

A Unique Manuscript of an Untitled Treatise of Abraham Abulafia in Biblioteca Laurentiana Medicea

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1. Abraham Abulafia and the Beginning of Kabbalah in Italy

With the arrival of Abraham Abulafia in the late seventies of the thirteenth century to Italy for the second time,¹ we may speak about the inception of Kabbalah in this country.² This Kabbalist composed some of his most important writings belonging to the Ecstatic Kabbalah in Capua and Rome around 1280, and then moved to Sicily, then part of the Aragonese crown, and continued to create and propagate his special brand of Kabbalah there between 1281-1291. Moreover, it is plausible that he brought with him from Spain numerous kabbalistic writings written by other authors.³ During the eighties of that century many kabbalistic treatises were copied in Rome, and since then Kabbalah remained part and parcel of Jewish culture of this country.⁴ Especially important is the second stage of the development of Kabbalah in Italy, in the writings of R. Menahem Recanati, who flourished in the early decades of the fourteenth century, an exponent of a totally different branch of Kabbalah, the theosophical-theurgical one.

Abulafia's ecstatic Kabbalah penetrated into the Christian elite, beginning with the eighties of the fifteenth century, when the Christian Kabbalah emerged under the direct impact of Flavius Mithridates' Latin translations of kabbalistic and other books prepared for Pico della Mirandola, many of them belonging to the Italian kabbalistic tradition. In my opinion, a more accurate understanding of both the Jewish and Christian Kabbalah in Italy would

- 1 For the first time he visited Capua in the early sixties of the thirteenth century and he studied there the *Guide of the Perplexed* with Rabbi Hillel of Verona.
- 2 See Moshe Idel, *R. Menahem Recanati the Kabbalist*, Tel Aviv- Jerusalem 1998, I pp. 33-36 [Hebrew]; See now idem, *La cabbala in Italia (1280-11510)*, tr. Fabrizio Lelli, Florence, 2007, pp. 114-133.
- 3 ibidem, pp. 35-36.
- 4 ibidem, pp. 37-50.

substantially benefit from a detailed inventory of the content of the Italian libraries, a project that would require an intimate acquaintance with the manuscript works of the kabbalists. However, a precise mapping of those libraries necessitates the identification of many anonymous treatises, an enterprise that is far from simple, and we are still far from completing such precise identifications. This is the case for most of the Italian libraries, including the Laurenziana collection in Florence. The manuscript content of this library is particularly important for the understanding of early Christian Kabbalah, since its first Italian exponents were active in this city. Like in many other Italian libraries containing Hebrew manuscripts, codexes belonging to the Ecstatic Kabbalah occupy a prominent place, just as these codexes are conspicuous in the choice of material that underlies Flavius Mithridates' Latin translations.⁵ The presence of substantial material from Ecstatic Kabbalah is conspicuous also in the structure of the kabbalistic manuscripts found in the Munich library, which contains material copied from Italian sources.⁶

In this short study, I would like to offer a very modest contribution toward such a project of mapping the precise kabbalistic content of the Italian libraries. A codex found in the Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Plut. II.28, fols. 69a-100b (#17809 at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem), contains an anonymous kabbalistic treatise that is, unfortunately, truncated both at its beginning and end.⁷ The codex includes a fragment from the book of the *Zohar* on Genesis (1a-68b), and a Hebrew translation of the *Kuzari* by R. Judah ha-Levi (101a-164). The Zoharic texts and the untitled kabbalistic fragment are copied in a fifteenth-century Italian hand, which may point to the work of a copyist active in Northern Italy. The *Kuzari*, however, is copied in an earlier Spanish hand, probably of the fourteenth century, thus possibly the work of a copyist in Spain, although it might also have belonged to another codex. No title, name of author, date, or reference to another writing of the author, are mentioned in the extant text of the untitled treatise that concerns us here. Given the fact that there are no chapters, or other divisions of the material, it is hard to approximate the original structure or length of the untitled fragment.

Nevertheless, a perusal of the extant part of the text demonstrates that R. Abraham Abulafia is the author of this fragment. Let me adduce the main reasons for this identification of the author. I shall do so by analyzing some topics characteristic of Abulafia's thought, attempting to point out how this manuscript contributes to a better understanding of Abraham Abulafia's Kabbalah. Much more parallels of topics and themes found in this fragment can be adduced and I hope to do so in an annotated edition of this text which is under preparation.

2. Abulafia's Three Languages

In the anonymous fragment, like in Abulafia's other writings, three languages are singled out: Hebrew, Greek, and *la'az*; the latter stands in both cases for either Latin or Italian.⁸ Moreover, like in Abulafia, Hebrew is described as the comprehensive language that includes all the other seventy languages.⁹ In a manner especially close to Abulafia, and unlike any other Kabbalist with whom I am acquainted, the anonymous text resorts to non-Hebrew words for numerical calculations, *gematria*, even less so when divine names are involved. Indeed, the untitled treatise provides one of the most complex and fascinating uses of speculations related to the divine names in various languages, in quite an ingenious manner. So, for example, he asserts that

In *la'az*, *Dominus Deus*, which, when subtracting from it [the numerical value of] *Shem ha-Nokhrim* what remains is *Domino Dio*, which is the secret of the *YHWH 'Elohim*...and its valence is *Qol*, which amounts to *Qol YHWH 'Elohim*, and it is the secret of *Raziel*,¹⁰ *medaqdeq, mehaqeq, be-mare'ah, ba-midbbar, be-lo 'sheruf 'otiyot, be-lo 'ahor*, and this is the meaning of the verse¹¹ 'and he heard the voice of the Tetragrammaton, God, walking in the garden, in the breeze of the day.'¹²

8 See Moshe Idel, *Language, Torah and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia*, tr. Menahem Kallus, Albany 1989, pp. 21-24.

9 Ibidem, pp. 23-24.

10 *Raziel* is a relatively rare name in mystical or magical treatises; Abulafia is very fond of it because it amounts in *gematria* to his proper name Abraham. See Moshe Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia*, tr. Jonathan Chipman, Albany 1987, pp. 140, 200, 201.

11 Genesis 3:8.

12 Ms. Firenze-Laurenziana II,48, fol. 96a: הסר כי השם הנזכר שמו בלעז דומינוש דיוש. הסר ממנו שם הנוכרים נשאר דומינו דין והוא סוד יהוה אלהים בלשון ה וחשבונו קול. הרי הוא קול יהוה אלהים הוא סוד וריאל מודקק מחקק. במראה. כמדבר בלא צירוף האותיות בלא אחר. והוא מה שאמר, וישמעו את קול ייז אלהים מתהלך בגן ברוח היום

5 See Chaim Wirszubski, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism* Cambridge, Mass. 1988, index of sources, p. 286.

6 This is a matter of a separate study.

7 See the catalogue of Antonio Maria Biscioni, *Bibliothecae Hebraicae Florentinae: Catalogus*, Florentiae 1757, pp. 258-260.

