Magic and Language

Perspectives on Jewish and Christian Magic in Early Modern Europe

Edited by
Yuval Harari, Gerold Necker
& Marco Frenschkowski

HARRASSOWITZ

Magic and Language

Studies in Magic and Kabbalah

Editors:
Saverio Campanini, Yuval Harari and Gerold Necker

Volume 1

2024

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

Magic and Language

Perspectives on Jewish and Christian Magic in Early Modern Europe

Edited by Yuval Harari, Gerold Necker
and Marco Frenschkowski

2024

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

In collaboration with the Goldstein-Goren International Center for Jewish Thought at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Contents

Preface

Research on magic has received particular attention in the past decades, inspiring the fields of Jewish studies and Christian theology alike. New perspectives on magic have focused on comparative questions, material cultures, and ritual procedures, thereby exploring unedited documents and drawing attention to visual presentations. This volume, which follows a two-day conference at Leipzig University, is devoted to phenomena, texts, and writers with magical affiliations and their interactions with reality, daily life, cultural images, language, ritual, theology, and literature, in particular biblical texts. The sources dealt with come mostly from the Renaissance and Baroque periods, and although the main focus of this volume is oriented towards the Jewish frame of reference, it also engages with various Christian views as well as with intercultural interactions in the form of the exchange of perceptions, concepts, and practices in the field. "Magic and language"—that is, the relationship between what is basically a system of ritual technology and its expression (in theoretical writing or as a performative act)—as a key component of magical traditions is particularly complex and multilayered. It includes the very verbal essence of the magic act as well as its linguistic components, differences between verbal and nonverbal acts, performative speech (or writing) in contrast to, for example, the listing of information in manuals of know-how, and the coding of language with the help of non-semantic elements such as seals and other performative diagrams. All these and more are at the focus of this volume.

Magical ideas and activities affected every European Jewish community in early modern times. After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, a considerable proportion of the refugees settled in Morocco, though the main migration routes led to the Ottoman Empire, and trade cities in northern Europe and Italy also served as important hubs. This flow joined the constant move of persecuted Jews from Germany to the east that had been occurring from late medieval times, resulting in a thriving Jewish community in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Thus, the different social backgrounds of city and countryside need to be considered for both Jewish magic and its active protagonists. A striking feature is the appearance of the *ba'alei shem* ("masters of the [divine] name"). This title was used both polemically and as an appellation of authority, reflecting the power associated with the performative activation of divine names. Incorporated in adjuration formulas, divine names had a key role in the implementation of magic *techne* from antiquity. Yet during the high Middle Ages this facet of Jewish cosmology gained an immense theoretical development, which in turn also dramatically influenced the field of the actual use of divine names. A particular affiliation with such powerful names happened in the development of the kabbalistic teachings of Isaac Luria (1534–1572), who focused on certain meditation techniques. The intersection between "theoretical Kabbalah" on the

one hand and "practical Kabbalah" (pertaining to magic) on the other deeply reshaped the Jewish world in early modern times, particularly in respect of ritual and prayer.

Although *kishuf* (magic) is prohibited in the Bible and the Talmud and practicing anything labeled as *ma'aseh keshafim* (a magic deed) has been forbidden ever since, in Judaism, unlike in the Christian environment, magic was not demonized and room was left on the margins of religion for (what we may conceive as) magic practices. Without an effective definition of and prohibition against the various types of *segullot* (charms), amulets, astral talismans, exorcism formulae, and the like, which usually did not even stress the difference between "white" and "black" magic—apart from warnings of the inherent danger—all spheres of life could and have been subject to magical influence in one way or another. The extent to which the widespread use of spells and adjurations both orally and in the form of written amulets and curses had penetrated into everyday life becomes evident not only from the wide circulation, in terms of both quantity and geographic distribution, of recipe books but also from the use of vernacular languages—that is, Arabic, Ladino, and Yiddish—for the writing of those manuals or for noting specific words inside them. Special features such as pieces of legerdemain or magic riddles that were current in the Renaissance show distinctive use of the vernacular (for example, German or Italian loanwords or expressions), either because they do not correspond to the general Hebrew vocabulary or simply have become customary. Numerous manuscripts document a clear line of continuity of magical traditions from late antiquity and the Middle Ages to early modern times in terms of both their verbal and nonverbal aspects. One major example of the ancient starting point is the continuing presence of so-called ring-letters (*charactêres*), which functioned as "divine emblems" in Greek magical texts, penetrated into the magic traditions of Christians, Muslims, and Jews, and were later conceived of as a kind of angelic language (*alpha beta shel mal'akhim*) to be decoded by means of various alphabetic transliterations. The names and seals of the seven kings of the demons, which originate in early medieval Arabic traditions and are incorporated in Jewish recipes through a process of adoption and adaption that continues to the present day, is another such example. In the flexible, operative, success-based field of magic, words, signs, formulas, and ritual practices made their way from one culture to another, from one generation to another, and from one language to another, affecting and enriching detectable threads of long-term traditions.

In order to practice magic, one had to study it first from an expert teacher (sometimes travelling afar from home for that) and from books of expertise. Therefore, a serious qualification required not only the "mastering of names" and various ritual techniques for activating them, but also the willingness to itinerate, the difficulties of foreign languages and cultural surroundings notwithstanding. Related to this are also questions of how the socio-ideological matrix of a dominant Christian surrounding and the, so perceived, "perennial wisdom" encapsulated in Jewish esoteric lore fostered the appropriation and acculturation of "foreign" magic elements on both sides, as well as how access to magical knowledge was mediated in both worlds regarding different genres of magical texts, social impacts, knowledge strategies, and various forms of piety.

The first two essays in this volume, by Gideon Bohak and Yuval Harari, are devoted to an exceptional artistic manuscript of a Jewish magic compilation called *'Ets ha-Da'at*

(The Tree of Knowledge) that was written by Elisha son of Gad of Ancona in the year 1535/1536. This work stands out not only for its skillful drawings, but also for the great variety of magical sources that were used by its author. While Bohak offers a fascinating analysis of the multilayered structure of this compilation by way of *Quellenforschung*, Harari applies himself to the aesthetic mastery of presenting magic exemplified by its paratexts, including iconographical features, which are compared to an illustrated manuscript of the prognostication book *Maggid Davar* (Reveals a [Hidden] Word) produced by the very same scribe-illustrator, as he demonstrates. Thus, using different approaches, both essays demonstrate that the unique work of an Italian Jew who connected the long history of magic with the contemporary language of art belongs to what may be called the culture of magic in the full sense of the word.

The two following contributions also focus on erudite Italian authors. Saverio Campanini discusses the section on "some occult operations of nature and art" found in the monumental work *In Scripturam Sacram problemata* by the Christian kabbalist Francesco Zorzi (1466–1540). The hints and traces in that section lead, as Campanini surprisingly shows, to a theory of magic based on "The Book of Splendor" (*Sefer ha-Zohar*) one generation before it appeared in print. Emma Abate's essay on the understanding and translation of Hebrew kabbalistic works and holy names into Latin and Italian by the Augustinian friar and cardinal Egidio da Viterbo (d. 1532) is an exciting investigation of how one humanist applied his philological methods to Hebrew exegetical and mystical works. By shedding fresh light on the study program that Egidio established using his Hebrew manuscript collection—with the still-hidden treasure of his annotations, which she explores for the first time—she succeeds in providing a vivid impression of the interest in Kabbalah in Renaissance Italy.

A topic of particular interest is the engagement of Moses Zacuto, a leading authority in Venice and Mantua in the seventeenth century, in practical and theoretical Kabbalah. Uri Safrai and Eliezer Baumgarten present the early stage and purpose of Zacuto's *Lexicon of Holy Names*, which has remained to this day one of the most popular works on divine names and magical formulae that are appropriate for their use. According to them, Zacuto believed that it was futile, perilous, and forbidden to deal with holy names without precise kabbalistic knowledge about them and their divine "roots," which he offered in this work. Maximilian de Molière's research addresses the corpus of Zacuto's letters, which include newly discovered instructions for writing amulets. He focuses on Zacuto's correspondence with Abraham Rovigo, demonstrating how Zacuto offered his young disciple both practical support and competent knowledge, and clarifies the state of the art regarding magic and the producing of amulets at that time. Finally, Gerold Necker analyses the magical content of three manuscripts related to a greater or lesser extent to the school of Moses Zacuto—firstly, *segullot* attached to a copy of a classic Lurianic treatise; secondly, a collection of recipes incorporated into a Lurianic miscellany; and thirdly, magic collectanea combined with the "Book of Remembrance"—which serve as three case studies for the reevaluation of the question of whether there was a mutual relationship between the distribution of Lurianic Kabbalah and the interest in magic during the seventeenth century.

Interreligious characteristics and the popularity of magical-astrological concepts—as indicated by smooth transitions, adaptions, and enrichments, in various languages—are best displayed in the *Ydea Salomonis*, a magical work with an "open" nature, which is at the very heart of Gal Sofer's scholarship. His examination of the textual tradition, contents, methods, and ritual performances breaks fresh ground in the field of "Solomonic magic." Of particular interest are the magic fragments from the Cairo Genizah that Sofer has been able to identify as Hebrew versions related to *Clavicula Salomonis*, *Ydea Salomonis*, and other Latin "Solomonic" texts, some of which he edits and translates into English.

The fact that the popularity of ancient magic books and the belief in their effectivity continues through to modern times is to a certain degree due to their connection with the Holy Scripture, that is, the biblical texts themselves. Dorothea Salzer approaches this relationship from a methodological point of view in terms of semantics, ritual performance, and speech act theory. Using Hebrew and Aramaic texts from the Cairo Genizah, she employs the phrase *unio magica* to conceptualize the efforts of magicians to bridge the gap between themselves and powerful biblical figures. In doing so, she offers a new interpretation of the functions and forms of biblical allusions in magical texts. Meanwhile, Bill Rebiger's research object is *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim* (Book of the Magical Use of Psalms), which has been the most popular magical manual from the Middle Ages up to modern times. Rebiger draws attention to an edition and German translation, published in 1788, which has not yet been considered in this work's reception history, as well as to the biographical vicissitudes and motivation of its translator, the Jewish convert Gottfried Selig. Next, focusing on the so-called *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, Michael Siefener presents the folkloristic adaption of magic works in the belletristic style of magic books that had been "lost" since time immemorial—as their publishers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would insinuate in an attempt to boost their sales—but rediscovered in old manuscripts. Compilations under the banner of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* contain a hodge-podge of grimoires, everyday sayings, and household remedies, partly including "Solomonic" traditions, and Siefener—himself a prolific author of speculative fiction involving magical elements—tells the intriguing story of how these early modern Christian magic motifs and texts continued to be diffused through notable publishers and antiquarian from the eighteenth century to present times.

Marco Frenschkowski was the curator of an exhibition of the very large collection of magical manuscripts (in fact, the largest of any European library) at Leipzig University Library in 2019–2020. Using examples from these and other Christian magical texts, especially from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, he shows the deep ambiguity in the images of Jewish tradition. While Jewish magic is imagined, on the one hand, as a product of Jewish wisdom and scholarship and therefore of the highest interest for Christian discourses on magic, antisemitic stereotypes are also at work, and Jews can be seen as both sages and scoundrels. The result is, in some respects, a fantasy Judaism with only limited contact with real Jewish people. Indeed, antisemitic and philosemitic approaches can to some degree be interpreted as deeply interrelated ways of producing clichés that make use of Judaism as a paradigm of the culturally "other." The different agendas of Judaism exhibit a very large interest in Jewish magical traditions in well-educated German circles, however.

The essays collected in the present volume are based on a conference that took place at Leipzig University in November 2019 under the title "Magic and language: Jewish and Christian magic in early modern Europe." Funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), the conference aimed to advance the revival of research on magic with regard to the periods following antiquity and medieval times on the one hand and the dovetailing of Jewish and Christian studies around magic on the other. We hope that the broad range of topics, genres, approaches, and findings presented in this volume, which in a way reflect the great variety of both facets and desiderata in the field of magic in early modern times, will be further addressed by concerted and detailed studies in the future. The present collection of twelve essays is an initial attempt to enter this period and area of interreligious interest via an interdisciplinary collaboration and intends to contribute many-sided and innovative perspectives on the understanding of magic as a multifaceted cultural phenomenon.

Acknowledgments

<div align="right">The Editors</div>

Abbreviations

List of Abbreviations

CUL   Cambridge University Library
esp.   especially
IMHM   Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts
           (now National Library of Israel)
MS, MSS   manuscript(s)
pl.   plural
sg.   singular

Abbreviations Used in References

AMB   Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity
ANRW   Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms
           im Spiegel der neueren Forschung
AJSR   AJS Review
AR   Archiv für Religionswissenschaft
ASAW   Abhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
BASOR   Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BHT   Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
BJRL   Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester
BN   Biblische Notizen
BSGW   Berichte der Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften
EncJud   Encyclopaedia Judaica, 2nd ed.
ER   Encyclopedia of Religion, 2nd ed.
GRBS   Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies
HAI   Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah:
           Selected Texts from Taylor-Schechter Box K1
HTR   Harvard Theological Review
JANER   Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions
JANES   Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society
JECS   Journal of Early Christian Studies
JJS   Journal of Jewish Studies
JQR   Jewish Quarterly Review
JRitSt   Journal of Ritual Studies
JSQ   Jewish Studies Quarterly
KS   Kiryat Sefer (Kiryath Sepher)
MEAH   Miscelánea de estudios árabes y hebraicos

MGWJ	Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums
MSF	Magic Spells and Formulae: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity
MTKG	Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza
PGM	The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation: Including the Demotic Spells
RC	Religion Compass
REJ	Revue des études juives
RHR	Revue de l'histoire des religions
Sef	Sefarad
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
TRE	Theologische Realenzyklopädie
VT	Vetus Testamentum

List of Illustrations

We would like to express our great gratitude to the libraries and collections listed below, which provided us with scans of manuscripts as well as printed books and generously authorized the printing of them in the present volume.

A Renaissance Manuscript of Jewish Magic

Gideon Bohak

Among the many hundreds of manuscripts of Jewish magic scattered in dozens of libraries and private collections all over the world, one manuscript stands out for its artistic qualities and its very personal introduction.[1] It contains a compilation made by Elisha ben Gad of Ancona in the year 1535/1536; it made its way to the collection of Moses Gaster, and is now found in the British Library in London (MS Or. 12362 = Gaster 38).[2] The manuscript contains forty-nine paper folios of a small size, each measuring 92 mm in width by 138 mm in height, forty-six of which are inscribed. It was written by a single, professional, Italian hand, and is characterized by high quality decorations and illustrations, produced by the same scribe.[3] The manuscript is missing approximately six folios, with ten magical recipes (nos. 67–72 and 93–96), but as a copy of the entire text was made in the late eighteenth century and is found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Opp. Add. Oct. 73 (= Neubauer 2570), the contents of nine of these recipes may be reconstructed from the later copy.[4]

The identity and self-understanding of the author of this compilation may be deduced from the elaborate introduction that precedes the magical recipes, in which he explains at great length, and in florid Hebrew, how he compiled this collection of kabbalistic traditions, which he named *'Ets ha-Da'at*, or "The Tree of Knowledge." Giving a name to one's collection of magical recipes is a practice attested in manuscripts of Jewish magic

at least from the fifteenth century onwards, and in this respect our manuscript is not unique.[5] Another feature of *'Ets ha-Da'at*, namely, the consecutive numbering of each recipe, is even more common, and is attested from an even earlier period.[6] A third feature of our manuscript, namely, the inclusion of a table of contents, or an index, which aims to make it easier to find a recipe for a specific aim without having to read the entire manuscript, is also attested in other manuscripts of Jewish magic, at least from the fifteenth century onward, but Elisha's mode of arranging his index is quite idiosyncratic.[7] Rather than providing a short list of all the recipes in his compilation, in a sequential order, he classifies them under four headings: recipes that use pure names of power, recipes that use impure names of power, "natural" remedies (which make no use of names of power), and miscellanea. This is not a very practical way of classifying magical recipes, but it may reflect Elisha's sense that the use of impure names, which might transgress the boundaries of rabbinic Halakhah, could be problematic.[8] The same sensitivity may also be reflected by the work's title, which takes its cue from the "Tree of Knowledge *of Good and Evil*" of Gen 2:9 and Gen 2:17. Thus, although the recipes themselves are not classified or organized in any way—as we shall see below—the table of contents does try to classify them,

------

5   For a case in point, see the compilation called "Sefer ha-Razim," compiled and copied by Moses ben Ya'akov in the 1460s, and found in MS New York, New York Public Library, Heb. 190, pp. 58–195 (hereafter NYPL 190). On this compilation, see Gideon Bohak, *A Fifteenth-Century Manuscript of Jewish Magic: MS New York Public Library, Heb. 190 (Formerly Sassoon 56) - Introduction, Annotated Edition and Facsimile* [in Hebrew], 2 vols., Sources and Studies in the Literature of Jewish Mysticism 44 (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2014).

6   See, for example, the Cairo Genizah fragment Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, T-S K1.70, published by Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1985), 224–229 (= Geniza 5), where the recipes—which are written in a mixture of Aramaic, Hebrew, and Judeo-Arabic—are numbered with Arabic numerals. The numbering may have been added by a later user, but it certainly was there before the entire manuscript was deposited in the Cairo Genizah. In "Sefer ha-Razim" (see previous note) the recipes are also numbered.

7   For another example of such a manuscript, see MS Geneva, Bibliothèque de Genève, Comites Latentes 145 (= Sassoon 290), which contains a long table of contents or index at the beginning of the manuscript (pp. 22–58); for a description, and the entire index, see Benayahu, "The Book 'Shoshan Yesod ha-Olam,'" 193, 219–269. See also n. 9 below.

8   The distinction between "names of purity" and "names of impurity" goes back to the Babylonian Talmud (see bSan 91a), and was further developed in such tractates as *Arba'ah Yesodot* (Four Foundations/Essences), on which see Peter Schäfer and Shaul Shaked, *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 42, 64, and 72 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994–1999), vol. 1, no. 3 (= MS Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, T-S K1.2) and no. 4 (= MS Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, T-S K1.37), and vol. 3, no. 55 (= MS Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, L-G Misc. 16, previously at Westminster College); Yuval Harari, *Jewish Magic before the Rise of Kabbalah*, trans. Batya Stein (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017), 268–269. It also emerges in Hai Gaon's responsum on the use of powerful names, for which see Simcha Emanuel, *Newly Discovered Geonic Responsa* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Ofeq Institute, 1995), 124–146; Gideon Bohak, "Jewish Magic in the Middle Ages," in *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West*, ed. David Collins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 271–272, 287–288.

and in a way that stresses not only the aim of each recipe, but also whether it makes use of powerful names, and if so, whether they are "good" or "evil" names.[9]

And yet, the most unusual feature of the textual contents of *'Ets ha-Da'at* is the inclusion of a detailed first-person introduction, explaining how this compilation came about, and stressing the compiler's own efforts in creating it. For a compiler of a magical recipe book to mention his own name within his compilation is hardly unusual, and many copyists of magical recipes even inserted their own names into some of the recipes they copied—for example, in recipes for gaining charm and grace in the eyes of other people.[10] But the inclusion of an elaborate egodocument, running to almost 600 words, is highly unusual for a Jewish compilation of magical recipes.[11] Even more unusual is the artistic quality of this manuscript, in which numerous decorations of several different types illuminate the individual recipes, thus giving this magical handbook an appearance that is highly unexpected in a manuscript devoted to detailed technical instructions on how to achieve various aims by means of spells and adjurations. This, however, is a subject that is fully covered in Yuval Harari's contribution in the present volume.

And yet, once we ignore the long introduction and the elaborate decorations, *'Ets ha-Da'at* turns out to be yet another book of Jewish magical recipes, providing recipes for anything from inducing love to catching a thief to making oneself invisible or annulling witchcraft, with the different recipes arranged in a more or less random fashion. To give just one example, on fols. 24v and 25r, we find a recipe intended to enable its user to walk long distances without becoming tired, followed by a recipe for the treatment of scrofula, a recipe for being saved from one's enemies, a recipe to open a closed treasure chest, a recipe for an amulet against all fears, and so on. This sequence, which is typical of the entire book, tells us that there was no attempt to arrange the recipes according to their different aims, even though in two instances we do find a series of consecutive recipes for a single aim—for love (recipes nos. 46–54, fols. 29a–30b) and to catch a thief (recipes nos. 80–86, fols. 37a–39b). There also was no attempt to arrange them according to any other principle, in spite of the attempt in the prefatory index to classify the recipes according to

---

9　The need to classify the recipes in one's compendium was felt by other compilers; I note, for example, a manuscript copied by Shemariah ben Avraham Yeḥi'el in 1467 (MS Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, 2734), in which he divided his miscellany into twenty-two subsections, in order to facilitate the search for specific remedies (see fols. 65r–68v), and then provided a detailed index for each section (see fols. 68v–89v). For the compiler's identity, see Nurit Pasternak, *Together and Apart: Hebrew Manuscripts as Testimonies to Encounters of Jews and Christians in Fifteenth-Century Florence* [in Hebrew] (PhD diss., Hebrew University, 2009), 96–97.

10　See, for example, a twelfth-century example analyzed by Ortal-Paz Saar, "Success, Protection and Grace: Three Fragments of a Personalized Magical Handbook," *Ginzei Qedem* 3 (2007): 101–135; in NYPL 190 (see n. 5 above), the copyist often inserts his own name, Moses ben Marḥaba, and that of his son, Yequti'el ben Sittita, into recipes for apotropaic and beneficial aims.

11　For a non-Jewish, and much earlier, *comparandum*, see Thessalos's introduction to his *De Virtutibus Herbarum*, on which see Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Temple and the Magician," in Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map is Not Territory*, SJLA 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 172–189; on 174, n. 14, Smith notes other similar texts from late antiquity. And compare the very short, and matter-of-fact, introduction to the *Experimenta Duodecim Johannis Paulini*, which is cited below.

whether they make use of powerful names, and which ones. Such eclectic collections of magical recipes for many different aims and using many different techniques are found in hundreds of manuscripts of Jewish magical recipes, reflecting their compilers' interest in practical instructions and other bits of data, and their disinterest in creating an overall structure, a thematic unity, or a coherent theoretical system to undergird the practical manual they have assembled.[12]

From the point of view of the modern scholar, this eclectic and arbitrary structure of many manuscripts of Jewish magic is something of a problem, since it means that in order to examine such a compilation in its entirety, rather than studying each of its constituent textual units separately, we must first decide what it is that we wish to study. Are we looking for some coherent theological, philosophical, or "scientific" worldview that underlies all the different recipes? Are we trying to reconstruct the compiler's cosmology, his angelology, his demonology? Are we trying to learn something about the problems that troubled him or his potential clients, about the ingredients available to him, about his social and economic status? Are we trying to assess how "kosher," or how "Jewish," his recipes were, and whether he himself was sensitive to such issues? All these questions, and many others, may legitimately be asked when studying such a manuscript. And yet, the question that I find most interesting when reading such a compilation is: where did all these magical recipes come from? Were they created, or even only adapted, by their compiler, or did he just copy recipes he found in his own written sources or heard from oral tradents? Were they translated from other languages, or were they originally composed in the language in which we find them here? Were they composed by Jews, or were they adopted from other cultures? Asking such questions helps us situate each manuscript within the *longue durée* of the Jewish magical tradition, which is characterized by the continuous copying and rewriting of magical recipes over many generations. It also enables the untangling of the Jewish and non-Jewish sources which fed into the Jewish magical tradition, and thus sets the stage for the study of the cross-cultural contacts that had a major impact on the Jewish magical tradition, and the constant borrowing of magical texts and traditions across linguistic, religious, and cultural boundaries. And it also helps us place each manuscript in a specific historical context, by showing which of its many recipes point to its compiler's written sources, and which point to materials he received orally from his contemporaries. It is for this reason that in the following pages I embark upon a kind of *Quellenforschung* which does not aim to trace all the sources used by our compiler (who probably used many different sources, most of which are no longer extant), but to highlight the eclectic and multilayered nature of the compilation he produced.

When delving into the recipes found in any magical recipe book, two more notes should be kept in mind. First, when we look at the earlier appearances of some of the manuscript's recipes, as we shall do below, we must always remember that the compiler himself had very different notions about the sources at his disposal. In his intro-

---

12 For the characteristic features of manuscripts of Jewish magic, see Bill Rebiger, "Unterweisung, Überlieferung und Aktualisierung von magischem Wissen im Judentum: Ansätze zu einer Textpragmatik," *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 36 (2010): 31–55, esp. 43–47.

duction, Elisha recounts how his searches for wisdom led him to Venice, where he met sages who were wiser than the sages of old (מביני מדע מכלכול ודרדע), and how he stayed for two years with Rabbi Yehudah Alkabetz, who made him the guardian of his library (שומר בית מלא ספרים שמני). There, he found books of Kabbalah, and especially one book, sealed in a case within a case and wrapped in a cloth (גנוז וחתום בתיק בתוך תיק, ובתוך מפה מכוסה וסתום), from which he selected and copied some excellent remedies (סגולות), and some amulets made by experienced and pious men (וקמעים נעשו על ידי מומחים ומיראת ה׳ שבעי(ם)), and wonderful adjurations (והשבעות יפות צרופו(ת) נוטפות מר ואהלות). When his patron died, he left Venice in search of another patron, and ended up in a holy city full of sages and prophets—presumably Safed (which is explicitly mentioned in the title page as the place where the book was compiled)—where after a long time he asked the local sages whether they had ancient things (דברים עתיקים), and exchanged with them many different items. He again selected a small number, and created his own compilation, *'Ets ha-Da'at*. It thus becomes very clear that he had collected his materials both in Venice and in Safed, that he received them from trustworthy sources, and that he thought of their contents as old, but was not really worried by how old they were. It is only the modern historian who is worried by such questions, and who employs philological and comparative tools with which to try to answer them. Moreover, it is only because we have access to far more manuscripts of Jewish and non-Jewish magic than Elisha would have been able to consult that we can embark upon a search for the earlier versions of the recipes he had found worthy of being included in his own compilation.

The second point that we must bear in mind is that most of the recipes found in *'Ets ha-Da'at*—and in any other manuscript of Jewish magic—cannot be dated with any certainty. Thus, the search for earlier sources does not seek to offer a precise date and provenance for each magical recipe, but rather to show that for those recipes which are attested in other manuscripts, their provenances diverge widely. This is also why I shall focus on recipes whose earlier histories may be traced with certainty, and ignore some more doubtful examples. And in what follows, I divide the specific test cases according to their ultimate age, beginning with the oldest ones and ending with recipes that Elisha must have learned from his contemporaries.

1 Some Ancient Magical Recipes in BL Or. 12362

One excellent starting point for our study is provided by a recipe for extracting a bone stuck in one's throat, a recipe whose earliest attestation known to me is in the Babylonian Talmud. To see the relations between the two recipes, I copy them synoptically:[13]

---

13 In what follows, Hebrew words and letters which are highlighted in the manuscript are printed in boldface; all English translations are my own.

BL Or. 12362, fol. 45a:	bShab 67a: [14]

<div dir="rtl">

לְמִי שֶׁבָּלַע עֶצֶם מִי שֶׁבָּלַע עֶצֶם קַח מֵאוֹתוֹ מִין עַצְמוֹ שֶׁבָּלַע וְשִׂים אוֹתוֹ עַל רֹאשׁוֹ שֶׁלֹּא יֵדַע וְלַחוֹשׁ אַחַ״כ אֵלּוּ הַשֵּׁמוֹת נְחַשׁ נְחַשׁ חַד חַד מְנַע מְנַע צָא צָא. וּבְדוֹק.

מִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ עֶצֶם בִּגְרוֹנוֹ מֵבִיא מֵאוֹתוֹ הַמִּין וּמַנִּיחַ לוֹ עַל קָדְקֳדוֹ וְלֵימָא הָכִי חַד חַד נַחַת בְּלַע בְּלַע נַחַת חַד חַד.

</div>

"For one who swallowed a bone: One who swallowed a bone—take (a bone) of the very same kind that he swallowed, and put it on his head so that he does not know, and whisper afterwards these names '*nḥash nḥash, ḥad ḥad, mna' mna', za za*,' and (it is) tested."

"One who has a bone (stuck) in his throat, he brings (a bone) of the same kind, and places it on the top of his head, and he should say thus, '*ḥad ḥad, nḥat, bala' bala', nḥat, ḥad ḥad*.'"

The aim and the instructions to be followed are identical for both recipes, and even the spell to be recited still bears some resemblance, with the formula *ḥad ḥad* appearing in both, the corruption of *nḥat (nḥat)* to *nḥash nḥash*, and perhaps even the corruption of *bala' bala'* to *mna' mna'*. Given the fact that more than a millennium separates the Babylonian Talmud and *'Ets ha-Da'at*, the fact that the recipe has not been entirely corrupted is quite noteworthy. [15]

Looking more closely at this example, we may note that the spell provided by the Babylonian Talmud actually makes sense, and may be translated into English as "one one, went down, swallowed swallowed, went down, one one." On the one hand, it clearly refers to the bone that went down the person's throat and was swallowed—and got stuck there. On the other hand, it tries to reverse that process by arranging the words in the order of A, A, B, C, C, B, A, A, in order to mimetically encourage the bone that went down the throat to go back up again, and join its fellow bone on the patient's head. [16] In the Renaissance copy of the same recipe, we can see how all this was lost in transmission, a clear product of what one scholar referred to as "from sense to nonsense," and what I prefer to call tex-

---

14 I provide the reading of MS Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod.hebr. 95, but an examination of the other textual witnesses, as recorded in the Hachi Garsinan website (https://bavli.genizah.org/Global/home), reveals relatively few differences between the manuscripts, and none of the other textual witnesses is closer to the version found in BL Or. 12362. For parallels to the practice recommended here, see Giuseppe Veltri, *Magie und Halakha: Ansätze zu einem empirischen Wissenschaftsbegriff im spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Judentum*, Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 62 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 161, 164, 168, 178, and 212.

15 This recipe reappears in other Jewish magical recipe books, including MS New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, 8114, fol. 38b; MS Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, Opp. 432 (= Neubauer 1539), fol. 146b; MS Tel Aviv, Gross Family Collection, EE 11.39, fol. 5a (= letter *alef*, recipe no. 7).

16 See also Gideon Bohak, "Babylonian Jewish Magic in Late Antiquity: Beyond the Incantation Bowls," in *Studies in Honor of Shaul Shaked*, ed. Yohanan Friedmann and Etan Kohlberg (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2019), 79–81.

tual entropy.[17] But having said that, we may also note that in the Renaissance copy a new element emerges which is not there in the Talmudic spell, namely, the two words *ẓa ẓa* at the end of the spell. In their current vocalization, they are meaningless, but if we vocalize them as *ẓe ẓe*, they could be translated as "come out, come out," which definitely is an appropriate invocation for the stuck bone. This too is a very familiar process, in which new elements are added to old spells, in order to enhance their power, and they too are subject to the forces of textual entropy.

A second point that must be stressed is that in this specific case, the ultimate origins of the spell lie not in some ancient *magical* text, but in the Babylonian Talmud, a canonical Jewish text. For even if we assume that the rabbis did not invent this spell, and that it circulated independently in magical texts from the rabbinic period onwards, we would still have to admit that most Jews—or, at least, most rabbis—would have known it from its appearance in the Talmud. And yet, this does not make our compiler, or any of his predecessors, correct the recipe in light of the talmudic version, or even add a comment about the existence of this parallel. This is not an isolated example, and even in *'Ets ha-Da'at* there is one more example of a spell that came from the Babylonian Talmud, but was completely misunderstood by its later users, including Elisha ben Gad himself.[18]

Another interesting example of the *longue durée* transmission of magical recipes is provided by a recipe for catching a thief, which follows several other recipes for the same aim and runs as follows (fol. 37b):

עוד אחר **למצא הגנב** קח אורפימנטו ודומה לזהב והוא פסולת זהב לשוחקו ולערב עם לובן ביצה ולצייר העין על הכותל כזה * או סימן אחר בדומה לזה והוא שיהיה בדמות העין ואחר שצײרת אותו מסמר של נחושת תיקח בידך ותכה המסמר בעין ותאמר **שתרואֵל אלשתרו שתֶ שתֵ שתֵ שת.** משביע אני עליכם אותיות קדושות ומלאכים קדושים שתעשו שיבא מיחוש שיבא וכאב גדול בעין אותו האיש או האשה שגנב גניבה זו ולא יעבור ממנו כאב וצער זה ולא תרפו ממנו עד אשר יודה בכל. ותכף יבא הצער אל הגנב ויודה בקול רם.

"Another one to find the thief: Take *orpimento*—and it is like gold, and it is gold slag—grind it and mix it with egg white, and draw an eye on the wall, like this [at this point there is an image of an eye, reproduced in Fig. 1a], or another sign similar to this, i. e., one that looks like an eye. And after you draw it you should take a copper nail in your hand, and hit the nail into the eye, and say, '*shtaro'el alshtro shte shte shete shte*. I adjure you holy letters and holy angels, that you will make an ache and a great pain come into the eye of that man or that woman who stole this stolen object, so that this pain and suffering will not pass away from him, and you will not

---

17 Claudia Rohrbacher-Sticker, "From Sense to Nonsense, From Incantation Prayer to Magical Spell," *JSQ* 3 (1996): 24–46.

18 For this example, see the spell אוזפן הוזיא דמייל on fol. 13b, and compare bShab 66b; Yuval Harari, "Bringing the Dead in a Dream—Divination through the Dead in the Jewish Magical Tradition (Jewish Dream Magic, Part I [in Hebrew])," in *Dameta leTamar: Studies in Honor of Tamar Alexander*, ed. Eliezer Papo, Haim Weiss, Yaakov Bentolila, and Yuval Harari, El Prezente 8–9, Mikan 15 (Be'er-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2015), 1:204.

let him loose, until he confesses everything.' And immediately suffering will come upon the thief and he will confess in a loud voice."

(a) BL Or. 12362	(b) NYPL 190, first image	(c) NYPL 190, second image	(d) PGM V, (= BL, P.Lond. 46, fol. 2r)

Figure 1: The images of the eye in the recipes for catching a thief

Looking at the image which accompanies this recipe (see Fig. 1a), we may note that unlike most of the illustrations in *‘Ets ha-Da‘at*, which are merely decorative, here we see an illustration that is an essential part of the instructions, in that it tells you what image to draw on the wall, including both the human eye and the nail stuck inside it.[19] And on the linguistic level, we may note the recipe's use of the Italian word *orpimento*, which the text then feels bound to explain, and which might point to the recipe's use in an Italian-speaking milieu.[20] But this recipe is found in many other Jewish magical recipe books, including some that predate *‘Ets ha-Da‘at* and that display no Italian influences. This, for example, is what it looks like in NYPL 190 (formerly Sassoon 56), p. 100, compiled in the 1460s by a scribe called Moses ben Ya‘akov, somewhere in the Arabic-speaking world:

קבלת טליטלה ובהוראת ר׳ משה נ״ע׳ תעשה צורת עין בכותל מפסולת כסף ולובן ביצה כזה *
ותכה במסמר נחשת שתשים באישון העין בפטיש של נחשת ותאמר הרבה פעמים משביע אני עליך
שְׁתַרוֹאֵל שְׁתוֹרָאֵל תם.

"A Kabbalah (tradition) from Toledo, and in the teaching of R. Moses, may he rest in Eden: Make the form of an eye on the wall from silver slag and egg white, like this [a very schematic image of an eye, see Fig. 1b][21] and hit on a copper nail which you place in the pupil of the eye with a copper hammer, and say many times, 'I adjure you *shtaro'el shtora'el*.' The end."[22]

---

19 For the distinction between aesthetic, performative, and functional illustrations, see Harari, "Magical Paratexts," 243–249; see also p. 258, where he refers to this specific example, and also his contribution in the present volume.

20 Needless to say, orpiment is not related to gold in any way, but is gold in color, which is how it got its name, from Latin *auri-pigmentum*.

21 On the same page of NYPL 190, there appears another version of this recipe, and there the image to be drawn is of an entire face, but again very schematically; see Figure 1c.

22 See Bohak, *Fifteenth-Century Manuscript*, 1:142, 2:100. For the recipe's appearance in other Jewish magical recipes see Bohak, *Fifteenth-Century Manuscript*, 1:142, n. 1; Harari, "Magical Paratexts," 258, n. 59.

The similarities between the two recipes are many, including the recipe's aim, the use of metal slag mixed with egg white to draw an eye on a wall, the use of a copper nail, hammering the nail into the eye, and the adjuration of the angel Shtaro'el. On the other hand, there are also many differences, including the use of gold slag in one recipe, silver slag in another, the instruction to use a copper hammer, which is found in one recipe, but not in the other, and the long adjuration of several angels in one recipe, as against a much shorter adjuration, and of a single angel only, in the other. Even the images accompanying the two recipes could not be more different (see Fig. 1), although they both illustrate the same instruction, to draw a human eye on a wall. Clearly, we have the same basic recipe, but transmitted by many different copyists, in many different languages, and constantly changing its exact form. And in this case, we can also see that in one version of the recipe it is attributed to a Rabbi Moses of Toledo, but in the other it is not; this attribution may be accurate in the sense that a Rabbi Moses of Toledo may have been one of the recipe's many transmitters, but he surely was not the only one, and he certainly did not compose or invent this recipe. In fact, the technique of catching thieves by drawing an eye on a wall and hammering a nail into it was already mentioned in several writings of *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz*.[23] But even they must have learned it from much earlier sources.

To prove that our recipe was not composed or invented in the Jewish world, or in the Middle Ages, we must turn to the magical texts of late antiquity. There we find it in two of the Greek Magical Papyri, SM II, 86 (3rd or early 4th cent.) and PGM V.70–95 (ca. 4th cent.).[24] In PGM V it already is accompanied by an image of an eye, but this time in a very Egyptian style (see Fig. 1d). And that it kept on being transmitted, and transformed, throughout the Middle Ages is demonstrated in numerous Greek and Latin magical recipe books, as well as in many vernacular magical texts.[25] Thus, any attempt to trace all its

---

23   See Moritz Güdemann, *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Cultur der abendländischen Juden während des Mittelalters* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1880–1888; repr., Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1966), 1:207, who quotes the relevant passage from the "Book of Angels" (ספר מלאכים); Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (New York: Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1939; repr., Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 125.

24   For SM II, 86 (= P. Oxy. LVI, 3835), see Robert W. Daniel and Franco Maltomini, *Supplementum Magicum*, Papyrologica Coloniensia 16 (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990–1992), 1:179–186; and Christopher A. Faraone and Sofía Torallas Tovar, eds., *Greek and Egyptian Magical Formularies: Text and Translation*, vol. 1 California Classical Studies 9 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2022), no. 46. The papyrus is badly preserved, and the accompanying image of the eye—if there was one—is lost. For PGM V, see Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 2nd ed., ed. Albert Heinrichs (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973–1974), 1:184–185; for an English translation, see Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 102. For the thief-catching ritual and its later appearances in numerous languages, see also Adolf Jacoby, "Ein hellenistisches Ordal," *ARW* 16 (1913): 122–126; Adolf Jacoby, "Zu dem Diebszauber Archiv XVI, 122ff," *ARW* 18 (1915): 585–587; Adolf Jacoby, "Weiteres zu dem Diebszauber Archiv XVI 122ff," *ARW* 21 (1922): 485–491.

25   For some useful surveys of the evidence, see Ulrike Horak and Christian Gastgeber, "Zwei Beispiele angewandter Bildmagie: Ein griechischer Diebszauber und ein 'verknotetes' Sator-Quadrat," *Biblos* 44 (1995), 197–209; Stephen B. Stallcup, "'The Eye of Abraham' Charms for Thieves: Versions in Middle and Modern English," *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft* 10 (2015): 23–40; Chiara Benati,

different appearances in the Jewish magical tradition will have to take into account both the possibility of inner-Jewish transmission and the possibility of recurrent borrowing from non-Jewish sources. But for our current purpose, suffice it to say that this recipe began its life in late Roman Egypt, if not long before, and entered the Jewish magical tradition on more than one occasion. By the time it was included by Elisha ben Gad in his own compilation, it had been in circulation—in various forms and in different languages—for more than a thousand years.

2   Some Medieval Magical Recipes in BL Or. 12362

As we saw in the previous section, some of the recipes found in *'Ets ha-Da'at* can be traced back at least to late antiquity, and perhaps even to earlier periods. But other recipes found in this compendium are demonstrably medieval in origin. Perhaps the best example is provided by a text called "The Properties of the Snakeskin," a collection of twelve recipes that make use of the powder remaining when a snakeskin is burned under specific astrological conditions. This text made its way into *'Ets ha-Da'at* in two different places. In the first, on fol. 36a, we get an abridged, and garbled, version of this text, which includes a brief introduction, the technical instructions on how to produce the powder, and four uses of this powder. It is followed by a recipe involving snake oil, on fol. 36b. In the second instance, on fols. 45a–46a (right after the recipe for one who swallowed a bone, which we discussed above) we find the entire text, except for one recipe that is missing; this recipe was clearly lost in transmission, since the introduction refers to twelve different uses of the powder, and the instructions are numbered 1–12, with the twelfth section left blank. The appearance of the whole text is an unusual occurrence in *'Ets ha-Da'at*, since it is the only example of an earlier multi-recipe magical text which was copied by Elisha ben Gad in its entirety. And, as this is a well-known text, we can easily trace its earlier history and its appearance in other manuscripts of Jewish magic.

In the Christian world, this text is known as *Experimenta duodecim Johannis Paulini* (The Twelve Experiments of Johannes Paulinus), and it begins as follows:

> Cum ego Johannes Paulinus essem in Alexandria civitate egipciorum reperi in quodam libro qui salus vite appellatur hec XII experimenta, que inferius de serpentum coriis sunt descripta que plerumque solent in casibus inveniri. Illum autem librum fecit Alanus physicus, qui experimenta tamquam ab eo facta asserit vera esse. Ego autem transtuli ea de arabico in latinum.

> "When I, Johannes Paulinus, was in the city of Alexandria, in Egypt, I found in a certain book called *Salus vitae* (Life Saver) the twelve experiments concerning

---

"Painted Eyes, Magical Sieves and Carved Runes: Charms for Catching and Punishing Thieves in the Medieval and Early Modern Germanic Tradition," in *Magic and Magicians in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Time: The Occult in Premodern Sciences, Medicine, Literature, Religion, and Astrology*, ed. Albrecht Classen, Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 20 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 197–213; Daniella Zaidman-Mauer and Sivan Gottlieb, "'Beat the Copper Nail in the Eye with a Hammer': An Ancient Magic Spell in Yiddish for Catching a Thief," *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 17 (2023): 153–175.

snakeskin described below, which can be used in most cases encountered. This book was written by Alanus the physician, who asserts that he tried the experiments and found them to be true. I then translated it from Arabic into Latin."[26]

The Latin text claims to be a translation from an Arabic source, and although the original Arabic text has never been identified, one factor argues for the claim that it did exist, and was not made up by some Latin-language author. In Arabic, the word for "life" and the word for "snake" are almost identical. Moreover, in Arabic texts it is common for a work's title to contain wordplays and rhymes, and a postulated title such "The Salvation of Life (حَيَاة) from the Skin of a Snake (حَيَّة)" would fit nicely in the Arabic medical and magical library. And although Alanus is a good Latin name, it probably is a corruption—typical in Latin translations from Arabic—of a name that began with *al-*, the Arabic definite article. However, until an Arabic version of this text is securely identified, we cannot be sure about its ultimate origins.

In the Jewish world, this text is found in at least twelve different manuscripts, which seem to reflect three independent translations into Hebrew. One of these was carried out by David ben Yom Tov ibn Bilia, who says that he translated the text from Latin in the year 1338, and offers a Hebrew translation of the entire text, including the introduction we have just cited.[27] Another version, which is the most widely attested, probably reflects a different translation of the Latin text, by an anonymous translator, and does not mention its author's name.[28] But in the version found in *Ets ha-Da'at*, the text begins as follows (fols. 45a–45b):

---

26 For the Latin text, see John William Schibby Johnsson, "Les 'Experimenta duodecim Johannis Paulini,'" *Bulletin de la Société française d'histoire de la médecine et de ses filiales* 12 (1913): 257–267; for its wider contexts, see Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923–1958), 2:794–796; for an English translation, which I quote here with some modifications, see the unpublished manuscript by William Eamon, "Medieval Wonder Drugs: Two 13th Century Snake Tracts," https://www.academia.edu/6496337/Medieval_Wonder_Drugs_Two_13th_Century_Snake_Tracts. For its appearance in Hebrew manuscripts, see Moritz Steinschneider, *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher* (Berlin: Kommissionsverlag des Bibliographischen Bureaus, 1893; repr., Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1956), 805–806; Mauro Zonta, "Medieval Hebrew Translations of Philosophical and Scientific Texts: A Chronological Table," in *Science in Medieval Jewish Cultures*, ed. Gad Freudenthal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 58; Gideon Bohak, "Rabbanite Magical Texts in Karaite Manuscripts," *Karaite Archives* 1 (2013), 26–27. In what follows, I make use of an unpublished paper written by a high school student, Emmi Cohen, under my supervision, and containing an analysis of the different Hebrew versions of this text.

27 This text is found in MS Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod.hebr. 228, fols. 115r–v, with a different copy of the same text on fol. 182v.

28 This version is found, for example, in MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Hébr. 806, fols. 251r–252r; MS New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, 1856, fols. 16r–17r; MS St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Evr. II A 171/5, fols. 2r–3v; MS London, British Library, Or. 10329, fols. 1r–2v.

סגולות מעור הנחש דברי שלמה הרופא מטוליטול׳ הנה מצאתי כתוב בספר הערב כי […] ומצאתי
כתוב בספרי הסגולות המובהקות מלשון הערב שתועלותיו הם שנים עשר ויש מהם רחוקי׳ מן השכל
ומפועל בטבע.

> "Remedies from snakeskin, the words of Shlomo, the physician from Toledo. I have
> found written in a book of the Arabs that … [here come the technical instructions] …
> and I have found it written in the books of manifest remedies in the Arabic language
> that it has twelve beneficial uses, and some of them are far from reasonable and far
> from the workings of nature."

Who this Shlomo of Toledo was we do not know, and the claim that the text was translated directly from Arabic need not be taken at face value, but it should not be discarded either. After all, Toledo was a famous center of translation of medical and other works from Arabic into Latin and into Hebrew. And when we compare this Hebrew version with the Latin text we can easily see that it is the same basic text (except for the one recipe that is missing in the Hebrew text), but also quite different from it. To see this, we only need to look at the third recipe of the Latin *Experimenta duodecim* and at the fourth one in Elisha ben Gad's Hebrew text:

Experimenta duodecim (ed. Johnsson):	BL Or. 12362, fol. 45b:
Tertium est quod si laveris faciem tuam cum pulvere isto et cum aqua apparebis terribilis omnibus inimicis tuis et tremebundi fugient a facie tua et amici tui tibi familiariter adherebunt et sic poteris cognoscere amicos tuos et inimicos.	הד אם תערב ממנו במים ותרחץ ממנו הפנים יתברר לך האוהב והשונא כי האוהב ידבק בך וירוץ אחריך והשונא יברח ממך.
"The third is that if you wash your face with this powder and with water you will appear frightening to all your enemies, and they will flee from you (lit. from your face) trembling with fear, and your friends will stay with you more intimately; and in this way you will be able to know your friends and enemies."	"The fourth: If you mix some of it (the pulverized snakeskin) in water and wash your face with it, you will distinguish between the one who loves you and the one who hates you, since the one who loves you will stay with you and run after you, and the one who hates you will run away from you."

What we see here is that the aim and the basic technique of the two recipes are exactly the same, but their wording is very different. Thus, while we can never be sure that the text found in *'Ets ha-Da'at* was translated directly from the Arabic text, which was also translated into Latin, this is quite possible. And regardless of whether it was translated from Latin or from Arabic, we have here a clear example of a text that is unattested in late antiquity but enjoyed some popularity among non-Jews in the Middle Ages. It was translated into Hebrew on several different occasions, with one of these Hebrew versions reaching Elisha ben Gad and being incorporated into his own compilation. In this case,

he clearly knew of the foreign origins of the text he was copying—which was originally found "in a book of the Arabs"—but he probably did not know of its popularity in the Latin-speaking world.

3   Some Contemporary Magical Recipes in BL Or. 12362

Having seen that some of the materials included by Elisha ben Gad in his compilation were extremely old, and others were medieval in origin, we may now ask whether he also had access to more contemporaneous materials. And here, one example stands out, as it is the only case in *'Ets ha-Da'at* where Elisha refers to materials that he received orally, and from a named source, rather than reading them in written manuscripts. It is found in fol. 43b, and runs as follows:

> **לאיש כבד פה ולשון** והיא סגולה נפלאה. קח עשב הנקרא בלשון לעז׳ לְנְגוּוה מַאגאנה. ואומרים בעלי
> הטבע כי היא נמצאת בהרים הרמים. ואם יושם העשב הזה תחת לשון לכבד פה או לנעדר הדבור
> ויחזיקנו תחת לשונו לילה אחת אז יותר ממאסר לשונו ואז ימהר לדבר צחות. זה הוגד לי ושמעתי
> ממי׳ ליאון דאוסטילה.

"For a man with a speech impediment,[29] and it is a wonderful remedy. Take the herb which is called in *la'az*[30] "lingua magana"—and the masters of nature say that it is found in the high mountains. And if this herb is placed under the tongue for someone with a speech impediment or someone who cannot speak, and he will hold it under his tongue one night, then his tongue will be released from its imprisonment, and then he will soon speak clearly. This was told to me and I heard it from M. Y(ehudah) Leon of Ostiglia."

When reading first-person references in Jewish magical recipe books, one always has to ask whether this is the compiler speaking, or whether the compiler simply copied the reference which was found in his written sources, and the reference itself is in fact much older. For example, in Elisha's copy of the snakeskin text we discussed above, the text begins with a first-person account, מצאתי כתוב בספר הערב, "I have found written in a book of the Arabs"—but the speaker is not Elisha ben Gad, but Shlomo of Toledo, who probably lived several centuries earlier. However, in the example before us now, Elisha says that he *heard* the information, and names the oral tradent as a certain Leon of אוסטילה. This must be Ostiglia, some 140 kms west of Venice, and some 300 km northwest of Ancona.[31] And the data provided by Leon of Ostiglia include the Italian name of the plant and the claim that Leon himself had learned all this from "the masters of nature" (בעלי הטבע). This is the only occurrence of this expression in *'Ets ha-Da'at*, and although we cannot be sure about this, it is likely that Leon's sources were not Jewish, and that this bit of knowledge

---

29 Literally, "heavy of mouth and tongue," as in Exod 4:10.

30 In Jewish texts, *la'az* refers to words in a foreign tongue, usually the local vernacular; in this case, the reference is to Italian, or one of its local dialects.

31 On the Jews of Ostiglia in the sixteenth century, see Shlomo Simonsohn, *History of the Jews in the Duchy of Mantua* (Jerusalem: Kiryath-Sepher, 1977), 211–212, 223–224, 228, 229.

stems from the medical discourse of the time. The plant in question is said to grow in the high mountains—presumably, the Alps, not far from Ostiglia and Venice—and its name, "lingua magana," probably refers to *Ruscus hypoglossum*, which is also known as *lingua magna* and *lingua pagana*.[32] It was known in Greek as *hypoglosson* (under-the-tongue), because its flowers sprout under a tongue-shaped protrusion in the middle of its leaves.[33] It was also known as *hippoglosson* (horse-tongue), a name which probably was derived from *hypoglosson*, but parallels similar plant names such as *kynoglosson* (dog-tongue) and *bouglosson* (bull-tongue). The plant kept its *hippo-* name, and is still known as the horse-tongue lily, but it also has several other names in different European languages.

The placing of an "under-the-tongue" plant under a patient's tongue in order to heal tongue-related illnesses is hardly surprising. In fact, it is also recorded in three Italian herbals of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, which preserve slightly different versions of this recommendation, embedded within other uses of the same plant.[34] All three herbals also claim that it grows in high mountains, or in cold areas. The sections relevant for our own discussion may be printed as follows:

Foligno herbal:[35]	Marucelliana herbal:[36]	Urbino herbal:[37]
Herba bonifatia e sia lingua pagana [...] Item ad persona che avesse lingua piagata tolli la follia di questa erba e frechele bene di sopra e di sotto alla lingua e subito guarisce [...] Nassie in terrini friddi e in lochi scuri.	Herba bonifatia et linghua paghana [...] Chi avesse la lingua paghana o grossa: piglia la foglia di decta herba et tienla in boccha, usandola parecchi dì: fia presto libero [...] Nascie in montagne frigide et obscure.	Herba Bonifazia o lingua pagana [...] Item at persona che havesse lingua pagana; togli le foglie di questa herba, cioè le foglie et fregali sopra et sotto la lengua, et guarirà [...] Et nasce in montagne fredde, et loci obscuri. Et è provato.

---

32 For this plant and its different names and medicinal uses, see, for example, William Salmon, *Botanologia, The English Herbal* (London: I. Sawks, 1710), ch. 382, pp. 544–545. I am grateful to Elke Morlok for this reference.

33 See Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 15.131, 27.93; Dioscorides, *De materia medica* 4.129.

34 The following discussion is based on Roberto Tavazzi, "Un 'libro de erbe' del Quattrocento: Il codice A.VIII.16 della biblioteca 'Jacobilli' di Foligno," *Proposte e Ricerche* 59 (2007): 296–310; for the texts cited below, see p. 307.

35 MS Foligno, Biblioteca Jacobilli, A.VIII.16, fol. 19r; this part of the manuscript displays watermarks attested in Venice in 1480 and in Lucca in 1482 (see Tavazzi, "Un 'libro de erbe,'" 297).

36 MS Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, 168/C, n. 25; this manuscript dates to 1512 (see Tavazzi, "Un 'libro de erbe,'" 302). I have had no access to Salvatore Pezzella, *I segreti della medicina verde nell'epoca medicea, da due manoscritti inediti della città di Firenze* (secoli XV e XVI) (Assisi: Properzio, 1980).

37 MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 1354, fol. 3v; early sixteenth century. For images of this manuscript, see https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Urb.lat.1354; for an image and transcription of this page, see "Erbario di Urbino," https://www.globalnet.it/erbe/home.html. I have had no access to Maria Lucia De Nicolò, *L'erbario del Duca di Urbino (trascrizione e commento del cod. Urb. Lat. 1354 della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana)*, 2 vols. (Milan: Mediamed, 2010).

"The plant *bonifatia*, and (it is) also (called) *lingua pagana* [...] Also, for a person who has a wounded tongue, remove the leaf of this plant and rub it well above and below the tongue, and immediately he/she will be healed [...] It grows in cold terrains and in dark places."

"The plant *bonifatia*, and *linghua paghana* [...] One who has a 'pagan'[38] or a swollen tongue: Take the leaf of the said plant and hold it in the mouth, using it for several days; he/she will soon be free [...] It grows in cold and dark mountains."

"The plant *bonifazia*, or *lingua pagana* [...] Also, for a person who has a 'pagan' tongue; remove the leaves of this plant, that is, the leaves, and rub them above and below the tongue, and he/she will be healed [...] And it grows in cold mountains, and dark places. And it is tested."

The three herbals differ from each other, but are close enough to what Leon of Ostiglia told Elisha ben Gad as to assure us that some such text served as the source from which Leon derived his knowledge. There, he learned that the *lingua pagana* plant grows in high mountains, which are cold and dark, and that when rubbed above and/or below a patient's tongue, it can heal it of various ailments. The herbals are less ambitious than what Elisha attributed to Leon, as they do not claim that this plant can help a patient who cannot speak, but the text which was used by "the masters of nature" may have been such a herbal, or some related text.

To this example of a recipe which Elisha heard from his contemporaries, rather than read in books, several more may be added.[39] Right after this recipe (and still on fol. 43b), a recipe for treating epilepsy is introduced by "I have heard from an experienced physician" (מפי רופא מומחה שמעתי), with a recommendation that the patient should drink "the excrement of a stork, which is called in *la'az cigogna*" (צואת החסידה הנקראת בלעז ציגונייה) in water or in wine, "and he will immediately get up and walk, and will be healed in three days, with God's help." Here too, Elisha records data that he heard, not read, and adds the Italian name for a stork, probably because he heard it in his native Italy. Moreover, the spelling ציגונייה (cf. *cicogna* in Modern Italian) probably reflects the local dialect used by Elisha or his interlocutor, and is attested in Bologna, Bergamo, and Mantua, all quite close to Ancona, Ostiglia, and Venice.[40] And here the source is an anonymous physician,

---

38 For "lingua pag(h)ana" as the name of an affliction, see Gabriel Fallopio, *La chirurgia* (Venice: Abondio Menasoglio, 1675), 286: "Dalla Ranula, o Lingua Pagana [...] Nasce sotto la lingua un certo Tumore chiamato da i moderni Ranula, da i Greci Batracco [...] & par che sia una nova lingua nell'huomo, onde dal volgo e chiamata lingua Pagana, perche il volgo con questa voce pagana comprende tutte le cose inutili & cattive." (Concerning the "Little Frog," or "Pagan" Tongue [...] a certain tumor grows under the tongue, which is called by the moderns "Little Frog," by the Greeks βάτραχος (frog) [...] And because it (i.e., the tumor) is a new tongue in the man, therefore people call it a "pagan" tongue, since people use this word "pagan" for all things that are useless and bad.)

39 I am less certain about an example found on fol. 42a, where the text says: "I have found it (i.e., this remedy) tried and tested myself, and then I said that it is worthy to be written in a book." Is this Elisha speaking, or did he copy the whole sentence from an earlier source?

40 See the online Tesoro della Lingua Italiana delle Origini, http://tlio.ovi.cnr.it/TLIO/, under *cicogna*.

not a kabbalist, and perhaps not even a Jew.[41] What Elisha did not know, and could not have known, was that the use of stork dung to treat epilepsy was already recommended by Dioscorides, in the first century AD.[42] Here, in other words, we have another instance of a very ancient recipe, but this time it was transmitted in medical manuals which were copied and read by Christian (and Jewish?) physicians, and not in Jewish magical recipe books. For Elisha, it was a piece of advice he had heard "from an experienced physician."[43]

On fol. 46b, Elisha again reports a medical recipe that he had heard; this time, it is a recipe to cure heavy diarrhea, and Elisha says that "I have heard it from one who tried them (i.e., these ingredients), that he cured with them many people whose intestines almost dried up (because of their diarrhea)" (ושמעתי ממי שנסה אותם שרפא בהם הרבה אנשים שכמעט נתיבש המעי שלהם). And here too, he names one of the ingredients both in Hebrew and in Italian, when he speaks of "rose oil, i.e., *rosato* oil" (שמן ורד היינו שמן רוסאטו).[44] The appearance of Italian words is very common in *'Ets ha-Da'at*, and in other manuscripts of Italian Jewish magic, and need not imply an oral rather than a written transmission.[45] But the claim that Elisha heard the recipe makes this clear, and the provision of the Italian technical terms probably shows that he heard it from Italian speakers, most likely in his native Italy. Finally, in one section in which Elisha explains when and how to write amulets (fols. 19a–19b), he twice refers to *Sefer Razi'el* as his source, and in one of these instances says that the writing must be with an iron (pen), "for thus I have received from my teacher, and saw in *Sefer Razi'el*" (כי כך קבלתי ממורי וראיתי בספר רזיאל).[46] Though he

---

does not name this teacher, he is probably thinking of Rabbi Yehudah Alkabetz, the only other living person who is mentioned by name in his compilation. But in this case, the knowledge he received orally was also found in one of the manuscripts that he read. And as this is one of only two written sources which he explicitly cites by name, [47] it is tempting to identify it with the book that he had seen in Alkabetz's house, sealed in a case within a case and wrapped in a cloth, as we have noted above.

4   Conclusion

As noted at the beginning of this paper, my aim was not to go over the entire compilation of Elisha ben Gad and classify each textual unit according to its relative age. Such an undertaking is a priori impossible, and even if it were possible, it would be quite futile, since it would not help us learn where exactly Elisha found these recipes. As he himself makes very clear in his own introduction, his compilation reflects the gradual accumulation of knowledge, gleaned from many different sources, both in Venice and in Safed. Many of the written sources that he used must have been very eclectic in their own right, like most manuscripts of Jewish magic, and the result is a hopeless mixture of older and newer magical recipes, to which Elisha added a few items that he received orally, from his living contemporaries. Such a combination is very common in manuscripts of Jewish magic, and with the possible exception of the reference to בעלי הטבע, "the masters of nature," which served Leon of Ostiglia as trustworthy sources, there is very little here to remind us that Elisha was living in the Renaissance, and not in the Middle Ages. But the elaborate egodocument with which he opened his compilation, his decision to provide a table of contents in which the recipes are classified in four different categories, and especially the lavish decorations which accompany the entire manuscript, all seem like fresh innovations, the harbingers of a new era. In this respect, we may see *'Ets ha-Da'at*, as copied in the manuscript London, British Library, Or. 12362 as an interesting example of old wine poured into a new wineskin.

Judaistische Beiträge 32 (2005): 1–22; Reimund Leicht, *Astrologumena Judaica: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Astrologischen Literatur der Juden*, Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism 21 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 187–194.

47   The other is *Sefer Yetsirah*, which is mentioned on fol. 23a as the source for a recipe "to open the heart," that is, to improve one's memory and learning abilities; it is not clear which book he had in mind, since the famous *Sefer Yetsirah* has no such recipes. On fol. 39b, in a ritual in which a boy will see demons, he is told to tell them to bring the book of Solomon and take an oath upon it, but the book is not described any further.

Between Safed and Ancona:
Text and Paratext in Two Sixteenth-Century Jewish Manuscripts of Magic and Divination

Yuval Harari

In 1535, Elisha, son of Gad of Ancona, wrote his book *'Ets ha-Da'at* (Tree of Knowledge) in Safed.[1] *'Ets ha-Da'at* is a book of magic recipes, one of the hundreds of works in this genre with a long history still ongoing. The existence of Jewish magic literature is already hinted in antiquity in the *Book of Jubilees* (2nd cent. BC) in the context of the anti-demonic "remedies" Noah received from the angels and "wrote down in a book" that he gave to his sons (Jub. 10:10–14), and possibly also in fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls dealing with protection from demons.[2] But the appearance of this literature as a systematic and diversified body of knowledge organized in lists of instructions for action is first recorded only centuries later in two magic works from antiquity—the *Book of Mysteries* (*Sefer ha-Razim*) and the *Sword of Moses* (*Ḥarba de-Moshe*)—apparently written in the second and third quarters of the first millennium.[3] Their earliest manuscript versions, however, as well as that of Jewish magic instructional literature in general, were found in the Cairo Genizah— the repository of worn-out holy (and other) writings, mainly from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries kept in a side room of the Ben-Ezra Synagogue in Fustat (old Cairo).

About two and a half thousand magic fragments were found in the Cairo Genizah, among them amulets for protection, healing, and success in business and personal life, writs of curses and harm to rivals, adjurations for divination purposes, and fragments from magic recipe books, most of them written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Judeo-Arabic. A similar literature developed in Jewish communities in the Christian world as well, recorded in hundreds of manuscripts and later also in printed books. This magic literature emerged and was shaped by generations of authors, collectors, writers, translators, and copyists, and its creators have remained largely anonymous.[4] The writers' time and place,

---

let alone their identity, are almost invariably unknown to us. *'Ets ha-Da'at* is a rare excep-
tion in this tradition, yet not only in this regard.

This work is currently known in two copies, both of Italian origin. One, MS London,
British Library, Or. 12362 (hereafter MS London), which is the focus of this article, is
from the sixteenth century. The other copy, MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Opp. Add.
Oct. 73, 1a–57b (Neubauer 2570; IMHM F 22273; hereafter MS Oxford), probably relies
on the earlier one and is from the eighteenth century. It is, as noted, a book of magic
recipes, and includes 126 items. Most of its sections offer recipes for dealing with a broad
variety of needs, mishaps, and desires typical of this genre: heal a fever, catch a thief, have
milk for nursing, rescue from enemies, make a dream inquiry, talk to the dead, and many
others.[5] A few offer theoretical knowledge related to magic activity, such as the "Alphabet
of Metatron the Prince of Presence"—an alphabetical dictionary of *charactêres* (magic
signs composed of various combinations of short lines with circles at their ends, also
known as "ring letters"),[6] or general instructions for preparing amulets ("The Kabbalah
of Making Amulets Properly").[7] Most of the items are isolated recipes and a few, such as
"Charms of the Snakeskin—According to Solomon the Physician of Toledo," make up
an organized collation around a common core (in this case, using the ashes of a snake's
slough that was burned "in the month of March when the moon is filling and in the first
degree of Aries").[8] Most recipes were written in no particular order, while a few, such as
nine recipes for love or seven for catching a thief, were gathered together according to
their common concern.[9]

In all these regards, this volume is not exceptional in the Jewish literature on magic
recipes known to us from the Middle Ages and the early modern period. In every other
sense, however, and particularly in its copy in MS London, this work is unique. The *Tree
of Knowledge*, as it appears in this manuscript, including all its paratexts, will be my first
concern. I will then move on to the other work I focus on, a prognostication treatise titled
Maggid Davar (Reveals a [Hidden] Word), and to the connection between the two. But
first, a brief word on "paratexts" is in place.

---

5   For a discussion of the history of some of these recipes, see Gideon Bohak, "A Renaissance
    Manuscript of Jewish Magic," in this volume.

6   MS London, fol. 18b (section 22). On *charactêres* and other performative signs in Jewish magic tradi-
    tion, see Gideon Bohak, "The Charaktêres in Ancient and Medieval Jewish Magic," *Acta Classica:
    Universitatis Scientiarum Debreceniensis* 47 (2011): 25–44.

7   MS London, fols. 19a–21a (section 23).

8   MS London, fols. 45a–46a. All English translations are mine unless otherwise indicated. This short
    tract, which includes twelve uses of snake's slough, was copied throughout the Middle Ages in many
    Latin books of magic and medicine, where it was ascribed to Johannes Paulinus and titled "Twelve
    Experiments of Johannes Paulinus" or "Twelve Experiments with Snakeskin." It was also trans-
    lated into Hebrew and even made its way to a nineteenth-century Karaite manuscript. See Bohak,
    "Renaissance Manuscript"; Gideon Bohak, "Rabbanite Magical Texts in Karaite Manuscripts,"
    Karaite Archives 1 (2013), 26–27. The twelfth charm is missing in MS London and the copyist left
    some space for its amendment at the bottom of the page. It is also missing in MS Oxford but the
    copyist left no space here.

9   For love, see MS London, fols. 29a–30b. For catching a thief, fols. 37a–39b.

1   A Brief Word on Paratexts in Jewish Grimoires

Gérard Genette coined the term "paratext" as part of his textual theory. He used it to refer to all the components "beyond the text" that constitute and surround the printed textual manifestation of any verbal context—be it as part of the book (binding, title page, font, table of contents, preface, pictures, titles, indices, and so forth, which he called "peritext") or outside it (advertising posters, reviews, promotion interviews, and so forth, which he called "epitext").[10] Genette intended his method for printed books, but his analysis, particularly that of the peritexts, is relevant to works in manuscript as well. Several years ago, Daniel Abrams suggested using the concept of "paratext" in the study of kabbalistic manuscripts to denote "all the signs and annotations that were added to the discursive text."[11] In the context of Jewish magic manuscripts, I use the term "paratext" to denote all the paralinguistic elements of the text in the broad meaning of "text," that is, all that was placed on the page in the manuscript. The graphic design of the linguistic text (the font, the layout, the numbering of the items, tables, etc.), the graphic signs, diagrams, and drawings included in the verbal text, page titles, illustrations, amendments, and signs of their inclusion, signs of use of the manuscript, and so forth—all are paratexts. They split into three groups: functional paratexts, that is, visual aspects of the manuscript that follow from its function as a manual of magic; performative paratexts, which are part of the recipes' instructions; and decorative paratexts, meaning illustrations.

The Jewish literature of magic recipes, as noted, is professional-technical. It is written in the "list" genre, that is, as brief and closed units of information consecutively arranged and meant for practical use through the retrieval of the required information unit—the recipe. Heading every recipe is always its purpose—"for love," "to catch a thief," "for a crying kid," "for winning in court"—followed by details of the ritual and linguistic acts to be performed to achieve it. Lists of this kind were at times organized to various degrees, but their authors rarely related to them as an actual book.[12] Elisha son of Gad was an exception among the parties interested in "practical Kabbalah" (as magic knowledge came to be known after "Kabbalah" became the accepted term for denoting Jewish esoteric lore)[13] as was also the copyist of his work in MS London.

---

10 See Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. J.E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); on "peritext" and "epitext," see pp. 4–5. The following discussion of Jewish magic paratexts is very concise. For more detailed discussion and further bibliography, see Harari, "Functional Paratexts"; Yuval Harari, "Magical Paratexts: Ms London, The British Library Or. 12362 (*Ets ha-Da'at*) as a Test Case" [in Hebrew], *Kabbalah* 42 (2018), 241–249.

11 Daniel Abrams, "Kabbalistic Paratext," *Kabbalah* 26 (2012), 11. See also Daniel Abrams, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory: Methodologies of Textual Scholarship and Editorial Practice in the Study of Jewish Mysticism*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2013), 517.

12 On the arrangements of Jewish grimoires and the functional paratexts designed to ease the retrieval of information, see Harari, "Functional Paratexts."

13 See Yuval Harari, "'Practical Kabbalah' and the Jewish Tradition of Magic," *Aries* 19 (2019): 38–82; Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974), 182–189.

2 *Ets ha-Da'at*: MS London, British Library, Or. 12362

MS London, British Library Or. 12362 (formerly Gaster 38) is a small (138 × 92 mm) leather-bound notebook made of paper (with visible network marks and no watermark) entirely devoted to one opus, *Ets ha-Da'at*.[14] The manuscript includes forty-nine folios, and six additional ones are missing.[15] It was written extremely carefully with brown ink in a very small Italian script and decorated throughout—beside the writing and as part of it in additions to the letters—with the same ink and by the same person. This, then, is an exceptional example of a magical book that was created from the start not only as a source of knowledge but also as an object of beauty.

Added to the many decorative paratexts in the manuscripts are textual peritexts of the kind Genette pointed out as well as functional and performative paratexts of the kind mentioned above. I will first consider the major peritexts—the title page, the introduction, and the indices—and then briefly discuss the magic ones—the functional, performative, and mainly the decorative paratexts in the manuscript.[16]

Peritexts

Elisha viewed his work as an actual book. He named it *Ets ha-Da'at* (Tree of Knowledge) and set a title page, where he identified himself by name and noted the place and time of the writing—Safed, 5296 according to the Jewish calendar, which is 1535/1536 CE. Elisha also wrote a detailed personal introduction to his manual (in rhymed prose, including many biblical quotes and hints)—a rare event of a magic book of recipes serving as an egodocument—and placed at its opening four subject indices meant, as he declared, to optimize its use.

The structure and the paratexts at the beginning of this work, then, attest that it was written right from the outset for specific future addressees, to whom Elisha introduc-

---

14 See http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Or 12362 (currently unavailable; see the British Library website) or through the Ktiv website, at https://www.nli.org.il/en/discover/manuscripts/hebrew-manuscripts.

15 This calculation matches the number of recipes missing from the manuscript. Between fols. 34b and 35a, six recipes are missing (numbered 67–72). Between fols. 40b and 41a, four recipes are missing (numbered 93–96). All these missing recipes appear in the indices at the beginning of the book and in its additional copy in MS Oxford. This latter manuscript was also written in Italian script, probably in the eighteenth century. It has ninety-eight folios and, beside *Ets ha-Da'at*, many additional magic recipes gathered from various sources were also copied into it. The copy of *Ets ha-Da'at* in this manuscript includes many of the functional and performative paratexts found in MS London (see below). Like most copyists of magic recipes in the Middle Ages and the early modern period, however, the copyist of this manuscript also focused on the information he copied into his work and did not bother decorating it. He did regularly rely, however, on the pattern of a triangle standing on its head that he created at the end of the pages from a sequence of increasingly shorter lines and, in some cases, he placed various amulets spells in a relatively simple frame. In all these issues, as well as in the drawing of ears on the sides of a frame around the title of a recipe "for earache" (no. 121), MS Oxford follows the visual models characteristic of MS London and thus appears to depend on it. More explicit determinations require further research on this question, which is not my concern here.

16 My discussion here follows Harari, "Magical Paratexts," 249–262.

es the work through the title page, the introduction, and the tables. All these serve the author, (1) to emphasize his role as a collector, preserver, and organizer of the knowledge found in the work he presents to the reader, (2) to substantiate the credibility and legitimacy of this knowledge, and (3) to point out the practical benefits hidden in the work. Elisha's admiration for the knowledge he gathered in his treatise and his pride in it is evident in the title of the work, in the biblical verse he placed on the title page—"the Lord loves the gates of [*sha'arei*] Zion" (Ps 87:2), which relates to the book's front page (*sha'ar*) as a representation of the entire work—and mainly in the words that follow the title in the cover page: "The tree of knowledge whose fruit is sweet, matters that are the mystery of the world and refined as gold. Published on earth by [...] Elisha of Ancona."[17]

In the introduction, Elisha describes the main steps in his life that led him to the information in his book. In the magic recipes literature, this is a rare author's testimony on the collection of the material and on his sources. In several brief lines of rhymed prose overlaid with biblical allusions, Elisha tells his readers that, in his youth, he abandoned the vain pleasures of the flesh and went out to seek wisdom and knowledge. He wandered "from family to family and from town to town," in his words, until he reached Venice, where R. Yehudah Alkabetz took a liking to him and put him in charge of his library. On what happened there he writes:

> And so it was that when I searched in his bookcases and his treasures of light, I found books of Kabbalah, which rises to fame and glory [...] and I saw one book concealed and enclosed in a bag within a bag, wrapped in cloth, covered, and sealed. And I removed its cover and saw on its margins the mystery of the world. Therefore, I did not hold off from taking paper and copying parts or the whole of it. I then selected one thing from another, superb charms rising from it as sacrifices rise to the God of awe, and amulets made by experts suffused with the fear of God, and beautiful, pure adjurations, fragrant with myrrh and aloes.[18]

Elisha spent two years in the house of his patron in Venice, until R. Yehudah's death, and after crying and mourning the loss continued on his wanderings until he reached Safed.[19]

> There too [he writes] God showed me compassion, I found grace among the sages, and after a long time, I asked whether they possessed any ancient things sweeter than honey, solid as a mirror. And every single one who possessed a trace of sapphire and diamond was moved by his spirit to bring it here, and these are the things

---

17 MS London, fol. 2a. See also the discussion of the "stone tables" that Elisha set up in his work, at the end of this subsection.

18 MS London, fol. 3b.

19 Elisha does not mention Safed explicitly but says that he finally found rest and peace when he reached "the keystone, a crown of glory and a place of holiness," where "prophets and kings" are versed in Torah and halakhah. Since he mentions no other stops in his trip from Venice to Safed, where he wrote his work, it is plausible to assume that these superlatives refer to Safed, which indeed enjoyed this status in the land of Israel in the sixteenth century. See below, n. 21.

acquired by exchange, until I collected from the very best a cluster small in quantity but large in quality, a little that holds a lot, and I have called it *‘Ets ha-Da‘at*.[20]

Elisha, then, lived in Safed, became friendly with its sages, and wrote his treatise there, on the eve of the intellectual storm that raged in the city during the next two-thirds of the sixteenth century.[21]

Secrets are not easily accessed and, indeed, Elisha did not gain the trust of the people of Safed quickly but rather "after a long time," as he notes. It was not for free that he gained their trust, since he had not come empty-handed. He was a learned man, who came from Italy holding secrets of practical (and apparently also theoretical) Kabbalah that he had acquired in R. Yehudah Alkabetz's library. Such things, he writes, are "acquired by exchange," and he had something to offer.[22] In this give and take relationship, he was exposed to additional manuscripts and possibly to further oral knowledge, expanding his acquaintance with the "ancient" wisdom that, as he put it, he now offers proudly and openly to his future readers, the addressees of his introduction.

In the last part of the introduction, Elisha notes some of the areas where the secrets he had collected could prove useful and announces:

> And in order not to tire the one searching for something, I made for him four stone tables. One table will speak of the holy names, and one of the names of the unclean spirit and the *Sitra Aḥra*;[23] and one of healing through natural means and experiments (*nisyonot*), and the last of separate, beautiful, and pleasant things.[24]

---

20 MS London, fol. 4a.

21 On the sixteenth-century spiritual center in Safed, see Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Roni Weinstein, *Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity* (Portland: Littman, 2016); Eli Yassif, *The Legend of Safed: Life and Fantasy in the City of Kabbalah*, trans. Haim Watzman (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2019). On the immense interest in practical Kabbalah in that period, particularly in Safed, see Moshe Idel's words: "The significant growth in the importance of practical Kabbalah in the generations preceding and following the expulsion from Spain is definitely palpable [...]. This growth left its mark among Safed's kabbalists as well [...]. More than any other city previously, Safed can be viewed as a place where interest in kabbalistic magic or practical Kabbalah surpassed all we know about any other location in the Jewish world at the time or later"; Moshe Idel, "R. Nehemiah Ben Shlomo the Prophet on the Star of David and the Name *Taftafyah*: From Jewish Magic to Practical and Theoretical Kabbalah" [in Hebrew], in *Ta Shma: Studies in Judaica in Memory of Israel M. Ta-Shma*, ed. Abraham Reiner et al. (Alon Shevut: Tevunot, 2011), 46. Unfortunately, Elisha does not note in the introduction to his book any of his sources in Safed. Sporadic mentions of sources in the recipes—such as "this was told to me and I heard from Leon of Ostiglia"—could be references to himself or possibly copied by him together with the recipes from the book of Kabbalah that he found in R. Yehudah Alkabetz's library. In any event, since he does not mention additional places for collecting his materials except for Venice and Safed, this person may have lived in Safed in the early sixteenth century. However, see also Bohak, "Renaissance Manuscript."

22 On the symbolic capital embedded in kabbalistic knowledge and on the use of this capital, see Boaz Huss, *The Zohar: Reception and Impact*, trans. Yudith Nave (Portland: Littman, 2019).

23 *Sitra Aḥra* (lit. "the other side" [of the godhead]) is the title of the head of the evil forces.

24 MS London, fol. 4b. For the origin of "stone tables" see Exod 24:12, 31:18.
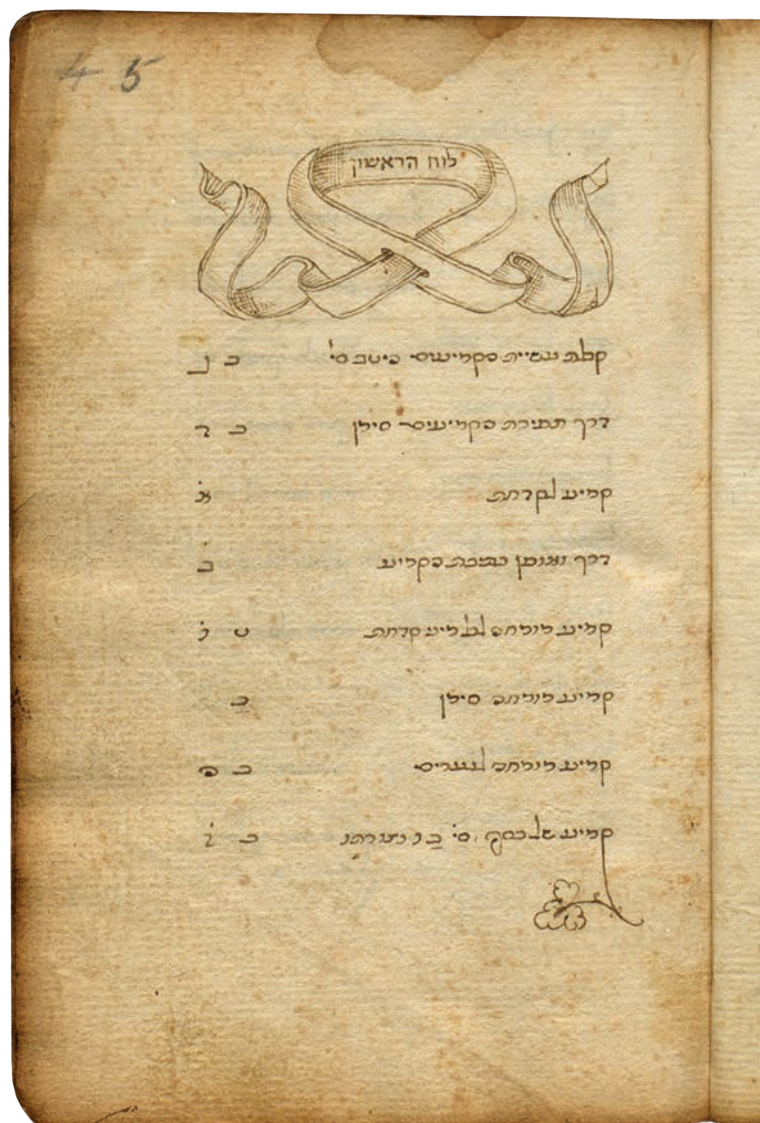
Figure 1: MS London, British Library, Or. 12362, fol. 5a (functional paratext)

Immediately following the introduction, Elisha did indeed set at the opening of his work an index of subjects, split into four "tables"[25] (see Fig. 1). This index is a relatively superior version of a process discernible in the development of magic recipe books that, essentially,

25   MS London, fols. 5a–10b.

entails the organization of the magic knowledge while envisaging the future retrieval of information units from it, as necessary.[26]

Indices and Related Functional Paratexts

Functional paratexts are all the visual aspects of the magic manuscript whose source is in their function—a pool of practical knowledge collected in writing in brief units of information (recipes) for retrieval and use as necessary.[27] *'Ets ha-Da'at* in MS London, a work meticulously planned by its author and painstakingly reproduced by its copyist, gives expression to many of the functional paratexts typical of Jewish grimoires. The recipes in the manuscript were visibly separated from one another through a space and some adornment as well as through bold and well-defined titles (also decorated) proclaiming the purpose of the act.[28] Beside the title, the items in the book were consecutively numbered (in Hebrew letters) in the margin. This numbering, unquestionably Elisha's work, served him in the "tables" he placed at the beginning of the book—the only instance known to me of a subject index in a manuscript of magic recipes.

Jewish grimoires usually contain, if they have any indexing at all, a concise table of contents that presents the recipes according to their order of appearance in the volume while tying together the recipe's number and purpose. A subject index is a much more advanced stage in the organization of magical information toward its future retrieval, since it offers a collection of recipes according to common areas and greatly reduces the scope of the search. Elisha did adopt this sophisticated approach but only in one case—the index of "medications from nature and experience." The organizing principle of the table is indeed the recipes' purpose. In two of the other indices, he gathered recipes together according to the type of name used in them—holy names or impure names—and in the fourth, he concentrated all the recipes that had not been included in one of the three other tables. At the top of each table, he placed a title that proclaims its essence and, under it, listed all the relevant recipes in two columns: on the right is the recipe's purpose (for fever, fear of enemies, salvation from the devil, eliminating mice and fleas, etc.) and on the left its number.

Performative Paratexts

Like all manuscripts of magic recipes, *'Ets ha-Da'at* also includes performative paratexts. These paratexts, meaning the signs, drawings, and diagrams that are part of the information needed for performing the recipe's instructions, usually appear as part of the reci-

---

26 On this process, see Harari, "Functional Paratexts," 191–200.
27 Harari, "Functional Paratexts," 191–200.
28 The purpose of the recipe—that is, what it helps with—is the core of the information required by the user, as Elisha attests in the introduction. Compare a quote from the introduction by Samuel b. Ḥayyim Vital to the index he made for his father's treatise, *Sefer ha-Pe'ulot*: "Since in the writings of my father and teacher, of blessed memory, I found these charms, and since, without indexes, whoever searches for a wish will despair of finding it, I awoke to the need for indexing these delightful treasures so that one may immediately find one's request and succeed in his wish. Amen, may it be God's will." See Ḥayyim Vital, *Sefer ha-Pe'ulot* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: n.p., 2010), 373.

pes. In the magic literature, the most common among these paratexts are the *charactêres*, which are also found in *'Ets ha-Da'at*. Four recipes in the manuscript provide instructions on the preparation of amulets, among them adjuration formulas that also include *charactêres* presented in the recipe.[29] Another section suggests using an alphabet of twenty-two *charactêres* (like the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet) for decoding purposes.[30] A recipe for "stopping the bleeding" includes another set of simple graphic signs, to which the text relates as "letters" (although they are not) or "names."[31]

As well as graphic signs, the work also includes a table and two drawings illustrating how to follow the instructions in the recipes. The table is included in the recipe for enhancing memory and its purpose is to illustrate (to the writer of the amulet to be prepared for this purpose) the graphic setting of the holy names that must be noted in it. The frame drawn around the set of names finishes the illustration and presents the complete amulet.[32] The two performative drawings in the work are integrated into two recipes, one for coercing another to acquiesce to some request and the other to catch a thief.[33] This is the text of the first (Fig. 2):

> Request. To make a request that will not be denied, he should wash his hands in spring water and write these names on his palm, then place his palm on his friend's and make his requests. And he should write as follows, with a new pen: Š'F [sign] Š'F [sign] Š'F.[34]

---

29 In two cases (sections 15, 65), the combination of *charactêres* is woven into the adjuration formula. In two others, they are separated from it by means of specific instructions unique to them—"and then do this" (section 98), "and write as follows" (section 121)—and the *charactêres* appear immediately after.

30 MS London, fol. 18b (section 22).

31 MS London, fol. 44a (section 112). According to the instructions, writing these signs on the skin of a deer or of a cat and placing it close to the source can stop the bleeding. A very close parallel appears in a mid-fifteenth-century Italian manuscript of magic recipes, which includes a series of signs partly similar to that of MS London; see Florence Gal, Jean-Patrice Boudet, and Laurence Moulinier-Brogi, *Vedrai mirabilia: Un libro di magia del Quattrocento* (Rome: Viella, 2017), 254–255 (I am thankful to Gal Sofer for this reference). Signs that seem to be letters but cannot be decoded as such appear in many other manuscripts of magic recipes, where they are sometimes referred to as "seals" and ascribed to angels or demonic ministers; see, e.g., MS Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, T-S K1.9; MS Budapest, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Kaufmann A245, fols. 125–126; MS New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, 8114, fols. 65a–66a.

32 MS London, fol. 12a. On magic practices for enhancing memory and improving learning, see Gideon Bohak, "A Jewish Charm for Memory and Understanding," in *Jewish Education from Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Studies in Honour of Philip S. Alexander*, ed. George J. Brooke and Renate Smithuis (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 324–340; Yuval Harari, "Opening the Heart: Magical Practices for Knowledge, Understanding, and Good Memory in the Judaism of Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages" [in Hebrew], in *Shefa Tal: Studies in Jewish Thought and Culture*, ed. Zeev Gries, Haim Kreisel, and Boaz Huss (Be'er-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University Press, 2005), 303–347.

33 Recipe 51 (fol. 30a) is also accompanied by a drawing that illustrates the act required in the recipe. In fact, however, the drawing adds nothing to the oral instructions and should be seen as part of the set of decorations in the manuscript (see below).

34 MS London, fol. 32a.

Figure 2: MS London, British Library, Or. 12362, fol. 32a (performative paratext)

Below these instructions, the copyist drew a spread palm with the fingers pressed together and wrote on it the letter combination Š᾽F three times as well as the two signs—very simple *charactêres*. The reason for adding the drawing is probably the need to write the names and the signs on the palm precisely as illustrated since this shape is part of the power

mechanism through which the petitioner will coerce acquiescence to his request when placing his palm on the other's.

Finding a thief or a stolen object is a common aim in the magic recipes literature and the means suggested for this purpose are diverse. The recipe here is known from many sources. The act it requires is based on the principle of similarity (as … so …) and its purpose is to connect signifier and signified, causing the thief to suffer and thus force him to return what he stole.[35] It reads as follows:

> Another one to find a thief. Take orpiment, which resembles gold and is the dross of gold, and [it should be] ground and mixed with the white of an egg. Draw an eye on the wall as follows: [a drawing] or a sign like it that should look like an eye. After you have drawn it, take a copper nail and knock it into the eye and say "ŠTRW'aL 'aLŠTRW ŠTa ŠTe ŠeTe ŠTa, I adjure you holy letters and holy angels to cause great pain and soreness in the eye of the man or the woman who committed this theft. May this pain and soreness not leave him, and show no clemency to him until he admits to everything. And let sorrow immediately overcome the thief and let him admit to it aloud."[36]

This method for catching a thief, an earlier version of which is already found in the Greek Magical Papyri, prevails in Jewish and Christian sources. In many cases, the recipe was accompanied by a figurative or schematic drawing of an eye.[37] The author of MS London went even further and, probably because of his artistic inclination in the production of the book, drew a big eye with a nail stuck in the pupil.

Another significant performative paratext in the manuscript consists of the diacritical marks used for the vocalization of holy names, which are provided in the recipes to ensure the names' correct pronunciation when reciting the adjurations. The diacritical marks distinguish the holy names from the rest of the text and accompany the other graphic

---

35 On the sympathetic principles of magic—the principle of similarity and the principle of contact—pointed out by James Frazer, see Harari, *Jewish Magic*, 21–23, and the bibliography therein.

36 MS London, fol. 37b.

37 A few versions of this recipe were collected by the author of the fifteenth-century "Book of Mysteries" in MS New York, New York Public Library, Heb. 190. See Gideon Bohak, *A Fifteenth-Century Manuscript of Jewish Magic, MS New York Public Library, Heb. 190 (Formerly Sassoon 56): Introduction, Annotated Edition, and Facsimile* (Los Angeles: Cherub, 2014), 1:142, sections 77–79 (and n. 1 for further references) and 2:100; Bohak, "Renaissance Manuscript." For further Jewish parallels of this recipe, see MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Opp. 485, fol. 16a; MS Budapest, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Kaufmann A245, fol. 39a; MS London, British Library, Or. 14759, fol. 34a. For Christian parallels, see Gideon Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 287, n. 170; Ulrike Horak and Christian Gastgeber, "Zwei Beispiele angewandter Bildmagie: Ein griechischer Diebszauber und ein 'verknotetes' Sator-Quadrat," *Biblos* 44 (1995): 197–225; Stephen B. Stallcup, "'The Eye of Abraham' Charms for Thieves: Versions in Middle and Modern English," *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft* 10 (2015): 23–40. On knowledge transformation in this regard between the two cultures, see Gideon Bohak, "Catching a Thief: The Jewish Trials of a Christian Ordeal," *JSQ* 13 (2006): 344–362.

means used for this purpose, such as a bold font, adornments at the top of the letters, and various signs above them. [38]

Decorative Paratexts

The copy of *'Ets ha-Da'at* in the London manuscript singles out this work in the Jewish instructional literature of magic, mainly in its form. This is a rare instance of a book of magic recipes turning into a precious object. The merit for this achievement goes obviously to the copyist who, whether by his own or some patron's initiative, invested great effort into making his copy attractive. In doing so, he charged the cumulative knowledge in this volume with the symbolic value accruing from the form he gave it, from the effort that was required to produce it, and from the potential of its public presentation.

The decorative paratexts in this work split into two main categories: layout and adornments. A careful examination of the manuscript reveals that the same ink was used in the writing and the drawing, and both are the work of the same person. I briefly review below these characteristics of the manuscript.

Unlike most magic manuscripts, MS London attests to preplanning of the pages' form. The margins were carefully drawn and the copyist took pains to keep them straight. [39] The writing is small and even (except for titles and performative names written in a prominent font) and spread over the page in straight lines. Almost every page opens with a new title and most of the recipes end on the page where they began. Illustrated titles, decorations (mainly designs) at the end of the recipes, and the centered alignment of the writing helped the copyist fill the pages to the end whenever he estimated there was no room for full inclusion of the subsequent recipe. [40]

Errors were corrected in subtle and hidden ways, usually by writing over the mistaken letters. As for an error in the title, the copyist generally preferred to leave it (rather than making a correction that would mar the title's appearance), [41] while erasures in the body of the text were delicately performed avoiding use of the margins to suggest corrections. [42] The strict justification of the left margins (the end of the lines) vertically, and diagonally

---

38 For the vocalization of holy names, see, e.g., fols. 15a–b, 21a, 37b, 48b. For the other graphic devices, see, e.g., fols. 21a–b, 25a, 26a, 27a.

39 Traces of the drafting are still visible on some pages and particularly evident on fol. 15a, where the copyist forgot to remove it.

40 "Triangular" writing is evident in almost every page. A good example appears on fol. 24a where, at the end of a particularly long section, the copyist used this technique several times to stretch the text to the end of the page.

41 See, for example the titles of sections 73 and 119, on fols. 35a and 47a. By contrast, in the title of section 103 (fol. 42b), the copyist added a small missing letter *dalet* above the first word so that it would read *le-qadaḥat* (for fever), possibly choosing to do so because the missing letter created a meaningful alternate word—*laqaḥat* (to take)—thus distorting the true purpose of the recipe.

42 See, for example, the almost imperceptible erasure of the letters *he* and *mem* on fol. 25b (section 35). Only once did the copyist use the margins to note an alternate version of the holy name that appeared in the body of the text (fol. 27b). On fol. 33b, a later writer added a correcting note in big coarse script.

in the lines of triangular writing, was preserved using two devices: writing the first letter of the word that opened the next line or adding a small graphic sign.[43]

There are five kinds of adornments in the manuscript: frames, ribbons, plant models, schematic scribbles coming out of the letters, and figurative drawings. All are drawn in ink, without color. The text and its adornments are intertwined and follow from one another throughout the manuscript.

Frames and ribbons adorn the titles of the recipes and, at times, also other units within them. They are designed in Renaissance style, three-dimensional in their appearance, emphasizing light and shadow through straight, even, and short pen strokes, creating the impression of a print (which they imitate).[44] These illustrations had a dual purpose: to highlight the text they accompany (usually written in a large and bold font) and to enhance the beauty of the manuscript.

Plant models, the most prominent figurative motif in the manuscript, decorate the book from beginning to end (see Fig. 3). These decorations serve as background to the titles or accompany their schematic frames, adorn the recipes, serve to separate them from one another, and fill the bottom part of the page. Simple plant decorations, usually in the shape of leaves, at times come out from the top or the bottom of a letter extending to the margins of the page and adding adornment.[45]

Schematic scribbles may begin at the top of a letter in the first line or, more commonly, at the bottom of a letter in the last line (see Fig. 3). In most cases, there is one long and curling pen stroke that creates a more or less symmetrical pattern. In a few cases, the scribbles take on a figurative appearance that is not floral.[46]

The most interesting adornments in the manuscript are the figurative drawings incorporated into the recipes. Some, such as the two cases discussed above, are in the category of performative paratexts, meaning they were meant to illustrate to the reader how to execute the recipe's instructions. The purpose of most drawings in the manuscript, however, is decoration for its own sake. As such, the drawings are tightly linked to the content and, in most cases, they accompany the titles and intertwine with their general design. Following are a few examples.

---

43 See e.g., fols. 29b, 39a (sections 49, 86). On devices employed to justify left margins in Jewish medieval manuscripts, see Malachi Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology: Tentative Typology of Technical Practices Employed in Hebrew Dated Medieval Manuscripts* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1981), 87–103.

44 Often, especially in the ribbon adornments that seem folded or flowing, the structure of the writing in the title attests that the decoration preceded the title as, for example, fols. 40a (section 89), 43a (section 107). In others, such as fols. 13a (sections 6, 7), 38b (section 85), the title was clearly written first. The titles of the tables (the indices) at the opening of the book were also placed within decorations of ribbons.

45 These scribbles appear mostly on the upper or lower margins as, for example, on fols. 4b, 5a, 15b, 22a, 44a–b (but see also fols. 9a, 17b).

46 See, for example, fols. 5b–7a, 19b, 21a, 28b, 30a, 40a. For figurative scribbles, see the latticework on fol. 17b, the bird's head on fol. 41b, and the face image (?) within the leaf on fol. 42b.
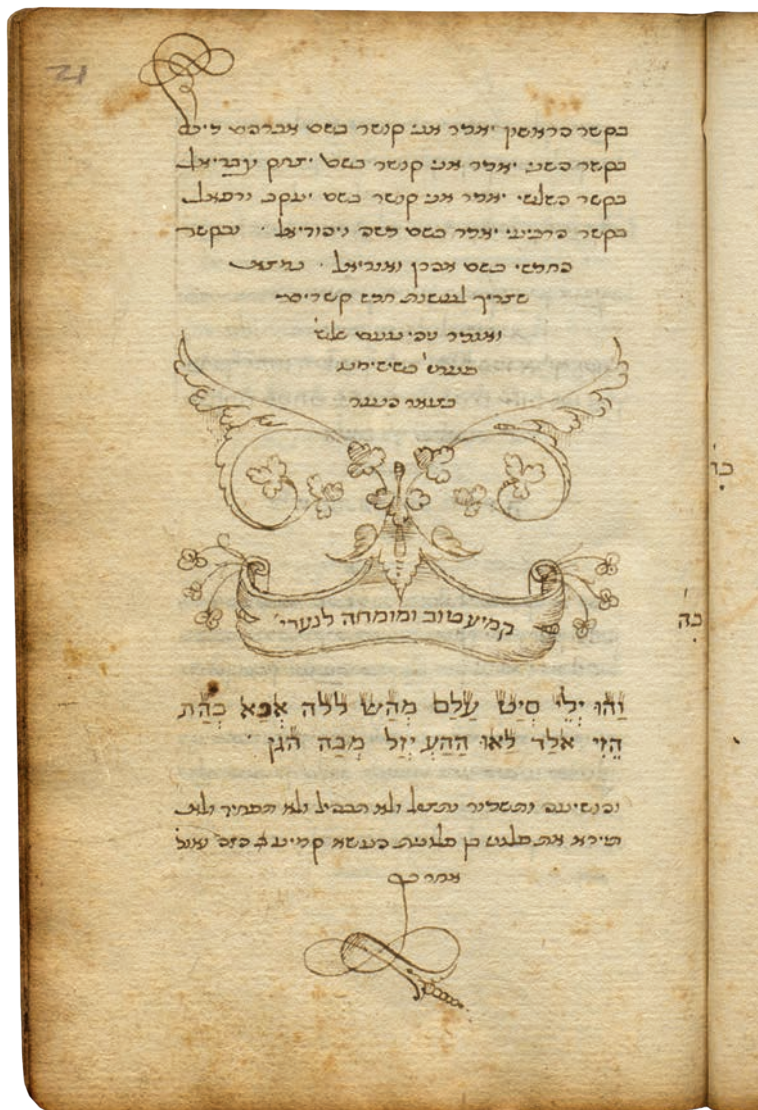
Figure 3: MS London, British Library, Or. 12362, fol. 21a (decorative paratext)

The first drawing appears at the opening, around the title "introduction" (fol. 3a). Two profiles of older bearded men in the floral design and look to the sides, attached to both sides of the frame surrounding the title. A close drawing appears on the sides of the title "stopping a nosebleed" (fol. 25b, section 35), where the reason for choosing this illustration was probably the two figures' prominent noses.

A drawing of a crown adorns the title "the mnemonic name" (*shem ha-zokher*) heading the recipe for enhancing memory and understanding (section 21, fol. 18a). Possibly, this decoration is a visual expression of the "crown of Torah" in the rabbinic denotation of this term, referring to the social status associated with knowledge of Torah and Talmud.[47]

A more solid connection between the title of the recipe and the accompanying illustration is evident in a recipe "for love," where the title is written on a round jug with three burning wicks on it (fol. 30a, section 51). The fire motif is highly popular in Jewish love magic and, although this recipe does not use it, it comes forth visually here, perhaps influenced by its explicit appearance in the preceding love recipe.[48]

A drawing of a naked hen brooding over three eggs appears at the center of a "ribbon" on which, to the right and the left of the hen, is the title of the recipe—"snake fat." The content of the recipe clarifies the link between it and the drawing:

> If you take snake fat [...] and feed it to the hen, all her feathers will immediately fall off and it will be naked as on the day of its birth. She will not die, but over time she will go back to herself and the feathers will be returned to it. (fol. 36b, section 78)

In two additional cases, the link between the purpose of the recipe and the decoration of its title is clear. One is a recipe "for a woman who has no milk" that prescribes, "Write on her right breast 'B SW SS and on her left breast write 'B SW SY' and she will immediately have plenty of milk," accompanied by a drawing of a woman's head with a careful hairdo and exposed breasts (fol. 42b, section 104). In the other one, meant for "earache," there is a drawing of a child's head with big ears at the center of the "ribbon" containing the title (fol. 48a, section 122).

'Ets ha-Da'at, then, is an unusual example in Jewish culture of a manuscript of magic recipes written by its author not for personal use but, explicitly, for future addressees. The form it took in MS London is an indication of potential circles who could be interested in this kind of literature in mid-sixteenth-century Italy. Whether it was produced at the request of a patron or at the copyist's initiative, this copy was doubtless meant to turn the work from merely a manual into a bookish artifact whose value derives from its appearance no less than from its content, and whose intended use was far wider than the option of retrieving required information for dealing with life's hardships. The copyist's taste and artistic talent are evident throughout the work in the script, the design, and the decoration. His unique imprint is especially significant since it is also found in another sixteenth-century manuscript that includes a divinatory work titled *Maggid Davar*—MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1072.

---

47 See mAv 4:13.

48 The wording of the preceding recipe is as follows: "More for love. Take from the bone of a dead or hung man, burn it, and say: 'As I burn this bone, may the heart of the woman burn [...]'" (fol. 29a, section 50). See Ortal-Paz Saar, "'And He Burned His Heart for Her': The Motif of Fire in Love Spells from the Cairo Genizah" [in Hebrew], *Pe'amim* 133–134 (2013): 209–239.

3   *Maggid Davar*: MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1072

MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1072 (hereafter MS Moscow), is an illustrated manuscript of a future-telling (*goralot*) book. *Goralot* (*sortes*) are one of the prognostication methods meant to expose some hidden knowledge to its users. This is "wisdom divination," in the terms of Evan Zuess's typology. Yet its basis, rather than being in natural signs, is in a human manipulation that randomly (from a human perspective), but not by chance (cosmically), leads its users to the desired result.[49]

The Genre

Maggid Davar belongs to the genre of fortune-telling books in which the inquirer can choose one of several pre-set questions to which answers may be found in the treatise. These questions are presented in a list at the opening. Each one has a fixed number of answers that are also pre-set, and are spread in the book's tables of answers.[50] The organizing method in these tables, each one containing one possible answer to each of the questions presented at the beginning, ensures that, by the end of the prognostication procedure, inquirers will reach a relevant answer to their question. What drives the procedure and leads the inquirer to a specific answer is a number obtained through such means as lot casting or drawing a random number of points.[51]

---

49 See Evan M. Zuess, "Divination," *ER* 4:375–382. Jews have used (and are still using) various methods of prognostication. Some are magical, meaning they involve the adjuration of a supernatural entity for the revelation of the required hidden knowledge, of which the *she'elat ḥalom* (dream request) is a prominent example. Others, such as *goralot ha-ḥol* (sand oracles) or *goralot urim we-tummim* (Urim and Thummim oracles), for example, are purely technical. For a broad study of the use of divination in Judaism, see Shraga Bar-On, *Lot Casting, God, and Man in Jewish Literature: From the Bible to the Renaissance* [in Hebrew] (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2020). See also Josefina Rodríguez-Arribas and Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *Unveiling the Hidden—Anticipating the Future: Divinatory Practices among Jews between Qumran and the Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), and the many chapters dealing with Jewish traditions of prognostication in *Prognostication in the Medieval World*, ed. Matthias Heiduk, Klaus Herbers, and Hans-Christian Lehnerculture (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2021). For a detailed examination of Jewish bibliomancy by means of the Torah, see Shraga Bar-On, "Bibliomancy in Jewish Tradition: The Lot Attributed to the Gaon of Vilna (*Goral Hagra*)" [in Hebrew], in *Myth, Ritual, and Mysticism: Studies in Honor of Professor Ithamar Grunwald*, ed. Gideon Bohak, Ron Margolin, and Ishay Rosen-Zvi (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2014), 521–582; Shraga Bar-On, "If You Seek to Take Advice from the Torah, It Will Be Given: Jewish Bibliomancy Through the Generations," in Rodríguez-Arribas and Gieseler Greenbaum, *Unveiling the Hidden*, 161–191; Pieter W. van der Horst, "Sortes Biblicae Judaicae," in *My Lots Are in Thy Hands: Sortilege and its Practitioners in Late Antiquity*, ed. AnneMarie Luijendijk and William E. Klingshirn (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 154–172.

