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# Towards Jewish Emancipation in the Grand-Duchy of Tuscany

Daide Mano

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# The Italia Judaica Jubilee Conference

*Edited by*

Shlomo Simonsohn

Joseph Shatzmiller



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TOWARDS JEWISH EMANCIPATION IN THE GRAND-DUCHY  
OF TUSCANY: THE CASE OF PITIGLIANO THROUGH THE  
EMBLEMATIC FIGURE OF DAVID CONSIGLIO

*Davide Mano*

*Premise*

The subject of this paper is the cultural and political developments that paved the way for the civic recognition of Italian Jews during the second half of the 18th century. The coming of age of the Italian Enlightenment and the inauguration of the politics of reform are two essential factors that set in motion the initial steps in this direction.<sup>1</sup>

In this paper, I will explore some of the socio-political effects of the reformist age on the Jewish condition from the standpoint of the Grand-Duchy of Tuscany, with special emphasis on the reign of Grand-Duke Peter Leopold of Lorraine (1765–1790).<sup>2</sup> A further glimpse into some of the later developments of the 1790s will provide a deeper insight into the historical process.

Throughout the second half of the 18th century, Hapsburg-Lorraine Tuscany gave rise to one of the most advanced regimes in the Italian peninsula, putting into practice theories conceived by French Physiocrats and/or inspired by the British political model. As far as the Jewish question was concerned, even earlier than his brother Joseph II's *Tolleranzpatenten*, Peter Leopold was celebrated for having pioneered a series of regulations

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<sup>1</sup> For discussions of the European reformist movements of the second half of the 18th century, see for instance F. Venturi, *Settecento riformatore*, 5 vols. (Turin 1969–1990); L. Guerci, *L'Europa del Settecento* (Turin 2006). On Jewish *Haskalah* (enlightenment), see S. Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment* (Philadelphia 2004). For the Italian debates see, for instance, M. Caffiero, "Tra Chiesa e Stato. Gli ebrei italiani dall'età dei Lumi agli anni della Rivoluzione," in *Storia d'Italia. Annali 11. Gli ebrei in Italia*, C. Vivanti (ed.), II (Turin 1997), pp. 1089–1132; G. Luzzatto Voghera, *Il prezzo dell'eguaglianza. Il dibattito sull'emancipazione degli ebrei in Italia (1781–1848)* (Milan 1998).

<sup>2</sup> About the Grand-Duchy of Tuscany under Peter Leopold of Lorraine, see, for instance, L. Mascilli Migliorini, "L'età delle riforme," *Il Granducato di Toscana. I Lorena dalla Reggenza agli anni rivoluzionari*, F. Diaz, L. Mascilli Migliorini and C. Mangio (eds.) (Turin 1987), pp. 249–421. On the role of the Hapsburg monarchy in Italy in the 18th century, see C. Capra, "Hapsburg Italy in the Age of Reform," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 10/2 (2005), pp. 218–233.

that was intended to break the segregation of Tuscan Jews by granting them rights similar to those of other citizens.<sup>3</sup>

These remarkable laws originated within the broad theorisation of a new form of citizenship and administration, and were conceived by the Florentine bureaucracy in an attempt to adapt enlightened concepts to the Tuscan cultural context and political tradition. Their actual implementation came about with the *riforma delle comunità* or municipal reform—a groundbreaking Physiocratic reform that gained international praise for the Grand-Duke and his ministries.<sup>4</sup>

Against the backdrop of these developments, which took place between the 1770s and the 1790s, I will pay particular attention to the case of Pitigliano, a rural town in the Lower Province of Siena, which hosted one of the major Jewish settlements in Tuscany, smaller only than those of Leghorn, Florence, Pisa, and Siena.<sup>5</sup> Did the municipal reform effectively change the status of the local Jewish community and the condition of the Jewish individual? Did it inspire Jews with the desire for emancipation?

To answer these questions, I will investigate the experiences of one member of the Pitigliano community—David Consiglio—whose personality is emblematic of the Jewish situation in the late 18th century. With his adherence to religious tradition, desire for social mobility and awareness of emancipation, Consiglio's personal story reflects the complicated socio-cultural context of Tuscan Jewry in the age of enlightened absolutism.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See U. Wyrwa, “Perché i moderni rabbini pretendono di dare ad intendere una favola chimerica...”. *L'illuminismo toscano e gli ebrei*, *Quaderni Storici* 103/1 (2000), pp. 139–161. For the situation at Trieste after Joseph II's *Tolleranzpatenten*, see L.C. Dubin, “The Ending of the Ghetto of Trieste in the Late Eighteenth Century,” in *Il mondo ebraico. Gli ebrei tra Italia nord-orientale e Impero asburgico dal Medioevo all'età contemporanea* G. Todeschini and P.C. Ioly Zorattini (eds.) (Pordenone 1991), pp. 287–310.

<sup>4</sup> See the essential work by B. Sordi, *L'amministrazione illuminata. Riforma delle comunità e progetti di costituzione nella Toscana leopoldina* (Milan 1991). About Jewish citizenship, see M. Verga, “Proprietà e cittadinanza. Ebrei e riforma delle comunità nella Toscana di Pietro Leopoldo,” in *La formazione storica della alterità. Studi di storia della tolleranza nell'età moderna offerti a Antonio Rotondò*, H. Mechoulam, R.H. Popkin, G. Ricuperati and L. Simonutti (eds.), III (Florence 2001), pp. 1047–1067.

<sup>5</sup> See R.G. Salvadori, *La comunità ebraica di Pitigliano dal XVI al XX secolo* (Florence 1991); M. Livi-Bacci, “Una comunità israelitica in un ambiente rurale: la demografia degli ebrei di Pitigliano nel XIX secolo (sic, but XVIII),” *Studi in memoria di Federigo Melis*, V (Naples 1978), pp. 99–137.

