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ITALIAN COIN ENGRAVERS
SINCE 1800

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By Elvira Eliza Clain-Stefanelli

INTRODUCTION

Un phénomène qui est d'abord économique puis qui s'élargit dans le domaine de l'esthétique.
Jean Babelon, *La médaille et les médailleurs*

This study is concerned with coins as works of art. It may seem unusual to approach such objects of daily use—regarded popularly as the quintessence of crudest materialism—in esthetic terms. Nevertheless, coins are a direct and sincere expression of their time and are often true reflections of the artistic concepts of a period as they filter through the personality of an artist.

It is customary to regard only coins from earlier periods of history as creations of art and to deny this characteristic to contemporary productions. Essentially, however, there is little difference between an ancient and a modern coin. Both are frank expressions of their age. But there is some weight to the former view. While in classical times the ideal of beauty formed an integral part of everyday life, in the modern world a more utilitarian ideal predominates—a fact which is often reflected in coins. With technical progress and its emphasis on mechanical processes there has come a neglect of spontaneity in expression. Despite this, however, many modern coin engravers have succeeded in giving an artistic interpretation to even the coldest and most official pattern, and their work must be considered in terms of genuine art.

The modern coinage of Italy presents many interesting problems, among them the investigation of how a country in which a strong art tradition had

existed since ancient times met the challenges which its own period presented and how that country competed with the contemporary art of other nations, especially France. It is interesting to observe also how tradition, that sometime beneficent guide for new generations, can become a merciless tyrant which annihilates spontaneity, one of the most desirable qualities in art. A related problem lies in discovering how Italian artists tried to satisfy the quest for innovation, how they attempted to get away from established patterns, and where they directed their attention for new inspiration.

To appreciate the creative process of each coin engraver, to understand his personality, his problems, and to evaluate his creations as esthetic reflections within a historical framework is the theme of the present study. This primary motif is shifted at times to a more detective-like process of trying to identify, along lines of stylistic peculiarities, the various artists who worked anonymously on a certain coinage.

For reasons of space this is necessarily a selective study. It is not a complete series of the artists of the period nor is it a complete listing of each man's work, but rather it presents the major figures and their more representative productions. In general, the large silver and gold coins are given preference, with attention centered on portraits, since the latter, in fact, are considered the ultimate test of a coin engraver's per-

ception and skill in transmuting esthetic and human values into harmonious creations. Medals as a rule are neglected because their wide variety surpasses the limits of this study; they are occasionally included to cast light upon certain aspects of a particular artist, and many times only one side is necessary for this purpose. In the discussion of Neapolitan medals, illustrations are drawn from publications by Ricciardi and Siciliano and not from the famous collections in the Naples Museum since these are only now in

the process of being published. Under illustrations noted, the illustrated coins and medals are shown in size. Many of the coins are in the national collection of the Smithsonian Institution. Sources of the photographs are indicated with each legend. The author is grateful to the American Numismatic Society for supplying many photographs and to Mr. Joseph Bowen and Mr. James Duggins of the Smithsonian photographic division for their work.

TURIN

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Italy, then only a group of independent states governed by local and foreign dynasties, was on the threshold of a tumultuous era. New political ideals had arisen, inspired in part by the ferment of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. In a few decades dedicated men like Mazzini, Garibaldi, Victor Emmanuel II, and Count Camillo Cavour proclaimed, on the basis of these ideals, the political credo of their generation and after many battles welded Italy into a united kingdom.

The cultural development, as a reflection of the political destinies of these various Italian states, followed a tradition often determined only by dynastic interests and usually antagonistic to the nationalistic spirit. Artistic creations, and among them the work of the coin engravers, followed the general spiritual trend, each monarchy with its own groups of artists working independently. Until Victor Emmanuel II, assisted by Count Cavour, succeeded in forging the political unity of the country with Rome as the capital, at least four major intellectual centers were discernible: Turin, Milan-Venice, Rome, and Naples.

Turin, because of its geographical position, drew its inspiration from Paris, where for centuries the art of engraving had been cultivated and where it had been brought to a high degree of perfection. The cult of personality cherished by Louis XIV and Napoleon Bonaparte had found able proponents in engravers like Augustin Dupré, Jean Pierre Droz, and Pierre Joseph Tiolier. The portraits of each ruler, distant and imposing in their godlikeness, assumed various forms of expression. During Louis XIV's time the pomp of the exterior adornment on the figure gave majesty to the rather impersonal and remote likeness of the king, while, later, Tiolier's art succeeded in expressing an exalted image of the ruler

with the simplicity of neoclassicism and the psychological insight of the post-Rousseau period.

This direction in art, along with all the other neo-classical tendencies of Napoleon I, found a ready acceptance beyond the Alps, where the cult of perfection of form, with its noble simplicity, already existed in a tradition filtered through the Renaissance from classical times. During the Empire period Italian engravers rivaled their French colleagues in rendering homage to Napoleon, and his portrait was the subject of many outstanding Italian artists. Manfredini's bust of Napoleon (Fig. 7) can be considered a real challenge to Tiolier's portrait of his Emperor (Fig. 8).

FOOTNOTES

Single citation in footnote indicates supporting reference. Plural citations indicate the standard sources for description of the coin or information about the artist.

All footnotes are in shortened form. Complete references are cited at the end of this paper.

Book abbreviations

- BDM* *Biographical dictionary of medallists* by Leonard Torrey
CM *Conferis nummorum Italorum*
RZ *Relazioni della Real Zecca*
CapS *Supplemento alle monete del Regno dell'Impero da Carlo I. d'Asburgo a Vittorio Emanuele II* by Meinardo Cagnati

Periodical abbreviations

- BCNA* *Boll. Pmo del Circolo Numismatico Napoletano*
IN *Italia numismatica*
NCm *Numismatic Circular*
NumR *Numismatica (Rome)*
RevA *Revue Numismatique et Antiquaire*
RTA *Revue Numismatique et Antiquaire*

Among the group of distinguished artists working during that time in Turin were the Lavy brothers.

Amedeo Lavy¹ (1777-1864) was descended from a French family of engravers and sculptors who had been established since the early seventeen-hundreds in Piedmont. His father Lorenzo, who studied in Paris with Pierre Germain, the goldsmith of the Royal Court, worked later as coin and medal engraver at the Turin mint. He left an impressive series of dies for a medallie history of the Savoy family, *Storia metallica della Real Casa di Savoia*. The older son Carlo Michele² (1765-1813) after studying a few years in Paris, also worked, after 1789, at the Turin mint. Amedeo Lavy, the younger and more fortunate brother, led a highly diversified life. Well known as a sculptor of portrait busts, statues, and terra cottas (for the church in Castagnola), as an engraver of coin and medal dies, and as a designer of stamp and currency vignettes and of playing cards, his renown remained widespread and his popularity constant even during the changing regimes of the Savoy kings and Napoleon.

Lavy started at the age of thirteen as an apprentice in the Turin mint, later completing his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts. One of his first works was a copy of a portrait of Queen Christina of Sweden (1794). Two years later he engraved the dies for the coinage of Charles Emmanuel IV of Savoy. The vicissitudes of the Napoleonic wars brought him into close contact with opposing factions, and he put his art at the service of them all. During the War of the Second Coalition (1799-1801) against France, he had the opportunity to see the Russian Commander Alexander Suvaroff and to model Suvaroff's portrait in wax. A year later (1800) the French general André Massena had his portrait done by Amedeo Lavy. In the same year Lavy engraved the portrait of the First Consul on a medal celebrating Bonaparte's decisive victory at Marengo. The 20-franc piece issued by the Subalpine Republic in commemoration of the same victory (fig. 3) was also engraved by Lavy, who mentions it in his diary.³ In 1801 he was elected member of the Subalpine Academy of History

and Fine Arts and in 1805 he left for Rome to perfect his technique in sculpture and engraving.

In Rome Lavy worked under the direction of Antonio Canova⁴ for over a year, but a pulmonary disease forced him to return to Turin. During the subsequent years he continued unabated his work as a sculptor and especially as a portraitist. After the return of Victor Emmanuel I, Lavy devoted his entire activity to the glory of the Savoy king. A continuous succession of coin dies, medals, seals—he engraved the great seal of the state in 1815—were the result of these fruitful years. In 1817 he prepared drawings and projects for the proposed decimal system. In 1821, with the restoration of Charles Felix, he modeled the new king's portrait (fig. 5) in only two sittings, preparing all the dies for the new coinage. This prodigious activity brought Lavy widespread fame, and in 1823 he was appointed a member of the Accademia di S. Luca in Rome. But the recognition given to him by the world apparently was not the same which he received at home in Piedmont. From his diary we gather that he had administrative difficulties at the Turin mint. He was forced to ask for his retirement in 1825. One year later he obtained an annual pension of 2,400 lire and discontinued his activity at the mint, where, he noted with bitterness in his diary, members of his family had held the position of chief engraver for almost a hundred years.⁵

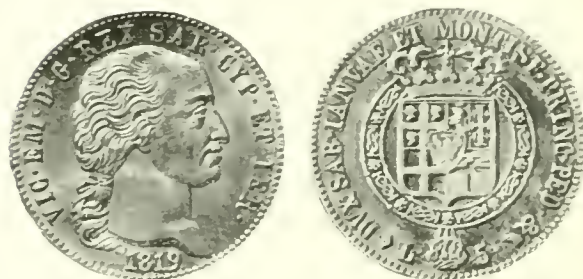


Fig. 1. — SARDINIA, VICTOR EMMANUEL I, 5 lire, 1819.
(Photo courtesy American Numismatic Society)

¹ *BDM*, vol. 3, pp. 347-349, and vol. 7, pp. 538-539; THIEME and BECKER, *Allgemeines Lexikon*, vol. 22, p. 480; BOLZENTHAL, *Sitzber zur Kunstgeschichte*, p. 304; ASSANDRIA, *Atti della Società Piemontese di Archeologia e Belle Arti* (1916), vol. 8, fasc. 4, pp. 209-274.

² *BDM*, vol. 3, p. 349; THIEME and BECKER, vol. 22, p. 480; BOLZENTHAL, pp. 303-304.

³ "Ho inciso la pezza in oro Marengo . . . e lo scudo di L. 5 uniformandomi al sistema decimale come quello della Francia" —ASSANDRIA, p. 247.

⁴ "Canova veniva sovente a correggermi" —*ibid.*, p. 249.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

⁶ *CVI*, vol. I, p. 441, coin 14; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 321.

Inspired in his work by the genius of Antonio Canova and by the neoclassical style, as well as by the art of the engravers of Greek antiquity, Amedeo Lavy achieved a mastery of form necessary to express his concepts in nobleness and simplicity.



Fig. 2. SARDINIA, VICTOR EMMANUEL I, half scudo, 1814.¹⁷ (Photo courtesy American Numismatic Society)

Works from the earlier period of his life can be judged as some of Italy's best coin dies. The portrait coin of Victor Emmanuel I of Savoy (fig. 1) and especially the bust represented on the half scudo of 1814 (fig. 2) achieve excellence through the majesty of their conception. The subtlety of details in rendering the character of the aged monarch, as well as the sense of proportion expressed in the entire composition, confer distinguished beauty on one of the most remarkable Italian coins of the 19th century. A Canova portrait medal engraved in 1810¹⁸ expresses this same simplicity and purity of form.



Fig. 3. SARDINIA, SARDINIAN REPUBLIC, 20 francs or Marengo, year 10 [1802].¹⁹ (Div. of Numismatics photo)

As a complement to Lavy's portrait achievements may be mentioned his allegorical compositions, of which the Liberty bust on the so-called "Marengo"

or 20-franc piece of Emperor Napoleon is a good example.²⁰ The same style of composition as the coin may be encountered on another coin of the same year, the 5-franc piece of Emperor Napoleon



Fig. 4. SARDINIA, SARDINIAN REPUBLIC, 5 francs, year 10 [1802].²¹ (Div. of Numismatics photo)

On this coin the vertical arrangement of the composition is strengthened by the massive group of two allegorical figures in opposition to the circular motif of the reverse.



Fig. 5. SARDINIA, CHARLES FELIX, 5 lire, 1828, Genova.²² (Div. of Numismatics photo)

Regrettably, Lavy's artistic devotion did not continue with time, and in later years his style, clinging faithfully to old patterns of composition, declined toward mannerism. His portrait of Charles Felix of Savoy (fig. 5) is only a pale reflection of his one-time

¹⁷ *CVI*, vol. 1, p. 440, coin 2.

¹⁸ COMANDINI, *L'Italia nei cento anni*, vol. 1, p. 452.

¹⁹ *CVI*, vol. 2, p. 415, coin 3; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 2.

²⁰ This coin, the first decimal coin issued in Italy, was struck in accordance with the decree of March 13, 1801 (22 Ventoso, year 9). It commemorated the victory of Napoleon Bonaparte against the Austrians under General Melas at Spinetta in the

vicinity of Marengo (near Alessandria). See also: CAMERON, *Monete e medaglie*, pp. 91-92; BOSCO, *Rivista numismatica*, p. 213.

²¹ For this first silver decimal coin, see: CAMERON, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93; *CVI*, vol. 2, p. 415, coin 4; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 3; DAVENPORT, *Les Monnaies de France*, coin 19.

²² *CVI*, vol. 1, p. 348, coin 1; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 19; SPAZZANI-FELTA, *Collezioni Numismatiche*, coin 17; DAVENPORT, *Les Monnaies de France*, coin 15; CAMERON, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

keenness of psychological finesse. This bust denotes common traits which identify it as a Lavy creation, but it seems that a tired hand could no longer inspire with life the conventional lines of an official portrait. One can speculate that this lack of insight may be attributed to a weariness from the excessive amount of work which he had been forced to master during those years—when, overcrowded with commissions, he could have lost spontaneity and adopted instead the more convenient forms of routine—or perhaps to a

deeper cause of personal discontent with his employers, but this is only surmise. With Amedeo Lavy's departure, the Turin mint was deprived of the creations of a master, and the products of the mint plunged for decades into a discouraging mediocrity.

Lavy's successor at the Turin mint was Giuseppe Ferraris, but we will discuss his work later, since his activity developed chiefly after 1861, during the reign of Victor Emmanuel II.

MILAN, VENICE, AND GENOA

The first half of the 19th century was a stormy period for both Milan and Venice, already united by a common destiny. Governed by an Austrian archduke, each city was part of the Austrian Empire. Later, during Napoleon's regime, they exchanged Austrian domination for rule by the French. Then in 1815 the Congress of Vienna restored to Austria the Lombardo-Venetian Kingdom from the debris of Napoleon's Italian possessions. Almost fifty years would pass before Lombardy and then Venice would join the other Italian provinces in forming the Kingdom of Italy. During the long Austrian and the French regimes, however, the mints of Milan and Venice continued to function. Artists like Luigi Manfredini, Giuseppe Salvirch, and Gerolamo Vassallo worked in these tormented years, celebrating the glory of the Austrians as well as of the French. Despite foreign domination, the coinage these artists created often reflects the eternal aspirations for freedom which they shared with other nationalistic Italians. The group of coins produced during the days of the ephemeral national republics of the period 1797-1805 in Turin, Milan, Genoa, or Venice form their most outstanding creations.

Luigi Manfredini¹³ (1771-1840) was hired in his early youth by the Milan mint, where he worked for over thirty years, 1798-1830. He became a well-known sculptor and cast-iron worker and was entrusted with the casting of the Victory quadriga which ornaments the Arco della Pace in Milan. His activity as an engraver of medals embraced a large group of commemorative medals celebrating important events

during the reigns of Napoleon and Francis.¹⁴ Many portrait medals of famous Italians, past and contemporary, complete his long series of works.



Fig. 6.—KINGDOM OF ITALY, NAPOLEON I, medal ("Encelado"), 1809¹⁵
(Photo from Comandini)

One medal, engraved jointly by Manfredini and Vassallo, which celebrated the victory of Napoleon at Ratisbon in 1809, was the subject of much controversy. The reverse, Manfredini's work, representing a giant crushed under an enormous rock (fig. 6), was misinterpreted by his contemporaries as a political

¹³ *BDM*, vol. 13, pp. 552-555; THIEFFÉ and BRÜCKER, vol. 24, p. 10; BOLZENTHAL, p. 304; COMANDINI, *L'Italia nei cento anni*, vol. 1, p. 344.

¹⁴ For some of his Napoleon medals, see: EDWARDS, *Napoleon Medals*, pls. 7, 9, 14, 17, 18, 24, 26, 31, 32, 39; BRAMSEN, *Médailleur Napoléon*; PATRIGNANI, *NumR* (1948), vol. 14, pp. 116-118.

¹⁵ COMANDINI, *L'Italia nei cento anni*, vol. 1, p. 344.

allusion to Napoleon's absolutistic regime and was mockingly called "Encelado" (Enchained). It allegedly caused serious trouble for Manfredini.¹⁶ He was accused also of being the author of the defamatory inscription *NAPOLÉONE* on the lira piece of 1810. Gneecchi says that contemporary investigators were unable to discover the author and that only later was it known that Manfredini was responsible for it.¹⁷

In his medals, as in his coins, Manfredini gives evidence of an outstanding artistic sensitivity, and, in addition, among his contemporaries he excels through a classical simplicity of form. In his portrait of Napoleon (fig. 7) he comes close to the perfect



Fig. 7.—KINGDOM OF ITALY, NAPOLEON I, 5 lire, 1811, Milan mint¹⁸
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

equilibrium of concept and expression that is characteristic of ancient art. The features of Napoleon, however impassive and remote in expression, are not lifeless in their statuesque beauty. The well-modeled relief suggests far more inner life than Tiolier's famous portrait of the Emperor (fig. 8). The proportion between head and inscription also finds a much happier solution in Manfredini's coinage than it does in Tiolier's. Remarkable versatility helped Manfredini change his style according to subject. The portrait of Maria Louisa of Parma (fig. 9), classical in its simplicity and purity of form, follows a line that is suffused with feminine grace, in contrast to the rocklike massiveness of Napoleon's head.

¹⁶ COMANDINI (op. cit., p. 427) indicates that he was forced to leave Italy and that he returned only in 1814 with the Austrians.

¹⁷ E. and E. GNECCHI, *Le monete di Milano*, p. 216. See also CARBONERI, p. 117; PATRIGNANI, *RivA* (1931), vol. 28, pp. 11-21; *NumR* (1948), vol. 14, p. 57; *NumR* (1949), vol. 15, pp. 107-108.

¹⁸ *CM*, vol. 5, p. 428, coin 82; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 98; DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 207.

Following a long-standing custom, Manfredini concentrated chiefly on the main die-work, that is, the obverse of the design, which consisted of the profile portrait or a composition, while the more per-



Fig. 8.—FRANCE, NAPOLEON I, 5 francs, year 13 [1804-1805] by Tiolier¹⁹
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

bound work on the coat of arms of the reverse was entrusted to another, less important artist. In fact, the Italian coinage of Napoleon was almost



Fig. 9.—PARMA, MARIA LOUISA, 5 lire, 1815²⁰
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

always the work of Manfredini in association with two other artists, either Salvirch or Vassallo.²¹

Giuseppe Salvirch²² (originally Franz Joseph Salwirk or Sallwuerk) was born in Mollenberg near Lindau, in Wurtemberg, in 1762. At the age of seventeen he came to Milan, where he started working at the mint as an apprentice of his uncle Christoph Woeher, chief engraver. Within a few years he succeeded in establishing his position at the mint:

¹⁹ DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 85.

²⁰ *CM*, vol. 9, p. 355, coin 4; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 278; DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 204; CARBONERI, pp. 24-249, 251n.

²¹ PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 75-744.

²² *BDM*, vol. 8, pp. 520-521, and vol. 8, p. 186; TUMSI and BICLER, vol. 2, p. 362; BOZENTHAL, p. 304.

in 1789 he was nominated third engraver; in 1801, first engraver; and in 1803, chief engraver. During these years he collaborated with Manfredini.

Most of Salvireh's works were unsigned, and only on medals may we find his initials I.S.F. (Josephus Salvireh fecit)—or so (Salvireh Giuseppe) on the pattern of a 40-lire piece of Napoleon. The patterns



Fig. 10.—ITALIAN REPUBLIC, pattern scudo of 5 lire, year 2 [1803]²³
(Photo from Pagani)

for the coinage of the Italian Republic struck between 1803 and 1804 (fig. 10), though unsigned, are mainly his work.²⁴

An excellent feeling for ornamentation, for those little details which fill the field in counterbalance to the surrounding inscription, distinguishes his work. Harmoniously designed, these patterns sometimes show, especially in the medium-sized coins, a distinct tendency to oppose compactly filled obverses with sparsely inscribed reverses.



Fig. 11.—KINGDOM OF ITALY, NAPOLEON I. pattern 40 lire, 1807²⁵
(Photo from Pagani)

From 1806 and 1807 date his patterns for the reverse of Napoleon's gold coinage of 40 and 20 lire (fig. 11). The massive coat of arms, with the shields

²³ *CVI*, vol. 5, p. 416, coin 4; PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coin 436.

²⁴ *CVI*, vol. 5, pp. 415–418, coins 1–28; F. and E. GNECCHI, pp. 203–206; COMANDINI, *L'Italia nei cento anni*, vol. 1, pp. 96–97; CARONERI, p. 116; RINALDI, *Rivoluzione Francese*, coins 131–150; PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coins 433–466.

²⁵ F. and E. GNECCHI, p. 209, coins 1–2; RINALDI, coins

of the many subjugated Italian principalities as center design and the surrounding inscription looking like a forgotten detail pressed in later, is too cumbersome for the limited field of the coin. Nevertheless, the project won Napoleon's approval and for eight years this reverse, joined to Manfredini's obverse, was the emblem of the French Emperor's Italian coinage.

In his earlier years Salvireh used a more balanced arrangement in his compositions. A good example is the scudo of 6 lire of 1800 engraved for the ephemeral Cisalpine Republic (fig. 12). The allegorical



Fig. 12.—CISALPINE REPUBLIC, scudo, year 8 [1800]²⁶
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

group of the obverse excels not only in its medal-like treatment of the relief but in the classical arrangement of the two figures. The seated figure of France is counterbalanced harmoniously by the standing figure of the Cisalpine Republic while the surrounding field is encircled by an unobtrusive but compact inscription.

The reverse, however, even though impressive in its well-rounded line, already shows his growing aversion for empty space. The large letters of the inscription are narrowly enclosed within the wreath, contrasting unpleasantly with the uncluttered composition of the obverse.

In association with Salvireh worked his disciple and successor Gerolamo Vassallo.²⁷ Born in Genoa in

490–492; PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coins 467–471.

²⁶ *CVI*, vol. 5, p. 415, coin 1; F. and E. GNECCHI, p. 222, coin 1; RINALDI, coin 129; DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 199.

²⁷ *BDM*, vol. 6, pp. 204–206; THIEME and BECKER, vol. 34, p. 132; BOLZENTHAL, p. 304; AVIGNONE, *Medaglie dei Liguri*.

1773, he had a very active life that kept him in the service of the Hapsburgs and of Napoleon at the mints in Genoa and Milan. Antoine Guillemard, the senior engraver of the Milanese mint, and also Salvirch advised him in the art of coin engraving. In his independent position as chief engraver at the Genoa mint, he could develop his own artistic personality, uninhibited by official directions.

The coinage of the Ligurian Republic (Genoa) between 1797 and 1805 is entirely his work.

