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## **Occurrences and Denotation of the Italian Lexical Type pizza**

Further Data and Considerations about the Denotational Periphery, in Relation to the Historical Italian or North East Mediterranean and South East European Spread of Co-derivatives of the Type pitta/pizza

**Abstract:** This study builds upon two earlier papers (Alinei and Nissan 2007; Nissan and Alinei 2013) which explored the etymology of the Italian lexical type pizza / pitta. The earliest sure Greek instance is in Theophilactus, who from 1090 to 1108 was bishop of Bulgaria with his seat in Ochrida. It is unclear whether the etymology could be traced to the fifth century C.E., to Hesychius' glosses  $\pi\eta\tau\epsilon\alpha$ :  $\pi\acute{\iota}\tau\upsilon\pi\alpha$  'bran' and  $\pi\eta\tau\acute{\iota}\tau\eta\varsigma$ :  $\pi\acute{\iota}\tau\upsilon\pi\circ\iota$   $\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\circ\iota$  'bran breads'. Alinei and Nissan (2007) proposed that Byzantine Greek borrowed pitta or pita from Christian Middle Aramaic, i.e., Syriac or some vernacular, as Aramaic pitta 'bread', cf. Hebrew pat, pitt- (historically, there were older developments in the biblical period, apparently, from such bread being suitable for tearing pieces from it). Note however that the borrowing from Middle Aramaic into Greek must have been late enough (thus, Byzantine) for the Northwest Semitic phoneme /p/ to have in the source language the allophones [p] and [f], rather than [ϕ] and [f] (which was still the case in Roman-age Hebrew, as opposed to early medieval Hebrew). In the present study, I further probe into the set of denotata of the Italian lexical type pizza — this time probing into the periphery: when the term denotes sweet pastry; and when what is denoted by pizza is food, yet is not a pizza.

**Key words:** Food in culture; Italian lexicology; lexical type pizza; Italian Jewish food cultures.

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## 1. Introduction

Food in culture is a scholarly domain with its own journals.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes a baked product that basically is a pizza is not called that way in Britain, because a different perception is sought. It is called *open tart* instead. And yet, a proliferation of types of pizza has taken over the world, including Anglo-Saxon countries, as a truly global phenomenon, in the second half of the 20th century. For example, Rossella Ceccarini (2011a, 2011b) has researched pizza and pizza chefs in Japan. This study follows in the steps of Alinei and Nissan (2007), Nissan and Alinei (2013). We consider further data and contexts from within Italian Jewish cultures, especially in Rome, as well as in non-Jewish food cultures from the Latium and Campania regions of Italy's Tyrrhenian littoral. We are going to show that the semantic domain of the acceptations of *pizza* derivatives also includes some sweet pastry (Rome's Jewish pizza, i.e., the *pizza di Beridde*, which is actually a cake) or pastry eaten with honey (Roman Jewish *pizzarelle*, which are fritters), and even a pasta dish (namely, the *pizzarelle* of Cerreto Laziale, as opposed to *pizzarelle* from Campania, which are just small pizzas). Among Rome's Jews, *Le Pizzarelle* is even the name for a particular liturgical song. What is more, the earliest known historical occurrence of the Italian word *pizza* is recorded in the Hebrew script.

## 2. Sandra Debenedetti Stow's Discovery of the Earliest Occurrence of Italian *pizza*, in a Jewish Glossary by Judah Romano

Sandra Debenedetti Stow,<sup>2</sup> a Roman Italianist who in the last several decades has been based in Israel published a short article, "*Harara, pizza nel XIV secolo*", in the *Archivio Glottologico Italiano*, responding to the early datation of *pizza* in a study by Laura Princi

<sup>1</sup> I owe the following list to Rossella Ceccarini, then based in Japan (email of 12 October 2010):

*Gastronomica*: <http://www.gastronomica.org/index.html>

*Food Culture and Society*

<http://www.bergpublishers.com/BergJournals/FoodCultureandSociety/tabid/521/Default.aspx>

*Food and History*: <http://www.brepols.net/Pages/BrowseBySeries.aspx?TreeSeries=FOOD>

*Food and Foodways*: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/07409710.html>

*British Food Journal*: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/products/journals/journals.htm?id=bfj>

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Sandra Debenedetti Stow kindly sent me a scan of her 1983 paper by email on 28 April 2016.

Braccini (1979), who claimed for *pizza* an early medieval Germanic etymology (supposedly through a Langobardic conduit) which Johannes Kramer (1989/90, 2005) and then Alinei and Nissan (2007) refuted (The latter also refute Kramer.). Princi Braccini had found no occurrence of *pizza* earlier than the first half of the 16th century.

Debenedetti Stow (1983) instead was able to find an earlier instance of *pizza* ‘flat bread’ (“focaccia”), from the 14th century. This discovery was a by-product of her research into Jewish Italian glosses, which culminated with a monumental work in two volumes (Debenedetti-Stow 1990–1994), on a 14th-century glossary (preserved in three manuscripts dated to the 14th century) by the philosopher and philologist Judah (Lionello) ben Moses ben Daniel Romano for a Hebrew-language book by Maimonides, the latter’s compendium of the precepts. The lexical entries in Debenedetti-Stow’s book — which is entitled *La chiarificazione in volgare delle “espressioni difficili” ricorrenti nel Mišneh Toràh di Mosè Maimonide. Glossario inedito del XIV secolo, di Jehudàh Ben Mošèh Ben Dani’èl Romano* — include a discussion of the Old Italian dialectal form the way it appears in the glossary, with a comparison to similar forms. Giuseppe Sermoneta discussed the “philosophical faith” of both Judah Romano and his better known relative, the poet Immanuel Romano, in an article entitled “La dottrina dell’intelletto e la ‘fede filosofica’ di Jehudah e Immanuel Romano” (Sermoneta 1965).<sup>3</sup> Debenedetti Stow (1983) concluded her paper as follows:

Il glossario di Iehuda Romano è rimasto in tre manoscritti, attribuiti al secolo XIV, il ms. n. 273 della ‘Bibliotheca Monacensis’, cat. Steinschneider, il ms. heb. n. 241 della Biblioteca Regia di Parigi (1311 cat. Zutenberg), e frammentariamente nel ms. n. 423 della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

Il nostro lemma è citato in due dei tre manoscritti come glossa dell’ebraico *ḥarara*, termine che compare nella *Mišna šabbat* I, 10, precisamente nella locuzione ‘focaccia cotta sulla brace’.

Il manoscritto parigino riporta dunque: a f. 5v.: *ḥarara, piša* (pizza) (5). Il manoscritto vaticano ha a f. 16r.: *ḥarara*, come *maša piša*.

Sarà interessante notare in quest’ultimo manoscritto l’introduzione del termine alternativo *maša* ‘azzima’ che sottolinea l’interpretazione semantica *pizza* = schiacciata.

Nel manoscritto monacense, f. 54r., la glossa non ha traduzione ma appare la seguente spiegazione in ebraico: *ḥarara* significa *ḥala*, che in ebraico vuol dire *focaccia*, e a questa spiegazione segue l’interpretazione del più famoso dei commentatori e glossatori medioevali giudeo-francesi, il Rashi (Salomon Izqaki); la spiegazione di Rashi è: ‘*ugat rešapim* che è l’ebraico *torta, focaccia schiacciata*’.

<sup>3</sup> Giuseppe Sermoneta, known in Israel as Joseph Baruch Sermoneta, was prominent in research into medieval Jewish manuscripts from Italy. He was born in Rome in 1924, and died in Israel in 1992. In his youth, he moved to Israel, but returned to Rome where he studied philosophy. He then pursued a doctorate at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. His dissertation was a new critical edition of Hillel of Verona’s *Sefer tagmulei hannefesh* (*Book of the Rewards of the Spirit*). Sermoneta’s doctoral supervisor was Shelomo Pines. In 1962, Sermoneta began his academic career at the Hebrew University, at the Department of Jewish Thought (which he eventually headed). He founded at the same university the Department of Italian Studies, which he headed for many years. Sermoneta founded the journal *Italia* (in Italian Jewish studies) together with the historian Roberto (Robert) Bonfil, born in Greece, but who for a short while was Milan’s chief rabbi before moving to Israel and beginning there his academic career. Sermoneta authored for the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* the entry about Dante Alighieri, as well as entries about the Jews of Italy. On 9 October 1982, Giuseppe Sermoneta was wounded during the bombing of the Central Synagogue in Rome by the Organisation for the Liberation of Palestine (shortly after Arafat’s visit to Rome and the Vatican). The atrocity claimed the life of a child, Stefano Tascè. In fact, the bombing was timed with a Jewish festival, during a ceremony of blessing children.

[Judah Romano's glossary is preserved in three manuscripts, dated to the 14th century, namely, MS 273 of the Bibliotheca Monacensis in Munich, as catalogued by Steinschneider; MS heb. 241 from the Royal Library in Paris (1311 as catalogued by Zutenberg); and only in fragmentary form in MS 423 at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

Our lexical entry is mentioned in two of the three manuscripts, as a gloss of the Hebrew *ḥārārā* [חָרָרָא], a word that occurs in the *Mishnah*, tractate *Shabbat* 1:10, inside the wording “focaccia cotta sulla brace” (“flat bread baked on embers” [Jastrow (1903, p. 506, s.v. חָרָרָא): “a thick cake baked on coals”]).

In the Paris manuscript, one finds, on folio 5v: *ḥarara*, *piša* [פִּיצָה] (pizza). [Debenedetti Stow's fn. 5 cites Jastrow (1903).] The Vatican manuscript has, on folio 16r, like *ḥarara*, like *mašša piša*.

It is of interest to remark, in the latter manuscript, that an alternative term is introduced, namely, *mašša* [מַצָּה] ‘unleavened bread’, which rather underscores the semantic interpretation *pizza* = ‘flat bread’ (“*schacciata*”). [Bear in mind that before matzo bread began to be produced by machine in a square shape, matzo bread used to be round, and a bit thicker. Hand-made matzo bread is still round.]

In the Munich manuscript, on folio 54r, the gloss includes no translation, but there is the following explanation in Hebrew: “*ḥarara* means *ḥalla* [חָלָה]”. In Hebrew this means ‘flat bread’ (“*focaccia*”). [Note however that in Modern Hebrew and British Jewish English, it means ‘braided bread for the Sabbath’.] This explanation is followed with the interpretation by the most famous of the medieval Jewish commentators and glossators from France, Rashi ([Rabbi] Shelomo *Yiḥaḳi*). Rashi's explanation is: ‘*ugat rešafim*, which in Hebrew means ‘flat [round] cake/bread’ (“*torta*, *focaccia schacciata*”).]

### 3. A Few Quick Considerations about the Geographical Spread of Flat Breads: From the Indian Flat Breads, to the Tortilla

There exist a few types of so-called “Arab flat bread”. Syria-Palestine and Mesopotamia are arguably the “epicentre” of flat bread as the very concept arose in human cultures, because that is the geographical area where wheat was found in the wild and then domesticated. Aaron Aaronson, a botanist (and First World War head of a spy ring), discovered wild wheat on Mt. Hermon. When the Hebrew Bible mentions ‘bread’ as *pat* (the inflection base is *pitt-*), and when Aramaic uses *pitta* for ‘bread’, probably in practice such bread used to be flat bread. Etymologically however the Semitic lexical root is related to a verb for tearing to pieces, and to names for bread crumbs, or even for flakes (of snow). Greek and Balkanic *pitta*, whence Southern Italian *pitta* (with the alternative forms *pizza* and *pinza*), was probably a late antique loanword from Middle Aramaic.

And yet, even though one does not historically find derivatives of the lexical type *pitta* or *pizza* in European languages of the western Mediterranean, this does not mean that local cultures lacked the thing named. Spain and Hispanic countries have a kind of flat bread: the tortilla. Of Indian flat breads, *roti chapati phulka* is the type most similar to the tortilla. Flat bread like Indian *naan* and Greek *pitta* is made without yeast.

Arabic does not use names etymologically related to *pitta* for types of flat bread eaten in Arab-majority countries. For example, in Iraq two kinds of flat bread are eaten. Both of them are large and round. There is a very thin, crisp and crunchy type, the *gáwrág*, from which one breaks off pieces. There also is a thicker, soft type (it can be rolled on toppings): it is called by the Arabic compound *khábbáz-ṡmāy*, literally ‘bread of water’ (because of its softness).

