

Lusdemar Jacquez Rivera*

Christian Knorr von Rosenroth's Translation of a Lurianic Dissertation: *Liber Druschim*, or the *Dissertation on Two Inquiries of the Kabbalists*

Christian Knorr von Rosenroths Übersetzung einer lurianischen Dissertation, *Liber Druschim* oder die *Dissertation über zwei Untersuchungen der Kabbalisten*

<https://doi.org/10.1515/asch-2024-2016>

Abstract: The present text analyzes two Hebrew copies of a Lurianic dissertation used by Christian Knorr von Rosenroth for the Latin translation printed in 1677 in *Kabbala denudata* as *Tractatus I. Liber Druschim*. This article first identifies the Hebrew source for Knorr von Rosenroth's translation and offers new insights into his style and method of translation, contributing to a better understanding of Rosenroth's approach to kabbalistic tradition. Secondly, this article contributes to the history of the transmission of Lurianic manuscripts and posits Sulzbach as an important center for the circulation and translation of kabbalistic knowledge.

Keywords: Christian Kabbalah; Sulzbach; *Kabbala denudata*

Schlüsselwörter: Christliche Kabbala; Sulzbach; *Kabbala denudata*

1 Introduction

In the late seventeenth century, Christian Hebraist Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636–1689) began compiling and translating kabbalistic texts from Hebrew into Latin in the small German principality of Sulzbach.¹ Knorr von Rosenroth was

¹ For Knorr von Rosenroth's biography see CHRISTIAN UNGER: Vitae Knorrianae Curriculum. In: Nova Litteraria anni MDCCXVIII in supplementum Actorum Eruditorum. Ed. by JOHANN GOTTLIEB

*Corresponding author: Lusdemar Jacquez Rivera: jacquezril90@zedat.fu-berlin.de

assisted in this enterprise by the rabbi of Sulzbach at that time, Joseph Hausen (d. 1681), and two patrons, Count Christian August (1622–1708) and Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614–1698).²

Sulzbach was a utopian place where Jews, Protestants and Catholics lived under rules that ensured peace and freedom for all. As part of this ambitious political project, aimed at making Sulzbach an intercultural hub of social and scientific progress, Count Christian August commissioned the translation and publication of works important for the three religious denominations that coexisted under his rule.³

In 1668, Knorr von Rosenroth was commanded to contribute with translations and publications after being appointed chancellor of Sulzbach.⁴ In addition to the many translations he prepared during this time,⁵ Rosenroth started working on

KRAUSE. Leipzig 1718, pp. 191–200 and KURT SALECKER: Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636–1689). Weimar 1931. MANFRED FINKE: Sulzbach im 17. Jahrhundert: Zur Kulturgeschichte einer süddeutschen Residenz. Regensburg 1998, pp. 116–237.

2 Francis van Helmont was the son of the paracelsian iatrochemist Jan Baptist van Helmont. ALLISON COUDERT: The Impact of the Kabbalah. Leiden 1998. For Christian August's life see KLAUS JAITNER: Der Sulzbacher Musenhof in der europäischen Ideengeschichte. In: Eisenerz und Morgenland. Ed. by JOHANNES HARTMANN and ELISABETH VOGEL: Amberg 1999, p. 636. HANS RALL: Christian August von Pfalz-Sulzbach als regierender Herzog (1656–1708) und als Familienvater. In: Land und Reich. Stamm und Nation. Probleme und Perspektiven bayerischer Geschichte. Festgabe für Max Spindler zum 90. Geburtstag, Band 2. Ed. by ANDREAS KRAUS. München 1984, pp. 181–194.

3 In 1660, Count Christian August commissioned intellectuals to create texts for educating both the court and its citizens. He appointed some controversial figures among Protestants due to their ideological stances, including spiritualist friends Justus Brawe, Jacobus Fabricius, and Clamerinus Florinus. These appointments aligned with the Count's »intention and program« for Sulzbach. FINKE, Sulzbach im 17. Jahrhundert (cf. n. 1), pp. 110–113. For Rosenroth's duties at the Court see HELMUT KLINNER: Christian Knorr von Rosenroth in der pfalz-sulzbachischen Kanzlei von 1668–1689. In: Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, Dichter und Gelehrter am Sulzbacher Musenhof, Festschrift zur 300. Wiederkehr des Todestages. Hg. vom Literaturarchiv und der Stadt Sulzbach-Rosenberg. Sulzbach-Rosenberg 1989, pp. 35–37.

4 In 1664, the first printing press was established in Sulzbach, under the care of Abraham Lichtenhaler, where the first volume of *Kabbala denudata* was printed in 1667. In 1666, the first Jewish printing house was established by Moses Bloch. For the history of the printing houses in Sulzbach see MANFRED FINKE: Christian Augusts Bücherwelt. In: Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, Dichter und Gelehrter am Sulzbacher Musenhof, Festschrift zur 300. Wiederkehr des Todestages. Hg. vom Literaturarchiv und der Stadt Sulzbach-Rosenberg. Sulzbach-Rosenberg 1989, pp. 52–66. For the history of Jewish printing houses in Sulzbach see MAGNUS WEINBERG: Die hebräischen Druckereien in Sulzbach: ihre Geschichte, ihre Drucke, ihr Personal. Frankfurt am Main 1930.

5 Knorr von Rosenroth translated Octavio Pisani's *Lycurgus Italicus*, Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* and Giambattista della Porta's *Magia Naturalis* in collaboration with Francis Mercury van Helmont. They also prepared a translation of van Helmont's father's *oeuvre*.

translating the *Zohar* at van Helmont's request.⁶ At that time, van Helmont was in England serving as Lady Anne Conway's physician,⁷ and he had sent an amount of 70 guildens (florins) to Rosenroth to manage the negotiations of Rabbi Hausen and acquire some Venetian manuscripts.⁸

Van Helmont used to collect Hebrew manuscripts and commission their translation. After his men in Sulzbach collected a batch of manuscripts containing some kabbalistic texts, and while he was in England, van Helmont found a group of people genuinely interested in collective studies: Henry More (1614–1687), the great Platonist of Cambridge,⁹ and Lady Anne Conway. They were both eager to learn more about the *Zohar* and about Isaac Luria (1534–1572), the renowned kabbalist of Safed.¹⁰ Apparently, van Helmont wanted to unveil the contents of the manuscripts to Henry More, so he could assess what »was good about them.«¹¹ Knorr von Rosenroth and van Helmont both admired Henry More's work, as the latter had become a reputable authority in pneumatology in England and on the Continent. Addition-

6 See Wolfenbüttel, HAB, Cod. Guelf. 30.4 Extrav., fol. 38v. The *Zohar* was the most significant work of kabbalah known to have been written throughout the Middle Ages. For a history of the composition of the *Zohar* see DANIEL ABRAMS: *Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory: Methodologies of Textual Scholarship and Editorial Practice in the Study of Jewish Mysticism*. Jerusalem 2010, pp. 224–424; and BOAZ HUSS: *The Zohar: Reception and Impact*. Portland 2016.

