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The Kabbalistic Culture of Eighteenth-Century Prague: Ezekiel Landau (the Noda Biyehudah) and His Contemporaries (Paperback)

By Sharon Flatto

The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, United Kingdom, 2015. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 235 x 155 mm.

Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.

Kabbalah, an esoteric lore whose study was traditionally restricted, played a surprisingly prominent and far-reaching role in eighteenth-century Prague. In this book Sharon Flatto uncovers the centrality of this mystical tradition for Prague's influential Jewish community and its pre-eminent rabbinic authority, Ezekiel Landau, chief rabbi from 1754 to 1793. A towering eighteenth-century rabbinic leader who is best known for his halakhic responsa collection the Noda biyehudah, Landau is generally considered a staunch opponent of esoteric practices and public kabbalistic discourse. Flatto challenges this portrayal, exposing the importance of kabbalah in his work and thought and demonstrating his novel use of teachings from diverse kabbalistic schools. She also identifies the historical events and cultural forces underlying his reluctance to discuss kabbalah publicly, including the rise of the hasidic movement and the acculturation spurred by the 1781 Habsburg Toleranzpatent. In telling this story, the study offers the first systematic overview of the eighteenth-century Jewish community of Prague, and the first critical account of Landau's life and writings, which continue to shape Jewish law...

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