

The Baader-Schelling Controversy in Schelling's *Das System der Weltalter*: Elohim as Divine Proxies.

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Abstract: This paper examines the controversy between Franz von Baader and Schelling as it takes place in Schelling's lecture course *Das System der Weltalter*. This particular instance of their disagreement involves Schelling criticising Baader for his notion of the biblical Elohim as divine proxies. The paper first provides a background to Baader-Schelling philosophical feud before examining Schelling's remarks against Baader in the *System der Weltalter*. Then, Baader's writings on Elohim are looked into in the light of their connection to Baader's conception of creation as falling-away and Baader's source for interpreting Elohim as proxies, including Saint Martin and Kabbalah. Thereafter, Schelling's criticism of Baader is analysed and interpreted in the context of the *System der Weltalter*. The paper aims to achieve several things: to show the presence of distorted kabbalistic influence in Baader and its discussion in Schelling; to revise Koslowski's view on Baader's creation narrative by pointing out how Baader's Elohim / divine proxies function to form a rather dualistic relation between God and creation; and to interpret Schelling's convoluted and difficult reply to Baader displaying that at stake between the two thinkers were questions of God's ineffability and freedom as well as God's involvement into creation.

Keywords: German Idealism, Christian Kabbalah, Schelling, Baader, Creation, Falling-Away, Abfall, Elohim

Disclosure statement: The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

Introduction

This paper is devoted to the controversy between Franz von Baader and F.W.J. Schelling that took place in the 1820s. More precisely, I am going to offer a close reading of one of the instances of their heated debate that occurred in Schelling's lecture course titled *Das System der Weltalter*. Schelling's critical discussion of Baader there, I will argue, involves an aspect of Jewish mysticism. I want to show that Baader's identification of the biblical Elohim

with the so-called divine principles, proxies or agents, that might seem incomprehensible at the first sight, is a creative misreading¹ of Jewish Kabbalah via French author Saint Martin. The controversy between Schelling and Baader will also allow the opportunity to look into two other things: first, how Elohim as divine proxies fit into Baader's creation narrative; and second, Schelling's response to Baader in light of his own philosophy as expressed in the *System der Weltalter*.

The Baader-Schelling debate has been a subject of three major studies in recent decades. First, Marie Zovko's *Natur und Gott* (Zovko, 1996) already in its title establishes the main point of the controversy, namely, the relationship between God on the one side and nature or creation on the other. Zovko's other contribution was the detailed historical portrayal of Baader's and Schelling's friendship. She showed how Schelling was simultaneously becoming irritated by Baader's eccentric behaviour on the one hand, while on the other hand he was prone to taking Baader's philosophical criticism too personally. At the same time, Baader was unaware how their comradeship was slowly eroding. The end of their friendship coincided with Schelling abandoning his *Weltalter* project altogether and, as Zovko suggests, these facts are connected. Schelling felt that in *Weltalter* drafts, which he was unable to finish, he was influenced by Baader's reading of Jacob Böhme and, according to Zovko, Schelling wanted to break free both from their personal connection and their philosophical affinity that in the end proved itself unproductive for him. Zovko's book was soon followed by Peter Koslowski's *Philosophien der Offenbarung* (Koslowski, 2001), which attempts to revise some of Zovko's points. Koslowski offers a vivid defence of Baader and sharply attacks Schelling. The basis for his critique of Schelling forms Koslowski's conceptual distinction between 'theosophic Gnosis' and 'Valentinian Gnosis'. Baader, insists Koslowski, belongs to the former, which is characterised by a stark distinction between God and the world: God is only involved in the world because of his compassion and goodwill towards humanity. Meanwhile Valentinian

gnosis, which, according to Koslowski, Schelling completes, is founded on the idea of alienation within God. The creation of the finite universe happens through the externalisation of a part of the Godhead and, thus, God is essentially connected to the world and has to suffer along with it. Joris Geldhof's *Revelation, Reason and Reality* (Geldhof, 2007) appeared several years after Koslowski's contribution. In his account of the Baader-Schelling relationship he tries to reconcile the two against the previous scholarship of Zovko and Koslowski. Geldhof points out that Baader's and Schelling's philosophies of revelation are closely aligned and have the exact same goal: namely, a conception of modernity that includes revelation at its core, as opposed to more common secularising views that Geldhof examines, citing the example of Karl Jaspers. Geldhof's work is again a revision of Zovko's and Koslowski's research: he focuses on the common ground between Schelling and Baader while brushing off theosophic lore and the alleged Gnosticism in both thinkers.²

This article contributes to the existing scholarship by examining one concrete instance of the controversy that takes place in Schelling's *System der Weltalter*, and especially by focusing the kabbalistic background of Baader's ideas that Schelling calls into question. In fact, while Baader's interest in the Kabbalah has been duly acknowledged by both Zovko³ and Koslowski,⁴ they do not elaborate on how exactly one can find these influences in Baader, even though Koslowski provides an overview of the creation narratives in Kabbalah and its connection to Christian thinkers including Baader. He also points out that some of the Kabbalah is gnostic, as it too, he argues, proposes the gnostic idea of the alienation of God within creation.⁵ In this paper I am going to first introduce the biographical background to the Baader-Schelling controversy. Then, I am going to examine some of the Baader's arguments against Schelling. Thereafter, I will outline Schelling's reply to Baader in the *System der Weltalter* and analyse what texts of Baader Schelling references, as well as discuss the concept of falling-away in Baader's creation narrative. I am then going to show how Baader's reading of Elohim

as divine proxies is connected to the writings of Saint Martin and the *Zohar*. Finally, before concluding the paper, I will offer a short interpretation of Schelling's counterattack against Baader in the *System der Weltalter*.

Baader's and Schelling's friendship in Munich

Let me first paint with wide brushstrokes the biographical context⁶ of the debates between Schelling and Baader. Franz von Baader was a Catholic thinker, one of the stars of Munich Romanticism. Trained firstly as a mining engineer – which might explain his subsequent interest in the philosophy of nature – he turned to philosophy after reading Kant in the 1790s. His first articles dealt with the philosophical conception of nature and criticized Kant for putting too much weight into questions concerning the possibility of empirical knowledge. Their respective letters show that even before they met Schelling had read some of the Baader's earlier work due to their mutual interest in philosophy of nature, and likewise Baader knew Schelling's publications concerning this matter.⁷ Baader was known for his deep interest in philosophical mysticism: he was an avid follower of St. Martin,⁸ and saw himself as a leading authority on Jacob Böhme's imaginative philosophy.⁹ Baader and Schelling met when the latter arrived in Munich in 1806. They became colleagues at the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities, and a personal friendship was kindled between them. Baader influenced Schelling's own growing interest in theosophy and mysticism during his first decades in Munich, culminating in the freedom essay and *Weltalter* drafts. Similarly, Schelling introduced Baader to the pietist writer and theologian Friedrich Oetinger, who exerted influence on both Schelling and Hegel.

