

THE EXPANSION OF ITALY FOLLOWING WORLD WAR I 1918-1926

This exhibit examines the postal history of the Italian occupation and/or annexation of former Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman territories in the period following World War I. These two former members of the enemy Central Powers surrendered on 3 November and 30 October 1918, respectively, opening up their lands to the entry of Italian and other Allied troops.

The first priority of the government was to take over "Italia Irredenta," i.e. Austrian territories inhabited by ethnic Italians, including the southern Trentino, Venezia Giulia and parts of Dalmatia. A second priority was adjacent lands considered strategically important, which included northern Trentino (South Tyrol to the Austrians) and coastal areas along the eastern shore of the Adriatic as far south as Albania.

In addition to sending troops to occupy the Ottoman capital of Constantinople, Italian forces were deployed in Palestine, where they hoped to be assigned to protect the Christian shrines, and southeast Anatolia, where Italy sought special economic privileges. In the end, however, Palestine became a British mandate, and Anatolia was turned over to the Turkish Nationalist government.

Naturally, all of this activity had considerable philatelic consequences. In addition to military mail, civil postal services had to be developed in the various political entities. The Italians were especially attuned to the fact that the issuance of stamps for new territories provided good internal propaganda after the harsh times during the war and served to enhance the country's standing internationally.



The victory over its ancient enemy, Austria-Hungary, was cause for great celebration in Italy. A grand review of the troops, led by King Victor Emmanuel III, held in the newly-liberated city of Trieste, is depicted on the above commemorative postcard.

Since most of the activity shown took place essentially simultaneously, the exhibit is presented geographically from west to east in the order shown on the following Plan Page. There is an imbalance of material from territories that issued more stamps, i.e. Fiume, but a substantial effort has been made to include all areas and significant events.

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PLAN OF EXHIBIT

Material in this exhibit will be shown geographically from west to east, starting with the Trentino up to the Brenner Pass and running through Oltre Giuba in East Africa:

Trentino -- 1918-1925
Venezia-Giulia -- 1918-1925
Austria-Hungary Proper -- 1919-1923
Fiume -- 1918-1924
Dalmatia -- 1919-1921
Montenegro -- 1919
Albania -- 1918-1921
Saseno -- 1922-1923
Corfu -- 1923
Turkey Proper:
Constantinople -- 1919-1923
Smyrna -- 1919-1923
Adalia -- 1919-1921
Scalanova -- 1919-1922
Castelrosso -- 1921-1924
Palestine -- 1918-1920
Oltre Giuba -- 1925-1926



Cover mailed from the newly-liberated town of Borghetto sull'Adige on 3 November 1918, the day the Austrians signed the Armistice agreement ending the war.

TRENTINO

Following the armistice with Austria-Hungary on 3 November 1918, Italian troops advanced to occupy all of the Trentino, a triangular-shaped territory between the former Italian border and the Brenner Pass. Anxious to philatelically commemorate their victory, within eight days of the signing of the armistice they had gathered up the supplies of Austrian definitive stamps available in the post offices, overprinted them "Kingdom of Italy/Trentino/3 nov. 1918," and placed them on sale. These stamps were theoretically valid for postage until 19 June 1924 but in fact were quickly replaced with Italian stamps overprinted "Venezia Tridentina."

Povo
29 December 1918



Quantities available of the 18 denominations varied widely. Some of the higher values are very scarce and have not been seen on cover by exhibitor. This applies to the 90 heller (200 printed), 2 kronen (350) and 4 kronen (210). In addition, only 11 copies of the 10 kronen were found and overprinted so this value was never sold at the post offices but given out to high dignitaries according to Bolaffi. Due to complaints raised by those not getting an example, 20 more were acquired and a second printing made. However, it is rarely seen for obvious reasons.

TRENTINO
Overprints on Austria
Civil Postmarks

Meran
3 December 1918

Povo
27 December 1918



R Meran
439

Raccomandato



R Povo
23

During the early part of the occupation, the post offices continued to use the old Austrian postmarks and registry labels in conjunction with the overprinted stamps. Upper cover paid 20 heller postage + 25 heller registration internally to Italy. Lower example paid 25 heller postage + 25 heller registration to France.

TRENTINO
First Overprints on Italy

Trento
10 January 1919

Posta Militare 124
29 December 1918
6 January 1919



It was soon decided that it would be more politically correct to use Italian stamps instead of Austrian ones. As a result, a new issue of 4,100 sets consisting of nine denominations of the King Victor Emmanuel III definitives was overprinted "Venezia/Tridentina" and issued on 20 December 1918.

