

# The Study of Christian Cabala in English

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## Part 1

Anyone who has read a few books concerning the Western esoteric tradition has encountered, at the very least, references to Cabala. The spelling varies: In this paper, *Kabbalah*, for the most part, refers to Jewish doctrine; *Cabala* refers to Christian developments.

Cabala figures into many tenets and methods central to Western esoteric thought and practice. Unfortunately, what is meant by term is not always clear and may vary from one reference to another. Those readers who enter an investigation of (Christian) Cabala after having studied (Jewish) Kabbalah may well become impatient at the outset with the misreadings and deformations characteristic of “Christian developments.” Perhaps even more frustrating, after co-opting such Kabbalah as was desired, virtually all Christian Cabalists sought to transform it into a dogmatic weapon to turn back against the Jews to compel their conversion—starting with Ramon Llull (ca. 1232-1316). See Harvey J. Hames, *The Art of Conversion: Christianity and Kabbalah in the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2000), a study of Llull “as being the first Christian to acknowledge and appreciate Kabbalah as a tool of conversion.” Hames demonstrates, too, that Llull was “not a Kabbalist, nor was he versed in any particular Kabbalistic approach” (p. 27). Refer, in particular, to Hames’ Chapter Three: “Into the Gates of Wisdom.” (Further on Llull, see “Items of Interest”: Herrera, Llull, *Man, Myth & Magic*, and Rossi.)

The strand of Cabala which has become best known began in Renaissance Florence with Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-94). Pico and his camp sought to harmonize their Christian beliefs with Kabbalah, which they considered a primal form of Jewish doctrine which originated with Moses himself (if not Adam) and thus long presaged the teachings of Jesus. This parallels the treatment of the *Hermetica* by the circle around Ficino, namely the movement to recover the *prisca theologia*, the ancient theology, thought to be the fountainhead of religion and philosophy. (See D.P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972—described in “Items of Interest”] and Jerome Friedman, *The Most Ancient Testimony: Sixteenth-Century Christian-Hebraica in the Age of Renaissance Nostalgia* [Athens: Ohio University Press, 1983].)

There was, however, an earlier expression of Cabala among the Spanish *conversos* in the late 1200s which continued until the expulsion of the late 1400s. There is not a whole lot on these early Spanish Cabalists, e.g., Abner of Burgos and Pablo de Heredia, in the English literature available. The promising title, *Spanish Christian Cabala* by Catherine Swietlicki (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), worthy as it is, deals with later manifestations of Christian Cabala in Spain. While Swietlicki's book might not generally be thought of as a primer on Cabala, it does contain a good overview of the Renaissance period as its opening chapter, which could help those approaching this subject for the first time to get their bearings. Swietlicki goes on to summarize "The Diffusion of the Christian Cabala in Renaissance Culture" in Chapter 2, giving a country-by-country account, covering Italy, France, England, and Spain. She then details the Cabala of Santa Teresa de Jesus (of Avila), Fray Luis de Leon, and San Juan de la Cruz—all of the sixteenth century.\*

On Abner and Pablo (as well as Pico and his contemporary Abraham Farissol), see Gershom Scholem, "The Beginnings of the Christian Kabbalah," in *The Christian Kabbalah: Jewish Mystical Books and Their Christian Interpreters*, edited by Joseph Dan (Cambridge: Harvard College Library, 1997). This article was originally published in German: "Zur Geschichte der Anfänge der Christlichen Kabbala" in *Essays Presented to Leo Baeck* (London: 1954); then in French: "Considerations sur l'Histoire des debuts de la Kabbale chretienne" in *Kabbalistes Chretiens* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1979). See also "Items of Interest": Sirat and Graetz.

Ideally, we would find sources which led us in a nice straight line from the Renaissance to the present day. Alas, the materials available on the subject and the history of Cabala itself conspire to make our effort one fraught with cuts and detours, though a certain shape to it all does emerge. At the outset, the limitations of an English-only bibliography should be noted, for any short list of the literature on Christian Cabala consists largely of works in other languages. Among the standard works are

- Benz, Ernst. *Die christliche Kabbala: Ein Stiefkind der Theologie* (Zurich: Rhein-Verlag, 1958)
- Faivre, Antoine (ed). *Kabbalistes chretiens* [series CAHIERS DE L'HERMETISME], a collection which includes articles by Scholem, Wirszubski, Benz, etc. (Paris: Albin Michel, 1979)
- Gorny, L. *La Kabbale juive et Cabale chretiennes* (Paris: P. Belfond, 1977)
- Secret, Francois. *Le Zohar chez les kabbalistes chretiens de la Renaissance* (Paris: Durlacher, 1958)
- \_\_\_\_\_ . *Les Kabbalistes chretiens de la Renaissance* (Paris: Dunod, 1964)
- \_\_\_\_\_ . *Hermetisme et Kabbale* (Naples: L'Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 1992)

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\* On Teresa of Avila, see "Items of Interest": Burgeson and Green. Regarding early Spanish Christian-Jewish cross influence, see Yehuda Liebes, "Christian Influences on the Zohar" in *Studies in the Zohar* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993] and "Items of Interest": Krabbenhoft and Wolfson.

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

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

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\* In his article, "Renaissance Kabbalah" (in *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, edited by Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman, New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1995), G. Mallery Masters singles out Jean Thenaud's *Traite de la Cabale chretienne* as "one very typical 'popularizing' treatise from early sixteenth-century France." After summarizing its contents, Masters reviews its sources, which amounts to a survey of the key figures of Renaissance Cabala: Pico, Reuchlin, Agrippa, Ricci, and Giorgi. As an overview, this article is awfully rapid. Better introductory articles and chapters for our purposes are

- Antoine Faivre's "Renaissance Hermeticism and the Concept of Western Esotericism" in *Gnosis and Hermeticism*, edited by Roelof van den Broek and Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998);
- Wouter J. Hanegraaff's historical outline of "traditional esotericism" (Chapter 14, especially section C, "The Components of Western Esotericism") in *New Age Religion and Western Culture* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996)
- Marsha Keith Schuchard, "The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance, and the Development of the Syncretic Occult Tradition," = CHAPTER II of *Freemasonry, Secret Societies, and the Continuity of the Occult Traditions in English Literature* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1975).
- Catherine Swietlicki, "Christian Cabala in the Renaissance" and "The Diffusion of Christian Cabala in Renaissance Culture" = CHAPTERS 1 and 2 of *Spanish Christian Cabala*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986.

In spite of its "assertive title" (the author's term, page ii), *The Rape of Jewish Mysticism by Christian Theologians* by Robert Wang (Columbia [MD]: Marcus Aurelius Press, 2001) is a rather drab summary of well-known—and well-worn—sources. 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, 1979) and Francois Secret (1964) on *cabala*, Charles G. Nauert (1965) on Agrippa, and Peter French (1972) on Dee, etc. Moreover, he does not engage his *thesis* (i.e., *rape* of Jewish mysticism) except fleetingly anywhere through the book save the preface and the brief conclusion. The book comes to an anticlimactic halt with "Christian Kabbalah becomes Rosicrucianism," "The Fama Fraternitas," and "Robert Fludd." Wang's omission of developments through the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> 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*.

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

*Alchemy of the Word* is presented in four sections: The first, "In the Beginning," traces Kabbalah and its influence from the Renaissance to the present-day. Beitchman puts some emphasis on the Kabbalah of the *Zohar*, treating a range of this central text's concepts and difficulties. Included are arresting discussions of Kabbalah's sexual symbolism and of the stress between (and attempted resolutions of) the notions of God's immanence and transcendence. The second section, "The Secret of Agrippa," begins with Pico, even while calling attention (relying on Secret) to cabalistic developments which predate Pico; it goes on to Reuchlin, as one would expect. Then to Agrippa; however, Beitchman does not dwell so much on *De occulta philosophia* as on Agrippa's apparent self-refutation in *De certitudine et vanitate omnium scientiarum declamatio inuectiva* (On the Uncertainty and Vanity of the Arts and Sciences), which Beitchman considers a manner of further cabalistic development on Agrippa's part. The third section, entitled "Bibliographica Kabbalistica," lists and, to one extent or another, describes a number of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century works which treat Cabala, whether sympathetically or otherwise. The promise of the chapter is undermined somewhat by Beitchman's inconsistent treatment of the items included and his veering off the subject-at-hand so frequently. The final section, "The Kiss of the Spouse," deals with (as the subheading suggests) "Cabala in England (1497-1700)," discussing Shakespeare, John Dee, and Thomas Vaughan, among others.

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

*Alchemy of the Word* is not a good introductory book; it would be best to have been through some of the other studies before engaging this one, i.e., Blau's *Christian Interpretation...*, and Yates' *Occult Philosophy* (see below, and see the footnote on page 3). It is something of a shame that Beitchman's keen observations, insights, and humor are buried in such cumbersome prose, strained with interjections and qualifiers. (I do hope that he doesn't feel that there is some form of *ars kabbalistica* in his over-interrupted sentences.) Moreover, there is Beitchman's infatuation with the word *ineluctable*, which seems to appear at least once on nearly every page of the book. All the same, there is a wealth of valuable information and fine synthesis here. In the end, the book is well worth the discomfort.

The classic English-language resource for our subject is Frances Yates' *Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979 and 2001; rpt. London: Ark Paperbacks, 1983), which is divided into three parts: Part 1 covers the Renaissance and Reformation periods, discussing Lull, Pico, Reuchlin, Francesco Giorgi, and Agrippa; Part 2 takes up the Elizabethan period, treating, most significantly, John Dee and Shakespeare; Part 3 moves into Cabala's connections with Rosicrucianism, occult philosophy and Puritanism (John Milton), and the return of the Jews to England in the seventeenth century. From reading Yates, we see how Cabala got smeared together with other pressing religious and philosophic concerns

of the day (Hermetism, alchemy, astrology, and magic), and how the term “cabala” came to be used quite loosely, referring at times to stuff which no Jewish Kabbalist would recognize as such.

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

- *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964; rpt. 1991) paraphrases the Hermetic writings which were most important to Ficino and company, treats Pico’s “Cabalist Magic” in some detail and summarizes the contents of Agrippa’s *De occulta philosophia*. This all leads to a discussion of Bruno’s Cabala, which, according to Yates, was derived primarily from Agrippa and remained rather dilute, being far less important to Bruno than his “Egyptianism.” Compare *Giordano Bruno and the Kabbalah: Prophets, Magicians, and Rabbis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) by Karen Silvia de Leon-Jones, who contends that Bruno’s knowledge and development of the Kabbalah were far more extensive than Yates suggests. In de Leon-Jones’ words, “Bruno does not merely present or discuss the Kabbalah, he transforms it, manipulates it, makes it his own, does it” (*Giordano Bruno and the Kabbalah*, p. 6). Note, however, the objections of David Harari, “Was the Author of *Cabala del Cavallo Pegaseo* a Kabbalist?” (in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, Volume Four, edited by Daniel Abrams and Avraham Elqayam. Los Angeles [Culver City]: Cherub Press, 1999); responding to de Leon-Jones’ *Giordano Bruno and the Kabbalah*, Harari suggests that Leone Ebreo was the author of *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo*, not Bruno, thus pulling the rug (i.e., the star textual witness) out from under de Leon-Jones’ thesis. The text in question, *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo* (THE CABALA OF PEGASUS)—attributed to Bruno—has been translated and annotated by Sidney L. Sondergard and Madison U. Sowell (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2002).
- *The Art of Memory* (University of Chicago Press, 1966; rpt. 1994) follows the methods of “artificial memory” from the ancient Greek rhetoricians to the seventeenth-century scientific philosophers. Of particular interest to us here are Yates’ chapters on Giulio Camillo’s *Memory Theatre*, which fused the Hermetic-Cabalist tradition to the art of memory. There are also chapters on the Art of Ramon Llull as a memory method, the memory systems of Giordano Bruno, and the *Memory Theatre* of Robert Fludd.
- *Theatre of the World* (University of Chicago Press, 1969) picks up where *Art of Memory* leaves off concerning Robert Fludd and John Dee, considering both as perpetuators and propagators of “the Renaissance revival of Vitruvius.” As with *Giordano Bruno* and *Art of Memory*, *Theatre of the World* “carries” Yates’ series on Renaissance thought “in the direction of the English theatre, and another step towards Shakespeare.”
- *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1972; rpt. 1993 and 1996) discusses the Rosicrucian Manifestos of the early seventeenth century and the reactions which they stirred; the whole commotion was quite well entangled with the Hermetic-Cabalist tradition. In this work, Yates further emphasizes (or, as some think nowadays, exaggerates) the importance of John Dee.
- “The Hermetic Tradition in Renaissance Science,” appears in *Articles on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology*, Volume 11: RENAISSANCE MAGIC, edited by Brian P. Levack (New York/London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992; hereafter: *Articles on Witchcraft* 11).

