

# Entires addressed to Sigri. B. Tagliaferro e figli, in Malta

*By Dr A Bonnici KM, MD, MRPSL*

Over the past twenty years, from time to time, several entires, addressed to Messrs Biagio Tagliaferro in Malta, have been appearing on the market, and are usually picked up by Postal History Collectors, especially those interested in Maritime Mail, and Postal Hand Stamps.

So, I have often been asked, especially by our overseas members, who was Biagio Tagliaferro ?

Biagio Tagliaferro was born in 1774 in Genoa. He had come to Malta around 1804 together with his brother Francesco, who had become the longest serving Russian Imperial Consul in Malta, from 1836 till his death in 1878.

In 1812, **Biagio Tagliaferro** (1777-1862) established a private bank in Malta called **B. Tagliaferro e Figli**.

This bank, which he fully owned, had its Offices, at 106 St. John Street, Valletta, on the left hand side of St. John's Cathedral.

In its early days, it dealt mainly in ship handling and grain financing.

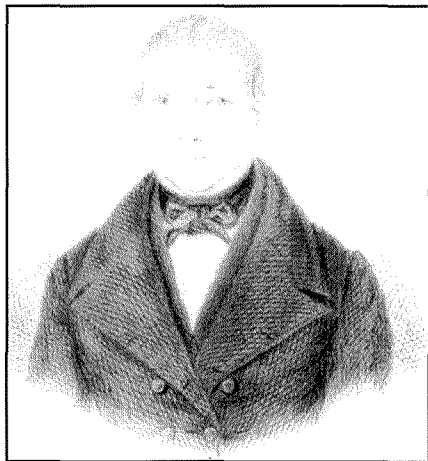
By 1816 he was master of the full rigged ship spelt in Maltese "Strangier" which means "Stranger", owned by John Stuart of Valletta. This ship was acquired by the Tagliaferro family in 1822. It was in this period that they established themselves as the leading grain merchants in the Russian Black Sea grain trade.

By 1822 the Tagliaferro establishment owned five ships that mainly operated between England, Malta, and the Black seaports of Odessa and Taganrog, as well as other Mediterranean ports. (1) J. C. Sammut from Scudo to Sterling.

In 1819 Tagliaferro became a naturalized British Subject and in 1842 he was elected President of the Banco di Malta, while in 1851 he became a member of the Currency Board.(2). Ibid, V. Tortell, Sunday Times Feature, 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2001.

Three years later, he was nominated to form a council to help the Government to run the commercial quays and the administration of lighthouses. (3) Wickman (5) 1983, and Consiglio (14) 1987; 277

By 1850 Tagliaferro became the leading grain merchant in the Mediterranean,



**Biagio Tagliaferro** (1777-1862)

and established Offices mainly in Odessa managed by his son Simeone, and appointed agents in nearly every Mediterranean port. In Malta he was assisted by his sons Girolomo and Giacomo. When Biagio died in 1862 Girolomo took over the management of the firm in Malta.

B. Tagliaferro and Sons was acquired by the National Bank of Malta on Jan I, 1969, and remained functioning, until in 1973, following a run on the National Bank, and its subsidiary the Tagliaferro Bank, Government intervened, and a three man council of administration was appointed, after Parliament passed the National and Tagliaferro Banks (Temporary Provision) Acts 1973.

On the 22nd March 1974 Prime Minister Dom Mintoff announced the setting up of the Bank of Valletta. The new bank which took over the assets and liabilities of the National Bank group started operations on March 25, 1974.

To day I am reviewing correspondence to the Tagliaferro firm, coming from “**CYPRUS - LARNACA. and SCIO, (CHIOS, KHIOS)**”, an island in the Aegean sea, close to Turkey, with special reference to;

## **Hand stamps of The Austrian Lloyd Agency**

### **LARNACA – CYPRUS.**

Entire written in Italian bearing the Julian/Gregorian calendar dates 26/14 June 1855, by Puerto G . Loiso from Cyprus, to Signori Biagio Tagliaferro & Figli, arriving in Malta on the 13th July, as noted by the Tagliaferros on the entire.

On the front it bears a clear **AGENZIA DEL LLOYD AUSTRIACO**, in an oval circle, with **LARNACA** in the middle, in black, together with the sender's hand stamp of **PIERTO G. LOISO. / LIMASSOL DI CIPRO** in bluish green. The entire is crossed with a light red crayon sign meaning it was paid for, and there is a (3) in black ink as postage.

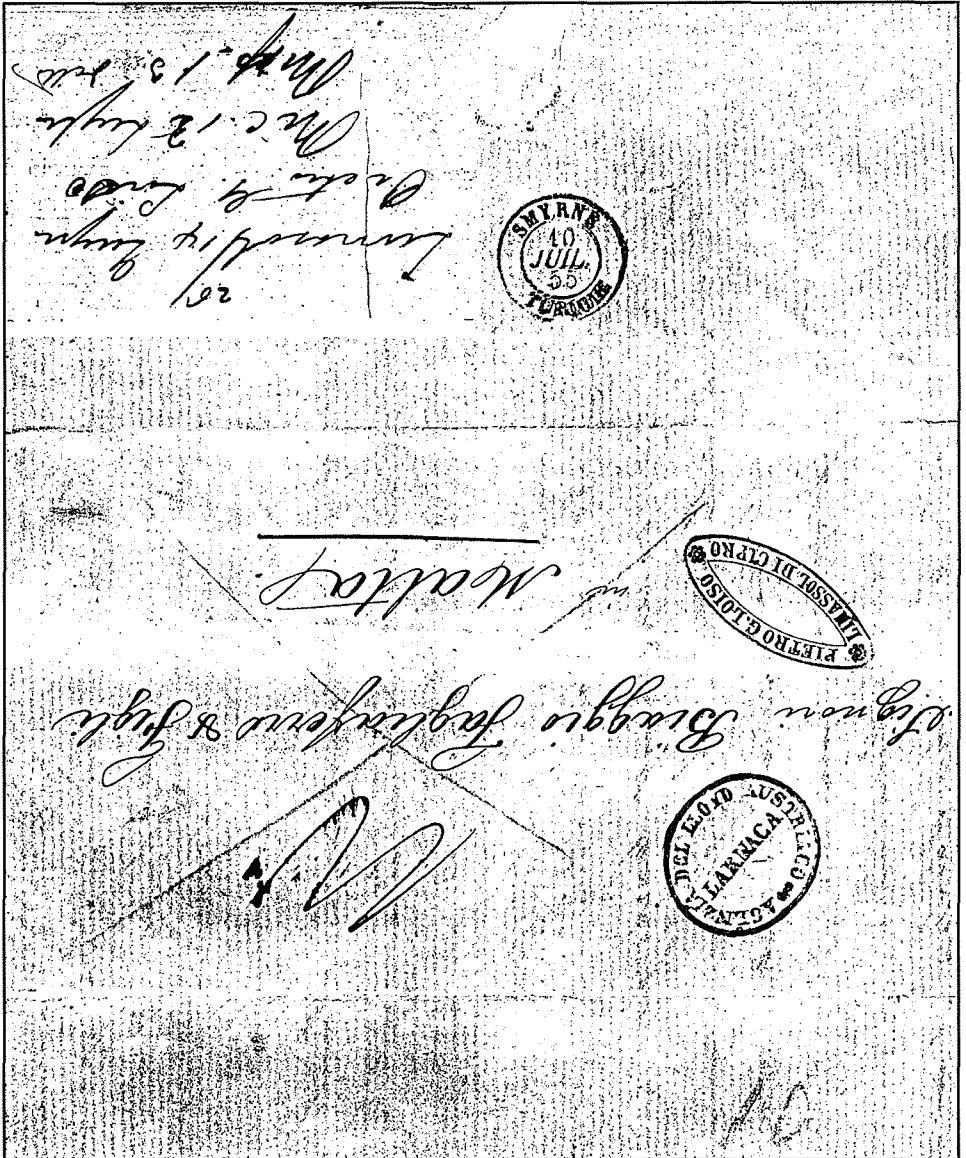
At the back, there is the 10th July, transit hand stamp, of **SMYRNA/ TURKEY.**, and a light red crayon (10), which is probably the final correct postage.

