

# Notes on the Study of Early Kabbalah in English

*with section on the*

*Hasidei Ashkenaz*

*to which is appended*

KABBALAH STUDY: JEWISH MYSTICISM IN ENGLISH (1996)

Don Karr

© Don Karr, 1985, 1996, revised & updated 2002-2021 Email: [dko618@yahoo.com](mailto:dko618@yahoo.com)

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THE PHASE OF JEWISH MYSTICISM conventionally referred to as “early *kabbalah*” begins with *Sefer ha-Bahir* (ca. 1180) and ends with the *Zohar* (1270-1300). The major features and figures of this span can be outlined thus:\*

A. Early Kabbalah

1. Formative Period

- a. *Sefer ha-Bahir* (ca. 1180)
- b. Provence
  - i. Isaac the Blind (1160-1235)
  - ii. The *Iyyun* School (early to mid-1200s)
- c. Gerona
  - i. Ezra ben Solomon (older contemporary of Azriel)
  - ii. Azriel (ca. 1160-ca. 1238)
  - iii. Nahmanides (1194-1270)
  - iv. Jacob ben Sheshet (contemporary of Nahmanides)
  - v. *Sefer ha-Temunah* (ca. 1300)
  - vi. *Sefer ha-Yashar* (13<sup>th</sup> century)
- d. Castile
  - i. Jacob ha-Cohen (brother of Isaac ha-Cohen)
  - ii. Isaac ha-Cohen (d. ca. 1300)
  - iii. Moses of Burgos (ca. 1230-1300)

2. Developmental Period

- a. Abraham Abulafia (1240-1291)
- b. Moses de Leon (1240-1305)
- c. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid (ca. 1240-ca. 1320)
- d. Joseph Gikatilla (1248-1325)
- e. Menahem Recanati (1250-1310)
- f. Isaac of Acre, or Acco (1250-1340)
- g. Bahya ben Asher (1255-1340)
- h. Joseph of Hamadan (late 13<sup>th</sup>-early 14<sup>th</sup> century)

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\* This outline is offered with full awareness that it gives an oversimplified picture of the development of early *kabbalah*. The outline on page 26 of pre-kabbalistic streams is similarly convenient.

Four books cover the FORMATIVE PERIOD which can serve as the basis of a study of early *kabbalah* in English.

- Scholem, Gershom. *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society/Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987)—hereafter OK.  
OK is from the German *Ursprung und Anfänge der Kabbala* (1962), translated by Allan Arkush, edited by R. J. Zwi Werblowsky; *Ursprung...* is an expansion of the Hebrew work, *Reshith ha-Qabbalah* (1948).
- Dan, Joseph; and Keiner, Ronald C. *The Early Kabbalah* [THE CLASSICS IN WESTERN SPIRITUALITY] (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1986)—hereafter EK.<sup>\*</sup>  
EK is an anthology of texts—an excellent complement to OK.
- Dan, Joseph. *Jewish Mysticism, Volume II: The Middle Ages* (Northvale - Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc., 1998)—hereafter JMII.  
JMII is a collection of Dan's articles covering early Kabbalah, concentrating on *Sefer ha-Bahir* and the Ashkenazi Hasidim (see below, Pre-Kabbalistic Streams of Jewish Mysticism, § 5. *Hasidei Ashkenaz*).
- Dauber, Jonathan. *Knowledge of God and the Development of Early Kabbalah* (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2012)—hereafter Knowledge of God.

To state my thesis in broad terms, a major factor that led to the development of Kabbalah was the adoption by the first Kabbalists of a philosophic ethos that, under the influence of the newly emergent Hebrew philosophic materials, had taken root in Jewish communities in Languedoc and Catalonia. This was an ethos in which a sort of meta-reflection on classical Jewish texts and, in particular, the investigation of God as the height of that reflection, was accorded great religious significance. It was their adoption of such an ethos, and the seriousness with which they took it, that spurred the early Kabbalists to actively develop and expand their traditions. (—page 3) sucjling

See also

- Haskell, Ellen Davina. *Suckling at My Mother's Breasts: The Image of a Nursing God in Jewish Mysticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012).  
This book is a reworking of Haskell's Ph.D. dissertation, METAPHOR AND SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION: THE IMAGE OF GOD AS SUCKLING MOTHER IN THIRTEENTH CENTURY KABBALAH (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005).  
See CHAPTER TWO, "Suckling the Divine Overflow in Early Kabbalah," which  
...looks at three influential early kabbalistic works that develop and incorporate imagery associated with the nursing divine: *Sefer ha-Bahir* (*The Book of Brightness*), Isaac the Blind's *Commentary on Sefer Yetzirah* (*The Book of Formation*), and Ezra of Gerona's *Perush le-Shir-ha-Shirim* (*Commentary on the Song of Songs*). (—page 12)
- Mottolese, Maurizio. *Analogy in Midrash and Kabbalah: Interpretive Projections of the Sanctuary and Ritual* (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2007).  
While Mottolese's work covers a broad range (Midrash, Maimonides, and mysticism), the core of the book (from CHAPTER 6 on) treats early *kabbalah* "from Provence to the Zohar." The kabbalists whom Mottolese draws upon most are Ezra of Gerona, Nahmanides, and, from a generation later, R. Bahya ben Asher (d. 1340).

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\* *From the Depth of the Well: An Anthology of Jewish Mysticism*, edited by Ariel Evan Mayse (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2014) contains excerpts of writings from this period drawn from Dan and Keiner's *Early Kabbalah* with passages from Ezra ben Solomon from Seth Brody's *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (listed below in § 1.c.1).

“Analogy,” which elsewhere might be termed “correspondence,” requires the notion of a sympathetic universe as epitomized by a phrase like “As above, so below.” If nothing else, *kabbalah* is about analogy.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Bodily Rituals in Jewish Mysticism: The Intensification of Cultic Hand Gestures by Medieval Kabbalists* (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2016).

Within the confines of his subject, Mottolese covers the entire spectrum of the current bibliography, from the *formative* period to the *developmental* period and the *Zohar*.

- Lachter, Hartley. *Kabbalistic Revolution: Reimagining Judaism in Medieval Spain* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2014) —hereafter ***Kabbalistic Revolution***.

“This study will focus on kabbalistic texts produced in Spain, mainly in the region of Castile-Leon, during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Kabbalists whose works will be of particular importance include Joseph Gikatilla, Moses de Leon, Joseph of Hamadan, David ben Yehudah he-Hasid, and to a lesser extent, Joseph ben Todros ha-Levi Abulafia and Isaac ibn Sahula. Occasional reference will be made, as a point of comparison, to kabbalists who lived and worked either earlier in the thirteenth century (such as Ezra and Azriel of Gerona, Nahmanides, Asher ben David, and the circle of *Iyyun* texts, or ‘Books of Contemplation’), or those who lived contemporaneously with the kabbalists in question but outside the region of Castile, mainly in Catalonia and Aragon (prominent examples would include Bahya ben Asher from Segovia and the students of Nahmanides living in the region of Catalonia), where kabbalists were somewhat more conservative. Notably absent from this list is Abraham Abulafia...” (pages 11-12).

To the above books, add the following dissertations:

- Brody, Seth Lance. *HUMAN HANDS DWELL IN HEAVENLY HEIGHTS: WORSHIP AND MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE IN THIRTEENTH-CENTURY KABBALAH* (Ph.D. dissertation, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1991).

“Current discussion of Kabbalistic spirituality, originating with Gershom Scholem, tends to differentiate between the ‘theurgic’ and ‘transformative’ sides of Kabbalistic practice and to present them as constituting divergent goals for mystical intentionality and life. Our analysis of thirteenth-century sources dealing with contemplative prayer and the priestly cult indicate that on the contrary, the theurgic efficacy of a Kabbalist’s worship is a product of his experiential adhesion and absorption into Divinity.” (from the ABSTRACT, p. vii)

- Dauber, Jonathan Victor. *STANDING ON THE HEADS OF PHILOSOPHERS: MYTH AND PHILOSOPHY IN EARLY KABBALAH*. (Ph.D. dissertation, New York: New York University, 2004) —hereafter ***STANDING ON THE HEADS OF PHILOSOPHERS***.

Chapters include “The Opening to Myth in the Thought of Abraham bar Hiyya,” “Myth and Philosophy in *Sefer ha-Bahir*,” “Ascent and Decent” (in *Sefer ha-Bahir*, R. Jacob ben Sheshet, and R. Azriel of Gerona), and “Myth and Discursive Thinking in R. Asher b. David.”

- Goldberg, Joel R. (= Yechiel Shalom Goldberg). *MYSTICAL UNION, INDIVIDUALITY, AND INDIVIDUATION IN PROVENÇAL AND CATALONIAN KABBALAH* (Ph.D. dissertation, New York: New York University, 2001) —hereafter ***MYSTICAL UNION***.

Focusing on the earliest kabbalists (e.g., Isaac the Blind, Ezra ben Solomon, and particularly Azriel of Gerona), Goldberg considers the role of individuality in mystical phenomena, i.e., mystical union and the ritual actions which precipitate it. See below, § 1.b.

## Formative Period

### I. a. Sefer ha-Bahir (BOOK OF BRIGHTNESS):

The earliest work considered “kabbalistic” is *Sefer ha-Bahir*. There are substantial discussions of this text in OK (pp. 35-48, 49-198) and Dan’s JMII (xiv-lvii, 1-18—see below in “Other references”). Translated excerpts are given in EK (pp. 57-69).

Using Scholem’s observations as a starting point, Ronit Meroz has presented her conclusions regarding the three distinct strata of *Sefer ha-Bahir* in several lectures (including “A Bright Light in the East—The Babylonian Stratum in *Sefer ha-Bahir*,” Session: HERMENEUTICAL REFLECTIONS ON EARLY KABBALAH at the Association for Jewish Studies Thirty-fourth Annual Conference, Los Angeles: December 17, 2002) and in her Hebrew article, “A Bright Light in the East: On the Time and Place of Part of *Sefer ha-Bahir*” in *Da’at: A Journal of Jewish Philosophy and Kabbalah* 49 ([Ramat-Gan]: Universitat Bar-Ilan, 2002):

- about half was written in Provence in the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century
- most of the rest was written in the Jewish Babylonian congregation which lived in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries; this stratum has several layers within it and includes *Raza Rabba*
- a few paragraphs were written earlier in the land of Israel, some time before the Babylonian strata

Regarding all this, refer to Meroz’ articles in English:

- “A Journey of Initiation in the Babylonian Layer of *Sefer ha-Bahir*,” in *Studia Hebraica*, Issue no. 7 (Bucharest: The “Goldstein Goren” Center for Hebrew Studies, 2007), on-line at <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=124809>
- “Middle Eastern Origins of Kabbalah,” § B. THE BABYLONIAN STRATUM OF THE BOOK *BAHIR*, in *The Journal for the Study of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry*, VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1, SECTION 1: ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH (Summer 2007), edited by Zion Zohar, at <http://sephardic.fiu.edu/journal/Summer2007.htm> [DEFUNCT LINK].\*

Fixing a date for *Sefer ha-Bahir* is also taken up in Giulio Busi’s FOREWORD to Saverio Campanini’s edition of Mithridates’ Latin translation of the *Bahir* (noted immediately below). Busi determines that the redaction of the *Bahir* must have been sometime after 1161, namely after Bahya ibn Pakuda’s *Duties of the Heart* and Yehuda HaLevi’s *Kuzari* had been translated from their original Arabic into Hebrew; one, the other, or both are the probable source of the *Bahir*’s “hidden quote” concerning “*whoever frees his heart from worldly occupations*” in its definition of the “*Merkavah* mystic.” Regarding further thematic sources for the *Bahir* coming from the *Kuzari*, Busi notes the likelihood

that Yehudah ha-Lewi’s book influenced directly the redactor of the *Bahir*, since, between the final redaction of this one in Southern France and the translation of the *Kuzari* into Hebrew, there is a demonstrable relation in space and time. As a matter of fact, the highly positive meaning of the heavenly agriculture present in the *Bahir* is quite close to Yehudah ha-Lewi’s theories centered on the election of Israel. (*The Book of Bahir*—page 32)

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\* This paper is now at ACADEMIA: <https://www.academia.edu/2049611/7. The Middle Eastern Origins of Kabbalah>

The notion of *Sefer ha-Bahir*'s being the "first kabbalistic work" has been called into question. Note Jonathan Dauber's conclusion (*Knowledge of God*, page 3): "[T]he *Bahir* did not in fact become known until the thirteenth century and ... its designation as a Kabbalistic work is problematic" (see *Knowledge of God*, CHAPTER FIVE). Daniel Abrams, an acknowledged source for Dauber, raises similar issues, questioning whether *Sefer ha-Bahir* is, in fact, *kabbalistic*—or even a *work* (see *Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory...*, CHAPTER 2, "The Interpolation of Marginal Glosses: 'The *Shekhinah*' and the Theosophic Revisions of Early Manuscripts of the *Book Bahir*").\*

There are six English extended translations of *Sefer ha-Bahir*:

- Campanini, Saverio (ed). *The Book of Bahir: Flavius Mithridates' Latin Translation, the Hebrew Text, & an English Version* [THE KABBALISTIC LIBRARY OF GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA – Giulio Busi, General Editor] (Torino: Nino Aragno Editore, 2005).  
The English version is from the Latin of Mithridates, composed around 1486.
- Collé, E. and Collé, H. *The Bahir/The Brightness: A New Translation with New Insights into One of the Most Important Books of the Kabbalah* ([n.p.]: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014).  
From the Amsterdam (1651) edition.
- Dennis, Geoffrey W. *Sefer ha-Bahir: Selections from The Book of Brilliance, The Classic Text of Early Kabbalah* (Woodbury: Llewellyn Publications, 2017).  
"Drawing from both the [Reuven] Margolioth (*Sefer ha-Bahir* [Jerusalem: Mossad Rav Kook, 1994] and [Daniel] Abrams (*The Book Bahir...* [Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 1991 and 1994]) texts, for this collection I have selected fifty-one of the most piquant and ... accessible passages, enough to allow the reader to see the full scope of the *Bahir*'s interests, but sparing the reader both the seriously fragmented sections and often repetitive nature of the complete work" (—page 8).
- Kaplan, Aryeh. *The Bahir: An Ancient Kabbalistic Text attributed to Nehuniah ben HaKana / 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E.* (New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1979).  
Based primarily on the edition by Reuven Margolioth (Jerusalem: Mossad Rav Kook, 1951 and 1994), which "integrat[es] all the readings from three late manuscripts, including words and phrases not found in the early manuscript witnesses."  
(—BAHIR, SEFER HA- [Daniel Abrams, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2008] at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/sefer-ha-bahir>)
- Neugroschel, Joachim. "From the Bahir," in *The Secret Garden*, edited by David Meltzer (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pages 47-96.  
"...translated from the definitive edition prepared by Gershom Scholem," i.e., *Das Buch Bahir* (Berlin: Arthur Scholem, 1923; Leipzig: W. Drugulin, 1923; reprinted, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970).
- Siet, Mark. *(The) Bahir Revealed: Kabbalah via the Keys of Consciousness* (n.p.: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012).  
Translation with extensive commentary. Siet notes at the beginning: "Special thanks for the inspiration of Aryeh Kaplan and his translation of the Bahir that is the basis of all the commentary herein presented."