TRENTINO
Second Overprints on Italy

Trento
3 January 1919

Meran
7 February 1919



Because Austrian currency was still in general circulation in the occupied territories, the Italians issued a new set in January 1919 of the three most common denominations with the "Venezia Tridentina" overprint but also surcharged in heller. A similar postal card was also printed. These were valid for postage until 19 April 1919.

TRENTINO
Third Overprints on Italy

Trento
20 April 1919

Meran
2 April 1919



S. D. Wassermann

Photographie und Optik

Meran, Südtirol

Stefaniepromenade, Pension Neuhaus

Sommersaison: Karersee b. Bozen



raccomandata



Kodak Societa Anonima .

Milano.

Via Vitter Pisani 6.



In order to have stamps that could be used interchangeably in all of the occupied territories, including Dalmatia, a new set of Italian stamps surcharged in Austrian currency was issued between January and April 1919. It consisted of eleven denominations of regular stamps plus two special delivery values. These were theoretically valid until 19 June 1924 but, in fact, they were replaced by unoverprinted Italian stamps well before then.

TRENTINO
Third Overprints on Italy

Obermais b. Meran
9 May 1919

Bozen
19 April 1919

Trento
16 April 1919



Examples of the overprinted stamps on registered covers are shown, including local and international usages.

TRENTINO
Postal Card
Provisional Postage Due Stamps

Meran
15 March 1919

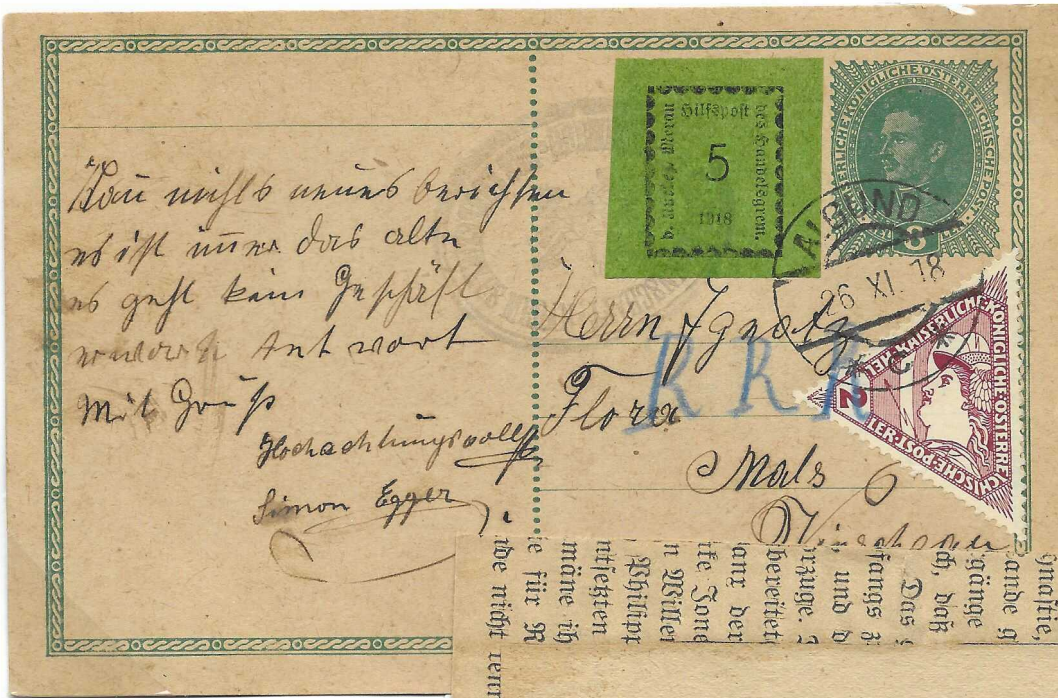
Bozen
16 April 1919



Upper example is a postal card with a similar overprint used from Meran to Innsbruck. Postage due stamps were not immediately available, so normal surcharged postage stamps were sometimes overprinted "Porto" and used as dues. In this case, the fee for a domestic letter would have been 20 centesimi. However, no credit was given for the 2 cent. stamp that was affixed, and a full 40 cent. double deficiency was assessed. A very unusual usage.

TRENTINO
Local Delivery Stamps

Algund
26 November 1918
27 November 1918
7 December 1918



The only "locals" used in the liberated territory were issued by the Chamber of Commerce in Merano for local delivery of business mail. The first set (in small format) was issued on 20 November 1918. This was followed by a second series depicting the coat of arms of the city that came out on 1 December 1918. The entire operation was discontinued on 20 December, when normal service was resumed by the post office.

