

**Book Review:** Some serious statistical errors in the book: *Dopo il 16 ottobre. Gli ebrei a Roma tra occupazione, resistenza, accoglienza e delazioni (1943 – 1944)* [After October 16. The Jews in Rome between occupation, resistance, hospitality, and denunciation (1943 – 1944)], edited by Silvia Haia Antonucci and Claudio Procaccia, Viella Roma, September 2017, 379 pages

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(Rome, 20 February 2020)

## **1. The fundamental methodical error in calculating the different living conditions of the 6,378 surviving Roman Jews during the Nazi occupation and persecution in Rome.**

1.1 One of the main goals of the book, *Dopo il 16 ottobre*, is to suggest a model for assessing the living conditions of the surviving Roman Jews during the nine months of Nazi occupation. Silvia Haia Antonucci and Claudio Procaccia want to write on page 22 that *the majority of the Jews in Rome were saved, not by the Church, but by hiding in private houses.*

1.2 The source of that statement is found on page 281 of the book by Antonucci and Procaccia. Here it becomes clear that their conclusion is based on a study by Daniele Spizzichino, found in the same book (pp. 273-288), whose goal is to reconstruct the different living conditions of the 6,378 surviving Roman Jews during the nine months of Nazi occupation (p. 288).

1.3 Spizzichino uses the following method: He takes the results of interviews with 250 Roman survivors of the Nazi occupation conducted in 2013, and declares the statistical results of this sample to be true for ALL of the 6,378 Jews who had survived the Nazi occupation in Rome (pp. 274-275). This explains the legend for each table and figure of his study: *Investigation of the living conditions of the Jewish community from October 16, 1943 until June 4, 1944. Year 2013 (pp. 276 – 287).*

1.4 The **fundamental methodical mathematical statistical error in Spizzichino's approach** is that he uses *the results of a sample as representative of the whole group*, as if all 6,378 Roman Jewish survivors had **the same** living conditions.

This is not the case. In fact, the 6,378 Roman survivors had very diverse living conditions. Therefore, his conclusion only represents the statistics of the 250 interviewed survivors, and in **no way** represents the statistics of the total group of 6,378 Roman Jews who survived the Nazi occupation.

Spizzichino has failed in providing a statistical model for evaluating the different living conditions of the 6,378 Roman Jewish survivors.

It also refutes the evidence of Antonucci and Procaccia that *the majority of the Jews in Rome were saved, not by the Church, but by hiding in private houses.* (p. 22). There is no historical proof for it.

**1.5 Some examples prove that Spizzichino's method** for assessing the different living conditions of the 6,378 surviving Jews is, in fact, for reasons of diversity, **not delivering the results he had hoped to find.**

On p. 282, Spizzichino writes that 39% of the 250 interviewed survivors had spent the whole time in private houses and were never in a convent or property of the Vatican State or of the Catholic Church. 39% equals 98 persons in absolute figures ( $250 \times 0,39 = 97,5 = 98$ ).

*Counterexample 1:* Sample no. 1 of 250 testimonies with the following composition:

One can easily discover the names of 76 Roman Jews who survived in the Vatican State and its 26 extraterritorial properties. In addition, we can identify 174 Roman Jews who survived in one of the 235 Roman convents. This means that  $174/250 = 0.696 = 69.6\%$  of the sample of 250 surviving Jews were

hidden in Roman convents and 30.4% in the Vatican State and its 26 extraterritorial properties. If we apply Spizzichino's method it would follow that 69.6% of the 6,378 surviving Roman Jews survived in the 235 Roman convents and 30.4% in the Vatican State and its 26 extraterritorial properties. This would mean that 0,0% survived in private houses, where Spizzichino claims 39%,

*Counterexample 2:* Sample no. 2 of 250 testimonies with the following composition consistence:

There are testimonies from 250 Roman Jews who survived the Nazi persecution hidden in the mountain villages outside Rome. Following Spizzichino's approach, the conclusion would be that all of the 6,378 Roman Jews survived in the mountain villages around Rome. The result is again completely different from what Spizzichino's method had predicted. Moreover: this sample no. 2 reduces Spizzichino's argumentation to absurdity and clearly proves that his method is neither working nor valid!