In the Iranic area, flat bread is eaten in Iran and Afghanistan. One can roll the Persian *noon taftoon*, but not open and stuff it (which is the case of Israeli and British *pitta* bread, but not of the two types of Iraqi flat bread). Persian flat bread is called *noon taftoon* (as spelled in Britain). Cf. English *naan bread*, denoting a light type of northern Indian flat bread (which

are are many, usually heavier than the Levantine types. Indian flat bread include *baati*, *bafla*, *bhature*, *khameeri roti*, *kulcha*, *naan*, *paratha*, *poori*, *loach poori*, *roti chapati phulka*, *sheermal* (the latter is sweet). Some Indian flat breads are deep-fried: *khameeri roti* differs from *naan* because it is deep-fried instead of baked in the oven. Likewise, *kulcha* is baked in the oven, whereas *bhature* is similar but is deep-fried.



Persian flat bread (*noon taftoon*), shown top left, and other food (from a kosher restaurant in London). This photograph was taken at Olive, a restaurant in di Finchley, and appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle* of 27 April 2007, supplement “Spring Dining”, p. SD11.

#### 4. Giacoma Limentani Reminiscing about the *pizza* from Rome’s Ghetto

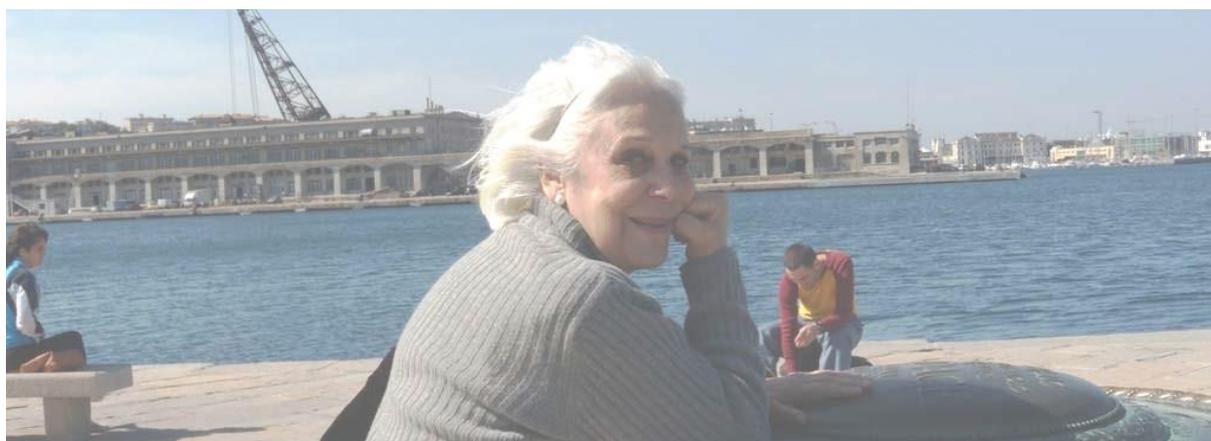
The Italian writer Giacoma Limentani was born in Rome on 11 October 1927, and died there on 18 February 2018. (This paper was begun earlier, and is now dedicated to her memory.) She has achieved fame in Italy, especially with a Jewish audience but also by addressing a

general Italian audience on Jewish themes, as an essayist and narrator. And yet, professionally she began and always remained a translator. She began by translating from English and French. She did so by catering to the cinematographical industry, but also, in the 1960s, by translating what could be called pulp literature, either detective stories, or love stories, which she did for the Grandi Edizioni Internazionali in Rome.<sup>4</sup> Giacomina Limentani evolved, professionally, in two directions: she made Jewish culture into a conspicuous component of her written production; and she became also an author, in addition to her being a translator. As the latter, she has also translated from Hebrew texts that have appeared in book form.

As an author of books, Limentani has especially published narratives, short stories, or novels. Such books include *In contumacia* (Milan: Adelphi, 1967), *Il grande seduto* (Milan: Adelphi, 1979), *L'ombra allo specchio: Racconti* (Milan: La tartaruga, 1988), *Dentro la D* (Genoa: Marietti, 1992), *Il più saggio e il più pazzo* (Viterbo: Stampa alternativa, 1994), ... *e rise Mosé* (Torino: Einaudi ragazzi, 1995), *Da lunedì a lunedì* (Torino, Einaudi ragazzi, 1999), and *La spirale della tigre* (Varese: Giano, 2003).

The novel *In contumacia* (*In Hiding*) is set in Rome towards the end of German occupation. The narrative is seen through the eyes of a young Jewish girl. She withdraws from the facts themselves, and the narration is like a nightmare or hallucination.

Limentani is also the author of a book of collected essays, adopting a Jewish and at the same time, belles lettres perspective, *Scrivere dopo per scrivere prima: riflessioni e scritti* (*Writing Afterwards, in Order to Write Beforehand*:<sup>5</sup> *Reflections and Essays*), published in Florence by La Giuntina, in 1997. See Nissan (2016 [2017] a).



Giacoma Limentani.

The periodical *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel* has long been the flagship of Jewish studies in Italy. It was established in 1925. Issue 3 in vol. 74 was dated September–December 2008. The journal editor (“Direttore e Direttore responsabile”) at the time was Giacomo Saban. That journal issue included, on pp. 171–222, a special section, edited by Clotilde Pontecorvo, and opened by her own brief contribution, entitled “La pluralità delle identità ebraiche” (“The Plurality of Jewish Identities”). This was followed by a contribution about Turkish Jewry by Giacomo Saban, Libyan Jewry by Livia Genah, Argentinean Jewry by Paola Di Cori, and (on pp. 199–204) Roman Jewry by Giacomina Limentani, numbered I-D, entitled “Giacoma Limentani: Un’identità ebraica romana”, and concluding the first part of the special section.

<sup>4</sup> [http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giacoma\\_Limentani](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giacoma_Limentani)

<sup>5</sup> “Writing beforehand”, as preparation for the future.

Limentani's contribution began with childhood reminiscences set in Rome, but then with a scene set in Venice.

Giacoma Limentani's "Un'identità ebraica romana" is wholly one section, with no internal subdivisions, but after a puzzling utterance on its first page, it is followed by a blank line. A scan of that initial part is reproduced below, and if followed by my translation.



Giacoma Limentani.

Io appartengo a un nucleo familiare romano che lasciò relativamente presto l'area del ghetto per stabilirsi nell'allora nuovo rione Prati.

Alla scuola elementare Pistelli, vicina a Piazza Mazzini, ero stata esonerata dall'ora di religione, in casa osservavo coi miei le ricorrenze ebraiche, il venerdì sera e alla vigilia delle altre feste andavo coi miei alla sinagoga di Lungotevere o Tempio Maggiore, come dicono gli ebrei romani, ma non avevo ben chiaro fino a qual punto l'area della sinagoga e quella del ghetto combaciassero.

Sapevo che per comprare “un quarto di pizza” – il più noto dei dolci “giudii” – bisognava andare in Piazza, che con “la Piazza” un ebreo romano intendeva Piazza Giudia e che Piazza Giudia è il cuore dell'ex ghetto di Roma, ma non avevo idea del senso di tutto ciò.

Cominciai a rendermi conto della diversità del ghetto dal resto di Roma verso i 6 o 7 anni, quando mio padre mi portò a Venezia. Lì, a Piazza San Marco, mentre davo da mangiare ai colombi, papà fu avvicinato da uno di quei merciai ambulanti che portavano le loro merci su una tavoletta appesa al collo. Seppi dopo che lui e il babbo erano andati insieme a Talmud Torah.

“Guarda chi si vede! – lo salutò allegramente papà – E cosa fai qui?”

“Non lo vedi? Vado pe' Roma!”

[I belong to a Roman household that left relatively early on the area of the Ghetto, settling in the Prati neighbourhood, which at the time was new.

At the Pistelli primary school, near Mazzini Square, I was exempted from religion lessons. At home I kept with my family the Jewish festivals. On Friday evening and on the eve of the other festive days I used to go with my relatives to the synagogue on the Lungotevere (riverside) street, the Main Temple, as it is called by Rome's Jews, but it wasn't totally clear to me to what extent the area of the synagoguer and that of the Ghetto overlapped.

I knew that in order to buy a quarter of pizza — the best known of Jewish cakes — one had to go to the Piazza (Square), that by “la Piazza” (“the Square”), a Roman Jew meant Piazza Giudia (Jews' Square [officially: Piazza Santa Maria del Pianto]), and that Piazza Giudia is the heart of the former Ghetto of Rome, but I had no idea of what it all meant.

I began to be aware of the difference of the Ghetto from the rest of Rome around the time I was aged six or seven, when my father took me to Venice. There, in St Mark's Square, while I was feeding the pigeons, Dad was approached by one of those peddlers<sup>6</sup> who used to carry their merchandise on a shelf hanging down from their neck. Later on, I learned that he and Dad had been classmates at the classes of Judaism (at the Talmud Torah).

“Glad to meet you! [literally: Look whom one sees!]”, Dad greeted him merrily. “What are you doing here?”

“Don't you see? I'm going around Rome!”]

The child understood that reply literally, so she thought the man was crazy. He intended an idiomatic sense instead, one in use in the dialect of Roman Jews. In “I peromanti: un'etimologia tra storia e letteratura”, Claudia Di Cave (2016) claims that peddlers walking around *per Roma* (‘around Rome’) developed by folk-etymology out of a complex cultural situation and professional roles current in the early modern period. Originally (in the early modern period) the word was *piromanti*, denoting such diviners who used to practise their art by observing flames (pyromancy). What is shared is low and disliked social status; diviners and Jews were marginalised. Di Cave (2016, pp. 86–87) points out the roles of necromancers, astrologers, and Jews in Italian comedies from the 16th century. As for the pizza of Roman Jews, it is a cake with candied fruits and raisin: we are going to say more in the next section.

<sup>6</sup> A *merciaio* in Italian denotes a haberdasher, but a *merciaio ambulante* denotes a peddler.



Piazza Giudia in Rome in 1900. Its side with casa Manli and the bakery is shown.

## 5. The *pizza di Beridde*

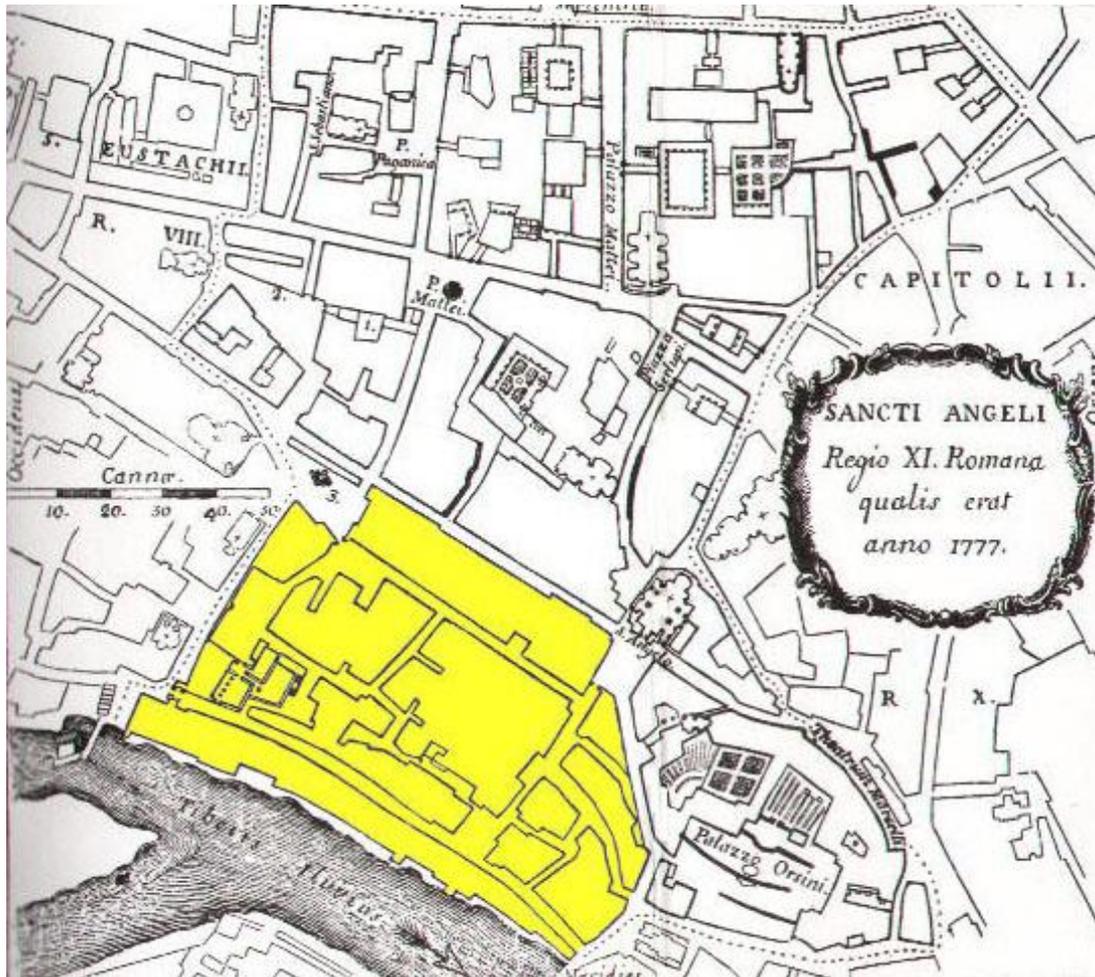
Giacoma Limentani's mention of *pizza* as a typically Jewish sweet baked food calls for explanation. Had she just referred to "a quarter of pizza", one would assume that she had to buy it in the square of the Ghetto in order to be satisfied that the pizza she was buying was kosher. She states explicitly however that she is referring to sweet bakery which is typically Jewish (of the Jews of Rome). One can buy a quarter of it, even though this is not a pizza as usually meant (with cheese and all). Limentani was stating that it was necessary to buy that kind of *pizza* (actually, not a member of the category one normally refers to as *pizza*, internationally), because it is considered a specifically Roman Jewish kind of cake: it is the most typical Roman Jewish cake, indeed. This is why it had to be bought inside the Ghetto.