For a recent review of the “so-called Yates thesis,” namely Yates’ “Hermetic interpretation of the renaissance (sic *a la* Gatti), see Hilary Gatti, “Frances Yates’s Hermetic Renaissance in the Documents held in the Warburg Institute Archive,” in *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism*, volume 2, number 2 (2002), Leiden-Boston-Koeln: Brill.

Inevitably cited along with Yates' studies is D.P. Walker's *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella* (London: Notre Dame Press, 1958; rpt 1975; rpt. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000). Between Ficino (1433-99) and Campanella (1568-1639) occurred developments of crucial importance to our line of inquiry, namely, the mixing of the demonic and the astrologic (as derived from Ficino), a mixture which turns up in one form in Agrippa's synthesis of Medieval magic, *De occulta philosophia*, but in quite another in Francesco Giorgi's *De harmonia mundi totius*. In the first section of *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, Walker focuses on Ficino, in the second on what became of his magic in the sixteenth century, and in the third on the "Telesians" (named for Bernardo Telesio, philosopher and scientist, noted less for his ideas than for his methods of empirical science) and Tommaso Campanella.

One impressive study details Pico's contact with Kabbalah: *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, by Chaim Wirszubski (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), which discusses Pico's sources and, in particular, considers his translator, Flavius Mithridates, who interjected more than a few interpolations into his renderings. Throughout, Pico's famous *Conclusiones* are drawn upon for analysis. The appendices to this book, of which there are twenty-three, cover points of doctrine and history connected with Pico's knowledge and development of Kabbalah. (It is interesting to note that Pico's main sources for Kabbalah were Abraham Abulafia and Menahem Recanti.) There is one drawback to Wirszubski's fine work: One needs to know Latin to read all the extracts from Pico and his translated sources.

For a reliable complete edition of Pico's *Theses* with an annotated English translation, see Stephen A. Farmer, *Syncretism in the West: Pico's 900 Theses (1486): The Evolution of Traditional Religious and Philosophical Systems* (Tempe: Medieval and Renaissance Texts, 1998). Also in English, Pico's *On the Dignity of Man, On Being and the One, Heptaplus*, translated by Charles Glenn Wallis, Paul J.W. Miller, and Douglas Carmichael respectively, with an introduction by Paul J.W. Miller [THE LIBRARY OF LIBERAL ARTS] (Indianapolis/New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965).

A translation of Pico's *Conclusiones Cabalisticæ* (extracted from the *900 Theses*) appears in A.E. Waite's *Holy Kabbalah* (London: Williams & Norgate, Ltd, 1929; rpt. New Hyde Park: University Books, 1960, and subsequently; rpt. Carol Publishing Group, 1992) in a chapter entitled "Some Christian Students of the Kabbalah." There, Waite gives sketches of Lull, Pico, Agrippa, Paracelsus, Reuchlin, Guillaume Postel, Robert Fludd, Henry More, Thomas Vaughan, Knorr von Rosenroth, Thomas Burnet, Ralph Cudworth, Louis Claude de St. Martin, Eliphaz Levi, Papus (Gerard Encausse), Stanislas de Guita, H.P. Blavatsky, and a few others. Waite's survey is quite useful, for its parade of names connected with Cabala—whether by fact or fancy—takes us from the Renaissance to the end of the nineteenth century. This collection of characters gives some idea of the range of Cabala's seepage into all occult and Theosophic endeavor, including the symbolism of the Freemasons and the Rosicrucians.

For more on Pico, see "The Magical and Neoplatonic Interpretations of the Kabbalah in the Renaissance," by Moshe Idel in both *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, edited by Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983) and *Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, edited by David Ruderman (New York: New York University, 1992). See also "Pico della Mirandola and the Beginnings of Christian Kabbala" by Klaus Reichert, in *Mysticism, Magic, and Kabbalah in Ashkenazi Judaism*, edited by K.E. Grozinger and Joseph Dan (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995).

Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522) wrote two books on Cabala. The first, *De verbo mirifico* (1494), speaks of the “wonder-working word,” YHShVH, the miraculous name of Jesus derived from the tetragrammaton of the Old Testament: YHVH with the letter *shin* added. The second, *De arte cabalistica* (1516), is a broader, more informed excursion into various kabbalistic concerns. A discussion of Reuchlin’s writings, especially *De verbo mirifico*, constitutes the fourth chapter of *The Most Ancient Testimony: Sixteenth-Century Christian-Hebraica in the Age of Renaissance Nostalgia*, by Jerome Friedman (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1983). *De arte cabalistica* appeared in English translation in 1983 (Abaris Books, Inc.) and was reprinted with a new introduction by Moshe Idel in 1993 (Lincoln: Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press: *On the Art of the Kabbalah*).

Further on Reuchlin:

- “Three Sixteenth-Century Attitudes to Judaism: Reuchlin, Erasmus, and Luther,” by Heiko Oberman, in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, edited by Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983);
- Christian D. Ginsburg’s description of *De verbo mirifico* in *The Kabbalah* (1864; published as *The Essenes and the Kabbalah*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956; rpt. Santa Fe: Sun Books, 1993), pp. 208-213;
- Charles Zika’s “Reuchlin’s *De verbo mirifico* and the Magic Debate of the Late Fifteenth Century,” in *Articles on Witchcraft* 11 (Garland, 1992);
- Joseph Dan’s article, “The Kabbalah of Johannes Reuchlin and Its Historical Significance,” which appears in *The Christian Kabbalah: Jewish Mystical Books and Their Christian Interpreters*, edited by Joseph Dan (Cambridge: Harvard College Library, 1997), and Dan’s collected articles, *Jewish Mysticism*, Volume III: THE MODERN PERIOD (Northvale: Jason Aronson Inc., 1999), which also contains Dan’s essay, “Christian Kabbalah: From Mysticism to Esotericism.”

On Reuchlin, also see “Items of Interest” under Baron, Graetz, Oberman, and Thorndike.

Francesco Giorgi (or Zorzi, 1467-1540) “has been considered a central figure in sixteenth-century Christian Kabbalah both by his contemporaries and by modern scholars. ... After Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who was the founder of the Christian kabbalah, Zorzi can claim second place,” writes Giulio Busi in “Francesco Zorzi: A Methodical Dreamer,” in *The Christian Kabbalah* (ed. Dan, Harvard College Library, 1997). Also see Yates’ chapter on Giorgi in *Occult Philosophy* (chapter V) and Walker’s *Spiritual and Demonic Magic* (pp. 112-119). Readers of French, see the chapters on Giorgi in Francois Secret’s *Hermetisme et Kabbale* (LEZIONI DELLA SCUOLA DI STUDI SUPERIORI IN NAPOLI 15, Napoli: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 1992).

Following on Pico and Reuchlin was Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim (1496-1535). His major work, *De occulta philosophia* (in three books), is a compendium of occult sciences. Agrippa’s account of cabala is found in Book III, coupled as it is with angelology and demonology and the magic connected with these. There is a fine edition prepared by Donald Tyson, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1992), where *De occulta philosophia* is rightly referred to as “The Foundation Book of Western Occultism.” Indeed, no other book has contributed more to the Western magical-occult tradition than this—with its companion, the pseudo-Agrippan “Fourth Book,” which is a tract on ceremonial magic in the same spirit as the three *true* books (see Robert Turner, ed., *Of Occult Philosophy: Book IV*, Gillette: Heptangle Books, 1995). Tyson supplements Agrippa’s text with a substantial amount of well-researched support material covering such topics as “Practical Kabbalah,” “The Sephiroth,”

“Magic Squares,” “Geomancy,” and others, in eight appendices, which makes this particular edition a valuable reference book.

*De occulta philosophia* in English can be viewed on-line at Joseph H. Peterson’s *Twilit Grotto* site, [www.esotericarchives.com](http://www.esotericarchives.com) and, as page-by-page images from the original, in Volume II of *Esoterica: The Journal of Esoteric Studies* (2000) at [www.esoteric.msu.edu](http://www.esoteric.msu.edu) in the section called “Archival Works.” Agrippa’s *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum* is available online (in both Latin and English) at Cornell University Library WITCHCRAFT COLLECTION site, at <http://historical.library.cornell.edu/witchcraft/index.html> (click *browse* > opening page: A).

On Agrippa, see

- Charles G. Nauert, *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought* (ILLINOIS STUDIES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES 55, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965; for Agrippa’s cabalistic sources, see pp. 129-136);
- Marc G. van der Poel, *Cornelius Agrippa, The Humanist Theologian and His Declamations* (Leiden / New York / Koln: Brill, 1997);
- Christopher I. Leirich, *The Language of Demons and Angels: Cornelius Agrippa’s Occult Philosophy* (Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2003 = *Hermetic Hermeneutics: Language, Magic, and Power in Cornelius Agrippa’s ‘DE OCCULTA PHILOSOPHIA,’* Volumes One and Two, Ph.D. dissertation, Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000).\*

The van der Poel and Leirich books complement each other nicely: The former concentrates on Agrippa’s philosophical and theological thought *via* his correspondence, orations, and declamations (i.e., *De incertitudine et vanitate...*, *De nobilitate et praecellentia foeminei sexus*, etc.), the latter focuses on *De occulta philosophia*. Particularly on matters of Agrippa’s biography, van der Poel and Leirich defer to Nauert as supplemented by the numerous articles of Paola Zambelli, only a few of which are in English:

- “Magic and Radical Reformation in Agrippa of Nettesheim,” in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 39 (1976) and *Articles on Witchcraft* 11 (Garland, 1992)
- “Scholastic and Humanist Views of Hermeticism and Witchcraft,” in *Hermeticism and the Renaissance: Intellectual History and the Occult in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Ingrid Merkel and Allen G. Debus (Washington: Folger Books, 1988).

The bibliographies in van der Poel and Leirich are immensely useful: See van der Poel (pp. 277-280) for a complete list of Agrippa’s works; see Leirich (pp. 240-243), **WORKS ON AGRIPPA**.

See also “Agrippa and Occult Philosophy” in Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic & Experimental Science*, Volume V: THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY (New York / London: Columbia University Press, 1941<sup>1st</sup>, 1966<sup>4th</sup>).

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\* Note Leirich’s comments on Antoine Faivre’s *definition* of esotericism in *The Language of Demons and Angels*, pp. 159-164.



In *Occult Philosophy*, Frances Yates calls John Dee (1527-1608) a “Christian Cabalist,” and, indeed, Dee seems to have drawn his Cabala fully from Christian sources, primarily Agrippa. There is a well-developed literature on Dee—many more works than are listed here—including his own works in reprint as well as studies of his works and influence. Recent publications include these works by Dee:

- Meric Casaubon’s presentation of Dee material: *A True and Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Years between Dr. John Dee and Some Spirits* (London: 1659; rpt. London: Askin, and Glasgow: Antonine Publishing Company, 1974; rpt. New York: Magickal Child Publishing, 1992; rpt. Kila: Kessinger Publishing, n.d.); also online at <http://historical.library.cornell.edu/witchcraft/index.html> at Cornell University Library’s WITCHCRAFT COLLECTION (go to *browse* > letter D). See the discussion of *A True and Faithful Relation* in Wayne Shumaker, *Renaissance Curiosa* [MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE TEXTS AND STUDIES, Volume 8] (Binghamton: Center for Medieval & Early Renaissance Studies, 1982), CHAPTER I: “John Dee’s Conversations with Angels.”
- *The Heptarchia Mystica of John Dee*, edited by Robert Turner (Wellingborough: Aquarian Press, 1983 and 1986);
- *Hieroglyphic Monad* (London: John M. Watkins, 1947; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1975; rpt. Edmonds: Sure Fire Press, 1986; rpt. York Beach, Red Wheel/Weiser, 2000);
- Geoffrey James’ edition of *The Enochian Magick of Dr. John Dee* (St. Paul, Llewellyn Publications, 1984 and 1994);
- *The Secrets of John Dee*, with introduction and commentary by Gordon James (Edmonds: Holmes Publishing Group, 1995);
- *John Dee: Essential Readings*, selected and introduced by Gerald Suster [WESTERN ESOTERIC MASTERS SERIES]. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2003.
- *John Dee’s Five Books of Mystery: Original Sourcebook of Enochian Magic* FROM THE COLLECTED WORKS KNOWN AS MYSTERIORUM LIBRI QVINQUE, edited by Joseph H. Peterson (York Beach: Weiser Books, 2003), which is a welcome reprint of *Mysteriorum Libri Quinque: Five Books of Mystical Exercises of John Dee* [MAGNUM OPUS - HERMETIC SOURCE WORKS SERIES, 20] hand-bound by Adam McLean, limited edition of 250 copies in 1985.

