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*Points of Similarity
between the Exposition of
the Doctrine of the Sefirot in
the Sefer Yezira and a Text of
the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*

The Implications of this Resemblance

by

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THE HOMILIES TEXT

WE SHALL BEGIN by offering a translation of the text of *Homiliae*, XVII, 6, 2 – 12, 1–end.¹

... Peter, having prayed according to his custom ... and having addressed the crowd in a way conforming to piety, began to speak thus: Our Lord Jesus, who was a true prophet ... uttered concise statements of views that stand out for their truth, and this for the following two reasons: firstly because he addressed his speech to pious people who had the knowledge required for believing in those pronouncements, which, as he put them, were [mere] assertion, for they were not foreign to their customary way of thinking; and secondly because, having but a limited time at his disposal for his *kérygma*, he did not employ the discourse of demonstrative reasoning,² in order not to spend the whole of his time making such discourses. Thus it could happen that, having been engaged in explaining a few discourses that could only be understood by a strenuous effort of the soul, he did not to a greater extent utter other discourses that stand out for their truth. For the statements that he made concerning the matters about which he wanted [to speak were intended] for a people (*laos*³) capable of understanding, to which we too belong; whenever

1 Following the Rehm edition, on which our translation is based.

2 *Tōi (tē) apodeixeōs*.

3 The Hebrews: see below, pp. 97–98.

— [it happened] seldom — we did not comprehend something of what he had said, we inquired privately so that nothing of what he had said should [remain] uncomprehended. Since, accordingly, he knew that everything he had said was known to us and that we were able to provide proofs,⁴ he commanded us — when he sent us to the ignorant nations (*ethnē*) in order to baptize them with a view to forgiveness of their sins — first to teach them, the first and the greatest of the commandments being, as it happens, to fear the Lord God and to worship Him alone. He commanded⁵ the fear of God, whose angels, those of the least faithful among us, stand in heaven continually contemplating the Face⁶ of the Father.

For He has a Form (*morphē*) for the sake of [His] first and unique⁷ beauty, and all the limbs, not for use. For He does not have eyes for the purpose of seeing with them — for He sees from every side; [for] He, as far as His body is concerned, is brighter beyond compare than the visual spirit⁸ in us and more brilliant than any light — compared to Him, the light of the sun would be held as darkness. Nor does He have ears for the purpose of hearing. For He hears, thinks,⁹ moves, acts,¹⁰ makes¹¹ from every side.¹² He has the most beautiful Form for the sake of man, in order that the pure in heart shall be able to see Him [cf. Matt. v:8], that they shall rejoice on account of whatever they have endured. For¹³ He has stamped man as it were with the greatest

4 *Apodeixeōs*.

5 Literally: 'said'.

6 *Prosōpon*.

7 *Monon*, literally: 'only'. On a possible meaning of this adjective here see below, n. 246.

8 *Bleptikon pneuma*.

9 *Noei*.

10 *Energei*.

11 *Poiei*.

12 Xenophanes is reported to have said with reference to God: 'Houlos horai, houlos de noei, houlos de t'akouei', 'The whole of Him sees, the whole of Him thinks, the whole of Him hears' (Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, IX:144, in Diels, Xenophanes, 11B, 24. As we shall see, similar notions concerning God to those set forth in our passage from the *Homilies* occur in a Christian theological treatise which, as far as its philosophical conceptions are concerned, derives from Neoplatonic sources.

13 On the authenticity of the passage which begins here or with the next sentence ('For this reason ...') and ends either with 'His own Form' or somewhat earlier, see below, p. 103, and n. 261 there.

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seal, with His own Form, in order that he shall rule and be lord over all things, and that all things shall serve him. For this reason, he who having judged that He is the All and man His image (*eikōn*) — He being invisible and His image, man, visible — will honour the image, which is man. Therefore one will be requited for whatever [whether good or evil] one does to man. For this reason, too, judgement issuing from Him, giving everyone his due,¹⁴ will reach all [men], for He arranges His own Form.¹⁵

But someone may say: If He has a Form, He has also a shape¹⁶ and is also in space;¹⁷ but if He is in space and encompassed¹⁸ by it, as though lesser [than it], how [can] He be greater than all things?¹⁹ [Again], how can He be omnipresent, if He has a figure? To him who speaks thus, one should say that in the first place [The Scriptures?] persuade [us] to have such thoughts and beliefs concerning Him²⁰... [and] we know those which are attested²¹ [as such] by our Lord Jesus Christ to be true, in accordance with whose command it is necessary to provide you the proofs for the [facts] being as [has been stated].

In the first place I shall speak of space and God.

Space is the non-existent,²² whereas God is the Existent, [and] the non-existent [cannot] be compared with the Existent. How can space be an existent, unless outside [it] there be a second place²³ similar to the heaven, the earth, the water, the air and any other body that may exist, [which bodies] may fill with themselves the

14 *Kat' axian aponemousa hekastoī.*

15 *Morphē.* On God's forms see G. G. Stroumsa, 'Forms of God — Some Notes on Metatron and Christ', *Harvard Theological Review*, LXXVI (1983), pp. 269–288. The Moslem mystic Ibn 'Arabī (1165–1240) refers to the 'forms of God' (*sūraat al-haqq*); see H. Corbin, *L'imagination dans le soufisme d'Ibn 'Arabī*, Paris 1958, n. 165. Cf. below, pp. 98–103.

16 *Skhēma.*

17 *Topos.* In the context, this rendering is preferable to 'place'.

18 *Periekhomenos.*

19 *Pantas.*

20 *Toiauta peri autou phronein peithouse kai pisteuein.* There appears to be a lacuna after *pisteuein*. Cotelier has suggested that the words *hai graphai kai* ('the Scriptures and') should be inserted at this point, as we have done, but it is not by any means certain that this conjecture is correct.

21 *Tas martyroumenas.* Assuming that the suggestion in the preceding footnote is correct, this feminine form seems to refer to *hai graphai*.

22 *To mē on.*

23 *Khōra.* The use of this term may indicate a Stoic influence; see below, pp. 73–76.

vacuum?²⁴ It is called vacuum, because it is nothing.²⁵ For this designation [nothing] is the one most appropriate to it. For that which is called vacuum, might it perhaps be like a vessel containing nothing? [This would be so], except [for the consideration that] such an empty vessel would not itself be space, but — if [we were to suppose that] such a vessel exists — that in which the vacuum would subsist.²⁶

In fact, it is absolutely necessary that the existent²⁷ should subsist in the non-existent.²⁸ This non-existent [which by some people is called space] I call nothing. How can that which is nothing be compared²⁹ with the existent? Unless, indeed, [they are viewed as their very] contraries, so that the existent should not exist and the non-existent should be called space.³⁰ Even if [space] should be something, I wish to use one example only — though many clamour to issue from me with a view to a proof — in order to show that that which encompasses [need] by no means be stronger³¹ than that which is encompassed. The Sun is a round figure, and the whole of it is encompassed by air, yet [the Sun] makes [the air] bright, warms it, traverses(?)³² it, and when it leaves it [the air] is plunged into darkness. And the part of it which has lost its brightness³³ becomes cold like something that has died. At sunrise, however, it is again illuminated, and whenever it is heated by [the Sun] it is also adorned with a greater beauty. [The Sun] does this through its participation, despite having a substance enclosed within [certain] limits. What therefore is to hinder God,³⁴ who is the Maker³⁵ and Ruler³⁶ of [the Sun?]³⁷

24 In our reading of the text, the question mark appearing on p. 233, l. 12 in the Rehm edition, after *dynatai*, has been displaced to l. 14, after *pleroi to kenon*.

25 *Ouden*. The vacuum is identified with *ouden* by Democritus (cf. Diels, 55A, 37). He also identified the vacuum with that which does not exist (*to mē on, to ouk on*); cf. Diels, 55A, 38, 40, 45.

26 The translation of this sentence is somewhat doubtful. See below, pp. 74–75.

27 *To on*.

28 *En tōi onti*.

29 Or: 'brought together', *sygkrinetai*.

30 The meaning of this sentence is doubtful.

31 Or: 'better', *kreitton*.

32 *Temnei*.

33 The text has *lampron*, but as some scholars have noted, this does not make sense. Our translation accords with two of the emendations that have been proposed for this phrase, but other emendations may be equally justifiable.

34 *Tōn theōn*.

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and of all things, and who Himself has shape, Form and beauty,³⁸ from having the participation [deriving] from Himself infinitely extended?³⁹ Therefore the God [who is] really [God]⁴⁰ is one, He who in His most excellent Form presides,⁴¹ being doubly(?) the heart⁴² of what is above and of what is below. And [proceeding] from Him, as from the centre, an Essence⁴³ abounding in life-giving and incorporeal force⁴⁴ traverses⁴⁵ all things,⁴⁶ the stars and the abodes⁴⁷ of the heaven, the water, the earth, the fire and whatever else, if anything, exists. [This Essence] is infinite in [the direction of] height, limitless in [the direction of] depth, immeasurable in [the direction of] breadth, and extends⁴⁸ thus in a threefold manner into the infinite, life-creating and rational nature⁴⁹ [that proceeds] from Him. For that [which proceeds] from Him must necessarily be infinite on all sides,⁵⁰ having as its heart Him who in reality is in [His] shape above all things;⁵¹ wherever He may be, He is, as it were, in the infinite as [its] midmost [point], being the limit⁵² of the All. Therefore the Extensions,⁵³ which start out from Him, have the

35 *Demiourgos*.

36 *Despotes*.

37 The text has *toutou*, 'of this'.

38 Literally: 'is in shape, Form and beauty'.

39 *Apeirōs ektetamenēn*.

40 *Ho ontōs theos*.

41 *Prokathēzetai*.

42 *Dis kardia*. The word *dis* (written *deis* in one MS) is regarded by several scholars as a corruption. It has also been suggested that the same may be true of the word *kardia*. However, the emendations that have been proposed seem to me rather arbitrary. I have accordingly conformed in my translation, admittedly with many misgivings, to the text of the MS, despite the strong reasons that exist for doubting its correctness.

43 *Ousia*.

44 *Zōtikēn kai asōmaton dynamin*.

45 *Dihikneita*.

46 *Ta panta*.

47 The translation conforms to the emendation, *monais*, proposed by Uhlhorn. The text has *monois*.

48 *Ekteinousa*.

49 *Phronimos physis*.

50 Or: 'which (proceeds) from Him on all sides must necessarily be infinite (*apeiron*)'.

51 *Hyper panta*, i.e., 'superior to all things'.

52 Or: 'boundary', *horos*.

53 *Ektaseis*.

nature of six limitless [ones⁵⁴]. One of them, proceeding from Him as its starting-point,⁵⁵ goes on⁵⁶ towards the height above, another towards the depth below, [the third] towards the right, [the fourth] towards the left, [the fifth] forwards, [the sixth] backwards, [and] He, looking upon them as upon a number that is equal on all sides,⁵⁷ completes(?)⁵⁸ the cosmos by means of six intervals of time,⁵⁹ He being the Repose,⁶⁰ and having the Aeon-to-come⁶¹ as [His] image;⁶² He is the Beginning and the End.⁶³ For in Him the six infinite⁶⁴ [ones] end, and from Him they take their extension towards the infinite.⁶⁵ This is the mystery of *Seven*.⁶⁶ For He is the Repose of all,⁶⁷ in the same way as He grants those who in what is little imitate His greatness Himself for repose. For He is alone, in one way apprehensible, in another inapprehensible, in one way [having] a limit,⁶⁸ in another limitless, [for] He has the Extensions, which [proceed] from Him to the infinite.⁶⁹ For He is both apprehensible and inapprehensible, near and far away, being there⁷⁰ as [one] who exists alone,⁷¹ and who grants the participation of the Intellect,⁷² which is infinite on all sides; it is through drawing breath from [this participation] that the souls of all [beings] obtain life. And when they are separated from their bodies and are found to have a longing for Him, they, being immortal, are borne to His bosom, just as in the season of winter

54 *Hex aperantôn physis*. In this context, *aperantos* doubtless has the same meaning as *apeiros*, 'infinite', and *ametrêtos*, 'immeasurable'; see above.

55 *Arkhê*.

56 *Dihikneitai*.

57 *Eis hous autos apoblepôn hōs eis arithmon pantakhothen ison*.

58 *Syntelei*.

59 *Khronikois diastêmasi*.

60 *Anapausis*.

61 *Esomenon Aiōna*.

62 *Eikōna*.

63 *Arkhê ... kai teleutê*.

64 *Apeiroi*.

65 *Eis apeiron*.

66 *Hebdemados mystêrion*.

67 Or: 'the all', or: 'all things': *tôn holôn*.

68 *Pê men perantos*: these words, which do not appear in the MS, are an emendation — most certainly correct — of the editor.

69 Or: 'to infinity', *eis apeiron*.

70 *Kaikei*; see below, n. 263.

71 Or: 'the only existent', *monos hyparkhôn*.

72 *Noou tēn metousian*.

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the vapours in the mountains, drawn upwards by the rays of the Sun, are borne towards it. What [great] love⁷³ shall we be able to conceive if we observe with the intellect [the beauty of] His Form.⁷⁴ This cannot be [achieved] in any other way. For it is impossible that beauty⁷⁵ be without form, or that one be drawn to love⁷⁶ Him or to believe that he sees God without the latter having a shape.⁷⁷ However, some that are hostile to truth and allied to evil⁷⁸ say, under the pretext of belauding⁷⁹ [Him], that He is without figure,⁸⁰ so that, being without form and shape,⁸¹ He would not be visible⁸² to anyone, [and hence] would not be desired.⁸³ For the intellect that does not see⁸⁴ the shape⁸⁵ of God is empty of Him. And how should one pray without having someone to whom he can turn for refuge, who can offer support? [For] he who is not [confronted] with something solid⁸⁶ steps out into the void.⁸⁷ Yes,⁸⁸ says he,⁸⁹ one ought not to fear⁹⁰ but to love⁹¹ God. I too say so, but this is given to one through having a good conscience⁹² in [the performance of] each meritorious deed.⁹³ And [the performance of] meritorious deeds comes about because of fear. But, says he, fear strikes terror⁹⁴ into the soul. But, say I, it does not strike terror [into it], but rather awakens [it] and turns⁹⁵ [it in the right direction]. Perhaps the saying is correct

73 *Storgē.*

74 *Eumorphian.*

75 *Kallos.*

76 *Erōs.*

77 *Eidos.*

78 Or: 'badness', *kakia.*

79 *Prophasei doxologias.*

80 *Askhēmatiston.*

81 *Amorphos kai aneideos.*

82 *Ahoratos.*

83 Or: 'much beloved', *peripothētos.*

84 *Horōn.*

85 *Eidos.*

86 *Antitypian ouk ekhōn.* The translation is conjectural.

87 *Kenon.*

88 *Nai.*

89 The opponent.

90 *Phobeisthai.*

91 *Agapan.*

92 Or: 'the good is born of conscientiousness', *eusyneidesia.*

93 *Eupoia.*

94 *Ekplēssei.*

95 *Epistrephēi.*

that it would not have been imperative to fear God if we men did not fear the [evil] designs of many other things, such as [our] fellow-men,⁹⁶ and, besides, beasts, creeping things, diseases, sufferings, demons⁹⁷ and myriads of other things. He who thinks that it is fitting that we should not fear God should deliver us from these things, so that we should not fear them either. If, however, he is not able to do this, why does he begrudge our ability to be set free,⁹⁸ by one fear — [the fear we have of] the Just One — from countless⁹⁹ fears, and, by a little trust¹⁰⁰ in Him, to change [for the better] countless¹⁰¹ sufferings [endured by] ourselves and by others, and therewith both receive¹⁰² recompense for [our] good [actions¹⁰³], and, because by reason of [our] fear of the all-seeing God we do no evil, to live in the present in peace.¹⁰⁴ In this way a prudent¹⁰⁵ servitude with regard [to Him who is] in reality the Master¹⁰⁶ makes one free with regard to all the others.¹⁰⁷ If, however, someone is able to refrain from sin without fearing God, let him not fear Him. For it is permitted to refrain out of love¹⁰⁸ for Him from doing that which displeases Him. For it is both written that [we should] fear [Him] and enjoined that [we should] love [Him], so that each [man] should make use of the remedy suitable for his temperament. Accordingly He is just. Therefore, whether you fear or love, do not sin. May [accordingly a man] who fears be able to control [the desire for] unlawful pleasures, not covet that which belongs to others,¹⁰⁹ practise benevolence towards men,¹¹⁰ be temperate,¹¹¹ deal justly.¹¹² For I see some

96 *Homoiōn*, more or less literally: '[those] similar [to us]'.
97 *Daimonas*.

98 *Apallagēnai*.

99 Literally: 'myriads'.

100 Or: 'belief', *pistis*.

101 Literally: 'myriads'.

102 In the future.

103 *Tōn agathōn*.

104 *En tōi paronti en eirēnēi diatelein*.

105 Or: 'reasonable', *eugnōmōn*.

106 *Pros ton ontōs despotēn*.

107 Quarry's emendation *douleia [pros] tous loipous* has been adopted in the translation. The text has *douleia tous loipous*, which does not make sense in the context.

108 *Agapēi*.

109 *Allotria*.

110 *Philanthropian*.

111 *Sophronein*.

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who, lacking in fear of Him,¹¹³ commit most sins. Let us therefore fear God not only because He is just. For, pitying the wronged, He takes vengeance upon those who did [them] wrong. For just as water puts out fire, so the fear of God removes the desire for evil. He who teaches not to fear has himself no fear either; and he who does not fear does not believe¹¹⁴ that there will be a judgement; he increases his desire, uses magical arts,¹¹⁵ and [falsely] accuses¹¹⁶ others of things he does himself.

Before we attempt to examine those doctrines expounded in this passage which come within the scope of our enquiry, namely those concerning Space, God and the extensions of God, several other points require clarification.

The passage purports to set forth some doctrines of Jesus, who is regarded as a 'true prophet' (*alēthēs prophētēs*). This description is characteristic of the Judaeo-Christian sect whose beliefs are embodied in parts of the *Homilies*. Jesus did not couch these doctrines in the language of demonstrative reasoning, because he addressed God-fearing people who required no proofs to support his assertions, and because, having but limited time at his disposal, he did not want to make unnecessarily lengthy discourses. He was fully aware that Peter and other disciples of his sort not only were conscious of and comprehended the implications of practically everything he said (in the rare cases when their understanding failed, they questioned him privately), but could also provide proof for the doctrines they put forward. It is not claimed, in other words, that all the doctrines enounced in our passage were made known by Jesus to his true disciples, such as Peter; what is claimed, rather, is that these teachings reflect correctly the doctrines of Jesus which were communicated by him to them only in part; the other part they were able to grasp without his instruction.

A brief analysis of its last section may help to situate the passage in relation to schools of thought in Christianity and Judaism. The section in question treats of love and fear of God, and issue is taken with the view that He ought to be loved and not feared. For while it is admitted that love alone, unaccompanied by fear, can induce a man to refrain

112 *Dikaiopragein*.

113 *Ateleis tou pros auton phobou*.

114 *Pisteuei*.

115 *Mageuei*.

116 *Diaballei*.

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from sinning and that such a man incurs no blame, the argument as a whole leads to the conclusion that, generally speaking, it is fear of God (which may or should be concomitant with love of Him) that leads to the performance of meritorious actions. Indeed the point is made that love of God comes about as a result of conscientiousness in (or a good conscience accompanying¹¹⁷) such actions, and that these are motivated by fear. It is also stated that he who does not fear does not believe in the judgement to come.

The latter affirmation accords with a Pauline text, II Cor. v:10–11:

For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done to his body according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the fear¹¹⁸ of God, we persuade men.

However, another Pauline text, Rom. viii:15, appears to depreciate fear (of God):

For you have not received the spirit of bondage¹¹⁹ again to fear,¹²⁰ but you have received the spirit of adoption,¹²¹ whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The superiority of love (of God) over fear (of God) is stated unequivocally in I John iv:18:

There is no fear in love,¹²² but perfect love casts out fear; because fear has torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love.¹²³

In Jewish thought, the intricacy and complicated nature of the relation between love¹²⁴ and fear¹²⁵ of God is a principal theme of several discussions. We shall not here go into the various positions taken by different rabbis,¹²⁶ but it seems to me that the passage from the

117 See above, n. 92, and text there.

118 *Ton phobon.*

119 *Pneuma douleias.*

120 *Eis phobon.*

121 *Pneuma hyiothesias.*

122 *Phobos ouk estin en tēi agapēi.*

123 Despite this and similar value judgements, fear of God of course remained an important and almost universally recognized and approved motivation in Christian religiosity.

124 אהבה

125 יראה

126 On love and fear of God in talmudic literature see for instance E. E. Urbach, *The Sages — Their Concepts and Beliefs*, Jerusalem 1979, pp. 402 ff.

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Homilies, which on the whole appears to counter the tendency to depreciate fear of God as compared to love of God, would not have struck a jarring note within the context of their deliberations.¹²⁷

Let us now set out to analyze the central section of our passage, that which treats of Space and of the 'Extensions' (*ektaseis*) of God.

We shall first discuss some philosophical terms used in the passage in connection with Space, and shall proceed to treat its view of God. In dealing with God's relation to Space as outlined in the passage, we shall also refer to Bardaisan's opinion on this point and to the critique of his opinion by Ephraem Syrus. We shall conclude by discussing the doctrine of God's Extensions, after which we shall turn our attention to the relevant texts in the *Sefer yezira*.