Abulafia spelled *Dominus Deus* in Hebrew by resorting to the letter *sin* rather than a *samekh* at the end of the two Latin names related to God, so that the numerical value of the phrase amounts to 736. When subtracting from it the numerical value of *Shem ha-Nokhrim*, 'the name of the aliens', which amounts to 671, what remains is 65, which is the *gematria* of the name 'Adonai in Hebrew. On the other hand, the consonants of *Domino Dio* amount to 136, like *Qol*, the voice, which is related to God. *Qol*, found together with the two divine names *YHWH 'Elohim* (=112) in the Genesis verse, amount to 248, which is the numerical valence of each of the words *Raziel*, *medaqdeq*, *mehaqeq*, *be-mar'eh*, *ba-midbar*, *be-lo' 'ahor*. There can no doubt about the attempt of the author to arrive to the value of 248, which is identical to *Raziel*, a theophoric name that occurs in ancient Jewish literature, but which has been adopted by Abraham Abulafia for himself, since it amounts to the value of the consonants of his own first name, Abraham.

However, beyond the general identification of himself with the angelic name, the equation between its numerical and that of the expression, *Qol YHWH 'Elohim*, 'the voice of the Tetragrammaton, the Lord', is fascinating: it betrays an attempt to hint at his own specific self-perception as a prophet. The Mosaic elements are conspicuous: *Raziel* was conceived in some late antiquity texts as the teacher of Moses, while the expressions *ba-mar'eh* and *meh[o]aqeq* were attributed to Moses in the Bible.¹³ The expression *be-lo' 'ahor*, namely without the back, seems to point too to Moses' request to see God's face, or to the assumption that he has indeed seen God so.¹⁴ The Adamic situation of hearing the divine voice in Paradise is related to the great interest in the Paradisical themes occurring in this treatise, some of which will be dealt with in the next section. Immediately afterward, Abulafia mentions that in Greek those names are *Kyrios* or *Theones*.¹⁵ Those three languages are conceived as encompassing all seventy languages. A similar resort to the three languages recurs also in Abraham Abulafia's apocalypse entitled *Sefer ha-'Ot*: 'And I shall write [divine] names and shall combine them and I shall check them...until the two languages will be transformed, languages that come to serve the Jewish language, namely Greek and *la'az*'.¹⁶ The assumption is that it

13 Deuteronomy 33:21.

14 Exodus 33:20.

15 Ms. Firenze-Laurenziana II, 48, fol. 96a: הלשון יון קורין שני אלו השמות קריוש או תיונש See also another instance where the letters תיו point, in my opinion, to *theo*, God. See Idel, *Language, Torah and Hermeneutics*, p. 24.

16 *Sefer ha-'Ot*, p. 70: ואכתוב שמות ואצרפם ואכחנם...עד אשר נהפכו בו לשונות שמים

is possible to transform linguistic material from one language to another, and thus retrieve the 'lost' Hebrew elements still extant in other languages.

This approach to the three languages, and the resort to them in order to extract some form of religious information is especially characteristic of Abulafia, though much less of any of his followers, and even less of any of the kabbalists belonging to other kabbalistic schools. This openness to other languages and forms of theological thought contributed to the interest in Abulafia's thought in the early stages of Christian Kabbalah, and we shall have more to say about this topic at the end of this study.

3. Combination of Letters as a Technique for Achieving the Agent Intellect and Paradise

One of the main techniques in Abulafia's Kabbalah to reach a mystical experience and to understand the Scripture is combination of letters. Though this technique is found already earlier, among the Ḥasidei Ashkenaz, and later among other Kabbalists, among the thirteenth-century Spanish authors Abulafia is much more interested in this technique than other. Let inspect one of the passages found in the untitled treatise on this topic:

Put always your attention to wisdom, which is known from the combinations found in letters, to those who knows how to combine them, because this is the purpose of the wisdom of man who intelligizes God, blessed be He. [...] Know in truth that the comprehension of the Agent Intellect is found within the twenty-two holy letters, which comprises the positive and negative commandments. And it is the candle illumining every man, and it is 'the river that exits from the Eden to irrigate the garden'¹⁷ [...] and it points out the twenty-two letters, the comprehension of the Agent Intellect, and this entirely [depends on] the combination of letters, the knower, the knowledge and the knowing, are 'Efrat'¹⁸ and this is the secret of 'Alef, Dalet, Nun, Yod, as I have informed you above, and likewise you will find in the case of the understanding person, the understanding and the understood. And everyone who comprehends the comprehension of the Agent Intellect, gains Life in the World-to-come,¹⁹ and is integrated in the secret of the angels of the living God.

הלשון היהודית והן יונים ולעזית אשר באו לשמש

17 Genesis 2:10.

18 No doubt that the very mentioning of 'Efrat has something to do with the name *Prat*, the Hebrew name for the river Euphrat, one of the legendary rivers of Paradise. The consonants of this word amount in *gematria* 681, like the plene spelling of the divine name 'Adonai, (as mentioned immediately afterwards), just as the sum of the consonants of the words *ha-Yodea*, *ve-ha-da'at ve-ha-yadu'a*.

19 The assumption that the world-to-come, namely ecstatic experiences while alive, may be achieved by means of manipulating letters is found many times in

And know that the six hundred-thirteen commandments amount to [the sum of the consonants]²⁰ that you will hear: 'I am the Lord,²¹ One Unique, Existent, Necessary, Present, Eternal'.²²

The river emerging from Eden and watering the Garden is, quite plausibly, the intellectual flow that descends from the Agent Intellect, which is understood in many medieval texts as an entity separated from matter, and is collected by the human intellect. This process is tantamount to the phenomenon of prophecy, which reflects, following Maimonides, the Aristotelian noetic process of representation of the intellectual by the means of the imaginative capacity, and by adding another Aristotelian view, which assumes the identity between the knower, the known and the knowledge, in the moment of intellection. Thus, the Garden is envisioned as the human intellect or person, the Eden, the separated Intellect. The later is conceived, following the medieval Aristotelian cosmology, as being available always to those who know who, and in the system of Abulafia, to those who resort to the technique of combining letters or the divine names. This technique is conceived to induce a transformation that changes the human into an angelic being, namely into an intellectual entity. Here we have the explication of the function of language and divine names as the means to attaining the meals, namely the affinities to the Agent Intellect.

In another discussion of the untitled treatise the three divine names are mentioned in a discussion that portrays a vision:

Abulafia's writings. See, e.g., Idel, *Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics*, p. 6.

20 The numerical value of the Hebrew consonants of the Hebrew words translated as 'I am the Lord...Eternal' amounts to 613.

21 In the manuscript יי which is a form of writings of the Tetragrammaton. In any case it is counted as 26 in the *gematria* of 613. Cf. note 20 above.

