

Joseph Dan

The »Unique Cherub« Circle

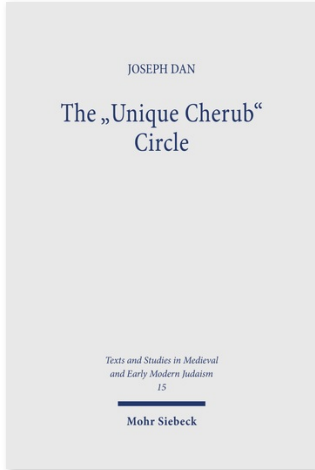
A School of Mystics and Esoterics in Medieval Germany

[Der Kreis des 'einzigen Cherubs'. Jüdische Mystik und Esoterik im mittelalterlichen Deutschland. Von Joseph Dan.]

Published in English.

The main point delivered by this book is that Jews living in Germany during the Middle Ages developed a dynamic and variegated culture which should be recognized as a constituent of European and German medieval religiosity. The esoterics, mystics and pietists who produced works like those analyzed in this volume derived their inspiration from the traditional Jewish texts, but were also part of the world they lived in, despite the seclusions enforced by the religious prejudices of the time. The esoterical-mystical phenomena described were to a very large extent an original development in central-European Jewry, and constitute one of their most important contributions to Jewish culture as a whole. In some cases, a spiritual atmosphere reminiscent of early Protestant sects, which were to appear in the same regions three centuries later, can be discerned. Some of these texts influenced the Christian kabbalists of the sixteenth century, like Johannes Reuchlin and others. This is a major spiritual phenomenon which has been completely neglected until now, and it is hoped that this volume will contribute to a new appreciation of this aspect of European creativity in the Middle Ages.

Joseph Dan Born 1935, studied at the Hebrew University, 1964 Ph.D; since 1982 Gershom Scholem Professor for Kabbala; 1993–2002 Guest Professor for Jewish Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin, since 2002 Professor emeritus.



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