



# **Guide to Italian public health documents declaring ships and goods to be disease-free, 1630-1818**

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## Summary

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**Collection Title:**

Italian public health documents declaring ships and goods to be disease-free, 1630-1818

**Source:**

Josiah Charles Trent History of Medicine Collections (Duke University)

**Abstract:**

Fourteen single-sheet printed documents issued by officials in northern Italian ports or inland trade centers, declaring that ships, cargoes, and crews have been inspected and are free of contagion, chiefly meaning bubonic plague. Cities include Venice, Brindisi, Milano, Piacenza, Ravenna, Reggio, San Giovanni in Persiceto, and Trieste. Almost all bear small woodcuts chiefly of patron saints and coats of arms, and official seals and stamps. Handwritten annotations include dates, itineraries, and, in the case of maritime shipping, the names of ships and owners. Some note the type of cargo and a few list the names of crew members, with age, stature, and other details. Most are in Italian but several also include some Latin. Forms part of the History of Medicine Collections at Duke University.

**Extent:**

14 items (2 boxes)

**Language:**

Materials are in chiefly in Italian, with a few in Latin.

**Collection ID:**

RL.11337

**Permalink:**

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m14k9s>

**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Italian public health documents declaring ships and goods to be disease-free, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

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## Background

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### Scope and Content

Fourteen single-sheet printed documents, issued from 1630 to 1818 by officials in northern Italian ports or inland trade centers, declaring that ships, cargo, and crews have been inspected and are free of contagion, chiefly meaning plague. Most are in Italian, but several also include some Latin.

Nine of these bills of health originated in Venice, with others from Brindisi, Guastalla, Milano, Piacenza, Ravenna, Reggio, San Giovanni in Persiceto, Segna, San Martino, and Trieste. They range in size from 6 x 8 1/4 to 12 x 16 1/2 inches. Almost all bear one or more small woodcuts such as patron saints and coats of arms; blindstamps and seals are also often present.

Typical handwritten content on the front and sometimes back of the sheet gives the name of the ship's owner and his ship, the ship's itinerary, number of containers ("Colli"), and type of cargo. A few of the documents also include lists of crew members, with names, ages, and stature. A few terms of interest that appear include "lazzaretto," indicating a place of quarantine, and "epizootico," a medical term for a non-human epidemic or agent. Forms part of the History of Medicine Collections at Duke University.

### Biographical/Historical

The cities issuing these clean bills of health are located in northern Italy; about half are port cities on the Adriatic; the other half are in central Italy and relate to overland trade rather than maritime shipping. The cities were part of a large network of European trade centers combating the spread of bubonic plague, cholera and other diseases through the inspection and quarantining of ships and overland cargo.

Clusters of dates found in this collection - 1629-1636, 1720-1730, 1775-1778, 1800-1803, and 1816-1818 - are linked to outbreaks of plague, cholera, and typhus in northern Europe.

The woodcut illustrations, mottos, and other elements on the document refer to the city's region and its ruling authorities, among which, various noble families, the Papal States, and the Napoleonic Cisalpine Republic.

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## Arrangement

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Arranged by date.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

### Processing Information

Processed and encoded by Paula Jeannet, November 2016. Accession(s) represented in this finding aid: 2016-0227.

### Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the copyright section of the Regulations and Procedures of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

### Acquisition Information

The Italian public health documents declaring ships and goods to be disease-free were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a purchase in 2016.

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## Names and Subjects

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- Communicable diseases -- Italy -- Social aspects
- Italy -- History -- 1559-1789
- Italy -- History -- 1789-1815
- Plague -- Early works to 1800
- Plague -- Italy
- Public health -- Italy -- History -- 17th century
- Public health -- Italy -- History -- 18th century
- Public health -- Italy -- History -- 19th century
- Quarantine -- History
- Shipping -- Italy
- Venice (Italy) -- History -- 1508-1797
- ephemera (general object genre)
- Port cities -- Italy -- History
- Bills of health (Maritime law)
- Josiah Charles Trent History of Medicine Collections (Duke University)

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## Collection Inventory

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Nos Prouisores Salutis Venetiarum. Gratis. Vniuersis, & singulis, facciamo ampia, & indubitata fede, qualmente s'estrazeno da questa Città sana (Iddio gratia) & libera d'ogni sospetto di mal contagioso gli infrascritti colli, a quali, & robbe, che entro vi sono..., 1630 March 9

Box 1 > Item RL11337-MS-01

Noi Presidenti Alla Sanità Di S. Martino in Rio. Facciamo fede, come da questa Terra libera, per la Iddio gratia da ogni sospetto di Peste si parte Sign: [?] Gherardo Salmerino da S. Mar.no habitante d'anni 35 statura curta pelo castagno..., 1631 February 13 [?]