After I inquired with her, Prof. Clotilde Pontecorvo in Rome (email of 23 May 2017) kindly supplied me with this explanation:

la pizza è un dolce fatto di farina, zucchero, ma soprattutto canditi, mandorle, pinoli e uva passa, diviso in rombi standard che si chiamano quarti di dimensioni di circa 10-12 cm e cotti al forno. La pizza si mangia soprattutto nelle occasioni liete (nascite, Circoncisioni, Bar Mitzva, Fidanzamenti, Matrimoni).

[Pizza [as being a Jewish Roman pastry] is a cake made with flour, sugar, but especially candied fruits, almonds, pine nuts, and raisin, divided into standard lozenges called "quarters" and sized nearly 10–12 cm, and baked in the oven. Such a "pizza" is especially eaten on family celebrations (births, circumcisions, bar mitzvah, betrothals, weddings).]

At Labna.it, the Italian-language blog of Jewish cuisine of Benedetta Jasmine Guetta and Manuel Kanah, in a post of 2 May 2014 Guetta gives the recipe (she reconstructed) of, along



A map, published by Monaldini in 1777, and showing the area of Rome's Rione Sant'Angelo, part of whose territory was the Roman Ghetto<sup>7</sup> in which the Jews were confined until 1870. The area of the Ghetto is coloured in yellow here.<sup>8</sup> “The **Roman Ghetto** or **Ghetto of Rome**, Italian: *Ghetto di Roma*, was a Jewish ghetto established in 1555 in the Rione Sant'Angelo, in Rome, Italy, in the area surrounded by present-day Via del Portico d'Ottavia, Lungotevere dei Cenci, Via del Progresso and Via di Santa Maria del Pianto, close to the River Tiber and the Theatre of Marcellus. With the exception of brief periods under Napoleon from 1808 to 1815 and under the Roman Republics of 1798–99 and 1849, the ghetto of Rome was controlled by the papacy until the capture of Rome in 1870”.<sup>9</sup>

with some text about what she calls (this is the title of the post) “Pizza di Beridde o pizza romana ebraica dolce”.<sup>10</sup> Benedetta Jasmine Guetta describes it as a kind of cookie. Guetta begins by stating:<sup>11</sup>

Ogni volta che amici e parenti vanno a Roma, chiedo loro di portarmi a casa alcuni speciali dolcetti che si trovano solo lì, per la precisione solo al forno del Ghetto, la pasticceria kasher Boccione: i ginetti — dei biscottoni enormi preparati con una frolla all'olio molto spessa e ruvida

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Ghetto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Ghetto)

<sup>8</sup> <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=26301077> or

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Ghetto#/media/File:RioneSAngeloInRomaByMonaldini\\_coloured\\_to\\_show\\_the\\_ghetto.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Ghetto#/media/File:RioneSAngeloInRomaByMonaldini_coloured_to_show_the_ghetto.jpg) This is a modification of the Wikimedia file [RioneSAngeloInRomaByMonaldini.jpg](#)

<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Ghetto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Ghetto)

<sup>10</sup> I.e., “Pizza for circumcision [*beridde* < Hebrew /brit/, ‘pact’, /brit-mila/, ‘circumcision’, ‘Abraham’s pact’], or sweet Roman Jewish pizza”. Cf. the Roman Jewish good wish: *Nozze* [wedding], *scompri* [births], *beridde*.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.labna.it/pizza-di-beridde-pizza-romana-ebraica-dolce-boccione.html>



Via Rua in Ghetto, a street inside the Ghetto of Rome, in a watercolour<sup>12</sup> (ca. 1880) by Ettore Roesler Franz (Rome, 1845 – Rome, 1907).<sup>13</sup>

– e la “pizza di Beridde”, che a dispetto del nome è ancora semplicemente un tipo di biscotto, arricchito di frutta secca e candita.

[Each time friends or relatives of mine go to Rome, I ask them to bring to me at home some special little cookies (*dolcetti*) one only finds there, more precisely only at the Ghetto’s oven, the Boccione kosher bakery: the *ginetti* — these are huge cookies prepared with very thick, rough shortbread with oil — and the “Pizza di Beridde”, which notwithstanding that name is, again, just a kind of cookie, enriched with candied fruits.]

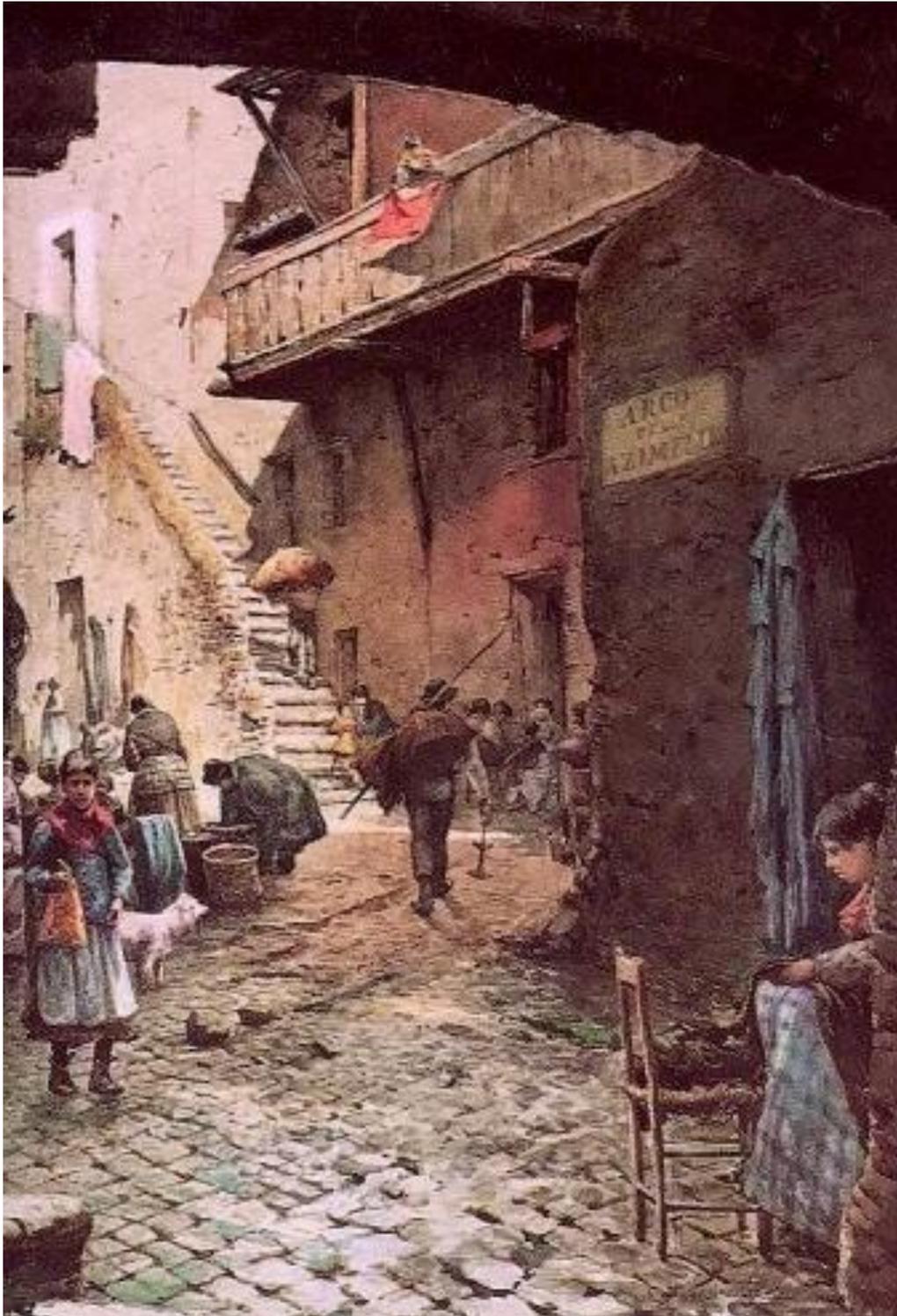
Usefully, Guetta supplies photographs of the slices of “pizza di Beridde”. One of those photographs is a close-up of such slices, which are crisp outside but soft inside:

Ma torniamo alla pizza ebraica dolce, o pizza di Beridde: in questa seconda foto vedete l’originale del Boccione, una torta divisa in tante fette, che sembra bruciata fino a non essere commestibile — ma è invece assolutamente deliziosa.

[But let us go back to the sweet Jewish pizza (*pizza ebraica dolce*), or pizza di Beridde: in this second photo you see the original [baked product] of the Boccione [bakery], a cake divided into many slices, which looks as though it is burnt so much it’s inedible, whereas it’s absolutely delicious instead.]

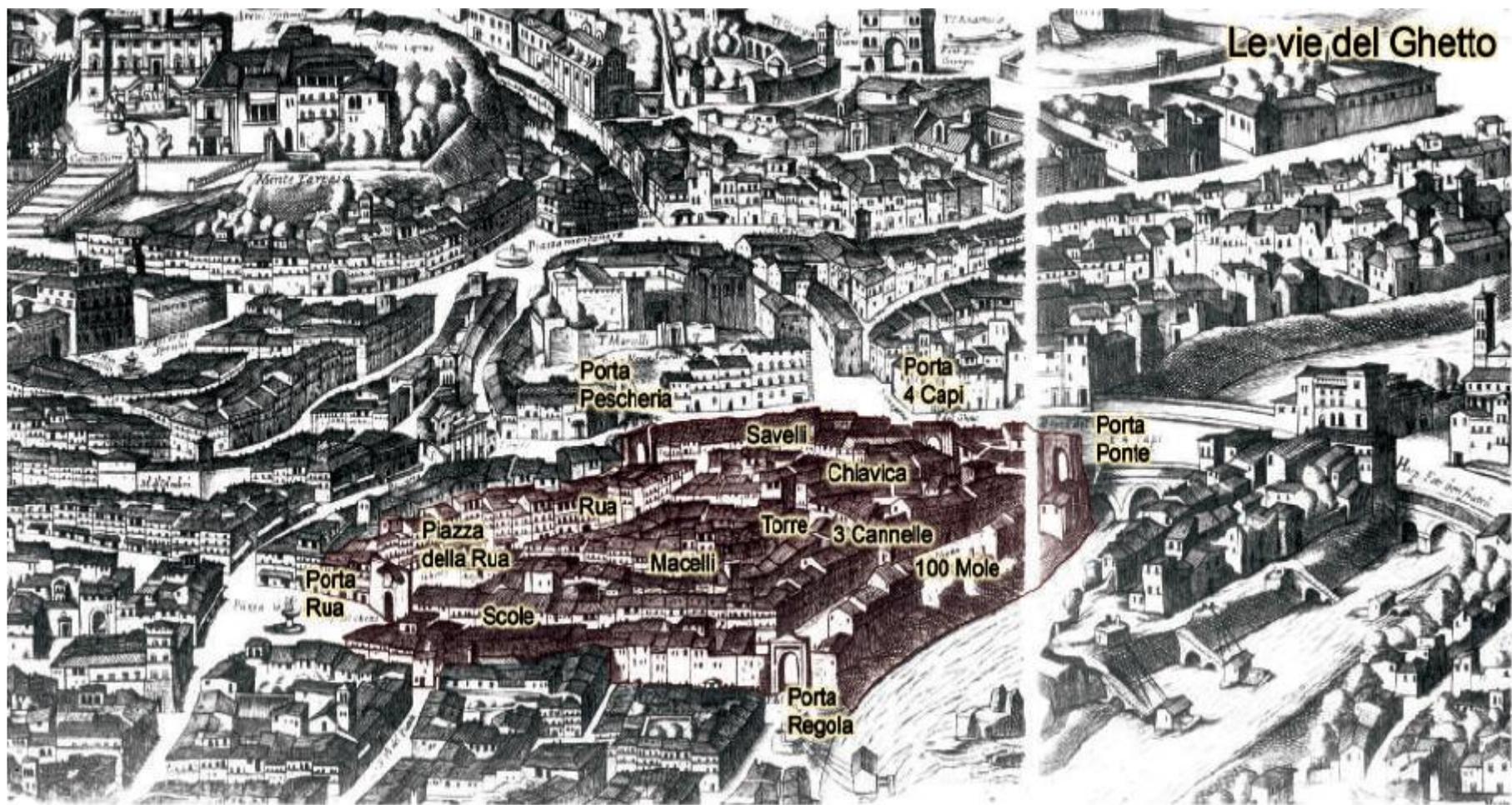
<sup>12</sup> <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cd/ViaRuaInGhettoByRoeslerFranz.jpg>

