

THE DECRYPTING OF THE KABBALISTIC VALUE OF THIRTY-SEVEN

It is a commonplace that in Kabbalistic circles particular significance was accorded to certain numbers. This note describes the manner in which the Kabbalistic value of thirty-seven has been discovered. Furthermore the French document which unwittingly contained the data thereby bore witness to a previously unknown Kabbalistic tradition. The document in question is the second of two Kabbalistic manuscripts written for Francis I (1494-1547), King of France, by Jean Thenaud (died c. 1542).

Jean Thenaud, a Franciscan from the king's home region of Angoulême had intimate access to the royal family. The king commissioned Thenaud to travel to the Holy Land and although the report on this voyage was published all Thenaud's other works, which include poetical commentary, horoscopes, monumental moralistic directives for the royal household and the two Kabbalistic works remained in manuscript. (All his works were written in French). The first Kabbalistic work was the 1519 manuscript *La sainte et très chrestienne cabale metrificée* (BN. Fr. 882) which was in verse and which, perhaps because of this, did not gain royal approval. Thenaud rewrote his findings and in 1521 duly presented *Traité de la cabale* (Arsenal ms. 5061).

At first sight Arsenal ms. 5061 is thoroughly neo-Platonic. It follows the Kabbalistic works of Johann Reuchlin, employs a cosmology and numerology derived from Dionysius the Areopagite and re-interprets Kabbalism by means of the *Figura* of the ninth century Rabanus Maurus of Fulda. Extensive use is made of the works of Ficino. Although Jews had been banned from France in 1394 this note shows that Thenaud had direct access to a Hebrew Kabbalistic source which gave particular value to the number thirty-seven. The first item of evidence is overt and occurs in a service of exorcism recorded in Treatise 4 of Arsenal ms. 5061. The second item of evidence is

covert, was recorded unwittingly by Thenaud in both of his Kabbalistic works and involves a list of the names of seventy-two angels.

THE OVERT EVIDENCE

In Arsenal ms. 5061 the fourth of the five treatises is “La Praticque de la Cabale. Diffinicion de la Cabale/ comment la loy fut iadis baillee en troys manieres La difference des Cabalistes et thamuldistes”. The treatise has twelve chapters, of which the final is entitled “Comment les anciens cabalistes qui vouloyent auoir vision et reuelacion diuine ou angelique esprit de prophecie / science infuse / et puissance sur nature usoyent des ceremonies contenues on liure de Aaron et des pon-tifes.”. The chapter describes how the Kabbalists would withdraw to some secluded location and carry out the rite involving prayer, sprinkling, anointing and perfuming. Colour images are given of the three altars, the water vessel in stone, the salt cellar, the under and outer vestments, the belt, the amulette, the ring, the staff, the chair and the silver vessels. At the conclusion of the rite the exorcist and the Kabbalist fasted “en grande chastete” for thirty-seven days. This number thirty-seven is mentioned twice on folio 94 verso. The second mention states that on the thirty-seventh night the candles suddenly ceased giving their light and then was heard such a sweet and delicious harmony that the participants were carried into ecstasy and enraptured. After this the celestial fire descended on the vessel of infusion and stayed there three days and three nights and then returned to heaven and the candles relit themselves

Thenaud attributed no particular significance to the number thirty-seven. This is prima facie evidence that he merely related the rite unaware of the considerable significance of that number which will now be explained by reference to a list of angels names which occurs not only in ms. 5061 and its variants but also in his earlier Kabbalistic work (BN. Fr. 882).

THE SEVENTY TWO ANGELS

In ms. Fr. 882 (BN poetry)²⁸², ms. 5061 (Arsenal prose),²⁸³ ms. 521 (Nantes),²⁸⁴ and ms. Fr. 167 (Geneva)²⁸⁵ copies Thenaud provides us with extensive and problematic lists of angels. According to Thenaud these lists are identical and he maintained that each list contained the names of 72 angels. In fact, however, these lists are not identical and contain significant differences both with respect to the transcription of the names and with respect to their number. Thus Arsenal ms. 5061 has only 71 angels (as Haaiah - (26) - after Nithhaiah is omitted).

