

## SASENO

Italian forces occupied the Island of Saseno off the coast of Albania on 30 October 1914. There was no normal postal service during World War I except military mail routed through Valona. The first postmark for Saseno did not appear until 1922. When the Peace Commission confirmed the Italian possession of the island, a set of eight definitives overprinted "Saseno" was issued and used between April and October 1923. Subsequently, normal unoverprinted Italian stamps were in use until the island was given up in 1943.

Distacc. R. Marina/Saseno (Valona)  
6 January 1922  
25 January 1923



The initial postmark was inscribed "Royal Naval Detachment/Saseno (Valona)" as shown above on a piece from a registered letter and a cover bearing Esperanto propaganda.

**SASENO**  
Unoverprinted Italian Stamps

Saseno/Isole  
30 March 1923  
20 March 1923



When the Peace Commissions finished their work, the 1913 boundaries of Albania were confirmed except that Italy received Saseno. As a result, a civil post office was opened on 6 February 1923, using a new postmark inscribed "Island of Saseno." Examples shown on a postcard and a receipt for a registered letter.

SASENO  
Overprints on Italy

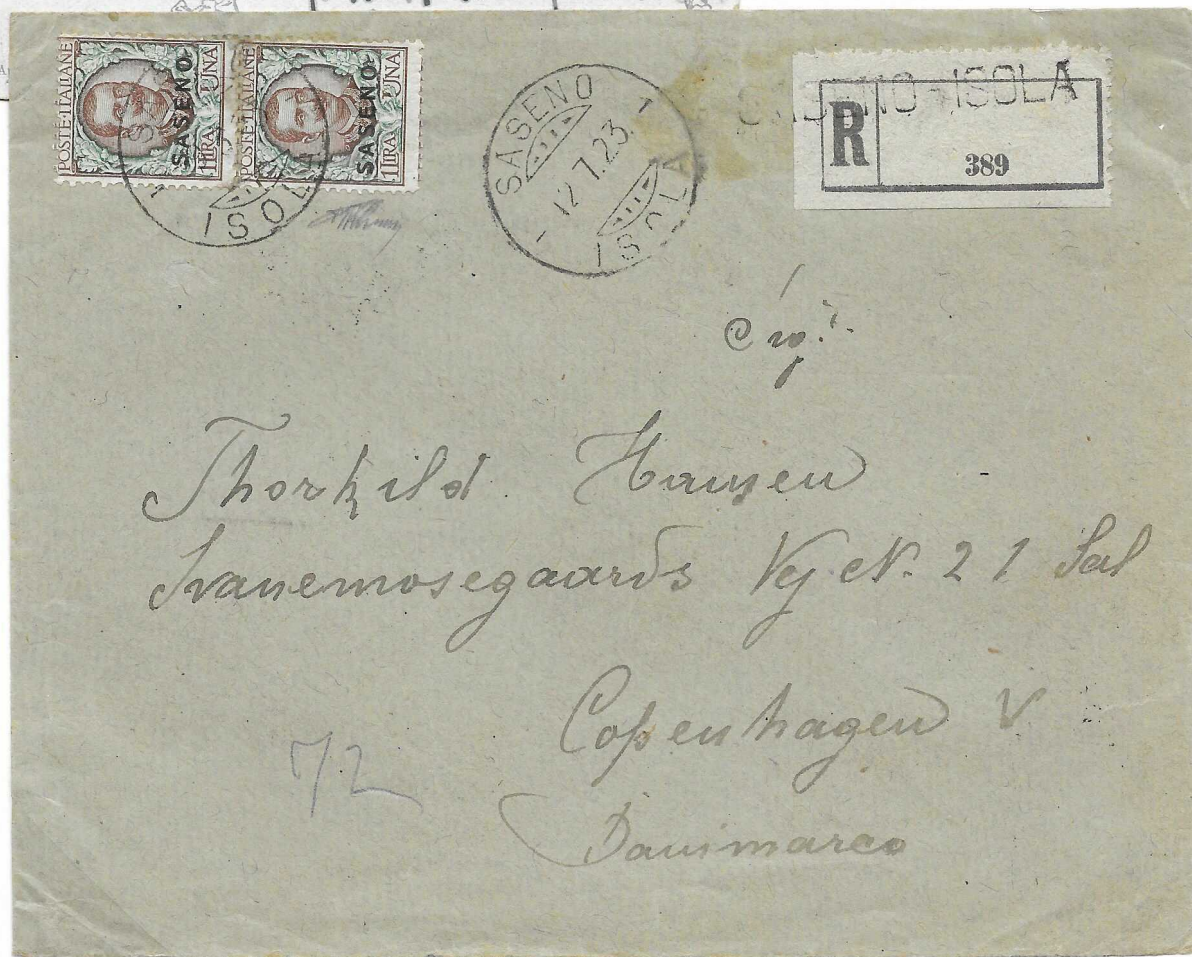
Saseno/Isole  
12 June 1923



Once the Italian sovereignty was confirmed, it was time to issue new stamps to publicize the augmentation of the national territory. Thus, 2,000 sets of eight Italian definitives showing King Victor Emmanuel III were overprinted "Saseno" and issued in April 1923. The complete set shown here on a philatelically-influenced cover.

SASENO  
Overprints on Italy

Saseno/Isole  
18 May 1923  
12 July 1923



Commercial use of these stamps is exceedingly scarce, with only six such covers recorded (per Buzzetti). Upper example is a postcard sent to the Naval Ministry in Rome. Lower cover to Denmark is regarded by the exhibitor as the most important example of postal history showing franking with the overprinted stamps, being a commercial usage, registered and to an unusual destination.



