

## **EARLY MODERN WORKSHOP: Jewish History Resources**

**Volume 2: Jews and Urban Space, 2005, University of Maryland**

### **Introduction to Taverns and Public Drinking in Florence**

Stefanie Siegmund, University of Michigan, USA

#### **Notes: Italy**

The texts presented here (from Florence, Italy, 1571-1622) draw our attention to a set of spaces neither specifically Jewish nor Christian, but decidedly urban and early modern: the eating and drinking establishments of the cities. Not included here but relevant are the rabbinic laws that forbid Jews to eat non-kosher food, regulate the wine Jews drink, and prohibit Jews from spending or handling money on the Sabbath and on festival days. As a set, the texts both hint at chronological developments in the city of Florence and in the ghetto and also serve to caution against facile readings of any one text in isolation. As an exercise, one might consider how any of the three texts that refer to Jews might have been interpreted on its own.

The demographic growth of cities, the presence of foreigners, the relatively improved safety of the streets, changing tastes and fashions, the availability of time for leisure and the necessity of travel for business – all these contributed to the success of hotels, pubs and taverns (and, later, coffee houses). Incidental archival information (Text 1) confirms the current scholarly judgment that Jews participated in most aspects of urban culture – participation that became a concern of Jewish officials in the ghetto (Texts 2 and 4). The first ordinance (1609) concerned Jews who visited taverns on Sabbath and holy days, not mentioning the consumption of food and drink in the city's establishments on other days. Sometime before 1622 there was a six month ban on Jews frequenting these establishments at all. Had the cultural practice changed in two decades, or should we see here the strengthening of a ghetto government that first attempted only to address the violation of the Sabbath and a decade later attempted to enforce kashrut? Similarities in the language of the state-wide statutes of 1619 (Text 3) and that of the second ghetto ordinance suggest that the Jewish governors were also working in the context or shadow of the state's legislation.

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### **Taverns and Public Drinking in Florence Public Records, 1571, 1608**

Translated by Stefanie Siegmund, University of Michigan, USA

#### **Notes: Italy**

##### Text 1

In the same manner, having viewed the proceedings against Salamone son of Rabi Benedetto hebreo, which in substance claimed that on the sixteenth day of last March, the said Salamone, at night, armed with a dagger, attacked Iacob son of ... Romano hebreo who was returning home from the Hosteria del Porcho, the former [Salamone] having struck a blow to the neck, drawing flesh and blood, as in the Book of Complainants, number 331.

##### Text 2

"That on the Sabbath and festival days, it shall not be permitted to anyone to go to drink and eat at hosterie or grecaiuoli of any type or stripe whatsoever, nor to have wine brought in from outside the ghetto on the day of the Sabbath, under penalty of 1 scudo per occasion [of the transgression], as above."

##### Text 3

That for six months from the abovesaid date, it shall be unlawful and in fact prohibited to go to eat or drink at osterie, bettole, grecaioli, alberghi, camere alocante and other similar places, in Florence just as for a mile outside, and this prohibition is made for every Jew of our holy congregation, of whatever status, sex and condition, of every age. Excluding from this penalty an [individual] who should wish to go to drink a glass of ices<sup>1</sup>, but this is only conceded for going alone, without any company, and the [governors] reserve the right -- if they should learn that someone is abusing and maligning the concession -- to prohibit [it] and condemn [it] the same as stated.

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#### **Text 1.**

Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Otto di Guardia e Baliá Principato 118, 159v. 26 April 1571:

"In simili modo et forma veduta la Inquisitione formata co[n]tro a Salamone di Rabi Benede[c]to hebreo dove insust[ant]ia si contineva il dì 16 di Marzo p[rossim]o passato il d[ett]o Salamone di notte, armato di pugnale haver' affrontato Iacob di . . . [sic] Romano hebreo che sene tornava a casa dal hosteria d[e]l porcho, il q[ue]llo haver' p[er]cosso di un colpo nella gholà co[n] missione di carne et sangue come al libro di querelanti numero 331."

#### **Text 2.**

Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Nove Conservatori del Dominio e della Iursiditione 368, 377r. Capitoli of the Jews of Florence (approved 8 January 1608/9)

Cap. 23: Che il sabato et giorni festivi non sia lecito a niuno andare a bere e mangiare à hosterie nè grecaioli sotto qualsivoglia quesito colore, ne meno farsi portare vino di fuori del ghetto il giorno di sabato, sotto pena d'uno scudo per ciascheduna volta come sopra.

#### **Text 3**

B Archivio della Comunità Ebraica di Firenze, Box D 3.2 folder 3, undated (but internal evidence dates it to 1622 or earlier)

....che per mesi sei dal giorno sopradetto sia inlecito e' a fatto proibito l'Andare à mangiare ò bere à osterie bettole grecaioli alberghi camere alocante e' altri luoghi simili tanto in Fiorenza quanto fuori lontane manco d'un miglio ho un miglio e' questo proibitione si fa a' ogni yehudiy del no[st]ro q[ahal] q[adosh] di qual si voglia grado sesso e' conditione si voglia d'ogni eta, escludendo di tal pene uno che volesse andare a

bere un bichiero di gicco [?] solo senza compagnia alcuna che questo si concede a' fatto, la qual concessione anco quando conosceranno che si voglia abusare e' malignare anco questo si riserbano in p'etto loro di proibire e' condenare si come dal detto.

**Archive:** Texts from the Archivio di State di Firenze and Archivio della Comunità Ebraica di Firenze

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