The evidence from the detailed assessment of watermarks in Nantes ms. 521 clearly shows this manuscript is to be dated almost a century later than ms. 5061 (1521) and Geneva ms. Fr. 167 (1536) Comparison of the spellings of the names of the 72 angels given in Geneva ms. Fr. 167 and Nantes ms. 521 shows very few differences.²⁸⁶ Where the scribe of the former uses an initial letter "I" the latter uses an initial letter "J"²⁸⁷ Where the scribe of the former uses an initial letter "V" the latter uses an initial letter "U".²⁸⁸ The endings -IAH and -EL will be fully discussed infra; here it is sufficient to note that Geneva ms. Fr. 167 and Nantes ms. 521 share an anomaly in that they both have number 4 Elemiach. This shared anomalous ending in -IACH is highly indicative of the likely dependence of Nantes ms. 521 on Geneva ms. Fr. 167.

The table image 4 however shows that there are significant differences between ms. 5061 and the others. These differences merit attention and are marked with * in the following table. The source of the Hebrew column will be discussed later but is inserted

²⁸² BN. ms. Fr. 882, f. 27 r^o. See image 2.

²⁸³ Ms. 5061, f. 87 v^o. See image 3.

²⁸⁴ Nantes ms. 521, Fr. 355, f. 186 v^o.

²⁸⁵ Geneva ms. Fr. 167 Gen. 1045, f. 174 v^o.

²⁸⁶ Nantes ms. 521 Number 1 is "Veluiah" but Gen. ms. Fr. 167 is "Vehuiah".

²⁸⁷ Numbers 2, 6, 22, 27, 33, 40, 44, 58, 62 and 70. Though they both have number 13 "Jezalel".

²⁸⁸ Number 61.

for reference. These differences are collected in the following table for easier reference.

Number	ms. 521 Nantes	ms. 5061 Arsenal	Hebrew
1	Veluiah	Vehuiah	והו
4	Elemiach	Elemiah	עלם
6	Jeiahel	Jelael	ללה
13	Jezalel	Jezabel	יזל
16	Halhamiah	Hakamiah	הקם
26	Haaiah	ABSENT	האא
28	Seeheiah	Seehiah	שאה
33	Jehuiah	Jehmah	יחו
34	Lehaiah	Lehahiah	להח
35	Chauakiah	Cauakiah	כוק
39	Rehael	Rehahel	רהע
41	Hahahel	Hahael	ההה
45	Sealaiah	Sealiah	סאל
55	Mebaiah	Mebahiah	מבה
57	Nemamiah	Memamiah	נמם
58	Jeiahel	Jeialel	ייל
63	Anauel	Ananel	ענו
65	Damabiah	Damahiah	דמב
66	Mauahel	Manakel	מנק
70	Jabamiah	Jabamiath	יבם
71	Hahael	Haiael	היי

This very high percentage of differences indicates that the copyist was either highly incompetent or that the list in Nantes ms. 521 was not copied directly from ms. 5061, notably proven by the omission of 26 in the Arsenal copy. Indeed the very fact that both Nantes ms. 521 and Geneva ms. Fr. 167 have number 26 Haaiah, which is missing

from ms. 5061, means that there must have been another copy from which they were made. In any event the differences warrant comment. No microfilm is currently available of the Nantes ms. 521, but some of the errors are easily explicable from inspection of the original. For instance the Nantes ms. has 'l's and 'b's that are very similar. This could account for the differences in number 13, Jezalel and Jezabel. Reference to the Hebrew shows that the former (Nantes ms. 521) is correct. Similarly confusion could have arisen over the 'l's, the 'b's and the 'h's. This could account for 1, 58 and 65. The writing of 'm' and 'ui' is also very similar, which could explain 33. Another explicable difference is due to the similarity of the 'n's and the 'u's. This accounts for 63 and 66. Odd endings occur in Nantes ms. 521 at number 4 and in Arsenal ms. 5061 at number 70, which indicate that the scribe(s) were unaware of the importance of the -IAH and -EL endings. Neither copyist appears able to differentiate h from j. Comparing both of the manuscripts against the Hebrew gives the intriguing result that in six cases the Nantes manuscript is the better,²⁸⁹ but in six other cases the Arsenal ms. is better.²⁹⁰

The differences in spelling between ms. Fr. 882 and ms. 5061 are marked with * in image 5.

