

Conversion, Annihilation, or Suicide:
The 1096 Jewish Pogroms in the Rhineland

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It was once an accepted belief that Jews during the 1096 Pogroms took their own life only after being given the ultimatum of accepting baptism or dying by the sword.¹ Recent scholarship and a closer look at the original chronicles, both Christian and Hebrew, provide a different viewpoint to this belief. After understanding the reasoning for the pogroms, or lack thereof, a new question arises in relation to the extent of the slaughter. This new viewpoint does not negate the mass murder of the Jews, nor does it negate the provided evidence of the possibility of baptism or death. Instead, we find that both events did happen. We can also glean from these sources an order in which the events happened. The Jewish Massacres of 1096 began as mayhem and slaughter that in certain cases manifested into the forced conversions and subsequent baptisms of Jewish Citizens in the Rhineland.

Before a statement on whether conversion or annihilation happened first can be made, a study of the most likely motives for these pogroms must occur. There was once speculation that the 1096 pogroms were planned. It is important to clarify the initial intent of the pogroms due to its influence in primary source interpretation. The Hebrew Chronicles attribute said planning to Count Emicho of Flonheim, the leader mentioned in the Hebrew Chronicles. Admittedly, if one dwells only on the Hebrew Chronicles, a case could be made that the pogroms were purposeful and planned from the start of the People's Crusade. Peter the Hermit had already moved through Germany by the time the Pogroms began happening. On his way to Constantinople, he stirred up the masses, so it makes sense that they started in his wake. However, that does not prove initial intent of the pogroms. Solomon Bar Samson, one of the Hebrew Chronicle writers, made his position on Count Emicho very clear, writing "Emicho the wicked, enemy of the Jews, came with his whole army against the city gate [of Mainz, Germany] . . . the enemies of the Lord said to each other: 'Look! They have opened up the gate for us. Now let us avenge the blood of 'the hanged one' [Jesus Christ].'"² He makes it seem as though Count Emicho premeditated the slaughter of the Jews at Mainz. Secondary sources, as well as other primary sources disprove this argument and instead argue that the Pogroms were unplanned mayhem, "Slaughter for the sake of slaughter" as David Malkiel states in his article "Destruction or Conversion Intention and reaction, Crusaders and Jews, in 1096."³ This is reiterated in many other sources. Kenneth Stow writes that "Emicho joined them [wanderers and leaders that presumably wanted to join the People's Crusade], and

¹ David Malkiel, "Destruction or Conversion Intention and reaction, Crusaders and Jews, in 1096," *Jewish History*, vol. 15 (2001): 257–80 on 257; also see Robert Chazan, "Medieval Antisemitism" in David Berger, ed., *History and Hate: Dimensions of Anti-Semitism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1986), 60–77 at 55.

² Solomon Bar Samson, *Solomon Bar Samson on the Massacres of Jews*, in *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt, trans. A. C. Krey (Canada: University of Toronto, 2014), 48–51 at 48.

³ Malkiel, "Destruction or Conversion," 266.

together, in a last minute decision, they decided to attack.”⁴ Stow interprets Albert of Aachen’s Christian narrative as though Count Emicho and his followers made a “last minute decision” to attack. Albert of Aachen does not state this directly; instead, he says that Count Emicho waited in Mainz for other leaders from the area.⁵ Though their plan may have been to leave straight from Mainz to Constantinople, there may have been certain enticing factors that made Mainz a target for such a large-scale attack.

Albert of Aachen’s narrative is quite revealing in how Christians regarded the 1096 Pogroms. He describes Count Emicho, and those who joined him in Mainz (including Thomas of Marle, Drogo of Nesle, and Clarembald of Vendeuil) as “intolerable company.”⁶ Later in his narrative, he writes with continued evident disgust: “the hand of the Lord is believed to have been against the pilgrim who had sinned by excessive impurity and fornication, and who had slaughtered the exiled Jews. . . The Lord is a just judge and orders no one unwillingly, or under compulsion, to come under the yoke of the Catholic faith.”⁷ Albert of Aachen expresses outspoken dislike and disapproval of Count Emicho, his following, and what they did in Mainz.