<sup>13</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ettore\\_Roesler\\_Franz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ettore_Roesler_Franz)



The Arco delle Azimelle in a watercolour<sup>14</sup> by Ettore Roesler Franz (ca. 1880). The *azimelle* (in standard Italian: pane àzzimo) are Jewish unleavened breads, which were produced in a bakery in this lane.

<sup>14</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Ghetto#/media/File:ArcoDelleAzimelleInGhettoByRoeslerFranz.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Ghetto#/media/File:ArcoDelleAzimelleInGhettoByRoeslerFranz.jpg)



A bird's view of the Ghetto of Rome, from a source of 1693 (*Collezione Disegni e Piante, Disegno et prospetto, dell'alma città di Roma già delineato da Antonio Tempesta, di nuovo ritagliato, accresciuto, et abbellito [...] nel pontificato di N. S. Innocenzo XII. Con la cura di Giovanni Giacomo De Rossi, l'anno 1693*), with labels identifying the

main streets of the Ghetto added by Micol Ferrara (2014).



An engraving by Giuseppe Vasi (1752), showing Piazza Giudia, part of which was inside the Ghetto, and part outside. The gate of the Ghetto is middle right.



An engraving of 1820: the Portico di Ottavia (the *porticus Octaviae*, from the Augustan era). It is often symbolically associated with the Ghetto of Rome. From the Middle Ages until 1885 its *propylaeum* hosted a fish market. [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_British\\_Library\\_-\\_Rome\\_-\\_Portico\\_di\\_Ottavia.jpg](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_British_Library_-_Rome_-_Portico_di_Ottavia.jpg)

Guetta mixes 00 wheat flour with some almond flour, oil, sugar, white wine, baked pine nuts, baked almonds, mollified raisin, and e.g. little cubes of candied citron (or other fruits).



Slices of Pizza di Beridde in a detail from a photograph of the Boccione bakery at the Labna.it webpage for the “Pizza di Beridde”.



Guetta’s photograph which shows a close-up of the slices of pizza di Beridde from the Boccione bakery.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.labna.it/pizza-di-beridde-pizza-romana-ebraica-dolce-boccione.html>



Guetta's photograph of the pizza di Beridde she made herself, using the recipe she reconstructed.

The kosher bakery, Boccione, is a small corner shop at Via del Portico d'Ottavia, 1. In a comment, dated 27 February 2015, to the Labna.it post<sup>16</sup> of 2 May 2014 at the Labna.it blog, "Dgsquare" claimed that "la Pizza Romana (io la conoscevo solo con questo nome) ha degli enormi tocchi di frutta candita e uvetta e mandorle e poca 'pasta frolla' per tenerli assieme" ["the Pizza Romana [Roman Pizza] (I only knew it by that name) has huge slices of candied fruits and raisin and almonds, and just a little pastry (shortbread) to bind them together"].

Another comment to the same post at Labna.it refers to the same baked product as "la pizza ebraica" ("the Jewish pizza"). Yet another comment explains that the name *Boccioni* was the nickname of the current owners, from *boccione* 'large glass vessel' in the Roman dialect, and this from *boccia* 'glass vessel' in that dialect.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. <http://fashionfooddesign.com/2014/01/pizza-di-beridde-o-pizza-dolce-ebraica-un-dolce-per-un-lieto-evento/>



Piazza Giudia with the bakery.



Via Portico d'Ottavia, formerly Piazza Giudia, in 1890, before the Jewish school was built.

## 6. Two Roman Jewish Acceptations of *pizzarelle*: Fried Batter, and a Liturgical Song

Another term denoting a typically Jewish Roman sweet baked product is *pizzarelle*, a plural diminutive, denoting matzo meal fritters soaked in either honey, or sugar syrup, but then you would not buy a quarter of it in the sense of it being cut out of the whole, because that is feasible, and then by quarter, a measure of weight or volume could have been intended. The *pizzarelle* are especially associated with the Jewish festival of Passover. They are unleavened, as required of this highly seasonal specialty.

*Pizzarelle* are made with matzo meal, or alternatively, with broken and matzo sheets soaked long enough for no bits of matzo to remain.<sup>17</sup> Next, egg yolks are added during preparation, along with much sugar, some salt, pine nuts, raisins, and orange zest. Egg white is then folded into the mixture. Next, small rounds of the batter (walnut-sized, or by another version, fist-sized) are dropped into hot oil and fried until golden brown. Right before serving, these fritters are optionally doused with (or rolled in) sugar syrup or honey.<sup>18</sup>



An individual Roman Jewish *pizzarella*; detail from the three photographs that follow.

Riccardo Di Segni<sup>19</sup> (n.d., note 16), citing a dissertation by Della Rocca (1982, henceforth DR), signalled two word senses of *pizzarelle* in the *giudaico romanesco* (Judaeo-Roman) dialect:

Un curioso esempio di integrazione tra cucina e rito è la denominazione romana di un canto liturgico pasquale, letto alla fine della preghiera del mattino, e che viene chiamato ‘Le pizzarelle’, come il dolce tipico della Pasqua (DR 24), probabilmente perché lo si consumava proprio al ritorno a casa dalla preghiera.

[A peculiar example of integration between the cuisine and the liturgy is the Roman name for a liturgical song for Passover, read at the end of morning prayer, and called *Le pizzarelle*, like the typical sweet baked food for Passover (DR 24), probably because it was eaten precisely upon one’s return home from prayer.]

Leah Koenig pointed out (2011):

*Pizzarelle* are loosely related to the Eastern European fried matzo meal pancake, *chremslach* — though *chremslach* are also eaten for breakfast, whereas *pizzarelle* fall more solidly into the dessert category. They also fall into a larger canon of fried foods traditionally enjoyed by Roman Jews. From the 16th through 19th centuries, Rome’s Jewish community lived an impoverished existence in a walled-in, segregated ghetto by the flood-prone Tiber River. At the time, frying foods in olive oil was considered one of the more economical methods of cooking. Over time, an oil-heavy

<sup>17</sup> Fried batter occurs in other Jewish cuisines, e.g. of Iraq. But on Passover, matzo is used instead of flour.

<sup>18</sup> But Koenig (2011) rather instructs: “Combine egg yolks, salt and olive oil in a medium bowl; set aside. In a standing mixer, beat egg whites and sugar until shiny with stiff peaks. Remove bowl from mixer. Using a rubber spatula, fold in egg yolk mixture, followed by lemon zest and matzo meal. Gently fold in raisins and pine nuts; let mixture stand for 15 minutes”.

<sup>19</sup> Riccardo Di Segni is now Rome’s chief rabbi. He has long been a senior clinical physician, but he has long been a scholar in Jewish studies, as well as a rabbinic author.

*cucina povera*, poverty cuisine, was developed in the ghetto, transforming humble ingredients into delicacies like the famous *carciofi alla Giudia*, “Jewish style” fried artichokes;<sup>20</sup> *baccalà fritto*, fried cod, and, of course, *pizzarelle*.



Jewish Roman *pizzarelle*.



These, too, are *pizzarelle*. Note the pine nuts embedded in the fritters.

<sup>20</sup> See for example [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carciofi\\_alla\\_giudia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carciofi_alla_giudia) See more below.



Roman Jewish pizzarelle being soaked in honey.

### **7. A Digression: *carciofi alla giudia*, *carciofi all'ariana*, and *carciofolata***

Let us say something more, now, about the *carciofi alla giudia*. Wikipedia explains:

Artichokes of the Romanesco variety, which are harvested between February and April in the coastal region northwest of Rome, between Ladispoli and Civitavecchia, are the best for this dish. The artichokes are cleaned with a sharp knife, eliminating all the hard leaves with a spiral movement. They are then beaten together to open them. They are left for some minutes in water with lemon juice, then seasoned with salt and pepper and deep fried in olive oil. The last touch consists in sprinkling a little cold water on them to make them crisp. At the end they look like little golden sunflowers and their leaves have a nutty crunchiness. They are eaten warm.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Quoted from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carciofi\\_alla\\_giudia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carciofi_alla_giudia)

After the promulgation of Italy's racial laws against the Jews in the autumn of 1938, some Roman restaurants changed the name of the *carciofi alla giudia* into *carciofi all'ariana*. In her book *Il mio Novecento*, Camilla Cederna wrote (2011):

A parte le notizie dei giornali che parlano continuamente di rabbini trafficanti di stupefacenti contesi da due polizie, di ebrei polacchi che propagano il tifo attraverso le loro lunghe barbe, di colossali truffe di ebrei a danno di correligionari, ogni giorno dell'anno XVII sui legge una nuova disposizione restrittiva a loro riguardo. Via dalle scuole i libri di testo degli ebrei, via gli ebrei da Cortina durante le feste di Natale e Capodanno («l'alta montagna, rifugio degli appassionati e degli eletti, con la sua austerità, il candore, la pace non deve accogliere queste malefiche tribù»), via le domestiche ariane dalle case degli ebrei, perfino i cioccolatini vengono epurati: troppi di loro contengono ancora dei biglietti con sopra scritte le massime del Talmud. Dal primo febbraio invece d'ebreo si scriva giudeo, s'aboliscono le musiche d'ebrei dalle trasmissioni radio, si congedano gli ebrei dall'esercito, i cittadini italiani sono obbligati a denunciare l'eventuale appartenenza alla razza ebraica e l'entità dei loro patrimoni. Vien sequestrato il *Nuovissimo dizionario tascabile della lingua italiana*, dove alla voce «antisemita» si legge: «Gente poco civile che osteggia e combatte gli ebrei», frase che il «Popolo d'Italia» definisce sconcia; sulle liste delle trattorie i carciofi alla giudia diventano carciofi all'ariana. «Vieto ai fascisti di inoltrare raccomandazioni di qualsiasi genere a favore di giudei, pena il ritiro della tessera» tuona il foglio di disposizioni n. 1341.