As the overprinted stamps were used up, no new printings were made. As a result, unoverprinted Italian definitives were placed back in use. In the case of the above cover, a pair of 1 lira stamps was used to pay postage and registry fee to Switzerland and then on to Austria.

## CORFU

In August 1923, members of the Interallied Mission operating on site for the delimitation of the border between Albania and Greece were ambushed by Greek terrorists. Their leader, Italian General Tellini, and two of his aides were killed. Italy demanded that Greece pay a heavy indemnity to the families and, when prompt action was not forthcoming, sent warships and landed 8,000 men on the Island of Corfu on 31 August. Shortly thereafter, Greece backed down and paid 50 million lire, which resulted in an Italian withdrawal on 27 September.

Poste Italiane/Brindisi Transiti  
September 1923



Above cover is an example of an unfranked official registered letter from the Boundary Commission through the Italian Consulate in Santi Quaranta to Bologna. Mail sent from the Commission is most unusual.

CORFU  
Naval Mail

R. Nave San Marco  
7 September 1923

R. Nave Conte di Cavour  
22 September 1923



The earliest examples of mail from the punitive expedition to Corfu have the marking of the *San Marco* and were sent through the Greek post office. Later mail is recorded with naval postmarks from the on board offices, such as the *Conte Cavour* on the lower card.





CORFU  
Overprints on Italy

Corfu/Poste Italiane  
25 September 1923



On 20 September, a set of eight Italian definitives depicting the King and overprinted "Corfu" were placed on sale. Reportedly, 20,000 sets were printed, but at least half of these were sold as remainders at the philatelic office in Rome after the occupation had ended.

**CORFU**  
Overprints on Italy

Corfu/Poste Italiane  
23 September 1923  
24 September 1923



Commercial usage of the Corfu overprints is very scarce since the period of validity was only 12 days. Although overfranked, the lower example has reportedly the only 60 centesimi stamp used on a cover other than philatelic ones with complete sets.