The above is the only entire that I have seen coming from “**LARNACA CYPRUS**” illustrated on Pg.9, and I would appreciate if collectors would let me know if they are aware of any others.

### **SCIO**

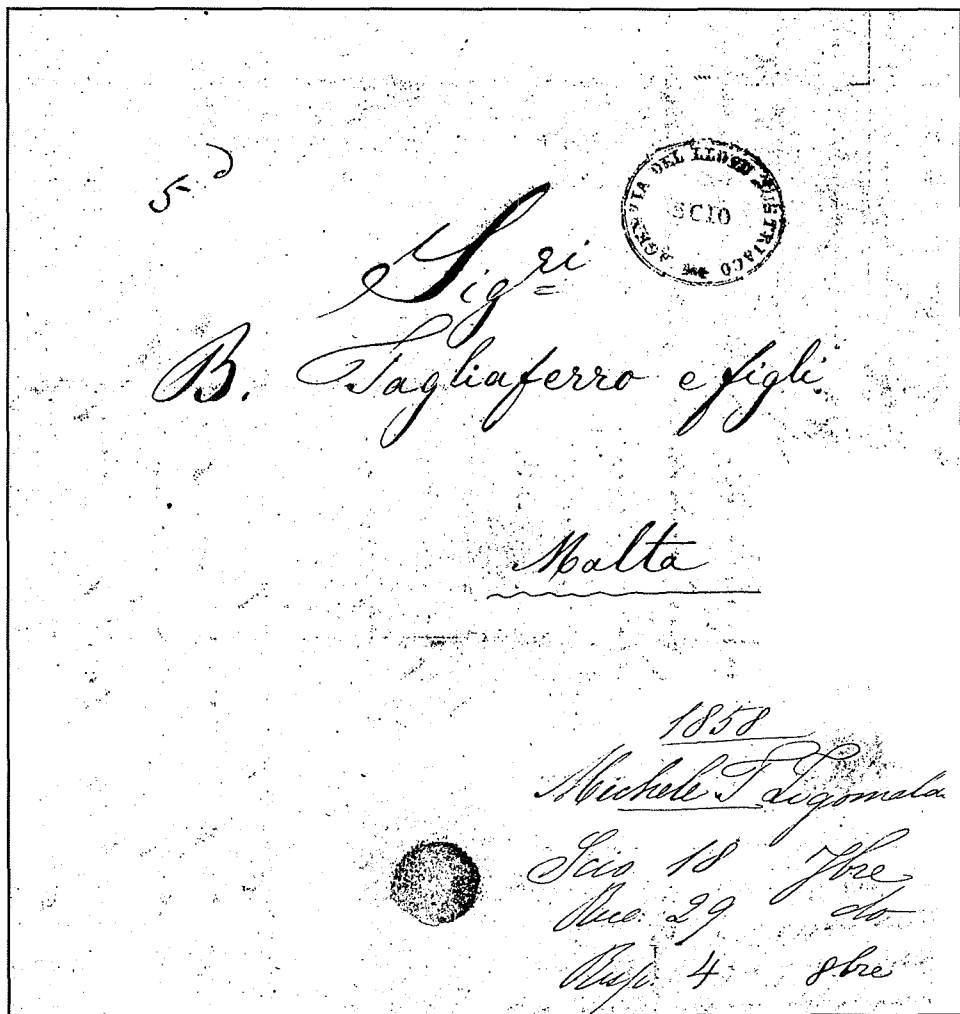
Owing to its favourable location about half way between Syra and Smyrna, the port of SCIO was selected by the Austrian Lloyd as a subsidiary coaling station when this Company inaugurated its Trieste-Constantinople line in 1837. A Shipping Agency of Lloyd was opened at SCIO in that year, and was later recognized by Vienna as an official Austrian Postal Agency.

The Lloyd Agency accepted mail from the earliest years, and cancelled it with the oval marking in black, supplied by the Company. Material of this early period is rare, and mainly limited to the 1850s/60s (earliest date recorded by Mueller is 1853).



Agenzia del Lloyd Austriaco - LARNACA  
26/14 June 1855.

I am reproducing four entires from SCIO the only ones that I have come across, written in French, on the 18 Sept, 2 Oct, 30 Oct and 13 Nov, from Michele F Zigomala, to Sigri B. Tagliaferro e figli, arriving in Malta as recorded by them on the entire, on the 29 Sept, 13 Oct, 9 Nov and 23 Nov, respectively.



*Agenzia del Lloyd Austriaco - SCIO*

Written on the 18<sup>th</sup> Sept, has a clear Lloyds Scio hand stamp, but the " S " of Scio rather faint.