While their friendship lasted in the 1810s, it was not without spot. In fact, there was growing personal unease on Schelling's part regarding Baader. They had different

temperaments, and slowly Baader's eccentricities became too unbearable for Schelling. For instance, Schelling never liked discussing philosophy in non-academic circles, whereas Baader was very talkative on the matter and would often embark in public on long monologues concerning his teachings. Eventually, Schelling began to find his company tiring. Another point of Schelling's discontent was Baader's extravagant experiments at the Bavarian Academy. While they both studied hypnosis at some point – while this might seem bizarre to us now, such things were considered more scientifically appropriate in the early nineteenth century – Baader's fascination with 'animal magnetism' transformed into a strong interest in the occult. He was convinced, for example, at one moment during 1810s that one of his daughters was possessed by the devil, who, Baader believed, held a grudge against him for his theological and scientific work. Apparently, Schelling was annoyed by such extravagance. The final personal difference between them was Schelling's Protestantism. Even though he was well integrated into the academic and social life in Bavaria, Munich was still a capital of Catholic Germany, which meant that for some of their colleagues Schelling and Baader were on the different sides. Even though Baader had ecumenist views and was more than tolerant to Protestantism and to Eastern Orthodoxy, the fact remained that their different faiths created some tension. Apparently, Schelling religious feelings were hurt by Baader's essay on the relationship between Catholicism and Protestantism. Titled *Über Katholizismus und Protestantismus*, it compared the differences of two Christian denominations to the conflict between positive religion and atheistic philosophy. Baader argued for the complete abandonment of the latter, thus indirectly attacking Protestantism as well.

What I have just outlined mainly shows Schelling's side of the story and speaks of his growing resentment towards Baader; but what were Baader's own feelings regarding their friendship? Baader seemed to have been totally oblivious to all mentioned above, and was not aware that his relationship with Schelling was deteriorating. What Zovko suggests is that

Schelling quit their friendship, being tired of Baader personally, and being disappointed in his *Weltalter* project that was influenced by Baader. The philosophical critique that Baader published against Schelling was simply used as a pretext to cut the connection. At the same time, Baader appears to have thought that they could still maintain friendly relations despite the attacks on Schelling that Baader exercised in his writings. It was especially clear on the eve of their fallout, which was formally caused by the fact that Baader sent Baron von Yxküll to Schelling in November 1825 together with a generous reference letter. Yxküll was not only a close associate of Baader, but was also a student of Hegel, with whom Schelling had been in a feud since 1807 with the publication of *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Baader it seems was unaware that sending such a guest could offend Schelling. What exactly happened between Schelling and Yxküll remains unclear, but this was the occasion after which the friendship between Schelling and Baader was broken for good.

Baader's criticism of Schelling's thought

Let us now turn to the actual philosophical content of the dispute. I will not give a full report of Baader's engagement with Schelling thought, but rather will only bring up Baader's more general attack on Schelling's system. One should keep in mind that Baader was mainly referring to Schelling's philosophy of nature and his philosophy of identity, which at the point of the controversy – the 1820s – was more than twenty years old, and, moreover, to a certain degree Schelling himself had moved on from his earlier thought by that time. Another point to consider is that in his attacks, Baader would often hide Schelling's philosophy behind euphemisms such as 'modern anti-religious philosophy' or even 'the completed atheism'. Schelling was quite right, however, in seeing himself as a target of attack behind these terms. At the heart of Baader's dissatisfaction was how Schelling postulated the relation between God

and creation, infinity and finitude. The context of Baader's critique echoed elements of the pantheism controversy. Here Baader believed that the dialectical philosophy that Schelling and then Hegel championed was ultimately making the divine immanent within the phenomenal world. The movements of spirit within first nature and then history that they described in their philosophical projects implied for Baader that either God outpoured himself into creation and became a part of it, or that the absolute was indeed the identity of both subject and object, spirit and matter. In any case, this would blur the line between the creator and the created. Let me now illustrate Baader's criticism with a quotation from his work. The one I want to use is suggested by Siegbert Peetz – the editor of the German edition of Schelling's *System der Weltalter* – because it appears to be the quote Schelling references in the said lecture course. This quote from Baader stems from a lecture he delivered in Munich only a year before Schelling's *System der Weltalter*. Says Baader:

Finally, through apotheosis of the material universe, which it holds to be the sole, normal, eternal and absolute or perfect mode of God's manifestation in man, this philosophy has taken the life of this world (of the animal) for eternal life and the unholy world spirit (spiritum mundi immundi) for the Holy Spirit itself, but hereby denied the latter (the third personality in God) just as it denied the Son and Father, and, insofar as one denies the Father as legislator, which could be called atheism in the narrower sense; denial of the Son then would be called deism, and finally the denial of the Holy Spirit must be called pantheism. One is also forced to admit that through this threefold heresy, modern denial of God acquired the appearance of a scientific nature, which was unknown to our ancestors...[...] With the advent of this doctrine of perfect atheism, a new epoch has of course begun for the church itself.¹⁰

Baader attacks here philosophical monism of Schelling's identity philosophy. What he calls the 'apotheosis of material universe' refers to Schelling's view that subject and object are two

sides of the same coin: they coincide in the absolute, yet in the phenomenal reality they are different.¹¹ Throughout the history, the absolute subject posits before itself, step by step, its own content: this is understood as the development of nature throughout its history, which then continues as development of human consciousness.¹² Baader finds this general scheme borders too much on enmeshing the world, man, and God together as if they were all the same. Hence, he believes that Schelling mistook the natural spirit of this world in its development for the Holy Spirit, and thus reached the state of ‘completed atheism’: God completely outpours himself into creation, ceasing to exist as a transcendent and ineffable entity. Baader’s own position was built upon analogous thinking. The creation or nature, he would say, is formed in the image of God, hence, we can truly see parallels between the spirit of the world and the spirit of God, yet these are analogies that allow us to see God in creation: they do not mean God’s actual presence in the phenomenal world. God as a creator is for Baader akin to a craftsman or an artist, who produces the world, but is not essentially enmeshed with it.

