

a view. Newman's struggle to find some middle ground, while not entirely successful, points out a continuing dilemma within contemporary feminist spirituality.

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Robert Chazan. *European Jewry and the First Crusade.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987. Pp. ix + 380.

With *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, Robert Chazan has made an important contribution to our understanding of medieval Jewish history and of the evolution of Jewish-Christian relations. The work is notable both for its thorough and detailed analysis of the Hebrew and Latin accounts of the attacks on the Rhineland Jewish communities in 1096 and for its revision of accepted notions of the impact of these events on Ashkenazic Jewry. Rather than viewing Ashkenazic Jewry as intellectually and socially isolated from the wider cultural milieu, Chazan shows how the Jews, along with their Christian neighbors, were deeply affected by the spirit of intellectual and spiritual innovation characteristic of the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries. This spirit of innovation is evident both in the popular crusaders' attacks on the Jews and in the Jewish response to Christian violence. Thus, according to Chazan, the ideational roots of the German crusaders' anti-Jewish violence consisted of a radical reinterpretation of the still fluid doctrine of crusade, whereby Jews, as the enemies of Christendom, became the objects of the holy war and therefore could be slaughtered or, preferably, converted. Such views were a departure from the Church's traditional toleration of Jewish existence within Christendom. More interesting is Chazan's analysis of the Jewish reaction to the assaults. Not only did the Jews passively choose death instead of religious conversion in accordance with halachic and aggadic tradition, but, moved by the intense spirituality characteristic of the period and by innovative interpretation of religious symbols and imagery (the sacrificial system of the Temple; Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac), they actively sought martyrdom in unprecedented fashion, even taking their own lives and those of fellow Jews. Through their extreme and fervent response the Jews displayed their loyalty to the Jewish faith and secured an ultimate triumph out of disaster.

Chazan effectively refutes the prevalent view that the events of 1096 marked a decisive and downward turning point in European Jewish history. He argues that total destruction was limited to the major Jewish centers of Worms, Mainz, and Cologne, that the twelfth century saw demographic recovery and growth, rather than decline, among Ashkenazic Jewry, that Jewish economic activity flourished after 1096, and that Ashkenazic cultural life in the twelfth century displayed increasing vitality and creativity (for example, the Tosafists).

However, there is, I think, some unevenness in Chazan's explanation of the causes of the anti-Jewish violence of 1096 and in his treatment of Jewish-Christian relations more generally, which stems from his placing perhaps excessive emphasis on the intellectual roots of the violence while minimizing its socioeconomic foundations. Thus, the "crusading bands" are perceived as having been moved to their anti-Jewish aggression almost solely by their novel interpretation of "crusading doctrine." The "crusading bands" or "armies" are viewed by Chazan as socially amorphous groups, and he makes no attempt to distinguish between the perhaps different motives of leaders and followers for perpetrating violence. Chazan, it seems, does not consider that the "crusading bands" were probably largely composed of the rural and urban lower classes, whose attitudes toward and actions against the Jews might have had little to do with the interpretation of the doctrine of crusade. The possible social and economic motives for Christian, particularly lower-class Christian, violence are given rather short shrift, as are the more diffuse elements of increasing psychological disorientation and revolutionary socioreligious ferment evident in the urban areas of the Rhineland (see, for example, Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millenium*), which in themselves might have created a fertile ground for social violence. In the same way, Chazan's argument for Ashkenazic Jewry's intellectual and spiritual integration into the Christian environment is more convincing than his argument for its social integration. The latter argument suffers from Chazan's failure to take into account the various social classes which comprised the Christian urban population and their differential relations with Jews; instead, all urban Christians are labelled "burghers," which leaves us with a rather hazy idea of how and with whom the Jews were socially integrated. In sum, while Chazan's assertion that the Ashkenazic Jews were by no means culturally isolated is well taken, and while it is also clear that the extant sources do not allow for a detailed socioeconomic analysis of Jewish-Christian relations, nevertheless more attention to the Christians' varied socioeconomic

and spiritual situation—for certainly it consisted of more than the Twelfth-Century Renaissance—would have resulted in a more balanced explanation of Christian interaction with and violence against the Jews.

In any case, Chazan's book no doubt will be the standard account of the events of 1096 and their aftermath for some time to come, and students of Jewish history in particular will find much that is new and much that compels a revision of their views of medieval Ashkenazic Jewry. Students of medieval Christian intellectual history will also discover that the cultural revival of the twelfth century was a Jewish as well as a Christian phenomenon. Chazan's fine translation of the Hebrew chronicles of the First Crusade (in the Appendix) will be of great interest and use to anyone concerned with the tragedy that befell the Rhineland Jews in 1096.

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Colbert I. Nepaulsingh. *Towards a History of Literary Composition in Medieval Spain.* University of Toronto romance series 54. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986. Pp. x + 296.

This book is a study of an important set of Spanish medieval works in light of their composition. The objective is both ambitious and appealing, and Professor Nepaulsingh has undertaken it with a deep knowledge of the texts and criticism. He has chosen hermeneutics as a theoretical basis. Although the focus is on composition, i.e. on "how parts of a work are put together" (3), the author rejects any theoretical approach that isolates the text from its background. Rather he looks into the various traditions (not sources) in search of a heuristic tool that would help to better comprehend the works he studies. Thus he establishes three dominant influences in composition: the Bible, scholasticism, and the wheel of Fortune to which a tentative fourth book, production, is added.

In "Books on a String" (ch. 1) the rosary or psalter is proposed as a wide-spread composition scheme. As evidence Nepaulsingh draws our attention to medieval iconography in which the holy would be depicted with a rosary in one hand and a book in the other. He examines Berceo's *Milagros* where the psalms occur as textual references, in the division of miracles, and within the allegory of the introduction. The stringing com-