Since Albert of Aachen was a historian, his record of disliking Count Emicho rather than championing him displays distaste for Count Emicho’s actions to those in high authority who read Latin. This same distaste is clearly illustrated in an essay by Daniel P. Franke. In his essay, he writes: “If anti-Jewish activity was inherent to or championed by the crusading movement, it would stand to reason that these writers would include it in their histories.”⁸ As Franke states, many of the Latin Narratives of the First Crusade leave out or only briefly mention the 1096 Pogroms. The *Gesta Francorum*, for example, begins its record in 1095 with the Council of Clermont. However, the narrative quickly selects Peter the Hermit, the first to make it to Constantinople, as its “main character.”⁹ By following Peter, the author conveniently leaves out the 1096 pogroms that sprung up after he paraded through Germany. Though he does mention the pogroms, Albert of Aachen displays an attitude one would expect from a Christian source that does not condone the senseless

⁴ Kenneth Stow, “Conversion, Apostasy, Apprehensiveness: Emicho of Floheim and the Fear of the Jews in the Twelfth Century,” *Speculum*, vol. 76, no. 4 (October 2001): 911–33 at 915.

⁵ Stow, “Conversion, Apostasy, Apprehensiveness,” 915; Albert of Aachen, “Albert of Aachen on the Peasant’s Crusade,” in *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. Allen and Amt, trans. Krey, 42–48 at 46–48.

⁶ Albert of Aachen, “The Peasant’s Crusade,” 47; Albert of Aachen does not include Drogo of Nesle in his narrative, however other histories place him there, see Conor Kostick, “Juvenes and the First Crusade (1096–99): Knights in Search of Glory?” *The Journal for Military History*, vol. 73 (April 2009): 177–208.

⁷ Albert of Aachen, “The Peasant’s Crusade,” 47–48.

⁸ Daniel P. Franke, “The Crusades and Medieval Anti-Judaism: Cause or Consequence?” in *Seven Myths of the Crusades*, 48–69, ed. Alfred J. Andrea and Andrew Holt (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2015), 52; Malkiel, “Destruction or Conversion,” 262.

⁹ Rosalind Hill, ed. and trans., *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum: The Deeds of the Franks and the Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 48–50.

slaughter of the Jewish people. After this review, one can confirm that the 1096 Pogroms were unsanctioned slaughters of the Jewish people by Christians on their way to Constantinople.

Count Emicho is an elusive character, and information on who he was, where he was, and what he did there can be confusing and misleading. The best way to quickly clear up these issues is to present basic biographical information.¹⁰ The Count Emicho from the Hebrew Chronicles was the Count of Flonheim. He is often mistaken for Count Emicho of Leiningen, who was not involved in any of the Crusades but did in fact live during this time period.¹¹ Count Emicho of Flonheim is only chronicled to be in Mainz by both the Latin Narratives and the Hebrew Chronicles.¹² Coming from Flonheim, which resides south of Mainz but north of Worms and Speyer, it would not make sense for Count Emicho to go south before going north to Mainz. This is where Peter the Hermit traveled through to reach Prague and eventually Constantinople. Other pilgrim groups sensibly followed the same path.

It is thought, however, that Thomas of Marle and Drogo of Nesle were at both Speyer and Worms, working north towards Mainz and meeting Count Emicho there with Clarembald of Vendeuil.¹³ It is possible that Count Emicho's actions and Thomas and Drogo's suspected actions in Speyer and Worms were similar enough that the men were mistaken as the same individual. Another important speculation is that Count Emicho may have known someone inside the city of Mainz, seeing as the gates to Mainz "opened" instead of being broken down. The inside person's knowledge of him also explains why Count Emicho's name was defaced after the massacre. His name was the only name the citizens could pick out of the different leaders that came ripping through their city. All these men together slaughtered the Jews of Mainz but were disbanded on their way to Constantinople due to Count Emicho's death.¹⁴ It is important to understand this man's purpose and origins because he is a central character of the 1096 pogroms.

The order of events during the 1096 Pogroms is a constant debate among historians like Robert Chazan, Jeremy Cohen, David Malkiel, and Kenneth Stow. The primary sources on the 1096 Pogroms are few; they are ambiguous however and leave plenty of room for analysis and argument. While not the earliest written, the narrative of Albert of Aachen did come before the Chronicle of Solomon Bar Samson.¹⁵ Albert of Aachen writes of only two cities that were attacked:

¹⁰ Stow, "Conversion, Apostasy, Apprehensiveness," 911–19.

