

THE PROBLEM OF THE DATE AND AUTHORSHIP OF
THE ZOHAR

by

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PREFACE

After studying the chief source materials concerning the date and authorship of the Zohar, and after examining the most important opinions of the great students of this problem, opinions dating almost from the appearance of the Zohar down to G. Scholem's recent startling reversal of thought, one is certain only of the uncertainty that is shot through the whole matter, one is impressed by the vast amount of "talk" on the problem and the paucity of real proof in one direction or the other.

In this Thesis the attempt will be made to present first, the most important source or bit of external evidence we have, and then to choose the most cogent arguments of the outstanding students of the problem thru the centuries. Having presented these, a summary will be made in which the evidence will be classified and weighed. As a beginner on a problem which has engaged the unsuccessful efforts of men great both in their mental ability and in the depth of their knowledge of the subject, it would almost be an impertinence on my part to attempt a theory or hypothesis of my own. I shall rather be satisfied, if I shall have presented a clear and complete picture of

the problem, for as the situation stands today, the conclusions of one man are as valid as those of the next, provided that their acquaintance with the materials is adequate.

Towards such a presentation the Thesis will be divided into four divisions as follows:

I. THE APPEARANCE OF THE ZOHAR

II. OPINIONS OF THE EARLY STUDENTS OF THE PROBLEM

III. MODERN OPINION ON THE PROBLEM

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

THE PROBLEM OF THE DATE AND AUTHORSHIP OF

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I. THE APPEARANCE OF THE ZOHAR

G. Scholem, in his article on Kabbalah in the Encyclopaedia Judaica tells us that the main body of the Zohar was put into its present form between 1240 and 1280. The earliest reference to it is found in the stories of *Sefer haKadmonim* by Isaac Ben Solomon Ibn Sahulah. (1) We can date this work exactly from its own introduction by the author. Although Abraham Zacuto says in *Sefer haKadmonim* that Sahulah died in 1268, (2) we find Sahulah's own statement in his introduction to the *Sefer haKadmonim* wherein, after a long dissertation on his own waywardness, he says:

וארכו לו שם הימים של שחיתות וחורמים ויהי מקץ
שלשים ושמד שנה למלכות, והיזר אשר קלבו חנף דת
ה' אלים ואמר וארבעים (שנים) נצאת למדע חלם לבדים (3)

Farther on he makes it clear that he has reference here to the writing of this book.

Gedalya b. Yahya, in his *Sefer haKadmonim*, said:

"Toward the year five thousand and fifty of the Creation (1290) there were different persons who claimed that all parts of the Zohar written in the Jerusalem dialect (Aramaic) were composed by R' Simeon ben Yohai, but all those written in the sacred language (pure Hebrew) ought not to be attributed to

him. Others affirmed that Rabbi Moses b. Nachman, having discovered the book in the Holy Land, sent it to Catalonia, whence it passed to Aragon and fell into the hands of Moses de Leon. Finally, several people have thought that Moses de Leon, who was a learned man, had drawn all these commentaries from his own imagination, and that he published them under the name of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai and his friends, in order to derive great benefit therefrom from the learned quarters. It is added that he acted thus because he was poor and crushed by burdens." (4) According to Rabbi Gedalyah, then, there was a well defined division of opinion with regards to the origin and authorship of the Zohar by the year 1290. Considering the difficulty of communication in those times it must have taken several years, even as much as a decade, before the knowledge of the existence of the book could have spread about and such a sharp difference of opinion could have crystallized.

The above discussion by R' Gedalyah is prefaced, in the *Sefer Mitzvot* by the remark:

וְהָיָה יוֹם יוֹמָיו דִּם מַלְאָכָא מְאֻרָּה לְהַזְכִּירָן לְנִרְנָן (5)

The reason for quoting the above passage from R^s Gedalyah's genealogy is because the date given by him precedes the date that may be deduced from the account of Isaac of Acco as we find it in Abraham Zacuto's *Seder 'Olam*. This famous book is practically the only reliable external source for our knowledge of the circumstances of the appearance of the Zohar.

date in margin
The first account follows: (6)

*all
mann
Text
Hindis
1, 1134,
note 2
see ibid*

"In the month of Adar, R' Isaac of Acco wrote that Acco had been destroyed in the fiftieth year of the chronology (1290) and that the saints of Israel had been killed there in a horrible manner (lit. by the four deaths of the Beth Din) and in the year (50)65 this R' Isaac of Acco was in Navarre in Italy having been saved from Acco, and in the same year, 65 (1305) he came to Toledo. And I have found in this diary of R' Isaac of Acco, the one who wrote a "Sefer Kabbalah" in the year (*1336* --(50)96) 1336 and in whose time Acco was destroyed, and all of them were taken captive two generations after Ramban--(lit. in the time of the grandson of Ramban), and three generations after Ramban. He (Isaac of Acco) went to Spain to investigate how the book, which R'Simeon and R' Eliezer his son had written in the ~~cave~~ *was found*, happy are those who merit its truth, in its light will they see light, (and to find) those who vouched for its truth, since some of it was forged. And he (Isaac of Acco) said that he knew by tradition that (that part of the Zohar) which was in ^{*language of*} Yerushalmi (Aramaic) he believed were (actually) the words of R' Simeon, but where it appeared in Hebrew, he believed that they were not his (R' Simeon's) words, but the words of a forger, since the authentic book is entirely in Aramaic. And this is what he (R' Isaac of Acco) says: 'And since I saw that its (the Zohar's) words were wonderful, drawn from the Exalted source, which flows freely forth without being replenished--blessed be the

without receiving (its flow) from any other source

*flour
beginning
the rest
account
of source
of Acco*

Name of the glory of His Kingdom forever---. I pursued it, and *him (Moses de Leon)*
 asked the scholars who had large parts of it in their possession,
 from whence these marvelous secrets, handed down orally--since
 they could not be written down--, had come, and I found there
 all kinds of explanations; but I did not find any of their re-
 plies concerning this question of mine to be conclusive; one
 said one thing, and another something else. I heard, in answer
 to my question, that the good Rabbi Ramban, may he be blessed,
 sent it (the Zohar) from Palestine to Catalonia. And a wind-
 storm brought it to the land of Aragon; there are some who say to
 Alicante; and fell into the hand of the Chacham R' Moses de Leon...
 And some say that Simeon Bar Yohai never did write the book, but
 that this R' Moses knew the name of the author and (even) that
 by his own ability this R' Moses wrote these marvelous things,
 and in order to get a good price for them, he hung his words
 upon a great oak, and he said I have copied these words from
 the book which R' Simeon b. Yohai and R' Eliezer his son and
 their associates wrote.

Tallmadolid
 So when I came to the city of Volodollid, where the king
 resides, I found this R' Moses. He received me favourably
 and he spoke to me and he took an oath and swore saying, 'May
 the Lord do thus unto me and even more, if the ancient book
 which Simeon b. Yohai wrote is not this very day in my house
 in *Avilah*, that is Avilah. When you come there to me I shall
 show it to you.' And it was after these words that he parted

from me and he went to the city Arbela to return home to Avila. He became ill in Arbela and died there. When I heard the tidings I was greatly incensed (אין יר' ש' מ'ח' א'ב) and I turned my steps to Avila, and there I found a great and old Chacham, whose name was David Depan Kurfu (Or acc. to Scholem, -- David Pancorbo), and he received me graciously and I adjured him asking him whether there were known to him the secret of the Zohar, concerning which men were divided, some saying thus, and others something else--and concerning which R' Moses had sworn to me; but there had not been enough time before he died, and I do not know upon whom to rely and whose words to believe. And he said, 'Know in truth that it is clear to me that this R' Moses without any doubt was himself the author, and by himself did he write everything that is in this book;--and now, listen to the manner in which all this became clear to me:--

Know that this R' Moses was a great spendthrift and he scattered his money on a large scale so that at this time instead of (leaving) his house full of the silver and gold which the wealthy mystics, to whom he sold parts of his (writings), gave him, he left his wife and daughter here, steeped in hunger and thirst and need. So when we heard that he had died in Arbela, I rose and went to the richest man of this city, called R' Josef of Avila and I said to him: 'Now is the time when you may acquire the Zohar which is priceless, if you do as I advise you.' And my advise was this, that R' Josef should call

his wife and say to her: 'Take this present and send it to the wife of R' Moses through your maidservant.' And she did so. On the next day he said to her, 'Go to the house of the wife of R' Moses and say to her, 'Know that I desire to have your daughter married to my son, and your needs shall be satisfied the rest of your days. (In return) I ask nothing at all, excepting the Zohar from which your husband used to copy and give to the people.' These things shall you say separately to her and to her daughter and you shall listen to the words that they shall answer, and we shall see whether or not they will agree.' So she went and did so. And the wife of R' Moses answered, and swore to the wife of R' Josef saying: 'Thus may God do to me, nay more, if ever this book was in the possession of my husband. It was ~~of~~ of his own heart and mind, understanding and reason that he wrote what he wrote; and I said to him when I saw him writing without anything in front of him: 'Why do you say that you are copying from a book, when you have no book; indeed, you write it out of your own head. Would it not be more advantageous to you to say that you write it out of your own mind; and would you not be the more honoured?' And he answered me: 'If I were to tell them this secret---that I am writing it out of my own mind, they would pay no attention to my words and wouldn't give me a cent for them, for they would say: 'He thinks them up out of his own mind.' But now when they hear that it is from that book, the Zohar, which R' Simeon b. Yohai wrote under the

influence of the Holy Spirit, I simply copying them, they will buy them at a high price--just as you see.' Afterwords the wife of this R' Josei spoke with the daughter of R' Moses, repeating the same words which she had spoken with her mother, that she would cause her to be married to her son, and that she would provide for her mother. An she (the daughter) answered her exactly in the same way that the mother had answered. Would you want any clearer evidence than this?'

When I heard these words I then believed that no such book existed, excepting the one which had been written and distributed by the author.

Then I journeyed from Avila and I came to the city, Malavira and I found there a great Chacham, a gracious and kind hearted man, his name, R' Josef Halevi, the son of R' Turdus, the Kabbalist; and I inquired of him concerning this book and he answered and said to me; 'Know and believe that the Zohar which Simeon B. Yonai wrote was actually in the possession of R' Moses, and he copied from it and gave to whomever he desired. And now see the great test I made to discover whether R' Moses copied it out of an ancient book, or whether he simply wrote it himself. And the test was: that many days after he had written me many and large tracts from the Zohar I hid one of the tracts and I said to him that I had lost it and I begged him to copy another one. So he told me: 'Show me the last tract before it and the

first one after it, and I shall copy it completely like the first one that you lost.' I did so. After a few days he gave me the copied tract and I laid it alongside the first and I saw that there wasn't the slightest difference between them--neither additions or deletions;; neither change of subject matter or wording, but the same language and the same material as if he had copied one tract from the other. Could there be a greater investigation than this, a more rigid test than this?'

Then I went from Malavira and came to the city of Toledo, and I continued to investigate the abovementioned book among the Chachamim and their students, but I found them too divided, one saying this, another that. And when I told them about the investigation of the Chacham R' Josef, they said to me that this was no proof for it is possible to say that before a man gives away a copy of that which he himself has composed, he makes a copy for himself with which he never parts, but he copies each new copy from this.

Indeed I did find something new for the students told me that they know an old man whose name was R' Jacob, a brilliant disciple of R' Moses, whom he said he loved like himself, who testified in the name of heaven and earth that R' Simeon b. Yohai wrote this Zohar. And concerning the book, I found no complete (satisfying answer)?(7)

*This is a famous remark
if it is found in Isaac
Shenker's (1800-1850) that completely
of this matter (viz. about the Zohar)*

The second version of the Isaac of Acco account, found on page 95 of the Filipowski edition, is much shorter than the first. This version lacks the vivid detail of the first one-- it is a retelling of that first one. The whole portion about the chronology is missing. The story is in itself retold quite faithfully, but in a digested form. There can be no question upon comparing the two, that the one we have translated above is the important historical document.

Hillel Zeitlin cites two interesting traditions concerning the Zohar which he labels *דברי חיים*. (8) The first I quote purely from a standpoint of interest, and because it represents a tradition entirely different from any of the others. Zeitlin states that he found it in the books of Chayim David Azulai, one called *דברי חיים*, and is there quoted in the name of A. Ravego, who found it written in a very old manuscript of the Zohar that belonged to his teacher, R' Moses Zacuto:

"The first of the Kabbalists, R' Nehunia ben Hakaneh wrote the "Sefer Habahir"; and after him R' Simeon b. Yohai wrote the Zohar, and he wrote into it many additional essays like the "tikkunim". And when R' Simeon b. Yohai wrote th and all that generation died, the knowledge of the Kabbalah was lost, until it came accidentally into the possession of one of the oriental monarchs, who had commanded excavations in a certain place for monetary reasons; and a box was found and in it was the Zohar. And he sent to the Edomite (Xian) scholars and they didn't have the slightest conception of

what it was all about. He sent for the Jews. They came to him and saw the book and said to him. Our lord king, this book was written by a sage and it is profound, and we do not understand it. He said to them: "Is there, then, no Jew in the world who understands it?" They said to him: "There is in Toledo." The king sent the books with his emissaries to Toledo; and when the sages of Toledo saw it, they rejoiced exceedingly and sent many presents to the king, and from there the Kabbalah emanated to all of Israel."

Zeitlin states that he found the second tradition on page 43 of R' Gedalya b. Yahya's *Shema Yisrael* (in the 1877 Warsaw edition): (9)

"It is proper that you should know that R' Simeon b. Yohai and his ~~disciples~~^{SPN} did not write the Zohar which we possess, but their disciples, and the disciples of their disciples and their associates wrote the documents about 70 years after his death; and I have an oral tradition that this composition was so tremendous, that if all of it were found and put together it would constitute a camel's load."

To sum up this section on the appearance of the Zohar; we have cited the opinion of Scholem that it was written between 1240 and 1280 C.E. By reference to Sahulah's introduction to *Shema Yisrael* we found the first use of the Zohar in 1281. We have seen that according to R' Gedalya b. Yahya there was a well defined difference of opinion concerning the authorship

and change of hands

of the Zohar as early as 1290. Yet in the source from which R' Gedalyah quotes, the *Sefer* of Abraham Zacuto we find that Isaac of Acco's coming to Spain is dated 15 years later and that he finds the quarrel as to the authorship of the Zohar still raging in 1305, the year that R' Moses de Leon died. In Isaac of Acco's account we found two definite stories as to the authorship of the Zohar. The first tells that it was written by R' Simeon b. Yohai and discovered in Palestine by Ramban, who sent it to his son in Catalonia from whence it was carried by a whirlwind to Aragon and into the hands of R' Moses de Leon. The other side claims that it was written by De Leon himself who used R' Simeon b. Yohai's name for the purpose of exacting a greater price for it from wealthy patrons. Isaac of Acco gives testimony given him by people holding both opinions, and in the end he concedes, that he himself cannot make up his mind.

We shall now see how subsequent students of the problem have arrayed themselves in this contest with varying shades of viewpoint ranging from the extreme of the the first-- i.e., authorship by R' Simeon b. Yohai, to the extreme of the second--i.e., total authorship by Moses de Leon.

