

MALTA AND THE "DELFOSSÉ" MARITIME LABELS

By Giovanni Bonello LL.D.

Maritime adhesives, known as "Delfosse" labels were in use in various parts of the world for about eight years, c. 1869 to c. 1877. A few are to be found on Malta mail, both incoming and outgoing.

Not a lot seems to be known about these adhesives. A. Bourdi, in *Les Timbres de Fantasia et Non Officiels* (1975) lists fifteen, of which three are as yet unrecorded.

These labels measure c. 36 x 25, perforation 11. Each routing is printed in a distinctive colour, and the number of each "via" is prominently displayed near the two upper corners. A blank slot at the bottom allows the ship's name to be filled in manuscript.



Fig. 1 VIA BORDEAUX (N° 5). Entire from Belfast to Malta, via Bordeaux, per S.S. *Arius*. December, 1871.

I am reproducing Bourdi's listing, with the shade of each label as described by him in French:

1	Via Havre	brun
2		
3	Via Naples	juane
4	Via Marseille	brun
5	Via Bordeaux	rose
6		
7	Via Liverpool	outramer
8	Via St. Nazaire	bleu
9	Via Brindisi	vert-bleu
10	Via Lisbonne	bleu-fonce
11		
12	Via Shouthampton	vert-juane
13	via New York	brun-roux
14	Via La Pallice	violet
15	Via Queenstown	lie-de-vin

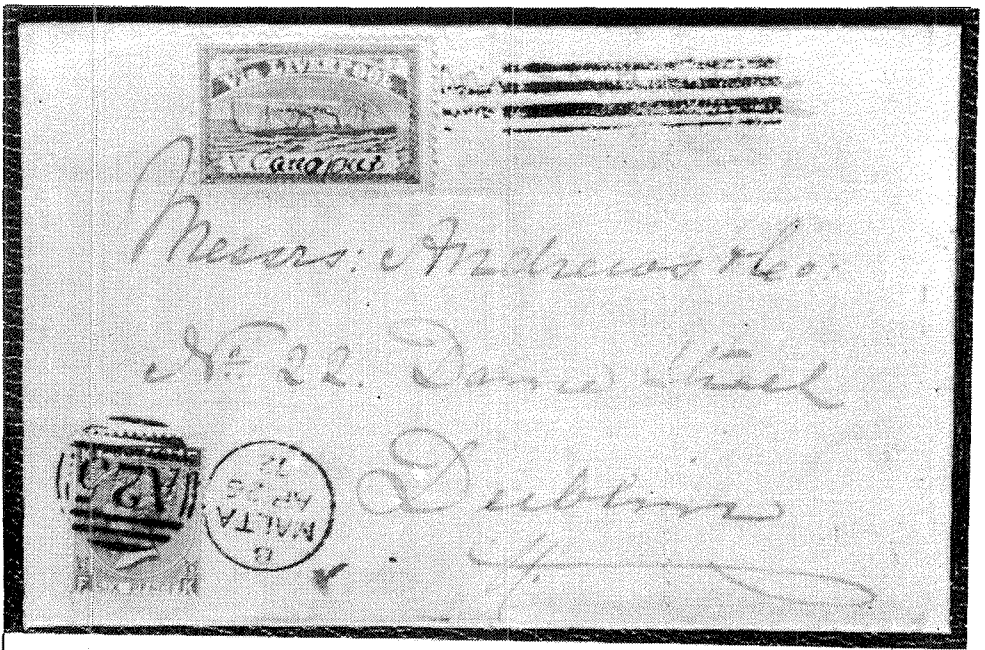


Fig. 2 VIA LIVERPOOL (N° 7). Entire from Malta to Dublin, via Liverpool. The manuscript "via Southampton" has been obliterated and substituted by a VIA LIVERPOOL label; per *Canopus* (or *Canopus*), April 1872.



Fig. 3 VIA BRINDISI (N° 9). Cover from Malta to Constantinople, Via Brindisi, per Albanian. April, 1875. Illustrated in MSC Handbook.

Round the four margins, in microscopic characters, runs the legend: "Vignettes postals Zimmerli, auteur-editeur, Agence maritime contracts forfaits, Delfosse et Cie, 24 Rue des Ecuries, maison reccomandee pour transports". I apologize for any misinterpretation, but the extreme smallness of the legend, invisible to the naked eye, makes the letters difficult to decipher.

