

TURKEY - CONSTANTINOPLE
Naval Mail

Constantinopoli
7 November 1921

COMANDO DIVISIONE NAVALE DEL LEVANTE

Handwritten in red ink:
P. 127
P. 127

R
COSTANTINOPOLI
Posta italiana
127



Stimatissimo Signor

CONTRAMMIRAGLIO Cav Uff/ GALLIANI LEONIERO

Via de BAULLARI N° 4

R O M A

Raccomandata

TURKEY - CONSTANTINOPLE
Naval Mail

R. Nave Sardegna
28 March 1922



Official military mail was still entitled to be sent free from Italian warship post offices in 1922. The old battleship *Sardegna* had been converted to a floating workshop in 1919 but nevertheless was still processing mail. Cover sent from the "Liquidation Office/Italian Naval Base/Constantinople."

TURKEY - CONSTANTINOPLE
Civil Mail

The foreign post offices abroad in Turkey were closed down at the beginning of World War I on 30 September 1914. However, with the postwar Allied occupation, some of these offices were reopened -- the Italian one located near the Galata Bridge took over from the military office on 1 July 1921.

Constantinopoli
5 December 1921



At first, ordinary postage stamps of Italy were used to pay postage, serving as forerunners for the forthcoming issues surcharged in Turkish currency. Used here to pay postage on a registered letter to Czechoslovakia. Note the postmark which dates back to the prewar period but has the branch name "Stamboul" excised.

TURKEY - CONSTANTINOPLE
Civil Mail

Constantinopoli
20 January 1922



The first new stamps consisted of 3,400 sets of five values of the current Italian definitives surcharged locally in Turkish currency and issued in November 1921. This series is shown here on a registered cover to Switzerland.

TURKEY - CONSTANTINOPLE
Civil Mail with Instructional Marking

Constantinopoli
18 March 1922
21 March 1922



The first surcharged stamps sent out from Italy were issued from December 1921 to March 1922. These were similar to the first local overprints but with different values. However, some of the postal clerks back in Italy, not accustomed to seeing Italian stamps surcharged in a strange currency, attempted to collect postage due.



This effort was thwarted when the Constantinople post office applied an instructional marking reading "Payment in Piasters is authorized by the U.P.U. in Berne. Do Not Tax." Note the two different postmarks in use at this time, with the name of the city and "Italian Post" reversed.

TURKEY - CONSTANTINOPLE
Civil Mail

Constantinopoli
24 August 1922



On the theory that Constantinople was the only Italian civil post office functioning in the area, the next set sent out was overprinted "Constantinopoli" as well as being surcharged in Turkish currency. In this case, there were 9,000 sets of five denominations issued from May to September 1922. As there was no stamp of 3.75 piasters that would pay the postage for frequently-encountered double-weight letters to Europe, a local overprint in this denomination was produced and issued on 5 August 1922.

TURKEY - CONSTANTINOPLE
Civil Mail

Constantinopoli
27 November 1922
30 January 1923

*Spillente: Quar Topitaco Trieste
Via Nain Lurabo 1*



*Monsieur
Robert Noske
Verleger, Die Germania*



SOCIÉTÉ OTTOMANE
POUR L'ÉCLAIRAGE
de la Ville de Constantinople

N° 4.

Recommandé.

استانبول شرکت تیوریه
بیمانی سی



Monsieur

Alwin



SUISSE.

Later, a set of 10 surcharges with large letters and numerals was issued in October and November 1922. Shown here on registered covers to Germany and Switzerland, the latter sent by the Ottoman Society for Electricity.

TURKEY - CONSTANTINOPLE
Civil Mail

Constantinopoli
12 October 1922



In August 1922, as part of a seemingly never-ending stream of different issues, stamps with a new type of surcharge were provided. In this case, a particularly heavy type face was utilized. Examples shown here on bank correspondence from Constantinople to Rome.

TURKEY - CONSTANTINOPLE
Prepared but Unissued Stamps for Civil Mail

March 1923



In March 1923, what was to be a final set of eight Italian definitives surcharged in Turkish currency was prepared. However, before they could be issued it was decided that since Constantinople was the only Italian civil office still functioning in Turkey, the stamps should also be overprinted with the name of that city. Thus, the set shown above was never sold at the post office, although a few sets subsequently came into philatelic hands.