TRENTINO
Unoverprinted Italian Stamps

Arco
25 October 1924

Campo Tures (Sand)
9 June 1925

Colle Isarco
(Gossensass)
14 August 1925



After 20 April 1919, normal Italian stamps and new Italian postmarks began to be introduced into the liberated territory. Examples shown here are from some of the small villages, not often seen. These have "Trento" at the bottom of the dial so that the area from which they originated would be clear.

TRENTINO
Unoverprinted Italian Stamps

Maia Bassa (Untermals)
18 May 1925

Pergine
24 December 1920

Raccomandata



98317

Mr. Max R. Kress
1725 Snyder ave

98317



Cedola - Coupon.	637	Pergine	64
	4865		

Amministrazione delle Poste Italiane
Administration des Postes d'Italie.

Bollettino di **Wertangabe** d'expédition.
Cassette **Valeur déclarée**
Valore dichiarato

Qui unito / Ci-joint: Cassette } Valori di dogana / Valeurs en douane

Valore assicurato / Valeur assurée: **Due Cento Lire**

Egregio Signor **M. MEISTER**

Nome e indirizzo del mittente / Nom et domicile de l'expéditeur: **ZURIGO**

Luogo di destinazione / Lieu de destination: **Boersestrasse N° 10**

Via e numero di casa / Rue et numéro: **Svizzera**

Paese di destinazione / Pays de destination: **Svizzera**

Peso - Poids: **W**

Avviamento / Acheminement: **Domodossola**

* Quadro da riempirsi dall'ufficio / Cadre à remplir par le bureau du pays de destination.

Totale / Total

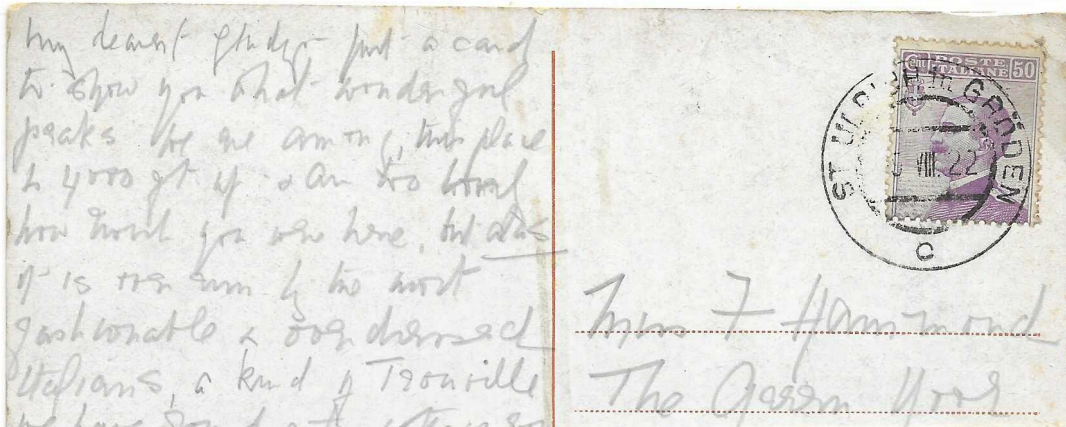
In some cases the new postmarks included the former Austrian name of the town as well as the new Italian one, as was the case with Maia Bassa (Untermals) shown above. (The Pergine postmark is still the old Austrian one.)