5d in clear manuscript red ink, and no transit or arrival hand stamps, but arrival date indicated as being received on the 29<sup>th</sup> Sept.



Sigri  
B. Tagliaferro e figli

6

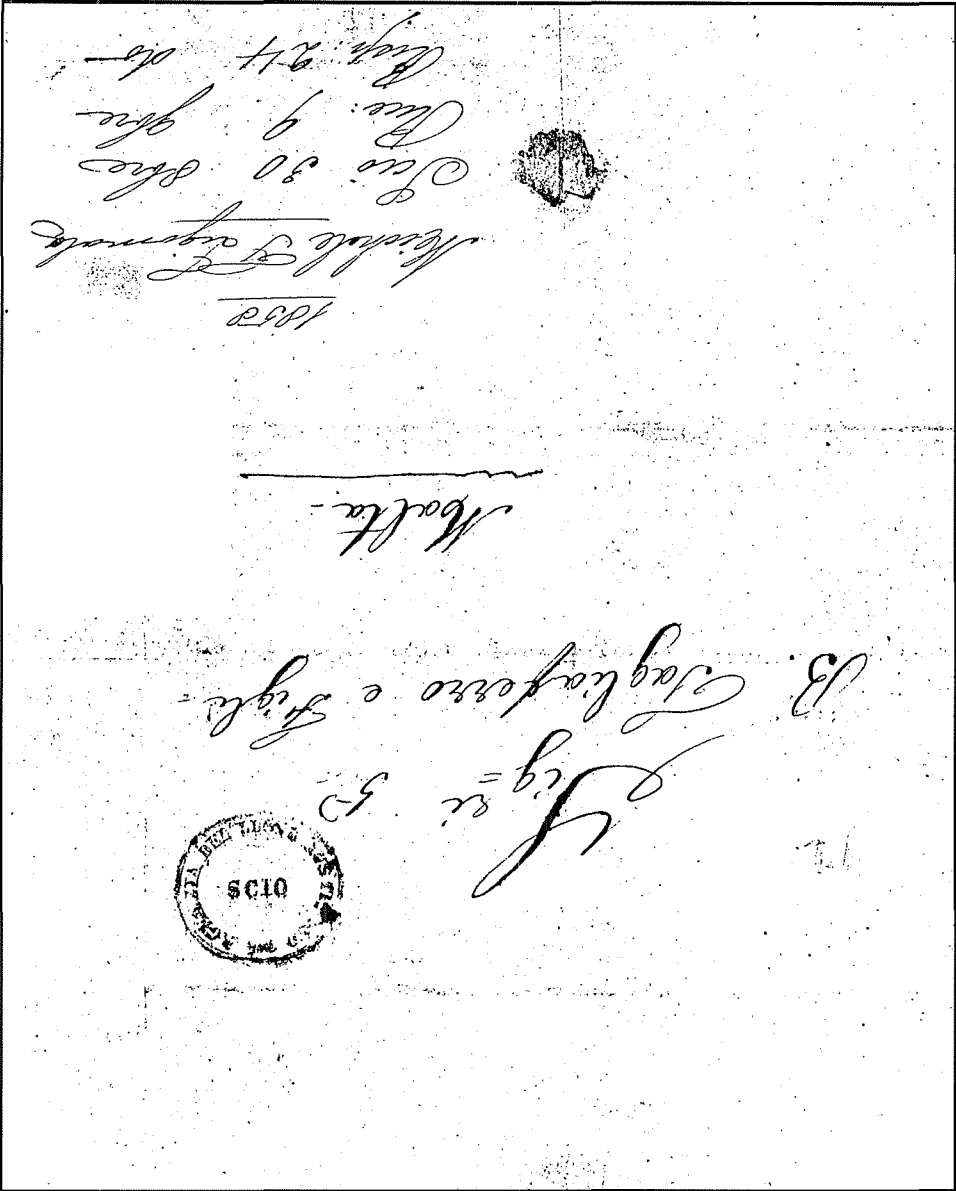
Malta

1858

No. 7 Sigri  
Pis 2 ore  
Puc 13 do  
Pusp 16 do

*Agenzia del Lloyd Austriaco - SCIO*

Written on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct arriving in Malta 13<sup>th</sup> Oct, with rather faint SCIO/Agenzia del Lloyd Austriaco, bearing a postage rate of 6d, whereas the other entires reproduced have a rate of 5d, written in clear manuscript red. I cannot understand the difference in rate, as the number of pages, and size, are all the same.



*Agenzia del Lloyd Austriaco - SCIO*

Written on the 30<sup>th</sup> Oct . It has the best Lloyds Scio hand stamp. It also has the clear 5d manuscript hand stamp in red. There are no transit or arrival hand stamps, but the arrival date is indicated in the letter as the 9<sup>th</sup> Nov.



