

# Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory: Methodologies of Textual Scholarship and Editorial Practice in the Study of Jewish Mysticism (Sources and Studies in the Literature of Jewish Mysticism)

Daniel Abrams

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Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory uncovers the unstated assumptions and expectations of scribes and scholars who fashioned editions from manuscripts of Jewish mystical literature. This study offers a theory of kabbalistic textuality in which the material book the printed page no less than handwritten manuscripts serves as the site for textual dialogue between Jewish mystics of different periods and locations. The refashioning of the text through the process of reading and commenting that takes place on the page in the margins and between the lines blurs the boundaries between the traditionally defined roles of author, reader, commentator and editor. This study shows that kabbalists and academic editors reinvented the text in their own image, as part of a fluid textual process that was nothing short of transformative. This book is certainly monumental, offering in its seven hundred pages a wealth of documentation and distilled argument that manages to be both comprehensive in its materials and transparent in its critical insights. It is rare indeed that a work of such formidable scholarship can actually be a pleasure to read and convincing in its elucidation of what are often extremely complex documentary circumstances and editorial traditions. From the foreword by David Greetham



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