Capo di Monte
Drinking Vessels
by J. Joseph Hersh, M.D.

The Collecting of Antiques by Esther Singleton, published in 1946 by the Macmillan Co. has the Capo di Monte story and pictures a vase in the Metropolitan Museum of Art characteristic of this type of fine porcelain. Her description of this fine porcelain referred to it as "little detached figures, generally grotesques, delicately modelled and painted".

Her reference to the founder of the Capo di Monte dynasty, Prince Charles of Bourbon, Duke of Parma, who became King of Naples and Sicily in 1735 states that he was one of those royal personages who liked to have beautiful objects. His fancy was for porcelain. Consequently he established in 1742 a factory for making soft paste porcelain near the royal palace, Naples, and used to work there occasionally himself.

When this King of Naples became in 1759 King Charles III of Spain, he established his pet porcelain factory at Buen Retiro, Madrid. He died in 1789 and Buen Retiro was offered for sale. What was left of the Capo di Monte factory was moved to Portici and later to Naples and there was continued by his son, Ferdinand and the latters wife, Queen Caroline, daughter of Maria Theresa. Following this came "the period of Neo-Classical taste". This continued until the closing of the Capo di Monte factory in 1820.

Warren E. Cox in his book titled "The Book of Pottery and Porcelain" carries this story further and adds a very important climax. According to Cox, a great many Capo di Monte models and moulds from the Capo di Monte factory were transferred to the Ginori factory at Doccia, near Florence.

The story of Doccia porcelain began with the Florentine patrician, Carlo Ginori, who in 1735 began his search for the proper clays and his studies for the construction of suitable furnaces. It was in 1737 that he brought into existence the lavish and gay, distinctive bas and high relief polychrome porcelain that combines the sculpture and art of the Italian masters. The last descendant of Carlo Ginori died in 1896 following which a merger was carried out with the Milanese family of Richard. Thus the manufacture of exquisite porcelain figurines and objet d'art continued to be produced under the firm name of Richard-Ginori utilizing the Capo di Monte moulds and packaging their creations with registration certificates of authenticity.

The Societa Ceramica Richard-Ginori has an outstanding color brochure on the Museo di Doccia which would appear to be strictly for advertising purposes. However a most informative article by M. E. Steedman on "Doccia Porcelain", published in the Connoisseur (London) Vol. XIX (Sept.-Dec. 1907) authenticates the information present in the brochure.

Steedman, like Warren E. Cox, tells of the Capo di Monte moulds being transferred to the Ginori factory in Doccia in 1821. A further interesting quote by Steedman relative to this transfer is that "large quantities of spurious Neapolitan china bearing the original mark have since been manufactured and distributed throughout Europe". As one con-
continues to digest the material in Steedman's article the thought of "spurious Neopolitan china" is nul-
ified. The Doccia factory adopted the N topped with the five pointed crown and the name Capo di Monte for their porcelain mark and creations after 1821.

The Marchese Carlo Ginori died in 1757 and his son Senator Lorenzo enlarged and improved the factory. Carlo Leopoldo succeeded Lorenzo and it was during his tenure that the Doccia museum was started as well as the adoption of the name Capo di Monte to their products and the mark of the Royal Capo di Monte factory as the mark of Doccia porcelain.

The progress of the Doccia factory was phenomenal. In later years they successfully imitated Chinese and Japanese porcelain. They copied the 16th century Majolica of Xante and Maestro Giorgio. The metallic lusters employed in the coloring of the latter were invented and brought to perfection by Giusti, an artist who received his training at Doccia.

They imitated Wedgwood's jasper-ware principally in the form of white oval medallion portraits on a blue background. (Steedman modifies his statement on Wedgwood to "it seems", and not a direct charge of imitation.)

The principal marks found on Doccia porcelain prior to 1821 are a star in gold or in red, the star forming part of the Ginori Coat of Arms. A double triangle in gold also appears on their best specimens. Sometimes the name Ginori is impressed as well as initials of their artists. N. S. is attributed to Nicolo Sebastian and P. F. to Pietro Fanciullacci who was a chemist as well as a painter. Rarely met with are the initials C. A. and P. G.

The gold oak leaf on the base of the Deposition (Model 220 with silver gilt fittings) is a mystery mark; it may be the goldsmith's mark for the filigree silver-gilt top and base of the porcelain vessel.

This article is titled "Capo di Monte Drinking Vessels", a part of the stein family that has been shrouded in mystery and doubt. The long historical preamble above is important since it clarifies and defines the term Capo di Monte and its Neopolitan mark. Had it not been for the Ginori family the history and accomplishments of the Royal Capo di Monte factory at Naples would have been lost forever. The Ginori family (descendants of Carlo Ginori) not only reincarnated the dream of Royalty who considered their work more of a hobby, but made it a specific reality.

Bicchiere da Birra (beer steins) in Doccia porcelains have been made by the Ginori descendents since after 1770. A communication from the present Director of the Museo di Doccia confirmed this for me and my fellow collectors of Doccia steins. Incidentally we refer to V&B steins as Mettlach so Ginori steins can be similarly referred to as Doccia steins.

The photographs supplied by the Director of the Museo Delle Porcel-
lan di Doccia are a great contribution to the fascination of ceramic art enthusiasts and clarify all previous misconceptions that have existed prior to their "discovery".

From this historical review of Doccia porcelain by M. E. Steedman and the photographs supplied by the Director of the Museo di Doccia we can conclude that the steins that we have always referred to as originating in Naples are in reality Florentine. Since the steins embody the magnificence of Italian art and particularly since Florence is the heart of its production, this is significant.

Translation of the letter from the Director of the Doccia Museum:

The Illustrious
J. Joseph Hersh, M.D.
1331 Terrace Drive
Pittsburgh, Penna. 15228
President Stein Collectors
International 1969 - 1970
July 21, 1974

Dear Sir:

We acknowledge receipt of your letter dated April 5, 1974 and also May 25, 1974.

Your study of the above material in collaboration with your friends who are collectors, that has been published is very interesting, and we would appreciate a copy for our own archives.

We have studied four photographs that were transmitted to our museum. From the observation of the above photographs we can determine and identify it to be of the Ginori collection "Fig. IV" (I II period) with the benefit of observing the jug along with the total globe.

Certainly in the second half of the 1800's the Ginori produced beer jugs with historical scenes of lowerand higher reliefs. Included we send you together with the photographs A1, AII, A table XXVII removed from the tariff of the artistic products of Ginori in 1800 until the 19th century and starting of the 20th century.

The beer jug which we stated above we have chosen Model 220 and 219, sending with a photographic documentation.

This source of information regarding the Napoli manufacturer is not able to be documented.

The scene on model 51 is found on the Ginori Models in the middle of the 18th century.

The photocolors you requested will be honored and will be completed on the model you preferred.

With humility.

Doccia Museum
Director

Editors Note: Any member who would like a copy of the original letter from the Museo di Doccia may obtain one by requesting it and sending a SASE to Prosit.

References:
Brochure, Societa Ceramica Richard-Ginori, Sesto Fiorentino (Firenze).
Brochure, The Richard-Ginori Stores, 711 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y.

Personal Communications:
Director, Museo Delle Porcellane Di Doccia, Florence, Italy.
Nada Saporiti, Assistant Museum Librarian, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, N.Y.