

embodies the role of an aspiring female creator in a male-dominated culture. Telma's struggle to create, and later her struggle against her created Golem, reflect a complex and ambivalent dynamic between body and text—a dynamic that both reflects and comments upon a basic tension within *Sefer Yeşirah*. In opposition to *Sefer Yeşirah*'s equation of the tongue and the penis as organs of creation, Blau highlights the complex relations between tongue and uterus, as symbolic of the relations between the female body and cultural production. *Sefer Yeşirah* itself and its associated creative potential appear in Blau's *Book of Creation* as the legacy of a matriarchal lineage, which challenges the canonized rabbinic (male) authority.

The second part of the article discusses Blau's reversal of the gender tropes associated with the Golem legend, centered around *Sefer Yeşirah*. The Golem legend implies the ability of men to procreate without the involvement of women. In the Golem legend associated with Elijah of Chelm, the Golem is a voiceless servant, restricted to the domestic sphere—possibly a reflection on the status of Jewish women at that time. In the Golem legend developed by Yudel Rosenberg, the Golem is a hyper-masculine defender of the Jewish community. Blau's treatment of the Golem thus represents a triple role-reversal: Telma is a woman who procreates without male involvement; her Golem is created for a 'feminine'-romantic role rather than a 'masculine'-warlike one; and it is the male Golem who becomes a voiceless prisoner limited to the household.

The final part of the article proposes several reasons for the tragic ending of the *Book of Creation*: Telma's creative hubris; her attempt to deny the body's role in creation; her acceptance of existing hierarchies and adoption of the masculine model of an Oedipal struggle against her maternal lineage; and finally, her situation as a female creator in a male-dominated culture which has set her up to fail.

Designing Sacred Time according to *Sefer Yeşirah* in *Bnei Yissachar* and Hasidic Homiletics

Leore Sachs-Shmueli

The tripartite equation from *Sefer Yeşirah*, “*Olam-Shanah-Nefesh*” (World, Year, Soul), is one of the most frequently cited statements in Hasidic literature. According to this equation, humans and time are structurally and essentially parallel to the divine upper world. In the second quarter of the 19th century, a unique Hasidic homilistical work emerged, focusing on sacred time: *Bnei Yissaschar* by Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov (1783–1841), the first Rebbe of the Munkacs dynasty and one of the most prolific Hasidic leaders and writers. While classic Hasidic homiletics were organized according to the weekly Torah portions, *Bnei Yissaschar* was the first work structured according to the Jewish months. In this work, the primary criterion for discussion was not the Torah but *Sefer Yeşirah*. Each section begins with a discourse based on a mishnah from *Sefer Yeşirah* relevant to that month, highlighting the sanctity of time through the combinations of letters and divine names according to Lurianic tradition. This article examines the use of *Sefer Yeşirah* in this work and its contribution to shaping the perception and significance of time in the Jewish Eastern European context. It explores the connection between the cosmic order of time derived from the creation concept in *Sefer Yeşirah* and the obligation of individuals to align themselves with this system encoded within the Torah’s laws. Beyond the perception of time, a hermeneutical analysis of how the *mishnayot* from *Sefer Yeşirah* are woven with halakhic exegesis and additional kabbalistic traditions will deepen the understanding of *Sefer Yeşirah*’s role in Hasidic homiletics of this period and illuminate its use in light of contemporary challenges.

The Literary Reworking of *Sefer Yeşirah* in Sarah Blau’s *Book of Creation*

Ayal Hayut-Man

This article examines Sarah Blau’s *Book of Creation*, a work of fiction in which *Sefer Yeşirah* plays a major role. Blau employs *Sefer Yeşirah* to examine the role of women in the literary tradition, particularly Hebrew literature.