The reason for the failure of Spizzichino's method lies in the great diversity in the living conditions of the 6,378 surviving Roman Jews.

1.6 Doubt in Spizzichino's method could have risen with Antonucci and Procaccia had they applied Susan Zuccotti's historical quality test. The test demands that any statement about the numbers relating to Jews during the Nazi persecution of Rome also has to give the number of Jewish testimonies, based on primary sources, which confirm this number. If we apply this test to the statistical living conditions of the 6,378 Roman surviving Jews, then the 39% hidden **only in private houses** would be equivalent to  $6,378 \times 0.39 = 2487,42 = 2,488$  Roman Jews who survived in private houses. This projected number of 2,488 is only covered by the 98 who are known to date from primary sources of the sample of 250 and that were only hidden in private houses. This means that the covering factor of 2,488 is  $98/2,488 = 0.0394 = 3.94\% \approx 4\%$ . This means that about 96% are not covered by primary sources! It is thus advisable to use the figure of 2,488 with the greatest caution as it becomes evident that it is only a provisional figure which includes a great uncertainty of 96%! It shows that Spizzichino's model and its numbers have no historically relevance.

The editors also could have become suspicious had they calculated the extrapolation factor Spizzichino used in his method and model. They would have found a value of  $2,488/98 = 25.4$ . This extrapolation factor is extremely high and calls for great prudence when it comes to drawing conclusions! And prudence would have been advisable because Spizzichino's results are so weak.

1.7 Consequences of the failure of Spizzichino's method for the proposed model of the living conditions of the 6,378 Roman surviving Jews.

*1.7.1 Practical consequences:*

1.7.1.1 The legend for each of Spizzichino's graphics and figures (pp. 276 – 287) has to be changed to: *Investigation of the different living conditions of 250 Roman Jews from October 16, 1943 until June 4, 1944. Year 2013.*

1.7.1.2 The present edition of the book as a whole is unreliable because it is using the results of Spizzichino's statistics in several places.

1.7.1.3 The book "After October 16, 1943" has be to rewritten, excluding the incorrect results of Spizzichino's study.

1.7.2 The *grave mathematical system error* in Spizzichino's model for describing the living conditions of the 6,378 surviving Roman Jews explains why the following aspects, well known in international research, are missing in his approach:

1) More than 1,300 Jews had already left their houses in search of safe hiding places, hoping to survive an uncertain future. A single volume could be written only on the question as to “Why the Roman Jews left their houses before 16 October 1943, and how Pope Pius XII hid 500 of them in 49 Roman convents under his special protection.”

2) We already know of 200 personal interventions by Pope Pius XII, extant in the Vatican archives, by which he hid Roman Jewish families in Roman convents – and this as early as September 1943! Again, this topic would be most interesting for a new book.

3) On more than 240 occasions, Pope Pius XII and his collaborators intervened on behalf of arrested Roman Jews. More than half of these interventions asked directly for the release of detained Roman Jews. Also this topic would be most interesting for a new book.

4) Pope Pius XII condemned Hitler and was in favour of helping Jews wherever he could. This theme calls also for a new book.

5) Pope Pius XII caused the release of 249 Jews (i.e. 20%) on 16 October 1943. Here is the content for another book!

6) Hundreds of international Jewish organizations and individual Jews expressed their gratitude to Pope Pius XII for what he had done as cardinal and pope in support of the Jews.

All of these aspects are missing in Spizzichino’s model.

## 1.8 Conclusion:

1.8.1 Spizzichino’s model of the statistical different living conditions of the 6,378 surviving Roman Jews is in no way covering the multitude of Jewish testimonies that are already available outside the archives of the Roman community.

1.8.2 From Spizzichino’s *fatal mathematical error* in calculating the statistics of the different living conditions of the 6,378 surviving Roman Jews follows that the study has to be rewritten. Federica Barozzi’s study of 1998 was based on only 40 testimonies and thus failed to cover the living conditions of the 8,000 Roman Jews. Spizzichino’s study included 250 testimonies but equally failed.

