

Iraq

Railway Post Stamps

1928 - ca.1942

The Stamps And Their Usage



The area of the Iraqi Railway Post Stamps is almost unknown and very little material is available, hence, many questions remain open, but it invites at the same time for detailed research.

Already from 15 January 1920, when the Railway Line between Baghdad and Basrah has been inaugurated, mail has been transported between both cities as well as in regular intervals between the General Post Office in Baghdad and the Railway Station Baghdad-West.

In 1928 the Iraqi Railway System which was under British Administration entered into an agreement with the Iraqi Post (Directorate General of Posts and Telegraphs) which allowed the acceptance of mail in railway stations/halts. Consequently, 54 Railway Post Offices were opened to accept mail and to transport mail with the next available train to the nearest Post Office close to the railway station of the destination Post Office from where it was handed over to the Iraqi Post for delivery to the receiver of the mail. Or, in case at the destination no mail delivery was available, the receiver could collect the letter from the Railway Post Office.

This exhibit deals with the period of 1928 up to ca.1942, the period in which the Iraqi Railway Post has been in operation and in which the Railway Post stamps have been issued. The date when the Railway Post has ceased is not known, the latest cover known by the exhibitor is dated 12 February 1942.

Many of the Railway Post Offices were located at Railway Stations/Halts where no Post Office of the Iraqi Post was available, often only one (part) strike of the Railway Postmark is known, and in very many cases no postmark has been found so far. As of today, from the 54 Railway Post Offices which are listed in the Official Publications, only 26 Railway Post Offices can be documented by Railway Post Office Postmarks. With the exception of one, all of the known Railway Post Office Markings are included in this exhibit.

Structure

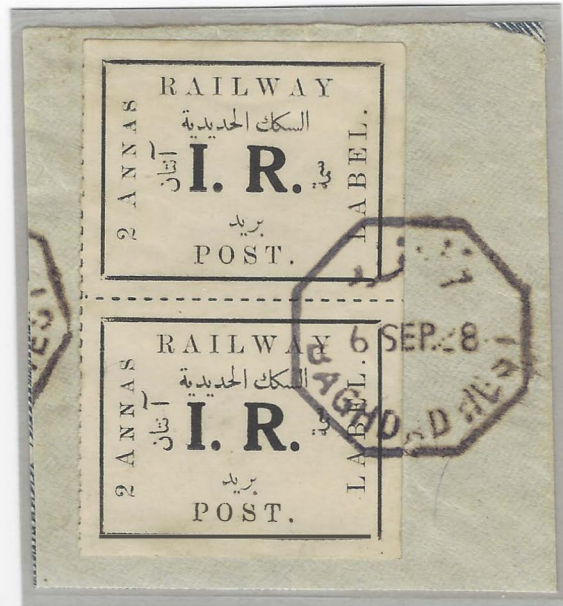
1. Stamp Issues.
 - a. 1st. Issue 1928, Inscription on stamps „I.R. Railway Post Label / 2 ANNAS“.
 - b. 2nd. Issue 1929, Inscription on stamps „I.R. Railway Post Stamp / 2 ANNAS“.
 - c. 3rd. Issue 1929, Inscription on stamps „Iraq Railways Post Stamp / 2 Annas“.
 - d. 4th. Issue 1932, Inscription on stamps „Iraq Railways Post Stamp / 10 Fils“.
 - e. 5th. Issue 1932-1942, new Design, Inscription on stamps „Iraq Railways Letter Service / 10 Fils“.
2. The Postmarks of the Iraqi Railway Post.
 - a. Type of Postmarks.
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3. The Railway Post Offices.
 - a. Railway Network of the Iraqi Railway.
 - b. Railway Post Offices of Baghdad.
 - c. Railway Post Offices of the North-Western Railway Line Baghdad - Baji.
 - d. Railway Post Offices of the North-Eastern Railway Line Baghdad – Khanaqin.
 - e. Railway Post Offices of the North-Eastern Railway Line Qaraghan - Kirkuk.
 - f. Railway Post Offices of the Southern Railway Line Baghdad - Maqil.
4. The use of the Railway Stamps.
 - a. Local Covers.
 - b. Foreign Covers.
 - c. Onward Transport by the Overland Mail Baghdad-Haifa.
5. Agreement of the Transfer of the Railway System of Iraq from United Kingdom to the Government of Iraq.

Selected Literature:

- Rainer Fuchs: Die Bahnpost in Irak 1928–1942. Michel Rundschau, Germany, January 2007 and others. Iraq Railway Post 1928 - c. 1942. The American Philatelist, Oktober 2007. Irak Eisenbahnpost (1928-42). Der Fiskal-Philatelist, ARGE Fiskalphilatelie e.V. im BDPH. Rundbrief Nr. 4 (2/2012).
- P.C. Pearson und E. B. Proud, The Postal History of Iraq. 1996.
- Iraq Railways – Cinderella Stamp Corner, von L. N. & M. Williams, The Stamp Magazine, August 1964.
- Dr. Friedrich Spacek. The Stamp Magazine, February 1965. / The Postal History of Iraq / The Railway Letter Service. / The London Philatelist, Volume 105, Mai 1996.
- Iraqi Post and Telegraphic Guide, issued by the Iraqi Administration for Post and Telegraphy, Baghdad, 1930 (English Issue) und 1932 (Arabic issue).
- The Iraq Directory, a General and Commercial Directory", Iraq, issue 1936.
- Maps of Iraq with Notes for Visitors, issued in 1929 by the Iraqi Government.