Blau’s protagonist, Telma—a Jewish orthodox woman who uses *Sefer Yeşirah* to create a Golem who serves as her romantic and sexual partner—

***Sefer Yeşirah* as a Literary Tool in Late Medieval Byzantium**

Dov Schwartz

In the West the use of *Sefer Yeşirah* was in accordance with the genre. Philosophers presented it as a source of scientific rules while kabbalists presented it as a theosophic or ecstatic treatise. In the West the genres blended and *Sefer Yeşirah* was commented on as containing various meanings. Elnatan Kalkish, Yehuda Mashkoni, Michael b. Shabtai Balabo and others commented on parts of *Sefer Yeşirah* in different ways and traditions.

An Inter-Generational Study of the Exegesis of *Sefer Yeşirah* in the Circle of R. Elijah of Vilna

Jonathan Garb

Amongst the various schools of modern Kabbalah, that paying allegiance to R. Elijah, the Gaon of Vilna, is exceptional in the degree of exegetical devotion to *Sefer Yeşirah*. This is reflected both in the dense and rich commentary penned by the Gaon, and by the numerous super-commentaries composed within the school, especially in recent years. The article commences with a close reading of key locutions within the Gaon's commentary (after covering its complex print history and some critical comments on the sparse existing research), aimed at uncovering the layered cosmology presented there, and its relationship to earlier phases of kabbalistic thought (especially the four-worlds theory and theories of the Tetragrammaton). Then, it surveys the history of the super-commentaries, focusing on the manner in which they strove to resolve some of the open questions raised by my own reading of the Gaon's text. The latter section of the article compares Ronit Meroz's approach to that of R. Elijah, uncovering surprising similarities, that in my view are not always called for by the plain sense of *Sefer Yeşirah*. It also shows that Meroz was concerned with some of the quandaries also addressed by the super-commentaries. Hence, I view this comparison as an illustration of the need to compare traditional and academic commentaries on core texts. The major themes uncovered here include perceptions of the Torah, messianism, linguistic views, and perceptions of wisdom.

name of God. Consideration of a specific recension of *Keter Shem Tov* that was known to Natan ben Sa'adya Har'ar makes evident its entanglement with central passages of *Sefer Yeşirah*, not only through the very structure of this kabbalistic work and some basic ideas shared by them, such as letter speculation and cosmology, but also through its relation to a late textual layer in the development of *Sefer Yeşirah*. Special attention is paid to the transmission of a section in MS Jerusalem, NLI, Heb. 8°488, identified as belonging to the same recension of *Keter Shem Tov*, within a series of commentaries on the issue of “ten and not nine etc.” (*Sefer Yeşirah* §4). This section in particular shows the connection between explanations of the first ten letters of the alphabet and the ten *sefirot* listed in ascending order, for which *Keter Shem Tov* is a rare example. On the whole, it can be discerned that different approaches manifest the common trend of early kabbalistic texts to merge the interpretation and adaption of *Sefer Yeşirah* with commentaries on the ten *sefirot*.

A Fragment from a Scientific Commentary on *Sefer Yeşirah* in Judaeo-Arabic

Y. Tzvi Langermann

It is well-established that the first wave of commentaries to *Sefer Yeşirah* read the book as a scientific text. The authors of these commentaries, including such notables as Saadia Gaon and Judah Halevi, learned their science from Arabic texts, and the majority of commentaries written at this time were written in Arabic as well. Two leaves (four sides) MS St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, the Russian Academy of Sciences EVR ARAB II 1142, are all that remain of what must have been an extensive commentary on *Sefer Yeşirah*. The fragment is distinguished by detailed explorations in three sciences not usually discussed in the extant commentaries: logic, statics, and arithmetic. Like the other commentators of his epoch, the unidentified author labors to explicate the elusive text of *Sefer Yeşirah* with the help of these sciences. Though his knowledge of science is not at all deep, the familiarity that the author exhibits with these branches of science is noteworthy, especially with regard to statics. In my contribution I offer an edition, translation, and analysis of the fragment.