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\* See also Abrams' "Prolegomenon to a New Edition of the *Book Bahir* – Editorial Practice in the Presentation of Ms, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek 209: An Essay in Method," in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, vol. 16, edited by Daniel Abrams (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2020), pp. 131-156.

Excerpts of the *Bahir* appear in the following:

- Bokser, Ben Zion. *The Jewish Mystical Tradition* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1981): § 7. “Sefer haBahir” (translated excerpts).
- Dan/Kiener. EK (pp. 57-69).
- Dauber, Jonathan. *Knowledge of God*, CHAPTER FIVE: “Investigating God in *Sefer ha-Bahir*.” (Dauber translates and comments on *Bahir* §§ 46, 48, 53, and 96.)
- \_\_\_\_\_. STANDING ON THE HEADS OF PHILOSOPHERS (noted above, page 3):  
     CHAPTER 2, Section D, offers a “Textual Analysis of *Sefer ha-Bahir*, Sections 32-60”  
     CHAPTER 3 translates § 60  
     APPENDIX 2 translates parts of § 32.
- Finkel, Avraham Yaakov. *Kabbalah: Selections from Classic Kabbalistic Works from Raziel HaMalach to the Present Day* (Southfield: Targum Press, 2002), pp. 40-46.  
     Finkel offers *Bahir* §§ 1, 3, 125, 126, 175, 176, and 195,
- Hoffman, Edward (ed.). *The Kabbalah Reader: A Sourcebook of Visionary Judaism*, foreword by Arthur Kurzweil (Boston – London: Trumpeter/Shambhala Publications, 2010).  
     Hoffman includes *Bahir* §§ 1, 2, 3, 5, 194, and 195.
- Horowitz, Daniel M. *A Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism Reader* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2016), pages 76-80.  
     With commentary, Horowitz translates §§ 23, 119, 125, and 195.
- Matt, Daniel C. *The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994). Matt translates §§ 22 (THE COSMIC TREE), 104 (THE RIGHTEOUS PILLAR), and 150 (STUMBLING).
- Stern, David, “Parables from *Sefer ha-Bahir*,” in *Rabbinic Fantasies*, edited by David Stern and Mark Jay Mirsky (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), pp. 203-213.  
     Seven passages translated: Pars. 3, 37, 38, 54, 76, 131-2, and 181. based on the Hebrew edition of Reuven Margoloth (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1951) with recourse to Alan Arkush’s translation of excerpts in Gershom Scholem’s *Origins of the Kabbalah*.

NOTE: *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 1996-2020)—hereafter ***Kabbalah: Journal***, followed by the volume number, editor(s), and date.

Studies:

- Abrams, Daniel. “Prolegomenon to a New Edition of the *Book Bahir* – Editorial Practice in the Presentation of Ms, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek 209: An Essay in Method,” in *Kabbalah: Journal*, vol. 16, edited by Daniel Abrams (2020), pp. 131-156.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “The Condensation of the Symbol ‘*Shekhinah*’ in the Manuscripts of the *Book Bahir*,” in *Kabbalah: Journal*, vol. 16, edited by D. Abrams and A. Elqayam (2007); a revised version of this paper appears as “The Interpolation of Marginal Glosses: ‘The *Shekhinah*’ and Theosophic Revisions of Early Manuscripts of the *Book Bahir*” = CHAPTER 2 of *Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory: Methodologies of Textual Scholarship and Editorial Practice in the Study of Jewish Mysticism* (Los Angeles – Jerusalem: Cherub Press – The Magnes Press, 2010—2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition 2014).
- Dan, Joseph. *Gershom Scholem and the Mystical Dimension of Jewish History* [MODERN JEWISH MASTERS SERIES #2] (New York: New York University Press, 1988), CHAPTER 5. “The Enigmatic *Book Bahir*.”
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Midrash and the Dawn of Kabbalah,” in *Midrash and Literature*, edited by G. Hartman and S. Budick (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); also in JMII: CHAPTER I.

- Dauber, Jonathan. *Knowledge of God*:
  - CHAPTER 5. “Investigating God in *Sefer ha-Bahir*”
- \_\_\_\_\_. STANDING ON THE HEADS OF PHILOSOPHERS (noted above, page 3):
  - CHAPTER 2. MYTH AND PHILOSOPHY IN SEFER HA-BAHIR
  - CHAPTER 3: A. SEFER HA-BAHIR: § 30
  - APPENDIX 2. § 32 OF SEFER HA-BAHIR IN LIGHT OF EARLY KABBALISTIC SOURCES
- Esmail, Waheeda. THE TRANSCENDENCE AND IMMANENCE OF THE DIVINE IN THE BAHIR AND IBN AL-ARABI’S THOUGHT. MA Thesis (Montreal: Concordia University, 2011).
- Eylon, Dina Ripsman. *Reincarnation in Jewish Mysticism and Gnosticism* [JEWISH STUDIES, Volume 25] (Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2003).
- Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003): CHAPTER 10. A. I. THE MYTHIC DISCOURSE OF THE BAHIR (pp. 256-260).
- Green, Arthur. *Keter: The Crown of God in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997): Chapter Thirteen. “*Sefer ha-Bahir*.”
- Idel, Moshe. *Ascensions on High in Jewish Mysticism: Pillars, Lines, and Ladders* (Budapest – New York: Central European University Press, 2005): Chapter 2, § 3, “The Pillar in the Book Bahir.”
- Krzok, Paul. “A Look at the Bahir,” in *The Hermetic Journal*, Number 22, edited by Adam McLean (Edinburgh: Winter 1983).
- Lehmann, O. H. “The Theology of the Mystical Book Bahir, in *Studia Patristica* I (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957).
- McGaha, Michael. “The *Sefer ha-Bahir* and Andalusian Sufism,” in *Medieval Encounters*, Volume 3, Number 1 (Leiden – New York: E. J. Brill, 1997), pages 20-57.
- Neubauer, A. “The Bahir and the Zohar,” in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, ORIGINAL SERIES, vol. 4 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1892).
- Schäfer, Peter. *Mirror of His Beauty: Feminine Images of God from the Bible to the Early Kabbalah* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002): Chapter 6, “The Shekhinah in the Bahir” (pages 118-134).
- Scholem, Gershom. *Kabbalah* [articles from *ENCYCLOPEDIA JUDAICA*] (Jerusalem -New York: Keter Publishing House/Times Books, 1974; rpt. New York: Dorset Press, 1987): (article) “*Sefer ha-Bahir*.”
- \_\_\_\_\_. *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965): Chapter 3. “Kabbalah and Myth,” § II.
- Segol, Marla. “Feeling and Wisdom in the *Sefer Bahir*,” in *English Language Notes*, vol. 56, no. 1 (Duke University Press, 2018), pp. 153-168.
- Wolfson, Elliot R. “Before Alef/Where Beginnings End,” in *Beginning/Again: Toward a Hermeneutics of Jewish Texts*, edited by Aryeh Cohen and Shaul Magid (New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2002).
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Hebraic and Hellenic Conceptions of Wisdom in *Sefer ha-Bahir*,” in *Poetics Today*, volume 19, number 1: HELLENISM AND HEBRAISM RECONSIDERED: THE POETICS OF CULTURAL INFLUENCE AND EXCHANGE I, edited by David Stern (Durham: Duke University Press, Spring 1998).
- \_\_\_\_\_. “The Tree That Is All: Jewish-Christian Roots of a Kabbalistic Symbol in *Sefer ha-Bahir*,” in (1) (idem) *Along the Path: Studies in Kabbalistic Myth, Symbolism and Hermeneutics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), and (2) *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, vol. 3, issue 1 [Special Issue: STUDIES IN JEWISH MYSTICISM, ESOTERICISM, AND HASIDISM] (Yverdon: Harwood Academic Publishers GmbH, 1993).

i. b. Provence:

The fragments of material that were to become *Sefer ha-Bahir* made their way to Provence where they fed the development of a mystical school, ca. 1200. This school's second generation was headed by R. Isaac the Blind (in Hebrew: Rabbi Yitzhak Saggi Nehor), *i.e.*, Isaac ben Abraham of Posquières (d. 1235), "...the first Jewish scholar whom we know by name that dedicated all his creative powers to the field of Kabbalah" (Dan's introduction to EK, p. 31). On Isaac the Blind, see EK (pp. 31-4, translations on pp. 71-86), and OK (pp. 248-309).

R. Isaac's major work, *Commentary on SEFER YEZIRAH*, "the first systematic treatise of Kabbalah," is fully analyzed and translated by Mark Brian Sendor in *THE EMERGENCE OF PROVENÇAL KABBALAH: RABBI ISAAC THE BLIND'S COMMENTARY ON SEFER YEZIRAH*, Volumes I & II (Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1994). In *MYSTICAL UNION* (noted above, page 3), Yechiel Shalom Goldberg analyzes key passages from R. Isaac the Blind's *Commentary on SEFER YEZIRAH* as well as passages from the works of R. Isaac's nephew, R. Asher ben David, and R. Azriel of Gerona (see below).

Further references:

- Halbertal, Moshe. *Concealment and Revelation: Esotericism in Jewish Thought and Its Philosophical Implications*, translated by Jackie Feldman (Princeton – Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007—hereafter ***Concealment and Revelation***): CHAPTER 9, "From Transmission to Writing: Hinting, Leaking, and Orthodoxy in Early Kabbalah."
- Koren, Sharon Faye. "Kabbalistic Physiology: Isaac the Blind, Nahmanides, and Moses de Leon on Menstruation," in *AJS Review*, vol. 28, no. 2 (Cambridge: Association for Jewish Studies, 2004); and Koren's *Forsaken: The Menstruant in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2011): PART II: MEDIEVAL KABBALAH, chapter 7.
- Matt, Daniel C. *The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994).  
Matt includes excerpts from Isaac's commentary on SY.
- Zinberg, Israel. *A History of Jewish Literature*, Volume III: THE STRUGGLE OF MYSTICISM AND TRADITION AGAINST PHILOSOPHICAL RATIONALISM (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973): CHAPTER 1, "The Mystics of Provence."

Also circulating in Provence in the early-to-mid 1200s were the writings of the *Iyyun* (CONTEMPLATION) school. The *kabbalah* of these strange texts is quite different from the doctrines which developed into classical *kabbalah*. See EK (p. 26, translations on pp. 43-56, "Book of Speculation," "Fountain of Wisdom," and "Explanation of the Four-Lettered Name"), OK (pp. 309-363), and especially Mark Verman's study, *The Books of Contemplation: Medieval Jewish Mystical Sources* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992—a revision of Verman's Ph.D. dissertation, *SIFREI HA-IYYUN*, delivered at Harvard, 1984), which includes translations of several major texts of this group.

On the *Iyyun* school, see

- Dan, Joseph. *The 'Unique Cherub' Circle: A School of Mystics and Esoterics in Medieval Germany* [TEXTS AND STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN JUDAISM, 15] (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999); comments regarding the *Iyyun* school, or "circle," appear throughout.



- Grözinger, Karl E. “Handling of Holy Traditions as a Path to Mystical Unity in the *Kitve ha-‘Iyyun*,” in *Rashi 1040-1990: Congres européen des Études juives*, ed. by Gabrielle Sed-Rajna (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1993).
- Verman, Mark. “The Evolution of the Circle of Contemplation,” in *Gershom Scholem’s MAJOR TRENDS IN JEWISH MYSTICISM 50 Years After*, edited by J. Dan and P. Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993).

1. c. Gerona (Catalonia):

The most prolific circle of kabbalists from the period before the *Zohar* was that of Gerona, which followed up on the teachings of R. Isaac the Blind. The primary figures of this group were (1) R. Ezra ben Solomon and (2) R. Azriel ben Menahem (Azriel of Gerona), who established a school which included (3) R. Moses ben Nahman (Nahmanides) and (4) R. Jacob ben Sheshet.

On the Gerona circle, see EK (pp. 34-36), OK (pp. 365-475), and Moshe Idel’s article, “Some Remarks on Ritual and Mysticism in Geronese Kabbalah,” in *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, vol. 3, issue 1 (Harwood Academic Publishers GmbH, 1993).

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R. Ezra’s detailed kabbalistic commentary on the meanings of the *mizvot*.
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- EK pp. 87-108, “Explanation of the Ten Sefirot” and “Commentary to Talmudic Legends.”
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4. R. Jacob ben Sheshet
- EK pp. 109-50, “The Book of Faith and Reliance,” and “Response of Correct Answers.”
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5. *Sefer ha-Temunah* [ShT]

A treatise often cited by the Gerona circle, ShT expounds upon the doctrine of the *shemittot* (COSMIC CYCLES). References: OK pp. 460-75; and G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, pp. 77-86.