I supply the following translation of Cederna's Italian paragraph:

[Apart from the news in the newspapers, which keep reporting about rabbis who double as drug-dealers and contended by the policy of two countries, about Polish Jews who spread typhus by means of their long beards, and about cases of colossal fraud perpetrated by Jews against their own coreligionists, each and every day of the year 17 from Fascism taking power one could read some new restricting measure concerning them. Away with textbooks authored by Jews from schools. Away with Jewish presence from Cortina d'Ampezzo, the ski resort,<sup>22</sup> during Yuletide and New Year's Day ("high mountain resorts, a haven to the aficionados and to the elect few, with the place's austere, candid appearance and its peacefulness, must not receive these maleficent tribes"). Away Aryan maids from Jews' houses. Even chocolates [of the Perugina and Rocher kind] are cleansed: too many of them still contain little pieces of paper carrying some maxim from the Talmud.<sup>23</sup> From February the 1st, instead of writing *ebreo* ('Jew') one must write *giudeo* ('Jewboy'),<sup>24</sup> music by Jews is banned from radio broadcasts, the Jews are discharged from the army, Italian citizens have the duty to declare it in case they belong to the Jewish race and then they must declare their assets. All copies of new Italian pocket dictionary, the *Nuovissimo dizionario tascabile della lingua italiana*, are confiscated, as under the entry *antisemita* this

<sup>22</sup> Cederna remarks: "La stagione di Cortina, insolitamente lunga per il freddo che ha fatto, non è mai stata tanto brillante. Milanese, romani, triestini hanno riempito gli alberghi e le piste, è stato inaugurato il nuovo rifugio del Faloria. Il gruppo di Edda Ciano è come sempre quello che si diverte di più." — "The season at Cortina, unusually long [in late 1938 and early 1939] because of how cold the weather was, had never been as brilliant as then. People from Milan, Rome, and Trieste filled the hotels and the ski grounds. The new shelter on Mt Faloria was inaugurated. The party around Edda Ciano [Mussolini's daughter] is the merriest, like always".

<sup>23</sup> I reckon that manufacturers made use of any collection of maxims they could lay their hands on. During the 1930s, Alfredo Sabato Toaff, chief rabbi of Livorno (as well as a classicist), had translated for the publisher Laterza in Bari, in 479 pages (Cohen 1935, recently often reprinted) a quite informative book from England, Abraham Cohen's now classic *Everyman's Talmud* (Cohen 1932, often reprinted), being an introduction by themes to the Talmud, and in which maxims were copious indeed. This catered not only to a Jewish readership in the case of this particular book, but to some interest on the part of the educated public for exotic thought, something which during those years they could find in a book series from Laterza.

<sup>24</sup> In Italy, in the 1980s Jewish communities and their institutions changed the adjective *Israelitico* in their titles with *Ebraico*, as the latter was felt to be the unmarked term, whereas the former was a euphemism, and the change was a statement to the effect that a euphemism for Jewish identity is unnecessary.

*Giudeo* is derogatory, with a few exceptions: (a) in the compound name for Jewish dialects, by emulation of English such as in *Judaeo-Spanish* (but traditionally, Judaeo-Roman has been *il giudaico romanesco*, and I personally prefer to refer to Judaeo-Arabic by *arabo giudaico* in Italian); (b) in the scholarly literature in Italian, when dealing with post-Exilic Jewry. In the latter case however, this continues an ecclesiastic tradition, in which *giudeo* was by itself derogatory.

definition was given: “Uncivilised individuals who is an enemy to and fights the Jews”, wording which the Party’s newspaper, *Il Popolo d’Italia*, claimed was indecorous. On the menu at restaurants, the [Roman dish] *carciofi alla giudia* (Jewish-style artichokes) became *carciofi all’ariana* (Aryan-style artichokes). New Measures Sheet 1341 thundered: “I forbid Fascists to make a recommendation of any kind in favour of Yids (*giudei*). The penalty for transgressors is the withdrawal of their Party membership card”.]



*Carciofi alla giudia*, a Roman, originally Jewish Roman dish, with tender hearts and crisp leaves.<sup>25</sup>

In Rome, artichokes are known as *carciofoli* (a diminutive), as well as *carciofi*. Let us consider how the poet and painter Cesare Pascarella (1858–1940) — see Nissan (2016 [2017] b) — conveys a sense of release in a context where Carnival is explicitly evoked, when a group of artists go to eat a typical Roman Jewish dish at the Ghetto. This is the theme of his narrative prose “Carciofolata” (“The Outing to Eat Artichokes”). It was first published in the weekly *Fanfulla della domenica*, on 13 Aprile 1884.

In “Carciofolata”, Pascarella described this scene (pp. 290–291 in the 1920 collection of his prose); in real life, he undertook such initiatives indeed:

Nel silenzio viene da lontano un trillare leggero di mandolini e le ultime case del vicolo si veggono colorire a poco a poco da una pallida luce giallognola. Due gatti balzano fuori da un mondezzaio e spariscono nella feritoia d’una cantina, e un cane «lupetto» si mette a correre verso il chiarore, abbaiano.

<sup>25</sup> The image is taken from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carciofi\\_alla\\_giudia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carciofi_alla_giudia). It was uploaded in 2010 by Simone Lippi. The photograph as shown here is cropped. Lippi’s full photograph can be accessed at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carciofo\\_alla\\_Giudia.jpg#/media/File:Carciofo\\_alla\\_Giudia.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carciofo_alla_Giudia.jpg#/media/File:Carciofo_alla_Giudia.jpg)

[In the silence, a light trill of mandolins is coming from a distance, and the last few houses of the alley are seen to take colour, little by little, from a pale yellowish light. Two cats jump out of garbage, and disappear in the embrasure of a cellar, and a little Alsatian dog comes running towards the faint light, barking.]

I trilli dei mandolini si avvicinano; il chiarore cresce e all'improvviso una festa di luce e di colori, una allegrezza di suoni e di canti invade la stradiciuola. Le finestrelle, le loggette e i mignani s'empiono subito di ragazze dai begli occhi neri e curiosi e i portoncini e le scalette si affollano di giovinotti e di vecchi che allungano il collo verso il fondo del vicolo, da dove rischiarato con fiaccole e bengala s'avanza un gruppo numeroso e pittoresco di suonatori strimpellando mandolini e chitarre. Essi hanno in capo grandi tube ornate di fiori e son tutti vestiti con abiti vistosi di forme disusate, i quali fan ridere i giovani e ricordano ai vecchi gli anni lontani della loro adolescenza. Le esclamazioni di sorpresa e le dimande si incrociano fra i portoncini e le finestrelle: — *Che è successo?...* — *Che d'è?...* — *È ritornato carnevale?...* — *Chi so'?* E una voce, superando il frastuono delle voci, degli strumenti e delle risate di cui ormai il vicolo è pieno, risponde: — *So' li pittori che vanno a magnà' li carciofoli, in Ghetto.* — All'udire tali parole gli uomini battono le [p. 291:] mani e le donne sorridono.

[The trills of the mandolins come closer; the faint light increases, and suddenly a feat of light and colours, a merriment of sounds and songs invades the alley. The little windows, the balconies are filled right away with girls with pretty black, curious eyes, and the little doors and short staircases are crowded with young and old men who protend their necks towards the end of the alley, from where, elighted by torches and Bengal lights, a numerous and picturesque group of players advances, as they strum on mandolins and guitars. They wear large top-hats ornamented with flowers, and all of them are dressed with showy, quaintly shaped clothes, which cause mirth among the young, and remind old people of their bygone teenage years. Exclamations of surprise and questions cross over between the little doors and little windows: "What happened?" "What is it?" "**Has carnival came back?**" [added boldface] "Who are they?" And one voice, overriding the clamour of the other voices, of the musical instruments, and of the lauyghter with which the aleey is by now filled, replies: "They are the painters going to eat artichokes in the Ghetto". Upon hearing these words, the men clap and the women smile.]

Then however, at the tavern, ran by a recognisably Jewish depiction of a man, Mr. Pacifico, with curly hair and a pot belly and yet described as a handsome man, as he tells people who want to come in that the place is already full with painters and only painters are admitted, the scene turns into a noisy charivari, he slams the door, and somebody breaks the glass-window. What is more, we are told before that as the painters hurry to take their place inside the tavern, they deliberately make a clamour with the cutlery. It is they who clamour first, before the crowd outside riots. This carnival scene is idyllic at first, but this being Pascarella, even though the carnival progresses, events turn too rowdy for comfort. We have seen precisely such an evolution of the situation in the *Discovery of America*, after Columbus' men land, and afterwards once the natives come to have reasons to want them out.

In "Carciofolata", the plot turns back to a benign situation, as one of the painters tries to begin a semi-serious speech about the botany of artichokes but is shouted down, and then Mr. Pacifico takes things in hand; food is served, and carnival is again benign (pp. 292–293):

Il sor Pacifico si fa innanzi, accolto da una tramontanata di fischi, di urli, di applausi e di risate, sale sur una sedia e con le mani alzate fa cenni per implorare un po' di pazienza; poi scende ed apre la porta di un meschino cortiletto, dove alcuni omini vestiti di bianco, fra nuvole di fumo azzurro, si affaccendano intorno a caldaie nere, piene d'olio bollente, per estrarne i carciofi, che sembrano d'oro, e gittarli entro a canestre coperte da candidi tovaglioli.

[Mr. Pacifico comes forth, welcomed by a storm of whistles, shouts, clapping and laughter. He mounts on a chair,<sup>26</sup> raises his hands, and gestures to beg for patience. He then descends from the chair of opens the door to a miserable little courtyard, where some little men dressed in white, amid clouds of blue smoke, are busy around black kiers full of boiling oil, taking out the artichokes, which appear to be golden, and throwing them inside large baskets covered with candid towels.]

<sup>26</sup> Caleb stands on a bench, asks for silence, and then refutes the Explorers' report, in *Numbers Rabbah* 15:11.



**Left:** A portrait of Cesare Pascarella by an unknown illustrator, published on the front cover of the monthly *La Tribuna Illustrata*, 5(6), in Rome in 1894.

**Below and bottom left:** Other portraits of Pascarella.



Appena il sor Pacifico apre la porta della cucina ne esce subito uno degli uomini bianchi, sorreggendo con le braccia robuste una di coteste canestre. Dopo [p. 293] qualche istante è vuota! Altre canestre colme di carciofi vengono recate sulle tavole, altre e poi altre, e non appena vi sono posate mostrano il fondo.

[As soon as Mr. Pacifico opens the door to the kitchen, immediately one of the men dressed in white comes out, supporting in his robust arms one of those baskets. In just a few instants, it is empty! Other baskets full of artichokes are carried to the tables, then more and more of them, and as soon as there is cutlery, one sees the bottom of the basket.]

Tutti mangiano ghiottamente e bevono. I carciofi, si sa, prosciugano la gola e il vino per bagnarla non è mai troppo. I litri si vuotano senza contarli. E il vino dà un dolce calore alle vene, arrossa i volti, rinforza i corpi e intenerisce gli animi. I «filetti di baccalà», una specialità del locale!, vengono dopo i carciofi ad accrescere in tutti la voglia di bere; e quando una enorme zuppa inglese, scortata da qualche bottiglia di liquore, segue i «filetti», i ricordi gli aneddoti le rimembranze e le memorie si propagano da una tavola all'altra, recandovi ora una sincera allegrezza ora una soave mestizia.

[Everybody eats gluttonously and drinks. Artichokes, you know, dry up the throat, and the wine to wet it is never enough. Innumerable litres are emptied. And the wine gives a sweet heat to the veins, reddens the faces, strengthens the bodies, and softens the spirits. The stockfish filets (a speciality of this restaurant!), come after the artichokes, and increase in everybody the desire to drink. And when a huge trifle (literally: 'English soup'), escorted by some bottles of liquor, follows the filets, the memories, the anecdotes, the reminiscences, and things of which one is reminded propagate from a table to the other, bringing there sometimes sincere merriment, some other times suave melancholy.]

## **8. The *pizzarelle* of Cerreto Laziale Are a Kind of Pasta, Whereas Around Naples They Are Small Pizzas**

The noun *pizzarelle* also denotes, elsewhere in central or southern Italy, a kind of bakery typical of a Catholic population, rather than of Jews. The transparent etymology of *pizzarella* (the singular whose plural form is *pizzarelle*) is as a diminutive of *pizza*. In present-day standard Italian however, the diminutive of *pizza* is *pizzetta*. For example, at the Jewish day school I attended in Milan from 1969 to 1974 while at high school, during recess some lady caretakers (themselves not Jewish) used to sell *pizzette* to pupils and teachers on the first floor landing. Those kosher small pizzas had their cheese topped with tomato paste and with a bit of paste of anchovies (*alici*) squeezed out of a tube.

As for *pizzarelle*, around Naples one comes across a sense of the word which is compatible with the etymological sense, as a small pizza. We show a photograph of such *pizzarelle* as served in Frattamaggiore, a town in the province of Naples. Actually, even the *pizzarelle* of Roman Jews are compatible (because of the fritters being made with rather flat batter) with the etymological sense of *pizza* itself (and of its lexical variant *pitta* from some areas of Italy), as being a flat bread, which became the base of pizzas as we know them. (In the history of food, the base could functionally be used as a dish or platter, with toppings).

