The Study of Christian Cabala in English: ADDENDA

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ADDENDUM A: Items of Interest


Some of the brief notices in the section called “A Handful of Curiosities” might be of interest:

i. George Eliot and Solomon Maimon
ii. How Milton Pronounced Hebrew
iii. The Cambridge Platonists


_____.”Queen Christina’s Esoteric Interests as a Background to Her Platonic Academies,” in Western Esotericism, Based on Papers Read at the Symposium on Western Esotericism Held at Åbo, Finland, on 15-17 August 2007, edited by Tore Ahlbäck [SCRIPTA INSTITUTE DONNERIANI ABOENSIS XX] (Åbo/Turku: Donner Institute in Religious and Cultural History, 2008).

The Latin copies of Sefer-ha-Raziel in particular show (sic) a continuation of interest in Hebrew angelology among Christian readers well after the great blooming of such concerns among Rosicrucian authors in 1614-1620” (page 13). “The angelic doctrine of liber Raziel is taken up by a group of texts called Claves Salomonis, magical texts that in conjunction with al-Magritti’s book of Arabic magic, Picatrix, influenced Cornelius Agrippa” (page 18).


Allan, J. Mason. An Introduction to the Kabbalah, with Special Reference to the Kabbalistic Elements in Freemasonry (rpt. Edmonds: Sure Fire Press = Holmes Publishing Group, 1994).

Allan’s 20-page introduction has a turn-of-the-century feel, though its date, save that of its recent reprint, is not given. It is based on Ginsburg, Mathers, and, it would appear, Westcott.


This rich collection of writings and illustrations includes Ezechiel Foxcroft’s translation of The Hermetic Romance, or the Chymical Wedding (1690); Thomas Vaughan’s translations of Fama Fraternitatis and Confessio Fraternitatis (1652) and his Holy Mountain, A Rosicrucian Allegory; material from Heinrich Khunrath (Amphitheater of Eternal Wisdom, 1609), Robert Fludd (BOOK IV OF Sumnum Bonum), Hinricus Madathanus (The Parabola, A Golden Tractate), Daniel Stolcius (Pleasure Garden of Chymistry); four articles by Rudolph Steiner; some bibliographic pieces; and The Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians (1785).

There are two other noteworthy renditions of The Chymical Wedding:


The dissertation’s first chapter, “Kabbalistic Philosophy: A Historical Perspective,” was hastily assembled from too few sources. The book’s introduction, “Kabbalah Then and Now: A Historical Perspective,” improves upon the dissertation greatly, offering a better focused and more nuanced background account.

As for the rest, matters of Russian Masonry and mystical literature are beyond my abilities to appraise.

The remaining three chapters analyze the place of kabbalistic allegory in Russian literature. ... The second chapter discusses the role of the kabbalistic allegory in the Masonic literature of the second half of the eighteenth century. ... The third chapter discusses the mutation of kabbalistic imagery in early nineteenth century Romantic works, especially in the works by the authors who were interested in the idea of universal science, such as Vladimir Odoevsky. ... The fourth chapter of the dissertation analyses the return of kabbalistic symbolism in the literature of the Silver Age [as represented by Symbolist and Futurist writers]. ... The mystical interpretation of the images of Wisdom and Adam Kadmon dominates also in philosophical works of the Symbolist writers, especially in the works of Vladimir Soloviev.

(dissertation, PREFACE, pages 2-4)

See below, under “Burmistrov,” “Kornblatt,” “Faggionato,” and “Leighton.”


*The Key to the True Kabbalah* is the final book of a four-volume set which includes (i) the preambles, *Frabato the Magician* (1979), a “mystical” novel which amounts to the author’s spiritual autobiography; (ii) *Initiation into Hermetics* (1956), a “course of magical instruction in ten steps”; (iii) *The Practice of Magical Evocation* (1956), instructions for evoking spirits, complete with seals. All of these titles were reprinted by Merkur.

*The Key to the True Kabbalah* treats its subject as a “cosmic language” linked by sympathetic correspondence to colors, elements, musical notes, and so on, as well as analogous influences in the *akashic*, mental, astral, and material realms. Guidelines for the magical use of one-, two-, three-, and four-letter keys (combinations) conclude the work.

Many serious practitioners of magic(k) extol Franz Bardon. For instance, Donald Tyson says of Bardon’s *Initiation into Hermetics*, “[T]his is the best book of exercises designed to prepare the mind for high magic that I have ever read” (*—Ritual Magic*, page 230). About *The Practice of Magical Evocation*, Tyson says, “The best book that I have read on the ceremonial evocation of spirits” (*—Ritual Magic*, page 234).


In § “Humanism and Renaissance,” see especially the sub-segments “Kabbalistic Bridges” and “Christian Kabbalism,” which give a quick history; and “Literary Battle Royal,” on Reuchlin’s involvement in various aspects of the “Jewish question,” in particular his debate with Johannes Pfefferkorn which grew into an international controversy.


Berg’s blend of fact and fable contains a chapter entitled “The Zohar’s Influence on the Renaissance, the Age of Discovery and Science” which discusses kabbalistic influence on Columbus (*via* Abraham Zucato), Michelangelo, Newton, and Edison, along with the more usual “Christian Cabalists” (Paracelsus, Dee, Pico, Reuchlin, von Rosenroth), and finally on to Ezra Stiles and Albert Pike.


Relying on Frances Yates, D. P. Walker, and Christopher Lehrich, Beyer focuses on Ficino, Agrippa, Fludd and Thomas Vaughan.

claimed the influence of Henry More, Keith converted from Presbyterianism to Quakerism.

Keith’s thoughts on worship are related ... to his understanding of immediate revelation by the Light that is experienced in worship and also to his unique Christology, since he identifies the Light with the soul of Christ, the heavenly man. To these discussions Keith brought his skillfulness in dialectic theology and his discoveries in Kabbalah.” (—page 258)


Of particular interest is Bloom’s section on the Mormons: Chapter 5, “The Religion-Making Imagination of Joseph Smith,” where Bloom states, “The God of Joseph Smith is a daring revival of the God of some of the Kabbalists and Gnostics, prophetic sages who, like Smith himself, asserted that they had returned to the true religion of Yahweh or Jehovah” (p. 99).

Further on Joseph Smith and Kabbalah, see below under “Owens” and “Quinn.”


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).


See below: “Deirdre Green.”


We see that Russian Freemasons of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and their intellectual successors—Russian philosophers and theologians who lived a century later—turned to kabbalah in order to solve problems which they felt were not adequately elaborated in Christian Orthodox theology.” (—page 50)


““There are two moments in the influence of kabbalistic ideas in Russia that are directly connected with the development of secret societies. After the establishment of the first Masonic lodges in the middle of the eighteenth century, Russians became acquainted with various ideas as works related to kabbalah. The impact of these ideas especially intensified with the advent of Rosicrucian lodges in the 1780s. The first period was interrupted with the official prohibition of freemasonry in Russia in the 1820s, but some background Masonic activity continued until the 1850s-1860s. The second period, between the 1880s and the 1930s, is characterized by an increased interest in the occult sciences, which culminates in the 1910s-1920s. In the 1930s, most of the members of various secret societies and occult groups were arrested and executed by the communist regime.” (—page 79)


““We will argue that the Russian Masons were deeply interested in kabbalistic matters. We will review the basic kinds of Masonic manuscript texts related to the Kabbalah and some kabbalistic concepts which are important to the Russian Masons. Finally, we will offer some preliminary reasons for this interest among the Russian Mason” (from the article, p. 11).

It was the Christian Cabala, already subsumed into European Masonry, upon which these Russian Masons drew.


“Two Principle trends may be identified in Russian freemasonry of the late 18th-early 19th centuries: rationalistic (deistic) and mystical” (p. 29). “The Order [of the Gold- and Rosy Cross] was founded by Bernhard Joseph Schleiss won Loewenfeld (1731-1800) ... [who] took an obvious interest in Kabbalah as if following the traditions of the Sulzbach Christian Kabbalah [i.e., von Rosenroth and van Helmont] of the late seventeenth century” (p. 31).

1 Konstantin Burmistrov and Maria Endel are regular contributors to the Russian-language journal, TIROSH; STUDIES IN JUDAICA (Judaica Rossica), which survived nine printed volumes (Moscow: 1998-2009) and has continued online. Volumes 6-18 (2003-2018) can be viewed at http://sefer.ru/rus/publications/tirosh.php.

These essays, previously published in *Artforum* and *Arts* magazines, include “Duchamp’s *Bride Stripped Bare: The Meaning of the ‘Large Glass’,*” which discusses Duchamp’s work in relation to Tarot images and the kabbalistic tree of life, and “Voices from the Gate,” which relates the Cabala to an installation by Robert Morris entitled *Hearing.*

See also Burnham’s article on Duchamp, “Unveiling the Consort,” parts 1 and 2 in *Artforum,* March and April 1971, vol. ix, nos. 7 and 8 (New York: Artforum).


The articles are in Italian and English. See in particular “The Mantuan Kabbalistic Workshop,” § 1. THE HEBREW LANGUAGE AND THE MYTH OF THE RENAISSANCE: CRYPTOGRAPHY IN THE STUDIOLO OF ISABELLA D’ESTE, and § 2. THE HUMANISTIC KABBALAH OF YOCHANAN ALEMANNO.


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 Qabalah,* Dr. Paul Foster Case.” (from the PREFACE)


Chapter III, “The Cabala and the Names of Power,” offers a pretty fair introduction to Western occult qabalah.

Chajes, Julie; and Huss, Boaz (eds.) *Theosophical Appropriations: Esoterism, Kabbalah and the Transformation of Traditions* (Beer Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2016).

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Colquhoun (1906-1988) has received a fair amount of attention in recent years. Refer to


“Since the Enlightenment, the occultist tradition has lost almost all cognitive authority among educated persons in the West, so much so that in our time an intellectual who seriously professed belief in magic would thereby call into question his own seriousness. One of the reasons why magical beliefs have become literally incredible is that we have discarded their philosophical foundations, but in Ficino’s day the foundations were intact—indeed, Ficino and others were still extending them.” (RQ, p. 524/AWMD p. 52).

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Couliano approaches magic as (quoting his introduction) “a science of the imaginary” which was believed to be capable of exerting “control over the individual and the masses based on deep knowledge of personal and collective erotic impulses”; thus, “[w]e can observe in it not only the distant ancestor of psychoanalysis but also, first and foremost, that of applied psychosociology and mass psychology.” Couliano discusses Ficino, Pico, and Bruno.


Praised by Harold Bloom, Andrei Codrescu, and Mircea Eliade, this book describes itself as “the first comprehensive account of the dualistic mythos that constitutes a crucial hidden dimension in Western culture and radically challenges how we think about religion itself.” (back cover)


See below under “Thorndike” where the rather harsh opening paragraph of Culianu’s article is quoted.


Dan traces scientific and mystical ideas starting with the Sefer Yezirah, elaborations of tenth-century commentaries on it, especially that of Shabbatai Donnolo, and developments of the Hasidei Ashkenaz, in particular Eleazar of Worms. Dan shows how these commentaries “contributed to the establishment of the concept of harmonia mundi as a dominant world-view in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, mainly in the context of the variegated phenomena which are sometimes united under the general title ‘Christian kabbalah.’”


*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.


“This book presents an interpretation that will surprise most Tarotists (those who are esotericists) and most academics (those who are critics of the esotericists). My theory covers the evolution of the Tarot, the connotations of its symbols, the symbols’ sources, and their transmission to the proper places at the proper times.” (INTRODUCTION, page 1)

The most interesting of Decker’s “rediscoveries” is taken up in his CHAPTER 11, “Numerical Cards and Gikatilla’s ‘Gates.’”

A Wicked Pack of Cards discusses how Tarot came to be positioned at the core of the Western esoteric tradition, focusing on its assumption by the French occultists J.-B. Alliette (= Etteilla), Éliphas Lévi, Gerard Encausse (= Papus), and Paul Christian.


History... picks up where Wicked Pack leaves off: tracing the developments of tarot down through the descendents of the Golden Dawn, i.e., A. E. Waite, Aleister Crowley, Dion Fortune, C. C. Zain, Paul Foster Case, etc.


The five-volume set represents the complete teachings of The Order of the Sacred Word, also called Aurum Solis, a descendant of the Golden Dawn.


“We shall be concerned with the Qabalah as Gentile occultists have received it from the traditions of Judaism,” states the preface. Duncan’s primary sources are Dion Fortune’s writings and Gareth Knight’s Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism.


The fifth chapter, “A Jewish Response to Christian Kabbalah,” discusses Modena’s criticism of Pico della Mirandola’s cabala. Modena’s problems with Pico for the most part follow his objections to (Jewish) kabbalah more generally.


Eco’s snide novel follows three Milanese editors as they concoct, then investigate, then get caught up in a grand esoteric conspiracy involving a twisted amalgam of secret societies and mystical traditions. In this entertaining but ultimately anticlimactic tale, Eco’s well-studied ease with source works of the Hermetic-Cabalist tradition is strutted about.


This collection of essays is, in part, an extension of Eco’s Search for the Perfect Language, especially CHAPTER 2, “Languages in Paradise.” There is a substantial section on Athanasius Kircher in the third essay, “From Marco Polo to Leibniz: Stories of Intellectual Misunderstandings.”

