

HEART SHAPED POSTAL MARKINGS OF: THE GRAND DUCHY OF TUSCANY THE DUCHY OF MODENA AND REGGIO THE PAPAL STATES

For 86 years, from September of 1767 to 1853 the Grand Duchy of Tuscany postal authorities used a system of ink stamped markings to aid the administration of the service. These markings were generally heart shaped and had the name of the city, Firenze (Florence) Siena or Livorno, and a number within it. Modena, Reggio and Carpi in the Duchy of Modena and Reggio, and Bologna in the Papal States also used this system. Those markings that were not completely heart shaped had some resemblance to a heart.

Why was a heart shape used?

"It was artistic genius, the charm of women, and the attractiveness and essence of Tuscan landscape which inspires beauty and the idea of love." (Alessandro Papanti).

This exhibit displays correspondence with heart shaped postal markings that has passed through the various postal services of Florence, Siena, Livorno, Modena, Reggio, Carpi and The postal markings illustrate a variety of colours, heart shapes and letter designs. Items with an orange outline are rarer.

Before 1767 the Tuscany postal services were not required to use a date stamp. In 1767 the authorities request that a stamp with location be stamped upon all mail. A heart shaped stamp was developed and used from about September 1767.

This exhibit displays the various heart shaped postal markings of 7 cities in northern Italy.

Black "Firenze" in heart with no number within



Entire from Florence to Rome, letter dated 6th April 1768

Reference: Precursors from the Heart of Tuscany, a Stamp for All Seasons. Alessandro Papanti (Translated from Italian by google translate).

HEART POSTAL MARKINGS OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF TUSCANY

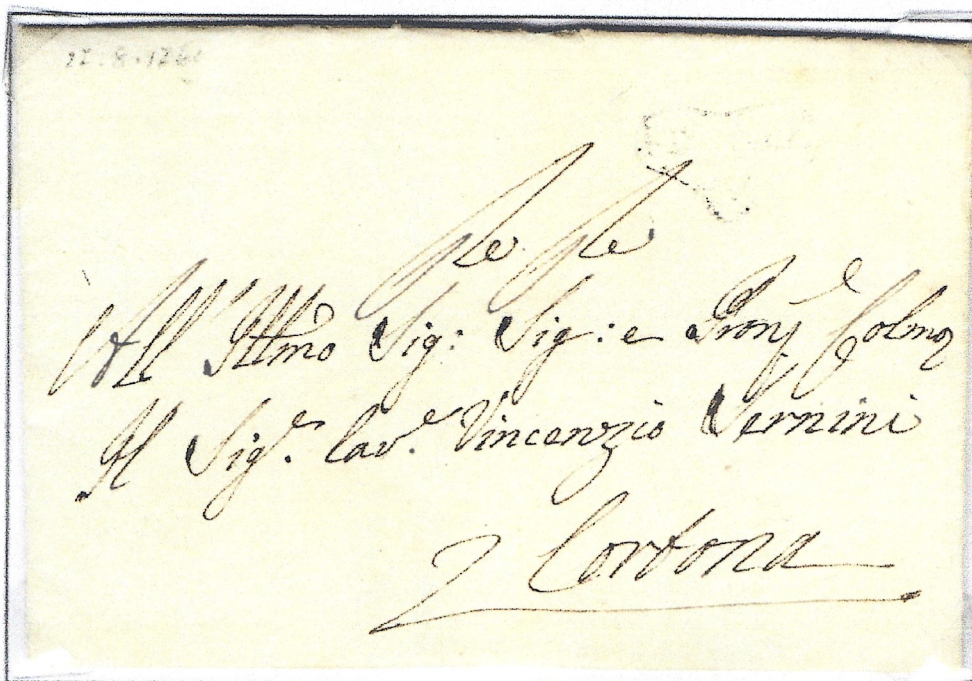
During this time the postal services were not required to use a date stamp. Shortly after the introduction of the city postal marking a number of the week was requested to be added to the stamp. The weekly number indicated what week of the year the letter was handled and represented a "departure" date. This was to aid the accounting systems in place at the time. Florence was the first place to use the system.

