The Study of Christian Cabala in English

Don Karr

For the ADDENDA to “The Study of Christian Cabala in English,” go to
http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Biblos/chrinb.pdf or
https://www.academia.edu/24035820/The_Study_of_Christian_Cabala_in_English_Addenda

© Don Karr 1995-2007; revised, enlarged, and updated 2007-2020; newly revised 2021-2022. All rights reserved.
License to Copy:
This publication is intended for personal use only. Paper copies may be made for personal use.
With the above exception, no part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, without permission in writing from the author.
Reviewers may quote brief passages.

CONTENTS

CHRISTIAN INTERPRETERS OF KABBALAH (navigation page)

INTRODUCTION
OUTLINE OF STANDARD LITERATURE
FOUR HISTORIANS OF CHRISTIAN CABALA

CHRISTIAN INTERPRETERS OF KABBALAH
SOME SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PRINTED WORKS ON CHRISTIAN CABALA
THE CONTENTS OF KABBALA DENUDATA
NINETEENTH-CENTURY BOOKS ON KABBALAH

THE HERMETIC ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN
TWENTIETH-CENTURY BOOKS ON KABBALAH/CABALA/QABALAH TO 1958

NAVIGATION & COMMOTION

On page 2, CHRISTIAN INTERPRETERS OF THE KABBALAH, i.e., the navigation page, subjects (names and topics) are arranged in roughly chronological order. Each entry on the list links to its subject’s page(s) within this paper.

The icon ☞ in the upper left of each page is a link to the navigation page.

In spite of its abundance of internal hyperlinks, the uneven treatment of its subjects, and its “cuts and detours,” this paper has been composed to be read, or at least skimmed, in order, from beginning to end.

Not all the names on the list are of Christians, whether by birth or conversion. Jewish personalities appear because they played a role in the development of Christian cabala, e.g., Pico’s mentors, Leone Ebreo, Samuel Falk, and Francis Israel Regardie.

Names are missing from the list, for example, Guy Lefèvre de la Boderie (1542-1598) and his brother Nicolas (1550-1613), even though Guy produced a French translation of Giorgi’s De harmonia mundi that was widely circulated and likely a cabalistic source for Shakespeare, and Nicolas is reputed to have written “the most important treatise on kabbalistic hermeneutics.” Yet, in English sources, Guy and Nicolas Lefèvre de la Boderie are mentioned only in passing.

Also missing: John Fisher (1469-1525), whose “theology is scarcely known and his interest in Pico, Reuchlin, and Catholic Kabbalah seems to have evaded detection entirely,” even though he was “the first to use the English-usage term ‘Cabala’”—Andrew Kuiper, “Officially Sanctioned Catholic Kabbalah?” in Church Life Journal (University of Notre Dame, August 7, 2019), §4 at https://churchlifejournal.nd.edu/articles/officially-sanctioned-catholic-kabbalah/s_finy.

On the other hand, many names on the list are connected to kabbalah only by reputation or through using the term kabbalah/cabala in its most inexact and extravagantly broad sense, e.g., Heinrich Khunrath, Ralph Cudworth, and Louis Claude de Saint-Martin.

---

CHRISTIAN INTERPRETERS OF THE KABBALAH

NAVIGATION PAGE

Names marked with an asterisk (*) have entries in Dictionary of Graces & Western Esotericism, edited by Wouter Hanegraaff in collaboration with Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, and Jean-Pierre Brach (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2005).

1. Ramon Lull* 1212-1286
2. Dante Alighieri* 1265-1321
3. Aeneas of Burgos 1270-1314
5. Lodovico Lazzareli* 1447-1500
6. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola* 1463-1494
7. Pico’s Mentors
   a. Johannes Reuchlin* 1455-1522
9. Petrus Galatinus* CA. 1460-CA. 1540
10. Leon Eraso CA. 1460-CA. 1510
11. Johannes Trithemius* 1460-1516
12. Francesco Giorgio* 1460-1516
13. Egidio da Viterbo* 1460-1512
14. Agostino Giustiniani 1470-1556
15. Albrecht Durer 1471-1528
16. Jean Théau CA. 1480-CA. 1485
17. Paul Richus 1480-CA. 1542
18. Guilio Camillo* 1480-1544
19. Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa* 1486-1535
20. Paracelsus* 1493-1541
21. Archangelo de Burgos Novo D. CA. 1570
22. Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter 1506-1557
23. Guillaume Postel* 1510-1558
24. Teresa of Ávila 1515-1582
25. John Dee* 1527-1608
26. Enochian Magic
   a. Luis de León CA. 1538-1592
27. Juan de la Cruz 1542-1591
28. Jean Bodin 1520-1596
29. Johann Pistorius 1546-1608
30. Giordano Bruno* 1548-1600
31. Heinrich Khunrath* CA. 1560-1605
32. The Conflagration of Cabala & Alchemy
33. William Shakespeare 1564-1616
34. Johannes Breydel 1568-1582
35. Paul V Lion 1570-1646
36. John Donne 1572-1631
37. Robert Fludd* 1774-1677
38. Jacob Bohme 1575-1624
39. Jacques Gaffarel 1601-1688
40. Athanasius Kircher* 1602-1680
41. J. S. Rittangel [Rittangelius] 1660-1692
42. John Milton 1608-1674
43. Antonio de Würtemberg 1613-1679
44. Thomas Vaughan* 1624-1695
45. Christian Knoer von Rosenrott* 1636-1689
46. Henry More* 1614-1687
47. Ralph Cudworth* 1617-1688
48. Anne Conway 1631-1679
49. Thomas Burnet 1635-1715
50. Isaac Newton* 1642-1726
51. Gottfried Leibniz 1646-1716
52. The 17th Century Printed Works on Christian Kabbala
53. The Contents of Kabbala Denuidata
54. Kabbalah in Colonial America
55. Johan Kemper 1670-1716
56. The ‘Unknown Superiors’
57. Emanuel Swedenborg* 1688-1772
58. Samuel P. F. E. 1710-1782
59. Alessandro Cagliostro* 1741-1795
60. Friedrich Christoph Oetinger* 1702-1781
61. Louis Claude de Saint-Martin* 1744-1803
62. William Blake* 1757-1827
63. Giorgio Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel 1770-1831
64. Francis Barnett* CA. 1778-1877
65. Franz Joseph Muller 1779-1860
66. David-Paul Drach 1790-1865
67. Alphonse Louis Constant [Éliphas Lévi]* 1810-1875
68. Albert Pike 1809-1891
69. Hargrave Jennings* 1817-1890
70. Seth Ponceau 1823-1889
71. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky* 1831-1891
73. Gerhard Encausse [Papus] 1865-1916
74. The 19th-Century Books
75. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn
76. William Wynn Westcott* 1848-1925
77. S. L. MacGregor Mathers* 1854-1918
78. Henry B. Pullein-Bury 1855-1926
79. Arthur E. Waite* 1857-1942
80. Florence Farr 1860-1917
82. W. B. Yeats 1865-1939
83. Aleister Crowley* 1875-1947
84. Charles Stansfield Jones [Frederick Ackland] 1886-1950
85. Kenneth Grant/O.T.O.
86. Charles Williams 1886-1945
87. Violet Mary Firth [Don Fortune]* 1890-1950
88. Francis Israel Regardie 1907-1985
89. The 20th-Century Books

The article, “Christian Kabbalah,” at WIKIPEDIA identifies ten “Christian Kabbalists” (see below, page 132), of whom are not listed above:

- Balthasar Walther (1558-CA. 1669), who is discussed in my entry on Jacob Böhme. The WIKIPEDIA article cites Leigh T. I. Penman’s paper, “A Second Christian Rosencreutz?”—my source as well.
- Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682), whom I have not encountered in the course of my research. The WIKIPEDIA article refers to Reid Barbour’s book, Sir Thomas Browne: A Life (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Therein, cabala is mentioned only in passing as “the fancies of Cabala” and simply “Cabala” (—pages 198 and 360) within lists of topics which Browne touched upon in his writings.
- Adriaen Cizplea (1609-1664), whom I have not encountered in the course of my research. The WIKIPEDIA article refers the reader to its own page on Cizplea, which contains neither notes nor links to sources. Further, the article refers to but one “short treatise” by Cizplea which is lost. References indicate that Cizplea’s cabala was derived from familiar names within the first wave of Christian kabbalah, namely Pico and Reuchlin, and a slightly later influence, John Dee.

© Don Karr 2022
INTRODUCTION

ANYONE WHO HAS read a few books concerning the Western esoteric tradition has encountered, at the very least, references to kabbalah, variously cabala, or qabalah. A familiarity with the term kabbalah and the implications of the variant spellings of the word as cabala and qabalah is useful here. Very broadly,

- kabbalah generally represents Jewish esoteric teaching which emerged in the 12th century, though preserving older mystical elements; it is a grand commentary on the Torah elaborating on the relationship of man and the infinite creator.

- cabala is something of a catch-all for both Christian interpretations of kabbalah from the Renaissance and Reformation periods and magic in general, such as that described by Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535).

- qabalah is “Hermetic” in that it is the narrow practical version of kabbalah originating in nineteenth-century Western esoteric schools such as the Golden Dawn the structure of which is centered on the kabbalistic Tree of Life and its correspondences to other schemes, especially the tarot.

These days, academics seem to favor kabbalah for all references, drawing distinctions by adding the modifiers “Christian” or “Hermetic.”

Cabala figures into many tenets and methods central to Western esoteric thought and practice. Unfortunately, what is meant by term is not always clear and may vary from one reference to another. Those readers who enter an investigation of Christian cabala after having studied Jewish kabbalah may well become impatient at the outset with the misreadings and deformations characteristic of “Christian developments.”

Complicating matters further, Christian ideas seem to have crept into (Jewish) kabbalah.

- Regarding kabbalistic developments in the 12th century, Elliot R. Wolfson suggests that the motif of the cosmic tree, an image that became central to kabbalah as the Tree of Life (etz hayyim—the tree of the sefirot), combines Jewish and Christian influences.\(^5\)


\(^{\text{5}}\) Frances Yates coined the term “Hermetic-Cabalistic tradition” to refer to the Christian stream begun by Pico and Reuchlin, which incorporated a blend of the literature attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, Platonism, and what was perceived as kabbalah. Thus, it is equivalent to the second category above: cabala.

\(^{\text{3}}\) For a summary of the differences between Jewish kabbalah and Christian cabala, especially with regard to the latter’s earliest stages, see


While raising the issues of Christian influences on (Jewish) kabbalah, Wolfson calls into question traditional lines of inquiry into a particular subject matter, namely, the ten sefirot, as the major indication of the origins of kabbalah. He says, in effect, that if Sefer ha-Bahir is the earliest known work which can properly be called kabalistic, its own contents suggest that something more—if not something other—than the sefirot comprises kabbalah’s primal swirlings.
Peter Schäfer indicates connections between the Christian figure of Mary and kabbalistic notions of the shekhinah (the “presence of God”) as a deific female, an object of devotion, and a mediator between God and man.\(^6\)

Yehuda Liebes has demonstrated that the Zohar’s “Doctrine of Trinity,” concepts of the “Son,” and interpretations of Genesis 1:1 betray signs of Christian thought, though he qualifies his observations, stating, [A]though the author of the Zohar allowed himself to be influenced by Christianity, this does not mean that he felt any affinity for the “Gentile Nations,” and particularly for those who converted to their faith. Quite the opposite is true.\(^8\)

Indeed, Ellen D. Haskell has shown how the author(s) of the Zohar “crafted strategically subversive narratives that bolstered Jewish identity by countering Christian claims.”\(^9\)

The strand of Christian cabala which has become best known began in Renaissance Florence with Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494). Pico sought to harmonize Christian beliefs with cabala, which he considered a prismatic form of Jewish doctrine which originated with Moses and thus long presaged the teachings of Jesus. This parallels the treatment of the Hermetica by the circle around Ficino, namely the movement to recover the priscia theologia (the ancient theology) and philosophia perennis (the perennial philosophy), thought to be the fountainheads of all true religion and philosophy.\(^10\) Certainly, the “first wave” of Christian kabbalists in the Renaissance (Pico della Mirandola, Johannes Reuchlin, Francisco Giorgi, Egidio da Viterbo, Agrippa, etc.) viewed cabala as an expression of Christian truth entrusted to the Jews centuries before Christ’s incarnation.\(^11\) These interpreters took cabala as an independent tradition that transcended Judaism.\(^12\)

---


\(^8\) Studies in the Zohar (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 139-161


\(^11\) The Ancient Theology is a series of articles examining the influence and use of the priscia theologia, ancient theology, as derived from the Hermetica and related material, writings of the first four-hundred or so years of the common era which were believed to be—until Isaac Casaubon’s “convincingly thorough scholarship (in 1614) showed otherwise”—of great antiquity and, indeed, the fountainhead of the world’s religions and philosophies.

\(^12\) On the “first wave” of Christian kabbalists, see my “Ésotérisme et Kabbale chrétienne,” in Histoire comparée des littératures de langues européennes, SOUS-SÉRIE RENAISSANCE, Volume II: La Nouvelle Culture – 1480-1520, ed. Eva Kushner (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó/Amsterdam: John Benjamins B. V., 2017), pp. 47-96; for the English version, “Esotericism and Christian Kabbalah: 1480-1520,” link to either of the following URLs:

- [https://www.academia.edu/34445754/Esotericism_and_the_Christian_Kabbalah_1480-1520_-_full_text](https://www.academia.edu/34445754/Esotericism_and_the_Christian_Kabbalah_1480-1520_-_full_text)

---

Even within Judaism, some developments of later kabbalah (16th century and after) spun free of dependence on the Torah. The Zohar was a supposed commentary on the Torah, and Lurianic kabbalah was a commentary on the Zohar. Hayyim Vital, whose writings are among the most important representations of Lurianic kabbalah, “restlessly recast the essential Lurianic doctrine in ways that increasingly abandoned the Zohar as proof text” (—Pinchas Giller, Reading the Zohar [Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 2001], p. 23).
Ideally, we would find sources which led us in a nice straight line from the traditional beginning of the Christian *cabala* in the Renaissance to the present day. Alas, the material available on the subject and the history of Christian *cabala* itself conspire to make our effort one fraught with cuts and detours, though a certain shape to it all does emerge.

At the outset, the limitations of an English-only bibliography should be noted, for any short list of books on Christian *cabala* consists largely of works in other languages.

A selection of standard works—listed chronologically—would include


Studies on Pico della Mirandola.


The “Christian Kabbalist” here is Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.


Contains papers in French (1), German (13), and English (2). The English articles are Sarah Hutton’s “From Christian Kabalism to Kabalistical Quakerism: The Kabalistical Dialogues of Anne Conway, Henry More, and George Keith,” and Moshe Idel’s “Jewish Thinkers versus Christian Kabbalah.”


  - Band 1. 15. und 16. Jahrhundert [FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES - Pico to Pistorius]
  - Band 2. 1600-1660 [Böhme, Frakenenberg, Khnunrath, Fludd, the translation of Sefer Yetzirah by Stephan Rittangel (642)]
  - Band 3. 1660-1850 [Kabbala denudata and thereafter]
  - Band 4. Bibliographie

Subsequent Luria-based kabbalists, e.g., Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto (author of *Kelah Pithei Hokhmah*) and Shneur Zalman of Liady (author of *Likkutei Amarim*, called the *Tanya*), offered bodies of teachings that are even further removed from Scripture.
Standard works in English include the following (listed chronologically),¹⁹ five of which are discussed in some detail below (follow the links):

  Contributors: Gershom Scholem, Joseph Dan, Giulio Busi, Klaus Reichert, Allison Coudert, and Hillel Levine.

---

¹⁹ In spite of its “assertive title” (—the author’s term, p. ii), *The Rape of Jewish Mysticism by Christian Theologians* by Robert Wang (Columbia [MD]: Marcus Aurelius Press, 2001) is a rather drab summary of well-known—and well-worn—sources. Moreover, Wang does not really engage his thesis (i.e., the rape of Jewish mysticism) anywhere through the book save the preface and the brief conclusion. The book comes to an anticlimactic halt with “Christian Kabbalah becomes Rosicrucianism,” “The Fama Fratinitas,” and “Robert Fludd.” Wang’s omission of developments through the 17th-19th centuries is all the more puzzling given the book’s subtitle, *How the Modern Occult Movement Grew out of Renaissance Attempts to Convert the Jews.*

See my detailed discussion of Wang’s *Rape of Jewish Mysticism* in ADDENDUM B, Reviews (a link to the URL for the ADDENDA is given at the head of this paper), and, in a less clear format, which seems purposely buried, at *Esoteric: The Journal of Esoteric Studies*, Volume VI, ed. Arthur Versluis (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2004), at http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeVI/Wang.html.

Christian Kabbalists: John Donne, Giordano Bruno, Ramon Lull, Paracelsus, Athanasius Kircher, Robert Fludd, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola… (Memphis: Books LLC, 2010) offers incomplete reprints of WIKIPEDIA articles with an index. The articles are sketchy and inconsistent, some showing no connection with cabala whatsoever. The same description could apply to *The Esoteric Codex: Christian Kabbalah* by Sarai Kasik (Lulu.com, 2015), though this book offers numerous illustrations.
SOME USEFUL INTRODUCTORY BOOKS, CHAPTERS & ARTICLES
LISTED CHRONOLOGICALLY

  Refer below to Thorndike within A SELECTION OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY BOOKS.
- Manuel, Frank E. The Broken Staff: Judaism through Christian Eyes (Cambridge – London: Harvard University Press, 1992), especially CHAPTER 3, §§ “Pico della Mirandola and His Mentors” (pp. 37-44) and “Johannes Reuchlin in Defense of the Talmud” (pp. 44-46).
- Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism, edited by Wouter Hanegraaff in collaboration with Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, and Jean-Pierre Brach (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2005), VOLUME II: § “Jewish Influences,” especially PART III: “Christian Kabbalah” in the Renaissance” (pp. 638-642), PART IV: Enlightenment / Romanticism” (pp. 642-644), and PART V: Occultist Kabbalah” (pp. 644-647).

---

The debt that the early Christian cabalists owe to Jewish teachers should not be overlooked. In a discussion of the Renaissance period, Eisig Silberschlag writes:

Many outstanding teachers who taught some eminent Christians were in the forefront of their age: Maulele da S. Miniato, the erudite banker and teacher of the Florentine statesman Giannozzo Manetti; the philosophical scholars Elijah del Medigo and Yohanan Alemanno, teachers of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola; Obadiah Sforno, the physician, the commentator on the Pentateuch and the teacher of Johannes Reuchlin; Elijah Levita, the itinerant scholar, grammarian and teacher to such eminent personalities as Edigio da Viterbo, the General of the Order of the Hermits of Saint Augustine, who became cardinal in 1517, Mario Grimani, the patriarch of Aquila, George de Selve, bishop of Lavau, Sebastian Münster, the humanist of Basle and Paul Fagius, the reformed minister; Leone Modena who taught Giovanni Vislingio, professor of anatomy in Padua, Vincenzo Nobera, the scholarly Theologian.


• Bogdan, Henrik. Western Esotericism and Rituals of Initiation (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007); see in particular CHAPTER 3, “Historical Background” (pp. 53-52), and the last section of CHAPTER 4 (pp. 89-93).


• Rosicrucian Digest, Vol. 90, No. 2: KABBALAH (San Jose: Rosicrucian Order AMORC, 2012); contains a mix of Jewish and Christian occult kabbalah with articles from a broad spectrum of authors: from Papus and Ralph M. Lewis to Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke and Daniel C. Matt.


https://www.academia.edu/34425754/Esotericism_and_the_Christian_Kabbalah_1480-1520_-full_text
FOUR HISTORIANS OF CHRISTIAN CABALA

ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE (1857-1942)

- **Doctrine and Literature of the Kabbalah** (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1902).

Writing from within the Western esoteric/Golden Dawn tradition, Waite made a serious attempt to set the record straight about what true kabbalah was and what it was not. His effort was hampered by his falling prey to the unreliable Latin, English, and French translations available to him, in particular Jean de Pauly’s *Le Livre de la Splendeur* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1906-1911), a Christianized French rendering of the Zohar which, unfortunately, was relied upon by a host of twentieth-century occultists, historians, and writers, including Denis Saurat and Anais Nin. However, Waite’s knowledge and understanding of kabbalah far exceeded that of anyone else within the Golden Dawn circle (Westcott, Mathers, Farr, Crowley, Pullen-Burry, Fortune, etc.). Waite’s *Holy Kabbalah* offers a remarkably clear-minded critical survey of the topic.¹⁶

BOOK X of *The Holy Kabbalah* is titled “Some Christian Students of the Kabbalah” (pp. 437-513). Therein Waite gives spot-on sketches of Ramon Llull, Pico della Mirandola, Johannes Reuchlin, Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa, Guillaume Postel, Robert Fludd, Henry More, Thomas Vaughan, Knorr von Rosenroth, Ralph Cudworth, Thomas Burnet, Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, Éliphas Lévi, Papus (Gerard Encausse), Stanislas de Guaita, H. P. Blavatsky, and a few others. Waite’s survey is quite useful, for its parade of names connected with kabbalah/cabala—whether by fact or fancy—takes us from the Renaissance to the end of the nineteenth century. Waite’s descriptions of these characters give some idea of the range of cabala’s seepage into occult and theosophic endeavor, including the symbolism of the Freemasons and the Rosicrucians.


On Waite:


---

¹⁵ Reprints from Carol Publishing Group, 1992; Dover Publications, 2003; Cosimo Classics, 2007.


Waite penned dozens of books on the occult sciences (alchemy, divination, magic, tarot, etc.) and its personalities (e.g., *Louis Claude de Saint-Martin* and *Thomas Vaughan*—see below). For a full list of Waite’s output with online access, go to [https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book?lookupname=key-Waite%2c%20Arthur%2c%201857%2d1942](https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book?lookupname=key-Waite%2c%20Arthur%2c%201857%2d1942)

JOSEPH LEON BLAU (1909-1986)

Reliable (even if not unbiased) scholarship on cabala might be said to have begun in the 1940s with Joseph L. Blau's *Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944; rpt. Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1965; rpt. Brampton: Ballantrae Reprints, 1998). Subsequent writers on the subject, while often disagreeing with Blau on many key points, freely use such words as “groundbreaking,” “essential,” and “pioneering” when referring to his study.

To provide a brief outline of Christian cabala, the contents of Blau's work are summarized here: The first chapter recapitulates the history of the kabbalah within Judaism, following Gershom Scholem. The second chapter takes up the beginnings of Christian interest in the kabbalah, stating that Ramon Llull “did not write of the Cabala in the thirteenth century” and that the pseudo-Llullian *De auditu kabbalistico* is somewhat kabbalah-like, but not kabbalistic; Blau then considers Pico della Mirandola in some detail. The third chapter discusses those whom Pico influenced, directly or from a distance. The fourth chapter focuses on Pico's most important follower, Johannes Reuchlin. Chapter Five summarizes Paolo Ricci's *De coelesti agricultura* and from it offers a translation of “Introduction to the Lore of the Cabalists or Allegorizers.” This fifth chapter finishes with a survey of others who “followed the path of cabalism to Christianity.” The sixth chapter, “The Fantastic Cabala,” discusses how cabala became entangled with magic, referring to, among others, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus. Chapter Seven treats Jean Thénaud and his work, *The Holy and Very Christian Cabala* (Appendix D of Blau’s study contains selections from this work in the original French). The continued diffusion of “the Christian interpretation of the cabala” by a range of relatively obscure 16th- and 17th-century expositors is discussed in Chapter Eight, “The Erudites.” Finally, Chapter Nine offers Blau's conclusions, namely that cabala was treated and shaped in many ways for many different purposes by many Christian interpreters, none of whom knew very much about kabbalah. Several appendices follow: A, on Moses Cordovero; B, on whether Ramon Llull was a cabalist; C, on the identity of Archangelus of Burgo Nuovo; and D, selections from Thénaud. An impressive bibliography lists Jewish and Christian primary and secondary sources.

In addition to *Christian Interpretation...*, there is Blau's article, “The Diffusion of the Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in English Literature,” in *The Review of Religion*, volume VI, number 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942). Here Blau concludes,

> This study has shown few actual Cabalists among the writers of English literature, but many writers to whom Cabalism was familiar. ... For Cabalism, specifically, it can be said in summary, that Fludd, Thomas Vaughan, and Henry More were the only Christian Cabalists who wrote in English. ... Cabalism was an intellectual fad, a day's fashion. (pages 167 & 168)

Blau’s first statement is accurate: There were “few actual Cabalists among the writers of English literature.” For the undoing of Blau’s statement regarding Fludd, More, and Vaughan, see below: *Fludd, More, Vaughan.*

Certainly, the third statement has been proven untrue, not just by the current paper but even in the scant evidence that Blau himself provides at the close of “Diffusion...,” § VII, where he mentions Madame Blavatsky, Anna Kingsford, Edward Maitland, and Wynn Westcott. These names, especially the first, are all quite familiar to us today.

---

8 Were I writing this line instead of Blau it would read, “few if any actual Cabalists...”

9 Also find descriptions of 17th-century printed works by these authors: *Fludd*MO, *More*CONCAB, *Vaughan*MALL.
DAME FRANCES AMELIA YATES (1899-1981)

The “classic” English-language resource for our subject is Frances Yates’ Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979 and 2001; rpt. London: Ark Paperbacks, 1983), which is divided into three parts: PART 1 covers the Renaissance and Reformation periods, discussing Llull, Pico, Reuchlin, Francesco Giorgi (or Zorzi), and Agrippa; PART 2 takes up the Elizabethan period, treating, most significantly, John Dee and Shakespeare; PART 3 moves into cabala’s connections with Rosicrucianism, occult philosophy and Puritanism (John Milton), and the return of the Jews to England in the seventeenth century. From reading Yates, we see how cabala got smeared together with other pressing religious and philosophic concerns of the day (Hermetism, alchemy, astrology, and magic), and how the term “cabala” came to be used quite loosely, referring at times to stuff which no Jewish kabbalist would recognize as kabbalah.

Other books and articles by Frances Yates are of great value to us here:

  Yates paraphrases the Hermetic writings which were most important to Ficino and company, treats Pico’s “Cabalist Magic” in some detail, and summarizes the contents of Agrippa’s De occulta philosophia. This all leads to a discussion of Bruno’s cabala, which, according to Yates, was derived primarily from Agrippa and remained rather dilute, being far less important to Bruno than his “Egyptianism.” See below, § GIORDANO BRUNO.

  Art... follows the methods of “artificial memory” from the ancient Greek rhetoricians to the seventeenth-century scientific philosophers. Of particular interest to us here are Yates’ chapters on Giulio Camillo’s Memory Theatre, which fused the Hermetic-Cabalist tradition to the art of memory. There are also chapters on the Art of Ramon Llull as a memory method, the memory systems of Giordano Bruno, and the Memory Theatre of Robert Fludd.


  Theatre... picks up where Art of Memory leaves off concerning Robert Fludd and John Dee, considering both as perpetuators and propagators of “the Renaissance revival of Vitruvius.” As with Giordano Bruno and Art of Memory, Theatre of the World “carries” Yates’ series on Renaissance thought “in the direction of the English theatre, and another step towards Shakespeare.”

  Yates discusses the Rosicrucian Manifestos of the early seventeenth century and the reactions which they stirred; the whole commotion was quite well entangled with the Hermetic-Cabalist tradition. In this work, Yates further emphasizes (or, as some think nowadays, exaggerates) the importance of John Dee. See the comments of Didier Kahn: “Even if the many works of Frances Yates have often shown themselves to be beneficial, and even if several of these works are now considered classics, there is no choice but to accept that The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, published in 1972, has scarcely done anything but add to the reigning confusion on the topic”—“The Rosicrucian Hoax in France (1623-24),” § PRESENT STATE OF RESEARCH ON THE ROSICRUCIAN MOVEMENT, in Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe, eds. William R. Newman and Anthony Grafton (Cambridge – London: MIT Press, 2001).
For reviews of Yates’ works, along with Didier Kahn’s comments mentioned above, see

- ______. Lodovico Lazzarelli: introductory chapter (discussed below, § LODOVICO LAZZARELLI).


**DANIEL PICKERING WALKER (1914-1985)**

Inevitably cited along with Yates’ studies is D. P. Walker’s Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella (London: Notre Dame Press, 1958, rpt. 1975; rpt. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000). Between Ficino (1433-99) and Campanella (1568-1639) occurred developments of crucial importance to our line of inquiry, namely, the mixing of the demonic and the astrologic (as derived from Ficino), a mixture which turns up in one form in Agrippa’s synthesis of Medieval magic, De occulta philosophia, but in quite another in Francesco Giorgi’s De harmonia mundi totius.

In the first section of Spiritual and Demonic Magic, Walker focuses on Ficino, in the second on what became of his magic in the sixteenth century, and in the third on the “Telesians” (named for Bernardo Telesio, philosopher and scientist, noted less for his ideas than for his methods of empirical science) and Tommaso Campanella.

Other works by D. P. Walker:


---

10 On Ficino’s magic, see Brian Copenhaver, Magic in Western Culture: From Antiquity to the Enlightenment (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), PART II.
PHILIP BEITCHMAN (1939—)

Criticisms of Joseph Blau’s conclusions are sprinkled through one of the more recent books given notice here, *Alchemy of the Word: Cabala of the Renaissance* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998) by Philip Beitchman, who draws on the research of the last 150 years, making full use of scholars ranging from Heinrich Grätz to Arthur Waite to Harold Bloom. Most of the contentious comments regarding Blau are derived from François Secret, whose works were among the most important sources for Beitchman. Indeed, from Beitchman’s book one gets a sense of how much the English-only reader is missing in not having Secret’s studies available.

*Alchemy of the Word* is presented in four sections: The first, “In the Beginning,” traces *cabala* and its influence from the Renaissance to the present-day. Beitchman puts some emphasis on the *kabbalah* of the *Zohar*, treating a range of this central text’s concepts and difficulties. Included are arresting discussions of *kabbalah’s* sexual symbolism and of the stress between (and attempted resolutions of) the notions of God’s immanence and transcendence.

The second section, “The Secret of Agrippa,” begins with Pico, even while calling attention (relying on Secret) to cabalistic developments which predate Pico; it goes on to Reuchlin, as one would expect. Then to Agrippa; however, Beitchman does not dwell so much on *De occulta philosophia* as on Agrippa’s apparent self-refutation in *De certitudine et vanitate omnium scientiarum declamatio inuctiva (On the Uncertainty and Vanity of the Arts and Sciences)*, which Beitchman considers a manner of further cabalistic development on Agrippa’s part.

The third section, entitled “Bibliographica Kabbalistica,” lists and, to one extent or another, describes a number of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century works which treat *cabala*, whether sympathetically or otherwise. The promise of the chapter is undermined somewhat by Beitchman’s inconsistent treatment of the items included and his veering off the subject-at-hand so frequently.

The final section, “The Kiss of the Spouse,” deals with (as the subheading suggests) “Cabala in England (1497-1700),” discussing Shakespeare, John Dee, and Thomas Vaughan, among others.

Throughout the book, themes and methods of *kabbalah/cabala* (which is spelled “cabala” through the text, yet, peculiarly, “kaballah” through the bibliography and index) are set against the notions of modern thinkers, philosophers, and writers: Freud, Kierkegard, and Kafka, to name a few. Beitchman freely and effectively draws on Gershom Scholem, Frances Yates, (as mentioned) François Secret, Harold Bloom, Lynn Thorndike, and others to compose this ranging view of *cabala* and its diffusion.

*Alchemy of the Word* is not a good introductory book; it would be best to have been through some of the other studies before engaging this one, *i.e.*, Blau’s *Christian Interpretation...*, and Yates’ *Occult Philosophy*. It is something of a shame that Beitchman’s keen observations, insights, and humor are buried in such cumbersome prose, strained with interjections and qualifiers. (I do hope that he doesn’t feel that there is some form of *ars cabbalistica* in his over-interrupted sentences.) Moreover, there is Beitchman’s infatuation with the word *ineluctable*, which seems to appear at least once on nearly every page of the book. All the same, there is a wealth of valuable information and fine synthesis here. In the end, the book is well worth the discomfort.

---

21 “A survey of Christian Cabala that could supersede the books by Joseph L. Blau (1944) and François Secret (1958) is desirable, but *Alchemy of the Word* is not that book. Discussion of dozens of authors requires a great deal of connecting historical narrative, and in this narrative stream the short passages of explanation and evaluation rush past too rapidly. The book offers many provocative statements, many informative ones, and many that are avoidably erroneous or obscurely brief. To undertake such an ambitious task without access to Hebrew for primary sources and modern scholarship; to characterize Kabbalah by relying heavily on the old studies of A. E. Waite, Adolph Franck, and Blau; and to ignore such important recent scholarship as *Pico della Miranda’s Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, is to attempt too much on an
Further, see


Beitchman on Beitchman: “Spinoza’s pebble thought it was moving freely only because it had forgotten being kicked along the road. Well, do we agree with Spinoza (he wasn’t there either when it all began) or the pebble? Whether we are subjects who have a say in what happens to us, or objects pushed around by forces, within and without us, beyond our control, has been argued back and forth for millennia. Beitchman’s *Play of the World* picks up on this ‘debate’ as refracted through the prism of a variety of works and genres, from Shakespeare’s *King John* of 1593 to Baudrillard’s essay on 9/11 of 2001, by way of excursions into the drug overdetermination of notably ‘stoned’ works like Coleridge’s ‘Kubla Khan’ and Burrough’s *Naked Lunch*, then up to the mountains of mystical apologetics that move the arena of the debate beyond the materiality of cause and effect, up to ‘the heavens’ of the *Zohar* in frankly sacred literature, then down (just a bit) to the theatre highlands of Villiers’ *Axel* and Russian Symbolist Theatre, in their (non)adaptation of the sacred to the profane realities of life on earth. with an excursion on the ramparts of Proust’s Platonic denials, because destructive of the autonomy of art, of Sainte-Beuve’s ‘real life’ causality approach to the appreciation of literature; then through the salutary confusion of des Forets’ (Blanchot-inspired) self-deconstructing fictions, rendering the whole question of where life ends and art begins or vice-versa nugatory, so intertwined have they become, or we made them... A fortiori now for our online generation. You see, we still haven’t decided if we have any say; only since we’re still wondering, still talking (like Beckett’s ‘can’t go on, must go on’), we’ve agreed to continue the conversation, *L’Entretien infini*, as Blanchot called it.”

CHRISTIAN INTERPRETERS OF THE KABBALAH

RAMON LLULL (1232-1316)

After co-opting such kabbalah as was desired, most Christian Cabalists sought to transform it into a dogmatic weapon to turn back against the Jews to compel their conversion—starting with Ramon Lull (ca. 1232-1316), “the first Christian to acknowledge and appreciate kabbalah as a tool of conversion.” In his book, The Art of Conversion, Harvey J. Hames demonstrates, however, that Lull was “not a Kabbalist, nor was he versed in any particular Kabbalistic approach.”


Lull has been associated with cabala through the work De auditu cabalisticco, which was erroneously attributed to him. In The Art of Conversion, Hames states (page 27),

Modern scholarship has shown that this work ... was written by an Italian doctor and scholar, Pietro Mainardi (1456-1529) from Verona, who taught in Ferrara and in Padua. His point of departure seems to have been an attempt to carry out Pico della Mirandola’s ideal of harmonizing the Lullian Art with the Cabala.

On Lull, see


Within this useful article, note in particular § THE ESOTERIC SOURCES OF LULL’S INSPIRATION (pages 186-189), where Goodrick-Clarke warily writes, “Jewish Kabbalah provides another potential source of Lull’s esoteric thought.” Oddly, Goodrick-Clarke makes no reference to Harvey Hames’ Art of Conversion (Brill, 2000) despite noting a later work edited by Hames, namely, Jews, Muslims, and Christians in and around the Crown of Aragon (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2004).

Peter Forshaw presents a good case for the contention that, over time, the missionary motive in Christian cabala diminished; see Forshaw’s “Christian Kabbalah” in The Cambridge Handbook of Western Mysticism and Esotericism, edited by Glenn Alexander Magee (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 143-155.


Herrera offers a readable summary of Llull’s life and thought as culled from numerous primary and secondary sources.


The first part is on Llull; the second part is on those whom he influenced.


Idel speculates on links between Llull’s theory of ars combinatoria and ecstatic kabbalah of Abraham Abulafia, mentioning that Pico believed that the two were quite similar.


CHAPTER II. “Encyclopaedism and Combinatoria in the Sixteenth Century” (pp. 29-60).
APPENDIX I. “The Liber ad memoriam confirmadam of Ramon Llull” (pp. 195-205).


CHAPTER 3, § 4, “Raymond Lull’s Theology of Concepts” (pp. 81-92).


Vega’s study is a fine “single source” which concludes with substantial selections from Llull’s writings. In the few discussions of kabbalah, Vega relies on Hames and Idel, suggesting that Llull’s ars combinatoria was derived from “systems associated with the Cabala of Abraham Abulafia” (p. 81).

From the series Collected Works of Giordano Bruno (see below):

DANTE ALIGHIERI (1265-1321)

In *From the Tree to the Labyrinth: Historical Studies on the Sign and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), Umberto Eco concludes CHAPTER 7, “Dante between Modistae and Kabbalah” (pp. 286-308),24

“Before its rehabilitation by the Humanists, Christian notions of the Kabbalah were hazy, and it tended to be lumped together with the black arts. On the other hand, it has been suggested (Gorni 1990: ch. VII) that Dante refers a little too insistently to various divinatory and magical arts…. He [Dante] appears to have been somewhat familiar with an underground and marginalized culture of which the Kabbalah was confusedly a part, at least in popular opinion. … The only drawback is that, in the absence of concrete proof of these contacts, this is all merely conjecture—as Busi (2004) pointed out in his review of Debenedetti Stow’s (2004) book on Dante and Jewish mysticism.” (—page 308)25

Jewish mysticism as a source for Dante has been explored in a few other works:

  
  “We can postulate a ‘Dante’s mysticism’ thanks to its precise background, the Neoplatonic philosophy, which is shared among Occitan and Sicilian texts as well as the Jewish mysticism. From the latter the Florentine poet adopts proper techniques to reach step-by-step the intellectual ecstasy towards the Wisdom, mystic’s ultimate aim, a voyage commencing from *Vita Nuova* and concluding to *Comedy* through the *Convivio*. Professor Sandra Debenedetti Stow is perhaps the first scholar who attempted to demonstrate Dante’s and Stilnovists’ knowledge of cabalistic methods and of Kabbalah too.”

  *(Jewish Mysticism in Dante Alighieri’s Works—page 4)*

- **“Dante Alighieri (1265-1321),”** at *Jewish Virtual Library, § BIOGRAPHY*, online at [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ej jud_0002_0005_0_04876.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ej jud_0002_0005_0_04876.html).

- **Forte, Valeria.** *From Rome to Jerusalem: The Quest for Cosmic Revelation; Jewish Mysticism in “The Divine Comedy”* (PhD diss., Dallas: University of Texas, 2014).

  “This study will present a comparative analysis between the practices advocated by Jewish mysticism in the quest for spiritual elevation and those described by Dante in *The Divine Comedy*. This analysis will be based on the historical premise discussed by Moshe Idel, according to which, the traditions of Jewish Hekhalot literature were present in the cultural fabric of Italy from the 10th century onward.”16 *(from the ABSTRACT)*

---


25 All of Eco’s references are to works in Italian:


Also in Italian: Giorgio Battisoni, *Dante, Verona e la cultura ebraica* (Florence: Giuntina, 2004).


“My speculations on Dante and the erotic vibrations of the *Commedia* recalled to me the reading I had done in the *Zohar*, where dreams speak of knowledge of God through a spiritualized sex. I began to wonder whether Hell, Paradise, and Heaven in Dante were constructed out of similar ideas.

“Moses de Leon, the reputed author of the *Zohar*, was dependent on Maimonides. Dante’s philosophical tutor, Thomas Aquinas, was a careful student of the twelfth-century Jewish philosopher. Shlomo Pines, in the introduction to his translation of Maimonides’ *The Guide of the Perplexed*, speculates on the basis of a designation of the prophet Moses in the *Inferno* that Dante had read Maimonides in Latin translation. The Neoplatonism of the thirteenth century underlay both the new mysticism of the Kabbalists and the dreams of the poets of Sicily and Bologna—texts that sought to draw together philosophic and erotic longing.

“It was to Dante’s advantage to know and absorb the lessons of the Kabbalah.”

* (Dante, Eros, and Kabbalah—pp. 18-19)


“I will confine my argument to the description of the use of mental images by the Stilnovisti and Dante and to its comparison to the role mental images fulfill in Jewish mysticism, especially in the system of the Spanish kabbalist, Abraham Abulafia.” (—page 85)

ABNER OF BURGOS (ca. 1270-1347 or 1348)

PAULUS [PABLO] DE HEREDIA (ca. 1405-ca. 1490)

There were some pre-Renaissance expressions of Christian cabala among the Spanish conversos in the late 1200s which continued until the expulsion of the late 1400s. There is not a whole lot in the English literature available on these early Spanish Cabalists, e.g., Abner of Burgos (Christian name: Alfonso of Valladolid) and Paulus de Heredia.

