUB, Palmsk. 332: 633–634</i> Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 158
V	Brenner	Sperling	Latin / March 28, 1699		I			Cph, GKS 3092, VI:1 4°
VI <sup>73</sup>	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / August 2, 1699	I				Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 181
VII <sup>74</sup>	Brenner	Sperling	Latin / Oct. 8, 1702		I			Cph, GKS 3092, VI:1 4°
VIII <sup>75</sup>	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / (not dated, 1702) <sup>76</sup>	I				Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 226

<sup>67</sup> A brief note, dated 2 September 1696, preserved only as a copy in UUB (Palmsk. 332: 617) was probably added to letter I. It is printed in a footnote to the translation of the letter. In Alenius 1988: 177, parts of this letter were printed.

<sup>68</sup> The source marked in italics serves as the main source for the letter.

<sup>69</sup> Reference in italics refers to the source marked in italics.

<sup>70</sup> Copies of all Sperling's drafts of letters are kept in NKS 2123 4°, a, b.

<sup>71</sup> In Nilsson 1973: 157–158 and Alenius 1988: 175, parts of this letter were printed (and in Nilsson also translated into Swedish).

<sup>72</sup> The poem which I believe was sent together with this letter (today preserved together with letter XX in GKS 3092, VI:1, 4°) is printed in Alenius 1988: 182 and in Alenius 1993: 340 (where it was also translated into Swedish).

<sup>73</sup> Parts of this letter were printed in Alenius 1988: 179–180 and 181; see also Alenius 1993: 339.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Nilsson 1973: 158.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Alenius 1988: 181.

<sup>76</sup> Secondary dating in the margin "Oct 1702" by Sperling.

SOPHIA ELISABETH BRENNER'S CORRESPONDENCE

No	Sender	Recipient	Language / date	D	O	C	P	Source
IX	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / Jan. 31, 1703	I				Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 233
X	Brenner	Sperling	Latin / June 11, 1703		I			Cph, GKS 3092, VI:1 4°
XI	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / (1703) <sup>77</sup>	I				Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 268
XII	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / March 17, 1704	I				Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 272
XIII	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / July 12, 1704 <sup>78</sup>	I				Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 241
XIV	Brenner	Sperling	Latin / Oct. 16, 1704		I			Cph, GKS 3092, VI:1 4°
XV	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / March 30, 1705	I				Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 246
XVI <sup>79</sup>	Brenner	Sperling	Latin / August 7, 1705		I			Cph, GKS 3092, VI:1 4°
XVII	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / August 8, 1705	I				Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 247
XVIII	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / Oct. 7, 1705	I				Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 252
XIX	Brenner	Sperling	Latin / Sept. 18, 1706		I			Cph, GKS 3092, VI:1 4°
XX	Brenner	Sperling	Latin / Dec. 5, 1706		I			Cph, GKS 3092, VI:1 4°
XXI	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / Febr. 9, 1707	I				Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 273

<sup>77</sup> Again only secondary dating in the margin. Sperling wrote "1703 ~~ut puto~~".

<sup>78</sup> In the margin the incorrect dating "12 Jul. 1703" was added. An *observandum* is that this letter has been catalogued in the database of manuscript letters ("Brevebase") in Cph by this secondary (incorrect) dating in the margin.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Alenius 1993: 339.



# LETTERS OF A LEARNED LADY

No	Sender	Recipient	Language / date	D	O	C	P	Source
XXII	Brenner	Sperling	Latin / April 19, 1707		I			Cph, GKS 3092, VI:1 4°
XXIII	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / May 19, 1707	I				Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 281
XXIV	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / March 27, 1708	I				Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 331
XXV	Sperling	Brenner	Latin / July 25, 1708	I				Cph, GKS 3092, V:2 4°, No. 285
XXVI	Brenner	Sperling	Latin / Oct. 12, 1708		I			Cph, GKS 3092, VI:1 4°
27	Aurivil- lius	Brenner	Latin / August 9, 1726				I	PD 1732: 156–157
28	Brenner	Benzelius	Latin / Oct. 11, 1710		I 80	I		Link, Br 10, vol. 3., No 128 UUB, G 20, f. 33f.
29	Brenner	Benzelius	French / Nov. 10, 1710		I			Link, Br 10, vol. 3, No. 138
30	Brenner	Benzelius	Swed. / April 10, 1713		I			Link, Br 10, vol. 4, No. 130
31	Brenner	Benzelius	Swed. / Febr. 3, 1717		I			Link, Br 10, vol. 5, No. 64
32	Brenner	Benzelius	Swed. / May 7, 1717		I			Link, Br 10, vol. 5, No. 69
33	Brenner	Benzelius	Swed. / Sept. 2, 1717		I			Link, Br 10, vol. 5, No. 82
34	Brenner	Benzelius	Swed., / Oct. 17, 1717		I			Link, Br 10, vol. 5, No. 87
35	Brenner	Benzelius	Swed., / Jan. 30, 1719		I			Link, Br 10, vol. 5, No. 117

<sup>80</sup> Photoprints of the original letters from S.E.Brenner to Benzeliuſ. (Nos. 28–40) are also in UUB (G 19-20).

# SOPHIA ELISABETH BRENNER'S CORRESPONDENCE

No	Sender	Recipient	Language / date	D	O	C	P	Source
36	Brenner	Benzelius	Latin / Jan. 16, 1722		I			Link, Br 10, vol. 7, No. 5
37	Brenner	Benzelius	Latin / July 24, 1722		I			Link, Br 10, vol. 7, No. 52
38	Brenner	Benzelius	French / Aug. 18, 1724		I			Link, Br 10, vol. 8, No. 89
39	Brenner	Benzelius	Latin / Sept. 5, 1724		I			Link, Br 10, vol. 8, No. 99
40	Brenner	Benzelius	Swed. / July 20, 1728		I			Link, Br 10, vol. 11, No. 43
41	Bilberg	Brenner	Latin, April 1, 1697			2		UUB, Palmsk. 332: 619ff. Skara, Knös saml., vol. 52: 207–208
42	Brenner	Bilberg	French, Jan. 8, 1715		I			Skara, Knös saml., vol. 3, No. 22
43	von Block	Brenner	Italian, Dec. 9, 1706			I		UUB, Palmsk. 332: 635ff.
44	Brenner	E. Brenner	Latin / Dec. 31, 1699			I	I	<i>Allahanda</i> , second part, Stockholm 1757, 97–98 (print) VA, Bergianska brevsaml., vol. 1, 453–454 (copy)
45	Dirichsen	Brenner	Latin / August 4, 1697			I		UUB, Palmsk.. 332: 629ff.
46	Brenner	Dirichsen	Latin, March 29, 1698				I	PD 1732: 105
47	Forselius	Brenner	Latin, March 4, 1714				I	PD 1732: 146ff.
48	Brenner	Frederick I of Sweden	Swed., / Dec. 14, 1726		I			RA, Biographica 48a
49	Brenner	Frederick I of Sweden	Swed., / Oct. 30, 1728		I			KB, Autografsaml.
50	Brenner	Heden- grahn	Latin, March 3, 1699				I	<i>Mulieres Philosophantes</i> , Uppsala 1699

# LETTERS OF A LEARNED LADY

No	Sender	Recipient	Language / date	D	O	C	P	Source
51	Brenner	Helin	Swed. / not dated		1			ATA, Ant. koll. o. Ant. ark., Fr:1
52	Hesselius	Brenner	Latin, Febr. 9, 1709				1	PD 1732: 144–145
53 <sup>81</sup>	Brenner	Hesselius	Latin, May 8, 1709			3 82		UUB, N. 981:100–101 UUB, Y5:19: 206–207 UUB, G 360 (Br-Cl)
54	Hjärne	Brenner	Latin / not dated				2	UUB, Palmsk. 332: 577–578 TF
55	Brenner	Keder	Latin / Dec. 13, 1720				1	PD 1732: 124–125
56	Keder	Brenner	Italian / not dated				1	PD 1732: 149
57	Brenner	Kingo	Latin / July 13, 1696		1	2		Cph, NKS 1654 2° Opera qvædam poetica Sophia Elisabet Brenners (original) UUB, N 1124: f. 33 (copy) Link, W 23: f. 52 (copy)
58	Kortholt	Brenner	Latin / Jan. 27, 1700				2	<i>Disquisitio de poetriis puellis</i> , Kiel 1700 PD 1732: 141
59	Brenner	Königs- marck	Italian / not dated				1	PD 1713: 45–46
60	Brenner	Mon- seigneur <sup>83</sup>	Swed. / Febr. 11, 1705		1			KB, Autografsaml.
61	Brenner	Monsei- gneur	Swed. / June 19, 1707		1			RA, Biographica 48a
62	Brenner	Monsieur	French / not dated		1			RA, Sjöholmsarkivet, Autografsaml.
63	Brenner	Morian	Latin / not dated				1	“In orationem publicam a nobilissima et doctissima virgine, Anna Sidonia Morian, nomini ac laudibus potentissimi regis nostri

<sup>81</sup> Nilsson 1973: 163ff. printed and discussed parts of this letter and added Swedish translations.

<sup>82</sup> The three copies are identical.

<sup>83</sup> See chapter 1.6, footnote to the summaries of letters Nos. 60 and 61 regarding the identification of the recipient. I have however no suggestion of the identity of the anonymous Monsieur addressed in letter 62.

# SOPHIA ELISABETH BRENNER'S CORRESPONDENCE

No	Sender	Recipient	Language / date	D	O	C	P	Source
								Caroli duodecimi, nec non totius regiae familiae nuper consecratam", in <i>Oratio panegyrica nominalibus Caroli duodecimi...Holmiae. 1715...habita ab Anna Sidonia Morian</i>
64	Brenner	Rudbeck the Elder	Latin / Sept. 14, 1686				I	<i>Judicia et testimonia illustrium atque clarissimorum virorum de celeberrimi Sveonis Olavi Rudbeckii (Senioris) Medicinae Professoris Upsalensis Atlantica, Francofurti (Recusa juxta Exemplar Upsalense), 1692</i>
65	Spegel	Brenner	Swed. / Nov. 6, 1711				I	PD 1732: 145–146
66 <sup>84</sup>	Brenner	Spiker	Swed. / June 30, 1715		I			RA, Autografsaml.
67	Swedberg	Brenner	Swed./ March 10, 1712			2		UUB, Palmsk. 332: 659ff. Skara, Knös saml.: 415–416
68	Tillaeus	Brenner	Latin, Nov. 16, 1723				I	PD 1732: 154–155
69	Tillaeus	Brenner	Latin, Febr. 22, 1724				I	PD 1732: 155–156
70	Brenner	Ulrica Eleonora the Younger	Swed. / not dated				I	PD 1713
71	Brenner	Ulrica Eleonora the Younger	Swed. / not dated		I			ATA, Ant. koll. o. Ant. ark., E4:1
72	Brenner	Åkerhielm	French / not dated		I			National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg, the Peter van Suchtelen collection, F. 993, K. 78, N. 383

<sup>84</sup> The letter has been printed in Hansson 1988: 173–174.

# LETTERS OF A LEARNED LADY

Table 2 Missing letters

No	Sender	Recipient	(Probable) language/date	(Probable) contents
1	Rudbeck the Elder	Brenner	Latin /1684–1686	Letter of thanks for Brenner's laudatory poem.
2	Brenner	Bilberg	Latin /1696	Brenner makes contact, adds copies of her poems, and expects to get a laudatory poem or letter in return.
3	Heden- grahn	Brenner	Latin / before March 3, 1699	Hedengrahn declares his plans to write a <i>gynaeceum</i> and asks for information on learned women.
4	Hesse- lius	Brenner	Latin / before Febr. 9, 1709	Hesselius informs Brenner that he is working on a rhymed work about the wives of the patriarchs. He asks for her opinion and probably also asks her for a poem on the publication of his work.
5	Brenner	Spiegel	Latin / before Nov. 6, 1711	Brenner makes contact with Spiegel and probably adds copies of her poems (expecting to get a laudatory poem or letter in return).
6	S.E. Brenner	J. Swed- berg	Swed./Latin/ 1712	Brenner expresses her sympathies after the fire which destroyed Swedberg's estate.
7	J. Bilberg	S.E. Brenner	French /1714	Bilberg asks Brenner to add the poem she wrote on the death of his daughter to the remaining copies of PD 1713.
8	Benzeli- us	S.E. Brenner	Swed./Febr.– May 1717	Benzelius asks Brenner about some manuscripts (in the possession of her late husband Elias).
9	Benzeli- us	S.E. Brenner	Swed. / after May 1717	Benz. asks for a catalogue of Elias Brenner's library.
10	Benzeli- us	S.E. Brenner	Swed. / before Jan. 1719	Benz. asks about the whereabouts of one of Brenner's daughters. He apparently had promised to take care of her education.
11	Benzeli- us	S.E. Brenner	Swed. / after Jan. 31, 1719	In this letter, Benz. probably thanked Brenner for the copper engravings she sent (three years later she excuses herself for not having written for a long time).
12	Benzeli- us	S.E. Brenner	Latin / 1722	Benz. promises that he will try to sell the remaining copies of PD 1713.
13	S.E. Brenner	P. Tilla- eus	Latin /Nov.1723– Febr. 1724	Brenner sends Tillaeus a letter to which she has added copies of poem(s), which he had asked for.
14	Benz	S.E. Brenner	French / Sept. 1, 1724	Benz. regrets that he has not succeeded in selling all the copies.
15	S.E. Brenner	M. Aurivillius	Latin / 1726	Letter sent with Brenner's poem on the Passion. She probably asked for his opinion of it in the letter.

### 1.5 General presentation of the letters

In view of the facts concerning missing letters, it is evident that the correspondence known to us, in all 72 letters between Sophia Brenner and 27 persons, is not complete. The preserved correspondence is also multifaceted and heterogeneous: it contains different kinds of letters written in different languages.

The correspondence between Sophia Brenner and Otto Sperling, consisting of 26 letters (all written in Latin), constitutes more than a third of Brenner's preserved correspondence. These letters are outstanding compared to the other letter contacts Brenner had. Fortunately enough, all the letters in the twelve-year-long correspondence have been preserved. It is possible to discuss the roles undertaken by Brenner and Sperling in their letters. In the present study their correspondence will be edited, translated and given a more thorough reading. It appears from *Table 1* that most of Brenner's other letter contacts seem to have been brief, with only one or a couple of letters sent between the correspondents.

With some reservations regarding the representativity of the material, since the collection of letters is far from complete, some short introductory remarks will be made in the following on the different kinds of letters presented in *Table 1*. The letters outside the Brenner/Sperling correspondence can be roughly divided into two categories:

1. Letters connected with Sophia Brenner's poetry (laudatory or dedicatory letters, letters concerning Brenner's promotion and letters that accompanied poems).
2. Letters concerning economic or personal matters.

The letters are written in Latin, Swedish, French and Italian. Forty-three of the 72 preserved letters are written by Brenner. Latin is used in 22 of these letters while fifteen letters are written in Swedish. Not seldom did Brenner write in French as well (five letters), for instance, to Bishop Benzelius. The choice of Latin was of course deliberate (see further in chapter 1.8). Finally, there is one letter (No. 59) in Italian by Brenner, the introductory letter to an Italian sonnet on a wedding.

Sophia Brenner's correspondence is the key to understanding the role and influence she held as a poet and *femina docta* among her contemporaries as well as in her own eyes. Several approaches could be used to introduce her correspondence. For reasons mentioned above, her correspondence with Sperling receives special focus in this dissertation, whereas the rest of the many-faceted correspondence she had is dealt with only in regard to the context of the letters. They

will be listed and briefly summed up in chapter 1.6. In chapter 1.7, a chronology of Brenner's life and rising fame as reflected in her correspondence will be given. This chapter also contains a section focusing on the choice of language and the role of Latin (chapter 1.8), as well as a section on the promotion of Sophia Brenner and of her professionalism reflected in the contents and functions of the letters (chapter 1.9).

## 1.6 Summaries of the letters to and from Brenner

In the following, brief summaries of letters by Brenner and letters to Brenner are given, with the exception of the 26 letters of the Brenner/Sperling correspondence. The letters have been divided into the two main categories presented above. Most of the letters belong to the first category of letters, connected with Sophia Brenner's poetry.

### Letters by Brenner connected with her poetry

*To Bishop Erik Benzeliuſ the Younger regarding the edition of PD 1713:*

No. 28,<sup>85</sup> October 11, 1710. Brenner expresses her gratitude for the subscribers Benzeliuſ had recruited and complains that she has not been able to find more subscribers. She refers to the edition as having been initiated by herself (*huic meo proposito*), and fears that the present calamity (that is, the state of war) and the burdensome general lack of resources will delay the publication if no more subscribers are found. Further, she asks Benzeliuſ to ask one of his students on her behalf to take it upon him to try to find subscribers among the students. Finally, she regrets that she has not been able to express her gratitude sooner, since she has been seriously ill for some weeks.<sup>86</sup>

No. 29, November 10, 1710. Again, Brenner expresses her gratitude for yet more money which Benzeliuſ had collected from subscribers. As an excuse for not having answered earlier, she pleads that she has been busy writing poetry: "Il faut pourtant Monsieur, que ie vous en demande pardon le commerce que i'ay eu pour quelques jours avec les Muses", and continues: "Vous savez le peu d'attachement que ces filles savantes ont pour le gain et les lettres de change" (You know how little the learned ladies care for profit and correspondence).

<sup>85</sup> The numbering of the letters has been taken from *Table 1*. For biographical information concerning persons mentioned here, see *Index personarum*.

<sup>86</sup> She probably had the plague; see above in chapter 1.1 and note 19.

No. 30, April 10, 1713. A note of thanks sent along with several volumes of *PD 1713*.

*To Johannes Bilberg:*

No. 42, January 8, 1715. Bishop Bilberg had asked Brenner to add her funeral poem to his daughter to the remaining copies of *PD 1713*. Brenner grants this, but at the same time asks for a number of off-prints to add to the remaining copies (around 200) of the book.<sup>87</sup> She then informs Bilberg that he is not the first to have asked her to do this: the relatives of Count Falkenberg had done likewise. As the public censor (Ms. le Secret. Brauner) had hesitated to accept that publication, the "Seneur du Roy" had given his permission for the benefit of the intellectual community:<sup>88</sup> "Non sine damno Reipublicae literariae huic scripto libertas Typographiae negari potest." Moreover, Brenner informs Bilberg that she has begun to consider leaving the world of poetry writing.

*To Johannes Dirichsen:*

No. 46, March 29, 1698. (Printed in *PD 1732*). Elegantly and with many modest phrases, Brenner expresses her gratitude for the laudatory poem Dirichsen had written to her.

*To Petrus Hedengrahn:*

No. 50, March 3, 1699. (Printed with *Mulieres Philosophantes* 1699). Hedengrahn had asked for information since he was writing a dissertation on learned women (see further in chapter 2.3). Brenner mentions the same women she had informed Sperling about two years earlier (this letter is a revised version of letter II to Sperling). She also refers to Sperling's earlier mention of "Luitzovia" (misreading Q as L in Sperling's letter: he referred to the Danish learned lady Anne Margrethe Qvitzow (1652–ca. 1700), who translated Caesar and wrote Latin epigrams) and "Piscopia" (the Italian Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia, who was the first woman to obtain a doctorate in philosophy in 1678), and adds a copy of Sperling's letter.

<sup>87</sup> "Je me souviens donc d'une de vos lettres, ou vous voulûtes, que les vers que l'ay eu l'honneur de composer sur le trepas de feu Mademoiselle vostre Fille, seroient ajoutées aux exemplaires du recueil de mes poésies imprimées l'an 1713. C'est dequoy M<on> R<everend> P<ère>, que ie viens maintenant vous prier de m'en faire tenir autant que bon vous semblera. Il me reste encor a peu pres 200 de dites exemplaires." The funeral poem for Hedwig Eleonora Bilberg was included in *PD 1732*: 50ff; in the copies of *PD 1713* that I have seen, the poem is not included.

<sup>88</sup> See further in the introduction to chapter 2.



*To Petrus Hesselius:*

No. 53, May 8, 1709. (Three months had passed since Hesselius wrote a letter to Brenner in which he asked for her opinion of his plan to write a biblical *gynaeceum*. He had now sent her a second letter, to which he added an extract from his manuscript). Brenner excuses herself for her late reply. She would indeed betray her sex and the Muses if she did not approve of his project. She lauds his ambition to “prodesse simul ac delectare” – (alluding to Horace, *Ars poetica*, 333) if he just keeps his style as high as the subject requires, “ne fortasse apud imbecillio rem nostrum sexum venerationis non nihil rebus Sacris detrahatur”. Brenner will write a poem on the publication if he just tells her when he wants it. (Hesselius probably had asked her to write a poem. Brenner speaks with authority and gives her advice without hesitation. At some time Hesselius sent Brenner a laudatory poem; Brenner wrote her poem to him one year later, four pages long.)

*To Nils Keder:*

No. 55, December 13, 1720. (Printed in *PD* 1732. Letter which was sent together with a laudatory poem to Keder: the poem had apparently been ordered by Keder with specific requirements).

Brenner explains why her poem has been delayed (household obligations). She has included in the poem the elements he had wished “Caeterum res praecipuas, quarum memineras, ut potui, commemoravi”. Brenner mentions that she is indebted to Keder (she probably refers to Keder’s work with the second edition of *Thesaurus*).

*To Thomas Kingo:*

No. 57, July 13, 1696 (sent together with a laudatory poem to him and several other poems, see further in chapter 1.7.2). Brenner expresses her admiration for Kingo as a poet. The Muses have demanded that she approach him even if she hesitated herself. Therefore, she has composed a poem in his honour.

*To Amalia Wilhelmina Königsmarck on her marriage to Carl Gustav Lewenhaupt:*

No. 59, not dated. (Printed in *PD* 1713: 45–46) Sophia Brenner wishes to join the congratulants and introduces her sonnet to the noble bride. She asks for God’s blessing over the bride and groom, who are both of aristocratic birth and renowned, and wishes all the best for them.

*To Anna Sidonia Morian:*

No. 63, not dated [1715]. (Printed with Morian’s speech, see *Table 1*.) Brenner lauds Morian for having given the speech. As the condition for these two

women of learning are similar, some sort of encouragement and praise are not untoward. However, Brenner is burdened by many duties, and therefore unable to applaud Morian properly other than through this letter, which she is happy to add to the other eulogies.

*To Olof Rudbeck the Elder:*

No. 64, September 14, 1686 (Printed in one of the collections of laudatory poems and letters to Rudbeck added to *Atlantica*.) The *causa* for the letter seems initially to be only to thank Rudbeck for his letter in which he had thanked Brenner for her poem. In the letter Brenner also expresses her gratitude to Rudbeck for having recommended her to other influential men “quod ... apud viros excellentes Regnique magnates mentionem summe honorificam feceris”. Furthermore she requests a copy of the volume in which her poem to him had been printed (this was probably her main purpose for writing. Nevertheless, this letter was printed accordingly in Rudbeck's next section with eulogies – proof of her importance, as von Platen says). Brenner concludes with “et meis studiis fave”.

*To Princess Ulrica Eleonora the Younger:*

No. 70, not dated [1713]. (Printed in *PD 1713*.) Brenner dedicates her work to the Princess. She refers to a Swedish saying: “anything new is welcome”. Brenner trusts that her collected poetry will be accepted, since it is the first time a woman has published a work like the present one in Sweden. Another argument to justify the publication is that it includes poems to members of the Royal court which deserve to be made public, even though these poems, as Brenner states, are products of great ambition rather than of a lofty intellect or of high-sprung ideas. Nevertheless, she believes that she has succeeded in praising the hero King, and adds that she hopes to continue doing so in the future, wishing God's blessing over the Princess, the Royal Court and the Kingdom.

Letters by Brenner concerning economic and personal matters

*To Erik Benzeliuss the Younger:*

No. 31, February 3, 1717. On behalf of her son Carl, Sophia Brenner asks Benzeliuss for a recommendation for him for a scholarship. Sophia and Elias Brenner do not have the means to send Carl to the Academy, which, as Brenner points out, qualifies him for a scholarship.

No. 32, May 7, 1717. Brenner repeats her wish and at the same time offers Benzeliuss his choice of anything he wants from Elias' collections (of manuscripts, books, coins or other rarities?).

*No. 33*, September 2, 1717. A note sent together with the catalogue of Brenner's library, apparently requested by Benzelius. He had also asked for a catalogue of Elias' coins ("curiositeterna"), which Brenner promises to provide later.

*No. 34*, October 17, 1717. Brenner asks Benzelius to take care of her son, who has apparently been granted the desired scholarship.

*No. 35*, January 30, 1719. Benzelius has taken steps to arrange for the education of one of Brenner's daughters. Brenner promises to inform her regarding this.

*No. 36*, January 16, 1722. Brenner has not been in contact with Benzelius for more than three years. She sends some poems so that he will see that she still amuses herself with poetry. However, she is still burdened by the remaining copies of *PD 1713*. She did publish her poetry for the sake of profit, which she regrets ("illorum <sc. librorum> adhuc partim oneror, quos quondam lucri causa, sed nimio meo malo, opusculo vulgaveram"). Brenner asks Benzelius in a roundabout manner to find a way to sell the remaining copies. She is willing to sell them for half the price. Bidding Benzelius a happy new year, she adds a postscript in which she asks him to come and visit, and concludes: farewell, and do let the poem (I sent) proceed ("iterum vale et inclusas <sc. versus> trade").

*No. 37*, July 24, 1722. Benzelius has promised to take care of the sale of the remaining copies, and Brenner sends 50 copies along with this letter, furthermore complaining over the fact that she has problems in obtaining the salary due her late husband. She adds in a postscript that the price of *PD* was six "karoliner", but that she would now be satisfied with "sex taleris cupreis", (= 'six dalers kopparmynt').

*No. 38*, August 18, 1724. Brenner informs Benzelius that he must not bother so much with the selling of her copies. (At this point, Brenner should have received her author's pension, so there was probably no longer any urgent need for money.)

*No. 39*, September 5, 1724. Benzelius had asked for the second edition of Elias' *Thesaurus*. Brenner wants some guarantees that Arvid Horn would take on the printing costs, which he had promised. She complains over the fact that she has not received her husband's due salary which had been decreed on by the Four Estates.

*No. 40*, July 20, 1728. Brenner asks for the whereabouts of ten remaining copies of *PD 1713*, which Benzelius apparently had not sold. (In other words, he managed to sell 40 of the remaining copies.)

*To Elias Brenner:*

No. 44, December 31, 1699. Sophia Brenner writes to her husband, who is on a journey and asks for a report from him. Brenner complains of illness and toothache, waits for information (an answer?) from a certain Watrang (perhaps regarding a poem), and finally warns Elias not to return home later than promised. (The letter was printed in the Swedish newspaper *Allahanda* in 1757.)

*To King Frederick I of Sweden:*

No. 48, December 14, 1726. Brenner asks for a printing privilege for her poem on the Passion for 20 years.

No. 49, October 30, 1728. Brenner asks for the salary of her late husband due between 1714–1717.

*To Jean (Johan) Helin:*

No. 51, (not dated, ca. 1728–1729, since Sophia Brenner mentions Keder's efforts with the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Thesaurus*, which was published in 1731). Brenner explains Elias' investments and costs in detail, and asks for one third of the income of the forthcoming second edition. She wishes to have half of the sum of 1,800 "riksdaler kopparmynt" paid in advance when she delivers Elias' material to Helin, and the other half when the edition had been published. The sum of 1,800 "riksdaler kopparmynt" would according to Brenner suffice for food for one year.<sup>89</sup>

*To Margerithe Catrine Spiker:*

No. 66, June 30, 1715. Spiker is addressed as Brenner's dear sister. Brenner is sorry to have been late in writing to her, but happy to have learned that Spiker has returned safely home from a journey and that she has given birth to two children. Brenner expresses her gratitude for a gift which she received from Spiker, but regrets that she does not know the price of it.<sup>90</sup>

*To Queen Ulrica Eleonora the Younger:*

No. 71, not dated, [Dec. 1718–/ summer 1720]. Brenner asks the Queen to buy

<sup>89</sup> According to a letter from Gustav Benzelstierna to his brother Erik Benzeliuſ the Younger dated September 30, 1729 (Link, "Gustaf Benzelstiernas brev till sin broder Erik Benzeliuſ d.y.", Br 11:a), *Thesaurus* was in print thanks to Helin, who was the secretary of the Board of Antiquities. It also appears from this letter that Sophia Brenner was granted a few hundred "riksdaler". Sophia Brenner died the next year, before she had made her dedication of the work. Instead, the dedication to the King, Frederick I of Sweden, was signed by "devotissimum Archivum Antiquitatum".

<sup>90</sup> See Hansson 1988: 171–176. Brenner had sent Spiker a poem when she got married in 1712. The gift she received might be payment for this poem.

Elias Brenner's collection of coins, as promised by King Charles XII. She needs the money to pay a debt and also to finance her stepdaughter's inheritance.

*To unknown Monseigneur:*

*No. 60*, February 11, 1705. Versified letter, by which Brenner asks an unknown count, a royal councillor, highly trusted by the King ("Wår Konungs främsta Råd och högstbetrodda Man"),<sup>91</sup> to help her future son-in-law Carl Löfgren gain a position, so that he will be able to marry one of Brenner's daughters. For the past forty years, the father of the girl (Elias Brenner) has been busy engraving coins. The girl, however, needs shiny coins instead of verdigrised ones.<sup>92</sup>

*No. 61*, June 19, 1707. Brenner again asks the count to recommend her future son-in-law for a position as a circuit judge. She refers to the previous letter and has been informed that her petition had been graciously received.

*To unknown Monsieur:*

*No. 62*, not dated, brief letter. Brenner asks "Monsieur" to lend her a chariot for the next day.

*To Jacob Åkerhielm:*<sup>93</sup>

*No. 72*, not dated. Brenner asks the letter recipient to recommend her son-in-law Daniel Enroth to his brother the President (Samuel Månsson Agriconius Åkerhielm, who was "statssekreterare", secretary of the State). To make the petition more persuasive, she adds a couple of her poems "de ma façon", as she says.

Letters to Brenner connected with Sophia Brenner's poetry

*From Magnus Aurivillius:*

*No. 27*, August 9, 1726. (Printed in *PD 1732*.) Brenner had made contact with Aurivillius, a chaplain to the King in Stockholm, sent him her long poem on the Passion and asked for his opinion about it. Aurivillius confirms that he has received her poem and promises that he will read it, although not critically, "non ut censor sed ut venerabundus consors deliciarum spiritualium quibus argumentum scriptionis pium animus semper exhilarat et ut admirator ingenii supra sexum foemineum prorsus virilis."

<sup>91</sup> See chapter 1.7.3 and note 116 regarding the identification of this Count.

<sup>92</sup> "Sant är att flickans fahr, ful intet mehra hint i hele fyrtij år, än idel pengar senka. men ock; för tusen år då gälde stijka mynt. de möglas snart på nyt, och hon behöfwer blanka. dock kan hon utan dem försörgd och hulpen blij, där Löfgren, något wist brödstykke finge äga."

<sup>93</sup> The name of the addressee is added in different handwriting in the letter.

*From Johannes Bilberg:*

No. 41, April 1, 1697. (Reply to Brenner's letter, which I have not found, to which copies of several of her poems had been added.) Bilberg regrets that he has not heard of Brenner before, praises her letter and her learning and welcomes her as the Swedish answer to the famous learned women of the time throughout Europe. He excuses himself for being late in answering and adds four elegiac lines to the letter (which were later appended to *TF*).

*From Magnus Gabriel von Block:*

No. 43, December 9, 1706. (Explanatory letter accompanying von Block's laudatory poem to Brenner, which had the form of an *ironia*.) In the letter Block points out that his poem should be read as a joke ("Compatisca per tanto, Wossignoria, l'assunto e Sappia però che ciò è più da Scherzo che detto da dovero"), and furthermore argues for the promotion of the maternal language.<sup>94</sup>

*From Johannes Dirichsen:*

No. 45, August 4, 1697. Dirichsen starts the letter by stating that he has learned about Brenner from Danish diplomat Grüner,<sup>95</sup> who had also shown him the letter and poems she had sent to Kingo. He eloquently praises her – "for what is sweeter than to know so much and to know moreover that this is known by both sexes" – and urges her to continue her studies, adding a laudatory poem in four elegiac lines.

*From Lars Forselius:*

No. 47, March 4, 1714. (Printed in *PD* 1732.) Forselius praises Brenner, her poetry and her correspondence with foreign learned men in Latin (and Greek!). Urban Hiärne has praised Brenner, as he does frequently ("quavis data occasione rarissimas ingenij Tui dotes sexum vestrum longissime supergressas depraedicat cunctisque studiose commendat"). Hiärne had thus succeeded, "ut ad editionem elegantissimi operis Tui carmen tenue laudibus dicatum Tuis non potuerim non transmittere": that is, Forselius could not resist sending her a complimentary poem on the edition of her poetry. In return, he (in a round-about way) requests a copy of Brenner's collected poetry.

*From Petrus Hesselius:*

No. 52, February 9, 1709. (Printed in *PD* 1732.) Hesselius was working on a

<sup>94</sup> See Göransson 2000.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. letter VI.

poetic work concerning the wives of the patriarchs of the Old Testament, and had already before sent a letter (not extant) to Brenner presenting his plans. He apparently had not yet received a reply from Brenner, so he wrote another letter, this time adding some extracts from his work in progress and asking for advice in the matter, at the same time abundantly praising Brenner as a *femina docta*.

*From Urban Hiärne:*

No. 54, not dated. (The preface to *TF*, written in Latin in the form of a letter addressed to Brenner.) Hiärne defends the publication of the complimentary poems and letters, emphasising Brenner's own modesty and calling attention to her virtues, skilled poetry and knowledge of foreign languages. He comments on her unwillingness to have the eulogies published. According to him, the more Brenner resists the idea of the publication of the eulogies, the more eager Hiärne is to do so, even going behind her back and secretly acquires copies of the eulogies from Elias Brenner.

*From Nils Keder:*

No. 56, not dated (after 1717; printed in *PD* 1732). Keder asks for a copy of a laudatory poem Brenner had recently written to Anna Maria Ehrenstrahl (the poem was published in *PD* 1732: 113ff.).

*From Sebastian Kortholt:*

No. 58, January 27, 1700. (Printed in Kortholt's dissertation and in *PD* 1732. The letter was sent to Brenner together with the laudatory poem, in which Kortholt dedicated his work to her.) Although Kortholt is not known to Brenner, she is well known to him: "Eqvidem ignotus Te alloqvor, sed non ignotam. Per totum enim eruditorum orbem dudum jam innotuere plane incomparabiles Tuae virtutes, plurima conditae ac perfusae humanitate, et omnis doctrinae cognitio insignis ac stupenda." Kortholt expresses his admiration for Brenner.

*From Haquin Spegel:*

No. 65, November 6, 1711. (Printed in *PD* 1732.) Spegel praises Brenner. He is surprised to have been approached by her.<sup>96</sup> He does not deserve her praise, but Brenner does deserve his, since she is the only learned woman in Sweden that he knows of. He refers furthermore to statements by Buchnerus and Puteanus

<sup>96</sup> Cf. von Platen 1985: 118. According to him, Spegel's surprise over Brenner's approach was so evident that the letter was not published in *TF*.

regarding virtuous women. In addition, he promises that he will add his praise to Brenner in his poem on Babel, which he hopes to live to conclude.<sup>97</sup>

*From Petrus Tillaeus:*

No. 68, November 16, 1723. (Printed in *PD 1732*.) Tillaeus has known of Brenner for a long time. More than 30 years ago he saw examples of her poems, which were given to him by her relative Henrich Brenner. He is glad that she published her poetry and is happy to have acquired a copy of *PD 1713*. Tillaeus is eager to see more of her poetry; he has learned that she is working on a poem on the Passion.

No. 69, February 22, 1724. (Printed in *PD 1732*.) Brenner had replied, apparently adding some poems, for which Tillaeus expresses his gratitude, eloquently praising her and her forthcoming poem on the Passion.

Letter to Brenner concerning personal matters

*From Jesper Swedberg:*

No. 67, March 10, 1712. (Swedberg had suffered significant losses as a result of a devastating fire on his estate. Brenner had written him a letter in which she expressed her sympathy.) Swedberg thanks her for her letter, and expresses his sorrow for the lost library and the many manuscripts, several of which he mentions.

## 1.7 Brenner's professional career as reflected in her correspondence

### 1.7.1 In the 1680's (29 poems, one letter)<sup>98</sup>

In 1680 Sophia Elisabet Weber and Elias Brenner married, which as already mentioned marked the very beginning of her career as a poet and famous *femina docta*.<sup>99</sup> Before her marriage Brenner had written only two poems, but from 1681 onwards her production of poetry became regular, and she continued to write poems on different occasions until her death in 1730.

<sup>97</sup> The poem was never published.

<sup>98</sup> In the following survey of Brenner's professional career, references will sometimes also be made to letters between other persons regarding Sophia Brenner as well as to poems to and from her.

The amount of poems written by Sophia Brenner for each decade is based on a (preliminary) inventory made by V. Lindgärde (including some poems that were not included in *PD 1713* or *PD 1732*). The number given for letters for each decade is based only on Brenner's dated letters in accordance with *Table 1*.

<sup>99</sup> Marriage for most learned women of the time resulted in their having to quit their studies and intellectual pursuits. Due to this fact it was recommended quite often that erudite women should not marry: Anna Maria van Schurman (among others) was an advocate of this.



In 1684, Sophia Brenner took the opportunity to write a laudatory poem in Swedish to Olof Rudbeck the Elder, having read his *Atlantica*. A collection of laudatory poems and letters from a number of learned men, most of them living abroad, had been added to the work.<sup>100</sup> Brenner also sent a Latin translation of the Swedish poem. Her poem was published in a second collection with eulogies (in 1685).<sup>101</sup> von Platen observes that she must have been very honoured by this, especially as she was the only woman among the hundred congratulants.<sup>102</sup> Rudbeck thanked Brenner for her poem in a letter, which is however not extant. It was probably written in Latin, since Brenner in turn thanked him with a Latin letter dated September 14, 1686 (the earliest letter of the ones preserved).<sup>103</sup> She acknowledged Rudbeck for having promoted her, “quod ... apud viros excellentes Regnique magnates mentionem summe honorificam feceris.” It thus seems as if Rudbeck recommended Brenner in more ways than only by adding her poem to the other eulogies. The quote is indicative of her awareness of her role as a professional poet: a recommendation by a man of influence might give rise to orders for poems and an income from them. Even more noteworthy than the fact that Brenner’s poem was printed is that her letter to Rudbeck, in which she did nothing more than thank him elegantly in Latin for his support and for the letter he had sent her, was also added to a third collection of his laudatory poems and letters, which was printed in 1692.<sup>104</sup> Apparently, the fascination over learned women writing letters in Latin was sufficient for even this letter to be printed.

Sophia Brenner received laudatory poems already in the beginning of the 1680’s. In 1680 the young Olof Hermelin wrote one in her honour,<sup>105</sup> and on November 10, 1683, the German Paul Stricker sent her a poem in Latin and German from Lübeck. During this year Brenner wrote two poems which according to von Platen’s definitions (see chapter 1.2) would seem to indicate professionalism: one to the city of Vienna, and another to John III, King of Poland, after the defeat of the Turks. Stricker might have written his laudatory

<sup>100</sup> Rudbeck 1681.

<sup>101</sup> Rudbeck 1685.

<sup>102</sup> von Platen 1985: 113.

<sup>103</sup> Letter 64 (*Table 1*).

<sup>104</sup> *Judicia et testimonia illustrium atque clarissimorum virorum de celeberrimi Sveonis Olavi Rudbeckii (Senioris) Medicinæ Professoris Upsalensis Atlantica*, Francofurti 1692 (= Rudbeck 1692:1). Furthermore, all four collections were printed together in 1692 (= Rudbeck 1692:2).

<sup>105</sup> According to von Platen 1985: 113 and Olsson 1953: 71, Hermelin’s Latin poem was written in 1686, but the dating of an early copy made by Brenner herself and sent to Bishop Kingo in 1696, is VIII Cal. Aug. 1680.

poem to her after having seen one of these poems. Another possibility is that he might have heard about her via for instance Johan Gabriel Sparwenfeld, who travelled through Europe at the time,<sup>106</sup> or he might even have met her in person, as she seems to have travelled to Germany from time to time, at least according to a letter from Elias Brenner to Olof Rudbeck the Elder dated March 16, 1699.<sup>107</sup> Another possibility, observed by Lindgärde, is that Stricker might have been exhorted by his relative Moller to approach the learned woman in Sweden. By doing this, he himself was published and could hence be presented in Moller's *Cimbria literata*.<sup>108</sup>

It is evident that word spread quickly after Brenner's marriage that Sweden now harboured a match to the famous learned women on the continent such as the Dutchwoman Anna Maria van Schurman. von Platen has pointed out that the collections with eulogies accompanying *Atlantica* inspired Sophia Brenner and her promoters to gather a similar collection for the edition of her collected poetry.<sup>109</sup> We will see that the letters seem to confirm this.

#### 1.7.2 In the 1690's (35 poems, six letters)

The correspondence during the 1690's reveals that Sophia Brenner's promotion as a *femina docta* and writer of occasional poetry was intensified during these years. The above-mentioned Sparwenfeld and Erik Benzeliuss the Younger both acted on her behalf as promoters, and as a result of this, Brenner's reputation spread. Brenner did not rely only on others for this, but was quite active herself. In 1696 she approached two illustrious and learned men of the church in a very similar way: on July 13, 1696, she wrote an eloquent letter in Latin<sup>110</sup> to the famous Danish poet, Bishop Thomas Kingo, in which she paid him homage and also recommended herself. A Swedish poem in his honour was added, as well as copies of as many as 18 of her poems in different languages and six laudatory poems written in her honour. In this way she certainly exhibited her ability by in fact sending Kingo a substantial part of her production so far.<sup>111</sup> The

<sup>106</sup> Jacobowsky 1932: 46.

<sup>107</sup> In the letter, which is printed in Aspelin 1896: 178ff., Elias Brenner mentions her journeys to Germany, "Så framt intet något särdeles infaller, har jag med min Hustru i sommar, vil Gud, ärnat besöka Upsala bygden, hälst efter hennes Tysklands resor nu merendels äro expedierade" (Aspelin 1896: 180).

<sup>108</sup> Lindgärde, "Kulturella förbindelser. Om Sophia Elisabet Brenner och hennes kontakter runt Östersjön" (in print).

<sup>109</sup> von Platen 1985: 114.

<sup>110</sup> Letter No. 57; see the summary on page 52.

<sup>111</sup> The collection is to be found today in Cph, NKS, 1654, 2°.

person who brought this “package of recommendation” to Bishop Kingo was Bolle Luxdorph, who at the time was Danish envoy “extraordinaire” in Sweden.<sup>112</sup> Of course Brenner was hoping for a response from Kingo in the form of an elaborated poem and/or a letter in her honour. Brenner seems to have made very much the same approach to a Swedish ecclesiastic, Johannes Bilberg, who was also an eminent scholar and *polyhistor*.<sup>113</sup> Neither the letter nor the identity of the poems she sent him has been preserved, but his reply reveals the similarity in the approach.<sup>114</sup>

The letters Brenner received between 1696 and 1700 show that her (and her promoters’) efforts to establish her fame were successful: rumour spread as learned men informed each other about the new Swedish *femina docta*. Brenner continued to write poems and increased her production during the 1690’s.

### 1.7.3 In the 1700’s (44 poems, eleven letters)

In the year 1700 Sophia Brenner was well established as a famous learned woman and writer of occasional poetry. During the ten years that followed, her production of poems reached its peak. At the same time, she was overloaded with household duties: there were in total 17 children in the Brenner family, several of which were taken seriously ill and died at early ages. These circumstances are reflected in Brenner’s letters, especially in the Latin correspondence with Otto Sperling, which had been initiated in 1696 and was continued during the greater part of the following decade. Brenner often complains about being overburdened and tells about the illnesses and deaths within the family as well.

During this decade Brenner chose more often to write her poems in Swedish, eventually using Swedish almost exclusively. This seems to have been a deliberate act of promoting the vernacular (cf. discussion in chapter 1.8). The fact that Sophia Brenner was highly celebrated at this time is also evident in her letters. She appears more confident and speaks with authority. Previously Brenner seems to have thought it necessary to employ modest phrases: in the earlier part of her correspondence there is an abundance of them. From now on, however,

<sup>112</sup> Regarding Luxdorph, see *Index personarum*.

<sup>113</sup> See also *Index personarum*; like Kingo, Bilberg was a skilled writer of Latin poems.

<sup>114</sup> Letter No. 41. (Summary on page 57.) “Non exiguum felicitati meae factam esse arbitror accessionem, quod Tibi, Eruditissima Domina, non ita pridem licuit innotuisse, Tecumque varios sermones serere et hoc amplius selecta Tua diversis in linguis conscripta cernere carmina ... Ceterum ipse mihi nunc irascor quod et vix et diu literas publice privatimque professus postea literarum officio abs Te sim provocatus. Accepi nimirum literas Tuas eo cultu dictionis et elegantia exaratas ut inter Eruditorum Virorum apud me Epistolas principem sibi locum optimo jure debeant vindicare.”

we find them less frequently in her letters. The Swedish vicar Petrus Hesselius contacted Brenner some time before February 1709 in two letters (one of which is seemingly lost today) and informed her about his work revolving around the wives of the patriarchs of the Old Testament, and asking for advice; in his second (preserved) letter he added extracts from his work in progress. Brenner replied to the second letter, speaking with authority and giving her advice without hesitation. Even if he wished to follow the words of Horace to “prodesse simul ac delectare”, as she said, he should be careful not to be too cursory.<sup>115</sup>

Brenner's awareness of her status at the time is also apparent in the two letters written in February 1705 and July 1707, where she asks for a post as a judge on behalf of her future son-in-law, Carl Löfgren.<sup>116</sup> Her petition seems to have been successful, since her daughter married the newly appointed circuit judge and mayor Carl Löfgren on December 8 of the same year; Brenner wrote a poem on the occasion.<sup>117</sup> She made use of her personal influence also later on to procure posts and services for members of her family: an undated letter in French, probably addressed to a certain Jacob Åkerhielm, contains a request for a recommendation of another son-in-law, law clerk Daniel Enroth. In order to make the addressee even more inclined to do as she wished, Brenner added some of her poems<sup>118</sup>

Already before 1710 a process was started to sign up subscribers for the forthcoming book containing Brenner's poetry. Urban Hiärne was one of the most eager to promote the book. He published a pamphlet announcing the plans for the book and asking for subscribers. This was the first time a Swedish book was published by way of subscription: repeating yourself therefore, Hiärne described

<sup>115</sup> See chapter 1.6, letter No. 53.

<sup>116</sup> Letters Nos. 60 and 61 (see the summaries of these letters on page 56). Both letters were written in Swedish: the first one was versified. The identity of the “Monseigneur” to which the petitions are addressed is unknown. Brenner addresses him as “Count” as well as “the highest Royal Councillor and the King's most trusted man”. One possibility is Count Carl Piper (1647–1716), who was highly trusted by King Charles XII and held posts both as a Royal Councillor and Secretary of State. From 1700 onwards Piper was stationed as head of the field chancellery in Balticum. Another possibility is Count Nils Gyldenstolpe (1642–1709), who was appointed President of the Royal Chancellery (“kanslipresident”) in 1705; he was influential regarding law in the Supreme Court. At the time, Löfgren was working as an assistant at a Swedish court of appeals and was applying for a post as a district judge after a certain Stiernkrona.

<sup>117</sup> *PD 1713*: 73ff.

<sup>118</sup> See the summary of letter No. 72. Nowadays, the letter is kept in the National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg. I have not found the poems Brenner sent in the National Library in St. Petersburg; according to a librarian there, her poems might have been included in collections which were transferred to some library in Poland during the 1950's.

the process rather thoroughly in his pamphlet, referring to the subscription method as being commonly used for instance in England.<sup>119</sup> The price of the book was set to 5 “karoliner”, half the amount to be paid in advance, and the rest when the book was received. Bishop Benzelius was also eager to promote the book. He signed up a number of subscribers in Uppsala and sent the money to Elias Brenner.<sup>120</sup>

In spite of all these efforts, the publication of *Poetiske Dikter* was considerably delayed because of the effects of war and plague, which struck hard.

#### 1.7.4 In the 1710's (34 poems, ten letters)

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1713, Elias Brenner sent a letter to Benzelius. He regretted the delay of the publication, in particular for the sake of the noble men who had subscribed to the work and were waiting to see the result; finally, the last parts of the book were in print.<sup>121</sup> *Poetiske Dikter*, printed in 200 copies, was a magnificent work embellished with several copperplate engravings. Nevertheless, because of the bad times the book did not sell as well as expected. In the latter part of her correspondence with Benzelius, Sophia Brenner reveals her disappointment. She is in desperate need of money after Elias' death in 1717, and Benzelius supports her by selling most of the remaining copies. As mentioned, Bishop Benzelius was an important promotor and benefactor of Sophia Brenner. She corresponded with him from 1710 until her death; only Brenner's letters have been preserved.

Several of the other letter contacts Brenner had at this time also concern the edition of her poetry. Letters from Bishop Haquin Spegel and Dean Lars Forselius reveal how the process of collecting laudatory poems and letters was organized. Forselius explains in his letter that he has written a laudatory poem

<sup>119</sup> Urban Hiärne's prospect was printed in 1709–1710; “Palmkiöldska samlingen” in UUB, houses one copy of it. In six pages Hiärne presented his arguments for the forthcoming publication. The work was already in print: 14 folios had been printed in quarto and it was expected to be completed in 1710, as appears from the pamphlet, which is printed in an appendix to this dissertation. Moreover, Elias Brenner mentioned the ongoing printing process in a letter to Erik Benzelius the Younger in October 1710 (printed in Aspelin 1896: 169–170).

<sup>120</sup> In a Swedish letter Elias Brenner expresses his thanks to Benzelius for having signed up subscribers and sent the money (see the printed version in Aspelin 1896, 169–170). According to Aspelin (1896: 133) Benzelius signed up around 20 subscribers. He does not, however, give the source for this information. According to the letter from Elias Brenner (written in 1710), only twelve subscribers had been signed up by Benzelius so far (Elias confirmed that he had received a note of 30 “karoliner”).

<sup>121</sup> The letter was printed in Aspelin 1896: 171.

to Brenner as a result of the eager promotion by Urban Hiärne of her.<sup>122</sup> Hiärne had done a very thorough job, showing him some of her poems and informing him about her correspondence with learned men in Latin (and Greek, Forselius added as well; perhaps Brenner's merits were sometimes exaggerated for the sake of the good cause of promoting her!). The reason for Forselius' sending Brenner his elaborated letter, written in Latin, seems to have been that he had not yet been acknowledged for his contribution to the collection of laudatory poems. He asked for a copy of *Poetiske Dikter*; the contributors probably considered themselves entitled to a free copy of the work they had praised.

In 1711, Brenner received a similar letter from Haquin Spegel (written in Swedish). She had approached Spegel herself (her letter is lost today), praising him abundantly and asking about a work in progress, hoping to get similar praise in return. Spegel met her expectations, returned the praise and promised to make place for Brenner in his forthcoming work. However, the introduction of his letter probably revealed too much about the process of collecting eulogies to be added to the other laudatory poems and letters accompanying the edition in 1713.<sup>123</sup>

#### 1.7.5 In the 1720's (23 poems, eight letters)

We have seen that Brenner had problems in supporting herself after the death of her husband in 1717. The major part of the preserved letters from the last decade of her life shows how worried she was about this, and the different kinds of ways in which she tried to obtain money. After some turnabouts she managed to sell her husband's valuable collection of coins and, as mentioned before, Benzelius assisted her by selling 40 of the 50 remaining copies of *Poetiske Dikter*.<sup>124</sup> Brenner must have been much relieved by the honour she received when she was granted an author's pension from the state in 1723. Erik Benzelius probably played an important role here, too: he was a member of "Sekreta utskottet", the committee that granted the pension. Between 1717 and 1723 Brenner wrote even more poems than before,<sup>125</sup> whereas she did not write a single poem in 1724, the year after she had been granted her pension, and only one

<sup>122</sup> Letter No. 47.

<sup>123</sup> Letter No. 65. I agree with von Platen (1985: 117), who made this observation.

<sup>124</sup> According to her letters to Benzelius dated July 24, 1722, and July 20, 1728 (Nos. 37 and 40).

<sup>125</sup> In 1723 Brenner finished her long poem on the Passion (a work which she had been labouring over for a couple of years). Apart from this poem she wrote two occasional poems besides her versified petition to the Four Estates. Brenner published an average of five to six occasional poems each year with a peak during 1698 and 1700, when she published eight and ten poems, respectively.

poem in 1725. These facts indicate that she was indeed paid for her poems. The brief laudatory letter or note to Anna Sidonia Morian reveals that she could (or would) not make an effort to produce eloquent, elaborated laudatory letters or poems any longer. Still, it is indicative of Brenner's status at the time that the brief letter was still printed before the speech. Sophia Elisabeth Brenner's signature was important enough, regardless of the contents of the letter.

Even so, the pension seems to have relieved Brenner financially only for some time, since it is evident from her letters that she continued to worry about her economy; she also continued to produce poems. Nils Keder was in charge of the second edition of Elias Brenner's *Thesaurus* in 1731. Not long before her death Brenner sent a letter to Jean (Johan) Helin, who was Secretary of State, and asked for a commission on the sales of this edition.<sup>126</sup>

### 1.8 The choice of language

In July 1699, the readers of *Nova Literaria Maris Balthici et Septentrionis* were informed that Petrus Hedengrahn had defended a dissertation entitled *Mulieres Philosophantes*, in which he praised a number of learned women, several of whom were mentioned in the announcement. *Nova Literaria* then reprinted Sophia Brenner's letter to Hedengrahn (No. 50), which preceded Hedengrahn's dissertation.<sup>127</sup>

The fact that Sophia Brenner knew several foreign languages, most important of all Latin, was crucial for the rise of her fame, and one of the best ways to display this knowledge of Latin was through the correspondence with learned men. We have previously seen how Brenner approached Thomas Kingo and Johannes Bilberg by writing eloquent letters in Latin and adding laudatory poems as well as copies of several of her poems. These letters were proof that she was more qualified than most women for the epithet *femina docta*, since many of the famous learned women did not in fact have knowledge of Latin or Greek, even though it was said to be the qualifying factor.<sup>128</sup> Therefore, Brenner's long

<sup>126</sup> Letter No. 51.

<sup>127</sup> "Non possumus autem inter cetera sequioris sexus literati et philosophantis decora, quorum syngrammate isthoc mentio sit, silentio praeterire doctissimam Cl. V. Eliae Brenneri, Collegii Antiquitatum, quod Holmiae est, Assessoris, Conjugem Sophiam Elisabetam, quae, uti dudum quamplurimis elegantissimi ingenii monumentis erudito orbi innotuit, ita nitidam quoque ad auctorem hujus Dissertationis Epistolam scripsit, typis simul excusam, quae hic repeti et ab exteris (Minervam istam Svecicam penitus cognituris) legi meretur. Ita vero habet:" (upon which followed Brenner's letter to Hedengrahn). *Nova Literaria* 1699: 201–204.

<sup>128</sup> Alenius 1993: 211.

correspondence in Latin with Otto Sperling, for instance, was immensely important as a merit, and we can see how this correspondence was indeed used as well as recognized as highly meritorious in the letter sent by Dean Lars Forselius in 1714.<sup>129</sup> He had started by praising the poems he had seen by her hand (shown to him by Hiärne), but then continued by saying that he had been even more impressed when he had understood that she maintained correspondence with foreigners.<sup>130</sup>

It appears from *Table 1* that Brenner preferred to use Latin in her letters: as many as 22 of the 43 preserved letters written by her were in Latin. She nevertheless also chose Swedish quite often (15 letters), and sometimes French (five letters) and Italian (one letter). After her marriage Brenner studied Italian, assisted by Nils Keder, colleague of her husband and close friend of the family.<sup>131</sup> All (preserved) letters Brenner received were written in Latin except for two letters in Swedish (No. 65 by Haquin Spegel and No. 67 by Jesper Swedberg) and two letters in Italian (No. 43 by von Block and No. 55 by Keder). The choice of Latin when writing a letter to Brenner, famous more than anything else for her linguistic proficiency and her excellent knowledge of Latin, was of course natural.<sup>132</sup>

Regardless of the fact that she came to be known as a multilingual *femina docta* with extraordinary skills in Latin, in the preface to *Poetiske Dikter* Brenner nevertheless proclaimed that her first aim always had been to promote Swedish; she pointed out that even though she had written poems in foreign languages on some occasions, her main ambition was to write poems in her other tongue.<sup>133</sup> I have discussed Brenner as a linguistic patriot and a polyglot else-

<sup>129</sup> Letter No. 47.

<sup>130</sup> "Longe tamen vehementior me subiit admiratio postquam requisita accuratius nominis Tui noticia etiam latinis te literis Graecisque atque exterarum quoque plurimum cognitione imbutam intelligerem. Quin immo, quod adhuc amplius tam altum eruditionis fastigium attigisse ut cum viris externarum nationum celebribus literarum commercia saepius exerceas. Ex quo tempore coepi haud mediocriter gratulari Patriae nostrae quae hujus generis gloriae laudisque experts hactenus jam demum cum peregrinis terrarum populis sexum sibi muliebre gratulantibus contendere potest."

<sup>131</sup> Keder 1742: 321.

<sup>132</sup> Brenner's skills in Latin were mentioned for example by a certain Mikael Bethlen in 1693. He noted that they spoke in Latin with Sophia Brenner and added that she had a better command of Latin than her husband, "Med [Elias Brenners] hustru talade vi latin, som hon behärskar bättre än sin man, ehuru han också förstår och talar latin mycket bra", Wickman 1988: 30.

<sup>133</sup> "fast jag en och annan gång wid vissa tillfällen försökt at göra någon Wers i de utländska Språken af hwilka jag kunnat ha någon kunskap/ är det allenast skedt som til et profw/.../ men mit rätta ändamål har alltid warit/ at skrifwa på mit Modersmål/ sökt at komma det samma efter mit pund och ämne och vårt Swenska Rime-sätt/ i större bruk och mera til at idkas." *PD* 1713.



where,<sup>134</sup> and I referred to S. Hansson, who was the first to focus on Brenner's linguistic patriotism. Having noticed that from 1706 onwards Brenner wrote her poems almost exclusively in Swedish, Hansson suggested that her contacts within the Royal Chancellery, where the focus at the time was on linguistic patriotism, had been important in causing her to change in her choice of language and proclaimed linguistic patriotism.<sup>135</sup> I agreed with Hansson on this in my article, but I also suggested that the contact Brenner had with Magnus Gabriel von Block in 1706, that is, the very same year that the change took place, might have been the actual turning point. Sophia Brenner and von Block wrote a couple of occasional poems to each other during her stay at Medevi Spa (where she took the waters), von Block staying there as the appointed physician.<sup>136</sup> Elias Brenner had also met von Block and sent him the much discussed poetical work *Thet Swenska Språketz Klagemål, At thet, som sigh borde, icke ährrat blifwer* ("The Swedish language's complaint, that it is not honoured as it should be"), a manifesto for the Swedish language connected to the Royal Chancellery.<sup>137</sup> Inspired by this poem von Block wrote a Latin poem to Brenner in the form of a classical *ironia*, that is, a complimentary poem to her as a Swedish poet disguised as a reproach by the Latin language for her neglecting Latin.<sup>138</sup> von Block added an explanatory letter in Italian to the poem, in which he explained that he intended it to be an echo of *The Swedish language's complaint* in favour of Latin instead of Swedish, since both she and he himself were so indebted to the classical language. But he then continued by stressing the real purpose of the poem, which was the promotion of Swedish, presenting his views on the role of Latin contra Swedish, and stating that he was eager to promote Swedish as his mother tongue. Thus, he managed to display Brenner's

<sup>134</sup> Göransson 2000.

<sup>135</sup> Hansson 1984: 93ff.

<sup>136</sup> Block wrote *Öfver den Ädle Sophias Brunn-Cur Wid Medewij* (Over the Noble Sophia, when she took the waters at Medewij) July 10, 1706, and Brenner replied the following day with the poem *Sophia til den obekiende Wälmenande* (Sophia to the unknown benefactor). Later the same year Brenner wrote a laudatory poem to Block entitled *Til Herr Doctor Block Öfwer des Lärda Anmärkningar Om Strömstadnandet Wid Norköping* (To the Doctor, Mr. Block, on his learned comments regarding the torrent that stopped in Norrköping). All three poems were published in *PD* 1713.