Red "Firenze" in heart with number 1



Entire from Rome to Pistola via Florence, letter dated 28th December 1804

Black "Firenze" in heart with number 35



Entire from Florence to Cortona, letter dated 27th August 1769

HEART POSTAL MARKINGS OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF TUSCANY

Red "Firenze" in heart with 17 and black "Livorno" with 16



Entire from Constantinople to Florence with Transit postmark Livorno.
Letter dated 26 March 1806.

Note the disinfectant holes used to "clean" mail from an influenza pandemic at the time.

Red Siena in heart with 52



Entire from Florence to Matitima via Siena, letter dated 29th December 1807

HEART POSTAL MARKINGS OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF TUSCANY

Black "Livorno" in heart with 53

How many weeks are there in a year? Postal regulations required the weeks to be counted from the Sunday. Florence had their stamps prepared in 1767, this year there were 52 Sundays. Siena started in 1792 and again this year had 52 Sundays. Livorno however started using this system in 1786 and in this year there were 53 Sundays.



Entire from Modena to Livorno, letter dated 22nd December 1794

Black "Livorno" in heart used as an obliterator

When the postal regulations required the date to be stamped on mail post offices continued using the heart stamp without the number as an obliterator up until 1853. The reason for this is not clear but possibly it was to enable a clear visualisation of the date on the date stamp.

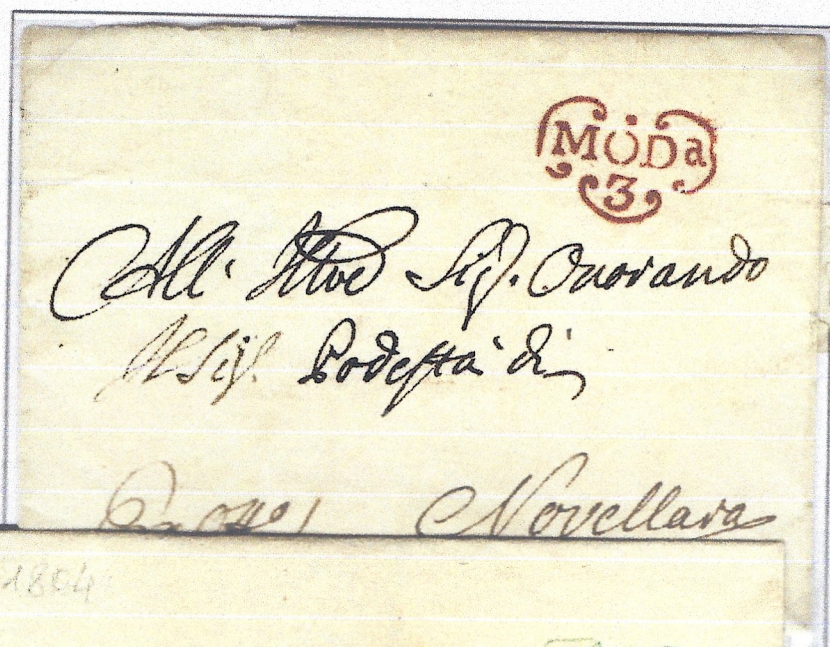


Cover from Livorno to Rome, 3rd December 1852
1 Crazia dark carmine on blue, 2 Crazie gray blue on blue.

