

POSTAL HISTORY OF LIVORNO, THE PORT OF TUSCANY: to 1823

The objective of this exhibit is to present the Postal History of the Port of Livorno (Leghorn) from the time of the statutes that built the port in the 1590s until its liberation from Napoleon & the restoration of the Archduchy. It will focus more on the international correspondence and disinfection of the mail. Being central to the Mediterranean, mail arrived by ship from west and east, as well as by land through Europe.

The port of Livorno (pop. 700) was purchased by Florence from Genoa in 1421, when the port of Pisa on the river Arno changed course. A new city was designed in the late 1500s when the Medici rulers decided to build an "ideal city", Renaissance style, with a new fortress to protect against pirates; city walls; and navigable canals. In the late 1580s *Duke Ferdinand I de Medici* declared Livorno a *porto franco*, which made trading of goods in the city tax-free. The new *Leggi Livornino* also allowed freedom of religion on payment of a penance.



Late 1500s Livorno with new fortifications & docks

As a result Livorno grew rapidly, becoming a cosmopolitan city, because of the large number of foreign merchants who settled there. This necessitated a growth of goods and mail services through Italy, Europe and the Mediterranean, organized by the merchants.

Since epidemics had been recorded since the 1400s (principally of the black death or plague) it was deemed necessary to protect the population from the diseases that would arrive with the increased international trade and infected visitors. An *Ufficio di Sanita* was formed in 1598 and the *Lazzeretto San Rocco* was built in 1590 and expanded in 1604. Mail as well as goods arriving were sent to this facility for quarantine after off-loading from ships. Ships believed to be already infected were sent to Elba. Mail continued to be sent to San Rocco after additional Lazzeretti were built further from the city in later years.

The Medici Dukes were displaced by Austria in 1737 and the Habsburg–Lorraine line agreed to by Austria and France. Later Napoleon replace them with the Kings of Etruria in 1801 followed by direct occupation in 1807, with the creation of the Department de la Mediterranee, based in Livorno. The postal system continually improved despite these political ructions. The exhibit is essentially chronological.

EXHIBIT PLAN Uses double size pages

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Mail Practices in Tuscany in the late 1500s | Frame 1 p 1-2 |
| 2. Livorno in the mid 1600s | Frame 1 p 5-6 |
| 3. The Late 1600s & Early 1700s | Frame 1 p 9-10 |
| 4. The Grand Dukes of Habsburgo-Lorena, 1737-1801 | Frame 3 p 13-14 |
| 5. The Bourbon Kings of Etruria, 1801-1807 | Frame 4 p 7-8 |
| 6. The Napoleonic Occupation, 1807-1814 | Frame 4 p 13-14 |
| 7. The Restoration of Ferdinando III, 1814-1824 | Frame 5 p 7-8 |

Items with disinfection of the mail have maroon frames; Other scarce items have blue frames.

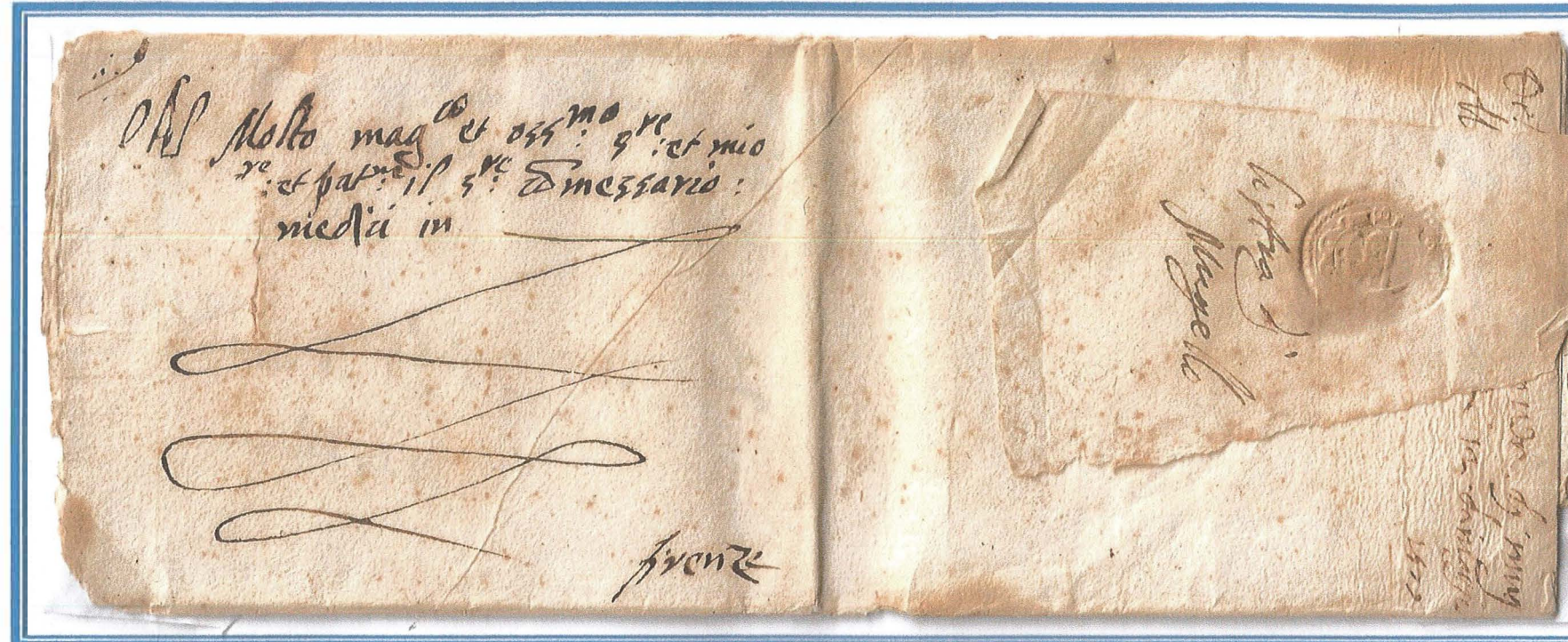
Coins of the periods are used to identify the Arms or Images of the different rulers

