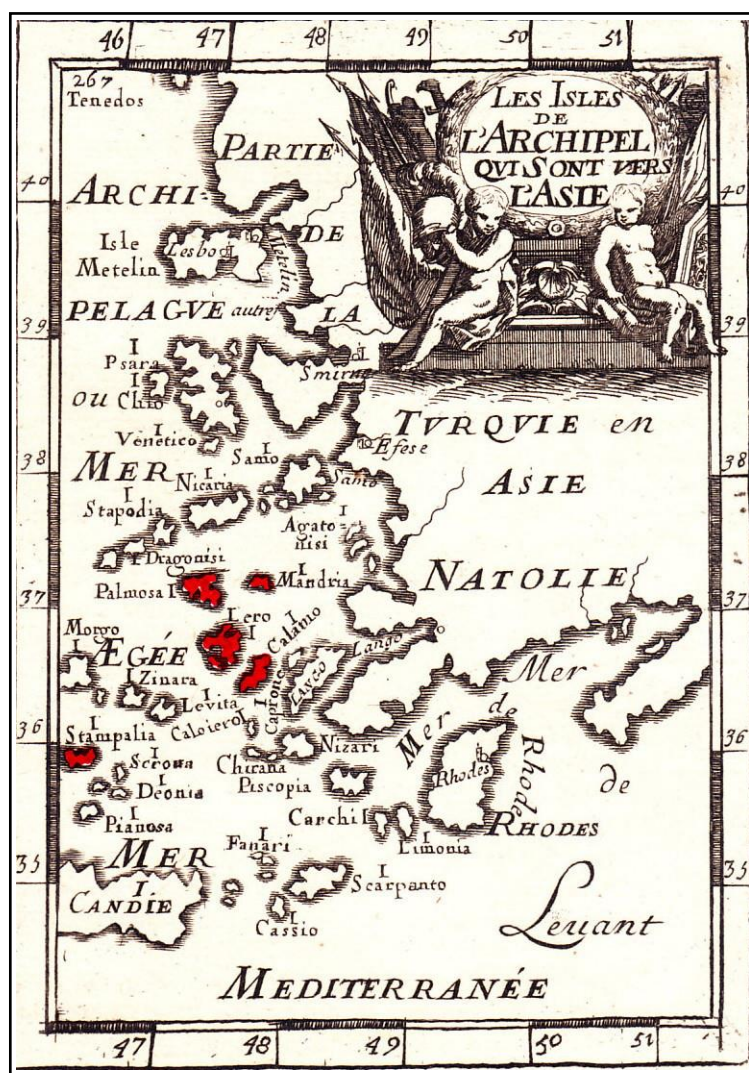


THE POSTAL HISTORY OF THE GREEK DODECANESE PROVINCE OF CALYMNOS



This exhibit shows the postal history of the five Dodecanese Islands which comprised the Greek Province of Calymnos: *in Greek Kalymnos, Leros, Patmos, Leipsoi and Astypalaia*, from the 1820's until 1948. These islands are marked in red on the above map of the Southern Aegean by A. M. Mallet in Paris from 1683, which uses old names. From north to south, the islands are (names used in this exhibit): Patmos, Italian Patmo, old name Palmosa; Lipsos, Italian Lisso, erroneously shown on this map as Mandria (a village on nearby Nicaria); Leros, Italian Lero; Calymnos, Italian Calino, old name Calamo; Stampalia, the Italian name of Astypalaia. The two islands lying between Stampalia and Leros shown on this map as Zinara and Levita are actually just rocky islets each with a population of only 3 persons.

As the five islands have differing postal histories, this exhibit is structured as follows:

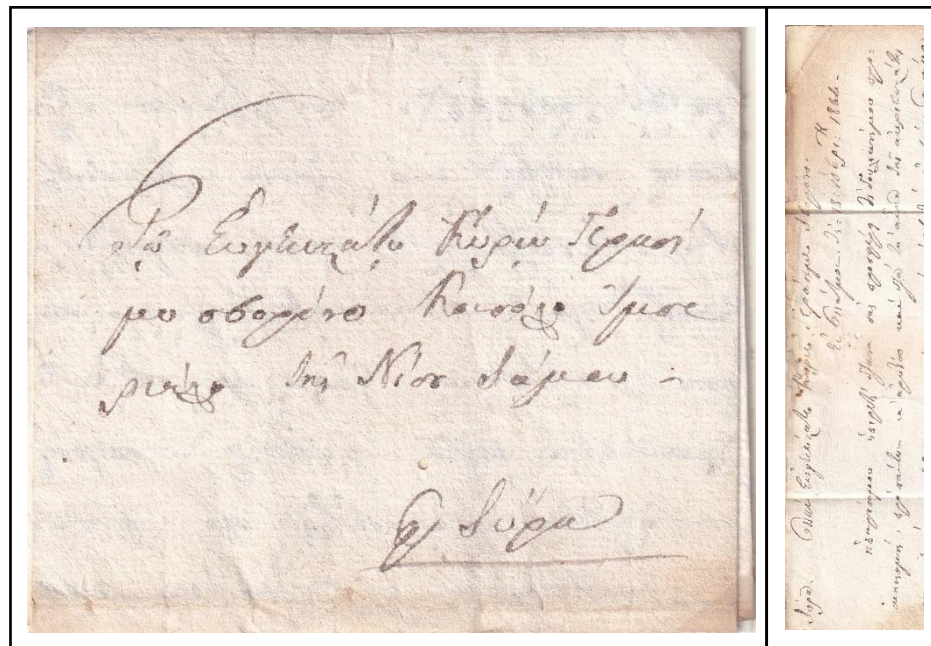
- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Ottoman period up to the Italian Occupation in May 1912 | 1824 - 1912 |
| 2. Stampalia – occupied first, the Italian base for the occupation of the Dodecanese | Apr 1912 - Feb 1913 |
| 3. Municipal and Italian Post Offices: a. Calymnos, b. Leros, c. Patmos, d. Lipsos | May 1912 - Feb 1913 |
| 4. Ship mail via inter-island lines and lines to Italy | Mar 1913 - May 1945 |
| 5. Italian Civilian Post Offices: Calymnos, Leros-Town, Patmos, Lipsos, Stampalia | Mar 1913 - May 1945 |
| 6. Italian Occupation of Leros: Italian Military Post Office No. 162 | 12 May - 2 June 1919 |
| 7. Leros – the Italian PO's at the Airport, Porto Lago, Santa Marina, Punta Cazzuni | Feb 1924 - May 1945 |
| 8. British Military Post Office on Leros | Sep 1943 - Oct 1943 |
| 9. German Occupation and Military Post Offices on Leros and Stampalia | Nov 1943 - May 1945 |
| 10. British Post Offices and Agencies up to the hand-over to Greece | May 1945 - Mar 1947 |
| 11. Greek Military Administration up to the Unification with Greece | Apr 1947 - Apr. 1948 |

The literature used includes: S.D. Tchilinghirian & R. Bernardelli: Stamps of Italy Used Abroad
M. S. Petradakis: Postal History of Aegean Is., Italian Military P.O.'s
M. Carloni and V. Cercenà: Storia Postale del Dodecaneso

1. Ottoman period up to May 1912

Privately carried letters from Patmos 1824 and 1825

Under the Ottomans, Patmos became one of the “privileged” islands, being allowed local administrative autonomy against payment of the usual tribute to Constantinople. These letters sent from Patmos to Samos in 1824 and to Nauplio in 1825, before post-offices were opened, were carried privately by available ships.



A letter dated Patmos 18/30 December 1824 (reduced copy of letterhead at right); addressed to Samos via Syra; ms. note of receipt on 30 December/11 January 1825

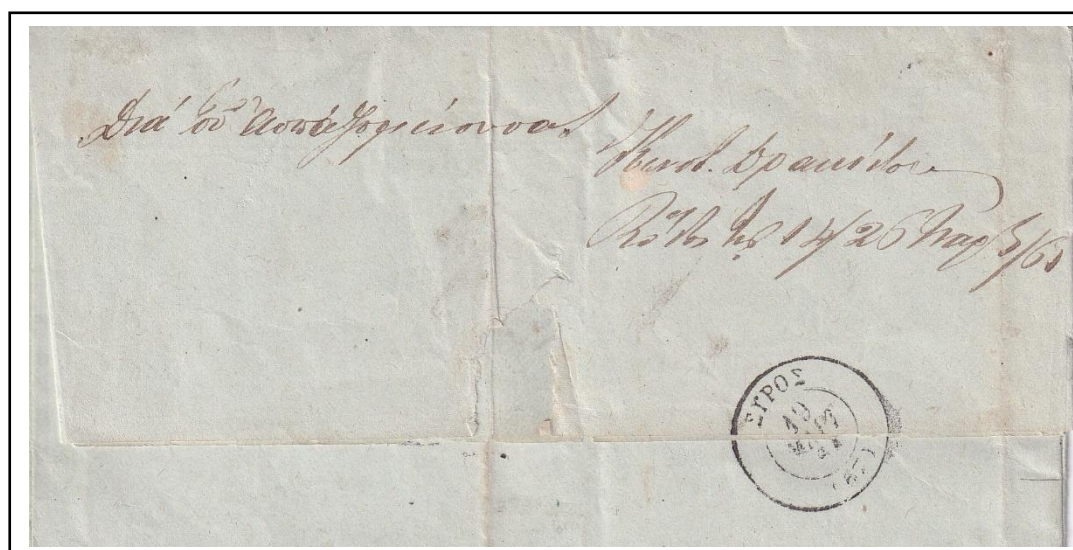
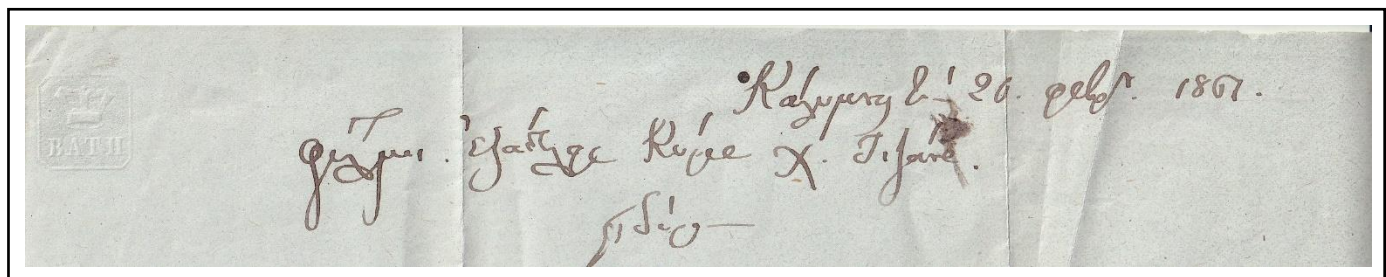


An official letter written in the name of the Province of Patmos on 2 June 1825 (reduced copy of signature and official seal at right). Addressed to the Greek Parliament, which at this time met in the former Agha Pasha Mosque at Nauplio in the Peloponnese. It will have been carried privately by available Greek vessels.

Privately carried letter from Calymnos 1861

Mont la Roper
 Xénor Lijar.
 Sig^{re}
 Cristó Tisano.
 Lira

126



An entire written at Calymnos on 20 February/4 March 1861 (copy of letterhead in centre) carried privately to an agent at Rhodes who forwarded it on 14/26 March 1861 (Below: copy of reverse with agent's inscription) to Syros via the Austrian Lloyd Agency with the sea carriage paid (but not marked). It bears the oval marking of the Lloyd Agency at Rhodes in blue; the Greek postage of 20 lepta payable by the addressee is marked in red (Greek stamps first issued on 1 October 1861); Syros arrival back-stamp dated 19/(31) March 1861 (see copy of reverse).

A letter from Calymnos to Trieste via a forwarding agent in Syros in 1866



An entire written at Calymnos on 31 January 1866, with the sender's oval cachet at the bottom left; carried privately to forwarding agent Georges Calvocoressi at Syros (oval cachet at top right) who handed it in unpaid to the Greek post office there on 13 February 1866. It was carried to Trieste by the Austrian Lloyd and the postage payable of 28 Kr. was marked with a hand-stamp (Greek postage 10 lepta + sea carriage 15 soldi + Austrian postage in Trieste 3 Kr.). It bears a boxed arrival back-stamp of Trieste in red dated 1 March (1866).

1. Ottoman period up to May 1912

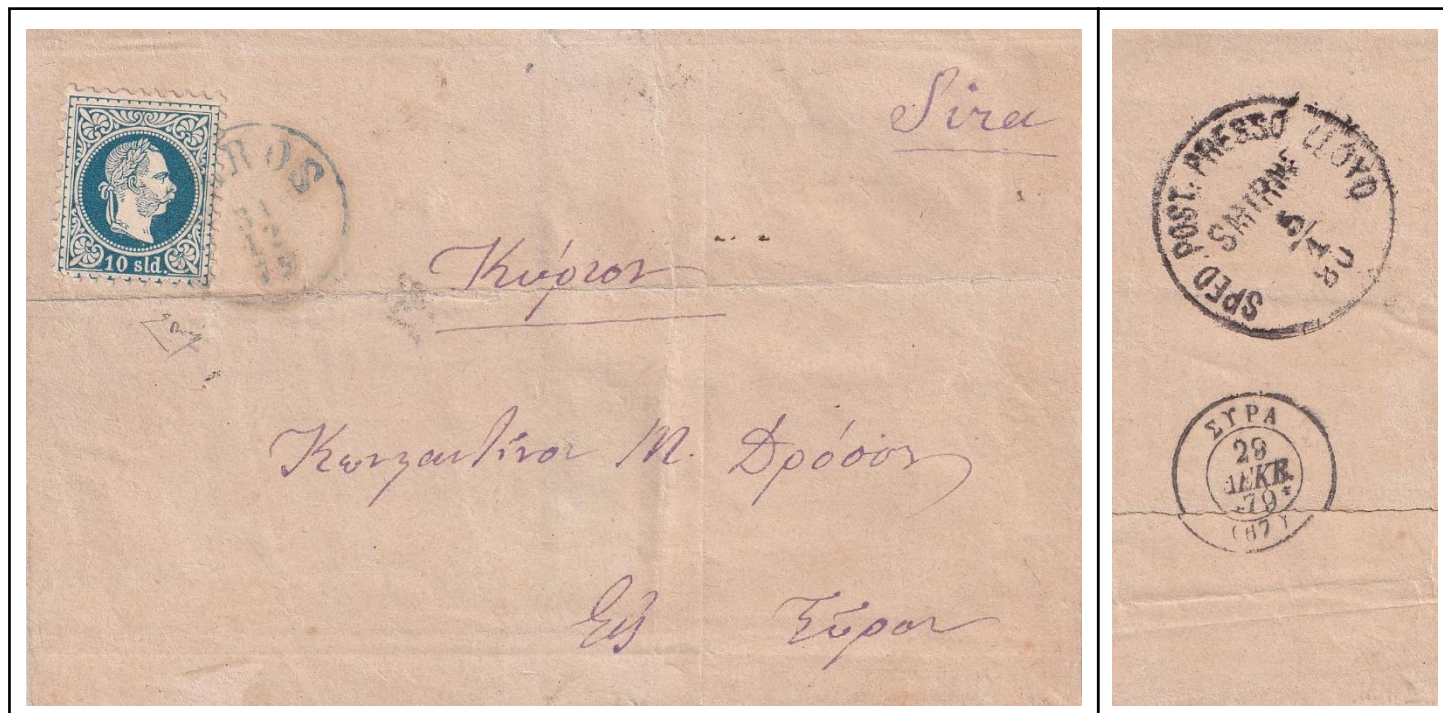
Foreign Postal Agencies on Leros 1872 - 1888

Egyptian P.O. (at Khedival Mail Line Agency) 1872-75 and Austrian P.O. (at Austrian Lloyd Agency) 1879-88



The Leros Agency of the Khedival Mail Line operated an Egyptian P.O. intermittently during the summer seasons between 1872 and 1875. This damaged 1 pi. stamp of the 1872 issue of Egypt bears the date-stamp "V.R. POSTE EGIZIANE * LEROS" of ? July 1873. Tchilinghirian reports that 3+ genuine examples of this date-stamp are recorded (only on loose stamps). Expertise.

The Austrian Lloyd line Trieste – Alexandria – Cyprus – Constantinople was further developed after the opening of the Suez Canal and an Austrian Post Office was opened at Leros on 6 April 1879. These 2 are the only entires recorded.



An undated wrapper sent to Syros franked at the UPU letter rate with a 10s stamp (1875 issue) cancelled "LEROS" on 31 December 1879. The copy of part of the reverse shows the transit back-stamp of the Austrian Post Office at Smyrna of 5 January 1880 (letter transferred to the Constantinople – Trieste line) and a Syros arrival back-stamp of 29 December/10 January 1880.



A wrapper dated Leros 3/15 January 1880 and sent to Syros franked as above; it was cancelled "LEROS" on 15 January 1880 and has a transit back-stamp of the Austrian Post Office at Smyrna and a Syros arrival back-stamp of 5/17 January 1880.

1. Ottoman period up to May 1912

Turkish Post Office at Calymnos 1868-1912

The first markings used at Calymnos were the octagonal type (known on stamps of the 1868 issue) and the 3-line rectangular type (known on stamps of the 1884 & 1892 issues) – **no covers of either are recorded**



Octagonal canceller on pair 20 para 1868 (**the only example recorded in the literature**) and 1 piastre 1868



3-line rectangular canceller on 20 para and 1 piastre stamps of the 1884 issue



A cover to Germany correctly franked with a 1 piastre stamp of the 1892 issue; cancelled in violet with the triple-framed rectangular marking of Calymnos; transit back-stamp of the Turkish post office at Smyrna, plus the international mail despatch date-stamp, dated 26 June 1892; Constantinople transit back-stamp of 27 June 1892; Berlin delivery back-stamp of 29 June 1892. At right: 100% copy of part of back.

1. Ottoman period up to May 1912

Turkish Post Office at Calymnos 1868-1912

An undated double-circle marking with Kalymnos at the top in Arabic, Turquie in French at the foot and Calymnos in the centre; recorded from 1890.



A double weight cover sent from the Calymnos District Court (negative seal at top right) to the Turkish Embassy in Madrid correctly franked with a 2 piastre stamp (1890 issue) cancelled in blue with the above undated marking of Calymnos.

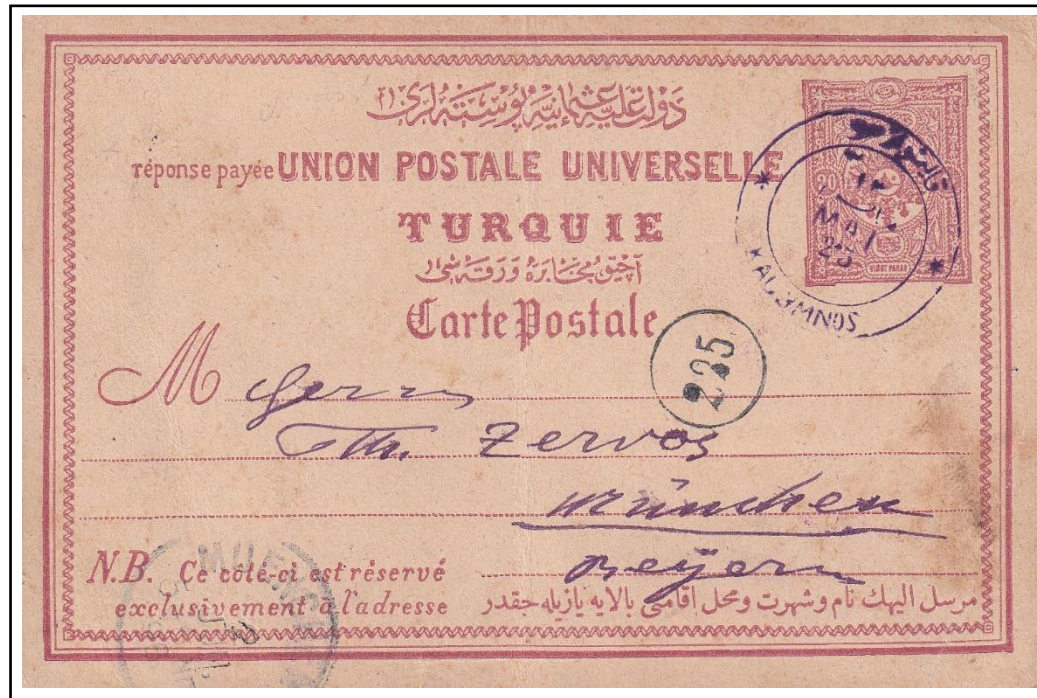
The cover bears departure date-stamps of Smyrna of 7 August 1890 (at top centre in blue) and Constantinople-Galata of 9 August 1890 (at right centre in black), plus a Paris transit date-stamp of 12 August 1890 (at top left-centre in black) and Madrid arrival back-stamps 14 August 1890.

This Calymnos marking is recorded only on this cover and on two stamps of 1890 issue. ©

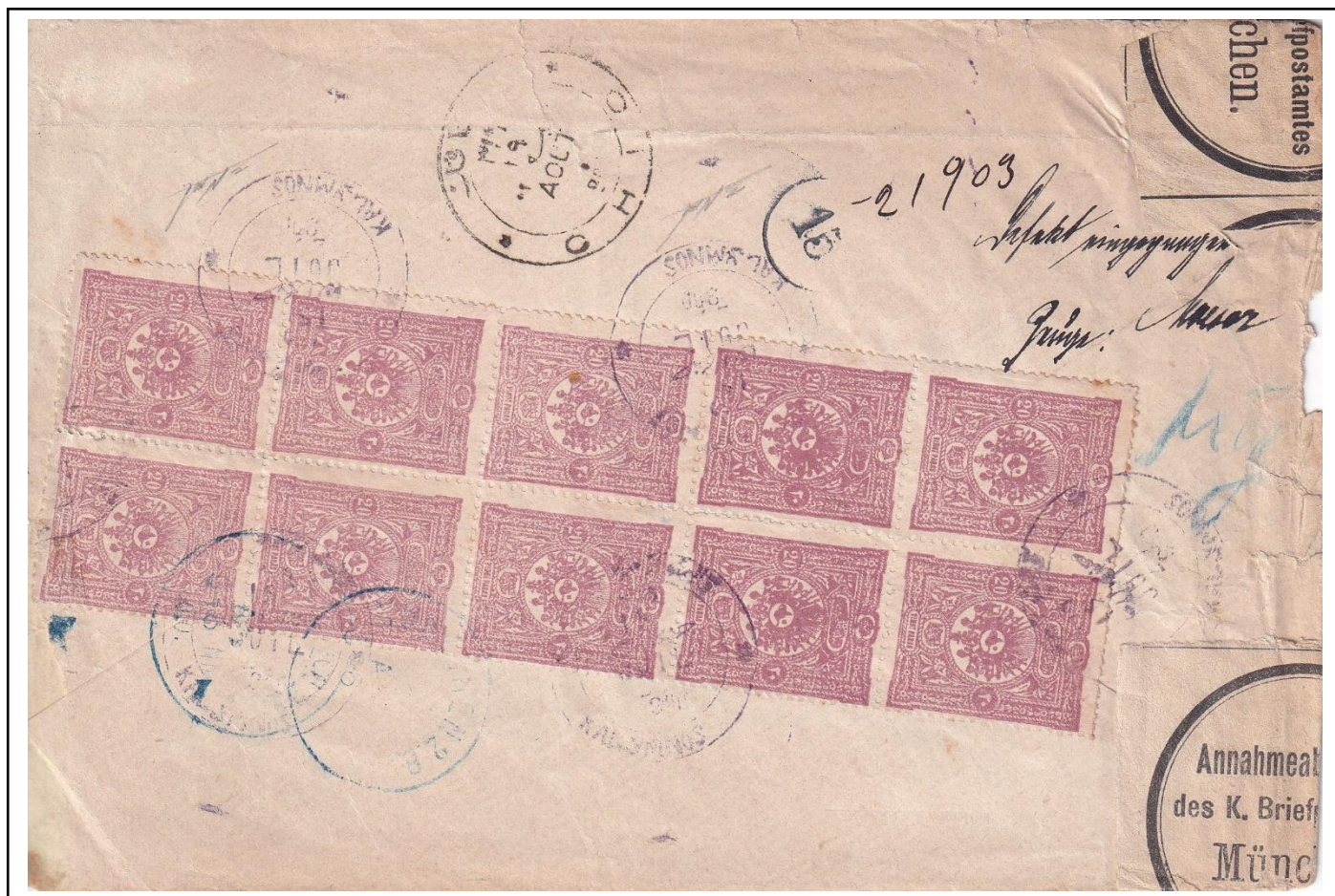
1. Ottoman period up to May 1912

Turkish Post Office at Calymnos 1868-1912

Double-circle date-stamp with six-line date introduced at Calymnos in 1892 and used until 1900



A 20 para reply post-card (1892 issue) written at Calymnos on 13/25 May 1896 and sent to Germany; cancelled with the above marking on 25 May 1896; transit back-stamp of the Turkish post office at Smyrna dated 27 May 1896; Munich arrival date-stamp of 2 June 1896.



A heavy registered cover to Germany franked at 5 piastres (postage 45-60g = 4 pi + registration 1 pi) with a block of ten 20 pa stamps of the 1892 issue; cancelled in violet with the above marking on 29 July 1900; transit date-stamps of the Turkish post offices at Chios ? August 1900 and Constantinople 3 August 1900; opened or damaged in transit and re-sealed by the Munich post office; Munich delivery back-stamp dated ? August.

