

70 Years Ago in Stamps:

Foreign Post Offices in Palestine, Part 1

by Samuel Ray (From Stamps Magazine, December 4, 1957)

Prior to the World War the Holy Land was a part of the Turkish empire. Palestine was in the region known as Syria which together with the entire Levantine area and the greater part of the Near East was under Turkish dominion, or acknowledged Turkish suzerainty.

Some parts of the Turkish empire enjoyed varying degrees of local autonomy. This was in some cases due to the inability of a degenerating central government to cope with the natives as, for example, the Arabs. In other cases parts of the empire gained entire freedom or de facto autonomy directly through the intercession of the European powers. Examples of the latter case are Greece, Egypt, and Crete. In addition, the greater European powers forced the Turkish government to grant them various extra-territorial privileges. These were at first limited to diplomatic concessions.

Later, with the exploitation of Turkey by European commercial interests, certain civil concessions were demanded and granted. These concessions were termed "capitulations" and included, among others, the right to maintain national identities, exemption from certain Turkish taxes and levies, independent legal, and judicial organization, and independent postal systems. It will be noted that the capitulations were remarkably similar to the concessions granted to foreign powers in their international settlements in the treaty ports of China.

Foreign postal systems existed in Turkey even as early as the pre-stamp period. These posts may be classified as having been either diplomatic (example: the consular posts in Constantinople), military (example: the Crimean War posts), or civil (example: the Italian posts in Egypt).



Jerusalem picture post card showing Church of St. Anne and Temple Area

Austria and Russia were probably the first foreign countries to establish post offices in Turkish territory, both having done so early in the 1800s. The Austrians operated principally in the Balkan region, and the Russians around the Black Sea. Both these countries, and the others mentioned later, also had postal agencies at the (then) Turkish capitol, Constantinople. France, from Napoleonic times onwards maintained packet ship lines to Constantinople and other parts of the Levant and soon

established postal agencies at the ports of call. The British organized their first civil post offices in Turkey at the close of the Crimean War, while Italian and German operations did not commence until after the political unification of those countries.



Turkey 1884-86 20pa carmine imperf sheet margin pair with Express D' Orient label, each tied by "British Post Office Constantinople Dec 22 88" c.d.s.

However, Palestine was not regarded as of importance either from a military or commercial point of view, and foreign post offices were not established there until 1852 when Austria opened the first such office at Jerusalem. Palestine being the Holy Land of both the Christian and Jewish faiths, as well as of the Mohammedans, it was natural for Europeans of the first mentioned persuasions to desire to visit and perhaps take up residence in the land. This could not be done in the early days as there was no guarantee of security under Turkish rule. However, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, with increasing European influence in Turkey, the capitulations were extended to include the Holy Land.

As a result, there was a steadily increasing number of European (and American) Christians and Jews who made pilgrimages to Palestine and frequently settled in the land,



Crimean War 1855 envelope to Limoges with 20 centimes tied by PCA02C cancel, cover also with "Armee D'Orient/2E Corps/14.AOUT.55" c.d.s.

establishing schools, hospitals, and other institutions. Commercial exploitation followed in the wake of these pilgrims, and numerous foreign post offices were soon established, beginning in 1852. Up to the time of the World War foreign post offices were operated in Palestine by Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Russia.

I. The Turkish Posts in Palestine

The Turkish government was quite well known for its backwardness and its gross inefficiency and mismanagement in all phases of its administration; the native postal system was no exception to this general rule. The Turkish post office was little more than a stamp issuing bureau. There was virtually no Turkish postal system established in Palestine until 1866 when the railway to Jerusalem was completed. Even after this date practically all of the mails originating in Palestine were handled by the European powers. As a result Turkish stamps used in Palestine (especially on entire covers) prior to 1914 are very scarce, and those used during the nineteenth century are exceptionally rare.