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6. *Sefer ha-Yashar* [ShY]

Scholem placed this tract “in the circle of the Kabbalists of Gerona in approximately 1260.” Indeed, it is generally believed that ShY was written by a kabbalist who attempted to render his kabbalistic ideas more acceptable—and accessible—by using the language of ethics and philosophy. Shimon Shokek argues for Rabbi Jonah Gerondi (13<sup>th</sup> century) as the possible, if not probable, author. Some traditions attribute ShY to Rabbenu Tam from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

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7. *A Commentary to the Ten Sefirot*

In “A Commentary to the Ten Sefirot from Early Thirteenth-Century Catalonia” (in *Kabbalah: Journal*, vol. 30, edited by Daniel Abrams, 2013), Abrams offers a synoptic edition of six manuscripts, with an English translation, based on MS London Reg. 16 A x (Margoloth 755), chosen “because it lacks many of the scribal errors that mar the other manuscripts” (page 15). “In some manuscripts there is an attribution to Nachmanides which was quite common with short, anonymous texts which were copied in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries” (p. 11).

1.d. Castile:

In the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a circle of kabbalists grew around the brothers R. Jacob and R. Isaac ha-Cohen (or Kohen), along with their pupil Moses ben Solomon ben Simeon of Burgos. Scholem refers to their developments as “the Gnostic reaction”—reaction, that is, to the philosophic leanings of the Gerona mystics (ref. Scholem, *Kabbalah* [1974], pp. 55-6). Joseph Dan points out, however, that

[t]he two brothers presented two different conceptions of the celestial and divine worlds. While Rabbi Jacob followed the traditions of the merkavah exegesis of Rabbi Eleazar of Worms and other earlier Jewish scholars, Rabbi Isaac adopted the basic concepts of the ten divine emanations, the *sefirot*, as described in the writings of Rabbi Isaac the Blind of Provence and Rabbi Azriel of Gerona. To their teachings, Rabbi Isaac added a new, revolutionary dimension: he claimed that parallel to the *sefirot* on the holy side, the right, there are evil *sefirot* on the left. (—Dan, “Conflicting Views of the Origins of Evil...,” in *Envisioning Judaism* [noted immediately below], page 823)

## References to the Cohens:

- EK pp. 36-7; translations 151-182, “Explanations of the Letters” and “Treatise on the Left Emanation”; OK pp. 355-64
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Dan devotes the last half of his paper to “The Theodicy of Rabbi Moses of Burgos in *The Pillar on the Left*,” offering a comparative analysis of this work and Rabbi Isaac’s *Treatise on the Emanations on the Left*.

- \_\_\_\_\_. “The Emergence of Messianic Mythology in 13<sup>th</sup>-Century Kabbalah in Spain,” in *Occident to Orient: A Tribute to the Memory of A. Scheiber*, edited by Robert Dan (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado/ Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988). Also JMII: Chapter 9.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Samael, Lilith, and the Concept of Evil in Early Kabbalah,” in *AJS Review*, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Association of Jewish Studies, 1980); in *Essential Papers on Kabbalah*, edited by Lawrence Fine (New York: New York University Press, 1995); also in JMII: Ch. 11.
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On Castilian *kabbalah* further, see

- Abrams, Daniel. “Metatron, the Lesser Lord, the Angel Called Elohim – A Kabbalistic Treatise from Thirteenth-Century Castile: Text, Translation and Commentary,” in *Kabbalah: Journal*, vol. 34, edited by Daniel Abrams (2016), pages 7-26.
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- Lachter, Hartley. “The Politics of Secrets: Thirteenth-Century Kabbalah in Context,” in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 101, No. 4 (Philadelphia: Herbert D. Katz Center of Advanced Judaic Studies, 2011), pp. 502-510.

Kanarfogel’s article leads us to a later phase of Castilian *kabbalah*—the subject of Hartley Lachter’s *Kabbalistic Revolution* (see above, page 3), which treats the writings of Joseph Gikatilla, Moses de Leon, Joseph of Hamadan, and David ben Yehudah he-Hasid—what we call here the “Developmental Period.”

## Developmental Period

2. a. Abraham Abulafia: Abulafia is the focus of Scholem's 4<sup>th</sup> lecture in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. Unlike the developing theosophical stream of *kabbalah*, Abulafia sought a system of ecstatic experiential *kabbalah*. Refer to the following:

ABULAFIAN TEXTS in translation:

- Abulafia, Abraham. *Chaye Ha-Olam Ha-Ba – Life in the World to Come*, translated by Yaron Ever Hadani and Sharron Shatil (Belize City: Providence University, 2008).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Gan Naoul – Locked Garden*, edited by Fabrizio Del Tin ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Get Ha-Shemot – Divorce of the Names*, translated by Sharron Shatil (Belize City: Providence University, 2007); edited by Fabrizio Del Tin ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Imrei Shefer – Words of Beauty*, translated by Alexandru Munteanu (n.p.: David Smith, LLC, 2016); edited by Fabrizio Del Tin ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Meditations on the Divine Name*, translated by Avi Solomon (self-published: Lulu.com, 2011); republished as *The Heart of Jewish Meditation: Abraham Abulafia's Path of the Divine Names* (Hadean Press, 2013 – <http://www.hadeanpress.com/>); available as a Kindle edition (Amazon Digital Services, 2012).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ner Elohim – Candle of God*, translated by Sharron Shatil (Belize City: Providence University, 2007); edited by Fabrizio Del Tin ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ohr Ha-Shechel – The Light of the Intellect*, integral edition in English and Hebrew, translated by Avi Solomon, Adam Shohom, and Sharron Shatil (Belize City: Providence University, 2008); edited by Fabrizio Del Tin ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Otzar Eden Ganuz – Concealed Treasure of Eden*, translated by Alexandru Munteanu [four volumes: Tome 1 of 4, Tome 2 of 4, etc.] (n.p.: David Smith, LLC, 2016); edited by Fabrizio Del Tin ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sefer Ha-Chesek (or Cheshek) – Book of Desire*, translated by Alexandru Munteanu (n.p.: David Smith, LLC, 2016); edited by Fabrizio Del Tin ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sefer Ha-Melamed – The Book of the Master*, edited by Fabrizio Del Tin (eUniversity.pub, 2018).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sefer Ha-Ot – The Book of the Sign*, translated by Efrat Levy; integral edition in English, Hebrew, and Aramaic (Belize City: Providence University, 2006); edited by Fabrizio Del Tin ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sefer Ha-Tzeruf – The Book of Permutation* (n.p.: David Smith, LLC, 2016); edited by Fabrizio Del Tin ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).

While, it is apparent that this work reflects his teachings, Abulafia did not write this work, which is generally referred to as “the anonymous *Sefer ha-Tzeruf*” (e.g., by Moshe Idel, “TA’ANUG: Erotic Delights from Kabbalah to Hasidim,” in *Hidden Intercourse*, page 126—see below under “Idel”). Even so, Aryeh Kaplan states,

Abulafia wrote much about permutation and combination of letters, devoting his entire *Sefer HaTzeruf* (BOOK OF BLENDINGS) to the subject. There, however, he writes very little regarding the actual method in which one makes use of such permutations. There is, however, one place where Abulafia goes into this at length, and this is in his *Otzar Eden HaGanuz*.

(—*Meditation and Kabbalah*, page 83)

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sheva Netivot Ha-Torah – The Seven Paths of Torah*, integral edition in English and Hebrew (Belize City: Providence University, 2006); edited by Fabrizio Del Tin ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sitrei Torah: Secrets of the Torah*, volumes 1 and 2, translated by Yaron Eden Hadani and Alexandru Munteanu (ENGLISH EDITION – Belize City: Providence University, 2009); edited by Fabrizio Del Tin ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).



- \_\_\_\_\_. “The Book of the Sign,” in *Revelation and Redemption: Jewish Documents of Deliverance from the Fall of Jerusalem to the Death of Nahmanides*, translated & edited by George W. Buchanan (Dillsboro: Western North Carolina Press, 1978): pp. 293-307.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Path of the Names: Writings by Abraham ben Samuel Abulafia*, edited by David Meltzer (Berkeley – London: Trigram • Tree, 1976).  
 “From *Sha’eri Zedek* [*Gates of Justice*],” “The Question of Prophecy,” and selections from *Hayei Olam ha-Ba* [*The Book of Eternal Life or The Book of the Life of the Afterlife*], and *Sefer ha-Ot* [*The Book of the Letter*].  
 See also the section on Abulafia (§ 1) in *Tree : 1 – 127*, edited by David Meltzer (Santa Barbara: Christopher Books, Winter 1970), pp. 128-153, which contains an article on Abulafia by Gershom Scholem, the same translation of *Sha’eri Zedek* as in *the Path of the Names*, the fourth, fifth and final section of the sixth sections of *Sefer ha-Ot*, “Be Prepared for Thy God” and “2 Prophetic Poems” by Abulafia.
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 “In particular, Rabbi Albotini followed a system advanced by Abraham ben Samuel Abulafia that is generally referred to as ‘ecstatic’ or ‘prophetic’ Kabbalah, as outlined in Abulafia’s *Sefer ha-Ot* (BOOK OF THE SIGN).” (—PREFACE, page viii)  
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The Scholars Press edition of *Book of Mirrors* is a slightly revised version of Matt’s Ph.D. dissertation, *SEFER MAR’OT HA-ZOVE’OT BY RABBI DAVID BEN YEHUDAH HE-HASID: TEXT AND STUDY* (Waltham: Brandeis University, 1978), available from UMI at [www.il.proquest.com](http://www.il.proquest.com)—easier to obtain than the book.  
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2. e. Menahem Recanati: "The first kabbalist to quote frequently and at length from the Zohar was Italian, Rabbi Menahem Recanati" (—Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, vol. 1, pages 20-21). Recanati also drew on the Geronese kabbalists.
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A page-and-a-half excerpt from Recanati's *Commentary on the Torah* (ff. 3<sup>v</sup>) is given in English (pages 217-8) and Hebrew (page 233), and "thematically summarized" (pages 218-9) in CHAPTER SEVEN, "The Beginning and End: *Bereshit* and the Sabbath."
  - Cordovero, Moses. *Pardes Rimonim: Orchard of Pomegranates, Parts 1-4*, integral edition in English, Hebrew, and Aramaic, translated by Elyakim Getz (Belize City: Providence University, 2007), pages 145-150.  
"This chapter is a transcription of Rabbi Mena'hem Recanati's view on the nature of the *Sefirot*, whether they are co-substantial with God or only vessels" (—Part 4, CHAPTER 1, ¶1)
  - Idel, Moshe. There are numerous references to Recanati in Idel's English works.\* See, in particular,
    - *Absorbing Perfections* (New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2002), CHAPTER 4, § IV: GOD AS TORAH OR TORAH AS GOD and § V: SOME REFLECTIONS ON DECONSTRUCTION (pages 122-8)
    - *Kabbalah and Eros* (New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2005), CHAPTER 3, § 5: MENAHEM RECANATI'S TREATMENT OF THE DIVINE CONCUBINE (pages 122-5).

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\* In Hebrew, there is Moshe Idel's *R. Menahem Rekanati, ha-mekubal* (Tel Aviv, Schocken, 1998), which is the first of an intended two-volume study.

- *Kabbalah in Italy 1280-1510: A Survey* (New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2011), chapters 7 through 10.
  - Ogren, Brian. *Renaissance and Rebirth: Reincarnation in Early Modern Italian Kabbalah* (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2009):  
Recanati is mentioned throughout Ogren’s book. On Recanati as source for Elia Hayyim ben Binyamin of Genazzano, see CHAPTER FIVE, pages 181-184.
  - Recanati, Menahem. *Commentary on the Daily Prayers: Flavius Mithridates’ Latin Translation, the Hebrew Text, and an English Version*, edited with introduction and notes by Giacomo Corazzol, two volumes. [THE KABBALISTIC LIBRARY OF GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA 3, Giulio Busi, general editor] Torino: Nino Aragno Editore, 2008.  
This two-volume set offers the only translation of a complete text by Recanati in English; the introduction contains the only substantial discussion of Recanati in English.  
See my review of this book in ADDENDUM F of *The Study of Christian Cabala*, at <http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Biblios/ccineb.pdf>
  - Stow, Sandra Debenedetti. “The Modality of Interaction between Jewish and Christian Thought in the Middle Ages: The Problem of Free Will and Divine Wisdom in Dante Alighieri and Menahem Recanti as a Case Study,” in *Interaction between Judaism and Christianity in History, Religion, Art and Literature*, edited by M. Poorthuis, J. Schwartz, and J. Turner (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2009), pages 165-217.
  - Wirszubski, Chaim. *Pico della Mirandola’s Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*. Cambridge – London: Harvard University Press, 1989.  
In the process of identifying sources for points of Pico della Mirandola’s *kabbalah*, Wirszubski quotes—in English—Recanati’s *Commentary on the Torah* dozens of times. These translations, however, are not rendered from the Latin translation of Mithridates (Pico’s translator), which is lost, but rather from Recanati’s Hebrew text.
2. f. Isaac of Acre (or Acco): Isaac of Acre is of particular interest given that he drew from both the Abulafian ecstatic school and the Catalanian/Castilian theosophic school, which included Nahmanides and the *Zohar*.
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## Addendum: Pre-Kabbalistic Streams of Jewish Mysticism\*

TO FILL THE SPAN between the close of the Old Testament and early Kabbalah, a much-simplified selection of streams representative of—or having influence upon—Jewish mysticism can be outlined thus:

1. Early beginnings
  - a. Apocalypses/Pseudepigrapha (ca. 200 BCE onward)
  - b. Philo (ca. 20 BCE to 50 CE)
  - c. Qumran (= Dead Sea Scrolls: 100 BCE onward)
  - d. Rabbinic and synagogue traditions (100 CE onward)
  - e. Miscellaneous magic texts and other “occult” works
2. *Merkabah* and *hekhalot* (200 CE onward)
3. *Sefer Yezirah* (between 200 and 900 CE)
4. Transition
  - a. Geonic period (600-1000)
  - b. Rishonic period (1000-1500)
  - c. Early commentaries on *Sefer Yezirah*
  - d. Religious philosophers
    - i. Solomon ibn Gabirol (1020-1070)
    - ii. Judah Halevi (1075-1141)
    - iii. Abraham ibn Ezra (1089-1164)
5. *Hasidei Ashkenaz* (German Hasidism: ca 1170-1240)

With his chapters on Ezekiel, Enoch literature and related material, Qumran, Philo, the rabbinic “Cycle of the Seven Stories,” *merkabah* passages in the Talmud(s), and the *merkabah* mystics, Peter Schäfer covers our §§ 1. a, b, c, d and § 2 in *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).<sup>†</sup>

### 1. Early beginnings

Since Jewish mysticism is ultimately based on the Hebrew Bible, the beginning, really, is the *Tanakh*, parts of which are more “mystical” than others. More important to our line of inquiry is that certain themes were developed more than others for a variety of mystical purposes. By Talmudic times, two branches of the mysteries were well known and defined: the *work of creation*, i.e. developments of the first chapters of Genesis, and the *work of the chariot*, developments of Ezekiel and, to a lesser extent, Isaiah.

