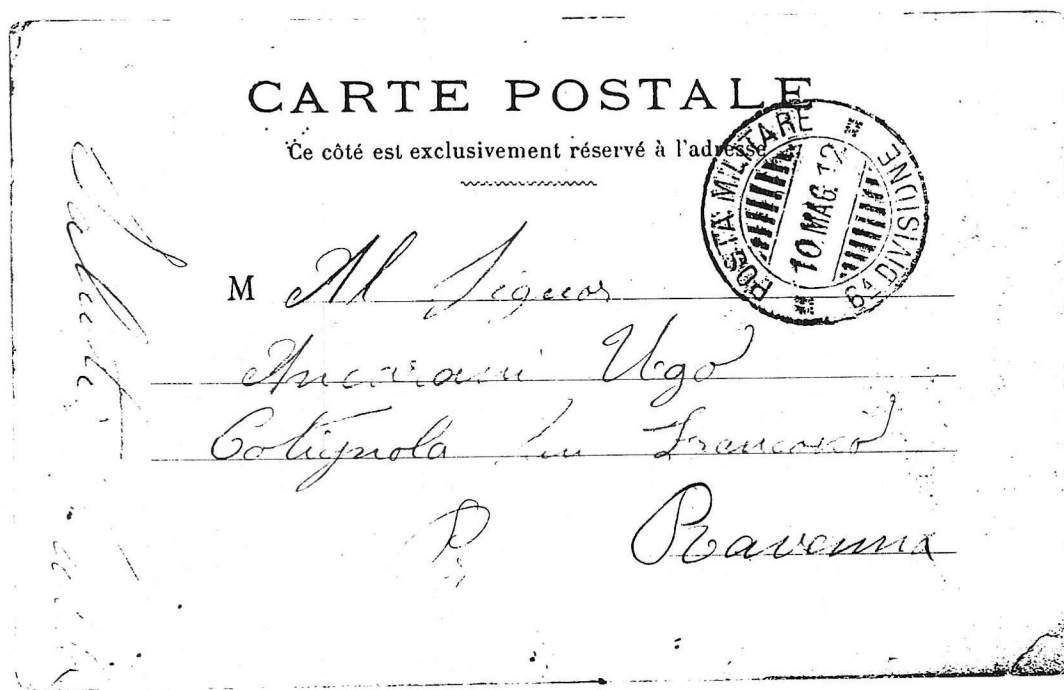


THE ITALIANS IN THE AEGEAN ISLANDS 1912 - 1943

Italy was a latecomer to the hunt for colonies, and by the beginning of the 20th Century, the pickings were getting very slim. Sensing that the Ottoman Empire held some outlying areas that might be obtained with modest effort, the Italo-Turkish War was undertaken in 1911. The first step was the invasion of the Turkish territory of Libya, thus creating the first Italian colony in North Africa.

In the spring of 1912, the Italians decided to open a second front against the obviously weak Turks, sending a naval squadron to the Dodecanese ("twelve islands" in Greek -- actually thirteen if Stampalia is counted, although it is one of the Cyclades) in the eastern part of the Aegean Sea. The first landing was by marines from the warships at Stampalia on 26 April, followed by the main force -- the Sixth Army Division -- at Rhodes on 5 May. By the end of that month, all of the islands had been seized, with the Italian occupation being confirmed when the Turks signed the Treaty of Ouchy on 15 August 1912.

The exhibit starts with a few covers from the early occupation period, mostly military, but the bulk of the presentation is divided into two sections. The first is geographical and shows covers with postmarks from each individual island, whether franked with its own overprints, normal Italian stamps or those issued for use generally in the Aegean Islands. The second section is chronological and shows the various commemoratives and definitive stamps that were issued for the Aegean and used on Rhodes.



