

IX

The Italian Post Office

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Introduction

The Italian postal service with Egypt has been the subject of several accounts: an initial study by Dr William Byam¹ for the Egypt Study Circle, abstracts from the Annual Italian Postal Reports by Charles Fox², reviews by Jean Boulad d'Humières³ and by Peter Smith⁴, a comprehensive treatment with historical background and a pricing scale for covers and stamps by Tchilinghirian and Bernardelli⁵, a more recent and detailed treatise in Italian⁶, and a review in the context of all Italian offices abroad⁷. Nevertheless, some discrepancies have lingered and some details can be refined.

After the Ottoman Sultan gave permission for Italian steamship service to Egypt, the opening of an Italian post office in Alexandria was a logical consequence. Although the Sultan was reluctant to grant to Italy the concession to open post offices in Turkey itself (e.g., in Constantinople), he was less reluctant in the case of Egypt, which had a somewhat ambiguous status as a vassal state with its own ruler. The Adriatico-Orientale steamship company began service between Ancona and Alexandria via Corfu, and an Italian post office was opened at the company's offices on March 1st 1863. Sailings were four times a month, leaving Alexandria on the 5th, 12th, 20th, and 29th. The office was placed in the charge of Giacomo Muzzi, Director of the Posta Europea, the Italian Consul having demurred⁷.

Tchilinghirian and Bernardelli postulated co-operation between Italy and France even before the opening of the Italian post office, in order to explain the existence of covers from the month before the official opening date, franked with Italian stamps, cancelled with an Italian "Piroscafi . . ." obliterator, but bearing the circular date-stamp of the French post office alongside. However, this obliterator is now understood to have been applied in Messina to letters received from French ships⁸. After the formal opening, the Italian mails were carried by French as well as Italian ships; the former gave service to Italy three times a month (9th, 19th, 29th) via Messina (Sicily) or Naples.

In 1864 a stop at Brindisi was added and Corfu was dropped. After May 1st 1866 Ancona was dropped as the terminus in favor of Brindisi. The trip took three days (by French ship, four days). From October 1st 1869 service was extended to Venice.

The Italian mails were also carried at times by the Lloyd Austriaco and by the British P&O Line, even from 1863, but more often after 1872 when P&O began service to Venice via Brindisi. In 1877 the mail contract was transferred to the Rubattino Company

which, in 1881, merged with I. & V. Florio & Co. to form Navigazione Generale. The only philatelic consequence of these events seems to be the addition of a line to Genoa in 1877.

When the Italian post office was opened stamps were provided from the start and there was no pre-stamp period. However, prepayment was not obligatory, and stampless covers therefore exist.

After the formation of the UPU, business at the Italian post office began a gentle decline and the office was finally closed on February 1st 1884 (or March 31st²⁶), although Italian steamships continued to serve Egypt.

Postal Markings Used at Alexandria

For consistency, the postmarks of the Italian office in Egypt are classified and designated in the same way as those of the other foreign post offices in this book, but one should be aware that two other classification methods have been published (Byam, Tchilinghirian and Bernardelli).



Fig. 1 Date-stamps CD-1 and CD-2.

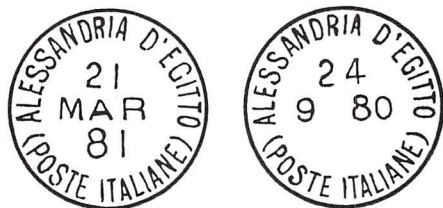


Fig. 2 Date-stamps CD-3 and CD-4.

Date-stamps in a new style, CD-3 and CD-4 (Fig. 2), were introduced in 1880, and CD-2 appears to have been taken completely out of use. The earliest date I have recorded for CD-3 is 4 SET 80, and for CD-4, 20 LUG 80. They continued in concurrent use until the Italian office was closed. They are markedly scarcer than CD-2.