From the Science of Logic to the Wisdom of Combination of Letters and Names in Abraham Abulafia's Writings

Moshe Idel

The present study concentrates on the relationship between Aristotelian logic and the technique of combination of letters in Abraham Abulafia's Kabbalah. In the mid-1260s, in Southern Italy, Abulafia was a student of Aristotelian *Organon*, he shifted in the early seventies to study a series of commentaries on *Sefer Yeşirah* he found in Barcelona. This biographical sequence became the matrix of his qualification of Greek logic, pertinent for understanding the lower worlds, as inferior to what he considered to be the "supernal inner logic" based on permutation of letters, that was depicted by the kabbalists as conducive to prophetic experiences. This subordination of philosophy to the search for prophetic experience is quintessential for understanding the emergency and impact of prophetic Kabbalah, and it had an impact on some later thinkers, including Jacques Derrida, who quoted Abulafia's statement on two types of logic.

I propose to extrapolate from this specific type of synthesis to a much larger situation related to Jewish thought that appropriated in many cases modes of thought that were alien to the ancient types of Judaism, theologically speaking non-systematic modes of thought that emphasized textuality and ritual performance, in order to "make sense" of the earlier Jewish documents. In my opinion, no systematic type of thought emerged from such recurring attempts, in many cases apologetic efforts, to subordinate different intellectual worlds in order to offer coherent theologies, and consequently scholarly efforts to discover such theologies in Jewish texts, are condemned to failure.

The Metamorphosis of *Sefer Yeşirah* in the Textual Transmission of *Keter Shem Tov*

Gerold Necker

The anonymous treatise *Keter Shem Tov* (Crown of the Good Name), composed in the middle of the 13th century and ascribed to Abraham Axelrad of Cologne, represents a prime example of how early kabbalistic literature was generated both by commentaries on the wording of *Sefer Yeşirah* and by a new understanding of the ten *sefirot* in combination with the four-letter

disparate metaphysical strata within the godhead, designated as “*Hillul*” versus “*Berakhah*.”

The Poetics of *Sod*: Nahmanides, the *Bahir*, and *Sefer Yeşirah*

Menachem Lorberbaum

Moses Nahmanides adaptation of *Sefer Yeşirah* to articulate his *sefirotic* theosophy signals a novel theological discourse. It demands also novel forms of reading. This paper follows the semiotic conceptions, imagery and mysteries attendant upon the axial role attributed to *Sefer Yeşirah* especially in Nahmanides’s Commentary to the Torah. New dimensions of revelatory significance are thus rendered available to an attentive and meditative study of the Divine logos.

Nahmanides’s Commentary on *Sefer Yeşirah*: The Text, Its History, and Formation

Oded Yisraeli

Moses Nahmanides was known for his cautious and esoteric approach regarding the secrets of Kabbalah. One of the only kabbalistic works he authored, which is certainly the most important, is his commentary on *Sefer Yeşirah*, and therefore it is of great importance for uncovering his kabbalistic view. However, identifying this work and attributing it to Nahmanides have always been controversial both in kabbalistic circles and scholarship. Utilizing philological literary and thematic tools, this article, first and foremost, approves Gershom Scholem’s identification regarding Nahmanides’s Commentary on *Sefer Yeşirah*. The article thoroughly examines the relationship between two versions of the text preserved in manuscripts—one shorter and the other lengthier. It concludes that both versions were created by Nahmanides himself. While the short version is a collection of Nahmanides’s primal notes, the lengthier version is the revised edition he prepared for publication.