HEART POSTAL MARKINGS OF THE DUCHY OF MODENA AND REGGIO

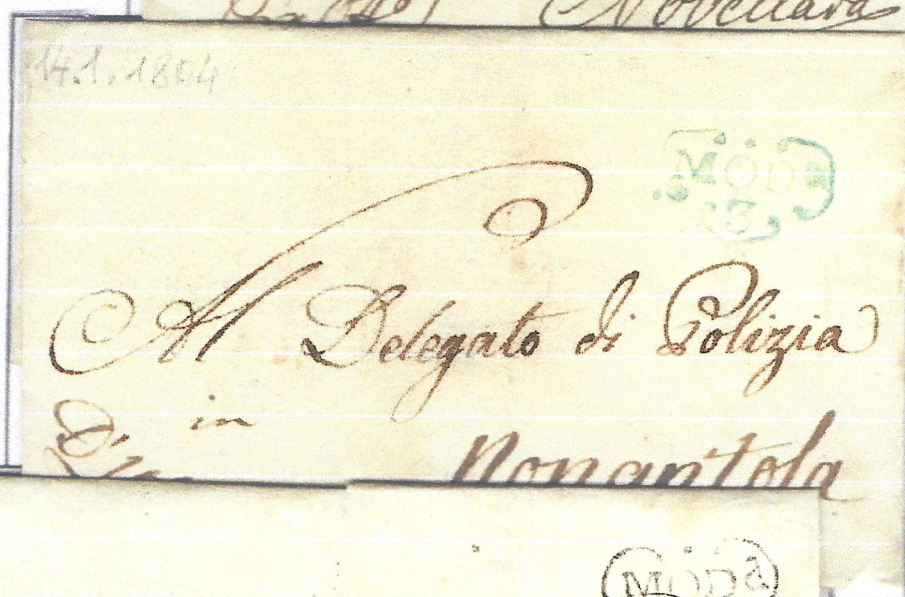
Red "MODa" in heart with 3

Entire from Modena to Novellaro,
letter dated 11th January 1793



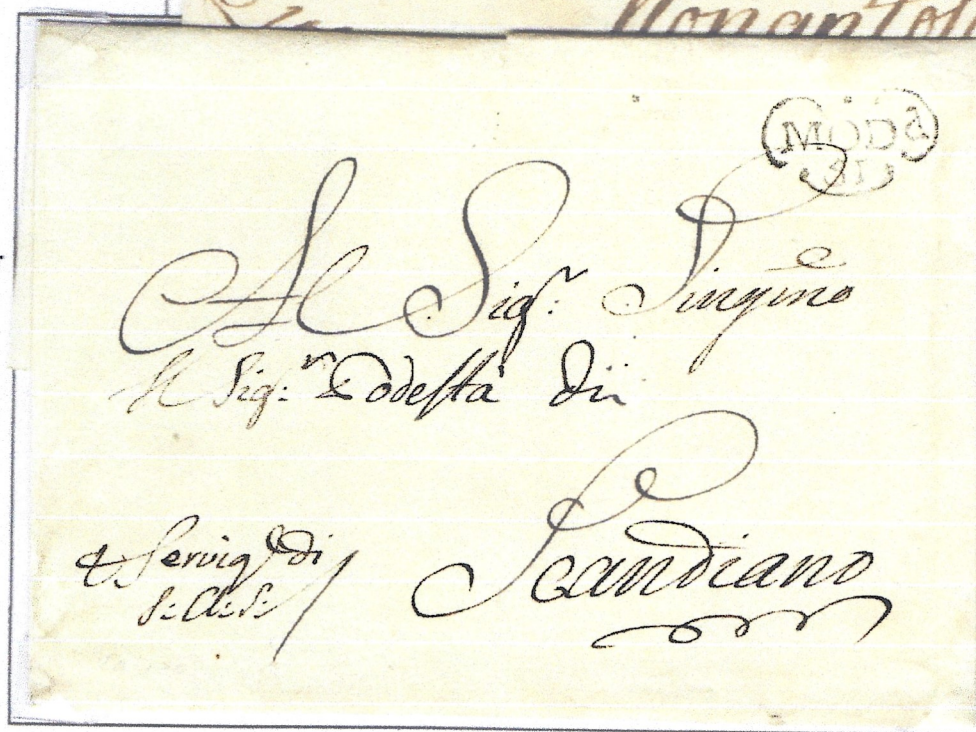
Green "MODa" in heart with 3

Entire from Modena to Nonantola,
letter dated 14th January 1804



Black "Moda" in heart with 51

Entire from Modena to
Scandiano.
Date unknown outer
section only.
The 51st week of the year
occurs late in December