The political changes had a repercussion in his life. In 1808 he was transferred by the French Government to the Milanese mint, where he spent the remainder of his days. His work developed chiefly as a collaboration with Manfredini and Salvirch in serving two masters, Napoleon and Francis of Austria. He engraved many medals in commemoration of their victories. The entry of Napoleon into Genoa is the subject of one of his medals in 1805,²⁸ while the battle at Ratisbon was commemorated on a medal of 1809, for which Manfredini engraved the reverse. Most of Vassallo's works are signed with his complete name or with his initials, H.V.S.S.E., H.V.F.E., sometimes only V.

An active spirit, Vassallo surprises us with his inventiveness in arranging purely heraldic patterns. The coinage of the Ligurian Republic shows two versions of an emblematic pattern used on the reverse of the gold and silver coinage. The composition of the obverse, on the contrary, is less inspired. Very conventional in its conception, for example, is the allegorical figure on the gold 96-lire piece (fig. 13).

Vassallo was not able to adapt to the common relief of figure in the high surface of a coin, suitable more linear treatment or his engraving, probably due to the wear of circulation. Very often we find Ligurian gold 96- or 48-lire pieces with a lineal figure in the center, reduced to an unclear silhouette, whereas the surrounding inscription shows little wear.

Of unquestionable value instead is the allegorical group represented on the obverse of the silver 8-lire piece of 1804 (fig. 14). Conceived in the spirit of



Fig. 14. — LIGURIAN REPUBLIC, 8 lire, 1804.²⁹
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

the time, this neoclassical theme, with its representation of Liberty and Equality clad in Roman garments, betrays a strong influence of Lavy and Salvirch. Despite this, Vassallo must be credited with a masterful execution: the well-rounded relief and the harmonious arrangement of the composition contribute a representative coin-image of the interval between Directoire and Empire.

The simplicity of ancient Roman ideals found expression not only in his conception and arrangement of a composition but also in his interpretation of a portrait. The head, bereft of any external adornments, became the subject of intensive study, which resulted in the expression of truly human characteristics. Napoleon's dominating personality had found a timeless image in Lavy's and Manfredini's portraits, and Vassallo tried to follow their example.

p. 100.

²⁹ *CVI*, vol. 3, p. 505, com. 1; RINARDI, com. 8; DAVANZO, *Europa, Cronaca*, com. 198.



Fig. 13. — LIGURIAN REPUBLIC, 96 lire, 1805.²⁸
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

A well-balanced composition, it cannot be compared, however, with the classical distinction of Manfredini's groups or with the plasticity of Salvirch's figures.

²⁸ COMANDINI, *L'Italia nei cento anni*, vol. 4, p. 144.

²⁹ *CVI*, vol. 3, p. 506, com. 2; DESIMONI, *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* (1890), vol. 22, pp. 248-249; CARLOSERI,

His interpretation of Napoleon's head on the new coinage of the copper soldo (fig. 15) and the 3 centesimi of 1811 strongly betrays the influence of Lavy. In portraying the head of the Emperor in 1811 Vassallo closely followed the youthful portrait of the First Consul engraved almost eight years before by Lavy (fig. 16).



Fig. 15.—KINGDOM OF ITALY, NAPOLEON I, soldo, 1811, Milan mint ³¹
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

Vassallo's active and vivid personality continually shaped his style with the passing of time, and in later years he is amazing in his audacity of composition, wherein the emphasis is placed upon the plasticity of the relief, so much neglected in his earlier work. A pattern 100-franc piece of 1807 (fig. 17) shows Napoleon's head facing partly to the right. This



Fig. 16.—FRENCH REPUBLIC, NAPOLEON FIRST CONSUL, obverse of pattern, 40 francs, year XI [1803] ³²
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

three-quarter profile, a challenge to every artist as far back as the master engravers of ancient Greece, found a happy solution in this pattern. Ineffective for any actual coinage, where daily wear in a short time would deface the unprotected high points of the features, this pattern, nevertheless, is an interesting experiment in modern coin engraving.

³¹ *CMI*, vol. 5, p. 428, coin 88; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 180; COMANDINI, *L'Italia nei cento anni*, vol. 1, p. 605; CARBONERI, p. 118.

³² PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coin 419.

³³ *CMI*, vol. 3, p. 506, coin 1; PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coin 124; RINALDI, coin 110.

But Vassallo's real test lay in another coin pattern, this time in the name of Napoleon's opponent, Francis I of Austria. The pattern for the 6-lire piece, 1816, for Lombardy and Venice (fig. 18) is positive



Fig. 17.—GENOA AS PART OF THE FRENCH EMPIRE, NAPOLEON I, pattern 100 francs, 1807 ³³
(Photo courtesy American Numismatic Society)



Fig. 18.—LOMBARDY-VENICE UNDER AUSTRIA, FRANCIS I, 6 lire, 1816, Milan mint ³⁴
(Author's photo)

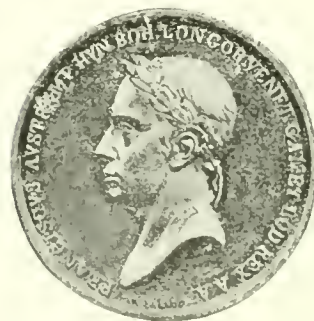


Fig. 19.—LOMBARDY-VENICE UNDER AUSTRIA, FRANCIS I, obverse of prize medal, 1815 ³⁵
(Photo from Comandini)

³⁴ *CMI*, vol. 5, p. 432, coin 3; PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coin 509; F. and E. GNECCHI, pl. 50, coin 1; CARBONERI, p. 167; COMANDINI, *L'Italia nei cento anni*, vol. 1, p. 918. FORRER (*BDM*, vol. 3, p. 553) assigns this pattern to Manfredini and in another place (*BDM*, vol. 6, p. 205) to Vassallo.

³⁵ COMANDINI, *L'Italia nei cento anni*, vol. 1, p. 827.

evidence of his artistic capabilities as an engraver. As late as 1815, Vassallo had engraved a similar portrait of Emperor Francis I on a prize medal celebrating industries and manufactures (fig. 19), but in the coin the expressive features of the sovereign, chiseled by a master's hand in a very low relief, are perfectly

set in the field of the coin, while the same proportion dominates the arrangement of the reverse.

It is tragic that Vassallo put a premature end to such varied and prodigious activity. Financial worries and ill health drove him to commit suicide in March 1819.

FLORENCE

No other Italian state reflected the turbulent events of the eighteenth century as much as Florence, stronghold of Italian culture. After 1737, when its national dukes ceased to come from the Medici family, Tuscany had a rapid change of rulers. The subsequent domination by the Austrian Hapsburgs was overthrown by the new spirit of liberty flowing from France. But the free and restless years of 1799 and 1800 led only to another foreign domination. Backed by Napoleon, the newly created Kingdom of Etruria was ruled by the Spanish Bourbons until 1807, when Napoleon's sister Elisa Bacciocchi took over and gave Tuscany and Lucca a peaceful but short rule. The downfall of the Napoleonides brought the Hapsburgs back to the throne of Florence, and only the growing tides of the national liberation movement finally freed Tuscany, which in 1860 became part of the United Kingdom of Italy.

The political vicissitudes of these momentous decades found only a pale reflection in Tuscany's coinage. The series of silver *francesconi* or gold *rusponi* show little if any change in the basic design during the various reigns. The crowned shield of Tuscany is invariably the one reverse type used, and only the small inserted escutcheons with the arms of the Lorraine-Hapsburgs or of the Bourbons unobtrusively indicate the passing of rulers and dynasties.

The influence of Vienna as well as Paris alternately played a leading part in the development of the engraving art of Florence. But no outstanding artistic personality distinguished himself during the period between 1800 and 1860 and no artistic school or tradition took shape at the Florentine mint. In brief, the art of coin engraving had an even flow, undisturbed by daring, new ideas. The only challenge

offered to the artists was in portraits. Here they could show the quality of their work.

The names of the various coin engravers denote the varied influences: the Austrian Zanobio Weber, the French Louis Siries, the Swiss Giuseppe Niderost, the Tyrolian Luigi Pichler—more actually than the Italian influence of Antonio Fabris, Pietro Cinganelli, and Luigi Gori.

Giovanni Zanobio Weber³⁶ (1761–1805), son of an Austrian officer in the Corps of the Guards and pupil of the Viennese engraver Anton Franz v. Widemann, worked chiefly during the late seventeenth century. Only the die of an early gold *ruspone* (1803–1807) and a *zecchino* ("Zecchino Zanobino") that was ordered by the Jewish banker Lampronti for the Levantine trade are attributed to Weber.³⁷ The artistic execution of both coins, using old established types, shows no personal character.

More renowned was the Siries dynasty of French engravers, who included among the members of their family a famous woman painter, Violante Beatrice (1709–1783), and her father, Louis Siries³⁸ (d. 1754), the well-known engraver of gems at the court of Louis XV of France. The prestige of French engraving assured Louis Siries the support of Grand Duke Francis II of Tuscany, who appointed him director of the Grand Ducal Gallery in 1749 and engraver at the mint in this same period.

Luigi Siries (1743–1811), his grandson, whose work was often mistaken for that of the older man, had developed a prodigious output by the time of his death. As engraver at the mint he cut the dies for the coinages of the Grand Dukes Peter Leopold and Ferdinand III, and for King Louis I and his son

³⁶ *BDM*, vol. 6, pp. 403–404; THUMM and BECKER, vol. 35, p. 219.

³⁷ BOLZENTHAL (p. 245) characterizes as remarkable his portrait of Vincenzo Bellini.

³⁸ *CVI*, vol. 12, pp. 439–460, coin *Museo Riccio*, p. 10; coins, 45–46.

³⁹ THUMM and BECKER (vol. 31, p. 107) and *BDM* (vol. 1, pp. 53–540) include information on the career of Siries.

Charles Louis. He also designed the portraits of Elisa and Felix Bacciochi of Lucca although the dies for the actual coinage were cut by Domenico Bentelli. Most of Luigi's works are signed with I.S.F., S.F., or S & L in monogram, and some are unsigned. (The dies signed only with an S are attributed to Carlo Siries, his son.)

The coin dies in the first part of Luigi's activity show little artistic quality although they mark a positive progress in comparison with his grandfather's work. The esthetic effect of his early engravings is achieved by an intricate arrangement of hair locks and draperies, while the artistic finesse of portraiture is completely neglected.⁴⁰ In later years the depth



Fig. 20.—TUSCANY, LOUIS I AS KING OF ETRURIA, francescone, 1803⁴¹
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

of the relief gained considerably, and the simplicity of design and inscription added other salient qualities to his work. The francescone of Louis I (fig. 20) can be considered one of his better creations although the portrait remains barren of any spiritual expression.

The succeeding coinage of Charles Louis and his mother Maria Louise is evidence that in later years Siries' talent did not improve. The apparently attractive 10-lire piece or dena of the Regent and her son (fig. 21) shows, on closer study, only modest qualities



Fig. 21.—TUSCANY, CHARLES LOUIS AND MARIE LOUISE, dena or 10 lire, 1803⁴²
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

of portraiture. Although the balance between the figures and the surrounding inscription is much better resolved than it is on the overcrowded francescone of 1806 with its separated busts (fig. 22), the portraits



Fig. 22.—TUSCANY, CHARLES LOUIS AND MARIE LOUISE, francescone, 1806⁴³
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

⁴⁰ See *CVI*, vol. 12, pls. 30, 31, and DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, coin 156.

⁴¹ *CVI*, vol. 12, p. 454, coin 12var.; GALLOTTI, *Le monete di Lucca*, p. 436, coin 5; DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, coin 151.

⁴² *CVI*, p. 455, coin 2; GALLOTTI, pp. 441, 447, coin 1; DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, coin 152.

⁴³ *CVI*, vol. 12, p. 458, coin 22; GALLOTTI, p. 447, coin 5; DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, coin 155.

are cut on the same pattern. No individual expression distinguishes one head from another. The same stereotyped treatment of individual traits is obvious in Siries' dies for the 5 franchi of Elisa Baciocchi of Lucca and her husband (fig. 23). Here the faces

sensitivity and depth of expression are poorly modeled (23).

This exquisite image finds a real only one coin of an almost unknown artist, Pietro Cinganelli, who signed with PC the portrait of Grand Duke Leopold II on the latter's coinage of 1826 (figs. 25, 26).



Fig. 23.—LUCCA, ELISA BONAPARTE AND FELIX BACIOCCHI, 5 franchi, 1807.⁴³ (Div. of Numismatics photo)

could be easily interchanged without altering the general impression.⁴⁵

The work of Carlo Siries⁴⁶ (d. 1854) is so interrelated with his father's activity that it is somewhat difficult to keep them apart. Only after Luigi's death can we determine Carlo's dies with certainty. Most of these dies were cut for coins bearing only a heraldic type, such as the ruspone, zecchino, or soldo. In the portrait coinage of the restored Grand Duke



Fig. 25.—TUSCANY, LEOPOLD II, fiorino, 1826.⁴⁴ (2x actual size) (Div. of Numismatics photo)

The only other quoted work of Cinganelli is a medal commemorating Galileo Galilei; his coin dies have been completely ignored. Nevertheless, with the energetic features of his Leopold II, he created one of the most brilliant portrait coins in the entire Tuscany series.



Fig. 24.—TUSCANY, FERDINAND III, half franceseone, 1823.⁴⁵ (Div. of Numismatics photo)

Ferdinand III, even if Carlo did follow the paternal tradition very closely in the same neat arrangement of figure and legend within the coin field, his execution of details denotes higher artistic qualities. The portrait of the aging monarch (fig. 24) reflects great



Fig. 26.—TUSCANY, LEOPOLD II, franceseone, 1830.⁴⁶ (Photo from CMI)

Antonio Fabris,⁴⁷ who in his early years came from Udine to Florence as a goldsmith, worked for the mint from about 1830. His portrait coin, the 1830 franceseone of Leopold II (fig. 26) is not devoid of

⁴³ CMI, vol. 11, p. 200, coin 10; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 232; DAVINPORI, *European Coins*, coin 203.

⁴⁴ For the decree concerning this issue, see CARBONERI, pp. 132-133.

⁴⁵ BDM, vol. 5, p. 535; TIMME and BECKER, vol. 31, p. 102.

⁴⁶ CMI, vol. 12, p. 464, coin 27; GALLIOTTI, p. 46.

⁴⁷ BDM, vol. 1, p. 434, and vol. 7, p. 182; BORZENTHAL,

p. 307.

⁴⁸ CMI, vol. 12, p. 468, coin 22; GALLIOTTI, p. 47, coin 3.

⁴⁹ CMI, vol. 12, p. 469, coin 31; GALLIOTTI, p. 47; DAVINPORI, *European Coins*, coin 158.

⁵⁰ BDM, vol. 2, pp. 64-65, and vol. 7, p. 250; TIMME and BECKER, vol. 11, p. 168; BORZENTHAL, p. 300; GALLIOTTI, p. 474.

a certain robust expressiveness even if the relief modeling is very inferior. The work on a series of medals⁵² during subsequent years gave him a better understanding of relief and design. Certainly his dies for the gold and silver coinage (fig. 27) of the Vene-



Fig. 27.—VENICE, PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, 5 lire, 1848⁵³
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

tian Republic (1848–1849) display a more subtle sense of decorative arrangement in addition to a delicate plasticity of relief. The old symbol of Venice, the Lion of St. Mark,⁵⁴ used in a new style, dominates the field of the obverse, while a slightly oval wreath adds grace to the reverse of the coin.

Another engraver, Luigi Pichler⁵⁵ (1773–1854) was better known as a gem engraver and as a painter. His talents as a cutter of precious stones gave him renown as a master of this art and his work was highly appreciated at the Austrian court. Elected an honorary member of the Viennese Academy of Fine Arts, he was later invited by Count Metternich to teach engraving at the institution. He spent several years in Vienna where in 1821 he was given the opportunity to make a portrait of Emperor Francis I. Inspiration from classic antiquity often guided him in the choice of subjects for his numerous gems.

He was also well known for a large number of fine portrait medals, but as a coin engraver he produced very few dies. The francescone of Leopold II (fig. 28) presents a well-proportioned coin design with an impressive portrait. The clean line and the extreme delicacy of execution, characteristic of a gem en-

graver who is accustomed to minuteness of detail, results in an excellent portrait of the Grand Duke, the fragility of which contrasts obviously with the robustness of previous portraits of the same ruler by Cinganelli and especially Fabris.



Fig. 28.—TUSCANY, LEOPOLD II, francescone, 1841⁵⁶
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

More devoted to coin engraving than Pichler was Giuseppe Niderost⁵⁷ (1804–1856), descendent of an old family of engravers from Brunnen, Switzerland. He came to Italy to learn die engraving and within a short while was working at the mint in Pisa and later at the one in Florence, where he became chief engraver in 1836. Assisted by Edoardo Gori in 1837 and later by Pasquale Santini, Niderost developed a large output at the mint, and many dies for the gold and silver coinage of Leopold II were produced by him or under his direction. Contemporaries considered his art inferior to Carlo Siries', but this opinion was based on the circumstance that most of his dies were made for coins of a purely heraldic type; executed in the traditional way with few if any changes, they gave him little opportunity to demonstrate skill. A neat workmanship was about all that was expected from an artist. Nevertheless, Niderost adapted the old Florentine lily and the crowned shield of arms to

⁵² MONDINI (*Spigolando tra medaglie*, p. 23) published a medal (1848) of Daniele Manin by A. Fabris.

⁵³ *CVI*, vol. 8, p. 661, coin 2; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 299; DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, coin 207; CARBONERI, pp. 173–174.

⁵⁴ See also PAPADOPOLI, *Alcune notizie sugli intagliatori*.

⁵⁵ *BDM*, vol. 4, pp. 522–530, and vol. 8, p. 127; ROLLETT,

Die drei Meister der Gemmnglyptik; BOLZENTHAL, p. 318; GALEOTTI, p. 474.

⁵⁶ *CVI*, vol. 12, p. 473, coin 71; GALEOTTI, p. 478, coin 6; DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, coin 159.

⁵⁷ *BDM*, vol. 4, p. 263, and vol. 8, p. 96; THIEME and BECKER, vol. 25, p. 459; GALEOTTI, p. 474.

a new coin denomination, the 80 fiorini in gold (fig. 29), and the result is one of Italy's most striking gold coins of the period.



Fig. 29.—TUSCANY, LEOPOLD II, 80 fiorini, 1827⁵⁸
(Div. of Numismatics photo)



Fig. 30.—TUSCANY, LEOPOLD II, francescone, 1856⁵⁹
(Photo courtesy American Numismatic Society)

The coin which he set down in 1827, however, as the francescone of 1856 (fig. 30). Here he created a more portrait of Leopold II⁶⁰ which presents a completely different aspect of the same Grand Duke. The features are full of life and expression in a relatively low but excellently modeled relief.

From the hand of Luigi Gori⁶¹ (b. 1838 in Florence), the last engraver at the Florentine mint in the late fifties, we have another coin portrait of the old



Fig. 31.—TUSCANY, LEOPOLD II, 10 quattrini, 1858⁶²
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

monarch (fig. 31). A good style, leaning slightly toward conventionalism, distinguishes these final productions of Tuscany's engraving art. Gori's workmanship is good, his elaborate style enhances an acute sense of realism, and his fine modeling adds depth to the low but effective relief. His dies for the gold so-called "ruspone del Ricasoli" and the other coins struck by the Provisional Government in 1859 are the last coins of independent Tuscany.

PARMA

Parma, for 32 years under the rule of Maria Louisa of Austria, second wife of Napoleon, was returned in 1847 to the former Dukes of Bourbon-Parma, but the remaining 13 years of this Duchy's independence were agitated by political disturbances and insurrections. The tides of the Revolution of 1848 were strongly felt in Parma; the reigning Duke Charles II had to abdicate in favor of his son Charles III, who was assassinated in 1854. Charles' infant

son Robert ascended the throne the regency of his mother, but six years later Parma was absorbed into the united Italian Kingdom.

The little principality had an old tradition in coin engraving. The silver scudi and the gold quadruplas of the Farnese princes are judged to be among Italy's most remarkable coin products during the 16th and 17th centuries.

After 1800 very few coins were struck for Parma,

⁵⁸ *CVI*, vol. 12, p. 467, coin 13; GALLOTTI, p. 475, coin 1. For the law concerning this issue, see CARBONERI, p. 201.

⁵⁹ *CVI*, vol. 12, p. 476, coin 106; GALLOTTI, p. 478, coin 3. DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 160.

⁶⁰ A similar portrait of Leopold II can be seen on a medal engraved by Niderost in 1849—cf. MONDISI, p. 79.

⁶¹ *BDAI*, vol. 2, pp. 295–298, and vol. 3, p. 377; TIMM and BECKER, vol. 13, p. 401; GALLOTTI, pp. 474, 494.

⁶² *CVI*, vol. 12, p. 477, coin 119; GALLOTTI, p. 483.

but some should be singled out for their charm and technical perfection. The portrait of Maria Louisa on the silver and gold coinage by Manfredini (fig. 9) was considered by contemporaries as one of the most graceful coin images of the time.

With this coin is associated the name of Giovanni Antonio Santarelli⁶³ (1759-1826), an excellent gem cutter and die sinker, who reportedly engraved the dies for the coin from designs by Manfredini. Inspired by the same portrait of Maria Louisa, he also cut a medal of the Duchess commemorating her arrival in Parma (1816).⁶⁴ In addition, he engraved the coinage of Eliza and Felix Bacciocchi of Lucca, designed by Luigi Siries (fig. 23), and two medals dedicated to the same princely couple.⁶⁵

After Santarelli moved to Florence, he was succeeded at the mint by Domenico (Donnino) Bentelli.⁶⁶ Born in Piacenza in 1807, Bentelli moved in 1844 to Parma, where he worked as engraver at the mint and later as professor of engraving at the Academy of Fine Arts. He died in 1885 at the age of 78. His art studies as well as his training as mechanical engineer⁶⁷ enabled him to participate effectively in the reorganization of the Parma mint in 1853. His work discloses a neat but somewhat mediocre concept of art. An impressive number of official and private medals⁶⁸ came from his workshop. In 1852 Bentelli prepared the dies for the coinage of Charles III of Bourbon, but the Duke's assassination in 1854 made the issuance of the coins impossible. Dies were cut only for the 5 centesimi 1852 and the 1, 3, and 5 centesimi 1854 in copper.⁶⁹ Bentelli also prepared drawings for a group of six coin projects, which included the 10 and 20 centesimi, and the ½-, 1-, 5-, and 20-lire pieces.⁷⁰

These coin projects betray a strong influence on Santarelli by the English mint masters, especially William Wyon. The arrangement of the escutcheons on the reverse of the 20-centesimi piece (fig. 32) is practically an adaptation of a similar arrangement in

use in England since the days of Queen Anne. St. George killing the dragon on the 20-lire gold piece (fig. 33) can be regarded only as a clumsy copy of



Fig. 32.—PARMA, CHARLES III, project for 20 centesimi, 1852⁷¹
(Photo from BDM)



Fig. 33.—PARMA, CHARLES III, project for 20 lire, 1852⁷²
(Photo from BDM)



Fig. 34.—PARMA, ROBERT AND MARIE LOUISE, 5 lire, 1858⁷³
(Photo from CMI)

the famous Pistrucci model for the coinage of George III of England.

Far superior in concept and especially in workmanship is the silver 5-lire piece (fig. 34) struck in 1858

⁶³ BDM, vol. 5, p. 334, and vol. 8, p. 187; THIEMI and BECKER, vol. 29, p. 428.

⁶⁴ COMANDINI, *L'Italia nei cento anni*, vol. 1, p. 892.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 143, 342.