¹¹ Stow, "Conversion, Apostasy, Apprehensiveness," 913, 915; Malkiel, "Destruction or Conversion," 267; Kostick, "Iuvenes and the First Crusade," 6. Thomas F. Madden states that it was Count Emicho of Leiningen; however, he provides no primary source evidence to support this claim. See Madden, *The Concise History of the Crusades*, third student ed. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 18.

¹² Stow, "Conversion, Apostasy, Apprehensiveness," 911, 913. Although Robert Chazan also places Count Emicho in Worms, Stow goes in depth about why this must have been so in his article.

¹³ Kostick, "Iuvenes and the First Crusade," 6.

¹⁴ Kostick, "Iuvenes and the First Crusade," 6; Stow, "Conversion, Apostasy, Apprehensiveness," 916.

¹⁵ Malkiel, "Destruction or Conversion," 264; Susan L. Einbinder, "Signs of Romance: Hebrew Prose and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance," in *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Michael A. Signer and John

Cologne and Mainz. He skips over the attacks on Speyer and Worms entirely, however he alludes to their happening.¹⁶ Of Cologne, he writes:

This slaughter of Jews was done first by citizens of Cologne. . . [they] severely wounded and killed many [Jews] . . . they destroyed the houses and synagogues of the Jews. . . When the Jews saw this cruelty, about 200 in the silence of the night began flight by boat to Neuss. The pilgrims and crusaders discovered them, and after taking away all their possessions, inflicted on them similar slaughter, leaving not even one alive.¹⁷

First, he notes that these atrocities were inflicted by “citizens of Cologne” that planned to go on the Crusade. The citizens decided to start with “enemies of the Christian faith” that resided in their hometown.¹⁸ Based upon this narrative, no concrete leadership had been established in Cologne. It appears leadership stayed unestablished for this company until their arrival in Mainz. This lack of military leadership, and perhaps also the lack of Christian religious leaders (such as a bishop), may explain why Albert of Aachen does not discuss the possibility of conversion in Cologne.¹⁹ A lack of leadership often means a lack of accountability, so there was likely not a possibility of conversion for the Jews of Cologne.

When these leaderless pilgrims arrived in Mainz, Albert of Aachen writes that they met up with multiple, capable leaders. Thomas of Marle, Drogo of Nesle, and Clarembald of Vendeuil were there, and Count Emicho of Flonheim was arriving fresh from Flonheim.²⁰ As told in the narrative, the Jews go to Bishop Rothard (the local Bishop) for protection in his palace.²¹ This did not stop Count Emicho and his army, and “[they] attacked the Jews in the hall with arrows and

Van Engen (South Bend: Notre Dame University Press, 2001), 221–33 at 226–27; Jeremy Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God: Jewish Martyrs and Jewish Memories of the First Crusade* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 145; Albert of Aachen wrote his narrative between 1095–1121; Solomon Bar Samson wrote his sometime in the twelfth century.

¹⁶ Albert of Aachen, “The Peasant’s Crusade,” 47: “The Jews of this city [Mainz], knowing the slaughter of their brethren”

¹⁷ Albert of Aachen, “The Peasant’s Crusade,” 46.

¹⁸ Albert of Aachen, “The Peasant’s Crusade,” 46.

¹⁹ Albert of Aachen here describes the first attacks in Cologne. The second attack (which took place after Mainz) may have included a higher conversion/forced baptism rate, as it was conducted by a different group.

²⁰ Albert of Aachen, “The Peasant’s Crusade,” 46; Kostick, “Juvenes and the First Crusade,” 6. As I previously mentioned, there is speculation as to where Thomas, Drogo, And Clarembald came from before arriving at Mainz. Latin accounts kept these atrocities unwritten, thereby creating mystery as to where certain known people were and at what time.

²¹ Albert of Aachen, “The Peasant’s Crusade,” 47.

lances. Breaking the bolts and doors, they killed the Jews, about 700 in number, who in vain resisted the force and attack of so many thousands.”²² This initial attack, seemingly unprovoked, initiated the mass suicide of the Jews and enticed the Bishop and his men to flee from Mainz without the Jews they were charged to protect.²³ This narrative also places the slaughter before the mass suicide. From the suicide, “a few escaped; and a few because of fear, rather than because of love of the Christian faith, were baptized.”²⁴ Here, Albert of Aachen finalizes the timeline of events in Mainz, ending with an option of baptism for the Jews.

