There are more Inquisitorial *processi* against Jews for hiring Christian servants than for any other breach of ecclesiastical regulations. It was an offence that alarmed Inquisitors, implying intimate contact between a Jewish master and a subordinate Christian behind closed doors, in the private space of a Jewish household, and as such representing an unknown level of promiscuity. When Christian servants entered Jewish households they became exposed to the Jewish family’s daily routine and the real risk of apostasy, or so the Inquisitors believed. These *processi* bear witness to the frequency of Christian servants working in Jewish households in this period. Although most of them worked for wealthy Jews, the practice of servant-keeping extended far down society; even poor Jews sometimes had servants and wetnurses, who occasionally stayed for long periods.

At the same time, the relationship between a Christian wetnurse or servant and her Jewish master in seventeenth-century Modena constitutes an important motif for the historian. Primary issues include the alleged violations of canon law, the formal characteristics of the *processi* and the specific form of daily interaction within the Jewish household. Jews had to deal with the same commonplace concerns as their Christian counterparts, ensuring that their babies were sufficiently nourished with breast milk (there was no alternative at this time), that they had hot food to eat on their Sabbath and that their houses were kept clean. No evidence has yet come to light that Jewish wetnurses served in Christian households, or that the Holy Office was concerned with this issue. Although Jews hired Christian midwives as well, this issue will not be discussed since the position was transitory. What then were the duties of the Christian wetnurse or servant within the Jewish household? What was the level of contact? What can be learned about contracts between Jewish master and Christian servant? How did the *padrona*, the Jewish matron of the household, fit into the relationship between Jewish master and Christian servant? Interaction between Jews and Christians in the intimate, private space of a household, where others may not...
enter without permission, is central to this study.

Although there were fifty-two *processi* against Jews for hiring Christian servants in our period, only five concerned wetnurses. The positions of Christian wetnurses varied, and in each Jewish household different ages as well as different economic circumstances created diverse relationships between master and servant. Calman de Sanguinetti, a Jew prosecuted in one of these *processi*, had a large household of seventeen people. When a Christian wetnurse was employed and entered his house, she was treated differently from a Christian wetnurse who worked part-time in the house of Abraham de Sacerdote, another Jew prosecuted by the Inquisition for this offence. Further, there are two examples where the Jewish infant was taken to live in the Christian wetnurse's home during the whole period of nursing. Therefore one must hesitate to make generalizations.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first deals with a history of the Church's prohibition of Jews hiring Christian wetnurses and servants and the second presents a discussion of the licences issued by ecclesiastical and secular authorities in Modena to moderate Christian service in Jewish households. The third part deals with the wetnurse's position in the Jewish household, using the *processi* as evidence of wider implications, the extent of contact and the form of contract between master and servant. The final part concentrates on the role of other Christian servants in Jewish households, the type of position assumed and levels of social interaction between Jew and Christian.

**Prohibitions**

From as early as the fifth century, the papacy prohibited Jews employing Christian wetnurses and servants. Later, in 770, Pope Stephen III (768–72) warned against excessive contact resulting from domestic service, and in 1179 the Third Lateran Council prohibited and condemned Christians who served Jews as domestics and wetnurses. The Council objected to the idea of Jews employing Christians because it ran contrary to the idea of a hierarchical relationship between the two. Christians, according to the Church’s idea of correct order, had to be superior to Jews and if a Jew employed a Christian as a servant – especially a living-in servant, subject to the authority of a Jewish head of household – the Christian placed himself or herself in an inferior state, which overturned the natural chain of authority. There is no indication that the Holy Office prosecuted Christians for employing Jews.

Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) in his canon *Etsi iudaeos* — originally a decree of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, and absorbed into the 1234 *Decretals* of Pope Gregory IX (1227–41), as well as the Italian canonist Hostiensis
(1200–70) — specified another reason why Christian wetnurses were prohibited from living in Jewish houses. At the time of Easter, and after the Christian wetnurse had taken communion, the Jews allegedly disposed of the Christian wetnurse’s milk in a latrine for three consecutive days. The letter read:

We have heard that the Jews... have become so insolent that whenever it happens at Easter that the Christian women who are the wetnurses of the Jews’ children receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ the Jews compel them, for three days thereafter, to spill their milk into the latrine, before they let them nurse again.6

Kenneth Stow believes that this statement was probably based on the medieval belief that breast milk was derived from the nursing mother’s blood. Stow argues that medieval Jews were ‘convinced that were their children to drink this milk following Communion they would become eucharistically tainted and idolatrously infested’.7 Stow bases his argument on the texts of Rabbi Solomon b. Isaac (Rashi) (1040–1105) and Solomon ibn Adret (ca. 1233–1310), and later the sixteenth-century Shulhan Arukh of Josef Karo (1488–1535), which in Yoreh Deah 81:7 (especially the commentary of Moses Isserles) notes that ‘For the milk of idolators [including – indeed, especially for Isserles – Christians] makes the heart foolish and instils into the child a wicked disposition’.8 It is certainly questionable whether Jews believed the Eucharist to have magical powers, or whether this was a belief projected upon them from Christian society, particularly at this time when from the thirteenth century host-desecration tales had begun to emerge.9

In November 1286, a different reason why Jews were prohibited from employing Christian wetnurses or servants was recorded. A letter sent from the papacy to the Archbishop of Canterbury complained of sexual intermingling between Jew and Christian.10 Two centuries later, Pope Martin V (1417–31), in his re-issue of the bull Sicut judeis in 1422, probably also referring to sexual promiscuity, labelled ‘scandals’ between Jews and their Christian servants as a reason why such employment was prohibited. The Pope also noted that Jews were less inclined to convert if they were allowed to have authority over Christians and permitted to feel superior to them. He therefore threatened Christian servants who worked for Jews with excommunication.11

The prohibition remained in force from this period onwards and episcopal courts and later the Inquisition were put in charge of monitoring it. When, in July 1555, Pope Paul IV (1555–59) issued Cum nimis absurdum, which radically restructured the limits of Jewish life in the Papal State and restricted interaction between Jews and Christians, he reiterated the Papal prohibition for the same reasons.12 From its opening, the bull ranted angrily that Christians were not to be subject to Jews:

It is profoundly absurd and intolerable that the Jews, who are bound by their guilt
to perpetual servitude, should show themselves ungrateful toward Christians; and with the pretext that Christian piety welcomes them by permitting them to dwell among Christians, they repay this favor with scorn, attempting to dominate the very people whose servants they should be.\textsuperscript{13}

\textit{Cum nimis}, in its long introduction, in particular mentioned the problem of Jews hiring Christian servants: ‘It is iniquitous that children of a free woman should serve the children of the maid servants.’ Later, Clause Four decreed that:

neither Jewish men nor Jewish women may have nurses or serving women or any other Christian serving them. Nor may they have their children wet-nursed or reared by Christian women.\textsuperscript{14}

In 1583, Gregory XIII in his bull \textit{Antiqua iudaeorum improbitas} reiterated the accusation that the Jews forced Christian wetnurses to dispose of their milk at Easter.\textsuperscript{15} Clause Eleven noted that the Inquisition had the power to proceed freely:

If anyone has up to now kept Christian wetnurses, in contravention of the canon laws and the sanctions of different Roman pontiffs our predecessors, or still keeps them and forces them, on the day when they should be receiving the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, to pour out [waste] their milk on one or more days into latrines, drains or other places.

Here, one must note the slight change in the tone of the prohibition. Although it remained a prohibition, the text hints clearly that the Pope knew that the prohibition was not adhered to and Jews were continuing to employ both servants and wetnurses, some of whom lived \textit{in casa}, in their homes.\textsuperscript{16} Pope Gregory XIII demanded that the Inquisition use its power to regulate this offence, to close the gap between the canon law prohibition and the way it had been blatantly ignored.

\textbf{Licences}

Secular governments in late medieval Italy usually ignored the Papal prohibition and continued to permit Christian service, as long as servants did not live in Jewish homes for long periods of time. In the early modern period, dukes and governments accommodated the Jews’ need for Christian wetnurses and servants as well as midwives, which also had economic benefits for the Christian community.\textsuperscript{17} In fact, as Benjamin Ravid has shown, the \textit{condotte} of Sephardi Jews in Livorno allowed Jews to house Christian wetnurses in their homes.\textsuperscript{18} The Jews’ ability to receive such services was part of a standard of living that they had come to expect.

From the late sixteenth century, in an atmosphere of tighter Papal control
over Jewish affairs, dukes of Modena were pressurised by the popes to restrict this policy. In 1570, Duke Alfonso II d'Este (1559–97) had decreed that Jews could employ Christian wetnurses and servants to live in their homes in Modena only in urgent circumstances, after having secured a licence from the Giudice di Savii, the secular magistrate in the city. If the Jews failed to acquire such a licence, they would face pecuniary as well as corporal punishment. Alfonso's decree read:

no Jew may be permitted to keep in his service any Christian woman as servant or maid or in any other capacity, or to make use of her in his house, unless compelled to do so by childbirth or similar urgent needs. For this he needs to acquire a licence from the Giudice di Savii, the judge who has jurisdiction over them by right, and not through any other means on pain of a fine of 100 scudi to be applied, one third to the accuser and the rest to the treasury, and three hoists of the rope or more at the discretion of His Excellency.

In 1602, Duke Cesare d'Este renewed the edict of his cousin. However, he stated explicitly that under no circumstances was the servant to live or eat in the Jew's house:

His Serenity further orders and commands that no Jew may be permitted to keep in his house in his service as servant or maid or for any other purpose, any Christian man or woman. It is only permitted that Jews use Christian women in childbirth, and Christian men in other similar urgent need with a licence from the Judges. The Judges shall give or withhold restricted licences as they see fit. As for other tasks [i.e. jobs other than domestic service – maintenance work on a house etc.], the Jews may make use of them freely and pay them due wages, so long as the workmen, craftsmen and others whom they employ do not eat or sleep with them [the Jew].

Unlike the earlier edict, Duke Cesare’s referred to male servants, which suggests that the employment of Christian men in Jewish houses was widespread enough to demand ducal regulation. The Inquisition urged the Duke to prohibit Christian service completely but he was unwilling to comply. In 1620 the ducal edict Grida sopra gli hebrei proclaimed further restrictions under pressure. Jews were no longer able to employ Christians in their shops or work areas, nor hire in their homes Christian teachers or musicians, Christian spinsters or women under the age of 45, and finally these Christians were not allowed to be present in the Jews’ houses after sunset or before sunrise:

His Highness further orders that no Jew may employ in his house, for his service, any servant or maid, or for any other purpose any Christian man or woman. Nor may he employ any Christian worker or craftsman to work with him in his house, in his shop, or elsewhere, nor give him food, cooked in the Jewish way, or according to the Jewish observances, unleavened bread, or similar food. Nor is the food to be distributed outside the home to Christian houses or Christians.
Jews may not bring into their houses to render any service any unmarried women or other Christian women under the age of forty-five. Nor may the Jews admit to their homes Christian men or women before sunrise in the morning, nor in the evening, after the third hour of the night, from the 1st October through to the end of April, and no later than the first hour of the night, from the 1st May to the end of September.  

Frustrated that the Duke had not issued an outright prohibition, the Inquisitor General, Giovanni Vincenzo Reghezza, protested, complaining in his letter to the Congregation of the Holy Office that the Jews of the city had persuaded the Duke to maintain these concessions, despite persistent requests from the Holy Office. Cardinal Millino agreed, but was unsure how the Inquisition could assert its authority. The Duke continued to argue that he had full authority to concede licences to the Jews, and in this he was supported by his ministers. Moreover, his predecessors had done the same, and Papal proclamations on this matter were meant to be observed in their own territories, not in the duchy.  