⁶⁶ BDM, vol. 1, p. 164, and vol. 7, pp. 67-70; THIEMI and BECKER, vol. 3, p. 353; JULLERAT DU ROSAY, *ACirc* (1915), pp. 669-672.

⁶⁷ Some of his inventions, e.g., a new safety catch for guns, found practical application; he also invented special coin scales and a device for detecting counterfeit coins.

⁶⁸ In 1872 he also engraved a Verdi medal, which was issued by the Municipality of Parma to commemorate the success

of the opera *Aida*—NATALETTI and PAGANI, *Le medaglie di Giuseppe Verdi*, p. 9.

⁶⁹ CMI, vol. 9, p. 556, coins 1-4; PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coin 552; CARBONERI, p. 252.

⁷⁰ BDM, vol. 7, p. 69. Published previously by JULLERAT DU ROSAY, *ACirc* (1915), cols. 669-672.

⁷¹ *Loc. cit.*

⁷² *Loc. cit.*

⁷³ CMI, vol. 9, p. 557, coin 2; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 292; DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 205; CARBONERI, pp. 250-251.

for the young Duke Robert and his regent mother, Maria Louisa. The graceful but otherwise insignificant portraits of the two rulers is coupled with an exquisite reverse, in which skill in harmoniously balancing composition and detail adds charm and

balliance. With the coin (especially the one pattern because only 100 were made) was the century-long series of *Papae regno* to an end.

PAPAL ROME

At the opening of the 19th century, the papacy, symbol of an age-old tradition of spiritual power, was conservatively defending the legacy of political autocracy against a constantly growing tide of liberalism and nationalism. The principles of the French Revolution, combined with the imperialistic tendencies of Napoleon Bonaparte, inflicted the first blow to the prestige of the papacy. Pope Pius VII, as a captive among the splendors of the French court at Fontainebleau, lost all freedom and retained only his dignity. After Napoleon's downfall, however, the papacy emerged once more victorious.

The new ideals of liberty propagated by the French, which initiated in Italy an era of political liberalism and nationalistic tendencies, found strong opposition in the head of the Roman Church. Pius IX fought for the perpetuation of an absolutist regime of both spiritual and political power instead of guiding the movement of unity which was inspiring all Italians. A bitter example of political anachronism, he proclaimed himself a captive within the walls of his own palace in order to symbolize his antagonism when Rome was made the capital in 1870 of the recently proclaimed Kingdom of Italy.

In the art of coinage, papal Rome has had an unrivaled tradition. A number of engraving masterworks have emerged from the workshops of artists like Benvenuto Cellini, Gasparo Molo, and the Hamerani "dynasty," embellishing the coins and medals of popes since the early fifteen hundreds. Christian devotion (mixed with memories of imperial world supremacy) inspired a magnificent series of portraits of the pontiffs as spiritual and worldly leaders. In its coinage Rome has given an astonishing example of an art in steady, organic evolution over hundreds of years of unbroken tradition.

From this tradition the work of the die engraver of the 19th century emerges as an almost compact group, only slightly colored by personal qualities of the various artists. This is especially true for the first part of the century when artists like Gioacchino Hamerani, Tommaso Mercandetti, the Cerbara brothers, the Pasinati brothers, and Bonfiglio Zaccagnini worked for the papal mint. With Carl Voigt, however, in the second half of the century, a new concept came to light and cleared the way for the vigorous artists of the 20th century.

The history of Roman glyptics and die engraving would be incomplete without the names of Giuseppe Girometti⁷⁴ (1779-1851) and his son Pietro⁷⁵ (1812-1859), both famous engravers of medals and gems. Giuseppe, already well known for four pieces of sculpture in the cathedral at Foligno, was forced by financial difficulties to concentrate chiefly on the cutting of cameos, a remunerative work which soon brought him worldwide repute. Guided by Canova's neoclassicism and by the unflinching models of the ancient Greeks, his works displayed artistic sensitivity and technical perfection.

In 1822, on the recommendation of Canova, he was hired at the Roman mint, where he worked under five pontiffs. During his long activity there he concentrated largely on medals. His portrait medals of Michelangelo, Benvenuto Cellini, Antonio Canova, and Cardinal Consalvi are judged to be among his best works. Bolzental in *Skizzen zur Kunstgeschichte* considered his medal of Giovanni Battista Nicolini as one of the perfect works of that time. Other creations of Giuseppe Girometti include a portrait cameo of George Washington. So widespread was Girometti's fame that foreign

⁷⁴ *BDM*, vol. 2, pp. 273-274, and vol. 7, p. 376; TIMM and BLOKER, vol. 14, p. 189; BOLZENTAL, p. 305; MARTINORI, *Annali della Zecca di Roma*, fascs. 23-24, p. 22n.

For his medals, see: MAZIO, *Medaglie pontificie*; also *Descriptive Catalog of Papal Medals*; CAMOZZI and VERLOVA, *Medaglie del Risorgimento*; BIANCHI, *Le medaglie del tra o Risorgimento*.

⁷⁵ For his activity as a gem engraver, see: KESÉ, *Handbuch der Edelstein- und Gemm. I. C. F. BÄLLIG, *Lehrbuch der Edelstein- und Gemm.**

DAVLOS, *Catalogue of Engraving Gems*; *BDM*, vol. 2, p. 274; vol. 7, p. 368; vol. 8, p. 333; MARTINORI, fascs. 23-24, p. 22n.

rulers such as the tsar of Russia and the kings of England and Sardinia sought his services.

His medals, like his cameos, show a perfection obtained only through a mastery of form combined with deep artistic insight. His portrait of Pope Gregory XVI (fig. 35) is a good example of his ability to impart majesty to a realistic likeness of a high dignitary; the features seem to be suffused with an inner glow of spirituality.



Fig. 35.—PAPAL ROME, GREGORY XVI, medal, year XI [1842]: view of Claudian aqueduct ⁷⁷ (Div. of Numismatics photo)

Pietro Girometti, who died in London in 1859 at the age of 47, was praised by Bolzenthall for the excellence of his medallic work. Pietro contributed little to coin engraving, but many fine works like the medals of Bembo and Brunelleschi are his contributions to the iconographic series of famous Italians, an enterprise undertaken by his father with Nicolo Cerbara. Umani thinks that Pietro, an excellent gem cutter, might have been better than even his father, who was credited with many of Pietro's works since both often signed only their last name.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ PATRIGNANI, *Gregorio XVI*, medal 71.

⁷⁸ UMANI, *NumR* (1943-1945), vols. 9-11, p. 62.

⁷⁹ THIEME and BECKER, vol. 15, p. 548.

⁸⁰ *Loc. cit.*; also KEARY, *British Museum Guide*, p. 87, item 343.

⁸¹ Cf. J. BABEON, *Médaille et médailleurs*, p. 189: "Leur mérite artistique n'est pas transcendant."

⁸² THIEME and BECKER (vol. 15, p. 549) and MARTINORI (fasc. 19, p. 169; fasc. 21, p. 21) indicate that Gioacchino Hamerani died in 1797 and that it was his brother Giovanni who signed the later works with "G.H." Both SFRALINI and FÖRNER

During the Pontificate of Pius VII (1800-1823), two brothers from the Hamerani dynasty of celebrated coin engravers devoted their activity to the Roman mint. Their names were linked to a glorious tradition which went back to the sixteen hundreds, when the Hermanskircher family of goldsmiths came from Bavaria to Rome to place their professional skill at the service of the popes. Among the many gifted artists in the family were two women, Anna Cecilia⁷⁹ (1642-1678), who executed some Biblical scenes for gold candelabra in St. Peter's, and Beatrice⁸⁰ (1677-1704), a talented engraver who produced during her short life many dies for seals and medals.

The two brothers Gioacchino and Giovanni added little to the renown of their ancestors⁸¹ possibly because their choice of career was determined by a rigid family tradition and not by individual talent.

Gioacchino,⁸² the older brother (1761-1801), served from 1789 as engraver at the Roman mint, achieving in 1794 the title of "cameral" engraver in charge of all coin and medal dies. Forrer states that his work was "unfortunately poor,"⁸³ while Thieme and Becker are of the opinion that Gioacchino, like his father Ferdinand, did very little work himself.⁸⁴ Many coin dies during Pius VI's and Pius VII's pontificates bear the complete signature G. HAMERANI, obviously designating in later years only the younger brother Giovanni Hamerani.

Giovanni⁸⁵ (1763-1846) studied architecture at the Academy in Parma, and in 1784 won the first award with his plan for the library. After he and his brother Gioacchino in 1796 sold the collection of the Hamerani dies to the papal administration, he decided to devote his time more to coin engraving than to architecture. Following the death of his brother, he took over the position of coin engraver at the papal mint. His activity was divided between the Roman mint and the Accademia di S. Luca, where he served after 1810 as a professor of medallic art.

The artistic capacity of the two brothers was limited to copying long-accepted coin types apparently

consider Gioacchino the author of all the coin dies during the first five years of Pius VII's pontificate and do not mention Giovanni at all. For the best study of the Hameranis, see NOACK, *Archiv für Medaillen- und Plakettenkunde* (1921-1922), vol. 3, pp. 37-39.

⁸³ *BDM*, vol. 2, p. 398. BOLZENTHAL (p. 270) also comments: "... er war Medailleur des Papstes Pius VI, dessen Bildnisse er wiederholt, aber in sehr tadelhafter Manier hergestellt hat."

⁸⁴ THIEME and BECKER, vol. 15, p. 549.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 548-549.



Fig. 36. -NEAPOLITAN OCCUPATION OF ROME, FERDINAND IV, scudo, 1806.⁸⁷
(Photo from CM)

without being able to add the slightest personal interpretation. Giovanni adopted his brother's dies for the reverse of the scudo struck by Ferdinand IV of Sicily during the occupation of Rome in 1800 (fig. 36). Rudely modeled planes, guided by heavy



Fig. 37. -PAPAL ROME, PIUS VII, medal commemorating his accession, year I, 1800.⁸⁷
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

⁸⁷ CM, vol. 17, coin 1; SERAFINI, *Medaglie Vaticano*, vol. 3, pl. 158, coin 12; MARTINORI, fasc. 22, p. 25; CARBONERI, p. 155; SPAZIANI-TESLA, *I Romani Pontefici*, p. 142, coin 266.

⁸⁷ PATRIGNANI, *Pio VII*, p. 46, medal 1.

⁸⁸ PATRIGNANI (*Pio VII*, p. 49): "... ha riprodotto le sembianze di Papa Chiaramonti in modo non corrispondente alla

lines, add only massiveness to the heavy frame of the Church, depriving the face of any natural beauty, heavy lettering renders the proportions even more awkward.

The same wooden rigidity, devoid of any trace of inner life, is the characteristic of a portrait medal of Pius VII (fig. 37). The very flat and superficial relief of the conventional features contrasts unpleasantly with the elaborate fullness of the folds in the garment. The unusually elongated face of the Pontiff disturbs the artistic balance of the composition, giving the impression that the face is just an insert within a prearranged frame.⁸⁸

Another medal of the same Pontiff (fig. 38) by Giovanni Hamerani uses a similar arrangement of garment and "mozzetta" to frame a better propor-



Fig. 38. -PAPAL ROME, PIUS VII, medal, year III [1803]; St. Peter's and rising sun.⁸⁹
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

tioned portrait. The features, modeled in a low but substantial relief, reflect a more spiritual life clad in severe dignity. An adequate sculptural technique adds the necessary plastic depth.

Associated with Gioacchino Hamerani at the Roman mint was Tommaso Mercandetti⁹⁰ (1758-1821), an engraver of seals, gems, and medals. The many years of his active life were a long succession of privations and betrayals. Apprenticed to gem cutting at the age of nine in the workshop of Gerolamo Rossi and later with Baldasare Curtini, he was compelled two years later to support his widowed mother and

verità . . . è stato ritratto con fisionomia apprezzata e molto ringiovanita."

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, medal 12.

⁹⁰ *BDM*, vol. 3, pp. 28-32, and vol. 8, p. 34; FROHM and BECKER, vol. 23, p. 40; GOLZENTHAL, p. 305; MARTINORI, fasc. 20-21, p. 180.

brothers. By the age of 22 he had already acquired a high reputation as a die cutter; King Ferdinand IV and Queen Carolina of Sicily entrusted him with their portrait medals and Pope Pius VI granted him a position at the Roman mint.

A few years later, in 1796, with the support of Cardinal Braschi, he was appointed chief engraver at the mint, but he had to compromise his position constantly to the undeserved reputation of Gioacchino Hamerani, who, as a descendant of the old engraving dynasty, so monopolized honors and positions at the mint that Mercandetti was forced to acquiesce to a kind of partnership with him. Nevertheless, some of the most impressive Italian coins during these years are the result of his activity. The death of Hamerani, instead of releasing Mercandetti from a hopeless situation, plunged him into even greater troubles. Law-suits with the Hamerani family and the ruthless competition of the brothers Giuseppe and Giovanni Pasinati as well as of the Passamonti brothers forced him to seek peace in retreat to the village of Bellmonte in Umbria.⁹¹ There he spent many years in financial privation since political complications prevented Pope Pius VII from paying him his full salary. He returned to Rome in 1810 and continued his activity as a medalist until the end of his life in 1821.

His work includes a great number of medals⁹² and coin dies engraved under Pius VI, the Roman Republic, and Pius VII. Most of his works are signed T. MERCANDETTI or only T.M., with the two letters occasionally interlaced in a monogram.

Owing, perhaps, to the strenuous conditions of his life, his coins lack a uniformity of character and execution. Deeply emotional, the quality of his work depends very much on the sincerity and intensity of his impressions. As a result, his creations alternate between mediocrity and magnificence.⁹³ An artistic and emotional peak of his life was reached in his collaboration with the Roman Republic. The ideals of liberty which swept from France across Rome incited a revolution against the papacy, and in 1798 the

Roman Republic was proclaimed. Mercandetti participated actively in the public clamor to bring these ideals to life. The glowing hope of his generation for a betterment of past injustices is expressed in the inscription of his so-called scudo⁹⁴ of 1799 (fig. 39).



Fig. 39. ROMAN REPUBLIC, scudo, year VII [1799]⁹⁵
(Author's photo)

Like an exultant cry, the words "Giorno che vale di tanti anni il pianto" (a day which compensates for the weeping of so many years) appears along with the date of the French Revolutionary calendar⁹⁶ on the reverse of this piece.

The obverse is one of the most eloquent expressions in coinage of the bold spirit of revolution. The complexity of emblematic representation does not overcrowd the field but flows into a logical sequence through a masterful employment of gradation and interposition on different plastic planes. The pedestal, bearing the symbol of the ruthless fight for freedom—the dagger—plus the symbol of attained lib-

⁹¹ PATRIGNANI (*Pio VII*, p. 25) states that the other artists who could not compete with his artistic ability resorted to the deceitful expedient of deleting his signature from the medal dies. For an example, see the medal of year VI (*ibid.*, medal 41).

⁹² EDWARDS, pls. 16, 40.

⁹³ PATRIGNANI (*Pio VII*, p. 28), concurring with Ancona's opinion, ascribes mannerism to Mercandetti's style, especially during his last years of activity.

⁹⁴ MARTINORI (fasc. 22, p. 21) insists that this piece, generally

called a scudo, was in fact a medal which was distributed to a group of young patriots clad in costumes of ancient Romans during a festivity arranged in the Forum by the Minister of Interior, Antonio Franceschi, February 15, 1799 (27 Piovoso, year VII).

⁹⁵ *CM*, vol. 17, coin 13; SPAZIANI-TESTA, *I Romani Pontefici*, p. 140, coin 262.

⁹⁶ The 27 Piovoso (year VI), or February 15, 1798, was proclaimed by French General Louis Alexandre Berthier as the day of establishment of the independent Roman Republic.

erty—the Phrygian cap—and draped with two unfurled flags, supports a boldly advancing eagle of nationalism, enclosed in its wreath of victory, astride the fasces, symbol of authority. The dynamic eagle,⁹⁷ modeled by a master's hand in a vigorous though graceful plasticity, suggests the exuberance of triumphant ideals after a battle. An antithesis of high against flat relief accentuates the effect of logical sequence; the feathered legs of the eagle, protruding in powerful strides, convey the rhythm of advancing movement in contrast to the static background.

The unusual coin image was the result of previous experiments, an example of which is the scudo of year 6 and of year 7 (fig. 40). This earlier piece,



Fig. 40.—ROMAN REPUBLIC, scudo, year VII [1703] (Author's photo)

which contains the same basic sculptural elements, but all dominated by a static conception, was transformed by the spark of inspiration into the masterpiece of figure 39.

Another scudo (fig. 41), created earlier for the Roman Republic, clearly shows Mercandetti's sculptural abilities as well as his defects. Here he follows a more traditional pattern by using the figure of Liberty as the obverse of the coin. The reverse field encloses the inscription within an oak wreath. And again Mercandetti's acute talent for the decorative element finds happy expression. Extreme simplicity, inspired by an exquisite sense of proportion with the juxtaposition of massive and low relief, results in an unobtrusively beautiful coin emblem.

The *scudo*, while displaying the same sense of balance in the arrangement of elements, still conveys a certain mechanical form of logic in its design. Although the vertical motif is balanced by the



Fig. 41.—ROMAN REPUBLIC, scudo, no date (Author's photo)

the double line of upright scepter and fasces, the figure lacks a necessary slenderness, and the massive drapery only emphasizes the robust and awkward plasticity of the image.



Fig. 42.—PAPAL ROMAN, Pius VII, medal, no date, view of St. Peter's (Div. of Numismatics photo)

The same wooden rigidity of contour and plastic surface is present in a portrait medal of Pope Pius VII (fig. 42). Spontaneity and physiognomic insight

⁹⁷ MARTINORI (fasc. 22, p. 31), asserts that the eagle is the copy of an ancient Roman relief found in the Forum of Trajan.

⁹⁸ SERAFINI, pl. 153, coin 21; *CM*, vol. 1, coin 13; SPAZIANI-TESTA, *I Romani Pontifici*, p. 140, coin 203.

⁹⁹ SERAFINI, pl. 153, coin 19; *CM*, vol. 1, coin 8; MARTINORI, fasc. 22, p. 3; SPAZIANI-TESTA, *I Romani Pontifici*, p. 140, coin 204.

¹⁰⁰ PATRIGNANI, *P. VII*, medal 4.

seem to have completely deserted the artist in modeling the heavy, claylike features of the Pontiff. Nevertheless, Patrignani considers it "a well-executed medal."¹⁰¹



Fig. 43.—PAPAL ROME. PIUS VII, obverse of medal, year XVIII [1818]¹⁰²
(Photo from Patrignani)

There are better portraits of Pius VII among the 34 medals which Mercandetti executed as "cameral engraver" in later years, especially after 1807. De-



Fig. 44.—PAPAL ROME. PIUS VII, obverse of medal, year XXI [1821]¹⁰³
(Photo from Patrignani)

serving special attention is the three-quarter bust of the aged Pontiff (fig. 43) and a profile bust of 1821 (fig. 44), both highly expressive.

A scudo of the same Pope struck in 1816 (fig. 45) from dies cut by the chief engraver of the mint, Giuseppe Pasinati,¹⁰⁴ displays a portrait that is touching in its naive simplicity. Apparently an unsure feeling for plastic values and the interplay of modeled surfaces made Pasinati resort to a more linear design. Physiognomic traits are overemphasized by protuberances which add an emaciated, haggard air to



Fig. 45.—PAPAL ROME, PIUS VII, scudo, 1816¹⁰⁵
(Photo from C.M.)

the otherwise smiling features.¹⁰⁶ The strongly arched forehead above the deeply set eyes cannot dispel the general impression of human helplessness.¹⁰⁷

It was a strange fate that deprived Pope Pius VII of engravers with the artistic capacity to perceive and translate into sculptural form the magnitude of his extraordinary personality.¹⁰⁸ Chateaubriand in his *Mémoires d'outre-tombe* describes the Pope as "une figure admirable, pâle, triste, religieux, toutes les tribulations de l'Église sont sur son front."

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, medal 84.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, medal 100.

¹⁰⁴ *BDM*, vol. 4, p. 395; *THEME and BECKER*, vol. 26, p. 269; *BOLZENTHAL*, p. 307; *CARBONERI*, p. 156. Giuseppe Pasinati and his brother Giovanni, in a heated competition against Mercandetti, tried to win through unfair methods and finally Giuseppe succeeded in securing the position of master of the Roman mint.

¹⁰⁵ *C.M.*, vol. 17, coin 75; *SERAFINI*, pl. 159, coin 13; *SPAZIANI-TESTA, I Romani Pontefici*, p. 115, coin 199.

¹⁰⁶ In 1816 Pasinati was commissioned to engrave a scudo with the portrait of the Pope. Apparently the die broke after five or six specimens were struck, and Pasinati, of advanced age by that time, did not re-engrave the dies. *PATRIGNANI (Pio VII,*

p. 23) states that he does not believe that this type was rejected by the Pope. It is generally agreed, however, that the Pope was opposed to having his portrait on coins. See also: *MARTINORI*, fasc. 23, pp. 18, 27; *Ras.V*, vol. 27, pp. 68-69; *NCirc*, vol. 18, col. 12061.

¹⁰⁷ Pasinati engraved ten medals during the pontificate of Pius VII. The only significant portrait was used on a medal of year XV (1815), which he copied from a previous portrait engraved by the Swiss medalist Brandt—*PATRIGNANI, Pio VII*, medal 71.

¹⁰⁸ *PATRIGNANI (Pio VII*, p. 27) contends that, with the exception of two noteworthy dies of Mercandetti, there was not a single medal which rose above the level of a stagnant mediocrity during this agitated period of European history.

Toward the end of his life another sculptor, Giuseppe Cerbara, attempted to render his likeness; in fact, a medal issued in the year of the Pope's death was engraved by this artist (fig. 46). The stooped back



Fig. 46.—PAPAL ROME. PIUS VII, medal, year XXIII [1822]; interior of Museum Pio Charamonti¹⁰⁹ (Div. of Numismatics photo)

and the deeply set head indicate the advanced age of the Pontiff, but, unbroken by the continuous adversities of an agitated life, his spiritual forcefulness is still evident. Strong features are presented in an elegant, flowing plasticity. Minutely executed sculptural details enhance this image of lifelong experiences translated into physical traits. The same smile encountered in Pasinati's medal vaguely emerges here from Cerbara's portrait, conveying a sense of benign human understanding, instead of perplexing helplessness.

Giuseppe Cerbara¹¹⁰ (1770–1856), and his younger brother, Nicolò, are two outstanding figures in the history of the Roman mint. Giuseppe began his career in the traditional way as a gem engraver, working as an apprentice in the shop of his father, Giovanni Battista, but devoting much of his attention to die engraving for medals. Through unremitting hard work he built a reputation which opened for him the

doors of the Accademia di S. Luca, where he became a member in 1812. Then a vacancy at the Roman mint gave him the opportunity to put his talents to the service of Popes Leo XII, Pius VIII, Gregory XVI, and Pius IX.

A long series of dies for coins struck under Leo XII, the Vacant See of 1829, and Pius VIII came from Giuseppe's workshop. His signature, G. S. CERBARA or CERBARA IOSEPH, is frequently found on coins and medals for a period of 25 or more years.

An artistic sensitivity combined with complete mastery of technical problems marks his work. His strong individuality searched for new forms to express old emblematic representations that were confined by tradition within fixed patterns.¹¹¹ The figure of the Church floating on ethereal clouds, a centuries-old symbol of the spiritual power of the Roman Catholic Church, was used by many artists before him in an unaltered form as a reverse type. But this still, archaic figure did not satisfy Cerbara's conception of the personification of religion. A sequence of three variations on this theme (figs. 47–49) reveals



Fig. 47.—PAPAL ROME. VACANT SEE, second (1823; Bologna mint) (Photo courtesy American Numismatics Society)

his tireless attempts to find more appropriate forms for the concept. The remoteness of the celestial figure had always been indicated by a very flat, receding relief, marked only by strong contour lines.

