

British Post Offices in the Levant 1857-1923

Historical Background: Great Britain was among the Powers that operated their own Post Offices on sovereign Turkish territory in the 19th century. This anomaly of national post offices operating in the Ottoman Empire was due to the so-called *Capitulations*. The term "Levant" is used to describe the Ottoman Ports.

Postal Background: A civilian British Post Office was first established in **Constantinople** in 1857, taking over from the Army Post Office which was set up during the Crimean War. In the following years, four more offices were opened in the Levant: **Smyrna** in 1872 (now Izmir in Turkey), **Beyrout** in 1873, **Stamboul** in 1885 - a Constantinople sub-office and **Salonica** in 1900 (now Thessaloniki in Greece).

Communication in the early years was achieved by the use of steamers via Marseilles and Brindisi, the *Lloyd Austriaco* and the French *Messageries Maritimes* attracting the lion's share of the postal contracts. When the railway line between Constantinople and Vienna was completed in 1889, railway became the dominant means for the transportation of mail.

The **Postal Rates** before the GPU / UPU agreement in 1875 are complex as they are directly depended on the **Postal Routes** employed in each case. The GPU / UPU approved certain international rates as from 1.7.75 and the rate situation was much simplified.

The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and especially the outbreak of WW1 severely affected the Levant postal network, causing the indefinite closure of the Offices by the Sublime Porte in September 1914. It was only in 1919 that the British re-established civilian POs in Smyrna and Constantinople. The former was burned down during the destruction of Smyrna in September 1922, while the latter closed permanently in September 1923.

Scope, Study and Presentation: This is a *postal history* exhibit of the *civilian* British Post Offices in the Levant from 1857 until 1923. It reflects considerable original research and new discoveries regularly reported in "The Overprinter" Journal of the Great Britain Overprints Society of which the exhibitor is the Levant Research Coordinator.

It is organized by Post Office and divided in two periods:

- **Part One : 1857 - 1914**
The Pre-War POs: *Constantinople, Stamboul, Smyrna, Beyrout & Salonica*
The Effect of War on British Levant Mail: *Balkan Wars (1912-13), WW1 (1914)*
- **Part Two : 1919 - 1923**
The Post-War POs: *Constantinople & Smyrna*

Indispensable bibliography:

1. Malim, Richard. *British Levant Study Papers Nos 1- 7*. The Great Britain Overprints Society, 1981-2000
2. Moubray, Jane and Michael. *British Letter Mail to Overseas Destinations 1840-1875*. The Royal Philatelic Society London, 1992.

Part One: 1857 - 1914

Constantinople	pp 3-37	Beyrout	pp 61-71
Stamboul	38-44	Salonica	72-88
Smyrna	45-60	Effect of the War	89-96

Part One covers the pre-war period of the British Post Offices in the Levant. It begins in 1857 when the Constantinople PO was open and ends in September - October 1914 when all British Levant Post Offices closed down shortly after the WW1 broke out.



Salonica, Constantinople & Smyrna in Turkey-in-Europe (pre - 1912) and Asia Minor



Beyrout in Middle East

Forerunner:

A British Army Post Office was established in Constantinople to cater for the needs of the British troops during the Crimean War of 1853-56. As this was of purely military nature, it escapes the scope of this exhibit. However, it was the predecessor of the civilian PO and as such an example is shown here:



Backstamp (100%)

26/3/56: Camp Sebastopol to Upton - on - Severn (10/4) via the British Army Post Office at Constantinople. Soldier's concession rate of 3d per 1/4 oz via Marseilles, stamps cancelled in London.

CONSTANTINOPE

PRE - GPU / UPU PERIOD: 1857 - 1875

Opened on 1st July 1857, it was the first and the largest British PO in the Levant with a business volume that exceeded 50% of all offices. It effectively took over the Army PO which was established during the Crimean War. Ordinary British stamps were used, cancelled with the C "killer". For simplicity, in this Pre-UPU period we can categorize the mail according to destination as follows:

A. GREAT BRITAIN, B. MALTA, C. OTHER DESTINATIONS

A. Mails to Great Britain

The "Principal" Routes from Constantinople to GB are as follows (A1, A2 & A3):

A1

- **Route: Via French Packet to Marseilles.** Principal Route until 14/5/67. Became Secondary Route on 15/5/67.
- **Rates:** 1/7/57 - 14/5/67 6d ¼ oz, 1/7/70 8d ½ oz, 1/7/75 6d ½ oz
1/7/57 - 10/61 Registration Fee 6d per ¼ oz
10/61 - 31/1/66 Reg'n Fee 6d per item
1/2/1866 Reg'n Fee reduced to 4d



7/12/64: Constantinople to London (15/12) *triple* rate Registered letter via French Packet paying 2s (6d per ¼ oz + 6d Reg'n Fee). Elusive 'REGISTERED' handstamp applied in Constantinople (one of three recorded).

Only recorded example of the 6d per item Reg'n Fee (Ex Cihangir, Metliss)

Route A1: Incoming Mail

A choice of two incoming letters via Marseilles, mainly because they required some form of action on the part of the receiving Constantinople PO:

10/10/66: from
Manchester at 6d $\frac{1}{4}$ oz.

$\frac{1}{2}$ oz letter underpaid
and marked
"INSUFFICIENTLY
PREPAID" additionally
charged 1s (i.e. the
additional 6d per $\frac{1}{4}$ oz and
two fines of 3d per $\frac{1}{4}$ oz
unprepaid).

No markings of the
Constantinople PO to
denote collection of the
additional charge.



7/7/69: from Lombard Street, London $\frac{3}{4}$ oz letter at 1s 6d. Arrived on 16/7 and remained for a few months in the Constantinople PO. "NOT-CALLED-FOR" applied before returned to London in January 1870.

Very few examples of this Instructional handstamp are known (Ex Robert Johnson)

A2

- **Route: "Quick Route" Via Vienna and France.** Principal Route from 15/5/67 (no mail from Constantinople recorded before this date). With the opening of the Varna - Rustchuk railway this superseded the route to Marseilles by French Packet. *The Franco Prussian War suspended this service and was replaced by the Belgian Route in 7/70*
- **Rates:** 15/5/67 - 24/7/70 8d ¼ oz, 1s 2d ½ oz, 1s 10d ¾ oz
Reg'n Fee 6d per ¼ oz



13/8/67: to
Manchester (20/8)
½ oz letter at
1s 2d, via the
"Quick Route".

Most elusive
Rate

A3

- **Route: Via Belgium avoiding France.** Principal Route from 25/7/70 (no mail from Constantinople recorded before this date).
- **Rates:** 25/7/70 - 24/11/72 6d ½ oz, 25/11/72 5d ½ oz, 1/5/73 4d ½ oz
Reg'n Fee 4d



4/2/71: to
London (13/2),
½ oz letter at 6d
via Belgium.

B. Mails to MALTA

There were important commercial ties between Constantinople and Malta, and as such a considerable volume of mail is recorded. There are no official documents detailing the routes and rates (except an incomplete 1865 Treasury Warrant), but study of the recorded letters indicates that the following might be in order:

- **Route:** By British, French, Egyptian or Italian Packet.
- **Rates:** Unprepaid: 6d $\frac{1}{4}$ oz or
Prepaid: 4d $\frac{1}{4}$ oz - increased to 5d from 1866



24/3/64:
Constantinople to
Malta (2/4) at
1s 6d **up prepaid**
rate of $\frac{3}{4}$ oz



25/1/60: to Malta (14/2)
at 4d per $\frac{1}{4}$ oz **prepaid**
rate (until 1865).

"Missent to England",
and so significantly
delayed.



1866: Increased Rates to Malta



Holcombe Opinion

27/3/67: to Malta (3/4), ¼ oz letter paying 4d instead of the increased rate of 5d. Arched "INSUFFICIENTLY PREPAID" handstamp applied in Constantinople, 2d to be paid by the addressee (1d underpayment + 1d fine).

Only five covers are known with this Instructional handstamp (Ex Metlis)



17/3/69: to Malta (23/3), ¼ oz letter this time properly franked at 5d.

C. Mails to OTHER DESTINATIONS

Mail to other destinations is seldom seen. A small number of covers to USA are recorded; all other destinations are rare. Except for the case of USA, there are no known published rates, making the rate and route identification a difficult task.

Mail to USA

12/7/73: to Massachusetts via Belgium. The rate of the Belgian route from Constantinople to Great Britain fell to 4d per ½ oz on 1/5/73 (see **A3** Route shown previously). This cover, sent two months after the reduction of the rate, pays 4d to GB plus 2d transatlantic surcharge. A further 2c was the delivery charge to Middlesborough Mass. (30/7).

Mail to India

7/7/73: to Bombay (14/2) via Alexandria and SEA POST OFFICE. No known published rates, but it is most probable that the rate was 10d ½ oz.

Only three covers are known to India, this being the earliest

Mail to Gibraltar



9/6/75: to Gibraltar (29/6) via Malta (22/6), paying 5d ¼ oz for the part of the journey to Malta. Boxed "TO PAY" applied on arrival: 4d to be paid by the addressee for the Malta - Gibraltar trip.

Previously unrecorded, no other example of Pre-UPU mail to Gibraltar is known

**GPU / UPU RATES - STERLING ACCOUNTING
PERIOD: 7/1875 - 7/1885**

As a result of the Congress in 1874 the General Postal Union approved certain International Rates as from 1/7/75. The most important foreign rates are:

Printed Paper Rate	½ d
Postcards <i>Reduced 1.4.1879</i>	1 ¼ d <i>1d</i>
Letter ½ oz	2 ½ d
Registration Fee <i>Reduced 1.1.1878</i>	4d <i>2d</i>
Acknowledgment of Receipt Fee (Avis de Réception)	2 ½ d

Postcard Rate

27/2/80:
to Guildford.
1879, 1d brown
foreign card.

(CP10 according to
Huggins/Baker)

Postal Stationery will be
identified by the Huggins/
Baker catalogue: Collect
British Postal Stationery,
2007



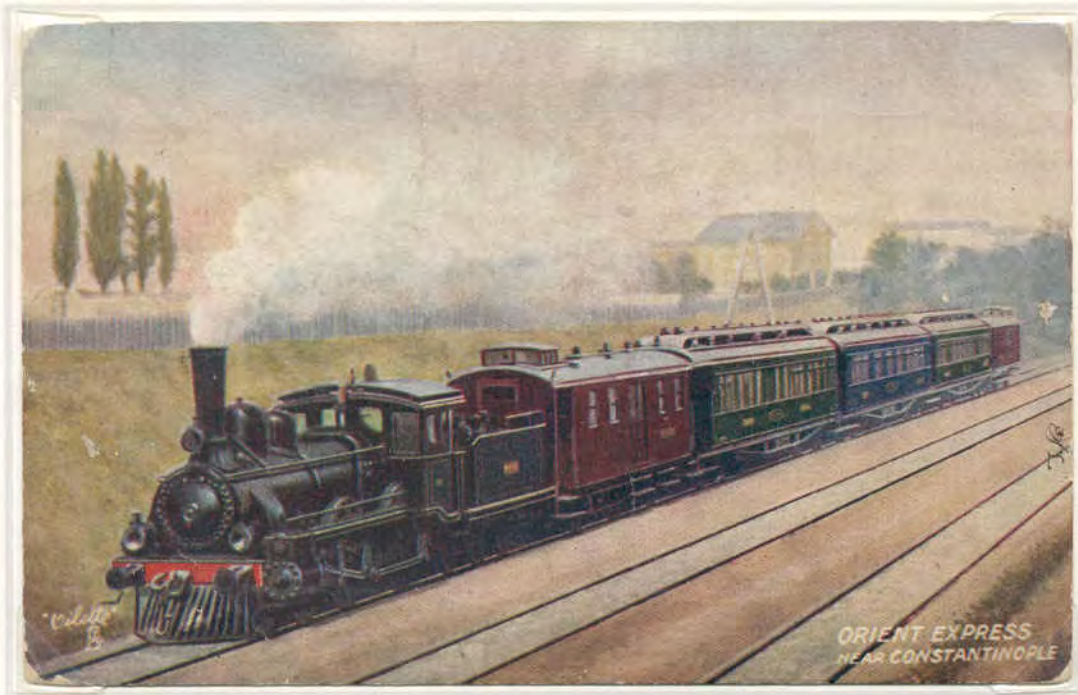
23/8/84: to Ipswich.
Reply part of the
1883 1d + 1d brown
foreign reply card
(CP18 R) which had
arrived in
Constantinople on
21/8.

A genuine "Reply"
use of this card from
Levant and as such
most elusive

Letter Mail: Single Rates (continued)

Orient Express

On June 5, 1883 the first "Express d'Orient" left Paris for Vienna. On October 4, 1883, the service was extended to Constantinople but passengers were ferried across the Danube to pick up another train to Varna, from where they completed their journey by ferry. On June 1, 1889, the first non-stop train to Constantinople left Paris.



c.1900

The implementation of the *Orient Express* significantly shortened the transit time of the mails. A letter from Constantinople to Great Britain would now take just four days.



OXFORD
H
JA26
84

22/1/84: to Oxford
(26/1) single rate
"Per Orient
Express".

The earliest
recorded (non
philatelic) letter
marked to be
carried on the
Orient Express train

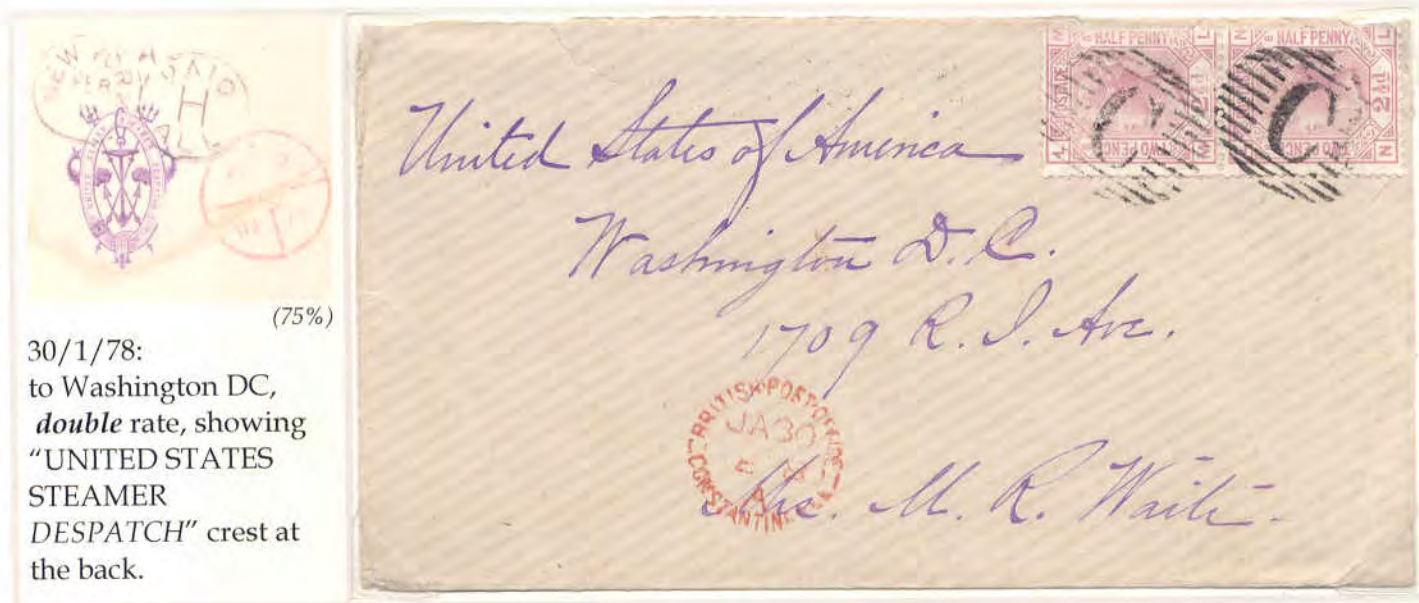
Per. Orient Express

CONSTANTINOPLE
JA 26
84

TWO PENCE
HALF PENNY

Mrs Boyle,
c/o Rev. H. J. Funnell,
Funnell's Hall,
Oxford,
England

Letter Mail: Double Rates



30/1/78:
to Washington DC,
double rate, showing
"UNITED STATES
STEAMER
DESPATCH" crest at
the back.

(75%)

USS "Despatch" departed from Washington DC on 20 April 1877 for the eastern Mediterranean and a special assignment with the US Embassy at Constantinople. Arriving there on 14 June, Despatch carried dispatches and transported the **American minister to the Ottoman Empire**, which was in turmoil because of war with the Russian Empire and internal political unrest.

Registration Fee 4 Pence



14/11/77: to Manchester (22/11) *double* rate via Brindisi with the 4d Reg'n Fee.

One of two recorded covers from British Levant with the GB 4d Sage-green (1877) and one of three recorded covers showing the elusive 4d Reg'n Fee (ex Bollen, Metliss)

Letter Mail: Double Rates (continued)

Registration Fee reduced

As shown in the Rate Table at the beginning of this section, the Registration Fee was reduced to 2d on 1.1.78.



10/1/81: to Boston Mass. **double** rate with the reduced Reg'n Fee of 2d showing the "REGISTERED - LETTER" handstamp of the Constantinople PO.

Four covers are known with this Registration handstamp, this being the only double rate

Letter Mail: Triple Rate



4/12/83: British Embassy at Constantinople to Marlborough House, London (8/12)
1 ½ oz (*triple*) letter at 7 ½ d.

- The sender: *Lord Dufferin*, ambassador to the Ottoman Empire - later appointed as Viceroy of India.
- The addressee: *HRH The Prince of Wales* - later became King Edward VII.

Higher than double rates in this period are seldom seen

UPU RATES - MIXED ACCOUNTING PERIOD: 8/1885 - 9/1914

On 1/8/85 the British Post Office surcharged stamps in Turkish currency (except for the low values of ½ d and 1d). This in effect gave each stamp two face values: a 2 ½ d stamp surcharged "40 Paras" would cost 40 Paras if paid for in Turkish currency and 2 ½ d if paid for in Sterling. At the same time the overprint made the postage stamp invalid in the home country and therefore ruled out any currency fiddle.

As stamps of both British and Turkish currency were used and accepted at the British Post Offices in the Levant, this period is referred to by students as "*Mixed Accounting Period*". The basic (external) UPU rates thus became:

Printed Paper Rate *	½ d
Postcards*	1 d
Letter per 20 grams	1 Piastre **
Registration Fee	1 Piastre
Acknowledgment of Receipt Fee	1 Piastre

* Printed Paper Rate and Postcard Rate still expressed in British currency

** 1 Piastre = 40 Paras

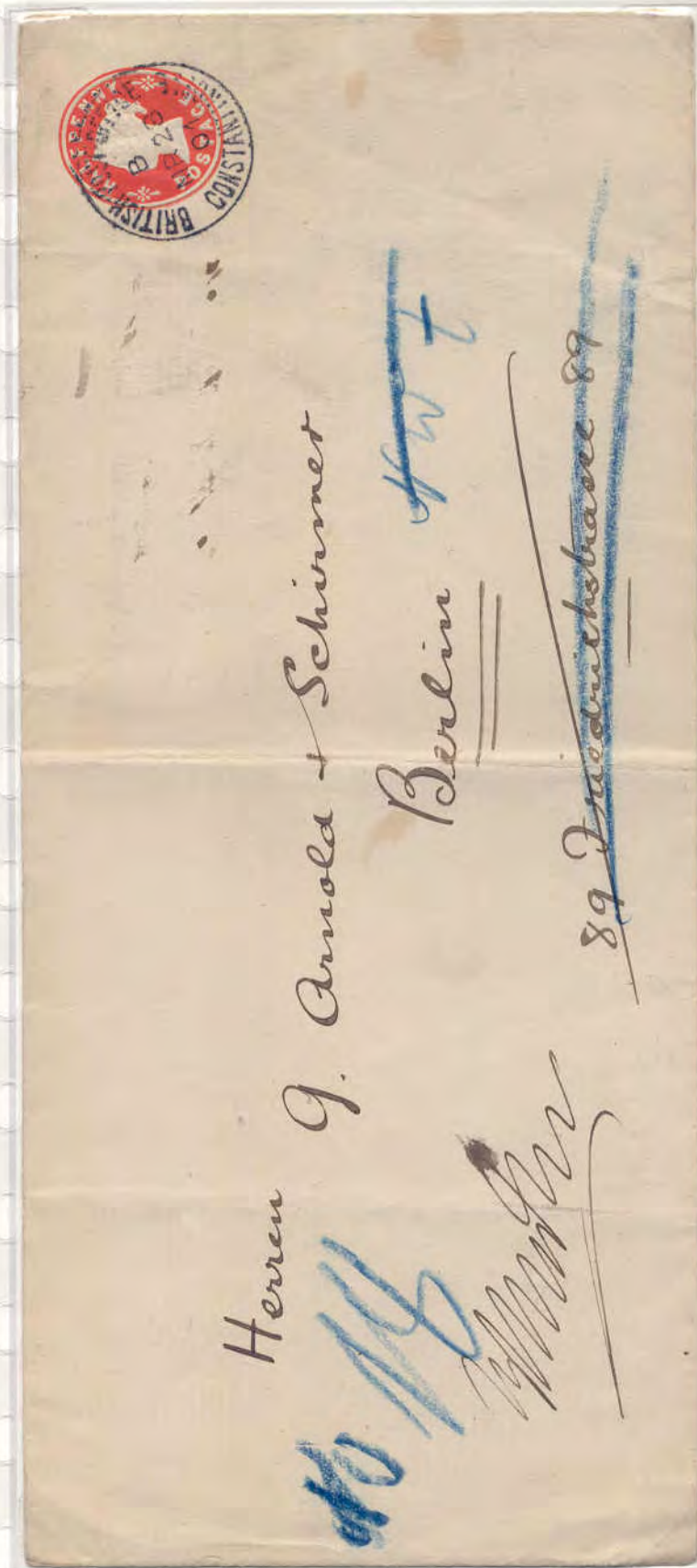
In October 1907 the rate for each additional 20 grams was reduced to 30 Paras. These rates remained unchanged up to the closure of the Offices in September 1914.



16/8/87: to London (20/8), paying 40 Paras foreign letter rate up to 20 grams plus 2d Registration Fee (instead of the usual 40 Paras stamp).

The only recorded use of the GB 2d lilac (1884) on cover from Constantinople and a truly representative "*Mixed Accounting*" example

Printed Paper Rate



Two examples of the Printed Paper Rate at ½ d or 10 Paras per 2 oz:

Top: 28/7/08 to Bethlehem (1/8), Switzerland ½ d yellow-green Newspaper Wrapper (WP21) overprinted "LEVANT".

Left: 28/3/01 to Berlin ½ d vermilion unglued Printed Paper Rate envelope (EP37) with tongued tuck-in flap.

