Introduction

In order to cross borders in early modern Europe, travelers were expected to carry proper documentation that both identified them and permitted them entry into the region to which they intended to travel. In the Electoral Palatinate, the Jews were issued a special type of safe conduct that was tied to a flat rate tax levied on the Jews of Worms. In response, Jewish communities developed both inter- and intracommunal systems to sell, buy, and keep track of these documents. This presentation examines the safe conducts and the records and systems that developed to regulate their use.

Bibliography

And *gabbaim* [collectors] are appointed for [the regulation] of the *tiur* [safe
conduct], which we, the residents of our community, are compelled to purchase
every year from the Spanish regime, and it is a great expense. And it [the safe
conduct tax] is not placed solely on our community, but rather on the larger group
[of Jews], such that without [having] that safe conduct, no one can leave or enter.
Thus all those that need the safe conduct are required [to share in the payment],
including those who live among us here, those who live in the surrounding regions,
also those who [reside] far away, even those communities and settlements that are
not subject [to the authority] of our community, such as Frankfurt [am Main],
Mainz, Bingen, etcetera. All those that face danger because of the safe conduct, or
those that have debts or own property in the region [of the Electoral Palatinate],
and all that will travel through the region over the course of the year, who will
benefit from the safe conduct, all these [groups] must pay their share of the safe
conduct [tax]. And the collectors are commanded to keep watch over those that
live nearby and those that live far away, and over those who are obligated in the
expense associated with the safe conducts, that they pay the necessary sums
willingly or under duress, as was agreed according to the specific case. And they
will sell all of the safe conducts, if they are able, for the community’s benefit. And
every year two collectors are appointed to this position, and in the following year,
two different collectors are appointed, because they [the collectors] are not
appointed for more than a one-year term.
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It was agreed by the holy community [the communal leaders], may they be preserved by God, and at their head, the eminent rabbi, may he be preserved by God, together with the communal leadership: After having reached an agreement with the holy community of Worms regarding the safe conducts from the Electoral Palatinate, that two hundred Gulden will be given to them from our community every year, in exchange for forty safe conduct[s] that they will provide to our community. And whatever additional [safe conduct[s]] we will needs, as per the needs of the residents of our community, each safe conduct can be acquired for the price of one ducat. It was agreed that those two hundred Gulden will be collected as follows: fifty Gulden will be paid by the gabbaim [the charity collectors] on a yearly basis, and the remaining sum, after the proceeds of the sale of the forty safe conducts, will be collected from every head of household, from everyone whose net worth is one thousand Gulden or more, and [it will] even [be collected] from orphans and widows, and even those who have less than one thousand Gulden [net worth], but do business, must pay the same sum. This is how it will be for as long as there is a need for these safe conducts.

Enacted Sunday, the third of Ab, 413 to the small counting [1653]
Juda son of R. Moses Oppenheim of blessed memory
Aaron son of Jacob Meir Binga of blessed memory
הוסכם מפי חבורא קדישא יצ "ו בראשם הגאון וב"ד יצ"ו בציירקה שאר קריאי העידה, מאחור דאש עין
וד אזע מתש ידרעון מט ק"ק וrome וערני חירום פסלן שרחק למה מאסלה טור שעה מהאילית טור וערני
מהאיין ורובים נד ארביעים חירום שיתו לקלטונינו נול ויאש פכום ויריס ברויס ציור תורכי
קלטונינו, כל חור בעע א סקוטן צי שיאפק, בכן המסע דש אוח מאהיין והרובים אמיל באימת זה אורי
נ kitchens וורתיין, דיין, לא חירום יעה נובאיס בכל שנה ושנה, ומיותרות והאר נט ויי די ארביעים
חירום גליון וערני, ולא פאש בר נבך פק, מלכתי פארך מאשל והרובים ומגלה פורטוי מורה
אלאנות ואפילים ממי שיא עמל שמאハード והרובים און גא הנע מסה מותק, מונ פד אคงות סק עבורי.
כי
וינוס וימ עא, לא מנו מיי ז"ד ז"ל ל"פ ק"ק.
ניוד ב"א" מ"רא"ר משיש ז"ל אפורניימ
אפור בר י٭ב מציון ז"ל בנתן