1: The Issued Stamps**1a: 1st Issue, Inscription of Stamps „I.R. Railway Post Label / 2 ANNAS“.**

The Stamps of the 1st issue have been issued on 1 September 1928 in booklets of 16 stamps with 8 booklet panes, each containing 2 stamps which have been rouletted vertically on the left side as well as horizontally between the stamps.



Complete booklet pane, cancelled on 6 September 1928 at Railway Post Office Baghdad-West. The earliest known cancelled Iraq Railway Post Stamps.

Complete booklet which was unknown for several decades and which has been discovered in August 2015. It is the only known complete booklet of the 1st issue of the Railway Posts Stamps of Iraq.



The booklet contains 8 booklet panes with 2 stamps each.

On left and right side are images of 2 of the 8 booklet panes of the shown complete booklet. Interestingly that all 8 booklet panes in the booklet of the same type **with Full Stop "** after Label. It may be therefore safe to assume that there has been an early and later issue of these stamps.

1: The Issued Stamps

1b: 2nd Issue, Inscription of Stamps „I.R. Railway Post Stamp / 2 ANNAS“.

The stamps of the second issue have most likely been issued in May 1929, again in booklets containing 16 stamps with 8 booklet panes, each containing 2 stamps. Like the previous issue, the stamps have been rouletted at left and horizontally between the stamps.

Four varieties are currently known. Similar to the previous issue they are recognizable on the position of the word “POST” underneath of “I.R.” and can be found on the upper and lower stamp of the booklet pane. The reason for these differences is again most likely caused by to the cliché assembly and almost all of the known stamps of this issue have been analyzed for that.



"POST"
pointing left



Khidhr



Kirkuk, 1930



"POST"
centered



"POST"
pointing left

Hamza fragment
In chapter 3f

Sulaiman Beg fragment
In chapter 3e



"POST"
centered

No complete booklet panes are recorded from that issue.

The above as cropped images shown stamps will be found in original in the chapter of the Railway Post Offices. Due to the rarity of the stamps and in order to show the differences this form of presentation has been chosen



Fragment, cancelled Baghdad (19 June 1929), with the round postmark of the Iraqi State Post.



It was believed that the stamps were issued only with rouletted perforation, the stamp shown here however is perforated on the left side with perforation L10.

1: The Issued Stamps

1a: 1st Issue, Inscription of Stamps „I.R. Railway Post Label / 2 ANNAS“.

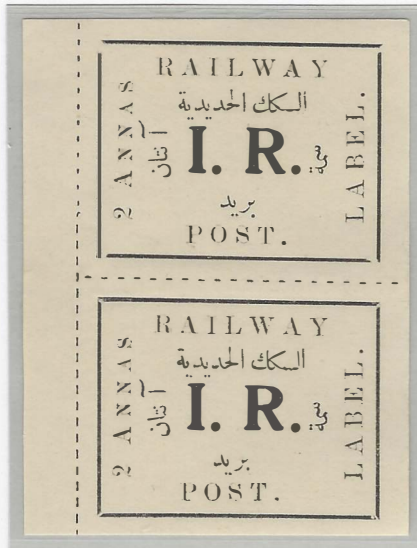
There are two main varieties found on the stamps which are with and without full stop (.) after the word “Label”. Furthermore, some differences notably by the position of the word “POST” under “I.R.”, the reason for these differences are most likely caused by to the cliché assembly, however, no solid proofs are so far found on that theory. The few existing booklet panes which have all been studied in detail lead to this conclusion.



"POST" pointing left



"POST" pointing left



Booklet Pane, both stamps **WITH** full stop after **LABEL**.



Booklet Pane, upper stamp **WITHOUT** full stop after **LABEL**.

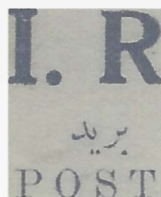


"POST" pointing left



"POST" pointing left

Other currently known sub-variants of this type.



"POST" in the middle, from upper stamp of the booklet pane



"POST" in the middle, from bottom stamp of the booklet pane



"POST" in the middle, from upper stamp of the booklet pane



"POST" in the middle, from bottom stamp of the booklet pane

1: The Issued Stamps**1c: 3rd Issue, Inscription of Stamps „Iraq Railways Post Stamp“, Denomination 2 Annas.**

The stamps of the third issue have most likely been issued in 1931. No complete booklet pane is known but it is believed that, like the previous issues, they have again been issued in booklets containing 16 stamps in 8 booklet panes, each containing 2 stamps and the stamps have been rouletted at left and horizontally between the stamps.

These stamps apparently have been printed in a very small/limited quantity and very rarely been used.

The shown stamps and the fragment in addition to a further fragment with Hamza postmark in chapter 3f are the result of over 20 years of collecting and searching.



Upper and lower stamps of the assumed booklet pane



Lower stamp of the assumed booklet pane, postmarked HAMZA, 30 November 1931 with postmark error "Inverted Date".



Fragment with lower stamp of the assumed booklet pane, postmarked HAMZA, 30 November 1931 with postmark error "Inverted Date".

Up to date no covers franked with these 3rd issue stamps are known.