“Ten and Not Nine, Ten and Not Eleven”: The Duality of the *Sefirah Hokhmah* and the Manner of Counting the Sefirot According to R. Isaac the Blind and Asher ben David

Judith Weiss

The article examines the concept of duality in the *sefirah* of *Hokhmah* and the correct manner of counting of the *sefirot* according to the Commentary on *Sefer Yeşirah* attributed to Isaac Sagi Nahor and according to his nephew Asher ben David. First, the study demonstrates that Isaac’s commentary clearly viewed *Hokhmah* as having a dual dimension – being present simultaneously in two groups of *sefirot* and functioning as both center and periphery of the *sefirotic* system. However, Isaac also maintained that despite this duality, *Hokhmah* should be counted as one *sefirah*, while *Keter* should also be counted as one, to maintain the total of ten *sefirot* described in *Sefer Yeşirah*. Then, it is shown that Asher ben David accepted and developed his uncle’s theosophical conceptions regarding *Hokhmah*’s dual nature. However, due to his stricter theological approach which considered divine influx as the sole fully ontological being, Asher rejected counting *Keter* as a separate *sefirah*, and instead, he described it as the divine flow present within *Hokhmah*’s upper dimension. This allowed him to count *Hokhmah* “twice” while still maintaining a total of ten *sefirot*. The article reveals Asher’s sophisticated rhetorical strategy in dealing with this theological tension. Rather than openly disagreeing with his uncle’s position, Asher presented both approaches anonymously as legitimate expressions of the same theological principle – counting either *Keter* and *Hokhmah* each as one or counting *Hokhmah*’s two dimensions. By recasting Isaac’s view in terms of divine flow rather than separate *sefirot*, Asher effectively legitimized his uncle’s position while subtly adjusting it to meet his own stricter theological standards. The study demonstrates both Asher’s deep reliance on Isaac’s attitude alongside his intellectual independence, while skillfully avoiding open theological controversy through careful rhetorical strategies. The appendix offers a new reading of Isaac’s *sefirotic* interpretation of Psalm 150 in his letter to Nahmanides and Jonah Gerondi. This reveals Isaac’s concept of a circular structure of the *sefirot*, beginning and ending with *Hokhmah*, a dynamic duality between *din* (judgment) and *raḥamim* (mercy), and two

in *Sefer Yeşirah* (or twice in some textual versions), the broader concept of “spirit” (*ru'ah*) recurs throughout the text, inviting diverse interpretations regarding its role in creation and its connection to divine revelation.

The study begins by analyzing key passages in *Sefer Yeşirah* that link the “Holy Spirit” with the first of the ten *sefirot*, presenting it as a foundational, metaphysical principle underpinning the cosmos. This identification aligns the Holy Spirit with *Ru'ah Elohim Hayyim* (the Spirit of the Living God), a term resonant with biblical language, while also engaging with rabbinic, mystical, and Christian theological frameworks.

Early commentators such as Saadia Gaon, Donash ibn Tamim, and an anonymous source cited by Judah ben Barzillai Albargeloni expanded on the Holy Spirit’s role in creation. Saadia Gaon emphasized its dual nature as both the will of God and a substance permeating creation, incorporating Stoic notions of *pneuma* to explain its cosmological significance. Conversely, the anonymous commentary described the Holy Spirit as the primordial creation—the “mother” of all subsequent elements—and linked it directly to divine revelation. This interpretation blended ontological and prophetic dimensions, portraying the Holy Spirit as a divine presence active both in the cosmos and within individuals.

Judah ben Barzillai later identified the Holy Spirit with wisdom, describing it as the first creation essential to both the cosmos and prophecy. His synthesis of earlier rabbinic traditions and mystical insights underscored the Holy Spirit’s role as an intermediary between humanity and God.

The article concludes that *Sefer Yeşirah* and its early commentaries elevated the Holy Spirit to a central metaphysical principle. This development laid the groundwork for its subsequent elaboration in medieval Jewish mysticism, particularly in Kabbalah, where it became integral as a divine emanation shaping both the godhead and mystical experience. Moreover, the article highlights how interpreters who approached the Holy Spirit through a rabbinic lens of prophetic revelation perceived its role in *Sefer Yeşirah* as facilitating dynamic processes of prophecy and revelation, ultimately positioning the text as a pivotal source for understanding these themes.

disseminated from Western Europe. Long portions of the text are documented thanks to citations and compilations by Judah ben Barzillai Albargeloni in his extensive commentary on *Sefer Yeşirah*. Additionally, numerous paraphrases can be identified in the works of *Haside Ashkenaz* (the “German Pietists”), particularly those belonging to the Kalonimide dynasty.