**CORFU**  
Overprints on Italy

Corfu/Poste Italiane  
25 September 1923

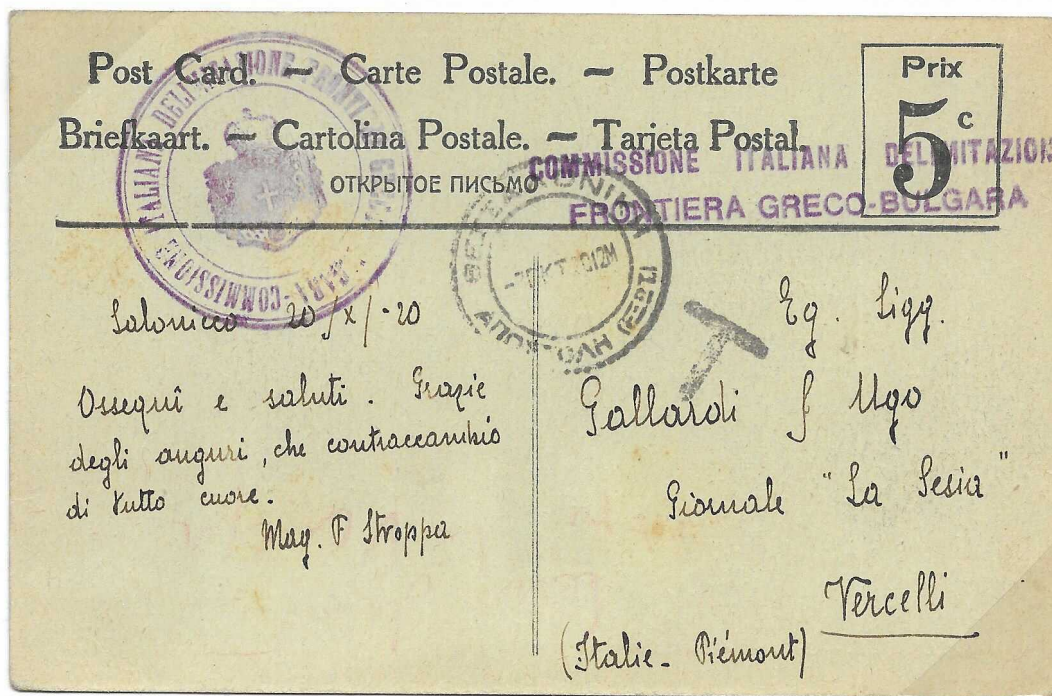


There were complaints that stamps with Italian denominations were not practical on an island where Greek currency was in circulation. As a result, additional stamps were surcharged in Greek lepta and drachma. Three such values were issued on 24 September. Three additional ones were prepared but did not arrive before the occupation ended, thus remained unissued.

## BULGARIA

In 1919, Greek forces occupied Western Thrace, a territory along the Aegean Coast formerly part of Bulgaria. In order to determine the new boundaries between the two countries, a delimitation team of French and Italians was sent in 1920 to do a topographical and ethnological study. In the end, the entire area was assigned to Greece.

