

# The Text and Context of the 1684 Sulzbach Edition of the *Zohar*<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

In 1684, the year in which the second volume of Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala Denudata*, including translations of the *Zohar* into Latin, was printed in Frankfurt-am-Main, Knorr was involved in another major Kabbalistic printing operation: the Sulzbach edition of *Sefer ha-Zohar*. This is the fourth edition of the *Zohar*, which had been printed for the first time in Italy in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. The Sulzbach edition of the *Zohar* was the product of a unique collaboration between Christian Kabbalists from different denominations, Jewish Kabbalists, and Jewish and Christian printers who operated in the court of Prince Christian August in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. While based on the previous editions of the *Zohar*, the Sulzbach edition had its own special features, which were adopted by almost all subsequent editions of the *Zohar*. Thus, it played a significant role both in shaping the Zoharic canon and in the history of its reception.

In the following study I will offer a description of the Sulzbach edition of the *Zohar* and examine its role in the history of the reception and canonization of the *Zohar*. I will explore the circumstances of its printing and will argue that it was part of a larger printing project of the Sulzbach Kabbalists, carried out in 1684, also including the second volume of the *Kabbala Denudata* in Frankfurt-am-Main, and the Syriac version of the New Testament in Hebrew characters in Sulzbach.

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1 An early version of this paper was read at the conference on *Kabbala Denudata* in Sulzbach-Rosenberg, July 2005. A German version of this article appeared in *Morgen-Glantz, Zeitschrift der Christian Knorr von Rosenroth-Gesellschaft* 16 (2006). I am grateful to Mr. Don Karr for his important suggestions, and for improving my English, to Prof. Yehuda Liebes for his comments, to Mr. Johannes Hartman for providing me with a photocopy of the *Sulzbacher Memorbuch*, and of Weinberg's *Geschichte der Juden in der Oberpfalz*, and to Dr. Ilaria Gadda-Conti and Prof. Katrin Kogman-Appel for their help in translating the Latin and German texts.

Following an analysis of the missionary ideology of the Christian Kabbalists of Knorr's circle, I will suggest the involvement of Sabbateans in the *Sulzbach Zohar* printing project, and adduce possible evidence in support of this hypothesis. Before turning to an examination of the text and context of the Sulzbach edition, I would like to offer a short description of the *Zohar* and its reception, previous to its printing in Sulzbach in 1684.

### **The Zoharic Texts and their Printing**

The Zoharic canon, printed for the first time in Italy in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, is a collection of various Kabbalistic writings which were probably composed by several authors in Castile in the late 13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup> century. The major part of the Zoharic canon constitutes of Kabbalistic interpretations of the Torah, in Aramaic, and attributed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century sage R. Shimon bar Yochai and his companions. Other key works making up the Zoharic corpus are *Tiqqunei ha-Zohar*, *Ra'aya Mehemna*, *Midrash ha-Ne'elam*, *Sifra de-Zeni'uta*, *Zohar* commentaries to the biblical books of Ruth, Lamentations, Song of Songs, and others.

Although the topic is still being disputed by contemporary scholars, it seems that significant parts of the Zoharic texts were composed and edited by the Castilian Kabbalist, R. Moshe de Leon. Yet, scholars agree that some Zoharic components, such as *Tiqqunei Zohar* and *Ra'aya Mehemna*, and probably also *Midrash ha-Ne'elam*, as well as other units, were written by different authors.<sup>2</sup> The Zoharic texts were not at first perceived, or circulated, as one literary whole, nor were they initially called *Zohar* or attributed to R. Shimon Bar Yochai. Only in the first decades of the 14<sup>th</sup> century did the new notion of a literary composition called the *Zohar* emerge among several Kabbalists, who attributed this as yet undefined text to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, and considered it an authoritative and sacred text. Consequent upon the emergence of the *Zohar* in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, Kabbalists and scribes started collecting Zoharic manuscripts and created diverse

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2 On the *Zohar* and the question of its authorship see: G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, New York 1971, pp. 156-204; I. Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, vol. 1, Oxford 1989, pp. 87-96; Y. Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, Albany 1993, pp. 85-90; C. Mopsik, *Le corpus zoharique ses titres et ses amplifications, La formation des canons scripturaires*, Paris 1993, pp. 76-105.

compilations of what each of them perceived to be *Sefer ha-Zohar*, or part of it.<sup>3</sup> Prior to the printing of the *Zohar* in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, the content and scope of what was called *Sefer ha-Zohar* was undetermined, and diverse cultural agents created individual Zoharic corpora. In the vast collection of Zoharic manuscripts copied between the 14<sup>th</sup> and mid-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, only a few are identical or can be regarded as belonging to the same family. This, as well as several explicit remarks by the scribes of *Zohar* manuscripts, indicates that during this period scribes collected Zoharic texts, edited them, and created their own *Zohar* collections.<sup>4</sup>

The first printings of the *Zohar* in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century created the Zoharic canon as we know it today. The corpus was printed for the first time, almost simultaneously, between the years 1557-1560, in two editions: one in Mantua by a group of Jewish printers, and the other in Cremona by Christians and converted Jews. The Mantua publishers set out by printing a volume of *Tiqqunei Zohar*, later adding three volumes of the *Zohar* divided according to the portions (*parshiot*) of the Torah. Apart from *Zohar* commentaries to the Torah, other Zoharic texts were included, such as *Midrash ha-Ne'elam*, *Ra'aya-Mehemna*, and *Sifra de-Zeni'uta*. At the same time, the printers in Cremona fashioned their edition in one volume, also arranged according to the Torah portions and including almost all of the texts found in the Mantua edition as well as additional texts, such as a Zoharic interpretation of the Book of Ruth, and *Sefer ha-Bahir*. Although there is a large overlap between the two editions, there are many differences in the scope of the texts included in them, their edition and arrangement, and in the versions of the texts they include. The printers of both editions collected and created their collections on the basis of several manuscripts. Although in both cases the printers attempted to create a comprehensive and exhaustive compilation of the *Zohar*, and even included texts that were not perceived to be part of the *Zohar* by their own standards, some Zoharic texts that circulated in manuscripts were

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3 B. Huss, 'The Early Dissemination of *Sefer ha-Zohar*' (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 70 (2001), pp. 507-542.

4 On the manuscripts of the *Zohar* see Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, pp. 99-101, and the third chapter of my forthcoming book on the history of the reception of the *Zohar* (to be published by the Ben-Zevi Institute).

not incorporated into the first printed editions. A number of these texts were collected in a special volume, later known as *Zohar Ḥadash*, printed in 1597 in Salonica.<sup>5</sup>

The publishing of the *Zohar*, which was considered by many an esoteric text whose circulation should be restricted to the intellectual elite only, initiated a heated controversy.<sup>6</sup> This controversy and the objections to the wider circulation of the *Zohar* may be the reason why the *Zohar* was printed only twice in the 17<sup>th</sup> century: in Lublin in 1624, and sixty years later in Sulzbach, 1684.<sup>7</sup> The Lublin edition, published by Zevi ben Abraham Kalonymus Jaffe, followed the Cremona edition, word for word, page by page.<sup>8</sup> The Sulzbach edition was based on the Cremona-Lublin version, yet, it contained some significant differences and additions, which I will now describe.