These 72 names are derived from Exodus xiv verses 19 to 21.²⁹¹ Each of these verses has seventy-two letters and the letters of the three verses were used to derive the seventy-two names. In order to arrive at the names the kabbalists used the following procedure. The first angel's name was based on the first letter of verse 19, the last letter of verse 20 and the first letter of verse 21. The second name was formed from the second letter of verse 19, the penultimate letter of verse 20 and the second letter of verse 21. The third name was based on the third letter of verse 19, the ante-penultimate letter of verse 20 and the third letter of verse 21. Continuation of this process gave the

²⁸⁹13 Jezalel, 33 Jehuah, 41 Hahahel, 57 Nemamah, 63 Anael and 65 Damabiah.

²⁹⁰1 Vehuah, 16 Hakamah, 55 Mebahiah, 58 Jeialel, 66 Manakel and 71 Haiael.

²⁹¹ See image 1.

seventy-two names. See column "Hebrew" in the table above.²⁹²

The names that differ in Thenaud's ms. Fr. 882 and ms. 5061 editions may now be collated for comparison.

No.	Ms. Fr. 882 BN	ms. 5061 Arsenal	Heb.	Comment
8	Kahethel	Cahethel	כהת	cf. 35 for "Ch" for כ
10	Aladiach	Aladiah	אלד	ms. Fr. 882 suffix wrong
13	Jezaiel	Jezabel	יזל	both incorrect
21	Neschael	Nelchael	נלך	ms. 5061 correct
23	Meiahel	Melahel	מלה	ms. 5061 correct
26	Haaiah	ABSENT	האא	ms. Fr. 882 correct
28	Seheiah	Seehiah	שאה	both ignore a.
31	Lecahel	Lecabel	לכב	ms. 5061 correct
33	Jehuiach	Jehmah	יחו	ms. Fr. 882 correct
34	Lehaiah	Lehahiah	להח	cp. ms. 521
35	Chauakiah	Cauakiah	כוק	cp. 8
39	Rahael	Rehahel	רהע	ע variously "a", "e", "i"
40	Jeiael	Jeiazel	יז	ms. 5061 correct
45	Selaiah	Sealiah	סאל	ms. 5061 correct
55	Mebaiah	Mebahiah	מבה	ms. 5061 correct
57	Nemamiah	Memamiah	נמם	ms. Fr. 882 correct
61	Vinabel	Umabel	ומב	ms. 5061 correct
63	AnaueI	Ananel	ענו	ms. Fr. 882 correct
65	Damabiah	Damahiah	דמב	ms. Fr. 882 correct
66	Mauakel	Manakel	מנק	ms. 5061 correct

²⁹²Supplementary information on these 72 names will be found in the endnote 'Kabbalistic Sources of the 72 Angels Names' of the author's unpublished PhD dissertation "A Critical Analysis of Jean Thenaud's Kabbalistic Manuscript", Arsenal ms. 5061, London, 1997.

This comparison indicates that both of Thenaud's versions have errors of transcription with respect to the Hebrew original. Most notable is the omission of 26 Haaiah in ms. 5061. Some other errors may be explained by the scribe misreading 'n' and 'u' (number 63, 66), and 'm' and 'ui' (number 33). The occasions where the ms. 5061 version is preferable to ms. Fr. 882 (earlier) version indicate that the later ms. 5061 version was not copied from ms. Fr. 882. This lends support to the possibility that both versions drew on different unknown originals. This is especially evident from the more accurate spelling in ms. 5061 rather than the ms. Fr. 882 version with respect to numbers 21, 31, 40 and 61.