<sup>6</sup> On Jewish conditions under the Italian enlightened absolutisms, see the relevant contributions by Simonsohn, Segre and Rosa in *Italia Judaica: Gli ebrei in Italia dalla segregazione alla prima emancipazione. Atti del III Convegno internazionale, Tel Aviv, 15–20 giugno 1986* (Rome 1989). For the Hapsburg context in Italy, see M. Del Bianco Cotrozzi, “Tolleranza giuseppina ed illuminismo ebraico: il caso delle unite principesche contee di Gorizia e Gradisca,” *Nuova rivista storica*, LXXIII (1989), pp. 689–726; P. Bernardini, *La*

Two events in the life history of David Consiglio are particularly revealing: his election to a municipal office in 1783 and his excommunication in 1793. These incidents are better understood if considered in the light of the broader context of the new legislation on Jewish citizenship. While comparing Tuscan municipal regulations, I will examine specific problems concerning Jewish eligibility to pursue public office. The reactions expressed by Jewish leaders in the wake of these changes are also of considerable interest.

### *Municipal Reform in the Grand-Duchy of Tuscany*

Municipal reform was the most complicated and ambitious project in Peter Leopold's plan of modernisation, in light of the juridical-institutional and social-political aspects involved. Carried out all over the Grand-Duchy between 1772 and 1786, it also proved to be the most representative example of that "cautious and gradual experimentation"<sup>7</sup> characteristic of Tuscan reformism.

This enormous blueprint of improvements gave shape to a reorganisation of the peripheral administrative and judicial systems, and consequently to a reconsideration of their relationship with the central authority. In a dialectic of centralisation-decentralisation of authority, municipal freedom redesigned "the lines of control and the role of the *magistrature*"<sup>8</sup> (the peripheral administrative bodies), minimising the functions of the centre and reinforcing local structures. The process of preparing for the reform in the 1760s and early 1770s led to homogenisation of the state judicial system. At the same time, the creation of new provinces imposed a division of jurisdictional powers that had great influence on the territorial identity of Tuscany.

A series of economic liberalisations—such as the introduction of free trade and free property transaction—preceded the municipal reform all

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*sfida dell'uguaglianza. Gli ebrei a Mantova nell'età della rivoluzione francese* (Rome 1995); M. Del Bianco Cotrozzi, "Gli ebrei dell'area alto-adriatica nell'età delle riforme e della prima emancipazione: istituzioni, cultura e religione," *L'area alto-adriatica dal riformismo veneziano all'età napoleonica, Atti dei convegni tenutisi a Venezia e Vicenza nel 1997*, F. Agostini (ed.) (Venice 1998), pp. 271–305.

<sup>7</sup> Migliorini, "L'età delle riforme," p. 303. The gradual application of the municipal reform over the entire Grand-Duchy comprised different stages, from the first experiments in 1772 to the regulation for the town of Siena on 29 August 1786.

<sup>8</sup> Sordi, *L'amministrazione illuminata*, p. 14.



over the Grand-Duchy. Sales of national real estate (*allivellazioni*) were carried out in anticipation of a process of land reappropriation to Tuscan peasants and local owners from the middle social strata.<sup>9</sup>

At the core of the reform were the Physiocratic ideas, according to which public administration was considered an economic enterprise to be run by a new group of interested residents, whose only requisite for eligibility was ownership of real estate. From the Grand-Duke's perspective, local administrations would turn into *communities of possessors*—the status of ownership being the “precondition for political representation.”<sup>10</sup>

As Bernardo Sordi has pointed out, the project for these new communities fostered a policy aiming at the “transformation of social distinctions”<sup>11</sup> in the sphere of citizenship. In fact, this new condition for citizenship was meant to stimulate a change in Tuscan leadership. According to the enlightened administration, municipal officers had to be selected through a new system: a random drawing from two electoral bags containing the names of local owners. The bags were set up each year before the new electoral draw: the five highest officers of the *Magistrato* were drawn from a first bag that included the names of the major local owners, while the ten councillors of the *Consiglio Generale* (the General Council) were drawn from a second bag, usually containing the names of the small landowners.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, the process of municipal reform linked representation with the *censo* (taxable quota). A remarkable innovation that accompanied the creation of the “emancipated communities” was the establishment of a new taxation system: in place of the many ancient levies regularly enforced on individuals, a single and centralised tax—the *tassa di redenzione* (redemption tax)—was imposed on real estate. The possessors,

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<sup>9</sup> As regards the important stage of the *allivellazioni*, see, for instance, Migliorini, “L'età delle riforme,” pp. 309–322.

<sup>10</sup> A. Chiavistelli, “Il Comune di Pietro Leopoldo: il Regolamento per la Comunità di Firenze del 20 novembre 1781,” *Annali di Storia di Firenze*, I (2006), p. 182.

<sup>11</sup> Sordi, *L'amministrazione illuminata*, p. 14.

<sup>12</sup> The five highest officers generally included a *Gonfaloniere* and four *Priori*. But the number of municipal officers in the *Magistrato* and the *Consiglio Generale* could differ from place to place, depending on particular regulations and statutes. For the situation in the Lower Province of Siena, see D. Marrara, “La Provincia Inferiore Senese e la sua riforma comunitativa (1765–1787). Profilo storico-istituzionale,” *Rassegna Storica Toscana*, 48/2 (2002), pp. 411–422.

suddenly becoming the interested parties and administrative actors, were also to take on the role of “new protagonists of the fiscal system.”<sup>13</sup>

*Tuscan Jewish Experiences and Attitudes Towards the Reforms*

Peter Leopold’s regulations had an enormous impact on Tuscan society and a significant influence on Tuscan Jews. Unlike in the past, Jews were granted Grand-Ducal protection, not only because of their commercial prominence but also by reason of the civic capacities they acquired with the new decrees. Ancient laws limiting Jewish rights were now subject to a re-examination in light of the liberalist plan. As a result, most of the arbitrary impositions placed upon the Jewish communities were abrogated, while other discriminatory clauses fell out of use and/or were replaced by enlightened legislation.<sup>14</sup>