1.8.3 As the living conditions of the surviving Roman Jews were so diverse, it is necessary to analyse all available testimonies, every single one of them, in the Jewish archives in Rome and elsewhere which are already available in different media.

1.8.4 The international community is awaiting with great interest the new results based on this systematically study.

## 2. The logical errors in Spizzichino’s conclusion on the results of his statistical study of the sample of 250 interviews with surviving Roman Jews.

2.0 Spizzichino writes on p. 281: "*Nel 39 % dei casi fu trovata ospitalità solamente presso privati, nel 13 % dei casi soltanto in istituti religiosi. Nella maggior parte delle situazioni però furono differenti i salvatori che diedero ospitalità. Nel complesso comunque questa fu fornita per lo più da private (fig. 2) [In 39 % of the cases, the Roman Jews found hospitality exclusively in private houses; in 13 % of the cases, the Roman Jews received hospitality solely in religious institutes. In the majority of cases, however, there were different rescuers who gave hospitality. By and large, therefore, it was given mainly by private people.]*"

2.1 Spizzichino’s conclusion that “*by and large [hospitality] was given mainly by private people*” is solely and completely based on his selection of the 250 interviewed surviving Roman Jews. If we take counter-example no. 1, given above, we find that the biggest group who offered hospitality were Roman convents, and the second largest group was the Vatican. This documented research shows that

Spizzichino's conclusion is only valid for his sample.

The reason, again, is that the different living conditions of the 6,378 Roman surviving Jews were diverse rather than homogeneous. Spizzichino should have been aware of this fact before starting his statistical research.

2.2 Spizzichino's division of the activity of the Roman convents into different statistical classes (p. 282, fig. 2) is also problematic.

We find the living conditions of Jews hidden in the Roman convents (*istituti religiosi*) specified in four different statistical classes, with a total value of 42% (= 13% + 23% + 2% + 4%). According to Spizzichino's sample, the majority – 42% – was helped, **at least** by Roman convents, and 39% **exclusively by private individuals**. This careful reading leads to a completely different interpretation of the facts, now in favour of the Catholic Church!

2.3 A third problem is Spizzichino's use of the group "other" (*altro*) on p. 282, introduction of fig. 2.

Spizzichino subsumes different institutions under this group, including *gli istituti non religiosi* (the **non-religious institutes**.) The group is subdivided into four classes with a total value of 16% (= 3% + 7% + 2% + 4%).

Vatican City State and its 26 extraterritorial properties are **non-religious institutes**, in the sense that they are certainly not **Roman convents** (*istituti religiosi*). The same applies to the Roman parishes.

Consequently, for example half of the 16% "others" could well have been institutions of the Catholic Church which saved Jews.

From this information it follows that the group of Jews aided by the Catholic Church would rise to **at least** 50% (= 42% + 8%) in comparison to the 39% who were **certainly not** supported by the Catholic Church.

2.4 A grave error in the statistical results of the study of the sample of 250 Jews chosen by Spizzichino (p. 282) is the fact that it makes no mention of the Jews who survived in the Vatican City State and its 26 extraterritorial properties. Their presence in these places is well documented. Spizzichino's huge lacuna shows once again that the sample of the 250 surviving Roman Jews is not representative of the whole.

**3. Daniele Spizzichino writes on p. 288 that his study has contributed to drawing "a more complete picture" (*un quadro più completo*) of the living conditions of the surviving Jews in Rome and Lazio. This statement is questionable because of the following errors:**

3.1 The results of the statistical analysis of the interviews with 250 surviving Roman Jews only apply to this sample group. The consequence is that the conclusions which can validly be drawn for the living conditions of the 6,378 surviving Roman Jews are rather limited. Besides, they are so general that they were already documented before the publication of Spizzichino's study. It, therefore, has NOT contributed to drawing "a more complete picture" of the living conditions of the surviving Jews in Rome!

3.2 Furthermore, Spizzichino claims on p. 288 that his study gives a more complete overview of the situation in the whole region of Lazio during the Nazi occupation.