22 Ms. Firenze-Laurentiana II.48, fols. 79b: שים לבך אל החכמה תמיד הידועה מתוך הציור הנמצא באותיות למי שיודע לצרפם כי זה הוא הכלית חכמת האדם המשכיל את השם יתברך ודע כי מוזן הגוף או מוזן הנפש שניהם מדת רחמים. ועתה אעוררך על מה שידעתיך דן דע באמת כי השגת השכל הפועל הנמצאת בתוך כ"ב אותיות הקדש היא כוללת מצות עשה מצות לא תעשה והוא הנר המאיר לכל אדם והוא נהר יוצא מעדן להשקות את ומורה כי תוך כ"ב אותיות השגת השם וזה כלו מצירוף האותיות וכן תמצא באמת...הגן אלף דלת נון יוד. כאשר מתוך צירוף האותיות היודע והדעת והידוע אפרת והוא סוד הורעתיך למעלה וכן תמצא סוד יודע מדע יודע שהוא המבין והבינה והמוכן. וכל מי שמשגיג השגת השכל הפועל זוכה לחיי העולם הבא ונכלל בסוד מלאכי אלהים חיים ודע כי תתייג וידוע כי באמת תכלית מציאותו השגת השם המיוחד ובו ישג. See also already earlier *ibidem*, fol. 79b: מצות הן מנין שתשמע אנכי יי"ו אחד מיוחד נמצא מחיב הוה נצחי ומצות הוה מודים על שכל הפועל כי השגת השכל הפועל היא בדמיון הנר והוא נהר יוצא מעדן ולפנים אבאר לך סודו יוחר מפורש שאין ספר בו

And he will tell you: 'I am the angel of the God of the hosts, so and so', and it is the secret of *Gan 'Eden* that is comprised in three names, *YHWH 'Adonai 'Elohim*, whose vowels are the prince of *Gan 'Eden* is 'Ezrat.²³ [...] And he will tell him: 'I am the tree of life, the Garden in Eden from the East'.²⁴ And he will understand that God has sent him His angel in order to help him by instruction, and to accustom him to the strong love of the Creator, by announcing to him the truth of the essence of the tree of life that is within the Garden, and this is the holy letters [...] and he is the 'prince of *Gan 'Eden*'.^{25 26}

I see in this passage the clue for at least some elements recurring in many of the passages from the ecstatic Kabbalah. The above discussions could be understood as hermeneutical games, which indulged in numerical calculations as part of an intellectual hypertrophy. Here, however, we face a kind of instruction, which may well be also a confession concerning an angelic revelation. This revelation is presented as the source of the numerical nexus between the three divine names mentioned in this text and in a series of other writings of Abulafia's and of his sources and followers, and *Gan 'Eden*. Both phrases amount in *gematria* to 177. What is however, quite exciting is the fact that according to this passage there is another numerical affinity, between the numerical values of the vocalization-signs, and the expression *Sar Gan 'Eden*, namely 677.

Moreover, the angel presents itself expressly as the tree of life and as the Garden of Eden. Therefore, Paradise is not only a label for an individual experience, but also is hypostatized as an angelic figure. Provided the identity between the three names and *Gan 'Eden*, in one of the quotes above, we may assume that the names that serve as part of a technique are also envisioned in a mystical experience. Indeed also in another case in Abulafia's writings, the divine names are used as part of a technique and appear in the vision of the mystic. In other words, the Agent Intellect materializes itself in the imagination

23 'eZRa T = 677 = SaR GaN 'eDeN.'

24 Genesis 2:5.

25 *Sar Gan 'Eden* and 'Ezrat amount both to 677. This numerical identity is important since it demonstrates that the author indeed intends to point to the numerical value of *Sar Gan 'Eden*, after he did so for the words *Gan 'Eden*.

26 Ms. Firenze-Laurenziana II:48, fols. 89b-90a: 'אני מלאך יי"ו: צבאות פלוני בן פלוני והוא סוד גן עדן הנכלל בשלשה שמות יהו"ה אדני"י אלהים בנקודם וכן יאמר לו האומר אנכי עץ החיים גן בעדן מקדם והוא יבין שכבר... שר גן עדן הוא עזרת שלה לו השם מלאכו לעזור בחמתו ולהרגילו באהבת הבורא בחזקה בהוריעו לו אמתת מהות עץ החיים אשר בתוך הגן והם אותיות הקדש... והוא הוא שר גן עדן

of the ecstatic Kabbalist in the form of names and describes itself as the Garden of Eden.

Elsewhere in the untitled text Abulafia contends that from the 'tree of life' Torah, both prophecy and commandments emerge.²⁷ A basic assumption of this kabbalistic system is the idea that the divine names are not simply secrets to be mentally known, but linguistic units that should also be recited in order to change the consciousness of the performer. Here the ergetic aspect is conspicuous, as the Torah is understood as an influx whose reception is conditioned by resorting to the mystical technique. It is quite possible that we have here a certain reverberation of the concept of the *Sar ha-Torah*, found in the Hekhalot literature and in the Middle Ages.²⁸

Let me address some other aspects of the text under discussion. From reading it, it becomes clear that there are first person formulations and third person formulations, the latter coming after the former and plausibly interpreting them. Such an approach is found in the commentaries Abulafia wrote to his own prophetic books.²⁹ However, while in those commentaries this type of narrative in the dominant one, in the untitled fragment this strategy constitutes, proportionately speaking, just an exception. In another passage, that is replete with *gematrias* amounting to 177, we read again about Paradise:

The Garden of Eden and *Geheinna* differ from each other, and *ve-dam*, which is *ha-'adam* is preponderating between them, and this decision is in accordance to the language... and the secret [...] of three special names hinted at [...] is an allusion [...] and so also the secret of the Garden of Eden, three degrees³⁰, three meals,³¹ three names, according to which the *Gadan Na'*,³² which is a vapor in a cloud,³³ and it is a subtle matter³⁴ [...] day and night^{35 36}.

- 27 Ms. Firenze-Laurenziana II:48, fol. 93a. On a revelation of a tree to Abraham related to the incident of *Elon Moreh*, see already in the apocryphal Testament of Abraham 3, as analyzed in Dale C. Allison, Jr., 'Abraham's Oracular Tree (T. Abr. 3:1-4)', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 44 (2003), pp. 51-61. For another parallel related to a revelation to Abraham Abulafia - dealing now with the angel Yahoel - and the Apocalypse of Abraham see Moshe Idel, *Messianic Mystics*, New Haven, London, 2000, pp. 90, 358, note 110.
- 28 See Moshe Idel, *Absorbing Perfections: Kabbalah and Interpretation*, New Haven-London, 2002, pp. 141-143, 176-178.
- 29 See idem, *Messianic Mystics*, New Haven London 2000, pp. 82-84, 295-302.
- 30 *Shalosh Ma'alot* in *gematria* 1176=1+176=177. On this *gematria* in ecstatic Kabbalah see Idel, *Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics*, pp. 116-117.
- 31 The consonants of *Shalosh se'udot* amount also to 1176.
- 32 The two words are obscure; I assume that they point to the movement of a certain

The parallelism between this passage and that from the untitled fragment would suffice in order to demonstrate the strong affinity between Abulafia's longest work, composed in 1286, and the text under scrutiny here. Let me turn to another discussion of Paradise from the same boom of Abulafia:

You know what happened to the four sages of Israel, as it was said on them: 'Four entered the *Pardes*', which is a name for the divine science which is from the existence of the delight and so did the gentiles call the Garden of Eden, *Paradiso*, whose meaning is self-evident, that is a place of delight. It means that everything that someone desires to attain, he attains, and he remains some time with this attainment and [then] he is disgusted by it. This happens to everything that has some deficiency.³⁷