About Dee:

- French, Peter. *John Dee: The World of an Elizabethan Magus* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972; rpt. 1984);
- Clulee, Nicholas H. *John Dee’s Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1988);
- Turner, Robert. *Elizabethan Magic: The Art of the Magus* (Longmead: Element Books Ltd, 1989);
- James, Geoffrey. *Angel Magic: The Ancient Art of Summoning and Communicating with Angelic Beings* (St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1995);
- Harkness, Deborah. *John Dee’s Conversations with Angels: Cabala, Alchemy, and the End of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999);
- Hakansson, Hakan. *Seeing the Word: John Dee and Renaissance Occultism* [UGGLAN MINERVASERIEN, 2] (Lund: Lunds Universitet, 2001);
- Woolley, Benjamin. *The Queen’s Conjuror: The Science and Magic of Dr. John Dee, Advisor to Queen Elizabeth I* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001).

Significant articles on Dee include Nicholas H. Clulee’s “Astrology, Magic, and Optics: Facets of John Dee’s Natural Philosophy” and Samuel Clyde McCulloch’s “John Dee: Elizabethan Doctor

of Science and Magic,” both of which are in *Articles on Witchcraft* 11 (Garland, 1992); and Michael T. Walton and Phyllis J. Walton’s piece, “The Geometrical Kabbalahs of John Dee and Johannes Kepler: The Hebrew Tradition and the Mathematical Study of Nature,” in *Experiencing Nature: Proceedings of a Conference in Honor of Allen G. Debus*, edited by Paul H. Theerman and Karen Hunger Parshall (Dordrecht/Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997).

Quite a bit of material on Dee is available on the Internet as, for example, The John Dee Society site at [www.johndee.org](http://www.johndee.org), The John Dee Publication Project (for Enochian material) at [www.dnai.com/~cholden](http://www.dnai.com/~cholden), and Twilit Grotto (selected writings) at [www.esotericarchives.com](http://www.esotericarchives.com). Refer also to the bibliography, which is somewhat more extensive the one I have given, at [www.nd.edu/~dharley/witchcraft/Dee.html](http://www.nd.edu/~dharley/witchcraft/Dee.html).

Dozens of books have been written about Enochian magic as derived from Dee’s work with Edward Kelley for the simple reason that the Golden Dawn incorporated a portion of it into their teachings. The Golden Dawn’s manner of Enochia was further developed by Aleister Crowley and subsequent authors and *magickians*, many of whom added elements which are quite alien to Dee’s work even while omitting well-nigh half of his original system. For an accurate impression of Dee and Kelley’s entire system, see Donald Tyson’s *Enochian Magic for Beginners* (St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1997). The title is misleading; Tyson’s book is a thorough introduction, description, and appraisal.

Further regarding the effects of Cabala in England, there is Daniel Banes’ *Shakespeare, Shylock and Kabbalah* (Silver Spring: Malcolm House Publications, 1978). Banes discusses John Dee and Robert Fludd to establish the existence of Cabala in England. He then goes on the purpose of his book: “to identify some of the kabbalistic themes in *The Merchant of Venice*, and to relate them to antecedents in the literature of Kabbalah.” From Banes’ analysis, it would appear that Shakespeare was most indebted to Francisco Giorgi’s *De harmonia mundi* (1525) via the French version of it rendered by Guy le Fevre de la Boderie (1578). See also Banes’ *Provocative Merchant of Venice* (Silver Spring/Chicago: Malcolm House, 1975), which begins with a dismissive critique of Charles and Mary Lamb’s prose retelling of “The Merchant of Venice” and concludes with Banes’ “vagrant speculations” regarding the dependence of this famous work upon the Kabbalah’ i.e., he sets up a variant *tree of life* showing correspondences between the *sefirot* and the play’s *dramatis personae*.

Among the names connected with Cabala are Paracelsus (1493-1541), Robert Fludd (1574-1637), and Guillaume Postel (1510-81). To Paracelsus, who is generally more associated with alchemy, the term “cabala” can be attached only in its broadest, most inexact sense, i.e., referring to astronomical and magical practices. Similarly, Dr. Fludd’s Cabala is a mixture of all sorts of stuff. Fludd did, however, expound upon the *sefirot* and the Hebrew letters (in the second book of *Summum Bonum*) and charted their correspondences to the planets and holy names in a few places (e.g., in *The Mosaicall Philosophy*; see below). Interestingly, while Fludd claimed Menahem Recanti as his kabbalistic authority, his sources were more apparently Pico, Reuchlin, and Agrippa. Guillaume Postel, on the other hand, produced a Latin translation of the *Sefer Yezirah* and penned some comments on it. He also translated portions of the *Zohar*, receiving guidance in its understanding from an unlikely tutor: an illiterate woman, though something of a sixteenth-century Mother Teresa, called Madre Zuana, or Mother Johanna—the Venetian Virgin. At various times, Postel identified her as mother of the world, the *shekhinah*, and the second messiah. Marion Kuntz writes, “As [Postel] worked on his translation of the *Zohar*, he became ever more convinced that the restitution of all things as interpreted by his Mother Johanna was confirmed not only in the ‘most divine and rare books of the *Zohar*,’ but also in the books of the ancient [Jewish] interpreters...” (*Guillaume Postel*, page 84—cited below).

Paracelsus, Fludd, and Postel are all discussed in A.E. Waite's *Holy Kabbalah* (mentioned above). On Paracelsus, see

- Andrew Weeks, *Paracelsus: Speculative Theory and the Crisis of the Early Reformation* [SUNY Series in Western Esoteric Traditions] (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997); [Paracelsus.]
- *The Archidoxes of Magic* translated by Robert Turner, 1655 (London: Askin, 1975; rpt. Kila: Kessinger Publishing Company, 1997);
- *Paracelsus: Selected Writings*, edited by Jolande Jacobi, translated by Norbert Guterman [Bollingen Series XXVIII] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979);
- Charles Webster, "Alchemical and Paracelsian Medicine," in *Articles on Witchcraft* 11 (Garland, 1992);
- On the Internet, go to [www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/paracelsus/paracelsus\\_1.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/paracelsus/paracelsus_1.html) = *Paracelsus, Five Hundred Years: Three American Exhibitions*, with introductory material by Allen G. Debus.

On Fludd, see

- the antique but adequate *Dr. Robert Fludd: The English Rosicrucian, Life and Works*, by J.B. Craven (Kirkwall: 1902; rpt. Kila: Kessinger Publications, n.d.);
- *Robert Fludd: Essential Readings*, selected and edited by William H. Huffman (London: Aquarian/Thorsons, 1992);
- William H. Huffman's *Robert Fludd and the End of the Renaissance* (London/New York: Routledge, 1988);
- Joscelyn Godwin, *Robert Fludd: Hermetic Philosopher and Surveyor of Two Worlds* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1979; rpt. Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1991).

Refer also to Yates' works, especially *Art of Memory* and *Theatre of the World*. Out of print and difficult to find these days is Adam McLean's edition of *The Mosaicall Philosophy: The Cabala of Robert Fludd* [MAGNUM OPUS HERMETIC SOURCEWORKS #2] (London: The Hermetic Research Trust, 1979); fortunately, the 1659 edition of *The Mosaicall Philosophy* has been reprinted by Kessinger Publishing Company (2003; Cabala is discussed in THE SECOND SECTION: Book 2, starting at CHAP. II, p. 171ff of the 1659 edition).

For Fludd material on the Internet, see "Titlepages to Robert Fludd's Books" at [www.alchemywebsite.com/fluddtit.html](http://www.alchemywebsite.com/fluddtit.html), the article on Fludd by Sharon M.W. at [www.levity.com/alchemy/](http://www.levity.com/alchemy/), Sharon M.W.'s six articles at The Ancient Rosae Crucis site: [www.arcgl.org/choice.html](http://www.arcgl.org/choice.html) (go to Selected Reading).

On Postel, see

- William Bouwsma's *Concordia Mundi: The Career and Thought of Guillaume Postel (1510-1581)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957);
- Bouwsma's article, "Postel and the Significance of Renaissance Cabalism," (in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 15, 1954);
- Marion L. Kuntz' *Guillaume Postel: Prophet of the Restitution of All Things—His Life and Works* (The Hague / Boston / Hingham: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1981);
- Kuntz' collection, *Venice, Myth and Utopian Thought in the Sixteenth Century: Bodin, Postel and the Virgin of Venice* (VARIORUM COLLECTED STUDIES SERIES CS668, Aldershot / Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2000; of the eight articles which concern Postel, six are in English, and two are in Italian);

- Bernard McGinn's "Cabalists and Christians: Reflections on Cabala in Medieval and Renaissance Thought," in *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews*, edited by R. H. Popkin and G.M. Weiner (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993; McGinn's article also covers Pico and includes a brief section on the period before him, back into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, discussing in particular the converted Jew Petrus Alfonsi);
- Yvonne Petry's *Gender, Kabbalah and the Catholic Reformation: A Study of the Mystical Theology of Guillaume Postel (1510-1581)* (Ph.D. thesis, Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1997) which is soon to be published by Brill.

Novelist, historian, and semiotics specialist Umberto Eco devotes some pages to Postel in *The Search for the Perfect Language* (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1995), a book which offers much of interest regarding Christian Europe's approaches to Kabbalah and the Hebrew tongue.

In the seventeenth century, two men account for the most significant promulgation of Kabbalah and Cabala outside Jewry: Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614-98) and Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636-89). Van Helmont's influence was surprisingly broad: from the Cambridge Platonists (in particular Henry More) to Leibniz (Kabbalah, as gathered by Leibniz through his contact with van Helmont and von Rosenroth, is thought to have influenced his concept of *monads* as well as his notions of free will). A number of items by Allison Coudert deal with all of this:

- "A Cambridge Platonist's Kabbalist Nightmare," in *Journal for the History of Ideas*, XXXVI:4 (1976);
- "Henry More, the Kabbalah, and the Quakers," in *Philosophy, Science, and Religion in England*, edited by R. Ashcraft, R. Kroll, and P. Zagorin (Cambridge University Press, 1992);
- "The *Kabbala denudata*: Converting Jews or Seducing Christians?" in *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews*, eds. Richard H. Popkin and Gordon M. Weiner (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993);
- *Leibniz and the Kabbalah* [INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES OF THE HISTORY OF IDEAS (hereafter: INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES), 142] (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995);
- "Leibniz, Locke, Newton and the Kabbalah," in *The Christian Kabbalah*, ed. Joseph Dan (Harvard College Library, 1997);
- "Leibniz and the Kabbalah," in *Leibniz, Mysticism and Religion* [INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES, 158], edited by Allison P. Coudert, Richard Popkin, and Gordon M. Weiner (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998);
- "The *Kabbala denudata*," in *The Columbia History of Western Philosophy*, edited by Richard Popkin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999: pp. 363-6).
- "Kabbalistic Messianism versus Kabbalistic Enlightenment," in *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture*, Volume I: *JEWISH MESSIANISM IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD* [INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES, 173], edited by Matt Goldish and Richard H. Popkin (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001).

Coudert's book, *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century: The Life and Thought of Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614-1698)* [BRILL SERIES IN JEWISH STUDIES, 9] (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1999) covers van Helmont and those influential thinkers around him: von Rosenroth, Henry More, Anne Conway, John Locke, Leibniz. This work offers the most comprehensive treatment of seventeenth-century Cabala to date. Further, see the comments on van Helmont and his summary of Christian Cabala, *Adumbratio Kabbalae Christianae*, in Sheila

Spector's "Wonders Divine": *The Development of Blake's Kabbalistic Myth* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2001); and Stuart Brown's "F.M. van Helmont: His Philosophical Connections and the Reception of His Later Cabbalistical Philosophy," in *Studies in Seventeenth-Century European Philosophy* [OXFORD STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY, vol. 2] (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

On the Cambridge Platonists, see Gerald R Cragg (ed.), *The Cambridge Platonists*. [LIBRARY OF PROTESTANT THOUGHT] New York: Oxford University Press, 1968. This useful collection offers extracts, primarily from Benjamin Whichcote, John Smith, Ralph Cudworth, and Henry More (Cudworth and More being the most significant). See also Frederick James Powicke's *Cambridge Platonists, a Study*, first published in 1926 (London/ Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd), reprinted in 1971 (Westport: Greenwood Press), which discusses Whichcote, Smith, Cudworth, and More as well as Nathaniel Culverwel and Peter Sterry. For a fine brief account, see Sarah Hutton's article, "The Cambridge Platonists," in *The Columbia History of Western Philosophy*, edited by Richard H. Popkin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). See also Hutton's edition of Ralph Cudworth's *Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality, with A Treatise of Freewill* (Cambridge / New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

There is a wealth of material on Henry More. On his life and thought, see, A. Rupert Hall, *Henry More: Magic, Religion and Experiment* (Oxford/Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990) and Robert Crocker, *Henry More, 1614-1687: A Biography of the Cambridge Platonist* ([INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES, 185] Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003). Also from Kluwer is *Henry More: The Immortality of the Soul* (edited by A. Jacob; [INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES, 122] 1987), *Henry More (1614-1687) Tercentenary Studies* (edited by Sarah Hutton, 1990), and *The Life of Henry More, Parts 1 and 2* by Richard Ward ([INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES, 167] 2000). Note the Coudert articles on the list above: "A Cambridge Platonist's Kabbalist Nightmare" and "Henry More, Kabbalah, and the Quakers." See also Sarah Hutton, "Henry More, Anne Conway and the Kabbalah," in *Judeo-Christian Intellectual Culture in the Seventeenth Century: A Celebration of the Library of Narcissus Marsh (1638-1713)*, edited by Allison P. Coudert, Sarah Hutton, Richard H. Popkin, and Gordon M. Weiner [INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES 163, 1999].