“A distinct textual link between Moses de Leon’s thirteenth-century Zohar and the fourteenth-century Shewings of Julian of Norwich suggests Julian’s role in appropriating the ideas of her surrounding cultures into her mystical writings. Building on both the principle of the Divine Feminine and the allegorical nature of parts of the Zohar, Julian constructs a notion of God as Mother that combats the misogyny of medieval Christian doctrine and secures her place as a woman writer in a male-dominated Church, defending a role as visionary and writer for herself and for her female successors.” (—from the ABSTRACT)


Ennemoser discusses “Cabbalah,” in VOLUME 1, PART 1, especially pp. 7-21, as derived from Franz Joseph Molitor’s Philosophie der Geschichte oder ueber die Tradition (4 volumes, Muenster: Theissing, 1827-57). See The History of Magic, VOLUME 2, THIRD DIVISION, for accounts of Paracelsus, Baptista van Helmont, Agrippa, Fludd, Kircher, Cagliostro, Swedenborg, and Böhme, among others.


Private Labyrinth is the first “scholarly” book which I saw (in the early ’seventies) which drew a distinction between “The Two Cabbalahs,” namely Jewish and Christian—including the late occult “qabalah” of the Golden Dawn—without dismissing the latter out-of-hand, which, until relatively recently, academics tended to do. Recall Scholem’s comments in Kabbalah, p. 203: “To this category of supreme charlatanism belong the many and widely read books of Éliphas Lévi, Papus…, and Frater Perdurabo…, all of whom had an infinitesimal knowledge of Kabbalah that did not prevent them from drawing freely on their imaginations instead”; or in Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, pp. 2 and 353: “From the brilliant misunderstandings of Alphonse Louis Constant, who won fame under the pseudonym of Éliphas 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 … No words need be wasted on the subject of Crowley’s ‘Kabbalistic’ writings in his books on what he was pleased to term ‘Magick,’ and in his journal, The Equinox.”

Lowry’s letters suggest that Frater Achad (Charles Stansfield Jones) was a particular favorite of his. In Epstein’s bibliography, however, some of the works listed as having been authored by Achad were written by others. Achad indeed wrote The Anatomy of the Body of God and QBL, but he was not, as Epstein has it, the editor of The Equinox or the author of Sepher Sephiroth (in The Equinox, Volume 1, Number 8); these were Crowley’s works. Nor did Achad write “A Note on Genesis” (in The Equinox, Volume 1, Number 2); this belongs to Allan Bennett. (All of these works are given notice above in the present paper: PART 2.)


“Drawing a comprehensive and convincing picture of Russia’s assimilation of contemporary Western intellectual values and traditions, Professor Faggionato offers some telling overall conclusions: the process of Europeanisation, forcefully initiated by Peter the Great, coming on top of the church crisis of
the eighteenth century, resulted in an intellectual disorientation of the elites that threatened both the social and political system. Masonic lodges and mystically oriented circles of the nobility sought ways to reform and stability by blending traditional Christian spirituality with scientific insight into the workings of Nature. Rosicrucian Hermeticism and esoterism were ready to offer them guidance on this path.”

(—Marc Raeff in the PREFACE to A Rosicrucian Utopia...)


A very rapid but intricately nuanced survey.


“A part of my concern will be to show how the functions and processes of creative activity documented by these authors may be mapped onto a set of essentially Freudian ideas, particularly those surrounding narcissism.” (—page 161)


Stock pop-Kabbalah stuff here: the overview, the Kabbalah-and-psychology piece, the interview with Zalman Schachter, the recommended-reading piece (this one is particularly poor), etc., though surprisingly sticking pretty much with Jewish Kabbalah. Pinchas Giller’s overview, though brief, is nicely done; he discusses the tension between Kabbalah and Maimonidean rationalism. Giller’s piece is, however, plagued by some distracting typos (e.g. “Rabbi Mose Cordovero” for Rabbi Moshe, or at least Moses, Cordovero”—page 11; “the brown of the skull” for “the crown of the skull” in an account of the Zohar’s anthropomorphistic descriptions of God—page 12).

Perhaps the most original article in the issue is Jay Kinney’s “A Higher Geometry: The Unique Kabbalistic Research of the Meru Foundation.”


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https://www.fieldbooks.com/cgi-bin/fields/st/GNOM

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Dictionary would be more accurate. Hebrew and other words and names are listed alphabetically (via English and Hebrew in two separate sections) and by numerical value. Terms scattered all through Golden Dawn and surrounding material (planet, zodiac, and angel names; the goetic spirits of the Lemegeton; tarot correspondences; etc.) are systematically set out and defined in this large reference book. Crowley’s Sepher Sephiroth (from The Equinox, vol. 1, no. 8) is appended as well.


See especially Chapter 2 “Italian Renaissance Magic and Cabala.”


Within this useful article, note in particular § THE ESOTERIC SOURCES OF LULL’S INSPIRATION (pages 186-189), where Goodrick-Clarke waryly 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).


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. Since Green’s article, St. Teresa’s connections with Cabala/Kabbalah have been taken up not only in Green’s Gold in the Crucible but in Catherine Sweitlicki’s Spanish Christian Cabala (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986) and Sujan Jane Burgeson’s Mystical Symbolism in Teresa of Avila (noted above, page 97).

Halevi, Z’ev ben Shimon [Warren Kenton] (listed chronologically—all of which have been subsequently reprinted):

  = Tree of Life: An Introduction to the Cabala (Rider & Co., 1972).
- Adam and the Kabbalistic Tree (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1974).
• School of Kabbalah (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1985).
• Anatomy of Fate: Kabbalistic Astrology (Bath: Gateway, 1986).
• Psychology and Kabbalah (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1987).

Halevi’s series is quite popular among both Jewish and non-Jewish readers. Individual volumes range from instructional to inspirational in that they present versions of Kabbalistic ideas while suggesting ways to apply them toward spiritual growth. Specifically, The Work of the Kabbalist gives practical advice for individual work, and School of Kabbalah suggests methods for developing group work; on the other hand, the earlier Adam and the Kabbalistic Tree and A Kabbalistic Universe are more theoretical. In The Tower of Alchemy (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1999), David Goddard recommends A Kabbalistic Universe, The Way of Kabbalah, and The Work of the Kabbalist for the gathering of “[t]he fundamental Qabalistic teachings...regarding the Qabalistic four worlds” (p. 41).


Hall connects phrases from the familiar “Our Father, Who art in heaven...” to the kabbalistic tree, saying (pp. 12-13), “From the table of analogies between parts of the universe (i.e., the tree of the sefirot) and the sections of the Lord’s Prayer, it is evident that the prayer is intimately related to the divisions of the human soul.”


Man... is considered one of Hall’s two great works, the other being The Secret Teaching of All Ages ([1928] reprint: Los Angeles: The Philosophical Research Society, 1977).


“What follows is as much historiography as it is history, because the modern study of Kabbalah has a plot with its own personalities, internal developments and ideologies which have influenced how Kabbalah has been perceived historically” (—p. 102).

“Almost from the outset, Kabbalah has had a chequered history, as it has faced internal and external criticism. As what was esoteric became exoteric, and though Kabbalah sort [sic] to portray itself as conservative and not innovative, its claim for ancient roots and for not revealing anything new brought it into conflict with other existing belief systems” (—p. 103).

“Thus, what is being suggested here is that the appearance of Kabbalah on the historical stage can only be understood as an esoteric phenomenon. Jewish mysticism does not start with Kabbalah in the thirteenth century but is part and parcel of the religious system for centuries previously” (—p. 106).


“This study is concerned with a rarely studied sector of the history of religions: certain currents of modern or post-Enlightenment Western Esotericism.” (—PREFACE, page xiii)
“This is my doctoral dissertation, on the ways in which contemporary religious movements legitimate their claims. The data are taken from various related movements within the theosophical family, but the strategies of legitimation apply more generally.” (—Olav Hammer: Personal Website > BOOKS, at http://www.olavhammer.com/books/)


“I believe it would be too simple to attribute the traditional resistance of academics against the study of Western esotericism merely to the fact that they reject its perspectives from their own ‘Enlightenment’ worldview, or even to the feeling that by taking such a field seriously one gives it some legitimacy.” (p. 248)


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


Go to THE ALCHEMY WEB BOOKSHOP > THE HERMETIC JOURNAL: http://www.alchemywebsite.com/journal.html. Articles of interest include


Writes Holmes, “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. 1)


Secret Lore traces strands which intertwine with our cabalistic ones, especially in such figures as Athanasius Kircher, Ralph Cudworth, and Mme Blavatsky. One wishes that the use of Egyptian lore by the Golden Dawn and its offshoots had been explored, but only passing mention is given.


An apparent student of the works of Aleister Crowley, Horus sets up his own attributions of planets for the sefirot on the tree of life, adding to the scheme Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto (which, for obvious reasons, were not included in the arrangement of the Golden Dawn).


“I will show that [Abraham David] Ezekiel’s interest in kabbalah followed on his joining the Theosophical Society [around 1882], and that theosophy was of a major bearing on his perception of kabbalah and on his translation and printing venture [i.e., Idra Zuta or the Lesser Holy Assembly translated from the Aramaic Chaldee into Arabic (in Hebrew characters, Poona: 1887)].” (—page 169) [my brackets—DK]


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 Alemanno, Pico, Reuchlin, and Bruno.


This overview article touches on such topics as the comparison of the Hermetic animation of statues with material in the Hebrew Enoch (3 Enoch, or Sefer Hekhalot), references to Hermes in the works of Jewish philosophers, the influence of Yohanan Alemanno (one of Pico’s teachers), and “the well-known initiation of Ferdinand of Aragon by Ludovico Lazzarelli.”


“The main aims of this paper are, on the one hand, to survey the acquaintance of Jewish Kabbalists with Christian Kabbalah and, on the other hand to point out the possible impact of Christian Kabbalah on them in the Renaissance period and on scholars of Kabbalah in the twentieth century” (—pp. 49-50).


See in particular § 3. HIEROGLYPHS AND CHRISTIAN KABBALAH, on Ficino, Pico, Reuchlin, Riccius, Agrippa, and Dee.


“In what follows, I shall argue that a description of the Middle Ages as uniformly displaying a mentalistic orientation is problematic. Yates’ view [that a change toward activism was inspired by the Hermetica, magic and Cabala] more aptly describes those elite approaches that emerged under the aegis of varieties of Aristotelian thought, as we see from Christian, Muslim and Jewish theological literature. In other speculative corpora, which were dominated by astral thought and Neoplatonic and theosophical-theurgical views, action (especially ritualistic action) is much more important.” (—pp. 33-34)


“To the extent that Ficino’s translations influenced Jewish Renaissance thought, it was mainly via the introduction of the Platonic and Neoplatonic corpora. We may better understand Jewish reticence on the syncretistic achievements of their Christian contemporaries if the non-conformist attitudes of Ficino, Pico or Bruno are put in relief.” (—pp. 156-7)


In the first section of her book, Izmirlieva analyzes The Divine Names of (pseudo-) Dionysius the Areopagite (1st century); in the second section, she studies the (Slavonic) amulet known as The 72 Names of the Lord (13th century). It is this second text which interests us here, for Izmirlieva “demonstrate[s], over a large body of textual traces, that The 72 Names of the Lord has its roots in the Gnostic Kabbalah and originates from a Kabbalo-Christian exchange that most probably took place in Provence in the twelfth century” (—page 12).


Johnson’s books explore 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.”


“The influence of the messianic ideas and especially the idea of ‘return of the Jews’ or ‘Jacob’s return’ found the most profound expression among the German Pietists. This served as a background for their interest in the Kabbala, which was considered to be a link between Judaism and Christianity beginning in the 16th century. The book of the early Silesian Pietist Christian Knorr von Rosenroth Kabbala Denudata published in the last quarter of the 17th century served as a scholarly basis for the massive use of the Kabbala in missionary activity among the Jews in Germany and later in Poland.” (—page 493)


Approaching the Kabbalah of Maat focuses on Western occult developments of kabbalah in the latter part of the twentieth century and includes an introduction to and transcription of the key documents of three important, albeit obscure, Maat-oriented groups: Horus/Maat Lodge, Ordo Adeptorum Invisiblum (OAI), and 416. For a more complete description and excerpts, go to either of the following:

- [https://www.academia.edu/31031361/Approaching_the_Kabbalah_of_Maat_excerpt](https://www.academia.edu/31031361/Approaching_the_Kabbalah_of_Maat_excerpt)

Approaching... is supplemented by The Methods of Maat (—not yet published), which includes a selection of significant OAI and 416 writings. For contents and excerpts from the introduction, link to either of the following:


This small-press production describes the author’s unique tarot, showing roughly drawn cards, each with a prominent Hebrew letter incorporated into the design, some with symbols of the chakkras—all quite different from the Golden Dawn-Waite-B.O.T.A. images. Kasdin acknowledges his particular indebtedness to Pike, Case, and Blavatsky.


See especially Chapter III, “The Order of the Asiatic Brethren.”

Keyssous-Dreyfus, Anne. “From Benedetto Marcello’s Psalm to a Jewish melody by Charles Valentin Alkan: An Overview of a Tune,” in How Jewish Mystical Thinking Shaped Early


Kilcher considers the use of Kabbalah as a model of encyclopedic knowledge, or metascience, offering two possible forms: magical and mathematical.