II. OPINIONS OF EARLY STUDENTS OF THE PROBLEM

Two hundred years after the appearance of the Zohar Abraham Zacuto, in his *'Ohr' 'o*, said: (10) "The Zohar, whose rays illumine the world, and which contains the (most profound) mysteries of the Law and of the Kabbalah, is not the work of Simeon b. Yohai, although it has been published under his name. But it was the work of, and edited by, his disciples according to his words, and his disciples themselves confided the care of the continuation of their task to other disciples. Written as were the words of the Zohar by men who had lived long enough to know the Mishnah and all the opinions and precepts of the oral law, they are, for that reason, all the more in harmony with the truth. This book was not discovered until after the death of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman and of Rabbi Asher, who did (not) know of it." (11) (12)

About half a century later R' Gedalyah b. Yahya wrote with regards to those, who in the days of Isaac of Acco held that the Zohar was not written by R' Simeon b. Yohai, but that it was ascribed to him by the forger, Moses De Leon: (13) "As far as I am concerned, I hold that all these opinions are baseless, and I believe, to the contrary, that Rabbi Simeon b. Yohai and his pious association did really, say all these things and many more, but it may be that they were not properly drawn up in those days, and after they

have been dispersed in several portions for a long time, they were finally collected and put in order. This is not astonishing; for it was thus that our master, Judah the Pious, edited the Mishnah, the different manuscripts of which were at first scattered to the four corners of the earth. In a like manner Rabbi Ashi also composed the Gemara."

We here see how these two men were gradually drifting away from the idea that R' Simeon b. Yohai actually wrote or even dictated the Zohar. However, it was not until somewhat less than a century later--around 1640, that the first whole hearted attack was made upon the tradition that Simeon b. Yohai was the author of the Zohar, when Judah Leon Modena wrote a broadside against the Kabbalah and the Kabbalists in his book, *אג' נאם*. This is a work dedicated to a student of his, a Lurian enthusiast, R' Joseph Chamiz. In the first portion of the book Modena states that Kabbalah arrogates unto itself the titles *קבלה* and *חכמה*:

”כי שמי אשר קוראים לה כאלו ראית קסמים, ומעצת קקל הקורא סבא/ חכמת הקבלה.”

and immediately thereafter he puts forth his thesis:

א' אפשר שתקרא חכמה וקבלה יחד ויאמר כי אלה חכמה או קבלה (14)

In the first section of the book Modena disproves Kabbala's pretensions of being a "science", which proof, though clever and interesting does not bear upon our subject. In the 3rd book he deals with the beliefs and dogmas of Kabbalism and shows them to be ridiculous in the light of reason.

The portion which concerns our inquiry, however, is the second or middle one, wherein Modena discusses Kabbala as tradition, attempting to demonstrate that there is no real Kabbalistic tradition extant in Judaism but that even its keystone, the Zohar, is a forgery on the part of Moses De Leon. Modena's conception as to the appearance and decay of the Secret traditions--which, have been accepted by the Kabbalists as having been oral until the days of R' Simeon b. Yohai---is best expressed in the two opening sentences of the second portion of his

ויקרא : ch. 11)

"Let me trouble you now, and put forth before you a clear proof that this (body of) knowledge cannot be fittingly classed as tradition (Kabbalan); it is impossible that it was received from our teacher Moses, not from the prophets, not even from the days of Ezra or for many years thereafter.....no Jew will deny that there are inner hidden secrets in every portion of the Torah that you may come upon, which (secrets) were revealed to Moses our teacher (peace be unto him) from God in heaven, and it is possible that he (Moses) handed much of it down to Joshua his disciple, and Joshua to the Elders, and the Elders to the Prophets, and so on after them, but it is certain that it (The body of Secrets) constantly diminished (in transfer)..... Both through lack of interest, and because of the great troubles, persecutions, and exiles, the receiving of those secrets did not extend down to present

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These are Modena's
J.D. (1613, 17, 162)
The Torah

times, nor to such time that it can be ascribed to the Zohar or any of the books around that time-- some 300 years ago, and the doctrines which they offer in the name of tradition (Kabbalah) as if it were handed down from the prophets; it is not even partially so." (15)

Modena proceeds to give three major arguments why the Kabbalah in general cannot be considered true tradition:

1. In all of the two Talmuds, in Siphre, Pesikta, etc., no hint of the Zohar is to be found. (16)

The Geonim and Rabbis who came after the closing of the Talmud knew nothing of the Kabbalah--nowhere in their writings is there even a glimmer of it, not even an objection to it. (17)

2. A tradition bases its validity upon the fact that everyone agrees upon its major tenets. There is no such agreement in Kabbalah: ".....Everything that has come down to us as a tradition from Moses to Israel, has never been disputed in any way, and no man has presumed to say: "thus it was handed down to me from the time of Moses.", thus did Rambam write in his introduction to the Perush Hamishnayoth. From which one may clearly deduce that if this body of doctrine (the Kabbalah) were indeed what the Kabbalists say it is, handed down from Moses on Mt. Sinai; it is not seemly that there be any disagreement concerning it? (18)

Immediately following, Modena points to the Pardes of Cordovero who tries to reconcile the views of

Relevant

R' Menahem Riccanti and his followers who hold that the Sephiroth are instruments of the En Sof and the followers of *זמורה* (David b. Zamora) who believed that the Sephiroth were the En Sof itself. (19) Modena continues along this line expanding upon this disagreement and pointing out that it is not a disagreement of detail, but one of basic Principle. As for the Gematria introduced by Lurya, every Kabbalist has his own tradition and his own methods. (20) There is even disagreement among the Kabbalists about the ideas in the Zohar. (21) Some insist that the ideas came directly from the prophets. Others glorify in showing that the Kabbalah is very much like the philosophy of Plato, still others would have it that the prophets taught Plato his philosophy. As for himself, says Modena, at the very beginning of the discussion, "Any rational human being can see that they (the ideas of the Kabbalah) are nothing but the children of aliens, the vain ideas of the Greeks, which entered the ears of some of the later scholars, who mixed them up and clothed them with an order and names to suit their fancy, and called them, *זמורה* and *אמורה*"

3. This argument arises from the tradition of the interdict on writing down, as stated by Modena: "All of us know that from of old nothing of the oral law was

permitted to be put into writing, as our sages expounded: "For concerning these things have I made a covenant with thee: things that are in writing you are not to be permitted to transmit orally, and things that are oral you are not permitted to transmit in writing. Thus this Kabbalah, which is oral law could never have been written into books like the *Shema*, *Shema*, etc." (22) This argument, from a historical standpoint, is rather weak, since, as Modena admits, the Mishna, Talmud, and Schulhan Aruch which were originally oral laws were later written down. He tries to justify these with a homily on *למדנו מן*.

Up to this point Modena has been dealing with arguments showing that the Kabbalah in general is not of any great antiquity, but of recent origin and growth. From this point forward he deals directly with the Zohar. His first sentence on the subject is an excellent summary of his attitude concerning the authorship of the Zohar: "And now I am coming to speak about the Zohar, and to show that as far as the author is concerned, and with regards to the nature of the book from its every aspect, that it is a new book; it has not been handed down as a tradition, and it does not come from R' Simeon b. Yohai or his disciples, but it is a production of someone much later, (who lived) about 350 years ago, and no more." (23) An interesting but minor argument follows: ".....it is certain that in those 13 years that they were in the cave,

when they had a miraculous charob tree from which to eat, and a fountain from which to drink, but no paper, or ink, or pen with which to write; and even if they had these they would have been unable to write, for our sages have told that they sat naked in the sand up to their necks, until a disease laid hold of them and of their flesh. If this is so they certainly couldn't have written the Zohar. And *אמנם* he writes: 'there is a tradition that the Zohar, which R' Simeon b. Yohai wrote was more than a camel's load!' (24)

There are five major arguments that Modena gives against the authorship of the Zohar by R' Simeon b. Yohai:

1. The Laws according to the Zohar are contrary to the accepted ones. ~~Historically, Simeon b. Yohai did not differ with traditionally accepted laws.~~ Modena sums it up: "...if R' Simeon, *father of the Kabbalists,* one who knows the very secrets of the Laws and their hints and their true ramifications it would be proper that the laws should all agree with him. But this is not the case. In fact we see that in many places the Kabbalists say that according to the "Remez" the law should run in a certain way, yet the Poskim and the great Palmudists have ruled to the contrary." (25)
2. The Zohar which is supposed to know all the true secrets of both the Law and of the Natural Universe is defective both in these and in everything else it touches. (26)
3. The language of the Zohar cannot possibly be ascribed

to R' Simeon b. Yohai on two counts. First, no man could be conceited enough to write concerning himself that which we find in the Zohar about Simeon b. Yohai: "And another total foolishness on their part, is to imagine that ~~if~~ R' Simeon b. Yohai wrote the Zohar, or if it were written in his day, that his hand would write, or that he would permit anyone to write concerning himself: 'a shaft of pure light shone upon him;' and even more than this; that even the angels came to meet him: 'coming to welcome him they would prostrate themselves before R' Simeon b. Yohai, because he was Holy unto his God.....'" (27)

Secondly, if R' Simeon b. Yohai had written the Zohar he would have done so in Hebrew. Modena reasons as follows: ".....if R' Simeon b. Yohai or his disciples had written the Zohar and the Tikkunim....it is certain that they would not have written them excepting in the Holy Tongue; because of the holiness in them (the works) they are worthy of being said in Hebrew and not in the weak and despicable Aramaic to which the Malache Hashareth pay no attention..... For ~~it~~ it is well known that the Aramaic was the vulgar tongue in those days; for if at present, someone were to write a Kabbalistic work about the secrets of the Torah, would he write it in a Kian tongue, Spanish or German, etc?

He would, without a doubt, write any work in Hebrew,
how much the more one concerning hidden and secret matters." (28)

4. From statements in the Zohar we could not possibly
date the book back as far as R' Simeon b. Yohai for chron-
ological reasons. "...many of the men who were mention-
ed in the Zohar were Amorayim, and therefore came after
R' Simeon b. Yohai and many years after the sages of
the Mishnah (Tanaim)." (29)

5. In conclusion, Modena plays his trump card---not only
that R' Simeon b. Yohai couldn't have written the Zohar,
but that he has positive proof that Moses De Leon did
write it. And he quotes ~~the~~ account of Isaac of Acco
as contained in Filipowski p. 95 fol.

The next important student of the problem was a man who wrote with keen insight and intelligence, out of a profound knowledge of both the Talmud and the Zohar itself. Jacob Emden (abbr., *יעב"ע*), though he does not show himself to be possessed of as developed an historical sense as do some of the later scholars and students of the problem, and although it is written not so much for scientific as for polemical purposes, does without a doubt present one of the most brilliant analysis of the internal evidence of the Zohar that we have, in his book *מלפני ספרים*, and many a man has done no more upon this problem than to review his arguments.

The main line of argument used by Emden is that the Zohar is a composite, and that although many parts are forged the essential portion is true and reliable. We shall see from his own words how he develops the problem.

First, as regards his view of the integral part of the Zohar:

הקדוש הוא הספר (הזוהר) ומחברו ישיה אי שביב, ביחוד שנתא בעל
 שבתאי' בידיו יסודות תורתו הקדושה, אל הסליא צרה,
 בגדיל תשיה להאדיר אנשי, לבאר פארוטיה, להשקת יתקוטיה
 אחים חיים ונצחים מן לבנו, הוא ירה כתר, הנה האזה ופדוה
 ארץ לה חמה בצורה, אדית אנשי לשאר דתאבו את כל
 חסן יקרה, דבראור להנה אליו ככל דקדוקי מלי דידן
 מי כאלו מורה, אין צדיק לשאר קיפ' תורה, החומר יותר
 מאד, יתר על כל מה שחסי לון דתאמאדון הקדוש חמדה
 ישראל. על כן אמרתו ולא אבנא. (30)

It is interesting to note here that Emden is not certain of the authorship, "אחיקל יביה מי יביה" ----. In general this particular problem does not appear to vex him.

He further states near the end of the chapter:

"גם ספר חזקוני הוא נצי המקובלים בלי ספק גדולים, דגלים
בצידי דעו האר"י ז"ל, שהיה אש קדוש אלהי, ודבר שורה עליו,
הוא עליו בנ"י בל חמור, הנשקב לפיכך, חלילה להפכו אחר דבריו." (13)

A further development of this point of view, where he begins breaking up the Zohar into authentic and forged, occurs in the very first sentence of his book:

"הנה כל דבר מן הנזכר קדוש הוא בדבר השמים אלוהי,
דבריו נבואים אמרין אך מאחר שנכשלו בו פוסקים וסבא אבני
שיש להם קצת מקלות, לאבני נפש אל הצדקים החלשים
ומתנגשים בפשטות לילך אחר ההלכה הקטנה חבל בחבל, לדלות
מים מתקנים מי המרים המאדירים מאד צרה נכריה."

Some folks, then, are being led astray in the Zohar. Can it be that this is possible if the whole Zohar is as good and as pure as we have seen above?

"אך יש קסם הלז שקדבלס, דר ותן מצורב לו, ודבר מדרש
הנעלם, נראה אורגס לכל, שאין מענין החקל, וכן כמה מאמרים
מבוססים גם בצד ספר חזקוני, והם לשון ארמי מקולקל." (23)

In the seventh chapter, Emden gives his opinion of the *מדרש הנעלם*:

"מדרש הנעלם נ"ל נצי מתכוון בלשון וצנין ושמאל האחרים
ותנאים בב"מ ויחשמיים המצויים בו בדרכייה גבולה, אהרן
שפה ידבר, חזין מדרש צדירות וחזין אריות מליצות, מתבטא לשון
חזקוני, וחלופו נקט מאד." (33)

A typical example of Emden's searching and original criticism of the internal evidence follows:

"הנהגה לבדל חבור בתקונן ורעיל מהימנא (שמחברם
 בארץ' אחד הוא בן נראה לי, ולשאלותיהם מעידים נהג
 נה, שמבטן אחד יצא) שהוא היה בלי שם ספר גדול
 אחרון לתר הדגה מבדל מלך הספר הנהגה הואשן בזמן
 ובמחלה אכן עז שם האלף משה באר הספר, 'אחרון'
 חייהם אף" עד ספרך דא תיקון, והנהגה של "חלק
 לבנים תתן, ודא כספים לבנים נפש היפה גם קצרה,
 אסתר אף ודעת קצרה לסבאל רמזים כאלה גדולה
 הקדשה האלפית, לא אלה לבד" פנים של נצח נאה
 ומלך שהיא יתע של הבל בלי ספר, עז יש שגש
 דברקדוק המלה אכן, הכל האלף אל מקום אחד ---
 להעיד על מקור מחברת המחדש בזמן אחרון, והא
 המחבר מי שהוא, אף כל פנים הוא עובד דברים הנהג
 משל גם בתלך מלך ספר הנהג, אלא בא עובדים מרים ומלשים
 מלשים בלי ספר, אלא ידעון מן המחבר, אם נאסבא על יצי
 ספרים מדעתיים אף היו כשגה היצא מלפני השלם" (34)

An even more widely quoted observation is that in which he finds a specific example of a Spanish word, which in the Zohar, some Spanish writer tried to pass off as of Hebrew derivation:

"הנה תראה ברעיל מהימנא כי בי תצא נהג ללון: "ושכיתא נהג
 אנהג לאש ומכא קול לבי כנישתא אנהג: והם הם הדברים
 שחזן ארסון הם בתקונן, נהג ללון: (המחבר) (Here he quotes
 וממה על עמק היס נחצא נהג שיקרא בית הבסות