He analysed (p. 281, fig. 1) the movements of 33 Roman Jews ( $250 \times 0.13 = 32.5$ ) who went out of Rome into Lazio. However, an earlier study, published on 10 May 2017, had already examined 339 cases of

Roman Jews who survived by hiding in the mountain villages. Obviously, this study gives a ten times more accurate picture of the situation of the Roman Jews in Lazio than Spizzichino's investigation.

In addition, a careful reading of the primary sources indicates the presence of different groups of non-Roman Jews in various places and towns in Lazio. They are not included in the study of Spizzichino, which is limited to the story of the Jews of Rome. On p. 323 of *Dopo il 16 ottobre*, Antonucci publishes a list of all the places in Lazio where DELASEM was active: Rome, Viterbo, Rieti, and Frosinone. It confirms that Jews were helped by DELASEM in these places. It also confirms that Spizzichino did not consider this fact in his study.

In order to get more accurate knowledge of what happened to the Jews in Lazio during the Nazi occupation, it is necessary to study their presence in every city and village in this region. As non-Roman Jews were hiding everywhere in those small villages, it is important to examine each individual case. Only on this basis can "a more complete picture" be drawn.

Spizzichino can in no way claim that "a more complete picture" can be drawn because he only studied the situation of the Roman Jews outside Rome fragmentarily and did not at all consider the living conditions of the non-Roman Jews in the different places in Lazio.

**4. Spizzichino (p. 275), but also Antonucci and Procaccia (p. 30), state that there were 13,000-13,500 Jews in Rome during the Nazi occupation and persecution of 1943 - 44. This statement is problematic for the following reasons:**

4.1 The number of 13,000 -13,500 Jews present in Rome **during the period 10 September 1943 to 4 June 1944 is NOT a historically confirmed figure**, but only an "guessed number" (*ipotizzato*), as Antonucci and Procaccia explain on p. 30, footnote 41. They add that the only criterion for this guessing is that the number needs to be higher than the 10,000 Jews to which Kappler refers.

4.2 On pp. 324 f., however, they give further clues: The Roman Jewish community consisted of 11,855 members on 31 December 1942. To this number must be added the Jews who had left the community through baptism. On p. 325, they state that 5,191 Jews officially left their community in the whole of Italy between 1 October 1938 and 31 December 1942. Since on 31 December 1942, the Roman community was the largest in the country with one third of all the Italian Jews, statistics suggest that we can add one third of the 5,191 Jews to the Roman community, i.e. 1,730 Roman Jews who became Catholics between 1 October 1938 and 31 December 1942. This means that the **Roman Jewish community consisted of 11,855 + 1,730 = 13,585 members in 1938.**

4.2.1 The available censuses of 1870, 1901, 1931, 1938, 31 December 1942, and 1948 give the following figures:

Year of Census	Number of Jews in Rome
1871	4,987
1901	7,838

1931	12,316
1938	12,494
31 December 1942	11,855
1943-1944	unknown
1948	11,000

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 Fig. 3.14 Hitler contestato 326 volte dal nunzio Pacelli  
[www.papapioxi.it/approfondimenti/lopera-a-favore-degli-ebrei-di-roma/](http://www.papapioxi.it/approfondimenti/lopera-a-favore-degli-ebrei-di-roma/)

Between 1870 and 1931, the Roman Jewish community grew by 50% every 30 years. This means that in the 30 years from 1931 it should have increased by an average of 6,000 members. From these statistics it follows that in 1938 there should have been **13,716 Jews in Rome** ( $= (7 \times 6,000 / 30 = 1,400) + 12,316$ ).

4.2.2 We can, therefore, assume that **the Roman community had about 13,500 members in 1938.**

4.3 If, however, only 12,494 Jews were counted in Rome in 1938, this means that about 1,000 were missing! If 1,771 Jews became Catholic in 1938 in the whole Italy, supposedly about one third, i.e. 600 members, changed their religion in Rome in 1938. Therefore, another 400 must have immigrated to other places; for example, several branches of the family of Giovanni De Benedetti emigrated to North and South America in June 1938.