One of the more enlightened “arm’s-length” studies. See especially Chapter Three, “Shiva and the Qabalistic Tree of Life,” and Chapter Five, “Chakras, Secret Traditions, and the Golden Dawn.”


A Christian application of Western occult qabalah by a student of Dion Fortune.


This article focuses on Vladimir Soloviev, “the most influential thinker in the religious renaissance at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries,” and his attempt to reconcile kabbalah with “the quite different and sometimes hostile theology of Russian Orthodoxy.”

See also Kornblatt’s Divine Sophia: The Wisdom Writings of Vladimir Solovyov, including annotated translations by Boris Jakim, Laury Magnus and Kornblatt herself (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).


This is a most inclusive and helpful bibliography of the books, articles, and MSS surrounding all matters and members of the Golden Dawn, many of which concern Kabbalah/Cabala/Qabalah.


Quoting LaDage, “The purpose of this book is to describe, in as far as I understand it, some of the inner correspondences between the Qabalah and the psychology of C. G. Jung.” LaDage’s primary cabalistic source was Dion Fortune’s Mystical Qabalah, one of the classics of Golden Dawn-style
qabalah. It is interesting to compare LaDage's book with David Bakan's Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition, first published in 1958, reprinted as a Beacon Paperback (Boston, 1975).


“...Theosophy, mysticism, Cabalism, nonempirical science, and thaumaturgy flourished in the Russian Enlightenment in the form of Rosicrucian mysticism and Masonic theosophy; the Novikov Freemasons were clearly erudite in these branches of arcane knowledge. How adept the later romantics were, however, is not clear. All that can be said for certain is that in the romantic period Masonic symbolism and the arcane skills of thaumaturgy were welcome in arenas of social and political action like the Decembrist affair, as well as in the larger arena of public journalism inhibited by ubiquitous censorship and private discussion made perilous by surveillance.” (—p. 32)

Leighton’s references to “Cabala,” “Cabalism,” and, alas, “Cabalistics” betray a limited and faulty understanding. Consider the following clause from Leighton’s discussion entitled “Gematria in ‘The Queen of Spades’ [Aleksandr Pushkin]”: “...other scholars assume that the yetzira are the letters and the sephira numbers.” (—p. 190)


“...this study and review of the literature introduces the topic of Hermetism and then describes its impact on Jewish thought in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, with special attention to updating the bibliography on Hebrew Hermetism.” (—page 112)


Love presents “Qabalah” in the light of Samuel Bousky’s teachings. While no works by Bousky are listed among Love’s references, Love does mention a “lecture given by Samuel Bousky at Bridge Mountain Foundation, Ben Lomond, California, 1969.” This very ’seventies book includes sections with titles such as “Matter is the Medium: Being is the Message,” “The Paramagnetic Fields of Mind,” and “Emanation, the Specific Intentionality of a Quantum God.”

Three books by Samuel Bousky are circulating:


This handsome eighty-page book reads as if it had been written a hundred years ago—and looks as if it had been printed a hundred years before that. It is filled with the pomp, ceremony, and blunders characteristic of post-Golden Dawn qabalah books; this one even announces itself as “Publication class A authorized for publication by the COA of the A. A. A.” The errors begin on the first page of the INTRODUCTION (page ix), where Macdonald states, “Most historians place the origin of written Qabbalah at about the same period as the Talmud, when the Hebrews lived in Babylon.” A footnote compounds the problem by stating that this Talmudic period was “c. 30 B.C.E.” Macdonald more-or-less admits to the irony of his title on page xi: “There are so many such books
[which ‘elaborate on the mysteries at great length’] available in our present Century that the term ‘unwritten’ can scarce be applied to [the ‘Unwritten Mysteries’] any longer.”


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 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 optimistic.


*Maxwell-Stuart, P. G. The Occult in Early Modern Europe. A Documentary History [DOCUMENTS IN HISTORY SERIES] (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999).*

This valuable anthology includes a section entitled “Magic and Kabbalah” which gives translations from Pico, Reuchlin, and Bodin, along with Manuel do Valle de Moura, Francisco Torreblan Villapando, Andreas Libavius and Federico Borromeo. Elsewhere in the book one can find numerous passages from Ficino, Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Campanella.


*McIntosh, Christopher. The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason. Eighteenth-Century Rosicrucianism in Central Europe and Its Relationship to the Enlightenment [BRILL’S STUDIES IN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY, volume 29] (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992).*

Rosicrucians, more of a “popular” work than The Rose Cross…, is of particular interest for its chapter, “The Golden Dawn, Its Antecedents and Offshoots.” For an overview, see McIntosh’s article, “The Rosicrucian Legacy,” in The Rosicrucian Enlightenment Revisited, listed below under “Ralph White.”

On a parallel strand, see McIntosh’s Astrologers and their Creed: An Historical Outline (London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1969), especially chapter 6, “From the Renaissance to the Age of Enlightenment,” and chapter 7, “The Nineteenth Century.”


“In the following discussion, I hope to establish the major significance of Sabbatai Sevi for England by examining several questions—limited in comparison with those entertained by Sabbatai’s most profound and exhaustive historian [i.e., Gershom Scholem]—concerning the English awareness of him 300 years ago. How and in what form did the unparalleled developments in the Levant from 1665 to 1667 first become known to English-speaking people? What contribution was made by the Sabbatian movement to Christian eschatology and to the expectations aroused among devotees by the approach of the “wonderful year” 1666? What was the range of response to the movement among English observers; what was its ideological or sectarian meaning to contemporaries?” (pp. 132-133)


The Magical Calendar is a grand chart, which amounts to a Hermetic-Cabalistic-Magical compendium, by Johannes Theodorus de Bry, who did the illustrations, so often reproduced, for the works of Robert Fludd and Michael Maier.


“The bulk of the papers … are grouped into three major sections: background of the Renaissance; magic, philosophy, and science; and art and literature” (p. 9). Articles from this collection have been cited elsewhere: see “Gosselin” (RE: Bruno), “Idel” (“Hermeticism and Judaism”), and “Zambelli” (RE: Agrippa).


See § KABBALAH AND CATHARISM (page 175) and § THE KABBALAH IN MEDIEVAL CHRISTENDOM (page 176). § EXONENTS OF THE THEORETICAL KABBALAH, discusses Agobard, Bishop of Lyons, and Arnold of Villanova (pages 176-178) along with Abraham Abulafia and Raymond Lully; 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.


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....”


The practical part of this book, written in Ophiel’s distinctive style (with its words in BOLD CAPS followed by THREE EXCLAMATION POINTS!!!), associates the elemental (tattwa) images with the sefirot of the tree of life.

Owen, Alex. The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

“The book is primarily directed towards arguing that occultism was constitutive of modern culture at the fin de siecle; conversely, it seeks to trace the lineaments of “the modern” in the gestures and presumptions of the occult. Most specifically, then, The Place of Enchantment sets out to show that this new form of occult spirituality was a particular articulation of the diverse and often ambiguous processes through which cultural modernity was constituted in Britain during the crucial years prior to the outbreak of the First World War.” (INTRODUCTION—p. 16)


“Joseph Smith and Kabbalah” is a most interesting piece. However, finding Volume 27 of Dialogue is unlikely, even in a well-stocked library; occasionally a copy turns up at Amazon or AbeBooks. Fortunately, there are two other sources for Owens’ work:

- the entire Dialogue article is online as part of the Gnosis Archive series at www.gnosis.org/jskabbt.htm
- a brief account, “Joseph Smith: America’s Hermetic Prophet,” is in Gnosis Magazine, Number 35, Spring 1995; this article is available on-line at http://gnosis.org/ahp.htm.

Refer to the critical review by William J. Hamblin in FARMS [FOUNDATION FOR ANCIENT RESEARCH AND MORMON STUDIES] Review of Books, Volume 8, Issue 2 (Provo: Maxwell Institute, 1996). Also see below: “Quinn.”


“Qabalah” gets its turn in Ozaniec’s series of books on such topics as meditation, the chakkras, tarot, dowsing, etc. Ozaniec “worked with Gareth Knight and Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki,” placing her squarely in the eclectic Western tradition derived from Golden Dawn. After referring to her work as “Qabala Renovata,” an expression borrowed from William Gray, Ozaniec states, “While acknowledging the
Jewish origins of Qabalah, at the same time it is impossible to ignore non-Jewish influences which have become incorporated into its fabric” (—page 7).


This well-circulated book begins, “The Qabalah, at the heart of the Western Mystery Tradition, is a way of personal development and self-realization based on a map of consciousness called the Tree of Life.”


“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)


“Reception...” is a summary article on Christian Europe’s encounter with Hebrew, discussing Sefer Yesirah, the writings of Bible commentator and grammarian David Kimhi (1162-1235), Reuchlin, Spanish humanist Antonio de Nebrija (1441-1522), Postel, and Swiss Hebraist Theodor Bibliander (d. 1564).


Quinn locates Smith’s sources for “Cabala” in adaptations of Johann Eisenmenger’s Traditions of the Jews (original, 1711; English editions produced by John Peter Stehelin in 1743 and 1748), and John Allen’s Modern Judaism (1816; 2nd edition: London: 1830). Quinn writes, “Smith’s apparent textual indebtedness to the books by Eisenmenger and Allen also demonstrates that he had access to their extensive discussions of the Cabala’s doctrine of the transmigration of souls.” (—page 303)


In the section of this article entitled “Renaissance and magic,” Quispel writes:

Pico was wrong when he believed that Cabala came from Moses. But he sensed that the two currents [Hermetism and Cabala] were essentially identical. In this he was right, because both Hermetism and Cabala date from the same period of history, reflect the same culture, Hellenism, and originate in the same climate, Alexandrian gnosic. (—pp. 224-5) [my brackets]

Only recently the texts found near Nag Hammadi in 1945 have shown that these Christian Cabalists [of the Renaissance and Reformation periods], although completely ignored by modern scholars, were on the right track. The Gospel of Truth, one of the first works of the Jung Codex, contains long speculations of Jewish esoteric origin about Christ as the Name of God. And few scholars would deny nowadays that according to the author of the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John, Jesus is the embodiment of that secret Name: ‘Holy Father, keep them through thine own Name, which thou hast given me’ (John 17, 11). And we see clearly that Paul sees Jesus as the Glory of God. Nay, even the mysterious title’ ‘Son of Man’ has been elucidated, now that so many works from Nag Hammadi call the Son of God: Man. Son of Man, Aramaic bar anash, simply means ‘Man’ and indicates God who reveals himself in the form of a man. All
these insights were in nuce already there in the works of these Christian Cabalists. (—p. 226) [my brackets—DK]

Rankin, Oliver Shaw. Jewish Religious Polemic of early and later centuries, a study of documents here rendered in English (London: Edinburgh at the University Press, 1956).

PART III, POLEMIC IN LETTERS, discusses and translates letters of Johann Stephan Rittangel (= Rittangelius, 1606-1652), “the Jew of Amsterdam,” known for his translation and commentary on Sefer Yetsirah. The dispute in the letters centers on the interpretation of the Shiloh passage of GENESIS 49:10. With typical irony, it is Rittangel 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” (—p. 96).


“We have spoken of the ‘Pathway of Fire’ with reference to the Kabbalah, to Advaita Vedanta, and to Asparsa Yoga. ... [T]he ‘Pathway of Fire’...indicates the ‘Way’ along which to travel in order to realize one’s own essence.” (—page 25)


The Golden Dawn tree-of-life material is here done up for neo-pagans of various stripes. The old cliché “only the names have been changed...” could describe Reed’s innovations.


“What is required is some familiarization with the contents of the ritual so that the on-going movement may be perceived.” (—page 11)


“The following article traces the development of research led by Ruth Reichelberg concerning Cervantes and the kabbalistic sense of his work, as well as the pursuit of this quest for sense by current researchers. This text has been written in memoriam, from Ruth Rechelberg’s notes.” (—page 121)


“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)


There is no shortage of cabalistic diagrams and images here, especially in the section “Sephiroth” (pp. 310-328). At 700+ pages, this is the most extensive collection of alchemical, Rosicrucian, Masonic, and cabalistic images—a good proportion of them in color—at a reasonable price.

Rossi, Paolo. Logic and the Art of Memory. The Quest for a Universal Language, translated with an introduction by Stephen Clucas [= CLAVIS UNIVERSALIS: ARTI DELLA MEMORIA E

Refer especially to Chapter Three: “Theatres of the World,” and Chapter Four: “The Imaginative Logic of Giordano Bruno.”

Further, see

- Shumaker, Wayne. “George Dalgarno’s Universal Language,” in Renaissance Curiosa (Binghamton: Center for Medieval & Early Renaissance Studies, 1982).


See the three articles in this collection by Moshe Idel: (i) “The Magical and Neoplatonic Interpretations of the Kabbalah in the Renaissance,” (ii) “Particularism and Universalism in Kabbalah, 1480-1650,” and (iii) “Major Currents in Italian Kabbalah between 1560 and 1660.” Herein also find also David Ruderman’s “Hope against Hope: Jewish and Christian Messianic Expectations in the Late Middle Ages.”