Turkish postmarks

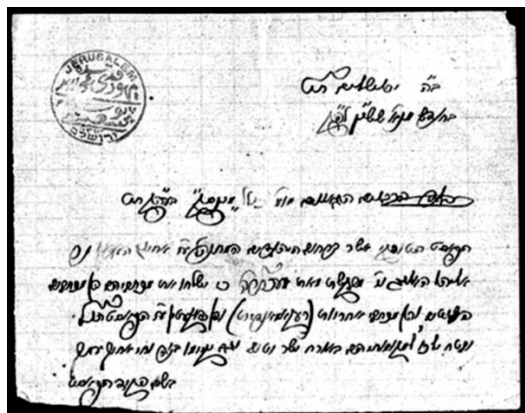


Turkey 1915 "B" overprint, Sc. 316B

So prevalent was this use of foreign postal systems throughout Turkey that in order to induce foreigners to patronize the Turkish post office, the native postage stamps were sold to them at a large discount. This discount, amounting to 20 per cent from the face value, was first granted to foreign firms early in the 1900s. Later, beginning with the issue of 1906, Turkish stamps that were sold at a discount were overprinted with

Arabic letter B, meaning "Behie" or "discount." From 1913 onwards a small five-pointed star was overprinted on the stamps in red or blue for the same purpose.

In October, 1914, taking advantage of the European unrest in the early days of the war.



Letter from the manager of the Jerusalem Post Office encouraging residents to use the services there, with strike of tri-lingual seal handstamp

Sultan Mohamet V of Turkey abolished the "capitulations" by proclamation, thus rescinding all rights of foreigners in Turkey—including the privilege to operate independent posts. Some of the foreign posts had already been closed because of political difficulties at the time of the Balkan War of 1912-13. In commemoration of the complete abolition of foreign privileges some of the current Turkish stamps were overprinted in native language "Abrogation of the Capitulations, 1330." From October, 1914, therefore, until the occupation by the British and French in 1917, only Turkish stamps could be used in Palestine. Covers of this period are nevertheless scarce, as the foreign population of Palestine left in large numbers at the outbreak of the war. Most of the letters mailed during this period bear various censor or a other military marks, and were routed via Syria or Constantinople, and are quite interesting. With the abrogation, incidentally, sales of Turkish stamps at a discount were discontinued.



Turkey 1914 overprint reading "Abrogation of the Capitulations, 1330", Sc. 278

Early in November, 1914 as a result of the abrogation and of other conditions, states of war between Turkey and the Allied powers were declared. Turkish participation in the World War was limited to activity in two theatres: at the Bosphorus and Dardanelles (in an attempt to shut off Russia), and at the Suez Canal (control of the Canal being necessary to strike at Egypt, and to prevent Allied colonial troops from reaching Europe). Palestine, being adjacent to the Sinai peninsula wherein the Suez Canal is located, was therefore the scene of numerous Turkish military operations in 1915 and 1916. The Turks actually occupied Sinai in 1916, and a series of overprinted stamps was issued in the same year to commemorate the occupation. These stamps, as well as the other Turkish stamps mentioned previously all exist used in Palestine.

In January, 1917, the British a troops entered Palestine and commenced an intensive campaign against the Turks. The latter were forced to retreat gradually until practically the entire country was occupied by the British (and some French) troops. In October, 1917, the Turkish government signed a peace treaty with the Allies, and withdrew from the war, thus ending Turkish rule in Palestine. The posts of the Allied armies of occupation are taken up in chapter IX of this study.

Back in 1916 the Turkish troops occupied Sinai and their hopes ran high for an early and successful conquest of Egypt. Even a special series of commemorative stamps was prepared in anticipation of a successful campaign. The Turks were, of course, defeated and their hopes never materialized. The issue of special stamps did not appear until 1919, when—ironically enough—they were issued with overprints to commemorate the armistice! These stamps are



Turkey 1919 Armistice issue on 25pi picturing Turkish column in Sinai

mentioned here because three of the designs showed Palestinian subjects. The Gibbons catalog describes these designs as "Sentry at Beersheba," "Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem" (this same subject later served as a design for several of the Palestine pictorial stamps of 1927), and "Turkish Column in Sinai."

II. The Austrian Posts



Austrian Postmarks

Austria was the first foreign power to open offices in Palestine, the Jerusalem office being opened in 1852 and the Jaffa office in 1854. Ordinary Austrian stamps (in kreuzer currency) were at first used in these offices as well as in the other offices in the Turkish empire. On June 1, 1867, special stamps for all the Austrian offices in Turkey (with values in soldi) were issued.



1876 cover to Patras Greece franked by Austria 10s tied by Gerusalemme c.d.s., also with Greek Patriarch's seal in form of a cross



Austrian Levant 20pa on 10 heller 1900/01 issue tied to fragment by Smyrna c.d.s.

inscribed in the same Turkish currency were introduced. The Austrian offices in Turkey remained open until the abolition of capitulations in 1914.

