

Part 2

Taxed Mail of the Ottoman Period

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*Editor's note: The article originally appeared as a 5 part series in the **Holy Land Postal History** journal, vols. 53-59, 1993-1994. The illustrations are copies of copies and are not very sharp or clear.*

THE FRENCH POST OFFICE

The French post office used postage due (P.D.) stamps for the purpose of taxation of mail. No special P.D. stamps had been prepared for the use of the French offices in the Levant, and they were supplied with the same P.D. stamps used in France.

Only five items taxed in the Holy Land by the French post office have been recorded to date. Four of these were taxed in Jerusalem using P.D. stamps. The fifth was taxed in Haifa and ordinary Levant stamps were used in lieu of P.D.s.

All five items - two postcards and three covers - were mailed from the United States to the Holy Land. They were insufficiently franked with the postage paying the United States inland rate instead of the rate to a foreign country.

The study of mail taxed by the French post office is made easy by the fact that the French centime (equal to a Golden Centime) was, according to the Universal Postal Union (UPU) agreements, the international accountancy monetary unit. Thus, the amount charged in centimes by the Post Office of the country of origin



Figure 1 One cent inland postcard mailed from New York to Jerusalem, taxed with 10 centime P.D. by the French Post Office in Jerusalem on October 11, 1909.

was actually the amount collected by the French post. For the period dealt with, United States 1 cent was equal to 5 French centimes.

THE POSTCARDS

As mentioned, two taxed postcards are recorded. One, originating in 1908, was shown by N.J. Collins¹. The second post card, from 1909, is shown in Figure 1. Both cards are United States domestic stationery post cards with an imprinted 1 cent stamp. The postcard rate to other countries was at that time 2 cents. On both postcards the circular cachet "T 10 centimes" was applied in New York. The postage due charge was computed as follows: double the missing 1 cent = 2 cents = 10 centimes. Upon arrival in Jerusalem, this fee was collected by application of French P.D. stamps.

THE COVERS

All three recorded covers were mailed in the United States with 2c franking. This was at the time the inland letter rate while the foreign destination letter rate was 5 cents. Accordingly, each of the covers was stamped in New York with the cachet "T 30 Centimes" (double deficient of 3 cents = 6 cents = 30 centimes).

The earliest of these covers was mailed in February, 1910 and arrived at the French P.O. in Jerusalem on March 14, 1910 (Figure 2). Taxed the next day, it should bear on its back six 5 centimes P.D. stamps – apparently one 5 centimes stamp is missing.

The only doubly taxed cover of the forerunner period seen so far is shown in Figure 3. This cover was mailed from New York in February, 1914. Upon arrival at the French P.O. in Jerusalem one 10 and one 20 centimes P.D. stamps were affixed on March 6. In an attempt to collect the 30 centimes, the payment was refused by the addressee, so the cover had to be returned to the sender.

This we learn of two postal cachets – both unrecorded so far for Jerusalem – a rectangular "Refuse" on the back, and a double line "retour a l'envoyeur" on the front.

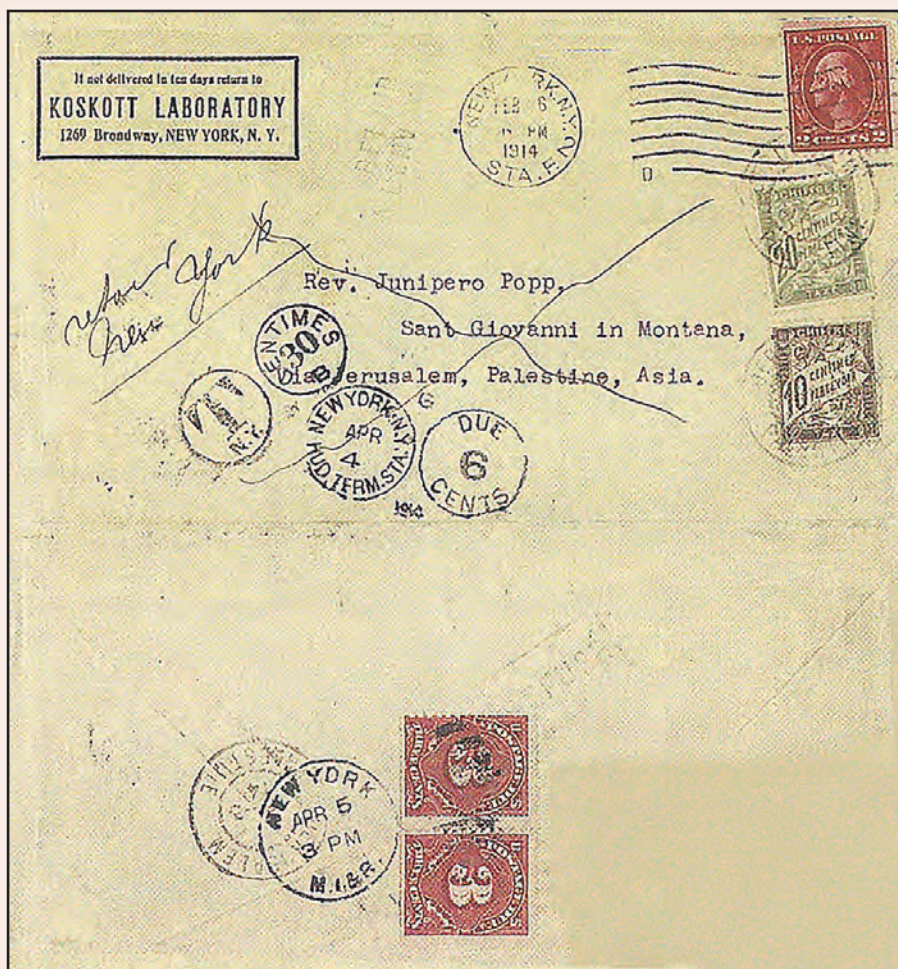
A second attempt to recover the charges was made in New York as

