

DIAGRAMMING SABBATEANISM

Abstract

Scholars have only recently started to study *ilanot* (lit., “trees”), the cosmographic genre constituted by the wedding of kabbalistic diagrams—the trees of the metonymic name—and large parchment sheets. Differences of kabbalistic opinion naturally found expression in these “maps of God.” The Sabbatean messianic movement of the 1660s and its prolonged and impactful afterlife produced, among other things, a number of distinctive kabbalistic opinions. For the most part, these innovations were tightly integrated with the speculations associated with “Lurianic” Kabbalah based on the teachings of R. Isaac Luria (1534–1572). The great Lurianic *ilanot* were designed and circulated in the second third of the seventeenth century, not long before the emergence of Sabbateanism, but their golden age was “the long eighteenth century”—a British coinage for roughly 1660–1830—and thus coincided with the profound and pervasive absorption of Sabbatean elements in precisely those sectors that produced and consumed these artifacts, including nascent Hasidism. The deceptively simple question at the heart of this article is this: What would it mean to diagram Sabbateanism? Or to put it another way, what would constitute a Sabbatean *ilan*? How might distinctive Sabbatean ideas have found diagrammatic expression in this genre? Once identified as such, what do Sabbatean *ilanot* tell us about the meanings of Sabbateanism in the contexts within which they were produced?

The Kabbalah has been characterized by a discourse of mechanistic objectivity since its literary emergence in the twelfth century. This feature was memorably highlighted by Gershom Scholem in his introduction to *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* as the reason for the paucity of autobiographical elements in Kabbalah, in contrast to their prevalence in Christian mysticism.¹ Kabbalists were wont to describe the divine realm with little apparent interest in sharing the “voyage” ostensibly required to get there. The topography of the divine was represented primarily in words, but material—and predominantly diagrammatic—images also figure in kabbalistic manuscripts, indeed already in the very oldest that have reached us.²

In the first centuries of kabbalistic creativity, the Godhead was pictured with relatively simple diagrammatic schemata: arboreal and circular figures appropriated from natural philosophy and astronomy, the prestigious scientific disciplines of the medieval Latin west.³ Concentric circles had long served to represent the structure of the cosmos, which the ancient simile likened to so many skins of an onion. The arboreal scheme, however, was transformed in the Kabbalah from a *tool* used to diagram conceptual, categorical, or familial relationships, to an *image* often presumed to capture the actual ontic structure of reality. Deploying variations of these two schemata, kabbalists produced a variety of configurations of the elemental qualities at the heart of their esoteric lore, the ten *sefirot*.⁴

¹ Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (Jerusalem: Schocken Publishing House, 1941), 15–16.

² For a pioneering descriptive survey of visual Kabbalah, see Giulio Busi, *Qabbalah visiva* (Torino: Einaudi, 2005). For a focused and highly theorized treatment of the early diagrams, see Marla Segol, *Word and Image in Medieval Kabbalah: The Texts, Commentaries, and Diagrams of the Sefer Yetsirah* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

³ See J. H. Chajes, “Spheres, Sefirot, and the Imaginal Astronomical Discourse of Classical Kabbalah,” *Harvard Theological Review* 113 (2020): 230–62.

⁴ For Gershom Scholem’s introduction to the *sefirot*, see his *Kabbalah* (New York: Times Books, 1974), 96–116.

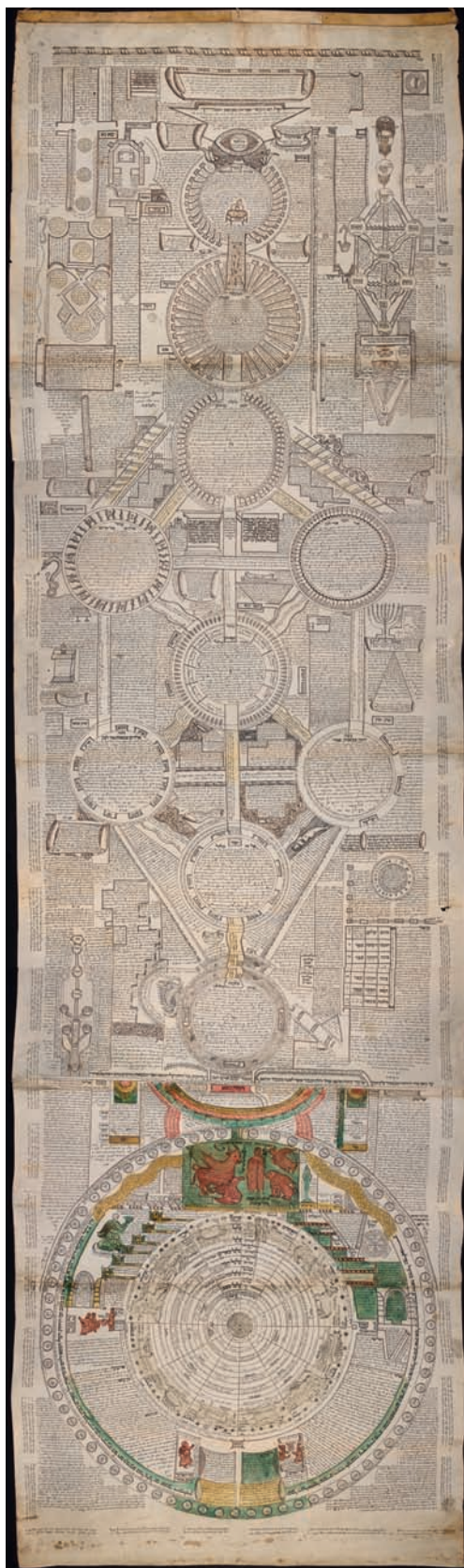


Fig. 1 "Magnificent Parchment", Italy, c1600, Parchment, 255 × 75 cm, Oxford: Bodleian Library MS Hunt. Add. D. (Photo: Courtesy of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.)

Kabbalistic diagrams appear in the pages of manuscript codices, where they generally served to clarify the texts beside which they were inscribed. Sometime in the fourteenth century, however, there emerged a genre of kabbalistic expression in which the diagram is central and the accompanying texts secondary. This is not to say that the texts are unimportant. On the contrary, they tell us what we are looking at, as the meanings of such figures are never self-evident from their purely formal characteristics.⁵ This new genre, called by the metonymic appellations *yeri'ot* (parchment sheets) and *ilanot* (trees), featured the familiar arboreal and circular schemata, now magnified and ramified to fill parchments that commonly measured nearly a meter wide and, when stitched end-to-end, extended several meters (Fig. 1).⁶

As *rotuli* (vertical scrolls), *ilanot* were new additions to a small but elite body of scrolls in Jewish society that included the Torah, the Esther scroll, the *mezuzah* (doorpost amulet), and the phylactery parchments. After the adoption of the codex by Jews around the ninth century, these scrolls were used for something *other* than quotidian information transfer: they were used in the context of ritual, they were *performed*.⁷ To ascribe to them any single function is nevertheless to run the risk of reductionism. Indeed, in the case of *ilanot* we find that an *ilan* can be an epistemic image, a mnemonic device, a beginner's précis, a master's summa, an appurtenance of prayer, an amulet. It may be a combination of any or even all of these. *Ilanot* also demonstrate tremendous variety, expressing cultural and ideational diversity. Regional influences are reflected in the concepts diagrammed as well as in the conventions of representation and aesthetics on display in the diagrams and their decorative embellishments. Within any given school, there was room for meaningful variation in the concepts selected for visual representation and the textual sources reproduced, excerpted, or paraphrased for inclusion.⁸

⁵ See Christoph Lüthy and Alexis Smets, "Words, Lines, Diagrams, Images: Towards a History of Scientific Imagery," *Early Science and Medicine* 14, no. 1 (2009): 398–439.

⁶ On nomenclature and the evolution of the genre, see J. H. Chajes, "The Kabbalistic Tree," in *The Visualization of Knowledge in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period*, ed. Marcia Kupfer, Adam Cohen, and J. H. Chajes (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), 449–473.

⁷ See J. H. Chajes, "Kabbalah Practices/Practical Kabbalah: The Magic of Kabbalistic Trees," *Aries* 19, no. 1 (2019): 112–145.

⁸ The analytical challenge is to assess the significance or impact of any given factor. Thus, we know that, despite the fact that Lurianic Kabbalah would seem to beg for diagrammatic treatment, it did not take that form universally; the variation that we see in

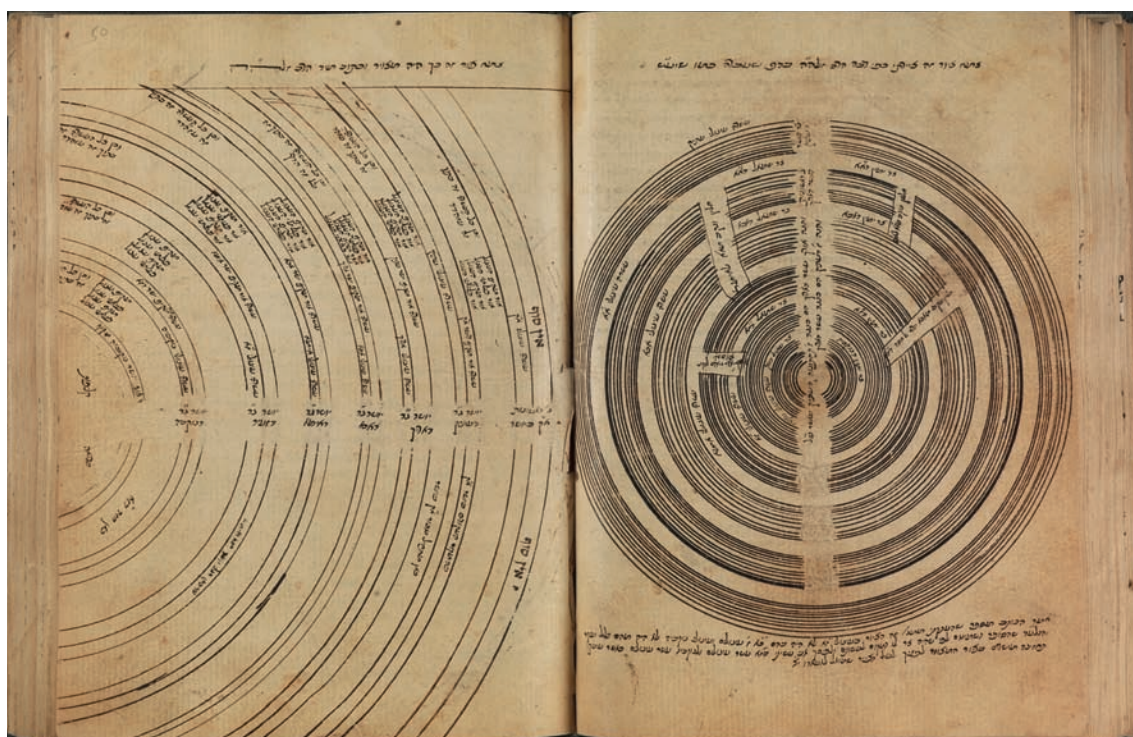


Fig. 2 Hayyim Vital (1542–1620), *Mavo she'arim*. Manuscript copy: Samuel Laniado of Aleppo (d.1750), ink on paper, 23.2 × 16 cm. Jerusalem: National Library of Israel MS 8815, 49b–50a. (Photo: Courtesy of the National Library of Israel)

Critical junctures in the history of what Giulio Busi coined “visual Kabbalah” bear an undeniable liminality, blurring what we tend to think of as the clear line distinguishing Jewish from Christian varieties.⁹ R. Jacob Zemaḥ (d. 1667), the former *converso* who came to Jewish life well acquainted with western esotericism and its visual language, seems likely to have designed the first and oft-reproduced *ilan rotulus* dedicated to Lurianic cosmogony, meaning that based on the teachings of R. Isaac Luria, the legendary kabbalist who was active in Safed in the early 1570s.¹⁰ We know that Luria’s most prominent and prolific disciple,

R. Hayyim Vital (1542–1620), produced at least one complex diagram that was larger than his codices could accommodate on their standard pages; Zemaḥ discovered it in a manuscript he restored and copied it alongside his own complementary version (Fig. 2).¹¹

Zemaḥ’s student, R. Meir Poppers (1624–1662), who was famous for having edited what became the canonical version of Lurianic teachings, *Ez Hayyim*, continued the tradition and devoted himself to *ilanot*-making as well, crafting innovative diagrammatic representations of the “Primordial Adam” (*Adam Kadmon*) with anthropomorphic features and detailed treatments of

different manuscript families of the same Lurianic treatise from different centers (European, North African, Ottoman, etc.) makes that abundantly clear. Other factors undoubtedly determined the nature and the very existence of *ilanot* within the big tent of Lurianism in its first centuries.

⁹ My intention here is to suggest a parallel to the “confusing” mixture of Sabbatean and non-Sabbatean Lurianism in the eighteenth century. See Moshe Idel, “Perceptions of Kabbalah in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century,” *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 1 (1991): 55–114. For an insightful study of a pre-Lurianic *ilan* that is attentive to the Christian context, see Fabrizio Lelli, “L’albero sefirotico di Eliyya Menahem ben Abba Mari Halfan (Ms. Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 44,18)” *Rinascimento* n.s. 43 (2008): 271–290.

¹⁰ It would become a ubiquitous component in *ilanot* thereafter. On Zemaḥ’s pioneering contribution to the renewal of the *ilan*

genre in the Lurianic era, see J. H. Chajes, *The Kabbalistic Tree: A History* (Liverpool: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization and Liverpool University Press, forthcoming.) See also Gershom Scholem, “On the Biography and Literary Activity of the Kabbalist R. Jacob Zemaḥ,” *Qiryat Sefer* 26 (1950): 185–194 [Hebrew]; and I. Sonne, “On R. Jacob Zemaḥ,” *Qiryat Sefer* 27 (1951): 97–106 [Hebrew]. On his acquaintance with Christian Kabbalah, and in particular its visual orientation, see Moshe Idel, “Jewish Thinkers Versus Christian Kabbalah,” in *Christliche Kabbala*, ed. Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2003), 49–65, especially 56.

