

Episode 4: The Crucible of Europe

IV-1 Atlas: Mediterranean, 1096

The Jews lived in the heartland of medieval Europe: France, Alsace and the Rhine Valley. The line of march of the Crusaders went right through the communities of the Jews.

- Point out Jerusalem (in the lower-right corner of the map) and the Rhine Valley (the great Jewish communities of Mainz, Worms and Troyes) toward the upper left.
- Zoom in near the words “Holy Roman Empire,” and show how the path for northern European crusaders would lead through the Rhine Valley to reach the Mediterranean (point out Venice at the center-bottom of the map) and to continue eastward to the Holy Land.

IV-2 Atlas: France, 1096

Rashi, in his late fifties at the time of First Crusade, was the acknowledged leader of the Troyes Jewish community. Thanks to his diplomatic relations with both the local rulers of the Champagne district, and his cordial relations with the bishop of Troyes, his community was spared the awful fates of their nearby sister communities in Germany.

- Point out Troyes on the map (just to the left of the word “Holy” [Roman Empire]).
- Point out Speyer to the east and further north, near Worms. Mention that this was the city where Rudiger had earlier extended a protective charter, and that it was mentioned earlier also as the first site of an anti-Semitic massacre at the start of the Crusades. (It was also the filming-site for the video just viewed.)
- Point out also nearby Metz and Rouen, where forced conversion of Jews was rampant.

IV-3 Atlas: Europe, 1348

The Black Death arrived in the middle of the fourteenth century and was merciless in its decimation of the mostly Christian European populace. Jews remaining in western Europe were largely concentrated in western Germany, having been expelled from England and France.

- Point out the area of Germany, and click on one or more the following **clickable items** (or summarize the information in the information panels) to illustrate the breadth of the anti-Jewish violence in the wake of the Black Death:
 - Strasbourg
 - Cologne
 - Basel
 - Vienna

IV-4 Atlas: Iberia: 975

Amid the tumultuous proceedings of the fifteenth century in Iberia, an Islamic world of great achievement was largely destroyed. The progression of the Christian *reconquista* largely proceeded from north to south, driving the Muslims out and tightening the noose on the Sephardim as Christian intolerance exploded in parallel with the reconquest.

- Point out the extent of Muslim control in Spain.
- Then click on the successive years on the time-scale slider at the left to show the progressive Christian takeover in Spain. Note that the last Muslim holding on Iberia was the southern region called Grenada, which itself would fall to the Christian armies at the end of the fifteenth century.