This envelope is most unusual from Constantinople

Postcards

As with Printed Paper, the Postcard rate was still expressed in Sterling:



12/6/89: to Kazanlik, Bulgaria via the Harmanli-Tzaribord Traveling PO.

1883, 1d brown foreign card (CP15)



16/3/93: to Castleford.

1892, 1d red foreign card (CP27).

The "C" in vertical oval killer is only rarely found on postal stationery (ex Metliss)

Postcards (continued)

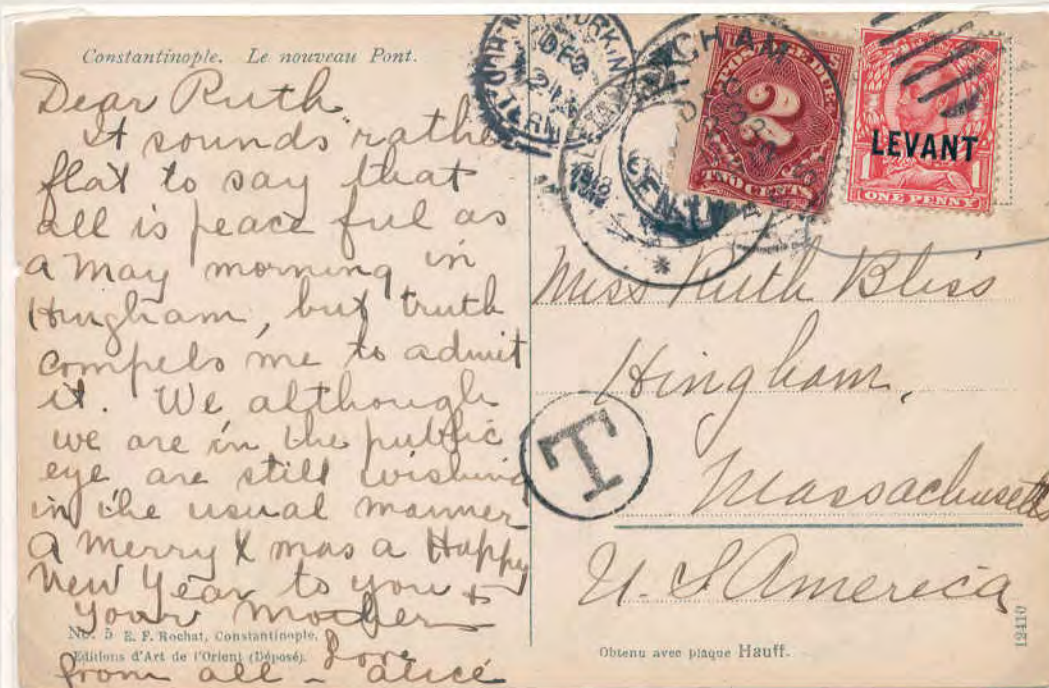
Taxed Mail

1/10/00: to
Dardanelles
(4/10), via the
Galata Turkish PO.

1899, 1d carmine
foreign card (CP35)



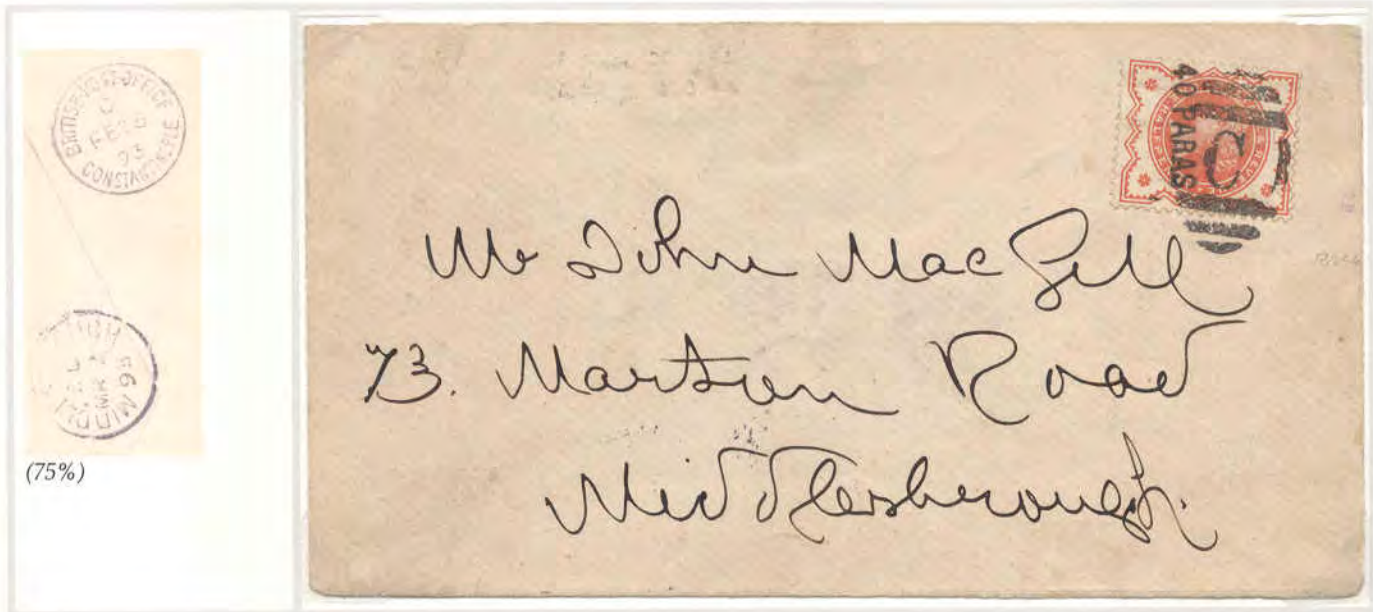
The postcard was taxed by the Turkish officials as the Ottoman Post did not recognize prepayment in stamps of a foreign Nation for delivery within the Ottoman Empire.



Dec. 1912: Ppc of Constantinople franked 1d LEVANT posted on a ship of the Romanian "ALEXANDRIA - CONSTANTA" line.

The British Levant stamp was not recognized as valid payment by the Romanians and a "T" in circle impressed indicating deficiency. A 2c surcharge (double the deficiency) was collected on arrival in Hingham Mass. A previously unrecorded use of the Romanian Maritime Postal Service between Egypt and Romania.

Letter Mail: Single Rates



25/2/93: to Middlesborough (2/3), first day "MacGill" use of the 40 Paras / ½ d "Constantinople Provisional", paying the foreign single letter rate. These stamps were overprinted locally by handstamp after an initiative by Mr Cobb the Constantinople Postmaster, reportedly as the ordinary 40 Paras / 2 ½ d stock was running low. Used from 25 February - 1 March 1893.



22/10/98: to Hamburg (25/10), taxed for the ½ d deficiency. As stated earlier, stamps in Sterling (2 ½ d) paying the 40 Paras letter rate was an alternative albeit seldom used.

Letter Mail: Multiple Rates



31/12/03: to Leipzig (3/1), 3d red-brown Postal Stationery Registered Envelope (PSRE) (RP24) overprinted "REGN: FEE. / 40 PARAS" with additional 2 x 40 Paras stamps for a *double* rate Registered letter.



25/4/96: to Wittenberg (28/4), 2 ½ d grey-blue PSE (EP35) overprinted "40 PARAS" with additional stamps of 120 Paras for a *triple* rate Registered letter.

The use of the violet "R" handstamp as a canceller is most unusual

Letter Mail: Multiple Rates (continued)

12 Piastres High Value on Commercial Cover



13/2/97: to Dresden (16/2) paying a total of 15 Piastres for a 14th rate Registered letter, showing a commercial use on cover of the 12 Piastres / 2s 6d high value stamp.

Only three covers are recorded with this high value stamp (ex Cihangir)

Letter Mail: The October 1907 Rate Change

On 29th October 1907 the rate for each additional 20 grams was reduced to 30 Paras.



(75%)



2/12/09: to Palermo via maritime "NATANTE NAPOLI-PALERMO", double rate letter paying 1 Piastre 30 Paras (1d=20 Paras), the correct rate after the October 1907 rate change.

The 1 Piastre 10 Paras /3d stamp was part of the "double line" overprints set issued on 16 November 1909 which was shortly replaced on 24 January 1910 by the subsequent "fractional" issue (in this case the "1 Piastre 10 Paras" was changed to "1 ¼ Piastre").

The only recorded cover with the "1 Piastre 10 Paras /3d dull reddish purple on yellow" stamp showing a proper commercial use in the correct period of usage

Letter Mail: Special Services:

Acknowledgment of Receipt
(Avis de Réception)



(60%)



31/1/12: to Honolulu (20/2) Hawaii, double rate Registered & AR cover with AR handstamp.
The extra AR Fee of 1 Piastre was affixed to the accompanying special AR form.

Only three AR covers are recorded from Constantinople, this being the only double rate and to a most unusual destination

POSTAL STATIONERY & SPECIAL FORMS

A selection of Postal Stationery and Forms is shown including some elusive items.

Registered Envelopes (PSREs)



(75%)

28/7/92: to London (1/8), 5 Piastres *quintuple* rate plus 2d Reg'n Fee.

1888, 2d blue PSRE (RP15), size H2.

Rarely seen used in British Levant



Registered Envelopes (continued)



Inland Registration.

Compensation for loss or damage given in respect of Inland Registered Envelopes of all kinds, according to the value of the contents, the fees set forth in the ordinary regulations apply.

Value	Amount of Compensation
2s.	2s.
3s.	2s.
4s.	2s.
5s.	2s.
6s.	2s.
7s.	2s.
8s.	2s.
9s.	2s.
10s.	2s.
11s.	2s.

Subject to the conditions in the published Regulations as to Inland Letters, &c.

(75%)

the published Inland Letters.

(150%)

28/5/06: to Beaune, France, single rate Registered Letter. 1893, 2d blue PSRE (RP20), size F with text error "Publisbed" at the back.



23/4/01: to Sheffield (27/4) at single rate. 1898, 2d blue PSRE (RP22), size G.

Registered Envelopes (continued)



REGISTERED

THIS LETTER MUST BE GIVEN TO
TO BE REGISTERED, AND A
THE ADDRESS MUST BE

Herrn Richard

3

Germany

LETTER.

AN OFFICER OF THE POST OFFICE
RECEIPT OBTAINED FOR IT.
WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE.

Jerow

Falkstrasse 19

10

Leipzig

*M 24
18*



FEE PAID.

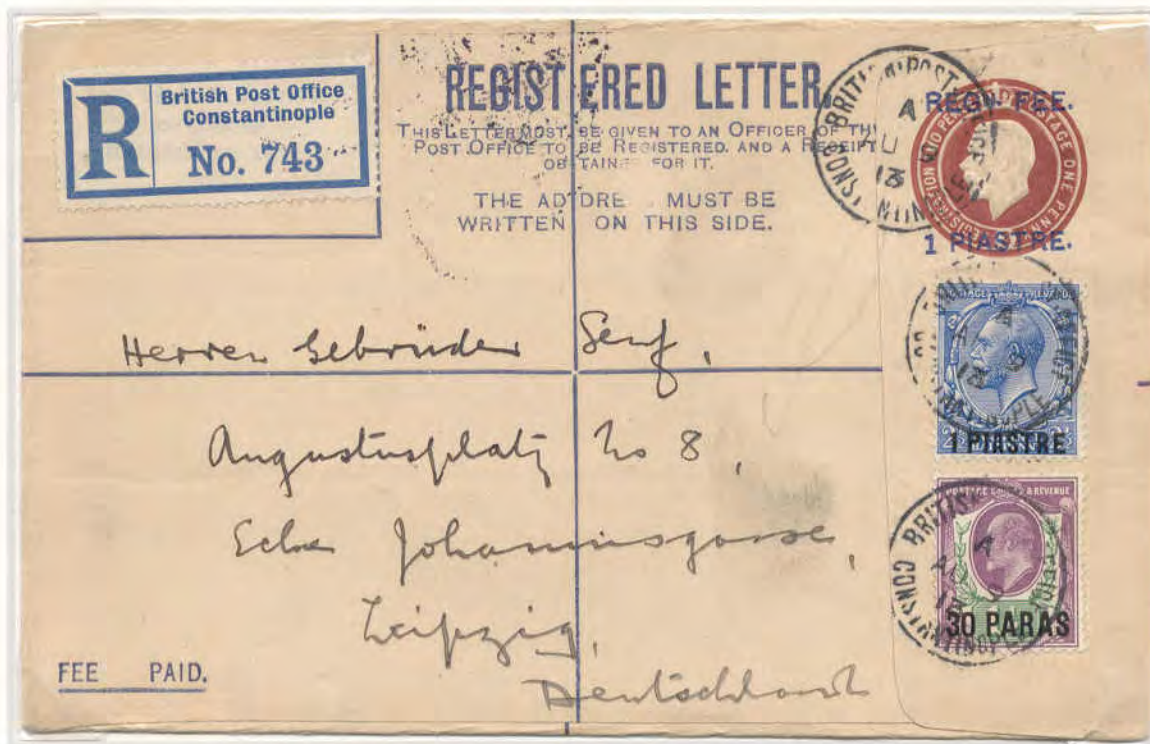
25/7/07: to Leipzig (28/7) at double rate. 1902 3d red-brown PSRE (RP24), size K overprinted "REGN. FEE. / 40 PARAS."
Only very few examples of this elusive size are recorded

Registered Envelopes (continued)



8/3/07: to London (12/3) at single rate, 1902 3d red-brown PSRE (RP24), size G overprinted "REGN. FEE. / 40 PARAS.". It bears the provisional Reg'n label issued on 18/2/07 which was replaced by the definitive issue only a month later.

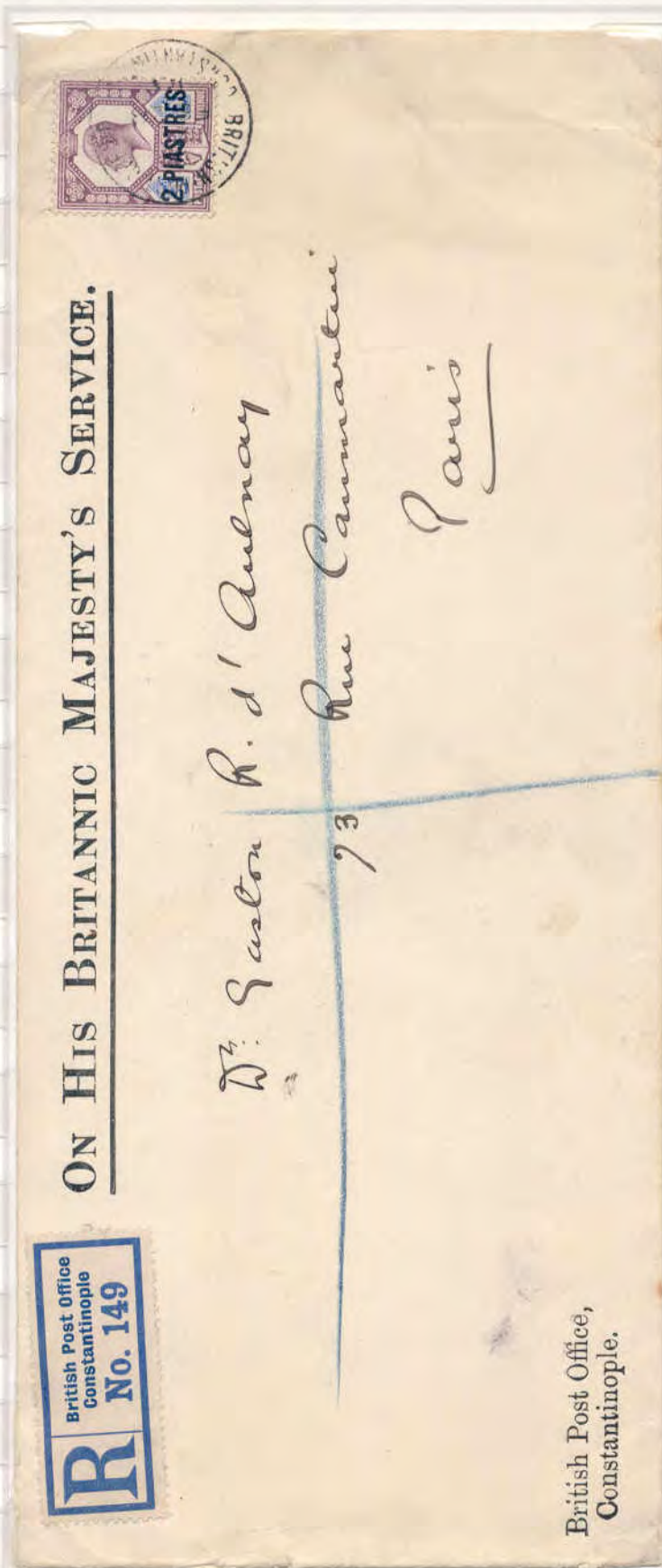
Only four covers with this Registration label are recorded from Constantinople



9/8/13: to Leipzig (12/8), double rate, 1912 3d red-brown PSRE (RP28), size G overprinted "REGN. FEE. / 1 PIASTRE.". It shows the definitive Reg'n label.

Post Office Envelopes

Two similar - but with slight differences - Official Post Office Envelopes



28/2/10: Constantinople to Paris, single rate Registered post office envelope.

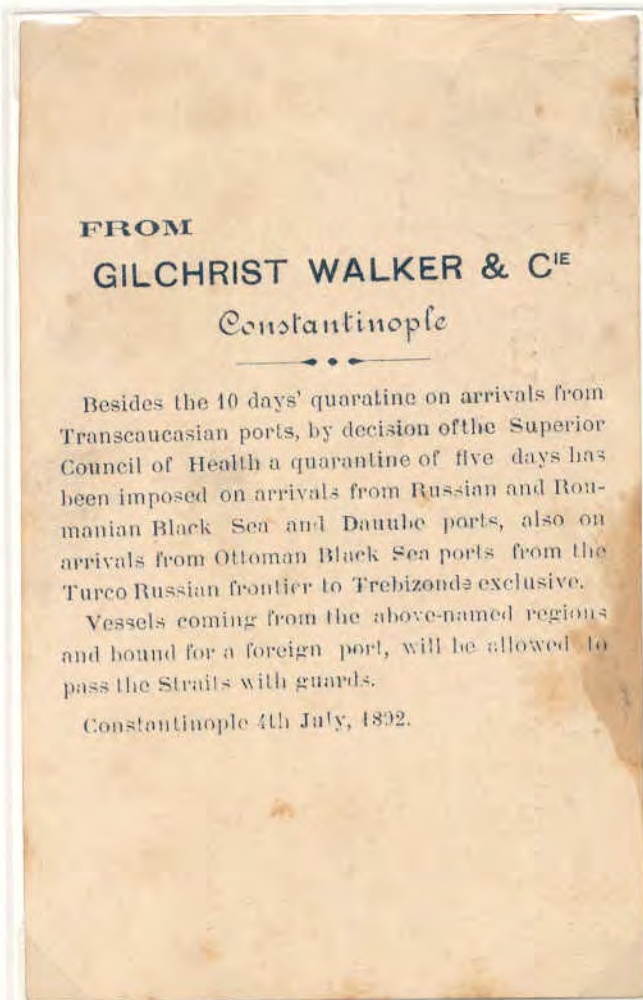


26/6/14: Constantinople to London, "BPO No 3" post office envelope unusually franked with a strip of three 30 Paras (10 Paras overpayment).

Postcards



10/10/98: to Neheim (13/10), Germany. 1883, 1d + 1d brown foreign reply card (CP18), with the Reply Part unused.



Quarantine Notice Postcard



4/7/92: to Liverpool. 1892, 1d red foreign card (CP27), privately printed at the back with message referring to quarantine measures. **Most unusual**

In 1892 there was plague in several Levant places and a serious outbreak of cholera spreading from Persia into Russia and on into Germany.

Postcards (continued)



28/1/07: to Bludenz (1/2), Austria. 1902, 1d + 1d carmine foreign reply card (CP47), overprinted LEVANT with the Reply Part unused.

Provisional 'LEVANT' Overprint

13/5/11:
to Gothenburg
(20/5), Sweden.
1908-11, 1d
pale-carmine
postcard (CP56)
overprinted
LEVANT.
This is the
"provisional"
overprint
(smaller) only
used for a few
months in 1911.

(see also another
example in the
Beyrouth section)



One of six recorded examples

Foreign Postcards

In a few cases Foreign Postcards were posted in the British PO and were not taxed by the British officials, probably because they would expect similar treatment to their own postcards. Two *genuine commercial* uses are shown here:



Special Form for Turkish Customs

(75%)



BUREAU DE POSTE BRITANNIQUE CONSTANTINOPLE.



La Direction de la Douane de Galata est priée de remettre au porteur de la parcelle postale désigné dans notre liste de consignation en date du 10.3.1909 comme ci-dessous :

Numéros d'ordre	MARQUES	ADRESSES	CONTENU.
31	1692.	Mrs Parascevitza Sivargola Coursu Gesme	Belt

Valeur.

Ps: 27

Galata, le



Le Directeur du Bureau de Poste Britannique.

G & S 1459 5000/4/07-[1620] 5000 2/08v

3/4/09: Special form of the British PO Constantinople to the Galata Customs Office with Turkish fiscals, requesting hand over to the bearer of a parcel sent on 10/3/09. On reverse black on green 1Pi Quais de Constantinople perforated label.

Only recorded example

(This is the discovery piece, see article by the exhibitor in "The Overprinter" Edition 3/2010, p.77)

MEMORANDUM.

From **The British Postmaster,**

CONSTANTINOPLE,

28 Feb. 1900.

To

*D. Gaston R. d'Aulnay
Paris*

*In accordance with your communication
of the 19th Feb. containing a remittance*

Post Office Receipt



Received of the Italian Embassy the sum of Ps. 336 on a /c of Postage
due to the British Post Office Constantinople for September 1901.

Ps. 336.

[Handwritten signature]



UNUSUAL DESTINATIONS

A small selection of mail from Constantinople addressed to unusual destinations:



(75%)

14/11/05: to *Christiansted, St Croix, Danish West Indies*, via New York.



14/3/12: to *Devonport, Tasmania (23/4)* via *Alexandria (22/3)* and *Port Said (23/3)*.

INCOMING MAIL

A choice of interesting incoming mail to the British PO Constantinople:



(100%)

19/1/91: Liverpool to Berlin, ½ d brown Newspaper Wrapper (WP16) **missent** to Constantinople (27/1). The BPO Constantinople was never issued with a "MISSENT" handstamp.



13/7/08: from *Krugerdsdorf, Transvaal* via the Constantinople German Post (5/8) with same day delivery to the British PO. *Unusual origin.*

11/5/04:
from Shanghai
(German Post)
via Suez (9/6),
arrived 16/6.



(75%)

17/5/07: Smyrna to Constantinople Registered Letter at single rate.