50 See also T.C. Skeat's definition of "book of fate" as "a fixed table of specific questions with a fixed number of alternative answers to each question." T.C. Skeat, "An Early Medieval 'Book of Fate': The Sortes XII Patriarcharum," *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* 3 (1954), 54.

51 On methods of lot casting in Hebrew books of fate, see Evelyn Burkhardt, "Hebräische Losbuchhandschriften: zur Typologie einer jüdischen Divinationsmethode," in *Jewish Studies between the Disciplines—Judaistik zwischen den Disziplinen: Papers in Honor of Peter Schäfer*, ed. Klaus Herrmann, Margarete Schlüter and Giuseppe Veltri (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 130–133.

This kind of fortune-telling practice, known as "staggered" *sortes*, was already known in the Greco-Roman world.[52] The earliest book of this genre known to us is *Sortes Astrampsychi*, written at the end of the first or in the early second century. Variations of it, or based on its systematic underlying model, are known from a later period in Muslim, Christian, and Jewish cultures mainly from the Middle Ages onward.[53] The earliest ev-

---

52 The source of this prognostication method was the lot-casting oracles in both oral and written form, a practice used in temples throughout the Roman Empire. The transition from oracles in temples to domestic divination practices and the replacement of priests with oracle-mongers using *sortes* books of divination and, accordingly, the increasing use of books of this kind was linked to deep religious changes in the Roman Empire in the early centuries CE. See, e.g., Jacqueline Champeaux, "*Sors oraculi*: Les oracles en Italie sous la République et l'Empire," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome—Antiquité* 102 (1990): 271–302; Jacqueline Champeaux, "'Sorts' et divination inspire: Pour une préhistoire des oracles italiques," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome—Antiquité* 102 (1990): 801–828; Fritz Graf, "Rolling the Dice for an Answer," in *Mantikê: Studies in Ancient Divination*, ed. Sarah Iles Johnston and Peter T. Struck (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 51–97; William E. Klingshirn, "Inventing the *Sortilegus*: Lot Divination and Cultural Identity in Italy, Rome, and the Provinces," in *Religion in Republican Italy*, ed. Celia E. Schultz and Paul B. Harvey Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 137–161.

53 For a cross-cultural study of lot books, see Johannes Bolte, "Zur Geschichte der Losbücher," in *Georg Wickrams Werke*, ed. Johannes Bolte (Tübingen: Litterarischer Verein, 1903), 4:276–341; and the bibliography in Skeat, "Book of Fate," 51–54. For general discussions of future-telling books in antiquity, see Pieter W. van der Horst, "Sortes: Sacred Books as Instant Oracles in Late Antiquity," in *The Use of Sacred Books in the Ancient World*, ed. Leonard V. Rutgers, Pieter W. van der Horst, Henriëtte W. Havelaar, and Lieve Teugels (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 143–174; AnneMarie Luijendijk and William E. Klingshirn, eds., *My Lots Are in Thy Hands: Sortilege and Its Practitioners in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2018). On the origin and transmission of the *Sortes Astrampsychi*, see Randal Stewart, "The Textual Transmission of the *Sortes Astrampsychi*," *Illinois Classical Studies* 20 (1995): 135–147. See also Gerald M. Browne, "The Composition of the *Sortes Astrampsychi*," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 17 (1970): 95–100; Gerald M. Browne, "The Origin and Date of the *Sortes Astrampsychi*," *Illinois Classical Studies* 1 (1976): 53–58. On the ancient text and its later variants, see the comprehensive study of Franziska Naether, *Die Sortes Astrampsychi: Problemlösungsstrategien durch Orakel im römischen Ägypten* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010). On the system behind "staggered" *sortes*, see Skeat, "Book of Fate." See also Browne, "The Composition"; Michael Meerson, "Book Is a Territory: A Hebrew Book of Fortune in Context," *JSQ* 13 (2006): 388–411. On *sortes* books in the Christian world, see, e.g., W.L. Braekman, "Fortune-Telling by the Casting of Dice," *Studia Neophilologica* 52 (1980): 3–29; Charles Burnett, "What is the *Experimentarius* of Bernardus Silvestris? A Preliminary Survey of the Material," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* 44 (1977): 79–125 (repr. in Charles Burnett, *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds* [Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996], art. no.17); Charles Burnett, "The *Sortes Regis Almarici*: An Arabic Divinatory Work in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem?" *Scripta Mediterranea* 19–20 (1998–1999): 229–237; Marco Heiles, *Das Losbuch: Manuskriptologie einer Textsorte des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2018); Marco Heiles, "Sortes," in *Prognostication in the Medieval World*, ed. Matthias Heiduk, Klaus Herbers, and Hans-Christian Lehnerculture (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2021), 978–983; William E. Klingshirn, "Defining the *Sortes Sanctorum*: Gibbon, Du Cange, and Early Christian Lot Divination," *JECS* 10 (2002): 77–130; William E. Klingshirn, "Christian Divination in Late Roman Gaul: The *Sortes Sangallenses*," in *Mantikê: Studies in Ancient Divination*, ed. Sarah Iles Johnston and Peter T. Struck (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 99–128; Randal Stewart, "The *Sortes Barberinianae* within the Tradition of Oracular Texts," in Luijendijk and Klingshirn, *My Lots Are in Thy Hands*, 173–195. On lot books in the Muslim world, see Bolte, "Losbücher," 287–291; Gustav Flügel, "Die

idence of this genre in the Jewish world was found in the Cairo Genizah, in fragmentary manuscripts from the tenth to the thirteenth century, including one in Palestinian Aramaic attesting to its even earlier provenance.[54] In the Middle Ages, and more significantly after them, the use of this type of book—shaped by local cultural patterns in the context of shared principles underlying the divination method—spread widely among Jews as well. Particularly well-known among them are the *sortes* book ascribed to Saadia Gaon and the two ascribed to Abraham Ibn Ezra—one of them, referred to as *Poqeaḥ 'Ivrim* (Opens [the Eyes of] the Hebrews), is close to the work discussed here[55]—*Goralot Aḥitofel*, *Goral Urim we-Tummim*, and the *Sefer Goralot* of R. Ḥayyim Vital.[56]

The divinatory practice of *Maggid Davar* is based on eighteen tables which are related to eighteen biblical kings. Each of these tables contains seventeen sentences (306 possibilities altogether), through which an answer can be obtained to one of the following eighteen questions[57] (see Fig. 4):

1.   Will[58] the pregnant woman give birth to a son or a daughter?
2.   Will he succeed with the merchandise he bought?

Figure 4: MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1072, p. 5

3. Will the debt be paid?
4. The maiden you love, will she be in your sign?
5. Will the theft or the loss be found?
6. Will the prisoner be released?

---

and originates in the Greco-Roman world. See Randal Stewart, "The Oracular εἰ," *GRBS* 26 (1985): 67–85; Browne, "The Origin," 56–58. All the translations here are phrased as questions.

7.   Will you succeed in your way?
8.   Will you succeed in the course you are taking to beget [a child]?
9.   Will the harvest this year be plentiful or small?
10. The fear you fear [where does it come from and what will happen with it]?
11. The end of the war [what will it be]?
12. Is the partnership good?
13. Will you receive the inheritance or not?
14. If you wish to go somewhere [is that a good thing]?
15. Will you succeed in what you wish to buy?
16.   What will happen to the patient?
17. Will you live a long life? [59]
18. Will you be rich?

As is usual in *sortes* books, both Jewish and others, the issues on which the book can be consulted are personal and touch on individual decisions in day-to-day life (the broader questions, such as the result of a war or the success of a harvest, must also be understood in this context).[60] The answer to the issue at stake is given using a method well hidden from and also surprising to the inquirers, sending them to one of seventeen possibilities that are spread in the tables containing the answers.[61] For example, below are the answers to the first question, "Will the pregnant woman give birth to a son or a daughter?," grouped in their order of appearance in tables 2–18:

The pregnant woman will scream in pain and give birth to a son.
The pregnant woman will, in a year, give birth to a beautiful daughter.
The pregnant woman will give birth to a son, who will be clever and wise.
The pregnant woman will have a difficult birth, the child will die, and righteousness
    delivers [from death].[62]
The pregnant woman will give birth to a daughter who will be slightly black.
The pregnant woman will give birth to a son who will teach halakhah to the sages.
The pregnant woman will give birth to a son and you will name him Eliezer.
The pregnant woman will give birth to a lovely daughter.
The pregnant woman will, fortunately, give birth to a son.
Your wife is pregnant and she will give birth to a son and you will name him Mordechai.

---

59 This page is missing in the manuscript, and the question is quoted from the list of questions at the beginning of the book (MS Moscow, p. 5 [should be p. 7]).

60 For a discussion of typical topics in the questions found in Jewish books of fate, see Burkhardt, "Hebräische Losbuchhandschriften," 127–129.

61 The question mentioned in the title at the top of each table is not answered within it. Each table, then, has a sentence answering each of the eighteen questions, except for the one in its title, so that in each table there are seventeen answers to seventeen inquiries (numbered 2–18), and each inquiry has seventeen possible answers spread throughout the book.

62 Prov 10:2; 11:4.

The pregnant woman will give birth to a son and a daughter and will have a difficult
  birth.
She will give birth to a boy and you will name him Me'ir.
You have conceived,[63] and will give birth to wise and clever twins.
She will give birth to a daughter who will be beautiful, lovely, and honorable.
In pain will the pregnant woman give birth to a daughter, who will be a woman of valor.
???[64]
She will give birth to three boys and you will name them Naphtali, Michael, and Eliezer.

The Procedure

The prognostication procedure using the tables of kings is carefully and systematically structured. The only random element in the process is the number of dots drawn by
the inquirer (without counting) before the procedure begins (see below). This element,
which sets the whole operation in motion, is not perceived as a cognitive datum but as
a product of divine direction leading the inquirer to the definitive answer fitting his or
her case. This book of fate, then, is perceived as a technical means for divine revelation
to the inquirer and its use should accordingly be framed in conscious and ritual terms.
The ritual that precedes the divination act—which includes the recitation of Psalm 100
(recognizing God's guidance and goodness) and a direct request that God should offer a
response through the book[65]—are directed precisely at this aim. So is the demand to respect the results of the divination procedure, mentioned in the introduction to the book:[66]

> May fear and terror overcome the inquirer coming here to obtain an answer to his
> question and may he direct his heart to heaven, without mocking it or continuing
> to test it. Instead, may he come with the proper intention and as a slave before his
> master,[67] first reading this psalm, "A psalm for the thank-offering, make a joyful
> noise to the Lord [...]"[68] and then say, "Sovereign of the Universe, it is known full
> well to you that we have no prophet and no seer and no Urim and Thummim, and

---

63 Gen 16:11; Judg 13:5.

64 As noted, the seventeenth table (related to King Hezekiah) is missing from the manuscript.

65 Requesting an answer from God by casting lots is already mentioned in 1 Sam 14:40–42. See also
  Acts 1:23–26.

66 Another aspect of this approach is the emphasis on the need to trust God and the divine response
  that will be obtained through the book (see below). As Evelyn Burkhardt shows, this approach characterizes all the Hebrew books of fate, which view the divination process they offer as an act of
  direct contact with God (her study shows, however, that the fortune-telling books that she studied share praying formulas different from the one suggested here); see Burkhardt, "Hebräische
  Losbuchhandschriften," 137–142. This approach is opposed to the Christian view on books of fate
  in the early modern period, which saw them mainly as a social amusement. The classic example of
  this approach is Lorenzo Spirito's *Libro delle sorti* written in Perugia in 1482. The wide popularity of
  this work is attested by the over thirty editions of it published until the mid-sixteenth century. See
  Allison L. Palmer, "Lorenzo 'Spirito' Gualtieri's *Libro delle sorti* in Renaissance Perugia," *Sixteenth
  Century Journal* 47 (2016): 557–578.

67 Compare bShab 10a.

68 Ps 100 is fully cited.

words of prophecy are like the words of a sealed book.[69] Let me know [the answer] to my question by lot." And let him say three times devotedly, "The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot,"[70] and he will then find a lucid answer to all he wishes.[71]

After the preliminary ritual is completed, it is possible to move to the actual prognostication act.

The divination method is described in the author's introduction to the work, as follows:

> This is *maggid davar be-'ito* [a word revealed in time], and this is its way:[72] Make four lines of dots without counting them and take out eighteen at the time, keeping the remainder. If, for example, your remainder is five or six or seven and you wish to know whether you will succeed with some merchandise or any other question, start counting from this question according to the number of your remaining dots and say: Will it succeed?—one; Will he have sons?—two; Will [the merchandise] be cheap?—three; and so forth up to the seventh. And when you get there, go wherever it sends you until you reach the place that you had asked about, and there seek the seventh or whatever your remainder was and you will find your answer, as a word fitly spoken.[73]

It works as follows. The inquirer should draw a large number of dots without counting them. That is the expression of the randomness principle. Removing any human intention or influence from the process leaves it entirely to divine guidance that, in turn, extracts it from arbitrariness. It is precisely here that the encounter with God occurs and, through it, the revelation of the future.[74] Henceforth, the protocol unfolds technically. First, one must erase from the drawn dots groups of 18 (or, in other words, divide their number by 18). The remainder is the significant datum that leads to the answer.

Now, the inquirer must turn to the table of questions found at the opening of the manuscript.[75] This table, as noted, contains on its right side the eighteen numbered questions to which answers can be found. On the table's left side is a parallel additional list,

---

69 See Isa 29:11.

70 Ps 16:5.

71 MS Moscow, p. 10 (should be p. 6).

72 The Hebrew is rhymed: הנה זה דבר בעתו וכה יהיה משפטו.

73 MS Moscow, pp. 9–10 (should be pp. 5–6).

74 A similar approach is also explicit at the opening of *Sortes Astrampsychi* in the instructions to one engaging in divination, where it is stated: "Taking the number of the question chosen by the customer and keeping it in mind, ask him to choose by lot any number he wishes from one to ten and tell him that God will put the number in his mouth" (Browne, "The Composition," 95). The approach claiming direct divine involvement in the divination procedure and pointing out something through it is already explicit in Scripture; see Bar-On, *Lot Casting*, 87–107 (and pp. 107–118, on biblical reservations about lot casting).

75 MS Moscow, p. 5 (should be p. 7).

with the names of eighteen biblical figures: Adam, Noah, the three patriarchs, Moses, and various prophets. From the question an answer is sought to, the inquirer must count questions in the table according to the number in the remainder, which will lead to one of the biblical figures in the left column. Having located this figure in the three tables containing the illustrations in the pages that follow, the inquirer is directed to one of the biblical kings and to a table of seventeen answers related to it.[76]

For example, if the question was, "What will happen to the patient?" (question 16 in the table of questions) and the remainder was six, the inquirer will count from this question (including the question itself) six items and will get to "Go to Abraham" (p. 5 [should be 7]). Abraham should then be located in the medallions of patriarchs and prophets, and he will send the inquirer to Solomon—"Abraham. Go to Solomon" (p. 6 [should be 8]). The next step is to look in the book for King Solomon and in "his" table to look for item 6 (number of the remainder in this case), to find the requested answer: "The patient will die of his illness and the gates of tears have not closed" (p. 17).[77]

Following this very brief description of the prognostication method of *Maggid Davar*, let us now turn to its paratexts and to what they can teach about its relation to *ʿEts ha-Daʿat*.

Paratexts: Between *ʿEts ha-Daʿat* and *Maggid Davar*

MS Moscow is the only copy of *Maggid Davar* known to us today. This work, just like *ʿEts ha-Daʿat*, was perceived by its author as a literary unit deserving a name, a title page, and an introduction. Here too, the introduction was written in rhymed prose with many biblical quotes and hints praising the work and its use, precisely as we found in Elisha son of Gad's *ʿEts ha-Daʿat* . The author writes:

> When the light of truth is missing and the root of wisdom has grown dark, when no fine man is there to hear the glorious awesome voice, when no prophet brings a message and no seer voices tidings, when the Urim that brought us joy and brightness are hidden, when dreams too speak falsely and visions herald changing fancies, the faithful God left us a man, trustworthy and more judicious than any, his soul is from the trunk of holiness and a crown of wisdom on his head. [...] And because of his grace and glories and the modesty of his qualities, he did not wish to expose it [the book] to his people in his lifetime and it did not see the light in his days. And now stand and see how splendid this day is, and how awe-inspiring and fearsome is this small book [...] here it is, *maggid davar be-ʿito* [a word revealed in time], and this is its way.[78]

---

76 The instructions appear below the medallions with the intermediating figures (pp. 6–8 [should be pp. 8–10]). First, the name of the figure painted in the medallion is noted and then the next step to be taken. For example: "Adam. Go to Joshua."

77 Compare bBer 32b.

78 MS Moscow, p. 9 (should be p. 5). Most Jewish books of fate include an introduction that praises them and ascribes their writing to some ancient figure who tells about their loss and later rediscovery (Burkhardt, "Hebräische Losbuchhandschriften," 133–137). See also Allegra Iafrate, "Pythagoras

Here too, then, at the opening of a practical work, the author provides details about it and enthusiastically praises it in rhymed prose and flowery terms. Unfortunately, however, he does not identify himself by name on the title page, probably because the book is not his own creation, as he notes there:

> *Maggid Davar*. Reveals secrets and expands wisdom like sapphire and gold. Was found in the holy writings of the sage R. Shlomo [be]n Shushan in Safed, may it be swiftly rebuilt in our times.[79]

This work, then, is also from Safed! And if we tie together this geographic provenance and the fingerprints of Elisha son of Gad found in the introduction to *ʿEts ha-Daʿat*, which are also evident here both in the very writing of an introduction and mainly in its style, I think it can hardly be doubted that he was the one who, in Safed, also copied *Maggid Davar*.

This joyful puzzle is complemented by the colophon added by the copyist at the front of MS Moscow: "And it was copied in Ancona in the year 5310 of creation by the learned R. Yeḥiʼel Gallico."[80] The year 5310 in the Jewish calendar is 1549/1550, about fourteen years after 1535/1536, when Elisha son of Gad of Ancona wrote *ʿEts ha-Daʿat* in Safed. A comparative analysis of the manuscripts' design shows that both MS London and MS Moscow were written and illustrated by the same person. The visual elements they share attest to this: the title page design with its columns and floral designs, imitating printed books; the drawing and shadowing methods using straight, short, and even pen strokes; the handwriting and the writing layout, particularly the progressively centering into a triangle standing on its head and, when necessary, two triangles one below the other meant to fill the page to its end;[81] the floral illustrations all along the work; the schematic adornments coming out from the letters;[82] the frameworks and the ribbons in which

---

Index: Denoting Authorship in *Sortes* Books," in *Dialogues among Books in Medieval Western Magic and Divination* ed. Stefano Rapisarda and Erik Niblaeus (Florence: SISMEL, 2014), 77–100, for a broader cultural context. The account here is slightly different since the book is not ascribed to a famous figure but to "a man, trustworthy and more judicious than any, his soul [is] from the trunk of holiness and a crown of wisdom on his head," but the general idea is similar. Another difference that singles out *Maggid Davar* is that this introduction precedes the instructions for use, unlike the accepted structure of other *sortes* books: (a) Instructions for use and warnings against contempt; (b) The story of the book's fate; (c) Prayer (Burkhardt, "Hebräische Losbuchhandschriften," 129–130).

79 MS Moscow, p. 3. I have not yet succeeded in identifying R. Shlomo ben Shushan. A few rabbinic figures known as "ben Shushan" or "ben Susan" were active in the land of Israel during the first half of the sixteenth century (most famous are R. David ben Shushan, R. Issachar ben Susan, and R. Moshe ben Shushan), but as far as I know, no traces lead from any of them to R. Shlomo.

80 These words were written in a small, cursive script on the front page, under the author's words cited above.

81 See MS Moscow, pp. 9–10 (should be pp. 5–6)—introduction. Compare MS London fols. 4b (introduction), 20b, 24a, 39b.

82 See MS Moscow, p. 10 (should be p. 6), first and last lines, and MS London fols. 4b (last line), 41a (first line).

the titles are written, at the top of the tables;[83] as well as many other decorative paratexts, leave no doubt that both manuscripts were produced by the same scribe-illustrator.

We can now say, then, that both *'Ets ha-Da'at* and *Maggid Davar*, which were written in Safed by Elisha son of Gad of Ancona, made their way to his birthplace, where they were handed over to the copyist-illustrator Yeḥi'el Gallico, who produced both the London and Moscow manuscripts.

We do not know what the shape of *Maggid Davar* was on its arrival to Ancona. But whatever it may have been, Yeḥi'el Gallico produced a beautiful manuscript, where he presented through drawings as well as color paintings all the biblical figures involved in the divination procedure. Here as well, then, a technical-professional work turned into a bookish artifact whose value derives not only from its content but also, and perhaps mainly, from its appearance.[84]

Drawings and Illustrations in MS Moscow

The script of MS Moscow, as noted, is meticulous, stylized, and decorated. This manuscript, used for prognostication, was decorated throughout both schematically (using frames, ribbons, and plant motifs [see Fig. 4]) and also—and mainly—using drawings of biblical figures and daily scenes touching on the topics discussed in the work. I offer below a preliminary review of the exceptional visual array in this manuscript[85] and open with the eighteen medallions at the beginning of the work.

After drawing the dots, taking out eighteen at a time, and obtaining the remainder number, the procedure opens with the table of questions and with the biblical figure that is reached in it.[86] These figures are a technically meaningless intermediate stage on the user's way to the tables of kings, where the answers are found. The aim of this stage is, apparently, one of two (or both of them together): to complicate affairs so as to confuse an outside observer and/or to add to the "kings' oracles" a middle stage of ethical biblical figures.[87] Be that as it may, this provided Gallico with an opportunity to display his artis-

---

83 See, e.g., the similar frameworks in MS Moscow, p. 9 (should be p. 5) and MS London, fol. 26a (section 37).

84 Christian *sortes* books were often illustrated, particularly in the early modern period, when they served for social amusement. A prominent, beautiful example is Lorenzo Spirito's *Libro delle sorti*, which was apparently illustrated by Perugino and his atelier (where young Raphael worked). See Palmer, "Gualtieri's *Libro delle sorti*." See also Allegra Iafrate, "Of Stars and Men: Matthew Paris and the Illustrations of MS Ashmole 304," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 76 (2013): 139–177; Meerson, "Book Is a Territory," 398.

85 I do not examine Gallico's artistic work, its characteristic motifs, its style, or its sources, issues that require separate study, but will describe his work generally, pointing to a limited number of examples.

86 MS Moscow, p. 5 (should be p. 7).

87 This intermediate stage (at times more than a single stage), which has no significance within the divination procedure except for complicating it to the observer, characterizes the *sortes* literature in general. The mediating elements between the acquired number that sets the procedure in motion on the one hand and the answer on the other are diverse—stars and constellations, birds, animals, kings, patriarchs, prophets, biblical tribes, and so forth. Other ways of complicating the procedure

tic talents and paint the patriarchs and prophets.[88] In these arboreal drawings, some still showing traces of color and concentrated on three pages, he focuses mainly on the faces.[89]

A frame was drawn on each page and, inside it, three pairs of medallions linked through branches to both sides of a vertical trunk planted in the ground and decorated with leaves and flowers.[90] In each of the medallions, Gallico drew the top part of the figure in front and, in the background, something related to it. Beside Adam, who was drawn almost in full holding a fruit and wearing a loincloth, he drew a tree and, twisted around it, a serpent with a human (or animal, or demonic) head; beside Noah, a dove holding branch in its beak; behind Jacob, a ladder reaching the clouds; in Moses' hands, the tablets of the law; and so forth. Many of the figures hold a book and some of them point with their index finger. These are the figures drawn in the medallions in order of appearance: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah. Each of these figures, as noted, sends the user to one of eighteen kings.

The last page of the medallions appears on the right side of the book's spread (p. 8 [should be p. 10]) and given that every "king table" takes up a full spread (see below), Gallico had to fill up the left side of it (p. 9 [should be p. 11]) before moving to the answer tables, as he indeed did. On this page, he drew a grassy flowery field and, in it, a four-branched tree headed by a big flower. From two of the lower branches hangs a big round fruit, and on it is written "Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust" and "steadfast love surrounds him who trusts in the Lord."[91] On the leaves hanging from the two higher branches and on the flower at the top of the trunk, he wrote: "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord."[92] The message on this page—a kind of title page to the tables of kings that follow and go on until the end of the book—joins the one that emerges from the introduction, emphasizing the need for trust in God and the answer reached through the divination procedure.

Each king has a page spread of his own. On the left side, under the title (which is the question that is identified through an intermediary figure with the specific king in the question table), are the seventeen answering sentences. On the right side is a rectangle

---

while confusing and further impressing inquirers is to spread dummy answers in the answer tables (at times including answers that a priori negate the very use of such inquiries!), which cannot be attained through suitable use of the book. See Browne, "The Composition," 98; Meerson, "Book Is a Territory," 395–297 and n. 25; Skeat, "Book of Fate," 46–47.

88 On the use of the intermediate stage for artistic demonstrations in *sortes* books, see Skeat, "Book of Fate," 48–49.

89 MS Moscow, pp. 6–8 (should be pp. 8–10).

90 All the drawings were painted inside a thinly traced and uniformly sized rectangular frame. On arboreal schemas that, from the Middle Ages onward, evolved as a paradigmatic pattern of the visualization of knowledge, see Pippa Salonius and Andrea Worm, eds., *The Tree: Symbol, Allegory, and Mnemonic Device in Medieval Art and Thought* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014). The most significant expression of this diagram in the Jewish world is the tree of the Sefirot (*ilan ha-sefirot*). See J. H. Chajes, *The Kabbalistic Tree* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022).

91 Ps 40:5 (NRSV 40:4) and 32:10 respectively.

92 Compare Jer 17:7.

split into three. At the center is the name of the king and in the bottom part is a drawing of the king. At times—as is true of Joshua pointing at the sun,[93] of David herding his sheep while playing the harp, and of Solomon reading a thick book and surrounded by others—the drawings suggest a clear link to the figure as it emerges in the Bible.[94] In most cases, however, it does not seem to follow the narrative about the king. Nor did I find any correspondence between the biblical figures of the kings and the questions that were tied to them.[95] What Gallico offers us, then, are stereotypical figures of rulers against the background of natural and urban landscapes from the Italian Renaissance, some as Roman characters and some as Muslim ones, some bearing a crown and some a turban, some wearing armor and a sword, and some a cape. I assume that a systematic examination of illustrated catalogues of rulers created in sixteenth-century Italy will lead to the source of the pictures, or at the very least of the motifs in the pictures that Gallico painted.

The most interesting segments, in my view, are actually those in the frameworks above the names of the kings. Here, Gallico painted scenes of everyday life in Italy that, in every single case, touch on the question that heads that king's table. These drawings (as well as those of the kings) deserve comprehensive research of their own, both as a reflection of life in sixteenth-century Italy and as an artistic representation of this reality. Through a few of the drawings, I succinctly point out below Gallico's approach and demonstrate the close link between the text and the picture in the manuscript.

In the spread of Joshua—headed by the question, "Will the pregnant woman give birth to a son or a daughter?"—is a drawing (on the top frame on the right) of a detailed birth scene that includes five female characters[96] (see Fig. 5). The woman giving birth, with her face toward us, lies on a broad armchair. Across from her, with her back to us, is the midwife sitting on a low chair, her hand under the dress of the woman giving birth. To the right of the woman in labor (to her left in the drawing) are two women: one older—perhaps her mother—and the other young, both supporting her and giving her water. On her left is a vessel with a burning fire inside it, possibly to warm the room and possibly related to the actions of the fifth figure, who stands on the right of the picture. This is an old woman, whose face looks clearly and deliberately different from the refined ones of the others. Her nose is long and crooked and her chin is sharp and prominent. Unlike the other women, whose hair is carefully groomed, hers is covered with a kerchief. These signs are meant to distinguish her from the four other women, as is the vessel with the burning flame that separates her from the group. Her role as well as the gesture she makes with her hands are unclear. She could be a servant providing fire and water and meeting the other

---

93 See Josh 10:12–13.

94 MS Moscow, pp. 12, 14, and 16, respectively.

95 The choice of the figures mediating the answers in *sortes* books, as noted, lacks any significance. Consequently, no meaning should be ascribed to the choice of the kings used in this book, or to the relationship between them and the questions that appear at the top of the answer tables related to them (all the more so since these are the questions that are not answered in that table). Were the situation different, it could have attested to unique and exceptional thought on the author's part.

96 MS Moscow, p. 12.

Figure 5: MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1072, p. 12 (Joshua)

needs of the woman in labor, or perhaps a "wise woman" performing some protection rite
for the woman giving birth.

  Another interesting example is the spread of King Solomon, who epitomizes wisdom
and justice.[97] The question atop the left side is "Will the debt be paid?" and the top frame
on the right presents a court scene showing the problem that gave rise to the question.
Two men, probably a lender and a debtor, stand to the left of a building they are about to
enter. The scale symbol on the entry gate indicates its function as a courthouse and, ac-

---

97 MS Moscow, p. 16.

Figure 6: MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1072, pp. 18–19 (Rehoboam)

cordingly, the three figures on its second floor are probably the judges. Since matters have reached the court, the debt has obviously not been paid and its fate is now brought before a legal instance. The fate of the debt, then, is at the focus of this spread both visually and linguistically.

The spread of Rehoboam is interesting from another perspective. The question "The maiden you love, will she be in your sign?" is accompanied by a surprising Renaissance scene that reveals the artistic taste of sixteenth-century Italian Jews[98] (see Fig. 6). Three women and one man sit together in a natural setting in an event of music and nudity. The group is split in two. On the right side sit two women talking to one another. One wears a dress and holds a violin or a viola and the other, seen from her side and back, is baring her shoulder and perhaps her breast too. Possibly, they are accompanying the maiden with the bare buttocks on the left of the drawing, at her meeting with the man sitting across her. This is a serene but sexually charged scene, with the lovers sitting across from one another largely naked. The man holds a lyre in his hand and seems to be singing to the girl across him when this romantic idyll is crashed by the man on the right whose appearance, in every detail, emphasizes how far removed he is from the event. This is a representation of the man wondering whether the maiden he yearns for will be his, and

---

98   MS Moscow, p. 18.

his figure is evidence of this manuscript's target public. Dressed in fancy court attire and wearing a sword, he stands tall beside the group, smiles, and points to the maiden. The youth, who has stopped playing, looks straight at him, while the girl, who had so far sat openly almost fully exposed to the youth, turns her back to the man asking about her and hides her body from him. Will she nevertheless be his? That is precisely the answer he is seeking in the book.

The question "Will the prisoner be released?" is accompanied by a minimalistic illustration of hinted figures outlined behind bars, with only their eyes visible to the reader.[99] The question "Will the harvest this year be plentiful or small?" is accompanied by a scene of a man and a woman sowing with a plow drawn by two oxen.[100] And the question about the "end of the war" is accompanied by a picture of horsemen—perhaps army commanders—standing near a walled town whose gate is open across a river.[101]

Gallico's drawing powers certainly relied not only on his talent but also on his familiarity with motifs prevalent in contemporaneous art. But did he henceforth follow his own course and imagine the scenes drawn in his book or did he perhaps rely on visual sources from which he copied? This type of question, as noted, calls for further research.

4   Conclusion

Maggid Davar is a fortune-telling book of the "staggered" *sortes* kind, that was copied and illustrated in Ancona in the mid-sixteenth century by Yeḥi'el Gallico, the copyist-illustrator who was also responsible for *'Ets ha-Da'at* as it is copied in the London manuscript. Both works were brought to Ancona from Safed, where they had been copied (*Maggid Davar*) or written (*'Ets ha-Da'at*) by Elisha son of Gad, who was also from Ancona, and were meticulously copied and illustrated by Gallico. His drawings in MS Moscow (*Maggid Davar*) are a Jewish visual expression of Italian court art in the sixteenth century and convey both daily life in Italy at the time and the way that biblical figures—prophets and kings—were imagined. In the context of this work, the decorated production of the manuscript is not at all exceptional in manuscripts and printed editions of *sortes* books. As far as MS London (*'Ets ha-Da'at*) is concerned, however, Gallico produced a unique manuscript of magic recipes, and his artistic imprint is evident in the decorative paratexts that appear on every single page.

The visual expression of the information in these manuscripts turned these works from manuals on divination and practical Kabbalah into precious objects, definitely intended not only for private use but also for public exhibition. This development attests to how members of the Italian Jewish community, for whom Gallico produced his works in the mid-sixteenth century, related to the contents that Elisha son of Gad had gathered in them during his stay in Safed.

---

99 MS Moscow, p. 22.
100 MS Moscow, p. 28.
101 MS Moscow, p. 32.

Magic Problems:
Francesco Zorzi's Theory of Occult Operations

Saverio Campanini

*Le Sohar représente donc la vérité absolue, et le Sépher Jézirah
donne les moyens de la saisir, de se l'approprier et d'en faire usage.*
Éliphas Lévi

In his *In Scripturam Sacram problemata*, published for the first time in Venice in 1536[1] (reprinted posthumously in Paris in 1574–1575[2] and again in 1622[3]), the Christian kabbalist Francesco Zorzi proposed 3000 questions and answers concerning mostly the Holy Scriptures, but also philosophical, hermetic, and magic doctrines.

In the sixth and last tome, containing, like the other five, 500 problems, the tenth section is dedicated to forty-four questions concerning "Some occult operations of nature and of art" (*De quibusdam occultis operationibus naturae et artis*).[4]

Here I would like to survey these questions and answers in order to determine whether a theory of magic could be derived from this very prudent discussion. The book, as is well known, raised the suspicions of the inquisitors from very early on, and it was inscribed on several lists of the proscribed books from the last quarter of the sixteenth century, but it was mildly condemned, with the formula "donec expurgetur."[5] The expurgation, after a long and complex debate between Dominicans and Franciscans, with the additional issue of a minority of Platonists facing a large consensus of Aristotelian Thomists such as Possevinus and Bellarminus, took up a large section of the *Index librorum expurgandorum*

---

1   Francesco Zorzi (Francisci Georgii Veneti minoritani), *In Scripturam Sacram problemata* (Venice: Bernardino Vitali, 1536).

2   Francesco Zorzi (Francisci Georgii Veneti Minoritani), *In Scripturam Sacram problemata. Cum indice triplici: Primus, tomorum et sectionum, secundus, rerum et verborum, tertius, locorum Sacrae Scripturae citatorum et explicatorum* (Paris: Michel Sonnius, 1574). Many copies of the same edition bear the date 1575 on the title page.

3   Francesco Zorzi (Francisci Georgii Veneti profundissimi theologi, ex ordine minorum), *In Scripturam Sacram, et philosophos, tria millia problemata. Additae sunt in calce libri theologicae correctiones, ut huic operi nihil requiratur. Cum indice triplici, primus rerum et verborum, secundus locorum sacrae scripturae, ultimus, deserviet Divini verbi praeconibus, ad Dominicarum Adventus, et omnium Quadragesimae dierum conciones habendas, qui maxime iuvabit lectoris animum* (Paris: Jacob Bessin, 1622).

4   These are *problemata* 428–471.

5   On the problems that Zorzi's oeuvre encountered with censorship and inquisition, see Cesare Vasoli, "Nuovi documenti sulla condanna all'indice e la censura delle opere di Francesco Giorgio Veneto," in *Censura ecclesiastica e cultura politica in Italia tra Cinquecento e Seicento*, ed. Cristina Stango (Florence: Olschki, 2001), 55–78.

of the Master of the Sacred Palace, Giovanni Maria Guanzelli from Brisighella.[6] It affect-
ed hundreds of passages and entire problems, some of which were doomed to complete
erasure, but—as far as the "magic" section is concerned—only two of the forty-four ques-
tions underwent correction. Only one of those was utterly condemned (*problema* 437);[7]
the other, *problema* 435, was only partially censored,[8] a clear sign that Zorzi had sensed the
changed climate—especially after the dramatic affair of the divorce of Henry VIII,[9] when
he was summoned to Rome and forced to keep silent on the matter—and lent to his ideas
about magic a particularly cautious formulation.

   If I had to determine the intellectual ascendancy of this discussion about the ulti-
mate sense of magic in a Christian intellectual and religious frame, two names—neither
mentioned explicitly by Zorzi—come to mind: Marsilio Ficino on the one hand,[10] and
Giovanni Pico della Mirandola on the other. It was Zorzi's custom throughout his volu-
minous works, both those printed and those that remained unpublished during his life-
time, not to mention the immediate sources of his ideas; he preferred ample reference to
ancient sources.[11] Similarly, Zorzi does not state explicitly that the tenth section of the last
tome of *In Scripturam Sacram problemata* is dedicated to magic, but speaks, in the most
general and vague terms, of occult operations of nature and technique and, in the entire
section, the word *magia* (magic) is mentioned only once (*problema* 461), in connection
with the Orphic hymns interpreted strictly according to Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's
"De modo intelligendi hymnos Orphei secundum magiam" (The interpretation of the
Orphic Hymns according to magic).

   One can best demonstrate the structure of the questions by quoting one of them in
extenso: I hope to be able to show, through it, that the apparent dispersiveness of Zorzi's
Problemata is not due to external constraints but rather corresponds to a carefully de-
signed plan. Whereas the first *problemata* follow, more or less faithfully, the structure and
the narrative of the biblical text or the doctrines and opinions of a series of philosophers
and wise men, the last tome is quite disparate, but what is lost in terms of great architec-

---

6   Giovanni Maria Guanzelli, *Indicis librorum expurgandorum in studiosorum gratiam confecti tomus
    primus, in quo quinquaginta auctorum libri prae caeteris desiderati emendantur* (Rome: Ex typo-
    graphia Reverendae Camerae Apostolicae, 1607), 446–509 (*Problemata*) and 509–553 (*De harmonia
    mundi*). See also Elisa Rebellato, "Il miraggio dell'espurgazione: L'indice di Guanzelli del 1607,"
    Società e storia 122 (2008): 715–742.

7   Guanzelli, *Indicis librorum expurgandorum*, 508: "dele Pithagoricum dictum tanquam ridiculosum."

8   Guanzelli, *Indicis librorum expurgandorum*, 508: "verba *& cum mutentur angelicae custodiae*, dele
    usque ad finem, asserit singulis tribus mensibus, et horis mutari custodias Angelorum."

9   See Jean-François Maillard, "Henry VIII et Georges de Venise: Documents sur l'affaire du divorce,"
    RHR 181 (1972): 157–186.

10 See Saverio Campanini, "Ein christlicher Kabbalist liest Ficino: Francesco Zorzi," in *Marsilio Ficino
    in Deutschland und Italien: Renaissance-Magie zwischen Wissenschaft und Literatur*, ed. Jutta Eming
    and Michael Dallapiazza (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017), 67–85.

11 This habit was so ingrained for Zorzi that in his commentary on the kabbalistic thesis of Giovanni
    Pico della Mirandola he managed to not mention the author even once; see Saverio Campanini,
    "Il commento alle Conclusiones cabalisticae nel Cinquecento," in *Giovanni Pico e la cabbalà*, ed.
    Fabrizio Lelli (Florence: Olschki, 2014), 167–230.

ture, is regained, as it were, through the consistent structure of the individual problems, each of them containing a miniature of the entire building. That is why, many years ago now, I could describe the makings of Zorzi chef d'oeuvre, his *De harmonia mundi*, by referring to a mathematical analogy: the characteristic self-similarity found in Mandelbrot sets, that is, the basic principle of fractal geometry.[12] If the book were organized only according to this principle, it would be rather boring, but—as the following example will demonstrate—there is a thread uniting the individual questions and answers, so that the content of the section develops, with each individual question, or *problema*, reproducing the structure, but not the argument, of the entire work. In other words, if we choose to read a single *problema* we will soon recognize that, in order to make sense of it, we need to go back to the preceding one or to put it into a meaningful series, since every part of the book implies the whole. The third edition of the *Problemata*, which appeared in print in Paris in 1622, introduced a liturgical device to selected portions of the *Problemata*, used to allow preachers to meditate and preach in correspondence with the Sundays of Advent and the forty days of Lent: even here, though, the problems are presented as homogeneous groups and not as single aphorisms, precisely because their meaning emerges only from their combination into a more complex, although recursive, pattern. In order to explain this point: to understanding question no. 461, one needs need to acquaint oneself at the least with the question immediately preceding it. Of course, this would be true, moving backward, also for the preceding question and so on, but in order to show how a thin slice of the entire work is organized, we will choose one *problema* in order to reveal the principle behind its construction, viewing it as a "cross section" and taking for granted, without illustrating in detail, what comes before and after it. If I manage to show the principle according to which this is done, I will be able to safely assume that a different investigation, of which I will give some examples later on, would elicit similar and consistent results.

Now, in *problema* 460, Zorzi concludes a previous set of questions concerning the *manuum ablutio*, the washing of the hands, as a powerful means for obtaining, from supernal powers (*a superis*), whatever we desire (*ut quicquid volumus obtineamus*).[13] We will come back to the idea of washing one's hands as a propitiatory practice, but here we will concentrate on the mechanism Zorzi describes: how does it work? The principle presiding over it is analogy: in order to obtain what we want, we have to conform to the powers bestowing upon us the capacity to perform or obtain the desired goal. This conformity is explained in terms of natural philosophy, with a reference to the celebrated aphorism "in habentibus symbolum facilis est transitus, facileque commercium" (for the elements having a symbolic affinity or a complementary characteristic in common, the passage from one to the other is easier, as easier is the communication), deriving, if I am not mis-

---

12 Saverio Campanini, "Haophan betoc haophan: La struttura simbolica del *De harmonia mundi* di Francesco Zorzi," *Materia Giudaica* 3 (1997), 13–17.

13 Zorzi, *Problemata* (1536), 410r–v. For the convenience of the reader, I have reproduced the original Latin text of the two *problemata* under scrutiny here in an appendix at the end of the article.

taken, through the interpretation of Saint Bonaventure,[14] from the *De generatione et corruptione* of Aristotle.[15] It is interesting that the usage by Aristotle of the term *symbolon*, probably derived in turn from Plato's terminology in the Symposion, induced no lesser erudite than Carl Gustav Jung[16] to attribute the aphorism to an alchemic author such as Johannes Daniel Mylius, who simply quoted it in his *Philosophia reformata* (1622).[17] It would certainly be worthwhile to analyze how exactly it could happen that a dictum from the naturalistic works of Aristotle has been taken for an esoteric authority of Renaissance alchemy, and certainly Zorzi's role in this process should not be disregarded, but let us not be distracted by that more general problem; Zorzi quotes it only to reaffirm that, in order to get in contact with the superior powers, we need to assimilate ourselves to them. Now, since they are pure, we also need to purify ourselves, if we want to operate effectively. At this juncture Zorzi adds the reference to the doctrine of the neoplatonist Syrianus, master of Proclus, who in his "theology" teaches that the priests of the earthly church, and any other "operator" (a term added by Zorzi) need to conform to the "anagogic gods" that is to say the "upward-driving powers" of the celestial hierarchy. The ultimate source for that contention is certainly Proclus' commentary on Plato's Timaeus,[18] but the mediated source is Giovanni Pico della Mirandola: in particular, thesis 13 of the second series of theses (according to his own opinion) on the doctrine of Plato: "If we follow the theology of Syrianus, it is rational to adapt the priests of the ecclesiastical hierarchy to the anagogical powers in the celestial hierarchy."[19] Not only does the tenor of Zorzi's quotation come from the unmentioned Pico, but also the highly suggestive choice of words, putting into Syrianus' mouth Dionysius Areopagite's terminology. As usual, *problema* 460 ends with a few biblical quotations, allegedly confirming this doctrine of conformity with the powers on high: especially Paul's Epistle to the Romans: "For whom he did foreknow, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son."[20]

---

14 See Bonaventure, *In secundum librum sententiarum* D. 7, p. 2, q. 1, fund. 2. For a more extensive analysis of the different versions of Aristotle's passage and its fortune among the scholastics, see Jacques Guy Bougerol, "Dossier pour l'étude des rapports entre Saint Bonaventure et Aristote," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 40 (1973): 135–222, esp. 169–170.

15 Aristotle, *De generatione et corruptione* II, 331a.

16 See C. G. Jung, *Psychologie und Alchemie* (1944), in his *Gesammelte Werke* (Düsseldorf; Walter, 1995), 12:263; C. G. Jung, *Die Psychologie der Übertragung* (1946), in his *Gesammelte Werke*, (Düsseldorf: Walter, 1995),16:250.

17 Johann Daniel Mylius, *Philosophia reformata* (Frankfurt am Main: apud Lucam Jennis, 1622), 182.

18 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum* (ed. Diehl) 1,153. See also *The Commentaries of Proclus on the Timaeus of Plato, in Five Books: Containing a Treasury of Pythagoric and Platonic Physiology; Translated from the Greek by Thomas Taylor* (London: printed by the author, 1820), 129; Sarah Klitenic Wear, *The Teachings of Syrianus on Plato's Timaeus and Parmenides* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 52–55.

19 "Si Syriani theologiam sequamur, rationabile est ecclesiasticae hierarchiae sacerdotes in coelesti hierarchia anagogicis virtutibus proportionari." See S. A. Farmer, *Syncretism in the West: Pico's 900 Theses (1486); The Evolution of Traditional Religious and Philosophical Systems* (Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), 440–441. I have not followed Farmer's translation.

20 Rom 8:29 (KJV).

The structure delineated in this quick survey is already clear: with an ascending movement from nature (Aristotle), to neoplatonic philosophy, to Revelation, all the sources Zorzi evokes are marked by analogy and *concordia* (the central idea derived from Pico). Moreover, the choice of references is made according to the very same principle of analogy, allowing Zorzi to suggest that the morphology of natural relationships is mirrored among the very texts forming his intellectual and spiritual arsenal and vice versa.

We are now in a favorable position to read the contents of the subsequent *problema* (no. 461), in which Zorzi writes:

> How do we operate according to the aforementioned conformity? Perhaps in accordance with the symbolic power (or complementary energy), as we have said? Or according to the power of consonance? The latter, in fact, is so effective that if one resounding element moves, it entails the movement of another resounding element, as I have already explained concerning the well-tuned cithers.[21] One can also cite the example of two true friends: one moves according to the movement of the other, since they desire and reject the same things, as the saying goes.[22] Thus, Orpheus teaches, in the operation of the individuum, that the name of natural and divine powers is, though by analogy, one and the same, and one is the hymn, as he requires in his magic, and one and the same is the work (or the operation). So that, for example, we could say: If I am disposed to receive the light and the favor of the sun; as long as the sun operates in me, also Raphael is at work, or whatever intelligence dominates the sun. At the same time, the identical operation is performed by the divine aspect (*numen*) corresponding to the sun and to that intelligence. This divine aspect is called by David, Isaiah and the most secret theologians תפארת, which is the heart of the Archetype, exactly as the sun is the heart of the sky. And both correspond to our heart, which in turn resonates with the supernal powers through illumination and ardent love.[23]

The idea of consonance, as it emerges clearly from this text, does not stand in opposition to the naturalistic approach of complementary affinity, it brings it rather to a completely different level, inserting the natural experience of musical attuning to the interpersonal harmony of friendship and then, with the example of the sun, heart of the sky, to the classic correspondence microcosm-macrocosm, to reach the "most secret theologians," that is to say the kabbalists, bringing the analogy too far for a philosopher, but exactly where Zorzi wanted it to be, in the very heart of the Godhead, coinciding with the sixth Sefirah.[24]

---

21 *Problemata* II,2,55. There Zorzi proposes the analogy of well-tuned instruments in order to justify the exclusion of eunuchs and castrati from the priesthood: they do not need sexual organs, but they need to be perfect, as God is perfect.

22 Sallust, *De coniuratione Catilinae* 20,4. The formula is already proverbial, although with different nuances, in Seneca, *Epistulae morales* 20 and 109.

23 Zorzi, *Problemata* (1536), 410r–v (VI,10,460). The translation is mine.

24 See Saverio Campanini, "Francesco Zorzi: Armonia del mondo e filosofia simbolica," *Il pensiero simbolico nella prima età moderna*, ed. Annarita Angelini and Pierre Caye (Florence: Olschki, 2007), 225–246.

Even in this case Zorzi was careful to provide several biblical authorities, the Psalms[25] and Isaiah,[26] to warrant for the reduction to the Sefirot, and to their graphic arrangement, called by him the Archetype, of every organ of the human body,[27] of every celestial body, of every angel and, since it is a dynamic image, of every force expressing itself in nature. As far as the mention of Orpheus is concerned, Zorzi's source is to be found without doubt in the Orphic hymns, translated by Ficino, but the wording of his teaching derives straight from Pico della Mirandola's theses, specifically from conclusion 6 of the second series "De modo intelligendi hymnos Orphei secundum magiam": "For each natural or divine power the analogy of property is the same, the name is the same, the hymn the same, the work the same, preserving the proportion."[28]

I hope to have shown here, albeit cursorily, how the *problemata* are built, and how the interplay of Zorzi's sources and all elements of nature is reflected in the very structure of his work, in which each problem is designed in such a way to resonate with any other. The harmonistic concept of nature and of literary-philosophical creation, already at the center of Zorzi major work *De harmonia mundi*, published in 1525,[29] is applied here to the specific field of magic, following the general lead of Ficino on the more precise trail designed by Giovanni Pico, who had launched the idea, without determining his intuition in detail, that the *scientia cabalae* provided the theory for understanding the working and the limits of any practice of "natural magic."[30]

The *problemata* specifically concerned with magic are quite heterogeneous, but they can be distributed under three major categories: time, place, and mode (*tempus*, *locus*, *modus operandi*). In fact, the large majority of the questions of this section, if not all of them, can be ascribed to one of these three categories. After a general introduction on the power of names in magic and the power of words (*vis verborum*), in which Zorzi states that words have great efficacy in the battle against the demons since the latter are also verbal in nature—a teaching that sounds both reassuring and disquieting at the same time—a large subsection is dedicated to the role of time in magic. Zorzi declares that with *tempus* in magic one should not understand the neutral continuum of the succession of instants: the efficacy of the magical operation, in fact, is strictly connected to the quality of the single

---

25 Ps 96:6 (KJV): "Honour (תפארת) and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary."

26 Isa 62:3 (KJV): "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory (תפארת) in the hand of thy God."

27 For a different, but analogous, doctrine of the correspondence between the Sefirot and the human body, the one offered by the Aristotelian kabbalist Paulus Riccius, and a comparative perspective, see Saverio Campanini, "Shaping the Body of the Godhead: The Adaptation of the Androgynous Motif in Early Christian Kabbalah," in *The Jewish Body: Corporeality, Society and Identity in the Renaissance and Early Modern Period*, ed. Maria Diemling and Giuseppe Veltri (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 255–376.

28 "Quarumcumque virtutum naturalium vel divinarum eadem est proprietatis analogia, idem etiam nomen, idem hymnus, idem opus, servata proportione"; see Farmer, *Syncretism in the West*, 506–507. I have slightly revised Farmer's translation.

29 Francesco Zorzi, *L'armonia del mondo*, trans. and ed. Saverio Campanini (Milan: Bompiani, 2010).

30 On Pico's "theory" of magic, see Flavia Buzzetta, *Magia naturalis e scientia cabalae in Giovanni Pico della Mirandola* (Florence: Olschki, 2019).

moments, depending on the angels that govern them and determine the *kairos*, the opportune time, or, to put it in more flippant terms, the "magic moment." Zorzi does not delve into details, but he alludes to the fact that the different quality of times and moments is tied to the rotation of the angelic hosts, who change every three months and also every three hours. This *problema*, as we have mentioned, was one of the very few that all the inquisitors found highly problematic and, after a series of proposed censorships entrusted to the Franciscans and to the Dominicans, *problema* 435 was condemned to complete erasure.[31] *Problema* 437 was also partially condemned by the Inquisition, since it is considered laughable (*ridiculosum*), because Zorzi quotes the ancient Pythagorean dictum "Do not pee against the sun" (*In solem ne mingas*), taking it seriously and, of course, symbolically. *Problema* 435 was condemned to utter deletion, due to the suggestion, smelling like magic, that the right angelic name could make a prayer more effective, according to its timing. If one considers, on the other hand, that hundreds of *problemata* from the entire work were judged heretic, suspicious, in need of revision, or to be utterly suppressed, the fact that the magic section of the book was left, with these two exceptions, untouched, proves once again that Zorzi, aware as he was of the dangers entailed by the topic he had decided to examine, had been very prudent in revealing his thought. This prudence is, if I am not mistaken, one of the causes of Daniel Pickering Walker's disappointment, in his book on spiritual and demonic magic, toward Zorzi's teaching:[32] compared to Ficino, Zorzi seems in fact much more inclined toward the symbolic and the allegorical, instead of being explicit on the magical praxis. The point on which one cannot agree with Walker, nevertheless, is his insistence on the idea that no theory of magic is provided in Zorzi's voluminous works. A theory of magic is actually provided, but one has to know where to look for it. Zorzi's theory of magic, like his theory of the entire exegetical building of the *Problemata*, is to be found, not in the questions, which are apparently disparate, occasional, and more often than not determined by the contingencies of biblical narration, but in the very structure of the answers he provides with untiring consistency. When considered from this perspective, it is easy to recognize that Kabbalah provides the underlying theory of the efficacy of magic. This was, after all, precisely Pico della Mirandola's program. The difference, and the originality of Zorzi consists in the fact that he has read different books and, as I will try to show, he had a deeper knowledge of the Zohar, which became for him, especially in his later years—that is to say, from 1525 to his death in 1540—the center of his understanding, reading, and studying of Kabbalah.

Let us consider the three categories I have delineated as essential for systematizing his chapter on magic. To begin with *tempus*, in *problema* 448, following a development concerning the "opportune time" (*tempus faustum*), defined as the right time to pray and to

---

31 Ugo Baldini and Leen Spruit, *Catholic Church and Modern Science: Documents from the Archives of the Roman Congregations of the Holy Office and the Index*, vol. 1, *Sixteenth-Century Documents* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009), 1738–1877, esp. 1791. Only the documents concerning the Dominicans are preserved at the archive of the Holy Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, that is to say of the Sant'Uffizio; thus Baldini and Spruit's publication includes only these.

32 D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (London: Warburg Institute, 1958), 112–119. I have discussed Walker's judgment in Campanini, "Ein christlicher Kabbalist," 72–73.

act (*tempus orandi et operandi*), Zorzi refers to a homiletic passage of the Zohar,[33] in which a biblical phrase that states that when the famine started, Joseph had already two children (Gen 41:50) is interpreted to mean that, during the seven years of the famine, he refrained from sexual intercourse. The influx from above, causing the seven years of abundance, had ceased, and the Sefirah dominating the years of famine was located on the left hand of the Archetype, the one presiding over rigorous justice. It was therefore advisable to refrain from sexual intercourse, in order to prevent the birth of ill-fated children. Zorzi comments, without enhancing the obvious leap from sexual activity to spiritual matters, that "the ones who are accustomed to pray and operate spiritually, can easily confirm it, by paying attention to the great difference existing from a moment to another" (*qui vero in orando, et spiritualiter operando sunt assueti, facile comprobant advertentes quanta sit differentia inter tempus et tempus*).[34] The material and the spiritual are, with all due proportions, one and the same.

The question of time entails also general aspects, which are of great interest for the theologian. For example, in *problema* 438 he asks: if the magical occasions are determined according to time by the supernal beings, are they also time-bound? This would contradict the idea that God and the angels are eternal (*apud quos non est tempus*). How is time so important in actions ultimately determined from above, if the superior forces themselves do not know time? There is, Zorzi insinuates, a superior form of time, from which our time is somehow derived or described by analogy: the superior time is unfathomable, and it is paraphrased by midrashic sayings, according to which one day for God is like one thousand years for us or, as in the zoharic commentary concerning the patriarch Jacob,[35] a period of seven years, the time he had to work in order to be entitled to marry Rachel, was for him as seven days. These seven "days," no doubt, are seven Sefirot. Here, as we will see in another instance, Zorzi seems to have misunderstood the wording of the Zohar: since Jacob worked seven years for Rachel, but was tricked by his father-in-law Laban into marrying first Leah, he had to work seven additional years in order to acquire the beloved younger sister Rachel as his wife. These seven additional years are explained by the Zohar as the "lower heptad," in other words, the seven Sefirot contained in a less concealed way in Shekhinah (or Sabbatical), whereas the first seven, hidden, are to be found in the "higher heptad," that is to say the same seven Sefirot still comprised in Binah (Jubilee), corresponding to Leah. Jacob, identified with Tif'eret, mediates between the two, desiring Rachel but being married first to Leah, the mother of many tribes. Now Zorzi, perhaps for reasons tied to his own symbolic understanding of the passage, inverts the hierarchy, and binds Rachel to the superior heptad and Leah to the inferior one. Moreover, adding his own explanation, since the higher heptad is not separated from the supernal unity (*nullatenus ab unitate distat*), the seven years he served for Rachel were for him as a few days, whereas the inferior seven, already detached from the origin, lasted longer both in reality and in his imagination. Not noticing the inversion, Zorzi did not try to explain the

---

33   Zohar I,204a.
34   Zorzi, *Problemata* (1536), 408v. The translation is mine.
35   Zohar I,153b.

contradiction, but one could observe that the first seven years, which seemed brief to him, were actually the ones needed for preparing to the union with Leah, although he believed he would attain Rachel. Even the mention of the well, where Jacob met Rachel, interpreted as Be'er Sheva', that is to say, the well of the seven (Sefirot) did not bring Zorzi to revise his inverted symbol, since he read the well as a source and not as the collecting place (i. e., Malkhut) where the Sefirot converge.

In the *problema* immediately following the group of questions dedicated to Jacob (no. 441),[36] Zorzi asks exactly how Elijah was able to stop the rain:[37] if it came from the influx from above, there would obviously be no way to tie by inferior means a superior decree (*ligando inferiora cum superioribus*). Therefore, as the Zohar contends,[38] Elijah must have had at his disposal the "key of the rain," tying the superior realities, where rain and drought are one, to the effect of commanding over rain. The miraculous performance of Joshua,[39] arresting the apparently unstoppable movement of the sun, is in Zorzi's eyes in no way different.

The category of place (*locus*) is treated in some of the ensuing questions in a very similar manner: from high above to the most inferior emanated realities, time and space are strictly related, and what looks for us different, is actually one and the same. In *problema* 449,[40] Zorzi states that time originates in the spatial movement of the celestial bodies, in turn determined by movements above them: spaces on high (*spatia*) correspond therefore to sublunar times (*tempora*). Again, in *problema* 455,[41] a zoharic interpretation[42] concerning Jacob who prepared the sheep for conceiving spotted and speckled lambs, he placed before them branches to favor the phenomenon but had to wait for the heat (*calor*) at the propitious time: this time of heat in animals corresponds to a spatial movement above and conversely, for operating magic, the right time will not bring the desired effect if the location is wrong.

Finally, the *modus* of magic action, where we would expect more intriguing details might appear a bit disappointing, if we are looking for explicit recipes: Zorzi deals extensively with the forms of prayer, or conjuration, without revealing the formulas the magician should be pronouncing. Rather he concentrates[43] on the external form of "magic" conjuration, stating that the right tone of voice should not be too elevated, but instead an almost inaudible murmur (*submurmurando*), and the authority quoted on this peculiar point is, once again, the Zohar.[44] But even a totally silent conjuration can be effective,[45] he writes, since the three conditions needed for effectively drawing the desired blessing

---

36 Zorzi, *Problemata* (1536), 407v.
37 The episode of the drought of rain and dew ordered by Elijah is told in 1 Kgs 17:1.
38 Zohar II,89a.
39 Josh 10:12–13.
40 Zorzi, *Problemata* (1536), 408v–409r.
41 Zorzi, *Problemata* (1536), 409v.
42 Zohar I,161b.
43 For example in *Problemata* VI,10,450; Zorzi, *Problemata* (1536), 409r.
44 Zohar I,210a.
45 Zorzi, *Problemata* (1536), 409r (VI,10,451).

on our prayer, are, according to the Zohar,[46] mind, intention, and speech (*mens, intentio, verbum*), but the latter can be fully unexpressed (*verbum mentale*).

The only detail Zorzi is ready to reveal concerning the magic ritual is the quite harmless practice of washing one's hands,[47] which is of course interpreted as a highly symbolic act—purifying from sin one's actions—and the sanction for the efficacy of this practice, quite important in Judaism at large, does not come from some halakhic compendium, but straight from the Zohar.[48] As to the exact procedure, the position of the Zohar is not consistent, since different rabbis describe which hand should wash which first: Rabbi Eleazar, in the passage quoted by Zorzi, insisted that the left hand should wash the right hand first, although, in another passage,[49] Rabbi Jacob contends that the washing should be performed the other way around[50] in accordance with the usually accepted practice in Judaism. Although Rabbi Eleazar insists that the fact that the left washes, and therefore serves, the right hand is meant to avoid any opening to the evil impulse trying to dominate the compassionate side, Zorzi states clearly that the right hand should begin the process and wash the left hand first. If one looks at the later *Shulḥan ʿArukh*, the traditional order is maintained but, perhaps in an attempt to reconcile the two opinions, the left hand should first reach for the vessel containing fresh water, in order to put the left in a subordinate position, only to pass the vessel to the right and start the ablution.[51] Be that as it may, one cannot describe Zorzi as slavishly reproducing the Zohar and accepting all its deviations from his own symbolic system and from established Jewish practice. He is rather constantly referring to the Zohar as the theoretical basis for his peculiar understanding of magic, to act effectively in accordance with the invisible structure of reality itself.

In 1933, Gershom Scholem wrote a letter to Walter Benjamin, who had promised to send him a brief text of his ("The Doctrine of the Similar"):[52] "It won't have escaped you that I'm looking forward to [your] text on language with the unfeigned interest of the Black Magician who expects a theory to shore up his formulae."[53] The role of the Zohar in Zorzi's late *problemata* fits this image perfectly: the theory badly needed by natural magic was in his eyes nothing else than Kabbalah and ìn particular the Zohar with its pervasive doctrine of similarity.

---

46 Zorzi alludes, once again, to Zohar I,210a. See also Zohar I,161a, and compare Zohar I,99b; 161a; 220b; II,239b; III,184b; 285a; and the annotation in Daniel Chanan Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 3:401, n. 657.

47 Zorzi, *Problemata* (1536), 409v–410r (VI,10,457).

48 Zohar I,198b.

49 Zohar II,154b.

50 See also Zohar Ḥadash on Ruth, f. 36d.

51 Joseph Karo, *Shulḥan ʿArukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 4,10.

52 *Die Lehre des Ähnlichen*; for an English translation see Walter Benjamin, "Doctrine of the Similar (1933)," *New German Critique* 17 (1979): 65–69. On the importance of this exchange I allow myself to reference my own essay "Ombre cinesi," in *Archivio e camera oscura: Carteggio 1932–1940*, ed. Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem (Milan: Adelphi, 2019), 377–453.

53 Gershom Scholem, ed., *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem 1932–1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 55.

Appendix

Problemata nos. 460 and 461 from Francesco Zorzi, *In Scripturam Sacram problemata* (Venice: Bernardino Vitali, 1536), 410r–v:

> VI,10,460. Quid operatur illa manuum ablutio ad hoc ut, quicquid volumus, a superis obtineamur? Nonne habemus illam Naturalium vulgata sententia: In habentibus symbolum facilis est transitus, facileque commercium? Si igitur cum superis commercium habere volumus, nonne necesse est ut illis conformemur in rectitudine, spiritualitate, munditie, et in cunctis pro viribus nostris? Hinc Syrianus in sua Theologia docet, quod Ecclesiasticae Hierarchiae Sacerdotes, et alii operantes proportionari debent anagogicis virtutibus coelesti Hierarchiae. Immo oportet, quod conformemur summo Hierarchiae, si Pauli varba observare voluerimus, / qui ait: Quos praescivit et praedestinavit, scilicet Deus, conformes fieri imagini filii sui. Quo sensu iterum dixit: Nemo potest dicere Dominum Iesum, nisi in Spiritu sancto, idest nisi participet de Spiritu sancto, sicut ipse Christus plenus fuit, de cuius plenitudine (teste Iohanne) nos omnes accoepimus.

> VI,10,461. Quomodo ex hac conformitate operamur? An ex illa vi symbolica, ut dictum est? An ex vi consonantiae? Nam haec adeo efficax est, ut ad motus unius consonantis, sequatur motus alterius, ut de citharis bene chordatis supra exemplificatum fuit, et de veris amicis exemplificari potest, quorum alter movetur ad motum alterius, cum utrique sit (ut dicitur) idem velle et idem nolle. Hinc Orpheus in operatione singularis docet, quod secundum quod est idem nomen, per analogiam tamen, virtutum naturalium et divinatum, idem est hymnus, ut sua Magia exquirit, idemque est opus, ut verbi gratia dicere possumus: Si dispositionem habeam ad suscipiendum lumen Solis, dum operatur in me Sol, operatur et Raphael, sive quaecumque intelligentia ipsi Soli praesidens, operaturque et illud numen, cui Sol et intelligentia illa respondent.[54] Quod quidem numen David, Isaias, et Secretiores Theologi vocant תפארת Tipheret, quod est cor Archetypi, sicut Sol cor coeli. Et utrumque respondet cordi nostro per illustrationem et fervidam charitatem superis correspondenti.

---

54 I have corrected the text of the printed editions, reading here *respondet*.

Hebrew Divine Names into Latin and Italian:
Shiv'ah Shemot and Other Samples from
Egidio da Viterbo's Workshop

Emma Abate

Ut quia homo te de facie non videt et vivit:
per has te formulas: sicut fas est mortali te docente
contemplaremur fac ut qui tua hic a tergo quaesivimus:
a fronte impleamur laetitia cum vultu tuo

From the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Augustinian friar, neoplatonist, and humanist, Egidio da Viterbo (1469–1532)[1] was deeply engaged in the study of the Hebrew language, a language which he defined in his kabbalistic treatise *Libellus de litteris hebraicis* (produced in 1517) as "sola lingua a divino Spiritu tradita."[2] Despite his successful career as a clergyman and diplomat in the Roman Church,[3] Egidio remained close to the spiritual branch of the Augustinians for life, devoted as he was to hermeneutics and

---

1   See François Secret, *Les kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance*, rev. ed. (Neuilly-sur-Seine: Arma Artis, 1985), 106–126; Francis X. Martin, *Friar, Reformer, and Renaissance Scholar: Life and Work of Giles of Viterbo, 1469–1532* (Villanova, PA: Augustinian Press, 1992).

2   See the autographic manuscript in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 5808, fol. 5r. In *Libellus de litteris hebraicis*, the Hebrew alphabet is considered the instrument and the foundation of the divine creation. In the introduction—dedicated to Cardinal Giulio de Medici— Egidio exhorts Pope Leo X to include the Hebrew letters *he*, *ḥet*, and *'ayin* in the Latin alphabet in order to enable Christians to spell Hebrew words and divine names: "So that we can write, read and understand what is divine" (for this translation see Brian Copenhaver and Daniel Stein Kokin, "Egidio da Viterbo's Book on Hebrew Letters: Christian Kabbalah in Papal Rome," *Renaissance Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 1–42, in particular p. 4. The other translations in the article from Egidio into English are mine); the rest of the work consists in a revelation of the secret shape of the Hebrew letters. See Egidio da Viterbo, *Scechina e Libellus de litteris hebraicis*, ed. François Secret (Rome: Centro Internationale di Studi Umanistici, 1959), 23–33. A recent Hebrew edition and translation of this work was prepared by Yehuda Liebes: Egidio da Viterbo, *Sifron 'al ha-otiyot ha-'ivriyot* (Jerusalem: Karmel, 2012); see also Saverio Campanini's review of the latter in *Materia Giudaica* 17–18 (2012–2013): 281–284.

3   Egidio was first vicar, then prior general of the Augustinians. In 1512 he was asked by Pope Julius II (1443–1513) to pronounce the discourse for the opening of the Fifth Lateran Council, during which the moral and spiritual renovation of the church and the conflict with the Turks were debated. Egidio became a cardinal in 1517 and bishop of Viterbo in 1523.

the contemplation of Scripture.[4] In studying Hebrew, Egidio developed grammatical and linguistic expertise as well as mystical and kabbalistic understanding.[5] He intended to improve his interpretation of the Bible in several ways—literal and grammatical, allegorical, and spiritual interpretations. In parallel, he wished to enhance his knowledge of divine and heavenly matters. Kabbalah was of pivotal importance for his perspectives on the reformation of Christendom and of Christian theology. He considered biblical exegesis to be the most direct access to the Trinitarian mystery due to the metaphysical correspondence between the Hebrew Scripture and Providence. He believed that the interpretation and understanding of the Jewish literature could allow revelations about the destiny of the Church and confirm its primacy over the Muslim world, heretics, and schismatics.[6] As indicated in his *Historia XX saeculorum per totidem psalmos digesta*, Egidio considered that the Hebrew Bible was a tool for deciphering the future and for performing miracles, if the Hebrew letters and the divine names were properly pronounced.[7]

Mystical and kabbalistic treatises on the mysteries of the Hebrew letters and the divine and angelic names are a key subject matter in the collection of books which Egidio assembled from the beginning of the sixteenth century[8] by commissioning copies from

---

4   Egidio probably started to study the Hebrew language when he entered the group of the Augustinian observants and rigorists of Lecceto in Tuscany (1502).

5   According to Egidio, all languages were corrupted and barbaric when compared to Hebrew. For different positions on the study of Hebrew during the Renaissance, see Daniel Stein Kokin, "Polemical Language: Hebrew and Latin in Medieval and Early Modern Jewish-Christian Debate," *Jewish History* 29 (2015): 1–38.

6   John W. O'Malley, *Giles of Viterbo on Church and Reform: A Study on Renaissance Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1968); John W. O'Malley, "Egidio da Viterbo and Renaissance Rome," in *Egidio da Viterbo, O.S.A. e il suo tempo: Atti del V Convegno dell'Istituto Storico Agostiniano, Roma-Viterbo, 20–23 oct. 1982* (Rome: Analecta Augustiniana, 1983), 67–84.

7   Egidio wrote *Historia XX saeculorum per totidem psalmos digesta* between 1513 and 1518. The work is an interpretation of human history, subdivided into twenty eras, with a focus on the history of the papacy between Alessandro VI and Leo X. Each era is connected to the text of a psalm, from the first to the twentieth. See MS Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, IX B 14; and MSS Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, Lat. 351 and 502. See Léon-Gabriel Pélissier, *De opere historico Aegidi Cardinalis viterbensis* (Montpellier: Ex typis Caroli Boehm, 1896).

8   Egidio gathered a considerable collection of Hebrew manuscripts, translations, and editions. The majority of his library was lost during the Sack of Rome in 1527. Part of it remained in the heritage of the Augustinians or is in Rome held in the Biblioteca Angelica, the Biblioteca Casanatense, and the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Part found its way to Paris together with Catherine de' Medici (1519–1589) and the legacy of the Medicis; another part was acquired by the humanist and Hebraist Johann Albrecht Widmannstetter (1506–1557). See Charles Astruc and Jacques Monfrin, "Livres latins et hébreux du Cardinal Gilles de Viterbe," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et de Renaissance* 23 (1961): 551–554; Francis X. Martin, "The Writings of Giles of Viterbo," *Augustiniana* 29 (1979): 141–193; Adolfo Tura, "Un codice ebraico di cabala appartenuto a Egidio da Viterbo," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 68 (2006): 535–543; Emma Abate, "Filologia e Qabbalah: La collezione ebraica di Egidio da Viterbo alla Biblioteca Angelica di Roma," *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà* 26 (2013): 413–451; Margherita Palumbo, "I codici postillati di Egidio da Viterbo, dal Sant'Uffizio alla Casanatense," in *Egidio da Viterbo cardinale agostiniano tra Roma e l'Europa del Rinascimento: Atti*

Jewish scribes, scholars, and converts,[9] and by acquiring earlier manuscripts. The most cherished kabbalistic works circulating in Italy at that time found their way into Egidio's collection, sometimes after long negotiations.[10] Owning these volumes was only the first step in a long process of apprenticeship and learning. Once the copies of kabbalistic texts entered Egidio's library, translating them was an essential element of Egidio's study program. Translations into Latin (sometimes only of excerpts) of Hebrew works are extant in his handwriting or bear his signature.[11] In some exemplars, it is possible to recognize com-

---

del Convegno, Viterbo, 22–23 settembre 2012—Roma, 26–28 settembre 2012, ed. Myriam Chiabò, Rocco Ronzani, and Angelo Maria Vitale (Rome: Centro Culturale Agostiniano, 2014), 299–322.

9 In 1506, the convert Felice da Prato (1460–1539), the first editor of the rabbinic Bible and the author of the translation into Latin of the Psalter, entered the Augustinian monastery of Lecceto. Felice was probably one of Egidio's first masters of Hebrew and of Jewish esoteric doctrines. At Egidio's request, Felice translated *Imrei Shefer* by Abraham Abulafia (1240–after 1291) and the anonymous mystical work of the thirteenth century, *Sefer ha-Temunah*. See François Secret, "Notes sur Egidio da Viterbo," *Augustiniana* 15 (1965): 68–72. A copy of the Zohar, commissioned from the scribe Avraham ben Yitshaq from Tivoli, was completed in 1513; see the exemplar in Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, 2971. In 1515, the Jewish scholar and master of Hebrew Elia Levita (1469–1549) copied for Egidio the anthology *Sodei Razayya* (Secrets of Secrets) which encompasses mystical treatises by Eleazar of Worms (1176–1238), prominent personality of the group of Ḥasidei Ashkenaz. The exemplar of *Sodei Razayya* held in London, British Library, Add. 27199, includes the following works: *Sod Ma'aśeh Bereshit* (Secret of the Work of Creation), *Sod ha-Merkavah* (Secret of the Chariot), *Sefer ha-Shem* (Book of the Name), *Perush Sefer Yetsirah* (Commentary on the Book of the Formation), and *Ḥokhmat ha-Nefesh* (Wisdom of the Soul). See Gérard E. Weil, *Elie Lévita, humaniste et massorète* (Leiden: Brill 1963), 70–110; Malachi Beit Arié, "Eliyahu Levita as a Scribe, Author-Scribe, and Codicologist" (unpublished manuscript); Emma Abate, "Raziel a Roma, le copie di Egidio da Viterbo (1469–1532)," in *L'eredità di Salomone: La magia ebraica in Italia e nel Mediterraneo*, ed. Emma Abate (Florence: Giuntina; Ferrara: Edizioni Fondazione Meis, 2019), 119–142.

10 Egidio writes of his intense study of the Hebrew language in a letter dated 5 January 1514 (MS Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, Lat. 688, fols. 49r–v) to the Augustinian friar Gabriele della Volta (1468–1537), who was committed by Egidio to the search and acquisition of Hebrew manuscripts: "Nos quidem in studiis sanctae linguae / hebraeae libentissime conquiescimus" (We rest with great pleasure upon the study of Hebrew language). At that time, Egidio was looking for *Sefer ha-Qanah*, a kabbalistic work on the first chapter of Genesis: "De libro quem scribis, sine / mercede viginti aureorum exemplari non posse, qui / quidem liber Bencana dicitur super primum capitulum." Egidio was ready to pay a fortune to obtain this book, even if he exhorts Gabriele to make big efforts to pay less than two golden coins: "Hic scri/bentibus volumina hebraica pro singulo quaterni/one marcellos praebemus duos. / Iccirco curato quantum poteris detrahere, sed ut habeatur liber Bencana / nullis pecunis stetur." In a later letter to Gabriele dated 8 May 1514 (MS Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, Lat. 688, fol. 51r), Egidio complains about his copy of the Zohar, which he considered full of mistakes and incomplete; thus he implored Gabriele to look for a new copy during his mission in Syria.

11 Autographic versions into Latin by Egidio are found in MSS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 527 (vols. 1 and 2) and Lat. 598, and in MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 5198. They include the following works: zoharic excerpts, *Sefer ha-Temunah* (Book of the Image), *Sefer ha-Yiḥud* (Book of Unity), Gikatilla's *Ginnat Egoz* (Nut Garden), *Sefer ha-Bahir* (Book of Brightness), *Razi'el*, *Sefer Yetsirah* (Book of Formation), an anonymous commentary on the ten Sefirot, midrashim and aggadot, Gikatilla's *Sefer Sha'arei Orah* (Gates of Light), the Torah commentary by Menaḥem Recanati, and so on. See François Secret, "La traduction d'extraits du Zôhar par Gilles de Viterbe," in *Le Zôhar chez les kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance*, ed. François Secret

mentaries or sections which were redacted by Hebrew or Latin hands other than Egidio's and which interplay with his own translations and notes: they might be from later owners, but it is more likely that they belong to Jewish teachers and collaborators standing in as intermediaries between the Hebrew text and Egidio's understanding of its meaning. This way of turning the manuscript page into a sort of hypertext is typical of Egidio's style.

The present research deals with a different kind of evidence from Egidio's collection that sheds light on Egidio's devices and perspectives in approaching the Hebrew language and the Hebrew divine names. This evidence is found in translations, marginalia, and book notes which were penned by Egidio himself and by people who assisted him in his reading the Hebrew texts. After providing a brief insight into Egidio's premises and aims in the study of Hebrew literature, based on his autographic comments, the first part of this essay will focus on a set of translations from Hebrew into the Italian vernacular prepared by Jewish scribes and scholars for Egidio. The translators' techniques, methodology, and selection of kabbalistic, aggadic, and midrashic material will be examined: Egidio himself would ultimately translate these texts yet again into Latin, and autographic notes comment on this work in progress. Although this translation project is of crucial importance for the transmission of the mystical Jewish literature to the Christian world of the Renaissance, it has received almost no scholarly attention so far.

In the second part, this article will take into account a compilation (MS London, British Library, Add. 16390, vols. A–B) that includes, in its first volume, an anonymous glossary entitled *Shiv'ah Shemot* (Seven Names), on the divine names occurring in the Bible, accompanied by masoretic explanation, and in its second volume, excerpts of a Jewish mystical text in vernacular translation entitled *Raziel*.[12] They are both to be ascribed, as will be shown, to Egidio's workshop and to a collaboration with Elia Levita.

The final part of this article will be concerned with two autographic notebooks by Egidio (MSS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 596–597), in which our author records and translates Hebrew roots and divine names that he collected during his reading of Hebrew exegetical and mystical works.[13]

The combined analysis of these various witnesses[14] opens different viewpoints on the ongoing activities which Egidio promoted, supporting the spread of Hebrew and Jewish studies in Renaissance Rome. Moreover, it enlightens us on some of the propaedeutic materials which contributed to Egidio's key endeavor, that is to attain a mastery of Kabbalah and to shape his own syncretic kabbalistic system. Egidio achieved two high points in this pursuit, with the redaction of his *Libellus de litteris hebraicis*[15] and of his *Scechina* (in 1530),[16]

(Paris: Mouton, 1964), 34–42; François Secret, "Sur quelques traductions du Sefer Raziel," *REJ* 128 (1969): 223–245.

12   For a short description and digitized version of the manuscript, see the website of the British Library.

13   For a short description and digitized version of MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 596, see https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10038690b.

14   They deserve a proper philological examination in a future dedicated study.

15   See n. 2.

16   See the autograph held in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 3363; the digitized manuscript is at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6001320s. *Scechina* is a revelation of Kabbalah to

a *summa* of his knowledge of Hebraica, which delves into the secret meanings of the letters and of the names. Kabbalah, midrash, and early Jewish mysticism are there merged with neoplatonist and neo-Pythagorean insights and Christian dogmas; the Hebrew language and script are interpreted as concrete forms of the divine emanation.

1 Autographic Notes, Aggadot, and the Secret of the Letter *Nun*

Egidio's autographic notes are visible along the margins of Hebrew and Latin books he owned. Very condensed and almost stenographic, their style is easily recognizable. They show the considerable amount of time Egidio spent on the study of the Jewish tradition. In these notes, he added Latin translations of the Hebrew texts and insights into names and attributes of God. Conceptions embedded in the Jewish tradition are interwoven with neoplatonic perspectives, Hermeticism, and Christian expectations.

Some of Egidio's comments describe the spiritual goals of his exegetical efforts. For instance, at the end of his version of *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah* (MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 527, vol. 2, fol. 148r; see Fig. 1),[17] Egidio adds an insertion in which he explains that his translation from Hebrew progressed "carptim" (in a discontinuous way). Nevertheless, thanks to his reading, he believed that he had access to prophecies that confirmed the foundations of the Christian faith, still in their original shape before later corruptions and misleading interpretations occurred in the tradition. Only a few of these prophecies were explicit, while several others were left hidden in order to be uncovered by people living in later times as "the divine storehouses cannot be exhausted"; and so new and unproven spiritual paths have been opened up:

> Finis Brescit Raba carptim: ubi multe prophetata a S.S.[18] quae sanctae / fidei fundamenta confirmant: ubi posterio/res perfidi venena non asperserunt: sed ex multis / capta sunt paucissima: et quamplurima sunt / relicta: ut alias recognoscendo animad/vertimus: plura pociora altiora effi/caciora ad res nostras: quae colligat is / cui ingenium, facultas, ocium maius fuerit / viam aperuisse intentatam: ni sat /

---

the Emperor Charles V by the tenth Sefirah, Malkhut—identified with the Glory or with the Holy Spirit governing terrestrial life. Both *Libellus de litteris hebraicis* and *Scechina* were left unpublished by Egidio and were published only in 1959 by François Secret (Egidio da Viterbo, *Scechina*). A new edition of *Scechina* is in preparation by Yehuda Liebes and Judith Weiss. Both works are influenced by the millenarian doctrine of cosmic cycles (*shemittot*) described in *Sefer ha-Temunah*, which more than any other Hebrew work fed Egidio's messianic and apocalyptic expectations about the future of the church and of Rome. On *Sefer ha-Temunah*, see Moshe Idel, "The Kabbalah in Byzantium: Preliminary Remarks," in *Jews in Byzantium, Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures*, ed. Robert Bonfil (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 659–708; Gershom Scholem, *La cabale du "Livre de l'image" et d'Abraham Aboulafia: Chapitres de l'histoire de la cabale en Espagne*, ed. Yosef Ben Shlomo, Sabine Amsellem, and Saverio Campanini (Paris: Éditions de l'éclat, 2019); Saverio Campanini, "Dal sacco di Roma alla fine del mondo: Profezie cabbalistiche fra le carte di Egidio da Viterbo," in *Rinascimento plurale: Ibridazioni linguistiche e socioculturali tra Quattro e Cinquecento*, ed. Giulio Busi and Silvana Greco (Castiglione delle Stiviere: FPBP, 2021), 71–99.

17 For the digitized manuscript, see https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10033298p.

18 *Sacris Scriptoribus* or *Sanctis Scripturis*.
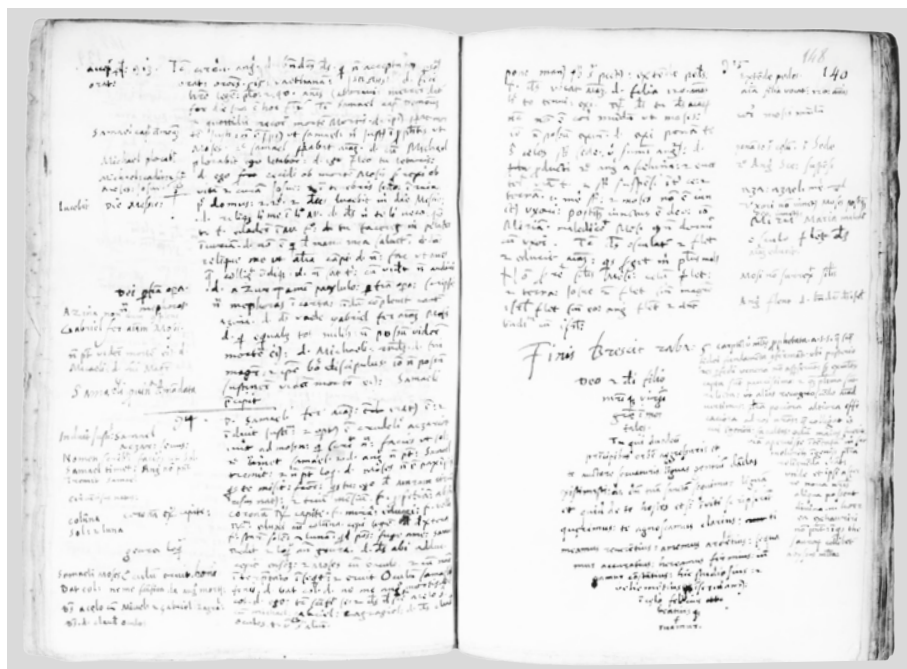
Figure 1: MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 527, vol. 2, fol. 148r

melioribus ingeniis plura / relinquenda erant: / unde et ipsi affer/re nova nostris / aliqua possent / Divina enim horr/ea exhauriri / non possunt: in quis[19] the/saurus cohibetur / abyssus multa.[20]

Egidio's enterprise of translation is thus aimed at gleaning insights from such an inexhaustible source in an attempt to boost his mission of faith renewal.

On the same page, Egidio adds a second note, a sort of prayer of mercy, thanking God for transmitting the knowledge of the Hebrew language to humanity. Here, Egidio's ap-

---

19 *In quis* is present in the manuscript; however *quibus* would be more correct.

20 "End of *Brescit Raba*, in a discontinuous way, in which much that was prophesied by the sacred writings confirm the foundations of the holy faith: where the later treacherous have not sprinkled [their] poisons; however, out of many, very few [secrets] have been picked out, and the great part [of them] have been left behind; thus, at a later time, we are able to recognize more important things which are higher and more effective for our achievements, which only a person of greater talent and ability can gather together in order to open up an untried path: and it is not enough, several others had to be left behind for better talents; from there, they themselves could bring forward some new things to our people; in fact, the divine storehouses cannot be exhausted. In these, the treasure is kept down by a great depth."

proach to the Hebrew language overlaps with his mystical and millenarian quests.[21] The gift of languages given to the apostles as an instrument of divine revelation (as described in the events narrated in chapter 2 of Acts) is evoked: the renovated study of the Hebrew language is desired by Egidio as a mean to reenact the Pentecost miracle; it will provide access to mystical worship and supernatural knowledge, as a stairway to heaven disclosing the direct vision of the Godhead:

> Deo et Dei filio / Matrique Virgini / gratiae immor/tales. / Tu qui duodecim / principibus orbem aggressuris et / te auctore servaturis: linguas gentium dandas / exstimasti: da dum tuam sanctam sequimur linguam / et quid de te hostes etsi invi-ti scripserint / quaerimus: te agnoscamus clarius: ti/meamus reverentius: amemus ardentius: sequa/mur accuratius: haereamus firmius: iun/gamur constantius: hic studiosius et / vehementius inserviamus: / in caelo foelicius / beatiusque f/ruamur.[22]

Another text added just after the translation of *Sefer ha-Temunah* (MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 527, vol. 1, fol. 404v)[23] is on the use of Hebrew letters in order to experience a direct manifestation of God's presence:

> Finis S. Temuna / Non cognovi Domine literaturam:[24] nam divina quis norit nisi Deus? Iussisti / servo fideli Mosi: omnia instar exemplarium superiorum facere: li-terasque / tuas arcanorum conscias edocuisti: quas uti moneres testatumque relin/queres inventum esse tuum: saepe verti illas: mutari: praefici: posthaberi: / addi: minui: inculcari: expungi: punctari: suspendi: in magnas: in exiles/que converti statuisti: [...]
> Ut quia homo te de facie non videt et vivit: per has / te formulas: sicut fas est mor-tali te docente contemplaremur / fac ut qui tua hic a tergo quaesivimus: a fronte impleamur laetitia cum vultu tuo.[25]

---

21 See Copenhaver and Stein Kokin, "Egidio da Viterbo's Book," 1–42.

22 "To God and to God's son, to the Virgin Mother, immortal gratitude. You when the twelve princes approached the world, for saving it according to your will. You decided to give people languages; therefore, please give us access to your sacred language and let us know all that was written about you—even from unfriendly and reluctant authors. This will permit us to recognize you more clear-ly; to fear you with more deference; to love you more ardently; to follow you more closely; to adhere to you more firmly; to unite to you more constantly; to be devoted to you more assiduously and vehemently; to delight more happily and felicitously once in heaven."

23 For a short description and a digitized version of the exemplar, see https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b100332977.

24 See Ps 71:15 Vulg.

25 "End of *Sefer ha-Temunah*, I don't know, oh Lord, the literature, for who knows divine matters other than God? You ordered your faithful servant Moses to act in everything according to the higher models and showed him your letters, sharing knowledge about their secrets; you thought how to use them and allowed to try your invention: that they were often turned and permuted [in a word], placed before or moved after, added or diminished, inserted or erased, pointed or suspended; you established that they could be shaped in small or big size." Further on in the continuation of the text: "As no man can see you face to face and live, we would contemplate you through these formulas, as

The shape of the Hebrew letters and their positions, numerical values, and combinations in names and roots are instruments of the revelation by the Holy Spirit. Their transmission to humankind dates back to the Sinaitic vision: God is the Hebrew alphabet's *protos euretes* and the divine teaching to Moses turns out to be the first human initiation into the kabbalistic tradition.

The above evidence sheds light not only on Egidio's visionary enthusiasm for Hebrew arcana and formulas, but also on his awareness of various techniques related to their interpretation and use. The Hebrew alphabet requires in-depth study and training; and this essay is dedicated to some less known aspects of this training.

A set of manuscripts contributes to clarifying some particulars of how Egidio unraveled the secrets entangled in Hebrew works. These exemplars, which once belonged to Egidio's library, include translations, from Hebrew into Italian vernacular dialects, of midrashim as well as Jewish mystical texts, which were prepared by interpreters of Jewish origin who were hired for this purpose. Unlike the scribes who copied Hebrew manuscripts for Egidio, the translators of these works are almost always left anonymous (probably not by chance). One exemplar housed in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (MS Vat. lat. 5198) incorporates the translation of midrashim like *Mekhilta* (a commentary on Exodus)*, Torat Kohanim* (a commentary on Leviticus) and *Sifrei* (a commentary on Numbers and Deuteronomy).[26] In another manuscript held in Paris (MS Bibliothèque nationale de France, It. 612), a translation into Italian of *Aggadot ha-Talmud* is found.[27] Made up of writings in different hands and styles, and using different techniques of translation, it embraces a selection of legendary (nonlegal) texts from the Talmudic literature which were later expounded in Jewish mysticism, for example in the reflections on *ma'aśeh bereshit* and *ma'aśeh merkavah* in the Talmudic treatise Ḥagigah.[28] To give just two examples: The first section of the *Aggadot ha-Talmud* includes passages from Berakhot translated into a southern Italian dialect;[29] each paragraph begins with the expression "Legimmo," starting from Berakhot 3a: "Legimmo en una baraida: rabi Eliezer / dice tre guardi so' la note et in ogne / guardia et guardia poi Dio grida et grida / como uno lione" (fol. 1r).[30] In treatise Shabbat 88a (fol. 17r–v), the popular story on the ascension of Moses to heaven is reported in a dialect which sounds more similar to an Italian vernacular from Tuscany; the text begins: "Nela hora che salì Moisce al cielo dissero li angeli innanze de Dio: 'Segnor

---

befits our mortal condition. Grant that we have here sought your interests from behind, as it were, may we be filled with the joy of seeing your countenance."

26 See Martin, "The Writings of Giles," 180.

27 See https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10037282z.

28 Passages from the following treatises are included in *Aggadot ha-Talmud*: Berakhot, Shabbat, Megillah, Pesaḥim, Ḥagigah, Ketubbot, Gittin, Ta'anit, Bava Batra, and 'Eruvin.

29 This translation of Berakhot is found in the first pages of the manuscript; it was copied a second time by a different hand just few pages later. See fols. 1r and 14r.

30 דְּתַנְיָא, רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר: שָׁלֹשׁ מִשְׁמָרוֹת הָוֵי הַלַּיְלָה, וְעַל כָּל מִשְׁמָר וּמִשְׁמָר יוֹשֵׁב הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא וְשׁוֹאֵג כְּאֲרִי.
"Rabbi Eliezer says: The night consists of three watches, and over each and every watch, the Holy One, Blessed be He, sits and roars like a lion." (The translation of Talmudic passages is from the William Davidson online edition; see https://www.sefaria.org/Berakhot.3a.6.)

del Mondo che ha da fare un nato de donna infra de noi, disse ad essi "per ricevere la legie he venuto.""" [31]

Who were the authors of these texts? Indirect sources list among Egidio's assistants Rav Yosef Hagri ben Avraham (16th cent.), a member of the rabbinic court in Rome, and Michael Zumat (15th–16th cent.), a kabbalist and doctor of Sicilian and Sephardi origins. [32] However, despite a careful examination of the manuscripts, it is hard to say if either of these individuals ever contributed to these translations as their names are absent from the copies and their handwriting is unknown. We are aware that, at Egidio's request, Felice da Prato translated both *Imrei Shefer* by Abulafia and the anonymous *Sefer ha-Temunah* from Hebrew into Latin. However, these versions are not preserved; neither it is possible to ascertain when exactly Felice da Prato assumed the role of teacher of Kabbalah or of Hebrew for Egidio.

If we go back to Egidio's Latin version of *Sefer ha-Temunah*, a note added at the end of a paragraph describes his difficulties during his translation enterprise. A collaborator "dictated" this passage in a way that was both too fast and unclear for Egidio, who simultaneously translated it into Latin (MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 527, vol. 1, fol. 395): "Ita confuse dictatus fuerat hic locus: ut ne sibille quidem legi possit: tentavi ad verbum fere transferre: ut licuit acceleranti." [33]

So far, it seems impossible to establish who was dictating this text and whether there is any connection to Felice da Prato's translation of *Sefer ha-Temunah*. What is clearer, however, is that the text was not dictated in Latin, but that an interpreter assisted Egidio's translation through an extemporaneous "oral" explanation of the text.

Egidio attributes another excerpt (MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 597, fol. 599r; see Fig. 2) to a certain Robi or Rabi, probably a convert. The heading in Latin is in Egidio's handwriting: "Hec Rabi fecit Davidi discipulo De Christo filio Dei." The Hebrew text which follows is a Christian kabbalistic passage on the power of the letter *nun*, intended as a symbol of the Son of God. The text (edited by F. Secret[34]) was probably written by Rabi himself:

אות נ׳ נקרא נון לפני שמש נון שמו ויורה שהאל מראה כחו
ונפלאותיו למטה בתחתונים ומן התחתוני׳ נודעה שם ה׳ ויכלתו
וכשהוא מנצח למעלה כח מדת הדין והעדר אז נודע אלהותו בעליונים
ובתחתונים וזהו בימות המשיח שנ׳ ונודע בגוים שמו ואז יאמר

---

31 בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁעָלָה מֹשֶׁה לַמָּרוֹם אָמְרוּ מַלְאֲכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת לִפְנֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא: רִבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, מַה לִּילוּד אִשָּׁה בֵּינֵינוּ? אָמַר לָהֶן: לְקַבֵּל תּוֹרָה בָּא. "When Moses ascended on High to receive the Torah, the ministering angels said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, what is one born of a woman doing here among us? The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to them: He came to receive the Torah." (Translation from https://www.sefaria.org/Shabbat.88a.5-89a.6.)

32 François Secret, "Aegidiana Hebraica," *REJ* 121 (1962): 409–416; Weil, *Elie Lévita*, 70–110; Angela Scandaliato, "From Sicily to Rome: The Cultural Route of Michele Zumat, Physician and Rabbi in the 16th Century," in *Italia Judaica: Jubilee Conference (Tel Aviv, 3–5 January 2010)* (Leiden: Brill 2013), 199–211.

33 "This point was dictated in such a confused manner that even through sibylline oracles it is impossible to read it. I tried to translate it almost word by word."

34 Secret, "Aegidiana Hebraica," 415–416.
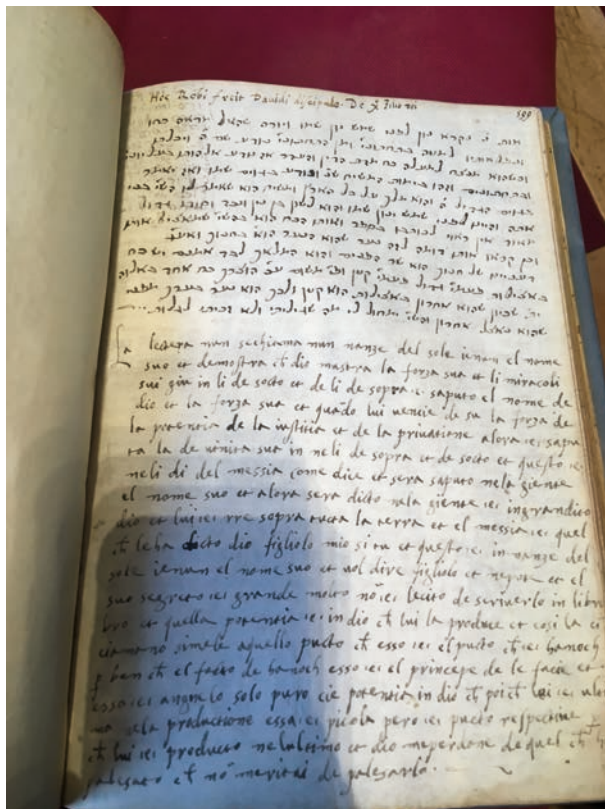
Figure 2: MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 597, fol. 599r

בגוים הגדול ה׳ והוא מלך על כל הארץ ומשיח הוא שאמר לו השי׳ בני
אתה והיינו לפני שמש ינון שמו והוא לשון בן נין ונכד וסודו גדול
מאוד אין ראוי לכתובתו בספר ואותו הכח הוא בהשי׳ שמאציל אותו
וכן קראו אותו דומה לזה נער שהוא הנער הוא בחנוך ואעג׳
דעניינו של חנוך הוא שר הפנים והוא המלאך לבד אמנם יש כח
באציל ות פעמי׳ גדול פעמי׳ קטן ופי׳ משום עכ׳ הוצרך כח אחד באלוה
ית׳ שכיון שהוא אחרון באצילות הוא קטן ולכך הוא נער בערך מפני
שהוא נאצל אחרון הש׳ ימחול לי מה גיליתי ולא זכותי לגלות[35]

We can figure out that Rabi also authored the almost word-by-word version into the vernacular of central Italy that follows the Hebrew text and is reported here:

> La lettera nun se chiama nun nanze del sole ienun el nome / suo et demostra et dio mustra la forza sua et li miracoli / sui giu in li de socto et de li de sopra, e saputo el nome de / dio et la forza sua et quando lui vencie de su la forza de / la potencia de la iustitia et de la privatione alora e sapu/ta la de vinuta sua in ne li de sopra et de socto et questo e / ne li di del messia come dice et sera saputo nela giente e ingrandito / dio e lui e rre / sopra tucta la terra et el messia e quel / et le ha dicto, dio figliolo mio si tu et questo e in nanze del /sole ienun el nome suo et vuol dire figliolo et nepote et el / suo segreto e grande molto non e lecito scriverlo in libro / et quella potencia e in dio et lui la produce et cosi la / ciamano simile aquello pucto et esso e el pucto e hanoch / per ben che el facto de hanoch esso e el principe de la facie et / esso e angelo solo puro cioe potentia in dio che poi che lei e ulti / ma nela productione essa e picola pero e pucto respective / et lui e producto ne lultimo et dio me perdone de quel che ho / palesato et non meritai de palesarlo

The translation seems to be an extemporaneous teaching close to orality, which was likely intended to aid Egidio's reading and understanding of the Hebrew text.

The revelation concerns a messianic secret enclosed in the metamorphosis of the letter *nun*. Due to its double form as נ and ן, ancient and medieval rabbinic commentaries often connect this letter to prophecy and secrets related to the world to come.[36] Here the double-faced *nun* is linked to an epiphany of the name of God through an esoteric interpretation of the text of Psalm 72:17: לִפְנֵי-שֶׁמֶשׁ, יִנּוֹן שְׁמוֹ ("may his name be continued as long as the sun"). In the Hebrew text by Rabi we read לפני שמש נון שמו (in presence of the sun, his name is *nun*),[37] while in the Latin translation *nanze del sole ienun el nome suo* (in presence of the sun, his name [is] *ienum*), *ienun* is left untranslated as if it was a proper name. In Rabi's explanation, the name of God, ינון or *ienun*, "in presence of the sun", signifies both "son" and "nephew" (it evokes 'offshoot and offspring' from Is 14:22: וְנִין וָנֶכֶד). This secret is also associated with the nature of Henoch, the antediluvian patriarch, who—according to the accounts of early Jewish mysticism—turned into Metatron, the angel closest to God's

---

as ha-Shem told him: You are my son, which means 'in presence of the sun his name shall continue' [Ps 72:17], and the expression son is 'offshoot and offspring' [Isa 14:22]. And this is a great secret, and it is not appropriate to write it in a book. And the same power is in ha-Shem that emanates it. And so, they describe it as resembling to this Young one, that is the young person who is in Henoch, and notwithstanding the fact that he is Henoch, he is the Prince of the Presence and he is a unique angel; indeed there is a power in the emanation, and sometimes it is big and sometimes it is small, and the explanation is that a unique power is required in God, blessed be Him: since it is in the last part of emanation it is small and thus it is more or less like a 'young person' because it was the last one to be emanated. And ha-Shem will forgive me for revealing such a secret and it was not in my right to reveal it."

36 See Copenhaver and Stein Kokin, "Egidio da Viterbo's Book," 1–42; Stein Kokin, "Polemical Language," 1–38.

37 In the manuscript the text is לפני שמש נון שמו (see Fig. 2); in Secret's edition it is corrected to לפני שמש ינון שמו.

presence (Śar ha-Panim, the prince of the presence), during his ascension to the heavenly palaces. Certainly, Egidio uncovered clues to the Trinitarian coexistence of different personas, both human and divine, in a unique God in these transfigurations of the letter *nun*.

A bit further on in the text, the scribe/translator asks God to forgive him for unveiling such a huge secret (השׁ׳ ימחול לי מה גיליתי ולא זכותי לגלות, "et dio me perdone de quel che ho / palesato et non meritai de palesarlo").