Along with CD-1, framed steamship-line handstamps (Type FS-) were also provided. Although a plausible interpretation is that two devices were provided, each inscribed PIROSCAFI / POSTALI, and having on a third line a place for a changeable adjective, AUSTRIACI, FRANCESI, INGLESI, or ITALIANI, postal records show that no AUSTRIACI slug was provided to the Alexandria office. Therefore, FS-2*au* must have been applied to letters on arrival at an Italian port⁸. There were two sizes, 24x12mm (FS-1), and 27.5x16.5mm (FS-2) (Fig. 3). FS-1 is known with ITALIANI (FS-1*it*) or INGLESI (FS-2*in*, very rare, seen 12 MAG 63 in blue); and FS-2 is known with FRANCESI (FS-2*fr*), INGLESI (FS-2*in*), ITALIANI (FS-2*it*), or AUSTRIACI (FS-2*au*), but the existence of other combinations should not be ruled out. As an exception, the third line may be empty, or

At the beginning, a circular date-stamp, CD-1, was provided (Fig. 1). It was inscribed ALESSANDRIA D'EGITTO to distinguish it from Alexandria in Italy, an industrial city between Genoa and Turin. In addition to the date in three lines, it bore a fourth line consisting of a number (hour) and M (*mattina*) or S (*sera*), for morning or afternoon, respectively. The fourth line was dropped in mid-June 1863, giving rise to CD-2. An adventitious variant of CD-2 has the year ciphers replaced by blank slugs. These date-stamps were struck in blue until October 1863, and thereafter CD-2 was struck in black (bluish black in mid-1865). It remained in use until the end of 1879 (latest seen, 7 OTT 79).

the name may be inverted (FS-1*it*). The most commonly seen is FS-1*it*, followed by FS-2*fr*. These markings were struck in blue from March until about October 1863, and thereafter in black (bluish black in mid-1865). Exceptionally, FS-2*au* has been recorded in red in 1863, and FS-2*it* in red on 17 Oct. 1863 (the latter is on a letter from Livorno, and it may therefore not have been applied at Alexandria).

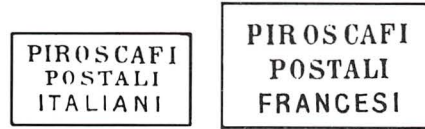


Fig. 3 Framed steamship-line handstamps.

FS-2*fr* is known in black on a cover dated 10 February 1863, bearing the date-stamp of the French post office (Byam collection); this is the earliest date known for any FS handstamp. It has been recorded used up to 1 March 1870, and FS-1*it* up to 10 July 1869. The only known example of FS-2*au* and the few known examples of FS-2*in* are on covers dated in 1863. On loose stamps they cannot be dated, and cannot even be associated with Egypt with certainty, for similar handstamps were in use at other Italian port post offices. However, when they are struck in blue (on stamps of Sardinia), the association with Egypt is fairly definite.

Three obliterators, each inscribed with the numerals 234, were successively sent to Egypt (Fig. 4). The first, OB-1, was in the form of a chamfered rectangle of angular dots, and has been seen as early as 5 May 1866. It continued in use until OB-2 was introduced (latest date seen for OB-1, 11 May 1877; earliest recorded for OB-2, 2 August 1878). OB-2 and OB-3 differed from OB-1 in having the numerals inside a circular array of bars (Fig. 4). They differed from each other in the form of the numerals; in OB-2, the top of the 3 and the bottom of the 2 are curved, whereas in OB-3 they are straight. The latest date I have seen for OB-2 is 26 May 1882, and the earliest for OB-3, 5 May 1883. The obliterators are known only in black. OB-1 is common; OB-2 is scarce, and OB-3, which had a very short life, is moderately rare. In addition, an anomalous obliterator has been seen cancelling a 60c. stamp on a cover dated 13 GEN 65 to Florence via Ancona. No other example has been reported and it appears to be a weakly struck FS obliterator overstruck EGITTO. Its status must be regarded as uncertain.

The date-stamps CD-1 and CD-2 were in concurrent use with FS-1 and FS-2. Usually, FS-1 or FS-2 was used to cancel the stamps, and CD-1 or CD-2 was applied alongside. However, the reverse arrangement exists on a substantial proportion of the early covers, and has been seen as late as 3 April 1866. After late 1863 the date-stamp was very rarely used as a canceller. FS-1 and FS-2 were used to cancel stamps until OB-1 came into use, but their use for information, struck alongside, continued until early 1870 (overwhelmingly FS-1*it*) (Tchilinghirian and Bernardelli report use until "ca. 1873").