¹¹ See the discussion in J. H. Chajes, “Kabbalistic Diagram as Epistemic Image,” *Peamim* 150 (2018): 235–288 [Hebrew].



Fig. 3 Meir Poppers (?) (c. 1624–1662), *Ilan of Adam Kadmon* and the *parzufim* (c.1650) with Jacob Zemaḥ element (bottom). Manuscript copy: 17th century Ashkenazi, ink on paper, 256 × 32 cm. Oxford—Bodleian Library MS Opp. 128, front-matter. (Photo: Courtesy of the Bodleian Library)

the complex “enrobings” (*hitlabshuyot*) of the subsequent configurations of the *sefirot* known as “personae” (*parzufim*). Poppers records having crafted such an *ilan* for his students in Krakow around 1650 (Fig. 3).¹²

Within a generation, the *ilanot* that I believe were likely designed by Zemaḥ and Poppers had been copied and distributed far and wide.¹³ By the 1670s, an erudite Christian kabbalist based in Sulzbach, Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636–1689), had acquired them—as well as additional *ilanot*—and supervised the preparation of engravings based upon them for inclusion in his comprehensive introduction to this lore in Latin, *Kabbala denudata* (1677). The aforementioned *ilanot* provided Knorr with comprehensive mappings of Vital’s version of Luria’s teachings. They did not, however, visualize the cosmogonic doctrine of the *Malbush* (Divine Garment) as taught by another of Luria’s disciples, R. Israel Saruq (16th–17th centuries).¹⁴ Saruq’s ideas were known to Knorr through the 1648 work of R. Naftali Bacharach, *Emeq ha-melekh* (*The Valley of the King*). To fill the lacuna, Knorr crafted an *ilan* of his own, a sequence of five figures that presented Saruq’s unique cosmogonic narrative. Two of his five figures elaborated on visual material in Bacharach’s book, and three were Knorr’s novel visualizations of its texts alone (Fig. 4).

Apropos liminality, Knorr’s original *ilan* was largely incorporated by Jewish kabbalists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries into increasingly popular hybridic scrolls. These opened with four of Knorr’s five original figures, followed by the Poppers and the Zemaḥ diagrams, all spliced one after another in a continuous rotulus many meters in length (Fig. 5).¹⁵ When Jews finally printed an *ilan* (Warsaw 1864)—some two hundred years after Knorr had printed engravings of the major manuscript families in his Latin masterwork—it too opened with Knorr’s images.¹⁶

The ambitious and authoritative diagrams of Lurianic Kabbalah drafted by Vital, Zemaḥ, and Poppers

¹² Meir Poppers, *Or zaru’a* [Light is Sown] (Jerusalem: Ahavat Shalom, 1985), 12b. See also below.

¹³ For the roles of Zemaḥ and Poppers in the reception/redaction history of Lurianic Kabbalah, see Yosef Avivi, *Kabbalat ha-Ari* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi, 2008) (Hebrew).

¹⁴ On the contested question of Saruq’s study under Luria himself, see Ronit Meroz, “R. Israel Sarug, Student of the Ari—A New Examination of the Problem,” *Da’at* 28 (1992): 41–50 [Hebrew].

¹⁵ J. H. Chajes, “Durchlässige Grenzen: Die Visualisierung Gottes zwischen jüdischer und christlicher Kabbala bei Knorr von Rosenroth und van Helmont,” *Morgen-Blatz: Zeitschrift der Christian Knorr von Rosenroth-Gesellschaft* 27 (2017): 99–147.

¹⁶ A unique printed Lurianic *ilan* of 1608 was only recently rediscovered. It is now in the Gross Family Collection. Joseph



Fig. 4 Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, *Kabbala denudata* (Sulzbach, 1677), Apparatus iv, Fig. 8 (at 224). Engraving by Johann Christoph Sartorius (1656–1739). Paper, 19.5 × 21 cm. Print from the Tel Aviv, Gross Family Collection Trust (Photo: William Gross)

were therefore in circulation when R. Nathan of Gaza (1643–1680)—the prophet and primary conceptual architect of Sabbateanism—applied himself to the study of Lurianic lore. Sabbateanism refers to the very complex social and religious phenomenon that began to unfold in the year 1665. In that year, an eccentric and charismatic kabbalist by the name of Sabbatai Ševi, plagued by his own messianic aspirations, visited a brilliant young kabbalistic healer—Nathan—at the latter’s home in what was then the town with the largest Jewish population in the Land of Israel: Gaza (Figs. 6 & 7).

Rather than heal Sabbatai, however, Nathan—who had been frequented by visions of a redeemer of Israel—confirmed Sabbatai’s greatest hope and fear that he was indeed the Messiah. Thanks to Nathan’s brilliance as a communicator (one might say “marketer” today) and to Sabbatai’s undeniable charisma, the movement spread like wildfire around the Jewish world. Gershom Scholem’s magnum opus, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah*, was devoted to this move-

ment up to and including Sabbatai’s conversion to Islam in 1666 and his death a decade later.¹⁷ As Scholem explained it succinctly, the near universal belief of the Jews in the messiahship of Sabbatai set the stage for a perhaps unexpected response to the unthinkable: his apostasy and death. Although many authorities publicly vilified Sabbatai and declared the messianic movement heretical, rabbis also invoked the ancient principle that God could not have led His entire people into error. In other words, although outwardly a failed and false movement, there remained something enduring and true in the experience that did not die with its messiah. For well over a century following Sabbatai’s death, Sabbateanism—now a fluid, personal, and protean phenomenon—would remain a constant presence in Jewish society.¹⁸

The present article is a case study at the crossroads of the history of kabbalistic diagrams and the history of Sabbateanism. Although Sabbateanism should not be thought of in exclusively intellectual (kabbalistic) terms, it remains undeniable that Sabbatai and Nathan

Delmedigo also included a text-only fold-out Lurianic *ilan* in the back matter of his 1628 *Novlot ḥokhmah* [Novellas of Wisdom]. Both of these antecedents to the Warsaw printings are far removed from the manuscript *rotuli* emulated by Knorr and the Warsaw printers.

¹⁷ Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah, 1626–1676* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973).

¹⁸ For a source-reader covering this period, with up-to-date introductions and bibliography, see Pawel Maciejko, ed., *Sabbatian Heresy: Writings on Mysticism, Messianism, and the Origins of Jewish Modernity* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2017).



Fig. 5 Isaac ben Leib of Grupa (Dolná Krupá), scribe; Lurianic *Ilan*, Schlaining (Stadtschlaining, Austria), cl800. Ink on parchment rotulus of five membranes, 26 × 309 cm. Manuscript copy: Cincinnati, Klau Library of the Hebrew Union College, Scrolls 69 (I-4) (detail, top of rotulus). (Photo: Courtesy of the Klau Library of the Hebrew Union College)



Fig. 6 "Sabetha Sebi: Vermeynden Messias der Ioden" from Thomas Loenen, *Ydele verwachtinge der Joden* (Amsterdam: Joannes van den Bergh, 1669), 237. Engraved copper-plate based on 1667 portrait. Paper, 29 × 19 cm. Print in Gross Family Collection Trust (117.011.055). (Photo: Ardon Barhama)

were, in addition to messiah and prophet, kabbalists.¹⁹ Nathan was, moreover, a Lurianic kabbalist, and, as we will see, familiar with the diagrammatic tradition of that lore, from Vital's foundational efforts to the innovations of Zemaḥ and Poppers, its great exponents of the first half of the seventeenth century.²⁰ Indeed,

¹⁹ For a brief, English-language treatment of the kabbalistic preferences of Sabbatai himself, see Yehuda Liebes, "Sabbatai Zevi's Religious Faith," in *Studies in Jewish Myth and Jewish Messianism*, ed. Robert Goldenberg and Arthur Green (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993): 93–113. Scholem noted Sabbatai's utter lack of interest in Lurianic Kabbalah in Scholem, *The Mystical Messiah*, 115–118.

²⁰ Poppers died in the winter of 1662, a few months before Sabbatai's arrival in Jerusalem, and thus never met him. Zemaḥ, however, was one of three judges on the Jerusalem rabbinical

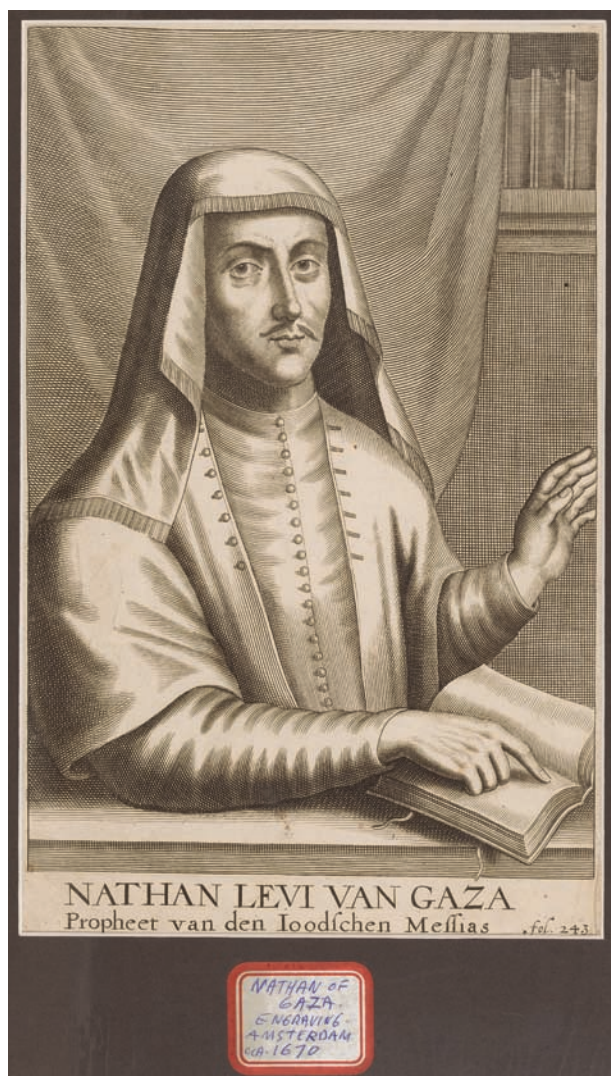


Fig. 7 "Nathan Levi van Gaza: Propheet van den Ioodschen Messias" from Thomas Loenen, *Ydele verwachtinge der Joden* (Amsterdam: Joannes van den Bergh, 1669), 243. Engraved copper-plate based on 1667 portrait. Paper, 29 × 19 cm. Print in Gross Family Collection Trust (117.011.056). (Photo: Ardon Barhama)

the golden age of grand Lurianic *ilanot* was unquestionably "the long eighteenth century"—a British coinage for roughly 1660–1830—and thus coincided with the profound and pervasive absorption of Sabbatean elements in precisely those sectors that produced and consumed these artifacts, including nascent Hasidism.

court that put the ban on Sabbatai and Nathan in 1665, forcing them to leave the city. See Scholem, *The Mystical Messiah*, 183, 248–249, 251. In the deposition of Moses b. Isaac Ḥabib published by R. Jacob Emden that recounts this excommunication, Zemaḥ is described as "the divine kabbalist, our teacher the rabbi Jacob Zemaḥ, who is famous in all the Lurianic writings." Jacob Emden, *Torat ha-kenat* [The Law of Jealousy] (Lvov: M. Wolf, 1870), 53. The deposition suggests that Nathan was condemned by the rabbinic

This brings us to the deceptively simple question at the heart of my study: What would it mean to diagram Sabbateanism? Or to put it another way, what would constitute a Sabbatean *ilan*? Clearly, it would be a kind of Lurianic *ilan*, as the teachings of Nathan of Gaza, like those of Israel Saruq (with which he was intimately familiar), are, at the end of the day, a distinctive expression of Lurianism.²¹ Like the Saruqian teachings, Nathan's Kabbalah was quickly absorbed and often honestly mistaken for the original teachings of Luria.²² Nathan's works were often misattributed (intentionally or unintentionally) and copied (knowingly or unknowingly) along with other works from the non-Sabbatean Lurianic corpus.²³ I emphasize this point in order to make it clear that identifying

court as well, but Scholem treats Sabbatai Ṣevi as the lone target of the ban throughout his discussion. See Scholem, *The Mystical Messiah*, 243 n.127 (Cf. Scholem's reference to Nathan and Sabbatai Ṣevi as having been traveling together at this time[368]). Scholem pits Zemaḥ against Nathan soon thereafter, however, writing that "Nathan ... succeeded in splitting the kabbalist camp, since not all kabbalists would follow Jacob Semah in his denial of any possibility of bridging between the Lurianic tradition (to whose literary crystallization he had contributed so much) and Nathan's message." In Scholem's estimation, the ban and Zemaḥ's opposition "played no role at all in the subsequent development. It was as if it never existed" (251, 253).

²¹ "The Kabbalah of Nathan of Gaza is nothing but a further development of the impersonal Lurianic Kabbalah." Yehuda Liebes, "Sabbetai Zevi's View of His Conversion," in *Sod ha-emunah ha-shabtait* [On Sabbateism (!) and its Kabbalah: Collected Essays] (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1995), 20–34, here 27 [Hebrew]. On Nathan's familiarity with Saruq's thought, see Scholem, *The Mystical Messiah*, 298–299. The best brief survey of the essential tenets and doctrines of Nathan's thought remains Chaim Wirszubski, "The Sabbatean Theology of Nathan of Gaza," in *Ben ha-shitin; kabbalah, kabbalah nozrit, shabtaut* [Between the Lines: Kabbalah, Christian Kabbalah, Sabbateanism] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990), 152–188 [Hebrew]. The most extended treatment of Nathan's thought is Avraham Elqayam, "The Mystery of Faith in the Writings of Nathan of Gaza" (diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1993) [Hebrew]. Little of Nathan's writings has been published to date, and next to nothing since Gershom Scholem, *Be-'ikvot mashiah* [In the Wake of the Messiah] (Jerusalem: Sifrei Tarshish, 1944) [Hebrew]. See, however, the recent printing of Wirszubski's transcription, Leor Holzer, ed. *Sefer habri'a* (*The Book of Creation*) by Nathan Ghazzati. Jerusalem: Holzer Books, 2019 [Hebrew].