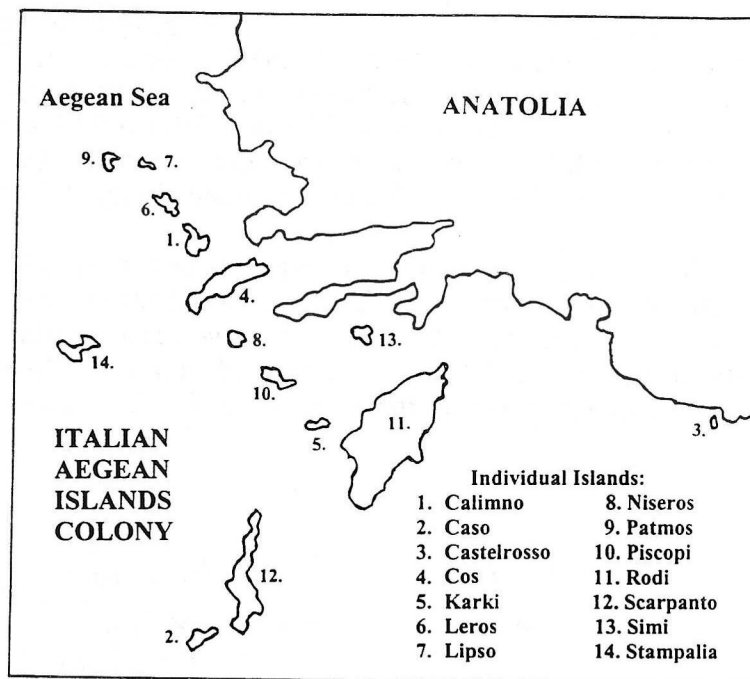
The first Italian post office in the Aegean was the military station for the 6th Division on Rhodes. This facility was in operation from 10 May 1912 to 31 October 1913. The above card was mailed on the first day of service.

The geographic nomenclature in the Aegean area is confused by the fact that the islands had both Turkish and Greek names, but these were not easily translated into Italian. For example, the stamps provided for the island called Calymnos in English were actually overprinted "Calimno" by the Italians, even though the cancel reads "Kalimno." Later versions are even spelled "Kalymno" and "Calino." For purposes of the exhibit, which is shown alphabetically by island in the first section, the spelling that has been adopted is that used on the initial overprints on the stamps.

THE ITALIANS IN THE AEGEAN ISLANDS 1912 - 1943 -- Plan of Exhibit

This exhibit is designed as a marcophily study. After starting with a few examples of mail from the beginning of the occupation, postmarks on the covers in the exhibit are presented alphabetically by island (spelled as on the the original overprints) and then chronologically, followed by general issues for the colony used on Rhodes:

Calimno	Leros	Rodi
Caso	Lipso	Scarpanto
Castelrosso	Niseros	Simi
Cos	Patmos	Stampalia
Karki	Piscopi	General Issues



An early picture postcard with scenes of Stampalia mailed from that island to Libya in August 1912. It received Greek and Italian military cachets on Stampalia but was sent on to Kalimno for processing, where it was postmarked on 17 August.

AEGEAN ISLANDS
Military Mail

Posta Militare/6a. Divisione
3 November 1912

R. Nave San Giorgio
14 March 1913

*Altra gentilissima
Signora Emma, et
l'amore fraterno
Bertolini e al buon
Padre perone sentiti
ringraziamenti,
auguro a cordia
saluti. A lei al buon
dini solo amici*

Strozzini

Photogr. Stamati Vasilili - Rhodes
Imprim. E. Ragozino - Naples (Italia). 63320

12

3-NOV 12

COMANDO DELLA DIVISIONE SPECIALE

Cap. Stan. Bertolini

Bertolini Hotel

Napoli

Saluti infiniti

Gravucci

Leros 11-3-913

Spet.le =

Sig.^{na} Teresa Lipu

e famiglia

(Presso la tenuta)

(Arciducato)

Viareggio

14.3.13

NAVE SAN GIORGIO

Cards and letters sent by Army and Navy personnel was free of postage during the initial occupation period. The upper card has the unit cachet of the "Headquarters of the Special Division/Rhodes." Lower card sent from Leros by a sailor on the warship *San Giorgio*.

AEGEAN ISLANDS
First Civil Post Office

Poste Italiane/Rodi (Egeo)
11 June 1912
18 July 1912

Poste Italiane 11/6 1912

*Alm
basio
dell'isola
di Rodi*



*Franchini Vittoria
Via Viminale 58*

Roma

Serie Aegypten. 1303.
Pyramiden mit d
Les Pyramides et
Pyramids with th



The end of Turkish resistance on 16 May 1912 permitted an early transition to civil government. Thus, the first civilian post office in the islands was opened on Rhodes on 8 June using the premises of the former Harbor Branch (Echelle) of the Turkish Post. Initially, unoverprinted Italian stamps were placed on sale, and a circular rubber handstamp was introduced as a cancellation.

