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Autore	Einbinder Susan L. <1954->
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Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- CONTENTS -- Acknowledgments -- INTRODUCTION: The Medieval Poetry of Jewish Martyrdom -- ONE. Faith and Fury: Medieval Jewish Martyrological Poetry and Resistance to Conversion -- TWO. "The Fire Does Not Burn": The Emergence of a Martyrological Motif -- THREE. Burning Jewish Books -- FOUR. Wheels within Wheels: Literature, History, and Methodology -- FIVE. Une Bele Qedushah: Troyes 1288 -- SIX. Jonathan and His Magic Book: Paris 1290 -- Epilogue -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	When Crusader armies on their way to the Holy Land attacked Jewish communities in the Rhine Valley, many Jews chose suicide over death at the hands of Christian mobs. With their defiant deaths, the medieval Jewish martyr was born. With the literary commemoration of the victims, Jewish martyrology followed. Beautiful Death examines the evolution of a long-neglected corpus of Hebrew poetry, the laments

reflecting the specific conditions of Jewish life in northern France. The poems offer insight into everyday life and into the ways medieval French Jews responded to persecution. They also suggest that poetry was used to encourage resistance to intensifying pressures to convert. The educated Jewish elite in northern France was highly acculturated. Their poetry--particularly that emerging from the innovative Tosafist schools--reflects their engagement with the vernacular renaissance unfolding around them, as well as conscious and unconscious absorption of Christian popular beliefs and hagiographical conventions. At the same time, their extraordinary poems signal an increasingly harsh repudiation of Christianity's sacred symbols and beliefs. They reveal a complex relationship to Christian culture as Jews internalized elements of medieval culture even while expressing a powerful revulsion against the forms and beliefs of Christian life. This gracefully written study crosses traditional boundaries of history and literature and of Jewish and general medieval scholarship. Focusing on specific incidents of persecution and the literary commemorations they produced, it offers unique insights into the historical conditions in which these poems were written and performed.