Tuscan Jews were granted religious freedom and could exercise the right of *patria potestas* (the father’s authority over his sons) in cases of kidnapped children and forced baptisms. In the social and cultural spheres, Jews were given access to literary and scientific academies and could finally obtain doctoral degrees at Tuscan universities.<sup>15</sup>

In line with the general plan, innovations in the economic policy granted the Jews full freedom of property and trade. Liberalisation led to a temporary revival of Jewish commercial activities: Tuscan Jewish traders began to develop their commercial initiatives in large-scale modalities and in unprecedented contexts. In some cases, they also started a process of renewal in the network of property relations: they profited from the public sales of urban and rural buildings and often became local

<sup>13</sup> Sordi, *L’amministrazione illuminata*, p. 121. The new community had to be considered as “a society of persons that pay *pro rata* both for public weights, like royal and general taxes, and for social weights, like local expenses imposed by the communities to benefit their particular economy,” *ibid.*, p. 201 [my translation].

<sup>14</sup> The very origins of this process must be traced to the middle of the 18th century, during the Lorraine Regency, when Jews experienced the actual opening of the ghettos. Obligations to wear the badge and forcibly listen to Christian sermons also fell out of use. During this phase, Giulio Rucellai’s tolerant views stand out; see Verga, “Proprietà e cittadinanza,” pp. 1054–55.

<sup>15</sup> See R.G. Salvadori, “La condizione giuridica degli ebrei nel periodo leopoldino,” *L’Ordine di Santo Stefano e la nobiltà toscana nelle riforme municipali settecentesche. Atti del convegno, Pisa, 12–13 maggio 1995* (Pisa 1999), pp. 247–259.

possessors.<sup>16</sup> Since in principle, municipal power was no longer to be determined by birth or religious affiliation but had to stem from the “modern” nexus with property and taxable quota, their status as owners and taxed residents gave them access to eligibility and representation in the local administrative bodies.<sup>17</sup>

Various reactions and different perceptions can be detected in Jewish internal debates. On the one hand, a large part of Tuscan Jewry showed a favourable attitude as regards the new political course. Their desire for social improvement and civic recognition found clear expression in some of the Grand-Ducal innovations. At the same time, Peter Leopold’s emancipatory policy included recognition of the autonomy of Jewish communitarian bodies, especially as far as religious matters were concerned.<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, such changes could not prevent internal debates from arising, particularly in connection with contemporary social developments. Some of the immediate effects of the reformist age raised serious concerns among religious leaders: socio-economic growth was producing new phenomena of disaggregation and loss of traditional ties. In the eyes of Tuscan rabbis, Jewish orthodoxy, tradition, social cohesion, and self-assistance were in serious danger. Their response to the cultural decline of their communities included new policies of religious conservatism.<sup>19</sup>

In reality, towards the end of the 18th century, the process of social emancipation and cultural enlightenment still involved a small minority

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<sup>16</sup> In Florence, Jews became owners of the ghetto quarter in 1779–1780, following a public auction; see R. Salvadori, *The Jews of Florence. From the Origins of the Community Up to the Present* (Florence 2001), p. 41. In Pitigliano, they turned into major owners in the local rural economy; see D. Barsanti and L. Rombai, “Dal controllo feudale all’organizzazione borghese di un territorio maremmano: l’alienazione delle fattorie granducali di Pitigliano, Sorano, Castell’Ottieri e S. Giovanni intorno al 1780,” *Bollettino della Società Storica Maremmana*, 41–42 (1981), pp. 20, 34–37.

<sup>17</sup> Verga, “Proprietà e cittadinanza,” *passim*.

<sup>18</sup> About the Jewish communitarian system in the 18th century, see M.F. Maternini Zotta, *L’ente comunitario ebraico. La legislazione negli ultimi due secoli* (Milan 1983); Id., “La condizione giuridica delle comunità ebraiche italiane nel secolo XVIII,” *La questione ebraica dall’illuminismo all’Impero (1700–1815). Atti del convegno della Società italiana di studi sul secolo XVIII, Roma, 25–26 maggio 1992*, P. Alatri and S. Grassi (eds.) (Naples 1994), pp. 235–250.

<sup>19</sup> Tuscan rabbis strongly expressed their conservatism in opposition to socio-cultural disaggregation and proposals for the modernisation of Jewish customs and self-government. After a false announcement about a 1796 rabbinical synod held in Florence, in which the religious leaders allegedly appeared to view reforms in Jewish life and rituals favourably, the rabbis of Leghorn and Florence strongly rejected any talk of change. See Wyrwa, “Perché i moderni rabbini,” p. 145. On the first Jewish manifestations of laicism and scepticism during the 18th century, see S. Feiner, *Shorshai ha-khilun. Matiranut ve-safkanut be-yahadut ha-meah ha-shmoneh esreh* (Jerusalem 2010) [Hebrew].

of Tuscan Jews—mostly traders and bankers in culturally privileged positions, among the first to fix their domicile outside the Jewish quarters. In most cases, a prevailing sense of fear of getting *out of the ghetto* still persisted in the psychological attitude expressed by large strata of the Jewish population, particularly in those towns where Jews had a long experience of segregation—as was the case in Florence and Siena.<sup>20</sup>

Jewish emancipation started to be manifest within the communities only at a later date. In the most advanced Jewish milieu at Leghorn, it was only during the French democratic interlude in 1799 that harsh internal conflicts revealed calls for internal renewal. On this occasion, lower social strata represented by *Italiani* Jews attacked the conservative oligarchy of the Sephardic merchant leadership.<sup>21</sup>

As we will see, poor and backward Pitigliano surprisingly experienced this kind of social conflict before the Leghorn debates and the French occupation of 1799: claims against the privileged leadership of the community had already emerged in the mid-18th century and troubled local Jewish life for decades afterward.

### *The Question of Jewish Eligibility*

According to Bernardo Sordi, Tuscan reformism defined and altered itself “in a continuous matching between [...] theoretical models and daily practice.”<sup>22</sup> It is in this sense that the municipal reform achieved an intermediate goal in the direction of enlightened administration and civil emancipation. As a matter of fact, the non-homogeneous application of the reform generated multiple self-contradictions that seriously altered the initial theorisation.