In *Giuseppe VII*, p. 25, PATRIGNANI concurs with Marinoni's statement that the designs of Cerbara are "accurate and reveal superior qualities in the art of die engraving, if somewhat manneristic."

¹¹¹ SPAZIANI-LECCA, *L'Arte e l'Industria*, com. 203; SERVINI, pl. 161, com. 10; DAVENPORT, *Italy's Coins*, com. 18.

¹⁰⁹ PATRIGNANI, *Pio VII*, p. 219, medal 108.

¹¹⁰ *BDM*, vol. 1, p. 386, and vol. 7, p. 17; THIERM and BECKER, vol. 6, p. 291; BOLZENTHIN, p. 306; MARINONI, *liscs*, 23–24, p. 22.

¹¹¹ Judging only his medals, Patrignani accused him unjustly of an antique mannerism in vogue since the time of the Hauser-

With pagan devotion. Cerbara could conceive of the divine only in perfectly modeled forms, and he embodied the abstraction in the flowing lines and curves of an essentially human body. The traditional heavy folds of the garment were replaced with a soft, veil-like drapery which heightened the ethereal impression created by vaporous masses of clouds.

His continued preoccupation with variations on this theme came to no avail, and regression instead of progress was the result. The exaltation and devotion expressed in his first reverse (fig. 47), where a slight asymmetric displacement of the figure toward the upper edge and the soft radiance of the halo convey divine aloofness, declines eventually into a senseless mannerism, clearly evident in his third version (fig. 49).



Fig. 48.—PAPAL ROME, VACANT SEE, scudo, 1820, Roman mint¹¹³
(Photo courtesy American Numismatics Society)

The same inclination toward mannerism is expressed in his portrait coins of Pope Leo XII. The brilliant effect of many of his refined portraits on his larger coins is based chiefly on subtle details that fade on smaller coins because of the limited surface. The delicacy of his portraits, with minute lines which blend into the softness of the plastic surface to reveal deep psychological insight, is successfully achieved on the large surface of the scudo (fig. 48), but degenerates on the reduced field of the gold coin (fig. 50) into a lifeless image.

The impression of fragile transparency conveyed by

some of his works apparently represents only a phase in Cerbara's artistic evolution and seems to be confined to the duration of Leo XII's pontificate. It is possible that the Pope himself, through the delicacy of his frame, inspired the artist. A later portrait medal of Pius IX struck in 1851 (fig. 51) shows no

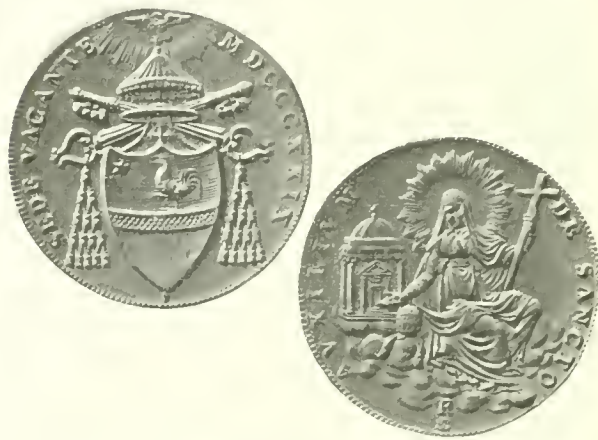


Fig. 49.—PAPAL ROME, LEO XII, scudo, 1825, Roman mint¹¹³
(Photo courtesy American Numismatics Society)

such qualities. Instead, a youthful, robust exuberance embodied in a noble but superficially treated relief replaces the transcendental, thoughtful frailty of the earlier portrait.

Giuseppe, with his young and ardent temperament, tried to break away from the dominating personalities of his predecessors, and the first phase in his activity clearly reveals his tendency to venture into new



Fig. 50.—PAPAL ROME, LEO XII, double zecchino or Leonina, 1828, Roman mint¹¹⁵
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

concepts of content and form. The coin types of Leo XII coincide with this period. Unsure of his new methods and apparently dissatisfied with the results, Giuseppe remodeled some of his compositions again and again. The search for an adequate expression of his artistic ego, however, proved to be

¹¹³ SPAZIANI-TESTA, *I Romani Pontefici*, coin 210; SERAFINI, pl. 162, coin 7; DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 188.

¹¹⁴ SPAZIANI-TESTA, *I Romani Pontefici*, coin 205; SERAFINI,

pl. 161, coin 17; DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 186.

¹¹⁵ *CMI*, vol. 17, coin 16; SERAFINI, vol. 3, p. 377, coin 4.

beyond his capabilities, and his creative resources declined to the mannerism which was noticed in figure 49. Apparently resigned to sacrificing his originality for the safety of an old, well-established tradition, he accepted the eclectic formalism of his time. His personality was completely absorbed by a tradition that was strong enough to perpetuate itself for many decades. In final years only the signature distinguishes Giuseppe Cerbara's works from those of his contemporaries.



Fig. 51.—PAPAL ROME, PIUS IX, medal, year VI, 1854; view of viaduct at Aricia¹¹⁶ (Div. of Numismatics photo)

Giuseppe is seldom mentioned apart from Nicolo, his younger brother and successor. The tradition which had persisted at the Roman mint, since the Flameranis first imposed the spell of their family on the institution, formed the background for the shaping of both artistic personalities. Their individual responses, however, were very different.

Nicolo Cerbara¹¹⁷ (1797-1869), of an even more conforming temperament than his brother, showed no tendencies toward outbursts of individuality. An engraver of gems like all his kinsmen, he was associated for almost 30 years (1829-1858) with the Roman mint, where he also served as director. A close friendship with Pietro Girometti induced him

to collaborate on a series of medals commemorating famous Italians such as Galileo, Raphael, and Pope Julius II (See *Monografia numismatica del Museo Italiano*).

An assiduous worker, he produced, in honor of an impressive sequence of medals on Popes Gregory XVI and Pius IX, most of the dies for the paper, gold, silver, and copper coinage during the pontificates of Pius VIII, Gregory XVI, Pius IX, the Vacant Sees of 1830 and 1846, and the Roman Republic of 1848. He also engraved the fisherman's ring of Gregory XVI.

Nicolo's work moved imperturbably along an even line of mediocrity. Devoid of the fine sensibilities exhibited by his brother's coinage, his technically perfect creations express an astonishing spiritual indifference. Immobilization, a stiffening of academic formalism, conducive to dry form and cold expression, characterizes most of his work, suggesting the "sacrifice of feeling" attributed by Sutherland to the classical revival of the 19th century.¹¹⁸ His well-balanced compositions, executed with plastic accuracy, cannot dispel the impression of banality.

The scene of the presentation of the Child Jesus in the temple, created for the reverse of the scudo of Gregory XVI (fig. 52), exemplifies this failing.



Fig. 52.—PAPAL ROME, GREGORY XVI, scudo, 1834; Roman mint¹¹⁹ (Div. of Numismatics photo)

Technically well arranged, the scene presents only a flat conventionalism of forms. No subtle vision has imparted life to this essentially static group. The wooden stiffness, accentuated by awkward, almost parallel running folds in the Holy garments, is not merely an external attribute; it is an expression

¹¹⁶ PATRIGNANI, *BCVV* (1947), p. 78.

¹¹⁷ THIMI and BUCLER, vol. 6, p. 291; BOUZENTHAL, p. 306.

¹¹⁸ *Art in Coinage*, p. 195-209.

¹¹⁹ *CAI*, vol. 1, coin 14; SERNISI, p. 78, coin 1; SUTHERLAND, *Art in Coinage*, p. 128, coin 21; D'ARCA, *L'Arte del Pontefice*, p. 128, coin 21; D'ARCA, *L'Arte del Pontefice*, p. 128, coin 21.

of the extreme coldness which grips the whole composition of the reverse. The obverse, however, presents a portrait that possesses an unexpected life-likeness.

Purely emblematic types, emphasizing the decorative element, found a better solution. The reverse of the scudo engraved for the Vacant See of 1830 and repeated with slight modifications in 1846 (fig. 53) succeeded in conveying a celestial vision.



Fig. 53.— PAPAL ROME, VACANT SEE, scudo, 1846, Roman mint¹²⁰
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

The halo of rays imparts an airy transparency to the background of the alighting dove. This greatly improved version created one of the subtlest images in modern coin engraving.



Fig. 54.— PAPAL ROME, GREGORY XVI, scudo, 1846,
Roman mint¹²¹
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

Of a similar decorative nature are the reverses for the silver and gold coinages of Popes Gregory XVI and Pius IX, each coin (figs. 54, 57) bearing

¹²⁰ *C.VI*, vol. 7, coin 2; SERAFINI, pl. 164, coin 1; SPAZIANI-TESTA, p. 127, no. 237; DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, coin 193. CARBONERI (p. 228) considers this coin noteworthy from an artistic point of view.

¹²¹ *C.VI*, vol. 17, coin 141; SERAFINI, p. 389, coin 73; SPAZIANI-TESTA, *I Romani Pontefici*, coin 232; DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, coin 192.

¹²² CARBONERI (pp. 229, 241) is impressed with the simplicity of N. Cerbara's coinage of Gregory XVI and of Pius IX:

a brief inscription enclosed within a laurel wreath.¹²² The central inscription is in rather massive letters, probably to satisfy practical more than esthetic purposes. This concise and salient legend apparently fulfilled its practical requirements since even Carl Voigt later adopted the same reverse design.

The subject of the portrait, a challenge to any artistic ability, seemed to impress Nicolo Cerbara hardly at all. His portrait series of the contemporary pontiffs and especially of Gregory XVI betrays little tendency to alter or improve the once-established images. His usual intellectual coldness becomes more evident when he is faced with the problem of reproducing in plastic form not only a physical likeness but a spiritual individuality. Apparently incapable of sensing the depth of a subject's inner life, he limited his portraits to external likenesses. A slight tendency toward idealization, however, was inspired by Pope Gregory XVI, who closely supervised the activity of his artists, trying to suggest versions of his portrait which would show him with more proportioned features. The camera aide Moroni relates that the Pope often discussed with the mint artists new coin designs or changes of already adopted types.¹²³ Such supervision certainly would eliminate the slightest inclination toward more original forms of expression.



Fig. 55.— PAPAL ROME, GREGORY XVI, 10 scudi, 1838,
Roman mint¹²⁴
(Author's photo)

One of Nicolo Cerbara's portraits (fig. 55), expressing only a platitude of form and concept, was adopted as the official portrait for coins and medals. An earlier portrait of the Pontiff (fig. 56) by the same artist, using a more sensitive psychological treat-

"Sono di una uniformità e semplicità degne di nota che fa un contrasto sigolare colla ricca e multiforme collezione di monete dei Papi anteriori a Gregorio XVI."

¹²³ PATRIGNANI (*Gregorio XVI*, p. 23) says that the Pope, being aware of the propagandistic importance of portrait medals, tried to minimize the prominence of his large nose and preferred portraits which solved this problem in a more esthetic manner.

¹²⁴ *C.VI*, vol. 17, coin 55.

ment, apparently did not meet the approval of the Pope since it was never used in later years.

Cerbara's portrait of Pius IX (fig. 57), a work from the period of his artistic maturity, attains a higher



Fig. 56.—PAPAL ROME, GREGORY XVI, obverse of medal, year I [1831]¹²⁵
(Photo from *RZ*)

degree of expressiveness. The vivacious and charming personality of Pius IX seems to have dissipated the earlier coldness of the artist to the extent that an elegant, sophisticated style replaces the earlier for-



Fig. 57.—PAPAL ROME, PIUS IX, scudo, 1848, Roman mint¹²⁶
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

malism. The well-modeled plastic relief renders in simple, clear-cut lines the warm personality of the high potentate.

Bound by the same formalism, but indicating a much higher sensitivity, are the portraits of Pope Pius IX by Bonfiglio Zaccagnini, who signed the dies for

the gold scudo between 1830 and 1848 and the bronze quattrini from 1851 to 1864¹²⁷. Little information is known about his activity. Forster assigns to him seven religious medals.

A tendency toward mannerism is evident in Zaccagnini's portrait of Pius IX used for the gold scudo (fig. 58). The same preference for minuteness



Fig. 58.—PAPAL ROME, PIUS IX, gold scudo, year VIII, 1853, Bologna mint¹²⁸
(Author's photo)

of detail is employed with better results on a medal from year VII (fig. 59) wherein design and plastic treatment suggest a psychological insight. Never-



Fig. 59.—PAPAL ROME, PIUS IX, medal, year VII [1853]; view of Via Appia¹²⁹
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

theless, the delicately engraved features contrast unpleasantly with the massive jaw, made more conspicuous by the superficial treatment of the surface of the right cheek.

¹²⁵ *RZ*, fig. 605.

¹²⁶ *CNI*, vol. 17, coin 12; SERAFINI, pl. 164, coin 17; SPAZIANI-TESTA, *I Romani Pontefici*, p. 129, coin 240; DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 194.

¹²⁷ *BDM*, vol. 6, p. 712.

¹²⁸ *CNI*, vol. 17, coin 101; SERAFINI, p. 430, coin 314.

¹²⁹ PATRIGNANI, *BCVA* (1913), p. 39.

However individual were their distinctions, the creations of these artists were direct products of their time and of its own mentality. One of the purest expressions of the intellectualism of the mid-19th century can be seen in the German engraver Carl Friedrich Voigt, who worked for many years at the Roman mint. His work is an image of his era, with all its merits and defects.

Although Voigt's artistic personality was formed under the guidance of most of the masters of his period, he did not follow any of them in particular. Not an imitator, he proved himself to be a master whose individuality and professional skill were molded and brought to perfection by the great spirits of his tutors.

Carl Friedrich Voigt¹³⁰ was born in Berlin in October 1800. His first artistic training was with the goldsmith Friedrich Alexander Vollgold and the engraver Leonhard Posch. At the age of twenty he joined the medallie institute of the Loos family and worked under the direction of Gottfried Bernhard Loos. Shortly afterward, he became their first engraver. In 1825 he was awarded the academy's first prize for sculpture, which gave him the opportunity to go to London to work at the Royal Mint. The guidance of Benedetto Pistrucci, a master of engraving, and the personal patronage of the Duke of Wellington were of decisive importance in the de-

velopments of his future career. After six months he went to Paris for further studies and then to Rome. The world-famous gem engraver Giuseppi Girometti introduced him to the art of cameo-cutting. Many

gems and especially a cameo representing Bellerophon and Pegasus are evidence of Voigt's exceptional skill in this art. His special aptitudes soon found general recognition and even Albert Thorwaldsen acknowledged his work. Endorsed by the great Danish artist, Voigt was given the assignment to engrave the prize medal for the Accademia Tiberina, which he later joined as a member. Attracted by Voigt's fame as an outstanding engraver, the art-loving King Louis I of Bavaria in 1829 appointed him first engraver at the Munich mint.

During Voigt's activity at this mint, he produced a brilliant series of coin dies for the historic double talers (fig. 60) of the Wittelsbach king.¹³² Other



Fig. 61.—GREECE, OTTO I, 5 drachmai, 1833¹³³
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

assignments for foreign countries, as the beautiful gold and silver coins for Otto I of Greece (fig. 61), a task he executed during his stay at the Munich mint, gave his name international renown. In 1857 he accepted an invitation of Pope Pius IX to work permanently at the Roman mint. He settled in Rome and for almost fifteen years his name appeared on all papal coins and on some of the medals. His days in his adopted country ended when he died suddenly in 1874 in Trieste while on a trip to Germany.

Voigt joined the papal mint at the peak of his career, his name already world-famous. A well-rounded personality, molded in the schools of the great masters of his time, he was, nevertheless, an outsider for the Italians, a stranger to their tradition. But he bowed before the ancient civilization and submitted to the rule of traditional papal coin engraving. His coin dies do not deviate in form from those of his



Fig. 60. BAVARIA, LOUIS I, double taler, 1848¹³¹
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

medals, see HABICH, *Die Medaillen und Münzen*, and KELL, *Mitteilungen der Bayerischen Numismatischen Gesellschaft* (1885), pp. 1-75.

¹³⁰ *BDM*, vol. 6, pp. 305-310, and vol. 8, p. 250; THUMM and BECKER, vol. 34, p. 508.

¹³¹ DAVENPORT, *German Talers*, coin 597. This coin commemorates Louis' abdication in favor of his son Maximilian II.

¹³² DAVENPORT, *German Talers*, pp. 22-39. For his Bavarian

¹³³ DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, coin 115.

Italian predecessors, even though the dies were executed in a totally different spirit.

This artist saw coins as an expression of monarchal prerogative rather than a medium of convenience. As a result, he invested them with all the dignity and, inevitably, all the rigidity of officialdom. Whether created for German principalities¹³⁴ or the Roman papacy, his coins present the same idea of monarchic power. Creating the portrait of a monarch, he was primarily concerned with the image of the ruler. Only of secondary importance were the human traits on which the divine prerogative was bestowed. On the same theory, Napoleon I, inspired by the example of Augustus, ordered his artists to render and preserve eternal youth in his features,¹³⁵ and the image of Queen Victoria likewise remained unchanged for decades.

Voigt's portraits of Louis I and Maximilian II of Bavaria, Otto of Greece, and Pope Pius IX (fig. 62) suggest Manfredini's portrayal of Napoleon. All



Fig. 62.—PAPAL ROME, PIUS IX, 100 lire, 1866, Roman mint.¹³⁶
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

are suffused with the same remote dignity, their expressions ageless, their physical likenesses a mere coincidence. It is not the lack of psychological ability to project feeling and thought into the features of a high potentate, or even the inability to express

them in just the form and ratio of gold, silver, or copper, but the refinement or an individual behind the coin, the personality which characterizes Voigt's work.

An example, however, of his psychological approach is the portrait of Pius VIII on a scudo of 1830 (fig. 63), created during Voigt's stay at the Munich



Fig. 63.—PAPAL ROME, PIUS VIII, scudo, 1830, Roman mint.¹³⁷
(Photo courtesy American Numismatics Society)

mint.¹³⁸ The beauty that comes from intellectual qualities and human understanding glows in the features of the aged Pontiff. A perfectly modeled eye accentuates the expression of concentrated intellectuality in this great art lover on the throne of St. Peter, and a mastery of sculptural values helps to portray this image, considered by many as one of the most sensitive portraits in modern coin engraving.¹³⁹

The same calm dignity is seen in the composition of the reverse. Here, a new beauty, resulting from perfect eurythmy of dimension and movement, pervades the statuary representation that was used for centuries by artists as a symbol of the papacy.

Once Voigt was on permanent assignment at the Roman mint, he conformed more closely to the tradition of that institution. The composition of the coins of Pius IX was continued by Voigt in the manner of his predecessors, with a bust of the Pope as the symbol of worldly power on one side and the value

therefore, to correct Forrer's date of 1829 to read 1830 for Voigt's assignment at the Munich mint. In 1831 Voigt engraved also "The Allegory of the River Tiber" for a medal of the Accademia Fiberna (ibid., medal 68), and Patignani thinks he prepared it before his departure for Munich during the pontificate of Pius VIII. Since Voigt did not do work at the time, however, he may have modeled it while in Munich.

¹³⁹An interesting fact is that an identical portrait, used as the obverse for the 30-bajocchi piece of 1830, bears Nicolo' Corbelli's signature instead of Voigt's.

¹³⁴ Voigt engraved coins for the principalities of Baden, Hesse, Saxe-Meiningen, and Württemberg.

¹³⁵ PATRIGNANI, *Gregorio XVI*, p. 23n: "De conserver à ses traits une jeunesse perpetuelle."

¹³⁶ SERAFINI, pl. 165, coin 15; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 1504.

¹³⁷ CAVI, vol. 17, coin 6; SERAFINI, pl. 162, coin 9; SPAZIANI-LISTA, *I Romani Pontifici*, p. 121, coin 212; DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 189.

¹³⁸ PATRIGNANI (*Gregorio XVI*, p. 107) thinks that Voigt must have engraved this coin while in Rome and Patignani proposes,

and year inscribed in a wreath on the other (fig. 62). This reverse type, created by Nicolo Cerbara, was adapted also to the decimal coinage introduced by Pius IX with the reform of 1866. Apparently only considerations of utility prevailed in the choice of this reverse, since the large but readable letters of the inscription overcrowd the field and disrupt any pleasant balance of composition.

Despite Voigt's conformity, the likeness of Pius IX on the obverse differs greatly from portraits of this pontiff by other artists. There is an expression of nobility presented with a simplicity which only a mastery of sculptural form can confer. The impassivity of the Pope is merely surface. An air of human kindness in a countenance of great dignity permeates the simple features. Voigt was not a sentimentalist; no impressionistic irregularities disrupt

the harmony in his simple balance. A master of form, he achieved a perfect interplay between simple lines and unobtrusive plastic relief. His fame rests upon a classic simplicity of composition and a sobriety of form.

After 1870 no coins were issued by the popes for almost sixty years, until 1930, when the striking of coins—an expression of recognized worldly power—was resumed as a result of the Concordat between the Italian government and the Papacy. Since the striking of the coins and medals of the Vatican is done in a well-established collaboration with the Italian government at the Roman mint, the section devoted to this most recent phase in the minting activity of the Vatican will be discussed in connection with modern Italian coin engravers.

NAPLES

The southern Kingdom of Naples and Sicily, an appanage of the Spanish Bourbons, was torn between the tyranny of their foreign-born kings and the idealistic, impetuous population, which was committed through the secret fraternity of the Carbonari to fight for civic freedom and for national affirmation. Set in motion by the ideals of the French Revolution, surge after surge of patriotic aspirations arose and then were smothered under the reactionary policies of Ferdinand IV. His reign of 67 years on the throne of Naples was a relentless, obstinate battle to maintain his autocratic regime in the face of time and events. Twice an exile during the victorious wars of the French, he later increased his efforts to rebuild his old power on the debris of the Napoleonic regime. With the support of foreign Austrian troops he crushed the patriotic uprising in 1820 and buried his previous concessions under endless political persecutions.

His attitude toward the growing tide of nationalistic movements became a tradition in his family. His son Francis I and his grandson Ferdinand II met the national quest for reform with the point of a bayonet. Neither understood the new and challenging spirit, and instead of leading their country toward a democratic monarchy, they persisted blindly in maintaining their autocratic rule. Finally defeated

by time and the patriotic enthusiasm of their peoples, the Bourbon dynasty ceased to reign in Naples in 1861, when this southern monarchy became an integrated part of the united Kingdom of Italy.

The coin designs of the Neapolitan mint offer a good example of the decisive effect which a strong personality can have on the development of an institution. At the Naples' mint the art of coin engraving was bound for decades to mediocrity and platitude because of the domineering spirit of its chief engraver Domenico Perger.¹⁴⁰ Spiritual inertia held him in the line of a tradition that had neither glory nor distinction. The coins and medals which he cut for Ferdinand IV during the last decade of the 18th century display an almost embarrassing primitivism (fig. 64) when compared to better products of some of his contemporaries like Nicola Morghen (fig. 65) or Vincenzo Aveta.¹⁴¹ Perger seemed to entirely dominate the mint for years; his initials D.P. appear on numerous coins until 1804 when the king, apparently tired of the monotony of his coins, expressed the desire for a radical change at his mint.¹⁴²

Luigi Diodati¹⁴³ was appointed master of the mint to replace Antonio Planelli, and under his expert direction operations were completely reorganized. The system introduced by Diodati was one of the

¹⁴⁰ *BDM*, vol. 4, pp. 450-452, and vol. 8, p. 120.