On both Abner and Paulus:

  While the focus of the article is Pico, Scholem discusses Burgos (pp. 26-29) and de Heredia (pp. 30-35) with mention of Pico’s contemporary Abraham Farissol (p. 35).

On Abner of Burgos:

  “This article examines how three major Jewish leaders who converted to Christianity in medieval Spain—Abner of Burgos, Pablo de Santa Maria and Pedro de la Caballeria—viewed Maimonides and the kabbalists.” (—ABSTRACT, page 145)

With Paulus de Heredia, we have entered the Renaissance chronologically, but Paulus was not part of the Florentine circle that inaugurated the traditional emergence—or “first wave”—of Christian cabala. He did, however, leave his mark.

A pair of letters in Hebrew, purportedly written by Tanna Nehuniah ben Hakanah, were “discovered”—more likely forged—translated into Latin, and commented upon by Paulus: THE EPISTLE OF SECRETS [Iggeret ha-Sodot OR Epistola de secretis] and THE DECLARATION OF TRUTH (published 1487 or 1488). These letters were put into English from Paulus’ Latin by Rodney G. Dennis (Oxford: The Jericho Press, 1998); regrettably, Paulus’ commentary is not included in Dennis’ translation.

The Epistle represents “the first recognizable work of Christian kabbalah.” It got wide exposure through being quoted in the works of Franciscan theologian Petrus Galatinus, which, in turn, influenced Athanasius Kircher (see below, §8 PETRUS GALATINUS and ATHANASIUS KIRCHER). It is worth noting, though, that Paulus’ cabala consists largely of (1) quotes from non-existent kabbalistic works (e.g., Galerazaya, which Paulus attributed to “Rabbi Haccados,” namely Rabbi HaKadosh) and (2) distorted or fake quotes from real kabbalistic sources, such as the Zohar.

---


LODOVICO LAZZARELLI (1447-1500)

Lodovico Lazzarelli “played a central role in the rediscovery of Renaissance hermeticism by Italian scholars since 1938; but he was entirely marginalized by [Frances] Yates and his name fell into oblivion after the 1960s” (—Wouter Hanegraaff, *Lodovico Lazzarelli...*, p. 2).


Also look for

- Beitchman, Philip. § RADICAL CABALA on Lazzarelli’s *Crater Hermetis*, in *Alchemy of the Word*, pp. 117-120.
- Walker, D. P. *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, pp. 64-72.
GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA (1463-1494)

Pico is often called the “Father of Christian Cabala” due to the incorporation of kabbalah/cabala into his grand synthesis of religion and philosophy of 1486, known as the 900 Theses.

One impressive study deals with Pico’s contact with kabbalah in great detail: Pico della Mirandola’s Encounter with Jewish Mysticism, by Chaim Wirszubski (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), which discusses Pico’s sources and, in particular, his mentor/translator, the Sicilian convert Flavius Mithridates (see below: PICO'S MENTORS). Throughout, Pico’s famous Conclusiones Cabalisticae are drawn upon for analysis. The appendices to this book, of which there are twenty-three, cover points of doctrine and history connected with Pico’s knowledge and development of cabala. It is interesting to note that Pico’s main sources for kabbalah were Abraham Abulafia, Joseph Gikatilla, and Menahem Recanati, and that Recanati’s writings contain numerous quotes from the Zohar. One drawback to Wirszubski’s fine work: One needs to know Latin to read all the extracts from Pico and his translated sources.

See also Wirszubski’s articles:


A translation of Pico’s Conclusiones Cabalisticae (extracted from the 900 Theses) appears in Arthur E. Waite’s Holy Kabbalah on pp. 445-452 (cited above in § FOUR HISTORIANS).


Another recent comprehensive study is Sophia Howlett’s Re-evaluating Pico: Aristotelianism, Kabbalism, and Platonism in the Philosophy of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola [CRITICAL POLITICAL THEORY AND RADICAL PRACTICE] (Basingstoke: Springer International/Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). Howlett opens her conclusion,

Pico’s vision of a solitary journey home to God, with no return, sets him apart from his philosophical contemporaries whether Ficino’s Golden Wits searching for the new Golden Age or Savinarola’s pignoni [lit. wEiners, i.e., Savinarola’s devotees] preparing for a communal end-time. He is the proponent of a

---

10 My KNOTS & SPIRALES: “Pico della Mirandola: Notes on the Emergence of Christian Cabala” (2010) derives much of its argument from Copenhaver's earlier work on Pico:
- at ACADEMIA.EDU: [https://www.academia.edu/3244459/Knobs_and_Spirals_I_Pico_della_Mirandola](https://www.academia.edu/3244459/Knobs_and_Spirals_I_Pico_della_Mirandola)
theological philosophy based on exceptionalism and the mystical journey of the one to the One. (—Howlett, page 209)°

Find also Pico’s HEPTAPLUS and Biblical Hermeneutics by Crofton Black (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2006), “the first full-length study of” Pico’s “commentary on the creation narrative of Genesis,” in which “Pico adopted an esoteric hermeneutic stance characteristic of Neoplatonic and kabbalistic exegesis...” (—from the back cover of the book). Note, however, Giulio Busi’s reservations about “traces of less than mature scholarship” in Black’s study (Aries, Volume 8, Number 1 [Leiden: Brill, 2008], pp. 91-92).


Further on Pico (listed chronologically):


° Note that Howlett previously published Marsilio Ficino and His World (Basingstoke: Springer International/Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
• Dougherty, M. V. “Pico’s Heptaplus and Biblical Hermeneutics” (review of Crofton Black’s Pico’s HEPTAPLUS and Biblical Hermeneutics—noted above), in Renaissance Quarterly, Volume 60, Number 2 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007).


Celestial Intelligences, beautifully designed by Peter Uccello, includes a number of Uccello’s illustrations, the most assertive of which have nothing to do with the subject matter of the book, except, perhaps, in the mind of the artist. They produce a distraction and seem an ill-fitted indulgence.


Gianfrancesco was the nephew of Giovanni, our subject. He penned the only contemporary account of the famed but short-lived “Prince of Concordia.” As in Copenhaver’s Magic and the Dignity of Man (see above, p. 21), this volume contains Pico’s Oration, though here both the original Latin and Copenhaver’s English of are shown on facing pages. Also, as in Copenhaver’s previous volume, there is an appendix of “Selections from Pico’s 900 Conclusions.


PICO'S MENTORS

Flavius Mithridates (Christian name: Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada – flourished 1450-1500):

A project under the general editorship of Giulio Busi offers a selection of Flavius Mithridates’ translations of kabbalistic works as commissioned by Pico: THE KABBALISTIC LIBRARY OF GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA – VOLUMES 1 through 5; Torino: Nino Aragno Editore; VOLUME 6: Castiglione delle Stiviere: Fondazione Palazzo Bonfoni Pastorio.

- VOLUME 1: The Great Parchment: Flavius Mithridates’ Latin Translation, the Hebrew Text, and an English Version, ed. Giulio Busi, with Simontenon Bonfoni and Saverio Campanini (2004)—a text, not treated by Wirszubski in Pico della Mirandola’s Encounter with Jewish Mysticism, which has been all but unknown until recently.
- VOLUME 3: Menahem Recanati: Commentary on the Daily Prayers – Flavius Mithridates’ Latin Translation, the Hebrew Text, and an English Version, edited with introduction and notes by Giacomo Corazzol (2008)—the only English-language source for any of Recanati’s writings, accompanied by a full introduction on Recanati and his works.
- VOLUME 5: The Gate of Heaven – Flavius Mithridates’ Latin Translation, the Hebrew Text, and an English Translation, edited with introduction and notes by Susanne Jurgan and Saverio Campanini with a Text on Pico by Giulio Busi (2012)—not the work by Gikatilla. “[P]robably written in Italy around the end of the 14th century by an author unknown to us” (—p. 11).

For brief reviews of Corazzol’s Menahem Recanati and Martini’s Yosef Giqatilla, see ADDENDUM B of the present paper (the URL for the ADDENDA is given at the head of this paper).

On Mithridates’ translations, see also


Further regarding Mithridates and Pico, along with Wirszubski’s Pico della Mirandola’s Encounter… (noted above), refer to CHAPTER 4 of David B. Ruderman’s World of a Renaissance

---

1 On the “Great Parchment,” i.e., the Yeriah Gedolah, see the articles by Ezra Brand: “The Yeriah Gedolah: An Allusive Rendering of the Sefirot” and “Towards Decoding Ha-Yeriah ha-Gedolah (The Great Parchment),” a Cryptic 14th Century Italian Kabbalistic Text,” both of which can be found at https://www.academia.edu/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=yeriah+gedolah
The latter can also be found at The Seforim Blog: https://seforimblog.com/2009/07/ha-yeriah-ha-gedolah/

Mithridates’ Sermo de Passione Domini, a sermon on the Passion delivered before Pope Sixtus IV, Good Friday, 1481, was edited with notes and commentary by Chaim Wirszubski (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1963). The text is in its original Latin; the 76-page introduction is in English, though most citations are in Latin. Wirszubski shows that the thrust of Mithridates’ sermon derives, unacknowledged, from Raymundus Martini’s Pugio Fidei (DAGGER OF FAITH, ca. 1280). Wirszubski points out, however, that in the Sermo there is “a shift from refutation of Judaism to proof of Christianity” (—Frances Yate’s review of Wirszubski’s edition of Sermo, “Flavius Mithridates,” which is CHAPTER 7 of Renaissance and Reform: The Italian Contribution, COLLECTED ESSAYS, VOL. II [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983]).

List of kabbalistic works translated by Mithridates at the behest of Pico della Mirandola, ca. 1486 (incomplete):

[black] = THE KABBALISTIC LIBRARY OF GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA [KL*]
[blue] = cited in Wirszubski, Pico della Mirandola’s Encounter with Jewish Mysticism

- Abulafia - Liber Combinationum “Book of Permutations”
- Abulafia - Liber de secretis legis – “Book of the Secrets of the Torah” – Sitrei Torah
- Abulafia - Liber Redemptionis “Book of Redemption” – Sefer Ge’ulah
- Abulafia - Summa brevis Cabala que intitulatur Rabie Ieude

- Ašer ben David, Peruš Šem haMešoraš [KL*]
- Axelrad - Liber Corona nominis bonis - “Book of the Crown of the Good Name”
- Azriel - Quaestiones super de decem Numerationibus - “Questions on the Ten Numbers (Sefirot)”
- Comentum Sepher Iesire
- Corona Nominis
- De Proportione Divinitatis – Ma’areket ha-‘Elohot
- Gate of Heaven [KL*] – also cited in Wirszubski
- Gikatilla - Expositio secretorum punctationis – Sefer ha-Niqqud [KL*]
- Gikatilla - Portae Iustitiae – “Gates of Justice” – Sha’are Tzedek
- Great Parchment [KL*]

- Isaac ben Jacob ha-Kohen, ‘Inyan Gadol [KL*]

- Libellus de expositione nominis Tetragrammaton - “Brief Explanation of the Name Tetragrammaton”
- Libellus de expositione tredecim proprietatum – “Brief Explanation of the Thirteen Properties”
- Libellus de secretis legis manifestandis edicto a sancto doctore - “Brief Secrets of the Torah Manifesting the Edict of the Holy Teacher”

- Liber Bahir – “Book of Brightness” [KL*]
- Liber de radicibus vel terminis Cabala – “Book of Roots and Bounds” – Sefer ha-Šorašim

- Peruš ‘al ‘Eser Sefirot I & II [KL*]
- Recanati – “Commentary on the Pentateuch” [translation lost]
- Recanati - Liber de secretis Orationem et Benedictum Cabale - “Book of the Secrets of Prayer…” (Perush ha-Tefillot) [KL*]

- Shaar ha-shamayim
Yohanan ben Isaac Alemanno (ca. 1435-ca. 1505):

The word that always seems to turn up in descriptions of Alemanno is *eclectic*. He drew on a range of medieval sources, from Maimonides to Averroës, metaphysics to magic, rationalism to mysticism. Through his contact with the Florentine Academy, he left his mark on the development of Christian kabbalah.

Sources listed alphabetically by author


In *The Song of Solomon’s Ascents* (SHIR HA-MA’ALOT LI-SHLOMO), “drawing from the most diverse sources, Alemanno both defined his conception of the complete wise man and praised an historical figure as the model for Jewish virtue in fifteenth-century Italy. The *Song of Solomon’s
Ascents is, in addition, a compendium of the syncretistic teachings of Alemanno, one of the eminent Jewish teachers of his time, and a figure notable to investigators of the Florentine Platonists as Pico’s consultant on Hebrew letters after 1488.” (—pp. 2-3) ... Along with background material, Lesley offers a detailed (153-page) summary of The Song of Solomon’s Ascents stating, “The length, embellishment and verbosity of Alemanno’s Hebrew composition precluded making a translation. ... [I]t is to be hoped that pruning can better expose the sense and structure of the original.” (—p. 2)


Chapter 2, § A VISIT TO FLORENCE (pp. 44-51) discusses Yohanan Alemanno and his kabbalistic pursuits, Pico della Mirandola’s contact with him, and “the misuse of Kabbalah for Christian missionizing.”
Elijah del Medigo (ca. 1458-ca. 1493):

While del Medigo was an authority on Aristotelian philosophy, his writings suggest that he was a strict Averroist. And though he is known primarily for his expertise in philosophy, he had a deep knowledge of rabbinic works.

It is interesting to note the list of books that del Medigo recommended to Pico della Mirandola. In spite of his being a critic of kabbalah—both Jewish and Christian—del Medigo provided a well-chosen set of titles that targeted Pico’s desire to learn the fundamentals of kabbalah:

“...the Zohar, Yishaq of Acco’s Me’irot ‘enayim, Yosef Gigatilla’s Sa’are orah, the Commentary to the Torah by Menahem Recanati, the Ma’arehet ha-Elohat, and one (or more) unspecified Commentaries to the Sefer yesirah ... the most evident omission being Avraham Abulafia’s works.”


Yet del Medigo disputed the antiquity of kabbalah and the Zohar and did not believe that Shimon bar Yochai was the author of it on the basis of the anachronisms it contains. Further, del Medigo was critical of Pico for blending “occult” doctrines from kabbalah and magic with Neoplatonic philosophy.

Sources listed alphabetically by author:


Bland discusses del Medigo’s remarks on Kabbalah and its adherents found in four of his works, one of which (his commentary to Averroes’ De substantia orbis) was originally composed in Latin for Pico’s benefit.


JOHANNES REUCHLIN (1455-1522)

Johannes Reuchlin, whose main sources for kabbalah were the writings of Menachem Recanati (Commentary on the Torah, Commentary on the Daily Prayers) and Joseph Gikatilla (Sha'are Orah, Gimnat 'Egoz), wrote two books on cabala.

The first, De verbo mirifico (1494), speaks of the “wonder-working word,” YHShVH, the miraculous name of Jesus derived from the tetragrammaton of the Old Testament, YHVH, with the letter shin added in its midst. Refer to Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann’s “History and Prehistory of the Cabala of JHSVH,” in Hebrew to Latin, Latin to Hebrew: The Mirroring of Two Cultures in the Age of Humanism [BERLIN STUDIES IN JUDAISM, 1], ed. Giulio Busi (Berlin: Institut für Judaistik, Freie Universität Berlin – Torino: Nino Aragno Editore, 2006), 223-241.

The second, De arte cabalistica (1516), is a broader, more informed excursion into various kabbalistic concerns, which appeared in English (translated by Martin and Sarah Goodman) in 1983 (New York: Abaris Books, Inc.); this translation was reprinted with a new introduction by Moshe Idel in 1993 (Lincoln: Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press) as On the Art of the Kabbalah.

On Reuchlin (listed chronologically):

- Blau, Joseph Leon. The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala... (1944), CHAPTER IV, “Pythagoras Redivivus,” pages 41-64, describes in some detail De verbo mirifico and De arte cabalistica.
- Oberman, Heiko A. The Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Age of the Renaissance and Reformation, translated from the German by James. I. Porter. [= Wurzeln des Antisemitismus, 1981] (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984). Nineteen historic personages figure into Oberman’s discussion. Along with Luther, Calvin, and Erasmus, we find Reuchlin and his rival Johannes Pfefferkorn. Oberman writes (p. 29), “The modern picture of Reuchlin as a friend of the Jews, for all its accessibility, simply does not stand up. Reuchlin was firmly convinced of the collective guilt of the Jews...”


- Reuchlin’s *Recommendation Whether to Confiscate, Destroy and Burn All Jewish Books: A Classic Treatise against Anti-Semitism*, translated, edited, and with a forward by Peter Wortsman; critical introduction by Elisheva Carlebach (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2000), written in 1510.


- Chapter 5, “The Neoplatonic Path for Dead Souls: Medieval Philosophy, Kabbalah and Renaissance,” begins with a discussion of Neoplatonic Arabic texts then takes us through early Kabbalah and the Zohar to Alemano, Pico, Reuchlin, and Bruno.


• Christie-Miller, Ian. 72 in His Name: Reuchlin, Luther, Thenaud, Wolff, and the Names of Seventy-Two Angels (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2016).


Reuchlin’s list of kabbalistic texts in De arte cabalistica : id est, de divinae revelationis, ad salvifetarem Dei, et formarvm separaturn contemplationem traditae, symbolica receptione, libri III, [Basileae? : Ex officina H. Petrina?], 1572?-73?—first published: 1517], pp. 13*-14*:

1. On the Creation, i.e., Sefer Yeziiran
2. Zohar
3. Ha Bahir
4. “Abraham Abulafia’s books on Kabbalah”
5. “Ramban’s distinguished commentaries” (Rabbi Moses ben Nahman, Nahmanides)
6. “the commentaries of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman’s “very learned pupil,” Rabbi Menahem ben Benjamin Recanati”
7. Rambam, Guide of the Perplexed (Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, Maimonides)
9. Sa’adia in Asia, Articles of Belief [ = Beliefs and Opinions] (Sa’adia Gaon)
10. Abraham Ibn Ezra, The Mystery of the Law, The Unity
11. “a book of Rabbi Hamai bar Hanina ... and another ... called Speculations”
12. Azriel of Gerona, Explanation of Holiness
13. Rabbi Akiva, Names and Explanation of the Alphabet
14. Rabbi Ama, The Gate of Mysteries of Psalm 19
17. Rabbi Joseph Albo, The Roots
18. Rabbi Judah Halevi, Alkuzari [= Kuzari]
19. Jacob Cohen, commentary on Sefer Yeziiran, including Rabbi Isaac [ben Samuel], Explanation of the Name of God
20. Todros ben Joseph Abulafia, on “the ten Cabalistic enumerations”

Some sources for Reuchlin that do not appear on his list:
• (anon.) Ruach Chen – Spiritus gratiae [= Spirit of Grace]
• (anon.) Hacdamah
• Rabbi Levi ben Gersom, “on the difference between Gabriel and Michael”
• Paulus de Heredia, Be-Sefer Igeret ha-Sodot [= Book of the Epistle of Secrets]
• Jerusalem Targum
• Targum Jonathan
JACQUES LEFÈVRE D’ÉTAPLES (ca. 1455-1536)

“Jacques Lefèvre d’Étapes can be regarded as one of the most versatile editors of classical works of philosophy and religion from the learned world of French humanism” (—E. Oosterwijk-Ritman, ‘Drink from this Fountain’, page 13). Along with his many editions of philosophical works, Lefèvre compiled a volume of Lull’s “thoughts,” penned a defense of Reuchlin, and wrote on natural magic and cabala. While he remained a Roman Catholic, he is considered a forerunner of Reformation thought in France. He was, indeed, accused by the Sorbonne faculty of theology of being “a Lutheran.”

As for the narrow selection of English sources addressing Lefèvre on magic and cabala, find the following:

  “Here my intention is simply to shed light on the significance and depth of the work [i.e., Lefevre’s *De magica naturali*] by studying Lefevre’s development of one Cabalist theme—the secret names of God—in the final chapters of book two of *De magica naturali*” (p. 119).
  Copenhaver asserts that *De magica naturali* (1492-94) was the first description of cabala in Renaissance France as a correction to François Secret’s contention that Symphorien Champier’s *Ars parva Galeni* (1516) was “la premiere presentation de la kabbale par un François” (in *Les Kabbalistes Chretiens de la Renaissance* [Paris: Dunod, 1964] p. 152).

- ‘Drink from this Fountain’: Jacques Lefèvre d’Étapes. Inspired humanist and dedicated editor, “an exhibition to honour Frans A. Janssen, retired director and at present member of the Board...,” text and catalogue: Theodor Harmsen (Amsterdam: Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, 2004).


  Chapter LX, “Magic in Dispute, II: Jacques Lefevre d’Etapes, Reuchlin, Trithemius”

PETRUS GALATINUS [or PIETRO COLOUNA GALATINO] (ca. 1460–ca. 1540)

The Franciscan convert Galatinus compiled De arcans catholicae veritatis [ON THE SECRETS OF CATHOLIC TRUTH], 12 volumes, ([Ortona]: Impressum vero Orthonae maris, summa cum diligentia per Hieronymum Suncinum, 1518, and Basel: Johann Herwagen, 1561) for the purpose of showing that “Judaism before Christ was Christianity” (—Beitchman, Alchemy..., p. 120). De arcans... offers excerpts from the Zohar, and it quotes and defends Reuchlin’s De arte cabalistica. De arcans..., in fact, presents a dialogue between Reuchlin and Belgian theologian and controversialist Jakob van Hoogstraeten (ca. 1460-1527). It also introduces passages from Paulus de Heredia’s Epistola de secretis, in particular those from the spurious kabbalistic text Galerazaya by the fictional Rabbenus Haccados (see page 19 above). De arcans..., however, is more generally based on the kabbalistic Apocalypse nova (Veneto, ca. 1500), attributed to one Amadeus of Portugal (= Amadeo Menez da Sylva—ca. 1431-1482), but even more on Dominican Friar Raymundus Martini’s handbook for missionizers, Pugio fidei (DAGGER OF FAITH—composed ca. 1280),33 and Porcher de Salvatici’s Victoria adversus impios Hebraeos (VICTORY OVER THE IMPIOUS HEBREWS—1303, printed in Paris, 1520).

In English, we find mostly shreds here and there; however, see

- Beitchman, Philip. Alchemy of the Word, pp. 120-121 et passim.
- Leftley, S. A. MILLENNARIAN THOUGHT IN RENAISSANCE ROME WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PIETRO GALATINO (c.1464-c.1540) AND EGIIDO DA VITERBO (c. 1469-1532) ([UK]: University of Bristol, 1996).

In French:


THE PROBLEM OF LEONE EBBREO’S DIALOGHI
A BIBLIOGRAPHY WITH A SELECTION OF QUOTES

Was Leone a philosopher, a Jewish philosopher, or simply a writer with a philosophical background? That question remains open to debate.
—Giuseppe Veltri, Renaissance Philosophy in Jewish Garb (2009), page 61

Yehudah (or Judah) Abravanel (or Abrabanel) (ca. 1460-ca. 1530), called Leone Ebreo (Leon Hebraeus, Leo the Hebrew), was the son of Isaac Abravanel (1437-1508), a highly-regarded philosopher and exegete.

[Yohanan] Alemanno, Pico, [Isaac] Abravenel and Ebreo were all involved in the same intellectual and social circles, and they seem to have mutually influenced each other.
—Brian Ogren, The Beginning of the World..., page 3.14

Ebreo is best known for his Dialoghi d’amore (DIALOGUES ON LOVE), written around 1500. The Dialoghi were included in Pistorius’ Latin compendium Artis cabalisticae..., TOMUS I (Basle: 1587) (see below, page 66). Because they appeared in what was ostensibly a cabalistic digest, the Dialoghi greatly contributed to the Christian impression of kabbalah and unduly categorized Ebreo as a kabbalist—hence the inclusion of Ebreo in our line of “Christian interpreters.”

There are two English translations of the Dialoghi:

• The Philosophy of Love (Dialoghi d’Amore), translated into English by F. Friedeberg-Seeley and Jean H. Barnes, with an introduction by Cecil Roth (London: The Soncino Press, 1937).
• Dialogues of Love [THE LORENZO DA PONTE ITALIAN LIBRARY], translated by Cosmos Damian Bacich and Rossella Pescatori; introduction and notes by Rossella Pescatori (Toronto – Buffalo – London: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

Indications of the problems surrounding Ebreo’s Dialoghi are reflected in the quotes from the sources listed.


P. You know that the corporeal world proceeds from the incorporeal as the true effect from its cause and creator. None the less the corporeal does not inherit the perfection of the spiritual, and you may see how defective is the body compared with the mind. And if you find many imperfections in the body such as dimension, division and, in certain cases, mutation and corruption, you must not therefore conclude that these defects pre-exist in the intellectual causes, but that they are in the effect only in so far as it falls short of the cause. Do not, therefore, believe that the plurality, division and diversity in earthly things pre-exists in the Ideal knowledge of them, for that which is one and indivisible in the divine intellect is multiplied ideally relative to the parts of the world produced by it, and in relation to these parts the Ideas are many, although one and indivisible with the divine intellect.

Excerpts of the Soncino translation are posted on the Internet at
http://www48.homepage.villanova.edu/emmet.mclaughlin/Renaissance%20Philosophy.htm

Part A (pp. 205-229)
Part B (pp. 246-276)
Part C (pp. 298-355)
Part D (pp. 354-413)
Part E (pp. 414-468)

14 Cited in full below.

Immediately upon publication it [Dialoghi 'd'Amore] was accepted as a major contribution to Renaissance philosophy. It was so remarkable an example of non-sectarian philosophy that, were it not for the author's name, one might mistake it for the work of a non-Jew.

Beitchman, Philip. Alchemy of the Word: Cabala of the Renaissance (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998); page 145:

Cabala in Leo the Hebrew's widely known book On Love has had the reputation of being a matter of image rather than substance, blending into a genre of Neoplatonic love poetry, with a tincture of mysticism—accounting for its popularity, in several languages, during the Renaissance and after.


Having read Ficino and Leone Ebreo, Bruno decided that the hero's love is a frenzy for what cannot be had but must always be pursued in a philosophical chase through sense, reason, and mind, ever approaching but never attaining the light of the One.

[FOREWORD to Dialogues of Love (Toronto: 2009—noted above); page xiv:

Judah [Abravanel] could have known this text [Zohar (1:4a, 2:7b, 32b)]—and many others that might illuminate his Dialogues—either from the Zohar itself or, more likely, from the Zoharic commentary on the Pentateuch written around 1300 by Menahem Recanati. In the case of the Cabala, however, God lives nowhere but in the details, in the intricate threads of symbols and images from which the Cabalists weave their midrashim. General associations, such as those suggested above between the Sefirot and the major agents of Judah's cosmology, are often possible but never conclusive.


The label “Renaissance” is often affixed to Leone Ebreo's philosophic activity. Although perhaps applicable to Leone when considered as a litterateur, the label is highly doubtful where the strictly philosophic sections of his work are concerned; and for that matter, it is debatable whether the label “Renaissance” has any legitimate application at all for the history of European philosophy, whether anything in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century European thought deserves to be singled out as distinctively “Renaissance” philosophy. ...

When Leone first treats the subject of the dependence of the universe on its cause, his discussion is wholly circumscribed by what he had learnt from Avicenna and Averroes.


Ordinary (practical) reason fluctuates between extremes, its goal being the preservation of life; extraordinary (contemplative) reason disregards normal conventions of prejudice and often leads to alienation and self-sacrifice. Comprising both disinterested love and the desire to “acquire” or “attain” the beloved, its ambivalence is personified in the figure of Sophia*, the reluctant mistress of the Dialogues. The ordinary reasonableness of the day to day world is challenged here by the radical intransigence of a higher love, which bears with it a higher standard of reason. The philosophically exalted blend of love and desire is the source of Philo’s* paradoxical desire to both live and die. (Dethier's parentheses.)

---

* The three Dialoghi are the conversations between Philo, the “lover,” and Sophia, the “beloved,” = WISDOM.

Gibbons, B. J. Gender in Mystical and Occult Thought: Behmenism and its Development in England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); page 71:
An important source of Christian Cabalism was Leone Ebreo’s *Dialoghi d’amore*, a popular work throughout sixteenth-century Europe. The *Dialoghi* themselves are closer to Neoplatonism than Jewish Cabalism, but they were thereby able to convey Cabalistic ideas in a way accessible to Renaissance Christian intellectuals.

Gluck, Andrew L. *Judah Abrabanel’s Philosophy of Love and Kabbalah*, with a foreword by Menachem Kellner (Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: The Edwin Mellon Press, 2012); page 624:

Regarding Kabbalah, however, whatever obvious resemblances exist might perhaps have been the result of common influences rather than direct dependence, though he was definitely knowledgeable about and interested in Kabbalah. His explicit questioning of the legitimacy of kabbalistic tradition is somewhat jarring alongside his apparently implicit assumption regarding the legitimacy of other esoteric traditions (such as the Hermetic one). In fact, it seems strange that he should specifically mention Kabbalah at all since so many other influences are left unacknowledged. That might indicate a special fondness for or interest in Kabbalah or it might reveal an especially critical stance towards it.


... given the evidence, an Italian original for the work seems most likely since (1) all the manuscripts, including Mariano Lenzi’s edition of 1535, are in Italian; (2) it seems that Judah had lived in Italy for close to twenty years by the time that he wrote the *Dialoghi* (more than enough time for someone to gain an intimate knowledge of Italian, especially someone proficient in Latin and Spanish vernaculars); (3) neither later Jewish authors, e.g., Azaria de’Rossi, nor non-Jewish authors, e.g., Tullia d’Aragona, had any reason to suspect that it was written in a language other than Italian; (4) if we assume the later date of 1511-1512, many non-Tuscan Italian authors of this period called for the adoption of Tuscan as a literary language, owing primarily to the fact that this was the language of Petrarch (1304-1374) and Boccaccio (1313-1375); and, (5) as for the question of the Tuscan dialect of the work, many Italian printers of the early sixteenth century “Tuscanized” Italian according to set criteria. Moreover, many Jewish authors in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries increasingly resorted to Romance vernaculars in order to attract a Jewish audience (including conversos and ex-conversos), which no longer understood Hebrew.


In this article I will deal with the encounter between a Spanish Jewish thinker, Leone Ebreo (Judah Abravanel), and the Platonic and Neoplatonic corpus translated and interpreted by Marsilio Ficino. As important as the Spanish background was for his thought and for his modes of acculturation in the Florentine Renaissance, it was the exposure to new material that sparked the creativity that culminated in Ebreo’s *Dialoghi d’Amore*. The more inertial culture of Spain of that period could not induce such an intellectual achievement. Nevertheless, and this is the main point in my discussion below, the Spanish background served at times as a grid for reading of even a seminal Platonic theme.

Leon Ebreo’s book *Dialoghi d’amore* is one of the few major Jewish philosophical contributions to European thought written in the Middle Ages; it was written and printed in several Romance languages decades before a Hebrew translation was made and printed. ... Ebreo’s book can be defined as the most accomplished Neoplatonic treatise in Judaism after ibn Gabirol’s *magnum opus Fons Vitae*, composed because of his encounter with Florentine Renaissance.


... Ebreo combines a Neo-Platonic emanational view of the emergence of reality with a view that resorts to sexual imagery even when discussing the highest entities, an approach that may reflect some form of kabbalistic theosophy. Though Ebreo was not a Kabbalist, at times he nevertheless used kabbalistic views in his book. Hence, he was conceived of as a Kabbalist, his book was printed in a collection of kabbalistic books entitled *Ars Cabalistica*, and he is quoted as a Kabbalist.

Ebreo is, however, more of an Aristotelian, and more of an Averroist, than he would care to admit. Despite his insistence on the significance of love as a causal principle for the workings of the universe, he is hard-pressed to offer a definition or description of love which is essentially different from that of the intellect.


Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Dialoghi is the consistency with which Leone enacts the idea that beauty, and the ravishment concomitant with it, is the necessary product of all human mental activities. As God created man in his image, the perception of beauty is a crucial issue, for the love generated by these mental images is modeled on the affection of the Godhead for His Creation.


The posthumous success of the [Dialoghi] with a wide audience, in Italian, Latin, Spanish, and French, tends to obscure the question of why it was written in Hebrew, for a Jewish audience, over thirty years before its publication in Italian.

Yehuda Abravanel, as a learned physician with eminent clients, as a member of a wealthy, well-placed family, as an exile from Portugal and Spain, and as the son of the outstanding biblical commentator and leader of the Spanish Jews, was a candidate for influence among Jews in Italy.

_____ “Proverbs, Figures and Riddles: The Dialogues of Love as a Hebrew Humanist Composition,” in *Midrashic Imagination: Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*, edited by Michael Fishbane (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); page 204-5:

The Dialogues of Love by Yehuda Abravanel has attracted more attention from historians of Jewish philosophy than its influence on later Jewish thought deserves. ...

The Dialogues of Love combines a variety of discourses that had not previously been juxtaposed in a single text: the full curriculum of Maimonidean philosophy, neo-platonism based on an acquaintance with authentic texts of Plato, astrology, Spanish Kabbalah, classical mythology, the entire body of Midrash and Jewish Bible commentary, and humanist rhetoric.


Finally, Judah Abravanel (Leone Ebreo) had some contact with Pico [della Mirandola] between 1492 when Leone arrived in Naples as an exile from Spain and Pico’s death in 1494. The extent of this acquaintance is difficult to determine, but may well have had an effect on Leone’s masterwork, the Dialoghi d’amore. ...

The Dialoghi are among the most remarkable products of Renaissance thought, arguably the most systematic and penetrating account of that favorite Renaissance theme, the nature and role of love. ... [T]wo aspects of his [Leone’s] presentation deserve note here because of the light they cast on the new situation in which [Jewish] Kabbalah found itself due to the challenge presented by [Christian] Cabala. First, the communication of a good deal of Kabbalah in a work probably written in the vernacular (and therefore accessible even to Gentiles) was surely unusual. Second, and more important, Leone’s mingling of Kabbalah with a wide range of other systems of thought—pagan, Christian and Jewish—is, as Moshe Idel has stressed, a new phenomenon among Jews at the end of the fifteenth century.* Shlomo Pines said that Leone transformed Plato into a Kabbalist.**

---


From Lenzi’s dedicatory letter we know that the Dialoghi were published posthumously. What state the text of the work was in when Leone was alive, his role in its transmission, his possible interactions with early readers and editors of the work are, of course, a matter of speculation and archival and textual evidence does not, so far, shed any definitive light on these matters. Nevertheless, the unprecedented interest in a work by a Sephardic Jew in the first three decades of the sixteenth century, which involved prominent members of the Siene community in Rome, southern Italian prelates, prestigious printers, expert copyists, the most important humanists and literati of the moment, as well as some key figures in the impassioned debate as to what language should be the norm for literacy and cultural expression in Renaissance Italy, is not to be understated by any means.


As far as the textual evidence in the Dialoghi shows, Leone was neither a Jewish Hermetic thinker nor a secret kabbalist. There is also no evidence that Leone was imbibing any insight from the Zohar. At most, Leone was a Jewish Platonist, and part of his project was to reconcile Plato and the Bible, as filtered through Rabbinic Judaism. To read Hermes and the Kabbalists too deeply into his thought is to transform it, in a similar manner in which he transformed both the thought of Plato and the narrative of the Bible.


Like his father Isaac and the rest of his older contemporaries discussed here [Pico della Mirandola and Yohanan Alemanno], Leone indeed has recourse to the classical pairing of “the beginning” with Wisdom; but unlike all of them, he seems to have completely neutralized the kabbalistic elements involved in the discussion.


The philosophy of Leone Ebreo contained in the Dialogues does not represent a system; its structure is not architectonic but organic. It is the unfolding of an idea through the totality of that which exists: the idea of love as the principle of being and as an ethical-religious norm. ...

The era still had not attained an all-embracing framework of experience to give material support and substance to the concept of the world. Hence all philosophers of the Italian Renaissance are bold, contentious, unsystematic, contradictory, vague, fanciful, rich in ideas, and yet lacking one central idea. In the midst of this chaotic deluge of ideas, Leone Ebreo occupies a unique place. He is still sufficiently a son of the Middle Ages to be able to believe in the possibility of achieving a universal philosophy, yet also close enough to the spirit of modernity to be able to replace the rigid, spherically graduated cosmos of medieval speculation with a vital world structure held together by emotion. Thus Leone’s conception of the world took from Scholasticism the hierarchical structure of the doctrine of emanation; from the spirit of the new era it derived the concept of ensoulment through the universal principle of love; from Judaism it drew the speculative ingredients (the theory of attributes, the doctrine of creation, eschatology); and from Plato it adopted the theory of ideas.

Roth, Cecil. “With the Humanists of Florence” = CHAPTER SIX of The Jews in the Renaissance (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959); page 133:

There is a controversy of long standing regarding the language in which the work was written. There is no reason why the erudite court physician, after ten years’ residence in Italy, should not have been able to express himself in Italian. But the Dialoghi read a little stiffly, and there is reason to doubt that this is the primary text: indeed, in a letter of 1543, the editor’s friend Claudio Tolomei wrote that the published version in Italian fell
short of the original clarity. A strong case may be made out for imagining that they were written in Hebrew, of which language the author had a complete mastery, as his poems show; but in that case the original has been lost, for the Hebrew version now extant is palpably a translation—possibly from the pen of Leone Modena. Modern Spanish authorities patriotically endeavor to win the original work (though not the published Spanish versions) for the language of the country from which its author had been ejected. But there is another possibility. The natural medium in which a Spanish Jew of the period would have expressed himself on a non-Hebraic subject was Ladino, or Castilian written in Hebrew characters. There is in fact in the British Museum a manuscript of the Dialoghi of this sort which, though not contemporary, may conceivably represent the author’s original text.


The alleged conversion of Leone Ebreo to Christianity is a calumny which was probably invented by one of his publishers in order to avoid persecution or to attract buyers for Dialoghi d’Amore or both.

Sarat, Collette. A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); page 408:

[Ebreo’s Dialoghi d’amore are] not a work of Jewish philosophy, but a book of philosophy written by a Jew.


Julius Guttmann* maintained that Leone should be regarded as the “only truly Jewish Renaissance philosopher,” an opinion shared by Carl Gebhardt,** who saw in him the last truly Jewish philosopher before Spinoza, even a precursor of the latter’s pantheistic vision.

* Guttmann, Julius. Die Philosophie des Judentums (Munich 1933; reprint, Wiesbaden, 1985)
** Gebhardt, Carl (ed.) Leone Ebreo: Dialoghi d’amore, hebraische Gedichte (Heidelberg, 1929)

Waite, A. E. The Holy Kabbalah (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1960); pages 429-430:

The interest in Leo the Hebrew can be only of a mystical kind, and it is on this basis presumably that he was included by Pistorius in his ambitious and unfinished attempt to engraver the signal treatises of Kabbalism. Even so, it is difficult to see that such a text has any title to a place among the Secret Tradition of Israel. We look in vain for the essential doctrines of Jewish philosophy ... [T]here is only one direct reference to the Kabbalah in the whole three hundred folio pages which the dialogues occupy in Pistorius...


To those of us who have learned about Renaissance Neoplatonism principally by studying Ficino, perhaps the most striking feature of Leone’s Dialoghi is its depiction of a dualistic cosmos governed by a system of universal hermaphroditism: Whereas eros is the copula mundi of Neoplatonic cosmology, Leone explicitly depicts that copula as heterosexual copulation. ... [T]he heterosexual emphasis of the Dialoghi reflects it roots in the Hebraic tradition.


Isaac Abravanel insists in one of his letters that his elder son, Jehudah, is “doubtless the major thinker of the present generation” [Otzar Nehmad, II, 58], and Jehudah himself declares proudly in his previously mentioned poem [“Telunah Al Ha-Zeman”]: “My keen thought surpasses that of all the scholars of Edom, who were like grasshoppers in my sight; I went to their schools and none of them could compare with me.” It must be admitted that Abravanel did not greatly exaggerate his importance.
JOHANNES TRITHEMIIUS (nee Johann Heidenberg) (1462-1516)

Trithemius’ “magical theology” was indebted to cabala, particularly as declared by Pico della Mirandola. Trithemius absorbed not only cabala’s angelic magic and rituals, which utilized divine names, but also its ciphers and cryptological methods. Scholarly debate over the beliefs and intentions of Trithemius comprise the discussion in the final chapter of Noel L. Brann’s book, *Trithemius and Magical Theology: A Chapter in the Controversy over Occult Studies in Early Modern Europe* [SUNY SERIES IN WESTERN ESOTERIC TRADITIONS], (Albany: State University of New York, 1999).


Trithemius’ most significant text, *The Steganographia of Johannes Trithemius*, BOOK I, has been translated by Fiona Tait and Christopher Upton, with BOOK III (translated by Dr J. W. H. Walden) and an extract from a commentary (from BOOK IV of *Cryptomenytes et cryptographia*) by Gustavus Selenus (also translated by Dr J. W. H. Walden), edited with an introduction by Adam McLean (Edinburgh: Magnum Opus Hermetic Sourceworks [No. #12], 1982), which is, alas, no longer available from McLean’s Alchemy Website (https://alchemywebsite.com/).