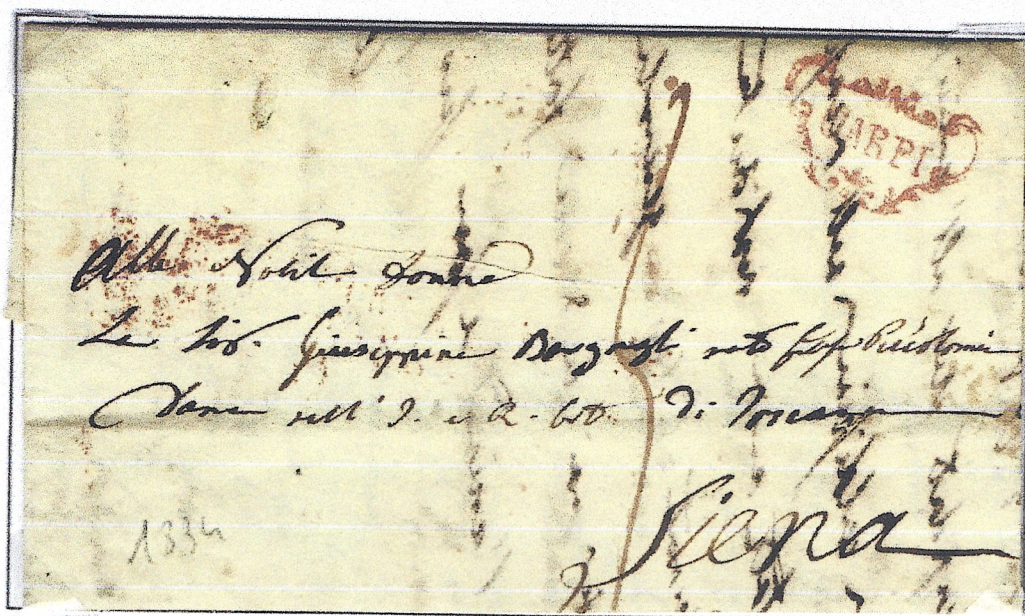


HEART POSTAL MARKINGS OF THE DUCHY OF MODENA AND REGGIO

Red "Carpi" in heart

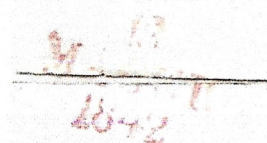
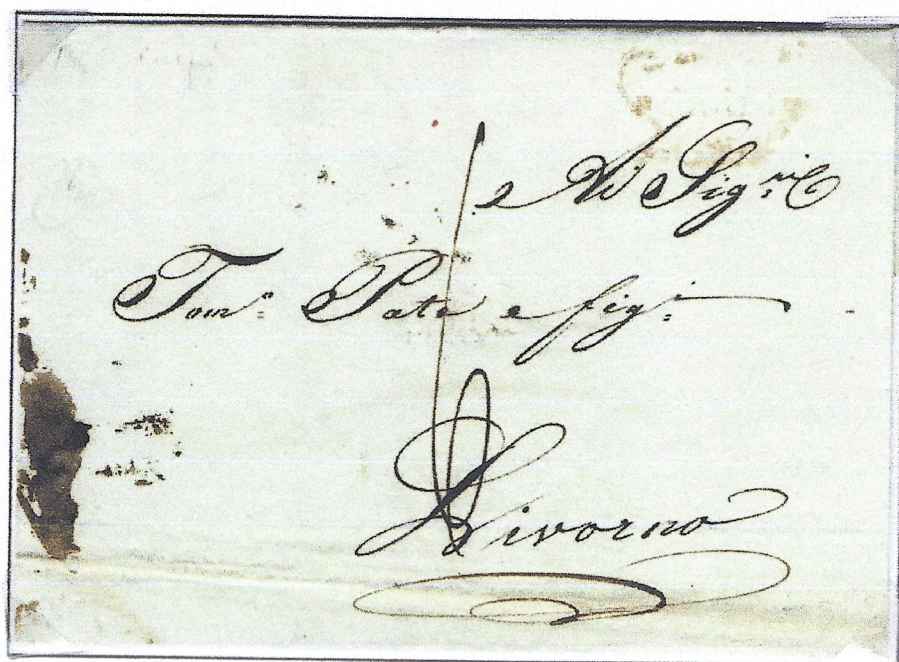
Letter written 7 January 1835, date stamped in red on back 11 Gennaio 1835