Sources of material for the early period:

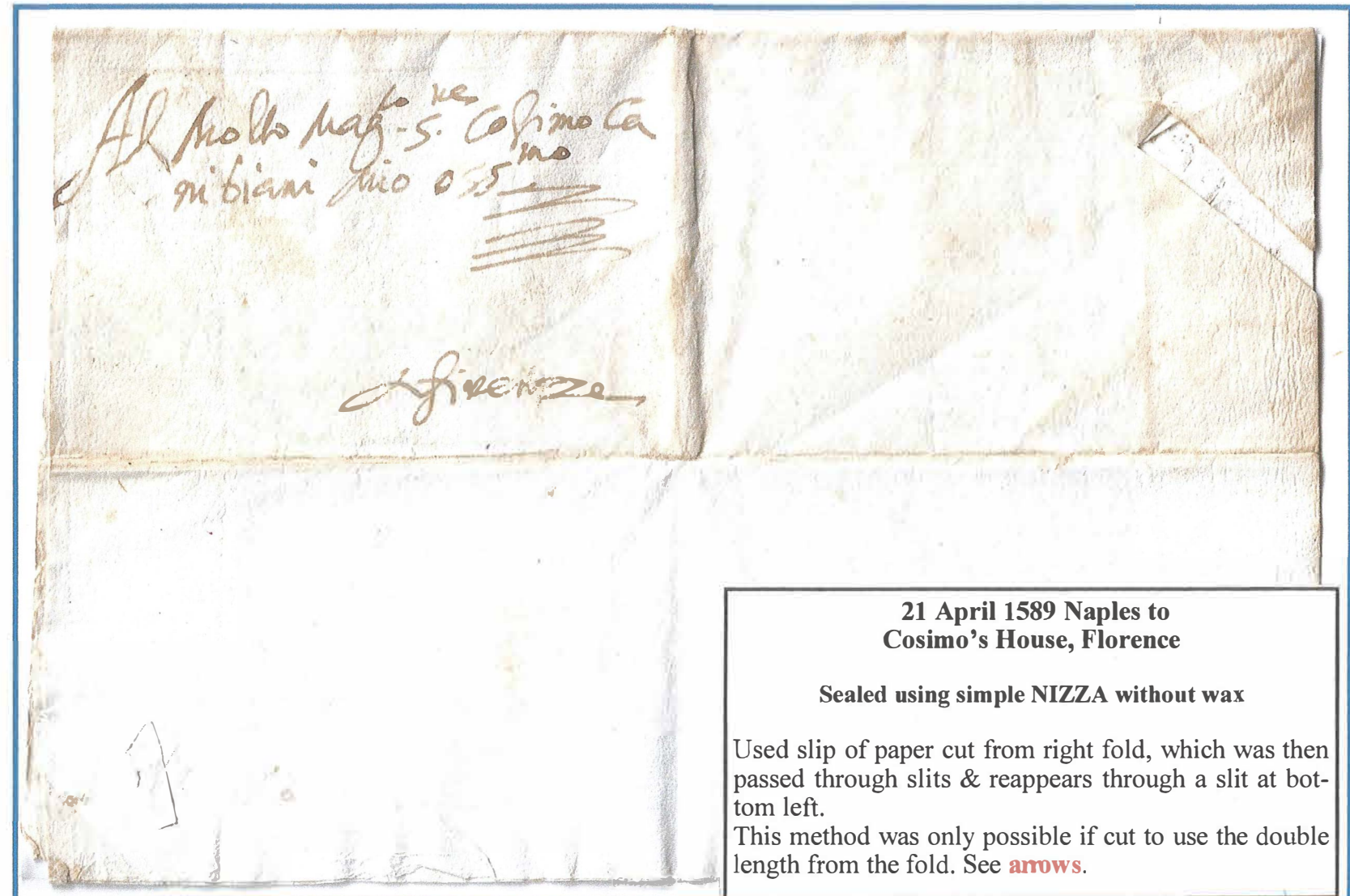
There are two major archives and some intermediate sources.:

1. Corsini Archives in Florence & London (1571—1602)
2. Corsini in Piacenza (attending the Financial Fairs setting exchange rates). 1606 –1613
3. Vernaccia et al. Archives. Livorno. 1674—1707

I. MAIL PRACTICES IN TUSCANY IN THE LATE 1500s



1 May 1577, Barberino de Mugello, Galliano, Tuscany to Mezzario Medici in Firenze.(Florence)
Rare entire NIZZA for sealing letter using large slip of paper with wax on reverse and wrapped and glued on the left side of obverse (arrows)



21 April 1589 Naples to
Cosimo's House, Florence

Sealed using simple NIZZA without wax

Used slip of paper cut from right fold, which was then passed through slits & reappears through a slit at bottom left.

This method was only possible if cut to use the double length from the fold. See **arrows**.