### **The Sulzbach Zohar Edition**

The printers of the Sulzbach edition were familiar with and utilized all three previous editions of the *Zohar*. They adopted the format of the Cremona-Lublin editions, yet aspired to present a better and more useful one by incorporating additional texts, as well as text emendations, variant readings, interpretations and study aids. In trying to establish a better text, the printers included readings of Zoharic texts taken (1) from R. Moshe Cordovero's *Pardes Rimonim* (written previous to the first printing of the *Zohar*); (2) from *Sefer Derekh Emet*, a book of variant *Zohar* readings which was compiled on the basis of Lurianic sources by R. Yosef Hamitz and printed by R. Moshe Zacut in Venice 1663; (3) from an ancient volume of the *Zohar* corrected by scholars residing in the land of Israel, as related in the introduction of Moshe Bloch, the printer of the Sulzbach edition. The Sulzbach printers appended to their texts references to Zoharic and other Kabbalistic

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5 On the Cremona and Mantua editions of the *Zohar* see G. Scholem, *Bibliographia Kabbalistica*, Leipzig 1927, pp. 166-167. On *Zohar Ḥadash* Salonica edition see Scholem, p. 176. See also Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, pp. 97-98.

6 On the controversy concerning the printing of the *Zohar*, see I. Tishby, *Studies in Kabbalah and its Branches* (Hebrew), vol. 1. Jerusalem 1982, pp. 79-130.

7 On the possibility that another edition was printed in Venice, prior to the Lublin edition, see Scholem, *Bibliographia Kabbalistica*, p. 167.

8 *Bibliographia Kabbalistica*, p. 167.

sources, apart from references to biblical texts that they adopted from the Cremona edition. In addition, the Sulzbach edition presented a commentary to the *Zohar*, *Imrei Binah*, by R. Issachar Ber of Kremnitz. This is a short commentary, mostly on difficult or idiosyncratic words in the *Zohar*, which had previously been printed in Prague in 1611. Along with *Imrei Binah*, the Sulzbach printers introduced into their text several other commentaries to Zoharic passages taken from various sources. At the end of the volume, the printers appended the book *Petah 'Enayim* by R. Eliezer ben Menahem Manes, a register of the biblical verses cited in the *Zohar* which had earlier been printed in Krakow in 1674. The volume is introduced by R. Isaac de Lattes' ruling (*pesaq*) in favor of the *Zohar* being printed, taken from the Mantua edition, as well as an introduction by Moshe Bloch, the printer of the Sulzbach edition, and a Latin introduction and salutation to the reader, possibly written by Knorr von Rosenroth.<sup>9</sup>

Before turning to examine the historical and ideological background of the printing of the Sulzbach edition, I will briefly examine its impact on subsequent editions of the *Zohar*. The next edition of the *Zohar*, the fifth since its initial one in 1557, was printed in Amsterdam in 1715 by the printer Shlomo Proops.<sup>10</sup> The Amsterdam edition became the standard on which all subsequent ones are based. The printers of the Amsterdam edition based it to a large degree on the Sulzbach one, which, in their introduction, they described as the most complete. Yet, the Amsterdam printers complained that the Sulzbach edition had two main deficiencies: (1) It included too many variant readings in the main text, rendering it hard to follow. (2) Most Kabbalistic texts, especially the Lurianic corpus, referred to the page numbers of the Mantua edition, making these references difficult to find in the Sulzbach edition. Thus, the Amsterdam printers based their work on the Sulzbach edition, including the commentaries printed in it, but omitted many of the variant readings this edition contains, and arranged their volume according to the order and page numbers of the Mantua edition. As mentioned above, Amsterdam became the standard edition of the *Zohar*, with all subsequent editions based on it.

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9 *Bibliographia Kabbalistica*, p. 168.

10 *Bibliographia Kabbalistica*, p. 168.

### The Sulzbach Printers

The 1684 Sulzbach edition was the product of a unique collaboration between Jews and Christians of various denominations who operated together in the circle of Knorr von Rosenroth at the court of Christian August. The Jewish-Christian collaboration in Sulzbach had begun before the 1684 printing of the *Zohar*. The first Jewish press was set up in Sulzbach in 1669 by Isaac Cohen ben Yehuda Judels of the Gershoni printer family of Prague. Isaac Judels, who worked with the Christian Sulzbach printer, Abraham Lichtenthaler (who established his printing house in 1664), had produced only a couple of Yiddish texts before leaving Sulzbach, to set up a printing press in Wilhermsdorf.<sup>11</sup> Fifteen years later in 1684, Moshe Bloch, who had resided in Sulzbach since 1661, started his Hebrew press with the assistance of Prince Christian August, Knorr von Rosenroth, and Francis Mercury van Helmont. Bloch's firm – he was succeeded by his sons and widow, and later by the family of his son-in-law – became one of the most important Jewish printers in Germany, until the closure of the press in 1851.<sup>12</sup>

The first publication from Moshe Bloch's printing press was the *Zohar*. The printers working with Bloch were Menahem Man ben Yitzhak of Prague and Abraham bar Issachar Gershoni, also from Prague, both probably related to Isaac Judels, the first Sulzbach printer. The text was prepared by R. Moshe ben Yoseph Hausen, who served as a teacher of Prince Christian August and Christian Knorr von Rosenroth.<sup>13</sup>

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11 M. Weinberg, 'Die hebräischen Druckereien in Sulzbach', *Jahrbuch der jüdisch-literarischen Gesellschaft*, vol. 1, 1903, pp. 25-32.

12 'Die hebräischen Druckereien in Sulzbach', pp. 32-39. See also M. Schmelzer, 'Hebrew Printing in Germany', *LBI* 33 (1988), p. 373.

13 See M. Weinberg, *Geschichte der Juden in der Oberpfalz*, München 1927, p. 17. In an entry from 1682, in the *Sulzbacher Memorbuch* (p. 6b), it is stated the R. Moshe is exempt from paying a fine for not attending the synagogue service in the evenings, while studying with the dignitaries (*ha-ḥashuvim*), and that the young man (*ha-bahur*), Götz, is exempt from the evening prayer while attending upon Master (*ha-adon*) Rosenroth: כהר"ר משה בן מוהרר"י בערב כל זמן שהוא אצל חשובין: ללמוד עמהם והבחור געץ בערב כל זמן שהוא אצל האדון רוזינרוט פטורי' מהקנס הנער געצלי כל אימת

The Sulzbach edition of the *Zohar* was completed with the financial and technical assistance of Prince Christian August, the Christian printer Johan Holst, Knorr von Rosenroth, and Francis Mercury van Helmont. Yet, while Christian August is mentioned in both the Hebrew and Latin introductions to the edition, and Johan Holst is mentioned on its Latin title page, von Rosenroth and van Helmont are not mentioned anywhere in the edition. The Latin introduction, which was probably written by von Rosenroth, is signed 'the collaborators' (Collaborantes).