Supplementing the translations of *The Steganographia* is Wayne Shumaker’s *Renaissance Curiosa* [MEDIEVAL & RENAISSANCE TEXTS & STUDIES, Volume 8] (Binghamton: Center for Medieval & Early Renaissance Studies, 1982), CHAPTER III: “Johannes Trithemius and Cryptography.”

Also find


---


The *Steganographia* of Trithemius (the great occult teacher of both Agrippa and Paracelsus) was written at the end of the fifteenth century, and became one of the most influential and notorious of occult texts throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It works on two levels - as a grimoire or book of conjuration of spirits, and simultaneously as a code book - and contains lists of spiritual messengers associated with the divisions of space and time, a Cabalistic Angel magic. The Steganographia which circulated secretly in manuscript during the 16th century was highly valued. John Dee, whose Enochian system of angelic magic was influenced by the Steganographia, noted that ‘One Thousand Crowns’ had been offered for a copy of this work. On one level it reveals ways of encoding secret information in outwardly innocent texts, and thus the publication of this item will have a considerable impact upon our view of the ways in which the esoteric orders of the 16th and 17th centuries may have conveyed information and preserved their secrets.

This volume includes Books I and III of the Steganographia, together with an extract from Gustavus Selenus’ *Cryptomenytes et Cryptographiae*, providing an analysis of the method of encoding in the Steganographia.
FRANCESCO GIORGI [or FRANÇOIS GEORGES DE VENISE] (1467-1540)

Francesco Giorgi (or Zorzi) “has been considered a central figure in sixteenth-century Christian Kabbalah both by his contemporaries and by modern scholars. ... After Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who was the founder of the Christian Kabbalah, Zorzi can claim second place,” writes Giulio Busi in “Francesco Zorzi: A Methodical Dreamer,” in The Christian Kabbalah, edited by Joseph Dan (Harvard College Library, 1997).

Giorgi’s major work, De harmonia mundi, “a massive and curious book, all Hermetic, Platonic, Cabalistic, and Pinchian,” has been given detailed—albeit messy—treatment in Francesco Giorgi’s De HARMONIA MUNDI by Yona Dureau (Lewiston - Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2011). The publisher’s description of the book is misleading, for this work is not a straightforward “translation from the original Latin of Francesco Giorgio’s De Harmonica (sic) Mundi that establishes its connections to Christian Cabbala in the early Renaissance” as touted by the Mellen Press website. Dureau’s forty untitled appendices offer facsimiles of key passages from Giorgi’s Latin text (Venice: 1525) and English translations of these, along with translations from Guy Lefevre de la Boderie’s French version of L’Harmonie du Monde (Paris: 1582); such facsimiles and translations (without Guy’s French) are also interspersed through the book.

A CD is included, Voces Harmoniae Mundi/Choirs of Harmony—“to listen to while reading”—which features “music from Zorzo’s (sic) time and dreams.”

On Giorgi (listed chronologically):


Readers of French, refer to the chapters on Giorgi in François Secret’s works:

- Hermetisme et Kabbale (LEZIONI DELLA SCUOLA DI STUDI SUPERIORI IN NAPOLI 15, Napoli: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 1992). The first three chapters (of five) are on Giorgi.
- Kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance (Paris: Dunod, 1964), § FRANÇOIS GEORGES DE VENISE (pp. 126-140).

---

CARDINAL EGIDIO DA VITERBO [or GILLES DE VITERBE] (1469-1532)

Cardinal Egidio da Viterbo was the author of two cabalistic works: On the Hebrew Letters and Scechina, published as Libellus de litteris hebraicis; Scechina, Testo critico latino con e inediti a cura di François Secret, two volumes (Roma: Centro Internazionale di studi Umanistici, 1959).

On the Hebrew Letters is da Viterbo's summary of Sefer ha-Temunah, BOOK OF THE FIGURE (i.e., the figure, or shape, of the Hebrew letters), a treatise that speaks on the shemiot, the seven thousand-year cycles which correspond to the seven lower sefirot, often cited by the early kabbalists of the Gerona circle.


In English, see (listed chronologically)

- Leftley, S. A. MILLENNARIAN THOUGHT IN RENAISSANCE ROME WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PIETRO GALATINO (c. 1464-1540) AND EGIDIO DA VITERBO (c. 1469-1532) (Ph.D. dissertation, [UK]: University of Bristol, 1996)

Egidio’s Commentarium ad mentum Platonis, in Latin, has been published as Giles of Viterbo – The Commentary on the Sentences of Petrus Lombardus, ed. Daniel Nodes (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2010). Nodes’ twenty-four-page introduction is in English.

Some enduring sources on Egidio are François Secret’s works:

AGOSTINO (or AUGUSTINO) GIUSTINIANI (1470-1536)

Undoubtedly acquainted with the “kabbalistic circle” which included Egidio da Viterbo and Pietro Galatino, Dominican Agostino Giustiniani, a noble Genovese scholar of Greek and Hebrew, compiled Psalterium hebraeum, Graecum, arabicum, et chaldaeum, cum tribus Latinis interpretationibus et glossis [The Psalter of Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, and Chaldean, with three Latin interpretations and glosses] (Genoa, 1516). The Psalter included the original Hebrew and Latin translations from the kabbalistic works of R. Isaac ibn Avi Sahulah and Abraham Abulafia.

Giustiniani drew on Reuchlin’s De verbo mirifico and De arte cabalistica for his cabalistic writings, which may, in part, have been the source of cabala for Leone Ebreo.


See also the reference to Giustiniani in Valentina Izmirlieva’s All the Names of the Lord: Lists, Mysticism, and Magic (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008) as “a well-known Christian Kabbalist” (page 200, note 42).


Readers of French


---

37 Sahulah (1244-after 1281), a friend of Moses de Leon, wrote the famous book of fables, Meshal ha-Kadmoni, in which Sahulah quotes the Zohar, § Midrash ha-Ne’lam. Meshal ha-Kadmoni is not, however, a kabbalistic work.
ALBRECHT DÜRER (1471-1528)

Quite a few researchers have speculated on Dürer’s connections with the Jews and cabala, but none has presented the idea as bluntly as Zhenya Gershman in “Dürer’s Enigma: A Kabbalistic Revelation in Melancholia § 1, in Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism [NEW SERIES], Volume 18, Number 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

The section heading, “Dürer’s Melancholia § 1 as a Tribute to Pico’s Legacy,” places the oeuvre from which Dürer’s cabala arose. Gershman follows the lead of Frances Yates’ “suggestion that Melancholia § 1 was philosophically linked to ‘Christian Cabala as understood by Pico, Reuchlin, and Agrippa’” (Gershman, p. 221, citing Yates’ Occult Philosophy, p. 69).

Note the brief report on Gershman’s “Dürer’s Art of Revelation: Revelation of Dürer’s Art,” presented May 27, 2016, at the Masonic Center in Santa Monica > http://www.projectawe.org/events/2016/5/16/drers-art-of-revelation-revelation-of-drers-art


In this book [Bronstein] discovers ground common to Jewish mysticism and non-Jewish painters from Giovanni di Paolo in the fifteenth century to Paul Klee in the twentieth.

—endflap

Other artists that Bronstein considers: Ambrogio Lorenzetti (14th century), Giorgione (15th century), Dosso Dossi and Titian (16th century), Giovanni Battista Piranesi (18th century), Degas (19th century), Picasso and Matisse (20th century).

“Art is the shelter of justice.” I heard myself saying it once. The point—the spark hidden in the rock—the finite circle of Kabbalah’s meditation, the never-finished line of Kabbalah’s meditation, and the finite circle—the never-finite line in Paul Klee’s birth of an arrow spark, arrow-directive, are one and the same “root of roots.”

Art is the secret metaphysical Woman, the Shekhinah, the Shekhinah, the secret metaphysical Woman is art: a frail, delicate and distant, erect, tenacious passionate winter rose in distant Spain—a frail, delicate, distant erect and tenacious argument...

Who was it, suddenly coming toward me? “Is that you, Giovanni?” I said. “What are you doing here, Giovanni di Paolo, a total stranger here?”

GIOVANNI DI PAOLO

“I heard a great roar. It came from where you are. I knew what it was, and so, my memory attracting me, I went there. A stranger, true, I am now of here and now. I heard a great roar—cataclysmic descent? ascent?—of the elements. I heard again the formation, through fire, air, water and solid dust, of the cosmos and of the soul.”

—Kabbalah and Art, page 61
JEAN THÉNAUD (ca. 1480-1542)

Franciscan Jean Thénaud, “voyager and cabalist,” was the author of *La saïncet et trescrestienne cabale* (The Holy and Very Christian Cabala—1519, also called *La cabale métrifée*) and *Traité* (or *Traicté* de la cabale (Treatise on the Cabala—1521). Six-hundred lines of the former, in French, comprise Appendix D of J. L. Blau’s *Christian Interpretation of the Cabala*. Thénaud’s “Very Christian Cabala” is discussed in Blau’s Chapter VII.

In his article, “Renaissance Kabbalah” (in *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, edited by Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman, New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1995), G. Mallary Masters singles out Thénaud’s *Traité de la Cabale chrétienne* as “one very typical ‘popularizing’ treatise from early sixteenth-century France.” After summarizing its contents, Masters reviews its sources, which amounts to a survey of the key figures of Renaissance cabala: Pico, Reuchlin, Agrippa, Ricci, and Giorgi (or Zorzi).


PAUL RICIUS [or RICCI] (fl. 1506-1541)

“The years between [Reuchlin’s De verbo mirifico and De arte cabalistica] also witnessed the appearance of a number of works by the learned convert Paul Ricius, the private physician of Emperor Maximilian, who took Pico’s and Reuchlin’s conclusions and added to them through an original synthesis of kabbalistic and Christian sources” (—Scholem, Kabbalah, p. 198). Ricius’ four-volume De cælesti agricultura was included in Johannes Pistorius’ compendium, Artis cabalistæ (Basileæ: per S. Henricpetri, 1587)

(See my outline of the contents of Artis cabalistæ on page 66.)

A “complete translation” of “PAUL RICCI’S INTRODUCTION TO THE LORE OF THE CABALISTS OR ALLEGORIZERS” (Pauli Ricci in cabalistarum seu allegorizantium eruditionem isagoge, Augsburg: 1515) is presented in Blau’s Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance (pp. 67-74). On this work, see Beitchman’s Alchemy of the Word: § THE DISSEMINATION OF CABALA (p. 169), along with his numerous other references.

See also (listed chronologically)


Readers of French, see § PAUL RICI in François Secret’s Kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance (pp. 87ff).
GIULIO CAMILLO (1480-1544)

Giulio Camillo, colorful alchemist and philosopher, was both praised and scorned in his day. He is most noted for his work on Memory Theatre, L'idea del teatro (Florence: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1550), which serves as a window into the intellectual and spiritual urgencies of his era, for Camillo engages the full gamut of the “Hermetic-Cabalist” tradition.

For the few sources in English (listed chronologically), see

  VI. “Renaissance Memory: The Memory Theatre of Giulio Camillo”
  VII. “Camillo’s Theatre and the Venetian Renaissance”
  “The Memory Theatre of Giulio Camillo asks the question: How is the motion of the memory connected with the motion of history? How is the personal political? It is the story of a man with perfect memory who is haunted by the memory of a murder he may have committed. As he searches his memory he is confronted by events that he denies. Amnesia begins to set in as his denials grow until the mind of a man who could focus his entire memory in a single moment is in danger of shattering. ... The Memory Theatre is structured as a play within a play within a play.” (—The Memory Theatre..., pp. 2 and 3)
  “There is evidence, however, that the cabalalah was not a subject that was wholly to absorb Camillo, and that he later felt that the references to it in L’Idea del Teatro were more like spice than the meat of the work.” (—Robinson, A Search..., page 26)
  Also see Robinson’s brief “Giulio Camillo’s L’idea del teatro,” in eSharp, Issue 1 (University of Glasgow, Autumn 2003): MAGIC, at http://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/esharp/issues/1/robinson/.

Camillo’s works were published in Italian as L’idea del Teatro e altri scritti di retorica (Turin: Edizioni RES, 1990). Lina Bolzoni has edited a Spanish version: La Idea del Teatro [BIBLIOTECA DE ENSAYO/ESSAY LIBRARY], translated by Jordi Raventos (Madrid: Ediciones Siruela SA, 2006 & 2010).

In Portuguese, find the illustrated O Teatro da Memória de Giulio Camillo, edited by Milton José de Almeida (Granja Viana/Cotia: Ateliê Editorial, 2005).

HEINRICH CORNELIUS AGrippa (1486?–1535)

Following on Pico, Lazzarelli, Giorgi, and Reuchlin was Trithemius’ student, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim. His major work, *De occulta philosophia* (in three books), is a compendium of occult sciences. Agrippa’s account of *cabala* is found in Book III, coupled as it is with medieval angelology and demonology and the magic connected with these.


Tyson’s edition of *De occulta philosophia* supplements Agrippa’s text with a substantial amount of well-researched support material covering such topics as “Practical Kabbalah,” “The Sephiroth,” “Magic Squares,” “Geomancy,” and others, in eight appendices, which makes this particular edition a valuable reference book.


A new English translation of *De occulta philosophia* from the original Latin was inaugurated with *Three Books of Occult Philosophy: Book One, A Modern Translation* (ACADEMIC EDITION), translated by Eric Purdue, preface by Christopher Warnock (Renaissance Astrology, 2012—note Warnock’s critique of “Donald Tyson’s Annotated Edition” on page 5). This eventually grew into a complete translation of all three volumes as *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, translated from the original Latin edition of 1533 by Eric Purdue (Rochester [VT]: Inner Traditions, 2021).

There are several inexpensive CreateSpace versions of *Three Books...*, e.g.:

- *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (CreateSpace/Mystical World Reprints, 2015)—paperback.
- *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (Complete and Uncensored Version) (CreateSpace/Monadic Deva Press, 2018)—paperback. “[T]he spelling has been modernized and archaic words changed to modern versions, without losing any of the original meaning.”

To study Agrippa, one might start with Blau’s *Christian Interpretation...* (CHAPTER VI, “The Fantastic Cabala”), Yates’ chapters on Agrippa in *Giordano Bruno...* (CHAPTER VII) and Yates’ *Occult Philosophy...* (CHAPTERS V & VI).

Then see (listed chronologically),


---

8 See below, **SOME SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PRINTED WORKS ON CHRISTIAN CABALA IN ENGLISH**, for the complete text of the title page of the 1651 English edition of *De occulta philosophia*—page 99.
• Kompels, Aida. *Cornelius Agrippa: OCCULT LANGUAGE AND HOW TO CONNECT TO THE DIVINE (B.A. Thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2012).*

The van der Poel and Lehrich books complement each other nicely: The former concentrates on Agrippa’s philosophical and theological thought via his correspondence, orations, and declamations (i.e., *De incertitudine et vanitate..., De nobilitate et praeclarentia feminei sexus,* etc.); the latter focuses on *De occulta philosophia.* The bibliographies in van der Poel and Lehrich are immensely useful: see van der Poel (pp. 277-280) for a complete list of Agrippa’s works, and Lehrich (pp. 240-243): WORKS ON AGrippA.

Particularly on matters of Agrippa’s biography, van der Poel and Lehrich defer to Nauert as supplemented by the numerous articles of Paola Zambelli, only a few of which are in English:


• “Agrippa as an Author of Prohibited Books” = PART II of *White Magic, Black Magic in the European Renaissance*.


Online, see Henry Morley’s *Life of Henry Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, Doctor and Knight, Commonly Known as a Magician*, 2 volumes (London: Chapman & Hall, 1856), several versions of which have been digitized by Google: INTERNET ARCHIVE >

PHILLIPUS THEOPHRASTUS AUREOLUS BOMBASTUS VON HOHENHEIM

known as PARACELSUS (1493-1541)

Another student of Trithemius, Paracelsus, is generally—and correctly—associated with alchemy. The term cabala can be attached to him only in its broadest, most inexact sense, i.e., referring to astronomical and magical practices.

On or by Paracelsus (listed chronologically):

- Pachter, Henry M. Magic into Science: The Story of Paracelsus (New York: Henry Schuman, 1951)
• Webster, Charles. Paracelsus: Medicine, Magic and Mission at the End of Time (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).


ARCHANGELUS OF BURGO NOVO (or ARCANGELO DA BORGONUOVO)  
(d. ca. 1570)

Franciscan monk Archangelus is reported to have died at a very old age (in Bologna). Like Pico, he studied Hebrew—and most likely kabbalah—under Flavius Mithridates. He learned Hebrew and Christian esotericism from Francesco Giorgi as well, and studied the works Reuchlin.

Archangelus' Dechiaratione sopra il nome di Giesu, secondo gli Hebrei cabalisti, Greci, Caldei, Persi, & Latini יִשָּׁרָאֵל ... in three books [DECLARATION UPON THE NAME OF JESUS ACCORDING TO THE CABALISTIC HEBREWS, GREEKS, CHALDEANS, PERSIANS, & LATIN ...] (Ferrara: Francesco Rossi, 1557), develops ideas introduced in Reuchlin's De verbo mirifico.

Late in his life, Archangelus wrote a lengthy commentary on—and defense of—Pico's 900 Theses: Cabalistarum selectiora, obscurioraque dogmata a Ioanne Pico ... [SELECT OBSCURE CABALISTIC DOGMATA FROM GIOVANNI PICO ...] (Venice: Francesco de Franceschi, 1569); this is probably his last work.

A section of Cabalistarum selectiora..., Interpretationes in selectiora obscuriora[ve] cabalistarum dogmata, appears in Johannes Pistorius' Artis cabalisticae, tomus I (Basil, 1587).

Dechiaratione sopra il nome di Giesu, in Italian, can be viewed at Archive.org > https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_cQRUI3aSbBQC or purchased as a leatherbound book from Generic (2019).

Cabalistarum selectiora..., in Latin, can also be accessed at Archive.org > https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_5aKmXIvCK24C or purchased as a leatherbound book from Generic (2019), where the author is listed as either “Archangelus de Burgonovo” or “Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.”

JOHANN ALBRECHT WIDMANSTETTER [or WIDMANSTADT] (1506-1557)

One of the most remarkable of the foreign humanists working in Italy at this time [1520-1553] was the German, Johann Albrecht Widmanstadt, later Chancellor of Lower Austria and Rector of the University of Vienna, who went far beyond the rudiments of Jewish scholarship and enjoyed the advantage of instruction by a number of distinguished teachers.


As a young man he knew of Reuchlin. ... [I]n Naples... he met Pico della Mirandola’s teacher of Kabbalah, Rabbi Dattilus [or Dattilo], and it was here that Widmanstetter’s kabbalistic education began. ... [Egidio da Viterbo] invited Widmanstetter to Rome to further his Arabic and kabbalistic studies.”


With guileless irony, Widmanstetter

warned his coreligionists that “from the Kabbalah of the Jews will spring, as from a Trojan horse, an infinite number of startling opinions which will serve as weapons for attack upon the Church of Christ.”


Widmanstadt’s criticism shows, at least on this particular point, an unusual understanding both of the kabbalah’s true character, and of the ambiguity inherent in the Christian kabbalist project, especially when, as in Pico’s case, that project was grounded in a belief in syncretism as a positive value.

Widmanstetter’s critique of Dattilus is quoted by Scholm in “The Beginnings of Christian Kabbalah” (p. 19).


Readers of French can refer to the segment of Secret’s Kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance (Paris: Dunod, 1964) on Widmanstetter, pp. 121-123.
Guillaume Postel (1510-1581)

Guillaume Postel produced a Latin translation of the *Sefer Yezirah* and penned some comments on it. “In addition, he translated the *Bahir*, part of a commentary of Menahem of Recanati, and a part of the *Bereshith Rabba.*” (—Marion Kunz, *Guillaume Postel*, p. 85—cited in detail below). Postel also translated portions of the *Zohar*, receiving guidance in understanding them from an unlikely tutor: an illiterate woman, though something of a sixteenth-century Mother Teresa (perhaps in both the best and worst senses), called Madre Zuana, or Mother Johanna—the “Venetian Virgin.” At various times, Postel identified her as mother of the world, the shekkinah, and the second messiah. Marion Kunz writes, “As [Postel] worked on his translation of the *Zohar*, he became ever more convinced that the restitution of all things as interpreted by his Mother Johanna was confirmed not only in the ‘most divine and rare books of the *Zohar,***’ but also in the books of the ancient [Jewish] interpreters...” (—Kunz, *Guillaume Postel*, p. 84). Alas, none of Postel’s translations has been published.

On Postel, in chronological order:

- Kunz’ collection, *Venice, Myth and Utopian Thought in the Sixteenth Century: Bodin, Postel and the Virgin of Venice* (VARIORUM COLLECTED STUDIES SERIES CS668, Aldershot – Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2000; of the 8 articles on Postel, 6 are in English, 2 in Italian).


Readers of French, refer to the works on Postel written or edited by François Secret:

- *Le Zohar chez les kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance* (Paris: Durlacher, 1958), SECTION VI, “Les traduction du Zohar de Guillaume Postel” (pp. 51-78) and APPENDIX I, “Préface de Postel à sa traduction du Zohar sur la Genèse” (pp. 104-114).

Also in French,

TERESA OF ÁVILA (1515-1582)

Teresa of Ávila was born into noble family with a converso background. She became a Carmelite nun. A theologian, reformer, and mystic, she was beatified in 1614 by Pope Gregory XV, heralded as a “Doctor of the Church.” Aspects of Teresa’s mysticism are thought to have been influenced by early Jewish mysticism (i.e., the hekhalot literature) and kabbalah.

See the following works:


  Teresa of Avila’s Interior Castle is analyzed against (i) the merkabah tradition, (ii) Abraham Abulafia’s “ecstatic” kabbalah, and (iii) the classical (theosophical) kabbalah of the Zohar and Gikatilla’s Sha’are Orah (Gates of Light).


  Before Green’s 1984 article, “St Teresa of Avila and Hekhalot Mysticism” (in Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses, vol. 13, no. 3), “the Jewish elements in [Teresa’s] book the Interior Castle had not been noticed” (p. 85)—or, at least, not developed beyond passing mention.


  Spanish Christian Cabala deals with, sixteenth-century manifestations of Christian cabala in Spain. While Swietlicki’s book might not generally be thought of as a primer on cabala, it does contain a good overview of the Renaissance period as its opening chapter, which could help those approaching this subject for the first time to get their bearings. Swietlicki goes on to summarize “The Diffusion of the Christian Cabala in Renaissance Culture” in Chapter 2, giving a country-by-country account, covering Italy, France, England, and Spain. She then details the cabala of Santa Teresa de Jesus (of Avila, 1515-1582), Fray Luis de Leon (1528?-1591), and San Juan de la Cruz (1542-1591).
JOHN DEE (1527-1608)

In *Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*, Frances Yates calls John Dee a “Christian Cabalist.” Indeed, Dee seems to have drawn his *cabala* fully from Christian sources, primarily Reuchlin, Agrippa, and Postel.

There is a well-developed literature on Dee—quite a few more items than are listed here—including his own writings in reprint as well as studies of his work and influence. First, note the references above in §FOUR HISTORIANS: FRANCES YATES.

Publications and reprints include these works by Dee:

  - A “completely new & reset edition” of *A True and Faithful Relation...* published as *Dr John Dee’s Spiritual Diaries* (1583-1608), ed. Stephen Skinner (Singapore: Golden Hoard Publishing, 2011); supplemented by Skinner’s *Key to the Latin of Dr John Dee’s Spiritual Diaries* (Singapore: Golden Hoard Publishing, 2012), “a full translation of the more than 50,000 words printed in Latin in Dee’s Diaries.”

  Further, there is *The Complete Mystical Records of Dr. John Dee — TRANSCRIBED FROM THE 16TH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPTS DOCUMENTING DEE’S CONVERSATIONS WITH ANGELS*, compiled and edited by Kevin Klein, 3 volumes (St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 2020).

  A discussion of *A True and Faithful Relation...* appears in Wayne Shumaker’s *Renaissance Curios* [MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE TEXTS AND STUDIES, Volume 8] (Binghamton: Center for Medieval & Early Renaissance Studies, 1982), CHAPTER 1: “John Dee’s Conversations with Angels.”


  Jim Egan’s translation is online at http://newporttowermuseum.com/resources/Monas-Hieroglyphica-in-English.pdf. This version was put into print in 2014 as *Sacred Symbol of Oneness*. Egan rendered his translation from the original 1564 Latin text, in the process consulting previous versions, including the Hamilton-Jones and Josten translations listed above.

  An attractive edition has been produced by Ouroboros Press, offering a new translation from the Latin by Teresa Burns and Nancy Turner with an introduction and extensive notes by Teresa Burns (Seattle: Ouroboros Press, 2021). The publisher claims that this is “the most complete edition.”


  *Five Books...* is a welcome new edition of *Mysteriorum Libri Quinque: Five Books of Mystical Exercises of John Dee / An Angelic Revelation of Cabalistic Magic and other Mysteries Occult and Divine / revealed to Dr. John dee and Edward Kelly A.D. 1581 – 1583, with a preface by Elias Ashmole* [MAGNUM OPUS - HERMETIC SOURCEWORKS SERIES, 20], a hand-bound, typescript edition of BL MS. Sloane 3188 by Adam McLean, in a limited run of 250 copies in 1985, which is now almost impossible to find.

59

At Joseph Peterson’s TWILIT GROTTO, www.esotericarchives.com/dee/index.html, selected writings:

- Five Books of Mystery (Mysteriourum Libri Quinque)
- Earliest versions of Angelic or “Enochian” script
- Mysteriourum Liber Sextus et Sanctus (Liber Loagaeth)
- Index Verborum of the “Angelical Language” from Liber Loagaeth
- Compendium Heptarchiae Mysticae
- De Heptarchia Mystica
- Tuba Veneris (THE TRUMPET OF VENUS)
- Tabula bonorum angelorum invocationes
- “The Holy Table” engraving from Casaubon’s True and Faithful Relation
- Monas Hieroglyphica [—the J. W. Hamilton-Jones translation]
- An excerpt from C. H. Josten’s translation of Monas Hieroglyphica
- “A Letter Containing a most briefe Discourse Apologetically”
- Meric Casaubon, A True and Faithful Relation (excerpts)

An interesting supplement to the Dee magical material is Stephen Skinner and David Rankine’s Practical Angel Magic of Dr John Dee’s Enochian Tables, TABULARUM BONORUM ANGELORUM INVOCATIONES [SOURCEWORKS OF CEREMONIAL MAGIC – Volume 1] (London: Golden Hoard Press, 2004): “...the present manuscript is a working expansion of the Book of Invocation or Calls, the last of the four manuscripts found in Dee’s secret chest.” (—p. 37) “The two manuscripts transcribed in Part 3 of this book are Sloane MS 307 and Sloane MS 3821, both from the British Library.” (—p. 53) It is strongly suggested that the author of the “extensive expansion” was one Thomas Rudd (1583-1656), whose manuscripts are also featured in volumes 2 and 3 of SOURCEWORKS OF CEREMONIAL MAGIC: Keys to the Gateway of Magic: Summoning the Solomonic Archangels & Demon Princes AND The Goetia of Dr Rudd: Angels and Demons. Add to these Colin D. Campbell’s Magic Seal of Dr. John Dee: The Sigillum Dei Aemeth (York Beach: Teitan Press, 2009), which presents the history of Dee’s sigillum, suggests corrections which might be made, then shows how it can be put to ritual use.

About Dee (listed chronologically, from 1668)

- Clulee, Nicholas H. John Dee’s Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion (London: Routledge, 1988)—Cabala is most often mentioned in Clulee’s Archangels of Dee’s Monas hieroglyphica. It is pointed out that Dee believed that he had superseded the “vulgar linguistic discipline” of Hebraic kabbalah with his own “real” kabbalah.
- James, Geoffrey. Angel Magic: The Ancient Art of Summoning and Communicating with Angelic Beings (St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1995)—James refers to the principle based on Hebrew cabala “which says that the name of an object is inextricably linked with that object. To know the true name of something is to be able to control it completely.” (p. 16)
- Harkness, Deborah. John Dee’s Conversations with Angels: Cabala, Alchemy, and the End of Nature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)—Cabala is dealt with throughout; see in particular CHAPTER 5, “The True Cabala: Reading the Book of Nature,” which describes “angelic cabala and explains how it is similar, and dissimilar, to the Jewish and Christian cabala of the early modern period.” (—p. 5)
- Håkansson, Hakan. Seeing the Word: John Dee and Renaissance Occultism [UGGLAN MINERVASERIEN, 2] (Lund: Lunds Universitet, 2001)—Dee’s uses of Cabala are discussed in numerous sections toward the middle of Seeing the Word, in particular pp. 170-199.
• Woolley, Benjamin. The Queen's Conjurer: The Science and Magic of Dr. John Dee, Advisor to Queen Elizabeth I (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001)—CHAPTER IX opens with a brief account of Dee's exploration of “a new field of research: the Cabala.”

• Szönyi, György E. John Dee's Occultism: Magical Exaltation through Powerful Signs. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004)—See pp. 90-104, where there is a “sketchy outline of the cabala” within a segment called PICO’S ECOCOMIUM OF EXALTATIO.


Significant short works, articles and chapters on Dee (listed chronologically, from 1921):

• James, M[ontague] R[hodes]. Lists of Manuscripts Formerly Owned by Dr. John Dee, with preface and identifications (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921).


• Clucas, Stephen. “‘Non est legendum sed inspicendum solum’: Inspectival Knowledge and the Visual Logic of John dee’s Liber Mysteriorum,” in Emblems and Alchemy, edited by A. Adams and S. J. Linden (Glasgow: Glasgow Emblem Studies, 1998), pages 109-132; reprinted in Clucas' compendium Magic, Memory and Natural
Philosophy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Surrey – Burlington: Ashgate, 2011)—hereafter Magic, Memory and Natural Philosophy.


Charlotte Fell Smith’s John Dee (1527-1608) (London: Constable & Company Ltd, 1909) is also at this site: click “Charlotte Fell Smith book.” Indeed, quite a bit of material on Dee is available on the Internet at not only THE JOHN DEE SOCIETY but also THE JOHN DEE PUBLICATION PROJECT (for Enochian material in particular) at www.john-dee.org
ENOCHIAN MAGIC

Dozens of books have been written about Enochian magic as derived from Dee's work with Edward Kelley for the simple reason that the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn incorporated a portion of it into their teachings. The Golden Dawn's manner of Enochia was further developed by Aleister Crowley and subsequent authors and magicians, many of whom added elements which are quite alien to Dee's work even while omitting well-nigh half of Dee's original system.

For an accurate impression of Dee and Kelley’s entire system, see Donald Tyson’s Enochian Magic for Beginners: The Original System of Angel Magic (St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1997; Kindle, 2002). The title is misleading: Tyson's book is a thorough introduction, description, and appraisal—not really for beginners.

“Enochian” literature spinning off from the Golden Dawn’s use of Dee material is extensive. Some examples:


LUIS DE LEÓN (1527-1591)  
JUAN DE LA CRUZ [JOHN OF THE CROSS] (1542-1591)

Luis de León and Juan de la Cruz flourished during the Spanish Golden Age, the era that produced Cervantes and El Greco. Both were likely “of converso stock.” (—Spanish Christian Cabala, page 155).

Fray Luis, an Augustinian theologian and poet, knew Latin, Greek, and, most significant here, Hebrew. He “used Christian Cabala to bridge the Hebrew and Christian traditions.” (—Spanish Christian Cabala, page 160).

In The Strife of Tongues, Colin Thompson notes that an accurate measure of the relationship between Fray Luis, Kabbalism and Jewish tradition is best obtained from assessing his debt to the most popular of the Christian Kabbalists, Galatinus and his De arcanis veritatis. (—page 165)

Thompson adds that Galatinus and the Christian interpreters of kabbalah whom he admired (i.e., Paul of Burgos, Pico della Mirandola, and Egidio de Viterbo), are not concerned with Kabbalah in itself, but with how it may be useful to Christians. (ibid.)

Indeed, Thompson opens his segment, FRAY LUIS AND KABBALISTIC THOUGHT, Fray Luis was fundamentally a Hebrew scholar fascinated by textual and linguistic detail, not for its own sake, but as the basis on which accurate interpretations of Scripture could be made and Christians have their knowledge of the Bible enriched.

Juan de la Cruz became a Carmelite under the tutelage of Teresa of Avila. Like Teresa, Friar Juan was posthumously declared a Doctor of the Church (by Pope Benedict XIII, 1726), and became known as the “Mystical Doctor.”

CatherineSweetlicki’s book, Spanish Christian Cabala, offers a well-developed speculation on the influence of the Zohar on San Juan’s thought.

On Luis de León:


On both Luis de León and Juan de la Cruz as “Christian kabbalists,” see


---

99 Born Solomon ha-Levi, Paul of Burgos, or Pablo de Santa Maria (1351-1435), was a wealthy rabbinical scholar who converted in 1391. After his conversion, in his role as an Archbishop and Lord Chancellor, he set to persecuting the Jews, limiting their rights to the extent that they had virtually no way of earning enough to maintain their lives—unless they too converted.
JEAN BODIN (1530-1596)

Bodin was a more accomplished Hebraist than most around him, including his older contemporary Guillaume Postel. In his works, especially *Colloquium heptaplomeres de rerum sublimium arcanis abditis* (Colloquium of the Seven about the Secrets of the Sublime—1588), Bodin cites a wide range of Jewish sources, including the Talmud, Maimonides, and the Zohar. Of the seven fictional discussants of the Colloquium, the most prominent—and portrayed as the most learned—is a Jew named Salomon Barcassius, “whose bearing and erudition command general respect and who argues that the religion of Moses, the most ancient, remains superior to all others” (—Frank E. Manuel, *The Broken Staff* [Cambridge – London: Harvard University Press, 1992], p. 55). The “others” are a rich Venetian host, a convert from Catholicism to Islam, a Calvinist, a Lutheran, a skeptic, and a “deist.”


Note Kuntz’ articles in her collection, *Venice, Myth and Utopian Thought in the Sixteenth Century: Bodin, Postel and the Virgin of Venice* (full bibliographic details above in § POSTEL):

1. “The Home of Coroneus in Jean Bodin’s Colloquium”
2. “Structure, Form and Meaning in the Colloquium Heptaplomeres of Jean Bodin”
3. “Harmony and the Heptaplomeres of Jean Bodin”
4. “The Concept of Toleration in the Colloquium Heptaplomeres of Jean Bodin.”

See also


JOHANNES PISTORIUS (1546-1608)

Pistorius served in the court of Karl II of Baden-Durlach. He was a doctor of medicine.

A restless Protestant, he drifted from Lutheranism to Calvanism, and finally wound up as a Catholic. In the Catholic Church, Pistorius held a number of offices.

Most important to our concern here is that Pistorius compiled an influential anthology of cabalistic writings:

Artis cabalisticae, hoc est, Reconditae theologiae et philosophiae, scriptorum: tomos I. In quo praeter Pavli Ricci theologicos & philosophicos libros sunt latini penè omnes et hebraei nonnulli praestantissimi scriptores ... opvs omnibvs theologis, et occultae abstrvsae q'v'e philosophiae stvdiosis pernecessariu ... ex D. Ioannis Pistorii. (Basileae: per Sebastianvm Henricpetri, M.D.XXXVII [1587])

This collection defined cabala in Christian Europe until, a century later, it was supplemented, or perhaps superseded, by Kabbala denudata, which in fact offers far more kabbalah than cabala, whereas Pistorius' compilation is a mix of the two.

Pistorius intended further volumes, but none was ever produced.


Contents of Artis cabalisticae:
- Pavli Ricci (Ricci, Riccius, or Riccio): De coelesti agricultura libri IIII
- Rabi Iosephi (Gikatilla): De porta, i.e., Sha'are Orah
- Leonis Hebraei (Leone Ebreo): De amore dialogi tres
- Ionnis Reuchlini (Johann Reuchlin): De arte cabalistica, libri III; De verbo mirifico, libri III
- Archangeli Bvironovenisis (Archangelus of Borgo Nuovo): Interpretationes in selectiora obscarioaq cabalistarvm dogmata
- Abrahami (Abraham the Prophet): De creatione & cabalistinis, hebraicè Sepher ıezira, liber
GIORDANO BRUNO (1548-1600)

According to Frances Yates, Bruno’s cabala was derived primarily from Agrippa and remained rather dilute, being far less important to Bruno than his “Egyptianism” (see above: § FOUR HISTORIANS: FRANCES YATES • Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition).

In his Cabala del Cavallo Pegaseo he appears to be totally rejecting Cabala for his purely Egyptian insights, an attitude which accords with his highly unorthodox view of the history of prisca theologia, or prisca magia, in which, according to him, the Egyptians are not only earliest but best, and the Jews and Christians later and worse.  

(—Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, p. 257)

Compare Yates’ conclusions about Bruno with those in Giordano Bruno and the Kabbalah: Prophets, Magicians, and Rabbis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) by Karen Silvia de Leon-Jones, who contends that Bruno’s knowledge and development of the kabbalah were far more extensive than Yates suggests. In de Leon-Jones’ words,

Bruno does not merely present or discuss the kabbalah, he transforms it, manipulates it, makes it his own, does it.  

(—Giordano Bruno and the Kabbalah, p. 5)

Note, however, the objections of David Harari in “Was the Author of Cabala del Cavallo Pegaseo a Kabbalist?” (in Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts, Volume Four, eds. Daniel Abrams and Avraham Elqayam, Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 1999). Responding to de Leon-Jones’ Giordano Bruno and the Kabbalah, Harari suggests that Leone Ebreo was the author of Cabala del cavallo pegaseo, not Bruno, thus pulling the rug out from under de Leon-Jones’ thesis.40

The text in question, Cabala del cavallo pegaseo (THE CABALA OF PEGASUS)—attributed as it usually is to Bruno—has been translated and annotated by Sidney L. Sondergard and Madison U. Sowell (New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2002): “The Brunist persona Saulino lectures on the Sefirot early in the first dialogue of the Cabala ... a kabbalistic system derived primarily from Cornelius Agrippa’s De occulta philosophia...” (—p. xxx).

Another Bruno dialogue has been put into English: The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast, translated and with an introduction by Arthur D. Inerti, foreword by Karen Silvia de Leon-Jones (Lincoln – London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

Other Bruno works in translation:

• The Heroic Enthusiasts (Gli eroici furori): An Ethical Poem, Part the First, translated by L. Williams, with an introduction, complied chiefly from David Levi’s “Giordano Bruno, o La religione del persiero” (vol. 1 – London: G. Redway, 1887-1889; vol. 2 – London: B. Quaritch, 1889).

  This title, translated as The Heroic Frenzies, can be found at Joseph Peterson’s ESOTERIC ARCHIVES, at http://www.esotericarchives.com/bruno/home.htm, along with ten other Bruno works in Latin. Peterson reproduces the translation of Paulo Eugene Memmo, Jr. (1964).


40 On Leone Ebreo, see THE PROBLEM OF LEONE EBREO’S DIALOGHI.
There is also Scott Gosnell’s seven-volume series of translations, *The Collected Works of Giordano Bruno* (available in paperback and Kindle):


4. *Thirty Seals & The Seal of Seals* (CreateSpace, 2016)

5. *On Magic* (CreateSpace, 2018)


7. *Song of Circe & On the Composition of Images: Two Books of the Art of Memory* (CreateSpace, 2020)

Studies on Bruno (listed chronologically, from 1950):


  Gatti treats Bruno the scientific thinker and mathematician rather than Bruno the “Hermetic Magus”—the title Frances Yates gave him.


  “In its multiple worlds, its combinations of Hebrew letters, and its interconnections, in addition to its affinities with the Neoplatonic interplay of darkness and light, Kabbalah bore an uncannily close relationship to the way of thinking that Giordano Bruno came to identify as the Nolan philosophy. Bruno’s was certainly not a Christian Kabbalah; if anything it was more identifiably Jewish. Neither alternative would find any approval within the walls of San Domenico. As a student, Bruno restricted his energies to a less dangerous pursuit: the material exercise known as the art of memory.”

  (—Rowland, Giordano Bruno, p. 61)


• Blum, Paul Richard. Giordano Bruno—An Introduction, translated from the German by Peter Henneveld [VALUES IN ITALIAN PHILOSOPHY, 254] (Leiden/Amsterdam – New York: Brill/Rodopi [VALUE INQUIRY BOOK SERIES], 2012).

  Blum, on the kabbalah in Cabala del cavallo pegaso, pages 61 and 62:

  “But when Onorio recommends, ‘if you are not willing to listen under the appearance of doctrine and science, then do it just for fun,’ then not only the foolishness becomes a metaphor, and not only the malicious portrait of Aristotle becomes a fable, but rather the entire wisdom displayed throughout this dialogue becomes a narrative. Kabbalah becomes a cabal. The third dialogue which allegedly failed turns the entire work into an unfinished Kabbalah, a little preparatory and paradigmatic intrigue for beginners: ‘Cabala parva, tironica, isagogica, microcosmica.’”