AEGEAN ISLANDS
"EGEO" Overprints

Poste Italiane/Rodi (Egeo)
27 November 1912
10 December 1912



Raccomandata



Herrn

Gebrüder Lenz

R. N. 123

RODI-EGEO
POSTE ITALIANE

Leipzig

In September 1912, new metal postmarks with a similar inscription were introduced to replace the rubber ones, which were showing wear.

On 22 September, the first special stamps issued for the Aegean Islands were 25 and 50 centesimi Italian ones overprinted "EGEO." Their purpose was fiscal, not political, reflecting losses of international mail business to the foreign post offices abroad in Rhodes which were pricing their services in devalued Turkish piasters. To meet this challenge, the Italians sold these stamps for 1 and 2 piasters, respectively, but overprinted them so that they could not be sent back to the home country and used for full face value. These stamps were valid in all of the islands.

AEGEAN ISLANDS
"EGEO" Overprints

Poste Ital. Vaglia Risp./Rodi (Egeo)
12 December 1912

Poste Ital. Racc. Ass./Rodi (Egeo)
21 November 1912

RODI (EGEO)
POSTE ITALIANE

R

394



M. no. 1
Signor
Roberto Brighenti
Capita ... Reali

Recommandée



Monsieur MAURICE MENASCHE

Assicurazioni Generali Han



1284

G A L A T A

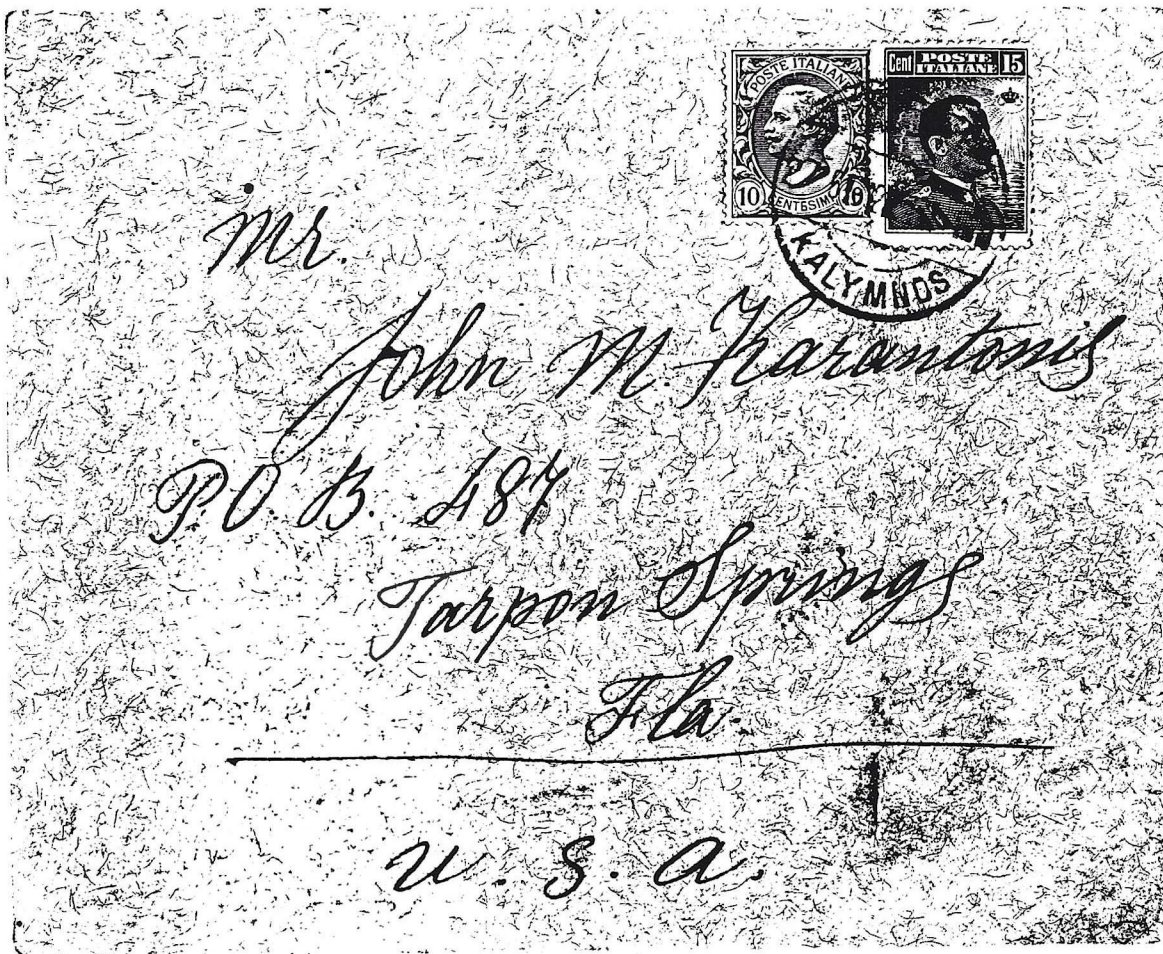
(Constantinople .)