Schelling’s reply to Baader and Baader’s creation as falling-away

One of Schelling’s replies to Baader occurs in the lectures *System der Weltalter*. *Weltalter – Ages of the World* – was the name of Schelling’s next project after he had completed the freedom essay in 1809. It was supposed to be a trilogy that talks about past, present and future, the three distinct ages of the world. Throughout the 1810s, Schelling kept writing and rewriting various drafts of *Weltalter*, of which only three variants of the first book remain along with sketches for the second book and countless fragments. Schelling never finished the project and in the 1820s moved on to what would be called his positive philosophy and philosophy of revelation. The *System der Weltalter* lectures were held in Munich during the winter of 1827 and 1828. While there certainly is some consistency of ideas between the *Weltalter* drafts and

the lectures, especially when Schelling explains the term *Weltalter*, ultimately the lectures do not follow the layout of the drafts. In fact, quite a large part of them is devoted to Schelling's commentary on the history of modern philosophy, including his own earlier thought. In this regard, I would suggest that *Das System der Weltalter*, despite sharing its name with the *Weltalter* drafts, belongs to the last, final phase of Schelling's thought. One must immediately concede that periodisation of Schelling's works is a difficult and much debated matter. I do not seek to provide any new arguments to this discussion and follow the more-or-less traditional line, as expressed by Judith Norman and Alistair Welchman,¹³ according to which Schelling's works are divided into four phases: transcendental philosophy and philosophy of nature; followed by the second period with the system of identity; then by the system of freedom; and finally by the last phase with the positive philosophy. In such context, *Das System der Weltalter* lies between the third and the fourth phases, sharing part of its name – *Weltalter* – with unfinished project of the third period, but in its focus on the history of philosophy that, according to Schelling, leads to his own 'positive philosophy', *Das System der Weltalter* could be read as one of the first texts of the fourth and final period of Schelling's thought.

Returning to the content of *Das System der Weltalter*, I will not go into the details of Schelling's presentation of his thought there, suffice to say only that he vehemently rejected the accusations of pantheism that I have outlined above. More importantly, this is where Schelling's remarks on Baader lie. Schelling does not mention Baader's name, but from what follows it is quite clear that he reacts quite harshly to Baader's denouncements mentioned earlier. Says Schelling:

It is well known that philosophy of nature has found various judges, but one of them has asserted in a very strange way that in the philosophy of nature the Holy Spirit is confused with the general spirit of life or with animal spirit.¹⁴

In the next sentence, Schelling proceeds with a counterattack on Baader's own views bringing up Baader's identification of Elohim with divine agents or principles. As Peetz suggests, Schelling is referencing lectures that Baader gave in Munich just a year prior to Schelling's *System der Weltatler*. Says Schelling:

But what is to be said in the end when this same judge asserts that nature is not the intermediate product of unity, but of the Elohim which this unity summons? According to this, the Elohim then would only be the principles of nature. One can really speak about principles in nature, in God there is only one principle. Apart from this, everything in God is only cause, not principle. Second, according to this explanation, the Elohim would be merely agents of unity, not instrumental causes. Third, the unity would have them merely for the purpose of matter production, so they themselves would only be a created being. The least judgement is that he himself falls into the error he accuses other of, *turpe est doctori, si culpa redarguit ipsum*¹⁵.

This is rather a convoluted and incomprehensible passage as it appears quite out of context in the lectures. So let me restate plainly what Schelling says here. The Elohim – the Hebrew word for God used in the opening chapters of Genesis that describe creation – is not now a word for God per se, but rather it denotes so-called principles of nature, which in turn are summoned by God as his proxies to create or to produce material existence. Schelling also offers criticism of Baader's ideas: as these proxies would be created entities – what would be the point in having them as intermediaries between the matter and God? Moreover, in God, says Schelling, there is only one principle, so how exactly would the many principles of Elohim then relate to the one principle in God? Schelling concludes that Baader himself might be guilty of not thoroughly distinguishing between God and the world.

To understand better where these ideas come from, I will again take Peetz's suggestion and quote from Baader's treatise written against modern anti-religious philosophy, and which Schelling apparently referenced in the quote above:

...Only a monstrous crime (at least a falling-away as an indignation against unity) could bring about this material manifestation, and only the persistence of this crime renders the continuation or propagation of this matter comprehensible; which is therefore not the immediate product of unity, but that of its principles (authorities, Elohim) which the unity called forth for this purpose.¹⁶

Baader's usage of such strong rhetoric as 'crime' and more importantly as 'falling-away' (or Abfall in German) suggests that he needs Elohim to be God's agents because in his view the creation of finite material existence is not good as it is, and therefore it cannot have proceeded from the God himself. Judging by this rhetoric, it seems that indeed for Baader creation came about because of a catastrophic event: the 'crime' or 'falling-away'. Only after this, God summoned the principles, Elohim, his proxies through which the creation of matter would unfold. Let us stay with the notion of falling-away. It is per se not unique to Baader within German thought. Moreover, the notion famously comes up in Schelling's own earlier work, such as *Religion and Philosophy*,¹⁷ where Schelling employs the term seemingly in the same manner Baader does in the quote above: as a prerequisite for the creation of finitude out of the infinite, which required a dramatic event, a separation that remains to be resolved at the end of history. The scholarship on Schelling has seen this notion as having roots in the Neoplatonic fall of the soul into matter,¹⁸ or interpreted it as a more general Gnostic disregard for creation.¹⁹ Perhaps reading it along the line of the Lurianic breaking of the vessels would also be tangible. All this might apply to Baader's usage. Here I want to first connect it to Böhme, given that Baader jealously defended himself as the interpreter of the shoemaker from Görlitz. Ferdinand

Christian Baur pointed out that the language of falling-away or Abfall previously appeared in Böhme exactly in the same context of the creation of finitude out of the infinite:

As with Gnostics, on Böhme's case too we find the whole system and its main task driven by dealing with a transition from the ideal world to the real world, from the absolute to the finite. With Böhme's understanding of the spirit-world taking the form of a more specific and more concrete picture, his conception of how to deal with this transition also had to be very vividly concrete. Böhme's solution for explaining the transition came partly through the idea of a falling-away (Abfall)...[...] We encounter the idea of a falling-away especially in terms of the fall of Lucifer, an event Böhme very often mentions and describes...²⁰

In other words, in Böhme the prerequisite steps for creation of phenomenal universe were the fall of Lucifer and the subsequent fall of Adam: these were the catastrophes that prompted the origin of matter. This coincides well with Baader calling the falling-away a crime, Verbrechen. At the same time, Baader's reading of the falling-away is quite abstract in comparison to Böhme, and might at first be closer to Schelling's own usage of the term. This was, however, not the view that Baader himself held, and which was brought up again in Koslowski's work. I have chosen not to use Koslowski's terminology in my analysis, yet wrestling with his work seems to me necessary. In Koslowski's picture,²¹ the main difference between what he calls theosophic Gnosis, to which Baader belongs, and Valentinian Gnosis, represented by Schelling, is that in theosophy God is not essentially enmeshed with the world during the creation. God, in this view, does not suffer per se during the process of creation or thereafter, he is not naturally involved in the drama of human history. Yet, he makes a choice after the creation to suffer together with humanity out of compassion. In Valentinian Gnosis, Koslowski argues, creation is a catastrophe that involves God because a part of him is externalised, alienated from divine Godhead.²² Here, God's suffering occurs without his choice, naturally.