7 Anne Conway (1631–1679) was part of a 17th-century network of English thinkers interested in neoplatonic pneumatology and kabbalah, known as the Cambridge Platonists. She authored *Principia philosophiae antiquissimae et recentissimae*, published posthumously in 1690. In this text, she raised questions about God and creation using kabbalistic terminology. JASPER REID: Anne Conway and Her Circle on Monads. In: *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 58 (2020), no. 4, pp. 67–704. Conway was a pupil of Henry More, and probably through her or Henry Oldenburg, More was introduced to van Helmont. Lady Conway suffered from prolonged migraines. Her brother, John Finch, through Henry Oldenburg, the secretary of the English Royal Society, contacted van Helmont to be her personal physician. Francis Willughby to Henry Oldenburg, 16 March 1670/71. In: *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg*. Vol. VII. Ed. by ALFRED RUPERT HALL and MARIE BOA SHALL. Madison, Milwaukee, and London 1970, pp. 519–520.

8 Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 30.4 Extrav., fol. 50v.

9 For More's biography see RICHARD WARD: *The Life of Henry More, Parts 1 and 2*. Ed. by SARAH HUTTON, CECIL COURNEY, MICHELLE COURTNEY, ROBERT CROCKER and RUPERT HALL. Dordrecht 2000. And for an exposition of his philosophy JASPER REID: *The Metaphysics of Henry More*. Dordrecht 2012.

10 LAWRENCE FINE: *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos. Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship*. Stanford 2003, pp. 1–123. And GERSHOM SCHOLEM: *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. New York 1995, pp. 251–266. MEIR BENYAHU: *Toledot ha-Ari*. Jerusalem 1967; EITAN FISHBANE: *Perceptions of Greatness: Constructions of the Holy Man in Shivhei ha-Ari*. In: *Kabbalah. Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 27 (2012), pp. 195–221. HAYYIM BEN YOSEF AZULAI: *Shem ha-gedolim*. Ed. by AARON BEN MOSES FULD. Vienna 1864, fols. 46a–46b.

11 Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 30.4 Extrav., fols. 49v–49r.

ally, in the preface to van Helmont's *Alphabet of Nature*, printed in Sulzbach in 1667, Knorr von Rosenroth expressed how important More's *Conjectura Cabbalistica* was for the understanding of the secrets of nature,¹² prophecies, and civilization, that is, the secrets contained in the Hebrew language of the Scriptures.¹³

Knowing that van Helmont would be in England to meet More there, Rosenroth wrote a letter to More raising queries about the soul, dualism, and Creation. Afterwards, the two began corresponding and exchanging their knowledge of kabbalah, philosophy, and theology. This collaboration led to the publication of the first volume of *Kabbala denudata* in 1677, which was intended as a reference book to the *Zohar*. More recommended that Knorr von Rosenroth publish what he had already translated, so his work would not be in vain.¹⁴ Additionally, More suggested including his correspondence with Rosenroth as a form of commentary on the translated texts and a lexicon of key kabbalistic terms. More also suggested to »set it out at leisure« in parts. In doing so, Knorr von Rosenroth's Zoharic studies would »conferre much to the benefit of the Reader and make the buk [sic] so saleable and the more effectually invite men to search into those studies.«¹⁵

The complete list of texts that More received remains ambiguous. However, it is possible to identify which texts he engaged with thanks to the published correspondence between More and Rosenroth. Among the many texts More received and commented upon, a *derush* or dissertation was translated as *Tractatus I. Liber Druschim*,¹⁶ a text that, according to More, was »convenient« for understanding kabbalah.¹⁷ The present article identifies the Hebrew sources for Knorr von Rosenroth's translation of this dissertation by examining the extant manuscripts he owned and by tracing how these manuscripts came into Rosenroth's possession. It also analyzes Rosenroth's method of translation which displays a unique approach to Lurianic kabbalah. Additionally, this article examines the linguistic choices made in the Latin translation of Knorr von Rosenroth in order to further characterize his translating style.

12 *Conjectura Cabbalista* was printed in 1653 and is a product of mere speculation and syncretism of philosophical, Pythagorean and kabbalistic principles. It is an interpretation of the first three chapters of Genesis. See REID, *The Metaphysics of Henry More* (cf. n. 9), pp. 88–95.

13 *The Alphabet of Nature* by F. M. van Helmont. Trans. by Allison Coudert and Taylor Corse. Leiden 2007, p. 15.

14 *Kabbala denudata* I, 2, p. 174.

15 *Kabbala denudata* I, 2, pp. 174–175.

16 For an explanation of the term *derush* regarding the present text see section 3. See also AVINOAAM J. STILLMAN: *The Safed Genizah: Buried Manuscripts and Kabbalistic Philology in Seventeenth-Century Palestine*. In: *Philological Encounters* (2024), pp. 9–10, for an explanation of the structure of the *derush* as a kabbalist genre and a different possible use of the word as *dissertation*. I follow Knorr von Rosenroth's translation of the term in the present text.

17 *Kabbala denudata* I, 2, p. 175.

2 Christian Knorr von Rosenroth's Idea of the Lurianic Kabbalah

By 1671, Knorr von Rosenroth sent his Latin translation of two sefirotic diagrams and some »cabbalistic papyrs«, including a Lurianic text, to England. As he expressed in a letter to More, printed as *Excerpta ex Epistola quadam Compilatoris de utilitate Versionis Libri Cabbalistici Sohar in Kabbala denudata's* first volume of 1677,¹⁸ the texts of Isaac Luria had helped him come to understand the *Zohar*.¹⁹ Soon after receiving these translated texts, More met with one of the professors of Oriental languages at Cambridge, a Jew, and a »Doctor of Divinity well versed in the Rabbins«,²⁰ who told him that »[the Jews] hold that Isaac Luria to be the most knowing man of their cabbala of the Jewes Nation.«²¹ Probably motivated by that interaction, More read the translations with increased enthusiasm and dedicated much of his correspondence to understanding the contents of *Liber Druschim*.

According to More, *Liber Druschim* was a text that conformed to Aristotelian cosmology. Although it remained largely impenetrable to him, More refrained from completely rejecting Lurianic kabbalah, unlike other kabbalistic translations that he either adapted and integrated into his own late exposition of pneumatology,²² or rejected categorically.²³

¹⁸ Kabbala denudata I, 2, pp. 3–5.

¹⁹ Henry More to Anne, 5 February 1671/72, Letter 218. In: Conway Letters. Ed. by MARJORIE NICHOLSON and SARAH HUTTON. Oxford 1992, p. 352.

²⁰ According to David Katz, the identity of these two men are Isaac Abendana and Edmund Castell. DAVID S. KATZ: The Abendana Brothers and the Christian Hebraists of Seventeenth Century England. In: Journal of Ecclesiastical History 40 (January 1989), no. 1, pp. 41–42; and DAVID S. KATZ: Henry More and the Jews. In: Henry More (1614–1687). Tercentenary Studies. Ed. by SARAH HUTTON. Dordrecht 1990 (International Archives of the History of Ideas/Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Idées; 127), p. 173–176.

²¹ Henry More to Anne Conway, Letter 218 (cf. n. 19), p. 352.

²² More integrated and adapted the pneumatology of Moses Cordovero as exposed in Tractate 31 of *Pardes Rimonim*. See his *Mercava Expositio* in Kabbala denudata I, 2, pp. 225–273.

²³ More rejected kabbalah as exposed in *Emek ha-melekh* as told by himself in the scholia to *Fundamenta Philosophiae sive Cabbalae Aëto-Paëdo-Melissae*, a text that originated from a nightmare. Kabbala denudata I, 2, p. 300: quamobrem, cum hoc insomnium eo tempore mihi accideret, quo in legendis Mss quibusdam cabbalisticis maximopere versabar, ut in Emek hammelech aliisque, suspicari quidem incepti eo visionem sive insomnium spectare posse et repraesentationem esse cabbalae cujuspiam. [At the time when I had this nightmare, I was extremely concerned with the reading of certain kabbalistic manuscripts, such as *Emek ha-melekh* and others, so that I suspected it was vision or nightmare representing the kabbalah in them].