1. Turkish period up to May 1912

Turkish Post Office at Calymnos 1868-1912

Ancillary markings used as cancellers at Calymnos from about 1890 to 1900



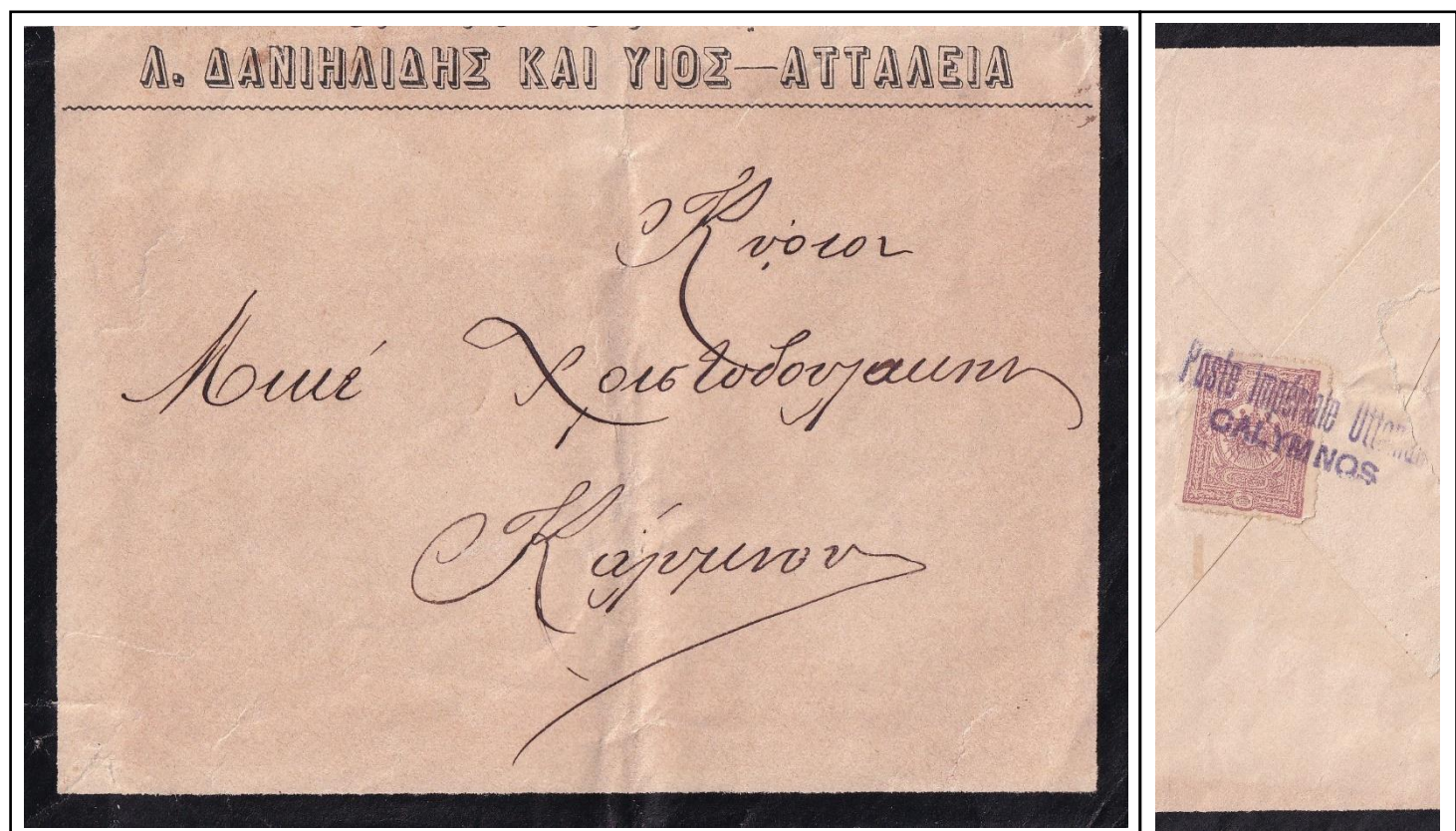
A 10 para stamp of 1892 cancelled with the 2-line post office administrative handstamp in violet



A piece with three 20pa 1892 stamps, of which two are cancelled with the standard-type registration handstamp

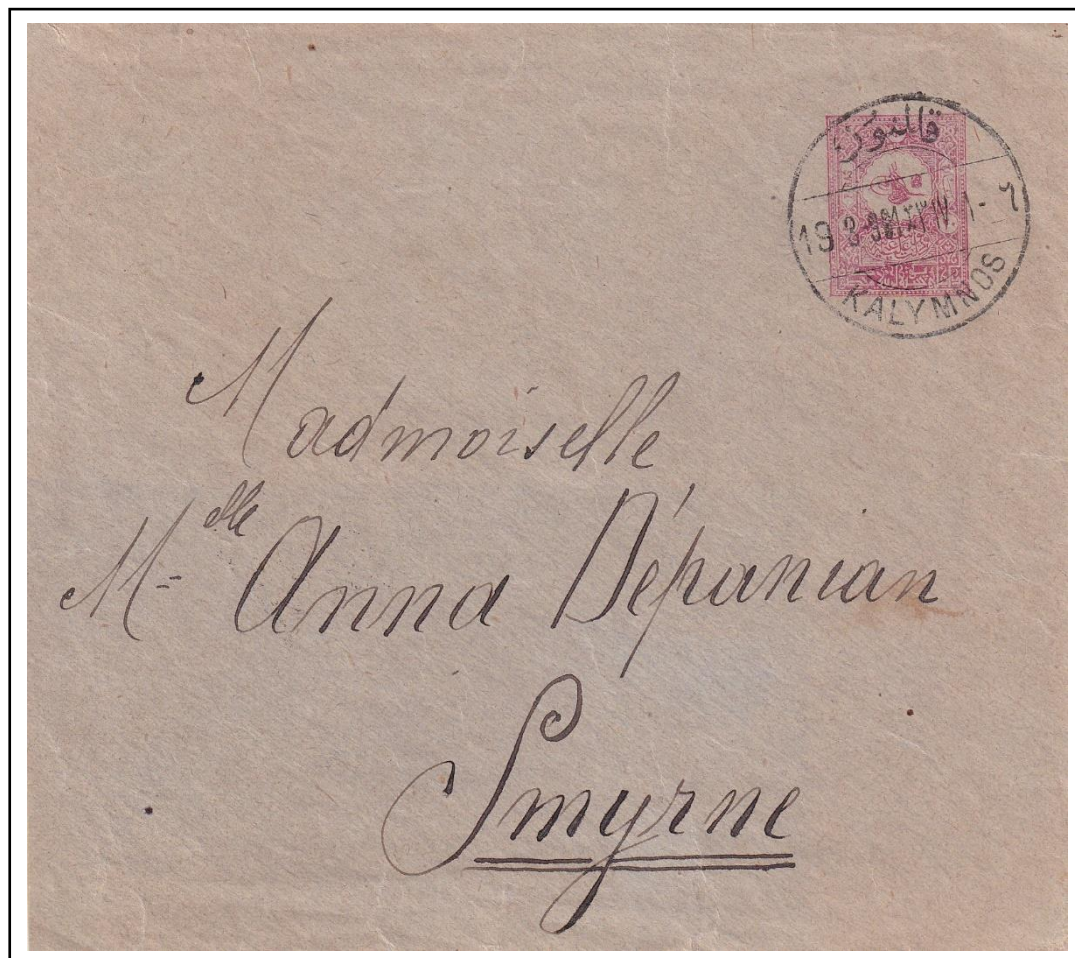


A 1 pi. stamp of 1892 cancelled with the 2-line "A.R." handstamp for letters with Advice of Receipt in blue



A mourning cover sent within Calymnos franked with a 20 para stamp (1892 issue) cancelled with a two-line handstamp translating "Imperial Ottoman Post". A right: a reduced copy of part of the back of the envelope.

Large double-circle with date-belt marking used at Calymnos 1901 - 1912



A 20 para envelope (1901 inland issue) addressed to Smyrna; cancelled with the above date-stamp of Calymnos on 19 March 1901; with a Smyrna arrival back-stamp of 22 March 1901.

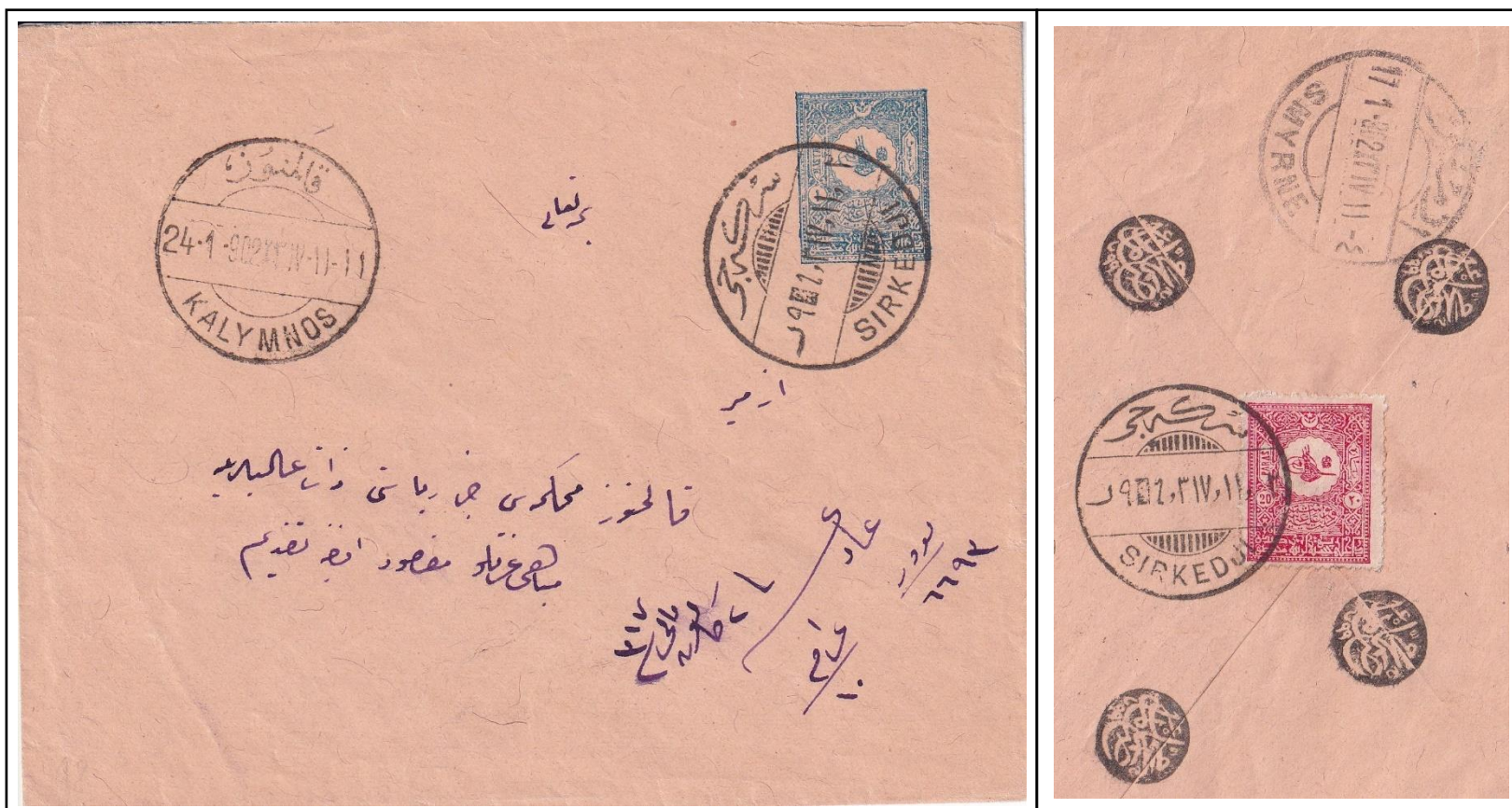


A view-card addressed to Algeria correctly franked with a 20 para stamp (1905 issue); cancelled with the above date-stamp of Calymnos on 21 December 1907; with an almost illegible transit date-stamp of Smyrna and a Paris transit date-stamp of 28 December 1907.

Large double-circle with date-belt marking used as a transit / arrival date-stamp at Calymnos 1901 - 1912



A 5 para wrapper (1901 inland issue) addressed to Stampalia (Astypalaea), which had no post office (copy of reverse). It was cancelled at Stamboul Psamatia and received the above date-stamp in transit at Calymnos on 3 October 1903.



A 1 pi envelope (1901 inland issue) sent registered from Sirkedji (Stamboul) to Calymnos (arrival 24 January 1902). The scan of the back shows a 20 para additional franking and a Smyrna transit back-stamp of 17 January 1902.

1. Ottoman period up to 1912

Turkish post office at Leros ca. 1890 - May 1912

Double-circle date-stamp with six-line date introduced at Leros ca. 1892 and used until 1901



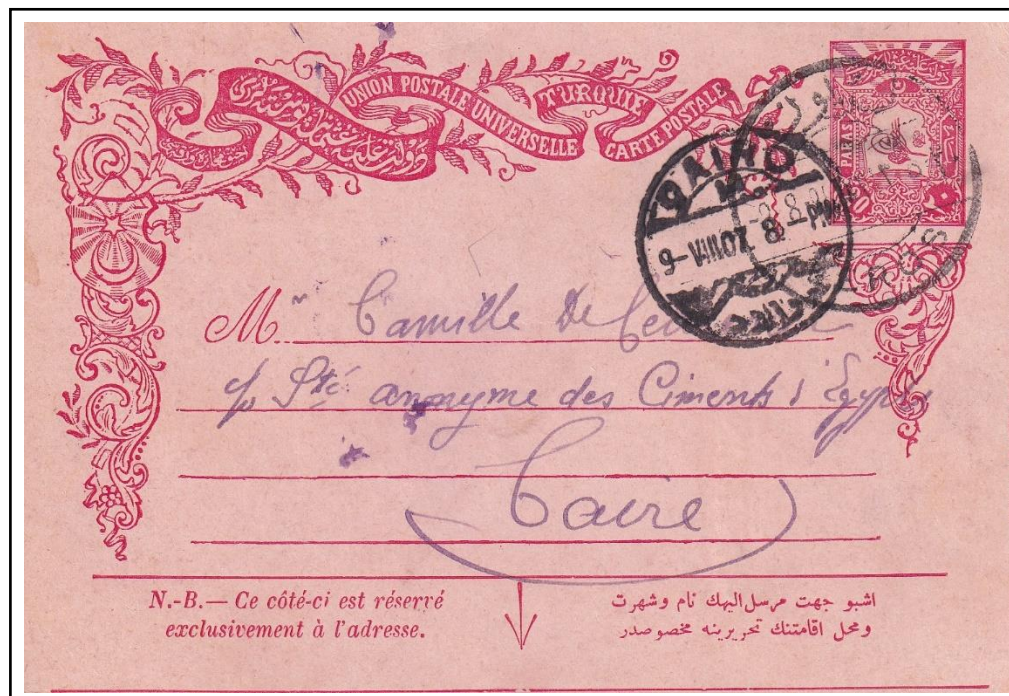
A pair of 10 para stamps of the 1892 issue with the 6-line date-stamp in blue – date apparently 2 May 190?



A part of a cover to Cairo franked with a 1 pi. stamp (1901 issue) with the 6-line date-stamp (date 5 May 1901?) over-stamped on arrival in Cairo. The stamp also bears the negative seal of the Leros post office.



A pair of 20 para stamps of the 1892 issue with the 6-line date-stamp in black with date in French illegible



A 20 para post-card (1905 issue) sent to Egypt and cancelled with the belt-type date-stamp of Leros on 2 August 1907; Smyrna transit and Cairo arrival back-stamps of 4 and 9 August 1907. Interestingly, the Cairo post office has again placed its date-stamp over the Leros cancellation just as on the above part-cover.

1. Ottoman period to 1912

Turkish post office at Leros ca. 1890 - May 1912

Large double-circle with date-belt marking used at Leros from 1901 to 1912



A full-text post-card sent to Samos franked with 4 x 5 para stamps (1909 issue); cancelled with the large double-circle with date-belt of Leros on 29 May 1911; Samos arrival back-stamp of 30 May 1911.



A letter to Constantinople franked with a 20 para stamp (1909 issue); cancelled with the above marking of Leros on 30 July 1911; with Smyrna transit and Galata arrival back-stamps.

1. Ottoman period up to May 1912

Turkish post office at Leros ca. 1890 - May 1912

Small double-circle marking with date-belt inscribed "LERYOS (ÎLE)" used at Leros in 1911-1912



Two pieces from an envelope from Leros bearing a 1 piastre stamp (1905 issue) cancelled with the small "LERYOS (ÎLE)" date-stamp in blue on 12 April 1912, the date of the Italian occupation; and the reverse of the envelope with the seal of the Ottoman post-office at Leros struck in the same ink.

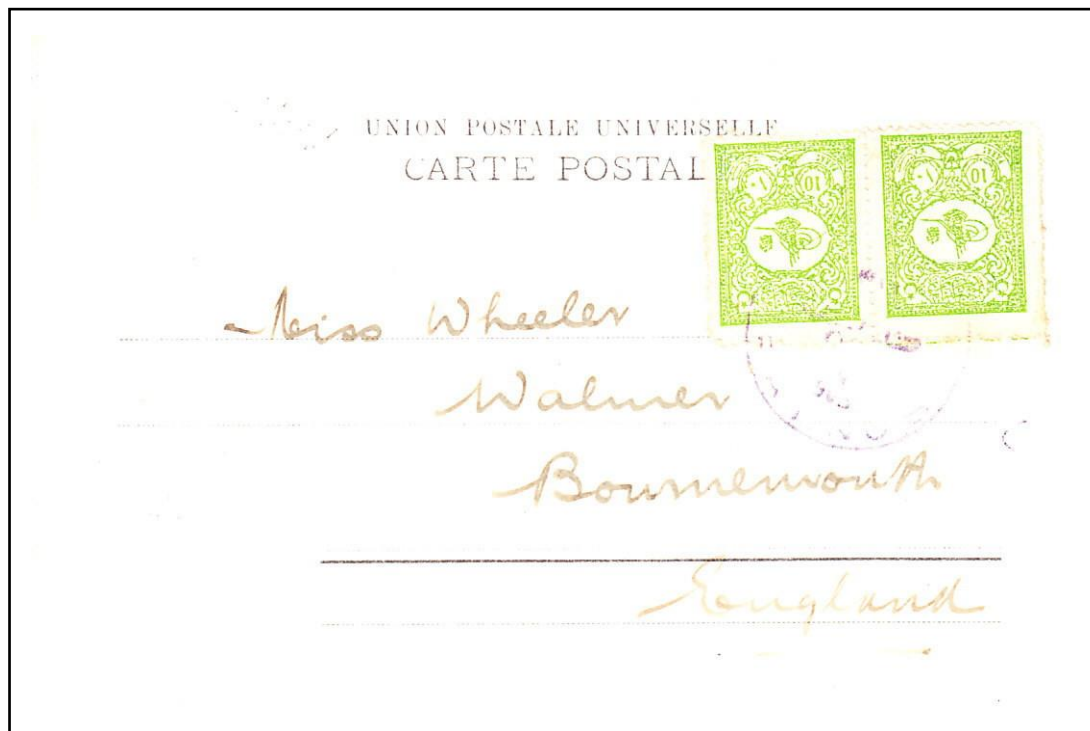


A letter sent to Constantinople; franked with a 20 para stamp (1909 issue); cancelled with the small "LERYOS (ÎLE)" date-stamp in black on 26 September 1911; Smyrna transit and Constantinople arrival back-stamps.

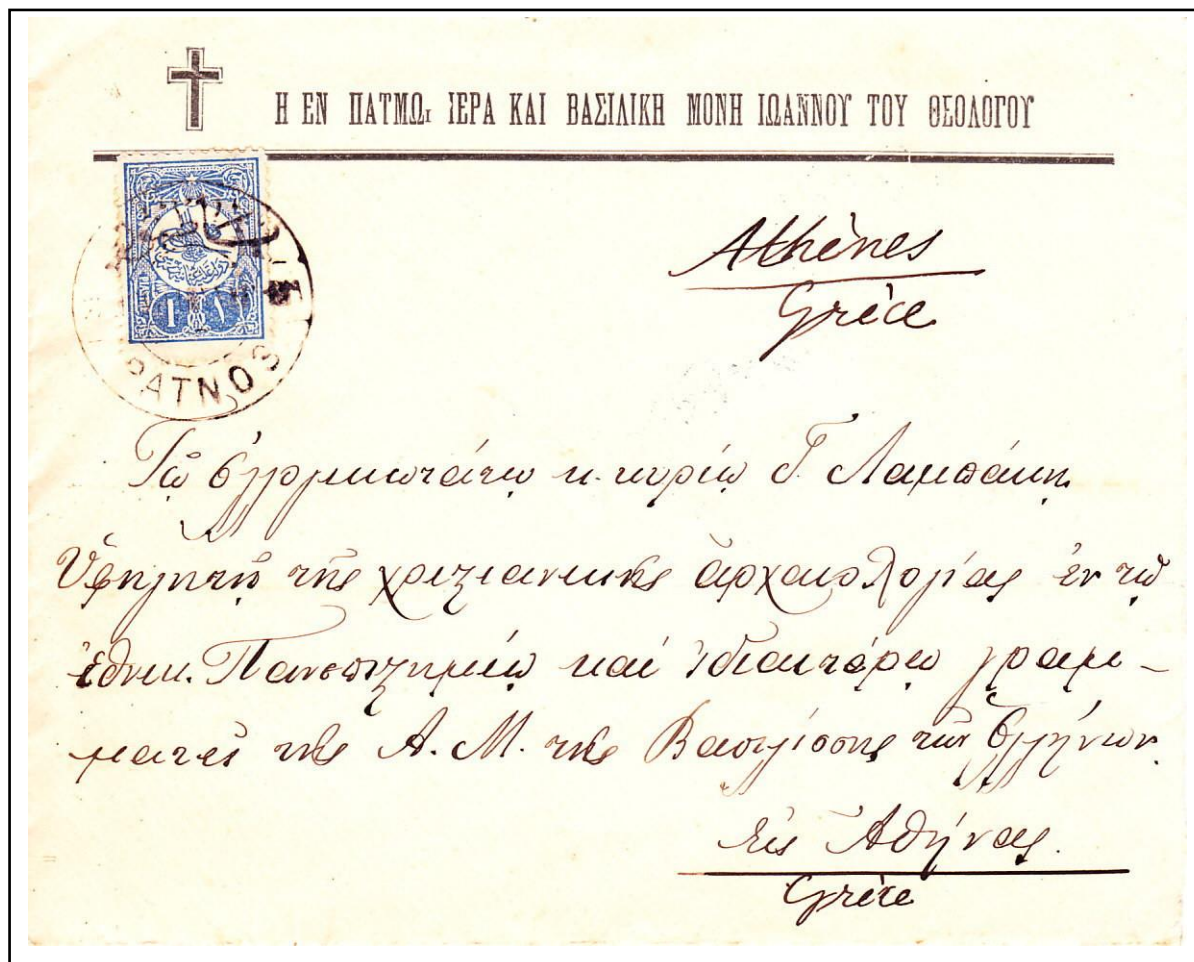
1. Ottoman period up to May 1912

Turkish post office at Patmos ca. 1900 - May 1912

Circular date-stamps with six-line date and date-belt used at Patmos ca. 1900 - 1912



A view-card from Patmos to England; correctly franked with a pair of 5 para stamps (1901 issue) cancelled with the six-line date marking inscribed "PATNOS" in violet on 4 November 1903; this is recorded on stamps of 1892 to 1906.

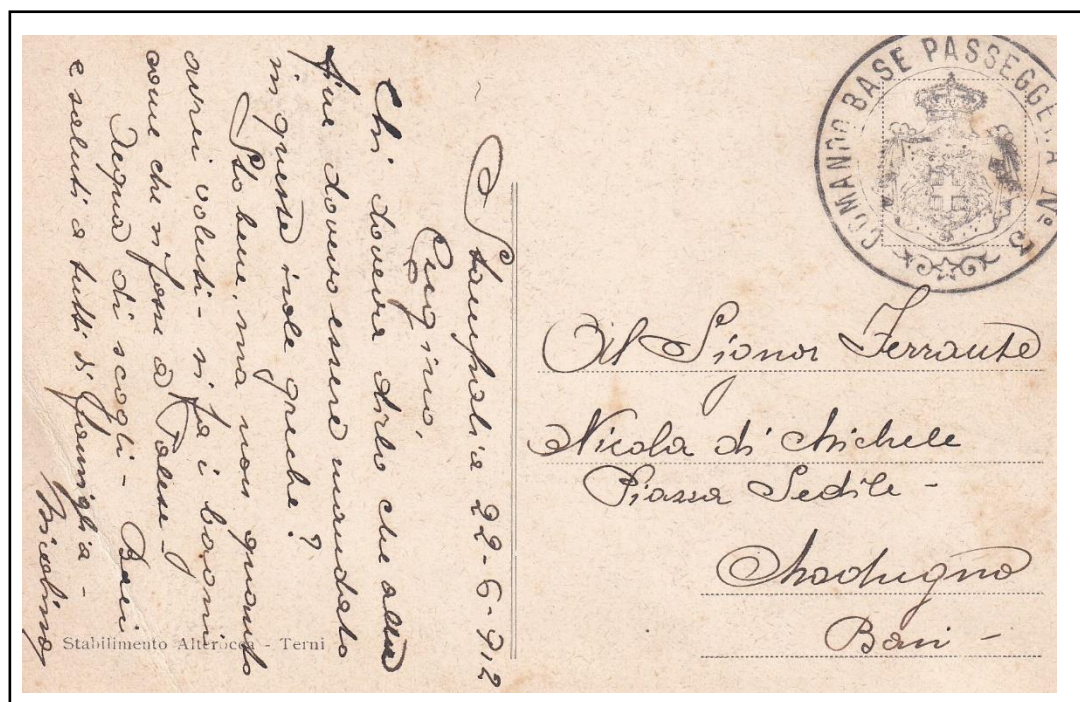


A letter sent to Athens from the Monastery of St. John the Evangelist on Patmos; correctly franked with a 1 piastre stamp (1909 issue); cancelled as above in black on 28 December 1911; Smyrna transit back-stamp of 4 January 1912.

