

Siege Money Issued in the Occupied Territories of Italy 1813-1848

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DURING both the Napoleonic (1813-1814) and the Revolutionary (1848) Wars in Italy, the following siege money was issued in the occupied territories:

I. 1813 CATTARO

At the siege of the French-occupied town and fortress of Cattaro by the British and Montenegrin troops, the Town-Council issued emergency paper money, the so-called "Billet", of two francs denomination. The note was printed in black on white paper. The signatures and serial numbers were handwritten; the reverse was blank. No copy is known in existence today.

At the same time obsidional coins (siege pieces or necessity money) of one and five francs denominations were in circulation.

II. 1813 ZARA

During the siege of the French-occupied fortress and town of Zara, the Town-Council issued emergency paper money of two francs. Seven series appeared, each issue consisting of 10,000 pieces of the two franc note. They were printed in black on white paper. Each has two signatures as well as the serial numbers handwritten, and a brown oval stamp. The reverse is blank. Dimensions are 105 x 85 mm. This "Papier de Siege" had valuations in both French francs and Venetian lira. The French 2 francs equalled Venetian lira 3:18:2.

During this period also, obsidional coins in the following denominations were circulated:

- 1 once equivalent to French francs 4.60
- 2 onces equivalent to French francs 9.20
- 4 onces equivalent to French francs 18.40

The coins were also marked with the valuations according to both the Italian and French monetary systems.

III. 16 October 1813—19 April 1814 PALMANOVA

The fortification of Palmanova was occupied by the French General Barone di Volterre. After the start of the siege by the Austrian troops, the COMMISSIONE DI FINANZA PALMANOVA issued emergency notes to alleviate the money shortage.

The notes were done on bluish-white handmade paper in a sum of 50,000 lire, with the usual handwritten parts supplied by an oval stamp. The paper has the watermark C e I HONIG, or A F G—1810.

The notes were signed by the following: Giuseppe Tornaschi, Burco, Francesco Carminati, Giacomo Biasioli, Pasquale Celin, Paolo Ebro, Gio Batta Fabris, Gio Batta Pellegrini, Lodovico Ferrari, Giovanni Nadanich, Giuseppe Putelli, Gasparo Zanulini.

- 2 Lire, 95 by 145 mm (7,500 pieces)
- 5 Lire, 125 by 125 mm (3,000 pieces)
- 10 Lire, 180 by 125 mm (1,000 pieces)
- 25 Lire, 205 by 110 mm (400 pieces)

During the siege a bronze coin in the 50 centimes denomination was also struck and put into circulation.



Palmanova siege notes, 1848

IV. 24 March—24 June 1848 PALMANOVA

While Milano and Venice were free from the Austrian troops, the Austrian fortress PALMANOVA went over to the Italian insurgents and later was besieged by the Austrian forces.

The COMMISSIONE DI FINANZA again issued emergency paper money as during the 1813-14 period in the sum of 60,000 lire.

The centesimi notes were printed on white card 75 x 90 mm. The single signature and the serial numbers were handwritten, and at the left border is an oval stamp reading COMMISSIONE DI FINANZA PALMANOVA IN STATO D'ASSIDIO 1848.

The lire notes were partly handwritten, partly printed on white card with two stamps in a dimension of 166 x 146 mm. The notes appeared rarely on watermarked paper with only a single letter or mark visible on a note. On the printed notes the value indication is made in red, the date in green.

The lire notes were signed by the following: Dr. Giuseppe Putelli, Dr. Bastiano Torre, Pietro Fredericis,

Sebastiano Buri, Nicolás Michielli, G. Batt. Uliana, Francesco Fabris, Giuseppe Focazzi.

Each note has two stamps: in an oval, COMMISSIONE DI FINANZA PALMANOVA IN STATO D'ASSIDIO 1848; and in a circle, COMANDO DELLA FORTEZZA PALMA NOVA. Both are in black. The reverse of each note is blank.

Naturally, there are some varieties among the handwritten notes.