Entering the *Pardes* implies two forms of experience: a positive one, of delight and one of disgust. *Pardes*, just as in the ancient versions of the story in rabbinic and Hekhalot literatures, may culminate in either a positive or a negative experience. The positive one, is designated here as *Gan 'Eden* and *Paradiso*. According to the untitled treatise dealing with theology, which means an experiential comprehension or meeting with God is a matter of delight.³⁸ Abulafia interprets the experience of the *Pardes* as an everlasting experience. Whereas in the case of other attainments, the delight is only temporary and it turns, ultimately, into disgust, in the case of the Paradise, namely metaphysics, the delight is constant and uninterrupted. The knowledge of reality, of the nature of existence, is the quintessence of the *Pardes* experience and Abulafia is relatively faithfully following Maimonides' conception of metaphysics. However, in contrast to the 'Great Eagle', Abulafia does not include Aristotelian physics in this definition of the *Pardes*. Likewise, the emphasis on delight in connection to the act of cognition related to metaphysics is characteristic of his vision of mystical experience as culminating in delight, a topic that would not have delighted Maimonides himself.³⁹ The mention of the feeling of delight may be regarded as related to actual experiences of Abulafia, for whom the *Pardes* might represent not only

kind of matter.

33 'Ed be-'anan, in *gematria* 177.

34 *Golem daq* amounts in *gematria* 177.

35 YoMaM Va-LaYLaH=177.

36 *Sefer 'Ošar 'Eden Ganuz*, Ms. Oxford-Bodleiana 1580, fol. 54a, ed. A. Gross, Jerusalem, 2000, p. 110.

37 'Ošar 'Eden Ganuz, p. 288.

38 Ms. Firenze-Laurenziana, II,48, fol. 91b: 'the comprehension of God is a delight'.

39 See Idel, *The Mystical Experience*, p. 189.

an authoritative legend, but also an expression of his own experience, just as it happened in the cases of his followers.

Here, as in one of the earlier discussions, Paradise is to be understood as part of a broader context, which includes also the opposite theme of *Geheinna*, just as delight and disgust are mentioned here together. In an even more radical manner it is found in another treatise of Abulafia's:

The Account of Creation and the Account of the Chariot are like male and female and so is 'Ereṣ, Gan 'Eden and *Geheinna*⁴⁰ that are two attributes, that God, blessed be He, rules over reality by their means. One of them is called the seat of Glory, the other the angel of death. And behold, at the end of time, the *Shekhinah* will dwell onto Israel... and redemption will start.⁴¹

It should be emphasized that despite the eschatological color of this passage, I have my doubts if indeed the Paradise is to be connected to an *Endzeit* in the strict sense of the word. The end of time, 'et qeṣ, indeed has this meaning in the Bible; however, in Abulafia's writings it often stands for the moment of the spiritual awakening, as he interprets the term *qeṣ* as *yeqīṣah*. If this is the case, the Edenic experience is connected not to a date in historical time, but with a moment in human spiritual progress. Likewise, the angel of death in Abulafia has nothing to do with the mythical figure but is a negative inclination in man. Thus, the fluctuation between Paradise and *Geheinna* has nothing to do with the judgment after death, but with human behavior and decision now. Elsewhere in the same treatise, Abulafia writes:

Some of those who entered in the *Pardes* become perfect, and some of them degenerated, and the secret of *Pardes* is, from one aspect *Gan 'Eden* and from another side it is *Geheinna*, and *Shemad*, and you should know that *Gan 'Eden* and *Geheinna* are indubitably on Earth.⁴²

Therefore, both Paradise and Hell are on earth, and they point not only to divine modes of action, but also to two ways someone chooses to behave. This dialectical vision of the Paradise is inherited from some succinct remarks found

in Rabbi Barukh Togarmi's *Commentary on Sefer Yeṣirah*. The topic of the Garden of Eden is presented as pointing to two different limbs and forms of action: mouth and penis, the positive and negative copulations, two mouths, Jew and Gentile, all of which are numerically equivalent to 177. Thus, Abulafia's dialectical understanding of Paradise is an elaboration of an approach already existent *in nuce* in his master's writing. Provided that Abulafia speaks about mundane existence, where the choice between an instantaneous Paradise or Hell is possible, he comes closer to Kafka's famous discussion of the fall from and return to Paradise, more than any of the Kabbalists. Paradise, for him, was an extreme, though perhaps not the more perfect human intellectual experience, and any defect in this mental process is to be considered as the way to Hell.

Let me turn to the equation between *Pardes* and *Shemad* found in the untitled fragment. The latter word means in Hebrew either destruction or conversion. In *gematria*, it amounts to 344, like *Pardes*. An important parallel to this dialectical view is found in a work of an early student of Abulafia's, R. Joseph Gikatilla: 'In truth, to some of them it was a *Pardes*, and to others it was *Shemad*. And the secret depends upon the secret of the Tetragrammaton'.⁴³ I wonder whether the *gematria* of *Pardes* = 344 = *Shemad* is not alluded also by the phrase *Shem D*,⁴⁴ namely the name of the Tetragrammaton. Though the phrase *Shem D* does not occur in any of the manuscripts, but only *Shem ben Dalet*, the kabbalist hinted at a secret, which regularly in this type of literature is a numerical equivalence. Indeed, in a fragment from another writing of Gikatilla, the relationship between the Tetragrammaton, *Pardes* and *Shemad* is mentioned, but, unfortunately, the text breaks precisely when the author was supposed to elaborate upon this issue.⁴⁵ Thus, in the untitled fragment there is a close conceptual affinity to a kabbalistic fragment authored by a disciple of Abulafia.

40 'Ereṣ (earth) amounts in *gematria* 291 like the combination of the Hebrew *Gan 'Eden ve-Geheinom*.

41 Ms. Firenze-Laurenziana II,48, fol. 98a: וכן מעשה בראשית ומעשה מרכבה הם זכר ונקבה וכן ארץ גן עדן וגהינם והנה שתי המדות שהשם יתברך מנהיג המציאות בהם האחת מהם כסא הכבוד שמה.

42 Ms. Firenze-Laurenziana II,48, fol. 75a: ועל כן לא נשלמו מהם ונפסדו מהם ומן הנכנסים בפרדס והסוד הוא כי פרדס הוא מצד אחד גן עדן ומצד אחד גהינם שהוא שמד ודעוהו ובוהו תדע כי גן עדן וגהינם בארץ בלי ספק הסתכל בוהו הסוד המוכרח. For another instance of the *gematria* *Pardes* = *Shemad* see *ibidem*, fol. 99a.

43 *Perush ha-Niqqud*, Ms. Paris BN 774, fols. 47b-48a; Ms. Vatican 603, fol. 189b, Ms. New York, JTS 851, fol. 62b. On the young Gikatilla's authorship on this short treatise see Ephraim Gottlieb, *Studies in Kabbalah Literature*, ed. Joseph Hacker, Tel Aviv 1976, pp. 99-105 [Hebrew] and Idel, *R. Menahem Recanati*, I, p. 44.

44 *D* namely *dalet* is four and stands for the Tetragrammaton.