In fact, Baader himself talks about such falling-away, connecting it to Hegel, but one might also conclude that Baader would utter the same critique against Schelling. So Baader says:

Just as little is the problem (as I already remarked in the *Fermenta Cognitionis*) solved by that conception of natural philosophy, according to which material nature itself should be the apostasy of the idea from itself (and not caused by such an apostasy), because even in its external appearance it should have the determination of inappropriateness with it (why not positive resistance?)! (See Hegel's *Encyclopedia* p. 228). - From which it would follow that God's expression or revelation of himself would forever fail and would forever be subject to the tantic striving of an artist to create with only unsuitable, bad material!²³

Baader is saying that the falling-away cannot happen in the way in which the material universe falls from the idea, because that would involve a part of the idea being alienated from itself; also it would mean that God is a bad artist who keeps failing at self-expression! One has to concede that Koslowski's analysis is spot on detecting these crucial differences that Baader sees between himself on the one hand and Hegel and Schelling on the other: namely, that the alienation of a part of the idea/God is inherently problematic. I want still to seek to correct that reading by pointing out that nevertheless Baader's position remains difficult. Elohim here become a tool for creation precisely because creation itself or the material universe is not good; it is something God can only do with help from proxies. In other words, if creation is a crime, a falling-away, then it cannot have proceeded from God directly; is it then the case that the world is dualistically opposed to God? And added to this dualism is the fact that calling creation a crime already implies a disregard for finite being or finite existence that is just as challenging as God's drama in Valentinian Gnosis, which, according to Koslowski, inspired Schelling. Yet putting my revision of Koslowski aside, one can observe that Baader needs divine proxies or

Elohim, because for him finite, phenomenal existence is problematic to a degree that he needs an intermediary between the world and God.

Sources of Baader's Elohim: St Martin and Kabbalah

Let us now look at the part of Baader's quote where he talks about the Elohim as principles. This identification appears to have its direct source and inspiration in the writings of St Martin, an eighteenth century French spiritualist and Freemason who himself was interested in mysticism and esoteric lore. I will also argue that behind St Martin and behind Baader's interpretation of him lies the book *Zohar*, which contains a portrayal of Elohim as a direct object and subject of the first verse of the Bible. But first, let us explore the connection to St Martin. Baader wrote several commentaries to or meditations on St Martin's thought, but also brought up St Martin as a superior thinker in his critical writings against Schelling and Hegel. In one of these polemical tractates, Baader references St Martin's commentary on the first verses of Genesis. St Martin, says Baader, reads the first word of the Bible – bereshit – not as 'in the beginning' but rather as 'dans le pensée' ('in the thought'), which Baader interestingly renders in German as 'in der Weisheit' ('in wisdom'). Furthermore, says Baader, the Elohim for St Martin 'are not the highest God, but instead denote agents of the second rank, which brought forth the material region as rupture of unformed and unshaped Chaos'.²⁴ That is, the Elohim are agents of God, who ruptured (or first produced?) the original chaos, and by doing this they brought forth phenomenal and material existence and transformed chaos into a more ordered state of being. Baader does not mention which book of St Martin he references, but most probably he used St Martin's *Tableau Naturel des Rapports qui existent entre Dieu, L'Homme et L'Universe* from 1782. Looking at St Martin's version, one thing that immediately catches one's attention is a small difference to Baader's transmission: St Martin

indeed does not translate bereshit as 'In Wisdom'; instead he only uses 'dans le pensée' – 'in the thought'. Says St Martin:

The word Rouch meaning the Principle, the head, or the abode of the thought, can mean the very thought itself: bereshit, which is the first word of the Hebrew text, can therefore be rendered as well by these words: In the thought. And not by these: In the beginning...[...] Thus, without rejecting this version: In the beginning God created etc one could read intellectually: In the thought God created etc.. and one would find here more truth.²⁵

In fact, there is a grain of truth in St Martin's exegesis: the Hebrew root Resh-Alef-Shin indeed means 'head'. So, knowing this, he proposes a reading that emphasises the intellectual, not phenomenal aspect of creation in the first verse of the Bible. What is interesting for us is that Baader apparently displays knowledge of a tradition that associates the word reshith with the second sefira,²⁶ Hochma,²⁷ God's wisdom, whereas St Martin seems to be unaware of this. So one can speculate that he either invents or receives from Christian Kabbalah or Theosophy another reading. In other words, Baader did silently correct his master! Still, Baader is more faithful to St Martin when it comes to the Elohim. For St Martin the philosophical stake in the creation story is the same as for Baader: he too wants God not to be too enmeshed in the world, not to be thought equal to matter. Says St Martin:

They translate they word Bara as 'he made', which also means 'he produced', 'he created'. Let us not be fooled. This expression – he made – would announce a coeternity of matter with God, who would have had no other work to do than to modify it....²⁸

In contrast to Baader, St Martin does not go so far as to call creation a 'crime' nor does he propose the falling-away as the way in which the phenomenal world came to be. Indeed, in this regard Baader appears to be following Böhme rather than St Martin. Yet, St Martin too wants

a more robust distinction between God and the world, hence, his suggestion not to understand biblical Bara as simply 'he created' as it would mean matter's coeternity with God, which makes it appear equal to God. Pursuing such distinction, he too announces that the biblical phrase 'Bara Elohim' – where Elohim stands in plural – means that the creation was 'a fruit of multiple agents'(256).²⁹ Two pages later, he even suggests translating 'Spirit of God' as 'the second action of the agents, Elohim' ('l'action sécondante de ces Agents, Elohim'), and summing up he says that Elohim means 'the number of agents, or the active plan' ('le nombre des agens, ou le plan actif de son execution').³⁰ So, the Elohim are a certain number of God's agents, who created the work that he envisioned intellectually.

It seems from these readings as if St Martin were free of the language of Abfall and of suggesting a catastrophic event as a decisive moment of creation's pre-history. This would not be completely true though, as we find another metaphor in St Martin that depicts man arriving to the world stage on 'a day after a fight'. Says St Martin:

The eye which contemplates the earth on a large scale and in its disorders will see there terrible signs of the power of its author. '[...] Fool, it is only you who will not see there the imposing traces of an ancient vengeance, and the acts, still speaking of an irritated power.[...] She treated the former prevaricators differently: she launched her thunderbolts on them; she crushed them under the weight of the scourges of her anger. You only appear on the battlefield the day after the fight; but it's still early enough to teach you how terrible it was.'³¹

In other words, we see the cruelty of the nature as we survey the earth, and what we see tells us of more sinister and dark events happening before we as humanity even entered the stage of history. Catastrophe is present in the history, or pre-history, of our world. I mention this also because Baader was impressed by this metaphor and, as Geldhof rightly points out, used it to

paint the state of human condition defined by the fall and original sin. Says Baader in Geldhof's translation:

...the breakdown and downfall from its first mode of being came prior to the appearance and the mission of the human being in the world, so that the human being set foot in the world, as it were, the day after a fight [le lendemain d'une bataille],³² moreover, with the call to restore and reconcile this destroyed and broken [...] universe".³³

Let us now make a short review of what we have discovered so far before moving on to possible kabbalistic sources for Baader's ideas. In Schelling's lectures one encounters a critique of Baader for his portrayal of the biblical Elohim as God's proxies, and not God itself. This idea indeed appears in Baader and is connected to his notion of material creation as falling-away, which he even calls a crime, where Baader, seeing the emergence of material existence as problematic, assigns God's proxies, the Elohim to be responsible for creation and not God itself, therefore achieving in Baader's sight a more robust distinction between the world and God. We then find this idea in St Martin, where the problematic remains more or less the same: St Martin too does not want God to create matter openly, so the Elohim are God's agents, proxies that help him to bring about the plan of the universe he had conceived intellectually. While at the first sight St Martin appears to be free of the rhetoric of falling-away or creation as catastrophe or crime, he still is in closest proximity to these ideas even if he instead uses his own metaphor of 'a day after a fight' as the condition in which humanity finds the world.

