

Chapter 5: The Medals of General Bonaparte

The Nature of Revolutionary-Era Medals

Introduction

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As Robert Holtman and others have shown, Bonaparte left few media untapped in his propagandistic endeavors, particularly after his coming to power in November 1799. ¹ It was not only his manipulation and censorship of the press that these historians have noted, but also his relationship with the arts, a relationship begun by the future emperor when he had only just begun his public career as commanding general of the Army of Italy. As with his mastery of the printed medium, Bonaparte also realized the potential of the visual arts, and early in his career he fostered relationships with leading intellectuals and artists in order to promote his reputation and popularize his image.

What is not well known, however, is Bonaparte's use of medals (or "coins" with no monetary function) as propagandistic devices during the Italian campaign. This practice is one more illustration of Napoleon's early mastery of image-making techniques that would take advantage of every medium that could possibly be deployed to further his political aims. As with his profitable exploitation of a growing popular press, Napoleon also benefited from an explosion of the production of medals and medallions during the years immediately preceding his rise to power. ² According to Bernard Poinssault, "Napoleon, with an extraordinary sense of the art of propaganda, used all types of coinage as political support in order to impress the masses and to consolidate his power." ³ As with his other uses of propaganda, Bonaparte did not invent the medium or the techniques he employed, but he did demonstrate a keen understanding of the potential these preexisting forms of propaganda offered, manipulating each to promote the precise image he desired—that of the simple revolutionary hero, capable of meeting victoriously all challenges he confronted, bringing both victory and peace to a nation that longed for both. ⁴

Revolutionary-Era Medals

During the first years of the French Revolution, the production of medals—once a royal monopoly—enjoyed a renaissance. ⁵ With the breakdown of royal authority, the number of workshops producing medals, jetons (small medals) and medallions (oversized medals) multiplied. ⁶ These medallions  [Jeton](#) were designed not only by independent engravers seeking to establish their reputations, but also by former royal engravers, such as Benjamin Duvivier, who now turned their talents to the glorification of the French Revolution. Medals commemorated the great figures and events of

the period. In the first years of the Revolution, for example, medals depicted Louis XVI as the restorer of the French Constitution and as a great supporter of reform, not as the tyrant worthy of death on the guillotine, his ultimate fate. ⁷ Other medals were struck honoring Jean Sylvain Bailly, the Comte de Mirabeau, and the Marquis de Lafayette, among other great Revolutionary political figures. ⁸ Medals were also struck to commemorate key events, such as the opening of the Estates-General. ⁹ The importance of these medals is only too clear when one considers the most popular medal of the time, one designed by Bertrand Andrieu memorializing the fall of the Bastille on 14 July 1789. ¹⁰ So popular was this medal that over 800 forgeries were produced to meet the demand. ¹¹

Napoleon Bonaparte was fortunate enough to be able to capitalize on this revitalized aspect of popular culture through his understanding the spirit of the times. According to R. Ben Jones:

Fashions change in intellectual circles, as in others. Our present age favors the anti-hero, diminishing the significance of the individual. It was not so in the era of Napoleon. Then there was an exaggerated consciousness of the capacity of individuals to perform great deeds, and the tremendous achievements of Napoleon make his career admirably suited to the period of Romantic Revival. ¹²

One reason for this revival in the manufacturing of medals and medallions was that the modern medal is an art form uniquely dedicated to the celebration of the achievements of individuals. As Mark Jones, curator of medals for the British Museum, notes, "Almost every medal bears a portrait, and though the features, achievement, or memory of an individual have been commemorated in every medium, only in medals are they the point from which all else flows." ¹³ This enduring trend, coupled with the emerging cultural and artistic tastes that would become known as "Romanticism," wonderfully coincided with and complemented the emergence of the era's greatest heroic individual, Napoleon Bonaparte.

Bonaparte and Romanticism

Bonaparte's achievements truly captured the imagination of his age. As Alexis de Tocqueville astutely observed, "It can be said of him that he surprised the world before his name was known." ¹⁴ An obscure Corsican artillery officer in 1789, he achieved a degree of notoriety for the key role he played in the capture of the city of Toulon in 1793. ¹⁵ As a reward for his efforts, he became one of the youngest generals of the Revolution at the age of 24. The continued demonstration of his abilities brought additional

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promotions, culminating in 1796 with the command of the Army of Italy. By this time, Bonaparte had become the embodiment of one of the great goals of the French revolutionaries: the opening of career paths to men of talent. [17](#)

In Italy, his fame continued to grow as he defeated army after army, frequently being out-numbered by as much as two-to-one by Austrian and Piedmontese forces. Triumphant in war at a time when other generals frequently proved incapable of achieving victory, Napoleon Bonaparte also proved capable of giving France what it so desperately desired in 1797-peace.

[18](#) This meteoric rise to prominence, coupled with the romantic sensibilities of the time, in large part combined to make Bonaparte the greatest hero of the Revolution. [19](#) Albert Guérard saw him as

"the Romantic ideal incarnate." [20](#) Napoleon Bonaparte would reinforce and enhance this heroic image through both his mastery of the revolutionary press and his relationships with leading artists, and, as we shall see, through his utilization of the art of the medal as well.

Throughout his career, especially after the founding of the Empire in December 1804, Napoleon realized the image-making potential of medals, commissioning more medals to commemorate his accomplishments than did both Louis XV and Louis XVI combined. Not since the reign  [French Medals](#) of the "Sun King," Louis XIV, had French *médailleurs* been so well patronized. [21](#) Where did Bonaparte discover the potential impact of this medium? Robert Miquel offers a suggestion in his article, "Bibelots de propagande ou de souvenir":

When, in 1784, the young Napoleon Buonaparte came to Brienne, through Paris, he was struck by the number of engravings and other objects that represented Louis XVI, Marie-Antoinette, and all the royal family. The next year, while going to Valence, he was surprised anew by the propaganda that was made for the King of France by the sellers of engravings, jewelers, and other hawkers. [22](#)

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By 1792, the images of the royal family had been replaced by those of the heroes and martyrs of the Revolution. As Miquel points out, by the time Bonaparte had become general-in-chief of the Army of Italy, he had fully absorbed the impact and lessons of the use of medals (as well as engravings  [Medal History](#) and other forms of propaganda). [23](#) In fact, judging from his use of medals during the Empire, Bonaparte understood the propaganda potential value of the art form better than did Louis XVI or any other French revolutionary.

The "Five Battles" Series

Introduction to the Series

As victory followed victory in the spring of 1796, the Army of Italy and its general were showered with official recognition from the Directory. One important element of this recognition was the production of commemorative medals. When news of Bonaparte's victories at Montenotte, Millesimo, and Dego reached Paris in April 1796, for example, the successes of the Army of Italy and Napoleon excited the population and attracted the attention of the *Corps-Législatif*. When this legislative body declared that, "The Army of Italy has deserved the merit of the nation" in its decree of 6 *floréal, an 4* (25 April 1796), [24](#) Bonaparte accepted this recognition in a letter to the Executive Directory and commissioned a series of copper medals as a memorial to the glory of his army. [25](#) Over the next year, similar official recognition would result in the striking of additional medals, ending in a series of five different medals: one commemorating the Battle of Millesimo and the combat of Dego; one memorializing the crossing of the Po, the Adda, and the Mincio Rivers; a third in honor of the Battle of Castiglione and the combat at Peschiera; another to mark the capture of Mantua; and the last, commemorating the passage of the Tagliamento and the fall of Trieste. [26](#)