These tensions at first prevented the Inquisition from any direct activity in monitoring the Jews’ hiring of Christian servants. Although there was one investigation against Vitale Alatini, a Jew living in Nonantola, in 1603 for allowing his Christian servants Lucretia and Camilla to stay overnight in his house, the case was postponed in order to receive further direction from Rome. More confident of its position in Modenese society, in 1615 the Inquisition established its own clerk to produce licences and in 1618 began prosecutions under the new generalship of Tommaso Novato (1618–20). During the 1620s, under the generalships of Tommaso Novato and Giovanni Vincenzo Reghezza (1620–27), eighteen of the fifty-two processi (35%) were executed. It was only with the accession in 1630 of Duke Francesco I – who heeded the advice of the bishop, Alessandro Rangoni, and did not renew the 1620 edict – that official jurisdiction was finally placed in the hands of Inquisitor General Giacomo Tinti, who began a more regulated monitoring, which continued after the establishment of the ghetto in 1638.

Inquisitorial licences were distributed only if the Jew could prove that, first, the Christian neither ate nor slept in the Jew’s house and, second, the Christians were still performing their religious duties, such as receiving the Eucharist and obeying the strict rules of Easter and Lent. These licences had to be renewed every three months, and the Jew had to pay for the privilege. In fact, regulations for hiring Christian wetnurses tightened as the century progressed. By 1630, the Inquisition would only issue licences for a Christian wetnurse to nurse a Jewish infant in the wetnurse’s home, on condition too that the nurse did not go into the home of her Jewish employer on any pretext. Such restrictions represented a victory for the Inquisition, since not only did they limit contact between the two groups, but they also forced the Jews into a situation where the
parents had little if any supervision over their infant.

Licences also became essential documents for Jews wishing to employ Christians in any capacity. But, in an atmosphere of competing jurisdictions, confusion lingered. When brought before the Inquisition, Jews often argued that they had secured secular licences from the Duke, but were not aware of the need to acquire Inquisitorial ones. There was even a third court, the episcopal one, which before the establishment of the Holy Office in 1598 had been responsible for regulating and issuing ecclesiastical licences on behalf of the Church. In fact, individual priests were slow to surrender this source of income to the Inquisition and continued to issue licences more willingly than the Holy Office to individual Jews. When in 1627 Beniamino Modena was denied a licence by the Inquisition for a Christian servant, he had turned to an episcopal vicar and received one. In 1636, Leone Poggetti, a Jewish doctor, and his wife Allegra testified before the Holy Office that they had done the same.

There was a further problem for the Inquisition. Episcopalian licences were often issued orally, sometimes without written verification in any inventories, and Inquisitors had no way of confirming their authenticity. When Calman de Sanguinetti, a Jewish banker, was prosecuted in 1601 for retaining a Christian wetnurse in his home, without an Inquisitorial licence, he testified that he had a verbal licence from an episcopal vicar, which the Inquisition had no way of disproving. In his final interrogation on 4 June, Sanguinetti was forced to admit – however disingenuously – that he had ‘misunderstood’ what a ‘verbal’ licence permitted, and had therefore allowed his Christian wetnurse to stay in his house:

I admit that the Father Inquisitor may have pointed out to me that he did not suppose that the nurse was to stay the night in my house. I now realise that, if I believed myself to have permission for the night as well, I misunderstood, and I ask your pardon for my error.

Jews clearly manipulated and manoeuvred licences to their advantage. Calman de Sanguinetti did not want to be constricted by rules that would make the nursing of his child so much more complicated. Since he had other servants living in his household, it was much simpler to let Antonia enter his house and live among them as a domestic, available for nursing at all times. He had also fooled Antonia into believing that he held another ecclesiastical licence permitting her to break the dietary rules of Lent. This violation was an offence against ecclesiastical discipline and aroused suspicion of heretical tendencies. At the end of his second interrogation, Calman was forced to admit his deception to the Inquisitor:

It is possible that I had said to the wetnurse that I had a licence from the Signor vicar permitting her to break Lent, not because I had asked or obtained a licence from the vicar because I had not asked for one. But it was possible I thought, that
Perhaps Antonia in her naivety and ignorance had believed that a Jew could secure a licence for her to violate the rules of Lent. The Christian wetnurse or servant was not expected to be involved in securing licences. Moreover, since most of these women were illiterate, it is doubtful that they ever asked to see them, or thought that the Jews had failed to secure them. When the wetnurse Giovanna had been told by her Jewish master, Isaaco de Modena, that he had acquired a licence for her, she had believed him. In 1636, when Jacobo Donato and his wife Stella were discovered maintaining frequent contact with their Christian wetnurse Margherita in their own home, they argued that they had not really understood the implications of their licence since it had been written in Latin, a language they did not understand. Inquisitor Giacomo Tinti refused to accept their argument and sentenced Jacobo Donato to six months in prison.

The increasing control that the Inquisition exercised on the issuing of licences allowed the tribunal a closer monitoring of the type of interaction and service that Christians provided their neighbouring Jews. The bestowing of licences upon Jews was also a perennial source of income that the Inquisition could benefit from. In 1658, the Inquisition began to employ special auditors to review the ‘excessive number of licences’ which its staff had issued over the years. Inquisitors were ordered to send to Rome a detailed list of all those who held licences, which were from then on only to be authorized by the Congregation of the Holy Office.

Wetnursing

Mercenary wetnursing has attracted considerable attention from social historians interested in family, childhood, fertility and cultural mores of the past. Some of these works even relate to the early modern Italian experience. Between 1400 and 1800, wetnursing was particularly widespread in Italy and represented a significant part of the domestic economy of poorer families in urban and rural areas. Common opinion, culture and socio-economic and medical factors contributed to a generalized rejection of maternal breastfeeding even among working-class people, and wetnursing, in Italian urban culture, became a major domestic industry. The main reason why wetnursing was so widespread, and so many women apparently did not suckle their own babies, was that it was thought dangerous for a husband and wife to have sexual intercourse while she was suckling a child, lest the wife get pregnant. If she did, her milk/blood would be diverted to nurturing the foetus, and this development was considered detrimental, even fatal, to the health of the child at the breast. Husbands were not expected to abstain from sex for a year or more while his wife was breastfeeding.
so, to keep the man faithful to the marriage bed, the couple often employed a wetnurse. Parenthood thus began with the social and economic pressure of finding an alternative provider for a newborn infant, turning over the significant role of nursing to a carefully chosen and paid employee. Good wetnurses were supposed to be not only healthy but of sterling character (since moral qualities were transmitted with milk). Parents often sent infants to board with nurses who lived in the countryside where they remained for periods of up to two years, until they were weaned. These country wetnurses were believed to be stronger and healthier and to provide better milk.  

How often Jewish mothers hired wetnurses in early modern Italy is harder to ascertain. Whether it was the norm for Jewish mothers to breastfeed their own children if they could, or whether the majority subscribed to the use of wetnurses, as did their Italian Christian counterparts at this time, needs clarification. Ancient Jewish law had specified in the Babylonian Talmud that it was a mother’s duty to breastfeed, and that a mother should naturally choose to do so. In the Babylonian Talmud, Ketubot 59–60 stated: ‘She [the mother] must nurse until the child is two years.’ Ketubot 61 stated, however, that if a husband forbade his wife to nurse her infant:

she had a legal right to make her own decision, since the labour and trouble would be hers alone. If however, the wife wished not to nurse, the decision was made according to the custom in that particular family.

Obviously, some Jewish women could not nurse their own children, especially mothers who had engorged breasts, or suffered from maternal rickets after labour or even had puerperal or milk fevers. However, a wetnurse is only referred to in Tosefta Niddah 2: 4–5, where it specified that if twins were delivered, then one was to be fed by a wetnurse.

Elisheva Baumgarten’s recent book, and first full-scale study of mothers and children in medieval Ashkenaz (Franco-Germany), was unable to confirm whether Jewish mothers hired wetnurses because they preferred not to nurse and could comfortably afford wetnurses, or whether wetnurses were employed principally by women who were physically unable to nurse. She argues that Jewish mothers probably employed Jewish wetnurses when available, and Christian ones were taken only when Jewish ones could not be found. It must have been difficult for Jewish parents to find a sufficient number within the relatively small ‘pool’ of such women provided by the Jewish population, especially in small Jewish communities. Sometimes Jewish infants were nursed in the Jew’s home and sometimes in that of the wetnurse. Although she hints that this did happen, Baumgarten could find no case where Jews left their children in the Christian’s care overnight unattended by a Jewish relative. It seems clear that to hire a Christian wetnurse was a compromise for Jews in need of the nurse’s
service.\textsuperscript{58} Many Papal concessions were granted, in particular by Pope Clement VII (1523–34), to allow Jewish communities, for example in Bologna, Piedmont, Ferno and Montegiorgio, as well as individual prominent Jews, to hire Christian wetnurses.\textsuperscript{59} Stefanie Siegmund, in her study of Jewish life in the Florentine ghetto, believes that prior to ghettoization in 1570 some of the wealthiest Tuscan families hired Christian wetnurses, and this continued until it was forbidden by the Synod of 1573.\textsuperscript{60} Julia Lieberman, studying the discourses and sermons of the Los Sitibundos, a seventeenth-century Jewish literary academy established by Sephardi Jews in Livorno, has found a particular sermon by José Penso de la Verga, a merchant and a prolific writer, entitled ‘Moral and Sacred Academic Discourse’ (Discurso Académico Morale y Sagrado), which was divided into six parts, three devoted to the ‘obligation of women to wetnurse their children’, a clear indication that a large proportion of Jewish mothers were not following this practice, which Lieberman interprets as refusal to endure the physical hardships of nursing.\textsuperscript{61} Tellingly, these sermons make no reference to the employment of Christian wetnurses, even as a prohibited practice.

Evidence from processi of the Papal Inquisition confirms that Jews employed Christian wetnurses in Modena. There were five specific processi during the period 1598–1638, although this practice is often referred to in other trials.\textsuperscript{62} Moreover these processi often provide more than one specific case of an individual Jewish master hiring a Christian wetnurse. The first processo, in October 1600, was against Isaaco de Modena, a Jewish banker living in Vignola, accused of employing in his house and allowing to stay overnight a twenty-year-old Christian wetnurse, Giovanna, who had nursed Sabbadia, his grandson (the son of his son Benjamin). Giovanna had been nursing the child for a year and had during this period slept in the Jew’s house when the infant or his parents had been unwell. Isaaco was brought to Modena on 10 October 1600 for interrogation but argued that he had not known that he had to acquire a licence or that it was forbidden for a Christian nurse to stay in his house.\textsuperscript{63} Neither Isaaco nor Benjamin was imprisoned during the investigation, but Isaaco was fined 25 ducats for allowing Giovanna to stay overnight in his house and failing to acquire an Inquisitorial licence.