Beginning in 1903 Austrian stamps overprinted in French

currency (centimes and francs) were issued. These were followed in July, 1908, by a definitive design (the Franz Joseph Jubilee types) with values expressed in the same currency. According to the Scott and Gibbons catalogs, all these stamps were ostensibly for use in Crete. Gibbons adds a note stating that "Many of the stamps issued for use in Crete have also been sold at Austrian Post Offices in the Levant." This was quite so. The commonest cancellation on these so-called Cretan stamps is that of Constantinople. Postmarks of other Austrian offices in the Turkish empire, including Jerusalem and Jaffa, on these French-currency stamps are by no means uncommon. In fact, Cretan cancellations on these stamps are actually quite rare! From covers examined, the Turkish-currency and the French-currency stamps of Austria were used concurrently and interchangeably throughout the Turkish offices; occasionally both types appear together on one cover.



1903 Austrian Offices in Crete 1 Franc on 1k, Sc. 5

It is the author's opinion that these French-currency stamps of Austria should be listed under "Offices in Turkey," and not "Offices in Crete." Other countries (for reasons which will be explained in the next paragraph) also issued stamps for offices in Turkey both in Turkish and French currency. Both types of issues are subsumed under one heading "Offices in Turkey" in the cases of France and Germany, and there is no reason why the Austrian stamps should not be treated similarly. Finally, it might be pointed out that Crete was a part of the Turkish empire until its union with Greece in 1913. It is true that an autonomous government with Prince George at the head was established in Crete through allied intervention in 1898-99, but nominally Crete recognized Turkish suzerainty until the union with Greece on February 1, 1913.

The existence of stamps with values expressed both in Turkish and French currency may be readily explained in that while Turkish money was the official currency of the country, the actual medium of exchange in the Levant was French gold. Examination of pre-war geography and commerce books will reveal the fact that most of the financial transactions in the countries bordering on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean were conducted in French currency. Even in an old travel guide for the Holy Land was found the warning that prospective travellers should exchange their money for French gold before leaving. The value of Turkish currency also fluctuated considerably during the pre-war period, and this, too, probably contributed to the necessity for issuing stamps in a standard currency.

Austrian covers used from Palestine are more frequently met with than those of the other foreign offices. The early covers with kreuzer or soldi stamps are very rare, as are all nineteenth century covers. Twentieth century covers are quite common, and may be found with both the Turkish-currency and French-currency stamps, the latter being more usual. Covers with stamps of both currencies are quite interesting and by no means uncommon.

70 Years Ago in Stamps:

Foreign Post Offices in Palestine, Part 2

by Samuel Ray (From Stamps Magazine, December 11, 1957, with images added)

(This is the second of a series of articles)



1876 cover to France with 1871-75 Ceres 30 centimes tied by "Jaffa 28 Avril 76 Syrie" c.d.s. with "Poste Francaise Jerusalem Cross (in center of marking to right of stamp).

III. The French Posts

The first French office in Palestine was opened in Jerusalem in 1885. Inasmuch as the first special stamps for general use in the French offices in Turkey were issued in the same year, covers with ordinary stamps of France or French Colonies (such as are known from other French offices in the Turkish empire) probably do not exist from Palestine. The first stamps consisted of ordinary French issues overprinted with equivalent Turkish values.



Ipi on 25c French Levant issue with Jerusalem double-circle c.d.s.



Jerusalem Palestine 1914 postmarks tie 12 French Levant stamps (8 more on front), also with Jerusalem Registration label

In 1902, the familiar Blanc, Mouchon, and Merson types of France with the inscription "Levant" were issued. The values on these stamps remained in French currency. Later some of these stamps were also overprinted with values in Turkish currency and both types were used interchangeably, frequently occurring on the same cover.

The French offices in Palestine as well as other parts of the Turkish empire were closed at the time of the Balkan War. Nineteenth century covers of the French offices in Palestine are, of course, quite rare. Twentieth century covers are not scarce, but seem to be less common than Austrian covers of the same period. The stamps of French offices in Turkey which were issued from 1921 to 1923 were intended for use in the French mandates and other Levantine territories occupied by the French, and were never used in Palestine.