Leopold’s enlightened bureaucracy had to cope with many difficulties and take into account the resistance of the ancient nobiliary leadership.

<sup>20</sup> The function of the ghetto as a separation between Jews and Christians “began to lose importance during the reign of the House of Lorraine in 1755 [...]. The obligation to close the gates tacitly ended, but the Jews continued to fulfil this duty on their own for 80 years more,” see Salvadori, *The Jews of Florence*, pp. 40–41.

<sup>21</sup> See R. De Felice, “Per una storia del problema ebraico in Italia alla fine del XVIII secolo e l’inizio del XIX. La prima emancipazione (1792–1814),” *Italia giacobina* R. De Felice (ed.) (Naples 1965), p. 360; C. Mangio, “La communauté juive de Livourne face à la Révolution française,” *Les Juifs et la Révolution française. Problèmes et aspirations*, B. Blumenkranz and S. Soboul (eds.) (Toulouse 1976), pp. 191–210.

<sup>22</sup> Sordi, *L’amministrazione illuminata*, p. 12 [my translation].

The need for political compromises and the strong persistence of traditional structures made modernisation efforts less successful, in the urban contexts even more than in the rural areas. Confrontation with the different needs of the local communities led Tuscan reformers to recognise peculiar statuses and grant special concessions. Hence, the choice to operate in each district through two regulations: a “general” one, to be valid for the entire district, and a “particular” one, regulating specific demands of the individual communities.<sup>23</sup>

This accidental path also affected the gradual process of granting the Jews rights equal to those of the Christian population. The remarkable advancement of their civil status came up against deep-rooted discriminatory attitudes, whose purpose was that of limiting emancipatory prerogatives. This was particularly evident on the occasions in which Jewish eligibility became relevant. In principle, access to citizenship was extended to Tuscan Jewish possessors, whose qualification for office was based, like that of Christian citizens, on their status as local owners; yet, even though Jews were included by law in the electoral bags, if their names were drawn for office, they were still subject to discriminatory treatment.

For Tuscan Jewry, “municipal emancipation” had different consequences, dependent on the various local regulations. This multiplicity of situations has to be taken into account in order to carefully distinguish innovations and regressions in Tuscan attitudes towards the Jewish question.

The most contradictory example that has been investigated by scholars is that of Leghorn. In this international port town, where Jews had acquired a special standing thanks to their commercial prominence, the reformed municipality decided in 1780 to exclude non-Catholics from any available office. Local authorities regarded Jewish eligibility as a serious threat to Christian dominance. Finally, an exception was made, and a delegate of the *Jewish Nation* was accepted at the assemblies of the *Magistrato*, but the traditional separation was preserved as well as the concept of the Jewish community as a *foreign body* within the State.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Chiavistelli, “Il Comune di Pietro Leopoldo,” p. 183.

<sup>24</sup> See C. Mangio, “La riforma municipale a Livorno,” *L’Ordine di Santo Stefano*, pp. 85–119; F. Bregoli, “Two Jews Walk into a Coffeehouse: The ‘Jewish Question’, Utility, and Political Participation in Late Eighteenth-Century Livorno,” *Jewish History* 24 (2010), pp. 309–329; id., “The Port of Livorno and its *Nazione Ebraica* in the Eighteenth Century: Economic Utility and Political Reforms,” *Quest: Cities of the Jews and Modernity*, forthcoming. I would like to thank Francesca Bregoli for sharing this paper with me before its publication. For a comparative approach, see L.C. Dubin, “Subjects into Citizens. Jewish Autonomy and Inclusion in Early Modern Livorno and Trieste,” *Simon Dubnow Institute*

Another complicated case is that of the nobiliary town of Siena and its late 1786 regulations. In principle, Jewish owners were to be admitted here in a third-class electoral bag created for the annual drawing for the councillors, while a first-class bag was reserved for the traditional noble leadership and a second-class bag comprised the names of the major real-estate owners. But, as stated by Francesca Piselli, the authorities in Siena manifested a general hostility to municipal reform and, as a result, Jewish eligibility was not implemented.<sup>25</sup>

As regards the system adopted for the district of Florence, a controversial 1774 resolution forced Jews to decline any municipal position in case their names were drawn. In response, a 1778 decree reaffirmed Jewish real-estate owners as qualified for office in the General Councils of the communities belonging to the districts of Florence and Pisa. If drawn for higher offices, they had to be replaced by qualified Catholics. To date, no evidence has been found of Jewish participation in the Florentine administrations, but there is a reference to Jews being elected to offices in the small town of Monte San Savino.<sup>26</sup>

Pitigliano adopted a modality similar to that of Florence.<sup>27</sup> In 1783, at the final stages of the reform, Pitigliano received its general and particular regulations, according to which eligible Jews could apply only to the General Council.<sup>28</sup> But here, the situation had a remarkable distinction:

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Yearbook 5 (2006), pp. 51–81. About the Jewish community of Leghorn, see also J.-P. Filippini, “La nazione ebrea di Livorno,” in *Storia d'Italia. Annali 11. Gli ebrei in Italia*, II, C. Vivanti (ed.) (Turin 1997), pp. 1047–1066.

<sup>25</sup> See F. Piselli, “Giansenisti,” ebrei e “giacobini” a Siena. *Dall'Accademia ecclesiastica all'Impero napoleonico (1780–1814)* (Florence 2007), pp. 96–101; and the entry “Comunità di Siena,” in *Comune di Siena—Archivio Comunale*, <http://www.comune.siena.it/main.asp?id=3190> [consulted on 17 December 2009]. About the Jewish community in Siena, see N. Pavoncello, “Origini e sviluppo della comunità ebraica a Siena,” *Nova Historia* VII (1955), fasc. V–VI, pp. 31–44.