TURKEY - CONSTANTINOPLE
Civil Mail

Constantinopoli
27 March 1923
1 August 1923



A final set for the civil post office was overprinted "Constantinopoli" and issued in March 1923, including a special delivery stamp. Shown here on a philatelic "set" cover and commercial registered letter to Germany.

TURKEY - CONSTANTINOPLE
Civil Mail -- Last Day Cover

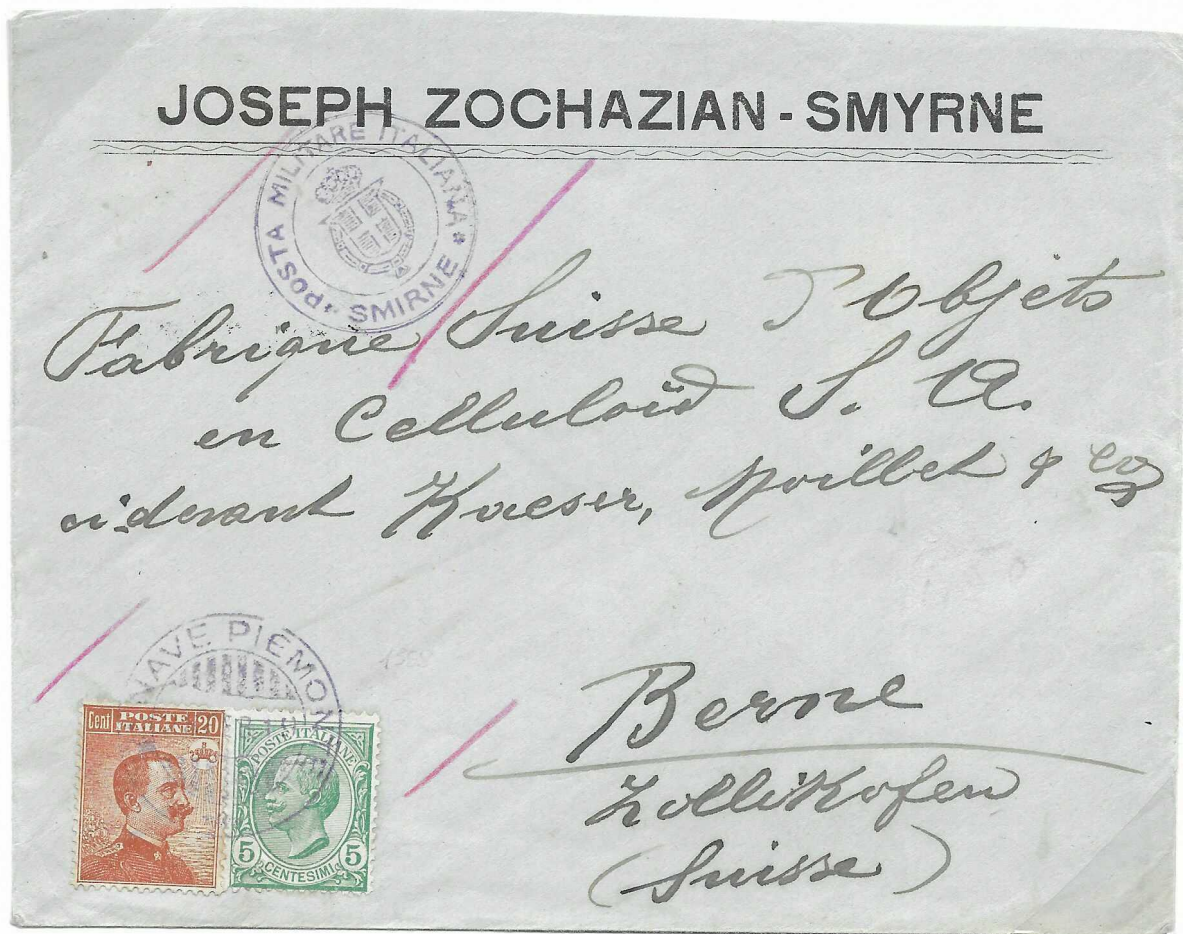
Constantinopoli
25 September 1923



Complete set of large surcharges on a philatelic locally-addressed cover. It is a souvenir of the last day of service of the Italian post and has an example of the 90 piastre stamp that exhibitor has never seen commercially used.