  “...Bruno regards the Jewish Kabbalah merely as another invitation to a general syncretism of religions or to the abolition of the historically and geographically diverse modes of expression within a universal philosophy.”


69
HEINRICH KHUNRATH (1560-1605)

Khunrath draws together Paracelsianism, alchemy, magic, and the cabala of Reuchlin, Agrippa, and Pistorius’ Artis cabalisticae (Basil, 1587) in text and eleven engravings, eight of which are remarkably detailed, in his Amphihteatrum sapientiae æternæ, solis verae (Hamburg, 1595; Hanau, 1609).

A “definitive edition” was published as Amphihteatrum Sapientiae Aeternæ – Schauflazt Der Ewigen Allein Wahren Weisheit, edited by Carlos Gilly, Anja Hallacker, Hanns-Peter Neumann, and Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann [CLAVIS PANSOPHIAE, 6] (Stuttgart: frommann-Holboog Verlag e.K., 2013) [German/Latin]:

“Complete reprint of the first print [Hamburg] 1595, as well as of the second and last print Hanau 1609. Includes a bibliography of Khunrath’s prints and handwritings, an index of names and a concordance of both editions, as well as a transcript of an 18th-century German translation of the Amphihteatrum Sapientiae Aeternae.” (—from the frommann-Holboog website)

On Khunrath and his Amphihteatrum sapientiae æternæ, listed alphabetically by author:


• Craven, J. B. Doctor Heinrich Khunrath: A Study in Mystical Alchemy from Craven’s personal papers: University of Aberdeen Special Collections, ref. GB 231 MS 896/2; print version edited by Adam McLean (Glasgow: Hermetic, Studies No. 1, 1997)—limited to 300 copies.


• Szulakowska, Urszula. The Alchemy of Light (Leiden – Boston – Köln: Brill, 2000), CHAPTERS 8 and 9 are on the 1602 and 1604 editions of Amphihteatrum sapientiae æternæ, respectively.


“... with extensive commentaries on these engravings, including material by J. B. Craven, Stanislas de Guaita, Papus and Johan Arndt.” (—http://www.alchemywebsite.com/bookshop/mohs7.html)

70
THE CONFLATION OF CABALA & ALCHEMY

Toward the end of his sub-chapter on Christian cabala (—Kabbalah, pp. 196-201), Gershom Scholem describes the blending of cabala and alchemy [my additions appear in brackets]:

As early as the late 16th century [with, for example, Paracelsus] a pronounced trend had emerged toward the permutation of Christian Kabbalah with alchemical symbolism, thus giving it an oddly original character in its final stages of development in the 17th and 18th centuries. This mélange of elements typifies the works of Heinrich Khunrath, Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Eternæ (1609), Blaise de Vigenère [1523-1596], Traité du Feu (1617), Abraham von Frankenberg [1593-1652], Robert Fludd (1574–1637), and Thomas Vaughan (1622–1666), and reaches its apogee in Georg von Welling’s [1655-1727] Opus Mago-Cabalisticum (1735) and the many books of F. C. Oetinger (1702–1782), whose influence is discernible in the works of such great figures of German idealist philosophy as Hegel and Schelling. In yet another form this mixture reappears in the theosophical systems of the Freemasons in the second half of the 18th century [and on into the nineteenth century]. (—Kabbalah, p. 200)

Refer to


See above:

• on Paracelsus, pages 52-53
• on Khunrath, page 70

See below:

• on Fludd, pages 76-77
• on Franckenberg, page 79
• on Vaughan, pages 85 & 105-1065
• on Oetinger, page 120
• on Hegel, page 129


“The very book that moved the real-life Goethe and the fictional Faust was Opus, with its revelatory secrets of alchemy, astrology, and the history of magick as well as those of Rosicrucians, esoteric Freemasonry, the Illuminati, and the Golden Dawn.” (—Opus..., back cover)

On Schelling:


In French, on Blaise de Vigenère and his Traicté du feu et du sel... (Paris: Abel l’Angelier, 1618)

• Secret. Les Kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance (throughout).
• _______. Le Zôhar chez les kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance, pp. 83-88.
• Traicté du feu et du sel (full French text): http://livres-d-hermes.com/PDF/TDFEDSot.PDF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

Quite a few works discuss the occult in Shakespeare. Some examples:

- Frances Yates' *Occult Philosophy*..., CHAPTER XII, “Shakespeare and the Christian Cabala: Francesco Giorgi and The Merchant of Venice” and Yates' *Theatre of the World* (both titles mentioned above, §FIVE HISTORIANS)

Two writers have given Shakespeare’s connections with kabbalah, or cabala, book-length consideration: Daniel Banes and Yona Claire Dureau.


Banes then goes on to the purpose of his book: “to identify some of the kabbalistic themes in The Merchant of Venice, and to relate them to antecedents in the literature of Kabbalah.” From Banes’ analysis, it would appear that Shakespeare was most indebted to Francesco Giorgi’s *De harmonia mundi* (1525) via the French version of it rendered by Guy Lefèvre de la Boderie (1578).

Banes’ earlier work, *The Provocative Merchant of Venice* (Silver Spring – Chicago: Malcolm House, 1975), begins with a dismissive critique of Charles and Mary Lamb’s prose retelling of *The Merchant of Venice* and concludes with his own “vagrant speculations” regarding the dependence of this famous work upon the Kabbalah. Indeed, Banes sets up a variant *tree of life* showing correspondences between the *sefirot* and the play’s *dramatis personae*.

Banes’ “commentary” on *The Merchant of Venice* is critiqued by Yates in *Occult Philosophy*..., CHAPTER XII.

We will use the chapter titles of Yona Dureau’s *Christian Cabala Movement in Renaissance England & Its Influence on William Shakespeare* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009)—with a few notes—to compose our description of her work:

- **CHAPTER I.** “Favourable Circumstances for the Development of Christian Cabala in England”
- **CHAPTER II.** “Translators of Christian and Jewish Cabala and Their Relationship to Writing and Writers”
- **CHAPTER III.** “The Impossible Quest for Lost Shakespeare”
- **CHAPTER IV.** “The Metaphysics of Prophecies and Free Will in Richard III”
- **CHAPTER V.** “Julius Caesar: Representation of History and the Talmudic Combination of Divine and Human Time” ... “...shows how Julius Caesar can be read according to seven levels of spiral time structures...” (—INTRODUCTION, p. 13)

CHAPTER VI. “As You Like It as a Kabbalist Teaching on the Impact of Sacred Study” ...
“...focuses on As You Like It and its intertextual connections with Cordovero’s manuscript Or Ne’erah” (—INTRODUCTION, p. 13). CHAPTER VI opens
Renaissance Europe bore the print of many trends and influences in the realm of esoteric teachings. It would probably be a comfortable hypothesis for the critic to look for Christian cabalistic elements in Shakespeare’s plays, to support and complete the imaginary image of the playwright established by generations of critics. Yet, just as intellectuals sometimes turned to kabbalah with no clearly defined religious purpose, and probably mostly for primarily intellectual stimulation, Shakespeare’s plays display a variety of influences. Some plays nevertheless are definitely more kabbalistical than others, some obviously influenced by the syncretic dimension of Christian Cabbalah. (—p. 197)

CHAPTER VII. “Antony and Cleopatra and Christian Cabbalah’s Hercules”

CHAPTER VIII. “Richard II, the Cabbalistic Loss of the Crown and the Rise of the Antichrist, or the Failure of the Way of Mildness and the Forecast of the Way of Severity”

A chapter which is summarized in Dureau’s INTRODUCTION (—p. 13), which “offers a reading of Twelfth Night in view of Christian Cabbalah’s theory of death by the divine kiss,” is missing from the book. Indeed, content descriptions in the INTRODUCTION conflate CHAPTERS IV and V and incorrectly number the chapters thereafter—indications at the outset of the pervasive sloppiness of this otherwise intriguing book.

JOHANNES BUREUS (1568-1652)

“Scandinavia was the land of the Hyperboreans who had migrated to the Baltic shores before the fall of the Tower of Babel and who therefore possessed the original, uncorrupted culture and spirituality of mankind.”


“The most striking of the theorists of the new Baltic imperium was Johannes Bureus.”

—ibid., p. 178.

“[Bureus] is the most important non-Jewish Swedish Kabbalist. In Bureus’s work older Gothism along with runic and linguistic research blended with his strong interest in all forms of esotericism: astrology, magic, alchemy, and above all the Kabbalah.”


PAUL YVON (ca. 1570-1646)

Paul Yvon, sieur de Laleu, was a “French merchant-banker ... whose wealth allowed him a second existence as a mathematician, esoteric theologian, and self-styled messiah” (—Wilke, “Where Geometry Meets Kabbalah,” page 179). He “claimed to have discovered, by a divine revelation [that] he experienced in 1614, the squaring of the circle and a new Judeo-Christian religion based on scientific intuition” (—Forshaw, Lux in Tenebris, INTRODUCTION, page 9). “Yvon blended the Hebraism of his Protestant upbringing with the millenarian tradition in the Catholic vein of Joachim of Fiore and Guillaume Postel” (—Wilke, page 188). He produced diagrams combining geometric figures and Hebrew letters, e.g., a series of Geometric-Kabbalistic drawings in a “Letter to Father Anastaze” (1634).

JOHN DONNE (1572-1631)

Within some of Donne’s poetry there is evidence of kabbalah/cabala.

The Cabala (or ‘Kabbalah’), originally referring to a biblical oral tradition, is a body of Jewish theosophical doctrine, rich in poetical imagery and symbolism based on mystical interpretations of the written (or ‘received’) texts. It has at various times attracted and influenced both Jewish and non-Jewish poets and philosophers. The following essay traces the influence cabalistic concepts had on the poetry of John Donne (1572–1631). Some of his poems which embody his philosophy of love clearly show his familiarity with the cabalistic lore of the Zohar, the basic book of the Cabalists.


This connection between the Zohar and the “philosophy of love” should sound familiar:

When [Leone] Ebreo depicts Love as a force unifying human and divine, earthly and heavenly, the bodily and spiritual, and indeed the entire universe—when he celebrates “carnal desire as the universal moving force”—he echoes the Song of Songs, incorporates medieval Jewish kabbalah, and anticipates Donne’s celebration of the sexual union of two lovers as enabling a connection with the divine, ordering a world that is otherwise disordered.


Also of interest in the present context:

• Albrecht, Roberta. The Virgin Mary as Alchemical and Lullian Reference in Donne (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2005).

“This groundbreaking study demonstrates the profound influence of Ramon Lull (c. 1232-1316?) upon Donne. Albrecht traces Donne’s ecumenical vision back to Lull, back to Pico della Mirandola, Lull’s disciple, and back to the Jewish cabala, sources for both. She shows how Donne refashioned Lull’s abstract version of Mary and, like Lull, used this Mary to include Muslims and Jews in the church universal.”—publisher’s description
ROBERT FLUDD (1574-1637)

The cabala of Robert Fludd is a mixture of all sorts of stuff. Fludd did, however, expound upon the sefirot and the Hebrew letters in the second book of his Summum Bonum and charted their correspondences with the planets and holy names in The Mosaicall Philosophy. Cabalistic material appears as well in Utriusque cosmi ... historia. Interestingly, while Fludd claimed Menahem Recanati as his kabbalistic authority, his sources are more apparently Pico and Reuchlin (both of whom drew extensively, albeit selectively, from Recanati), and Agrippa.

Out of print and difficult to find these days is Adam McLean’s edition of The Mosaicall Philosophy: The Cabala of Robert Fludd [MAGNUM OPUS HERMETIC SOURCEWORKS #2] (London: The Hermetic Research Trust, 1979), which reproduces Books 1 and 2 of the second section. Fortunately, the 1659 edition of The Mosaicall Philosophy has been reprinted—in full—by Kessinger Publishing Company (2003); cabala is given its most direct treatment in the second section: Book 2, starting at CHAP. II, pp. 171ff of the 1659 (= Kessinger) edition. There are subsequent reprints of this work, e.g. from EEBO/ProQuest (2011), Forgotten Books (2017), Pranava Books (2020).


See further my description of The Mosaicall Philosophy below within SOME SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PRINTED WORKS ON CHRISTIAN CABALA IN ENGLISH, pp. 101-102.

Along with Craven’s treatment of Utriusque cosmi ... historia in Dr. Robert Fludd..., CHAPTERS 9 through 13, sections of this work have been put into English:


Alas, both of these works are out of print and used copies are rare and pricey.

ref. https://alchemywebsite.com/bookshop/Magnum_opus.html

Utriusque cosmi...historia, VOLUME I, TRACTATE I, Book 1 (CHAPTERS 1, 4, 6-7, 9-10) and Book 2 (CONTENTS, CHAPTERS 1, 3-4, 6-8, 10, and 15) are given in Huffman’s Robert Fludd: Essential Readings (noted above).

Alas, Fludd’s most concentrated treatment of cabala within Utriusque cosmi...historia resides in VOLUME II, TRACTATE II, which has not, to the best of my knowledge, been put into English. See Craven’s CHAPTERS 11-13 and Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann’s “Robert Fludd’s Kabbalistic Cosmos” (listed immediately below).
On or by Fludd (listed chronologically, from 1902):

- Frances Yates’ works, especially Art of Memory and Theatre of the World (see above, page 9).

At THE ALCHEMY WEBSITE:
- articles on Fludd by M. W. Sharon and Ron Heisler ➔ SCHOLARLY ARTICLES ON ALCHEMY at http://www.alchemywebsite.com/articles_scholarly_individuals.html
  - M. W. Sharon - Doctor Robert Fludd
  - Ron Heisler - Robert Fludd: A Picture in Need of Expansion
  - Ron Heisler - Michael Maier and England
JACOB BÖHME (1575-1624)

THE PROBLEM OF LEONE EBREO’S DIALOGHI (pages 34-39 above) sets out an array of quotes from books and articles on Leone and his work which, on many points, contradict each other. A similar compilation could be arranged regarding Böhme and his connections to kabbalah/cabala.

To illustrate, Gershom Scholem notes (—Kabbalah, p. 200),

[S]tudents (as well as opponents) of Jacob Boehme had discovered the inner affinity between his own theosophical system and that of the Kabbalah, though there would seem to be no historical connection between them. In certain circles, particularly in Germany, Holland, and England, Christian Kabbalah henceforward assumed a Boehmian guise.

Yet, we read,

Of those learn’d men that convers’d with [Böhme] in the greatest familiarity was one Balthasar Walther … an apparent expert in kabbalistic tracts... who had poisoned Böhme’s pious Lutheran thoughts with its teachings.


With Böhme’s “curious assertion concerning the globe [as opposed to tablets] of the covenant,” T. I. Penman shows a bridge from Reuchlin (De arte cabalistica) via Walther to Böhme, who “could not speak Latin, let alone Hebrew, and therefore could have had no direct access to Reuchlin or his sources.” (All quotes are from Penman’s article. See XL. Questions concerning the soule: propounded by Dr. Balthasar Walter, and answered by Jacob Behmen..., London: Matth. Simmons..., 1647).

Here is a trim selection of sources on Böhme, somewhat biased toward our focus on kabbalah/cabala:


  The sources outlined are the Spanish conversos, along with Llull, Pico, and Reuchlin. The philosophical recipients include Oetinger, Böhme, Saint-Martin (via Böhme), and Schelling (via Oetinger).


  “One of the more important sources of Behmenist thought on gender is to be found in the Jewish mystical tradition.” (p. 69)


See especially CHAPTER 9, “Kabbalah in Boehme's Discourse and its Valentinian Enlisting.” O’Regan concludes—in so many words—that Böhme was more kabbalalah-like than genuinely kabbalistic.


Aries vol. 18: no. 1 is devoted to Böhme. The other articles are:

- Penman, Leigh. “The Broken Tradition: Uncovering Errors in the Correspondence of Jacob Böhme”

Perhaps the most instructive works on Böhme and his descendants, e.g., John Pordage, Johann Georg Gichtel, Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (on Oetinger, see below, page 120), are Arthur Versluis’ companion volumes, Wisdom’s Children: A Christian Esoteric Tradition (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999) and Wisdom’s Book: The Sophia Anthology (St. Paul: Paragon House, 2000).

In German, see John Schültz, Jakob Böhme und die Kabbalah: eine vergleichende Werkanalyse (Frankfurt am Main – New York: Peter Lang, 1993).

In the first section of Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann’s Geschichte der christlichen Kabbala, Band 2 (of 4), “the controversial question of Jacob Boehme’s relationship to Kabbalah is dealt with and Abraham von Franckenberg [1593-1652], the most important and most independent Bohemian Kabbalist, is presented” (frommann-Holzboog website).

Franckenberg combined alchemy, Pansophism, various forms of Christian mysticism, and kabbalah. His best-known—and weirdest—work is Raphael oder Artzt-Engel (Amsterdam: Jacob von Felsfen, 1676), which is a jumble of Paracelsus, Böhme, and kabbalah in the vein of the authors mentioned in CONFLATION OF CABALA & ALCHEMY above (page 71).

Unfortunately, there is next to nothing on Franckenberg in English.
JACQUES GAFFAREL (1601-1681)

Gaffarel’s most famous work is Curiositez inouiés sur la sculpture talismanique des Persans, horoscope des Patriarches et lecture des estoiles [Unheard-of Curiosities Concerning Talismanical Sculpture of the Persians, the Horoscope of the Patriarchs, and the Reading of the Stars], (French original: Paris: H. du Mesnil, 1629; English translation by Edmund Chilmead (sometimes attributed to “James Gaffarel”): London: G.D. for Humphrey Moseley, 1650).

Two of Gaffarel’s works connect him more directly to cabala:

- *Codicum caballisticorvm manucriptorvm quibus est vsus Ioannes Picus comes Mirandaluanvs INDEX a Iacobo Gaffarello* (Parisiis: Ex Typographia Viduë H. Blageart, 1651)—a catalogue of Pico’s manuscript sources.

As Tiziano Anzuni notes in the abstract to “Mystical Experiences and Kabbalistic Wisdom in Jacques Gaffrel’s Works,”42

The Orientalist Jacques Gaffarel (1601–1681) was often mentioned, mostly as a literary forger, but rarely studied. As a matter of fact, all we know about his life deals with his youth, when he was Richelieu’s librarian, interested in the Christian Kabbalah. ... [In *Abdita Divinae Cabalae Mysteria*] Gaffarel merges together referred supernatural experiences, kabbalistic literature and Christian tradition, thus creating an original patchwork and seeking to ensure a deeper knowledge of the world as well as of the human being.

See Jacques Gaffarel: Between Magic and Science, edited by Hiro Hirai (Pisa – Roma: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2014), which contains three papers in English:

- Odgers, Juliet. “Resemblance and Figure in Garden and Laboratory: Gaffarel’s Influence on John Evelyn,” pages 85-108.


Readers of French can search through François Secret, Les Kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance (Paris: Dunod, 1964), for the dozen-or-so mentions of Gaffarel.

All of Gaffarel’s works mentioned above have been published—in French—in recent years.

---

42 Catalogue to the 7th International Conference of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism Western Esotericism and Consciousness: Visions, Voices, Altered States (University of Amsterdam, 2-4 July 2010), [page 4].
ATHANASIUS KIRCHER (1602-1680)

Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher is described by Frances Yates as “a most notable descendant of the Hermetic-Cabalist tradition founded by Pico.” She also points out that “Kircher maintained the full Renaissance attitude to Hermes Trismegistus, completely ignoring Casaubon.”\(^{43}\) (It was Isaac Casaubon who, in 1614, through careful and thorough scholarship, showed that the Hermetica were “not the work of very ancient Egyptian priests but written in post-Christian times.”) Kircher held similar erroneous attitudes toward cabala and Hebraica. See Yates’ discussion in Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition (pp. 416-423).

As a Christian Cabbalist, [Kircher] sought to prove that Catholicity and Trinitarian faith could be consolidated, not weakened, by embracing all spheres and lines of knowledge.


There are five illustrated works on Kircher:

- **Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680): Jesuit Scholar. An Exhibition of His Works in the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University**, introduction and descriptions by Brian Merrill, which was originally published by The Friends of the Brigham Young University Library (Provo: 1989), and more recently reprinted by Martino Publishing (Mansfield Centre: 2003).
  
  An exhibition catalogue of “Kircher’s amazing world of magic lanterns, volcanoes, fossils, flying cats, hieroglyphics, and practical jokes with the most serious of intentions.” Also find Rowland’s article, “Athanasius Kircher and the Egyptian Oedipus” (2004) at the University of Chicago’s FATHOM ARCHIVE, online at [http://fathom.lib.uchicago.edu/content.shtml](http://fathom.lib.uchicago.edu/content.shtml).
  
  A series of articles which serves as an exhibition catalogue to and celebration of Stanford’s 1998 acquisition of all but one of Kircher’s works in first editions. In connection with this, online see [The ATHANASIUS KIRCHER PROJECT AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY](http://kircher.stanford.edu/).
- **Godwin, Joselyn. Athanasius Kircher’s Theatre of the World: The Life and Work of the Last Man to Search for Universal Knowledge** (Rochester [VT]: Inner Traditions, 2009)
  
  A grand summary of previous studies on Kircher housed in a generously illustrated over-sized book. One is tempted here to resort to the old reviewer’s cliché, “If you buy one book on...”

The Vulcans: OR, Burning and Fire-vomiting Mountains Famous in the World (1669), which offers material “collected for the most part out of Kircher’s Subterraneous World,” has been reprinted by Kessinger Publishing (2009).


---

\(^{43}\) Yates makes similar comments about Robert Fludd.


Make sure to read through Christopher Lehric’s Occult Mind: Magic in Theory and Practice (Ithaca – London: Cornell University Press, 2007), in particular pages 91-131. Then see


Two items at Mats Rendel’s Homepage, [http://www.phonurgia.se/rendel/](http://www.phonurgia.se/rendel/), treat Kircher: “Athanasius Kircher” (biography, translations) and “Kircherianum Virtuale,” an extensive index of web links.44 One site not listed by Rendel is the attractive MUSEUM OF JURASSIC TECHNOLOGY, which has a series of articles on Kircher’s life and works in “Collections and Exhibitions, Gallery 6”:


---

44 DEFUNCT LINK (2/5/2022)
JOHANN STEPHAN RITTANGEL, or RITTANGELIUS (1606-1652)

- **Liber Iezirah** Qui Abramahamo Patriarchæ adscibitur, unà cum Commentario Rabi Abraham F.D. super 32 Semetis Sapientiæ, à quibus liber Iezirah Incipit (Amstelodami: Ioannem & Iodocvm Ianssonios, M DC XLII [1642]).

Rittangelius converted from Jewish to Roman Catholic, then to Calvinist, and then to Lutheran. After Postel and Pistorius, Rittangelius produced what is reputed to be the third and “most valuable Latin translation [and interpretation] of the Sepher Yetzira.” His edition contains *The Thirty-Two Paths of Wisdom* with commentary.

The importance of Rittangelius’ translation tracks to the present: A. E. Waite says of William Wynn Westcott’s extremely popular edition of *Sefer Yetzirah*,

> It is based on the text of Rittangelius, compared with some other versions. It was prepared for the use of persons described as theosophists, occult and Hermetic students, whose purpose – if any – may have been served by such a production, but is in reality a paraphrase and fulfills few of the conditions required by scholarship.

Rittangelius’ letters containing his disputes with “a certain Jewish citizen of Amsterdam” (Rankin, p. 89) quote the *Sefer Yetzirah* and the *Zohar*. On these letters, see Oliver Shaw Rankin’s *Jewish Religious Polemic of early and later centuries, a study of documents here rendered in English* (Edinburgh at the University Press, 1956; rpt. Jersey City: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1969): Rankin’s Part III, *Polemic in Letters* (pp. 89-154), discusses and translates the letters. The dispute centers on the interpretation of the Shiloh passage of *Genesis* 49:10. With typical irony, it is the convert Rittangelius who is the kabbalist, using Simeon ben Jochai of the *Zohar* as his authority, whereas his Jewish opponent “appears to have had little more than hearsay acquaintance with the Zohar and seems to have no leanings towards the mystic movement among his people” (Rankin, p. 96).

JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)

If Shakespeare and, as we shall see below, Blake can be dragged into our *cabalistic* procession, then Milton too must be considered. Milton’s kabbalism has certainly been a matter of pointed debate.

In *Milton: Man and Thinker* (New York: The Dial Press, 1925; rpt. 1935), Denis Saurat begins § II, “Contemporary Sources and Influences,”

> Milton’s relationship to movements of his own time may be summed up thus: roughly speaking, the whole of Milton’s philosophy is found in the Kabbalah, except his materialism; his materialism is found in Fludd, except his mortalism; and his mortalism is connected with ideas of the contemporary English Mortalist group. The three stages are connected and form developments, one from the other: Fludd starts from the Kabbalah, and the Mortalists have their general principles in common with Fludd, and probably derived them from him.

(—Milton, p. 280)

Countering Saurat is Marjorie H. Nicolson’s “Milton and the *Conjectura Cabbalistica,*” in *Philological Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 1 (January 1927), and R. J. Zwi Werblowsky’s article, also titled

---


In “The Theology of Paradise Lost,” which is CHAPTER XII of A Preface to Paradise Lost, (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), C. S. Lewis comments on Saurat, writing, “Milton studies owe a great debt to Professor Saurat, but I believe that with the enthusiasm incident to a pioneer he has pressed his case too far” (page 82). Lewis goes on to develop a critique of Saurat’s finding doctrines derived from kabbalah in Milton’s magnum opus (see, in particular, Lewis’ pages 87-89).


Michael Lieb writes,

Although Blau sees Milton in the kabbalistic line, he does not view Milton as a “kabbalist.” Whereas Yates accords Milton more of a kabbalistic bent than does Blau, she is generally inclined to agree (Blau, “Diffusion,” pp. 163-65; Yates, Occult Philosophy, pp. 177-81).

—“Encoding the Occult: Milton and the Traditions of Merkabah Speculation in the Renaissance,” in Milton Studies, Volume 37 (University of Pittsburg Press, 1999), n. 51.


One last item: Shlomo Dov Rosen introduces “Between the Homunculus Fallacy and Angelic Cognitive Dissonance in Explanation of Evil: Milton’s Poetry and [Moshe Hayyim] Luzzatto’s


Note the comments of Frank E. Manuel in The Broken Staff (Cambridge – London: Harvard University Press, 1992), pages 145-146: “Scholars have demonstrated of late that the Jewish cabalist Luria’s conception of tsimtsum was not the direct inspiration of John Milton in some of his verses on the creation in Paradise Lost, as once was supposed.”

This chapter explores two diametrically opposed conceptions of angels and analyses their ramifications for such explanations. (page 57) ... I shall argue that Milton’s use of angelology falls into a homunculus fallacy, whereas Luzzatto defines the angels’ function in logically independent terms. Luzzatto positions angels in a subtle median position from which they are able to provide an explanation of human evil in epistemological terms and clarify existential tensions of the human condition.

**ANTONIA OF WÜRTEMBERG (1613-1679)**

Antonia of Würtemberg was “a learned expert of historical and genealogical sciences. The particular inclination of Princess Antonia, however, was applied to theology, and in particular to the Kabbalah” (—Ernst Benz, *Christian Kabbalah* [St. Paul: Graftstone Press, 2004], p. 60). Antonia is noted for having commissioned and donated a “Kabbalistic-Alchemical Altarpiece in a small church in the town of Bad Teinach near Cawl in Germany” (—Adam McLean, “The Kabbalistic-Alchemical Altarpiece in Bad Teinach,” in *Hermetic Journal* 12 [Edinburgh: Summer 1981], pp. 21-26. The image can be viewed online at McLean’s [ALCHEMY WEBSITE](http://www.alchemywebsite.com/bad_teinach.html).


“We have already mentioned that Antonia occupied herself with the study of the Cabala: and evidence thereof is even now preserved in the Royal Library at Stuttgart. At that place there is an *Unterschiedlicher Riss zu Sephiroth* (‘Various Sketches of the Sephiroth’), containing Cabalistic diagrams…. These diagrams were drawn by Princess Antonia of Würtemberg, who delighted in Cabalistic and Rabbinical lore” (—M. Kayserling, “A Princess as Hebraist,” in *The Jewish Quarterly Review, Volume IX, Number 35* [New York: The Macmillan Company, 1897], p. 510).

THOMAS VAUGHAN [EUGENIUS PHILALETHERS] (1621-1666)

Vaughan was a clergyman and alchemist, claiming membership in the Society of Unknown Philosophers. He was the twin brother of metaphysical poet Henry Vaughan (1621-1665).

Vaughan developed his [al]chemical art following Paracelsus and his natural philosophy following Agrippa.

Vaughan fancied himself a Rosicrucian, and he may be best known for translating Fama Fraternitatis and Confesio Fraternitatis (1614) from German into English (1652).

On Vaughan’s treatment of kabbalah in Magica Adamica (1650) and Lumen de lumine (1651), refer below to SOME SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PRINTED WORKS ON CHRISTIAN CABALA IN ENGLISH, pages 105-106.

See Peter Levanda, The Tantric Alchemist: Thomas Vaughan and the Indian Tantric Tradition (Lake Worth: Ibis Press, 2015), which is briefly described below, page 106.

Vaughan’s writings:

  - Vaughan’s translation of Johann Valentin Andre’s Fama Fraternitatis.
  - “A verbatim reprint of his first four treatises: Anthroposophica theologica, Anima magica abscondita, Magica adamica, and the true Coelum terrae, with the Latin passages translated into English and with a biographical preface and essay on the esoteric literature of western Christendom.”
  - Both Magia Adamica and Lumen de Lumine are included in this edition.
- Vaughan, Thomas & Rebecca. Aqua Vita: Non Vitis (Tempe: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 2001)—an alchemical manuscript describing experiments involving Vaughan and his wife.

---


I have added to [L. C. Martin’s] researches in one direction mainly—that of Henry Vaughan’s connection with the Hermetic or ‘ occult’ philosophy which his brother [Thomas] embraced and practiced, and so of the poet’s relations with his brother and possibly with others of the Hermetic manner of belief, notably Jacob Boehme, but also Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, and others of obscurer name. (—p. i)

86
FRANCIS MERCURY VAN HELMONT

In the seventeenth century, two men account for the most significant promulgation of kabbalah outside Jewry: Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614-1698) and Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636-1689). Van Helmont’s influence was surprisingly broad: from the Cambridge Platonists—in particular Henry More—to Leibniz. Kabbalah, as gathered through his contact with van Helmont and Anne Conway, is thought to have influenced Leibniz’ concept of monads and his notions of free will.

A number of items by Allison Coudert deal with all of this (listed chronologically):


Works by F. M. van Helmont published in English:

- *Two hundred queries moderately propounded concerning the doctrine of the revolution of humane souls and its conformity to the truths of Christianity* (1684) (Ann Arbor: EEBO Editions/ProQuest, 2011)—“an authentic reproduction.”
- *One Hundred Fifty-Three Chymical Aphorisms* (Octob. 1687) / *One Hundred Fifty-Seven Alchemical Aphorisms* (Octob. 1687), edited with additional material by Prince Karl Hildebrand von Niebelung (FBN Press VisionCon, 2004), printed as a chap book.

See my transcriptions of van Helmont’s most important cabalistic works:

- *A Cabbalistical Dialogue*
- *The Paradoxal Discourses, CHAPTER IV, and an APPENDIX ... CONCERNING ... THE REVOLUTION OF HUMAN SOULS from The Divine Being and Its Attributes*
- *Seder Olam*—all at the webpage *SELECTED WRITINGS OF FRANCIS MERCURIUS VAN HELMONT at HERMETIC KABBALAH:*


Outlines of these writings appear below: SOME SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PRINTED WORKS ON CHRISTIAN CABALA IN ENGLISH, *pages 102-104.*


---

49 While citing Spector’s translation of *Adumbratio Kabbalæ Christianæ* in their preface to *Messias Puer* (cited below, page 90), Anna M. Vileno and Robert J. Wilkinson advance the idea that Knorr von Rosenroth wrote *Adumbratio*, but that it was “probably produced in collaboration with his regular companion, Francis Mercury van Helmont” (ibid., p. xiv). They note that “The question of authorship of *Adumbratio* raises many delicate questions” (ibid., p. xx).

Further on in *Messias Puer* (pp. 65-70), the case is made for Knorr’s having written the *Adumbratio*, singling out CHAPTER 3 in particular as belonging to Knorr, with van Helmont possibly having contributed CHAPTER 7.
KNORR VON ROSENROTH (1636-1689)

Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, as translator, annotator, and editor, published the massive two-volume *Kabbala denudata* (Sulzbach: 1677 & 1689), which virtually alone represented authentic (Jewish) kabbalah to Christian Europe until the mid-nineteenth century.

These tomes draw from a range of kabbalistic texts: sections of the *Zohar*, *Pardes Rimmonim* by Moses Cordovero, *Sha’ar ha-Shamayim* and *Beit Elohim* by Abraham Kohen (or Cohen) de Herrera, *Sefer ha-Gilgulim* (a Lurianic tract attributed to Hayyim Vital), and others, with commentaries by Knorr himself, Henry More, and F. M. van Helmont, and—appended to some later editions—van Helmont’s “sketch” of Christian *cabala* (*Adumbratio Kabbalae Christianae*), almost all in Latin translation.\(^{10}\)

On pages 107-116 of the present paper there is an outline of the contents of *Kabbala denudata* which lists sources in English.

Refer to the items penned by Allison Coudert that are noted above, especially *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century*, which devotes a substantial section to Knorr and the ingredients of *Kabbala denudata*.

Also treating Knorr is Coudert’s “Seventeenth-Century Natural Philosophy and Esotericism at the Court of Sulzbach,” in *Étérisme, Gnoses & Imaginaire Symbolique: Mêlages offerts à Antoine Faivre* [GNOSTICA 3], eds. Richard Caron, Joscelyn Godwin, Wouter J. Hanegraaff, and Jean-Louis Viellard-Baron (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), pages 27-46.

Further see


Knorr is described as “...perhaps the last of those who still adhered to the tried and true Christian theory of the Kabbalah as an aspect of divine, archaic wisdom ... who tried to support that theory with new arguments” (—p. 26).


“Rosenroth’s diagrammatic representation of Lurianism constitutes a juncture where the parallel evolving discourses of Lurianism and early modern natural philosophy converges, en route to a meeting with the makers of modernity if not modernity itself.” (—page 118)


• Vileno, Anna Maria. “Reincarnations of Messiah(s): Messianic Expectations in Christian Knorr von Rosenroth’s Last Work,” in Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge 42 (Frankfurt am Main: Gesellschaft zur Förderung judaistischer Studien, 2019/20), pp. 73-96.


   Messias Puer cites Kabbala denudata countless times, primarily its Loci communes kabbalistici (Knorr’s grand kabbalistic glossary) from the first volume (see below, p. 108) and De revolutionibus animarum and Adumbratio kabbalæ christianæ from the second (see below, pp. 115 and 116-117).
THE CAMBRIDGE PLATONISTS

The Cambridge Platonists were a group of seventeenth-century Christian philosophers affiliated with the University of Cambridge. They were among the heirs to the Renaissance humanist movement of Marsilio Ficino, holding to the concept of a *philosophia perennis*.

Some of the names on our list of Christian interpreters of *kabbalah* can be found among the Cambridge Platonists, most notably Henry More and Anne Conway, along with Ralph Cudworth (see below). Beyond these—and even with the last mentioned—we stray from any significant involvement with *kabbalah* or *cabala*.

Knorr von Rosenroth and van Helmont entwine with the Cambridge Platonists through their close contact with More and Conway, but they are not part of this group.

On the Cambridge Platonists:

HENRY MORE (1614-1687)


Further, see (listed alphabetically)

- George, Edward Augustus. Seventeenth Century Men of Latitude: Forerunners of the New Theology (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1908); § HENRY MORE, 1614-1687 (pp. 109-128)


RALPH CUDWORTH (1617-1688)

One becomes frustrated trying to find evidence of any substantive cabalistic influence in Cudworth. A. E. Waite correctly acknowledges that “Cudworth connects but superficially with Kabbalism” (—The Holy Kabbalah, p. 480; on Waite, refer to § FOUR HISTORIANS, above). Thus, beware of Kessinger’s utterly pointless offprint of less than three pages extracted from Waite’s Holy Kabbalah entitled Ralph Cudworth: A Christian Student of the Holy Kabbalah (2006).

On Cudworth, see


  2. Breteau, Jean-Louis. “Chaos and Order in Cudworth’s Thought”
ANNE CONWAY (1631–1679)

As a student of both More and van Helmont, Conway refuted the major philosophers of her time (Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza) with an arsenal which included concepts from Lurianic kabbalah (as found in Knorr von Rosenroth’s Kabbala denudata). As did van Helmont, Conway became a Quaker; also, as van Helmont, she appears to have had some influence upon Leibniz.

On Conway, start with Sarah Hutton’s “intellectual biography,” Anne Conway: A Woman Philosopher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), and Conway’s own Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy, eds. Allison Coudert and Taylor Corse (Cambridge University Press, 1996). In addition, refer to

- Byrne, David. ANNE CONWAY: AN INTELLECTUAL PORTRAIT OF A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY COUNTESS. PhD. dissertation (Claremont: Claremont Graduate University, 2005).

Refer to § “Conway, Anne,” below: SOME SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PRINTED WORKS...
THOMAS BURNET (1635-1715)

Theologian Burnet was a contemporary of the Cambridge Platonists, though not one of them. In *Archeologiae Philosophicae* (London: 1692), LIBRI I. CAP. VII. *De Hebræis, eorumque Cabalæ* (which is not included in Foxton’s 1729 English translation reproduced by Kessinger, 2003), Burnet expounds upon *kabbalah*, dividing it into the Nominal and the Real, the former being the hermeneutical devices *gematria, temurah*, and *notaricon*, along with *vocabula* (NAMES), the latter being the doctrine of the *seferot* and the four worlds. Given that Burnet’s primary, if not sole, source on the subject was *Kabbala denudata*, his “slender knowledge” is more of *kabbalah* than of *cabala*.

In his “best-seller,” *Tellurius theoria sacra* (London: 1681) [English edition: *Sacred Theory of the Earth*, London: 1684, with several subsequent editions into the early 1700s], Burnet writes

> There has been a great fame, ’tis true, of the *Jewish Cabala*, and of great mysteries contain’d in it; and, I believe, there was once a Traditional doctrine amongst some of them, that had extraordinary Notions and Conclusions: But where is this now to be found? The *Essenes* were the likeliest Sect, one would think, to retain such doctrines, but ’tis probable they are now so mixt with things fabulous and fantastical, that what one should allledge from thence would be of little or no authority. One Head in this *Cabala* was the doctrine of the *Sephiroth*, and though the explication of them be uncertain, the Inferiour *Sephiroth* in the Corporeal World cannot so well appli’d to any thing, as to those several Orbs and Regions, infolding one another, whereof the Primigenial Earth was compos’d. Yet such conjectures, I know, are of no validity, but in consort with better Arguments. I have often thought also, that their first and second Temple represented the first and second Earth or World; and that of *Ezekiel’s*, which is the third, is still to be erected, the most beautiful of all, when this second Temple of the World shall be burnt down. If the Prophecies of *Enoch* had been preserv’d, and taken into the Canon by *Ezra*, after their return from *Babylon*, when the Collection of their Sacred Books is suppos’d to have been made, we might probably have had a considerable account there, both of times past and to come, of Antiquities and Futurities; for those Prophecies are generally suppos’d to have contain’d both the first and second fate of this Earth, and all the Periods of it. But as this Book is lost to us, so I look upon all others that pretend to be Ante-Mosaicical or Patriarchal, as Spurious and Fabulous. (—*Sacred Theory...*, chapter IX pp. 200-201)

On Burnet, see


- Burnet’s *Sacred Theory of the Earth* is available in print (Gale ECCO Print Editions, 2018) and as an Amazon Kindle text and at THE INTERNET ARCHIVE, at


ISAAC NEWTON (1642-1727)

Of course, part of the seventeenth-century fray was Isaac Newton, who,

... in formulating the factors in the corruption of the primitive church, found the influence of metaphysical emanation cosmologies, such as those in the kabbalah, the main culprit. Newton came to the kabbalah through Knorr von Rosenroth’s Kabbala denudata, but his criticisms of it were formed through his preconceived notion of the role of emanation in the church’s corruption and through the influence of [Histoire des Juifs (1716) by Jacques] Basnage, who dedicates considerable space to criticizing Kabbalah.


Goldish suggests that fanning the flame of Newton’s criticisms of kabbalah was his desire to undermine a key source of Leibniz’ “emanational cosmology,” which, due to its kabbalistic flavor, Newton could not abide.