The Kabbalah Decoded gives translations of Sifrè di-Tseniuta and the Idrot of the Zohar (i.e., the same items which appear in S. L. M. Mathers’ Kabbalah Unveiled). Sassoon and Dale treat these texts as technical manuals for assembling a “manna machine,” namely, a food production device which could, for instance, have fed the Jews in the wilderness. This thesis is developed in detail in The Manna Machine by the same authors (London: Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd, 1979).


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.”

Refer in particular to

§ 3.4. Raymond Lull’s Theology of Concepts
§ 3.5. Christian Cabala I: Giovanni Pico, Johannes Reuchlin, and Paulus Ricius
§ 3.6. Christian Cabala II: Jakob Böhme’s Doctrine of Qualities
§ 4.10. Ficino’s Angel and the Intellectus Agens
§ 4.11. Giovanni Pico: Pious Philosophy and the Dignity of Man
§ 4.12. Paulus Ricius’ Cabalistic Cosmos
§ 4.13. The Threefold Man of Paracelsus
§ 4.15. Abraham Herrera’s Adam Kadmon
§ 5.3. The Book Yezirah and the Archetypes of the Alphabet
§ 5.9. De Vita Coelitus Comparanda: Ficino’s Cosmological Medicine
§ 5.10. On the Shadows of Ideas: Giordano Bruno’s Seminal Combinatories
§ 5.11. Giordano Bruno’s Infinite Space


_____.


...in the fourth ‘cultic’ degree (i.e., the first degree of the third section) the student was taught various exercises that involved physical movements and the ‘vibration’ vowels. These exercises were combined with the Masonic signs and ‘grips,’ and were taught to be the means by which the ‘subtle energies’ of the body could be harmonized.

In a note (p. 345, n. 90) Egmond adds,

These exercises played also an important role in the O.T.O.; hence it is also possible that Steiner received them from [Theodore] Reuss. ... Another version of these exercises was published by Albert Schutz, Call Adonoi (Goleta, 1980).


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, and it is a bit more helpful for our line of inquiry, for it gets more into the magic of antiquity and contains a special section on Cabala.


Shirley sketches Apollonius of Tyana, Plotinus, Michael Scot, Paracelsus, Swedenborg, Cagliostro, and Anna Kingsford.

The treatises discussed are (i) Bruno’s *De Magia, Theses de magia, De magia mathematica*; (ii) Martin Delrio’s *Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex*; (iii) Campanella’s *De sensu rerum et magia*; (iv) Gaspar Schott’s *Magia universalis*.


Shumaker’s study gives full accounts of astrology, witchcraft, magic, alchemy, hermetic doctrine, with, alas, only a few fleeting mentions of Cabala—a strange omission considering the date of *Occult Sciences*’ publication: after Walker’s *Spiritual and Demonic Magic* (1958) and Yates’ *Giordano Bruno* (1964), both of which are mentioned in Shumaker’s “Bibliographical Note,” the latter being referred to as “indispensable.” Given that he quotes Pico’s famous *Conclusiones* (on page 16), “No science offers greater assurance of Christ’s divinity than magic and cabala,” one would expect Shumaker to follow up.


See *History...* pages 308-312 on Abner of Burgos, pages 405-407 and 410 regarding two of Pico’s teachers, Élijah Delmedigo and Johanan Alemanno (in § “Jewish Philosophers in Italy of the Quattrocento”).

Stuckrad, Kocku von. *Locations of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Esoteric Discourse and Western Identities* [BRILL’S STUDIES IN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY 186] (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2010).

Note § LINGUISTIC ONTOLOGIES IN CHRISTIAN KABBALAH within CHAPTER FIVE, “The Secrets of Texts: Esoteric Hermeneutics.”


Correspondences of the “Flashing Colours” are given for the ten sefirot and the twenty-two paths in the tradition of the Golden Dawn.


See my description of Suáres’ SY in “Notes on Editions of Sefer Yetzirah in English,” Part IV, page 37, at either

- [https://www.academia.edu/22875900/Notes_on_Editions_of_Sefer_Yetzirah_in_English](https://www.academia.edu/22875900/Notes_on_Editions_of_Sefer_Yetzirah_in_English)


Suáres’ series covers “the three great cabalistic works”: Genesis, *Sepher Yetzira*, and *The Song of Songs*. Suáres does not consider Kabbalah to be mysticism but rather a science of cosmic energies,
though in a hidden code. Suares’ thesis rests on the belief that each Hebrew letter “denotes not only a ‘letter’ but also a sign, a proof, a symbol and ever a miracle revealing its forgotten ontological origin.” In a chapter which is repeated in all three books, Suares explains the letter-code as he has discovered, or rather re-discovered, it.

Other items by Suares:
- “I Am Cain,” in Maitreya 2: The Seeds of Liberation (Shambhala...1971).
- “I Am Cain II,” in Maitreya 3: Gardening (Shambhala...1972).
- The Passion of Judas: A Mystery Play (Shambhala...1973).
- The Resurrection of the Word (Shambhala...1975).
- “What about ‘Ra?’” in Tree 4: Ra, edited by David Meltzer (Berkeley: [Tree Books], 1974).


Refer to Chapter 8, “Enlightenment and Kabbalah,” which contains the following segments: PHILOSOPHY AND MYSTICISM: THE KABBALAH (sic) DENUDATA, GEORG WACHTER: SPINOZISM, JUDAISM AND DIVINE PRESENCE, AND MYSTICAL DEMARCATIONS AND CONFUSIONS.


“Cabala” here, as in von Welling’s Opus Mago-Cabalisticum..., is Paracelsianism, i.e., alchemy, more related to Khunrath and Maier than the “cabalists” of the current paper.


“It is extremely likely that Bach came across many different number alphabets. Techniques of gematria were well known in his day and the [Hebrew] milesian alphabet [aleph = 1 to tav = 400] is used in at least two books that he owned... Had Bach used a number alphabet to embed theological meaning into his music through acceptable Cabbala Speculativa, he would almost certainly have used the cabalistic milesian number alphabet.” (Tatlow, pages 126-127 and 129)


“Tenen examines the Hebrew text of Genesis and shows how each letter is both concept and gesture, with a form of the gesture matching the function of the concept, revealing the implicit relationship between the physical world of function and the conscious world of the concept.” (—back cover)


- VOLUME IV. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries (1934; 4th printing 1966):
  - Chapter LX, “Magic in Dispute, I: Pico della Mirandola, Bernard Basin, Pedro Garcia”
  - Chapter LX, “Magic in Dispute, II: Jacques Lefevre d’Etaples, Reuchlin, Trithemius”
- VOLUMES V & VI. The Sixteenth Century (1941, 4th printing 1966):
  - Chapter VIII, “Agrippa and the Occult”
  - Chapter XLIV, “Mystic Philosophy: Words and Numbers”

- VOLUME VII. The Seventeenth Century (1958; 2nd printing 1964):
  - 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. Here one finds raw material—lots of it—but Thorndike’s conclusions and opinions should not be taken as the last word (rather like reading Grätz on kabbalah). However, the late Ioan Cumianu’s comments are 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.)


In chapter 2, music historian Tomlinson sets “Agrippa versus Michael Foucault”; in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, he discusses Ficino’s mixture of magic and music.


Written for the would-be practitioner, Ritual Magic is in three sections: “Basics,” an expanded survey of definitions and rationales; “Systems,” a quick history of magic; and “Practices,” which includes chapters on preparations, instruments and two simple rituals. The final chapter, “The Magician’s Library,” consists of a rather eclectic reading list in three levels of difficulty.


Tyson covers the Tetragrammaton’s history, symbolism, and use from the Old Testament to the Enochian magic of Dee and Kelley. The tour de force of the book is Tyson’s handling of the Twelve Banners of YHVH (i.e., the twelve sequences in which the four letters can be ordered).

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


Versluis discusses the influence of not just alchemy, theosophy, Rosicrucianism and Free-masonry, but also Gnosticism and Swedenborg. Chapters are devoted to such luminaries as Poe, Hawthorne, Melville (learn about the Gnosticism of Moby Dick), Alcott, Whitman, Dickenson, and others. Alas, there is not much on Cabala.


“Lacking its own sources, Christian esotericism took over a number of Jewish elements, adapting them to its own vision. In these circumstances, the Jewish esoteric preoccupation with prophecy and Messianism became, in the hands of Christian esotericists, a preoccupation with political changes. Of course, to say that Kabbalah had a direct influence on politics would be an overstatement. Still, the influence that Jewish mysticism exercised, through the Kabbalah, upon the (pseudo)philosophical doctrines providing the bases of several political movements with a decisive long-term impact on mankind cannot be denied.” (—INTRODUCTION, page 173)


“Between medieval Hermeticism and Kabbalah there is, however, a major difference. If, for the kabbalist the demonic realm is important precisely so that he could keep it away during the process of restoration of the original harmony and repair of the world (Tikkun Olam), for the Hermeticist this knowledge is necessary so that he could conjure the demons and force them to take part in the magic act, whose finality is not always positive.” (—page 97)


“One of the most interesting correspondences between mysticism and science can be found in Lurianic Kabbalah and the modern scientific theories regarding the birth of the universe.” (—page 162)


Ancient Theology is a series of articles examining the influence and use of the prisa 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.


This second enlarged edition reprints Wallis’ 1972 classic, adding Gerson’s updated bibliography. This work is included among our ITEMS OF INTEREST in light of the oft-repeated (in some circles, oft-resisted) formula: “Kabbalah is simply Jewish Neoplatonism.”

“Whether as inspiration or as initiation, then, Christian Kabbalah cannot be avoided in any rounded understanding of the rise (and decline) of the History of Religions. If there is an ‘untold story’ in the present project, it may be located in the shared Christian Kabbalist sources of Scholem, Corbin, and Eliade.” (—Wasserstrom, pages 50-51)


Webb treats the occult revival of the 19th century, including discussions of Mme Blavatsky (“...had led an intriguing and perhaps scandalous life...”), Annie Besant (“...from the arena of social reform rather than the jungles of Hindustan...”), Éliphas Lévi (“...the magus who remained faithful to his mystical socialism...”), Josephin Peladan (“...Catholic and occultist, artist and clown...”), “Three Messianists”: Adam Mickiewicz (“...at the College de France he discussed second sight...”), Andrei Towianski (“...the archbishop of Paris alerted his clergy against him...”), and J. M. Hoene-Wronski (“...a misplaced Renaissance man...”)—these comments are picture captions (between pages 192 and 193) drawn from the text. Another characteristic quote: “Whereas Fabre d’Olivet might merely be considered an eccentric, his disciple and plagiarizer, Saint-Yves d’Alveydre, was a fraud of the highest degree” (p. 271). Cabala is mentioned and discussed frequently.

Webb’s companion volume, The Occult Establishment (LaSalle: Open Court, 1976), is a “meticulously-researched history of occultism since 1918.” Along with some follow-up on such figures as Mme. Blavatsky and Papus from the 19th century, The Occult Establishment covers a range from Aleister Crowley and Rudolph Steiner to The Protocols of the Elders of Zion and Hitler, then on to Timothy Leary and Ken Kesey.


White brings together papers presented at two conferences: “The Rosicrucian Enlightenment Revisited” (September 1995) and “Prague, Alchemy, and the Hermetic Tradition” (August 1997). The prologue consists of the two initial Rosicrucian manifestos: Fama Fraternitatis and Confessio Fraternitatis. There follows a series of papers expanding upon—frequently challenging—Frances Yates’ studies, especially The Rosicrucian Enlightenment. One paper “tells the wild tale of John Dee’s mission in central Europe.”


“...In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the notion of a language of nature exerted a widespread appeal in European culture, among poets and literary writers, as well as philosophers.” (—page 3)


Pagan Mysteries... is a study of the sources for imagery in Renaissance art. Chapter One, “Poetic Theology,” opens with a discussion of Pico. Wind notes that Pico believed that the myths and fables of all Pagan religions “show[ed] only the crust of the mysteries to the vulgar, while preserving the marrow of the true sense for higher and more perfect spirits”—such as Pico himself, of course.


Zap Comix, No. 3. SPECIAL 69 ISSUE (San Francisco: Apex Novelties, 1968).

The front cover, rendered by San Francisco poster adept Rick Griffin, shows a lantern-wielding beetle uttering "יהשוה." Griffin’s spread inside the front cover displays the upper two-thirds of the
sefirotic tree, with banner-like lettering across the top reading, “AIN / AIN-SOPH / AIN-SOPH-AUR.” In the midst of the comic, Griffin has another page showing the letters A O M saying “SEPER YETZIRAH!” “SEPHER HA ZOHAR!” and “APOCALYPSE!” respectively. It appears that Griffin encountered Éliphas Lévi’s History of Magic—see page 61 of Waite’s translation (Rider, 1913 or Borden, 1949 and 1963; the Weiser edition didn’t appear until 1971).


“While there is no evidence to suggest that Goethe himself was a kabbalistic mystic, it is clear that he drew on this tradition freely ... Analysis of some key passages of his Wilhelm Meister, I suggest, makes clear that the tactile, fluid simultaneity of the aesthetic discourse he employs in presenting his feminine understanding of human sentiment justifies identifying it with the écriture feminine the Kabbalah exemplifies.” (—p. 65)


“My argument in what follows is that a reading of the female voice in La Picara Justina and Wilhelm Meister in the light of Irigaray’s theory of parler-femme reveals striking stylistic similarities in the two novels, similarities that internal and external evidence suggests may well be the result of both López de Úbeda’s and Goethe’s participation in the kabbalistic tradition of exploiting the literal bodiliness of language in order to express the (Divine) Feminine. In essence, my suggestion is that the Kabbalah may well be functioning here as the key intertext.” (—p. 158)


Described in Zinberg’s fifth volume are Jewish currents which influenced the formation of Christian cabala (ref. Pico della Mirandola, Johannes Reuchlin, etc.)
ADDENDUM B:

Seventeenth-century printed works on Christian Cabala in English²

[A catalogue of sources, title pages, & excerpts]

Caballism 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, caballism 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).