Box 1 > Item RL11337-MS-02

Nos Supra Prouisores, Adiuncti, & Prouivores Salutis Venetiarum. Gratis. Si parte di questa Dominante sana (Iddio lodato) & libera da ogni sospetto di mal Contagioso gl'infrascritti, con

robbe, ò con mercantie, ò senza, come qui sotto sarà notato..., 1713 January [?] 22

Box 1 > Item RL11337-MS-03

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I Presidente [sic], e Conseruatori della Sanità dello Stato di Milano. Si leuano da questa Città di Milano, sanissima per Dio gratia, e liberissima d'ogni sospittione di contagio pestifero, gl'infrascritti Colli di robba forastiera..., 1723 April 20

Box 1 > Item RL11337-MS-04

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**Scope and Contents**

This bill of health issued in Milano relates to overland movement of goods (handkerchiefs from Amsterdam) in containers ("Colli").

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Li Conservatori della Sanità di Parma. Levandosi da Parma Città sana, per Iddio grazia, & libera da ogni sospetto di Contagio, gl'infrascritti colli, per inviarli a Reggio e spediti dal [Sr.?] Gibertini..., 1723 April 20

Box 1 > Item RL11337-MS-05

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Priore, e Conservatori della Sanità di Piacenza. Si levano da questa Città di Piacenza, libera, e sana (per Iddio grazia) da ogni sospetto, anche minimo di Contagio, per inviarla a Reggio gl'insfrascritti, Colli, e Robbe..., 1723 April 25

Box 1 > Item RL11337-MS-06

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Noi Presidenti Alla Sanità Di Gvastalla. Si estraee da questa Città di Guastalla, sana, e libera per IDDIO grazia da ogni sospetto di Contagio, gl'infrascritti Colli di robbe..., 1722 July 6

Box 2 > Item RL11337-MS-07

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Nos Supra Provisores, Adjuncti, & Provisores Salutis Venetiarum. A qualunque Eccelentissimo Magistrato, ed a cadauno a cui appartiene, si fa pubblica, ed indubitata fede, qualmente si partono da questa Dominante sana per la Grazia di Nostro Signor Dio, e libera di ogni sospetto di mal Contagioso..., 1776 March 20

Box 2 > Item RL11337-MS-08

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Noi Provisori Alla Sanità Della Città e Porto Franco di Trieste Partono da questa Città sana, e libera, Iddio lodato, da ogni sospetto di male contagioso gl'infrascritti [Cm:?] Batta Schiavo con [Colli?] sei in netto sette..., 1781 May 23

Box 2 > Item RL11337-MS-09

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Noi Provisori Alla Sanità Della Regia, e Libera Città Di Segna. A chiunque le presenti Nostre

perveranno, facciamo noto, qualmente partono da questa Città, per l'IDDIO Grazia sana, e libera d'ogni sospetto di mal contioso, li sottoscritti..., 1786 August 10

Box 2 > Item RL11337-MS-10

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Parte da quasta Fedelissima Città di Brindesi, ove per la Dio grazia, di sua SS. Madre, e de' SS. nostri Protettori si vive sano, e senza sospetto di male contagioso lo suo [baccole?] nominato S. Ant.o di Padova del Padrone Fortunato Paduan di Chiosa con sette, dio ti \_\_\_ Marinari..., 1786 November 4

Box 2 > Item RL11337-MS-11

### **Scope and Contents**

This large notice contains a list of the captain and six crew members, with name, age, stature, and hair color, along with a lengthy note on the ship's travels and cargo.

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Repubblica Cisalpina Gio.S. 7: Fiorile Anno IX Rep.... La Municipalità di S. Gioanni in Persiceto Dipartimento Del Reno Alla Commissione di Sanità del Dipartimento del Reno In riscontro alla vostra delli 4: andante vi accertiamo, che il nostro Distretto è affatto Libero non solo dal malore Epizzootico, ma anche da qualsivoglia altro morbo occidentale, per cui non cambiamo nessuna relazione da lungo tempo..., 1800 April 27

Box 1 > Item RL11337-MS-12

### **Scope and Contents**

Rather than a printed form, this declaration is in the form of a handwritten letter to the public health administration in Bologna.

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Commissione Centrale di Sanità Pel Littorale Pontificio Dell'Adriatico Fede Di Partenza Ufficio di Sanità Marittima di Ravenna Si dichiara che partono da questo luogo libero (per grazia di Dio) da ogni sospetto di male contagioso i sottoscritti imbarcati sopra Baragozzo denominato La Divina Provvidenza di bandiera Pontificia..., 1818 September 2

Box 2 > Item RL11337-MS-13

### **Scope and Contents**

Includes list of six crew members, with name, function/social class ("qualità"), age, hair color, and stature. Also includes a note that one crew member was removed.

Gratis. Giesv Maria. Conseruatori alla Sanità di  
Parma. Si parte da questo luogo di dominio del  
Sereniss. di Parma libero per l'Iddio grazia d'ogni  
sospetto di Peste per andar a... [the rest is blank,  
undated]

Box 1 > Item RL11337-MS-14

**Scope and Contents**

Appears to be a blank form that would be filled out with details. Probably dates from pre-1800s.