1: The Issued Stamps

1d: 4th Issue, Inscription of Stamps „Iraq Railways Letter Post Stamp“, 10 Fils.

The change of currency from Annas/Rupees to Fils/Dinar which took place on 1 April 1932 made it necessary to issue the Railway Posts Stamps in changed currency. The denomination was now 10 Fils, the new rate for a railway post letter.

No complete booklet pane is known but it is believed that, like the previous issues, they have again been issued in booklets containing 16 stamps in 8 booklet panes of each 2 stamps and that the stamps have been rouletted at left and horizontally between the stamps.



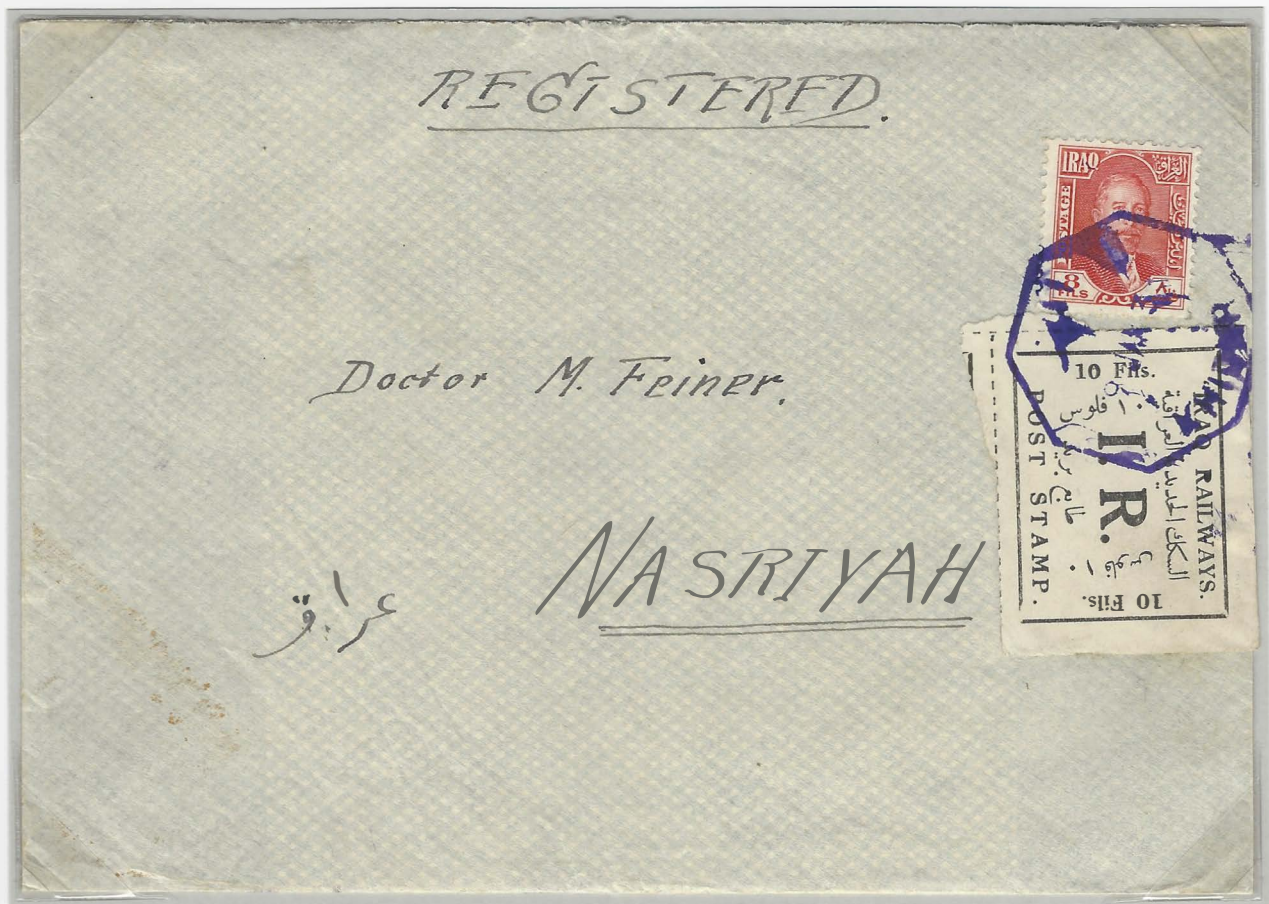
Upper stamp of the booklet pane, cancelled Khidhr,