What I want to argue now is that the roots of this idea – that Elohim are not God but his proxies or agents – lie in Jewish mysticism, in the *Book of Splendour*, and one can suggest that Baader receives a distorted misreading of it via his studies of either Christian or Jewish Kabbalah. In fact, St Martin already had at least some connection with Christian or Jewish

Kabbalah: some claim that his teacher Martinez de Pasqually was an Iberian Jew, who indeed was teaching a doctrine that had elements of Jewish mysticism.³⁴ One can also say that St Martin had access to some lines of Kabbalah as it was transmitted by Freemasons and other Christian esotericists.³⁵ With Baader the connection is even more promising. First, he was a friend of Molitor, the last Christian Kabbalist in the proper sense, who collected and read manuscripts in Hebrew. Second, Baader's biography written by his student Hoffman tells us that, as early as autumn 1796, Baader started learning Kabbalah upon returning from England to Hamburg. As Hoffman observes, Baader most probably was studying a sort of Christian transmission of Kabbalah via someone like Wachter,³⁶ yet this clearly attests early interest that Baader had for Jewish Mysticism. For instance, in one of his letters Baader brings up Isaac Luria himself and the book *Etz Haim*, one of the main works of Lurianic Kabbala, although the context of Baader's letter is animal magnetism, i.e., hypnosis³⁷. More importantly, Baader saw Kabbalah as being pre-cursory to his favourite Jacob Böhme, only noting that it contains a dangerous affinity to pantheism, which Böhme was able to escape. Says Baader:

Among the earlier forms of religious philosophy, it [i.e. Böhmist thought] has the most points of contact with Kabbalah, but understands the ideas of the Kabbalah more deeply than the latter itself, and keeps itself free from the errors of the Kabbalah, which tended to pantheism. One may also assume that Böhme... may have received some indirect knowledge of the Kabbalah from German mythical writings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.³⁸

On another occasion, Baader would go as far as to write that every theologian should know Kabbalah as its intuitions are central to any discourse on God, language and revelation:

The understanding of religion rests on the understanding of language and writing. I recently bought, among several rare books, Kuhnrrath's Amphitheater...[...] which

made apparent to me a lot...[...] about language in the old Kabbalistic, i.e. Mosaic sense. It is only the innocence of our modern theologians that is to blame for the fact that they don't even know anymore the very real Kabbalistic meaning of the prohibition: you should not do magic with the name of God! [...] Any theologian must know the magic and the Kabbalah (the names and powers of the angels), because through the actions of the angels, says the scribe Paul, the old law was given.³⁹

Of course, per se such interest incorporated in doxas Baader held regarding Jewish Mysticism does not mean that he had, for instance, a wide knowledge of *Zohar* or any other Jewish text.

Still, if one looks for a kabbalistic precedent of Baader's and St Martin's teaching according to which Elohim is not God but rather his proxy agents or principles, one can find a similar idea within the *Book of Splendour*, namely, in the tractate *Parashat Bereshit*, which is a commentary on the opening chapters of Genesis. They retell the story of creation using vivid imagery associated with the ten sefirot – divine qualities or even principles (as a side note, one can mention here that Baader himself used the term 'sefirot' as well in some of his writings). These verses of the *Parashat Bereshit* depict how Ein-Sof – the ineffable God hidden in nothingness – unfolds or externalises himself step by step into the ten sefirot, that can be known and expressed. As we can see the same problematic of difference between the world and God that was crucial to Baader is lurking here. So, describing the process of the unfolding of the sefirot from the Ein-Sof, *Zohar* proposes to read the first verse of the Bible as 'with this beginning __ created Elohim' – the subject in this sentence is missing and the Elohim become direct object the verb 'created'. Let us look at the full sentence with Daniel Matt's commentaries in brackets:

With this beginning, the unknown concealed one [i.e. the Ein-Sof or Keter – the hidden source of emanation] created the palace. This Palace is called Elohim, God (Here it is

Binah – the sefira of understanding and divine mother that gives birth to seven lower sefirot). The secret is With the beginning __ Created Elohim/God.⁴⁰

As Daniel Matt points out, the word ‘beginning’ is associated with the divine wisdom, Hochmah, and the preposition ‘with’ is used instead of ‘in’ since both usages are correct in Hebrew. As I have shown earlier, Baader was aware of this association of Wisdom, the second sefira, and the word ‘reshit’ – ‘beginning’ in the first verse of the Bible. So using Wisdom, Ein-Sof or Keter produced the third sefira, Binah, Understanding, the mother of the seven lower sefirot. The secret is then that the subject literally disappears from the verse, meaning that the hidden God is so truly ineffable that it even becomes absent from the sentence! The biblical Elohim now denotes something else, something other than the transcendent God. It also means that God does not create the world directly but via the sefirot. Still, one should take a step back and concede that surely there are different readings of what this actually means theologically, and only one of such readings would strictly see Elohim as divine principles, that is, the sefirot. Such a reading would be the closest to Baader and St Martin, wrestling with the same question in a similar manner: the relation between God and the world. Yet, other interpretations would not be so close to this problem. As Daniel Matt explains, there is a danger of a ‘gnostic’ dualist reading of this fragment where there is a creator God and another transcendent God. Another possible interpretation would be that it means that God literally created God – in other words, that the sentence describes a theogonic moment where the hidden transcendent God, that existed only for itself, now reveals himself as personal, knowable God for others.⁴¹

Let us now return to Baader. Could he indeed have received a very distorted version of this Zoharic passage? I think this is more than plausible. First, both narratives – Baader’s and the Zoharic – reread the biblical Elohim as something other than the creator God: sefirot in *Zohar*, God’s proxies in Baader. In both versions this too relates to the question of how God creates – via sefirot or via proxies – and ultimately has to do with God’s relation to the world:

both stories staunchly insist on God's ineffability. Second, Baader's lifelong interest in esoteric lore and mystical philosophy make it possible that he came across a version of these ideas during his studies. As we saw, he already knows more about Kabbalah than St Martin and corrects him silently at least on one occasion. Another question that raises itself here is whether such distorted transmission that Baader received via St Martin and other sources is at all valid? Gershom Scholem famously called *Zohar* a 'mystical novel' giving credit to the view that this text is not only strictly theological but also imaginative. In that regard, there is probably no incorrect way of reading it – even if the transmission happens not directly from *Zohar* – as long as one grasps the main concerns and questions *Zohar* wrestled with. And Baader certainly does that.