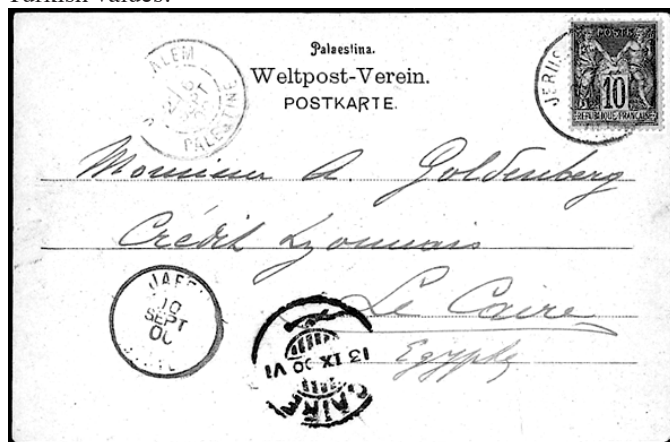
IV. The Posts of Great Britain

The British first opened an office in Palestine in 1885. Special stamps for general use in the Turkish offices were issued on April 1 of the same year; consequently, as in the case of France, covers from Palestine with ordinary British stamps probably do not exist as they do from other Turkish offices. It is true that ordinary British stamps were used in Palestine during the 1917 occupation, but these—as well as the other occupation posts—will be taken up in the chapter on military posts.

The first stamps for the Turkish offices were ordinary British stamps with overprints in Turkish currency. In 1905 the current Edwardian series was overprinted only with the word "Levant,"



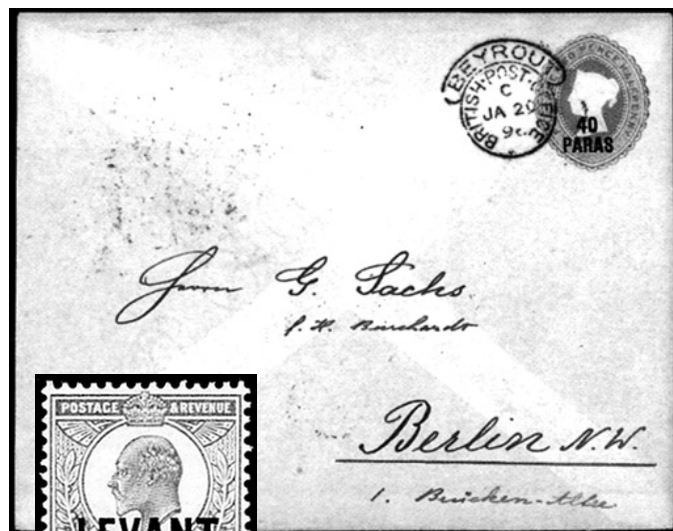
Only known multiple (outside the Royal Collection) of the 1893 British Levant 40pa on 1/2d overprints, Sc. 5



1900 postcard to Germany with message "Souvenir de l'inauguration de la Poste Francaise a Jerusalem..." and 10 centimes stamp tied by French P.O. "Jerusalem/Palestine 2E/6 Sept 00" c.d.s. This is the earliest piece of mail from this P.O. when it was reopened after 20 years on September 3, 1900.

the value remaining in British currency. Other Turkish currency and "Levant" issues appeared later and were used concurrently in the offices in Palestine until such offices were closed in 1914 with the abrogation of capitulations.

The author has been unable to determine from British catalogs and handbooks the need for the "Levant" stamps. It is probable that they were used for the same purpose as the British currency "Morocco Agencies" stamps, that is to prepay registration fees, parcel post charges, and other special postal costs. Nineteenth century covers of the British offices in Palestine are



Brit. Levant 1pi on 2p overprint, Sc. 25

Great Britain 2-1/2p postal stationery overprinted 40pa for use in the Turkish Post Offices, with hooded "Beyrout British Post Office C JA 20 96" cancel.

extremely rare, and even the twentieth century covers are by no means common. The stamps for Turkish offices which were issued in 1921 were never used in Palestine. They were used in various parts of the former Turkish empire occupied by the British for the purpose of effectuating the provisions of peace treaties.

V. The German Posts



No definite date for the opening of the first German office in Palestine is known to the author, but such office was probably opened sometime in the 1890s. Ordinary German stamps overprinted with values in Turkish currency for the Turkish offices had *Block of four Germany 1 piastre Turkish currency on 20pf overprints tied by "Jerusalem Deutsche Post" c.d.s.'s*

been in use since January 25, 1884, and these stamps were likely used in the Palestine offices when the latter were opened.

Turkish currency overprints continued in use until the German Palestinian offices were closed at the time of the Balkan War. In August, 1908, a French currency series of overprinted stamps was also issued and was used concurrently with the Turkish-currency stamps until the German offices were closed.