¹⁴¹ RICCIARDI, *Medaglie delle Due Sicilie*, p. 16, medal 43.

¹⁴² PROLA and MORILLI, *BCVA* (1926), pp. 3-25.

¹⁴³ DIODATI published a pamphlet about the organization of the mint: *Dello stato presente della moneta nel regno di Napoli o della necessità di un alzamento*.

most progressive of his time, and many of his innovations were imitated by Tsar Alexander I in perfecting the Russian minting process.¹⁴¹ Domenico Reborra, one of Diodati's expert technicians, improved



Fig. 64.—NAPLES, FERDINAND IV AND QUEEN CAROLINA, medal, 1791.¹⁴²
(Photo from Ricciardi)



Fig. 65.—NAPLES, FERDINAND IV, obverse of medal, 1792.¹⁴³
(Photo from Ricciardi)

the mechanical installations, which gave the mint better production. Diodati himself, after receiving from the Ministry of Finance in 1804 the assignment

to create a new ~~type~~ ~~pieces~~ ~~intended~~ ~~to~~ ~~impose~~ a new artistic direction on coin engraving.

Perger was forced to rise out of his inertia and to conform to the new policy with an energetic new creation. Inspired by a marble bust of the king by Antonio Canova, he presented a new coin design (fig. 66). It did not meet the approval of Ferdinand



Fig. 66.—NAPLES, FERDINAND IV, project for piastra, 1804.¹⁴⁴
(Photo from Prota)

and another project was requested with great urgency. Apparently following the directions of the Ministry of Finance, he turned toward English coinage for inspiration. The penny and twopence copper pieces struck by Matthew Boulton for the English Government in 1797 at the Soho mint in Birmingham had carried a raised border which had given the pieces the appearance of a cartwheel, from which was derived the name "cartwheel penny." This innovation was not favorably accepted by the English public since the coins "were found exceedingly cumbersome,"¹⁴⁵ and so the experiment was discontinued, many of the pieces being melted down for their copper content. But outside of England apparently the novelty of this experiment impressed people more than its failure.

Three among four of Perger's patterns submitted in 1804 for a piastra of Ferdinand IV display the same technique of a raised border. Two patterns—Perger's first project, have the inscription on the

¹⁴¹ PROTA and MORELLI, *BCVA* (1926), p. 4; D'ISCRIBI, *RVA* (1959), p. 36.

¹⁴² RICCIARDI, *Medaglie della Dinastia*, p. 1, medal 46.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 17, medal 47.

¹⁴⁴ PROTA, *AnnR* (1944), vol. 1, pp. 115-117.

¹⁴⁵ GRANT, *London Mint*, p. 263. See also DICKINSON, *Matthew Boulton; EDM*, vol. 1, p. 235.

border in incused letters,¹⁴⁹ while his third project (fig. 67) has one in raised letters. The latter was approved October 18 and was struck in a small number before the entire issue was terminated. The composition of this coin is very well balanced. The



Fig. 67.—NAPLES, FERDINAND IV, piastra, 1804¹⁵⁰
(Photo from Pagani)

small bust of the monarch in Roman attire, executed in Perger's habitual low relief, is not lacking in artistic value, and can even be considered one of his better coin engravings. The massivity of the strong profile is pleasantly balanced by the high relief of the surrounding border. The reverse has an impressive simplicity, harmonious in its design



Fig. 68.—NAPLES, FERDINAND IV, pattern piastra, 1804¹⁵¹
(Photo from Pagani)

and distribution of letters. Interestingly, the same obverse and reverse designs transposed to a standard, flat planchet with no raised border (fig. 68) completely lose their esthetic appeal: the bust appears awkward and too compact; the reverse, insignificant.

Perger's patterns did not receive necessary appreciation, nor did his dies seem fit for production. From the earlier, first project of the piastra of 1804 only a few specimens could be struck before the dies broke, while the second project was rejected without much consideration by the Superior Council of Finances. Lengthy wrangles widened his rift with the new administration. Against their regular procedure, his superiors gave the commission for the piastra project to two artists outside the mint, Filippo Rega for the obverse dies and Michele Arnaud for the reverse.

Michele Arnaud, more a technician than an artist, was well known in Naples as a button manufacturer. He had come in contact with the mint through occasional use of their presses. Later he introduced some mechanical changes and, in collaboration with Rega, he developed certain techniques for improving the die preparation. He was father of the engraver Achille Arnaud and the grandfather of Luigi Arnaud.

Filippo Rega¹⁵² (1761–1833) was born in Chieti but lived with his father, an antique dealer, in Naples. In 1776 he went to Rome to study design and gem engraving with the famous Giovanni Pichler. Twice he won the prize of the San Luca Academy of Arts. He returned after twelve years to Naples with an established reputation and found quick acceptance among the aristocracy and at court. The king commissioned him with the cutting of a portrait cameo of Prince Francis, while for Sir William Hamilton, the British envoy, Rega engraved a portrait of Lady Emma. He also cut a portrait of Napoleon I in agate, of Joseph Napoleon in onyx, and other portrait cameos of Joachim Murat and his family. His signature, PIRA or PERA, can still be seen on many of his works. The field in which he excelled was that of mythological subjects; his cameos were of such exquisite quality that often they passed for the work of an ancient Greek master.¹⁵³ In 1803 the French Institute elected him a member, and in 1804 his first assignment with the mint marked the beginning of a productive relationship which continued to his last days in 1833.

Rega's emotional temperament set the pattern of his entire life. His works were the creation of a few fugi-

¹⁴⁹ PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coins 751–752.

¹⁵⁰ PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coin 749. See especially D'INCERTI, *RIA* (1959), p. 37.

¹⁵¹ PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coin 750.

¹⁵² For further information on Rega, see: *BDM*, vol. 5, pp. 58–60, and vol. 8, p. 152; THIBERT and BECKER, vol. 28,

p. 82; FORRER, *RasV* (1908), pp. 91–94; *BCNV* (1926), pp. 16–19; COLUCCI, *BCNV* (1942), pp. 36–45; SICILIANO, *Medaglie Napoletane*, pp. 1 ff.; PROTÀ, *Giornale d'Arte* (1925).

¹⁵³ SICILIANO, *Medaglie Napoletane*, p. 1. FORRER (loc. cit.) also mentions the "unattainable velvety polish" of his cameo portraits.

five moments of inspiration while he let other amusements fill his days. Worries and penury were the inevitable result. It was said that in order to cover his debts he had to sell even his beloved harp and hence give up his activity as harpist at the court. He died in poverty.

Rega's work draws inspiration from the master of neoclassicism, Antonio Canova. The same serene perfection embodied in exquisitely modeled relief characterizes Rega's creations. Gem engraver by profession, he transposed the concepts of cameo cutting to die engraving. A well-rounded plasticity with a subtle interplay of chiaroscuro confer a high degree of grace and expressiveness to his portraits.

His activity at the mint was confined to creating and preparing the model for the obverse;¹⁵¹ the transposition to steel work was done by another, younger artist, who specialized in die engraving. In a petition to the king in 1815,¹⁵² Perger mentions the fact that while he was able to do his own complete die work, Rega had to be helped by Giovanni Martino and Domenico Reborà, both skilled in the technique of steel engraving. This circumstance helps reveal why all the coins and many of the medals engraved at the Naples mint after 1804 were anonymous. Separate artists would be assigned to design the obverse and reverse.¹⁵³ Some artists like Rega and his successors would create only the model in plaster (or the main punches) and would direct the final execution while other, younger, or less important artists actually finished the die sinking. When the principal punches, i.e., the portrait for the obverse and the coat of arms for the reverse, prepared by the two main engravers, were passed on to these minor artists, the latter often completed the dies by directly engraving the additional decorative elements. This system of combining various punches (also adopted by today's coin engravers) results in such a close interrelation between creative and executing artist that it is almost impossible to draw a clear line between individual creations. Artistic peculiarities, individual style, and creative personalities are intermingled in a common creative process.

¹⁵¹ Recorded are his dies for the 3-, 5-, and 10-centesimi pieces, 1813, with the portrait of Murat. He also created the dies for the gold 20- and 40-lire pieces of 1813 and for the silver coinage of that year.

¹⁵² Cf. SICILIANO, *Medaglie Napoletane*, p. 5.

¹⁵³ COSENTINI *CagS* (1914), vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 22-23; D'INCERLI, *RIV* (1959), pp. 50-51.

¹⁵⁴ CAGIATI, *Le monete delle Due Sicilie*, fasc. 5, p. 79, coin 5; D'INCERLI, *RIV* (1959), p. 62, coin 6; DAVENPORT, *F. napoleo*

In 1804 he engraved the reverse of Perger's gold 20-lire piece decided by the king to replace the Roman aureus. Rega's portrait of the piastra of 1805 was accepted only after the king's decision.



Fig. 60. NAPLES, FERDINAND IV, piastra, 1805.¹⁵⁴ (Div. of Numismatics photo)

paid for his work.¹⁵⁵ Although using the same technique of the raised border adopted previously by Perger, this coin displays a superior treatment. The massive border of the English "crown wheel" had formed an essential element in Perger's pattern. In Rega's composition it shrinks to a decorative element,¹⁵⁶ indicated only by two concentric circles. The bust of the king, to which Rega's classical sense of proportion added an unexpected beauty, completely occupies the field of the coin and dominates the whole composition. In this portrait the same, strong, aquiline features of Ferdinand IV which had acquired almost an effect of caricature in Perger's version, seem to impart nobility and energy to the face of the monarch. On the reverse, basically similar to Perger's design, Rega reduces the massiveness and accentuates the vertical line of the composition.

The change of regime in Naples in 1805 did not hurt Rega's career; his merits were also recognized by the Bonapartes. In fact, in December 1806 Joseph Bonaparte conferred on him the title of *Maestro d'arte sopra tutte d'arte* (master of engraving) at the Royal Academy of Arts and Design in Naples.¹⁵⁷ Rega continued his activity at the mint. We assume however, that the unsigned piastra of Joseph

Coins, coin 167.

¹⁵⁵ Corrocci, *B. VV.* (1912), p. 40. PROXY and MORETTI (pp. 3-25) mention that only 150 ducats were paid to Michele Arand for the reverse model.

¹⁵⁶ For a medal of 1807, cf. RICCIARDI, *medal.* - Recorded the same die, replacing with a wreath only the inscription within the border.

¹⁵⁷ SICILIANO, *Medaglie Napoletane*, p. 8.

Bonaparte (fig. 70), struck between 1806 and 1808 from a model furnished by Rega, was engraved by Vincenzo Catenacci. This assumption can be supported by the fact that a medal of 1805, bearing a



Fig. 70.—NAPLES, JOSEPH BONAPARTE, piastre, 1808¹⁶¹
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

similar portrait, was signed by Rega for the obverse and by Catenacci for the reverse, indicating that they were working together.¹⁶²

Rega's activity at the mint increased during Joachim Murat's reign from 1808 to 1815. But never was Antonio Canova's influence more evident than in the portraits of Murat by Rega and his contemporary Nicola Morghen, who created the beautiful 40-franc piece of 1810¹⁶³ (fig. 71). Inspired by the classical impassiveness of Canova's portrait of Murat,¹⁶⁴



Fig. 71.—NAPLES, JOACHIM MURAT, 40 franchi, 1810¹⁶⁵
(Author's photo)

Rega's interpretation, although permeated by the sovereign's aloofness, breathes more warmth. Two coin dies, the 12 carlini of 1809-1810 (fig. 72) and



Fig. 72.—NAPLES, JOACHIM MURAT, 12 carlini, 1810¹⁶⁶
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

the 5 lire of 1812-1813 (fig. 73), are extant; with the head of Murat facing left and right, both portraits, although unsigned, are undoubtedly the creations of



Fig. 73.—NAPLES, JOACHIM MURAT, 5 lire, 1813¹⁶⁷

Rega.¹⁶⁸ In fact, the same head design (facing left) appears on numerous medals¹⁶⁹ from 1809 to 1811, while the later design was used for the obverse of other medals struck between 1811 and 1813.¹⁷⁰ Some of the medals were engraved in a low relief generally adopted only for coins.¹⁷¹ Ordinarily, the

¹⁶¹ CAGLIATI, fasc. 5, p. 86, coin 1; DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, coin no. 165.

¹⁶² COLUCCI (*BCAV*, 1942, pp. 36-45) suggests that Catenacci is the engraver of the medal.

¹⁶³ This coin type, signed with N.M., was engraved by Nicola Morghen in 1810 in competition with Achille Arnaud (PROTA, *BCAV*, 1931, pp. 14 ff.). See also: CARBONARI, pp. 139-141; D'INGRIS, *RIV* (1959), p. 39.

¹⁶⁴ See COMANDINI, *L'Italia nei cento anni*, vol. 1, p. 827.

¹⁶⁵ PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 261a.

¹⁶⁶ CAGLIATI, fasc. 5, p. 92, coin 4.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 98, coin 2; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 265a.

¹⁶⁸ In 1812 the dies for the 5, 2, and 1 lire were sent to Paris to be approved by Napoleon; in 1813 Rega prepared other dies for the gold and silver coinage and also for the 3, 5, and 10 centesimi.

¹⁶⁹ RICCIARDI, medals 81, 82, 83, 86, 94. Especially well known are 81 (*Per la formazione della Piazza Murat*) and 94 (*Pel ritorno dalla campagna di Russia*).

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, medals 87, 93; LARIZZA, *Gli ultimi due secoli delle Due Sicilie*, pl. 35.

¹⁷¹ RICCIARDI, medals 81-83.

portraits for medals based on the same model as the coin have a more pronounced plasticity, which considerably enhances their physiognomic and sculptural qualities.¹⁷²

Done by the same artist, these two portraits (figs. 72, 73) differ essentially, revealing Rega's versatile range as a portraitist. The first portrait accentuates the classical eurythmy of line and relief, sacrificing individuality to beauty; the second and later portrait disrupts this symmetry and imparts personal character. The first is Rega's subjective interpretation of an idealized young hero who daringly conquered royalty. Later, certain particularities of a more human aspect, a defiant pursing of the lips, a coldly domineering eye, reveal deeper insight of the artist, or perhaps a better knowledge of Napoleon's favorite. The latter portrait won much admiration at court, and some proofs of the 5-lire 1812 were sent by Queen Carolina to Paris to be seen by her brother, Napoleon. Other proofs of Rega's dies for the decimal coinage, from 5 lire to 50 centesimi, were sent as models to the mint in Milan.¹⁷³

The untimely death of his king before an execution squad at Pizzo, Calabria, October 1815, did not affect the destiny of Filippo Rega. Benevolent recognition was also bestowed on him by the returning Bourbon king, Ferdinand IV, now known as Ferdinand I.

And even higher honors were in store for Rega. In 1822 he was commissioned by the king to teach engraving at the newly founded Istituto di Belle Arti and in 1829, as part of the general reform of the mint (*Riforma del Gabinetto dei cony nella zecca di Napoli*), a *Gabinetto d'Incisione* (Engraving Cabinet) was instituted as an annex to the mint under his supervision. As director of the Engraving Office he had, among other obligations, to prepare the models for coins and medals. After Diodati retired in 1825 as director of the mint, the tradition of having coin dies initialed by the *maestro della zecca* ceased. Only medals were so marked. In fact, since 1829 the medals issued by the Neapolitan mint always bear the initials or name of the director of the Engraving Office accompanied by the letters *INV.* or *DIR.* (invented or

directed) in the margin of the reverse (see *Moneta italiana*, or *Le monete e medaglie della zecca di Napoli*, directed by the director of the mint, with 100,000 *modelli* proofs).

During Rega's activity at the mint, he was surrounded by many young artists, some trained personally by him at the Engraving Office. Among them were Vincenzo and Scipione Catenacci, Fortunato Marinari, Francesco d'Andrea, Achille Arnaud, and Michele Landicina. Some of these artists signed medals engraved from Rega's designs. Vincenzo Catenacci, his successor at the Engraving Office, appeared to be his favorite collaborator, many medal obverses bearing the portrait of Ferdinand I (IV), Francis I, or Ferdinand II were signed by both Rega and Catenacci.¹⁷⁴ After 1830 the name of d'Andrea,¹⁷⁵ as well as of Landicina¹⁷⁶ appear also in conjunction with Rega's signature. Medal reverses were signed during the same period by Landicina, and especially by Achille Arnaud,¹⁷⁷ always accompanied by an *F. REGA DIR.*

The portrait of King Ferdinand I (IV) by Rega, engraved by Catenacci,¹⁷⁸ was used on the entire gold, silver, and copper coinage of 1818,¹⁷⁹ an example of which is the gold 15-piastre piece (fig. 74). This



Fig. 74. NAPLES, FERDINAND I, 15 piastre, 1818.¹⁸⁰ (Photo courtesy American Numismatic Society)

issue presents an unusual feature: a golden band encircles the heavy locks of hair.¹⁸¹ The custom of vesting rulers with the regalia of power had fallen in disuse for centuries, and even Louis XIV of France, the prototype of absolutistic power, is usually repre-

172 Ibid., medals 86, 87, 93, 94.
173 PROF. *Annali* (1939), p. 149.
174 RICCIARDI, medals 129, 152, 155, 156, 158.
175 Ibid., medals 133, 146, 151.
176 Ibid., medals 158, 160.
177 Ibid., medals 133, 146.
178 SUGLIANO, *Riv.* VV (1938), p. 45.
179 The same head was already in use in 1816 on 5- and 8-

tonest pieces. For the monetary reform of Ferdinand I and the monetary law of 1818, see CARBONERI, pp. 219, 212, 214; DI IESICRI, *Riv.* (1959), pp. 42, 43.

180 CAGLIARI, p. 109, coin 1; DI IESICRI, *Riv.* (1959), p. 43, coin 2.

181 The same portrait, executed only in English metal, has been used for many medals, all in gold. See RICCIARDI, pp. 146, 106, 116, 117, 129; TARIZZA, pl. 96.

sented in his mature years as bareheaded or with a laurel wreath. But with this crown, emblem of monarchic power, Rega certainly was alluding to the reactionary monarchy introduced by the king.

This head of Ferdinand I is a highly idealized portrait of the aged king. The patrician features hardly suggest a likeness of the man who reintroduced the "whole apparatus of despotism," when "freedom was strangled on the gallows and smothered in dungeons."¹⁸² A symbol of royal power by the grace of God, his aspirations an anachronism, his acts an offense against liberty, Ferdinand I died tormented by the prospect of the rising movement of national freedom which was advancing inexorably. Political events, however, did not have any effect on Rega's work; impassively he served them all, godlike heroes or human failures, glorifying the symbol they represented rather than the human beings they were.



Fig. 75.—NAPLES, FRANCIS I, 30 ducats, 1826¹⁸³
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

Ferdinand's successor, Francis I (1825–1830), a weak and timorous personality, was a vacillating figure on the royal throne. Rega tried again to embellish, if not to idealize, his king, however trivial the figure. During the short reign of Francis I, only a single portrait of him was used for the gold, silver, and copper coinage (fig. 75). A similar representation was also used on many medals¹⁸⁴ signed by Francesco d'Andrea, Vincenzo Catenacci, and even Andrea Carriello. Although different in execution from a medal, with the low relief typical of Neapolitan coins in this period, the portrait on this coin resembles more closely the portrait on the medals signed by d'Andrea (fig. 76) and we are safe in assuming that he was the artist who executed it.

The subtle and well-flowing plastic forms display a genuinely human serenity, which contrasts greatly with a contemporary portrait of the king by the French medallist Jean Jacques Barré (fig. 77). On

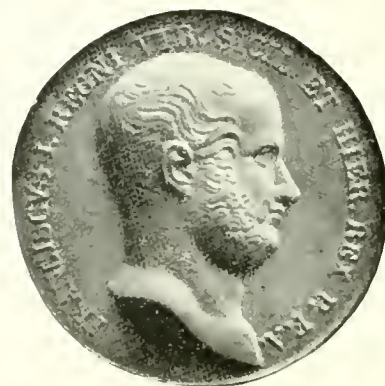


Fig. 76.—NAPLES, FRANCIS I, obverse of medal by
d'Andrea¹⁸⁵
(Photo from Ricciardi)

the other hand, the portrait signed by Catenacci (fig. 78) is a more realistic, less flattering interpretation of the original model by Rega.

Young King Ferdinand II (1830–1859), who succeeded his father at the age of eleven, reigned for 29



Fig. 77.—NAPLES, FRANCIS I, obverse of medal, 1830¹⁸⁶
(Photo from Ricciardi)

years under the most contradictory conditions. Antagonized by the Liberals and the Carbonari, haunted by the terror of sedition, he wavered between progressive and despotic methods before finally adopting a reactionary policy. "Re Bomba" (King Bomb)

¹⁸² CAGIAN, p. 103.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 119, coin 2; D'INCERTI, *RIV* (1959), p. 98, coin 95.

¹⁸⁴ RICCIARDI, medals 146, 152, 154–157.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., medal 146.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., medal 147.

was the nickname given him by the Italians after the bombing of Palermo during the revolts of 1848.¹⁸⁷ Cagiati sees in his reign, as in his coinage, three distinct periods: the first marked by a beneficial progress; the second, by tumultuous changes during the revolutionary years; and the third, his last period, by



Fig. 78.—NAPLES, FRANCIS I, medal by Catenacci¹⁸⁸
(Photo from Ricciardi)

reactionary despotism.¹⁸⁹ To discern clearly these fluctuations throughout his coinage is difficult, although the first period does present a parallel development in his coins.

The plain, unbearded head of the young king, copied by Catenacci (fig. 79) and Carricello (fig. 80) from a model by Rega, was used for the striking of medals between 1830 and 1840. A similar bust of Ferdinand II, conjoined with a bust of Queen Maria



Fig. 79.—NAPLES, FERDINAND II, medal 1830¹⁸⁹
(Photo from Ricciardi)



Fig. 80.—NAPLES, FERDINAND II, obverse of medal 1831¹⁹⁰
(Photo from Ricciardi)

¹⁸⁷ LARIZZA, p. 57.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, medal 154.

¹⁸⁹ CAGIATI, fasc. 5, p. 126. See also D'INCERTI (*RIV.*, 1959, p. 46), who also divides Ferdinand's coinage into three periods: (1) 1831-1839, characterized by a beardless portrait of the

king; (?) 1840-1850, the king wearing a slight beard; (3) 1851-1859, the king having a heavy beard. (The gold coinage shows an intermediate type from 1830 to 1831.)

¹⁹⁰ Ricciardi, medal 158.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, medal 166.



Fig. 81.—NAPLES, FERDINAND II, AND MARIA CHRISTINA, obverse of medal, 1834¹⁹² (Photo from Ricciardi)

Christina, was used on a medal (fig. 81) signed by Rega and executed by Laudicina.¹⁹³

The portrait adopted for the gold, silver, and copper coinage (fig. 82) from 1831 to 1835, or even 1839 to 1841, is undoubtedly copied from Rega's same model.



Fig. 82.—NAPLES, FERDINAND II, piastra, 1833¹⁹⁴ (Div. of Numismatics photo)

Since it is difficult to trace similarities between the more linearly treated engraving of coins and the high, rounded relief of medals, doubt arises as to whom to attribute the die execution, whether to Carriello or to Laudicina. To the latter point certain technical

characteristics, as the treatment of hair and the general design. A puzzling fact is that the only medal bearing the exact same portrait as the coins is one struck in 1840 on an octagonal planchet for the inauguration of the first Italian railroad (fig. 83),



Fig. 83.—NAPLES, FERDINAND II, octagonal medal, 1840: commemoration of railroad from Naples to Nocera¹⁹⁵ (Photo from Ricciardi)

a medal which clearly displays, under the king's head, the signature of a medallist called Benoist, whom this author is unable to identify.