One can see that CD-2 was used first in conjunction with FS-1 and FS-2, and then, mostly, with OB-1. However, in 1878 and 1879 it is found used with OB-2. Date-stamps



Fig. 4 Obliterators OB-1, OB-2, and OB-3.

CD-3 and CD-4 were used in conjunction with OB-2 and OB-3. The latter, which is a rarity on cover, is found fairly often on loose stamps, because it was used posthumously to cancel remainders of ESTERO stamps that had been returned to Italy.

A special date-stamp, RD-1, was used on registered letters; it carries the word CONSEGNE in an appendage at the bottom (Fig. 5). It was struck only on the cover, in black, and is not known cancelling stamps. It has been recorded with dates from 2 April 1870 to 2 August 1878 but may have been in use much earlier; the scarcity of registered covers hinders accurate dating. It was generally accompanied by R-1, which is very similar to the handstamps used by the Egyptian postal service. For use on money orders, and receipts for insured mail, a date-stamp similar to RD-1 but inscribed VAGLIA was provided (V-1). This is the rarest of the date-stamps, and has been seen on loose stamps, a receipt for posting an article of value, and on a money order receipt, from 1865 to 1878, but it may not exist on cover. In its last years, the Italian P. O. used a red registration label inscribed "Alessandria d'Egitto".



Fig. 5 Handstamps RD-1, R-1, and V-1.



Fig. 6 Handstamps P-1 and T-1.

Covers requiring postage due are rare. Those sent unfranked generally do not bear a postage due handstamp; a manuscript rate marking apparently sufficed. Short-paid letters were indicated with a handstamp, T-1 (Fig. 6). Examples of T-1 have been seen on covers dated from 1863 to 1871, but it was probably in use much longer.

A handstamp VIA BRINDISI in a frame, found on covers sent by Credit Lyonnais in the 1870s, is not a postal marking. It is struck in the same ink as the sender's cachet, dull blue, whereas the Italian markings are black.

Forgeries

All three obliterators as well as CD-2 have been forged. One forgery of CD-2 is so crude that it should deceive no one with the slightest knowledge; it was apparently a rubber stamp, with letters that are too large, a lack of serifs in EGITTO, and an incorrect spelling, POSTE D'ITALIA (Fig. 7). In contrast, the other forgery is extremely dangerous, and was made with a metal handstamp (Fig. 7). It differs from the genuine only in minute details, especially in the shape and position of the D. It is mostly found on the postage due stamps, most of which are cheap in unused state, making ready material for the forger. The first line of defense is determination that the stamp itself is one that was current at the time; the 20c., for example, was not issued until after the Alexandria office was



Fig. 7 Forged date-stamps, with an enlarged genuine CD-2 for comparison.

Forgery

Genuine

closed. Similarly, the 60c. with brown numerals instead of magenta was not used at Alexandria. This forgery has been seen on an ordinary stamp of the 1863 issue of Italy, but not on any ESTERO stamp, nor on a cover.

There are two forgeries of OB-1, one crudely rubber-stamped, and one more dangerous (Fig. 8). The first usually has a slightly greyish impression; the numerals are much too tall (by 2mm), and of different appearance. This forgery is sometimes accompanied by the crude forgery of CD-2. In the second forgery, the dots are smaller, and the 2 and 3 are distinctly wider, and a vertical line along the left side of the 3 touches the point of the middle angle (on the genuine, the angle does not project so far to the left). There are also differences in the shape of the balls that form the upper tip of the 2 and the lower tip of the 3.

The forgeries of OB-2 and OB-3 are struck from metal devices (Fig. 9). That of OB-2 shows less pronounced shading of the numerals (i.e., the vertical parts are not appreciably thickened); there are small differences in the shape of the numerals, especially in the ball of the 2. It has so far been seen only on the unissued L.2 of the 1881 ESTERO series, but may exist on other values. The forgery of OB-3 is not so well done; the bars are thinner, and the numerals are narrower and taller (especially the 3).



Fig. 8 Forgeries of OB-1.