TRENTINO
Unoverprinted Italian Stamps

St. Ulrich in Gröden
15 August 1922

San Candido
(Innichen)
19 July 1923

Tarvisio
20 November 1923



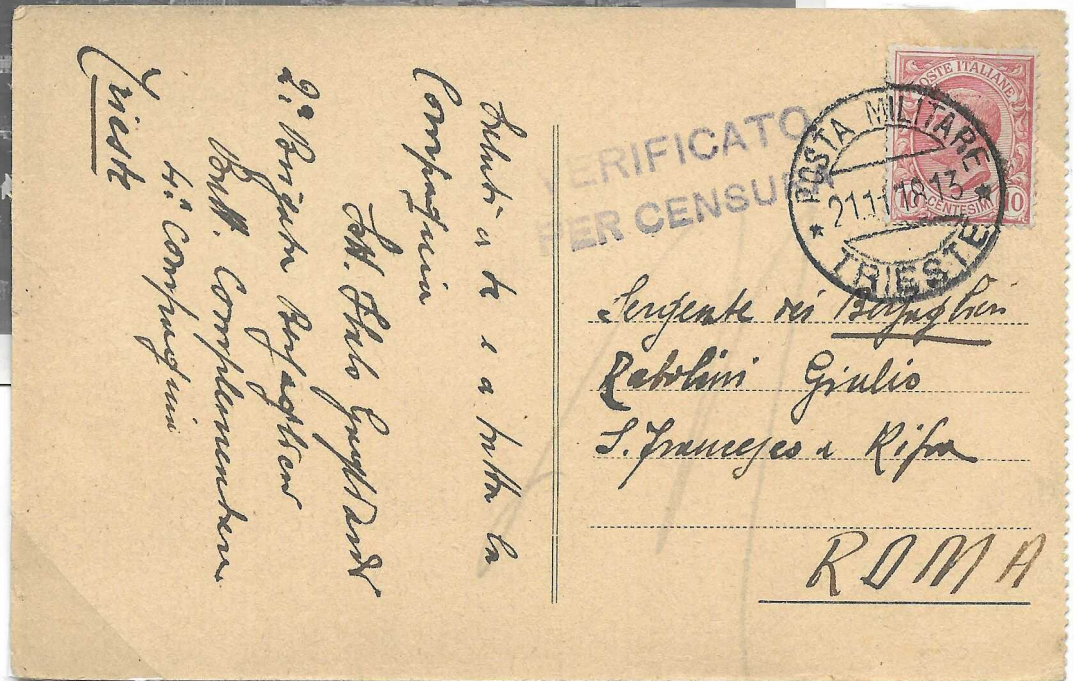
Covers showing different types of postmarks. The St. Ulrich postmark is the old Austrian one; San Candido is a new Italian one but includes the Austrian name of Innichen; Tarvisio is entirely in Italian.

VENEZIA GIULIA

Also quickly occupied by the Italians following the armistice with Austria-Hungary was Venezia Giulia, a diamond-shaped area at the head of the Adriatic Sea, known today as Istria. On 3 November 1918, the first Italian troops arrived at Trieste, the major city in the territory. To commemorate their victory, supplies of Austrian definitive stamps available in the post offices were collected, overprinted "Kingdom of Italy/Venezia Giulia/3. XI. 18," and placed on sale between 14 November to 4 December 1918. These first stamps were theoretically valid for postage until 19 June 1924 but in fact were quickly replaced with Italian stamps overprinted "Venezia Giulia."



Posta Militare/Trieste
3 November 1918
21 November 1918



The first actual philatelic event in Venezia Giulia was the use of a special cancel inscribed "Military Post" in Trieste. It is recorded from 10 November to 1 December 1918. However, in order to provide souvenirs of the liberation of the city, the postmark was officially backdated to 3 November and used to cancel various cards. Two such examples are shown above -- one with a stamp not issued until 15 November and a cachet of the Naval Air Mail Service that was not used until the 23rd. (One of these cancels has a dash after the "3," not the other.)

VENEZIA GIULIA
Overprints on Austria

Trieste
28 December 1918



A few copies of the 90 heller were overprinted, but the supply was too low to warrant issuing the stamp. The certificate from Oliva indicates that only 20 copies came on the philatelic market.

No. 16,543

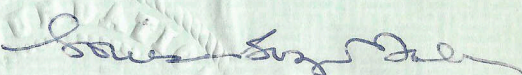
January 14th 19 63

THE PHILATELIC FOUNDATION
22 EAST 35TH STREET
NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

EXPERT COMMITTEE

We have examined the enclosed..... Austria
1918 3h. to 80h. and 1k. Scott #N33-N45
and N47 on one cover -----

submitted by..... Alexander Bisk -----
of which a photograph is attached and are of the opinion
that the overprints are genuine, and used
on a philatelic cover -----


For The Expert Committee
Chairman

THE PHILATELIC FOUNDATION

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32



16543

GUGLIELMO OLIVA

PERITO FILATELICO

GENOVA

PIAZZA DELLA LIBERTÀ, 4-3

TELEF. 52.079 - 582.414



Certificato N. 3143/54

VENEZIA GIULIA - 1918 - 90 heller lilla bruno. Non emesso.

Ho esaminato il francobollo sopra descritto, che reca la sovrastampa su tre righe - Regno d'Italia - Venezia Giulia - 3. XI. 18 e del quale una riproduzione fotografica é unita al presente certificato.

A mio parere l'esemplare ha la sovrastampa originale che corrisponde al 20° francobollo del foglio, é privo di difetti occulti e l'ho firmato.

Aggiungerò che questo francobollo, anche se non posto in corso, fu stampato all'epoca con tavola ed inchiostro originale e non ha nulla a che vedere con le falsificazioni impropriamente chiamate tirature abusive.

Genova, 21 Dicembre 1954.