

Identifying Watermarks on AMG VG Issues

by Richard Pederson

The AMG VG issues are among my favorite stamps created by the Allied Military Government (AMG). One of the main reasons for this is the vast array of varieties that were created when producing the AMG VG stamps. By order of the AMG, Italian stamps were overprinted with “A.M.G. V.G.” to create stamps for use in Venezia Giulia. There are several distinct overprint types, numerous overprint errors/varieties, and an array of different watermarks. Previously (Volume 4, Number 4 and Volume 5, Number 1), I have written about the numerous overprint errors and varieties appearing on AMG VG issues. This time I will discuss the watermarks that appear on AMG VG stamps.

Many AMG collectors also collect U.S. issues and, in so doing, have had to deal with the watermark varieties on the Washington-Franklin issues. In some instances, it is extremely difficult to detect single line USPS watermarks on some Washington-Franklin stamps. This is due to the fact that on those stamps, only a tiny portion of the watermark may be visible and that watermark may also be hidden by a cancelation or difficult to see because of the stamp color. There are no such problems with the AMG VG watermarks as one or more full or mostly full watermarks appear on each stamp and the watermarks are large enough so that when placed face down against a black background, they are often visible, even without the application of watermark fluid.

There are three distinct types of watermark appearing on the AMG VG issues. There is a crown, a narrow winged wheel, and a wide winged wheel. There are also varieties of the narrow winged wheel watermarks as they can appear in different orientations (i.e., rotated 90, 180, or 270 degrees) and the wide winged wheel is also reversed with multiple orientations. The three basic watermark types are shown in Figure 1.



Crown



Narrow Winged Wheel



Wide Winged Wheel

Figure 1. Basic “A.M.G. V.G.” watermark types.

First, let’s look at the crown watermark. This watermark only appears on three of the non-revenue AMG VG issues (see Figure 2) and also appears on several types of revenue stamps including those

for Letters of Exchange, Stock Transfer, Court of Justice, and Weights and Measures. On the revenue issues, the crown can appear rotated 90, 180, or 270 degrees as shown in Table 1.



Figure 2. Only non-revenue stamps with Crown watermark.

Table 1. Known orientations for crown watermark.

Orientation	Image
Crown in normal upright position (on revenues and issues pictured in Figure 1)	
Crown rotated right 90° (only on revenues)	
Crown rotated right 180° (only on revenues)	
Crown rotated right 270° (only on revenues)	

Next, we will examine the winged wheel watermarks. There are two basic types of the winged wheel watermark ON AMG VG stamps (see Figures 3 and 4). The first type has a narrow wing, a wheel that is approximately 13 millimeters in width, and the entire watermark measures 16 millimeters in height by 16 millimeters in width. The second type has a wide wing with a large wheel that is approximately 20 millimeters in width.

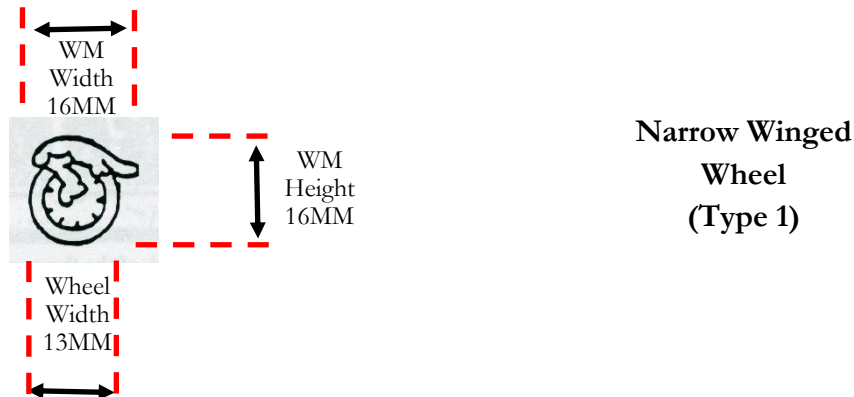
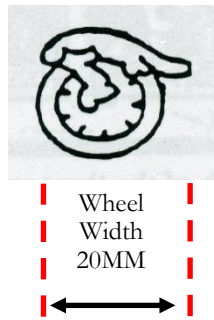


Figure 3. Small Winged Wheel watermark.



Wide Winged Wheel (Type 3)

Author's Note: There is a third type of winged wheel watermark used on Italian stamps overprinted by the AMG, but it only appears on the issues for the Free Territory of Trieste.

Figure 4. Large Winged Wheel watermark.

The Type 1 watermarks appear on most AMG VG issues. As shown in Figure 5, the tip of the wing can point left, or it can be reversed and point right. Known orientations of the left and right pointing wings are shown in Table 2.



Figure 5. Right and left pointing Winged Wheel watermarks.

The Type 3 watermarks are easy to detect as they are significantly wider than the Type 1 watermarks and are seen in a single orientation (see Figure 6) on the one non-revenue stamp on which they appear, the first printing of the 100 lire stamp picturing a united family and scales. This stamp is also easily differentiated from the second printing (shown at right in Figure 7) because it is darker in color (shown at left in Figure 7). In addition, Type 3 watermarks appear on several revenue stamps. Table 3 shows the known orientations for the Type 3 watermark on AMG VG stamps, including revenues.

As is demonstrated above, if you have an understanding of how to distinguish the different types and varieties of watermarks on AMG VG stamps, you have taken a significant step in identifying your AMG VG issues since there are only three of the basic stamps that do not have watermarks. In a following article, I will discuss the basic types of overprint that were used on the AMG VG stamps. Accompanied with the information I have presented here and previously on overprint errors/varieties, you should have all the information needed to identify your AMG VG stamps.

If anyone has encountered either a non-revenue AMG VG stamp with a Type 1 right pointing watermark that has a different orientation than shown in Table 2 above or a Type 3 watermark that is not included in Table 3, I would like to hear about it so I can update the information for our membership. I can be reached via E-mail at rich@pedersonstamps.com or mail at P.O. Box 662, Clemson, SC 29633.

Table 2. Known orientations for left and right pointing Type 1 Winged Wheel watermarks.








Direction	Orientation	Image
Left Pointing	Wing at top in normal position	
Left Pointing	Wing rotated left 90° to left side	
Left Pointing	Wing rotated left 180° to bottom	
Left Pointing	Wing rotated left 270° to right side	
Right Pointing	Wing at top in normal position	
Right Pointing	Wing rotated right 90° to right side (only on revenues)	
Right Pointing	Wing rotated right 270° to left side (only on revenues)	






Figure 6. Large Winged Wheel watermark. Rotated 180°.



Figure 7. Dark lake stamp at left and carmine lake at right.

Table 3. Known orientations for left and right pointing Type 3, Winged Wheel watermarks.

Direction	Orientation	Image
Left Pointing	Wing rotated left 180° to bottom (only on revenues)	
Right Pointing	Wing at top in normal position (only on revenues)	
Right Pointing	Wing rotated right 180° to bottom side	

References:

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[This article first appeared in the June 2018 edition of the A.M.G. Courier.]