In order to investigate Thenaud's sources, his lists of the seventy-two names will now be compared against the Geneva copy (fourth column) and against Reuchlin's lists in *De Arte Cabalistica*, from his book iii (sixth²⁹³ and seventh²⁹⁴ columns).

Some letters caused particular trouble in transliteration. Notably ך is given variously as K, C and G (all in number 8) and also as Ch in number 35. Similarly, as noted above, ן and ן caused problems. Another instance of this is number 59, ן ן ן , which was given as Harahel in both of Thenaud's versions and in Reuchlin.

Reuchlin has a list of seventy-two angels at folio 56 recto in book iii, and later in the same book at folio 58 verso there is another list with '-IAH' or '-EL' endings. The seventy-two names all have a trilateral basis. (The distribution of these endings will be examined below.) The full table is at image 6.

Note how Reuchlin transliterates ן in 24, 33, 34, 38, 51, 59, and 68. This distinction between ן and ן is not preserved by Thenaud. Secret wrongly gives 9 as HWY, 10 as

²⁹³ *De arte cabalistica*, f. 56 r^o.

²⁹⁴ *De arte cabalistica*, f. 58 v^o.

ALR, 13 as YWL, 36 as MNR, 40 as YYN, 44 as YAH, 50 as RNY, 55 as MKH, 57 as NMS, he does not differentiate ך and ך׃, (eg 34, 51, 58), and entirely omits 6 and 61²⁹⁵. In the main Thenaud follows Reuchlin closely, but some of the variations are highly revealing.

There is considerable evidence to show that the Genevan copy follows Reuchlin in preference to ms. 5061. See 2, 6, 13, 22, 27, 39, 40, 44, 62, 65, 66 and 70.

Before passing to a consideration of the endings -EL and -IAH which were given to the trilateral stems, some comments are called for as to the two trilaterals which occur twice in the Hebrew list. These are ך׃ at numbers 1 and 49, and ל׃ at numbers 11 and 17. Numbers 1 and 49 are distinguished by their endings so that 1 is Vehuiah and 49 is Vehuel. However numbers 11 and 17 are not distinguished by their endings. Number 11 is Lauiah and number 17 is Louiah. The entire list therefore has one name which is outstanding in that it is (essentially) repeated. This trilateral root has the value of 37 for:-

$$\aleph = 6$$

$$\aleph = 1$$

$$\aleph = 30$$

In kabbalistic terms the equivalence of ל׃ to 37 was of particular significance because it was an acrostic for לו אדיר וגדולה²⁹⁶ and also for לשמו אחדות ומלוכה.

Furthermore the number thirty-seven was of special significance in that it designated the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, plus the five final forms, plus the ten numerals. It will be shown below that the number 37 has a very particular significance in this list of angels' names. The number 37 will now be shown to be the key to understanding the careful distribution of the endings -EL and -IAH.

It has been noted above that number 1 Vehuiah, and number 49 Vehuel, are both formed from ך׃. The question may be posed asking why the same root gave rise to

²⁹⁵ F. Secret, *La Kabbale (de arte cabalistica)*, Paris, pp. 227, 228.

²⁹⁶ Numerically ל׃ and ל׃ were also equal to 37. Qneh Binah 26b.

different names. Why did number 1 take the -IAH ending while number 49 took the -EL ending and not the other way round? The choice of -IAH for the first ending, followed by -EL and so on, rather than -EL for the first followed by -IAH and soon on, is evident when consideration is given to names such as Daniel (50), Michael (42), and Ariel (46). Daniah, Michiah, and Ariaah are unfamiliar and are clearly less appropriate. The problem of the overall distribution of the endings will now be considered. In the first place it is clear that this distribution, as we shall see, is not random. This important point has been ignored by Secret in his translation of *De arte*. The question of distribution has been passed over by other writers too. However one scholar - Marques-Rivière - offered an explanation which essentially argues that the various suffixes had a geographical significance. The Eastern and the Western angels had names ending in -EL, -IEL, and -IAEL whereas the Northern and Southern angels names ended in -IAH and -AEL²⁹⁷.