The next fascicle to deal with wetnursing involved two separate processi within the same file, that of Calman de Sanguinetti, a wealthy banker, and Abraham de Sacerdote, whose profession remains unknown.\textsuperscript{64} It opened with a denunciation made in 1602 by a Christian prostitute, Julia Maola da Centro.\textsuperscript{65} Maola denounced a Christian wetnurse, Leonora, to the Modenese Inquisition for working in Calman de Sanguinetti’s house when in fact she was working in Abraham de Sacerdote’s. Calman de Sanguinetti’s trial opened on 27 April 1602 and ended less than two months later, on 4 June 1602.\textsuperscript{66} The Christian wetnurse,
Antonia Ferrarino de Nonantula, the wife of a local fisherman, lived locally in the parish of San Bartolomeo and served and stayed in the Sanguinetti house in casa for a period of four months. Calman de Sanguinetti was accused of failing to secure an Inquisitorial licence, of bringing the Christian to live in his household and of causing his wetnurse, who had remained in his house during Easter week, to violate the Lenten prohibition on eating meat. He was found guilty and fined 25 scudi (125 lire). This, the Inquisitor General Archangelo Calbetti argued, was to act as a warning to other Jews of what would happen if they failed to obey Inquisitorial regulations regarding the employment of Christians. Half of Calman's fine was paid to the Holy Office and half to charities or other religious institutions (such as hospitals or confraternities) in the city of Modena.

In the same fascicle is the processo of Abraham de Sacerdote, which opened on 2 July 1602, and was dropped on 16 July, fourteen days later. The Christian wetnurse involved was Leonora, wife of Sabbione, who lived behind the Bentivoglio palazzo in Modena. Leonora went every day to serve in Abraham's house. Abraham de Sacerdote argued that he had done all in his power to employ a Christian wetnurse within the framework of Roman and canon law and brought with him a medical certificate, handwritten by Casandrio, a Jewish doctor, which proved that his wife had not been able to nurse and his need for a nurse had been urgent. He had also obtained a verbal episcopal licence for his Christian wetnurse to suckle his child. However, he tried to explain that it was during the night that his child particularly needed nursing and therefore the wetnurse had come and gone also during the night. He told the Inquisitor:

The vicar, having read the certificate and heard from me about the needs of my child and the danger he was in, agreed and granted me a licence to have the child suckled by a Christian wetnurse, so long as she did not eat or sleep at night in my house. I replied that it was more often at night than by day that my son needed a wetnurse. The said Signore Vicar replied to me that if at night I needed a wetnurse, I could send and call for her to come to my home, when and how many times I wanted. He said that he would be content as long as she came and did not sleep in my house and I respected what was ordered and she never ate nor slept in my house.

None of the above three suspects was imprisoned during investigations, possibly because there was no room for them in the limited space that the Inquisition used as a prison in the convent at that time. They were free to remain in their homes, but ordered to appear in court whenever they were summoned. Nor were the Christian women for their part imprisoned, punished or threatened with excommunication or refusal of Christian burial.

Another investigation into this offence did not occur until 1633. When Abraham Bonighi and his son Isacco were prosecuted for this offence, it soon became clear that the Christians involved had been serving the Jews in their
home but not wetnursing. Smeralda, the wife of Abraham Bonighi, even testified that she did not know of any Christian women who nursed Jewish children, probably with the intention of protecting her co-religionists from prosecution.

In September 1636 three Jewish couples were prosecuted for hiring Christian wetnurses. All six were interrogated – imprisoned during the investigations, which lasted from September to January 1637 – and were found guilty of not being meticulous enough in confining themselves to the Inquisitorial restrictions regarding the employment of Christian wetnurses demanded in their licences. Although these women had not lived in casa nor slept overnight in the Jews’ houses, they had still maintained frequent contact with their Jewish masters and padrone during the period of nursing. The two Christian wetnurses involved, Margherita de Pavarotti and Juliana de Christiani (two of the three couples had employed the same Christian wetnurse, Juliana, at different times), had visited the households of their employers on many occasions, holding prolonged conversations with the Jews and sometimes eating in the Jews’ houses. The two Christian wetnurses were also imprisoned during investigations. The banker, Jacobo Donato, and his wife Stella received the heaviest punishment for not only allowing their wetnurse into their home on many occasions but also having carelessly allowed her to be seen by Christians taking part in the Feast of the Holy Rosary procession that had passed under the windows of the Jew’s house while she was holding her ward in her arms. Jacobo was sentenced to six months imprisonment and his wife to a six-month house arrest in her home. Salamon Sacerdote, whose profession remains unknown, and his wife Isotta had often provided their wetnurse with nourishment when she visited the Sacerdote household, and for this Sacerdote was sentenced to three months’ imprisonment and Isotta to a three-month house arrest. The third couple, Doctor Morensi, alias Leone Poggetti, and his wife Allegra, who had handed one of their twins (the daughter as opposed to the son) over to Juliana after she had finished nursing the Sacerdote infant, had also maintained familiarity and contact with their Christian wetnurse and were also punished. Leone Poggetti was sentenced to three months’ imprisonment and Allegra to house arrest for the same period. Margherita was given a punishment of a month’s house arrest and Juliana was absolved.

The fifth and final processo for wetnursing was against Emanuele Sangiannessi in the same year. Emanuele, a poor Jew, testified to the Inquisitor that his wife had been too ill to nurse their child, and after having acquired a licence from the Inquisitor had employed Giovanna de Menopi, a Christian wetnurse and a widow who had remarried Lorenzo Menopi. This wetnurse had come to his shop to nurse for the period of a year. The Jew testified that Giovanna never came to his house unless to collect the infant and only on one occasion had collected some bread which she had then taken home to eat. Inquisitor General
Giacomo Tinti dropped the case and the Jew was dismissed with a warning.

Paid nursing seems to have been a distinctive and prestigious sign of well-to-do Jews, as of Christian upper-class merchants or nobles at this time; as Klapisch-Zuber noted it 'flattered the vanity of the husbands, to be sure, but also enhanced the woman’s status as a fertile and prolific wife'. The wealthy banker Jacobo Donato actually admitted in his testimony in 1636 that his wife Stella had elected not to nurse her children. This seems to have been the practice of many wealthy Jewish mothers at this time, although not all wealthy women had nurses. In general, though, hiring a Christian wetnurse was not an optimal choice. Jews only turned to hiring Christians because of the shortage and difficulty of finding enough wetnurses of their own religion, and it is doubtful that they would have entrusted their children to Christians if it could have been avoided. Abraham de Sacerdote, Jacobo Donato and Leone Poggetti told the Inquisition that they had not been able to find a Jewish wetnurse and, as a result, had had to employ a Christian one. The wealthy banker Calman de Sanguinetti had a Jewish wetnurse, Laura, who was nursing his son before Antonia and living in his home. It was only because Laura became pregnant that she had stopped nursing Calman testified:

The Jewish wetnurse Laura had not been able to suckle the infant since she discovered that she was pregnant. I was not able to find another Jewish woman. Laura clearly forced her master into the unpleasant task of finding and then training a new employee.

Most of the Jews’ Christian wetnurses were poor women, as noted by the Inquisitor: wives of artisans, labourers and peasant farmers, who desperately needed to supplement their family income. Giovanna de Menopi told the Inquisitor in 1636, ‘I am a poor woman and procured to earn a living in whatever way I can’. There was also a range of ages. Leonora, Antonia and Giovanna de Menopi were approximately forty years old. However, Giovanna, Isaaco de Modena’s wetnurse, was much younger, twenty-five, and Margherita de Pavarotti and Juliana de Christiani both told the Inquisitor that they were twenty. One can suggest that Jews were probably willing to accept any wetnurse they could find whatever her age.

Jewish law demanded that Jews who employed Christian wetnurses allow them to nurse their children in their own houses rather than in the wetnurses’ houses. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Calman’s Christian wetnurse spent most of her day and night with the Jewish infant in his house, under the supervision of the Sanguinetti. Whether this was arranged because Calman did not trust the Christian with his child, or feared that she might baptize the child or purely out of convenience cannot be confirmed. Andrea Balletti describes two cases – albeit one much later – where Christian wetnurses
had taken Jewish children into their homes in Modena and baptized them. One occurred in 1587, the other in 1844. But in fact Calman de Sanguinetti actually allowed his wetnurse to take his child to her home once the Inquisition had forbidden Antonia’s residence in his house, and there is further evidence of Christian wetnurses taking Jewish infants home with them at night in other parts of Italy. Furthermore a new ruling, on 2 July 1673, by the Duke of Savoy ordered that Christians suckle Jewish infants only in the Christians’ own homes and only in very special cases.

In Modena, the Inquisition had by 1630 enforced this restriction for Jews of Modena too. Jews were only allowed to hire Christian women who took their wards into their own houses to nurse and keep them there, or as in Emanuele Sanguinetti’s case had an alternative location — his shop — to have his child suckled. The intention was to prevent the Christian from spending any period of time in the Jewish household. But in reality having one’s child nursed in an alternative household left the fate of the Jewish master’s child to that of his Christian wetnurse, and it says much about the Jews’ trust of local Christians, which resonates through the processi, that they were in general willing to let these poor Christian women rear their children during the period of nursing in their homes.

The demands the Jews made upon Christian wetnurses differed according to financial circumstances. Giovanna, Leonora, Juliana, and Giovanna de Menopi provided their services for poorer Jewish families, particularly for Jewish mothers who could not nurse their own infants, and as a consequence were able to continue nursing their own infants at the same time. In wealthy Christian households, it was unusual for a wetnurse to suckle more than one child.

These Christians employed wetnurses in their homes if the nurses had finished suckling their own children, or had put their own children out to nurse, or their children had died. Moreover, Jewish law forbade Jewish wetnurses to suckle more than one child. But the Jews who employed these Christian women had no choice, not having the finances to hire a woman who could suckle their infants exclusively. They were probably ready to take the first available woman who was physically able to nurse their children.

During the time Leonora was nursing Sacerdote’s child and Giovanna de Menopi Emanuele Sanguinetti’s child, the Christian wetnurses continued to live in their homes but ran back and forth to the Jews’ house or shop respectively, as required. Whether at night these women came back and forward as often as they testified is doubtful. Nursing at night could be constant, a fact that Inquisitors were probably unfamiliar with.

Antonia was expected to live in the wealthy Jewish household of the Sanguinettis, suckle the Jewish infant exclusively and take explicit orders regarding her diet from the padrona of the household. Antonia’s own home was in the same
area of Modena as that of the Sanguinettis, in the sestiere of San Bartolomeo, but she was still expected to live in casa while nursing the Jewish child. For her it was a well-rewarded occupation, in which her health was carefully monitored. She received plenty of rest and a good diet, did little housework, and enjoyed the luxury of comfortable accommodation to which no one of her background and circumstances would ordinarily be accustomed. As Dennis Romano has confirmed, these women, because of their matronly status, were respected by their masters and given precedence above other household servants.94

In Italy, employing a wetnurse in casa was the most expensive method and was common only among families of fairly high economic and social status who had money and space to keep a nurse. It was often used only for the eldest child of wealthy families, but in Calman’s and Isaaco de Modena’s cases the infant boys being nursed were not their first-born.95 Calman hinted at the enormous expense of this service:

I continued (to look for a Jewish wetnurse) as I did and I do all the time because this Christian one is very expensive.96

Due to Inquisitorial restrictions in the 1630s, the Jews who hired Margherita de Pavarotti and Juliana de Christiani were not able to employ Christian wetnurses in casa. Yet they did their best to maintain as much contact as they could with their Christian wetnurses. Jacobo and Stella Donato took a meticulous interest in their child’s development, diet and health, visiting their infant often in the wetnurse’s home and opening their doors to the wetnurse and her ward whenever she appeared.97 When Stella Donato went by herself to Margherita’s home, she told the Inquisitor that she was always accompanied by one of her servants.98 Stella also testified to her frequent personal contact with Margherita and the trust she had in the wetnurse’s rearing of her child during the two years of nursing.