<sup>137</sup> Printed in Stockholm in 1658. The identity of the pseudonym Skogekär Bergbo ("Woodloving Mountain-dweller") is unknown. However, S. Hansson has shown that the author was connected with the Royal Chancellery (Hansson 1984: 18–41).

<sup>138</sup> *Linguae Latinae Querela ad Soph. Brenneram, Sermonis Svecani Egregiam Cultricem* (1707, reprinted in the section with eulogies in *PD* 1732: 135–136). Block's poem was recently printed in Jönsson 2004: 343ff.

knowledge of Latin and her multilingual abilities at the same time as he presented her with the poem as part of the promotion of the mother tongue. Thus, Block's poem and letter might have influenced Brenner's language in her poems after 1706.<sup>139</sup>

But what about the choice of language in the letters? Interestingly enough, it seems as if Brenner started to write some of her letters in Swedish only after 1706. Before 1706 all preserved letters to and from Brenner were written in Latin, whereas the letters from this year onwards are just as often written in Swedish as in Latin, and occasionally in French or Italian. Brenner and her correspondents did not shun Latin in their later letters, but nevertheless it seems as if the knowledge of Latin did not play as important a role later on in Brenner's career as it did in the beginning, when Latin seems to have been the natural choice for both Brenner and her correspondents.

Does Brenner's choice of language depend on the contents of the letter? It seems clear that she in general preferred Latin in her promotional letters. She chose Swedish for instance in her short, business-like letters to the Royal Chancellery.<sup>140</sup> On the other hand, her personal letter (No. 66) to Margerithe Catrine Spiker was, not surprisingly, written in Swedish. Brenner used both Latin, Swedish and French in her letters to Benzelius. As mentioned before, most of her letters to him concerned the publication of *Poetiske Dikter* and economic matters, and Brenner chose to write these polite and rather elaborated letters in Latin or French, except for a couple of very brief letters or notes, which were written in haste and in Swedish. However, Brenner also sent some more personal letters to Benzelius regarding the education of her children, all in Swedish.

To conclude: almost all the letters in Sophia Brenner's correspondence regarding the promotion of the learned woman or the publication of her poetry were written in Latin or French, whereas the more personal letters in the correspondence more often were written in Swedish (besides the letters to the Royal Chancellery; Swedish was generally used in such letters). The possibility of her letters' being read by others, copied and/or published was clear for Brenner: it is not surprising for instance that her letter to Elias in 1698, whose contents were

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Brenner's poem on the *Agave Americana*, written in 1709, in which she equalled the flowering "aloe" on Swedish soil with the Swedish language: both had progress and prosperity in Sweden (*PD* 1713: 222ff.). See also discussion in Jönsson 2004.

<sup>140</sup> Letter No. 70 with an address to Queen Ulrica Eleonora (regarding the sale of Elias Brenner's collection of coins) and letters Nos. 48 and 49 to King Frederick I of Sweden (in the first one Brenner asked for privilege for her poem on the Passion, and in the other, for the salary due to her husband).

nothing but personal, was nevertheless written in Latin.<sup>141</sup> In elegant Latin, Brenner, troubled by illness and toothache, expressed her wish for the quick return of her absent husband, actually in a rather harsh tone. This letter was posthumously printed in the Swedish newspaper *Allahanda* in 1757.

### 1.9 The making of a poetess

Sophia Brenner's correspondence adds some information regarding how her fame was spread, like rings on the water. To begin with, some important conditions for Brenner's success are revealed in the letters to and from her. Firstly, the great interest in and fascination over the learned women of the time, and the need for a Swedish match to the foreign famous women, is evident. Several letters to Sophia Brenner included an account of the most distinguished learned women in Europe, the letter writer often choosing one *femina docta* for each country, a list to which Sophia Brenner was proudly added.<sup>142</sup>

Secondly, the fact that Brenner's knowledge of foreign languages, especially Latin, was essential for her reputation is also clear (see above). Thirdly, in the letters it is apparent that Sophia Brenner and her husband Elias were that rare bird, a learned couple. Most of the famous learned women never married: in reality, this was a prerequisite for their success, as mentioned before. Mr. and Mrs. Brenner often joined forces, Sophia writing poetry and Elias making copper engravings embellishing the printed poems. A family of 17 children on top of that made Sophia Brenner quite unique as a *femina docta*. No wonder that foreign scholars were eager to visit the Brenners in Stockholm.

As mentioned, von Platen was the first to come to the conclusion that Sophia Brenner was promoted through the assistance of a number of learned men; he asserted that the deliberate promotion explains the fact that her fame rose so quickly. I agree that her success was the result of a promotion, but I would like to emphasise that it was a cooperation between her efforts on the one hand and the support from this group of learned men on the other. von Platen mentions that in addition to her husband, Urban Hiärne and Nils Keder were also acting as promoters. It appears from Brenner's correspondence that Erik Benzeliuss the Younger as well as Johan Gabriel Sparwenfeld should be added to the inner circle of learned men promoting her. Benzeliuss seems to have taken part in the

<sup>141</sup> Letter No. 44.

<sup>142</sup> This was the case with the introductions of letters from Bilberg (No. 41), Forselius (No. 47), Hiärne (No. 54) and Spegel (No. 65).

process of collecting eulogies as well. His nephew Emanuel Swedberg (who later changed his name to Swedenborg) wrote to him from London in 1710 and sent him his distichs in honour of Sophia Brenner, asking Benzelius to correct the poem, if need be, and to send it to Brenner.<sup>143</sup>

Elias was Sophia Brenner's most eager supporter. He had joined the new staff of bourgeois officials within the Royal Chancellery, and Hiärne, Keder, Benzelius and Sparwenfeld were all friends and colleagues. The fact that these powerful men persistently promoted Sophia Brenner was significant for the response she got, which can also be seen for instance in the letter from Dean Forselius.<sup>144</sup>

The letters often reveal that Sophia Brenner had a considerable role in the promotional process herself: sometimes it is even possible to see her directing that process. In 1696 Brenner approached one Swedish and one Danish bishop, as mentioned above. Her efforts regarding Bishop Kingo in Denmark (sending the elaborate Latin letter and the Swedish poem in his honour, and several copies of other poems as well) seemed at first to have failed, since Kingo never responded. But as a matter of fact this approach turned out to be very important indeed to the rise of her fame. Firstly, it generated other contacts and supporters in the Danes Otto Sperling and Johannes Dirichsen, both sending her laudatory poems as well as letter(s) (according to letter VI, Kingo sent Brenner's work to other learned men; Sperling and Dirichsen had for instance both been shown her poems and letters). Secondly, it seems that Sperling also told his German correspondent Sebastian Kortholt about Sophia Brenner, resulting in Kortholt's dedication of his work on poetesses to Brenner in 1700.

Sperling's letter to Brenner initiated their interesting correspondence. Their exchange of letters was meritorious in itself, which is proven for instance by the fact that a copy of Brenner's first, elegant letter to Sperling has been preserved in the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, Germany. The copy in question was probably brought to Wolfenbüttel by the young Benzelius who visited the library in February 1698. The famous Leibniz was librarian in Wolfenbüttel. Benzelius might have given the copy of the letter to Leibniz already in September 1697, when he first met him (in Hannover).<sup>145</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Letter from Emanuel Swedberg to Eric Benzelius the Younger October 13, 1710, G 19:3:b, UUB.

<sup>144</sup> No. 47. Forselius wrote to her as a result of the eager promotion by Urban Hiärne of her.

<sup>145</sup> Brenner's letter was dated March 29, 1697, and only a week later Benzelius, who was on his way to Europe, visited Sophia and Elias Brenner and got their autographs in his *Stammbuch*. On February 10–11, 1698, he visited the library in Wolfenbüttel (according to Raabe 1998 (*Leser und Lektüre vom 17. bis 19. Jahrhundert. Die Ausleihbücher der Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel*): 21.

The diplomats obviously considered it a duty to promote the exchange of information regarding learned women: we have seen that the Danish envoys Bolle Luxdorph and Johannes Grüner acted as messengers for Sophia Brenner and brought her letters and poems to Kingo, Dirichsen and Sperling. Similarly, the envoy from Wolfenbüttel, Lorenz Hertel, who had obviously been asked to collect interesting literature “from the North”, reported via Johann Joachim Röber to Leibniz in September 1697 that he had made contact with a learned woman. Röber made copies of two of Brenner’s funeral poems and added them to the letter to Leibniz with a promise to send more curiosities from the North.<sup>146</sup> Leibniz answered him that Sophia Brenner was already known to him; he had seen what she had written in Benzeliu’s *Stammbuch*, and moreover added that he approved of her poems: “Car elle prend le vol bien haut au delà de son sexe. Et les vers que vous nous avés envoyés sont asseurement fort bons.”<sup>147</sup> Via Leibniz’ extensive contacts with Europe’s *intelligentia*, Brenner’s fame probably spread further.

Let us now return to the question regarding Brenner’s own partaking in the promotion, which should be connected to the question of her professionalism. As we have seen, von Platen defined Brenner as a professional poet, at least to some extent. He did not find hard evidence but based his conclusion on the criteria presented above.<sup>148</sup> The study of Brenner’s own correspondence as well as letters in which she is mentioned confirms von Platen’s conclusions regarding her professionalism: moreover, direct evidence has been found that proves this. In 1710 Brenner mentions the ongoing project of publishing her poetry as being *hoc meum propositum*,<sup>149</sup> and later on in the same correspondence she confesses that the project was originated *lucris causa*, that is, for the purpose of earning money.<sup>150</sup> In the letter from Benzeliu’s brother to himself, referred to above (in footnote 71, chapter 1.6), Benzeliu is informed that Brenner wished to “make a dedication” to the publication of the second posthumous volume of Elias Brenner’s *Thesaurus*, and that she had been granted a few hundred “riksdaler” in advance for this work. Another relevant fact is that the poems Brenner wrote in vain, that is, those which did not occasion a response either of money or of a poem in return, were not printed in her book. This was for instance the case with the poem she sent to Kingo in Denmark. She did work on commission,

<sup>146</sup> Letter No. 282 from Röber to Leibniz, September 8, 1697, Leibniz ed. 1923–: 475–476.

<sup>147</sup> Letter No. 39 from Leibniz to Lorenz Hertel, September 14, 1697, Leibniz ed. 1923–: 75–76.

<sup>148</sup> See chapter 1.2.

<sup>149</sup> See the summaries of letters Nos. 28 and 36 to Benzeliu (chapter 1.6).

<sup>150</sup> Letter No. 36.

which appears in a letter from Elias Brenner to Nils Gyldenstolpe (January 30, 1711).<sup>151</sup>

A fascinating example of her status, her professionalism and her expectations regarding the response to her poems meets us via a correspondence between two Russian officials in 1725: A Russian diplomat in Sweden, V. Tatischev, asked Sophia Brenner to write a poem to celebrate the memory of Tsar Peter the Great in 1725. Moreover, he made an outline of the desirable contents for her poem.<sup>152</sup> The poetess who lauded King Charles XII was accordingly exhorted by a Russian diplomat to laud his enemy! The plan which Tatischev made for her was, not surprisingly, highly diplomatic, without any reference to the Nordic War or the Swedish King whatsoever; it was only to be mentioned that the Tsar had "conquered enormous provinces".<sup>153</sup> On the 9<sup>th</sup> of April, Tatischev reported to the Russian court in St. Petersburg (more specifically to the Secretary of the Cabinet, I. Cherkasov) that he had found her unwilling to write the poem because she had not received any response regarding a poem she had written on the coronation of Tsarina Catherine I in 1724. Moreover, it was said explicitly that this was the reason that she did not print the poem. The diplomat asked that Sophia Brenner should be paid for the poem to the Tsarina, mentioning the proper sum to be paid; in the meantime, he said, he had promised to pay her himself.<sup>154</sup> The Tsarina decided that the money requested and a coronation medal in gold as well were to be sent to Sophia Brenner.<sup>155</sup> As this had been reported to Brenner via a letter from Cherkasov to Tatischev, Brenner declared that she was now willing to write the poem in memory of Tsar Peter. Tatischev reported to Cherkasov in June of 1725, that Sophia Brenner had been grateful for the news of the "gifts" she was to receive, and, being given Tatischev's plan for the poem, she promised to do the work.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>151</sup> Letter from Elias Brenner to Nils Gyldenstolpe, January 30, 1711, F 207, UUB.

<sup>152</sup> Scharypkin 1980: 73ff. Scharypkin refers to P. Pekarsky *Novyjja izvestija o V.N. Tatischeve*, Saint Petersburg 1864: 18.

<sup>153</sup> Scharypkin 1980: 18–19.

<sup>154</sup> RGADA, (Russian State Archives of Ancient Acts), Moscow, F.9, Petra I, ord. II, kn. 74, p. 40v. The payment and the medal were to be delivered by a Count Bonde (Gustaf Ulf Bonde). The correspondence in question is printed in D.M. Scharypkin, *Skandinavskaja literatura v Rossii*, Leningrad 1980: 73–74. See also Pekarskij 1864: 18. I am grateful to Dr. Alexander Pereswetoff-Morath for translations of the Russian texts in this context.

<sup>155</sup> RGADA, Moscow, F.9, Petra I, ord. II, kn. 74: 56v.

<sup>156</sup> Scharypkin 1980, 59r. One month later (July 23<sup>rd</sup>), Tatischev informed Cherkasov that he had given Brenner further extracts and that he expected to receive her poem shortly; he also asked Cherkasov to consult the Tsarina on whether Brenner's poem was to be printed in Stockholm or if the manuscript was to be sent directly to St. Petersburg (Scharypkin 1980: 71r). See also Jucht 1971:

I have searched in vain in St. Petersburg, and libraries and archives in Moscow have also been contacted in the search, regrettably with no result. Since neither the poems nor any letters, which Brenner usually sent together with her poems, have been found, we do not know whether the poem in memory of Tsar Peter the Great was actually written, or whether she received her payment. Nevertheless, we get a good picture of her role, status and self-confidence as a professional author.

In general, Brenner appears to be aware of her position, her possibilities and the consequences of her actions. Her use of different *topoi* in her letters is also indicative of this. I agree with Ruth Nilsson, who considered Brenner's fluctuation between confident self-esteem and frequent words of modesty as being dependant on the reactions she got as a learned woman.<sup>157</sup> Brenner employs the modesty *topos* quite often in her letters, especially at the beginning of her career. Appearing too confident in public was usually not a good tactic. Therefore, Urban Hiärne stated in the preface to *TF* (the collection of eulogies which was printed together with *PD 1713*) that Sophia Brenner opposed having these eulogies printed, the eulogies she had put such an effort into collecting. According to a letter from Elias Brenner to Benzelius, Brenner did indeed hesitate to publish her eulogies.<sup>158</sup> Hiärne, on the other hand, openly stated that the reason for printing the eulogies, in his opinion, was to justify the publication of Sophia Brenner's poetry:<sup>159</sup> this was probably a statement of fact. Nevertheless, for the

296–335. *Istorisheskie zapiski*. 88 (1971), 296–335; Poezdka V.N. Tatišsheva v Šveciju (1724–1726 gg.) The contacts between Tatischev, Cherkasov and Sophia Brenner were related in an article by J. Küttner (Küttner 1990); I tried to trace the contacts further via this article.

<sup>157</sup> von Platen, on the other hand, suggested that the fluctuation had something to do with Sophia Brenner's personality, "är utslag av en cyklisk läggning" (von Platen 1985: 107). I disagree with von Platen regarding this.

<sup>158</sup> See Aspelin 1896: 171, where the letter is printed. The collection of eulogies printed by Urban Hiärne did not consist of all the laudatory poems and letters Brenner had received by that time; the letters from Lars Forselius and Haquin Spegel, which revealed the process of collecting eulogies, were for instance not published there. On the other hand, in the second part of *Poetiske Dikter*, published in 1732, all these eulogies were printed.

<sup>159</sup> "Igitur, quo enixius id Tu egisti, ut Clarorum de Te virorum iudicia occultarentur, eò nobis incessit ardentius studium inqvirendi vulgandique, quae in laudes Tuas, seu vincta oratione, seu extra numeros, tum nostrates, tum alienigenae dixere. Ego quidem etiam dolo mihi ad hoc utendum duxi, sed, uti arbitror, justo pioque: dum ex chartophylacio Tuo depromtas <sc. elogias>, & à Marito Tuo, Viro Nobilissimo Eruditissimoque mihi creditas, ut saltem legerentur, exscribendas etiam clanculum curavi. Nimirum duo magnopere veritus sum; tum, ut non satis intelligere Te, hoc decus suum, patria nostra videretur, si Te taceret; tum, ut quae per veram modestiam Tu celanda censes, alii per supercilium pressa existimarent, & suas de Te opiniones ad blattas & tineas damnari crederent, quia spernerentur. Qvapropter ignosce, Domina, si arte id à Te ex-

learned woman it was wise not to show off too much. Sophia Brenner was proud of her poetry, but to appear all too eager to publish one's own eulogies might be detrimental in the long run.

torquere in publicos usus & patriae gloriam fas duxerim, qvod consilio, monitis, precibus non potui." (*TF*)





## Chapter Two

# THE BRENNER–SPERLING CORRESPONDENCE

### 2.1 Introduction

Was a letter written in the 18<sup>th</sup> century anything like ours? Well, it was, and it was not.<sup>1</sup> There was, as we have seen in the summaries of the letters of Sophia Brenner's correspondence, a wide spectrum of different kinds of letters. There were literary letters that were never meant to be sent,<sup>2</sup> as well as private letters in our sense of the word. But many letters had several functions, in a way they do not (so often) have today.

At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the concept of an international literary community, *respublica literaria*, was widespread. Learned men and women presented themselves as citizens of an intellectual community, which aspired to embrace the whole learned world regardless of nationality, social standing or sex. Even if the members – men and women of letters – were quite few, the literary community was expanding as new sciences were established.<sup>3</sup> Letter-writing was the main source for information. The letters served several functions: the scholarly need to spread, seek and exchange information, and the more general one, to criticize, recommend, gossip or advertise.

Even if the *respublica literaria* welcomed women, the group of learned women who actually took part in this intellectual communication was small. At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century only occasionally did they have the opportunity to study, even if the debate on women's right to study had been intense for centuries,<sup>4</sup> and the women who wrote poems and letters or even participated in the intellectual debate as scholars were extremely few. Extensive correspondence in Latin between a woman and a man was equally rare, especially in Scandinavia, where the number of learned women were easily counted, a fact Sophia Brenner mentioned herself in her first letter (No. II, 5 of the present edition): "I am

<sup>1</sup> See Alenius 1987 (*Brev til eftertiden. Om Charlotta Dorothea Biehls selvbiografi og andre breve*). Alenius discusses different kinds of Neo-Latin letters in Denmark, also the question of what a "private" letter was during that time.

<sup>2</sup> There is however no such letter in Brenner's correspondence.

<sup>3</sup> Dibon 1978: 45.

<sup>4</sup> See further below.

indeed affected by no slight anguish as I find that learned women are no less rare now in our Sweden than they were in the old times.”

The correspondence between Sophia Brenner and Danish Professor Otto Sperling the Younger opens many questions. The most obvious concerns the purpose and function of these letters: why did Brenner and Sperling correspond and what did this particular correspondence mean to them?

Some answers will be presented to these questions in this chapter. First, however, I will give some background information. Otto Sperling the Younger needs a closer presentation, and I will also give a brief presentation of the *gymnaecium* genre, that is, catalogues of learned women.

Born in Denmark in 1634, Sperling received private education in his early years and then studied at the university in the German town of Helmstadt for three years, mainly law.<sup>5</sup> For twenty years he supported himself as a private tutor while simultaneously doing his own research and studies in Germany, the Netherlands, France and England. His life was shadowed by the destiny of his father, Otto Sperling, whom he tried to help in different ways after having returned to Copenhagen in 1670. Sperling the Elder was the physician of Corfitz Ulfeldt and his wife Leonora Christina (daughter of the Danish King Christian IV). Ulfeldt and his wife were imprisoned for treason and Sperling the Elder was later imprisoned together with them, remaining in prison until he died in 1681.<sup>6</sup> In 1674, Sperling the Younger obtained a doctor's degree in law in Copenhagen. His occupations from then on were as multifaceted as his interests. He was a lawyer in Hamburg and was employed to organize the library of Colbert in Paris; moreover, he was a member of the Royal Council in Copenhagen. In 1692, he was appointed Professor of History at an academy in Copenhagen (“Ridderakademin”). In 1697, however, he was dismissed with permission to receive half his salary, due to differences of opinion with students and colleagues. From then on, he often complained about financial difficulties. Sperling stayed in Denmark and, after the coronation of the new King, Frederick IV, applied for a number of positions without any luck. Eventually, he was reinstalled as Professor (in 1701), but still did not get a higher salary. He had

<sup>5</sup> The biographic information has been collected from *DBL*, Alenius 1988, and Werlauff 1844.

<sup>6</sup> Otto Sperling the Younger tried to support both his father and Leonora Christina, among other things by inspiring them to write their autobiographies (Alenius 1987: 25.). In the catalogue of the books of Brenner's library, Corfitz Ulfeldt's apology in Danish is listed (*Catalogus ... Brenneri* No. 80).

friends and patrons who gave him support, and he mortgaged his library and his coins.<sup>7</sup> In 1715 he died.

To write a catalogue of learned women was just one of Sperling's many projects. A true polyhistor, he was constantly doing studies in numismatics, philology, literature, Nordic history and philology, and so on. Most of Sperling's work remained unpublished. Among his publications we find (for example) five dissertations concerning Nordic history and numismatics,<sup>8</sup> as well as collections of occasional poetry in Latin and German.

Among Sperling's many unpublished manuscripts, The Royal Library in Copenhagen houses two volumes entitled "Collectanea de foeminis omnis aevi doctis". Probably as early as in the 1660's, Sperling began to collect information for this work about learned women and to write their biographies and bibliographies. At his death he had information regarding 1,399 women, but the work was far from ready for publication.<sup>9</sup> Yet, his manuscript has provided much information of use to later scholars.<sup>10</sup> Sperling's intention was obviously to present the multitude of learned women who had become renowned throughout history, as well as in his own times. He approached the contemporary learned women that he wished to include in his work with letters and asked them for information regarding their literary work, as he did with Sophia Brenner.<sup>11</sup> In Copenhagen, Sperling's letters to 20 learned women in Denmark, Norway, Germany and Sweden (e.g., to Queen Christina) together with letters from eleven women addressed to him (a letter from the famous Italian Elena

<sup>7</sup> Sperling's collection of coins was bought by the Danish King, and in 1712, Sperling sold his entire library of more than 8,000 volumes at an auction. Sperling's proclaimed poverty has been observed in all the biographical sources mentioned above. Yet, he might have exaggerated his financial difficulties. I wish to thank Prof. Jørgen Steen-Jensen at Danish National Museum in Copenhagen for bringing my attention to this. Steen-Jensen observes that Sperling's collection of coins was very valuable, and he sold the collection to the King before he had the auction of his library. Thus, the auction seems not to have been caused by a difficult financial situation.

<sup>8</sup> His dissertation *De nummis non cunis* was an important contribution to Nordic numismatics. For further information regarding Sperling as a numismatist, see Kromann & Steen-Jensen 1995.

<sup>9</sup> The manuscript is to be found in GKS 2110 a – b, Cph. Sperling also inserted supplementary information, such as letters including *curricula vitae* (for instance Sophia Brenner's), in the manuscript.

<sup>10</sup> E.g., for A. Thura, who in 1732 published *Gynæceum Danica Litteratum* and F. C. Schönaus, *Samling af Danske Lærde Fruentimer*, 1753, according to Alenius 1988: 164–165.

<sup>11</sup> Sperling of course also asked for and received information regarding learned women from his male correspondents. Alenius (1988: 168) describes Sperling's approach to his work as follows, "He himself in letters to his colleagues does not treat the women as miracles, tenth muses, or exceptions extolled above their sex – they are merely objects to be described, counted, and correctly classified."

Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia is unfortunately lost) bear evidence of his method.<sup>12</sup> As frequent as his letter contacts with these learned women were, Sperling's correspondence with Sophia Brenner stands out as the most extensive one, considering the amount of letters and the twelve years it lasted. Sperling did not keep in contact with any other woman for more than a couple of years.

Even if women who acquired erudition including knowledge of vernacular or classical languages were still considered extraordinary at the end of the 17th century, quite a few learned women appeared already in the early Renaissance. The most famous among them were the Italians Isotta Nogarola (1418–1466), Cassandra Fedele (1465–1558), Laura Cereta (1469–1499) and Olympia Fulvia Morata (1526–1555), together with the French Christine de Pizan (1365–1431), the first female professional author. de Pizan initiated the debate on the nature of womankind, on woman's role in society and her right to study, generally referred to as the "Debate over *The Romance of the Rose*". An increasing number of learned women generated even more publications concerning the nature of woman and her role in society. During the 15th and 16th centuries no less than 900 publications concerning these questions saw the light of day.<sup>13</sup>

Quite often, a catalogue of learned women was added at the end of these publications. The exemplary aim was clearly to inspire other women to pursue studies and to encourage men to promote women to do so. Noblewomen were in the majority among the women who got the opportunity to study, but during the 17th century, learned women of the bourgeois or lower upper-class appeared more often.<sup>14</sup>

From the 16th and 17th centuries about 150 learned Nordic women are known.<sup>15</sup> Swedish learned women during the 18th century have been thoroughly explored by A. Öhrberg, who has found and presented Swedish women writers during the Swedish Age of Liberty (1720–1772), a total of 141 female

<sup>12</sup> See Alenius 1988: 168–169, for a list of these women. Sperling's collection of letters in Latin to and from women is the most comprehensive in Scandinavia (Alenius 1993: 228).

<sup>13</sup> Westman Berg 1984: 67.

<sup>14</sup> See Carrdus 2003.

<sup>15</sup> According to Alenius 1988: 167. Alenius observes that most of these women are Danish and Norwegian, since the basic source for information is Otto Sperling's unpublished work. "One cannot help wondering if Sweden, Iceland, or Finland had so few learned women during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries as appears today, only because there was no Otto Sperling to write about them." (ibidem).

authors of printed texts. Only a couple of these women knew or wrote in Latin.<sup>16</sup>

Catalogues of learned women, which were produced already in Classical Antiquity, were accordingly quite common in the 17th and 18th centuries. By displaying exempla, arguments for women's intellectual capacity, their right to study were strengthened.<sup>17</sup> M. Alenius has investigated the genre in Scandinavia. She defines the genre as "a rational panegyric catalogue of women and their intellectual pursuits."<sup>18</sup> The gynaecea of the 17th and 18th centuries in Scandinavia are quite easily counted. A handful of them, written in Latin or Danish, were printed in Denmark, most of which benefited from Sperling's unpublished work. In Sweden, only two gynaecea are known from this time.<sup>19</sup>

The famous learned women of the early Renaissance generally knew Latin and Greek, as well as several vernaculars. The epithet *docta* was normally granted only those women who knew the classical languages, or at least Latin.<sup>20</sup> However, at the end of the 17th century the number of learned women had increased, and, as already mentioned, women of the lower upper-class were also added to the group. At the same time, the general use of the vernaculars increased at the expense of Latin, and the political implications of the vernacular became more important as a manifestation of patriotism.<sup>21</sup> In this context it is interesting to note that the definition of a learned woman was discussed and eventually changed. In 1695, one of the more well-known authors of the *gynaecea*, Christian Franz Paullini, in his *Hoch- und Wohlgelehrtes Teutsches Frauenzimmer* defined those women who knew Latin as "hoch-gelehrte", while the

<sup>16</sup> Except for Sophia Brenner only Hedvig Charlotta Nordenflycht and Anna Maria Elvia (see *Index personarum*), Öhrberg 2001: 44–45.

<sup>17</sup> See Lerner 1993: 256ff.

<sup>18</sup> Alenius 1991: 178. *Gynaeceum* occurs as a title at least once: in J. A. Planerus: *Tactatus* [sic] *De Gynaeceo Docto, d.i. Von gelehrtem Frauenzimmer*, Wittenberg 1715. See also Alenius 1993, "Om alla slags berömvärda kvinnopersoner. Gynaeceum en kvinnolitteraturhistoria", in *Nordisk kvinnolitteraturhistoria*, 1: 217–232. To my knowledge, there is no major study on this genre in Europe. However, there are separate studies which present the catalogues, such as this study by Alenius of the Nordic *gynaecea*, or for the German ones by Woods & Fürstenwald 1984, (*Schrijfstellerinnen, Künstlerinnen und gelehrte Frauen des deutschen Barock. Ein Lexikon*).

<sup>19</sup> Alenius 1991: 178–180. The two Swedish *gynaecea* are *Försök til en Historia öfver Namnkunniga, Men I synnerhet Lärda Fruentimmer* by C. P. Westrin, Stockholm 1792, and A.A. von Stiernman's "Gynaeceum Sveciae Litteratum, eller Afhandling om lärda Swenska Fruentimmer" (unpublished; parts of it were, however, printed in *Stockholms Magasin*, (April 1780: 207–222, May 1780: 247–254).

<sup>20</sup> See for instance Woods & Fürstenwald 1984: X (=10).

<sup>21</sup> See Jönsson 2001: 25–34, Jönsson 2004: 332–351, and Göransson 2000: 301–307.

other women were “wohl-gelehrte”.<sup>22</sup> Alenius has observed that Sperling extended the notion of learning beyond the common understanding of a learned woman.<sup>23</sup> As we will see, already in his first letter to Sophia Brenner Sperling briefly presented his definition of a learned woman as one who had a literary production of any kind, in any language. Sperling’s view was adopted by later writers of *gynaecea* in Denmark.<sup>24</sup>

Two aspects of the correspondence between Brenner and Sperling will be discussed in the following. The first aspect is the significance of earlier correspondences between learned women and men, which may have served as role models for the two present letter writers, and the second aspect is the views on women Brenner and Sperling expressed in the correspondence.

## 2.2 Literary models

A discussion of the circumstances behind the composition of the letters is important when approaching a correspondence. Letter writers in early modern times were formally trained (in school). The tradition of model letters was very strong indeed; they were included in almost all manuals. It was highly recommended to make one’s own library of letters worth imitating or considered as inspiration.<sup>25</sup> In the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century, letter-writing was influenced by different ideals, which partly drew on traditional theory and were partly based on new ideas.

<sup>22</sup> Paullinus’ work was published in Frankfurt/Leipzig in 1706.

<sup>23</sup> Alenius (1991: 186) presents a discussion (during 1702–1703) between Sperling and a Danish Bishop, Jens Bircherod, regarding the definition of a learned woman. In his reply to Bircherod’s remark that the most learned among the Danish women did not know Greek or Hebrew, Sperling asserts the following, “But we can also establish learning solely within the Danish language, or within one foreign language or another; to the extent that it is unreasonable to exclude completely from any kind of learning those who have taken it upon themselves to translate and rework books in their own native language, or have written their own independent commentaries to something in Danish. They are, in fact, all famous for their writings, even though they have not acquired the basic learning which you require” (M. Alenius’ translation). Alenius remarks, “It was logical to do this if one looked at the possibilities available to women for stimulating the intellect at all. It was also in the spirit of the time to recognize the value of cultural transmission in the mother tongue in the form of translations, poetry, and scholarship”.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>25</sup> *Exempla* were as a rule always presented for different kinds of letters. Entire letters as well as parts of letters were recommended as models. Erasmus, for instance, in his *De conscribendis epistolis*, presented *sylvae*, parts of letters suitable to be studied and copied by the pupils in school practising letter-writing. See for instance his *Monitoriae sylva* and *Amatoriae sylva* in Erasmus ed. 1971: 503–513.

The history of letter writing is old and the tradition of letter theory can be traced back to Greek scholars in Antiquity, who defined and discussed different kinds of letters.<sup>26</sup> The Medieval *ars dictaminis*, which was based on *formulae*, served the need to instruct officials how to write letters at the chancelleries. The rules of classical rhetoric were applied, different parts of the letter were defined and many manuals recommended that letters were first composed in short forms, which were later to be expanded. In the Renaissance, the rediscovery of Cicero's *Epistulae ad familiares* as well as of Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* marked a change in manuals on letter theory. The Ciceronian letters in particular were presented as ideals. Letter writing flourished, and, subsequently, manuals were even more numerous than in the Middle Ages. Erasmus *De conscribendis epistolis*, which appeared in no less than 83 editions during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, had a significant impact,<sup>27</sup> and probably even more his vast correspondence, which was spread throughout Europe. Erasmus pointed out that the most important thing to remember when writing a letter was *decorum*, the adaption of the subject, language, style and purpose. Other influential humanist letter theorists were Juan Vives and Justus Lipsius. Even though the humanist *ars epistolica* often distanced itself from the formulaic Medieval *ars dictaminis*, it should be emphasised that there are more similarities between the two systems than there are differences. Both systems built on classical rhetoric, and presented formulas, *topoi* and model letters, *exempla*. A section which treated the use of titles was still ubiquitous in the manuals. The formal disposition of the letter in different *partes* was also still recommended.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> The oldest preserved treatises by Pseudo-Demetrios, Libanios and Philostratos are briefly discussed by Smolak (in Erasmus 1995:8: X-XII). A survey of manuals of letter theory from Antiquity to modern time from a Swedish perspective was presented in Lindberger 1977.

<sup>27</sup> Much research remains to be done concerning to what extent and in what way Erasmus' manual on letter-writing contributed to humanist epistolography in the centuries to come. The abundance of examples in his manual is, however, considered to have been his chief contribution (cf. for instance Fantazzi 2002: 42).

<sup>28</sup> J. Henderson expressed similar thoughts (Henderson 2002: 17), "The humanists of the Renaissance found the problem of generic description especially difficult because they had inherited two, often contradictory, theories of epistolography: Classical descriptions of the familiar letter and the Medieval *ars dictaminis*. The former conceived the letter as a conversation with friends or family, the latter, as an official document. The result of this dual heritage is that Renaissance manuals of letter writing often quoted the Classical *topos* that the letter is the mirror of the soul or cited ancient distinctions between the letter and other forms of composition, such as oratory, philosophy, and history, then belied those claims by offering detailed instructions on letter writing as an exercise in rhetoric preparing adolescents for the professions and for public office."



Letter theory in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century still depended heavily on the classical rhetorical tradition and letters were regularly defined on the basis of their *causa* – the reason for writing. Later on, the theorists more often described and defined letters from their contents (*materia*) and from their stylistic level (in French letter theory expressed as *sentiment*, in which the ambition was to compose letters that imitated a conversation in the parlours of the nobility).

#### The context of the correspondence

Sophia Brenner and Otto Sperling the Younger were both well educated. He had no doubt been trained to compose letters in school and was a prolific letter writer, as can be learnt from his copy-books.<sup>29</sup> Latin was his second language after his mother tongue, German. He wrote letters on a daily basis and, as it seems, performed much of his scholarly work through his epistolary contacts outside Copenhagen. Sophia Brenner was given almost the same education as her brother, and from the inventory of her letters presented in this book we can gather that she too wrote a number of letters. As was mentioned above, in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century different ideals were cherished throughout Europe. Letter theory in Germany (influenced by a bourgeois ideal) was for instance not at all consistent with letter theory in France. However, it took some time for new tendencies to reach Sweden; it is uncertain to what extent the French “new” style (introduced in France in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) was established in Sweden at the end of that century; a Swedish translation of de la Serre’s *Le secretaire à la mode* appeared only in 1755.<sup>30</sup> Sophia Brenner, whose mother tongue was also German, would have been most familiar with the more traditional German style. Typical features of the German letter of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century are strikingly similar to features in Brenner’s Latin letters to Sperling (expressions of modesty and of gratitude, questions answered in due order, as well as *formules de politesse*).<sup>31</sup> The period at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> / beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is an interesting one in epistolography, especially considering that the “modern” personal letter gradually makes its appearance. Admittedly, the new letter theories were mostly applied to vernacular letters; by the choice of Latin, the correspondent primarily would have had model letters in this lan-

<sup>29</sup> The copy-books, including ca. 500 drafts of letters, are to be found in Cph, GKS 3092: V:1–2, 4°.

<sup>30</sup> Hansson 1988: 42ff. According to Hansson, impulses of the new style had reached some groups within the Swedish aristocracy in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>31</sup> See Åslund 1995: 64.

guage in mind.<sup>32</sup> We know only some of the (perhaps many) books Brenner and Sperling had read and were influenced by regarding letter writing.<sup>33</sup> One example, though, of the kind of manuals that would have been familiar to both correspondents, appears in Morhof's *Polyhistor*, mentioned by Brenner in letter II. Chapter XIV in this book is entitled "Exempla imitationum". Morhof introduces his chapter by saying that he presents these examples for the benefit of both students and teachers.<sup>34</sup> The first examples consist of brief quotations from Cicero's letters *Ad familiares* resolved in a number of propositions, which are further explained by Morhof, as well as of a number of different variations of formulas and passages synonymous with the normally rather brief quotations from Cicero.<sup>35</sup> In chapter XV entitled "Sylloge exemplorum. Strictiore imitatione ex Epistolis Ciceronis, quas Melchior Junius secundum omnia genera collegit, expressorum", examples of imitations of fifteen different *genera* of letters are presented.<sup>36</sup>

As imbued as the correspondents in early modern times were with the knowledge acquired from their educations, the correspondence they eventually carried on as adults was nevertheless often very different from the model letters they had studied in the manuals. It is certainly important to study elements other than the strictly formal.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the impact of the new ideals for letter writing on Latin correspondence of the time would be worthwhile to study. In Sweden, Neo-Latin correspondences of Erik Benzelius, Carl von Linné, Axel Oxenstierna and Johannes Annorelius have been published in critical editions, (see the bibliography).

<sup>33</sup> In *Catalogus librorum beati assessoris Eliae Brenneri* the following books of relevance here are listed: August Buchnerus, *De commutata ratione* and *De exercitatione styli*, D. G. Morhof, *De disciplina argutiarum*, and Schefferus' *De stylo illiusque exercitiis*.

<sup>34</sup> "illa hic apponere voluimus, quae vel discipulis, vel etiam Magistris speciminis loco esse possint, quo in illâ palaestra modo exerceri debeant.", Morhof 1708: 518.

<sup>35</sup> By exemplum VI. Variatio Formulae per Figuras. Morhof demonstrates 77 (!) various ways of expressing Cicero's "Tu velim tibi ita persuadeas, nullam rem esse vel minimam, quae ad te pertineat, quae mihi non charior sit, quàm meae est omnes"; two examples are "*II. Jusjurandum*. Ne vivam, nisi vivo tuus. Hos ego oculos tango, quibus te fero. Hanc ego dextram testor, fidei mei pignus, nihil me omisurum diligentiae, in rebus, quae ad te pertinent, vel cum dispendio mearum, rectè curandis.", and "*19. Exaggeratio*. Quis credat, tanti tibi nomen meum esse, ut negotio tuo arduo conficiendo homuncionem hunc praeficere non dedigneris. Ego verò tanti beneficii memor, omnem ei rei curam, operam, diligentiam, nervos, Vires, vitam spiritumque ipsum impendam."

<sup>36</sup> The different genera presented by Morhof/Junius are: *epistola commendatoria, petitoria, adhortatoria, suasoria, consultatoria, officiosa, conciliatoria, consolatoria, gratulatoria, eucharistica, laudatoria, reprehensoria, expostulatoria, querela, nunciatoria*.

<sup>37</sup> I presented an overview in the Leuven paper referred to above and highlighted some aspects when approaching a correspondence like the one between Brenner and Sperling.

## Models and typical themes

In the present chapter, my ambition has not been to seek out and find the complete body of literature, primarily letters, from which the *topoi* and *exempla* were collected, nor to attempt to validate their impact. As with all literature, echoes of earlier texts, ancient classical as well as early humanist letters and other works, are numerous, and I do not at all claim to have identified more than a handful of them. However, in the search for possible models I have encountered some sources which seem relevant. Both Brenner and Sperling were well acquainted with the work of well-known learned women, Sperling via his research on learned women and Brenner by way of her self-assumed role as one of the first public apologists of women's right to study in Sweden (which will be discussed further below). It seemed probable that the most famous correspondences between learned men and women may have served in part as models for Brenner and Sperling when composing their letters. I have made comparisons with earlier correspondences through which learned women made themselves known, and which were probably known to Brenner and Sperling. In the following passages, *loci* and *topoi* from some of these sources, which are echoed in the present correspondence, will be displayed.

Elizabeth Jane Weston (1581–1612) was born in England but lived in Prague most of her life. She was one of the most well-known and revered learned women and poets of her age. Her career is in some ways similar to that of Sophia Brenner. A scholar and poet, she wrote occasional poetry to support, her mother, her brother and herself. She corresponded with several of the famous humanists, e.g., Scaliger, Melissus and Heinsius, and created a *persona* for herself in her poems and letters. She preferred to be referred to by the epithet “virgo Anglia”, even though she lived in Prague and moreover in 1603 married a German lawyer and gave birth to seven children.<sup>38</sup> Her correspondence was fairly well-known; it was lauded and recommended by Morhof in his *Polyhistor*, a work which evidently both Sperling and Brenner were well acquainted with.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> See Hosington 1997: 109 ff., and Cheney 1997: 119–128. Another not unimportant similarity between Brenner and Weston is the deliberate self-presentation, or self-promotion, they both displayed. Both women had learned promoters on their side, who promptly acted as intermediaries; Weston's patron Georg Martin von Baldhoven published her poetry twice, the second time in 1608 reedited together with letters by and to Weston as well as laudatory poems in her praise. Urban Hiärne took it upon himself to publish Brenner's poetry in a similar way. It might also be added that von Baldhoven was the first German to publish a *gynaeceum*. In his *Catalogus doctarum virginum et foeminarum*, printed in 1606, he included 70 women.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Brenner's reference to Morhof (presenting Sperling's forthcoming work on learned women) in her first letter to Sperling (No. II). Among many exemplary male humanist letter writers, Mor-

In several letters by Weston passages similar to the ones in the letters of the present edition occur, as seen in the following:

Brenner, X, 4: Quantum me levarunt in hoc adversantis fortunae curriculo consolationes tuae tam candide mihi oblatae, vix dici potest. Weston, III, 13:<sup>40</sup> Valde me levarunt in hoc adversantis fortunae curriculo nostro tuae eruditionis et consolationis plenissimae literae; ex quibus laeticiam cepi, maestissima alias, non vulgarem.

Brenner, II, 3: Quod interim, sive humanitatis exuperantia sive ingenioli mei tenuitate adductus, tantam eruditionis laudem mihi tribuis meque simul egregio huic Celebrium Foeminarum numero adscribere dignatus es, id totum insigni genij tui benignitati acceptum fero. Weston, III, 14: Sed quas mihi tribuis laudes, meae nunquam non imbecillitatis memor, vix agnosco; quin potius tuo in me favori & humanitati adscribo...

Sperling, VI, 3: Ne diffidas tuis humeris, plura ferre possunt, modò, quo es ingenio, Te aplices. Ibidem: Quid enim scriptionis possim non video: nec libenter materiam humeris meis graviolem suscipio; ne si parum succedat, animos aliorum offendam; & mea ipsius tenuitate angar: scribam tamen aliquid cum vacaro.

Brenner, XIV, 1: Nihil sane unquam mihi fuit gratius, Nobilissime Vir, quam vel tuas legere literas vel meas ad te dare. .... (ibidem, 3) Sed quid est quod ego vicissim reponam, nisi quod memoriam tantæ benevolentiae animo meo perpetuis imprimam notis, quas nec locorum distantia nec tempus ullum eradicare valeat. Weston, III, 19: Perpetuis meo cordi impressum notis ex animo meo evellere atque eradicare possit. ... Neque mihi quicquam quam vel literas tuas legere vel meas ad te dare contingere potest optatius.

Brenner, V, 1: Verum, quando rerum domesti- Weston, III, 24: Quae non nisi candoris et

hof recommends the study of the letters of Olympia Fulvia Morata, *Westonia Laura* (my italics, Elizabeth Jane Weston perhaps being confused with Laura Cereta) and Aloisia Sigaea (Morhof 1708, cap. XXIV: 335). Weston's work is not listed among the books in *Catalogus ... Brenneri*. It is however obvious that Brenner was well acquainted with, for instance, apologies for learned women which were not listed in the catalogue of Brenner's library (see chapter 2.3). Sperling's biography of Weston (No. 160 in his manuscript) is detailed (ranging over pages 206–207, 209, 215, 217, 219, 221, 223 and 225). Brenner's promotor Eric Benzeliuss the Younger was familiar with Weston's correspondence, too; he informs one of his correspondents in May, 1702 that he has copies of letters from Scaliger and Gruterus to Weston (letter 23 from Benzeliuss to W. E. Tenzelius, Eriksson & Nilsson Nylander 1983: 38).

<sup>40</sup> In Weston's *Collected Writings* (with English translations) = Weston ed. 2000 (eds. D. Cheney & B. M. Hosington).

carum curæ graviore curas quasi nunquam benevolentiae erga me tuae testes veniunt. admittant, confido me ab insigni tua bonitate niveoque candore, quem tam luculenter erga me testatus es, facile hujus culpæ veniam impetraturam. Quale etenim manifestus affectus in me tui testimonium est, quod postulem...

Brenner, XIX, 7: quæ tanquam tui in me candoris studii que singularis infucati testes avidè amplector, molestiam creare mihi possint.

Brenner, V, 4: quam quod etiam in posterum, si modo per varias interpellationes licuerit, maximum mihi calcar ad enitendum futurum spero.

Weston, III, 23: Nimis certe copiosus es in laudibus meis; quæ maximum mihi calcar esse deberent ad enitendum, ut si, quod in laudem meam dicis, non ita est, si ita quia dicis.

Brenner, XIV, 2: Perstitit nihilominus dixitque se sine meis literis ad te reverti nec velle nec posse. Respondeo igitur quamvis laconicè

Weston, III, 25: Respondeo tandem, quamvis laconicè, humanissimis viris illis, qui me suis, te suasore, Musis ornatam voluerunt.

Not one by one but taken together, these similarities seem to indicate that Brenner and Sperling were well acquainted with Weston's correspondence, and (especially concerning Brenner) also deliberately modelled their letters after Weston's.

The classical expression "lana (colus) et fusus"<sup>41</sup> was employed by the humanists to contrast the studies of the learned woman with their traditional obligations, symbolized by the wool, distaff and spindle. In his colloquium "Abbatis et eruditae", Erasmus' conservative and misogynist abbot explains to the learned Magdalia that "fusus et colus sunt arma muliebria" (the spindle and the distaff are the female attributes), instead of books. Furthermore, we find this theme in a letter from the famous humanist Angelo Poliziano to the learned Italian lady Cassandra Fedele:

At vero aetate nostra, qua pauci quoque virorum caput altius in literis extulerunt, unicam te tamen existere puellam, quæ pro lana librum; pro fuso calamum; stylum pro acu tractes.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Cf. for instance Tib. 2. 1. 63–64: "Hinc et feminei labor est, hinc pensa colusque/ fusus et apposito pollice versat opus".

<sup>42</sup> "You are nevertheless unique: a girl who holds book instead of wool; pen instead of spindle; stylus instead of needle," Politianus ed. 1642, III: 106.

We know for sure that Poliziano's correspondence with Cassandra Fedele was familiar to Sperling's, since he mentions it in the biographical article on Fedele in his catalogue. Moreover, the theme reoccurs in a commemoration of the deceased Elizabeth Jane Weston by Ioh. Matth. Á Wackenfels, (a Swabian scholar):<sup>43</sup>

II. *De eadem, Comparata cum alijs Virginibus.* /Fila, columque aliae traurant, fusosque puellae: /Et radijs carpunt stamina pexa suis. /Haud ita tu: claro Vestonia sanguine creta: /Sed magnis tractas aemula facta viris. /Pro filo, nentur tibi carminis aurea fila: /Metra Tibullinis, scilicet aequa metris. /Proque colo, calamo subtilem imitare Catullum: /Atque ubi fusi alijs, hîc tibi Musa fluit

Sophia Brenner had the theme in mind as she wrote “cum studia mea vitæque modum tuo suffragio comprobare et videam, quod ferre nequeas universum sexum nostrum ad colum et fusum (prout plurimis persuasum est) damnari, sed ad sublimiora tractanda vitamque inter scientias et artes humaniores agendam Foeminas etiam pro insigni tua comitate incitare desideras” (II, 3).<sup>44</sup>

Yet another theme in the Brenner/Sperling correspondence resembles the letter by Poliziano referred to above, that is, the following section in Brenner's letter (XVI, 2):

Sed perpende sodes, qualis haec mihi felicitas, qualis foret utilitas, si coram tecum confabulari tibi præsenti præsens cor aperire mihi contingeret, quod vero, quoniam vix sperandum, tuum obsecro ne diminuat favorem,

to which Sperling replies (letter XVIII, 4):

Utinam votum Tuum et meum, quod toties animo volvi, aliquâ ratione effici posset, ut vel ad semihoram tecum confabulari liceret et manus illas exosculari, quae tam doctis literis tam saepe meum exhilarant animum,

<sup>43</sup> Weston ed. 2000: 376–377. Translation by Cheney & Hosington: “II. *On the same, compared with other maidens.* /Other girls handle yarn and distaff and spindles, and tease out the combed threads on their shuttles; not so you, Weston, sprung from noble blood; instead, you emulate great men in the deeds you undertake. Instead of yarn, you spin the golden threads of song, measures equal indeed to those of Tibullus. And instead of the distaff, with pen you imitate subtle Catullus. Where spindles race for others, here the Muse flows for you.”

<sup>44</sup> For translation of the passages from the letters of Sperling or Brenner, see below on chapter three.

compared to Poliziano:

O quis me igitur statim sistat isthic, ut faciem virgo tuam castissimam contempler, ut habitum, cultum, gestumque mirer, ut dictata, instillataque tibi à Musis tuis verba, quasi sitientibus auribus perbibam!<sup>45</sup>

This is an expansion of the *topos*<sup>46</sup> “absentes colloqui” (and similar wordings). It draws on the fundamental function of letters as conversation “at a distance”, and is one of the most frequently used *topoi* in letter-writing from classical antiquity onwards; its function and use have been thoroughly explored by K. Thraede.<sup>47</sup> The expanded version of the *topos* in question to “praesens praesenti cor aperire” together with a wish to meet face to face (which appears also in other humanist letters) seems to have been favoured in letters to learned women, as we will see. The *topos* played both on the female beauty and the *amor-amicitia loci*, which were cherished in correspondences between men and women. We find one example (undoubtedly among many others) of its use during the Middle Ages in the letters of the Swedish Dominican Peter of Dacia to the German mystic Christina of Stommeln at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century:<sup>48</sup>

O dulcissima mea, quantum dolorem et merorem cordi meo generet locorum a te tanta distancia, dicere non possum/.../O karissima, utinam te

<sup>45</sup> “Who would then prevent me from contemplating your chaste face, Oh, maiden, admire your appearance, your face and your manners, and with my thirsty ears drink your words, those which you have been imbued with by the Muses!”

<sup>46</sup> The terms *topos*, *locus (communis)* and commonplaces on one hand, and set phrases and formulas on the other have a similar or synonymous meaning.

<sup>47</sup> *Grundzüge griechisch-römischer Brieftopik*. See for example Cic fam 15,19,1: “videor enim cum praesente loqui et iocari”. Thraede describes the *topos* as follows (page 37): “Man will also im Brief die Schriftlichkeit sozusagen überspielt sehen und vergleicht daher die schriftliche Verbindung mit dem Gespräch von Angesicht zu Angesicht. Das konnte, wie wir gewahren, zweifach ausgedrückt werden: einmal durch *quasi tecum loqui*, ... zum andern durch *videor tecum loqui* ... Zumindest die zweite Fassung ist nun kein Fündlein Ciceros, denn wir finden sie auch in einem Brief an Cicero, womit bewiesen ist, dass dieses Motiv Gemeingut der damaligen Bildungsschicht Roms war. Es zählte damals schon zur Topik des Briefes.” Furthermore, the expansion of the *topos* was developed: “Nicht nur in dieser paradoxen Form (*conloquia absentium*), auch sonst stossen wir im *Topos*, Brief als Gespräch zuweilen auf eine besondere Färbung, dann nämlich, wenn neben der Als-ob-Unmittelbarkeit auch die Als-ob-Gegenwart betont wird. Beide sind natürlich eng verwandt, aber man tut gut, den Übergang vom Hören (Sprechen) zum Sehen zu beachten/.../so dass ‚quasi-Gespräch‘ und ‚quasi-Anwesenheit‘ verschmelzen./.../fam.12, 30, 1 (Juni 43, an Cornificius) *aut quid mi iucundius quam, cum coram tecum loqui non possim, aut scribere ad te aut tuas legere litteras*. Das heisst: der Brief ersetzt den realen Kontakt, der Brief tritt an die Stelle des räumlichen Beieinander.” (op.cit.: 39).

<sup>48</sup> See Asztalos 1991: 348-350.

ore ad os alloqui possem et tecum eciam corporali presencia com-  
morari!.<sup>49</sup>

Here, the *locus* is employed to express the mutual love in God as the inner nature of the spiritual friendship between Peter of Dacia and Christina of Stommeln. The Christian spiritual love which united Christians in faith was often expressed in an erotic language.<sup>50</sup>

The letters of the present correspondence were described by Alenius as “love letters”, but this should not be confused with the modern concept. *Amor - amicitia* was one of the most frequently used commonplaces, *topoi*, in letters by humanists who drew not only on the classical tradition but also on the Christian tradition: *epistolae amatoriae* were sent between male scholars as letters of friendship.<sup>51</sup> The general understanding of humanist correspondences between a learned man and a learned woman should therefore be based on the consideration that the letter writers leaned on the one hand on this tradition, and on the other, on the letters which manifested the affection between a man and a woman.<sup>52</sup>

The *locus* “*praesens praesenti cor aperire*” together with a wish to meet face-to-face is seen also in a letter from André Rivet to Anna Maria van Schurman.<sup>53</sup> Among all learned women of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, van Schurman (1607–1678) stands out as the most exceptionally erudite one of all. Known as the “miracle of the century”, she was the first Dutchwoman to study at a university, mastered

<sup>49</sup> “Oh, my sweet darling, I cannot express how much I grieve in my heart at the distance between you and me. .../ O, dearest, if I could only talk to you face-to-face and meet you in person.”

<sup>50</sup> Asztalos referred to Aelred of Rievaulx’s distinction between different kinds of friendship (similar to Aristotle): *amicitia carnalis*, *amicitia mundialis*, and the only true friendship, that is, *amicitia spiritualis*. She furthermore observed that the modern distinction between love and friendship obstructs the understanding of the erotic language in Medieval religious texts (pages 161–162).

<sup>51</sup> This *topos* is frequent, indeed; some examples can be seen in the letters of Rudolphus Agricola (Agricola ed. 2002: 13), and of Gerhard Vossius (in Blok 1995: 211). See also Erasmus’ chapter *De amatoria epistola* in his *De conscribendis epistolis* (Erasmus ed. 1971: 509ff). The history of the development of the *amor - amicitia loci*, which were well established in Antiquity, is multifaceted: see in particular, Thraede 1970: 125–146.

<sup>52</sup> The correspondence between Abélard and Héloïse is probably the most well-known example of “love letters” – see, for instance, Chr. Baswells recent article “Héloïse” (Baswell 2003). Another example from the Middle Ages is “Sister Gibel’s Eroticized Love Letters” (Classen 1996: 106–107). Furthermore, love letters between a man and a woman – fictitious or not – can be studied in Blok 1995: 94–102 (correspondence of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century philologist Denis Lambin). Among the letters of the Swedish Queen Christina, the “love letters” between the young Queen and her cousin are well-known (Åslund 1995, 70–73).

<sup>53</sup> van Schurman 1650: 61.



fourteen languages and wrote, for instance, an Ethiopian grammar and the well-known dissertation on women's education.<sup>54</sup> Her personal impact on the next generation of learned women, among them Sophia Brenner, was immense. Her correspondence with renowned humanists and scholars, both men and women, was famous, and her letters were published in her extensive *Opuscula* in 1648, which, moreover, encompassed Latin essays, lyric poems and elegies, as well as a self-portrait.<sup>55</sup>

Apart from these specific similarities with possible letter models, Sperling and Brenner's letters are of course filled with many set phrases and commonplaces (*loci communes* and frequently used *topoi*). One of several *loci communes* found in later Latin prose prefaces studied by T. Janson is "requests and dedications". Common in that context is what Janson calls "the author's dilemma": that is, the author's hesitation between his wish to comply with a request and his unwillingness to do so because of his asserted inadequacy. In the end the author decides to write, having displayed his modesty and humility, "saying that – in spite of everything – he would prefer to demonstrate his inadequacy than turn a deaf ear to the request."<sup>56</sup> A typical and eloquent example of this can be seen in Brenner's first letter (II, 2): "incipiti nihilominus haesi animo, utrum consultius mihi foret respondendi an vero tacendi studium, metuendum rata, ne me, tot laudibus obrutam, immerentem forsan his litterulis tibi proderem."

The *topos* of modesty is very frequent in Brenner's letters. It was common in all kinds of correspondence of the time, but, as far as I have seen, it is more frequent in women's letters. Many women had an apologetic strategy, which included such elements as modesty. A future area of study is whether there is a general statistical difference in frequency of the *topos* of modesty in women's

<sup>54</sup> *Dissertatio de ingenii muliebris ad doctrinam, & meliores litteras aptitudine* (van Schurman 1641).

<sup>55</sup> See van Beek 2002: 271–293 in *Women Writing Latin*, vol. 3. Regarding van Schurman's correspondence, Van Beek remarks, "In van Schurman's correspondence with men, it is sometimes possible to see signs of her being perceived as an intellectual equal, but most often she presents herself as being advised or instructed by their greater learning. She relied on men like Voetius to allow her access to a university classroom and like Spanheim to edit and publish her *Opuscula*. But for almost all the women she corresponded with, she was an important role model and an adviser. Although the network of learned ladies was smaller than the male one and the women were also in many ways dependent on the good will of the men, nevertheless, the Women's Republic of Letters was important in its own right." (page 278).

The function of self-presentation by sending portraits in the early modern period is interesting. Many humanists added such portraits to letters, and this would have had a certain significance in correspondences such as the present one as an element in shaping the *amor-amicitia* roles. See further below regarding the portraits Brenner sent to Sperling.

<sup>56</sup> Janson 1964: 121. See, moreover, Helander 2004: 533–537.

letters compared to men's.<sup>57</sup> Another *topos* in the present letters that draws from for example Later Latin prose prefaces and has been investigated by Janson and other scholars is the word *lucubratio* which appears once in Sperling's and three times in Brenner's letters. Even if it was important to display modesty, diligence was nonetheless often emphasised in prose prefaces (already in Callimachus and in Latin authors from Cicero onwards) by mentioning one's nocturnal studies.<sup>58</sup> However, this *topos* was also used apologetically, or as describing the work as being done in one's "spare time", which would not detract the author from his or her daytime duties.<sup>59</sup> For Brenner, this *topos*, which included all these meanings, would have been very appropriate.

Direct literary allusions as well as reminiscences and echoes from classical texts are rare in Brenner's letters, whereas Sperling here and there alludes to mostly well-known passages from Plautus, Virgil and Horace in particular. This difference might be due to the fact that Brenner's education most probably did not encompass the normal *curriculum* for the male student. We do not learn much about how well she knew the classical literary canon. She herself complains in her autobiography over the fact that she was not allowed to read the classical authors along with the boys of her class in the private school she had been allowed to enter; however, as she married Elias Brenner, she lauds him for having presented her with the best German and Latin poets.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, Sperling's more traditional education would be reflected in his allusions.

<sup>57</sup> I have, however, no statistical evidence to substantiate the suggestion that the *topos* in question is more frequent in women's letters. Öhrberg (2001) studied printed texts (occasional poetry and political texts, mostly written in Swedish) of Swedish women during the Age of Liberty (1720–1772). The results of her comparative analyses show that the *topos* of modesty is *not* more frequent in the analysed texts by women as compared to similar texts by men. She does, however, remark that the *topos* of modesty is relatively frequent in letters (279–280). Regarding the general use of the *topos* in Swedish Neo-Latin, see Helander 2004: 533–537.

<sup>58</sup> Janson 1964: 97.

<sup>59</sup> See J. Ker, "Nocturnal writers in imperial Rome: the culture of *lucubratio*" (Ker 2004: 209–242) and J.M. Ziolkowski, "Classical Influences on Medieval Latin. Views of Poetic Inspiration", (Ziolkowski 1990:19–21).