45 Extant in Ms. New York, JTS 1884, fol. 30b

4. Some Messianic Speculations

Abulafia's writings are replete with a variety of messianic discussions. More than any Kabbalist before Sabbatai Ševi, Abulafia can be described as a mystical Messiah. It is not only a matter of dealing with eschatological issues that is so characteristic of Abulafia's writings, or his claim that he is the Messiah or at least a Messiah.⁴⁶ His very Kabbalistic system is a messianic one, which combines the rhetoric concerning national and apocalyptic redemption on its exoteric level, with a vision of spiritual redemption on the esoteric level.

Let me adduce a discussion stemming from the anonymous Kabbalistic writing, which may exemplify this messianic underpinning of Abulafia's thought, which can be compared to some statements found in his other works. 'This points to the knowledge of the end and the end of knowledge namely to the telos of man, because he is created in the image of God'.⁴⁷ A similar stand is hinted also at in 'Ošar 'Eden Ganuz, where Abulafia states that the 'end of the spirit is spirit', namely that the *telos* of the spirit of man is the spirit of God.⁴⁸

The knowledge of the end is understood as the *telos* of the human knowledge, or of the spirit of man, which is either an imitation of God, as man was created in His image, or stems from God, as is the case of the human spirit. Again, the term *qes* has been understood in an allegorical manner as the *telos*, which points to the spiritual vision of man, conceived of, implicitly, as more important than the knowledge of the end, namely apocalyptic knowledge. With this understanding of *qes* as pointing to a spiritual redemption in mind, let us analyze Abulafia's interpretation of an episode related to Jacob's famous dream and his awakening. In his *Commentary on Genesis* the ecstatic kabbalist writes:

God, blessed be He, said to Jacob in this dream 'And behold, I am with you and I shall keep you in all places to which you go'.⁴⁹ And then it is immediately written: 'And Jacob awoke out of his sleep'.⁵⁰ And it is said 'and he was afraid, and said: How dreadful [is this place]',⁵¹ all this is a hint at the exile of Israel and at the redemption at the end.⁵²

The resort to the verse that mentions the verb 'to awake' and the mentioning of 'the redemption at the end' may reflect a juxtaposition between the two, namely the attempt to interpret the awakening as meaning of the end. It should be mentioned that other eschatological terms like *mashiyah* in the passage quoted above, *teshu'ah* that occurred in another quote,⁵³ and *ge'ulah*, have been interpreted by Abulafia as pointing to a spiritual state of redemption. So, for example, he writes that upon the last letter of the divine name, namely *He*, depend 'prophecies and deliveries [coming] to all the speaking and intellectual soul[s]. This is the reason that every illuminati in search of prophecy and delivery, should contemplate the power of *he*'.⁵⁴

Let me compare a view found in the untitled ecstatic treatise describing the upheaval related to redemption and so other discussion of Abulafia concerning this topic. According to our text, 'in the time of the end, the *Shekhinah* will dwell in Israel by the help of God, and the supernal entities will be below and the lower entities will be above'.⁵⁵ Following some midrashic views, the theory of the presence of the *Shekhinah* below is conceived of as a sign of redemption. However, Abulafia's view this means more of a transformation that should be understood as the descent, and perhaps even the attraction of supernal powers into this world on the one hand, and the spiritualization of the human spirit, which turns from a lower into a supernal entity, on the other hand. In fact, the very use of the terms descent and ascent is somehow problematic, since Abulafia, following Maimonides, understands those moves metaphorically, as pointing to spiritual, inner events.⁵⁶ Redemption is therefore the enactment of

46 See Idel, *Messianic Mystics*, pp. 58-100.

47 Ms. Firenze-Medicea-Laurentiana, II.48, fol. 72a: וזה מורה על דעת הקץ ועל קץ וזה מורה על דעת כלומר ועל התכלית שהוא לאדם בהיותו נברא בצלם אלהים On the interiorization of messianism in Abulafia see M. Idel, "'The Time of the End": Apocalypticism and Its Spiritualization in Abraham Abulafia's Eschatology', *Apocalyptic Time*, ed. Albert Baumgarten, Leiden 2000, pp. 155-186. It should be mentioned that in the untitled treatise the issue of the redemption of the soul is mentioned in an emphatic manner. See *ibidem*, fol. 78b similar to the passage adduced below note 52.

48 Ms. Oxford-Bodleiana 1580, fol. 157b: סוד קץ הרוח רוח כל זה התגלגל על רוח הקדש והוא רוח שדי

49 Genesis, 27:15.

50 *Ibidem*, 27:16

51 *ibidem*, 27:17.

52 *Sefer Mafteah ha-Hokhmah*, Ms. Parma-de Rossi 141, fol. 30a: כי אמרו ית' ליעקב: ושמרתך בכל אשר תלך וגו' ואחריו בא' ודע מיד וייקץ בחלומו זה והנה אני ונאמ' יירא ויאמר וגו' כל זה היה רמז לענין יעקב משנתו וגו' עמך גלות ישראל ולגאולה בסוף מה נורא

53 See *Sefer ha-'Ot*, p. 79. See also *ibidem*, p. 76.

54 *Sefer ha-'Ot*, p. 75.

55 Ms. Firenze-Medicea-Laurentiana II.48, fol. 88b והנה בעת קץ תשרה השכינה בישראל בע"ה ויהיו עליונים למטה ותחתונים למעלה.

56 See *The Guide of the Perplexed*, I:10, tr. Shlomo Pines, Chicago 1989, I, pp. 35-

the potentiality of spiritualization found in human nature. In Abulafia's apocalypse, which we dealt with earlier in this section, we read:

The coming day is the day of Judgment
 And it is called the day of remembrance
 And the time of the trial has arrived
 And the time of the end has been accomplished.
 The heaven will become earth
 And earth will become celestial
 Because the Lord of the trial is called by the name *YHWH*
 And His judgment is one of truth,⁵⁷
 And his trial is upright

Here the type of *imaginaire* is more concrete, resorting to terms like earth and heaven, though this is a rhetoric that points, on an esoteric level, to a spiritual transformation. Nevertheless, though the wordings of the two passages vary, the concept beyond them is identical, and thus we have one more proof for the authorship of the untitled treatise, as a book of Abulafia.

5. A Definition of Judaism

As part of his strong interpretation of Rabbinic Judaism in terms of a cult related eminently with the recitation of the divine names, Abulafia offers in the untitled treatise a detailed and original explanation to the term Jew. Let me mention first that while the term Jew, *yehudi*, could point in the Bible to both a person belonging to a certain tribe, that of Yehudah, or later on, according to the book of Esther, to a community of people who share religious and other matters in common.⁵⁸ On the other hand, the term *yahadut* as a reference to the Jewish nation occurs only in Modern Hebrew usage.⁵⁹ During the Middle Ages this term was used to refer to Jewish doctrines, as did Rashi: 'As of the time that he is immersed in the ritual bath, in accordance with *yahadut*'.⁶⁰ It seems that a more spiritual understanding of a term that corresponds to *yahadut*, occurred only in Greek in ancient Jewish literature, namely *ioudaismos* in the

37.