On Newton and kabbalah,


On other aspects of “esoteric Newton,” see


GOTTFRIED LEIBNIZ (1646-1716)


> It is the purpose of this book to argue that for all its complexities the Lurianic Kabbalah had a significant influence on Leibniz’s thought. (*Leibniz and Kabbalah*, p. xi)

> ... I am not suggesting that Leibniz’s view of Kabbalah was one of total acceptance or that van Helmont’s kabbalistic theories were the major influence on his thought. Leibniz criticized certain kabbalistic ideas as lacking sufficient foundation or proof. But regardless of his criticisms, a careful reading of the manuscripts shows that he took the Kabbalah extremely seriously. (*ibid.*, p. 157)

Coudert discusses the kabbalistic influence on Leibniz of not only van Helmont but also Anne Conway (*ibid.*, pp. 26-29 et passim). Refer to the articles by Carolyn Merchant and Steven Schroeder listed above in § Anne Conway.

On Leibniz (listed chronologically):

  > The “circle” Brown refers to here comprised of Francis Mercury van Helmont and Knorr von Rosenroth. Whether Leibniz’ philosophy was the result of direct influence or convergence is the gist of Brown’s discussion; Brown highlights the latter.
  > See in particular Stuart Brown’s “Some Occult Influences on Leibniz’s Monadology”—the influences discussed are alchemy and *kabbalah*—AND Marcia (sic—it should be Marsha) Keith Schuchard’s “Leibniz, Benzelius, and the Kabbalistic Roots of Swedish Illuminism.”
  > “The thesis proposes that the proximity of these two doctrines is such that Christian Lurianic Kabbalah can be regarded, in many ways, as a mystical exoteric parallel to Leibniz’s.” (*ABSTRACT*)
SOME SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PRINTED WORKS ON CHRISTIAN CABALA IN ENGLISH

A catalogue of sources, title pages, & excerpts

Cabbalism as a form of thought permeates much seventeenth-century literature; it is as impossible to separate it sharply from other ideas of a particular author as it is to define exactly the particular brand of Platonism he held. By the seventeenth century, cabbalism had become so fused and intermingled with other ways of thinking that we look for it less in defined doctrine and creed than in an attitude toward a question.


Agrippa von Nettesheim, Heinrich Cornelius (1486?-1535):

- THREE BOOKS OF Occult Philosophy, WRITTEN BY Henry Cornelius Agrippa, OF NETTESHEIM, Counsellor to CHARLES the Fifth, EMPEROR of Germany: AND Judge of the Prerogative Court. Translated out of the Latin into the English tongue, By J. F. London: Printed by R.W. for Gregory Moule, and are to be sold at the Sign of the three Bibles near the West-end of Pauls. 1651.

< TRANSLATION OF De occulta philosophia libri tres (Cologne: 1533).


A modern translation from the original Latin commenced with Three Books of Occult Philosophy: Book 1, Academic Edition, by Eric Purde ([Cedar Rapids]: Renaissance Astrology, 2012), and now all three books—rendered by Purde—have been published (Rochester [VT]: Inner Traditions, 2021).


For studies treating H. C. Agrippa, see above, pages 49-51. Note in particular


9 Many English titles of this era use the word cabala to mean “the secret machinations of a small group of persons,” namely cabal. Some examples:

- Cabala, sive, Serinii sacra : mysteries of state & government : in letters of illustrious persons, and great agents, in the reigns of Henry the Eighth, Queen Elizabeth, King James, and the late King Charles : in two parts : in which the secrets of Empire and publique manage of affairs are contained : with many remarkable passages no where else published. London : Printed for G. Bedel and T. Collins ..., 1654.
- Birkenhead, John. Cabala, or, An impartial account of the non-conformists private designs, acting and ways : from August 24, 1662 to December 25 in the same year London : [s.n.], 1663.
- Lloyd, David. Cabala, or, The mystery of conventicles unavall’d : in an historical account of the principles and practices of the nonconformists, against church and state : from the first reformation under King Edward the VI. anno 1558. to this present year, 1664 : with an appendix of an CXX. plots against the present government, that have been defeated by Oliver Foulis ... London : Printed for Thomas Holmwood, 1664.


Brinsley, John (fl.1633 [1600-1665?):

THE CHRISTIANS CABALA, OR, SURE TRADITION: Necessary to be KNOWN and BELIEVED By all that will be Saved: A Doctrine holding forth, Good Tidings of Great Joy, to the greatest of all PENITENT SINNERS: With a CHARACTER of one that is truly Such: As it was lately held forth to the church of GOD at Great YARMOUTH. By John Brinsley, Minister of the Gospel there. LONDON, Printed for George Sawbridge, at the Sign of the Bible on Ludgate-Hill, 1662.

In his commentary on 1 TIMOTHY 1:15, Clergyman Brinsley discusses the term cabala in connection with the phrase “of all acceptation” (= “full acceptance” in The New English Bible):

Amongst the Jews there were many mysteries, Doctrines which they received from their Fathers by way of Tradition. These they called by that Name of Cabala, ... signifying acceptio, a receiving of a thing, thereby meaning their Traditions, such Doctrines as by word of mouth were conveyed unto them from their Forefathers. And these Mysteries, these Traditions, were of high account among their Rabbies, their Doctors, and their followers (even as others of like kind, are at this day in the Church of Rome), these they studied and were versed in them. But our Apostle willeth Christians to take notice. What was the true Cabala, the sure Tradition, which he here holdeth forth to them, as worthy of their study above all others; even this great Mystery of Godliness, That Christ Jesus is come into this world to save sinners.

(The Christians Cabala, pages 13-14).

A facsimile edition of The Christians Cabala was published by EEBO Editions/Proquest (Ann Arbor: 2011).

Conway, Anne (Anne Finch, Viscountess of Conway) (1631-1679):

THE PRINCIPLES Of the most Ancient and Modern PHILOSOPHY CONCERNING God, Christ, and the Creatures, viz. of Spirit and Matter in general, whereby may be resolved all those Problems or Difficulties, which neither by the School nor Common Modern Philosophy, nor by the Cartesian, Hobbesian, or Spinosian, could be discussed. BEING A little Treatise published since the Author’s Death, translated out of the English into Latin, with Annotations taken from the Ancient Philosophy of the Hebrews; and now again made English. By J. C. Medicine Professor. Printed in Latin at Amsterdam, by M. Brown, 1690. And reprinted at London, 1692.

< TRANSLATION of Principia philosophiae antiquissimæ & recentissimæ de Deo, Christo & creatura id est de spiritu & material in genere (Amsterdam: 1690)

Lady Conway obtained her knowledge of kabbalah—with its Lurianic cast—from van Helmont, who was her personal physician, and from von Rosenroth’s Kabbala denudata.


Regarding Conway, More, van Helmont, Knorr von Rosenroth, and Leibniz, see above, pages 86-97. Also refer to

Conway Letters: The Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More, and their Friends, 1642-1684, Collected from Manuscript Sources & Edited with a Biographical Account by

- Sarah Hutton’s articles:
- David Byrne, *ANNE CONWAY: AN INTELLECTUAL PORTRAIT OF A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY VISCONTESS*. (PhD dissertation, Claremont: Claremont Graduate University, 2005).

**Fludd, Robert** (1574-1637):

In Cabalistic interest, the [seventeenth] century begins with Robert Fludd whose so-called *Mosaicall Philosophy* is an amplification of Agrippa’s Cabalism. Fludd was, in some respects, akin to Pico, in that he tried to reconcile the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies. His attempt to do this was based upon the identification of the ten spheres of Aristotelian cosmology with the ten Sephiroth, which are obviously Platonic—i.e., Neo-Platonic—in character.

(Joseph L. Blau, “The Cabala in English Literature,” page 158, noted below)

- **MOSAICALL PHILOSOPHY** Grounded upon the ESSENTIAL TRUTH OR ETERNAL SAPIENCE. Written first in Latin, and afterwards thus rendered into English. By Robert Fludd, Esq; & Doctor of Physick. LONDON, Printed for Humphrey Moseley, at the Prince’s Armes in St. Paul’s Church-yard. 1659.

  < TRANSLATION OF *Philosophia Moysaica*, in qua sapientia & scientia creationis & creaturarum sacra veréque Christiana (vt pot. cujsis basis sive fundamentum est unicus ille lapis angularis Iesus Christus) ad amussim & enucleaté explicatur, avthore Rob. Flvd, alias de Flvtctibs. Govdæ, Excudebat P. Rammazenius, bibliopola, 1638.

Cabala is given its most concentrated treatment in the Second Section of BOOK 2, starting at CHAP. II, p. 171ff.

Books One and Two of the Second section were reprinted in Adam MacLean’s MAGNUM OPUS HERMETIC SOURCEWORKS series (No. 2; Edinburgh: 1979). Abridged versions of Fludd’s preface to *Mosaical Philosophy* and his chapter summaries are given in CHAPTER 8 of *Robert Fludd: Essential Readings*, edited by William H. Huffman (London: Aquarian/Thorsons, 1992). The whole of *Mosaical Philosophy* has been reproduced by Kessinger Publishing Company (2003), and by Forgotten Books (2017).

Helmont, Franciscus Mercurius van (1614-1699):
- A Cabbalistical DIALOGUE IN ANSWER To the Opinion of a Learned Doctor in Philosophy and Theology, THAT THE WORLD WAS MADE OF NOTHING. As it is Contained in the Second Part of the *Cabbala Denudata & Apparatus in Lib. Sohar*, p. 308. &cc. Printed in Latin at Sultsbach, Anno 1677. To which is subjoyned A Rabbinical and Paraphrastical Exposition of Genesis I. written in High-Dutch by the Author of the foregoing Dialogue, first done into Latin, but now made English. LONDON, Printed for Benjamin Clark in George-Yard in Lombard Street, Bookseller, M DCL XXXII.


- TWO HUNDRED QUERIES Moderately propounded Concerning the DOCTRINE Of the REVOLUTION Of Humane Souls, AND Its Conformity to the Truths Of Christianity. LONDON, Printed for Rob. Kettlewell, at the Hand and Scepter over against St. Dunstans Church in Fleetstreet. 1684.

   Courteous Reader,
   
   About two years since, the two hundred Queries following were Translated into the English Tongue beyond the Seas, by a Lover and Searcher after hidden Truth, and were brought over to be proposed to the Learned and Pious of this Kingdom, of whom the Proposer hath that esteem which S. Paul had of the Noble Bereans, Acts 17. verse 10, 11, 12. and who being not inferior to any of the European Nations, are capable to judge of such matters. Therefore it is with all sincerity referred to their judicious and serious scrutiny and inquiry. And if so be this meets with a favourable acceptance, there are two Treatises yet remaining which very probably may then see the Light: the First treating of, and elucidating the chiefest points here mentioned, but after another manner than is done in these Queries; The other is a Latine Tract, the Title whereof is, De Revolutionibus Animarum Tractatus primus e Manuscripto hauud ita pridem ex Oriente ad nos perlato, ex operibus Rabbi Titzchak Lorienisis [read Yitzchak Luria—DK] Cabbalistarum Aquilæ, latitate donatus.

   Farewel.
   
   (Two Hundred Queries, iii-vi)

The promise of this preface was fulfilled: van Helmont “caused” *De Revolutionibus Animarum* “to be added” (so he states in *Paradoxal Discourses*, page 160) to *Kabbala denudata*, TOM. 2, Pars Tertia: *PNEVMATICA CABBALISTICA...*, Tractatus Secundus, pages 243—478. The other *Treatise* is the chapter “Concerning the Revolution of Humane Souls” in *Paradoxal Discourses*, which is listed below.

See Coudert’s *Impact* for excerpts of 200 Queries: Qu. 40—42 (Impact, page 199), Qu. 64 (Impact, page 198), the first two-thirds of Qu. 142 (Impact, page 198), the opening of Qu. 148 (Impact, page 198), Qu. 151 (Impact, page 199), Qu. 161 (Impact, page 197) a portion of Qu. 200 (Impact, page 132, and re-quoted on page 197—cited as pp. 163ff, but actually pp. 164-5). Refer also to Beitchman’s comments in *Alchemy of the Word*, pages 201-207.
• “Concerning the Revolution of Humane Souls,” CHAP. IV. (pp. 105-161) of THE Paradoxal DISCOURSES OF F. M. Van HELMONT, Concerning the Macrocosm AND MICRO COSM, OR THE Greater and Lesser World, And their Union. Set down in WRITING by J.B. and now Published. LONDON: Printed by J.C. and Freeman Collins, for Robert Kettlewel, at the Hand and Scepter near S. Dunstan's Church in Fleetstreet. 1685.


• SEDER OLAM OR, THE Order, Series, or Succession OF ALL THE Ages, Periods, and Times OF THE WHOLE WORLD IS Theologically, Philosophically, and Chronologically Explicated and Stated. ALSO The Hypothesis of the Pre-existency and Revolution of Humane Souls. Together with the Thousand Years Reign of Christ on the Earth, probably evinced, and deliver'd in an Historical Enarration thereof, according to the Holy Scriptures. To which is also annexed, Some Explanatory Questions of the Book of the Revelations of the like import. And an Appendix; containing some Emendations and Explanations of divers Passages, in the two fore-going Treatises, out of the Author's Original Manuscripts and Papers. Translated out of Latin by J. Clark, M. D. upon the Leave of F. M. Baron of Helmont. LONDON: Printed for Sarah Howkins, in George-yard, Lombard Street, 1694.

< TRANSLATION OF Seder olam ordo seculaorum, historica enarratio doctrinarum, anno 1693.

Refer to my full transcription of Seder olam at http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/VanHelmont/index.php

A small portion of the Appendix to Seder olam (page 227, “Emend. And Explic.” to page 95, l. 5) appears in Coudert’s Impact, page 253-4.

• “An APPENDIX of Several Questions with their Answers Concerning the Hypothesis of the Revolution of Humane Souls,” in THE Divine Being And its ATTRIBUTES Philosophically Demonstrated from the Holy Scriptures, AND Original Nature of Things. According to the PRINCIPLES of F.M.B. of Helmont. Written in Low-Dutch by Paulus Buchius Dr. of Physick, and Translated into English by Philangelus. LICENSED Septemb. 25. LONDON Printed, and are to be sold by Randal Taylor, near Stationers Hall. 1693. (pp. 203-232)

The Hypothesis being this, viz. That every individual of Mankind must several times die and be Born again, in Order to the working out of their Salvation here in this World...
(The Divine Being and its Attributes: APPENDIX, page 205)

For my complete transcription of van Helmont’s APPENDIX to Divine Being, go to http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/VanHelmont/index.php

As the titles above attest, “the revolution of humane souls” was among van Helmont’s “chiefest” concerns, which connects with his incorporation of Lurianic kabbalah via the writings attributed to Hayyim Vital as rendered by Knorr von Rosenroth. With the kabbalistic concept of *gilgul* (roughly, *reincarnation*, or *transmigration*), van Helmont found his beloved doctrine supported by authority of the Bible.

CABBALISTIC PHILOSOPHY, 1677-99, opens (page 104), “In the period after 1680, van Helmont went out of his way to publish in English.”

For a full study, see Allison Coudert, The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century: The Life and Thought of Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614-1698) [BRILL SERIES IN JEWISH STUDIES, 9] (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1999).

More, Henry (1614-1687):

- Conjectura Cabbalistica. OR, A CONJECTURAL ESSAY OF Interpreting the minde of Moses, according to a Threefold CABBALA: Viz. Literal, Philosophical, Mystical, or, Divinely Moral. By HENRY MORE Fellow of Christ’s College in Cambridge. LONDON, Printed by James Flesher, and are to be sold by William Morden Bookseller in Cambridge, 1653.

Let us now take a general view of this whole Cabbala, and more summarily consider the strength thereof; which we may refer to these two heads, viz. the nature of the Truths herein contained, and the dignity of these persons that have owned them in foregoing Ages. And as for the Truths themselves, first, they are such as may well become so holy and worthy a person as Moses, if he would Philosophize; they being very precious and choice Truths. And very highly removed above the conceit of the vulgar, and so the more likely delivered to him, or to Adam first by God for a special mysterie.

Secondly, they are such, that the more they are examined, the more irrefutable they will be found, so Hypothesis that was ever yet propounded to men, so exquisitely well agreeing with the Phenomena of Nature, the Attributes of God, the Passages of Providence, and the rational Faculties of our own minds.

Thirdly, there is a continued sutableness and applicability to the Text of Moses all along, without any force or violence done to Grammar or Criticism.

Fourthly and lastly, there is a great usefulness, if not necessity, at least of some of them, they being such substantial Props of Religion, and great encouragements to a sedulous purification of our mindes, the study of true piety.

(Conjectura Cabbalistica: “The Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala,” pp. 183-4)

In a letter to Anne Conway, More indicates the origins of his “3 fold Cabbala”:

Though the Conceptions in the Cabbala be most what my own, yeit I do what I can in my Defense to gette Godfathers [i.e., Pythagoras, Plato, and the Neoplatonists—DK] all along to these births of my own braine, and so to lessen the odium of these inventions by alledgeing the Authority of Auncient Philosophers and Fathers, and therefore the Defense is longer then otherwise it had needed to have been, besides other Digressions I thought fitt to make which are not so speculative as practicall, which liberty I take, as havinge a designe so farre as I can to engage others to be good rather then Wise, or to ostentate my own skill and wisedome to the world. I am glad your Ladiship can so easily reade them and so readily understand my Cabbalas with the Defense.

(f. 43. HENRY MORE TO ANNE CONWAY, in Conway Letters, collected by Marjorie Hope Nicolson, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930: page 83)

Or, as bluntly put by Allison Coudert, “Conjectura Cabbalistica ... had been written in virtual ignorance of authentic kabbalistic texts” (Coudert, Impact, p. 232). With similar matter-of-factness, B. J. Gibbons states, “[Leone Ebreo’s Dialoghi [d’amore] are the obvious source of More’s Cabalism” (Gender and Mystical Thought [Cambridge University Press, 1996] page 74; refer above to THE PROBLEM OF LEONE EBREO’S DIALOGHI, pp. 35-40).

Conway, van Helmont, and Knorr von Rosenroth,” § 1, THE JEWISH AND THE ‘GREEK’ CABBALA. For other pertinent works of More’s rendered in English, find the references in Kabbala denudata, APPARATUS IN LIBRUM SOHR PARS SECUNDA, §10 (see below, pages 108-110).

For further examples of More’s writings on cabala, see Knots & Spirals: Some Brief Writings of Henry More (from Kabbala denudata) at http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/KS/index.php. Among the passages included is More’s prefatory letter (dated April 22, 1675) to his “Ad Clarissimum ac Erudissimum Virum N. N. De rebus in Amica sua Resposione contentis Ulterior Disquisitio” [TO THE LUCID AND LEARNED HERO N.N. ... WITH FRIENDSHIP IN RESPONSE TO THE CONTENT OF THE PREVIOUS DISQUISITION (i.e., a compendium of R. Naftali Hertz’ Emeq ha-Melekh in 103 Theses)] in English, appears on pages 173—176 of Kabbala denudata, tome 1 (Sulzbach: 1677).


Also, find in the current paper, § HENRY MORE, pages 91-92.

**Vaughan, Thomas** [Eugenia Philalethes] (1622-1666):

- **MAGIA ADAMICA,** OR The Antiquitie of Magic : AND The Descent therof from Adam downwards, proved. Whereunto is added, a perfect, and full Discoverie of the true Coelum Terræ, or the Magician’s Heavenly Chaos, and first Matter of all Things. By Eugenius Philalethes. LONDON : Printed by T. W. for H. BLUNDEN at the Castle in Corn-hill, 1650.

- **LUMEN DE LUMINE,** OR A new Magickall Light, discovered, and Communicated to the WORLD. By Eugenius Philalethes. GEN. I. 3 And God said, Let there be light. JOHN I. Chap : Ver. 5. And the Light shineth in the Darknesse. Pythag. Ne loquaris Deo absque Lumine. LONDON, Printed for H. BLUNDEN at the Castle in Corne-Hil. 1651.

Alchemist Vaughan describes two types of “Kabalah” in Magia Adamica: (1) the “true Kabalah,” whose “truths were unknown to most of those rabbins whom [Vaughan had] seen, even Rambam [Maimonides] himself,” and (2) the “inventions of some dispersed wandering rabbis” which consist of “certain alphabetical knacks,” the varieties of which “are grown voluminous” (—Works..., edited by A. E. Waite, page 167). Further, Vaughan speaks, following Sefer Yetzirah, of the “The Literal Kabalah... [which] hath Three Principles, commonly styled Tres Matres, or Three Mothers,” namely, Aleph (air), Mem (water), and Shin (fire) (—Works..., page 168). Vaughan links the sefirot with Jacob’s ladder, stating that this symbol “is the greatest mystery in the Kabalah” in that here one finds “inferiors united with superiors” (—Works..., pages 169-170). Ultimately though, for Vaughan, “the learning of the Jews—I mean their Kabalah—was chemical and ended in true physical performances” (—Works..., page 171).

In Lumen de Lumine, Vaughan equates the supernal sefirot with the Trinity, i.e., the Son : hokhmah, the Holy Ghost : binah, and, by inference, the Father : keter (—Works..., page 295). He concludes

> Now, Reader, I have unriddled for thee the grand, mysterious problem of the Kabalist. “In the seven parts”—saith he—“there are two triplicities, and in the middle there stands one thing. Twelve stand in battle array : three friends, three foes; three warriors make alive; three in like manner slay. And God the Faithful King Ruleth over all from the Hall of His
sanctity. One upon three, and three upon seven, and seven upon twelve, and all standing in close array, one with another.” (—Works..., page 305)

Refer to The Tantric Alchemist: Thomas Vaughan and the Indian Tantric Tradition by Peter Levanda (Lake Worth: Ibis Press, 2015), where kabbalah is frequently mentioned, though only in passing. “The Tantric Alchemist is a work on Alchemy as decoded by Tantra ... and a work on Tantra as understood by Alchemists.” The tantric connection of Vaughan and his wife had been taken up before, as, for instance by Kenneth Rexroth in his introduction to the reprint of A. E. Waite’s edition of The Works of Thomas Vaughan (noted above).

Villars, Abbé de (Nicolas-Pierre-Henri Montfaucon, 1635-1673)

- THE Count of GABALIS: Or, The Extravagant Mysteries of the Cabalists EXPOSED In Five Pleasant Discourses On The Secret Sciences ... Done into English, By P. A. Gent [= Philip Ayres]. With Short Animadversions. London, Printed for B. M. Printer to the Cabalistical Society of the Sages, at the Sign of the Rosy-Crusian, M DC LXXX [1680].


So popular was this Paracelsian romp that there were, in fact, two English translations published in 1680, the other being


Two editions also appeared in 1714; the title information of the second edition (#2 below) provides a summary of Gabalis’ contents:

1. THE Count de GABALIS: Being a Diverting HISTORY OF THE Rosicrucian DOCTRINE OF SPIRITS, VIZ. SYLPHS, SALAMADERS, GNOMEs, and DÆMONS: Shewing their Various Influence upon Human Bodies. Done from the PARIS Edition. To which is prefix’d Monsieur Bayle’s Account of this WORK: And of the SECT of the ROSICRUCIANS. Quod tanto impedio abscontitut, etiam solummodo demonstrare, distrueure est. Tertull. LONDON: Printed for B. LINTOTT and E. CURLL, in Fleet-Street, 1714. Price 1 s.

2. The Diverting HISTORY OF THE Count de GABALIS: CONTAINING, I. An Account of the Rosicrucian Doctrine of Spirits, viz. Sylphs, Salamaders, Gnomes, and Daemons; shewing their various Influence upon Human Bodies. II. The Nature and Advantages of Studying the Occult Sciences. III. The Carnal Knowledge of Women to be renoun’d. IV. ADAM’s Fall not occasion’d by eating the Apple, but by his carnal Knowledge of EVE. V. The Rise, Progress, and Decay of Oracles. VI. A Parallel between Ancient and Modern Priestcraft. To which is prefix’d, Monsieur Bayle’s Account of this Work, and of the SECT of the ROSICRUCIANS. The Second Edition. LONDON : Printed for B. Lintott at the Cross-Keys, and E. Currll, at the Dial and Bible, in Fleet-Street, 1714.

Count of Gabalis has been reprinted fairly frequently: see the recent edition, Comte de Gabalis, New York: Cosimo, 2005—on the back cover of which it states, “Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton’s based his strange novel, Zanoni upon this esoteric work. Alexander Pope in his dedication to The Rape of the Lock, sings its praises.”

Refer also to Christopher McIntosh’s comments on pages 107 and 108 of The Rosicrucians: The History, Mythology, and Rituals of an Esoteric Order (3rd edition, York Beach: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1997).
Bibliography for SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PRINTED WORKS:

- Nicolson, Marjorie H. “Milton and the Conjectura Cabbalistica,” in *Philological Quarterly*, Volume VI, Number 1 (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1927).
  § O: “Non-Jewish Kabbalah,” first division: “Primary Sources”
  Book X: “Some Christian Students of the Kabbalah”

*This catalogue would not have been possible without the able assistance of Hui-Ju Chen.*
THE CONTENTS OF KABBALA DENUDATA (KD)
WITH SOURCES IN ENGLISH

TOMUS PRIMUS (Sulzbach: 1677):


The frontispiece diagram (facing the title page) and the INSCRIPTIONES TITULI (a poem—verso of title page—explaining the words Explicat, Alta videt, Lucet, Domat, Intrat, which adorn the frontispiece) are translated into English on page 27 of Ernst Benz’ Christian Kabbalah (translated from the German by Kenneth W. Wenschne, edited by Robert J. Faas, St. Paul: Graillstone Press, 2004). Allison Coudert also translates the poem in The Impact of the Kabbalalah in the Seventeenth Century: The Life and Thought of Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614-1698) (HEREAFTER Coudert, Impact), page 138.

PRÆFATIO EDITORIS ADLECTOREM / Philebraum, Philochymicum, & Philosophum
[EDITOR’S PREFACE TO THE READER]

INDEX LATINUS MATERIARUM PARTIS Prioris
[INDEX OF LATIN MATERIAL IN THE FIRST PART]

INDEX LOCORUM S. SCRIPTURÆ VT
[INDEX OF THE LOCATION OF OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES]

1—740: APPARATUS IN LIBRUM SOHAR PARS PRIMA nempe LOCI COMMUNES KABBALISTICICI, Secundum ordinem Alphabeticum concinnati, Qui LEXICI instar esse possunt [APPARATUS TO THE BOOK ZOHAR FIRST PART namely KABBALISTIC COMMON-PLACES, ALPHABETICALLY ARRANGED, …] i.e., a glossary offering explanations and arrangements of names and divine epithets according to the sefirotic degrees, derived from the Zohar, Moses Cordovero’s Pardes Rimmonim, Gikatilla’s Sha’arei Orah, various Lurianic writings, and Æsch Mezareph.

On the Zohar, see below (TOMUS SECUNDUS: Pars Secunda) and my “Notes on the Zohar in English” at http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Biblios/zie.pdf or https://www.academia.edu/22865064/Notes_on_the_Zohar_in_English.

Cordovero’s Pardes Rimmonim has made its way into English: Pardes Rimmonim: Orchard of Pomegranates, Tomes 1-12, i.e., twelve volumes, Integral edition in English, Hebrew, and Aramaic, translated by Elyakim Gezt (I-VI), Sharron Shatil (VII-X), and Avraham Broide (XI-XII) (Belize City: Providence, 2007-2010) or edited by Fabrizio Del tin ([n.p.]: eUniveristy.pub, 2018); and Moses Cordovero’s Introduction to Kabbalah: An Annotated Translation of His OR NE’ERAV translated by Ira Robinson (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1994). Robinson refers to Or Ne’erav as “an epitome of Cordovero’s great systematic theology of Kabbalah,” i.e., Pardes Rimmonim (—p. xi).

On Gikatilla’s Sha’are Orah, or, Porta Lucis, see Avi Weinstein’s translation, Sha’are Orah, Gates of Light (San Francisco, HarperCollins, 1994); the translation is from the original Hebrew text, not from the Latin of Rosenroth.

108


KD I, 1: 388-9 (PARAGRAPH 7) is translated in Coudert's Impact, p. 126.

1—312: APPARATUS IN LIBRUM SOHAR PARSECUNDUM, CAJUS CONTENTA EXHEBET VERSA PAGINA [APPARATUS FOR THE BOOK ZOHAR SECOND PART, TABLE OF CONTENTS SHOWN ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THIS PAGE]

1. 3—5: Excerpta ex Epistola quondam Compilatoris de utilitate Versionis Libri Cabbalisticorum Sohar [EXCERTPTS AND NOTES ... ON THE ZOHAR]

The opening paragraph of this section is translated in Coudert, Impact, p. 114.

2. 6—13: Tabulae duæ Synopticae Cabbalisticae [TWO SYNOPTIC KABBALISTIC TABLES]:
   i. The Sefirot (in the form of the "Tree of the sefirot")
   ii. Key of the Sublime Kabbalah, on the Order of Divine Names with the Resolution of Difficult Enigmata of the Book Zohar


4. 28—61: Tractus I. Libri Druschim, seu Introducticio Metaphysica ad Cabbalam Autore R. Jizchak Lornense (with notes) [TRACT I. BOOK OF DISSERTATIONS, OR METAPHYSICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE KABBALAH OF ISAAC LURIA: Sefer ha-Derushim]

   A summary of Liber Drushim is given by Waite, Holy Kabbalah, pp. 414-416.


6. 73—99: ... Amica Responsio ad D. Henricum Morum [FRIENDLY RESPONSE TO DR. HENRY MORE – Knorr von Rosenroth]


7. 100—149: Tractatus de Anima R. Moscheh Korduero Pardes [TRACT ON THE SOUL FROM MOSES CORDOVERO'S GARDEN: Pardes Rimmonim]


8. 150—172: THESES KABBALISTICÆ quod est compendium Libri Emek hamMelech [KABBALISTIC THESSES WHICH ARE A COMPENDIUM OF VALLEY OF THE KING (in 130 Theses): Emek ha-Melekh]

   See Waite, Holy Kabbalah, § “Naphtali Hertz,” pp. 420-422; Naftali Hertz, Mystic Tales from the EMEEK HAMELECH, with commentary by R. DovBer Pinson (Brooklyn: IYYUN


More’s prefatory letter on 173-176, (dated April 22, 1675) is in English. This letter transcribed can be found in “Some Writings of Henry More,” at Knots & Spirals within Colin Low’s Hermetic Kabbalah:

- https://www.academia.edu/44675680/Knots_and_Spirals_Il_Henry_More_extracts_from_Kabbala_denudata


274—292: CATECHISMUS CABBALISTICUS, sive MERCAVÆUS, Quo, in DIVINIS MYSTERIIS MERCAVÆ EZECHIELITICÆ Explicandis & memoria retinendis DEcem sephirotharum sus egregie illustratur [SUMMARY OF THE KABBALAH, OR MERKAVAH, WHICH IS THE DIVINE MYSTERY OF EZEKIEL’S CHARIOT EXPLAINED & ACCOUNTED (AND IS) EXCELLENTLY ILLUSTRATED BY USE OF THE TEN SEFIROT—Henry More]

“Doctor Henry More’s short and faithful Paraphrase on Ezekiel’s Vision of the Mercava (or Chariot of the God of Israel), representing emblematically the Kingdom of the Messiah, and the Revolution of Souls thro’ the Four Worlds or States of Aziluth, Briah, Jetzirah, and Asiath, from the Hebrew Text,” “Dr. H. More’s Expositio Mercavae abridged,” “Dr. H. More’s Explication of the Mercava of Ezekiel, in Fifty-two Answers to so many Questions, abridg’d,” and “Catechismus Cabalisticus Mercavæus Sephirothis” appear in English as an appendix (pages 358-394) to R[alph James]. Cosway, A MISCELLANEOUS METAPHYSICAL ESSAY: OR, AN HYPOTHESIS Concerning the FORMATION AND GENERATION of Spiritual and Material Beings ...By an IMPARTIAL INQUIRER after Truth [i.e., Cosway]; London: Printed for A. MILLAR, over against Catharine Street, in the Strand. MDCCXLVIII, pp. 358-394.

A transcription of these passages can be found at Knots & Spirals within Colin Low’s Hermetic Kabbalah at the websites given immediately above in § 9.

MERCAVÆ EXPOSITIO is summarized in Waite, Holy Kabbalah, pp. 471-2.


308—312: AD FUNDAMENTA CABBALÆ ÆTO-PÆDO-MELISSÆÆ DIALOGUS [TO THE FUNDAMENTAL KABBALAH EAGLE-BOY-BEE DIALOGUE—van Helmont]

An English translation of Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont’s dialogue in response to More’s Fundamenta Philosophiae was printed in 1682. The title page reads: “A Cabbalistical DIALOGUE IN ANSWER To the Opinion of a Learned Doctor [i.e., Henry More] in Philosophy and Theology, THAT THE WORLD WAS MADE OF NOTHING. As it is Contained in the Second Part of the Cabbala Denudata & Apparatus in Lib. Sohar, p. 308. &cc. Printed in Latin at Sultsbach, Anno 1677. To which is subjoined A Rabbinical and Paraphrastical Exposition of Genesis I. written in High-Dutch by the Author of the foregoing Dialogue, first done into Latin, but now made English. London, Printed for Benjamin Clark in George-Yard in Lombard Street, Bookseller, MDCLXXXII.”

See my full transcription of “Francis Mercurius van Helmont’s Cabbalistical Dialogue,” at


APPARATUS IN LIBRUM SOHAR PARÌS TERTIA & QUARTA...PORTA CÆLORUM ...R. Abraham Cohen Irira ...&... Arbores seu Tabulas Cabbalisticas Universales... [APPARATUS FOR THE BOOK ZOHAR THIRD & FOURTH PARTS... (Abraham Cohen Herrera’s) GATE OF HEAVEN...TREES OR UNIVERSAL KABBALISTIC DIAGRAMS...]

Prefatio Editoris ad Lectorum [EDITORIAL PREFACE TO THE READER]

1—192: PORTA CÆLORUM [GATE OF HEAVEN]. (Philosophiae Cabbalistica) = a greatly abridged version of Abraham Cohen de Herrera’s Sha‘ar ha-Shamayim, or Puerta del Cielo.

Herrera’s Puerta del cielo found its way into Rosenroth’s Kabbala denudata through its Hebrew version, Sha‘ar ha-Shamayim, the original having been in Spanish. Rosenroth’s rendition is far from a fair representation of Herrera’s original work—which Kenneth Krabbenhoft offers in Abraham Cohen de Herrera: GATE OF HEAVEN (Puerta del cielo), translated from the Spanish with Introduction and Notes (Leiden: Brill, 2002). “Aboab [who executed the Hebrew translation] did not just translate [Herrera’s works] but also radically altered the texts according to his own interpretation” (—The Mystic Tradition, page 21—noted below; Rosenroth further condensed the work in the process of putting it into Latin, emphasizing its philosophical passages.

Herrera’s Beit Elohim (originally Casa de la divinidad) also makes an appearance in Kabbala denudata. (See below TOMUS II, PARÌS TERTIA: PNEVMATICA CABBALISTICA: TRACTATUS I: Doctrina Hebræorum de Spiritibus.)

Further on Herrera:


193—255: PARS QUARTA, quae CONTINET EXPLICATIONEM ARBORUM seu TABULARUM... [PART FOUR, A DETAILED EXPLANATION OF THE (KABBALISTIC) TREE OR DIAGRAM..., in 16 figures]

For this section in English, see Christopher Atton and Stephen Dziklewicz’ Kabbalistic Diagrams of Rosenroth, with an introduction by Adam McLean [MAGNUM OPUS HERMETIC SOURCEWORKS, Number 23] (London: The Hermetic Research Trust, 1987). Unfortunately, volumes in the HERMETIC SOURCEWORKS series were run in limited editions of 250 copies. Some titles—alas, not Kabbalistic Diagrams—have subsequently been reprinted.53


Refer to LURIANIC DIAGRAMS: KABALA DENUDATA VS ILAN HA-GADOL. LURIANIC DIAGRAMS, which is appended to my paper, “Which Lurianic Kabbalah?” online at Academia.edu: https://www.academia.edu/30928619/Which_Lurianic_Kabbalah


54 Until 2012, copies of Kabbalistic Diagrams were available from ALCHEMY WEB BOOKSHOP : MAGNUM OPUS BOOKS at http://www.alchemywebsite.com/bookshop/Magnum_opus.html; these are now sold out—link checked: 10-7-2012 and 12-28-2013. As of 2-25-2021, copies at AbeBooks.com and Amazon.com are going for $395.00. On 11-30-2021, there were no copies listed at AbeBooks.com, Amazon.com, or eBay.
KABBALA DENUDATA: TITLE PAGES

TOME I

TOME II
TOMUS SECUNDUS (Frankfort: 1684):

Id est LIBER SOHAR RESTITUTUS [WHICH IS THE BOOK ZOHAR RESTORED]; Cajus content a pagina versamonstrabili. OPUS Omnibus genuinæ antiquitatis, & sublimiorom Hebraïcæ gentis dogmatum indagatoribus, nec non Hebraïcæ & Chaldaïcæ linguae, & in specie Idiomatis Terræ Israeliticae, tempore Christi & Apostolorum usitati, Studiososis, alisque curiosi utilissimum, & vere Kabbalisticum...

1—38: Lectori Philebræo Salutem! [GREETINGS HEBREW-LOVING READERS!]

PARTE PRIMA
2. 151—346: TRACTATUS SECUNDUS: Introductio in dogmata profundiora (Libri Sohar) [INTRODUCTION TO THE PROFOUND DOGMA (OF THE BOOK ZOHAR)] ... VALLEM REGIAM. R. Napthali Hirtz, F.R. Jaacob Elchana [Naftali Hirtz, Ya’akov Elhanan] = the first six sections of Emek ha-Melekh; see Mystic Tales from the EMEK HAMELECH, with commentary by R. DovBer Pinson (Brooklyn: IYYUN Center for Jewish Spirituality, 2015).

PARS SECUNDA
1. 347—385: TRACTATUS PRIMUS: Siphra de Zeniutha...Liber Mysterii
2. 386—520: TRACTATUS SECUNDUS: Idra Rabba...Synodvs Areæ Magna
3. 521—598: TRACTATUS TERTIUS: Idra Suta...Synodvs Minor


4. 1—144: TRACTATUS QVARTVS: (commentaries)
   a. 3—47: Commentarius in Siphra de Zeniutha, Librum mysterii
      = Lurianic commentary [ON THE BOOK OF CONCEALED MYSTERY]
      from a manuscript of Hayyim Vital
      A brief account of this commentary appears in Waite, Holy Kabbalah, pp. 416-7.
   b. 47—144: Commentarius generalis in Librum mysterii & Synodos
      = §§ 130—236 of Naftali Hirtz’ Emek ha-Melekh
      Refer to Waite, Holy Kabbalah, § “Naftali Hirtz,” pp. 420-422, and Mystic Tales from the EMEK HAMELECH, with commentary by R. DovBer Pinson (Brooklyn: IYYUN Center for Jewish Spirituality, 2015).

5. 145—186 TRACTATUS QVINTVS: Tres Tractatus initiales Libri Sohar = annotated discourses with Lurianic commentary (Vital)
   a. 146—154: DISCURSUS I
   b. 154—162: DISCURSUS II
   c. 162—186: DISCURSUS III
1. 188—242: TRACTATUS I: Doctrina Hebræorum de Spiritibus = excerpts of Herrera’s *Casa de la divinidad* (Beth Elohim, Domus Dei, [HOUSE OF GOD])

There is an English translation by Olen Rush of *The Ten Impure Enumerations* from Abraham Cohen de Herrera’s *Casa de la Divinidad* (Oker Harim [Lulu], 2014). The enumerations are tabulated in the CONTINET EXPLICATIONEM ARBORUM seu TABULARUM at the end of Tome I of KD within the explanation of figura XVI. Rush conjectures that *The Ten Impure Enumerations* “appears to be a transcription of an excerpt from Maggid Mesheirim by R. Yossef Karo z”l” (INTRODUCTION—pages not numbered), which, while even noting an English edition, he admits, he has never seen!


Some of the contents of *De Revolutionibus Animarum* are approximated in *Sha’ar haGilgulim* [THE EIGHTH GATE]: *The Gates of Reincarnation*, translated from the Teachings of Rabbi Isaac Luria, 1534-1575, by Yitzchak Bar Chaim (Malibu: Thirty Seven Books Publishing, 2003), and *Sha’ar haGilgulim: Gate of Reincarnations – An English Translation of the Arizal’s work on reincarnation*: Volume 1 – Chapters 1-35, Volume 2 – Chapters 36-40, translated and annotated by Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Kiryat Yeairim: Thirtysix.org, 2014).

Note, however, that *De Revolutionibus Animarum* was translated from *Sefer ha-Gilgulim*, (published in Frankfort: David Gruenhut, 1684—the same year as KD II), not *Sha’ar ha-Gilgulim*, which is the last section, or “gate,” of Shemonah She’arim [THE EIGHT GATES], Hayyim Vital’s *Etz Hayyim* as redacted by Vital’s son, Shmuel (Jerusalem: 1850-99).

*Sefer ha-Gilgulim* is in two sections: BOOK 1 (chapters 1—35) contains material similar to *Sha’ar ha-Gilgulim* from well within the “Safed” line, which traces from Hayyim and Shmuel Vital to Jacob Zemach, then to Meir Poppers. In BOOK 2 (chapters 36—77) Poppers presents teachings which are not Lurianic, including material from the more eclectic “European” line which drew from older kabbalistic traditions and Moses Cordovero. Abraham Azulai, author of *Hesed le-Avraham*, also influenced this European Lurianic kabbalah.