5c French currency on 5pf German stationery indicia tied by "Jerusalem Deutsche Post 9 9 10" c.d.s.

German covers from Palestine are somewhat scarcer than the Austrian or French covers, and the Turkish-currency stamps on cover are of about the same rarity as the French currency items.



1898 German Post Office Registered picture postcard with Registered label, 20 para on 10pf and 1pa on 20pf stamps tied by Jaffa Deutsche Post 17.11.98 c.d.s.

VI. The Italian Posts

Little is known of the Italian posts in Palestine; an Italian office in Jerusalem was opened probably at the turn of the century. As early as 1874 Italy had issued special stamps for its offices in Turkey. These were the ordinary Italian stamps overprinted with the word "Estero," meaning "eastern lands" and applying to the same region known as the Levant. It is highly doubtful if any of the "Estero" stamps were used in Palestine, but if such were the case they would undoubtedly be extreme rarities.

General issues for Italian offices in Turkey, consisting of the ordinary stamps overprinted with values in Turkish currency, appeared on June 1, 1908. In the following year the Italian postal administration decided to issue specially overprinted stamps for each of the major Italian offices in the Turkish empire. Thus, in 1909 Jerusalem rated a special series of eight Italian stamps overprinted with the Turkish value, and with the name "Gerusalemme." This archaic spelling of "Jerusalem" is of interest in that it also appears on the early Austrian postmarks of that city.



1911 Registered Express cover to Italy with six different "Gerusalemme" surcharges (10 paras to 4 piasters) tied by "Gerusalemme Off. Postale Italianci" c.d.s.'s, plus Levant Express stamp lower left, used from the Italian P.O. in Jerusalem

Genuine covers of the Italian offices in Palestine are all quite rare. The "Gerusalemme" stamps, like many other Italian pre-war and most of the post-war stamps, were issued with a philatelic purpose in mind and exist for the most part in cancelled-to-order condition. The Italian offices in Palestine were closed at the time of the Balkan troubles.



Italy Gerusalemme and 20pa on 10c overprints tied by Gerusalemme c.d.s.

The 1921-23 Italian issues for the Turkish offices were never used in Palestine but were intended for use in Constantinople and in the various territories granted to, or occupied by, Italy as a result of the World War.



Three country franking: Italy 10pa on 5c Gerusalemme overprint tied by "Gerusalemme" c.d.s.; French Levant stamp tied by "Jerusalem Palestine" c.d.s.; Germany 10c on 10pf tied by "Jerusalem Deutsche Post" c.d.s.

Continued below

70 Years Ago in Stamps:

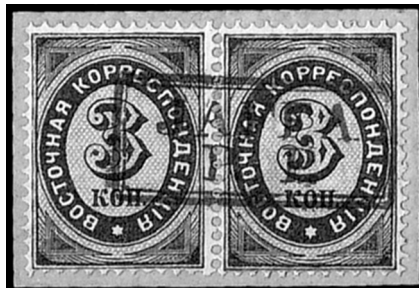
Foreign Post Offices in Palestine, Part 3

by Samuel Ray (From Stamps Magazine, December 11, 1957, with images added)

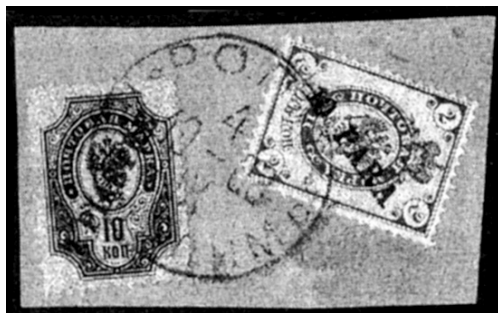
(This is the third part in this series)

VII. The Russian Posts

Although Russia had been among the first foreign countries to maintain post offices in Turkey, an office in Palestine was not opened until late in the 1880s or possibly early in the 90s. Special stamps in Russian currency had been in use in the Turkish offices since 1863 and were probably also used at the Palestine offices until replaced by the Turkish-currency overprinted stamps of 1900. Turkish-currency stamps continued in use until the Russian offices were closed with the abrogation of capitulations in 1914.



Pair of Russia 3 kopecks Levant Numerals with boxed "Jaffa P.P." postmark



Russia 10 paras on 2 kopecks and 1 piaster on 10k overprints on piece tied by Ropit Jerusalem 1910 c.d.s.