Is the author of this text Rabi himself? Is there any connection between Rabi and Rav Baruch from Benevento, the Jewish kabbalist who, according to Widmannstetter, was the first one to translate the Zohar into "Christianos" for Egidio?[38]

2   *Liber Esdrae*

Liber Esdrae (MS Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, Lat. 44) is another example of Egidio's assistants' intense translation activities.[39] The title refers to a miscellany entirely dedicated to mystical and kabbalistic works in vernacular Italian. The compilation was prepared as a gift for Egidio. It is preceded by an epistle "on the name of God" written in Latin by a refined humanistic hand, and signed by Niccolò Camerario (16th cent.), archpriest of Benevento, who was one of Egidio's *protégés* and who, after his conversion, advanced far in his career in the church.[40]

The epistle commences with a dedication to Egidio—"Reverendissimo in Christo pro patri et Domino Domino Egidio Viterbiensi S. R. E. Presbytero Cardinali Nicolaus Camerarius Arcipresbiter Ecclesiae Beneventanae"—and consists of a short celebration of the Hebrew name of Jesus, ישו, which is followed by an explanation of its meaning. This text functions as an introduction to the supposed main topic of the book, the secret of Jesus' name according to Christian Kabbalah.

However, Camerario's introductory epistle rather functions as a kind of *deguisement* of the subsequent content of the manuscript. After the first bifolium, the language and the handwriting change completely. The layout becomes more similar to a draft, penned by various informal cursive hands, all different from Camerario's elegant script. The *ductus* is very rapid and cursory; there are many abbreviations and elisions. The language is again an Italian dialect from central Italy. The quires of the manuscript are in disorder. Most of the texts can be read by turning the pages from left to right, like in a Hebrew book; some of the quires must be read in the opposite direction like in a Latin volume. The presence of catchwords and headings in the upper margins help in the process of rearranging the chaotic pagination of *Liber Esdrae*. The identification and reordering of the text is eased further by a few untranslated Hebrew words.[41]

---

38 "Eodem tempore audivi Baruch Beneventanum optimum Cabbalistam qui primus libros Zoharis per Aegidium Viterbiensem Cardinalem in christianos vulgavit." See Secret, "La traduction d'extraits du Zôhar," 34–42.

39 The volume is a paper manuscript of small size (142 × 211 mm) of 362 folios. In Christian Kabbalah, reference to the scribe Ezra not only hints at kabbalistic texts but at Jewish secret wisdom in general.

40 Flavia Buzzetta, "La cabbale vulgarisée au XVIe siècle: Niccolo Camerario, un cabbaliste oublié," *Accademia: Revue de la Société Marsile Ficin* 16 (2014): 121–134.

41 See Emma Abate and Maurizio Mottolese, "La Qabbalah in volgare: Manoscritti dall'atelier di
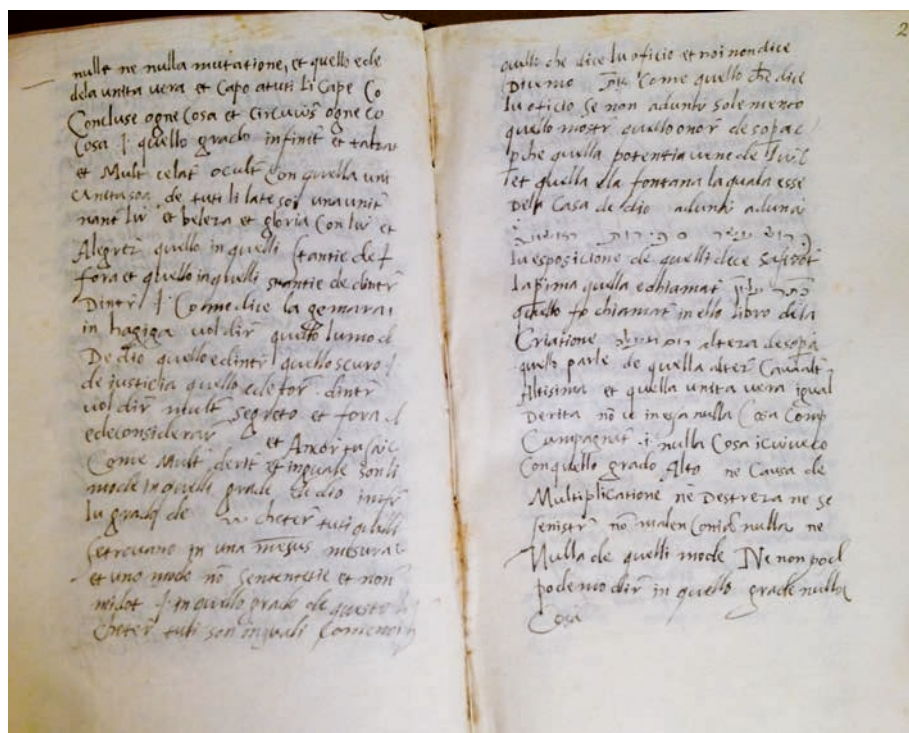
Figure 3: MS Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, Lat. 44, fol. 240r

As for the content, the manuscript encompasses a long section of *Ginnat Egoz*,[42] one of the earliest kabbalistic works by Yosef Gikatilla, consisting in a long explanation of the Tetragrammaton and its attributes.[43] Short passages referring to the *Zohar* and *Bahir* are also included in this volume, alongside a complete commentary on the ten Sefirot in vernacular translation. On fol. 240r, the title פרוש עשר ספירות ראשונה (commentary on the ten Sefirot, the first one) is in Hebrew and is followed by a commentary in Italian on the first Sefirah, Keter ʿElyon (see Fig. 3). The Sefirah's name is left in Hebrew characters in the text:

> Lu espositione de quelli dece sefirot. / La prima quella è chiamata כתר עליון / quello
> fo chiamato in ello libro dela / Criatione רום מעלה alteza de sopra. / Quello parle de
> quella alteza cava / altissima et quella unita vera igual,/ derita non ce in essa nulla

---

Egidio da Viterbo," in *Umanesimo e cultura ebraica nel Rinascimento italiano*, ed. Stefano Baldassarri and Fabrizio Lelli (Florence: Angelo Pontecorboli, 2016), 15–40.

42 See the titles on fols. 304r and 314r.

43 On *Ginnat Egoz*, see Elke Morlok, *Rabbi Joseph Gikatilla's Hermeneutics* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); Federico Dal Bo, *Emanation and Philosophy of Language: An Introduction to Joseph ben Abraham Giqatilla* (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2019).

cosa / cumpagnata in nulla cosa in cui ve / con quello grado alto ne causa de / multiplicatione, ne destreza ne / senistra [...] [44]

Going back to Egidio's notes, a comment on the conclusion of his version of *Perush ʿEśer Sefirot* (MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 598, fol. 65r) provides a new insight into how the translation of this text was prepared. Egidio describes the difficulties in achieving this work; his tone is similar to when he referred to his translation of *Sefer ha-Temunah*. The text of *Perush ʿEśer Sefirot* was executed in collaboration with somebody else, left anonymous, who was dictating the Italian version of the Hebrew text, while the Christian Hebraist quickly transposed the text into Latin word by word (see Fig. 4):

> Finis decem sephirot : quas notavimus saltu: non / sua serie ut dantur sed quae visa sunt : raptim : et confuso / currente lingua dictitantis : emendatione egent [...] [45]

In a first instance, the Hebrew text was translated into vernacular Italian by one of Egidio's collaborators; subsequently, Egidio tried to transpose what he was able to understand into Latin.

The extant part of *Liber Esdrae* consists of an anonymous translation, which is entitled *Raziel* and contains long passages of a version of the first two books of *Sodei Razayya*, namely *Sod Maʿaśeh Bereshit* and *Sod Maʿaśeh Merkavah*. They are based on the Hebrew *Vorlage* taken from the anthology by Eleazar of Worms, according to the manuscript copied by Elia Levita for his patron in 1515. [46]

The language of the vernacular *Raziel* is close to orality, very colloquial, full of odd terms and *hapax legomena*. There are many irregularities in the suffixation, in the concordances between gender and number. Transcriptions of Hebrew words are found in the text while some other expressions, which were hard to translate, have been left in Hebrew. The translation is sometimes literal and follows the Hebrew *Vorlage* word by word; in other cases, it is more similar to an explanation or an exegesis than to a proper translation. Sometimes, the text is abbreviated and words or entire quotations are omitted; a few sections of the Hebrew text are just summarized, or in other cases, there are exegetical additions. [47]

Along the margins of *Raziel*, the paragraphs are numbered in a way that matches the subdivision into paragraphs of the Hebrew manuscript of *Sodei Razayya* copied by Levita. The same numbered partition of the paragraphs is recognizable in the Latin trans-

---

44 "The explanation of the ten Sefirot. The first one is called כתר עליון, in the Book of Creation it was called רום מעלה 'the inscrutable height.' It refers to that very high and united hollow height, true equal direct, there is nothing in it and it is not accompanied by anything, in that high degree there is no cause of multiplication, neither right or left [...]."

45 "I wrote about the ten Sefirot not in a consecutive way but jumping—not according to their series, but as they appeared suddenly, while he [the translator] was dictating in a confused way in vernacular language [...] an emendation of this text is needed."

46 On the different traditions of *Sefer Raziʾel* and their intersections with *Sodei Razayya*, see Abate, "Raziel a Roma," 119–142; Bill Rebiger, "Zur Redaktionsgeschichte des 'Sefer Raziʾel ha-Malʾakh,'" *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 32 (2005): 1–22.

47 Abate and Mottolese, "La Qabbalah in volgare," 15–40.
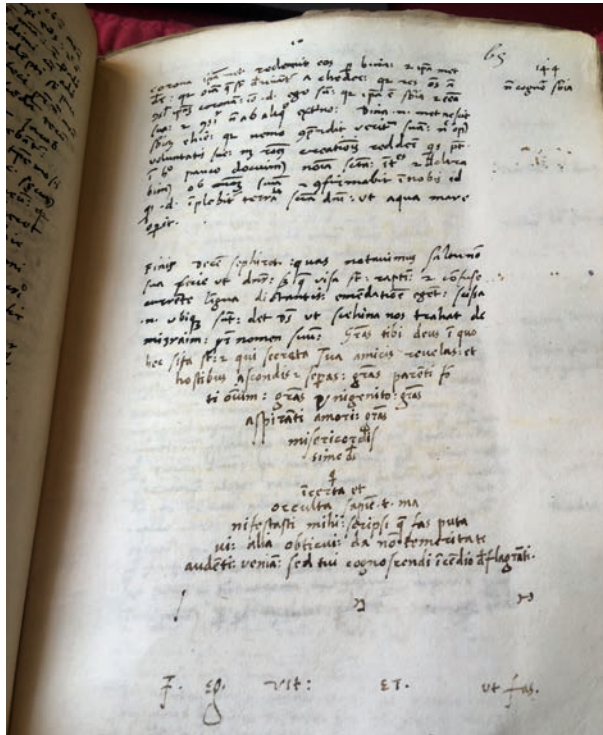
Figure 4: MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 598, fol. 65r

lation of this work which is authored by Egidio and also entitled *Raziel* (see MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 527, vol. 1, fol. 489r).

The Italian and Latin translations reveal different phases of the transmission of the Hebrew arcana to the Renaissance. The assessment of the three specimens—the Hebrew *Sodei Razayya* and the Italian and Latin *Raziel*—makes clearer to what extent the versions in Italian represent an intermediate step in the transition from Hebrew into Latin. In Egidio's study method, the translations do not constitute autonomous products that are accomplished and refined. Instead, they are unfinished, fragmentary, and extemporaneous writings to be read in parallel with the original Hebrew text and they serve as aids for its interpretation.

3   *Shivʿah Shemot* and *Sefer ha-Shem*

A different type of compilation that almost certainly belonged to Egidio's Hebrew library combines works in Hebrew and excerpts of a translation into vernacular Italian produced in the sixteenth century (MS London, British Library, Add. 16390, vols. A–B). [48] The first volume includes titles corresponding to distinct codicological and paleographic

---

48   For a short description and digitized version of the manuscript, see the website of the British Library.

units. The first is a Hebrew-Aramaic lexicon in an Ashkenazi book hand. Entitled *Shiv'ah Shemot*, it records the occurrences of the principal divine names found in the Hebrew Bible and in Targumim (fols. 2r–52v). The second work is entitled *Perush Mishnah*, a commentary of Moses Maimonides on *Pirqei Avot* written in Italian book hand.[49]

A close examination of *Shiv'ah Shemot* points to the authorship of Elia Levita, notably due to the remarkable similarities with the characteristics of Levita's autographs of his Aramaic lexicon *Meturgeman*.[50] Each lemma of *Shiv'ah Shemot* is followed by masoretic notes and includes a translation into Aramaic. The book hand and the *ductus* are similar to the handwriting in copies of *Meturgeman*.[51] By analyzing the scripts in *Shiv'ah Shemot* and in both exemplars of *Meturgeman*, one detects that an additional scribe has been at work: some sections of the works were probably handed to this second scribe under the supervision of Levita himself. As regards the layout of *Shiv'ah Shemot*, it displays features which resemble the *mise-en-page* of the two *Meturgeman* manuscripts: incipits and closing formulas are carved in wider square characters, parts of the lemmas are underlined in red ink, and the vocalization is marked in gray ink. In the margins, a few notes in Egidio's familiar handwriting are recognizable. In sum, considering the content, the style of the Ashkenazi hands, the layout, and the marginal notes by Egidio, it is reasonable to ascribe *Shiv'ah Shemot* to Levita's collaboration with Egidio.[52] It was likely prepared in order to supply Egidio with a grammatical and masoretic tool serving as an introduction to the study of the Hebrew names of God that occur in the Bible and in Targumim.

The second volume of the compilation (MS London, British Library, Add. 16390, vol. B) consists of a vernacular translation of a mystical work. In the upper margin of the first recto, it bears the heading "ex Raziel." The text is an anonymous Italian version of excerpts from *Sodei Razayya* which are complementary to the *Raziel* held in the Biblioteca Angelica (MS Lat. 44). At the beginning, the version in the British Library contains a portion of *Sefer ha-Shem*, the third work in *Sodei Razayya*, which is followed by an abridged translation of the last two books of the anthology, *Perush Sefer Yetsirah* and *Ḥokhmat ha-Nefesh*.[53] Again, the language is a dialect from central Italy. The translation is some-

---

49 *Perush Mishnah* is beyond the focus of this essay.

50 MS Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, Or. 84 and MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Héb. 98/2; R. Griño, "Importancia del Meturgeman de Elias Lévita y del Ms Angelica 6–6 para el studio del mismo," *Sef* 31 (1971): 353–361; Emma Abate, "Elias Levita the Lexicographer and the Legacy of Sefer ha-Shorashim," *Sef* 76 (2017): 289–311.

51 Both copies are autographic by Elia Levita; however, in both of them, one can identify the handwriting of a second scribe whose style differs slightly from the principal one. The copy of *Meturgeman* which is currently held in the Biblioteca Angelica in Rome is known to have been prepared for Egidio. See Abate, "Elias Levita the Lexicographer."

52 Most of Levita's grammatical works were produced at Egidio's request or dedicated to Egidio. Levita's relationship with his patron testifies to reciprocal admiration and is expressed in the colophons and in the introductions of the manuscripts that Levita copied for Egidio as well as in the printed works he published, such as *Sefer ha-Harkavah* (1517), *Baḥur* (1518), and *Pirqei Eliyahu* (1519), or the biblical concordance *Sefer ha-Zikhronot*. Even the late redaction of his masoretic treatise *Masoret ha-Masoret* (which is dated 1538, i.e., after Egidio's death) bears references to Egidio.

53 See Abate, "Raziel a Roma," 119–142.

times literal and follows the Hebrew *Vorlage*; in other cases, it resembles a paraphrase or a Targum. In the margin, there are different notes in Egidio's hand.

Both *Shiv'ah Shemot* and *Raziel* are linked in their own way to Egidio's workshop, appearing as different stages in Egidio's investigations on Hebrew divine names. Is there any direct connection between the two texts? *Sefer ha-Shem* analyzes the structure of the divine names and of their meaning in depth: the Tetragrammaton, the name of forty-two letters and that of seventy-two letters, *Ehyeh*, and *Shaddai*, together with their powers and magical uses, are discussed in the treatise.[54] In *Shiv'ah Shemot*, the list of the divine names, announced in the title page, encompasses the biblical names *El*, *Shaddai*, *Yah*, *Tsur*, *Elohe*, *Adonai*, and YHWH as follows:

שבע שמות

ספר במאד גדול יתרו שבע שמות נקראו לו

אל שדי יה צור אלוה ואדני עם יהוה אפילו[55]

Was *Shiv'ah Shemot* offered to Egidio as a propaedeutic reading to the explanation of the divine names in *Sefer ha-Shem*?

In the upper margin of the first folio, the formulaic incipit before the first entry of *Shiv'ah Shemot*—יה שמות מניין אכתו' והיה הוה יהי בשם (in the name of "it will be," "it is," and "it was" [YeHY HaWaH we-HaYaH], I'll write the sum of names of Yah)—evokes a further fascinating (probably incidental) link between this treatise and *Sefer ha-Shem*. The sequence והיה הוה יהי ("it will be," "it is," and "it was") is not recorded in the Bible, but the locution stems from the mystical literature where it hints to a permutation of the Tetragrammaton. The first part of *Sefer ha-Shem* is dedicated to the secret meaning of this expression: after the renowned introduction on the ceremony of transmission of the name in the water, *Sefer ha-Shem* focuses on the transition of the Tetragrammaton into its emanation, called HaWaYaH. The plural HaWaYoT in *Sefer ha-Shem* corresponds to the ten cosmic directions, analogous to the ten Sefirot in *Sefer Yetsirah*. All notions of temporality are reversed in HaWaYaH's dimension, implying the "immanence of God in the name, and of the divine name in the world." As the divine emanation is without a beginning or an end, the chronology "past," "present," and "future" is inconsistent in divine time.[56] The sequence והיה הוה יהי—which is displayed in the heading formula of *Shiv'ah Shemot*—indicates in *Sefer ha-Shem* the perennial circulation and immanence of the letters of the name as an atemporal continuum.

Both works may well have supported Egidio's intense study of the functions of the Hebrew names of God from a different, masoretic and mystical, perspective. Most likely, Egidio used the vernacular translation of *Sefer ha-Shem* to later prepare his own abbre-

---

54 A section of *Sefer ha-Shem* addresses how the name was used magically for different purposes by combining the letters in a way that corresponded to divine actions. See MS London, British Library, Add. 27199, fols. 302v–303v.

55 "*Seven Names*. An amazing book is called *Seven Names*. They are *El*, *Shaddai*, *Yah*, *Tsur*, *Elohe*, *Adonai*, and YHWH."

56 See "The Book of the Divine Name by Rabbi Eleazar of Worms" in Joseph Dan, *The Middle Ages*, vol. 2 of *Jewish Mysticism* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson), 129–177.

viated and stenographic Latin translation, which is extant under the title "in Nomine" (MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 527, vol. 1, fol. 540r).

4   Personal Notebooks versus *Scechina*

Two autographic notebooks held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (MSS Lat. 596–597) provide a further viewpoint that is complementary to Egidio's inexhaustible research on Hebrew roots and divine names. The notebooks contain personal concordances and lexicons of Hebrew and Aramaic roots,[57] arranged in alphabetical order, and a long list of divine and kabbalistic names arranged according to a hierarchy. Each root and name matches with biblical occurrences of its use and is accompanied by examples that Egidio found in midrashim, in Targumim, and in the kabbalistic texts he owned; the titles of these works are listed in the entries as well. The terminology corresponds to glosses in the margins of Egidio's books and translations. In some cases, near-homophonous Greek or Latin words without any real semantic connection to the Hebrew root are added to the entries; often, they belong to classical, neoplatonic, or Pythagorean sources. Egidio likely aimed at discovering a common origin or substrate between terms of faraway origins due to their phonetic similarity.[58] In search of an original and perfect language antecedent to Babel's corruption of human dialects, these primordial roots were understood to be a key to a primeval paradisiac language, Adamic and powerful.[59]

The notebook in MS Lat. 597 includes a long concordance of Hebrew names written in Latin letters and enlisted hierarchically according to a neoplatonic chain of being from *divina* to *terrestria*. First of all, the divine and metaphysical names are considered: the first record is the mystical name *Mephoras*, the explicit name of God;[60] the second entry combines

---

57 The Hebrew roots are arranged according to *Sefer ha-Shorashim* by Dawid ben Yosef Qimḥi; the Aramaic roots are arranged according to the lexicon *ʿArukh* by Natan ben Yeḥiʾel from Rome.

58 For instance, the Hebrew *nefesh* (soul) is combined with the Greek ψυχὴ; *ʿasaq* with ἀσκέω (to work); *ʿayin* (eye) with the root γνῶ (to know); *barakh* with the Greek βρέχω (to moisten); *qara* with κράζω (to cry); and so on. *Laḥash* is linked to the Greek λάκω (to crack, to make noise, to resonate, to resound). The entry *naḥash/menaḥesh* (diviner) adds the Latin word *maniacus*. Among the interpretations of *naḥash*, there is indeed *divinatio* and the Greek word μανία, which he translated as *furor* and *vaticinium*.

59 Umberto Eco, *La ricerca della lingua perfetta nella cultura europea* (Bari: La terza, 1993), 31–40; Elliot Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 197–202; James J. Bono, "The Two Books and Adamic Knowledge: Reading the Book of Nature and Early Modern Strategies for Repairing the Effects of the Fall and of Babel," in *Nature and Scripture in the Abrahamic Religions: Up to 1700*, ed. Scott Mandelbrote (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 1:299–340.

60 For Egidio, *Mephoras* is the Tetragrammaton containing the entire narration of the Pentateuch, or the seventy-two-letter divine name. In Jewish mystical and magical literature, *Meforash* is generally identified with the forty-two-letter divine name: see, for instance, Ithamar Gruenwald, "The Letters, the Writing and the Shem Mephorash: Magic, Spirituality and Mysticism" [in Hebrew], in *Masuʾot: Studies in Kabbalistic Literature and Jewish Philosophy in Memory of Prof. E. Gottlieb*, ed. M. Oron and A. Goldreich (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1994), 75–98.

Littere and *Numerus*;[61] the third one is *Trinitas*;[62] the fourth is the Pythagorean *Tetractis*;[63] and the fifth is the kabbalistic *Antiquus dierum* combined with En-Sof. Then the elements of the sefirotic system follow: sixth is *Keter*, corresponding to the Trinitarian figure of *Pater*; seventh is *Hocma*, corresponding to *filius et messia* and to *ben* and *bat*;[64] and eighth is *Bina*, corresponding to the Christian figures of *Mater* and *Spiritus*. The subsequent records concern the lower seven Sefirot, which Egidio thought of as modes of the Holy Spirit, flowing from Binah. They correspond to the Intermediate World and have the function of administering the Last and Lowest World.[65] And so the entries continue,[66] for hundreds of pages.

This treasure trove of Hebrew names, roots, and concordances constitutes Egidio's *loci* of memory, which is an essential aid for his translation and study and, ultimately, constitutes a fundamental instrument of his creativity, notably in the redaction of his kabbalistic works. Egidio not only used Hebrew texts and Kabbalah in order to interpret and sustain the Christian Scripture and doctrine, but he was able to connect and combine terms, meanings, and symbols, stored in his memory and displayed in the concordances, in order to create new syncretic categories of interpretation which define his own kabbalistic system. As noticeable in the beginning of the section on names in his autograph of *Scechina* (MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 3363, fol. 215r), Egidio developed his Trinitarian vision by reordering all information he gathered on Hebrew divine names in an organized structure of the Godhead, subdivided into ternaries:

> Primum / nomen meum Adonai est: non id nomen magnum per iod uau / sed per aleph dalet. Secundum altius Sciadai. Tertium illo eminentius / Elohe Zebaot: Quartum super haec tria Adonai Zebaot / quod per iod he describitur multum: atque ita ergo cum depresso ternario qua/ttuor his nominibus nuncupamur. Ad ternarium secundum descondit quin/tum nomen Adonai magnum nomen. Supra id sextuum / quod dicitur Elohim. Septimum super omnia septem: quod apella/tur El. Atque hucusque ergo cum duobus ternaris, septemque edificiis / nominibus elevamur. Tum ascendenti occurrit octavum nomen / quod est Adonai magnum

---

61 Hebrew letters are also numbers and are constitutive of the essence of things. In *Scechina*, 1:79, God speaks at the first person: "Accipe nunc sacratissimos meos numeros, quibus omnia condidi, impressi, constitui" (receive now my very sacred numbers, by means of them I founded, established and disposed everything).

62 In Egidio's notebooks, *Trinitas* corresponds to the first three Sefirot—*Keter*, *Hocma*, and *Bina*, in his transcription—to the neoplatonic triad of mind, intellect, and soul, to the Greek gods Rhea, Hera, and Hebe, according to Proclus, and to the biblical Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah.

63 A triangular representation of number ten subdivided into four rows, shaping an equilateral triangle, and integrating the kabbalistic symbolism connected with the numbers : 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10. On the meaning and use of *Tetraktys* in Egidio's work, see Copenhaver and Stein Kokin, "Egidio da Viterbo's Book," 28.

64 "Nomen filii eius nomen sapientia."

65 The seven lower Sefirot match with the seven gifts of the Spirit, and with the seven cardinal virtues of the Greek philosophers.

66 The ninth is *Ḥesed* corresponding to *Brachius*, the arm in the human body. The first entry related to the lower levels of reality is the eighteenth: *Creatio*.

cum punctis Elohim [Tetragrammaton]: dein altius / nonum nomen Ia: postremo omnium eminentissimum nomen / Ehie.[67]

The first ternary displays the four names "Adonai," אדני; "Sciadai," שדי; "Elohe Zebaot," אלוה צבאות; and "Adonai Zebaot," אדני צבאות. The second ternary includes the Tetragrammaton (יהוה), transcribed "Adonai" according to the Jewish liturgical reading; "Elohim," אלהים; and "El," אל. The third ternary begins with the Tetragrammaton vocalized with *niqqud*.[68] Then the ancient name "Ia," יה; and "Ehie," אהיה, the name deriving from אהיה אשר אהיה of the Sinaitic revelation to Moses (Exod 3:14), complete the record.

On the right margin of the same manuscript page, the pleroma of divine names is rearranged in a diagram sketching a little sefirotic tree (see Fig. 5): the highest name is אהיה, corresponding to Keter, יה, to Ḥokhmah, יהוה, to Binah, and so on; the lowest grade matches with אדני, corresponding to Malkhut.[69]

Egidio's representation of the inner structure of the Godhead was developed in decades of study and explorations of Hebraica through different methods and techniques, with the aid of Levita and of an imprecise number of Jewish and Christian collaborators.

Above the structure is the Unsaid and Unwritten, a *Deus ineffabilis*, whose face is hidden to human people and who is only conceivable by the humanity through the divine *vestigia*—names and roots. These formulas, as clarified at the conclusion of Egidio's translation of *Sefer ha-Temunah*, correspond to the divine "back side," which is the only "side" of God accessible to human wisdom and prayer infused with the divine grace.[70]

One of Egidio's prayers, enclosed in one of his notebook (MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 596, fol. 216v), is an intimate dialogue between Egidio and God, an Augustinian confession that is suitable for concluding this chapter:

> Deo optimo maximo gratias: frater Egidius Viterb. / Elegi Domine abiectus esse in domo tua: et meditari in Lege tua die ac nocte: / et in ea omnem aetatem terere: potius quam ab ea discedere: et vanis artibus quaerere / habitare in altis aedibus et in tabernaculis peccatorum: gratias misericor/diae ago tuae: qui hanc dedisti

---

67 The names are also listed in Hebrew script in the left margin of the page: 1 אדני, 2 שדי, 3 אלוה צבאות, 4 אדני צבאות, 5 יהוה 6 אלהים, 7 אל, 8 יהוה 9 יה, 10 אהיה.

68 In the Latin text, the name is replaced with "Adonai magnum cum punctis Elohim," vocalized with the punctuation used for Elohim in the liturgical reading (it is considered a *qere perpetuum*, according to the masoretic tradition).

69 On a kabbalistic tree in Egidio's collection, see Gabriele Sed-Rajna, "Un diagramme kabbalistique de la bibliothèque de Gilles de Viterbe," in *Hommage à Georges Vajda: Études d'histoire et de pensée juives*, ed. Gérard Nahon and Charles Touati (Leuven: Peeters, 1980), 363–376. For an in-depth analysis and an updated bibliography on kabbalistic trees, see J.H. Chajes, "The Kabbalistic Tree," in *The Visualization of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Marcia A. Kupfer, Adam S. Cohen, and J.H. Chajes (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), 449–473; J.H. Chajes, *The Kabbalistic Tree*, Philadelphia, 2022; and https://ilanot.haifa.ac.il/site.

70 On these positions, see Ingrid D. Rowland, "The Intellectual Background of the 'School of Athens': Tracking Divine Wisdom in the Rome of Julius II," in *Raphael's School of Athens*, ed. Marcia B. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 131–170, esp. 148.
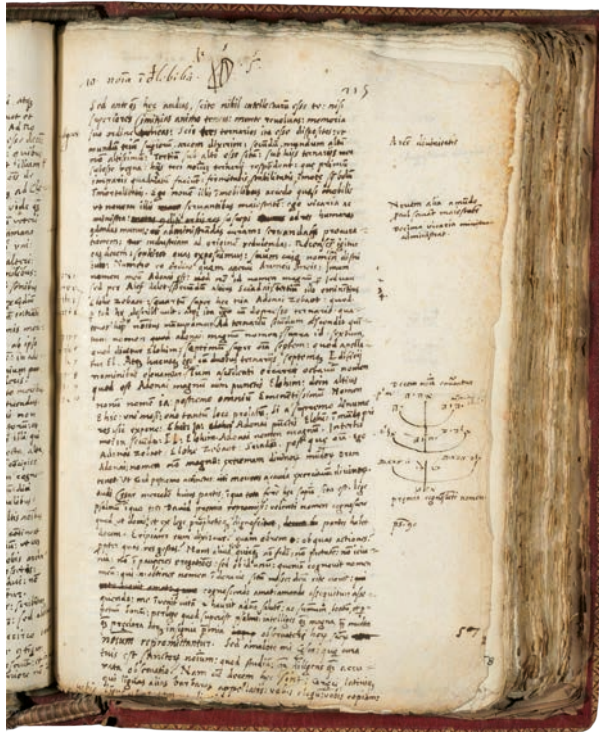
Figure 5: MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 3363, fol. 215r

mentem: ut amarem: non quae iudicio tuo / reprobasti: sed quae sancta manu tu conscripsisti: utque facis amare / que scribis: ita fac servare quae praecipisti et ut qui habitant terram me / rident ut barbara sectantem: ita tu habitans in caelis: da lumen eis: divinis illudentibus.[71]

---

71 "I thank you so much: me Egidio of Viterbo, the friar. I would prefer to remain in your house and meditate on your law, night and day; and to spend in this all my life, instead of giving them up in search of vain knowledge and to inhabit in high dwellings and in houses of sinners. I thank you for your mercy, for giving me that intellect which doesn't love what you reject and love what you wrote down with your holy hand and, in the same way, you make people love your writing, thus make them observe your precepts, even if men, living in this land, laugh at me, as if I had become the follower of a barbarian sect. Therefore, you, that inhabit the heavens, enlighten them, as they make fun of divine things."

Moses Zacuto and the Kabbalah of Divine Names

Uri Safrai and Eliezer Baumgarten

"A commentary of a few names that I have seen in scattered books, organized alphabetically."[1] With these words Moses Zacuto (ca. 1610–1697) began his lexicon of divine names found at the end of MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1448 (henceforth MS Moscow 1448). This lexicon served as the basis of his book *Shorshei ha-Shemot* (Roots of the Holy Names), an important and influential composition in the Kabbalah of divine names, about which the Kabbalah scholar Gershom Scholem commented:

> It is actually one of the most commonly found manuscripts among the Sephardim, there being hardly a man in the lands of the East who deals in amulets who does not possess a copy, and it is highly regarded by the practitioners of practical Kabbalah.[2]

The composition in its extant form is an extensive lexicon of magical texts arranged according to the Hebrew alphabet, with an abundance of indices with which the user can easily find a given name.[3]

While the copy made by Zacuto himself was rather limited, multiple copyists over the years tended to see the work as an "open book" to which they felt free to add additional magical lore.[4] Although lexicons of divine names and related terms are not rare in the kabbalistic tradition (from Yosef Gikatilla's *Sha'arei Orah* to the relevant chapter in Moses

---

1 MS Moscow 1448, fol. 47a (unless otherwise indicated, all translations are our own). This study was written as part of the DFG project "Encyclopedic magic: A synergetic approach to Rabbi Moses Zacuto's sources of practical and theoretical Kabbalah" headed by Prof. Gerold Necker and Prof. Yuval Harari. We extend our gratitude to them and to our fellow member in the cooperative, Maximilian de Molière, for his help in the composition of this article. The article is based on a lecture that we delivered at "Magic and language—Jewish and Christian magic in early modern Europe," held in Leipzig in 2019.

2 Gershom Scholem, *The Hebrew Manuscripts: Those Found in the National and University Libraries in Jerusalem*, vol. 1, *Kabbalah* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1930), 154, MS 108. Scholem refers to the version of the work that appears in MS Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Heb. 8° 477.

3 Moses Zacuto, *Shorshei ha-Shemot* (Jerusalem: Nezer Sheraga, 1999). On the composition and its genesis, see the extensive discussion in Yuval Harari, Eliezer Baumgarten, and Uri Safrai, "Zacuto's *Alpha-Beta Shel ha-Shemot*: Lexicality and the Kabbalah of Holy Names" [in Hebrew], *Da'at* 90 (2021): 369–425.

4 On the "open book" and its characteristics, see Israel M. Ta-Shma, "The Open Book in Medieval Hebrew Literature: The Problem of Authorized Editions," *BJRL* 75.3 (1993): 17–24; Malachi Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology: A Typology of the Craft of the Hebrew Book and Its Design in the Middle Ages with a Historical and Comparative Perspective* (pre-release version 6.0, 2015), https://www.nli.org.il/en/discover/manuscripts/hebrew-codicology), 469–500; Daniel Abrams, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory: Methodologies of Textual Scholarship and Editorial Practice in the Study of Jewish*

Cordovero's *Pardes Rimmonim*), these works were not necessarily identified as lexicons of magical spells and Zacuto was the first Jewish author known to us to organize magical lore as a lexicon of divine names. Such a system of organization seems neither self-evident nor widely used; if the book was intended to serve the magician, it would not be organized by divine names but rather by the practical goal of each magic spell (as we encounter in a number of magical books of the time).[5] It would seem, then, that the organization by divine names served a different purpose, which we will attempt to discern here.[6]

The first two sections of the current study is a survey of the development in Zacuto's treatment of divine names across his various compositions, beginning with his first works, characterized by a certain eclecticism and reflecting his activities in Poland and his birthplace of Amsterdam, and continuing to his later works, composed during his residence in Italy and reflecting a new level of lexicality and organization.[7] The third section treats Zacuto's interest in divine names and the factors that brought him to create a complete lexicon of them. The final section assesses the entirety of Zacuto's lexical productions and discusses its connections to a parallel and similarly influential trend: the minimization and even rejection of widely accepted compositions and traditions in favor of those received from R. Ḥayyim Vital. Zacuto's interest in divine names sheds light on the methods of organizing knowledge in seventeenth-century Italy, and its implementation in this interesting and unique field of divine names.

Mysticism (Jerusalem: Cherub, 2010); Ivan G. Marcus, *"Sefer Hasidim" and the Ashkenazic Book in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 13–30.

5   On paratexts in general and indexes in particular in magical manuscripts, see Yuval Harari, "Practical Kabbalah and the Jewish Tradition of Magic," *Aries* 19.1 (2019): 38–82; Yuval Harari, "Magical Paratexts: Ms. London, The British Library Or. 12362 ('Ets ha-Daʿat) as a Test Case" [in Hebrew], *Kabbalah* 42 (2018): 168–237.

6   Very little has been written on this genre of literature. On the identification of practical Kabbalah with the pre-kabbalistic Jewish magical tradition, see Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974), 182–189. Idel has argued that the term Kabbalah (reception) was from its start connected to the reception of divine names, dating back to the Babylonian era; Moshe Idel, "Defining Kabbalah: The Kabbalah of the Divine Names," in *Mystics of the Book: Themes, Topics, and Typologies*, ed. R. A. Herrera (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 97–122. On the division of fourteenth-century magic into two types—material-ritual magic and linguistic magic—see Harari, "Practical Kabbalah"; Moshe Idel, "Jewish Magic from the Renaissance Period to Early Hasidism," in *Religion, Science and Magic in Concert and in Conflict*, ed. Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 82–117.

7   On Zacuto's biography, see Michela Andreatta in Mošèh Zacuto, *L'inferno allestito*, ed. Michela Andreatta (Milan: Bompiani, 2016), 15–25; Dvora Bregman, *I Raise My Heart: Poems by Moses Zacuto* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Machon Ben-Zvi, 2009); Abba Applebaum, *Moshe Zacuto: His Life, His Books, His Kabbalistic Method, His Students, His Hymns, and His Public Activities* [in Hebrew] (Lvov: Snunit, 1926); Yaakov Lattes, "R. Moshe Zacuto—His Life and Activity" [in Hebrew] (master's thesis, Hebrew University, 1993). On *Sefer ha-Sodot* and its relation to Zacuto's life in Amsterdam, see Eliezer Baumgarten and Uri Safrai, "Rabbi Moshe Zacuto and the Kabbalistic Circle of Amsterdam," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 46 (2020): 29–49.

1 *Sefer ha-Sodot*: The Book of Secrets with Zacuto's Notes

MS Moscow 1448 is a large compound work containing a number of compositions, both complete and partial, most of them in Zacuto's hand. The first of these is *Sefer ha-Sodot* (Book of Secrets), an anthology of spells and charms that Zacuto collected over the course of his early life from a wide number of sources. This composition is one of many extant today from the early modern period, and the themes encountered in it are typical of such collections, which are characterized by their decidedly eclectic nature.[8] What is unique about this composition is its organizational system, which divides the work into various textual units while preserving the source of each: "These are what I found in Poland";[9] "*Shem ha-Doresh*, copied from an old book belonging to a kabbalist who brought it from Fez";[10] "This too I found in a book by Samuel Pallache";[11] "Those that they say are from R. Yitzhak Uziel, of sainted memory";[12] and the like.

An additional characteristic distinguishing the work is the unique arrangement of the manuscript on the page and the notes that Zacuto added in the margins (see Fig. 1). Throughout nearly the entire manuscript, Zacuto left significant space in the outer margins of the page, in which he added notes regarding the charms. The division of the page reveals that these are not the typical glosses many authors and copyists added to the manuscripts they copied but rather an integral part of the work's design, planned by Zacuto from the outset.

In order to clarify the nature of these notes, here follow a number of examples, the interior margin of the page (left side) showing the original charm and the outer margin (right side) Zacuto's notes:[13]

---

8 Hagit Matras, *Charm and Healing Books in Hebrew* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1997), 2.

9 MS Moscow 1448, fols. 1a, 6a.

10 MS Moscow 1448, fol. 7a. *Shem ha-Doresh* is the holy name for the magical success of the preacher; see Amos Goldreich, *Automatic Writing in Zoharic Literature and Modernism* (Los Angeles: Cherub, 2010).

11 MS Moscow 1448, fols. 12b, 15a. On Pallache, see Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, *A Man of Three Worlds: Samuel Pallache, a Moroccan Jew in Catholic and Protestant Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); David Abulafia-Corcos, "Samuel Pallache and his London Trial" [in Hebrew], *Zion* 25 (1960): 122–133.

12 MS Moscow 1448, fol. 14a. Uziel was Pallache's cousin, and both of them arrived in Amsterdam from North Africa at the beginning of the seventeenth century. On Uziel and his relationship to Pallache, see Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 48–49; García-Arenal, *Man of Three Worlds*, in the index under "Uziel."

13 The examples are taken from fol. 3a–b. A full discussion of the work and Zacuto's notes will appear in the forthcoming edition of the work as part of the project by Prof. Yuval Harari and the authors. Recently, the 'Book of Secrets' was published by R. Ohad Turgeman (Jerusalem 2022).

19 If, heaven forbid, one should be in great danger, engrave <with a knife>[14] on the inner side of the ship's mast the name יהֹו והֹך יה | YHW WHKh YH[ℵ]. This charm was transmitted by R. Yehudah Orko by *shevuʿat ha-Torah* (Torah oath).[15]

[ℵ] This name is derived from the verse "Let the sea and all within it thunder, the fields, etc."

יׄרעם הׄים וׄמלואו יׄעלוׄץ הׄשדהׄ וכׄל וגוׄ[מר][16]

20 To open a door at any time say, "Wise, please, please, Samichaʾel <Michaʾel>, Gavriʾel, Miftakhiʾel, I adjure you[ℵ] to open this door <or this door frame and do not delay>[17] before me. Tested and proven to be failproof.

[ℵ] With the name יוי | YWY; so I found in an ancient book.

21 To extinguish a fire, inscribe in a roasted egg the following names: אמטׄאל | ʾMṬʾL, שוטׄר | ŠWṬR, שלוׄטר | ŠLWWṬR[18] and throw it into the fire. The inscription must be precise and perfect.

22 For love
Write with your left hand on your right hand the following names: אנקׄתם | ʾNQTM,[ℵ] שסׄיׄה | ŠSYYH, שדׄי | ŠDY,[ב] יׄו | YW. Complete.

[ℵ] אנקתם | ʾNQTM is from the name called the name of the twenty-two letters, and I have already explained its origin.

[ב] שדי | ŠDY is in Yesod and includes the six days of creation, as follows: ש, the three patriarchs; ד, Malkhut, which is called *dalet* [poor], and which is also the fourth leg of the Chariot and the fourth letter of the Tetragrammaton; י, Yesod itself, called little *yod*. I found this in the *Tiqqunim*.

---

14 Above the line.

15 This version appears in *Tefillah le-Dawid*, printed in Istanbul (Koshta) in 1535 or 1538 by R. David ben R. Yosef Krakow. See Yitzhak Yudlov, "Tefilla le-David—A Collection of Prayers from Jerusalem" [in Hebrew], *KS* 61 (1986–1987): 930–931. Yudlov suggests, based on the name, that R. Yehudah Krakow was from the Balkans region. It may be that Zacuto's version reflects a copyist's error in which "Krakow" became "Orko."

16 1 Chr 16:32. The holy name is based on the acronym of the verse.

17 Inserted between the lines in Zacuto's handwriting.

18 These are the common names of the three holy kings (magi) Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar, and it seems they are intended here; see Katelyn Mesler, "The Three Magi and Other Christian Motifs in
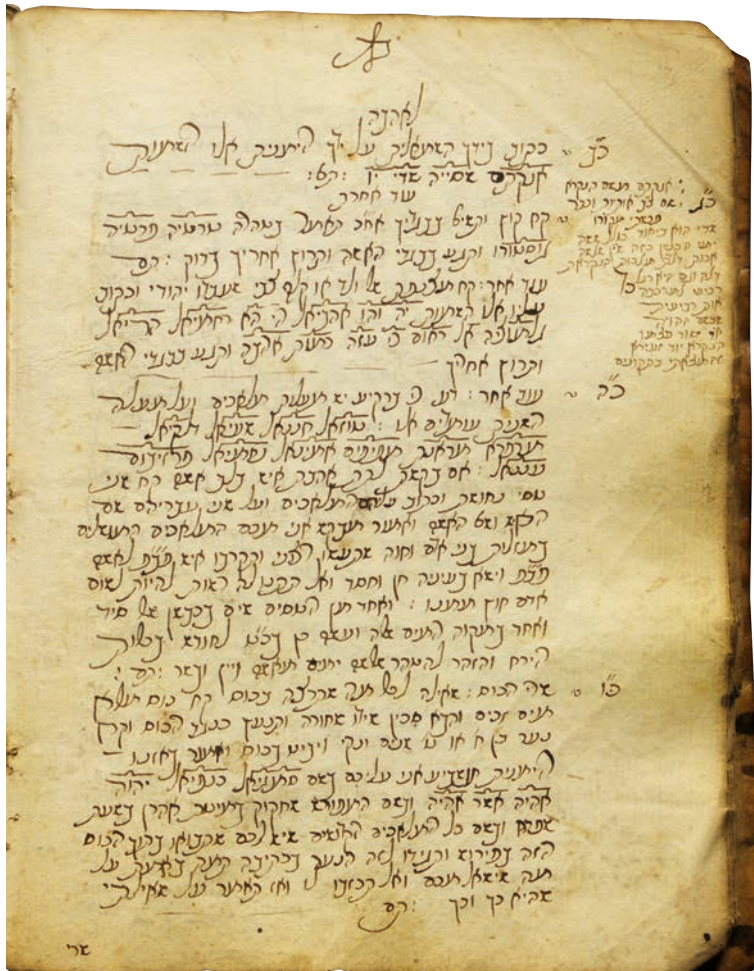
Figure 1: MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1448, fol. 3b

Medieval Hebrew Medical Incantations: A Study in the Limits of Faithful Translation," in *Latin-into-Hebrew: Texts and Studies*, vol. 1, ed. Yossef Schwartz, Alexander Fidora, and Harvey J. Hames (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 203–204, n. 138. Prof. Gerold Necker suggests that the names could be connected to the tradition of the church fathers who wrote about the polymorphism of Jesus: the first king saw Jesus as a youth, the second as a thirty-year-old, and the third as an elderly man. Following this interpretation, Immanuel is the child, שוטר | ŠWṬR is the Pantocrator, and שלוטר | ŠLWWṬR is the redeemer. Because the name שוטר | ŠWṬR appears frequently for the use of extinguishing a fire, the entire formula entered the charm for that use. It is important to note that here the name appears as אמטאל | 'MṬ'L and not Immanuel; it appears that in copying, the sequence of letters *nun–waw* was mistaken for a *tet*.

The spells that appear in this excerpt are not exceptional: we frequently encounter their like in the extant magical literature. Our focus will be rather on Zacuto's marginal notes. In these additions, Zacuto commented primarily on the divine names appearing in the spells, frequently explaining their sources, whether in Scripture[19] or the various and varied bodies of kabbalistic knowledge to which he had access: sources such as the Zohar literature, R. Moses Botarel's commentary to *Sefer Yetsirah*,[20] R. Bachaye ben Asher's Torah commentary,[21] various works by Moses Cordovero[22] or Isaac Luria,[23] and even unidentified works such as *Sefer ha-Qeme'ot* (Book of Amulets)[24] and *Sefer ha-Watiqin* (Book of the Elders).[25] Take, for example, Zacuto's second note to passage 22 appearing above. The spell cites the name שדי | ŠDY; in his note Zacuto draws a connection between the name as it appears in the love spell and its location in the kabbalistic system, as explained in *Tiqqunei Zohar*: "ŠDY is in Yesod and includes the six days of creation [...] I found this in the *Tiqqunim*." This comment evinces a very important process of connecting the magical literature referred to as "practical Kabbalah" to the theoretical kabbalistic literature, of which the Zohar literature is the outstanding example. Despite the natural connection between the two, they often operated in separate realms as separate literary corpora.[26] As we will argue below, it seems that a significant portion of the project

Zacuto took upon himself in these notes was to bridge the two genres and their respective terminologies, creating a shared language for them by equating and aligning their technical terms. This trend would be further developed in Zacuto's lexicon, at the center of which stood the divine names and their sources.

---

19 So, for example, regarding the name צמרכד | ṢMRKD, Zacuto writes in his gloss (fol. 1b, section 2) that it "derives from the final letters of the five verses from בראשית (in the beginning) to יום אחד (one day)," or on the name אהוה | 'HWH, which allows one to know a man's destined wife, Zacuto writes (fol. 2b, section 10) that it is "an acronym of א׳להי ה׳שמים ואלהי ה׳ארץ (God of heaven and God of earth) [...] and it is in [the Sefirah of] Da'at."

20 The copy of *Sefer Yetsirah* that Zacuto possessed was printed in Mantua in 1562. We know this from the page numbers in his references in the *Alpha Beta of the Holy Names* in MS Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, 615, on which we will elaborate below. See for example his reference to the name אהציציהרון | 'HṢYṢYHRWN (MS Jerusalem 615, fol. 141b) or the name גבריאל | GBRY'L (MS Jerusalem 615, fol. 144a).

21 See, e.g., fols. 1b, 13b, 18a.

22 Zacuto generally refers to *Pardes Rimmonim* (e.g., fols. 4b, 5b, 17a, 18a, 33b), but at times refers to *'Asis Rimmonim*, an abridgment of *Pardes Rimmonim* (e.g., fols. 18a, 24b).

23 The majority of Zacuto's citations are not to a particular book.

24 Fol. 17a. The book referred to as "*Sefer ha-Qeme'ot*, given to me by the holy lion [Luria]" (fol. 1a) may be related to this book. Also "a book that came from Jerusalem," mentioned on fol. 33b, could be related to these commentaries.

25 Fol. 26a.

26 On the relationship between "theoretical Kabbalah" and "practical Kabbalah," see Moshe Idel, "Abandoned Works by the Author of Kaf ha-Qetoret [in Hebrew], *Pe'amim* 53 (1993): 75–89; Harari, "Practical Kabbalah"; and the references in n. 5 above. On Zacuto's joining of the two genres, see J. H. Chajes, "Rabbi Moses Zacuto as Exorcist—Kabbalah, Magic and Medicine in the Early Modern Period" [in Hebrew], *Pe'amim* 96 (2003): 121–142.

2   From *Sefer ha-Sodot* to *Alpha Beta of the Holy Names*

At the end of MS Moscow 1448 we find a draft of an additional work (see Fig. 2), headed by the phrase with which we began this study: "A commentary of a few names that I have seen in scattered books, organized alphabetically."[27] This work in progress is a very partial, alphabetized list of twenty-three divine names containing only some of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and a very limited number of disparate names, but a more comprehensive lexicon can be found in MS Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, 615 (henceforth MS Jerusalem 615), also written in Zacuto's hand.[28] This later lexicon lacks a title, but in another composition by Zacuto, copied later in the same codex by one of his students, we find an explicit mention of the lexicon of names, referred to as *Alpha Beta of the Holy Names* (henceforth *ABHN*).[29] This work was copied repeatedly and later received the title *Shorshei ha-Shemot* (Roots of the Holy Names) or *Meqor ha-Shemot* (Source of the Holy Names), and it provided the basis for the printed book we now possess. Alongside this composition, the manuscript anthology also includes a dream diary and two homilies dated to 1655–1656, about eleven years after Zacuto arrived in Italy.[30] We may assume that it was in roughly this period that the later version of the lexicon of names was composed, though this cannot be confirmed.

The change in title reflects a change in purpose: not only "a few names," as we find in MS Moscow, but a much more ambitious project, the "Alpha Beta of the Holy Names" that we find in MS Jerusalem 615. In this version we can see the structure Zacuto intended to complete. The order of the letters and entries as they appear in *ABHN* illustrates Zacuto's plans for the book already in place at this point: the names are organized alphabetically, with each letter heading at least a full two-sided folio page. Beside the holy name itself, most of the entries appearing in the lexicon include the scriptural source of that name, its location in the sefirotic system or supernal worlds, its use, and at times the kabbalistic source from which Zacuto took the included information.

It is only from the title included in the initial draft that we learn that the primary intention of the composition was to serve as an alphabetized collection of names that were scattered throughout various books. The draft's location in MS Moscow 1448 alongside *Sefer ha-Sodot* may indicate precisely such a development, from sources cited in the original composition in an incidental manner, as they relate to the prescriptions or amulets under discussion, to an organized lexicon bringing together all the divine names found in the aforementioned "scattered books." An exhaustive comparison between *Sefer ha-Sodot* and the complete work appearing in *ABHN* reveals that at least some of the notes Zacuto

---

27 MS Moscow 1448, fol. 47a–52a. Zacuto left many spaces in these pages, to be filled with additional terms, and additional authors added various spells and lists in these spaces that have no connection to the work.

28 Zacuto integrated the material from the earlier work into the later version, including nearly all the names in the later version, with minor alterations.

29 From the copy of the work *Seventy Names of Metatron*, alphabetized by Zacuto or one of his students. See MS Jerusalem 615, fol. 167b.

30 MS Jerusalem 615, fols. 49a–b, 128a.
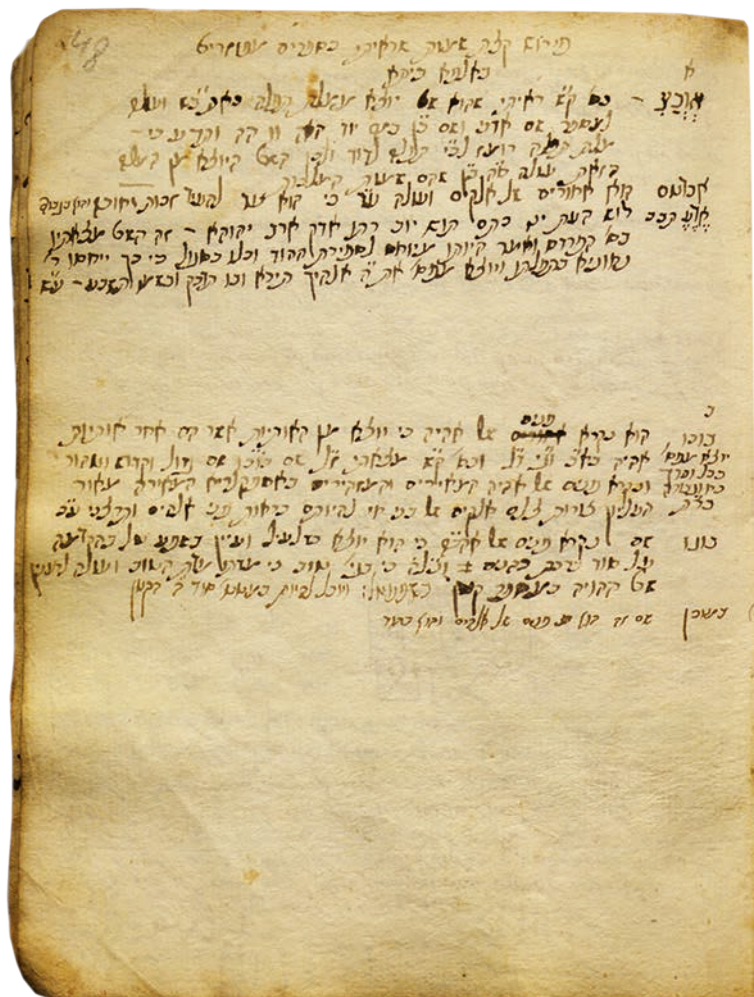
Figure 2: MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1448, fol. 48a

penned in *Sefer ha-Sodot* did indeed become independent entries in *ABHN*. We can easily show several examples of this transition.

In the section entitled "The Seven Days" in *Sefer ha-Sodot*, Zacuto comments:[31]

---

31   MS Moscow 1448, fol. 11b. This section is a series of oaths arranged by days of the week: to each day is attributed an angel, a divine name, and a planet, by which the magician is instructed to adjure in order that they may come to his aid.

I set an oath and a decree upon you, Samael, holy and mighty angel, who is appointed over the third day by the name יה יה אהיה הֹיﬡ אהוהֹﬞ הﬡ הֹה וה ההֹו אהֹו היה אל חﬡ | YH YH ’HYH HY ’HWH HWH WH HHW ’HW HYH ’L ḤY (which is in Yesod) רבון עלמין האﬥ יהֹו | H’L YHW and by the name יﬤﬡ צור עולמים קדושׁ קדושׁ אל אל יה אלהים | RBWN ‘LMYN YYY ṢWR ‘LMYM QDWŠ QDWŠ ’L ’L YH ’LHYM and by the name אלהא רבא וקדישא | ’LH’ RB’ WQDYṢ’ that is seen by day.

הֹיﬡ | HY is the name יהֹﬞ | YH in the mystery of the reversed seal.

ﬢ It seems that אהוהֹﬞ | ’HWH is in Daʿat, the mediator of Binah, in which is the name אהיה | ’HYH, and so it contains the letters אﬤ | ’H and the letters יﬤ | YH, which are received from Ḥokhmah.

As can be seen, in his second note Zacuto discusses the name אהוﬤ | ’HWH mentioned in the oath, locating it in the Sefirah of Daʿat in the sefirotic scheme. In a parallel passage in *ABHN*, Zacuto writes: "אהוﬤ | ’HWH is in Daʿat and it also has three expansions."[32] Zacuto does not mention his source, but it seems reasonable to assume that it is based on the note he wrote to himself in *Sefer ha-Sodot*.

We find another example of the use of identical sources regarding the name אהציציהרון | ’HṢYṢYHRWN. In the list of spells derived from the writings of Shmuel Pallache in *Sefer ha-Sodot*, we find the following passage:[33]

For the ease of suffering (may it never come upon us), by the name אהיה אשֹﬞר אהיה | ’HYH ’ŠR ’HYH and by the ineffable name engraved on the frontlet of Aaron,ﬤ and the signet ring[34] of Solomon and the signet ring of תמריﬡל | TMRY’L and the signet ring of holy Metatron and the signet ring of גבריﬡל | GBRY’L and the signet ring of מיכﬡﬡל | MYKh’L and the signet ring of שמשﬡﬡל | ŠMŠY’L and the signet ring of נהריﬡל | NHRY’L and the signet ring of נוריﬡל| NWRY’L and by the forty-two letter name, which is אבגﬡﬞתﬡ קרעשׁﬞטן נגדיכשׁ בטרצﬞתג חקבטֹנע יגלפֹזק שקוצﬡﬞת | ’BGYTṢ QR‘ŠṬN NGDYKhŠ BRṬṢTG ḤQBṬ‘N‘ YGLPZQ ŠQWṢYT.

ﬤ The ineffable name from the frontlet of Aaron I found in *Sefer ha-Pardes*, and it is written thus: אהציציהרון אברוחﬡיהרון ושבובנומהרון דמורטרון צפצפשׁﬡﬞתרון יהורמירון וחייהרון ברקﬡﬡאון עדשﬡﬞה גאון כסﬡﬡהמגמהון | הוהו יה היו יה אה אהוה דמהדירון | ’HṢYṢYHRWN ’BRWḤYHRWN WŠBWBNWMHRWN DMWRṬRWN ṢPṢPŠYTRWN YHWRMYRWN WḤYYHRWN BRQIH’WN ‘DŠYH G’WN KS’IHMGMHWN HWHW, but in *Sefer Yetsirah*, in the commentary of R. Moses Botarel, I found a different version in the name of R. Aharon the head of the yeshivah of Babylon, fol. 59.[35]

---

32 *ABHN*, MS Jerusalem 615, fol. 141b.

33 *Sefer ha-Sodot*, MS Moscow 1448, fol. 17a. The page contains a number of additional notes by Zacuto on this section, which we do not cite here.

34 In Hebrew בעזﬡﬞקתﬡ, which can be translated as "to be surrounded by a ring" or "tied and restricted."

35 The reference is to *Sefer Yetsirah*, Mantua edition of 1562 (see n. 20 above), which reads on fol. 59a: "The action of the three fathers will not help to join with the three mothers, as is known to the

The prescription as it appears in Pallache's writings references the ineffable name engraved on the frontlet of Aaron, with no further detail as to what that name is. Zacuto sought with his note to fill in the missing information, finding two sources that supplied it. The parallel passage in *ABHN* on the name אהציציהרון | ʾḤṢYṢYHRWN reads:[36]

> אהציציהרון | ʾḤṢYṢYHRWN, etc. Look in *Sefer ha-Pardes*, where it is written that this name was engraved on the frontlet of Aaron, and look also in the commentary of R. Moses Botarel to *Sefer Yetsirah*, fol. 59, in the name of R. Aharon the head of the yeshivah of Babylon.

The gloss on the recipe appearing in *Sefer ha-Sodot* has been reworked into an independent entry in the lexicon; both versions reveal Zacuto's search for a reliable and authoritative source on which to base his note.

In other instances the parallels between *ABHN* and *Sefer ha-Sodot* are even closer, as in the recipe found in the passage of material deriving from Poland:[37]

For preaching: First mention the name סַפְצָסְיָה [x] | SPṢSYH, for it is beneficial for preaching and to be successful.	[x]The numerological value SPH (385), for it gives craftiness to the stutterer. It seems to me that the numerological value of סַפְצָסְיָה | SPṢSYH is the same as that of שפה | SPH. [38]

The parallel passage in *ABHN* reads: "סַפְצָסְיָה | SPṢSYH [...] in my humble opinion it seems that it has the same numerological value as that of שפה | SPH, for the power of this name is for success in preaching and so have I found it written in writings that I brought from Poland."[39] The text in *ABHN* is based on the material found in *Sefer ha-Sodot*, with an explicit reference to the same "writings that I brought from Poland."[40]

Similarly, elsewhere in *ABHN* Zacuto writes: "דפטיאל | DPṬʾL [...] and I have written elsewhere that its power is to banish a demon from the house, from a manuscript, and from Fez."[41] A comparison to *Sefer ha-Sodot* reveals that Zacuto's reference to what "I

---

kabbalists, for every name is called according to the power of its might, as R. Aharon the head of the yeshivah in Babylon has said." On R. Aharon, see Zipporah Brody, "R. Moshe Botarel: His Commentary to Sefer Yetsirah and the Figure of Abu Aharon" [in Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 20.1 (2007): 159–206.

36 *ABHN*, MS Jerusalem 615, fol. 141b.

37 *Sefer ha-Sodot*, MS Moscow 1448, fol. 26b.

38 The numerological value of the name is equal to that of שפה | SPH, meaning both "language" and "lip."

39 *ABHN*, MS Jerusalem 615, fol. 150b. It is worth noting that the numerological value of the name in *Sefer ha-Sodot* does not equal that of שפה, that is, 385. This problem is also resolved by Zacuto's note, but in *ABHN* he amended the name so that its value would be correct. On this amendment, see below.

40 The title of the section has been erased and is difficult to read, and so we do not know if Zacuto's reference to those writings he brought from Poland refers to the entire work with the heading, "These are the writings I found in Poland" (*Sefer ha-Sodot*, MS Moscow 1448, fol. 1a), or if it refers specifically to this section, which also may have originated in Poland.

41 *ABHN*, MS Jerusalem 615, fol. 143a.

have written elsewhere" is merely the recipe as it appears in that work: "Banish a demon from the house and from any man with the name דפטיאל | DPṬ'L."[42] Furthermore, the section in which this recipe appears is "the writings of Shmuel Pallache,"[43] indicating that Zacuto's mention of having received the tradition "from a manuscript and from Fez" actually refers to those writings of Pallache, the source of which was the North African city of Fez.[44]

These examples reveal the way in which Zacuto collected his scattered glosses on the spells in the eclectic *Sefer ha-Sodot* and arranged them alphabetically in the lexical work *ABHN*. However, it should be noted that, in addition to the notes in *Sefer ha-Sodot*, several other sources served Zacuto in composing *ABHN*, and the manuscript itself reveals his systematic method of collecting names from the works he read and arranging them alphabetically.[45] These works also included later compositions that he encountered while in Italy, such as the Safed traditions that he received from R. Benjamin ha-Levi, whom he met in Venice.[46] These references do not appear in *Sefer ha-Sodot*, and it seems that they only reached him in this later stage.

3   The Roots of *Alpha Beta of the Holy Names*

Having discussed Zacuto's method of writing and the transition from marginal notes to a complete lexicon organized alphabetically, it is time to return to the question of Zacuto's goals for the project as a whole. To what end did Zacuto compose these notes and why did he value them so much that he undertook a wide-ranging journey to collect the material and then endeavored to compose such a thorough lexicon comprised of that material?

As mentioned above, in both his notes and his lexical entries Zacuto provided his textual sources, though often only in partial form. For example, in many references he found it sufficient to write "from a manuscript" without providing any detail about that manuscript,[47] begging the question of the value of such vague notes, which do not allow the reader to determine the original source.

---

42 *Sefer ha-Sodot*, MS Moscow 1448, fol. 18a.

43 *Sefer ha-Sodot*, MS Moscow 1448, fol. 15a.

44 On Pallache and his origins see n. 11–12 above.

45 A study of the manuscript illuminates his methodology in this composition: Zacuto opened a book or manuscript, copied some of the names appearing there, and then proceeded to the next work. In this way it is possible not only to list the titles Zacuto consulted but also frequently to establish the order in which he read them. At times, we can even see that Zacuto changed writing implements between works, revealing a pause between sessions; see a lengthy discussion in Harari, Baumgarten, and Safrai, "Zacuto's *Alpha-Beta Shel ha-Shemot*."

46 See, e.g., the reference to "Zohar of RB"L" in the entry for אִיאָל בַּיאָל נִיאָל and for ארריתא (fol. 141b); or to "the writings of RB"L" in the entry for הַדְרַנִיאָל (fol. 144a); and even a quotation of his words in the entry for יוהך כלך (fol. 150a). On R. Benjamin ha-Levi, see the index of Meir Benayahu, *A Singular Generation in the Land: The Letters of R. Shmuel Abuhav and R. Moshe Zacuto on Matters of the Land of Israel 1639–1726* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Yad ha-Rav Nissim, 1988); Yosef Avivi, "Solet Nekiyya: Rabbi Moses Zacuto's Sifter" [in Hebrew], *Pe'amim* 96 (2003): 71–106.

47 See, e.g., *ABHN*, MS Jerusalem 615, fol. 141a–b, and dozens of additional places throughout the composition. Elsewhere he is satisfied with noting the origin of the tradition ("from Fez") without

The context in which these names appear in *Sefer ha-Sodot* is a list of recipes and charms to which Zacuto added his glosses, providing the kabbalistic location of the names appearing within. This context is preserved in the lexicon, which also provides the purpose and power of many of the names ("its power is for success in preaching," "its power is for traveling long distances quickly," and the like), from which we may assume that there exists an affinity between the various notes and the practical use of those names. Such a connection is in fact mentioned explicitly: in a question sent by his student, R. Abraham Rovigo, Zacuto is asked if one can use the divine names to "open one's heart."[48] Zacuto responded vociferously in the negative, forbidding any use of the names, even in writing: "For there are some names the roots of which are unknown to us and perhaps some error has crept into them, and one must be wary that truth has been confused with lie, and it would be a serious offense."[49]

The limit on use of the recipe to open one's heart, then, derives from the lack of knowledge regarding its root. But what did Zacuto's mean by the "root" of the name? A broad survey of Zacuto's writings reveals that he uses the term "root" to indicate the location of the name in the Sefirot or the supernal countenances of the divine. For example, in his homilies that were reworked as the book *Em la-Binah*, he writes: "This holy name is located in *Imma* (the supernal mother), as is known [...] and there is no doubt that its root is in [the Sefirah of] Binah."[50] Even in *ABHN* itself, under the name יאהלו | Y'HLW, he writes: "This name is in [the Sefirah of] Yesod of *Imma*, and it seems to me that its numerological value is that of ב״ן | B″N [52], the root of which is there and which is a permutation of

---

naming the cited work (see, e.g., *ABHN*, MS Jerusalem 615, fols. 141a, 144a, 145a, 158a). As we saw above, a comparison to *Sefer ha-Sodot* reveals that some of these references to Fez refer to the writings of Shmuel Pallache, which Zacuto included in his work. On the use of references and reference books as an important and innovative learning tool throughout the seventeenth century, see Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 241–251.

48 On magical texts for the opening of the heart, see Gideon Bohak, "A Jewish Charm for Memory and Understanding," in *Jewish Education from Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Studies in Honour of Philip S. Alexander*, ed. George J. Brooke and Renate Smithuis (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 324–340; Yuval Harari, "Opening the Heart: Magical Practices for Knowledge, Understanding and Good Memory in Judaism in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages" [in Hebrew], in *Shefa' Tal: Studies in Jewish Thought and Culture (Festschrift for Bracha Sack)*, ed. Zeev Gries, Haim Kreisel, and Boaz Huss, Goldstein-Goren Library of Jewish Thought 3 (Be'er-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2004), 303–347. On Abraham Rovigo, see Simchah Asaf, "On the Biography of Abraham Rovigo" [in Hebrew], *Zion* 6 (1941): 155–157; Yeshayahu Zonah, "Matters Regarding Sabbtai Tsvi in the Notebook of Rabbi Abraham Rovigo" [in Hebrew], *Sefunot* 3–4 (1959–1960): 39–69; Meir Benayahu, "Sabbatian Rumors from the Notebooks of Rabbi Binyamin Hakohen and Rabbi Abraham Rovigo" [in Hebrew], *Michael* 1 (1973): 9–77; Benayahu, *Singular Generation*, in the index.

49 From a collection of Zacuto's letters in MS London, British Library, Or. 9165, fol. 10a. We have been assisted in our work on these letters by the databases of Maximilian de Molière, who has been working on a new edition of the letters as part of the Zacuto project and to whom we express our thanks.

50 Moses Zacuto, *Remez ha-Romez* (Moshav Bitchah: Qol Bitchah, 2008), homilies p. 15; Moses Zacuto, *Em la-Binah*, in *Sha'arei Binah*, by Yitzhak Tzeva (Thessaloniki [Salonika], 1813), vol. 2, fol. 50.

the name אליה״ו | ʾLYH″W, and he who understands will understand."[51] Every name has a location in the supernal realms and, according to Zacuto's letter, ignorance of a name's location is an invitation for error and "confusion" and so "serious offense."[52]

It should be noted that such a claim predated Zacuto, being evident in several primary texts from which Zacuto sourced his material, the most salient among them being the book *Berit ha-Menuḥah*.[53] The third chapter of this work treats "The supernal hosts, to know of which class they are,"[54] and so the practical instructions to the magician focus on the knowledge of the names of angels:

> If one does not know to which class the angel belongs and its origin, he should not proceed [...] and so when reciting the name of the angel, one must know if it is drawn from mercy or might or soft judgment or harsh judgment. And when he comprehends this he will comprehend its origin, which is like unto dominion over the angel [...]
>
> At the moment of creation, when the blessed Holy One created his world, he created it according to the preexisting order of divine wisdom, and he arranged his angels so that no angel should be in the place of another; rather this one cleaves to the power of its origin and this one to the power of its origin.[55]

According to the anonymous author, the proper orientation in the paths of the supernal worlds is critical to success, for knowledge of the location of an angel in the upper worlds allows one to control it, for such knowledge "is like unto dominion over the angel." In the continuation of the passage the author refers to this method as "the way of peace," for it follows the proper arrangement of the names, each in its place. It is this arrangement that allows for proper control of the heavenly forces and the achievement of one's particular goal through the appropriate angel.

Similar ideas are found later in the writings of Moses Cordovero. In the comprehensive analysis performed for his work on Cordovero's "Homilies Regarding Angels," Yoed Kadari shows that Cordovero also argued for the necessity of knowledge of the location

---

51 MS Jerusalem 615, fol. 150a. As such we may join this to the section following in the *ABHN* manuscript on angels. The first line reads "Then ten classes of angels and the sources of the effluence they receive, from the book *Shushan Sodot*" (MS Jerusalem 615, fol. 167a), and is followed by details on the sefirotic location of the classes of angels: *Er'ellim* are from Malkhut, *Hashmallim* from Tif'eret, and so on. The heading of the next passage reads "The angels that serve and receive from the seventy-two-letter name from *Sefer Ḥesheq*, as well as the power of every name from the seventy-two names." Such facts reveal that Zacuto did labor over the roots of the divine names and the angels, seeking them out in various works to which he had access.

52 Zacuto critiques the use of corrupt divine names in amulets in another letter, in which he attacks "the sage Samigah, o.b.m."; see the letters in MS London, British Library, Or. 9165, fol. 34a.

53 On this work, see Oded Porat's introduction to his edition of *Sefer Berit ha-Menuḥah* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2016) and the extensive references there.

54 Porat, *Berit ha-Menuḥah*, 274.

55 Porat, *Berit ha-Menuḥah*, 274. While the need for knowledge of the names is stressed in the writings of medieval sages like R. Yosef Gikatilla and R. Eleazar of Worms, those authors do not stress the need for knowledge of their origin.

of the angels in the supernal realms for practical purposes, and even stressed the need to know the scriptural origin of the holy names as a necessary condition for magical success:[56]

> There is not a name that does not depend on a Sefirah and on a branch that is known to us, and one must bind it and at times recite it along with its source, and this is an important reason why many achieve little or nothing in their efforts, for they do not know the place of the names.[57]

As in *Berit ha-Menuḥah*, in Cordovero's thought too knowledge of the origin of the angel or the divine name in the supernal realms is necessary for the magic to succeed. However, Cordovero takes an additional step and applies this idea to the praxis by which the kabbalist draws down the power of the supernal source. He explains this technique through a metaphor:

> One who is ignorant of this is like one who attempts to use pipes to irrigate his garden and lacks two or three pipes in the middle, so that the water pours out. Likewise, one may accomplish little or nothing for lack of knowledge about how to draw the divine name through its sources and channels.[58]

These words reflect an expansion upon what preceded them in *Berit ha-Menuḥah*: in addition to the knowledge of the origin of the name, one who seeks to employ the power of that name must ascend to the source and draw its power down.[59]

We encounter a different position in the writings attributed to R. Isaac Luria, which contain only a few references to the use of names in practical Kabbalah. These references imply that Luria vehemently opposed the use of divine names for such practical needs; he seems to have viewed it as a serious sin and even provided a number of practices to rectify this sin of "the use of holy names that is called practical Kabbalah."[60] This bothered his student Ḥayyim Vital, who is known to have engaged in practical Kabbalah and who

---

56 Yoed Kadari, "The Angelology of Rabbi Moses Cordovero" [in Hebrew] (PhD diss., Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2014) [in Hebrew], 175; see also 298–301, 318–319, 334–339. On Scripture as a source of all the divine names and angels in Cordovero's thought, see Moses Cordovero, "Homilies Regarding Angels" [in Hebrew], in *Mal'akhei 'Elyon*, ed. Reuven Margaliot (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1945), 1, 3; Kadari, "Angelology," 317–318. On the relation between this theme in Cordovero and Vital, see Assaf Tamari, "The Body Discourse of Lurianic Kabbalah" [in Hebrew] (PhD diss., Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2016), 252–264, esp. 263–264, n. 1150.

57 Cordovero, "Homilies," 7, 5. Elsewhere: "So one who knows the secret of the name with which he acts, the numerological value of its letters, and its source and origin and power, cannot be compared to one who does not know the difference between his right and his left yet hangs the amulet on his neck like a donkey, etc." (Cordovero, "Homilies," 7, 5). According to Kadari, Cordovero also followed the approach of *Berit ha-Menuḥah* in this matter.

58 Cordovero, "Homilies," 7, 2; see also Kadari, "Angelology," 301.

59 Such an idea reflects an elitist trend in which knowledge is only available to the select few, as in *Berit ha-Menuḥah*, or a trend away from the practical use of this knowledge to the point of refuting any such use, as in Cordovero's writings; Kadari, "Angelology," 348.

60 Ḥayyim Vital, *Sha'ar Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh* (Jerusalem: Ahavat Shalom, 2017), 74, 175.

wrote amulets for others,[61] and he asked his master to explain the reason for the ban. The Safed kabbalist Eliyahu de Vidas, author of *Reshit Ḥokhmah*, likewise pressed Isaac Luria for an explanation. These questions are documented in Vital's *Shaʿar Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh*, and the answer Luria provided de Vidas is especially relevant to our discussion:

> For all the names and amulets now found written in books are incorrect, and even the amulets that were written by an expert contain many errors, and so it is forbidden to use them. However, if we knew the true nature of the names we too would be permitted to use them.[62]

While Luria's other reasons address personal failings of the one using the names (a lack of purity or humility, for example) here the issue is the names themselves and the errors that have crept into them over the generations. Despite this difficulty, it is important to note that Luria also left open the possibility of magical use of the names, for if the magician were to know their "true nature" he would be allowed to use them. Luria's teachings lack the comprehensive theories we find in such earlier sources as *Berit ha-Menuḥah* and Cordovero's writings, and his demands are more minimalist: precise and error-free knowledge of the divine names.

We do not know if Zacuto had direct knowledge of the arguments made by Cordovero and Luria brought above, but in many respects we can see his projects as a reworking and a fusing together of these two trends. Like Luria, Zacuto raised for his student Rovigo the issue of errors in the names and the "serious offense" that was likely to result from them. Zacuto, though, was not satisfied with the usage of the precise and correct name by itself and added the knowledge of its root, as demanded by *Berit ha-Menuḥah* and Cordovero. Such a combination is not incidental, for this combination allowed the kabbalist to understand the name with precision, and the absence of this knowledge is the cause of error, as is clear in his explanation to Rovigo cited above: "For there are some names the roots of which are unknown to us and perhaps some error has crept into them, and one must be wary that truth has been confused with lie and it would be a serious offense."[63] When the root is clearly known, one can understand the name being used and assure its reliability, reducing the chance of falling into error.

We find a clear example of this dynamic in the name ספפצספיה | SPṢSPYH mentioned above. The name appears in corrupted form in *Sefer ha-Sodot*, such that the numerological value of the name does not match the verse from which it was derived. In the transition to *ABHN*, Zacuto amended the name, bringing its numerological value to the desired num-

---

61 Vital experienced a significant delay in his spiritual development because of these activities; see Ḥayyim Vital, *Sefer ha-Ḥezyonot* (Jerusalem: Machon Ben-Zvi, 2016), 47, 73, 142, 144–145. More can be learned about his amulet-writing from his book *Sefer ha-Peʿulot*, which records many of the inscriptions he wrote, along with their textual sources.

62 Vital, *Shaʿar Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh*, 182; see the other responses Luria provided to the question there and in Eliyahu de Vidas, *Reshit Ḥokhmah* (Jerusalem: Or ha-Musar, 1984), *Shaʿar ha-Ahavah,* ch. 6:40, 472–473.

63 From the collection of Zacuto's letters in MS London, British Library, Or. 9165, fol. 10a.

ber.[64] The root, which in this context means the name's numerological value, allows for the possibility of checking and correcting the spelling of the name. This being so, we can expand Zacuto's conception of the term "root" to include all the components found in *ABHN*'s entries: the "root" is the numerological value of the name, its scriptural source (referred to by Zacuto as its "origin" or "source"), its origin in the Sefirot or the upper worlds, and the bibliographic source from which Zacuto took the cited explanation. These four "roots"—numerological, scriptural, sefirotic, and bibliographic—together provide a clear and reliable basis for a given name and are in fact what allow one to employ its power. We should see the frequent references to anonymous manuscripts in Zacuto's work, then, not as citations intended to direct the reader to the source itself but rather as markers of the authority and reliability of the given information, removing the fear of error.

As such, we may suggest that Zacuto's wide-ranging endeavors for his lexicon of names were intended to provide reliable "roots" for the names appearing in the various recipes, as we indeed find with most of the names listed in *ABHN*. The lexicon of names, then, is an essential tool intended to provide the magician a clear source and a reliable anchor for the various names appearing in the recipes, an anchor that allows the magician to achieve his ends.[65] Such an anchor, of course, does not exempt the magician from the demand of Cordovero and others that he be familiar with the entire theory of divine names, but it certainly meets Luria's demand that one know "the true nature" of the names and so allows their use.

4   Order-Lust and "Pure Flour"

In Zacuto's response to Rovigo cited above, "confusion" is brought about by ignorance, specifically of a name's origin or "root." Zacuto points to another problem arising from such ignorance in the title he gave to the first draft of his work: "A commentary of a few names that I have seen in *scattered* books, organized alphabetically" (emphasis added). In response to the existing confusion and scattering of sources, Zacuto sought to anchor the names in a comprehensive lexicon that would include information on their sources.

As William West has shown, the desire for order and arrangement ("order-lust") is one of the foundation stones of the encyclopedic projects undertaken at that time and is no less important than the desire for the knowledge itself ("info-lust").[66] The writer and philosopher Denis Diderot (1713–1784), one of the first authors of the modern encyclopedia, described the goal of the project as follows: "The purpose of an *encyclopedia* is to collect

---

64   See above, n. 39. See also, in *ABHN* (MS Jerusalem 615, fol. 144b), Zacuto's vacillation regarding the name דְמוֹרְטְיְרוֹן | DMWRṬYRWN.

65   On the encyclopedia as enabling magical activity, see Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 166. A similar demand appears in other works of the period: in an eighteenth-century collection of recipes, we find "And he who wishes to use or act with these holy names, must know their source and origin" (MS Tel-Aviv, Gross HO.011.001, fol. 11a). It is important to note that the author of this manuscript proceeded to demand of the magician "purity and abstinence and great intentionality." On the need for intentionality in magical activities, see Agata Paluch, "Intentionality and Kabbalistic Practices in Early Modern East-Central Europe," *Aries* 19.1 (2019): 83–111.

66   William N. West, "Encircling Knowledge," *Renaissance Quarterly* 68.4 (2015), 1331.

knowledge disseminated around the globe."[67] Diderot's statement hews very closely to Zacuto's title referencing the scattered names and the need to organize them—but Zacuto was not satisfied with simply providing order. A broad view of Zacuto's activities reveals that the problem of decentralization and confusion engaged him deeply, especially during his years in Italy. As part of the encyclopedic trend, Zacuto composed at least two additional works of a similar character to *ABHN*: *Remez ha-Romez*, which is organized by number from 1 to 12600 [!] and in which every numerical entry is explained according to the numerology of the permutation of a divine name as found in the Lurianic Kabbalah;[68] and *'Erkhei ha-Kinnuyyim*, a comprehensive encyclopedia of terms in Lurianic Kabbalah, organized alphabetically.[69] A similar trend is evident in the editorial work Zacuto performed on the composition *The Seventy Names of Metatron*, a medieval commentary on the collected names of Metatron that Zacuto reorganized alphabetically.[70] These works

---

67 Denis Diderot, "Encyclopedia," in *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project*, trans. Philip Stewart (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library, 2002), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.004; originally published as "Encyclopédie," *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Paris, 1755), 5:635–648A.

68 There is no extant manuscript version of this collection in Zacuto's hand, but there are many in the hands of others, some of which maintain Zacuto's structure. See, e.g., MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 446; MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 447. In MS London, British Library, Add. 26927, the number of entries reaches as high as 12893. It is important to note that not every number entry has content: as we can see from some copies of the work, Zacuto began by writing all of the numbers (up to 968), leaving room beside the numbers for the entries themselves, which he filled in later; certain entries were not completed by him, and so some remain as blank spaces.

69 A portion of this work was printed in Meir ben Halifa's *Sefer Me'ir bat 'Ayin* (Izmir, 1755). On this book and its copying by Zacuto's students, see Avivi, "Solet Nekiyya," 93–96; Eliezer Baumgarten and Uri Safrai. "The Formation of Erkei ha-kinuyim: Between Natan Shapira and Moshe Zacuto" [in Hebrew], *Alei Sefer: Studies in Bibliography and in the History of the Printed and the Digital Hebrew Book* 32–33 (2014): 223–241. The work resembles a number of others written in the seventeenth century, such as Jacob Tsemaḥ's *'Erkhei ha-Kinnuyyim* (Korets, 1782–1785), R. Yosef Ergas's *Mavo Petaḥim* (Amsterdam, 1736), and Meir Poppers's *Me'orei Or*, printed in Frankfurt am Main in 1709 with the commentary of Natan Neta Hochenburg.

70 MS Jerusalem 615, fols. 167b–170b. The copy is not in Zacuto's hand but rather seems to be in the hand of one of his students; on this work, see Joseph Dan, *The Esoteric Teachings of Hasidei Ashkenaz* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1968), 217–224; Moshe Idel, "The Commentary of R. Nehemiah ben Shlomo the Prophet to the Seventy Names of God and the Treble Discourse" [in Hebrew], in *Memorial Book for Prof. Meir Benayahu*, ed. Moshe Bar Asher, Yehuda Liebes, Moshe Assis, and Yosef Kaplan (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2019), 2:751–797, and the extensive bibliography in n. 7. Aside from these three works, Zacuto seems to have begun to write a third index to the Sefirot, but did not continue it. A first draft of this index is found in MS Jerusalem 615, fols. 25a–35a. We may assume, therefore, that the index to the Sefirot was written at the same time or close to the writing of *ABHN*. An additional encyclopedic work is *Em la-Binah*, a collection of homilies organized alphabetically, though in this case the work seems not to have been strictly his own but rather a reworking by others of his writings. The basis of the work is found in the collectanea at the beginning of MS Jerusalem 615, fols. 1a–23a. The work was first published as part of Yitzhak Tzeva's *Sha'arei Binah* in Thessaloniki in 1813 (and again in Zacuto, *Remez ha-Romez*). We do not currently know who alphabetized the material found in MS Jerusalem 615. On this work, see Gerold Necker, "The

also align with the aspiration for order evident in *ABHN*; we know that *'Erkhei ha-Kinnuyyim* for one became a foundational work in Zacuto's study hall, as evident from his statement to Abraham Rovigo that the book "is in the most proper order possible, and it is very beneficial to one learning the wisdom of truth to seek out several entries in its index of terms, as you will see, with God's help."[71]

Aside from Zacuto's turn to the field of encyclopedic and lexical works, there is much other evidence of his engagement with the problem of fragmentation and confusion during his time in Italy. Of the many issues that he engaged in during those years, one central field in which he stressed the need for order was the Lurianic Kabbalah in general and particularly Luria's prayer intentions. As Yosef Avivi has shown, Zacuto worked vehemently against various attempts made in his surroundings to invent new kabbalistic intentions not explicitly listed in the Lurianic writings, as we find in the writings of Natan Shapira, Shimshon Bacchi, Naftali Bacharach, and even the prayer book composed by Zacuto's close disciple, Benjamin ha-Cohen.[72] Zacuto's recurring critique of these works is due to their conflation of different sources, whether of classical Kabbalah with the Lurianic system or of differing Lurianic traditions promoted by his various students. Zacuto claimed that such a conflation would lead to the creation of new and erroneous kabbalistic intentions; so in his critique of Natan Shapira he wrote that "one should not conflate homilies with intentions"[73] and, in his critique of the book of intentions written by his own student, Benjamin ha-Cohen, he wrote:

'Secret of the Creation of the Demons': A Chapter in an Anonymous Lurianic Treatise Adapted by Moses Zacuto," *Jewish Thought* 2 (2020): 93–112; Gerold Necker, "The Matrix of Understanding: Moses Zacuto's Em la-Binah and Kabbalistic Works of Reference," *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 16 (2021): 117–141. It is worth noting that this work too is almost entirely Lurianic.

71 Moses Zacuto, *The Letters of R. Moses Zacuto* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Yeshivat ha-Chaim we-ha-Shalom, 1989), letter 9. The abovementioned work is in fact *Sefer Kinnuyyei ha-Shemot*, not *'Erkhei ha-Kinnuyyim* as appears in the title, though from the content of the letter it seems the reference is to the same work. Compare the words of Conrad Gesner (*Historia animalium*, Zurich, 1551): "utility of lexica [like this] comes not from reading it from beginning to end, which would be more tedious than useful, but from consulting it from time to time [ut consulat ea per intervalla]." Blair stresses the use of the verb "to consult" in relation to books replaces its use regarding the learned person as a source of advice (Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 117). For more on the encyclopedia as making knowledge accessible, see William N. West, *Theatres and Encyclopedias in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). West shows how the authors of the encyclopedia saw their work as a kind of theater of knowledge performed before its audience.

72 Avivi, "Solet Nekiyya," 81–88. On R. Benjamin ha-Cohen, see Benayahu, "Sabbatian Rumors"; Avraham Naftali Tzvi Rut, "On the Plans for Immigration to the Land of Israel of R. Moshe Zacuto and his Student Benjamin ha-Cohen in the Year 1680" [in Hebrew], *Zion* 15 (1950): 146–149; the index of Yosef Avivi, *Kabbala Luriana* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Machon Ben-Zvi, 2008).

73 Zacuto, *Letters*, letter 1. On R. Natan Shapira of Jerusalem and Zacuto's meeting with him, see Bracha Sack, "On R. Moshe Zacuto's Role in the Composition of Tuv ha-Aretz" [in Hebrew], *Kabbalah* 10 (2004): 207–226; Hanan Gur's introduction to Natan Shapira, *Tuv ha-Aretz* (Jerusalem: Ger Family, 2006).

I have seen the book of intentions that the elder and pious R. Benjamin ha-Cohen arranged [...] but I was very greatly pained because he rode on numerous horses and drew his honey from the corpses of the lion's [i.e., Luria's] cubs, and mixed and grabbed and compiled and organized words he never heard from the mighty mouth of R. Ḥayyim Vital of blessed memory, for I have already informed you in person that I have received a tradition from modest and mighty men that most of the intentions found in the other books of the students of the holy lion [i.e., Luria] were for them alone and not for outsiders [...] but those written in the general *Sefer ha-Kawwanot* are of fine and pure flour and worthwhile to everyone.[74]

Likewise, in another letter to his student Abraham Rovigo he fiercely critiques those who "become confounded in the teachings of the other students of Luria, of sainted memory":

For my soul grieved to know how many become confounded in these places by leaving the source of life [Ḥayyim], engaging in speculation and supposition, either in the teachings of the other students of R. Luria, of sainted memory, or the writings of R. Menaḥem Azaryah da Fano, and there are those who return to the world of chaos [*Tohu*] in the teachings of R. Moses Cordovero, as I saw in the murmurings of one of the rabbis of Italy who wrote a work on the intentions of the prayers. And I was compelled by his requests that I review his book, and I saw so many terrible things that I could not keep silent, for in that book he combined and confused the words of the early masters with those of the later ones. My heart trembles at this and I beseech the supernal Rock to aid me in guarding the honor of His name, to offer true water from the channels of might, water of pure gold from the sources of truth and justice.[75]

To counter the state of disarray and confusion that exist in the other books of intentions,[76] Zacuto composed his own book of intentions which was, in his mind, the only complete and properly organized book: "It teaches precisely those intentions that have not been mixed up with the various homilies, as in your books, for this confuses the mind."[77] As

---

74 Zacuto, *Letters*, letter 6. On the phrase "the general *Sefer ha-Kawwanot*" (ספר הכונות הכולל) used here, see Avivi, "Solet Nekiyya," 81–86; on the prayer book of Benjamin ha-Cohen, see n. 78.

75 Zacuto, *Letters*, letter 8. The reference seems to be to the book *Kawwanat Shelomoh* by R. Shlomo Roqeaḥ, which Zacuto proofread and helped publish. This commentary on the prayers does indeed contain traditions from Cordovero and Luria, among others. On Cordovero's kabbalistic system being equated with the world of chaos, see the sources discussed by Avivi, "Solet Nekiyya," 80.

76 It is interesting to note that Zacuto uses similar language to describe a woman: "as you have informed me in the brokenness of her mind and confusion of her thoughts" (Zacuto, *Letters*, letter 24).

77 Zacuto, *Letters*, letter 9. On the frontispiece of his *Sefer ha-Kawwanot*, we find: "*Sefer ha-Kawwanot*, in which the secrets of the prayers will be explained, and ancient and sweet words received from the R. Luria, of sainted memory, that have been seen here from Safed, may it be rebuilt speedily and in our days, Amen. And I, the young Moses, son of the honored R. Mordechai Zacuto, o.b.m, have set aright many things that were in confusion, and also added things that I selected from *Sefer ha-Liqqutim* [...]" (MS Livorno, Biblioteca dell'archivio storico della Comunità ebraica di Livorno, Talmud Torà, fol. 72, frontispiece).

Avivi has shown, Zacuto's arrangement relied on what he referred to as "pure flour," that is, those traditions attributed to R. Ḥayyim Vital himself, which he received directly from Vital's students and their own students, such as R. Jacob Tsemaḥ, with whom Zacuto corresponded,[78] and Benjamin ha-Levi, whom he met in person in Venice.[79] So in his critique of R. Naftali Bacharach, author of the book *'Emeq ha-Melekh*, Zacuto wrote regarding his ordering of the supernal chambers:

> I testify before you that I know not where the author learned the order he posited, for, praise be to God, I have the pure flour from the words of R. Luria and R. Ḥayyim Vital, and they did not follow his path at all; nor do I know who taught him such things.[80]

Here, as in all the sources cited above, Zacuto reiterates the division between the confusion, conflation, and error that reign in other works and the "pure flour" that preserves the proper order, which Zacuto possessed.[81]

---

78 We learn of the direct relationship between Tsemaḥ and Zacuto from the former's letter to Zacuto found in MS Washington, Library of Congress, 129, fol. 8a–b (and see Avivi, *Kabbala Luriana*, 2:668–669); also, in the frontispiece of the prayer book (MS Mantua 149) by R. Benjamin ha-Cohen, a student of Zacuto, is written that the prayer intentions within "have been emended, received, and copied from the sage [...] Moses Zacuto, who received them from the prayer book of the great kabbalist R. Jacob Tsemaḥ, o.b.m., of Jerusalem." The attribution of the prayer book to Tsemaḥ is striking given Zacuto's own critique of this work and its like (see above).

79 Avivi, "Solet Nekiyya." A comparison should be made between Zacuto's paradigm of "pure flour," which focused on traditions traced directly to Vital, and the similar trend of abridgments and summaries of Lurianic teachings that were common at the time and reflected a similar ethic. For example, Samuel Vital (son of Ḥayyim Vital) wrote in his introduction to his prayer book *Ḥemdat Yiśra'el*: "and if we succeed to reach the teaching of R. Isaac Luria Ashkenazi, of sainted memory, to intend in our prayers all those intentions that were passed on by my father and teacher the master, o.b.m., not every mind is capable of this, and some will drown in the great sea of wisdom and emerge with only a potsherd in their hands [...] so I said to myself that I would bring merit to myself and the people of my age [...] and collect the smallest grains of flour [...] and abridge the intentions"; Samuel Vital, *Ḥemdat Yiśra'el* (Jerusalem: Ahavat Shalom, 2016), 1:4. His phrase "the smallest grains of flour" emphasizes brevity (see Samuel Vital, *Ḥemdat Yiśra'el*, 146), in contrast to the proliferation of teachings and traditions found in the Lurianic writings. Samuel Vital, like other contemporary authors, sought to summarize and abridge the lengthy and complex prayer intentions in the Lurianic writings to facilitate their use (see also R. Jacob Tsemaḥ's abridgment of the prayer intentions, extant in a number of manuscripts, among them MS New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, 9312). Zacuto himself seems to have been partner to this trend, creating a number of his own abridgments of the prayer intentions (see MS Ramat Gan, Bar-Ilan University Library, 1152). The expression "pure flour" in the sense of brevity and summation also appears in Gedaliah Cordovero's introduction to his father's work *Or Ne'erav* (Venice, 1587), fol. 3a.

80 Zacuto, *Yod'ei Binah*, MS Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Heb. 4° 82, fol. 32a; Avivi, "Solet Nekiyya," 79. On Bacharach's interpretation of the supernal chambers and the way in which he integrated the Lurianic Kabbalah with other traditions, see Eliezer Baumgarten, "Comments on Rav Naftali Bachrach's Usage of Pre-Lurianic Sources" [in Hebrew], *AJSR* 37.2 (2013): 1–23.

81 The problems of decentralization and conflation of different intentions is present in the background of other contemporary works. So R. Meir Poppers wrote regarding some writings of R. Jacob Tsemaḥ that had reached him: "I saw the expanse of his holy books, that they have no order, neither beginning nor end, and it pained my heart, so I said, Take a scroll and write all the homilies found in

Prima facie, it would appear that the encyclopedic *ABHN* and the eclectic magical traditions that Zacuto had collected were the polar opposite of the exclusivist concept of "pure flour" on which Zacuto insisted in the case of prayer intentions and in his other kabbalistic writings, in which the only permissible tradition is one stemming directly from R. Ḥayyim Vital. *Sefer ha-Sodot* and *ABHN* contain diverse traditions from across the Jewish tradition, from classical and early modern Kabbalah, Ashkenaz and Spain, Cordovero and Luria, Vital and the *Megalleh ʿAmuqot*, without any hierarchy or preference for one tradition over another. However, a comparison between the two literary endeavors—the encyclopedic-lexical work of *ABHN* and the exclusivist precision of *Sefer ha-Kawwanot* along with his Lurianic writings as a whole—reveals a shared intention: in both *ABHN* and his Lurianic writings Zacuto sought to arrive at the root, the most reliable and precise source, without the errors and corruptions that he found elsewhere. By returning to the root of the matter—in all of the meanings of the word—one can arrive at the genuine tradition of divine names as well as the purified Lurianic Kabbalah.

A panoramic view of Zacuto's activities, as we have tried to offer in this study, reveals that over the course of his years in Italy Zacuto invested great efforts in reaching the root of the matter at hand and creating a reliable and authoritative framework on which his students and disciples could rely for many years. The primary goal of this endeavor was to allow for an error-free kabbalistic practice: the encyclopedia of names allowed the magician to employ the divine names without fear of error or confusion and the clarifications of the Lurianic traditions allowed kabbalistic practice in prayer and unifications (*yiḥudim*). As we learn from the wide-ranging correspondence Zacuto maintained with his students, the question of the possibility of practicing Kabbalah engaged Zacuto and his students deeply, and Zacuto's initiatives were intended to provide the proper answer. These initiatives established Zacuto as one of the most important kabbalists of his generation and as the founder of a precise and developed kabbalistic school, on which all seekers of kabbalistic knowledge throughout the generations relied.

---

them, which are scattered in many works, one here and one there, and bring them together to create some order" (*ʿEts Ḥayyim*, Korets, 1786, fol. 1a). Likewise in the introduction to *Meʾorot Natan*, a book by Zacuto's colleague Natan Shapira, the author writes: "When I saw the intentions that we possess scattered here and there, and the words of the other students mixed in with the words of R. Ḥayyim Vital, of sainted memory, such that one cannot distinguish between the great light and the small lights, and even a single topic of the master R. Ḥayyim Vital himself is broken apart and scattered throughout the books; and I saw how one is burdened by the length of the intentions and so loses the essence of them; I decided, in order to bring merit to the many and balm to my miserable soul, I collected and gathered together words of improvement in this book"; Natan Shapira, *Peri ʿEts Ḥayyim* (Dubrovna, 1804), fol. 1b. These words seem to have their origin in the introductions of Abraham Azulay to the books of prayer intentions that he edited: *Kenaf Renanim: Qitsur Kawwanot ha-Tefillah* (Jerusalem: Machon Shaari-Ziv, 2002), 4; and *Maʿaśeh Ḥoshev* (Jerusalem: Machon Shaari-Ziv, 1992), 11.

R. Moses Zacuto's Correspondence and the Transmission of Magical Knowledge

Maximilian de Molière

The correspondence of R. Moses Zacuto has long been mined by scholars for information about the life and views of the great kabbalist, poet, and halakhist.[1] One such facet for which the letters proved a fertile source was Zacuto's philanthropic activism for Jews of eastern Europe and the Mediterranean who became enslaved by pirates and for Jewish communities who were in financial problems.[2] Moreover, Gershom Scholem was the first to exploit the letters for research on the history of Kabbalah when he extracted Zacuto's views on Sabbatianism from a letter he wrote to R. Samson Bacchi claiming that he was a cautious supporter of the movement until Shabbtai Tsvi's apostasy.[3] Some studies have built on the magical and kabbalistic knowledge which he transmitted in his letters. Through Roni Weinstein's survey of the letters, we also know of the kabbalistic

---

instructions that he sent to his disciples regarding normative sexual behavior in marriage.[4] And J. H. (Yossi) Chajes has analyzed the liturgy for an exorcism that Zacuto transmitted through a letter as part of his study on spirit possession.[5]

While this sampling indicates the importance of letters as a source on Zacuto, the interplay of this medium with his ability to communicate his ideas has not been appreciated. Considering the role of the medium adds another dimension that allows us to look at Zacuto's work from a new angle. In other words, how did Zacuto's use of missives shape his effectiveness in disseminating kabbalistic and magical knowledge among his correspondents and what avenues of agency did it open to him? Newly discovered letters by Zacuto to his disciple Abraham Rovigo in MS London, British Library, Or. 9165 show him conveying his knowledge of amulet production. This article will discuss two of these missives and point out their connection to Zacuto's efforts to disseminate magical recipes for amulets that he deemed authentically Lurianic among his followers.

Eliezer Baumgarten and Uri Safrai show in their article in this volume how Zacuto compiled his own magical works with which he intended to educate his students. One of these books is called *Shorshei ha-Shemot* (The Roots of Names); it contains divine names that could be used for the production of amulets and became a popular reference work among practitioners of Jewish magic.[6] Zacuto was already collecting magical recipes when he studied in Poland in his youth, compiling a book called *Sefer ha-Sodot* (The Book of Secrets).[7] Understanding the transfer of Zacuto's theoretical magical knowledge into practice from his letters appears particularly worthwhile, since to this day no amulet has been found that can be identified as his work. Another facet that the letters can shed light on are matters that are not discussed in his more theoretical treatises, such as Zacuto's attitudes toward other figures in the field of amulet makers. This information is especially valuable since amulets were not signed and the artisans who produced them are usually beyond the reach of historians.

The two letters under discussion are autographs from a larger collection that was assembled by his student Abraham Rovigo, the recipient of the letters, and is today held as MS London, British Library, Or. 9165 (IMHM F 6601).[8] Abraham Rovigo was one of a

---

4   See Roni Weinstein, "The Rise of the Body in Early Modern Jewish Society: The Italian Case Study," in *The Jewish Body*, ed. Maria Diemling and Giuseppe Veltri (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 43–46.

5   See J. H. Chajes, *Between Worlds: Dybbuks, Exorcists, and Early Modern Judaism*, Jewish Culture and Contexts (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 87–90.

6   On Jewish amulets in general, see Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (New York: Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1939), 132–152; for antiquity, see Gideon Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 114–123; for the late antique/early medieval period, see Yuval Harari, *Jewish Magic before the Rise of Kabbalah*, trans. Batya Stein (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017), 216–230.

7   On *Sefer ha-Sodot* and its origin, see Uri Safrai and Eliezer Baumgarten, "Moses Zacuto and the Kabbalah of Divine Names," in this volume.

8   The manuscript is described in George Margoliouth and Jacob Leveen, *Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the British Museum, Vol. Four* (London: British Museum, 1935), 157–158. Zacuto's letters are found on fols. 1a–87a of MS London, British Library, Or. 9165. The description in Margolioth's catalogue includes a full list of the correspondents.

select group of his correspondents with whom Zacuto shared his knowledge of practical Kabbalah. After studying under Zacuto in Venice, Rovigo became an ardent supporter of the self-styled Messiah, Shabbtai Tsvi. The extant correspondence between the two men starts in the early 1670s, when Rovigo had established himself as a community leader in Modena, and it ends in the 1680s, by which time Zacuto had long been a rabbi in Mantua.[9] Zacuto's correspondence with Rovigo takes up the first half of the London manuscript, a total of forty-seven letters; the remainder are missives Rovigo received from other luminaries of the age, such as R. Me'ir Rofe.[10] Most of Zacuto's letters in the manuscript are not found in the Livorno edition of *Iggerot ha-ReMeZ* prepared by R. Jacob Nuñez Weiss in 1780, which has served as the source for many researchers of Zacuto, and for those letters that are published there, the London manuscript sometimes offers alternative readings. Meir Benayahu edited some of these letters in his study on the relationship between the sages of Italy and those of the Holy Land, and others were published by Jacob Leveen.[11]

The dozens of letters Zacuto addressed to Rovigo open a window into the close personal relationship they had, discussing in private their everyday affairs, such as weddings, legal troubles, and deaths. Rovigo's collection of Zacuto's autograph letters also offers fresh insights into the way Moses Zacuto shared his knowledge of practical Kabbalah with his student and the interplay between the letters and Zacuto's collections of magical recipes, such as *Shorshei ha-Shemot* and *Sefer ha-Sodot*.