The Solomon Bar Samson Chronicle was written well after Albert of Aachen’s narrative, which means that Solomon Bar Samson may have been influenced by the French Romantics and the narrative of Albert of Aachen both.²⁵ That said, Solomon Bar Samson goes more in depth about certain details. He further promotes the “slaughter first” theory when he describes Rabbi Kalonymos ben Meshullam and the people of Mainz taking up arms against the Christians. However, this first line of defense failed. According to Solomon Bar Samson it failed “because of the many troubles and the fasts which they had observed they had no strength to stand up against the enemy.”²⁶ At the inner courts of Mainz another defense mounted, as it is written: “Each Jew in the inner court of the bishop girded on his weapons, and all moved towards the palace gate to fight the crusaders and the citizens . . . [but] the enemy overcame them and took the gate.”²⁷ The reciting of each mounted defense as described by Solomon Bar Samson invokes the inference that indeed, the first goal was slaughter. Even the local Christian Bishop in Mainz, Rothard, fled from the city because he felt his life was in danger due to his involvement with the Jews.²⁸ If the main goal or first action was conversion, the bishop would not have left. He would have stayed, as his job would become baptizing the Jews.

Solomon Bar Samson clearly thinks that the massacre in Mainz happened before conversion for the Jews became an option. He continues in his next paragraph: “When the children of the holy covenant saw that the heavenly decree of death had been issued and that the enemy had

²² Albert of Aachen, “The Peasant’s Crusade,” 47; The number killed in Mainz varies from source to source. Here, Albert of Aachen states 700 killed before the mass suicide. According to the *Annalista Saxo*, sourced by David Malkiel, 900 Jews were killed in Mainz; Malkiel, “Destruction or Conversion,” 267. Kenneth Stow states in “Conversion, Apostasy, and Apprehensiveness” that the Jewish memory books only cite 600 dead in Mainz by name; Stow, “Conversion, Apostasy, and Apprehensiveness,” 918. Solomon Bar Samson tops the list, recording “1,100 offerings on one day”; see Solomon Bar Samson, *The Massacres of Jews*, 51.

²³ Solomon Bar Samson, *The Massacres of Jews*, 49.

²⁴ Albert of Aachen, “The Peasant’s Crusade,” 47.

²⁵ Susan L. Einbinder, “Signs of Romance: Hebrew Prose and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance,” in *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe*, 221–33, ed. Michael A. Signer and John Van Engen (South Bend: Notre Dame University Press, 2001), 226–27; Jeremy Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 145.

²⁶ Solomon Bar Samson, *The Massacres of Jews*, 49.

²⁷ Solomon Bar Samson, *The Massacres of Jews*, 49.

²⁸ Solomon Bar Samson, *The Massacres of Jews*, 49.

conquered them and had entered the courtyard, then all of them . . . cried out together to their Father in heaven and, weeping for themselves and for their lives, accepted as just the sentence of God.”²⁹ They recognized that they must kill themselves to keep their purity, instead of allowing the Christians to kill them all. As the Christians broke through to the courtyard and continued to pick off the Jews with arrows and stones, the Jews decided “there is nothing better than for us to offer our lives as a sacrifice.”³⁰ This suicide, as described by Solomon Bar Samson, succeeds the initial slaughter, and is provoked by said slaughter. Solomon Bar Samson describes incidents of conversion in Worms, however conversion in Mainz seems to be on a personal basis.³¹

The personal account of Kalonymos ben Meshullam is also chronicled by Solomon Bar Samson. During the fighting in Mainz, Kalonymos and fifty-two other Jews of Mainz hid in a treasure closet in the palace of Bishop Rothard. After the fighting was over the bishop, having fled as aforementioned, sent a messenger to Kalonymos in the closet. He brought Kalonymos and his group across the river to Rüdeshheim, where the bishop was residing.³² Time passed, though it is unknown how much, and the bishop said to Kalonymos “I cannot save you. For your God has turned away from you, having no desire to leave any survivors among you . . . Know, then, what you and those with you must do. Either you must accept our religion or you must pay for the sin of your ancestors.”³³ Kalonymos takes this information to the other rescued Jews, and they decided to kill themselves rather than be killed or baptized by the Christians. Solomon Bar Samson admits he does not know for sure how Kalonymos dies; however, he does say that Kalonymos slaughters his own son before he himself dies.³⁴ Even though they had escaped the initial attack in Mainz and believed they were safe, Kalonymos and his remaining soldiers were still pressed to convert or die. While their mass suicide resembled the event in Mainz, post-conversion suicide was also common among the Jews of Mainz.