At the same time, the Christian wetnurses fully complied with the demands of their Jewish employers and showed a disciplined allegiance to them. Their deference was probably a compound of their temporary dependency and good salaries. Antonia even referred to Calman in her testimony as monsignor, the honorific title that the Papal bull Cum nimis had forbidden.99 How much direct contact Calman de Sanguinetti actually had with his wetnurse who lived in casa is not clear and cannot be satisfactorily deduced. His household was large, consisting of at least sixteen or seventeen people including as Calman testified, ‘housemaids, stewards, teachers, maids, wetnurses and servants’. The relations between people, especially master and servants, were probably impersonal.100

It is unlikely that Calman and the wetnurse would have seen each other daily, except perhaps when passing in a corridor. In fact all the Jewish masters who hired Christian wetnurses were unable to identify the first names of their
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wetnurses, which suggests that the Jew preferred to show the Inquisitor that he had minimal contact with the Christian.\(^{101}\) ‘Balia’, the term that the Jewish masters used to describe their Christian wetnurses, was the wetnurse’s title and indicated that she was a respected servant.

When Sanguinetti was asked in his second interrogation what food Antonia ate during Lent, he replied:

In my house, one finds always fat and lean food, but I did not watch what food she ate because she ate separately either before or after me.\(^{102}\)

Moreover, in Sanguinetti’s prestigious and large household it is unlikely that he would have eaten at the same table as any of his servants. The distinction between servant and master was always present. Beatrice Gottlieb has shown in her work on the European family that separate dining rooms for the family away from servants were becoming more and more common at this time.\(^{103}\) None of the Jews ate with their wetnurses, especially not with those wetnurses who were given additional food to eat on their visits to their masters’ homes.

Not only did the wetnurse provide for the daily physical needs of the child, with nourishment on demand, but she was expected to help in the care of a child’s frequent illnesses.\(^{104}\) Isaaco de Modena, Calman de Sanguinetti, Abraham de Sacerdote and Jacobo Donato refer to their children being unwell at various stages and testify that their wetnurses had attended the infants constantly during this period.\(^{105}\) Isaaco also testified that it was not only the illness of Sabbadia that had caused Giovanna to stay overnight, but also the illness of the ward’s parents.\(^{106}\) Calman informed the Inquisition that Antonia had actually slept in the same room as the infant every night.\(^{107}\) Although the wetnurses who kept their wards in their own homes make no reference to the sleeping arrangements, from such intimate contact that they had with the infant, affection for the child was possible. Leonora and Antonia both hint that they had become attached to their charges. Leonora had returned at night to the Jew’s house and stayed there, even though she knew that was forbidden. Antonia too, even though she was explicitly ordered by Inquisitor Calbetti to stop nursing the child, after her interrogation returned to the Jew’s house and suckled the infant during his illness. She admitted to the Inquisitor:

After I was examined the other time, I stayed three nights voluntarily in the house of Calman because his son was sick.\(^{108}\)

Whether these wetnurses acted primarily out of attachment for the child, or the desire to protect their wages and ensure the maintenance of their milk supply cannot be confirmed. The loss of their milk supply by an abrupt stop to nursing, which Inquisitor General Calbetti had demanded, would have had profound consequences for their professions as well.

None of the Christian wetnurses condemned their Jewish employers before
the Inquisition but one cannot know for certain if this was due to a genuine sense of concern. During Antonia’s second interrogation, when she was forced to admit that she had returned to Calman’s house against the orders of the Inquisition, she still did not lay the blame on him. She testified that she had misunderstood the Inquisitor and had thought he had told her to go back to Calman’s house. Perhaps the precariousness and difficulties of the nurse’s own position invited her to be dishonest. She stated:

I in leaving asked if his Reverence wanted me to return there, or go home and his Reverence said to me ‘Alright go’, and I at the time thought that he meant that I should return to Monsignor Calman’s house.109

Perhaps too she wanted to maintain her position in his household. But even at this late stage of the investigation when she was no longer working in his house, she chose not to condemn her Jewish master.

The processi thus indicate a mutuality of interest between the Jewish employer and the Christian servant, which derived from shared interest on both sides. The wetnurses’ positions were too important to the health of their children. These Jews were never asked if they had sexually exploited their Christian wetnurses and neither Jew nor Christian witnesses showed any suspicion that this might have been the case.110 Nor had the Jewish masters forced the wetnurses to dispose of their milk during Easter.111 Instead, the Christian wetnurses seem to have accepted their positions as employees of Jews with ease.

Fifteenth-century Italian wetnursing contracts reveal that the position of a wetnurse usually lasted a period of thirty months, or until the infant was weaned.112 Merry Wiesner has uncovered a contract where one clause stated that the wetnurse and her husband had to agree to refrain from sexual relations during the period of contract.113 One cannot know if Jews demanded this of Christian wetnurses. By contrast, Stow’s notarial documents on Rome and Toaff’s on Umbria reveal some wetnursing contracts in the sixteenth century, but these were signed between Jews and Jewish wetnurses.114 They specify the wages, the period of time the wetnurse was to suckle, the fact that she was to live in the Jew’s home, that either party could break the contract during the first six months of nursing, and to whom the wages were to be paid.

One can surmise that there was a written contract between Jew and Christian wetnurse, which granted a certain permanence, protection and financial security to the latter’s position, as well as a strongly legal character to the master–servant relationship.115 When Juliana is called to give testimony, she remembers with precision the day and month that she started nursing and exactly how long she had been suckling her ward.116 Calman testified in his interrogation what in fact his contract said:

Since I dictate the ways of the household, I take care of all kinds of expenses. I
provide food and clothes for the wetnurse.\textsuperscript{117}

Those Christian wetnurses who held their wards in their own homes were expected to appear before their Jewish masters not only each month to receive their wages but also whenever they were in need of food or clothing for the Jewish infant or for themselves. Contracts were made, not between the Jewish employer and the wetnurse, but between him and her husband, called in this case the \textit{balio}.\textsuperscript{118} Calman de Sanguinetti, Abraham de Sacerdote, Jacobo Donato, Salomone Sacerdote and Leone Poggetti showed they were acquainted with the husbands of the wetnurses and knew their names.\textsuperscript{119} Apart from necessity, paid employment and economic activities outside of the family were largely the province of men. The husbands of wetnurses were permitting their wives to enter a foreign household or accumulate earnings by bringing an additional child into their own home. It was the father of the infant and the husband of the wetnurse who facilitated the work of the nursing woman, and yet it is interesting that none of them was called to testify before the Inquisition or reprimanded for allowing his wife to enter terms of employment under Jewish masters. It was Margherita, too, who was punished by the Inquisition and not her husband.

Although it is clear that the Jewish \textit{padrona} of the house played little or no role in the formal contract between Jewish master and Christian wetnurse, daily exchanges between her and the hired Christian wetnurse were probably frequent, especially if the Christian wetnurse lived \textit{in casa}, and had intimate familiarity with the \textit{padrona}, even if they were not always on friendly terms. A common concern linked the two and a mutual understanding and appreciation probably ensued. In her testimony, Flavia, the wife of Calman de Sanguinetti, indicates that the management of the wetnurse and the wetnurse’s diet within the household was very much in her hands. One can sense from both Flavia’s and Antonia’s testimony that Flavia had asserted her control over the wetnurse and kept her under her watchful eye.

Flavia de Sanguinetti admitted to the Inquisitor:

\begin{quote}
At times Antonia ate fish and at other times she ate beans. For half of Lent, because the boy was sick, she ate meat with a licence from the Monsignor episcopal vicar.\textsuperscript{120}
\end{quote}

There is much less evidence about the relationship that existed between the \textit{padrone} of households who hired Christian wetnurses who took their wards into their own homes. None of these women could presume to exercise the same amount of control over their wetnurses. Furthermore some of these women were not \textit{padrone} of the same social standing as Flavia de Sanguinetti and Stella Donato, nor did they run such a large household.\textsuperscript{121} When asked by the Inquisitor who administered food and sustenance to Leonora when she fed her son,
Gentile Sacerdote replied:

I left the care up to her. She provided herself with food, since she did not stay in our house except when she suckled my son.122

What contact these women had with their wetnurses during the year of nursing can only be suggested. In their testimonies they showed a desire to maintain close contact with these women, offering them food and charity consistently, trying to supervise the nursing routine of their infants, and sharing discussions over the development of their ward. Considering that these padrone spent twenty to twenty-five years rearing the family, being in charge of the day-to-day running of the household and their children’s needs, the fact that they demanded close contact with their wetnurses, despite the fact that this was against Inquisitorial regulations, is only to be expected.123

**Other Christian servants**

In Italy, domestic servants were an integral part of all but the poorest households, but the profession did not generate a great deal of documentary evidence. All the same, several historians have begun to uncover details about domestic service. Dennis Romano has examined Venetian legislation concerning domestic servants from 1400 to 1600, analysing service as an integration of social and economic relationships between masters and servants as well as a ‘cultural metaphor’.124 He found that co-resident male and female servants were bound to their masters by contract for a maximum of ten years.125 He also argues that from the middle of the sixteenth century a new style of ‘aristocratic servant keeping’ developed, in particular an increase in the employment of male servants, and keeping more than one servant, both male and female, became the mark of noble living.126 Giovanna Da Molin has studied the household patterns in southern Italy between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries and discovered that female servants of all ages served in nuclear family households.127 Finally, Christiane Klapisch-Zuber has made initial speculations regarding the increase of the hiring of male servants from the late fifteenth century.128

Before ghettoization, wealthy Jews in Italy, like their Christian counterparts, tended to employ co-resident domestic servants, including housekeepers, maids, servants, tutors, slaughterers and stewards as a sign of prestige and social standing.129 These servants held both professional and apprentice positions in the Jewish household and played an important part in the daily routine of family life. Most of these positions were filled by Jews. Some historians have discussed this practice, and there are sufficient sources that can enlighten us further.130 Kenneth Stow’s notarial documents drawn up by rabbis, which trace twenty-one years of
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Jewish communal life from 1536 to 1557, two years after the establishment of the ghetto and the removal of Jews into an enclosed area, show a number of different contracts signed between Jewish household owners and the parents of Jewish maids.\textsuperscript{131} These positions provided advancement opportunities and a way to secure a dowry and a marriage partner, suggesting that service was a stage in the individual life-cycle, not a permanent occupation. Several documents show masters providing dowries for Jewish maids who remained in service until they were married.\textsuperscript{132} Occasionally there are contracts for male servants as well and for widows to serve as domestic servants.\textsuperscript{133} One woman, Stella, the widow of Angelino Signoretto di Segni, was taken in and given work in return for upkeep, which included food but no clothing.\textsuperscript{134} There is a suggestion too that these servants were paid their salaries only when their contract was finished, allowing the master the effective use of the money along the way but giving the servant a nice nest-egg at the end of the term.\textsuperscript{135} Salaries for female servants varied from 3 to 6 scudi a year, and for male servants from 6 to 7 scudi a year, compared to the Jewish wetnurses’ salary, which was 8.5 scudi for 6 months’ work.\textsuperscript{136} Certain Jewish servants may well have been relatives of their employers.