1   Contemporary Amulet Makers

Zacuto's instruction on practical Kabbalah in the correspondence encompasses the entire life cycle of amulets, from discussing their production to understanding their qualities and their defects. In the summer of 1673,[12] Abraham Rovigo had acquired several amulets on a trip to Livorno and sent them to Zacuto in order to better understand them. Specifically, Rovigo wanted to know if these amulets were the handiwork of his teacher. The original request by Rovigo is not extant, but Zacuto's response references the points of interest of his disciple:

---

9 The earliest letter to Rovigo is dated 3 Elul 5430 (19 August 1670); MS London, British Library, Or. 9165, fol. 2a. This letter is printed in Zacuto, *Iggerot ha-ReMeZ*, 4a–4b. For an overview of Abraham Rovigo's life and work, see Gershom Scholem, "Rovigo, Abraham ben Michael," 17:500–501, and the references there.

10 The letters of Rofe in the London manuscript have been published in Isaiah Tishby, "R. Meir Rofe's letters of 1675–1680 to R. Abraham Rovigo" [in Hebrew], *Sefunot: Studies and Sources on the History of the Jewish Communities in the East* 3–4 (1960): 91–130.

11 See Meir Benayahu, *A Single Generation in the Land: Letters of R. Shmuél Aboab and R. Moše Zacuto concerning the affairs of Erez Israel* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Yad ha-Rav Nissim, 1987–1988); Jacob Leveen, "Autograph Letters of Moses Ben Mordecai Zacuto from the British Museum Manuscript or. 9165," in *Semitic Studies in Memory of Immanuel Löw*, ed. Alexander Schreiber (Budapest: Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1947), 324–333.

12 Unlike most of Zacuto's autograph letters, this one has no date. Summer 1673 seems the most probable date, as Rovigo has sorted this missive in between a letter dated Lag be-Omer 5433 (4 May 1673)—MS London, British Library, Or. 9165, fol. 32a—and one dated Parashah Ki Tavo 5433 (27 August–2 September 1673)—MS London, British Library, Or. 9165, fol. 36a.

For the moment, praise the Lord, you sent me these amulets and asked me if they are my handiwork. I did not know what you saw on them, because you surely did not think that this mess testified (to my abilities)—I have never seen it (the amulet). For, praise the Lord, I am knowledgeable in the name of forty-two (letters) and (the name) of seventy-two (letters) without mixing up *tav* with *tet* and *he* with *ḥet*. Furthermore, everyone can see it that it (the amulet) is the product of the sage Sa-migah, of blessed memory. To be honest, I saw the arrangement a few times in his hand and I enjoyed it because it is full of awesome and wondrous names. And there-fore, I will tell you what is missing on it so that if someone can be found who can execute (it) in holiness, purity of ritual bathing, fasting, and full-day meditation. For here, there is no appropriate writer since our honorable teacher the Rav Rabbi Moses Shalit has grown old and he does not see as is required. On the right side of the amulet, an outer line is missing (saying): "'may the favor (of the Lord be upon us)' (Ps 90:17) 'because you took the Lord, my shelter the most high, as your heav-en' (Ps 91:9) YR'L 'no harm will come to you' (Ps 91:10)." And in its inner line that contains names in large letters are these names missing: LZG TQN 'SV SQT RVY P'R LYV 'TS and in order that you may understand the arrangement of the name I will reveal it to you. Know that the beginning (of the adjuration) is on the left of the amulet and begins with the name M'V YZY until its end and its beginning is the verse "who is like you" (Exod 15:11). And in the middle is the Name of forty-two (letters) and at the end the verse "And may the Almighty grant you," and the rest is instructed to be made properly, and by it, you are assured it will be effective. And also, he commanded to make the amulet of the ARI (Isaac Luria), of blessed mem-ory, and place it within this larger one.[13]

Zacuto's description provides a solid understanding of the amulets before him, which included two of the most common magical names used in Jewish amulets. The name of forty-two letters was known since antiquity and is based on a hymn of forty-two words, whose initials form the name. Similarly, the name of seventy-two letters is created from three verses (Exod 14:19–21) that each consist of seventy-two letters that are permutated according to a complex algorithm. The resulting name consists of 216 letters, making it ex-

---

13 עתה עתה ברוך ה׳ שלחת לי אלו הקמיעות ושאלת ממני אם הם מעשי ידי לא ידעתי מה ראית בהם כי כן חשבת הלא אותה המשובשת היא תעיד שמימי לא ראיתיה כי ברוך ה׳ גם אנכי ידעתי אותיות שם של מ״ב ושל ע״ב מבלי אחליף ת׳ בט׳ וה׳ בח׳, והאחרת האכולה מֵעַש כל אדם יחזה בה שהיא מעשה החֹ׳ סאמיגה ז״ל אמת כי סדרה ראיתי כמה פעמים בידו והנאני כי הוא מלא שמות נוראים ומופלאים, ולכן אודיעך מה חסר בה כדי שאם ימצא מי שיוכל עשוה בקדושה ובטהרת טבילה ותענית והתבודדות כל היום ההוא כי בכאן לא יש שום סופר כהוגן יען כמוהר״ר משה שליט נר״ו זקן ואינו רואה כהוגן, הנה בצד ימין של הקמיע חסר בשורה החצונה שיש בה ויהי נועם כי אתה ה׳ מחסי עליון שמת מעונך, יראל, לא תאונה אליך רעה, ובשורה הפנימית ממנה שיש בה שמות באותיות גדולות חסרים אלה שמות לזג תקן עשו שקת הוי פצר ליו אתש וכדי שתבין סדר השם אגלהו לך דע שתחלתו משמאל הקמיע ומתחיל בשם מאו יבי עד סופו וראשו הוא פסוק מי כמכה, ואמצעיתו צוה לעשות הקמיע של הארי זלה״ה וישימוהו בתוך זאת הגדולה, MS London, British Library, Or. 9165, fol. 34a. All transcriptions and translations from the letters are mine.

ceedingly challenging to copy correctly onto an amulet.[14] From this letter, we can learn a great deal about Zacuto's attitude toward the work of other sages who produced amulets. Zacuto points out several mix-ups that he observed between the letters forming the names in the amulet before him ("mixing up *tav* with *tet* and *he* with *ḥet*"). For the names in the amulets to work properly, however, they had to be written correctly. The tone in Zacuto's letter indicates that he felt unsettled by his disciple's suggestion that he would wrongly write these two *shemot*. The amulet also consists of verses from Psalms and additional holy names in which Zacuto likewise discovers defects. What is more, he discerns that the amulet maker forgot to write a series of divine names. It remains unclear from which source Zacuto took the information that he used in emending the amulet—his own collection of magical names, *Sefer ha-Sodot*, does not list these names.[15]

Zacuto claims to have identified the original artisan of the amulets sent to him by Rovigo, explaining that he had seen them before and recognized them as the work of a kabbalist by the name of "Samigah." The most likely candidate for the amulet maker mentioned by Zacuto is R. Joseph Samigah, who died in Venice in 1629.[16] Born in Thessaloniki, Samigah was rabbi in Padua before taking over the rabbinate in the lagoon city. Samigah fits the information given by Zacuto: while he wrote on halakhic matters, his work often contained kabbalistic material. It is doubtful that the two ever met in person. By the time of Joseph Samigah's death in 1629, Zacuto had not come to Venice.[17] If we read the phrase "I saw the arrangement a few times in his hand" not in the literal sense (Zacuto seeing Samigah with the amulet in his hand), but as a reference to his handwriting, then Joseph Samigah is the plausible amulet maker. In Zacuto's narrative of how he saw the amulet before, he asserts obliquely that "everyone can see it that it (the amulet) is the product of the sage Samigah," referring to some quality specific to Samigah that would be an instant giveaway to fellow amulet makers. Most likely Zacuto referred to the script used for writing down the adjurations, magical names, and other textual elements.

Zacuto mentions that it is possible to fix the amulet provided and that this is done by a competent expert who undergoes a rigorous regime of "ritual bathing, fasting, and full-day meditation" in preparation for the work. The letter also intimates that such experts were rare in northern Italy in Zacuto's time, as he mentions only one man, R. Moses Shalit, whom he describes as being no longer fit for the job due to his age. Zacuto writes "he does not see as is required," indicating that Zacuto worried that diminished eyesight

---

14 For the construction of these *shemot*, see Theodore Schrire, *Hebrew Magic Amulets: Their Decipherment and Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Behrman House, 1982), 97–98.

15 A critical edition of *Sefer ha-Sodot* based on Zacuto's manuscript of this text is currently being prepared for publication by Yuval Harari, Eliezer Baumgarten, and Uri Safrai. I thank them for making their transcription available for me.

16 I thank my colleagues Eliezer Baumgarten and Uri Safrai for making me aware of Joseph Samigah.

17 See Isidore Singer and M. Seligsohn, "Samegah (Samigah), Joseph Ben Benjamin," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. Isidore Singer, vol. 10 (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1902), 683–684; Julius Fürst, *Bibliotheca Judaica, bibliographisches Handbuch der gesammten jüdischen Literatur, mit Einschluss der Schriften über Juden und Judenthum und einer Geschichte der jüdischen Bibliographie* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1863), 230–231.

could again lead to mistakes in the copying of holy names. A man named Moses Shalit wrote a poem praising God which accompanies Eliezer Foa's commentary on the Passover haggadah that was published in Venice in 1641.[18] Both the time and the place of this publication fit neatly with Zacuto's description of Shalit. If he was already active in the 1640s, by the time Zacuto wrote his letter to Abraham Rovigo three decades later, Shalit would have been an old man.

This letter reveals that in Zacuto's view a good amulet maker possessed the skills of a learned artisan. He should be able to write the holy names correctly and must have good eyesight. It is also relevant that Zacuto knew only one amulet maker that he could recommend to Rovigo. Let us now turn to his practical advice on how to make an amulet.

2   A Lurianic Amulet Recipe

In another letter, Zacuto shared the process of creating an amulet with his student Abraham Rovigo. Usually, Zacuto explains to his disciple, he would have preferred to create the amulet for Rovigo himself, but as he was pressed for time, he decided to spell out the steps necessary so that his student could produce it himself:

> Regarding the amulet of which you asked me for a copy: I had no spare time to prepare it. So, I decided to send you the (fundamental) principle which is enclosed here. Give orders to copy it and to return it to me in the aforementioned week without any incident, for I have no other. And gladden your eyes at the prayer that contains (something) for all purposes. In case you want to make it for your beloved son, God protect him, write the whole prayer for Ḥokhmah and Binah and if you make it for the Holy One, may he be praised, you do not need to mention it. (Remember) only that the writing is done in holiness, ritual immersion, and fasting. Once you have completed your work, and you have copied it correctly, on one side outside the seal is written that runs from one to nine and ascends to the name YH (fifteen), from each side and each corner [here there is a drawing of the magic square]. On the second side this is written: [here there is a drawing of the Seal of Solomon]. It is called the Seal of Solomon and it is drawn in a single stroke and not two. Then tie it with kosher tendons and bind four knots and at each knot, you focus (your thoughts) on one of the (four) names of the twenty-two (letters) 'NQT, etc. After that speak at all four knots: "In the name of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, David, and Solomon." Then cover the piece with unprocessed wax and thereafter with a soft leather cover and sew it with a silken thread, called *cordela*, to hang around the neck and when hanging it up say the three verses "the Lord of hosts is with us" (Ps 48:8), "O Lord of hosts, happy (is the man that trusts in you)" (Ps 84:13), and "Lord, give victory" (Ps 20:10) and "may the favor" (Ps 90:17) "and the Lord's delight prosper through you" (cf. Isa 53:10) and in addition (write): "I will give you counsel (and God will be with you)" (Exod 18:19). Carry out the *Kawwanat Nefesh*, which I have transmitted to you for your Son, God keep him. But the most important thing is to

---

18   See Eliezer Foa, *Midrash Haggadah* (Venice: Bragadini, 1641). Shalit's poem is found on p. 3a.

find gazelle's leather because the ARI has instructed it this way. Know that there is a family man here who does not want to use a piece of gazelle leather for conjuring texts when he asked me about a defect (on it) and there is (enough room) for two amulets on it.[19]

With this letter, Zacuto affords to Rovigo a look into the process he employed to produce amulets. His method consisted of two main components: (1) the specific adjurations that determine the purpose of the amulet; and (2) a general-purpose template for producing an amulet that accompanied the adjurations and other materials which directed the amulet toward a specific purpose. This part of the recipe takes up the majority of this letter. Both parts of the recipe will be considered separately.

Zacuto attached his original template for producing amulets directed toward a specific purpose to the letter he sent to Rovigo. It is a remarkable feature of the letter that Zacuto was able to convey the original template that he used in his own work to Rovigo who then had the chance to work from the best source Zacuto could offer—Zacuto clearly felt that a copy would be insufficient or that the effort of making a copy as part of the letter was tantamount to preparing the proper amulet. The specific purpose of the amulet remains unclear in the letter; apparently it could be adapted, and the specifics for the particular amulet Rovigo intended to make are not discussed. This unique original was precious to Zacuto, as he asserted "I have no other," demanding of Rovigo that he return it to him after the work is complete.

Given the value that Zacuto placed in this artifact, it is remarkable that he did not only lend it to Rovigo, but that he also entrusted it to the hands of an unnamed, possibly Christian, messenger to transport it all the way from Venice to Modena. The autograph letter preserves the original address in Zacuto's hand. Unlike the majority of the extant autograph letters, the address of this missive is in Italian with some added Hebrew honorifics: "Al molto eccellente signore כמהח״ר Abraham figlio Refael Rovigo נר״ו, Modena" (To the most excellent gentleman, our honored teacher, the sage, Rabbi Abraham, the son of Raphael Rovigo, Modena).[20] Most of the addresses on Zacuto's letters are written in Hebrew, pointing to Jewish messengers who are sometimes identified in the text of the

---

19 על דבר הקמיע אשר שאלת ממני ההעתק לא היה פנאי לעשותו ולכן גמרתי לשלוח לך העיקרי אשר כמוס הנה ואתה תצוה להעתיקה ובשבוע העז״ל תשוב ותחזירנו לי בלי שהיה כי אין לי אחר זולתו ועיניך תחזנה התפלה הכוללת לכל דבר ואם תחפוץ לעשותו אל בנך יקירך ה׳ ישמרהו תכתב כל התפלה מעני החכמה והבינה ואם תעשהו להקבה אין צריך להזכיר כן רק שתהיה הכתיבה בקדושה טבילה ותענית ואחר שתסיים עשייתה ותכפלוה היטב יכתב מצד א׳ החיצון את החותם שהוא מא׳ עד ט׳ ועולה שם יה מכל צד ומכל פנה ומהצד הב׳ יכתב זה שהוא נקרא חותם שלמה ונעשה בבת א׳ לא בב׳ פעמים ואח״כ תכרכנו בגידין כשרין ותקשור ד׳ קשרים ובכל קשר תכוין לשם א׳ משם כ״ב אנקת׳ וכו׳ ואח״כ כל הד׳ קשרים תאמר בשם אברהם יצח׳ ויעק׳ משה ואהרן דוד ושלמה ואח״כ תכסה הכל בשעוה בתולה ואח״כ במכסה עור דק ותתפור בו משיחה cordela של משי לתלותו בצואר וכשתתלהו תאמר ג׳ פסו׳ ה׳ צבאות עמנו, ה׳ צבאות אשרי, ה׳ הושיעה ויהי נועם וחפץ ה׳ בידך יצלח ועוד איעצך ותעשה הכופר נפש אשר מסרתי לך בעד בנך ישמרהו צורו אבל היה עיקר גדול למצוא קלף צבי כי כך צוה האר״י זלה״ה ודע כי בכאן נמצא ביד בעל בית א׳ שאינו רוצה להזכר חתיכת קלף צבי אבל שאל לי בעדה דופיא א׳ ויהיה בה כדי ב׳ קמיעות. MS London, British Library, Or. 9165, fol. 48a.

20 MS London, British Library, Or. 9165, fol. 49b.

letter.[21] The use of Italian on the address of the missive under discussion indicates that Zacuto used the official, non-Jewish postal services. While Zacuto lived in Venice and Mantua, he had access to official post providers who sought to ensure steady channels of communication within Italy and the rest of Europe. The official Venetian post was organized by the Compagnia dei Corrieri della Serenissima Signoria di Venezia (Company of the couriers of the most noble lordship of Venice). The Compagnia's network consisted of a system of relay stations, called in Italian *stafette* (sg. *stafetta*) that were arrayed at a distance of approximately 20 km from each other. This system allowed for fast and reliable communication between cities.[22] If only we knew why Zacuto chose to send his precious amulet template via a non-Jewish messenger. Did he value the reliability of the official postal service? Or did no Jewish messenger present himself who was traveling to Modena when Zacuto wanted to dispatch his letter to Rovigo? If Zacuto preferred the official postal service, one would expect that Zacuto would have insisted in his letter that Rovigo sent back his template through the Compagnia.

As can be seen in Zacuto's compilations of this matter, amulets usually combine adjurations and holy names with sophisticated graphical elements. In this instance he chose to transmit most of this information by sending the original artifact. Unfortunately, he is not very forthcoming in his descriptions of the content or the layout of the amulet he sent to Rovigo: since his addressee had the artifact before him, verbose descriptions were unnecessary. Zacuto was therefore content to specify that Rovigo was to copy the template including the prayer for the Sefirot Ḥokhmah and Binah if the amulet was intended for his son; if it was intended for the Holy One, this section could be omitted. From these sparse remarks, it is difficult to make out the exact amulet that Zacuto had in mind. The reference to Rovigo's son strongly points to a protective amulet.[23]

The second part of the recipe, apparently intended to enforce the potency of the specific adjurations of the first part, combines several instructions for producing the mate-

---

21   In sum, fifteen of Zacuto's letters are addressed in Italian: MS London, British Library, Or. 9165, fols. 1b, 11b, 33b, 37b, 39b, 45b, 47b, 49b, 51b, 53b, 55b, 61b, 63b, 65b, 67b. Unofficial messengers for Zacuto's letters were R. Moses Tarzi, R. David Aviater, and R. Elchanan Rovigo, the younger brother of Abraham; see MS London, British Library, Or. 9165, fols. 14a, 40a, 46a, 52a. In addition, Zacuto employed emissaries on philanthropic missions. For more on this subject, see my upcoming study of Zacuto's correspondence.

22   The origin of the Compagnia is reconstructed in Adriano Cattani, *Storia delle comunicazioni postali nella Repubblica di Venezia* (Padua: Elzeviro, 2018), 13–30; Luigi Weiss, *I corrieri della Serenissima: Pagine e documenti di storia veneta* (Padua: Elzeviro, 2001), 39–69. The tariffs for the years 1663 and 1668 are found in Adriano Cattani, *Da Venezia in viaggio con la posta: Pagine e documenti di storia veneta* (Padua: Elzeviro, 2002), 152–154. The *stafetta* was introduced in 1584; see Cattani, *Storia delle comunicazioni*, 31–36.

23   On amulets protecting children, see Yuval Harari, "Childbirth Magic in Amulets and Recipes from the Gross Family Collection," in *Windows on Jewish Worlds: Essays in Honor of William Gross*, ed. Shalom Sabar, Emile G.L. Schrijver, and Falk Wiesemann (Zutphen: Walburg, 2019), 334–349. Rovigo's unnamed son was likely born in early May 1672. Zacuto congratulates Rovigo on his son's birth in a letter dated 22 Iyyar 5432 (19 May 1672), but he is not mentioned in the previous missive, dated P. Behar 5432 (8–14 May 1672); see *Iggerot ha-ReMeZ*, 7b and *Iggerot ha-ReMeZ*, 31b–32b, respectively.

rial artifact with performative elements that are designed to lend efficacy to the material components. The first element in Zacuto's recipe is the magic square, consisting of the numbers one to nine. As pointed out in the letter, they are arranged in such a way that the sum of each row, column, or diagonal equals fifteen. The number fifteen was significant for Jewish practitioners of magic as it also the numerical value of the letters YH, which form one of the names of God and the first two letters of the Tetragrammaton. The magic square thus promised protection to those who wore an amulet that included it.[24] The second graphical element Zacuto's instruction prescribe is a pentagram, the so-called Seal of Solomon. It belongs to a group of geometrical elements that are recurrent in Jewish amulets.[25] Zacuto is adamant that the seal is to be drawn in one stroke—probably the belief was that the pentagram will only function properly as part of the amulet if the amulet maker can accomplish the feat of drawing it without setting down his pen. The autograph letter displays multiple attempts at drawing the seal; this may be the work of Rovigo. Amulet makers in training had to work hard to meet the demands on their motor skills, as the numerous seals that are drawn unsuccessfully show.

In the next step, the amulet maker is to bind it with four knots made from kosher tendons. Knots have been part of Jewish magical practices since late antiquity. They have been found in different magical artifacts; some were designed to protect and others to cause harm to an enemy.[26] At each of the knots, one of the four names that make up the twenty-two-letter name is to be recited. Zacuto cites only the first of these names, which clearly shows that Zacuto expected Rovigo to remember information that he had relayed to him earlier. Many other Jewish recipes prescribe that the names be written onto the amulet. Tradition derives these names from the first twenty-two letters of the priestly blessing in the liturgy for Rosh Hashanah.[27] The recipe specifies that the practitioner is to sew together the leather cover of the amulet with a silken thread called a *cordela*—an Italian word which is even written out in Latin characters. This mention of the specific Italian name was probably meant to help Rovigo purchase the specific kind of silken thread that was known under the designation *cordela*. Zacuto may have believed that the

---

24 Magic squares are probably the invention of Arab mathematicians. Jews also used more elaborate magic squares with higher numerical values that were thought to point to other names or biblical verses; see Schrire, *Hebrew Magic Amulets*, 64–68; Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 142–143; Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 432.

25 In the medieval tradition of Jewish magic, the Seal of Solomon was often used alongside the hexagram, the so-called Shield of David. The history of both symbols has been studied in Gershom Scholem, *Magen Dawid: Toldotov shel Semel*, ed. Galit Hasan-Rokem (Ein Harod: Mishkan Le-Omanut, 2008); a German translation of this essay with a commentary is available as Gershom Scholem, *Das Davidschild: Geschichte eines Symbols*, ed. Gerold Necker (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 2010). See also Schrire, *Hebrew Magic Amulets*, 58–63, 68.

26 On magical knots in general, see Harari, *Jewish Magic*, 363, 216–217, n. 22. On harmful magic, see Yuval Harari, "'If You Wish to Kill a Person': Harmful Magic and Protection from it in Early Jewish Magic" [in Hebrew], *Jewish Studies* 37 (1997): 111–142; a list of different recipes and amulets mentioning knots is given on p. 133, n. 137.

27 On this name, see Schrire, *Hebrew Magic Amulets*, 97.

Hebrew term alone, *meshiḥah shel meshi*, was too indeterminate, and so added the Italian under which the necessary thread could be purchased.

The last prescription for making the amulet is to use leather of suitable quality made from the hide of a gazelle,[28] which Zacuto assisted Rovigo to obtain, and which appears to have been hard to come by. Another letter records that when Rovigo visited Zacuto in Venice, Zacuto had shown him a piece of parchment that was suitable for the production of an amulet. After Rovigo had returned home, Zacuto discovered an even better piece and sent it to Rovigo attached to the letter:

> I went by the shortest way to do your bidding and to fulfill your request for some gazelle parchment that is enclosed with this (letter) because it is far better than what I have shown you during your stay here.[29]

This means that as well as information, Zacuto also conveyed the ingredients themselves with his letters. The possibility of conveying materials with letters greatly enhanced Zacuto's effectiveness in disseminating his version of Lurianic Kabbalah, as he enabled his correspondents to put the theoretical knowledge into practice. In addition, this letter intimates that the two men had communicated verbally during Rovigo's stay in Venice. A number of additional letters show that Zacuto invited Rovigo several times in the 1670s to come and study with him. It appears that the references to previous bits of magical knowledge were conveyed during these occasions, leaving no immediate traces in the correspondence.[30] By supplying additional information and materials, Zacuto's letters complimented earlier in-person meetings.

This recipe is also significant as it sheds light on how Zacuto transmitted the magical knowledge he collected in his notebooks to his students and which alterations he made in the practical execution. The recipe bears a marked resemblance to a section inside *Sefer ha-Sodot*, titled *Sefer ha-Qemeʿot* (The Book of Amulets). *Sefer ha-Sodot* is a collection of magical recipes that Zacuto began collecting from various sources while he lived in Poland as a young man.[31] A side-by-side comparison highlights the shared features of the two texts:

---

28 On the materials used for amulets, see Harari, *Jewish Magic*, 226–228, and especially the references on p. 226, n. 54 to passages in the Talmud.

29 ועתה הנה באתי בדרך קצרה לעשות רצונך ולמלאות שאלתך במעט קלף צבי הכמוס בזה כי הוא ביותר טוב שיש לי באותה חתיכה שהראתיך בהיותך הנה. MS London, British Library, Or. 9165, fol. 26a.

30 This matter will be discussed more broadly in my upcoming study of Zacuto's correspondence.

31 See MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1448 (IMHM F 48570). For a discussion of *Sefer ha-Sodot*, see Safrai and Baumgarten, "Moses Zacuto."

Sefer ha-Qeme'ot:

And afterward, write the entire amulet and at its end seal it with the Seal of Mars (*ḥotem madim*) and write after it [divine names] I will succeed, Amen, Amen, Selah: And put *tagin* onto the letters of the name and all that need such as [divine names] and bind it and **sign onto it from outside a seal like this before you [magic square] ‹And know that from each corner this seal ascends to (the numerical value of) YH (= fifteen)›.** [32] And write the letters in the order of the *alphabeta*, meaning that *alef* is at the beginning like this: ʾB GD HV ZḤ Ṭ, for even as **they increase** (in numerical value) it is necessary to write them in the aforementioned sequence. **And on the other side, write the Seal of Solomon, which is done in one stroke, like this: [Seal of Solomon]. Fasten the amulet with tendons and bind one knot in the name of ʾNQTM** and the second (knot) in the name of PSTM and the third (knot) in the name PSPSYM and the fourth (knot) in the name of DYVNSYS and **all four (knots) in the name of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, David, and Solomon. Cover the amulet with unprocessed wax and insert it into a pouch of leather and hang it from your [neck]. In the name of the Lord say "the Lord of hosts is with us" (Ps 48:8), "O Lord of hosts, happy (is the man that trusts in you)" (Ps 84:13), and "Lord, give victory" (Ps 20:10). (Speak) each verse three times** and if you do so, you will succeed with the help of God. [33]

Zacuto's letter:

Once you have completed your work, and you have copied it correctly, **on one side outside the seal is written** that runs from one to nine and **ascends to the name YH (= fifteen), from each side and each corner [magic square]. On the second side this is written: [Seal of Solomon]. It is called the Seal of Solomon and it is drawn in a single stroke** and not two. **Then tie it with** kosher **tendons and bind four knots** and at each knot, you focus (your thoughts) on one of the (four) names of the twenty-two (letters) ʾNQT, etc. After that speak at all four knots: "In the name of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, David, **and Solomon." Then cover the piece with unprocessed wax and thereafter with a soft leather cover** and sew it with a silken thread, called *corde-la*, **to hang around the neck and when hanging it up say the three verses "the Lord of hosts is with us" (Ps 48:8), "O Lord of hosts, happy (is the man that trusts in you)" (Ps 84:13), and "Lord, give victory" (Ps 20:10)** and "may the favor" (Ps 90:17) "and the Lord's delight prosper through you" (cf. Isa 53:10) and in addition (write): "I will give you counsel (and God will be with you)" (Exod 18:19). Carry out the *Kawwanat Nefesh*, which I have transmitted to you for your Son, God keep him.

---

32 This explanation is found in a marginal note in Zacuto's own hand.

33 ואחר תכתוב הקמיע כלו ובסופו תחתום בחותם מאדים ותכתוב אחריו פופיאל שנתיאל שריאל אפליאל סוסיאל עזריאל אל שדי צבאות אצליח אאׄס: ותשים תגין על אותיות השם וכל הצריכין כגון ותכרוך אותו ותחתום עליה מבחוץ חותם כמו זה שלפניך ‹ריבוע קסם› ותכתוב האותיות על סדר האלפא ביתא ר״ל האל׳׳ף בתחילה כמו זה אב גד הו זח ט כי אע״פי שהם מדולגים צריך לכתבם כסדר האמור ומן הצד השני תעשה חותם שלמה הנעשה בבת אחת כזו ‹חותם שלמה› ותקשור הקמיע בגידין ותקשור קשר אחד בשם אנקתם והקשר השני בשם פסתם והשלישי בשם פספסים

As this comparison shows, the two texts hold the same textual, graphical, and perfor-
mative elements in the same order. It is, therefore, safe to say that Zacuto used *Sefer ha-
Qemeʿot* as his source when he wrote his recipe for Abraham Rovigo. The original from
which Zacuto copied *Sefer ha-Qemeʿot* into *Sefer ha-Sodot* is unclear, but he clearly held
the work in high esteem. According to a marginal note at the beginning of the manuscript
that he copied along with the main material from his source, this text was connected to
Isaac Luria. The note reads "in *Sefer ha-Qemeʿot* which the ARI (Isaac Luria) gave to me."[34]
We have no reason to doubt that Zacuto accepted this claim of Isaac Luria's authorship,
as the note also provides a reasonable explanation of why Zacuto chose to convey this
recipe to Rovigo.

Yosef Avivi has demonstrated that Zacuto wielded his influence in order to spread the
tradition of Lurianic Kabbalah according to the tradition transmitted by Ḥayyim Vital.
In Zacuto's view, the texts by other students of Isaac Luria were impure and should not
be consulted. Conversely, in his letters to his disciples he praised Ḥayyim Vital's works
as "sifted flour" (*solet neqiyyah*) and exhorted them to only study Kabbalah from those
texts that he had judged as meeting this criterion.[35] The endorsement as *solet neqiyyah*
extended to magical traditions that Zacuto believed were the product of Luria. In reality,
Luria was highly critical of magic and the use of divine names in amulets. The revered
kabbalist drew attention to a possibly erroneous tradition, painting a bleak picture of the
transmission of names: he asserted that "all the names and amulets you can find written
in books today are erroneous." In order to prohibit any interpretation of his assessment,
Luria went on to say that in his view even the names and amulets written by experts con-
tained many errors and for this reason he prohibited any magical use of names.[36] Zacuto
took the marginal note that he had copied into MS Moscow, Guenzburg 1448 at face val-

---

והרביעי בשם דיונסֹיס וכלם בשם אברהם יצחק ויעקב משה אהרן דוד שלמה ותכסה הקמיע בשעוה בתולה ותכניסנה
בכיס של עור ותלהו על הנצרך בשם יהֹוה ותאמר ה׳ צבאות עמנו ה׳ צבאות אשרי ה׳ושיעה כל פסוק ג״פ ואם ככה תעשה
תצליח בעזרת האל MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1448, fol. 8b. I thank my colleagues
Eliezer Baumgarten and Uri Safrai for allowing me to use this passage from their upcoming edition
of *Sefer ha-Sodot*. Emphasis by me.

34 בספר הקמיעות שנתן לי האר״י. MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1448, fol. 1a.

35 See Yosef Avivi, "'Solet Nekiyya'—Rabbi Moses Zacuto's Sifter" [in Hebrew], *Peʿamim* 96 (2003):
71–106. Many of Zacuto's letters also include offers to have the texts he approved of copied against
a fee by the students in his yeshivah and report on the progress of copying his works by a scribe. To
give only one example: תמיד עסק הסופר מהמעתיק את ס׳ נגיד מצוה לך לשמך ישלים העתקתו יתחיל ס׳ אחר אשר
לא יהיה לך שמה (The scribe has constantly worked on copying *Sefer Nagid u-Metsawweh* for you and
after he will be paid, he will begin another book that you do not have there). MS London, British
Library, Or. 9165, fol. 6a. This letter is printed in Zacuto, *Iggerot ha-ReMeZ*, 5a–5b.

36 דע כי כל השמות והקמיעין הנמצאים עתה כתובים בספרים הם מוטעים ואפילו השמות והקמיעין שנתנסו והומחו ע״י
מומחה יש בהם טעיות רבות ולכן אסור להשתמש בהם אמנם אם היינו יודעים השמות על מתכונתם ואמיתותם היינו
רשאים גם אנחנו להשתמש בהם. Ḥayyim Vital, *Shaʿar Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh* (Jerusalem: Mekhon Noʾmi,
1988), 41v. On Luria's attitude toward practical Kabbalah, see Gerrit Bos, "Ḥayyim Vital's 'Practical
Kabbalah and Alchemy': A 17th Century Book of Secrets," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 4
(1994): 55–112.

ue—he believed that *Sefer ha-Qeme'ot* was the product of Luria and thus constituted an authentic and permitted instruction to produce an amulet.

Sefer ha-Qeme'ot promises to guide its readers through the process of preparing an amulet. The foundation of every amulet is to acquire kosher gazelle parchment. Just like the instructions in Zacuto's letter, *Sefer ha-Qeme'ot* implies that the recipes are to be combined with adjurations that determine the specific purpose of the finished amulet. Zacuto got the idea of conveying a template suitable for the preparation of any kind of amulet from *Sefer ha-Qeme'ot*.[37]

However, the comparison of *Sefer ha-Qeme'ot* with Zacuto's letter also displays some substantial differences between the two recipes. First, it appears that recipe in *Sefer ha-Qeme'ot* includes a third graphical element, the Seal of Mars (*ḥotem madim*), at the very beginning. The manuscript does not illustrate the layout of this seal—it is possible that Zacuto left it out of his recipe because he did not know what the Seal of Mars was supposed to look like. Zacuto emphasizes in his letter to Rovigo that the Seal of Solomon is to be drawn in one stroke by adding the prohibition "and not two" to his recipe. Another notable difference is that *Sefer ha-Qeme'ot* cites all four divine names constituting the twenty-two-letter name that are to be spoken at each of the four knots. Zacuto, on the other hand, cites only the first name and reminds his disciple that these names together make up the twenty-two letter name, relying on the existing magical knowledge of Rovigo. In Zacuto's recipe, the act of adjuration that is to be performed at each of the knots by saying the divine names is emphasized by the verb "focus (your thoughts)" (*tekawwen*), meaning that the amulet maker should direct his mental strength on the intended effect of the holy name. The last distinction between the two recipes is that Zacuto adds in his version to the sequence of citations from Psalms three additional biblical verses.

The list of differences is even longer when we consider the introduction of *Sefer ha-Qeme'ot*. Before writing the amulet, certain prayers are to be spoken and with every new line another prayer is said. In his letter to Rovigo, Zacuto leaves out these performative acts, reminding his disciple instead that the writing was to be performed "in holiness, ritual immersion, and fasting"—the same prescriptions he mentioned in the first letter discussed in this article. Amulet making was not supposed to be a mundane task; the artisan was to prepare himself spiritually and physically for his task. These preparations required knowledge of the rituals involved, time to undergo immersion and fasting, and discipline to implement them; when Zacuto explains in his letter to Rovigo that he did not have the time to prepare the amulet himself, he was probably thinking of the effort required to undergo the ritual immersion and fasting. *Sefer ha-Qeme'ot* also stresses that the prayers should be directed to the angel appointed to the time of writing in order for the amulet to become efficacious. To this end, the work comes equipped with a comprehensive list of angelic names and their seals, sorted by days and hours, to aid amulet makers in finding the correct angelic name. Control of angels to manipulate reality has been a component of

---

37   See MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1448, fols. 8a–b.

Jewish magic since late antiquity and was a common element in Jewish amulets.[38] These supplementary materials, necessary to adjust the amulet to the individual circumstances, make up the largest part of *Sefer ha-Qemeʻot*.

In his letter to Rovigo, Zacuto makes no mention that the help of angels had to be secured to produce an amulet, even though this omission is—from a magical perspective—the most momentous of his changes. There is no reason to think that Zacuto did not believe in angels. In the margins of his manuscript, he added the names of numerous additional angels and emended names that in his view were misspelled.[39] One possible explanation for the omission can be found in the first letter that was discussed in this article in which Zacuto chides Samigah for misspelling several holy names in an amulet he had made. In order for the names of angels to function properly, Rovigo would have to find the correct ones for the time of writing and then copy them free of error. Perhaps Zacuto feared that the chance of committing errors in this area was too great, and thus removed the angelic names. The verses from Psalms that Zacuto added to the recipe in his letter could have been intended as a substitute for the holy names—the possibility of misspelling was smaller by far as these were well-known verses. Either way, this change indicates a self-assured attitude toward practical Kabbalah. Zacuto must have felt that he had sufficient expertise in amulet making that he could make changes to the recipe without diminishing its efficacy.

3   Conclusion

The letters of Moses Zacuto reveal him as more than a mere supplier of kabbalistic and magical texts. He was knowledgeable in the milieu of seventeenth-century Italian producers of amulets. His letter to Abraham Rovigo regarding the amulets of Samigah shows that Zacuto tried to stay well informed of the work done by other makers of amulets, enabling him to recognize them by their work. Another observation that can be derived from this missive is that there were apparently not many amulet artisans; indeed, it seems that at the time of penning this letter Zacuto could not direct Rovigo to a single active amulet maker in his surroundings. Curiously, Zacuto does not offer his own services to fix the amulets, even though the second letter that has been discussed shows that he was himself an active amulet maker.

---

38 One of the oldest texts that discuss how humans can gain control over angels is *Sefer ha-Razim*, which divides the names of 700 angels into seven "heavens." The most recent scholarly edition is Bill Rebiger, Peter Schäfer, Evelyn Burkhardt, Gottfried Reeg, and Henrik Wels, eds., *Sefer ha-Razim I und II: Das Buch der Geheimnisse I und II*, Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 125, 132 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009). Parts of *Sefer ha-Razim* were incorporated into other traditions, forming *Sefer Raziʼel*, which was known to Jews in the early modern period through manuscripts and a printed edition that was published in 1701 in Amsterdam; see Bill Rebiger, "Zur Redaktionsgeschichte des *Sefer Raziʼel ha-Malʼakh*," *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 32 (2005): 1–22. Angels were also discussed in kabbalistic texts like the Zohar, *Berit ha-Menuḥah*, and *Pardes Rimmonim*, where they may even have a corrupting influence on humanity.

39 See MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1448, fols. 8b–11a.

The close connection between the second letter to Rovigo and *Sefer ha-Qeme'ot*, moreover, points to the professional attitude that Zacuto brought to his work with amulets. As Yuval Harari has argued in his study *Jewish Magic before the Rise of Kabbalah*, amulet makers "definitely based the text of the adjuration on the professional literature available to them." Zacuto fits this mold, as he indeed used the most authoritative source for his amulets, in his case a book attributed to Isaac Luria. Harari also found that the use of magical recipes did not curb the creativity of magical practitioners. A similar assessment can be made with regard to the way Zacuto conveyed the recipe to his disciple—while Zacuto was keen to transmit the core of the instructions faithfully, he took care to add insightful explanations not found in the written sources that would enable Rovigo to successfully produce his amulet, and he supplied additional biblical verses to enhance the recipe's efficacy. [40]

Zacuto's correspondence adds to our understanding of Jewish magic in the early modern period as it sheds light on forms of magical knowledge that are not reflected in his more theoretical works, such as *Sefer ha-Sodot*. These letters offer another window into Jewish magic, uncovering the creative adaption of recipes for practical use. Zacuto's missives show that he was aware of the previous knowledge Rovigo had of amulets and holy names, probably based on the instructions he himself had given his disciple during the latter's years of study at his yeshivah. He thus decided to abbreviate his instructions, as seen in the case of the twenty-two-letter name, or replace materials, as seen with the additional verses from Psalms, which perhaps stand in for the angelic names. Equally particular to his letters are the assessments he made of amulets by other practitioners and of the amulet makers known to him. Such observations are not the subject of Zacuto's theoretical works, which focus on the correct forms of holy names.

Finally, both Zacuto and Rovigo were able to send amulets, templates for amulets, or even essential ingredients for amulet production with their letters, thereby extending the agency of their magical work. Zacuto could examine the amulets that Rovigo had sent him and give his expert opinion. Rovigo could use the same amulet template that Zacuto worked from to produce his own amulet. By sending material artifacts themselves, Zacuto and Rovigo overcame the constraints of availability of materials like leather and the singularity of Zacuto's original templates. The conveying of ingredients with letters extended Zacuto's ability to disseminate his knowledge to an additional level of agency, that of providing hands-on support to his disciples.

---

40 See Harari, *Jewish Magic*, 213–216, for examples that illustrate the differences between recipes and amulets; the citation is from p. 213. The transformation of spells when applied to Aramaic bowls is the subject of Shaul Shaked, "Transmission and Transformation of Spells: The Case of the Jewish Babylonian Aramaic Bowls," in *Continuity and Innovation in the Magical Tradition*, ed. Gideon Bohak, Yuval Harari, and Shaul Shaked (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 187–218.

Magic in Lurianic Contexts:
Aspects of Affinity and Diffusion

Gerold Necker

The relationship between magic and Lurianic Kabbalah is inevitably connected to the critical attitude of Isaac Luria (1534–1572), the charismatic founding figure of the major mystical trend of the early modern period.[1] Consequently, the approach to magic adopted by his main disciple, Ḥayyim Vital (1542–1620), who claimed dominance in and control over the interpretation of Luria's teachings, has also been questioned.[2] Curiously, the former's objections to the use of magic formulas—stressing, for example, the possibility of the holy names being transmitted incorrectly—and the contumacious practices of the latter, who assembled (and tested) magical recipes in his *Book of Remedies, Charms, and*

---

1   See the quotation and interpretation of the main statements found in Ḥayyim Vital's *Shaʿar Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh* (Gate of the Holy Spirit) in Eli Yassif, *Safed Legends: Life and Fantasy in the City of Kabbala* [in Hebrew] (Haifa: University of Haifa, 2011), 162–163. For more detailed information, see Yuval Harari, "'Practical Kabbalah' and the Jewish Tradition of Magic," *Aries* 19 (2019): 38–82, esp. 54–56. A collection of Luria's reservations concerning magic or "practical Kabbalah" is found in Ḥayyim Vital, *Even ha-Shoham* (Onyx Stone) (Jerusalem: Machon Daʿat Yosef, 1988–1989), 6:125–130 (starting with no. 22, "Thus it is forbidden to use practical Kabbalah"). Some examples of this are the idea that some angels are connected to evil and so the adjurer would be defiled by the demonic *Sitra Aḥra* (lit. "other side"), or that Rabbi Yishmaʿel and Rabbi Aqiva, the heroes of (late antique) *merkavah* mysticism, could still use the ashes of the red heifer sacrifice for ritual purification, which is why they particularly practiced the "opening of the heart"; on the use of this magical practice for Torah study, see Yuval Harari, "Opening the Heart: Magical Practices for Knowledge, Understanding and Good Memory in Judaism of Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages" [in Hebrew], in *Shefa Tal: Studies in Jewish Thought and Culture*, ed. Zeev Gries, Howard Kreisel, and Boaz Huss (Beʾer-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2004): 303–347, esp. 319–325; and see below. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer of this paper for his/her helpful comments.

2   On Vital's role in the interpretation of Lurianic Kabbalah, see Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 3rd ed. (New York: Schocken, 1965), 254–257; Gershom Scholem, "The Bond of Fellowship of the Students of R. Isaac Luria" [in Hebrew], in *Lurianic Kabbalah: Collected Studies by Gershom Scholem*, ed. by Daniel Abrams (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2008), 262–294; on the link to magic, see in particular Joseph H. Chajes, "Rabbi Moses Zacuto as Exorcist—Kabbalah, Magic and Medicine in the Early Modern Period" [in Hebrew], *Peʿamim* 96 (2003), 129–130; see also n. 11 below. Consistency between Luria's and Vital's teachings can be found in the latter's *Shaʿarei Qedushah*: Vital refers to the danger of using "practical Kabbalah" in the context of the story of Joseph della Reyna, whose sad end is compared to that of Shlomo Molkho, while in *Sefer ha-Gilgulim*, he reports Luria's warning that della Reyna's failure to overpower the evil forces through incantations resulted in his punishment of being reincarnated as a black dog (see Joseph Dan, *The Hebrew Story in the Middle Ages* [in Hebrew] [Jerusalem: Keter, 1974], who quotes the sources on pp. 222–223).

Amulets, a book on "practical Kabbalah,"[3] create the impression of a fundamental contradiction.[4] To a certain extent, these opposing stances depend on the taxonomy of the magical field, on emic and etic perspectives, and on the social history of what became known as Jewish esoteric knowledge in general, Kabbalah, and the Jewish tradition of magic in particular, which, in interrelated terms, is known as "practical Kabbalah" (*qabbalah maʿaśit*).[5] Similarly to some other key topics in Lurianic lore, however, the conceptual framework regarding magic is not as revolutionary as Luria's allegedly radical view might imply.[6] Many of his teachings, such as meditations and corresponding forms of piety, may be—and in fact did become—associated with "practical Kabbalah." They not only radiated into exclusive study groups, but in a way also influenced the way of life within Jewish communities, especially through the genre of "conduct literature."[7] Magical views did not per se counter Lurianic spirituality, yet their notorious permeability to foreign elements, whether pagan, Christian, or Islamic, appears to be incompatible with

---

3   Only an incomplete autograph by Vital has survived: *Sefer ha-Refu'ot, ha-Segullot, we-ha-Qemeʿot*, private collection, MS Jerusalem, Ben Zvi Institute, 2675 (IMHM F 42440), arranged and supplemented (with incantations in Ladino) by his son Samuel Vital. The title *Sefer ha-Peʿulot* (The Book of Practices) was added to the printed version (Modi'in Illit, 2010; 2nd ed., 2014); see Harari, "Practical Kabbalah," 56; Yuval Harari, "Functional Paratexts and the Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Jewish Manuscripts of Magic," in *The Visualization of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Marcia Kupfer, Adam S. Cohen, and J. H. Chajes (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), 196–198. Gerrit Bos refers to the same book under the title *Sefer Kabbalah Maʿaśit* (Book on Practical Kabbalah), and includes additional bibliography; see Gerrit Bos, "Hayyim Vital's 'Practical Kabbalah and Alchemy': A 17th Century Book of Secrets," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 4 (1994): 55–112.

4   See Harari, "Practical Kabbalah," 56.

5   See Harari, "Practical Kabbalah," 55–56; J.H. Chajes, "Kabbalah Practices/Practical Kabbalah," *Aries* 19 (2019): 112–145, esp. 117–118.

6   See the remarks and bibliography in Moshe Idel, "Conceptualizations of *Tzimtzum* in Baroque Italian Kabbalah," in *The Value of the Particular: Lessons from Judaism and the Modern Jewish Experience; Festschrift for Steven T. Katz on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Michael Zank and Ingrid Anderson (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 29–30.

7   See Jonathan Garb, *A History of Kabbalah: From the Early Modern Period to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 78–79, which also refers to Zeev Gries, *Conduct Literature (Regimen Vitae)—Its History and Place in the Life of Beshtian Hasidim* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1990), 41–102. See also also Moshe Hallamish, *Kabbalah in Liturgy, Halakhah and Customs* [in Hebrew] (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan Press, 2000), 332–355; Moshe Hallamish, *Kabbalistic Ritual: The Integration of Theory and Practice* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Idra, 2016), 201–202, and, in connection to halakhah, pp. 264–282. On the technical use of prayer intentions (*kawwanot*) see Pinchas Giller, *Shalom Shar'abi and the Kabbalists of Bet El* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 19–53; and Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 220–250, 259–299, including the practice of so-called *yiḥudim* (unifications) which are performed by combining letters and vocalizations of holy names and their spellings (*milluyim*, lit. "fillings"), in order to concentrate on specific divine configurations (*partsufim*, lit. "countenances") and their "couplings" (*ziwwugim*). See the detailed study on Vital's *Shaʿar Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh* (Gate of the Holy Spirit) in the context of *Sefer ha-Peʿulot* by Assaf Tamari, "Medicalizing Magic and Ethics: Rereading Lurianic Practice," *JQR* 112 (2022): 434–467.

the particular focus on improving the world by raising divine sparks caught among the so-called husks of impurity, meaning both transgressions and vicious threats from the Gentile world. Against this background, Gershom Scholem maintained that "Lurianism was far removed from this aspect of kabbalah, which nevertheless loomed large in the consciousness of the age."[8] Despite this observed distance, modern research in this field has begun to consider the fact that Ḥayyim Vital and other players were not immune to diverse interests in the "occult sciences" of the time, such as magic, alchemy, astrology, or chiromancy.[9]

However, less attention has been given to the question of how Lurianic texts and magical traditions could convene and merge precisely at the time of their distribution in the seventeenth century. Yuval Harari has demonstrated that a prime example related to both magic and Lurianic Kabbalah can be found in Moses Zacuto's (ca. 1610–1694) *Sefer ha-Sodot*, a collection of recipes and *segullot* infused with theoretical explanations.[10] While this model may be characterized by Zacuto's synergetic approach to theoretical Kabbalah and practical Kabbalah, the issue of blending Kabbalah and magic in general appears to be a broader phenomenon. It should be taken into account that certain ritual forms of kabbalistic practices are related to magic and vice versa.[11] In the context of this article, however, the focus will be primarily on textual adaptions and transmutations that convey magic, including *termini technici* and formula (other than Lurianic prayer intentions and unifications of holy names). On the basis of Yuval Harari's work, additional indications must be discussed in order to reconstruct the material background of the obscure relationship between Lurianic Kabbalah and magic. Therefore, the following topics, which are taken from manuscripts related to a greater or lesser extent to the school of Zacuto, who is otherwise known for his conservative view regarding Lurianic traditions,[12]

---

8 Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi the Mystical Messiah (1626–1676)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 75.

9 See Eli Yassif, *Safed Legends*, 15–16; Bos, "Hayyim Vital's Practical Kabbalah," 55–60; Tamari, "Medicalizing Magic," 438, n. 16.

10 See Yuval Harari, Eliezer Baumgarten, and Uri Safrai, eds., *Sefer ha-Sodot* (forthcoming); Yuval Harari, Eliezer Baumgarten, Uri Safrai, "Zacuto's *Alpha-Beta shel ha-Shemot*: Lexicality and the Kabbalah of Holy Names" [in Hebrew], *Da'at* 90 (2020): 397–425.

11 For this reason, Samuel Abba Horodezky talked about Lurianic Kabbalah with the phrase "practical kabbalah"; Samuel Abba Horodezky, "Luria, Isaak ben Salomo," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 10 (Berlin: Eschkol-Verlag, 1934), col. 1202. This was strongly opposed by Gershom Scholem, who, on the other hand, was concerned to distinguish Abraham Abulafia's Kabbalah of holy names from the "Kabbalistic parlance 'Practical Kabbalism'" (*Jewish Mysticism*, 145), to the extent that he defined Abulafia's approach as a "magic of inwardness," but did concede that later generations regarded his method of combination (*ḥokhmat ha-tseruf*) as the "key not only to the mysteries of Divinity but also to the exercise of magical powers" (p. 145). As for Isaac Luria, Fine (*Physician of the Soul*, 115) adds that he apparently knew kabbalistic writings like *Sefer ha-Meshiv*, approving as he did the possibility of automatic speech, or venerating revelations from Elijah or the angels, his rejection of the "more magical techniques" in that work notwithstanding; see also Moshe Idel, "Inquiries into the Doctrine of *Sefer ha-Meshiv*" [in Hebrew], *Sefunot* 17 (1982): 240–243.

12 Compare Scholem (*Sabbatai Sevi*, 80, n. 119) on Zacuto's critical remarks when acting as a proof-reader; Scholem also notes his opposition to liturgical innovations; see Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah*

will illustrate this issue, so as to substantiate the working assumption that the success of Lurianic Kabbalah had a catalytic effect on the diffusion of magical texts. Yet a detailed discussion of some prominent printed texts, which intermingle Lurianic Kabbalah with magic traditions, is beyond the scope of this article; examples would be Naftali Bacharach's *'Emeq ha-Melekh*, which was strongly influenced by the Lurianic school of Israel Saruq, but also refers to techniques of how to create a golem or to divination practices; and also the works of Shimshon ben Pesaḥ of Ostropol, who incorporated topics of eastern European demonology into his idiosyncratic version of Lurianic Kabbalah.[13]

The discussion of another feature which pertains to the kabbalistic worldview, namely the explanation of miracles and how to achieve a state to make them happen, would also go beyond the scope of the present article; this would require a broader understanding of the term "magic," as proposed by Moshe Idel in his fundamental analysis of the interrelationship between mysticism and magic in Hasidism.[14] For that reason the related question

---

(Jerusalem: Keter, 1980), 449. Zacuto kept faith with Vital's version of Lurianic Kabbalah by basing his redaction of Lurianic manuscripts on the authority of Jacob Tsemaḥ's works; see Yosef Avivi, *Kabbala Luriana* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Machon Ben-Zvi, 2008), 2:551–555; see also Tsvi Luboshits, "R. Moses Zacuto's Zohar Commentary: Ideology and Hermeneutic Aspects" [in Hebrew], *Pe'amim* 157 (2019), 75–76; and J. H. Chajes, "Rabbi Moses Zacuto as Exorcist—Kabbalah, Magic and Medicine in the Early Modern Period" [in Hebrew], *Pe'amim* 96 (2003), 129–130, which also considers Zacuto's approach to magical texts; Zacuto was not eager to canalize magical practices in the context of exorcism; see also J. H. Chajes, *Between Worlds, Dybbuks, Exorcists, and Early Modern Judaism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 87–90.

13 See Moshe Idel, *Golem: Jewish Magical and Mystical Traditions on the Artificial Anthropoid* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 153–154 (which also refers to Joseph Delmedigo's *Novlot Ḥokhmah*); for divination practices, see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 188. See also Yehuda Liebes, "Mysticism and Reality: Towards a Portrait of the Martyr and Kabbalist R. Samson Ostropoler," in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Isadore Twersky and Bernard Septimus (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 221–255.

14 See Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995). A good example is Idel's statement that Cordovero compared "magical activity [...] to the rituals performed by the priests and Levites in the service of the temple" (p. 68); his quotation (p. 420, app. 4, ch. 2, no. 13 [in Hebrew]) from *Pardes Rimmonim* refers to the connection between colors or shades of color and the Sefirot, in this case Ḥesed and white (clothes). This is well known (and used) by those who prepare amulets, according to Cordovero (though he does not call this connectivity "magic"). The evidence of this magical practice echoing in such an important kabbalistic work (*Pardes Rimmonim* soon became the standard refence work) can be understood as pointing to the interaction between theoretical and practical Kabbalah. It is obvious that this relation was also possible in respect of Lurianic sources. Research on manuscripts which link theoretical Kabbalah to magic is still in progress. As for Hebrew magical treatises contemporary to the Besht, however, Cordoverian influences are suspiciously absent, according to Moshe Idel, and "only in some few cases are Lurianic Kabbalistic themes addressed"; Moshe Idel, *Vocal Rites and Broken Theologies: Cleaving to Vocables in R. Israel Ba'al Shem Tov's Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 2020), 129. At any rate, the role of Lurianic Kabbalah in Hasidism should be reconsidered. In his review, Arthur Green does not agree with Idel's view that Cordoverian but not Lurianic sources were the main focus of Hasidism; he points out that Lurianic writings have been used in Hasidism similar to the reception of the Cordoverian corpus, that is in harmony with Hasidic views and experiences, and therefore eclectically or in a condensed manner; Abraham Isaac [Arthur] Green, "Idel on Hasidism, Ecstasy,

concerning the role of so-called *Ba'alei Shem* (wonder-workers, lit. "masters of the [divine] name")—the title implies "magical activity"—will not be addressed here, although their activities became more prevalent during the seventeenth century, and also involved those who apparently approached Lurianic Kabbalah.[15]

Certain motifs, such as "the shortening of the way" (*qefitsat ha-derekh*), exorcism of spirits, physiognomy, and magic events in transmigration stories, have been discussed by Gedalyah Nigal in relation to Safed spirituality, to wit the circles of Isaac Luria and Ḥayyim Vital.[16] In so doing, Nigal relied on the narrative tradition which led to Hasidic storytelling, including in particular *Shivḥei ha-Besht* (In Praise of the Ba'al Shem Tov).[17] Concerning the Lurianic sources and features (like *yiḥudim*), Nigal refers in his notes to Vital's *Sha'ar ha-Gilgulim* (Gate of Transmigrations [of the Souls]) in the context of metempsychosis and his *Sha'ar Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh* in regard to physiognomy and metoposcopy.[18] In addition, the compilation *Sefer ha-Kawwanot u-Ma'aśeh Nissim* (Book of Intentions and Tales of Miracles; Constantinople, 1720) indicates the practice of exorcism and tells stories about bilocation (*qefitsat ha-derekh*), but only examples from the first part, which includes a version of the *Shivḥei ha-ARI* (In Praise of Isaac Luria), are quoted.[19] While it is evident, as Nigal showed, that magic motifs from Safed had an impact on early Hasidism and fostered a creative way of elaborating them further in various genres of the Hasidic literature, the connection to the theoretical treatises of Lurianic Kabbalah and their dissemination is less clear. A trace can be found in the information that the numerical calculations of holy names have been used by Hasidic masters for healing procedures and other

---

and Magic" [in Hebrew], *Jewish Studies* 36 (1996): 279–281. For astral magic, see Dov Schwartz, *Studies of Astral Magic in Medieval Jewish Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

15 See Gedalyah Nigal, *Magic, Mysticism, and Hasidism: The Supernatural in Jewish Thought* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Asonson, 1994), 11.

16 Nigal refers to "transmigration and evil spirit (dybbuk)" (Nigal, *Magic*, 11), and also to physiognomy (pp. 19, 85, nn. 106, 133) as a contribution from Isaac Luria and Ḥayyim Vital to the motifs of "the Ashkenazic and Sephardic story."

17 For this collection, see Nigal's bibliography (Nigal, *Magic*, 215, n. 1), and Jonatan Meir, "Jewish Hagiography in Context: Sefer Shivhei haBesht and the Formation of the Hasidic Movement," in *The Way of the Book*, ed. Avriel Bar-Levav, Oded Yisraeli, Avraham (Rami) Reiner, and Jonatan Meir (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2021), 363–388; and see the edition by Karl Erich Groezinger, *Die Geschichten vom Ba'al Schem Tov, Schivche ha-Bescht*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997).

18 In addition to *Sha'ar ha-Gilgulim*, his *Sefer ha-Ḥezyonot* (Book of Visions) and Naftali Bacharach's *'Emeq ha-Melekh* (King's Valley) are also mentioned; Nigal, *Magic*, 241, nn. 39, 42. For the reading of either "the sin" or letters of the Tetragrammaton on the forehead, see p. 227, n. 106 and p. 254, n. 133. Nigal also lists Elazar ben Azikri's *Sefer Ḥaredim* (Book of the Pious; Venice, 1601); and see p. 118 on the innovative use of *yiḥudim*. For explanations of this practice, see Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 290–299; Lawrence Fine, "The Contemplative Practice of *Yihudim* in Lurianic Kabbalah," in *Jewish Spirituality*, ed. Arthur Green, vol. 2 (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 64–78; for metoposcopy, see Lawrence Fine, "The Art of Metoposcopy: A Study in Isaac Luria's Charismatic Knowledge," *AJSR* 11 (1986): 79–101.

19 Nigal, *Magic*, 235, nn. 31–36; with the parallels in *Sefer Toldot ha-ARI*. For *Shivḥei ha-ARI*, see below, n. 129. *Sefer ha-Kawwanot u-Ma'aśeh Nissim* includes the text of *Sefer ha-Kawwanot* (Venice, 1620), fols. 22b–56b.

issues.[20] When looking at the details, it becomes obvious that this refers to the *gematriot* known from Lurianic ontology, as highlighted by Lurianic kabbalists like Moses Zacuto, who used them for both theoretical and practical kabbalistic contexts.[21]

Techniques for the achievement of mystical experience appear in Lurianic texts that belong to different literary genres, such as Vital's ethical treatise *Sha'arei Qedushah* (Gates of Holiness) or his mystical diary *Sefer ha-Ḥezyonot*, but also in some parts of his comprehensive elaboration of Lurianic teachings, *Shemonah She'arim* (Eight Gates).[22] By contrast, actual magic practices, such as recipes, *segullot*, or amulets, are typically not provided for describing the Lurianic myth. Nevertheless, a depiction of Lurianic Kabbalah would be incomplete without considering the *Sitz im Leben* of all relevant practical techniques and their conceptualization. In order to get a more complete picture, Assaf Tamari claimed that the "medicalized discourse" in particular was determinative of the Lurianic "perception of action and agency."[23] This is certainly an innovative and far-reaching scholarly perspective, but the question remains: How and in which way was the transmission of Lurianic texts paralleled by and combined with the diffusion of magic traditions?

The following presentation of three case studies concerning manuscripts from the seventeenth century is a first attempt to elucidate the material conditions under which magic formulas, textual units, and large passages found their way into Lurianic manuscripts—that is, the extent to which this occurred, and which issues it centered around. This would include circumstances where these were later additions or where they were incorporated into the main body of a text; for that matter, these texts are devoted primarily to theoretical speculations. The way in which magic material was collected side-by-side with certain extracts from Vital's Lurianic works will be illustrated.

1   Study and Prayer: MS London, British Library, Add. 27082

Since antiquity, the affinity between mysticism, magic, and prayer has been a well-attested phenomenon, in particular in the so-called incantation prayers in Hekhalot literature[24] or kabbalistic prayers from medieval times, most prominently featuring magical versions

---

20 Nigal, *Magic*, 27–28, referring to the Besht's epistle to his brother-in-law, and to Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye's *Toldot Ya'aqov Yosef* (Korets, 1780), fol. 201a: "And his master (sc. the Besht's heavenly teacher) [...] showed him in which worlds he was in now, and there were names of E-h-e-y-e and combinations of E-h-e-y-e-h" (p. 229, n. 138).

21 See Gerold Necker, "The Matrix of Understanding: Moses Zacuto's *Em la-Binah* and Kabbalistic Works of Reference," *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 16 (2021): 117–141.

22 For *Sha'arei Qedushah* in the context of musar-literature, see Patrick Koch, *Human Self-Perfection: A Re-Assessment of Kabbalistic Musar-Literature of Sixteenth-Century Safed* (Los Angeles: Cherub, 2015), 67–77; for *Sefer ha-Ḥezyonot*, see the edition by Morris M. Faierstein (Jerusalem: Machon Ben-Zvi, 2005) and his translation, *Jewish Mystical Autobiographies: Book of Visions and Book of Secrets* (New York: Paulist Press International, 1999). For Vital's collection of Luria's teachings, the *Shemonah She'arim*, see Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 391–392, n. 3.

23 Tamari, "Medicalizing Magic," 436–437.

24 Peter Schäfer, "Jewish Liturgy and Magic," in *Geschichte, Tradition, Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 1:541–555.

of the Shema and the Amidah.[25] Though there are points of similarity between magical texts and mystical prayer approaches such as Lurianic *kawwanot* and *yiḥudim*[26]—Lurianic Kabbalah also influenced the innovative collection of prayers and customs by Nathan Nata Hanover (*Sha'arei Tsiyyon,*, Prague, 1662)—there is often a noticeable difference at the formal level. The magical attitude commonly called witchcraft—and in that regard analogous to Christian magic—includes technical terminology and performative acts, manifesting an impetus to change a given status quo through the power of secret names and ingredients (*materia magica*), which are expected to quickly satisfy a determined need or specific request, in general without the highly ambitious and time-intensive effort to activate the different divine aspects distinctive of Lurianic Kabbalah. Unfortunately, the two spheres, as Assaf Tamari demonstrated in regard to "remedies" and "unifications," are sometimes almost indistinguishable. With regard to the textual tradition, however, there is another salient point. A magic formula rarely comes unaccompanied. As is well known from various genres, a contextual link can be established by taking up an issue only to introduce a somehow related or even completely different tradition en bloc. In a similar way, entire manuscripts can be treated as compositions in which the copied texts are sometimes arranged in a coherent way, whether by thematic association or open as regards subject matter but connected by headings, names, or *Sitz im Leben*. In any case, redactional issues come into play.

---

25 A kabbalistic version of the Eighteen Benedictions is embedded in Hekhalot traditions in MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Michael 9, fols. 117a–136b; see Peter Schäfer, Margarete Schlüter, and Hans G. von Mutius, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981), IX. For a magical perspective on the statutory prayers, see Yuval Harari, *The Sword of Moses: A New Edition and Study* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Akademon, 1997), 92–101; Yuval Harari, *Magic before the Rise of Kabbalah*, trans. by Batya Stein (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017), 229, n. 65 and 266–267. For the transmission of ancient mystical prayers to early kabbalistic interpreters, see Gershom Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 194–196; some kabbalistic versions are assembled in Gershom Scholem, *Kitvei yad be-qabbalah* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1930), no. 2, p. 9 (fols. 29a–32b); see also the manuscripts noted in Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 135. See also Moshe Idel, "The Mystical Intention of the Eighteen Benedictions by R. Isaac Sagi Nahor" [in Hebrew], in *Masu'ot*: *Studies in Kabbalistic Literature and Jewish Philosophy in Memory of Prof. Ephraim Gottlieb* [in Hebrew], ed. Michal Oron and Amos Goldreich (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1994), 25–52; Moshe Idel, *The Gate of Intention: R. Isaac ben Shmuel of Acre and Its Reception* (Los Angeles: Cherub, 2020), 19, 33–34, 132–138; Moshe Idel, "Jewish Magic from the Renaissance Period to Early Modern Hasidism," in *Religion, Science, and Magic in Concert and in Conflict*, ed. Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 82–117.

26 See Agata Paluch, "Copying, Compiling, Commonplacing in Kabbalistic Manuscript Collectanea: *Sefer Ḥeshek* and the Kabbalah of Divine Names in Early Modern Ashkenaz," in *Representing Jewish Thought: Proceedings of the 2015 IJS Conference Held in Honour of Professor Ada Rapoport-Albert*, ed. Agata Paluch (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 109 and the references noted there (nn. 31, 32), and 120 (highlighting *kawwanot*, unifications [*yiḥudim*], and even the Saruqian theory of *malbush* concerning the spread of kabbalistic rituals "based on performances of divine names"); see also Idel, *Hasidism*, 149–154. And see above, n. 7.

With that in mind, a magical adaption in a manuscript which includes the Lurianic treatise *Sikkum Sefer ha-Derushim* (Epitome of the Book of Homilies) by the Moroccan kabbalists Masʿud Azulay Saggi Nehor and Suliman ben Oḥanah may serve as a starting point.[27] According to Yosef Avivi, this treatise is the first survey of Lurianic teachings to be arranged as a sequence of the emanation process, beginning with God's withdrawal, *tsimtsum*.[28] It was transmitted in many manuscripts,[29] annotated by Menaḥem Azaryah da Fano (1548–1620), received a new opening together with the title *Qitsur Sefer ha-Derushim*, and was later ascribed to Jacob Tsemaḥ. This version reached the school of Moses Zacuto and was copied by Samuel David Ottolenghi (see Fig. 1),[30] who added some magical texts he found during a 1681 visit to Mantua in a siddur owned by Zacuto, who was chief rabbi there from 1673—after his first ministry in Venice—until his death in 1697.[31]

The magical material in the manuscript London, British Library, Add. 27082 is introduced by a prayer to be recited "before studying," which opens with: "May it be Thy will, Lord, our God and God of our fathers, immortal, Lord of all heights, on account of you and on account of your great, honorable, and awful name, whose order is as follows [...]."[32] Then, nine vocalized names from the so-called seventy-two names are listed,[33] followed by "open my heart to your Torah, give me wisdom and understanding *and largeness of heart like sand on the seashore* (cf. 1 Kgs 5:9), etc.," requesting that the speaker may acquire the ability to understand and memorize what is being read.[34] Alongside this prayer, another text includes two more sequences of vocalized holy names[35] for meditation in order to "better understand what the master teaches you" and so that the intellectual faculty ("the heart") may become "like a fountainhead, and like a spring that never runs dry,[36]

---

27   Avivi, *Kabbala Luriana*, 1:364–365, 2:743–744.

28   Avivi, *Kabbala Luriana*, 365.

29   See the lists in Avivi, *Kabbala Luriana*, 2:744; Giulio Busi, *Catalogue of the Kabbalistic Manuscripts in the Library of the Jewish Community of Mantua* (Florence: Cadmo, 2001), 92 (on MS Mantua, Jewish Community of Mantua, ebr. 95).

30   On Zacuto's (and Benjamin Cohen's) disciple Samuel David Ottolenghi (d. 1718), who served as a rabbi in Padua and Venice, see Zeʾev Gries, *Sifrut ha-hanhagot* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1989), 17; and see below, n. 137. For the Lurianic writings copied by Samuel Ottolenghi, see Avivi, *Kabbala Luriana*, 2:851–852.

31   See the colophon on fol. 45b and the introductory sentence on fol. 47a, according to which Ottolenghi stayed in Mantua for two months, Av and Elul, in the year 5481 (שנת תתן אמ״ת ליעקב; cf. Gen 7:20).

32   Fol. 47a. See Fig. 1. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

33   See Moses Cordovero, *Sefer Pardes Rimmonim* (Jerusalem: Yerid Hasefarim, 2000), 21:5 (p. 255).

34   Cf. bBer 17a. On forgetting and remembering, see Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition* (New York: Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1939), 190–192.

35   The first, with eight names, consists of the letters of the Tetragrammaton and incorporates the letters *alef*, *mem*, and *tav* (which together form the word *emet*, "truth"); the second sequence, which also features the letters of the Tetragrammaton, consists of seven names, but begins, like the common abbreviation of the liturgical phrase "praised be the name of the glory of His kingdom forever," with *bet* and *shin*.

36   Cf. *Sefer Razi'el* (Amsterdam, 1701), fol. 36b.
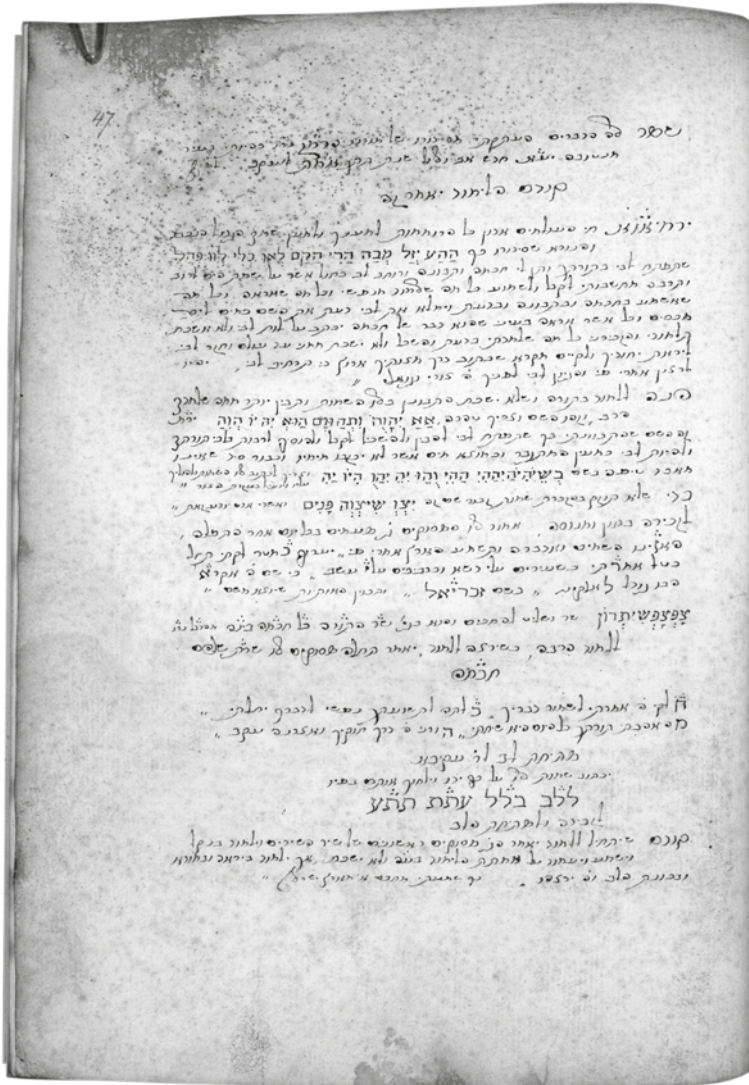
Figure 1: MS London, British Library, Add. 27082, fol. 47a. National Library of Israel, Ktiv Project (Ottolenghi's additions to "Epitome of the Book of Homilies," copied from Zacuto's prayer book)

and like a plastered cistern that does not lose a drop."[37] However, there is now a brief explanation that "the names have to be written," which has been added at the end for those who would like to perform this mnemonic procedure so that it may be "effective

---

37   mAv 2:8 (read *ke-vor sud* instead of *sid*).

with God's help." The next short entry reads: "In order that you may not be harmed while pronouncing (holy) names, remember this name, יִצְוֶן שִׁיצְוֶה פָּנִים—and happy is the man who knows this."[38] There then follows a standard *segullah* against forgetfulness, which includes verses that are also found in a magical context in earlier fragments from the Cairo Genizah:[39]

> For remembrance, tested and tried: Speak these verses three times every day after the prayer, "Hear, O heavens, and I will speak, and listen, O earth, to the words of my mouth. My teaching shall drop like rain, my speech shall distill as dew, as raindrops upon the grass, and as showers on the herbs. For I will proclaim the name of YHWH. Ascribe greatness to our God!" (Deut 32:1–3), by means of the name *Zakhri'el*, and focus on the letters (of this name), which emerges from them.

The quoted verses include the letters—marked by the scribe—of the name *Zakhri'el*, which belongs to the "secret of the seventy names of the angels" mentioned in the Zohar.[40]

The next entry is introduced by a name whose explanation is ascribed to an authority with the initials "BL"—apparently a tradition from Zacuto's teacher Rabbi Benjamin ha-Levi (as mentioned also in Zacuto's autograph MS Jerusalem 615):[41]

> צְפְצָפְשִׂיתְרוֹן,[42] prince and ruler to make one wise, and the gematria (the numerical value of this name) is (equal to the sum of) "prince of the Torah, all, wisdom, un-

---

38   This entry is to be found in the printed version of Zacuto's *Shorshei ha-Shemot* (Jerusalem: A.B. Sefarim, 2010), 344, *siman* 185 (letter *yod*), and also in Zacuto's autograph, MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1448, *Sod ha-sodot*, no. 29, fol. 4a; but not in MS Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Heb 4° 615 (henceforth MS Jerusalem 615), which includes the nucleus of what would later become *Shorshei ha-Shemot*, as was verified by Baumgarten, Harari, and Safrai, "Zacuto's *Alpha-Beta shel ha-Shemot*," 397–425.

39   See Dorothea Salzer, *Die Magie der Anspielung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 99, 227, 406, which also refers to the medieval *Sefer Gematriyyot* that applies these verses to a request for the power of persuasive speech in disputes.

40   Zohar 1:108a–108b (*Sitrei Torah*). On *Zohari'el*, see also *Zohar Ḥadash* on Songs 68c, and also Reuven Margaliot, *Mal'akhei 'Elyon* (Jerusalem: A.B. Sefarim, 1988), 58 (no. 102). In this context, Scholem refers to Lurianic angelology as explained in Abraham Azulay's commentary *Or ha-Ḥammah*, fol. 103b (*Gershom Scholem's Annotated Zohar* [in Hebrew] [Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1992], 1:438). For a broader perspective on this issue see Yoed Kadary, *Moses Cordovero's Angels: Kabbalah and Magic* [in Hebrew] (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2022).

41   Fol. 47b. The initials of Rabbi Benjamin ha-Levi combined with the abbreviation NR″W (מהרב״ל נר״ו), signifies that the entry was written before Rabbi Benjamin's death in 1672. Benjamin ha-Levi of Tsefat was a disciple of Ḥiyya ha-Rofe, whose teacher was Ḥayyim Vital: see Moses Zacuto, *Iggerot ha-ReMeZ*, ed. Mordecai Attiya (Jerusalem: Yeshivat ha-Ḥayyim ve-ha-Shalom, 1999), 23; see also the bibliography in Avivi, *Kabbala Luriana*, 2:189–190.

42   This name is said to be one of the explications of the Tetragrammaton which was written on Aaron's forehead. It appears in Zacuto's entry no. 32 in MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1448, fol. 17a, with Zacuto's reference to Cordovero's *Pardes Rimmonim*; in fact, this name is found in *Pardes Rimmonim* 21:9 (p. 261), where it is quoted from *Sefer ha-Bahir*; see Gershom Scholem, *Das Buch Bahir*, 3rd ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970), 82–84 (section 81). Yet the identical wording of the explanation given here in MS London, British Library, Add. 27082,

derstanding" (*śar ha-torah, kol, ḥokhmah, binah*), in order that one may learn a lot. From Rabbi B″L, may the merciful God rescue and preserve him.

When one wishes to learn, he should first recite these verses, whose initial letters (make up the word) "wisdom" (*ḥokhmah*): "YHWH is my portion, I have said that I would keep your words" (Ps 119:57). "My soul languishes for your salvation, I hope in your word" (Ps 119:81). "Oh, how I love your Torah, it is my meditation all day long" (Ps 119:97). "Teach me, YHWH, the way of your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end" (Ps 119:33).

The combination of "Prince of the Torah"—the angel in charge of magic learning—with the key words "wisdom" and "understanding" is already documented in Hekhalot literature,[43] but the new element here is the numerical value matching the gematria of the mentioned name, plus its ten letters (which add up to 1316).[44] The connection of Psalm 119 (the longest in the book of Psalms) to the study of the Torah for magical purposes is found in the medieval educational initiation ritual,[45] and, of course, in *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim*, the book on the magical use of Psalms, which also mentions the *terminus technicus* "opening of the heart,"[46] which is, not coincidentally, the heading of the next entry in the London manuscript. Here, it is presented as "*petiḥat ha-lev* by Rabbi Aqiva," that is, a tradition of the famous teacher of the tannaitic scholar R. Simon bar Yohai, to whom the authorship of the Zohar is ascribed. These traditions in the name of R. Aqiva were collected in *Sefer Migdal Dawid* (David's Tower) by David ben Isaac, who finished his encyclopedic compendium, the last of its kind before Lurianic Kabbalah arrived in Ashkenaz, in the town of Fulda in 1595.[47] However, no names similar to those following "*petiḥat ha-lev* by Rabbi Aqiva" are mentioned therein: "He should write these names on the palm of his

---

fol. 47a (up to the point that Benjamin ha-Levi's initials are mentioned, and including the benediction) appears in Zacuto's entry in MS Jerusalem 615, fol. 147a (Hebrew pagination 158a); see also the entry to this name in the printed version of *Shorshei ha-Shemot*, 483, *siman* 23 (letter *tsade*), which ascribes the tradition to ריב״ל, and adds some explanations referring to the gematria of the names; see also below.

43 See Schäfer, Schlüter, and von Mutius, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, sections 388, 389 (*Hekhalot Zutarti*, MS New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, 8128; see also section 341): the "Prince of the Torah," "wisdom," and "understanding" (*tevunah*) help Moses, who has forgotten "all" the Torah teachings he received at Mount Sinai, to regain this knowledge; on the magical-theurgic Torah myth in Hekhalot literature, see Peter Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God* (Albany: State University of New York, 1992), 51, 144, and passim; Elliot Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 114–116 (in analysis of David Halperin's theses).

44 צפצפשיתרון = 10 + 1306 = 67 (בינה) + 73 (חכמה) + 50 (כל) + 1116 (שר התורה).

45 See Ivan Marcus, *Rituals of Childhood: Jewish Acculturation in Medieval Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 29–31.

46 See Bill Rebiger, *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 175 (verse 33), 177 (verse 57), 179 (verse 97), and the commentary on the "opening of the heart" (*petiḥat ha-lev*), which is mentioned in section 19, pp. 225–226, including bibliography.

47 See MS Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, 8° 397, fol. 212b (under the entry *petiḥat ha-lev*, which starts on fol. 205a), and Scholem, *Kitvei yad be-qabbalah*, 111 (no. 43).

hand and lick them up with his mouth: LLB BLL 'TT TT'." There is, however, a magical tradition of *petiḥat ha-lev* ascribed to R. Aqiva in Joel ben Uri Heilprin's *Mif'alot Elohim* that instructs one to write the names LLH HLL 'HH on a myrtle leaf which should then be dissolved in wine (for a day or two) and drunk.[48] While the act of internalization is quite common in this context, these particular names are not.[49] Therefore, Heilprin's early eighteenth-century Ashkenazi recipe may partly reflect the former tradition.

The copy of Zacuto's magical annotations lists a last *segullah* "for remembrance and opening of the heart":

> Before one begins to study, he should recite the first three verses of the Song of Songs, and he will learn easily, and hear and understand the true essence of the teaching, with God's help, and he will not forget, but will learn with reverence and awe, and with devotion of the heart, and he will be favorable unto God (Job 33:26). This is what I heard from a wise man from the land of Israel.

Interestingly, an exegetical link to the Song of Songs is also found in Isaac Luria's answer to Eliyahu de Vidas's question[50] of why adjurations and sacred names are prohibited given that there is an established tradition of using them. In resolving this contradiction, Luria specified that permission is granted when a person is able "to sustain himself," for he is described by the verse "the maidens love you" (Song 1:3), expounded as "even the angel of death loves the righteous one,"[51] that is, as long as he is not guilty of a crime. Thus, no accusations arise when he uses sacred names. In the same context, a penance for sins that have been committed is given; namely, rolling in snow nine times.[52] It is telling that this *tiqqun* was incorporated into the chapter entitled "The Secret of Learning Kabbalah" in

---

48 See the first entry for the letter *pe* (the first edition of this work was published in Zhovkva [Żółkiew] in 1725; I am using a reprinted edition from 1805). On the sources for *Mif'alot Elohim*, see Hagit Matras, "Creation and Re-Creation: A Study in Charm Books" [in Hebrew], in *Creation and Re-Creation in Jewish Thought: Festschrift in Honor of Joseph Dan on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Rachel Elior and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 147–164 (Hebrew section). An almost identical instruction using the letters LLB BLL 'TT TT' is found in the printed version of Zacuto's *Shorshei ha-Shemot*, p. 386, *siman* 55 [letter *lamed*] (but not included in his *Sefer ha-Sodot*), with the small additional instruction to drink a cup of wine after licking the names from one's hand, although this is not presented as a tradition of R. Aqiva.

49 See the references in Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Peering through the Lattices* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 140–142, 155–158, including MS Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. parm. 2342 (De-Rossi 541; IMHM F 13218), fol. 262a.

50 See *Sha'ar Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh*, ed. Jehuda Zvi Brandwein, *Kol Kitvei ha-ARI* (Jerusalem, 1988), 10:41. Eliyahu de Vidas was a student of Moses Cordovero and the author of the ethical treatise *Reshit Ḥokhmah* (Beginning of Wisdom; Venice, 1679), one of the first books to popularize kabbalistic ethics in early modern times.

51 bAZ 35b; meaning that the word *'alamot* (maidens) can be read as "the one appointed *over death* ('al mawet)." Song 1:1–2 is interpreted in bAZ 35a.

52 *Sha'ar Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh*, 41 (probably an Ashkenazi atonement).

Zacuto's siddur.[53] Here, a *segullah* placed before the section entitled "The Recitation of Names" is introduced as follows:

> Against forgetfulness: he should roll in snow (*sheleg*), which meets the numerical value (333) of forgetfulness (*shikheḥah*), and wash his forehead with it three times, each time focusing his attention on (the letter) *alef*, since there are three *alef*s—one of 161, one of 143, one of 151—for the gematria of snow (333).[54]

It is evident that this combination of magic elements (including snow) and the *kawwanah* on the divine name 'EHYH—which results in the numerical values of 161, 143, and 151 via three "fillings" (full spelling of each letter) with *alef*, which itself has the numerical value of 111[55] and gives the gematria of snow when multiplied by three (ablutions)—indeed characterizes a kind of Lurianic amalgamation of theoretical and practical Kabbalah, whose performance is simultaneously linked to atonement (rolling in snow).

The remaining additions in Samuel Ottolenghi's copy of *Qitsur Sefer ha-Derushim* are first a *segullah* against apostasy, which is followed by an interpretation of the sacred name of forty-two letters, an amulet against illness, and—after a page that is intentionally left blank—more amulets and *segullot* (including, for example, protection for a sea voyage, a remedy against a scorpion sting, assistance for a woman having trouble giving birth, and a method for miraculously abridging a journey [*qefitsat ha-derekh*]).

It is likely that not all of these were included in the prayer book in Zacuto's possession, as at least half of the material on the last folio did not originate from Ottolenghi's hand. By its very nature, a magic collection invites its readers to add further entries, regardless of whether the source was tied to a specific kabbalistic context or not. The significance of such a context, however, also matters in the following anthology.

2   A Christian Motif among Lurianic Traditions: MS London, British Library, Or. 10734

The various stages of different Lurianic traditions reaching Europe from the end of the sixteenth century onward do not paint a coherent picture. Moses Zacuto was apparently the first authority to attempt to sort and classify these teachings by focusing on the school of Ḥayyim Vital and the editions of these writings produced by Jacob Tsemaḥ, which he glossed for use by his disciples. However, he seems to have been less meticulous

---

53 Moses Zacuto, *Siddur ha-ReMeZ* [R. Moses Zacuto's prayer book], (Jerusalem: Qol Bitḥa, 2016), 300–302.

54 *Siddur ha-ReMeZ*, 302.

55 That is, the numerical value of the spelling of *alef* (*alef* [1], *lamed* [30], *pe* [80]); the three fillings of the name 'EHYH (Exod 3:14), which refers to the Lurianic *partsuf Imma* (corresponding to the *sefirah Binah*), are as follows: *alef*, HY,YUD, HY (= 161); *alef*, HA, YUD, HA (= 143); *alef*, HH, YUD, HH (= 151). This association is in line with Samuel Vital's commentary on the *tiqqun* for rolling in snow mentioned in *Sha'ar Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh*. He refers to a tradition of rolling in snow seven times, explaining that all sacred names emerge from the "upper mother" (i.e., the *partsuf Imma*), which is called "seven years." This source is damaged by unseemly mentions of the sacred names; *Sha'ar Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh*, 41.

concerning the large quantity of Lurianic *derushim* (expositions or homilies), though his brief notes are also scattered in the margins of some of them. One example is a manuscript collection in the British Library, which is written in Italian cursive script and probably dates from the late seventeenth century.[56] It presents a cross section of compositions from outside of the Lurianic mainstream, including some magical material. The first part starts with Simon Kohen's *Derush ha-Malbush*,[57] which describes the creation process according to his teacher Israel Saruq,[58] the first prominent Lurianic preacher in Europe. A fundamental difference from Vital's Lurianic version is the mediation of a garment (*malbush*), woven from the Hebrew letters of the Torah, between the light of the infinite God, En-Sof, on the one hand, and the emanation of the Sefirot and the so-called four worlds out of the Tetragrammaton on the other. Zacuto's commentaries in this manuscript are found in three *derushim* of a particularly interesting collection belonging to the circle of Luria's disciple Joseph ibn Tabul.[59]

The relevant sections appear in the middle of the manuscript as part of a compilation that begins with the heading: "We also found these principles (*klallim*) of Rabbi Luria."[60] Three short magical sections are incorporated on three different folios.[61] The first includes a Latin phrase that will be discussed in what follows (see Fig. 2); the second and third catch one's eye with so-called ring letters,[62] and a hexagram is used in a description of how

---

56 MS London, British Library, Or. 10734 (IMHM F 8049); compare MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 55 (IMHM F 6736), up to fol. 267a; MS Washington, Library of Congress, Hebr. 38. The London manuscript is not described in Yosef Avivi's *Kabbala Luriana*. Glosses by Zacuto are found in the following Lurianic texts, which we also know from other manuscripts traditions: fol. 63a (להבין סדר התלבשות אריך ואבא ואימא, see MS Jerusalem, The National Library of Israel, Heb. 4°19, fol. 92a–b [see Scholem, *Kitvei yad be-qabbalah*, no. 25]), fol. 66b (לתת סיבה לשבירת הכלים ותיקונם, comparefols. 79b–81a), and fol. 71a (קודם האצילות).

57 MS London, British Library, Or. 10734, fols. 1a–34a; this text was copied at the beginning of the seventeenth century by Ezra of Fano; see MS Mantua, Jewish Community of Mantua, ebr. 115, fols. 170a–191b; see Busi, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts*, 143–144; Ronit Meroz, "The Saruq School of Kabbalists: A New Historical Interpretation" [in Hebrew], *Shalem* 7 (2001), 170–171.

58 Kohen's teacher; see Avivi, *Kabbala Luriana*, 1:310–311.

59 See n. 56 above; such traditions were redacted by Menaḥem Azaryah da Fano and also reached the kabbalists in Ashkenaz, were collected by Alexander Katz, and were eventually used by Joseph Delmedigo and Naftali Bacharach, both of whom printed some material in their books *Novlot Ḥokhmah* and *ʿEmeq ha-Melekh*. See Avivi, *Kabbala Luriana*, 1:447.

60 The collection of magical texts starts after the well-known Midrash of Rabbi Aqiva exploring the so-called crowns of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet (fols. 264b–267a), including a part about large letters and also some of the small letters, which is missing in the edition of Adolph Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash* (repr. Jerusalem: Wahrman, 1967), 5:6 (pp. 31–33): גם כללים אלו מצאנו מהרב, fols. 267a–323b.

61 Fols. 287a–b, 288a, and 294a–b, which is followed by entries about Lurianic teachings and customs.

62 On fol. 289a these letters are explained as being "seals to be written on deer parchment" which are to be "placed under a suspect while he is sleeping so that he will confess to you what he stole, for he will talk (about it) in (his) sleep and (even) when awake." The copyist calls the attention of "the gentle reader" (*naʿim ha-qore* matches the word order in the Spanish honorific form of address *el amable lector*) to different instructions for writing these seals, all of which must be considered lest the seals will be ineffective. On the use of such ring letters (German *Brillenbuchstaben*, *Augenschrift*,

to make an amulet.[63] Shortly before the end, the four spellings of the Tetragrammaton according to the numerical values of 72, 63, 45, and 52 appear in a cleromantic context, anticipating in a way the possible combination of Lurianic Kabbalah with *goralot*, which later became a sort of subgenre in this magical literature, especially in the pages of a text named *Sefer ha-Goralot* (Book of Oracles) attributed to Ḥayyim Vital.[64] After completing the "principles of Rabbi Luria," the scribe noted: "All this is found among the booklets of the companions of Rabbi [Luria] (*ben ha-quntresim shel ha-rav*) and therefore I copied them, although they do not belong to the homiletic expositions."[65] The following recipe, which includes a magic square with rows and columns, each totaling to 40, was apparently added somewhat later by the same scribe.[66]

The magical material is embedded in a mixture of brief explanations, kabbalistic aphorisms, and ethical admonitions, such as "a person who does not wear a fringed garment (tzitzit) in this world will receive a filthy garment in the world to come" or "a man should be careful not to sleep alone because of Lilith, who is there when he is alone,"[67] or another, based on the Zohar, which states that "it is good for a man not to be washed by a Gentile, or to be shaved by a Gentile, so as not to intermingle his aura with that of a Gentile."[68] Sometimes the entries are more complex, and esoteric names are listed such as those of Sama'el and the names of his host in opposition to the hierarchy of the ten Sefirot,[69] and sometimes they offer magical insights, such as "jewels and gold are increased with the help of flying stars (i. e., comets), and the stars that increase copper are red,"[70] or the following information, again based on the Zohar: "It is the way of the sorcerers to mention someone's last name according to their mother's name, since this is a matter beyond doubt, and

---

or *Engelalphabet*; Latin *sigilla* or *figurae*), see Gideon Bohak, "The Charaktêres in Ancient and Medieval Jewish Magic," *Acta Classica: Universitatis Scientiarum Debreceniensis* 47 (2011): 25–44.

63 See fol. 289a: the amulet is intended to help against *paperas* (Spanish for mumps); the inscription reads "dove's wings" (*kanfei yonah*), surrounded by the letters *he* and *mem* on the upper side and *alef* and *bet* below. The amulet apparently recalls the miraculous story of Elisha's tefillin which changed into dove wings in bShab 49a, 130a.

64 See Menachem Kallus, "Pneumatic Mystical Possession and the Eschatology of the Soul in Lurianic Kabbalah," in *Spirit Possession in Judaism: Cases and Contexts from the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Matt Goldish (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 169; and see also Evelyn Burkhardt, "Hebräische Losbuchhandschriften: Zur Typologie einer Jüdischen Divinationsmethode," in *Jewish Studies between the Disciplines—Judaistik zwischen den Disziplinen: Papers in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday*, ed. Klaus Herrmann, Margarete Schlüter, and Giuseppe Veltri (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 95–148, esp. 126–127, 129–130, 132 (n. 92), 143–147.

65 Fol. 294b.

66 Fol. 294b; the remaining half of the page is blank.

67 Both on fol. 269a.

68 Fol. 269a; see Zohar 3:104b. I have translated צולמא as "aura"; the Aramaic לאתערבא is mistakenly written as לאתערא here.

69 Fols. 270a, 271a; see also the illustration of the throne of glory (*kisse ha-kavod*) on fol. 271b. Speculations about the spiritual character of the commandments follow on fol. 272a–b.

70 Fol. 276a; see Zohar 1:223b. The expression *kokhva* (or pl. *kokhevayya*) *de-sharvita* is derived from *kokhva de-shavet*, a star that flies; cf. bBer 58b. The Zohar describes the Shekhinah's "purple hair," which conveys judgment to the world and therefore takes on a demonic appearance.
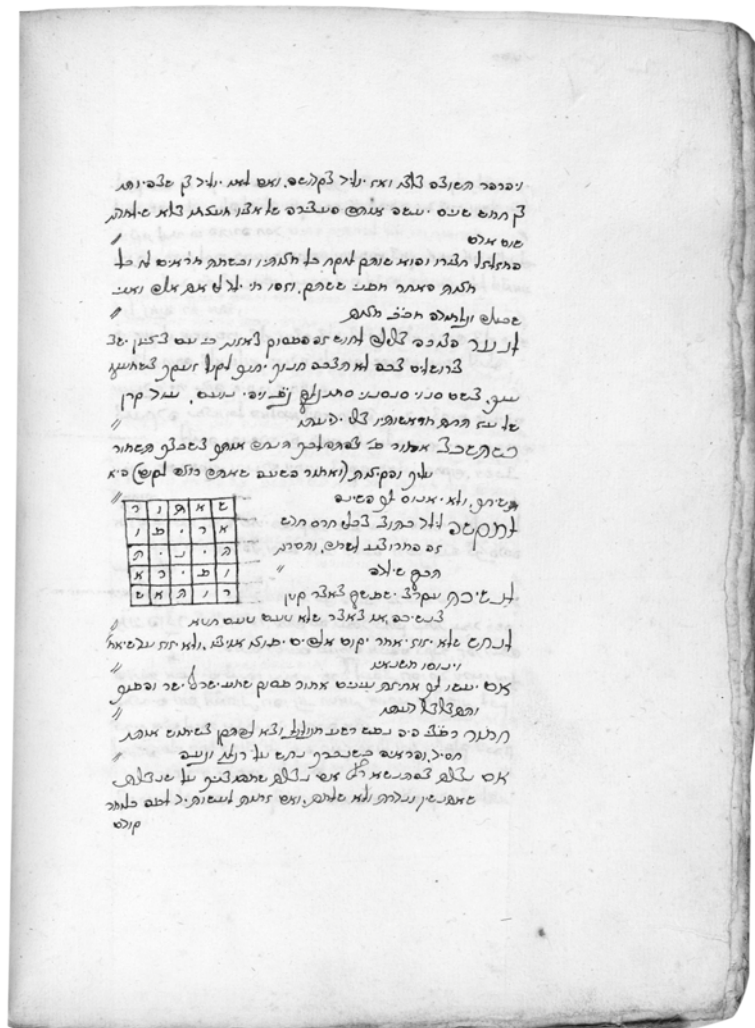
Figure 2: MS London, British Library, Or. 10734, fol. 287b. National Library of Israel,
Ktiv Project (Sator Arepo square)

that is why Balak said: 'Look, a people has come out of Egypt,' but he did not say 'the sons of Israel' (Num 22:5)."[71]

---

71 Fol. 283r; see Zohar 2:17b. A separate study is required of the way in which magical contexts in the Zohar influenced Lurianic Kabbalah (such as the commentary on Zohar 3:19a in MS Mantua, Jewish Community of Mantua, ebr. 115, fol. 61a–b; see Busi, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts*, 127).

At the bottom of fol. 287a, the first recipe appears:

> For a woman, to avoid miscarriage: you shall write the verse "and he shall be like a tree planted, etc." (Ps 1:3; Jer 17:8) on parchment in Hebrew square letters (*ketav ashuri*) and place it on her heart.[72]

The next entry refers to a man whose wife is taking a ritual bath, which requires him to occupy himself with studying Torah and repentant thoughts. Following another entry on proper behavior,[73] the second recipe reads as follows:

> For an infant crying in the night, whisper this verse in his ear "For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem, you shall weep no more: he will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as he hears it, he will answer you" (Isa 30:19); in the name of *Sanui Sansanui Samnaglaf*, three times (the verse) "and let the favor [of the Lord our God be upon us]" (Ps 90:17), and the horn of a goat shall be under his head, without his knowledge.[74]

The three names *Sanui Sansanui Samnaglaf*—various vocalizations are possible—are surely the most popular of the Jewish magical names of obscure etymology, though their function is well attested and often illustrated by three figures, as mentioned in the early medieval satirical work *Alfa Beta de-Ben Sira*.[75] They prevent Lilith from killing infants, and, apparently, they also help a child not to be frightened, so that it will stop crying at night. The third magical instruction—just before the Christian motif—is a kind of awakener:

> When you go to sleep, say the verse (Prov 6:22) "When you walk, it shall lead you; when you sleep, it shall keep you; and when you awake (and [now] say the hour that you want to get up), it shall talk with you," and [this way] the sleep will not compel you [at that hour].[76]

In the next recipe, we find a square including eight different Hebrew letters. They form a palindrome out of five Latin words—*sator arepo tenet opera rotas*—which is surely the most popular of the magical Christian phrases whose meaning is still a matter of debate. The square[77] illustrates the following recipe:

---

72 For recipes for women in childbirth, see Chen Avizohar-Hagai and Yuval Harari, "'For a Woman in Hard Labor': A Compilation of Magic Recipes to Deal with Labor Difficulties" [in Hebrew], *Jewish Studies* 56 (2022): 116–160. See also the recipe with the Sator Arepo formula below.

73 Compare fol. 287b, an admonition not to affront his fellow man who puts up with this in silence; see Ḥayyim Joseph David Azulay, *Devash Lefi* (Honey for My Mouth; Livorno, 1801) 9, letter *zayin*, fol. 22b (based on Menaḥem Azaryah da Fano).

74 Fol. 287b.

75 See Dagmar Börner-Klein, *Das Alphabet des Ben Sira* (Wiesbaden: Marix, 2007), 74–77, and the bibliography mentioned there.

76 Fol. 287b; see Fig. 2.

77 It appears that the scribe drew the lines from left to right (!), divided five vertical lines from left to right, scratched off the remaining parts of the horizontal lines, and then inserted the letters.

> For a woman in hard labor (*le-maqshah leled*). You shall write this square on a new earthenware vessel (*keli ḥeres ḥadash*) next to her name and remove it as soon as she has given birth.[78]

Almost the same instruction, including the magic square with the Latin words (using the Hebrew letter *tav* for the letter *t*), is found in Vital's *Book of Remedies*; the Sator square belongs to the traditions which Vital introduces as having been transmitted to him by *maggidei emet*, "preachers of (kabbalistic) truth,"[79] and shows only small changes or extensions:

> For a woman in hard labor. You shall write this seal (*ḥotam*) on a new earthenware vessel (*keli ḥeres*) or on parchment next to her name, and you shall put it on her navel and remove it as soon as she has given birth, lest her bowels also come out.[80]

All three preceding recipes in the London manuscript are found in the very same part of Vital's *Book of Remedies*, as is the subsequent recipe for healing a scorpion sting,[81] while the next two in this series seem rather to be common knowledge: one for making a snake immobile with the help of Ps 68:2 and another for warding off a magical act of deception (*aḥizat ʿenayim*) by reciting the *Shemaʿ Yiśraʾel*.[82] All seven of these recipes seem to be of eastern origin, but the crucial question in our context is how the Latin phrase slipped in. In fact, a related instruction appears in Moses Zacuto's *Sefer ha-Sodot*.[83] The Moscow manuscript of *Sefer ha-Sodot* includes a number of recipes for birth complications, one of which includes the Sator square, but with the letter *tet* instead of *tav*, declaring that the formula should be written on a *luaḥ*, apparently a wooden board, to be placed on the woman's abdomen, while she herself must eat an apple or a piece of cake bearing her own name and have the names of angels whispered in her ear. The magic square seems to be

---

78 Fol. 287b: למקשה לילד כתוב בכלי חרס חדש זה המרובע לשמה ותסירנו תכף שילדה. Compare the similar recipe no. 55 in the manuscript of the Gross Family Collection, edited and discussed by Avizohar-Hagai and Yuval Harari, "For a Woman in Hard Labor," 158–159; this recipe differs in the transcription of the Latin letters, and the *materia magica* (the magic square should be inscribed on a [chunk of] cheese, apple, or egg and eaten up, not on a vessel to be placed [on the woman's body] just until she gives birth); see also Yuval Harari and Chen Avizohar-Hagai, "Childbirth Magic in Amulets and Recipes from the Gross Family Collection," in *Windows on Jewish Worlds: Essays in Honor of William Gross*, ed. Shalom Sabar, Emile G.L. Schrijver, and Falk Wiesemann (Zutphen: WalburgPers, 2019), 334–349, esp. 344, fig. 8, and n. 24. I would like to thank Yuval Harari and Chen Avizohar-Hagai for sharing their knowledge on this topic with me.

79 *Sefer ha-Peʿulot*, 11.

80 *Sefer ha-Peʿulot*, 210, no. 228: למקשה לילד כתוב זה החותם בכלי חרס חדש או על קלף נייר לשמה ושים על טיבורה ותסירהו תכף אחר הלידה פן יצאו גם בני מעיה. Within the square, the Latin word *tenet* has been mistakenly printed with a *gimmel* instead of a *nun*. In the autograph (*Sefer ha-Refuʾot, ha-Segullot, we-ha-Qemeʿot*), MS Jerusalem, Ben Zvi Institute, 2675 (IMHM F 42440), fol. 69b, the word חדש does not appear.

81 *Sefer ha-Peʿulot*, 210, no. 230 (against miscarriage); 211, no. 237 (the crying boy); 226, no. 315 (a scorpion sting); 237, no. 375 (for awakening).