B. *Figli*  
*Tagliaferrò e Figli*

5d

Malta



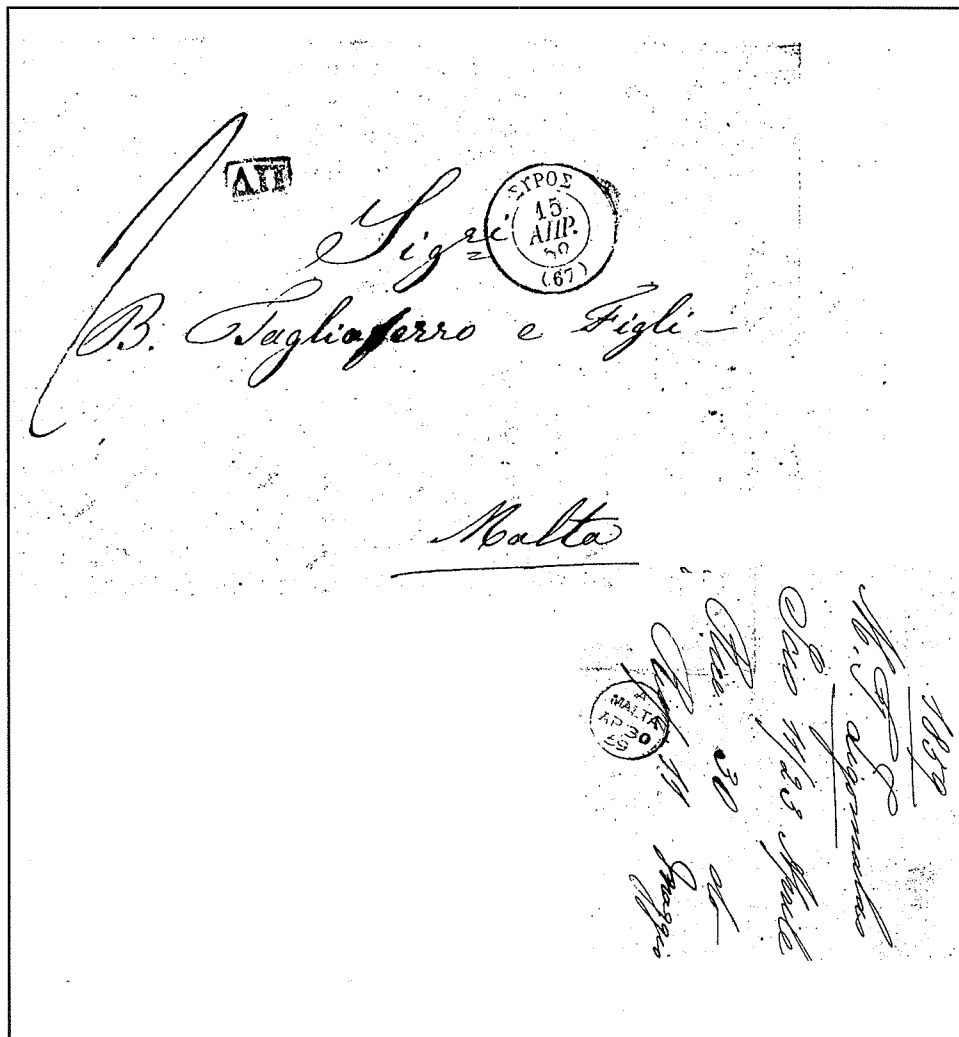
1850  
*Michele T. Sigonella*  
*Scio 13 gbre*  
*Rec. 23 do*  
*Dep. 24 do*

*Agenzia del Lloyd Austriaco - SCIO*

Written on the 13<sup>th</sup> Nov has Scio not visible due to use of the Lloyds hand stamp.

5d in clear manuscript red ink, and no transit or arrival hand stamps, but arrival date is written inside letter as arriving on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov.

The entire of the 30<sup>th</sup> October is the last one, that in this group, bears the Lloyd Scio hand stamp, as correspondence, examined originating from the same source, written in Greek from the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1859 onwards, does not have any more the Lloyds Scio hand stamp, but were sent by Courier to Syros, where they were posted and forwarded through the normal post office, each bearing the local hand stamp as follows;



1. Written on the 11/23 April in Scio, bearing Syros 15 Apr 1859, and Malta 30 Apr hand stamps. Greek Postage Due hand stamp – ΔΙΙ, (90) Lepta, Greek currency, in red on back, for a single sheet.