In light of the newly identified remnants from this old commentary—in both the Cairo Genizah and secondary sources—it is now possible to fully characterize it as a scientific commentary on *Sefer Yeşirah*, devoted mainly to cosmogonic, cosmological, and theological themes. In addition, it is possible to examine the circulation of the commentary in detail and to determine the degree of its reception and the nature of the impact it left on later generations. In this context, this study emphasizes particularly its importance for the study of the “German Pietists” and their literature. The findings presented on this subject contribute to the ongoing historical discourse on the eastern origins of their lore.

The most significant record of the early Babylonian commentary is evident from the extensive work of R. Eleazar of Worms, including the works collected in his *Sode Razayya* (*Sefer Alpha Beta*, *Hilkhot haNevu'ah*, *Sefer haShem*, *Sefer Hokhmat haNefesh*), his commentary on *Sefer Yeşirah*, his commentary on the prayers, and his commentary on Ezekiel's Chariot. Eleazar of Worms applied the ideas of the old commentary in numerous areas of his thought, including the theory of divinity (and more specifically the theory of spirits), cosmogony, creation, prophecy and revelation, the theory of the soul, the interpretation of the chariot, and the *via negativa*. A detailed analysis of the numerous instances in which Eleazar of Worms adopted and adapted words and concepts from the commentary reveals a clear reliance on the scientific foundation of the original, which largely shaped R. Eleazar's own scientific approach to *Sefer Yeşirah* as well as other areas of thought.

On the Holy Spirit in *Sefer Yeşirah* and Its Early Commentaries

Adam Afterman

This article investigates the concept of the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ah HaQodesh*) in *Sefer Yeşirah* and its early commentaries, focusing on its ontological and metaphysical significance. While the term “Holy Spirit” appears only once

***Sabaoth* – A Sign in His Armies: On the Origins of a Linguistic Homily in *Sefer Yeşirah* and Its Development in Medieval Kabbalah**

Jonatan M. Benarroch

This article discusses a linguistic homily in *Sefer Yeşirah* that interprets one of God's names, *Sabaoth* "Armies," as an abbreviation for "A sign in his armies" (אות בצבאות שלו). The article traces the development of this linguistic homily from its earliest appearance in *rabbinic sources* to its interpretation in medieval Kabbalah.

This article serves as a continuation of Tzahi Weiss's article: "God of Israel – a Prince before God" (אלהי ישראל – שר בפני אל) by discussing another short commentary that has entered the *Sefer Yeşirah* version of R. Saadia Gaon – as it appears both in his commentary to *Sefer Yeşirah* and in the Genizah version published by Nehemiah Allony.

By comparing the interpretation of the gloss on the divine name *Sabaoth* to midrashic literature on the one hand, and to the literature from the school of the 'Unique Cherub' and Kabbalistic sources from the Middle Ages on the other, the article seeks to show that the intention of the interpretation of God's name *Sabaoth*, as "a sign in his armies" in *Sefer Yeşirah* refers to Metatron who was appointed over the entourage of above and below. The article dedicates a large discussion on the appearance of this homily in several sources of medieval Kabbalah that explicitly interpret the homily as referring to the archangel Metatron. According to this interpretation, "A sign in his armies" (אות בצבאות שלו) refers to Metatron's role as the leader of the heavenly hosts.