82 Fol. 287b.

83 No. 75 in the forthcoming edition by Yuval Harari, Eliezer Baumgarten, and Uri Safrai, whom I thank for sharing with me their transcription of *Sefer ha-Sodot* (MS Moscow, Russian State Library, Guenzburg 1448).

merely an extra ingredient,[84] being used simply to upgrade a medical context that dates back to antiquity.[85] Its incorporation into Lurianic traditions that reached Europe in the seventeenth century was due to its adaption in a setting that was affiliated to Ḥayyim Vital's magic collection. In turn, the Lurianic context further increased the authorita-

---

84 This reinforces the impression already given by Max Grunwald's translation of a potpourri of recipes found in early modern manuscripts, one of which (MS Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 135; see Moritz Steinschneider, *Catalog der hebräischen Handschriften in der Stadtbibliothek zu Hamburg und der sich anschließenden Sprachen* [Hamburg: Meissner, 1878; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1969], 149, no. 319) was written by Naftali Kohen ben Isaac in Posen around 1635 (about the same time that Zacuto left Hamburg for eastern Europe); see Max Grunwald, "Aus Hausapotheke und Hexenküche," *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Jüdische Volkskunde* 3 (1900): 1–87. In his introduction, Grunwald described the material he found as superstitions based on Christian folk beliefs in Germany on the one hand and as being derived from the centuries-old Jewish art of healing on the other. He reconstructed a recipe intended for women having trouble giving birth by supposing that the Greek names *aspetos soterios* that should be written on clay and placed on the woman's abdomen while she is sleeping are a hint to the famous Sator formula (my translation of Grunwald's German text, p. 56, is as follows: "Graviditatem adipisci. Write the names 'ασπετος σωτηριος' on clay and put them on her belly [*Unterleib*], while she is sleeping"). He refers to similar-sounding Greek names in another recipe for women in childbirth, but here the woman is meant to eat the rind from a block of cheese (*ein ränftel Käse*) inscribed with the letters "orpid teneged itera ipertes אורפיד טנינגדאיטרא יפרטיש," which Grunwald identifies with the formula "arepo tenet opera rotas." He also finds the Latin phrase in a third recipe: "Against theft: Write these names, שאטור רוטאש, on an axe, and hang these names behind the door, and the thief will be unable to find any peace until he restores the stolen property to you" (p. 67). Concerning another seventeenth-century Hebrew manuscript including the Sator palindrope, see Michael Kohs and Giuseppe Veltri, "Magic in the Hebrew-Manuscript Collection of the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg: Observations on Cod. Hebr. 252," in *Exploring Written Artefacts: Objects, Methods, and Concepts*, ed. Jörg B. Quenzer (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2021), 1:534–562. It has already been noted that the Sator formula appears throughout the history of Jewish magic from medieval times on: see Gideon Bohak, *A Fifteenth-Century Manuscript of Jewish Magic: MS New York Public Library, Heb. 190 (formerly Sassoon 56)* [in Hebrew] (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2014), 1:143, n. 1 (including also a reference to *Sefer ha-Pe'ulot*). An early kabbalistic context, documented in a Jerusalem manuscript which dates to the end of the seventeenth century but was copied (according to Gershom Scholem) from a rather old *Vorlage*, includes commentaries on divine names: here, the Sator phrase (though wrongly spelled שאתו״ר ארופ״ו תיתי״ת ופור״א רותא״ש) is the powerful name used for an incantation designed to reveal whether a certain man or woman is still alive; MS Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Heb. 8° 476, fol. 52a–b (Scholem, *Kitvei yad be-qabbalah*, no. 2, p. 11).

85 E.g., the amulet Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, T-S Ar. 49.54, published in Shaul Shaked and Joseph Naveh, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Incantations of Late Antiquity*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1987), 228–229. An early example of its appearance in Coptic magic is a sixth-century spell, reconstructed in Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994), 120–124, designed to drive evil forces from a pregnant woman named Sura. A figure accompanies the powerful names, first *Yao Sabaoth*, then archangels, but also Jesus and the gnostic Abrasax; the Sator formula is set between a sequence of angelic names. In addition to other healing purposes known for the Sator names, the main effect of this spell, the protection of a woman during the critical stages of her pregnancy, penetrates Christian magic in Europe from the early Middle Ages on.

tive character—and thus the effectiveness—of this magic formula,[86] notwithstanding its Christian (or even pagan) origin.

Having said this, the following example is an exception to this observation. Nevertheless, it indicates that the circulation of this magic formula in early modern times was partly linked to Isaac Luria. The scribe Isaac ben Yidel Cohen Worms, who in 1729 copied a Hebrew version of the *Seal of Solomon* (*Sefer Mafteaḥ Shelomoh*),[87] furnished an explanation of the Sator formula appearing in a so-called *Sefer ha-Otot* (Book of Signs),[88] which he incorporated into his copy of *Mafteaḥ Shelomoh* (MS Amsterdam, Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, Ros. 12; see Fig. 3).[89] He presents the formula in the context of the seals of the seven planets, stating that it differs from the Lurianic tradition, since he found

> in a book in the name of Isaac Luria (*ha-ARI z″l*) the inner magic square, (which is) for a woman in hard labor (*le-maqshah leled*), but שאתור [*sator*] is (written) there with a *tav* [not with a *tet* as in *Sefer ha-Otot*], and accordingly תינית [*tenet*] with two *tav*s, but I rely more on this book [i.e., *Sefer ha-Otot*], which is more accurate, and surely there must have been a (scribal) error in that book.[90]

The description of this magic square, which he compares to his own *Vorlage*, fits well within the Lurianic tradition in the London manuscript, the recipe designed to assist women in labor. By contrast, the spelling of the Sator formula in *Sefer ha-Otot*—a *segullah* against evil, misfortune, and arrogance—is set within a circle providing additional information that he deems to be more appropriate in the given context: astrological signs, the angelic name *Shabtai'el*, and a quotation from Ps 72:8.

At any event, some adaptions of the Sator formula in Jewish esoteric literature could plausibly explain how in the seventeenth century a tendency started to ascribe specific traditions to the circle of Isaac Luria. Though this is a rather familiar phenomenon in the field of customs,[91] we cannot ignore that it was also opened up to practical Kabbalah (in the sense of practiced magic), despite magical material's general tendency to cross reli-

---

86 In a similar way, Claudia Rohrbacher-Sticker, "*Maphteah Shelomoh*: A New Acquisition of the British Library," *JSQ* 1 (1993/1994), 265, explains some Christian attributions of magical traditions to Jewish origins. See also Reimund Leicht, *Astrologumena Judaica: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der astrologischen Literatur der Juden* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 344–345.

87 A facsimile of this Hebrew version of *Clavicula Salomonis* was edited by Hermann Gollancz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914). See also Leicht, *Astrologumena Judaica*; Rohrbacher-Sticker, "*Maphteah Shelomoh*," 266; and Gal Sofer, "The Hebrew Manuscripts of *Mafteaḥ Shelomoh* and an Inquiry into the Magic of the Sabbatians" [in Hebrew], *Kabbalah* 32 (2014), 136.

88 According to Leicht (*Astrologumena*, 345) the Hebrew version of a hitherto unidentified "Liber Sigillorum."

89 See Sofer, "*Mafteaḥ Shelomoh*," 148, 152–153. I would like to thank Gal Sofer for drawing my attention to this version.

90 Fol. 2a, according to the new pagination starting after fol. 72a, which indicates that *Sefer ha-Otot* does not belong to *Clavicula Salomonis*.

91 A popular offshoot of Lurianic customs forming a category of their own was the so-called *Shulḥan ʿArukh ha-ARI* ('Set Table' of Isaac Luria) [Prague, 1660]; see Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 364, n. 9. See also below.
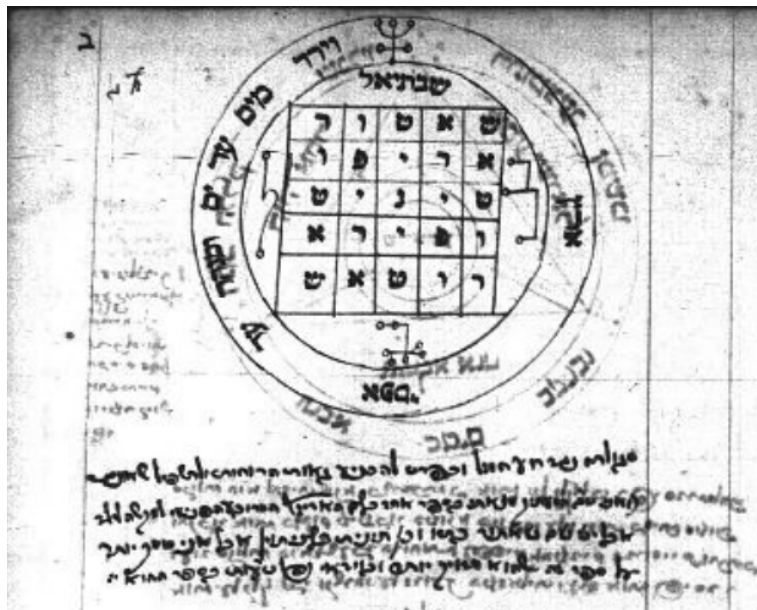
Figure 3: MS Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, University of Amsterdam, Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, Ros. 12, fol. 2a (*Mafteaḥ Shelomoh*)

gious borderlines and the unsystematic scattering of thematic clusters. This may indicate that embedding magic in this way—namely, in the context of Lurianic traditions—stimulated the distribution of both.

3 Lurianic Elements in Magical Contexts: MS Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Heb. 28° 9006

A new acquisition of the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem, the manuscript Heb. 28° 9006 [92] includes the earliest known version of *Sefer Zekhirah* (Book of Remembrance; fols. 70a–140b), a book on magic by Zachariah ben Jacob Simner (fl. 17th cent.), a resident of Plungė (Plungyan) in Lithuania, that also contains astrological sections and was first printed in Hamburg in 1709. [93] The bulk of the manuscript is of oriental origin and

---

92 Hereafter MS Jerusalem 9006. The piece was acquired (thanks to the intervention of Prof. Yuval Harari) in June 2017.

93 See Reimund Leicht, "Toward a History of Hebrew Astrological Literature," in *Science in Medieval Jewish Cultures*, ed. Gad Freudenthal (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 285. Other early manuscripts are MS Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Library, 519 (18th cent.); MS Holon, Yehuda Nahum, 149, which also includes Jacob Tsemaḥ's *Nagid u-metsawweh* (dated to 1725); and MS Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Heb. 28° 6145 (dated to 1766). A first investigation concerning the many sources (about sixty-five!) mentioned in *Sefer Zekhirah* in the context of the books *Shem Tov Qatan*, *Amitat Benyamin*, *Toldot Adam*, and *Mifʿalot Eloqim* was carried out in Matras,

was written in the second half of the seventeenth century by the scribe Yosef ibn Tsefat,[94] who indicates time and again that he compiled the various parts of the manuscript from different sources. It opens with an anthology of instructions for preparing amulets with divine names, their relationship to biblical verses and the Sefirot,[95] angelic names with prayers, and incantations, some of which are ascribed to famous personalities such as Naḥmanides (Ramban), Solomon ben Adret (Rashba), and even Maimonides (Rambam), as well as others up to the sixteenth century.[96] There then follow short sections from *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim*[97] and a brief treatise explaining the magical implications of each letter from *alef* to *tav*.[98] Next come horoscope calculations,[99] protection for travelers, *segullot* for memory, learning, and dream inquiry,[100] a kabbalistic drawing of the menorah featuring Psalm 67 and explanations,[101] and an excerpt from a *Sefer Rimmon* by Isaac of

---

Matras, "Creation and Re-Creation," 147–164, esp. 151–156 (see n. 17 on *Peri 'Ets Ḥayyim* and *Sefer ha-Kawwanot*), and 163–164, the appendix entitled "Table of the Titles of the Treatises Mentioned as Sources of the Books."

94   See the colophon on fol. 48b; however, some other hands are included (e.g., fols. 13a–14b, 53b, 58b). On two pages, non-Hebrew capital letters are used: on fol. 41a the word SMIRH at the top appears to be a transcription of the first Hebrew word, *shemirah*; likewise SMIRWT on fol. 32b seems to signify the plural; but the sequence of letters on fol. 42a is incomprehensible to me. The order of the pages is sometimes disrupted; a folio is missing between fols. 42b and 43a, along with half of fols. 37 and 69, and another between fols. 59b and 60a. Also, however, a new pagination sequence was added, which I will use in what follows.

95   The relationship to the Sefirot characterizes a function in the etic perspective of the term "practical Kabbalah"; see Harari, "Practical Kabbalah," 74. A good example is found in the present manuscript on fol. 28a (with illustration); compare also the explanation of the holy name emerging from the initial letters found in Gen 43:11, which in combination with the vocalization are related to "three names included in the ten Sefirot," fol. 48a.

96   For Ramban, see fols. 3b and 33b; for Rashba, fol. 12a. There is also a reference to the holy names emerging from Gen 49:19, which is written "three times in the Zohar" (Zohar 1:244b; 2:27a; 3:155b). For Rambam, see fol. 12b; another incantation is ascribed to Rabbi Abraham ben David (fol. 33b). A tradition from Isaac de Leon (fl. second half of 15th cent., Spain) is quoted at length on fol. 44a; the abbreviation מהרי״ב (fol. 40b) probably refers to R. Jacob Berab (1474–1546). For attributions to German pietists (*Ḥasidei Ashkenaz*), see below. Book titles are seldom specified as sources; see, e.g., *Sefer Razi'el*, fols. 38a and 39b (compare fols. 33b and 42a in the version from Amsterdam, 1701); *Sefer ha-Bahir* (unknown version), fol. 38a; and *Sefer ha-Zohar* (see above and fol. 59a).

97   Fol. 15a–b opens with the beginning of *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim*, which is interrupted by the wrongly placed fol. 16a–b (the first recipe is for a woman having trouble giving birth), and continues on fol. 17a with Ps 42:2. Compare *Shimmush Tehillim*, section 46, although this arrangement of the texts does not correspond to the synopsis in Rebiger's edition, for it continues with section 49 (according to MS London, Wellcome Institute, Hebr. no. A 34), and also in the following arrangement. Further explanations, which are not included in *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim*, are found, e.g., on fol. 39a: "A Psalm of David. Give unto the Lord, o ye sons of might." Eighteen memorials (*azkarot*) are included here (cf. yBer 3:25): "[...] know that everyone who recites this psalm four times each day [...] shall be saved from danger on sea or on dry land [...]" (on Ps 29); and see fols. 40a and 52a.

98   Fols. 18a–20a.

99   Fol. 21a–b.

100 Fol. 22b.

101 Fols. 23a–24a.

Akko about the vocalization of the divine name of seventy-two names (derived from Exod 14:19–21), illuminated by the twenty-four circles of the letters of the Tetragrammaton.[102]

An almost identical text intended to bring about effective learning by reciting the first three verses of the Song of Songs, matching the additions found in Zacuto's prayer book, appears within a series of *segullot* introduced here (rather than being added at the end) with the phrase "I heard from a wise man of the land of Israel [...]."[103] This is followed by another *segullah* for learning the Torah mentioned in the same context—namely, the verses from Psalm 119 whose initial letters result in "wisdom"—although this time it is not described as a tradition of Benjamin ha-Levi.[104] Both *segullot* here are part of a large collection of amulets, dream questions, and protection for journeys through a forest or crossing a river or the sea, one of which is ascribed to Rabbi Yehudah he-Ḥasid (d. 1217), another to Eleazar of Worms (d. 1230).[105]

Sometimes, the texts interweave information based on Lurianic Kabbalah, for example, in the context of an amulet "to be put on the heart of a woman to make her become pregnant": the holy name כְלִי, which is one of the seventy-two tripartite divine names (Exod 14:19–21), should be united with its "source"—namely, the name 'EHYH (Exod 3:14)—and written on deer parchment as אֶכָהְלְיֶיֵה (alternating letters from both names).[106] There is even a whole series of holy names with magical and liturgical traditions that is

---

Fol. 24a. The very same section, which begins with "It is I, Isaac of Acre. Into my hands fell *Sefer Rimmon* [...]" and includes the twenty-four circles of the Tetragrammaton, is repeated (with an endnote added by the scribe, Yosef ibn Tsefat) on fol. 48b. Another reference to this tradition is found on fol. 34b, starting with "I found written in the name of R. Isaac of Acre: Into my hands fell an ancient book (the word *rimmon* is crossed out and replaced by *yashan*) [...]." For Isaac of Acre's interpretation of the seventy-two-letter name, see Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, 236, n. 191; see also the reference in Eitan Fishbane, *As Light Before Dawn: The Inner World of a Medieval Kabbalist* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 270–271, n. 43. However, in MS Jerusalem 9006, the second way of arranging this name according to Exod 14:19–21 is intended; see below.

103 של א״י שמעתי מחכם א׳ מארץ ישראל similar to כך שמעתי מחכם א׳ מארץ ישראל. There are other slight differences (fol. 24b): קודם שיתחיל ללמוד יאמר הג׳ פסוקים ראשונים של שיר השירים וילמוד בנקל וישמע ויבין אמיתת בדבר ולא ישכח אם ילמוד באימה ויראה וכוונת הלב. The very same text (with minor changes at the end) appears again on fol. 28b. Since the material in this collection was assembled from different sources, the repetition may indicate that this *segullah* in particular was rather widespread.

104 See fol. 25a, followed by a *segullah* with the divine name of forty-two letters against evil inclinations.

105 Fols. 26b and 27a.

106 Fol. 27a; a unification (*yiḥud*) with the vocalization as per the biblical specification of each letter in Exod 3:14; 14:19–21. On 'EHYH as the source of all holy names referring to the *partsuf Imma*, see n. 55 above. For other examples, see the tradition ascribed to Isaac Luria (*mi-kitvei ha-ARI*) on the holy names פלג and אזבוגה being linked to Gen 35:5 in combination with Gen 19:11, whose recitation in the described manner protect the speaker from evil (fol. 11b); in addition, Ps 91:14 must be recited eleven times, while meditating on the name ביט (fol. 12a; this name appears as the first entry for the letter *bet* in Zacuto's *Shorshei ha-Shemot*); and see fol. 35a–b (concerning "forgetfulness," which belongs to "the secret of *aḥorayim*," and how the *partsufim* of Rachel and Ze'ir are involved concerning the names Adonai and Tetragrammaton), and fols. 55a–58a (on the connection between both a drop of semen and the faculties of the soul and to the divine world of the *partsufim*).
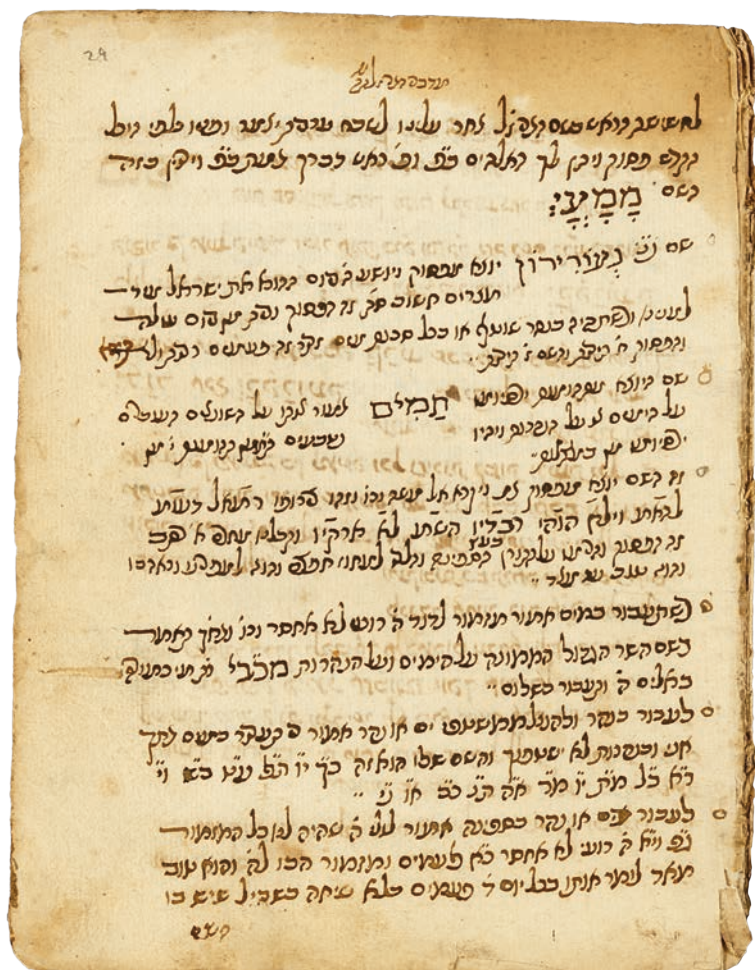
Figure 4: MS Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Heb. 28° 9006, fol. 29a

explicitly ascribed to Isaac Luria (*mi-divrei ha-ARI*), though (see Fig. 4).[107] On the other hand, an amulet against fever, which is also found in Vital's *Book of Remedies*,[108] is not

---

107   See fols. 29a–30a. The words *mi-divrei ha-ARI* have been added by a different hand at the top of the page, but the first of the following seven *segullot* was already introduced "in the name of ha-ARI"; it helps against headache and explains that the verses Gen 27:28 and Ps 119:160 should be recited two times after the *ʿAlenu* prayer in the evening, facing the Torah shrine, while focusing on the name מְמִעֵי; the other holy names, useful against threat of danger from rivers and seas, however, have no
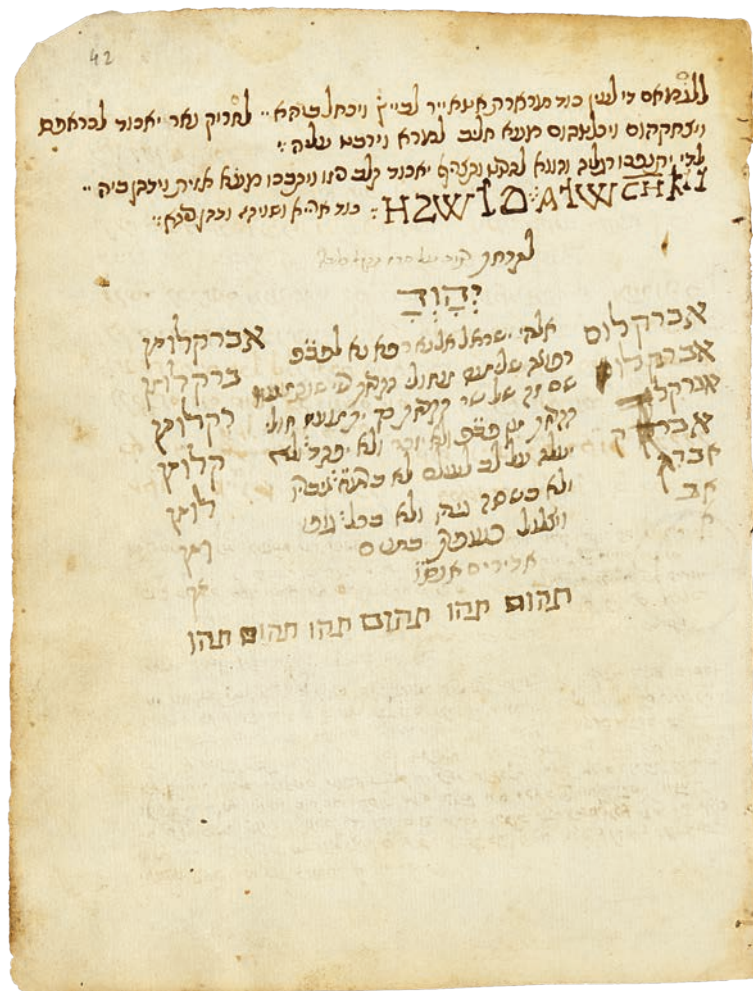
Figure 5: MS Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, 28° 9006, fol. 42a

connected to Luria (Fig. 5).[109] The incantation uses the name of the angel in charge, the "prince of fever," ʾA-B-R-Q-L-W-S, written on seven separate lines, dropping the last let-

---

connection to Luria (e.g., the name נְעוּרִירוֹן, based on Exod 14:30, or the verse Lev 1:1, written backwards, or מכבי in combination with Ps 23:1).

108 Fol. 42a; see *Sefer ha-Peʿulot*, 96, no. 227 (p. 296 in the printed edition), and the description of a related *segullah* in Bohak, *Fifteenth-Century Manuscript*, 1:130, n. 8 (with reference to *Sefer ha-Peʿulot*).

109 In contrast to the seventeenth-century MS Copenhagen, Royal Danish Library, Sim. 9, which ascribes this same amulet to Isaac Luria (fol. 58a).

ter each time in a vanishing act (in German *Schwindeschema*), pointing downward, ending with the letter *alef*. On the opposite side, the same name ends with the letter *tsade* instead of *samekh*, and drops the first letter each time, thus ending with *tsade*.[110]

Furthermore, a *segullah* for protection using the name *Taftafyah*, which Zacuto emphasized through the notable number of traditions relating to this name that he assembled in his dictionary of holy names,[111] indicates that some roots of early modern Jewish magic reach back to the Ḥasidei Ashkenaz (German pietists) and their reception of oriental sources.[112] All the relevant equivalent elements regarding the numerical value of this name are presented: the last letters of Exod 23:20 (until "place"), the protection "against armed forces" (*'al tsava*) or "against a shield" (*'al magen*), along with "be unto me armed forces" (*yhyh li tsava*), "be unto me a shield" (*yhyh li magen*), and "order fear" (*tsaweh paḥad*); all these phrases sum to 193, like the name *Taftafyah*.[113]

A section on the seventy-two divine names lists the seventy-two triads not according to the standard pattern—that is, the first letter of Exod 14:19, the last letter of Exod 14:20, the first letter of Exod 14:21, and so on[114]—but according to the so-called straight order: each name of the triads results from the regular sequence of letters within each of the three verses, meaning the first letter of Exod 14:19 together with the first letter of Exod 14:20, the first letter of Exod 14:21, and so on.[115] Subsequently, the names of the seventy-two angels are added, from Metatron to *Azaryahu*, and their functions or magical applications

---

110 In MS Copenhagen, Royal Danish Library, Sim. 9, fol. 58a, the name on the opposing side is identical, but a second version of it is given in extenso, with the difference that the last letter of the name is a *nun*. Compare also MS Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 252, fols. 6b and 8b; see Kohs and Veltri, "Magic in the Hebrew-Manuscript Collection," 545–546.

111 See Gerold Necker, "The 'Secret of the Creation of the Demons': A Chapter in an Anonymous Lurianic Treatise Adapted by Moses Zacuto," *Jewish Studies* 2 (2020): 95–114. The implications of the name *Na'aryron*, which I discuss in this article in the context of *Taftafyah* (according to a tradition of Me'ir of Rothenburg), are explained on fol. 45b of the present manuscript (MS Jerusalem 9006).

112 See Moshe Idel, "R. Nehemiah ben Shlomo the Prophet on the Star of David and the Name Taftafyah: From Jewish Magic to Practical and Theoretical Kabbalah" [in Hebrew], in *Ta-Shema': Meḥqrim be-mada'ei ha-yahadut le-zikhro shel Yiśra'el M. Ta-Shema'*, ed. Avraham (Rami) Reiner et al. (Alon Shvut: Tevunot, 2011), 1:1–76.

113 Fol. 41b; see also below for the traditions the amulet ascribed to Jacob Berab on fol. 40b and the magic square with the letters of *Taftafyah* for an amulet on fol. 48a.

114 Compare Zohar 2:51b, and see the references in Daniel Chanan Matt (ed.), *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, vol. 4 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 258–259, n. 216 (explaining the name of seventy-two names with 216 letters in total). Moses Zacuto used not only this standard pattern, but also the straight order; see Eliezer Baumgarten, Yuval Harari, and Uri Safrai, "Commentary on a Few Names: On the Beginning of Zacuto's Lexicon of Holy Names," *JSQ* (in press).

115 Ten different ways of arranging the triads are mentioned in Johannes Reuchlin, *De arte cabalistica libri tres*, ed. Widu-Wolfgang Ehlers and Fritz Felgentreu, Hebrew text ed. Reimund Leicht (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2010), 392–395; the most common one is explained on p. 397. For the corresponding names of the seventy-two angels, see pp. 410–413. The ten ways are listed systematically and in extenso in Petrus Galatinus, *De arcanis catholicae veritatis libri XII* (Frankfurt, 1612; first printed in 1518), *liber secundus*, cap. 17, col. 97–100; Galatinus mentions that only the first two (which follow the patterns described above) include a vocalization according to his kabbalistic sources. A first hint towards the second version of the name of seventy-two names is

are listed, but only up to the sixty-second name, since this is what the scribe found in his source,[116] followed by instructions on how to use the holy names consisting of letters from the Tetragrammaton. Particular importance was attached to this "straight" version of the seventy-two names—which is explained at length by Menaḥem Tsiyyoni (fl. 14th cent.) as being used by the "masters of the service" (*ba'alei ha-'avodah*)[117]—in the Lurianic liturgical traditions, and thus it also appears in Zacuto's siddur in the context of "reading the Shema."[118]

Among the theoretical kabbalistic interpretations, which are added to—or tied together with—the magic collection,[119] short extracts from Lurianic writings form a particular unit just before the *Sefer Zekhirah* begins.[120] After Isaac Luria's answers to two questions from R. Samuel Fodila, adapted from a letter which is known from Ḥayyim Vital's Lurianic corpus, there are two explanations of the concept of the four worlds "in a nutshell,"[121] which introduce the short "homily on the parapet" (Deut 22:8).[122] Next come other short Lurianic pieces, such as an exposition on the words *et* and *gam* (אתין וגמין)[123] and a discourse on the letters אט״בח.[124] Eventually, a "homily on the image" (*derush ha-tselem*)[125] and explanations of *gadlut* (the process of growing up within the divine configurations)[126] round off the collection of topics that include, inter alia, the "descent of the powers of consciousness" (*moḥin*), the "exile of Joseph in Egypt," "Pharaoh's dreams,"

---

apparently given in *Tiqqunei Zohar*, ed. Reuven Margaliot (Jerusalem: Mosad haRav Kook, 1994), fol. 86b (*tiqqun* 51), and see also Zohar 2:119b (*Raya Mehemna*).

116 Fol. 50b (*'ad kan matsati*).

117 See his commentary on the Torah, *Sefer Tsiyyoni* (Lemberg, 1882), fol. 30b–c. Frequent references to *ba'alei ha-'avodah* can also be found in the contemporary *Ma'arekhet ha-Elohut*, which suggests hermeneutic expertise in divine names and their relationship to the Sefirot. By contrast, the appellations *anshei shem* (people of the name) or *mekhashefim/qosmim* (magicians/sorcerers) are used for those who adjure demons; see Boaz Huss, "Demonology and Magic in the Writings of R. Menahem Ziyyoni," *Kabbalah* 10 (2004), 58.

118 *Siddur ha-ReMeZ*, 171–173.

119 On fol. 59a–b, a numbered list with fifteen items appears under the heading "These Are the Reasons that Cause the Death of the Righteous" (*elu hem ha-devarim she gormim mitat ha-tsaddiq*), beginning with the insights given in the Zohar *parashat wa-yeshev* (Zohar 1:179a on Ps 34:20, and the explications of Gen 37:1 in Zohar 1:180a).

120 Fol. 60a, although the beginning is lost, because again the manuscript is incomplete and some pages are missing here.

121 Fol. 60a. On Samuel Fodila, see Gershom Scholem, "The True Kabbalistic Writings of Luria," in Gershom Scholem, *Qabbalat ha-ARI*, ed. Daniel Abrams (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2008), 244–245. The two quotations concerning the four worlds are from *Tiqqunei Zohar* 3b (end) and *'Ets Ḥayyim* 42:1 (ed. Jehuda Zvi Brandwein, *Kol Kitvei ha-ARI*, 2:315).

122 Fol. 60a–b; this version differs from the longer version printed in *Sefer ha-Liqqutim* (Jerusalem: Lipshitz, 1913), fols. 60d–65c.

123 That is, the *nota accusativa* and the word "also," fol. 60b; cf. *'Ets Ḥayyim* 38:3 (ed. Brandwein, 2:208).

124 Fols. 60b–63a; cf. the longer version in *'Ets Ḥayyim* 35:4–5 (ed. Brandwein, 2:177–184).

125 An anthology of eight "homilies of the image" (*derushei ha-tselem*) is found in *'Ets Ḥayyim* 25:1–8 (ed. Brandwein, 2:1–48).

126 Starting with "thirteen years and one day in adulthood (*gadlut*)," fol. 67b; see Ḥayyim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Haqdamot*, ed. Jehuda Zevi Brandwein, *Kol Kitvei ha-ARI*, 5:312–313. On fol. 68a, the

and the secret of "impregnation" (*'ibbur*). The central theme of this Lurianic anthology is the unfolding emanation and its dynamics within the divine world correlated to the protagonists (especially Jacob, Rachel, and Leah) of the biblical narrative.

It comes as no surprise that *Sefer Zekhirah*, which is a good fit with the magical character of the first part of the manuscript, includes about thirteen references to traditions related to Isaac Luria. Generally speaking, against the backdrop of an increasing tendency to approach Luria from a hagiographical perspective and the increased popularity of Lurianic customs in the seventeenth century—and, one should also add, the circulation of theoretical texts that were more easily comprehensible in paraphrases or summaries[127]—it stands to reason that his role in magical contexts should be highlighted in this way.[128] Some of these "Lurianic" traditions apparently emerged from what we might call an authentic origin, meaning that they had a connection to Lurianic writings, particularly concerning prayer intentions. Already in the first chapter of *Sefer Zekhirah*, which deals with the commandment about tzitzit (fringes), the following *segullah* is formulated according to what is found "in Isaac Luria's prayer intentions" (*be-kawwanot ha-ARI*):[129]

> A person who puts the fringes in front of his eyes during the reading of the Shema is promised that his eyes will not go blind. He who consistently contemplates (the fringes) is worthy to receive the face of the Shekhinah. This is also good for keen perception and leads to piety (*yirat shamayim*). And looking at the edge (כנף) is good for dissolving anger, thus the numerical value of "edge" (150) sums to the same as that of "anger" (כעס). That is why a child becomes accustomed to tzitzit from the age of three, for in doing so, the holy spirit will rest (upon him), according to the secret of the gematria of *tallit* which equals the numerical value of En-Sof according

---

text breaks off because half of the page is missing. Fol. 69b does not discuss Lurianic topics, but is again devoted to holy names and magic.

127 A good example is the "earliest dated Ashkenazi manuscript in our possession that contains Lurianic material," MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Opp. 526; see Elchanan Reiner, "A Biography of an Agent of Culture: Eleazar Altschul of Prague and His Literary Activity," in *Schöpferische Momente des europäischen Judentums in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Michael Graetz (Heidelberg: Winter, 2000), 232.

128 On the development of Luria's role as a legendary figure, see Eitan Fishbane, "Perceptions of Greatness: Constructions of the Holy Man in Shivhei ha-ARI," *Kabbalah* 72 (2012): 195–221; Patrick B. Koch, "Of Stinging Nettles and Stones: The Use of Hagiography in Early Modern Kabbalah and Pietism," *JQR* 109 (2019): 534–566. Solomon Shlomiel of Dresnitz's letters about Luria (which were later incorporated in *Shivḥei ha-ARI* [In Praise of Isaac Luria]) can be viewed as the "first kabbalistic hagiography" (Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 423; see also Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 84–88). The considerable increase in printings of *Shivḥei ha-ARI* (and later also *Toldot ha-ARI*, first printed in Istanbul in 1720) at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries (see Fishbane, "Perceptions of Greatness," 220) may be seen as a sort of compensation after the breakdown of the Sabbatian movement. The involvement of famous (even rational) scholars in fantastic legends which describe them as having thaumaturgical faculties can already be found in the Middle Ages, e.g., in respect of Saadia Gaon.

129 Fol. 72b (= 3b in the new pagination starting with *Sefer Zekhirah*). See the first printed edition (1709), fol. 5a.

to its spelling,[130] and also the gematria of "exiles" (גליות).[131] In that way, he will be worthy of the world to come.

To be sure, the starting point of this tradition is the ancient custom of grasping the four fringes during the third part of the Shema prayer, the passage on tzitzit (Num 15:37–41), and passing them before one's eyes while reciting the verse: "That you may look upon it and remember all the commandments" (Num 15:39).[132] In Vital's *Sha'ar ha-Kawwanot*, detailed instructions for prayer intentions follow the statement that "a man should look upon the fringes, at every hour and moment, as it is written '[and it shall be unto you for a fringe] that you may look upon it' (Num 15:39), and it is a great benefit for the soul, in that he will not happen to perform a sin."[133] The intentions include the numerical equivalents of "eye" and a manner of spelling the Tetragrammaton on the one hand and a spelling of the name 'EHYH—being equivalent to the "edge" of the fringe, but eventually harmonized with the numerical value of 130—on the other.[134] Two consecutive contemplations sum to 260, which refers to "seeing" (*re'ut*), based on "and when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see (*sar lir'ot*)" (Exod 3:4), because *sar* has the numerical value of 260 and "to see" is understood as "for seeing." That is to say, the main ingredients of the *segullah* against blindness are mentioned, and one could add parallels for the issue of anger or the aspiration to dwell with the divine spirit.[135] Similar outlines, including some particular explanations of holy names, but without the promise of protection, are also summarized in the Lurianic prayer book, and in a less sophisticated précis in the famous collection of Lurianic customs *Shulḥan 'Arukh ha-ARI*, as well as in Samuel David Ottolenghi's *Me'il Shemu'el* (Samuel's Coat).[136]

---

130 *Tet*, *lamed*, *yod*, *tav* (9 + 30 + 10 + 400) plus *ha-kollel* (one for the word) = 450 = פא, וו, סמך, נון, יוד, אלף = 111 + 20 + 106 + 120 + 12 + 81.

131 Both words, *galuyot* and *tallit*, sum to 449.

132 The custom is also reflected in kabbalistic contexts; see Zohar 3:174b (*Raya Mehemna*).

133 *Sha'ar ha-Kawwanot*, *derush* 7 (ed. Jehuda Zevi Brandwein, *Kol Kitvei ha-ARI*, 8:49–50).

134 *Sha'ar ha-Kawwanot*, *derush* 7; the spelling of 'EHYH "filled" with the letter *he* sums to 151 (*alef*, HH, YUD, HH), but deducting 21 (the gematria of 'EHYH) means that the number 130 is reached once more.

135 As for the reference to the three-year-old child, a first hint is found in the same context: Isaac Luria reports that his own boy was still too small to be able to distinguish between the intentions pertaining to the contemplation of the fringes of (the divine configurations) *Ze'ir Anpin* and Jacob (*Sha'ar ha-kawwanot*, 50).

136 For the prayer book, see the *Siddur Qol Ya'aqov* (Lemberg: Stauropigianische Instituts-Druckerei, 1859), fol. 17a: "One has to grasp them (sc. the fringes) and look at them at all times during the day, because it is very beneficial for perception and for remembrance to perform the commandment of 'you may look upon it und you will remember' (Num 15:39), and one should aim to remove the darkness from the eyes of (the divine configuration) *Nuqva* and to illuminate her from the eyes of (the configuration) *Ze'ir Anpin* [...]." Compare the early yet unelaborated description in *Shulḥan 'Arukh ha-ARI*, letter *he* (no pagination): "And when you reach the beginning of the passage on tzitzit, grasp the four (edges) of the fringes with your right hand and look on them, and when you reach 'you may look upon it' (Num 15:39), concentrate on the intention that you are aware of, (since) it is (written) in (Isaac Luria's) *Sefer ha-Kawwanot*, and when you reach 'after your eyes' (Num

However, the aspect of thaumaturgic magic, guaranteed by Luria's authority, also seems to have been stimulated by one of the anecdotes that Vital incorporated into his writings. He reports that he once suffered from an eye complaint for almost two months. When Vital consulted his teacher, Luria gave him two possible causes for his disease: one in accordance with a talmudic explanation,[137] the other bound to the special spiritual power that rested upon Luria when he was concentrating on awe-inspiring intentions—the Shema prayer being one of three occasions.[138] Since Vital wanted to learn from his teacher by watching him, the force of holiness surrounding Luria affected Vital causing his eyes to become damaged.[139] It is evident that Luria's solemn but apparently dangerous charisma during prayer was likely to transform into the miraculous power of protection from blindness, which became inherent in the very act of gazing at the fringes. This is not a metamorphosis of liturgy into magic, but rather the transmission of a supernatural effect being achieved through the devotional religious observance of a positive commandment. Of course, prayer and ritual are expected to be salutary. However, the Lurianic concept of holiness translates them into success, or more precisely, establishes a mutual commitment with the divine presence.

It is telling that the *segullah* of tzitzit that saves one from blindness was also included in Yeḥi'el Michal Epstein's *Qitsur Shenei Luḥot ha-Berit* (Abridgment of the Two Tables of the Covenant; Fürth, 1696, fol. 34a). With minor changes and some additions in comparison to *Sefer Zekhirah*, this version—though not being called a *segullah*—was included among the laws, customs, and kabbalistic teachings in Epstein's supplemented condensation of Isaiah Horowitz's *Two Tables of the Covenant* (*Shenei Luḥot ha-Berit*), which was disseminated throughout the Jewish world.[140]

15:39), kiss them and put them between your eyes." On the entanglement of Jacob Tsemaḥ's *Nagid u-metsaweh* with this work, see Avivi, *Kabbala Luriana*, 2:670–671, and compare the printed text in *Sefer Nagid u-metsaweh* (Przemyśl, 1880), 31. Samuel David Ottolenghi's abridgment of Isaiah Horowitz's *Shenei Luḥot ha-Berit* (Two Tables of the Covenant) does not refer to Luria in this context, but in *Hilkhot tsitsit* he mentions the purpose of the "secret of the fringes"; namely, to concentrate on the divine name 'EHYH filled with *he* in times of anger because it equals the numerical value of "anger" (*ka'as*), as does the grasped "edge" (*kanaf*) of the fringes (*Me'il Shmu'el* [Venice, 1705], fol. 7a).

137 bShab 113b: when someone takes "great strides" on weekdays, it "takes away one five-hundredth of a man's eyesight"; though his eyesight would be restored by the evening kiddush on Shabbat, Luria explains that Vital failed to concentrate on the appropriate prayer intentions.

138 The other two are bowing at the thanksgiving prayer (bBer 34a) and responding (Isa 6:3) during the Kedushah.

139 See *Sha'ar ha-Mitswot*, parashat 'eqev (ed. Jehuda Zevi Brandwein, *Kol Kitvei ha-ARI*, 7:89). Vital was cured by ceasing to gaze at his teacher during these three times of prayer. See also *Peri 'Ets Ḥayyim*, *sha'ar qeriyat shema'*, ch. 24 (ed. Jehuda Zevi Brandwein, *Kol Kitvei ha-ARI*, 13:200). This extraordinary but dangerous power of holiness is also mentioned in *Shivḥei ha-ARI*, ed. Jacob Moses Hillel (Jerusalem: Ahavat Shalom, 1991), 48; see also Fishbane, "Perceptions of Greatness," 201, n. 16.

140 On the wide circulation of *Qitsur Shenei Luḥot ha-Berit*, see Marvin Heller, *The Seventeenth Century Hebrew Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 2:1232–1233; Hallamish, *Kabbalah in Liturgy, Halakhah and Customs*, 288. On the efficiency of this work for the diffusion of kabbalistic liturgical traditions, see

5   Conclusion

The three manuscripts discussed in this article have served as case studies for approaching different contexts of the conjoint appearance of magic and Lurianic Kabbalah in the seventeenth century. A first field was opened up by *segullot* found in a prayer book in the possession of Moses Zacuto and copied by Samuel Ottolenghi as a supplement to *Qitsur Sefer ha-Derushim*. The mere fact that the scribe felt it important to add this magical material to a widely read compilation of homilies on Luria's doctrine of creation indicates that the two fields were not considered to be in conflict with each other. On the contrary, when it comes to individual practices of piety, the person engaged in prayer pairs the complex details of sacred names and their unifications with his desire for successful learning. That is to say, an understanding of the Lurianic worldview determines both the purpose and the means. It should be taken into account that obliviousness is not only a serious barrier to learning, but is also associated with a lack of "fidelity to the covenant of circumcision."[141] The combination of these characteristics with penitential practice is particularly striking. In this context, the aspect of danger when reciting sacred names is also addressed, which reflects a basic difficulty in bringing forth supernatural powers, as acknowledged by Isaac Luria himself. Eventually, it was absorbed by the concept of holiness. As a matter of fact, the gap between confidence in effective religious acts charged with Lurianic spirituality on the one side and the highly sensitive awareness of personal sin in the context of affliction, sickness, and disaster on the other was bridged by the holy tradition, made accessible by kabbalistic teaching, and endowed with Luria's authority.

These factors also influenced the transmission of Lurianic writings as a whole, and compilations which include units of magical texts and recipes seem to be a rather frequent phenomenon. For example, the school of Israel Saruq, which forms a distinct part of the ramified Lurianic teachings, has to some extent been characterized as being susceptible to magic.[142] Thus, a textual unit of magical traditions denoted as "principles of Rabbi Isaac Luria" belonging to his "companions" surfaces in a comprehensive manuscript collection in the British Library that also incorporated important Saruqian writings (along with glosses by Moses Zacuto). Some of these recipes were adapted from Vital's *Book of Remedies*, among them the well-known Christian formula *sator arepo tenet opera rotas* in

---

Patrick Koch, "'Gathering the Dispersed': The Evolution of a Kabbalistic Prayer Addendum for *Tiqqun Qeri*," *HTR* 114 (2021): 241–264.

141 Joel Hecker, ed., *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, vol. 11 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 259, n. 676, commentary on *Zohar Ḥadash* 89c, with additional references. Hecker emphasizes that in "Zoharic Kabbalah, forgetfulness is directly linked to the demonic."

142 See Paluch, "Copying, Compiling, Commonplacing," 108, 111–112 (concerning *Sefer ha-Ḥesheq* in general, which was transmitted among Lurianic-Saruqian traditions, and a Saruqian formula for the preparation of a "magical ring"); and Chajes, *Between Worlds*, 221, n. 21, referring to Saruqian "manuscripts in circulation in Italy during Zacuto's lifetime" that included magical traditions ascribed to Luria, but adding that in 1651 in Krakow, Meir Poppers wrote his Lurianic *Sha'ar ha-Yiḥudim* which was extended with "amulets and magical diagrams" that are unknown in earlier manuscripts. It seems likely that the whole phenomenon of adding magical material to Lurianic texts did not appear before the middle of the seventeenth century and that Zacuto's affinity for magic played an influential role in this context, as claimed above, following Yuval Harari.

a magic square for women having difficulties giving birth. Its appearance in a *Sefer ha-'O-tot*, incorporated into a Hebrew version of *Clavicula Salomonis*, proves that this precise medical use of the formula was known for being ascribed to Isaac Luria, despite its transference to an astrological context in *Mafteaḥ Shelomoh*.

Lurianic texts forming part of Ḥayyim Vital's kabbalistic compilations appear in a condensed form alongside magical traditions—including some that have been ascribed to Luria—in MS Jerusalem 9006. Since a whole range of *segullot* are upgraded by similar attributions in the same manuscript (starting with medieval Ashkenazi and Sephardi authorities in the field of Jewish mysticism), it is clear that the focus on Luria increased during the seventeenth century. This is also emphasized by *Sefer Zekhirah*, which follows closely upon the Lurianic anthology in MS Jerusalem 9006 and indicates that the diffusion of Lurianic Kabbalah, particularly from the second half of the seventeenth century, is in line with the contemporary interest in magic. Nevertheless, within the juxtaposition of different sources in the Jerusalem manuscript, older traditions also emerge that corroborate the assumption that an early interaction with "practical Kabbalah" had fundamental effects on Lurianic meditation, as shown in the case of the straight order of the divine name of seventy-two names. In the broader context, later manifestations of so-called Lurianic customs collected in *Shulḥan 'Arukh ha-ARI* and of traditions incorporated into the hagiographical *Shivḥei ha-ARI*, connected both to the founding figure himself and consequently to the Lurianic appeal to liturgy and prayer, also appear. Essentially entailed in the ongoing process of the diffusion of Lurianic Kabbalah, however, is an idiosyncratic affinity to magic.[143]

---

143 It would be helpful to prepare a systematic list of Lurianic manuscripts that include magic material, either incorporated in the texts (as in MS London, British Library, Or. 10734) or added by a later hand—to give a final example, the collection of Lurianic *kawwanot* from the seventeenth century in MS Mantua, Jewish Community of Mantua, ebr. 90, fols. 1a–79b, which was "supplemented" with magic remedies against poison and epilepsy (fol. 84b; see Busi, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts*, 79–80).

Hebrew "Solomonic Magic": The Case of the *Ydea Salomonis*

Gal Sofer

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the dynamic meaning of the term *Ydea Salomonis*, which appears in manuscripts from the late Middle Ages onward.[1] This article aims to analyze the dynamics of the term *Ydea Salomonis* and demonstrate (through close readings of manuscripts) the different ways that scribes used it, and how those contributed to the rise of different practices. I will begin with a short discussion of "Solomonic magic," a scholarly category that is often believed to denote a specific set of works, among them *Ydea Salomonis*. Following that, I will present the various meanings of *Ydea Salomonis*, as they appear in different works, and illustrate that despite their differences, they do share some common material. I will conclude this article by offering an edition of Cairo Genizah fragments and a Latin parallel that should be seen as part of our discussion on *Ydea Salomonis*.

1   "Solomonic Magic"

Defining a corpus of texts often produces serious methodological difficulties. When it comes to scholarly works of "magic," a somewhat problematic term in itself, it is even more challenging. Such a problematic case is that of "Solomonic magic," a vague signifier that seems to play a different role in the works of different scholars.[2] While serious

---

2   On some aspects of this problematic "corpus," see Julien Véronèse, "La transmission groupée des textes de magie salomonienne de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge: Bilan historiographique, inconnues et pistes de recherche," in *L'Antiquité tardive dans les collections médiévales*, ed. Stéphane Gioanni and Benoît Grévin (Rome: École française de Rome, 2008), 193–223; Julien Véronèse, "Solomonic Magic," in *The Routledge History of Medieval Magic*, ed. Sophie Page and Catherine Rider (London: Routledge, 2019), 187–200. Throughout this paper, I use the following abbreviations for frequently quoted manuscripts:
MS C: Private collection, Coxe. 25. Formerly Amsterdam, Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, 114 (this manuscript is paginated, not foliated).
MS F: Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, II.III.214.
MS G: (facsimile) Hermann Gollancz, *Sepher Maphteaḥ Shelomo* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914). (Second foliation is marked with asterisk.)

genealogical work needs to be carried out to understand how this term developed and functions in both primary and secondary literature, that is beyond the scope of this paper.[3] However, I give some introductory words here to justify the approach toward certain texts, specifically the *Ydea Salomonis* text(s) that stand(s) at the center of this paper. This text, or rather collection of texts, is known to us from several manuscripts from the fourteenth century onwards, solely in Latin. There are also Hebrew *Ydea Salomonis* texts, one of which is preserved in the Cairo Genizah, that attest to the instability of this whole "corpus" of "Solomonic magic." Deeper examination shows that *Ydea Salomonis* is far from being a specific text, and that this name was given to different, distinct objects, as we will see. Discovering the possible relationships between those objects, which can be revealed only through a close reading of the texts under study (rather than defining all as parts of the same "corpus," or even the same "work"), is one of the aims of this paper.

First, let me start with a clarification: "Solomonic magic" is a scholarly category that is supposedly meant to signify specific works.[4] This specification is rather confusing as some scholars use the "Solomonic" adjective to indicate an attribution to the famous King Solomon. However, when it comes to scholarly efforts, the term seems to focus on the specific works that were gathered together by the famous, yet anonymous, author of the *Speculum Astronomiae*, who listed (some of) them among a group of detestable works. Véronèse has already pointed to the problematic nature of the "Solomonic" category, explaining that the lack of medieval textual evidence is one reason for this problem, as is the textual fragility of manuscripts and their transformations.[5] However, the list of works that the "Magister Speculi" created—in a polemical context with an explicit condemnation—seems to play a central role, among scholars, in defining this "corpus." Furthermore, the deficiency of early (medieval) textual evidence led to historians of this "corpus" leaning almost exclusively on condemnations of such texts by figures such as the "Magister Speculi," William of Auvergne, and Michael Scot. This created a distinct

---

MS L: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 89, sup. 38.

MS O: London, British Library, Or. 14759.

MS P: Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, XIII.F.24.

MS S: London, British Library, Sloane 3847.

MS V: Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal.lat. 1196.

SSM: *Summa sacre magice*; Kassel, Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel, 4° MS astron. 3.

3   See Gal Sofer, "Solomonic Magic: Texts, History, and Reception" (PhD diss., Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2022), 14–27.

4   Scholars, and not practitioners, use the term "Solomonic magic," with two exceptions. The first exception is modern practitioners, who use academic sources for their practice. The second exception, which is more relevant to us, is the fourteenth-century Catalan magician Berengar Ganell, who used the term *magica Salomonis*. However, it is important to note that for Ganell, *magica Salomonis* is a signifier of all the texts of "magic" that are ascribed to King Solomon. No excluding criteria were set by Ganell. This is contrary to the scholarly "Solomonic magic," which does not, de facto, include texts such as the *Misceláneo de Salomón*, even though it is quite relevant (see note 61 below). On Ganell, see below.

5   See Véronèse, "La transmission."

corpus that is not outlined through a close reading of the texts as products of their scribes but rather by the (selective) reading of their opponents.[6] Without underestimating the importance of such evidence for the historian, who might use it to sketch the historiography of this "corpus," it is important to escape from the frame that those polemicists set for us and rely on the texts themselves, as well as their physical hosts—the manuscripts.

That being said, I do not think that the term "Solomonic magic" is useless. On the contrary, it is useful to use this term to highlight the similarities, alongside the differences, that have been discovered by scholars of such texts. Therefore, I suggest leaving "Solomonic magic" behind as a firm category. My usage of the "Solomonic" adjective is not a signifier of a well-defined and closed corpus, but rather a dynamic and open matrix of textual units that can draw our attention to unstudied formulas, creating the foundations for new studies. The study of textual units in such works, which should be considered as open books (or "fluid"),[7] might be more helpful than trying to trace their questionable urtext. Such a study has already been done by Véronèse, who drew our attention to the intertextual links between different works, revealing their "open" nature.[8] In that sense, the *Ydea Salomonis* that is listed in the list of the "Magister Speculi" is no exception.

In what follows, I present Hebrew texts (manuscripts and Cairo Genizah fragments) from different periods that can be seen as part of the "corpus" of *Ydea Salomonis* texts. I use these texts to exemplify the transmission of knowledge throughout cultures and languages, as well as to describe the dynamic nature of technical terms, such as the term *Ydea*.

2　*Ydea Salomonis*: Preliminary Notes on an Elusive Term

There has been no systemic study on the *Ydea Salomonis*, and even references to this title in the secondary scholarly literature are quite rare.[9] However, its relative disappearance from scholarly works does not correlate with the popularity it gained from the Middle Ages

---

6　By "selective" I mean that these opponents treated *Ydea Salomonis* as the name of a specific work.

7　According to Bryant, "fluid text is any written work that exists in multiple material versions due to revisions (authorial, editorial, cultural) upon which we may construct an interpretation"; John Bryant, "Witness and Access: The Uses of the Fluid Text," *Textual Cultures* 2 (2007), 17.

8　Véronèse has observed the existence of intertextual links in many of his works, and his critical editions of "Solomonic" texts are full of footnotes with references that exemplify those important links. See, for example, Julien Véronèse, *L'Almandal et l'Almadel latins au Moyen Âge: Introduction et éditions critiques* (Florence: SISMEL—Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2012).

9　Important exceptions are Lynn Thorndike, "Traditional Medieval Tracts concerning Engraved Astrological Images," in *Mélanges Auguste Pelzer: Études d'histoire littéraire et doctrinale de la Scolastique médiévale offertes à Monseigneur Auguste Pelzer* (Leuven: Bibliothèque de l'Université, 1947), 250–251; Jean-Patrice Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance: Astrologie, divination et magie dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2006), 145–149; Sebastiano Gentile and Carlos Gilly, *Marsilio Ficino e il ritorno di Ermete Trismegisto* (Florence: Centro Di, 1999), 226–228; Véronèse, "La transmission," 201–202; David Pingree, "Learned Magic in the Time of Frederick II," *Micrologus* 2 (1994): 39–56; Nicolas Weill-Parot, *Les "images astrologiques" au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance: Spéculations intellectuelles et pratiques magiques (XIIe–XVe siècle)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002), 52–53; Benoît Grévin and Julien Véronèse, "Les 'caractères' magiques au Moyen Âge (XIIe–XIVe siècle)," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 162.2 (2004), 328–330; Charles Burnett, "Inscriptio characterum: Solomonic Magic and Paleography," in *Unveiling the Hidden—*

on. In the first half of the thirteenth century, the bishop of Paris, William of Auvergne, considered it to be idolatrous, alongside the *Anuli Salomonis* (Rings of Solomon) and the *Novem candariae* (Nine *Candariae*).[10] The astrologer in the court of Frederick II, Michael Scot, mentioned the *Ydea Salomonis* in his *Liber introductorius* as a source for a method of receiving answers from spirits.[11] The Benedictine monk John of Morigny seems to have been familiar with it and even operated related practices during the first half of the fourteenth century.[12] During the fifteenth century, the term *Ydea Salomonis* was still in use; as well as manuscripts that refer to it, a book entitled *De quattuor annulis Salomonis* (On the Four Rings of Solomon) with an incipit that mentions the *Ydea* was listed among the inventory of a Barcelonian bricklayer Pere Marc, who was prosecuted by the Inquisition in March 1440 for heresy, and his books were burned in October of that year.[13] It did not disappear then, as we will see.

Anticipating the Future: Divinatory Practices among Jews between Qumran and the Modern Period, ed. Josefina Rodríguez-Arribas and Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, Prognostication in History 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 311–332. See also the interesting observation of Ockenström concerning similarities between an *Ydea Salomonis* and an astral magic text in Lauri Ockenström, "Demons, Illness, and Spiritual Aids in Natural Magic and Image Magic," in *Demons and Illness from Antiquity to the Early-Modern Period*, ed. Siam Bhayro and Catherine Rider (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 300, n. 29. In his work on catoptromancy, Delatte wonders whether the word *ideae* refers to the spirits' prototypes; see Armand Delatte, *La catoptromancie grecque et ses dérivés* (Liège: Vaillant-Carmann, 1932), 46.

10 See Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), 2:279–280, 2:351–352; Pingree, "Learned Magic," 45; Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, 145–146; Graziella Federici-Vescovini, *Medioevo magico: La magia tra religione e scienza nei secoli XIII e XIV* (Turin: UTET libreria, 2008), 35; Thomas B. de Mayo, *The Demonology of William of Auvergne: By Fire and Sword* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), 29; Robert Mathiesen, "A Thirteenth-Century Ritual to Attain the Beatific Vision from the Sworn Book of Honorius of Thebes," in *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic*, ed. Claire Fanger (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1998), 146. While Mathiesen translated the word *candariae* as "Scarabs", I use *candariae* (and all its different variations) as is. Those, as will be shown below, were often seen as talismanic tools.

11 MS Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, CLM 10268, fol. 17v: "Et est sciendum quod spiritum quidam quan doque intrant in corpora mortuorum nuperime et per illa sonant, responsa dare sapienti conuocati, ut probatur in arte Alphayrei, Florieth, Ydee Salomonis et cetera." I also consulted the edition in the dissertation of Glenn Michael Edwards, "The *Liber introductorius* of Michael Scot" (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1978). See also Pingree, "Learned Magic," 46.

12 John described a vision in his *Book of Visions* that came to him during the making of the fourth ring of Solomon, in which he heard a voice that blamed him for being a fool to practice this forbidden necromantic art. See the edition of Claire Fanger and Nicholas Watson, *Liber florum celestis doctrine: The Flowers of Heavenly Teaching* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2015), 166–167. See also Claire Fanger, *Rewriting Magic: An Exegesis of the Visionary Autobiography of a Fourteenth-Century French Monk* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2015), 109. On the connection between the *Ydea* and the four rings of Solomon, see below.

13 Josep Hernando, "La Inquisición en Cataluña en la Baja Edad Media: Un proceso por crimen de herejía contra el ciudadano de Barcelona Pere Marc," *Clio & Crimen: Revista del Centro de Historia del Crimen de Durango* 2 (2005): 127–174; Sebastià Giralt, "The Manuscript of a Medieval Necromancer: Magic in Occitan and Latin in Ms. Vaticano, BAV, Barb. Lat. 3589," *Revue d'Histoire des textes* 9 (2014), 264.

The Parisian bishop's reference to those three works together—*Ydea Salomonis*, *Anuli Salomonis*, and *Novem candariae*—is often used as evidence that they were transmitted together, and some scholars even considered the *Anuli Salomonis* to be another title of the *Ydea Salomonis*, particularly due to the passage by the "Magister Speculi" describing the incipit of a work entitled *Quatour anulis Salomonis* as "de arte eutonica et ydaica."[14] But a word of caution is required here, since, as I have mentioned, the term *Ydea Salomonis* has been used in more than one way, representing quite different, albeit connected, objects: a title of (different) works, a title of a book (that contains different *experiments*), a method, a specific tool, a symbol of power, and—as in the *Speculum* but also in other sources—an art. Even if those different objects are somewhat connected, or even derived from each other, we should be careful not to draw a broad conclusion based on one of those objects while ignoring the others.

As with the famous *Clavicula Salmonis*, which was used as a title of quite different texts, the *Ydea* seemed to gain popularity by the same process and was used to point to more than one (distinct) work.[15] In all cases, the work is attributed to the three or four wisest disciples of Solomon: Fortunatus, Elazar, Toz Grecus, and—often but not always—Nazarus or Macarus.[16] Sometimes it is described as a collaboration with Ysaac, the son of Solomon.[17] The attribution to Ysaac the son of Solomon is quite intriguing since it seems to be an interpolation of the name of a famous Jewish figure—the physician Isaac Israeli ben Solomon, also known as Isaac Iudaeus (ca. 855–955), whose works were translated from Arabic into Latin.[18] Two of them (*De urinis* and *De diaetis universalibus et particularibus*) appear in MS V, the same codex in which one can find a text of the *Ydea Salomonis* in later handwriting. Whether the interpolation of Isaac Iudaeus into the chain of transmission has any historical (fictional or nonfictional) roots,[19] this genesis narrative is by no means random and is deeply ingrained in the notion of conscious eclecticism, that is, explicit borrowing from different sources—in different languages—to build a systematized method. The Christian-Latin (Fortunatus, Nazarius), Jewish-Hebrew (Elazar),

---

14 Paola Zambelli, *The Speculum Astronomiae and Its Enigma: Astrology, Theology and Science in Albertus Magnus and His Contemporaries* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1992), 244.

15 On the case of the *Clavicula Salomonis*, see Federico Barbierato, "Writing, Reading, Writing: Scribal Culture and Magical Texts in Early Modern Venice," *Italian Studies* 66.2 (2011): 263–276; Federico Barbierato, *Nella stanza dei circoli: Clavicula Salomonis e libri di magia a Venezia nei secoli XVII e XVIII* (Milan: S. Bonnard, 2002).

16 In MS V, for example, only the first three are mentioned, without Nazarus. In MS F, it is Macarus.

17 MS V, fol. iv; MS C, p. 46.

18 According to Altmann and Stern, the author of the famous book of astral magic, the Arabic *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, drew some elements from Isaac's *Book of Definitions*; see Alexander Altmann and Samuel Miklos Stern, *Isaac Israeli: A Neoplatonic Philosopher of the Early Tenth Century; His Works Translated with Comments and an Outline of His Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 7–8. See also David Pingree, "Some of the Sources of the Ghāyat Al-Ḥakīm," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 43 (1980), 4.

19 On the possible involvement of Jewish physicians in transmitting "Solomonic magic" in later periods, see Gal Sofer, "Wearing God, Consecrating Body Parts: Berengar Ganell's *Summa sacre magice* and *Shiʾur Qomah*," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 16, no. 3 (2021): 304–334.

and Pagan-Greek (Toz) all contributed to the work as the successors of the "ultimate" biblical source—King Solomon. Conscious eclecticism is an approach that was adopted by the Catalan Berengar Ganell, who was one of the first authors who mentioned and incorporated an *Ydea Salomonis* into his work.

Practicing during the fourteenth century, Ganell was known for his power to constrain evil spirits. In 1346, he completed his vast compendium of "sacred magic," *Summa sacre magice*. The *Summa* contains five books of a varied number of tractates and chapters, focusing on what Ganell considered "magic"—a "science of binding evil and good spirits by the use of the name of God, His names and the names of the things of the world."[20] Considering the lack of primary sources for the study of "Solomonic magic" during the fourteenth century, this is an important historical source for research in this field.[21] In the ninth chapter (*De formatione ydee*) of the second tractate of the second book, Ganell presents a tool that the practitioner should prepare for the magical act—the *Ydea Salomonis*. It is a piece of parchment with the image of the summoned spirit, a verbal *ligament* and *coniurium* (*SSM*, fol. 45r–v), alongside a visual representation—a monogram—of the names of the spirit and the practitioner.[22] In chapter 11 of the same tractate (*De sigillo Salomonis et ydea particulari*), we are told that this rounded parchment should be of a black or wild kid, and on it should (also) be the figure of the exorcist himself (i.e., the practitioner), standing on his feet, armed with a sword, with the head of Lucifer under his feet. Furthermore, the figure of God—as the image of the upper half of a human—should be drawn on it, as well as the figure of Christus—as the image of the upper half of a human with a cross on his head (*SSM*, fol. 51v).[23]

---

20 *SSM*, fol. 3r: "magica est scientia artandi spiritus malignos et benignos per nomen Dei et per nomina sua ac per nomina seculi rerum." The *Summa* was first described by Carlos Gilly in 2002, who noted that the earliest manuscript is of the fourteenth century; see Carlos Gilly, "Between Paracelsus, Pelagius and Ganellus: Hermetism in John Dee," in *Magia, alchimia, scienza dal '400 al '700: L'influsso di ermete trismegisto*, ed. Carlos Gilly and Cis van Heertum, vol. 1 (Florence: Centro Di, 2002), 286–294. See also Damaris Gehr, "Beringarius Ganellus and the Summa sacre magice: Magic as the Promotion of God's Kingship," in *The Routledge History of Medieval Magic*, ed. Sophie Page and Catherine Rider, Routledge Histories (London: Routledge, 2019), 237–253; Jean-Patrice Boudet and Julien Véronèse, "La somme de la magie sacrée du maître Bérenger Ganell," in *Le pouvoir des mots au Moyen* Âge, ed. Nicole Bériou, Jean-Patrice Boudet, and Irène Rosier-Catach (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 17–19.

21 On this problem, see Véronèse, "La transmission," 199–200. Nonetheless, earlier texts have recently been discovered. See, e.g., Vajra Regan, "The De consecratione lapidum: A Previously Unknown Thirteenth-Century Version of the Liber Almandal Salomonis, Newly Introduced with a Critical Edition and Translation," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 28 (2018): 277–333.

22 *SSM*, fol. 45v: "Etiam dicit ibi Salomon quod spacium debet esse ubi scribitur ydea vel efigies aperencie istius in quo scribatur suum ligamen et sua coniuratio." The images of the spirits are based on their description in the *Liber officiorum spirituum*, the book of the offices of spirits—an integral part of this ninth chapter. In the table of contents (fol. 2r), the title of the ninth chapter is *De formatione ydee et officiis*, referring to the *Liber officiorum*.

23 An "exorcist" is mistakenly understood today as a person who banish demons—probably through Hollywoodian products (such as Friedkin's *The Exorcist*, 1973). However, it was used interchangeably with terms like "master," referring to one who adjures the spirits. On this term see Stephen Clucas,

Later in the same chapter, Ganell describes seven different methods to use this *Ydea*. The sixth and seventh methods were developed independently during the fifteenth century, fused, and circulated under the title *Lucidarium Magistri Petri de Abbano in arte magica*, or *Elucidarius*, also known as the *Heptameron*, or in eighteenth-century Hebrew translations as *Sefer ha-Ma'or* (the book of light), reflecting the earlier title *Lucidarium*.[24] By "fused" I refer to the fact that while in Ganell's *Summa* the sixth and the seventh methods are described as alternative methods, the later *Lucidarium* uses them as different stages of the same ritual. This fused method was also used earlier in the well-known *Liber iuratus Honorii*, which Ganell knew and copied, and which was probably the source of the later *Lucidarium*. In any case, this shared method is important since it suggests a specific direction of transmission. While in the *Summa* there is a description of the *Ydea* with the figure of the (armed) exorcist himself, the equivalent *pentaculum* in the *Lucidarium* does not contain such an instruction, and neither does the *Liber iuratus Honorii*. Yet, both contain a clear borrowing from the method mentioned by Ganell concerning the *Ydea*.[25] In the *Summa*, when the *Ydea* is presented to the demons, the practitioner is instructed:

> And let him raise the *idea* in front of his face with both hands open, saying: Behold the most sacred work, and it is a wonderful representation (or diagram, *descriptio*). Behold the true heads, prefigured and surrounded by the most sacred names for your destruction. Behold the sign of Solomon with its letters, characters, and figures, which I carried before your presence. Behold the person of the exorcist, in the midst of the exorcism, who is so powerfully fortified [...] and therefore come, with all agility, by Eyeassereye [...] and by this sign of Solomon, and by his ring, and by the one who powerfully rules and commands over you, and by the virtue of the heavenly spirits, and by the person of the exorcist.[26]

"Exorcism, Conjuration and the Historiography of Early Modern Ritual Magic," in *Aisthetics of the Spirits: Spirits in Early Modern Science, Religion, Literature and Music*, ed. Steffen Schneider (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2015), 261–285.

24 On the dating of the *Lucidarium*, see Julien Véronèse, "Pietro d'Abano magicien à la Renaissance: Le cas de l'Elucidarius magice (Ou Lucidarium artis nigromantice)," in *Médecine, astrologie et magie entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance: Autour de Pietro d'Abano*, ed. Jean-Patrice Boudet, Frank Collard, and Nicolas Weill-Parot, Micrologus 50 (Florence: SISMEL—Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2013), 299–300. On *Sefer ha-Ma'or*, see Reimund Leicht, *Astrologumena Judaica: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Astrologischen Literatur der Juden* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 347–353; Gal Sofer, "The Hebrew Manuscripts of *Mafteaḥ Shelomoh* and an Inquiry into the Magic of the Sabbatians" [in Hebrew], *Kabbalah* 32 (2014), 140–142. I consulted the *Lucidarium* in St. Gallen KB Vadiana, Rara Vadianische Sammlung, VadSlg MS. 334 (henceforth referred to as VSG).

25 Véronèse already pointed to some similarities between a text of the *Ydea* (in MS C) and the *Elucidarius*; see Véronèse, "Pietro d'Abano," 312.

26 *SSM*, fol. 53r: "Et erigat ydeam coram sua facie apertam ambabus manibus dicens: ecce opus sacrae tissimum et est mirabilis descripcio. Ecce capita vera praefigurata et sanctissimis nominibus circumdata ad exitium vostrum. Ecce signum Salomonis cum suis litteris karacteribus et figuris quod ante vestram presentiam asportavi. Ecce personam exorcisatoris in medio exorcismi, qui est fortissime adeo munitus [...] et ideo venite cum omni agilitate per eyeassereye [...] et per hoc signum salomonis et per anulum eius et per eum qui super vos potenter dominatur et imperat, et per virtutem cele-

The practitioner points to his own (armed) image that is depicted on the *Ydea*, as well as to the sign of Solomon and the sacred names on it, to coerce the demons to come. In his verbal adjuration, he specifically uses the name *Eyeassereye*, that is, אהיה אשר אהיה. Both the *Lucidarium* and *Liber iuratus Honorii* contain a related formula:

Lucidarium (VSG, pp. 14–15):	*Liber iuratus Honorii* (*SSM*, fol. 82r):
Deinde Exorcizator teneat manum prope pentaculum et dicat:	Et tunc in medio circuli conversus teneat manum dextram in aere dicens:
	Ecce opus sacratissimum et est mirabilis descripcio. Ecce capita vera praefigurata ad destructionem vestram sanctissimis Dei nominibus exornata.
Ecce pentaculum Salomonis quod ante vestram adduxi presentiam.	Ecce signum Salomonis cum suis litteris, karacteribus et figuris, quod ante vestram adduxi presenciam.
Ecce personam exorcizatoris in medio exorcismi, qui est optime a Deo munitus [...] Venite, venita ergo cum festinatione, venite Oaye, Saraye [...] Et per hoc presens pentaculum, quod super vos potenter imperat. Et per virtutem celestium spirituum. Et per personam exorcizatoris [...]	Ecce personam exorcizatoris in medio exorcismi, qui est optime a deo munitus [...] Venite igitur cum omni festinatione, O aye saraye [...] Et per hoc presens sacratissimum opus, et per sanctum sigillum quod super vos potenter imperat. Et per virtutem celesium spirituum. Et per personam exorcizatoris [...]

Three elements in this formula suggest that the text in Ganell's chapter on the *Ydea* represents a text that precedes those in the *Liber iuratus Honorii* and the *Lucidarium*.[27] First, the names Oaye Saraye and aye saraye seem to be a corruption of the well-known Hebrew *Eyeassereye*, as it appears in Ganell's chapter on the *Ydea*. Second, addressing those names in the vocative "O" (as in the *Liber iuratus Honorii*) rather than in "per" seems unique and not in line with the aim of this formula. In other words, one expects to find here the divine name functioning as a source of authority or power, not as the address of the adjuration, let alone the address of the command "venite" (come), which is supposed to be

---

stium spirituum, et per personam exorcizatoris." Unless otherwise indicated, all translations into English are my own.

27 On *Liber iuratus Honorii* and its two versions, see Mathiesen, "A Thirteenth-Century Ritual"; Katelyn Mesler, "Liber iuratus Honorii and the Christian Reception of Angel Magic," in *Invoking Angels: Theurgic Ideas and Practices, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. Claire Fanger (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2012), 113–150; Jean-Patrice Boudet, "Magie théurgique, angélologie et vision béatifique dans le Liber sacratus sive juratus attribué à Honorius de Thèbes," *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 114.2 (2002): 851–890; Federici-Vescovini, *Medioevo magico*, 142–147.

directed toward the demonic entities.[28] Last, but the most obvious, is the reference to the figure of the exorcist, the *personam exorcizatoris*. This figure does appear on the *Ydea*, as the instructions to prepare it show, but there are no instructions to draw such a figure in the *Liber iuratus Honorii* or the *Lucidarium*.[29]

From the various methods in the *Summa sacre magice*, we learn that Ganell treated the *Ydea* as a specific tool that could be used in different practices. However, in other works, we see that the use of the *Ydea* is not always as a physical tool but also as a symbol that is mentioned, verbally, during different adjurations, without a specific connection to the ritual presented by Ganell. For example, in a fifteenth-century manual for exorcism we read an exorcism that invokes God alongside objects that are attributed to King Solomon:

> By the most sacred names of God almighty, by which blessed Solomon, as by his chain [...] has bound the evil spirits, by the rings of Solomon, and by his mysterious *Ydea*, by which the four rulers of the [four] regions are called and bound.[30]

This is certainly not a rare occasion, and many adjurations of demonic magic contain such references to "Solomonic" objects. Another example would be two exorcisms from a famous fifteenth-century nigromantic handbook that was studied and published by Kieckhefer, in which the demonic entity is adjured "by the seal of Solomon, and by his ring [and] IX celestial *candarias*" and also "by the seal of Solomon [and] by his rings."[31] Besides the seal of Salomon and his ring(s), the nine *candariae* are also physical tools that are mentioned by Ganell as complementary to the ritual of the *Ydea* (fol. 52r). "Complementary" is a keyword since it seems that in Ganell's *Summa*—as well as in later texts—those *candariae* stand alone. Ganell attributes different virtues for each *candaria*

---

28 In an eighteenth-century Hebrew translation of *Liber iuratus Honorii*, this passage clearly refers to איישראיק (a form of aye saraye, i.e., Eyeassereye) as the recipient of the command "come!" See MS G, fol. 64r: אח״כ תשוב אל אמצע העגולה וידך תגביה אל האויר השמים ואמור: הנה המעשה הקדוש   הזה בתכלית הקדושה ורשימה נפלאה, הנה ראשיכם מצויירים ומוכנים ומסודרים אל האבדון בשמות הבורא יתברך, הנה חותם שלמה עם אותיותיו והקרקטרי ותמונתו אשר הבאתי לפניכם, הנה המשביע הזריז ונזר אמיץ ואביר הלב אשר יקרא אליכם בחזק ויכולת. ע״כ [על כן] בואו ומהרו מאד, או אתה אייישראיק, לא תאחר מלבא, בשמות ית[ברך] ובחותם הקדוש אשר ממשלתו עליכם, ובכח וכו[לי].

29 In the earliest known manuscript of the *Lucidarium* that was published by Véronèse, my points concerning Eyeassereye seem to be irrelevant: "Ecce potenciam, presentiam et personam exorcisatoris in medio exorcismi qui est optime a Deo munitus [...] Venite ergo cum festinacione in virtute nominum istorum: [Aye Saraye Aye Saraye] [...] [et per personam exorcisatorios]." See Véronèse, "Pietro d'Abano," 329. The square brackets are my own addition—I have consulted the manuscript Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 1115 and completed the citation.

30 The original Latin is cited in Florence Chave-Mahir and Julien Véronèse, *Rituel d'exorcisme ou manuel de magie? Le manuscrit Clm 10085 de la Bayerische Staatsbibliothek de Munich (début du XVe siècle)* (Florence: SISMEL—Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2015), 133, n. 440: "per sanctissima Dei omnipotentis nomina per quem felix Salomon sicut per vinculum suum [...] spiritus malignos ligavit, per annulos Salomonis, per ydeam misticam ejus quibus quatuor rectores plagorum vocantur et constringuntur." On the four rulers of the four regions (i.e., the four demonic kings), see below.

31 Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1998), 283: "Et per sigillum Salomonis, et per annulum eius, ix candarias celestes" and "per sigillum Salomonis, per annulos eius."

(*SSM*, fols. 53v–55r), which he treats as a representation of different *semamphoras*, that is, ineffable names (see Fig. 1): "And the power of this shaped *semamphoras* is to give strength so that man fears not his enemy, nor serpent nor poisons."[32] Other works that include the nine *candariae* also explicitly point to their usage in different rituals and practices, including but not exclusive to the *Ydea* (or the "Eutente," i. e., *Eutonica*):

> It is to be known that the written nine celestial *candarie*, revealed to Solomon by divine revelation for the protection of the body and the soul, are worth a lot, not only for *Ydea* or the sacred operation of *Eutente*, but they also assist in diverse necessities.[33]

Thus, the *candariae* were seen as tools that should accompany the *Ydea*, or the *Eutonic* art, but were also used independently, as we saw in Ganell's *Summa*. Considering written amulets such as the thirteenth-century Canterbury amulet, and other common *breve*, it is probable that the *candariae* were used independently before their integration into the *Eutonic* art.[34] A similar mechanism of integration also fits the *De quattuor annulis* (On the Four Rings), a work that is known from six Latin manuscripts, the earliest dated to the thirteenth or fourteenth century (MS V).[35] In this work, four different metal rings are

---

32 *SSM*, fol. 54v: "et vis istius semaphoras figurati est dare valorem quod homo non timet suum inimicum neque serpentem neque pociones."

33 MS C, p. 42: "Sciendum est quod perscripte Candarie Novem sunt celestes divina revelatione pro corporis et anime protectioni proprii Salomoni revelati valet quod ad multa non solum ad ydee vel eutente operationem sanctam etiam in diversis subveniunt necessitatibus." Cf. MS G, fol. 48r–v: ראוי לדעת כי הט׳ קאנדרירי אלו הם שממיים ונתגלו לשלמה בשפע האלהי למחסה ולהצלת הגוף והנפש, כי סגולתם לא לבד המעשה ההמש״ל או האוטאוט״ן, אבל נותנים סעד ועוד בעניינים ומקרים רבים.

34 On the Canterbury amulet, see Don C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2006), 199–214. Skemer suggested the possibility that "the Canterbury amulet was made in the pilgrimage town by a monk or cleric who had mastered or had access to pseudo-Solomonic grimoires and other texts" (p. 209). However, if we rely solely on textual grounds, there is no reason to assume such (relevant) texts were available at that time, and it seems to me that the other direction is more likely (i. e., scribes like Ganell incorporated materials from amulets into their own texts and practices). While it deserves special attention and deeper examination, one can see how the circular seals in the Canterbury amulet relate to the *candariae*. It is even more interesting to see the attempts of scholars to "read" those seals as they were made of letters, an approach that is supported by Ganell's *Summa*, in which he wrote explicitly that those seals are made of letters. See, e.g., Katherine Hindley, "Text over Time: The Written Word in English Charm before 1350," *Incantatio: An International Journal on Charms, Charmers and Charming* 7 (2018): 72–93. Hindley wrote (p. 83): "Although the seals of the Canterbury amulet cannot be read as ordinary text, they use alphabetic forms to draw the reader towards the experience of textuality." The instructions Ganell gives to make the *candariae* include, explicitly, references to alphabetic forms (Greek, Hebrew, and Latin). On such circular figures, see Sophie Page, "Medieval Magical Figures: Between Image and Text," in *The Routledge History of Medieval Magic*, ed. Sophie Page and Catherine Rider (London: Routledge, 2019), 438–442.

35 Thorndike listed four manuscripts of this work; see Thorndike, "Traditional Medieval Tracts," 250–251. Another Latin manuscript has been discussed by Boudet and by Véronèse; see Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, 145–149; Véronèse, "La transmission," 201. To these we should add another Latin manuscript, MS P: Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, XIII.F.24, fols. 101r–112r. The *De quattuor annulis* in this manuscript seems to share similarities with the one in MS L.
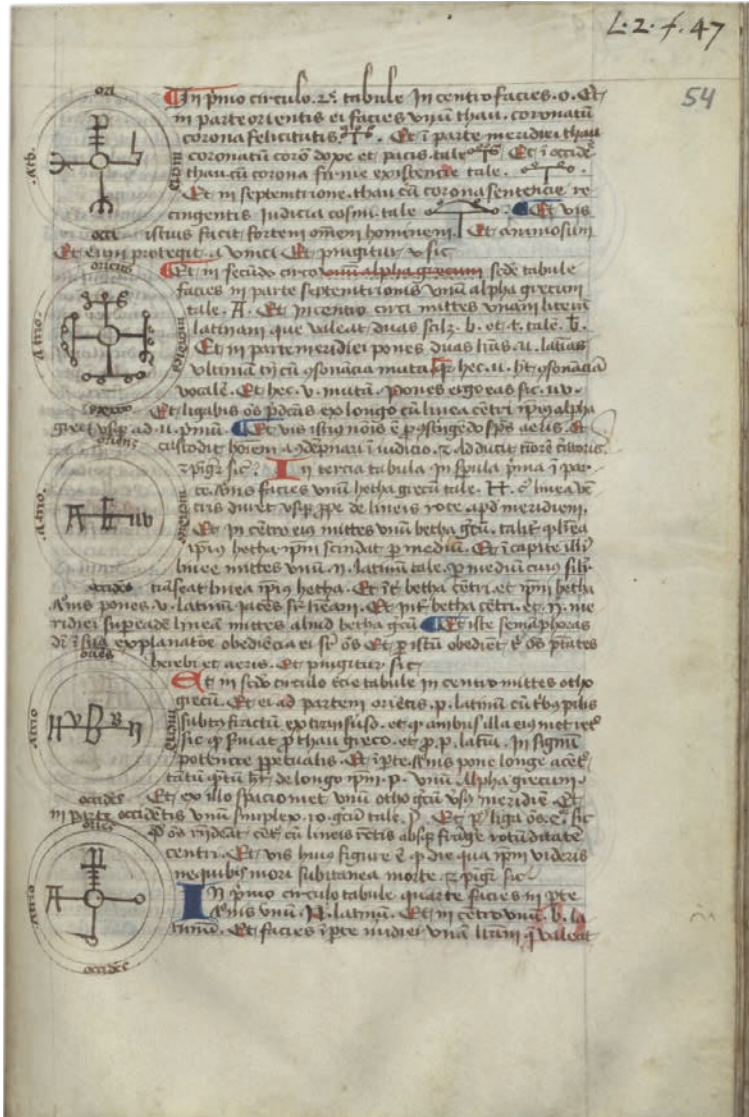
Figure 1: *Summa sacre magice*; Kassel, Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel, 4° MS astron. 3, fol. 54r

described with the methods to prepare, consecrate, and "activate" them so they will have the power ascribed to them. In Ganell's *Summa*, the first ring (known as Atymatacuy or Antytachuy) is crucial for the ritual of the *Ydea*, but each of the four rings is described in-

dependently and can be used separately.[36] Both Ganell's *Summa* and distinct texts of the *De quattuor annulis* list the different virtues of each ring, underscoring their uniqueness. For example, in all the manuscripts I have consulted, the third ring is made on the day of Venus, contains (among others) the inscription Afferoditis or something similar (i.e., Aphrodite), and can induce love.[37]

It is difficult to decide whether these three—*Ydea Salomonis*, *De quattuor annulis*, and *Novem candariae*—were part of the same work at first and then separated, or the other way around. Due to the internal evidence that seems to suggest that the different elements can be used separately, and since they seem to reflect quite different traditions,[38] I lean to the latter explanation. Furthermore, while they often circulated together, this was not always the case. In MS V, for example, one can find *De quattuor annulis* but not the *Ydea Salomonis*, nor the *Novem candariae*, even though the notion of using the first ring as complementary to the *Ydea Salomonis* is mentioned. However, this does not mean that there is no connection between the three. For example, in some works, like MS C, the practitioners who follow the instructions will need the *Ydea* if they wish to consecrate the rings. Also, the incipits of most of *De quattuor annulis* and *Ydea Salomonis* allude to the same (specific) "Solomonic" genesis narrative. Yet, similar incipits do not always correlate with the contents. As an example, let us mention the *Ydea Salomonis* in MS F, in which its incipit is: "Incipit tractatus discipulorum Salomonis scilicet Fortunati, Eleazari, Macari et Toç Greci" (fol. 26v). In this text, an *Ydea* very close to the one in Ganell's *Summa*—but more specific—is used to create an activated catalogue of demons, in which the entities present themselves in the first person (fol. 28v).[39] This catalogue is named here "Liber Dyagargaricam," possibly a corruption of *De aggregatione*, the book of aggregation, which can be understood as a collection or "congregation." This is supported by the fact that the act of summoning spirits to a specific place was often known as an act

------

36 Each ring has its own name, with slightly different spelling even in a specific given manuscript. For example, in Ganell's *Summa*, the first ring is known both as Atymatacuy and Antytachuy. The first ring in MS C is Antytacui, while in MS V it is Amintatui. Those names are still a mystery to me, although it seems that Ganell considered them as names that derive from the four ineffable names (*Shemamforash*)—the name of four letters, seven letters, twenty-three (or twenty-four) letters, and seventy-two letters. Yet, the way the names of the rings were derived from those ineffable names is unclear.

37 MS V, fol. 2r; MS L, fol. 212r–v; *SSM*, fol. 50r; MS C, p. 50; MS P, fol. 103v; MS S, fols. 68v–69r.

38 There is a high probability that the texts regarding the four rings are derived from astral magic texts or practices. Rings with inscription of names of deities that were made in a specific (astrological) time were circulated, as were the instructions to make them. Yet, more research on the relation between "astral" (or "hermetic") and "Solomonic" magic is needed. Meanwhile, see Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, 153–155. See also the interesting discussion of Grévin and Véronèse concerning another text in MS V (*De annulis septem planetarum Salomonis*), and the possibility that the seals in this text are inspired (or even derived) from the Arabic alphabet; Grévin and Véronèse, "Les 'caractères' magiques," 375.

39 Burnett, "Inscriptio characterum." It is common to find catalogues of demons in which each demon presents himself in the first person. On catalogues of demons, see Jean-Patrice Boudet, "Les who's who démonologiques de la Renaissance et leurs ancêtres médiévaux," *Médiévales* 44 (2003): 117–140; Gal Sofer, "Crooked Manners and Strange Figures: Visuality as a Tool for Constraining Demons" [in Hebrew], *Mabatim: Journal for Visual Culture* 1 (2022): 77–100.

of *congregare*, attested in Latin, Hebrew, and Greek texts, as well as the *Ydea* text that I discuss later (see below, §2a: *congregandum spiritus*).[40] While the connection to Ganell's notion of the *Ydea* as a tool is obvious, it seems that in MS F, the scribe adopted it for a quite different application.

In the eighteenth century, the *Ydea* was known as a distinct book of recipes or experiments. In a Hebrew version of the *Clavicula Salomonis*, the *Mafteaḥ Shelomoh*, the scribe—the Italian Rabbi Yehudah Peretz—added a (newly foliated) appendix with a miscellany of experiments.[41] Some of them are known from manuscripts of fifteenth-century Italy, but some are of German origin, or more probably a German mediator, such as the following experiment:

> A tested and completely safe experiment, which was copied from a book named *Ydea* that King Solomon, peace be upon him, wrote. And it can be done with four friends, and this operation is called the *Ydea* of three horsemen. And the copyist has said that my [i.e., the copyist's] master entered this circle several times, and I also entered it with him twice, and I did it on my own for many times and I have found it true and correct, and it is more precious than gold and fine gold. Into this circle enter all the sorcerers to know the truth about everything they wish, since it is not dangerous whatsoever, and it is true without doubt. In this circle, the masters instruct their disciples and train them, since at first sight it seems frightful to them. [...] First, take an upupa [i.e., hoopoe], which is called in the language of Ashkenaz [i.e., German] Wiedehopf [...][42]

---

40 For Latin, see, e.g., *SSM*, fol. 32v. See also a version of *Liber Razielis*, where the verbs are "congregare et constringere spiritus" (MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 1300, fol. 41r). For the Hebrew equivalent לקבוץ, see Yuval Harari, "Demonic Dream Divination [Jewish Dream Magic II]" [in Hebrew], in *Asif Le-Yassif—Essays in Folklore and Jewish Studies in Honor of Professor Eli Yassif*, ed. Tova Rosen et al. (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2017), 206–211; Gideon Bohak, "Babylonian Jewish Magic in Late Antiquity: Beyond the Incantation Bowls," in *Studies in Honor of Shaul Shaked*, ed. Yohanan Friedmann and Etan Kohlberg (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2019), 95–98; Gal Sofer, "The Seal of Bileth: Its Position in The Kevitza Literature and The Mafteaḥ Shelomoh Cycle" [in Hebrew] (MA thesis, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2016), 37–60; Gal Sofer, "'And You Should Also Adjure in Arabic': Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Formulas in the Solomonic Corpus," in *Esoteric Transfers and Constructions*, ed. Mark Sedgwick and Francesco Piraino (Cham: Springer, 2021), 57–71. For the Greek use of συνάγω, see the famous Ὑγρομαντεία in MS London, British Library, Harley 5596, fol. 18v, published by Armand Delatte, *Anecdota Atheniensia*, vol. 1 (Liège: Vaillant-Carmann, 1927), 397: συνάξεως <καὶ> ἐπαγωγῆς τῶν πνευμάτων. For a partial translation of the Ὑγρομαντεία, see Pablo A. Torijano, *Solomon, the Esoteric King: From King to Magus, Development of a Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 231–253. Torijano (p. 170) used the verb "to congregate."

41 The manuscript that Peretz composed is the work that Hermann Gollancz later found in his father's library; see Hermann Gollancz, *Maphteah Shelomo—Clavicula Salomonis: A Hebrew Manuscript Newly Discovered and Now Described* (Frankfurt am Main: Kauffmann, 1903). On the identification of the scribe of Gollancz's manuscript (MS G), see Sofer, "*Mafteaḥ Shelomoh*."

42 MS G, fols. 3v*–4r*: [ושלמה המלך עליו אידיאה ושהמע״ה הנק[רא] מספר הועתקה בתכלית ובטוחה יפה עולה ניסיון השלום] חיבר אותו. ויכולים לעשותו עם ד' חברים, ונק[ראת] זאת הפעולה נסיון של אידיאה מן ג' פרשים. והוא שהעתיק אמר כי בזה העיגול נכנס בו האומן שלי כמה פעמים וגם אנכי עמו נכנסתי ב״פ [ב' פעמים] ומעצמי עשיתי פעמים רבות
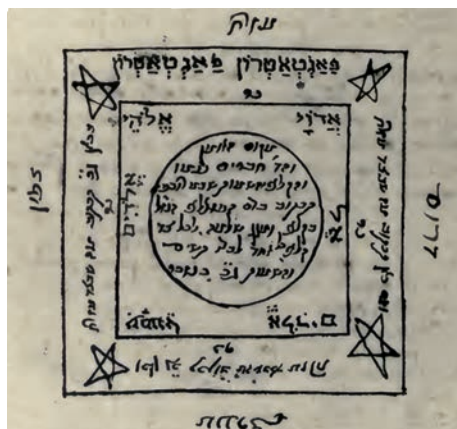
Figure 2: Hermann Gollancz,
Sepher Maphteaḥ Shelomo, fol. 51*

Aside from the quite rare identification of this experiment as a practice of sorcerers (מכשפים),[43] many terms were only transliterated to Hebrew, preserving their Latin form. Among these are שילווא (*silva*, forest), אופופה (*upupa*, hoopoe), ארמאן (*eremus*, wilderness, an abandoned place, from the Greek ἐρῆμος), and בושקו (*boscus*, wood). This should not be seen as the scribe's insufficient Latin, since he clearly understood those terms, and we know for a fact that Peretz—for a period the *darshan* (preacher) of the Ashkenazi community in Venice—knew Latin and was also fluent in Italian.[44] So far, this practice has not been found in the known manuscripts with a title or incipit that refer to an *Ydea*. It is a long ritual for summoning three horsemen, which come in turn. All three are described as holding a hawk, but they differ in their beauty and politeness, which increase gradually. The second is described as more beautiful than the first, and the third is the most beautiful of the three. The practitioner is instructed to ignore the first two, pretend to be angry at them, and wait for their disappearance. Only the third horseman, who also wears a crown, is then asked to fulfill the practitioner's wish. Common instruments are used, including writing tools, incense, specially made candles, a sword, and a magic circle (see Fig. 2).

Here the *Ydea* is both a name of a book of experiments and a technical term that is attached to the summoned entities (*Ydea* of three horsemen). The *Ydea* as a tool does not appear here, only a piece of parchment that contains שמות הכישופים (literally, the names of the sorceries, i.e., magical names). While I have not found this experiment in any known text with a title or incipit that refers to an *Ydea*, I did find it in a seventeenth-century English manuscript (London, British Library, Sloane 1727). In this manuscript, the ex-

---

ומצאתיו אמיתי וישר ואולם הוא ענין נבחר מחרוץ ומפז. בזה העיגול נכנסים כל המכשפים לידע אמיתות מאיזה דבר
שירצו לפי שהוא בלתי שום סכנה ואמיתי בלי ספק. בזה העיגול האומנים מדריכין תלמידיהם מרגילין אותן לפי שהוא
לכתחילה קצת נראה כמורא בעיניהם. [...] ראשית דבר תקח אחת אופופ״ה הנקראת ב״א [בלשון אשכנז] וידהופף.

43 Interestingly, a student of Peretz, Isaac Zekli, commented on the halakhic aspect of this practice. Surprisingly, Zekli was not worried about the identification of this practice as a practice of sorcerers (that contains שמות הכישופים), but he wished to emphasize the need for dust in the tool where the blood of the hoopoe is collected (cf. Lev 17:13–14); see MS Amsterdam, Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, Ros. 12, fol. 70v. On Zekli and his halakhic comments, see Sofer, "*Mafteaḥ Shelomoh*," 151–152.

44 In fact, another manuscript shows that Peretz translated most of his texts into Italian. In this manuscript, the experiment "*Ydea* of three horsemen" is missing. Did Peretz regret writing it? Did he find it problematic to translate? I hope to discuss this Italian manuscript elsewhere soon. On Peretz, see Sofer, "*Mafteaḥ Shelomoh*," 168–171.

periment—which was published by Briggs—lacks any reference to an *Ydea*.[45] Briggs discussed it as having "something of a fairy-tale quality," even though one does not find the incorporation of fairy lore into this specific experiment.[46] Again, emphasizing intertextual links is revealing, and there are some links between this practice of *Ydea* in MS G, the experiment published by Briggs, and other known *Ydea* texts, such as Ganell's *Ydea*, in which the practitioner is instructed to write also "the seal of the aerial (ones)" (*sigillum aereorum*). This is a reference to a long textual unit in Ganell's *Summa*, which can be found in Peretz's text as שמות הכישופים, and in the English experiment as "the words in negromancy." For easier reference, I have divided the texts into paragraphs, without changing their order:

SSM, fols. 13v–14r, *sigillum aereorum*:	MS G, fol. 4r*, שמות הכישופים:	MS Sloane 1727, *The words in negromancy*:
§1 Bethala suspensus in ethera per ayga per myga per turetac per renay ataryron aboaga.	בפטאלא שושפינשוש אין איטרא פר אאיגא פר מיגירלא פיר קוריטאק פיר רינאייאי פיר אקאריאון פיר אבגא	Betha suspensus in ethera superea
§2 Conuenite[47] et occurrite ab universis mundi partibus		
§3 ara arax pangula iamtarpa kantalee calcecathos syray angyus sathon arathon payn eurapa elon edydy per hoc zeam vitale gysyna genasse acenyth vicinath	אדא אראר פאנגאלא ייאנטא פראנטיליצי קאלקא קאקריש צידאי אנגוליש סילון פישון אראיטון פאמי אורפא אילאן אידידיאי פיר איק זיאס וויטאלייזמו יינשי אקאני טיבוש אין קורט	enpion, emprogudum, pamelion angius Marius Egripus fons floriseme desede baldithe sapors ana velarca sira.
§4 ut angyus de sede florigereth super ea	אוט אנגוויש די שידי פלוריאס סופיר מיאה וואנטאריאה	

45 See K. M. Briggs, "Some Seventeenth-Century Books of Magic," *Folklore* 64.4 (1953), 462. All quotations of this experiment are from Briggs's publication.

46 As Klaassen and Bens have argued, the "regular incorporation of fairy lore into necromancy seems peculiar to the late sixteenth century"; Frank Klaassen and Katrina Bens, "Achieving Invisibility and Having Sex with Spirits: Six Operations from an English Magic Collection ca. 1600," *Opuscula* 3.1 (2013), 6.

47 *Convenite* is an imperative form of *convenire*, which is semantically close to *congregare*. This is, again, a common verb in demonic texts.

SSM, fols. 13v–14r, *sigillum aereorum*:	MS G, fol. 4r*, שמות הכישופים:	MS Sloane 1727, *The words in negromancy*:
que posita sunt in baldi-chye spheris baldyutab-rac flebilis palmonyam inephar yrystyx abyrey lazacu sella	קווי פוזיטא שונט אין באלדיצי שפיטיש באלדוקן טאברק פלייליש פלאנדו אמאס מפור גזיפיריש אבילור ריאי לאר אקושישא	

§5

But these are truer:
Beltha suspensus Mathea Superea Implex pamil-ion ananrius fons floris Trosdogod Baldachia. Sarius Mars.

From this comparison, we can see the closeness of the formula in MS G to the *sigillum aereorum* in Ganell's *Summa*. Many known textual phenomena can explain the easily spotted variances. For example, there is a common exchange of the letters ר (*resh*) and ד (*dalet*) in Hebrew, which explains the ציידאי (in Ganell: *Syray*) and ארא (in Ganell: *ada*). The confusion between *r* and *z* in some Latin handwritings is also well-known, as is the confusion between *s* and *l*. This can explain the form לאר אקושישא (in Ganell: *lazacu sella*), which also demonstrates the reorganization of unknown names (*lazacu sella* → *laz acusella* [reorganization] → *lar acusessa* [*z-r* and *l-s* exchanges] → לאר אקושישא [Hebrew transliteration]). A similar case is אין קורט (in Ganell: *vicinath*), in which the three pen strokes of *vi* have been read as *in*, and the three pen strokes of *in* as *ur* (*vicinath* → *incurath* → *in curath* → אין קורט).[48] Even more revealing are transliterations of words such as *baldichye* into באלדיצי, since our Italian scribe is not expected to transliterate the combination of *chye* as צי, but rather as כי or קי. It is therefore quite likely that he had in front of him the form *baldici* or *baldice*, underscoring the textual complexity.

Unlike the last example of the use of the term *Ydea* in a Hebrew manuscript, that is, as the (transliterated) title of a book, there are Hebrew texts in which the term המשל (*hemshel*) often replaces the (instrument) *Ydea*. This can be seen in a Genizah fragment that I discuss in detail below. The word *hemshel* might be explained by the way that this term was used during the fifteenth century as the Hebrew equivalent of the Platonic ἰδέα in Hebrew philosophical works.[49] Whether other (non-Hebrew) appearances of *Ydea* can

---

48 While I describe it as a linear process to demonstrate the isolated changes in vitro, this should not be seen as the only possibility. Variances in vivo can appear simultaneously and independently. For a short discussion on these phenomena, see Sofer, "Wearing God."

49 See, e.g., Parma Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 2629, fol. 84r: נשלם המאמר בהמשלים המשלים הנקראי[ם] אידיאי לפי הלשון היונית (The work on the *hemshelim* [pl. of *hemshel*], which are called *idei* in Greek, has now been completed).

also be seen as borrowed from Platonic discourse is a matter of a deeper investigation. For the time being, however, it seems quite likely. Ganell, for example, compared his *magica* to the *gramatica philosophorum*, treated the *Ydea* as a work of four philosophers, and used Grecisms such as *Epytologia* or *Eutentica* to describe it. This *Eutentica* might derive from the Greek verb εὐθηνέω (in the sense of effective), as Gentile and Gilly suggested,[50] or, as I suggest, from the verb αὐθεντέω, "to dominate," probably reflecting the interaction between the (royal) exorcist and the demons.[51] If the *Ydea* was in fact seen as some sort of extension of the Platonic concept, one can wonder if it was developed in a cultural atmosphere in which astral texts were circulated. Considering that texts of *De quattuor annulis* frequently refer to planetary influence on metal objects, and that some texts of *Ydea* also mention such influences, this hypothesis seems even more plausible.[52] The existence of the Latin and Occitan *Libre de ydeis de astrologia* which contains both astral and demonic magic (including references to the Arabic "Maymon, rey del demonis" and Albumahch) also support this hypothesis.[53]

From those examples, we can fairly conclude that the term *Ydea Salomonis* does not always refer to the same object—textual, technical, or physical—and while we can point to shared material between these different texts, we cannot, and should not, describe them as part of a simple and linear *stemma codicum*. Instead, let us again bring to our mind the intertextual links, which often seem to suggest that we are facing different (creative) practices that (partially) rely on common material. A good example of such material would be the demonic cosmology that stands in the background of many *Ydea* texts, into which we already had a glimpse through the *sigillum aereorum*. In that text, we are told about one "Bethala" that is suspended in the air (§1), and a snake-like creature[54] on the seat of one "Florigereth," which is placed in the sphere of "Baldichye" (§4).

---

50 Gentile and Gilly, *Marsilio Ficino*, 228.

51 On this interaction, which mimics legends about King Solomon, see Sofer, "Crooked Manners."

52 See, for example, MS C, pp. 46–47. The (later) identification of *Ydea* with pentacles (see section 6 below) is interesting if we consider the popular books of pentacles in which one can often find explicit correspondences between pentacles and the seven planets. On the interaction between astral magic and demonic cosmology in relevant texts, see Nicolas Weill-Parot, "Cecco D'ascoli and Antonio da Montolmo: The Building of a 'Nigromantical' Cosmology and the Birth of the Author-Magician," in *The Routledge History of Medieval Magic*, ed. Sophie Page and Catherine Rider (London: Routledge, 2019), 225–236. See also Sophie Page, "A Late Medieval Demonic Invasion of The Heavens," in *The Sacred and the Sinister: Studies in Medieval Religion and Magic*, ed. David J. Collins (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2019), 233–254.