Regardless of how More adapted or rejected Lurianic kabbalah, it is still relevant to characterize Knorr von Rosenroth's understanding of it.²⁴ It seems that he saw Lurianic kabbalah as a means to understanding the contents of the *Zohar*. He even counted the Lurianic *opus magnum*, '*Ets Hayim*, among the Zoharic reference books and indexes. In the second volume of *Kabbala denudata*, after listing the most useful reference books in the preface to the reader, von Rosenroth stated:

And if someone has the opportunity to acquire the manuscripts of R. Isaac Luria Ashkenazi, written by R. Hayim Vital, that were brought a long time ago from the East to these lands, many of which are said to be still extant there, then a far greater light will shine on him. The complete work is called '*Ets Hayim*, after the Compiler's name, and I got hold of it through various ways. It is divided into six volumes.²⁵

Indeed, Luria did not pen '*Ets Hayim*. However, it was not composed of six books, but eight. In the index of texts he provided in the same preface, Knorr von Rosenroth listed the contents of the edition of '*Ets Hayim* by Ya'akov Tsemah (1570/84–1666), a kabbalist who dedicated his life to editing the manuscripts of Hayim Vital that were recovered from the genizah in Safed.²⁶ This index corresponds to some extent to the texts contained in the extant manuscript copies of Ya'akov Tsemah's edition of '*Ets Hayim* at the Bavarian State Library in Munich, which were used by Knorr von Rosenroth for his translations.²⁷ The copies and the index reveal that Knorr von Rosenroth's copy had a two-part version of *Sefer ha-Kavanot*, which he listed as books three and four of '*Ets Hayim*.²⁸

Besides informing his readers of the arduous way to '*Ets Hayim*, Knorr von Rosenroth was aware of the difficulties related to recognizing this text's authorship

24 For Henry More's adaptation of some aspects of the kabbalistic knowledge see *Mercava Expositio* and *Catechismus Cabbalisticus* in *Kabbala denudata*. See also the *scholia*, the augmented version of *Mercava Expositio* and the *Tabula Tertia* in Henrici Mori Cantabrigiensis Opera Omnia: Tum quæ Latinè, tum quæ Anglicè scripta sunt. Vol. 1. Qui Præter Enchiridium Ethicum Et Enchiridium Methaphysicum Cum duabus illius Appendicibus, Multa alia Scripta partim ad antiquam Philosophiam Judaicam sive Cabbalisticam, partim ad Demonstrationem ac Defensionem Existentiæ Dei, & illius Providentiæ pertinentia complectitur. Ed. by JOHN COCKSHUTE in *Fundamenta Cabbalisticæ*. ALLISON COUDERT: A Cambridge Platonist's Kabbalist Nightmare. In: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36 (1975), no. 4, pp. 633–652 and GIULIANA DI BASE: Henry More against the Lurianic Kabbalah. The Arguments in the Fundamenta. In: *Rivista di Storia Della Filosofia* 1 (2022), pp. 19–35.

25 *Kabbala denudata* II, Praefatio, pp. 9–10.

26 GERSHOM SCHOLEM: le-Toledot ha-mequbal R. Ya'akov Tsemah. In: *Kriyat Sefer* 26 (1950), pp. 185–194. And STILLMAN, The Safed Genizah (cf. n. 16), pp. 7 and 17–23.

27 Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Cod.hebr. 319 and 333.

28 *Kabbala denudata* II, Praefatio, pp. 12–15. Cf. RONIT MEROZ: Redemption in the Lurianic Teaching. Jerusalem 1988, pp. 53–56 and YOSEF AVIVI: *Kabalat ha-Ari*. Jerusalem 2008, pp. 599–605.

and understanding the process of its compilation. For that reason, he had acquired different versions of the text, similar to what he would do to prepare his translation of the *Zohar*, which eventually became the 1684 Sulzbach edition.²⁹ Rosenroth's awareness of the complicated processes of distribution and compilation of his sources determined his approach to Lurianic kabbalah. He used Luria's name as an umbrella term, grouping together texts produced by Vital and other compilers, perhaps similar to the way it is used today. Driven by a philological impulse, Knorr von Rosenroth gathered as many manuscripts and printed editions as possible, with the help of his collaborators, to understand the subject as comprehensively as possible. As a Christian Hebraist, he believed firmly that the messianism in the *Zohar* revealed Christ. And so, through studying this text, Christians and Jews could benefit by recognizing the true Messiah and »purifying« religion from philosophy.³⁰

Familiar with the difficulties of studying the contents of the *Zohar*, which largely appeared obscure to any reader, Rosenroth found in the Lurianic version of kabbalah »a little more openly« an exposition.³¹ He insisted that the reader of kabbalah should withhold any assent of prejudices so that they could, by their own effort and means, experience the »investigation of the Ancient Philosophy of the Jews.« As it appears, Rosenroth believed that these studies should be integrated into the curricula of Universities and Academies.³²

Knorr von Rosenroth's understanding of Lurianic kabbalah as a genre of commentaries on the *Zohar* was aligned with what he understood to be its nature. In other words, Luria's teachings focused on understanding the *Zohar* through mystical and exegetical techniques,³³ allowing his students to comprehend the *Zohar* by mediation and reconciling its seemingly contradictory contents.³⁴ By studying and translating other commentaries on the *Zohar* from the Cordoverian tradition, Knorr von Rosenroth found in the Lurianic tradition a confirmation of his own perception of the *Zohar* as a messianic text that, when read thoroughly, revealed Christ.

Messianism in Judaism and Christianity differs in a central point: the fulfillment of the expectation of the Messiah. However, Knorr von Rosenroth carefully recognized the Galilean link connecting both religions alongside the revelation of

29 BOAZ HUSS: The Text and Context of the 1684 Sulzbach Edition of the *Zohar*. In: Tradition, Heterodoxy, and Religious Culture: Judaism and Christianity in the Early Modern Period. Ed. by CHANITA GOODBLATT and HOWARD KREISEL. Tel Aviv 2006, pp. 117–138.

30 Kabbala denudata I, 2, pp. 75–78.

31 Kabbala denudata I, 2, p. 77.

32 Kabbala denudata I, 2, p. 77.

33 BOAZ HUSS: The Anthological Interpretation: The Emergence of Anthologies of Zohar Commentaries in the Seventeenth Century. In: Prooftexts. A Journal of Jewish Literary History 19 (1999), no. 1, pp. 3–4.

34 HUSS, The Zohar (cf. n. 6), pp. 120–121.

Elijah. He was cautious about identifying Shimon bar Yohai or Isaac Luria with Christ. Nevertheless, the three figures were active in Galilee and were visited by Elijah, whose revelation provided them with the authority of divine instruction. Despite being acquainted with the Lurianic texts that depicted Luria as a transmigration of Shimon bar Yohai's soul, Knorr von Rosenroth omitted such information,³⁵ probably to prevent any rejection and confusion from his readers and to convey the Lurianic exegetical method as objectively as possible. According to the Lurianic teachings, Moses' soul reincarnates in every generation, and so, Shimon bar Yohai was believed to be a reincarnation of Moses. Thus, in the new generation, Luria was the reincarnation of Moses. Instead of associating the messianic figures of kabbalah with Christ, Knorr von Rosenroth focused on the »new teachings« of Luria that followed the teachings of Yohai.³⁶ As seen throughout the prefaces of the two volumes of *Kabbala denudata*, Rosenroth aimed to promote a new method of approaching the *Zohar* based on first-hand experience and on suspending any preconceived notions about its contents.

