

known, despite its importance in religious history. The translation of the text is precise and clear, while the notes are copious and illuminating. This is an essential source for medieval European religious history and Jewish religious history.

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VERNACULAR VOICES: LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY IN MEDIEVAL FRENCH JEWISH COMMUNITIES. By Kirsten A. Fudeman. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. Pp. xiii + 254; plates. Cloth, \$59.95.

This study by a fine scholar on the topic of the role of the vernacular in medieval French Jewry is a fascinating and an enlightening volume. The introduction discusses the field and provides the linguistic context, offering interesting connections between language and religious identity. Discussions of bilingual Jewish texts and what they show about Jewish and Christian society and of the messages and values of two wedding songs written in a combination of Hebrew and French are particularly engaging. Fudeman moves easily from analyses of contemporary scholarship to examining what was said (and not said) about the Jewish use of French in the medieval period to reconstructing the course of events in a false accusation of murder in Blois. Her conclusions about the oral nature of French among Jews raises many stimulating questions. The author shows how linguistics contributed to the maintenance of linguistic singularity even beyond the use of glosses in rabbinic texts. This is a significant contribution to medieval Jewish history and to the study of the popular religion of the period.

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Judaism: Modern

UNTOLD TALES OF THE HASIDIM: CRISIS AND DISCONTENT IN THE HISTORY OF HASIDISM. By David Assaf. Tauber Institute Series for the Study of European Jewry. Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2010. Pp. xxiii + 336. Cloth \$55.00; paper, \$35.00; Ebook, \$29.99.

This book, translated from the Hebrew version published in 2006, deals with events or characters in the history of Hasidism that were “concealed or deliberately suppressed.” The seven chapters deal with orthodox historiography, the converted son of the founder of Chabad, the tragic death of the seer of Lublin, the opposition (often violent) to Bratslav Hasidim, and the tormented lives of three Hasidic personalities; Akiva Shalom Chajes, Menachem Nahum Friedman, and Yitshak Nahum Twersky. The materials are often surprising. It must be remembered, however, that they illustrate potentials or exceptional cases but not the mainstream of Hasidism. Therefore, this book can be used as an illuminating supplement to standard sources on East Euro-

pean Jewish religious history but cannot replace them. It should also be noted that this is not a systematic survey of discontent in Hasidism. By dealing with a number of issues viewed by Hasidim as problematic, this volume serves as an important corrective to the many hagiographical works on Hasidism.

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ANTI-JEWISH VIOLENCE: RETHINKING THE POGROM IN EAST EUROPEAN HISTORY. Edited by Jonathan Dekel-Chen, David Gaunt, Natan M. Meir and Israel Bartal. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011. Pp. xviii + 220. Cloth, \$34.95.

This volume contains eleven essays that deal with outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in eastern Europe. The introduction downplays the role of religion, direct or indirect, in outbreaks of violence on the basis of the view that “religions normally develop an everyday tolerance at the local level for other faiths, while preserving rivalries and maintaining a level of hate-speech.” Not surprisingly, most of the articles look elsewhere for explanations of violent outbreaks. The book is divided into three parts and each is rather novel. The first deals with pogroms during and after World War I, a relatively ignored topic. The second deals with Jewish responses to pogroms including attempts to prevent pogroms or to deal with them; the third and last part contains studies that deal with regional characteristics and attempts to explain the unique characteristics of various regions. The topic of blood libel and the Beilis case are the only topics related to religion that get some attention. In part, the lack of attention given to Jewish or Christian religious responses reflects the research interests of the individuals who wrote the papers. This seems to be a reflection of some of the current foci of scholarly interest. Although this book would be a very welcome addition to collections on Jewish history and society, as well as to the study of anti-Semitism, it is more limited in what it has to offer to collections that deal mainly with religion.

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THE ORIGINS OF JEWISH SECULARIZATION IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE. By Shmuel Feiner. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. Pp. xvi + 330. Cloth, \$65.00.

There was a time when Jewish secularization was seen as the inevitable next step after the Jewish Enlightenment. Recent scholarship has shown that the internal challenges to tradition and Jewish belief began much earlier, and not only among the families of exiles from Spain such as Spinoza’s. In this book, Feiner brings together both original research and contemporary scholarship to give a broad picture of the origins of secularization among Jews. The introduction is a succinct but extremely valuable presentation both of the