Fragment, cancelled Kirkuk, 27 February 1933



Lower stamp of the booklet pane

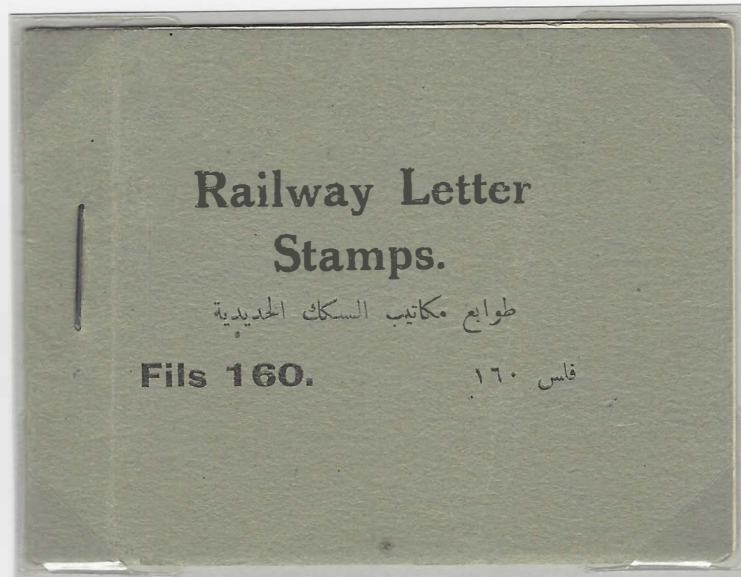


Cover from Khidhr (9 January 1933) to Nasiriyah, franked with a 10 Fils Railway Post Stamp plus 8 Fils Iraqi Post stamp, the correct rate for a local cover sent by Railway Post. The cover is marked "REGISTERED", apparently the sender has not been aware that the Iraq Railway Post did not accepted registered covers, hence the cover was sent by ordinary cover. On reverse arrival postmark NASIRIYAH (15 January 1933).

1: The Issued Stamps**1e: 5th Issue 1932-1942, new Design, „Iraq Railways Letter Service“, Currency in Fils
Red Background in stamp**

After the currency change from Annas/Rupees to Fils/Dinar which took place on 1 April 1932, initially the Railway Post Stamps were issued in the old design but with the new currency / denomination of 10 Fils. Shortly after however, new designed Railway Post stamps have been issued. These stamps were completely re-designed but have been issued again in booklets of 16 stamps, this time however with only 4 booklet panes each containing 4 stamps.

Complete booklet which was unknown for several decades and which has been discovered in June 2019. It is the only known complete booklet of the 5th. issue of the Railway Posts Stamps of Iraq.



The booklet contains 4 booklet panes with 4 stamps each.

These stamps exist in 3 color shades and the sequence of color shades could be defined as from “red” to “yellow” and later on “orange”.

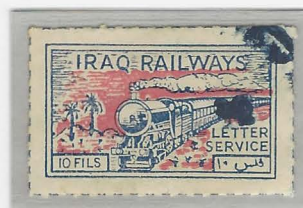
The stamps exist in two varieties which can be separated by the curved and straight trail of smoke under „WAYS“ of „RAILWAYS“. The curved trail of smoke can only be found on the position 3 (left lower position in the pane), it is assumed not to be an error but a cliché characteristic only.



Curved trail of smoke under „WAYS“



Straight trail of smoke under „WAYS“



Marken mit Hintergrund in rot

Type "A"

Curved trail of smoke under „WAYS“

Type "B"

Straight trail of smoke under „WAYS“

1: The Issued Stamps

1e: 5th Issue 1932-1942, new Design, „Iraq Railways Letter Service“, Currency in Fils
Red Background in stamp

A detailed study of the 4 panes in the booklet as well as the booklet pane shown here as well as the very few in other collections revealed that the stamps have indeed two different clichés, whereas the distribution in the booklet pane of 4 stamps is always identical.



Booklet Pane with 4 stamps, cancelled with Railway Post Marking of BAGHDAD EAST

Cliché Distribution in the pane.

Straight trail of smoke under „WAYS“ Type "B"	Curved trail of smoke under „WAYS“ Type "A"
Curved trail of smoke under „WAYS“ Type "A"	Straight trail of smoke under „WAYS“ Type "B"



Local cover from Baghdad West (1 December 1936) to Basrah on a Telegram Form of the Iraqi Railway franked with the 10 Fils red (Type B) Railway Post Stamp. The Railway Post Postmark of Baghdad West shows the wrong date of 1 December 1936, evident by the Transit Postmark of Maqil and Basrah which are dated 30 November 1936.

1: The Issued Stamps

1e: 5th Issue 1932-1942, new Design, „Iraq Railways Letter Service“, Currency in Fils
Yellow Background in stamp

The yellow colored stamp is so far only known with straight trail of smoke under „WAYS“. A cliché correction of this characteristic can be ruled out since the later issued orange colored stamps exists with both varieties.



Stamps with yellow background and straight trail of smoke under „WAYS“



Local cover with a 10 Fils, yellow, Railway Post Stamp, dated 20 November 1933 sent from von Baghdad to Hinaidi on a Form Sheet of the British Army "On His Majesty's Service" in Iraq. The 8 Fils franking of the Iraqi Post is the correct rate at time of posting for a local cover up to 20 Grams.

1: The Issued Stamps

1e: 5th Issue 1932-1942, new Design, „Iraq Railways Letter Service“, Currency in Fils
 Orange Background in stamp

The orange colored stamps are again known with straight and curved trail of smoke under „WAYS“. These stamps must have been issued only shortly before the cessation of the Iraqi Railway Post as they are very rarely seen.



Booklet pane of 4 stamps, orange background.

Only three complete booklet panes of this issue with orange colored background are recorded

Cliché Distribution in the panes.