On the Eastern Roots of the Theology of *Ḥaside Ashkenaz*: An Anonymous Commentary on *Sefer Yeşirah* from the Cairo Genizah and Its Reception in Medieval Western Europe

Avishai Bar-Asher

This study focuses on an early commentary on *Sefer Yeşirah*, a single surviving manuscript, which was produced in the Middle East in the tenth century and preserved today in fragments scattered among the collections of the Cairo Genizah. This comprehensive commentary was composed in Babylon during the era of the Geonim and subsequently transmitted to and

“Two Hundred Thirty-One Gates”; *Varia Lectio* – “Two Hundred Twenty-One Gates”: Calculation Methods in *Sefer Yeşirah* by Early Commentators and the Creation of a Golem

Na'ama Ben-Shachar

Section 19 of *Sefer Yeşirah* describes how God weighed and exchanged the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and formed with them the life of all present and future creature. An explanation is provided for the method by which He combined the letters: *Aleph* with all the other 21 letters and all of them with *Aleph*, Bet with them all, and them all with Bet, and so on. The sentence that concludes the description of this technique reads: “The result is that they go out by two hundred twenty-one gates”.

As I will show in my paper, all the first commentators of *Sefer Yeşirah* – Saadia Gaon (931), Dunash ibn Tamim (955\6), Shabbatai Donnolo (946), and Judah ben Barzillai Albargeloni (12th century) – strongly criticized the version that reads 221 gates and explained why it should read 231 (or 462) gates.

The mathematical explanation for the version that reads 231 gates is presented by Saadia (and in similar ways by the other three commentators). According to Saadia, the calculation can be expressed as follows: we begin with 22 letters, multiply by 21 (i.e., $22 - 1$) to exclude identical pairs such as אא, and then divide by 2 to eliminate reversals such as בא and אב. This yields: $22 \times 21 \div 2 = 231$.

Saadia's logic and rationale for his calculation is clear, thus the versions of *Sefer Yeşirah* that read 221 require an alternative method of calculation.

From an examination of the early commentators and dozens of manuscripts of *Sefer Yeşirah*, I would like to show that the 221 version is not a mere scribal error, and that the common version from the tenth century and at least until the twelfth century was 221 gates.

As I will show, the mathematical explanation for the number 221 is given by Rabbi Judah he-Hasid and is quoted by his disciple, Rabbi Eleazar of Worms, in his commentary on *Sefer Yeşirah*. According to their methods, sections 18 and 19 in *Sefer Yeşirah* are read as a sequence and understood as a practice through which a Golem can be created. I will present the unusual mathematical method for calculating the number of gates and highlight additional texts drawn from Rabbi Judah and Rabbi Eleazar's methods.

“Five Points in the Mouth”: Between *Sefer Yeşirah*’s Theory of Articulation and the Ancient Tradition of Sanskrit Phonetics

Marva Shalev Marom

The article examines the relationship between the phonetic system presented in passage §17 of *Sefer Yeşirah* (the “Moşa’ot Doctrine”) and the ancient Sanskrit phonetic tradition, through a pioneering direct comparison of primary sources. As noted by Epstein, Pines, Aloni, and Liebes, the division of the Hebrew alphabet into five points of articulation in the mouth – reminiscent of the ancient classification of Sanskrit consonants into five groups according to their place of articulation – indicates a significant indirect encounter between *Sefer Yeşirah*’s author and the Indian linguistic tradition. The article begins by surveying the primary approaches to this question: how scholars have identified linguistic and theological parallels between §17 and Indian-originated linguistic theories, proposing historical pathways and intermediary texts as potential links between the phonetic systems. To address this gap, a comparative analysis is presented of passage §17 – its content, structure, and theological position – alongside four of the most direct discussions of the topic within ancient Sanskrit phonetics, specifically in the late Vedas, the *Prātiśākhya* literature, and Pāṇini’s *Aṣṭādhyāyī*.