The Sulzbach edition was intended for two different sectors: traditional Jewish readers and Christian Hebraists. While the Christian readership did not have any problem with the involvement of Jews in the printing of the *Zohar* – on the contrary, this certainly contributed to its authority in their eyes – the involvement of Christians in this project was problematic from the Jewish point of view. Moshe Bloch, the Hebrew printer, apologizes for the addition of a Latin title page and Latin introduction to his edition:

To the reader. Do not be taken aback when you see the introduction to this holy book written in a different language, i.e., in Latin. There is nothing new in it. It only recounts the glories of our exalted master, the Duke. Our Sages of blessed memory also used this language many times in midrashim and the Palestinian Talmud ... We have done this out of concern, that no ill will be spoken about us, God forbid, as it happened a few times. Thus, we have printed the permission given us from the authorities in this language. And may all the nations gaze on it *and say: come let us go up to the Mount of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob; That He may instruct us in His ways, and that we may walk in His paths (Isaiah 2.3), Oh House of Jacob ! Come let us walk by the light of the Lord (Isaiah 2.5).*<sup>14</sup>

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שהוא בעסקי הדפוס והגהה או בשירות של דוכס יר"ה ואדון רוזאנראט אין עליו שום קנס הן בבוקר או בערב

14 אל עין הקורא. הנה אל יבהלנו רעיונהי בראותו בהקדמת הספר הקדוש הזה בלעגי שפה ובלשון אחרת ידבר והוא לשון לאטי"ן, אבל באמת איננו דבר מה חדש בו. רק יספר תהלות מעלת אדונינו הדוכס יר"ה וכבר שמשו חז"ל הרבה בזה הלשון בהרבה מקומות במדרשים ובתלמוד ירושלמי. וגם מורה דרך הזה כאשר גם אנטנו כתבנו בהקדמה שלנו. ומדבר דאגה עשינו זאת כדי שלא יעלילו עלינו ח"ו כאשר יקרה כמה פעמים בכמה מקומות הדפסנו הרשות והורמגא מהשררה יר"ה בלשון הזה לנהר אליו כל הגויים ויאמרו לכו ונעלה אל הר יי' ואל בית אלהי יעקב ויורנו מדרכיו ונלכה בארחותיו וגו' בית יעקב לכו ונלכה באור יי'

As mentioned above, the Sulzbach edition of the *Zohar* was published in the same year the second volume of the *Kabbala Denudata* was printed, a volume including a Latin translation of three central Zoharic units: the *Idra Rabba*, the *Idra Zuta*, and the *Siphra de-Zeni'uta*.<sup>15</sup> In that year, the *Ditika Hadata*, the Syriac New Testament, printed in Hebrew letters, was also published in Sulzbach. Only Johan Holst, the Christian printer, is mentioned on the title page of this edition, but the use of Hebrew type indicates that this too was a joint project of the Sulzbach Jewish and Christian printers. As I shall argue in the following section, the printing of the Syriac New Testament, the Aramaic Zohar (in Sulzbach), and the second volume of the *Kabbala Denudata* (in Frankfurt), in 1684, were all part of a messianic Kabbalistic mission of the circle of the Sulzbach Christian Kabbalists.

### **The Christian Messianic Mission of the Sulzbach Edition of the *Zohar***

Since the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, Christian Kabbalists, foremost among them Pico Della Mirandola, Johannes Reuchlin, and Guillaume Postel, regarded the Kabbalah in general and the *Zohar* in particular as part of the *prisca theologia*, or *philosophia perennis*, the ancient divine wisdom, revealed to Adam and Moses, culminating in Christianity. Christian Kabbalists of the Renaissance period believed that the *Zohar* (which they assumed predated the Talmud and the Church fathers) contained early Christian doctrines (including that of the Trinity), and thus could be used as a tool for convincing the Jews to convert.<sup>16</sup> This was probably the motivation behind the participation of Christians and converted Jews in the first printings of the *Zohar* in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Cremona edition of 1560 was a joint project of Christians, Jews and converts (it was prepared by the convert Vittorio Eliano); Christians

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15 On the centrality of the *Zohar* in the *Kabbala Denudata*, see A. Kilcher, 'Kabbalistische Buchmetaphysik: Knorrs Bibliothek und die Bedeutung des Sohar', *Christliche Kabbala*, Memmingen 2003, pp. 211-212: 'Die Kabbala denudata ist damit, so lässt sich zunächst in buchtechnischer Hinsicht sagen, eine Bibliothek, deren Architektonik um dieses eine Buch zentriert ist, de Zohar'.

16 F. Secret, *Le Zohar chez les Kabbalistes Chretiens de la Renaissance*, Paris 1964; A. P. Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century*, Leiden, Boston & Köln 1999, pp. 111-112.



took part also in the printing of the Mantua edition of 1557-1560.<sup>17</sup> The Christian Kabbalist Guillaume Postel claimed that he convinced Rabbi Moshe Basola to support the printing of the *Zohar* in Mantua.<sup>18</sup>

Following the earlier Christian Kabbalists, Knorr von Rosenroth and his circle believed that the *Zohar* and the Gospels imparted the same truths clothed in different terminology, and because of that the Kabbalah could be used for missionary purposes.<sup>19</sup> In the first volume of *Kabbala Denudata*, published in Sulzbach 1677, Knorr relates that from his experience, the Jews were open to listen to, and accept, Christian doctrines presented in Kabbalistic terminology:

When I thought about convincing and converting the Jews, I observed that no small obstacle arose from the fact that they either do not understand our terminology, or equally that they shrink away from it, thinking it strange and absurd. When, afterwards, however, I spoke with them using their own expressions, I always gained their open ears. And I obtained the opportunity to expound to them, by means of the gentlest exposition all the mysteries of Christianity which had formerly seemed so absurd to them.<sup>20</sup>

Based on this experience, Knorr von Rosenroth believed that knowledge of Kabbalah should be encouraged among the Christians, who could use it for missionary purposes.

I have often eagerly desired that their more profound theology

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17 Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar* (above, n. 2), p. 97; G. Busi, *Mantua and the Kabbalah*, Milano 2001, p. 55.

18 F. Secret, *Le Zohar chez les Kabbalistes Chrétiens*, p. 55, n. 1. Moshe Basola's decree in favor of printing the *Zohar* appeared in the first edition of *Tiqqunei Zohar*, Mantua 1557. Later, Basola changed his mind and opposed the printing of the *Zohar*. See Tishby, *Studies in Kabbalah* (above, n. 6), pp. 108-110.

19 Coudert, *The Impact* (above, n. 16), pp., 112, 125-129; Kilcher, 'Kabbalistische Buchmetaphysik' (above, n. 15), pp. 222-223.

20 '... cum de convincendis atque convertendis Judaeis meditatus sum, non parvum exinde observavi oboriri impedimentum, quod illi terminos nostros vel non intelligant, vel tanquam insolitos atque absurdos abhorreant; cum e contrario postquam ipsorum phrasibus cum ipsis loquerer, patulas semper habuerim aures, occasionemque nactus sim, omnia Christianismi mysteria, quae tam absurda hactenus ipsis visa fuerant, mollissima interpretatione ipsis proponere', in: *Kabbala Denudata*, 1, 2: 74. I have followed Coudert's translation (above, n. 16), pp. 112-113.

