

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Peter Easton

DR. JOHN MITCHELL has discovered the existence in the Archivio di Stato in Turin, Italy, 31 pages of *Patenti Piemonte* (1613-20) referring to Newfoundland's best-known pirate, Peter Easton. These papers confirm information available in the English *Calendar of State Papers (James I and Venetian)*.

Easton retired from piracy in or about 1613, and became involved in the affairs of the Italian Duchy of Savoy under Arch-Duke Charles Emmanuel I (the Great) [*Carlos Emanuele I, Il Grande*]. These *patenti*, written in the vernacular, record Easton's activity as Charles Emmanuel's Lieutenant-General of Savoyard artillery, Easton's marriage to Francesca Grimalda, daughter of a court worthy, their children, Easton's illness (1617-1618?), the dispersal of Easton's treasure (1613), Easton's pension from the Duke, Easton's residences in Savoy and other matters.

The *patenti* are divided in two categories: (1) *Patenti Conti Finanze* and (2) *Patenti Piemonte*. Both are inscribed under the name *Pietro Eston*. The former exist in Rep. 1614 to Rep. 1620, while the latter are in Rep. 31 to 36.

Palaeographically these are all written in Italian humanist script of some degree of difficulty, legibility depending upon the particular hand of the scribe or secretary. The record of them is under the general title: Archivio di Stato di Torino, Camerale Piemonte, Giudice delle patenti delle Camere dei conti di Piemonte.

They are as follows:

1. *Patenti Conti Finanze*. Rep. 1614, f. 179 ("1614. 23 Giugno")
2. *PCF*, Rep. 1614/15, f. 114; f. 270; f. 283
3. *PCF*, Rep. 1617/18, f. 6, 7-v
4. *PCF*, Rep. 1618/19, f. 130; f. 183
5. *PCF*, Rep. 1620, f. 10; f. 132 ("1620. 29 Nov.re")
6. *Patenti Piemonte*. Rep. 31, ff. 161-164 ("1 maggio 1613")
7. *PP*, Rep. 32, f. 212

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8. *PP*, Rep. 33, ff. 132-134; f. 241
9. *PP*, Rep. 35, f. 27
10. *PP*, Rep. 36, f. 384 (“2 Smbre 1620”)

There are 13 pages or parts of pages of *Patenti Conti Finanze* and 18 pages or parts of pages of *Patenti Piemonte*.

These *patenti* would be of interest to anyone studying Savoyard notarial law and finance during the early seventeenth century and one unusual moment: Peter Easton’s meteoric appearance in Piedmont. Though written in legalese, these abstruse documents definitely fill in gaps in the arch-corsair’s life.