² 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, Scrinia 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, actinges and wayes : from August 24, 1662 to December 25 in the same year London : [s.n.], 1663.
- Lloyd, David. Cabala, or, The mystery of conventicles unvail’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 I 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. Medicinæ Professor. Printed in Latin at Amsterdam, by M. Brown, 1690. And reprinted at London, 1692.

< TRANSLATION OF Principia philosophiæ 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, Part 1 (http://www.digital-brilliance.com/contributed/Karr/Biblios/ccinea.pdf), pages 53-60, and refer to

- Sarah Hutton’s articles:
  (2) “From Christian Kabalism to Kabalistic Quakerism: the Kabalistic Dialogues of Anne Conway, Henry More, and George Keith,” in Christliche Kabbala, edited by Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2003)
- David Byrne, ANNE CONWAY: AN INTELLECTUAL PORTRAIT OF A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY VISCOUNTESS. (PhD dissertation, Claremont: Claremont Graduate University, 2005).

Fludd, Robert (1574-1657):

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 verèque Christiana (vt pote cujus basis sive fundamentum est unicus ille lapis angularis Iesus Christus) ad amusim & enucleaté explicatur, avthore Rob. Flvd, alias de Flvctivs. 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 Mosaicall 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 Mosaicall 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 haud ita pridem ex Oriente ad nos perlato, ex operibus Rabbi Titzchak Loriensis [read Yitzchak Luria—DK] Cabbalistarum Aquilæ, latinitate 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 198), 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 Paradoxical 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 foregoing 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, Lumbard Street, 1694.

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


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 Colin Low’s HERMETIC KABBALAH:


As the titles and excerpts 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 of 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.


**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 expeditiously 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 suitablenesse and applicability to the Text of Moses all along, without any force or violence done to Grammar or Criticisme.

Fourthly and lastly, there is a great usefullnesse, 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, yett 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 haweing 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 below to ADDENDUM
D: The Problem of Leone Ebreo’s Dialoghi.)

Conjectura Cabbalistica is volume 2 of Henry More: Major Philosophical Works (in nine volumes), edited
Conjectura is summarized in A. E. Waite’s Holy Kabbalah, pp. 472-3 and discussed in Robert Crocker’s
Henry More, 1614-1687: A Biography of the Cambridge Platonist [INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES, 185]
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 ADDENDUM C to this
paper on Kabbala denudata, APPARATUS IN LIBRUM SOHAR PARS SECUNDA, §10 (below).

For further examples of More’s writings on cabala, see Knots & Spirals: Some Brief Writings of Henry
Among the passages included is More’s prefatory letter (dated April 22, 1675) to his “Ad Clarissimum
ac Eruditissimum 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’ Emek ha-Melekh in 103 Theses)]
in English, appears on pages 173—176 of Kabbala denudata, tome 1 (Sulzbach: 1677).

Note the items by Sarah Hutton listed above (§ Anne Conway) and Hutton’s “More, Millenarianism,
and the Ma’aseh Merkavah,” in Everything Connects: In Conference with Richard Popkin: ESSAYS IN HIS
C. Brown, “The Mere Numbers of Henry More’s Cabbala,” in Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900,
Volume 10, Number 1 (Houston: Rice University, 1970).

Also, find the bibliography in Part 1 of the current paper, “17th CENTURY...” § HENRY MORE, at

Vaughan, Thomas (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 Terra, 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 Magicall Light, discovered, and Communicated to the
WORLD. By Eugenius Philalethes. GEN. I. 3 And God said, Let there be light. JOHN 1.
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.

Lumen de Lumine, edited by A. E. Waite, was republished, London: John M. Watkins, 1910.
Both Magia Adamica and Lumen de Lumine are included in The Works of Thomas Vaughan,
edited by A. E. Waite (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1919); reprinted, New Hyde
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 Yezirah*, 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 Son: hokhmah and 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. Quid tanto impendio abscontitur, etiam solummodo demonstrare, distruere 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 Demons; 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. Curll, 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 ADDENDUM B:

- Nicolson, Marjorie H. “Milton and the Conjectura Cabbalistica,” in Philological Quarterly, Volume VI, Number 1 (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1927).

This catalogue (ADDENDUM B) would not have been possible without the able assistance of Hui-Ju Chen.
ADDENDUM C:

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 Explicit, Alta videt, Lucet, Domat, Inrat, which adorn the frontispiece) are translated into English on page 27 of Ernst Benz’ Christian Kabbalah (translated from the German by Kenneth W. Wensche, edited by Robert J. Faas, St. Paul: Grailstone Press, 2004). Allison Coudert also translates the poem in The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century: The Life and Thought of Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614-1698) (HEREAFTER Coudert, Impact), page 138.

PRÆFATIO EDITORIS AD LECTOREM / Philebræum, 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 KABBALISTICI, Secundum ordinem Alphabeticum cincinnati, 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.

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 Getz (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.


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

1—312: APPARATUS IN LIBRUM SOHAR PARS SECUNDA, CAJUS CONTENTA EXHIBITA 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 Cabbalisticici Sohar [EXCERPTS AND NOTES ... ON THE ZOHAR]

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

2. 6—13: Tabulae duæ Synopticae Kabbalistica [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 Enigmas of the Book Zohar


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

   A summary of LIBER DRUSCHIM 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]

   Passages from Rosenroth’s Amica Responsio are translated in Coudert, Impact: KD I, 2: 74 (Impact, pp. 112-3), KD I, 2: 75 (Impact, p. 117), KD I, 2: 75 and 76 (Impact, p. 111)
7. 100—149: Tractatus de Anima R. Moscheh Korduero Pardes [TRACT ON THE SOUL FROM MOSES CORDOVERO’S GARDEN: Parde Rimmonim]

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


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:


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 Asiah, from the Hebrew Text,” “Dr. H. MORE’S Expositio Mercavæ 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 Sephirothiscus” 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:


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


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


APPARATUS IN LIBRUM SOHAR PARS 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 [p. 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, PARS TERTIA: PNEVMATICÁ CABBALISTICA: TRACTATUS I: Doctrina Hebraëorum de Spiritibus.)

Further on Herrera:


193—255: PARS QUARTA, quæ 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

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run in limited editions of 250 copies. Some titles—alas, not *Kabbalistic Diagrams*—have subsequently been reprinted.⁴


Refer to *LURIANIC DIAGRAMS: KABBALA 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](https://www.academia.edu/30928619/Which_Lurianic_Kabbalah)

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⁴ See ADDENDUM A, “Items of Interest”: McLean. Until 2012, copies of *Kabbalistic Diagrams* were available from [ALCHEMY WEB BOOKSHOP](http://www.alchemywebsite.com/bookshop/Magnus_opus.html) > MAGNUM OPUS BOOKS; these are now sold out—link checked: 10-7-2012 and 12-28-2013.
KABBALA DENUDATA:
TITLE PAGES
**TOMUS SECUNDUS** (Frankfort: 1684):

Id est LIBER SOHAR RESTITUTUS [WHICH IS THE BOOK ZOHAR RESTORED]; Cajus content a pagina versamonstrabit. OPUS Omnibus genuinæ antiquitatis, & sublimiorom Hebraicæ gentis dogmatum indagatoribus, nec non Hebraicæ & Chaldaicæ lingue, & in specie Idiomatis Terræ Israelicæ, tempore Christi & Apostolorum usitati, Studiosis, aliisque curiosis 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)] ... VALLEEM REGIAM. R. Naphthalí Hirtz, F.R. Jaacob Elchana [Naftali Hirtz, Ya`akov Elhanan] = the first six sections of Emek ha-Melekh

**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
   b. 47—144: Commentarius generalis in Librum mysterii & Synodos
      = §§ 130—236 of Naftali Hirtz' *Emek ha-Melekh*

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!


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], redacted by Hayyim 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.6

5 On the Lurianic doctrine of transmigration, see also

  - PART I. REINCARNATION

6 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 APPLICATIO DOCTRINA HEBRÆORUM CABBALISTICÆ AD DOGMATA NOVI FÆDERIS; PRO FORMANDA HYPOTHESI, AD CONVERSIONEM JUDÆORUM PROFICUA

[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 MÆNUM, Sumtu JOHANNIS DAVIDIS ZUNNERI, Cassitero JOH. PHIL. ANDREÆ. ANNO M DC LXXXIV.

CONTENTS:

CAPUT I. De variiis universi statibus
[Of the Various Levels (or States) of the Universe]

CAPUT II. De statu universi primo sive primææ institutionis, ejusque efficiente
[Of the First State of the Universe or of the Primordial Institution, and of Its Nature]

CAPUT III. De Medio primææ productionis seu Adamo primo
[Of the Mediator of the First Produced, or Primal Adam]

CAPUT IV. De Naturis Productis, & sine Productionis
[Of the Beings Produced & of (the purpose of) Their Production]

CAPUT V. De statu secundaæ Destructionis
[Of the Subsequent State of Destitution]

CAPUT VI. De statu modernæ Constitutionis
[Of the State of the Modern Constitution]

CAPUT VII. De Animarum Præexistentia in specie
[Of the Pre-existence of the Souls Explicitly Set Forth]

CAPUT VIII. De Personis Divinitatis in specie
[Of the Divine Personæ (i.e., Parzufim) Explicitly Set Forth]

CAPUT IX. De status istius tertii Depravatione, sive De Lapτu Animarum
[Of the Third State of Corruption, of the Fall of the Souls]

CAPUT X. De statu postremaæ Restitutionis, ejusque Gradu primo
[Of the Supreme State of Restitution, & of Its First Stage]

CAPUT XI. De secundo Gradu Restitutioæ Animarum
[Of the Second Stage of the Restitution of the Souls]

CAPUT XII. De duobus ultimis Restitutionis Messianæ Gradibus
[Of the Two Ultimate Stages of the Messianic Restitution]


Reference editions for ADDENDUM C:

[Volkskundiche Quellen (Folklore Sources): Neudrucke europäischer Texte und Untersuchungen (Reprints of European Texts and Studies)].
(Hildesheim – Zurich – New York: George Olms Verlag, 1974; reprinted 1999).

Knorr von Rosenroth, Christian, Freiherr (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 525 .K6 1684]


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

Other works consulted:

Some Other Cabalistic Canons in Latin

Reuchlin, Johann

De arte cabalistica : id est, de divinae revelationis, ad salvifieram Dei, et formarvm separatarm contemplationem traditae, symbolica receptione, libri III, olim per ... [Basileae? : Ex officina H. Petrina?, 1572?] First published: 1517.

Reuchlin's list of Kabbalistic texts (pp. 13v-14v):

1. On the Creation, i.e., Sefer Yezirah
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 Yezirah, including Rabbi Isaac [ben Samuel], Explanation of the Name of God
20. Todros ben Joseph Abulafia, on “the ten Cabalistic enumerations”

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7 It is interesting to note the list of books that Elijah del Medigo recommended to Pico della Mirandola: “the Zohar, Yishaq of Acco’s Me’irot ‘enayim, Yosef Giqatilla’s Sa’are orah, the Commentary to the Torah by Menahem Recanati, the Ma’areket ha-Elohat, and one (or more) unspecified Commentaries to the Sefer yesirah ... the most evident omission being Avraham Abulafia’s works. (—Giulio Busi, “Who Does Not Wonder at this Chameleon?” The Kabbalistic Library of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola,” in Hebrew to Latin, Latin to Hebrew: The Mirroring of Two Cultures in the Age of Humanism [BERLIN STUDIES IN JUDAISM, 1], edited by Giulio Busi [Berlin: Institut für Judaistik, Freie Universität Berlin / Torino: Nino Aragno Editore, 2006], pages 172-173)

8 Some sources for Reuchlin that do not appear on his list:

• (anon.) Ruach Chen – Spiritus gratiae [= Spirit of Grace]
• (anon.) Hacadma
• 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
Pistorius, Johannes

Artis cabalisticae, hoc est, Reconditae theologiae et philosophiae, scriptorvm : tomus I. In quo praeter Pavli Ricci theologicos & philosophicos libros sunt latini penè omnes et hebraei nonnulli praeantissimi scriptores ... opvs omnibvs theologis, et occvltae abstrvsae q’ve philosophiae stvdiosis pernecessarium ... ex D. Ioannis Pistorii.

Basileae : per S. Henricpetri M.D.XXCVII [1587]

Contents:
- Pavli Ricci (Ricci, Riccius, or Riccio): De coelesti agricvltvra libri IIII
- Rabi Iosephi (Gikatilla): De porta, i.e., Sha’are Orah
- Leonis Hebraei (Leone Ebreo): De amore dialogi tres
- Ionnis Revchlini (Johann Reuchlin): De arte cabalistica, libri III; De verbo mirifico, libri III
- Archangeli Bvrgonovenisis (Archangelus of Borgo Nuovo): Interpretationes in selectiora obscuroíaq cabalistarum dogmata
- Abrahiami (Abraham the Prophet): De creatione & cabalistinis, hebraicè Sepher ierzira, liber, i.e., Sefer Yezirah

Mithridates [incomplete]

List of works translated by Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada, or Mithridates, at the behest of Pico della Mirandola, 1486. KL = THE KABBALISTIC LIBRARY OF GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA.