57 *Sefer ha-'Ot*, p. 69: הגיעה / הדין הוא יום / הזכרון נקרא / ועת המשפט / הגיעה / וזמן הקץ הם ונשלים / השמים יהיו ארץ / והארץ תהיה / שמימיית כי אלהי המשפט יהיה / שמו ודינו דין אמ / חי ומשפטו ישר.

58 See Moshe Bar Asher, 'איש יהודי היה בשושן הבירה' – Il y avait a Suse un homme juif', *Revue des études juives* 161 (2002), pp. 227-231.

59 See Ya'aqov Kena'ani, *Ošar Leshon ha-'Ivrit*, Jerusalem-Tel Aviv 1965, vol. 6, p. 1767.

60 See his commentary to the Babylonian Talmud, *Yebamot*, fol. 46a.

Book of the Maccabees where it occurs in the context of an endorsement of the veneration of the Torah, and is opposed to *hellenismos*.⁶¹ According to the untitled fragment, the nature of the Jew is described as follows:

The comprehension of the Jew will be the comprehension of the Name and this is the way [the name] *Shadday* was interpreted to the effect that for us it suffices the name 'Eheyeh, and likewise *YeHUDY*, *YHW DaY*, 'Ehad 'Ah 'Ehad, and by the comprehension of *YHWH* 'Ehad, redemption will come to us.⁶²

The word *YeHUDY*, Jew, contains the same consonants that constitute also the locution *YHW DaY*, which means that the three consonants that constitute the Tetragrammaton are sufficient. A comprehension of the essence of the Jew is therefore identical to the comprehension of the sufficiency of the divine name. By means of Gematria *YeHUDY* amounts to 35 like the expression One, 'Ehad is the brother of One. The two words 'Ehad, amounts in gematria 26 and this addition of one to one is the significance of the word 'Ah, brother. 26 is however, the gematria of the consonants of the Tetragrammaton. Such a calculation occurs also elsewhere in Abulafia as pointing to the mystical experience of the union of man and God by means of comprehension.⁶³ This comprehension is a salvific one, as we may learn not only from the mentioning of *ge'ulah* but also from the perusal of the context where the phrase *mashiyah YHWH* is mentioned. In other words, for Abulafia the eschatological success of the Jews mentioned in the quote from *Sefer 'Ošar 'Eden Ganuz* may, though I cannot say that must, be understood not only as related to a political and religious ascent of a certain nation, but also as the emergence of a certain type of comprehension of the centrality of the divine name. Or, to formulate it more drastically: It would not be surprising to assume that the term Jew was understood by Abulafia as an allegory for the perfect knowledge of the divine name:

And the Jew who thinks that because he is Jewish and can trace his ancestry to the seed of Yehudah, he is of the seed of royalty, if he does not confess in the truth his similarity with the tribe of Yehudah is only [the matter of] a name. For Yehudah is etymologically related to *hoda'ah*.⁶⁴

61 See Martin Hengel, *Greeks and Barbarians*, Philadelphia 1980, p. 77.

62 Ms. Firenze-Laurentiana II,48 fol. 89a: כ"י תהיה השגת יהודי השגת השם וכן פירשו: יהו די אחד אח אחד ובהשגת יהוה אחד תהיה ש[?] היה לנו לומר די בשם אהיה וכן יהודי. יהו די אחד אח אחד ובהשגת יהוה אחד תהיה לנו גאולה.

63 See the text analyzed in Idel, *Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah*, pp. 7-8.

64 See Abulafia's epistle entitled *Masref la-Kesef*, Sassoon Ms. 56, fol. 30b.

Abulafia bases his discussion here on the Biblical etymological allusion to Genesis 49:8. Yet, whereas there the 'confession' is on the part of Yehudah's brothers, to Yehudah, the kabbalist alters the meaning and has it refer to God. Elsewhere we read as follows: 'You, oh nation of God, Supernal Holy Ones who look to the Name and to the source of your intelligence, and have seen the form of YHVH within the form of your hearts'.⁶⁵ It seems to me that the expression *mabitei shemo*, namely those who look to His Name, is an explanation of the name *Yisra'el* that divides the word *Yisra'el* into *yishar*, etymologically related to the word *yashur* [He will look to], and the word 'El [God].⁶⁶

In a commentary he wrote to one of his prophetic books written at about the same time as his attempt to meet with the Pope, his *Perush Sefer ha-Melis* Abulafia wrote:

[T]he meaning of 'a man of Yehudah' in that in this name is exemplified the lesson of Judaism. We are informed that the aim of confession is not reached merely by speculation, but rather, they must make whole the integrity of Judaism, i.e., confession of the knowledge of the truth and departure from confusion.⁶⁷

The term *Yahadut* is explained as implying *hoda'ah* or confession, derived, as it were, from an etymological relationship between the words Yehudah and *hoda'ah*. The 'confession' has the 'knowledge of the truth' as its content.⁶⁸ The nature of this 'truth' is not explained here. But we may discern its meaning by reading the section that immediately precedes the sentence just quoted:

Behold Raziel intends to inform us of His Exalted Name in accordance with the hidden path, in order to bring us closer to Him, may His Name be Blessed. Separate [the elements of] the words, for at times a name may consist of even only one letter, which is regarded as if it were one whole word. This tells us that each letter is a world unto itself, according to the Kabbalah.⁶⁹ And he was commanded to illustrate this wondrous Divine Power in order to instruct us regarding His blessed Name. Invert the [letters of the] word Raziel, so it becomes Yisrael. This tells us that Yisrael is Yizrael,⁷⁰ just as Avraham is Ya'aqov. This is due to the

joining of their two attributes, grace and truth, as it is written: 'Thou will show Truth to Ya'aqov [and] Grace to Avraham'.⁷¹ And in the word HVDV [give thanks] the Name 'eHeYeH⁷² is indicated because of the two essence-names composed through the name YH which are YHV and YHVH signifying HVD, HVDV, and YVDV⁷³ [glory, glorify, they will glorify] [...] Indeed the confession to the Name is the glorification. Thus HVDV (glorify) in the Name of 'eHeYeH, the HVDH VD'aY [confession of sufficiency] [...] This is sufficient, just as He is sufficient, may His Name be exalted and raised high.⁷⁴

It is clear that according to Abulafia the *Hoda'ah*, namely the confession, which is the essence of Judaism, is in fact the *hoda'ah* in the Names of God – YH, 'Eheyeh, YHVH. It may therefore be assumed that *Yahadut* does not exemplify the 'Jewish People' as a whole namely a nation, but rather refers to a specific religious tradition or experience that involves Names of God. This portrayal of Judaism is highly reminiscent of Abulafia's vision of Kabbalah, which states that the central goal of all of his writings is the dissemination of the Knowledge of the Holy Name, as we shall see in the next section. Similarly, he was the major exponent of the view that the Messiah will reveal the true Divine Name and the Kabbalah of the Names.

