

# Monete Degli Stati Italiani (Coins of the Italian States)

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Ciao amici! Attendees of the February 2019 meeting of the Stephen James Central Savannah River Area Coin Club (SJCSRACC) were treated to an extra special educational program by member Walter Kubilius. Walt is renowned for his in-depth research and excellently built presentations, and his program *Coins of the Italian States, 1760-1870* was no exception – it was interesting and professionally done!

His program really piqued my interest in this period of Italian history, so like any good numismatist I began researching to learn more. This article, which in general addresses the minor (copper and silver) coinage of the period, is a result of the research that followed and includes photos of some of the coinage Walt presented. If you find this subject interesting, there are many excellent sources of information

available on the internet, many more than the references listed at the end of this article. Buona lettura!

This article covers the evolution of coinage as the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian states are first conquered by the French and, after regaining independence, they transition from small independent states to a unified country in the second half of the century. As can be expected, along the way there was significant political intrigue and many subjugations which changed the coins of the period.

### Kingdoms:

- Lombardy-Venetia
- Sardinia
- The Papal States
- The Two Sicilies

### Dukedoms:

- Grand Duchy of Tuscany
- Duchy of Parma
- Duchy of Modena and Reggio
- Duchy of Lucca



Flag of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy, 1805

With respect to the political geography of the Italian Peninsula, it was comprised of four Kingdoms and four main Dukedoms (see sidebar and map) although this tended to flux as the imperial European powers waged their endless wars. To help the reader gain context, here is a generalized timeline of the key events which ultimately produced a completely unified Italy by 1870:

- 1700s: The people of the Italian Peninsula are subject to the alternating control of France, Spain, and Austria based on the many wars these powers engaged in.
- 1796 – 1805: Napoleon Bonaparte conquers various parts of the peninsula; establishes Republics in these areas, forming the Republic of Italy in the north of the peninsula.
- 1805 – 1814: Napoleon I is now Emperor of France and King of Italy (Northern and Central territories); Joseph Bonaparte is King of Naples. They did not control the Kingdom of Sardinia or the Kingdom of Sicily.
- 1814: Bonaparte defeated and the former Italian States are reconstituted. Austria is the dominant political and military force. Secret Italian factions and movements begin promoting unification.
- 1848: Lombardy-Venetia and Milan revolt against Austrian rule; Austria quashes the revolt.
- 1859: Franco-Austrian war. Sardinia's Prime Minister Count Camillo di Cavour secures alliance with France, who is victorious over the Austrians. The Northern Kingdoms become united and retain the name Kingdom of Sardinia.
- 1860 - 1861: Giuseppe Garibaldi leads army into southern states and overthrows Bourbon monarchy. Territories subject to rule of Victor Emmanuel II, King of Sardinia. Combined territories are proclaimed the Kingdom of Italy. Rome and Venetia are not part of the new kingdom.
- 1866: Italy gains control of Venetia from the Austrians, in return for the Italian's aid during the 1866 Austro-Prussian war.
- 1870: France, which protected the Papal States, became embroiled in the Franco-Prussian war. The Italian Army took advantage and invaded Rome. Unification of the entire Italian Peninsula is complete.



Flag of the Kingdom of Italy, 1860

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Many monetary units were used in the various regions of the Italian peninsula. This must have been very challenging to figure out due to the different denominations (many unique to a given region or principality), equivalencies, and the varied composition / precious metal content between the coins. Research at the Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC) website reveals they catalog 158 different denominations in use on the peninsula in the pre-Napoleonic era, many of which are fairly obscure and were, presumably, regional or issued by city-states.

NGC's website also lists 101 different denominations for the post-Napoleonic period that they have graded (down from the 158.) Shown in the upcoming tables are the main denominations and equivalencies used by region / principality in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, presented in a north to south geographical order. This article will not attempt to address all 101 denominations – for this level of information the Reader is referred to Krause Publications' *Standard Catalog of World Coins, 1801 – 1900*. The 7<sup>th</sup> edition (2012) contains 43 pages devoted to cataloging the coinage of the Italian States!

## NORTHERN ITALIAN COINAGE MONETARY EQUIVALENCIES

PRE-1816 MONETARY EQUIVALENCIES				
denari	soldo	lira	scudo	doppietta
12	1			
240	20	1		
		6	1	
			2	1

Reales were also a denomination used.  
50 Soldi = 10 Reales = 2.5 Lire

1816 - 1860 MONETARY EQUIVALENCIES		
Centesimi	Soldi	Lira
5	1	
100	20	1



Kingdom of Sardinia, 1848

**Sardinia:** The Kingdom of Sardinia was comprised of two separate geographical areas – the Island of Sardinia in the southeast Mediterranean Ocean, and the Piedmont and Savoy regions in the north-west of the peninsula, bordering France and Switzerland. Prior to 1796 this Kingdom



3 centesimi, Sardinia, 1826  
23mm, 5.9g



5 lire, Sardinia, 1849  
37mm, 25g, .9 fine

used the standard denari / soldo / lira / scudo system, but they converted to a decimal system in 1816. Unlike other lire in use at the time, the Sardinian lire contained only 4.5 grams of silver, versus the typical 5 grams. Following unification of Italy in 1860, the new Italian lire issued in 1861 maintained the Sardinian composition of 4.5 grams silver.



Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia 1815

**Lombardy-Venetia:** The Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia was often under the rule of Austria. The composition of their lire (also called a pound) was in line with German standards, so it contained 4.33 grams .9 fine silver. Under Austrian rule denominations of ¼, ½, 1, 1 ½ and 2 lire were issued.

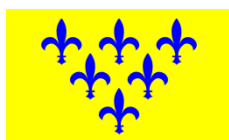


¼ lire, Lombardy-Venetia  
1822, 16mm, 1.62 g, .6 fine



1 centesimi, Lombardy-Venetia  
1822, 18mm, 1.7 g

Austria also issued copper ½ and 1 soldo pieces for use in Lombardy-Venetia. 1 lira equaled 20 soldi. During the revolution in 1848 Lombardy-Venetia issued lire that were subdivided by 100 cents (centesimi) and these were issued in denominations of: 1, 3, 5, 10 and 15 cents. In 1862 the Venetia lire were replaced by the florin, at a rate of 3 lira to 1 florin. In 1866 Lombardy-Venetia was unified with the rest of Italy, and use of the Italian lire commenced.



Duchy of Parma, 1814 - 1859

**Parma:** In the Duchy of Parma the primary coin was the lire, except during the Napoleonic occupation (1802 – 1814) during which the French Franc was the prime monetary unit. In 1815, following independence from France, the Parman lire was established as equivalent to a French franc and the Sardinian lire. As seen on the adjacent table, Parmans also used several other denominations based on the soldi, which was one-twentieth a lire.

PARMAN MONETARY EQUIVALENCIES			
6 denari	1 sesino		
12 denari	1 soldo		
	20 Soldi	1 lire (5 grams; .9 fine)	Post-1815: 1 French franc 1 Sardinian lire
		7 lire	1 ducato



5 soldi, Duchy of Parma,  
1815, 15mm 1.25 g, .9 fine

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Duchy of Modena and Reggio  
1814 - 1859

**Modena and Reggio:** The Duchy of Modena and Reggio was in the northern Italian peninsula between Milan and Florence and existed in one form or another from 1452 until 1859. This area is now part of the Italian region of Emilia-Romagna. Modena began minting coinage in the 13th century but ceased in 1796 when it was conquered by France. It is worth stating that the coinage of Modena and Reggio was very confusing due to denominational differences. For example, Modena and Reggio each had their own lire, but they did not share the same value - the Reggian Lira was worth 2/3 of a Modenese Lira. So in Reggio the Reggian lire was worth 12 denari, but in Modena it was worth 8 denari. Can you imagine the bartering this caused?



Duchy of Lucca  
1814 - 1859

**Lucca:** The Duchy of Lucca was an independent Italian state from 1160 until 1847. Lucca itself is a small, walled town in present-day Tuscany. Following Napoleon's invasion, Bonaparte gave the area to his sister Elisa to rule as the Republic of Lucca, which she did until the French were deposed in 1814. It was then occupied for three years by the Neapolitans from the south, and then it became a duchy of the Queen of Etruria (the Napoleonic successor state of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany) from 1817 to 1847, after which it was absorbed by Tuscany. In 1859 Lucca revolted to join the Kingdom of Sardinia, and became part of the unified Italy in 1861.

During the Napoleonic Republic period (1799 – 1814) Lucca's coinage was based on the French franc and was decimalized. Four denominations were issued: 3 and 5 centesimi, 1 Franco (equivalent to 100 centesimi), and 5 Franchi. Prior to 1800 and between 1826 – 1847 Lucca issued lire, where 1 lire equaled 20 soldi. Other denominations included the denari, quattrini, bolognino, scudo (shield), and doppia (see chart for equivalencies). In 1847, when Lucca was absorbed by The Grand Duchy of Tuscany, Lucca's Lira was replaced by the Tuscan florin at a rate of 2 lire to 1 florin.

LUCCAN MONETARY EQUIVALENCIES						
Prior to 1800; 1826 - 1847						
denari	quattrini	soldo	Bolognino	lire	scudo	doppia
4	1					
	3	1				
		2	1			
		20		1		
				7.5	1	
					3	1



1807 Republic of Lucca 5 Franchi  
37mm 24.84 g, .9 fine



1826 1 quattrini, Duchy of Lucca, 15 mm, 1.23 g



1826 1 soldo, Duchy of Lucca, 22 mm, 3.25 g



1837 1 Lira, Duchy of Lucca, 22.5 mm, 4.72



Grand Duchy of Tuscany  
1815 - 1859

**Tuscany:** The Grand Duchy of Tuscany was ruled by Ferdinand III from July 1790 (when his father Leopold II succeeded as Holy Roman emperor) until 1799 when he was displaced by the French Army due to his joining the English coalition which opposed France. He returned to Tuscany in 1814 following France's defeat, and he died in June 1824. As can be seen in the related table of

monetary equivalency shown here, prior to 1826 the monetary system had many equivalencies. This was simplified in 1826, when the Tuscan fiorino (florin) became the main unit of coinage. One fiorino was worth 100 quattrini. They also continued the use of the paolo and 1 paoli was valued at 40 quattrini.