3 Liber Druschim, or The Lurianic Discourse on Circularity and Linearity

After receiving Henry More's first impression of the translation of the Lurianic text, which he wrote as a list of queries regarding its contents and possible interpretations, Knorr von Rosenroth realized the importance of the new method of reading the *Zohar*.³⁷ In approaching the texts without prejudices, the reader could find Greek undertones that proved the Christian truth underlying this »Ancient Philosophy of the Jews.«³⁸ He shared with More:

When the writings of R. Moses Cordovero and R. Isaac Luria are read [one can notice] they are styled as commentaries [to the *Zohar*] and the Oedipus is somehow found in that Sphynx, so that way one can reach the desired goal [of understanding]; the former writings [Cordovero's] are found in printed editions, whereas the other [Luria's] are only found as high-priced manuscripts.³⁹

35 In HAYIM BEN JOSEPH VITAL: *Sha'ar ha-Gilgulim*. Jerusalem 1926, p. 110. See also MEROZ, *Redemption* (cf. n. 27), p. 305.

36 MEROZ *Redemption* (cf. n. 27), p. 303. See also HUSS, *The Zohar* (cf. n. 6), p. 167.

37 *Considerationes et Quaestiones in Tractatum I. Libri Druschim R. Isaaci Lorientis*. In: *Kabbala denudata* I, 2, pp. 62–72.

38 *Kabbala denudata* I, 2, pp. 74–76.

39 *Kabbala denudata* I, 2, p. 76.

These texts written in the East shared with philosophy not only the commentary genre, a preferred one among philosophers since antiquity, but also the way of presenting their contents.⁴⁰ The text Rosenroth chose to translate as an introduction to Lurianic kabbalah for Henry More had such characteristics and was fundamental to understanding the kabbalistic cosmogony.

The Lurianic text is listed in the index provided in the preface of the second volume of *Kabbala denudata* from 1684. It corresponds with the index on one of the folios between books in the extant copy of *Otsrot Hayim* and other fragmentary books of Ya'akov Tsemah's edition of *'Ets Hayim*. It can be found as the first dissertation of *Sefer Derushim* under the title of *'Inyan bet hakirov ha-mekubalim* (»Concerning Two Inquiries of the Kabbalists«).⁴¹ This dissertation addresses two fundamental queries: the cause and purpose of creation, and the temporality and materiality of the creation, i. e., the questions of what is above, what is below, what was before, and what is after. According to the author of the dissertation, these two queries have been the focus of kabbalists throughout history.

The text is divided into five branches (*'anafim*) or chapters, which deal orderly with the consecutive stages of the emanation in a descending order.⁴² Creation for kabbalists is characterized as an emanation from God. Lurianic kabbalah thematized the origin of this emanation as a divine contraction or *tsimtsum*.⁴³ As the text explains, the contraction creates an empty space where creation happens: the light from *Ein Sof*, i. e., the infinite and ineffable God, emanates into the empty space and is ordered in the image of man, known as *Adam Kadmon* or Primordial Man. From him, the *sefirot* descend (*hishtalshelut*) and are arranged into four worlds: Emanation (*Atsilut*), Creation (*Beri'ah*), Formation (*Yetsirah*) and Action (*'Asiyah*).⁴⁴

The Lurianic text that Knorr von Rosenroth translated describes in detail the aspect of such emanation. It is both circular and linear or expansive and descending (*hitpashetut ve-hishtalshelut*): »All the worlds are [emanated] in the aspect of

40 On the development of the genre in philosophy since the antiquity see HAN BALTUSSEN: *Philosophers, Exegetes, Scholars. The Ancient Philosophical Commentary from Plato to Simplicius. In: Classical Commentaries. Explorations in a Scholarly Genre.* Ed. by CHRISTINA S. KRAUS and CHRISTOPHER STRAY. Oxford 2016, pp. 173–194.

41 Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Cod.hebr. 333, fol. 272a.

42 YOSEF AVIVI, *Kabalat ha-Ari* (cf. n. 27), p. 1395.

43 YOSEF AVIVI, *Kabalat ha-Ari* (cf. n. 27), pp. 1184–1188 and 1334–1335.

44 On the theory of the four worlds, see GEROLD NECKER: *Einführung in die lurianische Kabbala.* Frankfurt am Main, Leipzig 2008, pp. 57–59. GERSHOM SCHOLEM: *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism.* New York 1969, pp. 72–75. See also SHAUL MAGID: *From Metaphysics to Midrash. Myth, History, and the Interpretation of Scripture in Lurianic Kabbala.* Bloomington 2008, pp. 29–30.

concentric circles like onion layers.«⁴⁵ However, it continues: »the aforementioned circles descend in three lines forming the image of *Adam Kadmon*.«⁴⁶

The *sefirot* are disposed in five *partzufim*, or divine countenances, encircling and surrounding the upper ones:

Keter is one *partzuf* [of the ten *sefirot*] and is called *Arieh Anpin*. *Hokhmah* is another *partzuf* and is called *Abba*. *Binah* too and is called *Imma*. *Tiferet* from *Hesed* to *Yesod* constitutes one *partzuf*, called *Ze'ir Anpin*. The tenth *sefira*, *Malkhut*, is one *partzuf* of the ten *sefirot* and is called *Nukba* (the feminine) of *Ze'ir Anpin*.⁴⁷

Regardless of the complexities of the Lurianic system, the text's schematic presentation and concise language could be regarded as one of the reasons behind Knorr von Rosenroth's decision to translate it. Additionally, the genre of Lurianic dissertations (*derushim*) echoes philosophical expositions. Hayim Bentov has stated that the term *derush* (*darush*) is a borrowing from Arabic logic,⁴⁸ more specifically from modal syllogisms, and should not be confused with the homiletic genre *derashah*. The confusion arises because in Hebrew, a Semitic language, these two concepts share a root דרש, and depending on the vocalization, bear different meanings.⁴⁹ The term in Arabic is *matlub* (what is looked for, *quaesitum* or *res quesita* in Latin) and permeated Hebrew logic as well. In Hebrew translations of the works of Averroes, Avicenna and Al-Farabi, the Hebrew translators used the word *mevukash* (literally, what is wanted) to translate the term *matlub*. However, the term was also used simultaneously with *darush* (literally, what is searched for) to refer to a different type of syllogism.⁵⁰ Gersonides, the great but misunderstood medieval Jewish

45 Kabbala denudata I, 2, p. 30.

46 Kabbala denudata I, 2, p. 36.

47 Kabbala denudata I, 2, p. 48; Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Cod.hebr. 333 fol. 282b my translation and emphasis. On the *partzufim* in Lurianic kabbalah see FINE, Physician of the Soul (cf. n. 10), pp. 138–141.

48 HAIM BENTOV: Methods of Study of Talmud in the Yeshivot of Salonica and Turkey after the Expulsion from Spain. In: Sefunot: Studies and Sources on the History of the Jewish Communities in the East, The Book of Greek Jewry – III. Jerusalem 1971, p. 62. My thanks to Gene Matanky for the discussion about the term and sharing Bentov's reference.