The practice of Jews hiring Christian servants remains largely unexplored in our period. Prior to the Counter-Reformation, Jews were allowed to hire Christian servants, even managing to keep them \textit{in casa} on occasions, as Shylock had Lancelot, the son of Old Gobbo in Shakespeare’s \textit{The Merchant of Venice}.\textsuperscript{137} Jews in Savoy, and certain bankers in Cremona and Rivardo in particular, were issued with \textit{condotte} by secular officials, which allowed them to keep Christian servants in their homes and granted absolution to the Christians who served them.\textsuperscript{138} In urban areas, such as Modena, this practice of allowing co-resident Christian servants stopped as a result of ducal edicts and increasing pressure from the episcopal court and the Inquisition to ban such practices. Instead, Jews hired older women or men, over the age of 40, who came to perform essential menial tasks during the week and to light fires and ovens and carry water from the well to the Jews’ house on the Sabbath, tasks forbidden by Jewish law to Jews, including Jewish servants.\textsuperscript{139}

Despite these rulings in the city capital, there is evidence elsewhere of Jews maintaining co-resident Christian servants as late as 1685 in areas where Jews were not ghettoized. According to the memorial of Don Angelo Biagi, the archpriest of Fiumalbo, ‘two thousand’ Christian servants, spinsters and married women from Fiumalbo, the mountainous region of the Estense on the border with the republic of Lucca and the duchy of Tuscany, went in the winter months to work in Jewish houses in Livorno.\textsuperscript{140} When his memorial reached the Sacred Congregation in Rome, the cardinals immediately transmitted orders to the Inquisition in Modena to investigate, fearing that much damage had been done since these ignorant peasant women had spent a large part of the year in the
service of wealthy Jews, had failed to frequent local churches and fulfil their Christian duties, and had had intimate contacts with the Jews, bringing back cloth, ornaments, strange customs and strange dialects. About twenty women from Fiumalbo were interrogated by the Inquisition for judaizing, in particular Giovanna Santi, Elisabetta Cappe and Maria Benucci. Under investigation these women maintained their ignorance of Jewish customs but were reprimanded for their actions, and given penances, as an example to others. The geographic mobility of these women is clear. Sixty-one years earlier, in 1624, Simone Sanguinetti, the local banker of Spilamberto, had also admitted that he had employed Christians from the mountainous regions surrounding the town, and that these women had lived in his home for long periods, attending to the various chores of running his household. Whether such movement was typical demands further research.

In urban cities in northern Italy such as Venice, Milan, Mantua and Modena, Jews were allowed to hire Christian servants as long as they had acquired licences. Their servants had to be women of mature years, who came in from outside, and who did not stay overnight or eat or sleep in the Jewish household. In those areas where the Holy Office had sufficient authority, such as Modena, Genoa and Turin, Inquisitorial courts were instructed by the Congregation of the Holy Office in Rome to take charge of monitoring this service. The first full processo in Modena against Jews for hiring Christian servants did not occur until 1618, twenty years after the establishment of the tribunal. The reason for the delay was the conflict of interest between the Duke and the Inquisition. Cesare d’Este, who had already instigated a licensing bureaucracy, was unwilling to concede power or share the task of monitoring the Jews with the Inquisition. Nonetheless, pressure was maintained, especially by the Congregation of the Holy Office, which consistently argued that the Inquisition should be monitoring this practice. Once the Duke had decreed in 1620 that Jews were not able to hire Christian women under the age of 45, the Inquisition enforced these regulations, taking advantage of the ducal restrictions to further its own authority and reasoning for executing meticulous investigations. If a Christian woman lied about her age before the Inquisition it was possible for the Holy Office to check it by referring to the local book of baptisms.

Tellingly, of the fifty-two processi that took place in our period, thirty-three (64%) were conducted against Jews who lived outside the city, in rural areas or small towns such as Carpi, Finale, Formigine, Marano, Nonantola, San Felice, Soliera, Spezzano, Spilamberto and Vignola. Investigations opened with the delation usually of Christians before local Inquisitorial vicars, who then passed their reports to the Holy Office in Modena. It was in these small Jewish communities that individual families ignored the strict regulations regarding Christian service, and often pleaded before Inquisitorial vicars ignorance of restrictions or
a need for licences. In Finale, the Inquisitorial Rector, Don Baldassarre Passerini, found in 1623 that there was a standard salary for Christians who served Jews in the town of seven *bolognini* if servants worked in the houses on Fridays and Saturdays, and five *bolognini* if they served but also ate in the Jews’ homes.148 Twenty-four of the fifty-two *processi* (46%) ended without a conviction, either because the investigation was dropped or because the Jew was found to be employing servants according to the regulations sanctioned by the duke and the Inquisition. However, of the thirty-three *processi* against Jews in the rural areas or small towns, seventeen (51%) ended with punishments of the Jews for breach of regulations, compared to six (32%) of the nineteen trials of Jews living in Modena.

The investigations of Jews in the capital were often instigated by the watchful eyes of spies or Inquisitorial officers who from the 1620s patrolled Jewish homes, making random visits to Jews’ houses. In January 1620 the Jew Alleluia was caught by Renaldo Romagnolo, an Inquisitorial officer, employing Catherina, a Christian servant in his house. In November of the same year, another Inquisitorial officer, Vincenzio Felloni, who delated Moise and Ventura Orsi, testified during his delation that he had found another eight Jews whom he knew hired Christians in their homes in Modena.149 In 1622, the *processo* against Angelo Resignari was initiated by an unnamed Inquisitorial officer who discovered that Anna de Renocchio was working in a Jewish household as well as eating there without a licence. De Renocchio told Inquisitor Giovanni Vincenzo Reghezza that the officer had instructed her to confess her employment to the Inquisition. She had immediately complied.150

As the Inquisition’s workforce and influence grew during the 1620s, spies watched Jewish households more attentively, paying more frequent visits. There was clearly an assumption that if any Christian was seen carrying something out of a Jew’s house, he or she was probably working in the household. In 1645, a Jew, Rulizza, was tried for employing Christian servants because one Christian had seen another leaving the Jew’s house in the ghetto carrying a bucket of water.151

Punishments for this offence were discretionary, varying from fines of 10 to 100 scudi, to public shaming and sentences of up to six months’ imprisonment. In 1619, David, a Jew of Maranello, a small town 18 kilometres southwest of Modena, was sentenced to one month’s imprisonment for employing a Christian servant without an Inquisitorial licence, who had also eaten and drunk, as well as stayed overnight, in his house.152 In 1629, Moisè de Castelfranco and Mattesciani Levi also found guilty of hiring Christians in their homes on the Sabbath and festivals without licences, were able to pay fines and so requested that their sentences of a four-month imprisonment be commuted to a fine.153 In 1622, Angelo Resignari, a 65-year-old poor Jew living in Modena, was sentenced to six months’ imprisonment for failing to secure a licence for his Christian servant, and for allowing the servant’s son, a young Christian boy of
sixteen, to enter his house and carry out household tasks in place of his mother when she was sick. This was a particularly harsh punishment for an old man unable to pay a fine. In 1628, Josef Arezzio, who had lied to his Christian servant and told her that he held a licence for her to serve him, was sentenced to four months’ imprisonment.

These processi often impeached more than one offender, and some Jews were prosecuted on more than one occasion. For example, three Jews – Josef Arezzio, Simone Sanguinetti and Benedetto Levi – were tried on two separate occasions for hiring servants, which confirms their failure to take Inquisitorial prosecution seriously. Of those prosecuted, eighty were men and nineteen were women, padrone who from the 1620s began to face investigation, imprisonment and punishment themselves for hiring servants, seen no longer as passive players in the household but as responsible for allocating duties and working schedules for their servants. Ventura Orsi was the first women to be prosecuted by the Inquisition, in 1620. Although she was not imprisoned during her trial she was sentenced to six months’ imprisonment with her husband for employing an under-age Christian servant without a licence. Her sentence and that of her husband were commuted to a fine of 50 lire. In 1633 Mariana Sanguinetti was imprisoned during her investigation and was given a punishment of six months’ house arrest for employing Joanna Lavazza, an under-age servant, who for her part was publicly shamed before the San Domenico church in Modena.

As the seventeenth century progressed, Christian servants began to be named on the cover of the trial pamphlets, seen not just as innocent women and men led astray, but as guilty parties who had committed an offence themselves. Many more Christian women were arraigned than men. As with wetnurses, these servants faced increasing spiritual penances and even imprisonment during investigation and punishment for failing to check the Jews’ licences and not refraining from eating and socializing in the Jews’ households. In 1622, Alessandro Spezzano was imprisoned during the interrogation against his master, Giuseppe Soliani, a Jewish banker, and received a series of penances himself for eating in the Jew’s home. He was ordered to stand in front of the church with an inscription of his offence tied around his neck. In 1637, Cesare Magnamini was even tortured during the investigation of his close contact with his master Abramino Sacerdote, but then released without punishment.

The Inquisition’s intention was pedagogic, to instil in the Catholic community an understanding that such intimate contact behind closed doors was sinful and reprehensible, but there were also moments when the Holy Office went beyond the normal prohibitions, forcing Jews to stop employing Christians of any kind and on any terms. At the end of many processi, Jewish offenders were warned that they should not hire any Christians again. When in 1624 Inquisitor Reghezza carried out an investigation into the employment of Christian
servants by the four Jewish families living in Spilamberto, he barred the ten
Christian servants involved from returning to their Jewish masters under any
circumstance even though some of these women were above the age of 45 and
had never eaten in the Jews’ households.\textsuperscript{161}

Contact between these Christian servants and their Jewish employers was
fundamentally different from that of wetnurses. The wetnurse provided an exclu-
sive service and was paid well for it, as opposed to Christian domestic servants
who at the beginning of the seventeenth century in Modena were no longer
co-resident professional servants but older poor men or women, fagarole as they
were called, desperately looking for additional earnings, and so willing to serve in
Jewish households.\textsuperscript{162} The women were often widows who were forced to return
to service, and frequently served more than one Jewish master.\textsuperscript{163} Maria di Verici,
a widow aged forty-seven, and the servant of Elia Malachim, told the Inquisitor
in 1622 that if she did not work for the six Jewish families she served, she would
‘starve to death’.\textsuperscript{164} When they could these women accepted the additional food
that their Jewish employers gave them, as long as these actions could be hidden
from Inquisitorial eyes.

Although in 1622 Anna had only worked for Angelo Resignani for a period
of eight months, some women worked for much longer periods in the same
Jewish households, which indicates that they had found favourable terms of
employment and reasonable masters. Lucia Righi, who served Gabriele Carpi
in Modena, admitted to the Inquisitor in 1620 that she had already worked for
him for three years, and in 1621 Santa Schedoni testified that she had worked
for David de Arezzio for five years.\textsuperscript{165} Outside the city, Jews who hired Christians
admitted in their testimonies that they had employed Christians for even longer
periods. In 1628 Caterina Bianchi of Formigine told the Inquisitor that she had
served the Jew Josef Arezzio for a period of ten years.\textsuperscript{166}

That the situation of Christian servants differed outside the capital is clear.
Here Jews more readily used Christian peasants, both men and women, to aid
them in their daily routines and tasks. The distribution of Christian servants
varied among these households and the average number of servants was closely
linked to the wealth or social status of the head of household. Standing before
Inquisitor Giovanni Vincenzo Reghezza, Leone Ravenna of Carpi in 1620 sang the
praises of his fattore Antonio Barbiano, whose practical intelligence had enabled
him to settle all the credit payments of his late father, Salomone Ravenna, within
one month of his death.\textsuperscript{167} Whether these servants signed up for multiple years
of service or were contracted on a monthly or yearly basis is still not clear. In
1630, Benedetto Levi, an established banker in Formigine, had five Christian
servants working for him – probably to increase the reputation and splendour
of his household – and one in particular, Alfonso Molino, had held the position
of official steward (fattore di campagna) for two years.\textsuperscript{168}
THE JEWISH HOUSEHOLD