TUSCAN MONETARY EQUIVALENCIES					
until 1826					
denari	quattrini	soldo	paoli	lire	
4	1				
	3	1			
	40		1		
	60	20	1.5	1	
				10	1 dena
			10		1 Francescone 1 Scudo
1826 - 1859					
quattrini	fiorino	paoli			
40		1			
100	1				
	4	10			

The Francescone was a large denomination coin issued by Ferdinand III, Grand Duke of Tuscany from 1791 - 1801. It was .917 fine silver, 27.5 grams, and 41mm in diameter of 41 mm. Ref: <https://en.numista.com/catalogue/pieces21652>

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1846, 3 quattrini, Grand Duchy of Tuscany 21 mm, 2.0 g



1859, 5 centesimi, Grand Duchy of Tuscany 21 mm, 2.0 g



1834 1 Francescone Grand Duchy of Tuscany 41 mm, 27.34 g, .917 fine



Papal States 754 1870

**Papal States:** While the Papal States had many different denominations, such as the grosso, carlino, testone, etc., their monetary system was based on the primary denominations of quattrini, baiocchi and scudo. The adjacent chart shows the denominations and equivalencies of the Papal States coinage prior to 1866, when they decimalized their coinage. 100 centesimi was equal to 1 lira, which contained 0.1342 ASW.

PAPAL STATES (CENTRAL ITALY) MONETARY EQUIVALENCIES		
Pre 1866:		
quattrini	baiocchi	
25	5	1 grosso
	7.5	1 carlino
50	10	1 giulio 1 paoli
150	30	1 testone
500	100	1 scudo (0.7736 ASW)
		3 scudi = 1 doppia



1759 1/2 baiocco, Papal States 25 mm, 5.8 g



1835 1 baiocco, Papal States 29 mm, 10.0 g



1867 1 lira, Papal States 23 mm, 5.0 g, .835 fine

SOUTHERN ITALY DENOMINATIONS		
tornese (Copper)	grana (Silver)	ducat (Gold)
0.5	5	3
1	10	6
1.5	20	15
2	60	30
3	120	
4		
5	1) The "piastra" was the unofficial name of the 120 grana silver coin.	
8	2) The denominations are not structured to be easily mathematically additive, which made change-making difficult.	
10		
EQUIVALENCIES		
tornese (Copper)	grana (Silver)	ducat (Gold)
10	5	0.05
50	25	0.25
100	50	0.5
200	100	1



Constitutional Kingdom of The Two Sicilies 1848-1849

**The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies:** The northern and central regions had fairly logical monetary systems; however, the same could not be said for the southern region. Naples and Sicily (which joined to become the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies) had only three denominations – the tornese, the grana, and the ducat. To complicate matters, the grana and the ducat did not have a singular unit. The smallest denomination for the grana was 5, while for the ducat it was 3. These

denominations, coupled with the lack of individual granas and ducats, resulted in a monetary system that was not structured to be mathematically additive. This system must have made the process of change-making very difficult!

After reviewing the coins of the Italian States, an interesting afterthought occurred - one to which the Author has not seen any information: how did these states managed the transition to the new forms of coinage as they occurred? Were the old coins recalled and melted? Did they simply continue being used? One assumes that since silver is silver and gold is gold, that when presented payment in "old" coinage it would be accepted. But again, the Author has not found any information on this topic. Perhaps this should be a topic for another article?

**Spero ti sia piaciuto questo articolo! Buona fortuna con la tua collezione di monete!**

**(I hope you have enjoyed this article! Good luck with your coin collecting!)**

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## AUTHOR NOTES:

The author thanks Mr. Walter Kubilius of the Stephen James Central River Area Coin Club for sharing his presentation with the Club and for many of the excellent coin photos used in this article.

The US Department of State, Office of the Historian website contains an article which summarizes the unification of Italy from the Napoleonic era through the incorporation of Rome in 1870. The article provides this information as context for a brief discussion on the impact this unification had on US foreign policy.

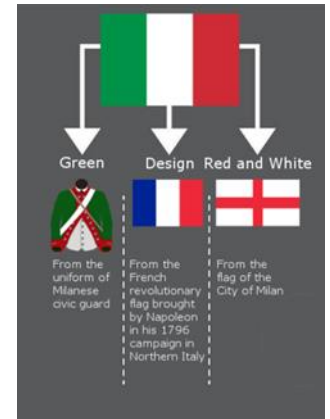
<https://history.state.gov/countries/issues/italian-unification>

*Italian Flag: What the Colors Mean & A Little History* is an excellent article on the history of the Italian Flag from its origin in 1796 to its current form, adopted when Italy became a republic in 1946. This article can be read at:

<https://www.italylogue.com/about-italy/italian-flag-what-the-colors-mean-a-little-history/>

An interesting animated map showing the history of Italian Unification is at

<https://www.vox.com/2014/12/1/7314717/italian-unification>



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