On mail from Malta, No. 7 VIA LIVERPOOL and No. 9 VIA BRINDISI are recorded (Figures 2 and 3).

No 5 VIA BORDEAUX, No 10 VIA LISBONNE, No. 12 VIA SOUTHAMPTON and No. 13 VIA NEW YORK are recorded on mail to Malta (Figures 1, 4, 5 and 6).

I thank any readers who will communicate to me other information in their possession.

Finally I wish to express my appreciation for the help received from Mr. Cecil Diamantino, Mr. Robson Lowe, Mr. John Michael of Sotheby's, Mr. Norman Williams of the Cinderella Philatelist and Mr. C. Angus Parker of Argyll Etkin.



Fig. 4

Fig. 5



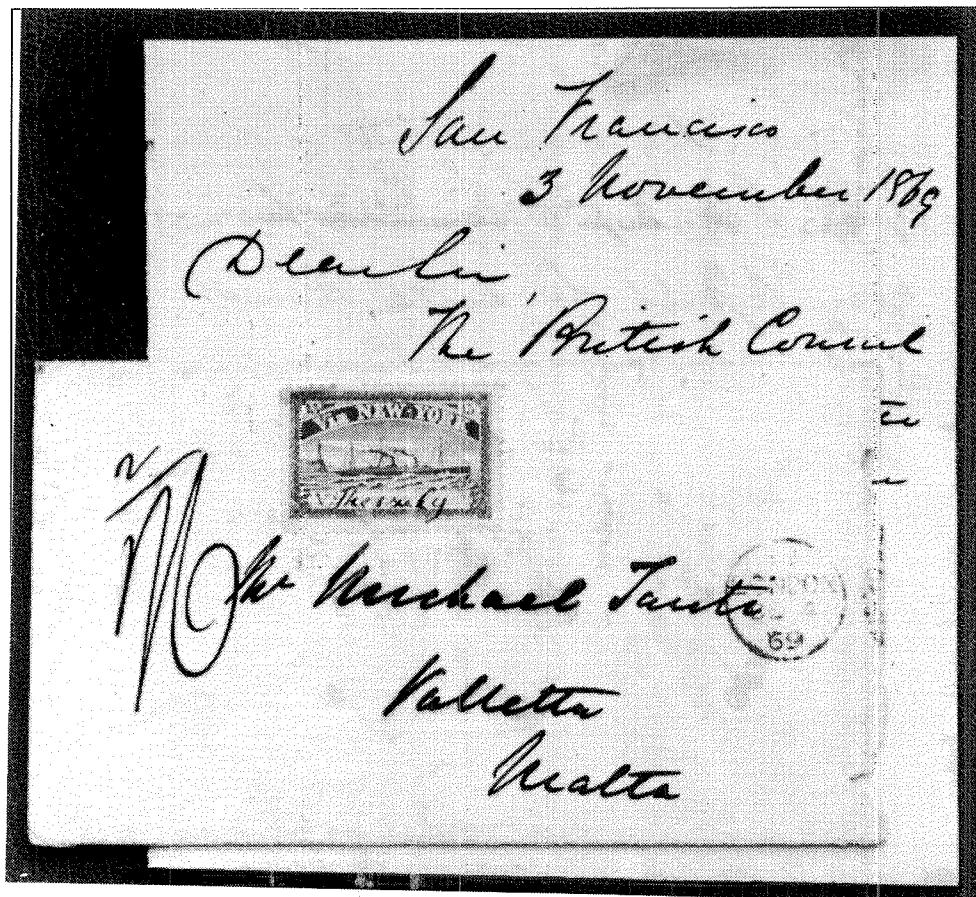


Fig. 6

Fig. 4 VIA LISBONNE (N^o 10). Entire from Motevideo, Uruguay, via London and Lisbon (or vice-versa?) to Malta, per *Massilia*. December 1869 to February 1870.

Fig. 5 VIA SOUTHAMPTON (N^o 12). Entire from London, via Southampton, to Malta per *Deccan*, 1877.

Fig. 6 VIA NEW YORK (N^o 13). Envelope with letter from San Francisco USA, via New York and London, to Malta, per *Thessaly*. December, 1868.