53 See MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 3589, fol. 67b. On this important manuscript, see the studies of Giralt, "The Manuscript of a Medieval Necromancer"; Sebastià Giralt, "The Liber Lune and the Liber Solis Attributed to Hermes in the MS Vatican, B.A.V., Barb. Lat. 3589," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes/Journal of Medieval and Humanistic Studies* 33 (2017): 103–126; Sebastià Giralt, "Medieval Magic in Occitan and Latin: The Libre de Puritats and Other Writings from the Codex Barberiniano Latino 3589," in *El saber i les llengües vernacles a l'època de Llull i Eiximenis: Estudis ICREA sobre vernacularització*, ed. Anna Alberni et al., Textos i Estudis de Cultura Catalana 170 (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2012), 201–216. On Arabic demonic figures—such as Maymon—and their appearances in the demonic cosmology of Ganell, see section 3 below.

54 I read Ganell's text "ut angyus" (§4) as "ut anguys," based on the Hebrew transliteration of Peretz.

3 Ganell's Demonic Cosmology

For the time being, Ganell's *Summa* is the only source that describes in detail the relevant demonic cosmology, which we see again in the different texts of the *Ydea*, as well as the *De quattuor annulis*, *Clavicula Salomonis*, *Liber iuratus Honorii*, and others. According to Ganell, the celestial hierarchy can be demonstrated by the *Tabula Semamphoras* he adopted from a version of *Liber Razielis*.[55] The *Tabula* is both an instrument and a cosmological map; it can be written with some expensive ingredients (saffron, rosewater, and musk) on a calf or deer parchment (*SSM*, fol. 37v) to be used as a luxurious and more powerful alternative to the *Ydea*, and it serves as a depiction of several elements in Ganell's cosmological perception (see Fig. 3).[56] At the outer margins are the four alphabets (Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, and Latin), which form the four languages of magic, each on a different side of the *Tabula* (west, east, north, and south respectively).[57] The inner margins contain four H-like forms, each containing an angelic name (Adiyel, Raphael, Sariel, and Samyel) and the word "God" in the respective language (Eloy, Theos, Alla[h], Deus). According to Ganell, those forms are the seat of the animals (*sedes animalium*), which probably correspond with the biblical *quatuor animalium* (Ezek 1:5).[58] The angelic entities strengthen their side by the power of "God"; for example, Raphael is the one who strengthens the east by the power of Theos. At the angles of the *Tabula* are four circles that contain different Godly names (Yaua, Eye Assereye Agla, Saday, Annora),[59] which Ganell named "the wheels of the animals" (*rote animalium*). Those "wheels" empower the adjunct angels to be able to defeat (or weaken) the demonic entity whose name is at the outmost margins. For example, Eye Assereye Agla gives power to Oriel and Zabdyel (Oriel's assistant, *adiutor*) to fight the chief Beelzebuth (i.e., Beelzebub). As well as the four H-like seats, two other seats are mentioned, which contain the two halves of the Tetragrammaton—יה and וה—at the center of the *Tabula*. Overall, six seats are presented in the *Tabula*.

However, the name "angyus" appears in that form, consistently, in Ganell's *Summa*, and it seems to be a name (compare to "angius" in the English manuscript). On the contrary, in Peretz version there is a clear inconsistency—both אנגוליש (§3) and אנגווייש (§4) are used.

55 On the familiarity of Ganell with *Liber Razielis*, see Gehr, "Beringarius Ganellus," 247; Sofer, "Wearing God."

56 This luxurious alternative for the *Ydea* exemplifies Gehr's argument that Ganell suggested a range of alternatives to fit different social classes. On this economic aspect, see Damaris Gehr, "Luxus und Luxusdiskurse in der gelehrten Lateinischen Magie des 12. bis 14. Jahrhunderts," in *Fremde—Luxus—Räume: Konzeptionen von Luxus in Vormoderne und Moderne*, ed. Jutta Eming (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2015), 147–165.

57 On the four languages of magic in the *Summa*, see Sofer, "Wearing God."

58 Nine seats of animals, which derive from the common Christian nine orders of angels, are mentioned in an adjuration in the nigromantic handbook; see Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 299.

59 Annora, or in Hebrew הנורא, is a common attribute to God meaning "the terrible" or "the awe-inspiring." I should mention here that Ganell considered Yaua as a "reduced" effable form (*reducendo adfabile*) of the ineffable Hebrew equivalent יהוה (*SSM*, fol. 39r). Interestingly, this reflects his idea of transliteration as a reductive process. Nevertheless, Ganell insisted that the practitioners use their own language while reciting and writing divine names (*SSM*, fol. 57v).
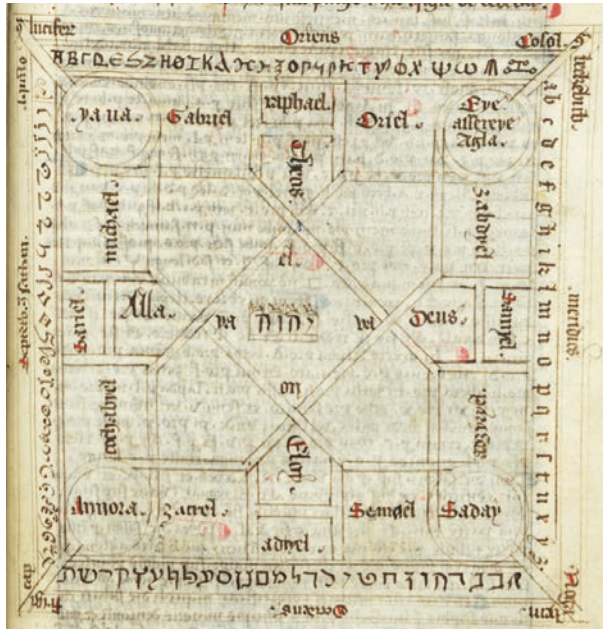
Figure 3: *Summa sacre magice*; Kassel, Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche Bibliothek
der Stadt Kassel, 4° MS astron. 3, fol. 38r

After describing the six celestial seats of the *Tabula*, Ganell moves on to describe the
equivalent demonic side in the next chapter (*De sex sedibus spirituum*). The relationship
between the first and the second descriptions is stated explicitly by Ganell:

> As you see that in the heavens there are six seats and four wheels [...] so, similarly,
> there are six seats in the earth, seats of malicious things, of punishment and torture,
> where the spirits consult against the human race.[60]

Then, in a fashionable mix of Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin, Ganell lists the six
demonic seats with their names, rulers, and some spirits that inhabit them. The fa-
mous Arabic demons Abnalaamar (i.e., ابن الأحمر *ibn al-Aḥmar*) and Maymona (i.e., ميمون
Maymūn) appear alongside the Greek Tartarus (Τάρταρος), and the Hebrew Admoday(!)
and Bileth.[61] It is again difficult to decide whether Ganell drew this cosmology through

---

[60] *SSM*, fol. 39r–v: "sicut tu vides quod in caelis sunt sex sedes et quattuor rote [...] sic similiter sunt in
terra sex sedes malignorum sedes pene et crucii ubi spiritus consiliantur contra genus humanum."

[61] On the Arabic tradition concerning the seven (demonic) kings, which was well known especially
through the *Shams al-Maʿārif al-Kubrā* (attributed to Aḥmad al-Būnī), see Tawfiq Canaan, *Aber-
glaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* (Hamburg: Friederichsen, 1914), 40–41; Tawfiq Canaan,
"The Decipherment of Arabic Talismans," in *Magic and Divination in Early Islam*, ed. Emilie
Savage-Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 139–142; Edmond Doutté, *Magie et religion dans l'Afrique*

his eclectic approach, or if he found a source that already contained this mix of traditions. Even though Hebrew and Arabic traditions have been interwoven in earlier texts, Ganell's unique and systematic cosmology, which contains materials of all four "languages of magic," appears to be his own invention, even though he seems to cite other sources. In fact, his citations (from Solomon's third, fourth, and fifth books) demonstrate his eclectic approach as well as his tendency to attribute texts in an unusual fashion.[62] That being said, many demonic figures in Ganell's cosmology—including some of the Arabic figures—were probably known to him through the version of *Liber Razielis* he possessed, which included the text *Liber Theysolius*.[63] In the part *de ventis rubrica* of this work, preserved in the fifteenth-century MS L, one can find Maymona, alongside Astaroth, Abnadaamar(!), Lucifer, and many others.[64]

As he stated, six terrestrial seats are then described, each supposedly corresponding to one of the six parts that God created (*partes quas Deus creavit*): heaven, earth, and the four corners of the world. The first is Parmach or Parmachya, the seat of Lucifer and the Tartarean infernal beings (*sedes tartarea, id est infernalis*). Ganell provides some anecdotes regarding the entities which occupied this seat and their relationship, but behind them, there is clearly a more complex cosmology, including roles and ranks that he does not describe in detail. For example, Ganell mentions nine pestilential winds (*ventis pestilencie*), among them Saathan, which is Lucifer's wind (not to be confused with Sathane), and Maymona, which is the wind of Lucifer's brother, Albarith. The second seat is Maonomeria, the seat of the twelve chiefs or barons (*principum vel baronum*) who are

---

du Nord (Algiers: Adolphe Jordan, 1909), 160–161; Stefano Carboni, "Ğinn del Kitāb Al-Bulhān e scienza talismanica nel mondo Islamico," *Annali di Ca' Foscari*, Serie orientale, 25.3 (1986): 97–108. On al-Būnī and the so-called *corpus bunianum*, see Jean-Charles Coulon, *La magie en terre d'Islam au Moyen Âge* (Paris: CTHS-Histoire, 2017), 205–232. See also the interesting findings in the *Misceláneo de Salomón*, a work that was not discussed as a "Solomonic magic" text in the scholarly literature, but that is still relevant and deserves attention. In this text, one can find *Aḥmar* as one of the sons of Iblis, based on the "*Ḥadīth* of Solomon," which also lists *Maymūn* and *Shamhūrush* among the brothers of *Aḥmar*. See Joaquina Albarracín Navarro, "Aḥmar, otro hijo de Iblīs (el diablo) en el Misceláneo de Salomón," *MEAH, Sección Árabe-Islam* 46 (1997): 3–16. Juan Martínez Ruiz and Navarro have published many articles on the *Misceláneo de Salomón* and a book, *Medicina, faramacopea y magia en el "Misceláneo de Salomón" (Texto árabe, traducción, glosas aljamiadas, studio y glosario)* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1987). A useful list can be found in Joaquina Albarracín Navarro, "Índice del manuscrito 'Misceláneo de Salomón,'" *MEAH, Sección Árabe-Islam* 48 (1999), 375–377.

62   Although it is beyond the scope of this article, for the time being let me stress that there are few passages in Ganell's *Summa* that he attributed, for the first time, to specific figures (King Solomon, Toz Grecus), and these attributions seem to be Ganell's own (creative) additions.

63   *Liber Theysolius* is one of the appendices of *Liber Razielis*, and we possess only two copies of it; see Sophie Page, "Magic and the Pursuit of Wisdom: The 'Familiar' Spirit in the *Liber Theysolius*," *La Corónica* 36.1 (2007): 41–70. For the most extensive study on the Hebrew *Sefer Razi'el* and the Latin tradition of *Liber Razielis*, see Leicht, *Astrologumena Judaica*, 187–294.

64   See MS L, fol. 233r. On Ganell's version of *Liber Razielis*, see Gehr, "Beringarius Ganellus." Gehr claimed that Ganell had a short version of *Liber Razielis* that included a translation of the Hebrew *Sefer ha-Razim*. See Sofer's response to Gehr's argument in Sofer, "Wearing God." The demonic cosmology in Ganell's *Summa* provides further evidence that weakens Gehr's argument.

subordinated to Admoday, the father of Bileth. The third seat is Baldach or Baldychya, the seat of Bethale, located in the air above Maonomeria. The fourth seat is Florigiet, the seat of Paymon with his legion, among which Ganell lists names that we already met in the formula of the *sigillum aereorum* (§3 and §4), with variations:

SSM, fols. 13v–14r, *sigillum aereorum*:	*SSM*, fol. 40r, *de sex sedibus spirituum*:
calcecathos	calce calcos
syray	cyray
sathon	sathan
arathon	arator
baldyutabrac	baldiutabrach
flebilis	flebilis
palmonyam	pamelon

Some of those figures are known from (yet unpublished) catalogues of demons. For example, Saron and Arator appear alongside Pamelon, Calces, Calros, and Syray in a four-teenth-century catalogue that Boudet has prepared for publication.[65] Ara, Acar, and Paragalla (cf. Ganell's *sigillum aereorum*, §3: "ara arax pangula") appear next to each other in a fifteenth-century Italian catalogue.[66]

The fifth seat is Apologya, the seat of Sathane with his servants, among them the four kings of the four corners of the world: Oriennens (east), Amaymon (south), Paymon (west), and Egyn (north). Here, we witness a gap in Ganell's cosmology, and the same Paymon who was described as inhabiting the fourth seat is listed again in the fifth. But it seems that Ganell is aware of such gaps, and he implies that one can appear in different seats with different roles. The sixth seat is Genealogia or Genealogia Chyde, the seat of Beelzebub, and is the only case in which Ganell gives an etymological explanation to the name of the seat. According to him, the seat of Beelzebub is named Genealogia (from the Greek γενεαλογία) since Beelzebub is the beginning and the chief of chiefs (*princeps principalis*) of all demons (fol. 40v). He also explains that the word "chyde," which seems to be a variation of the suffix "-chya" (of Parmachya and Baldychya), means sons, seats, or to be rested upon (*filius vel sedes vel innixus interpretatur*). Since Ganell used words of the "four languages of magic," the word "chyde" might derive from the Arabic قاعدة (*qāʿda*, a foundation, basis), related to the verb قعد (*qaʿada*, to sit).

The dissemination of some elements of this cosmology was wide, and some *sedes* appear later in different adjurations at different times, all over Europe. It is difficult not to exaggerate when describing the importance and impact of this cosmology on texts of demonic magic from the fourteenth century onwards, among both Jews and Christians. At the end of the fifteenth century, the Italian Yohanan Alemanno (1435–1505?), who had

---

65 I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Boudet, who kindly shared with me the texts.

66 On catalogues of demons, see above, note 39.

a great interest in manuals for coercing demons, mentioned three seats during his description of a ritual for summoning demons.[67] A catalogue of demons appended to a Hebrew translation of *Liber Bileth* contains, among others, references to B'R'BWLQWŠ the seat of B'LDYṢŠ.[68] In an experiment for love in the same manuscript, one can find an adjuration of Beelzebub and other demons "by the head of the seat of Ṭ'RṬRY" (fol. 44v). Another catalogue of demons derived from this cosmology can also be found, through Italian mediators, in nineteenth-century Tulchyn, Ukraine.[69] Greek manuals for banishing demons, which are undoubtedly based on Latin sources (including a version of the *Lucidarium*), also refer to this cosmology.[70] Formulas that derive from this cosmology can also be found in some fragments in the Cairo Genizah, and only through familiarity with it can one fully appreciate the context of those fragments.

4 Hebrew *Ydea* in the Cairo Genizah: Introduction

Thirty years have passed since Wasserstrom wrote his plea for the study of magic in the Cairo Genizah, and a lot of progress has since been made.[71] A number of important studies have been conducted to characterize some of the magical findings in the Genizah.[72] The most relevant to our discussion are European findings in the Genizah. In some cases,

---

67 See MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, héb. 849, fol. 52r (my emphasis): והכסאות הם שלשה מינים לכל אחד. הראשון הוא **כסא בלראקיאי**, השני הוא **כסא פירמנציאה**, השלישי הוא **כסא פולוגיאה**. והם לשבת עליהם היושב על כסא ה׳ מפני שמותיו הקדושים החרותים כל סביבותיו. ובשבתך עליו תקרא את הקריאה פעם אחת, ועד תשעה פעמים. כי אם לא יבאו בתשיעית או לא יתנו לך אות או מופת לבא, אתה שגיתה. (And the seats are of three types each. The first is the seat of BLR'QY'Y, the second is the seat of PYRMNṢY'H, (and) the third is the seat of PWLWGY'H. And they are to be sat on by the one who sits on the seat of the Lord, by (the power of) his sacred names that are engraved around it. And when you are sitting on it, you should adjure once and up to nine times. Since if they would not come in the ninth (adjuration) or would not give you a marvel or a [miraculous] sign for their coming, you erred.) On Alemanno's familiarity with "Solomonic" texts, see Gal Sofer, "The Magical Cosmos of Yohanan Alemanno: Christian and Jewish Magic in the Service of a Kabbalist," *Jewish Thought* 2 (2020): 65–92.

68 MS O, fol. 23r; MS G, fol. 47v. On the Hebrew translation of *Liber Bileth*, see Sofer, "The Seal of Bileth."

69 On this case, see Sofer, "Crooked Manners."

70 Louis Delatte has published those manuscripts in his *Un office byzantin d'exorcisme* (Brussels: [Palais des académies], 1957). See the relevant passage on p. 43: Ἐξορκίζω τοίνυν ὑμᾶς πνεύματα Βεραλάνευσις, Βαλδακιόνσης, Πανμαχία καὶ Ἀπολογίου καθέδραι […] Γενιολιακίδαι, δοῦλοι τῆς ταρταρέας καθέδρας, Πριμὰκ ὁ πρῶτος τῆς ἀπωλείας καθέδρας ἐκ τοῦ ἐννάτου τάγματος. There is no reason to assume this Greek text relied on a much earlier Greek source. On the contrary, some textual evidence clearly indicates that this Greek work is (at least partially) derived from a Latin source, probably through a Greek mediator. This includes, for example, the relatively late form Γεχοβά (i.e., the Tetragrammaton). On Greek forms of the Tetragrammaton, see Pavlos D. Vasileiadis, "The Pronunciation of the Sacred Tetragrammaton: An Overview of a Nomen Revelatus that Became a Nomen Absconditus," *Judaica Ukrainica* 2 (2013): 5–20. Comparing the name Βεραλάνευσις to the Latin form Bethalanensis (see below) shows the possible exchange of *t* with *r* in a Latin source, resulting in ρ in the Greek form.

71 Steven M. Wasserstrom, "The Magical Texts in the Cairo Genizah," in *Genizah Research After Ninety Years: The Case of Judaeo-Arabic*, ed. Joshua Blau and Stefan C. Reif (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 160–166.

72 See Gideon Bohak, "Towards a Catalogue of the Magical, Astrological, Divinatory, and Alchemical

Jewish scribes in Cairo transmitted recipes that originated in the Latin West.[73] Ortal-Paz Saar, for example, has identified a recipe "to bring a woman" that has been translated from Latin into Hebrew. She also mentioned a Latin parallel of this recipe from the nigromantic handbook published by Kieckhefer, which, as we already saw, contains some references to Solomon's *candariae* and rings as symbols of power.[74]

Six fragments from the Cairo Genizah, now found in the Cambridge University Library (CUL), contain materials related to the different works we have discussed. They were probably a part of the same codex and can be dated on paleographical grounds to around the seventeenth century or later (written in an Ottoman hand), reflecting the arrival of such European materials in Cairo.[75] Two of the fragments were preserved as bifolia, indicating the codex had folios which were approximately 15 cm high and 24 cm wide. Two torn fragments belong to the same folio and can be joined easily, thanks to a drawing of the magical circle (§3a + §3b). For easy reference, I have used the following abbreviations for the fragments:

§1a = CUL, T-S NS 180.18, fol. 1r
§1b = CUL, T-S NS 180.18, fol. 1v
§2a = CUL, T-S Misc.11.66, fol. 1v
§2b = CUL, T-S Misc.11.66, fol. 1r
§3a = CUL, T-S AS 143.120, fol. 1v + CUL: T-S Misc.11.66, fol. 2v
§3b = CUL, T-S AS 143.120, fol. 1r + CUL: T-S Misc.11.66, fol. 2r

The unfixed margins and a poorly illustrated magic circle point to a lack of writing organization. These suggest that our scribe was not a professional one, even though he was probably aware of the difficulties of writing, since he added what seem to be marks concerning his source in the form of two or three letters before each part (henceforth referred to as writing marks). While I could not identify the exact meaning of these letters (number of pages? number of paragraphs?), they are compatible with the order of the texts. This means that, assuming these writing marks are numbers, reading the text in the order of the numbers reflects the order of the texts in the Latin parallel text.[76]

Fragments from the Cambridge Genizah Collections," in *From a Sacred Source: Genizah Studies in Honour of Professor Stefan C. Reif*, ed. Ben Outhwaite and Siam Bhayro (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 53–79.

73 See, e.g., Gideon Bohak, "Catching a Thief: The Jewish Trials of a Christian Ordeal," *JSQ* 13.4 (2006): 1–19; Katelyn Mesler, "The Three Magi and Other Christian Motifs in Medieval Hebrew Medical Incantations: A Study in the Limits of Faithful Translation," in *Latin-into-Hebrew: Texts and Studies*, ed. Resianne Fontaine and Gad Freudenthal (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 1:161–218.

74 See Ortal-Paz Saar, "A Genizah Magical Fragment and Its European Parallels," *JJS* 65.2 (2014): 237–262.

75 The dating of these Genizah fragments was done with the kind help of Edna Engel and Gideon Bohak, to whom I am grateful. Some preliminary notes on those fragments can be found in Sofer, "The Seal of Bileth," 53; Sofer, "*Mafteaḥ Shelomoh*," 143–144.

76 Furthermore, there is a 1:2 ratio in the increase of the writing marks; unlike the first number, which increases by one in each appearance (רמב, רמא, רמ, that is, 240, 241, 242), the second number seems to appear twice before it increases by one (קצג, קצג, קצב, קצב, that is, 192, 192, 193, 193). Thus, it is likely that the second number refers to a scale that is larger than the first.

In addition to the lack of organization, some other textual phenomena suggest that our scribe had trouble with writing. He frequently displaces adjacent letters in words (adjacent metathesis); for example, תולעת instead of תועלת, or ותנחיל instead of ונתחיל. He also often uses phonetic spelling, such as עלה בשלום instead of עליו השלום , הו instead of הוא, and היאמים instead of הימים, and he seems to not care about consistency (e.g., one can find the Hebrew word "south" spelled both correctly as דרום and incorrectly as דרואם). There are twenty-four places in which he recognized a mistake and erased it, but the nature of those is varied.[77] The appearance of vowel points, especially in the verbal formulas (i.e., the formulas that the practitioner is instructed to utter), shows that the scribe had an interest in practical aspects, wishing to recite the formulas as close to their "original" form as possible. Thus, we can fairly conclude that even if our scribe was an amateur, this was unlikely to have been his first work; and he most probably wrote this down for his own personal (practical) use.

I would refrain from judging the scribe's Latin skills, since variations in his Latin source(s) might explain some inconsistencies between the surviving Latin texts and his own translation. Yet, he seems to recognize biblical allusions and translate them accordingly; for example, "beatus vir qui" (blessed is the one who ..., Ps 1:1) into the Hebrew אשרי. While in some cases he translates concisely, there are places where he seems to translate almost *verbum pro verbo*, such as "te invoco cito venies" (I invoke you, come quickly!) becoming the Hebrew אותך אקרא מהר לבא. This sometimes results in a mistranslation; for example, "divina maiestas super omnia dominas te cito venire compellat" (the divine majesty rules over all [and] compels you to come quickly) is translated into Hebrew as בשם הכבוד האלהים המושל על כל אותך ויכבוש לבוא הנה ולא לאחר (by the name of the divine majesty that rules all you [*singular*] and compels (you) to come here and not be late).[78] However, there is an alternative explanation here, offered to me by Yuval Harari: the scribe merely switched the word אותך (you) with ויכבוש (and compels).

Additionally, the inconsistency in our scribe's Latin would make it difficult to assess what kind of Latin skills he had. This inconsistency, in addition to the scribe's careless writing and frequent emendations, can be attributed to the personal (less critical) nature of the text. It is important to stress that point since it is easier—but pretentious and less accurate—to assume ignorance. Even if this might sound apologetic, careless writing and inaccuracies are forms of variation and should be treated accordingly. No ignorant scribe could ever read and extract relevant instructions from such texts, and it seems to me unproductive and inappropriate to adopt the paternalistic and forensic language of archaic

---

77 For example, in §2a, line 5, he erased the word אסר, in which he used ס instead of ש (of the word אשר), even though he had earlier spelled the word אשר correctly. In §1b, line 8, he wrote twice אשר and erased the second appearance (dittography); and in line 11, he had trouble with transliterating the (unique) name בטאלאננשו.

78 I have translated האלהים here as the adjective "(the) divine," but it is important to note that האלהים is a definite noun; the adjective should be האלהי. Our scribe is consistent in using האלהים instead of the adjective האלהי (e.g., §3a, line 15: האש האלהים).

(theologically driven) philology to label our ("magical, irrational, superstitious," as well as "automatic") scribe as ignorant.[79]

The texts preserved in these fragments correspond with at least three different works that I have been able to identify—(a small part of a version of) *Clavicula Salomonis*, (some formulas of) *Liber Bileth*, and a version of *Ydea Salomonis*—all of which (in our case) were translated from Latin into Hebrew.[80] In what follows, I present the relevant fragments for our discussion, which are those concerning the *Ydea Salomonis* and their Latin equivalent. Beforehand, let me describe in brief one of the rituals of the *Ydea*, preserved in the fifteenth-century MS C, which corresponds with the Genizah fragments. MS C, like the nigromantic handbook that was published by Kieckhefer, was most probably written in German lands; as already noticed by Gentile and Gilly, paleographically it seems that the provenance of this manuscript is southern Germany.[81] Some portions of the codex were studied and published by Véronèse, who also provided a useful review of its content.[82] The relevant text of the *Ydea* in MS C is on pp. 39–70, after *Liber angelicus* and before a version of *Vinculum spirituum* and the *Clavicula Salomonis*. It contains six different tractates, each with its own incipit: I. *De Ydea Salomonis* (p. 39); II. *Tractatus discipulorum Salomonis* (p. 40); III. *Consecrare candariarum* (p. 42); IV. *De tribus predictorum spirituum figuris* (p. 43); V. *Ydee Salomonis consecratio* (p. 44); and VI. *Liber Fortunati, Eleazari, Nazari, Toz graeci* (p. 45).[83]

The last tractate is divided into eight distinct parts. It begins with an introduction (VIa, pp. 45–47) concerning the *Ydea* and the four rings, as well as the ten precepts of this

---

79 See the words of Bernard Cerquiglini in his famous *In Praise of the Variant: A Critical History of Philology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 49: "Lachmannian philology, a mechanical archeology of the lapsus, began by automating the scribe [...]. The scribe was a machine, and this machine had to function poorly in order for the multiplicity and the excess of variants to fall into place, showing the slippery slopes of adulteration and delineating the genealogical branches of the manuscript family. Philology is a bourgeois, paternalist, and hygienist system of thought about the family; it cherishes filiation, tracks down adulterers, and is afraid of contamination." On Renaissance theological philology, see Sebastiano Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 45–57. In addition to all the above, of course, assumed ignorance might result in overlooking textual variations. A case in point would be our scribe's translation (§1b, lines 5–7) "the dominions—aerial, terrestrial, aqueous, and infernal." In an earlier Latin text, the equivalent phrase (MS C, pp. 62–63) is "aeree potestates terrestres atȝ infernales," atȝ being a conventional abbreviation for "atque," that is, "and" ("aerial dominions, terrestrial and infernal"). A reader who assumes that our scribe misread atȝ as *aqueae* (aqueous) misses the fact that this reading is already implied by the scribe of MS C in another passage (MS C, p. 65): "aerei, terrei, aquei et infernales reges." On scribes of necromantic texts and their education, see Frank Klaassen, "Learning and Masculinity in Manuscripts of Ritual Magic of the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 38.1 (2007): 49–76.

80 The fragments that contain the *Clavicula Salomonis* and the *Liber Bileth* were part of the original codex. These are MSS Cambridge, CUL, T-S NS 162.89 and T-S AS 218.84. The scope of this article does not include those fragments.

81 See Gentile and Gilly, *Marsilio Ficino*, 226.

82 See Véronèse, *L'Almandal*, 119–121.

83 Véronèse described this a little differently; see Véronèse, "La transmission," 201, n. 32.

art (VIb). Then, each ring is described in detail (first ring, VIc, p. 48; second ring, VId, pp. 48–49; third ring, VIe, pp. 48–50; fourth ring, VIf, pp. 50–51). After the instructions concerning the making of the rings, a long ritual for consecrating them follows (VIg, pp. 51–62), which explicitly utilizes the already consecrated *Ydea*, and includes the conjuration of the metal (that the rings are made of) and recitation of psalms and other prayers and formulas. Four rituals are described, one for each ring. The last part (VIh, pp. 62–70), *De arte Ydea seu Epytologya*, focuses on the main ritual, in which the practitioner uses all the tools that have been mentioned to summon the demonic dominions.

It is the aim of the practitioner of the ritual of the *Ydea* in MS C to summon the demons to fully manifest in front of his eyes. At the beginning of *De arte Ydea seu Epytologya* (VIh), the scribe describes the practitioner who managed to see the summoned entities as blessed. It is at this point where the cosmology behind the *Ydea* is revealed:

> Blessed also is he to whom many aerial dominions, terrestrial and infernal, will show themselves. Blessed is he to whom the imperial glory of the seat of *Bethalanensis* revealed itself. Blessed is he to whom the noble honor of the seat of *Baldachie* will appear. Blessed is he to whom the powerful princes of the seat of *Barachie* try to show themselves. Blessed is he to whom before the presence of the seat of *Apologie*, the noble dominions of the single seat (and) the cheerful figures will appear visibly by (their?) faces.[84]

It is important for the practitioners to have the demonic hierarchies that are described in Ganell's *Summa* manifested in front of their eyes when they summon them, since it is an affirmation that God answered the prayers. The manifestation of the demons is an expression of the practitioners' superiority over them, which has been achieved through their prayers and exorcisms.[85] We have already met variations of Bethalanensis, Baldachie, Barachie, and Apologie (all in the genitive case) in Ganell's *Summa*, as the third seat (Baldychya, the seat of Bethale) and the fifth seat (Apologya). I see no reason to assume that these are random names, and they seem to point to common ideas concerning demonic cosmology. Considering other "Solomonic" texts, the concept of full manifestation is quite common, and sometimes even expressed by the same phrase.[86]

But seeing the demons, even though a sign of success, is not the ultimate goal of the practice of this *Ydea*. It is the knowledge that they can supply that interests the practitioner: they can tell the past, present, and future; disclose the whereabouts of hidden treasures; and reveal secrets (§1a). For this frightening practice, the practitioner is invited to have with him friends or followers (*socii*), who will follow his commands and carry some of the instruments. Obviously, the practitioner should be brave, holding the sword "like

---

84 MS C, pp. 62–63: "beatus etiam ille cui tot aeree potestates terrestres atque infernales se demonstrabunt. Beatus cuius decus imperiale Bethalanensis sedis se ostendit. Beatus cui nobilis honor Baldachie sedis apparebit. Beatus cui Barachie sedis principes prepotentes se propalabunt. Beatus cuius coram presentia sedis Apologie potestates magnanimes simplicis sedis figure faciebus hilares visibiliter apparebunt."

85 See Sofer, "Crooked Manners."

86 See, e.g., the cases discussed in Sofer, "The Seal of Bileth," 66–67.

a strong man" (§3b, *quasi vir robustus*), a common motif in "Solomonic" texts. [87] On the day in which he wishes to operate, the practitioner should have special clothes with him, a hazel staff, and four double-edged swords (§2b). During the ritual, in which a circle is made in a special place, the practitioner positions each sword on one side of the circle (beginning with the east, then the west, south, and north). After placing each sword, an invocation to the demon that rules the respective side is recited. The practitioner addresses the famous four demonic kings Oriens (east), Paimon (west), Amaymon (south), and Egin (north), commanding them to come quickly (§3a). [88] Once the ritual has been done correctly, the practitioner is no longer required to perform the whole ceremony and is able to speak with the spirits whenever he wishes, except for the "prohibited days" (§2b). While the Genizah text ends here, the Latin text in MS C instructs the practitioner to wear the *antyntacui* ring, the first ring of *De quattuor annulis*, on his thumb throughout the ritual. Then, instructions are given to place the nine *candariae* between the swords: two in the southeast, two in the southwest, two in the northwest, and the last three in the northeast (MS C, pp. 69–70). Once again, the practitioner is told to be fearless, like a strong and powerful warrior (*quasi ut bellator fortis et potens*).

Aside from the missing information in the Genizah texts, stemming from their fragmentary form, the scribe himself refers to more (unclear) missing element(s), and advises the reader "to read (more?)" (§3b). One can speculate whether the integration of elements from *Novem candariae* or *De quattuor annulis* in MS C, which are not mentioned at all in the Genizah text, is missing in the Hebrew text due to its fragmentary form, or whether they were not included (or indeed were actively excluded) from it. All those different options are quite possible.

5   Hebrew *Ydea* in the Cairo Genizah: Text, Translation, and Latin Parallel

The translation follows the Hebrew Genizah fragments and my suggested reading of it, and not the Latin text. Those fragments and the codes I am using for them were indicated at the beginning of section 4. I have extracted the relevant Latin text from MS C, and it appears on the footnotes of each segment. The writing marks in the Genizah text were converted into numbers in the translation, which does not include the scribe's erased words.

---

87 See, e.g., Alemanno's words on this issue: "when you call them, they will come in crooked ways and different and scary forms [...] look down to the ground, and do not answer them [...] if you will call them with divine names and courage [...] they will come with terror and fear, and will answer you with a voice that is loud and clear as the day." Cited and translated in Sofer, "Magical Cosmos," 90.

88 While these four—Oriens, Paimon, Amaymon, and Egin—are very common names for the four kings of demons, they are not the only ones. See, e.g., the different names of the four kings of demons (Galtim, Baltim, Saltim, and Ultim) that are mentioned in Jean-Patrice Boudet, "Les condamnations de la magie à Paris en 1398," *Revue Mabillon* 12 (2001), 146.

Translation	Genizah text

§1a[89]

1 [   ] ' [   ]   [   ]ע[   ] 1

2]   192   קצב   [2

3] Solomon the great, which is called ’EN*T*HWQM   שׁל]מה הגדול הנקרא אֶנטהוקם 3

4] *T*S?YQWM or ’YDE’A, and we shall begin with the introduction   [טס?יקום או אֵי אידֵא ותנחיל בהקדמה 4

5] ? to elucidate the operation of the art that   [שהוד?אר לבאר מעשה המלאכה אשר 5

6] Solomon, peace be upon him, (called?) Idea, since   [שלמה עלֵבֵּ? עלָה בשלום המשל כי 6

7] there is a lot of labor in wisdom, but in practice   ע]מל רב הוא בחכמה א אבל במעשה 7

8] (even) more. But the great benefit follows the practice   יו]תר אולם אחר המעשה ימשך התולעת 8

9] (and) by that the prudent exorcist will be able   מ]ופל?ג [ ]בזאת יוכל המשביע המשכיל 9

10] to know all the things of the world, present, past   ליד]ע מכול נמצאים העולם הום עוברים 10

11] (and) future, and all the heavenly secrets,   ע]ת?ידים ומיכול הסודות הֵל העליונות 11

12] hidden (things), and the places where treasures are   נ]סתרות והמקמות אשר שמה האוצרות 12

13] ? And if he will wish to have friends (with him), to hear?   ו?]ו? ואם יחפוץ הו בחברין לשמוי?ע 13

14] ? and if he will wish   סופים? תסופרו? ואם יחפוץ ~~להשביע~~ 14

15] to request something, ? like? these   לשאול דבר רא]וי? [ ] [כ?]אלה 15

---

89   MS C, p. 62: Operatione artis quam Salomon ydeam vel eutentam sive epitologiam vocavit dignum duximus exponendis labor quid est in scientia maior autem in operationem sed post operationem magna sequitur utilitas per hanc artem prudens et providus exorcisator scire poterit de universis rebus mundi presentibus preteritis et futuris et de cunctis archanis et de ocultis et de locis ubi thesauri ocultari si vero voluerint ipsi et socy intelligere et audire phylosophiam et e[x]citabitur coram eis si aliquod petere voluerint.

Translation	Genizah text

§1b [90]

1] ʿ? [ ]	[ ] ?ע [1
2] these names	שמ]ות האלו 2
3 blessed is the one who will find grace in the operation []	אשרי מי שימצא חסד במעשה המלאכת?[ ] 3
4 of this art.	המלאכת האזת 4
5 blessed is the one to whom will appear the dominions	אשרי מי אשר אליו יתראו הממשלות 5
6 aerial, terrestrial	האויריות ארוציות כסא בלבֵּטַאל 6
7 aqueous and infernal, all (of them).	מימיים ותחתיים כלם 7
8 blessed is (the one) that 'p'd and the rulership of the seat of	אשרי אשר אשׁר אפאד ושררת כסא 8
9 Baʾldaʾqiʾe will appear to him.	בַאלְדַאקיֵא יתראה לו 9
10 blessed is (the one) that will see the honor and glory	אשרי אשר יביט בכבוד והדור 10
11 of the seat of Beṭaʾlaʾnenšo	כסא בֵטַאלָא בֵּנ? בֵּטַל בֵטַאלָאנְנְשׁו 11
12 blessed is (the one) that the dominion and head? of the seat	אשרי מאשר ממשלת וי?ראש כסא 12
13 of Paʾnaʾqʾi will be seen by him.	[ ] פַאנַאקיַאי יובטוּ ממנו? 13

§2a [91]

1] G?M Mʾ? [ ]	[ ] ?ג?ם מא [1
2] H friends(?) and the things of all	ה תֵּגֿוֹ? חַ?ברים ודבר[י?] הכל[2
3] much. 240 192	מאד רם קצב[3
4] ? in which the master would like to operate	ה?]גבל אשר בו יחפוץ האומן לעשות 4
5] (it?), he should choose two places	תו יבחר לו ב׳ מקומות אֵת אֵסֵּר[5
6] that one of them will be at the house in which	אשר האחד מהם יהיה בבית אשר שמה[6

---

90 MS C, pp. 62–63: Beatus vir qui sapientiam invenit et eius cor semper in sapientia vigilat. Beatus qui tante sublimitate culmen attingit et cui hec desiderabilia revelabuntur archana. Beatus etiam ille cui tot aeree potestates terrestres atque infernales se demonstrabunt. Beatus cuius decus imperiale Bethalanensis sedis se ostendit. Beatus cui nobilis honor Baldachie sedis apparebit. Beatus cui Barachie sedis principes prepotentes se propalabunt.

91 MS C, p. 63: Hic vero determinatio quo magister artis opus hoc agere voluitur provideat sibi duo loca, primus autem locus sit in domo visi citentur spiritus per invocationem, secundus ubi disponare circulus ad congregandum spiritus cum exorcismo Salomonis sitque procul a domo quasi tractus unius arcus locus autem sit mundus et secretus et extra viam orantium et remotus a conspectu hominum. Potest etiam fieri in villa si locus talis fuerit ibi, ut sit ortus undique clausus ita ut nullus in eo nisi per hostium ingredi potest.

Translation	Genizah text

7] to the spirits, and the second (will be the) place where

7] אל הרוחות והשנני והשני מקום שמה

8] he will draw the circle in which he will congregate the spirits

8 י]רשם העגולה אשר בו יקבץ הרוחות

9] and (utter) the exorcism of Solomon. And it should be far from the house

9 ו]השבעת שלמה ויהי רחוק מהבית

10] as a bowshot. And the place will be clean

10 מטהנ] כמטחוי קשת והמקום יהיה נקי

11] and hidden, outside the road, and far from

11 ו]נסתר לחוץ מדרך ההולכים ורחוק מת

12 people's business(?). It can also be done inside the city, if

12 עסקו בני אדם גם יוכל להעשות בעיר אם

13 the place in which he wishes to operate will be a closed garden

13 המקום יהי אשר שמה ירצה לעשות גן נעול

14] but(?) (such) that cannot be entered

14 אב]ל מאן א אפשר לכ?] [ ] להכנס בו

15 only through a single entrance.

15 אלא מֶפֶתַח א]חד   א?   [

§2b[92]

1]   NW? [   ]

1 [   ] נו?] [1

2] to do it(?) once, and he will speak with(?)

2 לע]ש?[ות או]תו פעם אחד וידבר ע?]ם   [

3 the spirits all the time, every day and every night,

3 הרוחות כל זמן כל יום וכל לילה

4 except the prohibited days. (And) he will be able

4 מלבד היאמים האסורים יוכל

5 to operate with virtue.

5 לפעול בכח

6   241   193

6   רמא   קצג

7 and when the day was ended(?), they should gather—the master

7 וכאשר הוגבל היום יקבצו האומן

8 and the friends, together. And they all should be bathed

8 והחברים יחד ויהיו כלם מרוחצים

9 well, and wear ironed garments

9 היטב ולבושים מגוהצים מלובשת

10 except for the pants, since they are ? clothing

10 מלבד המכנסים כי הו לבוש מבח?]ר

---

92 MS C, pp. 63–64: Postquam autem semel peregerit et collocutionem cum spiritibus omni tempore omni nocte omni die exceptis prohibitis diebus viriliter poterit operari die autem constituto magister et socii congregentur in unum et sunt omnes bene balneati pannis lineis et mundissimus exceptis bracis induti et hoc est quam braci vetitiduis(?) et in mundus vestimentum est hominis. Magister autem quatuor ancipites gladios et virgam coruli ad mensuram sui et ad extensionem brachii sui et ydeam in pelle caprina nigri sive silvestris quemadmodum Salomonis qui dicitur ars artium reperitur.

Translation	Genizah text

11 and unclean for human. And the master should have four

11 ומזוהם לאדם ויהיו לאומן ארבעה

12 double-edged swords, and a hazel staff

12 חרבות אַנְצִיפֵּרִיטֶשׁ וּמַטֶּה מקורלי

13 of the size of his arm, that is, of the length of his arms

13 בשעור זרועו ר״ל באורך זרועותיו

14 with the body, and it is (according to) the measure of his stature,

14 עם הגוף והא שיעור קומתו

15 and the Idea on a kidskin, ? or black

15 וההמשל בעור גדי [ ] או [שׁ]חור

16 or leathery [as?   ]R?

16 או עורײם כמ]ו   [ר? אֲ?וּ?הֲ?

§3a⁹³

1 [   ]

1 [   ]

2] A AW[   ]

2 [אא] אוּ

3] L?YK you A[   ]

3 [א] ל?יך אותך א

4 here fast(?) T̲[   ]T̲[

4 הנה מה?רה בגּ?בּוּ ת] [ת] [

5 since in? in the high will overcome(?) you [   ]

5 כי ב[] בעליון יְגַבּ]ר?   עָ]ליך [

6 and conquer you to come

6 ויכבוש אותך להג?ס? לגשות הנא

7 here. Then he should go to the west and draw

7 הנה [א]חר כך ילך למערב וישלוף

8 another sword, and he should do (with it) as he did with the first.

8 ח]רב אחר ויעשה כבראשון

9 put the top in front of the west

9 ש]ים הראש מול המּ המערב

10 and its point in front of the east, so that

10 ו]חודא מול המזרח באופן

11 one point will be attached to the other.

11 שיתחבר ה[ח?]וד האחד עם האחר

12 And he should say: you, [P m?]on, king [   ]

12 ויומר אתה [פ מ?]ון מלך [ ] בצד

13 of the west, I will call (you?) to this operation,

13 המערב א?[ו?ו?ת?ך?] אקרא אל המעשה הזה

14 to come quickly. On you will be the celestial (plural)

14 מהֵר לבא יעמוד יהיה עליך החרב

---

93 MS C, p. 64: O tu, Oriens, rex potentissime, ego te adhoc opus invoco tu vero festina venire non diff feras virtus enim altissimi te supereminet qui in hoc opere venire constrigat. Tunc vadat in occidente ense alio denudato et ut primo faciat desuper capulo in occidente statuat, ita ut vel altero invocatione magister dicens: O tu, Paimon vel Paymon, occidentalis plage rex fortissime, ego te adhoc negotium ut voco propriam celeriter venire celestis gladiis et ignis divinus super te stet qui te velociter advenire cogat. Similiter disponat tertium gladium in meridie videlicet capulum in septentrione et meridie, dicens: O tu, Amaymon, australis plage, te invoco cito venies locum istum acceleres divina maiestas super omnia dominas te cito venire compellat summo regis iudicio te convincet. Postremo quartum gladium disponat in septentrione capulum in meridie, Mucronem in septentrione, dicens [...].

Translation	Genizah text

15 sword (singular) and the divine flame that

15 השמימיים והאש האלהים אשר

16 will force you to fasten your coming. Then

16 יֵ‎ יכריחך למהר ביאתך אחר כך

17 he should prepare the third sword in the south, that is, the top

17 יכין החרב ג׳ בצד הדרום ר״ל הראש

18 at the north, and the point in the south. And he should say: you(?),

18 בצפון והחוד בדרואם וימר את?ה

19 AMYYMWN, king and great ruler of
20 the south, to this art

19 אמיימון מלך ומושל גדול בצד

21 I will call you to come quickly, and run to this place,

20 הדרום אל המלאכה האזת אותך

22 by the name of the divine majesty that rules

21 אקרא מהר לבא ותרוץ אל המקום

23 all you, and compels (you) to come

22 הנה בשם הכבוד האלהים המושל

24 here and not late. Last, he should prepare [   ]

23 על כל אותך ויכבוש לבוא

25 the fourth in the north [   ]

24 הנה ולא לאחר סוף יכין [חר]ב

26 and its point in the north [   ]

25 ד׳ בצד הצפון הַמּ] [

27 [   ]

26 וחודו בצפון [   ] [

27 [   ]

§3b⁹⁴

§3b[94]

1 [   ]

1 [   ] [

2 [   ] fear, with courage L[ ]

2 [   ]חיל באבירות ל[ ]

3 [   ]H and first he should place

3 [   ]ה ויעמיד ראשונה

4 [   ]R?T the house. Then

4 [   ]ר?ת הבית אחר כך

5 [   ]M[   ]

5 [   ]מ[   ] [

6 [   ]BWT[   ]WN it in the earth, commanding

6 [   ]בות[ ] [   ]ון אותו בארץ [י]צוה

Translation	Genizah text

7 [Y?]T_[]N[in] this way.
[in the inner circle: the magister.
in the four angles of the square: angle.
in the outer four circles: a friend.]
8 the top will be in the east, and the point in front of
9 the west. And (do) like that (with all the rest) etc. 193
10   [2?4?]2
11 that is, it is missing [   ]N, but read
12 in R?[   ] more(?)

[Diagram: concentric circles with crosses at four cardinal points; inner square with Hebrew labels קרן at the four corners, האומן in the central circle; outer circles labelled חבר, נ?ט?ל, ס?ל?, עחבר / ט?ל (Hebrew labels around the figure)]
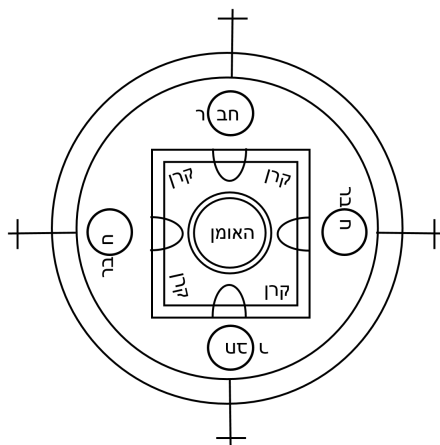
7]   י?]ת [נ] [על] הפנים האלו
8 הראש יהיה בפאת למזרח וחודו למול פאת
9 ה]מערב וכזו?ת וכל לה.   קצג
10   [ר?מ?]ב   קצג
11 ר״ל שחסר]   [ן אבל תעיין
12 בר?] [עוד?

6 Summary: *Ydea*, *Pentacles*, and *Candariae*

As we have seen, the term *Ydea Salomonis* is not as clear as we might wish. While it is mentioned by the "Magister Speculi," we certainly cannot tell at which text he was pointing. Neither the incipit nor the "title" is unique, and even the term itself was used in more than one way from a very early stage. Already in Ganell's *Summa*, we see that the *Ydea* is an instrument, and not a single text as the "Magister Speculi" probably knew it or wanted his readers to believe. We find it again, later, as a symbol of power that was used verbally in adjurations, and as a title of a book of (different) experiments. While it is tempting to suggest that we are witnessing a chronological evolution of the *Ydea*, this is not necessarily the case. All in all, a linear description would be inappropriate, since some late texts preserve quite early ideas concerning the *Ydea*, and some (straight) lines in a *stemma codicum* miss this textual complexity and scribal creativity, leaving us with nothing more than a reductive, illusionary stable theory.

In an eighteenth-century Hebrew short text, a method for summoning the four demonic Caesars (Oriens, Paymon, Amaymon, and Egim) is described in detail (MS O, fols. 15v–16r). The practitioner is instructed to show the demons "the pentacle" when they come, even though this "pentacle" is not described in the text, and the scribe stated that it will be explained elsewhere:

And then open the PYNṬWQWLY, that is, the *hemshel*, in front of them, and they immediately will kneel and bow before you [...] and they will say to you: you, the adjurer, must be a descendant of King Solomon, peace be upon him, or one of his disciples. Since from the days of King Solomon, no person saw us except for you. And if not for the great power and mighty hand of the names that you adjured us by, we would tear you and all your friends apart. And since you adjured us by the great power and the sacred names, we are forced to fulfill all your requests and will, so command us what to do.[95]

The scribe clarified the transliterated word פינטוקולי (PYNṬWQWLY, i. e., *pentacoli*, the Italian form of pentacles) by adding "that is, the *hemshel*," referring to the Hebrew *Ydea*. That the *Ydea*, as an instrument, was identified by this scribe with the (later) pentacle illustrates the fusion of early and late traditions. As we already saw, this is not a unique case—the *Lucidarium* also used formulas that refer to the *Ydea* as *pentaculum Salomonis*. The identification of the *candariae* with *pentacoli* in quite early texts of (a version of) *Clavicula Salomonis* adds another layer to this textual complexity.[96] Moreover, comparing the Hebrew text of the four demonic Caesars with Hebrew and non-Hebrew texts of (some versions of) *Clavicula Salomonis* reveals another textual link:[97]

MS S, fol. 57r, *Clavicula Salomonis*:	MS O, fol. 11v, *Clavicula Salomonis*:
... and let him shew them the pentacles and the scholars likewise, shall open there pentacles toward the partes. When they have shewed the pentacles, all there furour and madnes shall cease, and then there emperour shell say: "from the time of Salomon, there was noe coniurer could see my presence, if that thinges	ואחר שאמר זה יַרְאֶה להם הפינטוקולי וכן ג״כ [גם כן] התלמידים. ואחר שהראה אותם להם ינוחו הרעדות כלם. ואז יאמר הקיסר: "מזמן שלמה לא הי[ה] משביע אשר הי[ה] לו היכולת לראות את עצמי אם לא היו הדברים המוכנים לך אשר תַרְאֵנִי וע״כ [ועל כן] עתה תכבוש אותי בחוזק נפלא. אני מאמין כי מזרע שלמה אתה, כי מעט מהמשביעים

MS S, fol. 57r, *Clavicula Salomonis*:	MS O, fol. 11v, *Clavicula Salomonis*:

were not that ye have preparred and that ye shew unto us, and because ye compell us soe greevously I ~~belei~~ beleeve ye are of the progeny of ~~Psal~~ Salomon or of his fel-lowes, few circusators(!) have those thing-es whereby they may compell us by our hurt and against our will we must come before thee, because we cannot defend our selves, nor say against the wordes that ye speake and for feare of the pentacles we will be obedient and subiect to the[e] in all thy commandementes."

אשר להם הדברים אשר לכם שהם נגד אונינו וחפצינו. ועל כרחינו אנחנו מוכרחים לבוא לפניכם. ולכבוד הפינטקולי אשר לך אנחנו נסור למשמעתך בכל דבר ולכל אשר תצוה הננו."

The sayings of the emperor (or Caesar) in these passages resemble those of the four demonic Caesars, in which the pentacle associates with the *Ydea*. No reference to an *Ydea* appears in the texts of the *Clavicula*. All these examples reveal the complex textual links between distinct texts, and the use of the same term—*Ydea Salomonis*—to point to different objects in a network of shared materials. This emphasizes the need for close reading, and it is a call for being cautious when drawing (linear, simple) historical conclusions. *Ydea Salomonis* is an elusive term, and tracking its "origin" seems unproductive, especially when one reconstructs a (nonexistent) "urtext" ghost through the polemical discourse of some thirteenth-century Christian scholars. Unless one wishes to participate in an authenticity polemic, I see no reason for reconstructing a text. Instead, a careful study of the actual manuscripts we have, rather than those we are eager to discover (and invent), is much more revealing.

By careful reading of the different texts that mention an *Ydea Salomonis*, we have seen that even though they used the same term, different scribes understood it quite differently. Chronologically, an *Ydea Salomonis* appeared somewhere during the thirteenth century, possibly under the influences of astral text. Later, it was used as a tool of representation: a summoned demon, the practitioner, Christ, and God—all described on an *Ydea* that was used to constrain the demon. From a specific tool and (more abstract) symbol, it was then thought to be a book containing experiments for summoning demons. Overall, such a genealogical study of internal terminology is important for the study of the transmission and transformation of texts since the terminology supports the redesigning and rewriting of the texts and their different receptions.

Speaking Biblically:
Unio Magica and the Magician as Biblical Figure

Dorothea M. Salzer

The—mostly fragmentary—manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah with magical texts in Aramaic and Hebrew mainly date to the period between the tenth and sixteenth centuries.[1] In spite of this rather extended time span of their origin and although they represent different literary genres, such as amulets, magical handbooks, or instructions for magical rituals, these texts also share some common features that remained constant for a long period of time and can often be traced even further back to late antiquity. One of these common features is the use of biblical allusions, realized in various forms such as literal quotations, modified quotations, free paraphrases, and topical references.[2] Although scholarly studies of the magical texts from the Cairo Genizah mostly identify these allusions, research into their forms and textual and conceptual implications is sparse.[3]

Within the citing (i.e., the magical) text, these allusions serve different functions, among which the conceptual merging of the magician with a biblical figure—a function

---

1 This analysis is based on the following editions of magical texts from the Cairo Genizah: Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984), henceforth referred to as *AMB*; Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1993), henceforth *MSF*; Lawrence H. Schiffman and Michael D. Swartz, *Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah: Selected Texts from Taylor-Schechter Box K1* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), henceforth *HAI*; Peter Schäfer, Shaul Shaked, et al., *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, 3 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994–1997), henceforth *MTKG* I–III.

2 For a detailed analysis of the different formal categories of biblical allusions in the magical texts from the Cairo Genizah, see Dorothea M. Salzer, *Die Magie der Anspielung: Form und Funktion biblischer Anspielungen in den magischen Texten der Kairoer Geniza* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 17–59.

3 As well as Salzer, *Die Magie der Anspielung*, see Dorothea M. Salzer, "Biblische Anspielungen als Konstitutionsmerkmal jüdischer magischer Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza," in *Was ist ein Text? Alttestamentliche, ägyptologische und altorientalistische Perspektiven*, ed. Ludwig Morenz and Stefan Schorch (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 337–352; Dorothea M. Salzer, "How to Use the Hebrew Bible to Harm Your Neighbor: The Use of Biblical Quotations in Curse Texts Found in the Cairo Genizah," in *Envisioning Judaism: Studies in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Raʻanan S. Boustan, Klaus Herrmann, Reimund Leicht, Annette Yoshiko Reed, and Giuseppe Veltri (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 1:623–636; Joseph Angel, "The Use of the Hebrew Bible in Early Jewish Magic," *RC* 3 (2009): 785–798. On some observations about the distribution of biblical allusions in Jewish and Christian magical texts in late antiquity, but without analysis of their form or function, see Nils H. Korsvoll, "Bible Bible Everywhere? Reviewing the Distribution of Biblical Quotes in Ancient Amulets," in *BN*, n.s., 176 (2018): 89–110.

I propose to designate with the term "*unio magica*"—takes an especially prominent place.[4] This essay offers exemplary analyses of *unio magica*, from the perspective of intertextuality and literary and magical speech act theory.

1   The Magic of Allusions: Biblical Allusions and Magical Texts

The Hebrew Bible is regarded as sacred and of the highest authority within Judaism, and its text is therefore from the outset distinct—historically, conceptually, and linguistically—from any other text, including the magical texts found in the Cairo Genizah. In the case of quotations from the Hebrew Bible, this difference between the citing text and the quotation itself implies a considerable expansion of the semantic potential of the magical text, which is different from, and generally exceeds, the application of other elements outside ordinary speech, like *voces magicae*[5] or mumbo jumbo.

It is, therefore, important to realize that the biblical allusions in the magical texts hold a plurivalent function. On the one hand, they form part of the magical text and as such are constitutional for the meaning of the continuum at hand—in the following this will be referred to as the intratextual meaning or the syntagmatic function of the allusions. On the other hand, however, the allusions refer to biblical texts and thus are also part of a co-text which exists outside and independently of the alluding text. As a consequence, the allusion binds the magical text to the biblical pre-text (i. e., the text alluded to), and therefore enhances the semantic potential of the alluding text. This evocative dimension will be referred to in the following as the intertextual meaning or the paradigmatic function of biblical allusions.[6] However, the associative effect between the two texts is not limited to one direction only. Rather, the impact must be considered in the opposite direction as well: the use of a biblical text in a magical one renders the cited biblical text as magic. It is this reciprocal dynamic that is responsible for the performative aspect of biblical allusions and helps to create a temporal and spatial framework that sets the magical act apart from quotidian circumstances.

The magical texts from the Cairo Genizah apply biblical allusions in a variety of syntagmatic and paradigmatic functions.[7] In the following analysis, I will focus on one of the paradigmatic functions, specifically the conceptual merging of the magician with biblical figures by replication of speech acts recorded in the Hebrew Bible. I will give an outline

---

4   In this essay, I further develop my first, basic observations on the use of *unio magica* that were published in Salzer, *Die Magie der Anspielung*, 219–241.

5   On this, see David Frankfurter, "The Magic of Writing and the Writing of Magic: The Power of the Word in Egyptian and Greek Traditions," *Helios* 21.2 (1994), 201; Hendrik S. Versnel, "The Poetics of the Magical Charm: An Essay in the Power of Words," in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, ed. Marvin W. Meyer and Paul Allan Mirecki (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 105–158, 147.

6   The categories of syntagmatic and paradigmatic functions are based on Udo Hebel's analysis of allusions. See Udo J. Hebel, *Romaninterpretation als Textarchäologie: Untersuchungen zur Intertextualität am Beispiel von F. Scott Fitzgeralds This Side of Paradise* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1989), 61.

7   For a detailed categorization and analysis of these functions, see Salzer, *Die Magie der Anspielung*, 170–344.

of both the form and the mechanisms of this phenomenon, which seems aptly captured by the term *unio magica*.

2   The Concept of *Unio Magica*

In the field of research on magical practices of the German Middle Ages, Meinolf Schumacher applied the concept of *unio liturgica*, originally developed by Peter Schäfer in the context of Hekhalot literature in order to designate the goal of the heavenly journey of the descender to the chariot (*yored ha-merkavah*).[8] Based on Schäfer, Schumacher applied the term *unio liturgica* in order to describe "the liturgical union with a divine being" that occurs through the reproduction of divine speech in the course of a *historiola*, a ritual re-narration of a well-known mythical event. According to him, the function of the *unio liturgica* is the possibility "to equate oneself narratively with magically acting gods or godlike beings of prehistoric times (Idisen, Wodan) [...] in the hope of exercising a similar power as it 'once' happened."[9] However, unlike in Schäfer's concept, where *unio liturgica* indeed happens in a liturgical context insofar as it describes the participation of the *yored ha-merkavah* in a heavenly liturgy,[10] the phenomenon described by Schumacher in respect to medieval German magical texts has no proper liturgical setting, and Schumacher's adoption of the term therefore seems less fitting for a magical context and needs to be reconsidered.

Similar to the corpus analyzed by Schumacher, Jewish magical texts from the Cairo Genizah also show the phenomenon of merged characters as an important fulcrum of the magical ritual—in their case, in the form of a conceptual fusion of the magicians with biblical characters. In distinction to Hekhalot literature, the magicians do not strive to participate in a heavenly liturgy, but to perform a magical act by means of which a certain purpose is to be achieved. I therefore suggest drawing a terminological distinction and not speaking of *unio liturgica* but rather of *unio magica* with regard to magical rituals.[11]

Applied to the magical texts of the Cairo Genizah, I use this term to describe the process of magicians merging with specific biblical figures by the use of biblical verses during the magical performance. By forging an equation between themselves and specific biblical figures, the magicians form an associative and evocative link between the biblical past and the action to be performed. Hence, they set aside their ritual as an act which transgresses time and space, anchor their activity in the setting of the Hebrew Bible and vice versa, and thus transfer and activate the power that is conceived as having been active in the biblical past to the current ritual. Consequently, by forging an *unio magica* with a

---

8   Peter Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God: Some Major Themes in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 165.

9   Meinolf Schumacher, "Geschichtenerzählzauber: Die *Merseburger Zaubersprüche* und die Funktion der *historiola* im magischen Ritual," in *Erzählte Welt—Welt des Erzählens: Festschrift für Dietrich Weber*, ed. Rüdiger Zymer (Cologne: chōra.verlag 2000), 213. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from German into English are my own.

10   Schäfer, *Hidden and Manifest God*, 165.

11   This is to distinguish it from the use of this term by Carl Heinz Ratschow, for whom *unio magica* describes the union of a human being with their surroundings; Carl H. Ratschow, "Magie I," in *TRE 21*, ed. Gerhard Müller et al. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991), 690.

biblical character, the magicians recast themselves as biblical agents and harness the biblical figure's power and potency for their own ends.

Naturally, *unio magica* happens primarily in cases of biblical verses representing direct speech, for instance from a psalm or one of Moses' sermons. It is activated by way of utterance or other performative applications of the respective biblical verses, such as writing them down. Thus, to function as an *unio magica*, the verse can be realized in a performative utterance during a magical act,[12] but can also appear as a literary means, as is often the case in the magical texts from the Cairo Genizah, for instance, when a biblical character's direct speech is used in an amulet whose effect depends on writing and wearing it.[13]

In Schumacher's concept of *unio liturgica*, the union emerges as part of the application of a *historiola*, that is, a narrative incorporated into a spell. The magical impact of a *historiola* relies on its narrative setting,[14] functioning as a historical precedent or a paradigm and thus invoking a power that is proven to have already solved similar problems.[15] Contrary to this, in the context of *unio magica*, the transformative power is not evoked by *recounting* a story about an relevant incident of the past, but by *embodying* a powerful figure in the magical act, mostly by performing a direct speech act linked to this figure. Therefore, while a *historiola* derives its magical efficiency from the past simile relating to the aim of the current magical act, requiring and stressing temporal and spatial difference, *unio magica* relies on the conceptual merging of the magician and the biblical character, and the nullification of any difference in terms of time and space. In this regard, *unio magica* goes

---

12 On the magic act as performative act containing speech, see Stanley J. Tambiah, "Form und Bedeutung magischer Akte: Ein Standpunkt," in *Magie: Die sozialwissenschaftliche Kontroverse über das Verstehen fremden Denkens*, ed. Hans G. Kippenberg and Brigitte Luchesi (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), 283–289. On speech as performative act and part of the magic act, see David Frankfurter, "Narrating Power: The Theory and Practice of the Magical Historiola in Ritual Spells," in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, ed. Marvin W. Meyer and Paul A. Mirecki (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 457–476; David Frankfurter, "Spell and Speech Act: The Magic of the Spoken Word," in *Guide to the Study of Ancient Magic*, ed. David Frankfurter (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 608–625; Rebecca M. Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), esp. 161–278; Naomi Janowitz, *Icons of Power: Ritual Practices in Late Antiquity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), XX–XXV. Yuval Harari provides an introduction to the role of speech act theory in the research on Jewish magic and argues against the application of this theory in the study of magic texts; Yuval Harari, *Jewish Magic: Before the Rise of Kabbalah* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2017), 204–232.

13 On the evolvement of the magical power of amulets by writing and wearing them, see Frankfurter, "Magic of Writing," 195; Michael D. Swartz, "Scribal Magic and Its Rhetoric: Formal Patterns in Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah," *HTR* 83 (1990): 163–180, esp. 165.

14 David Frankfurter relates to the *historiola* as "narrating power" and describes the power of *historiolae* as "not merely economical, instrumental speech like *voces magicae*, but stories told for their own sake, as gatherings of lore for the sake of some special need"; Frankfurter, "Narrating Power," 461. For a survey of different interpretations of *historiolae* and their mechanisms, see Daniel James Waller, "Echo and the Historiola: Theorizing the Narrative Incantation," *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 16 (2015): 263–280, esp. 267–273.

15 David Frankfurter, "Narrating Power," 465.

also beyond a magical act based on the principle of analogy or *similia similibus*. Analogy presupposes the persistence of two chronological layers—the past and the present—and the magic act refers to the past event as a paradigm. In contradiction to this, *unio magica* is expected to be effective precisely because there is no such distinction: the magician impersonates a biblical figure, the situation at hand is identified with the biblical event, and the differences of time and space become void in performance.

For this, the quotation of the relevant words is conceived as powerful enough to create the setting for the magical act, to trigger the transformation of the magicians and to apply the efficacious force.

The fundamental conceptual distinction between *historiola*, *similia similibus*, and *unio magica* is also mirrored in the literary nature of the quoted passages: the biblical speech acts applied in the texts from the Cairo Genizah for forging *unio magica* rarely originate from narrative contexts, but rather often stem from ritual settings, such as prayer, curses, and blessings. In addition, the magician performing biblical speech acts to enter an *unio magica* sometimes applies passages from more than one biblical co-text, embodying several different characters conceived as powerful from the Hebrew Bible in order to accumulate power, which becomes effective since the performance of the magical *unio* voids difference in time and space with respect to different biblical texts as well. In contrast to this, a *historiola* typically focuses on one specific narrative setting.

The choice of the characters whose words the magicians apply in order to trigger *unio magica* is by no means coincidental—on the contrary, it involves particularly prominent figures from biblical narratives. Thus, in the following examples, Moses, King David, King Solomon, certain prophets, the priests, seraphim, and even God become the subject of *unio magica*.

3   Forms of *Unio Magica* in the Magical Texts from The Cairo Genizah

Moses

Some of the texts in the Cairo Genizah aim at an *unio magica* with Moses. For example, a magical cure for headaches instructs the magician to write a quotation from Num 12:13 (“*Oh, God, pray heal {her}*!”)[16] on a reed leaf and wear this as an amulet. The magician merges with Moses by putting his words in writing and creating an amulet. Thus, Moses’ prayer for the healing of his leprous sister Miriam is evoked and blended with the current situation, and his powers and potency are transferred to the amulet by the magician’s

---

16 The text reads אל רפא נא instead of אל נא רפא נא in the Masoretic Text; MS Cambridge, Cambridge University Library (henceforth CUL), T-S Ar. 44.44, fol. 2a/12 (*MSF*, 220). Translation of all biblical verses follows TNK, i.e., NJPS Tanakh 1985. Here and in the following, translations of biblical texts are in italics, and braces { } designate biblical text omitted in the magical text. Additionally, the following signs are used for the Hebrew texts: parentheses ( ) in the Hebrew/Aramaic text designate uncertain readings, brackets [ ] show restoration of lost writing or *lacunae*. In the translation, parentheses show supplements for better comprehension, doubled parentheses (( )) show the translation of the uncertain readings, and brackets designate reconstructed text or *lacunae*.

performative act of *unio magica* with Moses. As a result, Moses is evoked as the one who implores God and whose request will be granted.

Above all, however, the magician forges an *unio magica* with Moses with the help of quotations from Moses' speeches in Deuteronomy. Thus, for example, magical curses use quotations of the curses at the end of Moses' second speech in the land of Moab or from the threat of exile in his third speech. An instructive example is attested in a curse text from the beginning of the thirteenth century that features the following adjuration, citing an adaptation of Deut 29:19:[17]

עשו שאלתי קדישי עליון והחרימו את פל׳ בן פל׳ לא יאבה ייי׳ סלוח לפל׳ בן פל׳ כי אז יע?? אף ייי׳
וקנאתו בפל׳ בן פל׳ ורבצה [   ] האלה הכתובה והאמורה בספר הזה ומחה ייי׳ את שם פל׳ בן פל׳
מתחת השמים אלהים יכניע את פל׳ בן פל׳ אלהים יכניע את פל׳ בן פל׳ אלהים יאבד את פל׳ בן פל׳
אלהים ישחית את פל׳ בן פל׳ אלהים יכרת את פל׳ בן פל׳ [...].

"Fulfil my request, holies of the highest and ban N., son of N. *The Lord will never forgive* N., son of N., *rather will the Lord's anger and passion ra[ge] against* N., son of N. *till every sanction recorded* and spoken *in this book comes down upon [him] and the Lord blots out the name of* N., son of N. *from under heaven* [Deut 29:19] God shall subdue N., son of N., God shall destroy N., son of N., God shall kill N., son of N., God shall extinguish N., son of N. [...]"

In this adjuration, the magician not only merges with Moses by means of *unio magica*, he also intensifies the equation between past and presence by incorporating the name of the person to be cursed into the recitation of Moses' words.

Besides curses, however, the magical texts from the Cairo Genizah also quote other speech acts of Moses. According to a charm for gaining the attention of other people—a prince or a judge, for example—the magician has to begin by reciting verses from Moses' speech in Deut 32. These verses are directly parallel to the immediate goal of the magical act: the magician's wish to be heard is to be achieved with the help of the opening verses of this speech, which expresses this very issue:[18]

אם בקשתה שיהייו דבריך נשמעים לפני העם או לפני ש{שר }ושופט{ ושופט אמור אלין פסוקי
האזינו השמים וג יערף כמטר וגם כי שם ייי אקרא ואמור משביע אני עליכים שמות הקדושים
שבהם הוכיח משה את בני ישראל במדבר שתעשו את דברי נשמעים בעיני העם הזה או בעיני פל
ויהיו דברי נראים [...] קולי אל אל ייי אקרא ויענני מהר קדשו סלה ב׳ש׳כ׳מ׳ל׳ו׳ א׳א׳א׳ ס׳ס׳ס׳
הללויה: סלה :

"If you wish your words to be heard by people or by a prince or a judge, say these verses: *Give ear, O heavens,* etc. {*let me speak; let the earth hear the words I utter!*}

---

17 MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S NS 160.18, fol. 2b/2–6 (*MTKG* II, 280); for another example, see the *unio magica* formed by quoting Deut 29:20 in MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S K 1.148, fol. 1a/6 (*MTKG* II, 306; 13ᵗʰ cent.).

18 MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S K 1.132, fols. 7a/14–8a/1 (*MSF*, 184–185).

[Deut 32:1] *May my discourse come down as the rain,* etc.[19] {*My speech distill as the dew, like showers on young growth, like droplets on the grass*} [Deut 32:2]. *For the name of the Lord I proclaim* [Deut 32:3]. And say: I adjure you, holy names, through which Moses admonished the children of Israel in the desert, that you should cause my words to be heard by this people or by N., and that my words should be acceptable. [...].[20] *I cry aloud to the Lord, and He answers me from His holy mountain. Selah* [Ps 3:5]. Blessed be the name of his kingship for ever and ever. Amen. Amen. Amen. Selah. Selah. Selah. Hallelujah. Selah."

Following this instruction, the magician begins the ritual by quoting the words that, according to the biblical account, were spoken by Moses. Through this performative recitation, therefore, the magician forges an *unio magica* with Moses and thus proclaims the authority of the biblical leader for himself at the beginning of the ritual.[21] For the following stage of the ritual, consisting of a typical adjuration, the magician leaves the *unio magica* and returns to his own voice as magician, creating and marking a paradigm shift that is a characteristic of many magic rituals, and rituals in general;[22] the magician's release from time and space throughout his peformance of *unio magica* requires moving both forth and back between the two different states. The following part of the ritual starts with a performative contextualization of the magical names (שמות הקדושים, "the holy names") to be applied afterwards, invoking events of the past as a paradigm for their efficacy ("through which Moses admonished the children of Israel"). The magician then goes on to express his wishes, ending in the adjuration of the aforementioned magical names. Following this evocation of Moses by way of *unio magica* and subsequent narrative contextualization of the applied magical names, the magician, in the further course of his incantation, forges an *unio magica* with the royal poet and prayer David by reciting the verse Ps 3:5 ("*I cry aloud to the Lord, and He answers me from His holy mountain. Selah*").[23]

The interpretation of Moses as a figure of magical power is well rooted in the Hebrew Bible. The competition of Moses and Aaron with the Egyptian magicians described in the story of the Egyptian plagues (Exod 7:8–12:51; Deut 34:11) certainly is to be regarded as most influential in this regard.[24] Late antique Jewish and Christian texts attest to the

---

19 Reading וגם with the editors as an error for וג׳; see *MSF*, 188.

20 Magical names.

21 Since magical texts usually use the masculine form when addressing the magician, and since we do not have the means to reconstruct if this is used as generic form or not, here and in the following the masculine form is used when speaking about persons performing magical acts.

22 See Gavin Brown, "Theorizing Ritual as Performance: Explorations of Ritual Indeterminacy," *JRitSt* 17 (2003): 3–18, esp. 14.

23 On the possibility of merging with several biblical persons in the course of different stages of a magic ritual, see section 4.

24 On biblical accounts on magical acts carried out by Moses, see Scott Noegel, "Moses and Magic: Notes on the Book of Exodus," *JANES* 24 (1996): 45–59; Peter Schäfer, "Magic and Religion in Ancient Judaism," in *Envisioning Magic*, ed. Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 27–30.

continuity of this tradition.[25] Above all, Moses continues to be present as a powerful magician in pagan sources,[26] for example in the Greek Magical Papyri.[27] Some traditions understand Moses' magical powers to be rooted in the fact that he knew the divine name. The act of *unio magica* with Moses, therefore, endows the magician with Moses' authority also in this specific regard.[28] Illustrative is an instruction from the Greek Magical Papyri that aims at an *unio magica* with Moses as well. In contrast to the examples from the Cairo Genizah, however, this union is not accomplished by reciting biblical quotations. Rather, it is enough to allude to the story in order to stage the setting and to transform the magician into Moses. The following formula had to be written on a piece of papyrus:[29]

> O most great one [... (magical names)]. I am he whom you met at the foot of the holy mount and to whom you gave the knowledge of your most great [name], which knowledge will I even keep in sanctity, imparting it to no one save the initiates into our own holy mysteries [... (magical names)]. Come! Submit to this service and be my assistant.

From the field of Jewish magic, the most prominent work that conveys magical traditions in the name of Moses is חרבא דמשה (Sword of Moses), in which Moses is presented as "the archetype of all magicians: the one to whom heavenly magical knowledge was delivered and to whose adjurations the angels were bid to obey as a model of future magical relations between humans and angels."[30] In the magical texts found in the Cairo Genizah, several texts attest to the notion of Moses as a magician. In many cases, these texts allude to Moses' miraculous deeds before and during the exodus.[31]

---

25 For Moses as magician in rabbinic literature, see Yuval Harari, "Moses, the Sword, and *The Sword of Moses*: Between Rabbinical and Magical Traditions," *JSQ* 12.4 (2005): 309–319.

26 On Moses in magical and alchemical texts from antiquity, see John G. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1972), 134–161.

27 E.g., Hans Dieter Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation: Including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986; henceforth *PGM*), VII/619–627 ("Diadem of Moses"); *PGM* XIII/1–734 ("Eighth Book of Moses"; on this see Gager, *Moses*, 146–148; Fritz Graf, *Gottesnähe und Schadenzauber: Die Magie in der griechisch-römischen Antike* [Munich: Beck, 1996], 13–14); *PGM* XIII/1057–1074 ("A Secret Prayer of Moses to Selene"); *PGM* XIII/1078 ("The Tenth Hidden Book of Moses"); *PGM* XIII/973; on these texts see Gager, *Moses*, 148–151. On biblical motifs in these texts, such as for example the division of the Red Sea or the revelation of the name of God in the burning bush, see, e.g., *PGM* XII/81–93.

28 On the importance of the revelation of God's name, see Salzer, *Die Magie der Anspielung*, 310–313. Within the corpus of magical texts from the Cairo Genizah, the importance of the revealed name is attested in numerous references to Exod 3:14; see Salzer, *Die Magie der Anspielung*, 368–374.

29 *PGM* XII/92–96.

30 Harari, "Moses," 320. For an edition of this text, see Yuval Harari, *The Sword of Moses—A New Edition and Study* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Akademon, 1997). For an English translation, see Yuval Harari, "*The Sword of Moses*—A New Translation and Introduction," *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft* 7 (2012): 58–95.

31 See, e.g., MSS Cambridge, CUL, T-S NS 322.10, fol. 1a/8 (*MTKG* I, 85); T-S AS 143.427, fol. 1a/9–13 (*MTKG* I, 214); T-S K 1.144*, fol. 1b/6 (*MTKG* II, 31); T-S K 1.96, fol. 2a/3–4 (*MTKG* III, 369);

The *unio magica* with Moses forged by the magician, therefore, increases the latter's authority and potency. In addition, the reference to Moses, whether with the help of an *unio magica* or by other allusions to this biblical figure, has a legitimizing function in that it alludes to Moses, the lawgiver of Israel, the "cultural, religious and historical hero of Jewish tradition" and therefore legitimizes the magical act at hand.[32] This feature is especially prominent in the *Sword of Moses*, which also refers to him, as Harari puts it, as the "spiritual father of the nation." Harari assumes that this may have served to imply that the sword (consisting of magical names) was seen as revealed at Mount Sinai and therefore contains legitimate religious practice.[33]

King David

The magicians often recast themselves as King David by means of *unio magica* when applying verses from the psalms, because tradition considers David the author of most of these texts.[34] The equation of the magician with the biblical king becomes particularly clear when the magician recites passages from Psalms that use the first person singular.[35] This, for instance, is the case in a magical prayer featuring the request for the fulfillment of wishes, dating to the eleventh or twelfth century, which applies passages from Ps 55.[36] Since the first verse, attributing the psalm to King David,[37] is omitted, the quotation begins with Ps 55:2 (האז [ ] נה אלוהים תפלתי ואל תתעלם מתחנתי, "[*Give ear*], *O God, to my prayer; do not ignore my plea*") and ends with 55:9 (אחישה מ[ ] ל מ׳ ס׳ מס׳, "*I would soon find me* [*a refuge*] *from the sweeping wind, from the tempest*"). Due to the wording of the psalm in the first person singular, the magician effectively enters the voice of David, who enjoyed divine protection more than most other biblical figures according to tradition.[38] Through the repetition of David's words, which results in a ritual merging of magician and king, this reputation is now passed on to the magician, whose request therefore deserves special attention.

The same is true for the quotation of Ps 6:2–3 (יהוה אל באפך תוכיחני ואל בחמתך תיסרני חנני יהוה כי אמלל אני רפאני יהוה כי נבהלו עצמי, "*O Lord, do not punish me in anger, do not chastise me in fury. Have mercy on me, o Lord, for I languish; heal me, o Lord, for my bones shake with terror*")[39] in an amulet for healing. From the perspective of their syntagmatic function, the verses express the amulet's goal. Their paradigmatic function is to convey David's authority to the magician and the significance of the king's request to the person in need of healing.

MS New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, ENA 2672.20, fols. 20a/19–20b/1 (*MTKG* III, 47–48).

32 Gager, *Moses*, 180.

33 Yuval Harari, "Moses," 328–329.

34 See bPes 117a; bBB 14b.

35 Most obviously, not every quote from Psalms – in magical rituals, in prayers, etc.—forges a *unio magia*, since the latter is also dependent upon the co-text and context; see the observation above on the paradigm shift characteristic for ritual.

36 MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S K 1.25*, fol. 1b/11–16 (*MTKG* II, 177).

37 למנצח בנגינת משכיל לדוד, "*For the leader; with instrumental music*."

38 See Israel Moses Ta-Shma, "David: In the Aggada," in *EncJud* 5:452.

39 MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S K 1.70, fols. 2a/10–3a/1 (*AMB*, 226).

King Solomon

Similarly, since some of the biblical psalms are attributed to King Solomon, the magician can enter an *unio magica* with David's son by means of appropriate quotations from these psalms. This is attested, for instance, in an amulet stemming from the early sixteenth century, which aims at gaining prestige and respect, and at destroying enemies. The request of the amulet is expressed with the help of quotations from Ps 141 and Ps 72:[40]

יפלו במכמוריו רשעים יחד אנכי עד אעבור. לפניו יכרעו צויים ואיביו עפר ילחכו

> "*Let the wicked fall into their nets while I alone come through* [Ps 141:10]. *Let desert-dwellers kneel before him, and his enemies lick the dust* [Ps 72:9]."

While the first of the quoted psalms (Ps 141) is ascribed to David by its superscript, the second one (Ps 72) names Solomon as its author. The owner of the amulet thus merges with the figures of King David and King Solomon and consequently their authority and potency are transferred upon him.[41]

Entering an *unio magica* with King Solomon is particularly significant for the magician, because according to parabiblical and magical traditions, Solomon appears as the magician par excellence. Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions consider him to be a great and important magician, who possessed special powers over demons and who was also the author of various magical treatises. The biblical starting point of these traditions seems to be the wisdom attributed to Solomon and his description as "wisest of all men" (1 Kgs 5:11). The apocryphal work *Sapientia Salomonis* (late 1ˢᵗ cent. BCE–1ˢᵗ cent. CE) interprets this wisdom in terms of a magical and astrological knowledge, which also includes the power over spirits.[42] Josephus reports that King Solomon had composed incantations that cure diseases and also attributes exorcism of demons to him. Furthermore, Josephus describes how he witnessed the Jewish exorcist Eleazar using Solomon's name and chanting his incantations for this purpose:[43]

---

40 MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S K 1.163, fol. 1a/27–28 (*MTKG* II, 248).

41 The amulet is written for a man named Elazar ben Maliḥa; see fol. 1a/8 (*MTKG* II, 247). On the possibility of merging with several biblical figures during one ritual, see section 4 below.

42 *Sapientia Salomonis* 7,17–21: "For he himself gave me an unerring knowledge of the things that exist, to know the constitution of the world and the activity of the elements, the beginning and end and middle of times, the alterations of the solstices and the changes of the seasons, the cycles of the year and the constellations of the stars, the natures of animals and the tempers of wild animals, the violent forces of spirits and the thoughts of human beings, the varieties of plants and the powers of roots, and all things, both what is secret and what is manifest, I learned." Translation by Michael A. Knibb in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint: And the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under That Title*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin Givens Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 712.

43 Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 8,2,5. Translation: *The Loeb Classical Library, Josephus* (London: Heinemann, 1950), 5:595–597. On Josephus' description of Solomon as magician, see Dennis C. Duling, "The Eleazar Miracle and Solomon's Magical Wisdom in Flavius Josephus's 'Antiquitates Judaicae' 8.42–49," *HTR* 78 (1985): 1–25; on traditions about Solomon as exorcist, see Dennis C. Duling, "Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David," *HTR* 68 (1975): 235–252.

He put to the nose of the possessed man a ring which had under its seal one of the roots prescribed by Solomon, and then, as the man smelled it, drew out the demon through his nostrils, and, when the man at once fell down, adjured the demon never to come back into him, speaking Solomon's name and reciting the incantations which he had composed.

Striking in Josephus' description of an exorcism is that it reports a magical act that is performed by the magician by forging an *unio magica* with Solomon. By explicitly mentioning the king's name and by reciting the incantations attributed to him, Eleazar merges performatively with Solomon and conveys upon himself the king's magical authority and power.

The ring used by Eleazar attests to the very powerful magical tool (*materia magica*) ascribed to Solomon by other magical traditions. Solomon's ring in connection with his power over the demonic world is the central topic of the pseudepigraphic composition *Testament of Solomon*. In this Greek text, Solomon relates how he used a ring received from the archangel Michael to call upon demons and thus forced them to assist him in building the temple in Jerusalem.[44]

Rabbinical literature describes Solomon as master of demons,[45] and according to the magical manual *Sefer ha-Razim* (Book of Secrets; probably 7th–8th cent. CE),[46] Solomon was a master of demons and evil spirits.[47] Further references to King Solomon as a magician are found in the Greek Magical Papyri[48] as well as in the magical texts from the Cairo Genizah. For example, an amulet for protection in childbirth mentions him as a disciple

---

44 On this, see Philip S. Alexander, "Incantations and Books of Magic," in *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, ed. Emil Schürer, rev. and ed. Geza Vermes and Ferqus Millar (Edinburgh: Clark, 1986), 3.1:372–374. In their much more detailed article, Boustan and Beshay argue that the tradition about Solomon mastering the demons for building the temple is originally a Christian one; Raʿanan Boustan and Michael Beshay, "Sealing the Demons, Once and for All: The Ring of Solomon, the Cross of Christ, and the Power of Biblical Kingship," *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 16 (2015): 99–130.

45 bGit 68a–b. On Solomon as master of demons in rabbinic literature, see Gilad Sasson, "In the Wake of the Tradition about Solomon the Magician in Rabbinic Literature" [in Hebrew], *Jewish Studies* 6 (2007): 1–17. In addition to the tradition that Solomon used the help of demons to build the temple, Sasson determines another aspect of Solomon's power over demons in rabbinic literature: his ability to heal the sick by casting out demons. According to Sasson, this was handed down only implicitly, since the rabbis were keen to avoid any association with Jesus.

46 Bill Rebiger, Peter Schäfer, Evelyn Burkhardt, and Dorothea M. Salzer, *Sefer ha-Razim I und II: Das Buch der Geheimnisse I und II*, vol. 1, *Edition* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 9; see pp. 3–9 for a detailed discussion of the dating and origin of *Sefer ha-Razim*. Philipp Alexander suggests that the book was composed in the fifth or sixth century; see Philip Alexander, "Sefer ha-Razim and the Problem of Black Magic in Early Judaism," in *Magic in the Biblical World from the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon*, ed. Todd E. Klutz (London: T&T Clark International, 2003), 188.

47 Rebiger, Schäfer, Burkhardt, and Salzer, *Sefer ha-Razim I und II*, vol. 1, book II, section 13; Mordecai Margalioth, *Sefer ha-Razim: A Newly Recovered Book of Magic from the Talmudic Period* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Yediot Achronot 1966), 27. On Solomon as magician in *Sefer ha-Razim*, see Pablo A. Torijano, *Solomon, the Esoteric King: From King to Magus, Development of a Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 7; Alexander, "Sefer ha-Razim."

48 For instance, *PGM* IV/850–929.

of Ashmedai, the king of demons: "Specifically, you seven spirits about which Ashmedai, king of the demons, taught King Solomon [...]."[49]

Because of these traditions, the incorporation of Solomon's voice into a magical act evokes his magical power and endows the incantation with it. Mary Mills, in her study on Solomon traditions in Hellenistic Judaism, states that "the Solomon-traditions live on in new environments and remain traditions of power enabling human agents of a new era to attract divine energy to their own needs."[50] This is certainly equally true for the examples of magical texts from the Cairo Genizah, which apply the means of *unio magica*.

Prophets

The magical texts from the Cairo Genizah also attest to acts of *unio magica* with biblical prophets. Isaiah, for instance, is evoked in an act of *unio magica* several times. Thus, an incantation for pacifying a child from the eleventh century first aims at an *unio magica* with Isaiah, realized by reciting Isa 30:19:[51]

> בשם שדי די ברא שמייא בשמך רחמנא וחנינא בשם נסגא תסגא תמף בשם אהיה אשר אהיה לא יבכה
> הנער הזה כי עם בציון ישב ובירושלם בכה לא תבכה חנון יחנך לקול זעקתיך כשמעתו ענ. אכיר אנסו.

> "By the name of Shaddai who made the heaven. By your name, merciful and full of grace. By the name of NSG' TSG' TMP, and by the name *Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh* [Exod 3:14]. This young boy will not weep. *Indeed, O people in Zion, dwellers of Jerusalem, you shall not have cause to weep. He will grant you His favor at the sound of your cry, he will respond as soon as He hears it* [Isa 30:19].[52] Amen. So may it be pleasing. Amen. (In) eternity. Selah. And forever."

Merged through the *unio magica* with the prophet Isaiah and hence equipped with his authority, the magician relates the prophet's promise for the people of Israel to the situation at hand in order to soothe the child.

Priests

Besides specific and powerful figures from the Hebrew Bible, especially Moses, David, Solomon, and prophets, some of the magical texts from the Cairo Genizah attest to the use of *unio magica* with biblical priests. This is the case, for example, in a charm for identifying a thief, which is based on the biblical ritual of examining an alleged adulteress:[53]

---

49 ובפרט אתון שבעה רוחין די אוליף אשמדי מלכא די שידין לשלמה מלכא; MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S K 1.30, fol. 1a/9–10 (*HAI*, 71). On this tradition see *HAI*, 80. For more references on Solomon as magician, see MSS Cambridge, CUL, T-S K 1.68, fol. 1a/17 (*AMB*, 224; *HAI*, 123); T-S Misc. 27.4.11, fol. 1a/3 (*MSF*, 216); T-S K 1.162, fol. 1b/7 (*MTKG* III, 68).

50 Mary E. Mills, *Human Agents of Cosmic Power in Hellenistic Judaism and the Synoptic Tradition* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 61. On King Solomon in magical traditions, see Alexander, "Incantations," 372–379; Torijano, *Solomon*; Boustan and Berschay, "Sealing the Demons."

51 MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S NS 91.41, fol. 1a/1–9 (*MTKG* II, 265).

52 Slightly changed: the magical text has בכה instead of בכו in the Masoretic Text.

53 MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S K 1.28, fol. 2a/15–19 (*MTKG* I, 137).

אחר לגנב. קח שעורים ויטחון אותן למפרע (ביד שמאל) בריחים של יד ועשה עוגות על שם
החשודים ??? ויכתוב על העוגה יתן יי׳ את ירכך נפלת ואת בטנך צבה.

> "Another (instruction) to (catch) a thief: Take barley and one should grind it the
> other way round ((with the left hand)) on the quern, and prepare round flat cakes
> in the name of the suspects. And one should write on the flat cake: *The Lord may
> cause your thigh to sag and your belly to distend* [Num 5:21]."

The verse to be written on the cakes is taken from a biblical ordeal prescribed and de-
scribed in Num 5:11–31; God commanded the priests to use this incantation to test a
woman suspected of adultery. In using these words in writing, the magician therefore
enters into an *unio magica* with the biblical high priest and acts on God's orders. Unlike
the examples of an *unio magica* presented above, this instruction focuses not only on the
repetition of speech but also on mimicking the biblical ritual in deed. The magician is
required to write down the words that the high priest, following the biblical prescription
for the ordeal, had to speak, write down, and then wash into the water that the alleged
adulteress had to drink. Hence, the magician enters into an *unio magica* by reciting the
relevant verse. But the magician also has to play out the *unio magica* by imitating a part
of the biblical ritual (writing down the efficacious incantation and administering it to the
person under suspicion, who has to digest it) in order to catch a thief. Thus, the *unio mag-
ica* achieved by speech act is complemented by an *unio magica* achieved by mimicry. As
in the case of the biblical ordeal, the culprit will be recognised as a result of their swollen
belly. In the biblical description of the ordeal, the high priest is instructed and authorized
to carry it out by God. In the charm presented here, the magician takes the place of the
priest and thus claims cultic authorization for the magical act he is performing, thereby
annulling the difference between biblical and contemporary events, between high priest
and magician.[54]

Other texts in the Cairo Genizah attest the use of the priestly blessing (Num 6:23–27)
in order to forge an *unio magica* between the magician and the biblical priest.[55]

Seraphim

In addition to the magician's *unio magica* with prominent figures of biblical history, the
texts in the Cairo Genizah attest to acts of *unio magia* forged with seraphim, the highest
class of angels. An example of this phenomenon is found in the closing sequence of a
prayer for the fulfillment of wishes, which dates from the late eleventh century:[56]

בעבור שמך הגדול והגבור והנורא והמפורש והאביר [ ] והחזק והנפלא והנישא וה?] [ ] ברוך הוא
ק׳ק׳ יי צבאות [ ]הארץ כבודו ואחר כל זאת דבר] [ ] צרכיך וראשך ופניך יהיו למטה.

"For your name, the great, heroic, fearful, explicit, tremendous, [ ], strong, excellent, sublime and ???, blessed be he. *Holy, holy, holy! The Lord of Hosts! His presence {fills} all the earth* [Isa 6:3]*!* After all this speak [ ] (all) you need. Your head and your face should be (inclined) downwards."

The verses applied here represent the praise of the seraphim surrounding God in Isiaiah's vision of the temple. As a consequence, the magician, through his performance of these words, joins the order of the seraphim, becoming himself a powerful celestial being from God's immediate environment and thus increasing the impact of the magical prayer. [57]

God

Hans-Jörg Niggemeyer and Giuseppe Veltri have mentioned the possibility of the magician's identification with God in Jewish magical acts: both see the use of magical names as means to identify with God. [58] Different from this, the *unio magica* enables a personification with God by way of quoting God's speech, which is recorded in several biblical cotexts. For example, in several prophetic texts from the Hebrew Bible, the prophet utters a message connected with the claim that it was previously received from God. In these cases, the prophet is thus bestowed with divine authority. When such passages become part of the magician's speech, a double transfer takes place, due to which the magician ultimately enters into an *unio magica* with God. This is the case, for example, in the following charm to loosen a spell: [59]

שרוי לכל מילה (ד) [ ] סב עפר מין תחות רגלך [ ] עלוי (ז׳)כ׳(א׳) עוצו עיצה ותופר דברו דבר ולא יקום כי ע(מ׳ אל).

"Loosening for every matter which [ ]. Take (some) dust from underneath your feet [say?] over it ((seven)) twenty ((one)) times: *Hatch a plot—it shall be foiled; agree on action—it shall not succeed. For with us is God* [Isa 8:10]*!*"

The biblical verse is taken from God's direct speech act as given by Isaiah. If the magician applies these verses in a magical ritual acting out a performative *unio magica*, it ultimately is God who breaks the evil spells.

   The following charm, a remedy for distress that probably dates from the sixteenth century, also quotes divine speech, but here God's words do not stem from a prophetic speech, but rather from Psalms: [60]

---

57   On the importance of the "liturgical communion" in the Hekhalot literature, see Schäfer, *Hidden and Manifest God*, 165.

58   Jens-Heinrich Niggemeyer, *Beschwörungsformeln aus dem "Buch der Geheimnisse" (Sefär ha-razim): Zur Topologie der magischen Rede* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1975), 74, 92; Giuseppe Veltri, *Magie und Halakha: Ansätze zu einem empirischen Wissenschaftsbegriff im spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 87–88.

59   MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S K 1.143, fol. 7a/5–8 (*MSF*, 191; translation p. 199, slightly changed).

60   MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S K 1.3, fol. 3b/12–15 (*MTKG* III, 94).

אחרת גם כן יאמר ז׳פ׳ כי בי חשק ואפ??? ואשגבהו ידע שמי וקראני ואענהו עמו אנכי בצרה
אחלצהו ואכב?? אורך ימים אשביעהו ואראהו בישועתי ביי׳ קדוש הצלני מן צרה הזאת.

> "Another instruction. Also seven times one should say: *Because he is devoted to Me
> I will [deliver him]; I will keep him safe, for he knows My name. When he calls on
> Me,*[61] *I will answer him; I will be with him in distress; I will rescue him and make him
> hon[ored]; I will let him live to a ripe old age, and show him My salvation* [Ps 91:14–
> 16]. By the holy Lord, save me from this distress."

The formula to be spoken against affliction consists for the most part of the verses
Ps 91:14–16, which reproduce divine speech in the biblical pre-text and thus serve to form
an *unio magica* in the context of the described magical action. Consequently, the magi-
cian merges with the divine speaker, whereby he re-enacts the divine promise for deliver-
ance. After the promise is actualized by the act of *unio magica*, the magician speaks in his
own voice again and requests remedy for his distress.

These examples of an *unio magica* forged with God demonstrate that the magicians
assure themselves of the greatest—namely, the divine—authority, because by means of
unio magica they perform and transfer this authority to themselves.

The identification with God or a divine being is by no means a magical procedure
attested only in magical texts from the Cairo Genizah. Rather, it is common in magical
traditions of other provenances as well. A love spell found in the Greek Magical Papyri,
for example, attests to an *unio magica* with a divine being, for which the magician has to
recite the following words:[62]

> For I am Barbar Adonai who hides the stars, who controls the brightly shining
> heaven, the lord of the world [... (magical names)]. I am Thoth Osomai; attract her,
> bind her [...].

Here, in contrast to the previously mentioned examples from the Cairo Genizah, howev-
er, the *unio magica* does not happen through the repetition of direct speech, it is rather
enough to make a claim on an *unio magica* by stating it by a declarative speech act: "I am
Barbar Adonai ... I am Thoth ...."

4   Sequences of *Unio Magica*

The quoted examples demonstrate that the magician's merging with an important figure
of the biblical past appears rather commonly in the magical texts from the Cairo Genizah.
Moreover, the magician can embody several persons one after another within one single
magical procedure, forging an *unio magica* then stepping out of it in order to forge anoth-
er one with a different biblical character in the course of one ritual in order to accumulate
power. The following concluding sequence of an amulet is a vivid example of this feature.

---

61   The text reads וקראני instead of יקראני in the Masoretic Text.
62   *PGM* IV/385–390.

The amulet originates from around 1100 CE and is designed to protect its owner Abū al-Sayyid from damages and illnesses:[63]

ויקיים עליו ייי׳ ישמרך מכל רע ישמר את נפשך והסיר יי׳ ממך כל חולי וכל מדוה מצרים הרעים
אשר ידעת לא ישימם בך ונתנם בכל שנאיך׳. יברכך יי׳ וישמרך יאר יי׳ פניו אליך ויחנך ישא יי׳ פניו
אליך וישם לך שלום.

"And may (the following) be fulfilled in him: *The Lord will guard you from all harm; He will guard your life* [Ps 121:7]. *The Lord will ward off from you all sickness. He will not bring upon you any of the dreadful diseases of Egypt, about which you know, but will inflict them upon all your enemies* [Deut 7:15]. *The Lord bless you and protect you! The Lord deal kindly and graciously with you! The Lord bestow His favor upon you and grant you peace* [Num 6:24–26]!"

On the syntagmatic level, the biblical verses express the aim of the amulet and render its goals in biblical language. From a paradigmatic perspective, several different persons are evoked: by writing Ps 121:7, the magician speaks in the role of King David; this is followed by an *unio magica* with Moses (Deut 7:15); and finally, the amulet forges an *unio magica* with the priest by applying the priestly blessing (Num 6:24–26).[64] Thus, the concrete magical situation (i. e., writing and wearing the amulet) is merged with the biblical events referred to, and the potency and the reputation of the respective biblical figures are transferred to the magician who therefore enhances the amulet's potency.

It is interesting that the history of the magical use of the priestly blessing can be traced back to pre-exilic Judah.[65] Two inscribed silver amulets from a burial cave at Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem, dating to the sixth century BCE, reproduce parts of the priestly blessing that are presumably completely or at least largely identical to the Masoretic Text.[66] They are, therefore, not only the oldest witnesses to the magical use of the priestly blessing, they are even the oldest material evidence for a biblical text at all. In addition to the two silver amulets from Ketef Hinnom, the use of these verses is also well attested in other Jewish magical traditions from late antiquity to modern times, having been preserved to this day.[67]

---

63 MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S AS 143.427, fol. 1a/29–41 (*MTKG* I, 215).

64 For a short survey about the use of the priestly blessing, see Angel, "Use of the Hebrew Bible," 790. For a more comprehensive analysis, see Salzer, *Die Magie der Anspielung*, 87–92, 156–157, 164–165, 338–342.

65 On the use of these verses in Jewish magic, see *MSF*, 25–27, as well as Salzer, *Die Magie der Anspielung*, 87–90.

66 On these amulets, see Ada Yardeni, "Remarks on the Priestly Blessing on Two Ancient Amulets from Jerusalem," *VT* 41.2 (1991): 176–185; Gabriel Barkay, Andrew G. Vaughn, Marilyn J. Lundberg, and Bruce Zuckermann, "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation," *BASOR* 334 (2004): 41–71.

67 For examples from the end of the twentieth century, see Barry Ross, "Notes on Some Jewish Amulets: *Ayin Ha-Ra* and the Priestly Blessing," *Journal of Associated Graduates in Near Eastern Studies* 2 (1991): 34–40.

5 Then and Now: Remaining Distinguishable

A tenth or eleventh century recipe against "the restraint of the [fetus] in the womb" is another example of a magical text from the Cairo Genizah attesting to the use of God's direct speech, in this case relying on a verse from the book of Jeremiah. Here, however, the passage is marked explicitly as a quote from the biblical text, and the magical text highlights the distinction between the original and its actual recitation as well as the distance between God and the magician rather than performatively merging the two of them:[68]

> בשם יוצר עולם אשר יצרך ויודע מה בלבך ומה מעשיך הוא המגיד מראשית אחרית כמו שאמ׳
> בטרם אצרך בבטן ידעתיך וג׳ כה אמ׳ יי׳ בורא השמים ונוטיהם רוק׳ האר׳ וצאצאיה נות׳ נש׳ לע׳ ע׳
> ור׳ לר׳ בה.

> "In the name of the creator of the world, who created you and who knows what is in your heart and your deeds. He it is who *foretells the end from the beginning* [Isa 46:10], as it says: *Before I created you in the womb, I selected you;* etc. {*before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet concerning the nations*} [Jer 1:5]. *Thus said God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what it brings forth, Who gave breath to the people upon it and life to those who walk thereon* [Isa 42:5]."

The introductory words בשם יוצר עולם, "in/by the name of the creator of the world," already express a clear distinction between the magician and the authoritative power he draws on for his incantation. As the text progresses, it maintains this distinction and develops it even further: the verses Isa 46:10 and 42:5 speak referentially about God, qualifying the creator as Lord of humankind and of the universe, whose creation implies predestination. In the magical text, these verses frame God's direct speech in first person taken from Jer 1:5, which expresses the concept that individual election precedes procreation. The biblical verses from the book of Isaiah, therefore, set a referential and hermeneutical framework in order to explicate an interpretation of God's speech from Jer 1:5. Thus, in the course of the magical recitation, the magician interprets the original meaning of God's words preserved in the Hebrew Bible rather than forging an *unio magica*. In contrast to the latter, the clear-cut distinction between these two different contexts and subjects—the biblical text and the present world of the magician, God speaking and the magician reciting—is fundamental to the efficacy of the magical act. The magician quotes God's words as a self-declaration, but the text makes sure to mark that these are God's words, not the magician's. Nevertheless, through his quote and his interpretation of it, the magician assumes the efficacious divine voice and authority and speaks directly to the unborn child, reminding it to be God's predestined creation and reinforcing his request to the fetus to leave the womb, which is repeatedly expressed in the preceding part of the

---

68 MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S NS 322.10, fol. 1a/31–33 (*MTKG* I, 86). The same text already features God's direct speech before the quoted passage; see Job 39:1–4 on fol.1a/25–27 and Isa 45:23 on fol. 1a/29. These quotations are explicitly marked as well.

invocation.[69] Thus, the request is framed as a divine command without the conceptual merging that is essential for an *unio magica*. The magical act described in this adjuration, therefore, functions similarly to the *unio liturgica* described by Schumacher, for which it is crucial to maintain a final distinction between the magician and the powerful character he evokes from the past. As opposed to the latter concept, however, it does not unfold its efficacy through narration, but through interpretation.