Straight trail of smoke under „WAYS“ Type "B"	Curved trail of smoke under „WAYS“ Type "A"
Curved trail of smoke under „WAYS“ Type "A"	Straight trail of smoke under „WAYS“ Type "B"



Cover from Baghdad West (May 1940 to Basrah with the Railway Post stamp with orange background well as Iraq National Post stamps in the total denomination of 8 Fils (1, 2 and 5 Fils), the correct rate for an ordinary letter at the time of posting. **Only 6 covers with the Iraq Railway Post stamps in orange background recorded.**

2: The Postmarks of the Iraqi Railway Post

2a: Types of Postmarks

Two different types of Postmarks have been used by the Iraqi Railway Post. It can be assumed that each of the 54 Railway Post Offices located at the Railway Stations/Halts was equipped with the usual octagonal Railway Post with adjustable date slug. Up to date, only from 26 of the 54 known Railway Post offices strikes are known. The Railway Post Offices are listed in the Post Office Guide Nr. 55 of 1930 (English Version) und 1932 (Arabic Version) issued by the Iraqi Post. Further official sources, except for Railway maps and Railway Timetables are not known till today.

The General Post Office in Baghdad also had the permission to accept Railway Post Covers, however, covers posted there were cancelled with the normal round date stamp of the Iraqi Post.



Octagonal Railway Post Marking from Maqil and Khidhr on Railway Post stamps of the 4th. and 5th. issue

The background of this oval cancel which was discovered by the exhibitor is not yet fully known and no complete covers with this cancel are known.



Oval Date Stamp, currently only known used at Khanaqin, inscription „Iraq Railways / Khanaqin City / Date"

Aside of the shown stamps, only 3-4 other stamps cancelled with that postmark are known.

In some rare cases (currently only known from Ghuchan/Qochan) manuscript cancellations where used.



Fragment dated 25 June 1937 with the only reported complete strike of this postmark.



Manuscript cancellation from Ghuchan/Qochan

2: The Postmarks of the Iraqi Railway Post

2b: Postmark Errors

The date slug in the postmark was usually aligned in such way that the date was readable when the city name in English language was on bottom of the postmark. A few variances exist however with inverted date line. As of to-date only known from Hamza, Maqil and Baghdad West.



Hamza, 1932

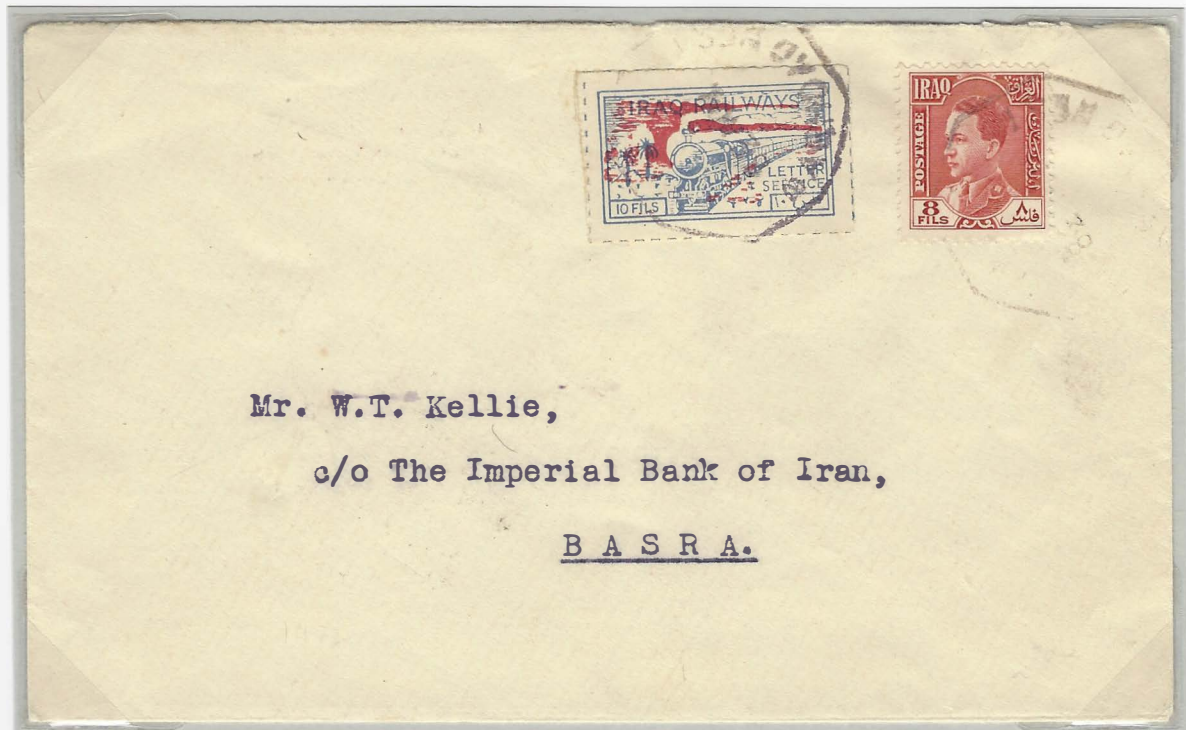


Hamza, June 1931



Maqil, July 1932

Three stamps used at Hamza respectively Maqil, date line inverted.



Cover from Baghdad West to Basrah, dated December 1938. **Date Line inverted.** On reverse transit marking of the Iraqi Post Office of Baghdad and Maqil, each dated 6 December 1938. The error must have been corrected at later date since covers exist franked with the 5th issue which do not show this error anymore.

