

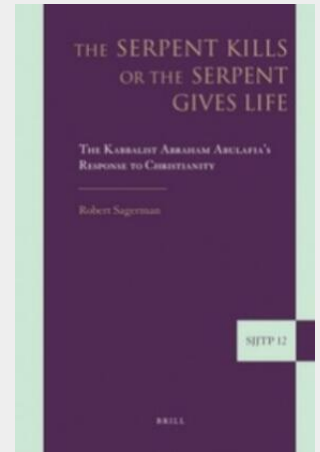
Sagerman

The Serpent Kills or the Serpent Gives Life

The Kabbalist Abraham Abulafia's Response to Christianity

Abraham Abulafia (1240 – c. 1291) founded an enormously influential branch of Jewish mysticism, referred to as the prophetic or ecstatic kabbalah. This book, from several perspectives, explores the impact of Christianity upon Abulafia. His copious writings evince an intense fascination with Christian themes, yet Abulafia's frequent diatribes against Jesus and Christianity reveal him to be deeply conflicted in his relationship to his southern European religious neighbors. This book undertakes a careful study of Abulafia's writings, suggesting that the recognition of an inner dynamic of attraction and revulsion toward the forbidden other provides a crucial key to understanding Abulafia's mystical hermeneutic and his meditative practice. It also demonstrates that Abulafia's uneasy relationship to Christianity shaped the very core of his mystical doctrine. [^]

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