²² In 1664, at the age of 66, Samuel Vital—the guardian of his father's authoritative Lurianic writings—came from Damascus to Cairo at the invitation of Raphael Joseph. There, he became, like his host, a believer—lending his authority as "the legitimate heir and representative of the Lurianic tradition" to Nathan. Scholem rightly found it striking that Samuel Vital seems to have found Nathan's Lurianic teachings compelling and genuine. Scholem, *The Mystical Messiah*, 276, 279.

²³ See, for example, Liebes's discussion of *Zaddik yesod 'olam*, a work attributed to Luria in manuscripts and printed editions alike: Yehuda Liebes, "The Book *Zaddik yesod 'olam*—A Sabbatean

a visualization of Nathan's "heretical" expression of Lurianic Kabbalah is hardly an easy task on more than one level, from singling out the "Nathanic" from the "orthodox" Lurianism, to assessing whether the visualization was knowingly drafted by an intentionally Sabbatean kabbalist.²⁴ We are not dealing with works that read like a "Gospel of Nathan" that tell the story of Sabbatai the Messiah, but with works of Lurianism that obliquely contextualize the then current messianic revolution in cosmogonic and cosmological terms. They may be audacious at times, but no more so than any number of other works to be found on every good Jew's bookshelf.

Even when they recognized a given work as Nathan's, many late-seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholars adopted a forgiving stance and allowed themselves to discard the "peel" and enjoy the "fruit."²⁵ Moreover, like Lurianism, Sabbateanism is an umbrella category; it is difficult to find consensus among its major thinkers on any given issue.²⁶ As Maoz Kahana put it, by the eighteenth century it had become "a catch-all for a broad family of beliefs ascribed to both groups and individuals throughout the Jewish dispersion."²⁷ To say that a given individual or work is "Sabbatean" without further elucidation is therefore to have said very little indeed. The nearly empty signifier "Sabbatean" was created by heresy-hunting "proto-Orthodox" rabbis and adopted by their academic successors.²⁸ In so doing, they reified a "complex, liquid and non-essentialized construct" and set up their own astonishment as the criterion for heresy so notably absent in the sources.²⁹

My aim, therefore, will not be to "out" an *ilan* as "Sabbatean" if I can show it to reflect the influence of Nathan's teachings or cannot account otherwise for its audaciousness. To the contrary, what I hope to show through the following brief case-studies is the extent to which even the *ilanot* that are most "suspect" in this regard are hardly of one cloth. If they share in common the aroma of Sabbatean smoke, their underlying fires could hardly be more different. It is a keen awareness of this *difference* that is critical to an appreciation of Sabbateanism in this period.

In short, it is often hard to say who was a Sabbatean over the course of "the long eighteenth century." Regarding one man, however, there is no ambiguity: Nathan of Gaza. Nathan earned the right to be called a Sabbatean fair and square. The visionary architect of a distinctive school of Lurianic Kabbalah, he provided inspiration and justification to the movement through teachings that were at times direct but more often oblique. Like Saruq's *Malbush*, Nathan's novel teachings were expressed in the language of Lurianism, formulated by a master of that tradition. And like Saruq's *Malbush*, Nathan's cosmogonic teachings called for distinctive diagrammatic visualizations.

A master Lurianic kabbalist, Nathan would have been well-aware of the great diagrammatic efforts of Vital, Zemaḥ, and Poppers. It could hardly have escaped him that the *ilanot* rotuli of his day were not simply visualizations, however. Lurianic *ilanot* were designed not only as images that pictured the Godhead, but as tools to be used by practitioners to contribute

Myth," in *Sod ha-emunah ha-shabtait* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1995), 53–69 [Hebrew].

²⁴ I borrow and adapt the apt term "Nathanic" from Jonathan Garb, *Kabbalist in the Heart of the Storm: R. Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto* (Tel-Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2014), 159 [Hebrew].

²⁵ See Maoz Kahana, "The Allure of Forbidden Knowledge: The Temptation of Sabbatean Literature for Mainstream Rabbis in the Frankist Moment, 1756–1761," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 102, no. 4 (2012): 589–616, especially the revealing analysis of the personal diaries of R. Pinhas Katzenellenbogen, 599–613.

²⁶ Idel, "Perceptions of Kabbalah in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," 76 and especially nn. 91 and 92 there.

²⁷ Kahana, "The Allure of Forbidden Knowledge," 589.

²⁸ Cf. the trenchant remarks in Elisheva Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy: Rabbi Moses Hagiz and the Sabbatian Controversies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 16–17. For a recent example of academic heresy hunting in which the author writes that to "out" secret Sabbateans she will "inspect their *zizit*," see Shifra Asulin, "Conversion and Hebraism in Seventeenth-Century Europe: A Consideration of Johann Kemper of Uppsala, AKA Moshe Ben Aaron Cohen of Krakow," in *The Sabbatian Movement and Its Aftermath: Messianism, Sabbatianism and Frankism*, ed. Rachel

Elior (Jerusalem: The Institute of Jewish Studies, 2001), 423–63, here 432 [Hebrew].

²⁹ In Tishby's work, there are numerous examples of material being added to the indictment that have no trace in earlier Sabbatean literature but which nevertheless are presented as evidence for an author's Sabbatean filiation. In one case Tishby writes that a particularly incriminating idea was not to be found in Sabbateanism. Isaiah Tishby, "Between Sabbateanism and Hasidism: The Sabbateanism of the Kabbalist R. Yaaqov Kopel Lifshitz of Miedzyrec," in *Netivei emunah u-minut* [Paths of faith and heresy] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1964), 204–226, here 219 [Hebrew]. The passage in quotation marks was used to describe the category of gender in Shaul Magid, *Hasidism Incarnate: Hasidism, Christianity, and the Construction of Modern Judaism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 96. Similarly, Yehuda Liebes has on occasion failed to find a source for a particular idea in clearly Sabbatean sources, but relied upon its "strongly match[ing] the spirit of Sabbatean syncretism." Yehuda Liebes, "A Profile of R. Naphtali Katz from Frankfurt and His Attitude Towards Sabbateanism," in *Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah in Ashkenazi Judaism*, ed. Karl E. Grözinger and Joseph Dan (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 208–222, here 213.

to its rectification, or *tikkun*.³⁰ This latter function brings us to a point I have yet to make but that is now salient: kabbalistic diagrams, and *ilan rotuli* in particular, were deeply implicated in the performance of Lurianic *kavanot*—the technical intentions to be focused upon during the commission of commandments and particularly during prayer. And if Lurianic theory could be harnessed by Nathan to explain the origins of Sabbatai's soul or the necessity of his apostasy, there was a problem with the *kavanot* and the work of *tikkun*: things had changed since Luria had prescribed them nearly a century before; the divine presence, the *shekhina*, was no longer "in the dust," but rising. With the seismic shift of the cosmos inaugurated by Sabbatai's coming, the old *kavanot* had become obsolete. Nathan was the first among the Sabbatean critics of *kavanot*; Sabbatai had also criticized them, but largely for their unintelligible obscurity.³¹ At times, Nathan called for scrapping them entirely, but he would also take upon himself their revision. Indeed, it is fair to say that if there was one genre with which Nathan was most widely identified—and which enjoyed a long afterlife, despite Nathan's problematic profile—it was the *tikkunim*, the pietistic "rectification" practices designed both to atone for the past and to inaugurate the new era (Fig. 8).³²

Despite the theoretical considerations and practical consequences of the dawning of the new era that might have threatened the genre of *ilanot* as it did the *kavanot* of Lurianic prayer, Nathan carried on drawing. Indeed, he not only used diagrams to illustrate concepts *en passant* in his various works, but he crafted a treatise that was fundamentally diagrammatic in nature: the *Maamar ha-iggulim* [Discourse of the Circles].³³ My



Fig. 8 Frontispiece, *Selihot* (Penitential Prayers), ed. David de Castro Tartas (Amsterdam, 1666). Paper, 12.3 × 7.5 cm. Gross Family Collection Trust (B.52). (Photo: William Gross)

³⁰ J. H. Chajes, "Imaginative Thinking with a Lurianic Diagram," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 110, no. 1 (2020): 30–63. Although Sabbatai Ševi had little use for the Lurianic "*tikkun*," Nathan seems to have at once preached its general obsolescence as well as its ongoing validity—at least with regard to the fate of human souls. See Scholem, *The Mystical Messiah*, 277, 293.

³¹ Nathan warned against the use of *kavanot* in his letter of September 1665 to Raphael Joseph in Egypt. See Scholem, *The Mystical Messiah*, 271–272, 277. The irony of Nathan's position in light of his own practices is pointed out and discussed on 279–280. See also Liebes, "Sabbetai Zevi's View of His Conversion," 25–26. The tension surrounding the question of whether or not to use the *kavanot*—and for what reasons—persisted over the subsequent centuries. See, for example, Idel, "Perceptions of Kabbalah in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," 68–76; Menachem Kallus, "The Relation of the Baal Shem Tov to the Practice of Lurianic Kavvanot in Light of His Comments on the Siddur Rashkov," *Kabbalah* 2 (1997): 151–167.

³² See Scholem, *The Mystical Messiah*, 466–467, 472–478, 496–498, 524–527; Isaiah Tishby, "The Penitential *Tikkunim* of Nathan of Gaza," *Tarbits* 15, no. 3–4 (1944): 161–180 [Hebrew]; Meir Benayahu, "*Shabta'ut be-yavan*" [The Sabbatean movement in Greece], *Sefunot* 14 (1973): 258–305 [Hebrew].

³³ The work has reached us in three manuscripts, all Italian copies dating to ca. 1700. The most complete version is Berlin, Preussische Staatsbibliothek, MS. Or. Oct. 3078. The less complete texts (with fewer and no diagrams, respectively) are Benayahu MS V 2 and Oxford Bodleian MS. Oppenheim Add. 4° 112. A fuller treatment and critical edition of this work is in preparation by Eliezer Baumgarten and myself. To date, only Giulio Busi has taken note of Nathan's diagrams; *Qabbalah visiva* includes the first diagram from *Maamar ha-iggulim* 1a. See Busi, *Qabbalah visiva*, 416–419. Scholem noticed a reference to this manuscript in a letter written by R. Isaiah Bassan to R. Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto published by S. Ginzburg in his *Igrot Ramhal*, 105, and writes that he himself saw the manuscript in Berlin in 1932. Gershom Scholem, *The Dreams*

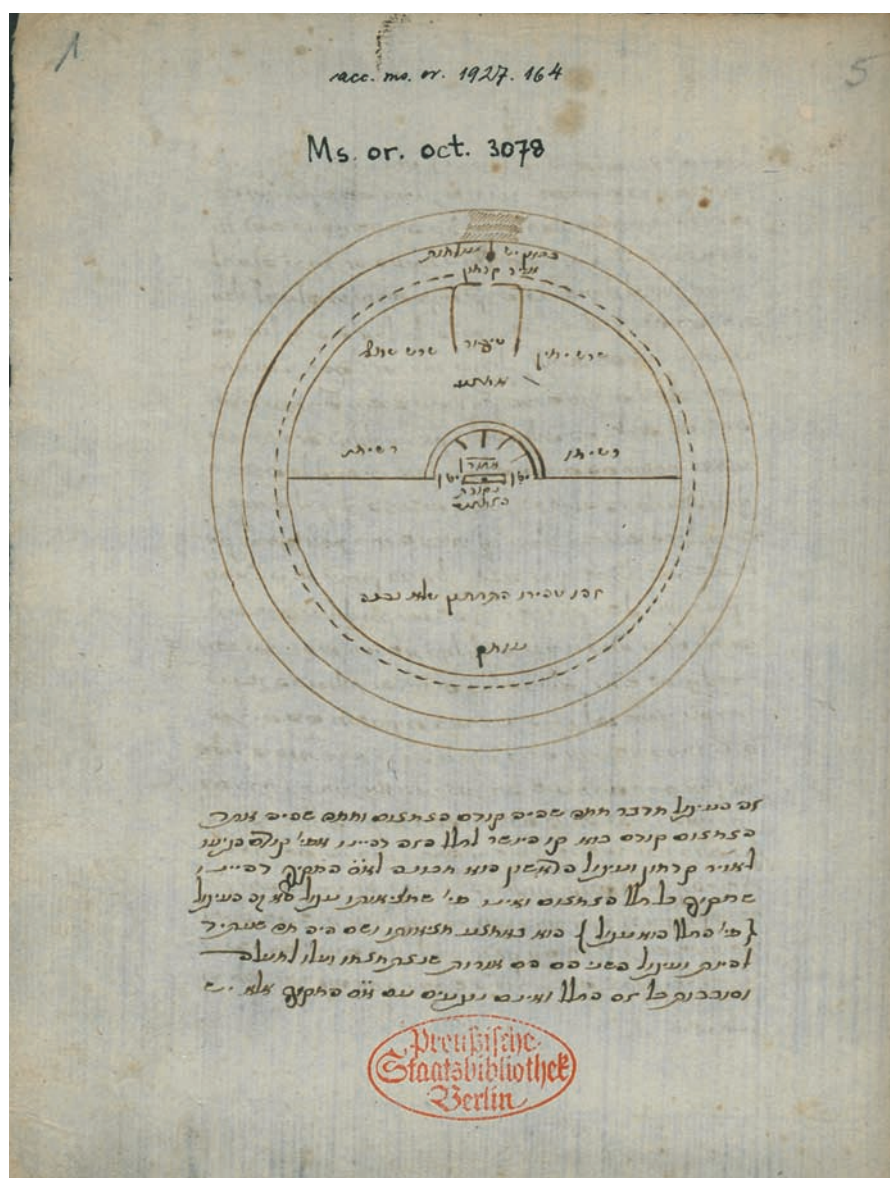


Fig. 9 Nathan of Gaza (1643–1680), *Maamar ha-iggulim*. Manuscript copy: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz, ms. or. oct. 3078, 1a. Italy, late 17th. c.. Paper 20.3 × 15.9 cm. (Photo: Courtesy of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.)

exploration of Sabbatean diagrams must rightly begin with at least a brief examination of these incontestable specimens.³⁴

Nathan's *Maamar ha-iggulim*, in the most complete extant witness, features four substantial diagrams—substantial in the sense that they dominate the respective pages upon which they are inscribed and, even more, constitute the core of the work and its structuring principle (Fig. 9).