One of Rega's collaborators was Achille Arnaud¹⁹⁶ (1790–1839), son of Michele Arnaud. In his younger years Achille had assisted his father in the engraving of coin dies. Later he was appointed *primo incisore dei roesci* (first engraver of reverses) and in this position he prepared most of the punches for inscriptions or ornamentations.¹⁹⁷ Many of his works are concealed by anonymity, and we can discern very little about his artistic qualities from the few signed medals. In Ricciardi's work on Neapolitan medals only two engravings (133 and 146) show his signature on the reverse. The medal struck in 1825 has only a simple emblematic representation, while the second one, from 1830 (fig. 84), displays a complex composition of anemic inspiration and poor execution.

In 1810 Achille Arnaud was commissioned to create a 40-franc piece for the new coinage of Joachim Murat, but his project was rejected by the director of the mint, G. De Turrís, as technically imperfect. Very few of these 40-franc pieces survive since they were consigned to the melting pot in December of

¹⁹² Ibid., medal 162.

¹⁹³ Michele Laudicina, a cameo and shell engraver from Trapani, was appointed engraver for reverses and medals. The director of the mint, Baron F. Ciccarelli, had words of high praise for his skill as diesinker. See SICILIANO, *BCNV* (1939), p. 9.

¹⁹⁴ CAGIATI, fasc. 5, p. 136, coin 3; D'INCERTI, *RIV* (1959), p. 115, coin 172; DAVINSPORT, *European Coins*, coin 172.

¹⁹⁵ RICCIARDI, medal 171.

¹⁹⁶ SICILIANO, *Medaglie Napoletane*, p. 3.

¹⁹⁷ SICILIANO, *BCNV* (1939), p. 13.

the same year.¹⁹⁸ We are inclined to assume that the well-designed and pleasant reverses of the Neapolitan silver coins as well as the standing divinity (fig. 75) used on the reverse of the gold coinage during those years were all his work. Unassumingly he continued his activity after Rega's death, assisting Vincenzo Catenacci in the latter's work at the Engraving Office up to his own death in 1839.



Fig. 84.—NAPLES, FRANCIS I, reverse of medal, 1830.¹⁹⁹
(Photo from Ricciardi)

Filippo Rega died in 1833, but his designs and models continued to be used for many years.²⁰⁰ His successor at the mint was Vincenzo Catenacci, whose signature followed by the customary *DIR.* (*directed*) can be seen on medals issued during 1836.²⁰¹ The coins continued to be anonymous.

We have little information about the life of Catenacci²⁰² and his activity, beyond his birth in 1786 and his death at Naples in 1855. Siciliano discloses that he was a favorite of Rega, who promoted the younger man's career at the mint.²⁰³ In 1829, at the age of 43, he was named on Rega's special recommendation *primo incisore dei ritti* (first engraver of obverses). He followed Rega to the Engraving Office where he worked until his death in March 1855. A son, Scipione Catenacci, also worked as an engraver.

Since Vincenzo spent most of his life at the mint under the spiritual guidance of Rega, his activity was limited to the work of faithful copyist and diesinker and he did not have the opportunity to develop

his own artistic personality. Nevertheless, he can be distinguished by more than a hundred years of experience in technical execution. His products were always the distinguishing mark of an individual.²⁰⁴

Among the medals engraved by Catenacci (and designs by Rega) can be mentioned the funeral medal of Ferdinand I (1825),²⁰⁵ another medal commemorating the return of Francis I from France,²⁰⁶ the death medal of the king in the same year,²⁰⁷ the obverse of the medal commemorating the accession of Ferdinand II in 1830,²⁰⁷ and a few prize medals. From the subject of the previous medals it can be seen that he was always given the highest assignments even though the quality of his work did not fully justify it. His portraits, inert and insignificant, cannot compare with similar works by engravers like D'Andrea and especially Carriello. The reverses show limited plastic qualities and his technique was unsuited to highlighting the dramatic points in Rega's original drawings.



Fig. 85.—NAPLES, obverse of medal commemorating Giovanni Battista Vico, 1851.²⁰⁸
(Photo from Ricciardi)

A medal dedicated to the Neapolitan philosopher Giovanni Battista Vico and signed only by Vincenzo Catenacci (fig. 85) appears to be an original composition of his. It can hardly be called more than

¹⁹⁸ PROTÀ, *BCMN* (1931), pp. 14-17.

¹⁹⁹ RICCIARDI, medal 146.

²⁰⁰ See the medal for 1836 (RICCIARDI, medal 166) with Rega's signature.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, medals 163, 164.

²⁰² *BDM*, vol. 1, p. 360, and vol. 7, p. 164; TIMMI and BECKER, vol. 6, p. 184; BOZZENTINI, p. 307; SICILIANO, *Medaglie Napoletane*, p. 2.

²⁰³ *Medaglie Napoletane*, p. 2.

²⁰⁴ RICCIARDI, medal 129.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, medal 151.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, medal 152.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, medal 158.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, medal no. 210.

mediocre. Once his sponsor was gone, Catenacci apparently did not have sufficient prestige to assert himself at the mint. His signature disappears from the medals early in 1836 to reappear only sporadically in 1837. In the same manner, the signatures of Carriello or d'Andrea are accompanied from that point on only by the name of the new director of the mint, Baron Francesco Ciccarelli, and, after a few years, even this procedure was not regularly followed.

Regrettably we have very little information about Francesco d'Andrea, one of Rega's very able assistants. His name was mentioned in connection with Rega as early as 1809, when Rosmina Colucci²⁰⁹ identified him as the probable engraver of the medal commemorating the founding of Murat Square in Naples.²¹⁰ The height of his career, which we can deduce from his signed medals, embraces a period of approximately two decades, from the early twenties to the late thirties, with its peak achieved during the reign of Francis I, 1825–1830. The warm interpretation of Francis' portrait (fig. 76), which carries d'Andrea's signature when the portrait appears on some of the medals,²¹¹ was apparently the selection for the obverse of the entire gold (fig. 75), silver, and copper coinage of this king.

Confined to engraving obverses, according to the tradition of the Neapolitan mint, d'Andrea worked on few reverses. Also, he apparently did not have any special aptitude for compositions. A premium medal from 1826 (fig. 78), representing an allegorical group on the reverse, confirms this supposition. His artistic qualities, sensitivity and subtle treatment of relief, can be traced only vaguely in this composition.

The portrait of young King Ferdinand II and of Queen Maria Theresa on their wedding medal of 1837 (fig. 86), a later work of d'Andrea, was highly praised because the artist had to create the portrait from memory and imagination. The same plump features of somewhat Neronian cast can be compared to a similar portrait by another artist used on the largest denominations of the gold, silver, and copper coinage between 1839 and 1851 (fig. 87).

This work leads us into one of the most intricate and puzzling series of portrait coins in the Neapolitan mintage. During the 29 years of his reign, Ferdinand II, who never posed for a coin, had a variety of portraits on his coinage. With the exception of the first, young, beardless head (fig. 82), designed by Rega during the latter's final years at the mint and used in a single version on the coinage from 1831 to 1839, we are completely in the dark as to whom to



Fig. 86.—NAPLES. FERDINAND II AND MARIA THERESIA, obverse of wedding medal, 1837²¹²
(Photo from Ricciardi)

ascribe the later portraits. Since the archives have not disclosed any precise documentation,²¹³ our designations are purely conjectural, obtained through personal interpretation of the stylistic characteristics of the various engravers.

The guiding hand of a master was lost after the death of Rega, and judging from the medals of that period, Vincenzo Catenacci, Rega's successor, apparently was unable to assert himself effectively. Studying the portrait of the king after 1833, the year of Rega's death, one suspects that each artist was on his own in creating and interpreting the likeness

²⁰⁹ COLUCCI, *BCNV* (1942), pp. 36–45.

²¹⁰ RICCIARDI, medal 81.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, medals 133, 146, 151.

²¹² *Ibid.*, medal 168.

²¹³ An excerpt from a letter (Naples, November 3, 1958) from Mr. Giuseppe De Falco, a well-known expert in the Neapolitan series, may serve to confirm this:

As I mentioned in my previous letter, because of my limited knowledge on the subject, I wanted to approach

Miss Eugenia Majorana, the late Mr. Cagiati's daughter, who in addition to being an undisputed authority in the field of the coinage of southern Italy is, for professional reasons, in contact with all the collectors and students of modern Neapolitan coins. Yesterday I was able to see my good friend, to whom I had already communicated your request some time ago. Unfortunately she could not tell me more than you would know already. Nobody up to now has done any systematic research in the fascicles of the last fifty years of the Bourbon mint in Naples.

There are no signed medals of a similar design which could help us determine the artist, but the psychological finesse and the plastic vigor in expressing individual traits point strongly toward Carriello as the probable author. The daring of the artist to present his king as a good-natured but uncouth character, resembling more a Dutch sailor than a high potentate, apparently did not meet the approval of the court. After three years this portrait was replaced with another anonymous portrait (fig. 91), which had already been in use since 1851 on two larger denominations, the silver piastres and the copper 10-tari pieces.



Fig. 91.—NAPLES, FERDINAND II, piastra, 1857²²⁰
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

This design, the last portrait of the king, is distinctively different from all the previous ones. The treatment of the beard, in wavy instead of curly lines, and the severe expression of the aging monarch can be traced only to a single medal of 1855, signed by De Cecli (fig. 92). Whether in fact De Cecli can be considered as the author of this new version or whether De Cecli's medal was only a copy of a portrait created by another artist we cannot establish, since De Cecli appears otherwise to be completely unknown. Cosentini mentions scores of engravers for 1861 but De Cecli's name is not among them.²²¹

Another artist who enjoyed a high reputation at the court was Luigi Arnaud.²²² Born in Naples in 1817, he was the son of engraver Achille Arnaud. Luigi had his first art training in his father's shop, which he soon took over, while still a very young man, at his father's death. In 1845 he was given the opportunity to engrave a medal commemorating the visit of Tsar Nicholas I to Naples.²²³ He followed it the

next year by another, large, showy medal, this time for the opening of the Caserta railroad (fig. 95).

The stately but otherwise lifeless portrait of the king used on both medals gained him the esteem of



Fig. 92.—NAPLES, FERDINAND II, medal commemorating the new harbor of Bari, 1855²²⁴
(Photo from Ricciardi)

the royal court and, after a brief interim at Rome, where he had gone to study cameo engraving, he was appointed second engraver of obverses in 1847. Ap-

²²⁰ CAGLIATI, fasc. 5, coin 36; D'INCERTI, *Riv* (1959), p. 128, coin 200; DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 175.

²²¹ COSENTINI, *CagS* (1914), pp. 23-25. Repeated in BORELLI, *NumR* (1936), vol. 2, p. 107.

²²² For details, see: SICILIANO, *Medaglie Napoletane*, p. 3; BORELLI, *NumR* (1940), vol. 6, p. 86.

²²³ RICCIARDI, medal 180.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, medal 214.

parently he had great creative capacity, numerous obverses and reverses of medals were signed by him during the period between 1845 and 1861.



Fig. 93.—NAPLES, FERDINAND II, obverse of half piastra, 1856.²²⁵
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

His first portrait of Ferdinand II (fig. 93), correct, conventional, and cold, was used as a permanent type for the 15 ducats from 1848 to the end of that issue in 1856. The same head was also used on the half-piastras struck between 1846 and 1859, and on the 5-tornesi pieces between 1845 and 1859. Another, later portrait (fig. 94), used only on medals,²²⁶ pos-



Fig. 94.—NAPLES, FERDINAND II, obverse of medal, 1857.²²⁶
(Photo from Ricciardi)

sesses excellent workmanship. The massive and energetic features, to which a Neronian resemblance again cannot be denied, are impressive in their cold disdain. It is an interesting appreciation of the character of this monarch in the last years of his life.

²²⁵ CAGIATI, fasc. 5, coin 4; D'ISCRITI, *BVA* (1959), p. 110, coin 140.

²²⁶ RICCIARDI, medals 200, 213. Another fine creation is the medal dedicated to Pius IX during his exile in Gaeta, 1838—cf. STOLLANO, *BCVA* (1939), pp. 47–53.

A similar, neat, but still the same true Neapolitan style can be seen also in the reverse composition. Engraved after designs created chiefly by his son Tommaso Arnaud,²²⁷ these reverses reveal Fer-



Fig. 95.—NAPLES, FERDINAND II, medal, 1846, by Arnaud.
(Photo from Ricciardi)

sculptural abilities in efficiently treating complex compositions while maintaining a harmonious rhythm (fig. 95). His remarkable talents as a sculptor, per-

²²⁷ RICCIARDI, medal 213.

²²⁸ He directed the Office of Engraving after Caterini's death.

²²⁹ RICCIARDI, medal 181.

fectured through an excellent education, increased his reputation at court, and in 1855 Ferdinand II paid him, as a mark of recognition, the significant sum of 600 ducats for the engraving of a medal.²³⁰



Fig. 96. NAPLES, FRANCIS II, piastra, 1859²³¹
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

It was only natural that with the accession of Francis II in 1859 Arnaud should be commissioned to engrave the new king's coinage (fig. 96). This final piece in

the long series of Neapolitan coins won wide approval at court for its "great resemblance." The king appointed him director of the Engraving Office with the right to place his initials on all coin dies. The piastra of 1859, bearing the elegant but disillusioned features of the young king, is the swan song of the independent Neapolitan mint.

The encroaching waves of the unification movement borne by Garibaldi's men, soon reached these southern lands and in 1861 the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily was incorporated into the new Kingdom of Italy. The mint at Naples, however, continued to work—but now for the whole country. Names like Andrea Carriello, Scipione Catenacci, and especially Luigi Arnaud were well known²³² in the early sixties, when coins bearing the portrait of Victor Emmanuel II were struck at this mint. The sole indication of their origin was a small letter x.

ROME SINCE 1861

It seems an irony of history that periods of high achievement in the evolution of nations seldom find superior artists among coin engravers to perpetuate the greatness of their time. A classic example is Caesar's coinage. Without any doubt it can be classed among the weakest portrait series of the entire ancient Roman coinage, otherwise so outstanding for its forceful realistic portraiture.

This same phenomenon occurred during the fateful years of Italy's battle for national unity. Under the leadership of the Savoy king, Victor Emmanuel II, Italians from separate territories set out to overthrow their national foreign rulers and join the movement for freedom and unity. The numerous coins of Victor Emmanuel II struck during the long reign of 29 years, however, do not show his appealing majesty.²³³ This is evident in the many coins struck during the first part of his reign, as king of Sardinia (1849-1861), by the chief engraver of the Turin mint, Giuseppe Ferraris, who continued also to engrave the coins for the unified kingdom (fig. 97). The complete coinage

in gold, silver, and copper struck during the long span of almost three decades is bound by a rigid conventionalism. The head of the king, banal in concept, hardly conveys his warm, charming, and energetic personality. The coat of arms on the reverse



Fig. 97.—ITALY, VICTOR EMMANUEL II, 5 lire, 1861,
Turin mint²³⁴
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

does not represent an inspiring symbol of national faith but a cold image of officialdom. Mario Lanfranco in his study of the projects and patterns of the Italian kingdom²³⁵ deplors the lack of artistic

²³⁰ COSENTINI, *CagS* (1914), vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 37-42.

²³¹ CAGIATI, fasc. 5, coin 1; D'INCERTI, *RLV* (1959), p. 169, coin 433; DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, coin 176.

²³² COSENTINI, *CagS* (1914), vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 19-26.

²³³ For a comparative study of Victor Emmanuel II's portraits on medals, see MONDINI, *Spigolando tra medaglie e date*. On pp. 143, 149, 190, 347, and 449 are medals engraved by B. Wyon, R. Gavard, L. Gori, and Paolo Pasinati.

²³⁴ *C.VI*, vol. 1, p. 465, coin 3; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 793; DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, coin 140.

²³⁵ LANFRANCO, *Ras.V* (1930), p. 209. CARBONERI (p. 263) seems less displeased with Ferraris' creations: "Le monete del Ferraris sono ancora più semplici di quelle del Lavy, ma sono riputate generalmente ottime per la esecuzione."

inspiration and the mediocre level of Victor Emmanuel's coinage.

The engraver Giuseppe Ferraris²³⁶ was born in 1794 in Turin, the son of an employee of the Austrian embassy. His family later moved to Milan, where the young Giuseppe had the opportunity to work as an apprentice in Luigi Manfredini's shop. At the same time he studied at the Scuola di Belle Arti of the Brera Academy in Milan. A copy of Andrea Appiani's "Olymp" established his reputation and in 1828 he began working as engraver at the Turin mint. The dies for the 25 centesimi of Charles Felix of Sardinia were his first work for his employer, whom he served for the rest of his life until his death in 1869. During the reign of Charles Albert he was given the job of chief engraver, a position which he held also during the reign of Victor Emmanuel II.

Although the coinage for the unified kingdom was created when he was 67 years old, it is definitely superior to the previous series (fig. 98). The more



Fig. 98.—SARDINIA, VICTOR EMMANUEL II, 5 lire, 1851, Turin mint²³⁷
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

compact relief of the smaller head, surrounded by a well-distributed inscription, creates a balanced coin image, which confers on this late portrait artistic qualities that were completely absent from his earlier coins.

Ferraris displays a better feeling for plasticity and a deeper psychological approach in some of his medals commemorating contemporary events, such as the

"Opening of the Subalpine Parliament in 1847" on portrait medals of Victor Emmanuel II and of Camillo Cavour. Apparently these works met the royal approval and helped establish Ferraris' reputation. He was decorated with the order of SS. Maurice and Lazarus.

His successor at the Roman mint was Filippo Speranza.²³⁸ Born in 1839 in San Marino del Camino, Filippo came to Rome as a boy. In 1863 he entered the papal mint as an apprentice, where he worked under the direction of Bonfiglio Zaccagnini, Francesco Bianchi, and Carl Voigt. Six years later he became an engraver. His first works were the dies for the 2½ lire of 1867 and the Pope Pius IX award medal for services during epidemics. His signature can also be seen on a medal of 1869 for the papal mint. A year later, after the annexation of Rome to the Italian Kingdom, he joined the staff of the royal mint at Rome in the position of chief engraver (1870-1903).

His coins, considered by Comandini "the expression of a conventional official taste,"²³⁹ cover the period of almost 25 years from 1878 to 1901. In his position as chief engraver he created all of the gold, silver, and copper coins struck during the entire reign of Humbert I and also during the first years of the rule of Victor Emmanuel III. Lanfranco expresses a deep sympathy for the adverse conditions under which Speranza had to work at the mint in a studio devoid of any modern technical facilities. He was forced to cut his dies directly into steel without the help of a pantograph. "This modest artist has never been sustained, guided or encouraged by his directors, who rather have sometimes hindered his work."²⁴⁰ Speranza was a capable technician, yet never has the purely utilitarian character of a coin predominated more over esthetic considerations than in his work.

The gold and silver coinage, which without exception adopted the portrait of the ruler as the leading type, was an ill-chosen field for Speranza's activities, since portraiture²⁴¹ constituted the weakest aspect of his artistic creations. The portrait of Humbert I

²³⁶ *BDM*, vol. 2, p. 88, and vol. 7, p. 298; THIEME and BECKER, vol. 11, p. 462.

²³⁷ *CNI*, vol. 1, p. 461, coin 15; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 681; SPAZIANI-TESTA, *Casa Savoia*, coin 157; DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 137.

²³⁸ *BDM*, vol. 5, pp. 597-599; THIEME and BECKER, vol. 31, p. 360.

²³⁹ COMANDINI, *RIN* (1903), p. 477.

²⁴⁰ LANFRANCO, *RIV* (1931), pp. 50 ff.

²⁴¹ Among his better works can be listed a medal struck for the unveiling of the Garibaldi Monument in Leghorn, 1889—see COMANDINI, *RIN* (1890), p. 27.



Fig. 99. ITALY, HUMBERT I, 5 lire, 1879²⁴²
(Div. of Numismatics photo)



Fig. 100.—ERITREA, HUMBERT I, 5 lire or tallero, 1891²⁴³
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

(fig. 99), with its conventional rigidity, is a regression in comparison even to Ferraris' last works.

Speranza also had the assignment to prepare the coinage for the colony of Eritrea. Interestingly, the tallero of 1891 (fig. 100) and the smaller denominations present better portrait qualities than his Italian coinage. The bust of Humbert I, in uniform and wearing a huge crown, apparently was intended to confer increased dignity and majesty to the figure of the king among his subjects in Africa.

In 1898 Speranza created, with the 5 lire for the Republic of San Marino, probably his most remarkable coin die (fig. 101). The subtle engraving harmonizes pleasantly with a well-balanced composition, permeated with patriarchal dignity. The free-standing figure of St. Martin on the obverse, surrounded by an unobtrusive, well-designed, and well-distributed legend, accentuates the vertical arrangement of the

composition. The reverse, although oversized and filled to excess in contrast to the simplicity of the obverse, nevertheless creates a pleasant impression.

In 1900 Speranza personally supervised taking a photographic portrait of the new king in Naples. The likeness he created, however, of Victor Emmanuel III on the 5 lire 1901 (fig. 102) and the 100 lire 1903 is a pathetic example of his incapability as a portraitist. The head, wooden and lifeless in expression, sits awkwardly on a small, short neck, while an oversized drawing of the emblematic eagle²⁴⁴ on the reverse, with exaggerated wing feathers, only accentuates the negative impression of the obverse.

The elderly artist did not realize that his poor creations were in fact a personal offense to the king. Victor Emmanuel III, himself a coin collector, went far beyond the role of a connoisseur. With the twenty huge volumes of his *Corpus nummorum Italicorum*, published between 1910 and 1940, he gave brilliant



Fig. 101.—SAN MARINO, 5 lire, 1898²⁴⁵
(Div. of Numismatics photo)



Fig. 102.—ITALY, VICTOR EMMANUEL III, 5 lire, 1901²⁴⁶
(Photo courtesy American Numismatic Society)

²⁴² *CVI*, vol. 1, p. 480, coin 3; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 903; CARBONERI, pp. 348, 541–542.

²⁴³ *CVI*, vol. 1, p. 486, coin 66; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 943; SPAZIANI-TESTA, *Casa Savoia*, coin 206.

²⁴⁴ The resemblance to the German eagle especially caused criticism (LANFRANCO, *Ras.V*, 1931, p. 49). See also D'INCERTI, *RIA* (1956), vol. 4, p. 111.

²⁴⁵ *CVI*, vol. 10, p. 727, coin 11; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 1472; DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, coin 302.

²⁴⁶ *CVI*, vol. 1, p. 488, coin 1; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 1019; SPAZIANI-TESTA, *Casa Savoia*, coin 208; CARBONERI, pp. 418–419; DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, 142.

evidence of his scholarly training.²⁴⁷ Naturally he could acknowledge only painfully the inferior quality of his coinage. The Italian public, aware of the complete failure in the artistic conception of their coinage, expressed not only criticism, but showed interest in bringing about a change. A private enterprise, the Johnson Establishment for Medals in Milan,²⁴⁸ must be credited with initiating and directing a real movement for the “artistic renewal of



Fig. 103. ITALY, VICTOR EMMANUELE III, pattern 100 lire, 1903.²⁴⁹
(Photo from Pagani)

Italian coinage” in the years preceding World War I. A contest held in 1901 under the auspices of the Società Italiana per l’Arte Pubblica of Florence had the purpose of promoting new creations for Italian coinage. Two artists, Domenico Trentacoste and Egidio Boninsegni, distinguished themselves with their projects. The Johnson Establishment in its studios executed patterns of these projects in gold, silver, and copper.

