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Sommario/riassunto	This text draws on a wealth of material, much of it previously available only in Hebrew, to trace the history of Jewish hymnography from its origins in the eastern Mediterranean to its subsequent development in Western Europe and Balkan Byzantium, on the Grecian periphery, under the Ottomans, and among the Karaites. Focusing on each region in turn, the work provides a general background to the role of the synagogue poets in the society of the time; characterizes the principal poets and describes their contribution; examines the principal genres and forms; and considers their distinctive language, style, and themes. The copious excerpts from the liturgy are presented in transliterated Hebrew and in English translation, and their salient characteristics are fully discussed to bring out the historical development of ideas and regional themes as well as literary forms.