The text of the treatise is, first and foremost, a commentary on these diagrams. Each section opens with a *rota*—a circular figure featuring internal divisions of various sorts and modest captioning—and then proceeds to Nathan's explication of its meaning. It is worth pointing out that in Nathan's lost autograph, and indeed as we find in two of the three extant witnesses, we may be quite certain that the diagrams did not merely dominate their respective pages but were

of R. Mordecai Ashkenazi, *a Follower of Shabbetai Zevi* (Leipzig: Schocken, 1937), 54 n.3 [Hebrew].

³⁴ Nathan's distinctive and ubiquitous usage of the term “*zōyyu*” (“image”) and its various derivations must also be subject to thor-

presented on oversize fold-out pages more congenial to the inscription of their wealth of graphical detail and intended contemplative use. This had been Vital's way, and Zemaḥ's after him.³⁵ The copyist of Benayahu ms V 2 was good enough to leave a comment that eliminates all doubt: "I have not written here the circle (העיגול) and the form (והצורה) because the format (מצע) is too small to unfold (מהשתרע). It will be written on a page of its own, at length (בהרחבה). There you will see it, and you will understand its meaning from here."³⁶ The copyist's note not only confirms my impression that Nathan continued the tradition of Vital and Zemaḥ in the strictly material sense, but that the text of the treatise was nothing more than an explanation of the diagrams at its heart. Unfortunately, fold-outs are the first pages of a manuscript to be lost, separated from the codices into which they were sewn, whether intentionally or by the inevitable ravages of time.³⁷ Even the Berlin witness is incomplete, having lost what—on the basis of the opening of its explication—was the most ambitious and synoptic diagram of the series: "Behold, *this circle* communicates the entirety of the worlds, from the beginning of the Primordial Ether (*avir kadmon*) to the last circle of the World of Action; and I will here present before you [the meaning of] each element on its own."³⁸ We may speculate that this particularly ambitious diagram did not lend itself, like the others, to the miniaturization required to reproduce it on the octavo paper size of the codex and hence has been lost.³⁹

The Berlin manuscript nevertheless begins with a diagram that gives a good sense of how Nathan visualized his cosmogonic notions. The bottom half of the inner circle is labeled "this is the lower *tehiru* ([super-

nal] light)⁴⁰ that was not built" (*zehu tehiru ha-taḥton she-lo nivnah*), a realm of hylic chaos.⁴¹ A place of unlimited potential for good or evil, it is also the location of the soul root of the Messiah. The "lower *tehiru*" is one of Nathan's innovations with no antecedents in prior Lurianic literature. A short passage on the *tehiru* from Nathan's *Drush ha-t'ninim* [Treatise on the Dragons] illustrates his wondrously subversive discursive weave of structural cosmology and messianism:

Know that the Abyss (*tehom*) that has no end is in the depths of the ocean. For when the worlds were emanated and *Ein Sof* withdrew his light and the secret of the *tehiru* remained at the center, from this *tehiru* were emanated all the worlds until this one. And you already know that we stand at the midpoint of the epicenter. And we must explain how we stand at the midpoint. If we say that all the circles are within one another like onion skins and we are at the center, then *Azīlut* is [also] beneath us, and the legs of *Adam Kadmon* that connect one extremity to the other pass through this world. And the linear channel, by means of which the light of *Ein Sof* comes [into creation], must necessarily pass through this world. What advantage, then, does *Azīlut* beneath us have over *Assiyah*? And why is all the matter and murkiness in this world, [despite] the linear channel being so near to us? ... And what is the secret of the Abyss if not the secret of the *tehiru*? ... And this *tehiru* is not clarified [*huvrar*] and will not be clarified but by the King Messiah, when the legs of *Adam Kadmon* descend and his feet stand on the Mount of Olives, and also the aspect of the linear channel will be below him. And then "the legs will come together."⁴²

Indeed, throughout Nathan's oeuvre we find a distinctive discourse of Lurianic cosmological structuralism

ough analysis. The centrality of *ziyyur* is also evident in Jonathan Eibeschütz, *And I Came This Day Unto the Fountain. Critically Edited and Introduced by Paweł Maciejko, with Additional Studies by Noam Lefler, Jonatan Benarroch and Shai Alleson Gerberg* (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2014), 14, 32, and especially 39 [Hebrew]. A dedicated study that explores the epistemological, ontological, and representational dimensions of this iconotextual discourse in Sabbatean works is a desideratum. For now, see Wirszubski, "The Sabbatean Theology of Nathan of Gaza," 157–159. Wirszubski does not specifically discuss *ziyyur* but shows its use as a synonym for *binyan* (lit. "building," "structure") in Nathan's cosmogony.

³⁵ See Chajes, "Kabbalistic Diagram as Epistemic Image," 260 n.94.

³⁶ The comment may be found on 162v of Benayahu MS V 2.

³⁷ See Chajes, "Kabbalah Practices/Practical Kabbalah: The Magic of Kabbalistic Trees," 121.

³⁸ Berlin MS Or. Oct. 3078, 9r. Cf. Oxford Bodleian MS. Oppenheim Add. 4°112, 2a, which is published in Scholem, *Be-ikvot mashi'ah*, 132. For "synoptic" vs. "detail" Lurianic diagrams, see J.

H. Chajes, "Kabbalah and the Diagrammatic Phase of the Scientific Revolution," in *Jewish Culture in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of David B. Ruderman*, ed. Richard I. Cohen, Natalie B. Dohrmann, Adam Shear, and Elchanan Reiner (New York: Hebrew Union College Press, 2014), 109–123, especially 114–117.

³⁹ Comparably comprehensive circle diagrams designed by Vital and Zemaḥ that have reached us thanks to the miniaturization efforts of the determined scribe R. Samuel ben Solomon Laniado may give us an idea of Nathan's model. See Figure 2 above.

⁴⁰ *Tehiru* is a cosmogonic term of zoharic provenance that denotes the highest light, the "luster on high" that is the brilliance of *Ein Sof*. See Daniel Chanan Matt, ed., *The Zohar, Pritzker Edition. Vol. I* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 107.

⁴¹ For Nathan, the secret of the *tehiru* was intimately bound up with the secret of faith. Elqayam, "The Mystery of Faith in the Writings of Nathan of Gaza," 99.

⁴² Zohar II 258b. Translated by the author from Scholem, *Be-ikvot mashi'ah*, 18.



Fig. 10 Nosen Khazen Hammerschlag (1624–c.1700), “Ilan de-Adam Kadmon”, 1691. Manuscript autograph: München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Cod.hebr. 450. Roll of 5 stapled parchment sheets, 336 × 68 cm. (Photo: Courtesy of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek)

imbued with existential pathos. This pathos may have been impossible to diagram, but the structural features that trigger it were not. Recalling our question, then, a provisional answer might be that a Sabbatean diagram would be one that features distinctive elements of Nathan’s cosmogonic narrative.

Nathan of Gaza, although clearly a visual thinker who fashioned works in which drawings were primary and texts their secondary explanations, did not craft an *ilan rotulus*—or at least not one that has reached us. Furthermore, none of the *ilanot* that have reached us from the late seventeenth century forward were produced by known Sabbateans.⁴³ Aside from the problematic category of “known Sabbateans,” the fact that so few *ilanot* carry colophons identifying their creators renders such a statement effectively meaningless. We have no choice but to interrogate the *ilanot* from this period for texts and visualizations of ideas associated with the figure of Sabbatai Ševi or with the notion of Sabbatean—and particularly Nathanian—Kabbalah. As a thorough review would mandate a book-length study, I will focus here on one extraordinary case-study. To provide a measure of comparison and contrast, I will then proceed to present two additional case-studies, albeit with relative concision.

Ilan of Adam Kadmon

The grand *Ilan of Adam Kadmon* (Fig. 10) by R. Nosen Khazen Hammerschlag⁴⁴—or Nosen Khazen, as he usually refers to himself—is the most jaw-dropping *ilan* I have yet to discover.⁴⁵ Dated 1691 in a colophon as rich and enigmatic as the artifact it concludes, this grand *rotulus* is composed of five vellum sheets. Each is approximately 68 cm wide; together, they extend 336 cm. The *ilan*, rubricated in red, orange, and shades of greenish-brown colors, is sufficiently gaudy to have attracted the attention of historians of Jewish art, but, not surprisingly, was utterly incomprehensible

⁴³ An *ilan* signed by Berl Perlhefter (c.1650 – c.1713) was recently brought to my attention by Francesco Spagnolo, the curator of the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life in Berkeley, California. The *ilan* is in their collection [67.1.11.3]. Perlhefter was a known Sabbatean during his years in the circle of R. Abraham Rovigo from roughly 1675 to 1682. The *ilan* is a beautiful, but—in terms of its content—ordinary copy of the *Adam Kadmon* rotulus associated with Poppers.

⁴⁴ Nosen Khazen is the most plausible pronunciation of Hammerschlag’s name in seventeenth-century Moravia. My thanks to Michael Miller, Alexander Beider, and Lenka Uličná for their consultations on this matter

⁴⁵ To explore this *ilan* online, see <https://tinyurl.com/ybt8azwh>.



Fig. 11 Nosen Khazen Hammerschlag (1624–c.1700), “*Ilan Adam Kadmon*,” 1684, Moravia. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Michael 88, 86b–87a. Paper, 190 × 12.6 cm. (Photo: provided by the Bodleian)

to them.⁴⁶ And although, as we will see, it is wise to question the facts as presented by our kabbalist-artist, the following may be gleaned from the aforementioned colophon: Hammerschlag was 67 upon completing his masterpiece in 1691, giving us a birth year of 1624. From his marginal annotations in an Oxford manuscript, we know his birthplace as well: Prosnitz, Moravia.⁴⁷ He was appointed as *khazen* (“cantor”) in 1642 and further claims that, at the time, he served as scribe to the “four lands of Poland.” The last we hear of him is in 1694, when he crafted a Lurianic prayer book.⁴⁸

This flamboyant *ilan* enjoyed a long period of gestation, as might be expected given the expense of its materials and the scale of the effort involved in its execution. A codex study was completed by Hammerschlag in 1684, much of which would be copied to parchment to create his masterpiece (Fig. 11).⁴⁹

A Lurianic kabbalist, Hammerschlag crafted an *ilan* bursting with references to the works of R. Ḥayyim

Vital. Indeed, the *ilan* colophon goes so far as to assert that Vital’s own *ilan* served as his model. However, a cursory glance at Hammerschlag’s long parchment should suffice to call that claim into question. Vital’s variations on nested circles are not only a world away from the sensibilities of our scribe but are, in fact, nowhere incorporated in its myriad details. The other hoary kabbalistic schema, the arboreal diagram, is also entirely absent in this “Tree of *Adam Kadmon*.” Hammerschlag’s tree is, in every way, a unicum.

Not one for consistency, Hammerschlag says as much himself just after asserting his reliance on Vital’s model: “This tree, which has never been seen until this very generation, with its enlarged branches: happy is the eye that has seen its great power and grandeur!” Though one could hardly contest that in this case the unprecedented whole was greater than the sum of its parts, many of the parts were indeed borrowed from earlier textual and visual sources, often with citations.

⁴⁶ The description of the rubrication of the *ilan* is borrowed from Michal Sternhall’s entry in the Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art. For now, the full entry on this *ilan* is offline, pending update. Munich BSM Cod. hebr. 451, a second, highly colorful *rotulus* by Hammerschlag, remains accessible. The latter is a so-called “*ilan ha-dikduk*” ([kabbalistic] “tree of hebrew grammar”). <https://tinyurl.com/y9czt6or>.

⁴⁷ See his marginal texts on the frontispiece of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Mich. 139.

⁴⁸ Based on the colophon in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Mich. 139. The mistaken bibliographical claim that an edition of the Psalms with his commentary was published in Prosnitz in 1605 is based on the conflation of the edition used by Hammerschlag for his commentary and the date of his composition. See Marvin J. Heller, “Often Overlooked: Hebrew Printing in Porstejov (Prosnitz),” in *Further Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 120 and the references in n.9.

⁴⁹ Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Mich. 88, 81a–103b.