06

MALTA  
JUN 8 1859

ΔΠ

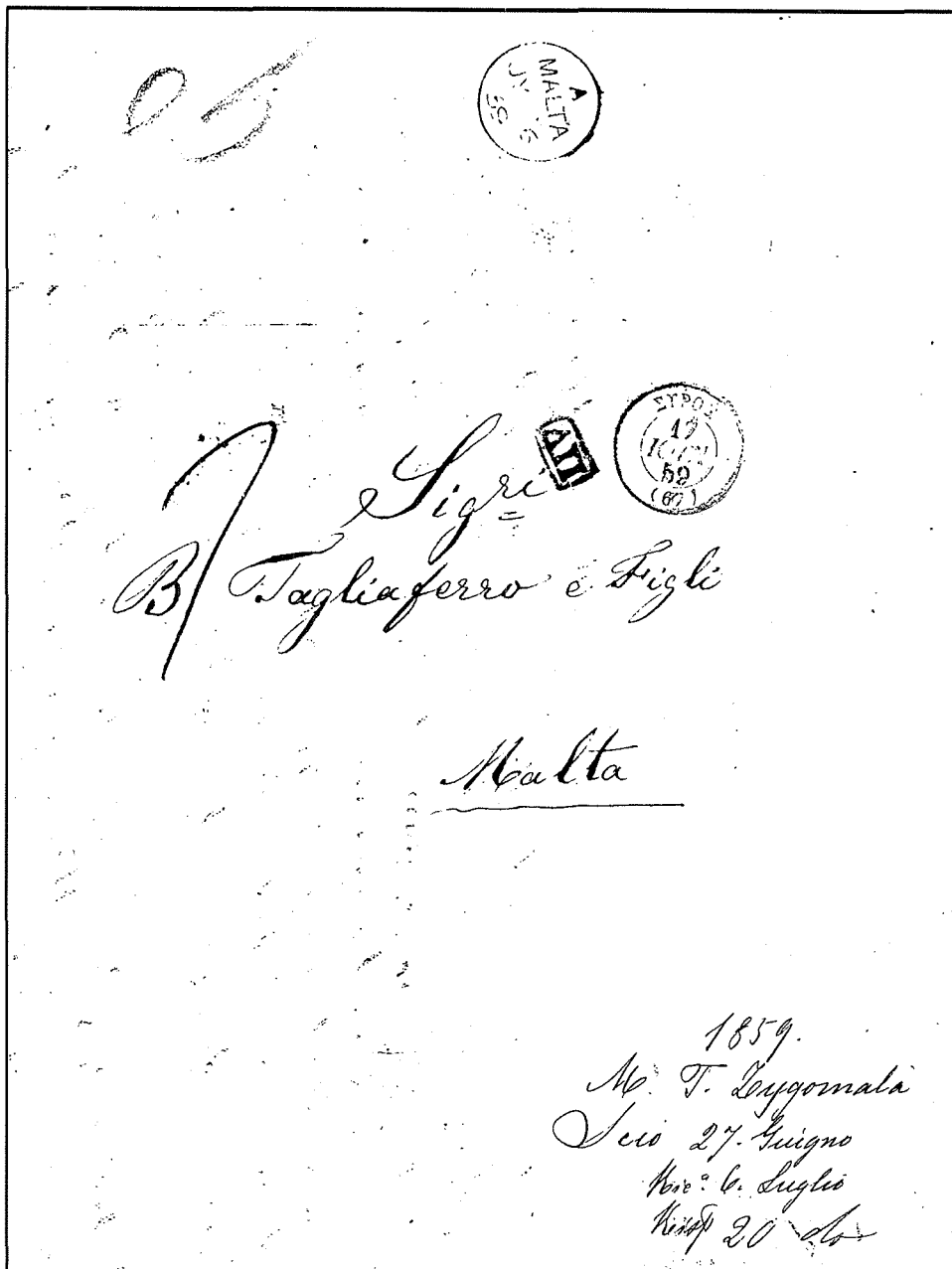
ΣΥΡΟΣ  
20  
MAY  
59

Signi  
B. Tagliaferro e Figli

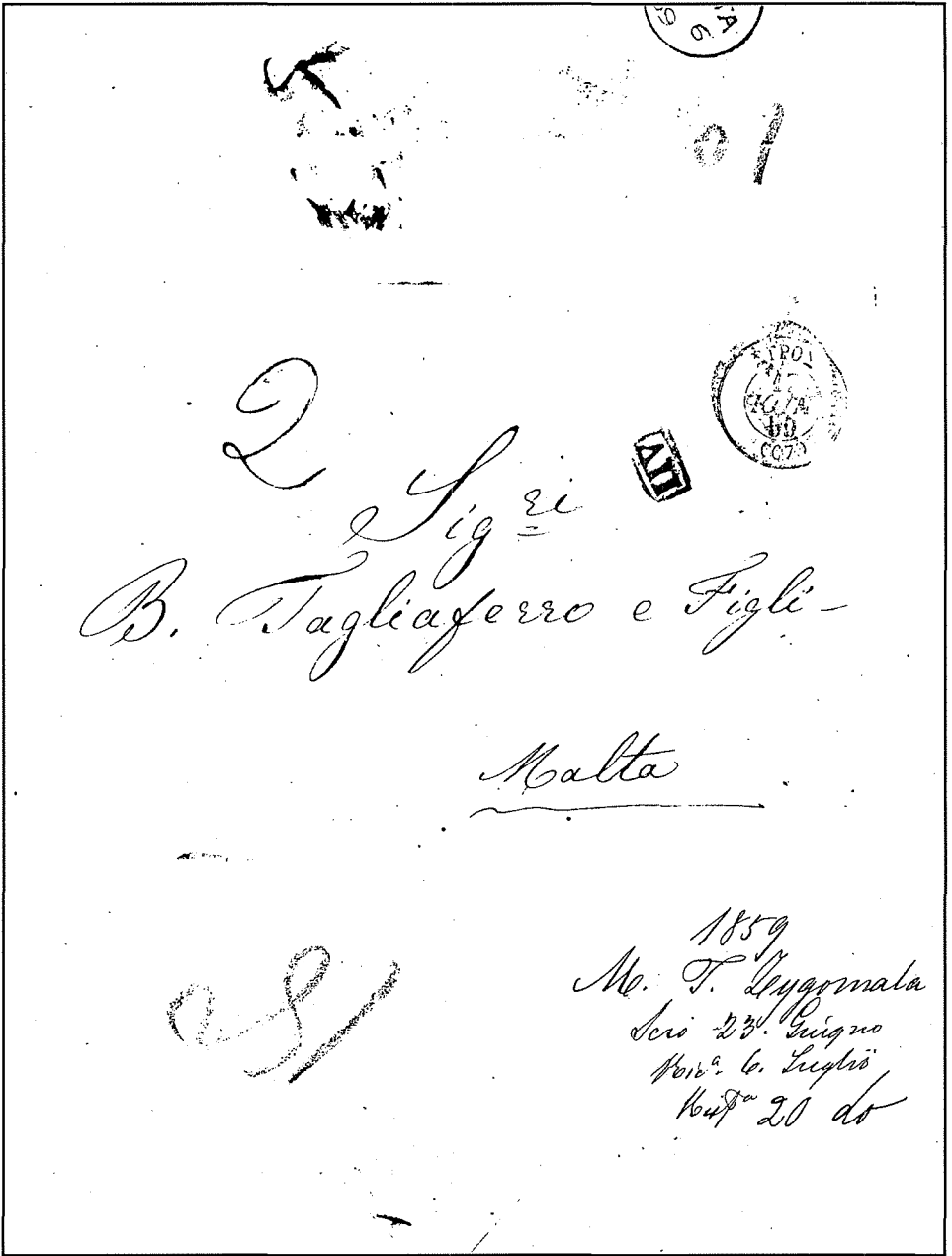
Malta

1859  
Mo. T. Kigornalari  
Scio 16/28 Maggio  
Nico 8. Giugno  
Nico 22 do

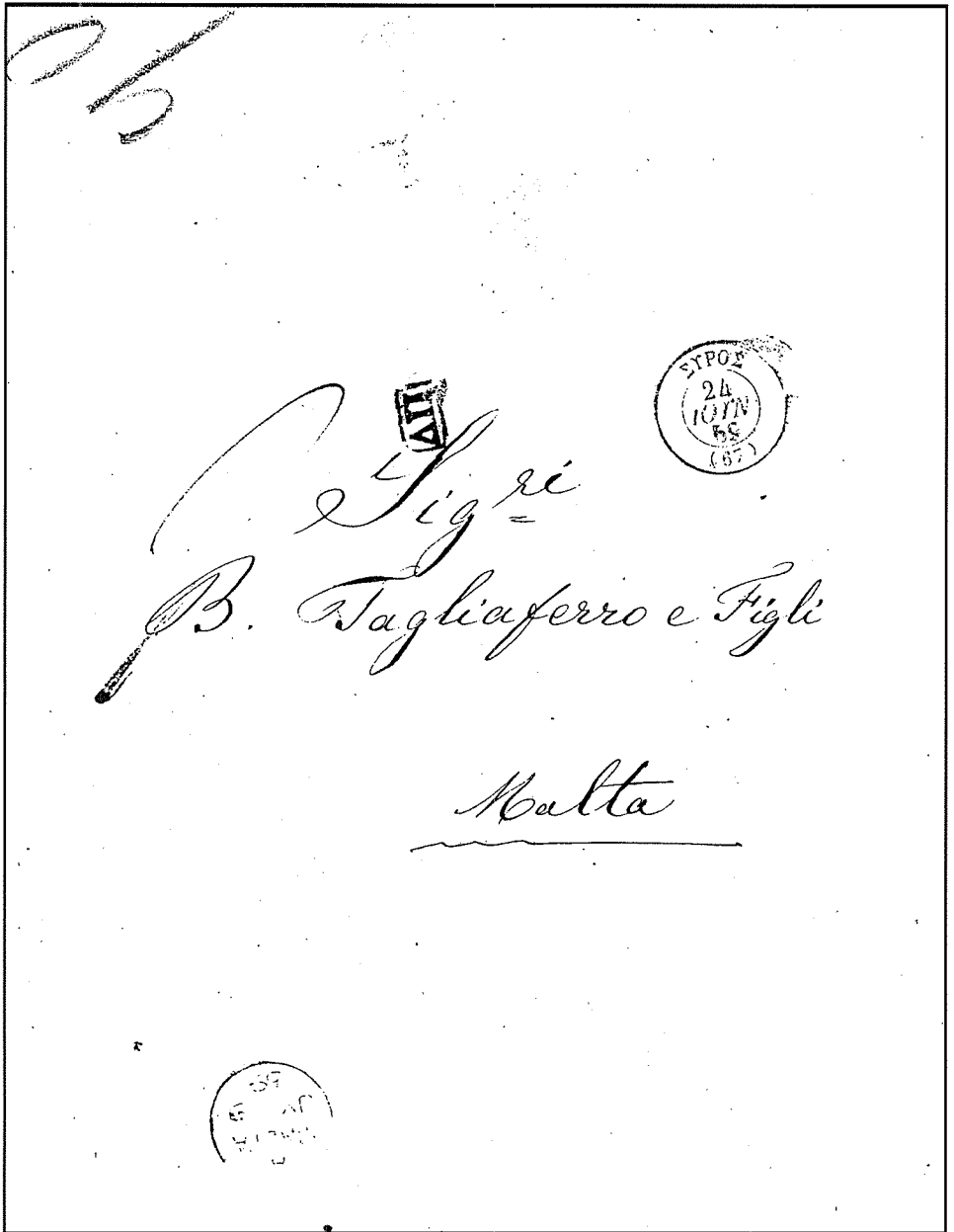
2. Written on the 16/28 May in Scio, bearing Syros 20 May 59, and Malta 8 June hand stamp, Greek Postage Due hand stamp ΔΠ, (90) Lepta in red crayon.