Using direct speech by way of citational reference rather than by forging an *unio magica* is attested for other biblical figures as well. A "curse amulet"[70] from the twelfth century, for example, quotes several verses from Deut 28, and therefore refers to Moses. As in the aforementioned example, the magical act receives its potency through interpretation:[71]

ויחושו אליו כל הפגעים. בשעות הרעות בצאת הגזרות הקשות הגזרות המתרגשות המתחדשות לבוא עליו כעניין שנ׳ יככה יי׳ בשחפת וג׳ יככה יי׳ בשחין רע וג׳ יככה יי׳ בשגעון ובעורון וג׳ והייתה וג׳ ארור א׳ב׳ע׳ וג׳ ויתר כל הקללות הכתובות בספר התורה הזה למחות את שמם וזרכם ולאבדם מן העולם א׳מ׳א׳ סלה.

"And may all plagues affect him. In the evil hours. When the stern decrees go out, that come newly to him, as it is said: *The Lord will strike you with consumption*, etc. {*fever, and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew; they shall hound you until you perish*} [Deut 28:22]. *The Lord will afflict you with a severe inflammation*, etc. {*at the knees and thighs, from which you shall never recover— from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head*} [Deut 28:35]. *The Lord will strike you with madness, blindness*, etc. {*and dismay*} [Deut 28:28]. *You shall grope*, etc. {*at noon as a blind man gropes in the dark; you shall not prosper in your ventures, but shall be constantly abused and robbed, with none to give help*} [Deut 28:29]. *Cursed shall you be in the city*, etc. {*and cursed shall you be in the country*} [Deut 28:16]. And all the rest of the curses, *recorded in this Book of Teaching* [Deut 29:20, slightly altered],[72] to eradicate their name and memory and to eliminate them from the world. Amen. Amen. Selah."

In this example, the magician repeats Moses' words from Deut 28, but only after explicitly marking them as a quotation by the introductive formula כעניין שנ׳ (as it is said). Hence, the verses are interpreted and used as a prediction for the situation at hand, and the distinction between the magician and Moses and the different levels of time and space are kept perspicuous. In addition to the use of direct speech from the Hebrew Bible, this

---

69 See MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S NS 322.10, fol. 1a/28, 29, 30 (*MTKG* I, 86), which feature several commands to the child to leave the womb.

70 The strip of paper was rolled, and so the editors suggested that it was worn as an amulet; see *MTKG* I, 204.

71 MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S K 1.90, fol. 1a/17–25 (*MTKG* I, 201). The English translation, apart from the biblical quotations, is from Michael D. Swartz, "The Aesthetics of Blessing and Cursing: Literary and Iconographic Dimensions of Hebrew and Aramaic Blessing and Curse Texts," *JANER* 5 (2005): 187–211, specifically 193–194.

72 In the Masoretic Text: הכתובה בספר התורה הזה.

amulet also imitates the literary form of the biblical text: as in the latter, the amulet lines up the curses in a list. In contrast to the biblical text, however, the sequence of curses in the text from the Cairo Genizah recognizably follows a climactic structure: the first two curses describe physical afflictions that are supposed to affect the person to be cursed (consumption, abscesses, etc.); then the afflictions of the body are followed by mental diseases (madness, insanity); leading to the wish that the cursed person should experience adversity and injustice from other people as the climax, quoting a phrase that introduces the biblical curses in the Masoretic Text (Deut 28:16). The final (slightly changed) quotation from Deut 29:20 at the end of the sequence (*"recorded in this Book of Teaching"*) serves as a concluding remark and puts further emphasis on the authoritative context of the cited words. The verbal and structural imitation of the biblical pre-text, therefore, intensifies the interpretation of the verses as prediction for the current situation by which the concrete magical situation receives authority and legitimization. An act of performative *unio magica*, however, is missing here.

Both texts, consequently, maintain the difference between biblical pre-text and the concrete magical situation by clearly marking the biblical texts as quotations, and they do not attest to an act of *unio magica.*

The biblical pre-text Num 5:11–31, which serves as the paradigm for the aforementioned ritual to catch a thief (see section 3), also became the template for the ordeal concerning an alleged adulteress attested to in two fragments from the Cairo Genizah (*'inyan sota*).[73] But other than the recipe concerning the thief mentioned above, the adapted form for the *'inyan sota* does not make use of *unio magica*, although it is based on a repetition of the biblical ordeal. However, the two chronological levels of the biblical past and the present of the magical ritual never merge, remaining separate.

As Guiseppe Veltri has pointed out, the text can be divided into three parts: the beginning, which contains a doxology as well as a chain of tradition for the magical names[74] to be used in the ritual (part 1, fol. 17a/1–17a/17); an explanatory summary of the biblical ordeal as it happened in biblical times, including the use of names, incantations, and curses supposedly used for the preparation of the water of bitterness (part 2, fols. 17a/18–17c/16); and the description of the adapted ritual for the examination of the alleged adulteress

---

73 MS Cambridge, CUL, K 1.56 (*MTKG* I, 31–33, a shorter version of the ritual) and MS New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, ENA 3635.17 (*MTKG* I, 18–22, a longer version of the ritual). In the following, I will concentrate on ENA 3635.17. Veltri analyzes this text against the background of halakhic traditions in Giuseppe Veltri, "'*Inyan Sota*: Halakhische Voraussetzungen für einen magischen Akt nach einer theoretischen Abhandlung aus der Kairoer Geniza," *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 20 (1993): 23–48. The text is also dealt with in Michael D. Swartz, "Temple Ritual in Jewish Magic Literature" [in Hebrew], *Pe'amim* 85 (2000): 62–75, esp. 64–67; Michael D. Swartz, "Sacrificial Themes in Jewish Magic," in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, ed. Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 307–311. On magical practices regarding the ordeal of the suspected adulteress, see Yuval Harari, "The Scroll of Ahimaaz and the Jewish Magical Culture: A Note on the Ordeal of the Adulteress" [in Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 75 (2006): 185–202.

74 On this chain of tradition, see Veltri, "'*Inyan Sota*," 29–35.

(part 3, fols. 17c/17–17d/19 and marginal note).[75] Only parts 2 and 3 are important here for determining the differences with *unio magica*, especially the fact that in both parts the distinction between the biblical and the present status is highlighted.

Part 2 explains the procedure of the biblical ordeal by illustrating its mode of efficacy. According to the text, the high priest not only wrote down curses to be washed into the water as explained in the biblical text (Num 5:23), but also enriched the water with magical names and words:[76]

> ודע ובין שמן אלו השמות הסתורות שהם שם המפורש היו משקין את הסוטה ומכם השמות תצבה
> בטנה ותפול יריכה ואילו הדברים עם אלו השמות היו כותבין לה [...] והפסוק שיאמר וכתב את
> האלות האלה הכוהן בספר ומחה אל מי המרים [...] הרי מים קדושים טהורים ועפר ואין בה
> שום מרירה אלא אלא את המים מרים לשום האלות והשמות שמהם היו מתים ואל השבועות והאלות
> והשמות שהיה הכוהן הגדול כותב בספר [...].

> "Know and understand that of these secret names, which are the Explicit Name, they gave the Sota to drink, and from these names her belly swelled, and her thighs fell. And these are the words with these names, which they would write for her [...] And this is the verse, which he should say: *The priest shall put these curses down in writing and rub it off into the water of bitterness* [Num 5:23] [...] Therefore (this was) holy and pure water and dust, and there was no bitterness in it, but the water was bitter because of these names from which they would die. And these are the invocations, and the curses, and the names which the high priest would write down."

In what follows, the text lists the magical names, incantations and some of the curses mentioned in the biblical description of the ordeal (the text lists Num 5:21 and 5:22 from the curses in Num 5:19–22), all of which the high priest wrote down according to this explanation. The magical text, therefore, interprets the biblical description, and explicitly states that the efficacious elements for the preparation of the water of bitterness were not only the curses as in the biblical pre-text, but also the magical names and other words to be written down.[77] According to this interpretation, the act of writing was accompanied by a speech act: the high priest is supposed to have uttered Num 5:23 when writing down the efficacious elements. Interestingly enough, in the biblical pre-text, this verse is not part of the curses against the woman, but part of the description of the ritual. By contrast, the present interpretation explains the verse as an efficacious *materia magica*. Hence, part 2 of the magical text retrojects contemporary magical practice (the use of magical names, of incantations, and of biblical verses as *materia magica*) into the biblical past.

The recipe in part 3 aims to provide instructions for the updated ordeal, at a time when neither the main cult agent (the high priest) nor some of the ingredients are available, due to the destruction of the temple:[78]

---

75 Veltri, "*Inyan Sota*," 27.
76 MS New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, ENA 3635.17, fols. 17a/18–17b/15 (*MTKG* I, 19).
77 For similar interpretations, see Veltri, "*Inyan Sota*"; Swartz, "Sacrificial Themes," 309.
78 MS New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, ENA 3635.17, fol. 17c/17—17d/9 (*MTKG* I,

וזה היא דרך הלקיחה שאנחנו עושים היום על עסק שאין לנו לא כהן ולמים קדשין ולא משכן:
דע ובין שאם יהיה האדם ירא שמים בזה הזמן וינקה נפשו מין החטאות ומין הזדונות וידרוך דרך
הטהרה וטהרה בגופו וטהרה בבשרו ויטפל באלו השמות ויתקן נפשו ??? ו הדרכים הוא דומה
למלאך ולכהן גדול. ?ל מה שיעשה לא יחזור פניו ריקם.

> "This is the way of taking it [the water of bitterness, DMS] that we practice today
> for the reason that we have no priest, no holy water, and no tent sanctuary. Know
> and understand that if a man fears heaven in this age and cleanses his soul of sin and
> wickedness, and walks in the way of purity, and purity is in his flesh, and he attends
> to these names, and he perfects his soul in [thes]e ways, he becomes similar to an
> angel and a high priest. He will not go forth empty-handed in anything he does."

The temporal distinction between past and present (היום) is explicitly stated here, and so
are the different historical and religious circumstances. Consequently, the magician does
not impersonate the high priest, he only becomes "similar" (דומה) to him.

The adapted version of the ritual includes a modification of the *materia magica* used
for the water of bitterness as well, as the text clarifies explicitly:[79]

ומן תחלת הדבר יקח תחת שאמר מים קדושים תקח אתה מים נבועין מן עין נובעת בכלי חדש
ותחת העפר אשר למשכן תלך אל בית הכנסת ותקח עפר מן ד׳ פינות ההיכל של תורה מלמעלה
ומלמטה […].

> "At the beginning of the matter one should take, instead of what (scripture) says,
> *holy water* [Num 5:17], you should take water flowing from a flowing spring in a new
> vessel, and instead of the dust in the tabernacle go into the synagogue and take dust
> from the four corners of the Torah shrine from above and from below [...]."

Thus, similarly to the case of the high priest, the text deals with the differences between
then and now, and does not aim to eliminate them. Most obviously, therefore, the ritual
presented in this text does not imply performative *unio magica*.

6 Conclusion

Unio magica is a transmission of power upon the magician or the client through the per-
formative embodiment of biblical figures. Exemplary text analysis demonstrates that es-
pecially the quotation of biblical speech as part of a magical act allows the magician to
merge with prominent characters of the biblical past conceived as powerful figures, with
heavenly beings, or even with God. Some of these biblical figures are portrayed and con-
ceived as knowledgeable magicians themselves, above all Moses and Solomon. By entering
an *unio magica* with them, the magician participates conceptually in their exceptional
competence in this field. In general, however, beyond such specific links relating to mag-
ical traditions, *unio magica* increases the potency of the incantation or the magical act,

---

20). On this, see also Veltri, "'*Inyan Sota*," 46; Swartz, "Sacrificial Themes," 310–311; Swartz, "Temple
Ritual," 65–66.

79   MS New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, ENA 3635.17, fol. 17d/9–15 (*MTKG* I, 20).

legitimizes it, and endows the magician with biblical and sometimes even divine authorization and power.

Research in the field of magic emphasizes the important role of language in transcending the present world and in marking the difference between a magical ritual and regular quotidian circumstances.[80] Thus, for example, the declamation of *nomina barbara* can be seen as a means by which the particularity of a magic act is expressed and emphasized.[81] Similarly, *unio magica* with a figure from the Hebrew Bible aims at the transcendence of the *hic et nunc*. Through citing direct speech of prominent biblical figures, the magicians traverse their own accidental existence in space and time and merge with the biblical character. As a consequence, the entire magical act becomes part of the biblical world, the cultic service of the temple in Jerusalem, or even the realm of heavenly beings, blurring through its performance any distinction in terms of time and space between the biblical world and that of the magician. In this, the *unio magia* stands in a fundamental opposition to the *historiola* and to the principle of *simila similibus* which both depend on upholding the difference between the current event and the past.

Unio magica is only one of the characteristic aspects of the magical texts from the Cairo Genizah in which biblical allusions assume a central function.[82] Analyzing these allusions not only promotes our understanding of the alleged modes of efficacy and dynamics that underlie rituals of Jewish magic but also demonstrates that their use in these texts is anything but arbitrary or a mere embellishment; rather it is of central importance, not to be ignored in further research on Jewish magic.

---

80 Versnel, "Poetics," 144–156. On the role of writing in this context, see Frankfurter, "Magic of Writing," 202.
81 Frankfurter, "Magic of Writing," 201.
82 On different paradigmatic functions of biblical allusions in magical texts from the Cairo Genizah, see Salzer, *Die Magie der Anspielung*, 218–344.

Unveiling the Secrets of Practical Kabbalah: Gottfried Selig's German Translation of *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim* or "Book of the Magical Use of Psalms"

Bill Rebiger

In 1788 a book was published in Berlin entitled ספר שמוש תהלים *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim. Oder: Gebrauch der Psalme zum leiblichen Wohl der Menschen. Ein Fragment aus der praktischen Kabbala. Nebst einem Auszug aus einigen andern kabbalistischen Schriften* or "*Sefer Shimmush Tehillim*. Or: Use of Psalms for the Physical Well-Being of People. A Fragment from the Practical Kabbalah. Together with an Excerpt from Several Other Kabbalistic Writings."[1] Gottfried Selig, a Jewish convert to Christianity, edited this book consisting first and foremost of a translation into German of the Hebrew manual of *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim* or the "Book of the Magical Use of Psalms." In addition, Selig includes more magical material like amulet texts from various Jewish sources. In the following pages, I would like to briefly introduce the editor Gottfried Selig, including some details of his biography and works. Furthermore, I will try to answer the question of the purpose of Selig's translation of Hebrew texts dealing with magic. Finally, I provide the reader with an overview of the reception history of Selig's book. However, before we learn more about the editor and his publications, I would like to present a brief introduction to Selig's *Vorlage*, the Hebrew manual of the magical use of psalms.

1   The Hebrew *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim* or "Book of the Magical Use of Psalms"

The *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim* or "Book of the Magical Use of Psalms" has probably been the most popular magical manual in Judaism from the Middle Ages to present times.[2] In this book, each biblical psalm is combined with instructions for a magical act intended for a specific purpose. The purposes of these instructions are the usual ones such as, for instance, healing, protection, love charms, dream questions, opening of the heart, and

---

1   See the scan of the complete book at https://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/29921/1.

2   Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (New York: Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1939; repr., Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 109. The other equally popular book of Jewish magic, the *Sefer Razi'el ha-Mal'akh* (Amsterdam, 1701), is much less a manual for the use of different magical practices for different purposes than actually an apotropaic amulet in toto; see Bill Rebiger, "Zur Redaktionsgeschichte des *Sefer Razi'el ha-Mal'akh*," in *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 32 (2005): 1. Concerning amulets included in the *Sefer Razi'el ha-Mal'akh* as well as in Selig's *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim*, see below.
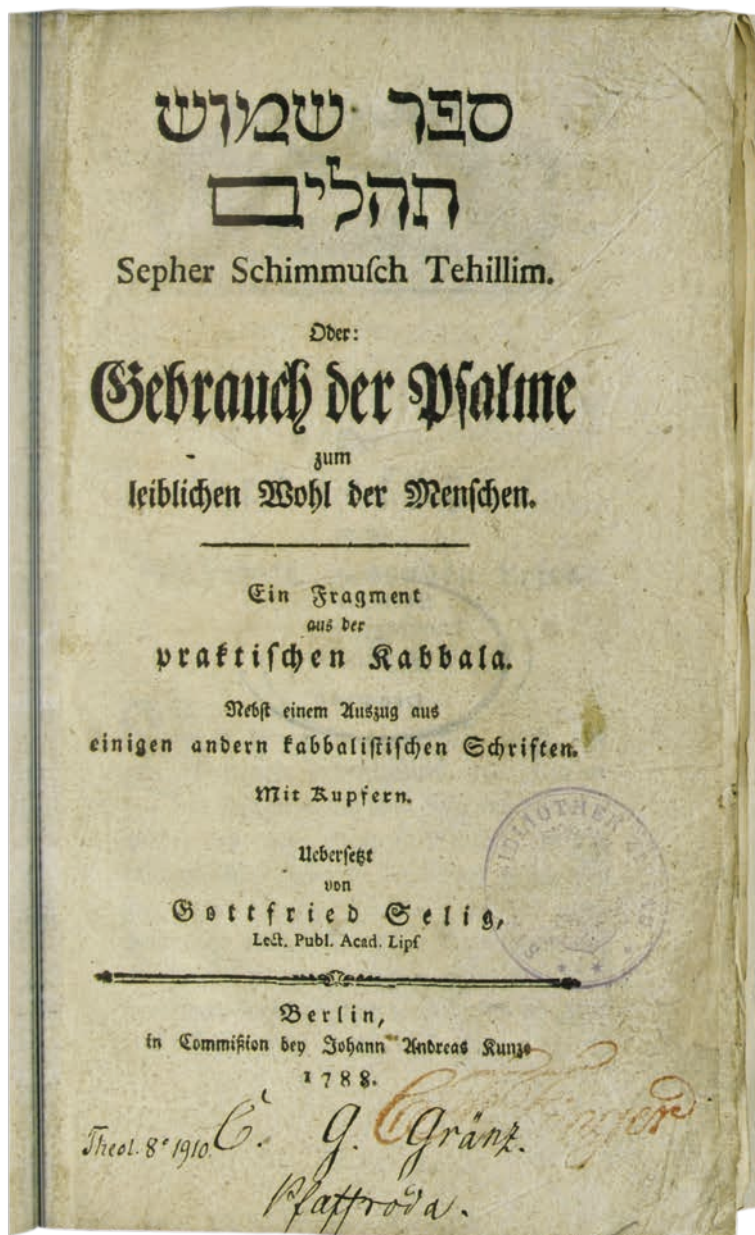
Figure 1: Gottfried Selig, Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim (Berlin, 1788), title page
(https://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/29921/5)

aggressive magic.[3] The origins of this book can be dated back to the ninth or tenth century CE. The earliest manuscript evidence is found in medieval fragments from the Cairo Genizah written in Hebrew-Aramaic or in Judeo-Arabic.[4] After a long and complicated history of compilation and redaction,[5] the first printed edition was published in the small town of Sabbioneta in northern Italy in 1551.[6] The text of this edition, which was at that point almost completely in Hebrew, became the textus receptus for all the following printed editions until today.

The main feature of the *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim* is the fact that it is a manual. As such, it is less intended to be read from the beginning to the end than to provide the reader with the instructions appropriate for a particular purpose when needed. Accordingly, every entry destined for the use of one specific psalm shows more or less the same structure: Following the number of the psalm and/or its title or first phrase, the purpose of the magical act is mentioned. Then an instruction text follows, describing very briefly what the client has to do with the psalm, such as speaking, whispering, or writing it.[7] The ritual setting and the use of other ingredients like oil, water, or salt in the magical act are also given in more or less detail. In many cases, two more textual elements enlarge these basic parts. First, a magical name of the psalm consisting of two or more letters and the name's derivation from specific words in the psalm is provided.[8] The most common principle in building these magical names in the *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim* is the derivation from the first or last letter of the first or last verse of the psalm. In order to achieve certain names or, perhaps, to put a veil of mystery on these names, different systems of substitution of

---

3   See Ludwig Blau, "Psalmomancy," in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. Isidore Singer, vol. 10 (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905), 240–241; Ron Barkai, "L'ús dels salms en la màgia jueva de l'edat mitjana i el Renaixement: El llibre Shimush tehillim," in *La Càbala*, ed. Ron Barkai, Eleazar Gutwirth, Moshe Idel, Masha Itzhaiki, and Mijal Oron (Barcelona: Fundacio Caixa de Pensions, 1989), 17–57; Bill Rebiger, "Die magische Verwendung von Psalmen im Judentum," in *Ritual und Poesie: Formen und Orte religiöser Dichtung im Alten Orient, im Judentum und im Christentum*, ed. Erich Zenger (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2003), 265–281.

4   Thus, e.g., Peter Schäfer and Shaul Shaked edited eleven Hebrew-Aramaic Genizah fragments containing the *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim*; see Peter Schäfer and Shaul Shaked, eds., *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, vol. 3 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 202–375 (no. 78–82).

5   See, e.g., Bill Rebiger, *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim: Buch vom magischen Gebrauch der Psalmen* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 69–76. Besides the introductory chapters concerning the manuscripts and printings, and the history of redaction and reception, this volume contains also a synoptical edition of four Hebrew versions of this manual as well as a German translation and a commentary.

6   See Bill Rebiger, "The *editio princeps* of *Sefer Šimmuš Tehillim*, Sabbioneta 1551," in *L'eredità di Salomone: La magia ebraica in Italia e nel Mediterraneo*, ed. Emma Abate (Florence: Giuntina, 2019), 169–184. The text of the Sabbioneta edition is included in the synoptical edition of four Hebrew texts in Rebiger, *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim*, 2*–117* (S1551).

7   Concerning various methods to perform magical acts, see, e.g., Bill Rebiger, "Unterweisung, Überlieferung und Aktualisierung von magischem Wissen im Judentum: Ansätze zu einer Textpragmatik," *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 36 (2010): 31–55.

8   Bill Rebiger, "Bildung magischer Namen im *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim*," *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 26 (1999): 7–24.

Hebrew letters like atbash, albam, and so on are used to create these names.[9] Second, a magical-liturgical phrase repeating the purpose concludes the passage of the magical use of a specific psalm.

In order to illustrate the general idea of the structure and concept of this magical manual, it is helpful to provide an example by quoting the first instruction of the *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim*, referring to Psalm 1:

> "Blessed is the man" (Ps 1:1), etc.
> Write this (psalm) on parchment of a deer up to (the verse):
> "In all that he does, he prospers" (Ps 1:3).
> And its name is ʾL ḤD.
> How (was this name built)?
> *Alef* from *ashrei* (Ps 1:1).
> *Lamed* from *lo khen* (Ps 1:4).
> *Ḥet* from *yatsliaḥ* (Ps 1:3).
> *Dalet* from *derekh reshaʿim* (Ps 1:6).
> And write:
> "Let it be your will ʾL ḤD that you achieve for a woman that she may not abort.
> You should heal her completely from now on and forever.
> Amen, Amen, Amen. Selah, Selah, Selah."
> Then put (the amulet) on her.[10]

In only a few entries, two, three, or even six psalms are combined together for a mutual purpose and the appropriate instruction.[11] A special case is the longest biblical psalm (Psalm 119) which is structured according to the Hebrew alphabet. In that case, every eight-lined stanza is provided with a specific purpose and instruction.[12]

2   Selig's Biography and Works

Fortunately, we are well informed about Gottfried Selig's life, since he published an autobiography in three volumes and more than one thousand pages focusing on his own and his sisters' conversions.[13] Selig was born as a Jew in the German town Weissenfels

---

9   Concerning the different methods of letter substitution, see Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 263–264.

10 See the Hebrew text of the Sabbioneta edition (S1551) in Rebiger, *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim*, 5* (section 4).

11 See the Hebrew texts of the Sabbioneta edition (S1551) in Rebiger, *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim*, p. 33* (section 45) using the three Psalms 41–43; p. 69* (section 95) using the two Psalms 87 and 88; pp. 71* and 73* (section 100) using the two Psalms 90 and 91; p. 73* (section 101) using the six Psalms 92, 94, 100, 22, 23, and 24; p. 77* (section 110) using the two Psalms 101 and 68.

12 See the Hebrew text of the Sabbioneta edition (S1551) in Rebiger, *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim*, 87*–97* (sections 129–150).

13 Gottfried Selig, *Geschichte des Lebens und der Bekehrung Gottfried Seligs*, Lect. publ., *seiner drey Schwestern und einiger nahen Anverwandten, welche sämmtlich das Judenthum verlassen, und treue Bekenner Jesu geworden sind. Von ihm selbst aufrichtig beschrieben*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Hertel, 1775–1779). See the long excerpts included in Johannes Graf, *Judaeus conversus: Christlich-jüdische Konvertiten-*

in Saxony-Anhalt on 12 September 1722.[14] He was originally called Philipp Heynemann. His father Mose Heynemann was a court Jew at the court of the Duke of Weissenfels. On 15 September 1738, when only sixteen years old, he converted to Protestant Christianity following strict Lutheran orthodoxy[15] (and not the second main stream of this time, that is, Pietism). After his conversion he attended high school classes, served in the army, and traveled to various German cities and even to Copenhagen in order to find a position to earn his living. From 1766, he was engaged as lector of rabbinic language and Talmud (*lector rabbinicus et talmudicus*) at the University of Leipzig. The extremely prolific author published several books including a textbook for learning Western Yiddish (Jewish German) supplemented by some information about the Jewish calendar[16] as well as an anthology of Hebrew rabbinic texts based on the editions by Christian Hebraists like Johannes Buxtorf (1564–1629), Johann Christoph Wolf (1683–1739), and others.[17] Selig was not only the editor of the weekly journal *Der Jude*, published in Leipzig between 1768 and 1772, but also its only author, writing in total more than 3500 pages in it. This publication, intended for a Christian audience, was a kind of ethnographic encyclopedia of the main Jewish rites and customs such as kashrut, birth rituals, and circumcision.[18] In all of his publications, Selig wrote extensively about essential features of Judaism such as halakhah, rabbinic exegesis, the calendar, customs, and so on in order to transmit detailed information about Jews to a Christian audience. In general, his audience was totally ignorant of even basic knowledge about Jews and had instead plenty of anti-Jewish prejudices. In a way, Selig was following here the zeitgeist of an early German Enlightenment but without being really involved in person in those circles and their theories. He was driven more by his experiences after his conversion, when he suffered as a result of the fact that most Christians were antisemites and regarded and treated him as still being a Jew and so,

---

autobiographien des 18. Jahrhunderts (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997), 117–259. See also the discussion of Selig's autobiography in Elisheva Carlebach, *Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism in Germany, 1500–1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

14 Concerning Selig's biography, see also the historical entries by Samuel Baur, *Allgemeines historisches Handwörterbuch aller merkwürdigen Personen, die in dem letzten Jahrzehend des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts gestorben sind* (Ulm: Stettin, 1803), 925–926; Friedrich C. G. Hirsching, *Historisch-Literarisches Handbuch berühmter und denkwürdiger Personen*, vol. 12 (Leipzig: Schwickertschen Verlage, 1809), 203–204; Johann Georg Meusel, *Lexikon der vom Jahr 1750 bis 1800 verstorbenen teutschen Schriftsteller*, vol. 13 (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1813), 79–80.

15 Concerning Selig's self-description in the preface of his autobiography as himself following strict orthodoxy ("meiner strengen Orthodoxie"), see Graf, *Judaeus conversus*, 121.

16 Gottfried Selig, *Kurze und gründliche Anleitung zu einer leichten Erlernung der Jüdischdeutschen Sprache, wobey zugleich eine Nachricht von der Abtheilung der Jüdischen Jahre und Monate, wie auch von ihren Festen und Fasttagen gegeben wird: Nebst einer Kupfer- und andern gedruckten Tabelle* (Leipzig: Rumpf, 1767).

17 Gottfried Selig, *Compendia vocum Hebraico-Rabbinicarum, quæ partim ex Buxtorfio, Wolfio, aliisque* (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1780).

18 See Yaacov Deutsch, *Judaism in Christian Eyes: Ethnographic Descriptions of Jews and Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

in their view, an "evil and bad person."[19] Selig included also basic ideas and concepts of Kabbalah based on kabbalistic sources which he mentions and sometimes even quotes. For example, we find him explaining the kabbalistic concept of the Sefirot in his weekly newspaper *Der Jude*.[20] Indeed, in his autobiography, he writes about his early reading of an excerpt from the Zohar and his admiration for the old kabbalists.[21] After a long life full of troubles and miseries, Selig died in the age of 72 in Dresden on 5 March 1795.

3   Selig's *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim*

When it was published in 1788, Selig's *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim* was printed in octavo and consisted of 152 pages plus five plates with copper engravings. In the preface, Selig states explicitly that the reason for this publication was to earn his living and reduce his debts. He continues:

> Because I found some time ago a channel to acquire with money various important kabbalistic manuscripts and books in order to translate them, my intention is to do so and if this will be successful I will translate and print one piece after the other.[22]

Selig goes on to emphasize that "true, wise, and enlightened kabbalists (receivers) lived and are still living [...] who strive to become more perfect in the divine wisdom."[23] He notes that he himself "knows such a man who has acquired sophisticated knowledge in Kabbalah and who—notwithstanding his great poverty—never undertakes a kabbalistic act for money."[24] Following the concept of Christian Kabbalah but without mentioning any of its authors, he claims that "almost all of the true and greatest kabbalists of the Jewish nation were indeed followers and confessors of the eternal highly praised redeemer of the world,"[25] that is, of Jesus Christ. In addition to this group of Jewish authors who wrote kabbalistic texts and prayers, Selig mentions another group of Jewish kabbalists

---

19 See Selig's preface to his autobiography in Graf, *Judaeus conversus*, 121–138. Concerning the widespread negative Christian attitude towards converts, see Johannes Graf, "Einleitung," in Graf, *Judaeus conversus*, 44–54.

20 See *Der Jude* (1768), 171–172; see also *Der Jude* (1771), 68–69.

21 See Graf, *Judaeus conversus*, 190, 197.

22 Selig, *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim*, 5: "Da ich nun vor einiger Zeit einen Kanal ausfindig gemacht habe, wodurch ich fürs Geld verschiedene wichtige kabbalistische Manuskripte und Bücher zum Uebersetzen habhaft werden kann, so bin ich willig und bereit, Hand daran zu legen, und, bey erlangtem Beyfall, eine Piece nach der andern zu übersetzen, und drucken zu lassen." Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

23 Selig, *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim*, 8–9: "wahre, weise und erleuchtete קבלנים Kabbalinim oder Kabbalisten (Empfänger) gelebt haben und noch leben [...] und bestreben sich, in der göttlichen Weisheit immer vollkommener zu werden." Selig's use of the term קבלנים *kabbalinim* instead of the common מקובלים *mequbbalim* (kabbalists) is very strange and reveals his lack of familiarity with Hebrew terminology.

24 Selig, *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim*, 9: "Ich selbst kenne einen solchen Mann, der in der Kabbala hohe Erkenntnisse erlangt hat, und der, seiner großen Armuth ohngeachtet, nie fürs Geld einen kabbalistischen Prozeß unternimmt."

25 Selig, *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim*, 10: "die ächten und größten Kabbalisten der jüdischen Nation fast alle Anhänger und Bekenner des ewig Hochgelobten Weltheylands gewesen."

"who were in fact engaged in experimentation"[26] such as, for example, Hayyim Samuel Jacob Falk (1708–1782)[27] and (Zwi) Hirsch Fraenkel (1662–1739?).[28] These kabbalists were acclaimed as "wonder-workers" writing amulets and performing magical rituals. Based on the obvious distinction between theoretical and practical Kabbalah, Selig defines his *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim* in the subheading of the title page as *Ein Fragment aus der praktischen Kabbala* or "A Fragment from the Practical Kabbalah."[29]

Concerning the alleged secret character and fascination many Christians attributed to Kabbalah,[30] he adds a kind of self-legitimation:

> Everything printed and sold for the public is no longer a rare thing and loses therefore every belief in it which it had as long as it was a secret thing for only a few people.[31]

This approach of disenchanting the fascination for mysteries and secrets by making it public and easily accessible corresponds in many ways to similar educational concepts of the Christian Enlightenment. As already mentioned, the main and perhaps tragic difference is the observation that Selig's publications reveal clearly that he was involved in neither Christian Enlightenment circles nor in the academic discourses of his time. In fact, Selig was a self-made man without a university degree who was not one of the happy few "enlightened" Germans but rather struggled alone all his life to earn his living.

The main body of the book following the preface contains a complete German translation of the Hebrew *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim*. In general, his translation follows more or less the textus receptus as it had been published repeatedly since the first edition of Sabbioneta. However, in some places Selig's *Vorlage* was obviously better than the printed editions, since he provides the reader with additional details known only from the manuscript tradition of this manual. The literary style of his translation follows the Baroque standards of his time, that is, rather flowery and long-winded, more paraphrasing than verbatim. Minor explanations of details of the Jewish language or tradition are integrated

---

26 Selig, *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim*, 10–12: "die sich wirklich mit Experimentiren abgegeben" (p. 10).

27 See, e.g., Karl E. Grözinger, *Tausend Jahre Ba'alᶜ Schem: Jüdische Heiler, Helfer, Magier; Ein Spiegel europäischer Geistesgeschichte* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017), 128–166; Michal Oron, *Rabbi, Mystic, or Impostor? The Eighteenth-Century Ba'al Shem of London* (London: Littman, 2020).

28 See, e.g., Gedalyah Nigal, *A Baal-Shem Condemned to Life Sentence: The Tragedy of R. Hirsch Fraenkel* [in Hebrew] (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1993); Isak Nathenël Gath, *Sorcerer from Schwabach: The Process of the Chief Rabbi of the Brandenburg-Ansbach Principality, Hirsch Fränkel* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Hakibbuz Hameuhad, 2013).

29 Concerning the term and concept of "practical Kabbalah," see, e.g., Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (New York: Times Books, 1974), 182–189; and the special issue *Aries* 19 (2019) devoted to this topic edited by J. H. Chajes and Yuval Harari, especially the article by Harari therein: "'Practical Kabbalah' and the Jewish Tradition of Magic," 38–82.

30 See, e.g., Daniel Jütte, *Das Zeitalter des Geheimnisses. Juden, Christen und die Ökonomie des Geheimen (1400–1800)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 45–59, 127–139.

31 Selig, *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim*, 16: "Alles, was öffentlich durch den Druck bekannt gemacht, und auch öffentlich zu verkaufen erlaubt wird, hört auf, rar zu seyn, und verliert mithin allen Glauben, den es so lange gehabt hatte, da es als eine geheime Sache nur wenigen bekannt war."

into the translation. He usually substitutes specific Jewish terms with Christian counter-parts—so, for example, "Synagoge" (synagogue) is replaced with "Kirche" (church).

The magical names and their derivations are given in Hebrew letters as well as in Latin transliteration. In his own annotations, Selig explains the instruction and some basic ideas about it. For instance, concerning the use of the first psalm for an amulet to avoid an abortion or premature birth, Selig provides the reader with the explanation that the magical use of psalms works also in one's native language (such as German) as long as the magical names of God and the angels are written or spoken in Hebrew.[32] Here, he refers explicitly to Isaac Luria, but without mentioning the source text. In the section on the use of Psalm 91, the classic anti-demonic psalm, Selig includes a rather long explanation and an amulet text linked to the first copper engraving at the end of the book, which shows the image of a micrographic menorah consisting of the first letters of all the words of Psalm 90:17 and Psalm 91.[33] Throughout his translation, but only occasionally, Selig also presents the original Hebrew text.

In the second part of his *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim* (pp. 120–152), Selig adds twelve magical instructions including amulets, and at the end of the book five copper engravings related to the text. The additional magical instructions are the following:

1. Five verses of different psalms which were included already in the first printed edition of the work (Sabbioneta, 1551). The next eleven sample texts do not belong to the original Hebrew *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim*, but were only added by Selig in his edition.

2. A protective spell attributed to Rav Amram.

3. A magical instruction for becoming invisible especially while traveling, attributed to Naḥmanides, that uses various biblical verses including several from the psalms.

4. A protective spell for travels, attributed to Naḥmanides and using a magical circle.

5. A protective spell for travels, attributed to Isaac Luria and using fifteen psalms.

6. A magical instruction for pregnant women to safely give birth, involving a she-dog also giving birth.

7. A text and instruction for a birth amulet and additional prayer text.

8. A magical instruction for making an amulet to protect against fire, consisting of a *Magen Dawid* (shown in engraving no. 2) and an incantation text.

9. An instruction for an amulet to protect against enemies in fights and wars (shown in engraving no. 3).[34]

---

32 Selig, *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim*, 27.

33 Selig, *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim*, 86–90 and copper engraving no. 1 on p. 153. In many Hebrew manuscripts, Psalm 91 begins with the last verse of the preceding psalm (Ps 90:17).

34 Text, magical names, and signs correspond to *Sefer Razi'el ha-Mal'akh* (Amsterdam, 1701), fol. 44b bottom. Selig doesn't mention the *Sefer Razi'el ha-Mal'akh* at all, and the *mise-en-page* is different
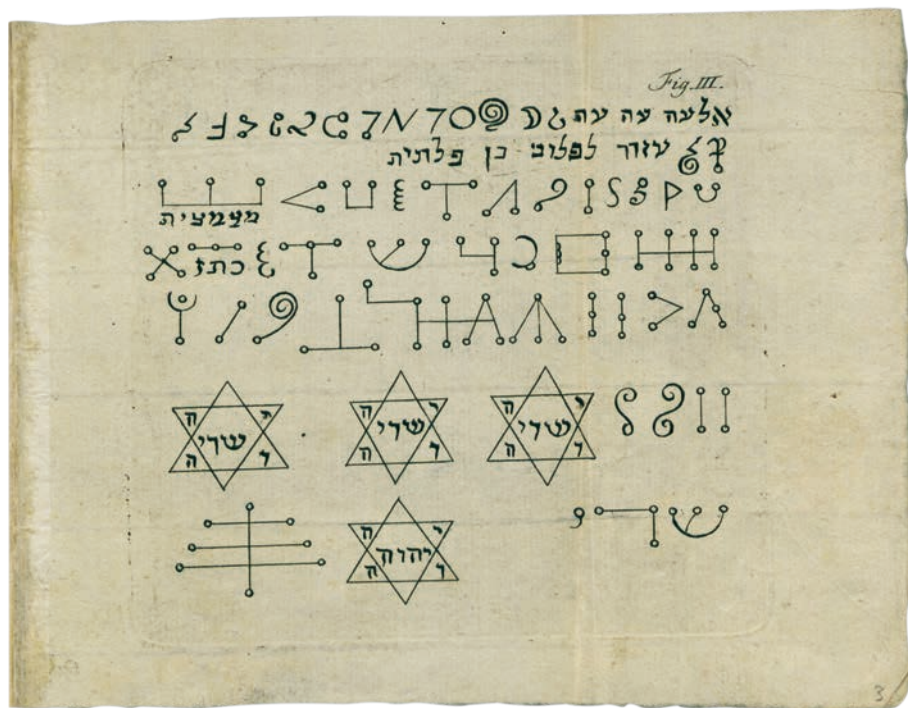
Figure 2: Gottfried Selig, Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim (Berlin, 1788), plate 3
(https://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/29921/163)

10. An amulet for luck, blessing, and success, using Ps 45:5 (shown in engraving no. 4).[35]
11. An amulet for grace and respect in society (shown in engraving no. 5).[36]
12. A divine name containing seventy-two letters, here based on seventy-two psalm verses, which are listed entirely in Hebrew.

4   Reception of Selig's Translation

To conclude my article, I would like to present some examples from the reception history of Selig's *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim*. The Protestant theologian and orientalist Paul Jakob Bruns (1743–1814) wrote a review of Selig's *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim* in Friedrich Nicolai's *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek*. In his polemical and sharp rejection of Selig's book, he writes:

---

to the Amsterdam edition. It's more likely that he used either a manuscript containing this book or perhaps a multi-text compilation of various magical recipes and amulets.

35 Text, magical names, and signs correspond to *Sefer Razi'el ha-Mal'akh*, fol. 42b bottom.
36 Text, magical names, and signs correspond to *Sefer Razi'el ha-Mal'akh*, fol. 44b top.

> Whether it is really smart to publish these follies in a language known to everyone, when one knows that there is a stronger tendency to superstition than before and an admiration of everything that seems to be wonderful and mysterious, is a question we tend to answer in the negative.[37]

Several years before, Selig's autobiography had been reviewed in the same journal by its editor Friedrich Nicolai (1733–1811), who criticized Selig's book about his conversion as a boring and obsolete publication, emphasizing that conversion of Jews is no longer a relevant issue, because the contemporary ethos of the Berlin Enlightenment is one of tolerance and emancipation: a Jew should remain within Judaism and become an equal citizen, like the Christians.[38] Thus, Selig was stigmatized again, this time as an outdated fossil.

In contrast, Selig's *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim* became highly appreciated, but in a completely different realm than the Enlightenment circles of the Berlin salons. Many years after Selig's death, esoteric publishers started to reprint his translation, again and again. Thus, the notorious publisher Johann Scheible (1809–1866)[39] in Stuttgart printed it in 1849 and again in 1853.[40] A more recent edition was published by Schubert in Bilfingen in 1972. Selig's translation—but without his annotations and without the Hebrew sample texts—was included by Helmut Werner in his anthology of kabbalistic texts in 2002.[41] The most recent German reprint I know was published by the Edition Geheimes Wissen ("Secret Knowledge Publishers") in Graz in 2014. After the title page, the following information and caveat are printed:

> This printing serves exclusively for esoteric research and scholarly documentation. Neither the publisher nor the author is liable for damages resulting from following the instructions.[42]

---

37 *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* 90 (1789), 206–207: "Ob es aber der Klugheit gemäß sey, dergeichen Thorheiten in einer jedem bekannten Sprache allgemein bekannt zu machen, wenn man weiß, daß mehr wie sonst ein Hang zum Aberglauben, und zur Hochschätzung alles dessen, was wunderbar und geheimnißvoll klingt, eingerissen ist, ist eine Frage, die wir zu verneinen sehr geneigt sind."

38 Friedrich Nicolai (under the alias Bm), "Geschichte des Lebens und der Bekehrung Gottfried Seligs […] Erster Theil" (review), in *Anhang zu dem fünf und zwanzigsten bis sechs und dreyßigsten Bande der allgemeinen deutschen Bibliothek: Dritte Abtheilung, 1774–1778* (Berlin: F. Nicolai, 1780), 1642–1644; the complete German text of Nicolai's review is included and discussed in Graf, "Einleitung," 113–114.

39 Scheible also published the German translation of *De Occulta Philosophia* by Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim (1486–1535) in five volumes in 1855–1856.

40 See Michael Siefener, "Collecting and Assessing Magical Books: The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses," published in the present volume.

41 Helmut Werner, *Kabbala: Eine Textauswahl mit Einleitung, Bibliografie und Lexikon* (Frechen: Komet, 2002), 363–424.

42 Gottfried Selig, ספר שמוש תהלים *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim oder Gebrauch der Psalme zum leiblichen Wohl der Menschen* (Graz: Edition Geheimes Wissen, 2014): "Dieser Druck dient ausschliesslich der esoterischen Forschung und wissenschaftlichen Dokumentation. Für Schäden, die durch Nachahmung entstehen, können weder Verlag noch Autor haftbar gemacht werden."

Selig's German translation was translated into English by a certain L. Weber and pub-
lished in London around 1880.[43] This translation is still reprinted under an English ver-
sion of the author's name, Godfrey A. Selig—there is no evidence that Selig had a middle
name beginning with A, and most probably that was simply invented by the publishers.
In a letter to Morton Smith (1915–1991), a US scholar of ancient Christianity, the Jewish
scholar of Kabbalah and bibliophile Gershom Scholem (1897–1982) writes—partly proud,
partly ironic—on 6 August 1948:

> One hour ago I received your gift, Selig's magical tract on the use of the Psalms.
> Many thanks to you. That such a book—I have the first edition, in German
> (1788)—should still be reprinted, is cause for wonder. I am very glad to know about
> this state of magical affairs in the USA, in case I should proceed to open a magical
> shop thereover.[44]

In his book on grimoires, Owen Davies coined the term "pulp magic." He defines pulp
magic as cheap mass products in pocket size with thousands of copies intended for a rath-
er uneducated readership and distributed at gas stations and newsstands. These books
are in most cases reprints of older editions, very often piracies without copyright. One
of the examples of pulp magic mentioned by Davies is the English translation of Selig's
book.[45] And indeed the English translation of Selig's work is still published today, but
now under the new title *Secrets of the Psalms*. One reprint is from 1982, and the copy I am
familiar with is already the eighth edition, published in 1990. The blurb on the back of
this edition, published by Dorene, reads as follows:

> This all-time best seller is second only to The Holy Bible. It has been trusted the
> world over by people who want to keep away evil, get money, good luck, success and
> many other desires. Contains all 150 Psalms from the King James Bible and shows
> you how to use them to make your life better.[46]

In this edition we find the English translation of Selig's *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim*, but
without any Hebrew text or his annotations and explanations. The appendices of his
original edition are also missing. Only small portions of his preface are included. Those
passages where Selig is critical of Jewish magic are deleted. Instead, the biblical psalter of
the King James Bible is added. There has even been a Spanish translation of the English
version, published under the title *Secretos de los salmos* by the same publisher. I am quite
sure that there are more reprints and translations of Selig's book available now, and still
more to come in the future.

---

43 Godfrey A. Selig, *Use of the Psalms*, trans. L. Weber (London, c. 1880; repr., Boston: Athena, 1943). See
    also Owen Davies, *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 141.
44 Gershom Scholem, *Briefe, vol. 2: 1948–1970*, ed. Thomas Sparr (Munich: Beck, 1995), 9 (letter 4); also
    in Guy G. Stroumsa, ed., *Morton Smith and Gershom Scholem, Correspondence 1945–1982* (Leiden:
    Brill, 2008), 24 (letter 10).
45 Owen Davies, *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 232–242.
46 Godfrey A. Selig, *Secrets of the Psalms* (Arlington: Dorene, 1990), last page, advertising publications
    from Dorene Publishers.

Collecting and Assessing Magical Books:
The *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*

Michael Siefener

At least since the remarkable success of the Harry Potter movies, grimoires have come back to public consciousness. Those who saw the movies will remember the fascinating libraries full of mighty tomes containing the magical knowledge of the whole world. Is there anyone who would not like to open such a folio and immerse themselves in its secrets?

Anyone interested in old myths and fairy tales, in which magical books sometimes feature prominently, might perhaps stumble upon the following story that was reprinted in Johann Georg Theodor Grässe's *Sagenschatz des Königreichs Sachsen*. It is a story about the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*:

> The Eichhorn house in Tautenhain [a village in Saxony] is of ill repute because since time immemorial it has been haunted by a black cat, day and night. [...] According to myth, in this house the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* can be found, a magical tome that allegedly brings all the treasures of the world, and the philosopher's stone, etc., to those who are able to read it. But those who read it or use it in the wrong way will meet a terrible fate, and that is the reason why the ownership of this book was considered as not desirable. This book might bring harm and misfortune down upon the whole village.
>
> So when a poor tailor came into the village and asked if he might be allowed to read it, the owner of the book was not amused. But in the end he gave the tailor a light so that he could climb down into the cellar where the book was kept. There the tailor settled in an armchair and began to read. Suddenly there was a terrible swooshing and swishing all around him, and owls and ravens flew out of the book, and ghostly eyes regarded him from every side, and soon he no longer understood what he was reading. When his fear reached its peak he began to read backwards, and all the creatures crept back into the book. He was glad he survived, and hurried from the cellar. The whole village was waiting for him upstairs since he had been away reading for twelve hours, whilst he thought he only had been in the cellar for an hour. On hearing about his adventure some old folk said he had been very near his goal; he should have kept reading for some minutes longer, and would have found the magic word. But the tailor, having been thus deprived of wealth and luck, did not dare to go back into the cellar.

According to another myth, the book is kept in chains and was immured in the cellar of the house in Tautenhain. The devil himself brought it there stealthily in the dead of night.[1]

If my interest in magic books has now been aroused, I might ask myself: How can I get information about grimoires in general? Of course there is always the possibility of looking into the depths of the internet (and to lose oneself in those depths) but so much of the information given there is either incomplete or outright wrong (or rubbish). It is always better to peruse scientific literature—in our case, for example, Owen Davies's splendid study *Grimoires*,[2] or Stephan Bachter's wonderfully thorough and erudite thesis *Anleitung zum Aberglauben*,[3] to name but two of several highly recommendable works. They provide the curious with an idea of the contents of magic books, also known as grimoires. And there one will find mention of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, too.

It is this grimoire, in its many different editions and variants, that I would like to comment upon regarding the problems of collecting and assessing magic texts.

Moses is not a completely unlikely candidate for the (insinuated) authorship of a grimoire, since he fought with the help of God (or with magic?) against the wizards of the pharaoh (Exod 7:8–9:11). In two magical papyri from around the fourth century CE we find mention of an "eighth book of Moses," at the end of which there is even a reference to a "tenth book of Moses."[4] The instructions in this magical text refer to complex preparations for conjurations by which the magician tries to gain "health, well-being, riches, glory, victory, power and popularity" for himself, whilst incapacitating his enemy.[5]

Another text bearing the name of Moses and dating from late antiquity is *The Sword of Moses*, edited and translated in 1896 by Moses Gaster; a new edition was edited by Yuval Harari in 2012.[6] He dates the *Sword* to the third quarter of the first millennium.[7] This book is not so much about ritual magic but about sympathetic magic. For example, we find here: "To make a woman follow you, take some blood of yours and write her name

---

1 Johann Georg Theodor Grässe, *Der Sagenschatz des Königreichs Sachsen: Zum ersten Male in der ursprünglichen Form aus Chroniken, mündlichen und schriftlichen Ueberlieferungen und anderen Quellen gesammelt und herausgegeben*, 2nd ed. (Dresden: Schönfeld, 1874), 2:351–352. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations into English are my own.

2 Owen Davies, *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

3 Stephan Bachter, "Anleitung zum Aberglauben: Zauberbücher und die Verbreitung magischen 'Wissens' seit dem 18. Jahrhundert" (PhD diss., University of Hamburg, 2005), https://ediss.sub.uni-hamburg.de/volltexte/2007/3221/pdf/DissBachter.pdf.

4 Karl Preisendanz, ed., *Papyri graecae magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* (Munich: Saur, 2001), 2:105–131.

5 Preisendanz, *Papyri graecae magicae*, 123–124.

6 Moses Gaster, ed., *The Sword of Moses: An Ancient Book of Magic* (London: Journal of the Royal Society, January 1896); reprinted in Moses Gaster and Samuel Daiches, *Three Works of Ancient Jewish Magic* (Hastings: Chtonios, 1986); Yuval Harari, "The Sword of Moses (Ḥarba de-Moshe): A New Translation and Introduction," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 7 (2012): 58–98.

7 Harari, "Sword of Moses," 66–67.

THE

SIXTH AND SEVENTH

BOOKS OF MOSES;

OR,

MOSES' MAGICAL SPIRIT-ART,

KNOWN AS THE

WONDERFUL ARTS

OF THE OLD WISE HEBREWS, TAKEN FROM THE MOSAIC
BOOKS OF THE CABALA AND THE TALMUD,
FOR THE GOOD OF MANKIND.

Translated from the German, Word for Word, according to Old
Writings.

WITH NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS.
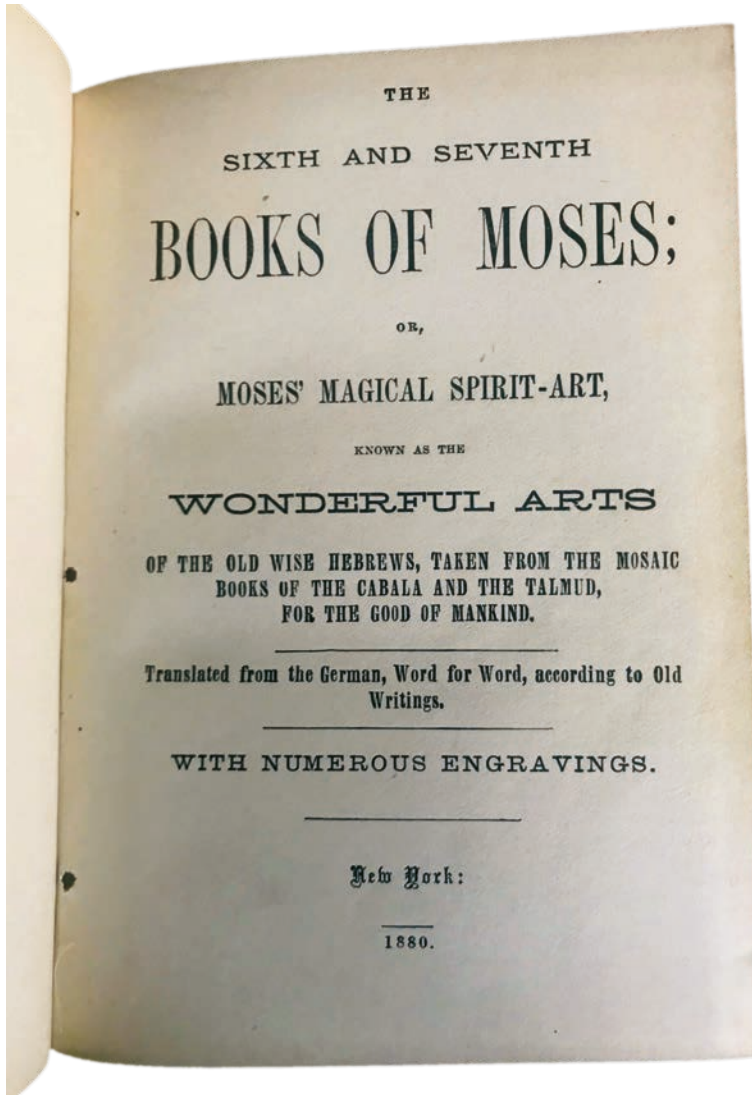
New York:

1880.

Figure 1: The 1880 edition of Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis published in New York (first published in Stuttgart, 1849, by Johann Scheible; a digitized copy is accessible at: https://books.google.com/books?id=9JA5AAAAcAAJ&pg=PP10#v=onepage&q&f=false)

on a new lamp when she comes and say toward her from 'TQNZ until 'TWMY.'[8] There is much more in the same vein.

---

8   Harari, "Sword of Moses," 87.

After that we do not hear from Moses as an author of magical texts for a long time. Only during the middle of the eighteenth century do manuscripts bearing his name turn up in German-speaking countries.[9] The first separate edition of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* was issued in the year 1849 in Stuttgart from the publisher and antiquarian book dealer Johann Scheible under the following title (see Fig. 1): *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis, das ist: Mosis magische Geisterkunst, das Geheimniß aller Geheimnisse. Wort- und bildgetreu nach einer alten Handschrift mit 23 Tafeln.* This edition has been digitalized twice by Google: from the copy in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, and from the copy in the Austrian National Library. Anyone who is interested in the contents of this book can easily have a look and satisfy their curiosity. But they are in for a disappointment.

The digitalized pages make it very clear that this is not a massive folio but a small and unimpressive book. It is not even voluminous: it contains only 32 pages and 23 plates. There is an eminent incongruity between this book and the heavy tome as described in the fairy tale above. I would like to state here, quasi in parenthesis, that the "massive magical tome" is pure invention. The biggest of the older grimoires that I know of is *The Magus* by Francis Barrett,[10] which is in quarto, only because it contains, in addition to its practical section, a much larger theoretical section. Most of the well-known grimoires, such as *Le grand grimoire*, the *Grimoire du Pape Honorius*, or the *Petit Albert*, are very small books, real "pocketbooks", which is quite convenient since some of the rituals described therein are to be performed outdoors, for example at a crossroads or under a gallows. It would be quite awkward to be forced to haul a heavy tome to the magic circle far from any human habitation ... But let's get back to our *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*.

Purportedly they were translated from the "ancient Hebrew," and indeed a lot of Hebrew letters are to be found in the text, but they make no sense at all. We find conjurations of entities (planetary ghosts? angels? demons?) that are named "Och," or "Phuel" (both have their origins in the *Arbatel*), or "Anoch" (presumably a corruption of Henoch), or "Scheol" (a name for the Jewish hell). So there are connections with the ancient Jewish world but they seem to be completely at random. The aims of the magical operations are: finding treasures, obtaining luck and blessings,[11] being agreeable to other people and defeating one's enemies,[12] salvation from any hardships, long life,[13] healing illnesses,[14] learning everything you want to know through dreams and visions,[15] and—again—obtaining treasures that are hidden in the earth or in a mine.[16] The words of the conjurations contradict the assertion that the text is a translation from the ancient Hebrew since they refer

---

9   Will-Erich Peuckert, "Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis," *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie* 76 (1957), 169; Bachter, "Anleitung zum Aberglauben," 96–106.

10 Francis Barrett, *The Magus* (London: Lackington, Allen, and Co., 1801).

11 *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* (Stuttgart: Scheible, 1849), 12.

12 *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* (1849), 13.

13 *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* (1849), 15.

14 *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* (1849), 16.

15 *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* (1849), 17.

16 *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* (1849), 18.

Das sechste und siebente

Buch Mosis

das ist

Mosis' magische Geisterkunst,

Das Geheimniß aller Geheimnisse.

Neueste Auflage
mit vielen Abbildungen.

Philadelphia.
Verlag von J. Weik & Comp.
Hamburg.
L. M. Glogau Sohn.

Figure 2: Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis, published around 1880,
with the publishers Weik in Philadelphia and Glogau Sohn in Hamburg on the title page

repeatedly to the Lord's disciples and the Gospels,[17] and to "the most holy appearance in
the flesh of Jesus Christ, by his most holy birth and circumcision."[18] By the way, in this
short magical text we find neither the usual purification rituals, nor any directions for
drawing the magic circle and so on, as discussed in so many other grimoires.

---

17 *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* (1849), 11.
18 *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* (1849), 15.

Now if the prospective collector of magic books wants to buy a copy of this book, he will get it neither on the internet nor from antiquarian bookdealers since the book is "of the last rarity," as Montague Summers would have said.

But what about other copies bearing the same title? There are more than 150 entries in the Karlsruher Virtueller Katalog (KVK) for "Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis." Why not simply buy a different copy? So our prospective collector orders one through the internet. When he receives it, and opens it full of joy, he will be disappointed. Let's say he ordered an edition with exactly the same title as the one from the Scheible edition, only with the addition "Neueste Auflage" (newest edition) on the title page, printed (without a date) in Philadelphia and Hamburg by Weik and Glogau Sohn (see Fig.2). He opens the book and looks in vain for the text of the first edition. This volume contains twenty-two other texts instead, most of which belong to the category of ritual magic. (By the way, they are from *Sammlung der größten Geheimnisse außerordentlicher Menschen in alter Zeit*, a collection issued by Johann Scheible under the false imprint of "Peter Hammer, 1725" in or around the year 1853 (see Fig. 3). The determination of a printing date of magical texts is often quite tricky—in this case, for example, it is known that the *Sammlung* was banned in 1854.[19]) Now he has learned something: When it comes to grimoires, you can't always judge the book by its title.

Our collector tries it a second time. He finds a Moses book with this title: *Sechstes und siebentes Buch Mosis oder der magisch-sympathische Hausschatz: Das ist Mosis magische Geisterkunst, das Geheimnis aller Geheimnisse, Philadelphia*. Is this a reprint of the first edition? No. Upon opening the book, he sees the black seals on the front page, and the linen straps that made it impossible to leaf through its pages when the book was new (see Fig. 4). This may look very mysterious and promising but the content is utterly disappointing. The book contains only recipes for all the ailments of everyday life, such as bad breath, dizziness, cancer, fever, scabies, and so on. Some of these recipes come from such collections as *Der sympathetische Hausarzt oder die enthüllten Zauberkräfte der Natur* and *Buch der entschleierten Geheimnisse oder Sammlung 72 nützlicher Mittel*. Most of the recipes are purely non-magical, only a few reek of the devil. But there is no ritual magic, no conjuring of ghosts or demons, no treasure hunting. Other books are bound in, each with its own pagination (all were sold separately, too): *Das siebenmal versiegelte Buch der größten Geheimnisse oder magisch-sympathetischer Hausschatz in bewährten Mitteln wider viele Krankheiten und Gebrechen des Leibes, nebst wundersamen Geheimnissen zur Erreichung der verschiedenartigsten Zwecke*; *Geheime Kunst-Schule magischer Wunder-Kräfte*; *Engel-Hülfe zu Schutz und Schirm in großen Nöthen*; *Das heilige Sales-Büchlein oder die Glücks-Ruthe*; *Romanus-Büchlein*; *Allgemeine Schicksalsdeutungen aus den zwölf Himmelszeichen*; and *Der wahrhaftige feurige Drache*. Only the last book, the "Fiery Dragon," is a translation of a grimoire of ritual magic: *Le dragon rouge* (which itself is nothing but a variant of the *Grand grimoire*). It follows the text of the first German edition (Weimar: Trommsdorff, 1850), which is a satirical rendering of the original *Dragon rouge* of which several quite different French editions exist (one of them is a novel with only a few elements of the initial grimoire!).

---

19 Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Abt. Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, E 146 Bü 5011.
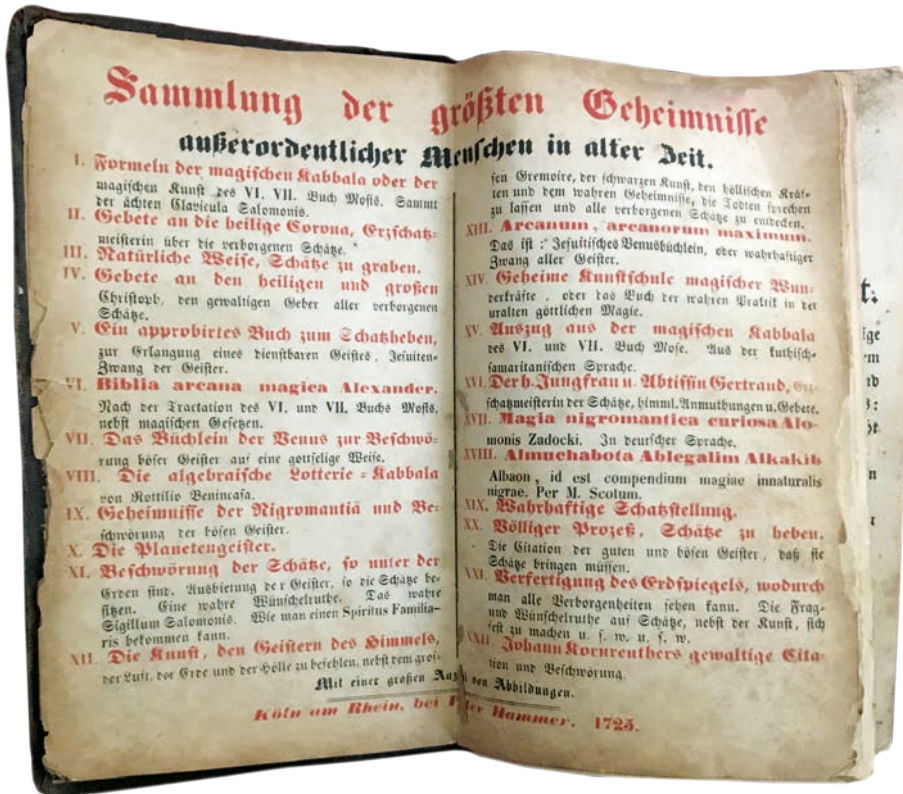
Figure 3: *Sammlung der größten Geheimnisse außerordentlicher Menschen in alter Zeit*, a collection issued by Johann Scheible in approximately 1853

Since the end of the nineteenth century, collective volumes like the one described here were issued by publishers like Fischer, Hülsemann, Bartels, and others. Usually they were printed on pulp paper; many copies disintegrated and did not survive.

What is the reason for the vast difference between all these variants bearing the same title?

The first edition, issued from Scheible, was based on a manuscript acquired by this indefatigable publisher (1809–1866). Why did he put it to the press? In the foreword to the second, enlarged edition (1851) he writes:

> In our enlightened age, the unprejudiced will observe in the publication of such a work, only what the author claims, namely, a contribution in reference to the aforesaid [magic] literature and culture of no trifling merit; but in regard to the believer also, the issue of a cheap edition will be more serviceable than the formerly expensive productions on sorcery, which were only circulated in abstract forms and sold

Figure 4: Sechstes und siebentes Buch Mosis oder der magisch-sympathische Hausschatz
(Berlin-Weissensee: E. Bartels, ca. 1920)

at extortionate prices. [...] In regard to the present edition it can only be said, that
the so-called *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, which have for several centuries at-
tracted the popular faith [and were supposed to be kept in chains or be immured],
is reality in accordance with an old manuscript (the most legible among many), and
given word for word [...] with unerring fidelity. [20]

---

20 *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* (Stuttgart: Scheible, 1851), 5–6; translation from *The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* (New York: n.p., 1880), 3.

Here we clearly see Scheible's reasons for the publication of *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis*: he wanted to contribute something to the history of culture in general and of magical texts in particular—and he wanted to make money. His books catered to the taste of those interested in cultural history—and for all those who wanted to experience the thrill of owning a "forbidden book," or who wanted to perform the rituals described therein, although many of the necessary usual rituals are absent from the book, as I have mentioned (these were added at a much later date by Migene González-Wippler in her *New Revised Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, first published in 1982), whilst some people only wanted to make use of the talismans reproduced therein. I own a copy of the second edition of Scheible's *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis*, from which all talismans have been excised from the second part. This was not an act of vandalism. Surely somebody took these talismans and made use of them; they were supposed to bring their bearer treasures, luck at cards, and success in court and business matters. Such excisions are also to be found in later editions. In a copy of *The 6th and 7th Books of Moses, or, Moses' Magical Spirit-Art* (no explicit date, but from the 1950s) in my possession, a double-sided talisman is missing: the front side was used to ward off enemies, and the rear side was supposed to help with all hardships and to grant a long life. Let us hope that it was of use to the person who mutilated this book …

This practice seems to have been quite common in America. When a hoodoo practitioner from Memphis, Tennessee, was asked about the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, he said:

> That book contains symbols. There's the symbol of Jupiter, Jupiter being the god of lawsuits and financial plenty. You cut that symbol, before you go to trial you bury that symbol and you recite the 72nd Psalm … which is supposed to forset all lawsuits.[21]

Scheible's grimoire seems to have sold well, since after the second edition appeared on the market in 1851, augmented by three additional magical texts, a third edition followed in 1853, greatly expanded. In it Scheible even included the *Sepher Schimmusch Tehillim*, first translated into German and published by Gottfried Selig in 1788. These three editions are rarely to be found on the market, and only a few institutions hold copies of them. Even rarer are the editions in German that were published in New York by William Radde, from 1857, with the thirteenth edition appearing in 1873. The text of these editions follows the third Scheible edition. There seems to have been a great demand for such books among the German immigrants, especially among the so-called Pennsylvania Dutch[22] (where "Dutch" does not signify people from the Netherlands but is a corruption of "Deitsch" or "Deutsch"[23]). This edition was also the basis for an English translation that was first

---

21 Kevin J. Hayes, *Folklore and Book Culture* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 19.
22 For the circulation of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* in America, see Patrick J. Donmoyer, *Powwowing in Pennsylvania: Braucherei and the Ritual of Everyday Life* (Kutztown, PA: Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Centre, 2017), 171–173.
23 David W. Kriebel, *Powwowing among the Pennsylvania Dutch: A Traditional Medical Practice in the Modern World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), VIII.

published in New York in 1880 (with no publisher indicated), which has been reprinted countless times (without any changes, unlike the multifarious German editions). Only the first edition bears "New York, 1880" on its title page; most of the subsequent editions are undated and read only "Published in the U. S. A." or "Published for the Trade." But let's get back to the German editions.

Earlier on I mentioned an edition which bears the imprint of "Weik, Philadelphia" and "Glogau Sohn, Hamburg." Shortly after Scheible's third edition of *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis*, copies with the same title and the addition "Sammt einem wichtigen Anhange. Neueste Auflage" appeared on the market. Purportedly, they were all published by "Verlag J. Weik in Philadelphia." It is commonly assumed that this is a fictive imprint,[24] but that is not quite correct. There really was a publisher by the name of John Weik who operated in Philadelphia (155 North Third Street).[25] Robert Cazden writes in *The German Book Trade in America*:

> From the beginning, Weik imported popular literature in a grand scale, a few vendible items in quantity with special title pages bearing his name. A typical Weik import was *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* in the Stuttgart edition of Scheible, a large consignment of which was shipped to Philadelphia on commission, doubtless on very favorable terms.[26]

Weik's firm was liquidated in 1862.[27] Since all of Weik's editions of *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* are undated, it is impossible to say whether or not they were all published during the period when Weik's was in business. Let's have a closer look at one of these editions.

Here we have the text of *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* as published by Scheible, containing 28 pages and 23 illustrations. On the recto side of the fore-title we find advertisements for Johann Scheible's "Faust" volumes (from "Das Kloster") and—appropriate for America—Scheible's editions of two books by Edgar Allan Poe, translated into German: *Erstaunliche Geschichten und unheimliche Begebenheiten* (1859) and *Unbegreifliche Ereignisse und geheimnißvolle Thaten* (1861). So our edition of *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* must have been issued after 1861. Perhaps Scheible printed it (this edition of *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* was never sold in Germany, so maybe it was meant for export only), and Weik added his own title page and fore-title. If this is the case, the book must have been published in or before 1862, for Weik's firm was liquidated in that year. The "wichtiger Anhang" mentioned on the title page consists in this case (many different "Anhänge" are known) of: "Das Apostel- und Missionarbuch. Oder: Abdias, eines der siebenzig Jünger Jesu und ersten christlichen Bischofs in Babylon, Geschichte aller zwölf Apostel. Mit einem Anhange kurzer Geschichten von Markus, Clemens, Cyprian,

---

24 Bachter, "Anleitung zum Aberglauben," 104; Christoph Daxelmüller, *Zauberpraktiken* (Zürich: Artemis & Winkler, 1993), 282; Karl-Peter Wanderer, "Gedruckter Aberglaube: Studien zur volkstümlichen Beschwörungsliteratur" (PhD diss., University of Frankfurt am Main, 1975), 52.

25 Robert E. Cazden, *The German Book Trade in America* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1984), 196–198 and *passim*.

26 Cazden, *German Book Trade*, 197.

27 Cazden, *German Book Trade*, 198.

Apollinar und Thekla, und einem Zusatze von Bonifacius, dem sogenannten Apostel der Deutschen." This work was first published anonymously in 1725; a third edition was issued from Henne, Stuttgart, in 1855. The Stuttgart edition is completely identical to the one appended to *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis* by Weik. This leads to the conclusion that Scheible bought the remaindered stock from Henne, attached the unbound quires to his Moses edition and shipped it all to America.

But this is not the end of the riddles in connection with the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*. In addition to the "real" Weik books (taken over from Scheible, with new title pages), there are "fake" Weik books. As we have seen, John Weik closed his business down in 1862. When we take a closer look at the Weik and Glogau Sohn "coproduction" I mentioned earlier, we see that the paper is of inferior quality and seems to originate from the end of the nineteenth century. Moreover, books from "Glogau Sohn" appear on the market only from the 1870s onwards. Glogau Sohn in Hamburg published (or to be more exact, pirated) quite a few occult books, including *Handschriftliche Schätze aus Kloster-Bibliotheken* (ca. 1890). This is by no means the famous book of magical texts issued by Johann Scheible around 1855, but a theoretical work about ghosts and witches—interesting in its own right, but not a grimoire. The publishers wanted to benefit from the mythical reputation of the original edition, which at that time must have already been a rare book. Today it is nearly impossible to find on the market. Glogau's "new edition" is embellished by crude but interesting woodcuts some of which later found their way into another Moses book entitled *Großes siebenmal versiegeltes sechstes und siebentes Buch Mosis*, allegedly printed in Philadelphia in the year 1467 (!), but actually issued by the Hamburg-based publisher Heimler in or around 1900 (see Fig. 5).

As we have seen, book titles and the names of publishers were easily "taken over" from other publishers in the hope of furthering their sales. The name of "Weik" must have had a ring to it and "Philadelphia" surely sounded very exotic and mysterious.

"Philadelphia" was also the fictitious place of printing for most of the "new" (late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century) editions of *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis*, some of which we have already encountered. The Publisher Max Fischer of Dresden was the first to market these "new" editions, which are simply "magische Hausväter-Literatur" (magical household literature) as Will-Erich Peuckert so aptly called them. Attached to them we find magical texts like *Romanus-Büchlein* (this book consists of conjurations and blessings for all kinds of ailments, magical or otherwise, and was first printed in 1788) or *Das siebenmal versiegelte Buch*, among others. The pages were tightly wrapped with straps of linen or paper, and sealed on the title page, so that the prospective buyer could not peep into the book. This practice was by no means limited to grimoires. It was also used for books like the third German edition of the *Malleus maleficarum* (Berlin: Barsdorf, 1922/1923). But here the customer could at least have a look at the contents page.

As we can see, nothing is left of the cultural intentions and interests of older publishers like Johann Scheible. These "new" grimoires only served commercial purposes. The Verlag Maximilian Wendel, Leipzig, carried this to the extreme when in 1906 they published "Das 6. u. 7. Buch Mosis: Die echte grosse und apogryphe [*sic*] Mosesbibel." Of course there is no trace of a Moses book to find in this mishmash of ghost stories,

Figure 5: *Großes siebenmal versiegeltes sechstes und siebentes Buch Mosis*, which states that
it was printed in Philadelphia in the year 1467, but was issued by Heimler in Hamburg in
approximately 1900

occult gossip, and excerpts from the *Romanus-Büchlein*. Moreover, we find a chapter on
how to win at a lottery ("unfailingly!"). But unfortunately we encounter nothing of that
kind in this chapter, apart from the information that the same publisher issued a rather
expensive book called *Die Gesetze des Zufalls* (The Laws of Chance), in which the secret
of always winning at the lottery is disclosed.[28] Of course this book was sealed, too. The
term "fraud" springs to mind ...

---

28   *Das 6. u. 7. Buch Mosis* (Leipzig: Maximilian Wendel's Verlag, 1906), 29–32.

As late as 1950, Planet-Verlag, Braunschweig, published a new edition of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, titled: *Das sechste und siebente Buch Moses das ist Moses magische Geisterkunst, das Geheimnis aller Geheimnisse*. The title leads us back to Scheible, but titles can be deceptive, as we have learned. A closer look into the book reveals to us that the first part ("das sechste Buch Moses") is nothing other than an abridged version of *Der wahrhaftige feurige Drache* as attached to Bartels' *Sechstes und siebentes Buch Mosis*. The second part ("das siebente Buch Moses") is a mishmash of well-known remedies (magical and otherwise) against all kinds of harm and misfortune, coming from sources other than Bartels and Fischer. This Planet edition was the center of a famous criminal trial (known as "Braunschweiger Mosesbuchprozess") initiated by Johann Kruse, author of *Hexen unter uns?* (Witches amongst Us?; Hamburg: Hamburgische Bücherei, 1951). He brought a charge against the publishers for imparting to the public a potentially dangerous remedy against syphilis. This trial dragged on for eight years, Will-Erich Peuckert acting as expert witness for the defendants, and Otto Prokop as a consultant for the prosecutor. In the end the publishers had only to pay a fine of 300 Deutschmark.[29] The book was not banned but went into one new edition after another.

I hope these short remarks make it sufficiently clear how difficult it is to tell apart the individual editions of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* and to build a collection of them. Driven by pursuit of profit, the publishers faked the names of places and other publishers and issued different books and compilations under the same title. Only a close look into the book can give information about its contents. I am afraid it will never be possible to compile a complete bibliography of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*.

And then there are the *Eighth and Ninth Books of Moses*, and the *Tenth and Eleventh Books*, and the *Twelfth Book* ... but that is a another story.

A Bibliography of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*

German editions mentioned in the text

Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis, das ist: Mosis magische Geisterkunst, das Geheimniß aller Geheimnisse. Wort- und bildgetreu nach einer alten Handschrift mit 23 Tafeln. Stuttgart: Verlag von J. [Johann] Scheible, 1849. 31 p., [1] p., [23] plates, [2] of them folded.

Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis, das ist: Mosis magische Geisterkunst, das Geheimniß aller Geheimnisse. Wort- und bildgetreu nach einer alten Handschrift mit 30 Tafeln. Zweite, sehr vermehrte Auflage. Stuttgart: Verlag von J. [Johann] Scheible, 1851. 151 p., [1] p. With 30 unpaginated plates.

Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis, das ist: Mosis magische Geisterkunst, das Geheimniß aller Geheimnisse. Sammt den verdeutschten Offenbarungen und Vorschriften wunderbarster

---

29 Joachim Friedrich Baumhauer, *Johann Kruse und der "neuzeitliche Hexenwahn": Zur Situation eines norddeutschen Aufklärers und einer Glaubensvorstellung im 20. Jahrhundert untersucht anhand von Vorgängen in Dithmarschen* (Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz Verlag, 1984), 83–95.

Art der alten weisen Hebräer, aus den Mosaischen Büchern, der Kabbala und dem Talmud zum leiblichen Wohl der Menschen. Wort- und bildgetreu nach einer alten Handschrift mit 42 Tafeln. Vierte, sehr vermehrte Auflage. New York: In Commission bei Wm. Radde, No. 300 Broadway. 1857. [2] p., 408 p., 2 p. [advertisements]. With 42 unpaginated plates.

Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis, das ist: Mosis magische Geisterkunst, das Geheimniß aller Geheimnisse. Sammt den verdeutschten Offenbarungen und Vorschriften wunderbarster Art der alten weisen Hebräer, aus den Mosaischen Büchern, der Kabbalah und dem Talmud zum leiblichen Wohl der Menschen. Wort- und bildgetreu nach einer alten Handschrift mit 42 Tafeln. 13. Auflage. New York: In Commission bei Wm. Radde, No. 300 Broadway, 1873. 408 p.

Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis, das ist: Mosis magische Geisterkunst, das Geheimniß aller Geheimnisse. Wort- und bildgetreu nach einer alten Handschrift mit 23 Tafeln. Sammt einem wichtigen Anhange. Neueste Auflage. Philadelphia: Verlag von J. Weik & Comp. [ca. 1861]. 28p, 400 p., [28] p. [advertisements]. [23] unpaginated plates.
* Contents: (1) Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis; (2) Anhang: Das Apostel- und Missionarbuch. Oder: Abdias, eines der siebenzig Jünger Jesu und ersten christlichen Bischofs in Babylon. Geschichte aller zwölf Apostel. Mit einem Anhange kurzer Geschichten von Markus, Clemens, Cyprian, Appolinar und Thekla, und einem Zusatze von Bonifacius, dem sogenannten Apostel der Deutschen.

Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis das ist Mosis' magische Geisterkunst, Das Geheimnis aller Geheimnisse. Neueste Auflage mit vielen Abbildungen. Philadelphia: Verlag von J. Weik & Comp. / Hamburg. L. M. Glogau Sohn, [ca. 1880]. [4] p., 476 p.

Das sechste und siebente Buch Moses oder der magisch-sympathische Hausschatz, das ist Mosis magische Geisterkunst, das Geheimniß aller Geheimnisse. Wortgetreu nach einer alten Handschrift, mit merkwürdigen Abbildungen. Preis 7,50 Mark. Dresden: Verlag von Max Fischer, [ca. 1885]. [2] p., 18 p., 96 p., 128 p., 32 p., 32 p.

Großes siebenmal versiegeltes sechstes und siebentes Buch Mosis oder das Geheimniß der magischen Geisterkunst Mosis. Ein magisch-sympathetischer Hausschatz der Mittel, welche bei Menschen und Vieh anzuwenden. Wortgetreu nach der ältesten Handschrift und Ueberlieferung, mit vielen wahrhaften staunenerregenden Abbildungen. Preis 7 Mk. 50 Pf. Philadelphia [Hamburg: Joseph Heimler], 1467 [ca. 1900]. 90 p., [2] p., 101 p., [1] p., [2] p., V p., [2] p., 75 p., [1] p., 55 p., [1] p., 44 p., 64 p., 7 p., [1] p. [advertisements].

Sechstes und siebentes Buch Mosis oder der magisch-sympathische Hausschatz, das ist Mosis magische Geisterkunst, das Geheimniß aller Geheimnisse. Glückstabelle, Schicksalsdeutungen. Wortgetreu nach einer alten Handschrift. mit staunenerregenden Abbildungen. Preis 7, 50 Mark. Philadelphia [Leipzig: Ph. Hülsemann, ca. 1900]. 128 p., 32 p., 47, [1] p., 20 p., 31, [1] p., 125, [3] p.

Das 6. u. 7. Buch Mosis: Die echte grosse und apogryphe [sic] Mosesbibel das ist ein Geheimbuch über allerhand wunderbare Ereignisse und nützliche Versuche, wodurch zur genauen Kenntnis

der Geisterwelt der Weg gebahnet wird. Nach dem 1873 verfaßten Excerpt-Manuskript des Karthäuserpaters Christian von Galenus herausgegeben und vielfach erneuert und verbessert von einem Freunde der geheimen Logenbrüder zu Magdeburg. Philadelphia. Einzige rechtmäßige, echte und wirklich vollständige Ausgabe. Nephelia. Leipzig 38: Maximilian Wendel's Verlag, [1906]. 239 p., [1] p.

Sechstes und siebentes Buch Mosis oder der magisch-sympathische Hausschatz das ist Mosis magische Geisterkunst, das Geheimniß aller Geheimnisse. Glückstabelle, Schicksalsdeutungen. Wortgetreu nach einer alten Handschrift. mit staunenerregenden Abbildungen Scutum Mosis. Schutzmarke. [Berlin-Weissensee: E. Bartels, ca. 1920]. 128 p., 64 p., 32 p., 31, [1] p., 47, [1] p., [8] S., [8] p. [advertisements], 134 p., [8] p. [advertisements].

Das sechste und siebente Buch Moses oder der magisch-sympathische Hausschatz, das ist Mosis magische Geisterkunst, das Geheimniß aller Geheimnisse. Wortgetreu nach einer alten Handschrift, mit merkwürdigen Abbildungen. Dresden-A 16: Max Fischer's Verlagsbuchhandlung, [ca. 1920]. 96 p., 128 p., 32 p., 32 p., 17 p., XII S. [Contents].

Das sechste und siebente Buch Moses das ist Moses magische Geisterkunst, das Geheimnis aller Geheimnisse. Wortgetreu nach einer alten Handschrift[.] Mit alten Holzschnitten[.] Philadelphia. Braunschweig: Planet-Verlag, 1950. 237 p., [2] p. With 5 plates and [1] unpaginated plate.

English editions mentioned in the text

The sixth and seventh books of Moses; or, Moses' magical spirit-art, known as the wonderful arts of the old wise Hebrews, taken from the Mosaic books of the Cabala and the Talmud, for the good of mankind. Translated from the German, Word for Word, according to Old Writings. With numerous engravings. New York: 1880. 64 p., 128 p.

The sixth and seventh Books of Moses; Or, Moses' magical spirit-art, Known as the Wonderful Arts of the Old Wise Hebrews, taken from the Mosaic Books of the Cabala and the Talmud, for the good of mankind. Translated from the German, Word for Word, according to Old Writings. With Numerous Engravings. Published for the Trade, [ca. 1920]. 190 p.

González-Wippler, Migene [ed.]: *The new revised Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses and the magical uses of the Psalms: Edited by Migene González-Wippler.* Bronx, NY; Original Publications, 1982. 219 p.

Jews, Judaism, Fantasy Judaism in German Magical Texts and Texts on Magic Mainly from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century: Some Basic Observations

Marco Frenschkowski

1   Judaism and Magic as Patterns of Alternate Culture

Jews and magic in Western European cultural history are deeply interrelated. Their public images have shaped patterns of alterity and to some degree of counterculture, and as such they quickly and easily intermingle in Christian mainstream imagination. Magic and Judaism from such a hegemonic mainstream point of view could be seen as particular and somehow related subcultures, segmental cultures, but this perspective is always deeply connected to clichés and stereotypes. It is not always easy to make these visible. Magic and Judaism seen from an external angle have another trait in common: they share a deep ambivalence or ambiguity in societal or public estimate or assessment.[1] This will be a major point of the present paper: Jewish people in German Baroque outsider views had to be either sages or scoundrels. They were only rarely and to a limited degree allowed to be just Jewish people. And magic of course could be seen as either highest primordial wisdom or as devilry, demonic temptation, sometimes in texts quite near to each other. We will demonstrate this with some observations from German Christian texts on magic and also some magical ritual texts themselves, as they increasingly have become a subject of research in recent years. This will not be a contribution, however, to that research (an ongoing topic in Judaic studies) on Jewish men and women practicing rituals we might call magic not in conflict with their Jewish piety, and which never went underground, and in many contexts were not problematized.[2] The basic difference between seeing magic as

---

1   Our knowledge of their entanglement in their respective general cultures has of course much increased; see, e.g., Edward Goldberg, *Jews and Magic in Medici Florence: The Secret World of Benedetto Blanis* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2011). Formerly clear-cut distinctions of pro-magic and anti-magic Jewish theology have become rather fluid in recent years; see, e.g., Sharon Flatto, *The Kabbalistic Culture of Eighteenth-Century Prague: Ezekiel Landau (the "Noda Biyehudah") and His Contemporaries* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010), which demonstrates that a famous eighteenth-century rabbi generally seen as staunchly opposed to esoteric practices in fact blended both magical and kabbalistic ideas with "orthodox" Judaism in a highly original manner, and also explains why he chose not to speak about these things in public.

2   This applies to traditional customs (*minhagim*) that participate in what might be called magic, though practitioners may not see it as such, collected, for example, in many volumes by Daniel Sperber, such as Daniel Sperber, *The Jewish Life Cycle: Custom, Lore and Iconography* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Daniel Sperber, *Why Jews Do*

something to be frowned upon or as an integral part of wisdom and religious ritual has been much demonstrated in its relevance to the Judaism-Christianity gap and its complex though limited cultural reality.[3]

But there is not just the wide field of questions of direct and other contacts between Jewish and Christian magic but also of continuity and discontinuity in the different traditions. We know there is a significant break between medieval and Renaissance magic as a result of integrating elements from neoplatonic demonology and worldviews in the days of Pico della Mirandola, Marsilio Ficino, Agrippa, Reuchlin, and Trithemius, and later Cardano and Giordano Bruno. Brian Copenhaver recently defined this as the main difference between medieval and Renaissance magic.[4] Whereas the earlier break between pre-Christian and Christian magic at the end of antiquity was a reduction, even a curtailing of tradition, the second break is a widening, a broadening of material and reference frames. Neoplatonism also legitimizes magic in ways unknown to medieval Latin magic: it provides it with a both philosophical and scientific rationale that only broke down in the eighteenth century. This complex of ideas and legitimation scenarios can be seen as the most essential Renaissance contribution to ritual magic. There is no such clear-cut difference in the integration of Jewish elements, present in earlier texts as well but abounding from the late Renaissance on in Christian magical books. Much of this is a fantasy Judaism, however, as we will see from the Leipzig collection and its background. And the situation is of course quite different in Italy, Germany, or England: which once again we cannot discuss in depth. (The change from manuscripts to printed books, for example for books of magic, occurred at quite different times in different European countries, and did not really change much for practitioners; once again, the Leipzig collection is a clear example, with its surprisingly widespread use of handwritten texts copied from printed books).[5]

What They Do: The History of Jewish Customs throughout the Cycle of the Jewish Year (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1999).

3 Gideon Bohak has even written: "the most striking feature of medieval Jewish magic is that within the Jewish community it was never considered heretical or diabolical"; Gideon Bohak, "Jewish Magic in the Middle Ages," in *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West*, ed. David J. Collins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 268. This seems to me overstating the point a bit (compare, e.g., bSan 65ab and Rashi's comments), but clearly expresses the basic question of different discourses.

4 Brian Copenhaver, *Magic in Western Culture from Antiquity to the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 55–126.

5 Still another question bordering on German Christian magic with Jewish elements is the continuity and discontinuity between older Jewish kabbalistic magic and both erudite and popular transformations in the eighteenth-century Hasidic movements. A careful comparison between the two traditions, separate in social and cultural location but not so much in time and space, might yield most interesting results. Recent research, though careful and elaborate, tends to concentrate on particular trajectories. That there is only a complex and broken and not so straightforward relationship between older Kabbalah and eighteenth-century ritual practice with magical elements in Jewish Hasidic groups is stressed, for example, by David Biale, David Assaf, Benjamin Brown, Uriel Gellman, Samuel Heilman, Moshe Rosman, Gadi Sagiv, and Marcin Wodziński, *Hasidism: A New History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 173.

"Learned magic" (not necessarily upper-class magic) as a part of "rejected knowledge" (to use James Webb's famous term)[6] in Germany is after all a research field of traditions and interactions where quite far-reaching discoveries are still possible. It has received scant attention so far, and even scholars of more popular German forms of magic such as Will-Erich Peuckert, Adolf Spamer, and Adolf Jacoby seem not to have known about the Leipzig collection, or at least have not tried to gain access. In this regard, learned magic has been treated quite differently from rural and lower-class magic, already a favorite of nineteenth-century German *Volkskunde* (folklore studies). But in theology (though not in religious studies), the interest was almost nonexistent, and this applies to other aspects of magic as well. Let me insert a personal observation. When I studied theology and Greek language and literature at Mainz University from 1978 to 1983, I knew exactly two people interested in magic: my later doctorate supervisor Otto Böcher (1935–2020), who had written extensively on demons in antiquity, and myself. There was simply no one else in the Theological Faculty interested in these matters. And even when I did my doctorate some years later on patterns of revelation in antiquity, I was the only person I knew who had actually read the Greek magical papyri. One felt a bit like a sailor without navigation charts in those days when interested in magic, at least in academic Germany, and particularly in theology departments. David Aune, another New Testament scholar, once nicely said of his colleagues that they worked "as if they were involved in a conspiracy to ignore or minimize the role of magic in the New Testament and early Christian literature."[7] Some years later, when I worked for some theological dictionaries, I quoted the *Eighth Book of Moses* from the Greek magical papyri,[8] but the editor of the reference work for which I wrote—I will not mention his name—was extremely irritated, and it took some trouble to convince him that such a work actually existed. He found it so strange, that he had deleted the reference from my article without my consent, and being young, I did not have the courage to tell him what I truly thought about this attitude. This has all changed completely. Magic is very much on the agenda of religious studies, of Jewish studies, of biblical studies, in ancient history, in media studies, in Western esotericism studies, and in other fields of research. This development has above all taught us to better understand the "inner logic" of magic, its place in social and individual contexts. Magic

---

6   See, e.g., Marco Frenschkowski, "Okkulte Subkulturen als Gegenstand kulturwissenschaftlicher Forschung: James Webb (1946–1980)," in James Webb, *Die Flucht vor der Vernunft: Politik, Kultur und Okkultismus im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Marco Frenschkowski and Michael Siefener, trans. Michael Siefener (Wiesbaden: Marixverlag, 2009), 7–34; Marco Frenschkowski, "James Webb und die Epistemologie des Irrationalen," in James Webb, *Das Zeitalter des Irrationalen: Politik, Kultur und Okkultismus im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Marco Frenschkowski and Michael Siefener, trans. Michael Siefener (Wiesbaden: Marixverlag, 2008), 7–27; also Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

7   David Aune, "Magic in Early Christianity," *ANRW* part 2, vol. 23.2 (1980), 368.

8   For a more recent translation, see Todd Klutz, "The Eighth Book of Moses: A New Translation and Introduction," in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, ed. Richard J. Bauckham, James R. Davila, and Alexander Panayotov (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), 1:189–235.

words, for example, are not, as was previously thought, meaningless, but evoke certain psychological and mental states: they have a complex imaginative function, are subject to linguistic rules and are thus "explainable."[9] No supernatural talent is required for ceremonial magic of the Leipzig type, no charisma, not even a "true will"—which the most famous magician of the twentieth century, Aleister Crowley (1875–1947), declared was the center of "magick"—but extreme care, concentration, and (surprisingly for the modern reader, considering the questionable aims of many rituals) a decent, morally unobjectionable life. (Perhaps this is to make the texts less suspect? Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Cod. mag. 116 speaks somewhat differently where the practitioner has to be made a magician, so to speak.)

And though the concept of magic has much been problematized,[10] there is not much ambiguity about which texts we might at least call core magical texts. This has changed the face of cultural studies to some degree: magic in no longer seen as just a popular, lower-class matter of peasants, craftsmen, maids, and groups seen as non-respectable, but also of an upper-class elite. As such it is often called Western learned magic, and is at last studied as an integral part of religious history, in the case of more recent Western societies as well.

2   The Leipzig Magical Collection

A major event in drawing international attention to the Leipzig magical tradition was the exhibition of the Leipzig collection of *codices magici* held in 2019–2020 at the Bibliotheca Albertina (Leipzig University Library).[11] This is my main reason for concentrating in this paper on the time period of these codices, their textual sources, and their cultural background. In around 1710, a corpus of 140 magical manuscripts was offered for sale in Leipzig through a printed catalogue (the year is not quite certain, as the catalogue itself does not state it). Their owner was the Leipzig physician Samuel Schröer (then 41 years of age), who hoped for the immense sum of 4000 reichstaler in return: the equivalent of two to three town houses.

Not much is known about Schröer. He was born on 14 June 1669 in Bautzen, then received his doctorate as a physician in Erfurt in 1693 with a study on opium ("De opii natura et usu"), a subject on which he later published a number of smaller papers. Schröer's doctoral supervisor Gottfried Adolph Luja (1631–1714) seems to have been an opponent of alchemy and perhaps also of other occult arts, as can be seen from a preserved funeral

---

9   See Marco Frenschkowski, "Zauberworte: Linguistische und sprachpsychologische Beobachtungen zur spätantiken griechischen und römischen Magie," *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 24.2 (2007): 323–366.

10 See, e.g., Bernd-Christian Otto, *Magie: Rezeptions- und diskursgeschichtliche Analysen*, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 57 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011); Marco Frenschkowski, *Magie im antiken Christentum: Eine Studie zur Alten Kirche und ihrem Umfeld*, Standorte in Antike und Christentum 7, (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2016).

11 For an overview, see Marco Frenschkowski, *Zauberbücher: Die Leipziger Magica-Sammlung im Schatten der Frühaufklärung*. Published in conjunction with an exhibition at the Leipzig University Library, 15 November 2019–16 February 2020. Leipzig: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, 2019 (catalogue of the exhibition).

sermon on the occasion of his (Luja's) death. We know little about Schröer's world of thought. According to one testimony, he was a close friend of Friedrich Roth-Scholtz (1687–1736), a well-known bibliographer of alchemical literature who had studied in Leipzig and later worked in Halle and Nuremberg, among other places, as a bookseller and publisher. Roth-Scholtz also printed the catalogue of *codices magici* in one of his books (*Veterum sophorum sigilla et imagines magicae e Johannis Trithemii [...] manuscripta*, Herrnstadt, 1732). Roth-Scholtz writes that he often saw the collection at the home of his "friend and patron" Schröer, but does not know for sure what became of the books later.[12] We know about the attempted transaction from an exchange of letters between the (quite famous) book collectors Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach (1683–1734) and Heinrich Wilhelm Marschalch (1622–1693), who later became a prominent Freemason.[13] An Augsburg printer named Paul Kühtze had printed the concise catalogue of the manuscripts in the context of the planned sale (apparently commissioned by the Leipzig bookseller Johann Christian Martini). This catalogue has recently become available in an annotated edition (edited by Daniel Bellingradt and Bernd-Christian Otto), and has had some impact on the ongoing research about both this collection (a variant version of the catalogue also exists) and about magic in German Baroque society as such. The collection itself survived, without being split up, and became part of the Leipzig Rathsbibliothek; this was probably not by sale, but we have not yet been able to determine how this came about. The texts themselves are mostly older, and the manuscripts may have been written from the late seventeenth century up to the time of their planned sale over a period of at least a number of years. They are now being analyzed as a major specimen of German Baroque learned magic.[14]

This paper will start with some further general remarks on eighteenth-century magic and some, I would say, not-so-obvious observations on the image of Judaism in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Germany and its two seemingly contradictory discourses (called, for the sake of convenience, "philosemitism" and "antisemitism"). In a third part I will illustrate some examples of what I call "fantasy Judaism," Jewish motifs in texts that have almost no real knowledge of Jewish life. In Leipzig, we have as already mentioned the particular advantage that the university with the *codices magici lipsienses* harbors the largest collection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century magical manuscripts in a European university library. This is larger even than the much-better-known Sir Hans Sloane collection in the British Library from a slightly later time (he died in 1753).[15]

The Leipzig collection has texts in Latin, German, and Italian, and quite often quotes Hebrew words in Hebrew script (but almost never sentences: knowledge of Hebrew was real but limited).[16] Most interestingly these 140 manuscripts (two alchemical manuscripts were later added), which are mostly angel and spirit invocations[17] and to a much lesser degree *magia naturalis*, were not brought together accidentally from different sources, but are a systematically arranged collection. As such it had been produced perhaps even by professional scribes for a collector or perhaps even a private magician whom we unfortunately cannot clearly identify. It was, as we have seen, owned by the physician Samuel Schröer around 1710, but more about its origin we simply do not know, and we have no evidence that Schröer used them for practical purposes. It is plausible that the texts written as single copies on not too large paper booklets had such a practice in view: they were not collected in larger codices as could have been done. The large presence of Jewish motifs, images, and words in these clearly Christian texts deserves the utmost attention. (Indeed, the prevalence of prayers and language quite close to the Baroque mystical tradition may be somewhat surprising in a collection concentrating on angel and demon invocations, and may have been a way of safeguarding against mistrust and persecution in wider society.[18]) Only some general observations and a very few examples can be given in this short indication of ambivalences between polemics and fascination.

3   Ethnic Stereotypes and Images of Magic

The image of Judaism in Christian magical texts makes visible ambivalences that are easily missed in histories of both Jewish culture and antisemitic discourses in European countries. The point I want to make here is about competing paradigms coexisting at the same time[19] and about the place of a fantasy Judaism in this scenario. Ethnic stereotypes as such in magic and about magic are of course very common. Smaller nations are said to be endowed with particular magic and divinatory powers, and no ethnic, cultural, and religious group became more reputed with such powers than the Jews. This stereotype

---

16 Strictly speaking, the *codices magici* collection is owned by the Stadtbibliothek Leipzig (known as the Rathsbibliothek—Bibliotheca Senatus Lipsiensis—until 1832). It was given to the university library (Bibliotheca Albertina) as a permanent loan in 1962. For our limited knowledge on the early history of the collection, see Bellingradt and Otto, *Magical Manuscripts*; Marco Frenschkowski, *Zauberbücher: Die Leipziger Magica-Sammlung im Schatten der Frühaufklärung*, published in conjunction with an exhibition at the Leipzig University Library, 15 November 2019–16 February 2020 (Leipzig: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, 2019).

17 Talismanic entities often cannot be clearly attributed either to the angelic or the demonic realm. See, e.g., Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham, eds., *Angels in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

18 See a fuller discussion of this in Frenschkowski, *Zauberbücher*. The Leipzig magicians clearly saw themselves as Christians.

19 We might be reminded of the words of the great James George Frazer: "Unless we allow for this innate capacity of the human mind to entertain contradictory beliefs at the same time, we shall in vain attempt to understand the history of thought in general and of religion in particular"; James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, 3rd ed., Adonis Attis Osiris 1 (London: Macmillan, 1913), 4:4–5, n. 1.

has an early history in antiquity, where Egypt and Thrace were countries reputed to be strongholds of magic, but the image of the "Jewish magician" is even more well known in both pagan and Christian literature,[20] and was revitalized in Renaissance culture.[21] It still loomed large in eighteenth-century German magic, to a quite astonishing degree, revealing important aspects of the clandestine discourse of practiced magic as such. It even becomes doubtful how appropriate Keith Thomas's famous theory on the "decline of magic" actually is: it may to some degree be a matter of perspective.

In sixteenth- to eighteenth-century ideas on magic yet more groups became reputed to have a particular talent for magic; the Lapps in Finland (as the Sámi were called in early modern times), and even more so the Roma (gypsies, tinkers and similar "travelers") all over Europe, had already gained this reputation from the fifteenth century on. *Zigeunerzauber* (Roma magic and divination) became a well-known label in eighteenth-century and more particularly nineteenth-century German popular culture, with some antecedents as far back as the fifteenth century.[22] It is not so generally known that in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Germany, there was a widespread belief that the Roma ("Zigeuner") were actually of Jewish ancestry; that is, they were a run-down Jewish tribe (even Johann Christoph Wagenseil shared this theory, which today seems far-fetched).[23] There is also some evidence that both freelance Jewish practitioners of divination and magical folk medicine and "gypsies" could act as competing salesmen—and indeed saleswomen—in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century southern Europe. (I hope to treat this evidence on some other occasion, and will abstain from going into details here.)

Ethnic stereotypes loomed large in both popular and erudite magic; in Baroque Germany this applied to images of Jewish magicians,[24] Gypsy sorcerers, and "Walen" (Venetians and other Italians reputed to be treasure hunters, and as real persons connected to the Saxonian mining industry),[25] and even of Arab and Turk magicians. The

---

20 For a detailed treatment, see Frenschkowski, *Magie im antiken Christentum*, 50, 145, 171–174; compare also pp. 144–150, where literature is given also on the Beta Israel, formerly called Falasha, who similarly were seen as sorcerers by Ethiopic Christians, and on many other relevant ethnic groups.

21 On alleged Jewish magicians in medieval Christian literature, see Simone Häberli, *Der jüdische Gelehrte im Mittelalter: Christliche Imaginationen zwischen Idealisierung und Dämonisierung*, Mittelalter-Forschungen 32 (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbeke Verlag, 2010), 237–250.

22 See many examples in Klaus-Michael Bogdal, *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner: Eine Geschichte von Faszination und Verachtung*, 4th ed. (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2013). Antisemitic ideas in older Roma folklore will have to be collected at some point; they are not rare.

23 See, e.g., Beate Althammer and Christina Gerstenmayer, eds., *Bettler und Vaganten in der Neuzeit (1500–1933): Eine kommentierte Quellenedition* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2013), 132–133, who quote encyclopedic sources from around 1730. Gypsies as sorcerers are not rare even in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sources, and by eighteenth-century magic texts (rather slowly) they became part of the European grimoire tradition, i.e., non-Roma tried to imitate "gypsy magic." We might also think of Joseph Glanvill's very famous "scholar gypsy" legend, which first appeared in Joseph Glanvill, *The Vanity of Dogmatizing, or, Confidence in Opinions* (London: Eversden, 1661).

24 Ideas on alleged Jewish witches were much rarer, an observation that needs further discussion.

25 In this context it is of some interest that many of the Leipzig texts are in the Italian language. Learning Italian was not so difficult: in 1702 Leipzig had three professional teachers (*Sprachmeister*) of the Italian language (as against six for French, but only two for English): their names are given in

case of the Walen is of some interest, as a number of spells in the Leipzig collection are intended to help find hidden treasure. Cod. mag. 75 (an illustrated manuscript), for example, is a detailed instruction on magical treasure-digging, with the revealing note that it does not matter whether the magician is Lutheran, Catholic, or Reformed, as long as he is pious and attends eucharistic communion regularly. "Magic" here takes on a character trait of an almost interreligious nature. For our context, we will have to note that the Walen were sometimes said to actually be Jews in disguise, though this is mentioned only a few times.[26] In treasure magic, it is particularly important to overcome so-called pygmies, spirits who are supposed to guard the treasures; this is stated in a whole series of texts. Such magic was undoubtedly practiced on a wide scale: we possess a great many testimonies to it. Was it ever "successful"? Or is that the wrong question to ask? (The problem of what might be called falsification blockage, preventing falsification of magical claims, has been discussed at some length in ethnological literature on magic, and I cannot elaborate on it in this paper.)