On Anne Conway, note Sarah Hutton's forthcoming *Anne Conway: A Woman Philosopher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and Conway's piece, *Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* [CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY Series\*], edited by Allison Coudert and Taylor Corse (Cambridge University Press, 1996). Conway, as a student of both More and van Helmont, refuted the major philosophers of her time (Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza) with an array of concepts from Lurianic Kabbalah (as found in Rosenroth's *Kabbala denudata*). As did van Helmont, Conway became a Quaker; also as van Helmont, she appears to have had some influence upon Leibniz.

Along with Coudert's various articles and *Leibniz and Kabbalah*, see

- Adams, Robert Merrihew. *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994);
- *Leibnizian Inquiries: A Group of Essays*, edited by Nicholas Rescher (Lanham/New York/London: University Press of America, 1989);
- Brown, Stuart. "Leibniz and More's Cabbalistic Circle," in *Henry More (1614-1687): Tercentenary Studies*, edited by S. Hutton. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publications,

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\* Also in the Cambridge series is Giordano Bruno's *Cause, Principle, and Unity: Essays on Magic*, edited by Richard J. Blackwell and Robert de Lucca, introduced by Alfonso Ingegno, 1998.)

1990. The “circle” Brown refers to here comprised of Francis Mercury van Helmont and Knorr von Rosenroth. Whether Leibniz’ philosophy was the result of direct influence or convergence is the gist of Brown’s discussion; Brown highlights the latter.

- Brown, Stuart. “Some Occult Influences on Leibniz’s Monadology,” in *Leibniz, Mysticism and Religion* [INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES, 158], edited by Allison P. Coudert, Richard Popkin, and Gordon M. Weiner (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998). The influences discussed are alchemy and kabbalah.
- Schuchard, Marcia (*sic*) Keith. “Leibniz, Benzelius, and the Kabbalistic Roots of Swedish Illuminism,” in *Leibniz, Mysticism and Religion* [INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES, 158] edited by Allison P. Coudert, Richard Popkin, and Gordon M. Weiner (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998).

Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, as translator, annotator, and editor, published the two-volume *Kabbala denudata* (Kabbalah Unveiled), which virtually alone represented Kabbalah to Christian Europe until the middle of the nineteenth century. These tomes contain an array of kabbalistic texts: sections of the *Zohar*, *Pardes Rimmonim* by Moses Cordovero, *Sha’ar ha-Shamayim* and *Beit Elohim* by Abraham Kohen (or Cohen) de Herrera, *Sefer ha-Gilgulim* (a Lurianic writing by Hayim Vital), and others, with commentaries by von Rosenroth himself and Henry More, and a summary of Christian Cabala (*Adumbratio Kabbalae Christianae*) by van Helmont—all in Latin translation.

A few items from *Kabbala denudata* have been put into English:

- S.L. MacGregor Mathers’ *Kabbalah Unveiled* (London: George Redway, 1887: rpt. New York/York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1968 and subsequently) gives three important texts from the *Zohar*: “The Book of Concealed Mystery, The Greater Holy Assembly, and the Lesser Holy Assembly.”
- William Wynn Westcott’s edition of *Aesch Mezareph*, a kabbalistic-alchemical tract found in pieces throughout *Kabbala denudata*, as Volume IV of *Collectanea Hermetica* (1894). *Aesch Mezareph* was reprinted by Occult Research Press (New York: n.d.). *Collectanea Hermetica*, vols. I-VII, was reprinted by Kessinger Publishing Company (Kila: n.d.). *Collectanea Hermetica*, vols. I-X, was published by Samuel Weiser (1998); this special edition includes Westcott’s version of *Sepher Yetzirah*.
- 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): Sixteen diagrams from *Kabbala denudata* are reproduced and translated. Figures 1-7 constitute one “great tree” depicting the structure of *Adam Kadmon* (= Primal Adam); figures 8-12 show a tree derived from *Emek ha-Melech* representing stages from the initial *tzimtzum* (contraction), through the emanations in the form of a wheel, to the second *Adam Kadmon* and the *parzufim* (faces); figures 13 and 14 show the *sefirot* in the world of *azilut*. Figures 15 and 16 depict the *sefirot* and so forth brought down in various ways to the lower worlds. All of the diagrams are based on the Lurianic system. Unfortunately, volumes in the HERMETIC SOURCEWORKS series were run in limited editions of 250 copies. Some titles—alas, not *Kabbalistic Diagrams*—have subsequently been reprinted. (See below in “Items of Interest”: McLean.) However, copies may still be available directly from ALCHEMY WEB BOOKSHOP at [www.alchemy.dial.pipex.com](http://www.alchemy.dial.pipex.com) > “Magnum Opus books.” Extracts of this work appeared as (i) “The Kabbalistic Diagrams of Knorr von Rosenroth,” in *the Hermetic Journal*, Issue Number 29 (Lampeter: Autumn 1985), and (ii) “Palaces, Mansions and Shells in a Kabbalistic Diagram of Rosenroth” translated by Christopher

- Atton and Stephen Dziklewicz, in *The Hermetic Journal*, Issue Number 38 (Tysoe: The Hermetic Research Trust, Winter 1987)—both introduced by Adam McLean.
- Kenneth Krabbenhoft's *Abraham Cohen de Herrera: GATE OF HEAVEN (Puerta del cielo)*, translated from the Spanish with Introduction and Notes (Leiden: Brill, 2002). Herrera's *Puerta del cielo* found its way into von Rosenroth's *Kabbala denudata* through its Hebrew version, *Sha'ar ha-Shamayim*, the original having been in Spanish. Knorr's rendition is far from a fair representation of Herrera's original work—which Krabbenhoft offers in GATE OF HEAVEN—for “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* [noted below], p. 21); von 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 made an appearance in *Kabbala denudata*.

Further on Herrera, see

- Krabbenhoft, Kenneth. *The Mystic Tradition. Abraham Cohen Herrera and Platonic Theology*. Ph.D. dissertation: New York: New York University, 1982; in particular, see Chapter 2: (sections) “Cabala,” “Christian Mysticism,” “Cabala and Christian Mysticism: Similarities and Differences,” and “Cabala and Conversos.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ . “Syncretism and Millennium in Herrera's Kabbalah,” in *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture*, Volume I: *JEWISH MESSIANISM IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD* [INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES, 173], edited by Matt Goldish and Richard H. Popkin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001).
- Altmann, Alexander. “Lurianic Kabbalah in a Platonic Key: Abraham Cohen Herrera's *Puerta del cielo*,” in (i) *Hebrew Union College Annual* 53, Cincinnati: 1982; and (ii) *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, edited by Isadore Twersky and Bernard Septimus. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987.

For more on von Rosenroth, see the items by Allison Coudert noted above, especially *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century*, where a substantial section of the book is devoted to von Rosenroth and the ingredients of *Kabbala denudata*.

One other character of the seventeenth century requires mention: Athanasius Kircher (1601-80), whom Yates describes as “a most notable descendant of the Hermetic-Cabalist tradition founded by Pico.” She also points out that “Kircher maintained the full Renaissance attitude to Hermes Trismegistus, completely ignoring Casaubon.” (Yates makes similar comments about Robert Fludd. It was Isaac Casaubon who, in 1614, through careful and thorough scholarship, showed that the *Hermetica* were “not the work of very ancient Egyptian priests but written in post-Christian times.”) Kircher maintained similar erroneous attitudes toward Cabala and Hebraica. See Yates' discussion in *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*.

There are three wonderfully illustrated works on Kircher:

- Joscelyn Godwin's *Athanasius Kircher: A Renaissance Man in Search of Lost Knowledge* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1979).
- Ingrid D. Rowland's *Ecstatic Journey: Athanasius Kircher in Baroque Rome* (Chicago: University of Chicago Library, 2000), an exhibition catalogue of “Kircher's amazing world of magic lanterns, volcanoes, fossils, flying cats, hieroglyphics, and practical jokes with the most serious of intentions.”
- *The Great Art of Knowing: The Baroque Encyclopedia of Athanasius Kircher* edited by Daniel Stolzenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Libraries, 2001), a series of articles

which also serves as an exhibition catalogue to and celebration of Stanford's 1998 acquisition of all but one of Kircher's works in first editions.

Recent essays on Kircher appear in *Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man Who Knew Everything*, edited by Paula Findlen (New York/ London: Routledge, 2003). Kircher is also discussed at some length in Umberto Eco's *Search for the Perfect Language* (Oxford/Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1995). On the Internet, see the list of pages which treat Kircher at *Athanasius Kircher on the Web* ([www.bahnhof.se/~rendel/kirlinx.html](http://www.bahnhof.se/~rendel/kirlinx.html)). One site not listed there, the attractive *Museum of Jurassic Technology* ([www.mjt.org](http://www.mjt.org)), has a series of articles on Kircher's life and works (in Collections and Exhibitions, Gallery 6: The Coolidge Pavilion).

In the eighteenth century, quite a bit of kabbalistic influence appears to trace to a single individual. There is evidence that, among others, Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) and Alessandro Cagliostro (1743-95) were indebted to Samuel Falk (ca 1710-82), a Polish Kabbalist known as the "Ba'al Shem of London" (*ba'al shem*, master of the name, i.e., one who uses holy names in performing magical operations and writing amulets). Falk supposedly introduced aspects of Kabbalah to a number of Christian scholars. Falk, Swedenborg, and Cagliostro are discussed in Joscelyn Godwin's *Theosophical Enlightenment* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994: CHAPTER 5). Godwin's main sources of information on this trio were two works of Marsha Keith Schuchard:

- *Freemasonry, Secret Societies, and the Continuity of the Occult Tradition in English Literature* (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, Austin: 1975)\* which contains such chapters as I. "The Cabala, Sexual Magic, and the Jewish Visionary Traditions," II. "The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance, and the Development of the Syncretic Occult Tradition" (based primarily on Scholem, Yates, and Waite) and VIII. "Cabalistic and Magnetic Visions among the London Swedenborgians in the 1780's and 1790's," before giving "special emphasis...to William Blake from 1780 to 1827" in CHAPTERS IX through XIII. (Schuchard's dissertation can be obtained from UMI Dissertation Services, on the Internet at [www.il.proquest.com](http://www.il.proquest.com).)
- "Yeats and the 'Unknown Superiors': Swedenborg, Falk and Cagliostro," in *Secret Texts: The Literature of Secret Societies*, edited by Marie Mulvey Roberts and Hugh Ormsby-Lennon (New York: AMS Press, 1994) where Schuchard provocatively suggests that the Unknown Superiors (i.e., of illuminist masonry, Falk in particular) may lurk in the obscure origins of the Golden Dawn. This is an expanded version of the article of the same name, subtitled "A short paper read at the Golden Dawn 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference organised by Hermetic Research Trust on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> April 1987," in *The Hermetic Journal*, Issue Number 37, edited by Adam McLean (Tysoe: The Hermetic Research Trust, Autumn 1987).

Further on Swedenborg\* and Falk, see Schuchard's

- "Emanuel Swedenborg: Deciphering the Codes of a Celestial and Terrestrial Intelligencer," *Rending the Veil: Concealment and Revelation of Secrets in the History of Religions*, edited Elliot R. Wolfson (New York: Seven Bridges Press, 1999), which discusses, among other things, Swedenborg's "access to kabbalistic exegetic and visionary techniques and to traditions of Jewish sexual theosophy."
- "Dr. Samuel Jacob Falk: A Sabbatian Adventurer in the Masonic Underground," in *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture*, Volume I: *JEWISH MESSIANISM IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD* [INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES, 173], edited by Matt Goldish and Richard H. Popkin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001).