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Figure 3: Two cents underfranked cover (instead of 5 cents) from New York to Jerusalem, marked "T 30 centimes" by New York duplex handstamp and accordingly taxed by 10c and 20c P.D.s at the Jerusalem French P.O. in March 1914. Having been refused by the addressee, the cover was returned to the United States marked "Due 6 cents" and taxed in New York by two 3c United States Postage Dues.



Figure 2 Cover from the United States franked 2¢ (inland letter rate), taxed upon arrival in Jerusalem with six French 5 centimes P.D.'s (one stamp missing?), March 15, 1910



evidenced by the duplex “Due 6 cents” of April 4, 1914 and the pre-cancelled pair of 3 cents American P.D. stamps affixed on the back on April 5. The manuscript notation on the front “refused New York” suggests that this second attempt to recover the charges had no greater success than the first one in Jerusalem.



Figure 4 An underfranked cover (2 cents instead of 5 cents) from the United States to “Haifa, Syria,” taxed by the French P.O. in Haifa by 2 definitive(!) French Levant stamps in March 1914.

The third cover (Figure 4) is a 2 ce postal stationery cover mailed by a bank to Haifa on February 14, 1914. On the front it shows the duplex “T 30 centimes” and on the back a Haifa arrival postmark dated March 3. The charge of 30 centimes was indicated by 5 and 25 centimes definitive French Levant stamps. These were handstamped by the triangular “T” mark.

This extraordinary usage of definitive stamps instead of postage due stamps may be explained by a temporary shortage of the latter at Haifa. This explanation is supported by the fact that loose French P.D. stamps postmarked at Haifa are known. The shortage was not general as the Figure 3 cover was taxed by P.D. stamps in Jerusalem three days later.

In summary, the rarity of this material has to be emphasized once more. All recorded covers taxed with P.D. stamps were taxed in Jerusalem.

As mentioned by Collins, loose P.D. stamps used in Haifa and Jaffa are known. The possibility that a cover or post card taxed with P.D. stamps at those offices, although remote, does exist.

* All dates in this section are according to the Julian Calendar.

THE RUSSIAN AND GERMAN POST OFFICES

Neither the Russian nor the German Post Office used P.D. stamps during the period prior to World War I. Handstamps and manuscript marks were used by the post offices on taxed mail, and the fees were collected from the addressees in cash. The study of this mail is quite difficult, as in many cases information usually provided by the P.D. stamps and the cancellation on the stamps – date, place and even the amount charged – is absent. The extreme rarity of the material is another factor which causes difficulties in this study. So far I have recorded only seven items from both of these offices which had been taxed on delivery in the Holy Land.

THE RUSSIAN POST OFFICE*

Four taxed post cards (no covers) have been recorded so far. One was shown by Collins² and the other three are illustrated here. All show encircled “T” handstamps which are sometimes similar, but definitely not identical. It cannot be concluded whether any of these marks belong to the offices in the Holy Land.

The earliest taxed item of the Russian Post Office dates back to 1889. It is a tatty 3 Kopecks Russian stationery postcard mailed to Jaffa (Figure 5). The correct rate was 4 Kop, so the postcard was underpaid 1 Kop. An encircled “T” handstamp is clearly visible, but it seems that no notation of the amount to be charged was made. This amount should have been double that missing amount, i.e., 2 Kop. The blue “ROPIT JAFFA” oval arrival mark



Figure 5 Russian 1889 3 Kop postcard to Jaffa bearing “T” mark and Jaffa arrival postmark on lower right corner.



Figure 6 Russian 1905 3 Kop postcard to Jerusalem showing circled "T" and "ROPIT JERUSALEM" arrival postmark.

is faintly seen on the lower right corner.