4.4 **The Jewish community consisted of 11,855 members on 31 December 1942.** Given the normal growth rate, it should have had 13,294 members ( $= 12,494 + (6,000 \times 4/30 = 800)$ ). **If we assume that about 1,400 left for reasons of faith, we come to 11,894 ( $= 13,294 - 1,400$ ) members.**

**Therefore, the number of 11,855 Roman Jews on 31 December 1942 is in accordance with the normal growth of the community, and takes into account those Jews who joined other faith traditions.**

**However, it does NOT include the number of 1,600 Roman Jews who emigrated between 1939 and 1942.** According to the instructions of DELASEM this number – 1,600 – must be added to the number of 11,855 because this number is the result, according to DELASEM of the official diminution of the Jews from the official lists of the Jewish communities.

But as for Rome, the number 11,855 is only the total number present in the Jewish community: **13,294** minus the 1,400 who left the community for reasons of faith. The number 11,855 represents the Jewish community including the 1,600 Roman Jews who left Rome from 1939 until 1943, without an official act of writing them out of the register of the Jews.

The number of 11,855 Roman Jews as of 31 December 1942 was the official number of an administrative document of DELASEM which needs to be reduced by the 1,600 Roman Jews who had left the country in secret. **This adjustment gives us a number of 10,255 ( $= 11,855 - 1,600$ ) Jews really present in Rome on 31 December 1942.**

**4.5 Furthermore: The fact that the Nazis only found the names of 8,000 Jews for arrest can be explained in the following way:**

It is widely known and was confirmed by Giovanni De Benedetti, who submitted evidence of photocopied forms, that the Italian fascists undertook an annual census to get information about the place of residence, family composition, property, etc., of every Jew in Italy including Rome.

**A census was conducted around May 1943, but after Mussolini had fallen from power in July 1943, those census lists were not destroyed.**

The Nazis then used the census list of May 1943, and the member registers stolen from the Roman

Synagogue at the end of September 1943, to compile a register of 8,000 Roman Jews to be arrested.

The following observations are important:

The list of the Jewish community of December 1942, contained about 11,855 names, and those of 1938, about 13,500 names and addresses.

If those lists of the Jewish community were decisive for the Nazis in order to compile the list of the arrests to be completed, they would have drawn up a list of 13,500 Roman Jews for arrest, because all those addresses were available.

Yet, they only compiled a list of 8,000 Jews. From this information it follows, that the fascist census list of May 1943 was the decisive list of the 13,500 Roman Jews known to the authorities in May 1943.

As in May 1943 according to the census list, only 8,000 Jews were known to be living in Rome, one could conclude that from 1 January 1943, until May 1943, 2,225 (= 10,255 – 8,000) Roman Jews went away secretly during those five months,

Because the Nazis not only arrested Jews on 16 October 1943, but also baptized Jews, in worst case another 2,000 non-baptized Jews must have secretly left the city.

**From these observations, it is possible to reconstruct that the list of 8,000 Jews to be arrested on 16 October 1943, at 5:00 in the morning, must have consisted of 2,000 baptized and 6,000 not-baptized Roman Jews.**

#### **4.6 Some important consequences:**

4.6.1 Kappler's guess that about 10,000 Jews should be present in Rome was a demonic intuition because there were actually 9,975 Jews in the city on 4 June 1944 and he did not have the complete list of all his potential sacrifices.

4.6.2 The above considerations demonstrate that according to Haia and Procaccia, the estimated number of 13,500 Jews present in Rome during the Nazi persecution is certainly wrong.

4.6.3 A big unexpected negative consequence of using the "guessed number" (*ipotizzare*) of 13,500 Jews present in Rome during the Nazi persecution from 1943 until 1944 was that Haia and Procaccia came to the wrong conclusions as by guessing they missed to make a confrontation of themselves with the lot's of different primary sources, that would have caused the awareness of the multitude of different living conditions of the Jews in Rome, and would have caused much more prudence and nuances in their conclusions.

