

Malta Zeppelin (LZ-129)

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More information from Mr. Dieter Leder

The Cover endorsed Zeppelin LZ-129 is very interesting, because it is the only Malta cover I have seen so far which was intended to go by LZ-129 Hindenburg. And it is of course the only one I have seen which was intended to go on the 1st North America Flight 1936. And just by my wording you can see, that your cover was not flown.

As per the routing instruction, the cover was intended to go from Rome via Milano to Frankfurt, this was the unusual way of zeppelin mail coming from Italy/Rome. But have a look at the back: There is a Roma April 30 transit marking, there is a Milano May 1 transit, but then the cover left the route to go via the Gotthard railway via Zurich and Basel to Frankfurt – instead the next transit marking is Torino May 2. Instead of going from Milano northwards, the cover left the intended route and went from Milano westwards to Torino.

I have no idea about the further way of the cover, I assume it went via France any perhaps Cherbourg. What I can see on the cover is a NY arrival on May 8. Let me first say that this Europe-USA trip was double in seven days by regular sea ship, so the May 8 arrival is within the time frame of surface transportation.

The zeppelin arrived on May 9 at 6 am, and all the zeppelin mail is postmarked NY May 9. So your cover arrived one day ahead of the zeppelin. In addition, as you have mentioned already, there is no Frankfurt transit marking and of course the red zeppelin flight cachet is also missing. The reason is clear: The cover went by surface. Due to the early dispatch, the cover was faster in NY by surface transportation then waiting for the zeppelin transportation.

Anyhow, there is no reason to be disappointed now. The cover bears high franking which would have covered the zeppelin transportation (I think you are the better Malta rate expert then I am), and the cover bears a clear routing instruction for the zeppelin mail transportation. This means, even if the cover was not flown, it was properly intended for that service. And according to the definition of aerophilately, even a cover only intended for airmail service is worth to be shown, although for any reason the cover did not make the flight. The intention is sufficient that a cover can be added to your airmail collection. And as per my first words, this is the only Malta cover I know which was intended for the LZ-129. It is a great piece!!!!