Influenced by the criticism directed against Speranza’s poor version of the emblematic eagle (fig. 100), Boninsegni resorted to allegoric representations such as Minerva and Agriculture for reverse types (fig. 103). Artistically insignificant, his first experiments, made in an extremely low relief, were conceived apparently

with the intention of creating a coinage model worthy to be struck.²⁵⁰

In 1905, under the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury Luzzatti, a permanent commission, the *Reale Commissione Tecnico-Artistica-Monetaria*, was assigned to supervise the selection of new coin types. A contest held the same year produced only a few results. No outstanding artists participated. As a result, in 1906 the *Reale Commissione* decided to directly appoint four renowned artists to the task of creating new coin types, Egidio Boninsegni for the gold, Davide Calandra for the silver, Pietro Canonica²⁵² for the copper, and Leonardo Bistolfi²⁵³ for the nickel coinage. In December 1906 Boninsegni presented his new projects.²⁵⁴ Technically and artistically they were much better executed than his previous experiments. The pattern for the 20 lire (fig. 104) can be considered among his best. While the other artists encountered only limited criticism from the commission—their new silver, nickel and



Fig. 104. ITALY, VICTOR EMMANUELE III, pattern 20 lire, 1906.²⁵⁵
(Author’s photo)

bronze coinage was approved in 1908 Boninsegni instead had to submit to several changes of his projects before he could obtain official approval for the finished models of the gold 10-, 20-, 50-, and 100-lire pieces in May 1910 (fig. 105). The tradition of Ferraris and Speranza had been forgotten. A refreshing, vigorous spirit bespoke a new mentality with

²⁴⁷ See: VICTOR EMMANUELE III, *RivA* (1931), no. 6-7, pp. 185-186; F.L., *RivA* (1931), pp. 203-212; PATRIGNANI, *RivA* (1931), no. 6-7, pp. 217-225. This issue of *RivA* was dedicated to the 50th anniversary of Victor Emmanuel III as a coin collector. See also PATRIGNANI, *AnnR* (1917), pp. 100-104.

²⁴⁸ *Stabilimento per Medaglie*, under the direction of STEFANO CARLO JOHNSON, who also published the *Rivista annuale, medaglie-plachette fusioni*, a review of medallistic achievements in Italy. In addition, he published in 1914 a profusely illustrated book, *La conquista della Eolbia nelle medaglie*, and, in 1919, *Le rivendicazioni italiane del Trentino e della Venezia Giulia nelle medaglie*.

²⁴⁹ *CVI*, vol. 1, p. 493, coin 3; PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coin 138.

²⁵⁰ *CVI*, vol. 1, p. 495, coin 16. See also PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coins 172-173, 214-215, 316.

²⁵¹ See also GNECCAN, *RivA* (1911), pp. 351-366; CARONIERI, pp. 433-441; DI SCERIF, *RivA* (1956), vol. 4, pp. 411-423.

²⁵² For his projects, see *CVI*, vol. 1, p. 496, coins 21-22, p. 499, coins 39-42; PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coins 317-321, 323, 358, 381, 386-389.

²⁵³ For his coin projects, see *CVI*, vol. 1, p. 498, coins 52-55; PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coins 295-299, 305; CARONIERI, p. 349. For his medals, see NICOLEMI, *RivA* (1911), p. 443. Bistolfi was also known for his paintings (COMANDINI, *Disegno*, vol. 1, p. 3).

²⁵⁴ LANFRANCO, *RivA* (1931), p. 239, pl. 1; *CVI*, vol. 1, pp. 495-500; PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coins 130-141, 148, 166-167, 171-175, 180; COMANDINI, *Rivista annuale, prove e progetti fusioni* (1910), pp. 1-5.

²⁵⁵ *CVI*, vol. 1, p. 496, coin 25, wrongly listed under project of Canonica¹; PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coin 135.

a wide outlook. The portrait bust of Victor Emmanuel III (fig. 105) ranks among the king's best likenesses. The artist represented the sovereign as his people always knew him—in uniform. The sober, dignified features reveal a subtle portraitist. The reverse allegory of Italia with the plow, *l'Aratrice*, is a pleasant innovation. Far from perfect, with slight defects in the modeling of the arm and the unnaturally twisted leg, this otherwise harmonious composition is a blend of poetry and realism.



Fig. 105.—ITALY, VICTOR EMMANUEL III, 100 lire, 1912²⁵⁶
(Author's photo)

Its sculptor and engraver, Egidio Boninsegni,²⁵⁷ who was educated in Rome (where in 1896 he won the first prize at the Academy) worked chiefly for Johnson's medallie establishment. In addition to many sculptures and funeral monuments, he also created good portrait medals, such as the ones of Pope Leo XIII and of the numismatist S. Ambrosoli.

Among Boninsegni's contemporaries was one of the originators of the new movement—the sculptor, engraver, and painter Domenico Trentacoste.²⁵⁸ Born in 1859 in Palermo, he studied art in Italy and abroad. In 1880 he went to Paris, where he opened his own studio two years later. In 1891 London became his next residence, but in a few years he established his home finally in Florence. Trentacoste participated successfully in 1894 at the International Exhibit in Vienna and in 1895 at the *Biennale* of Venice. In later years he filled the post of director at the Academy of Art in Florence. Practically blind during the last years of his life, he died in Florence in 1933.

This sculptor was commissioned to design the models for the jubilee coinage of 1911, commemorating the

50th anniversary of the founding of the Italian Kingdom.²⁵⁹ The two types, the bare head of the king facing left and the allegoric group of Italia and Roma, were adopted for the gold 50 lire and the silver 5 lire (fig. 106). Surprisingly, the two compositions do not reveal the sculptor: the reliefs of both obverse and reverse are flat and insignificant. While the head of the king is reminiscent of Speranza's portrait of 1901 (fig. 102), the reverse allegory betrays a strong French influence in the style of Roty and Chaplain. The meaningless emphasis on an allegoric group, popular with medals of that period, renders this reverse weighty and inappropriate for coins. Undoubtedly the composition, called "Italia Marinara," has a certain sculptural value, but reduced to the minute diameter of a coin, it results in an unclear and cluttered design. Details with symbolic meaning have become a puzzling map-design in the background.



Fig. 106.—ITALY, VICTOR EMMANUEL III, 5 lire, 1911²⁶⁰
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

Jean Babelon suggests the prerequisites of allegory: "A symbol is a reminder or a suggestion; it is not a complete description. The evocative force of a well-chosen detail surpasses that of a whole scene, meticulously narrated. . . . This intellectual subtlety, required from the artist as well as from his public, is the noble title of the art which we study here."²⁶¹

Fondness for heroic figures seems to characterize the period immediately preceding World War I. Undoubtedly Davide Calandra's attempt to express national grandeur found dignified expression in the

²⁵⁶ PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 954; CARBONERI, pp. 511-512; D'INCERLI, *Riv* (1956), vol. 4, p. 121.

²⁵⁷ THIEME and BECKER, vol. 4, p. 300; VOLLMER, vol. 1, p. 262. For some of his medals, see: NATALETTI and PAGANI, p. 58; *Delle medaglie e placchette*, pls. 6, 8, 18, 21.

²⁵⁸ *BDM*, vol. 6, p. 132, and vol. 8, p. 238; THIEME and BECKER, vol. 33, p. 377.

²⁵⁹ PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coins 168, 218, 239; GNECCHI, *Riv* (1911), p. 364; CARBONERI, pp. 440-441, 515.

²⁶⁰ PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 1020; SPAZIANI-TESTA, *Casa Savoia*, coin 209; DAVENPORT, *European Crowns*, coin 143.

²⁶¹ *La médaille et les médailleurs*, p. 223.

5-lire piece of 1914 (fig. 107). Commissioned in 1906 to create a new design for the Italian silver coinage, Calandra produced his model by the end of the



Fig. 107.—ITALY, VICTOR EMANUELE III, 5 lire, 1914²⁶²
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

same year. But the many changes²⁶³ required by the Monetary Commission altered the initial project almost beyond recognition. Only the basic conception of the coin remained: a small bust of the sovereign in



Fig. 108.—ITALY, VICTOR EMANUELE III, pattern 5 lire,
1906²⁶⁴
(Photo from Pagani)

uniform, enclosed by the massive circle of an inscription for the obverse, and the figure of Italia on a triumphal quadriga for the reverse. Artistically insignificant, the first project (fig. 108) presented many defects: an unappealing portrait of the king crowded

²⁶² PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 1021; SPAZIANI-FESIA, *Casa Savoia*, coin 210; DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 141. See also CARBONERI, pp. 542–543.

²⁶³ LANIRANCO, *RivN* (1931), p. 243; CARBONERI, p. 442; PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coins 219, 240, 254–257.

²⁶⁴ LANIRANCO, *RivN* (1931), p. 239, coin 9; PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coin 217.

²⁶⁵ Davide Calandra had his art education at the Accademia Albertina in Turin. Active as a sculptor, he created many generally appreciated works such as the equestrian statue of the Duke of Aosta in Turin (1902), reliefs for the Roman Parliament, and the gigantic Monument to Victor Emmanuel II in Rome. His sculpture *L'Aratro* (The Plough), 1891, is in

into a large circle of letters and, on the reverse, a poorly designed quadriga with a cumbersome arrangement of horses. The criticism of the Commission obliged the artist to correct defects and to improve the artistic qualities of the whole design. Eventually, Calandra proved himself a master of plastic relief²⁶⁵ and created a dignified coin image. The portrait of the king, wearing the Collar of the Annunziata Order (fig. 107), displays high qualities enhanced by a harmonious arrangement of the coin field. The reverse, deliberately emphatic, nevertheless shows a remarkable restraint in the choice of its means of expression. The static majesty of the figure of Italy contrasted with the dashing movement of the horses creates a strong impression. The subtle and, at the same time, bold treatment of the plastic surface decisively confirms Calandra's talent.²⁶⁶

The dies for the striking of the 5-lire pieces of 1911 and 1914 created by Trentacoste, and for the 100 and 50 lire by Boninsegni, were prepared by Luigi Raffaele Giorgi.²⁶⁷ Born in 1848 in Lucca, he was orphaned at an early age and forced to provide for himself by working in the shop of a goldsmith. At the same time he studied at the Istituto di Belle Arti in Lucca. Later he went to Florence to specialize in the art of medal engraving. Many medals like the ones of Torquato Tasso, Vincenzo Bellini, Alessandro Volta, Giuseppe Garibaldi, and other famous Italians were produced by Giorgi during his stay in Florence.²⁶⁸ A capable goldsmith and engraver, he participated in and won the contest at the Roman mint in 1906, and was appointed engraver and subsequently chief engraver. He died in Rome in 1912.

An excellent technician, he is given credit for refining the execution of Italian coinage during the first decade of this century. Ludless trials were involved in establishing a process to eliminate the imperfec-

the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome. He was highly praised for his refined, sober style and his sensitive interpretation of emotions. TIMM and BECKER, vol. 5, p. 371.

²⁶⁶ FORRER in criticizing the quadriga (*BDM*, vol. 7, p. 148) must have been greatly influenced by the reports of the Monetary Commission on the first, uncorrected project.

²⁶⁷ *BDM*, vol. 2, p. 268, and vol. 7, p. 365; TIMM and BECKER, vol. 11, p. 82.

²⁶⁸ For his Verdi medal, see NAIMETTI and PAGANI, p. 35. Other medals of Humbert I, Mazzini, and Amleodo of Savoia are in COMASINI, *RivN* (1889), p. 55, (1890), p. 227, (1892), p. 221.

tions which resulted from mechanical reduction of a model into the steel die.²⁶⁹

Giorgi's original work, the dies prepared for the coinage of Italian Somaliland, have little, if any artistic value. He created these coins merely for a practical medium of exchange, imitating Trentacoste in the execution of Victor Emmanuel's portrait. Giorgi tried to interpret in his own way the recommendation of the Monetary Commission in 1905 that "the coin, in contrast to the products of other arts, represents by its nature . . . a tangible record of the degree of perfection in a nation's art."²⁷⁰ Giorgi sought fulfillment of esthetic criteria purely in technical perfection.

His successor at the mint was Attilio Motti,²⁷¹ who held the position of engraver and chief engraver for 22 years until his death at age 68 in 1935. Motti continued Giorgi's tradition of technical perfection. All of the coins struck at the Roman mint for the Italian government and for foreign states during the period from 1913 to 1935 are faultless examples of his technical skill as well as his understanding of the artistic problems involved in adapting a project to a coin. Often he had to encounter the difficult task of reconciling new and bold ideas of various artists with the technical limitations of coin engraving. The dies cut by Motti from models presented by Calandra, Romagnoli, or Mistruzzi, nevertheless, reproduced faithfully the individual characteristics of each artist.

The 5 lire of 1914 designed by Calandra (fig. 107), the 20 lire of 1927 (fig. 112), and the 20 lire of 1928 (fig. 126) created by Romagnoli were magnificently translated into steel dies by Motti. Each of the three coins presents a new treatment of surface and edge. The 5 lire 1914 has a wide, protective rim which encloses the massive coin, while the 20-lire piece of 1927 is conceived differently: the planchet is not as thick and the whole appearance of the coin is less compact; in order to protect the well-rounded relief, a beaded and slightly raised border encloses the coin field. Even more basically different is the 20 lire 1928 (fig. 126). This new and daring creation of Romagnoli fills the limited coin field to capacity. The impression of forceful expansion

is maintained by Motti through a very ingenious technique which practically eliminates the border: only a sharp, raised edge contains the impressive coin image.

The same technique was used by Motti for striking the gold 100 and 20 lire 1923 with fasces. These coins are his own artistic products (fig. 109). The



Fig. 109.—ITALY, VICTOR EMANUELE III, 100 lire, 1923²⁷²
(Author's photo)

portrait of the king, although impeccable in its plastic treatment, shows little spiritual life. Impassive in its expression, it reveals the inability of the artist to reach beyond physiognomic likeness. The large-sized letters of the inscription overcrowd the field, depriving the coin of any esthetic appeal.



Fig. 110.—ITALIAN SOMALILAND, VICTOR EMANUELE III,
10 lire, 1925²⁷³
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

The reverse types of the 100- and 20-lire pieces of 1923 (fig. 109) present a novel emblem in Italian gold coinage. The simplicity of the Roman fasces and the lictorian ax would have been more impressive if not disrupted by the bold inscription.

The same tendency to use oversize lettering to indicate the denomination is characteristic of Motti. Apparently he believed that the indication of value

²⁶⁹ The only reliable information available about the otherwise unknown and complicated backstage operations involved in the planning, preparing, and striking of coins, and about the activity of persons involved in this process, is in the series of articles written by Mario Lanfranco, the former director of the Roman mint. See under LANFRANCO in literature cited.

²⁷⁰ LANFRANCO, *Riv. V* (1931), p. 237.

²⁷¹ *BDM*, vol. 8, p. 84.

²⁷² PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 957; D'INCERTI, *Riv. V* (1956), p. 128.

²⁷³ PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 1302.

must stand out forcefully on a coin. The 5- and 10-lire issue of 1925 for Italian Somaliland (fig. 110) supports this assumption.

Motti's activity as an engraver confines many of his better creations to the field of portrait, prize, and commemorative medals.²⁵⁴ They all portray a good technician who tried to compensate for his mediocrity of conception with a skillful and neat treatment of the plastic surface. His portraits²⁵⁵ are sincere, unsophisticated products of limited psychological insight and a surprising lack of individuality. Motti's creative drive was not strong



Fig. 111.—ITALY, VICTOR EMMANUEL III, pattern 2 lire, 1922.²⁵⁶
(Photo from Pagani)

enough to mold an individual style, as can be seen in a 2-lire pattern of 1922 (fig. 111). A first-rate diesinker, he cannot be compared as an engraver to his contemporaries Mistruzzi and Romagnoli.

Attilio Motti stands at the threshold of a new era in Italian coin engraving, when the cold, official heraldry of coin images turn toward more inspiring symbols of national greatness. During the latter half of the 19th century, the coin, impersonal and stereotyped down to the very portrait of the ruler, ceased to be an expression of anything that involved the spirit of the nation, its art, or its national aspirations. Only gradually, under the guidance of enlightened private initiative and the inspiration of the personality of Victor Emmanuel III, the *re numismatica*, did a reform movement succeed in asserting the imperative of drastic change.

Giuseppe Romagnoli, Aurelio Mistruzzi, Pietro Giampaoli belong to the generation of modern Italian

engravers who brought about the change to a more functional esthetic of the coin.

Giuseppe Romagnoli,²⁵⁷ born in 1862 in Bassano, studied sculpture and engraving with Enrico Bazzani. In 1909 he became the director of *Scuola d'arte della Medaglia*.²⁵⁸ Well known as a sculptor, he participated in many international exhibitions in Paris, Brussels, and in Munich, where he was awarded the gold medal. His work *Ev. Vittor. III* won the Venice prize in 1897. *Giunone* (Youth), another sculpture, is in Rome in the Museum of Modern Art. He is also the creator of sculptural groups which adorn the Victor Emmanuel Budee and the Victor Emmanuel Monument in Rome. In 1911 he won the international competition for the great monument of the International Telegraphic Union in Bern, Switzerland, a work which was erected in 1922.

Romagnoli is the official representative of modern Italian coin engraving, while Aurelio Mistruzzi represents the papal art of coin engraving during the same period. Contemporaries, working in close relationship at the Roman mint, where coins and medals are struck for both the Italian and the Vatican governments,²⁵⁹ the creations of these men evolve in similar directions, although differentiated by distinct personalities. Romagnoli is the author of 53 of Italy's modern coin types and also of an impressive series of official and private medals.

With him Italian coin engraving approached the long-cherished goal of a more artistically appealing coinage. Severely judged by Italian art critics²⁶⁰ as having limited inspiration and imagination, his "shortcomings" can be explained by the fact that he often presented himself as an eclectic artist. His style fluctuates according to his source of inspiration. Moreover, he does not assimilate the spirit of an art period of the past although he yields completely to its external formalism.

Working at the height of Fascism, when ancient Rome was the official standard of civic excellence, it was natural that Romagnoli would turn for inspiration to ancient sources. His models for the Italian

²⁵⁴ Many of his medals are published and illustrated in *RZ*, pp. 87-89, 92-94, 97-99, 107-112.

²⁵⁵ *RZ*, p. 100, coin 7; p. 101, coins 20, 30; p. 102, coin 35.

²⁵⁶ PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coin 245.

²⁵⁷ *BDM*, vol. 8, p. 170; THIRME and BLOCKER, vol. 28, p. 540, *Figuras de la numismática . . . Exposición nacional de numismática . . .* (1951), p. 153.

²⁵⁸ Founded in 1909 to train young sculptors for coin engraving. CAVROSIERI, p. 441; *RZ*, p. 1.

²⁵⁹ The Monetary Convention of 1930 decreed that the Vatican could have the use of the Roman mint for the striking of coins and medals.

²⁶⁰ *R.S.*, *VandR* (1937), p. 51.

gold coinage²⁴ as well as the silver 20-lire 1927 (fig. 112) and 1936 (fig. 113), clearly reflect this tendency. The personification of *Italia* on a ship's prow (fig. 114), the striding figure of the lictor on the 100 lire 1936, and the figure of the sower on the Albanian 2-franka ari piece of 1926 (fig. 115) portray



Fig. 112.—ITALY, VICTOR EMMANUEL III, 20 lire, 1927²⁴
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

the glorification of a heroic tradition. They are powerful coin images, and considerably enhance the decorative character of Italian coinage, but the flat execution of the plastic relief detracts from their artistic qualities. The perfect workmanship of this skilled artist, accurate in the execution of details and



Fig. 113.—ITALY, VICTOR EMMANUEL III, 20 lire, 1936²⁴
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

with an unquestionable sense of proportion, still fell short of imparting Roman vigor and magnificence to the ancient clichés. This quality appears strikingly if the lictor (fig. 114) is compared to the naively designed but sincere and forceful figures of Roman lictors on a denarius engraved over 2000 years before (fig. 116).

The triumphal quadriga on the reverse of the 20-lire 1936 (fig. 113), commemorating the Italian Empire, is practically an adaptation of a Roman type frequently used in the Augustan and Claudian periods. A similar interpretation guided Romagnoli in composing some of his medals, such as the ones commemo-



Fig. 114.—ITALY, VICTOR EMMANUEL III, reverses of 100 lire, 1931, 1936²⁴
(Div. of Numismatics photo)



Fig. 115.—ALBANIA, VICTOR EMMANUEL III, 2 franka ari, 1926 (2x actual size)²⁵
(Div. of Numismatics photo)



Fig. 116.—ANCIENT ROME, denarius of Q. Caepius Brutus, about 60 B.C.²⁶
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

²⁴ For the 100 and 50 lire 1931 (Fascist Era IX) to 1933 (I.E. XI), the 100 and 50 lire 1936 (I.E. XIV), and the 100 lire 1937 (I.E. XVI), see PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coins 959-964, 970-974.

²⁵ PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 985; SPAZIANI-TESTA, *Casa Savoia*, coin 212; DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 145.

²³ PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 994; SPAZIANI-TESTA, *Casa Savoia*, coin 221; DAVENPORT, *European Coins*, coin 147.

²⁴ PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coins 959, 963.

²⁵ RAYMOND, *Coins of the World*, coin 6; LANFRANCO, *Ras.V* (1932), pp. 258-259, pl. 5, coin 15.

²⁶ SYDENHAM, *Coinage of Roman Republic*, p. 150, coin 906.



Fig. 117.—ITALY, obverse of medal commemorating the bimillennium of Augustus [1937]²⁸⁷
(Photo from *RZ*)



Fig. 118.—ITALY, medal commemorating the bimillennium of Virgilius, 1930²⁸⁸
(Photo from *RZ*)

rating the bimillennium of Augustus (fig. 117) and of Virgilius. Huge in size and complex in composition, they cling closely to their ancient models. The obverse scene of the Virgilian medal (fig. 118) certainly tries to imitate similar composition from the frieze of Trajan's Column.

In harmony with his devotion to ancient Rome, Romagnoli turned also to Greece for artistic inspiration. The frequency of nude athletic figures on his coins²⁸⁹ and especially on medals reveals the great fascination which ancient Greek glyptics exerted on him. The spear-throwing youth on the medal commemorating the Olympic games in Antwerp, 1920 (fig. 119), the "Dedalus" on a medal struck in 1935



Fig. 119.—ITALY, medal, no date, commemorating the Olympic Games²⁸⁹
(Photo from *RZ*)

and the "Prometheus" on a medal of 1937,²⁹⁰ as well as the youth with fasces on the 20-lire piece of 1927 (fig. 112), are characteristic examples of his tendency to imitate the structural perfection of ancient Greek statuary.

Confronted with the challenge of expressing curvilinear beauty in a perfectly modeled plasticity, Romagnoli solved the problem only partially. Well-synchronized movements of accurately modeled plastic forms confer to his figures of athletes a statuary beauty, but they lack vitality. The brilliance of an

²⁸⁷ *RZ*, p. 125, medal 66.

²⁸⁸ *RZ*, p. 120, medal 51.

²⁸⁹ See especially his coinage for Albania; *RAYMOND*, p. 8, coins 6, 16.

²⁹⁰ *RZ*, p. 114, medal 8.