Schuchard's "elaborate reconstruction of Falk and his associates" is discussed in David Ruderman's *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000: pp. 156-169). While intrigued by Schuchard's portrait of Falk, Ruderman expresses a desire for more research and firmer evidence. Note also the highly critical review of Schuchard's work on Swedenborg in the article, "Schuchard's Swedenborg," by the Reverend Brian Talbot at The Swedenborg Project's site, [www.newchurchissues.org/SR/schurev1.htm](http://www.newchurchissues.org/SR/schurev1.htm).

For more on Falk, see Michal Oron, "Dr. Samuel Falk and the Eibeschuetz-Emden Controversy," in *Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah in Ashkenazi Judaism*, edited by Karl Erich Grozinger and Joseph Dan (Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995).

On other likely sources of Kabbalah for Swedenborg, see Schuchard's "Leibniz, Benzelius, and the Kabbalistic Roots of Swedish Illuminism," (noted above on page 14): "From 1703 to 1710, as Benzelius led Swedenborg through the university [Uppsala]," where "[i]t is almost certain" that Swedenborg studied under the convert Johann Kemper (page 97), a "crypto-Sabbatian" and author of an extended commentary on the *Zohar*. On Kemper, find Elliot R. Wolfson's "Messianism in the Christian Kabbalah of Johann Kemper," in *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture*, Volume I: *JEWISH MESSIANISM IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD* [INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES, 173], edited by Matt Goldish and Richard H. Popkin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001).

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\* Introductions to Swedenborg:

- Benz, Ernst. *Emanuel Swedenborg: Visionary Savant in the Age of Reason*, translated by Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke (West Chester: Swedenborg Foundation, 2002)—a translation of *Emanuel Swedenborg: Naturforscher und Seher*: 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1948; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1969.
- *Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision. A Pictorial Biography and Anthology of Essays and Poetry*, edited by Robin Larsen (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, Inc., 1988)
- Sigstedt, Cyriel Odhner. *The Swedenborg Epic: The Life and Works of Emanuel Swedenborg* (London: The Swedenborg Society, 1981)
- Smyth, Julian K and Wunsch, William F. *The Gist of Swedenborg*. New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1920
- Stanley, Michael. *Emanuel Swedenborg: Essential Readings* (Sydney: Swedenborg Lending Library and Enquiry Centre, 1993)
- *Swedenborg and His Influence*, general editor: Erland Brock (Bryn Athyn: The Academy of the New Church, 1988).
- Synnestvedt, Syg. *The Essential Swedenborg* (West Chester: Swedenborg Foundation, 1977)
- Warren, Samuel M. (ed) *A Compendium of the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1875, reprinted frequently).

Complete works by Swedenborg in English translation:

- *Apocalypse Revealed* (2 volumes)
- *Arcana Coelestia* (12 volumes)
- *Conjugal Love*
- *The Divine Love and Divine Wisdom*
- *The Divine Providence*
- *Heaven and Hell*
- *True Christian Religion* (2 volumes)

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

Of particular interest in the present context is the article by Jane Williams-Hogan, “The Place of Emanuel Swedenborg in Modern Western Esotericism,” in *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion* [= *GNOSTICA* 2], edited by Antoine Faivre and Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Leuven [Belgium]: Peeters, 1998).

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

If we follow this obscure line of Cabalists, Swedenborgians, and Freemasons, we eventually come to William Blake (1757-1827), who, as we have seen, is discussed in the dissertation of Marsha Keith Schuchard. On Blake, also see Schuchard’s articles:

- “The Secret Masonic History of Blake’s Swedenborg Society,” in *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 2 (1992);
- “Blake and the Grand Masters (1791-4): Architects of Repression or Revolution?” in *Blake in the Nineties*, edited by Steve Clark and David Worrall (London/New York: Macmillan Press Ltd/St. Martins Press, Inc., 1999);
- “Why Mrs. Blake Cried: Blake, Swedenborg, and the Sexual Basis of Spiritual Vision,” in *Esoterica: The Journal of Esoteric Studies*, Volume II, edited by Arthur Versluis (2000, on-line at [www.esoteric.msu.edu](http://www.esoteric.msu.edu)).

Further on Blake and Swedenborg, find the collection of articles edited by Harvey F. Bellin and Darrell Ruhl: *Blake and Swedenborg: Opposition Is True Friendship, The Sources of William Blake’s Arts in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation Inc., 1985), and Robert Rix’s article, “William Blake and the Radical Swedenborgians,” on-line at *Esoterica* (cited above), Volume V (2003), and Joseph Viscomi’s piece, “In the Caves of Heaven and Hell: Swedenborg and Printmaking in Blake’s *Marriage*,” in *Blake in the Nineties*, edited by Steve Clark and David Worrall (Hampshire and London: Macmillan Press Ltd / New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 1999).

One can sift through the daunting tonnage of Blake studies and find scant mention of Kabbalah/Cabala, even if esoteric currents are acknowledged as reflected in Blake’s work. Thus, most welcome is the recent study of the influence of Kabbalah/Cabala on Blake: Sheila Spector’s well-illustrated companion volumes “*Wonders Divine*”: *The Development of Blake’s Kabbalistic Myth* and “*Glorious Incomprehensible*”: *The Development of Blake’s Kabbalistic Language* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, both 2001. NOTE: A full-length review of Spector’s study appears in *Esoterica* V [2003]—web address noted in the previous paragraph.)

Spector writes (“*Wonders Divine*,” page 25)

...even though he [Blake] explicitly, often even emphatically, rejected many aspects of what might be called normative Christianity, he still found himself trapped within what had become the oppressive archetypal framework he repudiated, and it was only through

a concerted life-long effort, first to recognize the bonds, and then, to seek out alternate modes of thought, that Blake was able, finally, to create his own system. But that new system, contrary to popular belief, was not an original creation. Rather, when Blake finally liberated himself from the exoteric myth structure that dominates Western thought, he turned to its esoteric counterpart, the myth that, though originating with Jewish mystics, had been adapted by Christian Kabbalists to conform with their—and, in fact, with Blake’s—own brand of Christianity.

For more on Blake and Kabbalah, see Spector’s articles:

- “Kabbalistic Sources—Blake’s and His Critics’,” in *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 67, volume 17, number 3 (Winter 1983-84), an extremely useful article which contains
  - (i) a 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
  - (iii) a survey of sources of Kabbalah which could have been available to Blake.
- “The Reasons for ‘Urizen’” in *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (Spring 1988);
- “Hebraic Etymologies of Proper Names in Blake” in *Philological Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (Summer 1988).
- “Sources and Etymologies of Blake’s ‘Tirzah’” in *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1990).
- “Blake as an Eighteenth-Century Hebraist” in *Blake and His Bibles*, edited by David V. Erdman ([LOCUST HILL LITERARY STUDIES, No. 1] West Cornwall: Locust Hill Press, 1990).
- “Blake’s *Milton* as Kabbalistic Vision” in *Religion and Literature* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1993).

Also in *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 46 (volume 12, number 2 [Fall 1978])—an issue which focuses on *The Four Zoas*, a long poem among Blake’s “major prophecies”—see Terrence Allan Hoagwood’s article, “*The Four Zoas* and ‘The Philosophick Cabbala.’” Hoagwood writes (page 87):

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

Further, there is Asloob Ahmad Ansari’s article, “Blake and the Kabbalah,” in *William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon*, edited by Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Providence: Brown University Press, 1969); and the only other book-length treatment (130 pp.) of Blake’s Kabbalah which I have gotten a look at: Clay Mathew Bowman’s M.A. paper, *The Divine Family in Blake’s “The Four Zoas”*: A Comparison of the Divine Family Motif in Blake and the Kabbalah (Houston: University of Houston, 1987). Neither of these, however, is as useful as the works listed above. There is also Dena Donna Cheryl Taylor’s *Emanations of the Divine: Kabbalistic Elements in the Poetry and Designs of William Blake* (Ph.D. dissertation, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1983), which I have not seen.

## Part 2\*

The nineteenth century opened with the production of a book which was, for the most part, an unacknowledged copy of Agrippa (his *De occulta philosophia* and the pseudo-Agrippan *Fourth Book*), along with material from *The Heptameron* (attributed to Peter of Abano), Giambattista della Porta's *Magia naturalis*, and other sources—namely, Francis Barrett's tome, *The Magus, or Celestial Intelligencer* (London: 1801). While no great school accumulated around Barrett which we know of, his book inaugurated an era of renewed interest in Hermetic-Cabalist Magic, which seems to have been as uncritically accepted in the early 1800s as it had been in the Renaissance. Several reprints of *The Magus* have gone to press in the last several decades, such as the 1967 edition of University Books (New Hyde Park), the ubiquitous 1975 paperback of Citadel Press (Secaucus), and the Samuel Weiser reprint (York Beach: 2000) which includes full-color reproductions of the plates. *The Magus* can also be viewed on-line at the Sacred Texts site: [www.sacred-texts.com/grim/magus/](http://www.sacred-texts.com/grim/magus/).

The always readable Francis X King (*aka* Francis King) composed a slim book on Barrett based on the rather limited documentation concerning him as a daring though failure-prone experimental balloonist as well as a plagiarizing occultist, along with “Barrett's Hitherto Unpublished Stryking Manuscript”: *The Flying Sorcerer* (Oxford: Mandrake, 1992). For another account—indeed, a defense—of Barrett, see “Beyond Attribution: The Importance of Barrett's *Magus*,” which constitutes CHAPTER TWO of *The Revival of the Occult Philosophy: Cabalistic Magic and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn*, by Alison L. Butler (M.A. thesis, St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2000), a trimmed version of which appears as the lead article in *The Journal for the Academic Study of Magic* Issue 1 (Oxford: Mandrake, 2003). Other accounts of Barrett can be found in Christopher McIntosh, *The Devil's Bookshelf* (Wellingborough: The Aquarian Press, 1985—CHAPTER 13, “Magic in the Nineteenth Century”), and Joscelyn Godwin, *The Theosophical Enlightenment* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994—CHAPTER SIX, “Neophytes and Initiates”).

When the nineteenth century was about at its midpoint, there began a fairly steady stream of European works on Kabbalah and Cabala. Some of these were serious, even if not entirely successful, attempts to present the Jewish Kabbalah on its own terms, such as the works of Adolphe Franck, C.D. Ginsburg, and A.E. Waite. Others knotted together various Christianized strands, adorning them with other doctrines and currents, as did Eliphas Levi, H.P. Blavatsky, Papus, and Aleister Crowley. Some notable authors apparently had Masonic agenda, like Albert Pike, Ralston Skinner, and co-authors Bond and Lea. Works from this checkered array remain the basis of Kabbalah/Cabala study among great numbers of (primarily Christian) esoteric readers and researchers—even today—in spite of the contributions of Jewish and Christian scholars of the last fifty-plus years.

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\* It would be profitable to compare my listings with those in Sheila Spector's *Jewish Mysticism: An Annotated Bibliography on Kabbalah in English* (New York/ London: Garland Publishing, 1984), Section O: “Non-Jewish Kabbalah,” pages 309-357. The first division of this section, “Primary Sources,” begins with “J.F.'s” 1651 translation of Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia*; ironically, the second division, “Secondary Sources,” begins with Francis Barrett's *Magus* (1801). Spector's listings go through 1983. She includes—and comments on—quite a few items not given notice in my paper:

- rare items and manuscripts, such as seventeenth-century editions of van Helmont's works in English;
- 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century items which touch upon Kabbalah, or Cabala, only briefly or incidentally, like William Story's *Proportions of the Human Figure...* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1866) or George Alexander Kohut's *Ezra Stiles and the Jews* (New York: Philip Cowen, 1902);
- works which I have never encountered, for example Laurel Miller's *Kabbalistic Numerology* (New York: Metaphysical Publishing House, 1921) or F. Schneider Schwartz' *True Mysteries of Life* (New York: Vantage Press, 1957).

Among the influential books which were written in English, or which have been translated into English, are the following:

Franck, Adolphe. *The Kabbalah: Religious Philosophy of the Hebrews*. French original, 1843; German translation by A. Jellinek, 1844; English translation by I. Sossnitz, 1909; abridged English edition, New York: Bell Publishing Company, 1940.