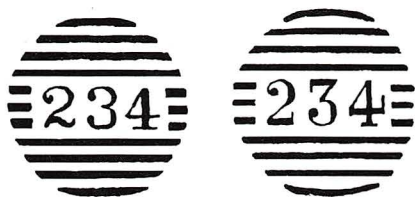


Fig. 9 Forgeries of OB-2 and OB-3.

Stamps and Stationery

The late printings of the 1855–61 typographed, embossed, imperforate stamps of Sardinia, 10c., 20c., 40c., and 80c., were supplied to Alexandria (the perforated versions of 1862 were not). If off cover, they may be identified by CD-1 or CD-2 as a cancellation, or by one of the FS handstamps struck in the characteristic blue of Alexandria. The 15c. blue of 1863 in the Sardinian design has not been recorded used at Alexandria, but the imperforate 15c. of the Kingdom of Italy (Feb. 1863) was available, and can be recognized in the same way. An example exists adventitiously cancelled with the French 5105 obliterator of Suez, possibly from a letter received from an Italian ship after the opening of the Suez Canal.

The 1863 perforated issue of the Kingdom of Italy, 1c., 5c., 10c. buff, 15c., 30c., 40c., 60c., and L.2, in both the London and the Turin printings, was used at Alexandria from 1863 to 1874. For the first three years, they were cancelled with an FS handstamp (usually FS-1*it*) in black; when so cancelled, they cannot with certainty be assigned to Alexandria. From 1866 they were cancelled with OB-1. The 40c. and 60c. are most commonly encountered; the other values are quite scarce, and the 1c. is rare. The 20c. on 15c. provisional of 1865 and the succeeding 20c. blue definitive of 1867 were also used at Alexandria; the former is very scarce, and the latter moderately so. The 2c. of 1865 was also used at Alexandria; it is rare.

The ESTERO overprinted stamps of 1874 superseded the stamps of Italy at Alexandria. Although all values, from 1c. to L.2, are known with Alexandria cancellations, those other than the 30c., 40c., and 60c. are scarce to rare. The usual cancellation is OB-1, much less commonly OB-2. Cancellation by CD-2 is known but is exceptional, and by V-1 is rare.

The 1881 ESTERO issue in new design (King Umberto), consisting of 5c., 10c., 20c., 25c., and 50c., was sent to Alexandria, but examples used there are scarce at best; the 20c. is the most easily found. These stamps were cancelled with OB-2 or OB-3; the latter was also used to cancel remainders, and cannot be certified as genuine use unless it is on cover. The L.2 of this issue was not put in use, but it can be found cancelled to order with OB-3 as well as with forged cancellations.

The 10c. postage due stamp of 1869 and most of the values of the 1870 issue of postage due stamps are known with Alexandria cancellations, CD-2 usually, CD-3 or CD-4 less commonly. The middle values, 30c., 40c., 60c., are most easily found, and the values below 5c. were probably not used in Alexandria. The lira values are rare, and may have been used only for internal accounting. Postage due stamps were sometimes pressed into use for fiscal purposes at the Consulate. One should beware of forged CD-2 cancellations on loose stamps. Any cover with Italian postage due stamps used at Alexandria is rare.

The Italian postal stationery used at Alexandria consists only of 10c. postal cards insofar as record goes. Those of the 1874, 1878, 1879, and 1881 issues are known (Fig. 10), as well as the 10c. Official postal card of 1875. All are very scarce to rare.

Arrival and Sea-Post Handstamps

The use of handstamps of the FS type at Italian ports has been mentioned. In addition, a straight-line handstamp reading DA ALESSANDRIA D'EGITTO was used from February, 1873, by the Susa-Torino Traveling Post Office on covers arriving by British ship; upon opening of the Italian post office at Alexandria the handstamp was turned over to Ancona for cancelling stamps that had not been cancelled at Alexandria (Fig. 11). Another arrival marking, applied at Trieste, is a curious anachronism: the handstamp used by the Austrian Post, VAPORE / D'ALESSANDRIA (Chapter VII). A three-line cancellation seen rarely on Egyptian stamps (1879), more often on covers from France to Genoa, reads PIROSCAFI / POSTALI / FRANCESI, (Fig. 11), and is attributed to Genoa⁹. Several Egyptian stamps and at least two covers, all of the Fourth Issue (one cover dated 1890), are known with a cancellation in cursive letters reading "Piroscafi postali / Inglesi" (Fig. 11), probably applied at Venice (Brindisi or Trieste?) to letters posted on board a British ship. Another handstamp, similar but in italics, reads "Piroscafi Postali / dall'Egitto"; it has been seen on an Italian postal card written on board a ship touching at



Fig. 10 A selection of postal cards used in Egypt (the bottom one is ship mail, cancelled with a retta, after closure of the Italian Post Office in Alexandria).