אסנקה. לו יתנך לא דתנאמיס ולא דאם מקום בשן בתאמאדס גבלי
 ויראשמי ולא דאדרש' דנל חוהים שידיון שיקרא שאל כן כלל
 גללל, כי אם דלסלן ספרדית נקרא כן בית פנסת, דאסנקה
 (דא שאן אן מכיר ללסן ספרד' דודגשתי קנאל כי שמצתי כחה
 פדמיס מספרד'ס הנמצא'ס במקומן נה)" (35)

We find further in chapter III that Emden feels inclined
 to attribute these spurious portions of the book to Moses De Leon:

"הנה לפחות יש כאן שני דברים לא גמורים על פיהם נקרא
 דבר, מספרי, רד"א מהימנא' דודגשתי שם הלאה דאדרש
 אחד (דא ונא אחת, שפה אחת דאדרש'ס אחד'ס, כח/
 שיראה דאמקומות דודגשתי מסין הספרים האלה, שהדברים
 כפולים, ודאמקומותהם שונים, הלא מן המקומות שםספרד דאמקומות
 אם ר' משה ד' לילאן הנחשד א' גללל, מכלל מקום חשד הלך
 לא דבר דין הא' (36)

We see then, that the author, felt that there were two
 or more parts; one the true Zohar (הז'הר) and the others,
 the spurious portions which must have been written by a later
 Spanish scholar, possibly, even, Moses De Leon. He is very
 careful to warn us, however, that we must not assume that
 because he may have written the spurious portions, De Leon
 wrote the true Zohar. Emden points out that the Zohar was
 known before the time of De Leon:

"אם דודגשתי שיהיה דאמקומותהם שונים, דאדרש'ס, כיצור דאמקומותהם
 דא כחה פדמיס הלא דא דא ס' הלאה, דאמקומותהם ללסן דאמקומותהם

פ' משפטים על הפסוק, וכי יצאו ילדי ישראל, ואמרו אלנו (37)
 מדרש של רשב"י (בדרך שרגל לקולנו בעל עבודת
 בקודש) נראה שהיה כבר נקרא שמו כסדר יצא דימיון,
 ואף אפשר שיכנה הבה"ב בן. ליחס לרשב"י כסדר פסוק דסקר
 מואלס חל, שהוא היה כח דבור אחד עם ר"מ ד' ליאון,
 גם חזו למאד רמ ד' ליאון (שהיה עם כל סתם אדם גדול לדברי
 הכל ומקובל נאמן). שיצאה דבר כזה, לעבודת דברי סודות מלא
 למחיר, גם כנראה ספרי מעשיות אלוים מבלגיא אשר לא היו
 ולא נקראו, ולתפוס דרשב"י ואחריו בדרך נאמן, והלא דבר נאמן
 ואפילו היהר אסר, כי לא ידעה בן ישראל. (38)

The last few sentences are particularly enlightening as to the unhistorical attitude of Emden. His acceptance of the statements and the honesty of these two men on their face value, in spite of the controversy that was raging about De Leon at the time, marks him naive in respect to historical perspective and judgment.

The author sums up his conclusions after numerous examinations of internal evidence:

"חבר ספר הנהיג המדפוס כלל שלשה ספרים: האחד והקדמון
 שלשה נקרא "אור" בעצם ואשכנזי, גם הוא מחבר מטעם
 חסדים. הראשון שהראשון אינו למעשה מחבר, והם מאחרים קצרים נסדדים,
 בהם גוף הקדמונים כללי החכמה בדרך קצרה סתומה וחלומה, והם
 נקראים בשמות "מתניתין", "תוספתא", "תרגום ירמיה", המדברים בשלש חזות
 מחוקה, והיו תפלות בידי יחידים גדולים דור האחרונים, הם הראשונים
 שהתחילו לכתוב על ספר כלשונם, והנהיג אליהם בקבלה מן

בקצמנים תנאים ראשונים עד הנביאים ומה חסין.
 וסביר איך מצויות שנכתבו בו, וכלל להיות מושגי
 הראשון. החלק השני שבראשון גם הוא זק כתיבת
 למאלר קהאלר מוקראי קדש, פולש תורה נביאים, כותבים,
 והאדמות היו למאלות גם בכללי חכמת האלמות, ובה
 ספרא דצניעותא, ועלל וליהם היסוד, ו"נלקט" כל אלה
 חלקו מן החכם רשבי האחרון. זמן (אמוראים, אן
 אחריהם מרבין סבוראי היה, אן בימי הגאונים) וקדש במעלה,
 ותלה דבריו האלן קדש רשבי לבין הנביאים אן היו
 שוארם בשמים.....

"השני: גם הוא כולל שלשה ספרים, והם תקוני הנהגה,
 רעיו מהימני, וסקודין, שלשם דרך אחד להם, שבה אחת
 ודברים אחרים, מחברים כאל כן אחד מהם, חובר חברים
 מחלכם, וכלל היה עם כל פנים חכם מקדש ספרד גאון
 מאלד. (בבא שנת חמישים ואילך לאילך הששין) אן הוא
 המקדש ר"מ ד' לאלן אן שחא חסידו בימיו, וטעמו
 במקדש, ר' נסים בר אדום המכונה צביא איליא,
 אשר היה לו רמז....."

"הספר השלישי נקרא מדרש הנזיר.... ענינו ומהותו
 רחוק ונפרד מהשנים הראשונים, עם שרצה גם הוא
 להתבאר להם בצבאלף לשון, וכלל בפני אדם, נסח
 לשון פזמים הרבה, מורכב מעבריות וארמיות, שאין צלול
 בקנה אחד, ומראיהן רע, לזמן ניכר גם מאיכות הענינים,
 ומן השמות הידועים, שבוה בהם בעלי הדברים הנאמרים
 ופזרים, כדי לתלות באילות גבולות." (צב)

So we see that Emden accepts the Zohar proper, even the *חב'נא*, which deal "largely of Cabbalistic angelology and the mysteries clustering about the Divine Name and the Divine Unity," (40) without any criticism, believing them to have come down directly from the first Amorayim who had gotten them as *קבלה* from the early Tanayim, who in turn had received them from the prophets, Moses, and Sinai. The Sifre De Taniutha was written by Amoraim or Saboraim but is authentic. This Sifra De Taniutha consists "of five chapters inserted in the book of Exodus and (deals) with the mysteries of creation, the human soul, and the relation between spirit and matter." (41)

To the second group Emden assigns the Tikkune Hazohar, the Raya Mehemma and the Pikkudin. According to Abelson the Tikkune Hazohar was published after the Zohar and came from a different source, (42) while the Raya Mehemma--" (The true Shepard Pastor Fidelis), which, besides dealing with topics similar to the foregoing, lays down definite precepts and rules of conduct, the exegesis being usually introduced with the words: "The True Shepard saith"--the true shepard being Moses! (43) These books, according to Emden, were written about 1290, possibly by Moses De Leon. But the third classification as exemplified in the Midrash Hane'elam is entirely extraneous material, very late, and a forgery from beginning to end. "The Midrash Hane'elam (Recondite Exposition), (which) contains a great deal of material of Scriptural exposition by the method of Gematria; i.e. the permutations and combinations of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the Hebrew numerals. It also

contains some allegorical exegesis of Scripture reminding one of the methods of Philo."(44) We can see from this last judgment on the part of Emden that his whole conclusion is suspicious. We know that he was a fighter; we know that he was fighting the Gematria and practical Kabbalah of his day. Thus, even if Gematria dated from Pythagorean days, Emden would have made it a late addition and labeled it as spurious, due to prejudice for his own cause. Emden's great contribution to this problem is not his specific conclusions but rather his approach on internal evidence and his observations to the effect that the Zohar is not a simple unit, either wholly true or wholly spurious, but a composite, written by many authors, coming from many different periods. Any inquiry into the date, authorship, and composition of the Zohar that hopes to find the facts will have to proceed along the lines laid down by Jacob Emden.

Much ink flowed to defend the antiquity of, and the authenticity of the Zohar against the charges both of Judah Leon Modena, and of Jacob Emden, but none of those written before the 19th century had any historical value. Nothing more of significance was produced on this problem until the 19th century.

III. MODERN OPINION ON THE PROBLEM

Both Krochmal and Landauer expressed their opinions concerning the origin of the Zohar. They were the first of the modern, scientific minds to touch upon the problem. Their contributions however, were meager indeed---yet because they were the first, we shall mention, very briefly, their views.

Krochmal followed no tradition but set down his opinion as follows: (First, with regards to the Kabbalah itself)

”נמצא שנה אמת ברור ואין להכחיש, שהיה חכמה זו בצורה
 איסורא מאת בני אבותינו הקדונים רב שרירא אב הא' קל
 והם שהעידו, כי הקצרה אליהם מן הנקונים בדורות שלפניהם
 ואם כן כבר התחילו על כל פנים באמצע דורות הקדונים,
 סביב לשנת תיק לאלף החמישי, ארור עזר, שבאה לארצות
 המערביות, ואילו לאיטליה, עזי איצה חכמים מישיבות הקדונים
 קבלו. היות נאדם בהם הרב רבי אהרן, אוקרא ראש ישיבת
 ברם, שבא לאיטליה סביב לשנת תרץ. איתמן הולא ואילך
 נמצאים איצה מנהלות אקוטרסטים קטנים, אקרא ויהאלי שימצאו
 עזר דלמחמם בארצות הספרים, ואז נצבר בביאור הנמצא
 מהם אתן במה שיבא. והמה הצור שמחמם חוצה יצירה
 זו, ונמשכה הם בשלשלת ברך עד הדמיון.” (45)

However, with regards to the Zohar and its various parts, he follows the opinion of Judah Leon Modena, a tradition followed by many of the "Jewish Scientists" of the 19th century:

"אלה מחבלי הנחל ההוא של אמצ'ה האלף החמישי ולפיכך
בבין עם פשוטים, היינו שראויהם חזקות וקיימות, לא יצאם
מחוקאם חזות כל מתעקש בעולם, שהסברים צוהר לכל
חלקיו וקונטרסיו, "הכיר", "פליא", "קני", "תמונה", "דניאל", וזוהי
כלם נחבדו בדורות אחרונים; איך שפיה כונת החלשים
עצמם באופן גבול, למרות את הדורות, אל עולמם ורק זה דרך
המצאה וזוהי נבונה, לפיכך בן המחברים" (46)

However, Krochmal does not venture so much as a guess as to who the author actually was. It was Landauer who ventured the first modern guess as to the author of the Zohar and though he was far off the track, as Zeitlin points out, he made an observation which was tremendously valuable. In the "Oriental Literaturblatts" of 1845 (47) he stated that whoever it was that wrote the Zohar, must have been a marvelous man, both a poet and a philosopher of no mean ability. He guessed that this man was Abraham Abulafia. Zeitlin points out that the guess is wrong:

"כי לא צדק לנבואה בהנחתו זאת - גלו' ויצא הוא עתה לכל
ראיות, אין כתבו של "הכיר" הוא את אבולפיה בשם אבן,
אלף זה פי שהיה האמת חלוצי חזיונות. תכל' של היצירה
חיק' לא רק חזיונות הדקה, כי אם גם ידיעות רחבות
ועמוקות, השדה שחלף ידיעותו של אבולפיה היה צר ומקובל.
כיצד, קרא הרשבי"א את אבולפיה בשם "רבי", ואבולפיה
השיב על צי המכתב מיד. באלול המכתב הוא מספר על
עצמו גדולות ונפלאות, ונתקן היפלאות הפך גם "ידיעותו".
מה סבא כל ידיעות ההקד' תנך וקצת משנה ותלמוד,
קצת סודי קבלה וחקירה, ולא יותר" (48)

And yet, the very statement on the part of Landauer that the man who wrote the Zohar must have been a great poet and philosopher, and not, as so many have called him before and since, a forger and a fakir, is a distinct contribution to the problem.

The first great contribution of the 19th century was made in 1843 by Adolphe Franck---and it is probably the keenest and most fruitful analysis of the problem that has to date been made.

Franck attacks the problem from the following standpoint: ".....the question we are now considering has already been solved in three different ways. Some maintain that, barring a few passages written in Hebrew---which do not exist nowadays in any edition or in any known manuscript--the Zohar pertains entirely to Simeon b. Yohai; others, just as exclusive in their view, attribute it to an imposter called Moses De Leon, and do not date it earlier than the end of the 13th century or the beginning of the 14th century; others, finally, have endeavored to conciliate these two extreme opinions by supposing that Simeon b. Yohai contented himself with the propagation of his doctrine through oral teaching, and that the memories thereof left by him either in the minds or in the notebooks of his disciples, were not united until several centuries after his death in the book in our possession today under the name of the Zohar.

Considered in the absolute sense, taking the words we have quoted quite literally, the first of the two opinions is hardly worthy of serious consideration and refutation." (49)

Accordingly Franck divides his discussion into 3 parts:

I. That Simeon B. Yohai did not write or dictate the Zohar.

A. Refutation of those who claim that the tradition about R' Simeon b. Yohai and his son Eleazar dwelling in the cave proves that he wrote the Zohar.

"It is said (although not vouched for any longer by the Talmud) that during these twelve years of solitude and proscription Simeon b. Yohai aided by Eleazar his son, composed the renowned work to which his name is still affixed. Were even the fabulous details separated from the narrative, it would still be difficult to justify the inference drawn from it; for it is not told what were the results, or what was the object of the meditations, in which the two proscripts tried to forget their suffering. Then again there are a multitude of facts and names found in the Zohar which Simeon B. Yohai, who died a few years after the destruction of Jerusalem, in the second century of the Christian era, could certainly not have known. For instance, how could he have spoken of the six portions into which the Mishnah is divided when the latter was written nearly sixty years after his death? How

could he have learned the names of vowel signs and other inventions of the school of Tiberias which, at most, can not reach back earlier than the beginning of the sixth century?"(50)

- B. That there are references in the Zohar to Mohammedanism--which was not in existence until centuries after R' Simeon b. Yohai died:

"A passage even more decisive could have been found in the Zohar; for the following is what a disciple of Simeon b. Yohai pretends to have heard from the mouth of his master: 'Woe to the moment when Ishmael was brought forth and invested with the sign of circumcision! For, what did the Lord do, whose name be blessed? He excluded the children of Ishmael from celestial union. But as they held the merit ^(having) adopted the sign of the Covenant, He reserved for them here below a portion in the possession of the Holy Land. The children of Ishmael are, therefore, destined to reign over the Holy Land, and they shall hinder the children of Israel from returning to it. But it shall last only until the time when the merit of the children of Ishmael shall be exhausted. They will then excite terrible wars on earth; the children of Edom will unite against them and war upon them, some on land, some on sea, and others

near Jerusalem. Victory will rest now with one, now with the other; but the Holy Land will not be delivered into the hands of the children of Edom."(51) (This, according to Franck, obviously refers to the Crusades.)

C. The Zohar itself states that Simeon B. Yohai charged his son and disciples to transmit the Kabbalistic doctrines. Had he written his book, the Zohar, this charge could not have been made by him:

"Thus, in the fragment entitled *לכלב לזרע*, of which we hope to translate a great part, and which forms in every respect an admirable episode in this vast compilation, it is told that when near death, Simeon b. Yohai summoned the small number of his disciples and friends, among whom was also his son Eleazar, for the purpose of giving them his last instructions.