A principal object, though not the only one, of the author of our passage in expounding his conception of Space is to prove that while God is encompassed by Space, He is more excellent than it. With this aim in view, the author states that Space is 'nothing'; it is that which does not exist. Furthermore, the vacuum is 'nothing'.¹²⁸

As the Extensions of God go forth to infinity in all six spatial directions, it seems certain that our author assumes Space to be infinite. In the context of an attempt to discover what philosophical doctrines may have influenced our passage, this assumption seems highly significant. The existence of infinite space is affirmed by two of the great philosophical schools of antiquity, the Atomists and the Stoics. Moreover, both the Epicureans¹²⁹ and the Stoics use three terms

127 The view stated in our passage that '[the performance of] meritorious deeds comes about because of fear' may be compared with an opinion put forward in *Aboth de-Rabbi Nathan*, Chap. x, ed. S. Schechter, New York 1967, p. 26, ll. 17 ff. (see also Urbach, *op. cit.*, p. 403). It is said there that a man who serves God out of love tends to be neglectful in his service, but not if he serves Him out of fear. The two positions are by no means identical, but both appear to reflect the attitude that the fear of God was to be defended against those who spoke of it in disparaging terms.

128 As has been pointed out above (n. 25), these assertions are reminiscent of statements made by Democritus (cf. n. 12 above, where we noted a resemblance, though perhaps to a lesser extent, of a notion concerning God put forward in our passage to a conception propounded by Xenophanes). The author of our passage may have obtained what knowledge he had of the doctrines of the pre-Socratics from doxographers, though acquaintance with other sources is not to be ruled out. Whereas Democritus (Diels, 55A, 38 and 40) regarded the full (*to plêres*), i.e., the actions, as what is (*on*) and the vacuum as what is not (*ouk on* or *mê on*), the author of our passage contrasts the non-existent (*mê on*) spaces or vacuum with the existent God.

129 *Kenon*, *khora* and *anaphês physis* are mentioned as synonymous terms in Epicurus'

relating to space which occur in our passage: *topos*, *kenon* and *khōra*. The Epicurean model of the universe, however, seems incompatible with that posited in our passage. Epicurus¹³⁰ states that the worlds (*kosmoi*), which exist in infinite Space, are infinite in number. In such a model Space does not and cannot have a midmost point; none of the worlds, neither ours nor the others, are situated in its centre. The model outlined in our passage is quite different, for the infinite space which it postulates has a centre — God.

The model in our passage does, on the other hand, bear a certain resemblance to that of the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus, which places the cosmos in the middle of infinite space.¹³¹ Plutarch attacks Chrysippus for supposing¹³² that what is infinite can have a centre.¹³³ As we have noted, the Stoics, too, use the three spatial terms occurring in our passage, *kenon*, *khōra* and *topos*. Our passage contains the following remark concerning the first of these terms:

To gar legomenon kenon ti pote hōs skeuos estin ouden ekhon?
‘For that which is called vacuum, can it perhaps be like a vessel containing nothing?’

This sentence may be compared with a remark of Chrysippus:¹³⁴

To men gar kenon tois kenois angeiois, legesthai paraplesiōs, ton men topon tois plēresi.¹³⁵ ‘For we speak of vacuum in a way similar to [our speaking of] full vessels.’

Both Chrysippus and the author of our passage, then, refer to empty vessels in connection with the vacuum.

The above sentence in our passage in which vacuum is compared to an empty vessel is followed by the observation:

Plēn auto to skeuos kenon on ouk auto esti topos, all en hōi estin auto to kenon, eiper skeuos estin. ‘... such an empty vessel would

‘Letter to Herodotus’ (in Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, Liber X, ed. H. S. Long, Oxford 1964, II, s.v. *Epicurus*, pp. 511 ff., l. 40). According to a conjectured reading, *topos*, too, may appear in this letter, in l. 39: *to pan esti sōmata kai topos*, ‘the Universe is bodies and space’ (identified with vacuum). However, the alternative reading *kai kenon*, ‘and vacuum’, seems more plausible.

130 ‘Letter to Herodotus’ (see n. 129), l. 45.

131 See for instance Von Arnim, II, pp. 170–176, particularly p. 174, l. 33.

132 Or: ‘dreaming’, *oneirothōn*.

133 Von Arnim, II, p. 174, l. 551, and p. 171, l. 539. Plutarch refers to a Stoic doctrine according to which the infinite has neither beginning, nor middle, nor end.

134 See Von Arnim, II, p. 163, ll. 2–3.

135 *Angeion* here and *skeuos* in our passage both mean ‘vessel’.

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not itself be Space, but — if [we were to suppose that] such a vessel exists — that in which the vacuum would subsist.’

If our rendering of this rather involved Greek sentence is correct, this observation (which may be a gloss that has entered the text) offers a criticism of the comparison enunciated in the preceding sentence and also of the comparison made by Chrysippus between the vacuum and an empty vessel. It may also deviate from Stoic terminological usage in tacitly identifying vacuum with space or in considering the former to be part of the latter.¹³⁶ The Stoics¹³⁷ define *kenon*, ‘vacuum’, as ‘absence of body, or that which is capable of being occupied by that which *is*, but is not occupied by it,’ or as ‘an extension (*diastēma*) from which body is absent,’ or as ‘an extension that is not occupied by a body’; *topos*, ‘space’, on the other hand, is ‘that which is occupied by a body’, or ‘that which is occupied by and coextensive with that which is’¹³⁸ (cf. also below).

All three terms, *topos*, *kenon* and *khōra*, occur in the following long sentence from our passage:

Pōs gar topos ōn einai dynatai, ektos ei mē deuthera khōra eiē, hoiron ouranos, gē hydōr, aer kai ei allo ti estin sōma, ho an kai autou pleroi to kenon, ho dia touto kenon legetai hoti ouden estin. ‘How can space be an existent, unless outside [it] there be a second place¹³⁹ similar to the heaven, the earth, the water, the air and any other body that may exist, [which bodies] may fill with themselves the vacuum? It is called vacuum because it is nothing.’

This sentence appears to assert that *topos* (‘space’) cannot be an existent outside the boundaries of this world, except on the supposition that a second world, a second *khōra* (‘place’), exists outside these boundaries; if this were so, the vacuum in this *khōra* would be occupied by bodies, the elements or one of the latter. The supposition is formulated in such a way as to leave no doubt that the author of our passage considers it extremely improbable (or perhaps even absurd). The use of the term *khōra* suggests that it denotes space (or vacuum) occupied by a body. This meaning is not in total agreement with the Stoic definition, going

136 The second supposition appears to be borne out by another sentence in our passage; see below.

137 See Von Arnim, I, p. 26, ll. 22 f.; II, p. 163, ll. 14 ff. and ll. 18 ff.

138 Sextus Empiricus remarks in connection with this definition that ‘now’ they (the Stoics) designate body as that which is (*on*).

139 The translation of *khōra* as ‘place’ is possibly misleading. ‘Space’ would be a better rendering, but we have used this term to render *topos*.

back to Zenon, according to which *khōra* is what is occupied in part by a body.¹⁴⁰ It seems, however, to accord by and large with a definition of Chrysippus according to which *khōra* is the *topos* of a bigger (*meivzanos*) body.¹⁴¹ This last sentence from our passage also seems to imply that while vacuum is nothing, space occupied by a body is an existent. This accords with the Stoic terminological usage in which body was called an existent (*on*).¹⁴²

The foregoing observations seem to call for the conclusion that the Stoic theory — though not adopted wholesale — had a considerable influence, directly or indirectly, on the conception put forward in our passage. As we shall elucidate, this theory is also relevant to the doctrine of Bardaiṣan (Bardesanes).

Bardaiṣan (154¹⁴³–222), born in Edessa, where he spent the greater part of his life, lived in a Syriac milieu and appears to have written only in Syriac.¹⁴⁴ He founded a sect which, as far as we can judge, was still in existence in the early centuries of Islam, and propounded a religious (some scholars call it Gnostic) doctrine which included a cosmology and a cosmogony. Our knowledge of this doctrine is derived from Syriac, Greek, Latin, Armenian and Arabic authors.¹⁴⁵

Several writings of the fourth-century church father Ephraem Syrus, including passages in his hymns and his ‘Prose Refutations of Marcion, Bardesanes and Mani’, are our main source for Bardaiṣan’s doctrine.¹⁴⁶

140 See Von Arnim, I, p. 26, ll. 22 ff.; II, p. 163, ll. 14 ff.

141 Von Arnim, II, p. 163, ll. 26 f.

142 See above, n. 138.

143 According to the most reliable testimonies.

144 *The Laws of the Countries*, which, if it is authentic, is the only preserved treatise of Bardaiṣan and one of the earliest Syriac works known to us, will not be discussed here, as it is not germane to our enquiry. This treatise is discussed at some length by Drijvers in *Bardaisan of Edessa*.

145 The authors apart from Ephraem Syrus who treat in various languages of this heresiarch are quoted and discussed by Drijvers on pp. 166–202. Abu’l-Huṣayn b. ‘Uthmān al-Khayyāt, a Mu’tazilite theologian who died in the first half of the tenth century, ought to be added to Drijvers’ list of Arabic authors quoted in this context. The relevant passages in al-Khayyāt’s *Kitāb al-intiṣār* are cited below in Appendix V.

146 A considerable portion of Drijvers’ book is devoted to a discussion of these writings of Ephraem Syrus. There are three very similar Syriac exposés of Bardaiṣan’s cosmogony and cosmology which by and large agree with and on certain points possibly clarify Ephraem’s account. The earliest is that of Barhadbeshabba ‘Arbaia (late sixth century), from whose account that of Iwannis of Durā (first half of the ninth century) and that of Moses bar Kepha (d. 903) may be derived. The account of Bardaiṣan’s cosmogony attributable to the Syriac author Theodore Bar

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Though we need not concern ourselves here with this doctrine as a coherent whole, we shall single out for comparison and discussion some particulars which seem to have a bearing on our enquiry.

According to a version of Bardaişan's cosmogony and cosmology found in Ephraem's 'Refutations',¹⁴⁷ this heresiarch believed in the existence of God, of inert Darkness, and of four pure elements, namely Light, Wind, Fire and Water. Initially God was on high, Darkness below, the Wind in the West, the Light in the East, the Fire in the South and the Water in the North. The creation of the world was brought about by a commingling of the four elements with one another and with Darkness.

According to Bardaişan, these four elements as well as God and the Darkness were encompassed by empty space. On this point Bardaişan's view bears an obvious resemblance to that put forward in our passage from the *Homilies*, a work widely supposed to date from the second half of the fourth century — that is, from perhaps a century and a half after the death of Bardaişan.

Accordingly, Bardaişan's conception of the relation between God and Space and that put forward in our passage both contrast in a similar way¹⁴⁸ with that of Ephraem, who believes that space is limited by God, and with the talmudic saying according to which God is the place of the world, but the world is not His place (see below, n. 183).

The following passage from Ephraem's 'Refutations' appears to be directed both against Mani, who is the object of a polemic in the immediately preceding passages, and against Bardaişan,¹⁴⁹ who is mentioned explicitly:

And on this account that pre-eminence which the Teaching gives to Space the true Teaching gives to God, because He is His own Space. For greater are the praises which Bardaişan uttered concerning Space than those which he uttered concerning the God [who is] in the midst of Space, which [praises] are not suitable for Space, but for God. For if they are suitable for Space, their Space is found to be more excellent than their God. But the true word demands praises as it demands acts of worship, and

Khonai (late eighth century?) differs considerably from the other three. The text and translation of these four accounts appear in Drijvers, pp. 96–116.

147 See Drijvers, pp. 134 ff.

148 Though, as we shall presently see, they differ *toto caelo* in their view of the nature of Space.

149 This is also the opinion of Drijvers, p. 136.

presents them to the one great and adorable [Being]. For as it is not right to worship idols, so that there may not be many gods with the One, so it is not right to bestow the title of 'Essence'¹⁵⁰ on Space along with God. And as it is not right to postulate another power which is able to command God, so it is not right to postulate a Space which is able to limit God. For if He is made subservient in one respect, this is a great blasphemy. For, as He does not command all if He is commanded, so He does not limit all if He is limited. For if the title of Commander is necessary to His lordship, the [title of] Space is also necessary. For if all commanders are under His command, as they say, all places too are included within His greatness, as we say, that is, as the truth requires.¹⁵¹

According to this text, Bardaisan viewed Space as 'Essence', *itautā*, a term which in his system may also be used of God, the four elements (as he defines them) and Darkness, all of which are eternal.¹⁵²

Obviously the Space which is described in this manner, and upon which, according to Ephraem,¹⁵³ Bardaisan bestowed higher praise than upon God, is totally unlike the Space described in our passage from the *Homilies*, which is nothing and non-existent. And yet the two Spaces have one all-important trait in common: both are said to encompass God. It was presumably this conception that led the author of our passage to downgrade Space, but for reasons unknown to us it did not engender the same reaction in Bardaisan, who apparently

150 *Itautā*. In the printed translation this term is rendered 'Existence'.

151 Ed. Mitchell, I, p. xcvi; Syriac text, pp. 132-133:

ומטל הנא ה' רבותא דיהבין יולפנא לאתרא יולפנא דשררא לה הו לאלהא יהיב לה מטל דהויה אתרא דנפשה. רורבן אנין גיר תשבחתא דאמר ברדיצן על אתרא, יתיר מן הלין דאמר על אלהא דבגו אתרא הנין דלו לאתרא זדקן אלא לה לאלהא. אן גיר לה לאתרא זדקן אשתכח לה אתרהון דמיתר הו מן אלהון. תבעא להין דיין מלתא שרירתא לתשבחתא איך דלסגדתא, ולחד רבא וסגידא מקרבא להין (?). איך דלא גיר ולא למסגד לפתכרא, מטל דלא נהוון אלהא סגינא עם חד הכנא לו ולא למשמהו אתרא באיתותא עם אלהא. ואיך דלא זדק דנסיים חילא אחרנא דמצא פקד לאלהא הכנא לא ולא דנסיים אתרא דמצא מסיך לאלהא. בחד מן גבין גיר אן אשתעבר גודפא הו רבא. איכנא גיר דלו פקד כל הו אן מתפקד הכנא לו מסיך כל הו אן מסתיך. אן גיר מתבעא פקודא למרותה מתבעא הו אף אתרא למרותה. אן גיר כלהון פקודא תחית פקודותא אנון איך דהנון אמרין, אף כלהון אתרותא לגו מן רבותא חבישין איך דחנן אמרין חנן. הנו דיין איך דתבעי שררא.

152 Bardaisan's Space may, however, have been incorporeal (unlike the other Essence).

153 Who certainly had some grounds for his assertion, though one should allow for exaggeration owing to his bias.

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had no qualms about exalting Space. Our author seems to have been aware of contentions of the kind put forward by Ephraem against Bardaisan, and he is at pains to prove that Space being what it is, i.e. a non-entity, the fact that it surrounds God by no means signifies that it is superior to Him (any more than the air encompassing the sun is superior to the latter) and does not in any way detract from His greatness.

Having clarified these matters, we may now turn our attention to the doctrine of God's Extensions (*ektaseis*) set forth in our passage. It is this doctrine which has a possibly significant bearing on the history of the conception of the *sefirot* as formulated in the *Sefer yezira*,¹⁵⁴ as I shall seek to demonstrate through comparison of the relevant texts in each work. The relevant section of our passage in this regard is the following:

And [proceeding] from Him [i.e., from God], as from the Centre, an Essence abounding in life-giving and incorporeal force traverses all things, the stars and the abodes of the heaven, the water, the earth, the fire and whatever else, if anything, exists. [This Essence] is infinite in [the direction of] height, limitless in [the direction of] depth, immeasurable in [the direction of] breadth, and extends thus in a threefold manner into the infinite, life-creating and rational nature [that proceeds] from Him. For that [which proceeds] from Him must necessarily be infinite on all sides, having as its heart Him who in reality is in [His] shape above all things; wherever He may be, He is, as it were, in the infinite as [its] midmost [point], being the limit of the All. Therefore the Extensions (*ektaseis*), which start out from Him, have the nature of six limitless [ones].

154 As part of the present investigation, I assayed to find out whether the points of similarity between certain doctrines propounded in *Homilies XVII* and the teaching of the *Sefer yezira* on the *sefirot* had already been mentioned in print. As I discovered, such a reference occurs in H. Graetz, *Gnosticismus und Judenthum*, Krotoschin 1846, pp. 110–113. But the brief remarks made there on this subject are rather confused, and contrast in this respect with various important and novel observations made in the same work on other topics. Graetz does not mention the term *sefirot* in his discussion, and one has the impression that he had at the time no clear grasp of the structure of the *Sefer yezira* and of the doctrine of the *sefirot* propounded therein. A. Epstein, on the other hand, cannot be accused of lacking clarity in the few lines which he devotes to this issue, referring back to Graetz, in his 'Recherches sur le Sefer Yecira' (*Revue des études juives*, XXIX [1894], p. 73). These two works are the only texts dealing with the subject of our enquiry that I have been able to discover.

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One of them, proceeding from Him as its starting-point, goes on towards the height above, another towards the depth below, [the third] towards the right, [the fourth] towards the left, [the fifth] forwards, [the sixth] backwards, [and] He, looking upon them as upon a number that is equal on all sides, completes the cosmos by means of six intervals of time (*khronikois diastēmasi*), He being the Repose (*anapausis*), and having the Aeon-to-come as [His] image; He is the Beginning and the End. For in Him the six infinite [ones] end, and from Him they take their extension towards the infinite. This is the mystery of *Seven*.

THE SEFER YEZIRA

Let us now look at the relevant passages in the *Sefer yezira*.¹⁵⁵ Our analysis of these passages will be aided by references to the tenth-century commentary of Saadya Gaon. This is possibly the earliest commentary on the *Sefer yezira* known to us, and its interpretations may be derived from some otherwise unknown tradition relating to our text which had come down to Saadya.¹⁵⁶ We shall also have recourse to the 'Qayrawan commentary' on the *Sefer yezira*, written in the tenth century and sometimes attributed to Dunash b. Tamim. This work purports to be a response to and critique of Saadya's commentary, whose interpretations in many cases are rejected.

Par. 1:¹⁵⁷ God engraved thirty-two ways of wondrous wisdom ... He created His world in three books: *s.f.r.*, *s.f.r.* and *s.f.r.*¹⁵⁸

155 The quotations from the *Sefer yezira* and also the paragraph numbers in the following pages are drawn from the Gruenwald edition. Occasionally variants noted in the critical apparatus have been preferred to the version given in the text. In our discussion of Saadya's commentary we refer, for obvious reasons, to the version of the text appearing there.

Our translations in most cases are taken from or based upon another article by Gruenwald, 'Some Critical Notes on the First Part of the *Sefer Yezira*', *Revue des études juives*, CXXXII (1973), pp. 475-512.

156 This is conceivable because Saadya lived in the geographical region, *largo sensu*, in which the *Sefer yezira* may be supposed to have originated and to have received its final redaction. In this respect he differed from Shabbetai Donnolo, whose commentary on the *Sefer yezira* may claim an approximately equal antiquity, but who essentially belonged to the Byzantine cultural milieu.

157 שלשים ושנים נתיבות פלאות חקק יה ... ברא את עולמו בשלשה ספרים בספר וספר וספר

158 Various ways of vocalizing these three words are possible. No reliable tradition has come down to us on this point.

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Saadya interprets the three 'books' as being 'writing' (*khatt*), 'numbers' (*a'dād*) and 'speech' (*nutq*). The same interpretation appears in the Qayrawan commentary.

Par. 2:¹⁵⁹ Ten *sefirot belima* and twenty-two fundamental letters.

We are not at present concerned with the twenty-two letters, i.e., the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.¹⁶⁰ The term *sefirot* is interpreted both in Saadya's commentary and in the Qayrawan commentary as denoting 'numbers'. Saadya's translation of the phrase *sefirot belima* is *a'dād mahzūra*, which, according to one of the explanations he propounds, appears to mean 'numbers having a limit', or according to another, 'numbers which should not be approached'.¹⁶¹ The Qayrawan commentary and various other sources, on the other hand, interpret the term *belima* as though it were two words, *beli ma*, i.e., 'without anything'.

Par. 3:¹⁶² Ten *sefirot belima*, according to the number of the ten fingers, five against five, and the Covenant of the One¹⁶³ is constituted in the middle ...

Par. 5:¹⁶⁴ Ten *sefirot belima*, ten and not nine, ten and not eleven. ... their measure is ten, which have no end.¹⁶⁵

Par. 7:¹⁶⁶ Ten *sefirot belima*, and their measure is ten, which have

159 עשר ספירות בלימה ועשרים ושנים אותיות יסוד

160 However, one of the categories into which they are divided in the *Sefer yezira* will be discussed below.

161 Or perhaps 'numbers that are defined'. The word used by Saadya (ed Qafih, p. 50) to clarify the meaning of *mahzūra* is *muljama*, literally: 'bridled'. Another signification of *mahzūra* is 'enclosed in such a way as to be unapproachable'. It would seem to be some such signification that is intended in the commentary, ed. Qafih, p. 90, where the term *a'dād mahzūra* is explained as meaning 'what you should hold back (*ahzūr*) your heart from thinking about'. In the opinion of Gruenwald, *belima* alludes to the secret attaching to the *sefirot*.

162 עשר ספירות בלימה: מספר עשר אצבעות חמש כנגד חמש וברית יחיד מכוונת באמצע

163 I read 'יחיד', 'one', rather than 'יחוד', 'Oneness', which Gruenwald inserts into the texts. Both readings occur in the MSS. On Saadya's commentary here see Gruenwald, 'Some Critical Notes on the First Part of the *Sefer Yezira*' (above, n. 155), p. 487.