What is perhaps most remarkable about these developments is not Napoleon's stunning victories in Italy, but rather his decision to produce these medals more or less on his own authority. As Michel Hennin, the compiler of the massive and definitive *Histoire numismatique de la Révolution Française*, notes: "These pieces were probably struck by the order of or at least with the approval of General-in-Chief Bonaparte." [27](#) Such action was without precedent during the French Revolution, as noted in the 20 *prairial, an 6* (8 June 1798) issue of *Le Moniteur*:

The Army of Italy has thought up a new way of promulgating the decrees which declared so many times that they deserved the gratitude of the nation. When news of these decrees reached the army, they had struck a medal as a sign of this recognition, bearing on one side the date of the decree and on the other a representation of the action that earned them the gratitude of the nation. [28](#)

Also remarkable is the fact that other armies received similar recognition from the *Corps-Législatif*, but their commanders did not strike medals commemorating that recognition. [29](#) Napoleon's sponsorship of these medals, however, was perfectly in keeping with his later interest in and practice of producing commemorative medals. [30](#)

Together, the first of Bonaparte's medals became known as "*les Cinq batailles*," or "the Five Battles." Intended not only for Napoleon's soldiers, but

also for an educated Italian audience, these medals were designed and struck at the Milan mint. Four were engraved by Charles Lavy (1765-1813), the engraver for the Turin mint, after designs by the Italian painter Andrea Appiani (1775-1817), [31](#) and one medal was engraved by Joseph Salwirck, the engraver for the Milan mint. [32](#) Each of these medals  [Andrea Appiani](#) was frequently duplicated (with minor alterations) at mints in both Lyon and Paris. While there is no evidence to suggest that the government had authorized the production of these additional medals, the fact that they were struck in several places at least gave them an illusion of being official. [33](#)

The Millesimo-Dego Medal

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As described in *Le Moniteur*, the basic elements of these medals followed a similar pattern: the date of the decree of the *Corps-Législatif* on the reverse and an image representing the victory on the face of each medal. But in many respects the first of this series of medals is the most impressive because of its use of symbolism. On its face is the figure of Hercules, holding a club in his right hand and the Hydra of Lerna in his left. Under his right foot is the tail of the beast and under his left lies a burning torch with which he will cauterize the necks of the hydra once he has severed its heads. [34](#)



Around the upper two-thirds of the border of the medal reads the legend: "BATAILLE DE MILLESIMO.COMBAT DE DEGO."

The reverse of the medal is the picture of simplicity. Around the central inscription ("LE PEUPLE FRANÇAIS A L'ARMÉE D'ITALIE") is inscribed "LOI DU 6 FLOREAL 4me AN DE LA REP." [35](#) Many of the early medals dedicated to Bonaparte contained a bust of the general on their faces, such as an early popular example described by Jean Babelon in his *La Médaille en France*. [36](#) But in the case of the first of the "Five Battles" medals, classical imagery is employed instead. The Hydra, no doubt, symbolized the Piedmontese and Austrian armies (numbering perhaps 70,000 men under the command of Generals Michelangelo von Colli and Johann Beaulieu, respectively), which the Army of Italy (numbering only 38,000 effectives) had just defeated on the plains of Piedmont, [37](#) but the use of Herculean iconography is even more fascinating.

The Hercules Motif

The image of Hercules on medals has a long history in France, dating from era of the *ancien régime*. As Jean-Charles Benzaken points out in a recent article, Hercules had long been associated with the kings of France, appearing on coinage or on medals memorializing royal victories. [38](#) During the French Revolution, however, Hercules underwent a transformation to become a symbol of the French nation, and more specifically of national unity. On a medal commemorating the fall of the Bastille in 1789, for example, we find an allegorical Hercules destroying royal despotism and tyranny. Two more medals, minted on the occasions of the *Fête de la Fédération* in Lyon (30 May

1790) and the *Fédération d'Amboise* (30 July 1790), likewise use popular Herculean imagery to denote "*FORCE, UNION ET PROSPÉRITÉ*," while yet other medals now assign to this revolutionary Hercules "new labors," including the destruction of despotism and eventually the destruction of the Hydra-like threat of Federalism. ³⁹ Also of importance to this revitalized and revolutionized Hercules is that in his labors brute strength is combined with wisdom to achieve success. On one characteristic medal, Hercules is joined by a bird (representing Minerva) with an inscription: "*LA SAGESSE GUIDE SA FORCE*." ⁴⁰ The image of Hercules also adorned money as well,  [Hercules](#) on notes of 100, 2,000, and 10,000 assignats, for example. On these notes, designed by Augustin Dupré, the legends read "*PAIX AUX PEUPLES, GUERRE AUX TYRANS*" and "*HERCULI PACIFICO*," associating the Revolutionary *sans-culottes* Hercules not only with national unity and the destruction of anti-republican traits, but also with victory and peace. ⁴¹

With the appearance of Hercules on Bonaparte's *Millesimo* medal, we witness yet another transformation of Herculean imagery. As Benzaken notes:

But who now is this Hercules? It is no longer the French people, nor is it, it seems to us, ... Bonaparte first consul [*sic*]; ... it is as the legend of the reverse indicates: *LE PEUPLE FRANÇAIS A L'ARMÉE D'ITALIE*. But this republican army is less and less an army of the people in arms; it is increasingly being confiscated by Bonaparte. ⁴²

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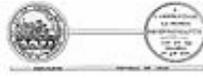
Hercules, once representative of the French people, has come to represent an army of the French people, and ultimately the general of that army. It is a transformation made all the more clear by the writing around the edge of the medal, which reads "*BONAPARTE GÉNÉRAL EN CHEF*." ⁴³ And, by the end of the Italian campaign, certainly Bonaparte would have personified all that Hercules had come to represent: the victor in battle, the champion of national unity, and the bringer of peace. ⁴⁴ Thus the allegory of Hercules had come full circle: during the *ancien régime*, he had represented a single individual and his achievements, namely the king; by 1796, Hercules had become an allegory for the achievements of another individual, Napoleon Bonaparte. ⁴⁵

The Po-Adda-Minico Medal

The second medal in the series was struck in honor of the crossing of three rivers—the Po, the Adda, and the Mincio—and was initiated after the decree of 24 *prairial, an 4* (12 June 1796), which once again officially recognized the efforts of Bonaparte's army: "That the Army of Italy continues to earn the gratitude of the country." ⁴⁶ Unlike the previous medal, however, this one was designed by Joseph Salwirck of the Milan mint, who engraved it in a

mold (*en creux*) without the benefit of a die. [47](#)

The face of this medal depicts one of the most important scenes in the Italian campaign and in the life of Napoleon Bonaparte—the crossing of the Adda via the bridge at Lodi. Here we see a general mounted on a rearing horse, waving his saber above his head and leading his soldiers across the bridge.



The reverse bears only the inscription: "*À L'ARMÉE D'ITALIE LA PATRIE RECONNAISSANTE-LOI DU 24 PRAIRIAL AN 4me REP.*" Like the preceding medal, one version of this medal also bears the inscription around the edge, "*BONAPARTE GÉNÉRAL EN CHEF*," [48](#) causing the medal once again to commemorate not only the Army of Italy, but also quite subtly Bonaparte himself.