4.6.5 Of the "guessed number" of 13,500 Jews living in Rome, only 10,000 are covered by the testimonies of primary sources. The additional estimated **3,500 Jews is a notional number** without any historical evidence, and it should be rejected from the study according to the Susan Zuccotti's historical quality test.

4.6.6 The number of Jews in Rome in May 1943 – three months before the Nazi occupation began – was 8,000. This group consisted of 6,000 non-baptized and 2,000 baptized Jews. One can rightly conclude that those 8,000 Jews were indeed present in the city in September 1943. By 4 June 1944, this Jewish community in Rome grew again to 9,975 members of whom 1,975 should be non-Roman Jews (most of them were foreign Jews), 6,000 Roman Jews and 2,000 baptized Roman Jews.

4.6.7 From 31 December 1942, until May 1943, the number of Jews living in Rome decreased by 5,855 (= 11,855 – 6,000) because of emigration! They escaped secretly, but a great number of them returned after the end of the war in 1945.

4.6.8 Of the 8,000 Roman Jews, 1,622 were killed in the 9 months of the Nazi persecution. Of the 8,000 Roman Jews to be arrested, 2,000 were baptised Jews, or 1/4. Using these numbers, about 400 (= 2,000 – 1,622/4) baptised Jews were killed. Because about 1,600 (= 2,000 – 400) baptised Jews survived, the

number 1,600 has to be subtracted from the number of over-all survivors (6,378). Consequently, on 4 June 1944, the real number of non-baptized Jews living in Rome was 4,778 (= 6,378 – 1,600).

4.6.9 In the months after the liberation of Rome, 5,855 Roman Jews, who survived abroad, returned to the city. Therefore, in 1946 the Roman Jewish community had 10,633 (= 4,778 + 5,855) members.

4.6.10 With natural grow from 1946 until 1948 the Roman Jewish community counts in 1948 about 11.000 (= 10.988 = 10,633 + 355 = 10,633+ 10,633 x 1/2 x 2/30 ) members, what was confirmed by the census o 1948!

4.6.10 What is really new is the fact that in the months before May 1943, about 5,855 of the 11,855 living in the Roman Jewish community emigrated secretly to other countries. This is about 50% or one half..

**4.7 In conclusion, the following table shows  
the reconstructed numbers of Roman Jews community from 1871 to 1948:**

Date of Census	Result of census	Calculated after using the evidence of historical data	Number of Jews in Rome
1871	4,987	-	4,987
1901	7,838	-	7,838
1931	12,316	-	12,316
1938	12,494	-	12,494
31 December 1942	11,855		11,855
May 1943	8.000	8,000 (= 2,000 baptized Jews and 6,000 non-baptized Jews)	8,000 (6,000 + 2,000)
September 1943	-	8,000 (= 6,000 Roman Jews + 2,000 baptized Jews)	8,000
4 June 1944	-	9,975 (= 8,000 + 1,975) 9,975 (= 6,378 + 1,622 + 1,975) 9,975 (= 4,778 + 1,600 + 1,622 + 1,975)	9,975
1946		10,633 = 4,778 + (11,855 – 6,000)	10,633
1948	11,000	10,988 = 10,633 + 355 = 10,633+ 10,633 x 1/2 x 2/30	11,000

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Fig. 3.14 Hitler contestato 326 volte dal nunzio Pacelli  
([www.papapioxii.it/approfondimenti/lopera-a-favore-degli-ebrei-di-roma/](http://www.papapioxii.it/approfondimenti/lopera-a-favore-degli-ebrei-di-roma/))

**5. Another grave error in Antonucci’s and Procaccia’s book, for example at page 349, is the fact that Amedeo Osti Guerrazzi in his article, for example at pages: 173, 175, etc., uses information derived from a novel of Anna Foà as a historical source for justifying historical facts. This working method makes the article unreliable.**

The problem with Foà’s *novel* is that it claims to be a historical novel. The author might be using some historical information, but she is not referencing facts. The lines of fact and fiction are blurred, and are not distinguishable to the reader. The quoting in the article of **Amedeo Osti Guerrazzi** from this secondary source, therefore, is not appropriate in an academic publication. Historian need to refer to the primary sources, if they exist.