The duties of Christian female servants were much the same whether they worked in the city or in the countryside. In the city, the Christian women in general did domestic tasks within the household, sweeping the floors, emptying the chamber pots, cleaning the brass and copper utensils in the canal, making the beds and warming them at night, helping with the cooking and in particular making bread, which was baked in a bread oven next to the open fire in the kitchen. One Christian servant, Saneta the daughter of Bartholomeo de Tassoni, told the Inquisitor in 1622, that she also served her master, the Jewish banker Giuseppe Soliani, at his table.\textsuperscript{169} Depending on the financial resources of the Jews, some preferred their servants to be available for the whole of the Sabbath. They were expected to arrive at sunset on Friday evenings, stay a few hours to help prepare and clear away the Sabbath meal, and then return again on the Saturday morning, to serve the Jews for the whole day in the household.\textsuperscript{170} On other occasions during the week they would come to sweep the house, make the beds and wash dishes. There is no suggestion that these women were expected to exclusively care for the children or serve as companions for their mistresses as Christian servants did in Christian households, although on occasion these women took care of the children for a few hours and were asked to escort them to the local synagogue.\textsuperscript{171}

Outside the city, Christian women did the same type of domestic work but tasks sometimes included sweeping the yard and clearing it of dung. Male servants were obviously expected to perform the most strenuous tasks – Alfonso Molino’s included carrying timber and water, bringing firewood to burn, washing screens with a bucket, and feeding the geese and tending to the horses.\textsuperscript{172}

It is difficult to discern the real extent of contact between Jewish master and Christian servant. Testimonies seem to suggest a pattern of contact based on propriety, acceptance and respect, but also the great dependence that the Jews had on their Christian servants. In Alleluia of Carpi’s interrogation, the Jew described his servant as ‘managing’ his whole household, confirming an integral relationship and frequent contact.\textsuperscript{173}

There is no indication in the \textit{processi} that the Jews of Modena ate with their servants. Outside the city, however, the situation was different. Christian servants ate the food that they helped prepare for the Jews, although they tried to convince the Inquisition that it was never at the same table.\textsuperscript{174} These Christian servants received a variety of food including meat, bread, soup and wine.\textsuperscript{175}

Although there is no mention of a written contract between servant and master, the testimonies indicate that the servants shared with their masters an understanding that if they served the Jews continually and competently, they would be paid accordingly and treated well.\textsuperscript{176} Occasionally, servants reveal that they had done additional services to aid their masters. Giovanna Varra, the servant of Simone Sanguinetti of Spilamberto, admitted in 1629 that she had...
stayed in the Jew’s house when one of his children was sick, and also during the
time when his wife had given birth. Nor is there any hint of animosity between
the two or any suggestion that Christian servants disliked working for the Jews
or felt poorly treated. When, in 1636, Matteo Donato came to denounce himself
to the Holy Office for hiring Christians, he argued that he had been in the wrong
and the guilt rested on his shoulders and not the Christians whom he had hired.
He made a good case to explain that he had hired two Christians because he
had an infirm child and desperately needed additional pairs of hands to help him
maintain his business of manufacturing acquavita.

In discussing Christian domestic service in Jewish households, mention
must be made of Christian laundresses and those Christians who assisted Jews
in their shops. In Modena, Christian women were allowed to launder the clothes
of Jews as long as they acquired licences to do so. But in 1624, when Inquis-
titor Reghezza carried out an investigation into the employment of Christian
servants by Jews in Spilamberto, he uncovered the recurring practice of Jews
hiring Christian laundresses who would come especially to the Jews’ homes
every couple of months and stay for a period of two or three days to wash
their linens and clothes. The laundry would be done in one room in the Jews’
home, where the laundresses would also be fed. In Ferrara the situation was,
as Adriano Prosperi has shown, better controlled by both the bishop and the
Inquisition. These women were provided with licences to wash the clothes of
Jews as long as they were ‘honest women and of good reputation’. Laundresses
had to fetch the bundles of dirty clothes and return the freshly laundered ones
to the doorstep of the Jews’ houses, but were forbidden under any circumstances
to enter their homes. Nor were they allowed to collect or return clothes on
Christian festivals.

Christians who were employed to work in the shops of Jews usually carried
out domestic work there too. In 1629, a trial of Biondi Sanguinetti of Spilam-
berto revealed that the Jewish banker was employing Lorena Lamboni to sweep
the floor and dust the surfaces of the furniture in his bank. Five years earlier,
in 1624, it was uncovered that an under-age Ruggiero Mariani had continued to
work in the shop of Mosè Sacerdote even though he was forbidden. Mosè argued
that Mariani came against his will and there was nothing he could personally
do to stop him. Mariani was given a punishment of public shaming and the Jew
was absolved with a warning not to allow the Christian to continue working
in his shop. A much more serious case was uncovered in 1632 when fifty
Christians were discovered working as day labourers in a silk-spinning workshop
in Spilamberto, a large industrial concentration by seventeenth-century stan-
dards. These Christians had been working for Simone Sanguinetti, a banker
in Spilamberto and an important Jewish entrepreneur, who had bought a
silk-spinning wheel workshop from a Marchese proprietor and nobleman,
Baldassarre Rangoni, who after the Great Plague of 1630–31 had run out of money. Sanguinetti had probably left the workshop in Rangoni’s name to avoid publicising the fact that he was the new owner. When this activity was discovered, a priest of Spilamberto, Filippo Mossa, testified that not only had Simone Sanguinetti and his sons Alessandro, Raffaele and Buonaiuto run the workshop, but there was an image of the Madonna painted on the inside wall of the workshop which had been covered over, to the disgust of his workers. Interrogations soon revealed that the Jew and his sons had in fact little direct contact with the Christian workers, since these workers were being managed by two Christian managers, Domenico Bonavi and Leonardo Costantini. Inquisitor Tinti immediately wrote to the Congregation of the Holy Office to request instructions on how to proceed, and on 18 December 1632 the Cardinals replied that the Inquisitor should pursue the matter with rigour. On 7 February 1633, after a full trial, Simone Sanguinetti was prohibited from employing any Christian spinners in the future, under the threat of a 50 scudi fine, and was forced to pay a fine of 60 scudi as punishment. Despite these rulings, the Inquisition did not have the power to close down an enterprise that was so important to the national economy. In 1644, Tinti re-opened the case, after evidence was adduced that Alessandro de Sanguinetti had prevented Christian workers from saying their prayers and had threatened to beat them. This time Alessandro was tortured, but then released without punishment. Christian testimonies in this processo vary and some are indeed full of resentment towards the Jewish proprietors, particularly Alessandro, who they argued prevented them carrying out their Christian duties.

Other Christians employed by Jews included musicians who entertained guests at family celebrations or taught Jewish children instruments or dance despite ducal prohibitions, and gravediggers who had transported Jewish corpses on donkeys to the Jewish cemetery especially during the plague. In processi against Jews for hiring Christian musicians, it was often the musicians who were interrogated more intensely and punished before their Jewish employers, as was Francisco Maria, a priest of Carpi in 1618 who had led a group of Christian musicians into the home of Leone Ravà for the celebration of his son Moïse Aron’s wedding two years earlier.

Jews had continually used Christian servants and wetnurses in the late medieval and early modern period in Italy. It was a practice copied and adapted from their Christian neighbours, whose servants, the Jews saw, made their lives noticeably easier. This practice linked these servants to their masters, primarily through an economic arrangement which exchanged goods and services, but also in a social encounter that seemed to be neither naturally suspicious nor mutually hostile. But by the beginning of the seventeenth century competing ducal and ecclesiastical jurisdictions – the ducal court, the episcopal court and
the Inquisition – whose rules regarding the employment of Christian wetnurses and servants differed slightly, boded ill for the Jews caught in between. Although at first the Inquisition lacked authority to prohibit Jews employing Christian wetnurses or servants, it soon began to prosecute and punish them when it found they were breaking regulations sanctioned by the duke, or when they had failed to obtain Inquisitorial licences or if Christian servants had not upheld their religious duties.

Throughout the seventeenth century, even after the establishment and their enclosure in the ghetto in 1638, Jews were frequently tried by the Inquisition for employing Christians and flouting the Inquisition’s rulings. Despite impoverishment and constraint within the ghetto walls, Jews continued to need these fogarole, and were unwilling to do without them. It can probably be deduced that the Jews’ employment of Christian wetnurses declined after ghettoization, forcing even the wealthier Jewish women to suckle their own children, find Jewish wetnurses or resolve to have their children sent away during the period of nursing to the home of their Christian wetnurses, a practice which troubled the Inquisition far less.

The Inquisition eventually learned to impose its demands with greater effect, and by 1728 demanded that the massari of the Jewish community provide lists and details of all Jewish families who hired Christian servants as well as the names, ages and addresses of the Christian women who served them. **190** Interestingly enough, the youngest Christian woman to work for Jews was Pasqua Sallino, who in 1771 was noted as being only seventeen years old. Hence, despite its opposition in principle and its many edicts on the subject, the Inquisition never succeeded in abolishing, or enforcing all its restrictions on, the Jews’ employment of Christian servants.

Notes

3 Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*. In 1179 Pope Alexander III ordered that: ‘Jews are not permitted to have Christian servants in their homes, either under pretext of rearing their children, or for domestic service, or for any other reason whatsoever, but that those who presume to live with them shall be excommunicated, yet they do not hesitate to have Christian servants and nurses, with whom, at times, they work such abominations as are more fitting that you should punish than proper that we should specify.’
4 The only evidence I have found of Jewish servants working in Christian households is in ASMoFIP 44 f.3 and in Balletti’s *Gli Ebrei*, p. 191. In this Inquisitorial processo against the Christian, Giovanni Antonio Balugani of Modena in 1615 was accused of dissuading Israel, a Jewish servant boy, from being baptized. Israel is reported to have made the fire in the home of the Christian Joannes de Jacobo. The young Jewish servant was imprisoned and later baptized on 25 March 1615 in the Church of San Domenico. Balletti mentions the Jewess Allegra Diena,
who served in the home of Isabella d’Este and, through persuasion by her padrona, was also led to the baptism font. Stefanie Siegmund discusses the topic of Jewish servants in Christian houses in *The Medici State and the Ghetto of Florence* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 296. She claims that Christians often hired Jews as servants in their households in Florence prior to ghettoization but not wetnurses.

5 Friedberg, *Corpus X.5,6,13.*


8 Ibid. p. 143.


10 See Grayzel, *Church and the Jews*, vol. II, p. 158 (doc.50).


12 See Bullarium Diplomatatum et privilegiorum sanctorum romanorum pontificum Taurinensis editio locupletior, facta collection norissima plurium brevium, epistolae, decretorum actuumque S. Sedis a S. Leone Magno, usque ad praesens cura et studio collegii addetect Romae virorum (Waltham, MA: Omnisys Corp., 1993), vol.VI, pp. 498–500. Clause 4 stated: ‘And they [the Jews] shall not have nurses or serving women or any other Christians serving them, of whatever sex. Nor shall they have their children suckled or reared by Christian women.’

13 Translated by Bonfil in *Jewish Life*, p. 67.

14 For a transcription and full translation of *Cum nimis* see Stow, *Catholic Thought*, pp. 291–8.

15 See Gregory XIII’s bull *Antiqua iudaeorum improbitas*, which is reprinted in *Bullarium*, vol.VIII, pp. 378–80, clause 11.


19 This is a reference to the usage of Christian midwives. On the use of Christian midwives in medieval Germany and France see the work of Baumgarten, *Mothers*, pp. 43–54.


21 Although the edict does not mention wetnurses, one should assume that they were included in the general term ‘servant’.