Furthermore, the postmark of Khanaqin City is known with inverted date as well as with inverted date line. See chapter 3d: The Railway Post Offices of the North-Eastern Railway Line Baghdad – Khanaqin. A special case seems to be the postmark of Shuaiba Junction, see Chapter 3f: The Railway Post Offices of the Southern Railway Line Baghdad – Maqil, where the postmark shows the variety "inverted city name and the bottom side of the letters showing towards inside the postmark" whereas the other postmarks show the letters towards outside of the cancel.

- 3: Railway Post Offices
- 3a: Railway Map of the Iraqi Railway



Reduced copy of a contemporary Railway Map (Original Map of size 52x43 cm is behind this Album sheet) from a travel pamphlet issued by Thomas Cook, dated ca. 1930. In red color the railway network at the time when the Iraq Railway Post has been in operation.

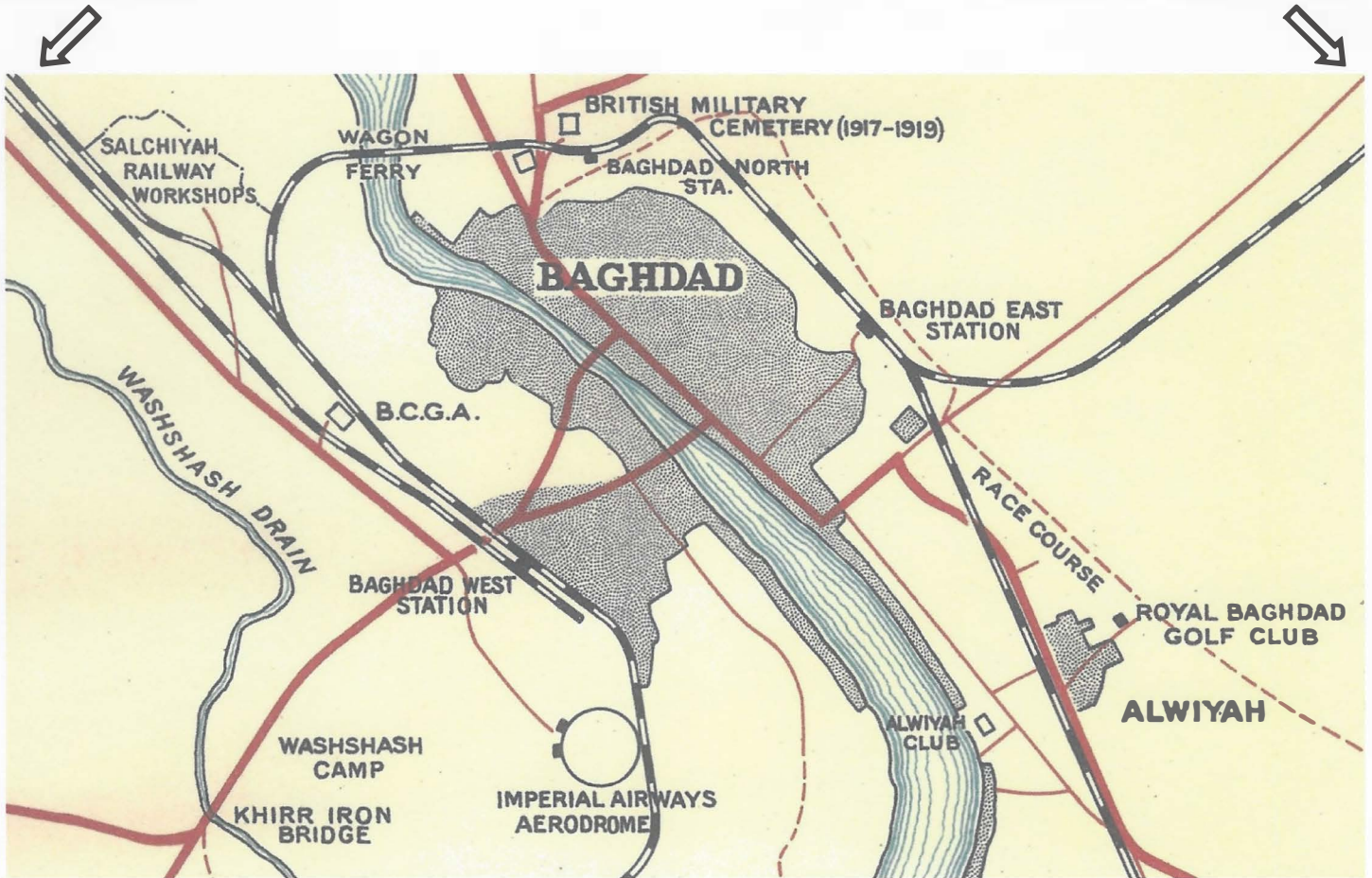
3: Railway Post Offices

3b: The Railway Post Offices of Baghdad

Extract of a Railway Map (Issue 1929) of Baghdad

North-Western Railway Line
Baghdad - Baiji

North-Eastern Railway Line
Baghdad – Khanaqin / Kirkuk



Southern Railway Line
Baghdad - Maqil

Baghdad had three Railway Stations, namely **Baghdad East**, **Baghdad North** and **Baghdad West**. The Station Baghdad West was at that time not yet connected by railway tracks with the stations Baghdad East and Baghdad North and the connection was made by Railway ferry, indicated above by "**WAGON FERRY**" which was replaced only in 1950 by the then completed Sarafiyah Bridge which had railway tracks included and interconnected **Baghdad East** and **Baghdad North** with **Baghdad West**



Baghdad West cancellations on the 1st. and 5th. issue.