The comparative analysis reveals a substantial gap between the phonetic systems, reflecting the historical, geographical, and cultural distances between the two linguistic traditions. This should come as no surprise given that the intricate tradition of Sanskrit phonetics – of which the five-point articulation division represents only the basic framework – had probably been transmitted by way of multiple intermediaries before reaching *Sefer Yeşirah*, thus arriving in a fragmented, decontextualized form. However, while *Sefer Yeşirah*’s author was surely not well versed in the ancient Sanskrit tradition’s complexities, this does not weaken the historical link between *Sefer Yeşirah*’s passage §17 and its remote, indirect, Indian sources.

have their origin in groups of people who considered it worth sharing them with a larger audience. However, their purpose in this respect was significantly thwarted by the fact that the terminological output included is far from being clear to “outsiders.”

This fact has given rise to two lines of development. In the first place, we find commentaries that focus on issues of meaning. They do so by way of extending the core meaning of the text under discussion, with a clear eye on the role that it plays in the creation of an ongoing tradition. Eventually, *Sefer Yeşirah* has become the root-text for the growing tradition of Medieval Jewish mysticism, the Kabbalah.

The other line of development shapes the academic-critical approach to the text. Here text-critical, linguistic, and contextual considerations come into play. However, it so happens that in the scholarly discussion the borderlines between these two kinds of development are not always observed. The question then arises to what extent the first line of development is relevant to the scholarly discussion of the book. This article examines the various problems involved in this fact and shows its various ramifications and consequences in the scholarly discussion of the book.

Certainty and Uncertainty in *Sefer Yeşirah*

Tzahi Weiss

Sefer Yeşirah is an enigmatic text that has drawn significant scholarly attention due to its immense influence on medieval Jewish literature on the one hand and the lack of scholarly consensus regarding its period of composition, content, and textual versions on the other. In this article, I argue that the range of possibilities regarding the dating of *Sefer Yeşirah* and the differences between its versions are not as vast as suggested in the scholarly literature. The aim of this article is to demonstrate that, while questions about the cultural context, time of composition, and versions of *Sefer Yeşirah* remain open, these questions fall within a clear framework. *Sefer Yeşirah* was composed in the versions familiar to us between the 7th and 9th centuries CE, and its versions are relatively close to one another, with the main differences between them stemming from their editorial processes rather than their phrasing.

English Abstracts

Preliminary Remarks on the Exegesis and Hermeneutics of *Sefer Yeşirah* and Its Vocabulary

Ithamar Gruenwald (z"l)

Short and compressed in its modes of expression and utterances as *Sefer Yeşirah* is in its three major versions, it has become one of the most influential books in the history of post-biblical Judaic booklore. In what in its longest version does not exceed the limit of two thousand words, the anonymous writers or compilers presented a rather unique spectrum of terms and notions that in a significant way take over, even replace, biblical accounts of the creation of the world.

This article highlights matters of exegetical and hermeneutical issues that emerge from the unique nature of the terminology used in the book. Exegesis, in this respect, deals with the lexical-linguistic meaning of the terms used, while hermeneutics opens the spectrum of the meanings viewed as implied by the text under consideration. Although many of the terms used in the book have their origin in biblical Hebrew, their lexical usage here is unique and, in many respects, unprecedented. Ultimately, this fact gave rise to the multiplicity of hermeneutical stances annexed to the book.

Arguably, the authors were aware of the fact that the book is embedded in exegetical ambiguity and hermeneutical vagueness which enhance its pristine nature. However, they preferred to leave matters on that level which required, or was due to inspire, stances of exegetical and hermeneutical oeuvre. This feature characterizes texts that have gained scriptural status. Though in many ways textually closed, that is consecrated and binding, exegetical and hermeneutical platforms of discussion impose themselves on those texts, thus shaping an ongoing process of inventing meaning that in turn claim sacred status for themselves.

As indicated, the book contains challenging attempts to shape systematic concepts about the creation of the world. Undoubtedly, the ideas that emerge