164 עשר ספירות בלימה: עשר ולא תשע, עשר ולא אחת עשרה ... ומידתן עשר שאין להן סוף

165 The word 'end', which in this passage renders סוף, is also used to translate אחרית; see below, Par. 7.

166 עשר ספירות בלימה, ומידתן עשר שאין להן סוף: עומק ראשית ועומק אחרית, עומק טוב ועומק רע, עומק רום ועומק תחת, עומק מורח ועומק מערב, עומק צפון ועומק דרום ואדין אל מלך נאמן מושל בכלן ממקום קדשו ועד עדי עד

no end.¹⁶⁷ The depth¹⁶⁸ of the Beginning and the depth of the End, the depth of Goodness and the depth of Evil, the depth of Height and the depth of Lowness, the depth of East and the depth of West, the depth of North and the depth of South. And a single Lord, the faithful God and King, rules all of them from His holy abode, for ever and ever.

It may be noted that according to Saadya's commentary (p. 55), 'His holy abode' signifies the middle of the world, which is Jerusalem.

Par. 16:¹⁶⁹ These are the ten *sefirot belima*. One: the Spirit of the living God. Two: Spirit from Spirit. Three: Water from Spirit. Four: Fire from Water. And Height and Lowness, East and West, North and South.

Par. 30:¹⁷⁰ This paragraph deals not with the *sefirot* but with the seven 'double' letters: *beit*, *gimmel*, *dalet*, *kaf*, *pe*, *resh*, and *tav*. They are called double because each of them is pronounced in two different ways. They correspond to the six 'sides'¹⁷¹ or 'ends'¹⁷² (of the world), i.e., as specified in the second recension of this paragraph and in Saadia's commentary: Above and Below, East and West, North and South, with the addition of the seventh member in this series, which seems, according to the indication of our recension and of Saadia's commentary on it, to be the Holy Temple, which is in the middle (of the world); Saadia remarks: 'we say that the Creator is in the middle of His World'.¹⁷³

Let us now return to the account of the *sefirot* given in the *Sefer yezira*.

Pars. 5–6:¹⁷⁴ [Ten *sefirot belima*], their measure is ten, which have

167 Or possibly: 'it being without end.'

168 Saadya renders 'depth', עומק, as *nihāya*, 'end' (ed. Qafih, p. 51).

169 — אילו עשר ספירות בלימה: אחת — רוח אלוהים חיים, שתיים — רוח מרוח, שלוש — מים מרוח, ארבע — אש ממים, ורום ותחת, מזרח ומערב, צפון ודרום. This paragraph is identical, except in one unimportant detail, with Par. 11. Pars. 11 and 16 may be regarded as containing a second list of the ten *sefirot* (the first occurs in Par. 7). But the text of the *Sefer yezira* used by Saadya in his commentary gives quite a different 'second' list of the *sefirot*; see below.

170 This paragraph has two recensions. That discussed here occurs in Saadya's commentary (ed. Qafih, p. 80).

171 צלעות

172 קצוות

173 *Naqūl inna'l-khāliq mutawassit ālamahu.*

174 (עשר ספירות בלימה) ומידתן עשר שאין להן סוף, נעוץ סופן בתחילתן ותחילתן בסופן

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no end.¹⁷⁵ Their end is fixed in their beginning, and their beginning in their end, as a flame is bound to a burning coal. Know and think and conceive that the Lord is one and the Creator one, and there is no second to Him. What can you count before one?

Par. 8:¹⁷⁶ Ten *sefirot belima* ... Seeing them is like the vision of lightning, their ultimateness is their having no end. And upon His order they run and return.¹⁷⁷ Upon His command they hasten like a tempest, and they make obeisance to His throne.

We may now make a schematic comparison between the doctrine of the *sefirot* and its cognate conceptions in the *Sefer yezira*, as set forth in the above paragraphs, and the parallel doctrines relating to the Extensions (*ektaseis*) in our passage from the *Homilies*. Such a comparison leads us, I believe, to the discovery of five points of similarity between the two teachings; the obvious difference between the two, the fact that the *Sefer yezira* posits ten *sefirot* while the *Homilies* passage refers to six *ektaseis*, will be discussed later on.

Point I

The six Extensions (*ektaseis*) and six of the *sefirot* are or correspond to¹⁷⁸ the six cosmic directions of Space: above and below, east and west, north and south.

Homilies

One of [the Extensions], proceeding from Him [God] as its starting-point, goes on towards the height above, another towards the depth below, [the third] towards the right, [the fourth] towards the left, [the fifth] forwards, [the sixth] backwards ...

Sefer yezira

Par. 7: Ten *sefirot belima* ... The depth of the Beginning and the depth of the End, the depth of Goodness and the depth of Evil, the

בגחלת קשורה בגחלת. דע וחשוב וצור, שהאדון יחיד והיוצר אחד שאין לו שני, ולפני אחד מה אתה סופר

175 Or: 'it being without end'.

176 עשר ספירות בלימה ... צפיונן כמראה בוק, תכליתן אין להן קץ ודברו בהן ברצוא ושוב, ולמאמרו כסופה ירדפו, ולפני כסאו הן משתחווים. This text conforms (apart from one detail) to the version occurring in Saadya's commentary, ed. Qafih, p. 67.

177 For this part of the passage cf. Ezek. i:14: 'And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning', והחיות רצוא ושוב כמראה הבוק,

178 'Correspond' would seem more or less to convey the conception of the *Homilies*,

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depth of Height and the depth of Lowness, the depth of East and the depth of West, the depth of North and the depth of South.

Par. 16:¹⁷⁹ These are the ten *sefirot belima*. One: the Spirit of the Living God. Two: Spirit from Spirit. Three: Water from Spirit. Four: Fire from Water. And Height and Lowness, East and West, North and South.

In both these lists, six of the *sefirot* correspond to the six cosmic directions of space. They differ, however, with respect to the designations of the remaining *sefirot*.

Point II

Both the Extensions and the *sefirot* are infinite.

Homilies

Therefore the Extensions, which start out from Him, have the nature of six limitless [ones].

As we have seen, this is not the only statement to the same effect occurring in *Homilies* XVII.

Sefer yezira

Par. 5: [Ten *sefirot belima*], their measure is ten, which have no end.

This statement also occurs in Par. 7.

In my view this statement originally referred to the spatial infinity of the six *sefirot*, corresponding to the six cosmic directions; this infinity parallels that of the Extensions. With the adoption of the conception of ten *sefirot*, as we shall see, the assertion concerning their infinity was necessarily interpreted as alluding to something totally different.

Point III

Both the Extensions and the *sefirot* are connected with the notion of number.

Homilies

He [God], looking upon them [the Extensions] as upon a number

while 'are' seems more in keeping with the text of the *Sefer yezira*, though it is out of place with regard to Saadya's commentary. See Appendix I.

¹⁷⁹ And Par. 11, see above.

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that is equal on all sides, completes the cosmos by means of six intervals of time ...

Sefer yezira

The term *sefirot* appears to be derived from the verb *safor*, 'to count'. As we noted above in connection with Par. 2, both Saadia's commentary and the Qayrawan commentary regard the *sefirot* as numbers. The idea of the completion of the creation of the cosmos by means of six intervals of time (i.e. the six days of creation, which are clearly regarded as having a close connection with the Extensions) does not appear in the *Sefer yezira* in the context of the doctrine of the *sefirot*, but it does occur in this context in other Jewish texts embodying early cosmic speculations.¹⁸⁰

Point IV

In the case of both doctrines the end is said to join up with the beginning. Both the Extensions and the *sefirot* are in motion. Both move forward (whatever their direction) and return.

Homilies

He [God] is the Beginning and the End. For in Him the six infinite [ones, i.e. the Extensions] end, and from Him they take their extension towards the infinite.

Sefer yezira

Pars. 5–6: Ten *sefirot belima*, their measure is ten, which have no end. Their end is fixed in their beginning, and their beginning in their end, as a flame is bound to a burning coal. Know and think and conceive that the Lord is one and the Creator one ...

Par. 8: ... And upon His (God's) order they (the *sefirot*) run and return ...¹⁸¹

Point V

God's place is in the centre of the Universe.

180 See for instance E. Gottlieb, *Mehqarim be-sifrut ha-qabbala*, Tel Aviv 1976, pp. 64 ff.

181 In a recension of Par. 5 (ed. Gruenwald, p. 142), the phrase from Ezek. i:14 appears in a more complete form: וְהַחַיִּוִּת רָצוּ וְשׁוּב, 'And the living creatures ran

Homilies

And [proceeding] from Him [God], as from the centre, an Essence abounding in life-giving and incorporeal force traverses all things ... He [God] is, as it were, in the infinite as [its] midmost [point] ...

Here the term 'force' refers to the Extensions. The conception that God's place is in the centre is clearly presupposed in the following passage stating that

One of them [the Extensions], proceeding from Him as its starting-point, goes on towards the height above, another towards the depth below, [the third] towards the right, [the fourth] towards the left, [the fifth] forwards, [the sixth] backwards ...

Sefer yezira

The only statement in the *Sefer yezira* that there is no difficulty in construing as alluding to God's place in the centre of the universe occurs in Par. 30, which treats of the double letters and not, at least not ostensibly, of the *sefirot*. Having enumerated the six 'sides' or 'ends' of the world,¹⁸² the paragraph goes on to speak of the Holy Temple which is in the middle, and at least one recension contains an indication that God's place is in the Temple.¹⁸³ As we have already noted, Saadya states in his commentary that God is (located) in the middle of His world. Par. 3 of the *Sefer yezira* perhaps suggests that God — if the words 'the Covenant of the One' indeed refer to Him — is 'in the middle' between two groups each comprising five *sefirot*, but there is no indication that the passage refers to God's location in space.

Our passage from the *Homilies* clearly spells out the implication of the doctrine that God is located in the centre of the world: its author, as we have seen, considers this doctrine to be bound up with the concept of a finite God, whose extension in space, as proven by His position,

and returned'. There can be no doubt, as far as I can see, that the phrase is used in the context of the *Sefer yezira* with reference to the *sefirot*.

182 Which correspond, as we know, to six of the ten *sefirot*.

183 והיכל קדוש מוכן באמצע 'ברוך כבוד ... ממקומו' A Talmudic saying follows immediately: 'הוא מקומו של עולמו, ואין עולמו מקומו' 'He is the place of His world, and His world is not His place'; see Urbach (above, n. 126), p. 68. This saying may have been quoted here because it contradicts the assertion made in the preceding passage that God is localized in one particular place.

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is limited. His finiteness is contrasted with the spatial infinity of His *ektaseis*. In the redaction (or redactions) of the *Sefer yezira* available to us, this contrast is not explicit, to say the least; there may even have been an attempt to disguise or negate it.

To recapitulate, the doctrine in *Homilies XVII* concerning God and the Extensions accords with the doctrine of God and the *sefirot* in the *Sefer yezira* with respect to the following five points: (1) the six Extensions and six of the *sefirot* are, or correspond to, the six spatial directions; (2) both the Extensions and the *sefirot* are infinite; (3) both are connected with the notion of number; (4) in both cases the end is said to join up with the beginning, both are in motion, and both move forward and return; (5) in both God's place is in the centre of the universe. These parallels seem to me so significant that they cannot be dismissed as coincidental; furthermore, the nature of the substantive differences between the two doctrines suggests that one of them — that expounded in the *Sefer yezira* — at some point was radically transformed.

As we have noted, the most obvious of the differences is that the *Sefer yezira* speaks of ten *sefirot*, while *Homilies XVII* speaks of only six Extensions which correspond to the six spatial directions. There are indications, however, that this difference may not have existed at a previous stage in the development of the doctrine of the *sefirot*. Perhaps the most important of these possible indications is the fact that the two lists of the ten *sefirot* occurring in the *Sefer yezira* have only six *sefirot* — those corresponding to the spatial directions — in common, while their designations of the four remaining *sefirot* are utterly dissimilar. This may suggest that originally only the six *sefirot* corresponding to the six spatial directions were posited; if that is so, the doctrine of the *sefirot* would at this phase have borne a marked resemblance to the conception in *Homilies XVII*.

A puzzling text in the version of the *Sefer yezira* which Saadya used in his commentary, and Saadya's equally puzzling comments on it, may be relevant in this connection. The text, Chap. iv, Pars. 1 and 2 in Saadya's version,¹⁸⁴ contains the 'second' list of the *sefirot* and so corresponds by and large to Pars. 11 or 16 in our version.¹⁸⁵ It may be rendered as follows:

184 Ed. Qafih, pp. 105 and 110; in the Lambert edition this passage appears on pp. 69 and 73 of the Arabic text.

185 These two paragraphs are to all intents and purposes identical; see above, n. 169.

(1) Ten *sefirot belima*: One, the spirit of the living God, the Living of the Aeons (*'olamim*, worlds or eternities), His throne is established from of old, may a blessing and a benediction be upon His name always, for ever and ever, this is the Holy Spirit.

(2) Two, spirit from spirit, and He graved and carved in it (apparently in the second spirit proceeding from the first) the four winds (i.e. directions) of heaven. East and West, North and South, and a spirit¹⁸⁶ is in each of them.¹⁸⁷

This text seems self-contradictory: it begins with a reference to ten *sefirot*, but lists only six, the first and the second Spirit and four spatial directions out of six, Height and Lowness being omitted.

Two possible ways of resolving this difficulty may be envisaged.

Hypothesis No. 1: All passages referring to the *sefirot* in the *Sefer yezira*, or in an earlier text on which that work may have been based, were revised at a certain stage in the evolution of the doctrine with a view to affirming and emphasizing a new conception of ten *sefirot*, or as the *Sefer yezira* has it, 'not nine or eleven'. In order to account for the self-contradictory character of the text under discussion, it may further be supposed that by some oversight the insertion here of the idea of ten *sefirot* was not accompanied by a corresponding modification of the following passage so as to harmonize it with this assertion. Pursuing our hypothesis further, we may suppose that some relatively early doctrine posited the existence of only six *sefirot*, just as *Homilies XVII* posits the existence of six Extensions.¹⁸⁸

186 In our translation the Hebrew word *ruah* is rendered both as 'spirit' and as 'wind'.

187 The Hebrew text reads as follows:

(א) עשר ספירות בלימה. אחת, רוח אלהים חיים, חי העולמים, נכון כסאו מאז, ברוך ומבורך שמו תמיד לעולם ועד וזו היא רוח הקודש.
(ב) שתיים, רוח מרוח, חקק וחצב בה ארבע רוחות השמים: מזרח ומערב, צפון ודרום, ורוח בכל אחת מהן.

188 If we permit ourselves to indulge in some more speculation, the parallel between the *Ektaseis* (which we have designated as Extensions) of the *Homilies* and the *sefirot* in the passage from the *Sefer yezira* may be pushed further. In *Homilies XVI, 12, 1-2* (ed. Rehm, p. 223, l. 29 - p. 224, l. 7), God's Wisdom, which is His spirit, is described as being extended (*ekteinetai*) from Him as a hand and creating (*demiourgousa*) the universe; the noun *ektasis*, which derives from *ekteinein*, occurs in the same context (p. 224, l. 3). This may legitimately be interpreted as signifying that God's Spirit, which is identified with His Wisdom, is regarded here as His Extension. As we have seen, this is also the case in the *Sefer yezira* passage, in the version appearing in Saadya's commentary, which is the subject of our present discussion. As far as I know, however, no attempt is made in the *Homilies* to amalgamate the doctrine of Section XVI, in which God's Extension is regarded as

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Hypothesis No. 2: The text of the *Sefer yezira* included in Saadya's commentary is defective here. At first blush this hypothesis has the merit of resolving our difficulty without requiring any fine-spun speculation; a closer look, however, may lead us to conclude that the notion of a definite text in this case may be problematic, for it implies the existence of a canonical redaction, of which the faulty text is an imperfect copy. As far as I can see, there is no evidence that a canonical redaction of our passage — i.e., one approximating Par. 16 in the version that has come down to us — existed in Saadya's time. Moreover, Saadya's interpretation of this passage in his commentary seems to me to give a clear indication that the text in the MS of the *Sefer yezira* available to him, which is doubtless the earliest MS of this treatise of whose contents we can form an idea, was identical (except, perhaps, for one particular) with that which according to this second hypothesis should be regarded as defective. As attested by the Arabic textual tradition,¹⁸⁹ he states that the author of the book (i.e., the *Sefer yezira*), having in the first chapter established ten infinite things as corresponding to the ten Numbers, here establishes seven 'roots'¹⁹⁰ as corresponding to them. The fact that Saadya refers to seven rather than six 'roots' is perplexing; none of the possible explanations appears satisfactory. It seems certain, however, that no list of *ten* Principles or *sefirot* resembling that in Par. 16 of our version is to be found in his interpretation of the passage or passages in question.

Unless new manuscript material turns up, the question of which of these hypotheses is correct cannot be answered definitively. However, it may well be that Saadya's version of the text and his interpretation of it constitute additional evidence that the conception of the *sefirot* set

being constituted by His Wisdom or Spirit, with that of Section XVII, in which the term Extension is applied to the six infinite spatial Directions. In the above text from the *Sefer yezira*, on the other hand, an attempt at an amalgam of the two different doctrines concerning the *sefirot*, paralleling the two conceptions of God's Extension, may be discerned. The *sefirot* listed in this text may be classified into (1) the Spirit of God and a Spirit deriving from this Spirit, and (2) four of the six spatial directions.

189 The Arabic MS used by Lambert in his edition has אצול ך (seven 'roots'), which Lambert emends to אצול ך (ten 'roots'; see ed. Lambert, p. 69 of the Arabic text). In the Qafih edition (p. 105), which uses the same MS, the word 'seven' is written out in full: שבעה אצול. One Hebrew translation of Saadya's commentary has עשרה; another, quoted in the commentary of Yehuda b. Barzilay on the *Sefer yezira*, has שבעה (see ed. Lambert, *loc. cit.*, n. 8).

190 Or: 'elements' (*usul*).

forth in the *Sefer yezira* acquired some of its essential characteristics as a result of a profound modification of an earlier doctrine.

At this point I shall adumbrate a hypothesis which might perhaps account for the changeover from six *sefirot* to ten. To introduce this hypothesis, we shall cite, again, Saadya's commentary and the Qayrawan commentary, and a third commentary written by Yehuda b. Barzilay of Barcelona, who lived in the second half of the eleventh century and the first half of the twelfth. It may be supposed that a degree of continuity existed between the cultural milieu to which all three of these authors belonged and that in which the *Sefer yezira* originated,¹⁹¹ and some observations of these commentators may thus throw light on the transformation in the conception of the *sefirot* which we suppose to have taken place.

Par. 5 of the *Sefer yezira* contains, *inter alia*, the phrases

Ten sefirot belima ... Their end is fixed in their beginning, and their beginning in their end.

Near the beginning of Saadya's explanation of these lines in Chap. iii of his commentary we encounter the following passage:¹⁹²

Supposing that somebody says that the Indian [method of] numbering (*al-hisāb al hindī*) has only nine numbers (*a'dād*), for ten is given the position¹⁹³ of one, and thus twenty the position of two, thirty the position of three, and so on up to ninety, [which is given] the position of nine. Then they confer upon one hundred the status¹⁹⁴ of one, upon two hundred that of two, and so on up to one thousand or more [than one thousand].

We shall reply: they can only confer this status with regard to the circumscribed¹⁹⁵ numbers that are traced on a board. As far as the conviction¹⁹⁶ with regard to numbers *per se* is concerned, they have no doubts that ten has a grade which one has not. It is spoken of as one ten, just as one speaks of one five and one three, and so forth.

Furthermore, if a man should wish to invent signs for numbers

191 This does not apply to the tenth-century commentary of Shabbetai Donnolo (see above, n. 156), though he may have had some knowledge of Arabic science.

192 Pp. 90–91 in the Qafih edition.

193 *Makān*, literally: 'place'.

194 *Manzila*.

195 *Al-mahşūra*.

196 *Al-ʿitiqad*.

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up to five which would upon reaching [this number] return and recur (*ta'ūd rāji'a*), [or if he should wish to invent signs] which would not return until they reach [the number] forty, he would be able to do this.¹⁹⁷ However the perfect number,¹⁹⁸ upon which the system¹⁹⁹ [is founded], is ten, neither less nor more.

Several observations on this passage are in order. First of all, Saadya refers to only 'nine numbers', and this poses a question: why does he not refer to the sign for zero, which exists in both the Indian and the Arabic systems of numerals? Even if we assume that zero was not considered a number, as no doubt was the case, the question remains valid. In the absence of additional evidence, any attempt to answer it would necessarily be rather speculative.²⁰⁰ It may be noted that the Syriac author Severus Sebokht, in the earliest known reference in the West to the Indian system of numerals, also refers to nine signs, omitting all mention of the sign for zero. The same is true of the Qaywaran commentary on the *Sefer yezira*. The description of ten as the perfect number is attributed by Aristotle to the Pythagoreans.²⁰¹ The last of our observations on this passage from Saadya's commentary may be the most significant in the context of our inquiry. It concerns the fact that Saadya uses a form of the verb *rāja'a*, 'to return' or 'to recur', to denote the recurrence of the same numerals in the *al-ḥisāb al-hindī*, or in any other system of number symbols based on the same principles. This same verb is used by Saadia in the translation of what in his recension is Par. ii:1 of the *Sefer yezira*; it is said there of the Sefirot:

197 Here I follow Qafih's reading and translation. Lambert's translation (p. 79), based on a slightly different reading, is 'on ne pourrait l'en blâmer'. The subject of this French phrase is the man who might wish to invent a system of signs for numbers different from the Indian one.

198 *Al-'adād al-tām*.

199 אל-בניה, literally: 'the construction'.

200 On the occurrence in Sanskrit of the zero in the framework of the Indian system of numerals see for instance G. Ifrah, *Histoire universelle des chiffres*, Paris 1981, pp. 475 ff.