Reuchlin comments on the significance of the endings -IAH and -EL. He does however not seek any pattern in the distribution:-²⁹⁸ "But since these letters of the seventy names do not seem to satisfy you, I will show you, not only in the characters already mentioned but also in some to be mentioned shortly, how one may pronounce whatever is pronounceable from the shapes of the letters. We have it that God himself was the inventor of this skill, for we read in Exodus 23, "Behold, I send my angel before you to guard you on the way and to lead you to the place that I have appointed. Be careful in his sight and heed his voice lest you annoy him: he will not pardon your crimes, for My Name is in him." By this we understand that properly the name of an angel ought sometimes to include the name of God. So when the masters of Kabbalah could not

²⁹⁷On remarque que les 72 noms se terminent par un des quatre noms divins IAH, EL, AEL et IEL. Nous avons déjà vu ces syllabes sacrées dans les noms gnostiques. Selon le philosophe Jean Belot, curé de Milmont, le nom des génies qui habitent l'Orient et l'Occident se terminent par EL, IEL, IAEL, et ceux qui habitent le Nord ou le Midi ont leur nom finissant par IAH et AEL.

Les Kabbalistes ont par ailleurs plusieurs tables pour rechercher celui des 72 génies qui dominent telles ou telles parties du Cosmos. Nous donnons ci-après ces tables. See J. Marques- Rivière, *Amulettes, Talismans et Pantacles dans les traditions Orientales et Occidentales*, Paris, 1938.

²⁹⁸ *De arte cabalistica*, f. 58 r°. See image 7, *Ibid*, f. 58 v°. See image 8.

derive meaning from the name of any angel, they used the whole of a name of God and formed the angel's name from it. They saw that it was an improper use of the letters MICH or GABRI or RAPHI to signify by them the name of an angel without the addition of the name of God, i.e. EL, resulting in Michael, (folio 58 verso) Gabriel and Raphael. When it came to the other angelic names, they tried to imitate Sacred Scripture and say Raziel, Iophiel, Zadkiel, Peliel, Malthiel, Uriel and others like that. The Romans call their god on the Capitol "Best" and "Greatest," being "Best" because of his kindnesses and "Greatest" because of his strength. (Cicero bears this out, in his speech to the priests On behalf of his own home). In the same way, the Jewish nation call their god Yah because of his kindnesses and EI because of his strength and virtue. The Kabbalists comment on the words of King David, when he says: "If you have seen our iniquities, Yah, O Lord who will sustain us?": " 'Yah' shows that he is the world of mercy, 'Adonai' ('O Lord') that he is the world of harshness," as it says in Gate of Light, Chapter 8. On EI, you read in Numbers 16, "O Strongest 'EI,' God of the spirits of all flesh, will your anger strike against all for the sin of one?" So to us, God is best because he is merciful, and greatest because he is strong, and this is represented by these two divine names, Yah and EI. And if you join one of these to any of the seventy two names you will make an impressive and striking word".

But apart from Reuchlin's pious exegetical attempt to explain the presence of these suffixes it is clear that he had no awareness of any significance of their distribution. Similarly Thenaud was unaware of any pattern underlying the distribution of the endings. He commented merely that God was just and merciful. He appears to relate the justice of God with -IAH and the mercy of God with -EL²⁹⁹.

²⁹⁹ BN. ms. Fr. 882, f. 32 r^o, lines 11-15:-

“Si doys sauoir que tous les noms des anges
Qui reuelez nous sont et des archanges
Sont terminez en yah on en el
Signifians que le dieu eternel
Est iuste et tout misericordieux”.