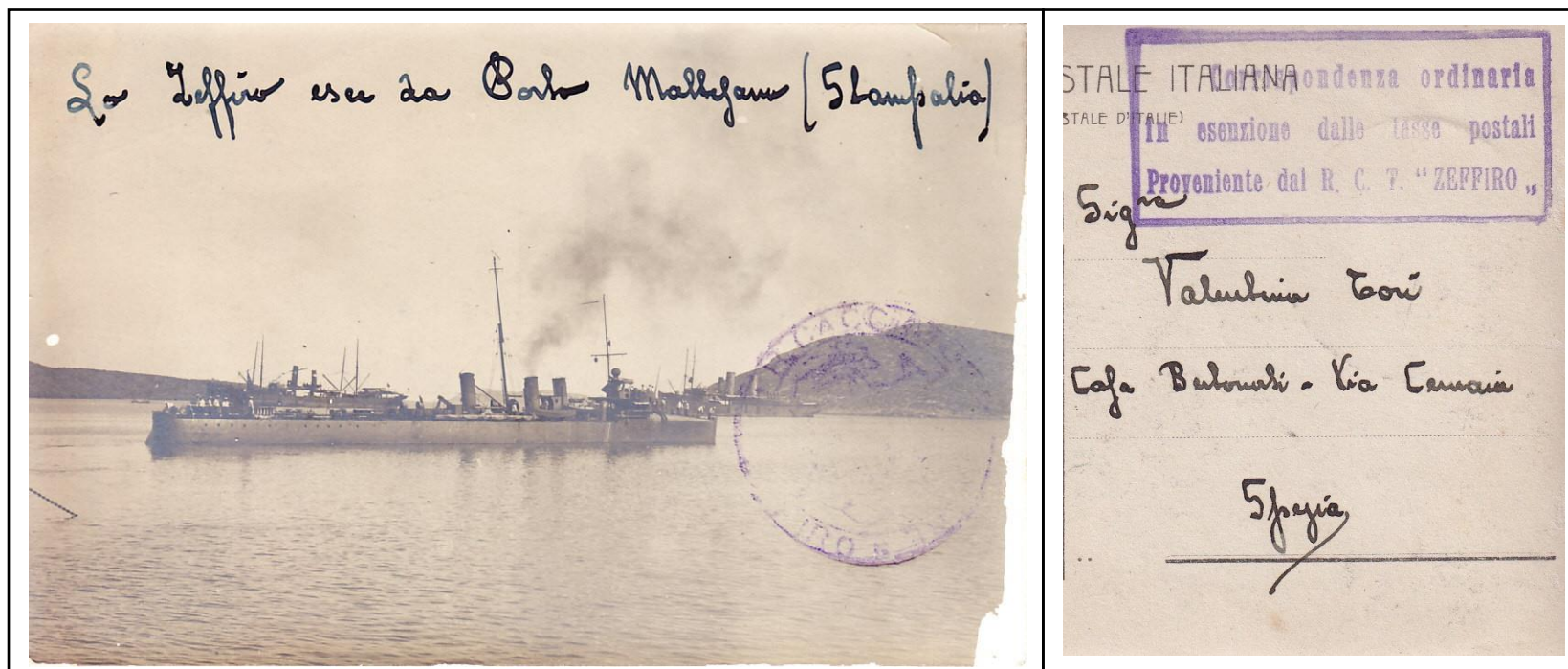
2. Stampalia – the Italian base for the occupation of the Islands

Apr 1912 - Feb 1913

This outlying and unimportant island was the first to be occupied by the Italian Navy - in April 1912



This view-card was written on Stampalia on 22 June 1912. It bears the official cachet of Transit Base No. 3, which is believed to have been at Porto Maltezana in summer and autumn 1912, and served as a franking mark for mail to Italy.



This view-card shows the Italian destroyer "Zeffiro" in the wide bay Porto Maltezana ("Maltese Port"). When the Italian Naval Division under Admiral Presberito occupied the island on 28 April 1912, this bay was selected as the base from which the Italian warships would occupy the Dodecanese. It remained the main Italian naval base until 1913, when Porto Lago on Leros was recognized as being more suitable. Written at Porto Maltezana on 14 September 1912, the copy of part of the address-side of the card shows the ship's franking mark.

Military mail from Italian naval vessels based at Stampalia – July/August 1912



This view-card sent to Italy shows the Italian 13,000 ton battle-ship “Napoli” and was written from the vessel at Stampalia on 15 July 1912. It bears the ship’s date-stamp of the same date.



This view-card of Smyrna sent to Italy was written from the vessel “San Giorgio” at Stampalia on 1 August 1912. It bears the ship’s date-stamp of 1 August 1912, a patriotic vignette and a Modena arrival date-stamp of 6 August 1912.

The civilian post office at Scala was under naval control and used markings translating “Post Kingdom of Italy Stampalia” and “Post Office Stampalia” both manufactured on the repair-ship “Vulcano”



This view-card dated 16 June 1912 has a patriotic text “From this land, forever Italian, consecrated to glory by so much noble and venerable blood ..” was sent postage-free to Italy. It bears the two above markings in violet, and also the non-postal marking of the Community of Astypalaia, plus the date-stamp of the Italian postal steamer “Scilla” (date illegible) in blue.



This envelope was sent to Stampalia for return to Italy by registered mail, correctly franked at 40c with Italian stamps (the 25c value with a major perforation shift); with a manuscript note on the back, saying that the office did not offer a registration service; bearing the two above markings in violet, plus the date-stamp of the “Scilla” dated 22 May 1912 and an arrival back-stamp of Palermo of 27 May 1912, together with a delivery mark “487” and a note that the letter was found in the ordinary mail.

2. Stampalia - Civilian post office operated by the Italian Post

26 June 1912 – Oct 1943

Mail to Italy showing the standard rubber date-stamp supplied from Rome on the opening of the office



A cover sent to Italy correctly franked with a 15c stamp of the 1912 Campanile of St. Mark issue, which was not on sale at Rhodes, but valid for inland postage; cancelled in violet with the rubber date-stamp of Stampalia on 25 July 1912 (showing minimal distortion after one month's use); arrival back-stamp of Secondigliano dated 31 July 1912.



A cover sent to the Turkish Moudir (Mayor) of Stampalia, held as a prisoner of war at Caserta; correctly franked on the reverse (scan at R) with a 15c stamp of Italy; cancelled as above on 5 July 1912 (the rubber date-stamp undistorted after one week's use).

Use of black ink causes deterioration of the rubber date-stamps



A view-card showing the port, Scala, where the Italian post office was located, sent with a 5-word greeting to France correctly franked with a 5c stamp of Italy cancelled on 19 October 1912 with the rubber date-stamp in violet (a different date-stamp, which does not show the same extent as that below in September 1912).



A cover containing photographs correctly franked at 2c as printed matter and sent registered to Italy (registration fee 10c) on 14 September 1912 (the black ink used here caused this rubber date-stamp to deteriorate); the envelope bears the cachet of the hospital ship "Re d'Italia" plus transit and arrival back-stamps of Brindisi and Recanti of 21 and 23 September 1912.

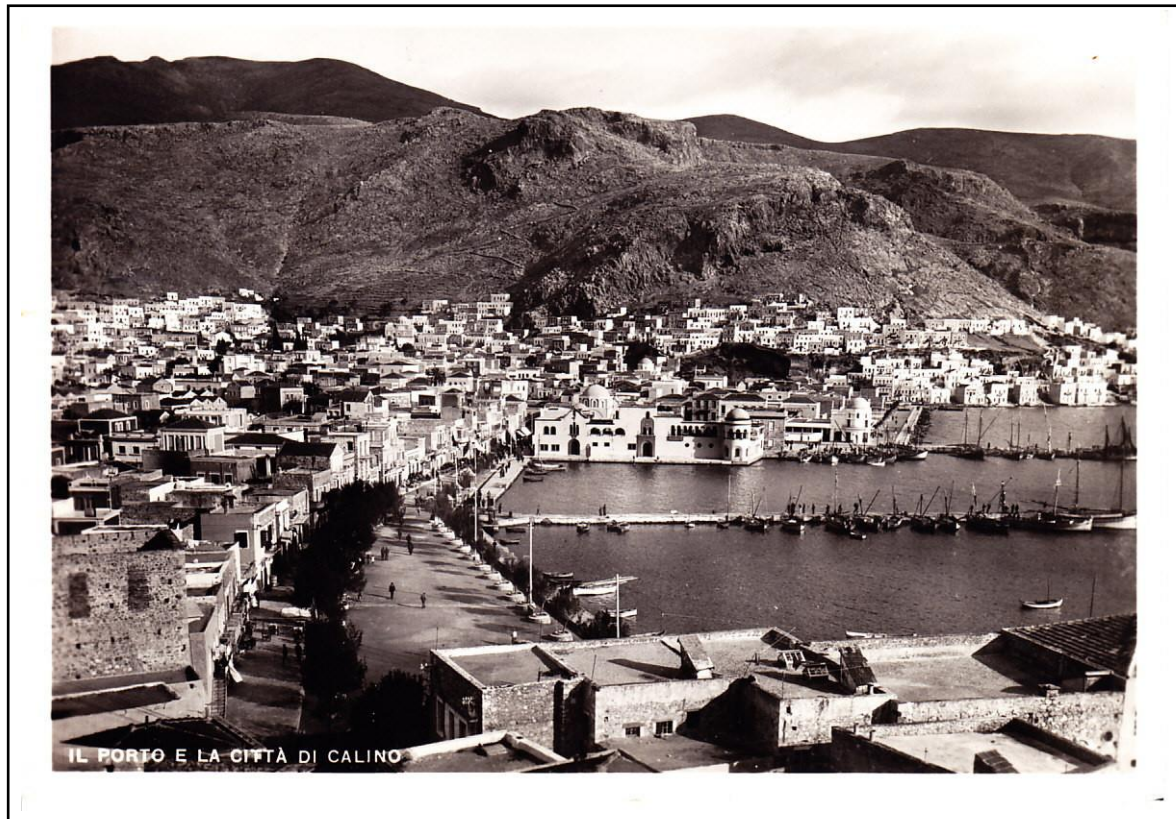
Mail showing the rubber date-stamp in its final form



Above: An envelope sent postage-free to Italy; bearing the hand-stamp inscribed "POSTA MILITARE Ro. D'ITALIA STAMPALIA" introduced in April 1912 and now used to identify the mail of military personnel, plus the date-stamp of the civilian post office dated 5 January 1913 in violet; the envelope bears a Turin arrival back-stamp of 12 January 1913.

Below: An over-franked philatelic cover sent registered to Constantinople on 11 February 1913 (thanks to the violet ink since October, this rubber date-stamp shows only modest deterioration); the envelope bears arrival back-stamps of 22 February 1913.

Continued use of the Turkish date-stamp after the Arabic name and date had been defaced



This view-card shows the port of Pothaea (Italian Porto Calino) and the town of Chora (Italian Calino) on Calymnos, which was, after Rhodes, the second most populous of the Dodecanese islands. Sponge fishing and trading had brought prosperity.



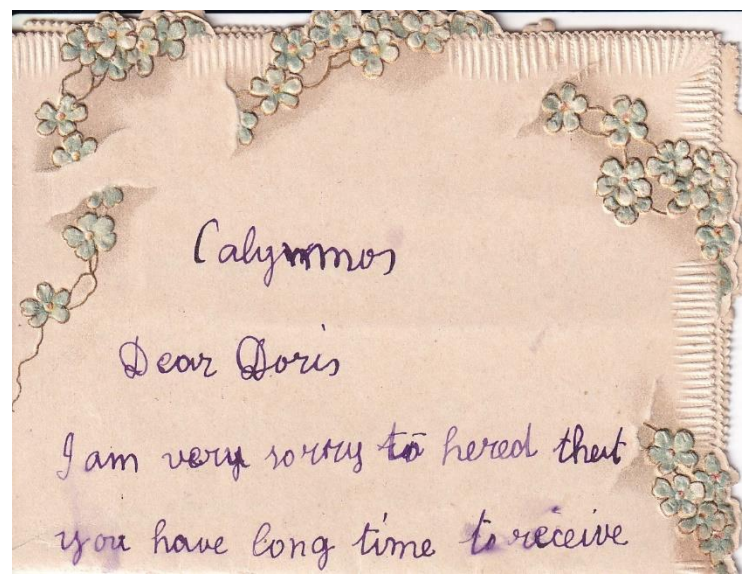
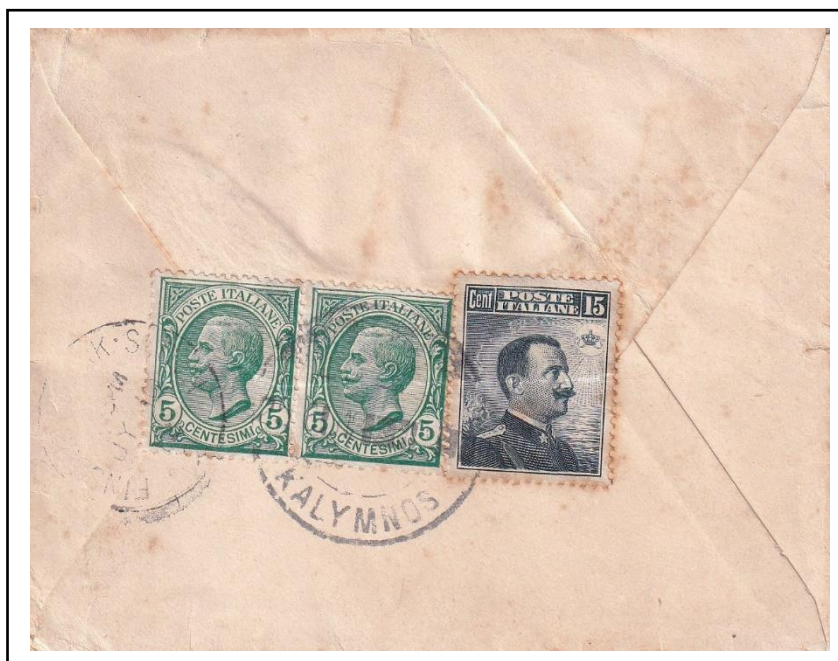
After the Italians had captured Calymnos on 12 May 1912, the post office was handed-over to the Municipal authorities. Stamps with values in Greek lepta showing Helios, the “Sun God”, and inscribed “Community of the Islanders” had been printed by Aspiotis Brothers in Corfu (who printed the Greek stamps) for the “Dodecanese Committee”, which apparently had hopes of autonomy. These stamps were cancelled to order on a number of the islands; but it is claimed that they saw brief postal use at Calymnos (no evidence seen in 50 years!) and were then forbidden, with Italian stamps being supplied on 21 May 1912.

This portion of an envelope bears the series of “Sun God” stamps cancelled to order with the defaced Turkish date-stamp with the date 22 May 1912. The use of Turkish-type grey-black ink makes it appear likely that the cancelling actually took place on this date, the day after the postal use of these stamps had been forbidden.

3a. Calymnos - Municipal post office

12 May – 30 June 1912

Use of the defaced Turkish date-stamp with Italian (and “Sun God”?) stamps from 21 May 1912



The decorative letter enclosed with heading “Calymnos”

This envelope was properly used to England correctly franked with two 5c stamps plus a 15c stamp of Italy which were cancelled with the defaced Turkish date-stamp of Calymnos in grey-black ink on 25 June 1912. It has a Finsbury Park (London) arrival back-stamp dated 10 July 1912.



This front addressed to Leros bears the set of “Sun God” stamps cancelled with the defaced Turkish date-stamp of Calymnos in black ink dated 19 June (year-date blocked) and has an “arrival” marking of the Municipal Post Office at Leros. Tchilinghirian wrote that letters sent from Calymnos to Leros franked with the “Sun God” stamps are known. Although the period of genuine use of both the defaced Turkish date-stamp at Calymnos and this marking of the Municipal Post Office at Leros was mid-May to late June 1912, this front is at best a philatelic item from that time and at worst an illegitimate posthumous production.

3a. Calymnos - Italian civilian post office

1 July 1912 – Feb 1913

Mail showing the new standard rubber date-stamp introduced on 1 July 1912 in its initial state



An envelope from Rhodes with the cachet of a military unit and the date-stamp inscribed "POSTA MILITARE 6^A DIVISIONE" of 4 July 1912; the envelope bears the new rubber date-stamp of Calymnos of 6 July 1912 as an arrival back-stamp.



An envelope bearing the locally available Italian stamps cancelled to order on 17 July 1912 with his rubber date-stamp using violet ink. The date-stamp already shows signs of wear.

Mail showing the transition from violet to black ink with the rubber date-stamp in August 1912



An envelope sent to Trieste (then Austria) correctly franked with a 25c stamp of Italy cancelled with the rubber Calymnos date-stamp on 17 August 1912, apparently the last date of the use of violet ink.



An envelope sent to France correctly franked with 10c + 15c stamps of Italy cancelled with the rubber Calymnos date-stamp on 18 August 1912, apparently the first date of the use of black ink.

Mail from August and September 1912 showing the rubber date-stamp distorted from the use of black ink

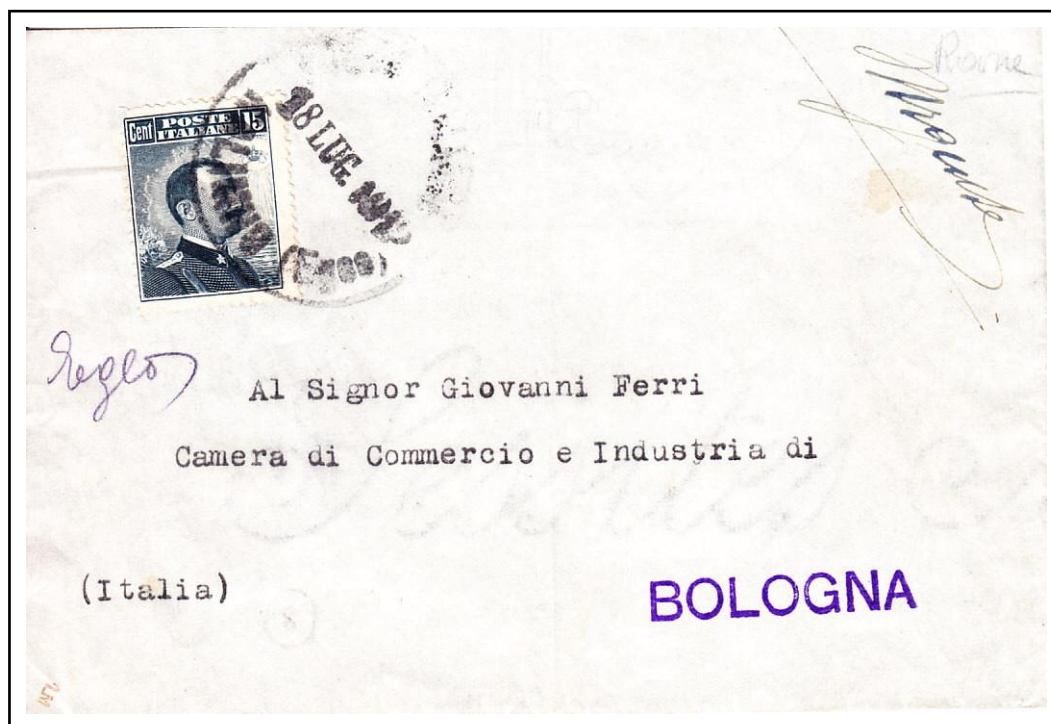


A view-card sent postage-free to Italy; with the cachet of the 10,400 ton armoured cruiser "Amalfi" and the rubber date stamp "POSTE ITALIANE KALIMNO (Egeo)" of 21 August 1912 (minimal deterioration at the beginning of the use of black ink).



A cover to a former Turkish customs official of Calymnos now a prisoner of war in Italy; correctly franked with three 5c stamps of Italy; cancelled as above on 27 September 1912 (now with heavy damage after only 6 weeks of use with black ink).

Mail from October and November 1912 showing the rubber date-stamp in heavily damaged states

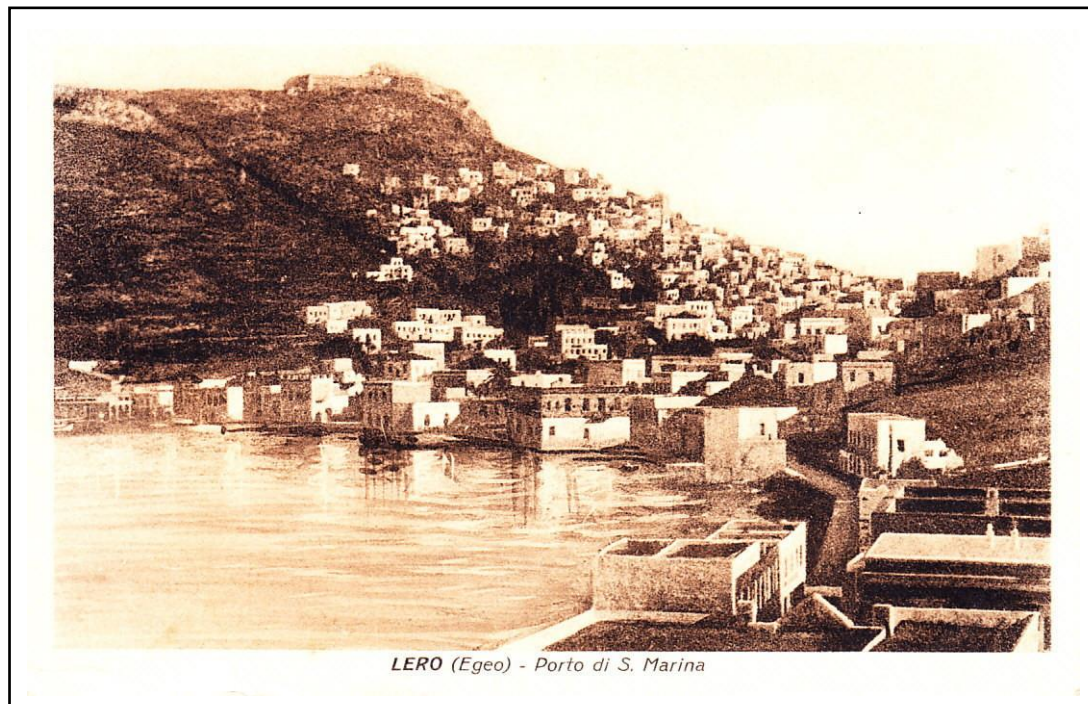


A cover to Italy correctly franked with a 15c Italian stamp cancelled with the above date-stamp; bearing the date "18 July 1912" but so heavily damaged that the top part has disappeared. The Bologna arrival back-stamp dated 25 November 1912 confirms that the "July" date was an error, the correct date of November being consistent with the state of this date-stamp.



A cover to Constantinople correctly franked with a 25c stamp overprinted "EGEO" issued on 22 September 1912 for sale at a discount; with the rubber date on 11 October 1912 (the damage shown below has here been partially repaired).

Locally manufactured marking used by Municipal post office from mid-May to late June 1912



This view-card shows the mediaeval town of Leros and its port, Marina, in Alinda Bay (renamed Santa Marina by the Italians). The island was largely barren and many of its inhabitants worked seasonally in Egypt, returning to Leros for the summer. Many settled in Egypt after the Italian occupation, to be replaced by immigrants from Italy, particularly workers at the Naval Base.



This commercial cover to Egypt is correctly franked with five 5c Italian stamps, which are cancelled with the marking of the Municipal post office; it bears transit and arrival back-stamps of Alexandria and Cairo, all dated 15 July 1912.

Mail showing the standard rubber date-stamp supplied from Rome on the opening of the post office



A registered express letter to Italy over-franked by 10c with a 50c stamp of Italy (overprinted "EGEO" at Rhodes for sale at a discount) plus a 25c express stamp; cancelled in violet on 6 December 1912; Rome express arrival back-stamp of 15 December 1912. This cover shows how the date-stamp had suffered only minimal damage because no black ink had been used.



This cover to Egypt is correctly franked with five 5c Italian stamps, which were cancelled in blue with the rubber date-stamp on 19 August 1912; it bears transit and arrival back-stamps of Piraeus and Alexandria dated 13/26 and 28 August 1912.