The Battle of Lodi

The Battle of Lodi was in reality a minor battle. As Owen Connelly points out, the Austrians under General Sebottendorf were already in full retreat, and if Bonaparte had waited a day, he might have even crossed the bridge without a fight. Bonaparte, however, decided to force the issue in order to ensure the continued destruction of the Austrian army. [49](#) The cost of the battle was fairly high, but Bonaparte made the most of it by exaggerating the size of the enemy forces (nearly doubling their actual strength to 18,000 men) and by over-estimating the Austrian casualties (which he set at 3,000)—misrepresentations that would become standard practice in Napoleon's imperial bulletins. [50](#) The symbolic importance of the battle, however, far outweighed its military significance. It was the crossing of the Adda at Lodi, coupled with the passages of the Po and the Mincio, that enabled the capture of the greater part of Lombardy. General André Masséna occupied Milan on 14 May, with Bonaparte arriving on the following day. François Furet sums up the situation this way: "One might cite this month [May 1796], and his [Bonaparte's] provisional installation as General-in-chief in the Lombard capital, as the turning point of his life." [51](#)

The Bridge Motif

What artistic motif would better symbolize such dramatic and pivotal events than the image of the bridge? As John L. Connolly, Jr. argues:

The bridge as locus and symbol was engaged by Napoleon's propagandists to celebrate his military prowess and his role as hero-general. The passage of the Po, Adda, and Mincio rivers in 1796, for example, was summarized in medallic art in the form of Bonaparte, leading the infantry across a bridge. Mounted, saber in hand, he leads a fighting column—the avant guard of the Revolution—in its rite of passage. [52](#)

As Connolly points out, in art, the depiction of bridges, more than any other man-made structure, forces us to consider their potential use. ⁵³ Their most obvious symbolism is that of change or movement, from one condition or state to another; this symbolism holds for the literature and art of today as well as that of the eighteenth century. ⁵⁴ For the audience of the 1790s, a whole host of additional connotations were evoked by the iconography as well.

Connolly points out that, for example, the Roman legends of Horatius Cocles and the defense of the Sublician bridge and of Constantine's crossing of the Milvian bridge (among others) were well known in Bonaparte's time and could have easily added a classical flavor to the Lodi medal that many modern viewers might overlook. ⁵⁵ Nor were classical allusions the  [Horatius Cocles](#) only possible symbolic reading of this medal. Connolly finds at least three additional possible eighteenth-century readings for the bridge motif. One was a Christian interpretation, equating the central figure with Christ, with the bridge serving as "a link between heaven and earth and a symbolic promise of salvation." ⁵⁶ Certainly Bonaparte, through a whole host of propaganda efforts that included not only the use of medals, but also his manipulation of the press, consciously fostered the development of his image as the "savior of France." ⁵⁷

Another popular interpretation of the bridge would have been as a symbol for the frailty of life and the hazards of passing from one phase of life to another. ⁵⁸ Again, this interpretation perfectly fits the circumstances of Napoleon's life at that moment. Not only was the crossing of the bridge, under enemy fire, a hazard to be overcome, but Napoleon himself also noted the events at Lodi as a turning point of his life. Reflecting later on the events of the first phase of the Italian campaign, Bonaparte wrote: "It was not till after the terrible passage of the bridge at Lodi that the idea shot across my mind that I might become a decisive actor in the political arena. Then arose, for the first time, the spark of great ambition." ⁵⁹ With this string of successes achieved in such a short time, having forced Piedmont to sue for peace and driven the Austrians back into Mantua in only twelve days, ⁶⁰ Napoleon did indeed seem to be ready to embark on a new phase of his career.

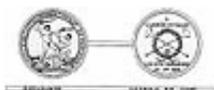
And finally, for the Revolutionary audience for these medals, the image of the bridge had taken on a new significance. As Connolly points out, Revolutionary Paris witnessed a frenzy of bridge construction and renovation, with old houses and shops being cleared from the bridges over the Seine. One contemporary view of this clearing away of the old can be seen in Hubert Robert's contemporary painting of the Pont au Change. It was as if, writes Connolly, "The bridge of the revolutionary era emerged from the rubble of

the royal past.... The Revolution built the bridge to the future." [61](#) Once again, as with the choice of an allegorical Hercules, Bonaparte's *médailleurs* carefully selected images which captured the rising fortunes of Napoleon's military career and which encapsulated the genesis of his political aspirations. According to Jean Tulard, "From the time of Lodi, Bonaparte's eyes were turned towards Paris; he was aware of the unpopularity of the Directory; he also knew that the power was there to be taken." [62](#) On another occasion, shortly after his victory at Lodi, Bonaparte told his aide, Colonel Auguste Marmont: "They haven't seen anything yet. ... In our time, no one has the slightest conception of what is *great*. It is up to me to give them an example." [63](#) From such a reading, one might also read into these medals the notion that any crossing of this "bridge to the future" would be led by an increasingly ambitious Napoleon Bonaparte.

The Castiglione-Peschiera Medal

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The third medal in the "Five Battles" series commemorated the Army of Italy's victories over the Austrians at Castiglione and at Peschiera and the army's recognition by the Council of Ancients of the *Corps-Législatif* in its decree of 27 *thermidor*, an 4 (14 August 1796) which declared "that the Army of Italy does not cease to earn the gratitude of the country by its victories of 15 and 16 *thermidor*." [64](#) Once more these



medals were designed by Lavy after a drawing by Andrea Appiani, and were struck in Milan, with a second, slightly modified version being produced in Paris. [65](#) The face of this medal shows a single naked sword-wielding warrior locked in combat against two enemies. One enemy lies vanquished, as the warrior prepares to deliver a deathblow to the second enemy, who raises his sword in defense. The legend reads: "BATAILLE DE CASTIGLIONE" and "COMBAT DE PESCHIERA" The reverse bears the inscription: "À L'ARMÉE D'ITALIE-LOI DU 27 THERMIDOR AN 4me REP," which is arranged above and  [Castiglione](#) below a central laurel wreath and two crossed trumpets, which represent the announcement of victory and the glory of the army. Like the preceding medals in the series, one of the Milan versions also bears the inscription around the medal's edge, "BONAPARTE GÉNÉRAL EN CHEF." [66](#)

This medal, reminiscent of a John Flaxman relief, is engraved in the simple neoclassical style that dominated the artistic tastes not only of Revolutionary  [John Flaxman](#) France, but also of Europe at large. [67](#) The three warriors, representative of the three armies involved in this most recent series of battles, are naked, their muscles taut and defined. The victorious warrior, of course, represents Bonaparte's Army of Italy, which engaged and defeated the Austrian Armies of Italy and of the Tyrol under Field Marshals Dagobert-Sigismond von Wurmser and Paul Davidovich in a five-day battle which began on 5 August 1796. In the course of the fighting, the Austrians lost 70 cannon and their baggage train, along with 600 dead

and between 12 and 15,000 prisoners. ⁶⁸ Bonaparte's victory ended any Austrian hopes of relieving their besieged garrison at Mantua, making Napoleon's ultimate triumph in northern Italy only a matter of time.