Consider the sequences of the endings of the 72 names. The first is -IAH, the next two are -EL, the next two are -IAH and the sixth is -EL. Now apply to this small sample the kabbalistic technique of relating numbers to letters. The occurrences are in the order of 1,2,2 and 1; when the alphabetical equivalents are written the result is abba or ABBA. An even more striking result emerges when the entire list is treated kabbalistically, which will now be done.

When the full sequence is written the result is as follows:-

1221123321233113421431132211171211111

and when the alphabetical equivalents are written the result is as follows (left to right printing):-

abbaabggbabggaagdbadgaagbbaaazabaaaa

Attention may now be given to the pattern which may be observed in the same list, when printed right to left.

aaaaabazaaabbgaagdabdgaaggbabggbaabba

There are thirty-seven letters representing the 37 groups. The significance of the number 37 has been noted above, but was Thenaud aware of its significance? This number 37 was specified elsewhere in Thenaud's kabbalistic ms. As has been described above, in the order of exorcism the exorcists fasted for thirty-seven days, and at the end of that time there was the spiritual event concerning the candles, the sounds and the celestial fire³⁰⁰. This is prima facie evidence that Thenaud was in touch with a

³⁰⁰ Ms. 5061, folio 94 verso:- "Ces choses faites dictes et paracheuees ilz mectoyent toutes les choses susdictes en larche et iusnoyent pour trente et sept iours en grande chastete puy se lieuoient en chascune minuyt et se vestoyent ensemble ornoyent de toutes les susdictes choses et disoyent loraison qui sensuyt. Deus misericordiarum q` humanum genus ad reparandam angelorr preuaricationem creastiquiqz sedus inter angelos et homines pr` nrī Abrahe et semi` eius promisisti digneris me famulum tuum. N. sacris tuis licet immeritum promouere et angelum quem michi custodem didisti visibiliter me videre concedas En la xxxvii nuyt les cierges cessoient desclairer tout subit puy lon oyoit une tant douce et delicieuse armonie qui lon estoit contrainct dentrer en rapt et extase"

kabbalistic tradition that placed high value on the number thirty-seven. In itself this is no evidence that Thenaud himself was aware of any special significance for that number.

The following diagram plots the occurrence of the groups of endings. Thus there is one (a) -IAH, then two (b) -EL, then two (b) more -IAH, followed by one (a) -EL, and so on.

	יז	יב	ה5	ד4	ג3	ב2	א1	row vlue	sum
1							1	1	1
2						1		2	3
3						1		2	5
4							1	1	6
5							1	1	7
6						1		2	9
7					1			3	12
8					1			3	15
9						1		2	17
10							1	1	18
11						1		2	20
12					1			3	23
13					1			3	26
14							1	1	27
15							1	1	28
16					1			3	31
17				1				4	35
18						1		2	37
19							1	1	38
20				1				4	42
21					1			3	45

22			1	1	46
23			1	1	47
24		1		3	50
25			1	2	52
26			1	2	54
27			1	1	55
28			1	1	56
29			1	1	57
30	1			7	64
31			1	1	65
32			1	2	67
33			1	1	68
34			1	1	69
35			1	1	70
36			1	1	71
37			1	1	72

When these groups are presented in Bar Chart form the result is as shown in image 9. This distribution shows firstly that numbers 5 = 𐌆 and 6 = 𐌇 are unmentioned. Could this be on account of their connection with the Tetragrammaton? What is more important for the present assessment is group number 30 as indicated. The Bar Chart clearly shows how outstanding is group 30 with its 7 long string of -EL endings leading to the number 37 from 30 +7.

Furthermore when each letter is given its own value, starting at 1 for 𐌆, and so on, then the progressive sum may be given. It will be seen that by the time of the eighteenth group the progressive value has reached 37. This is shown on the chart above in bold. Similarly if the process is repeated, but starting at the end, the progressive sum will also be 37 by the time that the same position is reached. (The eighteenth from the top, which is the twentieth from the end.)