<sup>26</sup> See Verga, “Proprietà e cittadinanza,” pp. 1056–57; Chiavistelli, “Il Comune di Pietro Leopoldo,” pp. 181–206. About the Jewish communities of Florence, Pisa and Monte San Savino in the late 18th century, see Salvadori, *The Jews of Florence*, pp. 51–54; M. Luzzati, *Ebrei ed ebraismo a Pisa* (Pisa 2005), pp. 45–52; R. Salvadori, “Quattro secoli di storia ebraica a Monte San Savino,” *Gli ebrei a Monte San Savino* (Monte San Savino 1994), pp. 11–50.

<sup>27</sup> Pitigliano was situated in a geographical enclave bordering the Papal States, north of the abandoned marshlands of the *Maremma* of Grosseto. For a detailed description of this area, see L. Rombai, *Le contee granducali di Pitigliano e Sorano intorno al 1780. Cartografia storica e unitaria di un territorio* (Florence 1982).

<sup>28</sup> The general regulation for the Lower Province of Siena was published in the *Motuproprio* of 17 March 1783, see *Bandi e ordini da osservarsi nel Granducato di Toscana pubblicati dal 8 gennaio 1789 al 2 aprile 1791 raccolti per ordine successivo di tempi con il sommario dei medesimi* (Florence 1791), XI, 130. For the particular regulation of Pitigliano, see *ibid.*, 142.

according to a local tradition of economic privileges, Pitigliano Jews had been enjoying unlimited property rights since the 16th century, and thus had already entered local strategic property networks.<sup>29</sup> This factor was particularly apparent on the occasion of the electoral draws: as a matter of fact, during the 1780s and 1790s, the names of Jewish owners happened to be drawn from the bags many times and indeed, they held office in the General Council of Pitigliano with noteworthy frequency.<sup>30</sup>

*The Jewish Community of Pitigliano in the “Age of Reforms”*

From 1765 onward, the underdeveloped Lower Province of Siena had been benefiting from certain conditions, such as full freedom in the grain trade. Additional exemptions and liberalisations had been introduced in 1778 to boost local agricultural enterprises and attract foreign farmers and rural inhabitants.<sup>31</sup> In contrast with other places, between 1781 and 1783, the large-scale sales of national property had produced a partitioning of lands and buildings, bringing particular advantage to the multiplicity of local small owners, among whom were many Jews.<sup>32</sup>

Concurrently with the economic revival of the 1770s and the process of municipal reform in the 1780s, Pitigliano registered a significant demographic increase, after a long period of depopulation. As pointed out by Danilo Barsanti and Leonardo Rombai, “also in Pitigliano and Sorano, in the short period following Leopold’s pro-bourgeois liberalistic policy, all demographic and productivity indicators registered a remarkable

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<sup>29</sup> In Pitigliano throughout the centuries, special *privilegi*—such as tax exemptions, freedom of property and transactions—were extended to Christian and Jewish residents in order to revitalise this backward area. According to Roberto Salvadori, the right of property granted to Jews endured through the 16th century, even when Pitigliano lost its autonomy as a county and became part of the Grand-Duchy under the rule of the Medici. It was still in place after the ghetto was established in 1622, during the period of fiercest anti-Jewish oppression; see Salvadori, *La comunità ebraica di Pitigliano*, pp. 17–19.

<sup>30</sup> See Archivio Comunale di Pitigliano (ACP), *Registro dei Sig.ri Gonfalonieri, Priori e Consiglieri che hanno riseduto nella Comunità di Pitigliano in forza del regolamento del 1783, e degli altri impiegati*. I would like to thank Elisabetta Peri from the Pitigliano municipality for her helpfulness.

<sup>31</sup> D. Marrara, *Storia istituzionale della Maremma senese. Principi e istituti del governo dall’età carolingia all’Unificazione d’Italia* (Siena 1961), pp. 202–222.

<sup>32</sup> Barsanti-Rombai, “Dal controllo feudale,” pp. 34–37.

increase.”<sup>33</sup> This positive juncture also affected the local Jewish community, whose population reached 222 individuals (about 10 percent of the general population) in the mid-1780s. After the absorption of the communities of Sorano and Santa Fiora, and additional influxes of immigrants from the Papal State, Pitigliano’s importance as a Jewish centre, in the wider area between the Grand-Duchy and the Papal State, became even more pronounced.<sup>34</sup>

This expanding Jewish presence in Pitigliano must have produced some violent reactions among the Christian population, since we find references to attacks on local Jews. Nevertheless, the large number of Jewish claims sent to state authorities in Florence during this period reflects a clear determination to defend the Jews’ newly acquired position. In 1774, the *massari* (administrators) of the Jewish community of Pitigliano made an official complaint and asked for a firm resolution of the frequent mistreatment that Jews suffered at the hands of the Christian populace. The positive answer from the central government recalled the rules in force, according to which Jews had to be granted protection from any violence and considered equal to all Tuscan subjects: “Dovendo la Nazione Ebraica godere di quella tranquillità e quiete della quale godono gli altri sudditi, [...] senza il minimo riguardo al professar l’individui medesimi, utili come gli altri al commercio, una religione diversa dalla nostra.”<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, in 1783, on the eve of municipal reform, the Jewish community asked the Grand Duke to abrogate three ancient taxes imposed on their “nation” that Christians usually did not pay: “Supplicando volere ordinare che, abolite le tasse dette di famigli, del mantenimento della fonte e del predicatore dal primo luglio in poi, siano considerati come i cristiani o nel modo che dispone il Regolamento generale ed il particolare per la comunità di Pitigliano.”<sup>36</sup> Peter Leopold gave his concession in the

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 26 [my translation]. After his visit in 1787, Peter Leopold left with a vivid description of the developments in Pitigliano; see Pietro Leopoldo D’Asburgo Lorena, *Relazioni sul governo della Toscana*, A. Salvestrini (ed.), III (Florence 1974), pp. 562–568.

<sup>34</sup> See M. Livi-Bacci, “Una comunità israelitica in un ambiente rurale,” *passim*.