No less than three unsuccessful attempts were made for delivery. Finally marked 'Retour' and bilingual boxed 'Non Reclame / Not Called For', before being returned to Smyrna. 'DUPLICATE' handstamp also applied; according to the Proof Book in the PO Archives this handstamp was sent to Constantinople on 14 /12/05.

An extraordinary combination of two elusive instructional marks on the same cover

STAMBOUL

(Constantinople Sub-Office)

Opened in April 1885. No mail from this office is to be found between 25th August 1896 (closed due to Anti Armenian riots) and 9th February 1908 (re-opened). Closed permanently on 30th September 1914. The smallest British PO in the Levant.

Rates as stated in the Constantinople section.

FIRST PERIOD: 1885 - 1896

Sterling Accounting Period: April - July 1885

For the brief period April - July 1885 (before the introduction of the surcharged stamps in August) it is possible to find letters franked with ordinary British stamps.



23/5/85: to Dakota, USA paying 2 ½ d for a single rate letter. The GB stamp is cancelled by the Stamboul "S." killer.

Only three covers are recorded with British stamps in this short period (ex Cihangir)

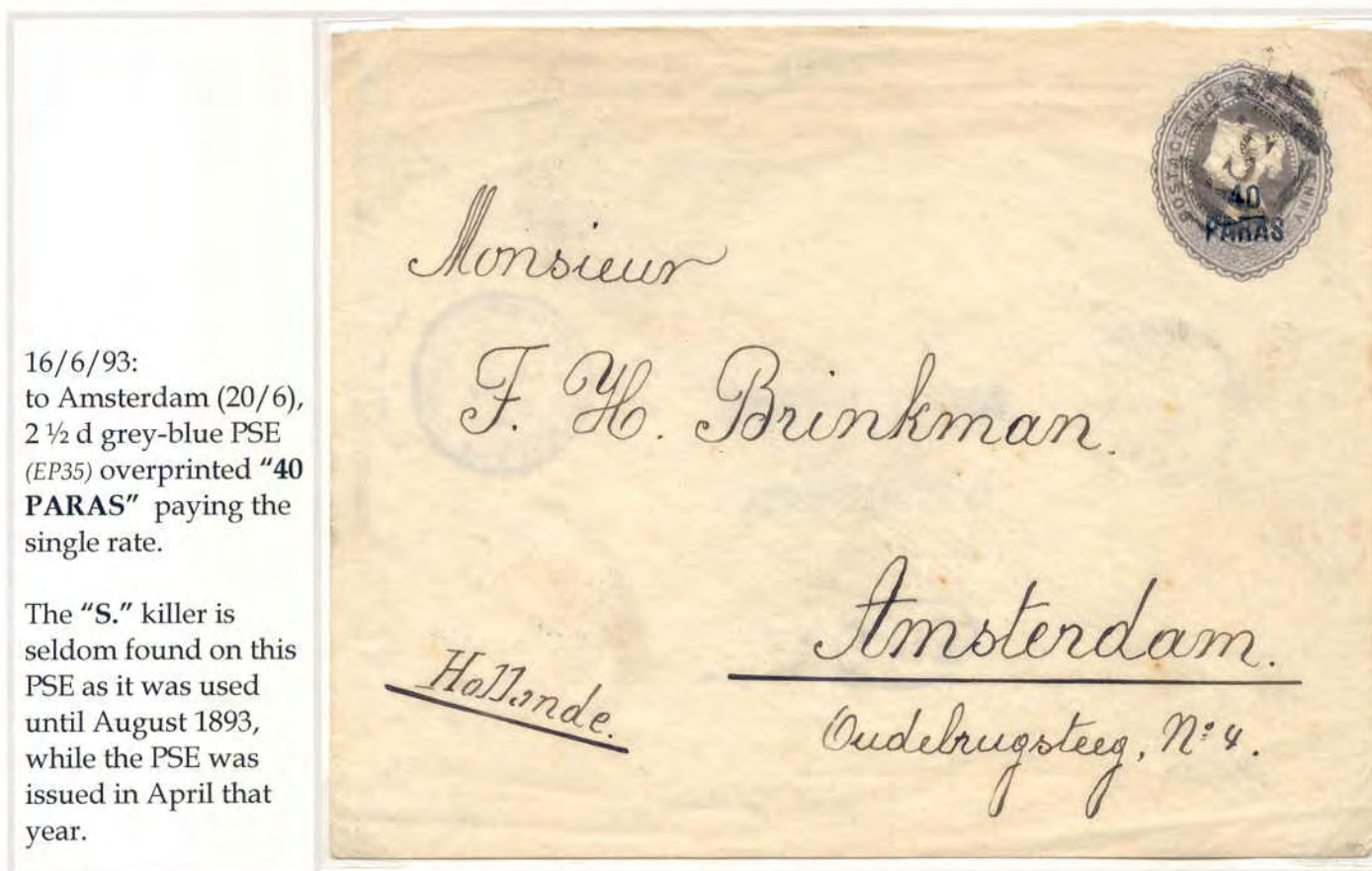
Mixed Accounting Period: From August 1885

Postcard Rate



7/4/92: to
Philipopolis (now
Plovdiv), Bulgaria
1d brown postcard
(CP15)

Letter Mail: Single Rates



16/6/93:
to Amsterdam (20/6),
2 ½ d grey-blue PSE
(EP35) overprinted "40
PARAS" paying the
single rate.

The "S." killer is
seldom found on this
PSE as it was used
until August 1893,
while the PSE was
issued in April that
year.

Letter Mail: Single Rates (continued)



28/2/93: to Paris (4/3) paying 40 Paras single rate plus 40 Paras Reg'n Fee. Franked with two copies of the 40 Paras "Constantinople Provisional".

The overprint shows the "damage in S", typical of the last couple of days of use.

Letter Mail: Multiple Rates



25/6/87: to Somerville Mass. (8/7) via New York at *double* rate.

Letter Mail: Multiple Rates (continued)



The earliest recorded use of the "40 Paras / 2 1/2 d" Jubilee stamp, and most probably a First Day Cover

Orient Express



This PSRE bears an "Express d' Orient" label in salmon-pink. Research in the PO Archives does not provide evidence to support the theory that these labels pay any additional fees and most probably their use is purely instructional.

One of only two recorded "Express d' Orient" triple rate covers

SECOND PERIOD: 1908 - 1914

The Office - being closed for a period of twelve years - resumed business on 10th February 1908. Because of riots the office was closed on 9th April, 10th and 25th 1909.

Printed Paper Rate

30/12/10: to Chicago paying the ½ d or 10 Paras per 2 oz Printed Paper Rate

Sample Post

24/2/08: to Leeds, via the *French Day Mail TPO*, parcel tag of a *Sample With No Value*, paying 2d Reg'n Fee plus 1d the minimum charge for Samples. It bears an ordinary Constantinople Reg'n label cancelled with a Stamboul undated and uncoded cds.

An early item of the second period showing an elusive commercial use of the 3d "LEVANT" and the only recorded use of this Stamboul Provisional Reg'n label

Letter Mail

HUGO & FRIEDR. LAUTERJUNG
(N. H. DARR & W. CURDTS)
CONSTANTINOPEL.

R British Post Office
Constantinople
(Stamboul)
No. 248

An die Firma



Ludw. Schniewind & Co.

G. m. b. H.

Germany

1303

Cronenfeld

bei Cronenberg (Rheinland).

22/7/13: to Cronenfeld (27/7), double rate, showing the earliest recorded use of the 1/2 d profile head overprinted "LEVANT" issued in July 1913.

R British Post Office
Constantinople
(Stamboul).
No. 416



117

Registered
Herrn W. Wiedemeyer

14/14

Kassel
Schöne-Aussicht g.

9/7/10: to Cassel (12/7) at 5 Piastres for a quintuple Registered cover.

UNUSUAL DESTINATIONS

A choice of mail from the British PO Stamboul addressed to unusual destinations:



14/9/93: to *Fredrikshamn, Finland* (21/9) triple rate Registered Letter.
No routing instructions, most probably routed via St Petersburg.



8/7/96:
to *Sao Paulo,*
Brazil (5/8)

SMYRNA

PRE - GPU / UPU PERIOD: 1872 - 1875

Opened in December 1872. Ordinary British stamps were used cancelled with the Smyrna F87 "killer". This was the second largest office generating about 25% of the total revenue of all the British Levant POs. The Treasury warrant of 2.12.72 announces the opening Routes and Rates to Great Britain. Basically, two Routes were offered:

A1 (via Marseilles) & **A2** (via Vienna).

{For a comprehensive analysis of the Routes and Rates used in this period see the Exhibitor's article: 'Early mail of the BPO Smyrna 1872-76' published in "The Overprinter" (Journal of the GBOS) edition 3/2009 (pages 87-9)}

A1

- **Route: Via French Packet to Marseilles.** Offered throughout the year as it did not depend on weather conditions.
- **Rates:** 12/72 - 30/6/75 **8d ½ oz**
1/7/75 - 31/12/75 **6d ½ oz** (no example recorded)
Reg'n Fee 4d (no example recorded)



7/3/73: to London (15/3) ½ oz letter at 8d rate via French Packet to Marseilles

The earliest recorded cover out of the British PO in Smyrna (Ex Metliss)

A2

- **Route: Via Vienna**
Summer Route: Via Constantinople and Austrian Packet to *Varna*
Winter Route: Austrian Packet to *Trieste*
- **Rates:** 12/72 - 31/4/73 **6d** ½ oz (no example recorded)
 1/5/73 - 30/6/75 **5d** ½ oz
 Reg'n Fee 4d (no example recorded)



27/12/73: to London (5/1/74) ½ oz letter at 5d, per Austrian Packet via Trieste, the normal "Winter Route".

Emergency Route: In the summer of 1873 the outbreak of cholera epidemic on the Danube made it necessary from 7th August and for a short period that the summer mails via Vienna would not follow the usual "Summer" Route, but would be diverted away from the contaminated area *via Trieste*:



9/8/73: to London (13/2), ½ oz letter at 5d via the "Trieste Summer Emergency Route".

Previously unrecorded, this is the only known example from Smyrna of the Emergency Route

**GPU / UPU RATES - STERLING ACCOUNTING
PERIOD: 7/1875 - 7/1885**

This is the period spanning from the introduction of the new UPU rates up to the issue of surcharged stamps in August 1885. Rates as shown in the Constantinople section.



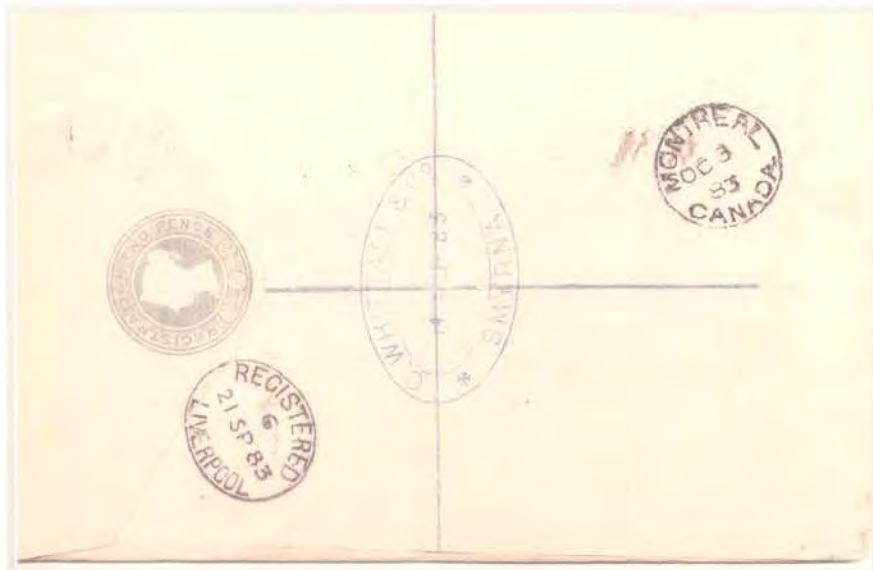
28/7/76: to London (4/8) via French Packet, 1/2 oz letter at the 2 1/2 d UPU rate



(75%)

31/7/78: London, single rate via Smyrna (9/8) to the local Forwarding Agent "Hadkinson, Merrylees & Co" for further dispatch by boat to Calymnos. At the time, there existed no PO of any Power in the small Dodecanese Island of Calymnos.

A unique Transatlantic Triple Rate PSRE



(75%)



14/9/83: to Montreal (3/10), Canada via London and Liverpool (21/9). 1883, 2d blue PSRE (RP13), size G franked with GB 1 1/2 d Venetian red (1880) & 6d / 6d lilac (1883) to make up the total rate of 9 1/2 d for a *triple* rate Registered Letter.

One of two recorded pre-1885 PSREs used in Smyrna and the *only* recorded cover from *any of the British Post Offices Abroad* that shows this elusive combination of stamps

UPU RATES - MIXED ACCOUNTING PERIOD:
8/1885 - 9/1914

A detailed account of this period and its Rates are given in the respective Constantinople section.

Printed Paper
Rate



(75%)

7/2/03: to
Ludwigshafen,
Germany at
1/2 d or 10 Paras
per 2 oz Printed
Paper Rate.



Unusually routed via Salonica (95% of mail to Europe was routed via Constantinople)



18/2/14:
to Zurich.
1911 1/2 d bright-
green Wrapper
(WP22) overprinted
LEVANT.

An
overweight
newspaper
wrapper
up to 6 oz

Sample Post

The Sample without Value (*échantillons sans valeur*) rate was 1d for samples up to 4 oz, and ½ d for each additional 2 oz. The examples shown here are tags originally attached to parcels containing samples of dried fruit to Switzerland not exceeding 10 oz each.



(75%)



To Glarus (29/7), a late use of the F87 barred obliterator.



(75%)



Postcard Rate



22/4/99:
to Weimar (29/4),
Smyrna early PPC
at 1d.

Taxed in Error:
A01 barred
obliterator



17/3/98:
to London (22/3).
1892, 1d red
foreign card
(CP27).

On arrival in the London Foreign Branch, the card was erroneously marked for a 4d postage due, then amended by an Inspector who applied the A01 mark.

The A01 canceller was previously used in Kingston, Jamaica (1858-60), and later returned to London. From the number of worldwide items seen with this mark it appears that the Foreign Branch in London mostly used the A01 when it was determined that the item in question was incorrectly marked for postage due.

The only recorded item from British Levant cancelled with the A01 obliterator

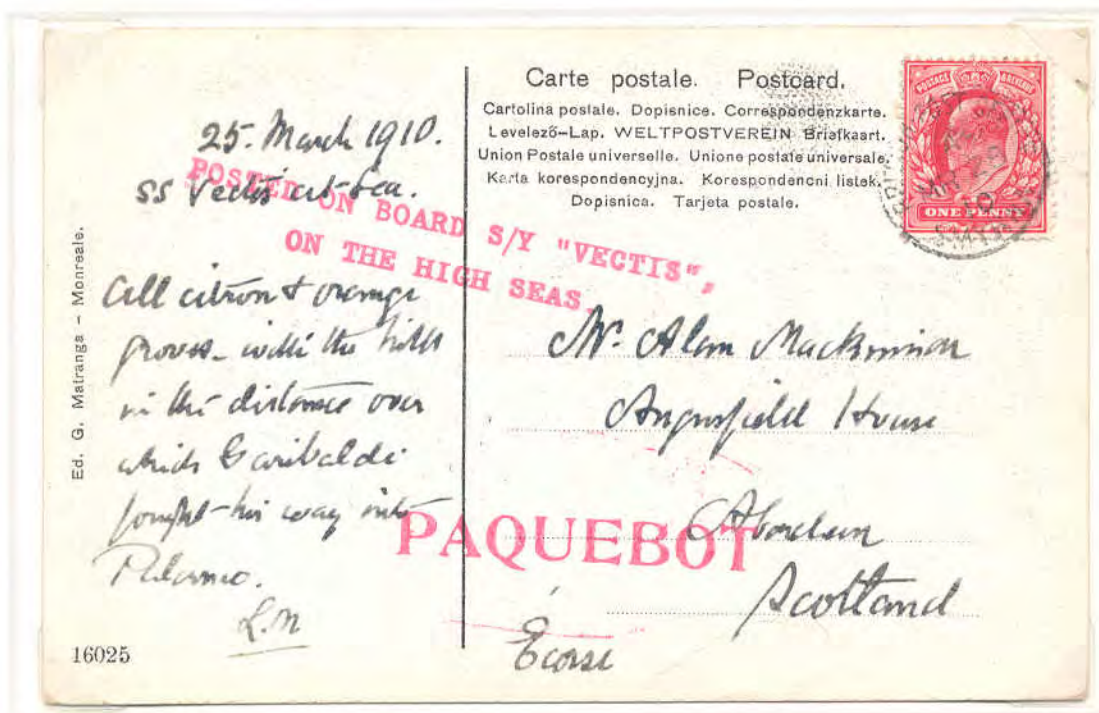
Postcard Rate (continued)

Maritime / Paquebot Handstamps

Prepaid mail posted aboard yachts cruising the Mediterranean is occasionally found with the stamps cancelled in transit at the British PO Smyrna.



23/4/05: PPC posted aboard S/Y ARGONAUT to London via BPO Smyrna (25/4).



25/3/10: PPC posted aboard S/Y VECTIS to Aberdeen via BPO Smyrna (28/3).

Letter Mail

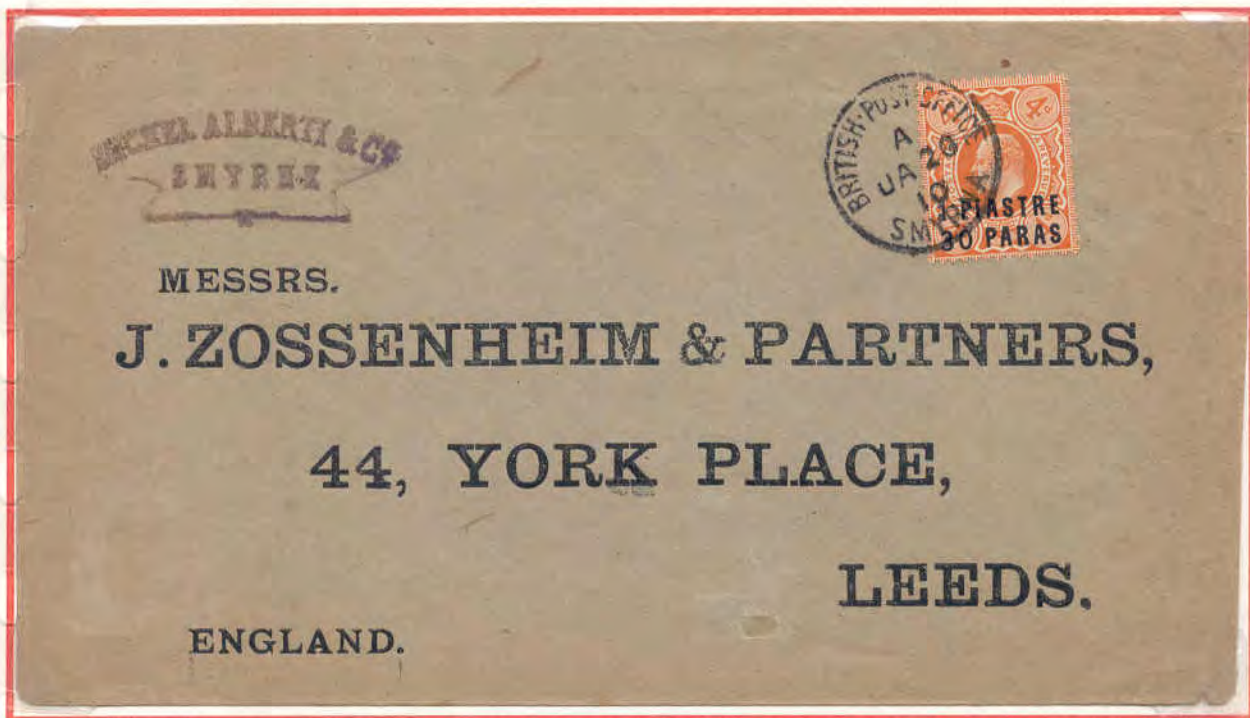
Single Rate

13/5/12:
to Germany,
single rate,
surprisingly
routed *via*
Piraeus.



(75%)

The 1 Piastre
foreign letter
rate is paid by
an unusual
combination
of 30 Paras &
½ d LEVANT.



Double Rate



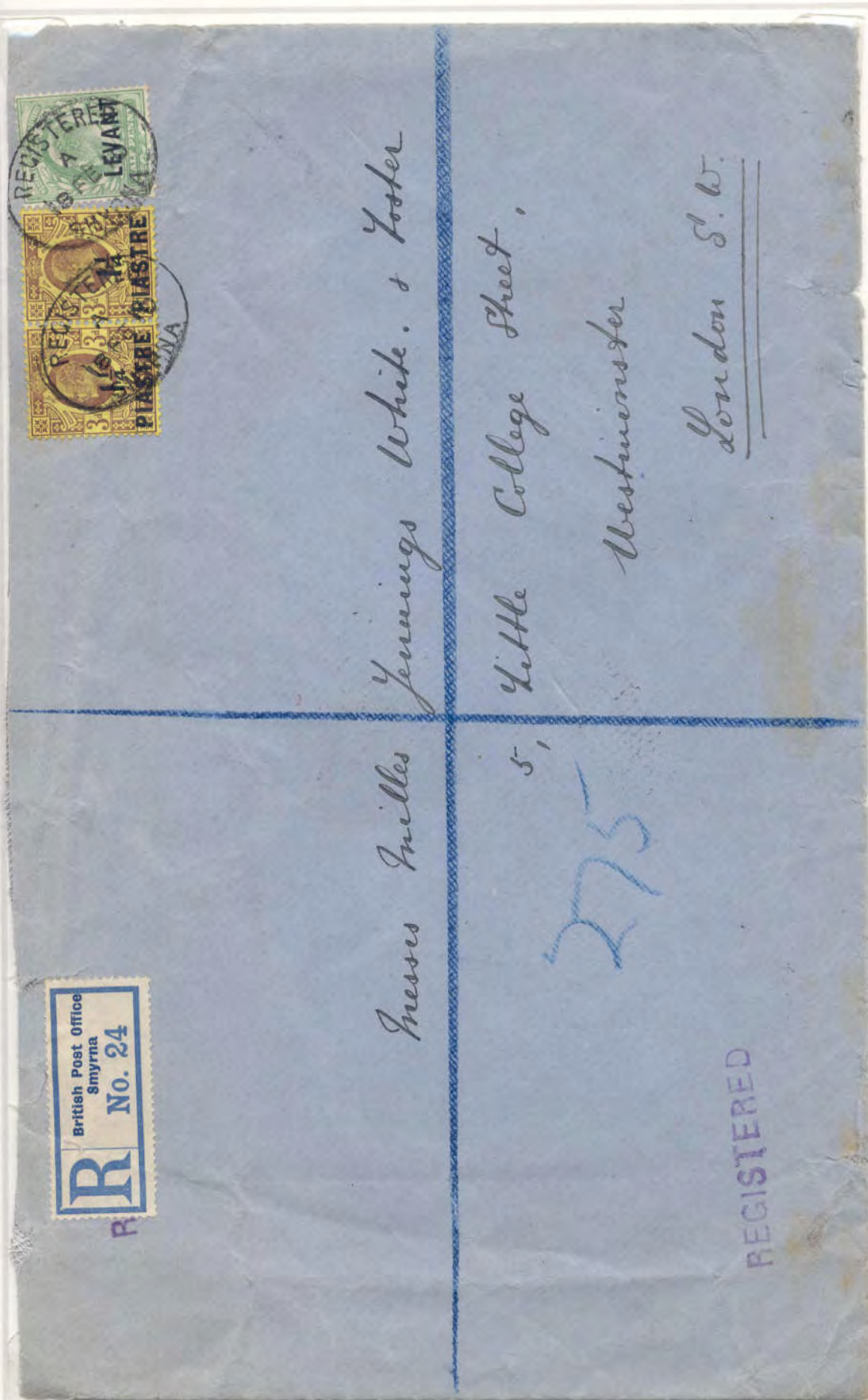
(75%)

20/1/10: to
Leeds (25/1),
double rate at
1 Piastre
30 Paras.