In May, 1909, a belated commemorative series, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Russian posts in Turkey in 1857, was issued. This series (as in the similar case of Italy) was also overprinted for each of the major Russian offices in the Turkish empire. Two Palestinian towns, Jerusalem and Jaffa, were thus honored with a series of nine stamps each.

Strangely enough, while the modern spelling "Jaffa" was used on the stamps for that city, the Jerusalem stamps were overprinted with the archaic form "Jerusalem." In both series, the one kopek value also exists with overprint in blue instead of black, and most of the lower values are known with overprints inverted or doubled.



Left, Russia Turkish Offices 50th Anniversary 3.50 rouble commem with Jaffa overprint, Sc. 78; right with Jerusalem overprint, Sc. 88

Some of the low values of the "Jerusalem" overprints are also known without the initial "I." All of these special stamps are practically unknown postally used; the author thus far has seen them only in cancelled-to-order condition.

In general, all Russian covers from Palestine (or even Turkish-offices stamps with Palestinian postmarks) are very rare. They are probably the scarcest of the foreign-office items from Palestine.

VIII. Miscellaneous

Although Greece, Poland, and Romania, at one time or another established (or contemplated establishing) post offices in the Turkish empire for diplomatic services or occupied territories, none of the stamps issued by these countries were ever used in Palestine.

IX. The Military Posts

During the Allied military occupation in 1917 and 1918, the ordinary stamps of Great Britain, France, Egypt, and India, and the Indian I.E.F. stamps were used in various parts of Palestine. Stampless military and civilian covers of this period also exist, the Turkish stamps having been invalidated immediately upon the occupation of the country. All of these stamps—and lack of stamps—were eventually succeeded by the E.E.F. (Egyptian Expeditionary Force) stamps in 1918. These latter remained in use throughout Palestine until superseded by the tri-lingual overprints of the civil administration in 1920.

Egypt 1867-69 Pernasson issue 1 piaster with "V.R. Poste Egiziane/Jaffa/2 Giu 1871" c.d.s.



Palestine 1 millieme 1920 Tri-Lingual overprint, Sc. 15



Palestine 1 millieme 1920 Tri-Lingual overprint, Sc. 15



Palestine 1p indigo, Sc. 1



The precursor of the Tri-Lingual Overprints of Palestine, a Pre-war Turkish Registration label of Jerusalem

As early as 1914 British Indian troops were occupying Mesopotamia, and in 1915 and 1916 both British and French troops occupied various parts of Asia Minor and the Levant. However, the Turks remained in complete control of Palestine until 1917, when, on January 19th of that year, the British I.E.F. troops crossed the frontier at Raffah. These Indian troops used

the ordinary Indian as well as the overprinted I.E.F. stamps; both types with F.P.O. cancellations of 1917 indicate probable use in Palestine. Properly authenticated Indian stamps and covers used in Palestine are extremely rare.

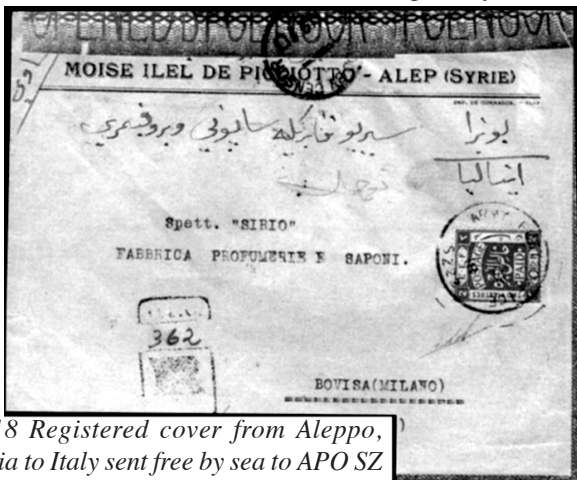


1918 Registered cover to England with 12 anna and 1 rupee overprinted I.E.F. tied by "Base Office A.I.E.F." c.d.s., also with censor handstamp.

Later the same year, the British E.E.F. troops followed, and took Gaza early in October, 1917. About the same time, combined British and French troops entered the northern part of the country from Syria (where the French had been campaigning extensively). Turkey was meanwhile weakening both because of the revolts of the Arabs (induced principally by the activities of the famous Colonel Lawrence). Late in October, therefore, the Turks capitulated and sued the Allies for peace. A treaty was signed in that month and the Turks withdrew from the War. British troops entered Jaffa in November, 1917, and took Jerusalem in December. On December 11, 1917, General Sir Edmund Allenby made his state entry into Jerusalem and the British occupation was formally complete.

The mails of both the British and French troops went free during this period. However, the British soldiers (and probably the French also) had to pay for registration fees, parcel post charges, and other costs for special services, thus accounting for the use of ordinary British (and French) stamps in Palestine. Both stampless and franked covers carry only F.P.O. or army cancellations, but may be easily identified.

Ordinary Egyptian stamps are also known used on cover from Jaffa. All of these covers, especially the franked



1918 Registered cover from Aleppo, Syria to Italy sent free by sea to APO SZ 22 (Port Said), where 1 pi + 1 pi registry fee was applied with 2 pi E.E.F. stamp and cancelled.

items, are of great rarity.

From the time of the British occupation and until the first E.E.F. stamp was issued at Jerusalem and Jaffa on February 10, 1918, civilian mails were accepted without stamps. Covers are exceptionally rare; they carry the army post and censor marks, and a "T" or "Taxe" marking in accordance with U.P.U. regulations. The postage was collected at the destination.

To be continued



1918 cover from APS SZ 44 (Jerusalem) to Alexandria, censored in Palestine. Cover not taxed even though delivered after the free period had ended.

70 Years Ago in Stamps:

Foreign Post Offices in Palestine, Part 4

by Samuel Ray (From Stamps Magazine, December 11, 1937, with images added)

(This is the fourth and final part in this series)

IX. The Military Posts, Cont.

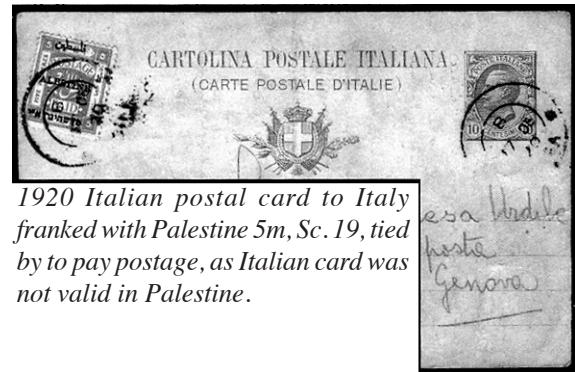


British Military Postmarks

From the time of the British occupation until the first E.E.F. stamp was issued at Jerusalem and Jaffa on February 10, 1918, civilian mails were accepted without stamps.... The postage was collected at the destination.

The author has seen one cover addressed to the United States where the ten cents postage due (double the international five-cent rate) was collected by means of a parcel-post-due stamp.

At the request of the British military authorities, the Director of Army Postal Services of the E.E.F. arranged for the designing and printing of a one-piastre stamp in the familiar E.E.F. design. The printing was executed by the Typographical Department of the Egyptian Survey Office, at Giza, where several reprintings of the stamp and also printings of the five-milliemeres overprint



1920 Italian postal card to Italy franked with Palestine 5m, Sc. 19, tied by to pay postage, as Italian card was not valid in Palestine.

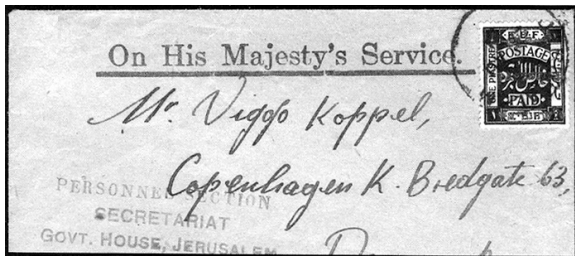
were made. One piastre was the foreign letter rate, at the time, while five milliemeres was the foreign postcard rate and the local letter rate.

Beginning July 16, 1918, a complete set of eleven values printed by Somerset House, London, in the same E.E.F. design was issued. These stamps remained in use until superseded by the overprinted stamps of the civil administration on September 1, 1920. All the unoverprinted stamps were finally demonetized on May 1, 1922.

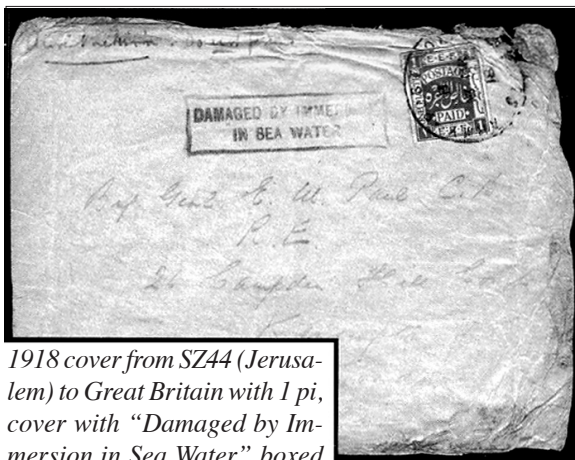
All of the unoverprinted E.E.F. stamps were intended for general use by the British and Allied armies in the various countries bordering on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, and for the civilian populations of the occupied areas. The stamps were not intended specifically for use in Palestine although they were used there for the most part. These E.E.F. stamps are also known with postmarks of, and on covers from, various places in territories now known as Turkey, Syria, Latakia, Lebanon, Iraq, Trans-Jordan, and Egypt. All usages outside of Palestine are extremely scarce. It might also be noted that E.E.F. stamps showing postmarks dated July 1, 1920, and later, were used during the civil administration of Palestine and are of interest as distinguished from those used under the military administration.



E.E.F. used outside Palestine 5m with 1919 Beyrouth cancel



1921 OHMS cover to Denmark with 1 pi E.E.F., Sc. 9



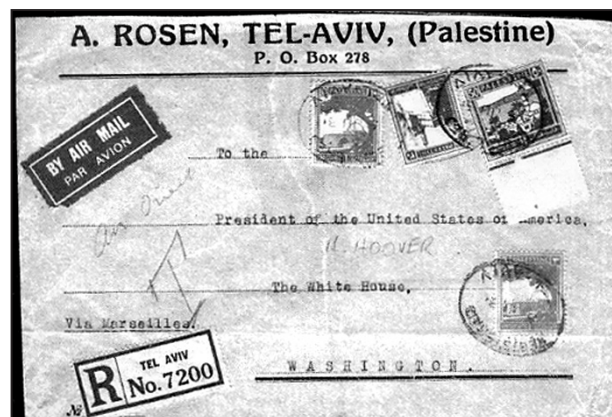
1918 cover from SZ44 (Jerusalem) to Great Britain with 1 pi, cover with "DAMAGED BY IMMERSION IN SEA WATER" boxed handstamp. Two mail carrying ships were torpedoed but able to deliver their cargo. This is the only wreck cover from Palestine with its stamp still attached.

X. The Palestine Civilian Posts

By the terms of the Peace Treaty of Versailles of 1919, Great Britain was given a mandate over Palestine, to be administered in the interests of a Jewish national homeland in accordance with the Balfour declaration. Although the terms of the Peace Treaty were effective as of January 10, 1920, a civil govern-



1925 airmail cover from Palestine to Iraq with E.E.F. 2pi. The cover was carried on the first regularly scheduled acceptance of civilian mail from Palestine.



1931 Registered cover from Palestine to the President of the United States (Hoover), franked with 1927 3m, 10m, 20m and 50m, sent by French service via Marseilles and Air Orient

ment in Palestine was not established until July 1, 1920. Sir Herbert Samuels was appointed the first British High Commissioner for Palestine.

One of the early acts of the civil administration was to take over the military post offices and arrange for a definitive stamp issue for Palestine. The new stamps, consisting of the old E.E.F. stamps overprinted with the name "Palestine" in three languages, were first issued on September 1, 1920, and so ending the story of the foreign posts in Palestine....

The tri-lingual overprint on the Palestine stamps is quite unique in philately, no similar case being known. The languages of the overprint are Arabic, English, and Hebraic. The Arabic inscription reads "Falastina," the native version of "Palestine." The Hebraic overprint reads "Palestina" and is followed by two

characters which are the abbreviation of "Eretz-Yisroel," Hebrew for "Land of Israel." This is the first and only time Hebraic inscriptions have appeared on recognized postage stamps. The only other instance where the author has been able to find the use of the Hebrew language on postal stationery was on a bi-lingual Turkish pre-war registry label (illustrated at left).



The precursor of the Tri-Lingual Overprints of Palestine, a Pre-war Turkish Registration label of Jerusalem



Palestine 1 millieme 1920 Tri-Lingual overprint, Sc. 15



1905 four country franking with stamps from Austrian, Russian, French, German Post Offices in Jerusalem, each tied by respective cancels