201 See *Metaphysics*, I, 986a, 8-9: *teleion hē dekas einai dokei*. Cf. also E. Frank, *Plato und die sogenannten Pythagoreer*, Tübingen 1962, pp. 309 ff., 314 ff., and 326. In the Arabic translation by Thābit Ibn Qurra of the *Arithmētiqe eisagōgē* of Nicomachus of Gerasa, the term *al-'adād al-tām*, which in this work as well as in Saadya's commentary designates the perfect number, is interpreted in a different way (*Arabische Übersetzung der Eisagōgē des Nicomachos von Gerasa*, ed. W. Kutzch, Beirut 1958, pp. 39-40, corresponding to pp. 42-43 of the Greek text, ed. R. Hoche, Leipzig 1866).

ואמר אל-בארי ירדהא כאל-מלאיכה אלתי תחאצר ותרגע. 'The order of the Creator causes them to come back as do the angels which run forward and return'.

The same phrase, with slight variations, occurs in Saadya's translation of his recension of Par. iii:1 (as numbered in his version), which is the subject of his commentary in the passage under discussion; there, however, it refers not to the *sefirot* but to 'your heart'. It nevertheless seems very probable that his use of the verb *raja'a* in this passage from his commentary to denote the recurrence of numerals is connected with his conception of the forward and backward motion of the *sefirot*, which term, as we know, he interprets as denoting *a'dād*, 'numbers'. Indeed, this seems already to be implied by his mention of the *al-hisāb al hindī*.

In the Qayrawan commentary an answer of sorts is given to a question posed by Saadya's commentary, that of why there are ten *sefirot*, though there are only nine numerals in the Indian system of numbers.²⁰² The answer is that one is not a number:²⁰³

For this reason the author of the *Sefer yezira* speaks of ten *sefirot*, for when we subtract one from ten nine remain, and the end (*sof*) of the numbers exists in the Wisdom of God,²⁰⁴ may He be blessed, and all the system of numbers²⁰⁵ in the whole world is based²⁰⁶ on them. For this reason the Indian sages invented nine numerals²⁰⁷ ...²⁰⁸

This passage is quoted by Yehuda b. Barzilay,²⁰⁹ who comments:

The author of this book says: Ten *sefirot*, because one is not a part of the numbers;²¹⁰ thus only nine are left, and all numbering²¹¹ and counting is based²¹² on them. For this reason the Indians²¹³

202 Qayrawan commentary, pp. 25 f.

203 The statement conforms to antique and Arabic arithmology.

204 השם

205 החשבון

206 מתגלגל, literally: 'turns'.

207 אותיות, literally: 'letters'.

208 This passage is completed by a sentence in which the author refers to a treatise he has composed on the Indian system of numerals. In the edition used here the title of the treatise is corrupt.

209 *Perush sefer yezira*, p. 144.

210 חשבון, literally: 'counting'.

211 ספירה

212 תסוב, literally: 'turns'. This is clearly a rendering of the same Arabic term which is is

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invented writing nine signs (literally: 'letters'²¹⁴). I speak of them at length in a book I have written on their system of numbers, entitled *Hisāb al-ghubār*.²¹⁵

Immediately before this reference by Yehuda b. Barzilay to the passage in the Qayrawan commentary, we find the following lines:²¹⁶

Ten *sefirot belima*, ten and not nine, ten and not eleven ... that is, the system of numbers (*heshbon*) [goes] up to ten, not more and not less, for it stops at ten (*she'esor hi belimat ha-heshbon*). For when a man reaches ten, he returns to one, adding it to ten, and says eleven (*ahad 'asar*), twelve (*shenem 'asar*) ... up to twenty, which is two tens. A man cannot speak of a number (*heshbon*) which is not within the schema of ten. We have heard²¹⁷ that some Indians²¹⁸ disagree on this point, saying that the system of numbers (*heshbon*) is essentially constituted by nine, and that nine is the end (*sof*) of [this] system and the point at which it stops. That is, one counts²¹⁹ from one [upwards], saying one, two, three, up to nine, then one stops²²⁰ and returns and says ten, which is analogous to one, [while] twenty is analogous to two and so on up to ninety; at this point the tens stop,²²¹ one returns and says one hundred instead of one, two hundred instead of two and so on up to nine hundred; at this point the hundreds stop,²²² one says one thousand, which is analogous to one, [while] two thousand is analogous to two, thus there is always a recurrence.

rendered מתגלגל in the Hebrew version of the Qayrawan commentary.

213 Literally: 'the men of India'.

214 אוחית

215 'The Dust System of Numerals', *Hisāb al-ghubār*, is an Arabic term for the Indian system of numerals, or a system closely resembling the latter. In the Hebrew version of the Qayrawan commentary this term is rendered חשבון האבק. In the passage that follows at this point (pp. 144–145), Yehuda b. Barzilay speaks of a system of numerals based on the Hebrew alphabet, which in this context is supposed to have 27 letters, as 5 of its 22 characters are dual; that is, they have two different forms, one used at the end of a word, the other everywhere else.

216 *Perush sefer yezira*, p. 144.

217 The reference is doubtless to the above passage from the Qayrawan commentary, which Yehuda b. Barzilay subsequently quotes.

218 Literally: 'men of India'.

219 חושב

220 נבלם

221 נבלמו

222 נבלמו

Their answer²²³ to this is [as follows]: if numbers stop at nine,²²⁴ why does one say 'one ten' (*ahad 'asar*, i.e. eleven) and not 'one nine'. Since one does not say this, this means that [the point at which numbers] stop is not nine,²²⁵ but rather ten. It is to ten that one adds,²²⁶ as we have said above. However, some of the Indians say that the system of numbers²²⁷ [consists of] nine, and one is not part of the system of numbers [which consists of] nine. This has a signification. For this reason they invented writing nine numerals.²²⁸

The various derivatives appearing in the above passage of the verb *balom*, rendered here as meaning 'to stop', are significant in the context of our inquiry. They are quite clearly employed because the author considers this verb the root of the term *belima* in the expression *sefirot belima*. According to this interpretation, the expression signifies that the *sefirot* are numbers or a system of numbers which in a sense does not go beyond ten.²²⁹

We see, then, that these commentators refer to the Indian numerals in interpreting texts of the *Sefer yezira*. It seems to me that the assumption underlying such references may not be wholly unfounded, as suggested by several indications.

The *Sefer yezira* differentiates sharply between the series of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the series of ten numbers designated by the term *sefirot*. The theory it sets forth is concerned both with the sounds represented by the letters and with the letters themselves, regarded as *written* symbols. It is the latter aspect of the theory that comes to the fore in the passages treating of the 'double' letters, which are characterized by the fact that each of these written symbols stands for two sounds.

Now, in the Hebrew system of writing (as also in Greek and Syriac) the letters were — and still are — used as numerals. But this function of the Hebrew characters, which is never mentioned in the *Sefer yezira*, can only with difficulty — or perhaps not at all — be reconciled with

223 I.e., the answer of those who oppose this view.

224 שאם כן הוא תשעה הוא בלימת החשבון

225 שאין התשעה בלימה

226 That is, one says אחד עשר ('one ten', i.e. eleven) and so forth.

227 חשבון

228 אותיות, literally: 'letters'.

229 As far as our inquiry is concerned, the debate as to whether the system of numbers is based on nine or on ten and the critique of the Indian system related in this connection seem to me of secondary importance.

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the radical distinction between the system of letters and the system of numbers on which the doctrine of the *Sefer yezira* is based. That distinction obviously would be blurred if letters functioned as numerals. These considerations suggest that number-symbols other than letters were in use in the milieu in which the *Sefer yezira* originated; it is not straining probability too far to suppose that these symbols may have been the Indian numerals.

The hypothesis that the introduction of the Indian numerals may have had something to do with the conception in the *Sefer yezira* of a schema positing two separate systems, of letters and of numbers, seems to me very tempting, if speculative; I do not deny the possibility that there might be another quite different explanation to account for it. The presupposition on which this hypothesis rests, on the other hand, seems very difficult to contest: many converging indications suggest that the schema in question at some point superseded a unitary theory which may, perhaps, have been formulated broadly along the lines of the conception of *Homilies XVII*. It is perhaps significant that the dualistic schema of the *Sefer yezira*, which in my opinion was not rooted in very ancient tradition,²³⁰ does not, despite the immense influence of the work, appear to have made a deep impression on the thought of the kabbalists. Some kabbalistic texts may even contain dimly discernible vestiges of what may be viewed as a unitary conception antedating the *Sefer yezira*.

As may be seen from the passages adduced for comparison, the description of the Hebdomad in *Homilies XVII* (the six *ektaseis* and God in the centre) to some extent parallels the statements in the *Sefer yezira* concerning the attribution of the seven double letters.²³¹ Thus six of these letters correspond to the six directions of space, with God in the centre (*Sefer yezira*, Par. 30), and each letter corresponds to a day of the week (Par. 41).

In the *Sefer bahir*, regarded by Scholem as the earliest kabbalistic work, the term *sefirot* occurs in only one paragraph,²³² in a context which is not relevant to our enquiry. We find instead the term *ma'amarot* ('sayings'), which refers to the dicta by whose means God created the world. There are ten *ma'amarot* in all,²³³ and they are divided into two groups of three upper and seven lower *ma'amarot*.²³⁴

230 Relatively to the *Sefer yezira* itself.

231 As was suggested, in part, above.

232 See Scholem, *Ursprung*, p. 71.

233 They are also called 'forces' (כחות).

234 See Scholem, *Ursprung*, p. 110.

The latter seem to have some of the attributes of the *ektaseis* in *Homilies XVII* and also of the double letters in the *Sefer yezira*. There is certainly a connection between Par. 30 in the *Sefer yezira* and the apparent correspondence of the seven lower *ma'amarot* in the *Sefer bahir* to the six directions of space plus the Holy Temple of God, situated in the centre. These seven *ma'amarot* also correspond, again like the *ektaseis* of the *Homilies* and the double letters of the *Sefer yezira*, to the seven days of the week, and more particularly, as in the case of *Homilies XVII*, to the week in which the world was created.²³⁵ It should be noted, on the other hand, that there is no parallel in the *Sefer bahir* to the duality ensuing in the *Sefer yezira* from its positing of two systems, of *sefirot* and of letters.

Later kabbalists reverted to the terminology of the *Sefer yezira* and spoke of ten *sefirot*.²³⁶ They did not, however, take over from the *Sefer yezira* its doctrine of two distinct systems; on this point, too, analogy with the *Sefer bahir* should be noted. Only the unitary system of the *sefirot*, which no longer were viewed primarily as numbers,²³⁷ remained. However, this unitary system did not preclude the division of the ten *sefirot*, like the *ma'amarot* in the *Sefer bahir*, into two groups, one of three and the other of seven *sefirot*. In other words, we encounter evidence in relatively late kabbalistic texts to suggest that an earlier conception, present, as we have seen, in the *Sefer yezira*, may have survived in some form. The group of seven *sefirot*,²³⁸ like the parallel group in the *Sefer bahir*, retains one of the attributes of the *ektaseis* in *Homilies XVII* and of the double letters in the *Sefer yezira*: its members correspond to the seven days of the week (or of Creation²³⁹).

A conception which perhaps does not, strictly speaking, pertain directly to the body of doctrine treating of the *sefirot* but is nonetheless related to it speaks of 'Sabbath' as God's name.²⁴⁰ *Homilies XVII*

235 See Scholem, *ibid.*, p. 122.

236 Cf., for instance, G. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, Jerusalem 1974, p. 178.

237 As far as we know, no Hebrew author later than Yehuda b. Barzilay referred to the Indian numerals in the context of philosophical or kabbalistic speculations or commentaries. While they were and are in common use in Arabic works, Hebrew books used the letters of the alphabet as numerals.

238 Sometimes called 'the *sefirot* of the Building' (ספירות הבנין).

239 Cf. E. Gottlieb (above, n. 180), *loc. cit.*

240 Cf. I. Tishby, *Mishnat ha-zohar*, II, Jerusalem 1961, p. 490. The passage in the *Zohar* (II, fol. 886) reads: שמה דאיהו שלים מכל מהו שבת שמה דקודשא בריך הוא, שמה דאיהו שלים מכל סטרוי

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states that ‘He is the Repose’²⁴¹; this assertion is made, moreover, in the context of an explanation of the mystery of the Hebdomad, six members of which are the six *ektaseis*, corresponding to the six days of Creation, while the seventh clearly is God, who thus is the Sabbath — a designation which in Hebrew signifies ‘repose’.

Before proceeding to a new topic, let us sum up: It seems to me that we have reason, without going beyond the evidence at our disposal, to suspect that some kabbalistic texts, including the first of them from a chronological point of view, the *Sefer bahir*, as it were by-passed the *Sefer yezira* with regard to some aspects of the doctrine of the *sefirot* (by whatever name the latter were called) and continued an earlier tradition. In these texts the seven lower *sefirot*, conceived as different from the others, are fitted into a scheme positing the existence of ten *sefirot* in all, with the lower seven retaining some points in common with the Hebdomad of *Homilies XVII*, i.e. six *ektaseis*,²⁴² with God, regarded as the seventh, in the centre.

Let us now attempt to look into some themes from our passage in *Homilies XVII* with which we dealt above. This may help us to situate the body of doctrine which we have examined in relation to other theological and cosmological teachings, as we shall try to do in the final chapter.

We shall start by recapitulating the remarks that are meant to inform us of the kind of text that is offered to our scrutiny. This text, said to be a discourse of Peter, purports to be based on concise statements made by Jesus, the true prophet, to such people as were capable of understanding them. It would seem that these people were of Hebrew stock. The statements were short for two reasons: (1) because the people to whom they were addressed had no need of explanations in order to understand them, and (2) because Jesus had but a limited time at his disposal and did not wish to spend the whole of it in making such pronouncements as are expounded by Peter in the discourse with which we are concerned.

In this part of our text the implication, if that is what it is, that the

241 *Homilies XVII*, p. 234: *autos anapausis*.

242 It should be noted that this term — derived from the verb *ekteinein/ekteinesthai*, which, as we have seen (above, n. 188), is explained in *Homilies XVII* as referring to the extension of God, has a parallel in the *Zohar*'s conception of the extension of the divine substance in the *sefirot*. The Aramaic terms denoting this extension are פשיטו and אתפשטותא; see Tishby (above, n. 240), p. 135.

speaker and the listeners are Hebrews appears to denote the Judaeo-Christian provenance of the passage. The reference to Jesus as the 'true prophet' seems to provide more specific information: the author of the passage either was an Ebionite or was close to the members of this sect with respect to the particular doctrine in question.

An example of the relation of our *Homilies* XVII text to various Jewish and Christian doctrines may also be found in the passage at the end of the text which has already been discussed, that purporting to assess the part to be allotted respectively to love and to fear in the motivation of human actions. Its intention is not to proscribe loving God without fear, for it states that

If, however, someone is able to refrain from sin without fearing God, let him not fear Him. For it is permitted to refrain out of love for Him from doing that which displeases Him.

However, the rest of the passage manifests a pervasive scepticism as to the possibility of love unaccompanied by fear being sufficient to motivate one to conduct himself in a way pleasing to God. As has been suggested, this attribute is on the whole²⁴³ more characteristic of Talmudic Judaism than of Christianity; it is in total disaccord with the doctrine put forward in the First Epistle of John.

More important, however, for ascertaining the relation of the doctrines set forth in our passage to other schools of thought is its conception of God. We have already discussed certain significant aspects of this conception at length, namely the doctrines that God is circumscribed in space and finite, and that six infinite Extensions (*ektaseis*) come forth from Him, each of them in a different spatial direction, with Him at the centre.

Let us now examine our passage's description of some traits of the Form of God. It refers to the beauty of that Form; to the desire to see God; and to the possibility, under certain conditions, of satisfying that desire. We must also consider the polemical remark directed in the text against those who deny that God has a Form and that He is limited, being located in space.

The Form of God is described in our text as follows:

243 It should, however, be borne in mind that this is not a matter with regard to which rigid criteria designed to differentiate between the Jewish and the Christian positions can be of any use whatever. The variety of opinions on both sides is much too great.

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He [Jesus] commanded the fear of God, whose angels,²⁴⁴ those of the least faithful among us, stand in heaven continually contemplating the Face²⁴⁵ of the Father. For He has a Form (*morphē*) for the sake of [His] first and unique²⁴⁶ beauty, and all the limbs, not for use. For He does not have eyes for the purpose of seeing with them — for He sees from every side; [for] He, as far as His body is concerned, is brighter beyond compare than the visual spirit and more brilliant than any light — compared to Him, the light of the sun would be held as darkness. Nor does He have ears for the purpose of hearing. For He hears, thinks, moves, acts, makes from every side.

As we have noted,²⁴⁷ this description seems in part to echo a statement of the pre-Socratic philosopher Xenophanes, who affirms that ‘the whole of Him (God) sees, the whole of Him thinks, the whole of Him hears.’

Another text which seems relevant here occurs in a work entitled *Adversus Arium* (iv:24) by Marius Victorinus:²⁴⁸

... Auditor, Accipiens, sed ipsum manens vel mansio quies, quietus quiescens magis, quia a quiescente quies ut supra docuimus, unde dictus est et sedere quasi in centro *tōn pantōn ontōn*, id est omnium quae sunt, unde universali oculo, id est lumine substantiae suae, quae vel esse est vel vivere vel intelligere ideas²⁴⁹ *tōn ontōn* non versatili aspectu videt quia et quies est et a centro simul in omnia unus est visus. Haec deus.

P. Hadot makes the following comment on this text:²⁵⁰

Les expressions ‘il est assis au centre de tous les étants’, ‘il voit de son oeil universel les idées²⁵¹ des étants’ viennent probablement

244 On these angels see below, n. 257.

245 *Prosōpon*.

246 *Monon*, literally: ‘only’. An alternative rendering of the phrase might be ‘of His beauty, which is the first and unique beauty’.

247 See above, notes 12 and 128.

248 Quoted in *Porphyre et Victorinus*, II, p. 51.

249 The MSS have *ineas*. Dom Lambert’s emendation *ideas* was finally adopted by y Hadot after some hesitation. In a previous edition of the text which Hadot made jointly with P. Henry the emendation *lineas* is proposed; see *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I, p. 431, n. 1.

250 *Porphyre et Victorinus*, I, p. 431.

251 See n. 249.

directement ou indirectement d'un texte religieux, hymne ou oracle. En effet, l'image d'un oeil omnivoyant, placé au centre des choses, est traditionnelle dans les théologies solaires.

I do not intend to deny that the expressions mentioned by Hadot may call to mind notions or images which occur in solar theologies, and the suggestion that these expressions are derived from a religious text seems to me very probable. In this context a comparison between certain phrases and notions found in the above passage from Victorinus with parallel phrases and notions appearing in our passage may be of some interest.

In the text of Victorinus the words *unde dictus est*, 'therefore it was said of Him', may be interpreted as introducing a quotation,²⁵² which may be translated as follows:

He sits as it were in the centre of *tōn pantōn ontōn*, that is of all [the things] that are, and from there He sees with His universal eyes, that is with the light of His substance, which is being or living or intellecting the ideas²⁵³ of *tōn ontōn* with an unchanging regard, both because He is Repose²⁵⁴ and because His gaze [directed] from the centre at one and the same time towards all things is *one*. Such is God.

The expression *lumen substantiae suae*, 'the light of His substance', is certainly more philosophical, from the point of view of terminology, than the phraseology used of God in a comparable statement in *Homilies XVII*:

Tou en hēmin bleptikou pneumatos aparablētōs lamproteros kai pantos photos stilpnoteros, '[For] He, as far as His body is concerned, is brighter beyond compare than the visual spirit in us and more brilliant than any light.'

The Neoplatonist Victorinus, unlike the author of the *Homilies*, cannot be accused of crudely attributing a body to God, yet there is, I believe, an unmistakable resemblance between the expression 'the light of His substance' and the hyperbolic description of the luminosity of God's body in *Homilies XVII*. Given this, and taking into account the strong probability that the passage from Victorinus is a quotation of some

252 The occurrence of Greek words in the passage following *dictus est* seems to show that the quotation, if it is one, is translated from the Greek.

253 A different emendation of this text is mentioned above, n. 249.

254 Or: 'quietness'.

sort, we may advance the hypothesis that these two passages may be derived from a common source, or — and this is perhaps the more likely hypothesis — may have been formulated by authors who were influenced by approximately the same body of doctrine, or drew upon similar systems of images and symbols. The explanation *vel esse est vel vivere vel intelligere*, following the words *lumen substantiae* (of God), appears to be a Neoplatonic attempt to interpret an expression, apparently quoted from another source, which originally was meant to denote what may be called, for want of a better term, a physical reality.

The 'quotation' in Victorinus' text also speaks of God's 'location' in space:

dictus est et sedere quasi in centro *tōn pantōn ontōn*, 'It is said of Him that He sits as it were in the centre of all [the things] that are.'

This may, again, be compared with a phrase from *Homilies XVII*:

... *hoš en apeiroi mesos estin*, 'He is, as it were, in the infinite as [its] midmost [point].'

Thus both the 'quotation' in the passage from Victorinus and the text in *Homilies XVII* speak of God as being in the centre.²⁵⁵ Here, however, Victorinus' 'quotation' employs an anthropomorphic term which does not appear in the description of God in *Homilies XVII*: He is said to be 'as it were sitting'.²⁵⁶

255 The expression *hos apo kentrou*, 'as from the centre', is used of God in *Homilies XVII*, p. 234, l. 5, in a passage which appears on the same page as the expression we have quoted; we have seen in the Victorinus 'quotation' that God is said to sit 'as it were *in centro*'. As we know, the *Sefer yezira*, like *Homilies XVII*, conceives of God as being in the centre.