The Mantua Medal

These first three medals, commemorating the earliest of Bonaparte's stunning victories, were authorized over a span of four months, between May and August 1796. It would be another five months before the fourth medal in the "Five Battles" series would appear, this one memorializing the army's capture of the fortress-city of Mantua. Official recognition for this long-awaited event came in the form of the Decree of 24 *pluviôse*, an 5 (2 February 1798), when the *Corps-Législatif* announced, "the Army of Italy never ceases to earn the gratitude of the country." ⁶⁹ As



with the first and third medals, Lavy designed it after a drawing by Appiani, with variant editions struck at both Milan and Paris. ⁷⁰ The face of this medal depicts a female in flowing neoclassical robes handing keys to a cloaked Roman warrior. Such imagery was common in depictions of captured cities. The woman, representative of the people of Mantua, turns over to the warrior the keys of the city. The warrior, who represents the Army of Italy, receives the keys with his right hand; in his left he holds his spear, point down, representing an end to hostilities. In the background, an aqueduct can be seen leading to the city, no doubt an allusion to Mantua's Roman past. The inscription in the exergue reads: "*REDDITION DE MANTOUE.*"

The reverse of the medal is arranged in four fields, with a laurel wreath centered in the top quarter. Below this is an inscription: "*À L'ARMÉE D'ITALIE VICTORIEUSE.*" A bundle of lightning bolts lies just below center, and a final inscription, "*LOI DU 24 PLUVIOSE AN 5me REP,*" rounds out the bottom quarter of the medal. As with every medal of this series created under the aegis of Napoleon, one of the Milan versions bears the inscription around the edge of the medal, "*BONAPARTE GÉNÉRAL EN CHEF.*" ⁷¹

The Siege of Mantua

The siege of Mantua was indeed one of the keys to the success of the Army of Italy. Long considered the key to the Austrian defense of northern Italy, the capture of Mantua also proved to be one of the greatest challenges Bonaparte would face during his leadership of the Army of Italy. As long as the Austrians held the city, the movement of the French was hampered. Its garrison of 24,000 men, under the command of Field Marshal Wurmser, could sortie and threaten the French lines of communication at the same time. Meanwhile, Bonaparte's forces had invested the city, cutting it off from reinforcements and gradually reducing Wurmser's forces by siege. As J. M. Thompson noted, "Never was there a clearer case in military history of a campaign, and all that depended on it, being held up by the failure to

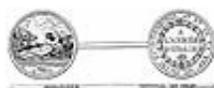
capture a solitary fortress." [72](#) For nearly six months, Wurmser held out as Bonaparte turned back repeated Austrian attempts to relieve the city. Finally, on 2 February 1797, Wurmser surrendered, with his forces reduced to 16,000 men. [73](#) With Mantua out of the way, Bonaparte was free to turn his full attention to the Archduke Charles and his army of nearly 50,000 Austrians. [74](#)

The Tagliamento-Trieste Medal

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Rounding out the series of "Five Battles" medals is one commemorating the passage of the Tagliamento River and the capture of Trieste by Napoleon's Army of Italy. Official recognition of these events came with a decree from the *Corps-Législatif* on 15 *germinal, an 5* (4 April 1798). [75](#) Once again, Charles Lavy engraved the medal after Andrea Appiani's drawing, with slightly different versions being struck in Milan and Paris. [76](#)

The face of this medal is dominated by a reclining river god, representing the Tagliamento River. In the left background, the victorious French army dashes into the river in pursuit of their enemies. This representation of the French army is reminiscent of Joseph Salwirck's "Lodi" medal, only in miniature, with a general on horseback-Napoleon Bonaparte, no doubt-leading his army to victory. In the right background, the Austrians flee, smoke rising from the



shambles of their army. The exergue bears the inscription: "PASSAGE DU TAGLIAMENTO/PRISE DE TRIESTE." On the reverse, a laurel crown encloses the simple inscription, "À L'ARMÉE D'ITALIE," with a legend consisting of "LOI DU 15 GERMINAL AN 5me DE LA REP." Like the previous medals in this series, one of the two Milan versions bears an inscription around the edge of the medal, "BONAPARTE GÉNÉRAL EN CHEF." [77](#)

This would be the last medal memorializing particular actions of the Army of Italy during Napoleon's first Italian campaign; although Bonaparte had renewed his offensive at the end of March 1797 and was driving north toward Vienna, no more battles of note were fought. Only three days after the decree of the *Corps-Législatif* that had honored the latest achievements of the Army of Italy, Archduke Charles, the Austrian commander, asked for and received an armistice on 7 April 1797. The preliminary peace was signed at Leoben on 18 April, and the final Treaty of Campo Formio was signed in October 1797, bringing the campaign to a close and making Bonaparte a national hero. [78](#)

The Proliferation of Bonapartist Medals

Popular Medals

While the Tagliamento medal was the last of the "Five Battles" series, it was by no means the last of the medals honoring the Army of Italy and especially its general-in-chief, Napoleon Bonaparte. Nor were the "Five Battles" medals the only ones struck during the course of the Italian campaign. [79](#) They were simply the only ones fabricated under Bonaparte's aegis. Other medals, both official and popular, were struck as well. Some commemorated the founding of the Italian republics by Napoleon, while others celebrated the Treaty of Campo Formio and the Congress of Rastadt; after 1798, still more medals were struck in honor of the Egyptian campaign. But the most popular subject of medals, throughout the entire period from April 1796 to October 1799, was Napoleon himself. [80](#) As John L. Connolly, Jr. points out, "Bonaparte alone is celebrated above all others as liberator." [81](#)



These medals (typically *jetons*), "struck in France or Italy, but always intended for the French [market]," were fabricated in great numbers. [82](#) They joined a growing number of inexpensive engravings of paintings and their imitations that flooded the Italian and French markets at this time. [83](#)

The most common type of these popular medals followed [84](#)  [Popular medals](#) a similar pattern: a bust of Bonaparte in profile and an inscription or legend on the face and a representative inscription and/or legend on the reverse, lauding the achievements of the general-in-chief of the Army of Italy. [84](#)

The Ingresso de' Franchesi Medal

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One of the first of this type of popular medals appeared as early as May 1796, within a month of the appearance of Lavy's "Millesimo" medal. This was an Italian medal, struck on the occasion of the



French capture of Milan. [85](#) The legend "*BUONAPARTE.GENERALE.IN.CAPO.DELL' ARMATA.D'ITALIA*" surrounds a crude portrait of Bonaparte in right profile and a plain field. The reverse bears the inscription, "*INGRESSO DE' FRANCHESI IN. MILANO DA, PORTA. ROMANA LI. XIV. MAGGIO MDCCXCVI.*" [86](#) On the whole it is an unimpressive medal, lacking the craftsmanship of the "Five Battles" series, but its existence points to the growing popularity of Napoleon in Italy and possibly in France as well.

The Lienard Medal and Its Variants

As Bonaparte's military (and propagandistic) successes mounted, so too did the number of independently engraved medals. One of the more notable of these was produced by P. -G. Lienard in the fall of 1796. On the face of this

medal is a bust of the young general, his hair long and trailing down his back. Around this portrait is the simple legend, "*LE GENERAL BUONAPARTE*." The field of the reverse contains the inscription "*CAMPAGNE D'ITALIE ANN.REP. IV*," surrounded by a laurel wreath. A double legend circles this field; the innermost reads "*UNE VICTOIRE D'ANNIBAL DE BRENNUS LI EFFACE LA GLOIRE*," ["A Victory of Hannibal of Brennus He Erases (from) Glory"], announcing that Bonaparte has surpassed the accomplishments of Hannibal, and the outer legend proclaims "*AU SON NOM ROME TREMBLE*" ["At His Name Rome Trembles. Another Victory"]. [87](#) An explanation for the puzzling outer legend is provided in the 30 May 1796 issue of the *Messenger du Soir*:



It is not only the talents and courage of Buonaparte [*sic*] that have terrified the Romans, it is his name as well (in which there is but one "R"-this requires explanation.

Several centuries ago a very respected prophet announced that Italy would submit to a general in whose name only one "R" could be found, that nothing could resist him, that Rome would throw open its gates to him, and that papal power would cease to govern the city. ... At the start of the war, the Romans thought that Kellerman would raise the tricolor above the capitol because his name contained the fatal letter. [88](#)

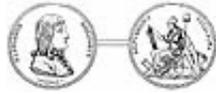
As if Bonaparte's own propagandistic efforts had not made him famous enough, now ancient prophets enhanced the name of Bonaparte, predestining him to greatness and predicting his conquest of the Eternal City.