In addition, new metal datestamps were provided for use with special services. The lower one was inscribed for use on registered and insured mail. The upper example was issued for money orders and postal savings, even though used here for registration.

CALIMNO

This island comprises 49 square miles and lies between Cos and Leros. In 1912, the population was about 25,000, second only to Rhodes in numbers and influence. The local inhabitants had a well above-average standard of living, primarily due to highly lucrative sponge fishing in the area. With the arrival of the Italian warships *Pisa* and *San Marco* on 12 May 1912, the Turkish garrison surrendered, and control of the government was asserted by Rear-Admiral Presbitero.

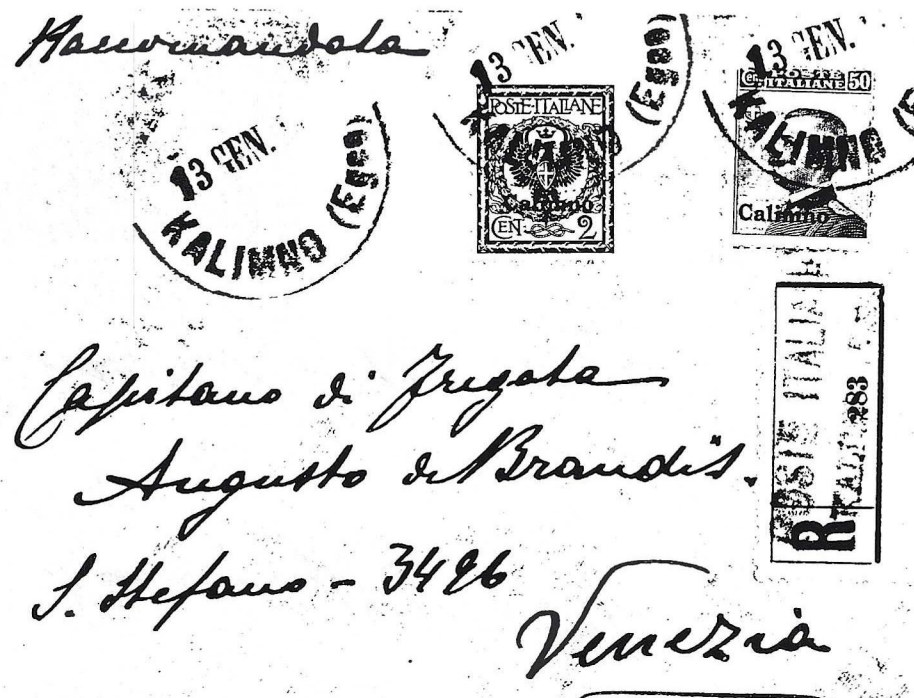
Kalymnos
27 June 1912



Pending arrival of the new Italian cds on 1 July, the old Turkish postmark continued in use but with the Arabic wording in the upper portion of the dial being excised. The above cover was properly franked with 25 centesimi in unoverprinted Italian stamps for an international letter. On the reverse, it bears a transit mark of Piraeus, Greece and a receiving mark in Florida, although the dates are illegible.