(i.e., the Kabbalah) would become known to many of our faith, and that our rabbinical studies would not come to a standstill at mere grammatical observations ... by which means at length the Jews would be able to read our writings and gradually be drawn back into the way of truth.<sup>21</sup>

For this purpose, Knorr published in the second volume of *Kabbala Denudata*, printed in 1684, containing translations of several important units of the *Zohar*, as well as of other Kabbalistic works. The publication of the entire *Zohar* in its original language, and in the same year, was intended to reinforce acquaintance with the Kabbalah among Christian Hebraists, who could use this knowledge in their mission to the Jews.<sup>22</sup>

While Knorr von Rosenroth and his circle aspired to enhance knowledge of Kabbalah among Christians, the printing of the 1684 Sulzbach edition of the *Zohar*, was targeted mainly to the Jewish readership. Assuming that the *Zohar* contained Christian doctrines, and recognizing its canonical status among contemporary Jews, the Sulzbach Christian Kabbalists were convinced that its printing would facilitate the recognition of Christian truths by the Jews.

Although this purpose is not mentioned explicitly in the Latin introductions to the *Zohar* edition, Prince Christian August stated this in a letter he sent, together with a copy of the *Zohar*, to his nephew, Herzog Frederik 1<sup>st</sup> of Saxony.<sup>23</sup> In this letter, dated March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1684

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21 '... ut intimior ipsorum Theologia pluribus nostratium innotesceret & studia nostra Rabbinica non in nudis haerent observationibus Grammaticis ... [Q]uo tandem & scripta nostra illi legere possent & ita pedetentim ad veritates iter reducerentur', *Kabbala Denudata*, 1, 2: 74 (Coudert, p. 113).

22 The author of the Latin salutation to the reader in the Sulzbach edition, probably Knorr von Rosenroth, advises the reader who finds the original *Zohar* difficult, to consult the Latin translations in the second volume of the *Kabbala Denudata*, as well as the Kabbalistic lexicon included in the first volume: 'Si quem absterreat difficultas sive styli, sive materiae hoc in opera propositae, is sciat, in Tomo secundo Kabbalae Denudatae certos exhiberi in usum hujus Exercitii gradus. Textus enim Librorum qui vocantur Siphra de Zeniutha; Idra rabba & Idra Suta, quae sun compendia totius Kabbalae, ibidem propununtur punctati, & in Sectiones atque paragraphos dissecti, una cum Versione & Commentariis ... & in Tomo primo Kabbalae Denudatae Lexicon etiam aliquale ad manus habeat, cum adminiculis necessariis aliis'.

23 See: F. C. Oetinger, *Die Lehrtafel der prinzeßin Antonia*, R. Breymayer and F. Haussermann eds., Berlin 1977, Band 1, Teil 1, pp. 54-55.

(printed in Gottfried Christoph Sommer's *Specimen Theologiae Soharicae*), Christian August writes:

Recently we received in our residence, for the purpose of publishing, a Hebrew work entitled the *Zohar*, which is believed to be the oldest of all books possessed by the Jewish people, and which is esteemed by them more than the Talmud itself. [...] It reputedly contains much that agrees with the holy scriptures of our New Testament. [...] By means of this work, the Jews could be persuaded that in the Christian doctrine of the Divine Persona, the Messiah, the Law and its inner significance, Grace, and in other points of conflict that stand between us, there is nothing that would prevent them from converting to the Christian faith.<sup>24</sup>

As mentioned above, in 1684, the year the *Zohar* was printed, a Syriac version of the New Testament, the *Ditika Hadata*, was published in Hebrew characters, in Sulzbach.<sup>25</sup> This publication is mentioned in the Latin salutation to the reader in the *Sulzbach Zohar*. The Christian reader of the *Zohar* is advised to consult the Syriac New Testament in order to improve his understanding of the Zoharic Aramaic.<sup>26</sup> I believe

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- 24 'Demnach jüngsthin in Unser Residentz allhier zu öffentlichem Druck befördert worden ein Hebräisches Werck, der SOHAR genannt, welches als das älteste seyn soll, unter allen Büchern, so dermahlen das Jüdische Volck annoch in Händen hat, und von denenselben höher geachtet wird, als der Talmud selbst; bisanhero aber wegen seiner Schwehrigkeit, unter uns Christen nicht sehr bekant gewesen: Und dann darinnen sehr viel enthalten seyn soll, was mit denen Heil. Schrifften Unsers Neuen Testaments übereinstimmet; [...] Also, daß aus diesem Werck die Juden sollen können überzeiget werden, daß in der Christlichen Lehre von den Personen in der Gottheit, von dem Messiah, von dem Gesetze, und dessen inwendigen Verstande, von der Gnade, und andern zwischen uns und ihnen sonst strittigen Puncten, nichts enthalten, welches sie von der Bekehrung zum Christlichen Glauben abwenden könne', in: G. C. Sommer, *Specimen Theologiae Soharicae*, Gothae 1734, fols. 2a-b. Interestingly, Christian August, who accepted the attribution of the *Zohar* to Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, suggests that the *Zohar*'s alleged author is none other than Simon the Just, mentioned in the New Testament (Luke 2, 26-33): 'Rabbi Schimeon Ben Jochai ... zur Zeit Unsers Heilandes selbst bis nach der Zerstörung Jerusalem gelebt: und wohl gar davor gehalten werden will, dass dieses derjenige Simeon, welcher unsern Herrn in Seiner Kindheit im Temple auf die Arme genommen'.
- 25 *Novum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, Testamntum Syriace*, Sulzbachi, Ex Officina Johanis Holst, 1684.
- 26 'In Quibus si paululum quis fuerit excitatus (praesertim si Novum Testamentum Syriacum literis Hebraicis impressum frequenter insimul perlegatur). Opus hoc

that the printing of the New Testament in Syriac was intended not only for a Christian readership. The Sulzbach Christian Kabbalists printed the Syriac New Testament in the hope that Jews would read it and recognize its affinity to the *Zohar*.

In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, previous to the printing of the Syriac New Testament in Sulzbach, several unsuccessful plans for the publication of the New Testament in Hebrew were made by Christian Hebraists and Millenarians (among them, Peter Serrarius, Knorr von Rosenroth's teacher).<sup>27</sup> The 1684 publication of the *Ditika Hadata* was the realization of the same project: presentation of the New Testament in a language that could be read and understood by contemporary Jews in order to increase their knowledge of Christianity and encourage their conversion. The Syriac of the *Ditika Hadata* is close to Zoharic Aramaic and could be read by a Jew proficient in Talmudic and Zoharic literature.

Knorr von Rosenroth and his circle were convinced of the inherent identity of the doctrines of the Kabbalah and Apostolic Christianity. Apparently, they assumed that the Jews would be able to recognize the similarities between the New Testament and the *Zohar* more easily when both were presented in the same language: Syriac/Aramaic in Hebrew script.

As we recall, Knorr von Rosenroth attempted to increase the knowledge of Kabbalah among the Christians. At the end of the above cited passage from the first volume of the *Kabbala Denudata*, he aspires that through this, 'at length the Jews would be able to read our

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ipsum non punctatum sine versione facile intelliget'. See also in the continuation of the above cited letter of Prince Christian August, concerning the printing of the *Zohar*: 'Und dann anbey dieses Buch nunmehr auf eine Solche-Weise herausgegeben ist, dass diejenige, so sich in etwas auf die Hebräische und Chaldeische Sprach verstehen, (zumahlen wann sie sich das Syrische Neue Testament, so auch zu selbiger Zeit und selbigen Landen geschrieben ist, anbey bekannt machen) darinnen gar leicht sollen fortkommen Können'. Sommer, *Specimen Theologiae Soharicae*, fol. 2b.