Apparently this medal was popular enough that Lienard issued a second version with a new date in September 1797. [89](#) A third variation of this medal also appeared about the same time with a modified outer legend on the reverse, reading "*DIGNE AMI DE BARRAS, IL MARCHE A LA VICTOIRE*" ["Dignified Friend of Barras, He Marches to Victory"], noting Bonaparte's relationship with Paul Barras, one of the Directors. [90](#) What is interesting about these later two medals is that, according to Michel Hennin, the latter version was struck first, but was suppressed and replaced by the former medal. Hennin speculates that the suppression of the Barras version might have occurred at "the request of one of the interested parties, and perhaps by both." [91](#) Considering Napoleon's attempt to distance himself from the "corruption" of the Directory (one needs only to recall the title of one of Bonaparte's newspapers, the *Journal de Bonaparte et des hommes vertueux*, to see this distancing at work), it is probable that Bonaparte himself halted the production of this third version. [92](#)



Manfredini's "Cisalpina" Medal

Napoleon Bonaparte's role in Italy was not only that of general; he also contributed to the creation of several Italian "sister" republics. The best known of these, the Cisalpine Republic, was created by Napoleon on 29 June 1797, and, like Bonaparte's victories, its foundation was commemorated with the striking of medals. One of these was designed by Luigi Manfredini, one of the most distinguished Italian engravers of his day. ⁹³ A



proof of this medal was sent to the archives of the *Corps-Législatif* in Paris. ⁹⁴ The face of this medal, produced during the summer of 1797, is elegant in its simplicity. It consists of a bust in right profile of Napoleon Bonaparte with the legend "*NAPOLEONE BONAPARTE*," a tribute to the creator of the republic. The reverse of the medal displays the figure of a woman wearing a helmet and representing the Cisalpine Republic. In her right hand she holds a mace, a symbol of authority and strength. In her left hand is a pike, topped with a Phrygian cap of liberty, representing the republic's Revolutionary heritage. Around this allegory of the Cisalpine Republic are a helmet, a shield, a breastplate, and a plow (representing agriculture or industry). The legend on the reverse reads "*REPVBBLICA CISALPINA*." ⁹⁵

The All' Italico Medal

That same summer, Joseph Salwirck, who had previously engraved the "Lodi" medal in the "Five Battles" series, designed another medal commemorating the liberation of northern Italy. This one was commissioned by order of the Directory of the Cisalpine Republic, with proofs to be sent to the French government. According to reports in *Le Moniteur*, *Clef du Cabinet*, and *Gazette Française*, gold editions of this medal were sent to the president of the Executive Directory and to the presidents of both houses of the *Corps-Législatif*. Silver medals were delivered to the remaining four directors and to other government ministers. ⁹⁶ In a postscript to a letter dated 21 *brumaire*, an 6 (11 November 1797), Bonaparte himself ordered a copy of this medal to be sent to Gaspard Monge, his friend the noted scientist. ⁹⁷

The face of this medal, like that of the previous one, shows a bust portrait of Napoleon, with a legend of "*ALL' ITALICO*." ⁹⁸ The reverse, , is designed by Salwirck after a drawing by Appiani, is dominated by a grouping of three neoclassical women. In the center, wearing a helmet is a figure representing France; she holds a liberty cap in her left hand and is placing it on the figure to her right, which represents Lombardy. To the right of the allegorical France stands a representation of peace holding an olive branch in her right arm. Between the figures of France and Lombardy is the figure of Genius, holding on to the allegory of Lombardy and  *I'Insubria Libera* gazing approvingly at France.

The legend reads "*L'INSUBRIA LIBERA.*" [99](#) The symbolism is clear. France had liberated Lombardy (and thus the Cisalpine Republic) from Austrian control and brought peace to the region at the same time. All this, of course, was the result of Bonaparte's military and political genius. It was the commanding general of Italy as much as the event itself that this medal honored.

The Duvivier Medal

It was not just Italian *médailleurs*, however, who created medals for or about Napoleon. As mentioned earlier, the foremost French engraver of the day, Benjamin Duvivier, also fabricated perhaps the most impressive medal of the era, memorializing Bonaparte as peacemaker, triumphant general, and patron of the arts. A true work of art, this medal was not only intended as a gift to the National Institute but was also advertised in *Le Moniteur* and proved to be a popular success. [100](#)



A superb bust portrait of Bonaparte adorns the face. He is shown in profile, facing right and wearing his uniform. A legend of "*BONAPARTE GEN AL. EN CHEF DE L'ARMÉE FRANCOISE. EN ITALIE*" circles the portrait, and at the bottom, the exergue reads "*OFFERT A L'INSTITUTE NATION. PAR B.*



[Bust portrait](#)

DUVIVIER A PARIS." [101](#) While Duvivier's portrait of



[Cloaked Bonaparte](#)

Bonaparte remains one of the best in the medals of this period, it is the reverse that truly displays the

engraver's talent. In the center, a cloaked General Bonaparte rides a rearing horse and holds an olive branch in his right hand, representing the Treaty of Campo Formio. Before him two female figures, [Treaty of Campo Formio](#) Prudence and Valor, lead his horse by the reins, a comment on the way Bonaparte had conducted his Italian campaign—heroically, but with restraint. Following him flies an allegory of Victory; she holds in her right hand a laurel crown, which she has extended over Bonaparte's figure. This again reinforces Bonaparte's image as triumphant general. In Victory's left hand she holds a statue of Apollo Belvedere and manuscripts, representing not only that very statue, but all the works of art and scientific works collected by Napoleon and sent back to France, both to be preserved and to be displayed as spoils of war. [102](#) Thus, in this one medal one sees brought together all the themes that Bonaparte's various propaganda efforts had stressed: Bonaparte as triumphant general, as statesman, as intellectual, and as patron of the arts. Although both an artistic and a popular success for Duvivier, this medal ultimately failed to achieve what he had hoped it would—his restoration to official favor and the patronage he had once enjoyed. [103](#)

The Impact of Bonapartist Medals

For Bonaparte, however, the creation of such commemorative medals had the

desired effect of increasing his popularity, which in turn enabled him to fulfill his political ambitions. While attributing the origin of Bonaparte's political aspirations to the advent of his first Italian campaign may be premature, certainly by the end of the campaign and the signing of the preliminary peace at Loeben Bonaparte's ambitions had grown. At Mombello, Bonaparte's headquarters near Milan, for example, the general openly admitted his ambition and his contempt for the Directory of 1797 to the French ambassador to Tuscany: "What I have done so far is nothing. I am only at the beginning of the career that lies before me. Do you suppose that I have triumphed in Italy for the mere aggrandizement of the Directory lawyers, the Carnots, the Barras of this world? What an idea!" [104](#) The Directory had every reason to be suspicious of its "Italian Hero." And, according to Robert Miquel, "All these trinkets and mementos [which included not only medals, but also cameos, [105](#) engravings, fans, bonbon boxes and other assorted bric-a-brac] greatly disconcerted the Directory." [106](#) The medals of Napoleon, both those produced under his auspices and those produced independently, were but one physical manifestation of this growing distance between the goals of the Directory and the ambitions of its general. [107](#)



While the fabrication of these commemorative medals was by no means directed solely by Bonaparte and his agents, it was Napoleon's patronage of the "Five Battles" series that stimulated the market for more of these propagandistic keepsakes. To a great extent, the medals produced the desired effect, enhancing Bonaparte's popularity—through the use of a medium of propaganda once reserved only for kings—by showing him to be extraordinarily capable of achieving what the government of France had been singularly incapable of achieving, namely military success and peace. [108](#) As Jean Tulard so succinctly put it, "The Napoleonic legend was not born in St. Helena, but in the plains of Italy." [109](#) So effective had been Bonaparte's brilliant self-promotion that by 1799 — with France again at war, with Italy lost, with an invasion of France seemingly imminent, and with a corrupt government seemingly incapable of resolving these crises — the public could conceive of only one individual who could rescue France from impending doom.