49 See the entry for *darush* and *derishah* in JAKOB KLATZKIN: Thesaurus philosophicus linguae Hebraicae et veteris et recentioris. Pars prima. Berlin 1928, pp. 146–147; and BEN YEHUDA: Thesaurus totius hebraicitatis et veteris et recentioris. Vol. II. Berlin 1908, pp. 995–996, 997 and 1004–1008.

50 See CHARLES MANEKIN: Some Aspects of the Assertoric Syllogism in Medieval Hebrew Logic. In: History and Philosophy of Logic 17 (1996), p. 53; and Charles Manekin's translation of Gersonides, CHARLES MANEKIN: The Logic of Gersonides: A Translation of *Sefer ha-Heqqesh ha-Yashar* (the *Book of the Correct Syllogism*) of Rabbi Levi ben Gershon. Dordrecht 1992, p. 122, 129 and 256. See also the entry on *bakasha* in Klatzkin's *Thesaurus*, KLATZKIN, Thesaurus philosophicus (cf. n. 48),

philosopher,⁵¹ integrated this distinction throughout his *oeuvre*. In his *Milhamot Ha-Shem*, an astronomical work, Gersonides uses the term *derushim* as a genre of astronomical texts that propose scientific answers.⁵²

It seems that the term *derush* became common in the Italian reception of Gersonides to refer to higher investigations dealing with cosmogonic matters, from where it was somehow integrated into the work of Lurianic kabbalists in Safed.⁵³ Knorr von Rosenroth's word choice to translate the term *derushim* as the Latin *Dissertationes* indicates his deep understanding of literary genres in philosophy, whether Jewish or not. It also offers possible evidence of Knorr von Rosenroth's account of his teacher's knowledge on these matters.⁵⁴

p. 94. And *mevukash*. JAKOB KLATZKIN: Thesaurus philosophicus linguae Hebraicae et veteris et recentioris. Pars secunda. Berlin 1928, p. 139. My thanks to prof. Michael Chase for his explanation on the history and use of the term *matlub* in the Arabic tradition that led me to look for the terminology used in Hebrew works of logic in the Middle Ages.

51 RUTH GLASNER: Gersonides: A Portrait of a Fourteenth-Century Philosopher-Scientist. Oxford 2015; and Studies on Gersonides. A Fourteenth-Century Jewish Philosopher-Scientist. Ed. by GAD FREUDENTHAL. Leiden 1992.

52 CEDRIC COHEN SKALLI and ODED HOREZKY: A Fifteenth-Century Reader of Gersonides: Don Isaac Abravanel, Providence, Astral Influences, Active Intellect, and Humanism. In: Gersonide's Afterlife. Studies on the Reception of Levi ben Gerson's Philosophical, Halakhic and Scientific Oeuvre in the 14th Century through 20th Centuries. Ed. by OFER ELIOR, GAD FREUDENTHAL and DAVID WIRMER. Leiden 2020 (Officina Philosophica Hebraica; 2), p. 166. A version of Averroes' *Physical questions* was translated into Hebrew under the title *ha-derushim ha-tiv'iyim* by Moses Narbonne. MAURICE-RUBEN HAYOUN and ALAIN DE LIBERA: Averroès e l'averroïsme. Paris 1991, p. 59.

53 On the Safedian-Italian interactions and the influence of one place on the other see MOSHE IDEL: Safed in Italy, Italy in Safed: Toward and Interactive History of Sixteenth-Century Kabbalah. In: Early Modern Italy; Jewish Intellectuals in Early Modern Italy. Ed. by DAVID B. RÜDERMANN and GIUSEPPE VELTRI. Philadelphia 2004, pp. 239–269. The history of the development of the notion of *derush* and its transmission from philosophy to kabbalah is a matter that needs further investigation.

54 Kabbala denudata I, 2, p. 5. On several occasions Knorr von Rosenroth mentioned his teacher and his expertise about kabbalistic matters. He provided some details scattered throughout the prefaces of Kabbala denudata and his extant correspondence. However, the identity of said teacher remains ambiguous.

4 A brief History of the Hebrew Version of Knorr von Rosenroth's Copy of the Dissertation

After Isaac Luria's death, his students assumed the responsibility of transmitting their master's teachings. Luria had written some commentaries on the *Zohar*, explanations on certain kabbalistic topics, and some texts on Jewish prayers.⁵⁵ Among his many students, his self-proclaimed favorite disciple, Hayim Vital, began documenting Luria's teachings in what became a vast literary project. However, at some point in his life, Vital decided to bury these writings in a genizah, a repository for timeworn sacred material in a synagogue. In the early seventeenth century, these texts were recovered, copied, edited, and rearranged by Avraham Azulai (1570–1643) and Ya'akov Tsemah.⁵⁶

Azulai, who was Tsemah's teacher, was the first to start compiling and translating Vital's texts, a project Tsemah continued after Azulai's death.⁵⁷ Tsemah's editorial goal was to reconstruct and accurately transmit the order of the texts to faithfully represent the contents of the Ari's and Vital's teachings. For this reason, the texts were edited several times. Due to Tsemah's critical eye, the editions never seemed completely ready. His editorial zeal was such that he returned to the texts repeatedly and never discarded a previous version. Thus, different versions of the same text still coexist, most of which were recompositions of scattered *derushim* to which annotations and emendations were added.⁵⁸ As Avinoam J. Stillman has shown, such practices were collaborative, and the arrangement of the material at Tsemah's disposal responded to his philological impetus.

The dissertation that Knorr von Rosenroth translated belongs to an intermediate editorial stage of a text that was dear to Tsemah, *Adam Yashar*.⁵⁹ This dissertation underwent at least two stages of editing. Yosef Avivi has classified these as *Adam Yashar Aleph* and *Bet*. The difference between both versions is the inclusion of another dissertation, *Kehilat Ya'akov*.⁶⁰ A new dissertation, originating from the combination of *Adam Yashar Alef* and *Kehilat Ya'akov*, was designated by Avivi as *'Edut be-Ya'akov*. It included the initial phrase »two inquiries«. ⁶¹

55 On the texts written by Luria himself see AVIVI, *Kabalat ha-Ari*, vol. 1 (cf. n. 27), pp. 77–97. GERSHOM SCHOLEM: *The Real Writings of the Ari on Kabbalah*. In: *Kriyat Sefer* 19 (1941), pp. 184–199.