27 E. Van der Wall, 'The Amsterdam Millenrian Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669)', in: J. Van der Berg and E. Van der Wall eds., *Jewish Christian Relations in the 17th Century*, Dordrecht 1988, pp. 79-80; R. Popkin, 'Some Aspects of Jewish-Christian Theological Interchanges in Holland and England 1640-1700', in: *Jewish Christian Relations in the 17th Century*, pp. 13-14.

writings and gradually be drawn back into the way of truth'.<sup>28</sup> Then printing of the *Zohar* in Sulzbach 1684 was carried out by Knorr von Rosenroth and his circle, in hope that the Jews would be drawn into reading the Syriac New Testament, published by them in the same year, and recognize the identity of Zoharic Kabbalah and original Christianity.<sup>29</sup>

Before turning to an examination of the Sabbatean background to the printing of the *Sulzbach Zohar*, it should be mentioned that the Zoharic projects of the Sulzbach circle were motivated by internal Christian interests as well. Knorr von Rosenroth believed that the *Zohar* contained the ancient Christian-Jewish wisdom and was a source of divine knowledge. As such it might not only put an end to the religious disputes with the Jews, but would at the same time restore religious harmony between Catholics and Protestants. As Allison Coudert demonstrated, Knorr von Rosenroth, who blamed the discord among the Christians on their reliance upon Greek philosophy, argued that a return to the original source of Christianity, which was found in the Kabbalah, would unite the different Christian denominations amongst themselves, as well as with the Jews, in the single true faith.<sup>30</sup> From this point of view, the publication of the *Kabbala Denudata*, the printing of the Sulzbach edition of the *Zohar*, and the printing of the Syriac New Testament were part of the same mission: uniting Jews and Christians of various denominations in one faith through enhancing the knowledge of Kabbalah and demonstrating the essential identity of the *Zohar* and the New Testament.

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28 '... Quo tandem & scripta nostra illi legere possent & ita pedetentim ad veritates iter reducerentur'; see above, n. 21.

29 This was also the purpose of Knorr's lost work, *Messias Puer*, which contained comparisons between passages from the Syriac New Testament and messianic passages from the *Zohar* and the midrashim: 'Messias Puer. E Antiquitatibus Hebraeorum et in specie e libro Sohar ad Textum Novi Testamenti Syriacum illustrans'. See Kilcher, 'Kabbalistische Buchmetaphysik' (above, n. 15), p. 223. Knorr announces this work at the end of his salutation to the reader in the *Zohar* edition: '& si Dominus permiserit parallelismos Soharisticos in N.T quam proxime expectet'.

30 Coudert, *The Impact* (above, n. 16), p. 117; Kilcher, 'Kabbalistische Buchmetaphysik', pp. 222-223.

### **The Sabbatean Context of the 1684 *Sulzbach Zohar* Edition**

The 1684 printing projects of the Sulzbach circle, which included the second volume of the *Kabbala Denudata*, the *Sulzbach Zohar* edition, and the *Ditika Hadata*, took place in the aftermath of the Sabbatean messianic events of 1665-1666. Even after the conversion of Shabbatai Zevi to Islam in 1666 and his death in exile in 1676, many Jews retained their belief in his messianic mission. In the years preceding the Sulzbach printing projects, a new wave of Sabbatean propaganda emerged in Germany and Italy around the messianic claims of Mordechai Eisenstadt and the prophecies of his supporter (later his opponent), Issachar Bär Perlhefter (both originally from Prague), events that were probably known in Sulzbach.<sup>31</sup>

Andreas Kilcher suggested in a recent study that the background for understanding Knorr von Rosenroth's Zoharic projects is not only to be found in Lurianic Kabbalah but also in Sabbateanism.<sup>32</sup> Kilcher argues that Knorr von Rosenroth, who resided in Amsterdam during the apex of the Sabbatean events, probably took great interest in the Sabbatean movement, as did other contemporary Christian Hebraists and Millenarians, including his teacher Peter Serrarius, 'the Christian Sabbatean', who believed that Shabbatai Zevi was a precursor of the true Messiah and hoped that his coming might hasten the conversion of the Jews.<sup>33</sup> Following Kilcher, I would like to suggest that Sabbatean ideology may explain the participation of Jewish scholars in the Sulzbach printing projects; I will adduce evidence for connections between the Sulzbach Christian Kabbalists and Jewish Sabbateans.

The *Zohar* played a very significant role in the various manifestations of the Sabbatean movement, starting with Shabbatai Zevi himself,

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31 On the activities of Eisenstadt and Perlhefter, see G. Scholem, *The Dreams of the Sabbatean Prophet R. Mordechai Ashkenazi* (Hebrew), Leipzig 1938, pp. 55-56; idem, *Researches in Sabbateanism* (Hebrew), Y. Liebes ed., Tel Aviv 1991, pp. 530-538. I. Tishby, *Netivei Emunah u-Minut*, Jerusalem 1964, pp. 85-107. Bär Perlhefter resided in the household of Wagenseil, who was in correspondence with Knorr von Rosenroth, and may have known some of the Jewish Sulzbach printers, having previously worked in Wilhermsdorf, where Perlhefter published a book in 1670.

32 Kilcher, 'Kabbalistische Buchmetaphysik', p. 218.

33 'Kabbalistische Buchmetaphysik', pp. 218-220. On Serrarius' enthusiasm about the news of Shabbatai Zevi, see Van der Wall, 'The Amsterdam Millenarian Petrus Serrarius' (above, n. 27), pp. 88-91.

who based his messianic theology on it, up to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century followers of Jacob Frank, who were called ‘the Zoharites’.<sup>34</sup> Jewish Sabbatean circles, holding on to their belief in Shabbatai Zevi even after his apostasy, assumed that the *Zohar* foretold the *heilgeschichte* of Shabbatai Zevi (including his conversion to Islam), and were active in the dispersion of the *Zohar* as part of their striving for a Sabbatean Kabbalistic reform of Judaism.<sup>35</sup>

Many of the cultural practices that contributed to the spreading and popularization of the *Zohar* in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries were initiated by Sabbatean circles. Most of the *Zohar* commentaries printed in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were written by scholars with Sabbatean leanings, and Sabbateans were involved in both teaching the *Zohar* to a wider public, and translating it into the vernacular.<sup>36</sup>

As we recall, only three editions of the *Zohar* had been printed previous to the outbreak of the Sabbatean movement (together with one edition of *Tiqqunei ha-Zohar*, three of *Zohar Ḥadash*).<sup>37</sup> Following the Sabbatean events, a great number of editions of the Zoharic literature were published (the first of them being the 1684 Sulzbach edition). As I have shown elsewhere,<sup>38</sup> crypto-Sabbatean circles took part in most of these. Sabbatean scholars were involved in the printing of the 1715 and 1728 Amsterdam editions (as well as the 1719 edition of *Tiqqunei Zohar*) which were published by the printing house of Shlomo Proops. The 1736 Constantinople edition of the *Zohar* and the 1719 Ortakoj and the 1740 Constantinople editions of *Tiqqunei Zohar* were all printed by the clandestine Sabbatean circle of Jonah ben Yakov Ashkenazi. The Sabbatean Zevi Chotesh (who later made a Yiddish translation of the *Zohar*) published in Amsterdam, 1706, an edition of *Tiqqunei*

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34 A. Elqayam, ‘Shabtai Zevi’s Manuscript Copy of the *Zohar*’ (Hebrew), *Kabbalah* 3 (1998), pp. 345-347.