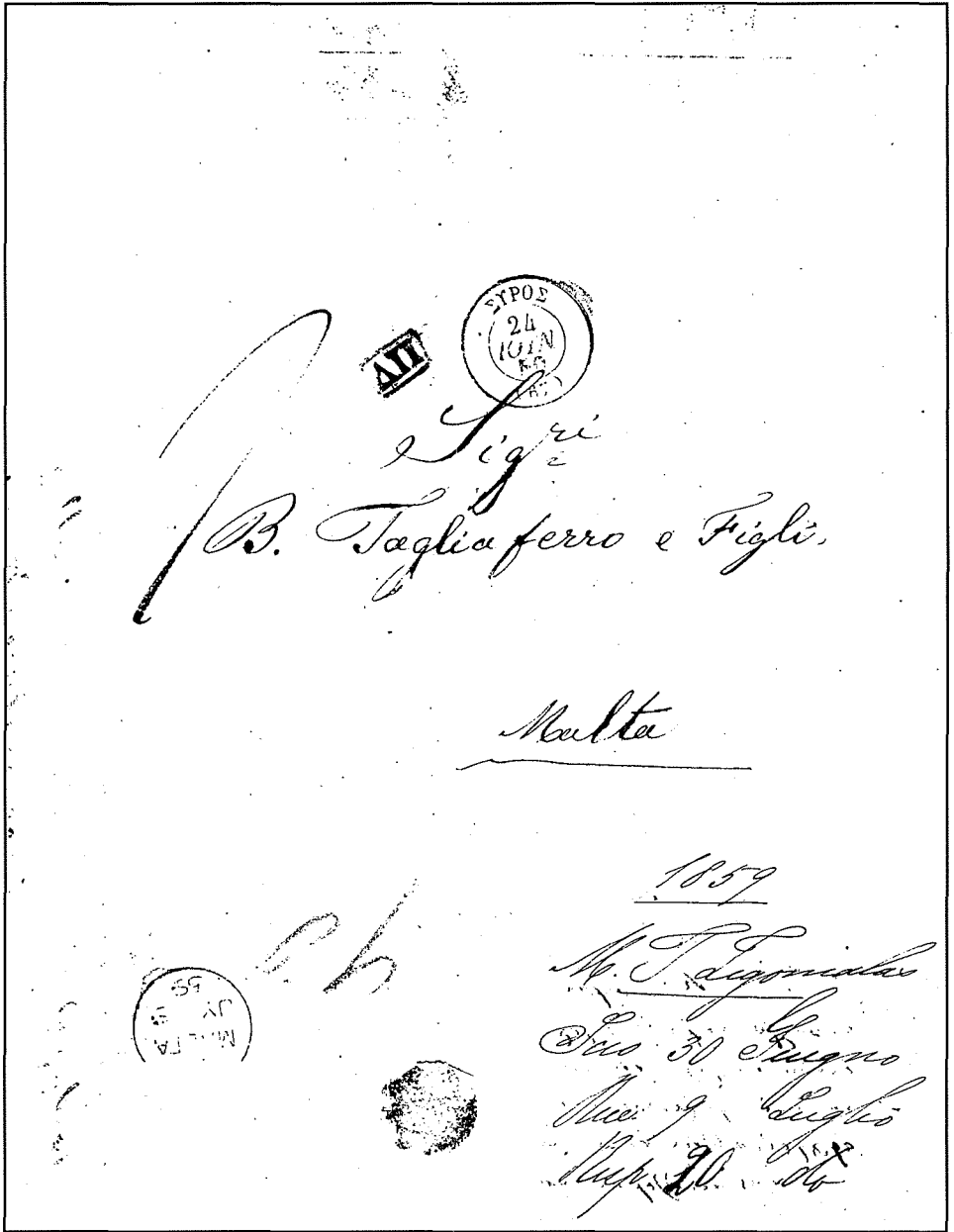
3. Written on the 27 June in Scio bearing Syros on 17 June 59, and Malta 6 July hand stamps, Greek Postage Due hand stamp ΔΙΙ, and (90) Lepta in red crayon, and manuscript (1) schilling in black ink.



4. Written on the 23 June in Scio, bearing Syros 17 June 59 and Malta 6 July hand stamp, with Greek postage due hand stamp ΔΙΙ, and clear manuscript "2" (180) lepta, and (10) in red crayon at back.