23 See for example ASMoFI *Ch. 245 f.52*. Here Benedetto Levi admitted openly that a Christian man worked in his house carrying wood and water into his house. See also ASMoFI 62 f.10,
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against Angelino, who also hired a young Christian.

Meaning three hours after sunset. Italian time worked on two twelve-hour stints, starting approximately at six in the morning depending on when the sun rose.

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This included the hiring of Christian music teachers in Jewish households. See the trial of Benedetto Levi, a banker in Finale, whose music teacher, Francisco Grappo, told the Inquisitor that he had his own licence. ASMoFICH 245 f.52 1630 (9r).

In the processo against Elia Melachim in 1622, ASMoFIP 62 f.24, the Christian servant Maria di Verici argued that she herself had procured a licence from the Signor Podestà in the Duke’s court. I was not able to find any record of these licences in the ducal archive. The ASMoAME filza 23/B had some pleas and requests from Jews to the Duke to come to their aid regarding imprisonment and torture but no lists of licences procured.

It is important to note that in one of the wetnursing trials of Jews between 1598 and 1638, one Inquisitorial consultore, the Dominican archdeacon, Horatio Blanco, argued that the Papal bull, Antiqua iudaeorum improbitas, had not been sufficiently published in Modena, and it was unfair to prosecute Jews for this matter without clearer instructions as to the prohibitions. See ASMoFIP 15, f.6 (27v).

See Kalak, Storia della Chiesa, pp. 360–1, for a copy of an edict issued by Bishop Pellegrino Bertacchi on 9 October 1610, demanding that Jews who hired Christian wetnurses out of necessity needed to acquire a licence from the episcopal court.

ASMoFICH 245 f.35, 27 January 1627. He told the Inquisitor: ‘I asked for a licence from the Inquisitor, but since he did not want to give it to me, I asked the episcopal vicar, and he gave me one.’

See ASMoFICH 247 f.24 (18r). See also ASMoFICH 247 f.32. In 1638 a panicked Michello Angelis, Tinti’s vicar general, complained to Tinti that local Jews had approached him asking for licences to allow Christians to make their unleavened bread on Passover, since neighbouring Jews in Mirandola had secured such licences from the Inquisitor in Reggio. To the relief of the
Inquisitor this proved to be nothing but a baseless rumour.

41 ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (8r), 'The vicar said that he would allow a wetnurse in the house out of necessity and on several other occasions that I asked him, he granted me a licence.'

42 ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (19r).

43 In order to escape the Lenten prohibition on eating meat, Christians had to be equipped with a special ecclesiastical licence on medical grounds. For the importance attached to this prohibition see the case of the Venetian mercer Giovanni Zonca in 1582, see Valerio Rossato, 'Religione e moralità in un merciaio veneziano del Cinquecento', Studi Veneziani new series 13 (1987): 204–31, 204–5, 208–9, 212–13, 228–31. Another case is found in Ioly Zoratini, Processi, vol. VI (1582–85) pp. 71–9, when several local Christian musicians attended a wedding in the house of Cervo, a Jewish banker in Capodistria, during Lent.

44 ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (11v).

45 The Christian wetnurses themselves knew that episcopal licences were necessary so that they could work. ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (2v) and (4v).

46 The Inquisitors always asked the Christian servants if they had a licence, and these women often responded that they had left it in the hands of the Jew to secure it. See ASMoFICH 245 f.42, the processo of Josef Arezzio, Jew of Formigine, and his son Benjamin, for hiring Christian servants. On 3 June 1628, the Christian servant Caterina Bianchi was asked if she knew if the Jew had secured a licence for her. She responded: 'My husband said to me that the Jew had a licence and that if someone annoyed us, the Jews said he would tell them to get lost' (‘Mio marito mi disse che l’hebreo aveva licenza e che se qualcuno ci molestava, l’ebreo disse di andargli inanzi con un par d’ovì’). Antonia and Leonora, two Christian wetnurses who worked in Sacerdote and Sanguinetti’s houses respectively, signed with a cross at the end of their interrogations, because, as the notary wrote, they were illiterate. On illiteracy of servants, see Cissie Fairchields, Domestic Enemies: Servants and their Masters in Old Regime France (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 112.

47 ASMoFICH 244 f.3 ‘Trial of Isaaco de Modena 1600.

48 ASMoFICH 247 f.24 (5r).


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See Romano, Housecraft, p. 214 for a specific case of when a certain wetnurse, Madalena Trentina, was prosecuted in Venice by the Censori in 1579 for having sex during her term of contract.

Unfortunately this practice sometimes proved fatal. See Yalom, History, p. 93, who notes that there was an extremely high infant mortality rate found in countries where infants were sent to be nursed in the homes of wetnurses.

I thank Elisheva Baumgarten for showing me these various wetnursing texts in Jewish sources. See Baumgarten, Mothers, pp. 122–5.

See the introduction by Pier Paolo Viazzo in Grieco and Corsini, Historical Perspectives, p. 24.

See Baumgarten, Mothers.


See Simonsohn’s Apostolic See, docs. 1319, 1333, 1423, 1545, 1576, 1577, 1587, 1740, 1834, 1987, 2707.

Siegmund, The Medici, p. 325.


See for example ASMofIP 17 f.8. When in 1601 Allegra, the wife of Abraam de Vita, a banker, is accused of practicing astrology, her delator, Julia Maola de Centro, accused her also of using the services of Caterina Levitana, a Christian wetnurse. See also ASMofICH 244 f.27. In the processo against David Arezzo for hiring Christian servants, in 1621, testimony by Julia Paganella, a Christian servant confirmed that in the past the Jew had hired a Christian wetnurse who had slept in the Jew’s home. The investigation was dropped, and the Jew was not interrogated.

ASMofICH 244 f.3.

The Sanguinetti family had arrived in Modena from Germany in 1560, when the brothers Simone, Emanuele, Moise and Calman de Sanguinetti managed a feneratizio (a loan bank). Before the establishment of the ghetto in 1638, the Sanguinetti owned all the buildings in Strada Cervetta in the area of San Bartolomeo at the centre of the city, nicknamed at that time Contrada Sanguinetti, the Sanguinetti quarter. They lived and worked in this area, as well as establishing two synagogues which were the main cultural centres for the Ashkenazi Jews and a private school. See Francesconi, Jewish Families, pp. 66–70, and Biondi, ‘La Nuova Inquisizione’, p. 69.

Julia Maola offered her services as a spy to the Modenese Inquisition after being tried for witchcraft. See Biondi, ‘La Nuova Inquisizione’, p. 69. See also ASMofFI Miscellanea 1600–1609, busta 294. Here, in fact, the Inquisitor wrote a note in 1604 that Maola’s depositions were not to be trusted. The actual text stated: ‘nothing or very little is to be believed in the deposition of the prostitute Julia Maola. In fact this woman spontaneously came to serve the Holy Office as a secret delator and even though she said something true in her accusation, nonetheless she introduced many false things in the hope of earning money. For this reason the Inquisitor must be diligent and careful not to be deceived by her. Maola also denounced Allegra, wife of Abraam de Vita, for divination on 16 September 1601. See ASMofIP 17 f.8.

See ASMofIP 15, f.6. His trial is recorded on 26 double pages of parchment.

ASMofIP 15, f.6 (22v–22r). The sentence reads: ‘Since you, Calman de Sanguinetti, a Jew of Modena, have, against the statutes of the holy Canons and the decrees of various supreme
pontiffs, and particularly against the letter and intent of the Bull of Pope Gregory XIII of happy memory, whose first words are Antiqua iudaeorum improbitas [The ancient wickedness of the Jews], kept in your house for the space of four months night and day one Antonia of Nonantola, a Christian wetnurse, so that she might suckle your own son, and especially on the day and night of the Easter Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, on which day the nurse had received holy communion, and for the whole of Holy Week during which the mysteries of the Passion of Our Lord are celebrated, as you have confessed in these proceedings [trying to mitigate] your crime with excuses, it is our wish to inflict on you punishment suited to the crime you have committed both so that you should henceforth take care and as an example to others.

68 See ASMoFIP 15 f.6. His trial is recorded on eleven double pages of parchment. These two trials are in the same fascicle.

69 ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (24v–24r).

70 See Chapter 1, page 29.

71 See Grayzel, The Church and the Jews, vol. I, p. 25. This was the punishment demanded by canon law for serving a Jewish master in casa.

72 ASMoFICH 246 f.8.

73 ASMoFICH 247 f.24.

74 When looking for Christian wetnurses, Jews probably tried to employ Christian wetnurses who had already served fellow Jews. It was because of a good recommendation that Juliana received from Salomone and Isotta Sacerdote that she moved after a year of nursing to suckling the infant of Leone and Allegra Poggetti. ASMoFICH 247 f.24 (9v): Isotta reported in her interrogation: ‘I know that Poggetti came to me to ask me if she was a good wetnurse and I said yes.’

75 These processions were organised by the local company or confraternity of the Rosary, in which people walked through the streets reciting the Rosary or singing it in unison. Rosary companies, whose members made a practice of saying the Rosary at regular intervals, were first introduced into Italy about 1480. I thank Brian Pullan for this reference.

76 ASMoFIP 98 f.10.


78 ASMoFICH 247 f.24 (6v).

79 See ASMoFIP 83 f.16 (16v) the processo against Simone Sanguinetti, the wealthy banker living in Modena in 1629 for allowing his Christian servant to bring his children into the synagogue. When his wife Stella was interrogated, she told the Inquisitor that she was in fact nursing her own child.

80 ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (5r). It is interesting to note that even though Laura was pregnant, she still remained in the Jew’s house. Dennis Romano, ‘The Regulation of Domestic Service in Renaissance Venice’, Sixteenth Century journal 22 (1991), 661–80, p. 674, notes that in Venice wetnurses who lost their milk were often in debt to their masters and had to stay in service and work as a regular maid until the debt was paid.

81 ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (4r).

82 ASMoFIP 98 f.10. Giovanna de Menopi’s testimony: (‘io sono povera donna et procura di qua-dngarmi il vivere in qualche modo’).

83 ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (3v). The notary notes this fact at the end of Leonora’s interrogation and at the end of Antonia’s interrogation (4r).

84 For Giovanna’s age see ASMoFICH 244 f.3; for Margherita’s see ASMoFICH 247 f.24 (2v) and for Juliana’s see ASMoFICH 247 f.24 (14v).

85 Baumgarten, Mothers and Children, p. 139.


88 ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (9v) ‘for this reason sometimes the baby stayed in her house’. Moreover, according to one interpretation of Jewish law which may have been standard, Jewish children could only be nursed by Christian wetnurses in the Jews’ homes. A thirteenth-century text of Yaacov Chazan called ‘The Tree of Life’, stated that a Jewish child could only be nursed in
A non-Jewish woman who delivers a Jewish woman’s baby and nurses the baby in the house of the Jewish woman will not kill the baby. And it seems to be the opinion of Rabbi Baruch Dafilo even if there is no Jewish presence in the house, as long as there is a Jewish presence in the city, she can nurse. But if all the Jews have left the city, it is forbidden.

(‘או כהピン ולילותת ב בית יהודיאموا באמצעות, אם ראה ברובה רבה באר ואיסריאל, אלא הוא הלך כל יהודייה חוץ לעיר אור.’)

רבי ברוך אומר: ‘איך הזכיר את עני יהודיאמה פרעה, בר מישריאל ושביעי, הלוחות טобще והורים, לפרך ב檔案.’

See Segre, Jews of Piedmont, doc. 2348.

See ASMoFICH 244 f.3, trial of Isaaco de Modena, who told the Inquisitor that he had a household of thirteen people including his sons, a daughter-in-law, servants, and a young Christian wetnurse.