In contrast, on 19 and 20 September, the town of Cerreto Laziale holds a Sagra delle Pizzarelle. This festival's sacredness is asserted in the transparent etymology of *sagra*. As can be seen in a photograph reproduced here, the *pizzarelle* from Cerreto actually are a kind of pasta, so there has been a major semantic shift from the etymological sense.



A pizzarella as meant in Frattamaggiore, from a restaurant's advertisement on the Web.



More pizzarelle from the Pizzeria PalaPizza in Frattamaggiore.



A dish of *pizzarelle* as meant in Cerreto Laziale, from an advertisement for the Sagra delle Pizzarelle.



Above and below, different toppings for a pizzarella from Frattamaggiore.





An announcement of the 2015 Sagra delle Pizzarelle in Cerreto, allegedly the 38th ever held.<sup>27</sup>

In conformity with the expectation that there exist pizzas with different toppings, the Associazione Spaghetitaliani, at a webpage<sup>28</sup> dated 15 July 2015, offered prospective

<sup>27</sup> The photo of the announcement is from <http://www.tiburno.tv/images/sagre/pizzarelle.jpg> whereas the photo of the Cerreto pizzarelle themselves is from <http://www.tiburno.tv/images/sagre/pizzarelle.jpg>  
<sup>28</sup> <http://www.imparziale.com/2015/07/15/nuova-tappa-di-pizzarelle-a-go-go/> (where *l'Imparziale* is a periodical registered in 2014 at the Tribunale di Napoli). As for the images of pizzarelle with different toppings from Frattamaggiore, these are details of a photograph with a red label "PIZZARELLE" across in the middle, which appears both at <http://www.imparziale.com/2015/07/15/nuova-tappa-di-pizzarelle-a-go-go/> and (also from 2015) at this other address: <http://www.terronianmagazine.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/pizzarelle-foto.jpg> The latter is at the website of a magazine, *Terronian Magazine*, promoting especially commercial interests from Italy's South, and established in 2014 by the Associazione Terronian. The name is surprising, as *terrone* is a disparaging name for a Southerner, used by Northerners. The name *Terronian Magazine* appears to try to ennoble the old slur. Arguably, by adapting it into English, prestige was sought (as English is now held to be a language of prestige), bypassing in the hierarchy the status of the Italian of those whose use the slur *terrone*.

customers a visit (within a series named “Pizzarelle a Go Go”) to the Pizzeria PalaPizza in Frattamaggiore, offering pizzarelle with six different kinds of toppings:<sup>29</sup>

**Sequenza delle pizzarelle:**

- 1 – datterini, mozzarella e olio evo, preparata da Enrico Di Pietro
- 2 – alici, fiori di zucca e provola preparata da Antonio Arfè
- 3 – mozzarella, cotto, rucola e pomodorino, preparata da Enrico Di Pietro
- 4 – carbonara di mare, crema di peperoni e provola, preparata da Antonio Arfè
- 5 – crema ai 4 formaggi, rucola, provola, salsicce e scaglie di grana, preparata da Enrico Di Pietro
- 6 – ragù di zucchine, provola e ricotta pepata, preparata da Antonio Arfè

Each and every entry, of the ones listed, includes some kind of cheese, and almost all of them are combined with fish, seafood or sausages. Thus, the expectation of a pizzarella as meant in Frattamaggiore is what one would expect of a pizza, and actually the word *pizzarella* there is intended as a diminutive (like *pizzetta*), in line with how one forms diminutives in Neapolitan. This is confirmed by an explicit statement in the same advertisement:

**Ogni Pizzarella** equivale a mezza pizza e potrà essere cotta anche senza condimento, che , in questo caso, verrà applicato sopra la Pizzarella dopo la sua cottura.

[Every pizzarella is equivalent to half a pizza, and it could as well be baked with no topping, which such being the case, would be added to the pizzarella after it is baked.]

## 9. Breads for Easter

In Italy, in particular in Sicily (Ruffino 1995, Ronco 1995), among the Catholic population, there is a great variety of breads for Easter; these are typically unrelated to Jewish baking for Passover, even though also in Christian baking for Easter there occur unleavened breads, just as one comes across leavened breads. Di Segni (n.d., note 2) averred that

non si può più affermare liberamente, senza fornire adeguati sostegni, che la ‘carta musica’ della Sardegna derivi dal pane azzimo ebraico, come faceva Cesare Medina intorno al 1870 (Medina, 1935).

[one can no longer freely claim, with no adequate evidence, that Sardinia’s *carta musica* is derived from Jewish matzoh bread, which is what Cesare Medina was claiming around 1870 (Medina 1935).]

## 10. The Historical Spread of the Lexical Type *pitta* / *pizza* / *pinza*, and the Sporadic Occurrence of Sweet “Pizza” or “Pita”

Alinei and Nissan (2007)<sup>30</sup> discussed the historical word family comprising *pizza* and *pitta* in Italy and the former Byzantine Empire. One finds *pita* as denoting a kind of stuffed sweet baked pastry in Hungary. Section 3 in Nissan and Alinei (2013) explained:

In southern Italy the forms *pizza* and *pitta* appear alternatively. Contrary to those giving for *pizza* a Germanic origin (which flies in the face of the material culture of eastern and central Mediterranean flat breads), Alinei and Nissan (2007) showed that *pizza* is from *pitta*, actually for the base of the pizza; and this is the Byzantine Greek *pitta*, whence sundry names for kinds of flat bread from the Balkanic peninsula and Anatolia, as well as (through Judaeo-Spanish) the Israeli

<sup>29</sup> Ones using seafood cannot be kosher. Also combining dairy ingredients with meat (sausage) is not kosher.

<sup>30</sup> That is a paper in Italian. Cf. Nissan and Alinei (2013), in English.

term *pita*, whence in English *pita*, *pitta*, *pita bread*, and (as introduced by supermarket chains) *mini-pitta* or even *mini white pittas* in Britain.

In Israel, one refers as *pita* even to the very large flat breads (widespread in the Arab world [...]) known among Iraqis and Iraqi Jews as *xābax m̄āy* (lit., ‘water bread’, the tender kind that kind be folded) and *gāwrag* (the hard, breakable kind), or then the similar Iranian flat bread [...], and the great variety of Indian flat breads, each kind with its own name (and sold that way in London).

In Italy one finds *pitta* in Calabria, Lucania, and (in Apulia) the Otrantino, for ‘flat bread’ (i.e., standard Italian focaccia), but in Naples one also finds *pettola* and, in the Abruzzo region, *pettola* for ‘sheet of pastry’, whereas in Italy’s north, in Valtellina one finds *peta* ‘rather flat bread’; and in the dialect of Venice and in the Romagna region one finds the form *pinza* for ‘pizza’ (Alinei and Nissan 2007).



The respective areas of the word forms *pizza*, *pitta*, and *pinza* in Italy (from Alinei and Nissan 2007).

Earlier in the present study, we have seen that the *pizza* from the Ghetto of Rome is a sweet cake. Is there any other sense of *pizza* such that a sweet baked product is denoted? And if so, does it come closer to the prototypical sense of *pizza*, comprising a flat *pizza* base? That is the case indeed. There exists the *Lotta-Chocca Pizza*. On 29 June 2017, while travelling by bus in Bexley main street in the London borough of Bexley, I saw a photograph on the glass window of an eatery of the “Lotta-Chocca Pizza”: it is made with thick chocolate cream (resembling Nutella) on a *pizza* base. The topping is outlandish for a *pizza*, and yet, because of there being a *pizza* base, that product is a *pizza* indeed in its proper sense.

Section 4 in Nissan and Alinei (2013) further stated:

In the eastern Mediterranean: Turkish has *pide* (dialectally *pīde*, *pīte*, *pīte*, *bīde*) ‘flat bread’; Bulgarian and Macedonian have *pita*, and Albanian, *pīte* (round flat bread that can be opened, as usual in Israel with the local *pita*. See in Fig. 4 *pitta bread* as sold in Britain, opened and stuffed). In Greece, the *pīta*, *pēta* or *pīta* is usually rectangular, instead of round. In Serbia and Croatia, by *pīta* one means a flat bread studded like lasagna.

In Hungarian, *pīte* denotes either a flat bread, or sweet baked pastry stuffed with fruits. In dialectal Rumanian and Arumanian, *pīṭă* denotes sundry kinds of bread (Alinei and Nissan 2007).

Closely related to Rumanian, Arumanian is spoken in some communities scattered in Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, and northwest Greece.

In Judaeo-Spanish, *pita* is documented as early as 1730, in Rabbi Jacob Kuli's *Me'am lo'ez*; Israeli *pita* is certainly from Ottoman Judaeo-Spanish, as pointed out by Schwarzwald (1993, pp. 45–46), who cites Gold (1984). Both Gold and Schwarzwald missed however the broader picture as delineated in Alinei and Nissan (2007), and which also reassesses and encompasses in the same framework the Italian and international noun *pizza*. Incidentally, as an instructive illustration of globalisation of the name and the concept, note that some material from Alinei and Nissan (2007) was reused with permission on pp. 19–20 and 27 (cf. on pp. ix, xii) in Rossella Ceccarini's (2011a) interesting book *Pizza and Pizza Chefs in Japan: A Case of Culinary Globalization*. Cf. Ceccarini (2011b, p. 19), where the hypothesis from Alinei and Nissan (2007) is much simplified and conflated.



Detail from a map in Alinei and Nissan (2007).

Samuel Hopkins, in his entry voce *pita*, *pitta* for the online *Oxford English Dictionary*, gave this etymology:

Partly < modern Hebrew *pittāh* (< Balkan Judaeo-Spanish *pita* slightly leavened flat bread), partly < the etymon of the latter, modern Greek *πίττα*, *πίτα*, *πίττα* bread, cake, pie, *pitta* (a1108 in medieval Greek as *πίτα*), partly < Serbian and Croatian *pita* (1685), and partly perh. also < other languages of the Balkans (cf. Albanian *pite*, Bulgarian *pita*); further etymology uncertain and disputed.

**NEW**

# LOTTA-CHOCCHA PIZZA



[/DominosPizza](https://www.facebook.com/DominosPizza)



[@Dominos\\_UK](https://twitter.com/Dominos_UK)

Nissan and Alinei (2013) further stated in Sec. 5:

It is quite possible that it was the intra-Ottoman social network of the speakers of Judaeo-Spanish from the eastern Mediterranean who introduced the term *pita* to Palestine, and in all likelihood, it was Jews from Salonika, Adrianople, or Bulgaria. The earliest sure Greek instance is in Theophilactus, who from 1090 to 1108 was bishop of Bulgaria with his seat in Ochrida. It is unclear whether the etymology could be traced to the fifth century C.E., to Hesychius' glosses *πίττα*: *πίτυρα* 'bran' and *πιτίτης*: *πιτύρινοι ἄρτοι* 'bran breads'.

Alinei and Nissan (2007) proposed that Byzantine Greek borrowed *pitta* or *pita* from Christian Middle Aramaic, i.e., Syriac or some vernacular, as Aramaic *pitta* 'bread', cf. Hebrew *pat*, *pitt-* (historically, there were older developments in the biblical period, apparently, from such bread being suitable for tearing pieces from it). Note however that the borrowing from Middle Aramaic into Greek must have been late enough (thus, Byzantine) for the Northwest Semitic phoneme /p/ to have in the source language the allophones [p] and [f], rather than [φ] and [f] (which was still the case in Roman-age Hebrew, as opposed to early medieval Hebrew: [...]).

## 11. Italian Jewish Sweet Pastries for Passover

Going back to Italian Jewish sweet pastries for Passover, note that the *apera*, typical of Venice Jews, is a large, round, thick cookie. It is not strictly speaking a flat bread (also in Jewish law, it counts like a cake rather than bread, for the purposes of the blessing required before and after eating it), and yet, typologically it is relevant. Its size is illustrated in the image reproduced here. These cookies are made by first beating eggs with sugar, anise extract, and freshly grated lemon rind, then gradually adding Passover cake flour (this is flour that would not rise, as the patry must be unleavened for it to be kosher for Passover). The batter thus obtained is then made into round medallions.<sup>31</sup> These are baked until they turn golden. (In the oven, they become somewhat puffed,<sup>32</sup> but not because of leavening.)



Apere (àpere) being prepared in Venice, shown here in order to give an idea of the size, in relation to the human hand. Detail from a photograph<sup>33</sup> by Paolo Della Corte from Venice.