---


55 On the Lurianic doctrine of transmigration, see also


56 *Sha’ar ha-Gilgulim* presents thirty-seven hakdamot, “introductions.” For more detail on the development of Lurianic Kabbalah, see “Which Lurianic Kabbalah?” at  
https://www.academia.edu/30928619/Which_Lurianic_Kabbalah
3. 1–70: ( appended to some editions of KD, van Helmont’s ) ADUMBRATIO KABBALÆ CHRISTIANÆ, Idest Syncatabasis Hebraizans, Sive Brevis Applicatione Doctrina Hebræorum Cabbalisticæ Ad Dogmata Novi Ætatis. PRO FORMANDA HYPOTHESIS, Ad Conversionem Judæorum Proficuæ [Outline of Christian Cabala, That is the Hebraic Conception or Brief Application of Doctrines of Hebrew Cabalists to the Dogma of the New Covenant; to Form a Hypothesis Proficient for Converting the Jews]. FRANCOFURTI AD MEUM, Sumtu JOHANNIS DAVIDIS ZUNNERI, Cassitero JOH. PHIL. ANDREÆ. ANNO M DC LXXXIV.

CONTENTS:

CAPIT I. De variis universi statibus
   [OF THE VARIOUS LEVELS (OR STATES) OF THE UNIVERSE]
CAPIT II. De statu universi primo sive primææ institutionis, ejusque efficience
   [OF THE FIRST STATE OF THE UNIVERSE OR OF THE PRIMORDIAL INSTITUTION, AND
   OF ITS NATURE]
CAPIT III. De Medio primææ productionis seu Adamos primo
   [OF THE MEDIATOR OF THE FIRST PRODUCED, OR PRIMAL ADAM]
CAPIT IV. De Naturis Productis, & sine Productionis
   [OF THE BEINGS PRODUCED & OF (THE PURPOSE OF) THEIR PRODUCTION]
CAPIT V. De statu secuæ Destructionis
   [OF THE SUBSEQUENT STATE OF DESTITUTION]
CAPIT VI. De statu modernæ Constitutionis
   [OF THE STATE OF THE MODERN CONSTITUTION]
CAPIT VII. De Animarum Praæxistentia in specie
   [OF THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF THE SOULS EXPLICITLY SET FORTH]
CAPIT VIII. De Personis Divinitatis in specie
   [OF THE DIVINE PERSONÆ (i.e., PARZUFIM) EXPLICITLY SET FORTH]
CAPIT IX. De status istius tertii Depravatione, sive De Laptu Animarum
   [OF THE THIRD STATE OF CORRUPTION, OF THE FALL OF THE SOULS]
CAPIT X. De statu postremae Restitutionis, ejusque Gradu primo
   [OF THE SUPREME STATE OF RESTITUTION, & OF ITS FIRST STAGE]
CAPIT XI. De secundo Gradu Restitutionis Animarum
   [OF THE SECOND STAGE OF THE RESTITUTION OF THE SOULS]
CAPIT XII. De duobus ultimis Restitutioæ Messianæ Gradibus
   [OF THE TWO ULTIMATE STAGES OF THE MESSIANIC RESTITUTION]

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS:


While citing Spector’s edition of Adumbratio Kabbalæ Christianæ in their preface to Messias Puer (cited above, page 90), Anna M. Vileno and Robert J. Wilkinson advance the idea that Knorr wrote Adumbratio, but that it was “probably produced in collaboration with his regular companion, Francis Mercury van Helmont” (ibid., p. xiv). They note that “The question of authorship of Adumbratio raises many delicate questions” (ibid., p. xx).

Further on in the book (pp. 60–70), the case is made for Knorr’s having written the Adumbratio, singling out CHAPTER 3 in particular, with van Helmont possibly having contributed CHAPTER 7.
French Translations:


Added title page: ADUMBRATIO KABBALÆ CHRISTIANÆ; ou SYNCATABASE HÉBRAÏQUE; ou Brève application des doctrines des Hébreux qabbalistes aux dogmes de la nouvelle Alliance, dans le but de former une hypothèse profitable à la conversion des Juifs / FRANCORT-SUR-LE-MEIN / IMPRIME PAR JEAN-PHIL. ANDRE, POUR LE COMPTE DE JEAN-DAVID ZUNNER 1684 / PUBLIÉ EN APÊNDECE À LA KABBALA DENUDATA DE KNORR VON ROSENROTH.)


Reference editions for The Contents of Kabbala Denudata:


[volkskundiche quellen (folklore sources): neudrucke europaischer texte und untersuchungen (reprints of european texts and studies)].

(Hildesheim – Zurich – New York: George Olms Verlag, 1974; reprinted 1999).

Knorr von Rosenroth, Christian, Freierr (1636-1689). Kabbala denudata...

(Sulzbachi: Typis Abrahami Lichtenthaleri, 1677-1684).

Cornell University, Kroch Library: WITCHCRAFT BF 1600 .K72 v.2

[This call number should be changed to BM 535 .K6 1684]


Spector, Sheila (trans/ed). Francis Mercury van Helmont’s ‘Sketch of Christian Kabbalism.’


Other works consulted:

KABBALAH IN COLONIAL AMERICA

The name George Keith (1639/9-1716) appeared above in connection with the Cambridge Platonists:


This connection put Keith into contact with the coterie around Kabala denudata, namely, Knorr von Rosenroth, Henry More, and F. M. van Helmont.

This also brings George Fox (1624-1691), the founder of the Quakers, into the picture:


Keith, usually described as a Scottish missionary, was brought up Presbyterian. In his twenties, he joined the Religious Society of Friends, i.e., the Quakers, and traveled to the Netherlands and Germany as a missionary with George Fox, Robert Barclay (1648-1690), and William Penn (1644-1718). Thereafter, Keith and Penn settled in the colonies in the vicinity of Philadelphia.

Not only did Keith successfully convert significant people from his circle to Quakerism, including [Anne] Conway herself, but he was reciprocally converted into a kabbalist. He eventually took his kabbalistic learning with him to America and integrated it into his own form of Quakerism known as “Christian Quakerism.”

Keith produced numerous manuscripts and a handful of published works containing his version of kabbalism, e.g., The Cabbala of the Jews (1688). Keith’s ideas, including his “kabbalistic musings,” were criticized by Puritan Cotton Mather (1663-1728) in his treatise against Quakerism (1691). Keith, too, eventually (in the 1690s) denounced the Quakers and Penn as deists and, further, wrote an anti-slavery missive (1693). Thereafter, he entered the Church of England.

The story of kabbalah in the colonies leads to “The First Kaballah Text Published in North America,” namely The Truth, The Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth (1722) by Judah Monis (1683-1764) with “a considerable amount of help” from Increase Mather (1639-1723), father of the aforementioned Cotton Mather. The frontispiece of the work reads,

_The Short ESSAY, WHEREIN the Author proves the Doctrine of the Ever Blessed and Adorable TRINITY, Both out of the Old Testament, And with the Authority of the Cabalistical Rabbies, Ancient and Modern._

On all of this, see Kabbalah and the Founding of America: The Early Influence of Jewish Thought in the New World by Brian Ogren (New York: New York University Press, 2021), which treats not only the men discussed above but also Ezra Stiles (1727-1795), who was a co-founder of Brown University (1764) and served as president of Yale (1778-1795).

Kabbalah in America: Ancient Lore in the New World, edited by Brian Ogren (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2020), PART 1 “Kabbalah in Colonial America,” contains Michael Hoberman’s “They Have with Faithfulness and Care Transmitted the Oracles of God unto us Gentiles’: Jewish Kabbalah and Text Study in the Puritan Imagination” (pp. 11-30) and Ogren’s “The Zohar in Early Protestant American Kabbalah: On Ezra Stiles and the Case for Jewish Christianity” (pp. 3-47).

Also see,


---

58 Ogren, Kabbalah and the Founding of America, p. 12
59 ibid., p. 119.
60 See my notes on Birkel’s articles on page 4 of ADDENDUM A (link at the head of this paper).
JOHAN KEMPER (1670-1716)

In the late seventeenth century, Rabbi Johan Kemper [the Christian name taken by Moses ben Aaron of Cracow, 1670-1716], a Polish Jew who immigrated to Sweden and converted to Christianity, was appointed professor of Hebrew at the University of Uppsala. ... During Kemper’s long tenure at the University of Uppsala he “trained a whole generation of Swedish scholars in Oriental and Rabbinic studies.”


In Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology: A Constructive Approach (Milton Keynes – Colorado Springs – Hyderabad: Paternoster/ Authentic Media, 2009), Richard Harvey writes (p. 115),

Christianizing the mystical tradition was the goal of Johann Christian Jakob Kemper of Uppsala, a 17th century Jewish Christian who established the truths of Christianity on the basis of Jewish sources, particularly the Zohar, to show that the messianic faith of the Christians was, in fact, the truly ancient Kabbalah of Judaism. His commentary on the Zohar [Mateh Moshe – THE ROD OF MOSES] published in 1711, begins with three initial chapters, on the Trinity, the divinity of the Messiah, and on Metatron, the embodiment of the Messiah.

On Kemper, see

- Eggerz, Niels. “Johan Kemper’s (Moses Aaron’s) Humble Account: A Rabbi between Sabbateanism and Christianity,” at EARLY MODERN WORKSHOP: RESOURCES IN JEWISH HISTORY, Volume 4: Continuity and Change in the Jewish Communities of the Early Eighteenth Century (Ohio State University, Columbus, August 17-19, 2015):


FRIEDRICH CHRISTOPH OETINGER (1702-1782)

Ernst Benz’ Die christliche Kabbala: Ein Stiefkind der Theologie [The Christian Kabbalah: A Stepchild of Theology] (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1958) opens with “The Beginnings of Christian Kabbalism,” a rather swift chapter following Scholém’s article of nearly the same name. Benz then treats developments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with chapters on Knorr von Rosenroth, Koppel Hecht, Isaac Luria (whom Oetinger “counted next to Jacob Böhme and Swedenborg as principal witnesses of spiritual knowledge”—p. 43), and “The Kabbalistic Master Tablet of Princess Antonia” (the image of which, with key, is appended to the text).

Benz pays special attention to the theosophist Friedrich Christoph Oetinger throughout the book, particularly in the chapters “Oetinger’s Path to Kabbalah” and “Oetinger’s Doctrine of the Sephiroth.”

Note, however, Wouter J. Hanegraaff’s remarks in Swedenborg, Oetinger, Kant: Three Perspectives on the Secrets of Heaven (West Chester: The Swedenborg Foundation, 2007):

Oetinger has often been presented as one of the main representatives of a Western esoteric tradition known as Christian Theosophy, and of another one known as Christian Kabbalah, but as will become clear from our discussions, there is much reason to see him as a remarkably orthodox representative of biblical fundamentalism as understood in the Protestant tradition. (—p. xxii)

Hanegraaff, however, acknowledges Oetinger’s “kabbalistic interests” and his contact with Knorr von Rosenroth’s Kabbala denudata.


Readers of French: Two papers in Kabbalistes chrétiens (Paris: Albin Michel, 1979) discuss Oetinger at length:


---


THE ‘UNKNOWN SUPERIORS’: SWEDENBORG, FALK, & CAGLIOSTRO

In the eighteenth century, quite a bit of kabbalistic influence appears to trace to a single individual. There are indications that, among others, Emanuel Swedenborg63 (1688-1772) and Alessandro Cagliostro (1743-1795)64 were indebted to Samuel Falk (= Hayyim Samuel Jacob Falk, 1708-1782), a Polish Kabbalist known as the “Ba’al Shem of London” (ba’al shem, “master of the name,” i.e., one who uses holy names in performing magical operations and writing amulets). Falk supposedly introduced aspects of kabbalah to a number of Christian scholars.

Connections among Falk, Swedenborg, and Cagliostro are discussed in Joscelyn Godwin’s Theosophical Enlightenment (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994: CHAPTER 5). Godwin’s main sources of information on this trio were two items by Marsha Keith Schuchard:


  Schuchard’s dissertation contains such chapters as I. “The Cabala, Sexual Magic, and the Jewish Visionary Traditions,” II. “The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance, and the Development of the Syncretic Occult Tradition” (based primarily on Scholem, Yates and Waite) and VIII. “Cabalist and Magnetic Visions among the London Swedenborgians in the 1780’s and the late 1790’s,” before giving “special emphasis ... to William Blake from 1780 to 1827” in CHAPTERS IX through XIII.


  Schuchard provocatively suggests that the Unknown Superiors (of illuminist masonry, Falk in particular) may lurk in the obscure origins of the Golden Dawn. This piece is an expanded version of the article of the same name, subtitled “A short paper read at the Golden Dawn 100th Anniversary Conference organised by Hermetic Research Trust on 25th and 26th April 1987,” in The Hermetic Journal, Issue Number 37, ed. Adam McLean (Tysoe: The Hermetic Research Trust, Autumn 1987).

Further on Swedenborg and Falk, see Schuchard’s articles,


---

63 Introductions to Swedenborg:
- Swedenborg and His Influence, gen. editor: Erlund Brock (Bryn Athyn: Academy of the New Church, 1988).
- Synnestvedt, Syg. The Essential Swedenborg (West Chester: Swedenborg Foundation, 1977)

Complete works by Swedenborg in English translation:
- Apocalypse Explained (6 volumes)
- Apocalypse Revealed (2 volumes)
- Arcana Caelestia (12 volumes)
- Conjugial Love
- The Divine Love and Divine Wisdom
- The Divine Providence
- Heaven and Hell
- The Spiritual Diary (5 volumes)
- True Christian Religion (2 volumes)

These works are all perpetually available from both The Swedenborg Foundation in West Chester (Pennsylvania) and The Swedenborg Society in London. Not usually carried in bookstores, all of the titles listed here can easily be mail-ordered from The General Church Book Center, 1100 Cathedral Road, Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009-0743 or on-line at http://www.newchurchbooks.com/.

64 See below, § CAGLIOSTRO.
This article discusses, among other things, Swedenborg’s “access to kabbalistic exegetic and visionary techniques and to traditions of Jewish sexual theosophy.”


Schuchard’s “elaborate reconstruction of Falk and his associates” is discussed in David Ruderman’s *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 156-169. While quite intrigued by Schuchard’s portrait of Falk, Ruderman expresses a desire for more research and firmer evidence.

For more on Falk, see


...it is clear that Dr. Falk’s reputation was familiar also in the outside world—especially among that curious international coterie of mystics, charlatans and adventurers of the type of Cagliostro and Casanova who so proliferated in the mid-18th century; and it is likely enough that he had contacts too among the circle of dissolute political intriguers who were inconsequentially preparing the way for the French Revolution. (Roth, p. 142)

Regarding other likely sources of kabbalah for Swedenborg, see Schuchard’s “Leibniz, Benzelius, and the Kabbalistic Roots of Swedish Illuminism” in *Leibniz, Mysticism and Religion* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998). “From 1703 to 1710, as Benzelius led Swedenborg through the university [Uppsala] ... [i]t is almost certain” that Swedenborg studied under the convert Johann Kemper (—Schuchard, “Leibniz, Benzelius...,” p. 97), a “crypto-Sabbatian” and author of an extended commentary on the Zohar. On Kemper, see above § KEMPER.

All of the research by Marsha Keith Schuchard which has been mentioned thus far—plus a great deal more—has been woven into her monumental *Emanuel Swedenborg, Secret Agent on Earth and Heaven: Jacobite, Jews, and Freemasons in Early Modern Sweden* (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2012). This work is by far the most extensive treatment of both “occult” and “clandestine” Swedenborg:

The following study of the role of esoteric intelligence in exoteric politics will raise many questions about our preoccupations of the rationalist, scientific mentality of the “enlightened” eighteenth century. In tracing Swedenborg’s long career, we come upon the persistence of early modern—even pre-modern—religious and philosophical beliefs, which fueled the imaginations of major thinkers as well as the machinations of major political players. (—p. xvi)

For a detailed preamble to Schuchard’s items above, see her hefty *Restoring the Temple of Vision: Cabalistic Freemasonry and the Stuart Culture* [BRILL’S STUDIES IN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY, v. 110] (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002), which takes the reader from the influence of “Jewish mathematical and architectural mysticism” upon medieval Masonic guilds (CHAPTER ONE) to “The Ruined Temple and the Flight of Knights” of the seventeenth century (CHAPTER TWELVE). Schuchard “concentrate(s) on certain themes that define the Stuart Masonic
mentality—i.e., Jewish and Scottish architectural mysticism; Jewish and Llullist mnemonic-visualization techniques; Cabalistic and Hermetic sexual theosophy; Rosicrucian and Masonic scientific schemes; crusader chivalry and illuminated knighthood; liberty of conscience and universal brotherhood” (INTRODUCTION, p. 7).

In *Swedenborg, Oetinger, Kant: Three Perspectives on the Secrets of Heaven* (West Chester: The Swedenborg Foundation, 2007), Wouter J. Hanegraaff calls into question the conclusion that Swedenborg is, in essence, an exponent of the Hermetic-Cabalist tradition—as opposed to his having remained in basic continuity with his scientific background. Noting “the paucity of explicit references on Swedenborg’s part to Western esoteric authors and traditions,” Hanegraaff concludes that his own “close study of Secrets of Heaven [Arcana Caelestia] and other works, as well as the relevant secondary literature, has convinced him [Hanegraaff] that the ‘exoteric’ Swedenborg defended by [Swedenborg biographers Martin] Lamm and [Inge] Jonsson is much closer to the truth than the ‘esoteric’ one [of Ernst Benz and Marsha Keith Schuchard]” (—pp. xx-xxi).

With his strong emphasis on *Secrets of Heaven*, Hanegraaff seems to overlook—or dismiss—key writings in the Swedenborg corpus, in particular *Apocalypse Explained* and *The Spiritual Diary*, in which the influence of esoteric traditions is more apparent.

See also Hanegraaff’s “Emanuel Swedenborg, the Jews, and Jewish Traditions,” in *Reuchlin und Seine Erben: Forscher, Denker, Ideologen und Spinner*, edited by Peter Schäfer and Irina Wandrey (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2005), pp. 135-154.

Of particular interest in the present context are four articles by Swedenborgian Professor Emerita from Bryn Athyn College, Jane K. Williams-Hogan:


Note also two papers in *Lux in Tenebris: The Visual and the Symbolic in Western Esotericism*, edited by Peter Forshaw (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2016):

- Crasta, Francesca Maria; and Follesa, Laura. “The Arcanes of the World. Symbols and Mystical-Allegorical Exegesis in Emanuel Swedenborg’s *De Cultu et Amore Dei*,” pages 220-239.

---

65 Another proponent of the “esoteric” Swedenborg—along with Benz and Schuchard—is the much earlier Ethan Allen Hitchcock, author of *Swedenborg, a Hermetic Philosopher* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1858). See also the more recent work, *The Esotericism of Emanuel Swedenborg: A Collection of Lectures*, by Philip W. Groves (Castlecrag: Triam Press, 2014).
ALESSANDRO CAGLIOSTRO (1743-1795)

Count Cagliostro (born Giuseppe Balsamo) is treated as either an occult genius or a charlatan. Of course, the whole “Count” thing was his own invention. Cabala resides rather dimly here—more in reputation and tone than substance. Yet, Marsha Keith Schuchard writes

After five almost untraceable years in Europe, when he learned Kabbalistic and alchemical skills, Balsamo returned to London in 1776 as the flamboyant Cagliostro—an admirer of Swedenborg and protégé of Falk. ... Cagliostro worked with Falk and William Bousie, a wealthy Anglo-French merchant, to develop a new system of “Egyptian” Masonry that would merge Falk’s Kabbalism and Swedenborg's theosophy into a new Judaeo-Christian rite.66

Thus, Cagliostro is reputed to be the influential promoter of the Egyptian Rite of Freemasonry and its likely author as he graced the high courts of Europe as a psychic and conjurer. On the other hand, he was imprisoned several times and through his life faced various criminal charges, including theft, forgery, fraud, and espionage.

An interesting coda:

Combining yoga and drugs produced an intense series of trances that [Aleister Crowley] believed recalled his past lives. Working back from his last incarnation as French occultist Éliphas Lévi (1810-1875), who died six months before Crowley’s birth, he relived memories of Count Cagliostro, Edward Kelly, and Pope Alexander VI.67

Just prior to his own birth he [Aleister Crowley] was Levi. Before Levi, he was Count Cagliostro, born Giuseppe Balsamo, a Sicilian peasant who rose to become one of the most controversial figures of the eighteenth century, a self-proclaimed master of magic with rumored ties to radical French Masonry, who died in Rome, a prisoner of the Inquisition.68

However, contrary to the accepted—and documented—history of Cagliostro,

Crowley recalled Cagliostro being born not in Palermo but in a Tunisian brothel, and dying not as a prisoner of the Inquisition at San Leo but in a mountain forest with a gaily dressed youth.69

On Cagliostro, see (listed chronologically—most of the older sources are online in digitized editions)


69 Kaczynski, Perdurabo, p. 331.
LOUIS CLAUDE DE SAINT-MARTIN (1743-1803)

“In his account of Martinism, Franz Von Baader⁷⁰ argues that Saint-Martin’s admiration for German mystic Jakob Böhme (1575-1624) became more and more noticeable as the years went by and that Böhme represented more than a kindred spirit for the Unknown Philosopher [Saint-Martin], becoming almost a cult figure.”


Here again is a figure who in one place is described as “steeped in Kabbalistic doctrines and rituals” (—Liz Greene, Magi and Maggidim,⁷¹ page 316), yet in another place is distanced from them:

“There is nothing to indicate that he [Saint-Martin] had read Kabbalistic literature: there is every presumption that he did not”


Alas, it is from within Greene’s discussion of “Waite’s Kabbalistic ‘Mysticism’” (pp. 311-324), which is derived from The Holy Kabbalah, that her statement about Saint-Martin is drawn.⁷²

In his ample volume, The Life of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, The Unknown Philosopher and the Substance of His Transcendental Doctrine (London: Philip Welby, 1901; reprint Blauvelt: Rudolf Steiner Publications, 1970),⁷³ Waite states that this “Lover of Secret Things ... differs somewhat conspicuously” from those “who connect with the higher school of Kabalism” (pages 113-114); “Saint-Martin ... has little apparent connection with this school of mystic thought” (pages 239-240); “I take leave to doubt whether he had heard of the Zohar, except in [a] distant and unmeaning way” (The Life..., pages 241-242).


Some examples of Saint-Martin’s writings:

  Saint-Martin’s final work.

- **Natural Table: Natural Table of Correspondences which Exist between God, Man and the Universe** (1782), translated by Piers A. Vaughan (Bayonne: Rose Circle Publications, 2018).

- **Of Errors & Of Truth, or Man Restored to the Universal Principle of Knowledge** (1775), translated by Piers A. Vaughan (Bayonne: Rose Circle Publications, 2017).


---

⁷⁰ Franz von Baader (1765-1841), German Catholic theologian/philosopher; the assessment reported is presumably found in von Baader’s book, Les Enseignements Secrets de Martines de Pasqually, Précédés d’une Notice sur le Martinéisme & le Martinisme (Paris: Bibliothèque Chacornac, 1900).


⁷² In light of the quote from Liz Greene, it is troubling to note that two of Waite’s works on Saint-Martin appear in her bibliography, the one noted above and St. Martin: The French Mystic and the Story of Modern Martinism (London: William Rider & Son, 1922), reprinted in Three Famous Mystics (London: William Rider & Son, 1939). The three famous mystics of the latter are Saint-Martin, Böhme, and Swedenborg.

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

If we follow this line of Cabalists, Böhmeans, Swedenborgians, and Freemasons, we eventually trip over William Blake, who is discussed by Marsha Keith Schuchard, not only in her dissertation (as noted above) but in the following articles:


and at ACADEMIA.COM in typescript form, unfortunately without the illustrations: https://www.academia.edu/38106151/MSBLAKE.docx_1_docx-Why_Mrs._Blake_Cried

“Why Mrs. Blake Cried...” was immensely expanded—and then, the author informed me, somewhat reduced—into a most intriguing book: Why Mrs. Blake Cried: William Blake and the Sexual Basis of Spiritual Vision (London: Century, 2006); released in the US as William Blake’s Sexual Path to Spiritual Vision (Rochester [VT]: Inner Traditions, 2008).


Alas, one can sift through the daunting tonnage of Blake studies and find scant mention of kabbalah/cabala, even where it is acknowledged that esoteric currents are reflected in Blake’s work. One exception is Denis Saurat’s Blake and Modern Thought (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1929; New York: Lincoln Mac Veagh/The Dial Press, 1929). Saurat’s chapter on the cabala (pp. 98-106) declares that “Blake is full of the Cabala and of its Christian exponents”—these exponents, according to Saurat, ranging “from Pico della Mirandola to Fludd and Swedenborg.”

A more recent study of the influence of kabbalah/cabala on Blake is Sheila Spector’s well-illustrated companion volumes, “Wonders Divine”: The Development of Blake’s Kabbalistic Myth AND “Glorious Incomprehensible”: The Development of Blake’s Kabbalistic Language (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2001).74

---

74 See my review of Spector’s volumes on Blake in ADDENDUM B. The URL for the ADDENDA is given at the head of this paper, just beneath the title.
Spector writes (“Wonders Divine,” p. 25)

...even though he [Blake] explicitly, often even emphatically, rejected many aspects of what might be called normative Christianity, he still found himself trapped within what had become the oppressive archetypal framework he repudiated, and it was only through a concerted life-long effort, first to recognize the bonds, and then, to seek out alternate modes of thought, that Blake was able, finally, to create his own system. But that new system, contrary to popular belief, was not an original creation. Rather, when Blake finally liberated himself from the exoteric myth structure that dominates Western thought, he turned to its esoteric counterpart, the myth that, though originating with Jewish mystics, had been adapted by Christian Kabbalists to conform with their—and, in fact, with Blake’s—own brand of Christianity.

Along these lines, Spector has published a number of articles:

- “Kabbalistic Sources—Blake’s and His Critics’,” in Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly 67, volume 17, number 3 (Winter 1983-84), an extremely useful article which contains
  (1) a review of scholars who broach the issue of kabbalah in connection with Blake;
  (2) a discussion of the problems surrounding the scholarly approach to kabbalah itself;
  (3) a survey of sources of kabbalah which could have been available to Blake.
- “The Reasons for ‘Urizen’” in Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly 21, no. 4 (Spring 1988);
- “Hebraic Etymologies of Proper Names in Blake” in Philological Quarterly 67, no. 3 (Summer 1988).
- “Sources and Etymologies of Blake’s ‘Tirzah’” in Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly 23, no. 4 (Spring 1990).
- “Blake’s Milton as Kabbalistic Vision” in Religion and Literature 25, no 1 (Spring 1993).

Building on all of the above, Spector has produced The Evolution of Blake’s Myth [ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN ROMANTICISM] (New York: Routledge, 2020). In particular, “Wonders Divine” and “Glorious Incomprehensible”—the companion volumes described above—“establish the foundation for her current study.”

The purpose of the following chapters is to map out Blake’s path as he made the transition from the exoteric, that is conventional, mode of thought to the esoteric, or private, by adapting van Helmont’s Christianized version of Luria’s myth as the basis for both his visual and verbal art.

(—The Evolution of Blake’s Myth, page xx)

In Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly 46 (vol. 12, no. 2 [Fall 1978], an issue which focuses on The Four Zoas, a long poem among Blake’s “major prophecies”), see Terrence Allan Hoagwood’s article, “The Four Zoas and ‘The Philosphick Cabbala.’” Hoagwood writes (p. 87):

“The Philosphick Cabbala,” part of [Henry] More’s retelling of the fall of man as narrated in the Book of Genesis, bears close resemblance in many points to Blake’s retelling of the fall of man in The Four Zoas.

I have seen two other book-length treatments of Blake’s kabbalah:

1) James, Laura DeWitt. William Blake: The Finger on the Furnace (New York: Vantage Press, 1956), which “is the result of ten years of intensive research on the interpretation of Blake’s didactic and symbolical works.” James writes (p. 62)

So it is with the underlying pattern of Blake’s Prophetic and Symbolic Poems. It is surprisingly harmonious with qabalistic lore; and anyone familiar with that basic pattern can supply many a missing piece. In fact some of the most subtle points will never yield their hidden meanings without those shadowy outlines to connect the pieces that are given.


Then, there is Asloob Ahmad Ansari’s article, “Blake and the Kabbalah,” in William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Providence: Brown University Press, 1969). Neither the James, Bowman, nor Ansari, however, is as useful—or stimulating—as the works by Schuchard and Spector listed above.

Refer also to Jos van Meurs’ deft “William Blake and His Gnostic Myths,” in Gnosis and Hermeticism from Antiquity to Modern Times, eds. Roelof van den Brock and Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998). This article emphasizes Böhme as a major influence on Blake—an influence acknowledged by Blake himself.

Online via Amazon Digital Service is a Kindle edition of Daniel Buchanan’s 11-page Blake’s Use of Kabbalistic Imagery, AKA Blake’s Kabbalistic Influences: A Practical Application of the Sacred Tree of Life ([n.p.]: Magic Beanstalk Publishing House, 2013).

Finally, we have “Wheels within Wheels”: William Blake and the Ezekiel’s Merkabah in Text and Image [The Père Marquette Lecture in Theology 2007] (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2007) by Christopher Rowland. Rowland intrigues us with references to “thirty years of studying Jewish mysticism” (that is, by the theology department at Marquette) and ma’aseh merkabah in his opening section, but he then somehow gets from antique apocalyptic to Blake without mentioning kabbalah at all. After Spector’s substantial description of Blake’s amalgam of Lurianic kabbalah, van Helmont’s cabala, and merkabah, Rowland’s lecture is something of an anticlimax.
Bound up with the esoteric stream is Hegel, who drew upon Böhme, Ramon Lull and other Pansophists (e.g., Fludd, Comenius, Leibniz), and Lurianic kabbalah by way of Kabbala denudata and F. C. Oetinger. All of this is very efficiently discussed in Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition by Glenn Alexander Magee (Ithaca – London: Cornell University Press: 2001); see in particular CHAPTER FIVE: “The Kabbalistic Tree: The Science of Logic” and CHAPTER SEVEN, § 3. “Hegel’s Philosophy of History: The Influence of Isaac Luria and Jewish Eschatology.”


Online:

- Drob, Sanford. “Hegel” (2001) within “The Lurianic Kabbalah/The Theosophical Kabbalah” at THE NEW KABBALAH:  
  http://www.faculty.umb.edu/gary_zabel/Courses/Phil%20281b/Philosophy%20of%20Magic/Arcana/Kabbalah/hegel.html


  
  Now (2/25/2021) view at  
FRANCIS BARRETT (CA. 1775-18??)

The nineteenth century opened with the production of a book which is, for the most part, an unacknowledged copy of Agrippa’s De occulta philosophia and the pseudo-Agrippan Fourth Book, along with material from The Heptameron (attributed to Peter of Abano), Giambattista della Porta’s Magia naturalis, and other sources—namely, Francis Barrett’s tome, The Magus, or Celestial Intelligencer (London: 1801). While no great school accumulated around Barrett that we know of, his book inaugurated an era of renewed interest in medieval Hermetic-Cabalistic magic, which seems to have been as uncritically accepted in the early 1800s as it had been in the Renaissance.

Several reprints of The Magus have gone to press in the last several decades, such as the 1967 edition of University Books (New Hyde Park), the once-ubiquitous 1975 oversize green-covered paperback of Citadel Press (Secaucus), and the Samuel Weiser reprint (York Beach: 2000) which includes full-color reproductions of the plates. The Magus can also be viewed on-line at the SACRED TEXTS site: www.sacred-texts.com/grim/magus/.

The always readable Francis X King (aka Francis King) composed a slim book about Barrett, The Flying Sorcerer (Oxford: Mandrake, 1992), based on the rather limited documentation concerning his being a daring, though failure-prone, experimental balloonist as well as a plagiarizing occultist; appended is “Barrett’s Hitherto Unpublished Skrying Manuscript.”


FRANZ JOSEF MOLITOR (1779-1860)

In *Kabbalah* (p. 201), Gershom Scholem makes these note-worthy comments:

The crowning and final achievement of Christian Kabbalah was Franz Josef Molitor’s comprehensive *Philosophie der Geschichte oder Über die Tradition* [four volumes, Münster: Theissging, 1827-1853], which combined profound speculation in a Christian kabbalistic vein with highly suggestive research into the ideas of Kabbalah itself. Molitor ... clung to a fundamentally Christological view of the Kabbalah, whose historical evolution he completely failed to understand, yet at the same time he revealed an essential grasp of kabbalistic doctrine and an insight into the world of the Kabbalah far superior to that of most Jewish scholars of his time.76

Born near Frankfurt, Molitor, a Freemason and liberal Catholic philosopher, studied law in his younger days. However, the second half of his life was devoted to Jewish studies, especially *kabbalah*. He came to believe that *kabbalah* contained a pure ancient truth (*prisca theologia*) which was more fully revealed upon Christ’s incarnation—a belief similar to that of the Christian interpreters of the *kabbalah* in the Renaissance. Likely because of this belief, his formidable scholarship was largely ignored by the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, who were active around the same time as Molitor.77

*Philosophie der Geschichte*... can be viewed in its original German at Archive.org > [https://archive.org/details/philosophiedergoomoligoog](https://archive.org/details/philosophiedergoomoligoog)


In English see


Volume I (of 2), Part 1 of Joseph Ennemoser’s *History of Magic*78 (pp. 7-21) reviews the “Cabbalah,” drawing primarily on Molitor’s *Philosophie der Geschichte oder Über die Tradition*.

In German,


---

76 Another Christian cabalist for whom Scholem frequently showed his admiration was Johann Reuchlin.
77 The prevalent impression that the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* shunned the study of *kabbalah* has been effectively challenged by George Y. Kohler in *Kabbalah Research in the Wissenschaft des Judentums (1820-1880)* (Berlin – Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2019). Kohler comments on Molitor but briefly:

> The reference is to Franz Joseph Molitor (1779-1860), a Catholic enthusiast of Kabbalah, and his book *Philosophie der Geschichte*, (1827) discussing Kabbalah in the spirit of Schelling. (—pp. 69-66, n. 17)
If, after searching the English-language WIKIPEDIA for “Christian kabbalah,” you searched the French WIKIPÉDIA for “kabbale chrétienne,” you would find a markedly different list of names.

The English-language WIKIPEDIA page has
- Pico della Mirandola
- Johann Reuchlin
- Francesco Giorgi
- Paolo Riccio
- Balshasar Walter
- Athanasius Kircher
- Sir Thomas Browne
- Christian Knorr von Rosenroth
- Johan Kemper
- Adorján Czipleá

The French-language WIKIPÉDIA page has
- Jean Pic de la Mirandole
- Jean Reuchlin
- Francesco Giorgi (Zorzi)
- Guillaume Postel
- Jacques Gaffarel
- Le Chevalier Drach

At the French site, only two of the six kabbalistes chrétiens receive write-ups: “Pic” and “Le Chevalier Drach,” and the latter gets the longer passage.

DAVID-PAUL DRACH [THE CHEVALIER DRACH] (1791-1865)

David-Paul Drach and his interest in kabbalah are given little attention in English sources. You might read several pieces on Drach and find no mention of kabbalah, though his renown as a Hebraist and Talmudic scholar is always forefront.

Mme. Blavatsky notes,

A very learned Rabbi, now the Chevalier Drach, having been converted to Roman Catholicism, and being a great Hebraist, thought fit to step into the shoes of Pico della Mirandola and John Reuchlin, and to assure his new co-religionists that the Zohar contained in it pretty nearly all the dogmas of Catholicism.

Here, Mme. Blavatsky has accurately characterized the Chevalier Drach and his views. Drach was a defender of the “true kabbalah” on the grounds that it originated with Moses, was passed down as part of the Oral Tradition in the manner described in II Esdras, and, in its pure form, contained the same Christian doctrine found in the works of the Church Fathers. Drach did, however, speak of another false, adulterated kabbalah: what we might call today “practical kabbalah,” namely, magic and ritual sorcery.

Appended to Papus’ Qabalah: Secret Tradition of the West is “a partial reprinting of a Qabalistic treaty by the Chevalier Drach” titled “The Qabalah of the Hebrews,” pp. 356-365 (see below: PAPUS).

Drach wrote two books (in French) containing his conception of kabbalah:


---

79 https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kabbale_chr%C3%A9tienne
80 The German WIKIPEDIA page, Christliche Kabbala, diverges as well. The Geschichte (history) section mentions Llull, Pico, Pablo de Heredia, Ricius, Galatino, Postel, Rittangelus, Pistorius, Knorr von Rosenroth, Trithemius, Agrippa, Dee, and those representing the mixture of alchemy and kabbalah: Khunrath, Frankenberg, Fludd Georg von Welling, and Oetinger.
81 Collected Writings, Volume XIV, MISCELLANEOUS (posthumously published essays from the 1880s and 1890s), compiled by Boris De Zirkoff (Wheaton – Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1950; rpt. 1966, 1985, 1995), page 220. Blavatsky’s Collected Writings can be found online at http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/
82 II Esdras (4 Ezra) 14: 42-48.
ÉLIPHAS LÉVI (ALPHONSE LOUIS CONSTANT) (1810-1875)

I do not think that Lévi ever made an independent statement upon any historical fact in which the least confidence could be reposed. He never presented the sense of an author whom he was reviewing in a way which could be said to reproduce that author faithfully.


The natural and obvious result of the antagonism of the great Jewish scholars [of the 19th and early 20th centuries toward kabbalah] was that, since the authorized guardians neglected this field, all manner of charlatans and dreamers came and treated it as their own property. From the brilliant misunderstandings and misrepresentations of Alphonse Louis Constant, who won fame under the pseudonym of Eliphas Lévi, to the highly coloured humbug of Aleister Crowley and his followers, the most eccentric and fantastic statements have been produced purporting to be legitimate interpretations of Kabbalism.


[Levi’s] influence is apparent in the work and thought of figures as diverse as Anna Kingsford (albeit in a negative way); Papus; A. E. Waite; W. Wynn Westcott; and Aleister Crowley. Most significant of all was his influence upon Madame H. P. Blavatsky. Her seminal work, Isis Unveiled (1877), is heavily indebted to Levi’s ideas on the Kabbalah, and especially to his notion of the all-pervading Astral Light.

R. A. Gilbert, in the PREFACE to The Great Secret, or Occultism Unveiled (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 2000), p. 5.

Levi’s understanding of Kabbalah is based on speculations on the Tetragram, the name of Mary in Hebrew, and the relation of the number two to unity. But his sources were always second-hand; his knowledge of Hebrew was limited to a few rudiments; and most of his proofs rested on the mere accumulation of witnesses, just as in the Catholic traditionalism of the Romantic era.


There is a wealth of literature on this well-known Catholic occultist: both books by Lévi—which are eloquent, fascinating, and highly influential mayhem—translated into English, and studies on him and his reception.

The following books by Lévi have all been reprinted beyond the editions listed. Note that among the translators of Lévi’s works are A. E. Waite and Aleister Crowley.


The Book of Splendours is a collection of Lévi’s writings. Among these is a compacted paraphrase of Idda Rabba from the Zohar (though Lévi refers to it as “The Idda Suta”) clearly derived from Knorr von Rosenroth’s Kabbala denudata, and the oft-reprinted short piece, “The Elements of the Qabalah in Ten Lessons: The Letters of Éliphas Lévi” (1891), which also appears independently as The Elements of the Kabbalah in Ten Lessons, ed. Darcy Kuntz [GOLDEN DAWN SERIES 13] (Edmonds: Holmes Publishing Group, 1997).84

• The Great Secret. Lessons on the Mysteries of Occultism, including Magnetism, Astral Emanations, Divination and Creative Omnipotence (French original, 1868; English translation by Transcript Ltd

81 For a refutation of this “accusation,” see George Y. Kohler in Kabbalah Research in the Wissenschaft des Judentums (1820-1880) (Berlin – Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2019).
84 The first portion of Lévi’s “Idda Suta” and all of “The Elements of the Qabalah in Ten Lessons” appear in Papus’ Qabalah: Secret Tradition of the West; see below: PAPUS.


- The Mysteries of the Qabalah. Part One: Commentary on Ezekiel; Part Two: The Apocalypse of St. John as the Key to the High Qabalah (First published, 1920; English translation by W. N. Schors, New York: Samuel Weiser, 1974).


On Lévi and his milieu (alphabetically):


ALBERT PIKE (1809-1891)


Pike steeps his descriptions of Masonic grades in *kabbalah/cabala* and other esoterica. Already on page 15, the 1st degree Apprentice is told, “...you must open the pages of the Sohar (i.e., Zohar) and Siphré de Zenitha, and other kabbalistic books, and ponder deeply on their meaning.” From there on, *Morals and Dogma* is quite full of kabbalistic references and passages. Pike makes numerous references to works that appear in Knorr von Rosenroth’s *Kabbala denudata*.

