Shemitah and Yovel as Agriculturally based Relating to Jewish Ecology & Environmentalism also
Paradigms for Ultimate Eschatology biyamei Ahronim

The doctrine of sabbatical worlds and the "grand Yovel" was developed extensively in the writings of the Kabbalists of Gerona, specifically R. Ezra and Nachmanides. According to the Ramban each world is destined like the one we presently live in, to exist for 7 millennia. There are ultimately seven worlds, paralleling the years of Yovel. In addition each world with it seven millennia parallels the Kabbalistic idea of 7 lower sefirot, from Hesed to Malchut, which represent the natural world and it is the natural world and Ecotheology that is the subject of S's book. The Jubilee year in Kabbalistic terms parallels the sefirah of binah, called the 50th gate (see Bar Yochai hymn below), which ist he beginning fo the hidden sefirot and represents the idea of ultimate redemption (also found in DSS). This is what Ramban means when he writes, "and possibly this is what our rabbis hinted at when they said 50 gates of intelligence were created". there are 49 thousand years which comprise these 7 worlds and are then followed by supernal Yovel. All this is based on the gemarah interpreting the pusek in Tehillim, "a thousand years in your sight O Hashem, as as but yesterday etc." Thereby the gemarah likens each creation day to 1000 years. Rabbi Isaac of Acre a talmid of the Ramban adds clarity to Ramban's hints of the secret of 50, or the Doctrine of the sabbatical worlds. Rabbi Isaac writes:

You should know that as the Jubille in one generation is 50 years, in thousand generations you have fifty thousand years. This what King David said, "The promise he gave for a 1000 generations" (Ps 105:8) [and wa also read] "who keeps his covenant faithfully to the 1000s generation (Deut. 7:9). And this is the ORDER of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years about which it says, "and each man shall return to his lot (Lev. 25:12), that all shall return to the Jubilee which is the foundation (yesod) and the believer shall keep silent. And the scholar said, "all was from the Siva Rishona and all will return to Siva Rishona, and this secret now explains the meaning of Shemita and the Yovel years.

Rabbi Isaac of Acre goes on to explain that "one millennia laid waste" means there will be an absence of human and animal life, but then be reinstated and during the 7th cycle o the 7th world of world(s) then the "time of life" will be "remembered" (by Hashem) for renewal etc. That is with Rabbi Issac of Acre the phrase "it will lie destroyed" refers tot he 7th millennia of the 7th millennial cycle. This does not contradict Koheleth' remark "Dor holekh ve dor halakh ve Hareetz laOlam omedet." The world as Koheleth asserts will remain and this is in conformity with Rambam's agreement in this case with Aristotle's cosmology. The Mikubalim of 16th C Safed interpret dor holekh ve dor bah ve haaretz olam omedet as a remez to gilgulim. However the earlier 13th century Mikubal Rabbi Menachem Recanti writes:

One millennium it will be destroyed does not mean that the world will return to the tohu vavohu of the beginning of beginings as in the year of the Jubilee. Rather the meaning of destroyed (haruv) is without man animal and other creatures. And all things composed of the 4 elements will return to their fundamental state.
Recanti explains that it is only during the "GRAND Yovel" (after the existence of the 7 successive worlds), and not at the end of every Sabbatical (after the 7 millennia of each world), that all of creation returns to the primordial state of being qua Being

The 13th century Rabbi Bahya ben Asher, a student of the Rashba commenting on Shemita in Vayikra interprets "sod" along the lines of Ramban and again affirms that the pusek does not contradict the doctrine of Sabbatical years writing:

They all hint to the length of the world's existence as it indicates in the beginning of Koheleth "ve ha-aretz olam omadet"(Eccl 1:4) which is the secret hint to the GRAND YOVEL. The world "forever (le-olam) refers to the GRAND YOVEL which is also called OLAM related to Olmayah and Olamut. There is the secret of the 50 gates of binah through which the world was created, and all of them were revealed to Moses save one (gate)... This means that Moseh was taught of every millennium which parallels each gate of intelligence, and that he was told of all of Eksistence (yeshmut, il y a , es gibt, SHAM) from beginning to the end (telos) except for the Holy GRAND Final Yovel which is the 50th gate, the innermost gate of total binah etc.

Rabbi Bahya is suggesting the plan of Hashem who sees past, present, future, and even transcends modalities of time, to a "time" of total Shabbos and eternal perpetual rest. This is the world to come (that will become manifest) after the tiyhayat hameytim. according to Rav Baycha the 7th millennia of each of the 7 worlds, has its own resspetive messianic era, tichayat maytim, and olam-ha ba. Since in this world to come the spiritual (non corporeal, agreement with Rambam - ayn lo Demuth haguf ve-eino guf) dominates the material and soul dominates the body, the material is considered as if "destroyed" or at least totally subjected to ruchanit.

Rabbi Judah Hayyat (1450-1510) citing Ramban and Recanti explains that one millennium of destruction does not imply a total destruction of the earth (ha-aretz). the 7th millennium is necessary because of the Talmud's insistence that" the son of David shall not come until all the souls have merged from their Abode (and have been brought into physical existence, as according to Hazal's teachings of the souls at Har Sinai). Al the souls must emerge before the 7th millennium. The 7th millennium is not a physical state in agreement with the rationalist the Rambam. Then only existing souls continue for its duration and go from one spiritual state to another. Recanti explains that each new world is better than the previous one as developed in Ma'arekhet Ha-Elohut from te 14th c and ascribed to RЕbbenu Peretz.

Each of the 7 worlds exist for 1000 years because each world has a sevenfold cycle, that is the seven worlds that parallel the seven upper celestial worlds for each sefirah is called "a world" and there are 49 years of the Yovel which are the 49 thousand (years of all the 7 worlds). If each world corresponds to one of the sefirot from hesed to malchut, the question arise which cycle are we in now? The author of Sefer ha-Temunah claims that we are in the 2nd world corresponding to gevurah, a world in whih the
attributes of stern judgment-truth-din is dominant in the emanation from the distant gardens of the sefirot according to rav Isaac of Acre in hs work Sefer Yeziarah.

The complexity of Shemitah and yovel in halakhah and Jewish mysticism is very difficult. Its reception history is even more complex in the works of Rav Don Isaac Abarbanel, R. Judah Hayyat and later mikubalim of 15th C. safed including the Mehaber Rav Karo who touches on the subject in Maggid Mesharim, the mystical dream diary where the Mishnah personified as the shekhinah gave over sod-torah. Rabbi Moses Cordovero (Ramak) mentions the doctrine of sabbatial years aliied with Yovel in his Shiur Komah as well as in Eilima Rabbati. As late as 1842 Rabbi Lipschutz in Or ha-hayim discusses the concept of Sabbatical secreds and Grand Yovel relating to the afterlife in Talmudic sources. To prove and demonstrate from tradition the existence of these past worlds he introduces further interpretation on the doctrine of sabbatical worlds we find in the Gerona circle moving forward and later weighed into with discussion by Rabbi Elijah Benamozegh, Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch, Rabbi Shem Tov Gefen, and Rav Kook.

Thus the topic of Shemita and Yovel are inextricably bound in halakhah and al pi kabbalah as the blue print not only for the 49 days of counting (sefirat ha-omer) but indeed the paradigm of the history of the world(S). I say worlds because the 7 worlds of the Mikubalim are intricately related to such a radically concise formulation in the hymn of the Rashbi song on Lag b'omer in reference to the secret of 7 weeks which lead to the secret of the 5th gate of understanding (bina).