'Thou', he said to Eleazar, 'will teach; Rabbi Abba will write, and my other friends will meditate in silence.' The master Yohai is seldom introduced as speaking. His doctrines are delivered orally by his son or his friends, who again come together after his death to communicate to one another what each one remembered of his teachings, and to enlighten themselves mentally on the common faith."(52)

D. There is a reference in one of the books of the Zohar that is very late in its scientific outlook. "We translate yet another passage which might be believed to have been written by some disciple of Copernicus, were we not compelled, even denying its authenticity, to date it at least from the end of the thirteenth century: 'In the book of Hamuna the elder it is fully explained that the earth turns upon itself like a sphere; that some people are above, others below; that all creatures change their appearance to the climate of each place although keeping always the same position; that certain places on earth are light, while others are in darkness; that some have day while others have night; and that there are countries where it is always day, or where night lasts but a few moments at least.'" (53)

II. That Moses De Leon did not write the Zohar.

It is interesting here to note Franck's opinion of De Leon:

"Are we, then, forced to honor an obscure rabbi of the thirteenth century, an unfortunate charlatan who, necessarily, must have devoted long years in writing it, and who yielded only to the cry of misery and to the hope of relieving it by such slow and uncertain means? Certainly not!" (54)

A. Moses De Leon would not have written the Zohar in Aramaic for several reasons:

"The Zohar is written in an Aramean language belonging to no particular dialect. What scheme could De Leon have had in mind by making use of this idiom which was not in use in his time? Did he, as is maintained by a modern critic already quoted, desire to impart a semblance of truth to his fictions by making the various persons under whose names he wished to pass off his own ideas, speak the language of their epoch? But since he was in possession of such widespread knowledge, a fact admitted even by those whose opinions we combat, he must also have known that Simeon b. Yohai and his friends were counted among the authors of the Mishnah; and, although the Jerusalem dialect was probably their everyday language, it would have been more natural to make them write it in Hebrew.

.....we are quite sure that Moses De Leon wrote a Kabbalistic book in Hebrew which bears the title "The Name of God," or simply, "The Name,"-- Sefer Ha-Shem (שֵׁם שֵׁם).

The work is still in manuscript, and was seen by Moses Cordovers. From the few passages that he quotes, it is evident that it was a very detailed and frequently a very subtle commentary on some of the most obscure points of the doctrine taught in the Zohar.....Is it possible that the same man, who,

at first had written the Zohar in the Chaldo-Syrian dialect,---be it to add interest by the difficulty of the language, or to make his thoughts inaccessible to the common man---would then consider it necessary to explain, to further develop in Hebrew, and place within reach of everybody, that which, at the cost of so much labor and trouble, he had hidden in a language almost forgotten even by the scholars themselves? Shall we say that by such means he was still more certain of putting his readers on the wrong scent? Indeed, it is too much trickery, too much time, patience and effort spent for the miserable aim which he is accused of having placed for himself; the combinations are too learned and too complicated for a man who has been accused both of the most stupid contradictions and the grossest anachronisms." (55)

B. No reference to Christianity or Aristotelianism.

"Another reason which compels us to consider the Zohar as a work much earlier than the time of Moses De Leon, and foreign to Europe, is that we do not find therein the least vestige of the philosophy of Aristotle, and that we do not meet there, even once, the name of Christianity or of its founder. It is known, though, that Christianity and Aristotle exercised absolute

authority in Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries."(56)

- C. Certain ideas used exclusively in the Kabbalah of the Zohar are found at earlier date than the thirteenth century:

" It is to be noted, finally, that the ideas and expressions which belong essentially, and which are exclusively consecrated to the Kabbalistic system expounded in the Zohar, are found also in writings of a much earlier date than the close of the thirteenth century. Thus, according to a writer whom we had already occasion to mention--Moses Botril, one of the commentators of the Sefer Yetzirah---the doctrine of emanation as understood by the Kabbalists, was known to Sadia; for he (Moses Botril) cites from him the following words which, he says, are quoted literally from the work entitled "Philosopher's Stone" which, it is true, is wrongfully attributed to him: 'O, thou man who drawest from the cisterns at the source, guard thyself, when tempted, to reveal something of the belief of the emanations, which is a great mystery in the mouth of all the Kabbalists; And this mystery is hidden in the words of the Law: 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord.'"(57)

III. That R' Simeon b. Yohai taught the basic material in the Zohar to a small group of disciples and associates who transmitted them orally. These oral traditions were edited little by little and much later were written up in the form of a book-- the Zohar, which found its way to Europe in the thirteenth century,.

"We hope that this opinion, until now expressed with timidity and as a conjecture, will soon acquire the character and rights of a certainty."(58)

A. From external evidence:

1. "This opinion, above all, is in perfect accord, as we ~~Ad~~read, noted by the author of the chronicle "Chain of Tradition", with the history of all the other monuments of the Jewish traditions and of the Jewish people. The Mishnah, the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds were also made up by joining the traditions of different ages and the lessons of different people, held together by a common principle. It agrees no less with a belief which, according to the historian just cited, must be quite old, 'I have learned from traditions', says the author, 'that this work was so voluminous that when complete, would have made up a camel's load.'"(59)

2. "More than a century after the Zohar was published in Spain, there were still some men who knew and who transmitted most of the ideas which form the substance of the Zohar by tradition only. Of such was Moses Botril, who in 1409, as he himself tells us, expresses himself on the Kabbalah and on the precautions to be taken in teaching it: "The Kabbalah is nothing more than a more pure and a more holy philosophy; only that the language of philosophy is not the same as that of the Kabbalah.....It is so named because it proceeds, not by reasoning, but by tradition.....' Apparently the author of these lines did not seem to know the Zohar even by its name, as the name is not mentioned a single time in any part of his work. On the other hand he cites a large number of very ancient writers, nearly all of whom belong to the Orient, like Rabbi Saadia, Rabbi Hai and Rabbi Aaron, head of the Babylonian Academy. Sometimes he tells us also of the things he learned orally from the mouth of his master. So it cannot be supposed that he drew his Kabbalistic knowledge from the manuscripts published by Nahmanides and Moses De Leon." (60)

B. Internal Evidence

1. Speaking of the /17133 /1720 , the /177 /1736 , and the /166 /1776 , Franck declares:

"These fragments, which, because of the great distance between them, seem to us at first sight lost in this immense collection, form, nevertheless, a perfectly co-ordinated whole in the progress of events as well as in the ideas..... Never are there the heights of speculation left to descend to the external and practical life to recommend the observation of the Law or the ceremonies of religion. Never can we find there a name, a fact or even an expression which could make ~~there a name, a fact or even an expression which could make~~ us doubt the authenticity of these pages in which originality of form enhances the value of the lofty thoughts.

It is always the teacher who speaks, and who uses no other method ~~but~~ that of authority to convince his listeners. He does not demonstrate, he does not explain, he does not repeat what others have taught him; but he affirms, and every word spoken by him is received as an article of faith.....

The mode of procedure is different in the rest of the book. Instead of continued exposition of one order of idea, instead of a freely conceived plan

persistently followed, in which the sacred texts invoked by the author as testimony follow his own thoughts, we find there the incoherent and disorderly course of a commentary.....

The same incoherence, the same disorder prevails in the facts, which, for the rest, are few in number and of uniform character. Here metaphysical theology no longer reigns in absolute sovereignty; but, side by side with the boldest and the most elevated theories, all too often we find the most material details of the external cult....."(61)

2. "As to the ideas contained in the Zohar, Simeon b. Yohai tells us that ~~he~~ was not the first one to introduce them. He repeated to his disciples what the "friends" taught in the ancient books (*למנוחיהם* 'למנוחיהם' *למנוחיהם*). He particularly cites Jeba the Elder and Hamuna the Elder.....
 I am far from pretending that either these personages, or these books of so remote an antiquity really existed; I only wish to establish the fact that the authors of the Zohar never thought of representing S.b.Yohai as the inventor of the Kabbalistic science."(62)

IV. Probable Dating

"When we add that frequent mention is made there of the religious beliefs of the Orient, like Sabeism and even of Islamism; that to the contrary, nothing is found there which can have any reference to the Christian religion, we shall understand how the Zohar in its present form, could not have been introduced into our countries until some time near the end of the thirteenth century. Some of the doctrines contained therein, as Saadia has shown, were already known before; but it seems certain that before Moses De Leon, and before the departure of Nahmanides for the Holy Land, there existed no complete manuscript in Europe." (63)

"Only such traditions as took ^{birth} ~~birth~~ from the first century until near the end of the seventh century of the Christian Era, are found in the Zohar. In fact, we cannot date-- I would not say the compilation, but the existence of these traditions, so very similar or closely connected to one another by the spirit animating them-- from an epoch less remote; for at that time they already knew of the Merkabah which is nothing more as we know, than that part of the Kabbalah to which the Zohar is specially consecrated; and Simeon b. Yohai himself tells us that he had predecessors. It is equally impossible for us to consider its birth in

an age nearer to us; for we know of no fact which authorizes such a conclusion." (64)

It is most interesting to know the point of view that animated this brilliant student of the problem, and even better, to hold it up as an example to our Jewish scholars who have held the Lohar in such contempt. To this end we quote Franck's closing remarks:

"....The books we have had under examination are not, as enthusiasts have confidently affirmed, of either supernatural origin or of prehistoric antiquity. Neither are they, as a skeptical, superficial critic still assumes, the product of imposture conceived and consummated in sordid interest, the work of a hunger driven Charlatan devoid of all ideas and convictions, speculating in gross credulity. Once more to repeat: These two books (65) are the product of several generations. Whatever may be the value of the doctrines contained in them, they will always be worthy of preservation, as a monument to the long and patient effort of intellectual liberty in the heart of a people and a time when religious despotism made the most use of its power. But this is not the only claim to our interest. As we have already said, and as we shall soon be convinced, the system they contain is, in itself, by reason of its origin and of the influence it exercised, a very important factor in the history of human thought." (66)

Thus, because of a sound point of view, and by means of a method in line with that laid down by Jacob Emden, and Adolphe

Franck arrive at conclusions which were certainly the clearest and truest up until his time---and possibly even down to the present day.

A very interesting and entertaining book called,

הקדמה לזוהר, was written by Samuel David Luzzato and published in 1852. The book is more distinguished for its elegance in style and beauty of expression than it is for any profundity of research or thought into the problem of the Zohar and its authorship. It consists of a dialogue between the author and a learned transient who insists on discussing the evils and falsehoods of Kabbalah in general and of the Zohar in particular. Throughout the book the author fights a half-hearted, losing battle for the sanctity of the Zabbalah, and succeeds only in putting up sufficient objections to give the transient fuel for his argument.

For the most part Luzzato rehashes the arguments that were given by Modena and by Jacob Emden; using them to establish his argument that the Zohar is a forgery from beginning to end. We may here note that Luzzato was the first in a long line of modern Jewish scholars who, especially in the last half of the 19th century held that the Zohar was in toto, a forgery on the part of Moses De Leon.

The first portion of the book attempts to establish, just as the first part of *סו"ף* 'n/c did, the fact that Kabbalah is not authentic tradition. This need not concern us very much, first because it is peripheral to our problem, and secondly, because we have already touched upon the arguments therein, in our discussion of Modena's work. The gist of the argument runs as follows:

The criterion for authenticity of a tradition is twofold. First, it must be accepted by the generation from which it emanated, by the next generation, and by each succeeding generation. Possessing the writings of these generations and having checked them one against the other and having found them to agree we may accept the tradition as authentic. Secondly, if we possess a tradition, and with it a tradition handed down from father to son that the tradition is true, we may accept it. The Kabbalah fulfills neither of these requirements. Luzzato, like Modena, points out that rabbis undoubtedly did have Secrets of the Torah, but that they have long since been forgotten. Also does Luzzato show that Saadya, Rambam, and even Benjamin of Tudela never mentioned Kabbalah in any of their writings. He remarks that in the two basic doctrines of *א"ל* and *ספ"ר* the Kabbalists disagree among themselves. (We have already met this argument as relates to the *א"ל* in *ספ"ר*) There follows a very amusing reading of a Kabbalistic prayer by

by the transient---a prayer supposed to have come down from R' Samuel. The transient scornfully points out that the prayer is a mixture of an Aramaic jargon and Hebrew, and that it is essentially unJewish, in that the prayer is part of the time directed to God, and the rest of the time to a host of intermediary angels, at times sounding as if it were directed to a plurality of deities. And the transient concludes with words which may well be taken to sum up not only Luzzato's view on Kabbalah, but those who followed in his footsteps:

" אים אמת שאין חדשה, אבל האל מורי
 חסד המקבלים יצ לארץ אל מתחת לארץ;
 אחי דאיתן כי כל יצר מחשבות לבם
 יק רצ כל היום, לשקר ולצ"ף ולחיות
 בקריות, בלא דעת ובלא תבונה." (67)

Where, then, did Kabbalah come from, if it isn't a Jewish tradition. With Modena, he answers--"From the philosophers:"

" אבל האמת שהמקבלים לקחו להם דעות
 הפילוסופים אשר היו בימינו, ובראשם דוד קצת
 חסידים כד' להסכימם עם תורתם ואלוהותם, וקראו
 אותם דם ידו שנינו ונקראו דם שמים, והנה חכמת הקבלה
 מקבלת היא היד המקבלים אק לא מקדושתו, וקראו הפילוסופים." (68)

Thereafter follows a discussion of various philosophical ideas, which Luzzato claims, were taken over by the Kabbalists, especially the philosophical ideas of : 1) reward and punishment (in Philosophy every good deed becomes embodied as a help to heaven and every bad deed the opposite, while in Judaism,

נבא' taught that reward and punishment were by decree of God.)

2) The three souls--(in philosophy: *נפש, חיות, שכל* --- in Kabbalah *נשמה, רוח, נפש*). 3) The 10 Sephiroth (In philosophy, Albo points out how an object becomes actualized down through the ten Sephiroth and the final one *מאכלות* is the philosophical *השכל*.) 4) Arrangement of Sephiroth is philosophical--(like the *מגילות* or *עולות* which are arranged in circles:

ו' אמין בא לבא מה שאמר בכל ספירה וספירה, שג' לא
אור פנימי ואור חקיקי, ואם לאו ממה שאמר הפילוסופים,
אבר הראשית אלה הם העקריות, שכל אחד אחד מחדות
העולמות יש לו שני חנין השכל, כי ישבים את עצמם,
ישבים את סגולה" (69)

5) The worlds of *אצילות, בריאה, יצירה, עשיה* are like philosophy's *עולם*. The *אצילות* is added by the Kabbalists to be different. 6) The name *אין סוף* is philosophical (Why not call God: *אין* or *אלהים*, etc., names which mean something in prayers rather than the cold philosophical *אין סוף*.) Luzzato then spends a considerable portion of the book in discussing the origin and date of the *קבלה* and *ספרות*. He comes to the conclusion that they originated long after R' Simeon b. Yohai, in the late Talmudic period, or even post-Talmudic period. Turning to the Zohar he points out that the Zohar uses cantillation marks (*ספרות*) for purposes of interpretation. In the next chapter Luzzato trots out the Isaac of Acco story. His proof of the authenticity of the account is

that the printer of the story in the Constantinople edition, Samuel Shullam, didn't like to believe this either since he was a Kabbalist himself. If he had any doubt as to whether or not it belonged to the *יוחאי* he would not have printed it. As for Isaac of Acco, he was no fool but a learned man, a Kabbalist, and mentioned for his brilliance even in non-Jewish sources. He also brings against the Zohar the language argument, saying it was written in Aramaic because the author was afraid that his forgery would be detected in Mishnaic Hebrew. Then comes Emden's argument of included Spanish words. Following that, is presented Modena's point regarding the confusion of non-contemporaneous rabbis with R' Simeon b. Yohai and other anachronisms. The final argument places the Talmud in opposition to the Zohar.. The Talmud says: "זכור לך את המצות" . but the Zohar is full of false predictions about the *ג'ק* .