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\* Refer to my “Kabbalah Study: Jewish Mysticism in English” (1993-1996), appended below, where there is a section offering suggestions for a survey of Jewish mysticism, one segment of which parallels the outline presented here. Alternative titles are discussed.

My initial efforts (in the early 1990s) to research the background of Jewish mysticism commenced with Norman Cohn’s *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* (New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 1993).

† Note Daniel M. Horowitz’ anthology, *A Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism Reader* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2016) which commences not with *Sefer ha-Bahir* but with the Bible, the apocalypses, and the Talmud.

a. Apocalyptic, Wisdom Literature, Pseudepigrapha

Radicalizations of Bible themes appeared in the intertestamental apocalypses, which, when grouped together with a somewhat irregular splay of wisdom literature, psalms, testaments, prayers, and other material, are referred to as the *pseudepigrapha*.

Two fine introductions to apocalyptic are

1. Russell, D. S. *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964).
2. Collins, John J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984; rpt. 1998).

Further, consult Collins' more recent *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature* [OXFORD HANDBOOKS] (Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).<sup>\*\*</sup>

Another strand begun in the Bible, including Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and certain of the Psalms, is *wisdom literature*, which traces its way through the standard extra-canonical set called The Apocrypha (in Ecclesiasticus), through the Pseudepigrapha, and on into the Talmudic Sayings of the Fathers (*Pirqa Aboth*). An enduring treatment of all this is O. S. Rankin's *Israel's Wisdom Literature* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd, 1936; rpt 1954 and 1964; rpt. New York: Schocken Books, 1969). More recent works include Stuart Weeks, *An Introduction to the Study of Wisdom Literature* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), and Robert Alter, *The Wisdom Books: Job Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2012).

A generous compendium of pseudepigrapha (which includes some material which does not really belong under this heading) is *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (OTP), edited by James H. Charlesworth: Volume 1: APOCALYPTIC AND TESTAMENTS; Volume 2: EXPANSIONS... LEGENDS, WISDOM... PRAYERS, ODES, PSALMS, FRAGMENTS (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1983 and 1985). It is a collection of utmost value and far more inclusive than the previous standard, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (APOT), edited by R. H. Charles (2 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913; rpt. 1973).<sup>†</sup>

Supplementing Charlesworth's OTP is *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, Volume 1, edited by Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila, and Alexander Panayotov (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), which expands the scope of the pseudepigrapha even further.

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<sup>\*\*</sup> Also of interest is Collins' *Seers, Sibyls & Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (Leiden – New York – Köln" Brill, 1997).

<sup>†</sup> Charles' APOT includes two items not in Charlesworth: "Pirke Aboth" and "The Fragments of a Zadokite Work." "[T]he former [is omitted from OTP] because it is rabbinic, the latter because it is now recognized to belong among the Dead Sea Scrolls" (—Charlesworth, page xxv).

Find also the important but rarely cited article by Charlesworth, "In the Crucible: The Pseudepigrapha as Biblical Interpretation," in *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation*, edited by J. Charlesworth and C. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); and Andreas Lenhardt's "Pseudepigrapha as Antecedents of Kabbalah: A Selected Bibliography," in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 1997).

b. Philo

Philo, who was the most important Jewish philosopher of the first century, has a somewhat anticlimactic relationship with Jewish mysticism. Thoroughly Hellenized, he begins for us the long, and rather strained, counterpoint between Neoplatonism and Judaism—and, indeed, Jewish mysticism—which simmers right on up to Spinoza and beyond. Of particular use in the present context are the following:

- Bockmuehl, Markus N. A. CHAPTER FOUR: “Philo,” in *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* [WISSENSCHAFTLICHE UNTER-SUCHUNGEN ZUM NEUEN TESTAMENT – 2. Reihe 36] (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1990).
- Borgen, Peder. “Heavenly Ascent in Philo: An Examination of Selected Passages,” in *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation*, edited by J. Charlesworth and C. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).
- Daniélou, Jean. *Philo of Alexandria*, translated by James G. Colbert (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2014)—French original: *Philon d’Alexandrie* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1958).
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- Philo of Alexandria. *The Contemplative Life, The Giants and Selections*, translated by David Winston, preface by John Dillon (New York–Ramsey–Toronto: Paulist Press, 1981).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Works of Philo*, translated by Charles Duke Yonge (London: H. G. Bohn, 1854-1855; RPT Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993).
- Runia, David T. (trans.) *On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses Pogrom* [PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA COMMENTARY SERIES, Number 1] (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005).
- Schäfer, Peter. CHAPTER 5: “Philo: The Ascent of the Soul,” in *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).
- Schenk, Kenneth. *A Brief Guide to Philo* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).
- Seland, Torrey. *Reading Philo: A Handbook to Philo of Alexandria* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014).
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- Winston, David. “Was Philo a Mystic?” in *Studies in Jewish Mysticism*, edited by Joseph Dan and Frank Talmage (Cambridge: Association for Jewish Studies, 1982).
- Yonge, C. D. (trans.) *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993).

## On Neoplatonism:

- Goodman, Lenn E. (ed). *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

c. Qumran

Since so much has been written on the Dead Sea Scrolls, let me suggest just three books to make short work of getting a reliable impression of the Qumran material:

- Garcia Martinez, Florentino. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated. The Qumran Texts in English* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994).
- Shanks, Hershel (ed). *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls. A Reader from the BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY REVIEW* (New York: Random House, 1992).
- VanderKam, James C. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994).

Four other works on the Qumran materials are of interest in the present context, especially the fourth:

- Boccaccini, Gabriele. *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis. The Parting of Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998).
- Davidson, Maxwell J. *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1-36, 72-108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran* [JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY OF PSEUDEPIGRAPHA SERIES, 11] (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).
- Magness, Jodi. *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002).
- Schiffman, Lawrence H. *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls. The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994).

The most “mystical” of the Qumran texts—those having the most in common with subsequent *hekhalot* literature—are the *Berakhot* and the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*. On these, see

- Alexander, Philip. *The Mystical Texts: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and Related Manuscripts* [COMPANION TO THE QUMRAN SCROLLS, 7 / LIBRARY OF SECOND TEMPLE STUDIES, 61] (London – New York: T & T Clark International, 2006).
- Davila, James R. *Liturgical Works* (Grand Rapids – Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000).
- Newsom, Carol A. “Merkabah Exegesis in the Qumran Sabbath Shirot,” in *Journal of Jewish Studies* 38:1 (Cambridge: 1987), pages 11-30.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* [HARVARD SEMITIC STUDIES 27] (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), which is a revised version of Newsom’s Ph.D. dissertation, *4Q SEREK SIROT ’OLAT: EDITION, TRANSLATION, AND COMMENTARY* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1982); see especially Chapter VII. “4Q Sir and the Tradition of the Hekhalot Hymns.”

Studies on the relationship of Qumran to *merkabah/hekhalot* mysticism are touched on in my paper in *Jewish Studies* 52, at HERMETIC KABBALAH, and at Academia.edu: “The Study of *Merkabah* Mysticism and *Hekhalot* Literature in English” (look for entries under “2004 • Elijah” and “2006 • Alexander”). This article is given fuller notice below in § 2.



d. Rabbinic and synagogue traditions\*

Bits and pieces of the “mystery” are scattered throughout the rabbinic writings following the themes mentioned (*creation* and *chariot*), along with others (angels and demons, mystical exegesis on various topics, etc.) Some material might be cast more into the category of “legend,” but here the allusions can be suggestive and significant. It is difficult to pin down a few books to represent this phase of development; with recent publications on *midrashim* and other rabbinic literature, a full list might contain dozens of titles. Given our track, however, see the following:

- Chernus, Ira. *Mysticism in Rabbinic Judaism* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1982).
- Halperin, David. *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature* [AMERICAN ORIENTAL SERIES, vol. 62] (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1980).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Faces of the Chariot* [TEXTE UND STUDIEN ZUM ANTIKEN JUDENTUM, 16] (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1988).
- Patai, Raphael. *Gates to the Old City: A Book of Jewish Legends* (New York: Avon Books, 1980): the *midrash* sections.
- Urbach, Ephraim E. *The Sages. Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975; rpt. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1987); see especially
  - Chapter VI. “Magic and Miracle”
  - Chapter VII. “The Power of the Divine Name”
  - Chapter VIII. “The Celestial Retinue”
  - Chapter IX. “He Who Spoke and the World Came into Being”
  - pp. 578-80.

e. Miscellaneous magic texts & other “occult” works

Full studies include Gideon Bohak’s *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Yuval Harari’s *Jewish Magic before the Rise of Kabbalah* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017), and Part I of Michael D. Swartz’ *The Mechanics of Providence: The Workings of Ancient Jewish Magic and Mysticism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018).

For a detailed bibliography on Jewish magic, see the one once maintained by Scott Noegel at the INTERNET ARCHIVE *Wayback Machine*:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20151004083815/http://faculty.washington.edu/snoegel/JewishMagicBibliography.pdf>

or the appendix to my “The Study of *Merkabah* Mysticism and *Hekhalot* Literature in English.” For starters, refer to the following survey articles:

- Alexander, P. S. “Incantations and Books of Magic,” in Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.—A.D. 135)*, A New English Version revised and edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar, and M. Goodman (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd, 1986): volume III, part 1, pp. 342-79.
- Idel, Moshe. “On Judaism, Jewish Mysticism and Magic,” in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*, edited by P. Schäfer and H. Kippenberg (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

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\* Noticeably absent here is reference to the Talmud. See the recommendations in my 1996 essay, “Kabbalah Study – Jewish Mysticism in English” (appended below), page 49.

- Schäfer, Peter. “Jewish Magic Literature in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages,” in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. XLI, no. 1 (1990).
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Magic and Religion in Ancient Judaism,” in *Envisioning Magic*.

## 2. Merkabah and hekhalot literature

Refer to my bibliographic essay,

- “Notes on the Study of *Merkabah* Mysticism and *Hekhalot* Literature in English,” in *Jewish Studies* 52 (Jerusalem: Journal of the World Union of Jewish Studies, 2017), ENGLISH SECTION, pages 35\*-112\*, and at <http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Biblios/mmhie.pdf> or [https://www.academia.edu/4881092/Notes\\_on\\_the\\_Study\\_of\\_Merkabah\\_Mysticism\\_and\\_Hekhalot\\_Literature\\_in\\_English\\_-\\_full\\_text](https://www.academia.edu/4881092/Notes_on_the_Study_of_Merkabah_Mysticism_and_Hekhalot_Literature_in_English_-_full_text)

## 3. Sefer Yezirah

Refer to my bibliographic essay,

- “Notes on Editions of *Sefer Yezirah* in English,” at <http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Biblios/syie.pdf> or [https://www.academia.edu/22875900/Notes\\_on\\_Editions\\_of\\_Sefer\\_Yezirah\\_in\\_English](https://www.academia.edu/22875900/Notes_on_Editions_of_Sefer_Yezirah_in_English)

## 4. Transition

### a. Geonic period

It is generally thought that the Geonic period left little evidence of theosophical development. Apocalyptic, *merkabah*, and rabbinic writings continued to exercise authority, this material being compiled and redacted with little being added to the existing traditions. In this period, however, magical works circulated and grew. Joseph Dan writes, “The Geonic period, from the sixth to tenth centuries, is a period which seems to be outside the realm of the history of Jewish thought. ... [I]t still retains the image of being a half-millennium almost completely devoid of any Hebrew works on theology or ethics. This image is not completely true.”\*

Refer to Scholem’s *Kabbalah*, pp. 30-5: “Mysticism in the Geonic Period.” See also Klaus Herrmann, “Jewish Mysticism in the Geonic Period: The Prayer of Rav Hamnuna Sava,” in *Jewish Studies between the Disciplines: Papers in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday* (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2003)—also in *Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity*, edited by Shaul Shaked [IJS STUDIES IN JUDAICA, 4](Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2005), pp. 171-212.

An example of a work from this period is *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* (CHAPTERS OF RABBI ELIEZER), which has been translated and annotated by Gerald Friedlander (London: 1916; rpt. New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1981 [4<sup>th</sup> ed]).

### b. Rishonic period

Among the *Rishonim* were the *Tosafists*, rabbis who developed “additions” to the Talmud, *i.e.*, additions to Rashi. For our purposes, see “Peering through the Lattices”: *Mystical, Magical, and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period* by Ephraim Kanarfogel (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000).

