

Call for papers

“The many faces of early modern Italian Jewry”

University of Potsdam, Germany, 4th–7th October, 2021

Organisers:

Dr Martin Borýsek (martin.borysek@uni-potsdam.de)

Dr Davide Liberatoscioli (davide.liberatoscioli@uni-potsdam.de)

As a result of its mixed nature, Italian Jewry eludes easy categorisation. The expression “Italian Jews” does not refer exclusively to indigenous Jews – descendants of the Jews who came to the Italian Peninsula during Roman Antiquity – but additionally denotes Ashkenazi Jews who arrived in the northern Italian regions during the Late Middle Ages, descendants of Sephardic immigrants from the Iberian Peninsula and later from the Ottoman Levant, and Greek-speaking Romaniote Jews originally from Venetian colonies in the former Byzantine territories. The mutual encounters between these various Jewish groups and their multi-faceted and sometimes contentious relations characterised every field of tradition, religious life and cultural production.

The aim of our conference is to investigate the character and impact of such encounters between Italian Jews of Italian, Ashkenazi, Sephardic and Romaniote origin, on cultural, religious, social and economic levels. The period at the centre of our attention is loosely bordered by the major waves of Sephardic immigration from the Iberian Peninsula (at the end of the 15th century) and the first acts of social and political emancipation of the Italian Jews implemented under Napoleonic rule (at the end of the 18th century). We invite papers that assess the mutual relations between Jewish individuals and communities of different cultural backgrounds in early modern Italy (including the Italian states’ overseas territories) from historical, literary or religious perspectives. Our aim is to address as many aspects of this overarching theme as possible and enable a lively scholarly discussion on this fascinating area of research.

The conference is hosted by the Institute for Jewish and religious studies, University of Potsdam, Germany, from Monday 4th to Thursday 7th October, 2021. We plan to hold the conference in a classic, live format; an on-line alternative will be organised if the epidemiological situation prevents us from meeting in person (the final format will be announced in good time).

We welcome paper proposals from academics and postgraduate research students working in the fields of Jewish studies, general and social history, early modern studies, Italian studies, history of art, and others. The working language of the conference is English, each presentation should be around 20 minutes long, followed by a discussion. If interested, please send a proposal (up to 250 words) by the **15th April, 2021**, to Martin Borýsek or Davide Liberatoscioli.

Contributions to travel and accommodation expenses may be available subject to the outcome of funding applications (details to follow).