<sup>60</sup> "...und also fieng Ich im 10:ten Jahr meines alters an, die Grammatica zugleich mit den Knaben zu lesen, und gerieth in kurzer Zeit so weit, dass Ich expliciren und mein thema setzen konnte, trotz einen, Ich will nicht sagen besser als jemand von meinen Mitschülern, ob ihrer erliche gleich den Terentium, Justinum, Cornelium, und wie die Schul-Autores mehr heissen, täglich in händen hatten, mir aber, ausser die Meditationes Gerhardi und das Exercitium Pietatis nebst einigen Sententijs, nichts zu lesen erlaubt war; welches mich nicht wenig verdross, sonderlich da Ich den Praeceptor sagen hörte, wenn Sie den Terentium lesen sollte, würdet Ihr Euch alle verkriechen müssen, Ich die nicht wusste aus was ursachen solches mir nicht gestattet wurde, dachte bey mir, Gott verzeihe es dir dass du mir den vorenthältst." /.../ Als Ich 18. Jahr alt war, wurde Ich an

Echoes of postclassical and humanist authors are presumably more frequent in the correspondences. I present only a small number of examples of some quotes and/or echoes of postclassical authors extant in the letters. In letter XIV, Brenner, having given a serious response to the “*gallina* – simile” introduced by Sperling, abruptly changes her mood and gives the following joke in the form of a quote from an emblem of Paulus Maccius (under the heading *gallina*): “si parturit ovum clamat et ingenti plurima voce glocit.”<sup>61</sup> The moral of the emblem was that one takes care not to brag. Brenner thus moderated her response, which reflected Sperling’s view that women were in fact superior to men (see further below), and excused herself for this bold act by quoting the emblem.

Allusions to Erasmus (especially his *Adagia*) occur sometimes in Brenner’s letters: not surprisingly, since the printed catalogue of Brenner’s library lists a number of books by him. Sperling, too, is influenced by Erasmus. To date, I have made only superficial comparisons between Erasmus’ texts and the present correspondence: such an in-depth study must await a future time.

### 2.3 “...cui *contra ius et consuetudinem* loco galli gallinam dono offerre es ausus” – a discussion of the views on woman

The keen debate on the role of woman in society and her right to study generated, as we have seen, many publications. Nevertheless, R. Nilsson (among others) has pointed out that the arguments presented in this debate were essentially the same from Plato and Aristotle onwards.<sup>62</sup> Publications concerning

meinen...Elias Brenner...verehliget, und wie Er ein sehr Curieuser Man war, hat es mich wehrender meiner Ehe, and keiner Aufmunterunt zum Wissenschaften gefehlet; zumahlen als Er einige Zuneigung zur Poesie bey mir gernercket, und die besten so wohl Lateinische als Teutsche Poeten angeschaffet...“ (*PD 1732*, “Kurze Lebens-Beschreibung”: 3).

<sup>61</sup> P. Maccius, Embl. 56: “Farra legens gallina, silet; si parturit ovum/ Clamat, et ingenti plurima voce glocit./lactator benefacta sibi sic objicit audax:/ Quae coepit, reticet; quae dedit, obloquitur.” (Picinelli 1687, IV (cap. XXX): 298. In Picinelli’s *Mundus symbolicus* emblems referring to *gallina* are explained in chapter XXX. The quotation above is found under the heading “lactare sua opera” (to brag about one’s work). The following lines precede the quotation on Maccius’ emblem: “Qui proprias virtutes vano ac jactabundo ore passim evulgat, Gallinam imitatur, quae toties glocitat, quoties ovum aliquod enititur. Lemma, FOETA CANTILLAT. S. Vincentius Ferrerius idipsum animadvertens, ait: “Nota contra multas personas vanas, quae non possunt tacere, si Deus dat eis aliquam gratiam vel revelationem, statim revelant et male. Tales sunt similes gallinae, quae non potest tacere, quousque prodit ovum, quod posuit.” (Picinelli 1687, IV: 298).

<sup>62</sup> R. Nilsson, *Kvinnosyn i Sverige. Från drottning Kristina till Anna Maria Lenngren*, published in 1973, is a substantial contribution to the history of feminism in Sweden. She thoroughly explores the views on women in Sweden during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

these questions appeared later in Sweden: only at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century were a couple of dissertations published in which emancipatory ideas regarding women were debated.<sup>63</sup> In 1626 three young sons of Johan Skytte debated whether women should be allowed to hold offices as diplomats.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, in the 1650's the reign of Queen Christina inspired two apologetic dissertations by Dal Pozzo (similar to Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim's treatise, mentioned below) and Rudbeckius & Canotus (treating only the question of women as rulers).<sup>65</sup>

Sophia Brenner has become known as the first in Sweden to publicly present opinions regarding women in her poetry, that is, outside the academies. Fifty years earlier in Denmark, Birgitte Thott (1610–1662) made a similar contribution, to pave the way for later feminism.<sup>66</sup>

### Equality and similarity

R. Nilsson employs the modern term “feminism”. She claims that feminist ideas were presented already in antiquity.<sup>67</sup> Views on women are traditionally grouped in four areas: the nature of woman, her education, her role in society, and her relation to males, including the roles within marriage. Nilsson emphasises that it is important to distinguish between *equality* and *similarity* when studying the apologetic writings on women.<sup>68</sup> The questions regarding similari-

<sup>63</sup> Nilsson 1973: 80.

<sup>64</sup> J. Skytte the Younger, *Dissertatiunculae sex, in quarum tribus primis, num femina legati officio fungi possit.../ab..Johannis..filiis..Johanne, Benedicto et Jacobo Skytte*. These rather brief dissertations have been presented by H. Helander in *Ad familiares*, 1996: 2: “Kan en kvinna vara diplomatiskt sändebud? En diskussion i 1620-talets Uppsala” (Helander 1996).

<sup>65</sup> J. dal Pozzo, *La donna migliore del huomo. Paradosso*, Uppsala 1650; P.J. Rudbeckius & L. Canotus, *Theses politicae de civili foeminarum imperio*, Arosiae 1651.

<sup>66</sup> See M. Alenius “Learned Scandinavian Women in the 17th and 18th Centuries” (Alenius 1991). Birgitte Thott made the first complete translation of a classical author into Danish (of Seneca Philosophus), dedicating the preface to women, and moreover wrote an unpublished major work in Danish “Om et lykssaligt liv” (“On a Blissful Life”), a philosophical treatise which unites Christianity and stoicism, but where she also agitates for woman's right to study. “Like ... Vives and like Schurman, she stresses the fact that studies cannot be detrimental to women, and like them, she does not demand political rights for women. ... For Birgitte Thott, Latin was useful when it came to important correspondence with men, but more than that it was a means of gaining access to the knowledge which they possessed. After that she regarded it as her duty to pass on what she had learned to other women in Danish.” (Alenius 1991: 182–183).

<sup>67</sup> Öhrberg (2001: 244) prefers to use the term emancipation rather than feminism, since direct demands for equality were not made by women during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18th centuries (in Sweden, feminism as a concept appears first in 1896). In the present work the term feminism (during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries) is employed only when Nilsson is referred to.

<sup>68</sup> Nilsson 1973: 11.

ties and differences between men and women were discussed by Plato and Aristotle. Aristotle claimed that the two sexes are fundamentally different, while Plato stated that they are similar, except for the body (but dissimilar in the respect that women are weaker). Nevertheless, both Aristotle and Plato considered women to be inferior to men, as did St. Paul, in contrast to Plutarch, who was of the opinion that women are superior to men. A number of different views have been presented throughout the centuries. Those who considered that women and men are different have had varying views on their equality: women were considered inferior, equal or even superior to men. Another important distinction emphasised by Nilsson is that between two different kinds of equality, “essential” on the one hand, and “accidental” on the other. In the New Testament, for instance, equality for all mankind is proclaimed, but equality in the eyes of the world was quite another thing than equality in the eyes of God.<sup>69</sup> One of the most influential apologists of women, Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, on the other hand, stated that the soul was essentially the same in women and men, whereas he considered women superior in their accidental qualities.<sup>70</sup>

#### Brenner’s view on woman in her poems

Nilsson has thoroughly explored Brenner’s “feminism” as it appears from her poems from 1684 onwards, as well as the possible sources for her opinions. Her study is very valuable, and she bestows Brenner’s views on women almost 40 pages. I will make a brief summary of her results:<sup>71</sup>

1. Men and woman are equal in the accidental respect. Female weakness is restricted only to the body: “the soul of woman and man is the same”. If woman were weaker (which she is not), she would need all the more to be strengthened (Nilsson refers to van Schurman as

<sup>69</sup> Nilsson 1973: 21. Nilsson here refers to S.A. Lakoff, “Christianity and equality” (Lakoff 1967: 119).

<sup>70</sup> Nilsson 1973: 30.

<sup>71</sup> Nilsson, 1973: 140–177, *passim*. Brenner’s views are presented in several poems in her collected poetry. The publications referred to by Nilsson as possible/probable sources for Brenner are: A. M. van Schurman, *Dissertatio de ingenii muliebris ad doctrinam, & meliores litteras aptitudine* (1641), F. Poulain de la Barre, *De légalité des deux sexes, discours physique et moral, où l’on voit l’importance de se défaire des préjugés* (1691), J. Esbergius & P. Hedengrahn, *Exercitium academicum mulieres philosophantes leviter adumbrans* (1699), J. L. Vives, *Von unterweisung und gottseliger anführung einer christlichen Frauen, im Latein De Institutione Christianae Foeminae genant* (1566), H. C. Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De nobilitate et praecellentia foeminei sexus* (1529), B. Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* (1552) and A. Tassoni, *De’ pensieri diversi... libri dieci* (1646).

- the possible source).<sup>72</sup> The quality of the female intellect is as good as that of men (Brenner concurs with de la Barre), and women are suited to higher endeavours.
2. Men and women are not identical, only equal.
  3. Sometimes women's actual acts of sensitivity are inferior to men's, but both sexes are equipped with an equal amount of "faults".<sup>73</sup>
  4. Women are recommended an extensive *curriculum*.<sup>74</sup> would have been as extensive as van Schurman's and Esbergius & Hedengrahn's (henceforward, 'E&H') advanced *curricula* (which were the widest, compared to other apologists), had not Brenner's concern for misogynist reactions restricted her.
  5. Eloquence adorns women (influence from Agrippa). Women have often straightened men's erroneous paths (cf. Castiglione). Beauty in women reflects a beautiful soul (cf. Castiglione, Agrippa von Nettesheim, Tassoni).
  6. Brenner does not demand that women should be allowed to hold offices. Women should publish their work, though. Generally, Brenner recommends a "soft policy" (also advocated by van Schurman). For instance, she advises against women participating in scientific debate (astronomy, for example – a reaction against Molière, *Les femmes savantes*). Nevertheless, she claims that there have been women who advanced further than men within science.
  7. Barriers for women depend on convention, not on the nature of womankind (de la Barre, E&H). However, Brenner accepts the convention.
  8. It is possible to combine studies with household duties (against van Schurman and E&H, who consider this difficult or impossible).

Nilsson points out that Brenner advises against anything that would evoke misogynist reactions, a caution considered good policy. Therefore she refrains from making statements regarding woman's role in society. Moreover, her statements advising against neglect of household duties in favour of studies should be seen in this light. According to Nilsson, her modesty diminished as the years went by. It is evident from Nilsson's survey that Brenner was very well

<sup>72</sup> Nilsson's references to the possible or in some cases evident sources from which Brenner collected her arguments are presented in parentheses after each argument in this summary.

<sup>73</sup> Criticism of other women was often expressed, for instance by Mary Wollstonecraft and Hedvig Charlotta Nordenflycht. Nilsson (1973: 154) considers Brenner somewhat "unclear" as she discusses female inferiority

<sup>74</sup> According to Nilsson, the *curriculum* Brenner proposes would have been as extensive as van Schurman's and Esbergius & Hedengrahn's (henceforward, 'E&H') advanced *curricula* (which were the widest, compared to other apologists), had not Brenner's concern for misogynist reactions restricted her. Nilsson also sees some influence from Vives in Brenner (regarding Brenner's view that women should not read about war).

read within the “emancipatory literature” of the time, even though her library did not contain more than a few books within this genre.<sup>75</sup> Echoes of the works referred to in the footnote above, including E&H, that is, the dissertation defended by the Swede Petrus Hedengrahn,<sup>76</sup> are evident in her poems, and moreover she mentions Plato, “hans Lär-Swänn” (his adept), that is, Aristotle, the fathers of the Church, in particular St. Jerome and Jacob Cats (17<sup>th</sup>-century author, most famous for his emblem books). In one of her poems (in 1701, at the death of Mätta Ribbing), Brenner polemises about the presentation of examples of earlier learned women, preferring more recent examples.<sup>77</sup>

#### The view on woman in the Brenner/Sperling correspondence

Sperling was, as we have seen, an eager advocate of learned women as was Brenner. The letters they exchanged were not private letters in our sense of the word, but nevertheless, the imaginary audience that Brenner and Sperling had in mind when they composed their letters was probably different from the audience Brenner was thinking of when writing her poems.<sup>78</sup> I wanted to investigate whether the differences in genre and expected audience had an effect on what views on woman Brenner and Sperling expressed in their letters. A summary of these observations is presented in the following.

Brenner lauds Sperling for his project and for his wish to present a multitude of learned women, and emphasises that this act strengthens “our cause” (II, 10). Moreover, she expresses her satisfaction that Sperling wishes to exhort learned women to live their lives among the sciences, and that he cannot stand that the female sex is doomed to household obligations (II, 3). Brenner does not deny that his wish for her to take up “higher studies” is also her own wish, but regrets to say that it is impossible for her to do so, due to her domestic situation (V, 4). As she responds to his emblematical picture (XIII, 2), her comment to his “emancipatory statement” (as she interprets it) is that as for her, she does not find anything among women that is less valuable than among men; on the

<sup>75</sup> *Catalogus librorum beati assessoris Eliae Brenneri* only includes Albertinus, *Hortulus muliebris*, Kortholt, *Disquisitio de poetriis puellis poetriis* and Menagius, *Historia mulierum philosopharum*.

<sup>76</sup> Brenner’s own possible participation in this work is discussed further below.

<sup>77</sup> Nilsson here says (1973: 142) that it is “probable” that Brenner knew of catalogues of women. It should be pointed out that it is evident from her correspondence with Sperling that she was very well aware of the existence of the genre at that point.

<sup>78</sup> Most of Brenner’s poems were first printed separately (according to Öhrberg 2001: 49 occasional poems were probably printed in 100 copies), and they were later published in *PD 1713* or *PD 1732*. The imaginary audience was in other words large; Brenner’s poems were “more public” than were her letters (admittedly, this is a difficult distinction to make).

contrary, women are even more refined than men. She cheers Sperling for acting on behalf of women contrary to the code and usual practice “*contra ius et consuetudinem*” (XIV, 3). Her reaction as she is informed about the misfortunes of Cille Gad is strong: “Heaven forbid that she would be convicted of such a vile and disgraceful act, which in its own way would become a burden on the other literate women in the eyes of malevolent persons, as usually happens” (XXII, 4).<sup>79</sup>

Sperling concurs with Brenner’s views. He urges her to pursue other forms of study (IV, 2), not to neglect her studies (*passim*), and not to let household duties stand in her way (repeatedly). As mentioned above, Brenner clearly interprets Sperling’s emblem (XIII, 2) as a claim to women’s superior intellect.

As we can see, the emancipatory views presented by Brenner in her letters are considerably more radical than in her poems. She complains repeatedly about her domestic situation, and it is obvious that the picture she projects in her poems, that household duties should be her priority, was not something she applauded, but in reality disliked. A very busy mother appears here in the flesh and blood, far from creating a *persona* for herself. Moreover, she openly admits that her innermost wish is truly to pursue higher studies. She is devoted to literary studies: here, too, in obvious contrast with the agenda in the poems. A third contradiction against the statements in Brenner’s poetry presents itself in her praising of Sperling’s act as *contra ius et consuetudinem*. In her poem to Watrang, Brenner stated that she had accepted the custom, *consuetudo*. Finally, Brenner’s enthusiastic interpretation of the simile (that the meat of the hen – woman – surpasses that of the rooster – man – in taste) was clearly an emancipatory one. She assumed Sperling meant that women are superior to men – thereby having the same opinion as Agrippa, Poulain de la Barre and J. Dal Pozzo (author of “La donna migliore del huomo”, published in Uppsala in 1650 – and agreed with Sperling).

The discrepancy between the views expressed in Brenner’s letters and in her poetry is interesting. Perhaps it reveals that she harboured opinions regarding woman’s emancipation which she did not display in her poetry, and even though the letters were indeed not private in the modern sense of the word, they did not acquire as big an audience as did Brenner’s poems. Moreover, Brenner and Sperling might well have had an audience in mind in their correspondence that was different from the one who would read her poems. In other words, Brenner chose to project only certain views in her poems, treading care-

<sup>79</sup> See comments on Cille Gad in letter XXI.



fully so as not to evoke unnecessary misogynist reactions. Nilsson's interpretation is that Brenner's views developed gradually and that this was the explanation for why she appeared more confident about her views on women as time went on. This may be true, but another aspect is the fact that Brenner, as she was very well aware, was the first to publicly present these ideas in Sweden outside the academies. More than anything else, she knew exactly which ideas and propositions might be prone to evoke reactions. She expressed her views on women during a period of over thirty years. Her poetry was spread in many copies as well as in *PD* 1713. It is natural to assume that she would become bolder towards the end of her production as the ideas were no longer new and startling to the audience.<sup>80</sup>

#### Excursus on the authorship of *Mulieres philosophantes*

R. Nilsson mentions the interesting dissertation by Esbergius & Hedengrahn (E&H), *Mulieres Philosophantes*. Petrus Hedengrahn, who was later to become Brenner's son-in-law, defended the dissertation.<sup>81</sup> It was published in 1699 and a congratulatory letter from Brenner was printed with the dissertation (letter No. 48 in the inventory of letters presented in chapter 1). In the letter, Brenner presented Hedengrahn with information about other learned women, which he had asked for. According to Nilsson, the true author of the dissertation is an open question. Based on the information in the printed letter, she considers it likely that Brenner had participated at least to some extent. Nilsson presents another possible participant, Nils Gyldenstolpe, whom Brenner presented as a defender of learned women,<sup>82</sup> and to whom the dissertation was dedicated.<sup>83</sup>

I agree with Nilsson that Brenner played an active part in this dissertation, and perhaps not only by giving Hedengrahn information about the learned Swedish women, of which, as Nilsson points out, we have evidence in the printed letter. Nilsson gives an account of similarities between E&H and Brenner in the statements based on Agrippa von Nettesheim that there is no difference between the sexes apart from the body – this extends to “the soul has no sex” – and also notes that the *curricula* recommended for women by Brenner, E&H

<sup>80</sup> Birgitte Thott, Brenner's Danish colleague, seems to have had a similar cautious strategy which resulted in her avoiding severe criticism (Alenius 1993: 246). Her method to mix, or, in Alenius' words, balance provocative arguments with generally accepted ones was successful, as was Brenner's.

<sup>81</sup> J. Esberg, Professor in Greek at Uppsala University, was *opponens*.

<sup>82</sup> In her poem on his death, *PD* 1713: 168.

<sup>83</sup> Nilsson 1973: 126–127.

and van Schurman were similar, and quite extensive.<sup>84</sup> I will add a few observations in the following.

E&H devote three pages to apologetic arguments in favour of women seeking fame.<sup>85</sup> The more talented and gifted the mind, the more eagerly the person aspires to gain fame and praise. What is the use of virtue that wishes to be hidden and therefore is useless? Virtue should not be concealed, and no one should envy those persons, men or women, who seek fame for their virtue and work.<sup>86</sup> We meet the same argument in Sperling's first letter to Brenner (I, 3) two years before the publication of E&H's dissertation: "*Vile latens virtus*". In Brenner's letter to Hedengrahn, printed with the dissertation, she brings up this argument when she lauds him for his project: "*nam ut verbis utar Flacci, paulum sepultae distat inertiae celata virtus*." Exactly this justification of Brenner's "marketing process" seems to have been an important parameter for her. Moreover, E&H and Brenner present identical arguments in favour of female studies – to promote virtue, to improve the intellect and for personal recreation.<sup>87</sup> The only difference between them is that Brenner refrains from arguments in favour of women aspiring to glory in their poetry.

Furthermore, E&H laud parents who permit their daughters to study. For, say E&H, girls have many household obligations; they should be released from some of them, but only to such an extent that they do not neglect their other duties. For adult women, if married, servants are recommended – for how would the women otherwise be able to attend to their studies if they always have their minds on domestic duties?<sup>88</sup>

E&H's dissertation does not reveal a vast knowledge of earlier and contemporary examples of learned women: the women mentioned on page 15 are first Gilberta,<sup>89</sup> followed by more recent examples in the following, haphazard order: du Gournay, Queen Christina, Queen Elizabeth, Wendela and Anna Skytte,<sup>90</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Nilsson 1985: 176.

<sup>85</sup> E&H 1699: 10–12.

<sup>86</sup> Paraphrasing translation of "*Cui adest virtus, cur vult inutilis esse? ... Eadem est heic ratio mulieris ac viri, hic cum latere non debeat, nec illi gloriam virtute & labore parandam quaerere quis invidet*" (E&H 1699: 12).

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Nilsson's summary of the proclaimed reasons for female studies for other apologists: van Schurman, Fénelon, Sahlstedt, Vives, Marguerite de la Caze. They all have other or only a few arguments in common with E&H and Brenner (Nilsson 1973: 168–169).

<sup>88</sup> E&H 1699: 14–15. The passages are not translated literally.

<sup>89</sup> The legend about the female Pope Joan, Agnes, Gilberta or Jutta, was popularised in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries; obviously, it was not questioned in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century (at least not by E&H). It was used by the Protestants in the propaganda against the Catholic Church.

<sup>90</sup> E&H refer to Brenner as the informant of Wendela and Anna Skytte (see the next footnote).

Anna Maria van Schurman and Sophia Elisabeth Brenner. E&H devote half a page to presenting Brenner. It is evident that she had submitted a number of congratulatory poems, which she wanted to be inserted as well, but that did not happen. E&H used Brenner's modesty as an argument for not adding them (an effective argument for her).<sup>91</sup>

As the different subjects which women should be allowed to study are treated one by one (eloquence, philosophy, poetry, dialectics, law, medicine, physics, metaphysics, mathematics including arithmetics and geometry, geography, music, astrology, ethics, politics, economics and history), some, mostly ancient, examples of women who have excelled in these subjects are presented. These have been copied from other works, such as Agrippa von Nettesheim's dissertation and Menagius' treatise, which appear in the list of the books in Brenner's library.<sup>92</sup> As law and politics are presented as less appropriate for women, E&H recommend that women should not practice law, since their modesty prevents them from doing so ("obstante verecundia sexus").<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, continue E&H, there are examples of women who actually did practise law.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, women are not as suited to politics as men; however, political theory is important for women to embrace, too.

Regarding the study of medicine, it is argued that the practice based on medical knowledge is important for women, especially since many of them refuse to be examined by male physicians; moreover, women would be competent to deal with the illnesses of their children if they had studied medicine. The knowledge of both mathematics and economics is presented as greatly beneficial in particular for a mistress of a household. Moreover, women's knowledge of economy is useful also for business other than just concerning the family and the household.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>91</sup> "Summam doctrinam, rerum linguarumque perplurium cognitionem miram, inter mulieres, quas tenet Svecia, in Nobilissimâ ac integerrimâ Dominâ Sophiâ Elisabet Brenner veneramus, cujus laudes, utpote in quibus dignè pandendis Gallus cum Italo, Danus cum reliquis sibi nativo quisque idiomate aemulant, [cujus rei exempla dignissima sunt quae heic inserantur, ut virtutis incitamenta pluribus contingant, verum id temporis vetant iniqua spatia] nunc quidem attingere nos haud conabimur, ne palpum ipsi obtrudere & castas aures ac oculos, si fortè eos subire contigerit, offendere videamur, tacito pectore venerabundi recondimus, & sequenti aetati post funera, quae tamen sera ipsi optamus, decantandas relinquimus. Testamentariae quoque Tabellae Skyttianae copiam nuper nobis fecit liberalis ipsius manus." E&H: 19–20.

<sup>92</sup> See the bibliography and *Index personarum*. See also Ménage transl. 1984 (introduction).

<sup>93</sup> E&H, 31.

<sup>94</sup> E&H, 31.

<sup>95</sup> "Quam itaque utilis et necessaria haec domestica disciplina sit mulieribus tum extra tum infra thorum nemo non experitur", E&H, 38.

Compared to other apologetic dissertations in favour of female studies, E&H's dissertation is different in that many practical arguments for different kinds of studies are presented, especially for housewives. The text is argumentative, direct demands are not presented. The importance of female modesty and general cautiousness on one hand, and the particular emphasis on the defense of women who aspire to fame on the other, indicate that Sophia Brenner's views and arguments were reflected in the dissertation. The general similarities in the description of women (in accordance with Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim) point further to this.

According to Nilsson, both E&H and Brenner accept the convention. This is however not explicitly mentioned in the dissertation. Nilsson considers E&H somewhat unclear regarding what is actually accepted and/or requested for women.<sup>96</sup> I do not agree with this. The style of the text is argumentative, the purpose being to open up the field for women to study in every possible area. Nowhere is it said explicitly that women should not be allowed to study a certain subject, to hold office, or speak in court. Instead, the purpose of the text is to present these possibilities. However, since this was the first major apologetic text in favour of female studies in Sweden, it was necessary to be cautious.

## 2.4 Highlighting the correspondence

In the following I will present a close reading of the Brenner-Sperling correspondence, highlighting the development of their letter contact. The following facts regarding this correspondence may serve as points of departure:

It consists of 26 letters between a learned man and a learned woman who never met in person;

It covers a period of twelve years (1696-1708);

It was conducted in Latin at a time when there were different ideals for letter writing.<sup>97</sup>

It is evident that both Brenner and Sperling valued their letter contact highly,

<sup>96</sup> Nilsson interprets "sexumque muliebrem ad munia politica obeunda non aequae ac virilem idoneum esse concesserimus" as it being *inappropriate* for women to hold office as men do. However, the translation of the Latin text is that E&H admit that women are not *as suited* to hold office as men. Based on this translation Nilsson asserts that E&H accept the convention and also that E&H argues that women should not hold office. In my opinion, this is an overinterpretation of the text.

<sup>97</sup> The letters are preserved partly in original form or copy only, partly both in concept, original and copy. Therefore, it is also possible to follow the process of improvements, changes of wordings and so on in the concepts and to compare them with the final result in the original.

and decorum is masterly displayed throughout the correspondence. In this case we may study how a personal and businesslike contact is established and developed over the years. I wish to focus on the letters of this particular correspondence with special regard to the dialogue that takes place between the two. The purpose of this investigation will therefore be to seek out, describe and highlight the development of the correspondence through the years, both generally and by paying particular attention to certain aspects. Three different goals will be pursued.

The first and foremost aim is to highlight the development of the content and style of the letters. I will make observations regarding what the correspondents are asking for, and in what way they communicate. More specifically – what are the direct and indirect reasons for writing (*causae*), and does the *materia* of the letters correspond to these reasons, explicitly or implicitly? Moreover, I have located “key-words” or well-defined elements in the letters that generate a direct response in the answer.

The second aim pursued here is the manner in which the correspondents presented themselves to the other and how their friendship developed, based as it was on the image each projected to the other. The fact that the correspondents never met in person makes it all the more interesting to follow this correspondence with regard to the self-image displayed in the letters. In what way and in what words do the correspondents present themselves? What roles do they create for themselves? Are these roles constant or do they change as the correspondence goes on and their friendship is established and deepened? Moreover, what factors keep the correspondence going on for twelve years? Is it possible to see a development of the letter relation reflected in the *causa* and *materia* of the letters as the years pass?

The third aim is to highlight the exchange of letters and gifts and its dynamics: what gifts are sent together with the letters and what purposes do they serve?

Regarding the first aim, the development in and of the communication, part of my text can be read as an abstract of the letters, but the reader should bear in mind that it does not refer to the entire contents of the letters, since the main focus has been on the development of the communication. I do not claim to present a full analysis of this correspondence by highlighting its development in this way. Instead of making a systematic analysis of, for instance, the rhetorical structure of the letters according to letter theory and defining the letters in detail according to the types of letters,<sup>98</sup> the main focus here has been on investigating

<sup>98</sup> See Hansson 1998 (*Svensk brevskrivning*), which includes such analyses.

the communicative elements of this particular correspondence.

To the benefit of readers not so familiar with the Latin idiom, I have chosen to use the English translations of the letters as a rule; sometimes, though, it has been necessary to quote the Latin text.<sup>99</sup>

#### 2.4.1 The line of communication

##### *Letter I (September 15, 1696)*

The main reason for Sperling to write his first letter to Brenner is evident – he asked for her *curriculum vitae*. Thus, this letter might be defined as a *petitoria*. The structure of the letter is easy to detect: it is arranged according to the classical rhetorical system. Sperling's *exordium* contains his presentation of the reasons for writing: he had seen the poems Brenner had sent to Bishop Kingo. He praises her poems and her talent (*captatio benevolentiae*, as recommended in manuals), and then proceeds to ask her for a *curriculum vitae*, and explains why he is asking for this. He exhorts Brenner to comply so that he may laud her in his forthcoming catalogue of learned women and refers to other learned women who have already sent him such information, to ensure that Brenner would not hesitate to comply with his wish. Well aware of the fact that Brenner's husband, Elias, was a leading numismatist in Sweden, Sperling also asks a question about another numismatist, Nils Keder, perhaps indirectly addressing Brenner's husband in making enquiries about him. Having added more praise, he concludes with a greeting to Elias Brenner, whose work he has seen, adding (I, 7), "*Humanitas* herself has bidden me to cherish and respect this venerable couple more and more." Sperling not only flatters Brenner, he also eagerly exhorts her throughout the letter. Furthermore, Sperling asks two other questions, but these questions are presented more *en passant*: in the first paragraph (concerning learned women in Sweden) (I, 2) "If there are any other such women, I entreat you to tell me," and in the last (regarding Elias Brenner's work) (I, 7), "Let me know whether he has finished it or is contemplating any additional studies!"

This letter is preserved in Sperling's draft of the letter as well as in a printed version in *PD* 1732. There are several corrections in the draft, proving that Sperling thoroughly polished his letter. For instance, he added words of flattery, and repeatedly changed the word order to make the letter as elegant as possible.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>99</sup> See the English translation of the letters in chapter three.

<sup>100</sup> See the critical notes to the edition. Sperling for example changed *Septentrio noster etiam* to *etiam Septentrio noster*, and finally to *noster etiam Septentrio*.

*Letter II*

On March 29, 1697, Brenner sent Sperling her response in the form of an elegant letter. This letter, too, has a clear disposition. After an *exordium* filled with formulas of modesty, it presents Sperling the information he had asked for. Declaring herself unworthy of his many laudatory words, Brenner wonders whether it is wise to answer, in case she might reveal her unworthiness in her reply. However, an argument for answering presents itself to her in Sperling's own stated *humanitas*, which (II, 2) "has left me with an unquenchable desire to subordinate my personal glory to the observance of your will." Brenner expresses her satisfaction in Sperling's interest in learned women. She proceeds to inform him about other learned women, leaving Sperling's request for her *curriculum vitae* to a postscript. In so doing, she manages to disguise the main reason for her reply, which is primarily to send her *curriculum vitae* to Sperling as requested. This was placed after her exhaustive answer to his question about other learned women in Sweden, even mentioning Queen Christina and ancient "skaldm  r" (virgin skalds).

Brenner then informs Sperling about her personal situation, which does not allow her to devote herself to studies, and hardly even allows her to take the time to answer his letter, but still assures him that she will pursue her studies. Finally, Sperling receives information about the work of Brenner's husband, Elias, which he also had asked for in the last paragraph of his first letter.

Two postscripts were added<sup>101</sup>; the first presents a gift from Elias Brenner together with some numismatic information, and the second, finally, Brenner's *curriculum vitae*, which she claims had been quickly composed by a friend, and the requested information about the numismatist Nils Keder.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>101</sup> These postscripts have not been preserved together with this letter in Copenhagen. The contents of the correspondence, however, reveal that they belong to Brenner's first letter to Sperling.

<sup>102</sup> Sperling's article "Brenneri uxor Suecica" can be found on page 678 in his catalogue as post number 728 (to be continued on pages 679, 681 and 683). Sperling starts his presentation of her by stating that she helped her husband in writing his work, and that her erudition was generally admired. He mentions her knowledge of different languages, that she had written many poems, which had not yet been published, of which he had seen some. Moreover, the reference to her in *Giornale de' Letterati* in 1692 is mentioned as is her approach to Kingo (see chapter 1.7.2); Sperling dutifully lists titles of all the poems which had been included in the "package of recommendation", or "book" as he names it, which had been presented to Kingo by Bolle Luxdorph. Sperling observes that Brenner wrote her very first poem to her tutor Zellinius in the age of 17. Furthermore, he mentions that Kortholt dedicated his work *Disquisitio de poetriis puellis* to Brenner, quoting in full Kortholt's dedicatory poem to Brenner. Sperling inserts Sophia Brenner's autobiography (written in Swedish) after page 682 in his manuscript.

*Letters III and IV (June 21, 1697 and August 17, 1697)*

Brenner's (and her promotors') underlying purpose for distributing her poems was no doubt to be awarded with laudatory poems from various learned men and women. Thus, Brenner most probably had expected a response from Bishop Kingo designed as a laudatory poem similar to the one she had sent to him (together with her other poems). Aware of this, and killing two birds with one stone, Sperling replies to Brenner in the form of an elegant letter in elegiacs, suitable for copying and presentation in print.

The poem has the same disposition as Brenner's reply and is neatly arranged according to the classical rhetorical system: *exordium* with *captatio benevolentiae*, *narratio*, in which Sperling responds to the information he had received from Brenner, and *conclusio*. The postscript Sperling adds to the letter, in which he encourages Brenner to turn to other studies as well, stands out as a more personal message to her.

Sperling sent his third letter (letter IV) two months after the poem, before he had received any answer. He had evidently been thinking about Sophia Brenner and her career, and wanted to pick up the thread of the argument he had presented in his postscript in the previous letter, the point being that Brenner would evoke even more praise from the learned world if she turned to higher studies and not only sweated over occasional poetry: (IV, 2)

This is why I think that your talent is too versatile to content itself only with poetry for the rest of your life. Your mind should also be challenged to take up other forms of literature, since it has been provided with such abundance and fruitfulness that it not only can exert itself in every *palæstra* and *gymnasium*, but moreover can expect or deserve the highest laurels, as many as will please you.

To this letter Sperling might have added a brief laudatory testimonial in Latin, which he probably wrote when he had seen her poems intended for Thomas Kingo. The testimonial is dated 2 September 1696, and is preserved today only as a copy in the Palmskiöld collection at UUB (332: 617): "Dudum Ego jam nobilissimam et doctissimam Foeminam Catalogo meo insertam, lego relegoque; meretur Ejus non vulgaris Eruditio, ut saepe laudetur et magnificè. Vestrò nunc beneficiò instructor, etiam magis Foeminam coepi mirari tot linguis eleganter poëtantem quod vix viris datum nemini, eaque felicitate ferè nemini. 2 Septembr. 1696 O. Sperling." Perhaps Luxdorph, who brought Bishop Kingo the examples of Brenner's production, also took them to Sperling, and some sort of recommendation or reaction was then expected. Luxdorph might have brought Sperling's testimonial to Sweden himself. My guess, though, is that Sperling added it himself to this first letter to Brenner.



Thus, this letter had one distinct purpose and can easily be defined as an *epistula petitoria*. In the *exordium* the stated *causa* or reason for writing was expressed: Sperling feared that his previous versified letter might be delayed on the way, and sent yet another. However, the *materia* of the letter shows that the main *causa* was the exhortation to pursue higher studies. Sperling presents arguments to further support his request, the first one regarding Brenner's talent, quoted above. He then forestalled her possible objections by offering her his support,<sup>103</sup> also reminding her of the support she already enjoyed from other learned men. Furthermore, he sent her a short poem. Finally, Sperling mentions that he has heard of the devastating fire in the Royal palace in Stockholm, and wishes to hear more about it.

*Letter V (March 28, 1699)*

Over two years later Brenner sent Sperling her reply, filled with formulas of modesty. The *exordium* of this letter contains the explanation for the late answer: her household duties. In the remaining part of the letter Brenner replies to Sperling's exhortation. She fills two thirds of her letter with formulas of modesty regarding his interest in her progress. Even though she realises that he is convinced that others could reach (V, 3), "the literary prominence (*culmen literarium*) to which the gifts of your lofty soul have already raised you long ago", she declares (V, 4), "I do not indeed deny that your suggestion is altogether consistent with my wishes, if only I had the leisure to bestow a little time upon the cultivation of my talent, especially since you so kindly promised your assistance in promoting my lucubrations and removing doubts. I hope that this will spur me in the future to exert myself and bring forth some work, when I can find the time."

*Letter VI*

On August 11, 1699, five months after Brenner's letter, Sperling delivered his next letter to the same courier who brought him her last one. This letter, too, was primarily exhortative. In his *exordium* Sperling explained who the courier of this letter was, and also revealed his eagerness to answer her quickly as he displayed some impatience with the courier's late return to Sweden. From Sperling's point of view, there was no longer any need for a *captatio benevolentiae* in the *exordium*; their correspondence was well established, and, unlike Brenner, Sperling replied with dispatch, sending her new letters. He kept the initiative in

<sup>103</sup> Letter IV, 3.

their contact and introduced new topics along with his constant exhortations, thus displaying his *benevolentia* throughout his letters.

In his letter Sperling exhorts her by presenting his arguments, emphasising Brenner's talent. He compliments her by saying she is the offspring of the Muses, and adds that she already dwells on a literary height, referring to *culmen literarium* in Brenner's letter (VI, 3), "Nos cœteri culmina illa literaria, quæ scribis, nondum attigimus; Tu verò etiam superasti." Another argument was presented in the form of a poem seemingly lost. He then informs Brenner he had committed himself to supporting her in yet another way: he had confronted Bishop Kingo with the fact that he had never replied to her, and had managed to get half a promise on her behalf that the Bishop would send something in return.

Finally, Sperling requests supplementary information to the biography (VI, 6); "You forgot to tell me about your parents in your autobiography."

*Letter VII (October 8, 1702)*

Brenner did not reply for three years. However, during this time the Great Nordic War had started with the attack on Sweden in 1700 and it was probably wise to refrain from answering the Danish correspondent. Also, letter delivery must have been impossible during these years.

Brenner's first concern in her *exordium* is again to beg forgiveness for the time elapsed before answering. She presents three reasons for the long delay, the first one regarding the general lack of spare time given her household duties, which stands in her way and effectively prevents her from all literary activities. Her willingness to answer has also been hindered by illnesses and one death in her family, accompanied by a lawsuit. These substantial excuses are accompanied by a tactical self-reproach (VII, 3), "But why do I tell you this, most celebrated Sir, who allow yourself to be occupied with nothing but matters of substance and whom it is almost irreverent to disturb with these kinds of trifles?" Presenting Sperling with this rhetorical question, she challenges him to engage even more personally in the circumstances around her, since her question encourages him to reply that he is of course willing to hear about her personal problems.

After the long *exordium*, occupying one-third of the letter, Brenner moves to her *narratio*, which in this letter has two different strains: she presents supplementary information regarding learned women and furthermore supplies Sperling with the requested information about her lineage. Brenner concludes her letter by assuring Sperling that she will continue her studies.

*Letters VIII (not dated) and IX (January 31, 1703)*

Brenner rapidly, probably within a month or so (this letter is not dated) received her next letter from Sperling, belonging to the genre of *epistulae familiares* or *mixtae*. At this point, we may note that the correspondents had reached a level where the letters served multiple functions. Books on letter theory did not recommend fixed compositions for this category, and this is also mirrored in Sperling's letter. After a brief *exordium* Sperling comments on a number of different subjects. Compared to his first letters, the number of corrections or changes in word orders in Sperling's drafts is quite small. However, his literary and rhetorical ambition does not seem to have been reduced. Sperling expresses his joy and adorns the text with Greek epithets<sup>104</sup> and literary references in the same vein as in his first letters. Brenner had repeatedly asked Sperling not to laud her in a way she did not deserve, filling her letters with commonplaces of modesty. Her wish was not fulfilled, inasmuch as the repeated modesty evoked more praise from Sperling. Brenner probably realized that this was a successful strategy; flattery and modesty have always worked as means of collecting praise.

This letter is more personal than the preceding ones. Sperling expresses his condolences for Brenner's loss, as she has told him about the death in the family and the accompanying lawsuit. His way of expressing this may seem slightly brutal to readers in our time: it was generally supposed to be dangerous to grieve heavily (VIII, 6-7):

You certainly seem to react to the death within your family with grief, which is human, provided only that you do not indulge yourself too much. Your fertility will provide other children to compensate for those your loss now drives you to long for. But I grieve very much for your sake that you are also entangled in lawsuits and are forced to deal with them, contrary to your wish. For I think that these are more lamentable than the funerals of your family members. 7 You are not naturally destined for lawsuits but for good literary works, which are the faithful sisters of peace and require calmness of mind.

<sup>104</sup> We have no evidence that Brenner knew Greek; undoubtedly, even a limited knowledge of Greek would have been mentioned by her or by her promoters as her knowledge of languages was usually thoroughly recorded (for instance, in *Nova literaria*, Mensis Februar. MDCC, 53: "Est consecratus hic labor (i.e., Kortholt's dissertation) Eruditiss. Sophiae Elisab. Brenneriae, Poëtriae inter septentrionales hodie facile Principi, & ob latinae, germanicae, gallicae, italicae & belgicae lingvarum peritiam celebratissimae."

However, considering the high infant mortality of the time, unfortunately also represented in the Brenner family – eight of her 15 children died young – , Sperling's seemingly insensitive reaction only reflected reality: deaths within a family were so common that grief probably had to be brief.

On January 31, 1703, probably a mere month later, Sperling wrote to Brenner again. This was a brief letter of recommendation of Mr. Hilcken, who had obviously asked for an introduction to the learned couple in Stockholm. Moreover, and for the first time in the correspondence, Elias Brenner was indirectly addressed with a question concerning numismatics.

*Letter X (June 1, 1703)*

This time, Brenner replied after half a year. The disposition of letter X is clear insofar as Brenner dutifully replied to every single question she had received in due order and responded to the other elements in his letters as well, such as the personal reflections Sperling had included on his old age. However, the different parts of the letters are more interwoven with each other and the expressions of modesty slightly toned down so that the letter appears to be more personal: Brenner seems to be replying to the type of letter which Sperling introduced in letter VIII. She mentions that she has also been ill. She thanks Sperling for his book *De nummis non cunis*, which he sent together with letter IX, but does not, however, offer any criticism or comments, which he had asked for (X, 5), "...for I think that such judgement should be granted those having a more refined taste."

*Letters XI (July 12, 1703), XII (undated) and XIII (March 17, 1704)*

Within a few months' interval, Brenner received three letters in a row from Sperling. From now on, issues of numismatics appear more and more in the letters. Still, the main reason for Sperling to continue sending letters to Sophia Brenner seems to have been the correspondence in itself, the epistolary contact with the learned woman, whom he wished to laud and exhort. He was eager to know what Sophia Brenner was working on (XII, 1) "...especially in enriching the literary world." To all three letters Sperling attaches engravings and booklets, intended as gifts to the learned couple, but more aimed at Elias Brenner. He obviously wished to establish contact with him as well, adding different questions regarding coins in the three letters, but the result of these efforts was meagre. Having received no letter for a year, either from Sophia or Elias Brenner, Sperling starts letter XIII with the following sentence, probably seasoned with a touch of irony (XIII, 1), "Even though I have nothing to write to you now, nevertheless I will write just that, lest someone should blame me for having let

slip an opportunity to write to you, most erudite Madam.” The courier, Lemmel, was furthermore instructed to deliver the letter in person and make thorough inquiries. An emblematical picture was presented with the following (XIII, 2):

I am keeping a fine hen fat and well nourished in order to sacrifice her to Aesculapius if he will report that you are happy and prosperous. And even though no one hitherto has offered Aesculapius hen, only cocks, I will nevertheless stir his divine appetite. He has never eaten hen, whose meat is much more delicious than that of the cocks, especially if the hens are sacrificed for the sake of your welfare, most prominent of women.

*Letter XIV (October 16, 1704)*

Mr. Lemmel did not confine himself to merely delivering Sperling’s letter, but, reading Sophia Brenner’s irritated *exordium* of letter XIV, it is obvious that the courier refused to leave the house until he had extracted a reply, ordered to do so by the frustrated and persistent Sperling (XIV, 1–2),

Truly, nothing has ever been more welcome to me than reading your letters or writing mine to you. Hence I would have postponed my reply to a time that perhaps would have seemed more convenient to me if your very diligent Master Lemmel had allowed me that delay. Indeed that good gentleman sees my many offspring (and how they are), not to mention all my other preoccupations, which usually more than anything else detain me from my studies, and especially from the duty which I should perform to my friends and to you above all. Master Lemmel nevertheless persisted and said that he neither would nor could go back without a letter from me to you. Therefore I respond, though laconically.

Contrary to her habit, instead of answering all the questions Sperling put in his letters in due order, Brenner mentioned that her husband wished to exchange those coins which he had in duplicate with him. She also returned the picture presented by Sperling, adding to it the “emancipatory” statement (see above), rather abruptly concluded with a joke by which Brenner seems to display a certain amount of self-irony, if it is interpreted as a pun on the self-promotion of the learned women in the time (XIV, 3),

I do not doubt that your hen will have pleased Aesculapius and rendered him kindly disposed towards me. 3 What you write is true, namely, that the meat of hens surpasses that of cocks in taste, and I find nothing about

the hen that I would value lower than about the cocks. If you do not mind the loquacity and ostentation, according to that passage of the poet, "If she lays an egg, she shouts and cackles a lot in a loud voice."<sup>105</sup>

*Letters XV–XX (March 30, 1705 – December 5, 1706)*

Another *epistula mixta* or *familiaris* from Sperling was delivered to Sophia Brenner by a courier, who is recommended in letter XV. The couriers bringing the letters from and to Copenhagen were students or scholars who wished to visit the learned Sperling or the famous erudite couple in Stockholm, sometimes wishing explicitly to see Elias Brenner's collection of coins;<sup>106</sup> thus, quite a few of the letters from Sperling serve partly as letters of recommendation.<sup>107</sup> All other letters in the Brenner-Sperling correspondence are *mixtae* or *familiares*. With time, the style becomes less elevated. The main subjects treated in Sperling's letter XV, as in the following ones, are numismatics and the exhortation and promotion of the learned woman. He discusses matters of numismatics and seems to consider Sophia and Elias Brenner a team. Obviously, Elias Brenner was the expert, but Sophia Brenner acted as his secretary and also seemed to be quite well informed.<sup>108</sup> Sophia Brenner dutifully forwarded questions and referred answers. In letter XV Sperling asks for detailed information about the Silver Bible,<sup>109</sup> and in her reply Brenner provided the information he requested, relating answers from a specialist. Sperling expressed his deep gratitude for this service in letter XVIII (letters XVI by Brenner and XVII by Sperling crossing in the post), lauding Brenner for accomplishing this, despite the fact that the Silver Bible was kept in Uppsala, and not in Stockholm, which he had assumed. Nevertheless, he ventured to add some complementary questions regarding the Silver Bible in letter XVIII and moreover asked for a thorough description of

<sup>105</sup> See further comments to the edited letter.

<sup>106</sup> These students or scholars are mentioned especially in the latter part of the correspondence (see, for instance, letters IX, XII, XIII, XV–XXVI.)

<sup>107</sup> Dibon (1978: 46) stresses the importance of such letters of recommendation as "veritable passports carried by students and travelers, giving them introductions to men of renown in the Republic of letters."

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Sperling's comment in letter XV, 3 regarding a false interpretation of one of Queen Christina's coins, by which he addresses both Elias and Sophia Brenner. Sperling was obviously well aware that Sophia Brenner's support was important to her husband. In his biography on Sophia Brenner he remarked, "...maritum in conscribendis suis opusculis adjuvit." This might also have been information he had received from the mutual friends who acted as couriers between Stockholm and Copenhagen. Apparently, Elias Brenner benefited from the assistance from his wife in several ways.

<sup>109</sup> For further information about the Silver Bible, see notes to the translation of letter XV.

the Archives of National Antiquities, though ensuring her that he did not want her to take up this task if it was too troublesome.

Almost a year passed before Sperling received a reply, but then he got all the information he wanted, in full detail. Brenner's reaction to Sperling's apologies for troubling her with these matters seems honest: in letter XIX she claims that she was honoured just to be considered part of the learned world (XIX, 7), "For what more beautiful pledge of your friendship can I ask for than that you with great kindness request such information from me, which you could obtain from your learned peers with a single word without any complications or lapses of time." No irony should be read into these lines, even though a modern reader might do so, because the role of a secretary and intermediary between learned men seems to have been welcomed by Sophia Brenner.

A brief correspondence also took place between Sperling and Elias Brenner during the years 1705–1707.<sup>110</sup> Their contact was initiated by the exchange of coins. In his first letter to Sperling, Elias Brenner confirmed that he had received his coins and repaid him with the same amount of coins, though not exactly the ones Sperling had requested, since he did not have all of them in duplicate. Furthermore, he told Sperling about his current work. The style of his letter to Sperling is quite businesslike: the elaborate style of his letters to Sophia Brenner is absent here. Sperling replied to this first letter on October 7, 1705, treating only matters of numismatics. On the very same day he wrote a letter to Sophia Brenner (letter XVIII). In 1707, Elias Brenner sent a brief letter to Sperling together with a gift, also asking for a further exchange of coins. To the best of my knowledge, Sperling never replied to this, and their correspondence ended with this letter.

*Letters XXI–XXVI (February 9, 1707 – October 12, 1708)*

During the final two years of the correspondence six letters were exchanged between Sperling and Brenner. The couriers apparently slowed down the correspondence, since many of the letters were not delivered within a reasonable time. Quite a few times the correspondents complain about the fact that the couriers carrying letters and expensive books and other gifts took so much time in delivering them that the rumour that there was a letter on its way sometimes spread faster, as in the *exordium* of letter XXI. Sperling complains about his old

<sup>110</sup> Letter by Elias Brenner to Sperling August 7, 1705 (GKS 3092 VI:1, 4°), to which Sperling replied on October 7, 1705 (GKS 3092 V:2, 4°), and finally Elias Brenner to Sperling on April 20, 1707 (GKS 3092 VI:1, 4°). Elias' first letter to Sperling has been translated into Swedish and commented by Sundquist 1998.

age, and tells Brenner about his involvement in succouring another *femina docta*, the Norwegian Cille Gad, in her misfortunes. She was sentenced to death for infanticide, but was then freed, apparently thanks to Sperling's assistance.<sup>111</sup> After the acquittal she visited Sperling in Copenhagen: he expresses his joy over this (XXV, 4), "I enjoy her charming company just as if I were living with the Muses."

In her letters Brenner comforts Sperling and encourages him; she now appears to be the more supportive part in the relation. She envies Gad for meeting the patron of learned women in person. Also, in the last few letters, she acts as an intermediary, as Sperling seeks information about a manuscript of Saxo Grammaticus.

#### 2.4.2 Self-presentation and developing friendship

Brenner's approach to Kingo, indirectly resulting in the present exchange of letters, had indeed been serious; an elaborated letter, with Kingo's name filled in in gold, had been sent together with quite a few of Brenner's poems. All in vain, since the Bishop never answered with the complimentary poem or letter which Brenner had expected in return. The fact that a new contact was established with a learned professor and polyhistor in Denmark was thus welcome. As mentioned in chapter 1.9, a marketing strategy was going on to promote Sophia Brenner and to collect testimonies for the forthcoming collection of laudatory poems and letters which was to be added to the publication of her poetry. Furthermore, their correspondence was accompanied by a vivid exchange of various gifts (dissertations, engravings and coins), to which I shall return presently. Even though Sperling in general took the initiative and seems to have been the more eager correspondent, Brenner certainly had her own agenda for what she would like to accomplish as a writer by corresponding with Sperling.

But the correspondence in itself and the growing friendship with Sperling, a learned professor from abroad, was also a testimony to learning and success, as Brenner states herself in one of her letters.<sup>112</sup> I have elsewhere discussed the self-presentation evident in these letters, when Sperling takes on the role of the patron of learned women in different ways.<sup>113</sup> Styling the addressee *pa-*

<sup>111</sup> It seems, though, as if Sperling's appeal for pardon to the Danish King was not the determining factor in freeing Gad. See further comment to letter XXIV.

<sup>112</sup> "For what could have happened to me that would be more glorious or more desirable than that I would have reason to congratulate myself on a friendship with a gentleman of such importance and integrity" (X, 2).

<sup>113</sup> See Göransson 2002: 204–223.



*tronus/patrona* and signing the letter *cliens, servus* or *cultor* was a common feature in letters of the time, and such is also the case in the present correspondence. Sperling is often addressed as *Musarum Patronus* by Brenner. He also addresses Brenner as *Patrona* once (in his second letter, as she had been very helpful and provided him with all the information he had asked for). Otherwise, he refers to Brenner mostly as *Matrona* or *Femina docta*.

However, the epistolary relationship between Brenner and Sperling is multifaceted. In the article I published in 2002, the personal aspect of their letters was briefly discussed. This aspect will be expanded on here, and focus will be placed on the development of the friendship, as it appears from the letters. Since correspondence between a learned man and a learned woman was something uncommon, news of the few examples was quickly spread along with copies of letters. As a result, quite a few of these rare letter contacts were well-known and most probably served as models for Brenner and Sperling when composing their own letters, adapting them to this subgenre.<sup>114</sup> We have seen that friendship was expressed in terms of love: the *amor/amicitia topos* was frequently employed. A correspondence like the present one between a learned man and a learned woman naturally played on this theme, and is well demonstrated there.

There is a personal approach already in Sperling's *exordium* in letter I: "Tuum quamvis jamdudum nomen colam et tabulis meis insertum habeam...". Sperling manages to compose a ceremonious letter that is at the same time personal. Brenner's reply is even more ceremonious, filled with formulas of modesty and highly elaborated. She still opens up to the personal level to some extent by referring to her burdensome household duties. The style of Sperling's versified letter (III) is the same as in letter I. To his next letter, letter IV (letters III and IV were sent one after the other, without any intervening reply from Brenner), Sperling added the brief poem, by which he sent his kisses to the learned woman, thus introducing the *amor/amicitia topos*. The nature of letter IV is exhortative, indeed; Sperling is eager to suggest that Brenner should take up other studies as well, so that she would be even more renowned. He assures her (IV, 3), "Non Te deseremus unquam, Optima Foeminarum, nam ex quo Tecum confabulari per literas licuit, nunquam absque Te sum, nec sine Te literas ulla attingere possum." Letter V by Brenner is written on the same rather formal level as her previous letter. Once again, she uses her household duties as an excuse, assuring him that she has been encouraged by his support, something she will never forget.

<sup>114</sup> See for instance Beebe 1999: 109.

In letter VI Sperling expresses his strong support and praise of Brenner's talent (VI, 3), "*Ne diffidas Tuis humeris, plura ferre possunt, modo, quo es ingenio, Te applices.*" Moreover, we have already mentioned that he tells Brenner he has been scolding Kingo for not having answered. He signs his letter "your constant admirer".

In her next letter Brenner gives her response to this massive support by asking forgiveness for her late answer. She provides more personal information regarding the illness and death of a family member, and the lawsuit that has occupied her during this time. The conclusion also reflects the fact that the level of emotion in the letters has risen at this point (VII, 7), "*Vale, Vir Candidissime, solitumque tuum erga me amorem ut continues, oro.*" The initiative is taken by Brenner here, as she introduces information about her personal circumstances. Sperling instantly reacts to this, providing in turn such information in letter VIII. He complains about his old age and despairs of being able to complete his work on learned women. His harsh reaction to her personal loss has already been discussed. The lawsuit bothered Sperling, and he presents his view on this with a beautiful alliteration: (VIII, 7) "*Non litibus nata es, sed literis bonis, quae pacis sunt sorores fidae et tranquillitatem animi desiderant.*"

The contents of the following letters are more varied and the personal reflections appear more frequently. It takes two to maintain a correspondence. We have previously seen how Sperling throughout the correspondence is the person taking the initiative; he is the one to bring up new topics, to ask for information and to exhort and praise. Brenner responds to all questions in due order, but never directly introduces new subjects herself. Nevertheless, she is first to refer to the personal situation (time-consuming household duties, illnesses in the family and so on), which Sperling responds to by revealing his own troubles. She also understands his eagerness to support her and is the first of the two to mention the love and affection she has perceived through his letters, in letter VII and in letter X, respectively.

The more established the correspondence, the more frustrated Sperling becomes as he still has to wait a long time before receiving a reply from Brenner. This was the case for 1703 and 1704. Sperling had to send three letters before he got an answer. Brenner's silence may have been caused by the ongoing Great Northern War. Even if there was no war between Denmark and Sweden between the years 1701–1708, letter delivery must have been rather difficult at

times considering that the Great Nordic War war was still raging in other parts of Europe.<sup>115</sup>

As we have seen, Brenner is annoyed to be more or less forced to compose an answer as the courier from Sperling apparently had been instructed not to leave the house empty-handed. In letter XV Sperling again encourages Brenner, adding personal comments regarding his own work and signing with “Addictissimus Amicus et Servus”. The personal approach is direct in Brenner’s reply to this letter. Far from expressing modesty, she relies on his love for her to excuse her late answer and speaks about their friendship, which by now has become so strong that it overlooks such things. She also more or less invites Sperling to come and visit her in Stockholm, as directly as she can, expressing her wish to meet him face to face.<sup>116</sup> She concludes her letter: (XVI, 3) “Farewell, most famous Sir, and may you love me as I love you.”

In his next letter Sperling emphasises how eager he is to meet Brenner, but regrets to say that it is impossible, for reasons he does not explain in other words than XVIII, 4, “We are pressed too hard and separated from one another by adverse fate.”

The last two years Brenner and Sperling corresponded, their letters bear many marks of their mutual friendship. Sperling complains about his old age and his bad health,<sup>117</sup> and the personal roles have now been reversed, Brenner taking her turn to provide support and comfort.

Letters XXII and XXIII crossed paths, and for once Sperling is guilty of a late reply in letter XXIV, due to illness. His excuses for this are eloquent: note, for instance, the *climax* in the following (XXIV, 1), “Habes, Illustrissima Matrona, quod succenseas et, si gravius mecum agere voles, quod irascaris, tamdiu illum, qui Te amat, qui Te colit, qui Tuas virtutes et eruditionem cum summis, non in secundis aut tertiis, posuit, illum, inquam, tam diuturno silentio indulgere,

<sup>115</sup> As mentioned before, in 1700 Sweden was attacked by Russia, Denmark/Norway and Poland/Saxony; the Great Northern War went on until 1721, when Sweden’s days as a major power were ended. In the summer of 1700 Denmark was defeated and did not join the war again until 1709.

<sup>116</sup> XVI, 2.

<sup>117</sup> See for instance letter XXIII, 3: “I have not one but two feet in the grave and I will soon bid you and all good people farewell. Old age is bearing down on me; the passing years brook no delay. One must pass away from life in the end. I have lived long enough both for me and for everyone. What I wanted to see happen I will not see”.

Sperling seems depressed as well as tired, presenting a dissertation he is sending as a gift: “I hope you will enjoy it, though it is neither well polished nor accurately written; my writings usually are indeed more poured out on the paper than written”.

priusquam ad ultimas Tuas respondeat. Hoc, puto, dices piaculum esse nec Tauroboliis nec Crioboliis ullis abluendum.” Sperling has heard of the marriage of one of Brenner’s daughters, sends his good wishes, and concludes with (XXIV, 5), “May you and your husband therefore thrive and live most happily for the good of the *respublica literaria*; you are very near to me by the bond of friendship.”

In his last letter Sperling envies the couriers for having the opportunity to meet Brenner. He would have done the same himself, he assures Brenner, had his old age not made such a journey impossible. However, he has been delighted to have met Cille Gad. Brenner replies by expressing her envy of Gad and her affection for Sperling.

#### 2.4.3 The exchange of letters and gifts and its dynamics

Together with the letters Sperling and Brenner sent a number of gifts. The exchange of dissertations, poems, engravings and coins was rather extensive. In fact, two thirds of the letters were accompanied by various gifts. Of course it was convenient to exchange publications and, in the case of Sperling and Elias Brenner, coins and engravings to fill in the gaps in their respective collections of coins. When the letter writer did not have anything to send at the moment, this was regularly and explicitly regretted and excuses made in the letter. In a couple of instances, Sperling sent his recent publications as presentation copies.<sup>118</sup> One gift should be reciprocated by another, an *antidoron*.<sup>119</sup> Sometimes a specific wish is expressed, directly or in between the lines in the correspondence, a message the correspondent generally understood and responded to by providing the gift in question.