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\* *The ‘Unique Cherub’ Circle* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), page 17.

c. Commentaries on Sefer Yezirah

For a review of English sources on these commentaries, see my “Notes on Editions of *Sefer Yezirah* in English,” PART 3, noted above, § 3.

d. Religious philosophers\*

*A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy* by Isaac Husik (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1916; rpt. 1941) is a classic, but Husik grants only perfunctory mention to *kabbalah* in the opening strains of his conclusion. The same is generally true of *Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages* by Raphael Jospe (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2009). *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages* by Colette Sirat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) serves our purpose better, for it pays some attention to how *kabbalah* fits in.

For treatments which are more focused on *kabbalah*, see Elliot R. Wolfson’s “Jewish Mysticism: A Philosophical Overview,” in *History of Jewish Philosophy*, edited by Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman (London – New York: Routledge, 1997), and Hava Tirosh-Samuels’ “Philosophy and Kabbalah: 1200-1600,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Ernst Müller (1880-1954), in *History of Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford: East and West Library, 1946; rpt. New York: Yesod Publishers, n.d. [ca. 1960]), writes (pp. 73-74):

In Spain the Cabbalah assumed a more philosophical form, due to the influence of the religious philosophy which was already fully developed in that country. There are numerous points of contact between it and the work of the three great thinkers Jehudah Halevi, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, and Abraham Ibn Ezra. The first-named devoted some space to the *Sefer Yezirah* in his great work *Cuzari*. Gabirol as a neo-Platonist has many resemblances with the Cabbalah. ... Finally Abraham Ibn Ezra made mystical numerical and literal analyses of the Name of God, particularly in his writing *Yesod Mora*...

i. On ibn Gabirol, refer to

- Loewe, Raphael. *Ibn Gabirol* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1989)  
An analysis of ibn Gabirol’s life and writings. Included is a full translation of *Keter Malkut* (ROYAL CROWN), which Müller calls Gabirol’s great “cosmological hymn.”
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Ibn Gabirol’s Treatment of Sources in *Kether Malkuth*,” in *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History Presented to Alexander Altmann on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, edited by Siegfried Stein and Raphael Loewe ([Tuscaloosa]: University of Alabama Press, 1979).

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\* According to Abraham Abulafia, Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed* is a profound mystical text. Be that as it may, Maimonides is not generally ranked among those who contributed to the development of the *kabbalah*. Nonetheless, he is considered *esoteric*—a euphemism perhaps for *elite* or *elitist*. See James Arthur Diamond’s *Maimonides and the Hermeneutics of Concealment, Deciphering Scripture and Midrash in THE GUIDE OF THE PERPLEXED* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), and Marvin Fox’s excellent *Interpreting Maimonides* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

Further see Moshe Idel, “Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed* and the Kabbalah,” in *Jewish History*, volume 18, nos. 2-3 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004)—an issue “Commemorating the Eight-Hundredth Anniversary of Maimonides’ Death”; and Menachem Kellner, *Maimonides’ Confrontation with Mysticism* (Oxford – Portland: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007).

In his brief foreword to *Six Treatises Attributed to Maimonides*, translated and annotated from the Hebrew editions by Fred Rosner, MD (Northvale – London: Jason Aronson Inc., 1991), Rabbi Moshe Greenes argues that Maimonides was “steeped in Kabbalah.”

- *Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol*, translated by Peter Cole (Princeton - Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- Pessin, Sarah. *Ibn Gabirol's Theology of Desire: Matter and Method in Jewish Medieval Neoplatonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Solomon Ibn Gabirol," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ibn-gabirol/> (published 2010)
- Wise, Stephen S. *The Improvement of the Moral Qualities: AN ETHICAL TREATISE OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY BY SOLOMON IBN GABIROL...WITH A TRANSLATION...* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1902; rpt. Palala Press, 2015).

Also see

- Idel, Moshe. "Jewish Philosophy and Kabbalah in Spain," in *Sephardic & Mizrahi Jewry: From the Golden Age of Spain to Modern Times* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).
  - *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought*, edited by Lenn E. Goodman (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992):
    - Dillon, John M. "Solomon Ibn Gabirol's Doctrine of Intelligible Matter"
    - Mathis, C. K. "Parallel Structures in the Metaphysics of Iamblichus and Ibn Gabirol"
    - McGinn, Bernard. "Ibn Gabirol: The Sage among Schoolmen"
- ii. Judah Halevi's principal work, *Kuzari* (or *Cuzari*), has been put into English a few times, but not all versions include the commentary on *Sefer Yezirah* (in § 4:25). Two that do are
- Hirschfeld, Hartwig. *The Book of Kuzari* (New York: Pardes Publishing House, 1905; rpt 1946; rpt New York: Schocken Books 1964).
  - Korobkin, N. Daniel. *The Kuzari: In Defense of the Despised Faith* (Northvale - Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc., 1998): pp. 232-248.

Also see

- Baneth, David Hartwig (Zwi). "Judah Halevi and Al-Ghazali," in *Studies in Jewish Thought*, edited by Alfred Jospe (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981).
- Burnstein, Abraham. *Judah Halevi in Grenada: A Story of His Boyhood* (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1941).
- Efros, Israel. *Studies in Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974): Part II. "Some Aspects of Yehuda Halevi's Mysticism" and "Some Textual Notes on Yehuda Halevi's *Kuzari*."
- Krinis, Ehud. *God's Chosen People: Judah Halevi's 'Kuzari' and the Shi'ṭmām Doctrine [CELAMA 7]* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishing, 2014).
- Levin, Gabriel (trans.) *Poems from the Diwan* (POETICA 32) (London: Carcanet Press, Ltd., 2002).
- Lobel, Diana. *Between Mysticism and Philosophy: Sufi Language of the Religious Experience in Judah Halevi's KUZARI* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000).
- Rosenzweig, Franz. *Ninety-Two Poems and Hymns of Yehuda Halevi*, translated by Thomas Kovach, Eva Jospe, and Gilya Gerda Schmidt; edited by Richard A. Cohen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000).  
Originally published as *Jehuda Halevi: Zweiundneunzig Hymnen und Dedichte* (Berlin: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1927).

- Scheindlin, Raymond P. *The Song of the Distant Dove: Judah Halevi's Pilgrimage* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- Schwartz, Dov. "From Technique to Consciousness: Notes on the Development of Esoteric Writing in Twelfth-Century Jewish Thought," in *Jewish Thought: Journal of the Goldstein-Goren International Center for Jewish Thought*, Volume 2: ESOTERICISM IN JEWISH THOUGHT (Beer-Sheva, 2020), pp. 9-33.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Judah Halevi and Abraham Ibn Ezra" (= CHAPTER ONE) in *Studies on Astral Magic in Medieval Jewish Thought*, translated by David Louvish and Batya Stein [THE BRILL REFERENCE LIBRARY OF JUDAISM, VOL. 20] (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2005).
- Silman, Yochanan. *Philosopher and Prophet: Judah Halevi, the KUZARI, and the Evolution of His Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).
- Sirat, Colette. *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages: Chapter 4*.
- Strauss, Leo. "The Law of Reason in the Kuzari," in *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, vol. XIII (New York: 1943).
- Sviri, Sara. "Spiritual Trends in Pre-Kabbalistic Judeo-Spanish Literature: The Cases of Bahya ibn Paquda and Judah Halevi," in *Donaire*, NÚMERO 6 (London: Consejería de Educación y Ciencia, Embajada de España, 1996), pp. 78-84.

iii. Works by Abraham ibn Ezra translated into English:

- *Abraham Ibn Ezra Latinus on Nativities: A Parallel Latin-English Critical Edition of Liber Nativitatum and Liber Abraham Iudei de Nativitatibus* [ABRAHAM IBN EZRA'S ASTROLOGICAL WRITINGS, Volume 6], edited, translated and annotated by Shlomo Sela (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2019).
- *Abraham Ibn Ezra on Elections, Interrogations, and Medical Astrology A Parallel Hebrew-English Critical Edition of the Book of Elections (3 Versions), the Book of Interrogations (3 Versions), and the Book of the Luminaries* [ABRAHAM IBN EZRA'S ASTROLOGICAL WRITINGS, Volume 3], edited, translated and annotated by Shlomo Sela (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2012).
- *Abraham Ibn Ezra on Nativities and Continuous Horoscopy: A Parallel Hebrew-English Critical Edition of the Book of Nativities and the Book of Revolution* [ABRAHAM IBN EZRA'S ASTROLOGICAL WRITINGS, Volume 4], edited, translated and annotated by Shlomo Sela (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2013).
- *Abraham Ibn Ezra: The Book of Reasons, A Parallel Hebrew English Critical Edition of the Two Versions of the Text* [ABRAHAM IBN ERA'S ASTROLOGICAL WRITINGS, Volume 1], edited, translated and annotated by Shlomo Sela (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2007).
- *Abraham Ibn Ezra: The Book of the World, A Parallel Hebrew English Critical Edition of the Two Versions of the Text* [ABRAHAM IBN ERA'S ASTROLOGICAL WRITINGS, Volume 2], edited, translated and annotated by Shlomo Sela (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2010).
- *Abraham Ibn Ezra's Introductions to Astrology, A Parallel Hebrew-English Critical Edition of the Book of the Beginning of Wisdom and the Book of the Judgments of the Zodiacal Signs* [ABRAHAM IBN EZRA'S ASTROLOGICAL WRITINGS, Volume 5], edited, translated and annotated by Shlomo Sela (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2017).
- *Commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra on the Pentateuch*, translated by Jay F. Shachter (Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, 1986).
- *Commentary on the Pentateuch*, translated & annotated by Norman Strickland and Arthur M. Silver (New York: Menorah Publishing Company, 1988).

- *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch: Deuteronomy (Devarim)*, translated and annotated by H. Norman Strickman and Arthur M. Silver (Menorah Publishing, 2001).
- *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch: Exodus (Shemot)*, translated and annotated by H. Norman Strickman and Arthur M. Silver (Menorah Publishing, 1997).
- *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch: Genesis (Bereshit)*, translated and annotated by H. Norman Strickman and Arthur M. Silver (Menorah Publishing, 1988).
- *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch: Leviticus (Va 'Yikra)*, translated and annotated by H. Norman Strickman and Arthur M. Silver (Menorah Publishing, 2004).
- *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch: Numbers (Ba-Midbar)*, translated and annotated by H. Norman Strickman and Arthur M. Silver (Bloch Publishing Co., 1999).
- *Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra's Commentary on Books 3-5 of Psalms, Chapters 72-150*, translated by Norman Strickman (New York: Touro College Press/Academic Studies Press, 2016).
- *Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the First Book of Psalms, Chapters 1-41*, translated by Norman Strickman (Academic Studies Press, 2009).
- *Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Second Book of Psalms, Chapters 42-72*, translated by Norman Strickman (Academic Studies Press, 2009).
- *Rabbi ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Creation (Perush ha-Torah: Bereshit, Perek 1-6)* translated by Michael Linetsky (Northvale - Jerusalem: Jason Aronson, 1998).
- *The Beginning of Wisdom / Reshith Hochma*, translated and annotated by Meira B. Epstein; edited with additional annotations by Robert Hand ([Bel Air?]: A[rchive for the] R[etrieval] of H[istorical] A[strological] T[exts], 1998).
- *The Beginning of Wisdom: An Astrological Treatise by Abraham ibn Ezra*, edited by Raphael Levy and Francisco Cantera (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press/London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1939).
- *The Book of Nativities and Revolutions*, edited, translated and annotated by Meira B. Epstein and Robert Hand ([Bel Air?]: A[rchive for the] R[etrieval] of H[istorical] A[strological] T[exts], 2008).
- *The Commentary of Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra on Hosea*, translated by Abe Lipshitz (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1988).
- *The Religious Poems of Abraham ibn Ezra, Volume One*, translated by Israel Levin [STUDIES IN HEBREW POETRY] (Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1975).  
Volume 2 (1980) is the Hebrew edition.
- *The Secret of the Torah (Sefer Yesod Mora ve-Sod ha-Torah)* translated by Norman Strickman (Northvale - Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc., 1995).
- *Twilight of a Golden Age: Selected Poems of Abraham Ibn Ezra*, translated and edited by Leon Weinberger [JUDAIC STUDIES SERIES] (Tusdaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1997).

#### Studies on Abraham ibn Ezra:

- del Valle, Carlos. "Abraham Ibn Ezra's Mathematical Speculations on the Divine Name," in *Mystics of the Book: Themes, Topics and Typologies*, edited by R. A. Herrera (New York: Peter Lang, 1993).
- Friedländer, M. *Essays on the Writings of Abraham ibn Ezra* (London: The Society of Hebrew Literature / Trübner and Co., 1877; rpt Yerushalayim, [Mitshuf], 1964).

- Halbertal, Moshe. *Concealment and Revelation*:  
CHAPTER 5, “Esotericism and Commentary: Ibn Ezra and the Exegetical Layer”  
CHAPTER 6, “Concealment and Heresy: Astrology and the Secret of the Torah”
- Kreisel, Howard. “Abraham Ibn Ezra’s ‘Secrets’ in the Early and Later Torah Commentaries,” in *Jewish Thought: Journal of the Goldstein-Goren International Center for Jewish Thought*, Volume 2: ESOTERICISM IN JEWISH THOUGHT (Beer-Sheva, 2020), pp. 35-64.
- Lancaster, Irene. *Deconstructing the Bible: Abraham ibn Ezra’s Introduction to the Torah* [ROUTLEDGE JEWISH STUDIES SERIES] (Abingdon – New York: Routledge, 2003; reprinted 2007).  
—includes a translation of *Introduction to the Torah*.
- Langermann, Tzvi. “Abraham Ibn Ezra,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ibn-ezra/> (published 2006; revised 2014).
- Schwartz, Dov. “Judah Halevi and Abraham Ibn Ezra” (= CHAPTER ONE) in *Studies on Astral Magic in Medieval Jewish Thought*, translated by David Louvish & Batya Stein [BRILL REFERENCE LIBRARY OF JUDAISM, vol. 20] (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2005).
- Sela, Shlomo. *Abraham Ibn Ezra and the Rise of Medieval Hebrew Science* (Leiden – Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003).
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Abraham Ibn Ezra’s Appropriation of Saturn,” in *Kabbalah: Journal*, Vol. 10, edited by Daniel Abrams and Avraham Elqayam (2004), pp. 21-53.
- Soloveitchik, Haym. “Topics in the *Hokhmah Ha-Nefesh*,” in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, Volume XVII (Oxford: The Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, 1967), page 65-78.  
Ibn Ezra’s *Yesod Mora* and his commentaries on Exodus and Ecclesiastes were inserted into *Hokhmah Ha-Nefesh*, presumably by Eleazar of Worms.