256 Note, moreover, that God is called *anapausis*, 'Repose', in our passage from the *Homilies*, and *quies*, which may likewise be rendered 'Repose', in the 'quotation' in Victorinus. The parallel here is uncertain, for in *Homilies XVII anapausis* clearly alludes to the Jewish Sabbath, while Victorinus' use of *quies* and various derivatives from the same root in the passage immediately preceding the 'quotation' (see *Porphyre et Victorinus*, II, p. 51) has obvious Neoplatonic overtones. In my opinion, however, this does not necessarily prove that there is no connection between the two conceptions of God as repose. As we have supposed with regard to another term occurring in the 'quotation', Victorinus may have imposed on the latter a Neoplatonic interpretation which perhaps bore no relation at all to its original meaning. The phrase 'He sits as it were in the centre ...' in the

Let us go back to the anthropomorphic description in *Homilies XVII* which we began to analyze above. The description begins by saying that the

angels,²⁵⁷ those of the least faithful among us, stand in heaven continually contemplating the Face of the Father. For He has a Form (*morphē*) for the sake of [His] first and unique²⁵⁸ beauty,²⁵⁹ and all the limbs, not for use.

Here commences the explanation according to which God has eyes and ears, not because He requires these organs in order to see or hear, but because, as is clearly implied, the lack of them would impair the beauty of His Form. After this has been made clear, the text goes on:

He has the most beautiful Form for the sake of man, in order that the pure in heart shall be able to see Him, so that they shall rejoice on account of whatever they have endured.

This last sentence is obviously a sort of commentary on a verse occurring in the Beatitudes (Matt. v:8): 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.'

According to this doctrine, then, God's Form is as it is for the sake of its beauty, and this beauty is for the sake of man; the statement from the Beatitudes is interpreted as meaning that the pure in heart will be rewarded²⁶⁰ for the sufferings they have endured by having the

'quotation' is paralleled to some extent by a statement occurring in Chap. iv of *Pirqe de-rabbi Eliezer*:

ושכינתו של הקב"ה באמצע, והוא יושב על כסא רם ונשא
Holy One, Blessed be He, is in the middle, and He sits on a high and lofty throne.'

The meaning is that God is in the middle of the ranks of the angels, who are disposed in a certain order. It may be added that the use in the Victorinus 'quotation' of the verb 'to sit' in relation to God appears to imply that He is seated on a throne.

257 Does the expression 'angels, those of the least faithful among us' refer to the souls of the faithful after death, when they have left their bodies? The Greek text does not seem to warrant this interpretation, for these souls are said already at present to stand in heaven. A possible meaning is that every faithful member of the community has a heavenly counterpart or twin. However, we cannot profitably engage in such speculation before making the necessary preliminary investigation regarding other references of this kind, if they exist, to angels.

258 On this rendering see above, n. 246.

259 'For the sake of [His] beauty' seems an appropriate rendering of *dia kallos*.

260 Probably after death or in eschatological times.

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joy of seeing God, which in the context signifies seeing the beauty of God's Form.

The text goes on:

For He has stamped man as it were with the greatest seal, with His own Form, in order that he shall rule and be lord over all things, and that all things shall serve him ...

The passage which seems to begin with this last sentence²⁶¹ and goes on for several lines in the printed text of the *Homilies* appears to me either to have been considerably altered, with a view to making it unobjectionable from the point of view of Orthodox Christianity, or to be a gloss that has been inserted into the text. The reference here to the difference between the invisible God and His image (*eikōn*), the visible man, seems to me to contradict the earlier statement concerning God's Form, which is visible and beautiful and may be seen by those who, because of their merit, are vouchsafed this grace.

This passage of dubious authenticity is followed by a renewed reference to God's Form, which appears to continue the preceding discussion:

But someone may say: If He has a Form, He has also a shape (*skhēma*) and is also in space.

This comment, in my view, has a precise function. It establishes that both the doctrine concerning the beauty of God's Form and the other main topic (to which the phrase serves as an introduction) of our passage in *Homilies* XVII, God in Space and His Extensions, share a basic presupposition: both, each in its different way, posit a limited God, located in space. This conception seems to be a necessary corollary of the doctrine that God has a beautiful Form, and it is, of course, also the fundamental assumption of the doctrine concerning God and His Extensions. The intent here seems to be to point out that the two doctrines may be regarded as complementary.

This does not by any means entail the conclusion that these two doctrines, disparate in many ways, were originally evolved by the same people or group of people; indeed, the contrary seems more plausible. The juxtaposition of the two doctrines in the same text and the sentence designed to show the affinity between them indicate, rather, that both at some point were adopted by one author, and perhaps by one sect.

261 One of the reasons why I consider the textual authenticity of this sentence doubtful is the fact that it begins 'Tei gar ...' The word *gar* seems misplaced here.

After the exposition of the doctrine of the Extensions, the text continues:

For He is alone, in one way apprehensible, in another inapprehensible, in one way [having] a limit, in another limitless, [for] He has the Extensions, which [proceed] from Him to the infinite.²⁶² For He is both apprehensible and inapprehensible, near and far away, being there²⁶³ as [one] who exists alone,²⁶⁴ and who grants the participation of the Intellect, which is infinite on all sides; it is through drawing breath from [this participation] that the souls of all [beings] obtain life.

Some formulations occurring in this passage appear to be at variance with the doctrine, very forcibly expressed earlier on in the text, which asserts the limitedness of God. The deity to which the passage refers appears to be an entity in which God and His Extensions constitute a unity. This gives the doctrine a rather disconcerting pantheistic cast, which becomes particularly evident if we accept the (not implausible) rendering of *monos hyparkhon*, an expression which refers to God, as 'the only existent'. The passage may have Stoic overtones in other statements as well, though the possible similarities are too vague to be worth citing. We may recall in this connection our earlier discussion of the influence of Stoic terminology on the various designations of space and place occurring in *Homilies XVII*.

And when they [the souls] are separated from their bodies and are found to have a longing (*pothos*) for Him, they, being immortal, are borne to His bosom, just as in the season of winter the vapours in the mountains, drawn upwards by the rays of the Sun, are borne towards it. What [great] love (*storgē*) shall we be able to conceive if we observe with the intellect [the beauty of] His Form (*eumorphia*). This cannot be [achieved] in any other way. For it is impossible that beauty (*kallos*) be without form, or that one be drawn to love (*erōs*) Him or to believe that he sees God without the latter having a shape (*eidos*). However, some that are hostile to truth and allied to evil²⁶⁵ say, under the pretext

262 Or: 'to infinity'.

263 *Kaikei*. *Ekei* may denote the transcendent world of the Platonic ideas or such entities as the Intellect. However, there is nothing to indicate that the reference here is to this connotation of the Greek word.

264 Or: 'as the only Existent'.

265 Or: 'badness', *kakia*.

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of belauding [Him], that He is without figure (*askhēmatistos*), so that, being without form and shape (*amorphos kai aneideos*), He would not be visible (*ahoratos*) to anyone, [and hence] would not be desired.²⁶⁶ For the intellect that does not see²⁶⁷ the shape (*eidōs*) of God is empty (*kenos*) of Him. And how should one pray without having someone to whom he can turn for refuge, who can offer support? [For] he who is not [confronted] with something solid²⁶⁸ steps out into the void (*kenon*). Yes, says he, one ought not to fear but to love (*agapan*) God.

The main doctrine enunciated in this passage is pretty clear up to a point. Longing for God, we are borne upwards to His bosom. It would be impossible to have love (*storgē* or *erōs*) for Him if He had no form, for there is no beauty without form. It is the intellect that perceives the form or shape of God. The terminology of this last statement recalls an expression of Plotinus, who spoke of ‘intelligible’ or ‘intellected’ beauty.²⁶⁹ From a doctrinal point of view, however, it is difficult to imagine a greater contrast than that between this latter Platonic notion and the conception of *Homilies XVII* regarding the beauty of the anthropomorphic, corporeal God posited in the text.²⁷⁰

God’s beauty, perceived by contemplating His Form, is the object of affections on the part of man which are described here by the terms *pothos*, *storgē* and *erōs*. The last is most significant in this context, because it indicates that the author, in speaking of those affections which lead to the soul being borne upwards to God’s ‘bosom’, has in mind passionate (or ecstatic) longing and love.²⁷¹ The last sentence in the above passage deals with an altogether different topic, one that

266 Or: ‘much beloved’, *peripothētos*.

267 *Horōn*.

268 *Antitypian ouk ekhōn*. The translation, as we have noted, is conjectural; it is suggested by the context.

269 *Ennead*, V, 8 is entitled ‘Peri tou Noētou Kallous’.

270 The two theological notions of ‘seeing God’ and ‘the beauty of God’ obviously pose problems within the framework of the doctrines of various Christian denominations, which generally eschew anthropomorphism and the attribution of corporeity to God, except in the matter of the incarnation.

271 An indication as to the connotation of *pothos* and *peripothētos* (which also occurs in our text) may be seen in the Septuagint rendering of the Hebrew verb עָרַוּ in Ps. xlii:2 (= xli:2 in the Septuagint) as *epipothein*:

כָּאִיל תַּעֲרַג עַל אֲפִיקֵי מַיִם כֵּן נַפְשִׁי תַּעֲרַג אַלְיָךְ אֱלֹהִים
(‘As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God’), Septuagint: *Hon*

has already been touched upon above: the author's assessment of the relative importance of love (*agapē* — *'ahava* in Hebrew) and fear (*yir'a* in Hebrew) of God. The text provides us with no information as to whether its author or authors attempted to define the relationship between *erōs*, a passionate love and longing for the beauty of God's form, and *agapē* (for God), whose power to sway human behaviour unaided by fear is regarded with some skepticism. Possibly no such attempt was made, each of the two concepts of love remaining in its own separate compartment of religious thought.

In the specifically Jewish writings, we find the notion of God's beauty in that genre known as the *Hekhalot* literature. An account of a mystical itinerary in *Hekhalot zutarti* has a double *Ofan*²⁷² proclaiming in the seventh *Hekhal* ('Palace'): 'May all those who are worthy to see the King in His beauty enter and see'.²⁷³ In a subsequent passage we find the words: 'Until he is raised and seated in front of the Throne of His Glory and he looks and sees the King in His beauty'.²⁷⁴

There is no known connection between the *Hekhalot* literature, in which we find references to God's beauty, and the *Sefer yezira*, one of whose main tenets is the doctrine of the *sefirot*. *Homilies XVII*, on the other hand, presents a text in which the concept of God's Extensions, which parallels the notion of the *sefirot* in *Sefer yezira*, is joined with an affirmation of God's beauty. We should not, however, lose sight of the possibility, pointed out above, that each of these two doctrines in *Homilies XVII* was originally evolved by a different set of people and in a different milieu, and that their unification into a single coherent theory was effected at some later stage.²⁷⁵

tropon epipothei hē elaphos epī tas pēgas tōn hydatōn, Houtos epipothei hē psychē mou pros se, ho theos.

It should, however, be remarked that the terminology of the Septuagint may not offer a clear distinction between love/*erōs* and love/*agapē*. In the translation of the Song of Songs, Hebrew אהוב and אהבה are rendered as *agapan* and *agapē*; cf. for instance i:3 and ii:4.

272 Literally: 'wheel'. Here the term denotes a member of a particular order of celestial beings.

273 *Hekhalot zutarti*, Secs. 322–324, ed. R. Elior, *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought*, Supplement I, 1982, p. 31: ראופן כפול תוקע ... ובהיכל השביעי אופני אורה מזלפות ... ומריע ותוקע לומר כל מי שהוא ראוי לראות המלך ביופיו יכנס ויראה

274 *Ibid.*, secs. 331–332, ed. Elior, p. 31: עד שמעלים אותו ומושיבים אותו לפני כסא: כבודו, והוא מסתכל ורואה את המלך ביופיו ויראה את המלך ביופיו. The question of whether man may see God and live is discussed there on p. 24.

275 I cannot here go into the conceptions of the beauty of God set forth by Christian theologians who were not tinged with Judaeo-Christianity. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*, I, quaestio XII, art. IV) quotes a passage of Dionysius

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We shall now present some data which may make it possible to hazard a guess as to the historical period, the country of origin and the social group or milieu in which the two texts we have discussed — the passage in *Homilies XVII* and the *Sefer yezira* — might have originated. On these points hard evidence is scanty, but not altogether lacking. There is good reason to believe that the passage from the *Homilies* originated in a group which believed in Jesus as a true prophet but not as a divine being. We can surmise, moreover, that this group was of Jewish origin and proud of it, and yet, unlike the Judaeo-Christians,²⁷⁶ did not deplore the fact that the missionary activity of the Christians was directed towards ‘the ignorant nations’, i.e. the non-Jews. These characteristics of the group in question are plainly indicated in, or can be deduced from, the following lines from our passage in *Homilies XVII*:

Our Lord Jesus, who was a true prophet ... uttered concise statements of views ... For the statements that he made ... [were intended] for a people capable of understanding — to which we too belong ...

Since, accordingly, he knew that everything he had said was known to us ... he commanded us — when he sent us to the ignorant nations (*ta amathē ethnē*) ... first to teach them, the first and greatest of the commandments ...

The exact time when our passage from the *Homilies* was written or redacted in the form that is available to us is unknown, but convergent

Areopagita referring to this notion. Another relevant passage from Dionysius is cited by the twentieth-century Russian theologian P. Florensky; see *Stolp i Utverzhdeniye Istiny*, Moscow 1914, p. 670. Florensky’s own interpretation of this conception occurs on pp. 99 f.

276 See S. Pines, ‘The Jewish Christians of the Early Centuries of Christianity According to a New Source’, *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities*, II, Jerusalem 1968, p. 237, which treats Judaeo-Christian documents incorporated by the Moslem theologian ‘Abd al-Jabbār (d. 1024) in his work *Tathbit dalā’il nubuwwat sayyidinā Muḥammad*. This work shows the Judaeo-Christians criticizing the Christians in general for perverting the original teaching of Jesus because of their love of power. The Christians had abandoned the Hebrew language, because ‘at that time the Hebrews were people of the Book and men of knowledge’, who would quickly have grasped their objectives and the way they were falsifying the true doctrine. ‘Accordingly,’ the critique continues, ‘they ... [took up] numerous other languages which had not been spoken by Christ and his companions. [Those who speak these languages] are not people of the Book and have no knowledge concerning God’s books and commandments.’

data appear to indicate a likely period, whose limits, however, cannot be defined precisely. The widespread view that the *Homilies* were composed in the fourth century need not in itself lead us to suppose that our passage also goes back to that century, for it could be a later accretion. There is, however, another fact which appears to indicate that the text in question was indeed written or conceived at that time, or possibly even earlier, namely the similarity we have already noted between the very distinctive formulation in our text of the problem of the relation between God and space, and what we know of how this problem was treated in the teaching of Bardaisan. According to both doctrines, God is limited with reference to space and encompassed by it, an unusual conception. This parallelism seems to me of greater significance than the difference between the two teachings in their attitude towards space: Bardaisan, as we are told (see above, pp. 77–79), esteemed space very highly, while our passage in *Homilies XVII* refers to it with pronounced disparagement.

On the whole it seems probable to me that the doctrine in our passage from *Homilies XVII* evolved in a milieu which had some knowledge of the parallel views of Bardaisan and perhaps also of the criticism levelled against them, and at a time when the question posed by the Syriac heresiarch as to the relation between the spatially limited God and infinite space was in the foreground of theological discussion within certain sectarian groups. There is no indication that later Bardaisanites were interested in problems of this kind.

In the context of our enquiry it may be relevant to mention that Book IX of the pseudo-Clementine *Recognitiones*, a work closely related to the *Homilies* which has been preserved in a Latin translation from the Greek, contains lengthy extracts from a Syriac treatise called *The Laws of the Lands* which is ascribed, perhaps correctly, to Bardaisan.²⁷⁷ But these extracts are also quoted by Eusebius in *Praeparatio Evangelica*, and so may have been taken by the author of the *Recognitiones* from the latter work. It should be added that the doctrine of *The Laws of the Lands* seems to have nothing to do with Bardaisan's theology as discussed above. Can we at least affirm, on the strength of these extracts, that the author of the *Recognitiones* was particularly interested in the Syriac literature? Not with any certainty, given the occurrence of the same extracts in the *Praeparatio Evangelica*, but this may well be the case.

A question arises here as to the linguistic background of the group

277 See *Recognitiones*, ed. B. Rehm, Berlin 1965, pp. 270–317.

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in which our passage from *Homilies XVII* was formulated. The data we possess on this point are somewhat puzzling. The group evidently prided itself on its Jewish descent, but held inhabitual views on the relation between God and space which have an unmistakable, though limited, affinity with the opinions of the Syriac heretic Bardaisan and may have been influenced by the latter. These data seem to indicate that the passage in question in all probability was composed within a Judaeo-Christian sect which from the linguistic as well as the geographical points of view belonged to the great community of Aramaic Christians who wrote in Syriac. Now, the section in question not only attests some knowledge of Stoic philosophy, a fact which is not altogether surprising, since Bardaisan too, according to Ephraem Syrus, was influenced by that school, but it also seems originally to have been written in Greek, given its apparently correct use of the various Stoic terms for space and place. There is at least a strong presumption in favour of this latter assumption, which, on the other hand, is not in keeping with our suppositions as to the characteristics of the group in which the text originated. A possible solution to this problem — not, in my opinion, a very satisfactory one, but it will have to suffice us for the present — would be to assume that the élite of the group, being bilingual, could write both in Greek and in Syriac.

As regards chronology, the various suppositions set forth above seem consonant with the hypothesis that our section of *Homilies XVII* was written either in the third century, perhaps some time after Bardaisan had set out his theories concerning God and space, or in the fourth, when Ephraem Syrus criticized these theories. As we have noted, it is in the fourth century that the *Homilies* as a whole are generally thought to have been composed.

Let us now set forth the data, however vague the attempt, which may be taken into account in forming a hypothesis as to when and where the *Sefer yezira* was composed. Any response to these questions is bound to be even more uncertain than the one we have proposed with regard to the passage from *Homilies XVII*. One reason for this is the much more intricate and indeed rather confused manner of composition of the *Sefer yezira*, for it indicates a lengthy period during which the main sections of the work were elaborated and (perhaps at a later stage) put together.

The two sections which concern us are: (1) that dealing with the system of numbers, or the *sefirot*; and (2) that dealing with the letters. Let us start with the first, which has been our principal

concern in the context of this article. We have shown that there are indications pointing to the existence of a doctrine positing only seven *sefirot*, which may have preceded the doctrine of ten *sefirot* presented in the *Sefer yezira*. We have also found some admittedly much more tenuous indications for the hypothesis that the replacement of the original system of seven *sefirot* by one based on ten may have resulted from or at least been facilitated by the introduction of what were known as Indian numerals in 'the West'. If these conjectures — they are no more than that — are taken seriously, they may provide a pointer as to the period of time when the transformation of the doctrine of the *sefirot* may have taken place.

The earliest 'Western' text to mention the Indian numerals is a treatise by Severus Sebokht composed in or around 662, that is, at a time when no Arabic influence is conceivable. Sebokht,²⁷⁸ who seeks to disprove the claim of the Greeks to preeminence in the sciences, praises the achievements of the Syrians (whom he equates with the ancient Chaldeans and Babylonians) in this field. He goes on to say that the Indians have surpassed both the Babylonians and the Greeks by their discoveries in astronomy, and by their mode of calculation, which is superior in its employ of nine signs²⁷⁹ to calculation with the aid of words. Sebokht's text does not state or even suggest that he regards the Indian numerals as a recent introduction in the West. They may have been known there for a century or more before his time.

The occurrence in the *Sefer yezira* of the astronomical term *teli*, apparently denoting some kind of heavenly dragon or serpent which brings about solar eclipses, might seem, *prima facie*, to provide us with another line of enquiry. In Syria this serpent was called *atalaya*, and it is mentioned, *inter alia*, in the Manichean Book of Psalms.²⁸⁰ The term *teli* occurs in the *Sefer yezira* in the following passage:

The ordinance of the ten, the three, the seven and the twelve are appointed over the *teli*, the sphere and the heart. The *teli* is in the universe like a king on his throne, the sphere is in the year like a king in the state, the heart is in the soul²⁸¹ like a king at war.²⁸²

278 See F. Nau, 'Notes d'astronomie syrienne', *Journal asiatique*, XVI, Xe série (1910), pp. 225–227.

279 תשע אחרותא. As we noted above, Saadya refers to the nine numbers that exist in the Indian system of numerals.

280 See for instance Scholem, *Ursprung*, p. 67, n. 46.

281 שפן. In the *Sefer yezira* the word usually means 'person' or even 'body'.

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Two phrases in Chap. viii of the *Sefer yezira* (in Saadya's version) also refer to the *teli*. The first is identical to that cited above, while the second gives no new information about this mythical animal²⁸³ and need not be quoted here. It may be relevant in this context to note that Severus Sebokht, writing, as we have noted, around 662, interprets the word *teli* in terms of a 'scientific' astronomy and dismisses the notion of a celestial animal.²⁸⁴

It is quite likely that the astronomical views of the group within which the *Sefer yezira* — or, more precisely, the recension²⁸⁵ of the work known to us — originated were strongly influenced by those held in the Syriac Christian milieu, whose culture the members of this group may be supposed to have shared. We might thence argue that the reference to the *teli* in the *Sefer yezira* most probably antedated the middle of the seventh century, when the corresponding Syriac notion of *atalaya* came to be interpreted in such a way that it could be employed as a term of scientific astronomy, and no longer denoted a mythical astronomical animal. However, this argument is based on so many unproven assumptions that it carries hardly any weight in our attempt to seek a solution, however uncertain, to the problem we are discussing.