Very shortly afterwards there appeared an answer to Luzzato's *אורח* in the form of a little treatise by *אוריאל* called, *אורח אוריאל* . We cite its reasoning here as typical of those "orthodox" Kabbalists who believed that the Zohar was absolutely holy and handed down from Sinai together with the oral law. It is typical of their clumsy attempts to combine an appeal to authority with reason. The author states that *ז"ל*

let his imagination overthrow his respect for authority. If *he* could he should immediately recall his book. But, since this is impossible, a refutation must be made. And *so* follows somewhat this vein:

1. How could *he* have had the nerve, the audacity to question the grand, marvelous, wonderful Kabbalah? One mustn't slander sticks and stones; how much more and more and more must one refrain from slandering the *"Shema"*.
2. There is no disagreement among Kabbalists with regard to God and the Sefiroth. He is One. They are 10 different sides of Him.
3. Because you don't understand something is no reason for saying that it isn't true; it only means that you haven't the depth to see it. The transient in the made his mistake in that he put all knowledge on a basis of experience rather than revelation.
4. Because there is disagreement about a certain point does not mean that the whole thing is forged. There is disagreement over so many laws of the Torah; does that mean that we don't accept the revelation of Torah? (In this argument *so* comes closest to making a cogent point against the *Avot*.)
5. Since the Kabbalah is beyond human understanding only those books about it, written at the time of Luria and Vital should be accepted. Later books do not have the true tradition.

6. The Zohar is hinted at in Bible and Rabbinic Literature--if one has "seeing eyes."
7. The Mishnah and Talmud, though given on Sinai could not be written down until after the destruction of the second Temple. The Zohar existed from earliest times but could not be written down until later.
8. The story of *Yonah* of Isaac of Acco----if it were true, being such a tremendously important thing, would have been taken up by the *Sh"v* of every land to discover the truth. Since no investigation was made it is obviously impossible that such a story was extant at the time.
9. Though of Heaven, the Zohar was written in the language of the time. This does not impugn its purity, however.
10. Later additions were made, but they were dictated to the Gaonim by God's Angels.
11. The *37* predicted in the Zohar did not come to pass because of Israel's wickedness.
12. Since the *de de* idea is unsearchable its untruth cannot be proved, therefore it is true.
13. The sealing of the decree on Hoshannah Rabba is a Jewish idea that was extant before the Zohar.(70)

In all we have, here in this work an even weaker criticism of a weak book.

Fortunately, for those, who are interested in arriving at as broad and true a picture of the problem of the authorship of the Zohar, within a few years (1856) the great mind and tremendous knowledge of David Lurian was brought to bear in favor of the antiquity of the Zohar in his little monograph קדמות ספר הזוהר. Here he advances a number of unanswerable arguments to prove that it is highly improbable that Moses De Leon wrote the Zohar. With great clarity he outlines the purpose of his first chapter on the very first page, saying:

ו' שאי אפשר להיות שחבירו הרב ר' משה ד' ליאון ז"ל
 כאשר העלים עליו המעוררים. — ויחלק לשלשה חתי' האמיתיות:
 א' משה שספרו הנמצא אצלנו בדפוס, ומה שספרו
 ה' דברי ר' משה' (Cordovero) ז"ל בדפוס מאת ספריו אשר
 היה לו ז"ל כחלקים, מהבדל שאינן דרכיו דרכי
 קובץ, ומתנגדים דבריו לו בדרכי ענינים.
 ב' רב' חלקים שחבירו הר' דליאון, שספרו הנמצא אצלנו
 בדפוס את דברי ר' חלקים, ומה שחבירו ז"ל בו החל
 כלוקח מלשון, או שהיה לפניו נוסחא משקשת דס' הזוהר.
 ג' משה שספרו החלקים שקדמו למה שדליאון א'
 מחכמי דורו רק שהיו ענינים אמיתיים ממנו, ומה שאינם
 כהר דברי ספר הזוהר.

A. The books of De Leon do not follow the Zohar.

1. Quoting De Leon's work as mentioned in Cordovero's "Pardes", David Luria says that De Leon differs from the Zohar over 23 different concepts; they are:

"אלון הנפלאות, אז, אחת, בטן, בת קול, גיה, חרב, חשמה, כרד, לשון,
 "מחשבה נשגב, מטלון, מחמק, מתן תורה, נאש, זון סלה, בקידה,
 קדם, קרן, שלש, שיצור קמה, שמן" (71)

2. De Leon, in his book ספר המסקל, says things that
 are contrary to the ideas in the Zohar.

הלא נראה בראש ספרו (ס מסקל) שכתב בצנין,
 בריאה, יצירה, דש"ה, וזה לשון בריאה בלא קטן מסוד
 יצירה כי יצירה אלה עם צנין בריאה, עד כאן לשון.
 וס"מ שם אה"כ שהן כנגד צנין [נפש, רוח, נשמה]. וזה
 לדבריו נשמה מיצירה ורוח מקריאה אשר יצא מהבורס
 הפכו לכל קווא ס' הנהיג ותיקונים שמאל
 במקומות רבים שבראה למחלה מיצירה, והנשמה מקריאה
 והרוח מיצירה, גם מציקרי הששון הסכמא המברשים,
 שבראה הוה עם יש מאין ויצירה עם ציר והתמללות
 יש מיש כיצור מחמדה" (72)

Again:--- 'שד' is the name given by the Zohar to
 the fifth Sephiroth, גבורה, especially in יקרא יא,
 but De Leon, in his שער השמות ascribes it ('שד') to
 the ninth Sephiroth. He gives אלוקים as the God name
 for the fifth Sephiroth. (73)

B. In some places where De Leon cites the Zohar he either
 misinterprets it or else he had before him a corrupt
 Manuscript.

1. In chapter 7 of the מסקל, De Leon thinks that the
 כסא מלכות of the ציצית is a symbol for the קדוץ
 or the Sephiro of מלכות; whereas in the Zohar

מכאן שנאמר אחר מלך הקצות לעולם ולעלמים, ואף אם
 נבוא שזה היקטל על שנת' ו' היה ראשון שנכתב בכתב יד
 מחברו ויהיה לפי זה מחברו מחבר לעצמן חר"ם דלמאן דמכל
 ז"ל הדבר וחוק שבזמן קצר כל כך ח"מ' חר"ם דלמאן דמכל
 שנת' ו' הרבט' ה' ה' חסד' מקום חר"ם דלמאן דלמאן
 מקום גדול היקטל שלפ' המקבל היה אשכנזי כיצד בשם
 ר' שמעון דין מבראנקפורט, בברט בימים ההם דמלך
 הגמלות וה' ח' (47)

2. In the book דברי מלך many quotations are recorded in
 Aramaic and ascribed to R' Simeon b. Yohai just like
 in the Zohar. Although they are not found in the
 Zohar, Luria believes that it was written by ~~חמ"ל~~ ^{חמ"ל} ~~חמ"ל~~.
 Others claim it was written by אברהם מלך ספרד. But
 even if it is so that generation lived before, gener-
 ations before Moses De Leon. He was a contemporary of
 רשב"א who was a disciple of רמ"ל. While De Leon
 never refers to רמ"ל as to his his teacher, but sim-
 ply as הרב ז"ל, showing that he was at least a generation
 removed from רמ"ל.
3. In his אורי פקוד, Turdes Halevi, who lived before De
 Leon tells certain stories as Midrashim. They are
 only to be found in Midrash Hane'elam of the Zohar.
4. Same with regard to the book מקד' חז"ל.
5. R' Menahem Ricanti in his book on the Torah and the
 meaning of the חז"ל cites a great deal from the
 Zohar. It has been accepted that Ricanti and

De Leon were contemporaries. But--says the author--one must have preceded the other. One must have copied from the other because there are places where their work is very similar. Riccanti is first. We find a place where he came to the problem of Solomon's 1000 wives; and he says this puzzled him a great deal over a long period of time, but then he solved it and put down his solution. De Leon takes up the same problem and gives the same solution. But he gives the solution with the greatest of ease. However, Riccanti only precedes De Leon by a few years and both probably had the same copy of the Zohar before them.

We may summarize the argument of *ר' שלמה* as follows:

The first Geonim quoted passages concerning the Kabbalah in the name of *ר' יהודה*. The language is very similar to that of the *ספר הזוהר*. Now, almost none of the Gaonic quotations are to be found in the present *ספר הזוהר* of the Zohar because only fragments are here contained. The author believes that at one time there was a *ספר הזוהר* for the whole Bible. The proofs for this conjecture are brought from the following sources:

1. Data from *ספר הזוהר* found in the writings of others which are quoted in the name of *ר' יהודה*.
2. That which is found in the printed copies of the *ספר הזוהר* that we have.

3. That not ascribed to the *אבות דרובא*, but simply quoted by the old authors as of the *אבות דרובא*.

4. Miscellaneous.

In the *דף* the author gives arguments why he believes that the Zohar was written before the close of the Talmud. He Believes:

1. That De Leon did not write it because the task was beyond his abilities, and because we can find no sufficient incentive to have caused him to forge it.
2. It is like *אבות דרובא* which have new laws that disagree with those of the Talmud.
3. Also like the Targum of *אבות דרובא* which was written before the close of the Talmud---because it contains new laws, and because no one would have dared to express new laws after the close of the Talmud.
4. The Zohar itself forbids making new laws against the laws contained in the Talmud.

In *דף*, a further step is taken by Luria to show that the Zohar was written at the time of R' Simeon b. Yohai and his disciples, for the following reasons:

1. The reference to the conquest of Palestine by the Arabs which states that "in four hundred years Palestine will be captured," as a prophecy on the part of R' Simeon b. Yohai who lived about 170. In point of fact Palestine was captured in 637 (about 400 years after his death).
2. In the Zohar to Exodus there is a reference to a conversation between a rabbi and Antoninus, the Roman,

which is very similar to a Talmudic story. The author argues that if these things were put in to fool the public, the forger of the Zohar would have been clever enough to compose the whole Zohar in such a manner as to leave no loopholes for critics.

3. As for the appearance of the names of the Amoraim who lived after R' Simeon b. Yohai, this is accretion, much after the manner of the rest of the Talmud.

The fifth and last *§* consists of a refutation of those who held the Zohar a forgery, because of its language. In the main, the author points out that because there was an interdict on the writing down of the oral law, it was necessary for the Zohar to be handed down from R' Simeon b. Yohai orally for several generations. Naturally, Aramaic, being the language of the people, was used for this transmission. Also, we find that in the Bible and in Rabbinical Literature, visions were reported in Aramaic--as in Daniel. Therefore, the Zohar, which is a book of visions was bound to be written in Aramaic.

In all, we may say of this little book that it is a gem of lucidity of thought and depth of erudition. The first portion of the book, where Luria proves that De Leon could not have been the author of the Zohar is, on the face of it, almost irrefutable. The last three *ס' ע"ב* where he tries to ascribe it to R' Simeon b. Yohai, are as weak as the first two are strong. They are all arguments which can easily be turned against the very points the author wishes to make. It seems only too bad that a man of Luria's knowledge and brilliance could not have had the

modern scientific approach as well as modern materials to aid him. If he had, perhaps the whole problem might have been nearer its solution than is the case today.

The next important article that merits our consideration takes the extreme opposite point of view from that which we have just been considering. It is note 2' of the Hebrew edition of Graetz' History of the Jews, volume 5. It is the ablest and most complete exposition of the argument that the Zohar was written, in its entirety, by Moses De Leon.

Graetz is brief, and to the point. His first argument is:

„באמת אין אנו צריכים כלל לראות כי הקוהר איננו מהאיש גמולו
מתייחס אליו, כי אחרי שהמקובלים בעצמם מקלים כי תורתם, תורה
האין סוף, הספידות וגלגל נפש, נחמדשה בשנים האחרונות לאלף החמישי,
והתלמוד לא מצאנו לה אף רמז קטן, הנה קצת יש לנו די הכחה כי
ובי שמתן בן יחיא התנא הקדמון אין בזה הסבר." (75)

He cites several passages from Abulafia's אצור הכבוד and he agrees with Luria that these are found in the מקדש הקודש. But he says:

„האם מכאן יש ראיה על קדמות הקוהר כמו שיחבול לראות הרצ"ל,
אסר בכלל אין יוצא מזה אלא ידיו וגלגליו בסדר הנתינים." (76)

Graetz proves, at some length, that Abulafia was a contemporary of Moses De Leon who lived to a ripe old age. And since he had influence at the Spanish court, De Leon was anxious to show him the Zohar. Thus, according to Graetz, Luria's hypothesis that the Zohar was known before De Leon, on the basis of Abulafia's אצור הקודש

has no foundation in fact. The same is true, he points out, with regard to Ricanti's evidence because he too was a contemporary of De Leon. And R' Shem Tob's evidence in *מגילת עזריאל* cannot be taken seriously because it is well known that even the Kabbalists of his own day did not believe his stories.

At this point Graetz quotes the whole story of Isaac of Acco (the one we have translated). He cites this as the weightiest evidence that the Zohar is a forgery on the part of Moses De Leon. He states that there were a number of Kabbalists of that day who rejected the Zohar.

Said *אין און און* :

"אין און און דאס זאל זיין דאס זאל זיין דאס זאל זיין" (77)

Said also *דאס זאל זיין* :

"ספר זוהר... דאס זאל זיין דאס זאל זיין (דאס זאל זיין) דאס זאל זיין דאס זאל זיין" (78)

At first, says Graetz, it was accepted that the Zohar had come down from R' Simeon b. Yohai. The first to question this was Elijah Del Medigo in his book *בחינת הדת*, on three counts:

1. The sages of the Talmud, and the Gaonim did not know of the Zohar.
2. The Zohar was revealed much later than R' Simeon b. Yohai.
3. The confusion of later Amoraim with R' Simeon b. Yohai in his dialogues.

Then Graetz tells about Modena's arguments--which we have already discussed in detail, as well as those of Emden, who, he tells us, was moved to write his *מכתב סודי* by the rise of the Frankists. Graetz feels that after such research, Emden should

very similar to those of the Zohar. In the *ספר יצירה*, in explaining why *אלהים* instead of *יהוה* is used in the creation story, De Leon quotes a passage from Psalm 46:9 and quotes it as containing *אלהים* when in fact, the verse actually contains *יהוה*. This very same explanation and the same error is found in the Zohar. There are several other examples of this kind.

There are also places in the Zohar where the author couldn't help but put in his own name. Although ascribed to R' Simeon b. Yohai, Yohai himself says:

(80) "כי דרשתי באיש חכם להודיע לי דבר קדוש ואלהי אלהים."

There are also several more examples of this type of thing.

We cannot ascribe the Zohar to Abulafia because, although both the Zohar and Abulafia in his works dealt with *קצ' 13*, not one of their calculations as to the date are in agreement.

Where, then, did De Leon get all these ideas? Graetz explains that the multiplicity of ideas in the Zohar were developed by the Kabbalists of the eighty years previous to its appearance. De Leon simply collated these ideas, and ascribed ~~all~~ all to R' Simeon b. Yohai, in all a pretty piece of forgery.