CALIMNO
Special Overprints

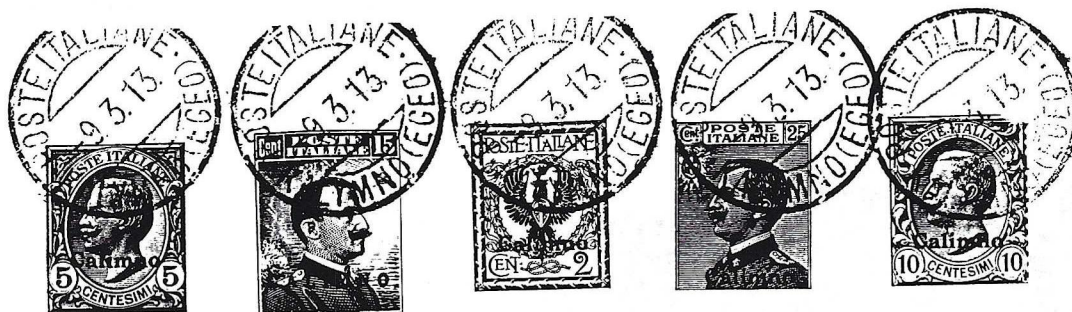
Poste Italiane/Kalimno (Egeo)
13 January 1913



For political propaganda purposes, not to mention philatelic revenues, the Italians decided to issue separate stamps for each of the thirteen islands in the Dodecanese Group. Accordingly, sets of seven values from 2 cent. to 50 cent. depicting King Victor Emmanuel III that were then current in Italy were duly overprinted and placed on sale on 1 December 1912. A circular rubber handstamp was used to cancel the mail until March 1913.

CALIMNO
Special Overprints

Poste Italiane/Kalymno (Egeo)
9 March 1913
4 August 1913



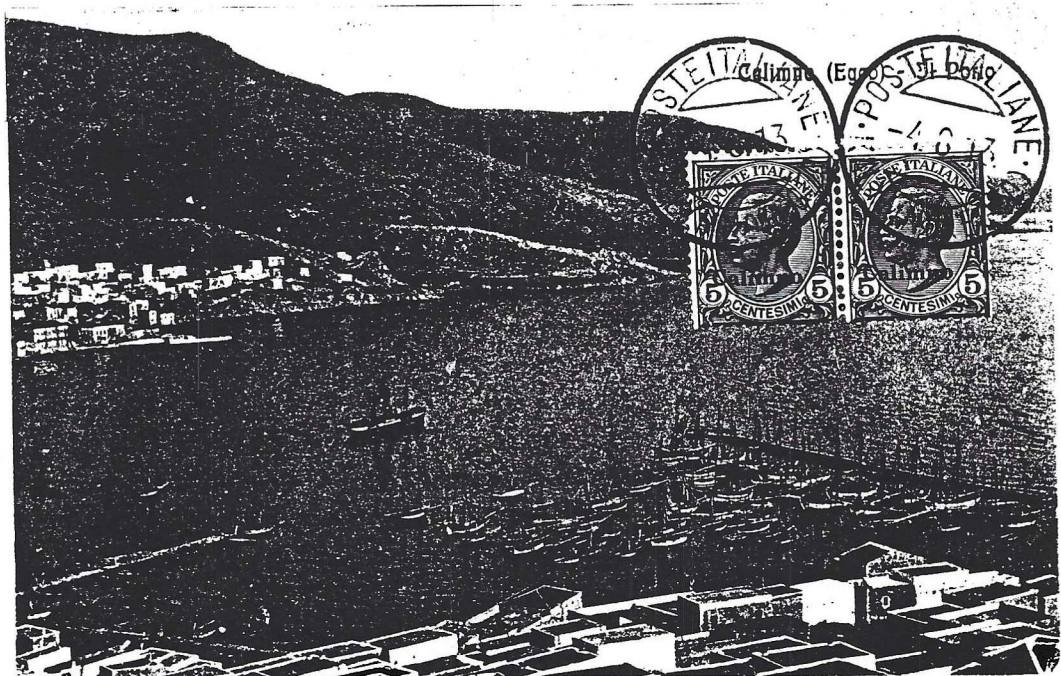
Recommandee



Monsieur Alfred B E R D O Z

MOUDON (Suisse)

R. No. 441



A metal cds was introduced in March 1913 and remained in use into the 1920s. It is shown here used on a philatelic cover to Switzerland and on a picture postcard to Belgium. Note that tourism was a significant activity in the Dodecanese at the time (and remains so today). Thus, picture postcards were printed and sold.