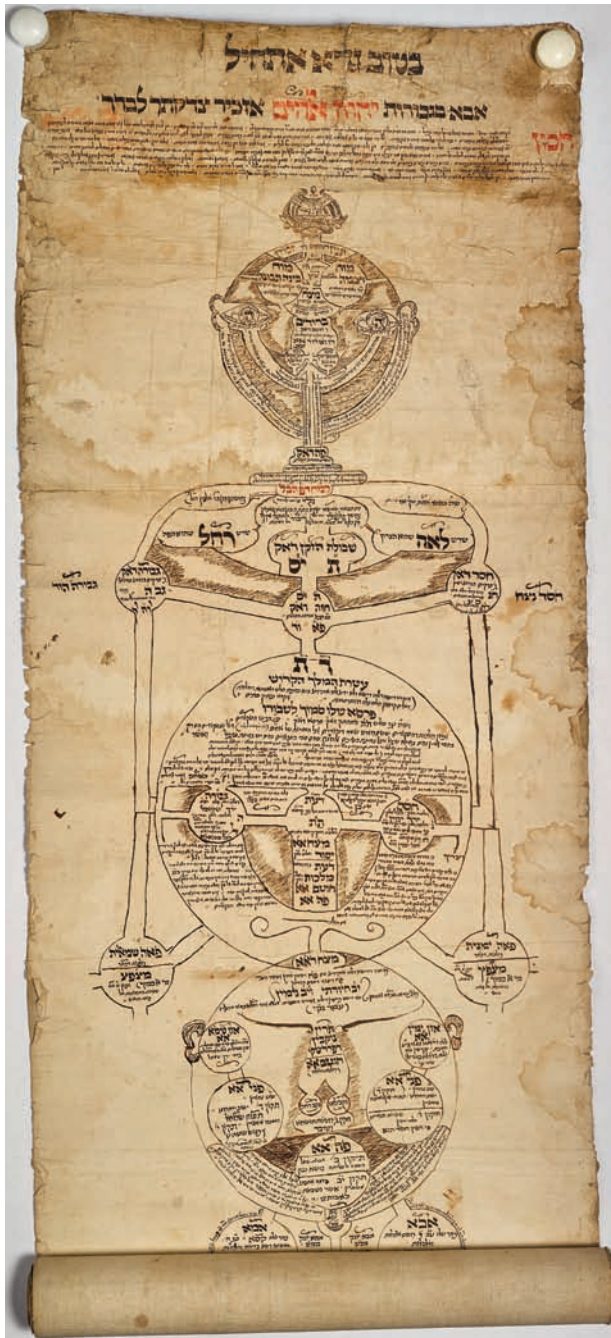


Fig. 12 Meir Poppers (?) (c. 1624–1662), “*Ilan of Adam Kadmon* and the *parzufim*,” c.1650, Cracow. Manuscript copyist: Nosen Khazen Hammerschlag (1624–c.1700), c.1660, Moravia. Paper rotulus of 11 membranes glued together and backed on linen, 400 × 48.6 cm. Gross Family Collection 028.011.009 (detail). (Photo: Ardon Barhama)

His use of earlier visual kabbalistic material is less conspicuous. Preparing his *magnum opus* in the late seventeenth century, he consulted the *ilanot* circulating in his environment even as he sought to better them in his own great *ilan*. As I recently discovered,

he even tried his hand at copying a standard Poppers *ilan*.⁵⁰ Although his artistic style was too indelible to go unnoticed, the Hammerschlag Poppers remains a faithful adaptation of its model (Fig. 12). For all the eccentricity of the *Adam Kadmon* atop his Poppers rotulus, it is light years away from the cartoony monarch staring straight ahead from the center of the first vellum sheet of the grand Munich parchment (Fig. 9).⁵¹

An examination of the inscriptions in the *Ilan of Adam Kadmon* reveals that, despite the strikingly different representational framework, Hammerschlag had in fact incorporated considerable content from the Lurianic *ilanot* produced earlier in the century. The same can be said of the subsequent “countenances” (*parzufim*), which are rendered in highly schematic form in most *ilanot*. In the Hammerschlag *ilan*, the first of these appears just below the flared bottom of the doublet bearing the 72-letter-Name (known today largely through Hollywood celebrity tattoos). The second has been shunted just under *Adam Kadmon*’s right hand. It seems almost appropriate to describe Hammerschlag as having “cannibalized” its highly regarded and widely circulated antecedent, the Poppers *ilan*. More prominent still are the traces of another Lurianic *ilan* then at the peak of its popularity. Like the Poppers *ilan*, which appeared across seven fold-out pages (Figs. 1–7) in Knorr’s 1677 *Kabbala denudata*, this second *ilan* in Hammerschlag’s repertoire had been published by Knorr as “Figure 15” in the same apparatus.⁵² Here too, Hammerschlag took artistic liberties with his source, incorporating it in bits and pieces across the novel serpentine layout of the lower section of the great *ilan*.⁵³

These prosaic deviations from generic conventions are hardly what make Hammerschlag’s *ilan* such a

⁵⁰ Shortly after my identification of the manuscript, it was acquired by William Gross and is now Gross Family Collection 028.011.009.

⁵¹ See J. H. Chajes and Eliezer Baumgarten, “About Faces: Kabbalistic Visualizations of the Divine Visage in the Gross Family Collection,” in *Windows on Jewish Worlds: The Gross Family Collection*, ed. Emile Schrijver, Falk Wiesemann, and Shalom Sabar (Zutphen, Netherlands: Walburg Pers, 2019): 72–83.

⁵² We find this *ilan* today in at least five manuscript families, including fold-out sheets bound into codices (Oxford MS. Michael 620 and, of a different family, Bodleian Library MS. Opp. 551), and as one extended section of a compact but highly refined composite *ilan* (Gross Family Trust MS 028.012.016).

⁵³ The three last vellum sheets of Hammerschlag’s *ilan* are divided into four columns, and the iconotextual flow begins in the upper-right corner of each. The presentation proceeds to the

startling artifact of kabbalistic visualization. It goes without saying that, despite his insistence that Vital's autograph provided his model, Hammerschlag's *ilan*, his *Adam Kadmon*, boldly departed from earlier kabbalistic diagrams. Vital had visualized *Adam Kadmon* as a series of circles punctured by a channel from above. Hammerschlag's *Adam Kadmon* was a Habsburgian emperor, from Imperial Crown to curled mustache.⁵⁴ His tripartite crown is unmistakably modeled on that of the Austrian Empire, a pure gold masterpiece executed in 1602 by Jan Vermeyen in Prague to be the personal crown of Rudolf II. The crown, today housed in the Kaiserliche Schatzkammer at the Hofburg Palace in Vienna, was a symbol of the beloved monarchy embraced by its Jewish subjects, as may be seen in its prominence in ritual artifacts from Torah *tasim* (breastplates) to *rimmonim* (ornamental stave finials) and Chanukka menorahs.⁵⁵ More pointedly, it is difficult not to notice the resemblance to Leopold I, the reigning Holy Roman Emperor (1640–1705, r. 1658–1705) (Fig. 13).

Remembered today by Jewish historians chiefly for his consent to the expulsion of Jews from Vienna in 1670,⁵⁶ Leopold had been the emperor for a generation

and was the iconic ruler of his age when Hammerschlag set to work on his great *ilan*.

Regally rich reds and golden yellows embellish the audaciously anthropomorphic representation. Such bold anthropomorphism in a drawing of *Adam Kadmon* is bested only by an engraving in Knorr's *Kabbala denudata*—the fifth of a sequence of diagrams he designed himself and the only one not included in later Jewish *ilanot* (Fig. 14).⁵⁷ This image also reminds us that *Adam Kadmon* can mean different things to different people. For those in Knorr's circle, it signified the Christ.⁵⁸ What did it mean for Hammerschlag?⁵⁹

It is an established tradition in the study of the Kabbalah of this period—both rabbinic and academic—for scholars to suspect Sabbateanism when confronted with something that strikes them as bizarre.⁶⁰ Hammerschlag's *ilan* certainly passes the bizarre test; should we suspect Sabbateanism? Nosen Khazen, we recall, would have been in his early 40s when the movement was in its heyday in the 1660s. We have no documentary evidence for his involvement in the movement at the time, but is the *ilan* itself evidence? Is his outrageous, cartoony anthropomorphism indicative of Sabbatean

bottom of each column (as limited by the vellum section) and continues atop the adjacent column to the left. From the bottom of the far-left column, one continues atop the right column of the next vellum sheet. This layout is a departure from the typical one found in *ilanot*, in which columns retain their integrity—center, flanked by right and left—from top to bottom, thereby respecting the symbolic significance of those placements in kabbalistic theosophy. Hammerschlag has not done away with that symbolic significance, of course; it is retained within each of the four columns.

⁵⁴ See n. 46 for a link to the online image that will be useful to consult as I offer close readings here and below.

⁵⁵ The Prague Jewish Museum has over 1,200 pieces of Viennese silver in its collection; Jewish museums in Vienna, Budapest, and New York, and the Israel Museum have extensive collections as well. My images and information are thanks to the generosity of William Gross, who has a number of extraordinary pieces of rare Alt-Wien (pre-1866) Jewish ritual Viennese silver in his collection.

⁵⁶ See, for example, David Kaufmann, *Die Letzte Vertreibung der Juden aus Wien und Niederösterreich: Ihre Vorgeschichte (1625–1670) und Ihre Opfer* (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1889), 65–166. The possibility of a kind of devotional messianic conflation between Leopold I and Sabbatai is intriguing and worth exploring. For a rare contemporary Jewish work on the former, see Daniel Springer, *Derekh ha-neshet: divrei ha-yamim shel ha-kaysar Leopoldus be-loshon ha-kodesh, ve-arami, ve-lashon ashkenaz* [Way of the Eagle: The History of Emporor Leopold in Hebrew, Aramaic and Yiddish] (Dyhernfurth: 1705). It may only be extant in the copy from David Oppenheim's library now in Oxford. Leopold I expelled the Jews of Vienna in

1670, which one might imagine would have ruined him as an object for Jewish veneration. His rule was not without its moments of benevolence toward the Jews, however, and the very fact that he was such a long-ruling Emperor (from the 1650s for a good half-century), who survived the Ottoman threat of the 1680s, may have made him something of an object for obsession or devotion.

⁵⁷ See Chajes, "Durchlässige Grenzen." The entry on "*Adam Kadmon*" in the turn-of-the-twentieth-century first Hebrew language general encyclopedia, *Oẓar Yisrael* [Treasure of Israel], features a highly realistic human-form *Adam Kadmon*, and prompted Rav Kook to write a letter in 1908 expressing his outrage. The image was sourced from Christian kabbalistic sources. Kook's letter was published as §133 in vol. 1 of *Iggrot ha-Raayah* [Letters of Rav Kook] (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1985), 161.

⁵⁸ Sheila A. Spector, ed., *Francis Mercury Van Helmont's "Sketch of Christian Kabbalism"* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 37. On the identification of the Trinity with kabbalistic *parzufim* by Helmont and Knorr, see the discussion in Allison P. Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the 17th Century: The Life and Thought of Francis Mercury Van Helmont, 1614–1698* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 125–129. Coudert rather amusingly makes an *a fortiori* argument on 127 regarding the plausibility of such identifications (in particular Christ the son with *Zeir Anpin*, which was an alternative to the *Adam Kadmon* association) by these two on the basis of Gershom Scholem's descriptions, which Coudert reads as if they were written by a Christian kabbalist!

⁵⁹ Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah*, 127.

⁶⁰ See n. 29 above.



Fig. 13 Hendrik Cause (1648–1699), “Leopoldus I.” c.1658–1699. Etching on paper, 24.7 × 17 cm. (Photo: Courtesy of ANL/Vienna Picture Archives PORT_00046931_01)

proclivities? Alas, anthropomorphic visualization of the divine is a problematic marker of Sabbateanism. First, anthropomorphic representations (albeit highly schematized) of *Adam Kadmon* had been fashioned by R. Meir Poppers, the leading Lurianic scholar of the mid-seventeenth century responsible for redacting the

canonical *Ez Ḥayyim*.⁶¹ Second, we know that among Sabbatean thinkers there were certainly figures—Abraham Miguel Cardozo foremost among them—who would have been opposed to such extravagant corporalization of the divine.⁶² And as we have seen, the founding theorist of Sabbatean Lurianism, Nathan

⁶¹ The diagrammatic commentary on the zoharic *idrot* composed in the fourteenth century by R. David ben Judah he-Hasid, *Sefer ha-gvul* [Book of the Limit], also provides an example of schematic anthropomorphic representationalism outside of any Sabbatean context. A bold post-Sabbatean example may be found in the series of *ilanot* fashioned by the Iraqi kabbalist R. Sasson ben Mordechai Shanduch (1747–1830). A critical edition of this family of manuscripts is in preparation by our research group. Shanduch has not

been “suspected” of Sabbatean leanings, but too little research has been done to make any definitive claims about him or even about Sabbateanism in Iraq in the long eighteenth century.

⁶² Although I have not examined Cardozo’s manuscripts, my impression is that his anti-anthropomorphic and metaphorical reading of Lurianic Kabbalah would have made him an unlikely producer of diagrams. On Cardozo and Lurianic Kabbalah, see Nissim Yosha, *Captivated By Messianic Agonies: Theology, Philosophy and*

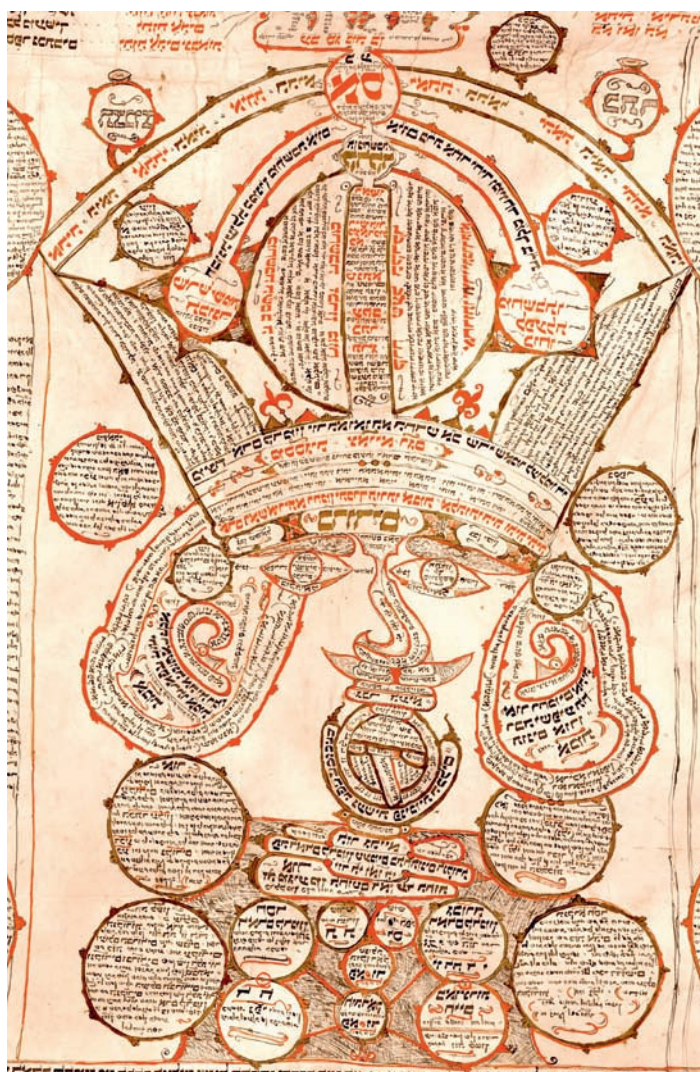


Fig. 14 Detail of Fig. 10. The image has been reversed on its horizontal axis to accentuate the resemblance of the portrait of Leopold I.

of Gaza, retained the geometrical graphic repertoire associated with Vital's and Zerah's diagrams to map his own distinctive *theological* innovations.⁶³ (None of these innovations are to be found in Hammerschlag's extraordinary *ilan*.)