TURKEY - SMYRNA
Naval Mail

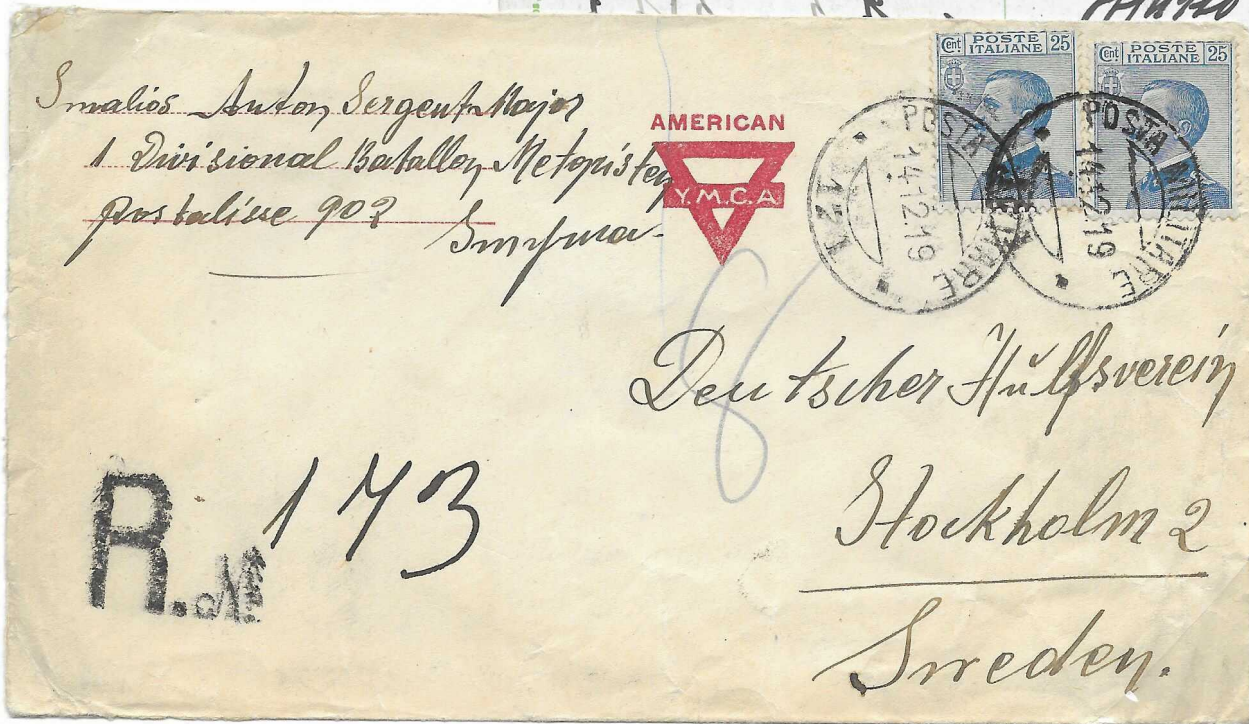
Posta Militare Italiana/Smirne
28 February 1919



The first activity outside Constantinople occurred at Smyrna on 28 February 1919. The circular postal marking was used only on the first day of the occupation, as it was almost immediately replaced by a field post office that became operational on the following day. Thus, mail sent on the first day went to shipboard offices for processing -- *R. Nave Piemonte* in this case.

TURKEY - SMYRNA
Military Mail

Posta Militare 171
5 June 1919
7 July 1919
14 December 1919



PM 171 operated in Smyrna from 29 February 1919 until 16 June 1923, except for a brief period following the great fire of September 1922. Its initial postmark was typical for the period with "171" at the bottom of the dial.