35 B. Huss, ‘Sabbateanism and the Reception of the *Zohar*’ (Hebrew), in: R. Elijor ed., *The Sabbatean Movement and Its Aftermath: Messianism, Sabbateanism and Frankism*, Jerusalem 2001, vol 1, pp. 57-63; Kilcher, ‘Kabbalistische Buchmetaphysik’, p. 218.

36 Huss (above, n. 35), pp. 63-64, 66-68.

37 *Sefer Tiqqunei Zohar* printed in Mantua 1557 was not printed even once during the 17th century. *Zohar Ḥadash* was printed for the first time in Salonica 1597, and again, in Krakow 1603, and Venice 1658.

38 Huss (above, n. 35), pp. 63-65.

*Zohar* (with commentary) containing clear Sabbatean allusions.<sup>39</sup> Sabbateans were probably also involved in the Amsterdam issue of the 1701 edition of *Zohar Hadash*, published at the same printing house.

The Sabbatean interest in the spreading of the *Zohar* and the involvement of Sabbateans in most of the printings of *Zohar* literature in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century raise the possibility that the Jewish printers of the Sulzbach edition too were connected to the Sabbatean movement, though there is no clear evidence of the involvement of Moshe Bloch or of any other Jewish Sulzbach printers in the movement. Sabbatean circles were active in this period in Germany, and some of them had close relations with Christian Hebraists. Sabbatean scholars, including the Sabbatean prophet Bär Perlhefter, mentioned above, and the Sabbatean convert to Christianity, Johan Kemper (who will be discussed later), resided in the household of the Lutheran Hebraist, Johann Christoph Wagenseil, in Altdorf, in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>40</sup> Probably, similar relationships between Christian Hebraists and Jewish Sabbateans existed at the court of Prince Christian August in Sulzbach.

There is indeed evidence that Knorr von Rosenroth and his circles were in contact with Jewish Sabbateans. In 1684, the first Hebrew edition of R. Hayyim Vital's *Sefer ha-Gilgulim* was published in Frankfurt-am-Main by the printer David Grünhut. The edition includes commentaries, with evident Sabbatean references, written by R. Meir Eisenstadt, who prepared the text for publication.<sup>41</sup> Knorr von Rosenroth

39 See: E. R. Wolfson, 'The Engenderment of Messianic Politics: Symbolic Significance of Sabbatai Sevi's Coronation', in: P. Schafer and M.R. Cohen eds., *Toward the Millennium, Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco*, Leiden, Boston and Köln 1998, pp. 252-255.

40 On the relations between Perlhefter and Wagenseil, see I. Tishby, *Netivei Emunah u-Minut* (above, n. 31), pp. 86-86; 106-107; Johan Kemper (previously, Moshe Cohen of Krakow) stayed in Wagenseil's residence in 1696. See: H. J. Schoeps, 'Rabbi Johan Kemper in Uppsala', *Kyrkohistorisk Arsskrift* XLVI (1945), pp. 148-149; S. Asulin, 'Another Glance at Sabbateanism, Conversion, and Hebraism in Seventeenth-Century Europe: Scrutinizing the Character of Johan Kemper of Uppsala, or Moshe Son of Aharon of Krakow (Hebrew)', in: R. Elior ed., *The Sabbatean Movement and Its Aftermath* (above, n. 35), vol 2, p. 424, 436. Asulin suggests that the convert 'Zarfo' (probably 'Zarfati'), who also resided in Wagenseil's household, may have been a Sabbatean as well.

41 On R. Meir Eisenstadt, see I. Tishby, *Netivei Emunah u-Minut*, p. 302, note 139 (Tishby suggests that Meir was the brother of the Sabbatean prophet Mordechai Eisenstadt); Y. Liebes, *On Sabbateanism and its Kabbalah: Collected Essays* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1995, p. 232. On the Sabbatean references in his commentary



included a Latin translation of this work (entitled *De Revolutionibus Animarum*), in the second volume of the *Kabbala Denudata*, which was published in Frankfurt-am-Main at the very same year!<sup>42</sup> Probably, he received the text from its Jewish Sabbatean printers, with whom he conceivably collaborated.

Possible evidence for the presence of a Sabbatean Kabbalist in Sulzbach is found in a letter written by the Dutch Hebraist Guilielmus Surenhusius. In his letter of introduction to Andreas Norrelius' 'Phosphoros Orthodoxae Fidei Veterum Cabbalistarum' (Amsterdam 1720), Surenhusius writes that Christian August, Francis Mercury van Helmont and Knorr von Rosenroth had studied the *Zohar* with a famous Kabbalist from Smyrna, whom they had invited to reside in Sulzbach for that purpose.<sup>43</sup> I do not know the identity of this Kabbalist, but the fact that he came from Smyrna, Shabbatai Zevi's hometown and a central Sabbatean stronghold, suggests that the teacher who taught the *Zohar* to the Sulzbach Christian Kabbalists was a Sabbatean.<sup>44</sup>

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to *Sefer ha-Gilgulim* see pp. 312-313, note 90. On the objection of the Rabbis of Frankfurt to the printing of *Sefer ha-Gilgulim* because of 'a danger', which is not specified, see M. Horovitz, *Frankfurter Rabbinen*, Hildesheim & New York 1972, pp. 92-93.

42 *The Study of Christian Cabala in English, Addendum C: The Contents of Kabbalah Denudata, with English Sources*, p. 77, published at: <http://www.digital-brilliance.com/kab/karr/>. I am grateful to Mr. Don Karr who brought the publication of *Sefer ha-Gilgulim* and its inclusion in the *Kabbala Denudata* in 1684 to my attention.

43 'Alterum, quod serenissimus Sulzbachi Princeps Augustus, Comes Platinus, nec non Nobilissimus Baro Franciscus Mercurius Helmontius olim tanta cupiditate librum Zoharicum videndi, illiusque argumentum inspiciendi arserint, ut celebrem quondam Doctorum Cabbalisticum Smyrnendem ad se arcesciverint, eumque una cum tota ipsius familia suis impensis aluerint, interea temporis excellentem ingenio juvenem, nomine Rosenroth, hujusce Doctoris disciplinae committentes, ut in praecipuas Zoharis pharaseologias & hypotheses in unum colligeret ...'. According to Surenhusius, he had learned this from van Helmont himself. Surenhusius' letter, dated June 26th 1719, was printed in *Phosphoros Orthodoxae Fidei Veterum Cabbalistarum* after Norrelius', introduction. For a French translation (prepared by J. de Pauly and published by P. Vulliaud) see 'Aurore de la Foi Orthodoxe des Anciens Cabalistes', *Le Voile D'Isis* 38 (1933), p. 356-357.