6. An Attempt to Identify the Untitled Treatise

The truncated form in which the untitled treatise has been preserved prevents us from having a clear idea about its general structure or even its main content. However, we may nevertheless attempt to identify the possible title of the book on the ground of information found in other books of Abulafia's. Though he wrote many books, and some of them have been lost, this loss concerns basically the original revelations he received at the end of the seventies of the thirteenth century in the Byzantine Empire and in Italy. However, commentaries composed by Abulafia himself on those lost prophetic books are extant and, together with the only extant prophetic book written later in the mid-eighties in Sicily, *Sefer ha-'Ot*, their perusal allows to determine that the untitled treatise does not belong to this literary genre. From his many other

for Abraham Abulafia and Israel for the Agent Intellect, since *YiSra'eL* = 541 = *SheKheL Ha-Po'eL*, it seems that this is a hint at the union between the Kabbalist and the Agent Intellect.

71 Micah 7:20

72 The consonants of the two words amount to 21.

73 The *gematrias* are as follows: YH = 15 = HVD, YHV = 21 = HVDV, YHVH = 26 = YVDV.

74 Ms. Rome-Angelica 38, fol. 5a.

65 *Sefer ha-'Ot*, p. 80.

66 Regarding the meaning of the term *Yisrael* in Abulafia's writing, see Idel, *Language, Torah and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia*, pp. 36, 38, 40, 110, 120, 166-167, 197.

67 Ms. Rome-Angelica 38, fol. 5a, Ms. Munich 285, fol. 10ab.

68 See *Perush Sefer ha-Melis*, Ms. Rome-Angelica 38, fol. 7b: 'For the spirit comprises Hebrew circumcised powers who instruct truth'.

69 See Idel, *Language, Torah and Hermeneutics*, pp. 5-6.

70 *Raziel* becomes, by changing the order of the consonants *Yzra'el*. As *Raziel* stands

books, we learn only about one single title that is not extant, and I would like to suggest the possible identity between this lost title and the untitled treatise. In his late, perhaps latest book *'Imrei Shefer*, written in 1291, Abulafia mentions four major books:

I have already composed many books about this knowledge [*yedy'ah*], which is the knowledge of God indeed. Today, there are twenty-one years [starting from] the year 31 [1271] until 51 [1291] [...] And during this period, from the year 39 [1279] until now, the year 51 [1291] itself, I have composed in the [domain of] this knowledge prophetic books consisting of verses dealing with this [type of] knowledge of God. And the only ultimate purpose of my all writings is 'to tell the name of God all over the world',⁷⁵ from the point of view of the intellectual knowledge. And I have composed on this many books in the form of books of wisdom, and among them four that are excellent, which are revealing most of this knowledge. One of them is *Sefer 'Or ha-Sekhel*, the second is *Sefer Gan Na'ul*, the third is *Sefer ha-Hesheq*, and the fourth is *Sefer Peras* [or *Pardes*⁷⁶] *ha-Sefer* and many like them. There is no doubt that it is incumbent on the kabbalist who is willing to comprehend this knowledge to study them and he will become wise by [understanding] them.⁷⁷

Out of those four titles mentioned explicitly, the first three are extant almost in a complete manner. The first two titles are preserved in a full form, while the third, *Sefer ha-Hesheq* is extant in a unique manuscript, which lacks the first part of the book. The fourth, *Peras ha-Sefer* or *Pardes ha-Sefer*, is unknown from any other source, with the exception of another indication found in *Sefer 'Ošar 'Eden Ganuz*. In this book, composed in 1285/1286 in Messina we read:

Now I am telling you the true path to recite the names, according to the chapter headings,⁷⁸ so that it will suffice to you what I shall speak about them, and you

75 Exodus 9:16. This verse occurs also at the end of this book, p. 204.

76 See the edition of the book by Amnon Gross, Jerusalem 1999, p. 50, based on Ms. Munich 40. However in other manuscripts of this book the version is *Peras*, not *Pardes*. See Ms. Paris BN 777, p. 24.

77 *Sefer 'Imrei Shefer*, p. 50: ודע שכבר חברתי אני ספרים רבים בואת הידיעה שהיא ידיעת השם באמת. ש לי היום אחת ועשרים שנה והיא משנת א"ל ועד שנת נ"א וסימנך אל נא רפא נא לה. ובחנך זה הזמן משנת ל"ט ועד היום שנת נ"א עוד חברתי בואת הידיעה בעצמה ספרי נבואה שהם פסוקים מעידים על ידיעת השם זו. ואין תכלית כוונתי בכל חיבורי כי אם למען ספר שמו בכל הארץ ומצד הידיעה השכלית. וחברתי על זה גם ספרים רבים בצורת ספרי חכמה ומהם ארבעה מעולים מגלים רוב זו הידיעה. הא' מהם הוא ספר אור השכל והב' ספר גן נעול והג' ספר החשק והד' פרסם הספר והאחרים רבים כמותם. ואין ספק שצריך המקובל הרוצה להשיג זו הידיעה לעיין בהם ומהם יתחכם בה

78 *Rashei perašim*. On this concept as understood in ecstatic Kabbalah see Idel, *Absorbing Perfections*, pp. 396-404.

will understand from them what is worthwhile to understand. And I shall start first with vocalization. Know that just as the consonants point to wondrous matters by their shapes, numerical value and their names, as I am going to announce to you in relation to the four occult letters, so too the vowels, by their shapes, their numerical value and their names, they point to numerous forms of occult knowledge. Those are the forms of the vowels found in the prophetic books. 'O is a dot on a letter, at the end of its highest part. 'I is a dot under the letter in its middle; 'U is a dot in the middle of the letter before the Vav. Those are the special vowels, which are not compounded. And those are the [signs of the vowels] compounded out of more than one dot...and despite the fact that I wrote here the necessary numbers [of the names of the vowels], and their names I shall not speak about their meanings because I have already done so at length in the book *Peras ha-Sefer*.⁷⁹

Following this passage, Abulafia indeed calculates not only the numerical values of the consonants but also the numerical values of the vowels that belong to a certain word.⁸⁰ So, while in *'Imrei Shefer* Abulafia claims, according to a certain manuscript, to have written a book entitled *Pardes ha-Sefer*, in his earlier *'Ošar 'Eden Ganuz* he mentions a book with a similar title. The latter book is, unfortunately, extant in a unique manuscript, so it is impossible to ascertain whether the phrase *Peras ha-Sefer* is just a copyist's error for *Pardes ha-Sefer*. However, it seems to me highly improbable to assume that Abulafia wrote two books, whose titles differ but by one letter. I assume that the two titles point to the same book, though one of them is mistaken. If this assumption is correct we may assume that the two passages