Salonica  
20 October 1920

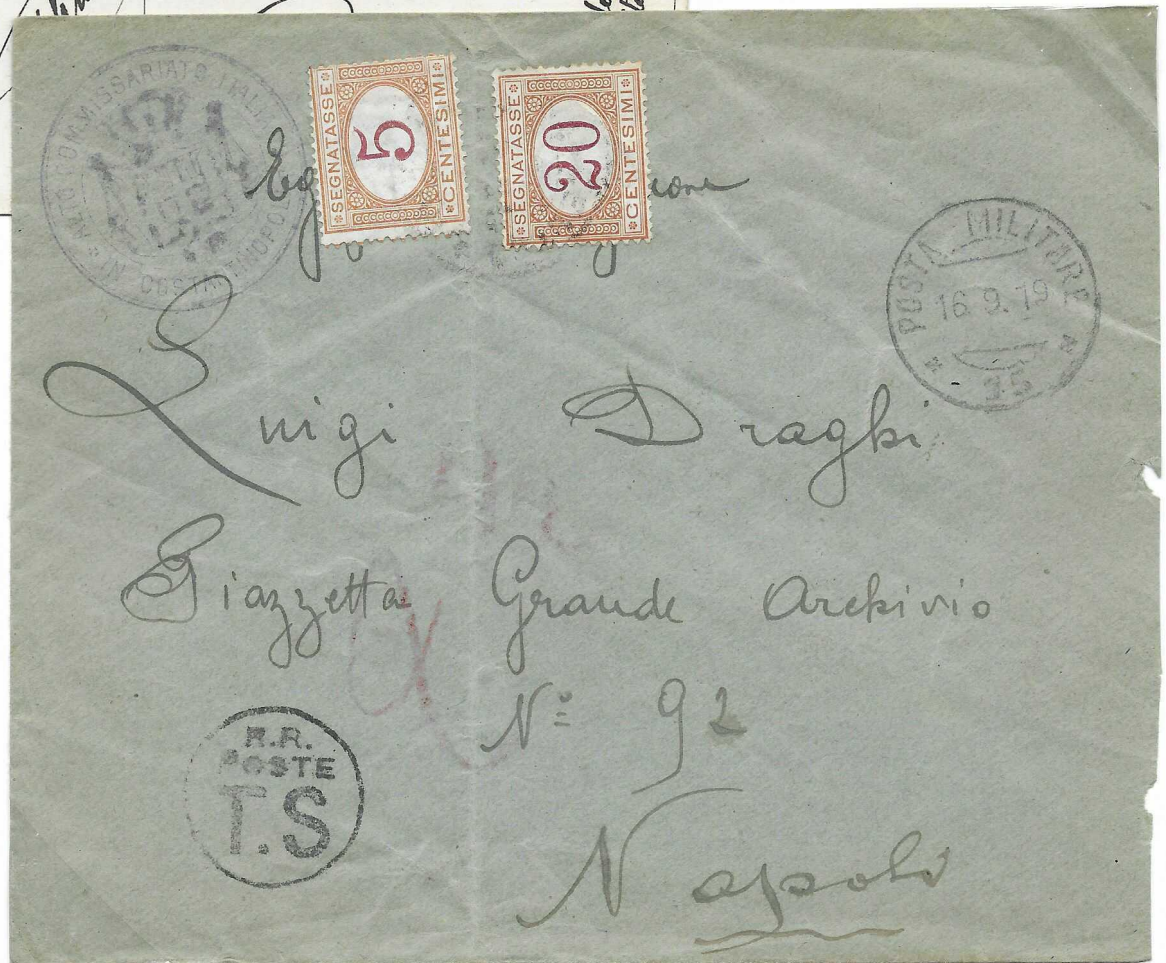


The above picture postcard of Salonica was sent to Italy by a member of the Italian Delimitation Commission for the frontier between Bulgaria and Greece. Sent unfranked but bearing the appropriate official cachet. The only example of such usage seen by exhibitor.

## TURKEY

Italian military activity in the Ottoman Empire consisted of two aspects. The first troops arrived in Constantinople on 6 February 1919 to participate in the Interallied occupation of the former enemy capital. The Italians operated a post office there until 1923. In addition, an expeditionary corps was sent to occupy several cities in southwest Anatolia in an attempt to establish an Italian zone of influence. Eventually, the Ottoman regime was replaced by a Turkish Nationalist government and the foreign troops withdrawn.

Posta Militare 15  
18 April 1919  
16 September 1919



PM 15 was opened near the Galata Bridge in Constantinople on 13 February 1919 to serve the Italian troops in the Interallied force. Examples are shown of rectangular and circular cachets of the Italian High Commission.

TURKEY - CONSTANTINOPLE  
Military Mail

Posta Militare 15  
29 July 1919  
31 December 1920



Local Italian military mail was entitled to free franking at PM 15, as indicated by the cover addressed to a member of the French forces in Constantinople. Lower cover is an example of registered mail from PM 15 to Germany, charged at 25 cent. for postage and 25 cent. for registration.