44 I do not know of any famous Kabbalist from Smyrna who resided in Germany at this period. Yet, according to Gershom Scholem, Shabbatai Zevi's brothers, Joseph and Elijah Zevi, passed in that period in Germany, on their way from the Balkans, back to Smyrna. They left the Balkans after Shabbatai's death, in 1676, and were back in Smyrna in 1684. See G. Scholem, *Researches in Sabbateanism*

Probably, the Kabbalist from Smyrna is the same teacher mentioned by Knorr von Rosenroth in the preface to the second volume of *Kabbala Denudata* (who, like the tutor mentioned by Surenhusius, resided in Sulzbach with his family).<sup>45</sup> Knorr writes that he omits the name of his teacher, who was already old, ‘on account of the hatred of his relatives and co-religionists’.<sup>46</sup> Why was this Rabbi hated (or why was Knorr afraid that he would be hated) so much by his fellow Jews? The most likely answer is that he was instructing Christians in Kabbalah; another ground for hatred may have been his Sabbateanism (which, as I shall argue below, could be the reason for his teaching Kabbalah to Christians). Interestingly, in the same period, 1682, the Sabbatean prophet Bär Perlhefter was persecuted by the Jews of Ansbach because of his studies with Johan Christoph Wagenseil.<sup>47</sup>

Knorr von Rosenroth relates that two of his teacher’s children died, and later, two of his own children died, at the beginning of their studies together, and that his tutor interpreted this as ‘a punishment for the publication of this doctrine’.<sup>48</sup> This strange interpretation, which did not prevent teacher and student from continuing their studies, echoes the famous story concerning the death of Isaac Luria's son, Moshe, as a punishment for revealing the secret contained in a passage of the

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(above, n. 32), p. 533. Could the teacher of Kabbalah from Smyrna be one of these brothers? This could certainly explain Knorr von Rosenroth's assertion, which will be discussed below, that he could not reveal the name of his Kabbalah teacher, on account of the hatred of the Jews. Whatever the identity of this Kabbalist was, the connection between a Kabbalist from Smyrna and the Sulzbach circle could have been made through the English Quaker associates of Francis Mercury van Helmont. On the mission of the Quakers to the Jews of Smyrna see M. Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets*, Cambridge & London, 2004, pp. 111-112. Interestingly, according to one account, the English merchants for whom Shabbatai Zevi's father was a factor, were Quakers.

45 Yet, there is also the possibility, suggested by Allison Coudert (above, n. 16), p. 107, n. 36, that this teacher was Rabbi Moshe Hausen, the corrector of the *Sulzbach Zohar* edition, mentioned above.

46 ‘... magistro meo jam seni, cujus nomen ob odio contribulium ejus reticeo’, *Kabbala Denudata* II, 1: 18-19, cited by Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah*, p. 107.

47 Perlhefter relates this in a letter he wrote to Wagenseil, on 29.3.1682. The letter is printed in A. Buchler, ‘Die Grabschrift des Mardochai Mochiach’, in: Von M. Brann and F. Rosenthal eds., *Gedankbuch zur Erinnerung an David Kaufman*, Breslau 1900. pp. 455-456, and Tishby, *Netivei Emunah u-Minut*, p. 107.

48 ‘quod ille in poenam publicatae hujus doctrinae fieri interpretabatur’; see Coudert, *The Impact*, p. 107.

*Zohar* relating the messianic myth of the snake that bites the doe's vagina in order to enable her to give birth.<sup>49</sup> According to Ḥayyim Vital, Luria's disciple:

The day my Teacher of Blessed Memory explained this passage to us, we were sitting in the field under the trees. A crow passed above him and screeched. My Teacher said: Blessed be the Truthful Judge. I asked him [what he meant], and he answered that the crow informed him that because of the public revelation of this secret, he was punished by the heavenly court. It was decreed upon him that his little son would die ... and indeed, he died after three days.<sup>50</sup>

Knorr Von Rosenroth's teacher of the *Zohar* compared his own instruction of a gentile in Kabbalah to Isaac Luria's revealing Kabbalistic secrets to his students. Like Luria, he did not stop teaching Kabbalah because of his loss.<sup>51</sup> He probably regarded his activity as having a messianic significance, similar to Luria's disclosing of the secret of Zoharic myth (a myth which plays a central role in Sabbatean theology).<sup>52</sup>

Assigning a messianic connotation to the teaching of the *Zohar* to gentiles fits in well with Sabbatean anti-nomic mentality and may

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49 *Zohar* II, 52b. On this passage and its messianic significance in the *Zohar* and in Lurianic Kabbalah, see A. Berger, 'Ayalta - From the Doe in the Field to the Mother of the Messiah', in: *Salo Wittmayer Baron Jubilee Volume*, 1, Jerusalem 1974, pp. 209-217; R. Meroz, 'Redemption in the Lurianic Teaching' (Hebrew), Ph.D. Thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1988, pp. 306-315; Y. Liebes, '"Two Young Roes of a Doe": The Secret Sermon of Isaac Luria Before his Death' (Hebrew), in: R. Elior and Y. Liebes eds., *Lurianic Kabbalah*, Jerusalem 1992, pp. 126-148.

50 See: *Sha'ar ha-Kavvanot: Kol Kitvei Ha-Ari*, vol. 9, Jerusalem 1988, p. 187; M. Benayahu, *Toledot Ha-Ari*, Ramat Gan 1967, pp. 98-99, 197-198.

51 According to one version of the story, Luria promised his worried students that he would not cease teaching them the secrets of the Torah, even if all his children died; see Benayahu, *Toledot Ha-Ari*, p. 198.

52 On the messianic significance which Luria attached to the revelation of the secrets of the *Zohar*, as well as the death of his child, see Liebes, 'Two Young Roes of a Doe', pp. 139-140. On the centrality of this myth among the Sabbateans (Shabbatai Zevi himself probably identified himself as the Sacred Snake, and Nathan of Gaza and his followers explained this myth as referring to the second coming of Shabbatai Zevi), see Liebes, *On Sabbateanism and its Kabbalah* (above, n. 41), Jerusalem 1995, pp. 177-178, 280, n. 69; A. Elqayam, 'The Rebirth of the Messiah' (Hebrew), *Kabbalah* 1 (1996), pp. 114-121.

explain the contacts of other Sabbateans, such as Bär Perlhefter and Johan Kemper, with Christian Hebraists. Thus, it seems probable that Knorr von Rosenroth's Jewish teacher, a Kabbalist from Smyrna according to Surenhusius, was a Sabbatean.

Possible evidence for the influence of Sabbatean ideology on the Zoharic projects of the Sulzbach circle appears in the letter of Prince Christian August, cited above. In this letter (found in Sommer's *Zohar* anthology), Christian August relates that the Jews hold the *Zohar* in higher esteem than the Talmud ('und von denenselben höher geachtet wird, als der Talmud selbst'). This is an interesting assertion. While the *Zohar* was indeed very highly regarded by Jews in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the accepted view was that the Talmud was the more authoritative of the two, and if a contradiction exists between the *Zohar* and the Talmud, the ruling of the latter should be followed.<sup>53</sup> It was only among Sabbatean circles that the *Zohar* was considered to be more authoritative than the Talmud.<sup>54</sup> It is possible, then, that Christian August's observation on the status of the *Zohar* among the Jews reflects a Sabbatean view that was held by his Jewish teachers and collaborators in Sulzbach.