Notes:

Note 1: See Robert B. Holtman's *Napoleonic Propaganda* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), which discusses Bonaparte's mastery of these methods during the periods of the Consulate and Empire. [Back.](#)

Note 2: Jean Babelon, *La Médaille de France* (Paris: Larousse, 1948), 77, and Jean Babelon, *La Médaille et les Médailleurs* (Paris: Payot, 1927), 193.[Back.](#)

Note 3: Bernard Poindessault, "Napoléon Était-il l'Héritier de César?" *Revue de l'Institut Napoléon* 128-129 (July-December 1973): 85.[Back.](#)

Note 4: Romi [Robert Miquel], "Bibelots de propagande ou de souvenir," *Mirror de l'histoire* 109 (1959): 46; and R. Ben Jones, *Napoleon: Man and Myth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1977), 11. See also Albert Léon Guerard, *Reflections on the Napoleonic Legend* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1924), which discusses Bonaparte's presentation of events and achievements to foster his legend. As far as the desire for peace, any number of contemporary newspapers expressed the desire for peace. The 6 October 1796 issue of the *Gazette Française* contains a lengthy article on the topic.[Back.](#)

Note 5: In a speech before the National Convention on 28 October 1792, Jacques-Louis David called for the creation of a series of medals to be modeled on ancient Greek and Roman coins that would commemorate the "glorious or happy events" and the "great men" who made those events happen. Roger Marx, *Les Médailleurs Français depuis 1789* (Paris: Société de Propagation des Livres d'Art, 1897), 1. See also Babelon, *Médaille en France*, 77; and Babelon, *Les Médailleurs*, 199-200.[Back.](#)

Note 6: Sylvie de Turckheim-Pey, "Les médailles révolutionnaires conservées au Cabinet de la Bibliothèque Nationale," in *Les Images de la Révolution Française*, ed. Michel Vovelle (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1988), 199. The size, and thus the cost, of the medals also reflected their intended audiences. Jetons, being the smallest and least expensive, were designed for a mass audience and were often distributed free of charge; larger works, frequently using precious metals, were intended for dignitaries and a wealthier audience. See Anthony Griffiths, "The Origins of Napoleon's *Histoire Metallique*, Part II," *The Medal* 17 (1990), 29 and 36.[Back.](#)

Note 7: Marx, *Médailleurs*, 3-4, and Babelon, *Médaille en France*, 77.[Back.](#)

Note 8: Mark Jones, *The Art of the Medal* (London: British Museum Publishing Ltd., 1979), 99; Mark Jones, *Medals of the French Revolution: British Museum Keys to the Past* (London: British Museum Publishing Ltd., 1977), 3; and Marx, 3-4.[Back.](#)

Note 9: M. Jones, *Medals of the French Revolution*, 3-7; Babelon, *Médaille de France*, 78; and Marx, *Médailleurs*, 3.[Back.](#)

Note 10: M. Jones, *Art of the Medal*, 99; M. Jones, *Medals of the French Revolution*, 1; and Adrien Blanchet, *Médailles, Jetons, Méreaux*, vol. 3, *Manuel de Numismatique Française*, by Adrien Blanchet and A. Dieudonné (Paris: Éditions Auguste Picard, 1930), 79.[Back.](#)

Note 11: Babelon, *Médaille de France*, 78, and Babelon, *Les Médailleurs*, 194.[Back.](#)

Note 12: R. Jones, *Napoleon*, 11.[Back.](#)

Note 13: M. Jones, *Art of the Medal*, 6. In this case, *modern* means Renaissance and later. According to Mark Jones in his *The Art of the Medal*, "The art of the medal is not, like painting or sculpture, a universal art form in cultures widely separated in space and time. It is specific to one particular civilization, that of Renaissance and post-Renaissance Europe" (6).[Back.](#)

Note 14: Alexis de Tocqueville, as quoted in Jean Tulard, *Napoleon: The Myth of the Savior*, trans. Teresa Waugh (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), 61.[Back.](#)

Note 15: Owen Connelly, *Blundering to Glory: Napoleon's Military Campaigns* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1987), 15-19.[Back.](#)

Note 16: Connelly, *Blundering*, 18.[Back.](#)

Note 17: Harold T. Parker, *The Cult of Antiquity and the French Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1965), 25; Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 170; and Connelly, *Blundering*, 18. The first two of these historians, among others, take up the issue of the importance of the concept of opening careers based on merit during the French Revolution; Connelly notes Bonaparte's case in particular.[Back.](#)

Note 18: See the introductory chapters of Albert Léon Guérard's classic study, *Reflections on the Napoleonic Legend*, for a concise overview of Napoleon's fostering of his legend well before the writing of his memoirs during his exile on Saint Helena.[Back.](#)

Note 19: Any number of biographies and histories of the period discuss the sensational early career of Napoleon. Among those available in English are: Felix Markham's *Napoleon* (London: Mentor Books, 1966); Martyn Lyons's *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); J. M. Thompson's *Napoleon Bonaparte* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952); Geoffrey Ellis's *Napoleon* (London: Longman, 1997); R. Ben Jones's *Napoleon: Man and Myth*; François Furet's *Revolutionary France, 1770-1880*, trans. Antonia Nevill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and, probably the most insightful work in translation, Jean Tulard's *Napoleon: The Myth of the Savior*.[Back.](#)

Note 20: Albert Guérard, *The Life and Death of an Ideal: France in the Classical Age* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), 346.[Back.](#)

Note 21: Poindessault, "Héritier de César," 85. See also Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 229-31; and M. Jones, *Art of the Medal*, 100-01. So great was Napoleon's interest in the production of medals that he "would have medal

designs submitted to him even when he was away campaigning" (100).[Back.](#)

Note 22: Romi, "Bibelots," 46.[Back.](#)

Note 23: Romi, "Bibelots," 46.[Back.](#)

Note 24: Michel Hennin, *Histoire numismatique de la Révolution Française, ou description raisonnée des médailles, monnaies, et autres monumens numismatiques relatifs aux affaires de la France depuis l'ouverture des États-généraux jusqu'à l'établissement du gouvernement consulaire*, 2 vols. (Paris: J. S. Merlin, 1826; reprint, Maastricht: A.G. van der Dussen, 1987), I: 507. According to *Le Moniteur*, the passage in question reads: "... by the victory at Millesimo, the *Armée d'Italie* had acquired new claims to national recognition." See *Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur universel* (Paris), 11 floréal, an 6 (30 April 1796).[Back.](#)

