## THE HEALTH PASSPORTS OF THE PORT OF LIVORNO

Adi n di fer ioni 1623 Noi Ottauio Cappelli Commeffario di Sanità,e Proueditore della Città,e Porto di Liuorno per S. A. S. facciamo fede come fi parte di quì, per la Dio gra-zia con buona fanità , e fenza dubbio alcuno di mal contagiofo. In Juigr finichor inquation marinas yandare mina a prale Fig. 1

By Alan Becker

It is interesting to note how the change in importance of Livorno is reflected in the Health Passports from the 17th century on. The first type has included in its design the Marzocco Tower standing at the entrance to the port. The earliest one I have seen is from the 3rd February 1621, I have examples from the 2nd September 1623 and

15th February 1624 (figs1 & 2) with differing printed text, but both implying that the vessels are free of contagion. This type appears to have been phased out by 1625.

## MARZOCCO TOWER

The tower (fig.3) was probably built in the late 1500s at the same time as the Porto Mediceo which is the oldest part of the Port of Livorno. It owes its name to the copper Marzocco (a rampant lion) that sat on top and functioned as a weather vane. Octagonal in shape and with a truncated pyramidal base, the tower is lined with veined white marble.

The corners of the octagon correspond to the four major winds and the four intermediate winds, the names of which are carved on the eight sides of the balcony. The interior is on seven floors and is furnished with an ingenious cistern to collect rain water. The tower is surrounded by a small sixteenth-century fortalice, built on the initiative

of Duke Alessandro de' Medici, with storerooms and quarters for the guards and soldiers. I had originally thought that it was the Faro or Fanale (lighthouse or beacon) referred to on many maps but the late 17th century plan of Livorno I have (fig.4) shows the Marzocco Tower as a completely separate building. The tower was hit by lightning in 1737 destroying the Marzocco which was not replaced.

Adi 15 sells war alle hile no

Noi Ottauio Cappelli Commeffario di Saniti, e Proueditore

della Città, & Porto di Liuorno per S. A. S. facciamo fede

to, e qua liberamente accettate. E però in ogni luogo fe gli può dar pratica. E: to fede habbiamo fottofcritto la presète.

Vasce motion to

up canelle

Fig. 2

5 boere classabell unque & success

1.cr

10 balledice Flore malla

come Lichny e harts becorange ha Ha carico fors barra h mine / gleto berand Per condurre a harting le Robe forto notare venute per la via di Mare, o di Terra, e di luogo non folper-

> There is a column in the Piazza Signoria surmounted by a Marzocco Lion and it also appears in the design of the 1851 stamp issue of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Fig. 5 shows a photo of Mario Impallomeni and myself standing beneath the column in 2001 when visiting the first ASPOT exhibition arranged by Luigi Impallomeni.

> The design of the next certificate of health (fig.6) incorporates the emblem of the Medici family, the six balls in an oval shield (fig. 7), the earliest I have seen is one for the 14th February 1626.

## THE MEDICI COAT-OF ARMS

There are several theories on its origins. The first implies that the Medici were descended from Averado, one of Charlemagne's knights, who when passing through Tuscany to Rome encountered a savage giant at Mergello, a place to the north of Florence. He fought the monster and killed it with





his shield receiving many dents in the combat. de-lys into the top palla. Charlemagne allowed him to commemorate the

victory by representing the dents as red balls, or palle, on a field of gold. The second is that the red balls represent either pills or cupping glasses for bloodletting since the Medici had been doctors or apothecaries, apparently the descendants of a charcoal burner originally from Mergello. The third explanation, and probably the correct one, is that the balls represent coins

like the bezants, Byzantine coins, copied from the moneylenders, the Arte del Cambio.

It is interesting to note that the designer of the Medici Coat of Arms has incorporated three fleur-

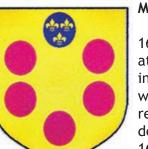


Fig. 7

## MADONNA DI MONTENERO

After an epidemic of the pest in 1630/31 the Livornese population attributed the end of it to the intervention of the Madonna but it was short-lived since the epidemic returned as early as 1632 causing 200 deaths. The chapel had been built in 1603 following the appearance of the Madonna to a shepherdess in the 15th

century; she was deemed to be the protectress of the city. The figure of the Madonna appears in the layout of the document soon after this as I have a health certificate of the 27th August 1649 (fig.8)

A de di Ghie Gratis. 179 NOI CAVALIER FRANCESCO SERATTI Intimo Attuale di Stato di S. A. R il Serenissimo FERDINAN-Principe Reole di Ungheria, e di Basmia, Arciduca di Aufiria, maluca di Tofcana, e per la R. A. S Governato Civile, e ilitare della Città, Parto, e Gianisdizione di Livarno, , Prefidente di Sanità , ec. ec quelta Città, e Porto, dove per la DIO di Montenero noltra Protettrice fi vive di m house Francia , con Fig. 9

and she is included in the health passports I have spanning the years to 1826.

The Medici period lasted until the death of Gian Gastone in 1737; having left no heirs, the Granduchy was then taken over by the Lorenese family which was confirmed by the treaty of Aquisgrana of 1748. The design of the certificates became more elaborate as shown by an example (fig.9) of 28th November 1791(?) for a journey to Marseille under an Ottoman captain of 20 years.

In 1799 the first French occupation took place causing Ferdinand III to flee to Austria leaving the Florentine senate in charge. Ludovico di Borbone, under the Treaty of Luneville the 9th February 1801, became the ruler of the Granduchy which was re-named the Kingdom of Etruria. Fig.10 is an example of a health certificate from this period with the coat of arms of Ludovico at the left. Dated the 23rd February 1803 it is for a voyage to Marseille of the brigantine 'Nettunno' [sic] under white-haired Capt Dom.co Berny, aged 65, issued under the authority

**Fig. 10** Carry Los S A di 20.di Cratia. NOI JACOPO DE LAVILETTE CICO PRIMO, Isfate di Sua 1000 ATreffia NOI MARCHESE PAOLO GARZONI VENTURI dine Reale della Legione del Merito sotto dine Reale della Legione d'Oaore, Ciam LEOPOLDO II., Consigliere intimo atti l' I. R. R. A. S. Governatore Civile e Milliu Livorno, Conandante Sameme del Livi nore dell'Ordine del Merito sotto il titolo di S. Giuseppe, Officiale dell'Or-e della Legione d'Onare, Ciamberlano di S. A. L. & R. H. Gass-Duca 00 II., Cousigliere intimo ortunde di Stato, Finanze S. Goorrantore Civile e Militare della Città, Porto e mandente Supremo del Litorate Toscano, della I. e R. A storni Volonteri di Costa, PRESTERNI EL DIPARTIMENTO C A 6

A teetiano che parte da questa Città e Porto, ove, per la grazia di Dio, e per la intercessione della Masonna or Musraneno nostra Prosettrice, si vive con ottima salute, e senza alcun sispetto di molattia contagiosa, per andare a so an le sopra il Bregoentenanniant o Eredo del Cap: Elice Celcevich di bandiera Unistrecaca I Siz Unerelio Inglessi

132 6

of Jacopo De Lavilette, Lt General to his Majesty Lodovico I, King of Etruria, Civil Governor of Livorno, President of Health. The Granduchy was finally restored to the Lorenese family the 29th February 1814. The last example (fig.11) is from the period leading to Unification, a bill of health, the 24th August 1826, for brigantine 'Erede' under Austrian colours for a voyage to Zante struck with cachet of the Livorno Health Office, with an elaborate heading depicting the Madonna di Montenero.

**Fig. 11** 

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