<sup>35</sup> See Central Archives of the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP), *Pitigliano—Copia di lettere, ordini, regolamenti*, Grand-Duke’s concession (22 April 1774). A similar statement is found in a 1784 writing by Francesco Maria Gianni, one of the most influential figures in Peter Leopold’s bureaucracy, as quoted by Verga, “Proprietà e cittadinanza,” p. 1050. Many thanks to Dr. Renato Spiegel of the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

<sup>36</sup> See CAHJP, *Pitigliano—Copia di lettere, ordini, regolamenti*, plea of Raffaele Servi and Abram Camerino.



same year, reaffirming the equality of his Jewish and Christian subjects in terms of rights and duties.<sup>37</sup>

### *Jewish Internal Debates in Pitigliano*

The Jewish community also had to cope with a great deal of internal divisions—a significant number concerning economic issues. The harshest conflict stemmed from a request to remove an ancient form of internal taxation—the *testatico*, i.e., the poll tax that the *Kahal* (the Jewish governing body) levied on each family head. Objectors depicted this traditional levy as an antiquated relic of an oligarchic past that had to be rejected. The case had a precedent in 1745, when a claim against rich contributors in the community was brought by a group of poor persons, who requested an exemption: one of the protagonists, Isach Consiglio, managed to obtain the admission to the Jewish council of two delegates representing the poor.<sup>38</sup>

Thirty years later, in the 1770s, the old question of the *testatico* was troubling the community members again on the occasion of the renewal of Jewish internal regulations. Divisions between poor and rich were revived—the former asking for exemptions, the latter calling for the preservation of the ancient system established by the founders of the community—to such an extent that no agreement could be reached between the factions. The rise in the prices of commodities, following liberalisation, probably widened the social gap between Jews of the higher strata and their underprivileged brethren. The financial difficulties of the *Kahal* must have caused a further increase in internal fees and subsequent protests.<sup>39</sup>

The civic authorities of Pitigliano had to intervene: in 1778, the Jewish community was given a new regulation that, while conforming to the contemporary enlightened policies, still expressed a strong conservative attitude. Jewish jurisdictional autonomy was confirmed, as well as the community's traditional forms of self-government and internal taxation. Accordingly, the *testatico* remained in force.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., letter of Anfano Perpignani to the Vicario Regio of Pitigliano confirming the Grand-Ducal *rescritto* (17 July 1783).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., petition of the poor (1745) and Isach Consiglio's proposition (1746).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Grand-Duke's concession of new regulations (3 December 1778).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

Once more, in 1787, a complaint raised by a group of protesters rejected the imposition of additional fees. But this time, the dissent also aimed at condemning the alleged misconduct of Rabbi Lazzaro Levi, and explicitly mentioned defaults in payments. Even more significantly, the complaint again included a request for the direct involvement of the civic authorities of Pitigliano, disregarding Jewish community leaders. Among its signatories is David Consiglio, the son of Isach.<sup>41</sup>

### *David Consiglio*

The figure of David Consiglio is extremely relevant to the case in hand, as his life history is connected to important changes in both Jewish and Christian societies. The intertwining of his personal experience with the wider developments of his times enables us to obtain insights into the problems related to this phase of Jewish emancipation.

David Arieḥ ben Yitzḥaq Consiglio was born into a family of low social status.<sup>42</sup> He married Ester Cetona of Santa Fiora, who had recently arrived in Pitigliano with her family, and they had two children—Giuseppe and Affortunata.<sup>43</sup> Like most poor Jewish residents, the family lived close to the synagogue building in the former ghetto where, from the second half of the 18th century on, some poor Christian families also had their domicile. Jewish traders from the higher social strata lived and worked in the main commercial street.<sup>44</sup>

No evidence about Consiglio's main employment has been found in the sources. Apparently, in the late 1780s, he enjoyed a small improvement in

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<sup>41</sup> See ACP, *Carteggio dal 1767 al 1800*, Camerino's petition (12 December 1787). With regard to conflicts between members of the Jewish communities, see also the study by P. Bernardini, "Qahal come *universitas*: l'evolversi e le forme del consenso e del dissenso individuale verso la struttura comunitaria ebraica nell'Italia Settentrionale tra Cinque e Settecento," in *Corpi, fraternità, mestieri nella storia della società europea*, C. Mozzarelli and D. Zanardi (eds.) (Rome 1998), pp. 325–339.

<sup>42</sup> In a 1777 marriage contract, "David Aryeh ben Yitzḥaq Consilio" appears as best man; see Jewish Theological Seminary, Ketubbah, Pitigliano, 1777. 5537 Nisan 14 [1777 April 21], General Collection, Rare Book Room, Drawer 49. On the social status of the Consiglios, see CAHJP, *Pitigliano—Copia di lettere, ordini, regolamenti*, Isach Consiglio's proposition (1746).

<sup>43</sup> Giuseppe was born on 15 July 1785 and Affortunata on 10 May 1791. My gratitude to Franco Paoletti for this information, gathered from the local newspaper *L'Ombrone* (31 May 1885).

<sup>44</sup> The Consiglio family house was located inside the poor quarter of the ghetto, see ACP, *Affari Comunitativi*, 1799 (21 January 1799).

his status as he obtained the rabbinical licence for ritual slaughter and started serving as a *sciattino* (Judeo-Italian for *shohet*). A letter he received in 1787 from the rabbi of Monte San Savino, Moisè Israel Urbini, also unveils his plans to convince the rabbi to move to Pitigliano and replace the controversial Lazzaro Levi as the community's religious leader. It is likely that during these years, Consiglio might have served as a *massaro* (administrator) in the *Kahal*, but he could have also been engaged in a personal feud with community leaders.<sup>45</sup>

In fact, the sources available reveal a complex figure, whose attachment to his cultural-religious world seems to coexist alongside a critical attitude towards the community leadership. His social commitment led him to side with the underprivileged of the community, and his participation in the debates of the time often led him into conflict with other members.