Note 25: Napoleon Bonaparte, *Correspondence de Napoléon Ier*, vol. 1 (Paris: Henri Plon, 1858), 238, [no. 338](#). Hereafter abbreviated *Corr.* followed the volume number, page number, and by the appropriate document number. See also John Eldred Howard, ed., *Letters and Documents of Napoleon* (London: Cresset, 1961), 107. In his footnote concerning the decree of the *Corps-Législatif*, Howard incorrectly attributes Bonaparte's gratitude to both the proclamation and to the awarding of the medal. As we shall see, the striking of the medal was initiated by Napoleon, not the *Corps-Législatif*. See also Paul Delaroche, Henriquel Dupont, and Charles Lenormant, *Médailles de la Révolution Française, depuis l'ouverture des États-généraux (5 mai 1789) jusqu'à la proclamation de l'Empire (18 mai 1804)* (Paris: Bureau du Trésor de numismatique et de glyptique, 1836), 79-80.[Back.](#)

Note 26: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, 1: 507; cf. Blanchet, *Médailles, Jetons, Méreaux*, 82; and Babelon, *Médaille de France*, 83.[Back.](#)

Note 27: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 507. See also Anthony Griffiths, "The Origins of Napoleon's *Histoire Metallique*, Part II," *The Medal* 17 (1990), 29.[Back.](#)

Note 28: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 507; cf. *Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur universel* (Paris), 20 prairial, an 6 (8 June 1798).[Back.](#)

Note 29: In the 30 prairial, an 4 (18 June 1796) issue of *Le Moniteur*, for example, the accomplishments of the Army of the Sambre and the Meuse were noted by the Council of Five Hundred: "The Army of the Sambre and the Meuse does not cease to earn the gratitude of the country."[Back.](#)

Note 30: Griffiths, "*Histoire Metallique*, Part II," 32-35.[Back.](#)

Note 31: Griffiths, "*Histoire Metallique*, Part II," 29. For a good brief discussion of Appiani, see also Anthony Griffiths, "The Design and Production of Napoleon's *Histoire Metallique*, Part I," *The Medal* 16 (1990), 16 and 25.[Back.](#)

Note 32: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 507-8. Andrea Appiani would ultimately be rewarded for his artistic skill and his loyalty to Napoleon with the title of First Painter of the Kingdom of Italy during the period of the Empire. See Ferdinand Boyer, *Le Monde des Arts en Italie et la France de la Révolution et de l'Empire* (Turin: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1969), 114.[Back.](#)

Note 33: Jean-Charles Benzaken, "Hercule dans la Révolution Française (1789-1799) ou les 'Nouveaux Travaux d'Hercule,'" in *Les Images de la Révolution Française*, ed. Michel Vovelle (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1988), 210.[Back.](#)

Note 34: Edith Hamilton, *Mythology* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1942), 231.[Back.](#)

Note 35: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 506; cf. Hennin, II: 73. Volume II of this set contains pen and ink plates of the medals described in Volume I.[Back.](#)

Note 36: "In *vendémiaire* of the year IV, Bonaparte, general of the National Convention, finally appears on a medal; ... it is a leaden medal without great prestige, executed by an expeditious artisan, but it allows us to meditate on the Caesarian profile of this soldier with the small epaulettes" (Babelon, *Médaille de France*, 83). This is probably the same medal, engraved by P. -G. Lienard, that is discussed in Hennin. Lienard's medal commemorates Bonaparte's initial victories, and various medals were struck using the same head and similar legends, but with different dates. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 516-17.[Back.](#)

Note 37: Connelly, *Blundering*, 24-28; Tulard, *Myth*, 57-58; Thompson, *Napoleon Bonaparte*, 70; and David G. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1966), 54-62. Bonaparte opened the Italian campaign against two armies. He gained a central position and struck the Austrians on his right at Montenotte (12 April) and at Dego (14 April), at the same time striking the Sardinians at Millesimo (13 April) and finally at Mondovi (21 April). After this last battle, the King of Sardinia sued for peace, which was signed on 27 April at Cherasco. This now left Bonaparte free to face a shaken Austrian army.[Back.](#)

Note 38: Benzaken, "Hercule," 203.[Back.](#)

Note 39: Benzaken, "Hercule," 203-06. In her *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), Lynn Hunt sees Hercules in similar terms, but notes additional symbolic interpretations of the mythic figure. For Jacobins, he offered a contrast to the figure of Liberty preferred by the Girondins; for the sans-culottes, he represented their raw, uneducated power; for Jacques-Louis David and members of the Convention, Hercules became an embodiment of popular sovereignty with whose masculinity the representatives identified (Hunt, *Politics*, 94-117).[Back.](#)

Note 40: Benzaken, "Hercule," 205.[Back.](#)

Note 41: Benzaken, "Hercule," 207.[Back.](#)

Note 42: Benzaken, "Hercule," 209.[Back.](#)

Note 43: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 506-8; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, II: 73.[Back.](#)

Note 44: Here it is useful to recall Bonaparte's struggle against the Clichy political factions and his repeated professions of support for the government and the Constitution of the Year III, particularly in his two newspapers, *Le Courier de l'Armée d'Italie* and *La France vue de l'Armée d'Italie*, and the fact that it was he who achieved peace at Campo Formio in 1797.[Back.](#)

Note 45: Benzaken, "Hercule," 212. This connection between Napoleon and Hercules would continue into the imperial era as well. As Benzaken notes, Vivant Denon alone designed six medals using Herculean iconography, and a total of eleven medals with the image were eventually struck.[Back.](#)

Note 46: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 510; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, II: 73.[Back.](#)

Note 47: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 510.[Back.](#)

Note 48: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 510; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, II: 73.[Back.](#)

Note 49: Connelly, *Blundering*, 29, and Chandler, *Campaigns*, 77-84.[Back.](#)

Note 50: Connelly, *Blundering*, 29. Connelly puts the French casualties at 350 killed and wounded, with 153 Austrians killed, 1,700 captured, and an undetermined number of wounded. J. M. Thompson notes that such misrepresentations can actually be found as early as April 1796 in Bonaparte's first dispatches to the Directory (*Napoleon Bonaparte*, 70).[Back.](#)

Note 51: Furet, *Revolutionary France*, 188.[Back.](#)

Note 52: John L. Connolly, jr., "Bonaparte on the Bridge: A Note on the Iconography of Passage," *Consortium on Revolutionary Europe, 1750-1850: Proceedings* 15 (1986), 50.[Back.](#)

Note 53: Connolly, "Bonaparte on the Bridge," 54.[Back.](#)

Note 54: Connolly, "Bonaparte on the Bridge," 54.[Back.](#)

Note 55: Connolly, "Bonaparte on the Bridge," 54-55.[Back.](#)

Note 56: Connolly, "Bonaparte on the Bridge," 53.[Back.](#)

Note 57: Any number of biographies make this point, but perhaps the best development of this theme can be found in Tulard's *The Myth of the Savior*.[Back.](#)

Note 58: Connolly, "Bonaparte on the Bridge," 53.[Back.](#)

Note 59: Harold F. B. Wheeler, ed., *Maxims of Napoleon* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, n.d.), 135; cf. J. Christopher Herold, ed, *The Mind of Napoleon: A Selection from his Written and Spoken Words* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 47. Tulard records the statement with a slight variation: "After Lodi I no longer saw myself as a mere general, but as a man called upon to influence the destiny of a people. The idea occurred to me that I could well become a decisive actor on our political scene" (Tulard, *Myth*, 58).[Back.](#)

Note 60: Tulard, *Myth*, 59.[Back.](#)

Note 61: Connolly, "Bonaparte on the Bridge," 53.[Back.](#)

Note 62: Tulard, *Myth*, 62.[Back.](#)

Note 63: Napoleon Bonaparte to Auguste Marmont as quoted in Connolly, *Blundering*, 29.[Back.](#)

Note 64: *Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur universel* (Paris), 3 fructidor, an 6 (20 August 1796); cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 514-15.[Back.](#)