Schelling's reply to Baader

Having discussed Baader's ideas, one can now turn to Schelling's reply to Baader in the *System der Weltalter*. Schelling's lapidary critique of Baader consists at the first sight in just two things. First, that there is only one principle in God and not several (as there are in nature), and, second, that in failing to understand this Baader himself becomes a pantheist and accuses others of what he himself is guilty of. Still, one can speculate as to what Schelling precisely means here. I can see two ways of interpreting Schelling's position in regards to Baader and the kabbalistic background of his ideas. One way would be to read Schelling's critique in light of his own connection to Kabbalah. There has been a lot of work in recent decades showing Schelling's affinity to Lurianic Kabbalah in particular⁴²: his use of the notion of God's contraction, of the similarity between his view of history and that of Lurianic *tiqqun*, his conception of Ungrund and the kabbalistic Ein-Sof. In the context of the *System der Weltalter*, it would be possible to interpret his notion of *Zerreissen*,⁴³ 'Rupture' within God

between the Father and the Son, which is a prerequisite to creation, as a parallel to the Lurianic zimzum or the breaking of the vessels, concepts which too might be seen as proposing a rupture or a breaking within God that separates him from creation. In this regard, one could juxtapose Schelling as presenting a more Lurianic version of creation with Baader as presenting a more Zoharic one, essentially reading them alongside two perspectives on creation present within Jewish mysticism. This would be thought-provoking, but would also require more unpacking than there is space for here. Also, one would need first to offer a simpler reading that would be less speculative, but would instead offer an interpretation bound to his project in the *System der Weltalter*, while not excluding the possibility of a more elaborate reading. So, in what follows, I will confine my comments to this shorter and narrower reading of Schelling's reply.

First, it would be curious to whether in the context of the *System der Weltalter* Schelling recognised the roots of Baader's thought – his connection if not to Kabbalah then to sources such as Böhme and St Martin. Indeed, one quote from the lectures shows that Schelling was at least aware of this as he brings up both names while attacking theosophy, whose main proponent was of course Baader himself. Says Schelling:

Even if Jacob Böhme speaks in such a pompous speech, there is still vitality and fresh strength in him; but it is quite reprehensible and pernicious and does not come from such a strong inner will with others, whose mysticism is only the ruins of previously thought ideas, where everything is already corrupt. Such a man is St Martin, who evidently only collected and connected things thought by others. Such a mysticism is by all means harmful and pernicious...⁴⁴

To put it in other words, Böhme was still an insightful writer as he was original and novel, but the people interpreting him in the recent decades are second-class writers. While Baader here is not mentioned explicitly, this is also most probably an attack on him as well as these two

thinkers, Böhme and St Martin, who were the main interest and object of Baader's work and scholarship.

Turning to the content of Schelling's reply, one can ask how one understands Schelling when he says that there is only one principle in God and not many? In the grand scheme of the *System der Weltalter*, Schelling proposes a thesis that creation might only have happened through the free will and decision to create by God.⁴⁵ Thus, for example, his critique of emanation in the lectures could be read via this thesis: emanation is questionable as it requires a more natural flow of creation out of God as if ignoring his free will. But then if creation is a free decision, then perhaps that is the only 'content' of the ineffable, transcendent God that we know of and can speak about. That is, the only thing we know about God and his inner life before the creation was that he had a free will or a free desire to create, but nothing more than this. Baader's mistake then is twofold, if we read Schelling this way. First, the proxies – Elohim – he proposes are still 'created being' as Schelling calls them, so they are schematically still too close to an emanationist doctrine: from God proceed Elohim, from them the created world, etc. Second, and this is even more important, Schelling in saying that there are many principles in nature but not in God alludes to a more crucial problem he sees in Baader. Namely, that Baader immanentises principles of nature into God. If Elohim are not God but the producers of nature, in a way themselves being principles of nature, then how can it be that they themselves are not part of God as he is unfolding? God then seems to envelope nature, having it within itself as Elohim, divine agents and principles. If Elohim are not exactly in the world – we don't encounter them – then they must rather be part of God. This then indeed sounds like the pantheistic Spinozism that Baader was so critical of: God is in the end equal to nature. Hence Schelling's mocking verdict that Baader himself is guilty of what he claims others to be. One should be aware of the ironic attitude Schelling's remarks have. Yet, this is not the end of the controversy in the *System der Weltalter*.

The last twist of the Baader-Schelling debate within Schelling's lectures is that Schelling himself has a theory of Elohim as 'Mächte', i.e., 'powers' in the *System der Weltalter*. It comes down to Schelling's teaching of three 'Potenzen', i.e., 'potencies'.⁴⁶ God as existing within itself is a potency for 'blind being' – in that sense God remains for Schelling Herr des Seins, Lord of Being, as he has being outside himself, he has power not of himself but of something that lies outside of him. This also means that God does not exist in a certain sense, he does not have to exist as being is outside of him. From here, Schelling says there are two possibilities: one is that there is no God and he has nothing to do with being, and the other one that God has potential being, is potentially existing. This, in turn, leads us to the notion of God's freedom and God's subjectivity: potentially existing as 'blind being', God decided to exist in actually as being, 'Sein'.⁴⁷ A second potency is the one transitioning from 'blind being' to being proper. In connection to this arises again the following dictum from Schelling:

...God's first deed was such that he revealed what he wanted of his own free will through the opposite, then this concept of a divine economy in the creation of the world has nothing dubious or difficult. It seems more dubious to determine the relation of those external, cosmic, demiurgic potencies to God (Elohim-Jehovah). [...]...the principle of blind being as such emerged; but against this principle the two higher ones are in tension; through this principle they are negated and law as potencies and therefore not God, for God is not a negation, but God is the will that puts these potencies in tension and holds them together. The whole thing is only an act. So God is the unity that persists in non-unity.[...] The potencies in this opposition are not Deus; but just as little are they things; they are therefore purely divine powers; they are not simply not God, for God has created himself in them. They are the Elohim while God in the immanent sense is equivalent to the superdivine God Jehovah of the Old Testament. For the will that does not enter into the tension itself, but is the cause of the tension

outside of the tension, is the most spiritual, stripped of all substance; and he is not fourth outside the potencies, but is in them without being themselves...⁴⁸