Many more kabbalistic references were lifted from one of the most unreliable sources, Éliphas Lévi, whom Pike quotes freely without acknowledgement. See “Lévi’s Kabbalistic Thought in America: Albert Pike,” in Uzzel, *The Kabbalistic Thought of Éliphas Lévi = Éliphas Lévi and the Kabbalah*, noted above: § ÉLIPHAS LÉVI.

Pike also borrows from Adolphe Franck: On page 256 of *Morals and Dogma*, Pike writes of Jewish families who had familiarized themselves with the doctrine of Zoroaster and, subsequently, developed those parts which could be reconciled with their faith. This sounds like Franck’s conclusion regarding the “traces that the religion of Zoroaster has left in all parts of Judaism,” stating later that “this borrowing did not destroy the originality of the Kabbalah,” for it was reconciled with the Jews’ concept of “the unity of cause” (Franck, *Kabbalah*, Bell edition, p. 224).

On Pike, see


HARGRAVE JENNINGS (1817-1890)


Jennings says of his opus, *The Rosicrucians*..., “[T]his whole Book is but the translation and exposition of his highly-prized and very scarce works ... [by] our own countryman, Robert Flood or Fludd (Robertus de Fluctibus), the famous physician and philosopher (1574-1637)” (—PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION, p. xi. Find also *The Rosicrucians*..., VOLUME II [3rd edition], Chapter the Twenty-First, “Remarks Relating to the Great Mystic—Robert ‘de Fluctibus’”—p. 235 ff).

Jennings’ ranging—or rambling—survey of symbols, concepts, and myths never quite gets to Rosicrucian rites as such. A cabalistic undercurrent courses through these volumes. Focused treatment of *cabala* appears in the final chapters of the second volume (3rd edition): Chapter the Twenty-Third, “The Outline of the Cabala, or Kabbalah,” and Chapter the Twenty-Fourth, “Cabalistic Profundities.” Extracts from *Kabbala denudata* are included—in Latin though. (One gets to brush up on one’s French in Chapter the Fourteenth.)

The *sacred fire* is at the core of Jennings’ mysteries; he saw its most blatant symbol in just about everything higher than wide.

*The Rosicrucians*... and Jennings’ other books served as source material for the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor and Mme. Blavatsky.85


On the Internet, see the 1995 (© Ordo Templi Orientis) biographical sketch at THE HERMETIC LIBRARY > The Invisible Basilica of Sabazius, [www.hermetic.com/sabazius/jennings.htm](http://www.hermetic.com/sabazius/jennings.htm).

Other works by Hargrave Jennings:

- *Phallism: a description of the worship of Lingam-Yoni in various parts of the world and in different ages, with an account of ancient & modern crosses, particularly of the Crux Ansata, or handled cross, and other symbols connected with the mysteries of sex worship* (London: privately printed, 1889).
- *The Indian Religions, or Results of The Mysterious Buddhism Concerning that Also Which is to be Understood in the Divinity of Fire* (London: George Redway, 1890).

S[ETH] PANCOAST (1823-1889)


Pancoast makes two remarks in his introduction which, along with his ties with Mme. Blavatsky (as her physician) and the apparent influence of Hargrave Jennings, indicate his perspective:

...the grand old Kabbalistic Theosophy was the native root, the central trunk, whence all the religions the world has ever known sprang, as shoots and branches from a parent tree... (p. 11)

...the special purpose of this volume is to promote the well-being of mankind in this probationary world, by advocating Light and its Rays as the best remedial means for the Human Organism, when from any cause, internal or external, the equilibrium of health is disturbed, and disease wastes the body and deranges the mind—nay, even when there is no clearly defined disease, but only feebleness and indisposition for physical and mental effort. (p. 13)

These ideas are bridged in statements such as

Light is the foundation upon which rests the superstructure of the Kabbalistic Theosophy—Light the source and centre of the entire harmonious system. Light was the first-born of God—His first manifestation. (p. 19)

Pancoast combines Kabbalistic Theosophy, the science and medicine of his day with their fascination with magnetism and electricity, and esoteric methods of “assisting nature” with “applications of Light” for the purpose of physical and mental health.

Throughout the compendious works of Mme. Blavatsky (hereafter HPB), Isis Unveiled and The Secret Doctrine, we find numerous references to kabbalah, and some passages which deal at length with kabbalistic doctrine. But in a collection of articles published together as Kabalah and Kabalism (cited below), HPB made it most clear that she believed that

1. Kabalah was inferior to “our (Eastern) septenary system” (see “Tetragrammaton”)
2. kabbalistic writings had “all suffered corruptions in their content by sectarian editors”
   (FOREWORD, referring to “The Kabalah and the Kabalists”)
3. there was “evidence of occult knowledge in the West,” even though HPB saw fit to expose
   “[kabbalah’s] limitations” and point to “the misleading character of Kabalistic symbolism”
   (FOREWORD, referring to “The Kabalah and the Kabalists”)

With all of this, HPB claimed to be restoring the true meaning of kabbalistic doctrine according to Chaldean originals known to her—and only to her. She did condescend to say that “the Jews can claim the Zohar, Sepher Yetzirah (Book of Creation), Sepher Dzeniuta, and a few others, as their own undeniable property and as Kabalistic works” (“Kabalah and Kabalists,” p. 16), referring to the Zohar and Sifre Dzeniuta as if they were separate works. HPB’s attitude would raise eyebrows had she been the all-knowing scholar that she claimed to be. However, these statements come from one whose references to kabbalah are shot through with serious errors and misunderstandings. HPB had but a cursory knowledge of the subject, and that from easily traceable sources.

If one takes a lenient view, HPB’s sources could be blamed for the bulk of her errors, for many of these had indeed “suffered corruptions in their content by sectarian editors”:

1. from Lull to Pico and Reuchlin to Knorr von Rosenroth, Christian cabalists believed that with kabbalistic methods rightly used, Jews could be shown the “truth” behind the Old Testament and won over to Christ. While the largest portions of Kabbala denudata presented genuine (Jewish) kabbalah, some editions concluded with Adumbratio Kabalæ Christianæ, namely (translating the full title), Outline of Christian Cabala which is the Hebraic Conception or Brief Application of Doctrines of Hebrew Cabbalists to the Dogma of the New Covenant; to Form a Hypothesis proficient for converting the Jews (see above, Adumbratio).
2. Éliphas Lévi, who “[n]ever made an independent statement upon any historical fact in which the least confidence could be reposed,” and who “never presented the sense of an author whom he was reviewing in a way which could be said to reproduce that author faithfully” (Waite, The Holy Kabbalah, p. 489—see above, § ÉLIPHAS LÉVI).
3. S. L. MacGregor Mathers, who was also dependent upon Knorr and Lévi (See below, § S. L. MACGREGOR MATHERS.)
4. Isaac Myer, whose earnest study contains many errors, some of which even HPB did not commit, as, for example, Myer’s confusion of the roles and order of the sefirot, calling binah the second and hokhmah the third (Myer, Qabbalah, pp. 259–63; see below, A SELECTION OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY BOOKS ON KABBALAH: 1888 • Myer, page 147).

But with these sources and others in a similar vein, we cannot account for all of HPB’s blunders. She alone refers to the Talmud as the “darkest of enigmas even for most Jews, while those Hebrew scholars who do comprehend it do not boast of their knowledge” (Isis Unveiled, vol. I, p. 17), and she is unique in considering Liber Drushim as part of that murky Talmud (The Secret Doctrine, Adyar edition, vol. 2, p. 156). The nature of the Talmud is well known. As for Liber Drushim (= Sefer ha-Derushim), it is a sixteenth-century tract of the Lurianic school which HPB undoubtedly encountered in Knorr’s Kabbala denudata.
Further, her statements regarding the authorship of the Zohar, which are sprinkled through The Secret Doctrine, contradict one another, mixing history, legend, and imagination differently with each reference. As mentioned by Arthur E. Waite,

It would serve no purpose to enumerate any further challengeable assertions which rest more or less exclusively on the good authority of Madame Blavatsky. It will be sufficient to refer to her views upon the authenticity of the Zohar. On the one hand the author is said to be R. Simeon ben Yohai (Secret Doctrine III, 92); again, it was “edited for the first time” between A.D. 70 and 110 (Secret Doctrine III, 167); and yet again, it was written as it now stands, by R. Moses de Leon, the original being lost, though at the same time its contents were “scattered through a number of minor MSS.” R. Moses had Syriac, Chaldaic, and Christian Gnostics to help him. Such opinions are without any warrant for criticism (Secret Doctrine I, 114, 230; III, 167).

(—The Holy Kabalah, p. 513)

Some further statements by and about HPB:

[T]he Book of Job, a Kabalistic treatise on Egypto-Arabic Initiation...

(—HPB, “Kabalah and the Kabalists,” p. 8)

[T]he authors of the New Testament ... had to borrow their most metaphysical symbols not from the Pentateuch, or even the Kabalah, but from the Âryan astro-symbology.

(—HPB, “Kabalah and the Kabalists,” p. 8)

Where were the builders, the luminous sons of Manvantaric dawn? ... In the unknown darkness in their Ahhi Paranishpanna. The producers of form from no form—the root of the world—the Devamatri and Svabhavat, rested in the bliss of non-being.

(—HPB, Book of Dzyan, Stanza II, § 1)

For our own part we regard her neither as the mouthpiece of hidden seers, nor as a mere vulgar adventurer; we think that she has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting impostors in history.

(—Society for Psychical Research: 1883, report)

There can be little doubt in my opinion that the famous stanzas of the mysterious Book Dzyan on which Mme. H. P. Blavatsky’s magnum opus, The Secret Doctrine, is based owe something, both in title and content, to the pompous pages of the Zoharic writing called Sifra Di-Tseniutha. The first to advance this theory, without further proof, was L. A. Bosman, a Jewish Theosophist, in his booklet The Mysteries of the Qabalah (1916) p. 31. This seems to me, indeed, the true ‘etymology’ of the hitherto unexplained title. Mme Blavatsky has drawn heavily upon Knorr von Rosenroth’s Kabbala denudata (1677-1684), which contains (vol. II, pp. 347-385) a Latin translation of the Sifra Di-Tseniutha. The solemn and magniloquent style of these pages may well have impressed her susceptible mind. As a matter of fact, H. P. B. herself alludes to such a connection between the two ‘books’ in the very first lines of Isis Unveiled (vol. I, p. 1) where she still refrains from mentioning the Book Dzyan by name. But the transcription used by her for the Aramaic title shows clearly what she had in mind. She says: ‘There exists some-where in this wide world an old Book... It is the only copy now in existence. The most ancient Hebrew document on occult learning—the Siphra Dzeniuta—was compiled from it.’ The Book Dzyan is therefore nothing but an occultistic hypostasy of the Zoharic title. This ‘bibliographical’ connection between fundamental writings of modern and Jewish theosophy seems remarkable enough.

(—Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, pp. 398-9)
Works by Blavatsky include


The two articles from *Kabalah and Kabalism* are reprinted in Zohar by Nurho de Manhar (San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1978), pp. 396-424 (see below, § NURHO DE MANHAR). The other articles in *Kabalah and Kabalism* are “Isis Unveiled and the Visishtadwaita,” “Stray Thoughts on Death and Satan,” and “A Posthumous Publication.” The whole collection of articles has been reprinted a few times: Kessinger, 2010, and more recently by “independent” publishers. Online: https://www.ultindia.org/pamphlets/hpb/Kabalahandkabalism.pdf

There is an extensive literature on Mme. Blavatsky and her influence. Here are a few items to start with:


  Hammer sets HPB in the broad context of the Theosophy movement, along with Alice Bailey, Edgar Cayce, Fritjof Carpa, C. W. Leadbeater, and Rudolf Steiner.


  Johnson’s book explores the sources behind the traditional facades revealing/concealing Theosophy and Mme. Blavatsky. *The Masters Revealed* is especially valuable in connecting real people with such mythical figures as the “hidden mahatmas,” who provided Blavatsky with her elite initiated hidden knowledge. See, however, Daniel H. Caldwell, K. Paul Johnson’s *House of Cards? A Critical Examination of Johnson’s Thesis on the Theosophical Masters Morya and Koot Hoomi* (Tucson: [P.O. Box 1844], 1996), which includes an appendix: “Comments by David Reigle on Johnson’s ‘Sengchen Tulku’ Chapter.”

  “For both Blavatsky and the ‘Hermetic’ occultists Jewish kabbalah is understood as belonging more to the ‘West’ than to the ‘East’.... For Blavatsky ... the status of Jewish kabbalah maintains a certain degree of ambiguity, because of the presence of a broader and older kabbalah firmly posed in the ‘East’, from which Jewish kabbalah is supposed to have originated.” (—pages 162-163)

  “The exploration undertaken in this paper of a still largely uncharted area has shown that Blavatsky’s conception of Theosophy was closely interrelated with an ideal of superior ancient knowledge.
Theosophy was narrated as the original primeval historical source of true wisdom handed down through the ages—yet it was also described as transcendent and timeless." (—page 175)


One recent study of HPB is Julie Chajes’ Recycled Lives: A History of Reincarnation in Blavatsky’s Theosophy [OXFORD STUDIES IN WESTERN ESOTERICISM] (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), which references to HPB’s notions of kabbalah throughout. However, Chajes’ introduction states,

> Although the limitations of space require us to restrict the historical contextualization to these four main subjects [i.e., Spiritualism, science, Platonism, and Orientalism], two omissions deserve special mention, namely Kabbalah and Egyptology, both of which Blavatsky discussed in relation to her rebirth theories.” (—page 6)

Thus, we turn to Chajes’ “Construction Through Appropriation: Kabbalah in Blavatsky’s Early Works” in Theosophical Appropriations: Esotericism, Kabbalah and the Transformation of Traditions, edited by Julie Chajes and Boaz Huss (Beer Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2016), pages 33-72.

Albert Jounet was “a Christian socialist and a member of the French Theosophical Society.” He served as the vice president of the Spiritualist Alliance, founded in 1884 by William Stanton Moses (London) and Jeanne Beauchamp (Paris), an organization devoted to the study of spiritual and psychic research.

With Rene Caillie, Jounet co-founded the Fraternite de l’Étoile in 1889, which published the periodical L’Étoile (March 1889-December 1895).

L’Étoile featured authors from the late 19th-century French occult stream within the period known as La Belle Époque (1871-1914). The Fraternite de l’Étoile stressed the value of scientific, “Western” (Christian) occultism with a personal God and the survival of the “moi,” in contrast to the “Eastern” or “Hindo” occultism being expounded at the time by H.P. Blavatsky.

Tobias Churton refers to Jounet as a “Kabbalist, spiritualist and socialist.” Jounet wrote on many occult subjects (yoga, messianism, angels, amulets and talismans, esoteric Christianity, etc.). Only two of his works (that I am aware of) are specifically about kabbalah/cabala:


Le Royaume de Dieu has been put into English as Rosicrucian Kabbalah: The Kingdom of God, translated by Alex Bushman ([n.p.]: independently published, 2020). Bushman says of The Kingdom of God (pages 7-8),

This short yet potent work takes us on a journey through the Kabbalist’s Etz Chaim, the Tree of Life. Each chapter explores the alchemical essence of the 10 sephirot that compose the tree of life.

La Clef du Zohar consists, in part, of a French translation of Sifra di Tseniuta from the Zohar.

---


88 “From Pat Deveney’s database,” reproduced at http://iapsop.com/archive/materials/etoile/

89 Churton, Occult Paris, page 10.

PAPUS [GÉRARD ENCAUSSE] (1865-1916)


Papus was a Martinist, a member of the Kabbalistic order of the Rose Croix, and, with Lucien Chamuel, co-founder the Librairie du Merveilleux (1888). Papus was “a great boulevardier and bon vivier”—“the most famous popularizer of Hermetic doctrines during the Belle Epoque.”

The works by Papus listed above figure prominently in the transmission of Western esoteric qabalah.

Qabalah is a hodge-podge of Jewish and Christian, cabalistic and non-cabalistic elements. Several writers contributed to the work: Éliphas Lévi, Saint-Yves d’Alveyldre, “Sedir,” and Chevalier Drach. Papus himself drew on the works of Kircher, Lenain, Stanislas de Guaita, Heinrich Khunrath, and others, primarily Christian occultists, putting this work firmly in the Hermetic-Cabalist vein. Papus’ eclectic bibliography includes all sorts of stuff, much of which has nothing whatsoever to do with cabala.

Qabalah includes a rendering of the Sefer Yetzirah and extracts from the Zohar, i.e. “The Idra Suta or the Great Synod.” Papus reproduces (without acknowledgement) a portion of “Idra Suta” as found in Éliphas Lévi’s Book of Splendours, pages 19–26, which is not actually from Idra Suta but rather from Idra Rabba, which is, in fact, the “Great[er] Synod,” Idra Suta being the “Lesser Synod.”

Papus does credit Lévi for “The Elements of the Qabalah in Ten Lessons,” which appears in Papus’ Qabalah on pages 59–74. This little piece is also in Lévi’s Book of Spendours, pages 127-142.

In The Tarot of the Bohemians, through its associations with the Hebrew letters, tarot is here cabalized in the tradition of Etteilla and Éliphas Lévi. Papus offers a full exposition on Western esoteric, or “kabalistic,” tarot.

---

The superscript SY indicates that there is a review of Papus’ treatment of the Sefer Yetzirah in my “Notes on Editions of Sefer Yetzirah in English,” pp. 6-7, at HERMETIC KABBALAH > http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Biblos/svie.pdf or at ACADEMIA.EDU > https://www.academia.edu/22875900/Notes_on_Editions_of_Sefir_Yetzirah_in_English

James Webb, The Occult Underground (La Salle: Open Court, 1974), page 162.

idem, The Occult Establishment (La Salle: Open Court, 1976), page 167.

See above: LÉVI.
A SELECTION OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY BOOKS ON KABBALAH

When the nineteenth century was about at its midpoint, there began a fairly steady stream of European and American works on kabbalah and cabala. This continued on into the twentieth century. Some of these efforts were serious, if not entirely successful, attempts to present the Jewish kabbalah on its own terms, such as the works of Adolphe Franck, C. D. Ginsburg, and A. E. Waite. Others knotted together various Christianized strands, adorning them with other esoteric doctrines and currents, as did Éliphas Lévi, Papus, and the founders of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Some notable authors had a Masonic agenda, like Albert Pike, Ralston Skinner, and co-authors Bond and Lea. Works from this array remain the basis of kabbalah/cabala study among great numbers of (primarily non-Jewish) esoteric readers and researchers—even today—often pointedly in spite of the contributions of Jewish and Christian scholars of the last hundred and fifty years.

What follows is a selection of works from the nineteenth century which treat kabbalah or cabala and were written in, or have been translated into, English. These are given in chronological order; the year in the left margin indicates the date of first edition of the work listed.95


“The Jews pretend to derive their Cabbala from Esdras, Moses, Abraham, and Adam: but it is very evident from the Cabbalistic doctrine concerning Divine emanations ... that it originated in Egypt, where the Jews learned, by the help of allegory, to mix Oriental, Pythagoric, and Platonic dogmas with Hebrew wisdom.” (VOLUME II, p. 184)


Despite his errors, Franck still commands a fair amount of regard. As noted by Moshe Idel (Kabbalah: New Perspectives [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988]: pp. 7-10) some of Franck’s conclusions bear notable similarities to those of Gershom Scholem, most importantly that kabbalah


Spector includes—and comments on—quite a few items not given notice in my paper here:

• 19th-century books which touch upon kabbalah, or cabala, briefly or incidentally, such as William Story’s Proportions of the Human Figure... (London: Chapman and Hall, 1866).

• works which I have never encountered, for example Marie Caithness, Duchess of Pomon, Mystery of the Ages, Contained in the Secret Doctrine of All Religions (London: Redway, 1887); Spector notes that this work “contains a chapter written from the theosophical standpoint, ‘The Kabbala, or Hebrew Theosophy.’”

• 19th-century articles.
was a vital force at the “heart and soul” of Judaism, not the aberrant and heretical sideshoot which historians such as Heinrich Grätz and other “enlightened” scholars of the nineteenth century thought it was. Franck brought to a common modern language (French—and a year later Adolph Jellinek put Franck’s Kabbalah into German) a reasoned account of kabbalah with informed descriptions of Sefer Yezirah and the Zohar.

Franck’s major error was finding in Zoroastrian lore the source of kabbalistic concepts. His mistakes notwithstanding, Franck’s serious attempt to present the kabbalah from its own sources stands in marked contrast with another French writer who began to publish some dozen years later: Éliphas Lévi, who took every liberty his imagination could conceive in presenting kabbalah/cabala and other esoteric subjects.


Ennemoser discusses “Cabbalah,” in VOLUME 1, PART 1, especially pp. 7-21, as derived from Franz Joseph Molitor’s Philosophie der Geschichte oder uber die Tradition (4 volumes, Muenster: Theissing, 1827-57); VOLUME 2, THIRD DIVISION, contains accounts of Paracelsus, Baptista van Helmont, Agrippa, Fludd, Kircher, Cagliostro, Swedenborg, and Böhme, among others.


“The disciples of the Tanaim and Amoraim, as we have seen, hold by tradition. The Karaites maintain the sole authority of the written word. Between these two there is also an intermediate class, who do not constitute a corporate sect, and who are orthodox in their belief of the verities of the Hebrew Scriptures and of the great facts of tradition, but who claim at the same time the right of rationalizing upon them. They are represented by such writers as Saadja Gaon, Bachja, and Maimonides. But in addition to these, there has been always for the last two thousand years a mystical school, more or less numerous, who have treated the written word as the symbolic vehicle of an esoteric doctrine. This school may be said to consist of two classes. 1. Those with whom that interior spiritual signification shapes itself into a philosophical system, which they nevertheless hold either from, or in connexion with, a foreign or Gentile teaching, such as Platonism. Their representative is Philo. They blend the Mosaic law with the Gentile monotheism. 2. The other class are the KABBALISTS, properly so called, who, from the impulse of the mind after a deep and satisfying knowledge of the inmost mysteries of being, have given themselves up too much to the tutelage of the imagination, and constructed a system which combines, at once, the sublime and the despicable.” (Jerusalem and Tiberias, pp. 296-7)


One might assume that Ginsburg was a sympathetic commentator, for he outlined the traditional history of the kabbalah “as told by its followers”; but obliquely in this book and more openly in subsequent articles, Ginsburg showed his hostility toward kabbalah to be equal to—and perhaps derived from—that of Grätz. In an article which Ginsburg co-wrote with S. A. Cook, there is a
reference to the Zohar as “that farrago of absurdity.” Ginsburg considered the Zohar a fraud perpetrated by Moses de Leon. Even so, Ginsburg’s Kabbalah gives an admirable account of its subject. This book is, in form, an expanded outline, so its manner is somewhat clipped, though dense with information. There are lots of biblical and Zoharic references, and great detail on such topics as the 72 names of God and the hermeneutical conventions gematria, notaricon, and terumah.

NOTE: Gematria, notaricon, and terumah predate kabbalah by centuries. Gematria in particular, which is so often treated as central to the kabbalah by Christian commentators, plays only a limited role in such kabbalistic classics as the Zohar, the works of Moses Cordovero, and the Lurianic compendia assembled by Hayyim Vital. See Scholem’s article, “Gematria,” in Kabbalah (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1974; rpt. New York: Dorset Press, 1987), and Dan’s comments in “Christian Kabbalah: From Mysticism to Esotericism,” in Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion, eds. A. Faivre and W. Hanegraaff (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), pp. 127-128.


An unusual, albeit engaging, take on kabbalah emerging from a mixture of the French occult scene around Éliphas Lévi, Freemasonry, and New England Transcendentalism (1830s-60s), which included Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and early feminist Margaret Fuller.


Mackey includes a fairly substantial article on kabbalah (vol. 1, pp. 439-443) apparently derived from C. D. Ginsburg.


Originally published as installments in Masonic Review, Skinner’s book “constitutes a series of developments, based upon the use of geometrical elements, giving expression in a numerical value. These elements are found in the work of the late John A. Parker... setting forth his discovery (but, in fact, the rediscovery) of the quadrature value of the circle” (p. 1). The “geometrical elements,” measures, and numbers are drawn mainly from the Great Pyramid and the Old Testament. Wizards Bookshelf, the re-issuer of Skinner’s Key, refers to it as “the most esoteric work we sell."


For further comments on all of the treatments of Sefer Yetzirah mentioned within this bibliography, which are marked with a superscript SY, see “Notes on Editions of Sefer Yetzirah in English,” PART 1: TRANSLATIONS:

- [https://www.academia.edu/22875900/Notes_on_Editions_of_Seper_Yetzirah_in_English](https://www.academia.edu/22875900/Notes_on_Editions_of_Seper_Yetzirah_in_English)

After some “Preliminary Remarks,” Chapter XVI, “Extracts from the Kabbalah,” gives excerpts, primarily from “An Epitome of the Two Tables of the Covenant,” i.e., a summary of Isaiah Horowitz’ *Sh’nei Luhot ha Brit*.


Appendix V, § 4 contains a very brief description of *kabbalah* and a translation of *Sefer Yetzirah*.


Myer’s book discusses ibn Gebirol’s work in relation to the Zohar and analyzes his Mekor Hayim. The bulk of the book is a survey of hokmah’s history and relationship to other religious systems. Myer’s last chapters are devoted to translated excerpts from the Zohar. Zohar excerpts also appear in Chapters 3, 4, 18, 19, 20, and Appendix A. Myer confused, or reinterpreted, some doctrine, e.g., the roles and order of the second and third sefirot: hokhmah and binah (pp. 259–263).


A few paragraphs (from pp. 10 & 11) suffice to illustrate the tone and approach of Page’s *Golden Fleece*:

There is no Hebrew, but what more Hebrew can be taken from it. That language which is understood to be Hebrew at the present day, can be treated in the same manner, and it is all of it, the explanation of the explication of the connection betwixt this life and the life beyond the grave.

The history of the Jews is obscure, for the very reason that all races of men have in their turn been Jews and Hebrews, as will be shown in this work. They are numerous as the sands of the sea (C), and scattered over the earth.

Letters were named abominations, at a time when people had an understanding of their astrological meaning. Abomination, is defined as odious. O die us. When a good soul goes forth from the house of clay, it sees these letters in the light of that word in all of its meaning.

The present use of the word comes down from an age when the masses did arise against the abominable use to which they were part.
These things “which shall be an abomination unto you,” are for the Jews to study; both the name and letter, and the thing of life, as the parts of that thing of life fit the law of language by names and anatomy. See the kidneys and the kid (goat) and the knees—the kneepans—the sign Capri. See capricious.


Masonic rituals—featuring a “M[aster] Cabalist”—is written in a code reminiscent of IF U CN RD THIS, with a few other signs and symbols (such as X and Æ) thrown in. Thus, the query “W-t. ws. th-n. s-d. t. u.” expands to “What was then said to you?” Assuming a familiarity with Masonic rites and a little practice, Cabala is almost readable. One of these days, someone will pore over Masonic tomes and manuscripts and match it with an un-coded text.

Davidson, P[eter]. The Sepher Jetsirah or Book of Formation, to which is added THE THIRTY-TWO WAYS OF WISDOM and THE FIFTY GATES OF INTELLIGENCE, translated an annotated by P. Davidson (Louisville, White County [GA]: Peter Davidson / Glasgow [Scotland]: Bernard Goodwin, 1896). SY


Regarding Agrippa, see the above, § AGRIFFA.


Stirling, William. The Canon. An Exposition of the Pagan Mystery Perpetuated in the Cabala as the Rule of All the Arts (London: Elkin Matthews, 1897; rpt. London: Research Into Lost Knowledge Organisation Trust, 1974 and 1981; rpt. York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1999). The ancient “canon of the arts” and knowledge through the ages of significant ratios and measures are considered via the proportions of ancient monuments and the numerical values of biblical names. The book attempts to establish that a standardized sacred geometry, which was applied in the construction of holy sites and in the writing of holy names, reflects key proportions of the universe.
THE HERMETIC ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN

THE HERMETIC ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN was founded in the 1880s by S. L. M. Mathers, W. W. Westcott, and a third apparently less significant gentleman named W. R. Woodman, who died in 1891. Mathers and Westcott concocted an eclectic program of occult study containing quite a bit of cabala and kabbalah, or now qabalah, as derived from the Christian sources that we have discussed, especially Agrippa, John Dee, and Knorr von Rosenroth. For better or worse, Golden Dawn teachings have become the cornerstone for much—if not most—of the occult work practiced today.⁹⁶ For the history and development of the Golden Dawn, refer to the following items:


“We will show how this synthesis ['of cabalistic magic...in which many currents of esotericism could be assimilated'] began in the Renaissance by scholars such as Pico della Mirandola, Johannes Reuchlin and Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, and we will show how the process was concluded by Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers... This dissertation builds upon the work of Dame Frances Yates....” (p. ii)


Butler examines not only the personalities involved in the formation of the Golden Dawn but also the influences and motives which shaped their response to “the tightening camps of science and religion in an intellectual environment that heightened the allure of magic.”


“...not only do Butler’s works mischaracterize the practices of the Golden Dawn itself, but [she] also wrongly identifies these categories as instances of innovation. In fact, there is a strong degree of formal similarity between the ritual mechanics of the order and those earlier antique, medieval, and Renaissance practitioners in the specific areas of visualization and invocation. These similarities strongly call into question the characterization of the Golden Dawn’s magic as fundamentally modern in form.”


Egmond discusses “three of the most influential occult movements of western Europe”: the Theosophical Society, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and the Mysteria Mystica Aeterna.


Gilbert tells the story from the founding of the order in 1888 to its collapse in 1914. Several important documents are presented, such as the letters from Anna Sprengel, now generally considered fraudulent, authorizing and encouraging William Wynn Westcott to set up the Golden Dawn, and Westcott’s “Historical Lecture.”

⁹⁶ See above, page 63, regarding the Golden Dawn's use of John Dee's “Enochian magic.”


“In order to explore the ‘metaphysical and cosmological self-understanding’ of the practitioners of the British occult revival, I have employed the qualitative methodology of the multiple case study to examine the work of six occultists and their perceptions of the Kabbalah [i.e.] ... Éliphas Lévi, ... William Wynn Westcott, Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers, Arthur Edward Waite, Aleister Crowley, and Dion Fortune.” (p. 29)

“The results of my research strongly suggest that the Kabbalah of the occult revival may not, after all, be an occultist Kabbalah divorced from its Jewish roots, but instead displays a surprising fidelity to the complex currents of the Jewish Kabbalah....” (p. 30)


An account based on careful research, though not fully sympathetic to its subject.


King’s account is a bit more ranging than Howe’s (*Magicians of the Golden Dawn*). He gets into some of the subsequent Golden Dawn offshoots which appeared after the original order’s demise. In some regards casting an even wider net is *The Rebirth of Magic*, co-authored by King and Isabel Sutherland (London: Corgi Books, 1982—published only in paperback), which adds a bit more background and detail on the French occult revival and expanded treatment of personalities such as Dion Fortune.

The bulk of the Golden Dawn teachings, through its own documents, has been generally available since Israel Regardie’s four-volume edition of *The Golden Dawn, 1937-40* (Chicago: Aries Press); frequent reprints were begun by Llewellyn Publications of St. Paul in 1969. Beyond Regardie’s full selection, other books which present significant Golden Dawn documents include the following:


*Companion* is a wealth of documentary minutia on the Golden Dawn’s history, structure, workings, membership, and sources.


This book reprints the “Flying Rolls,” i.e., the instructional materials handed around to Golden Dawn members, which are not included in Regardie’s collection. The 2nd edition adds some material.


Torrens gives historical accounts, doctrinal summaries, and alternative (early) versions of the Outer Order rituals.


The grade rituals/initiations from Neophyte ($0^\circ = 0^\circ$) to Magus ($8^\circ = 3^\circ$) written in the years 1916-1923.

______. *Rosicrucian Rites and Ceremonies of the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross* [aka *Complete Rosicrucian Initiations of the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross*] (Burnaby [BC]: Ishtar Publishing, 2005/7).

Includes Festivals of the Equinox and Solstices; Consecrations of the Temple for the First, Second, and Third Orders.


“The Golden Dawn Rituals and Commentaries expounds on the structure only up to $5^\circ = 6^\circ$, but the diligent student in Golden Dawn mysteries who studies this book carefully will be able to extrapolate and develop
the $6^2 = 36$ and $7^2 = 49$ and in due time even the ‘Babe of the Abyss’ (Portal of the Third Order). $8^2 = 64$, and $9^2 = 81$ formulae.” (—Martin Thibault, FOREWORD to the 2010 edition, page 9)

Zalewski gives the $6^2 = 36$ and $7^2 = 49$ (i.e., The Inner Order) rituals not included by Regardie—now supplemented by Zalewski’s Inner Order Teachings of the Golden Dawn (Loughborough: Thoth Publications, 2006), which takes the teachings “back to the original Mathers/Westcott formulae. Included in this book are most of the previous unpublished teachings of Mathers for the Theoricus Adeptus Minor grade of the old Golden Dawn.”

The qabalah of the Golden Dawn is epitomized by its treatment of the tree of life, which merges memory theater, sympathetic magic, and encyclopaedia. The quintessential example of the Golden Dawn’s brand of qabalistic synthesis is Aleister Crowley’s Liber 777, which consists of table after table of correspondence—almost 200 columns—arranged according to the kabbalists’ ten sefirot and the twenty-two paths which interconnect them. The EDITORIAL PREFACE to the 1955 and subsequent editions (probably written by Gerald Yorke) calls 777 a “Qabalistic dictionary of ceremonial magic, oriental mysticism, comparative religion and symbology.” Among the sources which Crowley's introduction acknowledges are Kabbala denudata, “the lost symbolism of the Vault in which Christian Rosenkreutz is said to have been buried,” Dee, Agrippa, the “Art” of Ramon Llull, Pietro di Abano, Éliphas Lévi, to mention those who have been connected, however loosely, with cabala. The preface of 777 goes on to say, “The Chinese, Hindu, Buddhist, Moslem, and Egyptian systems have never before been brought into line with the Qabalah; the Tarot has never been made public.” 777 was reprinted with two other “Qabalistic” items as The Qabalah of Aleister Crowley (New York: Samuel Weiser Inc., 1973); this collection has subsequently been reprinted a few times.

Some of the books listed below within § GOLDEN DAWN INTERPRETERS OF THE KABBALAH are considered “classics of qabalah”: S. L. MacGregor Mathers’ Kabbalah Unveiled and Dion Fortune’s Mystical Qabalah. A student of Fortune’s, Gareth Knight, produced a compendious study, A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism (Helios Book Service [UK], 1965; New York: Samuel Weiser, 1978), which offers a thorough compilation of the Golden Dawn’s “qabalah of correspondence” in its 500-plus pages.

Among the books on kabbalah/cabala/qabalah which are often recommended by students of Golden Dawn-type occultism are A. E. Waite’s Holy Kabbalah, Myer’s Qabbalah, and C. D. Ginsburg’s Kabbalah; these are thought to be the “serious … difficult … scholarly” books on the subject. Considered more practical are Fortune’s Mystical Qabalah and the popular series by William Gray, which includes The Talking Tree (1977), The Ladder of Lights, or Qabalah Renovata (1981), Concepts of the Qabalah (1984) and The Tree of Evil (revised edition, 1985—all titles, New York: Samuel Weiser). Concepts of Qabalah is Volume 3 of Gray’s SANGREAL SODALITY SERIES: Vol. 1. Western Inner Workings (1983); Vol. 2. The Sangreal Sacrament (1983); Vol. 4. Sangreal Ceremonies and Rituals (1986—all titles, New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc.) Another favorite is W. E. Butler’s Magic and the Qabalah (Wellingborough: Aquarian Press, 1964; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1972). None of these “practical” books draws much from Jewish sources; each is based instead on Golden Dawn materials, whether first- or second-hand.

One book claims that it “presents the majority of the Kabbalistic teachings from the Golden Dawn in one fascinating volume”: Pat Zalewski’s Kabbalah of the Golden Dawn (St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1993). This book may well reflect Golden Dawn teachings, but it also demonstrates that the longstanding tradition of mangling (Jewish) kabbalah—and the stubborn ignorance of it—has not come to an end. The book’s account of the history and major texts of
kabbalah is studded with a staggering number of errors; even the titles of the kabbalistic books given in the footnotes contain mistakes. As an inexpensive source showing what has become of qabalah, Zalewski’s book may have something to recommend it.

John Michael Greer’s Paths of Wisdom: Principles and Practice of the Magical Cabala in the Western Tradition (St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1996) is a far better, more substantive—and certainly more readable—introduction to the Golden Dawn’s Magical qabalah. Neither as inclusive nor as well presented as Greer’s Paths of Wisdom is a work of similar intent, Experiencing the Kabbalah by Chic Cicero and Sandra Tabatha Cicero (St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1997), which offers the reader an “easy-to-use beginner’s guide.”

Continuing interest in the Golden Dawn is demonstrated by a book-sized journal featuring articles by contemporary authors; between 1994 and 1998, four volumes were published—none since, however. The second volume, The Golden Dawn Journal, Book II, is subtitled “Qabalah: Theory and Magic,” edited by Chic Cicero and Sandra Tabatha Cicero (St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1994). The articles are spotty; some are downright bad. A few are sincere attempts to offer the results of thoughtful research, both academic and practical.

For developments of Western esoteric (i.e., Golden Dawn, Crowley, etc.) qabalah through the twentieth century, refer to my survey in Approaching the Kabbalah of Maat (York Beach: Black Jackal Press, 2013), pages 3-113.

---

98 Still, at this late date, in a chapter added to the “revised and enlarged” second edition of David Rankine’s Climbing the Tree of Life (London: Avalonia, 2022), we find statements like, “We know that one of the earliest and greatest of Jewish Kabbalistic texts, the Sepher Yetzirah or Book of Formation was said to have been written by Simeon ben Yochai about 70 CE, and is now commonly dated as 1st-2nd century CE” (page 19). This little mass of faux pas—which is wrong on nearly every point—is all the more baffling given the works of solid Jewish scholarship listed in the book’s bibliography, which includes Joseph Dan’s Ancient Jewish Mysticism (Tel Aviv: MOD Books, 1993) and several works each by Gershom Scholem and Moshe Idel. Even Pat Zalewski offers a fairer account of Sepher Yetzirah: “The exact date of its origin is usually thought to be somewhere between the 3rd and 2nd [sic] century A.D. One legend asserts that the Prophet Abraham was the instigator of the theory of the book, which he received in a vision. Some Kabbalistic authorities have ascribed authorship of this volume to Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph...” (Kabbalah of the Golden Dawn, page 42).

Refer to my “Notes on Editions of the Sefer Yetzirah in English,” at Hermetic Kabbalah and Academia.edu:

- [syie.pdf](digital-brilliance.com)
- [(PDF) Notes on Editions of Sefer Yetzirah in English | Don Karr - Academia.edu](http://donkarr.com)

Further along (on page 19), Rankine says of the merkabah mystic’s journey through the Seven Palaces that there “he would encounter demons.” This is a stunning gaffe, especially with Dan’s Ancient Jewish Mysticism, Peter Schäfer’s Hidden and Manifest God (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), and two works by Michael D. Swartz, Mystical Prayer in Early Jewish Mysticism (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992) and Scholastic Magic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) shown in the bibliography.

Refer to my “Notes on the Study of Merkabah Mysticism and Hekhalot Literature in English”:

- [Jewish Studies 52 (Jerusalem: Journal of the World Union of Jewish Studies, 2017), ENGLISH SECTION, pages 35*-112]*
- [Notes on the Study of Merkabah Mysticism and Hekhalot Literature in English—with an appendix on Jewish Magic](digital-brilliance.com)
- [(PDF) Notes on the Study of Merkabah Mysticism and Hekhalot Literature in English | Don Karr - Academia.edu](http://donkarr.com)


99 Given that the Hermetic-Cabalist tradition is the major source of notions and practices of the Golden Dawn, it is no surprise that the subject “Qabalah” (i.e., cabala) is also well represented in the other issues of The Golden Dawn Journal: Book I: DIVINATION (1994); Book III: THE ART OF HERMES (1995); and Book IV: THE MAGICAL PANTHEONS (1998; all from Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul). See, for example, Madonna Compton’s article in Book III, “Logos Revealed: Hermetic Influences on the Renaissance Humanists,” where there is an effort to affect an academic tone in discussions of Pico, Reuchlin, Henry More, and Knorr von Rosenroth; or Harvey Newstrom’s article in Book IV, “In the Beginning was the Word,” which draws on the Sefer Yetzirah and Sefer Bahir—along with The Key of Solomon—in a discussion of the sundry epithets for each of the ten sefirot.
Some basic readings on the qabalah of the Golden Dawn:


3. Dion Fortune’s Mystical Qabalah (reprinted many times).


5. John Michael Greer’s Paths of Wisdom: Principles and Practice of the Magical Cabala in the Western Tradition (St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1996)—in my opinion, the best of the introductory books.