The 1 Piastre 30 Paras /4d brown - orange was legitimately used for one month only (16/12/09 - 23/1/10), before being replaced by the fractional "1 ¾ Piastres /4d" value.

The only recorded cover with the "1 Piastre 30 Paras /4d brown - orange" stamp showing a proper commercial use in the correct period of usage

Letter Mail: Double Rates (continued)



18/2/10:
 to London (24/2)
double rate
 Registered letter,
 paying 1 ³/₄
Piastres for a 40g
 letter plus
1 Piastre Reg'n
 Fee.

Letter Mail: Multiple Rates

Unregistered multiple rates are not often seen, and especially high frankings are rare.



18/4/10:
to London, paying
7 ³/₄ Piastres for a
180g - 200g ordinary
letter.

Rate calculation:

40 Paras for the first
20g

270 Paras
(30 Paras x 9 steps)
for the rest
21g - 200g

A total of 310 Paras
(= 7 ³/₄ Piastres)

Rare commercial Multiple Rate example and an elusive franking

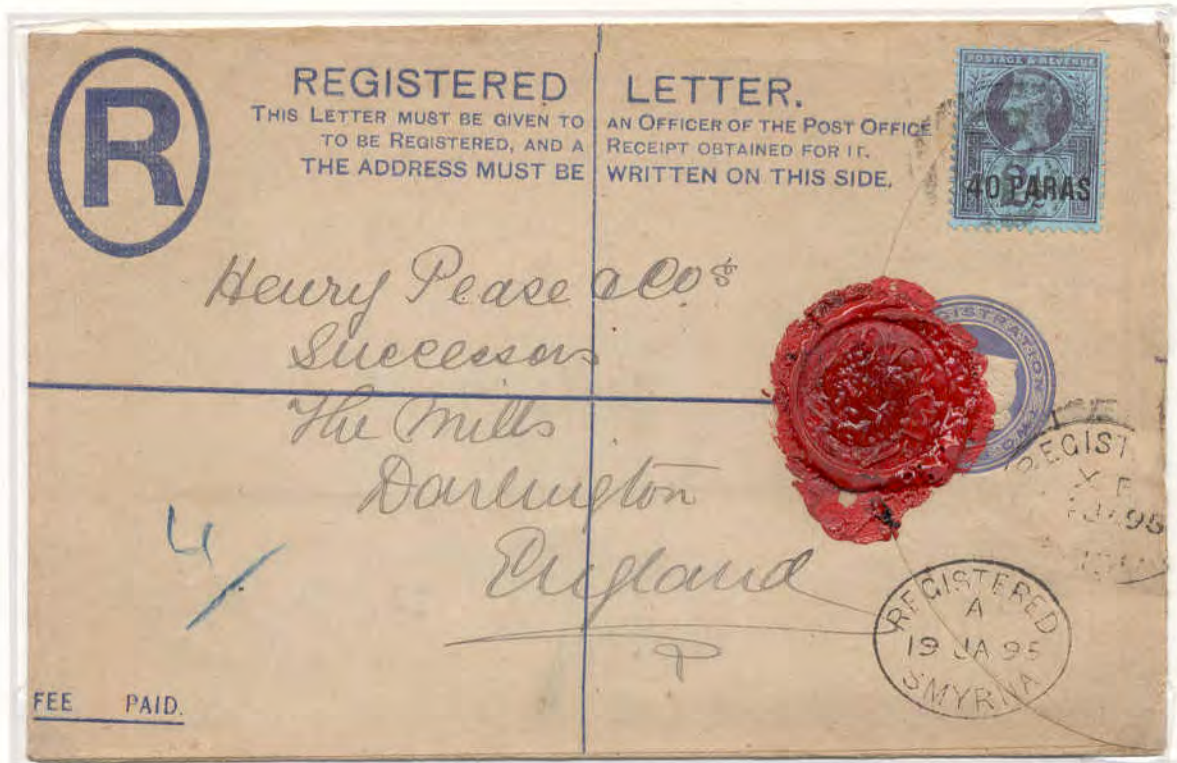
POSTAL STATIONERY & SPECIAL FORMS

A choice of elusive Postal Stationery and Forms from Smyrna is shown in this section.



12/4/94:
to London (20/4),
2 ½ d grey-blue
PSE (EP35)
overprinted "40
PARAS" with
additional 40 Paras
stamp for a single
rate Registered
letter.

While this PSE is
commonly found
used in Smyrna
sent as ordinary
mail, it is
extremely
difficult to find it
in Registered
form



19/1/95: to Darlington (25/1) at single rate. 1893, 2d blue PSRE (RP20), size G.
Surprisingly, PSREs are rather seldom found used in Smyrna in the prewar period

Special Form for Parcel Post / Customs Declaration

The sending of goods by Parcel Post required the presentation of such goods to the Customs Authority for which a special form was used. Very few have survived.

Highest recorded franking in Sterling:

PARCEL POST. SMYRNA.
FORM OF CUSTOMS DECLARATION.

Date Stamp: **SMYRNA**

Place to which the Parcel is addressed: *37 Mining Lane London E.C.*

Gross Weight of Parcel: *9 lbs. 4 ozs.*

Net Weight of Contents: *6 oz 110*

Value of Merchandise: *11 -*

CONTENTS: *One silk rug*

Parcel Bill No. *27*

Entry No. *3*

G & S 3227 [8133] 1000 2/99c

SMYRNA.
No. *3*
FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST

Inland Postage: *11 -*

Name and Address of Sender: *Mr. 12 Aluzgan Co. Smyrna*

1/9/00: to London at 3s, regarding the sending of a 9 lbs 4 oz rug.

"SMYRNA FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST" label indicating the 1s inland postage was applied in the GPO London.

SMYRNA.
No. *35*
FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST.

Date Stamp: **BRITISH POST OFFICE SMYRNA**

Place to which the Parcel is addressed: *Leeds*
Route Via *Brindisi*

Gross weight of Parcel: *lb.*

Net Weight Contents: *lb. oz.*

Value of Merchandise: *£ s. d.*

Contents: *Cheese*

Name and Address of Sender: *A Hassan Smyrna*

Inland Postage: *9*

PARCEL PASSING THROUGH THE G.P.O.

15/11/13: to Leeds via Brindisi at 16 Piastres, regarding the sending cheese.

{Starting from 1901 Brindisi became the preferred Route for the sending of parcels}.

Only recorded parcel franking in Turkish currency

UNUSUAL DESTINATIONS

A selection of mail from the British PO Smyrna addressed to unusual destinations:



13/6/90:
to *Guatemala*
(15/7), 1d brown
postcard (CP15)



24/12/97: to *Jaala, Finland* via Constantinople (29/12) and St Petersburg, re-addressed to *Kuopio* (5/1).

Unusual Destinations (continued)

11/2/12: to Swakompmund, German West Africa, via Hamburg, re-addressed to Karibib.



21/4/13: to Kerman, Persia double rate Registered Letter routed via Alexandria (25/4) and Teheran (10/5).

INCOMING / READDRESSSED MAIL

A selection of two interesting incoming / readdressed covers to Smyrna:



(45%)
25/9/01: Paris to Leeds (27/1), readdressed to Salonica (2/10) and again readdressed (7/10) to Smyrna (11/10).

Twice readdressed mail

'Non Réclamé / Not Called For'



(50%)

27/2/08: Crew to a passenger of Paquebot Saghalien at Piraeus.

Readdressed to Constantinople and Smyrna, showing a fine strike of the bilingual boxed 'Non Réclamé / Not Called For' applied in Smyrna (no stop after the wording as opposed to the Constantinople mark).

Only recorded example of this Smyrna instructional mark



GPU / UPU RATES - STERLING ACCOUNTING PERIOD: 7/1875 - 7/1885

This is the period spanning from the introduction of the new UPU rates up to the issue of surcharged stamps in August 1885. Rates as shown in the Constantinople section.

Postcard Rate

13/4/76: to New York (7/5), a commercially used example of the 1 ¼ d "One Penny Farthing" brown postcard (CP5)



The 1 ¼ d foreign postcard rate was only valid until 31.3.79. This postcard is difficult from British Levant, and even more so from Beyrouth.

Letter Mail



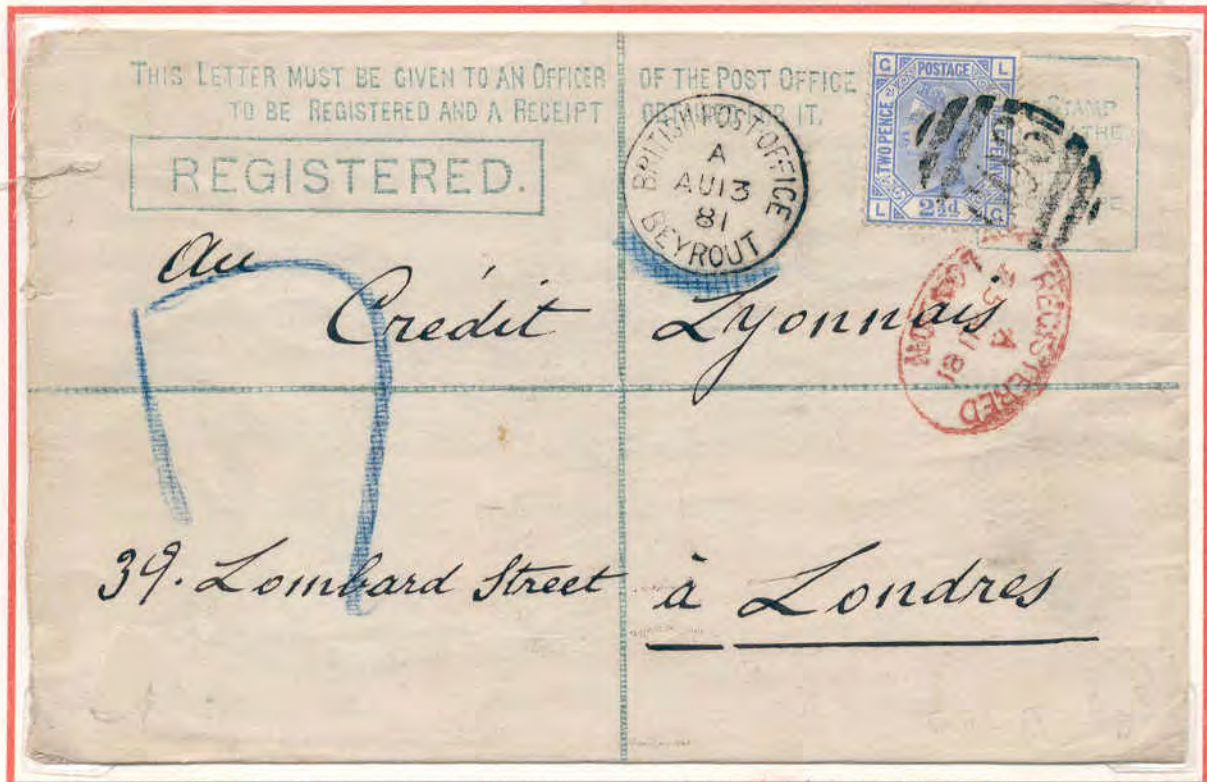
22/11/80: to Omaha, Nebraska at the 2 ½ d single letter rate.

Letter Mail (continued)



Registered Single Rate:
An outstanding use of
a GB PSRE in Beyrouth

(50%)

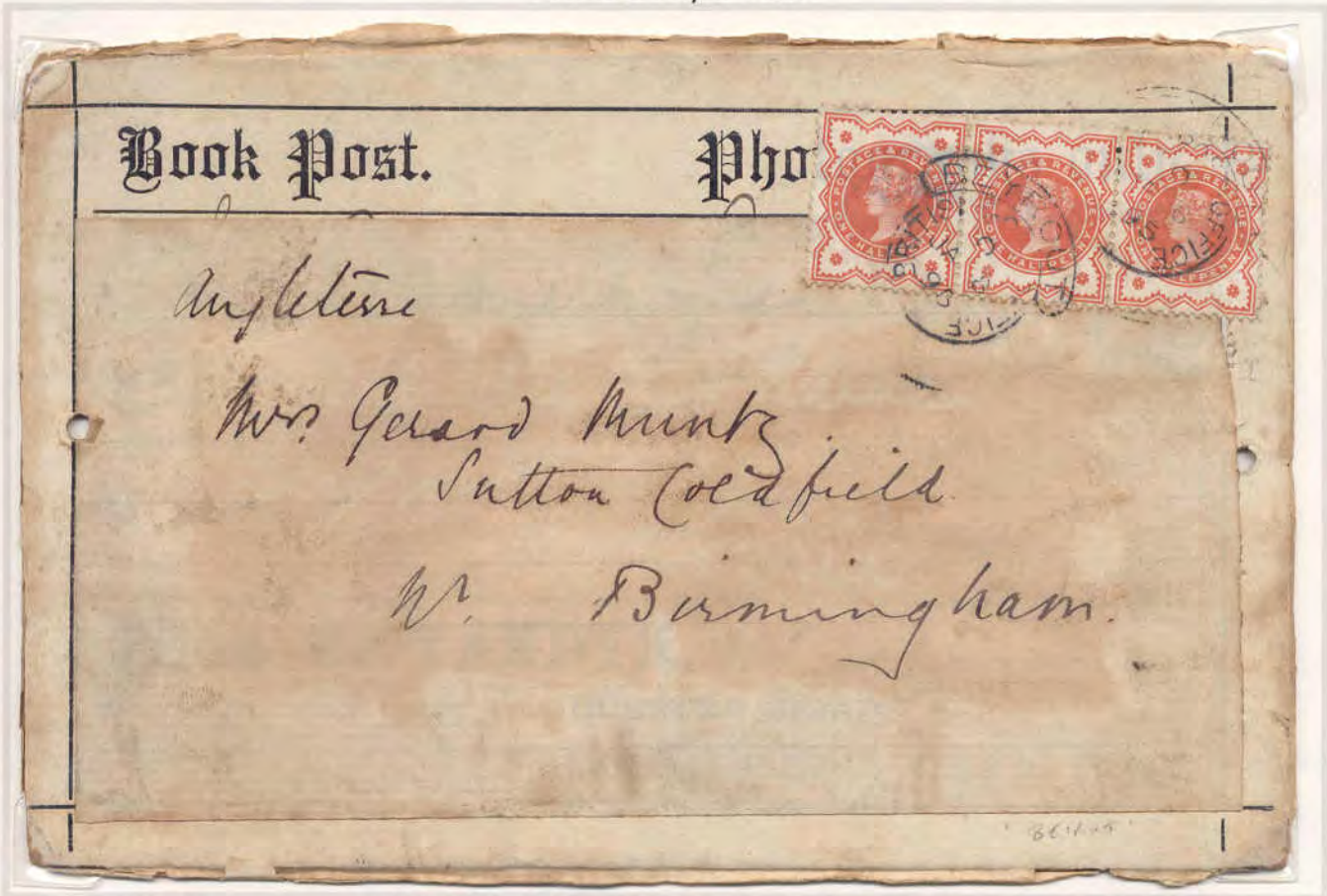


13/8/81: to London (25/8) at single rate, 2d blue PSRE (RP6), size G.
Very rare use from Beyrouth of this PSRE, possibly a second example exists.

**UPU RATES - MIXED ACCOUNTING PERIOD:
8/1885 - 9/1914**

A detailed account of this period and its Rates are given in the respective Constantinople section.

Printed Paper Rate



8/1/95: to Sutton Coldfield, Book Post thick card previously attached to a 4-6 oz packet.

Postcard Rate

21/4/11: to London 1d pale carmine postcard (CP56).

Very late commercial use of an unoverprinted postcard



Letter Mail: Single Rates

Anything higher than single rates from this small office is difficult.



18/1/87: to London (31/1) at 40 Paras single rate, 2d blue PSRE (RP13), size G. Elusive use.



28/10/98: to Breslau (6/11) at the 80 Paras Registered single rate, sorted on the Breslau - Oderberg TPO, where the "Vom Auslande" Reg'n label was affixed.

Letter Mail: Single Rates (continued)

Ship Mail via the British PO Beyrout

22/3/11: "Rayak, Palestine", 4-page letter from an American traveler to Chicago (10/4).

The letter in part reads: "Yesterday we stayed at Damascus and are today en route to Beirut via Baalbek".

Franked with 1 Piastre stamp to cover the foreign single rate postage and posted abroad the ship's mailbox.

The ship's mailbag was treated as a closed bag at the Beyrout PO and was only opened and the stamp cancelled in the London Foreign Section.

Rayak, Palestine. Mar. 22.

Dear Charlie:

We have had a rush trip through Palestine but the time spent has been well worth the cost. We left Cairo on March 13 and were delayed at Port Said so we did not reach Jerusalem until Wednesday noon. In Jerusalem we really studied the missionary work interviewing representatives of all the missions. I was taken over the principal sights by a C.M.S. missionaries though I studiously avoided trying to see "evangelists." We wandered over the Mount of

the Temple through your and me for we have these landscape are to life of our

GRAND HOTEL VICTORIA — DAMAS (SYRIE)



The Rev. Charles W. Gilkey
5228 Woodlawn Ave.
Chicago, Ill.

U. S. A.

NO SUCH NO. - S. 1519

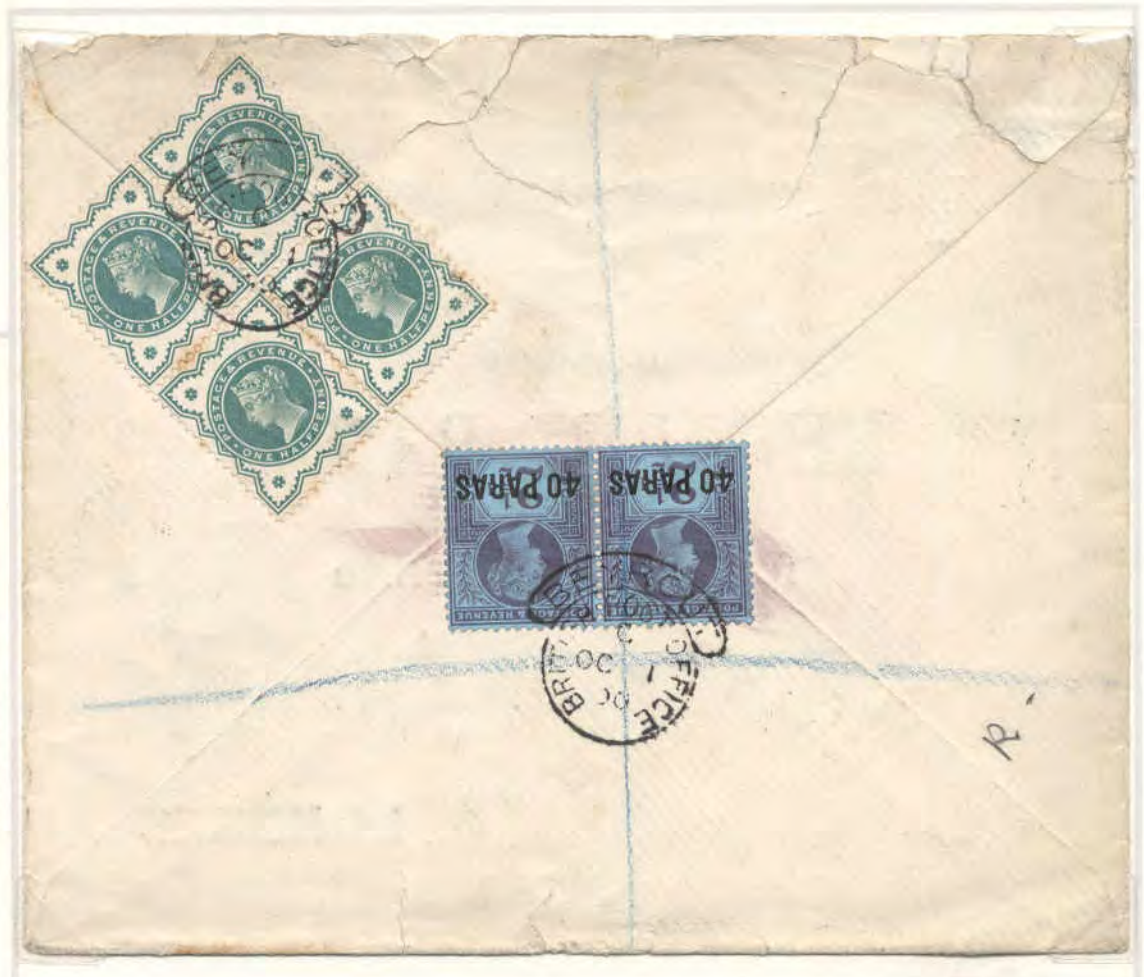
Letter Mail: Double Rates



17/4/96: to Pulsnitz (25/4) Germany, double rate Registered "home-made" wrapper.

The 80 Paras stamp shows the "small 0" variety.

Only one other example of this variety on cover is recorded



(25%)

1/10/00: to London (10/10), double rate Registered letter where the Reg'n Fee is paid in Sterling (2d) instead of Piastre (40 Paras).

Letter Mail: Double Rates (continued)



25/2/07: to London (7/3) double rate, 1902 3d red-brown PSRE (RP24), size G overprinted "REGN. FEE. / 40 PARAS.".

The only recorded example of the provisional Registration label from Beyrouth

Letter Mail: The October 1907 Rate Change



16/6/12: to Boston Mass. (8/7), 1908 3d red-brown PSRE (RP26), size G overprinted "REGN. FEE. / 1 PIASTRE".