Entire from Carpi to Siena.



Letter written 5 May 1842, date stamped in red on back 18 Maggio 1842

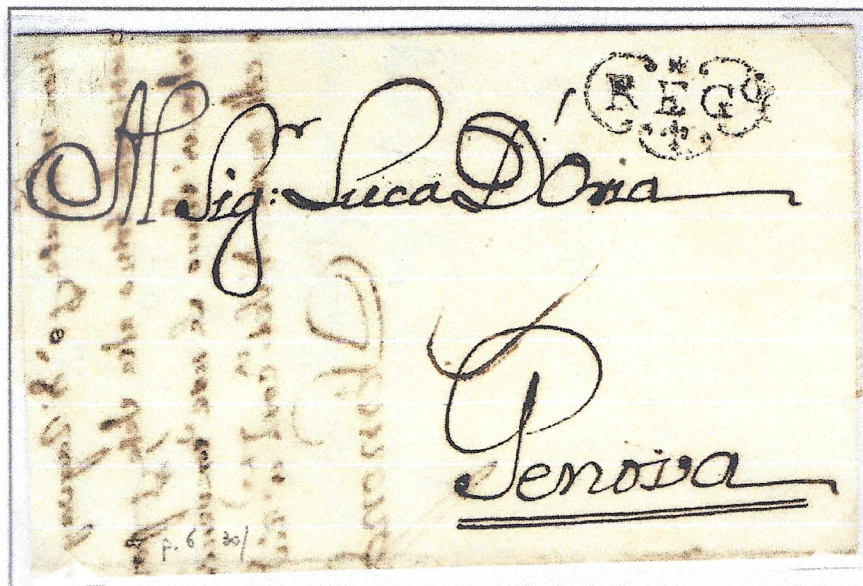
Entire from Carpi to Livorno.



"CARPI" used to cancel
Sardinia 20 centesimi.
Embossed head of
Victor Emmanuel II.
Issued 1855 (stamp on
piece)