CALIMNO
Special Overprints

Poste Italiane/Kalymno (Egeo)
3 March 1916
27 October 1921



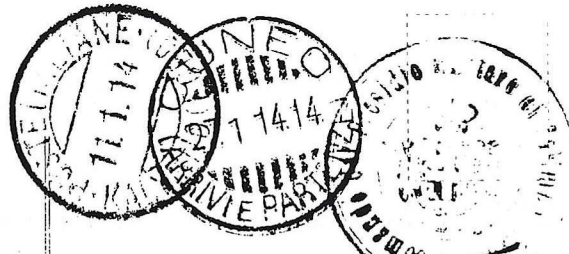
The inland letter rate to Italy was raised from 15 cent. to 20 cent. in 1915. As there were no stamps of this denomination, stocks of the 15 cent. were surcharged "cent. 20" and issued in January 1916. A new 20 cent. value in the original design but printed in orange was issued in June 1917. This is an extremely difficult stamp to find on cover, but a philatelically-inspired one to Switzerland is shown above.

CALIMNO
Military Mail

Poste Italiane/Kalymno (Egeo)
11 January 1914

RR. Poste Italiane/Kalymno (Egeo)
24 June 1918

Saluti fam.
Piero



Signorina Margherita Frasca
Fara Triguera (Cagliari) S.p.2
Frasca

26141 Ediz. Ettore De Luca



Cartolina postale Italiana in franchigia
Corrispondenza del R. Esercito

Indirizzo del mittente da riprodurre, nelle risposte
di persona e in caso di assenza, saluti al
destinatario.
Cognome e Nome
Signor Fabbio es alim.
Rafano

Grado
Reggimento
Arma
Compagnia
Squadron
Batteria
Ripart. speciali
Mitlenk -
Deton. S. 16-88
Genio
Telegrafico
Calimno Egeo

Allegro Signor
Signor Luigi
Acampora Russo
Catania
(Prov. di *Sicilia*)



Military mail continued to be sent free of postage. However, a good deal of searching is required to find appropriate unit cachets for some of the smaller islands.

Note that the lower fieldpost card has a different cancel than those shown heretofore. The wording is similar except for the addition of "RR. (Royal)" at the upper left of the dial. Introduced in 1914 and used into the 1920s, but considered scarce in the Tchilinghirian handbook.

AMMINISTRAZIONE DELLE POSTE E DEI TELEGRAFI D'ITALIA



Amministrazione delle Poste e dei Telegrafi d'Italia
Administration des Postes et des Télégraphes d'Italie

A V V I S O

DI RICEVIMENTO
DE RÉCEPTION

AVIS

DI PAGAMENTO
DE PAYEMENT



di un (a) Rodolfo
d'un 119
iscritto sotto il N. 119 dall'ufficio
enregistré sous le N. 119 au bureau
di Rodi
de 119
il 1925 e indirizzato
le 1925 et adressé
al Sig. Mario
a M. Calimno
a Calimno

di un vaglia postale della somma di Lire
d'un mandat de poste de la somme de Frs.
emesso dall'ufficio di
émis par le bureau de
il 1925 sotto il N.
le 1925 sous le N.
a favore del Sig.
au profit de M.
a
a

Il sottoscritto dichiara che
Le soussigné déclare que (b)

sopra indicato è stato regolarmente
susmentionné à cet égard (c)

il 1925
le 1925
del destinatario 1925
du destinataire 1925
Firme (d)
Signatures

del capo dell'ufficio distributore o pagatore
du chef du bureau distributeur ou payeur

Bollo dell'ufficio
distributore o pagatore



(a) Oggetto raccomandato o di una lettera o di una scatoletta assicurata o di un pacco postale. — (b) L'oggetto raccomandato o di una lettera o la scatoletta assicurata o il pacco postale o il vaglia postale. — (c) Consegnato o pagato. — (d) Questo avviso deve essere firmato dall'interessato, o se i regolamenti del paese di destinazione lo permettono, dal capo dell'ufficio distributore o pagatore; poi essere messo in busta e spedito in raccomandazione col primo corriere all'ufficio d'origine dell'oggetto cui si riferisce.