It shows the post-October 1907 reduced double rate at 1 Piastre 30 Paras (plus 1 Piastre Reg'n Fee).

POSTAL STATIONERY

A selection of elusive Postal Stationery from Beyrouth is shown in this section.



detail from the back (40%)

22/2/94: to London (3/3), 2 ½ d grey-blue PSE (EP35) with inverted surcharge "40 PARAS".

Remained in London until 18/5 and stamped "Not Called For / EC" before returned to Beyrouth.

While in Poste Restante it was evidently damaged & marked by the Return Letter Office "Recd in a damaged state in RLO London/ 19.5.94"

(Ex Günther Heyd)

The *inverted surcharge* was created by a forger in 1894. A PO decision dated 14th July 1894 was made to treat these items as unpaid. Before that date covers were accepted with the fake inverted surcharge as having paid the 2 ½ d charge for the envelope in Sterling.



4/5/09: to New York (20/5), 1902 3d red-brown PSRE (RP24), size F, overprinted "REGN. FEE. / 40 PARAS."

Elusive size

Postcards



(Left) 12/12/10: to Hamburg via Alexandria (13/12), 1908-11, 1d pale - carmine postcard (CP56) overprinted LEVANT.



(Right) 16/11/12: to Amsterdam (26/11) via Port Said (19/11), 1912, 1d scarlet postcard overprinted LEVANT.

Provisional 'LEVANT' Overprint

21/11/11: to London, 1908-11, 1d pale-carmine postcard (CP56) overprinted LEVANT. This is the "provisional" overprint (smaller) only used for a few months in 1911.

(see also another example in the Constantinople section)



One of six recorded examples

Postal Stationery used in Foreign POs

Beyrouth was an important Middle East port where Austrian, French and Russian ships regularly called. Late mail could be posted on special boxes at the harbor to be loaded directly on board.



Austrian Levant
- Lloyd
Cancellation



No indication of origin on this PSE, but according to Austrian Lloyd's schedule tables for 1901, this letter traveled as:

*Mr. Hussey
18 Elvaston Place
Queen's Gate
London S.W.*

13/4/01 posted in Austrian Lloyd's ship box in Beyrouth. 20/4/01 (morning) delivered to the Austrian PO in Smyrna where the "COL VAP.DA/ALESS" handstamp was applied. 20/4/01 (afternoon) handed in the local British PO. 25/4/01 Arrived in London.

Russian
Levant
Cancellation

Genuine usage of the 1d postcard by a German traveler, giving a brief account of his journeys to his family. Acquired in Beyrouth but posted in the Russian "РОПНТ" Agency in Haifa on 1/5/09.



SALONICA

Opened on 1st May 1900. Throughout its operation a *double-ring* datestamp was used. In the first year of operation a *single-ring* datestamp was also used albeit only rarely.

All mail to Europe went by rail via the Nish - Belgrade line. Mail to other parts of the world made use of the various Austrian, French, Russian, Italian and Greek maritime agencies.

{For a comprehensive analysis of the Routes used at the opening of the office see the Exhibitor's article: 'Postal Routes of the BPO Salonica in 1900' published in "The Overprinter" edition 3/99 (pages 57-60)}

The office was allowed to function after the Greek occupation of the city in November 1912 and closed down in October 1914.

An Early Cover

21/5/00: Salonica to New York (2/6), at single rate.

An early cover, showing use in the first month of operation

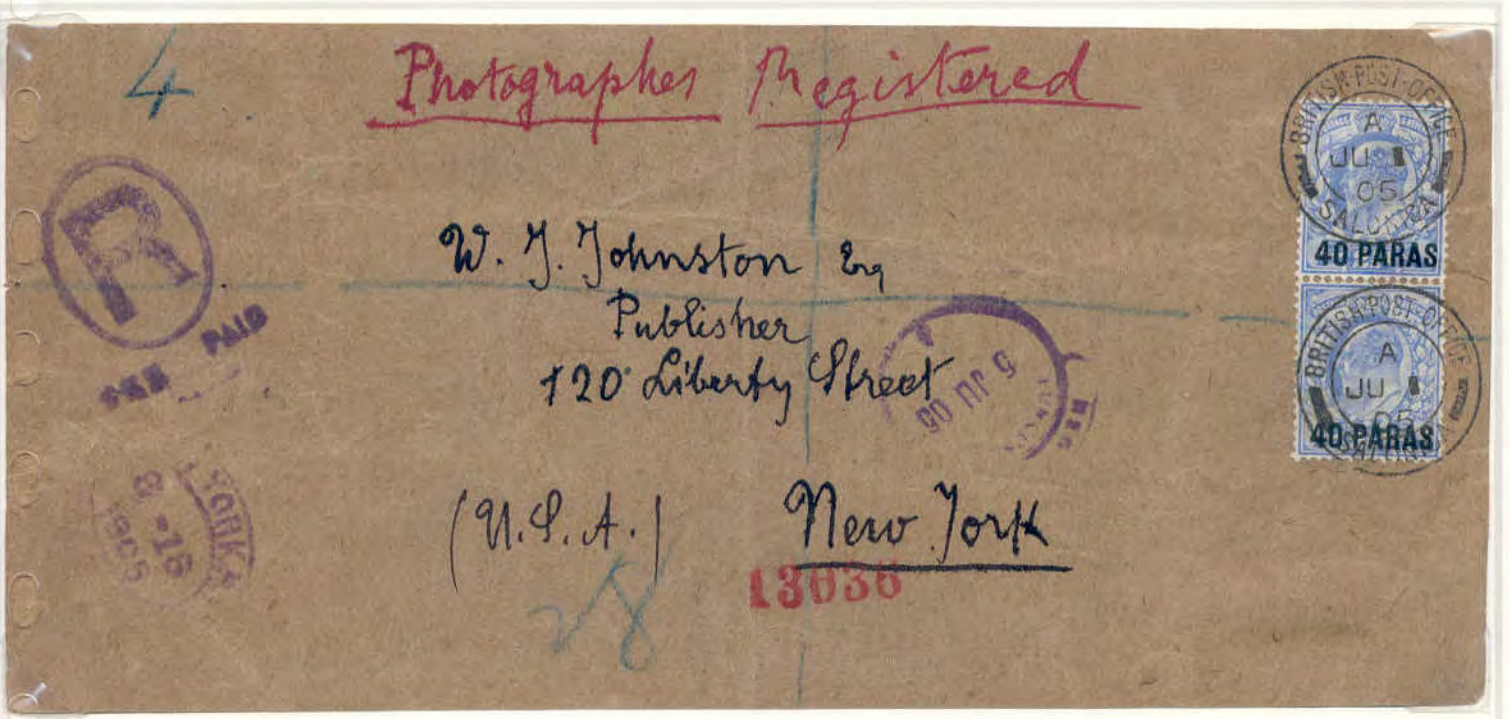
POSTAL RATES

A detailed account of this period and its Rates are given in the respective Constantinople section.

Printed Paper Rate

31/3/04: to Exeter (4/1), picture postcard sent at the 1/2 d PPR. The message at the picture side exceeded the six-word limit, and so it must have been taxed 1d on arrival.

One of three recorded strikes of the Salonica "T" handstamp

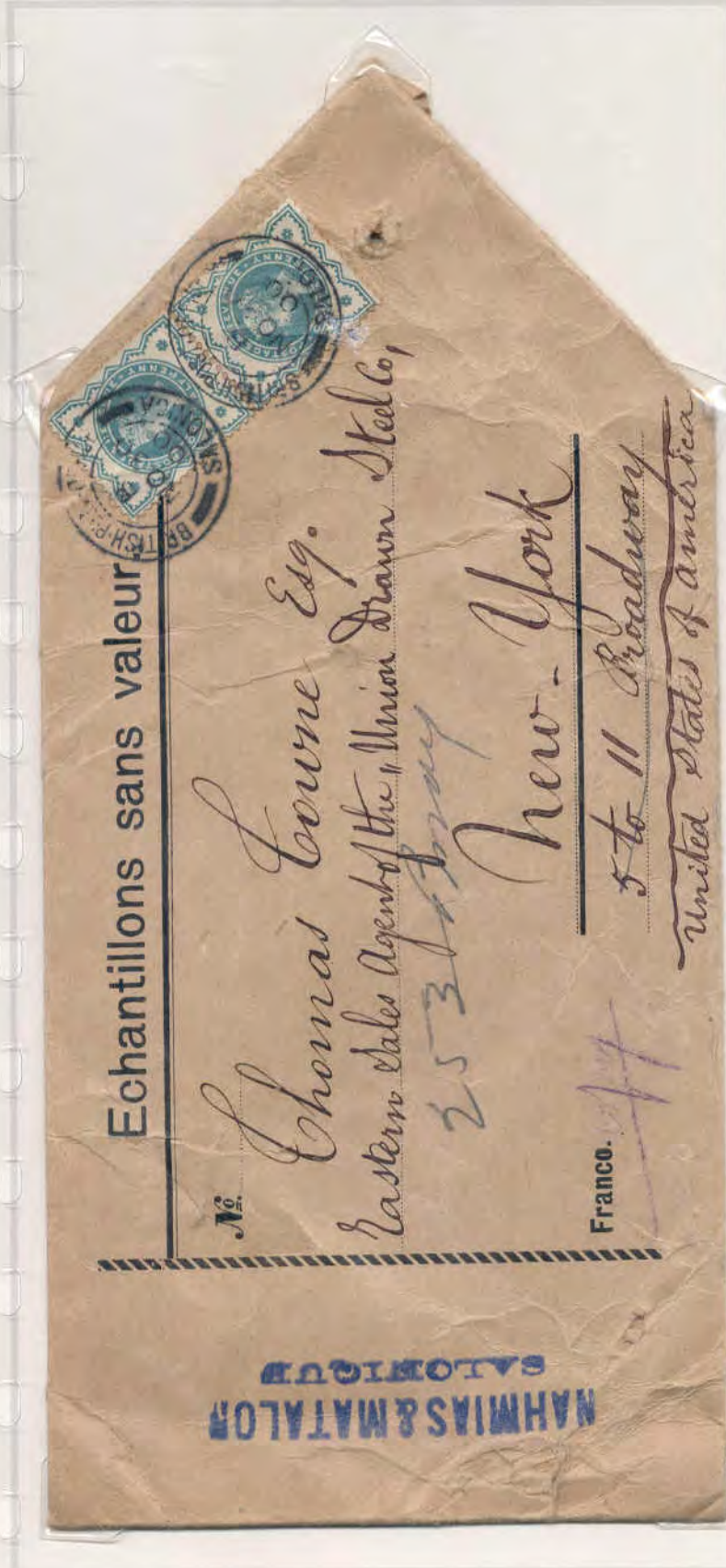


1/6/05: to New York (16/6) registered large part wrapper containing photographs. Under PO regulations photographs qualified for the PPR. This pays 40 Paras for a 6-8 oz Printed Paper plus 40 Paras Reg'n Fee.

Printed Papers are seldom found Registered

Sample Post

Two examples of the *minimum 1d (up to 4 oz) Sample Post Rate:*



Top: 16/7/02 to Manchester (21/7), with an extra 40 Paras for Reg'n Fee. Posted too late and so dispatched in the next day's mailbag (17/7), hence the **TOO LATE** handstamp (one of two recorded from Salonica - the other also in this exhibit)

Left: 30/11/00 to New York, this item reached Liverpool in time to connect with the 5/12 service of the *RMS Majestic* via Queenstown to NY.

(Ex Metliss)

Postcard Rate



17/1/01: to Somme, France at the 1d postcard rate.



14/2/02: to Antwerp (17/2), Belgium three-fold picture postcard at the 1d postcard rate. Due to its size it was charged on arrival 30 centimes (double the 15c = 1 1/2 d deficiency), as it was thought that it should have paid the letter rate.

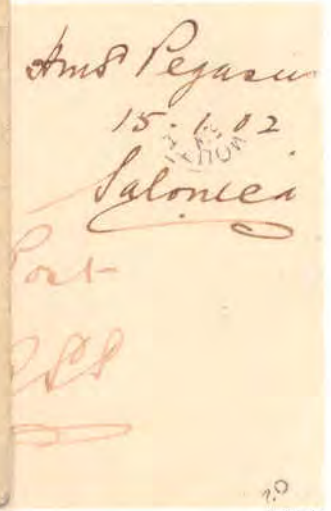
Postcard Rate (continued)

Royal Naval Mail through the BPO Salonica

Sailors' mail serving on Royal Naval vessels patrolling the Mediterranean was treated as a closed bag: the ship's bag was put inside the Post Office's closed bag, and was not opened until on arrival in London (where it was also postmarked).



HMS Pegasus



15/1/02: HMS Pegasus, Salonica to Plymouth via London (27/1).

(75%)



HMS Maine



(75%)
 Please may I move for the collection
 all's well. Letter to follow.
 - E.M.

14/9/04: HMS Maine, Salonica to Weymouth via London (18/9).

The London octagonal "fancy" cancellation with code letters CS was used on Sundays for overseas mail posted on board ships. Period of use: 1904-09



Letter Mail: Single Rates

Anything higher than single rates from this small office is difficult.



backstamp (100%)

23/12/00: to Leeds (27/12), at 40 Paras single rate plus 40 Paras Reg'n.

One of three recorded covers of the single-ring cancellation



16/6/02: to Leeds (20/6) at 80 Paras registered single rate, posted too late and so dispatched in the next day's mail.

One of two recorded examples

Letter Mail: Single Rates (continued)



28/3/07: to Leeds (2/4) at registered single rate, showing a commercial use of the provisional Registration label.



2/1/14: to St Helena Island, USA posted as single rate at 1 piastre. The PO clerk at Salonica found the letter to be double rate and thus charged it at 30 centimes (*double the deficiency of 30 Paras = 15 centimes*). On arrival the amount payable was converted to 6 cents.

Letter Mail: Single Rates (continued)

Mixed Franking: Three different categories of stamps



11/3/09: to Milan (14/3), Italy single rate Registered commercial cover. The Reg'n fee is paid in British currency. This item demonstrates legitimate use of **three** kinds of stamps:

- 1) unoverprinted,
- 2) overprinted LEVANT,
- 3) overprinted in Turkish currency

The only recorded commercial cover from British Levant showing proper use of all three categories of stamps

Letter Mail: Multiple Rates

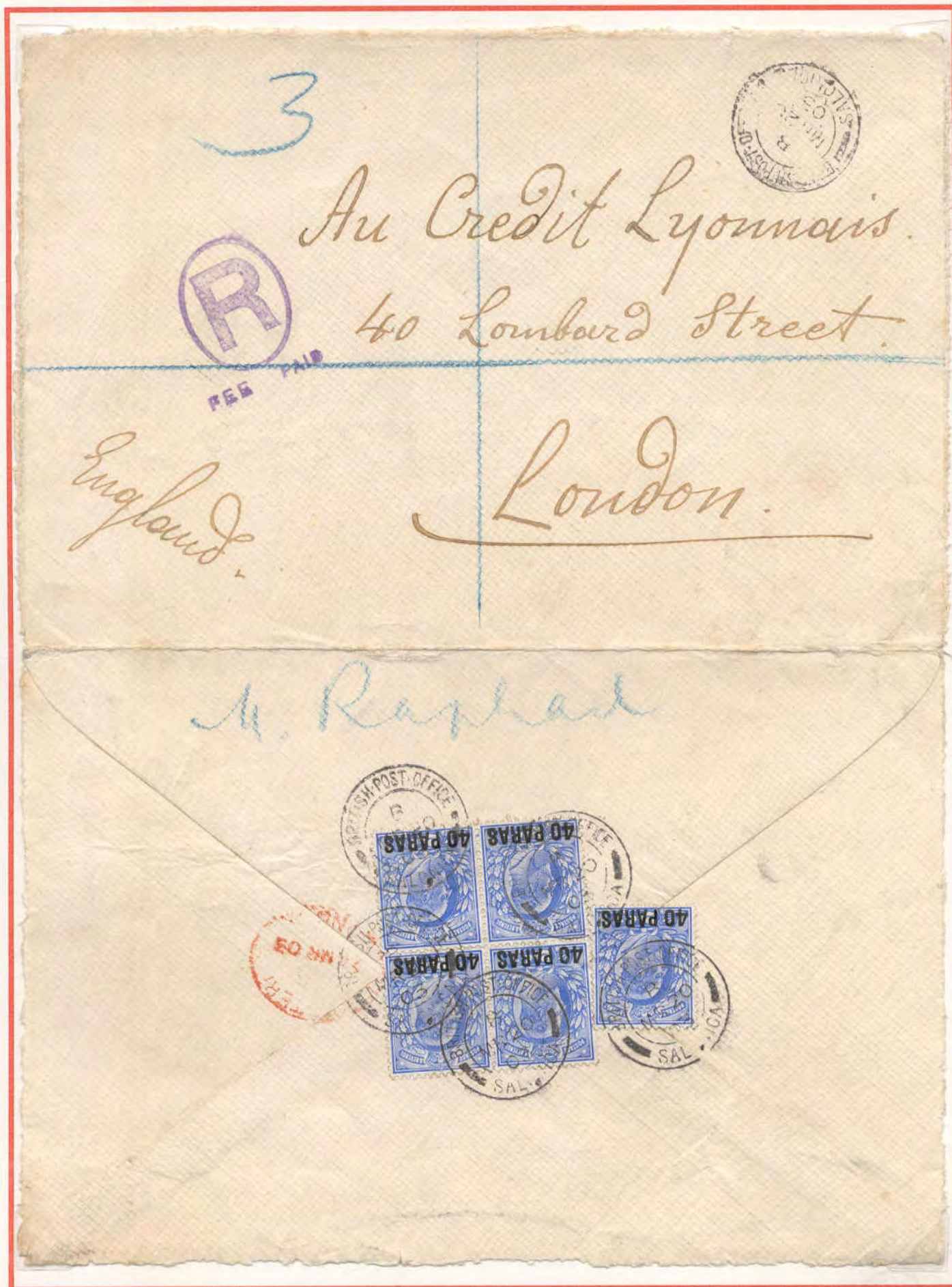


7/6/00: to Leeds (11/6) paying 80 Paras *double* rate plus 40 Paras Reg'n Fee.



1/5/00: to Leeds (5/5), paying 3 Piastres (=120 Paras) *triple* rate plus 1 Piastre Reg'n Fee.

The only recorded use of the KEVII 4 Piastres / 10 d on cover from Salonica



20/3/03: to London, *quadruple* registered cover at 5 Piastres.

Salonica's highest recorded franking



Letter Mail:
The October 1907
Rate Change



5/10/11: to Paris
(10/10) showing the
post - October 1907
reduced *double rate*
at
1 Piastre 30 Paras (1
½ d = 30 Paras).

Letter Mail: The Mysterious 1 ¼ Piastre Rate



26/3/11: to
Leeds (30/3),
at the
mysterious
1 ¼ Piastre
rate.

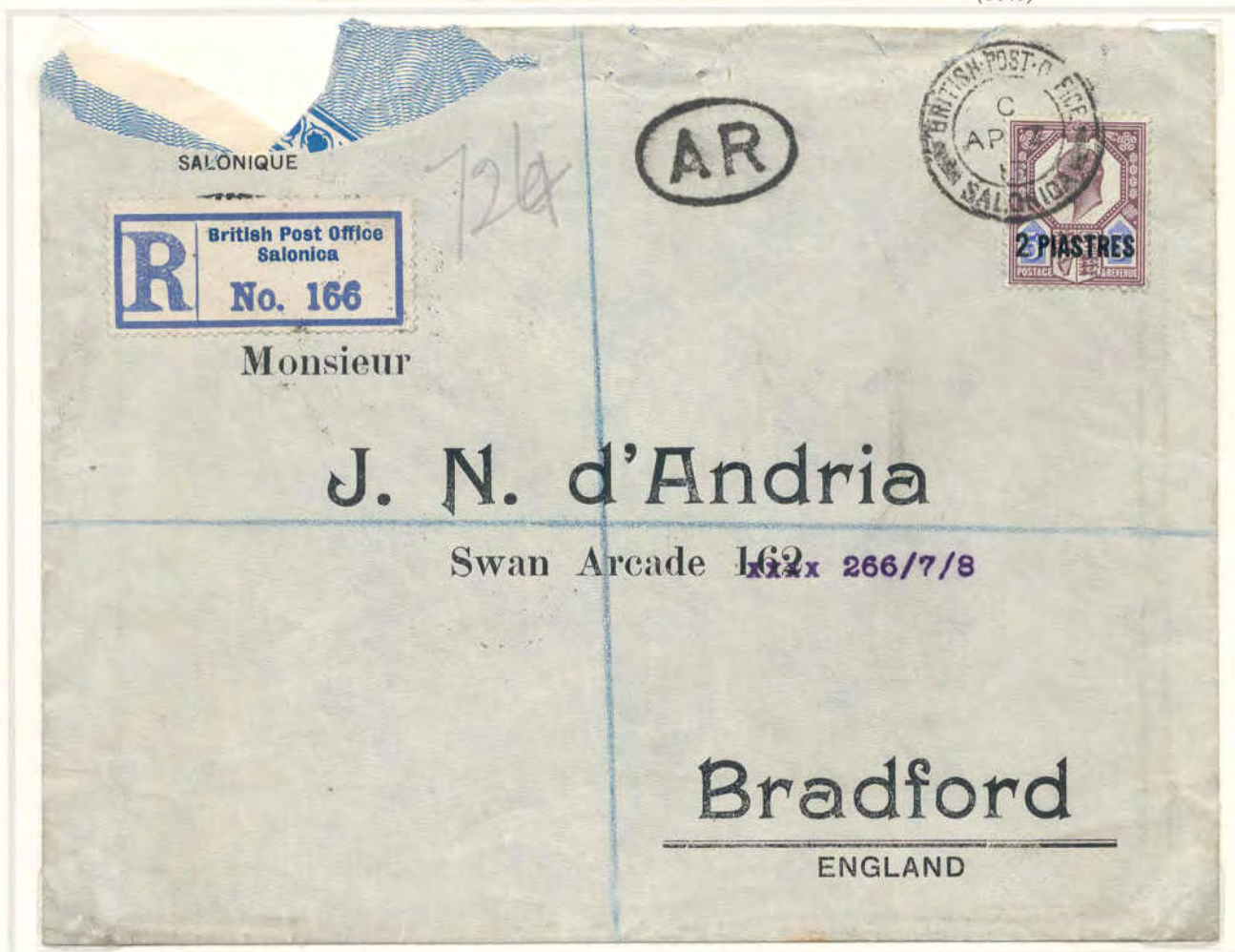
A few commercial single-rate covers bearing the 1 ¼ Piastre alone are known. It has been suggested that the extra ¼ Piastre paid some kind of Late Fee, but this is not verified by research in the PO Archives.