Note 65: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 508.[Back.](#)

Note 66: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 514; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, II: 74.[Back.](#)

Note 67: For a superb discussion of the impact of the neoclassical movement in Europe, see Albert Boime, *Art in the Age of Revolution, 1750-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).[Back.](#)

Note 68: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 514-15.[Back.](#)

Note 69: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 550. See also Antoine-François Pérès de la Haute-Garonne, *Discours prononcé par Pérès de la Haute-Garonne sur la nouvelle victoire de l'armée d'Italie, séance de 5 pluviôse, an 5* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, [1797]). Frank E. Melvin Collection of Pamphlets of the French Revolution, Department of Special Collections, Kenneth Spencer Research Library. University of Kansas, Lawrence.[Back.](#)

Note 70: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 550-51.[Back.](#)

Note 71: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, vol. 1, 550; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, vol. 2, 78.[Back.](#)

Note 72: Thompson, *Napoleon Bonaparte*, 86.[Back.](#)

Note 73: Chandler, *Campaigns*, 121, and Connolly, *Blundering*, 35-47.[Back.](#)

Note 74: Chandler, *Campaigns*, 121-123, and Connolly, *Blundering*, 47.[Back.](#)

Note 75: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 552.[Back.](#)

Note 76: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 552-53.[Back.](#)

Note 77: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 552; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, II: 78.[Back.](#)

Note 78: Connelly, *Blundering*, 47-49, and Chandler, *Campaigns*, 123-25 and 130.[Back.](#)

Note 79: Babelon, *Médaille en France*, 83-84. Bonaparte also adorned the coinage of the Italian "sister" republics. According to Jean-Charles Benzaken, his effigy appeared on one Ligurian and four Cisalpine coins. See Jean-Charles Benzaken, "Iconographie des Monnaies et Médailles des Républiques Sœurs Italiennes," *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* 289 (1992): 383.[Back.](#)

Note 80: M. Jones, *Art of the Medal*, 101. Indeed, Christian-Marc Bosséno points out that Bonaparte's portrait became one of the most popular figures, not only on medals, but also of engravings and paintings as well. See Christian-Marc Bosséno, "Figures et Personnages de l'Iconographie Politique Italienne (1789-1799)," *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* 289 (1992): 410-11.[Back.](#)

Note 81: Connolly, "Bonaparte on the Bridge," 49.[Back.](#)

Note 82: Benzaken, "Iconographie," 383.[Back.](#)

Note 83: Bosséno, "Figures et Personnages," 410.[Back.](#)

Note 84: Typical of the inscriptions/legends on the face are "HEROS BUONAPARTE," "BUONOPARTE [*sic*] GENERAL EN CHEF DE LA BRAVE ARMEE D'ITALIE," or simply his name. See Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 539-41 and 554-56; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, II: 76 and 79. See also Delaroche, Dupont, and Lenormant, *Médailles de la Révolution Française* 82-88.[Back.](#)

Note 85: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 509-10.[Back.](#)

Note 86: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 509. The translation of the legend reads: "Buonaparte, general-in-chief of the Army of Italy." The reverse inscription reads: "The entry of the French in Milan by the Roman Gate, 14 May 1796." The spelling of *Buonaparte* on the face also dates this medal to early in the Italian campaign, before the French spelling of Bonaparte's name became accepted.[Back.](#)

Note 87: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 516-17; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, II: 74. Bosséno points out that Napoleon would not only be compared favorably to Hannibal, but to Alexander as well ("Figures et Personnages," 413). In most cases, Bonaparte's accomplishments were shown to surpass those of his classical models.[Back.](#)

Note 88: *Messenger du Soir* (Paris), 11 *prairial*, an 4 (30 May 1796).[Back](#).

Note 89: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 560; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, II: 79.[Back](#).

Note 90: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 560; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, II: 79.[Back](#).

Note 91: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 560. href="#txt91">Back.

Note 92: Jean Tulard et al., *Dictionnaire Napoléon* (Paris: Fayard, 1987), 1407. As discussed earlier, this newspaper ran for a little more than a month between February and March 1797.[Back](#).

Note 93: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 556.[Back](#).

Note 94: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 556.[Back](#).

Note 95: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 555-56; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, II: 79.[Back](#).

Note 96: *Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur universel* (Paris), 10 *frimaire*, an 6 (30 November 1797); *Clef du Cabinet* (Paris) 8 *frimaire*, an 6 (28 November 1797); *Gazette Française* (Paris) 8 *frimaire*, an 6 (28 November 1797); cf. Hennin, I: 557. According to a later report in *Clef du Cabinet*, Eymar-Laforêt gave two medals, engraved with the figure of Bonaparte, to the Council of Five Hundred. These were later deposited into the Bibliothèque of the *Corps-Législatif*. See *Clef du Cabinet* (Paris), 25 *frimaire*, an 6 (15 December 1797). See also Delaroche, Dupont, and Lenormant, *Médailles de la Révolution Française*, 84.[Back](#).

Note 97: *Corr.* III: 573, [no. 2353](#). This letter is the only specific reference to medals in Napoleon's official correspondence before 18 *brumaire*. Bonaparte wrote: "I am sending you a medal struck in Milan."[Back](#).

Note 98: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 556; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, II: 79. The translation reads, "To the Italique," one of a host of sobriquets by which Napoleon was known as a result of his Italian triumphs.[Back](#).

Note 99: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 557; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, II: 79. The translation reads, "Lombardy free."[Back](#).

Note 100: M. Jones, *Art of the Medal*, 101, and Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 569; cf. *Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur universel* (Paris), 28 *germinal*, an 6 (17 April 1798). The advertisement in *Le Moniteur* listed these medals at 6 francs for bronze and 26 francs for those made of silver. As with the newspaper subscriptions, the cost of commemorative medals was beyond the reach of most people. Certainly, however, the price of bronze medallions was affordable to many French

bourgeoisie. [Back](#).

Note 101: Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 568; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, II: 81. [Back](#).

Note 102: Martyn Lyons, *France Under the Directory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 127, and Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, I: 569; cf. Hennin, *Histoire numismatique*, II: 81. [Back](#).

Note 103: Duvivier, like his father before him, was one of the chief medal-makers to the king. With the coming of the Revolution, he tried to adapt to his new environment with his *Abandonment of Privilege* (1789), but he was forever associated with the *ancien régime* and would even be stripped of his position at the mint. One can see this medal of Napoleon as an attempt to regain favor. See M. Jones, *Art of the Medal*, 99. [Back](#).

Note 104: Napoleon Bonaparte to Miot de Melito, as quoted in Furet, *Revolutionary France*, 189; cf. Owen Connelly, *The French Revolution/Napoleonic Era* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), 200; Owen Connelly, *The Epoch of Napoleon* (Huntington, NY: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1980), 19; and R. Jones, *Napoleon*, 79. [Back](#).

Note 105: An advertisement in *Clef du Cabinet*, for example, noted that the National Porcelain Works at Sèvres had placed on sale busts of General Bonaparte. A gold-plated bust cost 60 francs, one in white stone cost 42 francs, while medallions cost only 6 francs. This same advertisement made it known that cameos were also available. See *Clef du Cabinet* (Paris) 26 *floréal*, an 6 (15 May 1798). [Back](#).

Note 106: Romi, "Bibelots," 48. [Back](#).

Note 107: Lyons, *Directory*, 202. [Back](#).

Note 108: Lyons, *Directory*, 212. [Back](#).

Note 109: Tulard, *Myth*, 61. [Back](#).

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