- 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 Cabalaque intitulatur Rabi leude
- 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)”
- Gate of Heaven [KL]
- Gikatilla - Expositio secretorum punctuationis – Sefer ha-Niqqud [KL]
- Gikatilla - Portae Iustitiae – “Gates of Justice” – Sha’are Tzedek
- Great Parchment [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
- Recanati - Commentary on the Pentateuch
- Recanati - Liber de secretis Orationum et Benedictinum Cabale - “Book of the Secrets of Prayer...” (Perush ha-Tefillot) [KL]
- Shaar ha-shamayim
ADDENDUM D:
The Problem of Leone Ebreo’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) (146?-152?), called Leone Ebreo (Leon Hebraeus, Leo the Hebrew) is best known for his *Dialoghi d’amore* (DIALOGUES ON LOVE), written around 1500.

The Dialoghi were included in Johann Pistorius’ Latin compendium *Artis cabalisticae: HOC EST reconditæ theologiciæ et philosophia, scriptores TOMUS I* (Basle: 1587)—see “Some Other Cabalistic Canons in Latin” (on the previous pages).

There are two English translations of the Dialoghi:

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

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*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.

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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)

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, 3:21b)]—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 Cabalist 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 (i) 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, neoplatonism 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.**

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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 Siennese 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 Yohannan 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 Ebreeo 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 Ebreeo 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.

Silberschlag, Eisig. From Renaissance to Renaissance: Hebrew Literature from 1492-1970 (New
York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1973); page 44:

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.

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

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

Veltri, Guiseppe. “Philos and Sophia: Leone Ebreo’s Concept of Jewish Philosophy,” in
Cultural Intermediaries: Jewish Intellectuals in Early Modern Italy, edited by David B. Ruderman
and Giuseppe Veltri (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 2004); page 55—also
CHAPTER THREE of Veltri’s Renaissance Philosophy in Jewish Garb: Foundations and Challenges in
Judaism on the Eve of Modernity (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2009); page 60:

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 engarner 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... 


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.
ADDENDUM E:
A Sampling of Biographical Dates
Names marked with an asterisk (*) have entries in 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).

<table>
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<td>Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples*</td>
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ADDENDUM F: REVIEWS

Sheila Spector’s
“Wonders Divine”:
The Development of Blake’s Kabbalistic Myth

“Glorious Incomprehensible”:
The Development of Blake’s Kabbalistic Language

Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2001; 213 & 202 pages
ISBN: 0-8387-5468-6 & 0-8387-5469-4

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An edited version of this review originally appeared in
online at http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeV/Reviews/Spector.html *

William Blake is sometimes illuminated but rarely explained by his sources,
because his fierce intellectual independence allows nothing to pass into his
work unchanged. It is therefore hazardous to accept prior analogues to his
ideas as sources, especially on the basis of mere conceptual analogy, and even
more hazardous to practice the kind of algebraic substitution in which Blake is
made to mean what a supposed source meant.

—Martin K. Nurmi, “Negative Sources in Blake,” in
William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon, edited by Alvin
H. Rosenfeld (Providence: Brown University Press, 1969)

* Compare my review with those of Dena Bain Taylor in Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 38, Issue 2
(University of Rochester, 2004)—PDF at http://bq.blakearchive.org/38.2.taylor; and Mark S. Lussier in Romanitic
Circles (University of Maryland, 2005) at https://www.rcc.umd.edu/reviews-blog/sheila-spector-glorious-
incomprehensible-development-blakes-kabbalistic-language—which, alas, has a “Security Risk” warning attached
to it.
Within the imposing mass of Blake studies one finds few items which discuss the use of kabbalah by Blake, even if esoteric currents are acknowledged as reflected in his work. Where kabbalah is identified as an influence—or possible influence—the connections, if developed at all, rarely go beyond simple part-for-part examples (e.g., Eden, Beulah, Generation, and Ulro as the kabbalistic “four worlds”). Mostly what one finds are scattered highly speculative remarks or free-floating ascriptions where it is neither specified nor clear what “kabbalah” (or “cabala”) refers to. Thus, most welcome is a recent study which treats at length the influence of kabbalah on Blake: Sheila Spector’s illustrated companion volumes: “Wonders Divine”: The Development of Blake’s Kabbalistic Myth and “Glorious Incomprehensible”: The Development of Blake’s Kabbalistic Language. Briefly, Spector’s thesis is this:

... 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.

("Wonders Divine," page 25)

Through the books, Spector reinforces her approach with such observations as

From the numerous failed attempts to explain these brief works [Blake’s minor prophecies], it should be apparent that Kabbalism truly is a different mode of thought, one not amenable to conventional methods of interpretation, at least not without grossly distorting the text.

("Wonders Divine," page 106)

It is important to establish at the onset that the kabbalah to which Spector refers throughout her study is primarily the Christian interpretation of Lurianic kabbalah as exemplified by Francis Mercury van Helmont’s Adumbratio kabbalæ christianæ, a treatise appended to some editions of the second volume of Christian Knorr von Rosenroth’s Kabbala denudata (2 volumes, Sulzbach: 1677-84). Hence, it is neither any form of Jewish kabbalah (of which there is more of an array than is generally acknowledged) nor the Christian cabala of earlier figures such as Pico della Mirandola, Johannes Reuchlin, Francesco Giorgi, and Henry Cornelius Agrippa. Blake made use of merkabah mysticism as well. So, too, in this article, “kabbalah” will refer to the amalgam of merkabah, Lurianic kabbalah, and van Helmont’s Adumbratio which Blake, according to Spector, subsumed.

Spector offers a stage-by-stage analysis of Blake’s absorption of kabbalistic concepts, showing true incorporation—as opposed to reworking, gloss, or “mere conceptual analogy.” As Spector presents it, kabbalistic elements and doctrines naturally correspond to the characters, concepts, and methods in Blake’s writings, though, it
must be admitted that, in reading Blake without benefit of Spector’s guidance, these equivalences are not so obvious.

Both volumes are organized chronologically, starting with “Contexts,” then discussing Blake’s work according to a four-fold scheme: Pre-Myth / Pre-Intentionality, The Fact of Myth / The Fact of Intentionality, The Concept of Myth / The Concept of Intentionality, and The Transcendent Myth / The Divine Intentionality, myth being the focus of “Wonders Divine,” intentionality as reflected in Blake’s use of language being the concern of “Glorious Incomprehensible.”

Spector contrasts the two studies in the opening lines of her similar introductions. “Wonders Divine” begins:

This is a book about Blake’s myth, defined as the structuring principle of intentionality. Concerned with neither the mental state nor the facticity of an object, intentional analysis focuses on the ways by which different levels of consciousness establish relationships with their respective referents.

Spector argues accordingly that the progressive transformation of Blake’s personal myth from a Miltonic to a kabbalistic orientation reflects the evolution of the basic principles upon which Blake’s intentional relationship was predicated (“Glorious Incomprehensible,” page 21).

The introduction to “Glorious Incomprehensible” opens:

This is a book about Blake’s language, defined as the external manifestation of intentionality. Concerned neither with the mental state nor with the facticity of an object, intentionality refers to the relationship between the subjective consciousness and some kind of referent; and as its external manifestation, the material language system can be said to manifest the kind of relationship that has been established between a particular level of consciousness and its corresponding referent.

Spector goes on to demonstrate how Blake’s language evolved from an original state of pre-intentionality in which he intuited some sort of relationship between language and thought, to a conscious awareness of the fact of intentionality, through a reflexive analysis of the concept underlying the material language system, and culminating, ultimately, in what amounts to an attempt to create a new language system, through which he might apprehend the “ultimate” referent. (“Wonders Divine,” page 19)

Somewhat like sections of a Lurianic text, Spector’s two volumes assume each other. While these are tandem studies, with identical prefaces (“Blake as a Kabbalist”) and closely parallel introductions (“Blake’s Problem with Myth” vs “Blake’s Problem with Language”), it seems best to start with “Wonders Divine,” which, in focusing on myth, offers the theosophical context into which Blake’s advance toward a concentratedly mystical use of language, taken up in “Glorious Incomprehensible,” is set.

“Wonders Divine” starts off by providing the context and background of Blake’s progress as it grew from his problems with the Christian formulation of Milton: the
Doctrine of Original Sin, the Ransom Theory, and Eternal Damnation. Bringing Jewish mysticism and *kabbalah* into the discussion at the outset, Chapters 1, 2, and 3 (“Contexts: The Myths of Eighteenth-Century England,” “From Calvinism to Kabbalism: Transforming Myths,” and “Pre-Mythology: Mil tonic Antecedents”) include discussions of (i) *Ma‘aseh Merkavah*, that is, speculation on visions of the Divine Chariot; (ii) *Ma‘aseh Bereshit*, the Work of Creation, which concerns the occurrence and structure of the universe through such concepts as *tzimtzum* (contraction), the *sefirot*, the four worlds, *shevirat* [ha-kelim] (breaking [of the vessels]), the *parzufim* (“faces” or divine personae) and *tikkun* (restoration); and (iii) the passage of all this into “the most fully delineated Christianized version of the [kabbalistic] myth, the *Adumbratio Kabbalæ Christianæ*” (—p. 44) of F. M. van Helmont, the contents of which are outlined (—pp. 44-46). The discussion then passes to Blake’s early works and their critique of and struggle with Milton (e.g., “passive obedience” [Milton] vs “active resistance” [Blake]) and Blake’s issues within himself (e.g., the dilemma between the visionary and the rational). Early on, Blake postulated the notion of the “Poetic Genius,” that potential within to apprehend the non-corporeal world, as a critical part of his effort to subvert Milton’s “passive obedience” and the *Paradise Lost* myth.

In Chapter 4, “The Fact of Myth: Contemporary Apocalypse,” we find Blake at the stage where he passes from trying to renovate Milton to abandoning him. Here, too, are the first inklings of *kabbalah* in Blake’s work, though these are tentative expressions which may show only affinity or sympathy through some initial contact. Evidence of direct influence is not firm, even if some features (given Blake’s use of Hebrew roots) and passages are highly suggestive. This is also the stage at which Blake passes from “fiction” to “prophecy.”

Spector’s pivotal Chapter 5, “The Concept of Myth: Psychomachia,” offers full—and quite convincing—kabbalistic interpretations of Blake’s minor prophecies (*The Song of Los*, *The Book of Urizen*, *The Book of Ahania*, and *The Book of Los*), tracing, as in the earlier works, the pre-mythic state, the imposition of the dualistic (Miltonic) state, the exposure of the errors of that dualistic state, and, finally, postulation regarding the correction of this error. Spector, for instance, presents *The Book of Urizen* (—pp. 92-97) as pressing Lurianic myth upon Milton’s two “falls” (from *Paradise Lost*), with chapters kabbalistically organized according to the concepts of *tzimtzum* (God’s contraction within Himself, Chapter 1), the consolidation of *din* (unmitigated judgment, Chapter 2), and *shevirat* [ha-kelim] (the breaking [of the vessels], Chapter 3). Succeeding chapters of *Urizen* speak of the results of *shevirah*, eventually leading to the process of *tikkun* (restoration) in the final chapter. *The Book of Los* is shown (—pp. 102-106) to be derived from van Helmont’s *Adumbratio*, for it passes from the three-fold Lurianic structure (*tzimtzum-shevirat-tikkun* as given in *The Book of Urizen*) to van Helmont’s four-fold structure: (i) The Primordial Institution, resulting in the formation of *Adam Kadmon* (Primordial Man); (ii) The State of Destitution, namely *shevirah* and the resulting excess of *din*; (iii) The Modern Constitution, on “*Adam Kadmon*’s attempts to separate the shards of negation from the lights of purity”; and (iv) The Supreme Restitution, *tikkun*, including “the restoration of all souls, the capture of Satan, and the destruction of the shards.”
Blake’s final stage is discussed in Chapter 6, “The Transcendent Myth: Kabbalism.” The chapter begins (—page 107)

In the major prophecies [Vala/The Four Zoas, Milton, and Jerusalem], the various kabbalistic motifs Blake had been experimenting with evolve into a complex, multi-faceted myth whose archetypal structure provides the means of reconciling the two dilemmas he had been grappling with throughout the composite art: the function of Christ and the role of the prophet in the fallen world.

Spector shows (—pp. 110-131) Vala/The Four Zoas to be structured according to the sefirotic tree, beginning with the lowest, malkut, and ascending through a succession of “nights” to the “Ninth,” hokhmah. Progress through the sefirot in ascending order is rare in kabbalistic literature. The only other example which comes to mind is Joseph Gikatilla’s Sha’are Orah (1559), which was fairly well-circulated via the Latin translation of Paulus Riccius, Porta Lucis, printed in Pistorius’ collection, Ars Cabalistica, and drawn upon for the grand kabbalistic glossary in Kabbala denudata. Blake could have been familiar with this.