Messianism in the Thought of Abraham Miguel Cardozo (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi, 2015), 161–166 [Hebrew]. The “circular and linear” emanations so central to Lurianic diagrams were not spared Cardozo's treatment, as may be seen in the passage adduced in Nissim Yosha, “The Philosophical Background of Sabbatean Theology—Guidelines Towards an Understanding of Abraham Michael Cardoso's Theory of the Divine,” in *Galut aḥar golah: meḥkarim be-toledot 'am Israel mugashim le-professor Haim Beinart* [Beinart Festschrift], ed. Yosef Kaplan, Aharon Mirsky, and Avraham Grossman (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi, 1988), 562–564, especially 563.

Moshe Idel has noted that Sabbatean interpretations of Lurianism were commonly viewed as anthropomorphic, with examples drawn

Anthropomorphism alone may not suffice to mark Hammerschlag as a Sabbatean, but a close inspection of the *ilan* leaves no room for doubt about his faith. Just below the title inscription, “Tree of Adam Kadmon,” we see a Tetragrammaton fashioned of large hollowed

from Hasidic critiques of corporeal understandings of Lurianism. Idel does not argue that actual Sabbatean interpretations of Lurianism were anthropomorphic. Idel, “Perceptions of Kabbalah in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century,” 59. Cf. 76, where Idel contrasts Luzzatto and R. Joseph Ergas's allegorical interpretations of Lurianism with the “plain meaning” stressed by R. Immanuel Hai Ricchi. The fact that Luzzatto created *ilanot*—albeit nonanthropomorphic—further complicates any attempt to correlate views on corporealization and the production of *ilanot*.

⁶³ See, however, Nathan's reference to “the arms I have drawn there in Adam Kadmon” in the short cosmogonic work noted above, Scholem, *Be-ikvot mashiach*, 144.



Fig. 15 Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1631–1689), *Kabbala denudata* (Sulzbach, 1677), Apparatus IV, Fig. 12 (at 233). Engraving by Johann Christoph Sartorius (1656–1739). Paper, 21.7 × 17.7 cm. Print from the Tel Aviv, Gross Family Collection Trust (Photo: William Gross)

letters filled and surrounded by inscriptions. The decorative rectangular frame in which it is set has a small opening centered on its lower horizontal line. This opening leads into the crown jewel of the Habsburg crown—here dominated by the acrostic for *Ein Sof*, the infinite. The typical divine name associated with *keter* (“crown”), the highest of the *sefirot*, is *EHYH*—a name used by God self-referentially in Exodus 3:14 that may be understood as “I shall be,” that is, a first-person future-tense conjugation of “to be.” This divine name was associated by the kabbalists with the crown *sefirah*, which is above and beyond the constellation of the *sefirot*. The Tetragrammaton, by contrast, was associated with the central *sefirah* of *tiferet*—the *sefirah* also associated with the Holy One, Blessed be He. By placing

⁶⁴ This central tenet of Sabbateanism was explored most thoroughly in Elqayam, “The Mystery of Faith in the Writings of Nathan of Gaza.” For Sabbatai’s own formulation, see Liebes, “Shabbetai Zevi’s View of His Conversion.”

YHVH as he did—not merely substituting it for *EHYH* but also showing it as the deeper source of *Ein Sof* and *keter*, Hammerschlag was making a statement that would scarcely be missed by anyone with an inkling of Sabbatai Ševi’s “secret of the Godhead.”⁶⁴ In this “secret,” which Sabbatai innovated and that both Nathan of Gaza and Abraham Miguel Cardozo elaborated, *YHVH* is the true and very personal God first and foremost of Sabbatai (“*elohei Sabbatai Ševi*,” as he often referred to Him), but in principle of anyone accepting this secret. This is undoubtedly the intended sense of the inscription just below the bold title of the *ilan*, which reads: “And you, my son, know the God of your father (*elohei avikha*) ... for *YHVH* demands all hearts.”⁶⁵ Hammerschlag added a manicula just under the *YHVH* in that inscription point-

⁶⁵ On the centrality of this verse in Sabbatean thought going back to Sabbatai himself, see Elqayam, “The Mystery of Faith in the Writings of Nathan of Gaza,” 310–313.

ing to the large Tetragrammaton atop the crown. In the Sabbatean “secret of the Godhead,” *Ein Sof* is regarded as religiously irrelevant, and in some formulations even as a kind of “embodiment” of *YHVH*—an idea here expressed graphically. Suggestions of apotheosis—a conflation of Sabbatai with God—are easily found in the neighboring inscriptions. In the final *heh* of the large Tetragrammaton, he has written “For My Name is within Me (*be-kirbi*) (!), the numerical equivalent of *Shaddai*.” The numerical value of *be-kirbi*, 314, is that of Metatron as well—of whom God says in the Talmud: “My Name is within him” (BT *Sanhedrin* 38b). For all the strangely subversive suggestion of this meaningfully located intentional misquotation, it is merely one step away from the most ubiquitous of Sabbatean *gematriot*: the three letters *SDY* that make up the name *Shaddai*, when rendered individually as *shin*, *dalet*, *yud*, equal 814, which equals *Sabbatai Ševi*.⁶⁶ Interestingly, Nathan of Gaza is reported to have explained the numerical equivalence between *Sabbatai Ševi* and *shin*, *dalet*, *yud* by invoking the description of Metatron on that same talmudic page, BT *Sanhedrin* 38b: “His name is that of his master” (“*shmo ke-shem rabo*”).⁶⁷

These associations and more are spelled out yet again just below that Habsburg jaw, where we read in bold script: “In *Ozrot Hayyim* page 12, I found this, verbatim—see on the right, under ‘And these are his words.’” Looking right, we find a parallel circle filled with an ostensible quotation from Vital’s work that links the highest lights of *Adam Kadmon*, the latter equated with *YHVH*, with the name *Sabbatai*; the latter is said to be central to the culmination of the cosmic restoration (*tikkun*). The codex study for this parchment scroll (Oxford—Bodleian Library MS Michael 88)—which, like all the Hammerschlag manuscripts in Oxford, may have been originally collected by the great heresiarch R. Jacob Emden (1697–1776)⁶⁸—has an even

more extensive and suggestive passage, combining “lady-doth-protest-too-much” insistence of precise citation, enthusiasm, and additional equations that include the term “messiah” (*mashiah*). Needless to say, none of the pre-1691 extant manuscripts of *Ozrot Hayyim* examined include the passage. Any uncertainty about the Sabbatean nature of this passage was put to rest by another I discovered in his 1683 work *Or ha-ganuz* [The Hidden Light] (bound with the *ilan* codex in Oxford - Bodleian Library MS Mich. 88). Hammerschlag covers much of the same ground but with an added emphasis on “giveaway” terms including 814 [תתי"ד] and *Shaddai*.

Our grand *ilan* has additional oblique references to the Messiah. Two may be found at the very bottom of the *rotulus*. At the end of the second column from the right, we find a hierarchical list of the Godhead from top to bottom, from *Adam Kadmon* through the countenances, culminating in those of “Father, Mother, Son, and Daughter.” The last, a reference to the lowest *sefirah*, is glossed in red ink in the final line as follows: “She is called ‘the Orchard of Holy Apples of All the Field.’”⁶⁹ “The Field” is emphasized from above with a horizontal squiggle, and explained in smaller black script underneath as being equivalent numerically to *Shaddai*, which, as we have noted, was easily converted to *Sabbatai Ševi*. In the column just to the left (adjacent to the colophon), however, is an even more dramatic encrypted wink: “The fourth countenance and its completion; from here begin the 390 worlds (*S”S ‘olamot*).” This sounds very kabbalistic, except that there is no precedent for the notion of 390 worlds in the literature. Instead, rabbinic literature as early as the Mishnah ‘*Okzin* (3:12) speak of the 310 worlds (*Sh”T ‘olamot*) to be bequeathed to the righteous by God in the future. This classical eschatological teaching was subtly updated by our *khazen* to 390, which happens to be the acrostic for *Šabbatai Ševi*. The acrostic, *S”S*,

⁶⁶ On these substitutions for *Sabbatai Ševi*, see Yehuda Liebes, “The Vilner Gaon School, Sabbateanism, and dos Pintele Yid,” *Daat: A Journal of Jewish Philosophy and Kabbalah* 50–52 (2003): 255–290, here 267 [Hebrew]. *Shaddai*, with each letter spelled individually (*shin*, *dalet*, *yud*), came to 814. Many of these identifications originated with *Sabbatai Ševi* himself, and were adopted by every sort of Sabbatean over the centuries—including by the Ottoman-Turkish *Dönmes*, whose liturgy and songs are also replete with such references to *Sabbatai Ševi*. Their devotions also reflect a personal adoration of *Sabbatai Ševi* more than an engagement with Nathanian theosophy. On the *Dönmes*, see now Cengiz Sisman, *The Burden of Silence: Sabbatai Ševi and the Evolution of the Ottoman-Turkish Dönmes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁶⁷ See Elqayam, “The Mystery of Faith in the Writings of Nathan of Gaza,” 326.

⁶⁸ Thousands of volumes from the library of Heimann Joseph Michael (1792–1846) were acquired in 1848 by the Bodleian Library and the British Library; many of these originated in Emden’s library. The suggestion that the Hammerschlag MSS may have been “sequestered” by Emden was suggested by Menachem Kallus in an unpublished lecture. See Menachem Kallus, “Graphic Representation in Kabbalah, 1350–1850” (Unpublished paper, delivered at University of Oxford, 2009 with additions in 2011, deposited in Scholem Library, Jerusalem).

⁶⁹ See Zohar I 224b (Pritzker I p. 350). Daniel Matt notes there that “the apple orchard of *Shekhinah* drips with dew emanating from *Tiferet*, who is known as as heaven.”

is also the traditional one used to refer to the cantorial leader of communal prayer, *shaliah ṣibbur* in Hebrew. It is unlikely that this was lost on Hammerschlag. The association between cantor and messiah may indeed be found in contemporary Sabbatean sources, as we see in an astounding passage in a Kurdish manuscript:⁷⁰

The arithmetic value of S"Ş alludes to the dwelling place of His power (*shekhinat 'ouzo*), called King Messiah. And it is also *shaliah ṣibbur*, leader of the community of all the *sefirot*, which distributes nourishment to all the worlds in the secret of 'she rises while it is still night and gives (*va-titen*) food to her family' (Proverbs 31:15). And the final (!) messiah is called *shaliah ṣibbur*.

Although we cannot know for certain that Hammerschlag had precisely this teaching in mind, the colophon adjacent to his reference emphasizes his position as a cantor (*khazen*): he refers to himself as "Nosen Neta *Khazen* who was appointed as *khazen* in the year 420 (1660)." It is fair to wonder to what extent Hammerschlag's obsession entailed personal identification with this divine messiah. At the very least, Sabbatai and Nosen Neta were both singers.⁷¹

Hammerschlag's Sabbateanism is Sabbatai-centric, and his iconotextual compositions reveal no clear structural or ideational traces of Nathan's kabbalistic innovations. He was likely unaware of Sabbatai's dismissal of Lurianic Kabbalah and singular focus on the Zohar, *Sefer ha-kaneh* and *ha-pliah*. For all its adoration, the *Ilan of Adam Kadmon* remains a Lurianic cosmograph. Hammerschlag's other extant manuscripts—which I hope to treat in a more thorough analysis of this equally unknown and engaging figure—show unabated interest in Lurianic *kavanot* as well. In short, Sabbatai Ṣevi is the focal point of his

faith, but his religious life does not otherwise show signs of having changed dramatically as a result. In this respect, Hammerschlag could have been the subject of Gershom Scholem's description of R. Mordechai Ashkenazi, the Zolkiew-born Sabbatean prophet whose personal dream notebook of the 1690s was analyzed by the great scholar in one of his earliest publications on Sabbateanism: "We see [in Ashkenazi] the whole spiritual orientation (*mahalah ruḥo*) of a true *ḥasid* for whom the transformation of the world that came with the appearance of Sabbatai Ṣevi was the determining event in his inner life—notwithstanding the fact that the world of *halakha* and commandments remain fully binding for him."⁷² It is intriguing that this same Mordechai Ashkenazi recorded in his notebook that the "secret of the Godhead"—referred to as "*shiur komah*"—was explained to him by the *maggid* and described in terms of *tiferet* and its enrobing in the *parzufim*, and which he understood upon "his having gazed upon a drawing that the *maggid* had drawn by his own hand" (*u-befrat biroti ha-ziyyur she-ziyyer be-yado*).⁷³

Through text and image, Hammerschlag expressed his devotion to Sabbatai. Even the acrostically refracted *gematria* of Sabbatai's name thrilled this Moravian esotericist. The *ilan* visualizes this devotion, and the nature of its representationalism must be attended to with sensitivity and specificity. I have noted that this *Adam Kadmon* bears an uncanny likeness to Emperor Leopold I. I would suggest that this likeness reveals Hammerschlag's conflation of the iconic Emperor and his beloved King Messiah. Hammerschlag has given visual expression to a Sabbateanism focused upon Sabbatai himself.⁷⁴ Sabbatean iconography from the height of the movement's activity features images

⁷⁰ The Hamburg State and University Library Carl von Ossietzky, Hamburg, Germany, MS. Levy 90, I 23a. Eliezer Baumgarten kindly brought this passage to my attention. The MS is dated to the "17th–18th century" in the NLI catalogue.

⁷¹ Scholem, *The Mystical Messiah*, 158; Eliezer Papo, "Meliselda' and its Symbolism for Sabbatai Sevi, His Inner Circle and His Later Followers," *Kabbalah—Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 35 (2016): 113–132.

⁷² Scholem, *The Dreams of R. Mordecai Ashkenazi*, 37. See also his trenchant remarks on "the mistake of R. Jacob Emden," who failed to understand how "true *ḥasidim* and *zaddikim* could also be Sabbateans" (52). It may also be salient to note here another of Scholem's observations in the same study: in the 1690s, it was possible to express a belief in Sabbatai Ṣevi within certain rabbinic circles without inevitably generating condemnation and charges of heresy (39). Scholem's claim is based on the case of R. Abraham Rovigo, whose belief was so unremarkable in the 1690s as to have left insufficient traces for the heresy hunters of the next generation

to have heard about it. It should be noted, apropos the discussion of Nathan above, that two of three extant manuscripts of his *Discourse on the Circles* were copied by Rovigo's scribe.