Letter Mail: Special Services:

Acknowledgment of Receipt
(Avis de Réception)



(60%)



7/4/13: to Bradford, single rate Registered & AR cover with appropriate AR handstamp.
The extra AR Fee of 1 Piastre was affixed to the accompanying special AR form.

The only recorded AR cover from Salonica

Letter Mail: Special Services (continued)

Express Delivery

The International Express Delivery Service was first introduced in Constantinople on 1 August 1911. From 8 May 1913 was also extended to the other Levant offices. The prepayment of the Express Fee was in Sterling and obligatory.

{For a comprehensive presentation of the introduction of this Service to the British Levant Post Offices based on original research in the PO Archives, see the Exhibitor's article: 'Levant - International Express Delivery Service' published in "The Overprinter" edition 4/02 (pages 86-92)}



Wax seal at the back of the Serbian Consulate (70%)



13/10/14: Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (in exile during WW1) to the "Times" in London (23/10), triple rate Registered Express letter. The Express Fee in this case was 3d as the distance between the PO of delivery and the "Times" Office was less than a mile. Express label and handstamp applied in Salonica.

The only recorded Express Letter from any of the British Post Offices in the Levant (Ex Cihangir)

POSTAL STATIONERY



Postcards

(Left) 29/12/10 to Paris.
1899, 1d carmine
postcard (CP35).
Sent by the Salonica
Postmaster George Blunt.



(Right) 27/12/02
(dispatched on 30/12)
to Smyrna (3/1/03).
1899, 1d carmine
REPLY postcard (CP37).
A genuine commercial
REPLY use and as such
extremely elusive



Envelope

27/10/02: to Cairo (1/11),
2 ½ d grey-blue PSE (EP35)
surcharged "40 PARAS".

Additionally franked
40 Paras to make up the
ordinary double letter
rate.

Registered Envelopes (PSREs)

Rarely seen from Salonica; the few examples known are more or less philatelic.



14/8/07: to Berlin (17/8). 1902 3d red-brown PSRE (RP24), size G overprinted "REGN. FEE. / 40 PARAS." showing the latest recorded use of the provisional registration label.



7/8/13: to Preasburg, Hungary. 1902 3d red-brown PSRE (RP24), size F, overprinted "REGN. FEE. / 40 PARAS."

Elusive size

UNUSUAL DESTINATIONS



As a rule, mail to uncommon destinations from this small office is seldom seen.

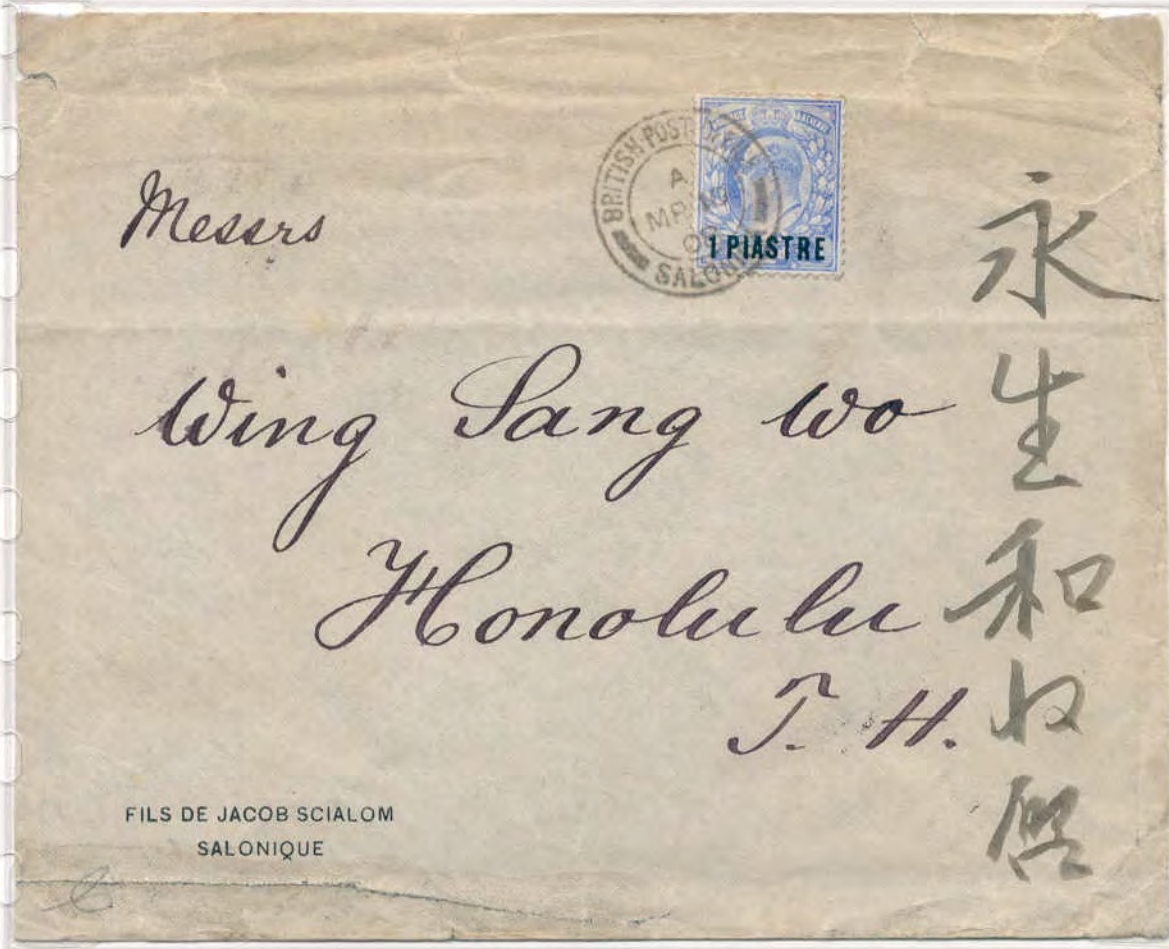
20/6/04: to Meester Cornelis, Java, Dutch East Indies (18/7), via Alexandria & Suez, single rate Registered cover

(Ex Cihangir)



26/12/05: to Floriana, Malta via Valletta (1/1/06), addressed to Sir John Blunt, the well-known British diplomat.

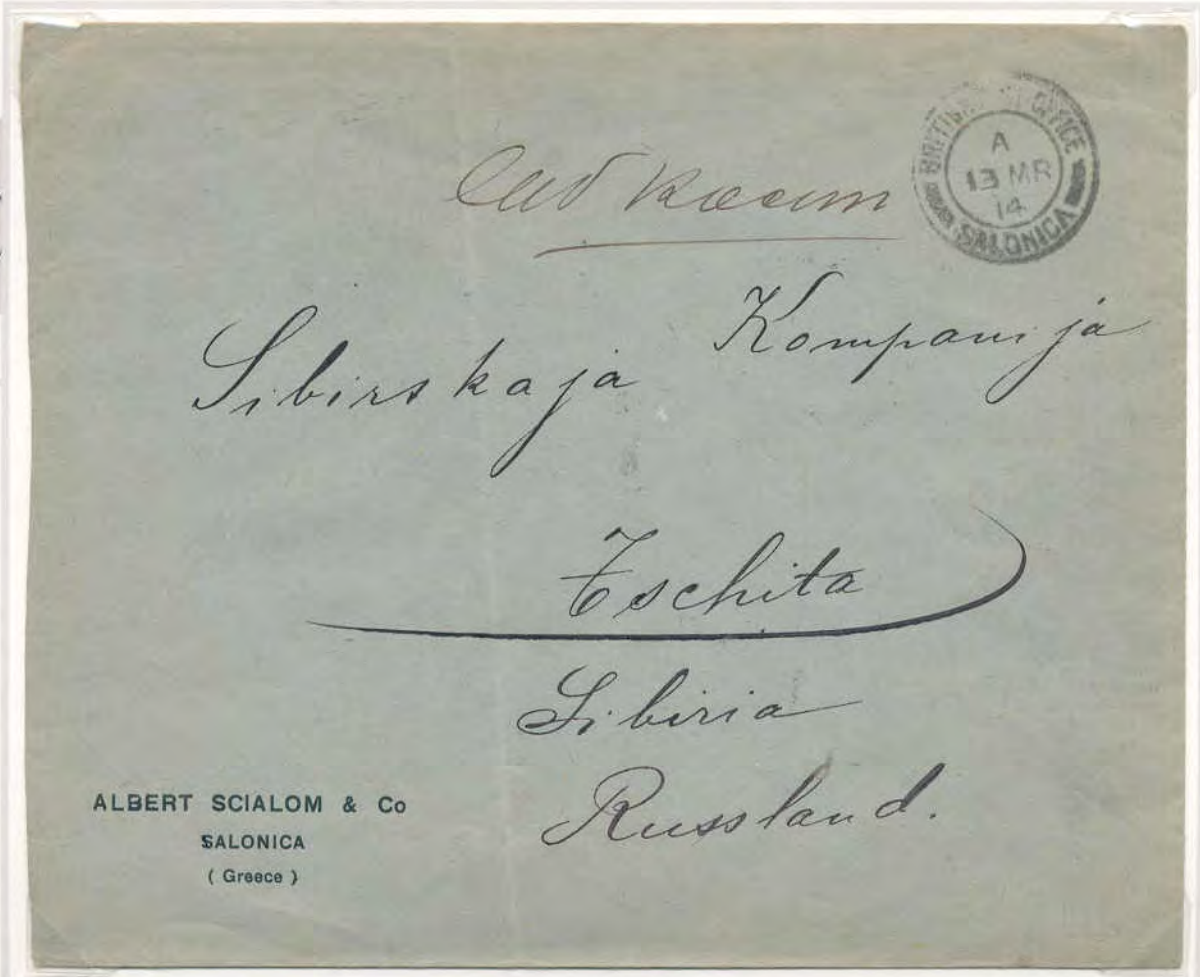
10/3/08: to Honolulu, Hawaii single rate cover.



(30%)

13/3/14: to Chita (13/3 Old Calendar), East Siberia, single rate via the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Chita is a Station on the Trans-Siberian Railway, 6199 km from Moscow



EFFECT OF WAR

This – the last Section of Part One – is devoted to the effect of War on the mail from British Levant. It deals with: 1) *The Balkan Wars of 1912-13*, and 2) *The WW1*.

1) THE BALKAN WARS 1912-13

The First Balkan War broke out on 8 October 1912 when Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia (Balkan League), having large parts of their ethnic populations under Ottoman sovereignty, attacked the Ottoman Empire, terminating its five-century rule in the Balkans in a seven-month campaign resulting in the Treaty of London.

The Second Balkan War broke out on 16 June 1913 when Bulgaria, dissatisfied with its gains, attacked its former allies, Serbia and Greece. Their armies repulsed the Bulgarian offensive and counter-attacked penetrating into Bulgaria, while Romania and the Ottomans used the favourable time to intervene against Bulgaria to win territorial gains. In the resulting Treaty of Bucharest, Bulgaria lost most of the territories gained in the First Balkan War.



The War interrupted communications along the railway line from Constantinople West. Likewise the Salonica – Nish – Belgrade railway was fought over, the usual transit time to European destinations was considerably affected, as mail was now routed via Greek ports.

Outbreak of the Balkan Wars



7/10/12: Salonica to Paris, commercially used 1d deep carmine postcard (CP56).

Posted the day before the War broke out.

As there is no arrival b/s it is not possible to tell whether it made the last train service to Europe

The Balkan Wars 1912-13 (continued)

Greek forces capture Salonica on 7/11/12. A British Sailor serving on a RN ship sends the following postcard with a note on the picture side: "this is the place the Greeks have just taken".



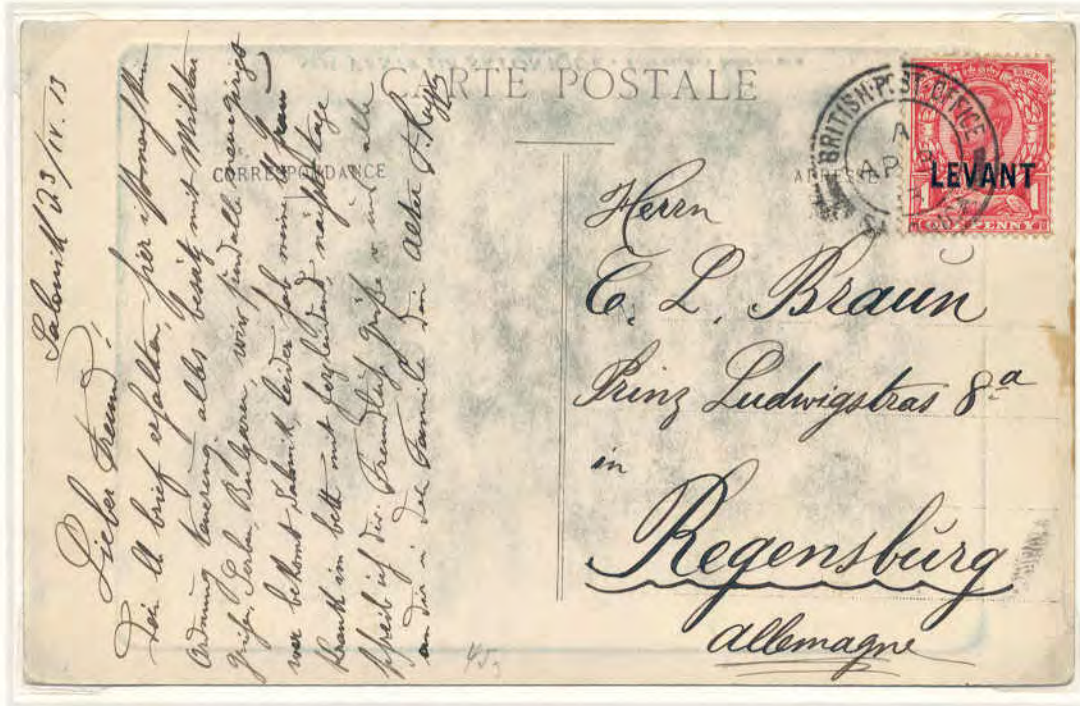
11/11/12: Beshika Bay, Turkey to Portsmouth carried in the closed RN Mailbag and through one of the British Post Offices in the area. Postage paid in cash and as the ship's 1d stamp stock run out, the card received the 'LONDON PAID' handstamp. Due to the War it took 11 days to reach London instead of the usual 4-5 days.



14/11/12: Salonica to London, the earliest recorded cover after the liberation of the city.

The Balkan Wars 1912-13 (continued)

Hours after the liberation of Salonica, a few Bulgarian Army units were granted permission by the Greeks to settle in the city resulted in a very tense situation as Bulgarians coveted Salonica too. The future of the city seemed uncertain.



3/4/13: Salonica to Regensburg, Germany. Message reads: "...the city is full of Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian troops and no one really knows who will finally conquer Salonica..."

The Bulgarians, dissatisfied with their share of territorial gains of the First Balkan War,, attack the Greek forces on 17th June near Nigrita, Northern Greece and so starting the Second Balkan War.



17/6/13: Salonica to Bradford PPC sent on the day the Bulgarian offensive started the Second Balkan War. Impossible to say if/when the card arrived safely.

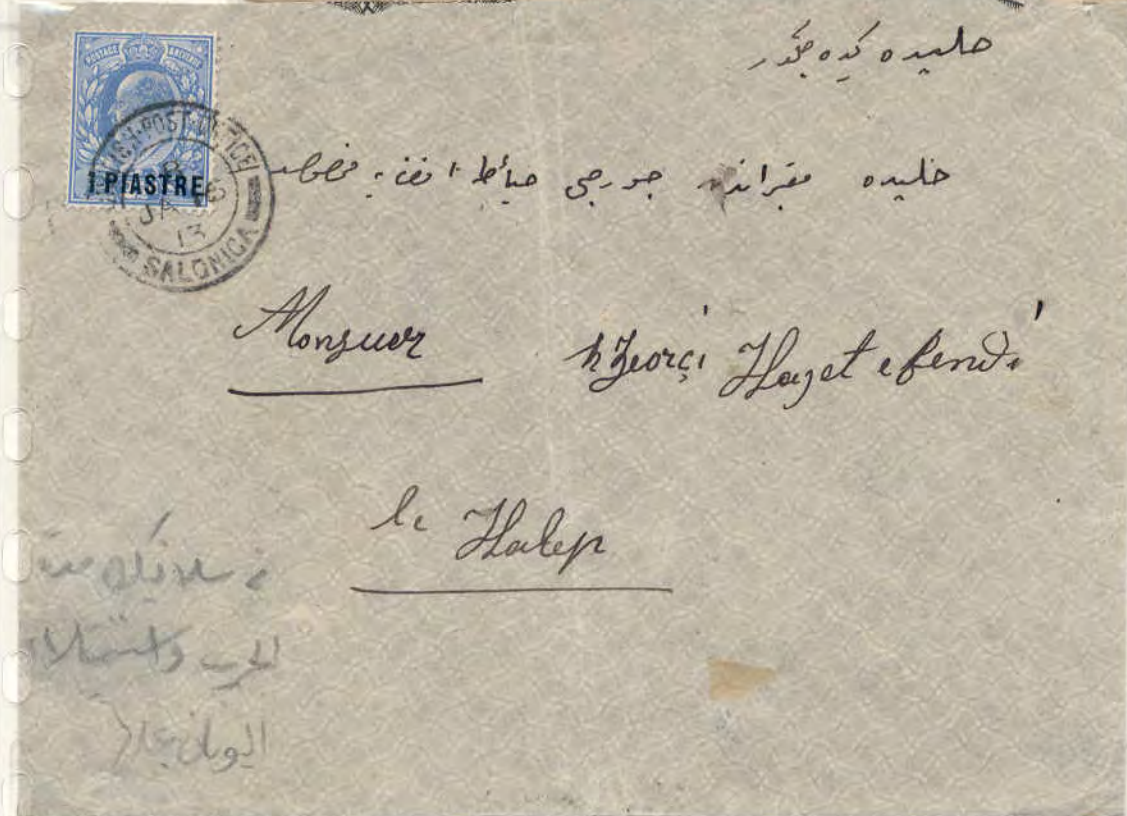
The Balkan Wars 1912-13 (continued)

Communication between the British PO in (the now Greek) Salonica and the British POs in Constantinople and Smyrna was severely affected, the usual transit of 1-3 days became about 2 weeks.



28/11/12:
Constantinople
to Salonica
(10/12).

Transit time:
12 days



16/1/13: Salonica to
Aleppo (2/3), via the
British PO Smyrna
(27/1).

Transit time between the
two British POs:
11 days

2) FIRST WORLD WAR

WW1 broke out on 28/7/14. The Parcel Post and Money Order services were suspended. Again, railway connections from Constantinople West and Salonica North were interrupted. Alternative routes were employed mainly by ship to *Marseilles* or *Brindisi*. Transit times were severely affected.

*Interrupted/
Delayed Mail*

W. DOWNS
4. 15PM
SEP 2 1914

28/7/14:
Constantinople
to London sent
on the day the
WW1 broke out.



Detained in Vienna and handstamped "Zurück! / Keine Beförderungsmöglichkeit", returned to Constantinople and resent to London (2/9) on a *roundabout* route via *Salonica* and *Brindisi*.



Delayed to USA

THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK
REGISTERED
Newark, Ohio

(25%)

6/8/14: Salonica to
Newark, USA
(31/8).

It took **9 days** to
London (instead of the
usual 4 days by rail)
as it was dispatched by
Sea via *Marseilles* or
Brindisi.

First World War (continued)



31/8/14:
Stamboul to
Leeds (14/9) via
London (13/9),
double rate
Registered cover.

Transit time to
London: 13 days.

One of three
recorded covers
from Stamboul
in the period
August -
September 1914

Early Indian Censorship



13/9/14: Salonica to Calcutta (7-8/10) ppc, showing Indian "Passed by censor."
This is the only recorded (up to 1914) British Levant item with a censor mark.

First World War (continued)

Delayed to
Argentina



23/9/14: to
Buenos Ayres
(7/11).

Transit time to
London: 18 days.

A very late
cover from
Smyrna as the
PO closed only
a week later



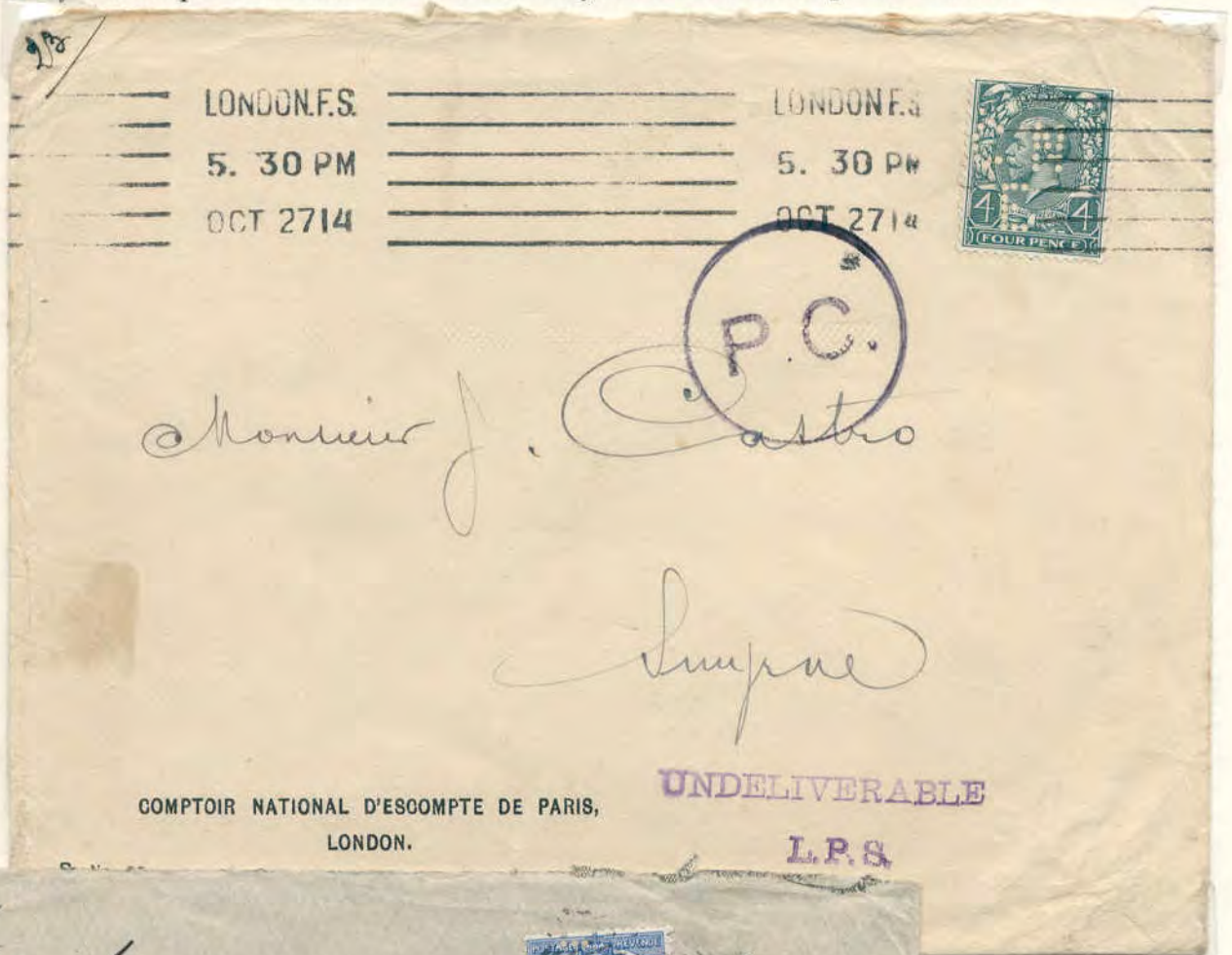
7/10/14: Salonica to Lucerne. 1912, 1d scarlet postcard (CP62), sent a week after the rest of the British Levant POs had closed. The Salonica PO operated until the end of October (a very late use on 13/10/14 is shown in the Salonica Section)

First World War (continued)

An immediate effect of the WW1 was the closure of all foreign Post Offices in the Ottoman Empire on 30th September 1914. On top of that, communication between Great Britain with the now enemy Turkey was suspended. Two such covers to Smyrna & Constantinople are shown:

(Right)
27/10/14:
London to
Smyrna, double
rate censored
cover. The
letter never
reached
Smyrna.