In Spector’s report (—pp. 131-140), Blake’s work Milton develops the roles of “upper” and “lower” man according to features of Adam Kadmon, Primordial Man, and Adam Rishon, who descended into the corporeal world after shevirat. In Milton, Blake resolves some of the problems of his previous efforts by incorporating the kabbalistic notion of gilgul, the revolution (transmigration) of the soul—from pre-existence, through incarnation and reincarnation, to transformation in the form of the ability to apprehend the Divine Vision as symbolized by the merkabah (—page 132).

In Jerusalem (—pp. 140-168), Blake offers merkabah mysticism as the basis for development and restoration (—page 146). Jerusalem transforms van Helmont’s four-fold system into a kabbalistic narrative following the progress of the characters Los and Albion (see comments below).

Many more parallels are discussed to demonstrate Blake’s incorporation of kabbalah. Spector offers kabbalistic readings of Blake with an ease and assurance which suggest their being foregone conclusions, which—one might forget reading this book—they are not. But Blake’s cast of characters, his own array of parzufim if you will, so neatly aligns with elements in the kabbalistic universe that Spector’s argument is impossible to dismiss. The conclusion to “Wonders Divine,” “The Eternal Prophet,” begins

More than simply a collection of images and archetypes, the kabbalistic myth provided Blake with the medium necessary for reexamining his vocation as prophet.

“Glorious Incomprehensible” follows a parallel track to “Wonders Divine” through the phases of Blake’s development. The background Spector provides in the first chapter (“Contexts: The Languages of Eighteenth-Century England”) concerns the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophers and grammarians. Blake saw the march of philosophy from Bacon (through Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, [James] Beattie, and [Thomas] Reid) to [Dugald] Stewart as a descent, or degeneration. The Cambridge Platonists are mentioned as something of an alternative. Blake didn’t have much time for contemporary grammarians either, though he did draw from
contemporary philologists, especially those who formulated theories regarding English as being descended from ancient Hebrew. Spector seems to assume Blake’s use of John Parkhurst’s works, e.g. *Hebrew and English Lexicon, without Points.*

Chapter 2 is subtitled “Newton’s sleep,” the expression which Blake threw back at the empirical thought which he would attempt to supersede. As in “Wonders Divine,” this second chapter surveys Blake’s early prose, *The Book of Thel, Tiriel,* and *Visions of the Daughters of Albion.* Spector discusses Blake’s early experiments with Hebraic roots “which would eventually undermine the specious stability of conventional [English] language system” as Blake progressively treated his derived terms with more kabbalistic range and intention. In these early works, Blake often used Hebrew roots for the names he invented; these names, however, are not simply translated words with fixed denotations or connotations. Each suggests multiple meanings, or an aggregate of meanings, which defy singular allegorical reference or, for that matter, limitation on its mythic function. This technique, or process, in Blake becomes more conscious in the stage described in Chapter 3, “The Fact of Intentionality: ‘And twofold Always.’” Spector’s treatment of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* reads like a fractal reduction of the whole course of Blake’s development, which progresses from pre-intentionality of the early works, as in “The Little Girl Lost” and “The Little Girl Found,” through the notions of the “twofold vision,” as in “A Little GIRL Lost,” toward the “Divine intention” of the major prophecies. Finally, “To Tirzah” predicts the need to transcend the double vision and to move into higher modes of intentional relationship. With the name Tirzah itself, Blake reached into the Bible, and, in the manner of kabbalistic exegesis, attempted to get past its literal meanings in order to uncover its essential reality—as he did with clusters of terms which were derived from Hebrew roots or which could be subject to improvised Hebraic etymologies.

Still, Blake’s workings with the facts of intentionality proved in themselves limiting. Blake’s next step was to move beyond fundamental principles of the language into its theoretical basis, as in the title of Spector’s Chapter 4, “The Concept of Intentionality: ‘soft Beulahs night.’” Parallel to the corresponding Chapter 4 in “Wonders Divine,” Spector discusses Blake’s pivotal four-part psychomachia, which again traces the whole process: (i) *The Song of Los* represents pre-intentionality, the animal soul; (ii) *The Book of Urizen* plots issues of the fact of intentionality via the split between the visionary and the rational; (iii) *The Book of Ahania* “turns the concept of intentionality back on itself”; and, lastly, (iv) *The Book of Los* expresses the need to transcend the material system.

Regarding again a work commented on above in the discussion of “Wonders Divine,” *The Book of Urizen* “dramatizes the process by which the Rational Soul forms the material language system” (—page 115) setting Urizen’s—the rational component’s—consolidation of language in coincidence and equivalence with Los’, the visionary component’s, isolation. In the end, the concept of intentionality is postulated as the means of transcending the restrictive effects of the language system. Demonstrations of this are in Blake’s reinterpretations of names according to kabbalistic rather than corporeal referents. An example:
The most significant, both in terms of myth and vocabulary, is the name Urizen. While probably coined as a kind of combination of the Greek for “horizon,” the Hebrew for “curse/light” of the “counselor,” and the English pun, “your reason,” now, the name is represented in terms of its occult core, the resh-zayin (raz), “secret,” hidden within Urizen.

(—“Glorious Incomprehensible,” page 116)

The final minor prophecy, The Book of Los, exposes the fallacies underlying conventional speech, but provides no alternative or transcendent system, one that would promote the visionary faculty.

The major prophecies are taken up in Chapter 5, “The Divine Intentionality: ‘my supreme delight.’” It is in this stage that Blake’s language is transformed, not solely by his “conversion” to kabbalah but by his surrender to an apparent “external voice” dictating to him from the spirit realm. The meanings of the familiar elements also shift as Blake moves from allegory to mysticism.

If one turns to a standard discussion of Blake, one finds that “the giant Albion” is said to represent “the collective being of the English nation,” and it is left at that. This evokes an issue which Spector addresses a few places (see, in particular, the opening of her conclusion to “Glorious Incomprehensible”): Conventional wisdom would have it that Blake’s themes, his mythic structure, and his cast of allegorical characters are more or less fixed, and that a character, such as Albion, should always refer to the same thing. Hence, the conclusion drawn by such conventional wisdom is that Blake’s use of these elements is inconsistent, if not arbitrary. Spector’s analysis, with the aid of a kabbalistic (or, at least, Hebraic) reading, suggests something entirely different.

In his early works, Blake used the word [Albion] fairly conventionally, at first as a poetic name for England, and then, in America, exploiting the Latin derivation to juxtapose the leprous Urizen, ally of Albion, against Red Orc, champion of the Americas. But at some point during the composition of The Four Loas, Blake seems to have recognized the deeper significance of the lexeme. No longer a personification of the “Island White” (or a pun on the Isle of Wight), Albion assumes the dimensions of an entirely original set of roots, both found in normative Hebrew: aleph-lamed (’el, “God”), and beit-nun (ben, “son”). As the newly discovered “son of God,” Albion is revealed to be Everyman, Blake’s Adam Rishon, created or corporeal man, an indigenous “Orc” who, analogous to the biblical prototype, embodies the individual, the race and the land.

(—“Glorious Incomprehensible,” page 129)

Spector leads us to the culmination of Blake’s development, where Blake creates a fully mystical language that, no longer interposing itself between the subjective consciousness and the ultimate referent, finally serves as the vehicle for achieving the via mystica.

(—“Glorious Incomprehensible,” page 169)

It will be interesting to see what the response of Blake scholars is to Spector’s confident presentation. From the other side—that of the kabbalah specialist—one must appreciate Spector’s care in circumscribing just which kabbalah she is talking about
and her acknowledgement that, from a traditional Jewish standpoint, Blake’s kabbalistic sources leave quite a bit to be desired, especially given that they were written or translated by Christians either for Christians or for Jews to compel their conversion.

Assuming that Spector’s thesis is correct—her argument and analysis are certainly persuasive—one can uncover much of what lay behind the progress of Blake’s obscure works as well as his methods in composing them.

—Don Karr

1. See Spector’s article, “Kabbalistic Sources—Blake’s and His Critics,” in Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly 67, volume 17, number 3 (Winter 1983-84) for
   (i) a brief review of scholars who broach the issue of kabbalah in connection with Blake,
   (ii) a discussion of the problems surrounding the scholarly approach to kabbalah itself, and
   (iii) a survey of sources of kabbalah which could have been available to Blake.

Spector’s other works include
   • “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).

Robert Wang

The Rape of Jewish Mysticism by Christian Theologians: How the Modern Occult Movement Grew out of Renaissance Attempts to Convert the Jews

Columbia [MD]: Marcus Aurelius Press, 2001; vi + 147 pages.

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[See a description and the preface of the book at www.marcusaureliuspress.com (NO LONGER EXTANT—2009)]

In spite of the “assertive title” (the author’s term, page ii), The Rape of Jewish Mysticism by Christian Theologians by Robert Wang is a rather drab summary of well-known—and well-worn—sources. Wang does not make use of much scholarship since Gershom Scholem (works cited from 1941 and 1974) on kabbalah (though there is recourse to Moshe Idel, especially regarding Abraham Abulafia), Frances Yates (1964 and 1979) and François Secret (1964) on cabala, Charles G. Nauert (1965) on Agrippa, Peter French (1972) on Dee, etc. The scope of the book is too limited: It starts too late (nothing on Ramon Llull, thirteenth century) and ends too early (nothing on
developments of the seventeenth-through-nineteenth centuries) to fulfill the promise of its title. Moreover, Wang does not engage his thesis (i.e., the *rape* of Jewish mysticism) except fleetingly anywhere in the book save the preface and the brief conclusion.

*The Rape of Jewish Mysticism* does fairly distinguish the separate, if intersecting, paths of Jewish *kabbalah* and Christian *cabala*. The first chapter (of three), “Beginnings,” opens with a summary of Jewish mysticism up to the *Zohar*. The chapter is interrupted by a few pages on the *Hermetica* and then returns to “The Early Hebrew Kabbalists” (one paragraph), Isaac the Blind (three paragraphs), and Abraham Abulafia (about four pages). Thereafter, we meet the familiar Renaissance figures: Ficino, Pico, and Reuchlin. However, to tell the story from the beginning, Wang should have begun his account of Christian appropriation of Jewish mysticism in the thirteenth century—a century earlier than he did—with Ramon Llull, who was apparently the first to incorporate *kabbalah*, or *kabbalah*-like ideas, into his system and rhetoric with the aim of converting Jews. (Refer to Harvey Hames, *The Art of Conversion: Christianity & Kabbalah in the Thirteenth Century*, Leiden – Boston – Köln: Brill, 2000.)

The second chapter, “After Reuchlin,” might be useful to those who cannot read the French works of François Secret; the first half of the chapter summarizes material from *Les Kabbalistes chretiens de la Renaissance* (Paris: Dunod, 1964) on Paul Ricci, Cardinal Egidio da Viterbo, Francesco Giorgio, and others. It then discusses Agrippa (dependent on Nauert), followed by a return to Jewish *kabbalah*—that of sixteenth-century Safed—with sections on Moses Cordovero and Isaac Luria.


*The Rape of Jewish Mysticism* comes to a premature halt with “Christian Kabbalah becomes Rosicrucianism,” “The Fama Fraternitas,” and “Robert Fludd.” A coda entitled “Rejected Jews” sidles up to the supposed theme of the book which is so
energetically shouted by its title. Alas, there is little more here than restatements of the obvious and speculations undermined by inadequate research: “Expulsions and forced conversions were a deeply disturbing process…” (page 140); “Perhaps, indeed, there were many ‘secret Jews,’ for whom the deeply meditative Christian Kabbalah may have been a compromise” (page 141).

In the midst of the second chapter, Wang mentions S. L. M. Mathers’ and Aleister Crowley’s compendium 777 (page 71), where he states that Francesco Giorgio’s lists of correspondences is “an early precursor” of 777. This suggests that it is to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn—which was headed by Mathers and which counted Crowley among its members—that he is ultimately leading us, namely, to the British occult of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Golden Dawn’s dogma and ritual have indeed shaped Western occultism “as it is known today” (a phrase from the back cover). Not only does Wang fail to inform us who Mathers and Crowley are, but, as already noted, he stops his account short at Robert Fludd. (Nor does Wang specify the nature of 777, which is table upon table of correspondences whose organizing principle is the ten sefirot and the twenty-two paths, i.e. the twenty-two Hebrew letters, of the kabbalistic “tree of life.”)

Wang’s omission of developments through the seventeenth-to-nineteenth 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. We could quibble over the meaning of “modern” (as it might be broadly understood in a formula such as Biblical-Talmudic-Medieval-Modern), but the full text of the back cover takes away any doubt about what “modern” refers to here: “The extraordinary story of how, from the fourteenth century on, Christian theologians used the essence of Jewish mysticism to prove the divinity of Christ, and how that effort resulted in Christian Kabbalah, in Rosicrucianism, and in all aspects of the Western occult movement as it is known today.” Further, the last paragraph of Wang’s preface begins, “By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the assimilation of Jewish Kabbalah into Western occultism was complete” (page vi).² Add to this that Wang has written on the Golden Dawn’s manner of Western occultism in books such as An Introduction to the Golden Dawn Tarot (New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1979), The Secret Temple (New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1980), and Qabalistic Tarot: A Textbook of Occult Philosophy (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1983—a new edition is now available from Marcus Aurelius Press [2004]).