Master Isaac the Parnas was forcibly converted to Christianity by the Crusaders on the day of the attacks in Mainz. After his wife was killed, he accepted baptism to prevent further harm to his family. He also wished to save his children from being kidnapped and raised as Christians. Master Isaac was not the only Jew in Mainz with this fear. Days later, Master Isaac was overcome with guilt and grief. He decided to sacrifice his children to God, and then proceeded to burn his house down with his own mother inside.³⁵ He then went to the synagogue, where him and a friend

²⁹ Solomon Bar Samson, *The Massacres of Jews*, 49.

³⁰ Solomon Bar Samson, *The Massacres of Jews*, 50.

³¹ Malkiel, “Destruction or Conversion,” 263.

³² Solomon Bar Samson, “There They Remained in Desperate Straits . . .,” in Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 131–33.

³³ Solomon Bar Samson, “There They Remained in Desperate Straits . . .,” 132.

³⁴ Solomon Bar Samson, “There They Remained in Desperate Straits . . .,” 132.

³⁵ Eliezer bar Nathan, “Master Isaac Ben David,” in Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 91–92; Solomon Bar Samson, “Master Isaac the Parnas,” in Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 93–94.

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started fires at every entrance. The inferno killed them both, relieving them of the guilt they had from acting Christian and betraying their Jewish faith.³⁶ This short story mentions briefly that conversion happened after annihilation. Isaac's baptism after his wife's death during the slaughter, and Isaac's subsequent suicide days after the events appears to be a common theme. Though not a mirror image, the previous story of Kalonymos presents a similar timeline: massacre in Mainz, attempted baptism by Bishop Rothard in the days following, and a mass suicide by those Jews being held by the bishop. Despite the added romantics of Solomon Bar Samson, the story of Master Isaac the Parnas is exemplary of annihilation before conversion.

The *Mainz Anonymous* as we know it today is missing pages from its original form.³⁷ Luckily, the story of *Mistress Rachel of Mainz* survives and provides a more personal account of what happened in Mainz. The story of *Rachel of Mainz* begins in Rachel's home, after the initial attacks on the city. She fears her children will be taken and converted to Christianity. She says "I have four children. Even on them have no mercy, lest these uncircumcised ones come and take them alive and they be maintained in their error."³⁸ In this phrase alone, the *Mainz Anonymous* gives an order to the events in Mainz and also presents a theme found in the Solomon Bar Samson Chronicle. That presented theme is the dramatic slaying of Jews by their own people for the sake of purity.³⁹ When Rachel gives the command to have her own children slain, she does not appear to know if there is a possibility of conversion to save their lives.⁴⁰ She takes her actions based upon assumption. There is no evidence that she knows the Christians will keep her and her children alive if they accept baptism. She believes that the Christians will have mercy on her children's lives but in return for their lives, those children will be raised as Christians. She can't accept that possibility, so she kills them instead.

After killing all four of her children, Rachel of Mainz allowed their blood to cover her as she held their bodies. When the crusaders came (presumably not friends of the family, which was sometimes the case in these instances), "[t]hey said to her, 'Show us the treasure that you have in your arms.' When they saw that the children were slaughtered they beat her and killed her."⁴¹ The crusaders here do not offer conversion to Rachel, and Rachel does not kill herself like many of the other Jews in Mainz. Instead, as it is written, the crusaders enter and kill her upon seeing she killed her children. The assumption here, made by Rachel and which remains undisputed, is that the

³⁶ Eliezer Bar Nathan writes that both Master Isaac and his friend, Master Uri, burned in the fire at the synagogue. Solomon Bar Samson writes a more romantic version, where Master Uri runs to the synagogue while it is burning so he can join his friend in the fire. In this version, Master Uri is killed by Crusaders on the way to the synagogue.