Despite his errors, Franck still commands a fair amount of regard. As noted by Moshe Idel (*Kabbalah: New Perspectives* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988]: pp. 7-10) some of Franck's conclusions bear notable similarities to those of Gershom Scholem, most importantly that Kabbalah was a vital force at the "heart and soul" of Judaism, not the aberrant and heretical side shoot which historians such as Heinrich Graetz and other "enlightened" scholars of the nineteenth century thought it was. Franck brought to a common modern language (French—and a year later Adolph Jellinek put Franck's *Kabbalah* into German) a reasoned account of Kabbalah with informed descriptions of *Sefer Yezirah* and the *Zohar*.

Franck's major error was finding in Zoroastrian lore the source of Kabbalistic concepts. His mistakes notwithstanding, Franck's serious attempt to present the Kabbalah from its own sources stands in marked contrast with another French writer who began to publish some dozen years later: Eliphas Levi, who took every liberty his imagination could conceive in presenting Kabbalah/Cabala and other esoteric subjects.

Mackey, Albert G. *An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sources, Comprising the Whole Range of Arts, Sciences and Literature as Connected with the Institution*. Philadelphia: Moss and Co., 1873 and 1878; revised edition, Philadelphia: L. H. Everts and Co., 1894; reprint Kilo: Kessinger, n.d.

Mackey includes a fairly substantial article on kabbalah (vol. 1, pp. 439-443 of the Kessinger edition) apparently derived from C.D. Ginsburg.

Levi, Eliphas. *The Book of Splendours. The Inner Mysteries of Qabalism* (Its Relationship to Freemasonry, Numerology and Tarot), French original, 1894; English translation, Wellingborough: The Aquarian Press and New York: Samuel Weiser, 1973.

This work contains a compacted paraphrase of *Idra Rabba* from the *Zohar* (though Levi refers to it as "The Idra Suta") and the oft-reprinted short piece, "The Elements of the Qabalah in Ten Lessons: The Letters of Eliphas Levi" (1891), which also appears in

1. Papus. *The Qabalah*, listed below; and
2. *The Elements of the Kabbalah in Ten Lessons*, edited by Darcy Kuntz [Golden Dawn Series 13], Edmonds: Holmes Publishing Group, 1997.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Great Secret. Lessons on the Mysteries of Occultism, including Magnetism, Astral Emanations, Divination and Creative Omnipotence*. French original, 1868; English translation, Thorsons Publishers Ltd, 1975; rpt. Wellingborough: The Aquarian Press and New York: Samuel Weiser, 1981.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The History of Magic*. French original, 1860; English translation by A.E. Waite, London: William Rider and Son Ltd, 1913; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1969.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Key of the Mysteries*. French original, 1861; English translation by Aleister Crowley in *The Equinox*, vol. 1, no. 10 London: (Marshall, Simpkin) 1913; republished London: Rider 1959; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1970.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Mysteries of the Qabalah*. Part One: Commentary on Ezekiel; Part Two: The Apocalypse of St. John as the Key to the High Qabalah. First published, 1920; English translation, New York: Samuel Weiser, 1974.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Transcendental Magic*. French original in two parts: 1. *The Doctrine of Transcendental Magic* (1855); 2. *The Ritual of Transcendental Magic* (1856). English translation by A.E. Waite, London: George Redway, 1896; revised and enlarged edition (Waite), London: William Rider and Son Ltd, 1923; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1974.

Levi's works are eloquent, fascinating—and highly influential—mayhem. On Levi and his milieu, see Christopher McIntosh, *Eliphas Levi and the French Occult Revival* (London: Rider Publishers, 1972; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1975; and 1974); and Thomas A. Williams, *Eliphas Levi: Master of Occultism* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1975). On Levi's influence, see Robert Lesley Uzzel, *The Kabbalistic Thought of Eliphas Levi and Its Influence on Modern Occultism in America* (Ph.D. dissertation, Waco: Baylor University, 1995).

Ginsburg, Christian D. *Kabbalah: Its Doctrines, Development and Literature*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1863; London: G. Routledge and Sons, 1864; rpt. with *The Essenes*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956; rpt. Santa Fe: Sun Books, 1993.

One might assume that Ginsburg was a sympathetic commentator, for he outlined the traditional history of the Kabbalah “as told by its followers”; but obliquely in this book and more openly in subsequent articles, Ginsburg showed his hostility toward Kabbalah to be equal to—and perhaps derived from—Graetz's. In an article which Ginsburg co-wrote with S.A. Cook, there is a reference to the *Zohar* as “that farrago of absurdity.” Ginsburg considered the *Zohar* a fraud perpetrated by Moses de Leon. Even so, his *Kabbalah* gives an admirable account of its subject. This book is, in form, an expanded outline, so its manner is somewhat clipped, though dense with information. There are lots of biblical and *Zoharic* references, and great detail on such topics as the 72 names of God and the hermeneutical conventions, *gematria*, *notaricon*, and *terumah*. (NOTE: These methods predated Kabbalah by centuries. *Gematria* in particular, which is so often treated as central to the Kabbalah by Christian commentators, played only a limited role in such kabbalistic classics as the *Zohar*, the works of Moses Cordovero, and the Lurianic compendia assembled by Hayim Vital. See Scholem's article, “Gematria,” in *Kabbalah* [Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1974; New York: Dorset Press, 1987]; and Dan's comments in “Christian Kabbalah: From Mysticism to Esotericism,” in *Western Esotericism and the Science of Religion*, edited by A. Faivre and W. Hanegraaff [Leuven: Peeters, 1998: pp. 127-8]).

Pike, Albert. *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*. 1871; copyright Supreme Council of the Southern Jurisdiction: 1906; rpt. Charleston: L.H. Jenkins, 1949.

Pike steeps his descriptions of Masonic grades in Kabbalah/Cabala and other esoteria. Already on page 15, the 1<sup>st</sup> degree Apprentice is told, “...you must open the pages of the Sohar (i.e., *Zohar*) and Siphre de Zeniutha, and other kabbalistic books, and ponder deeply on their meaning.” From there on, the book is quite full of kabbalistic references and passages. Unfortunately, the bulk of these were lifted from one of the most unreliable sources: Eliphas Levi, whom Pike quotes freely without acknowledgement. (See “Levi's Kabbalistic Thought in America: Albert Pike,” in Uzzel, *The Kabbalistic Thought of Eliphas Levi*...noted above: Levi.) Pike also borrows from Adolphe Franck: On page 256 of *Morals and Dogma*, Pike

writes of Jewish families who had familiarized themselves with the doctrine of Zoroaster and, subsequently, developed those parts which could be reconciled with their faith; this sounds like Franck's conclusion regarding the "traces that the religion of Zoroaster has left in all parts of Judaism," stating later that "this borrowing did not destroy the originality of the Kabbalah," for it was reconciled with the Jews' concept of "the unity of cause" (Franck, *Kabbalah*, Bell edition, p. 224). Pike also makes numerous references to works which appear in Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbalah denudata*.

Greene, William B[atchelder]. *The Blazing Star; with an appendix treating of the Jewish Kabbala, also a tract on the Philosophy of Mr. Herbert Spencer and one on New England Transcendentalism*. Boston: A. Williams and Co., 1872; rpt without the tracts on Spencer and Transcendentalism as *The Blazing Star and the Jewish Kabbalah*, with a foreword by R.A. Gilbert, Berwick: Ibis Press [Nicolas-Hays, Inc.], 2003.

An unusual, albeit engaging, take on Kabbalah emerging from a mixture of the French occult scene around Eliphas Levi, Freemasonry, and New England Transcendentalism (1830s-60s, which included Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Thoreau, and early feminist Margaret Fuller).

Skinner, Ralston. *Key to the Hebrew Egyptian Mystery in the Source of Measures with Supplement*. 1875-76; rpt. Philadelphia: 1910; rpt. San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1972.

Originally published as installments in *Masonic Review*, Skinner's book "constitutes a series of developments, based upon the use of geometrical elements, giving expression in a numerical value. These elements are found in the work of the late John A. Parker...setting forth his discovery (but, in fact, the rediscovery) of the quadrature value of the circle" (p. 1). The "geometrical elements," measures, and numbers are drawn mainly from the Great Pyramid and the Old Testament. Wizards Bookshelf, the reissuer of Skinner's *Key*, refers to it as "the most esoteric work we sell."

Blavatsky, H.P. *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*, 2 volumes. New York: Bouton, 1877: reprinted often.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy*. 2 volumes (standard) or 5 volumes ("Adyar" edition). London: Theosophical Publication Society, 1888; reprinted often.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Kabbalah and the Kabbalists at the Close of the Nineteenth Century," and "Tetragrammaton" in *Kabbalah and Kabbalism*, 1881-92, rpt., The Theosophy Company, n.d.; also in Nurho de Manhar's *Zohar: Bereshith-Genesis*, Wizards Bookshelf edition, pp. 396-424 (see below).

Where were the builders, the luminous sons of Manvantaric dawn? ... In the unknown darkness in their Ahhi Paranishpanna. The producers of form from no form—the root of the world—the Devamatri and Svabhavat, rested in the bliss of non-being. (*Book of Dzyan*, Stanza II, Section 1)

Throughout the compendious works of Mme. Blavatsky (hereafter HPB), *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, are numerous references to Kabbalah, and some passages which deal at length with kabbalistic doctrine. But in the collection of articles published together as *Kabbalah and Kabbalism*, HPB made it most clear that she believed that

1. "Kabbalah" was inferior to "our (Eastern) septenary system";

2. kabbalistic writings had “all suffered corruptions in their content by sectarian editors”;
3. there was “evidence of occult knowledge in the West,” even though HPB saw fit to expose “[its] limitations” and point to “the misleading character of Kabbalistic symbolism.”

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

For our own part we regard her neither as the mouthpiece of hidden seers, nor as a mere vulgar adventuress; we think that she has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting impostors in history. (Society for Psychical Research: 1883, report)

Gershom Scholem writes (*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 398-9)

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

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

1. from Pico to Knorr von Rosenroth, Christian cabalists believed that with kabbalistic methods rightly used, Jews could be shown the “truth” behind the Old Testament and won over to Christ;
2. Eliphas Levi, who “[n]ever made an independent statement upon any historical fact in which the least confidence could be reposed,” and who “never presented the sense of an author whom he was reviewing in a way which could be said to reproduce that author faithfully” (A.E. Waite, *The Holy Kabbalah*, p. 489).
3. S.L. MacGregor Mathers, who was also dependent upon Rosenroth and Levi;



4. Isaac Myer, whose earnest study contains many errors, some of which even HPB did not commit, as, for example, Myer's mix-up of the roles and order of the *sefirot*, calling *binah* the second and *hokhmah* the third (Myer, *Qabbalah*, pp. 259-63).

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

Pancoast, S[eth]. *The Kabbala: The True Science of Light*. An Introduction to the Philosophy and Theosophy of the Ancient Sages, Together with a Chapter on Light in the Vegetable Kingdom. Philadelphia: J.M. Studdart and Co., 1877; New York: R. Worthington, 1883.

Pancoast makes two remarks in his introduction which, along with his ties with Mme. Blavatsky (as her physician), indicate his perspective:

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

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

These ideas are bridged in statements such as

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

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

Westcott, William Wynn. *Sepher Yetzirah. The Book of Formation and the Thirty-Two Paths of Wisdom*. 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Bath: Fryar, 1887; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1893; 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, London: J.M. Watkins, 1911; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser 1975 and Wizards Bookshelf, 1990; so-called 4<sup>th</sup> edition as #3 of the Golden Dawn Series edited by Darcy Kuntz, Edmonds: Holmes Publication Group, 1996.

On Westcott's version of *Sefer Yezirah*, see my comments in "Notes on Editions of *Sefer Yetzirah* in English."

\_\_\_\_\_. *Aesch Mezareph, or the Purifying Fire*. London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1894; rpt. New York: Occult Research Press, n.d.; rpt. Edmonds: Holmes Publication Group, 1996.

See comments above regarding Knorr von Rosenroth, pages 11-14, and below regarding Mathers' *Kabbalah Unveiled*.

\_\_\_\_\_. *An Introduction to the Study of the Kabbalah*. London: J.M. Watkins, 1910 and 1926; rpt. Kila: Kessinger Publishing, n.d.

One can find similar material in *The Kabbalah of the Golden Dawn* by W.W. Westcott, with a preface by S.L. MacGregor Mathers, edited by Darcy Kuntz [Golden Dawn Series 16], Edmonds: Holmes Publishing Group, 1997; and in R. A. Gilbert's edition of Westcott's writings, *The Magical Mason*, Wellingborough: Aquarian Press, 1983.