TURKEY - SMYRNA
Military Mail

Posta Militare 171
21 March 1922



A second version of the PM 171 cancel appeared in February and March 1922, thus is seldom seen. It is inscribed continuously across the top of the dial "Posta Militare 171." This marking disappeared after the fire, presumably being destroyed along with the Italian post office and its other equipment.

TURKEY - SMYRNA
Prepared but Unissued Stamps for Civil Mail

The Italian authorities had planned to open a civil post office in Smyrna as well as in Constantinople and even went so far as to have a set of five denominations suitably overprinted. However, the military office proved sufficient to handle the civil mail, which had diminished as a result of the great fire at the time of the reoccupation by the Turkish nationalist forces, pending the final closing on 15 June 1923.

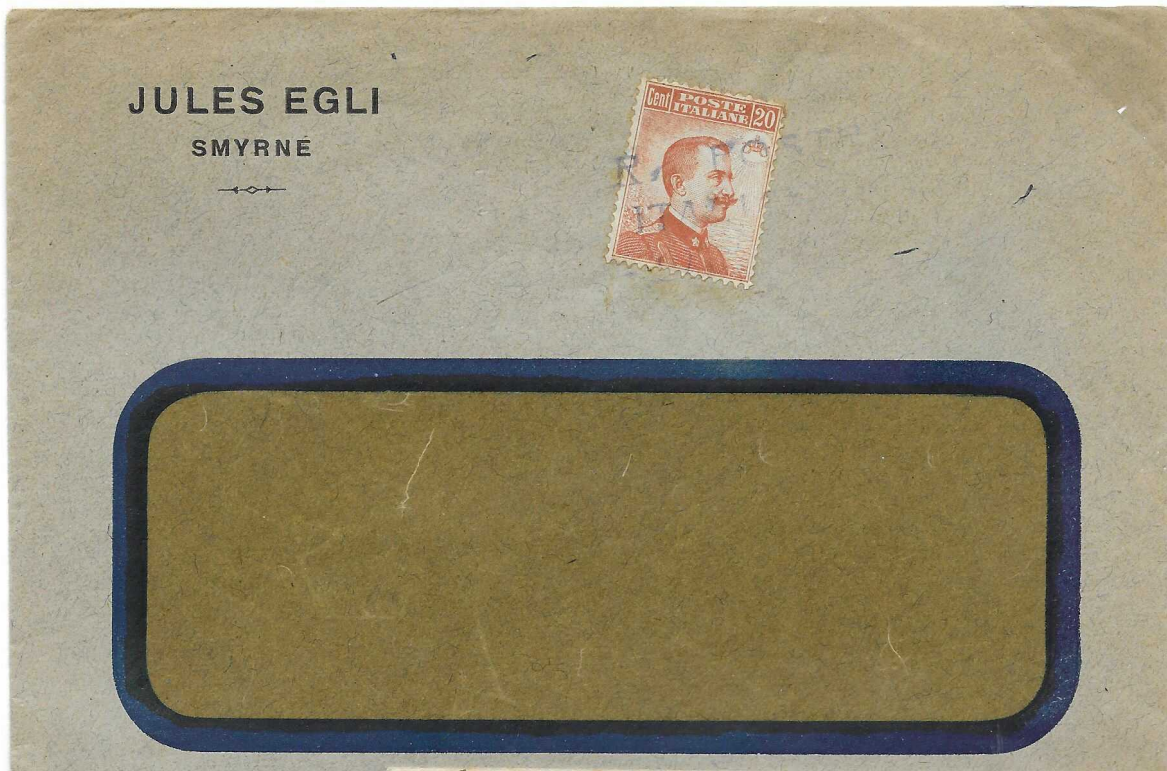
June 1922



The above examples show the five stamps that had been prepared for use in a planned civil post office in Smyrna.

TURKEY - SMYRNA
Military Mail

R. Poste/Italiane/Smirne
26 September 1922



The scarcest postmark of the Italian offices in Turkey is the provisional marking used in Smyrna following the Great Fire. It is a rubber stamp inscribed "Royal Italian Post Smyrna" in three lines. As the earlier cancels were not recovered, this was put into service temporarily in late September 1922. Fewer than five examples recorded.