

# THE DESTROYED MONUMENTS STAMPS OF THE ITALIAN SOCIAL REPUBLIC

In July 1943, when it became obvious that Italy did not have the strength to oppose the Allied military power, Mussolini, the de-facto head of state, was arrested by forces loyal to the King and a new government was formed. An armistice was later signed. Mussolini was rescued by German paratroopers and brought to northern Italy in September 1943. Later that month, the new Northern Italian state was officially proclaimed, which was later named Italian Social Republic (Repubblica Sociale Italiana - RSI).

German army occupied central and northern Italy under the pretense of rescuing their allies. The new government was a puppet state. For propaganda purposes, German authority was not officially emphasized, and it was claimed that the RSI was the real independent Italian government that refused to surrender. This state was never recognized by the Allies. As a matter of fact, at the end of the War, a German general signed the surrender on behalf of the RSI.

Initial attempts to issue postage stamps consisted of overprinting the Kingdom of Italy stock at hand, but no new stamps were printed. The need for new stamps quickly became severe.

In early 1944, a decision was made to print new stamps. A set of four ordinary stamps and one express stamp was prepared in the most needed denominations (20, 25, 30, 75 centesimi for ordinary, 1.25 Lire for express). Three stamps (20, 25, 1.25) showed national monuments destroyed in the war, and two stamps (30, 75) showed a drummer boy that was calling the people to fight. This set is called "Destroyed Monuments". It was prepared and printed in Rome, using the paper with crown watermark already at hand. The stamps were issued on June 5, 1944. Distribution was partly achieved before the day of issue. However, Rome was taken by the Allies one day earlier. A large stock, and the dies of the two stamps (20 and 25 centesimi) that could not be taken up North were seized by the Allies and turned over to the Southern Italian government. The 20 and 25 centesimi stamps were also overprinted and used in South.

The rate schedule had been the same since 1927. Changes were necessary, and a new rate schedule was prepared effective 1 October 1944. Another set of ten stamps was already being prepared, known as "Destroyed Monuments, Second Set" due to need for particular denominations. Similar subjects were chosen, except for a propaganda-oriented allegoric picture for the "workhorse" stamp of 50 Centesimi. This set was printed on unwatermarked paper, on staggered dates based on the need. Some stamps were issued before new rate schedule. Changes in rate schedule and issue dates of new denominations caused some interesting rare usages to form, which are reviewed under the section dedicated to the second set.

The initial fears of inflation did not come through; the economic conditions as well as postal rates remained stable until the end of RSI. The real inflation and rate increases came during the Regency (Luogotenenza) and Italian Republic periods after the RSI, that reflect themselves on the late 1945 and 1946 usages.

## Plan of the Exhibit

1st set: Essays  
Errors and varieties

2nd Set: Essays  
Errors and varieties

### Usages, both sets combined:

1-Stamp-oriented

2-Rate-oriented

a) Domestic

b) Fiscal

c) International

### Usages after RSI:

Valid in North until the end of 1945

Not valid in South, taxed or tolerated

Out of Validity, 1946 and 1947

*Material with expert certificates are marked with a C*