56 See STILLMAN, *The Safed Genizah* (cf. n. 16), pp. 11–17.

57 STILLMAN, *The Safed Genizah* (cf. n. 16), p. 15.

58 AVIVI, *Kabalat ha-Ari* (cf. n. 27), pp. 611 and 616–618.

59 STILLMANN, *The Safed Genizah* (cf. n. 16), p. 24.

60 AVIVI, *Kabalat ha-Ari* (cf. n. 27), p. 609.

61 See AVIVI *Kabalat ha-Ari* (cf. n. 27), pp. 612 and 618–620.

Avivi has dated *'Edut be-Ya'akov* approximately to 5406, 1645/1646; whereas *Adam Yashar Alef*, namely the dissertation without the initial paragraphs describing the two queries of kabbalists, was copied earlier. According to Avivi, the latter is an early version that succinctly explains the aspects of *'igul ve-yosher*, i. e., the circularity and linearity, in the form of the Primordial Man (*Adam Kadmon*). In this new dissertation, Tsemah included various themes: the *kelim* (vessels) and the aspects of *'igul ve-yosher* (the circular and the linear) during the process of emanation.⁶² Tsemah also added a brief description of the contents of the two merged *derushim* that begins with the line »the two queries the kabbalist occupied themselves with.« The process of composition of the new *derush* happened progressively through intertextual references between the different versions of the *Derush Adam Yashar* (*Aleph*, *Bet*, or *'Edut be-Ya'akov*) available to Tsemah, who would refer to one or another as if they were contemporary and of equal importance.⁶³

5 Gathering and Copying Manuscripts

As previously mentioned, Knorr von Rosenroth gathered as many manuscripts and text editions as possible to study kabbalah. In the correspondence between van Helmont and him, there is mention of the six books of Luria and some other manuscripts that were to be bought from some Venetian book dealers by Rabbi Joseph Hausen.⁶⁴ Van Helmont would send money to be allocated for specific purposes, including producing as many copies of manuscripts as possible. In addition to translating the newly acquired manuscripts, Knorr von Rosenroth and the rabbi had to produce copies of texts for their own use.⁶⁵

In his Catalog of Hebrew Manuscripts of the Bavarian State Library of Munich, Moritz Steinschneider identified Knorr von Rosenroth's handwriting in the margins of some texts.⁶⁶ He stated that those manuscripts were used as a source for *Kabbala denudata's* translation. Remarkably, the majority of those manuscripts are

⁶² On the aspect of circularity and linearity in Lurianic kabbalah see MORDECHAI PACTER: *Roots of Faith and Devequt. Studies in the History of Kabbalistic Ideas*. Jerusalem 2004, pp. 131–184. See also J. H. CHAJES: *Imaginative Thinking with a Lurianic Diagram*. In: *Jewish Quarterly Review* 110 (Winter 2020), no. 1, pp. 30–63.

⁶³ AVIVI, *Kabalat ha-Ari* (cf. n. 27), pp. 616.

⁶⁴ Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 30.4 Extrav., fol. 50v.

⁶⁵ Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 30.4 Extrav., fol. 51r.

⁶⁶ MORITZ STEINSCHEIDER: *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Regiae Monacensis: Die hebräischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München*. München 1895, pp. 181–183.

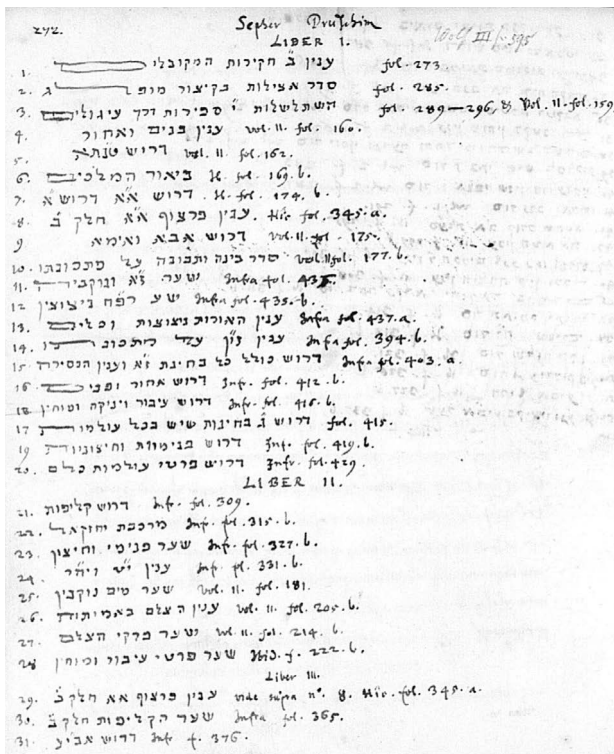


Fig. 1: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 333, fol. 272r, urn:nbn:de:hbv:12-bsb00107049-8

written by the same hand, i. e., seventeenth-century Ashkenazi cursive script, with the same ink and on the same type of paper. They are arranged similarly, leaving sufficient margins for annotations – a space that was conveniently used by Knorr von Rosenroth – all well-aligned and centered. The existence of these manuscripts provides material evidence of how van Helmont's orders were carried out. Furthermore, it demonstrates how relevant Sulzbach was for the legacy of Lurianic kabbalah, as a center of gathering and copying manuscripts. As mentioned above, two of these manuscripts correspond to the copies of Ya'akov Tsemah's edition of *'Ets Hayim*. They were indexed by a non-Hebrew hand, probably by Knorr von Rosenroth himself. They were written in different hands from the Sulzbach's copies, in what seems to have been a collaborative enterprise of scribes.⁶⁷

As an example of the importance of Sulzbach as a distribution center of kabbalistic knowledge in manuscript form, I will focus on the Lurianic dissertation, *Sefer*

⁶⁷ On collaborative scribal practices, and for an example of Safedian scribal communities, see STILLMAN, *The Safed Genizah* (cf. n. 16), pp. 19–30.

Derushim. A copy of *Sefer Derushim* is found at the Bavarian State Library under the shelfmark of BSB, MS Cod.hebr. 333. A comparison between the Latin translation and the extant manuscript of a *derush* »about the two inquiries« shows significant differences between the page numbering of the *Zohar* references included in the different variants of this text. The Latin translation does not have the same *Zohar* references as those in the group of manuscripts that Yosef Avivi has called *Adam Yashar Bet*; however, they are found in a different set in a variant of this text, one that Avivi has designated as *Adam Yashar Gimmel*. Of this offshoot of texts only two manuscripts were identified by Avivi to have survived, currently under the shelfmarks: New York, MS Lehmann K65 and Hebrew Union College Library, Cincinnati, OH, USA MS 611. The former is dated 1685, whereas the latter 1745.⁶⁸ They could have derived from the extant copy at the Bavarian State Library in Munich, since the translation of *Tractatus I. Libri Druschim*, on which both Henry More and Rosenroth commented, must have been completed by 1671, which was the year when More began his kabbalistic study.

Furthermore, the *Zohar* references are different in New York, MS Lehmann K65 and Hebrew Union College Library, Cincinnati, OH, USA MS 611, but are identical between the former and BSB, MS Cod.hebr. 333. The differences might be the result of a copyist slip that led to confusing certain letterforms (some letters *vav* were confused with *zayin* and some forms of *bet* with *nun*). Also, MS NY Lehmann K65 and BSB, MS Cod.hebr. 333 expose some of the contents of the dissertation in a briefer manner than those found in Hebrew Union College Library, Cincinnati, OH, USA MS 611, which is of a later composition (from 1745), with some further emendations and additions.⁶⁹

To add further evidence about the ownership of the extant manuscript BSB, MS Cod.hebr. 333, and its relevance for the production of copies in Sulzbach for Knorr von Rosenroth's translations, I have identified a fragmentary and unfinished copy of the text as contained in BSB, MS Cod.hebr. 333.⁷⁰ This copy is found at the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel among the notebooks of Knorr von Rosenroth under the shelfmark of Cod. Guelf. 157.1 Extrav. This copy was written by a different Hebrew hand than that of the manuscripts at Munich; however, it was copied on the same paper as all the copies produced in Sulzbach, with ample space left for future annotations on the margins. Aside from a stylistic preference over some of the

68 AVIVI, *Kabalat ha-Ari* (cf. n. 27), p. 771.

69 AVIVI, *Kabalat ha-Ari* (cf. n. 27), p. 771.

70 The copy at the Herzog August Bibliothek is followed by another internal unfinished copy of the *Hakdamat Ets Hayim* and the *Derush Israel Ve-Rahel* found in the other extant manuscript used as a basis for the internal copies of Sulzbach. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Cod.hebr. 319, fols. 1a–2b.