Brindisi in 1887, and addressed to Suez, as well as on loose Egyptian stamps. These postmarks are very scarce to rare; other types may exist. The circular date-stamp of NAPOLI / MOLO exists on Egyptian stamps; although it may indicate paquebot use, an example on a 1911 postcard has no such indication.

DA ALESSANDRIA D' EGITTO

*Piroscafi postali
Inglese*

**PIROSCAFI
POSTALI
FRANCESI**

Fig. 11 Italian arrival markings.

be described. One type is a double-ring circular date-stamp having lunettes containing bars above and below the date band, inscribed PIROSCAFO POSTALE ITALIANO around the bottom, and the name of a ship around the top. It is known struck in violet on the *Bosforo* in November 1902, on the *Balduino* in August 1908, on the *Singapore* in 1900, and is reported from the "S. S. Enna" (Vienna?). Another double-ring type is inscribed more briefly PIROSCAFO POSTALE and ship name; it has been seen from the *Catania* on a 1915 postcard.

Seapost cancellations became more common after World War I, owing to expansion of Italian influence. A double-ring type similar to that described for the *Bosforo*, but without bars in the lunettes, is known for the *Esperia*, *Milano*, and *Ausonia*; it is found on Egyptian stamps of the 1920s and 1930s. The *Marco Polo* used two types of date-stamp, each a double ring inscribed PIROSCAFO POSTALE * MARCO POLO around the circumference; one of them contains lunettes of bars, the other does not (seen in 1930s). Ships of the Lloyd Triestino, successor to the Lloyd Austriaco, used date-stamps inscribed with the company name: PFO HELOUAN / LLOYD TRIESTINO. *Helouan* is the commonest, but *Vienna*, *Gange*, *Palestina*, *Pilsna*, *Tevere*, *Victoria*, *Nettuno*, *Eritrea*, *Città di Bari*, and *Cartago* have been seen (1920s and 1930s)¹⁰. A much different type is a triple oval, with LLOYD TRIESTINO between the inner and middle ovals across the top, and VIENNA across the bottom, struck in violet. The only example I have seen is on a cover franked with an Italian L.1.25 stamp (LT perfin) addressed to Alexandria in 1928. Its connection with Egypt derives from an additional cancellation, VAPORE / D'ALESSANDRIA in black. It has a backstamp of Trieste, and was apparently posted on board a ship coming from Alexandria.

Seapost cancellations are scarce but by no means rare in the period between the two World Wars, but do not appear afterwards. Examples before World War I are very scarce.

In the Red Sea, Italian ships serving the possessions in Eritrea and Somalia, which were acquired from Egypt in 1885, carried post offices in the nineteenth (and early twentieth?) century. The one whose postmarks are most often seen, MASSAUA-ADEN, has nothing directly to do with Egypt, but there are two considerably rarer ones, inscribed

In a different category are cancellations applied aboard Italian ships that carried a maritime post office. The ship postmarks of Italian steamers operating in the Mediterranean did not come into use until the Alexandria office was closed, but the date-stamps of many of them are known on Egyptian stamps from letters mailed on board (or at dockside). The subject of Italian steamship postmarks is large and complex, and it is not feasible to treat it comprehensively here; only some cancellations seen on Egyptian stamps will

SUEZ / SERVIZIO ITALIANO / DEL MAR ROSSO, or POSTE ITALIANE / MASSAUA-SUEZ (and vice versa) (Fig. 12). The first is known dated in 1890–91, and probably continued until about 1898, when the second type came into use (seen as late as 1900). Both are given the highest rarity rating by Bianchi. They are said^{11a,11b} to have been struck on the front of letters on departure, or on the back on arrival (or in transit); I have only seen use as a backstamp, but they may have been used to cancel stamps of Italy, Eritrea, India, or even perhaps Egypt. After 1900, circular date-stamps bearing the ship's name, in the usual types, replaced the rectangular handstamps. Pilkington^{11b} lists other ships used in the Red Sea service, besides those already mentioned as having cancelled Egyptian stamps.

