SPIRITUALITY & RELIGION

The Kabbalistic Tree

The Devil's Atlas: An Explorer's Guide to Heavens, Hells and Afterworlds
by Brooke-Hitching, Edward

NONFICTION

An American in Provence: Art, Life and Photography
by Beck, Jamie
Chajes (Jewish thought, Univ. of Haifa; *Between Worlds: Dybbuks, Exorcists, and Early Modern Judaism*) has authored a stunning scholarly work on the history of ilanot, diagrammatic representations on parchment of the kabbalistic “tree of life” used to express abstract relations. He outlines the origins of and the reasoning behind Jewish people’s visual documentations of their understanding of God. The book’s 250 illustrations include classical examples of ilanot from Spain, Italy, Byzantium, Yemen, and other areas, while showcasing the contributions of Rabbi Isaac Luria, who figures prominently in this text. Chajes also explores modern versions of ilanot.

**VERDICT** Extensive research with primary-source materials makes this a monumental achievement that will be valuable to scholars and general readers interested in Judaism, religion, and art history.

Reviewed by *Jacqueline Parascandola*, Oct 01, 2022

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