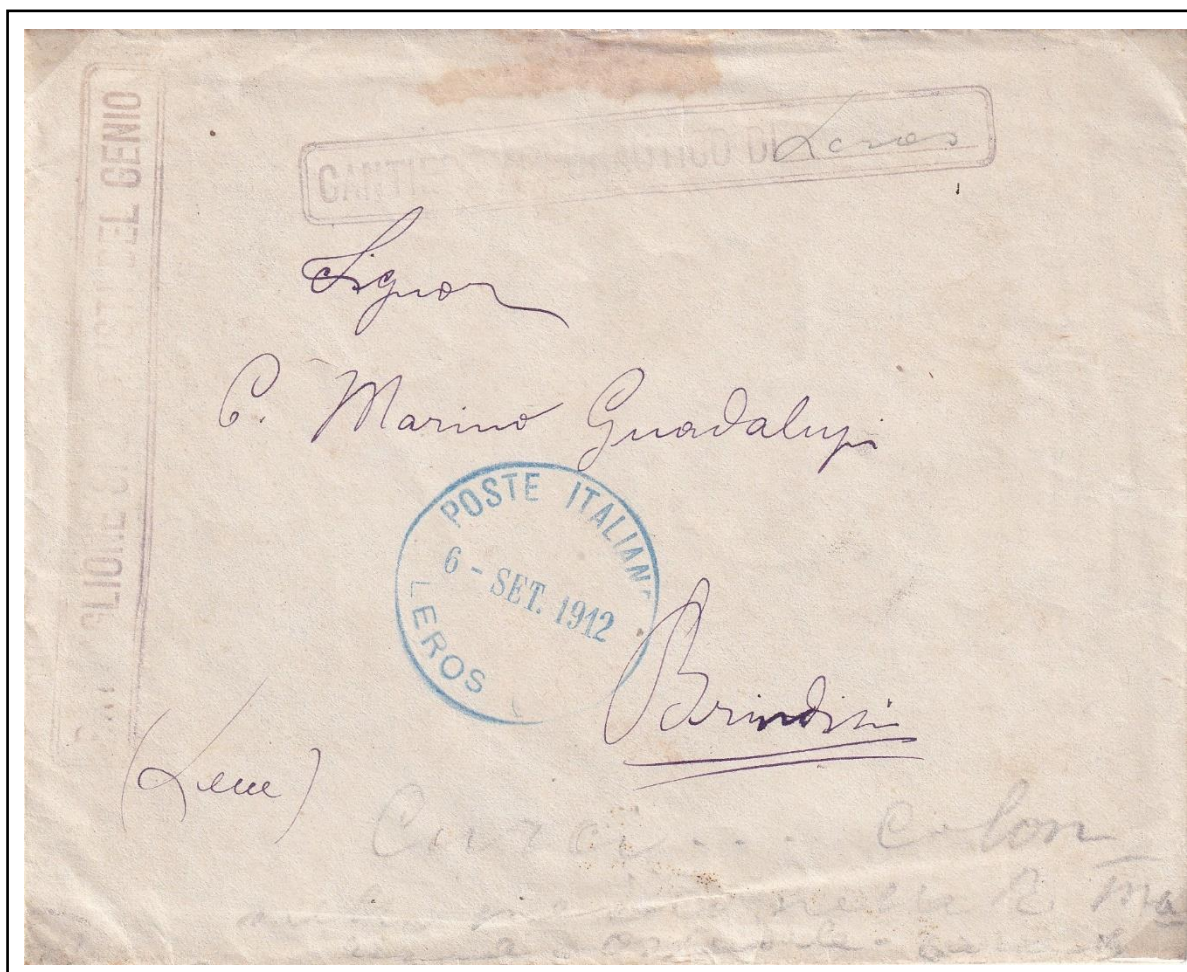
3b. Leros - Italian civilian post office at Leros-Town

1 July 1912 – Feb 1913

Italy quickly recognized the strategic value of Leros and started to construct military installations, including a hanger at Partheni Bay. The construction team was provided with a boxed military franking mark translating “Special Battalion of the Sappers”.



A view-card to Italy datelined “Partheny 15 October 1912” bearing the above marking and a Leros date-stamp of the same day



A letter to Italy which bears the above marking plus a boxed marking translating “Aeronautical construction site of Leros (ms.)” (“Partheni” also known) in violet and a date-stamp of 6 September 1912 in blue; Brindisi arrival back-stamp of 10 October.

Items of mail showing that the rubber date-stamp had deteriorated only slightly thanks to blue and violet ink



A view-card sent to Egypt correctly franked with a 10c stamp of Italy (overprinted “Leros” and issued in December 1912) cancelled in violet on 1? January 1913; with transit and arrival date-stamps of Alexandria and Port Said of 20 and 21 January.

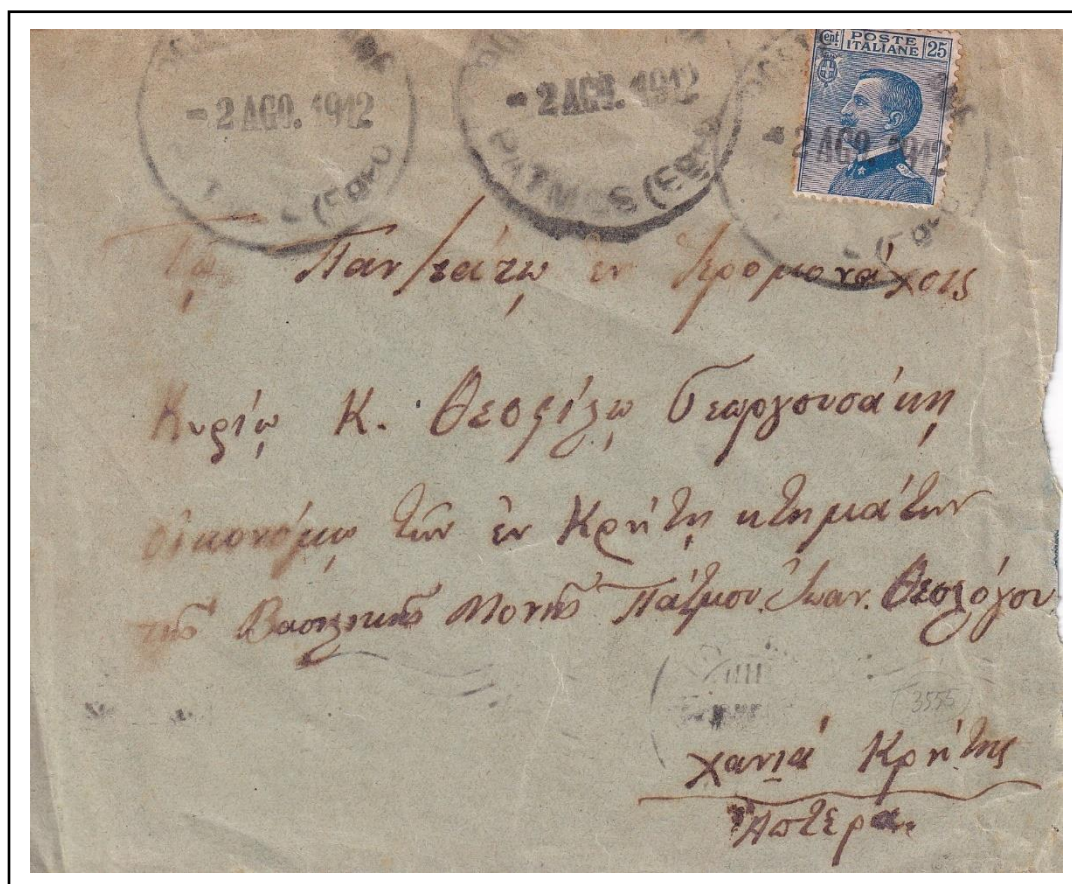


This item of registered printed matter to Italy is correctly franked with a 2c “Leros” stamp for the postage plus 5c Italian and “Leros” stamps for the registration; these were cancelled in violet on 6 February 1913; Rome arrival back-stamp of 18 February.

The new date-stamps used from transfer of post office to civilian staff in July 1912 raise questions



Some writers say that the new rubber circular date-stamp was introduced on 21 July 1912 when the Patmos post office was transferred to civilian staff. These writers do not mention the temporary 3-line date-stamp "POSTE ITALIANE / DATE / PATMOS <EGEO>", which this 5c post-card cut-out shows in use on 23 July 1912.



This clearly commercial letter to Crete was correctly franked with an Italian 25c stamp, which was cancelled in black with the new rubber date-stamp at Patmos on 2 August 1912. This early date is confirmed by a Chania arrival back-stamp of 31 July/ 13 August 1912. This new date-stamp already shows surprisingly heavy wear, possibly due to rough use with poor-quality black ink.



This philatelic post-card to Italy is correctly franked on the back with a 5c Italian stamp for the postage plus one of 10c for the registration fee cancelled with the rubber marking dated 26 August 1912; the card bears transit and arrival date-stamps of Milan and Cremona dated 3 September 1912. At right, a reduced copy of the address-side. The condition of the date-stamp and the quality of the impressions indicates that this must be a new date-stamp, which is deliberately being used with blue ink only.

Rubber date-stamps used from opening of Italian post office until replaced in March 1913



A view-card sent postage-free by a serviceman on Patmos to another on Leros; bearing the rubber date-stamp of Patmos in blue dated 7 November 1912. Thanks to the use of blue ink, this rubber canceller shows only minimal distortion from 16 weeks of use. The card has the rubber date-stamp of Leros in violet dated 12 November 1912 as an arrival mark.



This 15c on 20c letter-card of Italy was sent from Patmos to Italy and cancelled with a rubber date-stamp showing heavy deterioration in black on 10 March 1913. It appears that the date-stamp which suffered deterioration due to the use of black ink already in August 1912 has continued to be used with black ink, getting into a worse state by March 1913. Savona arrival back-stamp of 24 March.

Rubber date-stamps used for the entire period with only minimal deterioration

Lipsos (only ca. 500 inhabitants) was the smallest of the Dodecanese islands and had only minimal commercial mail. From these two covers, it appears that also Lipsos had two rubber date-stamps: one, used with black ink, which gave thick lettered impressions; and one used with blue ink, which gave finer impressions.



A visiting card sent as printed matter to Italy correctly franked to the value of 5c with a 1c definitive stamp and two 2c commemorative stamps (and therefore philatelically inspired); cancelled in black with the rubber date-stamp of Lipsos on 12 October 1912; arrival back-stamp of Lugo, Ravenna, dated 25 October 1912. Normally, only blue ink was used with this rubber canceller, but this shows little distortion after 12 weeks in use (probably also due to the minimal quantities of mail).



A registered philatelic cover sent to Italy correctly franked with two 25c stamps of the "EGEO" issue (one with inverted overprint) of 22 September 1912 (prepared locally at Rhodes for sale at a discount to compete with the Austrian and French post offices); cancelled with a Lipsos rubber date-stamp in blue on 13 January 1913; Naples arrival back-stamp of 11 March 1913.

The main maritime routes serving the islands



This decorative post-card published by the Adriatica Shipping Company shows its lines in the Adriatic, in the Aegean and to Egypt in the mid-1930s; it was sent from Athens to Vienna in 1936

The first regular maritime postal services serving the island commenced in 1913 and comprised:

- a. The inter-island line: Rhodes-Symi-Cos-Calymnos-Leros-Lipsos-Patmos-Stampalia and return
- b. The lines to Italy
 1. Rhodes-Piraeus-Brindisi: first by ships of Nautica and of Puglia, then those of Adriatica
 2. Rhodes-Piraeus-Bari: first by ships of Puglia which was absorbed into Adriatica in 1932
 3. Rhodes-Piraeus-Venice: first by ships of Puglia and San Marco (both absorbed into Adriatica in 1932)
 4. Rhodes-Piraeus-Venice-Trieste: by ships of Lloyd Triestino from 1932
 5. Rhodes-Genoa or Rhodes-Venice: alternate services by ships of Sitmar

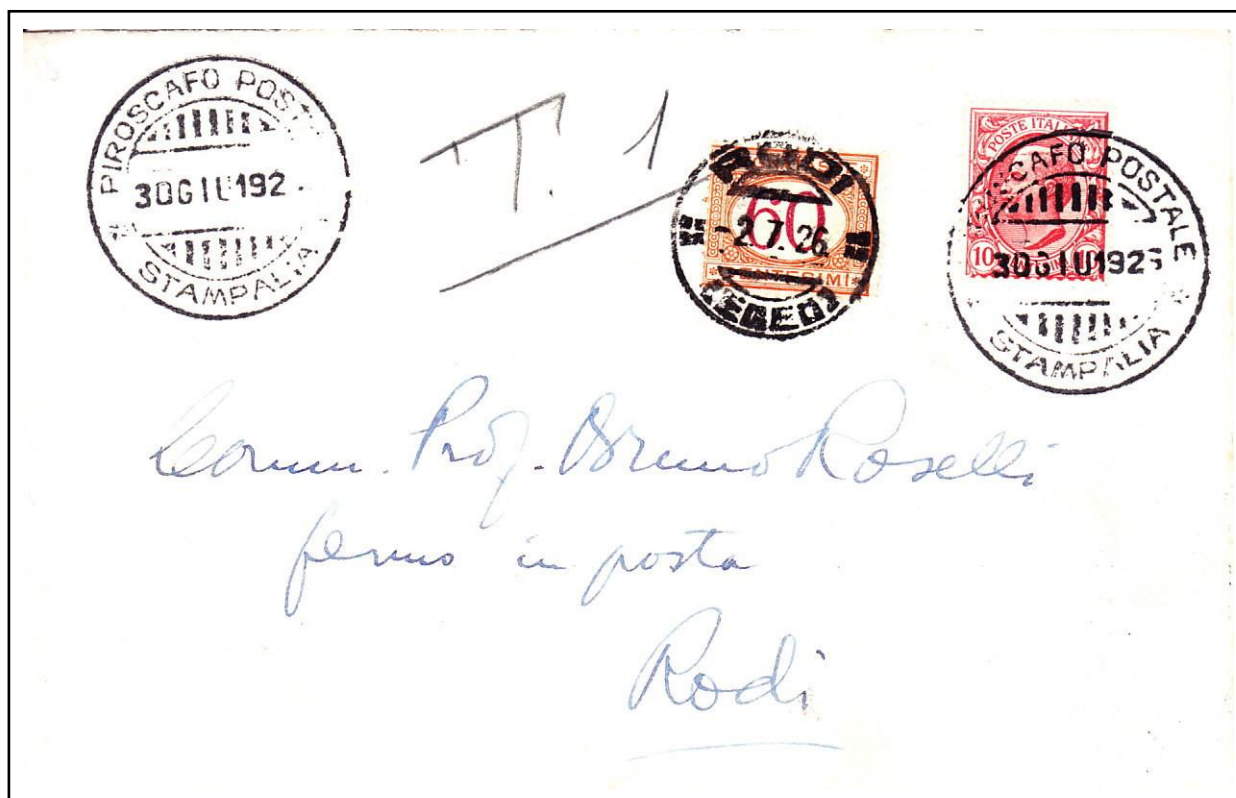
Items of maritime mail are included here only if they are likely to have originated in the islands Calymnos, Leros, Lipsos, Patmos or Stampalia.

Mail to Italy via Rhodes by the "Postal Messenger" in 1916



This cover to Italy bears the cachet of the Port Office at Calymnos and was correctly franked with a 20c on 15c stamp of the "Caso" overprinted issue; the stamp was cancelled (possibly on arrival at Rhodes) with the "Postal Messenger" inter-island line date-stamp on 20 April 1916 (this marking is listed in the standard literature, but with no examples on cover being recorded); the envelope bears a Livorno arrival back-stamp dated 29 April 1916.

Mail to Rhodes and Italy by the "Stampalia" serving on the "Postal Messenger" service in 1926



Above: A philatelic cover to Italy correctly franked with a 3 x 20c stamps of Italy; cancelled with the date-stamp of the postal steamer "Stampalia" on 30 June 1926 (recorded only from the 1930's); postman's delivery mark of Florence.

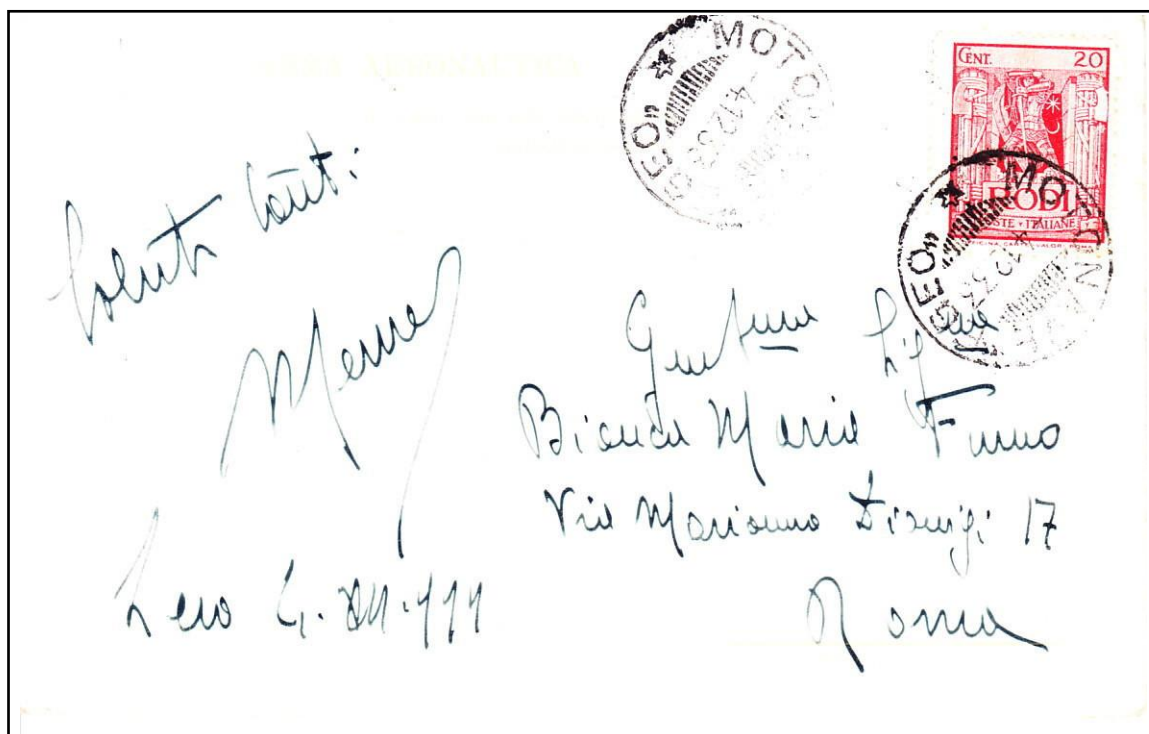
Below: A philatelic cover to Rhodes under-franked with a 10c stamp of Italy; again cancelled with the date-stamp of the postal steamer "Stampalia" on 30 June 1926; 60c (should be 1L) postage due charged on delivery on 2 July 1926.

Mail from Calymnos to Italy via Rhodes by Nautica in 1931



This commercial cover from Calymnos to Italy was correctly franked with a 50c stamp of the 1929 Aegean issue; the stamp was cancelled on board the vessel "Calitea" with the "Piroscafo Calitea * Nautica" date-stamp on 28 November 1931 (before the transfer of the "Calitea" to Adriatica in 1932); the vessel apparently called at Calymnos on its outward voyage from Brindisi to Rhodes; the envelope has a Rhodes transit back-stamp of 29 November and a Livorno arrival back-stamp of 2 December 1931.

Greetings cards sent to Italy in 1933 – probably by the Rhodes-Piraeus-Bari service



Two short-text post-cards to Italy correctly franked with 20c stamps of the 1932 Egeo issue; carried to Italy on the return voyages of the Rhodes-Piraeus-Bari line ships, which called at Leros.

Above: Dated 17 December 1933; cancelled with the date-stamp of the postal vessel "Filippo Grimani" on the same day.

Below: Dated 4 December 1933; cancelled with the date-stamp of the postal vessel "Egeo" on the same day

5. Italian Civilian Post Offices at Leros-Town and on the other four islands

Mar 1913 – Sep 1943

All Italian stamps were valid in the islands but the 2, 5, 10, 15, 25, 40 and 50c values were issued with overprints for each island in December 1912; additional 20/15c values issued for inland rate increase in 1916. This section starts with the issue of standard metal date-stamps inscribed "POSTE ITALIANE * ISLAND NAME (EGEO)" in March 1913.



A cover of 28 February 1916 from Lipsos to Italy correctly franked with a 20/15c "Lipso" stamp issued for new rate January 1916



A cover weighing 16.5g and insured for 300L sent from Calymnos to Italy on 4 July 1913 franked with stamps of the 1912 "Calimno" issue to the value of 70c; Naples-Bari TPO transit and Altamura arrival back-stamps of 12 and 13 July 1913.

5. Italian Civilian Post Offices at Leros-Town and on the other four islands

Mar 1913 – Sep 1943

In addition to the standard metal date-stamps inscribed “POSTE ITALIANE * LEROS (EGEO)”, a metal date-stamp inscribed “RR. POSTE ITALIANE * LEROS (EGEO)” was also introduced at Leros-Town in ca. 1914. (“RR.” = “Royal”)



This military post-card was sent from Leros to Rome correctly franked with a 5c “Leros” stamp cancelled with the above date-stamp on 4 December 1918; it bears a Rome arrival machine marking of 29 December 1912.



This registered cover was sent from Piraeus in Greece to Leros (reduced copy of front at left) on 13 August 1923 franked at 2dr40 as printed matter (postage 40 lepta to 50g plus registration fee 2dr); the cover bears transit and arrival back-stamps of Rhodes and Leros of 18 and 20 August 1923. Although the Greek post office noted no under-payment, 1L85 postage due was charged at Leros with 2 x 50c postage due stamps, plus 85c in Italian stamps, all cancelled with the “RR. POSTE ITALIANE” date-stamp on 20 August 1923. It seems possible that the Italian post office did not accept the letter as printed matter and calculated the postage due as twice the Italian foreign postage of 1L less the printed matter postage of 15c.

The "POSTE ITALIANE * LEROS (EGEO)" date-stamps Italianized to "LERO" in 1924



This registered part-cover sent from Leros to Egypt on 28 October 1924 shows a date-stamp already without the "S". It was correctly franked with one 1L stamp for the postage plus a further 1L stamp for the registration fee (rates 1.1.1923-31.12.1925).. The cover bears transit and arrival back-stamps of Rhodes and Alexandria of 31 October and 7 November 1924.



The date-stamp on this insured cover sent from Leros to Italy on 3 July 1925 still shows traces of the removed "S", which are now reappearing. It was insured for 200L and franked with a 60c stamp for the postage plus a 2L stamp for the insurance (rates 1925-27). The cover bears transit and arrival back-stamps of Brindisi, the Ancona-Bologna TPO and Lucca of 9, 10 and 11 July 1925.

Mar 1913 – Sep 1943

[illegible]

This parcel card used to send a packet from Leros to France on 22 October 1925 now shows the “S” of “LEROS” successfully removed. The parcel card (used for a packet weighing 4kg) had a nominal value of 2L and bears in addition Italian parcel post stamps (left halves) to the value of 14L25; it has a Brindisi customs date-stamp of 5 November 1925 and a back-stamp indicating transfer to the French P.L.M. railway at Modane on 11 November 1925.

Standard-type “LERO (EGEO)” date-stamp of Leros and new stamp issue (perf.11) inscribed “RODI” of 1929



A cover sent from Leros to Addis-Ababa on 21 August 1929 correctly franked with a 1L25 “RODI” stamp. The cover bears Alexandria and Port-Said transit back-stamps of 24 and 25 August 1929 and was sent to the town of Dire Daoua in Ethiopia to be carried on the first flight to Addis-Ababa on 5 September 1929. It received the flight cachet in magenta on the front and that of the return flight in violet on the back, together with the Addis-Ababa arrival mark. Above: a 75% copy of the back of the cover.

5. Italian Civilian Post Offices at Leros-Town and on the other four islands

Mar 1913 – Sep 1943

Two series of Italian commemorative stamps were overprinted for each of the islands: the 1930 Ferrucci series and the 1932 Garibaldi series. All the overprinted stamps and the un-overprinted Italian stamps were valid in all of the islands



A cover sent from Leros to the nearby island of Coo on 26 October 1930 insured for 10,000L. (One strike of the date-stamp shows no "S" but the others show large parts of the "S" reappearing!). The cover was franked to the value of 31L20 with 6 x 20c + 24 x 1L25 Ferrucci stamps overprinted "LERO", which had been issued six days earlier. This mass-franking is surprising and required the attachment of an additional sheet to the envelope to carry the stamps. However, the only higher value in the Ferrucci series, the 5L value, carried a surcharge of 2L and was therefore unattractive for franking purposes.



Reduced copies of the attachment to the cover showing 20 of the 24 1L25 and 4 of the 5 20c Ferrucci stamps used for the franking

5. Italian Civilian Post Offices at Leros-Town and on the other four islands

Mar 1913 – Sep 1943

Although an airport had been constructed on the southern side of Porto Lago during the 1920's, this was for military use and the carriage of civilian mail by air commenced first in the 1930's. This airmail letter from Leros-Town to Egypt in October 1931 will have been carried by the S.A.M. service Rome-Brindisi-Rhodes-Alexandria (started in June 1931)



This flown cover from Leros-Town to Alexandria is confusing as the canceller bears the wrong year – it should read 5 September **1931**, not **1930** – this explains why it shows the damaged “O” of “LERO” which did not occur until 1931. It is correctly franked for postage 1L25 + airmail 3L50 with “RODI” stamps to the value of 2L95 plus Italian airmail stamps to the value of 1L80. A copy of part of the back of the cover (shown at 100% above) shows a Rhodes airmail transit date-stamp of 6 September 1931 and an Alexandria airmail arrival date-stamp 7 September 1931, which confirm carriage by air.

From Lipsos to Brazil by zeppelin from Friedrichshafen in August 1933



This zeppelin cover was sent from Lipsos to Pernambuco on 20 August 1933. It is philatelic and apparently slightly over-franked at 10L20 (for postage 1L25 + registration 1L50 + airmail 7L), but the 5L "Rodi" and 5L Italian airmail stamps are not otherwise seen properly postally used from Lipsos. A reduced copy of the back of the envelope shows transit date-stamps of Leros and Rhodes of 21 and 23 August 1933 plus various Italian date-stamps indicating arrival in Milan on 25 August but delay there until 1 September, to be sent to Friedrichshafen (transit date-stamp of 2 September) with the other Italian mail for the 6th South America Flight; the flight cachet and the Pernambuco arrival date-stamp of 6 September 1933 confirm carriage by the Graf Zeppelin.

