

A 5 LIRA FRANKING..... AND A SURPRISE

Luigi Farina

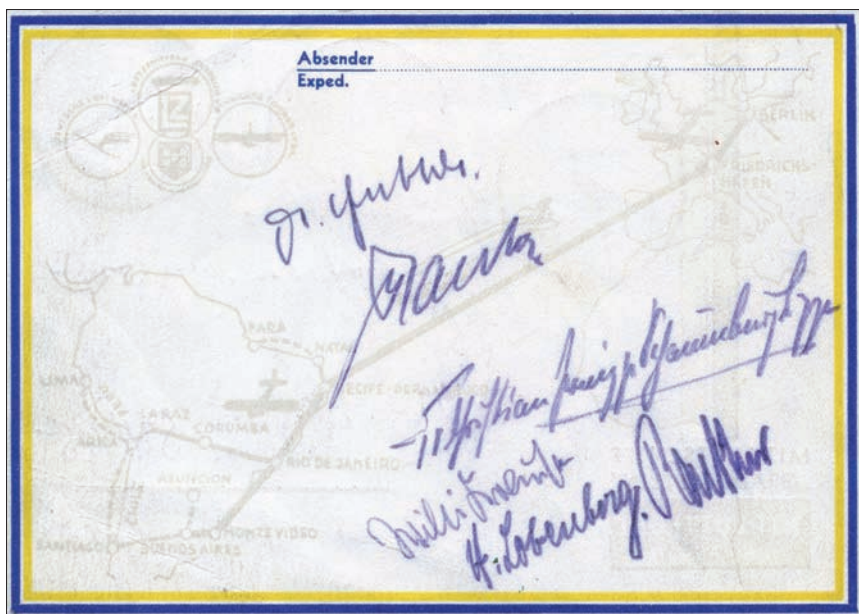
IN MARCH THIS YEAR I participated in a stamp auction in Germany and was bidding on some airmail covers which interested me. Among these covers I noticed an official LZ-127 GRAF ZEPPELIN postcard flown on the 1933 Rome Flight. The card has a German address and is franked with the 5 Lira zeppelin stamp from Italy.



Front Postcard franked with the 5 Lira zeppelin stamp instead of the 3 Lira zeppelin stamp.

I briefly want to recall that the additional fee for the 1933 Rome Flight of airship LZ-127 was Lira 3 for postcards sent to Europe and Lira 5 for covers sent to Europe. When I received my purchase from the auctioneer I was surprised to find on the reverse of the postcard various signatures.

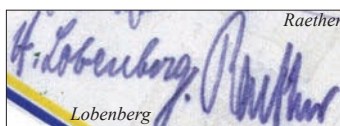
In the past I had a similar postcard (I do not remember whether franked with a Lira 3 or Lira 5 zeppelin stamp) with signatures from passengers of the airship, so I looked up Dottore Fiorenzo Longhi's book *Catalogo storico descrittivo degli aerogrammi Zeppelin di Italia, Colonie Italiane, San Marino, Vaticano* (published by Vaccari in 2009) which lists the names of the passengers on the three legs of the 1933 Rome Flight of LZ-127 GRAF ZEPPELIN.



Back Six signatures on postcard, two of them are matching passengers of the round trip over Rome.

In fact, I could identify two signatures on the card as they correspond to names of passengers boarded for the round trip over Rome: Passengers Lobeberg and Raether, the last two signatures on the card. However, there is no trace in the passenger lists of the other signatures on the card.

Now look at the photo shown to the right, it was published in the *L'illustrazione Italiana* magazine on 4 June 1933. This issue included an article on the Rome visit of airship LZ-127 GRAF ZEPPELIN. The photo shows to the left General Italo Balbo - Minister of Aviation of the Kingdom of Italy from 12 September 1929 to 6 November 1933, in the middle Mr. Starace who was Secretary of the Italian Fascist Party and to the right we see German Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, who had strongly backed the flight of airship LZ-127 GRAF ZEPPELIN to Rome (29 May 1933 and 30 May 1933).