²⁹¹ *RZ*, p. 122, medal 58; p. 125, medal 68.

art concept deeply felt by ancient masters could confer beauty to their work, but it becomes meaningless to the later imitator. The modern artist could copy the academic perfection of lines and forms, but he could not absorb the ancient spirit, essentially different from the mentality of his own time.

In this group the coins, compared with the medals, must be adjudged of superior quality. One reason is that the small, limited field of the coin, slightly blurred by the modern reducing process of the original model, conceals many of the imperfections which are salient on the larger field of the medal. As a result of this and of his own artistry, Romagnoli was able to

portrait embellishes one of the most attractive modern coins (fig. 122). The allegories of the reverse types



Fig. 122.—ALBANIA, ZOG I, 100 franka ari, 1926²⁹⁴
(Author's photo)

are chiefly modern interpretations of ancient Greek coin images: the rider on the 1-lek piece recalls the boy rider on the Tarentum coins, Hercules wrestling



Fig. 120.—ITALY, VICTOR EMMANUEL III, 10 lire, 1926²⁹²
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

create some of Italy's most impressive modern coins, among which are the 10-lire piece of 1926 (fig. 120) and the 10 lire 1936 (fig. 121). They exemplify best

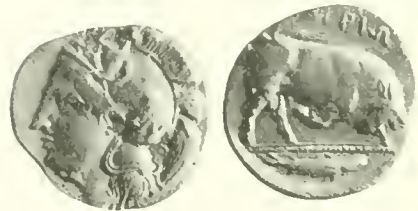


Fig. 123.—THURIUM (LUCANIA), double stater struck
400 281 B.C.²⁹⁵
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

the Nemean lion on the half-lek is inspired by a similar type on the coins of Heraclea, while the beautiful eagle head on the 10 qindar leku is taken from the famous coins of Elis. Inspired by Greek



Fig. 121.—ITALY, VICTOR EMMANUEL III, 10 lire, 1936²⁹³
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

his exquisite technique in mastering composition and portrait alike. Victor Emmanuel's portrait by Romagnoli (fig. 121) must be considered the best likeness of this monarch. Imposing in its stately perfection, with subtle details, this head of Victor Emmanuel III, certifies the high degree of Romagnoli's skill in engraving.

The same art, permeated with sensitivity and decorative grace, can be noted in Romagnoli's coinage created for Albania under the rule of Ahmed Zog's. The simple, compact, and expressive outline of Zog's



Fig. 124.—ITALY, VICTOR EMMANUEL III, pattern
[20 lire, 1927]²⁹⁶
(Photo from Pagani)

coins, Romagnoli in 1927, using the butting bull types of coin of ancient Thurium (fig. 123), also created a project for a 20-lire piece (fig. 124), but it was not accepted.

²⁹² PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 1004.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, coin 1013.

²⁹⁴ *RZ*, pp. 73-77; YEOMAN, p. 11, coin 17.

²⁹⁵ GROSE, *Catalogue McClean Collection*, vol. 1, pl. 40, coin 17.

²⁹⁶ PAGANI, *Prove e progetti*, coin 189.

A conspectus of Romagnoli's art would be incomplete without mentioning a group of seven annual medals commemorating the years of the Fascist era.²⁹⁷ His fondness for heroic figuration here found an appropriate field for expression. Inspired by ideological symbolism, he tried to glorify in these medals a spirit of national exaltation. Amazing is the metamorpho-



Fig. 125.—ITALY, obverse of medal commemorating the first anniversary of the Empire, year XV F.E.²⁹⁸
(Photo from *RZ*)

sis which took place; his style changed completely; the fine, subtle sensitiveness flows into a bold and aggressive robustness. Statuesque and cold, the figures of these medals become merely symbols, and even the busts of Victor Emmanuel III (fig. 125) and of Mussolini, remarkable as they are for their excellent workmanship, seem to lose their human character. Evidence of these nationalistic tendencies may be seen in his 20-lire coin of 1928 (fig. 126), which bears the motto on the reverse: "Better to live one day as a lion than a hundred years as sheep."

Romagnoli is a classic example of a good artist exposed to the vicissitudes of overwhelming ideological

influence, which, appealing to the veritable in his talent, split his ego and accentuated the good by not instead of allowing him the freedom to evolve according to an interior development. Regarded in their totality, Romagnoli's creations present such manifold traits that sometimes they can hardly be attributed to the same individual.

His art did not win unanimous approval, which is probably due to a rejection of its ideological content in spite of his genuine talent. The heroic spirit of ancient times, artificially transplanted and exalted, did not stir conviction in many Italian minds. Ancient art has often been imitated, but never have traditional patterns been more boldly proclaimed as



Fig. 126.—ITALY, VICTOR EMANUELE III, 20 lire, 1928.²⁹⁹
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

official symbols of national aspiration. As a result, Romagnoli's creations were considered by these critics to be remote, insincere, and barren. His talent and rich creative qualities fell victim to the political climate.

While Romagnoli was serving the Italian government, his contemporary, Aurelio Mistruzzi³⁰⁰ (d. 1960), chief engraver for the papal coinage, could claim an equally prolific output during his continuous activity at the Vatican. Born in Villaorba (Udine) in 1880, he studied in Venice and at the Brera Academy in Milan before obtaining a fellowship which permitted him to complete his studies at the School of Medallists in Rome. In this city he established his permanent residence. From 1919, during the Pontificate of Benedict XV, Aurelio Mistruzzi worked as engraver and later as chief engraver of

²⁹⁷ See illustrations, *RZ*, pp. 128-133.

²⁹⁸ *RZ*, p. 132, medal 6.

²⁹⁹ PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 193; SPAZIANI-FESCA, *Con*

Storia, coin 220; DAVENPORT, *Fascist Coins*, coin 146.

³⁰⁰ VOLTMER, vol. 3, p. 401.

Vatican coins and medals,³⁰¹ serving under Popes Benedict XV, Pius XI, and Pius XII. He succeeded Francesco Bianchi, the official medal engraver of Pope Pius XI.

Mistruzzi was a versatile artist. Producing not only an impressive number of medal and coin dies, he devoted his time also to sculpture. The *Pietà* in the private chapel of the Nerazzini family in Montepulciano, the *Vergine Saggia*, a madonna for the tomb of the Moretti family in Villaorba, the *St. Francis* in the Basilica of St. Anthony in Padua, plus many chandeliers, tabernacles, and other religious objects are examples of his prodigious activity.

In his role as official engraver at the Vatican he created the dies for the complete coinage in gold, silver, nickel, and copper of Pope Pius XI, and used the same reverse types for the coinage of Pope Pius XII in 1939.

The new reform trend found its expression also in Mistruzzi's coinage. After the long hiatus in papal strikings since 1870, the coinage of Pius XI, "the Pope of Conciliation," signaled a new era, when a centuries-old tradition and art were resumed with new vigor in accord with the esthetic expectations of modern times. Mistruzzi embarked upon this task with the reserve and moderation which distinguish his whole artistic temperament. His sensitive personality was adverse to any radical changes. With the aristocratic restraint of a master, he tried to create new and, at the same time, artistically attractive symbols of an old ecclesiastic heraldry, intent on not sacrificing the dignity of the institution.

Motivated by his exquisite sense of the decorative, he created a charming group of religious figures and scenes, representing among others the Savior, the enthroned Madonna with Child, St. Peter in the boat, St. John with the Lamb, Archangel Michael, St. Peter, and St. Paul. The chief artistic value of these scenes consists in their graceful harmony. The figure of the Savior on the gold 100-lire piece of 1929 (fig. 127), impressive in its spirituality, the diaphanous figure of the Madonna on the 1-lire piece,

or the Good Shepherd on the 2 lire (fig. 128) are gracious, serene compositions, cut to please the taste of the broad mass of believers, and not subtle creations reserved for the sophisticated art-lover.



Fig. 127. VATICAN, PIUS XI, 100 lire, 1929³⁰²
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

The larger part of Mistruzzi's activity at the papal mint was devoted to the engraving of medals. They can be divided, according to Patrignani's groupings, into annual medals, those commemorating



Fig. 128. VATICAN, PIUS XI, obverses of 1 and 2 lire, 1929³⁰³
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

exceptional events, and those celebrating different personalities connected with the Vatican.³⁰⁴

The annual medals issued each year during the entire pontificate of a pope usually commemorate the significant events of the preceding year.³⁰⁵ Among this group the most impressive compositions are the Consistory of Cardinals before the Bernini altar in St. Peter's Basilica (engraved on the reverse of the medal of year VIII)³⁰⁶ and a scene representing the Pope in prayer for world peace on the medal of year V (1943).³⁰⁷ The last two decades, with their abundance of extraordinary events, inspired a great number of special medals. Among them should be

³⁰¹ F.L., *RevV* (1931), pp. 110-112; PATRIGNANI, *IV* (1952), vol. 3, no. 1, p. 3; *NumR* (1940), pp. 31-34; *NumR* (1948), vol. 14, pp. 30-38; PAGANI, *RLV* (1949), pp. 64-65; *AES*, *NumR* (1935), vol. 1, pp. 8-13.

³⁰² *CVI*, coin 1; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 1576.

³⁰³ *CVI*, coins 4, 5; PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coins 1603, 1612.

³⁰⁴ PATRIGNANI, *NumR* (1948), nos. 1-3, p. 30. For other medals, see also JOHNSON, *Le rivendicazioni italiane*.

³⁰⁵ Annual medals were published in *NumR* (1935), no. 1, pp. 14-15; (1939), no. 3, p. 79; (1943-1945), pp. 77-78; (1947), nos. 1-3, p. 42; (1949), nos. 1-6, p. 73. See also most issues of *IV*.

³⁰⁶ *NumR* (1947), nos. 1-3, p. 42.

³⁰⁷ Published in *NumR* (1943-1945), p. 77.

mentioned the medal commemorating the Marian Year (1954),³⁰⁸ the 450th anniversary of the Swiss guards,³⁰⁹ and the opening of the World's Fair in Brussels.³¹⁰

The value of these medals rests chiefly in the composition of the reverse, the portrait of the pontiff on



Fig. 129.—VATICAN, obverse of medal of Cardinal Bisleti³¹¹
(Photo from *IV*)

the obverse being transmitted unchanged or only slightly altered from year to year. On the personal medals, however, the likeness of the commemorated personality deserves special attention.

Mistruzzi proved to be a good portraitist although many of his creations do not achieve the highest quality. His analytic interpretation of human physiognomy, his unobtrusive suggestions of intellectual and emotional qualities, and his subtly modeled planes all blend in creating a clean-cut, academic portrait. Among his better portraits should be considered the busts of Popes Pius XI and Pius XII. The latter, studied minutely in the complexity of his personality and interpreted by the artist in many changed versions, emerged in a "speaking" likeness. The portrait of Gaetano Cardinal Bisleti (fig. 129), created by Mistruzzi in younger years (1924), betrays the artist's great admiration for the Renaissance, as can

be seen by comparing it to a medal engraved about 1480 by Niccolò Fiorentino (fig. 130). Mistruzzi turned to this period for inspiration; a Roman coin turned to classical antiquity for his esthetic sources. Unified in conception, subtle in suggestion, serene in execution, Mistruzzi's portrait exemplified the rewarding results obtained by a deep understanding and assimilation of the esthetic concept of an earlier period. The portrait medals of Marquis Camillo



Fig. 130.—OBVERSE OF MEDAL OF ARCHBISHOP RINALDO ORSINI OF FLORENCE BY NICCOLÒ FIORENTINO, ABOUT 1480³¹²
(Photo from Hill)

Serafini, Francis Cardinal Spellman,³¹³ Monsignor Giulio Montini,³¹⁴ or Celso Cardinal Costantini³¹⁵ are a few examples of the great number of medals engraved by Mistruzzi during the past two decades.

A large number of these medals was work done in addition to his duties at the Vatican, medals which were made for the Italian and foreign governments as well as for private persons. A survey of official Italian medals would be incomplete without mentioning the works of Mistruzzi, and his name in fact frequently appears in the medal listings of the Italian Government.³¹⁶ In each group of premium, war, portrait, and commemorative medals, a few compositions of Mistruzzi testify to his unbounded inventiveness. Interestingly, the Mistruzzi one encounters here differs greatly from the Mistruzzi one meets in the Vatican coinage, revealing an unexpected facet of his personality. The academic, subdued, some-

³⁰⁸ "Medaglia pontificia dell'anno Mariano" *IV* (1955), no. 9.

³⁰⁹ Published in *IV* (1956), no. 6.

³¹⁰ Published in *IV* (1958), no. 5.

³¹¹ *R.S.*, *NimR* (1937), no. 3, p. 53.

³¹² Hill, *Italian Medals of the Renaissance*, pl. 152, medall 29.

³¹³ Published in *IV* (1950), nos. 11-12.

³¹⁴ Published in *IV* (1955), no. 10.

³¹⁵ Published in *IV* (1957), no. 1.

³¹⁶ *R.Ç.*, pp. 89-112.

what pedantic style of the religious scenes changes into a daring and forceful style. Few of these compositions, such as the appealing medal of 1927 for the Fair at Tripoli,³¹⁷ recall his style of the Vatican compositions.



Fig. 131.—ITALY, medal commemorating the 6th centennial of Dante, 1921³¹⁸
(Photo from *RZ*)

Although a greater number of subjects implicitly calls for a greater variety in execution, this does not necessarily impair artistic qualities. Banality, the usual plague of commemorative medals, can seldom be detected in Mistruzzi's compositions. Much of the time his unquestionable technical skill or the originality of the sculptured theme, such as the one on the Dante medal in 1921 (fig. 131), confers a superior quality to his work. Apparently he does his best when, inspired by Renaissance art, he abandons the soft contour and pedantic technique of his usual style and follows the more unified and compact simplicity of those earlier masters. In 1935 he struck for the Musical Academy of St. Cecilia in Rome an official medal (fig. 132) which bears on the obverse an



Fig. 132.—ITALY, obverse of medal [no date] commemorating the Music Academy of St. Cecilia³¹⁹
(Photo from *RZ*)

impressive bust of the saint. The high, massive relief as well as the compact character of the inscription—used in the Renaissance tradition as an organic part of the whole composition—does not detract from its effect. The delicate line of the head, turned slightly upward in a movement of ecstatic inspiration, is fully enhanced by the simplicity of composition.

The medal of Benito Mussolini in 1925 reveals a third and even more unexpected aspect of Mistruzzi's talent. The head, vaguely inspired by Renaissance technique, reveals only moderate portrait qualities, but the truly surprising part of the medal is the

³¹⁷ "Medaglia per la Prima Esposizione Fiera Campionaria di Tripoli"—*RZ*, p. 117.

³¹⁸ "Medaglia per il VI Centenario Dantesco"—*RZ*, p. 114, medal 10.

³¹⁹ "Medaglia ufficiale dell'Accademia di S. Cecilia"—*RZ*, p. 123, medal 62.

reverse (fig. 133). The symbolic figure of the powerful helmsman reveals the amazing vigor in expression of which Mistruzzi was capable. In order to conform with the spirit of the times he completely changed his technique, his style, and practically his entire



Fig. 133. ITALY, reverse of medal commemorating Benito Mussolini, 1925.³²⁰
(Photo from *R*.)

creative ego.³²¹ Of Michelangelic aspect, the figure of the gigantic navigator is completely new and modern in execution. Seldom has the ideal of physical strength been more impressively represented. Romagnoli's athletes pale before this giant. The bulging, excellently modeled muscles and limbs which fill the restricted field of the medal, keeping the head to a minimum of space, succeed in presenting an image of overpowering physical strength. Moreover, the piece retains perfect balance of composition, the strong vertical line of the central figure being harmoniously enclosed within the two segments of inscription.

In the execution of a self-portrait in gold, the gold 100-lira piece struck in 1925 commemorating the 25th Anniversary of Victor Emmanuel II (fig. 134). The official intention was to give the



Fig. 134. ITALY, VICTOR EMANUEL III, 100 lire, 1925.
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

commemorative coin a rather medallion character. The obverse, representing the head of the king resting on an oak tree, resulted in an awkward design. But the remarkable accomplishment is the reverse. A forward-striding fighter, gripping a banner with one hand and carrying a small figure of victory with the other, triumphantly ascends a rock inscribed *VERA D'ITALIA* (Peak of Italy). This novel coin image has stirred controversial judgment. But apart from slight imperfections, among which might be mentioned the somewhat forced twist of the right shoulder, the coin fully deserves its great popularity among collectors. The forceful movement of the figure which cuts the field of the coin almost diagonally, counterbalanced by the solidity of the rock and the sweeping motion of the banner, confers life and vigor to an unusual composition, so different from the customary symbolic figures of ancient inspiration.

To those who unduly criticized his efforts, Mistruzzi gave an answer on a self-portrait medal: "*Quod potui feci, faciunt meliora potentes*" ("What I could, I did—let those who can, do better").³²²

After Attilio Moti's death the position of chief engraver at the Roman mint was given to Pietro Giampaoli.³²³ Born in 1898 in Buia, Province of

³²⁰ *R*, p. 101, medal 26.

³²¹ A strange coincidence placed the author of one of the most inspired medals of Fascism in serious conflict with the party. PATRIGNANI, *IV*, 1952, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 3) relates the adventure of one of Mistruzzi's anti-Fascist medals, which was created in secrecy and was almost published prematurely in a leading Roman newspaper the day of Mussolini's reappearance in September 1943. Mistruzzi's response to personal persecution

had found expression toward the end of the war in four anti-Fascist and anti-Nazi medals, all filled with the same bitterness of a Karl Goetz.

³²² PAGGI, *Monete d'Italia*, coin 938.

³²³ For decree no. 1829 of October 11, 1925, see *R*, p. 13.

³²⁴ Medal of 1946, published by PATRIGNANI, *V*, *R* (1) 383, nos. 1-3, p. 38.

³²⁵ VOLLMER, vol. 2, p. 258.

Udine, he studied art at the Brera Academy in Milan. Well known and appreciated as a sculptor and engraver in the artistic circles of Rome since the time of Pope Pius XI, he exhibited in 1928 at the "Biennale" in Venice. In later years he was awarded the first prize with gold medal at the International Exhibition of the Medal in Madrid, 1951, for his composition *Laetitia*.

His first accomplishments at the mint were the die engravings for the gold and silver coins of 1936 and 1937, created by Giuseppe Romagnoli.³²⁶ The substantial plasticity of Motti's engravings, rich in detail and modulation of plane, settles in Giampaoli's technique into a more linear treatment of relief. Apparently under the dictate of practical consideration, which requires a smooth surface on the coin for easy stacking, Giampaoli tended to flatten the relief, as can be seen on most of the coins created after World War II (fig. 135).



Fig. 135. ITALY, REPUBLIC, 20 lire, 1957³²⁷
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

This technique is apparent not only in his earlier engravings but throughout his entire career as a coin engraver. In this respect the coins differ greatly from the medals, which achieve their excellence rather through massive and well-rounded relief. One of his most recent creations, the 500-lire piece of 1958, the first silver coin struck in Italy after World War II, shows the same low relief which was adapted for a composition otherwise in the spirit of the Renaissance (fig. 136). The distinctive harmony of this coin reveals Giampaoli's novel approach to solving the esthetic problems of modern coin engraving. A profound admirer of Renaissance art, he succeeded in completely assimilating the essence of the art concept of the 15th century.

He is so deeply affected by the spirit of the Renais-

sance that his creations can be considered less an interpretation than a real revival of an art concept. Many Italian artists and especially engravers have directed their attention, during the last few decades, toward the Renaissance, seeking inspiration or solutions for technical problems. Some of the medals of Mistruzzi already show the beneficial influence of Renaissance art in the simple flow of line and relief.



Fig. 136. ITALY, REPUBLIC, 500 lire [1958]³²⁸
(Div. of Numismatics photo)

Others have tried to adopt the vigorous style of these early masters of the medal, but only a few have succeeded in absorbing so completely their art concepts as Giampaoli has.

Best evidence of this is his medals, where all elements, artistic and technical, have merged to produce an amazing new movement in modern Italian engraving. Unified in conception, precise, bold in relief, at the same time graceful and harmonious, Giampaoli's portrait medals are outstanding and original. As a portraitist Giampaoli gives evidence of a limited use of realism, which permits him a more subjective interpretation of physiognomic traits. A certain static meditateness takes away an immediate vivacity, conferring instead on the figures a more statuary quality.³²⁹ Broad planes with a well-molded relief add to their compactness. The casting technique, more widely used by Giampaoli than the striking method, certainly enhances these effects. The surrounding legend, conceived as a sculptural element, as a component part of the composition, usually completely encloses the bust, sometimes in two or three dense rows.

One of the most remarkable creations in this series, signed by the artist as JOANNES PAULVS, is a medal dedicated to his wife Laetitia Savonitto for their

³²⁶ For his more recent work, engraved from designs by Giuseppe Romagnoli, on the issues of the Italian Republic, see: PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, pp. 82-86; RAYMOND, p. 77; YEOMAN, *Catalog of World Coins*, pp. 278-279.

³²⁷ PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 1352; YEOMAN, p. 280, coin A102.

³²⁸ PAGANI, *Monete italiane*, coin 1311.

³²⁹ He also engraved in 1956 a medal of Queen Elizabeth II of England, commemorating her sixth anniversary of reign—published in *IV* (1957), p. 81. For other medals, see PATRICIANI, *IV* (1952), vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 12-13; *IV* (1952), vol. 3, no. 5, pp. 43-45; *IV* (1955), vol. 6, no. 4, p. 27.

SUMMARY

The tides of history since 1800 have borne the art of Italian coin engraving from stagnant shallows to a new, high ground of creative achievement. The opening of the 19th century was marked by a serene recollection of antiquity as expressed in the dignified simplicity of neoclassicism, which soon declined, however, into a tired, anemic intellectualism. Recurrently, artists turned for inspiration to the exhausted sources of a revived classicism which could offer little spiritual guidance in an art bound more and more by official convention. Quest for perfection was confined to exterior form: coins served chiefly utilitarian purposes.

As a result, the coinage produced during the turbulent mid-century years when national unity was being forged under Victor Emmanuel II marks an amazing low point in Italian engraving. The products are cold, superficial: they do not suggest the intellectual and emotional storms which shook those decades. Gone were the eras when the Greek artist enclosed in a small piece of metal part of his own and his countrymen's soul, when Roman engravers portrayed in coarse compositions the political dreams of their leaders, when an esoteric stiffness expressed the awe before king and God which inspired the Middle Ages.

An upheaval in this stagnation was caused by public reaction in the years just prior to World

War I. At the same time President Theodore Roosevelt in the United States was instigating an artistic awakening in American coinage, a radical change occurred also in Italian coin engraving. Artists began to create with the stimulating certainty that their products would be judged, admired, and criticized. New themes enlivened coin images, replacing the monotony of previous heraldic coin types. Into the fervor of this competition were drawn engravers and especially sculptors of repute, and the first decades of the present century teem with their coin projects. Their experiments reveal a new outlook in solving artistic and technical problems.

Then, in the twenties, Italian coin engraving evolved into a more definite and uniform art concept. Once again artists gravitated toward the great early sources of classical antiquity, and for over two decades the exuberant images of ancient Greece and Rome filled the imaginations of the engravers, but all too soon this ideal degenerated again into a cliché.

From this long series of discouraging repetition of classical patterns, declining finally into an obsessive mannerism, there slowly emerged a new concept—the values of Renaissance art transposed to a modern age. With such esthetics, conveyed through an elegant simplicity, Italian coin engravers have found, beyond their other trends, a promising outlook for the future of their art.

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