⁷³ Ibid., 43. Scholem also notes a reference in the notebook to a "*Sefer shiur komah* written by *ploni* that is not to be studied"—which he was unable to identify.

⁷⁴ Another figure who may best be understood in this manner is the Moroccan contemporary of Hammerschlag, R. Joseph Ibn Zur. Ibn Zur developed a unique Sabbatean Kabbalah that was, like Hammerschlag's, fixated on the person—and name—Sabbatai Ṣevi rather than upon Sabbatean theology. His own kabbalistic works, both "theoretical and practical," were constructed around arboreal diagrams with unusual designations, which he "activated" in creative homiletical and magical operations. These *ilanot*, however, do not share Hammerschlag's representational approach. See Eliezer Baumgarten, "Homilies on the Kabbalistic *Ilan* of Yosef ibn Zur," *Kabbalah* 37 (2017): 101–157 [Hebrew].

of Sabbatai as a crowned king seated atop a throne modeled upon King Solomon's, complete with seven lion-bounded steps.⁷⁵ It is a kind of fantasy that apparently can survive the death of the Messiah, and those in the reverie can go on living as Jews among Jews. Hammerschlag's expression of devotion to Sabbatai the King Messiah—crafted a generation after Sabbatai's conversion (1666) and death (1676)—is a rare visual artifact of such a form of devotion and its capacity for stubborn persistence.⁷⁶ That this King is also *Adam Kadmon*—which, given the apophatic nature of kabbalistic notions of the infinite God (*Ein Sof*), makes it something of a personal God (here, undoubtedly, the God of Sabbatai Ševi)—makes Hammerschlag's Sabbatai nothing less than divine (God as Sabbatai Ševi). The *ilan* has become a means to express, through text and image, the thorough integration of personal Sabbateanism and Lurianic cosmology.

We turn now, then, to brief explorations of two other “suspects,” each of which will allow us to see our central issue in a different light and, taken together, point the way to some broader preliminary conclusions.

The Sha'ar Gan 'Eden Ilan

An *ilan* in the Gross Family Collection takes us to a different world. The *ilan* is a hybrid, with a very beautifully

executed unicum parchment *rotulus* on top (29 cm wide by 134 cm in length, comprising two parchments) stitched to a narrower parchment Poppers–Zemah *Great Tree* bottom (24.5 cm wide by 181 cm in length, comprising four parchments). The five diagrammatic frames that make up the top half all exhibit striking graphic novelty, and the fifth frame in particular is something of a paragon of icontextual calligraphy, masterfully arraying a number of imaginatively styled elements (Figs. 15 & 16).

This extraordinary series of diagrams is, in fact, a diagrammatic visualization of the work *Sha'ar Gan 'Eden* (Koretz, 1803) by R. Yaakov Koppel Lifshitz of Mezritch (d. 1740). There can hardly be a more concrete example of “visualizing Jewish thought” than this graphical adaptation of a kabbalistic book. The early eighteenth century would thus be the *terminus post quem* for this manuscript, which bears no colophon.⁷⁷

Isaiah Tishby saw Lifshitz and his works as a central conduit connecting Sabbateanism and Hasidism, the latter emerging as a movement in the 1770s. In his approbation to *Sha'ar Gan 'Eden*, Levi Yizhak of Berdichev wrote of the Ba'al Shem Tov's own fondness for Lifshitz's writings. Although Lifshitz attacked Sabbateanism in his works, Tishby argued that these same works in fact expressed Sabbatean interpretations of Lurianism.⁷⁸ In the course of his “indictment” of Lifshitz, Tishby wrote that although he could not find

⁷⁵ The best example is from the *Selihot* published in Amsterdam by David de Castro Tartas in 1666 with a frontispiece featuring Sabbatai Ševi seated on King Solomon's throne (figure 8 above). Little has been written on the visual materials of Sabbateanism. Shalom Sabar is working on an article that should represent a substantial contribution to this neglected area of research.

⁷⁶ A contemporary parallel is not difficult to find. The slogan “King Messiah” emblazoned upon an image of the last Lubavicher rebbe, R. Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902–1994), is perhaps the most common placard in today's State of Israel, hung everywhere by his otherwise conventionally Orthodox devotees. On the visualization practices of contemporary believers in the messiahship of the Rebbe, see Yoram Bilu, “‘With Us More Than Ever Before’: Making the Absent Rebbe Present in Messianic Habad,” in *Toward an Anthropology of Nation Building and Unbuilding in Israel*, ed. Alex Weingrod, Stephen Sharot, Moshe Shokeid, and Fran Markowitz (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 195–214. On parallels between the practices of the so-called “*meshihistim*” (unqualified messianic enthusiasts) of today's Chabad-Lubavich and the Sabbateans of the seventeenth century, see Maoz Kahana, “Shabbetai Zevi: The Halakhic Man,” *Zion* 81, no. 3–4 (2016): 391–433, especially 401 n.31, 408 n.63 [Hebrew].

⁷⁷ An online digital edition of this *ilan* is in preparation. Another *ilan* in the Gross Family Collection, which I have named “The *Ilan* of Holiness” (Gross Family Collection Trust 028.012.003), also opens

with a visualization of one particular work before continuing with its own adaptation of a Poppers–Zemah *Great Tree*. This first section is based on a mysterious text by the name of *Maamar adam de-azilut* [The Discourse of Adam of Emanation], and its ostensible auto-commentary, published by R. Moshe Graf, along with a commentary of his own, in *Va-yakel Moshe* [And Moses Gathered] in Dessau (1699). For a critical edition of this *ilan*, see J. H. Chajes, with Eliezer Baumgarten and Menachem Kallus, *The Tree of Holiness* (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, forthcoming). Graf had fairly extensive Sabbatean connections, but there is no smoking gun in the book, and none in its diagrammatic adaptation. Graf's embeddedness in various Sabbatean contexts—geographical, familial, and ideological—are explored at length in chapter 5 of Sara Zfatman, *Go Out, Impure One! Exorcisms in Central Europe in the Early Modern Period* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2015) [Hebrew]. Although Graf's work is cited by name in Eibeschütz's *I Came This Day Unto the Fountain*, Pawel Maciejko does not identify the former as a Sabbatean. Eibeschütz, *And I Came This Day Unto the Fountain*, 14 n.19.

⁷⁸ Tishby, “Between Sabbateanism and Hasidism.” Shaul Magid has recently revisited this material; see Magid, *Hasidism Incarnate: Hasidism, Christianity, and the Construction of Modern Judaism*, 93–111, especially 212 n.76. See also Avinoam Stillman, “Nathan of Gaza, Ya'akov Koppel Lifshitz, and the Varieties of Lurianic Kabbalah.” *El Prezente: Journal for Sefardic Studies* 11 (forthcoming).

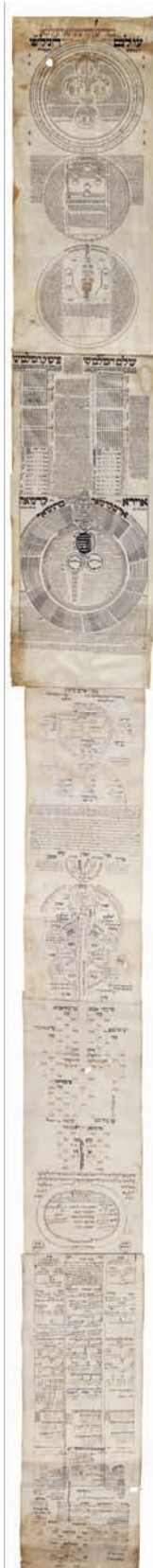


Fig. 16 “*Sha’ar Gan Eden Ilan*” c. 1800, Eastern Europe. Ink on (cow) parchment. Manuscript: Part I 134 × 29 cm (two parts, sewn); Part II 181 × 24.5 cm. (four parts, sewn). Gross Family Collection Trust 028.012.005. (Photo: Ardon Barhama)



Fig. 17 “*Sha’ar Gan Eden Ilan*,” (Fig. 16) bottom of Part I.

a Sabbatean source for a particular idea, its audaciousness sufficed to incriminate it.⁷⁹ Lifshitz indeed used Sabbatean sources in *Sha’ar Gan Eden*, though it is not clear to what extent he did so intentionally, let alone “subversively.”

A fortiori, the anonymous executor of the fascinating visualization of this work could very well have done his work without having imagined that his diagrams carried any kind of Sabbatean message. It hardly needs to be pointed out that there are no anthropomorphic elements whatsoever in this visualization of *Adam Kadmon*. Nevertheless, long before the *ilan* was identified as a visual adaptation of Lifshitz’s work, the placement of what might be called “evil’s epicenter”—the realm of the *klippot* [*lit.* shells]—stood out for its inscription in a strikingly lofty realm of the mapped divinity (Fig. 17).

⁷⁹ Tishby, “Between Sabbateanism and Hasidism,” 219.

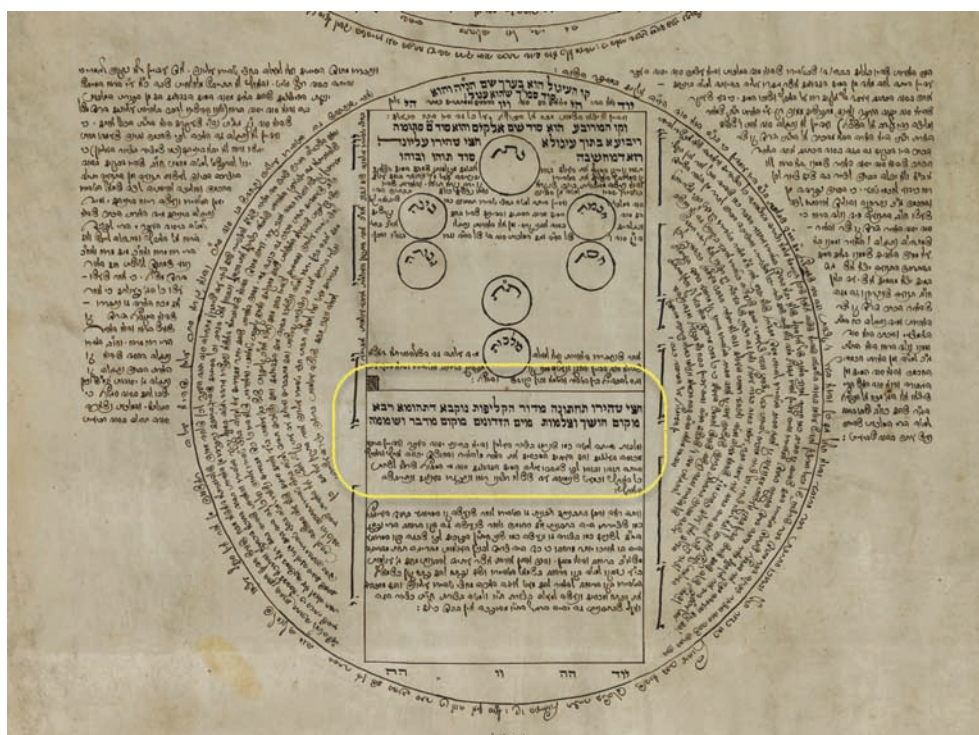


Fig. 18 “*Sha’ar Gan Eden ilan*,” (Fig. 16) “*tehiru*” of Part I.

Location, even in a map, is everything, and this odd placement of evil was anomalous by mainstream Lurianic standards. The inscription “the lower half of the *tehiru*, domain of the *klippot*,” moreover, recalls Nathan of Gaza’s diagram. In short, in this case—as we saw in Nathan’s diagram but not in Hammerschlag’s—the theological landscape of Nathan’s thought has found distinct visual depiction. In that sense, the *Sha’ar Gan Eden ilan* could be considered Sabbatean. That said, I think it likely that the author of *Sha’ar Gan Eden* and the maker of the *ilan* it inspired would have imagined this indebtedness in very different terms. There is no reason to believe that whoever created this *ilan* knew that he was visualizing specifically Sabbatean cosmogony; not everyone is a philological heresy hunter, and the ontological priority of evil was not a Sabbatean invention. The already mentioned and widely read *’Emeq ha-melekh* by R. Naftali Bacharach, for example, opens with a cosmogonic narrative in which evil makes a precociously early entrance. Already on page 1a, the primordial sphere is said to have contained everything

that would ever be created, including evil, *pace* Isaiah 45:7. As Bacharach would have it—and he could hardly be accused of crypto-Sabbateanism (proto-Sabbateanism?)—Adam’s sin amplified primordial evil but did not introduce it.

The Siprut de Gabay Tree of Circular and Linear Emanations

The third and final *ilan* for us to consider was strikingly drawn—at least three times, in fact⁸⁰—on single sheets of parchment measuring 87 × 69.5 cm (Fig. 18). The diagram is an ambitious attempt to juxtapose the two modes of emanation in Lurianic cosmogony, the circular and the linear (*’iggulim ve-yosher*).⁸¹ Diagrams of these two modes are among the most common in codices of *Ozrot Hayyim*, *Ez Hayyim*, and their parallels, but these lack all detail. As illustrative additions to the texts in which they are embedded, they make do with concentric circles through which passes a linear shaft from top to center (or beyond it, depending upon how

⁸⁰ Jerusalem, National Library of Israel MS 1045, the Gross Family Collection 028.012.024, and the Lehmann Collection (K 85).

⁸¹ Mordechai Pachter, “Circles and Straightness: A History of an Idea,” in *Roots of Faith and Devekut: Studies in the History of*

Kabbalistic Ideas, ed. Daniel Abrams (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2004): 131–185.