Censored mail from Stampalia during the first years of WW2



A mourning cover sent to Aden on 1 November 1939 correctly franked with a 1L25 "RODI" stamp; Rhodes transit back-stamp and Aden arrival back-stamp of 29 November 1939; censored on arrival as Britain was at war with Germany since 1.9.39.



A commercial cover sent registered to Rhodes on 19 February 1941 correctly franked with 50c + 1L25 "RODI" stamps; cancelled with a new date-stamp of a type recorded from only 2 islands; censored at Rhodes (Italy entered WWII in June 1940).

An unrecorded Telegraph Office date-stamp of Stampalia used after the fall of Mussolini



A registered cover sent to Rhodes on 7 September 1943, after the fall of Mussolini, but before the German occupation on 22 October 1943. It was franked at 1L75 with stamps of Italy (postage 50c plus 1L25 registration) cancelled with an unrecorded date-stamp "UFFICIO TELEGRAFICO * STAMPALIA EGEO". The cover bears a Rhodes arrival back-stamp of 23 March 1944 (occupied by the Germans since 11 September 1943). The transit time of 5½ months reflects the problems at this time.

5. Italian Civilian Post Offices at Leros-Town and on the other four islands

Mar 1913 – Sep 1943

Mail from Calymnos cancelled with the “CALINO * EGEO” date-stamp during the first years of WW2



A cover sent to Italy on 6 May 1940 (the month before Italy entered WW2 so not censored); correctly, but very unusually, franked with an Italian commemorative stamp – the 50c value of the 1939 Railway Centenary issue; Naples arrival b/s of 14 May.



A cover sent by airmail to Poland on 18 January 1942 (occupied by Germany since September 1939) correctly franked with a 1L25 “RODI” stamp paying the postage plus 3 x 50c “RODI” airmail stamps for the airmail fee (50c to Italy + 1L onwards); censored and re-sealed on despatch and again in Germany (in the Vienna / Prague sector); no transit or arrival back-stamps.

Mail from Leros cancelled with the "RR. POSTE ITALIANE" date-stamp during the first years of WW2

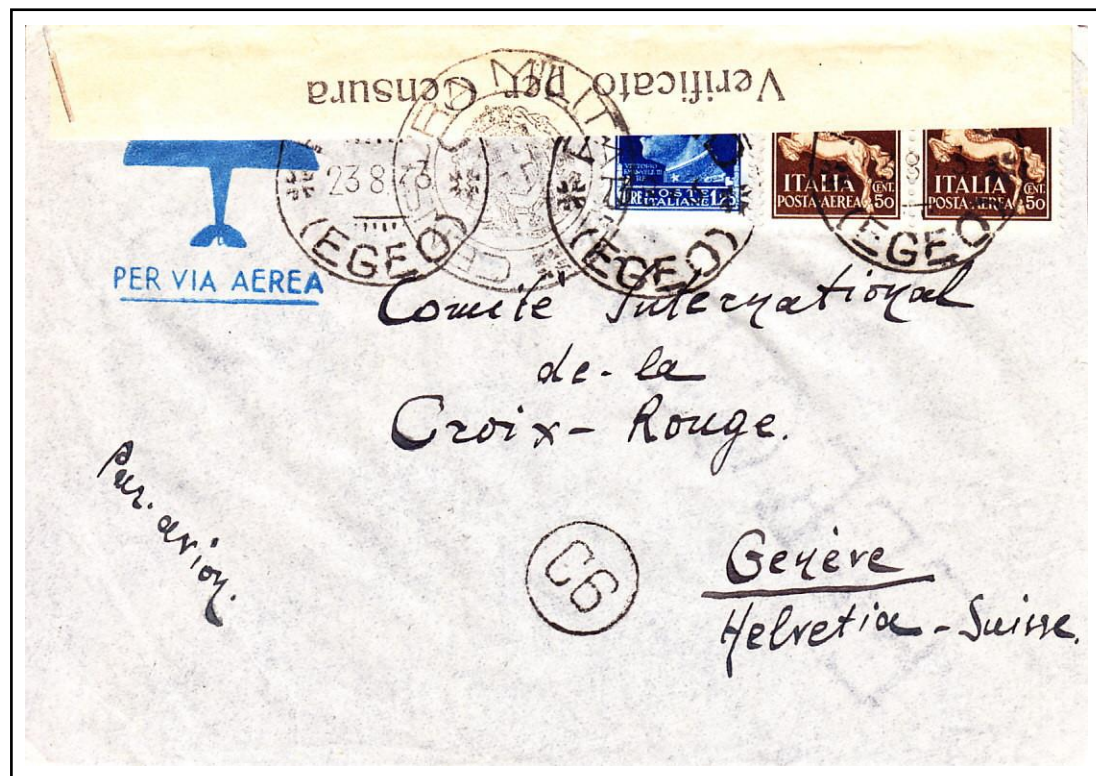


A cover sent by airmail to Italy on 27 September 1942; correctly franked with 50c ordinary plus airmail stamps of Italy; censored in transit at Rhodes; Milan arrival back-stamp of 2 October 1942.



A cover sent un-franked to Rhodes by the Governor's Office at Leros on 27 August 1943 (shortly before the Armistice on 8 September 1943); as such mail was not postage free, single postage due of 50c was charged on arrival on 3 September 1943.

Mail sent to the Red Cross in Geneva from Calymnos and Patmos in 1942 and 1943



A cover sent by airmail from Patmos on 23 August 1943 (some 2 weeks before the Armistice); correctly franked with 1L25 ordinary plus 2 x 50c airmail stamps of Italy for air carriage from Rome to Switzerland (the airmail service from Rhodes to Rome had been discontinued at this date); censored in transit at Rhodes on 27 August 1943.



A cover sent by airmail from Calymnos on 8 February 1942; franked with 1L75 in ordinary "RODI" stamps plus a 1L airmail stamp paying the postage of 1L25 plus the airmail fee of 1L50 (Rhodes to Rome 50c + Rome to Switzerland 1L); mail to the International Red Cross was apparently not censored at this time.

6. Italian Occupation of Leros

Italian Military P.O. No. 162 at Leros 12 May - 2 June 1919

At the end of WW I, in March 1919, a section of the Anatolian Coast became formally a zone of Italian influence. An Expeditionary Force based on Leros occupied Scalanova. Military P.O. No. 162 operated at Leros from 12 May 1919 and was transferred to Scalanova on 2 June 1919.



A letter written at Scalanova on 18 May 1919 by a member of the Anatolia Expeditionary Force and sent to Italy correctly franked with 5c and a 20c stamps of Italy; cancelled with the "Posta Militare 162" date-stamp at Leros on 24 May 1919; with a Bagnasco arrival date-stamp of 7 June 1919.



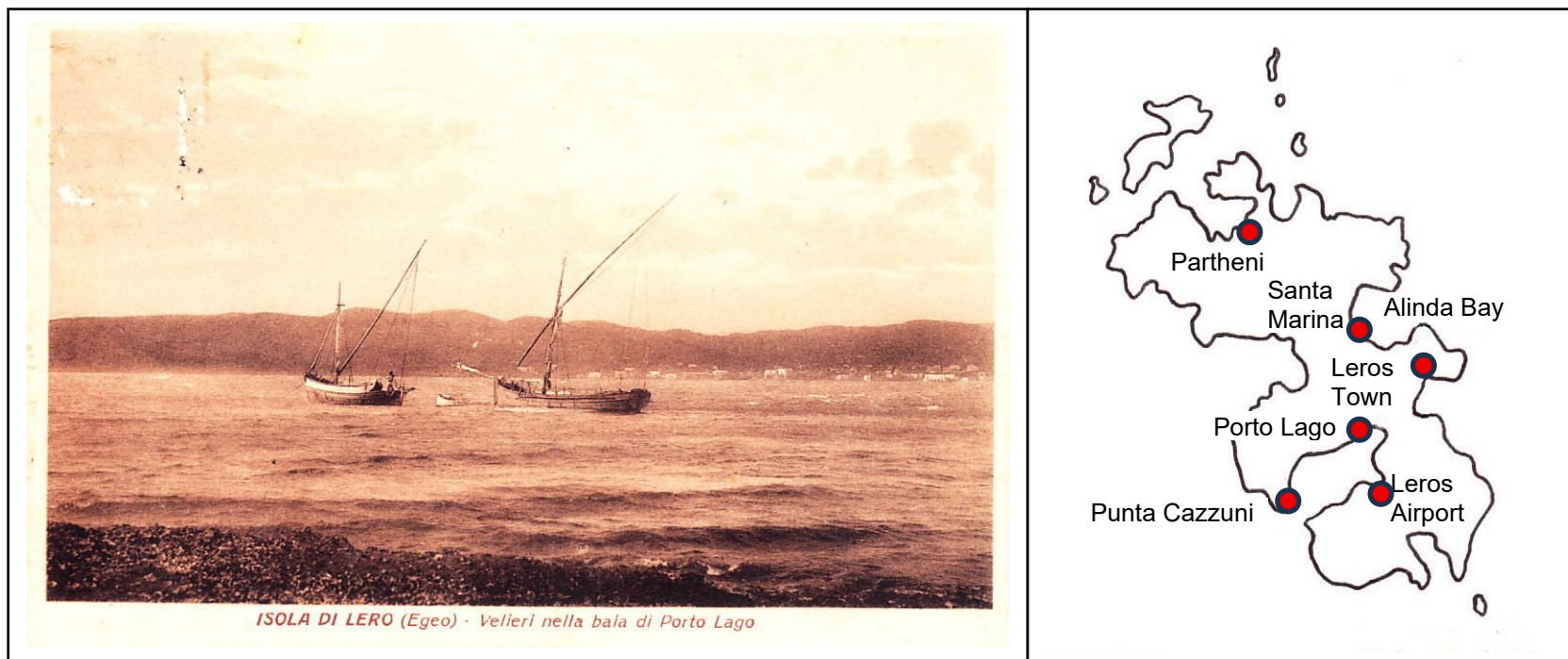
A mourning letter written at Scalanova by a Lieutenant of the Anatolia Expeditionary Force and sent to Italy franked only with 10c "Leros" stamp; cancelled with the "Posta Militare 162" date-stamp at Leros on 24 May 1919. On arrival at Turin, 15c postage due was charged (the amount of the under-franking, without doubling) date-stamp illegible.

7. Leros – Italian PO's at Porto Lago, Airport, Punta Cazzuni and Santa Marina Feb 1924 – Sep 1943

Porto Lago Naval and Submarine Base, Leros Airport and Punta Cazzuni Semaphore Station



Expertise (Chiavarello & Sorani)



Above: This commercial post-card dated Leros 14 February 1924 was sent to Italy from the Naval Base and correctly franked with 4 x 5c Italian stamps cancelled with and unrecorded oval marking of the Naval Base, here named “Porto Laki”.

Below left: A view-card showing the Bay of Laki (renamed Porto Lago by the Italians) written at Leros on 24 September 1925. It shows no naval vessels or installations, but both the Naval Base and the airport (“Giovanni Rossetti”) were under construction.

Below right: A sketch-map showing the rocky island of Leros which has 7 deep natural bays. After originally using Stampalia as a base for naval operations, the Italians recognized the potential of Porto Lago, probably the largest land-locked deep-water harbour in the Mediterranean. Some researchers place the 5th Submarine Group in Partheni Bay, others in Porto Lago Bay.

7. Leros – Italian PO's at Porto Lago, Airport, Punta Cazzuni and Santa Marina Feb 1924 – Sep 1943

The second and third postal markings of Porto Lago Naval Base – 1924/25



A cover sent to Italy correctly franked with Italian stamps to 50c (inland rate 1923-25) cancelled in violet with the double circle marking translating "Naval Base of Port Laki" (3rd marking recorded only 1924); arrival back-stamp of Lucca (date illegible).



A cover sent to Italy correctly franked with a 50/40c Italian stamp (inland rate 1923-25) cancelled in violet with the three-line marking translating "Royal Posts / Naval Base / Port Laki of Leros" (2nd marking, Tchilinghirian records only one example - from July 1924); arrival back-stamp of Canzo dated 22 September 1924. This marking was issued as a franchise mark and first struck in blue on this letter from the Commandant of the Naval Base; however, as an officer, he had to pay postage.

7. Leros – Italian PO's at Porto Lago, Airport, Punta Cazzuni and Santa Marina Feb 1924 – Sep 1943

The fourth and fifth postal markings of Porto Lago Naval Base – 1925/33



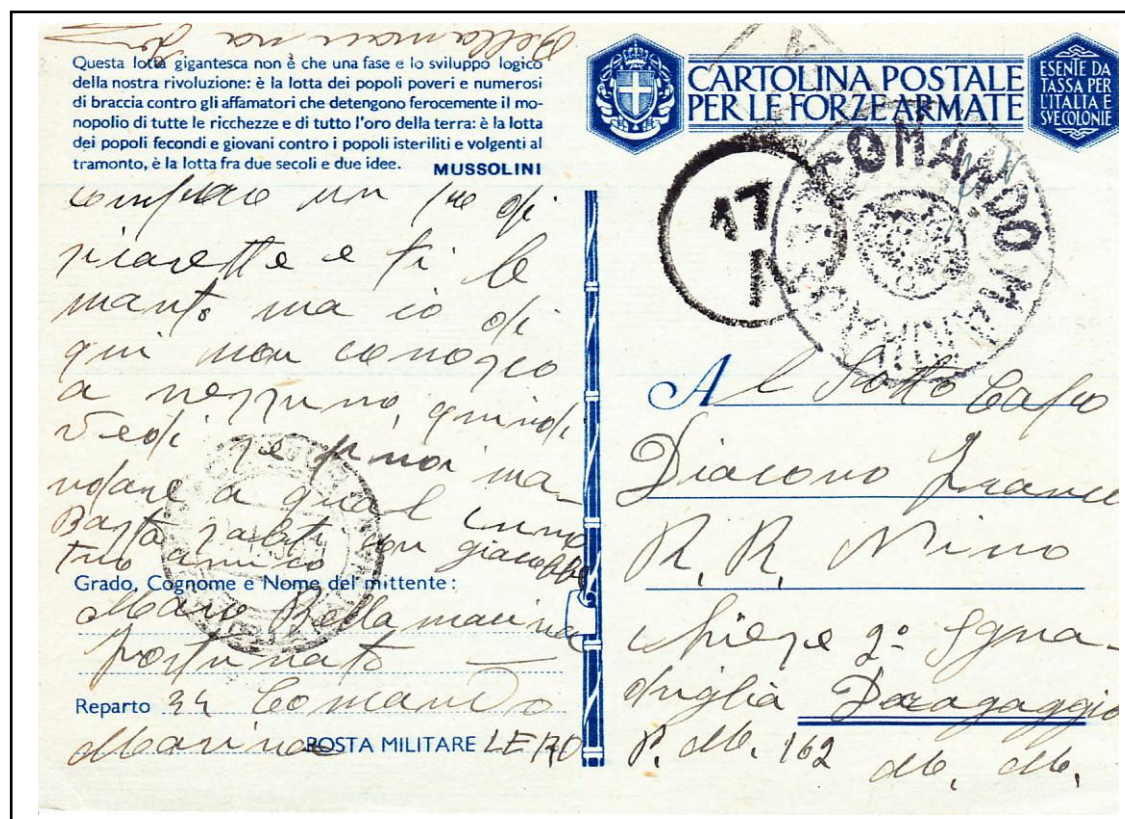
A cover sent to Rhodes correctly franked with a 50c Italian stamp (inland rate from 1927) cancelled in violet with the 4th marking translating "Royal Posts / Naval Base of Porto Lago of Lero" (recorded 1925-31). Rodi arrival back-stamp of 17 April 1929.



A cover sent to Italy correctly franked with a 50c "Rodi" stamp (inland rate from 1927) cancelled with the date-stamp translating "Naval Base * Porto Lago" on 24 February 1933 (5th marking, recorded from 1932 up to the opening of the Civilian p.o. at Porto Lago in 1933); illegible arrival back-stamp of Lecce.

7. Leros – Italian PO's at Porto Lago, Airport, Punta Cazzuni and Santa Marina Feb 1924 – Sep 1943

Mail from Porto Lago Naval Base (Marina No. 610) via Military P.O. No. 550 at Rhodes – 1943

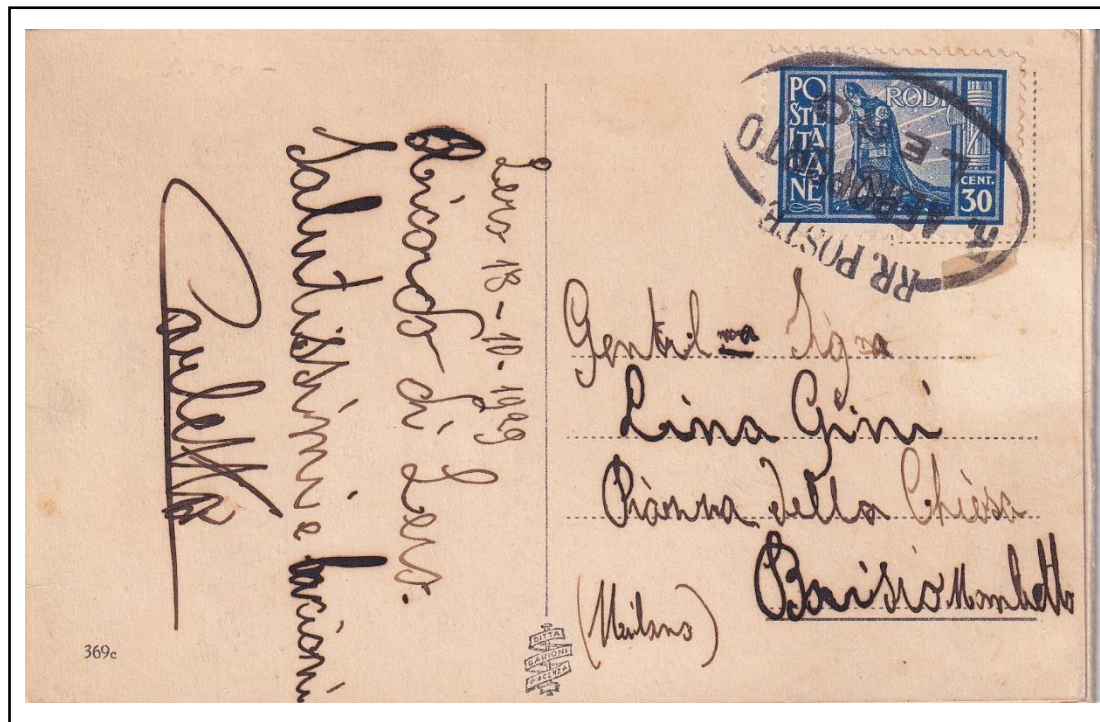


Above: A postage-free military card dated 10 January 1943 sent to a naval vessel served by Military P.O. No. 162 (on Syros) and bearing a franchise cachet "Commandant Marina Leros"; censored by the Naval Authorities in Rome on 20 January 1943.

Below: A letter to Italy with a marking of "Marina 610" (Porto Lago, Leros, where it was also censored) franked with an Italian 50c stamp; this stamp was cancelled "Military P.O. 550 – Flying Service No.2" at Rhodes on 26 August 1943 (here with the fascist date blocked out after the fall of Mussolini); the letter was bears an arrival back-stamp of Stroncone dated 9 September 1943.

7. Leros – Italian PO's at Porto Lago, Airport, Punta Cazzuni and Santa Marina Feb 1924 – Sep 1943

Franchise markings of Leros Airport on the Bay of Porto Lago used as cancellers – 1930/32



A panorama view-card dated 18 October 1929 sent to Italy franked as full-text with a 30c “Rodi” stamp (inland rate from 1927) cancelled in black with the oval marking translating “Royal Posts / Royal Airport / Lero”.



A short-text view-card dated 26 August 1932 sent to Rhodes correctly franked with a 20c “Rodi” stamp (inland rate from 1925) cancelled in violet with the mark translating “Royal Posts / Lero (Aegean) / Royal Airport”; Rhodes arrival 27 August 1932.

7. Leros – Italian PO's at Porto Lago, Airport, Punta Cazzuni and Santa Marina Feb 1924 – Sep 1943

Mail from Leros Airport (Airport No. 802) via Military P.O. No. 3450 (an office in Bari for mail to Aegean) – 1942/43



A full-text view-card sent to Italy with a cachet of the unit saying “zone not provided with stamps”; with the military cachet “Airport No. 802 (Leros) / Military P.O. 3450”; correctly franked at 30c with Italian stamps cancelled at Rhodes on 23.12.1942.



A letter addressed to a naval vessel with, on the reverse (see photocopy), an oval franchise marking of Leros Airport; bearing an Italian 50c airmail stamp to pay the airmail fee; this stamp was cancelled in transit by Military P.O. 550 at Rhodes on 17 March 1943, where the letter was censored on 18 March; censored again by the Naval Authorities in Rome on 25 March.

7. Leros – Italian PO's at Porto Lago, Airport, Punta Cazzuni and Santa Marina Feb 1924 – Sep 1943

Date-stamps of the Semaphore Station on Punta Cazzuni overlooking the Bay of Porto Lago – 1931/36



A view-card sent to Italy correctly franked with a 20c “Rodi” stamp (1929 perf. 11 issue) cancelled with the date-stamp translating “Royal Semaphore Station Lero (Aegean)” dated 6 July 1931 (recorded only from 1931).



A view-card sent to Italy correctly franked with two 10c “Rodi” stamps (1932 perf. 14 issue) cancelled in deep red with the date-stamp translating “Semaphore Station * Cazzuni Point” dated 20 December 1936 (this is apparently the only recorded example); transit date-stamp of the post office at Leros-Town dated 23 December 1936.

7. Leros – Italian PO's at Porto Lago, Airport, Punta Cazzuni and Santa Marina Feb 1924 – Sep 1943

A full Civilian Post Office was opened at Porto Lago at the end of 1932 – ordinary and airmail date-stamps



An ordinary letter to Italy with a correct mixed franking comprising a 10c "Rodi" stamp plus two 20c stamps of Italy; cancelled with the Porto Lago date-stamp on 5 March 1935; Milan arrival back-stamp of 8 March 1935.

The image shows a military postal card (Cartolina Postale) for the Italian Armed Forces. It features a blue crest on the left and a circular cachet on the right. The text is as follows:

CARTOLINA POSTALE PER LE FORZE ARMATE

ESENTE DA TASSA PER L'ITALIA E SUECOLONIE

VERIFICATO PER CENSURA

POSTA MILITARE 550/E

Distaccamento B.N.010

Mittente

Cognome LOMBARDI

Nome Luigi

Grado C° Furiere 1° cl.

Reparto MARIDIFE (Egeo)

Sig.ra Assunta LOMBARDI

Via Filomeno CONSIGLIO

N° 38=

BRINDISI

A postage-free military card sent to Italy with a circular cachet of the Commandant of the Marina and the airmail date-stamp of Porto Lago of 21 September 1940; censored before despatch.

7. Leros – Italian PO's at Porto Lago, Airport, Punta Cazzuni and Santa Marina Feb 1924 – Sep 1943

Civilian Post Office at Porto Lago – mail to Italy with registered and money order/savings date-stamps - 1935



A registered express letter to Italy correctly franked with "Rodi" stamps to 1L75 plus a 1L25 "Rodi" express stamp; cancelled with the registration date-stamp of Porto Lago on 20 October 1936; Salerno arrival back-stamp of 24 October 1936; readdressed to Rome with and re-franked with Italian 1L75 ordinary plus 1L25 express stamps cancelled on 27 October 1936.



An airmail letter to Italy correctly franked with "Rodi" stamps to 1L; cancelled with the Porto Lago money order/savings date-stamp (not intended for cancelling mail) on 21 December 1935; Rhodes and Bologna transit and arrival back-stamps.

7. Leros – Italian PO's at Porto Lago, Airport, Punta Cazzuni and Santa Marina Feb 1924 – Sep 1943

Civilian Post Office opened at Santa Marina in Alinda Bay in 1934 – mail to Italy with ordinary date-stamp



A view-card showing the residential town of Santa Marina near the old harbour of Marina sent to Italy in September 1934



An express letter to Rome correctly franked with a 50c "Rodi" stamp plus a 1L25 "Rodi" express stamp; cancelled with the ordinary date-stamp of Santa Marina on 6 June 1936; Brindisi and War Ministry transit and arrival marks of 13 and 14 June.