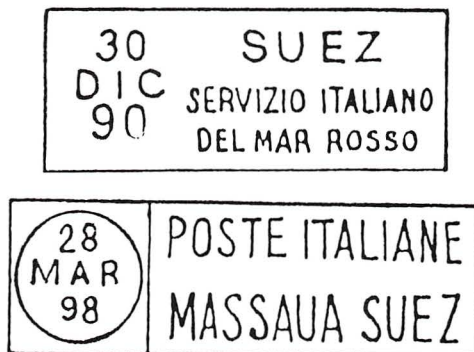


Fig. 12 Handstamps of Italian maritime post offices in the Red Sea.

Postal Rates

The previously published information on rates¹² is not entirely consistent, and some of it is not documented by official archives. It is therefore desirable to compare the rates seen on covers with the published data to eliminate as much of the uncertainty as possible. Since most covers or folded letters are not complete with contents, thus weighing them does not disclose their original weight, a special problem arises with weight stages because rates are often quoted for “single” letters without specifying the maximum allowed weight. Particularly suspect is an assertion repeated by several writers that the initial letter rate was 60c. per 40g. This very large weight is inherently improbable, and must be a typographical error in an 1868 guidebook first quoted by Mazloum¹³. Certainly it should have been 10g. The table on the following page summarizes the most reliable data that I have been able to sift out. It is consistent with the rates given by Zanaria and Serra¹².

The weight was eventually raised to 15g, a change that took place⁷ on July 15th 1870, after the rate was reduced from 60c. to 40c. (January 1st 1869). Confirming evidence is found in the existence of mixed-franking covers (at least three) of the early 1870s on which the Egyptian franking corresponds to a higher weight-stage (i.e., according to 10g increments rather than 15g) than does the Italian. In the time of the Second Issue of Egypt, the single letter weight was 10g, and a letter weighing between 10g and 15g would have required 2pi., whereas it would have needed only 40c. for the Italian postage.

A comment is needed on the distinction between prints and manuscripts. The rate for printed matter included samples and greeting cards without a handwritten message. Manuscripts could be handwritten documents, archives, etc., other than current correspondence. This distinction was made by the Italian postal service, although not all other postal services did so. The category is sometime called “commercial papers”.

Before the formation of the UPU (to which Italy and Egypt were founding

RATES OF THE ITALIAN POST						
letters						
	paid	unpaid	reg. fee	prints, etc.	postcard	samples mnspts.
1 MR 63	60c./10g	80c./10g	60c.	10c./40g		60c./20g
by Fr. ship	80c./7.5g	90c./7.5g	double*	10c./40g		
1 JA 65						
by Fr. ship	60c./7.5g					10c./40g?
1 JA 69	40c./10g	60c./10g	40c.	5c./40g		20c./50g 20c./50g
15 AP 70						5c./50g
15 JY 70	40c./15g	60c./15g				
1 JA 74					10c.	
1 JY 75		80c./15g				
1 JA 76	30c./15g	60c./15g	30c.	UPU7c./50g	UPU 15c.	
30 SE 78	20c./15g	?		2c./40g		2c./50g
1 AP 79	UPU*		25c. ?	UPU 5c./50g	(UPU 10c.)	
	25c./15g					
	? 1880 Switz.	20c.				

* Boulad states that the fee was a fixed amount. L.1.20

* Higher rates were in effect for very distant destinations such as South America and the Far East, but little, if any, mail would have been sent to them from Alexandria.

Avis de réception: 1863 – 20c.

Insurance: 1863 – 70c. + 10c./100L. Money Orders: 40c./20L., then 1.60L./61–100L.