A. Handwritten notes:

1 Lira	3 Lire
2 Lire	6 Lire

B. Printed notes:

5 centesimi	} not put into circulation
10 centesimi	
25 centesimi, 6,000 pieces	
50 centesimi, 9,000 pieces	
1 Lira, 11,000 pieces (together with handwritten ones)	
2 Lire, 8,000 pieces (together with handwritten ones)	
3 Lire, 5,000 pieces (together with handwritten ones)	
6 Lire, 2,000 pieces (together with handwritten ones)	
10 Lire	} not put into circulation
50 Lire	
100 Lire	

V. 7 April-12 October 1848 OSOPPO

The fortress Osoppo also went over from the Austrian forces to the Italian insurgents. To remedy the money shortage the Finance Commission issued wholly handwritten emergency paper money in a sum of Austrian lira 6,180.

The notes were written on greyish-white paper in a dimension of 158-169 x 70-74 mm. The reverse is blank.

All notes have five signatures as follows: Zannini, L. Andervolti, G. Vecchiaritti, Enrico Francia, Giacinto Franceschinis.

All notes also have three stamps in rectangles: COMANDO D'ARTIGLERIA IN OSOPPO, Deputazione Comunale di Osoppo, and COMMANDO DEL FORTE D'OSOPPO.

50 centesimi, 169 by 70 mm
1 Lira, 159 by 72 mm
2 Lire, 158 by 72 mm
3 Lire, 159 by 74 mm
6 Lire, 159 by 72 mm
50 Lire, 160 by 73 mm
100 Lire, 160 by 73 mm

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Postal Use of Russia's Currency Stamps

(From "Philatelic Magazine," London, December 1974)

One of the results of Russia's economic troubles early in the first world war, was a desperate shortage of metal for coinage. As a stopgap measure, the imperial government reprinted certain of the current postage stamps on card and released them for circulation as currency. It has been stated that their use for postal purposes was categorically prohibited and that postage due was charged on any letter found to be bearing them. The August 1974 issue of our Moscow contemporary "Philateliya SSSR" carries an article by D. Kouznetsov which offers evidence to modify the view previously held. We reproduce the article below, in translation, by courtesy of "Philateliya SSSR".

In 1915 the Ministry of Finance issued "stamp money" in values of 10, 15 and 20 kopeks. These items were printed on very thick paper from clichés of the postage stamps of the Jubilee Issue of 1913*. On the reverse side they carried the inscription: "In circulation on equal footing with silver coinage."

In philatelic journals and catalogues one reads that it was forbidden to make use of these currency stamps for postal purposes. Certainly they were not sold in post offices; and in cancelled state, especially on cover, one rarely comes across them.

Recently in the State Archives of the Perm Oblast** a document was shown us which demonstrates that the postal authorities did not in fact stand in the way of the use of this "stamp money" for the payment of postage.

Carrying out instructions received from the Chief Directorate of Posts and Telegraphs and dated October

8th 1915 (Order No. 8907), the Chief Officer at the Perm Posts and Telegraphs region instructs all establishments under his jurisdiction that "in the event of payment being made, for the transmission of postal communications, with currency stamps issued by the Ministry of Finance, then such items are to be accepted without hindrance . . ."

At the same time, the instructions do point out that "it is required to be explained to the public that the aforesaid stamps are intended for circulation exclusively as coinage and therefore should not be used for payment of postal fees of any kind, instead of postage stamps."

Whether a dispensation similar to that described above was given in the case of the 1, 2 and 3 kopek values which were put into circulation as currency in 1917, is not at present established.

However, as the 10, 15 and 20 kopek currency stamps were "accepted without hindrance" postally, their existence on cover does not after all present itself as "an oversight on the part of postal employees" or as a case of "cancellation by favour", as was previously thought. These currency stamps were in practice as valid for postage as any other stamps. They must therefore be allowed to take their place in the albums of philatelists.

* Commemorating the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty on the throne of Russia.

** A province on the western slopes of the Urals.