Furthermore, Christian and Jewish sources allow us to reconstruct some significant events between the 1780s and the 1790s, corresponding with particular stages of David Consiglio's life. If, on the one hand, his involvement in many of the Jewish internal debates bears evidence of his deep commitment to the Jewish community, on the other hand, two poles of his life history are marked by events that placed him in a different space, *outside the ghetto*.

### *Consiglio's Election to the General Council*

Let us consider Consiglio's election to the General Council of Pitigliano in 1783, the same year as the local municipal reform.<sup>46</sup> What is striking here from a Jewish point of view is the immediate outcome of the newly introduced system: David Consiglio, a Jewish resident, a local employee and a small property owner (as a family householder), is included in the second electoral bag, from which his name is drawn and then his nomination is confirmed. No traces of opposition to his election are recorded in the sources. He becomes a municipal councillor, receives his pay, and participates in the most important decisions taken by the municipal assembly. This was a period of revolutionary change in the local administration and he was part of it.

<sup>45</sup> See Archivio Dell'Università Israelitica di Pitigliano (AUIP), VII, 1, fasc. 3, letter of Moisè Israel Urbini to David Consiglio (Monte San Savino, 16 December 1787). I wish to thank Dr Gysèle Lévy from the Centro Bibliografico UCEI in Rome.

<sup>46</sup> See ACP, *Registro dei Sig.ri Gonfalonieri, Priori e Consiglieri*, election in the year 1783.

In the late 18th century, there was a Jewish councillor on the General Council of Pitigliano almost every year—and not a single case of Jewish refusal is registered.<sup>47</sup> However, Jewish eligibility remained confined to the lowest offices and was never extended to higher ones: the Grand-Duke's *motuproprio* of 1789 definitively restricted Jewish qualification to the General Council in the entire Grand-Duchy. Leghorn was again the exception: here the discriminatory regulation of 1780 remained in place.<sup>48</sup>

Jewish ineligibility was extended to all major public functions: some Jewish owners from the wealthier classes, when drawn for high office, were regularly replaced by Catholics.<sup>49</sup> Jewish women were also included in the electoral bags but, like all other females, were declared “unsuitable” for office: if drawn, they were obliged to pass the charge to their husbands or to another male substitute.<sup>50</sup> And other kinds of problems arose in elections of professional municipal employees, for which the votes of the general municipal assembly were required. For example, in the selection of the *camerlengo* (the bursar), Jewish candidates found no support from municipal voters. The mere possibility of having a Jew in charge of municipal monies aroused a general opposition from the assembly.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, we can still uphold Marcello Verga's assumption<sup>52</sup> that in Pitigliano too, the linkage between municipal reform and Jewish ownership produced a significant rupture with the traditional perception that

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<sup>47</sup> Jewish councillors in Pitigliano between 1783 and 1804 included David Consiglio in 1783; Angelo Febo in 1786; Raffael Vita Servi in 1788; Pacifico Sadun and Daniel Sadun in 1789; Giuseppe Servi in 1790; Lazzaro Sadun in 1792; Pacifico Sadun in 1799; Raffael Servi and Moisè Sorano in 1800; Abram Bemporad in 1801; David Paggi and Angiolo Spizzichino in 1802; Emanuele Paggi in 1804. See ACP, *Registro dei Sig.ri Gonfalonieri, Priori e Consiglieri*, passim.

<sup>48</sup> For the *Motuproprio* of 20 April 1789, see *Bandi e ordini*, XXX.

<sup>49</sup> Jews drawn by lot for higher offices and replaced included Isach Servi in 1788 and in 1791 for the office of *Priore*, replaced by Giuseppe Marrani; Abram Bemporad in 1796 for the office of *Gonfaloniere*, replaced by Giuseppe Marrani; the inheritors of the late Raffael Servi in 1797 for the office of *Gonfaloniere*, replaced by Giuseppe Capata; the inheritors of Castelnuovo in 1801 for the office of *Priore*, replaced by don Bernardino Fabbriziani; Angelo Ajò in 1803 for the office of *Priore*, replaced by Francesco Ciacci. See ACP, *Registro dei Sig.ri Gonfalonieri, Priori e Consiglieri*, passim.

<sup>50</sup> Jewish women drawn by lot and later replaced included Prudenza Paggi in 1790 for the office of councillor, replaced by Giuseppe Servi; Rosa Ajò in 1799 for the office of councillor, replaced by Domenico Vannini; Prudenza Paggi in 1801 for the office of councillor, replaced by Abram Bemporad; Perna Consorzio in 1802 for the office of councillor, replaced by her husband David Paggi. See ACP, *Registro dei Sig.ri Gonfalonieri, Priori e Consiglieri*, passim.

<sup>51</sup> See ACP, *Deliberazioni del Consiglio (1799–1802)*, year 1802, 3a; id., *Deliberazioni del Consiglio (1802–1805)*, year 1804, 7a.

<sup>52</sup> See Verga, “Proprietà e cittadinanza,” p. 1067.

viewed Jews as a separate group without any involvement in civic and political spheres.

### *David Consiglio's Excommunication*

The second major event in David Consiglio's life that has particular significance occurred ten years after his election to the General Council of Pitigliano. In 1793, following a series of unheeded warnings, the local rabbinical court imposed a ban of excommunication on David Consiglio because of his repeated transgressions of the rules of ritual slaughter, and also because of his public defamation of Rabbi Moisè Israel Urbini (newly arrived from Monte San Savino). David Consiglio was declared an *avaryan*, a transgressor of Jewish Law, and excluded from the *minyan* and the *aliyah la-Torah*. He lost his licence as a *shohet u-vodek* and was dismissed from the office of communal ritual slaughterer.<sup>53</sup>

One can find Consiglio in records from a year later employed as a glass worker, trying to survive economically. There is no doubt that his excommunication by the Jewish community caused him many problems. No information is available concerning the length of his ban. David Consiglio died the following year, and in 1795, his family, having been left in abject poverty, was forced to request financial aid from the municipality.<sup>54</sup>

This episode in the life of David Consiglio offers an opportunity to examine some of the major issues that the *Kahal* of Pitigliano had to face. In the early 1790s, there is evidence of a tightening of internal control as well as a strengthening of rabbinical power. The relative judicial autonomy still enjoyed by the Jewish community was used on this occasion to deal with disobedience towards the authorities, divisions, defaults on payments, and above all, the decline in religious observance.<sup>55</sup> Rabbi Moisè Israel Urbini explained his worries in a letter to the *parnasim*:

<sup>53</sup> See AUIP, VII, 1, fasc. 3, warnings to the *shohet* David Consiglio (1792); and *ibid.*, VIII, 3, fasc. 16, declaration of *avaryan* to David Consiglio (1793).