5. Written on the 18 June in Scio, bearing Syros 24 June 59 and Malta 9 July hand stamp, with Greek Postage Paid handstamp boxed ΔΙΙ, and (90) Lepta in red crayon.



6. Written on the 30 June in Scio, bearing Syros 24 June 59 and Malta 9 July hand stamps, with manuscript "1" in black ink, and (90) Lepta in red crayon, and Greek Postage Paid ΔΙΙ handstamp.

Mosoi' M'gior  
A'p'iar M'g'oupiour -

Re M'g'dar

1859

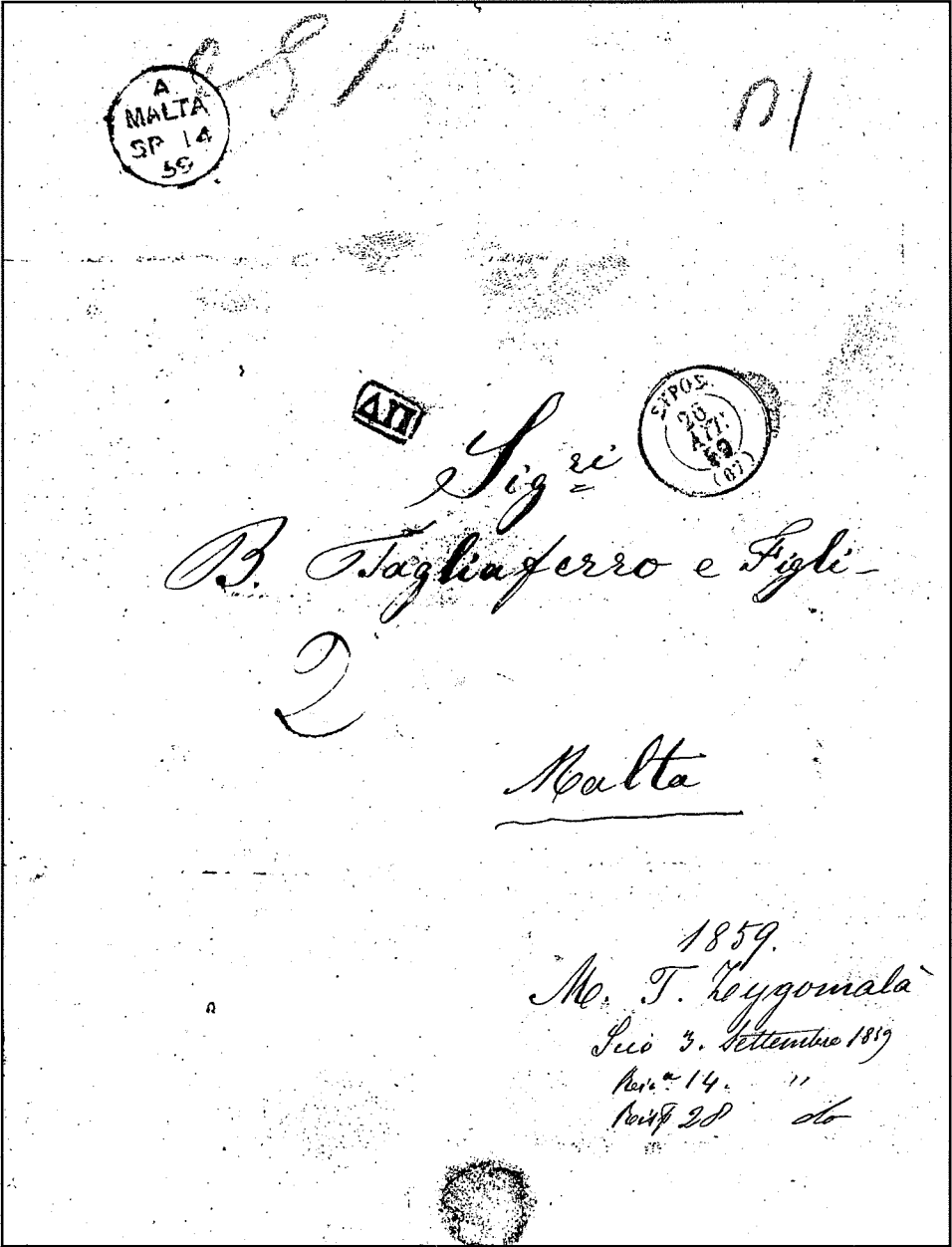
Mr. F. Sigonala

Scio 13/25 Agosto

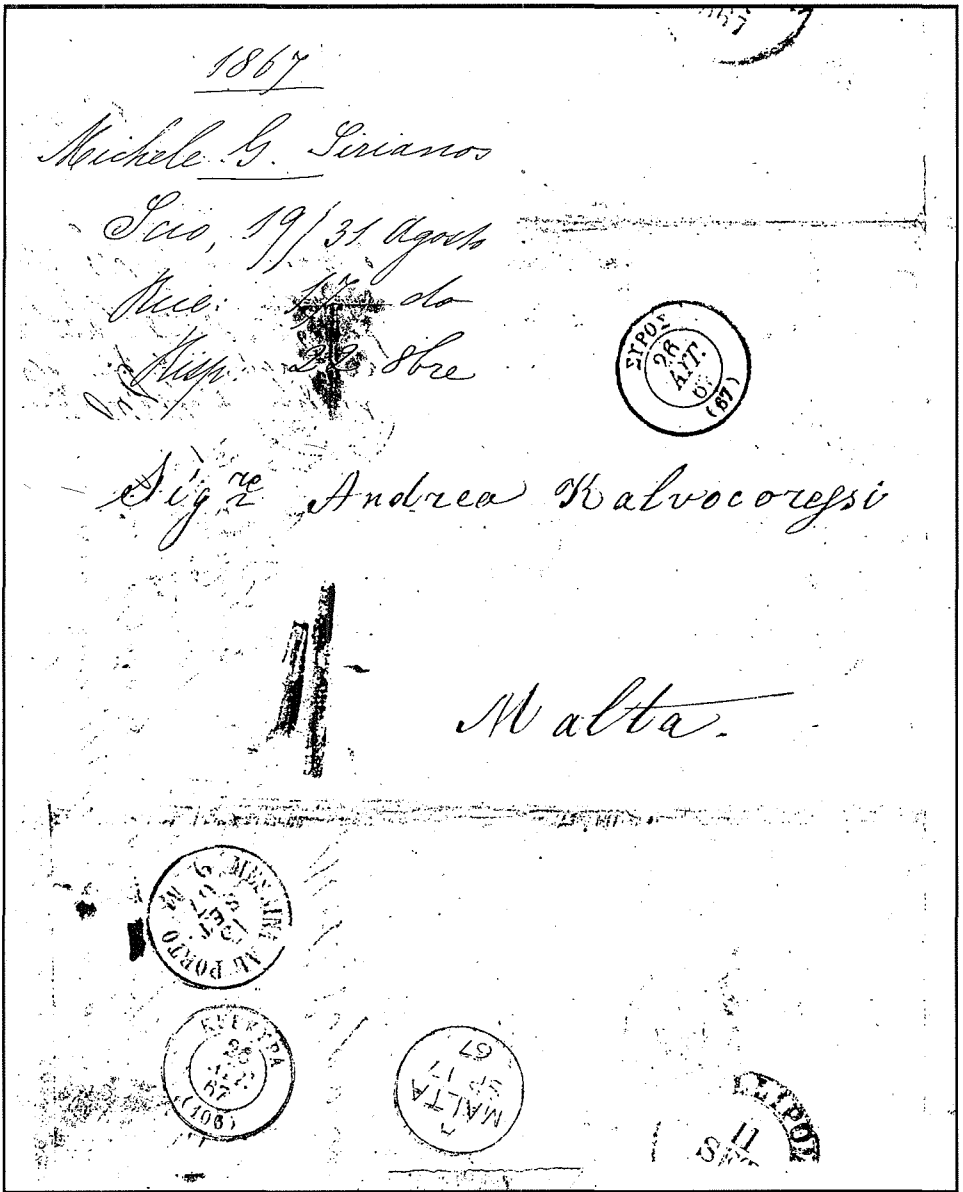
Pace. 26 The

Rispr. 28 to

7. Entire written on the 13/25 August 59, arriving in Malta on the 26 September, with no postal hand stamps, but sent by private messenger.

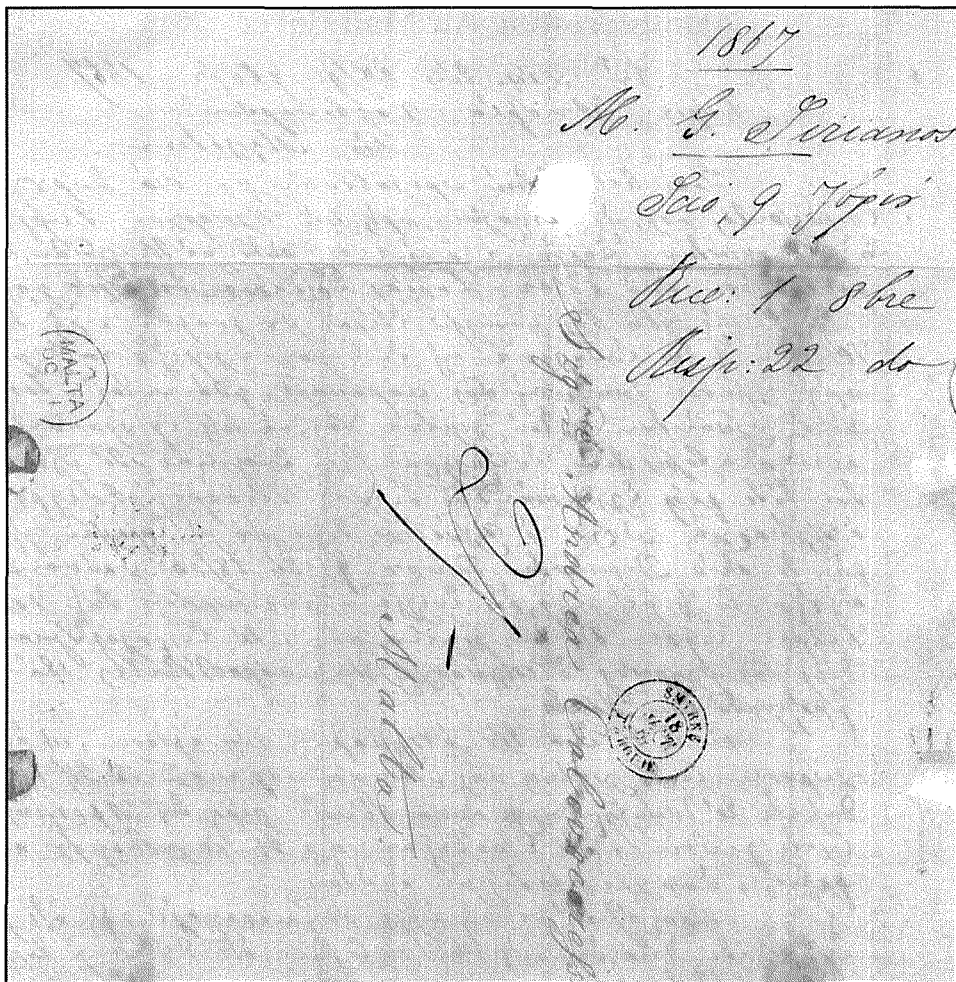


8. Written on the 3 September in Scio, bearing Syros 26 August 59 and Malta 14 Sept hand stamps, Greek postage due hand stamp ΑΠΙ, excellent manuscript 2/- (schillings) in black ink, (180) lepta, and (10) in red crayon.



9. Entire written in Greek 19/31 August 1867 from G. Lirianos in Scio to Andrea Kalovocoressi an agent of the Tagliaferros in Malta, arriving 26 August in Syros, **Gallipoli in Italy** on the 11 September, Messina 15 September, and Malta 17 September.  
It bears 1/- (schilling), in thick black manuscript as postage to be paid.





10. Entire written in Greek on the 9 September by G. Lirianos to Andrea Kalovocoressi, via Smyrna Turkey 18 September, arriving in Malta 1 October, bearing 2/- (schillings) in manuscript as postage to be paid.

The Postal History Journal of America, of February 1999, Number 112, has an article on Austrian Lloyd Agency Hand stamps in the Ionian Islands by Dimitri P Zaphiriou, in which he points out that hand stamps of Ithaca, Paxos, St. Maura and Zante, shown to the national and international philatelic and postal history communities were unanimously pronounced fake. He also describes the saga of Dr Nicolas's St. Maura, and the reasons he firmly believes that it is genuine. Those that are interested in the Lloyds hand stamp should read this article.