

put forward. Goldish offers an explanation for this phenomenon that is both innovative and convincing in his new book. He suggests that the reasons for the success and widespread acceptance of Sabbateanism are to be found in the outbreaks of “popular prophecy” and millenarianism that affected not only Jews, but also Christians and Muslims in the middle of the seventeenth century. It is millenarianism that provides the fertile soil in which Sabbateanism could sprout and flourish. The Sabbatean movement began with a prophetic vision by Nathan of Gaza, a young and highly respected mystic. In his vision, he saw that Sabbatei Sevi was the awaited messiah. As the news spread, the movement was strengthened and disseminated by outbreaks of “prophetic activities” among all sectors of the Jewish community, including women and children. The contemporary parallels in the Christian and Muslim communities that Goldish discusses add weight and substance to his argument. This work is an outstanding example of the synergistic effect of studying Jewish history in its broader context and is a major contribution to the study of early modern religious history and culture. It can be highly recommended to anyone interested in early modern history and would be a significant addition to any library.

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## Judaism: Modern

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**DEFINING THE YIDDISH NATION: THE JEWISH FOLKLORIST OF POLAND.** By Itzik Nakhmen Gottesman. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2003. Pp. xxiii + 247. Cloth, \$34.95, ISBN 0-8143-2669-2.

Secular Yiddish nationalism sought to create a Jewish “national” identity at the beginning of the twentieth century that was not based on the Jewish religion and the Hebrew language. In their place, they proposed the Yiddish language and its modern literature as the unifying and identifying core of Jewish identity. Like other modern “national movements” in Central and Eastern Europe based on German Romanticism, the early Jewish folklorists turned to the collection and analysis of folklore as a primary tool in the creation of a new “national” identity. In this study, Gottesman traces the role of folklore as a tool in the development of a Yiddishist identity in Poland, from its beginnings before World War I until its end in the Holocaust. He describes the key figures and institutions involved in the creation of the Yiddishist folklore movement and its source materials. Beginning with individual collectors of folk songs and proverbs, the movement became institutionalized first through the Ansky Jewish Historical-Ethnographic Society and its culmination in the YIVO Ethnographic Commission in the 1930s. What is missing from this study

is a critical evaluation of the larger goals and motives of these folklorists in the context of Jewish life in interwar Poland. Nonetheless, Gottesman’s book is a significant contribution to our understanding of prewar Jewish life in Poland and its wide variety. It adds to our knowledge of the history of folklore and Yiddishism.

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### THE REGAL WAY: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF RABBI ISRAEL OF RUZHIN.

By David Assaf. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002. Pp. xv + 456. \$65.00, ISBN 0-8047-4468-8.

This biography of Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin, one of the most influential and controversial hasidic leaders of the nineteenth century, is a major scholarly contribution. Israel of Ruzhin was the prototype for a new type of hasidic leader that became the dominant model from the middle of the nineteenth century to the present. Family lineage became more important than learning or personal charisma in choosing hasidic leaders, and materialism and luxury replaced austerity and asceticism in hasidic courts. Assaf breaks new methodological ground in his study and illuminates a previously neglected period in the history of Hasidism. His study goes beyond the theology and intellectual history of Hasidism, utilizing archival and non-hasidic sources not available for previous periods of hasidic history. His examination of the social and economic structure of the hasidic community and the hasidic court, how it was administratively organized, and how its manifold activities were financed, is path breaking. This volume is a revised translation of the original Hebrew edition. Some primary sources in Hebrew have been deleted from the notes and new research since the publication of the Hebrew edition has been added. It is a very important addition to the history of Hasidism and the study of East European Jewish history. It is highly recommended for anyone interested in these areas.

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## The Americas: Central and South

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**LA LUCHA CONTINUES: MUJERISTA THEOLOGY.** By Ada María Isasi-Díaz. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004. Pp. xiv + 270. \$24.00, ISBN 1-57075-557-4.

*La Lucha* in this case is “the struggle” of Hispanic/Latina women—*mujeres*—from which the word *mujerista* has been crafted; however, such a neologism is warranted, insofar as the experiences of Latinas are different from those of feminists, who tend to be white

and middle-class, and those of “womanists,” who are African American. This book is a continuation of the author’s earlier volume, *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century* (1996; reviewed in *RSR* 23: 154), and, like that volume, a collection of previously published essays. As in similar collections, one finds some repetition, but on the whole, the flow of thought from one essay to the next is better orchestrated than in *Mujerista Theology*. The first three essays are autobiographical: reminiscences of a Cuban youth, the trauma of teenage emigration, missionary activity in Latin America, participation in the women’s ordination conference, graduate theological studies—all these experiences are shared in such a way as to constitute an eloquent and engaging personal statement of *mujerista* spirituality. The remaining nine essays provide many additional details for this attractive portrait of *mujerista* theology: a search for liberation in the face of multifaceted discrimination, an acceptance of ethnic and racial diversity, a recognition of the divine in *lo cotidiano*—the struggles of everyday life, a picaresque mocking/tricking of oppressors, the continual and unending quest for justice, love and reconciliation, and so on. Many readers will find this book both liberating—freeing them from a variety of obstacles and oppressions—and encouraging—providing readers with an incentive for working on their own *proyecto histórico*—a Gospel-inspired self-realization.

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**RESURGENT VOICES IN LATIN AMERICA: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, POLITICAL MOBILIZATION AND RELIGIOUS CHANGE.** Edited by Edward L. Cleary and Timothy J. Steigenga. New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2004. Pp. vii + 268. Cloth, \$65.00, ISBN 0-8135-3460-7; paper, \$24.95, ISBN 0-8135-3461-5.

The Quincentennial of the “discovery” of the Americas was marked by a growing recognition of both the indigenous presence in Latin America and its multidimensional aspects: cultural, political, social, and religious. The eight essays in this collection are case studies of the interlinked “political mobilization and religious change” in six countries: Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru. While the details about political-religious interaction are quite contrasting and sometimes apparently contradictory, these accounts are linked by three panoramic themes: 1) religious syncretism that takes kaleidoscopic forms as Christianity continues to interface with indigenous religious beliefs and practices, 2) a shift away from the theologies of inculturation that appeared in the wake of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and the Latin American Episcopal Conference in Medellín (1968) to the formulation of indigenous theologies, and 3) the interaction of indigenous religion and cul-