Fig. 2: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod.hebr. 333, fol. 280r, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00107049-8



Fig. 3: Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel: Cod. Guelf. 157.1 Extrav. Cod. Guelf. 157.1, fol. 203r

abbreviations and some minor scribal slips, the copies are identical. Additionally, the copy at Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel reproduces the diagrams found in the manuscript BSB, MS Cod.hebr. 333 in an exact manner. The reason for abandoning the copying of this manuscript cannot be determined. Nevertheless, it serves as an example of the copies of texts that were produced for internal use in Sulzbach.

6 Knorr von Rosenroth’s Style of Translation and his Latin Tractatus I. Liber Druschim

Gershom Scholem once described Knorr von Rosenroth’s translation of Hebrew as follows: »In his translations, Knorr aimed at precision, sometimes to the extent that the meaning is obscure to those not familiar with the original.«⁷¹ The words

71 GERSHOM SCHOLEM: Christian Knorr von Rosenroth. In *Encyclopedia Judaica*. Vol. 10. Jerusalem 1972, cols. 1117–1118.

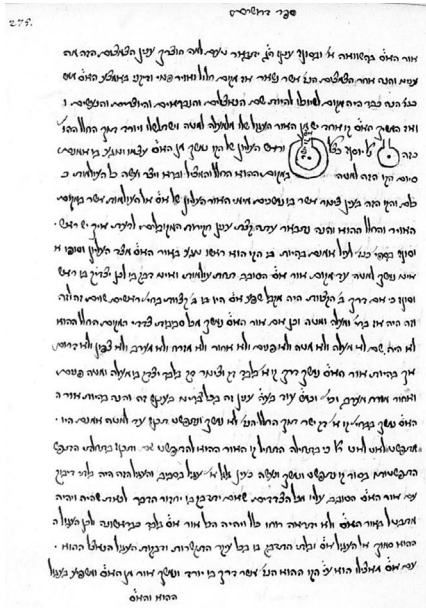


Fig. 4: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Cod.hebr. 333, fol. 275r; urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00107049-8

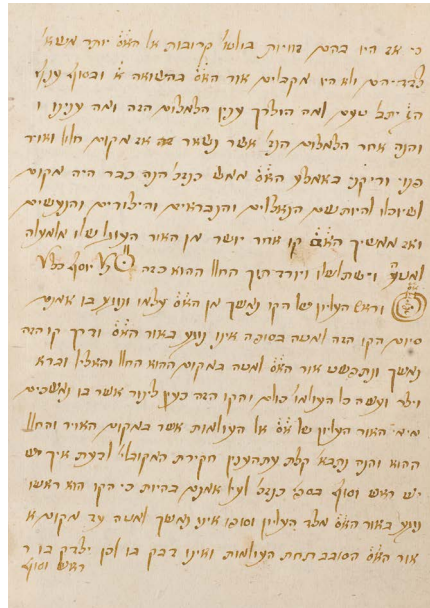


Fig. 5: Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel: Cod. Guelf. 157.1 Extrav., fol. 194r

of Scholem evoked Knorr von Rosenroth's own words on his translation method. However, in the preface to the reader in the second volume of *Kabbala denudata*, Knorr von Rosenroth stressed that his work did not aim to be *akribieia*, i. e., precise. Instead, he intended to allow the reader to become familiar with the common way of speaking among the Jews, and more specifically, among the rabbis of Germany.⁷²

Such a statement reveals the intricate foundations of *Kabbala denudata*, which was thought of as a reference book to the *Zohar* for Christians interested in furthering their knowledge. Its use had to be likewise practical. As a statesman, Knorr von Rosenroth imagined this project as twofold: theoretical and practical. It had one objective: tolerance. Regardless of the ways in which tolerance was to be achieved, whether through conversion or peaceful coexistence between Christians and Jews, the project's ambition was to provide specific tools and examples offered by Knorr

72 *Kabbala denudata* II, Praefatio, p. 17, Knorr von Rosenroth stated: »non quidem ad ultimam apicum Grammaticalium ἀκρίβειαν (*akribieian*), sed prout id facere solent Rabbini nostrates, ita ut conversanti cum Judaeis familiaris fiat illorum idiotismus.«

von Rosenroth throughout the prefaces to his translation.⁷³ The project aimed to prove that the doctrine of the Hebrews had been unified by Christ, who emphasized the contemplation of the soul in his teachings.⁷⁴

In translating the idiomatic style of the Hebrew language, Knorr von Rosenroth chose a word-for-word method, namely a literal translation.⁷⁵ This decision was influenced by an idiosyncratic reasoning: not to impose Latin on Hebrew. His sound understanding of both these languages made him aware of the stylistic limitations of translating on the one hand, and of how important it was for the student of the *Zohar* to accustom themselves with the »Zoharistic style,« on the other hand.⁷⁶ Such an approach reminds us of Boethius' statement in favor of the literal method against the classical Ciceronian preference for the sense-for-sense, i. e., rhetorical method. According to Boethius, in order to achieve knowledge of a specific matter, one should sacrifice »the elegance of style« to express the »uncorrupted truth« of the text.⁷⁷ In Knorr von Rosenroth's translation of the Lurianic dissertation, there is a clear preference for the word-for-word translation, a method toward which he was inclined in most of his translating projects.⁷⁸ Unlike in his translations from

73 Kabbala denudata I, Praefatio, p. 3. On the possible missionary intention of the project see WILHELM SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN: Knorr von Rosenroths missionarische Intentionen. In: *Morgen-Glantz* 20 (2010), pp. 189–204.

74 Kabbala denudata II, Praefatio, pp. 7–8: ut quicquid Metaphysicum et Pneumaticum esset in doctrina Hebraeorum singulari istius Viri studio colligeretur; suo tempore, cum ultimate Christianismi instaret consummation, inter exercitatiores felicioe praxi animos cum Christi traditis in ordinem pro facilitanda Animae contemplation redigendum.

75 The word-by-word method is part of the classical and humanist tradition of translation. It is opposed to the sense-for-sense method. See *Cic. opt. gen.* 5.14, Cicero in twenty-eight volumes. Vol. 2: *De Inventione. De Optimo Genere Oratorum. Topica*. Trans. by HARRY MORTIMER HUBBELL. London 1949, p. 365. For a historical comparison of Ciceronian and Boethian/Horatian methods of translation and their development throughout history see DANIEL WEISSBORT and ASTRADUR EYNSTEINSSON: *Translation – Theory and Practice: A Historical Reader*. Oxford 2006, pp. 17–54. See also OANA-ALIS ZAHARIA: »De interpretatione recta ...«: Early Modern Theories of Translation. In: *American, British and Canadian Studies* 23 (2014), no. 1, pp. 5–24. For a history of translation in Early Modernity and how such tradition became more complex and subjective see REGINA TOEPFER, PETER BURSCHEL and JÖRG WESCHE: *Übersetzen in der Frühen Neuzeit-Konzepte und Methoden*. Stuttgart 2021.