Unusual usage of an Italian stamp (surcharged 50 cent. on 40 cent.) to pay the fee on an Advice of Receipt form for an intra-colony registered letter mailed from Rodi to Calimno. This form was signed by the recipient and the postal clerk and returned under cover to the originating office on Rodi.

CALIMNO
Unoverprinted Italian Stamps
Rodi Definitives

Ufficio Postale Telegrafico/Calino
28 October 1926

Poste-Calino/Egeo
5 July 1933



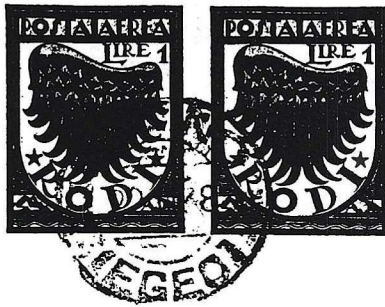
J. BINFORD WALFORD,
3904 CHAMBERLAYNE AVE.,
RICHMOND
U.S.A. VA.

46

A third steel cancel for Calimno (this time with the spelling of the island being an Italianized "Calino," was introduced in 1925 and used until the late 1930s. It is described in the Tchilinghirian handbook as being "very scarce" used on the stamps of Italy. In addition, an unusual datestamp inscribed "Poste-Calino" was also used during the 1930s; it is listed as uncommon.

CALIMNO
Rodi Definitives

Calino/Egeo
22 November 1938
14 May 1941



Via, Ma CALINO(EGEO)
R 3283



Monsieur.

M^{me} Michel. Foundote
~~Angela~~
~~Balena~~
Anbar
Cameroun
Francais

Mod. 24 R.

PAR AVION
Per via aerea



Via
aerea



Herr



Nicos Coulianos

Box 422

(J U E D E)

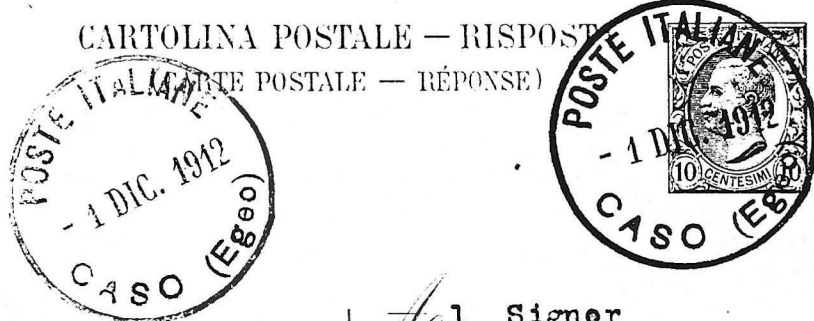
POSTEROR
=====

There were two types of cancels inscribed Calino/Egeo. The first had geometric figures at the sides, while the second had stars in the same locations. The former was used from about 1925 until the late 1930s; the latter from 1940 to 1943. These postmarks are relatively common, but the destinations of the covers shown -- to the Cameroons and Sweden -- are distinctly uncommon.

CASO

This island comprises 27 square miles and lies at the southern end of the Dodecanese, about five miles to the east of Scarpanto. There was little economic activity on the island, and the population did not exceed 1,750 in 1912. With the arrival of the warships *Regina Elena* and *Alpino* on 13 May 1912, the Turkish authorities surrendered, and control of the government was assumed by the Italians.