³⁷ Robert Chazan, *God, Humanity, and History: The Hebrew First Crusade Narratives* (University of California Press, 2000), 28–29.

³⁸ *Mainz Anonymous*, in Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 107.

³⁹ Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 108.

⁴⁰ Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 108.

⁴¹ *Mainz Anonymous*, in Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God*, 107.

crusaders wanted to claim and convert the children. Though this may have happened all over the city, it is not written about in many other sources. According to David Malkiel, most options for conversion happened during “close encounters” and in obscure settings away from the masses. These “close encounters” were often fabricated by the Christian pilgrims. Friends of families would press for their Jewish friends to convert and escape death. Other times, Jews would be caught alone by groups of Christians and forced to convert. This fabrication happened during door-to-door visits (like when they found Rachel), as well as in alley ways and while escaping from the massacre.⁴² It is hard to say how many children were converted during these close encounters because there are few records of children being taken from the Rhineland and converted.

There are hints to a possibility of conversion in Jewish children, however the accounts are dictated by the parents and are discussed in harsh words.⁴³ There are accounts of fathers speaking to their children and how said children must “choose between hell and paradise,” and how the fathers did not want their children “raised in [the crusaders’] error.”⁴⁴ This same verbiage is used by Rachel in the *Mainz Anonymous* in relation to her own children. Latin sources retrieved by Mary Minty suggest that crusaders may have preferred to convert children rather than kill them, however David Malkiel makes the point that her sources chronicle thirteenth century and beyond and therefore should not be compared to 1096. Confirming what Malkiel states in his article, Albert of Aachen writes that mothers killed their children in the courtyards and halls of Mainz and the bishop’s castle (respectively), “preferring them to perish thus by their own hands rather than to be killed by the weapons of the uncircumcised [Christians].”⁴⁵ In fear of their children being slaughtered by the Christians, or worse baptized, mothers in the Jewish communities of the Rhineland slaughtered their children.

After reading the excerpts of these chronicles, it may seem as though conversion was never an option for the Jews in these cities. However, one must remember that the focus of many of the surviving chronicles (both Latin and Hebrew) are on the attack on Mainz. The narrative of Bernold of St. Blasien reports of Jews in Worms, who went to their bishop for protection (like in Mainz) but were denied unless they converted to Christianity. When given the ultimatum, the Jews preferred to kill themselves over dying by the swords of the Christians or baptism.⁴⁶ Robert Chazan and his assessment of “The Speyer-Worms-Mainz Unit” of the Solomon Bar Samson chronicle confirms that narrative. Chazan states that Jews in Worms went through what they did in Speyer and eventually Mainz: they died at the hands of Christians, they died by their own hands, and some even *allowed* themselves to be killed by the Christians. He also writes “[Solomon Bar Samson] does mention a number of Jews forcibly converted,” however neither Solomon Bar Samson or

⁴² Malkiel, “Destruction or Conversion,” 268–70.

⁴³ Malkiel, “Destruction or Conversion,” 270.

⁴⁴ Malkiel, “Destruction or Conversion,” 270.

⁴⁵ Albert of Aachen, “The Peasant’s Crusade,” 47.

⁴⁶ Malkiel, “Destruction or Conversion,” 263.

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Robert Chazan give an official number and they do not describe how the incident in Worms comes about.⁴⁷ The same is not said about Mainz, which can be explained by the difference in Crusader leadership between Worms and Mainz.

The Jews of the Rhineland were slaughtered in 1096, with forced conversion being a rare exception not offered in every afflicted city. Many Jews chose to kill themselves and their families rather than be killed by the Christians. Suicide was also used to evade forced conversion. The lack of primary sources is a regrettable detriment to the argument at hand. This argument should also be expanded outside of Mainz and Worms, visiting Cologne, Trier, and Speyer, as well as Jewish cities in France that never experienced the knowledge of a “Count Emicho.”⁴⁸ Research in this field is important to Jewish history. It is also important to solidly nail down the events in 1096 due to the continuing discrepancy across the historiography. Though this task is virtually impossible, further analysis of the primary sources we do have can provide the evidence and other information needed to form and complete current historical debates.

⁴⁷ Chazan, *God, Humanity, and History*, 74–75.

⁴⁸ “Count Emicho” is used here as the symbol described by Stow, “Conversion, Apostasy, and Apprehensiveness,” 911–23.

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