Other rates seen: 70c. to Belgium via Ancona and France, 28 DE 63
80c. to GB, JA and MR 68
90c. To USA via Liverpool, 17 DE 70
L. 1.40 to GB, MY 67

Unexplained rates seen: L. 1 to Verona in 1865
20c. + 10pa. Cairo to Firenze, 31 DE 70
20c. + 10pa. Cairo to Genoa, 15 OC 79
20c. + 5pa. On newspaper to Perugia, 27 FE 70

signatories), rates to countries other than Italy were complex and depended on the destination, the route (i.e., the other countries that provided intermediate handling), and the existence of bilateral postal agreements. It is not feasible to provide information on all the possibilities. Little mail was sent from Egypt through the Italian post office for destinations other than Italy and Switzerland, however. In general, the rate charged was the sum of the rate to Italy and the rate from Italy onwards to the country with which Italy had a postal agreement. For example, an 1863 letter from Alexandria to Krainburg via Trieste and Liubiana is known franked L.1; this sum was made up of 60c. for transport to the Austrian border, and 15 kreuzer (= 37.5c., rounded off to 40c.) for onward carriage in the Austrian postal system.

Currency exchange rates were fairly constant in the nineteenth century, and the rate for Italian and Egyptian currency in 1872 may be accepted as general with only small variations: L.20 = 77pi.5pa., L.1 = 3pi.34pa., 1pi. = 26c., 10pa. = 6.3c., 15pa. = 10c. (Appendix 4). For postal purposes other than international accounting, these were usually rounded off (sometimes upwards, such as 1pi. = 30c.). This is the exchange rate shown in the Italo-Egyptian Postal Treaty¹⁴ which came into effect on January 1st 1873.

The bilateral postal agreement had the effect of allowing mail to be sent from any

point in Egypt to any point in Italy franked only with Egyptian stamps, and in the reverse direction, franked only with Italian stamps. The rates were the simple sum of the Egyptian and Italian rates, converted according to the specified exchange rate. The cost of sending a letter from, say, Cairo to Genoa remained the same, but the need for mixed franking was avoided. Letters put directly into the Italian Post at Alexandria continued to pay the old rates. The treaty rates were 2pi.20pa. per 15g to Italy, 2pi.35pa. to Switzerland. The registration fee was 1pi.20pa., printed matter cost 15pa. per 40g, and manuscripts cost 45pa. per 50g. Letters could be sent unfranked, and were then charged 4pi.30pa. or L.1.20. Insurance was 10c. per L.10.

Until the treaty came into effect, mixed franking was required for mail to or from internal Egypt. At first, this involved the *Posta Europea* handstamped franks; examples are very scarce to rare. In 1865, after the Egyptian Government bought out the *Posta Europea*, mixed franking with the Viceroyal Post, using its circular date-stamps, was required until January 1st 1866, when Egyptian stamps were issued. Owing to the short pre-stamp period of the Viceroyal Post, examples are rare. Thereafter, mixed franking occurred successively with the First, Second, and Third Issues of Egypt. Although all are scarce, they are relatively easily found, almost as easily as French and Egyptian mixed franking, and much more easily than mixed franking with Austrian, British, or Greek stamps. Incoming mixed franking was sometimes accomplished with Egyptian stamps available in Italy; in such cases, the Egyptian stamps were not infrequently cancelled with an Italian numeral obliterator.

It can be seen from the table that unpaid letters were charged 20c. more than prepaid ones (Fig. 13) up until the inception of the UPU; partially paid letters were charged the unpaid rate less the amount of the stamps present. Effective July 1st 1875 the UPU



Fig. 13 A letter from Port Said franked only to Alexandria; charged the unpaid rate, 60c., indicated by manuscript 6 (decimi), in 1872.

regulation was adopted: unpaid letters were charged the double rate (Fig. 14). However, Italy did not immediately adopt the UPU proposal for a uniform letter rate equivalent to ca. 25 centimes. It maintained the old rate of 40c. until January 1st 1876 when it was reduced to 30c. The UPU Congress of 1878 (Paris) changed the way of charging partially paid letters to a simple doubling of the deficiency, instead of the unpaid rate less the amount of postage applied.



Fig. 14 An unfranked letter of Oct. 1875, charged 80c. (double rate) following UPU regulation.

References

Some of the drawings in this chapter are based on previous publications by W.E. Byam, C. Fox, S.D. Tchilinghirian, and R. Bernardelli.

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2. C. Fox, *QC III* (7), 88-9 (whole no. 31, Mar. 1949).
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