<sup>31</sup> <http://chronicle.1.org.nz/Item.asp?Item=3689>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.coquinaria.it/forum/forum/i-forum-di-coquinaria/tavola-rotonda-2006/49085-nuovo-topo-di-ricettine-ebraiche?p=1206593#post1206593> (a post of 23 January 2007).

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.shootfood.it/single-image/venezia-la-preparazione-delle-apere-un-tradizionale-dolce-ebraico-pesach-la-pasqua>



The preparation of àperes in Venice; courtesy of Paolo Della Corte, who is the photographer, based in Venice.



Another photo by Paolo Della Corte, showing the preparation of apere.  
<http://www.shootfood.it/single-image/venezia-la-preparazione-delle-apere-un-tradizionale-dolce-ebraico-pesach-la-pasqua>



*Bulla buns* are a kind of West Indian bread, especially from Jamaica. The shape and size closely resemble those of Venetian *apere*. This photograph shows a London baker holding a tray of bulla buns; this is Miriam Skidmore at Chief Bakery, a London specialist bakery, in the South London neighbourhood of West Norwood, which is best known for its cemetery. Miriam Skidmore with the tray was photographed<sup>34</sup> on p. 33 in the Homes & Property supplement of the *Evening Standard* (London) of 24 May 2017.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.pressreader.com/uk/london-evening-standard-west-end-final-b-es-homes-and-property/20170524/281500751196066>

In the *belles lettres*, one can find a reference to the baking of *apere* in Venice in a work of fiction, *Undici stelle risplendenti (Eleven Shining Stars)* by Anna Vera Sullam (2012). It is a novel whose setting is at a Jewish home in contemporary Milan, during preparations for the Passover evening banquet. Milan has the largest Jewish community in Italy after Rome. In the following passage from *Undici stelle risplendenti*, some up to date information is given about current modes of production of pastries for Passover as consumed by Jewish families in Italy. In particular, one character explains that they are imported from France or Israel, and that local production of pastries for Passover in northern Italy apparently only survives in Venice, by a couple of commercial establishments but also by ladies who come to the Jewish community's Passover oven in order to bake for their respective families.

*Bisse* are S-shaped cookies for Passover,<sup>35</sup> with anise extract and grated lemon rind, like *apere*. Both kinds of cookies are often mentioned together. Venetian *bissa*, Italian *biscia*, is a name for non-venomous snakes, so the semantic shift to the cookie is by shape metaphor.<sup>36</sup>

The following is reproduced from a page in Anna Vera Sullam's book:

«Mi dispiace non aver fatto niente» interviene Sofia, «non ho avuto tempo e ho dovuto comprare dei dolci già pronti.»

«Ah, ma sono ottimi! Li fanno a Milano?»

«Non credo, devono essere francesi, o forse israeliani, non lo so. Penso che solo a Venezia si continuino a fare i dolci artigianalmente.»

«Chi li fa i dolci ebraici a Venezia?» chiede Camilla, che avrà mangiato per l'ultima volta un dolce il giorno della sua Prima Comunione.

«Ci sono due negozi appena dentro al Ghetto, dalla parte della fondamenta di Cannaregio. Ma per *Pesach* viene aperto il vecchio forno, lì accanto, in una calle che si chiama appunto "Calle del forno", e molte donne della Comunità si alternano per fare i dolci tradizionali: le *apere*, le *bisse* e gli *zuccherini*» spiega Ruth.

«*I didn't understand what she said*» interviene Mrs Weinstein, e il marito le traduce la conversazione suscitando altri gridolini di meraviglia.

[“I am so sorry I prepared nothing”, Sofia said. “I had no time, so I had to buy ready-made pastries”.

“Oh, but they are excellent! Do they make them in Milan?”

<sup>35</sup> [http://digilander.libero.it/davarina25/RICETTE\\_PESACH.htm](http://digilander.libero.it/davarina25/RICETTE_PESACH.htm)

<sup>36</sup> I remember from the years I spent in Milan (1965–1983), that the Jewish community sometimes advertised the opportunity of buying “*bizze e apere*” for Passover. *Bizze* was a wrong adaptation of *bisse*, formed by reckoning that *bisse* (with [ss] instead of [tts] in the reconstructed *bizze*) is the pronunciation one would expect in Venice.

“I don’t think so. They must be French, or perhaps Israeli, I don’t know. I think it’s only in Venice they still make those pastries in small enterprises”.

“Who makes Jewish pastries in Venice?”, asked Camilla. Presumably, the last time she ate some sweet pastry was on the day of her Confirmation.

“There are two shops just as you enter the Ghetto, on the side of the foundations of Cannaregio. But for Passover, they open the old oven, nearby, in an alley called ‘Oven Alley’ (Calle del Forno), and many women who belong to the Jewish Community prepare in turn traditional sweets: *apere*, *bisse*, and *zuccherini*”, Ruth explained.

“I don’t understand what she said”, Mrs Weinstein said in English. Her husband translated for her the conversation, and got in response little cries of amazement.]

The *zuccherini* (whose name is derived from *zucchero* ‘sugar’) are defined on the next page in Sullam’s book:

«Io quest’anno ho fatto gli *zuccherini*, quelli tondi, coperti di zucchero e con un buco in mezzo» interviene Vittoria. «Si prende un pezzo di impasto, lo si lavora dandogli la forma di una pallina, la si appiattisce sul tavolo, poi con il dito si fa un buco in mezzo.»

[“This year, I made *zuccherini*, the round ones, coated with sugar and with a hole in the middle”, Vittoria intervened. “One takes a piece of batter, one works it giving it the shape of a little sphere, then one flattens it on that table surface, and then one makes a hole in the middle with one’s finger”.]

«Io li faccio diversamente» replica Ruth. «Do all’impasto la forma di un cilindro lungo una decina di centimetri, poi chiudo tra loro le due estremità così da formare una *ciambella*.»

[“I make them differently”, Ruth retorted. “I shape the batter like a cylinder, nearly 10 cm long, then I join together the two ends, thus forming sort of a bagel shape”.]

«Mia madre li faceva come Vittoria» si intromette all’improvviso Arrigo. «Solo che il buco lo otteneva premendo un ditale in mezzo al dolce.» Poi, vedendo che tutti si sono girati verso di lui, si ritrae come una lumaca nel guscio e abbassa gli occhi intimidito.

[Arrigo suddenly intervenes: “My mother used to make them the way Vittoria does. But she used to make the hole by pressing a thimble in the middle of the pastry”. Then, seeing that everybody turned towards him, he retreats like a snail into its shell, and shyly lowers his eyes.]

## 12. What Is Meant by *ghetto pizza* in the United States of America

Finally, considering that Giacoma Limentani’s text about Rome mentions buying a quarter of pizza inside the Ghetto, it is worthwhile mentioning that at present in the United States, one comes across the phrase *ghetto pizza*. It apparently has more than one acceptance. The following is quoted from a webpage entitled “Urban Dictionary: *ghetto pizza*”<sup>37</sup> and dated 25 February 2008: “Chillax Tyrone, we just cook ourselves up some of the *ghetto pizza*! [...] a pizza made of saltine crackers, ketchup packets and grated Parmesan”.

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=ghetto%20pizza>



“Ghetto Pizza” from *Bloglander*, where this mock-warning is given: “You may want to look away if you’re adverse to main meal recipes with only three ingredients”.

Another sense of *Ghetto Pizza* occurs at a webpage entitled “Ghetto Pizza: Cheap Eats - Bloglander” (dated 13 March 2006),<sup>38</sup> and denotes an easy made next thing to a pizza, that here in London or elsewhere I have often eaten at home (only, it contained tomato rather than sauce, and was toasted in the oven rather than in aluminium foil inside a toaster), without it occurring to me that it should have a name; if pressed to describe it, I would have referred to it as “a toast topped with melted cheese”. In fact, the blogger stated that the name *Ghetto Pizza* is their own coinage.<sup>39</sup> The blogger gives a recipe, using one slice of white bread, one slice of cheese (“mozzarella, swiss, etc.”), and two tablespoons of spaghetti sauce.<sup>40</sup> Most definitely, this is not what Giacomina Limentani meant when referring to pizza from the Ghetto.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.bloglander.com/cheapeats/2006/03/13/making-ghetto-pizzas/>

<sup>39</sup> “If you were ever a hungry latch-key kid coming home from school, chances are you’ve made an afternoon snack like this before. I call it **Ghetto Pizza**, although maybe it should be called ‘Starving College Kid Pizza’. I happen to think this is quite good for lunchtime meals as well (as long as you eat other stuff with it, veggies would be nice!). ¶ I actually wasn’t a latch-key kid until high school, but I still found occasion to make these every so often. The recipe is stupidly simple, has endless modifications, generally tastes ‘good’ and can be fairly cheap as long as you don’t go putting any gourmet toppings on top”.

<sup>40</sup> “If you can’t figure out how to make this, then I don’t know what to say. ¶ Varying the type of bread can do wonders. I particularly like to use **English Muffins** as the base, because they are round like a mini-pizza, they have nooks and crannies where sauce can get into and because they have that extra crunch that normal toast doesn’t have. Another favorite is the **Ghetto Pizza Bagels**. ¶ By the way, I know they have all these ‘mini-pizza’ things you can buy in the frozen food section. I try and avoid those, because these are so easy to make”.

### 13. Greek *Pitari* for ‘Matzo Bread’ in a Medieval Jewish Document

In an article in which he was concerned with medieval documents preserving Greek in Hebrew characters (typically intermingled with Hebrew text), Nicholas de Lange (2006) discussed “fragments of four Passover *haggadoth*. In three of them the instructions for conducting the seder are given in Greek; in the fourth the instructions are in Hebrew but there are some Greek words.

Taken together, they shed light not only on the Greek language spoken by the Jews who produced them, which is the main concern of this essay, but also on the ritual of the seder [Passover evening banquet] as practiced by these Jews, which has some distinctive features” (*ibid.*, p. 491, my brackets). “Codicological criteria offer no reason to doubt that all belong chronologically in the ‘classical period’ of the [Cairo] Genizah [the synagogue loft where these and many other medieval documents were preserved], defined by dated documents in the period from ca. 1000 to the early thirteenth century. On linguistic grounds they [the fragments discussed] cannot be earlier than the tenth century” (*ibid.*, my brackets), but “not earlier than the twelfth century” (*ibid.*, p. 492). “They all clearly derive from a Greek-speaking milieu. Dialectal features are hard to pin down, but the use of the accusative for the indirect object (6,7) points to northern Greece, Constantinople, or Asia Minor” (*ibid.*). “In conclusion, these fragments provide us with our earliest evidence for the Byzantine ritual of the Passover seder. On the grounds mentioned earlier, there are to be dated in or before the twelfth century. Copies of the Greek (Romanipote) rite prayer book containing the seder ritual are generally dated some two or three centuries later” (*ibid.*, pp. 496–497).

Let us consider the following (de Lange 2006, p.493):

D. *Cutting the matsah* [5, 8]

5: [*kepernin*] *pitari kekofitito is* [ . . . ] *si mesa tondhio keto* [ . . . ] *trapeziou* ([and he takes] some unleavened bread and cuts it into [two and places one half] between the (other) two and the [other half he places at the ?side] of the table).

The term *pitari* for *matsah* is also found later in 6. This word, derived from the Greek *pitta*, means a (small) unleavened bread. It may also echo the Jewish Palestinian Aramaic *patir*, which has the same meaning. From the fact that it is cut, not broken, we may deduce that it was softer than present-day *matsot*, perhaps more like a contemporary pita. The words supplied in square brackets in the translation are based on the description of this ritual in 8. The ritual is omitted in 7.

8: [Then take] the three *matsoth taprotoplas[ta]* and set them before you, and take one of them and cut it into two pieces. Place one piece between these two *matsoth*, and place one piece at the side of the table and cover it with a cloth.

The word *protoplasta*, applied to these three *matsot*, is puzzling. The term means “first formed”, “first shaped”, or even “first kneaded”. In older Greek Jewish usage it refers to Adam, the first man (*Wisdom of Solomon* 7.1, 10.1). There may be some theological symbolism involved in applying it to the *matsot*, or it may simply indicate that these special *matsot* destined for the seder ritual were made first, before those intended for ordinary consumption.

As for the Jewish Palestinian Aramaic *patir* for ‘matzo bread’, consider that in Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic, an individual matzah, or matzo bread collectively, is referred to as *máṣṣa* (which does not take a suffix for the plural), which is a loanword from Hebrew, or then by *ftīy*. Passover is referred to either as *Pésah* (from Hebrew), or as *‘Id el-ftīy* (literally, ‘Festival of the matzo bread’).