TURKEY - CONSTANTINOPLE  
Military Mail

Constantinopoli  
12 January 1922



Colonnello di S.M.  
FRANCESCO VITELLI

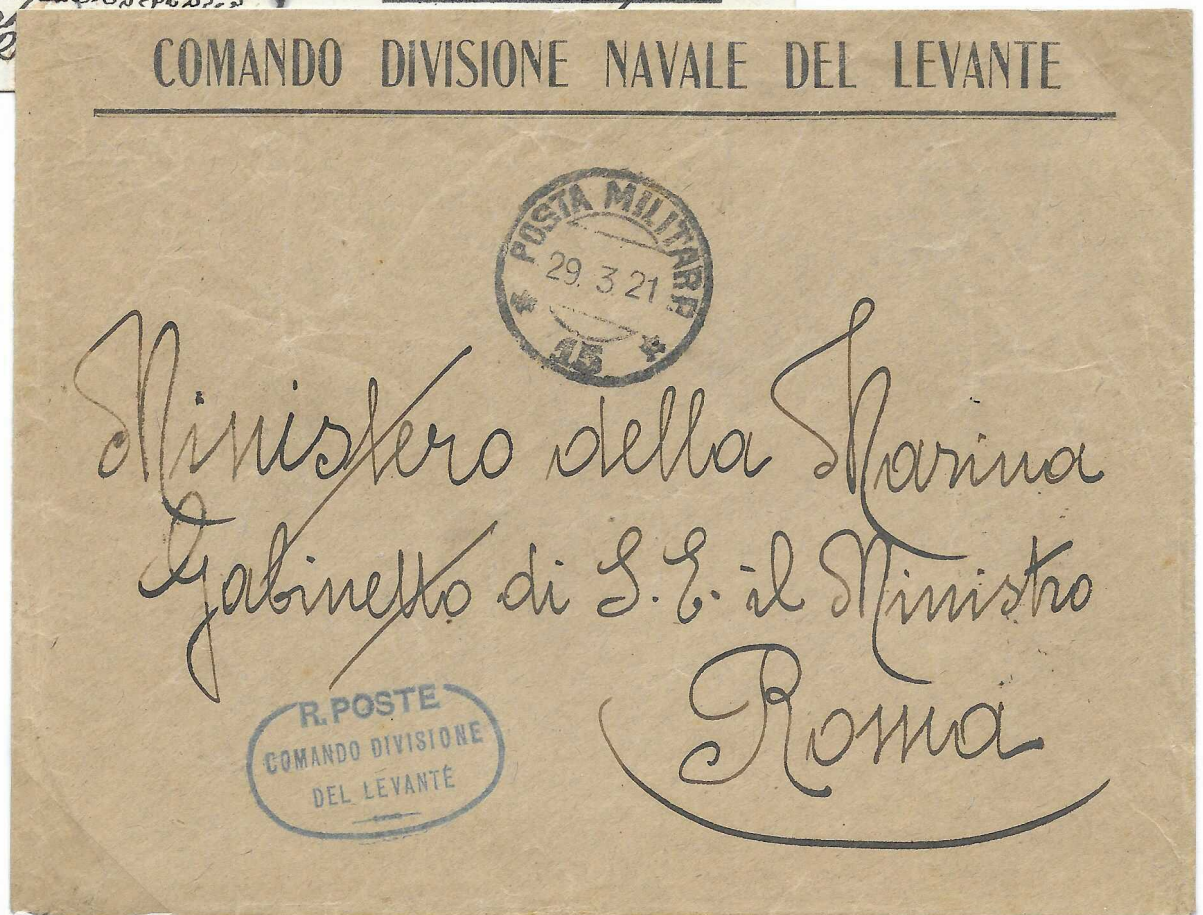
Maggiore dei Granatieri  
G. Augusto Speckel  
~~Ministero degli Affari Esteri~~  
Comando del Corpo d'Armata  
Roma



Following an agreement between Italy and the Nationalist Turkish government under Mustapha Kemal on 13 March 1921, tensions between the two sides were reduced and on 10 July, the military post office was converted into a civil one. As a result, mail was henceforth charged at full international rates, e.g. 40 cent. per 20 grams for letters. This office remained open until 30 September 1923.

TURKEY - CONSTANTINOPLE  
Incoming Mail/Naval Mail

Posta Militare 15  
October 1919  
29 March 1921



As a rule, PM 15 did not datestamp incoming non-registered mail. However, the postcard above received an unusual boxed marking inscribed "Italian Military Post/Mummane Sokak," the location of the Headquarters. Official military mail had free postage as shown by the cover from the "HQ of the Naval Division in the Levant."