The first man in this century to have spent considerable time and effort on the problem of the Authorship of the Zohar is Hillel Zeitlin, who, in 1920, had two articles on the subject in the *תקופה*. His first article consists chiefly of the history of the opinions of various men on the subject, beginning with the account of Isaac of Acco. Near the end of the article he begins summing up the problem. Apparently, he points out,---apparently, the Zohar was written by Moses De Leon:

„התאמה היתה אחתית, לכאורה, היא: רבי משה די ליאון חקר גם את דברי טאובס על הנהיג גם את תלמידיו. רגלים לדבר: רבי משה גם הוא, הוא הפיץ אותו בדברים, הוא שלח קונטרסים קונטרסים ממנו למידים אנציהים וקבלת דמיונים שבו הלא, באמת העידה, שמעולם לא הצטיק די ליאון קונטרסיו מתוך ספק, אלא, מדעתו ומעליו כתב מה שכתב; רבי יצחק דמן דכו חקר וזרש והציד על הדבר; הקצ'א מהימני, משה הקדמון, מתען המקומות דברים, דם מתוך הקצ'א, שם הוא - משה" (81)

But--, Zeitlin says, ---the great scholar David Luria proves from internal evidence that it is impossible to consider De Leon the author.(82) Not only does Zeitlin expound the views of Luria; he expatiates upon them, giving explanations where Luria refrained from so doing, especially with regards to the contradictions in the terminology and basic ideology between the Zohar and the acknowledged works of Moses De Leon.

Zeitlin adds an interesting observation concerning De Leon's own attitude toward the Zohar:

"כשהלגים און בספרי רבי משה ד' לילאן בשם-ער, ראוי
 און כי בלא בצמח האמין באמת אבתמים, שדברי הקהר'
 הם דברי מדגש. מביא בלא את דברי הקהר' באלת הסגנון
 שבו בלא מביא את דברי הפסיקתא והתלמוד אמר גם
 נאמר, שפיה רבי משה מחבר קנטרסטים ואיחסם לרבי
 שמעון בן יוחאי בשביל להשיב את מקומם, למה היה לו
 להחזיק ביצחק ז"ל בשאר ספרים שחבר? וכיצד היה צובר
 תמיד צ"ל ז"ל ולא היה שוכח אף פעם אחת להביא
 את דברי הקהר' כמביא את דברי בצמח?
 בכל המקומות שרבי משה מביא דברים מן ספר
 הקהר' אין אף רמז ומציא ללוצה יחס של קרבה שיש לו
 לרבי משה, ולדברים אשר בלא מביא. מביא בלא את דברי הקהר'
 בחצות קדש. מרגשת היא אמתית בקדמיותה של הספר
 שבלא מביא אלא אלהין קדישין ד' קהר'..." (83)

Thus we see that the apparent strength of those who argue that the Zohar was entirely the forgery of De Leon is no strength at all. We see too--from Luria's arguments--that different parts of the Zohar were known by the Gaonim, that parts were written by the Amorayim or even before them.

What about the testimony of Isaac of Acco? This has the stamp of genuineness upon it, says Zeitlin. What about all these manuscripts that De Leon wrote and ascribed to R' Simeon? Where do they come from; who wrote them; when were they written?

In his second article Zeitlin attempts to give the answer.

לפי החיצוניות - אנו חיים אלא שתי מחשבות אפיקות
 בלתי תלויות זו בזו, ולפי הנחות - רק מחשבה אחת, מחשבת
 הטוב, המתעלמת ומסתרת עצמה ונותנת במבט מקום גדול לרע.
 והרי כאן המציצב בדקה המבדלת את האמת האחדות
 הטובה לבין אמת השניות. כשאדם מבין את כל עמקה של
 הבחירה ואת כל הפלגת העולמי הגדול של הבורא, יכול
 הוא להיות את כל תוקף מחשבת הרע, ולהאמין בכל זאת
 באחדותה הממשלת של מחשבת הטוב, אבל כשאדם
 אינו משיג את כל היסוד הדק של הבחירה והבורא,
 הרי הוא - בשדה שהוא רואה את כל גורמי אוצרות
 הרע - עלול לכוון באחדות האלמות, ביחידה של מחשבת
 הטוב, ולקבל הרשת השניות.

"רבי עקיבא בעצמו נצטח מרשת זו (יצא בשלום) לפי
 שראה את כל כחה של הבחירה, שיש לה מקום ביחוד עם היצירה" (84)

And as proof of this fact Zeitlin cites the words from the
 original source in (תנ"ך י"ד)

כשתפיל מעיניך אצל אבן שיש טהור, אל תאמרו מים מים."

Says Zeitlin, that according to the Zohar: (85)

"בין לפי התקוות לבין לפי הנהיג' בכוונה, אבן שיש טהור על היותו היות
 צלם, ובה אפיקות רבי עקיבא על צי: אל תאמרו מים מים... כלומר: השמור
 והעבול, שלא תבטל ולא תבטל מן האחדות האבדית היותו קבוצה, לאחיה
 ונשקבה אל המקום אשר שם בורא ונותן - מים מים מים מים" (86)

Zeitlin has, no doubt, correctly interpreted the Kabbal-
 istic and Zoharistic comments on the Talmud; but has he
 properly evaluated the ideas and expressions in the Talmud itself?

We cannot say that he has not--but there is reason for healthy doubt as to his and the *מהיכל* interpretation of the expression *קצץ בג'ו'ר'ה* --upon which the whole proof is built. According to Jastrow *קצץ בג'ו'ר'ה* means: "(to cut down the shoots in the garden of religion), to be hostile to religion, corrupt the youths; to be a heretic." There seems to be some support to this interpretation because the expression was actually used for trees: In Baba Kamma 91b, according to Jastrow, we find the expression *קצץ בג'ו'ר'ה* -- which is translated: "Thou hast cut down my young trees." And then in Canticles Rabbah to chapter I:4 we have *קצץ בג'ו'ר'ה כיצד*, which is translated: "in what way did he manifest his hostility to religion?" We can see from this that *קצץ בג'ו'ר'ה* was a common expression in Tannaitic times which at first meant precisely the cutting down of young trees and then was adapted as a general expression of heresy. There was nothing mysterious or occult about this expression in rabbinic literature. It was only much later that the Kabbalists reinterpreted the expression to mean *belief in מל'ה*. Thus, Zeitlin is reading out of the verse not what the Tanaim put there, but what the later Kabbalists put there, and the following conclusion of his is absolutely untrue:

וְצִיָּן לְפִי כֵּן זֶה לְדִין, שֶׁכֵּן בִּימֵי עֲקִיבָה הָיוּ לְחֻכְמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 שִׁטָּוֹת סְבֻלֹת בְּסִתְרֵי הָאֱלֹהִים, אֲחֻדִּים נִכְשָׁלוּ בָהֶם, וְאֲחֻדִּים -
 הַשְׂמֵמִים וְהַבְּרִיאִים בְּלֹאם - בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה שִׁטָּת הַמַּסְתַּלְּקִין הַיְּהוּדִים.
 [Thus far we might agree. But what follows is most untrue.]
 הַמִּיחַסֵּת אֶת, שֶׁכֵּן הִצִּירָהּ לְרֵבִי עֲקִיבָה - אִם אֵל אֲבִשֶׁר
 לְהַכִּיחַ אֶתְּכֶם, כֵּן זֶה יֵשׁ לָהּ עַל מַה שֶּׁמֵּחֶלְקָהּ" (87)

Zeitlin gives several pages of reference to show that Akiba was a mystic as well as a rationalist and that he was the great founder of Jewish mysticism. It is very probable that Akiba did have something to do with mysticism--he may even have been keenly interested in it. But Zeitlin fails completely to prove his contention that Akiba began the chain of Kabbalah which culminated in the Sefer Yetzira and the Zohar. As for R' Simeon b. Yohai, Zeitlin does not go into detail, but places him as one who followed in the footsteps of Akiba and in much the same manner laid the foundation of the Zohar.

The next problem discussed is: How were these mysteries transmitted through the ages?

מאסרים בין רק ראשי פרקים, כח שנאמר במשנה, ובספרה שבה
דברו ביניהם לבין עצמם, לאחר: בספר הארמית או הסורית.
כי רק ההלכות היו שונים במשנה הקודש (במשנה המשנה
וההיתוות) אבל הביאור הרגיל זה שקלא וטריא בין הארמית או
בסורית, ולכל היותר - בספר מדרגות משנה הקודש, ארמית, סורית, וכו'.

And having been handed down through the ages:

כשנאמר משנה בשם רב השרה האדלר, שהיה ר' (בפרשת נשא
ובפרשת האזינו), בספרו דצניעותא (בפרשת וזאת), בהיותו
שונות, במאמרים קודמים מאתו, הוא פורשם כהנה' עצמו,
אין מלבדו, שכלם, תבניות של ראשי פרקים. אין אלה הלכות
מסודרות בקבוצה, כח הלכות אחרות שקססר יצרה, אלא
דמיון דקים מן הדקים, שנחלקו מבה לאן, לבין העלם
שהיה מאמרים, הרי אלה מן שיטות, כי אם התחלות של
שיטות, את השיטות עצמן צריכים היו, בין העלם להבין

מבשרתם. קני העליה' היו מבארים להם את, ראשי הפרקים, כל אחד
 ואחד לפי מה דמסדר במהיה, ולפסחים קרבנות היו מצרפים את
 כל שיהיה לראשי הפרקים' וזושים מהם חטיבה אחת. במשך
 הדורות חדלו להקדים בין, ראשי הפרקים' ובין הפרקים' שדעיהם.
 הכם נאסף לתקן קולטותם שונים, שדברו מצור' עבר' ואיך ליד: (88)

And so, Zeitlin sums it up: R' Simeon b. Yohai and his
 disciples handed down the "ראש' פרקים"to those who followed
 them in the spoken tongue--Aramaic. When it was written down
 the writers feared to change it. But when the later authors
 filled in the comments on these "ראש' פרקים", though they
 tried, they could not fill in the correct Aramaic;--so we have
 the corrupt Spanish forms.

But, continues the author, there is an underlying unity in
 the Zohar--as if one man had edited it; and the following are
 the flimsy arguments Zeitlin advances as the key to the editor:

בפסחים רבוא' אלו שמונים מתקן פברי קאפר' ענות נפש
 דלויק, קדוש אלוהים, שיריה בשם המדקדק, ענות נפש הסודות
 יסורי משיח, ענות נפש נאדור בין רבבות אנשים צדים
 עה, והיא מתקדשת על אלה העולם, שכלו טהור ויפי,
 שמתן לקחה.

בדעתנו את ח"י הנצוצים של פי ליאון והטאנו לה
 ביחוד אלו מקומות רבים ברעיון מתקן, שבהם ידבר על
 יסורי משה והצלות אלו הקדור רב'..... סוף, סוף אק קול ענות
 רבי משה פי ליאון עצמו אלו שמונים. (89)

The truth of the matter, says the author, is that Moses
 De Leon collected the scattered manuscripts, edited them, and

added his own ideas:

„ואללה הוא לא היה רק מלפני
 גם את הלאה אשר לו, המשיך הלאה את הרציונל הקדושים
 והקדושים אשר מצא, דרש אחרת כן חזר הפך בהם הפך
 בהם ומצא בהם טעמים רבים... (90)“

Leitlin concludes by explaining, that it is true that both Simeon b. Yohai and Moses De Leon wrote the Zohar; that De Leon did not lie when he told Isaac of Acco that he had an ancient manuscript from which to copy and when he told his wife that he was composing it out of his own head. For he was, in fact, adding from his own head to the manuscript that he had. And, since he took this ancient manuscript with him during his travels and since he did not die at home--we needn't be surprised that his wife could not turn it over to the rich Jew, who offered her such a marvelous future in exchange.

As a journalistic guess, as an attempt to bring together long conflicting facts into a plausible theory, Leitlin's second article is indeed ingenious---it may, by chance, even be true; but lacking any substantial proof, it adds nothing solid to our scientific appreciation of the problem.

Upstart G. Scholem Jr.

A far more capable, more scholarly, and more trustworthy student of the Zohar and the problem of its authorship is To date, however, his writings are inconclusive, because, after having written an excellent article in the first volume of *מנחם' ה'הב'ת* in 1926 refuting the view that Moses De Leon wrote the zohar, he turned about, and in a few introductory pages to his German translation "Die Geheimnisse der Schöpfung--ein Kapitel aus dem Zohar," written in 1935, he declares that Moses De Leon was the author of most of the Zohar, possibly all of it. Although contradictory, the arguments in both these articles seem sound and are certainly worthy of consideration.

The name of his article in 1926 is:

"האם חזר משה ד' לילאן את ספר ה'הב'ת?"

and in the first paragraph he makes it clear that this is the only aspect which he will discuss. / First, he attacks the pillars of the opposition, which claims that De Leon wrote the Zohar as a forgery.

"הראיה, כי משה ד' לילאן הוא האל מחברו של ה'הב'ת, מוסבר בעיקר על שני מאפיינים, והמצדדים אין דווקא לשאר הטענות, ואילו הם ערערו של ר' יצחק צמח עכו, הכוללת האבאית בעל הדין, כביכול השליח שבין ספרו 'משה ד' לילאן, שיצא בהתחלת שנה ועדיו' נמצאים אהן כיום, ובין ספרו 'ה'הב'ת' (98)

There follows a digest in Scholem's own words of the account which we translated in the first section of this thesis. He points out that although it is evident that parts

parts of Isaac of Acco's account are missing both in the beginning and in the end, the testimony nevertheless is not forged. Two hundred years before the appearance of the ס' יוסין we find that יצחק קצר mentions a man by the name of Don Jucaí de Avila as a tax farmer in 1285 and as a בזל הבית in 1303. And if he was a tax farmer, says Scholem, its small wonder that Isaac of Acco calls him: „דשיר קצר“ :

„ באמתותה של תעודתו כי בתור תעודתו אין להטיל ספק, ולעומת קצרה טען אלה שהחזיקו אותה למעלה פחות, אכן לא הוכרחו להיכנס עם הם לעמוד הקדמי שאל של ר' יוסף ד' אביהם נמצא בתעודות ספרדיות שנתים לפני המעשה. וכל הפרטים הנלקטים מראשיתם. (92)“

However, if we can't doubt the authenticity of Isaac of Acco's account we certainly have every reason to doubt the veracity of his sources of information:

„ כי לא מפי אשתו של רבי משה שמואל ר' יצחק מה שטען, אלא הוא מפי ר' דוד ור' דוד מפי ר' יוסף ור' יוסף מפי אשתו לוק אשתו מפי אשתו של משה ב' לילן (ואם בן יד' שני נשים באמצעי) ואין יודע קצת איזה בית דין היו מקבלים עובד משהשם כן בלי בקבוקים כאלו שקדוה הבית דין של ירושלים. (93)“

According to his wife De Leon thought up the Zohar completely from his own mind. This is impossible. In the first place De Leon had a manuscript of some kind before him; even if it was his own manuscript from which he made copies. This

is in accordance with Joseph Abulafia. Why then, didn't the woman show this copy when offered such handsome rewards. Secondly, we must doubt the truthfulness of both wife and daughter of De Leon, who, according to Pancorbo, were estranged from him (De Leon). Furthermore, it is impossible that any man could have written out of his own fancy a work as large as the Zohar in the last ten years of his life. Many things in the Zohar couldn't have been conceived by him because the ideas there were not current in De Leon's day. For example, the אמרי אלהים חמדת הכתר in פרשת יתרו are an ancient Greek idea. Even the form and style are out of older places. If De Leon's widow actually did say that De Leon wrote the Zohar himself she was either giving false testimony or De Leon had given her false information. Furthermore, the disciple, R' Jacob, whom R' Isaac mentions at the end of his account and who states that De Leon did have the books before him, was closer to De Leon in this matter than was his wife or daughter. It is interesting too, that R' Isaac after his inquiry into the problem remained steadfast in his belief in the truth and antiquity of the Zohar. And as for the statement in the account:

„ואלו היית מקדיש להם, שמעלי אני כותב לא ישיקו
 בקברי ולא יתנו לי כרואה כי יאמרו כי מלכו היה
 באדמאם. אבל דעה, כאשר אשמעו שחלק ספר זה אשר
 חבר רשבי ברוא בקדש אני מצטיק יקנו אותם
 בדמים יקרים כאשר ציניק רואות.”