The very choice of the translated Zoharic texts in the second volume of the *Kabbala Denudata* may also reflect Sabbatean preferences. The units that Knorr von Rosenroth choose to translate, *Sifra de-Zeni'uta*, *Idra Rabba*, and *Idra Zuta*, are the three texts that (together with *Sefer Yezirah*) were regarded most highly by the Sabbateans. Nathan of Gaza recommended studying these texts daily and the Sabbatean converts to Islam (the Dönme) translated them into Ladino. Several editions of these texts were printed by covert Sabbateans in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, and their recitation was considered by opponents as an

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53 See J. Katz, 'Post Zoharic Relations between Halakha and Kabbalah', in: B. D. Cooperman ed., *Jewish Thought in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century*, Cambridge and London 1983, p. 290; B. Huss, 'Sefer Ha-Zohar as a Canonical, Sacred and Holy Text: Changing Perspectives of the Book of Splendor between the Thirteenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *The Journal of Jewish Thought & Philosophy* 7 (1998), pp. 279-280.

54 Huss (above, n. 53), pp. 284-285; Huss, 'Sabbateanism and the Reception of the *Zohar*' (above, n. 35), pp. 54-56; Kilcher, 'Kabbalistische Buchmetaphysik' (above, n. 15), pp. 217-218.

indication of Sabbatean identity.<sup>55</sup> Among the many commentaries to the *Zohar* written by Sabbateans, there are several on these texts, including a commentary to *Sifra de-Zeni<sup>c</sup>uta* written by Bär Perlhefter, the Sabbatean prophet mentioned above.<sup>56</sup> In a text probably composed by Perlhefter (containing heavenly apocalyptic revelations), we read that the final redemption is dependent upon the ‘explications of the *Zohar* ... and the study and interpretation of *Sifra de-Zeni<sup>c</sup>uta* which will be revealed in the generation of the Messiah’.<sup>57</sup>

Finally, I would like to mention again that collaboration between Sabbateans and Christian Hebraists existed in other places in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. I have already discussed Bär Perlhefter and his relations with Johan Christian Wagenseil several times. Another interesting case is the cooperation between Andreas Norrelius, the Swedish Christian Hebraist, and his teacher, Johan Kemper, formerly Rabbi Moshe ben Aharon Cohen of Krakow, a Jewish Sabbatean who (in 1696) converted to Christianity and resided for a short time in Wagenseil's household, before settling in Uppsala where he lived until his death in 1714.<sup>58</sup> The collaboration between Norellius and Kemper has some interesting parallels to the Jewish-Christian cooperation at Christian August's court and may shed light on the possible Sabbatean context of the 1684 Sulzbach printing projects. Andreas Norrelius published in Amsterdam 1720 a Latin translation of *Zohar* passages, with a commentary by his teacher, Johan Kemper, entitled *Phosphoros Orthodoxae Fidei Veterum Cabbalistarum*. Norellius also had plans to print another of Kemper's *Zohar* commentaries entitled *Mateh Moshe* (*The Rod of Moses*), but could not raise the funds for this project.<sup>59</sup>

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55 M. Benayahu, ‘The Sabbatean Movement in Greece’ (Hebrew), *Sefunot* 14 (1971-1977), pp. 270-271; Huss, ‘Sabbateanism and the Reception of the *Zohar*’, pp. 60, 65.

56 Huss (above, n. 55), p. 64; Liebes, *On Sabbateanism and its Kabbalah* (above, n. 41), p. 153.

57 דגאולה בתרייתא תלייא בהיא ימא דאיהי אורייתא דאצטריך ב"נ למבקע האי ימא בביאורי הוהר ובהגדה ובלימוד ובכתיבת ספרא דצניעותא דאתגלייא בדרא דמשיחא see Scholem, *Researches in Sabbateanism* (above, n. 31), p. 545.

58 On Johan Kemper and his relations with Andreas Norrelius, see Schoeps, ‘Rabbi Johan Kemper in Uppsala’ (above, n. 40), pp. 146-177; see also Schoeps, *Barocke Juden, Christen, Judenchristen*, Bern & München 1965, pp. 60-75.

59 Schoeps, ‘Rabbi Johan Kemper’, p. 161.

Although, overtly, Kemper wrote a Christian *Zohar* commentary,<sup>60</sup> Shifra Asulin has recently demonstrated that he did not abandon his Sabbatean ideology after his conversion, and several Sabbatean concepts and doctrines can be found in his commentary.<sup>61</sup> The resemblance between the activities of the ‘Uppsala circle’ and those of the Sulzbach printers is found not only in their *Zohar* projects, but also in their attempts to disperse the New Testament to the Jews. The Syriac New Testament was, as we recall, printed in Sulzbach in 1684; Johan Kemper prepared a Hebrew translation of the New Testament in Uppsala that Norrelius tried (unsuccessfully) to print in 1730.<sup>62</sup> Thus, both in Sulzbach and later in Uppsala, Christian Hebraists worked with the help of Jews, or former Jews, on projects involved with the publication of the *Zohar* and the New Testament. While the missionary interest of the Christian Hebraists who were involved in these projects is evident, one can only speculate as to whether the Sulzbach Jewish printers were, like in the case of Johan Kemper, willing to cooperate with the Christian scholars in these projects on the basis of their Sabbatean ideology.

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- 60 On Kemper’s Christological interpretations of the *Zohar*, see E. R. Wolfson, ‘Messianism in the Christian Kabbalah of Johann Kemper’, in M. Goldish and R. H. Popkin eds., *Millenarianism and Messianism in the Early Modern World*, Dordrecht, 2001, pp. 139-187.
- 61 S. Asulin, ‘Another Glance at Sabbateanism’ (above, n. 40), pp. 438-458. According to Asulin: ‘Deciphering the words of Kemper using Sabbatean codes creates a text with clear, radical and far reaching Sabbatean significance ... We have in front of us a text that overtly speaks about Jesus and the Christian world, but deciphered by Sabbatean terminology reveals a distinctive Sabbatean text’ (pp. 451-452). Interestingly, Norellius, who probably was not aware of his teacher’s hidden Sabbatean agenda, noticed the similarities between his teacher’s doctrines and those of Sabbatean Neḥemia Ḥiya Ḥayun, in his book *‘Oz le-Elohim* (a chapter of which Norrelius translates into Latin). On Norellius’ interest in Ḥayun’s doctrines and his account of Jewish polemics concerning the writings of Hayun, see Schoeps, ‘Rabbi Johan Kemper in Uppsala’, pp. 168-175; Schoeps, *Barok Juden*, p. 69-74; S. Asulin (above, n. 40), pp. 434-435.
- 62 Schoeps, ‘Rabbi Johan Kemper’, pp. 164-165. Kemper translated into Hebrew (and commented on) the Gospel according to Mathew for the first time in 1704, and again, in 1713 (together with the Epistle to the Hebrews); see Asulin (above, n. 40), p. 424.