Furthermore the composition of both 37s is notable. Working from the top the first three are worth 5, the next five are worth 10, the next ten are worth 22. Alternatively working from the top the first three are worth 5, the next eleven are worth 22, the next four are worth 10. The same system applies when working from the base. The lowest five are worth 5, the next three are worth 10, and the last twelve are worth 22. Alternatively the lowest five are worth 5, the next eleven are worth 22, and the last four are worth 10. This is an astounding instance of chiasmus incorporating the value associated with the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the 5 final forms and the number 10 (numbers, commandments).

It may also be noted that the middle of 37 being 19, it is not surprising to see that the progressive sum attained in the middle, when starting either from the top or from the base, is twice 19 - 38. Furthermore the value of the next number is 42 as shown in shadow in the chart above. This number was highly significant in kabbalistic terms, as was recognized by Reuchlin³⁰¹ and Thenaud³⁰².

³⁰¹J. Reuchlin, *De arte*, f. 73 r^o, l. 20:- "All existence and all speech arises from these combinations, for of those that are specially termed Gates our father Abraham said in the book of Creation: "And every spoken thing and every created thing exists by its progress from them." By reliance on them we can with ease employ them to the aid of our salvation. Consideration of all created things leads back, within the bounds of human capability, to understanding of the one Creator. That understanding is our salvation and eternal life. Thus we pass from God, through his Name, back to God. He himself is his own Name of the four letters, which is blessed always to eternity, as the Psalmist showed when he said: "And they will understand that you are your Name, the Tetragrammaton, alone, supreme for you above all the earth." So this name alone is called Semhamaphores meaning "Name that explains the essence of God." Proof of this comes from the first part of this art. A second Name of God that can take the place of the first and is written with twelve letters will be understood from the second part. Finally, there is yet another name, dealt with in the third part of Kabbalah, and that is the name of 42 letters. Not that a single utterance of a single name consists of 42 letters, for any intelligent person would realize, as Maimonides teaches, that no single name can be found written with so many letters. But a number of names entwined closely together and pieced together from many letters lead the Kabbalist through hidden reasonings to the true understanding of God the Tetragrammaton, Yod H Vav H, which also signify arithmetically 42. Forty-two letters of this sort, joined in such a way through such separate names, are referred to as one name [f. 73 v^o] because in the end they signify only one thing, just as in the opposite case, other names may be made up of a number of elements collected together to signify many separate things through a single word. So what has happened in this case is that the reasoning by which our understanding is led to God could not be deployed except through many letters and words. Nor is this surprising since clever engineers usually trace the source of a spring by its many different streams. So God made everything emanate from the depths of the fountain for it to flow back again to the infinite chasm, "Iehosi dabar bemaamar ve maamar bedabar ad leha'amid kol hadebarim bema'ayan hashalhebeth vehashalhebeth bemaamar kema'yan ein heqer ve ein mispar leorah hamitallemeth be thosefeth hahoshekh hamesuthereth biklal arba'im veshtaim otioth. " These are the words of that excellent contemplative scholar Hamai in his book *On Speculation*, to which he usefully attaches the book on the Fountain of Wisdom, though so fine and clear a man has no need of such a testimonial. Now I shall try to translate this passage into Latin without, if I can, affecting the quality of his thought: "To

The importance of the discussion above is twofold. First it shows that although Thenaud was highly dependent on Reuchlin, the 'coincidental' use that Thenaud innocently