Scholem feels that De Leon would never have said such a thing. It is even doubtful whether his wife would have done so. It is very likely that someone who hated De Leon inserted it.

Scholem sums up this section as follows:

אם נסתכל, איפוא, מה שיצא לנו מדברי ר' יצחק דאן דכל חיבול נע:
 אן תמצא מכל ספר מלבד הוא, שהצטרף הנהר יצא אחת
 ידי ר' משה די ליאון.
 (ב) עדות האמת, כי מצדו ומתן אהבת הקצו היה ענין
 את הנהר, מוכרבת ומולדת בתכלית הספר לאי אפשר לקבל
 קנין שם עם יסוד עדות כזו, שלא ידעו פרטי גמוליה.
 (ג) ר' יצחק דאן דכל האמין עם יסוד עדות שאין יכולות
 לנו, כי האמת היה מדרש אחת ביד ר' משה, ובכר
 את שבדו של ר' משה בבניו באלוליוז על שלשה
 העדוה, שמה באב"ה. (94)

Scholem handles the second problem, i.e. whether we can ascribe the Zohar to Moses De Leon because of the parallelism between his acknowledged works and the Zohar,-- as follows:

First he points out that the Zohar has been ascribed to Moses De Leon because by a comparison between the first printed of his books "קנע החכמה", with the Zohar it was found that the materials, ideas, even mistakes were identical, simply that the former were in Hebrew and the latter in Aramaic. In refutation of this belief Scholem shows that De Leon never wrote his own books as if they contained original ideas, but rather does he always say:

"ראיתי במדרש", "ראיתי בסתרי תורה", "ראיתי בסתרי היחוד", "יש ענין
 גלוי... וכו'".

And further, De Leon is not referring to a general literature when he speaks of "ספר זוהר", but to a specific book because in one place in "ספר זוהר", he says: *אמרו בספר זוהר למקלות אחרים*. Thus De Leon did not collate his earlier works into an Aramaic Zohar, but must have had a manuscript before him from which he quotes.

Did he then write this Zohar first, and then copy the Hebrew books from it? "No!" says Scholem--(in 1926) This, aside from psychological reasons, is not possible because:

1. The Zohar contains many expressions and ideas which Moses De Leon could not explain in his own works.
2. For a long time it was thought that De Leon was the first to write Kabbalistic treatises in his time. This lent credence to the idea that he wrote the Zohar. But we know from the works of R' Turday Halevi and R' Joseph Jikatilla that their writings were Kabbalistic. Abulafia who died in 1283, cites in his *כף חן* several passages from the Zohar. In an even earlier work "פניני חן", he cites several passages from the Zohar. In his book "פניני חן", Jikatilla also brings quotations from the Zohar and we know that in De Leon's last book Jikatilla's work is mentioned. Says Scholem:

*"וזה דבר כי חזק יצא מאחרים כאמרו, אם יחזיקו
 יותר בכתבי יד של המקובלים הראשונים המצויים
 בספרותם" (95)*

And in conclusion Scholem states:

„... כל השאלה על התהוות הצד והשאלה בדבר עריכתו
 וסגורו ובדבר יחס האמת לר' משה ד' ליאון ומשוררו
 מחשבו. ואמנם-סתם תשובה חזקית על שאלות אלו ולבנין
 כיצד נוצר וכיצד סדר היתה, אם אולי משה ד'
 ליאון היה מסדר מקורות מדרשיים, שהיו לפניו מתמנים בזה
 יצירות, באלבן חדש, ואם בשער הסדר הוסיף גם הוא נוסף
 משלו, ואיך נתגלגל שירי דורות קדומים עד לידי
 ר' משה והקדמים לו בין מקובלי קאשטיליא - כל אלה
 תלויים בחקירה חדשה ושיטתית על הגבולות הקדומים
 באלה. בלא משפטים קדומים, בחקירת לשון היתה וצריך הכלל
 וברט. וההחלטה לן ידעת היתה מקורה, שער נוסחא מאתן." (96)

It is in view of this feeling on the part of Scholem that his reversal some ten years later in his introduction to the little German translation, "Die Geheimnisse der Schöpfung," comes as a distinct surprise. Instead of finding, after these many years of "חקירה חדשה," that which he had expected to find--namely, the sources which Moses De Leon used in editing the Zohar, he found that De Leon was not an editor at all, but the author. Even more surprising, is the fact that he bases this new point of view upon an argument which directly contradicts his last point in the Hebrew article of 1926. There he goes to some length to prove that De Leon could not have written the Zohar before writing his "own" books. Here he states that De Leon did write the Zohar before writing his "own" books. Unfortunately, Scholem simply states his con-

do
 clusions and not his proofs, in this little preface. We can no more than present them:

He makes it known at once that he cannot agree with Graetz; especially with regards to the character of the man who wrote the Zohar. Graetz said that De Leon was a charlatan. Scholem believes he was a genius. Neither does he accept our more modern view that De Leon collated and edited a group of documents coming from earlier times. This rejection grows out of his own experience. He says:

"Jeder versuch, durch Herausarbeitung genauer Kriterien Schichten und Teile im Sohar nachzuweisen, die vor die mitte des 13 Jahrhunderts zuruckzufuhren, schlagt in einen neuen Beweis des Gegenteils um. Das hat der Autor dieser Zeilen, der Jahre die Durchfuehrung einer solchen Analyse verwandt hat, nachdrucklich erfahren. Das eindeutige Resultat entsprach so wenig den Hoffnungen, mit denen er auszog, widerlegte sie so grundlich, dass er es wagen kann, als sicheres Ergebnis das Folgende zu sagen:"(97)

That the Zohar is a unit. There are certain omissions and errors of arrangement in printing, but one can only divide it into three parts, which are absolute units within themselves, and are related to one another. They are:

1. *מדרש פנינים*
2. Main part of the Zohar, with the *ספר חמדה ואמרות*, and miscellaneous writings
3. The *תקון קצו* and the *מחנה נחמיה*.

The first two were certainly written by one man and the third was written either by the same man when he was much older-- or more likely--by another man at a later date--before 1300 and after 1290. This man certainly had the first two books before him. The author of the first two books was a man versed in the philosophical and Talmudic learning of his time. His philosophical propensities were far outweighed by his genius for mystical homiletics. He was not an editor or collator. Although his ideas were not new, they were not from old, half forgotten sources, but were based upon the Kabbalistic ideas that developed about the time of Nachmanides. They were written down by De Leon between 1260 and 1280 (98). Was Moses De Leon the author? There are proofs both for and against his authorship. But none of them are convincing. We can only say that De Leon fits into the chronological picture better than any one else we know. First, we know that his fellow citizen from Guadalajara, Isaac ibn Sahula, had already read the *דברי עזרא* in 1281. From 1286 on De Leon wrote his "own" works. And these works, unlike any others, took all their materials and points of view specifically from the Zohar and not from the general Kabbalistic field. So either he completely sank under the influence of another author until his own personality disappeared, or he himself was the author. And, finally, through the discovery of a manuscript copy of the *אורה נחמיס* written for De Leon and dated 1264 (99) we find the twenty years between 1264 and 1286 (when the writing of his "own" books began) in which he would have ample time to write the Zohar.

Moreover, the very fact that he was grounded in the philosophy of Maimonides makes him the logical man to have written a book like the Zohar with its philosophical prerequisites.

And at the end of the discussion we find this very significant note:

"Es sei ausdrücklich bemerkt, dass, als der Autor dieser Zielen seine wesentlich unbestimmter formulierten Sätze über Autorschaft und Redaktion des Sohar im Artikel "Kabbala" der Encyclopaedia Judaica (IX), 654) schrieb, er die Autorschaft des Mosche de Leon noch für ausserst unfewiss hielt, wie er denn Jahre lang nicht an sie geglaubt hat. Die sehr komplexe Frage hat sich aber seit 1931 so weit aufgeklärt, dass eine "Redaktion" völlig aus der Soharkritik auszuschneiden hat, und die Autorfrage steht wie oben dargelegt. Es ist wohl möglich, dass die Autorschaft Mosche de Leon's noch einmal exakt und abschliessend bewiesen werden wird." (Italics mine) (100)

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. The Date of the Appearance of the Zohar.

As we have already seen, Scholem gives two dates for the composition of the Zohar and the setting down thereof in its present form. In 1931, he wrote in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* that it was composed between 1240 and 1280. In his latest statement he has given the period of composition as between 1260 and 1280. In neither case does he give proof for his terminus a quo, excepting that in the later statement he opines that it must have taken 20 years to write the book. His terminus ad quem is based upon the fact that in 1281 Ibn Sahula in his *יגלה סוד* made use of materials taken from the Zohar (specifically the *פרק עשר*). This proof is given both in his earlier and later statements. Insofar as he has, to date, failed to further implement that proof, it does not carry a great deal of weight as far as proving that the Zohar as we know it, was in its present form by 1281, even though Sahula was a fellow townsman of De Leon. If the theory of Franck and Luria and others is correct, i.e. that De Leon edited a large number of manuscripts that were already in existence, then we may as well assume that Sahula copied directly from one of the older manuscripts, or from some such copy of this manuscript as was in the hands of R' Joseph Halevi (mentioned in the Isaac of Acco account).

There is further proof, however, of Scholem's dating in the account of Ibn Yahya in *Sefer* wherein he stated that a great quarrel existed in 1290 as to whether or not Moses De Leon had written the book. We must allow a number of years for the circulation of the book--in those days transportation and communication was very slow. This gives us a year in the eighties in which the book must have appeared.

However, Isaac of Acco, in the *Sefer* account from which R' Gedalya quotes, gives 1305 as the year of the death of Moses De Leon. And since such a controversy was raging concerning the authorship of the Zohar at the very time of the death of De Leon, we cannot possibly believe that De Leon finished it twenty five years earlier. If he had finished the Zohar in 1280, why should the controversy have been at its height in 1305? Is it not far more logical to assume that if De Leon had not died until 1305, and if the Zohar were published and broadcast beginning 1280, that the controversy would have reached its height within five or ten years after that, and within a few years after the height of the controversy had been reached, somebody like Isaac of Acco, or R' Joseph Halevi would, with De Leon still alive, have solved the question of its authorship once and for all? Thus, assuming the date 1305 as correct for the death of Moses De Leon (101), we cannot reasonably put the publication of the Zohar earlier than 1290 and probably not until close to 1300. Moreover, from Isaac of Acco's account, we are not even sure that a complete copy of the Zohar in its present form was anywhere in existence at that time.

On the contrary, no one in all of the account had seen either the original Zohar, or a complete copy of the Zohar. In fact, the positive references that we do have to the existence of the Zohar are that parts and fragments--all copies--of it existed. When Isaac of Acco sets out to ascertain the authorship of the Zohar, he says: "I pursued it, and asked the scholars who had large parts of it in their possession, from whence these marvelous secrets had come." The story of R' Joseph Halevi indicates that he never saw anything but copies of parts of the Zohar. Indeed, everyone assumed that a Zohar existed, but no one ever saw it.. In other words, we have not a single positive proof that a complete Zohar, such as we know today even existed at the time of the death of De Leon--excepting De Leon's own statement to Isaac of Acco.

Even the date 1300 may be too early, because according to the information of Ibn Yahya in the *Sefer Hachinukh*, the Zohar was not discovered until after the death of *R' Asher* and R' Asher(1328) ((see note 13))

We must admit, then, that all the external evidence at the present time is highly contradictory and doubtful. And, as far as this evidence goes, the complete Zohar may not have been in existence for a century after the death of De Leon(102). We can only say that by 1305 most of its tracts were extant in scattered manuscripts, which were widely known, especially in Spain--and that a controversy raged at this time, in which one side accused De Leon of having composed all the manuscripts

himself, while the other affirmed its antiquity. De Leon, whether he was or was not the author, certainly was the distributor of these manuscripts.

This knowledge as to the dating of the appearance of the Zohar is very unsatisfactory, and points to the need of more, and more conclusive external evidence on the question.

B. The Problem of the Authorship of the Zohar.

In summarizing the major arguments we may divide them into:

1. Those based on external evidence
2. Those based on internal evidence

1. There is no external evidence of any historical value for or against R' Simeon b. Yohai as author of the Zohar. The argument from the Talmudic story of Simeon b. Yohai's sojourn in the cave is very feeble as both Modena and Franck pointed out.

As for the theory that the Zohar was developed over a period of centuries, the external evidence is meager, fragmentary, and not to be taken very seriously. Franck mentions that Moses Botril in 1409 had no written Zohar before him, but that his knowledge thereof was transmitted to him orally. R' Gedalya in *שולחן ערוך* gives us the tradition that if we had the entire Zohar it would constitute a camel's load. Luria cites fragments from the *מדרש עליון* which are Midrashim quoted in the name of *ר' שמעון* but which are not extant in our copies of the Zohar, and he states that he believes that at one time there existed a *מדרש* for the entire Bible.

The external evidence both for and against Moses De Leon's authorship of the Zohar is contained in Isaac of Acco's account. And, although this account has, for years, been the greatest argument in favor of De Leon's authorship--I believe that if it has any validity at all, it is in the opposite direction.

No one doubts the authenticity of the account itself. But there must be grave doubts as to the authenticity of the story told to R' Isaac of Acco by David Pancorbo. Who was this Pancorbo? How trustworthy is his evidence? No one can tell. But from the story he tells we see first that he must have taken sides with those who believed the Zohar a forgery. Although one may object to this reasoning, saying that he took that side only after he found the irrefutable evidence he gives, I think that there are reasons to doubt Pancorbo's objectivity in the matter. The evidence he gives does not ring true. A careful reading of the account gives us the feeling that someone is building up a theoretically flawless case against De Leon, and not a true one. The offer on the part of the wealthiest Jew in Avila to support the widow for life and take the daughter into his family in exchange for a book--no matter how valuable--sounds more as if the teller is building up a motivation for De Leon's wife, so that there will be no come back on the listeners part that she refused to part with the Zohar because it was too precious to her. The impression that this is an imaginary story grows upon us when we hear that the wife of R' Joseph (the first lady of Avila Jewry) went to the home of De Leon and carefully made the offer separately to the widow and the daughter. That would more closely approximate the tactics of a criminal lawyer than that of a wealthy woman whose husband had great influence at the Spanish court. From these facts there might be some justification in an assumption

that Pancorbo, a colleague, and fellow townsman of R' Moses De Leon, were not on the friendliest of terms when the latter lived in Avila, for if they were, R' Pancorbo would not have told the story he did to a stranger, even if it were true. How much credence, we wonder, could be placed in the stories of one of our modern rabbis concerning the work of his colleague who officiates in the same city---take Cleveland as an example. Moreover, Isaac of Acco's account, far from supporting one side argues almost equally on both. He says in the end that he remained unconvinced. Why then should anyone today be permitted to use this account as evidence either for or against De Leon's authorship. And even further, as Scholem has pointed out, the *'ohi' o* text of the account has omissions and corruptions, which render it unfit as positive proof for one side or the other until new external evidence of some kind is discovered.

2. Argument based on internal evidence.

These may be broken down into three groups.