76 Kabbala denudata II, Praefatio, p. 17.

77 Boethius *In Isagogen Porphyrii Commenta*. Ed. by SAMUEL BRANDT (*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*; 48), p. 230: *Commenta cuius incepti ratio est quod in his scriptis in quibus rerum cognitio quaeritur, non luculentae orationis, lepos sed incorrupta ueritas exprimenda est* [my emphasis and my translation]. Remarkably, Knorr von Rosenroth translated Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophica* in 1667; however, whether he was familiar with this work of Boethius remains ambiguous.

78 Interestingly, according to Guillaume van Gemert, Knorr von Rosenroth's translation of Boethius' poems in the *Consolation of Philosophy* follows a sense-for-sense translation. See GUIL-

Dutch, English or Latin, where Rosenroth took some liberties and styled them as supercommentaries, in the translations from Hebrew there is no evidence of the translator's persona. Rosenroth avoided any vocabulary that could be linked to Christianity or philosophy. This choice was not due to lack of his linguistic proficiency; rather, it reflects how Rosenroth used the word-for-word method to convey the text without any »corruptions.«

Perhaps the best example of Rosenroth's attitude to the Lurianic dissertation is his decision of translating the phrase *le'ila 'al-kala ilat 'al kol ha-'ilot* literally, as *Supremo omnium loco Causa Omnio* (lit. the Cause of everything is on the highest), instead of the more common *Causa Causarum*.⁷⁹ The phrase *'ilat ha-'ilot* was well-known among kabbalists since the Middle Ages as an equivalent translation of the First Cause. It was first introduced to kabbalah from philosophical contexts, principally from the translations of the Aristotelian texts by Judah ben Tibbon (1120–1190).⁸⁰ That Knorr von Rosenroth was familiar with the meaning of the phrase as *Causa Causarum* is evidenced in his correspondence with More, published in the first volume of *Kabbala denudata* in 1667.

As mentioned previously, More raised some queries about each of the chapters of the Lurianic dissertation. Concerned with guiding the correct interpretation, Knorr von Rosenroth thus elaborated further on the contents of the text. There he used the phrase *Causa Causarum* to refer to *Ein Sof* on two occasions in order to explain how the essence of the *sefirot* must be separated from *Ein Sof*. He stated: »when the activity [of *Ein Sof*, that is, the contraction and emanation] has reached the state of Creation, it is necessary that the essences [*sefirot*] be separated and removed from the Cause of Causes.«⁸¹ Then he continued: »that the *sefirot* as long as their substance is near to the Cause of Causes are hidden in the emanation and

LAUME VAN GEMERT: Boethius als Lebensmodell. Christian Knorr von Rosenroth und Johann Hellwig in Konkurrenz. In: *Welche Antike?* Bd. 2. Ed. by ULRICH HEINEN. Wiesbaden 2011, pp. 783–795.

79 *Kabbala denudata* I, 2, p. 33. See MOSHE IDEL, *Kabbalah in Italy, 1280–1510: A Survey*. New Haven 2011, pp. 106; and JACOB KLATZKIN: *Thesaurus philosophicus lingua Hebraicae et veteris et recentioris*. Pars tertia. Berlin 1930, pp. 134–136.

80 Judah ibn Tibbon introduced the term in his translation of Bahya ben Joseph ibn Paquda's *Duties of the Heart*, *Hobot ha-lebabot* chapter 2, paragraph 5. The Tibbon family translated many philosophical works from Arabic into Hebrew: Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*, Aristotle's *Metereology*, Al-Farabi's summary of Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Avicenna's *Metereology*. For the use of the phrase to name God in medieval kabbalah see GERSHOM SCHOLEM: *Origins of the Kabbalah*. Ed. and trans. by ZWI WERBLOWSKY. Princeton 1987, p. 213; and Daniel Matt's introduction to his edition of *The Book of Mirrors: Sefer Mar'ot ha-Zove'ot*. The Book of Mirrors: *Sefer Mar'ot ha Zove'ot*. R. David ben Yehuda he-Hasid. Ed. by DANIEL CHANAN MAT. Chico/CA 1982, pp. 21–22.

81 *Kabbala denudata* I, 2, p. 84.

were only revealed according to his desire.⁸² It is evident that the literal method of translation was taken to the limits here. But another example of Rosenroth's approach to Hebrew texts is found in his translation of the word *sefirot* as *numerationes* (numbers). This is an etymological translation rather than one related to the use of this term in the kabbalistic tradition. However, as can be seen in the previously quoted examples, Rosenroth referred to *sefirot* as »essences« in his correspondence with More. Again, Rosenroth's translation choices could be linked to his desire to avoid any philosophical associations that might cause any prejudice when reading the texts.

Lastly, the word-for-word translation of the Hebrew text displays Knorr von Rosenroth's expertise in both Hebrew and Latin. This is evident especially in his translation of the two motions, or aspects of emanation – expansion and descension (*hitpashetut* and *hishtalshelut*) –, which Rosenroth decided to translate as *expansio* and *emissio*, respectively. The Latin words retained some connotations that could be missed in the equivalent English terms, *expansion* and *emission*. When choosing both terms, Rosenroth preserved the connotation they have in Hebrew: *expansio* encapsulates the Hebrew meaning of spreading out from the source throughout the empty space, evoking circularity, while *emissio* means to cause light to move outward from the source (i. e., sending forth) in the form of rays.⁸³

Conclusion

My analysis of Knorr von Rosenroth's translation of the *Dissertation on the Two Inquiries of the Kabbalists* illustrates his expertise in both Hebrew and Latin. His translation choices support the rationale behind the publication of *Kabbala denudata* and the *Zohar* project in Sulzbach, which were both theological and political in character. Knorr von Rosenroth provided a word-for-word translation from Hebrew to Latin in order to encourage his readers to understand the messianic truth in the texts without interfering in their interpretation.

Sulzbach's importance as a center for the production and circulation center of kabbalistic knowledge still requires further research.⁸⁴ Rosenroth's awareness

⁸² *Kabbala denudata* I, 2, p. 85.

⁸³ See acceptance five of the word *emissio* in the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*. ROBERT JOWITT WHITWELL: *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*. Ed. by DAVID HOWLETT and RICHARD ASHDOWNE. In: <https://logeion.uchicago.edu/emissio> (08/08/2024).

⁸⁴ ANDREAS B. KILCHER: *Kabbala in Sulzbach. Zu Knorr von Rosenroths Projekt der Kabbala Denudata*. In: *Die Juden in der Oberpfalz*. Vol. 2. Ed. by MICHAEL BRENNER and RENATE HÖPFINGER. München 2009, pp. 69–86. <https://doi.org/10.1524/9783486720235.69> (08/08/2024).

of the many variants of kabbalistic texts extant in manuscript form reflects the widespread circulation of kabbalistic sources in Ashkenaz writ large.⁸⁵ Among the extant manuscripts Rosenroth used for his translations, there appear different versions of the same text, reworked and recopied. Furthermore, Knorr von Rosenroth and his colleagues produced copies of texts intended for their internal use, all of which should be considered part of the broader legacy of Lurianic manuscripts. Finally, Knorr von Rosenroth's method of translation emerges as crucial for understanding the transmission of Lurianic-kabbalistic ideas into Christianity and philosophy in the early modern period.

85 AGATA PALUCH: The Circulation of Jewish Esoteric Knowledge in Manuscript and Print. The Case of Early Modern East-Central Europe. In: *Print Culture at the Crossroads. The Book and Central Europe*. Ed. by ELIZABETH DILLENBURG, HOWARD LOUTHAN and DREW B. THOMAS. Leiden 2021 (*Library of the Written World – The Handpress World*; 94), pp. 483–484.