N. Aloni²⁸⁶ approaches the problem from another angle, pointing out the resemblance in one important respect between a grammatical conception formulated by the first Arab grammarian, Khalil b. Aḥmad (d. 791), and that expressed by the author or last redactor of the *Sefer yezira*. Both classify the letters according to the part of the mouth or throat from which the sounds corresponding to the letters issue. However, it seems to me that this similarity does not in fact yield an indication as to when the *Sefer yezira* was composed or redacted. The principle of Khalil's classification of the letters is most probably

282 וְחֹק עֶשְׂרֵה שְׁלוֹשָׁה שְׁבַע וְשָׁנִים עֶשֶׂר פְּקוּדִים בְּתַלִּי וּגְלָגַל וּלְבָ. תְּלִי בְּעוֹלָם כְּמִלְךָ עַל מַלְחָמָה כְּסֹאֵר, גְּלָגַל בְּשָׁנָה כְּמִלְךָ בְּמַדִּינָה, לֵב בְּנֶפֶשׁ כְּמִלְךָ בְּמַלְחָמָה (Par. 59, ed. Gruenwald, p. 172; cf. ed. Qafih, i:4, p. 59). The 'ten' to which the phrase refers are the *sefirot*; the other numbers allude to the number of letters included in each of the three groups into which the Hebrew alphabet is divided according to the *Sefer yezira*.

283 Note that Saadya in his commentary, i:4 (ed. Qafih, p. 60), considers *teli* to mean *tanin*, a word which may denote various species of large aquatic animals.

284 See Nau (above, n. 278), pp. 219–222.

285 Or recensions.

286 See N. Aloni, in *Temirin — Meqorot u-mehqarim be-qabbala ve-hasidut*, Jerusalem 1972, pp. 62–69; and see also N. Szed, in *Revue des études juives*, CXXXII (1973), pp. 513–528.

derived from that of the Indian grammarians, who, like Khalil, posit eight categories of letters on the basis of this classification. It seems possible to me that the influence of the Indian grammarians on the Arabs — like that of the Indian arithmeticians, in the case of the numerals — was indirect, or at least partly so. The Indian conceptions may have been transmitted, *inter alia*, by Syriac authors. Or again, though this seems unlikely, the Syriac grammarians, and in their wake the Hebrew grammarian of the *Sefer yezira* on the one hand, and the first Arab grammarian on the other, may have been exposed separately to Indian influence. It may be remarked in this context that the *Sefer yezira*, on the basis of this system of classification, not only posits five categories of letters rather than eight, a fact perhaps explained by the greater number of letters representing sounds found in Arabic as compared to Hebrew, but also differs in some other particulars from Khalil's classification. A detailed comparison of the three grammatical systems of letter classification, those of the Indians, of Khalil and of the *Sefer yezira*, may throw some light on the relation between them. In the present state of our knowledge, however, it is very chancy to base hypotheses as to the date of the composition or redaction of the *Sefer yezira* on the fact that its classification of letters resembles, up to a point, the classification propounded by Khalil.²⁸⁷

The problem of the provenance of the *Sefer yezira* might also be approached from a different angle. Its division of the Hebrew alphabet into three sets of letters, and more particularly the notion of the seven double letters,²⁸⁸ represents a kind of grammatical speculation. The conception of a class of double letters seems to me to go a step beyond the invention of the *dagesh rafe*, the point whose presence or absence in these letters indicates that the particular letter in question should be pronounced in one of two possible ways. Now, grammatical speculations, of this kind or indeed of any kind, were not, as far as

287 According to the *Kitab al-iftikhār* by the Ismā'īli theologian Abu Ya'qub al-Sijstani, who was active as a missionary in Iran in the middle of the tenth century, the sounds represented by the letters proceed from three places in the mouth and from the uvula; see the extracts from this work published by H. Halm, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Isma'iliya*, Wiesbaden 1978, p. 210. The *Sefer yezira* and Saadya's commentary (pp. 110 f.) speak of five places (and not four) from which the sounds proceed, and unlike Abu-Ya'qub they list the sounds that proceed from each of these places.

288 This conception is far more important in the context of the *Sefer yezira* than the classification of the letters according to the part of the mouth from which the sounds corresponding to them proceed.

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we are aware, made by Jewish authors prior to the *Sefer yezira*.²⁸⁹ This conception thus does not seem to have been of particularly early origin. It has a parallel, moreover, in the conception of six double letters, corresponding to the seven enumerated in the *Sefer yezira* with the exception of *rēsh*, occurring in the Syriac grammar. It seems likely that the two grammatical conceptions may have been worked out at the same time, or — another possibility — that the Syriac grammarians or specialists in *messorā* may have evolved the notion of double letters first.

The fact that the earliest Syriac grammatical text may have been composed by members of the Nestorian school at Nisibis, at the end of the fifth century or the beginning of the sixth, may be relevant in this context. There seems to have been a special relationship between Nestorians and Jews, or more probably Judaeo-Christians. Cassiodorus, moreover, mentions Jews as having been teachers (or students²⁹⁰) at Nisibis. It seems plausible in the last analysis to attribute such knowledge of Hebrew as is found in some Syriac texts at least in part to the impact of studies pursued at this school.²⁹¹

In the estimation of A. Merx,²⁹² the earliest relevant Syriac treatises dealing with the grammatical phenomenon of double letters go back to the beginning of the sixth century. If that is the case, and if our supposition as to the connection between the Hebrew and the Syriac conceptions of 'double letters' is accepted, the redaction of the *Sefer yezira* available to us must have been produced at that time or later.²⁹³

289 There may doubtless be exceptions to this generalization, but it seems to me by and large to be correct.

290 According to the interpretation of R. Macina.

291 I have pointed out elsewhere (in my article, 'Gospel Quotations in 'Abd al-Jabbār and Cognate Matter in Relation to Early Christian and Judaeo-Christian Readings and Traditions', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, IX [1987], p. 256, n. 10) that a Syriac author of the ninth century quotes an opinion on the characteristics of the Hebrew verbal tenses which shows a better understanding of the matter than the views expressed in the tenth century by Saadya, who takes over Greek definitions which are inapplicable to the Hebrew verbs.

292 See A. Merx, *Historia Artis Grammaticae apud Syros*, Leipzig 1889 (reprint Nendelm Lichtenstein 1966), pp. 30–31.

293 Halm (above, n. 287, pp. 38–52) gives an account of various speculations concerning letters in works composed by Ismā'īli authors, and calls attention to the fact that these speculations bear a resemblance to those found in the *Sefer yezira*. A detailed study seems warranted on the points of similarity and divergence in this respect between the *Sefer yezira* and the *Kitab al-kashf* (see Halm, *ibid.*, pp. 38 ff.),

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We may recall at this point that a similar dating for the work, namely the sixth or seventh century, was suggested by our hypothesis as to the part played by the propagation in the West of the Indian numerals in the formulation of the parallel systems of numbers and of letters peculiar to the *Sefer yezira*. I cannot, however, emphasize too strongly that the suppositions on which these datings are based are unproven and, in the present state of our knowledge, unprovable, and this is also true of the datings themselves.

attributed (perhaps incorrectly) to the Ismā'ili writer Ja'far b. Mansūr al-Yaman, who lived in the second half of the tenth century.

English version of a paper read in Hebrew 28 February 1984

Appendix I

THE TEN SEFIROT
AND WHAT CORRESPONDS TO THEM

Saadya's commentary on the *Sefer yezira* consists of the Hebrew text with (1) an Arabic translation, designated *tafsir*, and (2) a commentary, *sharh*, both of which are appended to the respective passages with which they are concerned.

Let us look at Saadya's *sharh* to his Par. i:3 and at the deviation of his interpretation from the Hebrew text available to us. Our translation of the Hebrew text reads:

i:3:¹ Ten *sefirot belima*, according to the number of the ten fingers, five against five, and the Covenant of the One is constituted in the middle, by word, tongue (or 'language') and mouth, and their measure (or, in Gruenwald's rendering, their 'unit of measure') is ten which have no end: The depth of the Beginning and the depth of the End, the depth of Goodness and the depth of Evil, the depth of Height and the depth of Lowness, the depth of East and the depth of West, the depth of North and the depth of South. And one Lord, the faithful God and King, rules all of them from His holy abode, for ever and ever.

Saadya's translation of this passage may be rendered:

Its *tafsir*: The ten *mahzūra* Numbers² are according to the number of the ten fingers, five correspond (*tuqābil*) to five, and one body in the middle, harmoniously tempered (? *mu'addala*) by word, tongue, and mouth; corresponding (*wa-bi-izā'ihā*) to them are ten which have no end. The end (*nihāya*) of the First and the end of the Last, the end of Goodness and the end of Evil, the end of Height and the end of Lowness, the end of East and the end of West, the end of North and the end of South ...

Saadya's rendering of this passage deviates or seems to deviate in the

1 Saadya's commentary, i:3, ed.: Qafih, p. 51:

עשר ספירות בלימה, כמספר עשר אצבעות, חמש כנגד חמש, וברית יחיד מכוונת באמצע, במלה ולשון ופה. ומדתן עשר שאין להן סוף. עומק ראשית ועומק אחרית, עומק טוב ועומק רע, עומק רום ועומק תחת, עומק מזרח ועומק מערב, עומק צפון ועומק דרום. וארון יחיד אל מלך נאמן מושל בכלן ממעון קדשו ועד עדי עד.

2 *Al-a'dād al-mahzūra*. On the various possible meanings of *mahzūra* see above, p. 81, and n. 161 there; and see below.

following three important particulars from the Hebrew text (including the variants) available to us:

(1) The expression ברית יחיד, which we have rendered 'the Covenant of the One', is translated by Saadya as *juththa*, 'body'.

(2) The word 'omeq, 'depth', occurring in the Hebrew text in relation to each of the *sefirot* ('the depth of the Beginning' and so forth), is rendered in Saadya's *tafsir* as *nihāya*, 'end'.

(3) The word *middatan*, 'their measure', is rendered in Saadya's *tafsir* as *bi-izā'ihā*, 'corresponding to them'.

Are these deviations indicative of Saadya's having used a Hebrew text different from that occurring in the MSS of his commentary?

As regards the first particular, Saadya's *sharḥ* on this passage shows clearly that this question is to be answered with an unequivocal no: the phrase under discussion did not differ in the text used by Saadya from that occurring in the version of the *Sefer yezira* available to us.

In saying מכוונת באמצע ברית יחיד, he wished (to state) that the Wise One encompassed the whole creation (*khalq*) from all its directions, just as those ten encompass man. ... Sometimes a mistake is made with regard to this, and ברית יחיד is said to refer to a Covenant. This does not [accord] with truth. (p. 51)

Evidently Saadya read the words ברית יחיד as *beriyat yahid*, 'the Creation of the One', rather than *berit yahid*, 'the Covenant of the One'; in Hebrew characters the words *beriyat* and *berit* are indistinguishable unless they are vocalized. The question of why his *tafsir* substitutes *juththa* ('body') for *khalq* ('creation') remains unsolved, however. The reference to an interpretation of ברית as 'covenant' suggests that there may have been others before Saadya who attempted to explain texts of the *Sefer yezira*.

With regard to point (2), by contrast, it cannot be proven conclusively on the basis of Saadya's *sharḥ* that the deviation in his translation from the Hebrew text available to us is *not* due to his having had before him a Hebrew version which used a word other than 'omeq in its definition of the various *sefirot belima*. It can, however, be conjectured with a certain degree of plausibility that Saadya may have rendered this Hebrew word (if it did occur in the text he used) as *nihāya* in order to draw the reader's attention — by means of the apparently paradoxical assertion of each of the ten which have no end to be the end of something ('the end of the First' and so forth) — to a fundamental characteristic of his doctrine of the *sefirot*.

The following passage, which forms a part of Saadya's commentary

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(*sharh*) on this statement in the *Sefer yezira*, makes this understanding explicit, and also has a bearing on our point (3):

As for his³ establishing a correspondence (*muwāzāt*) between these Ten⁴ and Ten Things that have no end (*nihāya*), he intended (to show) thereby that, whereas from the human (point of view⁵) there is no end to what may be put together from the numbers by themselves, they are finite (*tatanāhā*) from the Creator's (point of view⁶). Thus we do not know the end (*nihāya*) of the First and Last of Time, whereas He knows; we (cannot) reach the end of the six directions, Height and Lowness, East and West, North and South, whereas He knows this. Nor can we define with regard to everything the ultimate in Beneficence and Badness, whereas He does define them. Accordingly these ten things have no end (from the point of view) of the created beings,⁷ but have an end (from the point of view) of their Creator.⁸

According to this passage, the ten *sefirot* considered as Numbers (*al-a'dād al-mahzūra*) correspond to the ten that have no end from the human point of view, i.e., the ends of the six directions of space, the First and the Last of Time, and the ends of Good and Evil. The term used in this passage to denote 'establishing correspondence' is *muwāzāt*, which derives from the same root as *izā'*. As we have seen, the latter word, in the form *bi-izā'ihā* ('corresponding to them') occurs in Saadya's *tafsir* of the passage from the *Sefer yezira*, where it appears to be an unusual rendering of the Hebrew word *middatan*,⁹ 'their measure' — a difficulty noted above in our point (3).

In two other passages in the *Sefer yezira*, ii:1¹⁰ and iii:1¹¹, Saadya again renders *middatan*, in the same context, as *izā'ihā*. His translation of the latter passage contains explanations which may shed light on our difficulty:

3 The author of the *Sefer yezira* or the work itself.

4 *Al-a'dād al-mahzūra*.

5 Literally: 'according to men', '*inda'l-nās*.

6 Literally: 'according to the Creator', '*inda'l-khāliq*.

7 Literally: 'according to the created beings.'

8 Literally: 'according to their Creator.'

9 The Hebrew word corresponding to *bi-izā'ihā* would properly be *kenegdam*. Note, however, that the word *keneged* occurs in the passage from *Sefer yezira* under discussion (i:3), and is rendered by Saadya as *tuqābil*.

10 Ed. Qafih, p. 67.

11 Ed. Qafih, p. 90.

Our *tafsir*: The meaning of our saying: ‘Ten numbers (*a’dād mahzūra*¹²) is: curb (*uhzur*) your mouth in order that it should not speak of an addition to them, and curb your heart in order that it should not think about this.¹³

... And the meaning of our saying that ‘corresponding to them (*bi-izā’ihā*) are the ten which according [to our point of view¹⁴] have no end’, for their Last is fixed in their First and their First in their Last, just as the flame of a fire is bound to a [piece of] coal.¹⁵

The end of this passage appears to offer an interpretation — based on the text of the *Sefer yezira* — of the notion that the Ten to which the work refers have no end.

There is a third passage in Saadya’s commentary, iv:2,¹⁶ in which his *tafsir* contains the word *bi-izā’* — that in which he refers to six things corresponding to the ten *sefirot belima*. But here, unlike in the other two passages,¹⁷ this Arabic word does not correspond to a Hebrew word. We have already referred above (pp. 87–89) to this passage and its problematic nature, from the point of view both of the Hebrew text and of Saadya’s translation and commentary on it. The ten *sefirot belima* to which the original Hebrew in Saadya’s version refers appear to be as follows, if we are to account for the number ten: (1) the Spirit (*ruah*)¹⁸ of the Living God; (2) a Spirit from the (first) Spirit; (3) the four Winds (*ruhot*) or Directions of the sky (i.e., Space), East and West, North and South;¹⁹ (4) (four) spirits (*ruah*), each of which is found in one of the winds or directions. However, this solution of the difficulty posed by the statement that the *sefirot belima* are ten is most unsatisfactory as far as the latter four ‘spirits’ are concerned, and it may be preferable to give up our attempt to identify the ten *sefirot* mentioned in this text. As we have suggested, a portion of the passage may go back to a period when, in an early redaction of

12 As we have seen, this is Saadya’s rendering of the term *sefirot belima*.

13 In his commentary (ed. Qafih, p. 90) Saadya asserts that the word *belima* (in the expression *sefirot belima*) is derived from the verb *balom*, ‘to bridle’.

14 Literally: ‘according to us’, ‘*indanā*’.

15 The Hebrew text (p. 90) reads: עשר ספירות בלימה בלום פיד מלדבר, בלום לבך מלהרהר ... ומידתן עשר שאין להן סוף, נעוץ טופן בתחלתן ותחלתן בסופן כשלהבת קשורה בגחלת

16 See above, n. 184.

17 Where, as we have said, it corresponds to Hebrew *middatan*.

18 As we have seen, the word *ruah*, ‘wind’, also means ‘spirit’.

19 Height and Lowness, which occur in the other lists of the *sefirot*, are missing.

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a text which later became an integral part of the *Sefer yezira*, only six or seven *sefirot* were postulated.

Saadya's rendering of this passage propounds a sort of bastard solution to the problem. According to his *tafsir*²⁰ (or a possible interpretation of it), there is a correspondence (*bi-izā'*) between the ten *a'dād mahzūra* and (1) the Will (*Mashi'a*); (2) in the second degree (*al-martaba al-thāniya*), the Air that is perceived (or 'the External Air', *al-Hawā' al-zahir*); and (3–6) the four winds (*riyāh*) that blow from this. This would mean that there are six existents that correspond to the ten *a'dād mahzūra*.

The *sharh*²¹ on this passage differs on at least one point from the *tafsir*, as becomes clear in the first sentence of the *sharh*:

The author of this book (the *Sefer yezira*) — after positing as corresponding²² to the ten numbers ten things that have no end, as you know from the first chapter — has posited here as corresponding (*hida'ihā*²³) seven Roots (*Uṣul*).

The *sharh* thus refers to seven Roots, though the *tafsir* spoke of six things.²⁴

These seven Roots are: (1) God's *Mashi'a*²⁵ or *Irāda* (the meaning of both terms is 'Will'; when this Will becomes actual it is called *kalima*, 'word'), called *ruah* ('Spirit' or 'Wind') by the author of the *Sefer yezira*; (2) the Second Air (*al-Hawā' al-thāni*), called Glory (*Kavod*) in the Holy Scriptures and designated by the (Jewish) nation (*'umma*) as *Shekhina*, by the *Sefer yezira* as the Spirit of the Living God (*Ruah Elohim Hayyim*), and by the Sages (*hakhamim*) as the Holy Spirit (*Ruah Ha-qodesh*); (3) *al-Hawā' al-zahir*, the Air that is perceived (or the External Air), in which the Creator has formed (*ṣawara*) the ten Numbers and the twenty-two letters; (4–7) the four Directions, East and West, North and South, and the Winds that blow from the four directions — the former as well as the latter are called *ruah*. Of these seven Roots enumerated in the *sharh*, the entity designated as 'the Second Air', Glory (*Kavod*), the Holy Spirit

20 Ed. Qafih, pp. 105 and 110.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 105–110.

22 I adopt here the emendation proposed by Qafih; the MS he used has *bi-hadhā*. Another possible reading is *bi-hidhā*; see the next note.

23 *Bi-hidhā* is approximately equivalent to *bi-izā'*.

24 In this particular context the words *uṣūl* ('roots') and *ashyā'* ('things') appear to be interchangeable.

25 Mentioned in Saadya's rendering of the passage.

and so on is mentioned neither in the Hebrew nor in Saadya's *tafsir*. The Hebrew text of this passage appears to be in need of emendation here, unless we accept the very implausible attempt set forth above to discover in it an enumeration of ten *sefirot*. The suggestion in Saadya's *sharḥ* that the ten *a'dād mahzūra* (i.e., *sefirot belima*) in this text *correspond* to seven Roots (or six, as stated in the *tafsir*) seems to offer an acceptable solution of the difficulty, if we suppose that the number six belonged to the original doctrine, later emended in the *sharḥ*.

Our comparison of three passages in the *Sefer yezira* with Saadya's rendering of them has shown that Saadya appears in the last of them to translate a Hebrew text which — if we accept Qafih's emendation *bi-izā'*, or alternatively the emendation *bi-hidhā'* — differed at least on this one point from the Hebrew text available to us. There is also the possibility that the word *bi-izā'*, which occurs in Saadya's rendering of the other two passages as well, was not some sort of interpretation of the word *middatan* found in the Hebrew text of the former passages, but a translation of *keneged*, a word similar in meaning to *izā'* which may have occurred in the Hebrew text used by Saadya.²⁶

To return to the use of the term *bi-izā'ihā* in the passage with which we began (i:3): we do not know whether Saadya was the first to advance the theory of the correspondence between the ten *a'dād mahzūra*, the *sefirot belima* of the Hebrew text, and the 'Ten that have no end',²⁷ or if he adopted an explanation propounded by some predecessor. The *a'dād mahzūra* as conceived by Saadya may be viewed as transcendent numbers. Unlike the 'Extensions' in the *Homilies* and the Hebdomad mentioned in that work, they cannot be identified with the spatial directions or the seven days of Creation. The 'Ten that have no end', which either are cosmic entities or at least may be said to exist in the cosmos, merely correspond to these transcendent numbers. Saadya's adoption of this conception — possibly in the wake of a predecessor — may have restored some degree of coherence to the doctrine of the *Sefer yezira*, which seems to have lost this quality when it was established, owing to numerological speculations and the introduction of the Indian numerals, that there were ten *sefirot* and 'not nine or eleven'.

26 Cf. the discussion of this question in Appendix II, below, p. 122.

27 The first of the three passages discussed above refers to an explanation different from that offered by Saadya of one word in the Hebrew text. This explanation may have antedated Saadya's commentary.

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It should, however, be noted that in the third and last passage discussed above this conception leads to a conclusion which may be hard to admit, namely that the Will of God corresponds to one (or more) of the transcendent numbers. It would perhaps be more in keeping with habitual theological language if the formula were stood on its head, and the first number were said to correspond to the Will of God.

