

## Episode 3: The Shaping of Traditions

### III-1: Roman Tolerance/Jewish Converts - Timeline 1 CE

The opening video of this feature discusses “Godfearers,” gentile Romans who developed an affinity for -- and sometimes converted to -- Judaism. Learning the story of the Godfearers is very important for understanding the demographic bulge of Judaism in this era and the eventual rise of Christianity. The presentation is followed by four “speech” buttons, which are narrated documents from early sources, including Tacitus, Juvenal, Josephus and Ptolemy. Then, six documents present socio-historical perspectives, including a couple of moving epitaphs from tombstones, and a synagogue inscription.

### III-2: Reshaping Judaism/Ancient Synagogues - Timeline 72 CE

In this presentation, users will find a brief introduction to early synagogues in Turkey and Israel, followed by five panels of information. These explore locations, excavations, uses, decor, and leaders (which reveals the gender equality in these communities, and has some good narrative portions). This is accompanied by three Talmudic documents about rabbinic ideology and synagogues.

### III-3: Christian Rome/Jews and Roman Law - Timeline 300

Beginning with a caption about the Christianization of Rome, this presentation takes the viewer to a narrated presentation about Jews and Roman law, depicting the empire’s treatment of Jews from the 4<sup>th</sup> century onward. Users can then select among five buttons that provide narrations of some of these laws concerning circumcision, intermarriage, the legality of Judaism, Jews in the civil service, and Jewish wills. The documents that follow show the decrees giving Christians progressively more legitimacy and Jews less.

### III-4: Words of the Rabbis/A Page of Talmud - Timeline 395

This feature begins with a wonderful narrated guide to a page of Talmud, including a narrated explorable graphic of the page. The documents that follow provide passages from the Talmud and midrash concerning the Sanhedrin, lost goods, treatment of parents, and murder.

### III-5: Muhammad - Timeline 600

This narrated segment traces the outline of Muhammad’s life and inspiration, as well as his challenging interactions with the Jews of Medina. Then, four narrated panels discuss the Jews of Medina, a Quranic verse, Ishmael’s children, and Muhammad’s debates with Jews, using excerpts from the Quran, hadith and the Bible. Then, numerous documents present aspects of Muhammad’s interactions with Jews, as well as information about the fundamentals of Muslim belief from the hadith literature.

### **III-6: Jews in Muslim Lands/Jewish Leaders in Babylon/The Cairo Geniza - Timeline 700**

This presentation begins with a brief narration about the sociology and status of Jews in Islamic lands. Then two panels are presented. One describes the evolution in leadership in the post-Talmudic period, with four buttons of narrated texts about the Geonim, the Exilarch, the Caliphate of Baghdad, and Jewish traders and bankers. The other provides a narrated segment about the trove of documents found in an 800-year-old synagogue in Cairo, with five buttons giving narrations of texts related to daily life and the relationships of Jews in Islamic lands. Finally, two documents describe international Jewish merchants and life at a Babylonian Talmudic academy. (Note that this multimedia presentation, though it is displayed with episode three in the Timeline, really largely pertains to the beginning of the next episode.)

### **III-7: Jewish Continuity/The Karaites - Timeline 765**

This feature offers a narration about a Jewish schismatic sect, the Karaites, showing the widespread nature of this non-rabbinic form of Judaism through history. Some good examples of how they differed from “normative” Judaism are offered. Then, five buttons take users to voiceover readings of pro- and anti-Karaite polemics, including ones from no less than Saadiah Gaon and Maimonides. Then, three documents preserve some examples of Talmudic writing.