7. Leros – Italian PO's at Porto Lago, Airport, Punta Cazzuni and Santa Marina Feb 1924 – Sep 1943

Civilian Post at Santa Marina – registered airmail to Spain with airmail date-stamp - 1940



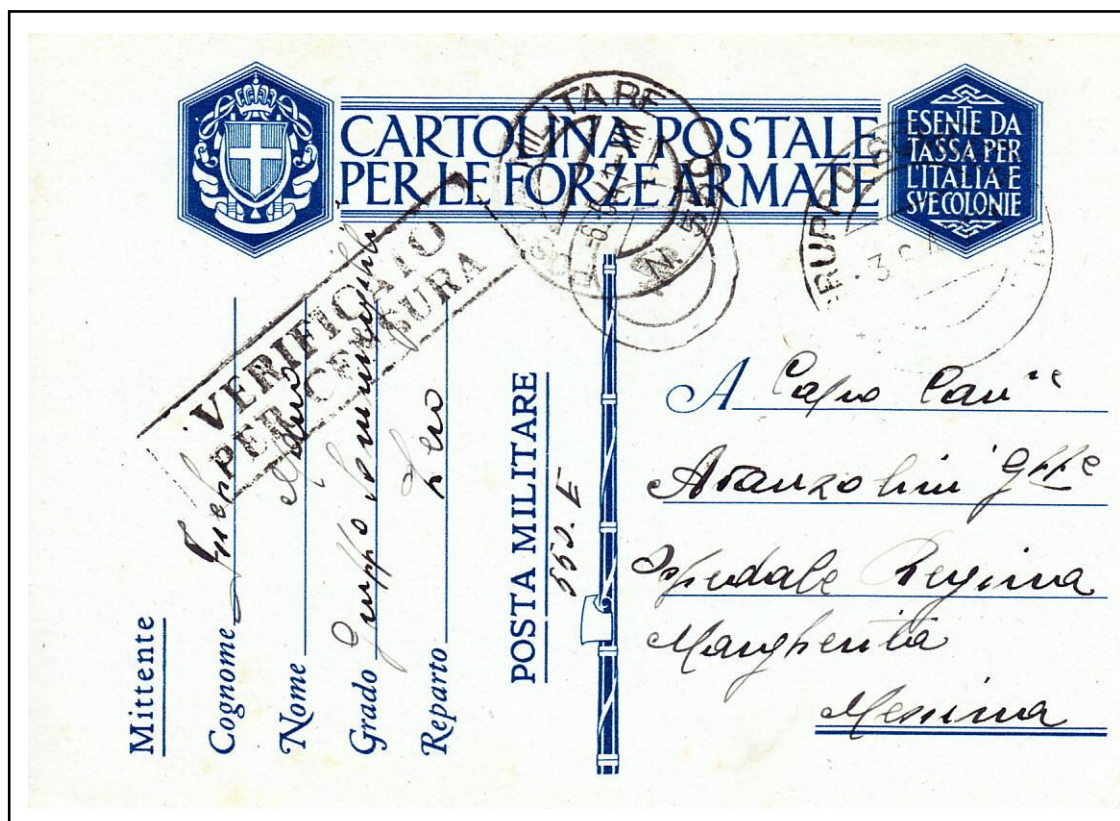
A registered airmail letter to Seville correctly franked with four 1L25 "Rodi" stamps (postage 1L25 + registration 1L25 + airmail 2L50) cancelled with the airmail date-stamp of Santa Marina on 12 January 1940; censored on arrival at Seville; redirected to Rome by surface mail and the airmail label crossed out in red. The above copy (100%) of part of the back of the envelope shows a Rhodes transit date-stamp of 15 January, Seville airmail and "Lista" (for Poste Restante) arrival date-stamps of 18 January, and a Rome arrival date-stamp of 9 February 1940.

7. Leros – Italian PO's at Porto Lago, Airport, Punta Cazzuni and Santa Marina Feb 1924 – Sep 1943

5th Submarine Group placed by some in Partheni Bay and by others in the Bay of Porto Lago – 1941



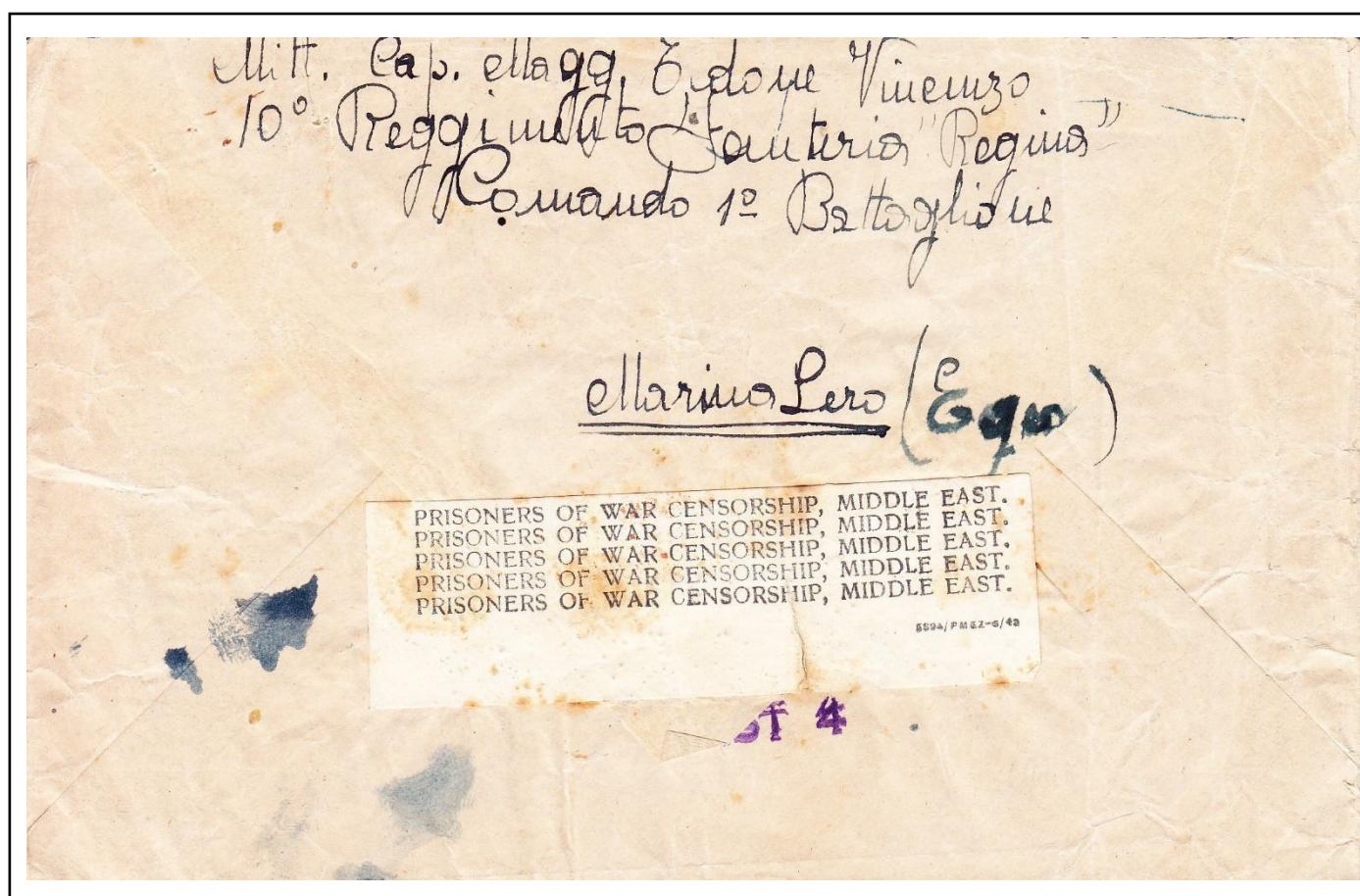
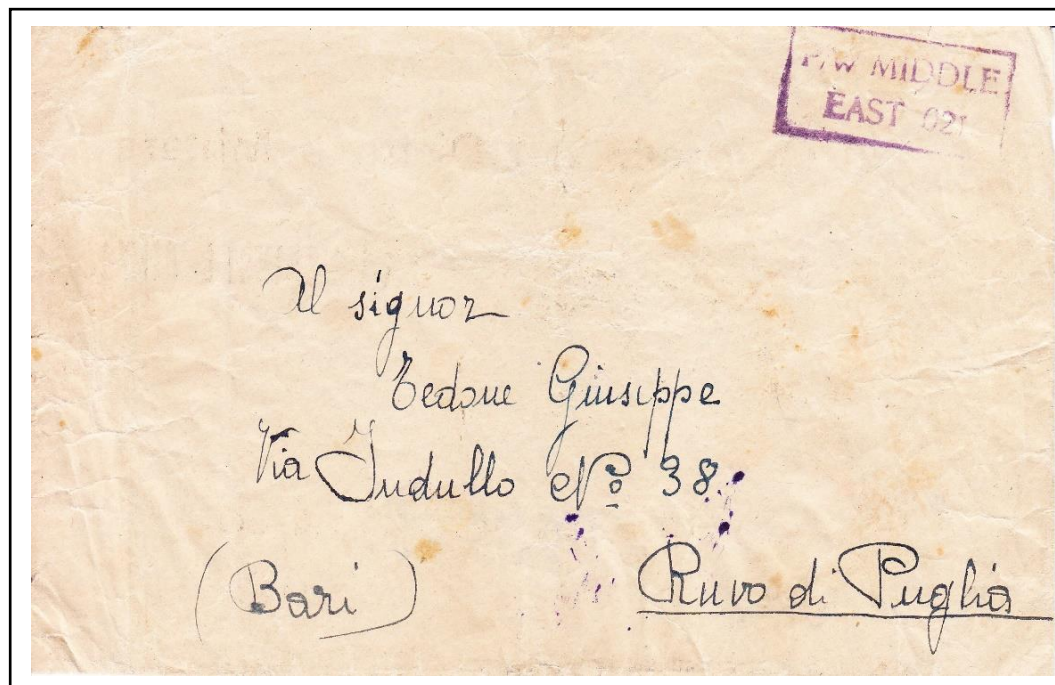
An officer's letter to Italy correctly franked with two 50c "Rodi" stamps (one for the airmail charge) cancelled with the "5th Submarine Group" date-stamp on 6 May 1941; censored at Rhodes; Santa Maria (Naples) arrival back-stamp of 15 May 1941.



A postage-free military card sent to Italy cancelled with the date-stamp translating "5th Submarine Group" on 3 June 1941; bearing a transit date-stamp of Military P.O. No. 550 at Rhodes dated 6 June 1941; probably censored at Rhodes.

Defence of Leros by British and Italian forces from 16 September to 15 November 1943

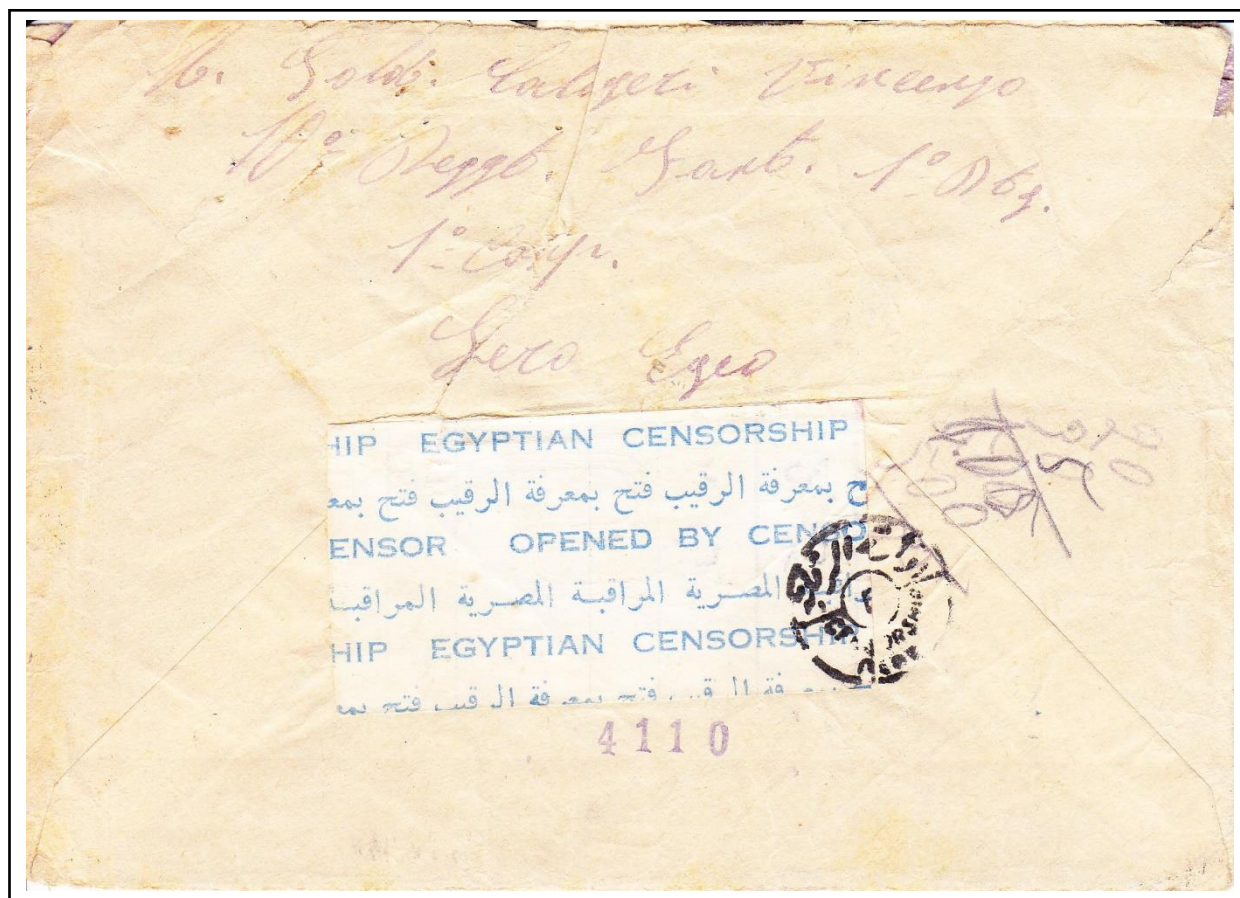
After the Armistice, 3'000 British forces arrived on Leros between 16 September and 8 November 1943 to join the Italian forces in defending the island against German attack. The Germans started a bombardment of the island on 25 October. This was intensified, and paratroopers dropped, on 12 November, Leros Town being occupied by 15 November 1943. Some mail from Italian troops was forwarded to Southern Italy (which was controlled by the Allies) through the British Military Post via Egypt.



Above: A reduced copy (75%) of the address-side of an undated officer's envelope to Ruvo di Puglia in Bari Province; Southern Italy bearing a boxed censor mark for Prisoner of War mail "P/W MIDDLE EAST 021" applied in transit in Egypt.

Below: The reverse of the above envelope showing the sender's address, the 10th Infantry Regiment "Regina" on Leros, and bearing a further censor mark for POW mail "P/W MIDDLE EAST 4" plus a sealing strip applied in transit in Egypt.

Defence of Leros by British and Italian forces from 16 September to 15 November 1943



Above: A reduced copy (75%) of the address-side of a soldier's envelope to Italy franked with a 50c Italian stamp and bearing a boxed censor mark for civilian mail applied in transit in Egypt. The original letter enclosed is date-lined "Lero 20 October 1943" but the stamp was first cancelled on arrival at Taranto in Southern Italy on 16 December 1943.

Below: The reverse of the above envelope showing the sender's address, the 10th Infantry Regiment "Regina" on Leros, and bearing a sealing strip "EGYPTIAN CENSORSHIP / OPENED BY CENSOR" tied by a circular mark censor mark for civilian mail "CENSORSHIP DEPT".

Civilian mail from Leros to Italy could only be sent in minimal quantities by infrequent German airmail services



A 30c "RODI" inland postal-card (1936 issue), which was sent to Northern Italy by a civilian on Leros without a supplement for airmail, and was cancelled with the Santa Marina airmail date-stamp on 15 June 1944. It bears no further postal markings, but does have three different German censor's boxed numeral marks, plus signs of having been tested for hidden messages.



This rationed 30c reply-card (2nd issue on blue-grey paper) was cancelled at Santa Marina on 7 February 1944 and bears a German (Munich sector) censor mark. It also bears a Gavinana arrival date-stamp of 29 March 1944.

9. German Occupation and Military Post Office on Leros

Nov 1943 – May 1945

Substantial German forces had arrived on Leros by the end of 1943 and were served by Field Post Office No. 943, which was originally attached to F.P.O. No. 736 at Athens, then attached to the F.P.O. at Rhodes from July 1944.

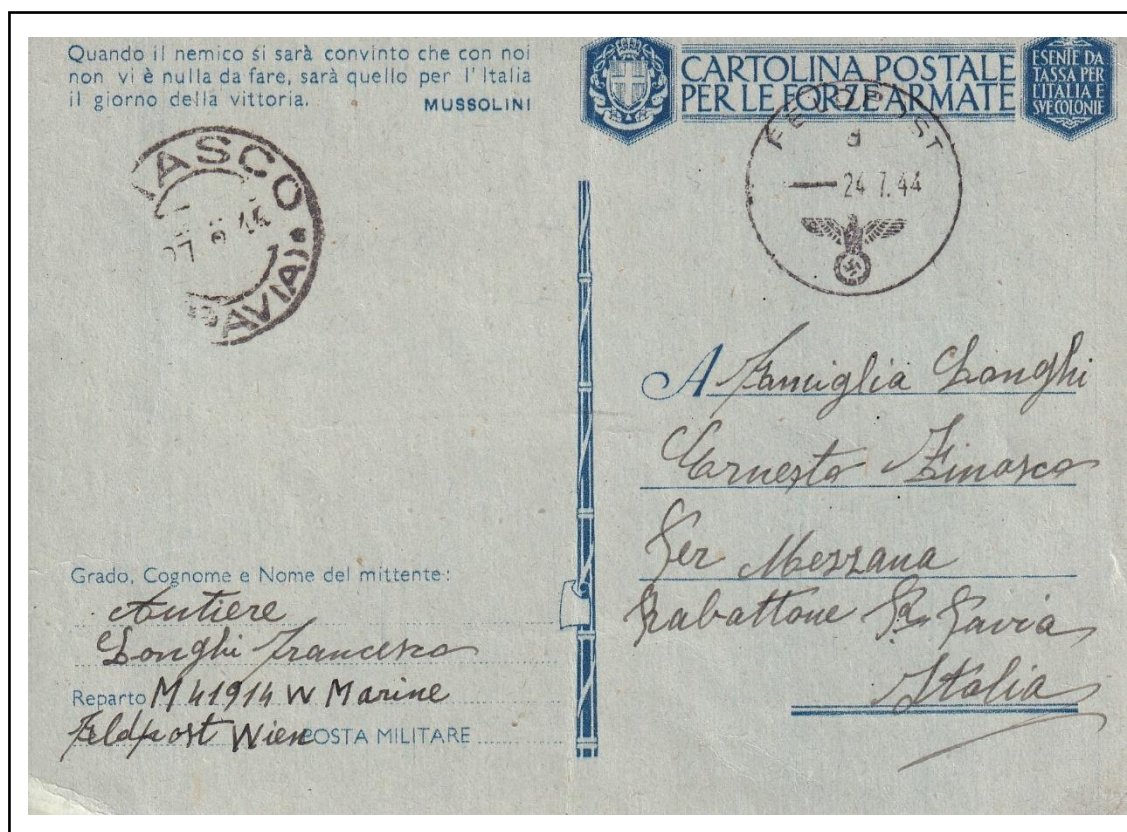


An official letter sent to Germany from the office of the Fortress Commandant at Leros, which had Fieldpost No. 10449. It received the "FELDPOST h" date-stamp and a registration label with the number "943" inserted by hand on 21 May 1944 and bears a Wilhelmshaven arrival back-stamp of 3 June 1944.

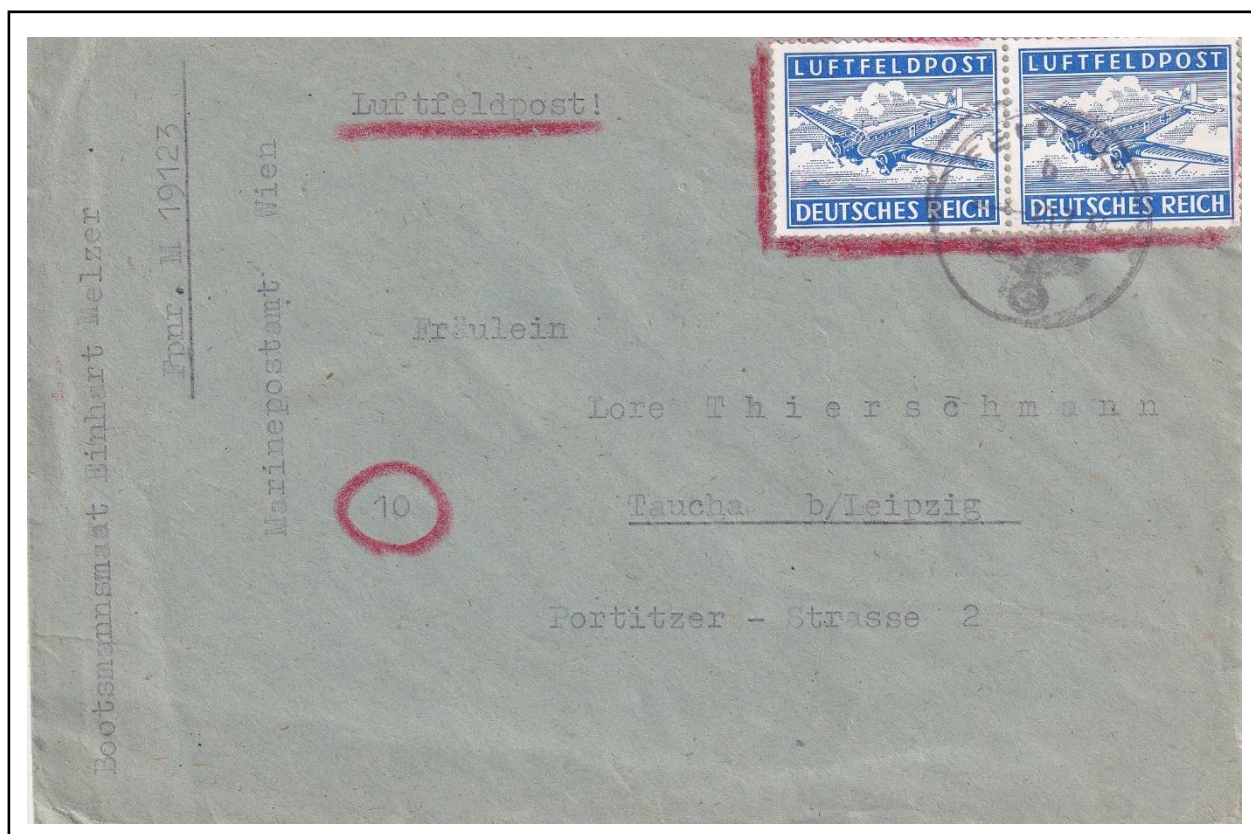


A letter sent to Germany by a member of Fortress Infantry Battalion 999 on Leros, who was served by Fieldpost No. 57885A. It received the "FELDPOST h" date-stamp without number (943) on 7 April 1944. As mail to Germany normally had to be transported by air to Yugoslavia, ordinary letters required "LUFTFELDPOST" stamps, the issue of which was rationed. As the requirement for two stamps first applied from 1 June 1944, this letter was either overweight or the requirement was misunderstood.

Mail from members of naval units on Leros sent to Italy and Germany via Rhodes in July 1944

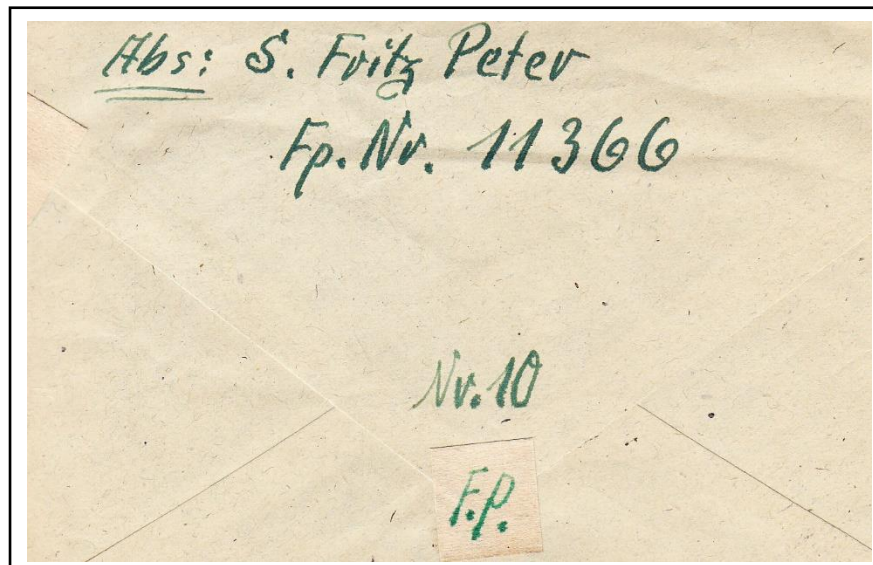


An Italian fieldpost-card sent to Italy from the office of the Marine Defence at Leros, which had Fieldpost No. M 41914. It received the "FELDPOST d" date-stamp at Rhodes on 24 July 1944 and bears a Finasco, Pavia, arrival date-stamp of 27 August 1944.



A letter sent to Germany by a mate in the Coastal Defence Flotilla on Leros, which was served by Fieldpost No. M 19123. It correctly bore two "LUFTFELDPOST" stamps which were cancelled with the "FELDPOST h" date-stamp at Leros on 30 July 1944.

German forces occupied Stampalia from 22 October 1943 to autumn 1944, when the Allies regained mainland Greece



Above: A copy of part of the back of the envelope below, which was sent to Germany by the Harbour Captain at Stampalia and shows his Fieldpost number 11366; the enclosed letter to his family is dated 6 June 1944.

Below: The front of the above envelope, showing the official cachet of the unit, but with the Fieldpost No. 11366 illegible. It received the "FELDPOST m" date-stamp without number on 23 June 1944.