This is a convoluted quote. It has ultimately to do with what we have just discussed above: the difference between the ineffable, hidden God as potential being and the God revealed within the 'economy of the world's creation'. That is, God proper, as the 'blindes Sein' – let us say positive nothingness – remains outside of creation, but what about God as subjectivity, as will that wanted to be, wanted to reveal itself and create? The will sets up divine potencies – the one of the blind being, and the one of the being proper – that create tension between themselves. The potencies themselves are not God, but God is that which is united between them. Peetz proposes that what Schelling calls Jehova is the potency for the being proper – a potency for blind, undifferentiated being, juxtaposed with the Elohim. Again, neither is itself God, as God is ultimately the will that makes transition from one to another. And indeed, Schelling says Elohim are not exactly not God: there are where God produced itself (erzeugt), attempted a transition from positive nothing to something. One can and should ask at this point, is there then any difference between Schelling's Elohim as 'Powers' (Mächte) and Baader's teaching of Elohim as God's proxies (Bevollmächtigten)? First, Baader's Elohim are proxies in a sense that he wants to see them as different from God, so that God would only be involved in creation through them. Schelling's position is a bit different: Elohim here are an expression of a creative potency within God, that helps to produce God as the act of all three potencies, yet themselves they cannot be called God exactly. They are opposed to the first potency of God's blind being or positive nothingness. Yet, it appears that from Schelling's standpoint the crucial difference would certainly be along the lines of his critique of Baader's Elohim outlined above. Namely, Baader's Elohim come too close to being a part of the divine: firstly, as a created intermediary this is too close to a doctrine of emanation; and secondly, as a multitude of principles, if they proceed from God directly, then they are an immanent part of the divine. The first argument

makes freedom disappear from Baader's system, the second makes Baader's notion of the Godhead too pantheistic. Of course, Schelling's system is also monistic, yet the argument against Baader would perhaps be that the dialectics within it make Schelling's scheme less vulnerable to the claim it is pantheistic: God as ineffable, 'blind being' always remains outside the created world, and the God we encounter as Elohim is the expressed powers of creative potency within God: we see the vestiges of the creator in the world as the trace of God deciding to be and to create, yet the ineffable remains outside of being. For Schelling then, Baader's scheme would appear too simplistic and too dualistic, for while Baader postulates the difference between creation and creator, he, in Schelling's view as one can imagine it, avoids any type of dialectic or movement within God, thus, failing to proof his whole scheme against the danger of a pantheist reading.

Conclusion

Looking at the instance of the Baader-Schelling controversy presented in the *System der Weltalter* one can conclude several things. First, one sees again that truly at stake for both thinkers – for Baader in his attack on the dialectical philosophy of Schelling and Hegel, and for Schelling when he replies to Baader in the lectures – is the relation between world and God, between creation and creator, between the finite and phenomenal and the infinite and ineffable. In the long wake of the Pantheism Controversy, Baader seeks different allies to support his position: Jacob Böhme and St Martin, along with Baader's own study of Kabbalah. He finds in them a notion of divine proxies or agents, which he thinks is one of the tools to save his creation narrative from enmeshing God with the world. It appears that in Baader's wider creation narrative this idea of Elohim as proxies is connected to his view of creation as a falling-away from God. Baader views material existence as problematic to such a degree that he needs divine

proxies alongside God itself to create the phenomenal universe. Coming back to Elohim as proxies, one can attest that while the immediate source of the idea is St Martin, it is possible to attribute the roots of such idea to the Zoharic Kabbalah that exercised influence upon European thinkers, especially those interested in mysticism and esoteric lore. Second, Schelling's condescending reply to Baader shows that the question of God and the world is important to him as well. While he mocks St Martin and Baader, and even is not that happy with Böhme, his reply appears to be more thoughtful and insightful than one could expect from a simple polemic *ad hominem*. Developing his own philosophy, where freedom and decision play an important role, he perceives the whole notion of divine proxies to be problematic: if they are too close to a doctrine of emanation than a free act of God is impossible; on the other hand, it appears too easy to see the proxies as being immanent to God and this reading would be even more problematic, since then there would be potentially no difference between the world and God. Third, the presence of ideas from Christian and Jewish mysticism within philosophies of the Goethezeit has been known for a long time. In his admiration for Böhme, Baader did not even try to hide this influence. The present example shows an instance where a concept stemming from St Martin and possibly the Kabbalah, and endorsed by Baader, is (however briefly) discussed by Schelling, who engages with Baader's interpretation. This exemplifies an interesting phenomenon, which I believe is sometimes overlooked: the fact that not only is there the influence of Kabbalah on German thought in the said Goethezeit, but also that kabbalistic concepts, even though they are often distorted and received via Böhme or the Christian interpretation of the Kabbalah, are not only received, but also developed and discussed. In other words, the reception is critical and creative. In fact, I believe in Baader's case one can talk about a creative misreading of Böhme, St Martin and Kabbalah. It is creative since Baader – although clearly fascinated by all of these sources – never repeats any of them verbatim. Rather, he keeps adding distortions to every author he draws on, mixing and

rethinking ideas from different sources. From Böhme he takes the notion of falling-away, a dark envisioning of creation that has catastrophe as its prerequisite. Baader attempts to develop a philosophical or theological concept out of this, and strongly defends his reading of Abfall against the competing versions of Schelling and Hegel. Such conceptual work is rather alien to Böhme, as are also the Elohim as divine proxies. Yet, Baader's appropriation of St Martin is also far from literal: he is not afraid to correct his French master, nor is Baader hesitant to embody divine proxies into his own creation narrative, where they are now married to the notion of Abfall and serve to resolve the question of the difference between the world and God. Again, Baader seeks to perform conceptual work, which is less prominent in St Martin. The same can be said about the possible Zoharic roots of Baader's ideas.

Another important moment in Baader's work here is exactly this conceptualisation of the ideas he takes from the mystical literature. Böhme, St Martin, and *Zohar* are full of vibrant – one can even say mythical – images that Baader seeks to translate into the conceptual language of philosophy and theology. Certainly, Baader was neither the first and nor the last author who engaged in such translation. This paper has highlighted and illustrated such translational work as it attempted a close reading of the Baader-Schelling controversy, taking the example of Schelling's attack on Baader in *Das System der Weltalter*.

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¹ 'Creative misreading' or 'misprision' is a term drawn from literary studies, especially from Harold Bloom's theory of influence. It means that the author does not create new works or ideas ex nihilo, but rather keeps repeating the works of precursors, only this repetition is not verbatim, not identical to the original work of a precursor. This difference to a precursor – however small or seemingly significant – constitutes the originality of the author and is called 'misreading'. See Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence*, 5-49.

² Schelling's possible connection to Gnosticism had been thematised since the nineteenth century. F.C. Baur's monumental *The Christian Gnosis* (Baur, 2020) is perhaps the first instance of this argument: there Baur reads recent German thought – Schelling, Hegel, Schleiermacher, and Böhme – through their connection to ideas originating in ancient Gnosticism. In German scholarship, Jaspers revived this reading in his 1955 book on Schelling (Jaspers, 1955), while Koslowski's book remains the most fundamental recent example of this argument, whereas in the Anglophone world Cyril O'Regan's work on Hegel (O'Regan, 1994) and Böhme

(O'Regan, 2002) is ultimately connected to Baur's thesis. A recent French contribution to this topic comes from Patrick Cerutti (Cerutti, 2013), translator of Schelling's *Ages of the World* into French. Some currents of recent Schelling scholarship – including Geldhof and Sean McGrath (McGrath, 2012) – have disregarded or called into question Schelling's connection to Gnosticism, whereas Lee May's latest article (Lee May, 2023) is an attempt to revise this tendency to abandon gnostic readings of Schelling.