Already in Brenner’s first reply such a subtle wish is expressed indirectly, as she informs Sperling that her husband often receives coins he lacked from abroad, adding to her letter some coins from Elias as well as some engravings, thus ensuring that Sperling would send coins in return. One gift generated a reciprocal gift of a similar kind. To his third letter (letter IV in the edition), for instance, Sperling added a love poem.<sup>120</sup> In letter V Brenner sent an engraved

<sup>118</sup> Dibon (1978: 52) regards this as “a primitive form of the modern practice of sending out review copies”. This was clearly the underlying reason for Sperling.

<sup>119</sup> According to the vocabulary within the *Respublica literaria*, Dibon 1978: 53.

<sup>120</sup> Alenius (1993: 339) observes that it is impossible to know for sure that the love poem was ever sent. Admittedly, Brenner never directly refers to the poem in her letters. If the love poem had been sent, Brenner’s response to it could have been the engraved picture she sent to Sperling.

picture of herself.<sup>121</sup> We find an example of a specific request in letter VIII, where Sperling asks for the forthcoming *memoria* (funeral sermon) of the recently deceased Olof Rudbeck the Elder. Brenner confirms the “order” in her next letter, and promises to send the *memoria* as soon as she can. She dutifully does so in letter XIV, a year and a half later.

Sending valuable engravings and coins seems to have been rather hazardous, as the couriers were not always reliable. Several times Brenner and Sperling enquire after gifts they had sent, which they realised had not been delivered since there had been no reaction from the addressee. Thus, it was necessary to relate the contents of the last letter and what gifts were sent together with it.

Towards the end of the correspondence Sperling sent several gifts, one dissertation and some coins without receiving a reply until he had written another letter explicitly asking if the gifts had been delivered. Brenner answered him and thanked him for the gifts, but according to her letter she did not send any gifts in return. In his last three letters (containing his gifts to Sophia and Elias Brenner) Sperling repeatedly had expressed expresses a wish for reciprocation in the form of an engraving of one particular coin. Receiving neither this nor any

<sup>121</sup> Brenner sent Sperling two portraits of herself (first, as it seems, the medal with her portrait, and later on, a silver coin struck by Carl Gustaf Hartman in 1699 (with the words “crescit cultura” on the back side, the front side presenting her name and face). Sperling responded to the gifts by the following (XI, 3). “I received your medal and your features incised in silver. And you should not think that I am an *adornateur* only because of the silver or the elegance of the craftsmanship, for I assure you that there is much more that pleases me in that medal; you are with me and I look at you. I speak to the medal as if I were together with you, daughter of Phoebus and Pallas Athena. I often ask what you are doing now and even though all is silent I nevertheless know everything whenever I behold the medal.”; (XVIII, 5): “Your Mr. Frondin is most agreeable; in my house, any person you recommend, noblest Madam, can enjoy all the devotion and service I can extend. I showed him both your picture, etched in copper, and your silver coin, neither of which he had however seen, because I wanted to know which had the better likeness. He confirmed that the coin presents a better likeness, just as other persons had already told me; yet that beautiful roundness of your face is missing in both reproductions. I am delighted with those portraits, remembering you always.” Cf. L. Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters. The Construction of Charisma in Print* (Jardine 1993). Jardine describes Erasmus’ acts of self-presentation and self-fashioning in different ways (suggesting that he “aspired something more like the renown traditionally accorded only to the major ancient authors and teachers of secular and sacred texts – the international acclaim and recognition accorded to a Seneca or a Jerome,” (Jardine 1993: 29–30). His physical distance was eliminated by representations of his person in portraits as well as through published personal letters. The friendship with Thomas More and his family and with Peter Gilles were celebrated by portraits and “represented as a pleasure taken in a precise physical rendering of the absent friend. ... There is a deliberated distinction being made here between levels of memorial representation. Affectionate letters transport souls to remote locations, paintings make present bodies” (Jardine 1993: 31).

other gifts in return would have been a disappointment to him. This might have been one of the reasons why the correspondence ended with Brenner's last letter, which she sent, as it seems, without any accompanying gift.

## 2.5 Linguistic remarks

To begin with, two general remarks should be made: Neo-Latin has been described as being *eclectic*.<sup>122</sup> But at the same time the Neo-Latin authors imitated *auctores probati*, most of whom (but far from all) belonged to the "Golden Age".<sup>123</sup> Neologisms or new meanings of classical words were often necessary, but the morphology remained the same as in classical times (with few exceptions), as did the syntax in general: most deviations from ancient Latin syntax were due mainly to the lack of information regarding the classical syntactical norms. In accordance with IJsewijn's recommendation, the letters of the present edition will be studied in more detail with regard to their linguistic appearance from a stylistic perspective.

### Orthography

Since no dictionaries in early modern times functioned as standards of classical spelling, the average writer of Neo-Latin seems to have had more or less eclectic spelling.<sup>124</sup>

The common confusion in the spelling of words with or without diphthongs can be seen throughout the correspondence.<sup>125</sup> Brenner and Sperling also em-

<sup>122</sup> Olschki 1922: 69.

<sup>123</sup> IJsewijn 1990–1998, I: 32; Benner & Tengström 1977: 61–62.

<sup>124</sup> Benner & Tengström 1977, 71–72. Cf. a number of studies in which the orthography of Swedish Neo-Latin authors have been part of the investigation: for instance, that of Johannes Messenius (A.-M. Jönsson 1988: 30–38 and *VHS* 4: 7); Anders Spole (*VHS* 1: 21ff); Olaus Troilius (*VHS* 2: 4); Olaus Rudbeck (*VHS* 3: 7); Johannes Matthiae Gothus (*VHS* 5: 7); Algot Scarin (*VHS* 6: 13–14); Johannes Unaeus (*VHS* 7: 7); Johannes Baaz (*VHS* 8: 9–10); Olaus Rudbeck (*VHS* 9: 8ff.); Johannes Schefferus (*VHS* 10: 16–23); Andreas Stobaeus (M. Berggren 1994: 43–54); Emanuel Swedenborg (Helander 1995: 20ff. and *idem* 1988: 23–24; Johannes Ulvichius (Uddholm 1980: 57–58.; Johan Ihre (Östlund 2000: 31–34); Johan Upmarck (Tengström 1983: 66–69), and Johannes Anorelius (Sjöberg 2005: 44–45).

<sup>125</sup> For example Brenner: *foemina*, *foetus*, *caeterum*, *coeteros*; Sperling: *foemina*, *Camoena*, *foecunditas*, *foecundam*, *coelatos*, *praelo*, *naenia*, *facescere*. Brenner uses the Medieval spelling *peniteat*. Both Brenner and Sperling write *seculum*, which was the most common spelling of the word in Neo-Latin.

ploy 'y' instead of 'i' in a couple of words which were supposed to have a Greek origin,<sup>126</sup> as well as inconsistent spellings of single and double consonants.<sup>127</sup>

Moreover, Sperling sometimes uses 'ci' instead of 'ti' before a vowel.<sup>128</sup> He also writes "*scribtas, scribserim, scribtione*", etc. Brenner alternates between using the spelling 'ij' and 'ii',<sup>129</sup> whereas Sperling usually has 'ii'. We find a couple of instances of assimilated and non-assimilated forms,<sup>130</sup> and a few other spellings deviating from the classical norms.<sup>131</sup>

### Morphology and vocabulary

Regarding morphology, the following observations have been made:

Brenner and Sperling consequently use the ablative singular of adjectives in the comparative with the ending *-i* instead of *-e*.<sup>132</sup> This use has been observed by Benner & Tengström as occurring very often, but far from always in the texts they investigated.<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, Brenner once has the ablative singular ending in *-e* instead of *-i*.<sup>134</sup> In Brenner's letter XVI, 2 we find an example of an odd comparison of an adjective, *propinquiorem* (= *propiore*).<sup>135</sup>

Other irregularities regarding morphology in the letters are the following:

*virum*, (for *virorum*) III, 7 (Sperling)

*detrecteris* (= *detrectes*), IV, 4

*sentiit* (= *sensit*), VI, 1

*paratragediari* (= *paratragedare*), XIII, 3

*in opere istoc*, II, 14 (Brenner)

*concedisse*, XIV, 1

<sup>126</sup> Brenner: *inchyti, tyrocinium* (but *hiemem*), Sperling: *hyeme, sylvae, Thetys*.

<sup>127</sup> Haplographies in Brenner: *accomodatas, imo*, Sperling: *decollare* = *decolare*.

<sup>128</sup> *nuncio, nunciavit, pronunciatum, inficior*.

<sup>129</sup> For instance, *studiis/studijs, ingenij* but *desideriis, conijcies/conijcies*.

<sup>130</sup> Brenner: *tanquam, quanquam*, Sperling *inpertitur*.

<sup>131</sup> Brenner: *exuperantia* (but also *exsuperantia*), Sperling: *edecumatis, promptissimum*.

<sup>132</sup> *politiori ... ornatui* VII, 1, *circulo exteriori* XV, 6, *meliori nota* XV, 1, *priori ... descriptione* XIX, 2, *judicio superiori* XXI, 3, and *maiori ... gaudio* XXVI, 1.

<sup>133</sup> Benner & Tengström 1977: 73–74.

<sup>134</sup> *Frequente vel nimia cultura* XVI, 1.

<sup>135</sup> As did Benner & Tengström, 1977: 73–74.

Postclassical words or semantic extension:

*conversatio* ‘conversation’ XVI, 2  
*delineare* XXIII, 4  
*incomparabilis* II, 8 (etc.)  
*minera* ‘mine’ XXIII, 1  
*pararius* ‘intermediary’ XVIII, 3  
*textus* ‘text’ XIX, 3

Neologisms of form:

*contemperatio* Souter: ‘mixing’, Augustinus: ‘mix’;  
 here: ‘shape’ XIX, 3  
*paratragediari* ‘to mock’, cf. Plautus.: *paratra-*  
*goedare* XIII, 3  
*redhostimentum* ‘recompensation’ XIV, 6 (etc.)  
*scopticé traducere*<sup>136</sup> ‘to mock’ XVII, 3  
*lacerus* (for *lacer*) XXIII, 3

Late Latin and Medieval semantic extension:

*Doctor* (of medicine) XXII, 1  
*Dominus Dominus* ‘Monsignor’<sup>137</sup> I, 1  
*hac vice* ‘this time’<sup>138</sup> IX, 2

Neologisms of form based on non-Latin/non-Greek stems:

*runicus* (loan-word from Swedish) XII, 2

Late Latin and Medieval words:

*academicus* XIII, 3  
*correspondentia*<sup>139</sup> II, 12  
*depraedico*<sup>140</sup> VIII, 2  
*dememini*<sup>141</sup> VIII, 4

Compound lexemes:

*senator regius* II, 6  
*collegium Antiquitatum*, XVIII,  
*campi mareschallus* ‘Field Marshal’<sup>144</sup> VII, 6  
*ductor militum* ‘captain’ VII, 6

<sup>136</sup> Here with *traducere*. The origin is the Greek σκωπτικός (addicted to mocking or scoffing). I traced the earliest use of the Neo-Latin word back to a poem by William Alabaster: XXII In Gasparum Scioppium parabolarum scriptorem putidissimum bene male mulctatum (see Sutton 1997, or Sutton *online*. Alabaster first converted to Catholicism but then returned to Anglicanism. Through this poem he attacked the Catholic Humanist Kaspar Schoppe (1576–1649), who published treatises against King James, and called him Scopticus: “Symbolicum nuper cudisti, Scoptice, librum”. This adjective seems to have been in use after thereafter and later on we find it employed in its adverb form in a similar way as in Sperling’s letter: cf. Zvingerus 1724: “ipsaque scop-tice tamquam coniecturalis et mendax traducitur, non sine addito simul proverbio, *Mentiris ut Medicus*.”, and M. Maier, *Verum Inventum, Hoc est, Munera Germaniae, Ab ipsa primitus reperta (non ex vino, ut calumniator quidam scoptice inuehit, sed vi animi et corporis) ... evoluta et tradita*, Frankfurt am Main: Lucas Jennis 1619.

<sup>137</sup> Applies to princes and prelates.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. VHS 9: 33.

<sup>139</sup> See Helander 2004: 100–101.

<sup>140</sup> Krebs, I: 421: “Depraedicare – preisen, rühmen, scheint N. L., wie man sagt, von Desid. Erasmus gebildet, dem es sogar Muretus einigemal nachgebraucht hat; doch vermutet Rönsch, dass in einem Palimpsest der Ambr. In Luc. Evang. Depraedicavit statt depracavit zu lesen ist, Coll. Phil., S. 168.”

<sup>141</sup> Compounds were popular in Neo-Latin, see IJsewijn 1990–1998, II: 382. Cf. Morhof 1708: “*Dememinise* multi dicunt pro oblivisci, decepti corrupto loco apud Martialem lib. 2. epigr. 59. *Ipse iubet mortis dememinise Deus*, ubi rectius legitur *Te meminise*.” In modern editions of Martial,



*edecumatis* I, 3

*praeprimis* XII, 3

*insufficiens*<sup>142</sup> VIII, 3

*modernus*<sup>143</sup> II, II

Neo-Latin semantic extensions:

*academia* XIII, 3, XXV, 4

*Professor* VIII, 6

*infucatus* 'extraordinary' XIX, 7

Neo-Latin neologisms:

*fribuscula* VIII, 8

The Neo-Latin vocabulary employed in Sweden during the period 1620–1720, as well as the stylistics and characteristic ideas of the times, has been explored by Helander.<sup>145</sup> The following words in the present correspondence have been given special attention by him as belonging to the vocabulary typical of the time: *applausus*, *conclamo*, *consto*, *Dii meliora*, *equidem*, *facientia* 'facts/things that have to do with',<sup>146</sup> *nostras*, *prosapia*, *successivus*<sup>147</sup>.

Some poetic archaic words were also popular among Neo-Latin authors; in the present correspondence Brenner uses *hero* and *heroina*.<sup>148</sup> Sperling employs the exotic name *Ucalegon* (which first appeared in Homer).<sup>149</sup> It occurs only twice in the classical Latin literature (Vergil and Juvenal), with the meaning of a neighbour whose house is on fire, a learned allusion, which appears now and then in Neo-Latin texts. Diminutives occur frequently in both correspondents' letters (*opusculum*, *ingeniolum*, *lucubrationcula*, *occupatiuncula* etc), as in other Neo-Latin texts.<sup>150</sup> The expressions *meo nomine*, *hoc nomine*, etc. are frequent in Sperling's letters.

Other words or constructions I observed which also seem to be cherished in Neo-Latin are: *lucubratio*<sup>151</sup> 'nocturnal study', *remoram sentire* 'to be delayed',

the reading is "te meminisse". Morhof seems to have been one of the first to observe this false reading. See also Helander 2004: 105.

<sup>142</sup> Niermeyer, and according to Forcellini, in Tertullian

<sup>143</sup> See Helander 2004: 130.

<sup>144</sup> See Helander 2004: 178.

<sup>145</sup> Helander 1994 and 2004.

<sup>146</sup> See Helander 2004: 113–114.

<sup>147</sup> The word was spelled *subsicivus*, *subsicivus*, *subsecivus*, *succisivus*, and here in yet another way.

<sup>148</sup> VIII, 4 and II, 8. Benner & Tengström 1977: 60.

<sup>149</sup> Letter VIII, 7; see *apparatus fontium* to this letter.

<sup>150</sup> See IJsewijn 1990–1998, II: 382.

<sup>151</sup> This classical word (see "Nocturnal Writers in Imperial Rome: The Culture of Lucubratio" = Ker 2004) appears quite often in Neo-Latin writers such as Erasmus, Vives and Pontan and their successors, such as Sperling and Brenner.

nomine venire <sup>d</sup>‘go by the name of’,<sup>152</sup> *ex adverso*<sup>153</sup> <sup>d</sup>‘on the contrary’ and *emunctioris naris* (sc. homines) <sup>d</sup>‘persons with good judgement’.

### Syntax

In earlier studies of Neo-Latin texts the observations made regarding deviations from the syntax in ancient Latin are in many instances explained by the brief contemporary grammars. Taking this into account, it has previously been observed that many Neo-Latin texts are surprisingly “classical”; Swedish Neo-Latin literature appears increasingly classical during the period 1620–1720 (studied by Helander).<sup>154</sup>

IJsewijn mentions some generally striking features of Neo-Latin in comparison with Medieval Latin in the second part of *Companion to Neo-Latin Studies*: the revival of *accusativus cum infinitivo* (*AcI*) instead of *quod* and the indicative, a slight preference for shifted forms of the kind *amatus fui*, the disappearance of the typical Medieval conjunctions like *quatenus* (instead of *ut* or *quod*), but on the other hand a continued confusion of *cum* and *dum*, a certain looseness in the use of the indicative and subjunctive in subordinate clauses and in the *consecutio temporum* and a tendency towards a more analytical and paratactical phrase structure, depending on the genre and the individual author.<sup>155</sup> Non-classical constructions have been accounted for as influenced by Late Latin and/or Medieval Latin syntax in a Swedish study of specimens of learning and science from the period 1611–1716:<sup>156</sup> for example, an ablative form of the gerund instead of a present participle, frequent use of *iste*, *ipse* or *idem* equivalent to *is*, *ille* as well as gerundive used as passive future participle,<sup>157</sup> and the use of *quod* after *verba dicendi* and *sentiendi*.<sup>158</sup> Tengström (1983) compared the syntax of a Latin funeral oration from early 18<sup>th</sup>-century Sweden with other less literary texts and concluded that *quod*-clauses instead of *AcI*, frequent in Spinoza, the later writings of Swedenborg and in the Swedish dissertations examined, did not occur in the oration, and that the indicative in subordinate clauses, which was rather frequent in the other texts, was infrequent in the oration.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Cf. VHS 1: 27; VHS 9: 14.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. VHS 10: 57. This meaning is otherwise not attested in classical Latin.

<sup>154</sup> Helander 1994: 48; Östlund 2000: 59.

<sup>155</sup> IJsewijn 1990–1998, II: 410.

<sup>156</sup> VHS 1–10 and Benner & Tengström 1977.

<sup>157</sup> VHS 4: 9.

<sup>158</sup> Benner & Tengström 1977: 76ff.

<sup>159</sup> Tengström 1983: 77.

Do, then, these observations concur with the syntax of the letters of the present edition? Brenner and Sperling would be expected to follow the classical syntactic norms rather closely, especially considering that they had literary ambitions when composing their letters.

To begin with, both correspondents respect the classical norms regarding the use of *AcI*. Only in two cases does Brenner not use *AcI* after *verba sentiendi*.<sup>160</sup> Likewise, in accordance with the classical norm Brenner and Sperling have the subjunctive in indirect questions (in Brenner, around ten, in Sperling, over 40 instances).

However, the correspondents have some differences in their use of mood in other subordinate clauses. Brenner employs both the indicative and subjunctive mood in *quod*-clauses, but in almost all cases it seems to be a matter of an oblique subjunctive or of attraction of mood to governing clauses in the subjunctive mood:

oblique:

nil aliud conijcit quam quod ... impleant (II, 13)

doleo ... quotiescunque animum subit, quod ... licuerit (VII, 1)

ceterum quod ... non sis dedignatus ... debeo acceptum (VII, 5)

attraction:

videam quod ferre nequeas (II, 3)

quid gloriosius ... potuisset, quam quod ... habeam (X, 2)

Sperling as a rule takes causal and explicative *quod*-clauses with the subjunctive mood.<sup>161</sup>

In relative clauses defining an indefinite antecedent, Sperling and Brenner use the subjunctive, in agreement with classical Latin. Likewise their use of mood with subordinations in general mirrors classical usage. However Brenner's choice of mood vacillates a couple of times. In the examples given in the footnote below, she deviates from the classical norm.<sup>162</sup> Furthermore, one would

<sup>160</sup> "videam quod ferre nequeas" (II, 3), and "cum audiverat quod de tanti viri notitia meo more mihi gratulabar" XXII, 2.

<sup>161</sup> There are well over 20 instances in the letters with only two exceptions: "gratias ... debeo. quod ... implevisti" (XXIII, 2), and "gratias ... ages ... quod ... voluit" (XXIII, 3). This was common in Late Latin, see Sz: 575 (§ 311 b).

<sup>162</sup> Quantum me levarunt ... consolationes tuae ... vix dici potest (X, 4); quamvis saepius erubesco (X, 2); Verum, quando rerum domesticarum curae graviore curas quasi nunquam admittant, quale manifestius testimonium est, quod postulem, quam ubi censorem egeris et specimina extol-

have expected the subjunctive *commendes* in Sperling's "Fronidus Vester mihi est commendatissimus, et quem Tu commendas, Matrona omnium optima, apud me utatur licet studiis et officiis omnibus, quæ impendere potis sum."

The looseness in the use of tense mentioned by IJsewijn appears in Brenner's letters in particular, as is shown in the following instances:

metuendum rata, ne me, tot laudibus obrutam, immerentem forsan his litterulis tibi proderem, præsertim cum inter clarissima tua scripta te nominis quoque mei rationem habuisse perceperim (II, 2)

Nunquam enim inficias ibo, quanta voluptate animum meum perfudisti, cum studia mea vitaeque modum tuo suffragio comprobares et videam, quod ferre nequeas universum sexum nostrum ... damnari sed ... incitare desideras. (II, 3)

Ego, quæ nihil magis in votis habeo, quam ut tuo hac in re satisfacerem desiderio (II, 5)

hanc, quamquam ... censui semper, effugere tamen nullo modo potui, quo minus et eidem horas dare necesse sit quamplurimas (VII, 2)

– but also in Sperling:

Nullas non grates habeo; nam posse referre/ Haud vires fuerint sufficiente meæ (III, 2) (metrical reasons for the choice of tense)

Regessit facundus senex ea tot manibus trita fuisse ut sibi ipsi copia non erit vel perlustrandi vel legendi (VI, 5)

Hic stupeant Cicero, Nasones atque Marones, /Cum sua, quæ scribis, tam rediviva legent. (III, 4)

quidquid sentiant alii qui lapides, aurum et argentum mallent superesse quam literas<sup>163</sup> (IV, 4)

Once Brenner uses the archaic *ut ut* (with the subjunctive *sit*) as a synonym to the concessive *utcumque*.<sup>164</sup> Instead of the classical "*utrum* – *an*" Sperling has "*an* – *an*" or "*an* – *aut*" (XVIII, 3, XXIV, 4). He also uses *quaenam* instead of *utra* in "ut scirem quaenam Tibi similior esset" (XVIII, 5).

lere volueris (V, 2); Nullus dubito quin illa unica pagina vincet omnes omnium, quæ unquam factæ sunt, descriptiones (XIX, 5); use of *dum=cum*: dolore afficio, dum ... comperior (II, 5); *cum causale* with indicative: idque eo facilius creditur cum apparet (X, 7), præsertim cum ... confido (XVI, 1)

<sup>163</sup> There is also a deviation regarding the mood in *sentiant*.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Sz: 635 (§344): in ancient Latin *utut* occurred only with the indicative. *Utut* with the subjunctive was noted in VHS 2: 5 and VHS 9: 16.

Just like other Neo-Latin authors in this period both Brenner and Sperling sometimes have the shifted perfect passive (*edocta fuerim, gratulatus fui, acceptos fuisse, etc.*).<sup>165</sup> Brenner uses *forem, foret, etc.* more often than *esset, etc.*

There are some other examples of deviations from the classical norm in Brenner's and Sperling's letters which are typical of the contemporary Neo-Latin writers. One example is the vacillating use of *suus/leius*.<sup>166</sup> Furthermore, Brenner has partitive genitive after quot: "versatus est annorum nescio quot (for *annos*, VII, 6),<sup>167</sup> and the perfect infinitive for the future infinitive "Assero namque Tibi, si itinera nunc annis meis molesta ferre possem, me jamdudum advolasse, ut Te complecterer" (for *advolaturum fuisse (esse)* XXV, 3). There are further examples (some of which might be occasional *lapsus mentis*): *concedisset* for *concessisset* (XIV, 1), "quæ tanquam tui in me candoris studiiue singularis infucati testes avidè amplector" (for *infucatos*, XIX, 7), similarly, the following examples from Sperling's letters: "Spero illam liberatam iri" (for *liberatum*, XXI, 3) "ne se serpat ulterius error" XI, 5 (*cf.* ne error iste ulterius serperet" XVII, 3) and "dignissima es amari" (for *amare*, XXI, 3).<sup>168</sup>

A few examples perhaps reflect that Brenner's knowledge of the classical authors was not so deep-rooted as was Sperling's: she constructs *celare alqm alci* "tibi celarem" (VII, 4), and *abhorrere rem* "quam vero te semper abhorruisse sat scio" (X, 3).

In general, however, the deviations from the classical syntactical usage are quite infrequent in both Brenner's and Sperling's letters. The most striking difference between the syntax of the letters and ancient syntax is the use of

<sup>165</sup> The difference between shifted and unshifted forms had more or less been obliterated in Neo-Latin, see Kajanto 1979: 58 and Östlund 2000: 43. Östlund made an investigation of the use of the shifted forms in 13 Swedish dissertations written between 1750–1800, (Östlund 2000: 31, 42–43) and concluded that there was generally a slight predominance of unshifted forms, but that the distribution was close to 50–50. The shifted forms were most common in the perfect infinitive and the perfect subjunctive. The number of instances of shifted and unshifted forms of perfect passive in the present correspondence is quite small, but the shifted forms occur in the perfect infinitive (three instances), the perfect indicative (two), and the perfect subjunctive (four). However, both Brenner and Sperling have more instances of the unshifted than the shifted perfect infinitive (in all, 13 unshifted instances). Brenner has three instances of the shifted perfect subjunctive and no instances of the unshifted forms, whereas Sperling has only one instance of the shifted perfect subjunctive but four instances of the unshifted forms. Sperling has two instances of the shifted perfect indicative and no instances of the unshifted forms.

<sup>166</sup> Brenner: "Habes hic Carmen eius ... nec non versiculos aliquot gallicos sua manu conscriptas" II, 6, and "Virtus ... huius foeminae ex ... inclyti sui Patris"; Sperling: "ut Antiquitatis illud Collegium Vestrum mihi describas cum suis Praesidibus et Assessoribus" XVIII, 6.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Sjöberg 2005: 46.

<sup>168</sup> Or these aberrations might also be typical for the time.

mood in subordinate clauses, in the case of Sperling regarding *quod*-clauses, in Brenner's case the choice of mood in other subordinate clauses. This agrees well with general observations made in other studies of Neo-Latin authors (cf. IJsewijn, VHS *etc.*). In the printed catalogue of Sophia and Elias Brenner's library we find Andreas Stübels's rather brief *Latinismus in Nuce sive nova, compendiosissima & memoratu facillima Grammatica Latina*, printed in 1694. The rules of the syntax are there divided into two categories: "syntaxis simplex sive naturalis" and "syntaxis varians sive artificialis". Among the rules under the first category we find the title "9. Conjunctivi" directly numbered after the cases. Regarding the use of mood in subordinate clauses rule No. 9 states the following: "*Einen Conjunctivum haben:...Alle die Wörtlein: Ut, ne, quo, quin, quod; das Relativum Qui, quae quod, wenn es in Bedeutung der Ursache so viel ist als ut auf dass; cum, quum als/da (beym Imperfecto und Plusquamperfecto), quamvis, licet, ut obgleich; die Wunschk-Wörter ut, utinam, o si; und die höhnischen quasi, ceu, tanquam, perinde, ac si, als wenn, e.g. Volo, ut discas, dignus est, qui ametur etc.*" It continues: *offers cum, quum, wenn/weil/dass; meist an Ende der Rede quod, dass/weil; si, sin siquidem, ni, nisi; bisweilen auch etsi, tametsi, etiamsi, quanquam, quoad, dum, donec, simulac, simulatque, antequam, priusquam; gar selten quia, quoniam, quando, quatenus etc (Diese haben sonst den Indicativum)*. N.B. *Ut, dass/wird stets gesesst auff die Wörter also gross/so sehr/so vieles trägt sich zu etc. Auch wenn man vor dass sagen kann/auff dass/damit oder in Bedeutung einer End-Ursach auff die Frage zu was Ende?!.../ Ut wie/nachdem/hat den Indicativum.*"<sup>169</sup>

Brenner's use of the subjunctive after *quando* and *cum causale* accordingly might be explained by the information given in the grammar. Regarding the use of *AcI* the grammar states the following: "*Der Accusativus wird oft mit dem Infinitivo gesetzt/ da man sonst gebrauchte den Nominativum und Conjunctivum mit quod, oder selten mit ut/...als: dico te fecisse (quod tu feceris), par est, puerum discere (ut puer discat).*"<sup>170</sup> Considering this vague description Brenner's and Sperling's use of *AcI* appears to be remarkably classical.

#### Sentence structure

Regarding the sentence structure, one indication of the style is the number of contracted sentences in the letters. Gerund and gerundive forms of the verbs are frequent (over 40 examples in Brenner's letters, and ca. 30 in Sperling's), just as

<sup>169</sup> Stübels 1694: 29–30.

<sup>170</sup> Stübels 1694: 32.

*participium coniunctum* and *AcI*. The use of *ablativus absolutus*, however, is much more rare (only five to ten examples in Brenner's and Sperling's letters, respectively). As we can see from the number of examples, Brenner uses the gerund and gerundive forms more frequently than Sperling. This is even more the case with *participium coniunctum*, where there are over 40 examples in Brenner's letters, while Sperling has only a couple of examples. The difference is in fact even higher than this, since the total amount of words in Sperling's letters is ca. 30 % higher than in Brenner's. The frequency of the use of *AcI* is similar (Brenner ca. 60, Sperling ca. 70 examples). On the other hand, Sperling in particular uses the personal pronouns quite frequently, especially in letter VI.<sup>171</sup>

There are some examples of long sentences in the correspondence, especially in the first elaborated letters (Sperling's letter I and Brenner's letters II and V). Very long sentences (> 50 words) are more frequent in Brenner's letters than in Sperling's. As mentioned before, Sperling was a prolific letter writer; more than 500 letters are preserved in his copy-books in Copenhagen. Brenner, on the other hand, complained more than once that she did not have the time to write letters. However, when she did write a letter she was very thorough. The irritation she expresses as she is "forced" to write a letter instantly (letter XIV) seems to be genuine.<sup>172</sup> The fact that long sentences are more frequent in Brenner's letters probably reflect this difference between the two letter writers.

### Schemes and tropes

#### *a) in Brenner's letters*

Throughout the correspondence Brenner plays with figures of word order in particular in order to make her Latin as elegant as possible. Even though such examples can be collected from Sperling's letters it is evident that she more frequently and deliberately elaborated her letters with these kinds of schemes. Brenner regularly avoids the finite verb in final position in the clause (e.g., "quibus exoptatus nihil mihi accidit unquam", "per literas sibi expetiit commendationem", "tibi comisit tradendum", "me tam arcte tenes devinctam", "per me refert gratias"). This is connected to her predilection for *hyperbaton*: she separates the congruent or directly coherent words by putting other words in between and in this process places the finite verb as the next to the last word in

<sup>171</sup> In this letter, with around 400 words, we have 31 personal pronouns.

<sup>172</sup> See comments to letter XIV in chapter 2.4.

the sentence.<sup>173</sup> In her first letter (No. II) Brenner combines this stylistic feature with alliteration a couple of times (and in the first of the following instances also with *chiasmus*), “Id tamen nunquam mirari desinam, quomodo a cultura tenui tam locuples provenire potuerit Fructus, singularis scilicet tua erga me meaque studia benevolentia..”, and “Ut interim nihil omittam/.../haud postremas dare licebit/.../Serenissimae Principi CHRISTINAE/.../, cuius singularem et in studia et studiorum cultores propensionem cana canent secula.”

Figures of repetition occur sometimes in Brenner’s letters, especially word pairs, for instance “displicet terretque”, “salvum ac incolumem”, “tenebris et oblivione”. Personification occurs several times in her first letter<sup>174</sup> but only occasionally in her other letters. We find alliterations (instances from letter II given above, also in letter VII), “Doctrinae singularis dudum partae praemium pleniorisque adhuc parandae incitamentum,” and letter XVI, “si coram tecum confabulari tibi que praesenti praesens cor aperire mihi contingeret” (here combined with *polyptoton*).<sup>175</sup>

The most typical trope in Brenner’s letters is the hyperbole, especially the ones she used to express her modesty in different ways. We find it already in the first sentence of her first letter: “Fortunae quidem debeo, Vir Amplissime, quod versiculi isti, quos tanquam ingenioli mei quaecunque tyrocinium,” etc. The modesty is often displayed by the use of diminutive forms such as “litterulis”, “occupatiunculas”, etc. Hyperboles such as “postremas ... tuas (sc. literas) ... sic animo inhaesisse meo, ut centies imo millies de responsis reddendo gratique animi sensu declarando maxime fuerim sollicita” (VII) and “Nihil sane unquam mihi fuit gratius” (XIV) are also typical. Moreover, we find traditional metaphors here and there in her letters (e.g., “lucubrationes..in aperto ponere”, “neque de via, quam ad immortale Foeminarum decus munire coepisti, desistas (II) etc.). *Litotes* is quite common in Brenner’s first three letters, as it is in Sperling’s corresponding letters; it occurs only occasionally in the later letters, however.

<sup>173</sup> The following examples are all from her first letter (No. II in the edition): “quas ex labore suo habet novissimas”, “tam singularem et inusitatum in me meique similes spirat affectum”, “tuo hac in re satisfacerem desiderio”, “Nam ut praestantissimorum authorum de stupenda illius eruditione praeteream testimonia.”

<sup>174</sup> “Eo tamen usque me tua devinxit humanitas”, “instituto, quod..spirat affectum”, “spem certiorum fecerunt mihi..tuae litterae”, “cana canent secula”, “quarum animus naturali quodam instinctu Scientiarum desiderio flagrat.”

<sup>175</sup> *Polyptoton* = repetition through words derived from the same root.



*b) in Sperling's letters*

Sperling too made efforts to make his letters elegant. His first two letters are especially elaborated, the second of which was the versified letter (No. III in the present edition). In the introduction of his first letter he emphasises the most important word "Tuum" by putting it first in the sentence, "Tuum quamvis jamdudum nomen colam...". The schemes and tropes with which Sperling moulds his letters are similar to the ones we have found in Brenner's letters, but they differ in frequency. Characteristic for Sperling regarding tropes is his predilection for metaphors, for example in his first letter, "Neque enim Tui similibus deesse possunt quae scribant, nec torrentia tamen flumina quaedam ut decurrant petimus, sed ut ex limpidissimis illis fontibus, qui nunquam exarescunt, haurire nos sinas et utilibus, doctis ac jucundis istis nos proluere". Not surprisingly, several metaphors meet us in his versified letter (along with other figures of speech), but throughout the correspondence Sperling fills his letters with metaphors (combined with alliteration in letter IV, "et multo lautiores lactucas ista labra desiderent"). Similes occur occasionally, notably the one introduced in letter XIII: "Est mihi gallina insignis..." etc., to which Brenner responds in her following letter. Not seldom, Sperling makes references to the classical world and classical mythology.<sup>176</sup> We find hyperboles in Sperling's letters, too, but not at all to the extent that we do in Brenner. Furthermore, personification occurs in almost all his letters: for example, "et me exoptatissimum illud par Conjugum ... venerari ipsa jussit humanitas" I, 7, "Nulla quidem nescire Tuas mihi pagina debet" III, 4. Regarding figures of repetition, word pairs occur quite frequently. Furthermore, Sperling sometimes embellishes his letters with *anaphora*, for instance, "Habes, Illustrissima Matrona, quod succenseas et, si gravius mecum agere voles, quod irascaris, tamdiu illum qui Te amat, qui Te colit, qui Tuas virutes et eruditionem cum summis...posuit" (XXIV, in this case combined with *climax*), and "Assero..me jamdudum advolasse ut Te complecterer Teque viderem Tuisque colloquiis fruerer" (XXV).

Sperling's letters are free from the abundance of *hyperbaton* we have noticed throughout Brenner's letters. There are some instances of involution (not used

<sup>176</sup> For example in letter III: "Nos viles et turba sumus, quos nulla Dearum fovit, queis uber nullus Apollo dedit", and "Quas aluit facunda suis et docta Minerva ulnis, has solas alba quadriga vehet"; letter XVII "velut e puteo quodam Democriti", "Ego facile patior Epidaurios serpentes acutius me cernere".

by Brenner), for instance, “modo quo es ingenio Te applies” (VI) and “quod ne molestum Tibi sit oro” (XXI), and there are alliterations.<sup>177</sup>

Bringing together the most characteristic stylistic features in the letters to a conclusion, we have seen that even though the two correspondents have the same repertoire of schemes and tropes, Brenner favours above all *hyperbaton* and different kinds of hyperboles, whereas Sperling’s letters are characterized by his metaphoric language and repeated use of personification as well as by his predilection for word pairs. These features are of course more frequent in the earlier part of the correspondence, when the stylistic ambitions of the correspondents were higher, than in the later part.

The kind of figures of speech employed in a text and their frequency depend partly on the genre and on the *auctores probati*, but the taste for certain figures of speech also depended on the time and on the prevalent literary style. The most frequent stylistic devices in the letters of the present correspondence appear to be quite common in other Neo-Latin texts written in Sweden at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>178</sup> The occurrence of *hyperbaton* is very frequent indeed in almost all the texts investigated. This stylistic scheme appeared sometimes in classical prose and quite often in the poetry of the Golden Age. In postclassical Latin it appeared quite frequently, especially in Apuleius.<sup>179</sup> *Hyperbaton* was cherished also by some humanist authors,<sup>180</sup> but seems to have been even more popular at least in Sweden at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Other common stylistic schemes and tropes in investigated texts from this period are litotes, metaphors and similes, personification, inversion of conjunctions or introducing pronouns, hyperboles, antitheses, word pairs, exclamations, *apostrophe*, abundance and involution. The last figure is abundant in Schefferus *Regnum Romanum* (VHS 10), and as we have seen it occurs in Sperling’s letters. The most frequent stylistic features in the present correspondence

<sup>177</sup> For example, a couple of alliterations in letter VIII, “magis funestas autumo quam funera Tuorum”, “Non litibus nata es sed literis bonis” and in letter XVIII (combined with *polyptoton*), “Meretur igitur illa sedulitas Tua, ut omnibus gratiis gratus grates gratiasque hoc nomine optimas maximas, quantas potero, in sinum Tuum suavissimum effundam.”

<sup>178</sup> See Benner & Tengström 1977: 92–105, VHS 1: 90–92, VHS 2: 16–20, VHS 3: 26–28, VHS 4: 31–33, VHS 5: 19–20, VHS 6: 47–50, VHS 7: 25–28, VHS 8: 33–37, VHS 9: 60–62, VHS 10: 76–81, A.-M. Jönsson 1988: 82–91, Östlund 2000: 64–70, Tengström 1983: 94–120, and Uddholm 1980: 56–89. The “Baroque style” of Neo-Latin prose texts from Sweden is of course very similar to the style of the Swedish Neo-Latin poetry; see Berggren 1994: 34–43 and Helander 1995: 30–41 (and the Baroque style is of course not limited only to Swedish Neo-Latin texts from this period).

<sup>179</sup> VHS 4: 29.

<sup>180</sup> Curtius 1948: 276.

thus agree with other Neo-Latin texts written in Sweden and can be assumed to be typical of the Swedish or Scandinavian Neo-Latin baroque prose.

## 2.6 Concluding remarks

A Swedish letter by Brenner (see chapter 1, 2) was analysed by Hansson, who described it as a combination of two *genera*, *accusatoria* and *nunciatoria*, with one *causa* incorporated in another. Her conclusion, that Brenner systematically and formally composed the letter, is no doubt correct. Both Brenner and Sperling were too stylistically advanced to follow model letters recommended in manuals. The close reading of the present correspondence has revealed two correspondents who composed their letters formally and in accordance with traditional dispositions, argumentations and the *topoi* required by the genre. Yet, it seems they both employed them rather freely, more and more so as the correspondence progressed, managing to compose literary and eloquent letters which were at the same time personal.

In the first third of the correspondence Sperling had a primary reason for writing each letter, to which Brenner responded (however, the main *causa* was not always the stated one, as we have seen). Brenner's letters generally responded and replied to his requests and questions. Both Brenner and Sperling employ an argumentative style in many of the letters when asking for something: they seem to have been well acquainted with this particular form of composition, following the rules of letter theory. The petition is followed by arguments, and provided with answers to these arguments, to anticipate possible counterarguments. Gradually, as they establish a personal and professional relation, the disposition of the letters becomes less formal. In the second half of the correspondence, their relationship is so well established that the letters could be defined as *familiares / mixtae* (besides a few letters whose main *causa* is the recommendation of a scholar or student). Brenner dutifully replies to (almost) every single question. Sperling demands quite a lot from her. He constantly introduces new topics and questions, takes the initiative for further contact and eagerly writes two or even three letters in a row without having gotten a reply from Brenner in the meantime; she was often quite slow in answering.

What, finally, did this correspondence really mean to Sophia Brenner and Otto Sperling the Younger? Without a doubt, this twelve-year-long correspondence created a true friendship between the two. We have seen that Brenner did not hesitate to express her views regarding women, which were on occasion at variance with the "soft versions" she presented in her poems, being more radical

to Sperling. As the correspondence proceeds we get to know of Brenner's personal sorrows and worries regarding illnesses in her family, and of the ageing Sperling and his intellectual life seen through his complaints over manuscripts that had been delayed in print, his dispute with a scholar, and his personal engagement in another learned woman, Cille Gad, the Norwegian *femina docta* whose pardon he believed he succeeded in getting through an appeal to the King.

Sperling was a well-known patron of learned women. He managed to get his German friend Sebastian Kortholt to dedicate his work *Disquisitio de poetriis puellis* to Brenner and tried to persuade Kingo to write a laudatory poem in her honour.<sup>181</sup> I agree with Alenius, who remarked that Sperling seemed to have had a special relation with his female correspondents.<sup>182</sup> Sperling was an eager apologist and promotor of learned women, and he was important, for instance, for the Danish Countess Leonora Christina, who wrote her *Jammers-Minde* thanks to Sperling's exhortations.<sup>183</sup> "Entfernte Freundschaft ist uns Frauen ja erlaubt," Sophia Brenner wrote in a German poem to Paul Stricker in 1684, more than ten years before she received her first letter from the Danish Professor (*PD* 1732, 98-100). Having investigated Brenner's correspondence, I can say that to the best of my knowledge she did not have any other international letter contact than with Sperling, nor any one within Sweden that lasted as long or was as valuable.

Thanks to this correspondence Brenner became known as a member of the European literary community. Letters or poems received from abroad were important in establishing true fame. We have seen some indications of how Sophia Brenner's promotion strategies, both her own and by others, worked. These international contacts were also made known and acknowledged in her lifetime. The students and scholars who acted as couriers between Sperling and Brenner and were welcomed by Brenner and her husband, the learned couple, in Stockholm, generated new contacts, which were probably important as well, both for Sophia and Elias Brenner in Stockholm and for Sperling in Copenhagen.

The multitude of women Sperling had gathered must have been impressive to Sophia Brenner. She later on emphasised the importance of exhibiting examples of modern learned women in the catalogues, *gynaecea*, probably bearing

<sup>181</sup> See chapter 1.9 and chapter 2. 4 (comments to letter VI).

<sup>182</sup> See Alenius 1988: 168.

<sup>183</sup> Alenius 1987: 25.

Sperling's project in mind.<sup>184</sup> Last, but not least, it is important to point out that Sperling also benefited in a scholarly way from his correspondence with Sophia Brenner. She provided him with valuable information regarding numismatics and Nordic antiquities. At the same time, both correspondents wrote literary letters, which included quite a few *topoi* and passages similar to other famous correspondences between learned women and men. In particular, we have seen resemblances with the well-known correspondence of Elizabeth Jane Weston.

Their desire to meet face-to-face and talk together, and even their regret that this was never to happen were probably matters of fact. Meeting in person was impossible for many reasons: Sperling was hindered in his wishes to go and visit Sophia and Elias Brenner by his age and bad health, probably by his relative poverty and also by the politically unstable situation between Denmark and Sweden. Sophia Brenner was tied down by her household duties and her many children, and by her economic problems as well. The fact that the correspondence ended in 1708 may have had several reasons. One of them might be the renewed war between Denmark and Sweden (although there was peace between Denmark and Sweden from the summer of 1700 the war between them began again in 1709), another one that Brenner seems not to have sent an *anti-doron* in return for the dissertation and the coins Sperling had sent, in spite of his repeated requests for an engraving of a certain coin.

<sup>184</sup> See chapter 2. 3.

## Chapter Three

# EDITION WITH TRANSLATION

### Editorial principles

#### Main sources

As mentioned before, all letters by Otto Sperling the Younger have been preserved in his own drafts of the letters. Only three of these letters exist in other versions as well: copies of the letters numbered III and IV are found in *Palm-skiöldska samlingen* (UUB) – letter III exists also in print (in *TF*) – whereas letter I was printed in *PD 1732*. Which of these versions (regarding letters I, III and IV) comes closest to the lost originals?

In the copies, Sperling's changes appearing in the drafts have either been preserved or been further corrected. These corrections are similar to the ones in the drafts and are therefore likely to have been made by Sperling. Furthermore, the copies and the printed versions are quite similar, even though they are not identical. An important fact is that there are more letters copied at the request of Palmskiöld (who died in 1719) than there are printed in *PD 1713*. Thus, the "Palmskiöld copies" should have been made directly from the original letters and not from the printed versions, and perhaps also before the publishing of *Poetiske Dikter*.

In the edition of the Brenner/Sperling correspondence the copy text for letter III (which accordingly have three sources: draft, copy and print) will therefore be the copy of the letter. The printed version of letter III is more similar to the "Palmskiöld copy" than to the draft. Therefore, the main source for letter IV will also be the copy of the letter, and not the draft. For letter I, as we recall, we have two sources: Sperling's draft of the letter and the print. As with letter III, the printed version of letter I should come closer to the lost original than the draft. The changes performed in the print are easily explained (see the comments to the edited letter). Hence, the main source for letter I will be the printed version.

Most of Brenner's original letters were wrapped and sealed and delivered by personal couriers. They are addressed with Brenner's hand in the following manner: "a Monsieur Monsr Othon Sperling Conseiller de la Majeste de Danemark a Copenhagen".

## Modernisation or not

Considered that all original letters from Sophia Brenner to Otto Sperling the Younger have been preserved and that Sperling's drafts come close to the lost originals, my intention is to keep the elements in the letters that are characteristic of the time, but only such elements that are easily comprehensible for a modern reader: Many of the elements or features in the letters are characteristic for that period. However, a distinction has been made between different kinds of information in them. Firstly, there are elements that reflect the times, but which do not affect the readability of the letters. Secondly, there are elements, for instance the punctuation, that are characteristic of the time in such a way that they do sometimes obstruct the readability of the letter.

I decided to modernise only the elements that affect the readability. The elements characteristic of the times were thus divided into two groups: (A) Not modernised, and (B) Modernised.

*(A) Not modernised*

## 1. Orthography

The orthography has not been modernised. The application of capital and lower-case letters does not differ from the letter source in the edition, nor does the varying spelling of words or letters (for instance *ii/ij* and *qu/qv*). However, I consistently type capital letter after full stops without any indication in the *apparatus criticus*, even where the letter writer has used lower-case letters. Sophia Brenner's capital 's' seems to be identical to her lower-case 's', and I have therefore typed a capital S where I believe it was intended. It is difficult to distinguish some of Brenner's other capital letters from the lower-case letters, as well: for instance 'c' and 'm'.

## 2. Accent marks

Accent marks often occur in Neo-Latin texts. They were originally used to distinguish between homographs or homonyms, but there were other marks also with other, not redundant functions, which have been regarded as accent marks.

Discerning form from function, I have divided all accent marks which occur in the letters into two groups, naming the first group "accent marks" and the second "other marks", and ranging the latter under (B) Modernised below. The accent marks in these letters indicate parts of speech or inflected forms and usually – although not necessarily – distinguish homographs or homonyms: circumflex over abl. sing. - ending of the first declension, grave accent indicat-

ing adverbs, and also, very occasionally, marking out the conjunctions *quàm*, *modò* and *verò*; moreover, *trema* appear in the correspondence.

The use of accent marks in the letters of the present edition is inconsistent, but never confusing. Sometimes the immediate readability of the letters might increase when the accent marks are kept, as in a postscript of a letter from Otto Sperling, Jr to Brenner:

Quàm vellem ut historiâ quadam brevi de rebus patrii Latinè scriptâ  
publico famam Tui ad posteros relinqueres...<sup>1</sup>

On the one hand the accent marks belong to the diacritical marks of the text, whereas on the other hand they are also part of the general appearance of the text, as is the use of capital and lower-case letters. The accent marks do not affect the readability of the text and will therefore be kept.

### (B) *Modernised*

#### 1. Punctuation

The punctuation of the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries differs considerably from modern punctuation principles. Further, punctuation marks were certainly used more frequently at that time. See for instance the first passage in Brenner's first letter to Sperling (letter II):

Fortunae quidem debeo, Vir Amplissime, quod versiculi isti quos tanquam ingenioli mei quaecunque tyrocinium, Viro illi Magno transmittere sum conata, ad manus tuas pervenere. id tamen nunquam mirari desinam. quomodo a cultura tenui, tam locuples provenire potuerit Fructus; singularis scilicet, tua erga me meaque studia benevolentia; Quam humanissimis tuis litteris, quibus exoptatus nihil mihi accidit unquam, testari dignatus es.

The original punctuation might affect the readability of the letters. Hence, the punctuation of the edited text has been modernised.

#### 2. Other marks

— abbreviation marks (acute accent which marks the abbreviated enclitical *-que*, nasal stroke instead of *-m* or *-n*, and circumflex, e.g., over the archaic form *Virum* for *Virorum* (letter III)

— marks to distinguish between *u* and *n*

<sup>1</sup> Letter No. II.



Abbreviation marks will be resolved throughout in current text. The apostrophe over *u* to distinguish it from *n* will not be kept, either: it fulfils its purpose only in manuscript.

#### Abbreviations

All abbreviations in the text have been resolved to increase the readability. However, numbers and abbreviations of numbers in the lists of coins have not been expanded or spelled out. In a few cases the abbreviation has been noted in *app. crit.*

#### Other comments

On each page the Latin text will be followed by *apparatus fontium* and *apparatus criticus*. The sources for each letter are presented initially in the *app. crit.* The English translations are followed by other contextual remarks in footnotes. There are some Greek words and allusions in Sperling's letters. These were translated into French, reflecting Sperling's ambition to "show off".

#### Textual criticism, *apparatus criticus* and *apparatus fontium*

In the *app. crit.* all changes (most frequent in Otto Sperling's drafts of letters) in the letters are noted, as well as *variae lectiones* in other versions of letters I, III and IV, for which letters I have chosen one main source. When there are variation in accent marks in the draft compared to the main source, I have however chosen the version in the draft; the changes have been performed by the typist (who for instance changed Sperling's grave accents to acute ones). The variations of accent marks or spelling in the print of letter III have not been kept, since these probably just reflect the use of the typist.

Since we have Brenner's original for letter II, I have not noted the variations in the preserved copy of this letter.

I have corrected the text (Sperling's drafts as well as Brenner's originals) in cases when the text is impossible to understand otherwise or when it is obviously a slip of pen, and noted this in the *app. crit.* Otherwise, I have not made emendations, but noted the form which one would have expected in *app. crit.* (suggesting corrections by *expectaveris* to facilitate the reading). Some errors and slips of pen are marked with < > denoting supplements and [ ] denoting eliminations. Other emendations (of, for instance, errors in Sperling's drafts, which he probably changed further before he sent the letters) are noted with *scripsi* in *app.crit.*

In the *app. crit.*, the following abbreviations of the sources have been employed:

EDITION WITH TRANSLATION

*C* = Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092, V:2

*Palm.* = UUB, Palmsk. 332 (copy)

*PD 1732* = *Poetiske Dikter 1732* (print)

*TF* = *De illustri Sveonum Poëtriâ, Sophia Elisabetha Brenner, testimoniorum fasciculus*, Holmiæ, folia B1-B2 (print).

In *apparatus fontium* allusions, reminiscences and echoes of earlier authors have been noted. See further in chapter 2.2.

## Nobilissima et Elegantissima Fœmina

- 1 Tuum quamvis jamdudum nomen colam et tabulis meis insertum habeam, quoniam Te fama tacere nequaquam potuit, nuper tamen visis Tuis carminibus Latinâ, Suecicâ, Germanicâ, Italicâ et Francicâ linguâ compositis  
 5 atque ad Dominum Dominum Thomam Kingo Episcopum Fioniensem transmissis magis etiam magisque exsultare cœpi, quod tam politum et eruditum noster etiam Septentrio alat ingenium. 2 Rara fuerunt hactenus in Sueciâ vestrâ eruditionis inter nobilem sexum specimina nec, quantum indagare potui, ulla se scriptis præstitit præter Catharinam Bååth et alteram  
 10 Catharinam, Gyllengrip. His Tu tertia Charis nunc manus jungis, ne numero Charitum Sueciam carere quis objicere possit, et si quæ sunt aliæ, me moneas, quæso. 3 Ego enim doctas multas Sueciam quoque fovere non nescio, sed literatas solas agnosco, quæ scriptis suis eruditionem aliquam orbi docto consignarunt.
- 15 Rectè igitur, Politissima Tu et elegantissimæ eruditionis fœmina, scriptis edecumatis, ære quovis ac marmore perennioribus, totum, quâ patet, Orbem implere non dedignata es, quæ profundius expendisti Poëtæ illud: Vile latens virtus etc. 4 Unde non possum non hortari, ut ingenio et ætate pergas uti et jam editis monumenta superaddas plura, quæ Te posteris, ut nobis,  
 20 commendatissimam reddere queant. Neque enim Tui similibus deesse possunt quæ scribant, nec torrentia tamen flumina quædam ut decurrant petimus, sed ut ex limpidissimis illis fontibus, qui nunquam exaescunt, haurire nos sinas et utilibus, doctis ac jucundis istis nos proluere. Eæ enim sunt scaturigines Tuæ, ut nunquam deficiant, si velis.

10 manus jungis: cf. Hor. *Carm.* 1. 4. 6; cf. *Hom. Hymn Pyth. Ap.* 186.

16 ære...perennioribus: cf. Hor. *Carm.* 3. 30 .1 (*vide etiam* III, 17; XXIII, 3). 17 Vile...18 virtus: Claudian, *De Quarto Consulatu Honorii Augusti Panegyris* VIII. 222; cf. Hor. *Carm.* 4. 9. 30. 21 torrentia...flumina: cf. Verg. *Ecl.* 7. 52.

1 Nobilissima et : Main source: PD 1732: 138–139; other source: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No. 37, 4° (C) 3 nequaquam ] non C | potuit ex potest mut. C 4 Latinâ...linguâ ] Latinâ, Suecicâ (Suecicâ *supra lin.*), Italicâ et (et *supra lin.*) Francicâ, Germanicâ linguâ C 5 atque ex et mut. C 7 noster...Septentrio ] etiam Septentrio noster ex Septentrio noster etiam mut. C 8 vestrâ *supra lin.* C 9 indagare potui ex potui indagare mut. C | scriptis *supra lin.* C 10 manus jungis ex accedis mut. C 11 et...quæso *in marg.* C 16 edecumatis : Te et commendare cœpisti *post* edecumatis *del.* C | ære...marmore *supra lin.* *post* edecumatis ex Te et commendare cœpisti mut. C | totum ] totum PD 1732 17 profundius expendisti ex nosti mut. C 20 reddere queant ] reddent C 21 nec quidem *post* nec *del.* C | torrentia...quædam ] torrentia quædam flumina C

Most noble and refined woman!

1 I have cherished your name for a long time and have placed it in my catalogue, since fame does not allow you to stay secret. However, when, some time ago, I saw your poems in Latin, Swedish, German, Italian and French that you sent to Thomas Kingo, Bishop of Fyn, I became more and more delighted over the fact that even our northern countries foster such a refined and learned mind. 2 Hitherto, examples of erudition among the noble sex have been rare in your Sweden and, as far as I have been able to determine, not a single woman has made her writing public except for Catharina Bååth and Catharina Gyllengrip. Now as a third Charis, you join hands with them, so that no one can fault Sweden for lacking the three Charites. If there are any other such women, I entreat you to tell me. 3 For I know well that Sweden also cherishes many learned women, but I recognise only those, who have exhibited some erudition for the learned world by their literary specimens, as well versed in literature. 15

Accordingly, being a cultivated woman of refined erudition, you have rightly not been adverse to filling the wide world with your select writings, more eternal than any bronze or marble, deepening the words of the poet, "Merit concealed is of no avail." 4 Therefore I must exhort you to continue using your talent and your life to add more works to those already published. These works will render you as distinguished to posterity as to ourselves. For it can not be that your peers have nothing to write about; and we do not seek torrents, only that you let us drink from those limpid springs that never dry up, and that you let us refresh ourselves in your useful, learned and sweet springs. For such are your bubbling fountains that, so long as you will it, they shall never cease. 25

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2 my catalogue: viz. of learned women. For more information about Sperling's collection of learned women and of his unpublished catalogue on learned women "Collectanea de foeminis omnis aevi doctis" (Cph, GKS 2110 a-b), see chapter 2.1 and chapter 2.4.1 (comment to letter II). 10 Catharina<sup>1</sup>...Gyllengrip: Catharina Bååth is listed among the learned women in Sperling's manuscript, as is Catharina Gyllengrip (Nos. 550 and 551 respectively). 11 join hands: The Charites were often described or depicted as holding hands: besides Horace, cf. the Homeric Hymn III to Pythian Apollo, 186, where they are holding each other by the wrist. Cf. also Botticelli's *Primavera*.

5 Sed et illud abs Te contendam unicè si licet, Doctissima Fœminarum, ut curriculum aliquod vitæ Tuæ ad me perscribere non graveris, nimirum ut eò accuratiùs laudes Tuas, quas mereris, depingere mihi liceat in opusculo, quod de eruditissimis fœminis jampridem concinnandum sumsi, prout olim Quitzovia  
5 nostra et Piscopia Cornara, mihi semper desideratissima, aliæque non ignobiles ac doctissimæ suâ manu testatæ mihi miserunt, quas aliquando lucem visuras spero.

6 Scire præterea cuperem, an Nicolai Kederi vetusta Angliæ Numismata, quæ Tu carmine Tuo elegantissimo commendasti, iam prodierint et quis ille  
10 Kederus sit, ubi moretur, cujas sit, et quid sperare liceat de tam politis commentarijs orbi literato maximè profuturis.

Non iniquè feres, quod his meis ausus sim Tibi negotium facescere; eruditio Tua importunum me reddidit, quam omnes admiramur, meque non unam deferre Tibi palmam ut scires, has exaravi.

15 7 Vale cum Coniuge Tuo felicissimè, cujus numismatum elegantiorum Suecicorum libellum vidi, et me exoptatissimum illud par Coniugum multo multoque æstimare, venerari ipsa jussit humanitas. Num absolverit vel plura meditetur, certiozem me facies. Iterum Vale.

Dabam Hafniæ ad diem XV Septembris Anno Æræ Christianæ MDCXCVI.

20 Tibi, Nobilissima Fœmina,  
Addictissimus  
OTTO SPERLING

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1 si licet : *desunt in C* 2 nimirum : *deest in C* 4 jampridem : *ex jamdudum mut. C* | sumsi : elaborandum *post sumsi add. C* 5 mihi...desideratissima : *supra lin. C* | desideratissima : ex ipsis Venetiis *post desideratissima add. C* 6 doctissimæ : fœminæ *post doctissimæ add. C* mihi miserunt ] consignerunt *C* 8 Scire...14exaravi *C* ] *om. PD 1732* 13 me : *verbum, quod legere non possum, supra lin. post me add. C, postea del.* | unam...palmam : *ex unam palmam Tibi deferre mut. C* 16 me...Coniugum ] me par illud Coniugum exoptatissimum (*exoptatissimum supra lin. C* 17 venerari : *in marg add* venerari...humanitas ] jussit ipsa humanitas *ex æstimare fecit mut C* 18 certiozem me ] me certiozem *C*

5 However, I would also like to ask just one thing of you, that you, if possible, most learned amongst women, would send me some description of your life, so that I may more accurately depict your well earned fame in a minor work on learned women which I have undertaken to compile some time ago, just as our Qvitzow and Piscopia Cornara (I have always 5 esteemed her highly) and other noble and highly educated women have already sent me signed descriptions of their own lives, which I hope will see the light of day soon.

6 Furthermore, I would like to know whether Nicolaus Keder's work on old English coins, which you commended in your elegant poem, has yet 10 been published and who this Keder is, where he dwells, whence he comes and what might be expected of such an excellent work, which will be of great benefit to the learned world.