HISTORY

Well, thanks to the cooperation and competence of our friend Dieter Leder - German expert for airmail and zeppelin mail - I was able to identify the other signatures on the postcard: The first signature on top is the one of Josef Goebbels (German Minister of Propaganda), and below Goebbels is the signature of Karl Hanke who was personal adjutant and advisor to



Josef Goebbels



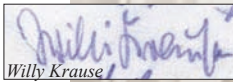
Karl Hanke

Goebbels. The third signature from the top following the ones of Goebbels and Hanke is the one of Friedrich Christian zu Schaumburg-Lippe



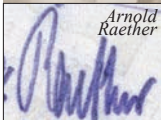
Friedrich Christian zu Schaumburg-Lippe

who was upper privy counselor and Goebbels' adjutant. The fourth signature is the one of Willi Krause, editor-in-chief of *Der Angriff* (The Attack), a propaganda newspaper of the Nazi Party. At this point I noticed that the postcard is addressed to the editorial office of *Der Angriff*. The signature number five is the one of Lobenberg, but we could not figure out his position. The last signature is the one of Arnold Raether, the later director of the propaganda movie department (Amt Film at the Reichspropagandaleitung).



Willi Krause

Der Angriff (The Attack), a propaganda newspaper of the Nazi Party. At this point I noticed that the postcard is addressed to the editorial office of *Der Angriff*. The signature number five is the one of Lobenberg, but we could not figure out his position. The last signature is the one of Arnold Raether, the later director of the propaganda movie department (Amt Film at the Reichspropagandaleitung).



Arnold Raether



H. Lobenberg

Wanting to finally reconstruct the history of this special card, I assume that the greetings card addressed to *Der Angriff* was prepared shortly before the landing of the airship at Rome Ciampino airport. By mistake they franked the card with the 5 Lire zeppelin stamp instead of the 3 Lire zeppelin stamp, then they signed the card and sent it off to be flown by zeppelin.



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What is certain is that this is a further proof of an aerophilatelic piece which combines philately and history. Readers of my articles know that this is my main interest in aerophilately. In general, this simple postcard turned out to be a unique historical document!

In addition to the postcard we found the photo below which was published in 1990 in *ICARE*, a French aviation magazine. It shows the zeppelin after the landing at Rome, it was the first of the two landings at Rome, the airship was arriving from Friedrichshafen. From the distance, the honorable guests are approaching the landed airship. On the left side of this large group we see the German delegation in their typical German uniforms and to their right we see the Italian guests.

As per today, the following people have been identified on the photo: (1) General Balbo, Italian Aviation Minister, (2) King of Italy, (3) Princess Mafalda of Savoy, daughter of the King (4) Prince Philip of Hesse, her husband (5) Francesco Ludovisi Boncompagni, Governor of Rome, (6) Achille Starace, Secretary of the Fascist Party, (7) Eugen Klee, German Ambassador at the Vatican (he is behind Von Hassel, you see only his leg and part of his shoulder, he can be identified in the movies of the landing), (8) Von Hassel, German Ambassador, (9) Sirianni (?), Italian Naval Minister, (10) Arturo Crocco, rocket and airship constructor, (11) Karl Hanke, personal adjutant and advisor to Goebbels, (12) Josef Goebbels, German Minister of Propaganda, (13) Friedrich Christian zu Schaumburg-Lippe, upper privy councilor and Goebbels' adjutant, (14) Magda Goebbels, wife of Joseph Goebbels, (15) Ernst A. Lehmann, Airship Captain.

We are still looking for information to identify further guests of the landing, we are looking for reports mentioning further names of guests and we need portrait photos of the guests to identify them. Lobenberg e.g. must be on the photo, but we do not know how he looked like. If you have any information to identify further guests of the airship landing, please let us know! ■