Appendix II

QUOTATIONS FROM SAADYA'S COMMENTARY ON THE
SEFER YEZIRA IN A POEM BY IBN GABIROL
AND IN THE FONS VITAE

M. Idel has devoted an article¹ to that doctrine which posits the existence (according to some sources, in the thought of God) of ten *sefirot* which are above the usual set of *sefirot*. The greater part of the article treats of kabbalistic texts which are beyond the scope of our present inquiry. However, it also discusses a quotation from a poem by Solomon Ibn Gabirol in which Idel detects — correctly, I believe — an allusion to some form of this doctrine.² Moreover, the verses cited in the article appear quite unmistakably to refer to a conception expounded by Saadya in his commentary on the *Sefer yezira*. The poem, called *Shokhen 'ad me-az* from its opening words, is largely a poetic paraphrase of some texts from the *Sefer yezira*,³ and it may also contain other reminiscences of Saadya's commentary.

The second half of verse 4 and the first half of verse 5 read:⁴

להקת עשר ספירות יום לחשף / לבלר כנגדם עשרה באין סוף
'He decided to reveal (literally: 'lay bare') the set of ten *sefirot* / And He wrote Ten corresponding to them in the Endless.'

Ibn Gabirol's use of the word *kenegdam* ('corresponding to them') parallels and is probably a translation of the Arabic *bi-izā'ihā*, which appears in Saadya's commentary in similar contexts (see Appendix I). Another possibility, however, is that both Saadya and Ibn Gabirol used a version of the *Sefer yezira* in which *kenegdam* replaced the word *middatan* in two relevant passages, as we have discussed (*ibid.*). As Idel has pointed out, the use of *kenegdam* suggests two sets of *sefirot*. Saadya's commentary enables us to some extent to clarify the relation between the two, for in saying 'he wrote Ten corresponding to them in

1 M. Idel, 'The Sefirot that are Above the Sefirot', *Tarbiz*, LI (1982), pp. 239–280.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 278.

3 The quotations from the *Sefer yezira* and other texts (but not from Saadya's commentary on the *Sefer yezira*) are indicated in the Yarden edition of Ibn Gabirol's sacred verse, pp. 9–12. Yarden suggests that the expression חַי עוֹלָמִים in verse 19b (p. 10) derives from the conclusion of the *Yishtabah* prayer. Given the close connection between this poem and the *Sefer yezira*, however, it seems more likely that the words are taken from *Sefer yezira* iv:1 (in Saadya's version).

4 Ed. Yarden, p. 9.

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the Endless (*be-'en sof*), Ibn Gabirol is clearly referring to Saadya's assertion that the ten *a'dād mahzūra*, the *sefirot belima* concerning which one should refrain from any thought or utterance, correspond to the Ten which, from the human point of view, 'have no end' (*'en la-hem sof*).

Ibn Gabirol's *Fons Vitae* is a philosophical work whose Arabic original has not been preserved, except for a few quotations. It is known to us only from a medieval Latin translation composed collaboratively by Auendehut (who may be the well-known twelfth-century Jewish philosopher Ibn Daud⁵) and Dominicus Gundissalinus, and from a summary compiled by Shem-Tov Falaquera.

The following passage occurs in *Fons Vitae*, II:21:⁶

Ac per hoc dictum est illud, quod compositio mundi non evenit nisi ex lineamento numeri et litterarum in aere. 'On account of this it has been said that the composition of the world came about only through drawing in lines⁷ numbers and letters in the air.'

This passage is clearly a quotation, as indicated by the words *per hoc dictum*.

The Hebrew equivalent of these words serves as an introduction to the same passage in Falaquera's summary:⁸

ועל כן נאמר הרכבת העולם קמה מכתובת המספר והאותיות באויר, 'On account of this it has been said that the composition of the world came about through the writing of numbers and letters in the air.'

These two versions may be compared with a text in Saadya's commentary (iv:29) which Ibn Gabirol seems quite clearly to be quoting:

Wa-fi hadhā al hawā sārāt al-mashī'a fa-khaṭṭat bi'l-ithnayn wa-'ishrīn ḥarf wa-bi'l 'ashara a'dad ṣuwar. 'And in this Air¹⁰ moved the Will (of God) and thus wrote by means of the twenty-two

5 He sharply criticizes the *Fons Vitae* in a philosophical work whose original text has also been lost. It is extant in two Hebrew translations entitled respectively *Emuna rama*, which has been published, and *Emuna nisa'a*, preserved in a manuscript which has not as yet been edited.

6 Ed. Baeumker, p. 63.

7 *Lineamentum* may be a line drawn with pen or pencil, or a drawing.

8 See S. Munk, *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe*, Paris 1927, p. 9 of the Hebrew text.

9 Ed. Qafih, p. 110.

10 'The air that is perceived' or 'the External Air'; see above, p. 119.

letters and the ten numbers the forms of the souls and of every existent.¹¹

Lineamentum in the Latin text of the *Fons Vitae* and *ketiva* in Falaquera's summary both correspond to the Arabic *khattat*. This verb has two different meanings, 'to draw a line' and 'to write', which would seem to account for the divergence on this point between the Hebrew and the Latin versions of the passage.

If these two versions are to be trusted, Ibn Gabirol's quotation omits Saadya's reference to the Will (of God), which may but need not necessarily mean that it was missing in the text of Saadya's commentary that was available to him. This omission notwithstanding, we may note, anticipating a little, that the conception of the Will set forth in the *Fons Vitae* appears to have been influenced by Saadya's commentary with respect to one of its distinctive traits. We shall attempt to elucidate this matter in the course of discussing a second quotation from Saadya's commentary occurring in the *Fons Vitae*:

III:16: Et ideo dictum est quod factor primus est in omnibus quae sunt ...¹² 'And because of this it has been said that the first Maker is in all things that are.'

V:39: Vides quod ideo dicatur Creator sublimis et sanctus esse in omni?¹³ 'Do you believe that because of this it is said that the sublime and holy Creator is in everything?'

As in the passage cited above, the fact that the two phrases are quotations is indicated by the words 'it has been said'.

In Saadya's commentary to *Sefer yezira*, iv, we find the following statements:

Kadhaka huwa tā'ālā mawjūd fi kull ba'd wa-kull min al-'alam.¹⁴
'... In a similar fashion He, may He be exalted, exists in every part and (every) whole of the world.'

... Kadhaka al-khāliq, 'alā annahu mawjūd fi'l-kull.¹⁵ '... In the

11 Cf. Saadya's third 'Root' (see above, p. 119), described in his commentary, ed. Qafih, p. 109, as 'the Air that is perceived [or 'the External Air', *al-zahir*], in which the Creator has formed the ten Numbers and the twenty-two letters.' The verb *sawwara*, which has been translated as 'formed', sometimes means 'drew', in the sense of making a drawing.

12 Ed. Baeumker, p. 114; the same statement appears in Falaquera's summary, III, 15, 12a: **ובעבור זה נאמר כי הפועל הראשון י"ת נמצא בכל**

13 Ed. Baeumker, p. 327.

14 Ed. Qafih, p. 106, ll. 10–11.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 107, ll. 1–2.

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same fashion, though the Creator exists in the whole (i.e., the universe) ...’

... Taqwā qulub al-mu’minīn fī i’tiqādihim anna’l-bārī mawjūd fī kull makān.¹⁶ ‘... The hearts of the believers are strengthened by their conviction that the Creator exists in every place.’

The near-identity of the statements from the *Fons Vitae* on the one hand and from Saadya’s commentary on the other does not in itself prove conclusively that Ibn Gabirol took these statements from Saadya’s work, for statements having a similar purport may be found in different sources. However, I believe that the following consideration makes this assertion more than probable: it can be shown that the doctrinal contexts in which the passages from the *Fons Vitae* and from Saadya’s commentary respectively appear are closely related, despite a difference between the two works on one significant point.

In his commentary, iv:1, Saadya states that the Will (*Irāda*) of God is His power (*qudra*),¹⁷ that the Power of God is in the First Air, which is the most subtle of the three whose existence is posited by Saadya,¹⁸ and that this Air is found within the most solid bodies, such as stones and mountains, and with it God’s power and God Himself.¹⁹ The *Fons Vitae*, similarly, states in one passage (III:15²⁰) that the Power of God (*Virtus Dei*) penetrates all things, exists in all things, and acts timelessly in all things. Elsewhere (V:32²¹), the statement already quoted above to the effect that ‘the Creator is in everything’ is followed by this passage:

It has certainly been said on account of this (*certe propter hoc dictum est*) that the Will, which is His Power (*Virtus*) is infused in everything and penetrates everything.

Here again, the words *dictum est* are probably indicative of the phrase being a quotation.

With respect to these doctrines, then, Saadya’s commentary and the *Fons Vitae* have one very important element in common, which as far as I can see is not to be found in other texts which served as sources for Ibn Gabirol’s theories. That element is the conception, set forth

16 *Ibid.*, ll. 23–24.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 106, ll. 19–20.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 107, l. 14.

19 *Ibid.*, ll. 11–15.

20 Ed. Baeumker, p. 111.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 327.

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both in the commentary and in the *Fons Vitae*, according to which God and His Will, which is His Power, are literally present in all places in the world, including solid bodies.

Ibn Gabirol's identification of God's Word (*Verbum*) with His Will (*Voluntas*, see *Fons Vitae*, V:36²²) may also derive from Saadya's commentary (iv:1²³), which contains the following statement:

This Will (*Irāda*), when it passes from [a state] of potentiality to a state of actuality,²⁴ is called Word (*kalima*).²⁵

But Ibn Gabirol may have borrowed this identification from other sources; it occurs in Neoplatonic and Isma'ili texts.²⁶ The conception of the Will set forth in the *Fons Vitae* does diverge from the doctrine propounded in Saadya's commentary on one important point, however: Ibn Gabirol's philosophical work does not refer to the theory concerning the three kinds of Air.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 322, l. 23, and p. 323, l. 17.

23 Ed. Qafih, p. 105.

24 Literally: 'when it goes forth from potentiality to actuality.'

25 Unlike the principal doctrines of Ibn Gabirol, his doctrine of the Will does not appear to have been influenced by Isaac Israeli's philosophical teaching. See A. Altman and S. M. Stern, *Isaac Israeli*, Oxford 1958, p. 158.

26 We shall touch upon another Neoplatonic doctrine occurring in the *Fons Vitae* below, in Appendix III.

Appendix III

QUOTATIONS FROM SAADYA'S COMMENTARY
ON SEFER YEẒIRA IN
MAIMONIDES' GUIDE OF THE PERPLEXED

We find the following passage in Saadya's commentary, iv:1:¹

In applying² to the Creator the following three expressions: *Hay ha-'Olamim*,³ 'The Living One of the Worlds', ... he⁴ intended [to refer] to a great mystery, namely the way in which the existence of the Creator is established in our imagination: by [using] analogies that come closest [to the] reality, but not making [Him] out to be a body. Accordingly he said: we have the conviction that He has with regard to the world the same degree as life has with regard to a living being. Hence we say by way of analogy: He is the life of the world. Because of this he designated Him first as *Hay ha-'Olamim*, 'the Living One of the Worlds'. In the same way Daniel says of the angel:⁵ 'he swore by the Living One of the World'.⁶ [For] He exists in every part and every whole of the World,⁷ just as we see that life exists in every part and every whole of a living being.

We will ascend from there to the rank of the Intellect, and we shall

1 Ed. Qafih, p. 106, ll. 1–26:

וקולה פי אלבארי הדיה אתלאתה אקואל חי העולמים ... אראד בה סרא עט'מא, והוא כיף יקום פי והמנא וגידאן אלבארי עלי אקרב אתמתחיל לא עלי אל-תג'סים, פקאל אנא נעתקדה מן אלעאלם במנולת אלחיוה מן אלחיואן, פנקול עלי אתמתחיל הו חיוה אלעאלם ולדלקך סמאה אולא חי העולמים, כמא קאל דניאל ען אלמלאך וישבע בחי העולם וכמאירי אלחיוה מוגודה פי כל בעץ וכל מן אלחיואן כדאך הו מוגיד פי כל בעץ וכל מן אלעאלם. ונרתקי מן דלך אלי מרתבה אלעקל פנסמיה עקל אלעאלם נריר בדלך תקריב אל אפהאמנא ... ואלכ'אלך גל ועז מוגיד פי ג'מיע דלך מדבר להא כוגוד אלעקל פי אלחיוה מדבר להא ולדלך אקרב מא נמת'ילה באן נקול הו עקל אלעאלם וכמא אן אלעקל לא יתג'זא בתג'זי אלג'סים, בדאך לא יתג'זא אלכ'אלך בתג'זי אלעאלם.

2 The MS has אלאקרב. The emendation is proposed by Qafih.

3 The other two expressions, which also occur in *Sefer yezira*, iv:1 (in Saadya's version), are: *Nakhon kis'o me'az*, which Saadya renders 'His throne is established from the beginning until the end', and *Barukh shemo le-'olme 'ad* which Saadya renders 'may His Name be blessed for ever and ever'; they do not concern us here.

4 The author of the *Sefer yezira*.

5 Daniel xii:7.

6 וישבע בחי העולם

7 Qafih's text has ומן כל חיואן פי כל בעץ, which does not make sense.

designate Him as the intellect of the world, intending thereby to bring [the matter] closer to our understanding. ...

The Creator, may He be exalted and honoured, exists in all these [things], and governs them, just as the intellect exists in the life and governs it. On account of this we say: He is the intellect of the world. And, in the same way as the Intellect is not [or: cannot be] divided into parts through the division of a body, the Creator is not divided into parts because of the world being divided.

Maimonides appears to have composed or at least conceived Chap. lxxii of Part I of the *Guide of the Perplexed* with the above passage⁸ in mind; this supposition would account both for the points of resemblance and for the considerable differences between the two texts.

With a view to making this contention plausible, I shall begin by quoting two extracts from Maimonides' chapter:

(i) In the same way there exists in being something that rules it as a whole and puts in motion its first principal part granting it the power of putting into motion ... This thing is the Deity, may its name be exalted.

It is only with a view to this that it is said of man alone that he is a small world, inasmuch as there subsists in him a certain principle that governs the whole of him. And because of this, God, may He be exalted, is called in our language the life of the world. Thus it is said: And swore by the Living [One] of the World (Dan. xii:7).⁹

(ii) Know that it behooved us to compare the relation obtaining between God, may He be exalted, and the world to that obtaining between the acquired intellect and man; this intellect is not a faculty in the body but is truly separate from the organic body and overflows towards it. We should have compared, on the other hand, the rational faculty to the intellects of the heavens, which are in bodies.¹⁰

⁸ Including some lines omitted above; they are quoted below.

⁹ *Guide*, transl. Pines, p. 191, l. 28 – p. 192, l. 2; Arabic edition, ed. I. Joel, Jerusalem 1930–1931, p. 124, l. 25 – p. 125, l. 8:

כדלך פי אלוג'וד אמר מא הו אלמדבר לג'מלתה אלמחרך לעצוה אלראיס אלדי
אעטאה קוה אלחרוך חתי דבר בה מא סוואה ... ודלך אלומר הו אלאלאה
תעאלי אסמה, ובחסב הדא אל-מעני פקט קיל פי אלונסאן כאצה אנה עאלם צגיר
אד ופיה מבדא מא הו אל-מדבר לג'מיעה ומן אגל הדא אלמעני סמי אללה תעאלי
פי לגתנא חיאה אל עאלם וקיל וישבע בחי העאלם.

¹⁰ *Guide*, transl. Pines, p. 193, ll. 10–15; ed. Joel, p. 134, ll. 4–7:

ואעלם אנה כאן ינבגי אן נשבה נסבה אללה תעאלי לעאלם נסבה אלעקל
אלמסתפאר ללאנסאן אלדי לים הו קוה פי ג'סם והוא מפארק ללגסד מפארק"

Two points of resemblance between the text from Saadya's commentary and the extracts from the *Guide* are evident. Both Saadya and Maimonides designate God by way of analogy first as 'the life of the world', quoting in this connection the verse from Daniel in which He is called 'the Living One of the World',¹¹ and secondly as 'the intellect of the world', a formula which Maimonides gives an Aristotelian turn by drawing an analogy between the relation of God to the world and the relation of the acquired intellect to man.

These points of similarity appear to me sufficient proof that Maimonides had read Saadya's commentary and used it for his own purposes. The only alternative would be to suppose that the two authors used a common source, but this seems highly improbable.

It is of interest to see how several of Saadya's conceptions, rooted, as we shall see, in Greek Neoplatonism, are adapted by Maimonides to conform with his medieval Aristotelianism.

In Saadya's text God is designated by way of analogy first as the life and secondly as the intellect of the world. Now, such a juxtaposition of life and intellect cannot, as far as I can see, be explained by a recourse either to Jewish or to Aristotelian sources. Its origin must be sought in Greek Neoplatonic writings, some of which were translated or adapted by Arabic scholars.

In this connection Proclus' triad of the Intellect (*ho nous*), Life (*hē zoē*) and Being (*to on*) comes to mind.¹² However, a passage in the Arabic pseudo-Aristotelian *Theology of Aristotle*¹³ seems to have more relevance to Saadya's text, since it refers to intellect and life in living beings. A similar reference occurs in a statement from Saadya's commentary (iv:1¹⁴), though there is no reason to believe that Saadya's statement is an adaptation of the pseudo-Aristotelian passage:

... For, just as the living being, and more particularly that which is rational, has a body whose mixture is subtler than that of all

חִקְיָקִיָּהּ וּפְאִיץ עֲלֶיהָ וְכֵאֵן יִכּוֹן חֲשִׁבִיָּהּ אֶלְקוּדָּהּ אֶלְנֶאֱטָקָהּ בְּעֻקּוֹל אֶלְאֶפְלֶאךְ אֶלְחִי
הִי פִי אֶגְטָאִם.

11 Saadya (ed. Qafih, p. 107) also designates God as 'the Living One of Worlds'. This slightly different expression is derived from *Sefer yezira*, iv:1 (in his version).

12 See Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*² (*Stoikheios Theologikē*), ed. and transl. E. R. Dodds, Oxford 1963, Theorems 101 and 102, pp. 90–93, and cf. pp. 252–253.

13 *The Theology of Aristotle*, X, in *Plotinus apud Arabes*, ed. A. Badawi, Cairo 1955, pp. 3–164; see pp. 150–161. The passage is translated by G. Lewis in *Plotini Opera*, ed. P. Henry and H. R. Schwayzer, Paris-Brussels 1959, II, p. 457. It corresponds to some extent to *Enneads*, VI:7, 9, 28 ff., in *Plotini Opera*, II, pp. 456–458.

14 Ed. Qafih, p. 106, ll. 13–21; we omitted this passage from the extract from Saadya's commentary quoted on pp. 127–128.

other bodies and is, being the noblest of bodies, a substratum for life, and [just as] life is a substratum for his intellect, since his life is subtler than his body and his intellect subtler than his life, so do we believe in a manner corresponding to this brief résumé that the Will of the Creator, which is His Power, spreads out in the Air, which is simple and subtle, bringing about generation in it and moving it, just as life moves a body.

Saadya states at the end of the passage quoted at the beginning of this Appendix that 'the Intellect is not divided into parts through the division of a body.' Docked of its conclusion, this statement would read: 'The intellect is not [or: cannot be] divided into parts.'¹⁵ Now, this very assertion occurs in the *Stoikheiosis Theologikē* of Proclus, Theorem 171,¹⁶ and it also appears in the Arabic *Kitab al-idāh li-Aristūṭālīs fi'l-khayr al-mahd* (= *Liber de Causis*), in the sixth theorem.¹⁷ In this Arabic work the statement reads: *al-'aql jawhar lā yatajazzau*, 'the Intellect is a substance which is not [or: cannot be] divided into parts'. The only difference between this wording and that encountered in Saadya's commentary is the absence in the latter of the word *jawhar*, 'substance'. The practical identity between the two statements should by no means be taken to prove that the assertion in Saadya's commentary derives directly or indirectly from the Arabic *Liber de Causis*, but it does point to the Jewish thinker's having adopted or adapted a Greek Neoplatonic doctrine in this particular. The words 'through the division of a body', on the other hand, appear to reflect a conception of the relation between the intellect and the body which is peculiar to Saadya's commentary and might have been inadmissible in a Neoplatonic work.¹⁸ Compare the Arabic *De Causis*, Theorem vi:¹⁹

15 Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads*, IV:2, 1.

16 *Elements of Theology*² (above, n. 12), p. 150; and cf. p. 289.

17 O. Bardenhewer, *Die Pseudo-aristotelische Schrift über das reine Gute*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1882, p. 72. The theorems are not numbered in Bardenhewer's edition of the Arabic text, but the one to which we refer in the Arabic corresponds to the sixth theorem in his edition of the Latin translation of the work prepared by Gerald of Cremona, *ibid.*, p. 169.

18 This may be too bald a statement. The assertion that the intellect cannot be divided through the division of a body might conceivably have been made in a Greek Neoplatonic text with a view to making clear the difference in this respect between the intellect and the soul, which, contrary to the intellect, may be divided through the division of a body; cf. *Enneads*, IV:2, 1, 75-76, and Augustine, *De Quantitate Animae*, XXXII, 68: 'Animam per seipsam nullo modo, sed tamen per corpus posse partiri'; and see *Plotini Opera* (above, n. 13), II, p. 6.

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As it [the intellect] is not [something that has] dimension or a body and as it does not move, [it is] indubitable that it [cannot be] divided into parts.

At the beginning of the same Chapter lxxii of Part I of the *Guide*, Maimonides makes the following statement:²⁰

Know that this whole of being is one individual and nothing else. I mean to say that the sphere of the outermost heaven with everything that is within it is undoubtedly one individual having in respect of individuality the rank of Zayd and Umar. The differences between its substances, I mean the substances of this sphere with everything that is within it, are like unto the differences between the limbs of a man, for instance.