## 5. Hasidei Ashkenaz

The *Hasidei Ashkenaz* (≈ GERMAN PIETISTS) were active in the Jewish communities of the Rhineland (major city: Regensburg) in the years 1170-1230. Leaders of this group were from the Kalonymus family.

Key figures include (1) Samuel ben Kalonymus the Pious of Speyer, his son (2) Judah the Pious (or Yehuda he-Hasid, 1150-1217), who wrote the best-known tract of this school, *Sefer Hasidim* (BOOK OF THE PIOUS), and (3) Eleazar ben Judah of Worms (1176-1238), Judah's main student, known for several works, foremost among these *Sefer ha-Roqeah* (BOOK OF THE PERFUMER), *Hokhmah Ha-Egoz* (WISDOM OF THE NUT), *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh* (WISDOM OF THE SOUL), and the multi-volumed *Sodei Razaya* (SECRET OF SECRETS, or SECRETS OF RAZIEL).

The fundamental unit for the transmission of esoteric oral knowledge is the family. According to the testimony of Rabbi Eleazar of Worms, the termination of his family line, as a result of the early death of his son and combined with the diminution of his students, moved him to commit the secrets of the Torah to writing. The fear of the loss of the secret as a result of the diminution of the line of transmission justified the writing down of the secret; thus, the knowledge could be passed on without relying on the continuous chain of oral tradition.\*

While not considered part of the early *kabbalah* in the strictest sense, the *Hasidei Ashkenaz* must be seen as a bridge between the earlier *merkabah/hekhalot* and name mysticism and important aspects of the *kabbalah* which was to follow.†

### General‡

Abrams, Daniel. "From Germany to Spain: Numerology as a Mystical Technique," in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. 47, no. 1 (Cambridge: 1996).

Ariel, David S. "'The Eastern Dawn of Wisdom': The Problem of the Relationship between Islamic and Jewish Mysticism," in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times*, Volume II, edited by David R. Blumenthal [BROWN JUDAIC STUDIES 57] (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), pages 149-167.

Bar-Levav, Avriel. "Death and the (Blurred) Boundaries of Magic: Strategies of Coexistence," in *Kabbalah: Journal*, vol. 7, edited by D. Abrams and A. Elqayam (2002) pages 51-64.

Baumgarten, Elisheva. *Practicing Piety in Medieval Ashkenaz: Men, Women, and Everyday Religious Observance* [JEWISH CULTURE AND CONTEXTS] (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

Cohn-Sherbok, Dan. *Jewish Mysticism: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1995).  
Passages: from a prayer from the Ashkenazi liturgy (pp. 98-100).

Dan, Joseph. "Ashkenazi Hasidim, 1941-1991: Was there Really a Hasidic Movement in Medieval Germany?" = JMII\*: Chapter 13.

\* Moshe Halbertal, *Concealment and Revelation: CHAPTER 4 "Concealment and Power: Magic and Esotericism in the Hekhalot Literature,"* page 33.

† For instance, one can track techniques in the use of names from Eleazar of Worms through Abraham Abulafia to Hayyim Vital, then, *via* Yakov Zemech and Meir Poppers, to Shalom Sharabi.

‡ Works on the general list on Hasidei Ashkenaz inevitably treat Yehuda he-Hasid and Eleazar of Worms, given that a majority of the principal writings of this movement come from them.



Originally in *Gershom Scholem's MAJOR TRENDS IN JEWISH MYSTICISM 50 Years After*, edited by P. Schäfer and J. Dan (Tübingen: J. B. C. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1993), pages 87-101.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Mysticism and Ethics in the Ashkenazi Hasidic Movement" = CHAPTER 3 of *Jewish Mysticism & Jewish Ethics* (Seattle – London: University of Washington Press, 1986), pp. 45-75.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Ashkenazi Hasidic Movement," in *Gershom Scholem and the Mystical Dimension of Jewish History* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), pages 92-126.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Emergence of Jewish Mysticism in Medieval Germany" = JMII: Chapter 2.  
Originally in *Mystics of the Book*, edited by R. A. Herrera (New York-Berlin-etc.: Peter Lang, 1993), pages 57-95.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Emergence of Mystical Prayer" = JMII: Chapter 10.  
Originally in *Studies in Jewish Mysticism* edited by Joseph Dan and Frank Talmage (Cambridge: Association for Jewish Studies, 1982).

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Language of the Mystics in Medieval Germany," in *Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah in Ashkenazi Judaism*—noted below under "Grözinger, Karl Erich; and Dan, Joseph (eds)."

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Seventy Names of Metatron" = JMI\*: Chapter 10.  
Originally in *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Vol. III (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1982), pages 7-29. Dan discusses the "most popular list of these name," *Sefer ha-Heshek* (printed Lemberg, 1865), which "was written, most probably, by one of the adherents to the theology of the Ashkenazi Hasidic movement, in the second half of the twelfth century or the first half of the thirteenth." (pp. 229-230)

\_\_\_\_\_. *The 'Unique Cherub' Circle. A School of Mystics and Esoterics in Medieval Germany* [TEXTS AND STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN JUDAISM, 15] (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999).

Dan distinguishes four major mystical circles from this period (12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries): (i) the *Iyyun* circle, (ii) the Kalonymus family (i.e. what we generally think of as the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*), (iii) *Sefer ha-Bahir*, and (iv) the 'Unique Cherub' Circle. The *Iyyun* and 'Cherub' circles, Dan insists, cannot be identified with the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*.

Green, Arthur. *Keter: The Crown of God in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997; rpt 2016).

Chapter Ten, "Medieval Reconsiderations"

Chapter Eleven, "The Hymn of Glory"

Chapter Twelve, "The Way to Kabbalah"

Grözinger, Karl Erich. "Between Magic and Religion – Ashkenazi Hasidic Piety," in *Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah in Ashkenazi Judaism*—noted immediately below under "Grözinger, Karl Erich; and Dan, Joseph (eds)," pages 28-43.

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The first eight articles (of twenty) treat the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*. See listings in this bibliography under Alexander, Baskin, Dan, Grözinger, Gruenwald, Hallamish, Marcus, and Wolfson.

Herrmann, Klaus, "An Unknown Commentary on the *Book of Creation (Sefer Yezirah)* from the Cairo Genizah and Its Re-Creation among the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*," in *Creation and Re-Creation in Jewish Thought* [FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOR OF JOSEPH DAN ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY], edited by Rachel Elijor and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

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\* JMII = *Jewish Mysticism*, Volume II: THE MIDDLE AGES (Northvale/Jerusalem: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1998).

\_\_\_\_\_. “Jewish Mysticism in the Geonic Period: The Prayer of Rav Hamnuna Sava,” in *Jewish Studies Between the Disciplines/Judaistik zwischen den Disziplinen: Papers in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*, edited by Klaus Herrmann, Margarete Schlüter, and Giuseppe Veltri (Leiden – Boston: Brill 2003), pages 180-217.

Horowitz, Daniel M. “Hasidei Ashkenaz: Mystical Moralism,” = Chapter 7 of *A Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism Reader* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2016).

Idel, Moshe. “From Italy to Ashkenaz and Back: On the Circulation of Jewish Mystical Traditions,” in *Kabbalah: Journal*, Volume Fourteen, edited by Daniel Abrams and Avraham Elqayam (2006).

\_\_\_\_\_. “Gazing as the Head in Ashkenazi Hasidism,” in *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, Vol. 6 (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), pp. 265-300.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Golem: Jewish Magical and Mystical Traditions on the Artificial Anthropoid* [SUNY SERIES IN JUDAICA] (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

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\_\_\_\_\_. “Some Forlorn Writings of a Forgotten Ashkenazi Prophet – R. Nehemiah ben Shlomo ha-Navi’,” in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (Philadelphia: Center for Advanced Judaic Studies / University of Pennsylvania Press, Winter 2005), pages 183-196.

Kanarfogel, Ephraim. “Mysticism and Asceticism in Italian Rabbinic Literature of the Thirteenth Century,” in *Kabbalah: Journal*, vol. 6, edited by Daniel Abrams and Avraham Elqayam (2001).

\_\_\_\_\_. “Peering through the Lattices”: *Mystical, Magical, and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000).

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Intellectual History and Rabbinic Culture of Medieval Ashkenaz* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013).

Koren, Sharon Faye. “Menstruation and the Mystics of Ashkenaz,” in *Forsaken: The Menstruant in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2011), pages 43-60.

Kuyt, Annelies. “Hasidut Ashkenaz on the Angel of Dreams. A Heavenly Messenger Reflecting or Exchanging Man’s Thoughts,” in *Creation and Re-Creation in Jewish Thought* [FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOR OF JOSEPH DAN ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY], edited by Rachel Elijor and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Piety and Society. The Jewish Pietists of Medieval Germany* [ÉTUDES SUR LE JUDAISME MÉDIEVAL: Tome X] (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981).

\_\_\_\_\_. “Prayer Gestures in German Hasidim,” in *Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah in Ashkenazi Judaism*—noted above under “Grözing, Karl Erich; and Dan, Joseph (eds).”

\_\_\_\_\_. “The Devotional Ideals of Ashkenazic Pietism,” in *Jewish Spirituality I: From the Bible through the Middle Ages*, edited by Arthur Green (New York: Crossroad, 1986).

\_\_\_\_\_. “The Historical Meaning of *Hasidei Ashkenaz*: Fact, Fiction or Cultural Self-Image?” in *Gershom Scholem’s MAJOR TRENDS IN JEWISH MYSTICISM 50 Years After*, edited by P. Schäfer and J. Dan (Tübingen: J. B. C. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1993), pages 103-114.

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Shoham-Striner, Ephraim. “Exile, Immigration and Piety: The Jewish Pietists of Medieval Germany, from the Rhineland to the Danube,” in *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, Volume 24, Number 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), pages 234-260.

Shyovitz, David I. *A Remembrance of His Wonders: Nature and the Supernatural in Medieval Ashkenaz [JEWISH CULTURE AND CONTEXTS]* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

Trachtenberg, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (New York: Behrman’s Jewish Book House, 1939; rpt. New York: Atheneum, 1975).

Wolfson, Elliot R. “The Image of Jacob Engraved upon the Throne: Further Reflection on the Esoteric Doctrine of the German Pietists,” in *Along the Path: Studies in Kabbalistic Myth, Symbolism, and Hermeneutics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

\_\_\_\_\_. “The Mystical Significance of Torah Study in German Pietism,” in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 84, no. 1 (Philadelphia: Dropsie College for Hebrew, July 1993).

### Development of *Merkavah/Hekhalot*

Abrams, Daniel. *Sexual Symbolism and Merkavah Speculation in Medieval Germany: A Study of the SOD HA-EGOZ Texts [TEXTS AND STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN JUDAISM: 13]* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1997).

Abrams treats and translates the *Sod ha-Egoz* texts, “the earliest known commentaries on Ezekiel’s Chariot (*Ma’aseh Merkavah*),” which are, on the one hand, apparent latter-day developments of *hekhalot* literature while, on the other hand, “proto-kabbalistic.”

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Dan, Joseph. “*Chochmat Ha-Egoz: Its Origin and Development*” = JMI\*: Chapter 9.  
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Hirschfelder, Ulrike. “*Torat ha-Mashiah* in the Context of Apocalyptic Traditions in Ashkenazi Hekhalot Manuscripts,” in *Envisioning Judaism: Studies in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, edited by Ra’anan S. Boustan, Klaus Herrmann, Reimund Leicht, Annette Y. Reed, and Giuseppe Veltri, with the collaboration of Alex Ramos, Volume 1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), pages 657-684.

Kanarfogel, Ephraim. “*Peering through the Lattices*”: *Mystical, Magical, and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000).

Kanarfogel tracks the influence and use of *hekhalot* and other mystical and magical material to 12<sup>th</sup>- and 13<sup>th</sup>-century Germany and France. He argues that esoteric teachings and practices spread beyond the *Hasidei Ashkenaz* to the *tosafists*, rabbinic descendants of Rashi, conventionally considered to have been inclined exclusively toward study of the Talmud.

Wolfson, Elliot R. “Haside Ashkenaz: Verdical and Docetic Interpretations of the Chariot Visions” = CHAPTER 5 in *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

\_\_\_\_\_. “Metatron and *Shi’ur Qomah* in the Writings of the Haside Ashkenaz,” in *Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah in Ashkenazi Judaism*—noted above under “Grözinger, Karl Erich; and Dan, Joseph (eds),” pages 60-92.

\_\_\_\_\_. “The Image of Jacob Engraved upon the Throne: Further Reflection on the Esoteric Doctrine of the German Pietists” = CHAPTER 1 of *Along the Path: Studies in Kabbalistic Myth, Symbolism, and Hermeneutics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

### Yehuda he-Hasid [Judah the Pious] & Sefer Hasidim

Alexander, Tamar. “Rabbi Judah the Pious as a Legendary Figure,” in *Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah in Ashkenazi Judaism*—noted above under “Grözinger, Karl Erich; and Dan, Joseph (eds),” pages 123-138.

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\* JMI = *Jewish Mysticism*, Volume I: LATE ANTIQUITY (Northvale/ Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc., 1998).

† *ibid.*

Baskin, Judith R. "Images of Women in Sefer Hasidim," in *Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah in Ashkenazi Judaism*—noted above under "Grözinger, Karl Erich; and Dan, Joseph (eds)," pp. 93-105.