"UNDELIVERABLE
-BLE / LPS"
London
handstamp.



(Left) 3/11/14:
London to
Constantinople,
single rate.
Again censored
& undeliverable.

SMYRNA

Timeline:

October 31 st 1918	Armistice with Turkey signed
March 1st 1919	British Post Office opened
May 15 th 1919	Greek occupation of Smyrna
August 10 th 1920	Treaty of Serves awards Smyrna and environs to Greece
September 9 th - 10 th 1922	Greek administration evacuates Smyrna / Kemalist Turks enter Smyrna
September 13th - 15th 1922	Great fire destroys the city / British PO burned down never to reopen
July 24 th 1923	Treaty of Lausanne

Reopened on 1st March 1919 under the enterprise of Commander Dixon, the Senior Allied Naval Officer. Unlike Constantinople, *accounting was made in Sterling alone*. Ordinary British stamps and stationery were used. Pre-war surcharged items are occasionally found - *the surcharged value in Piastres was ignored* in these cases.

Earliest recorded letter



13/3/19: to Manchester, *six-fold* Registered letter rate paying $1s \frac{1}{2} d$ (the Piastre surcharges were ignored). Passed by Censor in London (9-14/4). *Censored mail originating from BPO Smyrna is found up to July 1919.*

The earliest recorded letter from the British Post Office in Smyrna in the 1919-22 period

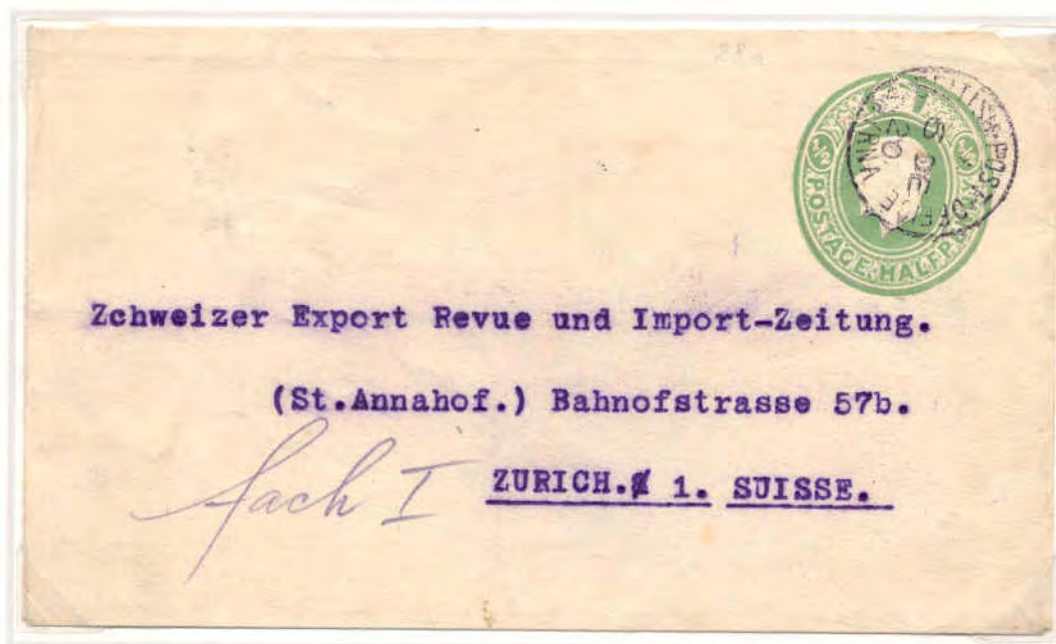
The Postal Rates remained fixed until the closure of the office:

Printed Paper Rate	½ d
Postcards	1d
Letter up to 20 grams	2 ½ d
Each additional 20 grams	1 ½ d
Registration Fee	2d

Printed Paper Rate

17/12/19: to London.
1912, ½ d green
Newspaper Wrapper
(WP25), overprinted
"LEVANT".

*Pre-war stationery used in
the post-war period.*



6/12/20: to Zurich. 1913-20, ½ d green Envelope (*tongued flap at left - EP54*), size E.
Most unusual from Smyrna

Postcard Rate



13/7/20: to *Harrar, Abyssinia* (Ethiopia), via Alexandria (21/7) at the 1d postcard rate. Scarce destination



13/10/20: to New York, *unpaid* postcard. The pre-war "T" handstamp of Smyrna was applied and a 4c (double the deficiency) postage due was collected on arrival.

Letter Mail: Ordinary (UPU) Rates

The Imperial Rate shown previously is the exception. The vast majority of mail found pays the UPU rates.



5/9/19: to London, *single rate* Registered Letter.

1915, 2d black Forces PSRE (RPF1), size G2. *Civilian use*

This cover was *censored* by the Military Authority in Constantinople. The practice of censoring civilian mail was abandoned in mid-October 1919.



7/9/20: to Ponderoyen (18/10) West Bank, British Guiana, a double rate Reg cover. Unusual destination

Letter Mail: The June 1921 Rate Increase

On 13th June 1921, the new increased rates came into effect (detailed table shown in the beginning of this Section). They were in force for only two months - until the introduction of the surcharged in Piastres values.



CL Perfin



(50%)

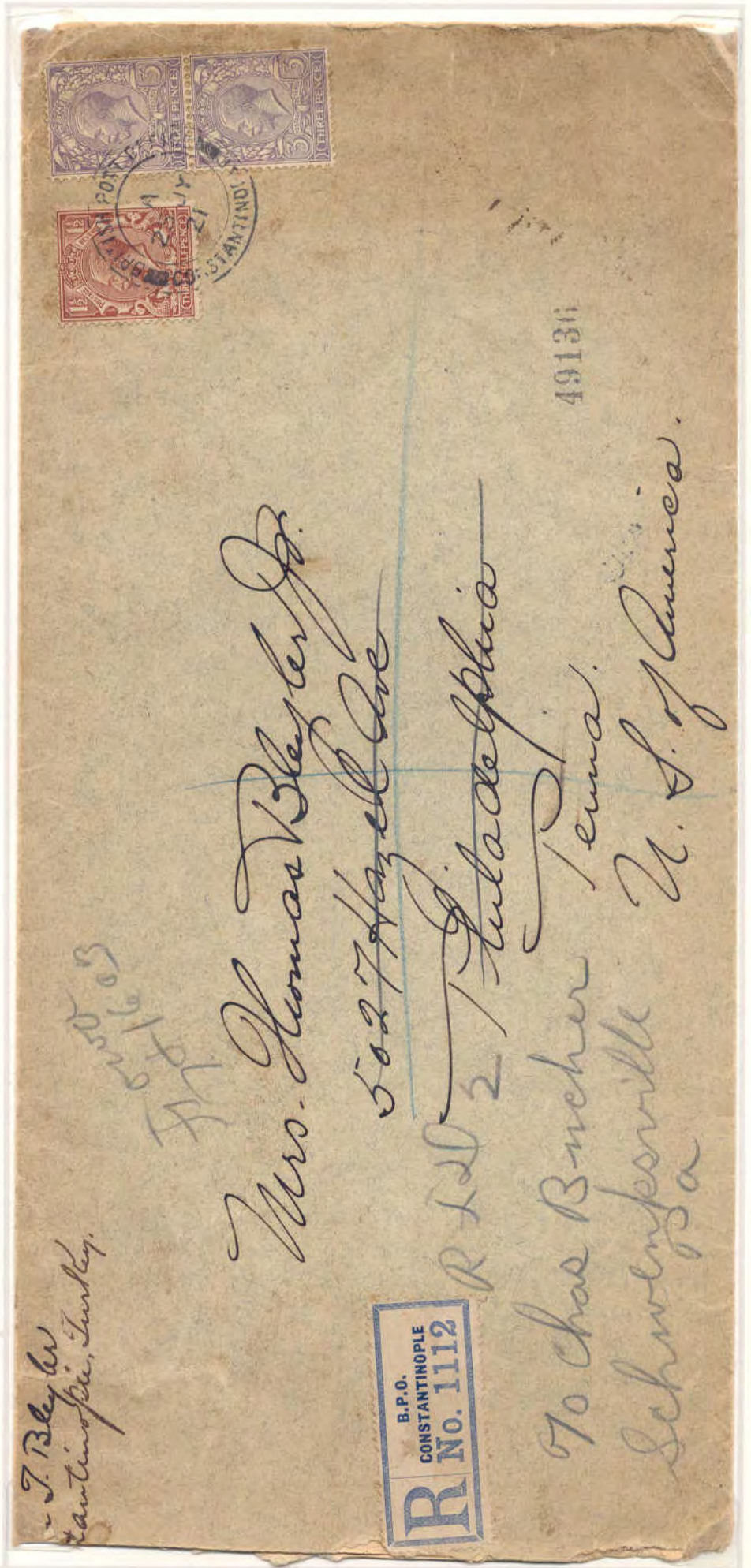


29/6/21: to London single rate Registered cover *at the new increased rates (3d Reg'n Fee + 3d foreign letter rate up to 20 grams)*. Stamps perfined with sender's C.L. monogram.

The only perfin found in the post-war period is the monogram C.L. of Credit Lyonnais. These are only found in the short period June-August 1921, when the value of the piastre was depreciating rapidly.

Only four covers with perfined stamps are recorded from Constantinople

Letter Mail: The June 1921
Rate Increase (continued)



25/7/21: to Philadelphia (11/8),
double rate Registered cover at
the new increased (and short-
lived) rates.

Elusive rate

*J. Bleyler
Constantinople, Turkey.*

July 25 1921

*Mrs. Thomas Bleyler Jr.
5027 Hazel Ave*

R 100 2 / Philadelphia

*To Chas Bucher Tenn.
Schwepersville U.S. of America.*

R
B.P.O.
CONSTANTINOPLE
No. 1112

49130

Postal Stationery

A choice of two British PSREs which are seldom found used in Constantinople:



15/3/21: to Barcelona at single rate. 1920, 4d grey-green PSRE (RP30), size G.



10/2/21: to Sliema (22/2), Malta at single rate. 1920, 2d black + 2d orange PSRE (RP31), size G.

PIASTRE ACCOUNTING PERIOD: 8/1921 - 1923

In Constantinople the economic situation deteriorated after the war and the piastre continued to be depreciated against the pound. To prevent speculation in the purchase of Great Britain stamps with Turkish currency, the British PO surcharged the stamps in piastres. This period is called "**Piastre Period**" as all accounting was made in Piastres (with the sole exception of Airmail Fees which were accounted for and paid in Sterling).

The most important foreign rates now became:

	8/1921 - 9/1923
Printed Paper Rate	1 ½ Piastres
Postcards	4 ½ Piastres
Letter per 20 grams	7 ½ Piastres
Each extra 20 grams	3 ¾ Piastres
Registration Fee	7 ½ Piastres
Acknowledgment of Receipt Fee	7 ½ Piastres

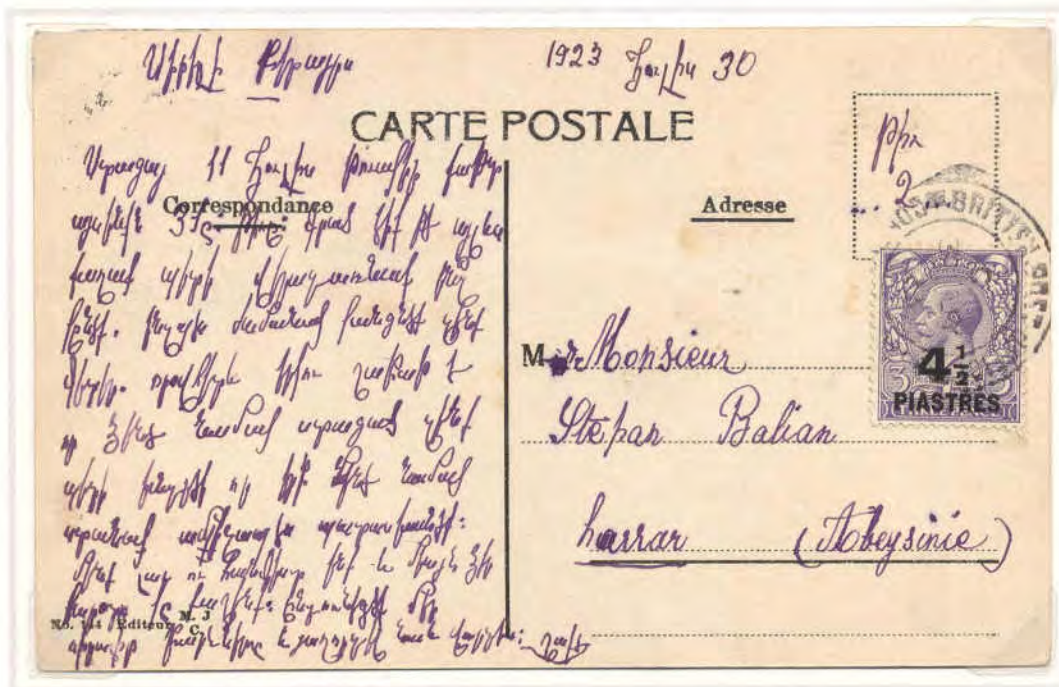
These rates remained unchanged until the closure of the Post Office in September 1923.

Printed Paper Rate



30/6/22: to New Jersey, sent unsealed at the 1 ½ *Piastres* Printed Paper Rate.

Postcard Rate

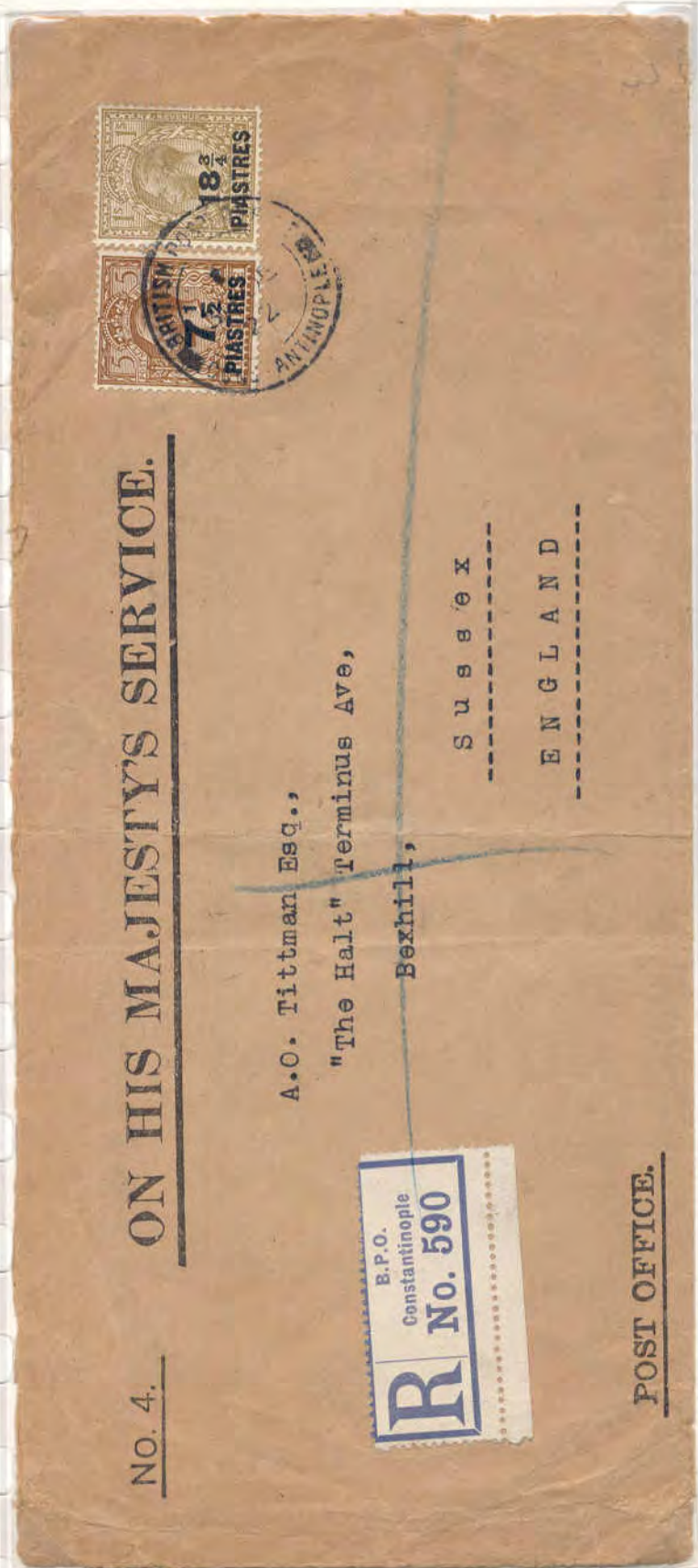


30/7/23: to Harrar, Abyssinia (Ethiopia), via Port Said (11/8) at the 4 1/2 Piastres postcard rate. Scarce destination



24/2/23: to Richmond, Virginia postcard short paid by 3/4 Piastres. The pre-war "T" handstamp of Constantinople was applied and a 6c (double the deficiency) postage due was collected on arrival.

Letter Mail



Top: 13/9/21 to Basel (19/9), *single* rate with Italian 1 Lira, but posted in the British PO. The franking was not accepted (it should have paid 7 1/2 *Piastres* in British stamps), 80c due on arrival.

Left: 30/12/22 to Bexhill (5/1/23), OHMS Post Office No 4 envelope, *quadruple* rate Registered cover. *Rate calculation:*

7 1/2 *Piastres* Reg'n Fee
 18 3/4 *Piastres* Letter Rate
 (7 1/2 Pi for the first 20 grams, 3 x 3 3/4 Pi for the 3 additional weight steps)

A total of 26 1/4 *Piastres*

Letter Mail: Special Services:
Acknowledgment of Receipt (Avis de Réception)

20/3/22: to Boston (4/4), at the single rate Registered rate of 15 Piastres. Handwritten notation "Avis de Réception", the extra 7 1/2 Pi. for this service would have been affixed on the special AR form.



Administration des Postes de la Grande Bretagne.
Post Office of Great Britain.

AVIS DE RÉCEPTION.
ADVICE OF DELIVERY.

d'une lettre avec valeur déclarée de }
of a letter insured for }
d'un objet recommandé } (1)
of a Registered Article }
d'un colis postal avec valeur déclarée de }
of a parcel insured for }
de } le } sous le No. } (2)
of } on the } under No. }
expédié par } M. }
sent by }
et adressé à }
and addressed to }
(full address) }

Le soussigné déclare (qu'une lettre avec valeur déclarée / qu'un objet recommandé / qu'un colis postal avec valeur déclarée) à l'adresse susmentionnée
The undersigned acknowledges that (an insured letter / a registered article / an insured parcel) addressed as above

et provenant de }
and posted at }
livré le }
delivered on the } 19

Signature (3)

du destinataire: } de l'agent du bureau distributeur:
of the addressee: } of the Postmaster of the Delivering Office:

1. Nature of the object (letter, sample, printed paper, etc.). 2. Bureau d'origine; date de dépôt à ce Bureau; no d'enregistrement au même Bureau.
Nature of article (letter, sample, printed paper, etc.). Office of origin; date of posting at this office; No. of registration at the same office.

3. Nota.—Cet avis doit être signé par le destinataire ou, si les règlements du pays de destination le comportent, par l'agent du Bureau distributeur, et renvoyé ensuite par le premier courrier directement à l'adresse indiquée au recto.
Note.—This advice must be signed by the addressee, or, if the postal regulations of the country of destination so provide by the Postmaster of the Delivering Office, then sent by the first Mail to the address shown on the other side.

7/7/23: to Zaqaziq (16/7), Egypt via the Cairo - Port Said TPO, AR card showing the AR Fee of 7 1/2 Piastres.

The only recorded AR card from British Levant

Letter Mail: Special Services (continued)

Airmail

RAF - operated Desert Airmail Service

In 1921, the Royal Air Force began the fortnightly Desert Airmail Service between Cairo and Baghdad. From October 1921 it carried private as well as official mail. Mail from the British PO Constantinople was first accepted for these pioneer flights around February - March 1923.

The sender had to pay the usual postage plus a special airmail fee of 6d per oz in British currency.



(75%)



30/7/23: to Basra (21/8), single rate Registered letter at 15 Piastres with additional Airmail Fee 6d per oz. Carried to Egypt by surface mail, airmail from Cairo to Baghdad (19/8) and surface again to Basra. The flight between Cairo and Baghdad usually took two days.

One of only four recorded commercial examples

Letter Mail:
Official Mail

ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE.

No. 32.

The Secretary,

General Post Office,

LONDON,

E.C. 1.

POST OFFICE.



4/10/22: to the
GPO London,
OHMS Post Office
No 32 envelope,
unfranked.

Official mail for
post office business
was sent *post - free*.

The only recorded
complete example
(a part-cover dated
17/12/21 is also
known)

Postal Stationery

A selection of GB Postal Stationery surcharged in Piastres for use exclusively in Constantinople (never issued at the BPO in Smyrna):



19/8/22: to Porto and re-addressed within Portugal. 1921, 1 ½ d brown inland card (CP77) surcharged "4 ½ PIASTRES" for the foreign postcard rate. On arrival it received the boxed 'NÃO CARECE DE NOVA FRANQUIA' to affirm that postage was paid by valid currency accepted by the UPU. Commercial use.