German Fieldpost numbers in the Dodecanese were changed to the new "Inselpost" numbers in November 1944



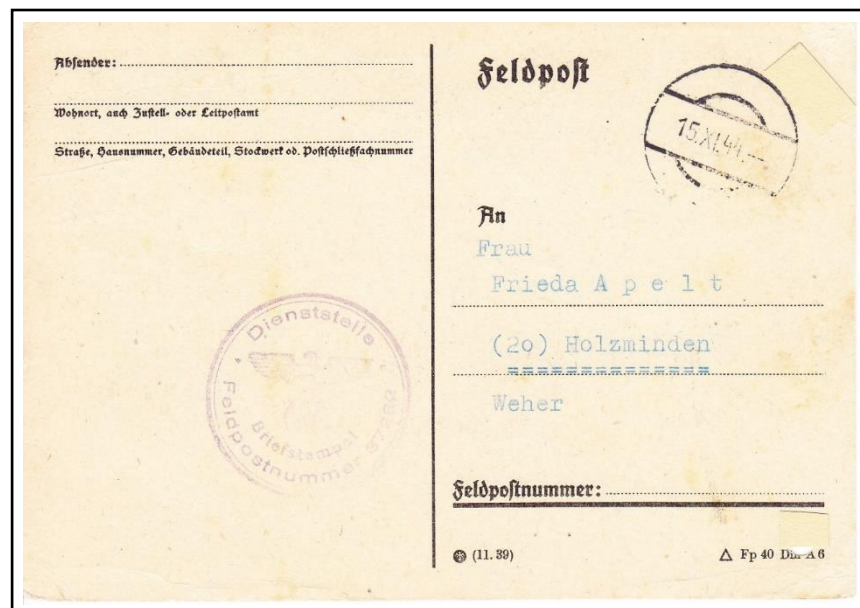
Two field-post letter-forms sent to Germany by the same member of Fortress Infantry Battalion 999 on Leros in November 1944: Above: Dated 18 October 1944, at which time the sender was served by Fieldpost No. 59462C. It bears the unit's cachet with this number and received the "FELDPOST h" date-stamp without number (943) on 7 November 1944. All mail to Germany normally had to be transported by air to Yugoslavia, but "LUFTFELDPOST" stamps were no longer required.

Below: Dated 14 November 1944, by which time the sender's Fieldpost No. had been changed to 68091C (Nos. 68090 to 68096 allocated to Leros). The unit's cachet with the old No. was not applied; with the "FELDPOST h" date-stamp of 20 November 1944. Letter-forms formerly required one "LUFTFELDPOST" stamp, but this requirement had been discontinued by this date.

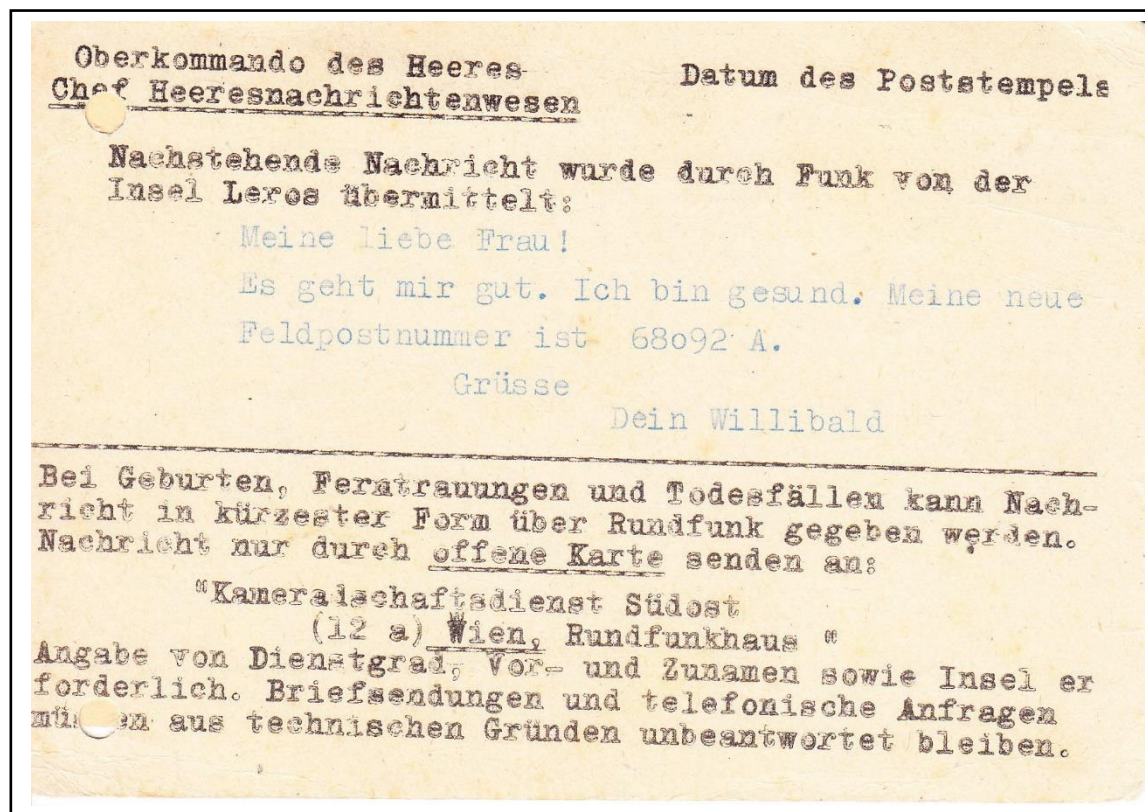
9. German Occupation and Military Post Office on Leros

Nov 1943 – May 1945

By October 1944 many German forces had been withdrawn Aegean and the remaining partial units could only be reached by air and needed new Fieldpost numbers for the new "Inselpost" (Island Post) military airmail service.




A 75% copy of the front of the post-card below showing a mute date-stamp of 15 November 1944 from "somewhere in Germany" and the postal franchise cachet of the unit which received / processed the incoming radio message from Leros.



A pre-printed post-card advising the receipt of a radio message from Leros composed of standard phrases, which translate: "My dear Wife. I am fine. I am in good health. My new Fieldpost number is 68092A. Greetings. Your Willibald".

A pre-printed card to inform addressees in Germany of new Fieldpost numbers in the Dodecanese

Empfänger: Dienstgrad: <i>Sig. Gefr.</i> Vor- und Zuname: <i>Horst Starck</i> Feldpostnummer: <i>68095B</i>		Feldpost 																									
(Bezeichnung des Truppenteils verbleibt. Die Dienstgrad nicht ändern. Dienstgrad nicht ändern (außer aus Soldat, Offizier, Leutnant usw.) Grussendungen an mich zur Übertragung durch einen Rundfunksender (Näheres erklärt die noch) sind zu richten an: Prop. Verw. Stelle, hier: Postgasse 4 betr.: Grussendungen.		An <i>Gefr.</i> <i>Willy Starck</i> <i>49492</i>																									
Der deutsche Rundfunk sendet für uns über die Kurzwellensender: <table border="0"> <tr> <td>D X Z</td> <td>D X O</td> <td>D X Cg</td> <td>von 9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31,55 m</td> <td>49,92 m</td> <td>25,55 m</td> <td>bis 10.30 Uhr</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D X Z</td> <td>D X Cg</td> <td></td> <td>von 15.45</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31,55 m</td> <td>25,53 m</td> <td></td> <td>bis 16.50 Uhr</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D X Z</td> <td>D X P</td> <td>D X M</td> <td>von 21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31,55 m</td> <td>49,75 m</td> <td>21,27 m</td> <td>bis 22 Uhr</td> </tr> </table>		D X Z	D X O	D X Cg	von 9	31,55 m	49,92 m	25,55 m	bis 10.30 Uhr	D X Z	D X Cg		von 15.45	31,55 m	25,53 m		bis 16.50 Uhr	D X Z	D X P	D X M	von 21	31,55 m	49,75 m	21,27 m	bis 22 Uhr	In Straße, Hausnummer, Gebäudetitel, Stadtteil oder Postfachnummer (b. 42) Δ Pp-40 - Din A 8	
D X Z	D X O	D X Cg	von 9																								
31,55 m	49,92 m	25,55 m	bis 10.30 Uhr																								
D X Z	D X Cg		von 15.45																								
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D X Z	D X P	D X M	von 21																								
31,55 m	49,75 m	21,27 m	bis 22 Uhr																								
„Es ist gänzlich unwichtig, ob wir leben, aber notwendig ist, daß unser Volk lebt, daß Deutschland lebt.“ (Adolf Hitler am 1. 9. 1943)																											

A 100% copy of the front of the post-card below, which was sent under cover from a serviceman on Leros to a relative at Fieldpost number 49492 (10th Company Air-Communications Regiment 229 Fighter Squadron Schlesien at Hirschberg).

O.U., den *26. 1. 45*

Meine neue Feldpostanschrift lautet:

An
Sig. Gefr. Horst Starck
 Feldpostnummer *68095B*
 (12a) Luftgaupostamt Wien

Jede an mich gerichtete Sendung muss mit einer Insepost - Zulassungsmarke versehen sein *M 09902A*
 Post mit meiner alten Feldpostnummer erreicht mich nicht mehr, sondern geht mit dem Vermerk "Neue Anschrift abwarten" zurück.

Anbei *1* Insepost - Zulassungsmarke +
 Insepost - Zulassungsmarken folgen. +
 + Nichtzutreffendes streichen

A pre-printed post-card dated 26 February 1945 advising the addressee the sender's new Fieldpost No. 68095B (with the old no. M09902A (Coastal Defence Flotilla "Attika"), enclosing one of the new "Insepost" military franchise stamps for a reply.

Military franchise stamps overprinted “Inselpost” introduced in order to ration airmail to and from the Aegean. New, sequential, Fieldpost numbers were allocated for the “Inselpost”, those for Leros being 68090-68095.

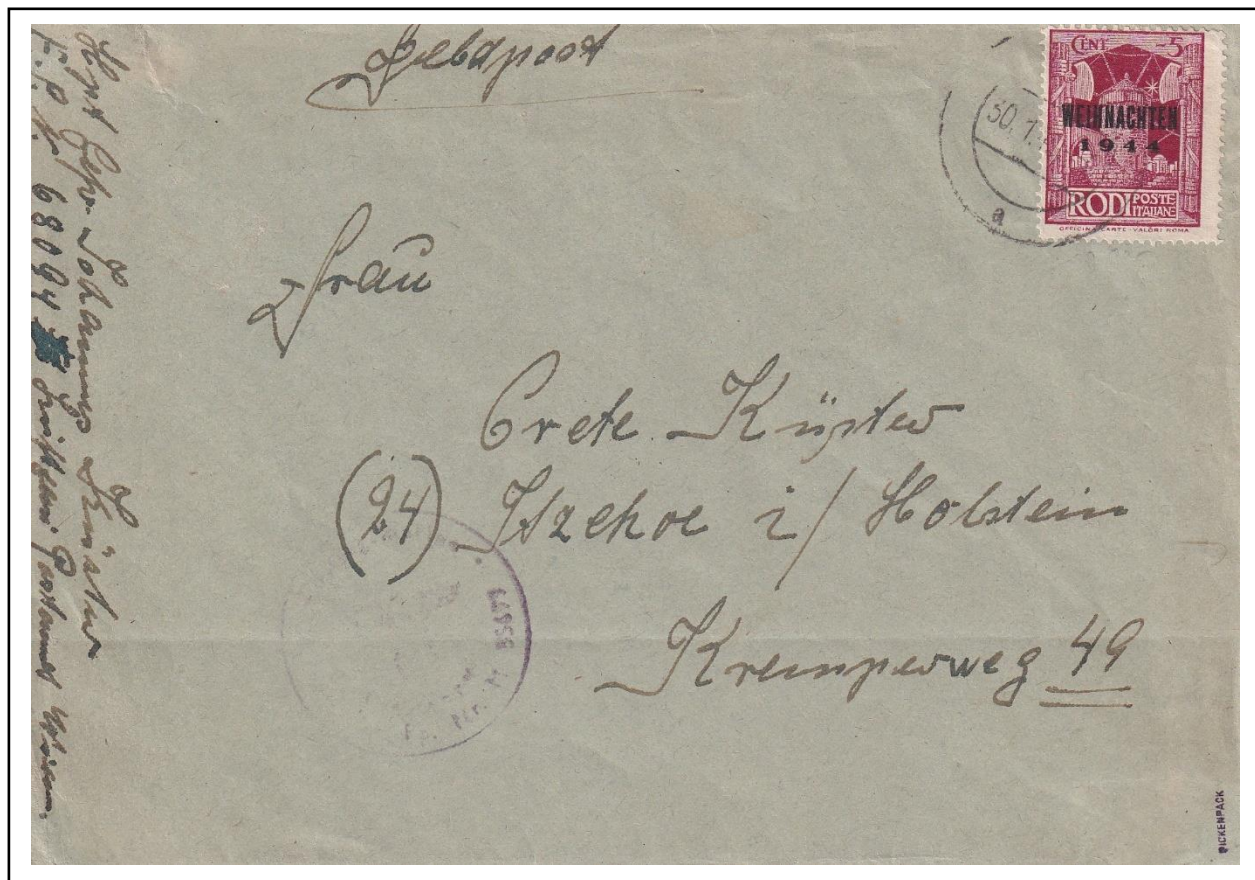


This field-post letter-form was written at Leros on 4 January 1945 by a member of Fortress Infantry Battalion 999 who was served by Fieldpost No. 68092 (but the cachet of his unit still shows the old no. 59447). It correctly bears a blue (rouletted) military franchise stamp overprinted “INSELPOST” at Rhodes, plus an unnecessary “WEIHNACHTEN” franchise stamp (Type I), both cancelled “FELDPOST h” at Leros on 20 January 1945. The form was probably flown from Rhodes to Vienna on 28 January 1945.

25,000 Italian 5c “Rodi” stamps were overprinted “WEIHNACHTEN 1944” (“Christmas 1944”) at Rhodes on 20-22 December 1944 and were intended as an extra “INSELPOST” franchise stamp in addition to the normal ration. This was initially not clearly understood on Leros and letters were sometimes sent with both types of stamps.

Mail to and from the islands was normally carried on the “Inselpost” flights (18 flights between 7 November 1944 and 3 May 1945) as there was virtually no Axis maritime traffic.

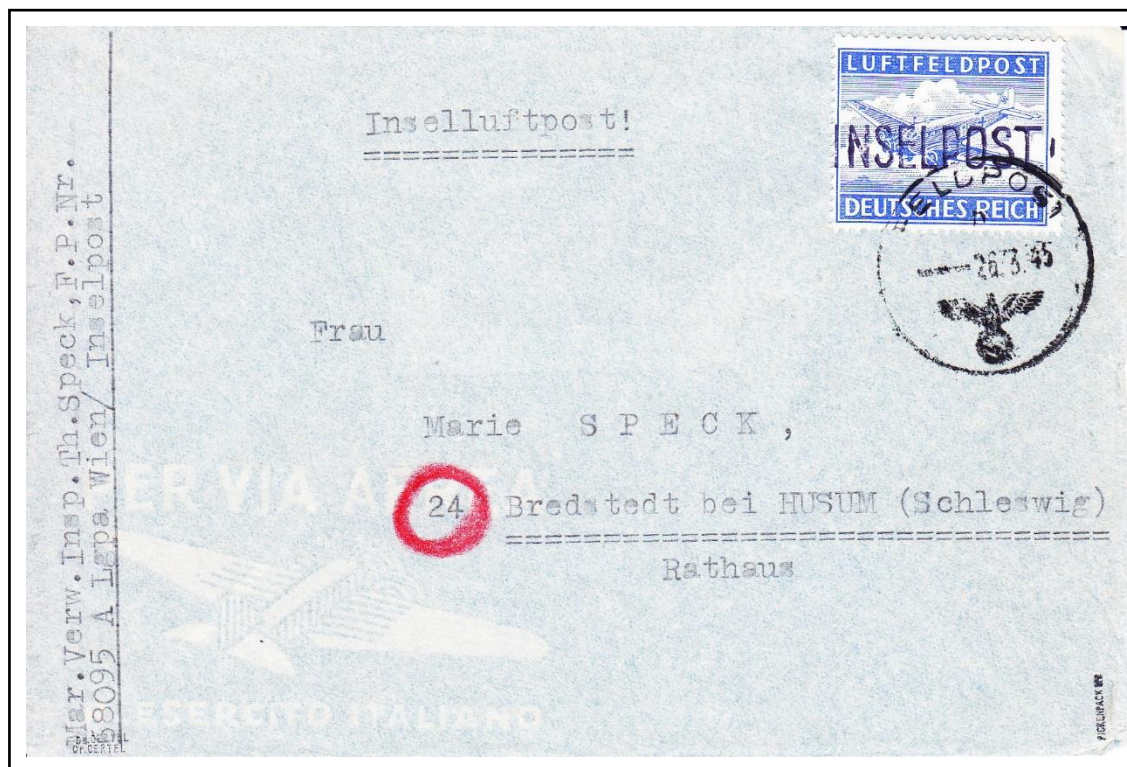
One exceptional opportunity arose: the Italian hospital ship “Gradisca” visited various islands in January 1945 in order to take wounded and sick persons. This ship visited Leros on 19 January 1945 and then reached Trieste 10 days later. Incorrectly, some mail from German military personnel was also carried.



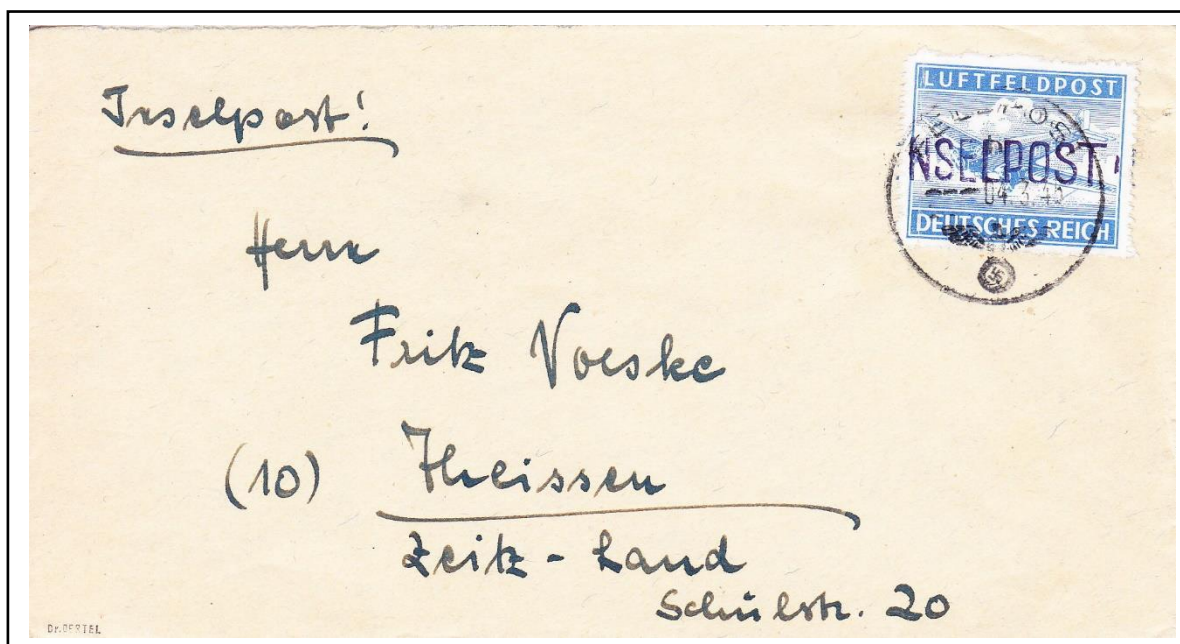
Certificate

This letter was written at Leros by a member of the Marine Anti-Aircraft Section who was served by Fieldpost No. 68094, but the violet cachet shows the Fieldpost No. 55699, which was that of the “Gradisca”. The envelope correctly bears a “WEIHNACHTEN” franchise stamp (Type I), which was first cancelled at the German Field-Post Office at Udine on 30 January 1945, after the “Gradisca” had docked at Trieste on 29 January 1945.

A local "INSELPOST" overprint on 16,000 blue franchise stamps was made by hand at Porto Lago on Leros between 3-7 February 1945, apparently because the regular monthly supply of "Inselpost" franchise stamps from Rhodes had not arrived.



A cover sent to Germany by a Maritime Inspector on Leros served by Fieldpost No. 68095A bearing a perforate blue franchise stamp overprinted in blue-black (ca. 1,200) cancelled "FELDPOST h" on 26 March 1945. This letter was probably flown to Vienna on 1 April 1945 but bears no evidence of onward transportation to Northern Germany.



A cover sent to Germany by an Officer of the anti-aircraft defence on Leros served by Fieldpost No. 68094B bearing a rouletted blue franchise stamp overprinted in violet-blue (ca. 14,800) cancelled "FELDPOST h" on 4 March 1945. This letter was probably flown to Vienna on 19 March 1945 and may have reached its destination in Saxony.

The main printing of "INSELPOST" military franchise stamps (on the brown franchise stamp for parcels) comprised 1,500,000 overprinted at Zagreb during 6-15 November 1944, issued in the Dodecanese in December 1944.



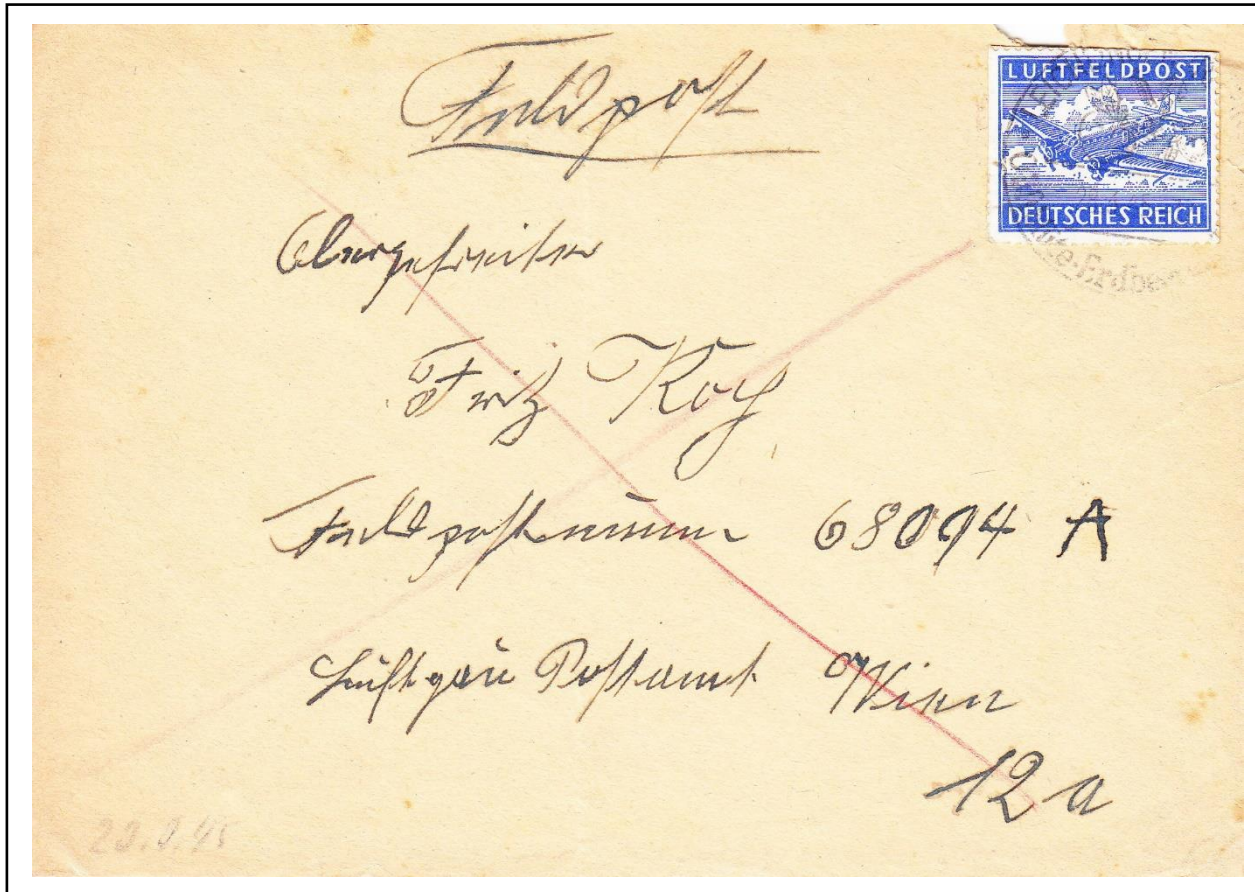
This field post letter-form addressed to Berlin was written at Leros on 25 March 1945 by a Private attached to Fortress Infantry Battalion 999 served by Fieldpost No. 68092E and bears a rouletted brown franchise stamp overprinted at Zagreb which was cancelled "FELDPPOST h" at Leros on 27 March 1945. It may possibly have been flown to Vienna on 1 April 1945 but it is questionable whether it was delivered to the addressee in Berlin in view of the Russian advance in April 1945.



Certificate

This letter to Germany was written on Calymnos on 25 March 1945 by a member of the 2nd Company of Fortress Infantry Battalion 999 served by Fieldpost No. 68091C and bears a Zagreb overprint franchise stamp which was cancelled "FELDPPOST h" at Leros on 20 January 1945. It was probably flown from Rhodes to Vienna on 28 January 1945.

A letter from Germany to Leros bearing an ordinary franchise stamp, not an “Inselpost” stamp



Certificate

This letter from Germany addressed to a Corporal attached to the Marine Anti-Aircraft Section on Leros served by Fieldpost No. 68094A was despatched from Leichlingen in the Rhineland on 28 March 1945 and bears a cut-out un-overprinted blue franchise stamp which passed unnoticed (or was deliberately ignored at this late stage). Although a last “Inselpost” flight to Rhodes arrived from Linz on 3 May 1945 (after no flights in April), the expert considered it unlikely that this letter reached Leros, which conclusion is supported by the red crossing through the address.