You will not disapprove of my having dared to cause you trouble by my requests. Your learning, which we all admire, has made me audacious, and 15 I have written this letter so that you would know that I award you not just one prize.

7 Live happily with your husband, whose work on finer Swedish coinage I have seen. *Humanitas* herself has bidden me to cherish and respect this venerable couple more and more. Let me know whether he has finished it 20 or is contemplating any additional studies!

Again, live well!

Copenhagen, September 15, in the 1696th year of the Christian era.

Your, venerable Madam,

humble servant

OTTO SPERLING

25

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5 Piscopia Cornara: Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia (1646–1684). The biography Sperling received from Cornaro does not appear in the manuscript or elsewhere in Cph. Anne Margrethe Qvitzow's biography is to be found added to Sperling's presentation of her in his manuscript. 10 in...poem: Brenner's poem was a short elegiac in Latin, dated May 22, 1687 and dedicated to Nicolaus Keder. Its title reads: "Ad antiquis moribus et studiis juvenem Nicolaum Kederum cum vetusta Angliæ numismata, quæ inter alia rariora in Museo suo servat, commentariis illustrata in lucem edere pararet." The poem was later published in *PD* 1713: 195. Keder's work on English coins is mentioned in *SBL* (2: 15) as an unpublished manuscript about English coins from the Viking Age that can be dated to 1687 at the latest. 18 work...coinage: In 1691 Elias Brenner had published *Thesaurus*, for which he had been praised in German, French and Italian journals (Aspelin 1896: 72).

Excellentissimo et Celeberrimo Viro  
OTTHONI SPERLINGIO  
Salutem Plurimam Dat  
Sophia Elisabeth Brenner

5 1 Fortunæ quidem debeo, Vir Amplissime, quod versiculi isti, quos tanquam  
ingenioli mei quaecunque tyrocinium Viro illi Magno transmittere sum  
conata, ad manus tuas pervenere. Id tamen nunquam mirari desinam,  
quomodo a cultura tenui tam locuples provenire potuerit Fructus, singularis  
scilicet tua erga me meaque studia benevolentia, quam humanissimis tuis  
10 litteris, quibus exoptatus nihil mihi accidit unquam, testari dignatus es.

2 Hæc etsi multis nominibus gratissimæ mihi fuere, ancipiti nihilominus  
hæsi animo, utrum consultius mihi foret respondendi an vero tacendi studium,  
metuendum rata, ne me, tot laudibus obrutam, immerentem forsitan his  
litterulis tibi proderem, præsertim cum inter clarissima tua scripta te nominis  
15 quoque mei rationem habuisse perceperim. Eo tamen usque me tua devinxit  
humanitas, Vir Candidissime, ut obsequij erga te magis quam proprij honoris  
notam memorem mihi imprimeret. 3 Nunquam enim inficias ibo, quanta  
voluptate animum meum perfudisti, cum studia mea vitæque modum tuo  
suffragio comprobares et videam quod ferre nequeas universum sexum  
20 nostrum ad colum et fusum (prout plurimis persuasum est) damnari, sed ad  
sublimiora tractanda vitamque inter scientias et artes humaniores agendam  
Fœminas etiam pro insigni tua comitate incitare desideras. Quod interim, sive  
humanitatis exuperantia sive ingenioli mei tenuitate adductus, tantam  
eruditionis laudem mihi tribuis meque simul egregio huic Celebrium  
25 Fœminarum numero adscribere dignatus es, id totum insigni genij tui  
benignitati acceptum fero. 4 Verum enim vero etsi laudes, quas in me confers,  
hactenus minime promerita sim, est tamen, cur delecter hoc tuo instituto,  
quod tam singularem et inusitatum in me meique similes spirat affectum, ut  
lucubrationes etiam Fœminarum in aperto ponere non detrecteris.

8 a...Fructus: cf. Mt. 13: 31f. 11 ancipiti...12 animo: cf. Erasm. *Adag.* 3. 8. 89.  
20 ad<sup>1</sup>...damnari: cf. Tib. 2. 1. 63f., cf. Erasm. *Coll.* XXXI (Abbatis et Eruditæ).

1 Excellentissimo et : Original, Cph, GKS III2, 2°

LETTER II

Sophia Elisabeth Brenner sends her greetings to  
the most Eminent and Renowned  
Mr. Otto Sperling

1 Most Distinguished Sir! I am indeed indebted to good Fortune that those little verses, which I undertook to send to that mighty Bishop as  
5 some sort of specimen of my inexperienced pen, have reached your hands. Yet, I will never stop being astonished at how the sowing of a few seeds can produce such a rich harvest, namely your extraordinary benevolence towards me and my studies, which you have deigned to demonstrate by your most kind letter; nothing has ever been more welcome to me. 10

2 Even though I was delighted by your letter for many reasons, I nevertheless was uncertain whether it would be more judicious to answer with this letter or to remain silent; I feared lest perhaps I betray myself as unworthy of the many praises you have heaped upon me, especially since I had learned that you had also taken up my name in your most illustrious  
15 work. However, your kindness, dear Sir, has so won me over, that it has left me with an unquenchable desire to subordinate my personal glory to the observance of your will. 3 For I shall never deny how much my spirit has delighted in your attention, when you expressed your full approval of my studies and my way of life and when I see that you cannot endure our  
20 entire sex being doomed to the distaff and the spindle: most people would so have it. You, however, with your extraordinary generosity wish to inspire even women to treat more subtle matters and to devote their lives to science and the liberal arts. I ascribe completely to your remarkably generous spirit the fact that you in the meantime, either influenced by your  
25 overwhelming kindness or by my petty talent, bestow upon me such praise and likewise consider me worthy of inclusion in your illustrious collection of celebrated women. 4 But all the same, even if I thus far have by no means merited the praise you confer upon me, nevertheless I have reason to  
30 delight in this your undertaking, which reveals such a unique and unusual sympathy for me and my peers, when I see that you do not decline to put even women's lucubrations into open view.

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5 to<sup>2</sup>...Bishop: Almost a year had passed since Brenner sent her poem and letter to the famous Bishop together with the other poems. Cf. letter No. VI, where Sperling reports that he has reproached Kingo for not replying. 32 lucubrations: that is, work done by lamplight.



Et quanquam ex celeberrimi Morhoffij Polÿhÿstoris libro 1, capitulo XIX de  
vitarum scriptoribus, hoc tuum institutum iam dudum fuerim edocta, spem  
tamen longe certior fecerunt mihi elegantissimæ tuæ litteræ Te tuis  
promissis stare ad celebrandam Fœminarum, quæ claruere, memoriam. 5 Ego,  
5 quæ nihil magis in votis habeo, quam ut tuo hac in re satisfacerem desiderio,  
non levi sane dolore afficior, dum Fœminas eruditas non minus ut olim in  
Suecia nostra raras esse comperior, præsertim cum id nomen nulli concedere  
videaris præterquam ijs, quæ scriptis suis orbi innotuerunt. 6 Fateor hoc  
prodigij instar apud nos haberi, neque cognovi ullam, quæ usque adeo  
10 profecerat, nisi jllustrissimam Comitem Ebbam Mariam, jllustris quondam  
Comitis et Regij Senatoris Ponti Friderici De la Gardie Filiam generosissimam,  
cui litterarum gloria jure tribui potest, quippe quæ generis splendorem  
superbasque Familiæ suæ imagines ornamento sibi non sufficere rata nisi etiam  
linguarum bonarumque artium decus ijs associasset. Habes hic carmen eius  
15 germanicum minime inelegans in obitum Divæ Reginæ ULRICÆ  
ELEONORÆ nec non versiculos aliquot gallicos sua manu conscriptos.  
Scripsit insuper meditationes sacras singulis diebus hebdomadis accomodatas  
sermone germano, opus prælo paratum.

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13 superbasque...imagines: *cf.* Mart. 5. 20. 7.

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16 sua ]eius *expectaveris*

And although I already some time ago learned from the famous Morhof's *Polyhistor* (book 1, chapter 19 "On the Biographers") about your plan, your most elegant letter nevertheless greatly confirmed my hope that you would stand by your promises to celebrate the memory of famous women. 5 Though my only wish is to satisfy your request in this matter, I am indeed affected by no slight anguish as I find that learned women are no less rare now in our Sweden than they were in the old times, especially since you do not seem to grant the name 'learned' to any other than to those who have become known to the world by their writings. 6 I confess that literary women are regarded as marvels among us, and I know of no one who has advanced so far other than the most illustrious Countess Ebba Maria, noble daughter of the late illustrious Count and Royal Councillor Pontus Fredrik De la Gardie. She indeed merits being called learned because she held that the splendour and the proud paintings of her family were not sufficient as an ornament for herself, unless she added to them the grace of languages and the liberal arts. You have here her elegant German poem on the death of the divine Queen Ulrica Eleonora, together with some small poems written in French by her hand. She has also written pious meditations for each day of the week in German, a work ready to be printed. 20

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2 Morhofs *Polyhistor*: *Polyhistor* by Daniel G. Morhof was published in 1688–92 (I have consulted a copy printed in 1708). In the passage Brenner is referring to, Morhof writes about Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia, who was the first woman ever to have obtained doctorate degree. He also enumerated scholars who had been or were presently writing eulogies or catalogues of learned women: J.C. Capaccius, Thomasius, J.B. Fregosus, Vincentius Placcius and Otto Sperling; Sperling's work on learned women from ancient times up to his time was presented as in progress (Morhof 1708: 227). ■ Ebba...Gardie: Ebba Maria De la Gardie wrote laudatory poems as did her younger sister Johanna Eleonora. Brenner wrote two poems to Ebba Maria De la Gardie, one laudatory poem in 1692 (*PD* 1713: 203) and an epitaph after her death in 1698 (*PD* 1713: 132–134). None of the writings of Ebba Maria De la Gardie was published during her lifetime. Some hymns and epitaphs have been preserved in transcription in UUB ("Palmskiöldska samlingen"). Having heard about Ebba Maria De la Gardie, Sperling listed her among the other learned women as No. 835. Not only Ebba Maria De la Gardie but Brenner, too, wrote an epitaph in memory of Ulrica Eleonora the younger, published in *PD* 1713: 20–21.

7 Accedit huic altera Comes Maria Aurora Königsmarck, cuius præclarum  
nomen ob singulares eius animi dotes et insignem linguarum peritiam in  
Dania quoque vestra, ut ubique, magni fieri non ignoro. Extant illius carmina  
non nulla germanico pariter ac gallico idiomate conscripta, quorum unum in  
5 memoriam celebris illius comediæ compositum est, quam ante aliquot annos  
Nobilissimæ et illustrissimæ Fœminæ in oblectationem Regiæ Domus  
Stockholmæ publice exhibuerunt, quod tanquam specimen elegantis ingenij  
tibi transmittere volui. Non dubito præter has duas multas alias sub nostro  
cælo morari, præsertim inter Fœminas, quibus splendidior sors et erecta  
10 indoles; quarum notitia cum adhuc ad nos nulla fuerit perlata, doleo me  
nomen earum Tibi indicare non posse.

8 Ut interim nihil omittam quod ad causam nostram tuendam sexumque  
decorandum faciat, haud postremas dare licebit Heroïnæ, quam neque Te  
neque orbem literatum latere plus satis agnosco, Serenissimæ Principi  
15 CHRISTINÆ, Svecorum, Gothorum Vandalorumque quondam Reginæ  
Potentissimæ, cuius singularem et in studia et studiorum cultores  
propensionem cana canent secula.

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17 cana...secula: cf. Cat. *Carm.* 95. 5; cf. Melchior Weinrich, *Aerarium poeticum*,  
Francofurti 1677: 891.

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9 sors : *supra lin.ms.*

7 I would also add another Countess, Maria Aurora Königsmarck, whose name, made glorious by her outstanding talents and her extraordinary knowledge of languages, I do know is fully appreciated in your Denmark, too, as everywhere. There are several poems of hers, written in German and French. One of them was composed in memory of the well-known play 5 that distinguished women of noble birth publicly performed for the entertainment of the Royal Court in Stockholm some years ago. I would like to send to you this same poem as an example of a brilliant talent. I have no doubt that apart from those two women there are many others in our countries, especially among women of splendid circumstances and 10 noble disposition. Since no information of such women has yet been conveyed to us, I am sorry to say that I can not indicate their names for you.

8 In order not to omit anything that might stand in defense of our cause and in adornment of our sex, not the least important is the heroine who I 15 am very well aware is not unknown to you or to the learned world, Christina, once the most serene and mighty Queen of the Swedes, the Goths and the Vandals; far into the future, they will sing songs of her remarkable inclination for studies and for those who cherish them.

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1 Maria...Königsmarck: Königsmarck was well known as a learned woman, lady-in-waiting to the Swedish court between 1680 and 1692, and mistress to Frederick Augustus I of Saxony (later to be King of Poland). Neither Ebba Maria De la Gardie nor Maria Aurora Königsmarck was published during their lifetime, although their poems were well known from transcriptions. Hanselli published their poems in 1873 (*Samlade Vitterhetsarbeten*, 8). On New Year's Day of 1684, Racine's play *Iphigénie en Aulide* had been performed at the court in Stockholm in the presence of the King, Charles XI, and his mother Hedwig Eleonora. The actors were a group of women, among them Ebba Maria and Johanna Eleonora De la Gardie, as well as Maria Aurora Königsmarck. The French culture and language were gaining ground; at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the language was being used more and more in poems and letters. However, to perform this French drama was something still unusual. Moreover, the fact that the actors were all women was something quite unique, and there was also some criticism against their venture. The poet Erik Lindschöld defended the women in a poem, where he rejected the slanderers and claimed that any critic should do better himself before criticizing the play (Hanselli 1866: 159). In an article entitled "Aurora Königsmarck och 1600-talets feminism" (Olsson 1979), B. Olsson argues the performance of *Iphigénie en Aulide* as a feministic demonstration. Königsmarck's poem is not found among the manuscripts in Cph; Brenner's choice of tense (*transmittere voluit*) perhaps indicate that she was only planning to send him the poem. Königsmarck is included in Sperling's catalogue as No. 834. 16 the...Christina: Elias and Sophia Brenner owned several books about Queen Christina: in fact, a major part of the books written about her at that time. They are listed in *Catalogus ... Brenneri*, (X 212, UUB).

Nam ut Præstantissimorum Authorum de stupenda illius Eruditione præteream testimonia, documento sufficiunt litteræ eius politissimæ, quibus partim Viros Sui Seculi Clarissimos humanissime invitavit, ut Grotium, Salmasium, Vossium, Heinsium, Bochartum, Freinshemium, Bœclerum, 5 Iunium, et præ cœteris lumen illud Philosophiæ incomparabile Nobilissimum Cartesium, partim summam cum quibusdam alijs amicitiam literariumque commercium benigniter contraxit, unde æternam sui nominis famam posteritati reliquit.

9 Neque defuerunt nobis antiquissimis quoque temporibus, quarum animus 10 naturali quodam instinctu Scientiarum desiderio flagravat, memorantque Historici Septentrionis vetustissimi de Fœminis, quas “Skaldmœr” vocant, quæ poetico spiritu agitatæ Heroum gesta carminibus suis decantarunt, quod tamen in eum finem minime adduxi quasi hoc tibi ignotum putarem.

10 Verum enim vero Te causæ nostræ adeo favere sat scio, ut minutissima 15 quoque pro sexu nostro facientia iam diu perspecta Tibi feceris. Macte laudatissimo hoc consilio, ingeniorum Censor benignissime, neque de via, quam ad immortale Fœminarum decus munire cœpisti, desistas etiam atque etiam rogo. Et quanquam, quod ad me spectat, studijs potius oblectari quam ea serio colere soleo, quæ tot curis negotijsque domesticis implicita vix 20 tantillum temporis ad litterulas has concinnandas impetrare potui, cave tamen existimes me ita admonitionis tuæ immemorem esse, ut horas post hac a vocatione mea rebusque œconomicis supervacuas ullis alijs occupationibus quam Musis et Artibus dicatas velim.

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5 cœteris ] coeteros *ms.*; *aut* præter coeteros *aut* præ cœteris *expectaveris* 6 amicitiam ] amittitiam *ms.*

For, passing over the testimonies great authors have made of her astonishing erudition, we find sufficient evidence in her refined letters, by which she both kindly invited the most brilliant men of her times (to come to Stockholm) such as De Groot, De Saumaise, Voss, Heinsius, Bochart, Freinsheim, Boecler, Du Jon, and most importantly that incomparable star 5 of philosophy, the noble Descartes, and generously engaged in close friendship and exchange of letters with certain others. These letters remain (as vehicles) to carry the eternal fame of her name to posterity.

9 Not even in ancient times did we lack women whose minds burned with a natural instinct for science. The ancient historians of the Nordic countries mention women, whom they call "Skaldmöer", who, stimulated by poetic inspiration, sang of the deeds of heroes in their poems; which fact, however, I would not mention as something unknown to you.

10 But at the same time I am well aware that you are so favourably inclined towards our cause that long ago you already acquired a thorough 15 knowledge of even the smallest facts that are favourable to our sex. Bravo to you and your excellent plan, you most benevolent Censor of talents, and I pray over and over again: do not step off the road which you have begun to create to the immortal glory of women. And yet, as far as I am concerned, I usually amuse myself with studies rather than devote myself 20 seriously to them, busy as I am with so many concerns and domestic duties that I hardly have been able to obtain even the little time needed to put together this letter; yet, do not think that I am so forgetful of your admonition that I will not devote the time I have free from housework to any other occupation than to poetry and the liberal arts. 25

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II Skaldmöer: Brenner probably refers to the Icelandic sagas and the Old Norse word *skáldmáer*. "Snorre Sturlusons Norlänske Konunga sagor", published in 1697, is noted in *Catalogus ... Brenneri*.

11 Coeterum cum quærere digneris, Vir Amplissime, de opere quod Maritus  
 meus Elias Brenner meditatur circa Nummos et Numismata SveoGothica,  
 paucis respondebo. Ille quotidie in eo est occupatus, maxime cum ei uni is  
 labor incumbat, non modo in colligendis hisce monumentis iisque  
 5 describendis et depingendis, sed præterea, cum non sit copia artificum, qui  
 expetita accurate exsculpere ea possunt, ipse manum admoveere cogitur,  
 saltem ad præcipua. 12 Deinde augetur indies eorum numerus, tam antiquis  
 quam modernis, quæ, maxime moderna, ab exteris, cum quibus contigit ipsi  
 correspondentia, tempore quovis accedunt. Atque hæc omnia libro ipso illata  
 10 habebuntur, ut quam primum perfectum, quoad fieri potest, circa hanc  
 materiemopus existat.

Vale Vir incomparabilis meque tibi semper dum vivo devinctam habe!  
 Stockholmiæ Die 29 Martij 1697

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6 manum admoveere: Erasm. *Adag.* 4. 3. 35; (*vide etiam* IV, 2).

11 For the rest, since you, most distinguished Sir, deigned to ask about the work my husband Elias Brenner had in mind on the Swedish-Gothic coins, I will add these few words. He is busy working with this every day, all the more since the entire work falls on him alone, not only the gathering of these specimens and the description and depiction of them, 5 but furthermore, since there are not a lot of artisans capable of engraving them with the requested carefulness, he himself is compelled to put his hand to this, at least to the most important ones. 12 Each day the number increases, both of the old ones and of the modern ones, which (mostly the modern ones) can arrive at any time from foreigners with whom he is in 10 correspondence. And all this will be inserted in that book, so that as soon as it is complete, to whatever extent this is possible, there will be a complete work on this matter.

Farewell, unequalled Sir, and think of me as perpetually devoted to you for as long as I live. 15

Stockholm, March 29, 1697

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13 complete work: Elias Brenner continued gathering supplementary information for a second edition of *Thesaurus* until his death in 1717. Nils Keder then continued the work, and in 1731 the second extended version of *Thesaurus* was finally published.



13 P.S. Maritus salutem quam plurimam tibi dicere iubet et quoniam per  
 varias interpellationes ipsi scribere non vacat mittit tibi, viro Amplissimo,  
 nummos 5 vere antiquos, quos inter Regis Alberti cum tribus coronis  
 cæterorum vincit raritatem, tabellas etiam aliquot quas ex labore suo habet  
 5 novissimas, effigiem deinde serenissimi Regis nostri ex argento, similitudinem  
 regij vultus, ut pro tempore creditur, optime referentem. De columellis vero in  
 nummo Olai Sköttkonung nil aliud conijcit quam quod spatium illic runis  
 vacuum commode impleant. Videtur etenim hic nummus ad imitationem  
 cujusdam ex Edelredi nummis esse cusum, cujus lemma totum exteriorem  
 10 nummi gyrum solum occupat. Iterum vale.

13 P.S. My husband asks me to send you his sincere greetings, and since he does not have the time to write you himself he sends you, eminent man, five truly ancient coins including a very rare one showing King Albrecht and the three crowns. He also sends some of his latest drawings and a silver reproduction of our serene King as well, which is considered to be an excellent representation of the King's features. As for the little columns in the coin of Olof Skötkonung, he has no other interpretation than that they might neatly fill out the space where there are no runes. For this coin seems to have been minted as an imitation of the coins of Aedelred, whose title alone occupies the outer circle of the coin. Again, farewell.

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1 PS: Today, the two postscripts (which are written on the same sheet of paper) are not attached to the present letter, but to a letter from Elias Brenner to Sperling (dated August 7, 1705), which is kept in Cph, GKS 3092 VI:I, 4°. I believe that they were attached to the present letter because of the following reasons: Brenner answers Sperling's questions about Nils Keder, the numismatist, in the second one of these postscripts. As we will see, she usually answers Sperling's questions in her next letter and never waited several years with her answer without reason, as would have been the case here if the postscript was not added to this letter. Moreover, Brenner refers to the *curriculum vitae* she is sending Sperling in the same postscript. Thus, I take it that her biography (which was written in Swedish) was also added to the present letter (contrary to Alenius, who suggested that the biography originally was attached to letter V in the present edition, Alenius 1988: 179). The biography presents Brenner only by giving the date of her birth, giving him information about her knowledge of six languages and that she had written a number of poems, some of which had been printed. Finally, a favourable mention of her from Father Bacchini, published in *Giornale de' Letterati* in 1692, was quoted. A number of congratulations had been received by her besides this one, the biography said, but they were omitted for the sake of modesty. Sperling added the half-page-long biography in full to his presentation of Sophia Brenner in his manuscript (vol. 2, between pages 283 and 284). Alenius discusses the biography and concludes that it was written by Sophia Brenner although it was written in the 3<sup>rd</sup> pers. sing. She rightly remarks: "The handwriting is very like hers, and a comment that would be odd from anyone else but her, suggests her: from "modestia", it is said, panegyric poems and comments on Sophia Elisabet Brenner have been omitted. Who else would have to be modest on her behalf other than herself, from whom, on the other hand, modesty was expected?" (Alenius 1988: 177–178). 3 King Albrecht: sc. of Mecklenburg.

14 P.S. Cum dignatus fueris expetere curriculum vitæ meæ, sustinui id tibi transmittere pro ut ab Amico quodam raptim lingua vernacula est consignatum et per eum fieri licuit. Ceterum quod de N. Kedero certior fieri vis, qui opus molitur de nummis Anglicanis, est Vir Juvenis nostras, qui  
 5 ætatem Musis consecravit, quarum studia etiam egregie doctus. Linguas omnes occidentales scit et præterea Antiquitatis exactiorem habet notitiam. In opere istoc desudat, quod quam primum absolvere satagit.

Nobilissimæ Elegantissimæ et Doctissimæ Dominæ  
 Sophiæ Elisabethæ Brenneriæ

- 10 1 Mitto Tibi multam, BRENNERIA Docta, Salutem,  
     Notam nec videas absque salute manum.  
 2 Jamque Tuas scribo perlatas esse tabellas,  
     Quas iter est longum, longa morata dies,  
     Nullas non grates habeo; nam posse referre  
 15     Haud vires fuerint sufficiantve meæ.  
 3 Vidi tam pulchre doctas legique Camœnas,  
     Ut spem jam longè viceris Ipsa meam.  
     Vidi quæ superant calami præconia nostri,  
     Nam divina Tuis undique vena fluit.  
 20 4 Non est quod metuas nostras, CLARISSIMA, laudes;  
     Sunt tenues, humiles, nec quid habent nimium.  
     Nulla quidem nescire Tuas mihi pagina debet,  
     Sed vix attingit digna Tuis meritis.

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12 perlatas...tabellas: cf. Ov. *Am.* 1. 11. 7.

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8 Nobilissimæ Elegantissimæ : Main source: Copy, Uppsala, UUB, Palmsk. 332: 625–628 (*Palm.*); other sources: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No. 156, 4° (C); *De Illustri Sveonum Poëtriâ, Sophia Elisabetha Brenner, Testimoniorum Fasciculus*, (printed version), Holmiæ, folia B1–B2 (TF). | Dominæ...Brenneriæ ] Dnæ Sophiæ Elisabethæ Brenneriæ Stockholm<iae> C 10 Mitto : ex scribo ex dico mut. Mitto...multam ] Multam mitto Tibi C 15 vires...meæ : ex unquam potero velle putare meum mut. C 16 pulchre ] pulchrè *supra lin.* C 18 calami...nostri : Musæ (Musæ ex laudes mut.) præconia nostræ C 19 fluit : Frustra est si magnâ quæram Te dicere chartâ / Quod merita es nunquam spiritus (*verbum, quod legere non possum*) habe(*ultimas litteras legere non possum*) post fluit del. C 23 attingit ] attingunt C

14 P.S. Since you deigned to request my biography I have undertaken to send you one which a friend quickly composed in the vernacular; he has given his permission for this. Regarding your wish to learn more about N. Keder, who is working on a manuscript concerning English coins, he is a young Swede who has dedicated his life to the Muses and is remarkably 5 learned. He knows all the Western languages and has a very refined knowledge of Antiquity. He devotes much time and effort into that manuscript, with which he has his hands full trying to finish it as soon as possible.

To the most noble, refined and learned Mrs. Sophia Elisabeth Brenner 10

1 I send you, learned Mrs. Brenner, my best regards and you should not see a familiar handwriting without a greeting. 2 Your letter, delayed by a long journey, has been delivered now. I was very delighted to receive it; I would not at all have been, nor will I ever be, able to express sufficiently how delighted I was. 3 I have seen and read poems so beautifully learned that 15 you have already by far surpassed my expectations. I have seen things more exquisite than my pen can express, for all your poems are inspired by the god of poetry. 4 Most illustrious Madam, you have no reason to fear our praise. It is modest and humble and by no means exaggerated. In fact, no page of mine should be without your praise, but none of them can attain 20 what your merits are worth.

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3 N Keder: In 1696, Nils Keder, Elias Brenner and two other numismatists were commissioned by the king to arrange the Royal collection of coins. In 1697, Keder and Elias Brenner again became colleagues as Keder, too, was appointed Assessor at the Board of Antiquities (Elias Brenner had been appointed already in 1693). As mentioned before, Keder says himself in his autobiography that he taught Sophia Brenner French and Italian (Keder 1742: 321). 10 To...Brenner: This letter is written in elegiacs. Quite a few letters were written in elegiacs in this time, see Alenius 1987: 53–54. 15 poems: *Camoenae* (= *Camenae*) were prophetic nymphs. The name is connected with *carmen* (oracle/prophesy) and was applied to the muses already in early Roman poetry, and is hence synonymous with poems.

- Hic stupeant Cicero, Nasones atque Marones  
 Cum sua, quæ scribis, tam rediviva legent.  
 5 Nos viles et turba sumus, quos nulla Dearum  
 Fovit, queis uber nullus Apollo dedit.  
 5 Haud tamen aut senium sors aut lassabit iniqua,  
 quin semper doctas (sic meruere) colam.  
 Raræ Pierides semper doctæque fuere:  
 Vix numerat Musas Græcia tota novem.  
 6 Non Aganippeis quævis sibi proluit ora,  
 10 Nec se Castaliis tingere quivit aquis.  
 Quas aluit facunda suis et docta Minerva  
 Ulnis, has solas alba quadriga vehet.  
 His debetur honos, has magni Regis adorat  
 Purpura; nos nunquam dememinisse decet.  
 15 7 Nomina præstatis vos immortalia solæ,  
 Nos levis at reliquos umbra cinisque manent.  
 Te mihi CHRISTINAM, Suecorum Maxima quondam  
 Quæ Regina fuit, commemorasse juvat.  
 Illa palimpsestis legitur creberrima nostris,  
 20 Et volitat toties illa per ora Virûm.  
 8 EBBA mihi, magnis Virgo virtutibus olim  
 Hisque oculis elegans, GARDIA nota fuit.  
 Nam memini cum nos pariter sulcavimus undas,  
 Et cum Matre tulit Balthica Tethys eam.  
 25 Sex nunc lustra ferè pergo numerare, trementes  
 Artus cum video et pallida membra levo

3 viles...turba: cf. Plin. *HN* 37. 113. 1; cf. Stat. *Silv.* 2. 2. 129. 5 senium...lassabit: cf. Quint. *Decl.* 17. 2. 21; cf. Sen. *Dial.* 6. 20. 1. 4. | sors...iniqua: cf. Liv. *fig.* 59. 15; cf. Sen. *Suas.* 6. 17. 15; cf. Sen. *Dial.* 9. 10. 6. 1. 12 alba quadriga: cf. Plaut. *Asin.* 279; cf. Apul. *Apol.* 22. 16 levis...cinisque: cf. Ov. *Met.* 9. 496; cf. Hor. *Carm.* 4. 7. 16.  
 20 volitat...Virûm: cf. Verg. *G.* 3. 9; cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 1. 34. 8; cf. Enn. *var.* 18. 23 sulcavimus undas: cf. Ov. *Met.* 9. 496.

2 scribis : ex scribunt *mut.* C 3 quos : ex queis *mut.* C | nulla Dearum : ex nullus Apollo *mut.* C 5 sors : *supra lin.* ex aut *mut.* C 6 quin : Ut ante quin *del.* C | sic : ex ut *mut.* C  
 8 Vix...novem TF] Vix numeras Musas Græcia tota novem *Palm.*, Non habuit præter Græcia tota novem C 11 Quas...suis : ex Has igitur felix quas *mut.* C 15 Nomina...solæ : ex S (post S aliquot litterae illegibiles, et verbum, quod legi non potest) redeunt et immortalia vobis *mut.* C 24 Tethys C TF] Tethys *Palm* 26 Artus...et : Artus cum (cum *supra lin.*) video et ex Artus cum video *mut.* C

Cicero, Ovid and Vergil may be amazed when they see their works so renewed by your writings. 5 The rest of us are of that worthless mass whom no goddess nourishes, whom no Apollo has ever filled with inspiration. Nevertheless neither old age nor ill fortune shall prevent me from always cherishing learned women, for they are deserving. The Pierides have always 5 been rare and learned; all Greece counts but nine Muses. 6 Not just any country has had the fortune to have access to water from Aganippe nor has it had the opportunity to refresh itself with Castalia's waters. Eloquent and learned Minerva will carry only those women in her white four-in-hand whom she has nursed. To them, learned women, should the honour be 10 paid; great Kings cherish them and we ought never to forget them. 7 You alone immortalize your names, whereas light shadow and ashes await the rest of us.

I am delighted that you mentioned Christina, once the great Queen of the Swedes. She occurs often in our palimpsests and she is often mentioned 15 in discussions.

8 I knew Ebba De la Gardie once, then a young maiden of many virtues and an elegant sight for my eyes. For I remember when we ploughed the billows together, and the Baltic Tethys carried her and her mother; almost thirty years have now passed and I am left looking at my trembling body 20 and lifting my pale limbs. 9 A mighty Aeolus had began to shake the ship and daughter and mother were worried. I ventured to approach and

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3 Apollo: Sperling refers to Apollo as *Musagetes*: leader of the choir of the Muses. The Muses were also named *Pierides* after Pieria, a narrow slip of country on the S.E. coast of Macedonia, bound on the W. by Mt. Olympus and its offshoots. A portion of these mountains was called Pierus. This country was one of the earliest seats of the worship of the Muses. 6 counts but: I take the meaning of *vix* as synonymous to *solum* or *modo*. 7 Aganippe...waters: Aganippe was a spring in Boeotia, sacred to the Muses, and Castalia, a spring on Parnassus, at Delphi, sacred to the Muses and Apollo. 15 palimpsests: It is not clear what Sperling means here by using the word "palimpsest". Perhaps it is just employed as a synonyme to "old books", or possibly "letters". 17 Ebba...mother: The crossing here related by Sperling evidently took place on the Baltic Sea. Ebba Maria De la Gardie was born in 1658. Sperling mentions her here as a young girl. Sperling was a tutor for Carl Philip Wrangel, son of Carl Gustaf Wrangel, in Hamburg from 1662 to 1668, when his adept suddenly died. From 1670 Sperling stayed in Copenhagen assisting his imprisoned father. Six lustra should count for 30 years. Then the journey would have taken place during Sperling's stay in Hamburg. However, *DBL* reports on Sperling going for a short trip to Livland and Ösel after 1670. Pontus Fredrik De la Gardie had a property in Fellin, Livland. Ebba Maria De la Gardie was then at the age of 12–15 and apparently was travelling together with her mother Beata Elisabet De la Gardie. 19 Baltic Tethys: the Baltic Sea. Tethys, the daughter of Uranos and Gaia, was the wife of Oceanus. 20 thirty years: = six lustra.

- 9 Nam quassare ratem jam cœperat Æolus ingens,  
 Atque inter curas Filia, Mater agunt.  
 Audeo, quod potui, præsens sermonibus ægras  
 Solari, redeant vis animusque, precor.
- 5 Omnia me nondum tam conclamata videre,  
 Spem superesse, citò cuncta serena fore.
- 10 Recreat hoc ambas verbum: transegimus horas  
 Donec sat placidè carbasa portus habet.  
 Hinc ea, quam dixi, pennis post effugit ætas.
- 10 Deque EBBA me nil invida fama docet.  
 Tu me sola doces nunc his, quæ mittis, et illam  
 Carminibus doctis nobilitasse decus.
- 11 Haud ignota mihi nec KÖNIGSMARCKIA dudum:  
 In laudes Albis flumina læta ruunt.
- 15 Dumque illam tenuit multos Hamburga per annos  
 Hanc colui (quidni? Debeo) sæpe domum.  
 Namque a WRANGELIO mansit reverentia longa;  
 Non possum Domini dememinisse mei.
- 12 Filius Illius, dum vixit, prima juventæ
- 20 In studiis sub me stamina duxit ovans.  
 Hæc nondum periit sed adhuc hæc hæret imago:  
 Salva sit illa domus, salva sit illa precor.  
 At nunc illa meis non chartis excidet unquam  
 AURORA, ingenii tot monumenta ferens.
- 25 13 Qualibus egregie me nunc, DOCTISSIMA MUSA,  
 Instruis, et quantum debeo scire cupis?  
 Debeo quot purum Tibi Cœlum volvitur astris,  
 Quot numerant Sýlvæ, Sýlvaque vestra feras,  
 Quot mare, quot claudunt sapidissima flumina pisces,
- 30 Quotque imber guttas læta per arva pluit.

1 quassare ratem: cf. Verg. *Aen.* 4. 53; cf. Ov. *Tr.* 1. 2. 2; cf. Hor. *Carm.* 4. 8. 32; cf. Stat. *Silv.* 2. 2. 141. 30 læta...arva: cf. Verg. *Aen.* 6. 744.

6 citò ] cito *supra lin.* C 8 placidè C ] placidè *Palm* 9 post : ex mei ex mihi *mut.* C 10 invida...docet : ex fama docere *mut.* C 13 Haud : ex Nec *mut.* C 14 In : Albis *ante* In *del.* C 16 quidni : ex sicut *mut.* C 17 mansit reverentia : ex cui quondam filius *mut.* C 18 Non ] Nec C 23 non chartis : ex nunquam *mut.* C 24 AURORA : Aurora ex Auroræ *mut.* C 25 egregie C ] egregie *Palm* (egregie ex Tu pulchrè *mut.* C) 27 purum...Cœlum : ex purum cœlum Tibi *mut.* C

console the worried women through conversation, as far as I could, and I urged them to recover their strength and spirit. I assured them that all was not yet lost, that there was still hope, and that all would soon be calm. 10 These words invigorated both women and we wiled away the hours until the port quite calmly housed the sails. Since then time has flown on wings 5 as I said, and envious fame tells me nothing of Ebba. You are the first to tell me by your letter that she too has exhibited her splendour in learned poems.

11 I have known Königsmarck for some time too; the waters of the Elbe flow happy praising her. While Hamburg kept her during many years, I 10 often visited that family (Why not? It was my duty). I have maintained high reverence for Wrangel: I cannot forget my Lord. 12 His son, as long as he lived, successfully spun the first thread of erudition's fabric as a schoolboy under my supervision. His image has not faded but still clings to me. I pray that this house remain safe. But now this Aurora will never be 15 excluded from my catalogue, bearing so many monuments of genius.

13 Do you, most learned Musa, wish to know what you have provided me with and how much I owe you?

I owe you the clear night's stars, the forests and their beasts, the fishes of the seas and flowing streams, and the numerous drops a shower rains on 20 grateful fields.

---

9 Königsmarck...Hamburg: Königsmarck (born in 1662) was the niece of Carl Gustaf Wrangel and stayed at the Wrangel residence in Hamburg as a young girl between 1674 and 1680, after her father had died in 1673. In 1674, Sperling returned to Hamburg after he had obtained his doctorate in law. Thus, Sperling and Königsmarck met during these years.



- 14 Sed nondum debere satis: nam desino nunquam  
 Vel debere Tibi vel superesse Tibi.  
 Debeo dum vivam, et Te post fata loquentur  
 Tam Tua quàm calami pignora plura mei.  
 5 15 χαῖρε meum et salve dulci perferre marito.  
 Si velis, hæc sapient, basia junge modò.  
 Urgeat hoc, quod versat, opus nec passibus ægris  
 Nos maceret, multùm lenta nocere solent.  
 Et sic eveniant Tibi quævis læta, quod opto,  
 10 Ut videas Tecum prospera multa. Vale!

Dabam Hafniæ ad diem XXI Junii Anno Æræ Christianæ MDCXCVII  
 Tibi, Nobilissima et Eruditissima Patrona, Addictissimus Cliens

- 16 P.S. Quàm vellem ut Historiâ quadam brevi de rebus Patriis Latinè scriptâ  
 publico Famam Tui ad posteror relinqueres, vel de finibus Regni Sueciæ  
 15 ejusque dominiorum, vel Geographiam quandam accuratam, quæ nobis adhuc  
 deest, 17 vel de fluviis saltem istorum Regnorum illorumque mirandis, et  
 similia, non triti argumenti: esset hoc sanè nominis Tui monumentum ære  
 perennius, totumque eruditorum Orbem in applausus Tuos excitares.

---

7 passibus ægris: cf. V. Fl. 3. 357.

---

1 nondum : non dum *TF* 3 et : *ex* sed *mut.* *C*, sed *TF* 4 quàm *C*] quam *Palm* | calami :  
*ex* nostra *mut.* *C* 5 perferre : perfer *expectaveris* 8 multùm *C* : multum *Palm TF* (multùm  
*ex* semper *mut.* *C*) 13 Quàm ] Quam *Palm* | Quàm...18excitares ] *om.* *T*  
 Historiâ ] Historiolâ *C* | Latinè : *ex* publico *mut.* *C* 14 vel...finibus : terminis et *post* vel *add.*  
*C* 16 saltem ] *deest in C* | mirandis : vel Geographiam quandam accuratam, quæ nobis  
 adhuc deest etc (etc *supra lin.*) *post* mirandis *add.* *C* | et...argumenti ] *deest in C* 17  
 esset...sanè ] *Esset enim hoc C*

LETTER III

14 Yet my debt continues; for I will never stop owing you nor being at your service. I will be indebted to you for as long as I live and after my death the many pledges of both your and my pen will speak of you.

15 Greet your dear husband *au revoir* for me, and add some dear kisses if you wish. May the work he is engaged in advance and not worry us with 5 infirm steps; with slowness usually comes much damage. And I hope that everything will turn out well for you so that you will have much success. Farewell!

Copenhagen, June 21, in the 1697th year of the Christian era  
Most noble Patroness of highest erudition, I remain your most humble 10 client

16 P.S. I would like you to pass your fame on to posterity by some short history of your native country, written in Latin, or of the Swedish kingdom and her dominions, or a detailed geographical description, which we still lack, 17 or at least on the rivers of the Kingdom and its sights, and 15 regarding other matters that have not been treated. For it would be a monument to your name more perpetual than bronze and you would call forth applause from the entire learned world.

---

12 PS: The postscript, which we find both in the draft and in "Palmskiöldska samlingen", was not printed in *TF*.

## Nobilissima ac Elegantissima Domina BRENNERIA

1 Quod verear esse, qui priores meas literas procrastinentur, satius esse duxi has  
superaddere, si maturius perferri possint. Ego quidem illi tradidi responsum ad  
Te meum, a quo Tuas acceperam, sed ut dies diem fallit, sic quoque tabellarios  
5 videmus aut exspectari aut lentis passibus progredi.

2 Vehementer amo ingenii Tui foetus; quò magis perlego, <eò> magis  
afficior et rapior. Hinc est, quod profundius Te tinctam existimem, quam ut  
in solis carminibus oberres aut consenescas. Ad alia quoque Tuus vocandus est  
animus, ubertate tantâ et foecunditate praeditus, ut in omnibus Palæstris et  
10 Gÿmnasiis non solum desudare possit sed et laureas exspectare vel mereri  
summas, quot placuerit. Manum saltem admove, ingenium videbis sponte suâ  
felicissimè succurrere. 3 Et si quâ in re suboriri dubia possent, quod tamen tam  
accurato iudicio Tuo vix posse sentio, habebis et Doctos Viros et me  
strepentem quoque inter olores anserem vel passerem, famulantem aut, si  
15 mavis, ancillantem. Non Te deseremus unquam, Optima Foeminarum, nam  
ex quo Tecum confabulari per literas licuit, nunquam absque Te sum, nec sine  
Te literas ullas attingere possum.

4 Et quoniam occasio se praebet, schedia mea ad Te mittere negligere nolui,  
quamvis digna non sint Tuis oculis, et multò Lautiores Lactucas ista labra  
20 desiderent.

7 profundius...tinctam: cf. Cic. *Brut.* 211.4. 14 inter...anserem: cf. Verg. *Ecl.* 9. 35f; cf. Prop. *Eleg.* 2. 34. 82. 19 Lautiores...20 desiderent: "Similes habent labra lactucas" Erasm. *Adag.* 1. 10. 71.

1 Nobilissima ac : Main source: Copy, Uppsala, UUB, Palmsk. 332: 633–634 (*Palm*); other source: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No. 158, 4° (C) 2  
Quod...procrastinentur ] Quod verear priores meas literas esse quæ nimis procrastinentur C  
] procrastinentur : procrastinent *expectaveris* 3 maturius C] maturius *Palm* 6  
Vehementer : ex Valde *mut.* C | eò : *scripsi* 8 aut consenescas ] *deest in C* 11 summas ] *deest in C* 12 felicissimè C] felicissime *Palm* | quâ ] qua C 13 et²...15ancillantem ] et me  
strepentem quoque inter olores anserem ( strepentem ... anserem *in marg.*) famulantem,  
aut, si vis et cupis, ancillantem etiam C 16 nec...literas ] aut literas C 18 Et ] *deest in C*

Most noble and elegant Mrs. Brenner!

1 Since I am afraid that there are people causing my previous letter to be delayed, I considered it better to add this, if it might be delivered earlier. I did hand over my answer to the messenger from whom I had received your letter, but as day trips day we see that the couriers either keep us waiting or 5 just keep going with their easy strides.

2 I enjoy the fruits of your talent immensely. The more I peruse them, the more I am moved and enthralled. This is why I think that your talent is too versatile to content itself only with poetry for the rest of your life. Your mind should also be challenged to take up other forms of literature, since it 10 has been provided with such abundance and fruitfulness that it not only can exert itself in every *palaestra* and *gymnasium*, but moreover can expect or deserve the highest laurels, as many as will please you. Just move your hand and you will see that your talent herself will hasten to help with great success. 3 And if in some respect doubts should spring up (which I, 15 however, hardly think could be the case considering your excellent judgement), you will have both learned men and me, a clamorous goose or sparrow among swans, as your servant or, if you wish, your maid-servant. We will never abandon you, foremost of women, for ever since I got the opportunity to converse with you by letters I am never without 20 you, nor can I even touch a letter without thinking about you.

4 And since the opportunity arises, I did not want to neglect sending you my spontaneous poem, even though it is not worthy of your gaze and though your lips might desire a more delicious dessert.

---

1 Most...Brenner: The draft seems mutilated at first sight, but the content of the letter shows that the text is preserved in its entirety and thus that the sheet of paper was mutilated before Sperling started writing. 23 spontaneous poem: No sign of Sperling's spontaneous poem(s) (*schedia*) is to be found among the drafts in Copenhagen. However, there is a short love poem written in distichs by Sperling's hand enclosed with a letter from Brenner to Sperling dated December 5, 1706 (letter XX in this edition). The theme of the poem is "*oscula pudica*" which Sperling wishes to send to Brenner. "*Schedium*" often implies an impromptu poem or speech (*OLD*), and it seems likely that Sperling refers to this poem with his comment "*et multò lautiores lactucas ista labra desiderant*" in this letter. Moreover, in letter V Brenner pays her regards for "*binæ literae*" in the beginning of the letter, referring to letters III and IV, whereas she concludes at the end: "*eò comperio, ut condignas pro Musis atque literis tuis elegantissimis!./ gratias minime referre valeam.*" "*Musis*" probably refers to the short love poem, which accordingly has been added below. Brenner does not pay her regards for anything that could be the poem in any other letter than letter V. 24 delicious dessert: paraphrasing translation of *Lautiores Lactucas* 'more luxurious lettuce'.

5 Doleo incendia et casus Vestros, inprimis si literariæ rei quid decessit,  
 quam ego jacturam omnibus præfero, quidquid sentiant alii, qui lapides,  
 aurum et argentum mallent superesse quàm literas. Facile illis carent, quod  
 nunquam intelligant, quid amiserint. Aurum et argentum aliunde refici  
 5 possunt, literæ deperditæ nunquam. Salute dictâ Tibi Musisque Tuis, et  
 optimo Conjugi. Vale. Dabam Hafniæ ad diem XVII Augusti Anno  
 MDCXCVII

Tibi, Nobilissima Fœminarum,  
 Toto animo addictus  
 10 Otto Sperling

#### Ad SOPHIAM ELISABETHAM BRENNERIAM

6 Oscula cum mittam, Tibi non nisi mitto pudica,  
 Sique minùs placeant cœtera, sunt vetera.  
 Et si, quod nolim, si offendunt ista pudorem,  
 15 Tuque pudorque Tuus tollat et ejiciat.  
 Sic volo; vel quidquam si demere fortè timebis,  
 Nomine iam fient cuncta pudica Tuo.

---

3 aurum ] et aurum *C* | quàm ] quam *C* | Facile *C* | Facile *Palm* 4 intelligant : *ex*  
 senserunt *mut. C* | Aurum...nunquam ] *desunt in C* 5 dictâ ] dicta *C* | Tibi...Tuis ] Tuis  
 Musis *C* 6 ad...XVII ] a.d. XVII *C*

LETTER IV

5 I grieve at the disastrous fire you had, especially if some literary work has been destroyed which loss I grieve more than other losses, whatever other people may think who prefer gems, gold and silver to remain rather than written items. For, ignorant of what they have lost, they can easily do without the latter. Gold and silver can be restored from elsewhere, lost literary works never. I salute you, your Muses and your good husband. Farewell.

Copenhagen, August 17, 1697

Venerable Madam,

I remain your most devoted

Otto Sperling

10

To Sophia Elisabeth Brenner

6 When I send you kisses, I do not send them unless they are chaste.

If other kinds of kisses displease you, they belong to the past.

And if (which I would not wish), those first kisses displease your modesty, 15 then take them and cast them away. So would I have it; but if you perhaps hesitate to disregard anything (of this), your name ill immediately render everything chaste.

---

1 disastrous fire: Sperling refers to the fire destroying the Royal Palace in Stockholm on May 7, 1697. The National Archives as well as the Royal Library were housed in the Royal Palace at this time: approximately one third of the National Archives and two thirds of the Royal Library were destroyed (Bergh 1917: 13–14). 14 belong...past: The meaning of “vetera” here is not clear. One interpretation of the word is that “they are an old man’s kisses”; another that the kisses are old in the sense that Brenner is free to disregard/discard them, though there is no clear source for this meaning; cf. however Sall. *Iug.* 102.14 “Ceterum vetera omittere.”

Viro Amplissimo et Summe Docto OTTHONI SPERLINGIO  
Salutem Plurimam Dat Sophia Elisabeth Brenner

1 Promptissimum sane et non vulgare respondendi studium exigere videbantur  
binæ tuæ suavissimæ literæ, Vir Celeberrime, quibus me jam ante biennium  
5 invisere dignatus es. Verum, quando rerum domesticarum curæ graviores curas  
quasi nunquam admittant, confido me ab insigni tua bonitate niveoque  
candore, quem tam luculenter erga me testatus es, facile hujus culpæ veniam  
impetraturam. 2 Quale etenim manifestius affectus in me tui testimonium est,  
quod postulem, quam ubi Censorem tam benignum egeris et perexigua  
10 ingenioli mei specimina, quorum pars potior præter inanias verborum nihil  
habet, longe supra eorum meritum extollere volueris, quod ex adverso tam  
uberiorem mihi præbuit erubescendi materiem, quam tenuiorem meam in  
litteris esse facultatem; eò comperio, ut condignas pro Musis atque litteris tuis  
elegantissimis, quas tibi habeo et semper habitura sum, gratias minime referre  
15 valeam.

3 Novi enim vires meas ingenij admodum pauperis; idcirco benevolentia  
erga me tuæ singulari id tribuendum ingenue fateor, cum me nominis  
perennitati studere animumque ad sublimiora convertere Amicissime jubeas.  
Tibi enim, Vir præstantissime, ita persuasum esse video, culmen illud  
20 literarium, quo te Ætherii Animi tui dotes jam pridem erexere, ab aliis quoque  
conscendi posse. 4 Non diffiteor equidem admonitionem tuam quam optime  
cum votis meis convenire, si modo in tali versarer otio, ut ingenij culturæ  
aliquantulum temporis largiri possem, præsertim cum lucubratiunculis meis  
juvandis dubiisque solvendis operam tuam benigne pollicitus sis, quod etiam  
25 in posterum, si modo per varias interpellationes licuerit, maximum mihi calcar  
ad enitendum futurum spero.

Vale, Musarum Patrone Nobilissime, et cave putes memoriam tuam apud  
me unquam intermorituram.

Dabam Stockholmiæ die 28 Martii 1699

---

10 inanias verborum: cf. Plaut. *Aul.* 83.

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1 Viro Amplissimo : Original, Cph, GKS 3092 VI:1, 4° 4 biennium : me *post* biennium  
*del.*

Sophia Elisabeth Brenner greets the most eminent  
and learned Mr. Otto Sperling

1 Most distinguished Sir! Your most charming two letters, which you  
deigned to let me receive and read more than two years ago now, seemed  
indeed to call for a most prompt and by no means conventional eagerness 5  
to answer. However, since the care of the household almost never allows  
greater concerns, I trust that through your marked goodness and flawless  
sincerity, which you have demonstrated so splendidly towards me, I shall  
easily obtain your pardon for this fault. 2 For what more conspicuous  
testimony of your sympathies towards me could I demand than when you 10  
acted as such a benevolent censor and wished to raise far beyond merit the  
trivial products of my humble talent, although the better part of these is  
little more than frivolity. Now, instead, I am embarrassed realising that my  
literary talent is as feeble as your praise is excessive. Thus I find myself  
hardly able to express a gratitude befitting your poem and most elegant 15  
letters, a gratitude which I have and always will have towards you.

3 I certainly know the limits of my very poor talent; so when you most  
kindly bid me to strive for the immortality of my name and to turn my  
mind to higher studies, I openly admit that this should be ascribed to your 20  
unique benevolence towards me. For, most eminent Sir, I see that you are  
convinced that the literary prominence to which the gifts of your lofty soul  
have already raised you long ago can also be scaled by others. 4 I do not  
indeed deny that your suggestion is altogether consistent with my wishes, if  
only I had the leisure to bestow a little time upon the cultivation of my  
talent, especially since you so kindly promised your assistance in promoting 25  
my lucubrations and removing doubts. I hope that this will spur me in the  
future to exert myself and bring forth some work, when I can find the  
time.

Farewell, most noble Patron of the Muses, and mind you do not think  
that my memory of you will ever perish. 30  
Stockholm, March 28, 1699

1 Sophia...Sperling: Alenius (1988: 179) suggested that the biography originally was  
attached to the present letter. True, Sperling does not refer to Brenner's biography in letters  
III and IV (in the present edition) but first in letter VI, as does Brenner in letter VII.  
However, as mentioned above, I believe that the two postscripts by Brenner, which are  
nowadays attached to a letter from Elias Brenner to Sperling, were added to Brenner's first  
letter, that is, letter II of the present edition. In one of them, Brenner informs Sperling that  
she is sending him her *curriculum vitae*.



## Nobilissima et Eruditissima Matrona

1 Ad Tuas 28 Martii cum Domino Grünero datas quod seriùs respondeam,  
idem Dominus Grünerus in causâ fuit, qui quotidie iter meditatus huc usque  
remoram sentiit nec ante dimitti potuit. Aceptissimas mii Tuas facilè credere  
5 potes. Æstimantur a me Tua omnia auro contra ita, ut nihil ἀντάξιον sit. 2  
Nec opus habebas excusationibus Tui silentii: ita enim mecum es, ut  
memoriam Tui nec deponam, et semper mihi, licet absens, obverseris. Unicum  
illud doleo quod nos disjungant tot οὔρεα σκιάοντα καὶ ἄλση et quod  
10 graviores curas domesticas sentire debeas quàm literas et Musas. Hæ enim, ut  
video, Tibi sponte veniunt et Tecum natas dicere licet: tam doctè, tam facundè  
scribis. 3 Sunt illa igitur facienda sed hæc non omittenda, Nobilissima  
Musarum proles. Nos cœteri culmina illa literaria, quæ scribis, nondum  
attigimus; Tu verò etiam superasti. Ne diffidas Tuis humeris, plura ferre  
possunt, modò, quo es ingenio, Te applies. Tenta, et succedent Tibi  
15 quæcunque velis. Penes me nullum de hac re dubium superest. 4 Et, ut videas  
absentem me Tecum versari, in effigiem Tuam hæc pauca composui, quæ  
iunxi, lutulentâ quidem et pingui Minervâ, nam me Senem jam deserit ille  
vigor et elegantia, quam Tui causâ optarem adesse.

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8 οὔρεα...ἄλση: cf. Hom. *Il.* 1. 157; cf. Hom. *Od.* 7. 268.

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1 Nobilissima et : Source: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No. 181, 4°  
(C) 7 memoriam Tui : depon *post* memoriam Tui *del.* 9 Hæ *ex* Illæ *mut.* 14 Tibi : *supra lin.* 15  
re : m *post re del.*

Most noble and erudite Madam!

1 The same Mr. Grüner to whom you handed the letter of 28 March was responsible for my late reply, since he, though he daily contemplated departing, hitherto has felt the need to tarry and could not be sent away until now. You can easily believe that I was greatly pleased with your letter. 5 All that you do is gold for me and nothing could be *également précieux*. 2 And you did not need to excuse your silence, for you are so present for me that I will not give up the memory of you; you are always with me, though absent. I grieve only that so many *montagnes ombreuses et forêts* separate us and that you have to regard household duties as more important than 10 reading and writing. For I see that the Muses come voluntarily, and one could say that they were born together with you, so learned and so eloquently you write. 3 Alas, household duties have to be done but you should not omit the latter duties, most noble offspring of the Muses. The rest of us have not yet reached those literary heights which pen in hand you 15 have even surpassed. Do not mistrust the strength of your shoulders. They can carry more if you just use the talent you possess. Try, and whatever you wish will turn out well. I have no doubt about that whatsoever. 4 And I have written down these few lines to your portrait, which I enclose, so that you will see that I am constantly present with you, although absent. They 20 are coarse and clumsy, for the vigour and skill that I would wish were present for your sake have already abandoned my old hands.

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2 Mr Grüner: For information about the messengers (and other persons mentioned in the present edition), see *Index personarum*. 6 précieux: I translated the Greek words Sperling occasionally adorned his letters to Brenner with into French to render the “foreign flavour”. As far as we know Brenner never studied Greek. Elias Brenner on the other hand had been studying Greek ever since his early schooldays (Aspelin 1896: 9); thus, assistance was close at hand if required for her understanding of these words and passages. 19 these...lines: Sperling probably sent her a few distichs with this letter, as with letter IV, but such a poem is not to be found among the drafts in Cph.

5 Cum Domino Kingo expostulavi jam acriùs, cum nuper adesset, quod ad  
Tua et honoris non vulgaris indicia submissa nullo planè vergo hactenus  
responderit. Regessit facundus ille senex tot Illustrium et doctorum manibus ea  
trita fuisse a primo quo illa receperit die, ut sibi ipsi copia non fuerit vel  
5 perlustrandi vel legendi. Ante paucos primum dies ad se rediisse, nec  
defuturum se, quæ omnes laudarunt et admirati sunt, quas mereris, gratias  
Optimas Maximas quam primum Tibi reddere.

6 In vitâ Tuâ oblita fuisti Parentum Tuorum mentionem mihi facere. Ex  
carmine autem Tuo collegi Te WEBERIAM natam esse, atque sic ex  
10 Germaniâ prosapiam Tuis ortam. Tuum erit hæc mihi prolixius edisserere, ex  
quo loco Germaniæ prodierint, quando Sueciam habitare cœperint, quando  
decesserint, et quæ sunt his conjuncta. Vitam Tuam, priusquam edentur meæ  
doctæ, quod aliquando spero fore, ad Te mittam, ut videas et monere possis, si  
quid Tibi displiceat.

15 Vale, et me Tibi commenda omnibusque bonis, Nobilissima Matrona, Tui  
Cultorem assiduum.

Dabam Hafniæ ad diem 2 Augusti Anno MDCXCIX.

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2 Tua : nihi *post* Tua *del.* | non : *ex verbo, quod legi non potest, mut.* 3 senex : *post* senex  
verbum, *quod legi non potest, del.* 4 ipsi : *supra lin.* | fuerit ] erit *ms.* 6 quæ : ob *ante* quæ  
*exspectaveris; cf. VIII, 1* 8 mihi : *supra lin.* 9 autem : *supra lin.* 13 quod...fore : *supra lin.*

5 I expostulated with Bishop Kingo rather sharply when he was here recently, as he had not yet replied with a single word to the writings which you had sent him which indicate an extraordinary reverence. That witty old gentleman replied that these had been worn down by so many hands of illustrious and learned men from the first day he had received them that he 5 had not the opportunity to peruse or even glance at them. They had been brought back to him only a few days ago and he would not forget to thank you sincerely as soon as possible for the poems, which everyone had praised and admired.

6 You forgot to tell me about your parents in your autobiography. 10 However, I concluded from your poem that you were born Weber, and hence that your lineage is from Germany. Now you have to expound further for me whence in Germany your ancestors emigrated, when they came to live in Sweden, when they died and all those relevant facts. I will send you your biography before my work on learned women is published, 15 which I hope will happen one day, so that you can check it and tell me if something displeases you.

Farewell, and may you, most noble Madam, and every good person be kindly disposed towards me, your constant admirer.

Copenhagen, August 2, 1699

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**i** expostulated...Kingo: I have not found any sign of Kingo replying to Brenner. Significantly, no reply from him was included among the eulogies which accompanied both the first and the second volume of Brenner's collected poetry. The general impression of these eulogies is that Brenner and her promoters saw to it that every laudatory poem or letter she had received was included there (cf. chapter 1.9 regarding Brenner's omission of the laudatory poem to the Tsarina, which had not been printed) : thus, it can perhaps with a fair degree of certainty be assumed that he never wrote to her. **ii** Weber: Brenner's family name Weber does not appear in any of the poems in the collection sent to Kingo, which means Sperling must have seen other poems by Brenner as well. The name Weber appears only in Brenner's funeral poem on her mother, who died in 1695 (*PD 1713*: 116–118), and in Brenner's poem on the wedding of her sister, Eva Margaretha Weber, in 1697 (*PD 1713*: 59–61).

Viro Nobilissimo et Summo Docto OTTHONI SPERLINGIO  
Salutem Plurimam Dat Sophia Elisabeth Brenner.