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*JQR 96:1* contains a selection of entries from the forum *Sefer Hasidim*:

- Baskin, Judith R. "Women and Sexual Ambivalence in *Sefer Hasidim*"
- Fishman, Talya. "The Rhineland Pietists' Sacralization of Oral Torah"
- Fram, Edward. "German Pietism and Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Polish Rabbinic Culture"
- Horowitz, Elliott. "Introduction: 'A Splendid Outburst of Spirituality'"
- Kanarfogel, Ephraim. "R Judah he-Hasid and the Rabbinic Scholars of Regensburg: Interactions, Influences, and Implications"
- Shoham-Steiner, Ephraim. "The Humble Sage and the Wandering Madman: Madness and Madmen as Exemplum from *Sefer Hasidim*"
- Soloveitchik, Haym. "Pietists and Kibbitzers" + APPENDIX

Kramer, Simon G. *God and Man in the Sefer Hasidim* (Skokie: Hebrew Theological College Press/New York: Bloch Publishing, 1966).

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\_\_\_\_\_. "Judah the Pietist and Eleazer of Worms: From Charismatic to Conventional Leadership," in *Jewish Mystical Leaders and Leadership in the Thirteenth Century*, edited by Moshe Idel and Mortimer Ostow (Northvale - Jerusalem: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1998), pages 97-126.

\_\_\_\_\_. (trans) "Narrative Fantasies from *Sefer Hasidim*" (by Judah the Hasid), in *Fiction*, vol. 7, nos. 1 and 2: RABBINIC FANTASY (The City College of New York, 1983); also in *Rabbinic Fantasies: Imaginative Narratives from Classical Hebrew Literature*, edited by D. Stern and M. Mirsky (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990; rpt. New Haven - London: Yale University Press, 1998).

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\_\_\_\_\_. "Religious Virtuosi and the Religious Community: The Pietistic Mode in Judaism," in *Take Judaism, for Example: Studies toward the Comparison of Religions*, edited by Jacob Neusner (Chicago - London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 93-115.

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Singer, Shalom Alchanan (trans.) *Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Wheeling: Whitehall, 1971).

A partial translation of *Sefer ha-Hasidim*.

Soloveitchik, Haym. "The Midrash, *Sefer Hasidim* and the Changing Face of God," in *Creation and Re-Creation in Jewish Thought* [FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOR OF JOSEPH DAN ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY], edited by Rachel Elijor and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Three Themes in the *Sefer Hasidim*," in *AJS Review*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Association for Jewish Studies, 1976), pages 311-357.

van Uchelen, Nikolaas A. "Ma'aseh Merkabah in *Sefer Hasidim*," in *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought*, vol. VI (3-4) [Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism: THE BEGINNINGS OF JEWISH MYSTICISM IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE], edited by Joseph Dan (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1987).

Yassif, Eli. "The Medieval Saint as Protagonist and Storyteller: The Case of R. Judah he-Hasid," in *Creation and Re-Creation in Jewish Thought* [FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOR OF JOSEPH DAN ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY], edited by Rachel Elijor and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

## Eleazar of Worms

Abrams, Daniel. "The Literary Emergence of Esotericism in German Pietism," in *Shofar*, vol. 12, no. 2 (West Lafayette: Purdue University, 1994).

"This paper will investigate the nature of R. Eleazar's attitude toward the transcription of esoteric matters and his departure from the expressed view of his teacher R. Judah the Pious." (page 71)

\_\_\_\_\_. *Sexual Symbolism and Merkavah Speculation in Medieval Germany* (see above: Development of *Merkavah/Hekhalot*)

The *Sod ha-Egoz* texts discussed are generally ascribed to Eleazar of Worms.

Altmann, Alexander. "Eleazar of Worms' *Hokhmah Ha-Egoz*," in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, Volume XI, nos. 3-4 (Cambridge: Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, 1960), pp. 101-113 ≈ "Eleazar of Worms' Symbol of the Merkavah," in (*idem*), *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), pages 161-171.

Cohn-Sherbok, Dan. *Jewish Mysticism: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1995).

Passages: from Eleazar of Worms' *Secret of Secrets* (pp. 90-95).

Dan, Joseph. "The Ashkenazi Concept of Language," Chapter 3 of *Jewish Mysticism, Volume II: THE MIDDLE AGES* (Northvale/ Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc., 1998), pages 65-87.

Originally "The Concept of Language in Ashkenazi Hasidism," in *Hebrew in Ashkenazi*, edited by L. Glinert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 11-25.

This article discusses Eleazar of Worms' *Sefer Alfa Beta* (the first treatise of *Sodei Razaya*) and *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Ashkenazi Hasidic "Gates of Wisdom," Chapter 4 of *Jewish Mysticism, Volume II: THE MIDDLE AGES* (Northvale/ Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc., 1998), pages 89-97.

On Eleazar of Worms' *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Book of the Divine Name by Rabbi Eleazar of Worms," = Chapter 7 of *Jewish Mysticism, Volume II: THE MIDDLE AGES*, pages 129-177.

Originally in *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge*, vol. 22 (Frankfurt am Main: Gesellschaft zur Förderung Judaistischer Studien, 1995) pp. 27-60.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Chochmat Ha-Egoz: Its Origin and Development" = Chapter 9 of *Jewish Mysticism, Volume I: LATE ANTIQUITY* (Northvale/ Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc., 1998).

Originally in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. XVII (Cambridge: Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, 1966).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Medieval Jewish Influences on Renaissance Concepts of *Harmonia Mundi*," in *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism*, vol. 1, no. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 135-152.

Dan traces scientific and mystical ideas starting with the *Sefer Yezirah*, elaborations of tenth-century commentaries on it, especially that of Shabbatai Donnolo, and developments of the Hasidei Ashkenaz, in particular Eleazar of Worms. Dan shows how these commentaries "contributed to the establishment of the concept of *harmonia mundi* as a dominant world-view in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, mainly in the context of the variegated phenomena which are sometimes united under the general title 'Christian kabbalah.'"

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Heart of the Fountain: An Anthology of Jewish Mystical Experiences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pages 101-113.

Ch. 7 THE VOICE OF GOD OVER THE WATER – THE WORSHIP OF THE HOLY NAME and Ch. 8 THE ROKEAH – DEVOTION IN PRAYER, excerpt of Eleazar's *Sodei Razaya* § *Sefer ha-Shem* and *Sefer ha-Rokeach*.

Eleazar of Worms. *Chokmat ha-Nefesh – Wisdom of the Soul*, edited by Fabrizio Del Tin ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).

\_\_\_\_\_. *Sefer ha-Shem – The Book of the Name* (the final part of *Sodei Razaya*), two volumes, translated by Avraham Broide, Alexandru Munteanu and Sharron Shatil ([n.p.]: David Smith, LLC, 2016) / edited by Fabrizio Del Tin ([n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).

\_\_\_\_\_. *Sodei Razaya* in English, four volumes ([n.p.]: David Smith, LLC, 2016 / [n.p.]: eUniversity.pub, 2018).

- *Secrets of Raziël: Book of the Alphabet – Sefer Alfa Beta*, translated by Alexandru Munteanu (2016) / edited by Fabrizio Del Tin (2018)
- *Secrets of Raziël: Book of Desire – Sefer ha-Chesek*, translated by Yaron Ever Hadani (2016) / edited by Fabrizio Del Tin (2018)
- *Secrets of Raziël: Book of Unity – Sefer ha-Yihud*, translated by Yaron Ever Hadani (2016) / edited by Fabrizio Del Tin (2018)
- *Secrets of Raziël: Commentary on the Book of Formation – Peirush al Sefer Yetzirah*, translated by Avraham Broide (2016) / edited by Fabrizio Del Tin (2018)

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Laws of the Angels*, First English Edition, includes “Sod ha-Yichud,” edited by Jonathan M. Stein, Esq. PLLC, forward by Jason Augustus Newcomb (Amazon Digital Services, 2011).

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Ways of Metatron: A Book of Enoch*, First English Edition, edited by Jonathan M. Stein, Esq. PLLC (Amazon Digital Services, 2011).

\_\_\_\_\_. *Three Tracts* [TREE TEXT: 2], edited by David Meltzer (Berkeley: Tree Books, 1975).

*THE BOOK OF PROPHECY, THE BOOK OF THE WORD*, selections from *Hokhmah ha-Egoz*—translations from Alexander Altmann’s “Eleazar of Worms’ Symbol of the Merkabah,” listed above.

Finkel, Avraham Yaakov. *Kabbalah: Selections from Classic Kabbalistic Works from Raziël HaMalach to the Present Day* (Southfield: Targum Press, 2002): Chapter 21, RABBI ELAZAR ROKEACH OF WORMS.

Idel, Moshe. “From Italy to Ashkenaz and Back: On the Circulation of Jewish Mystical Traditions,” in *Kabbalah: Journal*, Vol. 14, edited by Daniel Abrams and Avraham Elqayam (2006), pp. 47-94.

See in particular pp. 52-54.

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**Kabbalah Study**  
Jewish Mysticism in English  
by Don Karr

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Reviewers may quote brief passages.

A.

In an article reviewing the then-current (1970s) state of scholarship on the history of early rabbinic Judaism,<sup>1</sup> Jacob Neusner complained, in particular, about E. E. Urbach's study<sup>2</sup> concerning "*the sages, their concepts and beliefs*" (Neusner's italics) as revealing "remarkably little variation, development or even movement," where "[d]ifferentiation among the stages" and "among schools and circles within a given period" was all but neglected.

More recently, similar complaints have been leveled against "establishment" historians of Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah: In the last fifteen-or-so years, the neat linear history offered by Gershom Scholem<sup>3</sup> and those following his lead has been seriously challenged.

In the proceedings of a conference marking the fiftieth year since the publication of Scholem's landmark book, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (1941),<sup>4</sup> Ithamar Gruenwald argues<sup>5</sup> that this work (i.e., *Major Trends...*) "appears to be too limited in its conceptual framework, as well as in its actual treatment of the subject matter." Scholem saw certain developments in antique Judaism as a mystical *phase* which followed well after the writing of the Hebrew Bible; he also saw expressions of mysticism, once present, as separate and distinct, not just from the scriptural phase but from normal (common or popular) expressions of religion. Gruenwald makes a case for tracing "mystical, or quasi-mystical, elements in Scripture itself." Further, he states that there are mystical elements in rabbinic literature to which Scholem did not give due attention.

Critical analyses focusing on Scholem's treatment of ancient Jewish mysticism (i.e. *merkabah* mysticism and *hekhalot* literature) have also been offered in recent years.<sup>6</sup> For the moment, our concern is with those developments which, by one rationale or another, claim the title "Kabbalah," conventionally agreed to be a phenomenon begun in medieval times (though traditionally thought to be from antiquity). Our approach may at first appear to be at cross purposes, for, while there is a case supporting a definition for Kabbalah which is more inclusive (as in Gruenwald's comments noted above or in the suggestions in Moshe Idel's article noted

below), there are those of us who would like to see Kabbalah circumscribed sufficiently to salvage it from the excessive, near-generic use of the term, primarily in Christian and occult circles, to refer to mysticism and magic of all sorts. (The term *kabbalah* is itself a coinage<sup>7</sup> with problems not unlike those of such related words as “mysticism,” “magic,” “myth,” and “gnosis/gnosticism.”)<sup>8</sup>

The issue of defining—or redefining—Kabbalah has been addressed by Moshe Idel.<sup>9</sup> He critiques the “prevailing assumption in the academic field” that Kabbalah is “a relatively homogeneous mystical phenomenon, more theoretical than practical.” Idel’s primary target is, of course, Scholem and his notion that Kabbalah is defined, and thus unified, by a certain “core question,” namely, the mystery of the Godhead—which question is “answered” by the doctrine of the *sefirot*. Idel discusses the various mystical uses of divine names as an alternative kabbalistic channel.

In the introduction to *Essential Papers on Kabbalah*, Lawrence Fine attempts to set up a working definition for *kabbalah* starting with a rejection of the “popular, noncritical use of the term” as referring to all “esoteric and occult phenomena, past and present.”<sup>10</sup> Fine prefers to limit Kabbalah to “a discrete body of literature that became clearly identifiable beginning in Provence in the late twelfth century and northern Spain in the thirteenth.” However, in a book which has heated up the discussion on the origins of Kabbalah (and other topics) [*Kabbalah: New Perspectives*], Moshe Idel has argued that there is not such a definite separation between rabbinic literature and the conventionally circumscribed Kabbalah. Idel’s view suggests a more continuous, less neat development which gradually coalesced into a proto-Kabbalah.<sup>11</sup> The medieval Jewish mystics referred to as “Kabbalists” did not abandon the mysticism—or any other part of the vast rabbinic literature—which came before them. The *hekhlot* writings, German *hasidic* material, *Sefer Yezirah* and the various commentaries on it, etc., along with the Talmud, *midrashim*, and the rest of the rabbinic writings, were all considered authoritative—all part of the same chain of tradition (*kabbalah*) of which the medieval and later Kabbalists considered themselves links.<sup>12</sup>

Kabbalah did not spring up *ex nihilo*. It seems prudent to open channels for the origins and growth of Kabbalah back into the depths of ancient Judaism. Determining a starting line at *Sefer ha-Bahir* and the mystic circles at Languedoc does not match the facts. To begin with, the *Bahir* is itself a compilation, with sources in and references to earlier material, which immediately begins our search into the time before its appearance.<sup>13</sup>

## B.

To investigate Jewish mysticism, how is one to begin at the beginning? The documentary evidence is sprawling, yet incomplete. We cannot commence with Genesis 1:1 and travel a nice straight line to *Kabbalah today*. However, to set a broad stage for subsequent mystical endeavor, a fine first book is *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith*, by Norman Cohn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), the second part of which charts the primal swirlings of the path which eventually leads to Jewish (and Christian) mysticism, beginning with Zoroastrian concepts, tracing their development in Jewish

apocalyptic, finally landing in the Book of Revelation. This last turn may seem to veer off track unless one keeps in mind the fundamentally Jewish character of this mystical apocalypse.