19/1/22: to Zurich. 1921, 1 ½ d brown Reply part of originally double foreign reply card (CP80), surcharged "4 ½ PIASTRES". Commercially used as a normal card.

Postal Stationery (continued)

R
B.P.O.
CONSTANTINOPLE
No. 2163

REGISTERED

THIS LETTER MUST BE GIVEN TO
TO BE REGISTERED, AND A
THE ADDRESS MUST BE

Robert

LETTER.

AN OFFICER OF THE POST OFFICE
RECEIPT OBTAINED FOR IT.
WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE.

*Monsieur
Leroy*

France

5 Rue des Vergers

*Lursenes
(Seine)*



FEE PAID.



RECEIVED

30/12/21: to Lursenes via Paris (4/1/22) at double rate. 1921 5d orange PSRE (RP34), size K overprinted "REGN. FEE./7 1/2 PIASTRES."
Extremely rare, only a couple of other examples of this elusive size are recorded



16/10/22: to Sofia. 1921, 5d orange PSRE (RP34), size H, surcharged "REGN.FEE. / 7 1/2 PIASTRES." Up-rated to pay the foreign double rate. Note that it is flap type 8 and as such exceptionally elusive.

THE END OF THE WAR



23/8/1923: Buyuk Dere (Constantinople) to Portsmouth, stamps cancelled in London with "RECEIVED FROM HM SHIPS".

Message referring to the Treaty of Lausanne reads:

"We are expecting to leave here some time today... The Peace was ratified last midnight and we expect our destination to be Malta en route for home".

SMYRNA

Timeline:

October 31 st 1918	Armistice with Turkey signed
March 1st 1919	British Post Office opened
May 15 th 1919	Greek occupation of Smyrna
August 10 th 1920	Treaty of Serves awards Smyrna and environs to Greece
September 9 th - 10 th 1922	Greek administration evacuates Smyrna / Kemalist Turks enter Smyrna
September 13th - 15th 1922	Great fire destroys the city / British PO burned down never to reopen
July 24 th 1923	Treaty of Lausanne

Reopened on 1st March 1919 under the enterprise of Commander Dixon, the Senior Allied Naval Officer. Unlike Constantinople, *accounting was made in Sterling alone*. Ordinary British stamps and stationery were used. Pre-war surcharged items are occasionally found - *the surcharged value in Piastres was ignored* in these cases.

Earliest recorded letter



13/3/19: to Manchester, *six-fold* Registered letter rate paying *1s ½ d* (the Piastre surcharges were ignored). Passed by Censor in London (9-14/4). *Censored mail originating from BPO Smyrna is found up to July 1919.*

The earliest recorded letter from the British Post Office in Smyrna in the 1919-22 period

The Postal Rates remained fixed until the closure of the office:

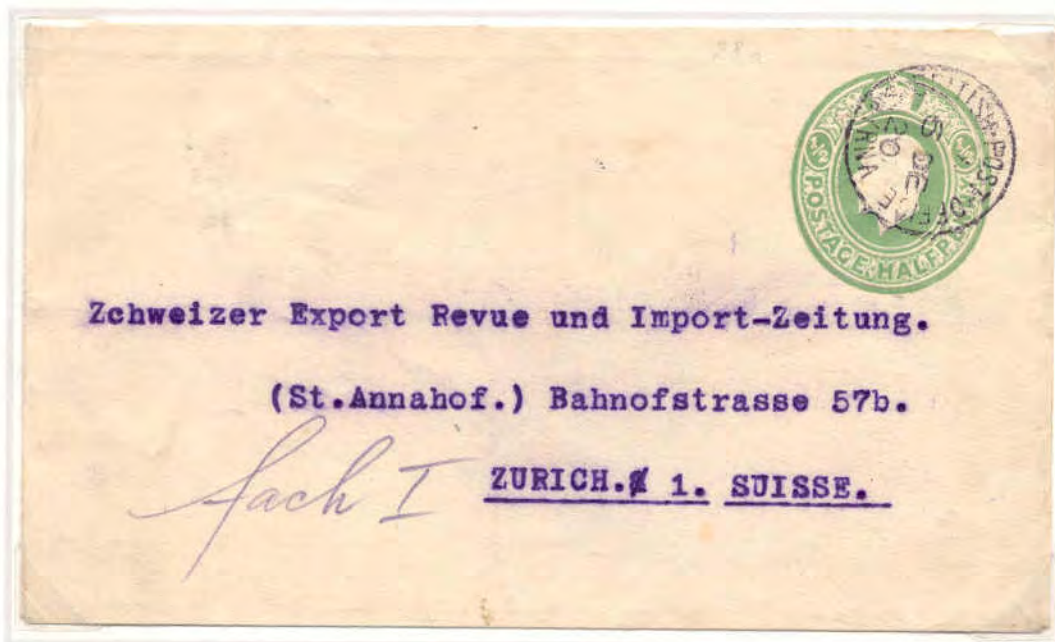
Printed Paper Rate	½ d
Postcards	1d
Letter up to 20 grams	2 ½ d
Each additional 20 grams	1 ½ d
Registration Fee	2d

Printed Paper Rate



17/12/19: to London.
1912, ½ d green
Newspaper Wrapper
(WP25), overprinted
"LEVANT".

Pre-war stationery used in
the post-war period.



6/12/20: to Zurich. 1913-20, ½ d green Envelope (tongued flap at left - EP54), size E.
Most unusual from Smyrna

Postcard Rate



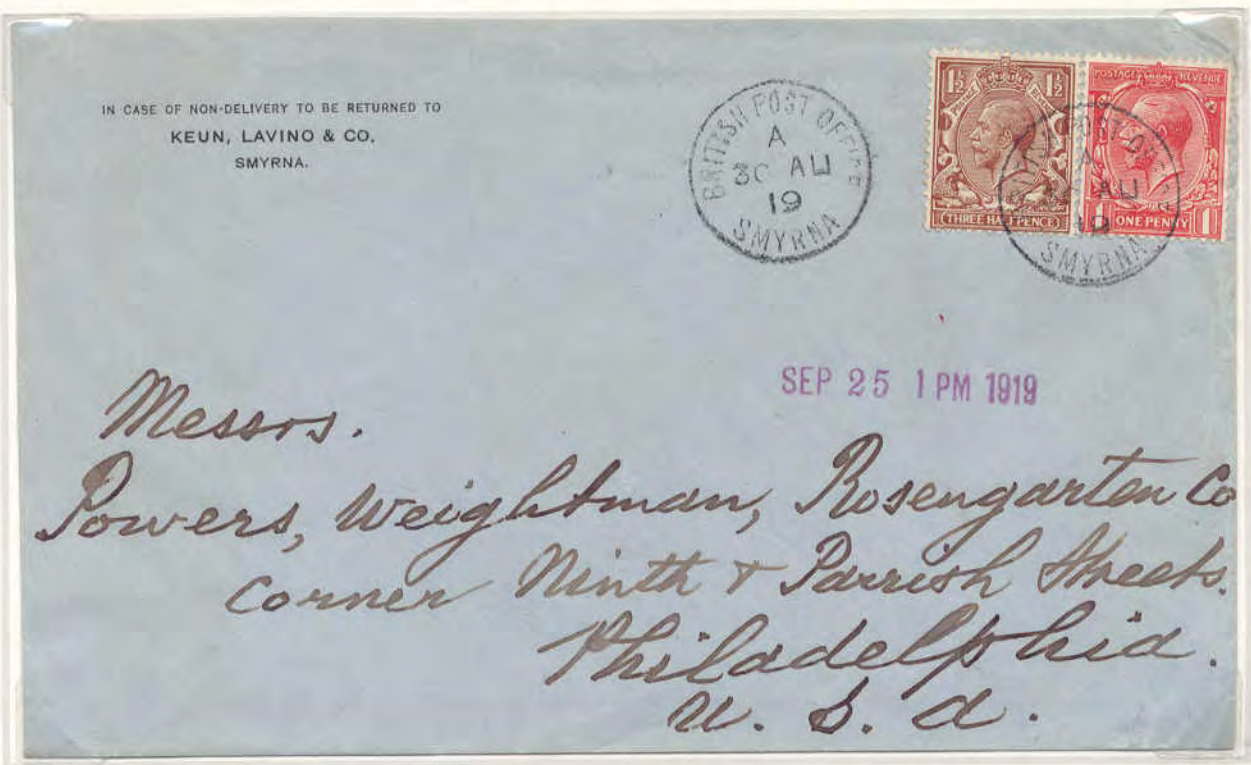
13/7/20: to *Harrar, Abyssinia* (Ethiopia), via Alexandria (21/7) at the 1d postcard rate. Scarce destination



13/10/20: to New York, *unpaid* postcard. The pre-war "T" handstamp of Smyrna was applied and a 4c (double the deficiency) postage due was collected on arrival.

Letter Mail

As shown previously, mail could be franked with pre-war **Piastre** overprints. A few items are known with pre-war **LEVANT** overprints, but the vast majority of mail was franked with GB stamps.



30/8/19: to Philadelphia *single* rate paid with ordinary GB stamps.

Letter Mail
(continued)

5/1/21: to
Cairo (11/1),
at the 4d
ordinary
double rate.



28/1/22: to
Constantinople
(30/1), at the *double*
Registered letter rate
of 6d.

Letter Mail (continued)

Overweight Postal Packet: Twelfth Weight Rate



c1920: to London, front portion of large Registered letter, which purports to be a *twelfth* rate item.

Rate calculation:

2d Reg'n Fee
 19d Letter Rate
 (2 ½ d for the first 20 grams, 11 x 1 ½ d for the 11 additional weight steps)

 A total of 1s 9d
 (½ d overpayment)

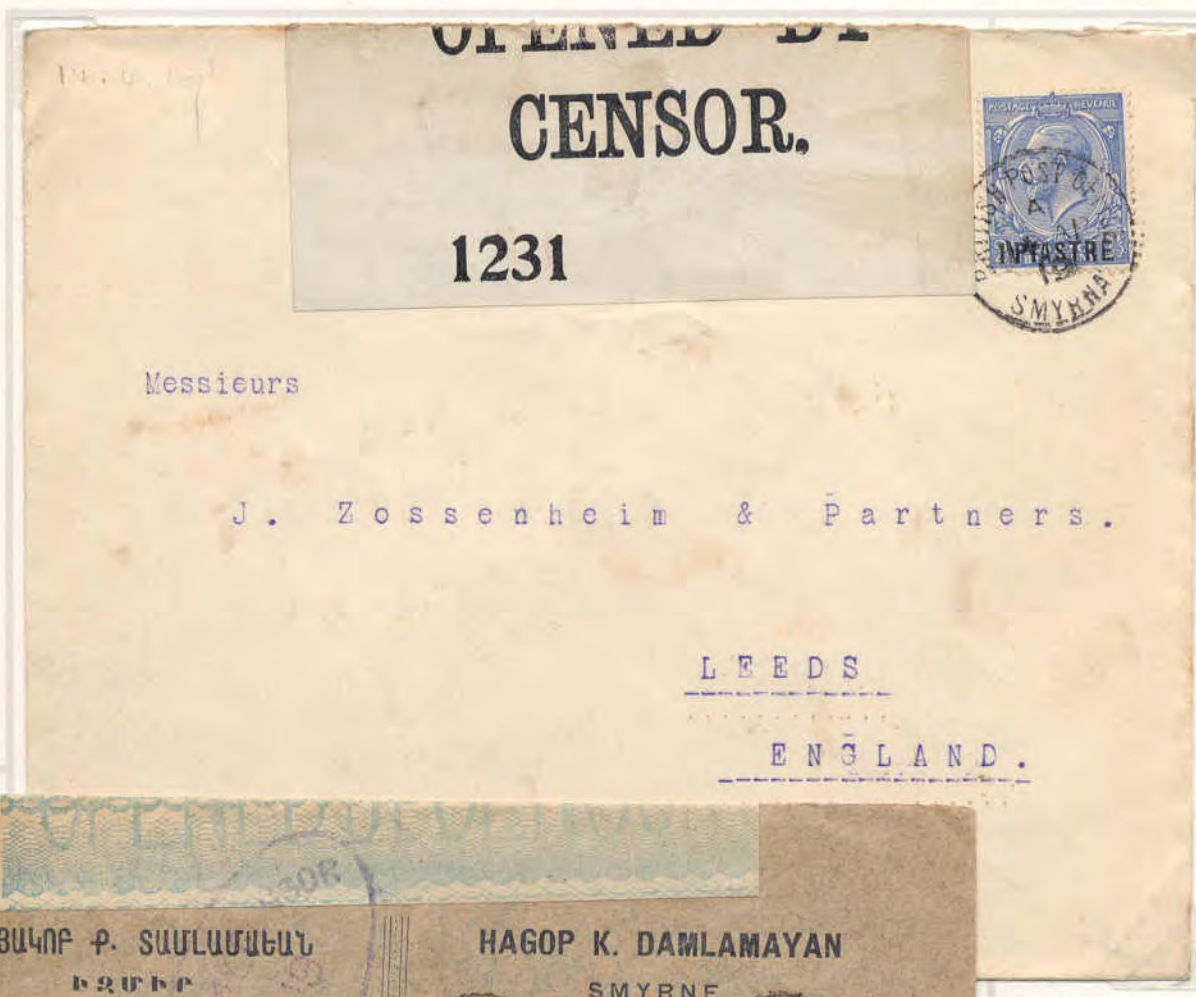
The use of the 8d value in Smyrna was previously unrecorded

Possibly the highest recorded franking on cover from Smyrna

Censorship

Mail posted in the British PO Smyrna was never censored in Smyrna, but early mail of the period March - July 1919 is found censored by the British on arrival in GB or Egypt. From the end of July 1919 no censorship was applied and this was due to the fact that Smyrna was by then - on Allies' order - under Greek administration.

14/4/19: to
Leeds,
censored in
London.



20/6/19: to
Alexandria
(11/7),
censored in
Egypt by the
British.

Censorship (continued)

Greek Censorship



(75%)



21/7/19: to Zurich (7/8), single rate Registered letter of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, routed via Piraeus. The identity of the sender must have excited the Greek Censors.

An unprecedented case of Greek censorship on mail originating from the British PO Smyrna

Rare GB Stamps used in Smyrna

A few of the most sought-after King George V Profile Head (wmk Simple Cypher) stamps are recorded cancelled with Smyrna postmarks. Perhaps the best known of these is the 2 ½ d "dull Prussian - blue" SG spec. N21(17) of which a small number of loose stamps are known including two blocks.



Currency Control tape and handstamp applied in Germany

(75%)



RPSL cert.

14 /2/20: to Dresden (23/2), single rate Registered letter.

The only recorded cover franked with the elusive 2 ½ d dull Prussian blue

Rare GB Stamps used in Smyrna (continued)

The 2 ½ d "Indigo-blue on Toned Paper" SG spec. N21(15) is considered to be one of the rarest KGV stamps. Seldom seen used in GB or abroad, one cover is recorded used in Constantinople in 1920.

The cover below was recently discovered by the exhibitor. Its use in Smyrna was previously unrecorded.

A major rarity of the KGV era



RPSL cert.

10/8/20: to St Louis (4/9), USA at double rate.

1918, 3 ½ d blue PSRE (RP29), size H.

The only recorded cover from Smyrna franked with the rare 2 ½ d "Indigo-blue on Toned Paper".

Discovery piece

Postal Stationery

A selection of choice Postal Stationery used in Smyrna:



20/8/20: to Huddersfield. 1902, 1d carmine Reply part of originally double foreign reply card (CP47), overprinted **LEVANT**. This is a pre-war item, commercially used as a normal card.



29/9/20: to Boston. 1919, 1 1/2 d brown Envelope (EP61), size H uprated for the foreign single rate. **Most elusive British Levant use**

Postal Stationery (continued)



17/11/19: to Alexandria, single rate Registered Letter.

1915, 2d black Forces PSRE (RPF1), size G2. Civilian use

The Registration label in this cover shows the error "inverted t" in the word "British".



20/1/21: to Kansas City (23/2) at double rate. 1920, 4d grey-green PSRE (RP30), size H.



18/11/20: to Paris via Brindisi (23/11) at double rate.

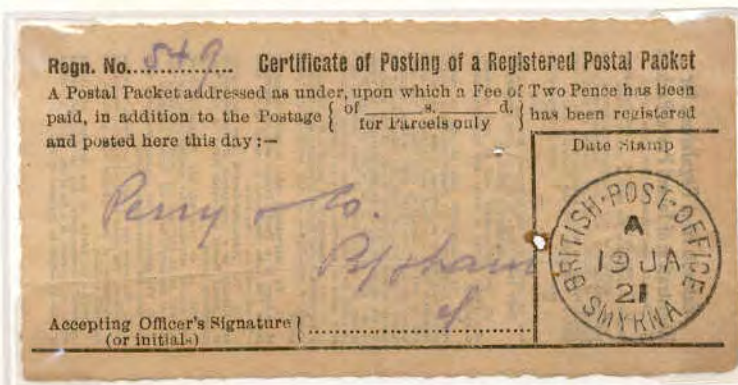
1920, 3d brown + 1d carmine PSRE (RP32), size G.

Rare use



13/12/21: to Leeds (20/12) at single rate.

1921, 5d orange PSRE (RP34), size G.

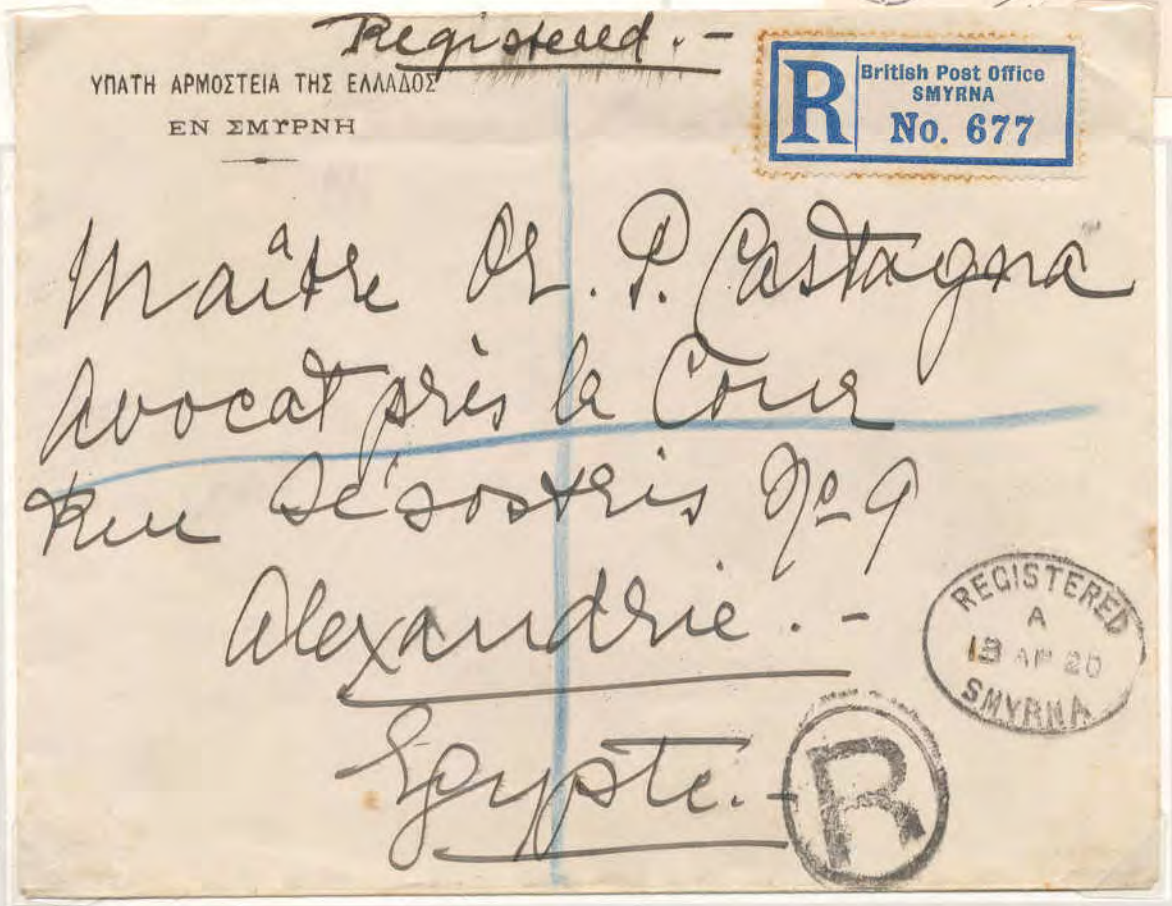


19/1/21: Certificate of Posting of a Registered Postal Packet to Birmingham.

High Commiserate of Greece in Smyrna

The British PO in Smyrna was very successful; even the Greek Authorities made use of its services even though there was a local Greek Post Office!

13/4/20: From "ΥΠΑΤΗ ΑΡΜΟΣΤΕΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ ΕΝ ΣΜΥΡΝΗ" (High Commiserate of Greece in Smyrna) to Alexandria (19/4), single rate Registered letter.



(45%)

Turkish Post via the British Post



1/6/20: to the USA, postcard franked Turkish 50 Paras and cancelled with octagonal "SMYRNE 8" datestamp, dispatched through the British PO (2/6).

An exceptional co-operation between the two Post Offices, seldom seen during the Greek occupation period.

SEPTEMBER 1922: THE GREAT FIRE OF SMYRNA & THE END OF THE BRITISH POST OFFICE



Turkish cavalry entered into Smyrna on September 9th 1922. The Greek army had evacuated the city the day before. During the confusion and anarchy that followed, a great portion of the city was set ablaze in the Great Fire of Smyrna.

The British Post Office was burned down and under the new administration was never allowed to resume business.

Left: Reproduction of a photo showing the British PO after it was burned down on September 15th 1922.



September 1922: to Basel (4/9), commercial cover of the 'Barker Brothers'. Prepared to be mailed through the **British PO** and thus franked with the proper postage of 2 ½ d. Handed over to the **Greek PO** (weak Greek b/s), stamps cancelled by pen strokes and '25' (centimes) handwritten notation for the benefit of the Swiss post. The amount due was collected on arrival.

It is possible that in the last few uncertain days of the Greek occupation the British PO refused responsibility to accept mail addressed to any other country than GB and her Colonies.

Suspension of Mail Services

15/9/22:
Constantinople to
Smyrna, cover front
at registered single
rate, showing a fine
strike of the BPO
Constantinople
postmark
'SERVICE
SUSPENDED'.

One of two
examples recorded
of this
Constantinople
mark.



The suspension of the British Postal Service at Smyrna was officially advertised in the PO Circular of the 20th September 1922: "The Postal Service at Smyrna is suspended and until further notice no letter or parcel Mails will be accepted for transmission to that place." The example below from Liverpool is dated 16/9/22:

