

ITALIAN EXPRESS MAIL

This exhibit is the synthesis of a wide collection of the “express mail service” in Italy. The aim is to explain what the express service was in two different moments of the postal history: before and after the institution of the monopolistic service by the Italian Postal Administration.

Since XVII Century, the word “Express” did not mean a service, but a person: it was the abbreviation of Express Courier, a man charged to deliver the mail more quickly as by normal postal services.

There were numerous and different ways to have letters sent as fast as possible:

“Per Staffetta” (by Dispatch Rider), “Cito” or “Subito” (Haste) letters, “Condannata” (Condemned) letters, and others.

Within the Italian boundaries, the express service was widespread all over the Ancient States and its use varied from State to State: very common in *Lombardo-Veneto* Kingdom, less frequent in Duchy of Modena or in Two Sicilies Kingdom.

In the Italian area, the *Lombardo-Veneto*’s Public Postal Administration was the first to set the rules of this service.

Personally, I consider all these matters as the precursors of the express service in Italy; moreover, they build up the first part of this exhibit.

The Italian Royal Mail on **July 21st 1890** set up the regular express service (no more a man, but a postal service), with its own rules and rates, five years after establishing its rules by the U.P.U. Congress in Lisboa, 1885.

Postal bulletins accurately described the organization of the express service as well as its numerous improvements.

At the beginning, the express mail was characterized by lots of elements: the compulsory word “espresso” written on cover, the registration number, the labels, the special stamps, the receipt, the large number of *espresso* postmarks and so on.

The delivery was carried out by the telegraph office.

In **1893** there was the printing of the first of 49 “Mod. 24” labels: 32 bilingual, 8 in French, 8 in Italian and only one in French, Italian and English.

Ten years later, on **June 1st 1903**, was issued the first special stamp for inland: 25 c. red rectangular.

On **September 1st 1908** was issued the first special stamp for abroad: 30 cents.

similar for dimensions to the previous one but red and blue.

The stamps (without considering the commemorative ones or the variety of overprint, which concern the traditional philately) were 13 to pay the inland rate and 8 to pay the abroad rate.

This distinction ends up 1945, from the 22nd 5 liras “Lieutenancy” stamp, to the 35th 300 liras “Winged Horses”.

The last stamps were no longer valid from May 31st 1992, according to the U.P.U. directives.

Rates changed 29 times for inland (from 25 cents to 3,600 liras) and 30 times for abroad (from 30 cents to 3,600 liras).

Express service ended officially **December 31st 2001**, replaced by other services:

Priority Mail, Chronopost, C.A.I. Post and others.

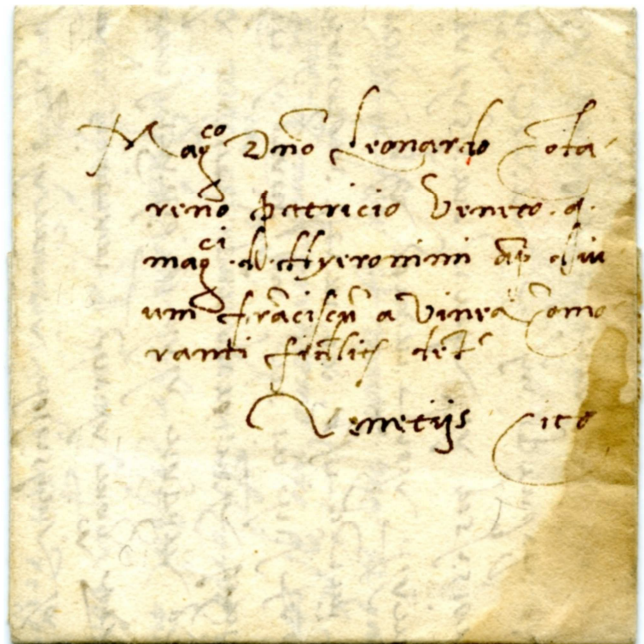
The first part of exhibit display the main precursors of Express, the second part illustrates the express service, showing the main guidelines of the specific rules.

SERENISSIMA VENETIAN REPUBLIC

folded letter sent **October 24th 1519** by the Count Fortunato Venier, Padova, to the Count Leonardo Contarini, Venezia

*Mag[nifi]^{co} D[omi]no Leonardo Contarino patricio veneto qu[ondam] mag[nifi]^{ci} d[omin]o Hyeronimi ap[ud] divum Franciscum a Vinea domoranti sinliciter **detur** Venetijs **Cito***

letter carried by private express courier, probably a servant of the Count. The Latin word **CITO** means **HASTE**, the Latin word **DETUR** means “[this letter] must be given in his hands only”



KINGDOM OF NAPOLI (1806-1815)

Joseph Bonaparte, Joachim Murat

FRENCH POST OFFICE IN NAPLES



folded cover from Napoli dated **October 9th 1807**, to Lyon, stamped
PORT PAYÉ
POSTE FRANÇAISE
À NAPLES
... and "**Par Estafette**" handwritten

It was very important, also for military reasons, to have a good postal service between Naples and Paris. This special service of Express Mail was open also to the private citizens, but only for prepaid 3.50 francs letters. (verso).

EXPRESS

organization of service

handwritten Espresso

At first, it was compulsory by sender to frank with stamps and to write ESPRESSO on front of cover. Express mail was delivered by Telegraph Offices, with a receipt signed by addressee and all other rules of telegraphic service.

Express mail from July 1890 till to 1893

registered first rate cover from Piacenza 29.10.1892, 9 a.m., to Modena 29.10, 7 p.m.

rates:
letter 20 c.
registration 25 c.

very few express franked with King Umberto I first issue stamps



organization of service

Mod.24 labels

the first innovation was the printing of the special labels "Modello 24"; the first of 49 different labels was printed 1893, the last one during 1997, its use was compulsory for letters sent abroad.

1st label Mod. 24, issued 1893, squared 24x62 mm

private postcard from Fauglia 13.7.1896, to Livorno 13.7, 10 a.m.

rates:
postcard 10 c.