produce matter in word and word in matter until he may restore all things to the fountain of the splendour and restore the splendour to the word like a fountain with neither end nor number, rendered inaccessible to light by the increase of shadows and hidden in the total of the 42 letters." This name that deserves such worship and veneration and is designated by the forty-two letters is termed by the best of the sages (may their memory be blessed!) as the "Holy and Sanctified. ... [f. 74 r^o] I will reveal to you that Name in the fashion of the Kabbalists. First let me separate the forty-two letters into seven words, then each word into two distinct parts in each of which will be three letters in accordance with Hebrew idiom. If you multiply six by seven, you will get 42, which is the sum total of the letters of that Name, which I entrust to your personal inspection with this drawing: SCThBMA ShCThThKS MYThASB YMYPTThA STThCHPS ThCHSMA SASPPSH. Having put so many letters into this verse, I can immediately derive from these seven words any other disyllabic portion of any single word. Each single utterance of this precious Name consists of six letters, as you see, but only in Hebrew, not in any other language. In Latin one needs more letters, producing Sagathbama, Sagaththechaz, Miathazab, lemibatha, Zethaghaphaz, Thegazama and Zaazpapas, which are names found in the books of the ancients but remaining to this day foreign and obscure in Roman speech. ... [f. 74 v^o, l. 25] On this, Count Mirandola comments in his Conclusions: "Any sound has power for magic in so far as it is formed from the sound of God." It is this that we strain to catch in our nets when we scour through all the possible combinations in all the alphabets to find eventually in Scripture the seven names enclosed in forty-two letters. For example, one seeks seven words in the twenty-first alphabet which may in the same way be symbolic of a verse of divine Scripture. I have laid them out clearly in the passage where I discussed them above. Similarly with the twentieth alphabet, and the nineteenth, and so on with all of them until we reach the first alphabet, and the nineteenth, and so on with all of them until we reach the first alphabet, which from its first pair of combinations is given the name of Albath. By using the combinations of this alphabet we get this new example: ThDL GNB ThRL LA Q CKL BQG KNK SLB QLK VSQ LR V QNN QBQ SSTh. This is also the divine name of forty-two letters given as the first alphabetical permutation in the book of Creation. [f. 75 r^o] For our father Abraham only put down the permutations and transpositions in this book of Creation because he assumed that the correct order of the ordinary alphabet was known to everyone. Some people are accustomed to combine the normal alphabet also in parallel fashion, writing ABGD, as Rabbi Hamai taught in that book of his on Speculation. He writes the name of 42 letters produced from this same combination like this: AQBThTSh AQBBKV TNBShVTh NTNHBSh VBQPHVBQPVTSh VShVHHA. This, like the others, symbolically signifies the blessed God in accordance with his properties. The ineffable four letters denote God as he is above all being. Ehieh represents God as he is in all being, Adonia shows God as he is the Lord of all, and Sadai shows him as he is lacking nought. Similarly the name of the 42 letters, whether it be received from transposed or straight forward combination, designates God the Creator of heaven and earth and of all that is visible and invisible. So these twenty three names, each of which has forty-two letters taken in accordance with the order of the twenty-three alphabets, are all derived from the first verses of Sacred Scripture: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was empty and void." Starting with beth as the first letter and ending with beth as the last letter in the Hebrew text as spoken by the Holy Spirit, the Kabbalists produce the 42 letters by always putting one letter for each letter under one and the same combinatory yoke. There are other Kabbalists who have indulged in higher speculation and transcend creation and the creatures, who stand in the sole emanation of the Deity. In holy manner they bestow that emanation, under a vow of silence and through the holy name of twelve letters and the name of 42 letters, upon those worthy men who are devoted to God. This traditional name is written in the Book of Secret Letters, where, in answer to the question of the Roman Antoninus about the holy names, Rabbi Hakados says that from the Tetragrammaton comes the names of 12 letters: Av Ben veRuakh haKadosh, meaning, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit." And from this is derived the name of 42 letters: Av Elohim, Ben Elohim, Ruah hakadosh Elohim. Shaloshah beehad, ehad beshe/oshah, which means: "God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, Three in One and One in Three." What heights and what depths in matters understood by faith alone!" J. Reuchlin, *De Arte Cabalistica*. Tr. M. and S. Goodman, New York, 1983, pp. 331 ff.

³⁰² Ms. 5061, f. 86 v^o, 87 r^o.

attaches to the number 37 elsewhere in ms. 5061 indicates that he did have a quite separate source that was rooted in a remote kabbalistic tradition.

Secondly these observations about the distribution of the -IAH and -EL endings are the first recorded discovery of a pattern, based on the number 37, which has lain undiscovered for generations.

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