Westcott's *Introduction*... was highly regarded by occultists of the Golden Dawn strain. Aleister Crowley, in *The Equinox* (vol. 1, no. 5, 1911) writes, "For the student unacquainted with the rudiments of the Qabalah we recommend the study of S.L.M. Mathers' 'Introduction' to his translation of the three principle books of the Zohar, and Westcott's 'Introduction to the Study of the Qabalah.' ... Dr. Westcott's little book is principally valuable for its able defense of the Qabalah as against exotericism and literalism."

Mathers, S[amuel] L[iddell] MacGregor. *The Kabbalah Unveiled*. London: George Redway, 1887; revised edition with a preface by Moina Mathers, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1926; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1968—reprinted frequently.

Mathers is a particularly important figure in that he, with W.W. Westcott, was one of the founders of the Golden Dawn. As author of most of the Golden Dawn rituals and many of its instructions, he was instrumental in laying the groundwork for modern occultism. However, as a translator and commentator in the field of Kabbalah, he was prey to—and perpetuator of—much misunderstanding and misinformation. An easy way to demonstrate this is to look at a couple of lists which Mathers gives in *The Kabbalah Unveiled*.

On page 14, as the most important kabbalistic books, Mathers lists the following:

- (a) The Sepher Yetzirah and its dependencies.
- (b) The Zohar with its developments and commentaries.
- (c) The Sepher Sephiroth and its expansions.
- (d) The Asch Metzareph and its symbolism.

With the first two entries there can be no argument: the *Sefer Yezirah* and the *Zohar* are two of the most important and influential works in Kabbalah. But the third and fourth entries simply do not belong. With evidence of Mathers' dependence on Rosenroth, we can fairly assume the "Sepher Sephiroth" refers to the section of *Kabbala denudata* which treats of the unfolding of the tree of the *sefirot*, in outline, then diagrammatic, form based upon Israel Sarug's version of the teachings of Isaac Luria. It is an item of considerable interest, but not one of the canons of Kabbalah. "Asch Metzareph" (*Esh M'zaref*) is a rather unusual example of the merger of Kabbalah and alchemy. As such, it is something of a peripheral curiosity, not a central work.

On pages 14 and 15, Mathers gives a list of "the most important books" contained in the *Zohar*:

- (a) The SPRA DTzNIOVThA, Siphra Dtzenioutha, of “Book of Concealed Mystery,” which is the root and foundation of the *Zohar*.
- (b) The ADRA RBA QDIShA, Idra Rabba Qadisha, or “Greater Holy Assembly”: this is a development of the “Book of Concealed Mystery.”
- (c) The ADRA ZVTA QDIShA, Idra Zuta Qadisha, or “Lesser Holy Assembly”
- (d) The pneumatical treatise called BITH ALHIM, Beth Elohim, or the “House of Elohim,” ...from the doctrines of Rabbi Yitzchaq Loria...
- (e) The “Book of the Revolutions of Souls”...an expansion of Rabbi Loria’s ideas.

It is true that by the time we get to Luria (= Loria), the themes begun in *Sifra Detzeniuta* and the *Idrot* [(b) and (c)] were considered central to the *Zohar*, but in a purely zoharic context these texts are something of an oddity. Mathers ignored, or was ignorant of, the real core and bulk of the *Zohar*: the running commentary to the Torah. As with the previous list, the last two items simply do not belong. As Mathers even notes, they are Lurianic, which separates them from the *Zohar* by nearly 300 years.\*

Mathers’ *Kabbalah Unveiled* is an English translation of (a), (b), and (c) of the second list as rendered from Knorr von Rosenroth’s Latin: *Kabbala denudata*. The translation is full of extranea—some Knorr’s, some Mathers’—so it is hardly a fair representation of these texts. (I recommend the translation of Roy A. Rosenberg: *The Anatomy of God*, New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1973.)

Myer, Isaac. *Qabbalah: The Philosophical Writings of Solomon Ben Yehuda Ibn Gebirol...and their connection with the Hebrew Qabbalah and Sefer ha-Zohar*. Philadelphia: privately issued, 1888; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1970; rpt. San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1988.

Myer’s book discusses Gebirol’s work in relation to the *Zohar* and analyzes his *Mekor Hayim*. The bulk of the book is a survey of Kabbalah’s history and relationship to other religious systems. Myer’s last chapters are devoted to translated excerpts from the *Zohar*. Myer confused, or reinterpreted, some doctrine, e.g., the roles and order of the second and third *sefirot*: *hokhmah* and *binah*.

Papus [= Gerard Encausse]. *Qabalah: Secret Tradition of the West*. French original, 1892; English translation, Wellingborough: Thorsons and New York: Samuel Weiser, 1977.

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

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\* Quite a few subsequent writers have accepted Mathers and his lists, especially the first, as authoritative. For instance, Charles Ponce in *Kabbalah* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1973), pages 50-52, includes *Esh Mezaref* in his list, “Other Main Works of Kabbalism.” Typical of Ponce, he sets two perfectly viable choices (*Sefer Bahir* and Cordovero’s *Pardes Rimmonim*) against two items with no real place on the list (*Esh Mezaref* and *The Thirty-two Paths of Wisdom*). Mme. Blavatsky, too, referred to *Esh Mezaref* as one of the most important books in Kabbalah. As noted above, she and Mathers both made heavy use of von Rosenroth’s *Kabbala denudata*.

Agrippa, H.C. *Three Books of Occult Philosophy or Magic*. English edition by Wallis F. Whitehead, 1897; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1971.

See the comments above regarding Agrippa, pages 7 and 8.

Stirling, William. *The Canon. An Exposition of the Pagan Mystery Perpetuated in the Cabala as the Rule of All the Arts*. Elkin Matthews, 1897; rpt. London: Research Into Lost Knowledge Organisation Trust, 1974; rpt. York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1999.

The ancient “canon of the arts” and knowledge through the ages of significant ratios and measures are considered *via* the proportions of ancient monuments and the numerical values of biblical names. The book attempts to establish that a standardized sacred geometry, which was applied in the construction of holy sites and in the writing of holy names, reflects key proportions of the universe.

Nurho de Manhar. *The Zohar. Bereshith-Genesis*. Published as a serial in *The Word*, a monthly magazine edited by H.W. Percival, New York: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1900-14; rpt. San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1978 and 1980.

Nurho’s work is a translation of the first sections of the *Zohar* rendered in the light of Mme. Blavatsky’s teachings. Nurho was a member of the Golden Dawn whose real name was William Williams.

Waite, Arthur Edward. *Doctrine and Literature of the Kabbalah*. London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1902.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Secret Doctrine in Israel*. London: Rider and Co., 1913.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Holy Kabbalah* (incorporating the two titles above). London: Williams and Norgate Ltd, 1929; rpt. New Hyde Park: University Books, 1960 and subsequently.

Waite made a serious attempt to set the record straight about what true Kabbalah was and what it was not. His effort was hampered by his falling prey to the unreliable Latin and French translations available to him, e.g., Knorr von Rosenroth’s *Kabbala denudata*, and Jean de Pauly’s *Le Livre de la Splendeur*, a Christianized French rendering of the *Zohar* which has been relied upon by a host of twentieth-century occultists, historians, and writers, including Denis Saurat and Anais Nin.

Begley, Walter. *Biblia Cabalistica, or The Cabalistic Bible*. London: Nutt, 1903; rpt. Belle Fourche: Kessinger Publishing, n.d.

Written “for lovers and collectors of literary curiosities,” this book treats “HOW THE VARIOUS NUMERICAL CABALAS HAVE BEEN CURIOSLY APPLIED TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES” (from the preface and title page). According to Begley, there is an old cabala and a new cabala. “The first is mainly Hebrew, and occasionally Greek; the second is almost entirely Latin, and of much later invention, not being heard of till about A.D. 1530” (p. 3). Begley’s book treats the latter, “the record of Christian fancy on Christian themes”—primarily by way of *gematria*. Knowledge of Latin—and German—is helpful.

Peeke, Margaret B. *Numbers and Letters, or The Thirty-Two Paths of Wisdom*. 1908; rpt. Belle Fourche: Kessinger Publishing, n.d.

Infusions of Christian doctrine, coinages such as of “Sephiroths” and the dedication to Dr. Gerard Encausse (= Papus) give apt clues regarding this work’s orientation.

Crowley, Aleister. *The Equinox: The Official Organ of the A.A. The Review of Scientific Illuminism*. Volume I, Numbers 1-10, London: (Simpkin, Marshall) 1909-13; rpt. York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1972 and 1999.

*The Equinox* is a grandiose esoteric miscellany which includes Golden Dawn materials (as reworked by Crowley), rituals, essays, “knowledge lectures,” stories, plays, tables, charts, poetry, etc. Two items of particular interest in the present context were extracted from *The Equinox*, namely “Gematria” (from vol. 1, no. 5) and “Sepher Sephiroth” (from vol. 1, no. 8), reprinted with *Liber 777* as *The Qabalah of Aleister Crowley* (New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1973). See comments below, page 28, regarding Crowley and *Liber 777*.

Coleville, W.J. *Kabbalah, The Harmony of Opposites: A Treatise Elucidating Bible Allegories and the Significance of Numbers*. New York, Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co., 1916; rpt. Kilo, Kessinger Publishing, n.d.

This readable presentation is derived from previous English sources (C.D. Ginsburg, translations of Eliphaz Levi, S.L.M. Mathers, A.E. Waite, etc.). Coleville emphasizes the kabbalistic view of the human soul and includes a chapter entitled “Kabbalistic Doctrine Concerning Cause and Effect (Karma).”

Bond, Frederick Bligh; and Lea, Thomas Simcox. *Gematria. A Preliminary Investigation of the Cabala*. 1917; rpt. London: Research Into Lost Knowledge Organisation Trust, 1977.

Though some Hebrew *gematriot* appear toward the beginning, this work is primarily concerned with Greek letters and their values.

Gewurz, Elias. *The Hidden Treasures of the Ancient Qabalah*. Vol. I: The Transmutation of Passion into Power. Chicago: Yogi Publication Society, 1918.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Mysteries of the Qabalah*. Vol. II, “Written down by seven pupils of E.G. Chicago: Yogi Publication Society, 1922.

These works are of the Hermetic-Cabalist type as influenced by Mme. Blavatsky, Golden Dawn writers, and the Masonic cabalists. One of the “seven pupils of E.G.” who wrote down *The Mysteries* was L.A. Bosman, mentioned above in Scholem’s comments regarding Mme. Blavatsky. Bosman’s *Mysteries of the Qabalah* (London: The Dharma Press, 1916; rpt. Kila: Kessinger, 2003) is identical to PART II (pp. 54—99) of the 1922 Yogi edition.

Boyle, Veolita Parke. *The Fundamental Principles of Yi-King, Tao: The Cabbalas of Egypt and the Hebrews*. New York: Azoth Publishing Company, 1920; Chicago: Occult Publishing Company, 1929; London: W. & G. Folye, 1934; rpt of the 1929 edition, Kila: Kessinger Publishing, n.d. (ca. 2000).

The nature of this work, which is at once eclectic and uncritical, can be exemplified by its (CHAPTER III) “Definitions of Letters and Numbers,” where meanings according to the “Hebrew Cabbala” and “Chinese Tao and Yi-King” are given for the 26 letters of the English alphabet. Boyle’s sources for “Hebrew” are S.L.M. Mathers, Isaac Myer, Eliphaz Levi, and Papus.

Stenring, Knut. *The Book of Formation by Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph* Including the 32 Paths of Wisdom...with an introduction by Arthur Edward Waite. Philadelphia: McKay, 1923; rpt. New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1970.

See my “Notes on Editions of *Sefer Yezirah* in English” for details on Stenring’s translation and Waite’s introduction. Though Stenring’s is a much better piece of work, it has been overshadowed by Westcott’s edition of *Sefer Yezirah*, which has been reprinted many times and shows up in dozens of sites on the Internet.

Frater Achad [Charles Stansfield Jones]. *The Anatomy of the Body of God, Being the Supreme Revelation of Cosmic Consciousness*. Chicago: 1926; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1969.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Chalice of Ecstasy, Being a Magical and Qabalistic Interpretation of the Drama of Parzival*. Chicago, 1923; Edmonds: Holmes Publishing Group, 1994.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Egyptian Revival, or The Ever-coming Son in the Light of Tarot*. Chicago: 1923; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1969.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Horus, Isis, and QBL,” in *The Equinox*, Volume III, Number 10, edited by Hymenaeus Beta X [William Breeze]; York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1986 and 1990.