But of course the group most intensely connected to magic in such cultural imaginings were the Jews as such.[27] The idea is spread over all Christian religious groups: Pope Pius V, for example, in his papal bull *Hebraeorum gens* from 1569, accuses Jews not just of usury

---

Das ietztlebende Leipzig 1702 (Leipzig: Johann Gottfried Renger, 1702; repr. with the 1701 volume, Leipzig: Schmidt-Römhild, 2000), a complete 1702 list of persons in administration, trade, church, and university. It was much easier to learn some Hebrew, which was part of the theological curriculum. On the Walen, see Heinrich Schurtz, *Der Seifenbergbau im Erzgebirge und die Walensagen* (Stuttgart: Engelhorn, 1890); Leo Winter, *Die deutsche Schatzsage* (Wattenscheid: K. Busch, 1925); Rudolf Schramm and Helmut Wilsdorf, *Venetianersagen von geheimnisvollen Schatzsuchern*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Grundstoffindustrie, 1990); Kay Meister, "Seltsame Schatzräuber in den Wäldern des Erzgebirges," *Erzgebirgische Heimatblätter* 43.3 (2021), 3:10–13; and more recently the most important study, Johannes Dillinger, *Magical Treasure Hunting in Europe and North America: A History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2012). See also the exhibition catalogue Markus Hirte and Johannes Dillinger, eds., *Schatz und Schatzsuche in Recht und Geschichte*, Kataloge des Mittelalterlichen Kriminalmuseums in Rothenburg ob der Tauber 4 (Erzabtei St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 2023).

26 See the passages in Schurtz, *Seifenbergbau*, 131–132; Will-Erich Peuckert, "Jude, Jüdin," *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, ed. Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, vol. 4 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1932; repr. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1987), 816.

27 Many examples are given in Peuckert, "Jude, Jüdin," 811–816, who stresses the ambivalence: "Jewish magic" in sixteenth–eighteenth-century Germany was feared, yet eagerly asked for (and sometimes well paid). See also Johannes Dillinger, "Die anderen Magier: Juden, Moslems, und andere Nicht-Christen in der europäischen Hexenlehre" in *Ritualia orientalia mixta: Reflexionen über Rituale in der Religionsgeschichte des Orients und angrenzender Gebiete*, ed. Predrag Bukovec and Vedana Tadić (Hamburg: Kovač, 2017), 163–186. In many cases the practitioners were not Jewish themselves, it seems: this deserves further research. Stories of Jewish magic (often with a clearly antisemitic frame of reference) were extremely widespread in early modern Germany, as they still are in the folklore collections compiled in the nineteenth century. The difference between fearing "witches" and fearing "Jewish sorcerers" is one of different levels of social interaction, as has already been stressed by Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Scribner, 1971), 560. See also my own older study, Marco Frenschkowski, "Katholiken, Juden und Moslems in der 'Historia von D. Johann Fausten': Beobachtungen zur Rezeption lutherischer Religionskritik in populärer protes-

and unsocial behavior, but also of magic and sorcery.[28] Jewish physicians, widely active from the Middle Ages on, were still a subject of superstitious fear in the early eighteenth century as well, and stories about Jewish physicians who were allegedly also sorcerers and poisoners were not just known, but even collected in early eighteenth-century Leipzig, which is the focus of our short remarks.[29] Material objects connected with Jewish ritual (such as bread with Hebrew letters), and also items of antisemitic fantasy (*matsot* allegedly baked with blood from Christian children) were used, for example, as apotropaic means against fire: this was a widespread practice well into the nineteenth century.[30] The many regulations against Jewish physicians working on behalf of Christians both in canonical law[31] and in secular law often repeat suspicions of evil sorcery, and suspect Jewish physicians of harming and even killing Christians up to early eighteenth-century texts.[32] The ban on consulting Jewish physicians was still aggressively expressed by Lutheran antisemitic theologians of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even eighteenth centuries,[33] though its practical impact seems to have been limited.

But often these views about Judaism were about Jewish wisdom and secret knowledge: in fact, they were markedly different at first sight from the antisemitic discourse. Many of the Leipzig codices use Hebrew words, usually quite correctly, and with obvious regard for Jewish knowledge. But if we take a closer look, we can see that things may be more complex.

---

tantischer Erzählliteratur," *Blätter für pfälzische Kirchengeschichte und religiöse Volkskunde* 63 (1996): 359–385 (= *Ebernburg-Hefte* 30 [1996]: 107–133).

28 Kenneth Stow, "More than Meets the Eye: Pius V and the Jews," in *Dominikaner und Juden: Personen, Konflikte und Perspektiven vom 13. bis 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Elias H. Füllenbach and Gianfranco Miletto, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens, n.s. 14 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 375–394; Kenneth Stow, *Catholic Thought and Papal Jewry Policy* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1977), 34–36.

29 See Samuel Krauss, *Geschichte der Jüdischen Ärzte vom frühesten Mittelalter bis zur Gleichberechtigung* (Vienna: A. S. Bettelheim-Stiftung, 1930), 54–61, who uses as a main reference Johann Jacob Schudt, *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten* (Frankfurt: Lamm, 1714–1718), esp. 2:382–406, an author highly critical regarding Jewish physicians, however.

30 Examples in Peuckert, "Jude, Jüdin," 815–816.

31 See Hans-Jürgen Becker, "Die Stellung des kanonischen Rechts zu den Andersgläubigen: Heiden, Juden und Ketzer," in *Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen der Religionen im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*, vol. 1, *Konzeptionelle Grundfragen und Fallstudien*, ed. Ludger Grenzmann, Thomas Haye, Nikolaus Henkel, and Thomas Kaufmann (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 114–115. The oldest Christian synod that tries to push back against Jewish medical practice, as far as I know, was the Second Trullan Council (Concilium Quinisextum, 692 CE), canon 11 (Fontes Christiani 83, p. 196), though John Chrysostom had already demanded the same restriction, as he had done when it came to other ways that Christians might participate in Jewish life (*Adversus Judaeos* orationes 1,3.7–8; 2,1; 8,5–7). According to the Trullan Council, a Christian accepting medicine from a Jew is to be excommunicated, a priest is to be removed from office. The magical aspect is here not yet visible, as in the medieval sources, but such suspicions may well have been in the background.

32 Krauss, *Geschichte der Jüdischen Ärzte*, 61–122.

33 The evidence has been collected by Louis Lewin, "Die jüdischen Studenten an der Universität Frankfurt an der Oder," *Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-Litterarischen Gesellschaft* 14 (1921): 217–221.

4   The Philosemitic Discourse in Magic and Literature on Magic

Jewish wisdom, science, medicine, and philosophy received a new standing from the Renaissance to the Baroque. What has been called "Christian Kabbalah" is only one aspect of the matter, which covers the field of magic and esotericism as well.[34] A seventeenth-century British jingle could say: "If one affirm he learned it from a Jew, the silly people think it must be true."[35] This is quite critical and disparaging, but a more serious analysis cannot deny the existence of a philosemitic discourse as well, mostly in learned circles. How this coexists with and relates to ideas hostile toward the Jews we will have to discuss later. The term "philosemitism" is not perfect, of course, and has the further disadvantage of having been invented by antisemites. We use it with some caution.[36]

We will start with the very obvious observation that German magical books as seen particularly in the Leipzig collection interact deeply with Judaism and Jewish ideas. We will not be surprised if we find a rather fine and detailed depiction of the sefirotic tree (Cod. mag. 21) with full explanation (derived mainly from Knorr von Rosenroth),[37] or lengthy discussions of the names of God as found in the Hebrew Bible, and the usual mystification of the Tetragrammaton. Cod. mag. 79 (*Semiphoras & Schemhamphoras Salomonis regis*) playfully discusses variants of the "full" 72-letter name of YHWH, already mentioned in the medieval *Liber iuratus Honorii* (quoted also in Cod. mag. 16, using the Islamic idea of ninety-nine names of God as well), being a handwritten copy of a magical text already printed by Andreas Luppius in 1686.[38] Cod. mag. 59 (*Schemhamphoras Iacobi*) is another such list, making use of Reuchlin's *De verbo mirifico* (1494).[39] Cod. mag. 41 is a text allegedly by Paracelsus explicitly using the Tetragrammaton for sleep divination (*Oraculum oneiromanticum, das ist 2. curieuse Experimenta in den Schlaf zu*

---

34 It is most unfortunate that the monumental overall presentation by Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, *Geschichte der christlichen Kabbala*, 4 vols., Clavis Pansophiae 10 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 2012–2014) is not much interested in the practical side of magic; see my review in *Blätter für pfälzische Kirchengeschichte und religiöse Volkskunde* 82 (2015): 339–341 (= *Ebernburg-Hefte* 49 [2015]: 139–141). The number of more specialized studies has rapidly increased, however.

35 Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 295.

36 Still quite useful to demonstrate what the term may mean for the period we discuss is Hans-Joachim Schoeps, *Philosemitismus im Barock: Religions- und geistesgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1952). See also Irene Diekmann and Elke V. Kotowski, eds., *Geliebter Feind, gehasster Freund: Antisemitismus und Philosemitismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart; Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Julius H. Schoeps* (Berlin: Verl. für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2009); Siegfried Riemer, *Philosemitismus im deutschen evangelischen Kirchenlied des Barock* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963).

37 The foldout map of the sefirotic tree by Otto (in Bellingradt and Otto, *Magical Manuscripts*, 111) is suggested to derive from Athanasius Kircher, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, 3 vols. (Rome: Vitalis Mascardi, 1652–1654; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 2013); he does not give the reference, however, which is 2:288. This is probable, but the version in Cod. mag. 21 is much simplified, though still quite complex, and drawn by someone not unused to Hebrew letters. It is given in my catalogue Frenschkowski, *Zauberbücher*, 21.

38 See VD17 32:682570C (http://www.vd17.de). On popular ideas on the power of handwritten items, see Sabine Wienker-Piepho, *"Je gelehrter, desto verkehrter"? Volkskundlich-Kulturgeschichtliches zur Schriftbeherrschung* (Münster: Waxmann, 2000).

39 See the discussion by Otto in Bellingradt and Otto, *Magical Manuscripts*, 86.

sehen vvas du verlangest). Cod. mag. 42 is an Italian collection of twenty-two recipes that primarily use biblical psalm texts for magical purposes.[40] Some other examples of such relationship easily spring to mind. A *Liber Razielis Angeli* (Cod. mag. 40) is part of the Leipzig corpus, though its exact relation to the Jewish texts of *Sefer Razi'el* is complicated. The abbot Ioannes Trithemius, to whom we owe the most influential Renaissance list of magical books (as a part of his *Antipalus maleficiorum* [Moguntiae: Balthasar Lippius, 1605]; the text seems to have been written in 1508),[41] already knew about different books alleged to be revelations from the angel Razi'el (who in Christian angelology first appears in the Old Church Slavonic Enoch tradition as Rasuel or Raguel). *Sepher Raziel* (printed in Hebrew Amsterdam 1701) was also well known in non-Jewish circles interested in the arcane arts. To give just one further example close to the Leipzig collection and of some importance for a summary view on Jewish magic, we mention a kind of history of magical, alchemical, and particularly talismanic texts and literature: Peter Friedrich Arpe, *De prodigiosis naturae et artis operibus talismanes et amuleta dictis liber singularis* (there is also a slightly abridged German translation). Arpe (1682–1740), a lawyer and historian of Schleswig-Holsteinian history, also a famed book collector,[42] knew the story about Adam and Raziel very well.[43] His listing of authors on magic starts with a long list of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible personages all alleged to have written grimoires and other magical texts, beginning with Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Ḥam, Abraham, Moses, and others. Solomon of course is the most important of all these authors on magic, and Arpe knows a large number of relevant titles. Only after these biblical authorities does he proceed to mention Egyptian, Greek, Chaldaic, and Persian authors. Zoroaster he discusses at great length, trying to disentangle the different traditions.[44] Taken together, "magic" is here

---

40   This is connected to the well-known use of psalms in both Jewish and Christian magical traditions, particularly strong in Baroque ritualism. See, e.g., Bill Rebiger, *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim: Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar = Buch vom magischen Gebrauch der Psalmen*, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 137 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), or (with examples from Coptic magic) Pierre Manoury (Le Gwen), *La magie des 151 Psaumes de David: Pratiques opératives de théurgie chrétienne* (Clamecy: Éditions Bussière, 2014). It can be compared to the use of qur'ānic verses in Islamic magic; see Constant Hamès (ed.), *Coran et talismans: Textes et pratiques magiques en milieu Musulman* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2009).

41   A comparison of this list with the older and shorter one given by Johann Hartlieb (1410–1468), *Das Buch aller verbotenen Künste* (1456), can be found in Will-Erich Peuckert, *Pansophie: Ein Versuch zur Geschichte der weißen und schwarzen Magie*, vol. 1 of *Pansophie*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Schmidt, 1956), 46–57. The Latin text of Trithemius is also easily available in Paola Zambelli, *White Magic, Black Magic in the European Renaissance: From Ficino, Pico, Della Porta to Trithemius, Agrippa, Bruno* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 101–114. A critical edition is being prepared by Carlos Gilly. The publication history is a bit more complicated than can be detailed here, as I learned from Michael Siefener.

42   On him, see Emil J. Steffenhagen, "Arpe, Peter Friedrich," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1875), 608–609.

43   Peter Friedrich Arpe (Arpius), *Geschichte der Talismannischen Kunst von Ihrem Ursprunge, Fortgange und Verbreitung: Ein Beitrag zu den geheimen und höhern Kenntnissen der Menschen* (Germanien [Gotha]: Ettinger, 1792), 65; Peter Friedrich Arpe (Arpius), *De prodigiosis naturae et artis operibus talismanes et amuleta dictis liber* (Hamburg: Liebezeit, 1717), 53.

44   Arpe (Arpius), *De prodigiosis naturae*, 53–72.

imagined as something deeply rooted in biblical and also Jewish tradition, though connected to other wisdom traditions as well. He clearly sees many of these titles as spurious, and he even knows about Muslim Solomonic books. Also "Mahmoud" is an alleged author of such items, which he enumerates. [45] Arpe's erudite book deserves a detailed study, which we cannot give here. We mention it simply as an early eighteenth-century example that discusses *Sepher Raziel* and tells its legitimizing story, mentioning many pseudo-Solomonic items: giving a clearly Jewish flavor to the Western tradition of learned magic as a whole.

Eisenmenger (about whom we will speak below), infamous as the most erudite antisemitic author of Baroque Germany, used *Sefer Razi'el* in a manuscript given to him as a loan by a certain Rabbi Veis Gelhäußer (Frankfurt, later Wetzlar), as detailed in the unpaginated rather substantial list of Hebrew books preceding the main text of his work. He of course speaks extensively about Jewish magic, which he sees as a major characteristic feature of Judaism and which he fiercely attacks. [46] A *Liber Raziel* is part of the Leipzig corpus, where Solomon is still the most often quoted authority for magical books. In our magical literature, fictional author statements are still the rule, and full-sounding names such as King Solomon were preferred. There is some fluidity in such attributions: Cod. mag. 2 is a German abridged version of *Clavicula Salomonis*, which is attributed to Albertus Magnus, however. Cod. mag. 19 is another Latin version of the same text, which now claims to be written by a certain Rehencatricus, an alleged Indian disciple of Apollonius of Tyana (who was well known as a traveler to India and conversant with Brahmanic gymnosophists). Solomon is still the most frequently mentioned author name of magical texts par excellence (referred to fifteen times in the Leipzig codices). [47] We might be reminded of the strange fact that in Romanian a special term for evil sorcerers who have sold their soul to the devil is *solomonar*, the "Solomons." [48]

Paracelsus (three texts), Trithemius (also three texts), Moses, and Hermes Trismegistus, even Jesus and David, are also attributed texts in the Leipzig corpus. All these attribu-

---

45 Arpe (Arpius), *De prodigiosis naturae*, 106 (pp. 109, 174 of the German version).

46 See, e.g., Johann Andreas Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: n.p., 1700; repr. Königsberg [Berlin]: n.p., 1711) 1:150–151, 436, 438–440; 2:439; and many other passages. Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum*, 2:90–189, is a long collection of curses against Christians allegedly used in Jewish piety. For a criticism, see Ruth Langer, *Cursing the Christians? A History of the Birkat HaMinim* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), which only discusses a part of the evidence.

47 Matthias Hoffmann has collected a large database of references to Solomonic magic from late antiquity on, as he has done for other figures in magic. This is available at https://www.academia.edu/35211546/From_Exorcist_to_Esoteric_Expert_Solomon_in_Magical_Literature_from_Early_Judaism_to_Magic_Grimoires_SBL_2017_Mysticism_Esotericism_and_Gnosticism_in_Antiquity_Short_version_of_the_Handout_get_in_touch_for_a_longer_more_elaborate_version.

48 Andrei Oişteanu, *Konstruktionen des Judenbildes: Rumänische und ostmitteleuropäische Stereotypen des Antisemitismus*, Forum: Rumänien 6 (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2010), 426; see also pp. 367, 593, 626. This whole book is of much interest for the folklore survival of the ideas discussed in this paper. On interest in Solomon in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theology, see Juan de Pineda, *Ad suos in Salomonem commentarios Salomon praeuius, id est, de rebus Salomonis regis libri octo* (Moguntiae: Hierat), 1613; Pineda (ca. 1500–1567) worked as a Protestant minister in a number of countries, though of Spanish ancestry.

tions are fictitious; but there are a few texts with authentic author names as well, such as Abraham von Franckenberg, who as it happens had also been the biographer of Jacob Böhme, thus illustrating the affinity between magic and mysticism. (It is often stated that the oldest author to write a grimoire using his own name may have been Antonio de Montolmo, *De occultis et manifestis*, late 14th cent.) Dr. Faustus is mentioned as an author in eight of the collection's writings: he was well known as an infamous magician from the sixteenth century. In 1587, the *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* was published, a kind of Protestant magic novel with vivid descriptions of scenes of incantation. Many names of important magicians are derived from antiquity: Zoroaster, Apollonius of Tyana, Hermes Trismegistus, Pithys, Ostanes. However, in our Leipzig codices no magic texts directly derived from antiquity are handed down, apart from a few short magic formulas such as the Roman shrinkage spell Abracadabra (in Cod. mag. 42) and the Sator Arepo square (Cod. mag. 120). There are even texts which elevate the magician to God and to a certain extent want to transform him into a deity himself (Codd. mag. 69 and 70). That sounds as if it is far away from Christian ideas, but the "theosis," the transformation of man into a mirror of the deity, is also possible in Christian mysticism as a "paradoxical" ideal.[49]

The second largest structural element of these traditions (after the clearly Christian ones) in these texts is the Jewish one, however. But interest in Judaism in highly selective: angel name and names of God, a mystification of the Tetragrammaton, the Sefirot. These are present in many texts. In this sense, Codd. mag. 17 and 21, for example, are quite kabbalistic texts. Magic in Baroque Germany is a most intense field of interaction with Judaism. But it is only in limited contact with Jewish people, as we will see.[50]

Of course serious study of Judaism emerged to some degree, and may have been a background of some texts. A famous example of the philosemitic discourse is Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala denudata* ("Kabbalah Unveiled," 1677–1678) with its partial translations of fundamental texts of the Zohar. Judaism is for the Christian author a source of mystical wisdom, with clear references to magic. Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636–1689) became well known as a translator, annotator, and editor of kabbalistic texts: his two volumes in three parts virtually alone represented authentic—that is, Jewish—Kabbalah available to Christian Baroque scholars. His magnum opus also contained translations of texts by Moses Cordovero, Abraham Cohen de Herrera, and Ḥayyim Vital and commentaries by Knorr von Rosenroth himself and by Henry More; some later editions include a summary of Christian Kabbalah (*Adumbratio Kabbalæ Christianæ*) by Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont. This all gained widespread attention, though not necessarily with the same attitude to Judaism. In the Leipzig collection, Knorr von Rosenroth is represented by Cod. mag. 31 with a mystical poem ("Hecatombe oder Hundert Lob-

---

49 See, e.g., Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

50 See similar considerations on the Greco-Egyptian magic of the Greek Magical Papyri: Gideon Bohak, "Hebrew, Hebrew Everywhere?" in *Prayer, Magic and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*, ed. Scott B. Noegel, Joel Thomas Walker, and Brannon M. Wheeler (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 69–82.

Sprüche") and a commentary on the text.[51] It was the same Knorr von Rosenroth who translated Giambattista della Porta's *Magia naturalis* into German (*Haus-, Kunst- und Wunderbuch [...]*, Nuremberg, 1680): precisely such contexts are instructive. He is clearly the most obvious example of a philosemitic interest in magic, mysticism, and esoteric explanations of man and God.

Another very well-known example of a philosemitic attitude not far from Leipzig would be Johann Heinrich Callenberg (1694–1760), who founded the Halle Institutum Judaicum et Muhammedicum in 1728, which for a long time strictly avoided missionary work, did not baptize, and had a program to help poor and little-educated Jewish people to gain a better understanding of their own traditions, learn Hebrew, and read the Talmud. Callenberg was convinced, however, that exactly this fact of his clients taking their own traditions seriously would, in the long run, make them interested in Christianity. This idea of conversion is of some interest as it was not expressed as leaving one's tradition but as taking it more seriously.[52] I will not elaborate on this but just mention this early eighteenth-century project as a specimen of a complex scenario of interaction in this very region of Germany, only a few miles from Leipzig.[53] Or we might mention Johann Christoph Wagenseil (1633–1705), a part of whose famous library of Jewish books is kept in Leipzig as well (the other part is in Erlangen). He of course was also interested in Jewish magic, as need not be detailed here. Even half a century later interest in magic still pops up in the most unexpected places, despite witchcraft trials being long past: in 1752, a Heinrich August Gelder wrote a booklet on the use of magic in military campaigns (*De bello per magicas artes iuste gesto*), and the spirit invocations of Johann Georg Schröpfer (using a *lanterna magica*) twenty years later became the talk of the day in Leipzig, and the subject of a large book by the Enlightenment theologian Johann Salomo Semler.[54]

The entanglement between Jewish and Christian magic remained quite complex, and was not only one-way. It should not be overlooked that many Christian magical texts were translated into Hebrew and other languages used mostly by Jews. The medieval Hebrew pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum* (ed. M. Gaster, 1907) or the much later Hebrew *Clavicula Solomonis* (*Sepher Maphteaḥ Shelomoh*, ed. H. Gollancz, 1914, reprinted in 2008), or of course the eighteenth-century Hebrew *Book of Abramelin* (translation of a piece of fantasy Judaism from around 1600; see below) are well-known examples. The impact was never only in one direction. The metaphysics of language prevalent in magical texts intrigued both Jews and Christians, even if they were not given to practice magic.

---

51   Edited in Rosmarie Zeller, "Eine kabbalistische Ausdeutung der 'Hecatombe oder Hundert Lob-Sprüche' von Christian Knorr von Rosenroth," *Morgen-Glantz* 23 (2013): 329–354.

52   On general ideas on converting Jews at the time, though concentrating on another part of Germany, see Christopher Clark, *The Politics of Conversion: Missionary Protestantism and the Jews in Prussia 1728–1941* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

53   See Justus I. Beyer, *Fortgesetzte Nachricht von der zum Heil der Juden errichteten Anstalt nebst den Auszügen aus den Tagebüchern der reisenden Mitarbeiter*, 12 vols. (Halle, 1777–1788); Johann H. Callenberg, *Bericht an einige christliche Freunde von einem Versuch, das arme jüdische Volck zur Er-känntniss und Annehmung der christlichen Wahrheit anzuleiten* (Halle: Krottendorff, 1730).

54   The story is told in some detail in my catalogue *Zauberbücher*.

Philosemitism can also interact with self-portrayals or, shall we say, self-stagings by Jewish scholars strictly rejecting any existence of magic, invocations, theurgy, and divination in Judaism. A famous example of such an apologetic outlook, slightly older than the Baroque texts quoted, is Leone da Modena's *Historia dei riti ebraici ed observanza degli Hebrei di questi tempi* (first complete printing in Venice, 1638), which in a number of languages became an important source for Christian ideas about Jewish ritual during the next hundred years.[55] But in many cases it is just magic that lent Judaism its fascination. We must on the other side not overlook this wider philosemitic trajectory when we want to understand the space that Jewish magic takes in the Leipzig collection. It is to some degree connected to a wider interest quite distant from magic, but taking place in the same urban cultural world, and perhaps even the same cultivated clientele. A well-known example will illustrate this. In 1749, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, still a student in Leipzig, wrote the first German theater play to bring to the stage an exclusively positive Jewish character. His small comedy *Die Juden: Ein Lustspiel in einem Aufzuge* (published in 1754, but only performed in 1766) tells the story of a brave Jewish citizen who rescues a feudal lord (a baron) from highwaymen. But he is not recognized as a Jew, and the later conversation in the castle, celebrating his heroism, brings out all the anti-Jewish clichés of the court, till among some general turmoil it becomes known that the hero is in fact a Jew himself. This is a small one-act play that makes fun of anti-Jewish ideas, but it is still only a first step toward Lessing's more famous *Nathan der Weise* of 1779. The precarious situation of the Jewish population in a number of passages becomes evident, and gives to the hilarity of the play a rather serious background note (one of the actual villains wants to murder all Jews).[56] The image of "der edle Jude" in a novel by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (*Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G*****, from 1747) is another early example of such a reversal of views about Jews in German enlightenment literature. Positive images of Judaism between Baroque and enlightenment include both occult and mainstream literature, but they are only one side of what we have to face.

5   The Antisemitic Discourse and the Social and Legal Status of Jews in Eighteenth-Century Saxony

In radical contrast to the attitude discussed in the previous section stands the antisemitic discourse, the history of which has for obvious reasons been rather well researched. This does not necessarily mean complete ignorance about Judaism. One major example might suffice to indicate this. Johann Andreas Eisenmenger's *Entdecktes Judenthum* (1700), which collected with immense erudition everything that could be used critically against Judaism, was perhaps written exactly during those years when the Leipzig magician was collecting his Hebrew spells and mystical formulas. Being a professor of Hebrew at

---

55 On the rather strange textual history of the chapter on magic in Modena, see the translation by Rafael Arnold in Leon Modena, *Jüdische Riten, Sitten und Gebräuche*, ed. Rafael Arnold (Wiesbaden: Marix, 2007), 176–177.

56 See the extensive discussion in Klaus L. Berghahn, *Grenzen der Toleranz: Juden und Christen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, 2nd ed. (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001), 69–82.

Heidelberg University for many years, Eisenmenger had much direct contact with Jewish scholars, and used at least 200 Jewish books. A central subject of his approach is Jewish magic, for which he gives many examples. The work became one of the main sources of antisemitism, but its place in the history on stereotypes about Jewish magic is not yet fully researched. Eisenmenger's translations are tendentious, but his texts are usually quoted without major distortions. (He also edited a version of the Hebrew Bible.) The first part of his magnum opus has a list of Hebrew books that he used; and the text makes it clear he had actually read them. He is particularly interested in curses, demonology, superstitions, passages critical of Christianity, and things like that, but he also provides space for all practices of magic, and indeed was particularly interested in this aspect. Eisenmenger's book is extremely erudite, but full of hate and antisemitic ideology to an almost pathological degree. We can reasonably ask why a man so violently antisemitic took such extreme trouble to learn Hebrew and Aramaic, also Arabic, seriously, and why he read many hundreds of Jewish books and spent all his life collecting data on Judaism. Can we deconstruct his approach? Is such an endeavor worth the trouble? On actually reading his 2000-page book (which very few scholars seem to have done), one may wonder at its strange mix of fact, fiction, sound knowledge, and ideologic distortion. It is the most extreme case of erudite antisemitism in Baroque Germany, and Jewish magic is a major subject in it. I have a feeling, but cannot prove, that Eisenmenger in his offensives against Judaism may also have had in mind certain types of Christianity that he could not openly attack (similar to what has been argued for the New Testament Gospel of Matthew, that the Pharisees are not just a reference to the Jewish group, but in fact a kind of cipher or code for a particular form of Christian piety that the author rejects). Eisenmenger however, never criticized the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible. This distinguishes him from Enlightenment philosophy in a narrower sense, which quite often attacked the Hebrew scriptures and Old Testament piety directly, culminating in Friedrich Daniel Schleiermacher's infamous dictum that Judaism is in fact a dead religion, a system no longer alive (see the fifth speech in *Über die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*, 1799).

These literary images interact with the social and cultural situation of Jews in Saxony and Prussia, which we need to consider. The basic ambivalence so obvious in our sources comes at a time when the statutory situation of Jewish people in the territories and states of Germany had become a subject of both legal and philosophical discussion. Tolerance was just being discovered as something that might include the Jewish population as well. But the old theological stereotypes of Christian antisemitism not just still existed, but began being transformed into the nationalist stereotypes of the nineteenth century, though these had not yet taken on the pseudoscientific attitude of later antisemitism. State ordinances on the Jewish population in Prussia were published in 1730 and 1750, but Prussian tolerance extended only to a rather limited degree to Jews.[57] Explicitly, further immigration of Jews into Prussia and other German states should be prevented.[58] In Saxony, the

---

57 Berghahn, *Grenzen der Toleranz*, 25.
58 On the situation in Saxony, see more generally Alphonse Levy, *Geschichte der Juden in Sachsen bis 1900* (Berlin: Calvary, 1900).

situation of Jews had much deteriorated since the Middle Ages. During the sixteenth century, expulsions of Jews were strictly enforced, for example in Meissen, Torgau, Plauen, and other cities. In Leipzig, the situation was more complicated due to the Leipzig fair, which attracted many Jewish traders and moneylenders that could not be excluded from it. But these were generally not allowed to settle permanently in the city. In Dresden from 1723 on, some thirty or forty Jews attached to the court Jew were allowed to live there permanently, and in Leipzig in 1710 a very small Jewish community was founded by Gerd Levi, court purveyor to the mint.[59] But these were special cases, and during the time in which we are primarily interested, Leipzig did not have a regular population of Jewish inhabitants.[60] This seems to have been acceptable to most citizens. As Saxony had become in the eighteenth century a territory with a marked urban character with a rapid increase in technology, the mining industry, and manufacturing,[61] this was a backward trait of some significance. In 1733, Frederick Augustus II, the successor of Augustus the Strong, abolished the Leibzoll, a tax on Jews passing through Saxony,[62] but in 1772, Frederick Augustus III (who later as Frederick Augustus I became the first King of Saxony) still promulgated a quite restrictive *Judenordnung* (regulation concerning Jews), and the situation improved only slowly during the first half of the nineteenth century. Only after 1834 did Jews have free choice of residence in Saxony, and only from 1846 were they allowed to have a formal congregation in Leipzig (though private synagogues had been in use at least since the mid-eighteenth century), much later than in most other territories of Germany.

In 1707, the Geheimrat (privy councillor) of Leipzig boasted that no Jews had lived in Leipzig for almost 200 years.[63] Even those Jews who came for the fair were mostly forbidden from holding Jewish services or celebrating Sukkot, which often fell during the autumn fair. But their impact on the fairs themselves was considerable, and fortunately we have exact numbers of Jewish traders taking part in these. From 1675 (when accurate lists of names start) up to 1764, across all three-yearly fairs there were a total of 81937 Jewish participants.[64] This is a very considerable number, and it means that Jewish culture and probably also Jewish books may have been easily available to those Leipzig citizens who were seriously interested.

---

59 Reuven Michael and Larissa Daemmig, "Saxony," *EncJud* 18:87–88, and in more detail Adolf Diamant, *Chronik der Juden in Leipzig: Aufstieg, Vernichtung und Neuanfang* (Chemnitz: Verlag Heimatland Sachsen, 1993).

60 See Diamant, *Chronik der Juden*, 17–19.

61 See, from a Marxist point of view, Karl Czok, "Zum Prozess der bürgerlichen Umwälzungen in Sachsen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert," in *Wissenschafts- und Universitätsgeschichte in Sachsen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Karl Czok, ASAW Philologisch-historische Klasse 71, part 3 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1987), 12–13.

62 This in former times had been a quite considerable amount of money; for details, see Diamant, *Chronik der Juden*, 36.

63 The text is quoted in Diamant, *Chronik der Juden*, 18.

64 See Max Freudenthal, *Leipziger Messgäste: Die jüdischen Besucher der Leipziger Messen in den Jahren 1675–1764* (Frankfurt am Main: Kauffmann, 1928).

Philosemitic scholarship and theology unfortunately had no effect on the official status of Jewish people, and it also did not destroy the clichés of antisemitic prejudices. On the other hand, it had a marked influence on the reception of kabbalistic ideas in Christian contexts. Magic fits in completely into this overall picture, as we shall see, and indeed makes some aspects of cultural entanglement much more clearly visible than is done by other facets of this contact. It is quite difficult to say to what degree such different systems of sacred knowledge as Lutheran orthodoxy, pietism, proto-Enlightenment, and esoteric Christianity with strong Jewish elements may have been seen as somehow competing. The magic texts themselves clearly are designed to be acceptable in mainstream society, and never polemize against any religious system. In fact, they rather try to "fit in."

Indeed, we might mention an interesting case of direct contact between Jewish magic and the Dresden court, the story of the Reichsgräfin Rochlitz, the mistress of Kurfürst (Elector) Johann Georg IV of Saxony. This is quite illuminating for the milieu of the Saxon upper class and its interest in magic. Intrigues "magically saturated" are associated with the names of the Reichsgräfin Rochlitz (Magdalena Sibylla von Neitschütz, 1675–1694). After her death—from smallpox, as it seemed—and the similar death of her lover, Johann Georg IV, a few days later, there came about an explosion of suspicions of sorcery. Perhaps both were poisoned with Aqua Tofana, the popular poison that Liselotte von der Pfalz mockingly called "poudre de succession." On the exhumed corpses all kinds of magical utensils were found, such as amulets and a bracelet braided from the prince's hair, and a long investigation followed during which astonishing things came to light,[65] a network of love sorceries, envy, intrigues, and suspicions. The accusation was directed less against "real" witchcraft, in which many people no longer believed, but against "attempted" witchcraft. What is striking in today's reading is the ease with which magical practices coexist in the Saxon upper class with enlightened skepticism and a a very strong critique of the churches' superstitions. The belief in magic had long since been "broken": it existed under the surface, so to speak. When it came to witchcraft charges against a fortune teller and charges of the use of love magic against a saleswoman, as well as charges against a Dresden executioner who earned a little money with small spells, and others against other similar persons, it was difficult to find lawyers at all for the indictment, since accusations of magic seemed hardly credible to them any more. (Although two people died as a result of the torture that was still used, the convictions themselves were rather harmless: the most severe punishment was expulsion from Saxony.) The events are well known through files, and have no fantastic elements about them (most magic attempts did not work anyway). A magic book owned by a French language teacher is mentioned, as (and now comes my point) is a Frankfurt Jew who made a living selling magic amulets and even a *spiritus familiaris* in a bottle "for heavy money" (as it is called)—one of the magic spells cost 300 taler, an immense sum, about the equivalent today of a large car or

---

65 Johann F. Klotzsch, *Die Liebeszaubereien der Gräfin Rochlitz, Maitresse Kurfürst Johann Georgs IV. von Sachsen*: *Hrg. von Johannes Jühling* (Stuttgart: Lutz, 1914); Hans-Joachim Böttcher, *Johann Georg IV. von Sachsen & Magdalena Sibylla von Neitschütz: Eine tödliche Liaison* (Dresden: Dresdner Buchverlag, 2014).

even a little more. Amulets with menstrual blood (an important ritual substance in magic, and not unknown in Jewish magic), luck spells, and the like were allegedly common with "all ladies at the Dresden court." Examples of rituals to bind spirits in bottles are in fact quite abundant in the magical books of the time, and one example was on display at the Leipzig exhibition. Jewish magic is here part of larger Christian discourses in the sphere of belief, make-believe, skepticism, and business.

6   Philosemitic and Antisemitic Discourses: Two Sides of the Same Coin?

In fact, these two discourses, the philosemitic and the antisemitic, seemingly contradictory, are connected, subversively, at a very basic, hidden level. Judaism in both cases is the "other." Antisemitism and philosemitism are not so completely separate as it might seem at first glance. What they have in common is the idea that Jewish people have to be something particular and special: they have to be sages, vehicles of wisdom in philosemitism or evil scoundrels in antisemitism (neither of which, of course, is an image of real Judaism). In neither case are they allowed to be just normal people, Jewish people. Philosemitism and antisemitism are each other's shadow: they are deeply entangled, as has been shown again and again in other contexts as well. The necessity of being partial, of being on the "right side," has to some degree prevented seeing these connections more clearly. Magic underlines this ambivalence, and demonstrates how its dynamics work in late Baroque Germany. In fact both discourses relate to the old motif of the Jew as a sorcerer, perhaps with higher wisdom, but also perhaps as an expert in dangerous sorcerous arts.

To make this clearer, some further general remarks on the presence of Jews in Saxony—an electorate and later a kingdom—at the time of the Leipzig collection might be welcome, adding to what we already have said. Saxony did have rather strict restrictions, and though a number of Jews were connected to the court at Dresden, only very few Jews were allowed permanent residence in Dresden, and even fewer in Leipzig. In the Middle Ages the situation had been much better, Jews even living in the countryside and being landowners, and also having their own "Judenburg" near the city, but they were forced to leave in 1540. We have already mentioned the later restrictions and the Leibzoll on traveling Jews. The prime minister of Frederick Augustus II, Heinrich von Brühl, was quite partial to Jewish activity and helped Jews become a part of the economic life of the city, but their social and legal status changed only very slowly. However, this does not mean that Jewish people were not present. We have mentioned the Leipzig book fair, next to the Frankfurt book fair the most important event for the book trade in Europe, and many hundreds, and in some cases perhaps even a thousand, Jews took part, as we have seen. They were not only traders in books but also in the animal fur trade. So it might not have been too difficult to get access to Jewish magical texts, and perhaps also to well-educated Jewish scholars willing to help Christians with Hebrew texts. In 1714 the Theologische Fakultät Leipzig issued an expert opinion (*Gutachten*) against the old blood libel, the antisemitic ritual murder legend.[66] There had been very few clear statements against this old lie by this time, and it is remarkable the Lutheran faculty at Leipzig became, not perhaps a

---

66   Arno Herzig, "Das Gutachten der Leipziger Theologischen Fakultät von 1714 gegen die jahrhunderte-

pioneer, but at least an early exponent of such criticism. If we look at the Leipzig magical texts themselves, there seem to be no cases of stronger antisemitic attitudes—as there are 140 handwritten books, not yet edited, I cannot state this too confidently, but this is my impression.

Taking this all together, there is a certain Janus nature in the way Judaism was thought about. Antisemitism and philosemitism interact in odd ways, and make use of similar motifs. There is a particular aspect both discourses have in common, which we now will try to face, once again with all due brevity. We find what I call "fantasy Judaism": using Jewish names and terms as backfill pieces, easily interchangeable, and perhaps often chosen simply for the purpose of mystification.

7   Fantasy Judaism: The Two Sides of the Coin

A well-known and very obvious example of the line of tradition where veneration for Jewish wisdom borders on fantasy in magic is the *Buch der wahren Praktik von der alten Magie*, allegedly by a certain Abraham of Worms, a Jewish sage in search of magical wisdom, traveling through many countries and finally writing a comprehensive handbook of late Renaissance magic, describing an initiation ritual that lasts eighteen months and that, among other purposes, obtains a "companion," a familiar, for the magician. In an abridged English translation of 1898, the *Book of Abramelin* (its usual title in English) has become a basic text of modern ceremonial magic, and it can be encountered everywhere in numerous magical orders in the USA and the UK. Recently rereading this text, it struck me that its kind of narrative imagination is much comparable to early Rosicrucian tracts, and I now believe it to have been written in the late sixteenth century or even a bit later. This view is also held by the recent editor of the first critical edition, Rick-Arne Kollatsch, though we do not have a clear proof for this dating. A Wolfenbüttel manuscript used by Kollatsch claims to be from 1608, which would be the latest possible dating. This complex text in its first book is a kind of pseudo-Jewish bildungsroman, a novel of education and enlightenment focusing on magic. A very fine copy is Cod. mag. 15 of the Leipzig collection. It is the longest text in the Leipzig collection, and explicitly states (an interesting suggestion) that it aims to be useful for Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. Abramelin himself is a sorcerer and ascetic from Upper Egypt who becomes Abraham's teacher.

The book was soon translated into various languages (even an Aramaic version extant in Oxford is only a translation from German). Its combination of realistic travelogue, deep religious quest for wisdom, mysticism, magic, and magical practice has always fascinated, and led to a large number of manuscripts and prints.[67] The book is also of great interest from a folkloristic point of view; but it clearly was not written by a Jew. The first printed edition (1725) was entitled *Des Juden Abraham von Worms Buch der wahren Praktik in der*

---

alte Blutschuldlüge," in *Judaica Lipsiensia: Zur Geschichte der Juden in Leipzig*, ed. Manfred Unger (Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 1994), 28–34.

67   See the edition by Rick-Arne Kollatsch, *Des Abrahams von Worms Buch der wahren Praktik von der alten Magie* (Hamburg: tredition, 2020) and also the new English version by Georg Dehn, *The Book of Abramelin: A New Translation*, 2nd ed. (Lake Worth, FL: Ibis, 2015).

uralten göttlichen Magie und in erstaunlichen Dingen, wie sie durch die heilige Kabbala und durch Elohym mitgetheilt worden sammt der Geister- und Wunder-Herrschaft, welche Moses in der Wüste aus dem feurigen Busch erlernet, alle Verborgenheit der Kabbala umfassend. And indeed Abramelin, and also Abraham of Worms, can be seen as a kind of esoteric or spiritual ancestor of Nathan der Weise, the most friendly imagined Jewish figure of German Enlightenment literature. Some general knowledge of Judaism is included, but Abramelin teaches magic as an almost interreligious affair, something accessible to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. His Judaism exhibits nothing that would not have been known to an educated Christian.

For a less weighty and somewhat later example of the same attitude, we introduce here an Austrian illuminated manuscript of magic by a Catholic Christian magician (he explicitly says so). This is Wellcome Library MS 1766, sold by a very well-known Viennese antiquarian bookseller (V. A. Heck) to the Wellcome Library in 1928. It bears the title *Compendium rarissimum totius artis magicae sistematisatae per celeberrimos artis hujus magistros, anno 1057: Noli me tangere*, and is a quite beautiful fifty-page manuscript with twenty-five watercolor illustrations (ten of which are ink wash with watercolor highlights), a unique example of highly "magical art." But the rather short text (despite the pompous title) deserves attention, combining some clearly black magic with sigillary body art, descriptions of invocations, necromantic manipulation of corpses (which takes place at gallows and churchyards), and an extensive use of psychedelic drugs (not unknown in magic, but almost never so elaborated). The manuscript (in Latin and partly in German) was formerly dated to around 1760, but seems to be a bit more recent (ca. 1795 according to the editors of a fine modern facsimile edition, Hereward Tilton and Merlin Cox). Making use mainly of printed sources ranging from the *Book of Abramelin*, Agrippa of Nettesheim, *Arbatel*, and *Ars notoria* to Trithemius's *Liber octo quaestionum*,[68] it is a sophisticated specimen of magic bordering on, we might say, early fantasy literature, particularly in its quite exceptional artwork. Its image of Judaism (in a work explicitly rooted in Catholic Christianity) is of quite some interest in our context:

> Von der Schwarzen-Magia, in Genere[:] Dieße Wissenschaft hat ihren Uhrsprung von Hebreern, Aegiptieren, und anderen Orientalischen Völckern. Sie bestehet in der Kunst, durch Caracters, Bilder, und Beschwörungen, die bößen Geister zum Erscheinen zu zwingen, und sich ihrer zu bedienen. Durch Tradition der Juden behauptet man, das als Adam gesehen, daß sein Sohn Kain den Bruder Abel tödtete, er aus fürcht lauter so ruchloße Kinder zu zeigen, sich einige Monathe von den Beischlaffe mit der Evan enthalten, und selbst den eigenen Samen vergossen hätte, aus welchen die Schedims oder bößen Geister entstanden sind. Liles. Machlas. Naimo. Asa, Veso, Chuz, sind die vornehmsten dießen Gattung, welche die Zauberer am gewöhnlichsten zu beschwören pflegen. (fol. 32v)

---

68 These are all contained in the 1630 Zetzner edition of Agrippa's works, as it happens. The author strangely also recommends Wierus—Johann Weyer—and of course the *Clavicula Salomonis*, of which any adept must try to get a copy ("oder wenigstens die Haupt-Sachen davon in Compendio," fol. 32v).

These names are all known from the Zohar (Liles < Lilit, Zohar 1:55a; Machlas < Maḥlat, Zohar 1:55a; Naimo < Naʿamah, Zohar 1:19b, 55a; Asa < ʿUzza, Zohar 1:19b, 25ab). This in itself is quite remarkable. The legend on the origin of the *shedim* as such is obviously derived from Ashkenazi sources (Liles < Lilit), and in fact is probably from the Zohar (1:54b) though known also in earlier compilations (*Tanḥuma Buber Bereshit* 26; *Midrash ha-Gadol* on Gen 5:3; cf. the slightly different *Bereshit Rabbah* 20:11, bEr 18b, and also Zohar 1:19b, 34b, 54a, 55a; 2:231b, 3:76b).[69] Like the earlier, medieval author of the Zohar, our German author was quite fascinated by the legend: he repeats it twice in his rather small book (also on fol. 40v). Solomon is the arch-magician, and he wished his Chaldaean, Hebrew, and Arabic (!) prayers and spells not to be translated, as other languages could not express their full force. Of the Solomonic book *Ars Almadel*, the author has the highest possible opinion, also mentioning the "geheimsten Lehren des Sophars und Ostanes" (fol. 45r)—Ostanes being a Persian magician known from antiquity, similar to Zoroaster. Jewish magic is here magic par excellence, and also the pinnacle of "oriental" sorcery. It seems quite clear, however, that the author, a Catholic Christian, has his knowledge mainly, if not exclusively, from books. We do not see any particular information on details of Jewish ritual or other traditions. The story quoted is rather an isolated piece. Judaism is here a fantasy background connected to other magical traditions, fantastic as well. It conjures up a background of occultism and mysticism, practical magic where Judaism is a label of respect: but it is never in much contact with Jewish realities, though it does have access to some specific legends.

More popular forms of appreciation of an alleged Jewish magical wisdom exist as well. The Saxonian Lutheran pastor Enoch Zobel in his famous account of poltergeist activity in his family home in 1691 (the most famous such story at the time) gives a list of possible resources against demons, witches, and the devil, but he notes that in such cases people stress the importance of Jewish apotropaic magical implements.[70] These are seen by him as superstition: but it is self-evident for the Lutheran author, living in St. Annaberg, that Christians might use such Jewish ritual means against demons, with it being an obvious idea for them.

It is in fact a tradition going back to the ancient church to problematize Jewish ritual means as used by Christians: the Spanish *Canones concilii Eliberitani*—the oldest extant church canons, from around 306 CE—already explicitly forbade Christian peasants to ask Jewish neighbors for magical blessings of their crops (can. Eliberat. 49, 4, 257–258 [ed. Rodríguez and Martínez Díez]). This must have been common, allowing Jews to earn some money from their alleged affinity to magic powers. The practice is well documented but must not be overrated: even more common is an imitation of Jewish magic in Christian magic manuscripts. As a working hypothesis (that we cannot elaborate on here)

---

69 Hereward Tilton and Merlin Cox, eds., *Touch Me Not: A Most Rare Compendium of the Whole Magical Art*, 2nd ed. (Lopen, Somerset: Fulgur Press, 2019), 141, n. on fol. 32v; Daniel Chanan Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, vol. 1 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 306–307.

70 Enoch Zobel, *Historische und theologische Vorstellung des ebentheüerlichen Gespenstes [...]* (Leipzig: Lanckisch, 1692), 123.

I would venture to say such practice at the time of interest, the early eighteenth century, depends more on "Christian Kabbalah" than on genuine Jewish tradition, and it is rather a stereotype in the Leipzig magical corpus.

Let me give an even more striking case of what we will call fantasy Judaism from a published book. In 1738 a *Clavis artis des berühmten Juden und Rabbi Zoroasters, wie solcher 1996 von Anfange der Welt in arabischer Sprache aufgesetzt, 1236 nach Christi Geburth ins Teutsche übersetzt von J.V.S.F.R.O. und in einer Uhralten Bibliothec gefunden worden* was published in Jena. The author is not given ("durch Einen Liebhaber der Spagyrischen Raritäten"), though it has been suspected that it might have been written by "Abraham Eleazar," who was quite well known in alchemical circles (legends connect him to Nicolas Flamel) and was the alleged author of *R. Abrahami Eleazaris Uraltes Chymisches Werk*, an alchemical treatise published in 1735 by Augustinus Crusius in Erfurt and later (much enlarged) by Lankischens Buchhandlung in Leipzig in 1760. The real author of this once again spurious title seems to have been Julius Gervasius of Schwarzburg: he is said to have been the editor on the title page of the first part of the book. The two parts of this book have the same pompous style of title (which I will here quote only in abridged form and from the second edition):

> R. Abrahami Eleazaris Uraltes Chymisches Werk, welches ehedessen von dem Autore theils in Lateinischer und Arabischer, theils auch in Chaldäischer und Syrischer Sprache geschrieben, nachmals von einem Anonymo in unsere deutsche Muttersprache übersetzt […]

and

> Donum Dei Samuelis Baruch, Des Juden Rabbi, Astrologi und Philosophi, gebohren aus dem Stamm Abrahams, Isaacs, Jacobs und Judä, welcher erlernet das goße Geheimniß des Meisters Tubalkains aus dessen Tabell, gefunden von Abrahamo Eleazare, dem Juden.

The alleged "Jewishness" of the writer is very much stressed, and of course it is pure fiction. The real author may not even have known "Chaldäisch" and "Syrisch" are actually the same language, and is not very clear why Arabic is mentioned. The similarities between the two books are very obvious; for example, the image of the magus on the cover page is very similar to that of "Rabbi Zoroaster," as are other images in the two books. The idea that the two books have the same author was suggested by the Freemason Hermann Fichtuld or Fictuld (ca. 1700–ca. 1770), one of the early leaders of the Order of the Golden and Rosy Cross.[71] For our context it is another example of fantasy Judaism, in

---

71 The Freemason's name is a pseudonym, perhaps for Baron Johann Friedrich von Meinstorff, as was proposed as early as 1800. For some discussion and full bibliographical details of the two books under discussion here, see John Ferguson, *Bibliotheca Chemica: A Catalogue of the Alchemical, Chemical and Pharmaceutical Books in the Collection of the Late James Young of Kelly and Durris* (Edinburgh: James Maclehose and Sons, 1906; repr. with abridged title, London: Derek Verschoyle, 1954), 1:2–4, 2:570–571; Volker F. Brüning, *Bibliographie der alchemistischen Literatur* (Munich:

this case connected to esoteric and alchemical literature.[72] The year 1738, when the *Clavis artis* was published, is of course an anagram of 1378, the alleged birth date of Christian Rosencreutz, and "F.R.O." means *Frater Rosae(crucis) ordinis*. The book actually is not as strange as the title may suggest, and is mostly part of mainstream alchemy.

But most of all, it is fantasy Judaism once again: a book allegedly from an ancient library—although naturally no detail is provided of which library—and translated from the Arabic, but written by the famous "Rabbi Zoroaster." Now this might seem an extreme fantasy. We are reminded of the ideas in early Freemasonry about the temple of Solomon, which are equally fantastic.[73] In a similar vein, Cod. mag. 29 in the Leipzig collection is a book *Hermetis Hebraei Geheimnüsse von denen Stunden des Tages und der Nacht, vvie auch von denen magischen Bildern und Figuren so in denenselben zu machen und vvie damit zu operieren*. Hermes as a Hebrew talismanic magician? This is not "syncretism," as the traditions combined are to some degree fantasy products. They try to enforce their magic by piling up names and authorities. Zoroaster—Zarathustra—was a subject of much interest in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of course, as he already had been to some degree in the Renaissance. Thomas Hyde from Oxford University had written his famous *Veterum Persarum et Parthorum et Medorum religionis historia* (1700) in the late seventeenth century (he died in 1703). This work first gave a hint of the real historical Zarathustra. A second edition appeared in 1760, and in 1754 Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron began his famous trip to India in search of the original Zarathustra, and became the first translator of the Avesta and other Persian and Indian texts into European languages (and it severely disappointed European scholars that the Avesta did not contain the kind of mysticism they had hoped for, but mainly Parsi ritual). But these were serious studies, very different from the fantasy Zoroaster of our text, who comes mainly from Greek, Latin, and Renaissance sources.

Older examples of such approaches are to be found in Renaissance theology, where it tries to come to terms with Hermetic and pagan philosophy. Marsilio Ficino, when enumerating the "six theologians" in agreement with each other on the human soul, begins his list with Zoroaster, proceeding with Mercurius Trismegistus, Orpheus, Aglaophamus, Pythagoras, and Plato.[74] Zoroaster is also, of course, the Sarastro in Mozart's *Magic Flute* (Die Zauberflöte). But calling Zoroaster a Jewish rabbi? This is more than strange, and very far from the serious attempts to find something out about a real Zarathustra.[75]

Saur, 2004–2007), nos. 4206, 4844; see also nos. 5209(3), 6285; and on "Zoroaster" in alchemy, also nos. 0647(2)–0648(3), 1004(3), 1078(III), 1148(III), 1973(3), 2091.

72 See also Peter J. Forshaw, "Cabala Chymica or Chemica Cabalistica—Early Modern Alchemists and Cabala," *Ambix* 60.4 (2013): 361–389; Raphael Patai, *Jewish Alchemists: A History and Source Book* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 238–257 (Patai sees the Uraltes Chymisches Werk as an at least partly authentic Jewish book, in fact the most important of Jewish alchemy, however, of which I am not convinced).

73 Alex Horne, *King Solomon's Temple in the Masonic Tradition* (London: Aquarian Press, 1972).

74 Marsilio Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, vol. 6, *Books XVII–XVIII*, English transl. Michael J.B. Allen, Latin text ed. James Hankins (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 7.

75 On Zoroaster and alchemy, see Michael Stausberg, *Faszination Zarathushtra: Zoroaster und die euro-*

The book has many similar erratic statements, such as calling itself a new *maḥzor*, a prayer book for the festival days. Did the author even know what this was? As already noted, the work is mainly an alchemical tract, which is rather surprising after the fanciful comparison with a *maḥzor*. The author is not known, but claims that the German version is based on an Arabic original from the year 1236. This also is spurious: the text cannot go back to a time earlier than the seventeenth century. Zoroaster of course is generally regarded as the founder of magic,[76] but it has always been known that he was not a Jew. Three or even four cultures are combined in the book's title. This might be called a syncretistic approach, a sort of absolute focusing of the Renaissance ideas about a universal *philosophia prisca* or *philosophia perennis*, and this indeed is a typical element in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century occult systems of "magic" or "alchemy."[77] Taken together, this is all a tremendous increase in the process of transforming Judaism into a piece of occultist fantasy,[78] a process that still continued in the nineteenth-century occultism of Éliphas Lévi, Madame Blavatsky, and similar others.

The blending of Jewish, Christian, and other authorities is not just a German phenomenon, of course. The late eighteenth-century *Grimorium Verum* (notorious as one of the first truly black magic grimoires),[79] for example, begins its book 4: "Il commence le Sanctum Regnum, dit le Roi des Esprits, ou les Clavicules de Salomon, très-savant Négromantien, ou Rabin, Hébreux [...]" (ed. Peterson, 109). But it purports to be compiled by a certain Alibeck the Egyptian from Memphis: yet another example of an fantasy mixture of traditions (the oldest version seems to be the French or perhaps the Italian one; all printed versions are defective). Cod. mag. 4 in the Leipzig collection is titled *CLAVICULA del SALOMONE re' d' Ebrei spiegata dall' Ebreo in Volgare per Rabi Colorno per ordine di Sua A. S. il Duca di Mantovia in anno 1453*, being a quite lengthy (87-page) Italian version of the *Clavicula Salomonis* allegedly translated from Hebrew to Italian in the fifteenth century. Here the Jewish background is more explicitly detailed though we do not know how true the story might be.[80]

We will give one further example which involves a certain amount of imagined Judaism, though it is much nearer to Jewish realities; it is also not directly connected to

---

päische Religionsgeschichte der frühen Neuzeit, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 42 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998), 2:947–952.

76 Gabriel Naudaeus (Naudé) denied that Zoroaster was a magician, however; Gabriel Naudaeus (Naudé), *The History of Magick By Way of Apology for All the Wise Men Who Have Unjustly Been Reputed Magicians, from the Creation, to the Present Age* (n.p.: John Streater, 1657), 63–79.

77 See, e.g., Thomas Leinkauf, *Grundriss Philosophie des Humanismus und der Renaissance (1350–1600)*, 2 vols. (Darmstadt: WBG, 2017), passim, e.g., 2:1227–1238.

78 See also Vinci Verginelli, *Bibliotheca Hermetica: Catalogo alquanto ragionato della raccolta Verginelli-Rota dei antichi testi ermetici (secoli XV–XVIII)* (Florence: Nardini Editore, 1986), 368, 380–381; this is a handwritten copy of the work in three booklets, where a beautiful miniature of Zoroaster is also reproduced—he strangely now has a cross on his miter-like hat.

79 Not that malefic magic is unknown in the Leipzig collection or earlier texts, of course. The differences between these and the later texts cannot be discussed at more length here.

80 See the discussion in Daniel Jütte, *The Age of Secrecy: Jews, Christians, and the Economy of Secrets, 1400–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 85–86.

magic. It clearly illustrates the interest in Judaism found even in places where Jewish people were not allowed to live. Between 1706 and 1708, Christoph Wallich (1672–1743), a convert of Jewish ancestry, set up a model synagogue in Greifswald on behalf of Johann Friedrich Mayer (1650–1712), professor of theology at the University of Greifswald and General Superintendent of Swedish Pomerania. Since 1697 there had been only a very few Jewish families in Pomerania (in German, Pommern), each city only being allowed to sustain just two Jewish households, and children of such families were forced to leave the country after they married. Nevertheless, interest in Jewish religion and ritual was quite strong, and Mayer had commissioned an installation of Jewish synagogue life, a kind of museum of Jewish ritual. There was even a life-sized doll dressed as a rabbi as part of the exhibition, which was carefully crafted and tried to be as authentic as possible. After Mayer's death in 1712, this "synagogue" reached Dresden via Leipzig, apparently by rather adventurous routes, where it was on display in the Wallpavillon of the Dresden Zwinger as part of a "Juden-Cabinet" until 1836. After that, its traces are lost: a text by Wallich about this "Lehrsynagoge," which appeared in three editions and contains a detailed description, is the only surviving relic today. Interest in Jewish rituals had risen considerably since Leone da Modena's *Historia dei riti ebraici ed observanza degli Hebrei di questi tempi* was published in 1638 (and quickly translated into French, Latin, English, and Dutch).

The title page of the third edition of Wallich's (German!) description of the synagogue states: *Bet ha-kneset shel ha-ga'on ha-rav ha-gadol rm" wk"g kmh"rr Me'ir nrw" ha-shokhen bah-yeshivah Grifzwalde oder Die Mayerische Synagoga in Greiffswalde: Zum Nutzen der studirenden Jugend aufgerichtet, worinnen die dazu gehörige Jüdische Gebeter samt ihrem Geräthe zu finden* (Braunschweig: Keßler, 1715). The Hebrew means "the synagogue of the gaon and famous rabbi, Rabbi Mayer, head of the yeshivah and high priest, his excellency, whom G'd may bless and preserve, living in the city of Greifswald." Wallich thus makes his Christian patron, the Protestant pastor and dean Johann Friedrich Mayer, into a rabbi, the wise head of a Jewish Talmud Torah school and owner of a synagogue, and in his dedication then also lists eighteen famous rabbis who were also named Me'ir or Mayer. Mayer is even called a high priest. We do not know what Jewish people might have thought about such a well-meaning distortion.

8   Magic as a Field of Interreligious Contact and Appreciation?

Those who read Baroque magical texts for the first time are often surprised by their strongly Christian and religious character: invocations of angels are frequent, many spells are formally prayers. The Trinity is invoked, biblical allusions are omnipresent, as are key words from theology and Christian mysticism. The Bible, especially the psalms, are used as texts of divination and magic, as is also the case in Judaism; Codd. mag. 87, 89 (ill.), and 100 are interesting examples here. Nevertheless, the spiritual world of the texts is far removed from ecclesiastical Christianity, if only because all rituals are performed alone or (more rarely) with an assistant. The magic of the spell books is a thoroughly private affair: the rites take place at home, occasionally in the open air. Of central importance are the many names and designations of God in the biblical languages (Elohim, Adonai, Sabaoth, IEHOVA, etc.). They are considered "power words," and can appear in many

permutations and transformations that are apparently intended to increase their potential. With magic names, the magician gains power over the forces of nature and fate. And most of these names are Hebrew or biblical ones. Many magic words come from a Jewish ritual tradition, such as the very frequent AGLA (a notariqon for *Atta gibor le-'olam adonay* [Thou, O Lord, art mighty forever]).[81] In all, we encounter hundreds of angels' and demons' names, many from ancient traditions, some "calculated," so to speak, from biblical texts (constructed by combining techniques), others apparently freely invented. Some spirits (e.g., the "planetary lords") bear titles of nobility: by becoming servants of the magician, a reevaluation of social position takes place, a trait that is also visible, for example, in the narrative Faust literature, which speaks vividly of practiced magic in the medium of piously entertaining literature.

Since I became involved in the Leipzig collection in 2011, I have realized the degree to which magic is also an interreligious affair, a sphere of contact. This is not just a matter of what used to be called syncretism, as in Greco-Egyptian magic, but of a willingness to share some religious practice, a willingness that is completely outside of ritual discourses in other parts of mainstream Christian religion. There are texts that explicitly say they can be useful to Christians and Jews and Muslims, or that the magician should not avoid taking part in the Eucharist with a pious heart, though it does not matter whether it is a Lutheran or Catholic one (see Section 3). These are strange statements in the year 1700, and would be completely unthinkable, for example, in Lutheran sermons.

Other texts from the Leipzig collection refer to Arabic wisdom or Turkish sigils (when the Ottoman Empire was still very much enemy country). This means that, surprisingly, Islamic elements are also present to some degree. They already played a considerable role in late medieval and particularly in Renaissance magic,[82] in various ways including through numerous translations of Arabic occult works into Latin and the vernacular languages (e.g., Picatrix's *Liber imaginum*), and in the late seventeenth century they became to some degree fashionable again in Western magic, though never as much as Jewish magic.[83] What Western learned magicians did not use were the qur'ānic quotations that were common in authentic Islamic magic. But the Leipzig magical collection contained other traces of Islamic magic. Cod. mag. 60, for example, is the *Ars Almadel*, originally in Arabic and translated into Latin around 1230, which here bears the title *Almodel Salomonis*. Cod. mag. 16, one of the longest texts in the collection, contains invocations of the ninety-nine names of God, a motif well known from Arabic magic. Cod. mag. 126 contains "two Turkish sigils," that is, talismanic signs. And so on.

---

81   The evidence for this interpretation is not so clear as is sometimes suggested, however. AGLA is not rare even on Norse runic inscriptions. Some doubts about the Hebrew explanation are expressed by Katelyn Mesler, "The Latin Encounter with Hebrew Magic," in *The Routledge History of Medieval Magic*, ed. Sophie Page and Catherine Rider (London: Routledge, 2019), 88.

82   See the very detailed study by Dag N. Hasse, *Success and Suppression: Arabic Sciences and Philosophy in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

83   Kircher, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, 2:361–400, has a chapter on "Cabala saracenica," directly following the chapter on "Cabala Hebraeorum." The two chapters exhibit an astonishing degree of knowledge about Jewish and Islamic magic.

The overwhelmingly present magical tradition in these Christian texts is nevertheless the Jewish one, much more than, for example, elements from classical antiquity. The way that these Jewish elements fit between Jewish folk magic and learned kabbalistic magic remains to be scrutinized. This all is quite remarkable in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Germany. It also makes us realize something that will deserve much closer attention at some point: I will not go quite so far as to say that learned magic was a field of interreligious dialogue, but that it was one of interreligious contact and recognition. This is to some degree put into perspective by the relevance of what I have called fantasy Judaism, which can be seen in many sources of the time. The ambivalence between philosemitic and antisemitic discourses is not much visible in our magical texts, though the social and cultural reality of Jewish life in eastern Germany and in Saxony in particular allows to see these dynamics as an important background factor when trying to correctly assess the textual genres of magic.

Another surprise is the closeness of—the affinity between—mystical texts and texts of practical magic. The successful Baroque publisher Andreas Luppius (1654–1731), who had studied in Leipzig and then worked in various places in Europe, published not only the first pietist hymnals and edifying religious writings by Jean de Labadie, Johann Tauler, Jakob Böhme, and Philipp Jacob Spener (as well as much-sold copperplate engravings of famous ecclesiastical personalities), but also astrological and kabbalistic texts, the writings of Theophrastus Paracelsus—and in 1686, a German version of the magic book *Arbatel de magia veterum*. In Cod. mag. 55, this latter is preserved in a shorter form (and in a mixed version with other texts in Cod. mag. 68), containing, besides magical aphorisms, invocations of the planetary angels. A *Key of Solomon* was published by Luppius in 1686. Such *Claviculae Salomonis* are represented among the Leipzig texts in seven versions and three different languages (Codd. mag. 2/3, 4, 5, 19, 27, and 85, and also Cod. mag. 1, a somewhat later addition to the collection). They contain mainly angelic incantations, with some practical recipes. Luppius is presumed to be the publisher of other early spell books. Nowhere does it become clearer how much religious and magical worlds of discourse could overlap, though representatives of mainstream religion—Christian or Jewish— may not have seen this at the time. All this is also part of the cultural background of the Leipzig collection. In Judaism, of course, mysticism and magic go together quite well; but for Christianity, this is not so well known, and needs further research.

Bibliography, Part 1: Early Printings and Other Sources

Adelung, Johann Christoph. *Geschichte der menschlichen Narrheit, oder Lebensbeschreibungen berühmter Schwarzkünstler, Goldmacher, Teufelsbanner, Zeichen und Linien-deuter, Schwärmer, Wahrsager und anderer philosophischer Unholden*. Leipzig: Weygand 1785–1799. (Vol. 6, Leipzig: Weygand, 1788.)

Agrippa ab Nettesheym, Cornelius. *Opera in duos tomos concinne digesta*. 2 vols. Lyon: Godefroy and Marcellin Beringen, n.d. [1630]. Repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1970.

Agrippa, Cornelius. *De occulta philosophia, libri tres*. Edited by Vittoria Perrone Compagni. Studies in the History of Christian Thought 48. Leiden: Brill 1992.

Arbatel de magia veterum: Summum sapientiae studium. Basel: Pietro Perna, 1575.

Arnold, Gottfried. *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie vom Anfang des Neuen Testaments bis auf das Jahr Christi 1688*. 4 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Thomas Fritschens Erben 1729. Repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 2008.

Arpe (Arpius), Peter Friedrich. *De prodigiosis naturae et artis operibus Talismanes et Amuleta dictis liber*. Hamburg: Liebezeit, 1717. German translation: *Geschichte der Talismannischen Kunst von Ihrem Ursprunge, Fortgange und Verbreitung: Ein Beitrag zu den geheimen und höhern Kenntnissen der Menschen*. Germanien [Gotha]: [Ettinger], 1792.

Bekker, Balthasar. *Die bezauberte Welt oder Eine gründliche Untersuchung des Allgemeinen Aberglaubens*. Translated from Dutch by Johann Lange. 2 vols. Amsterdam: von Dahlen, 1693. Repr., Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1997.

Beyer, Justus Israel. *Fortgesetzte Nachricht von der zum Heil der Juden errichteten Anstalt nebst den Auszügen aus den Tagebüchern der reisenden Mitarbeiter*. Journal, 12 vols. Halle, 1777–1788.

Bordelon, Laurent. *Historie, oder, Wunderliche Erzehlung der seltsamen Einbildungen, welche Monsieur Oufle ausz Lesung solcher Bücher bekommen*. Dantzig: Pharamund Kretschmer, 1712.

Bordelon, Laurent. *L'histoire des imaginations extravagantes de monsieur Oufle*. 2nd ed. 5 vols. Paris: Duchesne, 1753–1754. (1st ed., Amsterdam: Rochet, 1710.)

Callenberg, Johann Heinrich. *Bericht an einige christliche Freunde von einem Versuch, das arme jüdische Volck zur Erkänntniss und Annehmung der christlichen Wahrheit anzuleiten*. Halle: Krottendorff, 1730.

Clavis artis des berühmten Juden und Rabbi Zoroasters, wie solcher 1996 von Anfange der Welt in Arabischer Sprache aufgesetzt, 1236 nach Christi Geburth ins Teutsche übersetzt von J.V.S.F.R.O. und in einer Uhralten Bibliothec gefunden worden. Jena: Hohann Martin Gollner, 1738 (Author: "durch einen Liebhaber der Spagyrischen Raritäten.")

Eisenmenger, Johann Andreas. *Entdecktes Judenthum oder Gründlicher und wahrhaffter Bericht, welchergestalt die verstockte Juden die hochheilige Drey-Einigkeit, Gott Vater, Sohn und Heil. Geist erschrecklicher Weise lästern und verunehren [...]; alles aus ihren eigenen und zwar sehr vielen mit grosser Mühe und unverdrossenem Fleiß durchlesenen Büchern mit Ausziehung der hebräischen Worte und derer treuen Ubersetzung in die Teutsche Sprach kräfftiglich erwiesen und in zweyen Theilen verfasset, deren jeder seine behörige, allemal von einer gewissen Materie außführlich handelnde Capitel enthält; allen Christen zur treuhertzigen Nachricht verfertiget und mit vollkommenen Registern versehen*. 2 vols. Frankfurt am Main, 1700; Königsberg (Berlin): n.p., 1711.

Ficino, Marsilio. *Platonic Theology*, vol. 6, *Books XVII–XVIII*. English translation by Michael J. B. Allen. Latin text edited by James Hankins. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Gelder, Heinrich August. *De bello per magicas artes iuste gesto quaedam disserit et abeunti amico suo viro praenobilissimo doctissimo Ioanni Friderico Pierer Altenburgensi superatis laboribus academicis gratulatur Henricus Augustus Gelder Greiza*. Leipzig: Officina Langenhemiana, 1752.

Gockelius, Eberhard. *Tractatus Polyhistoricus Magico-Medicus Curiosus: oder ein kurtzer, mit vielen verwunderlichen Historien untermengter Bericht von dem Beschreyen und Verzaubern, auch denen darauß entspringenden Kranckheiten und zauberischen Schäden*. Frankfurt: Bey Johann Martin Hagen, 1717. (First published, Frankfurt: Lorentz Kronigers und Gottlieb Göbels Sel. Erben Buchhändl. in Augspurg, 1699.)

Hauber, Eberhard David. *Bibliotheca, acta et scripta magica: Gründliche Nachrichten und Urtheile von solchen Büchern und Handlungen, welche die Macht des Teufels in leiblichen Dingen betreffen*. 36 parts. Lemgo: Meyer, 1738–1745.

Horst, Georg Conrad. *Zauber-Bibliothek oder von Zauberei, Theurgie und Mantik, Zauberern, Hexen und Hexenprocessen, Dämonen, Gespenstern und Geistererscheinungen*. 6 vols. Mainz: Kupferberg, 1821–1826. Repr., Freiburg im Breisgau: Aurum Verlag, 1979.

Kircher, Athanasius. *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*. 3 vols. Rome: Vitalis Mascardi, 1652–1654. Repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 2013.

Klotzsch, Johann Friedrich. *Die Liebeszaubereien der Gräfin Rochlitz, Maitresse Kurfürst Johann Georgs IV. von Sachsen. Hrg. von Johannes Jühling*. Stuttgart: Lutz, 1914.

Kollatsch, Rick-Arne. *Der Abraham von Worms Buch der wahren Praktik von der alten Magie: Ein als jüdisch fingierter Magietext des frühen 17. Jahrhunderts*. 2nd ed. Vol. 1. Hamburg: tredition, 2021.

Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. *Die Juden*. In Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Gesammelte Werke*. Edited by Paul Rilla. Vol. 1. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1968.

Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. *Die Juden*. With an afterword from Wilhelm Große. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002.

Linck, Johann Heinrich. *Index Museai Linckiani, oder kurzes systematisches Verzeichnis der vornehmsten Stücke der Linckischen Naturaliensammlung zu Leipzig*. 3 vols. Leipzig: Buchhandlung der Gelehrten Beygang; Halle: Hendel, 1783–1787.

Luppius, Andreas, ed. *Claviculae Salomonis oder die wahre Beschaffenheit von den Geheimnissen der Geister: Worin der Weg, alle sichtige und unsichtige Geschöpfe zu erlangen, angezeigt wird; Aus einer alten Urschrift. Mit Vergünstigung des Geistes Aratron*. [Wesel]: Luppius, 1686. (Also published as *Claviculae Salomonis et theosophia pneumatica*.)

Matt, Daniel Chanan. *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*. 12 vols. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004–2017.

Modena, Leon. *Jüdische Riten, Sitten und Gebräuche*. Edited by Rafael Arnold. Wiesbaden: Marix, 2007.

Müller, Johann. *Judaismus oder Judenthumb: Das ist, Außführlicher Bericht von des jüdischen Volckes Unglauben, Blindheit und Verstockung*. Hamburg: Zacharias Härtel, 1643.

Naudaeus (Naudé), Gabriel. *The History of Magick By Way of Apology For All the Wise Men who Have Unjustly Been Reputed Magicians, from the Creation, to the Present Age*. N.p.: John Streater, 1657. (Translation of *Apologie pour tous les grands personnages qui ont esté faussement soupçonnez de magie*. Den Haag: Adrien Vlac, 1625.)

Naumann, Emil Wilhelm Robert. *Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum qui in Bibliotheca Senatoria Civitatis Lipsiensis asservantur*. Grimma: Gebhardt, 1838. Repr., Osnabrück: Zeller, 1985. (Pp. 190–203 contains the list of *codices magici*.)

Peterson, Joseph H., ed. *Grimorium Verum: With Complete French and Italian Texts*. Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace, 2007.

Pineda, Juan de. *Ad suos in Salomonem commentarios Salomon praeuius, id est, de rebus Salomonis regis libri octo*. Moguntiae: Hierat, 1613.

Praetorius, Johannes. *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung*. Introduction by Hans Henning. Hanau: Müller und Kiepenheuer, 1968. (Facsimile of Leipzig: Scheibe, 1669.)

Praetorius, Johannes. *Der Abentheuerliche Glücks-Topf Welcher in Hundert und achtzehen beschriebenen Abergläubischen Zetteln bestehet, womit die wahnwitzige Welt sich bereichern, und ihre Wolfart erkündigen oder bevestigen wil*. N.p.: n.p., 1669.

Rüdinger, Johann. *De magia illicita decas concionum: Zehen gründliche Predigten Von der Zauber und Hexenwerck*. 2 vols. Jena: Reiffenberger, 1630–1635.

Scheible, Johann, ed. *Das Kloster*. 12 vols. Stuttgart: Scheible, 1845–1849.

Schudt, Johann Jacob. *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten*. 4 vols. Frankfurt: Lamm, 1714–1718.

Semler, Johann Salomo. *Sammlungen von Briefen und Aufsätzen über die Gaßnerischen und Schröpferischen Geisterbeschwörungen, mit eigenen vielen Anmerkungen*. 2 vols. Halle: Carl Hermann Hemmerde, 1776. Repr., Waltrop: Spenner, 2004.

Tilton, Hereward and Merlin Cox, eds. *Touch Me Not: A Most Rare Compendium of the Whole Magical Art*. 2nd ed. Lopen, Somerset: Fulgur Press, 2019.

Wagenseil, Johann Christoph. *Tela Ignea Satanae: Hoc est Arcani et horribiles Judaeorum adversus Christum Deum, et Christianam Religionem Libri Anekdotoi*. Altdorf: Schönnerstadt, 1681.

Wallich, Christoph, *Bet ha-kneset shel ha-ga'on ha-rav ha-gadol rm″ wk″g kmh″rr Me'ir nrw″ ha-shokhen bah-yeshivah Grifzwalde oder Die Mayerische Synagoga in Greiffswalde: Zum Nutzen der studirenden Jugend aufgerichtet, Worinnen die dazu gehörige Jüdische Gebeter samt ihrem Geräthe zu finden. Zum drittenmahl aufgeleget, und heraus gegeben von Christoph Wallich*. Braunschweig: Keßler, 1715.

Zobel, Enoch. *Historische und theologische Vorstellung des ebentheüerlichen Gespenstes welches in einem Hause zu S. Annaberg 2. Monat lang im neüligst-1691sten Jahr viel Schrecken, Furcht und wunderseltsame Schauspiele angerichtet [...]*. Leipzig: Lanckisch, 1692.

**Bibliography, Part 2: More Recent Literature
(with Some Further Reading Relevant to the Subject)**

Abraham, David, Anke Költsch, Stephan Wendehorst, and Ulrich Johannes Schneider. *Leipziger Judentümer in Stadt und Universität*. Catalogue of the exhibition at the Bibliotheca Albertina, Leipzig, 13 January–25 April 2010. Leipzig: Universitätsbibliothek, 2010.

Althammer, Beate, and Christina Gerstenmayer, eds. *Bettler und Vaganten in der Neuzeit (1500–1933): Eine kommentierte Quellenedition*. Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2013.

Aune, David. "Magic in Early Christianity." Pages 1507–1557 in *ANRW* part 2, vol. 23.2. Edited by Hildegard Temporini, et al. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980.

Bachter, Stephan. "Anleitung zum Aberglauben. Zauberbücher und die Verbreitung magischen 'Wissens' seit dem 18. Jahrhundert." PhD diss., University of Hamburg, 2005.

Beck, Paul. "Die Bibliothek eines Hexenmeisters." *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde* 15 (1905): 412–424.

Becker, Hans-Jürgen. "Die Stellung des kanonischen Rechts zu den Andersgläubigen: Heiden, Juden und Ketzer." Pages 101–124 in *Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen der Religionen im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*, vol. 1, *Konzeptionelle Grundfragen und Fallstudien*. Edited by Ludger Grenzmann, Thomas Haye, Nikolaus Henkel, and Thomas Kaufmann. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009.

Bellingradt, Daniel, and Bernd-Christian Otto. *Magical Manuscripts in Early Modern Europe: The Clandestine Trade in Illegal Book Collections*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Berghahn, Klaus L. *Grenzen der Toleranz: Juden und Christen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*. 2nd ed. Cologne: Böhlau, 2001.

Biale, David, David Assaf, Benjamin Brown, Uriel Gellman, Samuel Heilman, Moshe Rosman, Gadi Sagiv, and Marcin Wodziński. *Hasidism: A New History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018.

Bogdal, Klaus-Michael. *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner: Eine Geschichte von Faszination und Verachtung*. 4th ed. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2013.

Bohak, Gideon. "Hebrew, Hebrew Everywhere?" Pages 69–82 in *Prayer, Magic and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*. Edited by Scott Noegel, Joel Walker, and Brannon Wheeler. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003.

Bohak, Gideon. "Jewish Magic in the Middle Ages." Pages 268–299 in *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West*. Edited by David J. Collins. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Böning, Holger, and Reinhart Siegert. *Volksaufklärung: Bibliographisches Handbuch zur Popularisierung aufklärerischen Denkens im deutschen Sprachraum von den Anfängen bis 1850*. Vols. 1, 2.1, and 2.2. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1990–2001.

Böttcher, Hans-Joachim. *Johann Georg IV. von Sachsen & Magdalena Sibylla von Neitschütz: Eine tödliche Liaison*. Dresden: Dresdner Buchverlag, 2014.

Böttrich, Christfried, Thomas K. Kuhn, and Daniel Stein Kokin, eds. *Die Greifswalder Lehrsynagoge Johann Friedrich Mayers: Ein Beispiel christlicher Rezeption des Judentums im 18. Jahrhundert*. Greifswalder theologische Forschungen 26. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2016.

Brüning, Volker Fritz. *Bibliographie der alchemistischen Literatur*. 3 vols. Munich: Saur, 2004–2007.

Busi, Julio, and Silvana Greco, eds. *The Renaissance Speaks Hebrew*. Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2019.

Cała, Alina. *The Image of the Jew in Polish Culture*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1995.

Clark, Christopher. *The Politics of Conversion: Missionary Protestantism and the Jews in Prussia 1728–1941*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

Cohen, Renac, and Jennifer L. Golub. *Attitudes towards Jews in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia: A Comparative Survey*. New York: American Jewish Committee, 1991.

Collins, David J., ed. *Magic and Witchcraft in the West: From Antiquity to the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Copenhaver, Brian. *Magic in Western Culture from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Courtès, Noémie. *L'écriture de l'enchantement: Magie et magiciens dans la littérature du XVIIᵉ siècle*. Paris: Champion, 2004.

Culianu, Joan P. *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Czok, Karl. "Zum Prozess der bürgerlichen Umwälzungen in Sachsen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert." Pages 11–24 in *Wissenschafts- und Universitätsgeschichte in Sachsen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*. Edited by Karl Czok. ASAW, Philologisch-historische Klasse 71, part 3. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1987.

Darnton, Robert. *The Corpus of Clandestine Literature in France, 1769–1789*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1995.

Darnton, Robert. *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Prerevolutionary France*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996.

Das ietztlebende Leipzig 1702. Leipzig: Johann Gottfried Renger, 1702. Repr. with the 1701 volume, Leipzig: Schmidt-Römhild, 2000.

Davies, Owen. *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Dehn, Georg. *The Book of Abramelin: A New Translation*. 2nd ed. Lake Worth, FL: Ibis Press, 2015.

Deutsch, Yaacov. *Judaism in Christian Eyes: Ethnographic Descriptions of Jews and Judaism in Early Modern Europe*. Translated by Avi Aronsky. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Deutsch, Yaacov. "'A View of the Jewish Religion': Conceptions of Jewish Practice and Ritual in Early Modern Europe." *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 3 (2001): 273–295.

Diamant, Adolf. *Chronik der Juden in Leipzig: Aufstieg, Vernichtung und Neuanfang*. Chemnitz: Verlag Heimatland Sachsen, 1993.

Diekmann, Irene A., and Elke-Vera Kotowski, eds. *Geliebter Feind, gehasster Freund: Antisemitismus und Philosemitismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Julius H. Schoeps*. Berlin: Verl. für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2009.

Dillinger, Johannes. "Die anderen Magier: Juden, Moslems, und andere Nicht-Christen in der europäischen Hexenlehre." Pages 163–186 in *Ritualia orientalia mixta: Reflexionen über Rituale in der Religionsgeschichte des Orients und angrenzender Gebiete*. Edited by Predrag Bukovec and Vedana Tadić. Hamburg: Kovač 2017.

Dillinger, Johannes. *Magical Treasure Hunting in Europe and North America: A History*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Eamon, William. *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Eming, Jutta, and Volkhard Wels, eds. *Der Begriff der Magie in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*. Episteme in Bewegung 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2020.

Fanger, Claire, ed. *Invoking Angels: Theurgic Ideas and Practices, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries*. University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2011.

Ferguson, John. *Bibliographical Notes on Histories of Inventions and Books of Secrets*. 2 vols. London: Holland Press 1959. (First published in 1882–1911 as a series of six articles and seven supplements.)

Ferguson, John. *Bibliotheca Chemica: A Catalogue of the Alchemical, Chemical and Pharmaceutical Books in the Collection of the Late James Young of Kelly and Durris*. 2 vols. Edin-

burgh: James Maclehose and Sons 1906. Repr. with abridged title, London: Derek Verschoyle, 1954.

Flatto, Sharon. *The Kabbalistic Culture of Eighteenth-Century Prague: Ezekiel Landau (the "Noda Biyehudah") and His Contemporaries*. Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010.

Foa, Anna. *Ateismo e magia: Il declino della concezione magica nel Dictionnaire di Pierre Bayle*. Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1980.

Forshaw, Peter J. "Cabala Chymica or Chemica Cabalistica—Early Modern Alchemists and Cabala." *Ambix* 60.4 (2013): 361–389.

Frazer, James George. *The Golden Bough*. 3rd ed. Vol. 4. Adonis Attis Osiris 1. London: Macmillan, 1913.

Frenschkowski, Marco. *Magie im antike Christentum: Eine Studie zur Alten Kirche und ihrem Umfeld*. Standorte in Antike und Christentum 7. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2016.

Frenschkowski, Marco. "Verstockung." Pages 942–948 in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*. Edited by Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer, and Gottfried Gabriel. Vol. 11. Basel: Schwabe, 2001.

Frenschkowski, Marco. "Faust zwischen Renaissancemagie und lutherischer Theologie: Gedanken zur 'Historia von D. Johann Fausten' von 1587." *Blätter für pfälzische Kirchengeschichte und religiöse Volkskunde* 62 (1995): 385–403 = *Ebernburg-Hefte* 29 (1995): 137–155.

Frenschkowski, Marco. "Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim und seine 'Okkulte Philosophie.'" Preface to *Die magischen Werke und weitere Renaissancetraktate*, by Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim. Edited by Marco Frenschkowski. Wiesbaden: Marix, 2008.

Frenschkowski, Marco. *Die Hexen: Eine kulturgeschichtliche Analyse*. 3rd ed. Wiesbaden: Marix, 2023.

Frenschkowski, Marco. "Katholiken, Juden und Moslems in der 'Historia von D. Johann Fausten': Beobachtungen zur Rezeption lutherischer Religionskritik in populärer protestantischer Erzählliteratur." *Blätter für pfälzische Kirchengeschichte und religiöse Volkskunde* 63 (1996): 359–385 = *Ebernburg-Hefte* 30 (1996): 107–133.

Frenschkowski, Marco. "Zauberbücher." Pages 357–358 in *Lexikon des gesamten Buchwesens*. Edited by Severin Corsten, Stephan Füssel, Günther Pflug, and Friedrich Adolf Schmidt-Künsemüller. 2nd ed. Vol. 8. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2014.

Frenschkowski, Marco. *Zauberbücher: Die Leipziger Magica-Sammlung im Schatten der Frühaufklärung*. Published in conjunction with an exhibition at the Leipzig University Library, 15 November 2019–16 February 2020. Leipzig: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, 2019.

Frenschkowski, Marco. "Zauberworte: Linguistische und sprachpsychologische Beobachtungen zur spätantiken griechischen und römischen Magie." *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 24.2 (2007): 323–366.

Frenschkowski, Marco, see also Webb, James.

Freudenthal, Max. *Leipziger Messgäste: Die jüdischen Besucher der Leipziger Messen in den Jahren 1675–1764*. Frankfurt am Main: Kauffmann, 1928.

Friedrich, Martin. *Zwischen Abwehr und Bekehrung: Die Stellung der deutschen evangelischen Theologen zum Judentum im 17. Jahrhundert*. BHT 72. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988.

Fuchs, Eduard. *Die Juden in der Karikatur: Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte*. Munich: Albert Langen, 1921.

Ganz, Peter, ed. *Das Buch als magisches und als Repräsentationsobjekt: Vorträge gehalten anläßlich des 26. Wolfenbütteler Symposions vom 11. bis 15. September 1989 in der Herzog-August-Bibliothek*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992.

Gay, Peter. *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*. 2nd ed. 2 vols. New York: W. W. Norton, 1995–1996. (1st ed., New York: Knopf, 1966–1967.)

Gilly, Carlos. "Il primo prontuario di magia bianca in Germania." Pages 199–217 in *Magia, alchimia e scienza dal '400 al '700: L'influsso di Ermete Trismegisto = Magic, Alchemy and Science, 15th–18th Centuries: The Influence of Hermes Trismegistus*. Edited by Carlos Gilly and Cis van Heertum. Florence: Centro Di, 2002.

Goldberg, Edward. *Jews and Magic in Medici Florence: The Secret World of Benedetto Blanis*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2011.

Grube-Verhoeven, Regine. "Die Verwendung von Büchern christlich-religiösen Inhalts zu magischen Zwecken." Pages 11–57 in *Zauberei und Frömmigkeit*. Edited by Hermann Brausinger. Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde.

Hanegraaff, Wouter J. *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Häberli, Simone. *Der jüdische Gelehrte im Mittelalter: Christliche Imaginationen zwischen Idealisierung und Dämonisierung*. Mittelalter-Forschungen 32. Ostfildern: Jan Thorbeke Verlag, 2010.

Haefs, Wilhelm, and York-Gothart Mix. *Zensur im Jahrhundert der Aufklärung: Geschichte—Theorie—Praxis*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006.

Hamès, Constant, ed. *Coran et talismans: Textes et pratiques magiques en milieu musulman*. Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2009.

Hasse, Dag Nikolaus. *Success and Suppression: Arabic Sciences and Philosophy in the Renaissance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016.

Haug, Christine, Franziska Mayer, and Winfried Schröder, eds. *Geheimliteratur und Geheimbuchhandel im 18. Jahrhundert*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011.

Herzig, Arno. "Das Gutachten der Leipziger Theologischen Fakultät von 1714 gegen die jahrhundertealte Blutschuldlüge." Pages 28–34 in *Judaica Lipsiensia: Zur Geschichte der Juden in Leipzig*. Edited by Manfred Unger. Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 1994.

Hirte, Markus, and Johannes Dillinger, eds. *Schatz und Schatzsuche in Recht und Geschichte*. Kataloge des Mittelalterlichen Kriminalmuseums in Rothenburg ob der Tauber 4. Erzabtei St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 2023.

Hoffmann, Matthias. *Salomo in magischer Literatur—Belege*. Forthcoming. (Manuscript kindly made available by author.)

Horne, Alex. *King Solomon's Temple in the Masonic Tradition*. London: Aquarian Press, 1972.

Hsia, Ronnie Po-Chia. *The Myth of Ritual Murder, Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.

Jaenecke-Nickel, Johanna. "Zur Erschließung des volkskundlichen Schrifttums des Barock." *Lětopis* 11–12 (1968–1969): 104–113.

Jütte, Daniel. *The Age of Secrecy: Jews, Christians, and the Economy of Secrets, 1400–1800*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.

Katz, Jakob, and Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, eds. *Begegnung von Deutschen und Juden in der Geistesgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1994.

Kisch, Guido. *Rechts- und Sozialgeschichte der Juden in Halle, 1686–1730*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970.

Klaassen, Frank. *The Transformation of Magic: Illicit Learned Magic in the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013.

Klutz, Todd. "The Eighth Book of Moses: A New Translation and Introduction." Pages 189–235 in Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures. Edited by Richard J. Bauckham, James R. Davila, and Alexander Panayotov. Vol. 1. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013.

Krauss, Samuel. *Geschichte der Jüdischen Ärzte vom frühesten Mittelalter bis zur Gleichberechtigung*. Vienna: A. S. Bettelheim-Stiftung, 1930.

Kruse, Ulrike. *Der Natur-Diskurs in Hausväterliteratur und volksaufklärerischen Schriften vom späten 16. bis zum frühen 19. Jahrhundert*. Bremen: edition lumière, 2013.

Láng, Benedek. "People's Secrets: Towards a Social History of Early Modern Cryptography." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 45 (2014): 291–308.

Láng, Benedek. *Unlocked Books: Manuscripts of Learned Magic in the Medieval Libraries of Central Europe*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008.

Langer, Ruth. *Cursing the Christians? A History of the Birkat HaMinim*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Lecouteux, Claude. *Le livre des grimoires: Aspects de la magie au Moyen Âge*. 3rd ed. Paris: Imago, 2008.

Lehmann, Emil. "Die Rechtsverhältnisse der Juden in Sachsen." Pages 169–215 in *Gesammelte Schriften* by Emil Lehmann. Berlin: Hermann, 1899.

Leinkauf, Thomas. "Der Naturbegriff in der frühen Neuzeit: Einleitung." Pages 1–19 in *Der Naturbegriff in der frühen Neuzeit: Semantische Perspektiven zwischen 1500 und 1700*. Edited by Thomas Leinkauf and Karin Hartbecke. Frühe Neuzeit 110. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005.

Leinkauf, Thomas. *Grundriss Philosophie des Humanismus und der Renaissance (1350–1600)*. 2 vols. Darmstadt: WBG, 2017.

Levy, Alphonse. *Geschichte der Juden in Sachsen bis 1900*. Berlin: Calvary, 1900.

Lewin, Louis. "Die jüdischen Studenten an der Universität Frankfurt an der Oder." *Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-Litterarischen Gesellschaft* 14 (1921): 217–238.

Lynn, Michael R., ed. *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts in the Enlightenment*. London: Routledge, 2022.

Manoury, Pierre (Le Gwen). *La magie des 151 psaumes de David: Pratiques opératives de théurgie chrétienne*. Clamecy: Éditions Bussière, 2014.

Marathakis, Ioannis. *The Magical Treatise of Solomon, or, Hygromanteia: The True Ancestor of the Key of Solomon*. Singapore: Golden Hoard Press, 2011.

Martens, Wolfgang. "Zur Figur eines edlen Juden im Aufklärungsroman vor Lessing." Pages 65–78 in *Begegnung von Deutschen und Juden in der Geistesgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Edited by Jakob Katz and Karl Heinrich Rengstorf. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1994.

Marshall, Peter, and Alexandra Walsham, eds. *Angels in the Early Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Marti, Hanspeter, and Detlef Döring, eds. *Die Universität Leipzig und ihr gelehrtes Umfeld 1680–1780*. Basel: Schwabe, 2004.

Meister, Kay. "Seltsame Schatzräuber in den Wäldern des Erzgebirges." *Erzgebirgische Heimatblätter* 43.3 (2021): 10–13.

Mesler, Katelyn. "The Latin Encounter with Hebrew Magic." Pages 85–98 in *The Routledge History of Medieval Magic*. Edited by Sophie Page and Catherine Rider. London: Routledge, 2019.

Michael, Reuven, and Larissa Daemmig. "Saxony." pp. 87–88 in *EncJud*. Vol. 18. Detroit: Gale, 2007.

Mulsow, Martin. *Prekäres Wissen: Eine andere Ideengeschichte der frühen Neuzeit*. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2012.

Novy, Teresa. "Die Magie der sogenannten 'Zigeuner' und anderer Fahrender." *Mittelalter: Interdisziplinäre Forschung und Rezeptionsgeschichte* (blog). 9 February 2015. https://mittelalter.hypotheses.org/5242.

Oehme, Ruthardt. *Eberhard David Hauber (1695–1765)*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1976.

Oişteanu, Andrei. *Konstruktionen des Judenbildes: Rumänische und ostmitteleuropäische Stereotypen des Antisemitismus*. Forum: Rumänien 6. Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2010.

Otto, Bernd-Christian. "A Discourse Historical Approach towards Medieval Learned Magic." Pages 37–47 in *The Routledge History of Medieval Magic*. Edited by Sophie Page and Catherine Rider. London: Routledge, 2019.

Otto, Bernd-Christian. "Historicising 'Western Learned Magic': Preliminary Remarks." *Aries* 16 (2016): 161–240.

Otto, Bernd-Christian. *Magie: Rezeptions- und diskursgeschichtliche Analysen*. Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 57. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011.

Patai, Raphael. *The Jewish Alchemists: A History and Source Book*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Peuckert, Will-Erich. "Jude, Jüdin." Pages 808–833 in *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. Edited by Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer. Vol. 4. Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1932. Repr. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1987.

Peuckert, Will-Erich. *Gabalia: Ein Versuch zur Geschichte der magia naturalis im 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert*. Vol. 2 of *Pansophie*. Berlin: Schmidt, 1967.

Peuckert, Will-Erich. *Pansophie: Ein Versuch zur Geschichte der weißen und schwarzen Magie*. Vol. 1 of *Pansophie*. 2nd ed. Berlin: Schmidt, 1956.

Pott, Martin. *Aufklärung und Aberglaube: Die deutsche Frühaufklärung im Spiegel ihrer Aberglaubenskritik*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1992.

Rebiger, Bill. *Sefer Shimmush Tehillim: Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar = Buch vom magischen Gebrauch der Psalmen*. Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 137. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.

Rengstorf, Karl Heinrich. "Die deutschen Pietisten und ihr Bild des Judentums." Pages 1–16 in *Begegnung von Deutschen und Juden in der Geistesgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Edited by Jakob Katz and Karl Heinrich Rengstorf. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1994.

Riemer, Siegfried. *Philosemitismus im deutschen evangelischen Kirchenlied des Barock*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963.

Riese, Reimar. "Leipzig." Pages 447–463 in *Lexikon des gesamten Buchwesens*. Edited by Severin Corsten, Stephan Füssel, Günther Pflug, and Friedrich Adolf Schmidt-Künsemüller. 2nd ed. Vol. 4. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1995.

Ruff, Margarethe. *Zauberpraktiken als Lebenshilfe: Magie im Alltag vom Mittelalter bis heute*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus-Verlag, 2003.

Russell, Norman. *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Schäbitz, Michael. *Juden in Sachsen—jüdische Sachsen? Emanzipation, Akkulturation und Integration 1700 –1914*. Hannover: Hahn, 2006.

Schmidt-Biggemann, Wilhelm. *Geschichte der christlichen Kabbala*. 4 vols. Clavis Pansophiae 10. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 2012–2014.

Schoeps, Hans-Joachim. *Philosemitismus im Barock: Religions- und geistesgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1952.

Schramm, Rudolf, and Helmut Wilsdorf. *Venetianersagen von geheimnisvollen Schatzsuchern*. 3rd ed. Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Grundstoffindustrie, 1990. (1st ed., Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Grundstoffindustrie, 1986.)

Schurtz, Heinrich. *Der Seifenbergbau im Erzgebirge und die Walensagen*. Stuttgart: Engelhorn, 1890.

Scott, Edward J.L. *Index to the Sloane Manuscripts in the British Museum*. London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1904.

Seifert, Alfred. *Die Apotheker-Familie Linck in Leipzig und ihr Naturalien- und Kunstkabinett (1670–1840)*. Mittenwald: Nemayer 1935.

Skinner, Stephen. *Techniques of Solomonic Magic: The Origin and Methods of the Solomonic Grimoires*. Singapore: Golden Hoard Press, 2015.

Skinner, Stephen, and David Rankine. *The Veritable Key of Solomon: Three Complete Versions of the Key of Solomon*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn, 2008.

Spamer, Adolf. *Romanusbüchlein: Historisch-philologischer Kommentar zu einem deutschen Zauberbuch*. Edited by Johanna Nickel. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für deutsche Volkskunde 17. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958.

Sperber, Daniel. *The Jewish Life Cycle: Custom, Lore and Iconography*. Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Sperber, Daniel. *Why Jews Do What They Do: The History of Jewish Customs throughout the Cycle of the Jewish Year*. Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1999.

Stausberg, Michael. *Faszination Zarathushtra: Zoroaster und die europäische Religionsgeschichte der frühen Neuzeit*. 2 vols. Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 42. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998.

Steffenhagen, Emil Julius. "Arpe, Peter Friedrich." Pages 608–609 in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*. Vol. 1. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1875.

Stow, Kenneth. *Catholic Thought and Papal Jewry Policy*. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1977.

Stow, Kenneth. "More than Meets the Eye: Pius V and the Jews." Pages 375–394 in *Dominikaner und Juden: Personen, Konflikte und Perspektiven vom 13. bis 20. Jahrhundert*. Edited by Elias H. Füllenbach and Gianfranco Miletto. Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens, n.s. 14. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015.

Stratton-Kent, Jake. *Pandemonium: A Discordant Concordance of Diverse Spirit Catalogues*. London: Hadean Press, 2016.

Thomas, Keith. *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. New York: Scribner, 1971.

Verginelli, Vinci. *Bibliotheca Hermetica: Catalogo alquanto ragionato della raccolta Verginelli-Rota die antichi testi ermetici (secoli XV–XVIII)*. Florence: Nardini Editore, 1986.

Waibler, Helmut. *Johannes Praetorius (1630–1680): Ein Barockautor und seine Werke*. Frankfurt am Main: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1979.

Walther, Karl Klaus. *Die deutschsprachige Verlagsproduktion von Pierre Marteau/Peter Hammer, Köln: Zur Geschichte eines fingierten Impressums*. Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1983.

Wanderer, Karl-Peter. "Gedruckter Aberglaube: Studien zur volkstümlichen Beschwörungsliteratur." PhD diss, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main, 1976.

Webb, James. *Die Flucht vor der Vernunft. Politik, Kultur und Okkultismus im 19. Jahrhundert*. Edited by Marco Frenschkowski and Michael Siefener. Translated by Michael Siefener. Wiesbaden: Marixverlag, 2009.

Webb, James. *Das Zeitalter des Irrationalen: Politik, Kultur und Okkultismus im 20. Jahrhundert*. Edited by Marco Frenschkowski and Michael Siefener. Translated by Michael Siefener. Wiesbaden: Marixverlag, 2008.

Weigel, Bjoern. "Johann Andreas Eisenmenger." Pages 200–202 in *Handbuch des Antisemitismus: Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 2, *Personen*. Edited by Wolfgang Benz. Berlin: de Gruyter Saur, 2009.

Wels, Volkhard. "Magie und (Al)Chemie im 16. Jahrhundert: Thesen zu ihrer Begründung im Neuplatonismus, bei Paracelsus und im Paracelsismus." Pages 157–201 in *Der Naturbegriff in der frühen Neuzeit: Semantische Perspektiven zwischen 1500 und 1700*. Edited by Thomas Leinkauf and Karin Hartbecke. Frühe Neuzeit 110. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005.

Wienker-Piepho, Sabine. *"Je gelehrter, desto verkehrter"? Volkskundlich-Kulturgeschichtliches zur Schriftbeherrschung*. Münster: Waxmann, 2000.

Wilde, Manfred. "Christian Thomasius im Spannungsfeld der späten Hexenprozesse in Kursachsen und in Brandenburg." Pages 141–154 in *Christian Thomasius (1655–1728): Gelehrter Bürger in Leipzig und Halle*. Edited by Heiner Lück. ASAW, Philologisch-historische Klasse 81, part 2. Leipzig: Hirzel, 2008.

Wilde, Manfred. *Die Zauberei- und Hexenprozesse in Kursachsen*. Cologne: Böhlau, 2003.

Winter, Leo. *Die deutsche Schatzsage*. Wattenscheid: Busch, 1925.

Wistrich, Robert S., ed. *Demonizing the Other: Antisemitism, Racism and Xenophobia*. Studies in Antisemitism 4. Amsterdam: Harwood, 1999.

Zambelli, Paola. *White Magic, Black Magic in the European Renaissance*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Zeller, Rosmarie. "Eine kabbalistische Ausdeutung der 'Hecatombe oder Hundert Lob-Sprüche' von Christian Knorr von Rosenroth." *Morgen-Glantz* 23 (2013): 329–354.

Zimmels, Hirsch J. *Magicians, Theologians and Doctors: Studies in Folk-medicine and Folklore as Reflected in the Rabbinical Responsa (12th–19th Centuries)*. Northvale, NJ: Aronson, 1952.

Index

Authors, scribes, printers (premodern)

Books

Bible

Manuscripts

Places