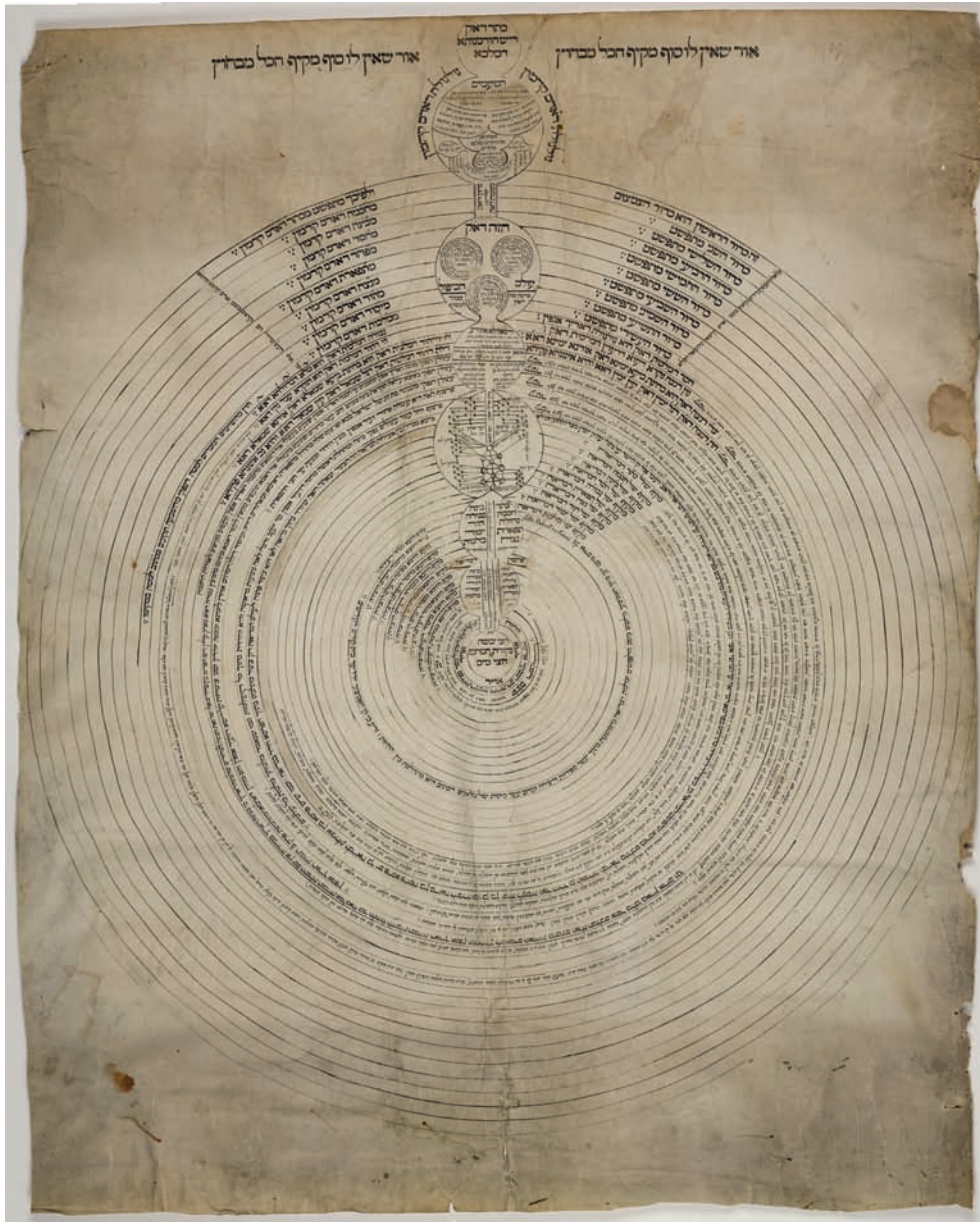


Fig. 19 Joseph Siprut de Gabay (1695–1766), “Tree of Circular and Linear Emanations,” c.1734, Amsterdam. Ink on (cow) parchment. Manuscript autograph: 87 × 69.5 cm. Gross Family Collection 028.012.024. (Photo: Ardon Barhama)

the process is understood). These modest diagrams usually lack inscriptions; at most, they will label a few of the circular bands and the linear shaft. More ambitious efforts to map the intersections of these modes do exist in rare manuscripts, including dedicated diagrammatic pages in codices beginning around 1600 in the MSS of Efraim Penzner and Menachem de Lonzano, as well as those fashioned by Zemaḥ and specifically attributed to Vital in his work.⁸² Still, with all due

respect to these diagrams, the extraordinary parchment under consideration provides far more intricate and inscribed networks: over forty concentric bands traversed by a linear shaft figured as eight successive spheroidal dilations.

The great achievement of this diagram—or at least its great aspiration—is to have orchestrated the juxtaposition of the linear emanation to align precisely with the locations to which they correspond in the concentric

⁸² J. H. Chajes, “Imaginative Thinking.”

circles while preserving considerable detail in its presentation of both.⁸³ The linear is clearly adapted from the Poppers *ilanot* that, as we may infer from the number of extant manuscripts, were widely circulated from the second half of the seventeenth century. The challenge faced by our *ilan*-maker is reflected in some contemporary *ilanot* in which the concentric circles are placed before or after the linear exposition.⁸⁴ In this expertly wrought single parchment, the head of *Adam Kadmon*, whose anthropomorphic facial features are muted and gracefully stylized, sits largely beyond the circles in the infinite ground of *Ein Sof*. The band representing *Mal-khut* of *Adam Kadmon* intersects with the top of *Arikh*, as it should. Siprut has a bit of trouble with positioning of the kaleidoscopic trees of the *Great Tree* as well as with *Briah* and *Yezirah*. *Assiyah* is given short-shrift visually, but is inscribed in keeping with the medieval scientific tradition—still in vogue, at least among kabbalists, in eighteenth-century Amsterdam and elsewhere.

We know of three nearly identical copies of this *ilan* in the same hand; only one bears a colophon, dating it to 1734.⁸⁵ From it, we also learn that it was fashioned by the self-described “craftsman” (*ma’aseh yedei oman*) Joseph Siprut de Gabay (1695–1766).⁸⁶ Siprut is known to us from a handful of occasional poems composed in Amsterdam in the first half of the eighteenth century, including a lamentation honoring his late father, “the Divine Kabbalist, the perfect sage ... R’ Abraham.”⁸⁷ He also enjoyed composing and illuminating riddles, such as the one he composed as a delightful wedding gift to a bride and groom who married in 1743 (Fig. 19).⁸⁸

Could this artsy riddler be the mastermind of such an ambitious integration of *‘iggulim ve-yosher*? Such

an attempt bespeaks self-confidence as a kabbalist no less than as a draftsman. Might Siprut have executed the vision of another kabbalist, perhaps his father, who had passed away the previous year?⁸⁹

If his *Tree of Circular and Linear Emanations* was largely derivative, it nevertheless holds a few surprises. The great majority of its inscriptions were indeed copied directly from Siprut’s sources. But not every text inscribed within the complex figure can be sourced to these familiar diagrams. Moreover, these supplementary inscriptions have one thing in common: they betray the influence of Sabbatean theology. The boldest of his Sabbatean expressions are found in the first two densely inscribed *‘iggulim*, the twelfth and thirteenth ones in; the eleven outermost bands are the “spheres of *Adam Kadmon*” and bear only square-lettered labels identifying them as such. In the thirteenth band, we find the phrase “*or she-ain bo mahshavah*” (light containing no thought). (Fig. 20).⁹⁰

Coined by Nathan of Gaza, the Paul of Sabbateanism, this locution is the philological equivalent of Sabbatean DNA.⁹¹ The inscription in the twelfth band “quotes” the talmudic sages to the effect that “the Son of David will not come until the two feet touch.” This invented quotation, recalling the phrasing of eschatological speculation found in *bSanhedrin* 97a, is a paraphrase of Nathan’s *Drush ha-teninim* (Homily on the Sea Monsters). It is worth noting that the culmination of this messianic prophecy is national-restorative rather than revolutionary-utopian or mystically interiorized: when these “feet touch,” “Israel will then return to its land and the beautiful crown to its former glory.”

⁸³ The extant artifacts do display some variation in the details of this juxtaposition. It is not clear to me whether this variation is intentional.

⁸⁴ For example, Gross Family Collection 028.012.025 puts the circular after Poppers, whereas Gross Family Collection Trust 028.012.023 places it before. On these *ilanot* see J. H. Chajes, *The Kabbalistic Tree: A History*.

⁸⁵ Lehmann Collection (K 85) bears a colophon. The parchment is framed and behind glass, making its reproduction unfortunately impossible.

⁸⁶ My indefatigable postdoctoral collaborator, Eliezer Baumgarten, succeeded in deciphering the damaged colophon and quickly assembled a great deal of information about Siprut de Gabay. My thanks to Bart Schuurman (Stadsarchief Amsterdam) for directing me to the archival books containing death and burial information.

⁸⁷ <https://goo.gl/owoI5A> (Entry 22; Page 15 in the digital object). Abraham Siprut de Gabay (d. 1733) is also referred to as a Kabbalist in MS Ets Haim 47 B 03, p. 17.

⁸⁸ Ets Haim MS HS. EH Pl. A-7. See Lajb Fuks and R. G. Fuks-Mansfeld, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Ets Haim, Livraria*

Montezinos, Sephardic Community of Amsterdam (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 169, n.317. For other works by Siprut, see 134–137, 148–149. I am grateful to Heide Warncke, Executive Curator of the Bibliothek Ets Haim, for her immediate and generous responses to my queries.

⁸⁹ No known works are attributed to Joseph’s father, R. Abraham.

⁹⁰ The classic study on this phraseology is Chaim Wirszubski, *Bein ha-shittin* [Between the lines] (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1990); see especially 157–159. I think it plausible that these references can be traced back to the arrival of Nehemiah Hayyon (ca. 1650–ca. 1730) in Amsterdam in 1713 with his just published Sabbatean treatise *Oz le-elohim* (Power to God). Hayyon enjoyed the support of the Portuguese community led by Solomon Ayllon (1660 or 1664–1728). Ayllon’s subtle and theological approach to Sabbatean Kabbalah, which carefully avoided direct references to Zevi, is congruent with the passages in Siprut’s *ilan*. See Yael Nadav, “Rabbi Shlomo Ayllon and His Sabbatian Kabbalah Booklet,” *Sefunot* 3–4 (1959): 301–47 [Hebrew].

⁹¹ Liebes, *Sod ha-emunah ha-shabtait*, 57–60, 152. Cf. 154–155 for a transvaluation of the term.



Fig. 20 Joseph Siprut de Gabay (1695–1766), Hebrew riddle for the wedding of Abraham b. Joseph Capadoce and Rebecca de Chaves, 1743, Amsterdam. Ink on parchment. Manuscript autograph: 46.7 × 39.8 cm. Ets Haim Library Amsterdam Netherlands Pl. A-7. (Photo: Courtesy of Ets Haim Library)

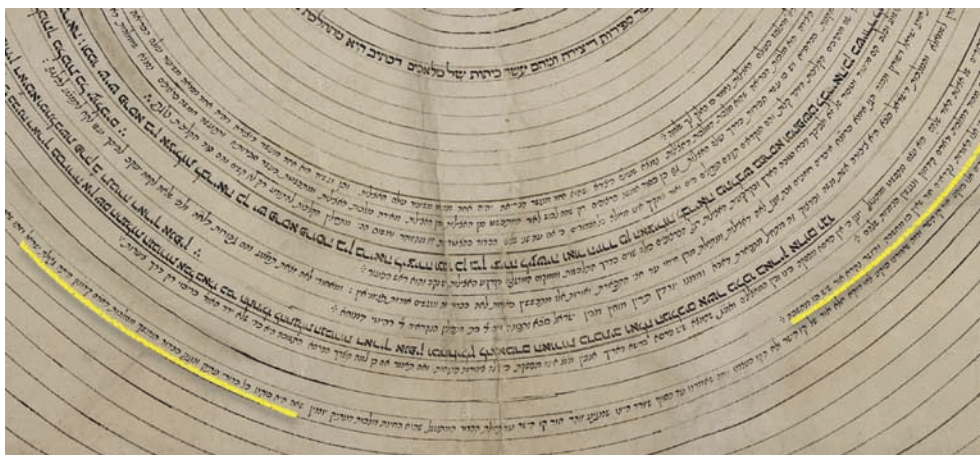


Fig. 21 “Tree of Circular and Linear Emanations,” (Fig. 18) detail.

If we take those Gazan-formulations in the circles seriously, the diagram must be said to map Sabbatean terrain. In the circular mode of emanation, the presumption is that the outer circles, given their proximity to the *Ein Sof* that surrounds the entire map of creation, are scarcely possible to differentiate from the infinite and undifferentiated ground. In these inscriptions on the Siprut de Gabay *ilan*, we find the implicit statement that creation (emanation, to be precise) is the expression of the potential of primordial light that “contained” thought. Yet the unfathomable potential of the primordial light that gave no thought to creation has also found a place on the map: it’s the cosmic rabbit hole. If this is to be considered a Sabbatean *ilan*, then, more than anything, it would seem to reveal the domestication of radical Sabbatean cosmology in genteel eighteenth-century circles. It seems appropriate that it was left to us by a known riddler.

A Brief Conclusion

Three extraordinary, enigmatic *ilanot*: the last two map distinctive Sabbatean theological terrain, but do they cross any borders? If anything has crossed a border here, it would seem to be Nathan’s cosmology. Indeed, these two *ilanot* give visual testimony to the ubiquity of Nathan’s thought in the Kabbalah of this period—so deeply assimilated as to make “outing” Sabbatean works almost absurd by definition. These “Gazan *ilanot*” reveal the pervasive influence of Nathan’s distinctive theological innovations—or at least locutions; they have a bit of his bark, but very little of his bite. Hammerschlag’s *ilan*, on the other hand, winking at us with the Leopoldian eye of *Adam Kadmon*, represents another kind of Sabbatean afterlife. Nathan and his cosmology are nowhere in sight, but Sabbatai in all his glory reigns supreme. Hammerschlag was in love with Sabbatai, but he was also a devoted scholar, a scribal artist, a communal secretary, and, of course, a *khazen*. For all their differences, as expressions of Sabbatean Kabbalah in the long eighteenth century, these *ilanot* do have one thing in common: all bear witness to the domestication of deviance.

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J. H. (Yossi) Chajes (Ph.D., Yale University 1999) is Sir Isaac Wolfson Professor of Jewish Thought in the Department of Jewish History at the University of Haifa. He directs the *Ilanot Project*, a pioneering research initiative devoted to the study of visual Kabbalah and its history. His history of the *ilanot* genre, *The Kabbalistic Tree: A History*, will be published in early 2022 with the Littman Library and Liverpool University Press.