

CHAPTER EIGHT

ITALIAN STATES

AND POST OFFICES IN THE LEVANT

Sperati made thirty-nine different reproductions of twenty-three different basic stamps in this group. Some were obviously popular for of one he made four different imitations and of four others he made three different imitations. His earliest recorded imitations were made in 1921.

It should be noted that some of the tests apply to the position of the genuine stamp on the sheet.

The Cross of Savoy and the Sicilian stamps have deceived several experts who were misled by their ability at plating and having identified the sheet position, they proceeded to certify the stamp as genuine.

In the case of the engraved stamps, the absence of the basic test for engraving is a certain and easy clue for identification.

The inverted frame varieties of Sardinia are particularly interesting as everything about them is genuine with the exception of the frame.

Sperati made at least forty-three different cancellations for five different states, a few of which are extremely deceiving but the majority are "too true to be good."

MODENA

There are two stamps to consider—both Newspaper Tax—the 1853 9 centesimi and 1859 10 centesimi. The following comments apply to both reproductions.

Sperati is known to have made "die" proofs in black and in colour, as well as unused reproductions on genuine paper. It is probable that both reproductions can be found on portions of genuine newspapers.

The genuine stamps were printed by typography and the reproductions by photo-lithography.

1853 NINE CENTESIMI PLATE 57

For **comparison** use the stamp with the small inscription.

The **colour** is a good match but under the MVL the genuine appears black on greyish toned while the reproduction appears grey on pinkish.

The **impression** of the reproduction is woolly and is obviously not typographed.

Basic tests: *B, E, F and K.*

SPECIFIC TESTS

Note: Some of these tests may apply to a genuine sheet position.

- (i) There is a break in the top frame over the "PO" of "POSTE."
- (ii) Both "S" 's in "ESTENSI" are badly shaped and appear to be inverted.
- (iii) There is a major flaw on the left of the breast of the eagle.
- (iv) The "N" of "CEN" is shorter on the left than it is on the right.

ITALIAN STATES

Modena—*contd.*

1859 TEN CENTESIMI PLATE 57

The impression of the reproduction is obviously not typographed.

Basic tests: *B, E and F.*

SPECIFIC TESTS

Note: Some of these tests may apply to the genuine stamp from the same sheet position as that copied by Sperati. The stamp is from the right vertical row.

- (i) Note the marginal frame line at right which is broken over the first "T" of "GAZZETTE," and just above this and between the outer frame line and the top right corner ornament there is a dot.
- (ii) There is a dot between the "N" and "T" of "CENT."
- (iii) The head and serifs of the "T" of "TASSA" are separate.
- (iv) The "A" of "TASSA" has been retouched and the small fault that comes on the inside of the lower part of the right leg of the letter has been removed.
- (v) As in the genuine there is a dot between the two "S" 's of "TASSA" but the right letter has been retouched and the dot that normally comes in the head has been removed.

NAPLES

1860 HALF TORNESE

PLATE 57

Sperati is known to have made "die" proofs in black and in colour, as well as used reproductions. There are at least five different reproductions but they are from only three different sheet positions. These reproductions are often found on pieces of old letters or on genuine newspapers.

	GENUINE	SPERATI
PRINTING	<i>Engraving</i>	<i>Photo-lithography</i>
COLOUR {	<i>Pale to deep blue</i>	<i>Pale to deep blue</i>
DL		<i>Too deep and too bright</i>
MVL	<i>Dull to deep grey-blue</i>	<i>Very similar</i>
PAPER MVL	<i>Rather stained</i>	

BASIC TESTS: *A, D and E.*

SPECIFIC TESTS

Reproduction A

The negative and cliché are both dated November 1942. A second cliché was made in August 1946. This reproduction can always be easily identified as it is cancelled in the top left with type 1d.

- (i) There are two white patches in the upper parts of the "D" of "DELLA."
- (ii) There is a break at the foot of the "B" of "BOLLO."
- (iii) The top left serif of the "N" of "TANA" is broken away.

Reproduction B

- (iv) This sheet position may always be identified by the left vertical frame line of the upright of the cross which is extended into the circle above and touches the "P" of "POSTA."
- (v) There is a break in the right side of the lower half of the "T" of "POSTA" (Plate 57).

- (vi) There are white patches on both sides of the last "O" of "BOLLO."
- (vii) In the vertical lines of shading in the top right quarter between the arms of the cross there are some dots between the fourth and fifth lines to the left of "NAP."

Reproduction C

In the Sperati records there are two negatives dated November 1939, presumably a cliché must have been made from one of these at that time. The cliché in possession of the B.P.A. is dated August 1953.

- (viii) The centre of the cross has been slightly retouched and in consequence many of the little marks that show on the genuine have been removed.
- (ix) The "S" of "POSTA" has been retouched, removing the scratch like an acute accent that runs into the head of this letter in the genuine stamp from this sheet position.
- (x) The outer frame line at right is broken where it should meet the circular frame.