Were Wang at the very least to get us to Christian Knorr von Rosenroth’s Kabbala denudata (Sulzbach: 1677-8, 1684), he would have accounted for of the other key source for “the Modern Occult Movement” as characterized by the Golden Dawn (the most important single source being Agrippa’s De occulta philosophia—whether by way of Barrett’s Magus or not). Indeed, from the Latin of Kabbala denudata, S. L. M. Mathers translated to English three tracts from the Zohar (with von Rosenroth’s—and his own—elaborations) under the title The Kabbalah Unveiled (1887; this title is still available in several versions). Kabbala denudata was source to many other influential occultists, the best-known being Mme. Blavatsky and Albert Pike.
Along with the general shortcomings of the book, we must also endure its many ill-conceived phrases: (referring to the Zohar) “The book...became shrouded in mystery” (page 11); “The system of Abulafia was quite unique” (page 21); (about Agrippa) “He was the turning point toward modern occultism” (page 76); and (also about Agrippa) “...he became the leader of a relatively avant garde group of scholars...” (page 80). All this and the topic-by-topic rehash from too few sources suggest a hasty scholar writing at his material. Contrast Wang’s work with Philip Beitchman’s Alchemy of the Word (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), where a clear dependence on secondary sources does not stand in the way of a provocative and nuanced discussion.

Some of Wang’s statements are simply wrong: (writing about Lurianic Kabbalah after 1590 in a section on Jewish developments) “Of course, Luria’s work was only of use to, and understood by, a very small elite” (page 98); while Wang cites Scholem’s Major Trend in Jewish Mysticism, he seems to have missed the second part of Scholem’s “Seventh Lecture: Isaac Luria and His School.”

There are also mistakes and omissions in the notes.

The need for an up-to-date introductory book on Christian Cabala has certainly not been filled by The Rape of Jewish Mysticism. The fault is not with the effort to write a “popular,” accessible book. There are a number of well-done works on Jewish mysticism aimed at a general audience, e.g., Neil Asher Silberman’s Heavenly Powers: Unraveling the Secret History of the Kabbalah (New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1998) and J. H. Laenen’s Jewish Mysticism: An Introduction (Louisville – London – Leiden: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001). Even more specialized books, such as Lawrence Fine’s excellent study of Isaac Luria, Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003) have been written so as not to exclude the non-scholarly reader.

—Don Karr

Notes:


2. What was, in fact, initially assimilated into Western occultism bore little resemblance to Jewish Kabbalah.

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, two volumes, 860 pages

[THE KABBALISTIC LIBRARY OF GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA 3]


The two generous volumes of Commentary on the Daily Prayers serve several purposes:

1. The Hebrew text is a critical edition of Perush ha-Tefillot, “the last work he [Recanati] undertook” (HEBREW SECTION: pages 1*-151*).

2. As with the two previous monographs in the KABBALISTIC LIBRARY series, the Latin translation of Commentary on the Daily Prayers by the Jewish convert Flavius Mithridates (pages 163-373) presents an important kabbalistic source work for Pico.

3. The English translation (pages 375-681)—from Mithridates’ Latin—is the first English edition of any complete text by Recanati.*

Giacomo Corazzol describes Mithridates’ rendition of Commentary on the Daily Prayers as a combination of strict word-for-word translation and glosses which “provided Pico with a sort of textbook” on Jewish liturgy and kabbalah (INTRODUCTION, page 108). But before taking up Mithridates’ Latin translation in detail (pages 98-161), Corazzol offers a full discussion of the fourteenth-century Italian kabbalist Menahem Recanati, his works and his sources (noting in particular Ibn Malka’s Commentary on the Daily Prayers and Ya’aqov ben Ya’aqov ha-Kohen’s Commentary on the Chariot), culminating in an analysis of Recanati’s theosophy and theurgy (pages 19-97). While Recanati is often mentioned in studies of kabbalah, cited along with “such seminal figures as Maimonides [and] Nahmanides” (Giller, 1993**—page 5), and referred to as an “important Italian kabbalist” (Fine, 2003†—page 103), nowhere else do we find anything like “[t]he detailed reconstruction presented by Corazzol,” which, series editor Giulio Busi adds, “is even more important if seen within the framework of Pico’s Conclusiones, since Count della Mirandola used Recanati as a veritable encyclopedia for kabbalistic texts that he could not otherwise read” (Busi’s PREFACE to Commentary on the Daily Prayers, page 11). Corazzol’s introduction is the first comprehensive treatment of Recanati in English.††

Recanati’s Commentary on the Torah has been shown to have been a key source for Pico’s Conclusiones. Refer in particular to the numerous references in Chaim Wirszubski’s Pico della Mirandola’s Encounter with Jewish Mysticism (Cambridge – London: Harvard University Press, 1989), where, in identifying sources for points of Pico’s kabbalah, Wirszubski quotes—in English—the Commentary on the Torah dozens of times. These translations, however, are not rendered from Mithridates’ translation, which “seems to have been lost almost completely” (Busi’s PREFACE, page 9), but rather from Recanati’s Hebrew text. In contrast, the Commentary on the Daily Prayers is quoted by Wirszubski, using Mithridates’ Latin version which is fully preserved, only twice: on page 52, regarding the word AMEN, and on page 149 on “[t]he intrusion of magic into the mysticism of prayer.” Thus, the present edition of the Commentary on the Daily Prayers fills a major gap in Wirszubski’s study, just as the first volume in
the KABBALISTIC LIBRARY series did: The Great Parchment (2004) published (in Hebrew, Mithridates’ Latin, and English) for the first time a work not mentioned at all by Wirszubski. I must hasten to add, however, that noting these lacunæ is not intended to cast criticism upon Wirszubski’s remarkable pioneering work.

The theosophy and theurgy of Recanati’s commentaries are founded on the idea that “the perfection of the supernal merkavah [the upper world] depends on the perfection of the inferior man [the microcosm]” (Commentary on the Torah, fol. 51b, cited in the INTRODUCTION, page 71 [my brackets—DK]). This contingent perfection can be obtained through the perfection of one’s thought, speech, and action (or gestures) in prayer, a “formula drawn by Recanati from the Sefer ha-Yihud” (INTRODUCTION, page 74). Prayer is instrumental in the perfection process, for “[e]ach word of the prayers [elaborated by the sages] is like a tessera [a glass or marble tile] of mosaic, whose proper interpretation can turn into a milestone for setting out in the celestial streets of emanation” (INTRODUCTION, page 80 [my brackets—DK]).

Giulio Busi concludes his preface (page 12), Recanati’s Commentary on the Daily Prayers was apt to raise Pico’s interest, especially since it offered a well-structured attempt to define a link between earthly liturgy and intradivine life. While reading the Commentary, the Count must have immediately perceived quite a few similarities with Neoplatonic theurgy, and Mithridates did his best to put his pupil on the right track. It is therefore not surprising that Corazzol was able to detect a most probable influence of Recanati’s Commentary on Pico’s Orphic theses, which are replete with theurgical hints. To the daring Neoplatonic magician that Pico was, the mystical sympathies between below and above sketched by the Italian kabbalist issued a challenge that could only be accepted.

Readership: those interested in Jewish mystical theology, kabbalah, Christian Hebraism and the Christian reception of the kabbalah, Medieval and Renaissance religious and philosophical history, Neoplatonism, and European humanism.

—Don Karr
February 2009

* Along with the many passages from Recanati’s Commentary on the Torah translated in Wirszubski’s Pico della Mirandola’s Encounter, a page-and-a-half excerpt from Commentary on the Torah (ff. 3r-v) is given in English (pages 217-8) and Hebrew (page 233), and “thematically summarized” (pages 218-9) in CHAPTER SEVEN, “The Beginning and End: Bereshit and the Sabbath,” in Crofton Black, Pico’s HEPATPLUS and Biblical Hermeneutics (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2006).

†† In Hebrew, there is Moshe Idel’s R. Menahem Rekanati, ha-mekubal (Tel Aviv, Schocken, 1998), which is the first of an intended two-volume study. My thanks to Joel Hecker for calling this work to my attention.

Sefer ha-Niqqud [= BOOK OF PUNCTUATION], from Joseph Gikitilla’s early “philosophical-kabbalistic” period, is given in three versions: (i) a critical edition of the Hebrew text (the short version used by Mithridates); (2) a transcript of the Latin translation of Mithridates; and (3) an English translation from Mithridates’ Latin.

Sefer ha-Niqqud is a treatise on “The Mystical Connotations of the [Hebrew] Vowels,” showing a play of influences, primarily between the scholasticism of Maimonides and the metaphysics of Sefer Yesirah. The text bears comparison to Gikitilla’s Sha’ar ha-Niqqud, which is the third section (of three) of his Ginat Egoz,* which is also from his early period.

Yet another work by Gikitilla with a similar title, Sod ha-Niqqud on the secrets of the vowels, is from his later “sefirotic,” or “theosophical-kabbalistic,” period.

Sefer ha-Niqqud commences with an introduction which condenses the course of [Gikitilla’s] thought in a concise fashion ... followed by a general discourse on the vowels with respect to their effects on letters, the spheres and the unique name of God. Thereafter the vowels holam, qamas hataf, qamas, suruq, hiruq, sere, segol, sva’ and patah are treated one by one in detail. The treatise concludes with a presentation of all six combinations of the word ‘holam,’ that is to say hamal, lehem, lemoah, mahal and melah. (—pages 58-59).

Within Sefer ha-Niqqud,

it was one of Gikitilla’s main concerns to show that the Hebrew vowels take part in the theory of creation expressed in the Sefer Yesirah because to him the vowels are the guarantors of motion and thus the mainspring of the process of creation. (—page 87)

The vowels “transform [the letters’] potency into actuality.” (ibid)

At the opening of a subchapter on GOD’S UNIQUE NAME IN RELATION TO THE VOWELS (§ 6), Martini offers this assessment (—page 118):

Gikitilla’s entire work, whether in his early philosophical-linguistic period or in his later sefirotic phase, is determined by the extensive consideration of the unique name of God, the tetragramm, and His other appellations such as Adonay, Elohim, or Eheyeh. The concept of the tetragramm emerges as the center of Gikitilla’s thought, and this concept of God’s unique name underwent interesting modifications, depending on the particular philosophical or religious influences to which he was exposed. Hence, a detailed study of the different perceptions that Gikitilla developed with respect to the tetragramm could serve as a mirror of his intellectual development.**

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** This desideratum may be answered somewhat by Elke Morlok’s recent book, Rabbi Joseph Gikatilla’s Hermeneutics, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.
In § 7 of the introduction, ATTEMPT AT AN INTERPRETATION, Martini offers “a new approach toward defining Giqatilla’s position within Spanish mysticism of the 13th century” (—page 130), challenging conclusions of her predecessors along the way, e.g.,

Thus, according to Giqatilla, there is no conflict between allegorical and symbolical interpretation of the Torah as Scholem assumed, for the mystic strives to exceed allegory by accepting it as a method of harmonizing scientific knowledge with the Torah in order to reach the symbol as an image of God’s very own essence. However, there is no evidence for Idel’s thesis that Maimonides’ rational approach to ma’aseh bereshit and ma’aseh merkava launched a positive or negative discussion within mystical circles in Giqatilla’s writings—neither in his early works or in his later teachings. (—page 158)

Discussion of Gikatilla’s development from his early works to his later teachings is the core of the introduction’s § 7, describing it as a “process of disengagement from Aristotelian approaches” which “culminates in the Ša’are orah,” Gikatilla’s classic account of the sefirot.* With what I will call an efficient subtlety, Martini traces the influences affecting this process in detail.

Thus far, I have discussed only Martini’s introduction, which, like Giacomo Corazzol’s introduction to Menahem Recanati’s Commentary on the Daily Prayers from the same series**, constitutes a substantial (145-page) study not only of the featured text but of its author as well.

Martini describes Mithridates’ Latin translation, identifying the “reading aids” supplied by the translator to help Pico through passages which, in “pure translation” would have been utterly opaque. Mithridates’ “clarifying comments...distinguish themselves for being concise and faithful to the source.” (—page 174) There are, however, Mithridates’ more “interpretive comments,” designed to prompt the interest of “Renaissance philosophers such as Ficino or Pico” (—page 189), discussed in Martini’s § 3. THE ASCENSION OF THE SOUL TO THE GREATEST FELICITAS. Further, there are Mithridates’ infrequent CHRISTIANIZING INTERPOLATIONS (§ 4.), of which Martini remarks on two examples.

Martini’s analysis of the text shows how the concepts transmitted by the Latin versions of works such as Sefer ha-Niqqud position themselves in the emerging Christian kabbalah of Pico and Johannes Reuchlin, noting in particular Reuchlin’s notion of “the close affinity between the kabbalah and Pythagorean doctrine.” (—page 188) Martini concludes, however, that “the choice of the Sefer ha-niqqud for Pico’s kabbalistic library remains a riddle” (—page 218), for other works, i.e., Ginnat Egoz and Sha’are Orah, “the latter actually having been recommended to [Pico] by Del Medigo” (—ibid), would seem more fitting choices.

Readership: those interested in Jewish mystical theology, kabbalah, Christian Hebraism and the Christian reception of the kabbalah, Medieval and Renaissance religious and philosophical history, Neoplatonism, and European humanism.

—Don Karr, March 2011