1 Doleo, Vir jllustris, quotiescunque animum subit, quod propter leviores  
rerum domesticarum occupationunculas, quibus indies magis magisque  
5 obruor, officio, prout optaveram, non licuerit defungi. Talem etenim Matrum  
Familiarum rogo putes conditionem, ut literis earumque studijs tanquam  
politiori hominum ornatui utique sit contraria, ne quid gravius dicam. 2  
Mihique credas, obsecro: quamvis sat diuturno temporis spatio nihil ad te  
dederim literarum, postremas nihilominus tuas affectum omnino singularem  
10 in me spirantes sic animo inhæsisse meo, ut centies imo millies de responsis  
reddendo gratique animi sensu declarando maxime fuerim sollicita. Sed tamen  
frustra instituto in primis obstitit valetudo afflictissima quorundam meorum,  
quam etiam mors subsecuta est plane inopinata mortemque Lis. Hanc,  
quamquam inter cœtera huius seculi incommoda maxime esse abhorrendam  
15 censui semper, effugere tamen nullo modo potui, quo minus et eidem horas  
dare necesse sit quamplurimas. 3 Sed quid hæc ad te, Vir Celeberrime, qui  
totus non nisi circa solidiora occupari te pateris, quem etiam eiusmodi  
interpellare ludicris pene est religiosum.

Addam tamen aliquid, quod tuæ, uti spero, expectationi ingratum erit  
20 minime. Novi etenim quanti facias literaria nostri sexus decora, quorum  
quoque ordini Doctissimis tuis Scriptis Dignitatem suam asserere summa cum  
laude iamdudum susceperis.

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4 magisque...5 optaveram: *cf.* Mt. 23: 23. 11 declarando maxime: *cf.* Cic. *Amic.* 18. 13; *cf.* Columella 1, praefatio; *cf.* Erasm. *Adag.* 1. 1. 37.

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1 Viro Nobilissimo : Original, Cph, GKS 3092 VI:1, 4° 11 reddendo : reddendis  
*exspectaveris.* 18 ludicris : *supra lin.*

Sophia Elisabeth Brenner greets the most noble  
and learned Mr. Otto Sperling

1 Eminent Sir! I grieve whenever I remember that my trivial household duties, which overwhelm me more with each passing day, have prevented me from fulfilling my promise to you as I would have wished. For you 5 must understand how the situation for housewives is quite the opposite, not to say something even worse, of literary activities and the study of literature which is like a very elegant costume. 2 I beseech you to believe me: even though I have not written to you for a fairly long period of time, none the less your last letter, which shows a sympathy for me that is unique 10 in every respect, has become so implanted in my mind that I felt encouraged hundreds or rather thousands of times to give answers and to declare my gratefulness. But all the same this intention was impeded especially by a severe illness among some family members, which also was followed, completely unexpectedly, by death, and upon the death, by a 15 lawsuit. Although I have always thought that lawsuits should be avoided as being among the worst miseries of our time, nevertheless I could not avoid devoting a great many hours to it. 3 But why do I tell you this, most celebrated Sir, who allow yourself to be occupied with nothing but matters of substance and whom it is almost irreverent to disturb with these kinds of 20 trifles?

I will add something, however, that I hope will not be disagreeable to you. For I know how highly you regard literary works that adorn our sex, for whose sake you already some time ago most commendably undertook to illuminate the dignity of women through your most learned writings. 25

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15 death<sup>1</sup>...lawsuit: A couple members of Brenner's family died between 1699 and 1702. One of Brenner's two sisters (both married in the 1690's, see *Svenska ättartal*, XI: 335 and Aspelin 1896: 84), Maria Polchow (younger sister of Sophia Brenner), died as a widow on December 17, 1700. Maria was widowed twice: she had first been married to Bartholomaeus Klüwer, a merchant in Stockholm, in 1683. In neither of the marriages did she have children. Thus, the legal dispute referred to in this letter might have had something to do with her death. As we recall, Sophia and Elias Brenner had 16 children in all, two of which were children from Elias Brenner's first marriage. Most of the children died young: only five or six reached the age of majority. During the period between Brenner's last letter and the present one, at least one of the children from Elias Brenner's first marriage died, Susanna Elisabeth, at the age of 25.

- 4 Quapropter et tibi, Vir humanissime, et Heroinæ huic eruditæ, Nobilissimæ Dominæ Wendelæ Skytte, iniuriam mihi facescere viderer, si doctum hoc et venerabile nomen, cuius fama vel rapiditate temporis vel negligentia nescio quorum quasi inclarescere desijt, tibi celarem. Innotuit  
 5 equidem mihi iam antea virtus ac ingenium jllustris huius fœminæ ex tabellis Testamentarijs inclyti sui Patris, incomparabilis Herois Johannis Skytte, qui ob progressus haud vulgares, quos illa una cum sorore carissima, Nobilissima Virgine Anna Skytte, in lingua præsertim fecerat romana, tanquam Doctrinæ singularis dudum partæ præmium pleniorisque adhuc parandæ incitamentum  
 10 filiabus suis supramemoratis eandem cum filiis bonorum mobilium reliquit divisionem, quarum tabellarum exemplar tibi, si bene recordor, ante hac transmitti curavi. Quibus linguis insuper scientiisque Nobilissima hæc Domina Skytte sexum plane ac ætatem superantibus fuerit instructa, fusius ex inclusis hisce perspicies.
- 15 5 Cœterum quod in postremis tuis ad me datis literis de parentibus meis eorumque progenie tam exacte disquirere non sis dedignatus, id totum benignitatis erga immerentem exsuperantiæ debeo acceptum. Petitioni igitur tuæ morem gerens, quantum hac de re ipsa cognitionis habeo, breviter hic exponam.

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18 tuæ : *supra lin.*

4 Therefore, most cultivated Sir, I think I would commit an injustice against you and that erudite heroine, the noble Wendela Skytte, if I concealed her learned and venerable name, whose fame either the passage of time or the negligence of individuals has in a manner of speaking dulled. The virtue and talent of this illustrious woman were indeed known to me 5 earlier through the will of her famed father, the unparalleled hero Johan Skytte. Because of the extraordinary progress she and her dear sister, the noble maiden Anna Skytte, had made especially in the French language, he decided to divide his movable property equally between his daughters and his sons as a reward to the daughters for their remarkable learning and as a 10 stimulus to further achievements. If I recall correctly, I have sent you a copy of this will previously. You will see more thoroughly from the enclosed material in which languages and sciences this noble Miss Skytte was instructed, learning clearly beyond her sex and age.

5 That you in your previous letter to me deigned to inquire so 15 thoroughly about my parents and their offspring I ascribe completely to your abundant benevolence towards one so undeserving as me. I will indulge your request and briefly relate here what I know.

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2 Wendela...Skytte: Sperling reports the information about Wendela and Anna Skytte (Nos. 883 and 1134) in his manuscript.. He also refers to a letter from Mr. Grüner (the messenger mentioned in the previous letter), dated December 28, 1698 (perhaps a lapsus for December 28, 1699, since that is the dating of letter V by Brenner referred to as being delivered by Grüner). Grüner apparently has given an account of the will "qui et ipse Testamentum se hoc vidisse scribit, illudque descripsisse" (Sperling, "Collectanea de foeminis omnis aevi doctis": 774). Sperling also quotes a passage about the women in question from letter 50 by Brenner to Petrus Hedengrahn (which is very similar to letter II), and confirms that Brenner had sent "Excerpta...de iisdem foeminis doctissimis, et quidem ex Wilhelmi Simonii Laudatione funebri, quam...habuit Dorpati 1629". He added this excerpt to the presentation of the two sisters in his manuscript (between pages 777 and 778). 16 my parents: Here Brenner gives more information about her parents than in the "Kurze Lebens-Beschreibung", which was added to the second volume of her *Poetiske Dikter*. According to *Svenska ättartal* (XI: 335), Brenner's mother Christina Spoor married Johan von Massberg, who was a brewer in Stockholm, in 1654. (Brenner alternates the spelling of her mother's family name: "Spåre"/"Spore", whereas the family name in *Svenska ättartal* is spelled "Spoor"). Apparently, Christina Spoor was widowed shortly after, and then married Nils Weber in 1658. In her "Kurze Lebens-Beschreibung", Brenner mentions that the language spoken in the Weber family was German, "weil mein Vater an geburt ein Teutscher, die Mutter ebenfalls, welche sich einige Jahr in Teutschland aufgehalten, gut Teutsch sprach." Apparently, Brenner's grandfather Carl Spoor had stayed in Germany as a military commander in the Swedish army.



Pater meus Nicolaus Weber ante plus quam viginti annos pie defunctus ex germania, uti probe iudicas, originem traxit. 6 In Marchia Brandenburgensi natus a patre Hans Weber indigena seu, ut vocant, *Ertgesesen* in fundo quodam *Hohenhoff* et Matre Elisabeth Stölting intravit Sveciam circa annum 1633 in  
 5 comitatu Serenissimæ Principis Mariæ, Regis Gustavi Adolphi Magni conjugis. In Aula iam memoratæ Reginæ versatus est annorum nescio quot. Deinde inivit matrimonium cum Matre optima Christina Spore in oppidulo nata Bothniæ occidentalis Lulu, filia Domini Caroli Spåre, qui tempore serenissimæ Reginæ Christinæ in exercitu Svetico Ductor fuit militum, vulgo Capitain, et  
 10 civis cujusdam Holmensis johannis a Masberg, qui pater erat illustrissimi Campi Mareschalli Svetici Conradi Materfeldii, delicta vidua. Habitaverunt Stockholmiæ ibique mercaturam exercuit Pater. 7 Ex quatuor lib<e>ris in eodem coniugio procreatis, filij unius et trium filiarum natu maxima egomet sum. Obijt beatus parens anno 1680, mater vero 1695. Quod reliqu<u>um est  
 15 continet curriculum istud qualecunque vitæ meæ iam antea tibi transmissum.

Noli tamen, obsecro, quemadmodum solitæ tuæ comitatis genio forte obtemperans in animum induxisti, maiores mihi conferre laudes quam vel mereor, vel me dignum est. Ego ex adverso omni cura conatuque imminebo, ne te tui in me collati studii ac favoris peniteat unquam.

20 Vale, Vir Candidissime, solitumque tuum erga me amorem ut continues, oro.

Dabam Stockholmiæ die 8 octobris 1702

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3 indigena : *scripsi*; indigenæ *ms.* 11 delicta : *i.e.* derelicta

My father Nils Weber, who died piously more than 20 years ago, was German by descent, as you rightly suggest. 6 He was born in Mark Brandenburg to Hans Weber, a native or, as they say, *Ertgesesen* from a certain country estate called *Hohenhoff*, and Elisabeth Stölting. He entered Sweden around 1633, attending the serene Queen Maria, the wife of King 5 Gustavus Adolphus the Great. He stayed at the court of this Queen for some years. Then he married my good mother Christina Spore. She was born in the small town of *Luleå* in *Västerbotten* and was the daughter of Mr. Carl Spåre, who during the reign of the serene Queen Christina was a military commander (commonly referred to as 'captain') in the Swedish 10 army. She was the widow of a certain citizen in Stockholm, Johan von Massberg, who was the father of the illustrious Swedish field marshal Conrad Materfeld. They lived in Stockholm and my father ran a business there. 7 I am the oldest of four children (one son and three daughters) born in this marriage. My father, blessed in memory, died in 1680 and my 15 mother in 1695. The description of my life that I already sent to you contains the rest.

But I entreat you not to indulge your usual goodwill towards me by conferring higher praise upon me than I deserve or am worthy of. But I will pour all my attention and effort into my studies so that you will never 20 regret the concern and support bestowed upon me.

Farewell, most kind Sir, and I pray that your devotion towards me will remain steadfast.

Stockholm, October 8, 1702

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5 1633...Maria: Gustavus Adolphus married Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg in 1620 and she stayed in Sweden from then on, while the King conducted the war in Germany. In 1631 she joined him there and remained in Germany until the death of Gustavus Adolphus at Lützen on November 6, 1632. Apparently, Brenner's father got in touch with the court there and accompanied Maria Eleonora back to Sweden in 1633. According to *Svenska ättartal* (XI: 335), he served in her court. 8 *Västerbotten*: the area of northern Sweden, today the county *Västerbotten*, was divided in 1810 into two counties, *Norrbottnen* and *Västerbotten*. The city of *Luleå* is situated today within the modern county of *Norrbottnen*.

## Nobilissima et Eruditissima Matrona

1 Ad Tuas 8 Octobris datas quid reponam nescio. Ita mihi placuere, ut nihil supra; χρυσόστομον me mallet esse quam ὄστομον et elinguem, quem me nunc reddis doctissimis et elegantissimis Tuis ad me datis. Gaudium primò  
5 meum testor et contestor, quod ex illis percepi. Deinde Te salvam et incolumem vivere, quod diutinum ut sit, omnibus votis exopto.

Gratissima mihi fuerunt Excerpta et Eloquia doctissimarum Virginum et foeminarum Skyttiarum et Kyliarum, quæ submisisti, ob quæ Tibi æternas gratias agere non desino. Quamvis enim illas jamdudum inter doctas meas  
10 recensuerim, a Tuâ tamen manu, quod locupletiores accesserint, unicè gaudeo. 2 Ob quæ quantum Tibi debeam, non satis exprimere queo, τιμολφέστατον mihi et φίλτατον κάρα. Sed quas Tuis debeam laudes, Apollinis et Musarum iudicium sit, neque enim tenuis mea vena ad illas deprædicandas assurgere poterit. Tam doctè tam latinè scriptas quis non laudare vellet? Si vellem,  
15 quantus non mihi campus? Plus quàm Marathonius. Sed parco Tibi, quæ laudes meas deprecaris. Hæc enim modestia Tua est, ut nolis laudari, quum sis omnibus doctis laudatissima. Non sum ex iis, qui in os laudare et blandiri cupiunt: novi enim quam illud sit ingratum Tuæ modestiæ. 3 Mereris tamen non meum eloquium ob hanc epistolam scriptam sed, si proferatur in  
20 publicum, doctissimorum, quotquot sunt, omnium. Laus enim mea, quæ paupertina est et valde insufficiens, eò pertingere non poterit, quò Te Tua eruditio albis quadrigis jam dudum provexit. Quapropter nihil ulterius mihi dicendum superest quàm ut te colam et amem, quandiu spiritus hos reget artus.

25 4 Non diu mihi superesse continget, qui jam septuagenarius ferè ultimam scenam fabulæ ludo claudioque. Tuum erit amici integerrimi non dememinisse, et quæ de Parentibus Tuis beatæ memoriæ mihi suppeditasti jam Tuæ vitæ subjungo, quoniam ea perire fas non fuerit, qui<a> Te senex etiam illis encomiis non destituendam ut prosequar concessisti.

22 albis quadrigis: cf. Plaut. *Asin.* 279; cf. Apul. *Apol.* 22. 23 spiritus...24 artus: cf. Verg. *Aen.* 4. 336. 26 scenam...claudioque: cf. Erasm. *Adag.* 1. 2. 35 "Supremum fabulae actum addere".

1 Nobilissima et : Source: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No. 226, 4° 10 manu : *supra lin.* 12 Tuis : *sc. litteris* 15 quæ ] qui *ms.* 26 claudioque : *ex et claudio mut.* 27 beatæ memoriæ ] b. m. *ms.* 28 quia ] qui *ms.*

Most noble and erudite Madam!

1 I do not know what to reply to your last letter dated October 8. It pleased me so much that I would like nothing more than to be *à bouche d'or* rather than *mû* and speechless as your learned and elegant letter has rendered me. Firstly, I wish to express the joy I felt over your letter. Secondly, I truly 5 wish and hope that you are safe and sound and will remain so.

I am very pleased and will never stop expressing my eternal gratitude for the excerpts and eulogies you sent of the learned maiden Skytte and madam Kyle. For even though I had already included them among my learned women, I am nevertheless very pleased that you have enriched my 10 descriptions of them. 2 I cannot express sufficiently how much I owe you for this information, *ma plus chère et plus précieuse amie*. But Apollon and the Muses should judge what kind of praise I owe you, because my poor vein will not be able to not rise to proclaim it. Who would not want to 15 praise such learned writings and in such good Latin? If I would do that, what great challenge would it not be for me? Greater than Marathon. But I will have mercy on you since you deprecate my praise. For you are so modest that you do not want to be praised even though you are the most praiseworthy for all learned men. I am not one of those persons who wish to laud someone to her face and flatter her, for I know how much your 20 modesty dislikes that. 3 But you deserve not only my praise for the letter you wrote but from the entire learned world, if it is published. For my praise, which is rather poor and by no means sufficient, could not reach the heights your learning long ago raised you to on a chariot pulled by four white horses. Therefore nothing further remains for me to say than that I 25 will cherish and love you for as long as there is life in my limbs.

4 I will not be granted much longer to live. At seventy I am playing in and finishing the last scene of the drama. You must not forget your most honest friend altogether. I add the information you supplied me with 30 about your parents, blessed in memory, to your biography now, since it would not be right if this information got lost now that you have accepted that I, old man, write about you, who should not be forgotten in these eulogies.

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8 Skytte...Kyle: Wendela Skytte was married Kyle. See *Index personarum*. 24  
 chariot...horses: Sperling again compares Brenner to Minerva, (cf. letter III).

Nam facile mors obrepisset et imperfecta reliquissem quæ Tuæ vitæ et eruditioni in meis locum amplum facient. 5 Non spero me victurum, ut illa publica fieri possint, sed invenient posteri quid Tu fueris et quantum erudito orbi per Te accesserit, Matrona Eruditissima. Mille ducentas et plures jam  
5 collegi, inter quas, ut mereris, nomen Tuum eminet et eminebit perpetuò.

6 Mortem Domini Olai Rudbeckii invitatus percepi, Protectoris Sanè non solùm Sueciæ Vestræ, quantùm in ipso fuit, sed omnium Septentrionalium scriptis suis doctissimis. Bene sit illius manibus. Et si quid vitæ ipsius supererit honos et gloria, quam scio non sinent intermori Professores Upsalienses, ea  
10 quæso, quum vacat, ad me perscribere Tibi curæ sit. Illius enim Viri memoriam nunquam nobis deponere fas est.

Tu verò etiam mortem Tuorum videris luctu prosequi, quod humanum est, modò non indulgeas nimis. Supplebit fœcunditas alia, quæ desiderare quædam orbitas Te nunc cogit. At quod litibus etiam impliceris et contra sententiam  
15 illas suscipere cogaris, hoc Tui causa maximè doleo; illas enim magis funestas autumo quàm funera Tuorum. 7 Non litibus nata es, sed literis bonis, quæ pacis sunt sorores fidæ et tranquillitatem animi desiderant. Lætum tamen exitum habituras confido. Ne sentias ex illis molestias, quas Tibi proximus fortè creat Ucalegon, neque enim penes Te est flammæ, quas illi litigantes  
20 immittunt, extinguere aut diffilare uno statim spiritu; fiet tempore ut ex flammis istis innocentia Tua sit illustrior.

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1 mors obrepisset: *cf.* Plaut. *Pseud.* 686 19 Ucalegon: *cf.* Hom. *Il.* 3. 148; *cf.* Verg. *Aen.* 2. 312; *cf.* Juv. *Sat.* 3. 199.

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8 Bene ] Be ne *ms.* | Et...quid : de *post* Et si quid *del.* 20 statim : *supra lin.* | fiet : cum *post* fiet *del.* | tempore : ex tempore *mut.* 21 istis : *supra lin.* | sit ex prodeat ex (*ut videtur*) prodierit *mut.*

For death could have come easily, and then I would have left those passages unfinished which will make the description of your life and learning ample in my writings. 5 I do not hope that I will live long enough for this work to be published, but posterity will find out who you were and how much you contributed to the learned world by your writings, most 5 learned lady. I have already collected more than 1200 learned women among whom your name is outstanding, and will always be, just as you deserve.

6 I learned with sorrow about the death of Professor Olof Rudbeck. By his learned writings he was indeed a protector not only of your Sweden, as 10 far as he could, but of all the northern countries. Blessed be his memory. And if some honour and glory will be paid to his life, which I know the Professors in Uppsala will not neglect, please copy it to me when you have the opportunity. For we should never let the memory of that man die.

You certainly seem to react to the death within your family with grief, 15 which is human, provided only that you do not indulge yourself too much. Your fertility will provide other children to compensate for those your loss now drives you to long for. But I grieve very much for your sake that you are also entangled in lawsuits and are forced to deal with them, contrary to 20 your wish. For I think that these are more lamentable than the funerals of your family members. 7 You are not naturally destined for lawsuits but for good literary works which are the faithful sisters of peace and require calmness of mind. However, I am convinced that these lawsuits will have a happy outcome. You should not feel distressed because of these lawsuits, 25 which perhaps your closest neighbour Ucalegon brings about, for you should try to extinguish and disperse the flames those litigating persons throw at you with one single blow. With time your innocence will emerge even more clearly from those flames.

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6 more...1200: When he died, Sperling had written shorter or longer presentations of 1,399 women in his manuscript. In his previous letters to Brenner, Sperling was more optimistic about finishing his catalogue on learned women, "Vitam tuam, priusquam edentur meae doctae, quod aliquando spero fore, ad Te mittam..." (letter VI), than he appears to be here. 9 Rudbeck...glory: Olof Rudbeck the elder died on September 17, 1702. Sperling is referring to the customary funeral oration with "personalia", which was usually made public. Rudbeck's famous *Atland sive Manheim* was published in four volumes (the fourth was unfinished) between 1679 and 1702. The work was much discussed by learned men around Europe, and it took some time before critical voices were raised. 25

Ucalegon: the name appeared first in Homer. In Vergil and Juvenal it has the meaning of a neighbour whose house is on fire (cf. chapter 2.5 *Vocabulary*).

8 Dominus Stampehlius, qui Vobiscum nuper fuit, salutem Tibi plurimam et officiosissimam impertitur. Multisque Tuam et mariti Tui humanitatem et officia mihi testatus est, cuius dememinisse nunquam poterit.

Sed quid dicam Domino Kedero Vestro factum esse, quem non credo mihi  
 5 succensere, quod ab ipsius sententia, quam de nummo aureo Sigtuniensi protulit, paulo diversus abierim. Nam post illas meas, in quibus iudicium, quod expetiit, meum perscripsi, nihil ab ipso vidi, telamque amicitiae coeptam abrupit. Inter doctos semper bene convenit, licet non unius semper sententiae sint. Salutem illi plurimam meo nomine dicito, et ne succenseat ora, si quid  
 10 temerè scripsi, temeritati meae ignoscat velim: nihil est, ob fribuscula quaedam amicitiae protinus repudium mittere.

9 Adjungo hisce meis munusculum quoddam, quod nuper ex Batavis ad me seriùs allatum est; misissem aliàs maturiùs. Si legi meretur, legas, et, quid de illo sentias, judica. Tuum enim iudicium unicè exspecto. Vale.

15 Dabam Hafinæ ad diem Anno MDCCII  
 Tibi, Nobilissima et Eruditissima Matrona, Omni cultu et obsequio  
 addictissimus Tuus  
 Otto Sperling

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5 nummo : Sig *post* nummo *del.* 7 amicitiae coeptam : *ex* coeptam amicitiae *mut.* 10 ignoscat : *ex* (*ut videtur*) conderet *mut.*

8 Mr. Stampehlius, who recently visited you, sends his warm and most solicitous greeting. In many words he has testified to your and your husband's kindness and services, which he will never forget.

But what has happened to your Mr. Keder, who, I hope, did not become angry with me because I diverged a little from the opinion he put 5 forward regarding the gold coin in Sigtuna? For ever since I sent my letter, in which I expressed the opinion he wished to hear from me, I have not seen anything from him, and he has broken the loom of friendship which was set up. Learned men always remain friends even if they are not always 10 of the same opinion. Greet him warmly on my behalf, and I would like him to forgive my thoughtlessness if I wrote something recklessly, so that he will not be indignant. There is no reason why one should immediately break a friendship due to a little dissension.

9 To this letter I attach a small gift that was recently brought to me from the Netherlands. It had been delayed; I would have sent it earlier 15 otherwise. You may read it, if it deserves to be read, and decide what you think of it. I am very anxious to hear your opinion in particular. Farewell.

Copenhagen (not dated), 1702

With all devotion and respect, most noble and erudite lady,  
yours most humbly  
Otto Sperling

20

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4 Keder...Sigtuna: In 1700, Keder published a Celtic gold coin found in Sigtuna in the magazine *Nova literaria* (Lubecae 1700: 203). The coin was an imitation of a stater minted by Philip II of Macedonia. On the obverse was the image of the head of Apollon, while the reverse had an image of a pair of horses Keder believed that the head on the stater represented Odin (the principal god of pagan Scandinavia), and that the pair of horses also was connected to the ancient Scandinavian religion (*SBL*, 21: 16). 14 gift: Sperling refers to the gift in his next letter as “munusculo quodam libelli mei de Nummis non cuspis” (published in 1700). This dissertation, in which Sperling discussed the old means of payment, was considered to be a major opus within the research on the history of coinage (*DBL* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 22: 357).



## Nobilissima et Eruditissima Matrona

1 Nullam occasionem ad Te scribendi, Elegantissima Foeminarum,  
prætermittere me decet. Quare, cum Dominus Hilcken, Licentiatu Juris  
Utriusque, Hamburgo per nostra Regna ad Vos contendat, illum sine literis ad  
5 Te meis hinc dimittere nolui, ut eum Tibi sinas esse commendatissimum, et si  
quâ re juvare possis ipsius negotia, non dubito, quin factura sis. Misi ad Te  
literas cum munusculo quodam libelli mei de Nummis non cusi, quas  
commisi Secretario Legationis apud nos, Amico meo Domino de Utterklo, qui  
illum fasciculum ad Te curandum in se suscepit. Nescio an perlatus Tibique  
10 traditus rectè sit, prout spero. Novi nihil in re literariâ nunc occurrit, quod  
Tuis oculis dignum sit.

2 Illud autem enixè Te rogatam volo, ut cum Domino Marito Tuo,  
præmissâ salute officiosissimâ, meo nomine consulas, num observaverit,  
quando primi nummi aurei a Sueciæ Regibus cusi fuerint, et quosnam  
15 antiquissimos aut teneat aut percusos esse sciat. Rem gratissimam facietis et Tu  
et Ille, si de his me docere volueritis. Nec aliquid hac vice addo, nisi ut affectu,  
quo coepisti, usque prosequaris me.

Tibi, Nobilissima Matrona, Cultu et obsequio  
addictissimus

20 Dabam Hafniæ ad diem XXXI Januarii Anno MDCCIII

## Nobilissimo et Celeberrimo Viro OTTHONI SPERLINGIO

Salutem Plurimam Dat Sophia Elisabeth Brenner

1 Accepi jampridem literas tuas, Vir Nobilissime, quarum lectionem non uno  
saltem nomine pergratam fuisse mihi haud difficile conjicies. Quanquam enim  
25 eò arrogantiae non processu, ut invidiosa hæc præconia, quibus me indignam  
extollis, meis unquam vindicem meritis, quin potius id totum hallucinanti tuo  
erga me amori acceptum feram,

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1 Nobilissima et : Source: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No. 233,  
4° 2 Elegantissima : ex Doctissima *mut.* 5 eum : *supra lin.* 21 Nobilissimo et : Original,  
Cph, GKS 3092 VI:1, 4°

LETTER IX

Most noble and erudite Madam!

1 It would be ungracious of me to neglect any opportunity to write to you, most elegant of women. Thus, since Mr. Hilcken, licentiate *iuris utriusque* is passing through our Denmark on his way from Hamburg to you, I would not let him leave without a letter from me; he is most deserving of 5 your hospitality and I have no doubt that you will help him in whatever way you can. I sent you a letter and a small gift, namely my booklet *On unstruck coins*, and I handed them over to our secretary at the embassy, my friend Mr. de Utterklo, who has undertaken to bring you that little package. I do not know if it has been conveyed and correctly delivered to 10 you as I hope. As for literary works, nothing new has appeared that is worth your attention.

2 I would indeed like to ask you to greet your husband on my behalf and to ask him whether he knows when the first gold coins were cast by Swedish kings, and what coins are the oldest among the ones he owns 15 himself or knows to have been cast. I would be most grateful to you and your husband if you would inform me about those things. I have nothing else to add except that I hope that you will remain my friend.

With all devotion and respect, most noble lady,

Yours most humbly

<not signed>

Stockholm, January 31, 1703

20

Sophia Elisabeth Brenner sends her warm greetings  
to the most Noble and Renowned Otto Sperling

1 I received your letter long ago, most noble Sir, and you can easily imagine 25 that I was most delighted for more than one reason when I read it. For even though I have not become so blasé that I would ever assert that those desirable words of praise by which you laud me are in accordance with my merits, but rather would ascribe it entirely to your foolish love for me,

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3 *iuris utriusque*: that is, of civil and canon law. 28 desirable: for the Latin *invidiosa* 'enviable'.

non tamen inficior, quam jucundum mihi fuerit ex illis intelligere te postremas meas non benignis modo inspexisse oculis, verum etiam haud mediocrem inde, ut scribis, percepisse voluptatem.

2 Quid enim mihi vel gloriosius vel magis ex voto obtingere potuisset, quam  
 5 quod de amicitia tanti nominis tantæque integritatis viri habeam unde gratuler. Hac animi in me tui propensitate effectum est, ut inter foeminas, quas ob editos in lucem doctissimos ingeniorum foetus orbi exponis erudito, nomen excludi meum minime sis passus, ad quod, quamvis sæpius erubesco tanquam  
 10 propria imbecillitatis ubique memor, placet tamen, ut verum fatear tanto non displicuisse viro. 3 Unicum hoc mihi displicet terretque, cum te septuagenarium ultimam iam scænam fabulæ agere simul ac claudere putas. Sed forsitan aliter visum erit Supremo Numini, quod intimis interea venerabor precibus, ut in perpetuum totius reipublicæ literariæ ornamentum te diu  
 15 saluum ac incolumen servet. Habet etiam hoc aliquid solatii mortem non tam senectute quam immodice vivendi ratione accelerari, quam vero te semper abhorruisse sat scio.

4 In obitum Beati Rudbekij nihil adhuc conscriptum vidi. Dicitur tamen memoriam viri istius clarissimi et de patria quam optime meriti quibusdam curæ fuisse et quamprimum publici juris factum iri; tum etiam curabo ut  
 20 habeas.

Quantum me levarunt in hoc adversantis fortunæ curriculo consolationes tuæ tam candide mihi oblatae, vix dici potest.

5 Kederum toto hoc anno præterlapso non vidi, vereor, ne ob corporis, quæ ubique illum comitatur, infirmitatem, et sui ipsius et cæterum pertæsus  
 25 omnium, vix amicorum ferat consortium. Ipsa quoque per totam hiemem morbo laboravi sat difficili. Citius enim ad suavissimas tuas respondiissem, nisi hoc ipsum ab officio me retinuisset.

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4 obtingere : n *supra* lin. 11 scænam : ex scenam *mut.* | fabulæ : ex fabula *mut.* 19 publici : ex publice *mut.*

I will nevertheless not deny how pleased I was when I realised that you not only had looked upon my last letter with lenient eyes but that you also had obtained, as you say, no mean delight from reading them.

2 For what could have happened to me that would be more glorious or more desirable than that I would have reason to congratulate myself on a 5 friendship with a gentleman of such importance and integrity. Being so benevolent towards me, you did not omit my name from the number of the women you exhibit to the learned world because their literary production have come to light. Even though I am rather often embarrassed when I think of my own feebleness, it nevertheless pleases me that I have 10 honestly not displeased such a great man. 3 The only thing that displeases me and terrifies me is when I hear that you at seventy consider yourself to be playing in the last scene and concluding the drama. But almighty God will perhaps decide otherwise. I shall pray earnestly that you will long be kept safe and sound as a perpetual jewel in the entire literary community. 15 The consolation I can give is that old age in itself does not hasten death so much as an excessive way of life, which I know quite well that you have always shunned.

4 I have not yet seen anything written on the death of the late Professor Rudbeck. Yet, they say that certain persons have been commissioned to 20 compose the *memoria* of this brilliant Professor, who truly has deserved praise from his country, which will be published as soon as possible. I will see that you receive it.

I can hardly express what a relief your sincere consolation has been to me in these times of adverse fortune. 25

5 I have not seen Keder this past year. I am afraid that the reason is the ill health he constantly suffers; and thoroughly wearied as he is both with himself and all others, he can hardly endure the company of his friends. I have myself struggled with quite a serious illness, too, all winter long, and I would have given an answer to your most pleasing letter sooner if this had 30 not kept me from my duty.

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<sup>19</sup> written...Rudbeck: The funeral oration in honour of Rudbeck was published in 1703; see further in letter XIV.

Pro dissertatione tua doctissima, munere mihi perquam grato, cum ob candidissimi tui erga me pectoris affectus, tum ob ipsius argumenti stylique politioris venustatem, summas, quas possum, tibi ago gratias. Judicandi vero potestatem, quam tu quidem satis benigne mihi offers, si in me susciperem, ab  
 5 omni modestia aliena forem; id enim emunctioris naris hominibus largiendum puto.

6 Ad quæstionem, quam de nummis aureis postremis tuis humanissimis addidisti, paucis respondeam, quantum ex marito meo intellexi. Orbes isti aurei, qui temporibus successivis effodiuntur e terra, tametsi inter nummos  
 10 usuales proprie non habentur, omnium tamen sunt antiquissimi, qui apud nos demonstrari queunt. Horum orbium quatuor, postquam ante aliquot annos hic in Svecia reperiebantur, a marito meo exacte et ad amussim delineati sunt, quod ex figuris illorum ære incisis plane perspicies.

7 Ex constitutione monetaria Regis johannis huius nominis secundi constat  
 15 Anno 1497 Stockholmiæ monetas cusas fuisse aureas valoris quatuor et dimidiæ marcæ holmensis. Nec omnino absimile videtur Sveciæ Reges jam ante istud tempus monetas cudi fecisse aureas, quamquam nemini nostrum adhuc innotuere. Tenebris et oblivione forsitan adhuc jacent sepultæ, idque eo facilius creditur, cum apparet nostrates rei nummariæ studium sero propemodum  
 20 fuisse amplexos, quorum nullus ante maritum meum elegantissimo hoc pariter ac utilissimo studio tota mente omnique incubuit impetu, cuius assiduitate nummi antiqui rarissimi et qui ad ornamentum illustrationemque Historiæ patriæ maxime conducunt in lucem sunt protracti.

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5 emunctioris naris: *cf.* Hor. *Serm.* 1. 4. 8; *cf.* Erasm. *Adag.* 2. 8. 59; (*vide etiam cap. 2.2 huius dissertationis*).

I am most grateful to you for your most learned dissertation, a gift most welcome to me both because of your kind sympathy and because of the elegance of the argument and refined style. But if I should undertake the power of judgement that you so kindly offer, I would be far from all modesty; for I think that such judgement should be 5 granted those having a more refined taste.

6 I will give a short answer to the question about the gold coins you added in your last kind letter, as far as I have understood from my husband. Even though those golden orbs, which were unearthed by chance, cannot rightly be grouped with coins that have been in use, they 10 nevertheless are the most ancient that can be seen among us. Four of these coins were discovered here in Sweden some years ago and my husband has produced precise drawings as you will see clearly in these figures, engraved in copper.

7 It appears from the monetary regulation of King John II that gold 15 coins of 4.5 Stockholm Marks were minted in Stockholm in 1497. And it does not seem to be too unlikely that the kings of Sweden had in fact gold coins minted even before that time, even though no evidence of such coins has come down to us thus far. Perhaps the information hitherto lies buried 20 in darkness and oblivion, which seems the likelier since clearly we Swedes were almost too late in embracing the study of coinage. No one before my husband has devoted his full attention and energy to this most elegant and useful study. My husband's diligence has brought to light very rare and old coins that have contributed greatly to the adornment and embellishment of our native country's history. 25

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13 these figures: The coins drawn by Elias Brenner which have been sent together with this letter are today enclosed in another letter from Sophia Brenner, the one dated September 18, 1706 (letter XIX). The drawings of "Nummi aurei" were enclosed in the second edition of Brenner's *Thesaurus*. 16 coins...1497: According to Stiernstedt (1874: 20), no such gold coins were in fact minted during the brief reign of John II. 23 brought...light: The words "in lucem sunt protracti" refer to the full title of Elias Brenner's *Thesaurus Nummorum Sveo-Gothicorum Vetustus Studio indefesso Eliae Brenneri L Annorum Spatio collectus, secundum seriem temporum dispositus et e tenebris in lucem protractus*.

8 Deinde nummos reperies aureos omnium Sveciæ Regum a Gustavo primo  
usque ad incomparabilem Regem nostrum regnantem Carolum XII, excepto  
Rege Sigismundo. Dum autem de nummis aureis hæc ad te scribo, succurrit  
menti me ante biennium numisma argenteum effigiem meam referens seu, ut  
5 galli vocant, medaille, per Nobilissimum Dominum Grönnerum tibi misisse.  
Gratum mihi foret si hoc qualecunque munusculum in manus pervenisset  
tuas. Amicorum enim nemini tam ex animo dicatum credas tibi que persuadeas  
velim.

Vale, vir præstantissime, et a marito meo plurimum salveat.

10 Dominus Stampelius, si adhuc istic hæret, salutetur quæso.  
Dabam Stockholmæ die 11 Junij Anno 1703

### Illustrissima et Nobilissima Matrona

1 Scribendi rursus occasio se præbet per Dominum Richterum, qui ad Vos  
itineri se accinxit. Tuam semper memoriam colo venerorque; nihil illâ mihi  
15 gratius occurrit. Et quoniam ad Tuas 1<1> Junii cum Domino Hilckenio Juris  
Utriusque Licentiato missas adhuc responsum debeo, gratias Tibi et Domino  
Marito Tuo summas ago, quod icones nummorum istorum veterum  
aureorum tam docta et limatâ manu sculptas juxta submittere dignati sitis.

2 Noli, quæso, mecum de Tuis præconiis altercari. Veritatem ipsam si  
20 attingere possem, longe majora mihi scribenda essent quàm scripsi vel scribo.  
Sed quoniam laudari erubescis, quod ingenuis Tuis moribus tribuo, facilè ego  
continebo calamum et ἐπέχειν et ἀπέχειν dicam, ne Tuas aures offendam,  
quæ mihi semper es laudatissima et amicissima.

3 Nummum Tuum et Tuos vultus argento coelatos accepi, et ne me credas  
25 εἰδωλολάτρην esse vel propter argentum vel propter operis elegantiam, longè  
plura sunt quæ me in nummo isto delectant; præsentem Te habeo et video,  
colloquor cum Nummo isto, tanquam si Tecum essem, Phoebi Palladisque  
filiâ. Quæro sæpe, quid jam agas, et licet muta sint illic omnia, scio tamen  
omnia, quoties illum inspicio. 4 Deus Te servet diutissimè, Illustrissima  
30 Matrona, ne morbis illis, de quibus scribis, succumbas. Curam Tui geras

5 misisse ] mississe *ms.* 9 salveat : *ut videtur ex* salviat *mut.* 12 Illustrissima et : Source:  
Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No. 268, 4° 15 11 Junii ] 1 Junii *ex* Ad  
Jun. *mut.* 19 præconiis : qui *post* præconiis *del.* 22 Tuas : *ex* Tibi *mut.* 28 illic : *supra lin.*

8 Thence you will find gold coins minted of all the Swedish kings from Gustavus I to our incomparable reigning King Charles XII, except for King Sigismund. Apropos gold coins I am reminded that over two years ago I sent you a silver coin or, as the French call it, a *medaille*, representing my image, the most noble Mr. Grönner being the messenger. I would be glad 5 if this small gift has reached your hands, for I would like you to believe and be convinced that it has not been dedicated so wholeheartedly to any other of my friends.

Farewell, eminent lord, and my husband sends his hearty greeting. Please send my greeting to Mr. Stamphelius if he still dwells there. 10  
Stockholm, June 11, 1703

Most famous and noble Madam!

1 Again I have an opportunity to write since Mr. Richter is ready to go to you. I always cherish and revere the memory of you; nothing has ever been more welcome to me. And since I still owe you a reply to your letter of the 11th of June, sent with Mr. Hilcken, licentiate of civil and canon law, I must thank you and your husband sincerely for sending me the drawings of those old gold coins, performed with such a skilled and polished hand. 15

2 Please do not argue with me regarding your praise. If I could attain to the truth, I would have to write far more than I have written or will write. 20 But since you blush at being praised, which I ascribe to your modest manner, I will promptly withhold my pen and say *arrête* and *ça suffit*, lest I offend you, who are always my most praiseworthy, dearest friend.

3 I received your medal and your features incised in silver. And you should not think that I am an *adrateur* only because of the silver or the elegance of the craftsmanship, for I assure you that there is much more that pleases me in that medal; you are with me and I look at you. I speak to the medal as if I were together with you, daughter of Phoebus and Pallas Athena. I often ask what you are doing now and even though all is silent I nevertheless know everything whenever I behold the medal. 4 May God 30 preserve you always, illustrious Madam, so that you will not succumb to the illnesses you have described. You must take excellent care of yourself so

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1 Thence: Brenner reconnects to the chronology she has begun to draw from the reign of John II and onwards.



optimam, ut valeas et vigeas perbenè et pancraticè, si non Tibi, nobis tamen omnibus, quibus semper es erisque desideratissima.

Mitto Tibi nummi Suecici vulgaris ærei ectypum, quem et Francici et Berolinienses hoc anno ludum fecerunt et nugacissimis suis explicationibus  
 5 alienis vultibus donarunt, ut metamorphosin Ovidii per illos auctiorem nunc habeamus. Si risum tenere potes, cum illos videris et legeris, mirum fuerit. 5 Admonitionem meam de his nummis sub prælo habeo, et doleo non esse absolutam, ut et illam mittere possem; cum occasio feret, mittam. Necesse verò duxi errores illos doctorum hominum detegere, ne se serpat ulterius error et  
 10 plures animos contagio quodam trahat, quod nosti erroneis perquam familiare esse. Vale, et cum Domino Marito Tuo officiosissimè salutato, quem Tui causâ amo. Iterum iterumque ipsa Tu quoque salve, Illustrissima Matrona, à Tuo Tibi  
 Addictissimo Otto Sperling

15                   Salve plurimum Nobilissima et Honoratissima Matrona

1 Quod ante ad Te non miserim quisquilias has meas in causâ fuit Occasio, quæ defuit. Interim quid agas, quid rerum geras nunc, inprimis in re literariâ illustrandâ, scire multum aveo. Valere Te mihi nuntiavit Dominus Gröner, quod magnâ animi cum voluptate percepi, et ut diutissimè valeas familiæ Tuæ  
 20 nobisque omnibus opto.

Dominus Episcopus Kingo, Poëta in Danicis celeberrimus, diem suum ante paucos menses obiit.

2 Vidi Domini Kederi dissertationem Lipsiæ editam de *Argento Runis seu literis Gothicis insignito*. Sed cur Gothicis?

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1 pancraticè: Plaut. *Bacch.* 248. 6 risum tenere: Hor. *Ars P.* 5.

5 per illos : *ex ex illis mut.* | nunc : *ex redditam mut.* 6 fuerit : *ex erit mut.*

10 quodam : *ex quoddam in marg. mut.* 11 Domino : *Mar ante Domino del.* 15 Salve plurimum : Source: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No. 272, 4°

that you will be well and in full vigour, if not for your own sake then for the sake of all of us, for whom you always are and will be most indispensable.

I send you an embossed figure of a common Swedish copper coin, which both the French and the Berliners have put on show this year as they by 5 their incompetent explanations have endowed it with such strange features, that we now have an extended version of Ovid's 'Transformations'. If you can repress a smile as you see and read their explanations, it will be a wonder. 5 My comments on these coins are being printed and I am sorry that they have not been published yet so that I could send them to you as well; I will do so when I have the opportunity. I considered it necessary to 10 reveal the errors these men have made so that this mistake will not extend further and transmit a kind of infection upon others as well, which fact is quite common with vagrants, as you know. Farewell, and send my respectful greetings to your husband, whom I love for your sake. Once 15 again, live well, most illustrious Madam,  
yours most sincerely  
Otto Sperling

Most noble and honourable Madam!

1 The reason that I have not sent you these trifles before is that I have not 20 had an opportunity. Nevertheless I am very anxious to know what you are doing and what work you are occupied with at the moment, especially in enriching the literary world. Mr. Gröner has informed me that you are well, which I was very happy to hear. I hope that you will be long in good health for the sake of your family and for all of us. 25

Bishop Kingo, Denmark's most famous poet, ended his days a couple of months ago.

2 I have seen Mr. Keder's dissertation *On silver (coins) with Runic or Gothic letters*, printed in Leipzig. But why "with Gothic letters"

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9 being printed: *De nummo Svecico aereo*, see further in letter XVII. 28  
dissertation...Leipzig: Keder's dissertation was actually printed in Lübeck in 1703. It is listed in *Catalogus librorum ... Brenneri* (No. 181). 29 Gothic letters<sup>2</sup>: Sperling rejects the idea that the words "litterae Gothicae" were used synonymously with the runes. The reason behind this was that this meaning of the word was often confused with the Gothic script, i.e., the characters that, originating from France, spread throughout Europe from the thirteenth century onwards (Egerland 2000: 423).

Quæ nunquam Gothicæ fuerunt, sed Normandicæ verè sunt, et postquam illi in Galliâ Christianam religionem amplexi, in hoc Alphabetum Runicum dispositæ et cum nostris Regionibus Septentrionalibus communicatæ fuerunt. 3 Coetera in illâ dissertatiunculâ valde mihi placuerunt. Quæ mitto; si digna  
 5 judicaveris, cum amicis Tuis communicare poteris. Quoniam verò Dominus Grönerus in procinctu stat ad Vos rediturus, haud possum nunc prolixiores ad Te dare, quæ semper animo meo obversaris et mereris prolixissimo affectu à me et ab omnibus bonis exigi. Salute dictâ officiosissima Domino Marito Tuo, me Vobis commendo totum et Tibi præprimis, Nobilissima Matrona, Servum  
 10 Addictissimum  
 Dabam Hafniæ ad diem XVII Martii Anni MDCCIII

## Illustrissima et Nobilissima Matrona

1 Quamvis nihil nunc sit quod scribam, illud tamen etiam scribam, ne occasionem ullam præterisse me reus ad Te deferar, Matrona Eruditissima.  
 15 Juravi honestum hunc Virum Dominum Magistrum Lemmel Lipsiensem, ut ad Te viseret et de Tuâ valetudine quæreret Tibique has meas traderet, officiosissimâ salute Tibi Tuisque dictâ, mihique redux de Te referret omnia salva, prout sæpius illa pro Te vota suscipio.  
 2 Est mihi gallina insignis optimè alta et nutrita, quam servo, ut illam  
 20 Æsculapio mactem, si Te lætam et prosperis omnibus comitatam nunciaverit. Et quamvis gallinas Æsculapio hactenus obtulerit nemo sed gallos solos, ego tamen hanc salivam Deastro movebo, qui nunquam gallinas comedit, quarum carnes multo sunt suaviore quàm gallorum, inprimis si pro Tuâ Salute, Foeminarum Optimâ, offerantur.

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20 Æsculapio...21 gallos: cf. Tert. *De corona*. 10.

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1 verè sunt : *supra lin.* 2 amplexi : sunt *post* amplexi *del.* 8 me : meaque *post* me *del.* 12 Illustrissima et : Source: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No. 241, 4° 15 Juravi : *ex* Adjuravi *ex* Conjuravi *mut.* 17 de Te : *supra lin.* 22 gallinas : *ex* gallinam *mut.*

LETTER XIII

They were never Gothic but certainly Nordic letters, and when the Norsemen assumed the Christian faith in France, the letters were arranged into the runic alphabet and linked to our northern region. 3 The rest of this little work pleased me very much. I send it to you; if you find it worthy to be sent to your friends, you could pass it on. However, since Mr. Gröner is 5 ready to return to you I cannot give you a more lengthy letter now; but you are always in my mind and deserve to evoke the most copious goodwill in me and in all good men. I send my most reverent greetings to your husband and I ask both of you sincerely, and especially you, most noble Madam, to be kindly disposed towards your most humble servant. 10  
Copenhagen, March 17, 1704

Most illustrious and noble Madam!

1 Even though I have nothing to write to you now, nevertheless I will write just that, lest someone should blame me for having let slip an opportunity to write to you, most erudite Madam. I have beseeched the honourable 15 Master Lemmel from Leipzig that he visit you, make inquiries about your health and deliver this letter of mine to you, having greeted you and your family warmly, and that he, when he will have returned to me, would tell me that all was well, just as I very often pray.

2 I am keeping a fine hen fat and well nourished in order to sacrifice her 20 to Aesculapius if he will report that you are happy and prosperous. And even though no one hitherto has offered Aesculapius hen, only cocks, I will nevertheless stir his divine appetite. He has never eaten hen, whose meat is much more delicious than that of the cocks, especially if hens are sacrificed for the sake of your welfare, most prominent of women. 25

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20 hen...Aesculapius: The picture Sperling is projecting is typical for the common emblematical representations at the time (cf. Brenner's response in the next letter).

3 Mitto simul Programmata quædam mea Academicorum nostrorum honori dicata, ut videas etiam Equestres Academias literarum studia non negligere apud nos.

Sed illud etiam abs Te quæram, an Christina Regina unquam nummis suis  
5 Finnica Græcis literis imprimi curaverit, prout mihi referre voluerunt docti aliqui.

Novi quidem Reginam istam Suecicum vocabulum MAKELOS aliquando nummo cuidam insculpi curasse, Græcis literis MAKEΛΩΣ, quod non intelligentes Itali aut Galli aut Hispani aut Germani paratragediari coeperunt  
10 miris modis et explicationes confingere, quas rideret ipse, qui nunquam risit, Saturnus. 4 Sed de Finnicâ Inscriptione sub Græcis literis latente nondum aliquid percepi, nisi hæc, quæ mihi nuper narrarunt, quod ut certò tandem sciam facies! Est mihi nunc sub manu Commentariolus de verâ Gothicâ scriptione antiquâ, et quantum illa a Runicis nostris discrepavit.

15 Vivas igitur et valeas diutissimè, Matrona Illustrissima et Eruditissima  
Dabam Hafniæ ad diem XII Julii Anno MDCCIII  
à Tuo Tibi addictissimo

Viro Nobilissimo ac summe docto OTToni Sperlingio  
salutem plurimam dicit Sophia Elisabeth Brenner

20 1 Nihil sane unquam mihi fuit gratius, Nobilissime Vir, quam vel tuas legere literas vel meas ad te dare.

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5 Finnica : sc. vocabula 7 vocabulum : *supra lin. 9* coeperunt : qua *post* coeperunt *del.*  
18 Viro Nobilissimo : Original, Cph, GKS 3092 VI:1, 4°

3 I send along some of the programs of lectures I have given in honour of our Academy so that you will see that even our Knightly Academies do not neglect the study of liberal arts.

I would also like to ask you whether Queen Christina ever had Finnish words minted with Greek letters on her coins, as some learned men told 5 me.

For I know that this Queen had the Swedish word *Makelos* engraved on some coin with Greek letters, ΜΑΚΕΛΩΣ, which the Italians, Greeks, Spaniards and Germans failed to understand and started to mock in peculiar ways and invent explanations at which Saturn himself, who never 10 smiles, would grin. 4 But I have not yet learned anything else about a Finnish inscription hidden under Greek letters, other than what they recently told me. You however will surely enlighten me. I am now working on a small commentary about the genuine ancient Gothic script and to what extent it differs from our runes. 15

Live long and prosper, most illustrious and erudite Madam!

Yours most sincerely, <no signature>

Copenhagen, July 12, 1704

Sophia Elisabeth Brenner greets  
the most noble and learned  
Otto Sperling

20

1 Noble Sir! Truly nothing has ever been more welcome to me than reading your letters or writing mine to you.

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1 programs...lectures: "In ietzigem und insonderheit auf Academien gewöhnlichem Verstande sind Programmata solche Scrifften, in denen iedermänniglich gewisse Solennitäten und Akademische Handlungen, als Reden, Disputationen, Begräbnisse ... und sie öffentlich angeschlagen werden.", Zedler *online*, 29: 403. 7 Makelos: The Swedish word *makelös* "without a husband" was deliberately chosen by Queen Christina; at the time, the spelling of the name was either *makelös* or *makalös*, and had a double meaning: "matchless" as well as "without a husband". The meaning of *makalös* has later been isolated to "matchless". See further in *Ordbok över svenska språket utgiven av Svenska Akademien (SAOB)*. The coin in question was cast in Rome in 1659 by Alberto Hamerani, and is described in Hildebrand 1874: 311–312. According to Hildebrand, the word was written with Greek letters for the purpose of making it harder to interpret for learned men, and the trick was a success, since quite a few men apparently made false interpretations and it took time before the true meaning behind the word was revealed. 10 Saturn...smiles: I have not found any other reference to "Saturn who never smiles", which there should be.

Hac tamen vice responsum meum in tempus, quod mihi forsā videbatur commodius, distulissem, si vir Tui studiosissimus Dominus Magister Lemmel eam mihi concedisset moram. Videt equidem vir ille bonus quot et quales mihi sunt catulli, ut de coeteris negotiis nihil dicam, qui me a studiis et præsertim ab  
 5 officio, quod amicis Tibique inprimis debetur, detinere solent quam maximè.

2 Perstitit nihilominus dixitque se sine meis literis ad te reverti nec velle nec posse.

Respondeo igitur quamvis laconice, tibi pro candido ac solito in me amore votoque pro mea salute Æsculapio facto summas, quas ego excogitare  
 10 possum, ago gratias. Gallinam tuam Æsculapio placuisse non diffido idemque mihi propitium reddidisse. 3 Verum est, ut scribis, gallinarum carnes gustu antecellere gallorum, nec quicquam in gallinis invenio quod minoris facerem quam in gallis. Si garrulitatem et iactantiam excipies, secundum illud poetæ: “Si parturit ovumclamat et ingenti plurima voce glocit”

15 Ut ut sit. Numen hoc quam maxime pronum tibi ut habeas oportet, cui contra ius et consuetudinem loco galli gallinam dono offerre es ausus. Sed quid est quod ego vicissim reponam, nisi quod memoriam tantæ benevolentiae animo meo perpetuis imprimam notis, quas nec locorum distantia nec tempus ullum eradicare valeat.

20 4 Cæterum de nummis Reginæ Christinæ cum inscriptione finnonica græcis sub literis occulta jure dubitas; tales enim nunquam hic in Svecia extitisse apertum est. Ut tamen de nummis aliquid dicam, memini me ex marito audivisse, se nummos, quos a Regibus Daniae, qui in Svecia etiam olim regnare, in duplo possidet, tanquam Erii Pommerani, Stockholmiae et  
 25 Arosiae, Christiæni 1 Stockholmiae, johannis 2 Arosiae et Malmoë cusi contra monetas eorundem Regum in Dania cusas vel contra nummos quosdam bracteatos nominibus Regum insignitos, 5 quorum nonnullos Vir nomine et antiquitate clarus Thomas Birkerod in specimine suo antiquo rei monetariae Danorum denominat, mutare velle et responsum a[t] Te, si placuerit,  
 30 expectare.

14 Si...glocit: Paulus Maccius, Embl. 56 (Picinelli 1687, IV: 298); (*vide etiam cap. 2.2 huius dissertationis*).

3 concedisset ] concessisset *expectaveris* 5 debetur ] debetur *ms.* 6 Perstitit : r *supra lin.*  
 10 idemque : eundemque *expectaveris* 25 cusi : cusos *expectaveris* 28 clarus : D. (Dominus)  
*post clarus del.* | antiquo : antiquæ *expectaveris*

Hence I would have postponed my reply to a time that perhaps would have seemed more convenient to me if your very diligent Master Lemmel had allowed me that delay. Indeed that good gentleman sees my many offspring (and how they are), not to mention all my other preoccupations, which usually more than anything else detain me from my studies, and especially 5 from the duty which I should perform to my friends and to you above all.

2 Master Lemmel nevertheless persisted and said that he neither would nor could go back without a letter from me to you.

Therefore I respond, though laconically, and bring forth the deepest gratitude I can find for your kind and constant love for me and for the 10 sacrifice performed on behalf of my good health to Aesculapius. I do not doubt that your hen will have pleased Aesculapius and rendered him kindly disposed towards me. 3 What you write is true, namely, that the meat of hens surpasses that of cocks in taste, and I find nothing about the hen that I would value lower than about the cocks. If you do not mind the loquacity 15 and ostentation, according to that passage of the poet,

“If she lays an egg, she shouts and cackles a lot in a loud voice.” Be that as it may. You should find this deity as well disposed as possible towards you, to whom you have dared to sacrifice a hen instead of a cock contrary 20 to the code and usual practice. How else will I requite your kindness than by impressing the memory of such great benevolence on my mind with ever-lasting marks, which neither distance nor time will be able to eradicate.

4 As for strange inscriptions, you rightly have doubts about Queen Christina’s coins with a Finnish inscription hidden under Greek letters, for 25 it is clear that no such coins have ever existed here in Sweden. Speaking of coins, I remember that I have heard my husband say that he would like to trade the coins for which he has duplicates, namely those minted by the kings of Denmark who once reigned in Sweden, too, e.g., those minted in Stockholm and Västerås by Eric of Pomerania, those minted in Stockholm 30 by Christian I and those minted in Västerås and Malmö by John II, for coins of those same kings minted in Denmark or for some bracteate coins marked with the names of the kings. 5 Mr. Thomas Birkerod, famous for both his name and his ancient family, mentions several of these in his work

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31 John II: = John of Denmark, Norway and Sweden. 33 Birkerod...Danes: Bircherod’s *Specimen antiquae rei monetariae Danorum* was published in 1701.



Vale, Vir incomparabilis, operique tuo de vera Gotica Scriptione antiqua, Arctoo orbi ut videtur utilissimo, quamprimum fac ultimam imponas manum. Iterum vale.

Stockholmiae die 16 Octobris Anno 1704

- 5 6 Fasciculum Manes Beati Rudbekij nuperrime editæ aliaque papyracea retinens pro tuis mihi transmissis loco redhostimenti una cum his Lemmelio tibi tradendum dedi.

### Nobilissima ac Eruditissima Matrona

- 1 Exoptatissimas et doctissimas Tuas, Optima Mulierum, cum munusculis  
 10 Tuis gratissimis tradidit mihi Magister Lemmellius ad nos redux, summamque Tuam humanitatem mihi multis deprædicavit. Quæ omnia mihi tam grata fuere quàm quæ sunt gratissima. Non mihi jam sunt, quæ Tuæ munificentiae redhostimenti loco mittere queam cum Viro hoc doctissimo Domino de Carstens, Lubecensi Doctore Medicinæ, quem Tibi de meliori notâ  
 15 commendo, quoniam Vestra curiosa, quæ non pauca sunt et nobilissima, ut percipiat et videat, advenit. 2 Nolui tamen illum ad Vos dimittere, licet vacuum, sine literis ad Te meis. Si quid in posterum, quod Tuâ elegantia dignum sit, reperire potero, nulla dubites, quin occasione datâ transmissurus sim et, quod Tuæ liberalitati debeo, remunerari maximè cupiam.  
 20 Vidi sane nummum Reginæ Christinæ cum MAKEΛΩΣ Græcis literis inscriptum, vocem Suecicam *Makelös* exprimentem, quem exteri non intelligentes et in Græcâ linguâ quærentes multis næniis ac conjecturis falsissimis illustrare sategerunt.

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5 Fasciculum...retinens : fasciculum ... retinentem *expectaveris* | editæ : editos *expectaveris* 8 Nobilissima ac : Source: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No. 246, 4° 10 ad...redux : *ex* redux ad nos *mut.* 20 Christinæ : M *post* Christinæ *del.*

about the old coins of the Danes. My husband will wait for an answer from you if this pleases you.

Farewell, my incomparable friend, and make sure that you put the finishing touches on your work about the genuine Gothic script, which I think will be of great public interest to the Nordic countries. Again 5  
farewell!

Stockholm, October 16, 1704

6 Together with this letter I have handed over a small package to Mr. Lemmel to be delivered to you, containing the funeral eulogy of Professor Rudbeck, which was recently published, as well as other papers, in 10  
exchange for the ones you sent me.

Most noble and erudite Madam!

1 Master Lemmel has returned to us and delivered your eagerly awaited, learned letter, and your most welcome gifts, dear Madam, and he has told me quite profusely about your exceptional kindness. All this was as equally 15  
welcome to me as it was full of elegance. At the moment I do not have anything to send to you with this learned Mr. de Carstens to repay your munificence. Mr. de Carstens is a doctor of medicine in Lübeck and I recommend him to you, since he has come to see and study your remarkable and extensive collection of coins. 2 Nevertheless I did not want 20  
to send him to you, even though he was ready to go, without a letter from me. If I find something worthy of your refined taste, you can be sure that I will send it over to you when I have the opportunity, and that I sincerely wish to repay the debt I owe your generosity.