Poste Italiane/Caso (Egeo)
1 December 1912
18 January 1913



CARTOLINA POSTALE — RISPOSTA
(POSTE POSTALE — RÉPONSE)

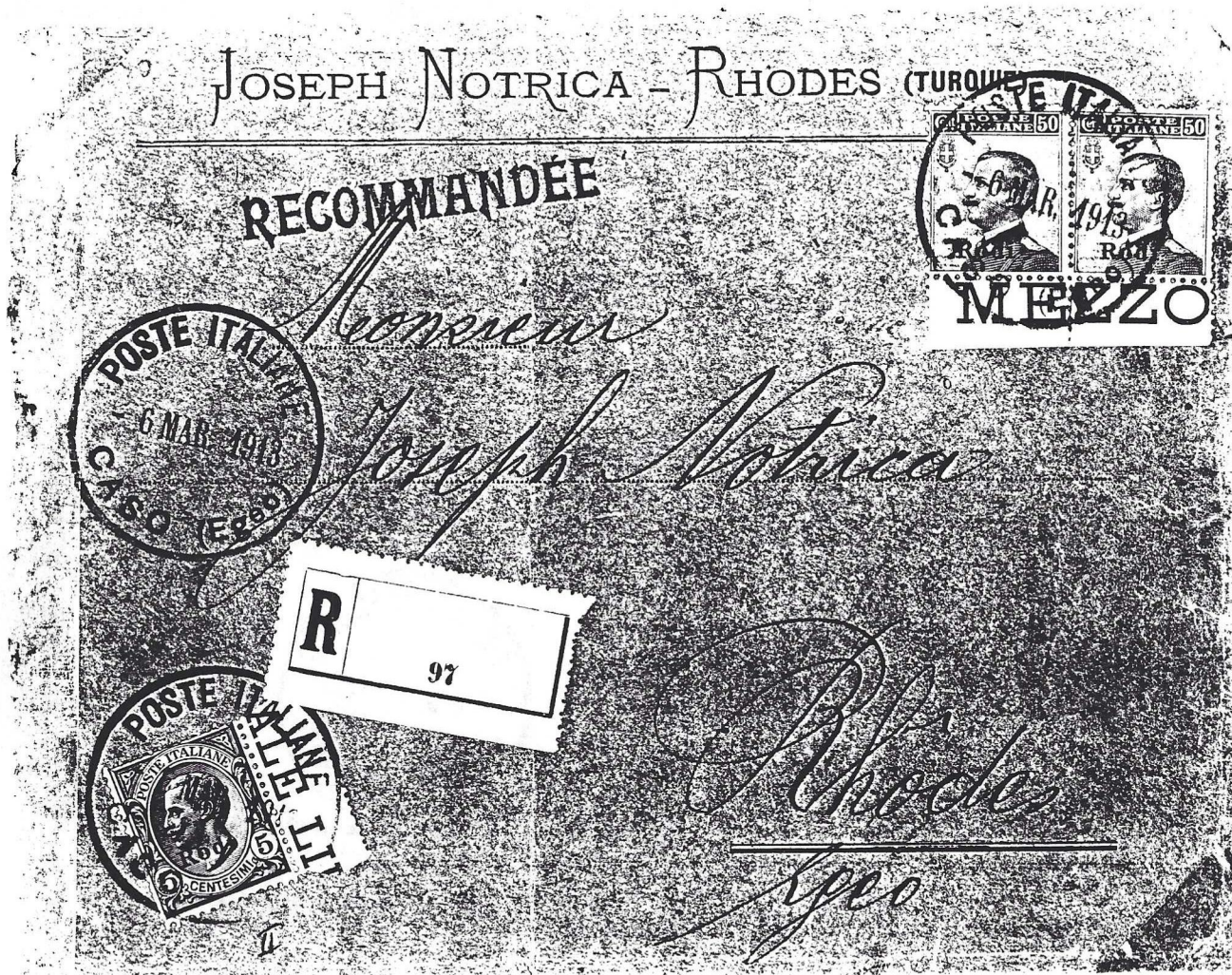
1 Signor
W. THON.
BASILEA. (Suisse)
Recommandata. 389



Capitano di fregata
Augusto di Brandis
S. Stefano - 3496

Venezia

The Italians reportedly opened the post office on Caso on 21 July 1912 and used a rubber datestamp to cancel mail. Because of the lack of business activity, commercial covers are hardly ever seen. Thus, the examples shown here are an Italian reply card (not used for that purpose but with a long message on the reverse) sent to Switzerland and a registered cover sent to the Frigate Captain in Venice with the new overprinted stamps that had been placed on sale on 1 December 1912.



This cover was sent from Caso although franked with three Italian stamps overprinted "Rodi." This is an unusual combination not seen previously by exhibitor. Backstamped for receipt in Rhodes on 29 March, three weeks later.