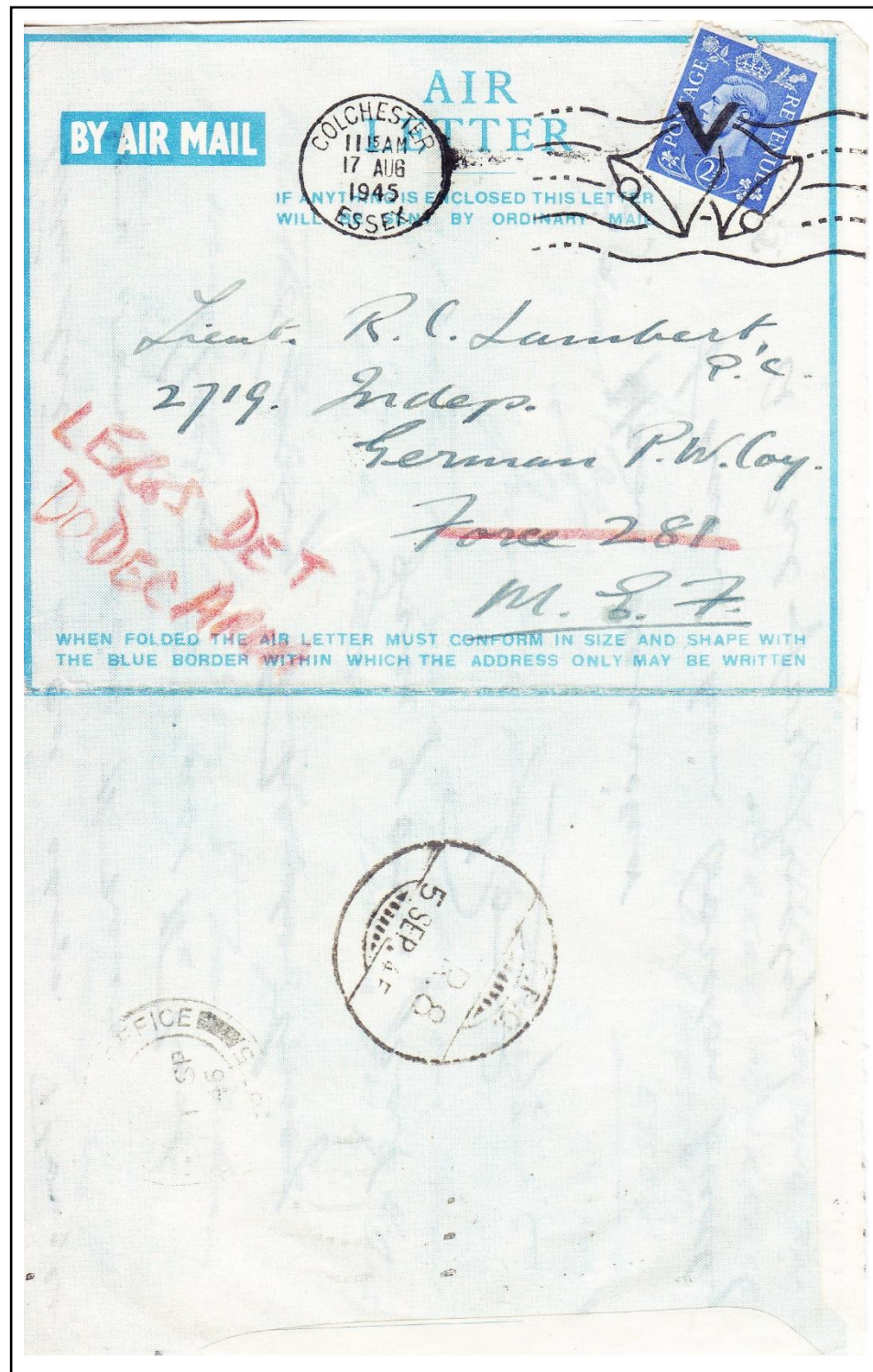
Civilian mail to a British Naval unit on Leros in May 1945

The Germans had taken control of the Dodecanese islands by November 1943 at the latest. At the time of the German surrender on 8 May 1945 there were about 5,500 Germans and 5,100 Italians on Rhodes, about 2,800 Germans and 600 Italians on Leros and about 1,150 Germans and 500 Italians on Cos. The Germans had abandoned the smaller islands, here Lipsos, Patmos and Stampalia in Autumn 1944 and these had been occupied by the British shortly afterwards.



This letter was sent by air from Nyasaland (today Malawi) in Central Africa addressed to Leros and correctly franked with stamps to the value of 1s3d cancelled at Blantyre on 29 April 1945. The addressee was an officer in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, who was probably engaged in police duties (most of the police in the Dodecanese came from Rhodesia). The letter was routed to Leros via an office Egypt and does not bear arrival or transit marks.

Indian Field Post Office R.8 on Leros



There appear to be no records of a British Military Post Office operating at Leros from May 1945; but Indian Field Post Office No. R.8 (a branch of Indian Field Post Office No. 90 on Rhodes) is believed to have been on Leros in 1945. This airmail letter from England is addressed to an officer attached to "Force 281 M.E.F." (an Independent German Prisoner of War Company) and is franked with a 2½d stamp cancelled on 17 August 1945. The "Force 281" in the address was deleted in red and replaced by "LEROS DET(achment). DODECANESE". The envelope bears a transit back-stamp of British Field Post Office No. 375 on Rhodes dated 1 September 1945 plus an arrival back-stamp of Indian Field Post Office No. R.8 on Leros dated 5 September 1945, but no civilian post office transit markings.

British Civilian Post Office on Calymnos opened on 4 July 1945



This commercial letter to Sweden was sent from Calymnos correctly franked with a 5d British stamp, overprinted "M(iddle).E(ast).F(orces)." for use in the former Italian territories, cancelled with the Italian date-stamp on 18 July 1945. The copy of part of the back shows a Rhodes transit date-stamp of 21 July, censorship and re-sealing with a ZD/5 tape of Rhodes, a Cairo machine transit-mark of 11 August, censorship and re-sealing with an Egyptian censor tape and a Gothenburg arrival back stamp dated 24 September 1945.

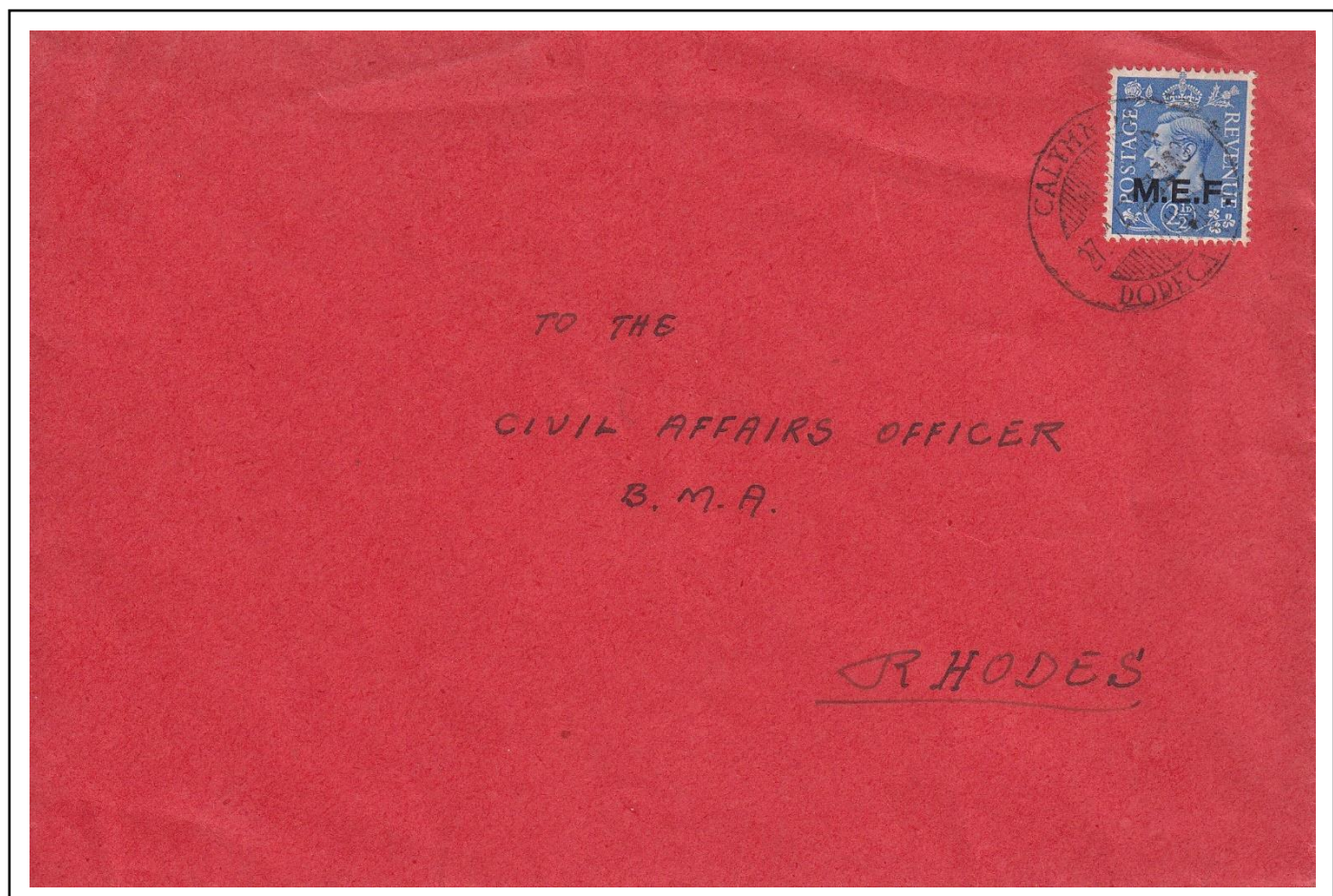
10. British Post Offices and Agencies up to the hand-over to Greece

May 1945 – Mar 1947

British Civilian P.O. on Calymnos – Italian date-stamp replaced with new British one on 15 April 1946



A philatelic cover sent from Calymnos to England correctly franked with a 5d M.E.F. stamp cancelled with the Italian date-stamp on 14 March 1946. The use of this date-stamp was discontinued a month later on the arrival of the new British date-stamp, which had been produced in Cairo by adapting a former Italian date-stamp.



A commercial inland cover from Calymnos to Rhodes correctly franked with a 2½d M.E.F. stamp cancelled on 27 January 1947 with the British date-stamp introduced on 15 April 1946. Rhodes arrival back-stamp of 3 February 1947.

British Civilian P.O. on Calymnos – airmail to France with the British date-stamp



A cover sent by airmail from Calymnos to France correctly franked with a 6d M.E.F. stamp cancelled on 28 May 1946. With an airmail routing marking and a transit back-stamp applied at Rhodes on 1 June 1946.



A cover sent by registered airmail from Calymnos to France correctly franked with a 6d M.E.F. stamp (airmail postage) plus a 5d stamp (registration fee) cancelled on 25 February 1947. With routing mark back-stamp applied at Rhodes on 1 March 1947.

British Civilian P.O. on Leros – mail with the Italian date-stamp “UFFIZIO POSTALE + TELEGRAFICO + LERO”



A cover to Rhodes correctly franked with a 2½d M.E.F. stamp cancelled at Leros-Town on 13 May 1946. Rhodes b/s 13 May 1946

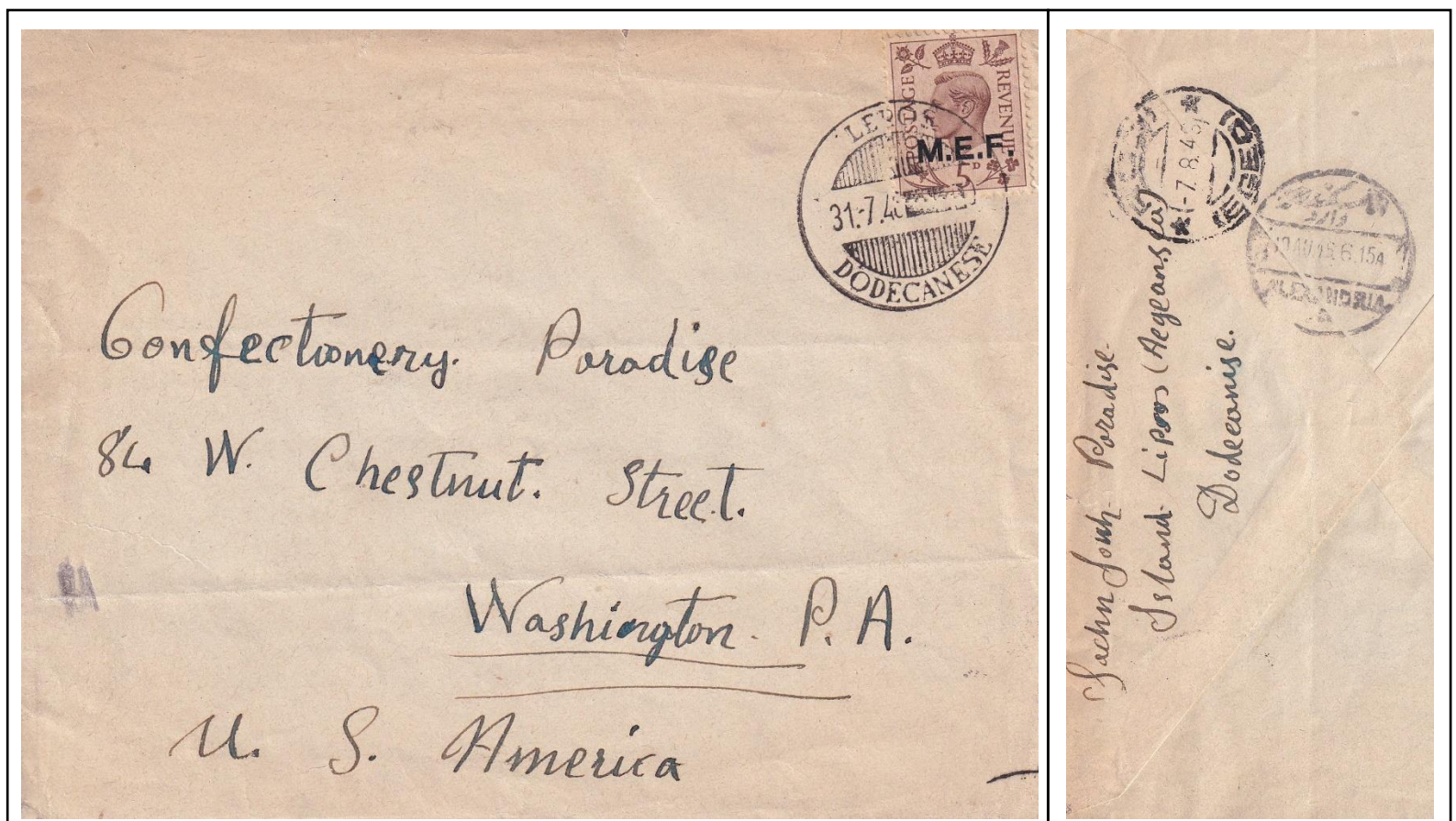


A cover to Egypt correctly franked with two 2½d M.E.F. stamps cancelled at Leros-Town on 23 April 1946. Rhodes transit and Alexandria arrival back-stamps of 25 April and 11 May 1946.

British Civilian P.O. on Leros – commercial mail from the British Postal Agency at Lipsos



A letter sent to the USA by surface mail from Lipsos correctly franked with a 5d M.E.F. stamp, which was cancelled by the British P.O. at Leros-Town on 17 December 1945 with the Italian date-stamp "UFFIZIO POSTALE + TELEGRAFICO + LERO". Right: a reduced photocopy of the back showing the sender's Lipsos address, a Rhodes and Alexandria transit back-stamps.



A further cover sent to the USA by the same person on Lipsos correctly franked with a 5d M.E.F. stamp, which was cancelled by the British P.O. at Leros-Town on 31 July 1946, now with the British date-stamp "LEROS DODECANESE". Right: A photocopy of part of the back showing the sender's Lipsos address, plus Rhodes and Alexandria transit back-stamps of 7 and 10 August 1946.

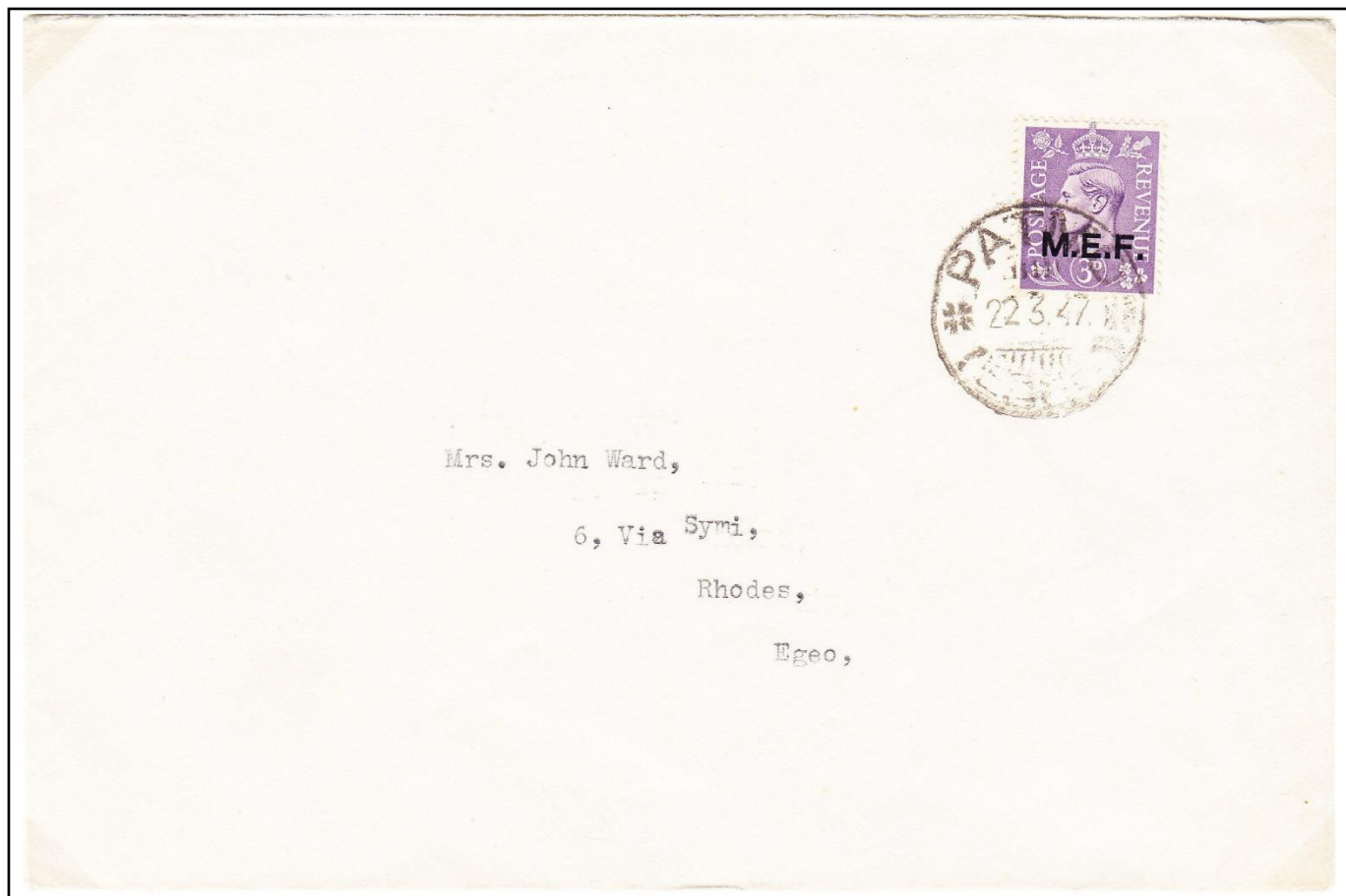
British Civilian P.O. on Leros – registered airmail cancelled with the British date-stamp



Above: A cover sent by registered airmail from the British P.O. at Leros-Town on 10 October 1946 correctly franked with M.E.F. stamps to the value of 2s11d (airmail $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 oz = 2s6d + registration 5d).

Below: A photocopy (100%) of part of the back of the above cover showing a Rhodes transit back-stamp of 10 October 1946 (an old Italian date-stamp for registered mail was still in use) and a Cairo delivery back-stamp of 22 October 1946.

British Civilian Postal Agency on Patmos - mail cancelled with the adapted Italian date-stamp The Italian garrison had left Patmos for neutral Turkey in November 1943 and material from the German occupation period, which ended ca. October 1944, is not recorded. Although the island was subsequently occupied by British forces, material is not recorded until after a British Postal Agency, operated by the Archimandrite of the Monastery, had been opened on 18 June 1945, using the Italian date-stamp with "EGEO" defaced.

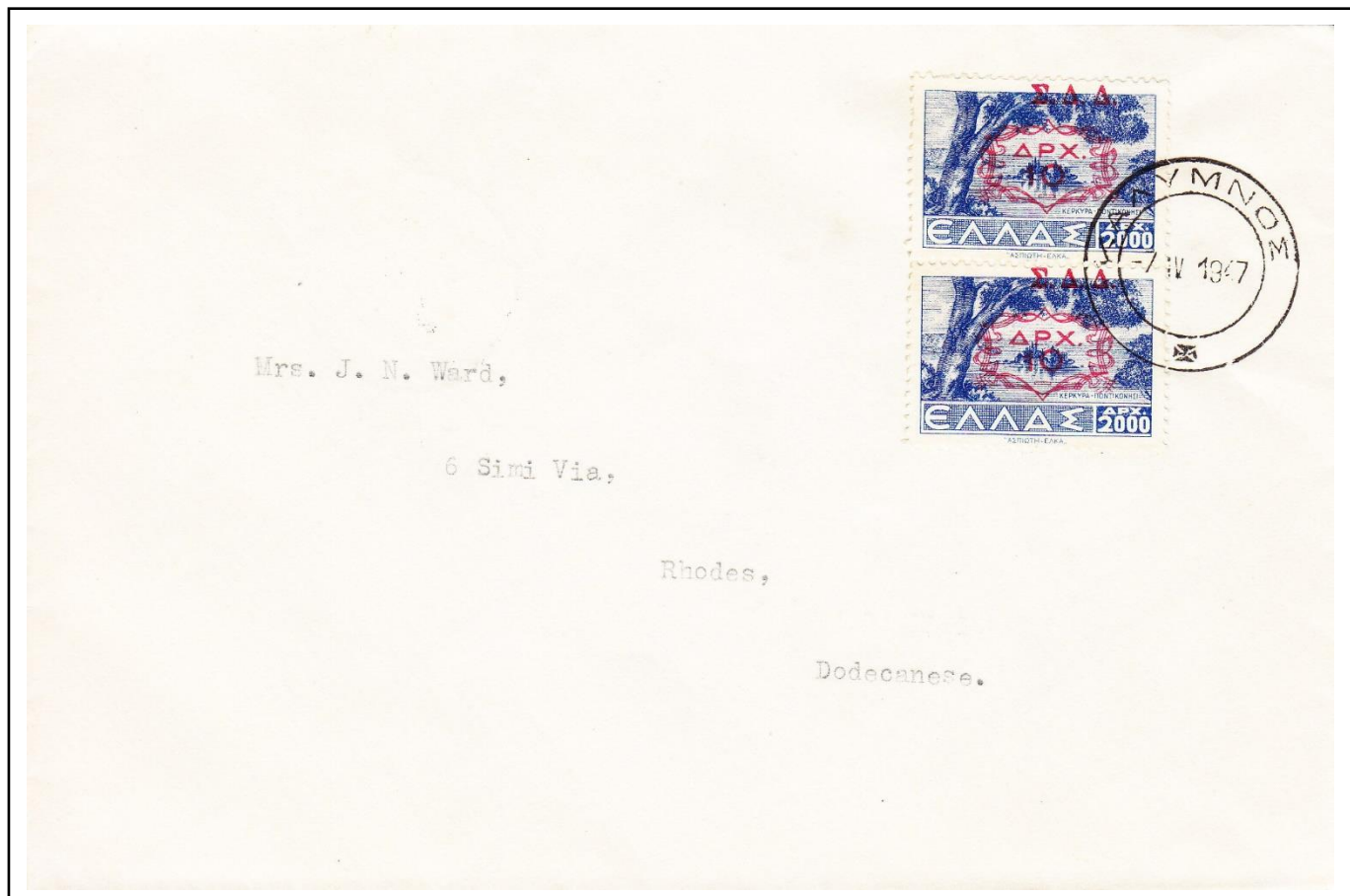


This cover was sent to Rhodes from the British Postal Agency at Patmos on 22 March 1947 correctly franked with a 3d "M.E.F." stamp (the inland rate had been increased from 2½d to 3d in 1946). No British-type "PATMOS DODECANESE" date-stamp had been prepared and the adapted Italian date-stamp "PATMO (EGEO)" was used until the end of the British period.

Transfer from British to Greek Military Administration on 1 April 1947



A philatelic cover to Rhodes bearing a 2,000 Dr. Greek stamp overprinted "S.D.D." (Military Administration Dodecanese) and "10 Dr." (but sold at 100 Dr.) in carmine which was cancelled at Patmos on 3 April 1947, the date of issue there.



A philatelic cover to Rhodes bearing two of the above stamps cancelled at Calymnos on 7 April 1947 (issued on 3 April) with the Greek Military Administration type date-stamp; the cover bears a Rhodes arrival back-stamp (Military Admin. Type) of 13 April.

Transfer of Calymnos P.O. to Greek Civilian Administration on Annexation with Greece on 7 March 1948



This opened-out souvenir cover sent to Rhodes on 7 March 1948, the day of the formal transfer from Greek military to civilian administration, is over-franked with a 500 Dr. Stamp of the “Restoration of the Dodecanese” series, which had been issued on 20 November 1947. On the front, the cover has the special commemorative cachet showing the Sun-God (which was probably applied at Rhodes) and, on the reverse, it bears two compulsory charity tax stamps of Greece. The canceller is the new Greek civilian type date-stamp, but the Rhodes arrival date-stamp of 9 March 1948 which is on the flap is still that of the military type.