I have certainly seen Queen Christina's coin with the word ΜΑΚΕΛΩΣ 25  
inscribed with Greek letters, denoting the Swedish word *Makelös*. Foreigners, who did not understand it and tried to explain it through Greek, have busied themselves embellishing it with many absurdities and utterly false conjectures.

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9 funeral...Rudbeck: *Laudatio funebris, qua polyhistori magno et medico longe celeberrimo, Dn. Olao Rudbeckio patri ... pridie Calendas Decembreis, Anno tertio supra millesimum septingentesimum ... Illustrissima Auditorum Corona cinctus, pro ingenii facultate et modulo parentavit, quam et nun typis vulgandam ... consecrat Johannes Esbergius Upsaliae.*

3 Unde optimè mones ex Finnonicâ linguâ nullum talem nummum ejus  
Reginæ Græcis literis reperiri, quod nec Te nec Maritum Tuum in his  
conquirendis et explicandis versatissimum latere facile poterat, si talis unquam  
cusus esset. Vestramque fidem majoris æstimo quam reliquorum, etiam  
5 doctorum Virorum, qui hoc mihi asseruerunt factum esse;

nec nisi videam in his aliquid credam, quod ipsis respondi; manus enim meæ  
sunt oculatæ; credunt, quod vident.

4 Meum de Gothicâ scriptione verâ antiquâ parum et lentè promovet.  
Movet tamen ut anus Terentiana donec Typographum reperire possit, quod  
10 genus hominum hodie difficillimum editoribus se præbet multorumque  
doctorum studia remoratur. Sed illud rogo summopere, ne, quod tot doctis  
Virginibus contigit, propter curas domesticas matrimonii, graves sanè,  
literarum curam deponas. 5 Unica est illa, coeteræ sunt innumeræ. Unicam  
hanc facilè superabis tanto ingenio quod Tibi natura largita est quoque Te  
15 foecundam præ aliis reddidit. Non Te sic obruant aliæ, ut hujus obliviscaris,  
opto. Domina sit hæc, ancillentur coeteræ curæ.

Quæ de nummis Danicis cum Suecicis permutandis nomine Mariti Tui  
desideras, videbo, num in paupertinâ mea supellectile reperiri possint, quos  
permutare queam. 6 Inter Gustavi Adolphi nummos, quorum icones misisti  
20 quosdam, non video annotatum, quem ego teneo in ære ovali figurâ, nec  
dubito, quin etiam in argento sit cusus. Ansula circulo exteriori est addita,  
magnitudine conspicuâ, pondere semunciae et quod excedit. Prima facies caput  
et pectus Regis exhibet; caput est laureatum. Inscriptio in circuitu:  
GUSTAVUS ADOLP<HUS> D<EI> G<RATIA> SVEC<ORUM>  
25 GOTH<ORUM> VAND<ALORUM>Q<UE> REX. 7 Aversa duas figuras  
ostendit: Spem cum anchora, quam sinistro pede premit, manibus complicatis  
et elevatis versus pectus, ut orantes et sperantes solent, facie coelum versus  
reflexâ. Altera Martis figura est chlamydati, paludati et galeati, Leonem capillis  
anterioribus sinistra retinens, dextra columnæ innixâ et Fortitudinem indicari  
30 puto, superius intra radios multiplices יהיה inferiùs MDCXXIX, in circuitu ET  
VICTRICIBUS ARMIS, significans et Spe et Fortitudine et victricibus armis  
se rem gerere. In prioribus suis forte illum annotatum habet Maritus Tuus,

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6 manus...7 quod: Plaut. *Asin.* 202.

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12 contigit : *ex accidit mut.* 16 Domina...curæ : *in marg.* 32 Maritus Tuus : *in marg.*

3 Thus you are right to tell me that no such coin of this Queen is found with Greek letters incised in Finnish; because if such a coin had ever been struck, it would not easily have escaped you or your husband, who has investigated and explained these matters for so long. I esteem your opinion higher than the opinion of others, even of learned men, who assured me 5 that this was the case.

I answered them that I would not believe any of this unless I saw it with my own eyes. For my hands are provided with eyes: they believe what they see.

4 My work on the genuine Gothic script is advancing only very slowly. 10 However, it moves slowly like a Terentian old woman until it can find a typographer, a difficult task these days for editors, and who delay the work of many learned men. But I implore you not to give up your studies because of the domestic duties, however heavy, as happens to so many learned maidens. 5 The literary duty is unique, while the other concerns are 15 innumerable. Nature, which has rendered you more fruitful than others, has also blessed you with such great talent that you will easily overcome this obstacle. I only hope that those other duties will not overpower you so that you forget this one. May she be the ruler and the other duties the maidservants. 20

On behalf of your husband you wished to trade Danish coins for Swedish ones. I will see if I can find something to trade in my poor collection. 6 Among Gustavus Adolphus' coins, of which you sent me some drawings, I do not see one there which I have, minted in copper in an oval form, and I have no doubt that it is also minted in silver. A loop of a 25 remarkable magnitude has been added to the exterior circle, one twenty-fourth of an *as* and more. The upper side shows the head and chest of the King; the head is adorned with laurel. The inscription on the circumference: "Gustavus Adolphus, by the grace of God king of Swedes, Goths and Wends". 7 The opposite side shows two images: Hope with an 30 anchor on which she rests her left foot, folded hands lifted to the chest in the way that persons praying and pleading usually have them, face turned up towards heaven. The other is an image of Mars wearing a Greek cape, a

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1 coin: The information in this paragraph is not given in the logical order. After Sperling had heard the interpretation which he suspected to be false he obviously demanded to see the coin in discussion himself; and after having been shown the coin, he could confirm his and Brenner's opinion. 22 poor collection: Sperling in fact owned a unique collection of coins, which was later purchased by the King (see chapter 2.1).

quos non vidi. Describere tamen illum volui, si fortè nondum ipsius oculis oblatu fuit; est elegantissimæ manus et structuræ.

Atque hunc nummum in Sueciâ cusum existimo, quod Annus 1629, qui significatur in nummo, primus sit, quo exercitum suum transfretavit in  
5 Germaniam.

8 Et quoniam Maritus Tuus desiderat quosdam nummos suos Suecicos permutare cum nostris Danicis, conquisivi ex meis capsulis, quibus carere potui, sedecim numero:

1. Abelem, Regem Danorum, filium Valdemari 2di
- 10 2. Christianum 1. cum vultu Regis coronato bracteatum
3. Christianum 1. cum insignibus Oldeburgicis et Holsaticis junctis, itidem bracteatum, quem Lubecenses *Blastrut* vocant
4. Regis Johannis Bergensem Norvegiæ
5. Johannem Malmogiæ cusum
- 15 6. Johannis in Holsatia cusum
7. Johannis Alburgi in Jutia cusum
8. Christierni 2di
9. Adhuc Christierni 2di
10. Friderici primi Kopenhagensensem 1523
- 20 11. Friderici Kopenhagensensem 1524
12. Friderici primi Bergensem
13. Friderici primi Malmojensem 1524
14. Christiani 3tii Hafniensem 1536
15. Ejusdem Regis Monetam Wisbyensem, et
- 25 16. Ejusdem monetam insulæ Gotlandiæ,

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2 elegantissimæ : manus et *post* elegantissimæ *supra* *lin. add.* 7 conquisivi : *ex* conquisive *mut.* 10 vultu : *ex* facie *mut.* 15 in Holsatia : *ex* Alburgi in Jutia *mut.* 22 Malmojensem : *sic*

military cloak and a helmet, holding a lion's mane with his left hand, and I think his right hand, leaning on to a column, represents Strength. Above, within numerous rays of light, "Jahve"; further down, "1629". In the circumference: "and with victorious weapons", indicating that he conducts affairs with Hope, Strength and victorious weapons. Perhaps your husband 5 has included this in his earlier drawings, which I did not see. I wanted to describe it anyway, in case it was not yet brought to his attention, because it bears signs of elegant workmanship and composition.

And I hold the opinion that this coin has been minted in Sweden, because the year 1629, which is inscribed on the coin, was the first year he 10 transported his army over the sea to Germany.

8 And since your husband expresses a wish to exchange some of his Swedish coins for our Danish, I have collected sixteen coins from my boxes that I can spare:

1. the Danish King Abel, son of Valdemar II 15
2. Christian I with the crowned head of the King, a bracteate
3. Christian I, with compound Oldenburg and Holsatic emblems, also a bracteate, (which the citizens of Lübeck call "Blastrut")
4. King John, minted in Bergen in Norway
5. John, minted in Malmö 20
6. John, minted in Holstein
7. John, minted in Ålborg in Jutland
8. Christian II
9. again Christian II
10. Frederick I, minted in Copenhagen in 1523 25
11. Frederick, minted in Copenhagen in 1524
12. Frederick I, minted in Bergen
13. Frederick I, minted in Malmö in 1524
14. Christian III, minted in Copenhagen in 1536
15. coin of the same King, minted in Wisby, and 30
16. coin of the same King, minted on the island of Gotland

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9 coin...1629: The coin is described by Hildebrand 1874: 146. 12 exchange...coins<sup>1</sup>: Regarding the correspondence between Elias Brenner and Sperling, see chapter 2.4.1 (Comments to letters XV-XX). For further information regarding the coins discussed here, see the rich Internet site "Dansk Mønt" *online* and the related site Galster *online*.

- 9 pro quibus desiderarem mitti Suecicos, si placet:  
 Erici Pomerani 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10 et medium Arosiensem tabula 7,  
 Christophori primum, secundum et 3tium, Caroli Canuti primum, 2dum,  
 4tum, 5tum et Christiani primi 1, 2, 3, tabula 5.
- 5 10 Ulterius, si petere audeo et facultas Tibi sit inspiciendi, quatuor Evangelia  
 Gothica Vestra argenteis literis scripta et argento ligata, perscribere velis  
 1 an in Folio vel quarto si<n>t scripta?  
 2 an membranis sint scripta?  
 3 an membrana sit alba vel purpurea in quâ literæ argenteæ istæ sunt exaratæ?
- 10 4 an nihil inibi reperiatur atramento scriptum?  
 5 an nullæ aureæ literæ reperiantur in fronte textuum vel paginarum?  
 6 an nullæ picturæ miniatæ vel aliæ ad margines appareant, et quæ?
- 11 Nam de his scriptores tacent, qui de isto volumine hactenus mentionem  
 fecerunt. Rem verò mihi gratissimam facies, si de illis me certiore reddes.
- 15 Sicque finio hac vice Te Tuamque salutem Deo Optimo Maximo  
 commendans, utque res Tuæ Tibi cunctæ prosperè ac feliciter cedant et  
 Maritum Tuum diligentissimè eo nomine salvere cupio, qui sum et illi Tibique  
 Addictissimus Amicus et Servus.  
 Dabam Hafniæ ad diem XXX Martii 1705

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1 si placet : *supra lin.* 3 Christophori primum : et *post* Christophori primum *del.* 4  
 tabula 5 : *ex* Stenonis Sture 1 et 3tium, tabula 6 *supra lin. mut.* 8 membranis : *ex*  
 membranes *mut.*

9 In exchange for these I would like to have the Swedish coins of Eric of Pomerania, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, and the coin from Västerås in the middle (in table 7), of Christopher I, II and III, Karl Knutsson, the first, second, fourth and fifth one, and of Christian I, Nos. 1, 2, 3 (table 5).

10 Furthermore, if I dare to ask and if you would have the opportunity 5 to inspect your four Gothic gospels written with silver-coloured letters and bound together with silver, would you like to write a detailed record of

1. whether they are written in folio or in quarto?
2. whether they are written on parchment?
3. whether the parchment on which those silvery letters are written is white 10 or purple?
4. whether nothing can be found there written with black ink?
5. whether no golden letters can be seen on top of the text or pages?
6. whether no vermilion pictures or other kinds of pictures are visible in the margins, and (in that case) what pictures? 15

11 The scholars, who have hitherto mentioned this book, say nothing about these facts: I certainly would be most delighted if you would inform me about them.

And so I end this letter entrusting you and your good health to almighty God. I wish that everything turns out successfully and happily for you. 20 Bring my sincere greeting to your husband. I am both his and yours most humble friend and servant.

Copenhagen, March 30, 1705

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6 Gothic gospels: Codex Argenteus (CA) is the most well preserved manuscript for Bishop Ulphilas' translation of the Bible to Gothic. The manuscript contains the four gospels and is written with silver ink. The beginning of each gospel as well as each section in the gospels is embellished with golden letters. CA was probably produced in Ravenna in 520 AD, and it has been assumed that the manuscript was brought by Saint Liudger (the tutor of Alcuin) to the abbey of Werden in the region Ruhr in the 8<sup>th</sup> century (see Munkhammar 1998: 89–123 for a presentation and discussion of the different theories regarding the history of the manuscript). At the middle of the sixteenth century it was rediscovered in Werden and Emperor Rudolf II brought it to the Royal Palace in Prague where it remained until the Swedes took it to Stockholm after the sack of Prague in July 1648. CA was later given to Isaac Vossius by Queen Christina, and his uncle Franciscus Junius published the first edition of the manuscript in 1665. CA was later purchased by Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie and donated to UUB in 1669. Both the famous antiquary Olof Verelius and Georg Stiernhielm had transcriptions made of the manuscript, but the physical appearance of the text was yet to be thoroughly described, as Sperling rightly remarks.



Viro amplissimo OTTHoni SPERlingio  
 Salutem Plurimam Dat  
 Sophia Elisabet Brenner

1 Multis sane ac indubitatis quidem argumentis tuus in me constat amor, Vir  
 5 Nobilissime. Idcirco quoties literas tuas inspicio tanta benevolentia tamque  
 candido erga me affectu repletas, summo confundor rubore meamque in  
 rescribendo detestor tarditatem, quam tamen, Vir optime, ne sinistre  
 interpreteris impense rogo, præsertim cum amicitiam nostram eo accrevisse  
 tamque altas eam egisse confido radices, ut frequente vel nimia cultura non  
 10 adeo indigeat.

2 Postremas tuas, reliquis tuis donis mihi longe gratiores, tradebat mihi Vir  
 Doctissimus Dominus Doctor Carstens, tua commendatione haud minus  
 quam suo ipsius merito moribusque elegantissimis mihi perquam carus. Huius  
 erudita conversatione sæpius, dum hic morabatur, multa cum utilitate pariter  
 15 ac jucunditate frui licebat. Sed perpende sodes, qualis hæc mihi felicitas, qualis  
 foret utilitas, si coram tecum confabulari tibi præsenti præsens cor aperire  
 mihi contingeret, quod vero, quoniam vix sperandum, tuum obsecro ne  
 diminuatur favorem. Placebit forsitan Superis eo firmiorem, eo propinquiorem  
 nostram reddere necessitudinem, quo magis nos voluerunt remotos.

20 3 Librum Ulphilæ, de quo scribis, ipsa non vidi, neque ob locorum  
 distantiam videre potui. Habes tamen hic, ni fallor, quæ scire desideras, et si  
 præterea aliquid vel omissum vel oblitum existimas, hoc ex Domino magistro  
 Frondino accipies, qui has tibi tradet. Et Ulphilam inspexit sæpius hic  
 Frondinus, tui nominis gloria captus. A me efflagitavit, ut tibi eum  
 25 commendarem; quod etiam facerem nisi persuasum haberem mihi illum satis  
 tibi esse commendatum, qui nova de me asportaverit.

Vale, Vir celeberrime, Tuique amantem redama.  
 Dabam Stockholmæ die 7 Augusti 1705

16 coram...aperire: cf. Cic. *fam.* 15. 19. 1; cf. Cic. *fam.* 12. 30. 1; cf. Verg. *Aen.* 4. 82;  
 (vide etiam cap. 2.2 huius dissertationis).

1 Viro amplissimo : Original, Cph, GKS 3092 VI:I, 4° 21 videre : non *post* videre *del.*

LETTER XVI

Sophia Elisabeth Brenner  
sends her warm greeting  
to the most distinguished Mr. Otto Sperling

1 Most noble Sir! You have proven your sympathy for me in many unequivocal ways. Therefore, whenever I look at your letters filled with  
such benevolence and sincere affection towards me I am very ashamed and  
I loathe my slowness in replying. All the same, I strongly entreat you, dear  
Sir, not to take this in the wrong way, especially since I am convinced that  
our friendship has grown to such a point and has become so deep-rooted  
that it does indeed not need regular or excessive cultivation. 10

2 The learned Doctor Carstens delivered your last letter, far more  
welcome to me than your other gifts. He is extremely dear to me, no more  
by your recommendation than by his own merits and most elegant  
manners. When he stayed here we quite often enjoyed his learned  
conversation that was both very useful and delightful. But please consider 15  
what joy and benefits I would obtain if I could converse with you  
face-to-face and open my heart to you in person. But at the same time,  
since this can hardly be expected to happen, I pray that it will not diminish  
your sympathy. Perhaps God will allow our bond to become all the more  
strong and close, the more he keeps us apart. 20

3 I have not seen Ulphila's book which you write about, nor have I had  
an opportunity to see it because of the distance. However, if I am not  
mistaken you will have the information you wanted here, and if you think  
that something has been omitted or forgotten besides this, you will receive  
that information from Master Frondin, who has delivered this letter to 25  
you. This Mr. Frondin, who is captivated by the glory of your name, has  
quite often studied Ulphila's book. He has urged me to recommend him to  
you, which I would do if I were not convinced that he, who has brought  
news about me, comes sufficiently recommended to you.

Farewell, most famous Sir, and may you love me as I love you. 30  
Stockholm, August 7, 1705

## Salve Nobilissima et Eruditissima Matrona

1 Quamvis nullum scribendi argumentum mihi se nunc offerat, quo manus  
 Tuas dignissimas exoculari dignè possim, doctissima Mulierum, hanc tamen  
 occasionem prætermittre nolui, quam Dominus Petrus Gierpe mihi præbet,  
 5 qui se meas ad Te curaturum promisit. Accessit huc doctissimus ille Juvenis et  
 in Antiquitatibus nostris Septentrionalibus peritissimus, quo nomine ipsi  
 gratulor, quum pauci sint qui studium illarum amplecti dignantur. Vidi apud  
 ipsum diligentiam summam Domini Peringskioldii, quâ variis lucubrationibus  
 fatiscentem jam et fessam Antiquitatem è somno et tenebris in lucem provocat  
 10 et excitat, ob quam rem ipsi bene sit precor. 2 Nihil enim eruditionem magis  
 instruit quàm Antiquitatis vestigia premere, et quæ tot seculis oblivioni tradita  
 sunt, velut e puteo quodam Democriti extracta in luce suâ ponere.

Misi cum Domino Doctore Carstens chartulas ad Te quasdam una cum  
 nummulis, quas permutari desiderabam cum Vestris. Non dubito, quin rectè  
 15 perlatae sint. Haud quidem ad nos rediit ille, sed aliâ via ad externos perrexit.  
 Significavit tamen literis suis ad Fratrem datis et Tuam salutem et  
 incolumitatem, de quâ semper gaudeo, utpote quâ nihil mihi est antiquius aut  
 jucundius.

3 Habui nuper adversarium Dominum Beyerum Antiquarium  
 20 Berolinensem super nummo Suecico meo, quem elucidavi et Sevensibus  
 perperam adscribi paucis docui, ne error iste ulterius serperet. Sed ego illis  
 nâniis nihil respondi, quum dignæ mihi non viderentur, ob quas tempus  
 aliquod aut horulam saltem perderem. Ille nunc abiit ad plures, nec tamen si  
 viveret ullum responsum extorsisset, rem enim ipsam fatetur.

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12 puteo...Democriti: Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 3. 28. 12. 23 abiit...plures: Petron. *Sat.* 42. 5.

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1 Salve Nobilissima : Source: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No. 247, 4° 2 argumentum : nunc *post* argumentum *del.* 3 doctissima Mulierum : *supra lin.* 12 velut : *supra lin.* 19 nuper : *supra lin.* 24 rem...fatetur : res enim ipsa fatetur *expectaveris*

Greetings, most noble and erudite Madam!

1 Even though I have nothing to write about and thereby properly kiss your deserving hands, most learned of Women, I nevertheless did not want to neglect the opportunity that Mr. Petrus Gierpe offers me, since he has promised to bring my letter to you. This learned young gentleman is an 5 expert on our northern history, for which I congratulate him, since few persons deign to concentrate on the study of this subject. In him I have seen the same strong assiduity as has Mr. Peringskiöld, by which he with different kinds of lucubrations revives the study of antiquities and drives it from slumber and darkness out into the light though it be weary and tired; 10 and I wish him all luck with that. 2 For nothing furthers erudition more than to follow in the steps of history and to haul things forgotten for so many centuries up to the surface, as if from some well of Democritus, and put them out in their light.

With Doctor Carstens I sent some papers together with the coins that I 15 wanted to exchange for yours. I have no doubt that they have been delivered properly. Even if he did not return to us but proceeded on another way to foreign countries, he nevertheless informed us in a letter to his brother that you are safe and sound. It makes me always happy to hear that, for nothing is more important or more desirable to me. 20

3 Recently I got Mr. Beyer, an antiquarian from Berlin, as an opponent on the topic of my Swedish coin, which I shed light on and briefly showed that it was incorrectly ascribed to the Cévennes, so that this error would spread no further. But I did not respond to this rubbish, which did not seem warrant my wasting any time on it, not even an hour. He has now 25 gone to the majority, but even if he had lived he would not have extorted any reply from me, for the thing speaks for itself.

8 Peringskiöld: Johan Peringskiöld was a collector and an antiquary, who was working on a major opus on the ancient monuments in Sweden (which was never finished). 21

Beyer...Cévennes: Sperling, Otto, *De nummo Svecico aereo per errorem Francicorum Sevensibus adscripto nunc vero detecto et ab errore liberato monstrante*, Havniae [1703].

Johan Gabriel von Beyer, 1645–1705, was born in Berlin but lived in Stockholm, and at the time he was “hovråd” (see *Index personarum*). 23 the Cévennes: inhabitants of the Cévennes (a mountain range of southern France). The Latin *Sevensenses* is not to be found in Graesse. I have only found the German word “Sevenner” (Zedler *online*, 37: 342). 26 gone...majority: i.e., died.

Sed scopticè me propterea traduxit quasi gloriolam et lauream mustaceo  
 quæsiverim nec alii æquè videre potuerint quod ego vidi. 4 Ego facilè patior  
 Epidaurios serpentes acutius me cernere, quod tamen meis oculis nequaquam  
 officit. Tu saltem valeas opto et salute officiosissimâ Marito tuo nomine meo  
 5 dictâ, iterum iterumque valeas idque pancraticè. Sum enim eroque semper,  
 Nobilissima Matrona, Servus Tibi Humillimus  
 Dabam Hafniæ ad diem 8 Augusti 1705

Salva sis Nobilissima ac Eruditissima Matrona

1 Quas Dominus Magister Frondinus à Te et Domino Marito Tuo ad me  
 10 pertulit VII. Aug. scribas post sex hebdomadam intervallum rectè satis  
 <tradidit>. Remorati sunt enim eum amici in itinere, quod dolebat et  
 excusabat. Elegantissima foeminarum, quid est quod Tibi rependam pro  
 benevolentia summâ qua me complecteris? Infinitis modis de me jam meruisti,  
 sed nunquam cumulatiùs quàm hac vice, dum tantam curam ostendisti in  
 15 procurandâ mihi doctissimi Viri Eenbergii testimonio et elucidatione de  
 Codice Ulphilæ argenteo et aureo. 2 Non ausus fuisset hoc onus imponere  
 Tibi, si scivissem tam longè petenda esse quæ desiderabam. Credidi enim  
 Codicem illum non Upsaliæ servari sed Stockholmiae in archivo Antiquitatum.  
 Meretur igitur illa sedulitas Tua, ut omnibus gratis grates gratiasque  
 20 hoc nomine optimas maximas, quantas potero, in sinum Tuum suavissimum  
 effundam, quod et toto animo nunc facio et faciam perpetuo.

3 Sed mentionem facit Dominus Eenebergius Canonum Eusebii, qui  
 subjiuntur in illo Codice singulis paginis, et interrogavi Dominum  
 Magistrum Frondinum de his, an Græcè scripti et additi essent hi Canones an  
 25 verò Latinè, et si Latinè, prout putabat, an argenteis literis aut atramento, an  
 caractere Runico, prout in Evangeliiis ipsis, an verò caractere Latino,

1 lauream...2 quæsiverim: Cic. Att. 5. 20. 4; cf. Erasm. Adag. 4. 9. 87. 3 Epidaurios  
 serpentes: cf. Paulinus Nolanus, Ep. 49. 8.

3 me : *supra lin.* 8 Salva sis : Source: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2,  
 No. 252, 4° 9 Frondinus : *ex* Frondius *mut.* | ad...pertulit : *ex* mihi tradidit *mut.* 10 satis :  
 tradidit d *post* satis *del.* 13 jam : *supra lin.* 17 esse : *ex* fuisse *mut.* 19 sedulitas : *ex*  
 benevolentia *mut.* | gratus grates : *ex* instructus Te accedam *mut.* 21 nunc : *supra lin*  
 facio : *ex* faciam *mut.* 22 Sed...218,5voluptas : *in marg. add.* 26 ipsis : *supra lin.*

But because of this he mocked me as if I had sought to win laurels easily and as if other men had not been able to see what I did. 4 I can easily endure the fact that the Epidaurian serpents are more sharp-sighted than I, but that is by no means any obstacle to my eyes. Anyhow, I wish that you are well, and do greet your husband sincerely. I wish over and over again 5 that you are well in every respect. For I am and will always be, most noble Madam, your most humble servant.  
Copenhagen, August 8, 1705

Greetings, most noble and erudite Madam!

1 After an interval of six weeks Master Frondin properly enough delivered 10 the letter from you and your husband of 7 August. Friends had delayed him on the way, for which he was sorry and excused himself. How shall I repay you, oh most elegant of women, for the great benevolence you bestow upon me? You have already earned my thanks in innumerable ways, but never more abundantly than when you showed such concern in 15 bringing me the learned Mr. Eenberg's testimony and information about Ulphila's silver and golden codex. 2 I would not have ventured to lay this burden on you if I had known that the information I wanted had to be gathered so far away. I thought that this book was kept not in Uppsala, but in the Stockholm Board of Antiquities. Therefore your helpfulness deserves 20 the deepest gratitude I can express and heap upon your charming arms, which I am pleased to do now and forever.

3 But Mr. Eenberg mentions the Eusebian canons which are appended on each page in that book, and I asked Master Frondin whether these canons were written and added in Greek or in Latin, and if it was in Latin, 25 as he thought, whether the canons were written in silver letters or with black ink, whether they were written with runic letters, as in the gospels themselves, or with Latin letters,

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3 Epidaurian...sharp-sighted: This might be a reference to another emblem, which I have however not found. 23 Eusebian canons: the division of the gospels into 1,162 sections, done by Eusebius of Caesarea in order to facilitate the comparisons of parallel cases in the texts. For further information, see Nordenfalk 1938 and Munkhammar 1998: 160–163.

quem Longebardicum vulgò vocant scribti essent hi Canones, an verò literis Romanis Capitalibus majoris Alphabeti, quod se non rectè meminisse mihi respondebat. Si qua datur occasio, ut hæc a Domino Eenbergio exquirere possis, quantum est quod Tibi ulteriùs debeam, mea Pararia, mea χαριεστότη, 5 mea voluptas?

4 Maritus Tuus muneribus me ditavit nummariis ultra quam desiderabam, quo nomine non solùm Ipsi sed et Tibi plurima debeo. Utinam votum Tuum et meum, quod toties animo volvi, aliquâ ratione effici posset, ut vel ad semihoram tecum confabulari liceret et manus illas exosculari, quæ tam doctis 10 literis tam sæpe meum exhilarant animum. Sed tantæ felicitatis spes necesse est nobis decolet, quos adversa nimium fata urgent et distinent. Hoc solùm gaudeo, quod animo lætissimo sæpius Te Tuaque complectar ac si præsens sim. 5 Nam et illa mihi voluptas est sincera et integerrima, quæ non potest auferri nec oleum aut operam suam perdere. His contenti simus necesse est, 15 animos jungere si nos ipsos ad alloquia et amplexus sistere non possumus.

Frondinus Vester mihi est commendatissimus, et quem Tu commendas, Matrona omnium optima, apud me utatur licet studiis et officiis omnibus, quæ impendere potis sum. Ostendi ipsi et effigiem Tuam in ære ductam et nummum Tuum in argento, quæ nondum viderat, ut scirem quænam Tibi 20 similior esset, et affirmabat in nummo Te Tibi similiorem esse, quod et alii jam me docuerant, sed deesse rotunditatem illam pulcherrimam vultus Tui in utroque. His me oblecto[r] memoriâ Tui sempiternâ.

6 Nunc et illud abs Te desidero, eruditissima et suavissima mea, ut quæcunque Tibi supersunt adhuc vel carmina vel alia Tui genii et ingenii, quæ 25 nondum misisti, eorum titulos solos mihi submittas, quò illa Vitæ Tuæ, quam sæpius inter eruditas meas ordior et retexo et amplifico, inseri et pro meritis Tuis iis laudibus exaggerari possint, quæ Tibi debentur.

10 spes...11 decolet: Plaut. *Capt.* 497. 14 oleum...perdere: cf. Plaut. *Poen.* 332; cf. Erasm. *Adag.* 1. 4. 62.

10 meum...animum: ex animum meum exhilarant et *mut.* 11 decolet ] decollet *ms.* 14 suam: *supra lin.* 15 ad...amplexus: *supra lin.* 16 commendas: commendes *exspectaveris* 17 utatur: ex fruatur *mut.* | licet: *in marg.* 18 quæ: ut videtur ex quas *mut.* | potis sum: ex potes ex potero *mut.* | Ostendi...22sempiternâ: *in marg.* 24 Tui...ingenii: *supra lin.* 25 misisti: ex submisisti *mut.* | solos: *supra lin.* 26 inseri: possint post inseri *del.*

the kind commonly referred to as Lombardian letters, or rather with Roman capitals. He answered that he did not remember exactly. If an opportunity arises for you to ask Mr. Eenberg about this, I would be ever so much more indebted to you, my intermediary, *ma plus chère amie*, my joy.

4 Your husband has enriched me by giving me even more coins than I had desired, wherefore I am much indebted not only to him but also to you. If only our common wish, which I have turned over so many times in my mind, could come true somehow, so that I could talk to you for just half an hour and kiss those hands which so often have raised my spirits 10 with their learned letters. But we, who are pressed too hard and separated from one another by adverse fate, must banish any hope for such happiness. My only joy is that time and again I can cheerfully embrace you and all that is yours just as if I were present. 5 For that pleasure is sincere and unimpaired; that can never be taken away or be in vain. Let us be 15 satisfied with our spiritual affinity, even if we cannot meet to converse and embrace each other.

Your Mr. Frondin is most agreeable; in my house any person you recommend, noblest Madam, can enjoy all the devotion and service I can extend. I showed him both your picture, etched in copper, and your silver 20 coin, neither of which he had however seen before, because I wanted to know which had the better likeness. He confirmed that the coin presents a better likeness, just as other persons had already told me; yet that beautiful roundness of your face is missing in both reproductions. I am delighted with those portraits, remembering you always. 25

6 I would also like you, most erudite and charming Madam, to send me just the titles of poems or other fruits of your talent that you have not yet presented me with, so that they can be added to your biography, which I often review, enlarge and rearrange among my other biographies of learned women. Thereby your labours will be amplified by the praise due to your 30 merits.



- 7 Sed et aliud onus imponere Tibi quæro, quod ne molestum Tibi sit oro, ut Antiquitatis illud Collegium Vestrum mihi describas cum suis Præsilibus et Assessoribus, qui nunc sunt et fuerunt. Dominum Gabrielem de la Gardie primum fundatorem et Autorem fuisse relatum est mihi, sed quo anno  
 5 coeperit nescio. Consului jam olim Dominum de Peringskiöld per Dominum de Grönerum super his, sed nullum responsum tuli; nescio quid impederit. Et si Tibi molestiam etiam aliquam hoc negotium pariet, non desidero. Tantum enim abest, ut molestias Tibi augere velim, ut quibus modis illas tollere vel minuere Tibi possim, quæram enixè.
- 10 Diutissimè verò valeas opto meique meminisse, ut favori Tuo commendatus sim æternum, si mereri potero, qui Tibi sum, Matrona Nobilissima, Servus et addictissimus et humillimus.
- Dabam Hafn. ad diem VII Octobris MDCCV

## Salve Nobilissime ac Celeberrime Domine SPERLINGE

- 15 1 Si penes te esset, Vir amicissime, tuæ indignari Brenneriæ jam ob meam in scribendo et rescribendo segnitiam, a deprecatione potissimum exordirer. Sed quoniam amoris esse scio animadvertere errores nec posse nec velle, prætermisissis his, ad novissimas tuas, quas Domino Sparfwenfeltio, ut ad me perferentur, tradideras, tandem respondeo, idque per juvenem eximium ac  
 20 nobilem, Dominum de Tettau, natione borüssum, qui nostris antiquitatibus coeterisque rarioribus perlustrandis haud vulgarem per aliquot hebdomadas impendit diligentiam iamque ad vos institutum habet iter. Huius desideriis tuam exorarem operam, nisi compertum haberem, quam pronus in musas earumque Alumnos sis.
- 25 2 Clarissimus Enbergius ad questiones de codice argenteo hæc regessit: “Venerandi Senis Domini Sperlingii Curiosam industriam vehementer amo et suspicio. Doleo tamen me priori mea Codicis Ulphilani descriptione non potuisse desiderio ipsius plene satisfacere. Sed ut, quod res est, ingenue fatear: non possum ulterius quid aut magis in ea re præstare aut præterquam quod  
 30 dixi dicere. Nam quod attinet ad figuras Canonum istorum Eusebianorum,

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4 fundatorem : *ex* fundamentum *mut.* 8 modis : possim *post* modis *del.* 10 meique : *ex* meoque (*ut videtur*) *mut.* | meminisse : *fortasse perperam pro* memineras 14 Salve Nobilissime : Original, Cph, GKS 3092 VI:1, 4° 19 perferentur : *perferrentur expectaveris*

LETTER XIX

7 But I intend to impose yet another burden upon you, which I pray will not be an annoyance, namely, that you describe your Board of Antiquities with its current and past presidents and assessors.

I have been told that Count Gabriel de la Gardie was the originator and founder, but I do not know in which year it was started. I have already 5 asked Mr. von Peringskiöld via Mr. von Gröner about this, but for some unknown reason I have not yet received any answer. But if this question will cause you further trouble, I do not want it. God forbid that I would increase your troubles, I who most eagerly to want to know how I may remove or decrease them. 10

I truly wish that you remain well and remember me, so that I will ever remain in your grace, if I be found deserving. I am, noblest Madam, your most obedient and humble servant.

Copenhagen, October 7, 1705

Greetings, most noble and celebrated Mr. Sperling!

15

1 If you were inclined to be indignant with your Brenner now because of my slowness in writing and answering, I would start with a strong appeal for clemency. But since I know that it is characteristic for love neither to be able nor to want to notice shortcomings, I will skip the appeal and finally 20 answer your last letter which you handed over to Mr. Sparwenfeld to be delivered to me. My answer will be sent with the excellent and noble young Mr. von Tettau from Prussia. For some weeks he has devoted extraordinary attention to the study of our ancient history and other rarities. Now he is on his way to you. I would ask you to help him with what he needs if I did not already know how well disposed you are to the Muses and their 25 disciples.

2 The famous Mr. Eenberg gave the following answers to your questions about the "Codex Argenteus". "I greatly esteem and admire the zeal of that aged gentleman, the venerable Mr. Sperling. All the same I am sorry that I did not fully satisfy his wishes with my previous description of Ulphila's 30 book. But as a matter of fact I must confess that I cannot present anything further in this case nor add anything to what I have already stated. As far as the appearance of those Eusebian canons is concerned, which the famous gentleman seems to think is some strange sort of text; through your

quos Vir Celeberrimus textum aliquem literarum præter rei naturam putare videtur, illud ipsum, quod cum Frondino tibi mittebam, apographum aut eius persimile tuo beneficio habeat.

3 Poterit inde intelligere non suspicandum esse istis locis contineri literas  
 5 aliquas, aut græcas, aut latinas, aut longobardicas, aut gotho-runicas, sed  
 ulphilanas referunt, non alius, sed solius ulphilanæ literaturæ vestigia. Sed  
 vestigia dico, nam non est textus aliquis in illis quasi arcubus aut fornicibus  
 inclusus sed alia quædam literarum Ulphilanarum contemperatio, exhibens  
 10 obscurè nomina Evangelistarum ad modum fere majoribus nostris, quin et  
 rusticis hodieque usitatum, quo utensilia et suppellectilem suam signare et  
 dignoscere solent, appellantque nostrates *Boomärken*.

4 Verbi gratia in quo arcu sive fornice hæc nota est  $\Psi$  nam talem fere puto  
 esse. Non est nunc ad manus meas codex neque opus. Antea enim, quantum  
 potui, adumbravi). Designabit hæc nomen Sancti Matthæi, nam  $\mathbf{M}$  et  $\Psi$  in  
 15 alphabeto ulphilano sunt M et th. Similiter  $\mathbf{\Psi}$  est nomen Beati Marci etc. et  
 sane præter talia nil quicquam est in illis fornicibus signorum quorumcunque.  
 Sed hæc ipsa sunt quæ nomine Canonum Eusebianorum eruditis venire  
 doctus sum.




5 Rursus quantum ad colorem: ut ipsi fornices, ita et hi characteres aurei  
 20 sunt toti. Curavit Amplissimus Dominus Benzeliu totam paginam unam  
 Codicis Ulphilani in omnem modum supra quam dici potest accuratè, imo  
 Mathematicæ, describi et solidissimo ligno incidi, sed quæ incisio expectat, ut  
 inseratur editioni ipsius lucubrationum antiquariarum sub prælo annum iam  
 et quod excedit sudantium, ubi omne aurum ab argento modis Heraldicis  
 25 distinctum est.

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12 Verbi gratia : v.g. *ms.* 14 nomen : nonen *ms.*


assistance he will obtain this copy of the same text, or at least something very similar, which I sent to you with Frondin.”

3 “From that source he will understand that one should not suspect any Greek, Latin, Lombardian or Gotho-runic letters to be in these places; they are “ulphilan” letters, no other kind, only some traces of the Ulphilan 5 alphabet. And I call them traces because there is no text enclosed in these bow-like or arch-like symbols. The Ulphilan letters have a different composition which obscurely conveys the name of the Evangelists in nearly the same way as used by our ancestors, and yes, even by rustics nowadays, to mark and identify their utensils and furniture; our natives call these 10 marks *bomärken*.”

4 “Take, for instance, this mark  enclosed in a bow or arch (I think it looks something like that: I do not have the book at hand now and there is no need for that, for I have sketched it earlier as well as I could). This mark will indicate the name “Saint Matthew”, because **M** and  denote “M” 15 and “th” in the ulphilan alphabet. Similarly  is the name of Saint Mark. And besides these marks there are truly no other marks whatsoever in these arches. But to my knowledge this is common opinion among learned men about the Eusebian canons.”

5 “Returning to the matter of colour, these marks, just as the arches themselves, are all golden. The famous Mr. Benzelius has had an entire page of Ulphila’s book described and cut into solid wood with inexpressible, nay I should rather say mathematical accuracy. This woodcut is, however, waiting to be inserted into his edition of antiquarian writings that has been about to be printed for more than a year now; in which 25 edition all golden marks are distinguished from silver marks as in heraldry.

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1 copy: I have not found the copy among the manuscripts in Copenhagen. 16 Saint Mark: Brenner’s transcription of the abbreviated Mark seems to be incorrect. She has written the Gothic letter **M** and, as it appears, a B, over the letter. She probably misread the abbreviation mark on top of the Gothic letter **K**, and thus completed the bow into a B (which is in fact not identical with the Gothic letter **B**). I thus made the emendation . 21 Benzelius...woodcut: Benzelius made an outstanding (Kleberg 1981: 22) edition of the CA during the first years of the eighteenth century. He also had a woodcut made in 1706 (by Professor Lars Rogberg) of one page of the manuscript, which was appended to the edition. However, Benzelius’s edition was not published until 1750 (*Sacrorum evangeliorum versio gothica ex codice argenteo emendata atque suppleta cum interpretatione latina et annotationibus Erici Benzelii...edidit, observationibus suas adjecit et grammaticam gothicam praemisit Edwardus Lye*, Oxford 1750). 26 in heraldry: Sperling refers to the method for rendering colours in black and white images of coats of arms. According to this system (the

Nullus dubito quin illa unica pagina vincet omnes omnium, quæ unquam factæ sunt, descriptiones. Ceterum nondum unquam sub prælo fuit nec veniet puto, donec operi, cui inserviet, ultima fuerit manus imposita.” Usque hic Enbergius.

- 5 6 Transmitto insuper quæ de nostro Antiquitatum Collegio scire optabas. Hæc satis ut puto dilucidè Nobilissimus Dominus Palmskiold, Archivi Regij nunc temporis Secretarius, manu conscripsit propria, Vir in investigandis ac illustrandis patriæ monumentis ingenij alacritate ac indefesso studio nemini cedens.
- 10 7 Nummos lætor a marito missos tibi fuisse acceptos, magis tamen quod me tibi præsentem forma ac gratiis præditam, ut scribis, non injucundo omnino fingis errore. Hoc unice doleo quod suspicaris jussa vel desideria tua, quæ tanquam tui in me candoris studiique singularis infucati testes avidè amplector, molestiam creare mihi possint. Quod etenim luculentius amicitia tuæ pignus
- 15 est, quod postulem, quam quod ex me summa humanitate cognoscere efflagitas ea, quæ nullis impeditus ambagibus nullaque mora tardatus a viris tui similibus Eruditis uno verbo impetrares? Cave igitur existimes me grave laturam id quod felicitati, quod gloriæ immortalī mihi imputo, etsi tardius plerumque rescribo quam pro expectatione tua votoque meo.
- 20 Vale et, ut coepisti, fave, Vir Celeberrime, tui observantissimæ  
Sophiæ Elisabethæ Brenneriæ  
Stockholmiæ die 18 Septembris 1706

Salvus sis Nobilissime Sperlinge  
Amice mihi perquam Chare

- 25 1 Vir reverendus Dominus Magister Wolck ad vos iam abiturus hanc ad te perferendam sibi a me expetit chartulam. Is unde cognoverit nescio non modo quid ipsa apud Te, verum ut et ipsi facilem conciliare valeam accessum. Non displicuit, ne quid dissimulem, hæc rogantis in me fiducia,

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1 vincet : victura sit *expectaveris* 13 infucati : infucatos *expectaveris* 23 Salvus sis : Original, Cph, GKS 3092 VI:1, 4°

I have no doubt that this single page will surpass all the other descriptions that have ever been made. But I do not think that it has yet been printed, nor do I think that it will be, until he has put the finishing touches to what he is working on.” End of quotation of Eenberg.

6 Moreover, I am sending the information you requested about our Board of Antiquities as well. The noble Mr. Palmskiöld, currently the secretary of the Royal Archives, has written this, which I think is informative enough, with his own hand. No one can compete with his enthusiasm and indefatigable devotion to the investigation and illumination of the monuments of our native country. 10

7 I am delighted that you have received the coins sent by my husband, and even more so that you by no unpleasant mistake imagine me in person gifted with beauty and charm, as you write. I am grieved only that you think that your demands or wishes, which I embrace eagerly as extraordinary evidence of your sincerity and unfeigned and singular interest in me, could trouble me. For what more beautiful pledge of your friendship can I ask for than that you with great kindness request such information from me, which you could obtain from your learned peers with a single word without any circuitous ways or lapses of time. 15  
Therefore, do not think that I find burdensome what I consider to bring me happiness and immortal glory, even if I usually answer you later than you would expect and I would wish. 20

Farewell, and please continue, famed Sir, to devote yourself to your most respectful

Sophia Elisabeth Brenner

Stockholm, September 18, 1706

25

Greetings, most noble Sperling, dearest friend of mine!

1 The reverend Master Wolck is now about to go to you and has asked me for this note to bring to you. I do not know where he has learned not only that I know you but also that I could procure an easy approach to you. I will not conceal the fact that this gentleman's faith in me has so pleased 30

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Petra Sancta method, established in 1638) each colour is represented by a specific cross-hatching. See Fox-Davies 1969: 60 and Bäckmark & Wäsling 2001: 16.

5 information...Antiquities: Palmskiöld's notes on the Board of Antiquities are today attached to another letter in the same volume (Cph, GKS 3092 VI:1, 4<sup>o</sup>).

eoque magis Tibi vellem commendatum. Nihil tamen dubitandum, quin se Tibi, ò præcelse antiquitatis jubari, quisquis antiquariæ rei verè studiosus commendaverit.

2 Nobili cuidam juveni germano, de Tettau, hinc ante aliquot hebdomades  
 5 discedenti et in Daniam, prout dicebat, properanti literas tibi tradendas his  
 equidem prolixiores tuæque petitioni utcunque satisfacturas commisi. Iam  
 quoniam præstantius nihil ad manum est mitto Brenneriæ familiæ  
 monumentum nuper ære a marito insculptum. Hic te semper ac diu quam  
 optimè salvere ac valere jubet, idem et maiora quoque toto ex animo  
 10 adprecatur

Tibi, Summo Viro, multis nominibus devinctissima  
 Sophia Elisabet Brenner  
 Stockholmiæ die 5 decembris 1706

#### Illustrissima ac Nobilissima Matrona

15 1 Diu est quod nihil ad Te, Eruditissima mea, scribserim. Defuit occasio  
 scribendi. Tuas ad me inter moras itinerum cujusdam versari nunciavit mihi  
 nuper Dominus Naurath Bipontinus; nondum sanè ad me perlatas esse scias.  
 Nunc quoniam ad Vos Dominus Leopold Medicinæ Doctor pergit, nolui  
 ipsum sine meis vacuum ad Te venire. Non opus esse credo, ut eum Tibi  
 20 commendem; solita es a me commendatos benigne suscipere, quod ut nunc  
 quoque facias, enixè peto. Doleo tamen me non potuisse opuscula mea de  
 Boreâ et de nomine Regio Konning, prælo jam quidem absoluta, simul  
 mittere, quoniam nondum mihi tradita sunt a Typographo. Occurret aliàs  
 occasio quâ tuas manus exosculari possint.

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14 Illustrissima ac : Source: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No. 273,  
 4° 15 Te : Vosque *post* Te *del.* 17 nuper : *supra lin.*

me, that I recommend him even the more. Yet there is no doubt that any truly eager student of the antiquities could recommend himself to you, most noble light of antiquarian studies.

2 I entrusted a letter to you, indeed more lengthy than this and at any rate commensurate to your request, to a certain young German noble, Mr. 5 von Tettau, who departed a couple of weeks ago and, as he told me, was hurrying to Denmark. Since I have nothing better at hand I send along a remembrance of the Brenner family, recently engraved in copper by my husband. He bids you continue in good fate and health, as does even more sincerely 10

Your, most distinguished Sir, in every respect most devoted,  
Sophia Elisabeth Brenner  
Stockholm, December 5, 1706

Most distinguished and noble Madam!

1 I have not written anything to you for a long time, my most learned 15 friend. I did not have the opportunity to do so. Recently Mr. Naurath from Zweibrücken reported to me that your letter has been caught in the delays of someone's journey. You should know that it certainly has not been delivered to me yet. Now, since Mr. Leopold, a doctor of medicine, is on his way to you, I did not want him to go without a letter from me. I 20 believe there is no need for me to commend him to you, as you are accustomed to kindly welcoming those I commend; and thus I ask you eagerly to do so now, too. I am, however, sorry that I have not been able to send along my work *On the North* and *On the Royal Name Konning*, which are indeed finished now, since they have not yet been delivered to me from 25 the printer. There will be another occasion for my work to kiss your hands.

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8 family...copper: The copper engraving has the title "Monumentum Familiae Brenneriae, prout in Civitatis Vasae templo, in Bothnia-orientali conspicitur". Martin, Henrik, Isak, Elias and Sophia Elisabeth Brenner appear in the copperplate (Aspelin 1896: 186). Today, the engraving is not attached to this letter but to a letter from Elias Brenner to Sperling dated August 7, 1705 (also in GKS 3092 VI:1, 4<sup>o</sup>). 24 On<sup>1</sup>...Konning: *Tractatus de Borea ejusque laudibus* and *De summo Regio nomine et titulo /.../ KONNING ejusque apud Danos origine...* were both published later in 1707.



2 De verâ scriptione Gothicâ et Runicâ prolixiùs excrevit et excrescet, quam speraram, et quoniam hac hyeme senectam meam difficiliorem sentire coepi, brachio et lumbo sinistro variis doloribus afflictis, nescio num ad finem et umbilicum perducere possim, nisi Deus vires ultiores concedat.

- 5 3 Doctarum nostrarum non ultima sed ferè princeps, Cæcilia Gad, malis fatis intervenientibus in Norvegiâ custodiæ mancipata sedet, quod puerum enixa illum in partu suffocasse suspecta facta sit. Uno quidem iudicio ab hoc crimine absoluta fuit innocentissima illa, sed altero iudicio superiori capitis damnata exspectat, quid summum Iudicium Regium pronunciaturum sit.
- 10 Spero illam liberatam iri. Indigna est hæc Camoena, tam solida eruditione Græcâ Latinaque imbuta, quæ violenta morte nobis eripiatur.

- 15 Spero Te tuosque valere, et ut diutissimè valeas opto. Salutem officiosissimam scribo Domino Marito Tuo omnibusque bonis qui Te amant, quæ dignissima es amari non solum ab omnibus sed præcipuè a Tuo, Matrona
- Ottone Sperling
- Dabam Hafniæ ad diem IX Februarii Anni MDCCVII

#### Nobilissime ac Celeberrime Vir

- 1 Desideratissimas tuas Dominus Doctor Leopold satis recte ante aliquot mihi
- 20 tradidit hebdomadas; idem, nisi et ille sinistris urgentibus fatis in itinere detinebitur, has tibi, ut spero, brevi reddet.

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3 ad...4 perducere: Hor. *Epod.* 14. 8.

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3 lumbo : *ex lumbi mut.* 7 suffocasse : *ex peremisse mut.* 8 altero iudicio : *cap post altero iudicio del.* 10 liberatam : *sic* 18 Nobilissime ac : Original, Cph, GKS 3092 VI:1, 4° 19 Dominus : *supra lin.*

2 My book *On the true Gothic and Runic script* has grown and will continue to do so more copiously than I had expected; and since I have started to feel my old age more this winter, with my left arm and hip vexed by equal pains, I do not know whether I will be able to finish this work, unless God grants me more strength. 5

3 Cille Gad, who is not the least, but rather one of the foremost of our learned women, is being kept in prison in Norway because of an evil intervening fate. She is suspected of having given birth to a boy whom she then suffocated. This totally innocent woman was indeed found not guilty of this crime in one court, but then she was convicted and sentenced to death in a higher court of appeal; she is now awaiting the decision of the highest Royal Supreme Court. I hope she will be acquitted. This Camœna, imbued with a solid knowledge of Greek and Latin, does not deserve to be snatched from us by a violent death. 10

I hope that you and your family are well and will continue to be so always. I send my most respectful greetings to your husband and to all good persons who love you. For you, most charming and learned Madam, deserve to be loved not only by everyone but particularly by your most sincerely 15

Otto Sperling

Copenhagen, February 9, 1707

20

Most noble and famed Sir!

1 The doctor, Mr. Leopold, delivered your eagerly awaited letter properly enough a couple of weeks ago. This same gentleman will soon hand this letter over to you, I hope, unless he too will be delayed on his journey by a harsh and urging fate. 25

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1 Gothic...script: This booklet was never published. It is listed among a great number of unfinished works in Johannes Møller's biography of Otto Sperling the Younger (Møllerus 1744, II: 855). 6 Cille Gad: The Norwegian Cille Gad (ca. 1675–1711) had the same good luck as Brenner did getting to learn Latin, Greek and Hebrew through the indulgence of her parents, but then had the misfortune of getting pregnant before marriage and being abandoned. Since no one had seen her give birth, she was accused of having killed her child and sentenced to death. Cille Gad had been tutored at home, and she was said to compose Latin poems with ease (Behrend 1908: 240). In 1706 her father heard that she was to be included in Sperling's catalogue. By then, Cille Gad had been imprisoned for two years.

Valde miror, quid duobus factum sit prioribus, quibus meas ad Te perferendas iam ante menses dedi complurimos, nobili præcipue de Tettau; huic etenim prolixiores et, ut sperabam, desiderijs tuis aliquo modo satisfacturas una cum fasciculo et monetis aliquot credideram antiquis. 2 Alter  
5 vero, Dominus Magister Volk, tui nominis tuarumque virtutum verè cultor, cum audiverat quod de tanti viri notitia meo more mihi gratulabar, satis avidè meam apud Te per literas sibi expetiit commendationem. Miror igitur ex merito, cur tam lentè absint, quænam moræ quive intervenerint casus.

Hoc demum juvat quod Tibi propterea non penitus exciderim, quod mei  
10 adhuc memor opera tua, Vir præclarissime, quæ orbi aquilonari eiusdemque antiquitatibus præcipuis caliginosa nonnunquam obscuritate laborantibus mirabilem ubique impertiunt lucem, tam benigne polliceris. 3 Noli, obsecro, male ominari tanquam hanc felicitatem, hæc bona propediem nobis eriperent fata. Doleo magnopere tuis tibi id indicari doloribus, sed is ipse, qui summam  
15 tibi indidit mentem, qui tot præclaris et sortem mortalium communem exsuperantibus animam exornavit virtutibus, senectutem quoque tuam, ut auguror, solito placidiorem coeterisque suis donis efficiet parem.

4 Infortunium miserrimæ Cæciliæ Gad satis deflevi. Dij meliora quam ut tam abominando coargueretur flagitio, reliquis sui sexus literatis apud  
20 malevolos suo modo oneri futuro.

Tu vero ut diu, ut pancratice valeas, optat ex animo, Vir Celeberrime, tui semper observatissima

Sophia Elisabeth Brenner

Stockholmiæ die 19 Aprili<s> 1707

25 P.S. Maritus salutem tibi dicit quam officiosissimam fasciculumque Domino Leopoldo tibi comisit tradendum. Iterum vale.

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18 Dij meliora : sc. dent 22 observatissima : *in lacuna* 25 Maritus : *litteræ Mari ob detrimentum chartæ legi non possunt* | officiosissimam : *litteræ offic ob detrimentum chartæ legi non possunt*

I am very curious about what has happened to the two previous persons, to whom I entrusted letters to be brought to you several months ago, especially the noble von Tettau. For I entrusted him with a lengthy letter which I hoped would somehow satisfy your wishes, a small package and some old coins. 2 Moreover the other gentleman, Master Volk, a true admirer of your name and your virtues, eagerly enough asked me to give him a letter of recommendation to you, when he had heard that I congratulated myself of being acquainted with such a great man, as I usually do. Accordingly, I am rightly curious to know why they are taking so long, and what delay or accidents may have occurred. 10

But I am pleased that I have not consequently fallen completely from your memory, since you, illustrious Sir, still remembering me, have so kindly have offered to send your work, which illuminates the northern region and its extraordinary antiquities, though they too often struggle in a misty darkness. 3 Please do not make gloomy predictions as if Providence soon would take this happiness and fortune away from us. I am very much grieved your pains indicate this to you, but the same God who has endowed you with such a noble mind, who has adorned your spirit with so many excellent virtues beyond the common mortal's lot, will also, as I predict, see to it that your old age will be unusually agreeable and equal to your other gifts. 20

4 I have indeed lamented the misfortune of poor Cille Gad. Heaven forbid that she would be convicted of such a vile and disgraceful act, which in its own way would become a burden on the other literate women in the eyes of malevolent persons, as usually happens. 25

That you, most famed Sir, indeed shall be well forever and in every respect is the wholehearted wish of your ever most respectful

Sophia Elisabeth Brenner

Stockholm, April 19, 1707

PS My husband sends you his sincerest regards as well as a small package which Mr. Leopold will deliver. Again farewell. 30

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22 Gad...burden: Brenner's somewhat harsh reaction reflects the indignation many early feminists felt over the fact that misogynists often took any opportunity to support their arguments that women were not capable of handling erudition without becoming depraved. See for instance Lerner 1993: 256.

## Salve perpetuum Nobilissima et Eruditissima Matrona

1 Tandem ad me pervenerunt Tuæ dulcissimæ et suavissimæ, quas Domino de  
Tettau tradideras preferendas ad diem XIIX Septembris anno præterito  
scribtæ. Ille enim ab eo tempore mineras nostras Norvegicas et opes illas Regias  
5 accuratiùs perlustrans, prout in his spectator est diligentissimus et  
accuratissimus, deprecatur apud Te, Optima Matrona, culpam suam, prout  
apud me deprecatus est, quod serus adeò ad me nuncius venerit.

2 Ignosco facilè, postquam Tuæ exoptatissimæ mihi redditæ sunt, quas  
ingenti cum desiderio jam dudum expectaveram. Quasnam gratias jam Tibi  
10 debeo, Suavissima mea, quod, quæ desideravi, tam accuratè implevisti, non  
solum Domini Enbergii responsum mihi procurando Te parariâ, sed et Archivi  
Antiquitatum Vestrarum origines tam elucidatas, ut nihil desiderari possit,  
adjungendo, præter nummos et elegantias coeteras eruditissimæ antiquitatis,  
quas unâ submisisti, quibus ita Tibi me devinxisti ut, quantum gratiarum  
15 reddere debeam, vix sciam, conscius mihi infinitas non sufficere!

3 Gratias etiam ages Domino Enbergio plurimas meo nomine, quod de  
Canonibus Eusebianis in Codice Argenteo Evangeliorum Vestro me docere  
voluit. Constant illi ex numeris, non ex vocibus. Quos numeros ego percipere  
volui, qua ratione Codici argenteo additi essent, ut cum Eusebianis editis eos  
20 comparare possem. Sed jam plenè edoctus sum de illis ex paginâ Benzelianâ,  
quam incidi curavit admodum exquisitè, quod lacerus ille sit codex, ubi hi  
Canones locum invenire debebant cum suis numeris.

Si Dominus Benzeliuſ ita perget reliquas paginas incidere, habebimus  
Codicis illius perpetuum aliquod monumentum Juniano jam longè  
25 præstantius et certius et quod nulla ætas ampliùs consumet, quod optare potius  
quam sperare mihi licet, qui nunc in tumbâ pedem habeo non alterum sed et  
alterum, Tibi bonisque omnibus citò valedicturus. Senium enim premit,  
vergunt anni, moram nullam patiuntur, exeundum est tandem e vita.

1 Salve perpetuum : Source: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No.  
281, 4° 4 mineras : ex minas *mut.* 7 serus adeò : (adeò *supra lin.*) ex tandem serus *mut.* 14  
Tibi me : ex me Tibi *mut.*

I hope that you are well and always will be so, most noble and erudite  
Madam!

1 Your delightful and most charming letter of 18 September from last year  
has finally reached me. You had handed it to Mr. von Tettau to be  
delivered to me. As a matter of fact, all this time he has been meticulously 5  
examining our Norwegian mines and Royal national resources, a diligent  
and meticulous student of these subjects as he is. He begs you,  
distinguished Madam, to excuse him and he has already apologized to me  
for being such a tardy messenger.

2 It was easy for me to forgive him, now that that desired letter of yours 10  
has been delivered to me; which letter I have long awaited with the utmost  
expectation. Now I am deeply indebted to you, my dearest, since you as  
my intermediary have so accurately provided what I desired, giving me not  
only Mr. Eenberg's answer but also providing additional information about  
the origin of your Board of Antiquities so clearly that I can ask for nothing 15  
more. Moreover, the coins and other refined objects of learned antiquity  
you included at the same time have put me under such obligation that I  
barely know how to thank you enough, well aware that infinite speeches of  
gratitude would not suffice for me!

3 Send my many thanks as well to Mr. Eenberg for being so kind as to 20  
inform me about the Eusebian canons in the gospels of your "Codex  
Argenteus". These are known by the numbers in them, not by the words. I  
wanted to know how these numbers had been added to the "Codex  
Argenteus" so that I could compare them with the edited Eusebian canons.  
But thanks to Benzelius' page, which he has engraved so meticulously, I 25  
understand this matter completely now, because this book is damaged  
where the canons ought to be located with their numbers.

If Mr. Benzelius continues having the other pages engraved in this way,  
we will end up with a record of this book which would be far superior to  
the edition of Junius and more correct, one which time will never destroy. 30  
But this is more a wish than a hope for me; I have not one but two feet in  
the grave and I will soon bid you and all good people farewell. Old age is  
bearing down on me; the passing years brook no delay. One must pass  
away from life in the end.