The first group relate to the authorship of the Zohar by R' Simeon b. Yohai. Many have argued that the Zohar was written by Simeon b. Yohai. Not a single argument worthy of consideration has been advanced for this point. (And David Luria was one of the defenders of this thesis). It is seen that since there is no positive proof of this fact, a few arguments against it will definitely invalidate this assumption. Modena and Franck gave the strongest arguments

to show that R' Simeon b. Yohai did not write the Zohar. They are:

- a) (Modena) The laws in the Zohar are contrary to accepted Talmudic laws. ((This argument is weak because the laws of many of the Tanaim differ from the accepted practise.))
- b) (Modena) We cannot conceive that R' Simeon b. Yohai was conceited enough to write many of things in the Zohar which raise him to Divine stature.
- c) (Modena) If R' Simeon had written the Zohar he would have written it in Hebrew ((Highly debatable. Others, especially Luria claim that the Aramaic is proof that R' Simeon did write the Zohar.))
- d) (Modena) Amoraim are put in temporal juxtaposition with Tanaim. If R' Simeon wrote it he would never have known these Amoraim.²² The same with regards to laws created much after R' Simeon.
- e) (Franck) The Zohar contains reference to Mohammedanism which did not come into existence until long after R' Simeon's death.

There are many more but none of them stronger than those presented above. These are sufficient to cause us to conclude very definitely that R' Simeon b. Yohai did not write the Zohar.

The second group of arguments center around the question, "Did R' Moses De Leon write the Zohar?" The arguments are:

1. Arguments derived from a comparison of the Zohar with Moses de Leon's "own" works.

Graetz states that the similarity between De Leon's other works and the Zohar shows that he is the author of both. As final proof of this he offers the bit of evidence from De Leon's

1/17 120 where the author makes an error in the quoting of psalms. The same error appears in a similar passage in the Zohar. Scholem in his article in 1926 says that this was a deliberate paraphrase and not a misquotation. Even if De Leon misquoted the verse in his "own" works and the same error is found in the Zohar, this hardly represents a valid argument that De Leon wrote both. He may simply have copied the Zohar's error into his own works. As a matter of fact both Scholem and Luria, using the similarity between the Zohar and De Leon's "own" works as a basis, argue far more cogently for the opposite conclusion; i.e., that De Leon was simply an editor of ancient Zohar manuscripts and that he used these materials in constructing his acknowledged works.

Luria demonstrates, and very convincingly, that the known works of De Leon do not follow the Zohar in either interpretation of words or ideas. He shows further, that the works of De Leon deviate so radically in many places from the Zohar that we must either conclude that he had a text before him--a corrupt one, or that he misinterpreted the Aramaic of the correct text. Scholem, in 1926, supports this view with a demonstration

of the fact that in his own works De Leon never simply quotes the Zohar, but that he always quotes it with deepest respect, saying that he got it from an ancient Midrash. Furthermore, Scholem points out, that in many places De Leon could not explain the Zohar at all.

2. Arguments based on the language and ideas contained in the Zohar.

Franck argues that if De Leon had written the Zohar in Aramaic, is it conceivable that he would have written the Hebrew of his own works to explain it? Franck makes another point--with reference to current ideology and background--- that since there are no references to Christianity or to Aristotelian ideas it is impossible that any one of the generation and place of habitation of De Leon could have originated the Zohar, or even have written it, on the basis of old ideas.

Graetz, on the other hand, though he does not directly answer these arguments, adduces other arguments on the basis of language and ideology of the Zohar, to prove that De Leon did write it. In answer to those who hold that one man could not have thought up all the ideas and materials contained in the Zohar, he states that De Leon simply used the work of that whole school of Kabbalists who lived and worked eighty years before the appearance of the Zohar. Graetz also points out, as regards the language of the Zohar, that woven into it at various points is the name *De Leon*, which of course refers to De Leon.

3. Arguments from chronology.

Franck claims that certain ideas exclusive to the Zohar were common much earlier than the time of De Leon. Luria says that many writers, Gaonim, Poskim, etc. quote from the Zohar, calling it a "Midrash", long before De Leon's time. And Scholem, in 1926, claims that Abulafia and Jikatilla wrote some Zoharistic things long before the Zohar appeared.

But Graetz points out that all the dates fixed as /37 in the Zohar are after the time of De Leon.

The one remaining possibility is that neither B. Yohai or De Leon wrote the Zohar, but that a group of ancient manuscripts containing most of the materials in the Zohar were in the possession of Moses De Leon; he collated them and edited them.

The chief argument in favor of this theory is that the nature of the Zohar is such, that one man couldn't have written it. Both Emden and Franck have spent much of their effort to show that one man could not have created such a composite work. And they have carefully shown just how composite the Zohar appears to be. They and others have affirmed that like other Jewish literature--Bible, Talmud, Mishna, etc.-- the Zohar was a gradual growth over a period of centuries.

However, Scholem in 1935, holds that the Zohar is practically a unit in every sense.

Immanuel

In trying to form my own conclusions on the matter I have been constantly reminded of Emanuel Kant's dictum on how one may ascertain whether or not a thing is scientifically trustworthy, or whether it is a lot of guess work. In the opening sentences of his preface to the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason, concerning the knowledge that lies within the province of reason, he says: "For if, after elaborate preparations, frequently renewed, it is brought to a stop immediately it nears its goal; If often it is compelled to retrace its steps and strike into some new line of approach; or again, if the various participants are unable to agree in any common plan of procedure, then we may rest assured that it is very far from having entered upon the secure path of a science, and is indeed a merely random groping." The evidence and the arguments we have been considering are a striking illustration of what Kant calls, "random groping."

First of all we must note that most of the arguments base themselves not so much on concrete evidence but rather on theoretical reasoning; as if anything in the nature of a historical or scientific problem has ever been solved by pure reason alone! It is obvious that unless we have a certain amount of reliable external and internal evidence on the matter, and unless they are in harmonious agreement as well as in a certain balance we cannot arrive at the historical truth of the matter. Actually the only external evidence on the subject, of any weight and

importance, is the Isaac of Acco account. And this, we have shown is thoroughly unreliable and inconclusive. We have much talk about internal evidence, but most of it is highly coloured by the prejudices of those who bring the evidence. This evidence is also contradictory in the extreme. Until a proper amount of, and a high enough quality of external and internal evidence can be ferreted out, and until these can be used in harmony with each other and without the prejudices of the investigator, we shall not have set this problem upon "the secure path of a science."

For myself, I can say that I am inclined to accept the theory that De Leon was the editor of older Zohar manuscripts. I am anxiously looking forward to the publication of Scolem's proof of his new position---that De Leon was the author of the Zohar. But unless it is based upon incontrovertible evidence, and not upon some of the reasoning which he uses in his latest German pronouncement on the matter, he shall have a great deal of difficulty in making me understand, how any man, genius though he might be, could have invented so many detailed stories, could have written a book which has, even in the English translation, all the earmarks of a genuine product of generations rather than that of an individual or a group of individuals. Just as the Bible, Rabbinic literature, The Tshuvoth of the Gaonim, the works of the philosophers are the logical and conscious expressions of Judaism---so the Zohar is the crystallization of the sub-conscious thinking of Judaism over centuries--not that of a single Jew.

NOTES

- 1) See article on Kabbalah in Encyclopaedia Judaica by G. Scholem; v.9, p.653--paragraph on Sohar.
- 2) ספר יחזקאל -- (Filipowski edition--1924) p.222
- 3) משל הקדמות (published 1547)
- 4) משל הקבלה (Amsterdam--1697) by מנחם מנדל --The English translation given, is to be found in the English translation of Franck's Kabbalah . p.88
- 5) משל הקבלה - מנחם מנדל (Amsterdam)
- 6) The first account begins on p.88 b. of the Filipowski edition of while the additional account begins on p. 95 of the same edition.
- 7) וואס מנחם מנדל קענט דאס וואס ער זאגט
- 8) התקופה --Vol. 6. p.316 and p.317; Hillel Zeitlin's article called התקופה
- 9) This edition is not available in the library. But we do not have to rely altogether on Zeitlin, because the arguments of both Judah Leon Modena and of Adolphe Franck contain reference to this passage.
- 10) This translation taken from the English version of Franck's Kabbalah p.86, based on ס' יחזקאל p.45
- 11) Ramban died in Jerusalem in 1300. R' Asher died in 1328. The English translation of Franck has the words: "This book was not discovered until after the death of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman and of Rabbi Asher, who knew of it." The hebrew text, however, reads: והנה כי הספר נחמד הרמז והפלא שכל ראהו. Thus, these men apparently did not know of the Zohar, according to Zacuto, even though they lived until after the turn of the century. But there is a note by Jacob Emden in the Filipowski edition of the ס' יחזקאל as follows
והנה כי הספר נחמד הרמז והפלא שכל ראהו
 and Solomon ibn Adret died in 1310. So from Emden's statement one would have to reason that the Zohar must have been known by the turn of the century. I simply state these contradictions because they speak for themselves.

NOTES

- 12) We may here note that the statement of Zacuto, that Ramban never saw the Zohar conflicts with the opinion held by many in the time of Isaac of Acco that the Zohar was found by Ramban in Palestine and sent to his son in Spain.
- 13) חזקוני הקדמה -- Amsterdam edition p.23b. The translation from Franck's Kabbalah p.89.
- 14) חזקוני חלק -- Jerusalem--1929 (edited by Libowitz) p.
- 15) ibid. p. לד
- 16) ibid. חלק XIX
- 17) ibid. חלק XI, XII, XIII
- 18) ibid. p. לח
- 19) ibid. p. לח + נח
- 20) ibid. p. נח
- 21) ibid. p. נח + לד
- 22) ibid. p. ל
- 23) ibid. p. ל
- 24) ibid. p. נח
- 25) ibid. p. ו
- 26) ibid. p. נח
- 27) ibid. p. לח + נח
- 28) ibid. p. נח
- 29) ibid. p. נח
- 30) חזקוני חלק -- Jacob Emden; Lember Ed. 1870; p.2
- 31) ibid. p.6
- 32) ibid. p.6
- 33) ibid. p.38

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34) *ibid.* p.37 f.

35) *ibid.* p.8

36) *ibid.* p.12

37) On p.45 of *ס' יחזק'ן* appears the following comment by Zmden:
 והרג בח"י שהיה תלמיד חרישקל ביוזע גם מלכין גשם רבו במה/פצמים הול/ראה
 ספר הנהגות ומקרא לטוב מחנך ב' משפטים דה"פ וכי יצא אנשים ומכנה אותם
 מדבריו של רש"י כדרך שדקלים לקראתו דם דה"ק (ו' שמע)

38) *מלפחות ספרים* p.7

39) *ibid.* p.39

40) J. Abelson. Introduction in the first volume of Sperling's ~~first~~ translation of the Zohar; p.XII

41) *ibid.*

42) *ibid.* p.XIII

43) *ibid.* p.XII

44) *ibid.*

45) N. Krochmal in *מורה נבוכים* --p.242; Warsaw, 1894.

46) *ibid.*

47) *התקופה* - Vol.6 p.326. This reference given in a footnote.

48) This publication is not available in the H.U.C. Library.

49) *התקופה* - Vol.6 p.326

49) English translation of *Kabbalah*. Author; Adolphe Franck
 1926.... pp.89 and 90.

50) *ibid.* pp.91 and 92

51) *ibid.* pp.92 and 93

52) *ibid.* pp.93 and 94

53) *ibid.* pp.94 and 95-- Although later Franck refutes this argument by saying that it is possible that this concept was gotten from the Pythagoreans and that this passage precedes Copernicus and his new astronomy, the argument still stands. In fact the passage might have been inserted after Copernicus.

NOTES

- 54) *ibid.* p.95
- 55) *ibid.* pp.95, 96. 97.
- 56) *ibid.* p.97
- 57) *ibid.* p. 98
- 58) *ibid.* p.108
- 59) *ibid.* p.108
- 60) *ibid.* p.115
- 61) *ibid.* pp.109, 110, 111
- 62) *ibid.* pp.114, 115
- 63) *ibid.* p.114
- 64) *ibid.* p.116
- 65) The author discussed the problem of the authorship of
in the chapter preceding this one.
- 66) *ibid.* pp.119 and 120
- 67) חזקוני חכמה הקדמה --S.D. Luzzato; Gorice 1852. pp.32,33.
- 68) *ibid.* p.54
- 69) *ibid.* p.64
- 70) The whole problem of the authorship of the Zohar is intro-
duced in Luzzato's חזקוני by a problem concerning the obser-
vance of Hoshana Rabba
- 71) חזקוני חכמה הקדמה David Luria; Warsaw 1886-7. p.2
- 72) *ibid.* p.3
- 73) *ibid.* p.4
- 74) *ibid.* pp.7,8
- 75) חזקוני חכמה הקדמה Graetz חזקוני p.382

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- 76) *ibid.* p. 383
- 77) *ibid.* p. 386
- 78) *ibid.*
- 79) *ibid.* p. 389
- 80) *ibid.* p. 390
- 81) התקופה Vol.6 p.329
- 82) We have already reviewed the arguments of Luria above.
- 83) *ibid.* p. 334
- 84) התקופה Vol.7 pp.356,357.
- 85) הראשית כ"ל חלק ב'
- 86) התקופה Vol.7 p. 359
- 87) *ibid.* p.359
- 88) *ibid.* pp.365, 366
- 89) *ibid.* p.367
- 90) *ibid.*
- 91) מקצי היהדות --Vol.I. p.16
- 92) *ibid.* p.18
- 93) *ibid.*
- 94) *ibid.* p.20
- 95) *ibid.* p.28
- 96) *ibid.* pp.28, 29
- 97) Die Geheimnisse der Schöpfung--G. Scholem 1935;pp.11, 12
- 98) We saw that in Enc. Jud. Scholem gave a similar date--only there he gave the dates 1240 to 1280.

NOTES

- 99) Up until the time of this discovery it was not known whether Moses De Leon was old enough in 1260 to write the Zohar. But now that we know that he was old enough and well known enough to have a copy of the *ספר חמדים* written especially for him, we may believe that by 1264 he was old enough to write the Zohar.
- 100) *ibid.* pp. 17, 18 bot.
- 101) Scholem, in his article in *מנחת חינוך* devotes the second section (which we did not discuss) to a discussion of the possibility that De Leon died in 1293; first, because Isaac Baer shows that the lapse of time between 1290, as the time of the destruction of Acco, and the coming of Isaac of Acco to Italy (or Spain) in 1304-5 leaves 15 years of wandering in his life, and we cannot account for these years. Secondly, from 1286 to 1293 we have book after book, at intervals of a few years from the pen of Moses De Leon. His last book, however, was written in 1293, and then he suddenly stopped writing. We are compelled to assume, if we would retain 1304-5 as the date of his death, that for 11 years De Leon wrote *nothing* more. If we accept the date 1293 as the date of Isaac of Acco's investigation and the date of De Leon's death, it would furnish support to Scholem's hypothesis that the Zohar was complete by 1280. Because then we could assign ten years for its introduction and spread, a few years more for the controversy to develop, and then, as the controversy reaches its height in 1293, and as the problem is about to be solved, De Leon suddenly dies, leaving us the unsolved problem of the Zohar's authorship.
- 102) Franck, in his article in *Kabbalah*, mentions the fact that Moses Botril seems to have received all his Kabbalistic and Zoharistic training orally as late as the first few years of the fifteenth century, some 100 years after De Leon's death.

very much in doubt!

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* האם חקר משה די ליאון את הקהילה? article?