3: Railway Post Offices
 3b: The Railway Post Offices of Baghdad
 Baghdad North & Baghdad West



Cover from Baghdad North (30 September 1929) to Khanuqin, franked with a stamp of the 1st issue (with dot (.) after "Label"), upper stamp from the booklet pane of 2 stamps.

The recipient of the cover is NOT the in the Arabian philately well-known Mr. Donaldson, but just a recipient with the same name.

This is the only known complete cover sent from Baghdad North.



One of the biggest users of the Railway Post was the French Embassy in Baghdad for mail to their consulate in Basrah. Cover from Baghdad West to Basrah, dated 5 September 1928, On reverse arrival postmark Basrah. The colour of the postmark of the Railway Post Offices was usually black. As can be seen from the shown cover, sometimes blue/violet colours have been used.

3: Railway Post Offices

3c: The Railway Post Offices of the North-Western Railway Line Baghdad – Baiji

This Railway line started in Baghdad West and lead via Khadimain, **Sumaichah**, Beled (Balad), Samarra, Tekrit (Tikrit) to **Baiji**. All Railway Stations/Halts on that line had a Railway Post Office of which to date from **three** of the six intermediate stations/halts usages are known.



Baiji, April 1932



Sumaichah

The Station- / City name can be recognised by the visible letter combination "CHA" which is possible only with Sumaichah.

Extract from the Railway Track Map (see chapter 3a) showing the North-Western Route from Baghdad till Baiji.

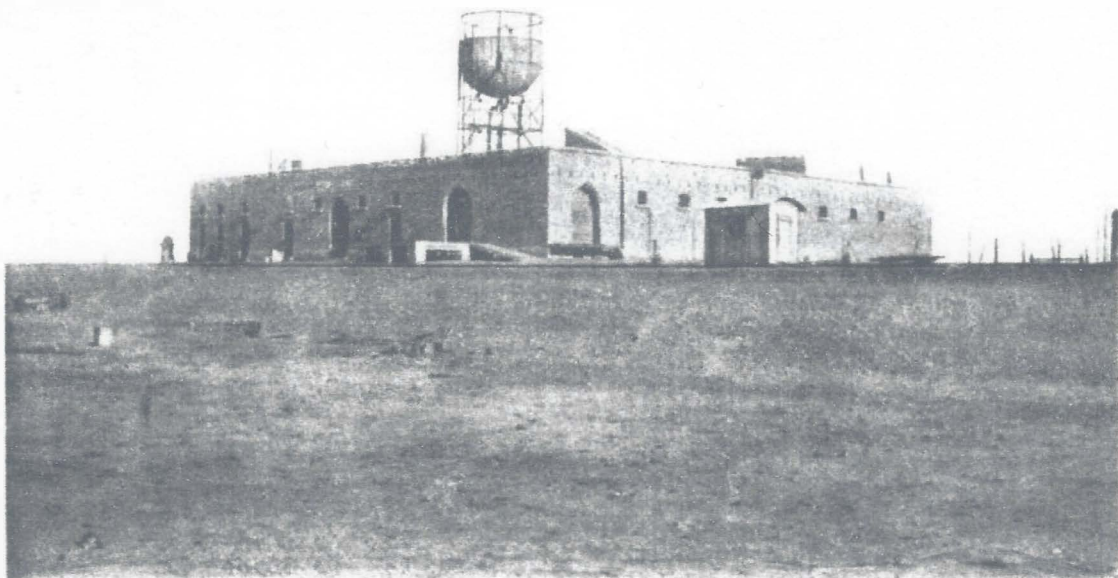


PLATE 6.—BALAD RAILWAY STATION.

Copy of a photo of the Railway Station Balad (Beled). This picture is a prime proof why from so many Railway Stations / Halts no covers are known as these halts were often in very little populated areas with extreme little volume of mail.

3: Railway Post Offices

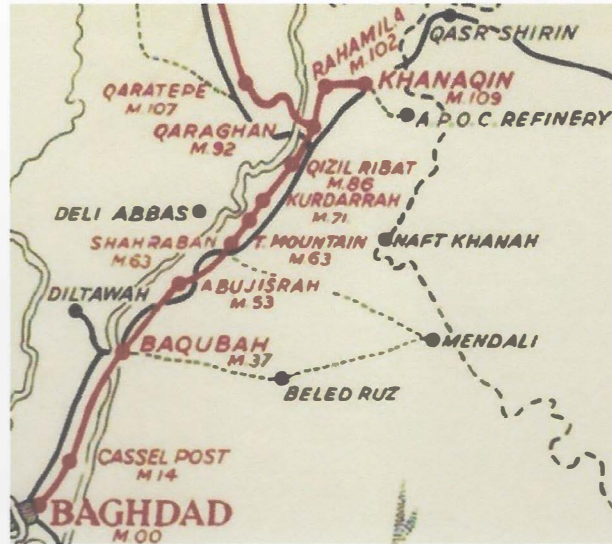
3d: The Railway Post Offices of the North-Eastern Railway Line Baghdad – Khanaqin

This railway line started in Baghdad North via Baghdad East and lead through the stations/halts in Cassels Post, Baqubah, **Abu Jisrah**, **Sharaban**, Table Mountain, **Kurdarrah**, Qizil Ribat, **Qaraghan**, Rahamila up to **Khanaqin**.