\_\_\_\_\_. *I.N.R.I. De Mysteriis Rosae Rubae et Aurae Crucis*. Chicago: The Collegium Ad Spiritum Sanctum, 1924; rpt. Edmonds: Sure Fire Press, 1989.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Liber 31*. 1918/1948; San Francisco: Level Press, 1974; this edition includes “Additional Notes on Liber Legis,” *Liber QNA*, and “Gambling with the World.”

\_\_\_\_\_. *Q.B.L. or The Bride’s Reception, Being a Short Qabbalistic Treatise on the Tree of Life*. Chicago: 1923; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1969

\_\_\_\_\_. “XXXI Hymns to the Star Goddess” (1923), in *Tree: 3*, edited by David Meltzer, Santa Barbara: Christopher Books, Winter 1972: pp. 66-80.

Frater Achad is generally considered Aleister Crowley’s most important student. Achad expands upon the Golden Dawn *qabalah*, establishing some of his own variations on such things as the attributions of the Hebrew letters and their correspondences to the paths of the kabbalistic *tree of life*, in one book, *The Egyptian Revival*, turning the attribution system established by the Golden Dawn completely upside-down.

A more recent writer, considered by many to be Crowley’s true heir, is Kenneth Grant, whose numerous books treat *qabalah* throughout. See, for example, Grant’s summary statements regarding the *qabalistic* tradition in *Beyond the Mauve Zone* (London: Starfire Publishing Ltd, 1999), Chapter 8: “The Metaphysics of Transmission.” Mention of Grant leads inevitably to the subject of the OTO, *Ordo Templi Orientis*—a can of worms, indeed. Perhaps the best single book on this still-functioning order is *O.T.O. Rituals and Sex Magick*, by Theodor Reuss and Aleister Crowley, compiled and edited by A.R. Naylor, introduced by Peter-R. Koenig - (Thame: I-H-O Books, 1999). Though published in 1999, the book is already out of print, commanding high prices, many times its original \$50 cover price. The bulk of the book is OTO documents, which, apparently, the active OTO groups are not pleased to see in print. (A similar negative reaction greeted Francis King’s edition of the O.T.O. material in 1973, *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.* [New York: Samuel Weiser].) Further controversy surrounds the introduction—and assessments—of Peter-R. Koenig. Much of the

material which appears in *O.T.O. Rituals...* can be seen at Koenig's well-crafted website, *The Ordo Templi Orientis Phenomenon* at [www.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/](http://www.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/).

Pullen-Burry, Henry B. *Qabalism*. Chicago, Yogi Publication Society, 1925.

Pullen-Burry was a member of the Golden Dawn; he reached the level of Hierophant in 1894 under the motto *Anima pura sit*. *Qabalism* discusses the *sefirot*, the four worlds, Adam Kadmon, etc.

Hall, M[anly] P[almer]. *The Secret Teachings of All Ages: An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy*. San Francisco: H.S. Crocker Co., 1928; rpt. Los Angeles: The Philosophical Research Society, 1978.

The subtitle, "*An Encyclopedic Outline...*," is certainly fitting. As far as Cabala is concerned, Hall's sources are all familiar to us from the present discussion: Barrett, Blavatsky, Fludd, Franck, Ginsburg, Khunrath, Kircher, Levi, Mathers, Myer, Papus, Paracelsus, Pike, Stenring, von Rosenroth, Waite, and Westcott.

Regardie, Francis Israel. *A Garden of Pomegranates: An Outline of the Qabalah*. London: Rider and Co., 1932; rpt. St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1970.

*A Garden...* is an insider's summary of the Golden Dawn's *qabalah*. See Part 3 and "Items of Interests" for other works by Regardie.

Ancona, Sergius Gortan. *The Substance of Adam: A Complete System of Cosmogony Founded on the Kabbala*. London: Rider & Co., 1934; rpt. Brampton: Ballantrae Reprint ([www.ballantrae-reprint.com](http://www.ballantrae-reprint.com)).

Part One: THE FOUR WORLDS OF THE UNIVERSE; Part Two: THE WORLD OF THE MAN OF FLESH IN ACTION. Quoting such sources as the Bible (Old and New Testaments), the Zohar, *The Emerald Tablet*, and some Latin numbered Pico-like CABBALISTIC DOGMA(S) Ancona presents "the western tradition" which, by way of "the great works of Eliphaz Levi, Saint-Yves d'Alveydre and Fabre d'Olivet...goes back consistently and without interruption to what was given to the white race by its three great interpreters of God—Rama, Orpheus and Moses—and by direct grace of the Prince of the Archangels, the Son, Jesus the Christ."

Fortune, Dion. *The Mystical Qabalah*. London: Williams and Norgate, 1935; reprinted frequently.

This work is considered a "classic," essential reading for students of the Western esoteric stream as exemplified by the Golden Dawn and its heirs. Regarding Dion Fortune, see the comments below and "Items of Interest."

### Part 3

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was founded in the 1880s by S.L.M. Mathers, W.W. Westcott (both of whom are represented in the list above), and a third, apparently less significant, gentleman named W.R. Woodman. Mathers and Westcott concocted an eclectic program of occult study containing quite a bit of Cabala as derived from the Christian sources we have discussed: Agrippa, Dee, von Rosenroth, etc. For better or worse, Golden Dawn teachings have become the cornerstone for much—if not most—of the occult work practiced today. The history of the Golden Dawn has been quite intelligently written about by Francis King, R.A. Gilbert and Ellic Howe; refer to “Items of Interest” for books by these writers.

The bulk of the Golden Dawn teachings, through its own documents, has been generally available since Israel Regardie’s four-volume edition of *The Golden Dawn*, 1937-40 (Chicago: Aries Press; frequent reprints were begun by Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul: 1969). Beyond Regardie’s full selection, other books which present further Golden Dawn documents of some significance include the following:

Mathers, S.L. MacGregor, et al. *Astral Projection, Ritual Magic, and Alchemy*. Edited by Francis King; 1<sup>st</sup> edition London: Spearman, 1971; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1975; 2<sup>nd</sup> enlarged edition, Rochester: Destiny Books, 1987.

This book presents the “Flying Rolls,” i.e., the instructional materials handed around to Golden Dawn members, not included in Regardie’s collection. The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition adds some material.

Torrens, R.G. *The Secret Rituals of the Golden Dawn*. New York: Samuel Weiser Inc., 1973.

Torrens gives historical accounts and doctrinal summaries and alternative (early) versions of the Outer Order rituals.

Gilbert, R.A. *The Golden Dawn Companion*. Wellingborough: Aquarian Press, 1986.

This *Companion* is a wealth of documentary minutia on the Golden Dawn’s history, structure, workings, membership, and sources.

Zalewski, Patrick J. *Secret Inner Order Rituals of the Golden Dawn*. Phoenix: Falcon Press, 1988.

Zalewski gives the 6=5 and 7=4 (i.e. The Inner Order) rituals not included by Regardie.

The quintessential example of the Golden Dawn’s brand of *Qabalistic* synthesis is Aleister Crowley’s *Liber 777*, which consists of table after table of correspondence—nearly 200 columns—arranged according to the ten *sefirot* and the twenty-two paths which interconnect them. This work calls itself a “Qabalistic dictionary of ceremonial magic, oriental mysticism, comparative religion and symbology.” Among the sources which the introduction acknowledges are *Kabbala denudata*, “the lost symbolism of the Vault in which Christian Rosenkreutz is said to have been buried,” Dee, Agrippa, the “Art” of Ramon Llull, Pietro di Abano, Eliphas Levi, to mention those who have been connected, however loosely, with Cabala. The preface of *777* goes on to say, “The Chinese, Hindu, Buddhist, Moslem, and Egyptian systems have never before been brought into line with the Qabalah; the Tarot has never been made public.” *777* was reprinted with two other “Qabalistic” items as *The Qabalah of Aleister Crowley* (New York: Samuel Weiser Inc., 1973; this collection has been reprinted a few times).



Some of the books listed in Part 2 of the present paper are considered “classics of qabalah,” especially Mathers’ *Kabbalah Unveiled* and Fortune’s *Mystical Qabalah*. A student of Fortune’s, Gareth Knight, produced a compendious study, *A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism* (Helios Book Service [UK], 1965; New York: Samuel Weiser, 1978), which offers a thorough compilation of the Golden Dawn’s “qabalah of correspondence” in its 500-plus pages.

Among the books on Kabbalah/Cabala which are often recommended by students of Golden Dawn-type occultism are Waite’s *Holy Kabbalah*, Myer’s *Qabbalah*, and Ginsburg’s *Kabbalah*; these are thought to be the “serious... difficult...scholarly” books on the subject. Considered more practical are Fortune’s *Mystical Qabalah* and the popular series by William Gray, which includes *The Talking Tree* (1977), *The Ladder of the Lights* (1981), *Concepts of the Qabalah* (1984) and *The Tree of Evil* (revised edition, 1985; all titles, New York: Samuel Weiser). *Concepts of Qabalah* is Volume 3 of Gray’s SANGREAL SODALITY SERIES: Vol. 1. *Western Inner Workings* (1983); Vol. 2. *The Sangreal Sacrament* (1983); Vol. 4. *Sangreal Ceremonies and Rituals* (1986). All of these titles were published by Samuel Weiser, Inc., New York.

Another great favorite is W. E. Butler’s *Magic and the Qabalah* (Wellingborough: Aquarian Press, 1964; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, 1972). None of these “practical” books draws on Jewish sources; each is based instead on Golden Dawn materials, whether first- or second-hand.

One book “presents the majority of the Kabbalistic teachings from the Golden Dawn in one fascinating volume”: Pat Zalewski’s *Kabbalah of the Golden Dawn* (St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1993). This book may well reflect Golden Dawn teachings, but it also demonstrates that the longstanding tradition of mangling (Jewish) Kabbalah—and the stubborn ignorance of it—has not come to an end. The book’s account of the history and major texts of *Kabbalah* is studded with a staggering number of errors, betraying Zalewski’s failure to read the sources he lists; even the titles of the books given in the footnotes contain mistakes. As an inexpensive source showing what has become of Cabala, Zalewski’s book may have something to recommend it. However, John Michael Greer’s *Paths of Wisdom: Principles and Practice of the Magical Cabala in the Western Tradition* (St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1996) is a far better, more complete—and certainly more readable—introduction to the Golden Dawn Cabala. Neither as inclusive nor as well presented as Greer’s work is the similar wisdom of *Experiencing the Kabbalah* by Chic Cicero and Sandra Tabatha Cicero (St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1997), which offers the reader and “easy-to-use beginners guide.”

Recent interest in the Golden Dawn is demonstrated by a book-sized journal featuring articles by contemporary authors; between 1994 and 1998, four volumes were published (none since, however). The second volume, *The Golden Dawn Journal*, Book 2, is subtitled “Qabalah: Theory and Magic,” edited by Chic Cicero and Sandra Tabatha Cicero (St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1994).\* The articles are spotty; some are downright bad. A few are sincere attempts to offer the results of thoughtful research, both academic and practical.

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\* Given that the Hermetic-Cabalist tradition is the major source of notions and practices for the Golden Dawn, it is no surprise that the subject of “Qabalah” (i.e., Cabala) is also well represented in the other issues of *The Golden Dawn Journal*: Book I: DIVINATION (1994); Book III: THE ART OF HERMES (1995); and Book IV: THE MAGICAL PANTHEONS (1998; all from Llewellyn Publications, St. Paul). See, for example, Madonna Compton’s article in Book III, “Logos Revealed: Hermetic Influences on the Renaissance Humanists,” where there is an effort to affect an academic tone in discussions of Pico, Reuchlin, Henry More, and Rosenroth; or Harvey Newstrom’s article in Book IV, “In the Beginning was the Word,” which draws on the *Sefer Yezirah* and *Sefer Bahir*—along with *The Key of Solomon*—in a discussion of the sundry epithets for each of the ten *sefirot*.

A checklist of basic readings on the “qabalah” of the Golden Dawn would include

1. Regardie’s edition of Golden Dawn documents, either as *The Golden Dawn* (most accessible through the Llewellyn reprints) or *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic* (—somewhat less available than the Llewellyn edition—from New Falcon Press).
2. Dion Fortune’s *Mystical Qabalah* (reprinted many times).
3. Regardie’s *Tree of Life: A Study in Magic* (which many occultists *and* academics rank as one of the best introductions to the whole topic).
4. Gareth Knight’s *Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism* (available through Weiser reprints).
5. Crowley’s *777* (which is included in *The Qabalah of Aleister Crowley*, reprinted frequently by Weiser).
6. Golden Dawn versions of “qabalistic” texts:
  - a. Westcott’s *Sepher Yetzirah* (in print from several publishers and on the Internet at dozens of sites)
  - b. Mathers’ *Kabbalah Unveiled* (available both in print and on the Internet)