6. Crowley’s 777 (London: Neptune Press, 1955); included in The Qabalah of Aleister Crowley (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1973), reprinted as 777 and Other Qabalistic Writings of Aleister Crowley (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1986); also available on the Internet—search: “Liber 777”

7. Golden Dawn founders’ versions of kabbalistic texts:
   a. Westcott’s translation of the Sepher Yetzirah
   b. Westcott’s edition of Æsch Mezareph “by a Lover of Philalethes, 1714”; Æsch Mezareph is a rare kabbalistic/chemical treatise
   c. Mathers’ Kabbalah Unveiled which contains portions of the Zohar translated from Knorr von Rosenroth’s Kabbala denudata.

---

101 For some general overviews, see the following:

102 For more detail on Westcott’s Sepher Yetzirah, see my “Notes on Editions of Sefer Yetzirah in English,” page 6 at [PDF] Notes on Editions of Sefer Yetzirah in English | Don Karr - Academia.edu

103 On Mathers’ Kabbalah Unveiled, see below, MATHERS, and my “Notes on the Zohar in English,” page 9, at [PDF] Notes on the Zohar in English | Don Karr - Academia.edu
GOLDEN DAWN INTERPRETERS OF THE KABBALAH

WILLIAM WYNN WESTCOTT (1848-1925)


Westcott’s name is attached to one of the most popular translations of Sepher Yetzirah. Westcott’s version has been reproduced in print and online countless times, with and without attribution.

Westcott’s Introduction to the Study of the Kabalah has been highly regarded by occultists of the Golden Dawn strain since its original publication. Aleister Crowley, in “The Temple of Solomon the King, Book V” (in The Equinox, vol. 1, no. 5—London: 1911), pages 71-72, writes,

For the student unacquainted with the rudiments of the Qabalah we recommend the study of S. L. M. Mathers’ “Introduction” to his translation of the three principal books of the Zohar (i.e., The Kabbalah Unveiled), and Westcott’s “Introduction to the Study of the Qabalah.” … Dr. Westcott’s little book is principally valuable for its able defense of the Qabalah as against exotericism and literalism.

In order to “provide some of the texts of greatest value in Hermetic research” (—Westcott’s preface to each volume), Westcott, under the motto Sapere Aude, prepared the Collectanea Hermetica as a series of pamphlets distributed by the London Theosophical Publishing Society:

1. The Hermetic Arcanum of Penes Nos Unda Tagi, 1623 (1893)
2. The Pymander of Hermes – Dr. Everard’s English Translation of 1650 (1894)
3. A Short Enquiry concerning the Hermetic Art, by a Lover of Philalethes, 1714; “An Introduction to Alchemy and Notes” (1894)
6. The Chaldean Oracles of Zoroaster (1895)
7. Euphrates, or the Waters of the East, by Thomas Vaughan, 1655 (1896)

Not to be confused with Kuntz’ edition is Kabbalah of the Golden Dawn by Pat Zalewski, on which see above pages 151-152.

For more details about Westcott’s Sepher Yetzirah, see “Notes on Editions of Sefer Yetzirah in English,” page 6, at http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Biblios/syie.pdf or https://www.academia.edu/22875900/Notes_on_Editions_of_Sefet_Yetzirah_in_English
8. *Egyptian Magic*, by Florence Farr (1896)
9. *Numbers: Their Occult Power and Mystic Virtues*, by W. W. Westcott (1902)

The only kabalistic items in the *Collectanea* are

- Number 4, *Aesch Mezareph*, an odd little work which combines alchemy and *kabbalah*. *Aesch Mezareph* was reconstituted from fragments strewn through the imposing glossary that opens Knorr von Rosenroth’s *Kabbala denudata*.\(^{106}\)

An edition of the *Collectanea* was reprinted as *Collectanea Hermetica, Parts 1-10*, with an introduction by R. A. Gilbert (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1998), which adds Westcott’s version of *Sepher Yetzirah*.

Regarding Westcott, see


**S[AMUEL] L[IDDELL] MACGREGOR MATHERS (1854-1918)**


Mathers is a particularly important figure in that he, with William Wynn Westcott, was one of the founders of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. As author of most of the Golden Dawn rituals and many of its instructions, he was instrumental in laying the groundwork for modern occultism. However, as a translator and commentator in the field of *kabbalah*, he was prey to—and perpetuator of—much misunderstanding and misinformation.

An easy way to demonstrate this is to look at a couple of lists which Mathers gives in his well-circulated and often-reproduced work, *The Kabbalah Unveiled*.

On page 14 of Mathers’ introduction to *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, as the most important kabalistic books, Mathers lists the following:

1. The Sepher Yetzirah and its dependencies.
2. The Zohar with its developments and commentaries.
3. The Sepher Sephiroth and its expansions.
4. The Aesch Metzareph and its symbolism.

With the first two entries, there can be no argument: the *Sefer Yezirah* and the *Zohar* are two of the most important and influential works in *kabbalah*.\(^{107}\) But the third and fourth entries simply do not belong.\(^{108}\)

---

\(^{106}\) APPARATUS IN LIBRUM SOHAR PARS PRIMA nempe LOCI COMMUNES KABBALISTICICI, Secundum ordinem Alphabeticum, cognitum, Qui LEXICI instar esse possunt [APPARATUS TO THE BOOK SOHAR FIRST PART NAMELY KABBALISTIC COMMON-PLACES, ...ALPHABETICALLY ARRANGED, ...]. \(1^{st}\) system pp. 1-740.

\(^{107}\) *Sefer Yezirah* was written centuries before the development of *kabbalah*. It was, however, fully incorporated by the earliest kabbalists and previous mystical schools (e.g., the Hasidei Ashkenaz, the Iyyun circle) that influenced them.

\(^{108}\) Westcott does a little better in his “note of the chief of the old Kabalistic treatises” in his *Introduction to the Study of the Kabbalah.* After mentioning “Sepher Yezirah” and the “Zohar” and, dependent on *Kabbala denudata*, enumerating the tracts within it with reasonable accuracy, Westcott adds (page 4),

Other famous Kabalistic treatises are:—“The Commentary on the Ten Sephiroth,” by Rabbi Azriel ben Menachem, 1200 A.D.; “The Alphabet” of Rabbi Akiba; “The Gate of Heaven”; the “Book of Enoch”; “Pardes Rimmonim, or Garden of Pomegranates”; “A treatise on the Emanations”; “Orz ha Chiim, or The Tree of Life” of Chajim Vital;
Mathers identifies *Sepher Sephiroth*, or “Book of Emanations,” as a work that “describes, so to speak, the gradual evolution of the Deity from negative into positive existence” (ibid., page 15). Given Mathers’ dependence on Knorr von Rosenroth, we can fairly assume “Sepher Sephiroth” refers to the section of *Kabbala denudata* which treats of the unfolding of the tree of the sefirot, in outline, then diagrammatic, form based upon the teachings of Isaac Luria via the versions of Hayyim Vital, Israel Sarug, and Naftali Hertz Bacharach. It is an item of considerable interest, but not one of the canons of *kabbalah*.

“A[esch] Metzareph” (*Esh M’zaref*), which Mathers found scattered in pieces through the lengthy glossary that opens *Kabbalah denudata* or in the compilation of these pieces by “a Lover of Philalethes” (1714), is a rather unusual example of the merger of *kabbalah* and alchemy. As such, it is something of a peripheral curiosity, not a central work.

On pages 14-15, Mathers states that the *Zohar* “contains the following most important books”:

(a) The SPRA DTzNIOVT’ThA, Siphra DTzenioutha, of “Book of Concealed Mystery,” which is the root and foundation of the Zohar.

(b) The ADRA RBA QDIShA, Idra Rabba Qadisha, or “Greater Holy Assembly”: this is a development of the “Book of Concealed Mystery.”

(γ) The ADRA ZVTA QDIShA, Idra Zuta Qadisha, or “Lesser Holy Assembly”

(δ) The pneumatical treatise called BITH ALHIM, Beth Elohim, or the “House of Elohim,” ...from the doctrines of Rabbi Yitzchaq Loria...

(ε) The “Book of the Revolutions of Souls” ... an expansion of Rabbi Loria’s ideas.

It is true that by the time we get to Luria (= Loria), the themes begun in *Sifra Detseniuta*, (α), and the *Idrot*, (β) and (γ), were considered central to the *Zohar*, but in a purely zoharic context these texts are something of an oddity. Mathers ignored, or was ignorant of, the real core and bulk of the *Zohar*: the running commentary to the Torah.

As with the previous list, the last two items, (δ) and (ε), simply do not belong. As Mathers even notes, they are Lurianic, which separates them from the *Zohar* by some 300 years. *Bet Elohim* was written by Abraham Cohen Herrera (1577-1639), who was a student of Israel Sarug and his version of Lurianic *kabbalah*. The first half of *Sefer ha-Gilgulim* (BOOK OF REVOLUTIONS, or REINCARNATIONS) is Hayyim Vital’s version of Luria, *Sha’ar ha-Gilgulim*, as redacted by Meir Poppers; the second half of *Sefer ha-Gilgulim* is not Lurianic, but rather based on older traditions. Mathers encountered all of this stuff in *Kabbala denudata*.

---

“Rashith ha Galgulim, or Revolutions of Souls” of Isaac de Loria; and especially the writings of the famous Spanish Jew, Ibn Gebirol, who died A.D. 107, and was also called Avicebron, his great works are “The fountain of life” and “The Crown of the Kingdom.”

“The Alphabet” of Rabbi Akiba is a pre-kabbalistic (8th or 9th century) pseudopigraphical mystical midrash on the shapes of the Hebrew letters, and “The Book of Enoch” likely refers to *The Hebrew Book of Enoch*, or 3 Enoch, which is a late antique or early Medieval text titled *Sefer Hekhalot*. Neither of these works nor the writings of Ibn Gebirol belong on a list of kabbalistic titles.

“Rashith ha Galgulim, or Revolutions of Souls,” more accurately *Sefer ha-Gilgulim*, is a compilation by Meir Poppers which appeared in *Kabbala denudata* (tom. II, pars tertia, pages 423-478 of the first system), only the first half of which is Lurianic, and that section was derived from the writings of Hayyim Vital, not Isaac Luria.

109 The *Sepher Sephiroth* to which Mathers refers is not the work of the same name issued by Aleister Crowley: “SEPHER SEPHIROTH.” SVB FIGVRÂ D (ꍰꝟꝟꝤꝞꝔ), by Allen Bennett, Aleister Crowley, and others, in *The Equinox*, Vol. I, No. 3 (London: Wieland & Co., 1912), pp. 500ff, paginated as i-xvi + i-101, a table of the *gematriot* of letters, words, and expressions from 1 to 3299, with only occasional entries beyond 1025.

110 *Kabbala denudata...*, Tome I (Sulzbach: Typis Abrahami Lichtenthaleri, 1677), *PARS QUARTA*, que CONTINET EXPLICATIONEM ARBORUM seu TABULARUM... [PART FOUR, A DETAILED EXPLANATION OF THE (KABBALISTIC) TREE OR DIAGRAM...], in 16 figures, [third system] pp. 193—255
Quite a few subsequent writers have accepted Mathers’ lists, especially the first, as authoritative. For instance, Charles Ponce in Kabbalah (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1973), pp. 50-52, includes Esh Mezaref in his list, “Other Main Works of Kabbalism.” Typical of Ponce, he sets two perfectly viable choices (Sefer Bahir and Cordovero’s Pardes Rimmonim) against two items with no real place on the list (Esh Mezaref and The Thirty-two Paths of Wisdom). Mme. Blavatsky, too, referred to Esh Mezaref as one of the most important books in kabbalah. As noted above, she and Mathers both made heavy use of Knorr von Rosenroth’s Kabbala denudata.

Mathers’ Kabbalah Unveiled is an English translation of (α), (β), and (γ) of the second list as rendered from Knorr’s Latin in Kabbala denudata. The translation is full of extranea—some Knorr’s, some Mathers’—so it is hardly a fair representation of these complex texts.iii

On Mathers’ treatment of the Zohar refer to page 9 of my “Notes on the Zohar in English” at

- ACADEMIA.EDU > https://www.academia.edu/22865064/Notes_on_the_Zohar_in_English

About Mathers, note the following:


HENRY B. PULLEN-BURRY (1855-1926)

- Qabalism (Chicago, Yogi Publication Society, 1925).

That which literarians, and bookworms call the Kabalah, is but a strange and more or less valueless set of writings chiefly of Jewish origin; in which scholars, knowing that there is throughout the scripture hidden as well as an open meaning, having striven to discover it; and have recorded their conclusions, often in words as hard to understand, or even get meaning from, as the scriptures themselves. (—Qabalism, p. xi)

In spite of the quote above, Qabalism clearly discusses the sefirot, the four worlds, Adam Kadmon, and Philo as “the most important link we have with the Gnosticism of the Jews” (— Qabalism, page 7). Pullen-Burry goes on to give examples of these writings, namely, “the Sepher Yetzirah” and “the Books of the Zohar.”

As a member of the Golden Dawn, Pullen-Burry reached the level of Hierophant in 1894 under the motto Anima pura sit.

FLORENCE FARR (1860-1917)


---

Farr was an actress, women’s rights pioneer, and notable Golden Dawn leader who “entered the portal” of $5^\circ = 6^\circ$ on August 2, 1891.

The Way of Wisdom presents a brief paragraph for each of the Hebrew letters. Farr promotes these epitomes as comparable to the statements of the intelligences in The Thirty-two Paths of Wisdom—or the last twenty-two of them, anyway. She then sets the twelve simple letters in correspondence to the twelve symbols of the Buddhist Wheel of Existence.

**NURHO DE MANHAR [WILLIAM WILLIAMS] (fl. 1888-1914)**


Nurho de Manhar is the pen-name of early Golden Dawn member, William Williams. His full motto was Nurho d’mahar heulnosh. Williams entered the Golden Dawn in 1888, within a year of its founding, and received his $5^\circ = 6^\circ$ on February 25, 1893. In spite of his Golden Dawn affiliation, Williams’ work is an English rendering of the first sections of the Zohar in the light of Mme. Blavatsky’s theosophical teachings.

On Williams’ treatment of the Zohar, refer to page 8 of my “Notes on the Zohar in English,” at [HERMETIC KABBALAH (Digital Brillance) or Academia.edu >](http://www.digital-brillance.com/contributed/Karr/Biblios/zie.pdf)

https://www.academia.edu/22865064/Notes_on_the_Zohar_in_English

**W. B. YEATS (1865-1939)**

William Butler Yeats was a prominent member of Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. However, if we take another route, one that follows the broad outlines of esoteric—if not purely kabbalistic—developments described above in §§ [THE ‘UNKNOWN SUPERIORS’](https://www.academia.edu/22865064/Notes_on_the_Zohar_in_English) and [WILLIAM BLAKE](https://www.academia.edu/22865064/Notes_on_the_Zohar_in_English), the formula SWEDENBORG → BLAKE → YEATS could be advanced.

In Kathleen Raine’s words on the end flaps of her *W. B. Yeats & the Learning of the Imagination* (Dallas: Dallas Institute Publications, 1999),

Yeats did not possess Swedenborg’s psychic gift, nor Blake’s soaring imaginative vision. States of expanded consciousness came to him seldom, and then through magical techniques, mediumship, and other aids towards opening of the mind. Yeats was, one might say, a scientific investigator, but winged by that attitude of imaginative assent which serves to create the reality towards which it is directed—nothing less than the building of worlds—the heaven’s and the earth’s—the soul inhabits.


In As Above, So Below: YEATS, CROWLEY, AND QABALAH (Ph.D. dissertation, Binghamton: State University of New York, 1996), Charles Nicholas Serra II, offers the thesis (—page v),

...if one comes to Yeats’s texts with an understanding of Qabalah in application (via Crowley) then one should be able to reconstruct Yeats’s deliberately fragmented overstructure or didactic message.

For writings by Yeats himself, find On Magic & the Occult (Turin: Black Letter Press, 2019), which is a collection of essays (including one on Blake), stories, poems, and a play (“The Shadowy Waters”).

Further on Yeats:
  
  The authors in the title were all members of the Golden Dawn. Chapter 2 is on W. B. Yeats.
  
  “An in-depth study of Yeats’ esoteric practices and beliefs, including excerpts from his Magical Diaries.”

ALEISTER CROWLEY (1875-1947)


Crowley had a tumultuous career in the Golden Dawn. These days, he is more associated with the O.T.O. and A.’.A.’. and their “magick.”

Crowley’s Equinox is a grandiose esoteric miscellany which includes Golden Dawn materials as reworked by Crowley, rituals, essays, “knowledge lectures,” stories, plays, tables, charts, poetry, book reviews, etc.

Two items of particular interest in the present context appeared in The Equinox:
- “Gematria” which is part of “The Temple of Solomon the King, Book V” in vol. 1, no. 5, pp. 71-120.
- “Sepher Sephiroth,” which is appended to vol. 1, no. 8, pp. 500 ff.

Both were reprinted with Liber 777 as The Qabalah of Aleister Crowley (New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1973). On Liber 777, see my comments above, page 151.

Also within The Equinox (vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 163-185) is Allan Bennett’s paper, “A Note on Genesis,” which was reprinted with a preface by Crowley in 1976 and 1977 (New York: Samuel Weiser). Bennett expands on the meaning(s) of Genesis 1:1: “by applying to the Text the Keys of the Qabalah,” showing that “[c]ontained therein also are the Divine, Magical, and Terrestrial Formulae of the Passage of the Incomprehensible Nothingness of the Ain Soph to the Perfection of Creation....”
Books about Aleister Crowley (listed chronologically):


Counter-Crowley, especially on his claims regarding the plot surrounding the reception of the *Book of the Law*: Richard Cole et al., *Liber L. + vel Bogus. The Real Confession of Aleister Crowley Sub Figura LXXX; Being Parts I & II(A) of The Governing Dynamics of Thelema (A Work in Progress)*, edited by Sadie Sparks (2nd edition – [UK]: privately published, 2014).

A sampling of Crowley’s works:


FRATER ACHAD [CHARLES STANSFIELD JONES] (1886-1959)


Frater Achad is generally considered Aleister Crowley’s most important student in the O.T.O.—A’.A.’. stream. Crowley even referred to Achad as his “Magickal Son.”

Achad expanded upon Golden Dawn qabalah, instituting some of his own variations on such things as the attributions of the Hebrew letters and their correspondences to the paths of the kabbalistic tree of life. Indeed, in his books of the ’twenties, he turns the attribution system established by the Golden Dawn completely upside-down.

For a deep dive into Achad’s astounding occult career, see


There is a summary of Achad’s qabalah in my *Approaching the Kabbalah of Maat* (York Beach: Black Jackal Press, 2013), pages 28-33.
KENNETH GRANT / THE O.T.O.

Another more recent writer, considered by an adamantine few to be Crowley’s true heir, is Kenneth Grant (1924-2011), whose numerous books treat a kind of qabalah throughout. See, for example, Grant’s summary statements regarding the qabalistic tradition in Beyond the Mauve Zone (London: Starfire Publishing Ltd, 1999), Chapter 8: “The Metaphysics of Transmission.”


Refer to my comments on the qabalah of Crowley, Frater Achad, and Grant in Approaching the Kabbalah of Maat, pages 18-41, et passim.

Mention of these three inevitably leads to the subject of the O.T.O., Ordo Templi Orientis—a can of worms, indeed.112 Perhaps the best single book on this still-functioning order is O.T.O. Rituals and Sex Magick, by Theodor Reuss and Aleister Crowley, compiled and edited by A. R. Naylor, introduced by Peter-R. Koenig (Thame: I-H-O Books, 1999). Sale of the book was discontinued due to legal actions taken by the O.T.O. regarding copyright violations. Thus, it almost immediately fell out of print, soon selling for many times its original $50 cover price. The bulk of the book is O.T.O. “secret” documents, which the active O.T.O. groups were (are) not pleased to see in print. Further controversy surrounded the introduction—and assessments—of Peter-R. Koenig. Much of the material which appears in O.T.O. Rituals... can be found at Koenig’s well-crafted website, THE ORDO TEMPLE ORIENTIS PHENOMENON at http://www.parareligion.ch/.

Back in 1973, a similar negative reaction greeted Francis King’s edition of the O.T.O. material: The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O. (New York: Samuel Weiser). This work was reissued by Richard T. Cole in 2004, “REVISED & UPDATED,” as a “deluxe, hand-numbered limited edition to 666 copies” on CD-ROM (Austin: O.T.O. New Media). The CD includes King’s text in two formats (read-only and Microsoft Word), “Scans of documents relating to the work,” G. M. Kelly’s review of the Naylor/Koenig work cited above, two fancy degree certificates, a woodcut of the eastern Mediterranean which supposedly depicts a “symbolic journey” relevant to the Minerval Degree, a two-page typescript entitled “A Short History of Saladin,” and scans of the CD’s own packaging—plus a three-part photo gallery containing

(i) 16 photos of Crowley from throughout his adult life
(ii) 16 more photos of Crowley in various ritual postures and costumes
(iii) “The Women,” within which is a subsection devoted to Leah Hirshg claiming seven previously unpublished photographs, five of which are quite obviously doctored.

All the while, an unidentified fragment of Shostakovich (?) piece drones in the background.

---

112 Regarding the O.T.O. as a “can of worms,” refer to the accounts of two long-standing members: the late James Wasserman, In the Center of the Fire (Lake Work: Ibis Press, 2012), which covers the years 1966-1989, and J. Edward Cornelius, Changing of the Guard (Berkeley: [privately issued], 2019), which covers the years 1989-1993.

For the “can of worms” in the first half of the twentieth century, see, for example, Richard Kaczynski’s Panic in Detroit – BLUE EQUINOX CENTENNIAL EDITION, revised and expanded edition (independently published, 2019).
CHARLES WILLIAMS (1886-1945)

Charles Williams was the author of “marvelous” novels, such as Many Dimensions (1930), War in Heaven (1930), Shadows of Ecstasy (1933), and Descent to Hell (1937). He came to Western esotericism via Arthur Waite and his Fellowship of the Rosy Cross, which based its curriculum on Golden Dawn material.


DION FORTUNE [VIOLET MARY FIRTH] 1890-1950

Originally in the Golden Dawn, Dion Fortune left (1922) to form the Fraternity of the Inner Light. While Fortune carried on Golden Dawn traditions, she added innovations that she received from “Ascended Masters.” These teachings are collected in Fortune’s posthumously published work, The Cosmic Doctrine, written in the years 1923 and 1924 (Toddington: Helios Book Service, 1966; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1976).

By its own account, The Cosmic Doctrine chronicles the “Inner Plane” teachings, received from “one of the ‘Great Masters,’” covering all aspects of the material and spiritual universe(s), their “evolutions,” “influences,” and “laws.”

According to biographer Janine Chapman, “The Cosmic Doctrine is supposed to be a re-written version of The Seven Aphorisms of Creation, which are compilations of notes taken at Dr. Moriarty’s lectures and which are the real ‘secrets of Dr. Taverner,’ the fictitious name Dion gave to Moriarty when she wrote her book, The Secrets of Dr. Taverner” (—Quest for Dion Fortune [York Beach: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1993]: p. 14).113 For more on Fortune’s “Moriarty period,” see The Story of Dion Fortune, by Charles Fielding and Carr Collins (Dallas: Star and Cross, 1985; rpt. Loughborough: Thoth Publications, 1998), pp. 31-35 et passim.

More pertinent to the subject-at-hand is Fortune’s immensely popular book, The Mystical Qabalah (London: Williams and Norgate, 1935; reprinted frequently). This work is considered a “classic,” essential reading for students of the Western esoteric stream as exemplified by the Golden Dawn and its heirs. The Mystical Qabalah remains a staple in the literature of qabalah, dubbed by Fortune “the Yoga of the West.”


FRANCIS ISRAEL REGARDIE (1907-1985)


Though Jewish by birth, Regardie was a major exponent of the Western esoteric tradition and its qabalah—not Scholem’s kabbalah. In his lifetime, Regardie was at ground zero of the Western occult tradition: he was a member of an offshoot of the Golden Dawn and served as a secretary/companion to Aleister Crowley.

Regardie was a member of the Stella Matutina order, which taught the Golden Dawn curriculum, but which Regardie found in “a state of demoralization and decay.”

Rightly or wrongly, Regardie came to the conclusion that the Order’s teachings would not survive unless they were published: he therefore left the Stella Matutina and deliberately broke the oath of secrecy he had taken at his initiation by publishing the majority of the Golden Dawn manuscripts in four large volumes.

In the years 1937 to 1940, Regardie published The Golden Dawn: An Account of the Teaching, Rites and Ceremonies of the Hermetic Order of The Golden Dawn, in four volumes (Chicago: Aries Press), which offered to the public virtually all of the teachings and practices of this till-then secret organization.

All of the books listed above are considered classics of Western esoteric literature. They were written and released at a time when there was very little available in print on the subject of qabalah and high magic(k)—certainly nothing so plain and clear as Regardie’s works.

- A Garden of Pomegranates is an insider’s summary of the Golden Dawn’s qabalah.
- The Middle Pillar gives instructions for and expansions of the “Qabalistic Cross” and “Lesser Banishing Ritual,” both of which are basic to Golden Dawn practice.
- The Tree of Life, considered by some Regardie’s magnum opus, explains the gamut of “high magic(k)” deployed by both the Golden Dawn and Crowley’s Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.), brought into a (relatively) unified system under the organizing principle of qabalah.

On Regardie:


---

115 ibid., pages 154-155.
116 The “Lesser Banishing Ritual” is also called the “Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram,” sometimes simply referred to as “LRBP.”
A SELECTION OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY BOOKS ON KABBALAH/CABALA/QABALAH TO 1958

What follows is a selection of works from the early twentieth century which treat kabbalah in one of its various forms and were written in, or have been translated into, English. These are given in chronological order; the year in the left margin indicates the date of first edition of the work listed.

Harris (OR Harry), Maurice H. Hebraic Literature. Translations from the Talmud, Midrashim and Kabbala (Washington & London: M. Walter Dunne, Publisher, 1901).

Harris’ § “The Kabbala” contains the same extracts given by Paul Isaac Hershon (1880)—see above in § NINETEENTH-CENTURY BOOKS..., Hershon.


The subtitle reads, “Comparative Metaphysics and Ethics, Rationalism and Mysticism of the Jews, the Hindus and most of the Historic Nations, as links and developments of one chain of Universal Philosophy.”


Written “for lovers and collectors of literary curiosities,” this book treats “HOW THE VARIOUS NUMERICAL CABALAS HAVE BEEN CURIOUSLY APPLIED TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES” (from the preface and title page). According to Begley, there is an old cabala and a new cabala. “The first is mainly Hebrew, and occasionally Greek; the second is almost entirely Latin, and of much later invention, not being heard of till about A.D. 1530” (p. 3). Begley’s book treats the latter, “the record of Christian fancy on Christian themes”—primarily by way of gematria. Knowledge of Latin and German is helpful.


Machen and Waite were members of the Golden Dawn. The meaning and purpose of this book has been puzzled over for over 100 years now. Gilbert concludes his introduction, “...let The House of the Hidden Light remain what it is: a record of a quest in which two men sought to find their souls by way of earthly love, a quest in which, against all odds, they attained” (page xxxii). In other words, the book is comprised of letters between Machen and Waite describing their Bohemian London night-life, albeit heavily coded in occult language. The end flap warns, “It may not be the great


Spector’s listings go through 1983. She includes—and comments on—quite a few items not given notice in my paper:

• early 20th-century books which touch upon kabbalah, or cabala, briefly or incidentally, such as George Alexander Kohut’s Ezra Stiles and the Jews (New York: Philip Cowen, 1902).

• works which I have never encountered, for example Laurel Miller’s Kabbalistic Numerology or, The true science of numbers, letters, words and their astrological allocations according to the Kabbala (New York: Metaphysical Publishing House, 1921) and F. Schneider Schwartz’ True Mysteries of Life: The Psychology of the Bible, the Kabbalah, and the Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: Vantage Press, 1957).

• 20th-century articles.
magical text that some had hoped for....” House was originally printed in 1904 in a limited run of three copies; the 2003 edition was limited to 350—which may have been overly optimistic. See Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “Mysteries of Sex in the House of the Hidden Light: Arthur Edward Waite and the Kabbalah,” in Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts, Volume Forty, edited by Daniel Abrams with guest editors Christian Wiese and George Y. Kohler (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2018), pp. 163-182.


Infusions of Christian doctrine, coinages such as “Sephiroths” and the dedication to Dr. Gerard Encausse (= Papus) give apt clues regarding this work’s mode and orientation.


In CHAPTER VII, “The Kabbalah,” Bayley writes, “The points of contact between the Kabbalah and the Albigensian Church of the Holy Spirit are therefore so numerous that the two systems may be said at times to merge completely into one another” (—page 99). He goes on to describe the use of notarikon (stating “Dante made frequent use of this Kabbalistic system of notarikon...”—page 100) and theruma, the meanings of the letters as numbers and shapes (illustrating, however, with Latin letters), and the indications of certain two-fold “veiling terms” (such as “sun and moon,” “active and passive,” leading up to the point that “Swedenborg expressed the same duality by the terms ‘Will’ and ‘Understanding,’ by the reconciliation of which man becomes an angel”—page 106).


As the title suggests, the “Kabbalah Unveiled” in this volume is S. L. M. Mathers’ translation of THE LESSER HOLY ASSEMBLY.


On the first page of this 32-page history, Sperling writes that “mysticism is the raw material of religion” (p. 145). He concludes, “For there is in Judaism a wholesome synthesis of legalism and mysticism, which has saved it from becoming either a visionary castle in the air or a petrified body of formulas” (p. 176).


“In treating in an entirely elementary fashion a subject so vast as that of numbers, it is in my opinion necessary that the wisdom of Quaballistical lore should be presented in an easy and intelligible form” (p. iii). The “Quaballistical lore” referred to is principally numerology, or number/letter equivalents, as in the conventional Hebrew values, applied to our Roman alphabet as well as other “systems of valuations set down to the mystic Pythagoras” (FOREWORD, p. 84).

the Pythagorean Number Philosophy.” “Copyright 1922 by Phineas Mordell”; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1975.)

Abelson, J[oshua]. *Jewish Mysticism* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1913; reprinted frequently).


“As soon as the Cabala became better known, Christians betook themselves to its study and paid it greatest attention because of the supposed agreement of its teachings with the dogmas of the Christian Church.” (*The Cabala*, p. 100)


Cabalist numerology of the Western esoteric sort, namely, the occult significance of numbers and ratios according to “Greeks, Aryans, and Egyptians,” as well as the Hebrews. The correspondences of numerology and astrology dominate.


Coleville’s readable presentation is derived from previous English sources (C. D. Ginsburg, translations of Éliphas Lévi, S. L. M. Mathers, A. E. Waite, etc.). Coleville emphasizes the kabbalistic view of the human soul and includes a chapter entitled “Kabalistic Doctrine Concerning Cause and Effect (Karma).”


Though some Hebrew gematriot appear toward the beginning, this work is primarily concerned with Greek letters and their values.


The chapter II, “The Kabbalah, or Secret Tradition from unknown date to A.D. 1305,” contains Westcott’s translation of *Sepher Yetzirah* and Mathers’ translation of *Sifre Dzneniuta* (The Book of Concealed Mystery) and *Idra Rabba* (The Greater Holy Assembly).


Gewurz’ works are of the Western esoteric type as influenced by Mme. Blavatsky, Golden Dawn writers, and the Masonic cabalists. One of the “seven pupils of E. G.” who wrote down The Mysteries was L. A. Bosman, mentioned above in Scholem’s comments regarding Mme. Blavatsky. Bosman’s Mysteries of the Cabalalah (London: The Dharma Press, 1913 & 1916; rpt Kila: Kessinger, 2003) is identical to PART II (pp. 54—99) of Gewurz’ 1922 Yogi edition.


The nature of this work, which is at once eclectic and uncritical, can be exemplified by its CHAPTER III, “Definitions of Letters and Numbers,” where meanings according to the “Hebrew Cabbala” and “Chinese Tao and Yi-King” are given for the 26 letters of the English alphabet. Boyle’s sources for “Hebrew” are S. L. M. Mathers, Isaac Myer, Éliphas Lévi, and Papus.


Refer to Arthur McCalla’s article on Fabre d’Olivet in Volume I of Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism, ed. Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2005) pp. 350-4, where Fabre d’Olivet is described as an “immensely curious and massively erudite self-proclaimed Neo-Pythagorean.” The thesis of Hebraic Tongue is that “The Mosaic cosmogony ... contains the principle of all science, ancient and modern.” (—McCalla, p. 350)


Hirsch begins the title essay, “It is hoped that the time has passed when the term ‘Jewish Cabala’ suggested the notion of a store-house of magic, black art, and witchcraft.” (—p. 1).

“The Cabalists” originally appeared in Jewish Quarterly Review, Volume 20, Number 1 (London: October 1907) under the title “Jewish Mystics—an Appreciation.”


Maeterlinck follows Adolph Franck (see above: “1843, Franck”) in his chapter VIII, “The Cabala,” which discusses the Sefer Yetzirah and the Zohar. Among the other brief chapters: VII – THE GNOSTICS AND NEOPLATONISTS, IX – THE ALCHEMISTS, and X – THE MODERN OCCULTISTS; chapter X touches on “Éliphas Lévi and his books, with their alarming titles,” “Madame Blavatzky” (sic), and “Rudolph Steiner.”

Though it is a much better and more interesting piece of work, Stenring’s Book of Formation has been overshadowed by Westcott’s edition of Sefer Yeẓirah.


Introduction: THE SCIENCE OF THE DIVINE NAMES
Part 1: KEYS OF THE SACRED WISDOM
Part 2: THE MYSTERY OF THE NUMBERS


See § KABBALAH AND CATHARISM (page 175) and § THE KABBALAH IN MEDIEVAL CHRISTENDOM (page 176). § EXPONENTS OF THE THEORETICAL KABBALAH, discusses Agobard, Bishop of Lyons, and Arnold of Villanova (pages 176-178) along with Abraham Abulafia and Raymond Lully [Llull]; then to § THE PRACTICAL KABBALAH IN MEDIEVAL CHRISTENDOM (pages 183-185). Later §§ include ZWINGLI AND THE KABBALAH (pages 488-490), ZWINGLI AND THE REUCHLIN AFFAIR (pages 490-492), SERVETUS AND THE KABBALAH (pages 568-569), and LUTHER’S INTEREST IN HEBREW, KABBALAH AND THE RABBIS (pages 622-625).

Agobard (779-840), an anti-Jewish polemicist, comes in a bit early to have been influenced by what we have determined to be kabbalah. Arnold (1240-1311), on the other hand, lived at the right time and dwelled in the right neighborhood (Catalonia) to have brushed up against some kabbalah.


In the manner of the Golden Dawn, Case connects the Rosicrucian grades with the sefirot of the kabbalistic tree of life and groupings of tarot cards. Case’s distillations of Western occult doctrine serve as the core teachings of an order which is still active: The Builders of the Adytum (BOTA) of Los Angeles.


“These unusual and beautiful Qabalistic meditations were inspirationally written by the recognized world authority in Tarot and Qabbalah, Dr. Paul Foster Case.” (from the PREFACE)


The subtitle, “An Encyclopedic Outline...,” is certainly fitting. As far as cabala is concerned, Hall’s sources are all familiar to us from the present discussion: Barrett, Blavatsky, Fludd, Franck, Ginsburg, Khunrath, Kircher, Knorr von Rosenroth, Lévi, Mathers, Myer, Papus, Paracelsus, Pike, Stenring, Waite, and Westcott.

*Picture Museum...* has been described as a “coffee-table book” of the Medieval and Renaissance occult, which gives the false impression that it is a trivial work. It just happens to contain a lot of illustrations. See in particular § THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN CABBALISTS, pp. 205-219.


The midsection of the book deals with “The Cabala”; passages from Jean de Pauly's French rendition (Paris, 1906-11) of the Zohar are quoted. Saurat believed that within the Zohar one could find “the expression of occult doctrine” which “in a more or less diluted form, reached our poets” (Spenser, Milton, Blake, Shelley, Whitman, Goethe, Nietzsche, Hugo, and others). The final section, “The Philosophical Ideas of Edmund Spenser,” concludes with “Spenser and the Cabala.”

Waton, Harry. *The Kabbalah and Spinoza's Philosophy as a Basis of Universal History:*

BOOK ONE: *The Philosophy of the Kabbalah* (New York: Spinoza Institute of America, 1931).


Rabbi Harry Waton was a “Kabbalist, Marxist, Spinozist, Jewish Supremacist” who believed that “the Jewish soul speaks an eternal language: and we saw, on the other hand, that the soul of the non-Jews speaks a temporary language.” — A Program for the Jews and an Answer to All Anti-Semites (New York: Committee for the Preservation of the Jews, 1939), p. 101.

Waton states in *The Philosophy of the Kabbalah* (pp. 14-15),

Spinoza’s philosophy is the profoundest, sublimest, boldest and most universal system of thought in the realm of philosophy; but the philosophy of the Kabbalah transcends even the philosophy of Spinoza. In the whole range of crystallized thought there is no system that can compare with the Kabbalah.


On the Soncino Zohar, see my remarks in “Notes on the Zohar in English,” pp. 3-4.

* at ACADEMIA.EDU - https://www.academia.edu/22869064/Notes_on_the_Zohar_in_English


Part One: THE FOUR WORLDS OF THE UNIVERSE

Part Two: THE WORLD OF THE MAN OF FLESH IN ACTION

Quoting such sources as the Bible (Old and New Testaments), the Zohar, *The Emerald Tablet,* and some Latin Pico-like CABBALISTIC DOGMA(s), Ancona presents “the western tradition” which, by way of “the great works of Éliphas Lévi, Saint-Yves d'Alveydre and Fabre d'Olivet ... goes back consistently and without interruption to what was given to the white race by its three great
interpreters of God—Rama, Orpheus and Moses—and by direct grace of the Prince of the Archangels, the Son, Jesus the Christ.”


- **VOLUME IV.** The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries (1934):
  - Chapter LIX, “Magic in Dispute, I: Pico della Mirandola, Bernard Basin, Pedro García”
  - Chapter LX, “Magic in Dispute, II: Jacques Lefèvre d’Etaples, Reuchlin, Trithemius”

- **VOLUMES V & VI.** The Sixteenth Century (1941):
  - Chapter VIII, “Agrippa and the Occult”
  - Chapter XLIV, “Mystic Philosophy: Words and Numbers”

- **VOLUME VII.** The Seventeenth Century (1958):
  - Chapter XX, “The Underground World of Kircher and Becher.”

*History of Magic* may yet be the most important single resource in its field, though these volumes require perseverance and some skepticism. Here one finds raw material—lots of it—but Thorndike’s conclusions and opinions should not be taken as the last word. However, the comments of the late Ioan Culianu (1950-1991) are much too dismissive:

A history of magic during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance has yet to be written. New discoveries and, above all, new interpretive viewpoints, have made obsolete the few existing syntheses, like those of Lynn Thorndike, Kurt Seligmann, or Emile Grillot de Givry. Any scholar who still relies on these works—especially on the first—is by no means better off than would be an anthropologist who relied exclusively on James G. Frazer. (“Magic in Medieval and Renaissance Europe,” in *Hidden Truths: Magic, Alchemy, and the Occult*, edited by Lawrence E. Sullivan [New York: Macmillan, 1989], page 110.)


---

1935


1937


Fuller, while noted as a formidable Major General in the British Army, was also a student of Aleister Crowley, though the two eventually had a falling-out (this was common with Crowley). Fuller produced some fifty books, writing on military history and theory as well as on occult subjects.

Fuller’s *Secret Wisdom of the Qabalah* is an effort to introduce the core of “Qabalistic” doctrine, covering cosmogony, notions of good and evil, fall and redemption, etc., drawing on the *Zohar* (the translation prepared by Simon, Sperling, and Levertoff, referred to as *The Soncino Edition*), Ginsburg’s *Kabalah*, Waite’s *Holy Kabalah*, Lévi’s *History of Magic*, Myer’s *Qabalah*, Ariel Bension’s *Zohar in Moslem and Christian Spain*, and Knut Stenring’s translation of *Sefer Yezirah*.

1938


**CHAPTER 4.** The Kabbalah – Key to Judaism, pp. 49-72

1941


Doreal’s typescript is illustrated by fold-out charts of THE TWENTY-TWO LETTERS and THE EMANATION OF THE TWENTY-TWO LETTERS, along with numerous diagrams through the text. His treatment betrays the influence of Mme. Blavatsky, Wynn Westcott, and S. L. M. Mathers.

Scholem’s work must be seen as the starting point for serious scholarship on [Jewish] kabbalah, which, since the publication of *Major Trends...*, has burgeoned.


Seligmann’s *History of Magic*—also published as *The Mirror of Magic*—is often compared with de Givry’s *Picture Museum...*, for it too is full of illustrations. Seligmann’s work is generally considered the better of the two. See § CABALA, pp.338-358, and § PORTRAITS: “Pico della Mirandola” (pp.309-311), “Agrippa von Nettesheim” (pp. 314-318), “Guillaume Postel” (pp. 327-329).