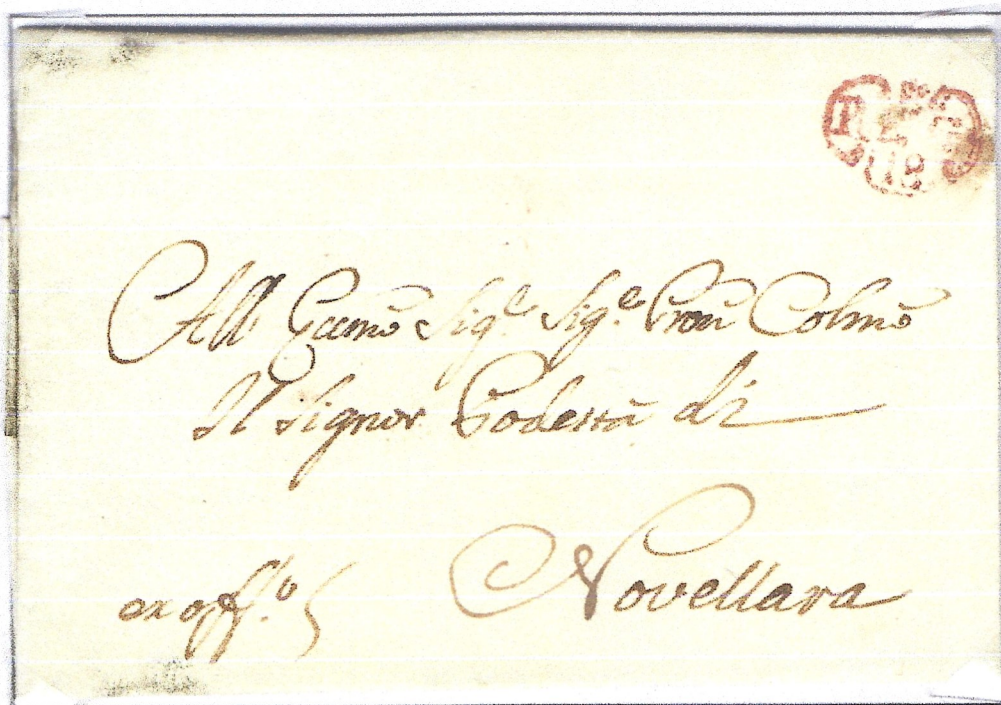
HEART POSTAL MARKINGS OF THE DUCHY OF MODENA AND REGGIO

Black "REG" in heart no number



Entire from Reggio to Genoa (Genova), letter dated 11th March 1774

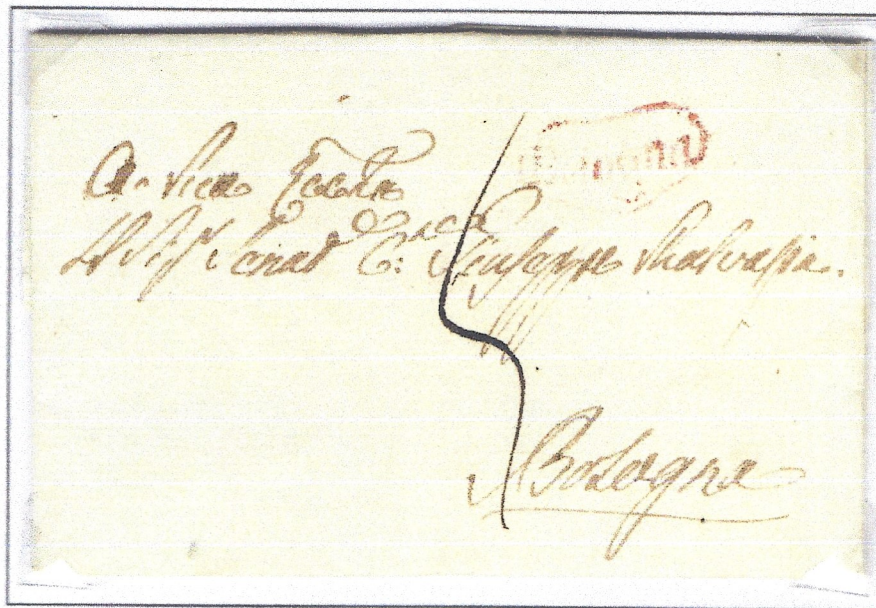
Red "REG" in heart 18



Entire from Reggio to Novellara, letter dated 2nd May 1787

HEART POSTAL MARKINGS OF THE PAPAL STATES

Red "Bologna" in heart



Entire from Mantua (Duchy of Milan) to Bologna. Tax to pay 4, letter dated 28th April 1775

TO FINISH WITH A MYSTERY

Black "Firenze" in heart with no number within



Entire from Lorno to Padova via Florence, letter dated 7th January 1769

7 Jan 1769 Lorno

This letter is dated 7 January 1769. It is unlikely that there is a missing "1" in the heart as the shape of the heart is the same as the Heart with no number seen on page 1. This is therefore a late usage of the original heart after numbers were introduced or where it states in the literature that numbers were introduced "shortly after" then "shortly after" was in fact a couple of years.