14 information...Antiquities: The five-page-long description of the Board of Antiquities  
has been preserved in Cph (GKS 3092 VI:1, 4°, with Brenner's letters to Sperling).

Satis vixi, et mihi et omnibus. Illa, quæ videre vellem, non videbo. Gratias quoque Nobilissimo Domino Palmskiold ages, quod hunc laborem mei causâ suscepit, et si quâ in re vel Tibi vel illi vicissim inservire potero, nunquam deero, quin promptissimum me inveniatis.

- 5 4 Mitto Tibi nunc quæ mittere prius debui, Boream meum et de Nomine Regio Konning dissertationem. Gratae habeas, licet sint minùs limatae aut exactè scribtae, ut solent mea magis effundi in chartam quam scribi.

Valeas vero et vivas cum Domino Marito Tuo diutissimè et felicissimè et meo nomine salutem ipsi dicito cum suaviis innumeris, quæ Tuo ore gratiùs  
 10 excipiet quam meo. Cum vacabit ipsi, mittat nummum Canuti Magni ubi REX DANORUM inscribitur delineatum. Iterum iterumque valete, Nobilissima Matrona, à Vestro addictissimo servo  
 Dabam Hafniæ ad diem XIX Majii Anno MDCCVII

#### Salve Nobilissima, Illustrissima et Doctissima Matrona

- 15 1 Habes, Illustrissima Matrona, quod succenseas et, si graviùs mecum agere voles, quod irascaris, tamdiu illum, qui Te amat, qui Te colit, qui Tuas virtutes et eruditionem cum summis, non in secundis aut tertiis, posuit, illum, inquam, tam diuturno silentio indulgere, priusquam ad ultimas Tuas respondeat. Hoc, puto, dices piaculum esse nec Tauroboliis nec Crioboliis ullis  
 20 abluendum. 2 Sed audias etiam, quæso, reum Tuum se excusantem, quod totâ hac hyeme occasio nulla se dederit, cui literas credere potuerim, quod autumno proximo ægrotus decubuerim lecto, affixus morbo gravissimo. Postquam convalui, Gaddiam Norvegicam, doctissimam foeminam,

19 Tauroboliis...20 abluendum: cf. Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum* 27. 8: "Taurobolium istud vel criobolium scelerata te sanguinis labe perfundit".

6 Gratae : grata *ms.* | limatae : limata *ms.* 7 scribtae : scribta *ms.* 9 suaviis : ex osculis *mut.*  
 14 Salve Nobilissima : Source: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No. 331, 4° | Nobilissima : et *post* Nobilissima *del.* 15 et si : ex etsi *mut.* 16 virtutes : nunq *post* virtutes *del.* 17 posuit : ex inqu<am> *mut.*

I have lived long enough both for me and for everyone. What I wanted to see happen I will not see. Proffer my thanks to noble Mr. Palmskiöld for undertaking this work for my sake. If I can somehow be of any help to you or to him in my turn, my prompt assistance will never fail.

4 I send you now what I should have sent you earlier, my dissertations 5  
*On the North* and *On the Royal Name Konning*. I hope you will enjoy them, though they are neither well polished nor accurately written; my words indeed usually flow onto the paper rather than get written down.

May you in turn be well and live well, happily and long with your husband. Give him my greetings together with innumerable kisses, which 10  
he would rather have from your lips than mine. If he has the opportunity, he may send me the coin of Canute the Great, on which "Rex Danorum" is incised. Again and again farewell, noble Madam, from your most devoted servant.

Copenhagen, May 19, 1707

15

Greetings, most noble, illustrious and learned Madam!

1 Illustrious Madam! You have reason to be indignant and, if you want to be harder on me, angered at him who, although he loves you, reveres you, and puts your virtues and erudition in the first place, not in the second or third, has for so long indulged himself in a lengthy silence before replying 20  
to your last letter. I think that one could say that this is a sin that can not be washed away by any sacrificial slaughters of bulls or rams. 2 Still, please listen to your culprit excusing himself for not having had an opportunity to entrust someone with a letter during this entire winter, and also for being bedridden last autumn, afflicted by a severe illness. When I had recovered I 25  
got the learned Norwegian Madam Gad

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6 North...Konning: Only *Boreas ejusque laudes* is listed among the books of Brenner's library (No. 172). 12 Canute...Great: Regarding the coin of Canute the Great, who was King of England, Denmark and Norway and died in 1035: see "Dansk Mønt" *online*. 26 Gad...freed: Already in his first consolatory answer to Cille Gad, Sperling stated: "Utinam Judex Tuus essem; etiam contra leges omnes Te liberarem et absolverem" (If only I were your judge! I would liberate and acquit you even contrary to all laws), (Cph, GKS 3092, 4°, V:2, No. 259). Furthermore, after having read all the documents of her case, he was convinced that she would be acquitted. He encouraged her and asked her to put her faith in God and the King. Half a year later, Sperling sent his petition to the King, entreating him to pardon Cille Gad (Cph, GKS. 3092, 4°, V:2, No. 324). Gad's father also sent petitions for pardon (according to Behrend 1908: 241, 244). On April 6, 1708, the Royal Court



de qua Tibi in prioribus scripsi, ob puerperium clandestinum capite  
condemnatam, supplicibus meis libellis Sacræ Regiæ Majestati porrectis a  
capitis periculo liberavi. Et puto hac æstate me illam hic visurum vivam et  
incolumem.

- 5     3 Te filiam elocasse Nobilissimo et spectatissimo Viro Carolo Löfgrenio  
intellexi ex Carmine Tuo polito Suecico, quod mecum communicavit Egregius  
Juvenis Henricus Fridericus Scharff a vestris oris veniens, quem Vestri causâ,  
quacunque ratione potero, commendatum mihi habeo. Faustum et felix hoc  
Vobis Parentibus filiæ sit conjugium, ut Avum et Aviam citò Vos audiam  
10 factos aliisque præterea gaudiis locupletatos.

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1 capite : *ex capito mut.* 2 Sacræ...Majestati : S.R. Maj. *ms.* 3 visurum : *scripsi*; visuram  
*ms.* 5 Nobilissimo et : *supra lin.*

(the one I wrote you about in my last letter, who was condemned to death for a clandestine childbirth) freed from the death sentence by my suppliant documents presented to his sacred Royal Majesty. And I think that I will see her here this summer safe and sound.

3 I have understood from your elegant Swedish poem that you have 5 married off a daughter to the noble and distinguished Carl Löfgren. The illustrious young gentleman Henrik Fredrik Scharff, whom I will help as much as I can for your sake, told me this when he came from your country. May this marriage be fortunate and happy for you parents, so that you soon will become grandfather and grandmother and be enriched by 10 other sources of joy as well.

---

announced the acquittal, which was said to have been decided on September 2, 1707 (Behrend 1908: 246). Gad was to spend another six months in jail, after which she had to pay fines and stand the discipline of the Church and then be exiled from Norway. When the pardon had been granted, Sperling wrote another letter to Gad, congratulating her, obviously proud of his achievement. Moreover, Sperling prompted Gad to come and visit him. In June 1708 Cille Gad and her father arrived in Copenhagen, where they stayed until both died in the plague of 1711. An interesting fact, noted by Behrend, is that the dating of Sperling's petition to the King requesting Gad's pardon is September 3, 1707. Assuming that both datings are correct, Behrend remarks, it could well be that the pardon was not actually the result of Sperling's petition. But regardless whether both datings are correct and Gad was not pardoned due to Sperling's petition or not, Sperling was convinced that he was responsible for the acquittal. Anyway, he clearly gives Brenner this impression in the present letter.

5 Swedish poem: Brenner wrote the poem mentioned by Sperling on the occasion of the marriage between Carl Löfgren and her daughter Sophia Brenner on December 8, 1707, entitling it: "Hustru Regel då Häradshöfdingen och Borgmästaren Herr Carl Löfgren med Fr. Sophia Brenner sit Äckenskap begynte i Stockholm den 8. Decemb. 1707" (*PD* 1713: 73–78).

4 Intellexi tam ex Scribtoribus Suecicis quàm ex aliis exstare apud Vos Saxonis Grammatici Historiam multò locupletioremanuscriptam quàm in editis comparuit hactenus. Illud precibus Tuis igitur velim efficias apud Nobilissimum Maritum Tuum, quem meo nomine officiosissimè salutabis, ut  
 5 quem Collegii Antiquitatum membrum dignissimum esse novi, de eo inquirat, initium ejus et finem excerptat mihique mittat, et an in membranis aut chartâ exstet, an uno plura apud Vos adsint ejus exemplaria, et quo tempore ea scribta judicet. Mitto ipsi nummos tres Erici, ut puto, sed an omnes sint Erici Pomerani non equidem affirmem; novit enim Nobilissimus Maritus Tuus sub  
 10 Erico Pomerano pessimæ notæ nummos cudos esse, ita ut vix legi queant.

Valete ergo felicissimè Tuque Maritusque Tuus Reipublicæ literariæ bono mihique amicitiae vinculo conjunctissimi, qui nunquam non ero Tibi, Nobilissima Matrona Addictissimus Servus.

Hafniæ ad diem XXVII Martii MDCCVIII

15

Salve Illustrissima et Nobilissima Matrona

1 Ad Te literas meas ultimas dedi XXVII Martii hujus anni cum Mercatore quodam, quem Scarfius ad Vos tendere mihi significavit. Nescio tamen an perlatae sint, quum Scarfius in Scaniam retro hinc perrexerit conditionem acceptaturus Informatoris apud nobilem

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2 locupletioremanuscriptam : qua *post* locupletioremanuscriptam *del.* 4 salutabis...quem : quem *ex* quoniam *mut.* 7 adsint : *ex* præsto sint *ex* exstent *mut.* | ejus : *supra lin.* 15 Salve Illustrissima : Source: Sperling's draft of the letter, Cph, GKS 3092 V:2, No. 285, 4°

4 I have learned both from Swedish authors and others that the manuscript of Saxo Grammaticus' *Historia* that you have in Sweden is much richer than those of previous editions. Therefore, I would like you to ask your noble husband (to whom you must give my sincere greetings), whom I know to be the most meritorious member of the Board of 5 Antiquities, to make inquiries about this manuscript; to make extracts from the beginning and the end of it and send them to me; to tell me whether it is written on parchment or paper; if you have more than one copy of it; and to estimate when it was written. 5 I am sending him three coins of Eric, as I believe, but I cannot affirm that they are all of Eric of Pomerania, 10 for your noble husband knows that the coins during the reign of Eric of Pomerania were minted so badly that they can hardly be read.

May you and your husband therefore thrive and live most happily for the good of the *respublica literaria*; you are very near to me by the bond of friendship. I will never stop, oh noblest Madam, being your most devoted 15 servant.

Copenhagen, March 27, 1708

Greetings, most illustrious and noble Madam!

1 I handed my last letter written to you on March 27 of this year to some merchant whom Mr. Scharff pointed out as being on his way to you. All 20 the same I do not know if it has been delivered since Mr. Scharff has returned to Skåne to take up a position as a private tutor for some nobleman

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2 manuscript: Sperling is probably asking for information about a manuscript (nowadays lost), which was owned by a clergyman in Hammarby and was entrusted in 1641 to the Royal Archives in Stockholm. See the following, quoted from Olrik & Raeder 1931: XVI: "Martin Aschaneus, sacerdos vicorum Fresta et Hammarby Suetiae, circa a. 1630 Saxonis codicem membranaceum formae quartae possidebat, qui post mortem eius (1641) Archivio regni Holmiensi traditus esse dicitur, postea vero evanuit; vid. J. H. Schröder in *Kgl. vitterhets historie och antiquitets academiens handlingar* XVI, p. 358–366." In his manuscript *De nummo Gothico Dn. Iani Rosenkrantzii* (Cph, GKS 2358) Sperling noted textual variations of a fragment of another manuscript by Saxo, that was discovered in the Royal Archives and later probably destroyed in the fire in Copenhagen in 1728. He was probably working on this as well as on *Historia Juris Danici, ab ovo repetita, omnia Jura Saxonica originem inde suam derivare ostendens* (mentioned among "inedita et promissa" in Mollerus biography on Sperling (Mollerus 1744, II: 855) when he received information about the manuscript in Stockholm (Olrik & Raeder 1931: XV).

quendam istius tractûs. Misi tunc etiam tres nummos istis literis inclusos Erici, ut puto, Pomerani, Regis Daniæ, pro Domino Marito Tuo, quos desideraverat. Gratulatus quoque fui de conjugio lectissimæ Filiæ Tuæ, 2 et petii, ut de Manuscripto Saxonis, quod apud Vos esse intellexi, Dominus  
 5 Maritus Tuus me doceret, an in membranis exstet illud Manuscriptum et an plura ejus Historici manuscripta teneatis, an in omnibus convenient initium et finem cujusque excerptat mihiq̃ue mittantur, ut videam et comparem cum nostris, quod etiamnum summopere peto, et exorari vos sinatis, quum facilè auxilio Domini Mariti Tui, Membri Societatis in Collegio Antiquitatum, hoc  
 10 impetrari posse sperem.

Cum iis nobilissimis Juvenibus, qui Tibi meas has tradent, ad nos Sueciâ lustratâ reversuris, responsum aliquod certum exspecto. Sint Tibi commendati et Domino Marito Tuo, qui soletis exteris favere, et consiliis Vestris multum juvari possunt in itineribus per Sueciam quæ meditantur. 3 Beatos illos fore  
 15 prædixi, Te, quam amo, viuros, me sanè beatiores, qui senio nunc gravis ad illam fortunam adspirare nequeo. Assero namque Tibi, si itinera nunc annis meis molesta ferre possem, me jamdudum advolasse, ut Te complecterer Teque viderem Tuisque colloquiis fruerer.

4 Gaddia mea ante mensem huc advenit. Cum illâ suaviter tanquam cum  
 20 Musis ipsis vivo; est enim, ut deprehendo, tam in Græcis quàm Latinis pererudita et versatissima. Meditatur in Academia nostrâ Orationem publicam habere, quâ gratias agat Clementissimo Servatori suo Regi Friderico quarto. Hæc habui nunc quæ scriberem et, salute officiosissimâ Domino Marito Tuo Tibique iterum iterumque dictâ cum voto hoc unico, ut benè Vobis et omnia  
 25 salva ac propitia sint, desino, æternum mansurus, Illustrissima Matrona, Tuus et cultu et officiis omnibus Servus.

Dabam Hafniæ ad diem XXV Julii Anni MDCCVIII

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1 etiam : *supra lin.* 2 pro : *ex quos mut.* 3 fui : *ex sum mut.* 9 Collegio...hoc : eum *post* Collegio Antiquitatum hoc *del.* 10 impetrari : *ex impetrare mut.* 16 si : *ex nisi mut.* | annis meis : *supra lin.* 17 advolasse : *advolaturum fuisse expectaveris* 20 in...Latinis : (sc. literis) *ex Græcè quàm Latinè mut.* 24 omnia : *littere vo post omnia del.*

in that region. Enclosed with that letter I also sent your husband three coins of, as I assume, Eric of Pomerania, King of Denmark, coins he still wanted. I also congratulated you on having given your excellent daughter away in matrimony. <sup>2</sup> And I asked your husband about the Saxo manuscript which I had been told is kept in your country, that he inform <sup>5</sup> me whether that manuscript is written on parchment, whether you possess several manuscripts by this historian and whether they agree totally, and that he would make extracts of its beginning and end and send them to me so that I could see them and compare them with our manuscripts. I still ask for this very eagerly and pray that you will allow yourselves to be <sup>10</sup> persuaded to do it, since I was hoping that this information would be easily obtained through your husband, being a member of your Board of Antiquities.

I am waiting for some definite answer when these noble young men, who will deliver this letter to you, return to us after having been sightseeing <sup>15</sup> through Sweden. I heartily commend them to you and your husband, who are usually well disposed towards foreigners. You can help them greatly with advice on their planned journey through Sweden. <sup>3</sup> I predicted that they would be fortunate as they were going to see you, dearest, more fortunate indeed than I, who cannot aspire to that fortune, burdened as I <sup>20</sup> am by my old age. For I assure you that I would already have hurried to see and embrace you and be delighted by your conversation if I could endure the journey, which is troublesome at my age.

<sup>4</sup> My Gad arrived here more than a month ago. I enjoy her charming company just as if I were living with the Muses. For I have discovered that <sup>25</sup> she is well educated and well versed in both Greek and Latin. She intends to give a public speech in our Academy, in which she will proffer her thanks to her clement saviour, King Frederick IV. I have nothing more to write about and I will finish this letter now with my sincere greetings to you and your husband and with the single wish that all will turn out well <sup>30</sup> and prosperously for you. I am with all respect and possible assistance, oh most illustrious Madam, forever your most devoted servant.

Copenhagen, July 25, 1708

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<sup>24</sup> Gad arrived: As mentioned before, Cille Gad stayed in Copenhagen together with her father from 1708 (until they both died in the plague of 1711); she was said to have been well known at the Academy in Copenhagen.

## Ave Vir Celeberrime

- 1 Te vivum adhuc et salvum esse eodem, quo soleo, et maiori sane gaudio ex  
tuis percepi novissimis. Vix etenim persuadebis Tibi, quam sollicitè annos tuos  
apud me computem, quemque timorem tot supra septuagesimum iam peracti  
5 meo injiciant animo. Est, ni fallor, aliquid occultum quamvis tua tamen  
doctrina reliquisque tuis virtutibus efficacius, quo me Tibi viso nunquam, spe  
insuper penitus amissa videndi, tam arcte tenes devinctam. Hinc conijcies  
facile, quantum tuæ gratuler Gaddiæ quantumque invidiam. Ignosce, vir  
optime, huic muliebri imbecillitati, non possum nisi apertè tecum.
- 10 2 De manuscripto Saxonis Grammatici responsum, quod expectas, ex me  
hac vice non audies, totum etenim hoc negotium curis commisi Clarissimi  
Benzelii Bibliothecarii Ac[c]ademici Upsaliensis. Is nota sibi hæc ait omnia,  
mihique promisit una cum suis observationibus, quas jamdudum, si bene  
memini, optabas, brevi communicaturum.
- 15 Dominus Hak non sine meis ad te literis abijisset, si fuisset domi. Aberam,  
ut ex voto Tuo avia fierem, quod etiam feliciter iam ante mensem accidit. 3 A  
Marito tamen, quod perferret, accepit, descriptionem scilicet Beati  
Palmsköldij, Archivarij quondam meritissimi, scriptum, Vir Antiquissime, ut  
puto, non inacceptum Tibi, quoniam Statum Archivi, quod apud nos est,  
20 dilucidius inde quam fortasse ex ullo intelliges alio, et præterea quod emi non  
potest.
- 4 Pro nummis et reliquis officiis marito oblati maximas, quas potest et  
debet, per me refert gratias. Eri Pommerani, ut bene mones, fuit unus, reliqui  
duo Frederici secundi. Juvenem cum hac chartula Tibi satis esse  
25 commendatum probe scio. Utinam ut salvum ac incolumem ostendat Teque  
superstite adhuc quam diutissime appellari possem tua, Vir Celeberrime,  
officiosissima famula  
Sophia Elisabeth Brenner  
dabam Stockholmiæ die 12 Octobris 1708

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1 Ave Vir : Original, Cph, GKS 3092 VI:1, 4°

Greetings, Illustrious Sir!

1 By your last letter I perceived with usual or even deeper joy that you are still safe and sound. For you would not believe how anxiously I reckon your years of age for myself and the fear those many years beyond the seventieth instill in me. Unless I am mistaken there is something that, even 5 though it is invisible, nevertheless is more effective than your erudition and your other virtues in keeping me so closely bound to you, whom I have never seen and whom I have no hope of seeing. Hence you can easily imagine how highly I congratulate your Gad and how much I envy her. Please forgive this female weakness of mine, good Sir, I have to speak 10 frankly to you.

2 You will not hear the answer you are expecting from me about the manuscript of Saxo Grammaticus because I have entrusted this enterprise entirely to the illustrious Benzelius, librarian at the Academy in Uppsala. He tells me that he has information about all this and promised me he 15 would send you this information soon together with his observations, which you requested previously, if I recall correctly.

Mr. Hak would not have left without a letter from me to you if I had been at home. I was away becoming a grandmother as you wished, which happened successfully a month ago now. 3 Still he got something from my 20 husband to deliver to you, namely, the description of the Archives made by the late Mr. Palmskiöld, the excellent archivist. I think that you, most influential Sir, will find this information satisfying whence you can understand the arrangement of our Archives more clearly perhaps than from anyone else and furthermore such a description cannot be purchased. 25

4 My husband proffers his most sincere thanks for the coins and the other services he has been offered. One of the coins was, as you correctly suggest, minted for Eric of Pomerania, the other two for Frederick II.

I know well that the young gentleman bringing this note is sufficiently commended to you. How I wish that he will see you sound and safe and 30 that for many years to come, while you remain alive, I can be called, Illustrious Sir, your most attentive servant,

Sophia Elisabeth Brenner

Stockholm, October 12, 1708

31 remain alive: Sperling lived for six more years. He died on March, 15, 1715, at the age of 82.





# INDICES

## Index personarum

- of persons corresponding with Sophia Brenner or mentioned in the letters (or with connection to her or her correspondence, mentioned in the comments of the letters)
- of learned women and authors of works on learned women mentioned in this dissertation who are discussed in relation to Sophia Brenner

The most frequently used sources have been the Swedish National Biographies (*SBL*, for letters A–S) and *Biographiskt lexicon öfver namnkunnige svenska män* (S–), and those of Denmark (*DBL*) and Germany (*ADB* or *NDB*), respectively, and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (= *EB*). References have normally not been made to these sources. Whenever other sources have been consulted, references are given

The names of Kings and Queens are spelled according to the English standard. The original spellings of other names have been kept.

Abel (ca. 1218–1252), King of Denmark from 1250–209

Aedelfred (= Ethelred II) (968? (*EB*) – 1016), King of England 978–1013, 1014–157

Agrippa von Nettesheim, Heinrich Cornelius (1486–1535), German expert on occultism, philosopher and author of a book on the theological and moral superiority of women 95, 96, 97, 99, 102

Åkerhielm, Jacob, born Jacob Hartz (d. 1733). Mayor of Nora and Linde; “bergsråd”. The stepson of Samuel Åkerhielm (*Svenska adelns ättar-taflor*: 4: 700 Tab. 3) 56, 63

Åkerhielm, Samuel Månsson Agriconius (1639–1702), President of the Chancellery; from 1700 Secretary of State (*Svenska adelns ättar-taflor*: 4: 700 Tab. 3, *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*: ny följd, 9: 693–694) 56

Albertinus, Aegidius (ca. 1560–1620) born in Holland, court librarian and secretary of council of the Dukes of Bavaria. Author of *Hortulus muliebris* (see bibliography) (Garland 1986:14) 98

Albrecht of Mecklenburg (ca. 1340–1412 (*SBL*)), King of Sweden 1364–1389 157

Aurivillius, Magnus (1673–1740). Chaplain to the Royal Court (in the field during the Great Nordic War). From 1715 vicar of St. Mary’s, Stockholm 56

Avila y Gusman, Pedro de (1668–1738), Zedler *online* (Suppl. S2, 469): “Avila y Gusman, Peter von”, “Balliv zu Nueve, Gross-Creutz des Ordens St. Johannis von Jerusalem” (Balliv was a lord of a manor or stronghold (Bailev) belonging to a knightly order). Furthermore he was envoy at the Spanish Royal Court, and later “Gross-Prior” of Castilien and Leon. He is probably to be identified with the Gusman in *TF* 36

Baldhoven, Georg Martinus von (1578–?), born in Silesia (now s.w. Poland, then under the Austrian Habsburgs), author of the first German *gynaeceum*, supporter of E.J. Weston and editor of her work (Weston ed. 2000: xiii–xiv, Woods & Fürstenwald 1984: xii) 86

- Benzelius, the Younger, Erik (1675–1743), archbishop, polyhistor with a vast correspondence. Founder of *Collegium curiosorum* in 1710 (later renamed “Vetenskaps societeten”), and *Acta literaria*. Travels through Europe 1697–1700, during which B. made the acquaintance of G.W. von Leibniz. From 1700 appointed librarian at UUB, acquired important collections to the library, among them “Palmskiöldska samlingen” 29–33, 41, 50, 53, 61, 64, 69, 70, 74, 85, 223, 233, 243
- Benzelstierna, Gustav (1687–1746). Brother of Erik Benzelius the Younger. Librarian at KB, Royal secretary and *censor librorum* 55
- Bethlen, Michael (1673–1706). Hungarian county governor and military commander, who was on a journey through Europe as a student, and visited Brenner and her husband on a couple of occasions (Wickman 1988) 67
- Beyer, probably can be identified with Johan Gabriel von Beyer, 1645–1705, who was born in Berlin and moved to Sweden, where he was employed as director of the post service, and from 1668 onwards as “hovråd” (see Hanselli 1869: 353–354: introduction to an edition of the poems of his son of the same name). According to Sperling, Beyer was an antiquarian (numismatist) from Berlin, who apparently died in 1705 215
- Bilberg, Hedwig Eleonora (d. 1714, see *PD* 1732: 50–52), daughter of Johan Bilberg 51
- Bilberg, Johannes (1646–1717). Professor of mathematics and theology. Bishop from 1701; writer of Latin poetry 51, 57, 62, 66, 70
- Bircherod, Jacob (1693–1737), Danish justice and author 34,
- Bircherod, Thomas (1661–1731), Danish Professor of eloquence, author and numismatist 203
- Block, Magnus Gabriel von (1669–1722), assessor, translator regni and physician at Medevi Spa for fifteen years. As a student he travelled through Europe, and was employed as a secretary to the Grand Duke of Tuscany for a couple of years. He knew thirteen languages, and corresponded with Leibniz (as did Benzelius and Sparwenfeld) 37, 57, 67, 68
- Bochart (Bochartus) Samuel (1599–1667). French scholar, protestant theologian and orientalist. Renowned for his conclusive victory over the Jesuit Véron in a disputation that lasted several days. His most famous works are *Geographia Sacra* and *Hierozoicon sive bipertitum opus de animalibus S. Scripturae* (*DBF*, 6: 743) 153
- Boecler (Boeclerus), Johann Heinrich (1611–1672). Professor of Eloquence Rhetorics in Strasbourg. Queen Christina of Sweden employed him as librarian and appointed him Professor of Rhetorics Eloquence in Uppsala, where he stayed only a year. He returned to Germany in 1652 153
- Bonde, Gustaf Ulf (1682–1764), Count, Royal Chamberlain, member of the Council and Chancellery, etc. As President of “bergskollegium” he was contacted by Tatisschev in Stockholm. During 1725–1726 Bonde travelled around the eastern parts of Finland to reorganize the economy after the war 73
- Brenner, Carl de (1696–1765), son of Sophia Elisabeth and Elias Brenner (Elgenstierna, 1: 615) 29, 53
- Brenner, Elias (1647–1717), Sophia Brenner’s husband; see in chapter 1.1 *passim*
- Brenner, Henrich (1669–1732), librarian, orientalist, cousin of Elias Brenner (*Scandinavian Biographical Index*, 1: 309) 59
- Brenner, Sophia Elisabeth (1659–1730); biography in chapter 1.1 *passim*

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- Bååt, Catharina. Married the Swedish Councillor Lars Ericsson Sporre in 1641 and probably wrote a commentary on Messenius' *Theatrum Nobil. Svec.* (according to *Svenska adelns ättar-taflor*: 368) 143
- Canotus, L., possibly to be identified with Laurentius Canutus, who was admitted to Uppsala University in 1647 (*UUM* 1: 117). *Respondens* to Rudbeckius & Canotus 1651 95
- Canutus = Canute the Great (Cnut I, Knud den Store) (1000–1035), Danish King of England, Denmark and Norway 235
- Carstens, Johann Gottfried (1681–1720). Doctor of medicine in Lübeck. In 1705 he travelled to Copenhagen, Sweden, England and the Netherlands (*Zedler online*, 5: 590) 205, 213, 215
- Castiglione, Baldassare (1478–1529), diplomat and author of *Il libro del Cortegiano* 96–97
- Catherine I, (1684–1727), second wife of Peter I the Great, Empress of Russia from 1725 41, 73, 175
- Cats, Jacob (1577–1660), “Father Cats”, Dutch jurist, diplomat and author of emblem books (first to combine emblem literature with love poetry) and rhymed dissertations on marriage and conjugal fidelity 98
- Cereta, Laura (1469–1499), Renaissance humanist and defender of women’s right to an education, etc. Her letters were published in 1488 (*DBI*, 23: 729–730) 80, 87
- Charles XI, (1655–1697), King of Sweden from (1660) 1672 151
- Charles XII, (1682–1718), King of Sweden from 1697 31, 40, 56, 63, 73, 195
- Cherkasov, I.A. (1692–1757), Russian secretary of the cabinet 1725–1727 (Küttner 1990: 160) 73
- Christian I (1426–1481), King of Denmark from 1448, of Norway from 1450, and of Sweden 1457–1464 203, 209, 211
- Christian II, (1481–1559), King of Denmark and Norway 1513–1523, and of Sweden 1520–1521 209
- Christian III, (1503–1559), King of Denmark and Norway from 1534 209
- Christian IV (1577–1648), King of Denmark from 1588 78
- Christina (Kristina, 1626–1689), Queen of Sweden 1644–1654. 32, 79, 91, 95, 101, 106, 113, 151, 161, 181, 201, 205, 211
- Christina of Stommeln (1242–1312). German mystic; corresponded with Petrus de Dacia 90–91
- Christine de Pizan (1364–1430, according to *EB*; 1365–1431 according to *Women in World History*). Born in Italy, she soon moved to France and was part of the French court society. Chr. de Pizan spent the rest of her life in France as a scholar, professional writer (composing several works on commission), poet and feminist. She wrote in French, modelling it on classical Latin prose. She initiated the long debate on the nature of womankind, called the “Quarrel of *The Romance of the Rose*” (*WWH*, 3: 729–733) 80
- Christopher I (ca. 1219–1259), King of Denmark from 1252 211
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- Cornaro Piscopia, Elena Lucrezia (1646–1684). Italian scholar. She was not allowed to get a doctorate in theology in Venice, but was granted a doctorate in medicine and philosophy there in 1678 (*WWH*, 4: 127) 80, 145

- Cruz, Sor Juana Inés de la, 1651–1695, Mexican nun, scholar and poet (1648 date of birth according to *WWH*, 8: 345–350) 36
- Dal Pozzo, Jacopo. Italian ex-capucin monk, who during 1647–1650 lectured in Spanish at Uppsala University. Published a dissertation on women in Uppsala in 1650 95, 99
- De la Gardie, Beata Elisabet, (born von Königsmarck) (1637–1723). Married to Pontus Fredrik De la Gardie 161
- De la Gardie, Ebba Maria (1658–1697). The daughter of Pontus Fredrik and Beata Elisabet De la Gardie, wrote occasional poems and participated in the performance of Racine's *Iphigénie en Aulide* in the Royal Court in 1684. Only six of her poems have been preserved (printed in Hanselli 1867: 23–34) 149, 151, 161, 163
- De la Gardie, Johanna Eleonora (1661–1708), sister of Ebba Maria De la Gardie; also a writer of occasional poetry 149, 151
- De la Gardie, Pontus Fredrik (1630–1692). Councillor and a commissary of several Boards of the State. Vice Governor of the province of Skåne. Married in 1655 to Beata Elisabet von Königsmarck. He owned several estates, for instance in Pomerania and Estonia as well as in Livonia. He lost most of his property however during the reduction made by the King in the 1680's. 149, 161
- Democritus of Abdera in Thrace, (ca. 460–370 BC). Greek philosopher of the “atomist” school 215
- Descartes (Cartesius), René (1596–1650). French philosopher. In 1649 he went to Stockholm on the invitation of Queen Christina 153
- Dirichsen, Johannes. Danish diplomat, in Sweden in the 1660's, and around 1680 as secretary at the peace negotiations in Lund (Marquard 1952: 247, 411). 40, 51, 57, 71
- Eenberg, Johan (d. 1709). Librarian at the University Library in Uppsala in 1690; Professor of Philosophy in 1704. 217, 221, 225, 233
- Ehrenstrahl, Anna Maria (1666–1729), portrait painter. Brenner wrote a poem in her honour 58
- Elvia, Anna Maria (1711–1783), daughter of a Professor in Uppsala, Petrus Elvius (*SBL*, 13: 416–417) 81
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- Eric of Pomerania (1382–1459), King of Norway 1389–1440, King of Denmark from 1412 and of Sweden from 1396 203, 211, 239, 241, 243
- Esberg (Esbergius) Johan (1665–1734), Dean, Professor of Greek and Theology, from 1711 superintendent on the island of Gotland 96, 100
- Fedele, Cassandra (1465–1558), Italian letter writer and scholar. (*DBI*, 45: 566–568) 80, 88
- Forselius, Lars (1653–1729), Dean in Alingsås (*Scandinavian Biographical Index*, 1: 582) 57, 64, 67, 70, 71, 74
- Frederick I (1471–1533), King of Denmark and Norway from 1523 209
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- Freinsheim (Freinsheimius), Johann (1608–1660). German philologist. Professor Skytteanus in Uppsala. F. worked as a librarian for Queen Christina later on and helped her with the invitation to Descartes to come to Sweden. In 1656 he returned to Germany 153

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- Fronдин, perhaps to be identified with Erik (Ericus Erici) Frondin, who was admitted to Uppsala University on May 13, 1691 and defended a thesis on the origin of the hieroglyphs in Uppsala in 1701, (Helander 2004: 429). Other alternatives are one of the brothers Elias and Johannes Frondin, who were admitted to Uppsala University on October 24, 1694 (*Uppsala universitets historia*, 2:2: 297) 120, 127, 213, 217, 219, 223
- Gad, Cille (ca. 1675–1711) (*NBL*, 4: 333–334). See footnote to letter XXI 37, 99, 115, 119, 135, 229, 231, 235, 237, 241, 243
- Gierpe, Petrus, Probably to be identified with Petrus Hjerpe from Stockholm, who was admitted to Uppsala University on March 16, 1695 (*UUM*, 5: 365) 215
- Gournay, Marie du (1566–1645), French learned woman and author 101
- Grainger, Walter, (d. 1729). English merchant, who bought Elias Brenner's collection of coins. (Aspelin 1896: 122–123) 31
- Groot (Grotius), Huig de, 1583–1645. Dutch humanist and jurist and author of Latin poems and dramas. Author of *De jure belli et pacis* (1625), considered to be the foundation for modern international law. Between 1634 and 1644 he was the Swedish Ambassador in Paris 153
- Grüner, Johannes Diderik (1661–1712), Danish diplomat, Secretary at the Danish legation in Stockholm (Marquard 1952: 394–395, 412, *DBL*, 5: 339) 57, 72, 173, 179, 199, 221
- Gustavus I (1496–1560), King of Sweden from 1523 195
- Gustavus Adolphus (Gustav II Adolf) (1594–1632), King of Sweden from 1611. Married Maria Eleonora, princess of Brandenburg, in 1620 181, 207
- Gyldenstolpe, Nils (1642–1709), Count, diplomat, governor and member of the Royal Council. Appointed president of the Royal Chancellery in 1705 29, 63, 73, 100
- Gyllengrip, Catharina (d. 1667) = Carin Gyllengrip, who was famous for her Swedish translation of Martin Hyller's *Gyllene skattkista*, printed in 1670 (Elgenstierna, 3: 266). 142, 143
- Hak, perhaps to be identified with Gustavus Hakes from Åbo Academy in Finland, who was admitted to Uppsala University on November 24, 1690 (*UUM*, 5: 335) 243
- Hedengrahn, Petrus (1677–1727), Dean. In 1699, he defended the dissertation *Mulieres philosophantes* (see chapter 2.3). In 1717, he married Brenner's daughter Regina Brenner (*Scandinavian Biographical Index*, 2: 802) 33, 40, 51, 66, 96, 98, 100, 101, 179
- Heinsius, Nicolaas (1620–1681). Dutch philologist, son of the famous philologist Daniel Heinsius. He edited works of several classical authors and was librarian for Queen Christina (Zedler *online*, 12: 619) 86, 153
- Helin, Jean (Johan) (1679–1753), archivist 'actuarie') at the National Archives and from 1725 secretary of the Board of Antiquities 46, 55, 66
- Hermelin, Olof Nilsson, 1658–1709, Swedish professor, Royal Councillor and Secretary of State, poet 60
- Hertel, Lorenz 1659–1737, German diplomat and librarian in Wolfenbüttel. On behalf of the counts in Wolfenbüttel he visited Stockholm and Copenhagen (*Deutscher Biographischer Index*, 2: 869) 72
- Hesselius, Petrus, 1679–1713, Swedish vicar, author of a work on the wives of the patriarchs later finished by O. Kolmodin (*Svenska män och kvinnor*, 3: 439) 33, 39, 52, 57, 63
- Hiärne, Urban, 1641–1724, archiater, assessor and physician at the Royal court. Founder of the spa at Medevi. 25, 34, 39, 57, 58, 63, 64, 65, 67, 70, 74, 86

- Hilcken, Christopher Willhad, 1664–1717. Licenciate in two law systems in Hamburg in 1707, Assessor and Secretary of the state in Hamburg. In 1703 he married the Swedish Christina Maria Daurer, and from then on probably travelled often between Stockholm and Hamburg (*Deutscher Biographischer Index* 2, Mollerus 1744, I: 254) 111, 189, 195
- John II, = John I or Hans of Denmark (1455–1513). Danish King from 1481, King of Norway from 1483 and of Sweden 1497–1501; Duke of Schleswig and Holstein 193, 203, 209
- John III Sobieski (1629–1696), King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania from 1674 60
- du Jon the Younger (Junius), François (1589–1677). Philologist and archaeologist. In 1665 he published the first edition of Bishop Ulfilas' Silver Bible, and dedicated it to the Swede Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie (who is believed to have paid the costs). De la Gardie then bought the manuscript and in 1669 donated it to Uppsala University 153
- Karl Knutsson (Bonde = Charles VIII) (1409–1470), Swedish King 1448–57, 1464–65, and from 1467. King of Norway 1449–1450 211
- Katarina (1661–1720), Countess, daughter of Adolf Johann I, Count of Pfalz-Kleeburg, and Else Elisabeth Brahe of Wisingsborg, Sweden. Married in 1696 to Kristoffer Gyllenstier-na (*SBL*, 1: 210) 30
- Keder, Nils (1659–1735). Poet and numismatist, Assessor in the Board of Antiquities. Keder, Elias Brenner, Carl Wrede and Johan Gabriel Sparfwenfeld were employed by Charles XI to organize the Royal Coin Collection. Published the second edition of Brenner's *Thesaurus* in 1731. K. was a personal friend of Mr. and Mrs. Brenner and taught Sophia Brenner Italian and French (see his autobiography, *Acta literaria*, IV: 321) 31, 34, 40, 52, 55, 58, 66, 67, 70, 71, 105, 106, 145, 155, 159, 187, 191, 197
- Kingo, Thomas (1634–1703). Danish poet and Bishop in Fyn. The writer of secular as well as spiritual poetry, Kingo was most renowned for composing hymns. In 1696, Brenner wrote a letter to Kingo and added a laudatory poem in his honour as well as an entire "package of recommendation", which initiated the Brenner/Sperling correspondence (see chapter 1.7.2) 39, 46, 52, 57, 60, 61, 62, 66, 71, 72, 105, 106, 107, 109, 115, 117, 135, 143, 147, 175
- Kortholt, Sebastian (1675–1760), German scholar, Professor of Eloquence in Kiel. Dedicated a work on learned women to Brenner (Kortholt 1700) 32, 58, 71, 98, 106, 110, 135
- Kyle, Wendela, see Skytte, Wendela
- Königsmarck, Amalia Wilhelmina (1663–1740), Countess, married to C.G. Lewenhaupt. Brenner wrote a poem and a letter to her on her marriage (*PD* 1713: 45–46) 40, 52
- Königsmarck, Maria Aurora (1662–1728), German poet and learned woman. Between 1680 and 1692 she lived in Sweden. Mistress to Frederick Augustus I of Saxony (later to be King of Poland). Königsmarck learned several languages as a young girl, and in Stockholm she took an active part in the court life. She wrote occasional poetry, also in several languages, and moreover published some letters in 1682: *Les divertissements de Medevij*. Her poems were published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Hanselli 1867: 71–131.) Brenner wrote a poem in her honour in 1687 (*PD* 1713: 196–197) 151, 163
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm von (1646–1716), German philosopher, mathematician and polyhistor, who corresponded with more than 600 persons, among them Sophia Brenner's promoters 26, 32, 71, 72

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- Lemmel, possibly to be identified with Petrus Lemnelius Gothoburgensis, who was a registered student at Uppsala university in 1692 (*UUM*, 1: 348) 112, 203, 205
- Lenngren, Anna Maria (1754–1817), Swedish poet, who already in her youth defended women's role in society 33, 94
- Leonora Christina (1621–1698), author, learned daughter of Christian IV of Denmark, married to Corfitz Ulfeldt. Imprisoned together with her husband, who was accused of treason, for 22 years, acquitted in 1685. She described her years in prison in *Jammers-Minde*. Sperling the Younger encouraged her to write her autobiography and a *gynaeceum*, *Heltinders Pryd* 78, 135
- Leopold, Johann Friedrich (1676–1711), doctor of medicine in Lübeck. He obtained his doctorate in Basel in 1700 and after that travelled through Europe for two years. *Relatio Epistolica de Itinere suo Svecico* was published in 1707 (*Die Matrikel der Universität Basel*, 4: 307, Mollerus 1744, 1: 342, *Deutscher Biographischer Index*, 3: 1242) 227, 229, 231
- Lewenhaupt, Carl Gustaf (1662–1703), Swedish officer, general in the Saxon infantry. 52
- Luxdorph, Bolle (1643–1698), Danish envoy in Sweden from 1691 (Marquard 1952: 394), Royal Secretary. presented Brenner's "package of recommendation" to Bishop Kingo 62, 72, 106, 107
- Löfgren, Carl (d. 1717), district judge in Uppland in 1707, mayor in Norrtälje. In 1707 married Brenner's daughter Sophia, who after his death married Daniel Enroth 56, 63, 237
- Maria Eleonora (1599–1655), princess of Brandenburg, Queen Consort of Gustavus Adolphus. 181
- Maria Elisabet (1663–1748), Countess, daughter of Adolf Johann I, Count of Pfalz-Kleeburg, and Else Elisabeth Brahe of Wisingsborg, Sweden. Married to Christof Gottlob v. Gersdorff. 30
- Massberg, Johan von = Conrad Materfeld, a German, married to Christina Spoor (later to become Sophia Brenner's mother). In 1657, he died of the plague. Their son Conrad Materfeld was the governor of Pomerania between 1688 and 1672 (*Svenska ättar-tal*, XI: 335) 179, 181
- Menagius, Aegidius (Gilles Ménage), 1613–1692, French scholar, author of *Historia mulierum philosopharum* 98, 102
- Morata, Olympia Fulvia (1526–1555), Italian classical scholar, letter writer and poetess (*WWH*, 11: 396–397) 80, 86, 87
- Morhof, Daniel Georg (1639–1691), German literary historian and poet, Professor of Eloquence and Poetry and (later on) History. His *Unterricht von der Deutschen Sprache und Poesie, deren Ursprung, Fortgang und Lehrsätze*, published in 1682, and *Polyhistor*, published in 1688–1692, are both well known. Posthumously, more parts were added to the two original volumes of *Polyhistor* 85, 86, 87, 123, 124
- Morian, Anna Sidonia, daughter of professor Christian Eberhard Morian from Reval, who moved to Sweden in 1710 due to the plague (according to Recke & Napiersky, 3: 266, where it is observed that he had a learned daughter). Morian mentioned in her speech that she lived in exile 40, 52, 53, 66
- Naurath, possibly to be identified with Johann Henrich Naurath (son of Martin Naurath, of whom there is information in *Deutscher Biographischer Index*, 3: 1443), "Bipontinus", i. e., from Zweibrücken 227



- Nogarola, Isotta (1418–1466), Italian humanist, author and letter writer, who chose a life as a scholar instead of marriage (*Dizionario enciclopedico della letteratura italiana*, 4: 521.) 80
- Nordenflycht, Hedvig Charlotta (1718–1763), Swedish poetess, who also published apologetic poems and writings in favour of women 33, 81, 97
- Olof Skötkonung, (ca. 965–), King of Sweden (*SBL*, 28: 235–238) 157
- Palmskiöld, Elias (1667–1719), Secretary at the National Archives. He had copies made of important documents; his collection was later purchased by UUB 39, 137, 225, 235, 243
- Paullini, Christian Franz (1643–1712), German author and polyhistor 81
- Peringskiöld, Johan (1654–1720), Antiquarian, Assessor at the Board of Antiquities and Councillor 215
- Peter I the Great, (1672–1725), Emperor of Russia from 1682 41, 73
- Petrus de Dacia, (ca. 1235–1289), Swedish Dominican. Corresponded with Christina of Stommeln 90, 91
- Piper, Carl, (1647–1716), Count, Secretary of State and Royal Councillor. He was an important advisor to the King, Charles XII. 63
- Poliziano, Angelo (1454–1494), classical scholar and poet, Professor in Florence 88, 89, 90
- Poulain de la Barre, François (1647–1723), philosopher, theologian; author of apologetic works on the nature and role of women (*Nouvelle biographie universelle*, 4: 567) , 96, 99
- Qvitzow, Anne Margrethe (1652– ca. 1700). Danish learned lady of the nobility. She wrote Latin epigrams and corresponded with Otto Sperling the Younger, to whom she sent a four-page-long Latin autobiography in 1673. She translated three books of Caesar's *De bello Gallico*; the translation was not printed 37, 51, 145
- Richter, letter courier between Sperling and Brenner (probably to be identified with) Christian Friedrich R. (1676–1711), , German physician. 195
- Rudbeck the Elder, Olof (1630–1702). Scientist and historian, Professor in Uppsala. He discovered the lymphatic system. In 1665, he was appointed Commissary of the National Culture because of his teaching of unconventional subjects, such as constructions of houses and fortifications. Among other things, Rudbeck worked with systematic reproductions of all plant species. His comprehensive nationalist work *Atlantica* was published 1679–1702. Brenner congratulated him with a poem and a letter, both of which were appended to the laudatory sections following the volumes of his work 32, 40, 53, 60, 61, 120
- Rudbeckius the Younger, Petrus Johannis (1625–1701). Bishop, Professor and *Praeses* of the dissertation on women defended by L. Canotus 95
- Röber, Johann Joachim (1662–1732). Tutor of the Duke of Wolfenbüttel, diplomat and justice. (*Deutscher Biographischer Index*, 3: 1693) 72
- Saumaise (Salmasius), Claude de (1588–1653). French scholar, Professor in Leiden. He was renowned for his Latin speech on the defense of King Charles I in 1649, on which Milton replied with a tract in 1651. S. stayed in Sweden in 1650–1651. 153
- Saxo Grammaticus, (mid-12<sup>th</sup> cent. – early 13<sup>th</sup> cent.). Medieval Danish historian, author of *Gesta Danorum* 115, 239, 243
- Schantz, Carl Ludwig von (1681–1734), archaeologist, Assessor at the Board of Antiquities from 1709. Married Mårten Knutsson Törnhjelm's daughter Hedvig Eleonora in 1715, and after her death in 1719 he married Brenner's daughter Maria Aurora. He edited the

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- second edition of Brenner's poetry (*PD* 1732). He inherited Törnhjelm's valuable collections of art and books. After von Schantz died the most valuable parts were sold at an auction in 1742; the remaining items were scattered 31, 40
- Scharff, Henrik Fredrik, not identified. Probably a son of the Swedish Dean Paulus Johannis Scharff (1657–1743) (Hagström 1897–1901, III: 331–336) 237, 239
- van Schurman, Anna Maria (1607–1678), learned Dutchwoman (*WWH*, 15: 814–815). See further in chapter 2.2 26, 59, 61, 91, 92, 95, 96, 97, 101, 102
- Sigea, Luisa (1522–1560), Iberian learned woman, poet and scholar 87
- Sigismund III Vasa (1566–1632), King of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from 1587 and of Sweden in 1592–1599 195
- Skytte, Anna (1610–1679), learned daughter of Johan Skytte. 101, 179
- Skytte, Johan (1577–1645). From 1624 he was the Governor General of Ingermanland, Livonia and Karelia. Founder of “skytteanska ligan”, which aimed at reducing the influence of the Swedish higher nobility. University Chancellor; founded a professorial chair in Uppsala. Skytte was one of the first in Sweden to make feminist statements, and his daughters were well educated 95, 179, 183
- Skytte, Wendela (1608–1629), learned daughter of Johan Skytte. Married the governor of Österbotten, Hans Kyle, in 1626 101
- Sparwenfeld, Johan Gabriel (1655–1727), Swedish scholar, promotor of Sophia Brenner. See Jacobowsky 1932 and Birgegård 2002 13–17 32, 36, 61, 70, 71
- Spiegel, Haquin (1645–1714), poet, Archbishop 48, 58, 64, 65, 67, 70, 74
- Sperling, Otto the Younger (1634–1715), see biographical information in chapter 2.1 *passim*
- Sperling, Otto the Elder (1602–1681). Physician at the Royal Court in Copenhagen and botanist. Friend of Corfitz Ulfeldt and Leonora Christina, to whom he taught Latin. As he remained in the company of Ulfeldt in Stockholm, he was also appointed physician of Queen Christina in 1653. Due to his friendship with Ulfeldt (who was accused of treason) Sperling was imprisoned, too, in 1658–1659 and from 1664 in Blåtårn in Copenhagen until his death. He corresponded with Leonora Christina during his imprisonment and composed an autobiography 78
- Spiker, Margerithe Catrine, married to Carl Brander. In the poem on Spiker's marriage, Brenner spells her name “Margareta Catharina Spieker” (*PD* 1713: 259–261; see also Hansson 1988: 171–176 36, 40, 47, 55, 69
- Spoor, Christina, (d. 1695 according to Brenner, letter VII). Mother of Sophia Elisabeth Brenner. Spoor was born in Luleå. According to Aspelin 1896, 75, she stayed in Germany as a child, learning German there. Nils Weber, Brenner's father, was Spoor's husband in her second marriage. Her first husband, Johannes Masberg (listed above), died in 1657 179, 181
- Stampeel (Stampehl), Nicolaus (1673–1749), senator, doctor *utriusque iuris* (*Deutscher Biographischer Index*, 4:1953) 187
- Stiernman, Anders Anton A von (1695–1765), author, historian, “actuarie” and councilor 81
- Stricker (Strickerius), Paul, (d. 1721). German clergyman. Born in Neustadt, he was appointed Assistant Rector in Flensburg in 1682 (*Deutscher Biographischer Index*, 4: 1999) 60, 61, 135

- Swedberg, Jesper (1653–1735), poet, scholar and Bishop; stepfather of E. Benzelius. In 1702, his estate in Uppsala suffered from a devastating fire. Sophia Brenner wrote him a letter of consolation, to which he replied 47, 48, 59, 67, 71
- Swedenborg, Emanuel (1688–1772), son of Jesper Swedberg, Swedish philosopher, scientist, theologian and seer 71
- Tassoni, Alessandro (1565–1635), Italian author 96, 97
- Tatischev, Vasily Nikitch (1686–1750), Russian administrator, historian and geographer, who stayed in Sweden between 1724 and 1726 “to investigate the mining, minting and manufacturing industries, to spy on the government and to recruit for the Russian Academy of Sciences, then in formation” (Wieczynski 1984: 191) 73, 74
- Tettau, Johann Friedrich von (1685–1735), scholar from eastern Prussia, who studied in Königsberg and was admitted to the “Ritterakademie” in 1704 (according to Raabe 1998; see also *Die Matrikel der Universität Königsberg* II: 236 221, 227, 231, 233
- Thott, Birgitte (1610–1662), Danish author and translator of Seneca 95, 100
- Tillaeus, Petrus (1663–1774), Dean in Västerås (Ekström 1990: 919–921) 59
- Törnhjelm, Mårten Knutsson (1663–1723), acquired a valuable collections of art and books, which after his death went to his son-in-law, C.L. von Schantz. 29
- Ulfeldt, Corfitz (1606–1664), “rikshovmästare”, married to Leonora Christina, see section 2.1 78
- Ulphilas (Wulfila), (311–382, according to *EB*), Bishop and missionary of the Goths, who translated the Bible from Greek into Gothic. The “Silver Bible” is kept in UUB (According to *Nouvelle biographie générale* (45: 781–784), Ulphilas lived 310–383) 213, 217, 221, 223
- Ulrica Eleonora the Younger, (1688–1741), Queen of Sweden 1719–1720. Married Fredrik of Hessen-Kassel (Frederik I of Sweden) in 1715 40, 53, 55, 69, 149
- Utterklo, Anders (1657–1717), Secretary of the Swedish Embassy in Copenhagen (*Stockholms rådhus och råd*, 2: 44) 189
- Vives, Juan Luis (1492–1540), Spanish humanist, author and supported the education of women 83, 95, 96, 97, 101, 124
- Weber, Nils, (d. 1680. according to Brenner). Merchant, who immigrated from Germany to Stockholm in 1633, married Christina Spoor and was the father of four children, among them Sophia Elisabeth Brenner 179, 181
- Weston, Elizabeth Jane, (1582–1612 *WWH*, 1581–1612 *ODNB*), English learned woman and poet, who lived in Prague most of her life (*WWH*, 16: 408–409, *ODNB*, 58: 285. See further in chapter 2.2) 86, 87, 88, 89, 136
- Westrin, Carl Peter (1739–1804), clergyman and author. *Scandinavian Biographical Index*, 4: 2364 81
- Wolck, Theodor, pastor, not identified 225, 231
- Wollstonecraft, Mary (1759–1797), author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (as well as of many other works) (*WWH*, 16: 704–710) 97
- Voss (Vossius), Isaak (1618–1689). The son of the famous theologian Gerhard Voss, in 1649 he accepted an invitation from Queen Christina, originally intended for his father, to come to Stockholm, where he worked with the Greek manuscripts that the Queen had collected. From 1670 Voss stayed in England 91, 153, 211

- Wrangel, Carl Gustaf (1613–1676). Count, and Councillor of the Realm. Military commander and governor of the Swedish province Pomerania; married to Anna Margaretha von Haugwitz. 161, 163
- Wrangel, Carl Philip (1648–1668), son of C.G. Wrangel. Studied in Greifswald and Heidelberg until 1665, and then served as a Second Lieutenant in his father's army. In 1667, he travelled to Holland and England (*Svenska adelns ättar-taflor*, 4: 647). 161, 163
- Zellin, Carl Andreas (d. 1686; Brenner wrote a funeral poem, printed in *PD 1713*: 81). Zellin was Brenner's teacher 28, 106

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NOBILISSIMO ET SUMME VENERABILI  
**D. THOMÆ KINGO**  
**EPISCOPO FIONENSI**  
S. P. D.

SOPHIA ELISABET BRENNER.

Quamvis ob eminentiam Virtutum tuarum,  
quibus apud nos quoque famâ ac scriptis iam ante clare-  
scere capisti, vir Reverendissime ac summè docte,  
ab omnibus non solum amari ac coli verum et officia  
expectare jure debeas, mihi tamen hactenus magis de-  
corum duxi. Æthereas ingenii tui dotes sacro silentio  
potius mirari quam commemorando styli mei tenuitate  
illarum Excellentia aliquid detrahere. Nihilominus  
cum à Misis pacem nullam impetrare potuerim ante-  
quam te vir celeberrime (qui inter vates hujus ævi  
caput exseris cognatumque cælo extollis ingenium),  
certiorem facerem quantopere Divinus tuis carminibus,  
licet captum meum aliquando superent, delectari soleam,  
non potui non literulas has qualescunque ad te dare:  
omnino confisa, fere, ut vir singularibus sapientia  
prærogativis instructus etiam in nostro sexu scintil-  
lam ejus quamquam minutissimam adco non sit contem-  
turus, ut conatum nostrum sibi displicuisse patia-  
tur. Hoc sorsu quoque factum est, ut Matronalis  
illa



Stockh. 29 Mart. 1697.

91. 421 S. Fol. III 12

Excellentissimo et Celeberrimo Viro

OTTHONI SPERLINGIO

S. P. D.

Sophia Elisabeth Brenner

Fortuna quidem dedeo, Vir Amplissime, quod versiculi isti quos tanquam  
ingenioli mei quaecumque tyrocinium, Viro illi Magno transultere sum  
comata, ad manus tuas pervenere. Id tamen nunquam mirari desinam.  
quomodo a cultura tenui, tam locuples provenire potuerit Fructus; Singu-  
laris Scilicet, tua erga me meaq. studia benevolentia; Quam humanissimi-  
tatis litteris, quibus exoptatus nihil mihi accidit inquam, tertari dignatus es.  
Haec et si multis nominibus gratissimae mihi fuere, anceps mihi minime  
hasi animo, utrum, consultius mihi foret, respondendi an vero tacendi stu-  
dium, metuendum rata, ne me tot laudibus obiectam, immerentem forsitan his  
litterulis tibi proderem; praesertim cum inter clarissima tua Scripta te nomi-  
nis quoque mei rationem habuisse perceperim. Eo tamenurgi me tua devota  
humanitas Vir candidissime, ut obsequi erga te magis quam proprii  
honoris notam memorem mihi imprimeret. Nunquam enim inficias ideo,  
quanta voluptate animum meum perfudit, cum studia mea, vitae modum  
tuo suffragio comprobare, et videam quod ferre nequeas, univocum sexum  
nostrum ad eolum et fusu(m) sponte plurimis persuasum esse damnari, sed ad  
sublimiora tractanda, vitamq. inter Scientias et artes humaniores agen-  
dam, Foeminas etiam pro insigni tua comitate meritare desideras. Quod  
interim sive humanitatis exuperantia, sive ingenioli mei tenuitate adductus,  
tantam eruditionis laudem mihi tribuis, meq. simul egregio huic Celeberrimo  
Foeminarum numero adscribere dignatus es, id totum insigni genij tui benigni-  
tati acceptum fero. Verum enim vera est laudes quas in me confers ha-  
ctenus minime promerita sum, est tamen cur delecter hoc tuo instituto quod  
tam singularem et inestatum in me meis Similes spirat affectum, ut lucu-  
brationes etiam Foeminarum in aperto ponere non detrecteris, et quam

11. 186.

97.  
vi Jun

Dea Sophia Elisabetha Brenneria. <sup>Stakleda</sup>  
<sup>multa</sup> Multum deo <sup>multa</sup> ~~multa~~ sibi, BRENNERIA Doctores salutem  
 Notam nec videas absque salute manum  
 Iam tuas scribo perlatis esse tabellas,  
 Quas iterum est longum, longa meata dies.  
 Nullas non grates habeo, nam polle referre,  
 Quod vides fuerint sufficiat, mea  
 Vidi tam doctas legi, famosas,  
 Ut sperem jam <sup>longe</sup> videris ipsa meam.  
 Pisi, quae superant <sup>magis</sup> ~~magis~~ praecordia nostras,  
 Nam divina tuis undique vena fluit.  
 Frustra est <sup>si magna</sup> ~~si magna~~ quae rursus Te dicere ~~clari~~  
 Quod interitus et nunquam spiritus ~~venit~~  
 Non est quod mehas nostras, <sup>CLARI</sup> ~~CLARI~~ <sup>laude</sup> ~~laude~~  
 Aut tenues, humiles, nec quid habent minime  
 Nulla quidem nescire tuis mihi pagina debet,  
 Te vix attingunt digna. Tuis <sup>magis</sup> ~~magis~~  
 Hic checant Cicerone, Marone atque Marone,  
 Cumina, quae <sup>stint</sup> ~~stint~~ tam redi vix legent.  
 Horiles et turba dices, quae nullas <sup>apollis</sup> ~~apollis~~  
 Fovet, quae ciber nullus Apollo dedit.  
 Gaud tamen aut <sup>scimus</sup> ~~scimus~~ aut <sup>laude</sup> ~~laude~~ <sup>lingua</sup> ~~lingua~~  
 Ut <sup>scimus</sup> ~~scimus~~ <sup>metuere</sup> ~~metuere~~ <sup>colam</sup> ~~colam~~  
 Para. Perdes semper doctus, fueres.  
 Non habuit frater <sup>gratia</sup> ~~gratia~~ tota novam  
 Non Apollis quavis sibi proluet ora,  
 Nec de castalis hinc, quivis aquis

Letter no. III. From Otto Sperling to Sophia Brenner.





The title page of *Poetiske Dikter* 1713. A laureated Muse points at the portrait of Sophia Brenner. Elias Brenner made the copper engraving.

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