<sup>54</sup> See *ibid.*, payment to the glass worker David Consiglio (1794), and ACP, *Deliberazioni del Consiglio 1794–1798*, 26r, concession of financial aid to the sons of the late David Consiglio (14 July 1795).

<sup>55</sup> See, for instance, AUIP, VII and VIII, *passim*, including debates on *torat ha-arakhah* (taxation system), *pragmaticas* against parties and dancing, and other rabbinical decrees concerning religious conduct to be observed during prayers, marriages and festivals.

Quello che purtroppo mi fa piangere a vive lacrime si è il vedere le grandi dissenzioni e giurato odio che trovisi fra i singoli di quel Caal, e che l'uno accusa l'altro e l'altro l'uno d'essere delinquenti, sia nel sciatare che nel badcare, cosa tanto scrupolosa, Dio guardi di mangiare nevelod utrefod, di qual delito non solo ne vengono atrocemente puniti i delinquenti, ma anche tolga Dio tutto il Caal per che devono trovarli un compenso . . .<sup>56</sup>

The new rabbi of Pitigliano aimed at a religious reformation of the community: his rulings introduced more severe modalities in the observance of the daily gatherings, “with the purpose of uprooting each one’s licence to begin the morning prayer at his liking.”<sup>57</sup> Transgressors were to be included in a list of *sussurranti* (rebellious, insubordinate men) that would be passed on to the police authorities.

Since internal taxation was “denigrated and almost evaded,” a new regulation had to be imposed for the levying of taxes in order to cover expenses for religious rituals. The rabbi issued further bans on Jewish attendance at public taverns, drinking wine and playing cards in public. On the other hand, recitations of *seliḥot* and additional rites of atonement were promoted.<sup>58</sup>

This significant reaction, motivated specifically by a growing laxity in religious observance, clearly reveals the tensions between tradition and emancipation in the changing landscape of the late 18th century. It is likely that David Consiglio’s excommunication was one consequence of the reaction of Pitigliano’s rabbi to emancipation. In fact, the process of religious reformation aimed not only at arresting the decline of traditional customs and the rise of religious transgression, but also at preventing internal divisions and conflicts. Surprisingly, the latter derived from non-traditional positions expressed by a group of Jews from the lower social strata, who fought for an internal reformation as they yearned for their own social emancipation.

### Conclusions

In general, during the age of Tuscan reforms, Jewish civic rights saw a remarkable improvement, but still, they remained subject to limitations. In the eyes of traditional society, discrimination was an essential element

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., VII, 1, fasc. 3, letter of Rabbi Urbini (Monte San Savino, 17 May 1793).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., notification of Rabbi Urbini (8 January 1794) [my translation].

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., VII and VIII, passim.

in the perpetuation of a distinction between Catholics and non-Catholics. By advancing a “soft revolution,” Tuscan reformism failed to achieve full equality between Christian and Jewish individuals, and in the public sphere, being a member of the Jewish community still carried a negative connotation. However, as shown in the case of Pitigliano, the frequent participation of Jews in public administration produced a significant rupture in traditional concepts of citizenship and local power.

Compared to Leghorn, Siena, and Florence, the situation of the Jews of Pitigliano, supported by the enlightened bureaucracy of Peter Leopold, seems to stand out and provide evidence of a general process of improvement in the sphere of civic rights. If we connect it to the brief reference to elected Jews in Monte San Savino, the example of Pitigliano may confirm Marcello Verga’s assumption<sup>59</sup> that in peripheral centres, Jewish election did not meet the same tangible opposition as it did in the more urban contexts.

Initially, the process of civic recognition strongly influenced Jewish viewpoints about the outside world and intensified debates within the Jewish community. This gave rise to a longing for social emancipation, but also to concerns about disaggregation and cultural decline. As seen through the figure of David Consiglio, in Pitigliano, the first manifestations of social and civic recognition for Jews were countered by a traditionalist revival during the 1790s. To recover its social and spiritual unity, the Jewish community tightened internal control and imposed a religious reorganisation.

Internal struggles between different social strata of Jewish society also shed light on unexpected calls for change in Jewish self-government. In particular, Jewish opposition to the system of internal taxation seems to reveal an interesting concomitance with some of the contemporary disputes in Christian society regarding taxation and finance.

Finally, a significant reference to David Consiglio’s children must be added. Giuseppe and Affortunata left Pitigliano while still young found a better life in Florence and Leghorn. In the early 1850s, Affortunata Consiglio endowed her native Jewish community in Pitigliano with a significant part of her brother’s patrimony, which she had inherited (Giuseppe had become an esteemed antiquarian!). The donation was used to establish a

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<sup>59</sup> See Verga, “Proprietà e cittadinanza,” p. 1059.

Jewish schoolhouse in Pitigliano in 1854 for the education of the poor; it was named “Pio Istituto Consiglio.”<sup>60</sup>

Besides manifesting the continual process of socio-economic emancipation in which Tuscan Jews were involved between the 18th and 19th centuries, these latter developments offer eloquent proof of the attachment that the Consiglio family continued to show toward their humble origins and their lasting sense of belonging to Jewish Pitigliano.

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<sup>60</sup> On the Institute, see for instance Salvadori, *La comunità ebraica di Pitigliano*, pp. 92–97.