For grounding in the theme (*i.e.*, the ascension to heaven) taken up by the ancient Jewish mystics associated with the *merkabah* and *hekhalot*, a most informative source is Martha Himmelfarb's *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). On a somewhat different tack, though holding onto the thread begun with the last two selections, is Markus N. A. Bockmuehl's *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* [WISSENSCHAFTLICHE UNTERSUCHUNGEN ZUM NEUEN TESTAMENT – 2. Reihe 36] (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1990)<sup>14</sup>

Assuming that the reader is reasonably familiar with the Hebrew Bible, the next step would be to acquire some knowledge of early rabbinic thought and method. *The Sages* by E. E. Urbach (see note 2) is an excellent start. Three anthologies serve as introductions to their respective texts:

1. *The Classical Midrash: Tannaitic Commentaries on the Bible*, translated and introduced with commentary by Reuven Hammer (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1995).
2. *The Mishnah: Oral Traditions of Judaism*, selected and translated by Eugene Lipman (New York: Schocken Books, 1974).<sup>15</sup>
3. *The Talmud: Selected Writings*, translated by Ben Zion Bokser (Paulist Press, 1989).
4. *The Talmud: The Steinsaltz Edition – A Reference Guide* (New York: Random House, 1989).

As a first approach to Jewish mysticism proper, an indispensable source is *The Ancient Jewish Mysticism* by Joseph Dan (Tel Aviv: MOD [Ministry of Defense] Books, 1993).

At this juncture, it would be a good idea to read some of the more general books on Jewish mysticism in order to get an impression of its history and concepts. My recommendation is to study the following books—in the order in which they are listed:

1. Scholem's *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (see note 3), some comments on which have already been noted<sup>16</sup>
2. Moshe Idel's *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).
3. Elliot R. Wolfson's *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

A weakness of *Major Trends* is the absence of a chapter on the early Kabbalah. Two books nicely fill this void:

1. Scholem's *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Jewish Publication Society and Princeton University Press, 1987).
2. Joseph Dan and Ronald C. Kiener. *The Early Kabbalah* (Paulist Press, 1986).

Paulist Press has provided two more titles which help round out our short list:

1. Daniel C. Matt. *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment* (1983)
2. Lawrence Fine. *Safed Spirituality: Rules of Mystical Piety, The Beginning of Wisdom* (1984).

The final development of Jewish mysticism covered in Scholem's *Major Trends* is Hasidism, on which I have not developed an extended bibliography. However, I can suggest three works to provide a foundation:

1. Rachel Elior. *The Paradoxical Ascent to God: The Kabbalistic Theosophy of Habad Hasidism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).
2. Moshe Idel. *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* (State University of New York Press, 1995).
3. Rivka Schatz-Uffenheimer. *Hasidism as Mysticism. Quietistic Elements in Eighteenth-Century Hasidic Thought* (Princeton/ Jerusalem: Princeton University Press and Magnes Press, 1983).

Three of the books listed above (Dan and Kiener's *Early Kabbalah*, Matt's *Zohar*, and Fine's *Safed Spirituality*) offer texts as well as introductions. There are some other anthologies:

1. Daniel C. Matt. *The Essential Kabbalah* (see note 3).
2. Dan Cohn-Sherbock. *Jewish Mysticism: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1995).
3. Ben Zion Bokser. *The Jewish Mystical Tradition* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1981).
4. David Meltzer (ed). *The Secret Garden. An Anthology in the Kabbalah* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1976).<sup>18</sup>

There is a bit of redundancy among these titles; fortunately, all are available in low-cost paperback editions.

There are some collections of articles which can be recommended:

1. Lawrence Fine (ed). *Essential Papers on Kabbalah* (New York University Press, 1995).
2. Arthur Green (ed). *Jewish Spirituality: volume 1: FROM THE BIBLE THROUGH THE MIDDLE AGES, 1986; volume 2: FROM THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY REVIVAL TO THE PRESENT* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1987).

*Haredi* students of the Kabbalah might sneer at many of the works suggested here. For an overview, they would instead urge Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan's *Inner Space: Introduction to Kabbalah, Meditation and Prophecy* (Brooklyn: Moznaim Publishing Corporation, 1990) or Rabbi Yechiel Bar-Lev's *Song of the Soul* (Petach Tikva, 1994). Both, especially the latter, are serviceable introductions to Lurianic Kabbalah, which is somewhat thinly handled in our entry on Safed Kabbalah, though covered well in Scholem's *Major Trends*.

For further advice on readings in Judaism, see *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts*, edited by Barry Holtz (New York: Summit Books, 1984). There, one is guided by specialists through the issues and literature of the Bible, Talmud, Midrash, medieval commentaries and philosophy, kabbalistic texts, hasidic teachings and prayer books.

Another good overview of the literature of Judaism is *The Sacred Books of the Jews* by Harry Gersh (New York: Stein and Day, 1968).

One of the best general anthologies is Philip S. Alexander's *Textual Sources for the Study of Judaism* (Totowa: Manchester University Books/Barnes and Noble Books, 1984; rpt. University of Chicago Press, 1990). Alexander's introductions are particularly helpful.

A very instructive set of anthologies (if you can get past the lame illustrations) is Louis Jacobs' CHAIN OF TRADITION SERIES published by Behrman House (New York):

1. *Jewish Law* (1968)
2. *Jewish Ethics, Philosophy and Mysticism* (1969)
3. *Jewish Thought Today* (1970)

To these could be added Jacobs' *Jewish Mystical Testimonies* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977).

Notes (updated 2003):

For full bibliographic information on various stages of Jewish mysticism, refer to my series on sources in English:

- “The Study of *Merkabah* Mysticism and *Hekhalot* Literature in English”—with an appendix on Jewish magic
- “*Sefer Yezirah* in English”
- “The Study of Early Kabbalah in English” [the current paper]
- “The *Zohar* in English”
- “The Study of Later Kabbalah in English: The Safed Period and Lurianic Kabbalah”
- “The Study of Christian Cabala in English”

These papers can be accessed on-line at

<http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Biblios/index.php>.

“Popular” books on Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism are numerous and quite varied in their quality and purpose. For readable, well-researched accounts, see

- Laenen, J. H. *Jewish Mysticism: An Introduction* [= JOODSE MYSTIEK. EEN INLEIDING] translated from the Dutch by David E. Orton (Louisville: Westminster Knox Press, 2001).
  - Silberman, Neil Asher. *Heavenly Powers: Unraveling the Secret History of the Kabbalah* (New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1998).
1. Jacob Neusner, “The History of Earlier Rabbinic Judaism: Some New Approaches,” in *History of Religions*, vol. 16, no. 3 (University of Chicago, February 1977).
  2. Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* [original Hebrew: HAZAL, PIRKE EMUNOT VE-DE’OT, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1975], English translation by Israel Abrahams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).
  3. See Scholem’s *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (Jerusalem: Schocken Publishing House, 1941; frequently reprinted by Schocken Books, New York). A similar flaw plagues the recent anthology by Daniel C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1994). As nicely done as it is, Matt’s book gives the erroneous impression that the Kabbalah can be summarized and distilled into a single, comprehensive volume. This problem of homogenization burdens other areas of Jewish studies. See Barry Holtz’s comments regarding *midrashim* in *Back to the Sources* (New York: Summit Books, 1984), pp. 177-9.
  4. *Gershom Scholem’s MAJOR TRENDS IN JEWISH MYSTICISM 50 Years After: Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism*, edited by Peter Schäfer and Joseph Dan (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1993).
  5. “Reflections on the Nature and Origins of Jewish Mysticism,” in *Gershom Scholem’s MAJOR TRENDS...* (see note 4).

6. In particular see Peter Schäfer, *Gershom Scholem Reconsidered: The Aim and Purpose of Early Jewish Mysticism* [THE TWELFTH SACKS LECTURE DELIVERED ON 29<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1985] (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, 1986) and Nathaniel Deutsch, *The Gnostic Imagination: Gnosticism, Mandaism, and Merkabah Mysticism* [BRILL'S SERIES IN JEWISH STUDIES, vol. XIII] (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995).

An essay which takes a critical look at contemporary “Kabbalah Studies” in general, but with a rather different approach from that of the present discussion, is Gil Anidjar’s “Jewish Mysticism Alterable and Unalterable: On *Orienting* Kabbalah Studies and the ‘Zohar of Christian Spain,’” in *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, Fall 1996). Regarding Anidjar’s central theme, namely Moslem influence on Kabbalah, see Moshe Idel’s leveling response, “Orienting, Orientalizing or Disorienting the Study of Kabbalah: ‘An Almost Absolutely Unique’ Case of Occidentalism,” in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 1997).

In several of Schäfer’s discussions (*Gershom Scholem Reconsidered* for one) and in David Halperin’s *The Faces of the Chariot* (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck] 1988), questions are raised about the titles and contents of *hekhalot* texts. The notion of fixed bodies of content forming a canon of “books” representing a coherent school of *hekhalot* mysticism appears unsupportable. A similar problem exists with the very term *kabbalah* (see note 7). A partial solution is suggested in such subheadings as the *early* Kabbalah of the Provence and Gerona circles, the *'Iyyun* school, *prophetic* Kabbalah (of Abraham Abulafia), or Lurianic Kabbalah. However, should the German *Hasidism* be excluded so definitely from Kabbalah?

7. Until the thirteenth century, *kabbalah* referred to the whole body of oral religious teachings: the Talmud, the *midrashim*, etc. Indeed, anyone who picked up a copy of *Sefer ha-Kabbalah* (BOOK OF TRADITION) expecting it to expound upon *kabbalistic* mysteries would be sorely disappointed. See *The Book of Tradition*, translated by Gerson D. Cohen (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1968).
8. On the terms “mysticism,” “symbol,” and “myth,” see Gil Anidjar’s article, mentioned in note 6. Words causing particular difficulty in the field of Jewish mysticism are “gnostic” and “gnosticism”; examples of discussions on these terms are
- P. S. Alexander. “Comparing Merkavah Mysticism and Gnosticism: An Essay in Method,” in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1 (1984)
  - Joseph Dan. “Jewish Gnosticism?” in *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 4 (1995)
  - Ithamar Gruenwald. “Jewish Merkavah Mysticism and Gnosticism,” in *Studies in Jewish Mysticism*, edited by J. Dan and F. Talmage (Cambridge: Association for Jewish Studies, 1982).
9. “Defining Kabbalah: The Kabbalah of the Divine Names,” in *the Mystics of the Book: Themes, Topics, and Typologies*, edited by R. A. Herrera (New York: Peter Lang, 1993).
10. If one were to pick up any of a number of popular books on Kabbalah, one might come away with the impression that Kabbalah was primarily, if not solely, the doctrine of the *sefirot*, or divine emanations. In fact, Kabbalah involves a rich array of concepts and techniques, not the least of which are various types of letter and name mysticism (though many of the hermeneutic conventions concerning words and letters, such as *gematria*, are more accurately considered rabbinic, not kabbalistic). Topics are diverse: the progression of cosmic cycles, mystical explanations of the *mitzvot*, the interplay of humankind with the ultimate God, the source of and reason behind evil, creation and the end, the mystical significance of the holidays, angels and demons, the transmigration of souls—indeed, a ranging literature full of unpredictable interpretations of scripture.
11. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). See in particular Chapters 6, 7, and 8.
12. On considering the German *Hasidim* as an important source for non-*sefirotic* Kabbalah, see Daniel Abrams, “From Germany to Spain: Numerology as a Mystical Technique,” in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. XLVI, no. 1 (Spring 1996).

13. See the various discussions of the *Bahir*:
- Gershom Scholem. *Origins of the Kabbalah*.
  - Joseph Dan. *The Early Kabbalah*.
  - \_\_\_\_\_. “Midrash and the Dawn of Kabbalah,” in *Midrash and Literature*, edited by G. Hartman and S. Budick (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); and in Dan’s *Jewish Mysticism*, Volume II: THE MIDDLE AGES (Northvale: Jason Aronson Inc., 1998). See especially the introduction to *Jewish Mysticism II*, where Dan argues against Scholem’s description of the history of Jewish mysticism as having a “linear development from its beginnings” (“Introduction: § III”).
  - Elliot R. Wolfson. “The Tree That Is All: Jewish-Christian Roots of a Kabbalistic Symbol in *Sefer ha-Bahir*,” in Wolfson’s *Along the Path: Studies in Kabbalistic Myth, Symbolism, and Hermeneutics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).
14. To pursue the development of Christian mysticism, see *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century*, by Bernard McGinn (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1991—paperback edition, 1995)—the best work on this topic which I have seen. *Foundations...* is the first of a four-volume series.
- An interesting supplement to McGinn is Guy G. Stroumsa’s *Hidden Wisdom: Esoteric Traditions and the Roots of Christian Mysticism* [STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS (NUMEN BOOK SERIES), Volume LXX] (Leiden – New York – Köln, E. J. Brill, 1996).
- Following mystical trends inevitably leads through apocryphal Christianity into Gnosticism. For an overview of this complex subject, see *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*, by Kurt Rudolph (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1984; New York: Harper and Row, 1987). For texts, see (forgive the “pop” titles) *The Gnostic Scriptures: Ancient Wisdom for the New Age*, translated, annotated, and introduced by Bentley Layton (New York: Doubleday, 1987), and *The Gnostic Bible*, edited by Wallis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer (Boston & London: Shambhala, 2003).
15. The more comprehensive English edition of the *Mishnah* by Herbert Danby (1933) is still available from Oxford University Press.
16. A possible alternative to *Major Trends* is Scholem’s *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1974, reprinted frequently).
17. In *Essential Papers*, Arthur Green’s article, “The Zohar: Jewish Mysticism in Medieval Spain,” is a gem; it’s worth getting the book just for this. This fine article also appears in *An Introduction to the Mystics of Medieval Europe*, edited by Paul Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), which also contains David Biale’s article on the Safed Period, “Jewish Mysticism in the Sixteenth Century.”
18. Be careful with the Meltzer anthology. It is full of sloppy mistakes.