ASMoFICH 247 f.24. See Stella’s testimony (7v and 11r).

Ibid.

ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (12r). See Stow, Catholic Thought, pp. 291–8. Clause 11. ‘Nor may they permit the Christian poor (or any other Christian for that matter) to address them as master.’

ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (5r) Such large Jewish families do not seem to be the norm in other Italian cities. Stow in Jews in Rome, vol. I, p. xviii. On the size of families and the number of servants employed in Christian households in early modern Italy, see Giovanna Da Molin, ‘Family Forms and Domestic Service in Southern Italy from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries’, Journal of Family History 15 (1990), 503–527, 517.

ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (5r): Calman told the Inquisitor: ‘The other I believe is called Antonia or Francesca. I don’t know because I usually call them “wetnurse” and not by their name.’ (25v–25r) Abraham stated: ‘I do not know the name of the said wetnurse although she is the wife of one who is called Sabbione.’

ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (6r) Calman’s interrogation.


ASMoFICH 244 f.3, ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (7v–8v) and (29r).

ASMoFIP 244 f.3.

ASMoFIP 15, f.6 (6v) ‘she slept separately, with the baby’.

Ibid. (11r).

Ibid. (12v).

Females in domestic service were generally considered vulnerable to sexual abuse, especially if they were naive young girls from the countryside leaving their families for the first time. The culprits were not necessarily the heads of the household – they could have been the

111 ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (4v–4r).
113 Wiesner, *Women*, p. 71. For examples of other Italian contracts signed between the balio and the father of the baby, see Valerie Fildes, *Wet Nursing*, pp. 52–3.
115 For the reasons why contracts were drawn up between servants and employers, see Romano, ‘Regulation’, pp. 673–4.
116 ASMoFICH 247 f.24 (14r) Juliana tells the Inquisitor: ‘On the 15th of this month, it will be six months that I have nursed this baby.’
117 ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (6v–6r).
119 ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (1r): Calman stated: ‘This wetnurse is the wife of Issepeto Ferrari de Nonantola’. Abraham also told the Inquisitor (25v–25r): ‘I do not know the name of the said wetnurse although she is the wife of one who is called Sabbione.’
120 ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (17r).
121 It should be noted that Flavia signed her name at the end of her interrogation and Gentile did not, which does perhaps suggest that Gentile was illiterate.
122 ASMoFIP 62 f.24 (28r).
123 On the number of years women spent rearing children, see Salmon, ‘Cultural Significance’, p. 253.
125 Ibid., p. 49. See also Romano, ‘Regulation’, pp. 662–3.
129 Toaff, *Love*, p. 252. See also ASMoFIP 15 f.6 (5r). As Calman himself stated, his household was full of different servants, living as integrated members of his household. ‘There are also housemaids, stewards, teachers, maids, wetnurses and servants present in my house’ (‘Vi sono poi massare et fattori, e maestri, e donzelle, ballie et servatori’).
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131 Stow, Jews in Rome, docs 50, 1246, 1410, 1549. These girls were called apprentices, which likely means that they were a little better than simple servants. These documents relate to the hiring of Jewish servants before the establishment of the ghetto and the removal of Jews into the enclosed area.


133 Stow, Jews in Rome, doc. 1386.

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid., doc. 1549. This was also the case for Christian servants in Christian households. See Romano, Housecraft, p. 147.

136 Stow, Jews in Rome, doc. 1510. See Wiesner, Women, p. 85, who notes that at this time ‘the gendered notion of work meant that women’s work was always valued less and generally paid less than men’s’.

137 See also Toaff, Jews in Umbria, vol. III, 1484–1736, doc. 2243.

138 See also Simonsohn, Apostolic See, docs 1427, 1290 and 1640.


140 See ASMoFI Carteggio con la Congregazione del S. Uffizio di Roma, busta 256. The text says 2,000 women, but this is probably an exaggeration.

141 Ibid.

142 ASMoFI P 170 f.10 and f.11.

143 ASMoFI P 70 f.13. On the geographic mobility of Christian servants in Italy, see Romano, Housecraft, pp. 122–35.

144 On Christian servants in Venice, see Pullan, Rich and Poor, pp. 556–7. In Venice it was the Ufficiali al Cattaver, the officials who had jurisdiction over the Jews, who issued licences to serve Jews. According to the charters of the Tedeschi Jews, from 1566, Christians were also forbidden to eat or sleep in the Jews homes, subject to a fine of 100 ducats and three years rowing in the galleys for the Jew and banishment from the city for the Christian. See clause 32 of the charter of 1624, published in Benjamin Ravid, Economics and Toleration in Seventeenth-Century Venice: The Background and Context of the Discorso of Simone Luzzatto (Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1978), p. 119. Licences were usually only granted for the hiring of mature women and men. But, in general, Christians were occasionally licenced to help out at weddings or celebrations – to carry lights or heavy objects. On the hiring of Christian servants in Milan, see Shlomo Simonsohn, The Jews in the Duchy of Milan (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1982–86), doc. 3663. On the hiring of Christian servants in Mantua see Shlomo Simonsohn, History of the Jews in the Duchy of Mantua (Jerusalem: Kibbutz Sepher, 1977), p. 110.

145 On Modena see ASMoFI Carteggio con la congregazione del Sant’Uffizio di Roma (1568–1784), busta 256. These papers contain continuing orders from the Congregation of the Holy Office, that the Inquisition regulate the prohibitions regarding Jews hiring Christian servants.

146 I do not include a processo against Moisè de Modena, who in 1594 was accused of having offered his Christian servant meat on a fast day, since this was before the establishment of the full Inquisition. Moisè was given a punishment of three months’ incarceration, which was commuted to a fine. See ASMoFI P 8 f.23, 3 December 1594. On this processo, see also Francesconi, Jewish Families, p. 111.

147 See Balletti, Gli Ebrei, p. 155. The Congregation of the Holy Office tried to persuade the Modenese Ambassador in Rome that ‘this is a matter subject only to their authority, in which His Highness cannot interfere in any way’.

148 See Balboni, Gli Ebrei, p. 47.
See for example ASMoFIP 57 f.21.

ASMoFIP 62 f.10, 24 March 1622 (1v). 'I came here because I was found by some people who I don't know, who said to me that I should come here. These people found me coming out of the house of Angelino the Jew, and so I have come.'

ASMoFICH 247 f.40.

ASMoFICH 244 f.22.

ASMoFICH 245 f.50. In another trial in ASMoFICH 245 f.51 (1629), Abraham de Rovigi's sentence of four months' imprisonment was also commuted to a 50–scudi fine. See Biondi, 'Inquisizione ed ebrei a Modena nel Seicento', in Fregni and Perani, *Vita e cultura ebraica*, pp. 259–73, p. 271.

In the 1622 trial, the Christian servant Anna was forced to admit that her son had also done the Jews some services, although she tried to imply that it had little to do with her. She told the Inquisitor, 'I have a son of fifteen or sixteen years, who has trouble with one of his legs. He went three or four times to bring water to the house of those Jews. I do not know that he has done anything else. I know that he came home at times carrying money. And I asked him from where he got it and he said that Angelino had given it to him because he had brought him water.'

For processi against Josef Arezzio, see ASMoFIP 68 f.16, 1623 and ASMoFICH 245 f.43, 1628. For processi against Simone Sanguinetti see ASMoFIP 70 f.13, 1624 and ASMoFIP 88 f.10, 1629 and for Benedetto Levi see ASMoFICH 245 f.48, 1629, and ASMoFICH 245 f.52, 1630.

ASMoFICH 246 f.15.

The naming of Christian servants on the cover of trial dossiers occurred for the first time on the processo of ASMoFIP 62 f.23, 1622.

Ibid.


ASMoFIP 70 f.13.


See ASMoFIP 62 f.24. Maria de Verici, who worked in the home of Elia Menachem, also admitted to working for a whole list of Jews including Leone da Fanno, David Nemo, Madonna Telza and Pellegrino Sanguinetti.

See ASMoFIP 61 f.18. Maria de Verici's testimony.

ASMoFICH 244 f.26 and ASMoFICH 244 f.27.

ASMoFICH 245 f.43.

ASMoFIP 53 f.4 (10v–r).

ASMoFICH 245 f.52.

ASMoFIP 62 f.23.

See ASMoFICH 244 f.26 Anna, the servant of Gabriele Sora reports that on Fridays she was busy 'making the fire and performing services in the house, and I was there until three at night and on Saturday all day'.

For processi where Jews were accused of allowing their Christian servants to enter synagogues during services see, for example, ASMoFIP 83 f.16.

See the processo of Benedetto Levi in ASMoFICH 245 f.52 (66v).

See ASMoFICH 244 f.25.

ASMoFICH 245 f.52 (32v–33r) and also ASMoFIP 53 f.4 (6r).

See Balboni, *Gli Ebrei*, p. 47.

See ASMoFICH 244 f.21. Here Beniamino, a Jew of Vignola accused of hiring servants, admits that his servants were paid according to the work they did. The Jew was absolved as he was found to have kept to the rules. In 1610 he had appealed to the Ducale Camerale to ask that the Duke allow Jews to carry on using Christians especially on festivals and other times without interference from the Inquisition. There is no indication what the Duke answered him. See CAHJP, *A.S.E. archivi per materie*, 'Ebrei' B.4, Processi I-LXXXIII, 1600–1629.

ASMoFIP 88 f.10.

See ASMoFIP 103 f.8.
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180 See ASMoFICH 247 f.22.
181 See ASMoFIP 88 f.10.
182 See ASMoFIP 73 f.8.
183 On spinning workshops see Wiesner, Women, p. 9.
184 For other examples when Jews carried out entrepreneurial activities illicitly, see del Col, L’Inquisizione, p. 525.
185 ASMoFICH 256 f.17.
186 Ibid. (42r).
187 Ibid., and see also Canosa, Storia, vol. I, pp. 44–5. The Cardinals stated that ‘the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office was disgusted by the ruling that permits Christians to serve Jews, that your Reverence is to prohibit the Jews to make use of the building of the spinner of silk in Spilamberto and begin proceedings against them.’
188 ASMoFICH 245 f.54 and f.65. The second case revolved around a Jewish boy who had drowned while swimming with his friends in the river. The corpse was carried in a cart to the cemetery with the help of local Christians who were then reprimanded for their actions. See also Balboni, Gli Ebrei, p. 50. A third case involved Alessandro Formigine and Salomone Castelfranco in 1637 (see ASMoFICH 247 f.29), who appeared before the Inquisitorial vicar in Finale, Fra Giacomo Ricci, to admit that they had been helped by a Christian to bury a Jewish woman since the Jewish gravedigger was too weak to do it alone. They asked the forgiveness of the Holy Office and were sentenced to a pecuniary punishment of 100 scudi. In Modena, Jews were given their own space to bury their dead, and after 1631 were allowed, instead of renting the land, to acquire it for the purpose of a new cemetery outside the Porta Bologna.
189 ASMoFIP 50 f.3.
190 See ACEMo filza 2.21 Instrumenti e testamenti 1485, 1606–1783. See for example for 1728 and 1733, the ‘Censo francabile imposto dalla nostra uniti e venduto al Tribunale della Inquisizione’. For the last decades of the eighteenth century, there are lists of Christian women who served in the ghetto, which the massari were to dispatch to the Holy Office. Also see ASMoFi, Lettere ed atti Inquisitoriali busta 290. Here there are lists of Christian women serving Jews from 1766 to 1782. These lists contain the name, address and age of the Christian, and the name of the Jewish family for which she worked.