De Lange concluded his paper with this paragraph (2006, p. 497):

There is no indication whatever of a distinctive Jewish dialect; consequently there are no grounds for applying the term “Judaeo-Greek” in this case. Even when specific objects associated with the seder ritual are named, words in current Greek use (such as *pitari*, *pikridhi*, *pinaki*) are employed, rather than foreign borrowings or distinctive terms. In one case, however, *efkharistia* for a liturgical benediction, we have indicated a long history of distinctively Jewish usage, and the same may be true of *protoplasta* and perhaps some other terms. Such words would have been perfectly intelligible to a Greek-speaking Christian, particularly when, as in the examples quoted, they were found in the Greek Bible of the Church.

#### 14. Pasqualone’s Research into Flat Breads

Antonella Pasqualone — of the Dipartimento di Scienze del Suolo, della Pianta e degli Alimenti of the Università degli Studi di Bari — has published two richly illustrated and cogently argued articles about flat breads (Pasqualone 2017 [in Italian], 2018 [in English]) that deserve to be widely known. The English-language overview is entitled “Traditional Flat Breads Spread from the Fertile Crescent: Production Process and History of Baking Systems”.

Her main focus in those papers is on kinds of bread in Western and Central Asia (in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Uighur culture in China’s Xinjiang), Iran and the Caucasus, the Arabian peninsula, as well as in North Africa (in Egypt and in the Maghreb, including in Berber culture), and Sudan and the Horn of Africa.

Concerning Xinjiang, bear in mind that the area was re-peopled, with migration from Kazakhstan, after the Dzungar genocide<sup>41</sup> in the mid-18th century; at any rate, the disappeared people were bearers of a Western Mongol culture, and unless they underwent some acculturation, it is unlikely they would have been relevant for the overview on the spread of flat breads from the Fertile Crescent.

There is also some brief reference to flat bread from the Indian subcontinent, but very much can be said about Indian flat breads, and these deserve studies for their own sake. Still, Pasqualone (2018) lists (even on a geographical map ranging as far west as the Maghreb) *chapafi*, *naan*, *roti*, *pitha*, *kulcha*, *bakhri*, and *dosa*, as being associated with India and Pakistan. For Iran, she lists *barbari*, *sangak*, *taftoon*, *lavash*, *khoshk*, and *jow*.

Pasqualone (2017) cites, for kinds of bread in Africa, an encyclopeda entry by Lyons (2016). She also cites several publications about baked products and ovens

<sup>41</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dzungar\\_genocide](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dzungar_genocide) begins by explaining: “The **Dzungar genocide** was the mass extermination of the Mongol Buddhist **Dzungar people**, sometimes referred as ‘Zunghars’, at the hands of the **Manchu Qing dynasty** of China and the **Uyghurs** of Xinjiang. The **Qianlong Emperor** ordered the genocide due to the rebellion in 1755 by Dzungar leader **Amursana** against Qing rule, after the dynasty first conquered the **Dzungar Khanate** with Amursana's support. The genocide was perpetrated by Manchu generals of the **Qing army** sent to crush the Dzungars, supported by allies and vassals like Uyghur leader **Khoja Emin** due to the Uyghurs revolt against Dzungar rule. ¶ The Dzungars were a confederation of several **Tibetan Buddhist Oirat** Mongols tribes that emerged suddenly in the early 17th century. The Dzungar Khanate was the last great **nomadic empire** in Asia. Some scholars estimate that about 80% of the Dzungar population, or around 500,000 to 800,000 people, were killed by a combination of warfare and disease during or after the Qing conquest in 1755–1757. After wiping out the native population of **Dzungaria**, the Qing government then resettled **Han**, **Hui**, **Uyghur**, and **Xibe** people on state farms in Dzungaria along with Manchu Bannermen to repopulate the area”. Besides: “The **Dzungarian** basin, which used to be inhabited by Dzungars, is currently inhabited by Kazakhs. The Dzungar genocide has been compared to the Qing **extermination of the Jinchuan Tibetan people in 1776**” (*ibid.*).

from the ancient Near East, as well as studies about ovens in medieval Andalusia. Also cited are studies about microbiological aspects of given kinds of bread. I would like to point out that the noun *tannūr* ‘oven’ occurs in Biblical Hebrew, so it is documented earlier than Arabic *tannūr* ‘oven’.

As for Italy, the *Spianata di Ozieri / Spianata sarda* is enumerated by Pasqualone (2017), along with *pistoccu* and *casarau* (aql three from Sardinia), and Pasqualone (2018) lists in addition *pitta* and *scacciuni* as being associated with Sicily, and — from northern Italy — *testarolo*, *panigaccio*, *neccio*, *piadina*, *crescenta*, and *borlengo*.

Pasqualone has discussed her data in rigorous, technical detail, so that a typology emerges, along with the geo-cultural distribution of its types. The criteria of classification are technically sound, and provide a framework for further research into the subject of flat breads.

Some of the kinds of bread she discussed also occur in Israel. Ethiopian Jews have brought *injera* bread, whose appreciation is an acquired taste, as otherwise, ones unfamiliar with it may consider it overleavened. Iraqi Jews have brought two kinds of Iraqi flat breads (both of them are known in Israeli Hebrew as *píta irákit*): within the culture, the crisp kind is known as *gáwrag*, whereas the soft kind is known as *khábəz mə́y*, i.e., literally, ‘bread of water’, softness being conveyed through reference to the retained wetness of the texture. And indeed, Pasqualone in the abstract of her 2018 paper points out that the multitude of flat breads “are always relatively thin, ranging from a few millimeters to a few centimeters in thickness. These breads, whose origin is very ancient, fit well into the context of a subsistence economy: i) they can be obtained from cereals other than wheat, such as pseudocereals or legumes, allowing the use of sustainable local productions from marginal lands; ii) they do not necessarily require an oven to be baked; iii) they can serve as a dish and as a spoon/fork; iv) they can be dehydrated by a second baking process, preventing the growth of molds and extending the shelf life; v) they are transported with little encumbrance”. Arguably, point (iv) is the main rationale for the existence of *gáwrag* as opposed to *khábəz mə́y*.

## 15. Arabic *ruqaq* (or *raqaq*, *roqaq*, *rogag*) vs. Hebrew *raqiq* (plural *reqiqim*)

Pasqualone (2018, p. 3, Fig., 3, part B) shows “Loaves of Egyptian *roqaq* bread. This bread is baked until dry; therefore, it has relatively long shelf life, and usually, it is rehydrated before eating”. Those sheets (rather than loaves) of Egyptian *roqaq* are thinner than Iraqi *gawrag* (which has some air captured inside, here and there). Rather, the Egyptian *roqaq* resembles *káhi*, a thin, round baked product that Iraqi Jews prepare for the Pentecost (Shavu‘óth), and which, once it is ready, is sweetened with sugar, butter and sugar, or *shira* (clear syrop of sugar; the noun *shira* is also known in that sense in Urdu; at least as early as the 18th century, many Iraqi Jews had been to India, often coming back to Iraq). Because of the tradition of pilgrimage among Iraqi Jews (before their traumatic exodus from Iraq in 1950/51), to the shrine of Ezra for ones coming from Basra, or to the Tomb of Ezekiel in Kífl (Čáƒəl), for ones coming from Baghdad, the name for the Jewish Pentecost in Baghdadi Judaeo-Arabic is *‘Íd əzzyāgha*, literally, ‘the Festival of Pilgrimage’.

Concerning “the *ruqaq* (or *raqaq*, *roqaq*, *rogag*) produced from wheat flour in the Arabian peninsula, in Egypt, and in northern Iraq” (Pasqualone 2018, p. 3), I would like to point out that the lexical type is the same of *raqiq* (plural *reqiqim*) in Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew (Jastrow 1903, p. 1497, col. 1, s.v.). In the *Babylonian Talmud*,

tractate *Bava Bathra* 19b, this is a thin baked product, in opposition to a kind described as “thick”. In Modern Hebrew, *raqiq* (plural *reqiqim*) has been applied to ‘pastry’, ‘sweet baked products’

The occurrence in the Babylonian Talmud is within a discussion of the first paragraph of Chapter 2 of tractate *Bava Bathra* in the *Mishnah* (itself compiled in the Galilee in the early years of the third century C.E.), and this paragraph is quoted (before being discussed in detail) in the *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate *Bava Bathra*, 17a: “A man should not dig a pit [in his own field] close to the pit of his neighbour, nor a ditch nor a cave nor a water-channel nor a fuller’s pool, unless he keeps them at least three handbreadths from his neighbour’s wall and plasters [the sides]. a man should keep olive refuse, dung, salt, lime, and flint stones at least three handbreadths from his neighbour’s wall or plaster it over. Seeds, plow furrows, and urine should be kept three handbreadths from the wall. Millstones should be kept three handbreadths away reckoning from the upper stone, which means four from the lower stone. An oven should be kept three handbreadths reckoning from the foot of the base, which means four from the top of the base”.

I quote the latter, as well as the following, from the now classic Soncino English translation of the *Babylonian Talmud* (Epstein 1935–1948, their brackets, my added numbers in braces which refer to their notes):

R. Tobi b. Kisna said in the name of Samuel: A thin wafer does not narrow a window space.<sup>{1}</sup> Why a thin one? The same can be said even of a thick one? — The Rabbi gave an extreme instance. It goes without saying in the case of a thick cake that since it is fit for food the owner does not mentally ignore its existence, [and therefore it does not narrow the window space]; but with a thin one, since it soon becomes uneatable,<sup>{2}</sup> I might think that he does ignore its existence. Therefore R. Tobi tells us [that even a thin cake does not narrow the window space]. Cannot this be derived from the fact that a wafer is a thing which is capable of becoming [ritually] unclean, and the rule is that anything which is capable of becoming ritually unclean cannot form a partition to prevent the passage of uncleanness?<sup>{3}</sup> — We assume the wafer in this case to have been kneaded with fruit juice.<sup>{4}</sup>

An objection [to the rule as stated above] was raised: If a basket full of straw or a jar full of dry figs is placed in a window space, then we decide as follows. If when the basket and the jar are taken away the straw and the figs can stand by themselves, then they form a partition, but if not, they do not. {...}

The concern is about how to delimit the volume of space, typically one or more rooms, where defilement for ritual purposes is considered to have occurred if a dead human body is found inside the room. A window larger than a given measure (9 cm × 9 cm) would cause also the adjoining room to be affected, but if objects are placed inside the window, they may be considered to reduce how large the window is, provided some conditions are satisfied, namely, (a) that such an object are not useful for any other purpose than reducing the size of the window, and (b) that such an object is not capable of becoming ritually unclean.

The notes from the Soncino English translation of the *Babylonian Talmud* are as follows:

1. If a dead body is in a room between which and an adjoining room there is an opening of a handbreadth square or more, the uncleanness spreads to the adjoining room unless the opening is reduced to the dimension of less than a handbreadth square by means of something which is not useful for any other purpose.
2. Because it soon becomes moldy through contact with the wall.
3. Hence there would appear to be no point in stating the rule.

4. And such a wafer is not subject to uncleanness like one kneaded with water, wine, or oil.

## 16. Concluding Remarks

We have come across some surprising facts about *pizza* and its co-derivatives. Sometimes, it is some sweet food that is meant: at an eatery in London, one can even find a pizza base topped with just thick chocolate cream. In Rome however, the *pizza di Beridde* of the Ghetto is a cake. Roman Jewish *pizzarelle* are fritters (eaten with honey or syrup, when it is not a particular liturgical song that is meant). And as Sandra Debenedetti Stow (1983) has shown, the earliest record of the Italian word *pizza* is פִּיצָה (in the Hebrew script). Interestingly yet unsurprisingly, the medieval glossator shows no awareness that *pizza* also exists in the form *pitta* in Italy (and it would have been beyond the point for that glossator to remark about the word *pitta* in early rabbinic Aramaic, as the gloss was to some particular, unrelated, name for a type of bread in Mishnaic Hebrew). The Israeli Hebrew name *pita* for what in British English is called *pitta bread* is a loanword from the Balkans, but in antiquity in Aramaic *pitta* just meant ‘bread’.

## Dedication

This article is dedicated to the memory of the writer Giacomina Limentani, who was born in Rome on 11 October 1927, and died there on 18 February 2018.

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