



All the Names of the Lord: Lists, Mysticism, and Magic

Valentina Izmirlieva



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Christians face a conundrum when it comes to naming God, for if God is unnamable, as theologians maintain, he can also be called by every name. His proper name is thus an open-ended, all-encompassing list, a mystery the Church embraces in its rhetoric, but which many Christians have found difficult to accept. To explore this conflict, Valentina Izmirlieva examines two lists of God's names: one from *The Divine Names*, the classic treatise by Pseudo-Dionysius, and the other from *The 72 Names of the Lord*, an amulet whose history binds together Kabbalah and Christianity, Jews and Slavs, Palestine, Provence, and the Balkans.

This unexpected juxtaposition of a theological treatise and a magical amulet allows Izmirlieva to reveal lists' rhetorical potential to create order and to function as both tools of knowledge and of power. Despite the two different visions of order represented by each list, Izmirlieva finds that their uses in Christian practice point to a complementary relationship between the existential need for God's protection and the metaphysical desire to submit to his infinite majesty—a compelling claim sure to provoke discussion among scholars in many fields.



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