Now, there existed any number of schemes outlining the analogy between the microcosm and the macrocosm, and Maimonides may be supposed to have been cognizant of many of them. The model which he proposes conforms from the point of view both of anthropology and of cosmology to the prevailing medieval Aristotelianism. However, all this leads to the two statements we have already quoted about God, which, being drawn from Saadya's commentary, have their source in the last analysis in Greek Neoplatonism:

(1) God in relation to the universe may be likened to life in man. In the parallel passage in Saadya's commentary God is likened first to life in a living being, and then to the intellect in a living being; in the second analogy it is clearly a living being which is or may be endowed with intellect, i.e. man, that is meant. Thus Maimonides could have found in the passage from Saadya's commentary, or interpreted into it, the comparison between the macrocosm and the microcosm. As we have seen, Maimonides also explains²¹ the term 'life', as he uses it in designating the function of God in the cosmos, as referring in the case of the microcosm, man, to the rational faculty. The microcosm which he describes in this connection is consequently wholly in keeping with the conception of the medieval Aristotelians.

(2) God's relation to the cosmos may be likened to that of the intellect to man. Though this statement, too, may be supposed, for the reasons given above, to have been borrowed from the passage in Saadya's commentary and accordingly to have originated in Greek Neoplato-

19 Bardenhewer, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

20 *Guide*, transl. Pines, p. 184.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 191 f.

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nism, it is nevertheless unexceptionable from the Aristotelian point of view. By characterizing the intellect to which he refers in speaking of the microcosm as 'the acquired intellect', a term drawn from the vocabulary of the medieval Aristotelians, Maimonides makes it clear that he shares this latter point of view.

Appendix IV

COSMOLOGY ACCORDING TO SEFER YEZIRA II:4
AS INTERPRETED BY SAADYA IN LIGHT OF
TALMUDIC ASTRONOMICAL DOCTRINES;
COMPARISON WITH THE FLAT-EARTH
COSMOLOGY OF KOSMAS INDIKOPLEUSTES

Saadya's Arabic translation of *Sefer yezira* ii:4¹ may be rendered as follows:

The twelve simple [letters] became twelve and neither eleven nor thirteen, because corresponding to them² are twelve borders [lines, this being what] all squares³ have in common. [Here is] their enumeration: Where east meets north, where it meets height and where it meets lowness; also where north meets west, where it meets height and where it meets lowness; also where west meets south, where it meets height and where it meets lowness; also where south meets east, where it meets height and where it meets lowness.

This is Saadya's commentary (*sharh*) on the above text:

Every cubic body⁴ has twelve border lines [at which the surfaces meet]. This will become clear to you if you take as an example a house or a treasure-box. For the roof meets with [the surfaces that are on] the four sides, and so does the ground surface, while [the surfaces that are on] the four sides meet with each other. Thus there are all in all twelve [border lines].

Now if somebody should say: to our [mind] it seems as though the author of this book holds that the earth and the heaven [*sama'*]

1 Ed. Qafih, pp. 81–82. The Hebrew text of *Sefer yezira*, ii:4 (ed. Qafih, p. 91) reads: שתיים עשרה פשוטות, שתיים עשרה ולא עשתי עשרה, שתיים עשרה ולא שלש עשרה. שנים עשר גבולי אלכסן, מפצלין לששה סדרים, מפסקין בין רוח לרוח, גבול מזרחית צפונית, גבול מזרחית רומית, גבול מזרחית תחתית, גבול צפונית מערבית, גבול צפונית רומית, גבול מערבית תחתית, גבול מערבית רומית, גבול מערבית תחתית, גבול דרומית מזרחית, גבול דרומית רומית, גבול דרומית תחתית.

Some sentences are missing in Saadya's translation.

2 *Bi-izā'ihā*; on this word, which has no equivalent in the Hebrew text here, see above, Appendix I.

3 *Murabba'*; as may be seen from the commentary on this text (see below), what Saadya had in mind was a cube.

4 *Jism murabba'*, literally: 'square body'.

are square and that there is no heaven beneath the earth, [i.e. that he holds] two opinions that are not in accord with what is believed by the men of knowledge, we shall answer: It is possible that what he said was [intended] to use an example rather than to make a statement about the true reality. [This would mean] that he had used the example of the heaven and the earth as we have used that of the house and the treasure-box. Furthermore we shall say that even if what he has said was [intended] to be a statement about the true reality, he would not have deviated on the two points [in question] from the doctrines of the men of knowledge. For some of them have said that the earth is square, and even said that there is no figure other than a square in the world: [for] every triangle or circle⁵ that we see is composed of small, square, very compact particles which cannot be perceived by the senses.⁶ If [the author of the *Sefer yezira*] believed something like this he should not be taken to task for [thinking that the earth was square]. As for [the belief] that there is a heaven [only] above the earth and not beneath it — this is professed by both R. Eliezer and R. Joshua.⁷ While agreeing with regard to this fundamental doctrine, these two differ as to how the heaven accomplishes its circular motion. In the opinion of both of them, there are gates⁸ in the east and the west through which the sun enters⁹ every morning and goes out every evening.

Quoting from the Talmud¹⁰ (*Baba batra* 25a-b), Saadya proceeds to explain the differences between the opinions of the two rabbis with regard to the motions of the heaven at night. I shall not here go into these astronomical doctrines and the problems to which they give rise; two statements occurring in the Talmud's exposition of this subject should, however, be noted:

R. Eliezer says: the world resembles a *quba*.¹¹

5 The reference is to three-dimensional bodies, rather than geometrical figures.

6 *Al-hiss*, in the singular.

7 R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus and R. Joshua b. Ḥananya. Both lived at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple and after.

8 The reference apparently is to gates in the firmament.

9 The printed text has *tadhul minhā*, whereas the correct phrase would be *tadhul fihā*. The substitution of *minhā* for *fihā* suggests that the text originally was written in Arabic characters, as this is a common scribal error in Arabic manuscripts.

10 With some deviations from the text as it appears in the printed editions.

11 עולם כקובה הוא דומה; the text as quoted here by Saadya differs from that in the printed editions of the Talmud.

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R. Joshua says: the world resembles an *akhsadra*.¹²

Jastrow¹³ defines *quba* as 'an arched room, compartment', while according to B. Kasowsky¹⁴ the word may designate a bedchamber or a tent that is broad in its lower part and narrow in its upper part. *Akhsadra*, the Greek *exedra*, is defined by Jastrow as 'a covered place in front of the house.'

Further on in the same passage, Saadya writes:

The opinion favoured by the great mass of our people is that the heavenly sphere (*al-falak*) and the earth are both of them spherical, that the earth, inside the heaven, is like unto a point, and that the circular movement of the sun takes place during the day above the earth and at night beneath it. ... This opinion was also mentioned by the ancient [rabbis], for they said: The sages of the gentiles say: the sun moves during the day above the earth and at night beneath it; and they said: Rabbi¹⁵ said [*Pesahim* 94b]: What they say seems preferable to what we say.¹⁶

12 עולם לאכסדרא הוא דומה. Here the quotation conforms to the printed editions of the Talmud; however, the opinion ascribed by Saadya to R. Joshua is attributed in the printed editions to R. Eliezer, and *vice versa*.

13 M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, New York 1950, s.v. קובה.

14 B. Kasowsky, *Thesaurus Talmudis*, Jerusalem 1974, s.v. קובה. J. Levy, in *Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und die Midraschim*, Berlin-Vienna 1924, defines *quba* as 'gewölbtes Zelt'.

15 The reference is to Rabbi Judah Ha-Nasi, the compiler of the Mishna, who lived in the second half of the second century.

16 The quotation, as given in Saadya's commentary, reads:

חכמי אומות העולם אומרים: חמה מהלכת ביום למעלה מן הארץ, בלילה למטה מן הארץ וקאלן: אמר ר' נראין דבריהם מדברינו.

Saadya does not quote here the opinion of the sages of Israel, which is cited in the corresponding passage of the Talmud. The passage there reads:

חכמי ישראל אומרים: ביום חמה מהלכת למטה מן הרקיע ובלילה למעלה מן הרקיע, וחכמי אומות העולם אומרים: ביום חמה מהלכת למטה מן הרקיע ובלילה למטה מן הרקיע. אמר רבי נראין דבריהון מדברינו.

The sages of Israel say: The sun moves at daytime beneath the firmament, and at nighttime above the firmament. The sages of the gentiles say: At daytime the sun moves beneath the firmament, and at nighttime beneath the earth (literally: 'beneath the soil'). Rabbi said: What they say seems preferable to what we say.

There is thus a considerable difference, which is of some interest, between the statement concerning the opinion of the sages of the gentiles as it appears in Saadya's commentary and the corresponding statement appearing in the printed editions of the Talmud.

At this point Saadya remarks:

Nevertheless many of them profess the opinion of the author of this book [the *Sefer yezira*].

Judging by his recourse to the above talmudic quotation, Saadya seems to have been of the opinion that *Sefer yezira* ii:4 should be interpreted in light of the cosmological and astronomical ideas of the talmudic Sages. It may be noted *en passant* that these ideas have a certain affinity with those occurring in the Book of Enoch, which also posits the existence of gates in the heaven.¹⁷ In the context of our present enquiry, however, it behooves us to dwell at some length on the points of similarity between the ideas in question and those set forth in a non-Jewish work, the *Christian Topography*¹⁸ (*Khristianikē Topographia*) of Kosmas Indikopleustes.

The *Christian Topography*, written in Greek apparently between 547 and 549, is the only extant work of Kosmas, a merchant of Alexandria, whose nickname Indikopleustes ('who sailed to India') indicates that he was a much-travelled man.¹⁹ Despite his professions of Orthodoxy,

17 Cf. O. Neugebauer, 'Notes on Ethiopic Astronomy', *Orientalia*, XXXIII (1964), pp. 51–61.

18 The most recent edition of this work is that of Wanda Wolska-Conus, *Cosmas Indicopleustes: Topographie chrétienne* (below: *Top. chr.*). She has also published a detailed study of this work: *La Topographie chrétienne de Cosmas Indicopleustes* (below: *Cosmas*).

19 His descriptions of various notable characteristics of countries he had visited are often of considerable interest. One such description may be rendered as follows (*Top. chr.*, v:53, II, pp. 85–87):

When [the Children of Israel] had received from God the Law and had newly learnt the [written] characters, God, who made the desert serve as a tranquil school, let them engrave letters throughout forty years. For this reason one may see in that desert, I refer to the desert of Mount Sinai, at the resting-places, that all the stones there that are broken off from the mountains are written over with engraved Hebrew characters (*grammasi glyptois hebraikois*); I, who have crossed these places on foot, bear witness to this. Some Jews, who read those [inscriptions], interpreted them for us. They said that it was written: 'departure of such and such person, from such and such tribe, in such and such year and month', i.e., similar things to those often written in inns by people in our [regions]. However, as [the Children of Israel] had only just learnt the characters, they made continual use of the latter and wrote down very many of them, hence all these places are full until now of engraved Hebrew characters, which, as I believe, have been preserved up to now for the sake of the unbelievers. Whoever so wishes can go to these regions and see for himself, or put questions and learn that on this point we told the truth.

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Kosmas was a Nestorian Christian; he states that he was taught his doctrine by Mar Aba (Patrikios), *Katholikos* of the Church of Persia in the years 540–552, whom he had met during the latter's visit to Alexandria. At a further remove, Kosmas was a disciple of the fourth-century scriptural exegete Theodore of Mopsueste, who was considered the 'Interpreter' *par excellence* of Syriac Christianity. I shall mention here only a few of the salient points of Kosmas' doctrine which are germane to our enquiry, because they exemplify the resemblance between his cosmological ideas and the parallel conceptions set forth in the Talmud and in the *Sefer yezira* as interpreted by Saadya:

(1) The earth is flat, and it is quadrangular.²⁰

(2) The cosmos is a cube, a truncated cylinder or ovoid, or a rounded oblong vault erected upon a flat surface.²¹

It may be noted that two of these conceptions, that according to which the cosmos is a truncated cylinder and that according to which it is a vault reposing upon a flat surface, may be likened to R. Eliezer's view that the cosmos has the form of a *quba*.²²

This passage is followed by a statement in which the author advances a claim known to us with small variations from several other texts: the Hebrews, who had obtained knowledge of the letters through the Tables of the Law, transmitted this knowledge to the Phoenicians, and in the first place to Kadmos, king of the Tyrians; from them it was received by the Hellenes, and thence it spread among all the peoples. While the interpretation of the Sinai inscriptions said by Kosmas to be propounded by some Jews should probably be discounted, his claim that he personally had seen Hebrew inscriptions in the Sinai Desert may possibly have some foundation in fact.

- 20 See *Cosmas*, p. 133, and cf. *Top. chr.*, ii:17, I, p. 321. As Wolska-Conus points out, this view concerning the shape of the earth was traditional among theologians of the 'Antiochian' school such as Theodore of Mopsueste, Diodorus of Tarsus and others (*Top. chr.*, I, p. 40). She also remarks that Theodore polemized against the conception that the universe was spherical (*Cosmas*, p. 72).
- 21 See *Cosmas*, pp. 130 f. and p. 269; *Top. chr.*, ii:17, I, p. 321, and iv:8, I, p. 547. Tzvi Langerman has discovered and is studying a manuscript of *Al-Manāẓir wa'l-Maraya al-muhrika*, a treatise on problems in optics authored by Ahmad Ibn 'Isā. According to a passage in this treatise, Mari considered the heaven to be a half sphere (*nusf kurra*) having the shape of a chestnut. The Arabic word which I have rendered as 'chestnut' is *qastan* or *qastana* (cf. R. Dozy, *Supplement aux dictionnaires arabes*, s.v.). The word corresponds to Syriac *qastanya* and Greek *kastana*; however, the reading of the word in the Arabic MS is not quite certain.
- 22 It seems to me — though I make this suggestion rather hesitantly — that there may also exist another point of resemblance between the cosmology of Kosmas and the Talmudic cosmology described above. According to Kosmas (*Top. chr.*, iv:15a–16, I, pp. 555–557, and ii:34, I, p. 339), the part of the earth which is beyond the north is uninhabited. When there is night in the

(3) Kosmas violently attacks the view positing the earth and the cosmos as being spherical. The erroneous idea that the heaven is spherical was first conceived by the Chaldaeans, who, having built the tower of Babel, began from its great height to observe the stars systematically.²³ (4) The view that the cosmos is spherical is professed by those who are 'outside',²⁴ the opponents of the Christians whose beliefs necessitate rejection of that doctrine; trusting their own conjectural discourse, they regard Moses the prophet, Christ and the apostles as vain babblers.²⁵ The irreconcilable opposition between the two doctrines as described in the *Christian Topography* parallels that defined in the Talmud between the cosmological conceptions of the sages of Israel and those of the sages of the gentiles. This parallel may be added to the many other facts, some of which are of much greater import, pointing to a striking resemblance in many areas between the Christian and more especially the Nestorian communities of the East, whose literary language in most cases was Syriac — Kosmas was an exception in this respect — and the Jewish communities which produced the Talmud, the Midrashic literature, and the *Sefer yezira*.²⁶ It is also noteworthy

inhabited portion of the earth, the sun and other luminaries move across the north from the west to the east.

The darkness at nighttime is due to the fact that the northern and, according to ii:34, the western portion of the earth rise up steeply, like a wall, their height equalling the breadth of the inhabited portion of the earth. By reason of this height they are interposed (*mesolaboun; mesazousa*) between light coming from the sun and the heavenly bodies on the one hand and the inhabited portions of the earth on the other. This explains why there are nights; cf. *Cosmas*, pp. 174–175. Now, in the passage from *Baba batra* 25a-b quoted in Saadya's commentary on the *Sefer yezira* (see above, p. 134), R. Joshua (or R. Eliezer — see n. 12 above) refers to a רוח צפונית מסוככת which may, in the context, be interpreted as meaning that the northern part of the earth is interposed at night between the light of the sun and the inhabited part of the earth. This interpretation of the Talmudic phrase would accord with the theory propounded by Kosmas; it is, however, hypothetical. I intend to deal elsewhere with some moot points arising from these texts in the *Top. chr.* and in the Talmud.

23 *Top. chr.*, iii:1, I, p. 436.

24 *Ibid.*, iv:15d, I, p. 559; *Tous exō*; iii:56, I, p. 491, and ii:100, I, p. 419: *ton exōthen*.

25 *Ibid.*, i:2, I, p. 275.

26 According to Kosmas, the tabernacle (*skēnē; mishkan*) built in the desert at God's behest by the Children of Israel was an image of the whole cosmos (cf. *Top. chr.*, v:20, I, p. 39). A similar notion appears in the midrashic literature, for instance in *Midrash tadshe* (ed. A. Jellinek, in *Bet ha-midrash*, III, Jerusalem 1967). Some of the details set forth in that work (*ibid.*, p. 165) are identical with those appearing in *Top. chr.*, ii:34, II, p. 63. This parallelism seems to have been noted by Wolska-Conus (see *Cosmas*, p. 115, n. 2), though she does not refer to it explicitly.

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that in the sixth century, which we have posited as the period of the final redaction of the *Sefer yezira* or as preceding its redaction by not more than one century, cosmological doctrines attributed by Saadya (who appears to consider them outmoded) to the author of the Hebrew work were maintained by a Nestorian author, who seems to have drawn them from the traditions of his own sect.

I shall discuss these and cognate matters in a separate article. Kosmas states, *inter alia*, that the crafts required for the construction of the tabernacle and for making its utensils, ornaments and other appurtenances, i.e., such arts as weaving, spinning, the masons' and goldsmiths' crafts and so forth — the list is rather long — are 'today' mostly practised by the Jews (*Top. chr.*, iii:70, I, p. 511). This remark probably refers to Jews living in Egypt, though it is conceivable that Kosmas had found a similar observation in the work of some other author, in which case he may also have been referring to Jews in other countries. The fact that there were many artisans among the Jews of that time is also attested by other sources. See, for instance, S. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*², New York 1952, II, pp. 247 ff. A rather curious reference to the Jews occurs in *Top. chr.*, iii:179, II, p. 277. In that chapter Kosmas denounces the adepts of various doctrines of which he disapproves — Eutyches, Arius, Appolinarius the Samaritan — who believe neither in the resurrection of the flesh, nor in an angel, nor in the spirit (*pneuma*), and he likewise denounces the unbelievers among the Jews (*tōn ioudaiōn hoi apistoi*), who reject the Christian resurrection and believe rather that life after death will be similar to our present way of life, in which we 'marry and are given in marriage' (cf. Luke xx:34). The reference to the unbelievers among the Jews may indicate that Kosmas was aware of the existence of Jews who believed in Jesus.

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Appendix V

REFERENCES TO DAIŞANITE TEACHINGS
IN THE KITAB AL-INTIŞĀR OF
ABU'L-HUŞAYN B. 'UTHMĀN AL-KHAYYĀT

Abu'l-Huṣayn b. 'Uthmān al-Khayyāt, who probably lived at the end of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth century, wrote his *Kitab al-intiṣār*¹ to defend the Mu'tazila sect — to which he belonged — against the aspersions of Ibn al-Rāwandī. In the course of his polemics he refers, *inter alia*, to the Dayṣāniyya, the followers of Bardaiṣan (Bardesanes).

From the charges and countercharges² concerning the Daiṣanite opinions imputed by Ibn al-Rāwandī to the well-known Mu'tazilite Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām, we may conjecture a reconstruction of how the doctrines of the Daiṣanites may have been understood either by Ibn al-Rāwandī or by Khayyāt. These doctrines apparently were viewed as dualistic: that which is light, living, capable of moving by itself and tending to ascend is opposed to that which is heavy, dead, incapable of moving by itself and tending to descend. In our world the light and the heavy are intermingled, but Khayyāt possibly implies that the Daiṣanites believed in a world of lightness on high and a world of heaviness below.

In another passage,³ the Daiṣanites are said to believe that light had continuously been harmed (*ta'adhdhā*) by darkness, and because of this it had commingled with the latter. The action of light, which is in accordance with wisdom, pertains to the substance (*jawhur*) and nature (*tibā'*) of light, just as the harshness (*khushūna*) of darkness and the fact that the light is harmed by it pertain to the substance and nature of darkness.

Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, a leading Shīite theologian who was the *bête noire* of the Mu'tazilites,⁴ is said by Khayyāt⁵ to have consorted with

1 Ed. A. N. Nader, Beirut 1957.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 36–37.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

4 According to 'Abd al-Jabbār (*Tathbit Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, ed. A. 'Uthman, I, Beirut 1966, p. 225), doxographers (this seems to be a correct translation of *al-'ulamā' bi'l-maqālāt*) spoke of Hishām as belonging to (or having a connection with) the *Dayṣaniyya* sect. This appears to have been a stock accusation; in this respect it is similar, though less frequently used, to the charge of being a Manichean — which, as 'Abd al-Jabbār mentions (*ibid.*), was also put forward against Hishām (by al-Hasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī in his work, *Fi'l-ārā' wa'l-Diyānāt*). One passage

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Abū Shākir, who according to Khayyāṭ was a Daiṣanite. We may note that in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*, Abū Shākir is listed among those who dissimulated their *zandaqa* (heretical views), adopting the outward semblance of Moslems.

in the *Tathbit* which refers to Hishām (pp. 231–232) seems to me of special interest, though it has no particular connection with our present inquiry. It gives a list of people who, while pretending to be Shī'ites, aimed *inter alia* at causing people to abandon Islam without being aware of the fact. The list includes Hishām, Abū'l-Warrāg, Ibn al-Rawāndī and three others, one of whom is Jābir b. Hayyūn, the celebrated alchemist. Paul Kraus intended to deal with Jābir's religious views in the third volume of his work on the *Corpus Jabiricum*. Since Kraus's death nobody, as far as I know, has continued his work on this topic.

5 Ed. Nader (above, n. 1), p. 37.

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