³ Zovko, *Natur und Gott*, 61.

⁴ Koslowski, *Philosophien der Offenbarung*, 188.

⁵ Ibid, 193-94.

⁶ In what follows, if not stated otherwise, I summarise succinctly two chapters on Schelling's and Baader's personal relations from Zovko's *Natur und Gott*. Zovko, *Natur und Gott*, 86-107, 108-139.

⁷ Zovko, *Natur und Gott*, 31.

⁸ Ibid, 29.

⁹ Ibid, 243-44.

¹⁰ All translations from German and French in this paper are mine, except where specified otherwise. This quote is from Schelling, *System der Weltalter*, 183f. The same passage in Baader's writings could be found in Baader, "Vorlesungen über religiöse Philosophie im Gegensatze der irreligiösen älterer und neuerer Zeit". *Sämmtliche Werke*, Band 1, 309-310.

¹¹ I refer here to Schelling's own introduction to his *System of Transcendental Idealism*. Schelling, *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, 9-22.

¹² Here I rely on Schelling's presentation of his earlier thought in his lectures on modern philosophy. Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 114-115.

¹³ Norman, Welchman, "Introduction: The New Schelling", 2-4.

¹⁴ Schelling, *System der Weltalter*, 182.

¹⁵ Ibid, 183-84.

¹⁶ Ibid, 184f. This Baader quote suggested by Peetz can also be found in Baader, “Bemerkungen über einige antireligiöse Philosopheme unserer Zeit”. *Sämmtliche Werke*, Band 2, 490.

¹⁷ Schelling, *Religion and Philosophy*, 26.

¹⁸ Leinkauf, “Schelling and Plotinus”, 186-89.

¹⁹ Lee May, “Schelling’s Philosophy as an Expression of Valentinian Theology”, 355.

²⁰ Baur, *The Christian Gnosis*, 352

²¹ Koslowski, *Philosophien der Offenbarung*, 1-5.

²² Ibid, 177-180.

²³ Baader, “Bemerkungen über einige antireligiöse Philosopheme unserer Zeit”. *Sämmtliche Werke*, Band 2, 489.

²⁴ Baader, “Revision der Philosopheme der Hegel’schen Schule, bezüglich auf das Christenthum. Nebst zehn Thesen aus einer religiösen Philosophie”. *Sämmtliche Werke*, Band 9, 386.

²⁵ Saint-Martin, *Tableau Naturel*, 256.

²⁶ While there are now many works that discuss and examine the ten sefirot, I would still reference Scholem’s short paragraph on them in his *Major Trends* as a starting point, Scholem, *Major Trends*, 211-217; as well as Idel’s longer discussion of the various concepts of the sephirot in his *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 136-153.

²⁷ Daniel Matt writes in his commentary on the text of *Parashat Be-Reshit*, a tractate within *Zohar*: ‘The flow of emanation manifests as a point of light. This is the second sefira: Hokhma (“Wisdom”), which is called Beginning because it is the first ray of divine light to appear outside of Keter, the first aspect of God that can be known.’ Matt, *Zohar*, 109f.

²⁸ Saint-Martin, *Tableau Naturel*, 257.

²⁹ Ibid, 256.

³⁰ Ibid, 258.

³¹ Saint-Martin, *L’Homme de Desir*, 52-53.

³² What Geldhof translates as ‘the day after a fight’ is indeed given in Baader’s original quote as “le lendemain d’une bataille”. In St Martin’s quote from *L’Homme de Desir* given above in my translation also as ‘the day after the fight’ the French original is ‘le lendemain du combat’. This slight difference might be explained either by suggesting that Baader misquoted St Martin; or by presuming this phrase appears in various works of St Martin in slightly different variations.

³³ Geldhof, *Revelation, Reason and Reality*, 136. The original could be found in Baader’s “Vorlesungen über Speculative Dogmatik. Baader, *Sämmtliche Werke*, Band 8, 152.

³⁴ Zovko, *Natur und Gott*, 29f.

³⁵ Koslowski connects Jacob Böhme, the Cambridge Platonists, Saint Martin, and Baader as one long line influenced by the Christian Kabbalah of the Renaissance era on the one hand and theosophical speculations on the other. Koslowski, *Philosophien der Offenbarung*, 182, 188.

³⁶ Hoffmann, “Der Entwicklungsgang und das System der Baader’schen Philosophie”. Baader, *Sämmtliche Werke*, Band 16, 20. Zovko references Baumgardt as pointing out that Baader studies of Kabbalah involved the sources of Christian Kabbalah such as Wachter, Rosenroth and others. Zovko, *Natur und Gott*, 61-62f. Yet, Wachter’s *Elucidarius cabbalisticus* was already suggested by Baader’s student and biographer Hoffman.

³⁷ Baader in a letter to Z. from 26th of April 1818. Baader, *Sämmtliche Werke*, Band 15, 341.

³⁸ Baader, “Bemerkungen über einige antireligiöse Philosopheme unserer Zeit”. *Sämmtliche Werke*, Band 2, 485-87f.

³⁹ Baader in a letter to Dr.S from 30th of April 1830. Baader, *Sämmtliche Werke*, Band 15, 461.

⁴⁰ *Zohar*, 110. Parashat Bereshit 1:15a.

⁴¹ Ibid, 110-11f.

⁴² One can mention such works as: Schulte, *Zimzum*, 296-323; Bielik-Robson, “The God of Luria”, 32-50; Ozar, “Schelling and Lurianic Kabbalah”, 119-139; Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 99-105. Elliot Wolfson also provides an extensive bibliography on the question of Schelling’s and speaking more widely German Idealism’s and Romanticism connection to Kabbalah: Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 392-93.

⁴³ Schelling, *System der Weltalter*, 179.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 71.

⁴⁵ Schelling, *System der Weltalter*, 138. Peetz also discusses Schelling's voluntarism in his introduction to *System der Weltalter*. Schelling, *System der Weltalter*, XVII-XX.

⁴⁶ See again Peetz's explanation of the three potencies in his introduction to the *System der Weltalter*. Schelling, *System der Weltalter*, XVIII-XIX.

⁴⁷ As Elliot Wolfson has pointed out, this notion of God as positive nothingness, potential being, where everything exists in indifference, might itself come from Kabbalistic sources either directly or more likely via Böhme, Oetinger, and other thinkers associated with the Christian Kabbalah. Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 99-105.

⁴⁸ Schelling, *System der Weltalter*, 144-45.