Another 3 Kop postcard is shown in Figure 6. It was mailed on June 29, 1905 from Ekaterinoslav to Jerusalem by the Zionist leader M. Usishkin, just before he left for the 7th Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland. This postcard is also underpaid 1 Kop, therefore an encircled "T" was applied, probably by the office of origin. Further markings are an Odessa transit mark on July 1, and "ROPIT JERUSALEM" arrival dated July 19, 1905.



Figure 7 The only Russian taxed item with clear evidence – by manuscript – of charges having been collected.

Apparently the tax – again 2 Kop – was collected in cash on delivery.

The Figure 7 postcard, mailed in September 1913, bears a 2 Kop stamp and shows clear signs of another stamp which is missing. It shows a violet "T", encircled by small stars, a handstamp and two manuscript notations.

These manuscripts prove to be most interesting. One, in red on the lower edge, reads "To collect 2 Metaliks". The other, in blue, reads "2 Metaliks received" followed

by a signature. A Metalik was an Ottoman coin equal to 10 paras, so the tax was 20 paras, equal to 4 Kopecks (1 Kopeck = 5 paras). This tax suggests that the missing stamp was the reason for taxation – the postcard rate was 4 Kop and the tax of 4 Kop is twice the missing 2 Kop

Unfortunately, from the four items recorded for the Russian Office, it is not possible to conclude that any of the handstamps used were applied in the Holy Land. In all likelihood they were applied at the outgoing office as is usually the case.

THE GERMAN POST OFFICE

Only three items have been recorded that show postage due charges were collected upon delivery by the German Post in the Holy Land. All these items clearly show the charges in manuscript.

The earliest, and the only inland item, was illustrated by Collins in his article² It is a postcard mailed from Rishon LeZion via Jaffa to Jerusalem on April 4, 1906 and franked by a 10 para stamp. As the rate was 20 para, a boxed "T" – typical for the German Post – was applied and the charge of ½ piastre, double the missing 10 paras, was marked by blue crayon.

The following two postcards were mailed from Germany to the Holy Land, each only franked 5 pf instead of 10 pf.. Therefore each were taxed upon arrival and charged ½ piastre (5 pf x 2 = 10 pf = 20 paras = ½ piastre).

The postcard in Figure 8 was mailed on March 12, 1908 from Konigsberg to Jaffa (to a POB) at the Austrian Post

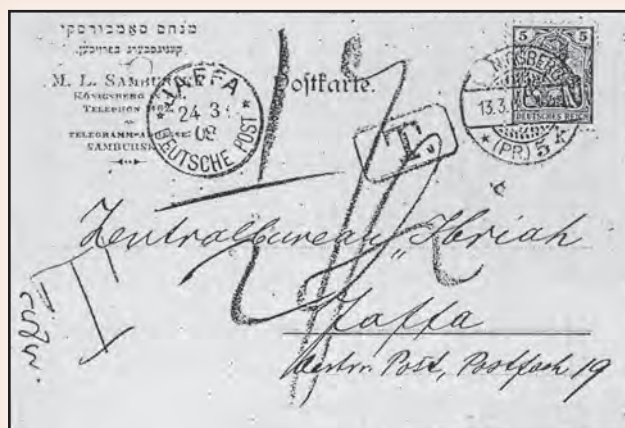


Figure 8: Underfranked German post card taxed ½piastre in Jaffa, 1908.

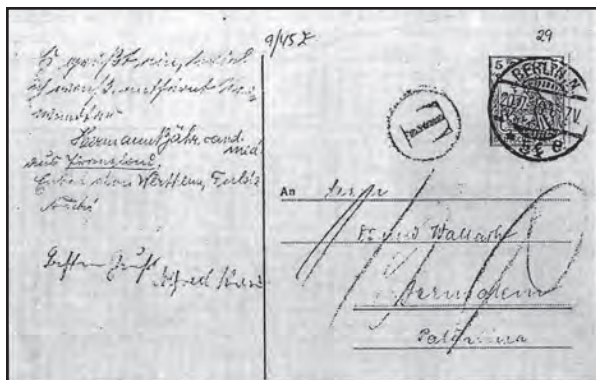


Figure 9: Underfranked German post card taxed ½ piastre in Jerusalem 1910.

Office!). It shows the typical German boxed “T” mark, Jaffa arrival dated March 24, 1908 and a bold “½Pi” in blue in manuscript.

The other (Figure 9) had been mailed from Berlin on July 20, 1910 to the well known physician Dr. Wallach in Jerusalem. It has an encircled “T” mark, and again is inscribed “½ P” by blue pencil. The charges on all these postcards were collected in cash upon delivery.

Acknowledgements: I would like to express my help from the late H.G. Muentz z”l for the Russian translations in Figure 6.

Reference:

1. N.J. Collins, HLP# #52 (1992), pp. 594-605, Figure 12.
2. N.J. Collins, HLP# #52, (1992) pp. 594-605, Figs. 15 & 17. ■

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