79 Ms. Oxford-Bodleiana 1580, fols. 150b-151a, ed. Amnon Gross, Jerusalem 2000, pp. 338-339: עתה הנני מגיד לך הדרך להזכרת השמות באמתה בראשי פרקים עד שיסיפיקו לך דברי בהם ותבין מהם מה שראוי להבינו ואזכיר לך הנקודות החילה. דע כי כמו שהאותיות בצורתן ובמספרם ובשמותם מורות על עניינים מופלאים כמו שאודיעך ב' אותיות ההעלמה, כן הנקודות בצורתן ובמספרם מורות על חכמות רבות נעלמות. ואלו הן צורות הנקודות הנמצא בספרים הנבואיים, או נקודה אחת על אות בסוף עליונותו. אי נקודה אחת תחת האות באמצעיתו. או נקודה אחת תוך האות לפניו ב"ו. אלה הם הנקודות המיוחדות שאינם מורכבות. ואלה הן המורכבות מיותר מנקודה אחת, א א א א. ואלה אינם מורכבים יותר א א א. ויש עוד שני מינים ונקראים דגש ורפה, והם נקודה וקו ב. ואלה אינם מניעים אבל מגידים על הקושי והרכות. וכבר ידעת מאמר חכמינו ז"ל שאמרו דמיאן נקודתא באתותיא כנשמתא דחיי בגופיה דאיניש. וא"כ הנקודות מורות על הרוחות ועל הכחות המניעות את הגופים המתנועעים. ואלה שמות הנקוד הנכתב, חולם חרק שורק אלה הם השלשה. קמץ צירי פתח סגול שרוק אלה הם החמשה. חטף קמץ חטף פתח חטף ס גול גם אלה שלשה. ואלה הם מספריהם ע"ח ש"ח ת"ר, ועוד ר"ל ש' תפ"ח צ"ט תר"ו, ועוד החתומים שכ"ז תקפ"ה קצ"ו, והשנים שי"ז רפ"ה, וסודם רפ"ל רופ"א. ואע"פ שכתבתי פה מספריהם המוכרחים גם שמותיהם לא אדבר בפירושיהם מפני שכבר דברתי בהם הרבה בספר הפרס.

80 See *ibidem*, pp. 340-341.

dealt with above, one discussing the intellectual understanding of the names and the other dealing with the vowels and their secret meanings, refer to the very same book, whatever its original name might have been. I would say that the first description of the lost book, as dealing in an intellectual manner with divine name fits indubitably the fragment extant in the Laurenziana library, as we have also seen in some of the discussions above. The other topic is however, not testified as a major topic in the extant folios. However, it nevertheless is not totally absent, as we learn from some succinct statements dealing with vocalization, one of which has been dealt with above.⁸¹

A third possible source that may help identifying the name of the untitled fragment, its meaning and also the period when it has been written is a passage found in Abraham Abulafia's *Sefer ha-'Ot*. In this prophetic book Abulafia wrote:

Friday, which is the first day of the month⁸² to the date enumerated to 5045⁸³ [end of 1284], YHWH stirred the spirit of Zekharyahu,⁸⁴ to repeat and duplicate the books of his prophecies and to accomplish the half of the book. Because among his books there is one, which is a half of a book, in order to hint at the half of the name and to the half of the name. And today the one has been accomplished and then the name is completed.⁸⁵

The term used for 'half of the name' is *ḥaṣi ha-shem* which is numerically equal with *ḥaṣi ha-sefer*, half of the book. Unfortunately, Abulafia never mentioned the title of that unfinished book which he completed at the end of the year 1284. However, the concept of half of the book is reminiscent of the expression *Peras Sefer*, which can be translated as half of the book, if *Peras* is understood in its Mishnaic meaning as half.⁸⁶

If this identification between the untitled fragment and the unidentified *Sefer Peras ha-Sefer* is correct we may approximate the date of the composition of the treatise. It has been composed before 1285, when Abulafia

started to write his '*Oṣar 'Eden Ganuz* and *Sefer ha-'Ot*, and I assume after 1279, when he started to write a series of prophetic books, to which some of the discussions in the untitled treatise are close. Thus we may assume that the book has been completed in Messina, where Abulafia was most of the time between 1281 to 1291.

7. Abulafia's Untitled Treatise and Augustino Giustiniani's *Poliglota* to the *Psalms*

The Laurenziana manuscript is not the single form in which this material has survived. In a famous *Poliglota* on the *Psalms* printed in Genua in 1516 by Augustino Giustiniani, there are several Kabbalistic passages, which constitute one of the first attempts to print Hebrew Kabbalistic material by a Christian printer. In addition to some fragments belonging to a variety of Kabbalistic sources, like the *Zohar* and fragments from R. Isaac ibn Avi Sahulah's *Commentary on Psalms*,⁸⁷ there are four anonymous passages belonging in my opinion to Abulafia, two of which are identical to material found in the Laurenziana codex.⁸⁸ These four passages are quoted as '*ex fragmentis cabalisticis*' in their original Hebrew and then translated in Latin. I assume that they stem from a fuller manuscript that differs from the Laurenziana one. I hope to deal with the details of those fragments in my edition of the untitled treatise, where I shall attempt to show that also the two other anonymous citations in Giustiniani's *Poliglota*, which belong in my opinion to Abulafia, may stem from the treatise under scrutiny here.

The plausible presence of Abulafia's manuscript under scrutiny here in Renaissance Florence⁸⁹ is part of broader phenomenon. Some other manuscripts of his which have been translated by Mithridates in Latin, and other writings of this Kabbalist have been mentioned and quoted by Yoḥanan Alemanno.⁹⁰ More recently the identification of an Italian translation of one of

81 See Ms. Firenze-Laurenziana II.48 fols. 89b-90a.

82 of the month of Kislev, as he wrote earlier.

83 *Ha-'adam*, Adam, but it should be calculated so that it will point to a year which is 1285, as mentioned immediately before this passage. For the use of this word in order to point to the year 5045 see also his *Gan Na'ul*, Ms. Munchen 58, fol. 339c.

84 This is another theophoric name Abulafia assumed for himself. The consonants amount, like those of Razi'el, to 248 like Abraham.

85 *Sefer ha-'Ot*, p. 77; On *Sefer ha-'Ot* see also now Harvey Hames, 'Three in One or One that is Three: On the Dating of Abraham Abulafia's *Sefer ha-'Ot*', *Revue des études juives* 165 (2006), pp. 179-189.

86 See '*Eduyyot*, 3:3.

87 See Gershom Scholem, *Peraqim le-Toledot Sifrut ha-Qabbalah*, Jerusalem 1931, pp. 67-68 [Hebrew].

88 See on the margin of the texts of *Psalms* 136, 139, 143 and 147.

89 See also M. Idel, 'Jewish Mystical Thought in the Florence of Lorenzo il Magnifico', *La cultura ebraica all'epoca di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, a cura di Dora Liscia Bemporad e Ida Zatelli, Firenze 1998, pp. 19-22.

90 See Moshe Idel, 'The Study Program of Yoḥanan Alemanno', *Tarbiz* 48 (1979), pp. 310-311 and note 68 [Hebrew]; See also Stephane Toussaint, 'L'individuo estatico. Tecniche profetiche in Marsilio Ficino e Giovanni Pico della Mirandola', *Bruniana & Campanelliana, Ricerche filosofiche e materiali storico-testuali* VI, 2

major works done in this city,⁹¹ shows that many of his views were potentially available in the circle of the Florentine intellectuals at the end of the fifteenth century. No doubt the writings of the founder of this branch of Kabbalah represent a major part of the Kabbalistic literature, in any language, found in Renaissance Florence.

(2000), pp. 531-379.

91 Franco Bacchelli, *Giovanni Pico e Pier Leone da Spoleto, Tra filosofia dell'amore e tradizione cabalistica* Tra filosofia dell'amore e tradizione cabalistica, Firenze 2001, pp. 12 note 38 and 14.