With the exception of Rahamila, all other Railway Stations/Halts on that line had a Railway Post Office, out of which to date only from **four** of the nine intermediate stations/halts usages are known.



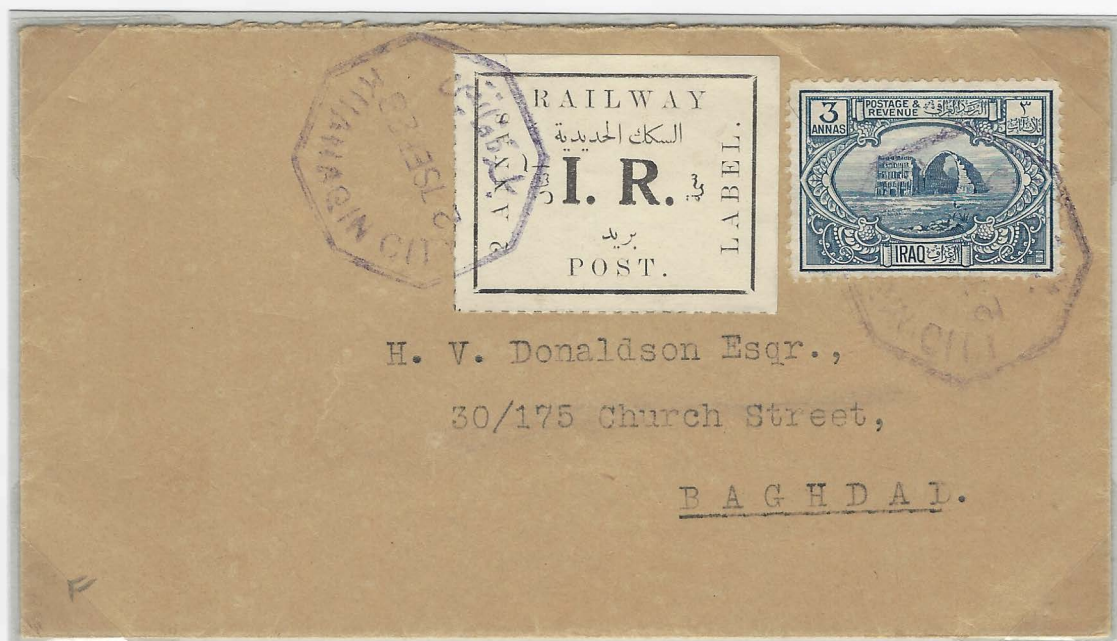
Abu Jisrah
9 August 1929



Auszug aus einer Streckenkarte (datiert ca. 1940)
der Nord-östlichen Route von Bagdad bis Khanaqin



Sharaban, 1929
Der einzige bekannte
Stempelabdruck

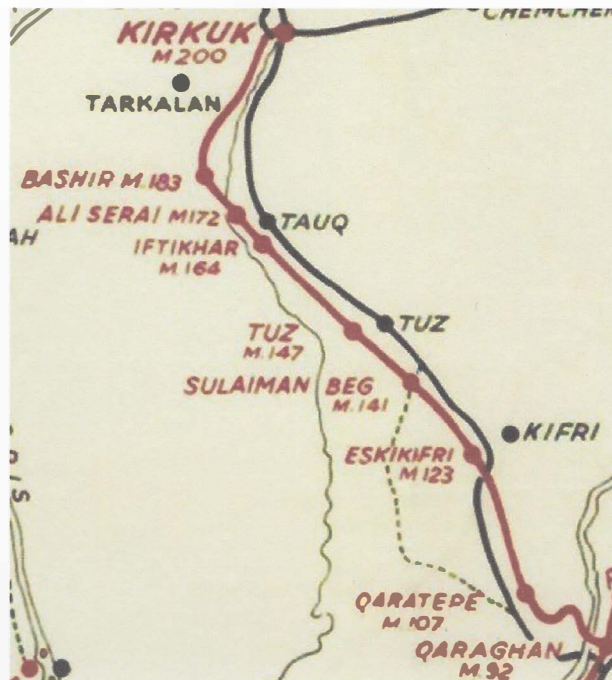


Khanaqin City to Baghdad East, franked with a stamp of the 1st issue, cancelled with the violet Railway Post Marking of Khanaqin City, dated 27 September 1928. On reverse transit- and delivery marking from the Iraqi Posted dated 28 September 1928. **Postmark Error "inverted Date Line"**.

3: Railway Post Offices

3e: The Railway Post Offices of the North-Eastern Railway Line Qaraghan – Kirkuk

This Railway Line is a branch line of the Railway Line Baghdad North - Khanaqin and started in **Qaraghan**, lead via Qaratepe, Eski Kifri, **Sulaiman Beg**, **Tuz (Kurmato)**, **Iftikhar**, **Ali Serai**, Bashir and ended in **Kirkuk**. Also, the Railway Post Office "I.P.C." (Iraq Petroleum Camp) belongs to this railway line; however, I.P.C. was connected only in January 1947 to the Railway Line. All Railway Stations/Halts on that line had a Railway Post Office of which to date only from **six** of the eight intermediate stations/halts usages are known.



Iftikhar



Qaraghan



Ali Serai



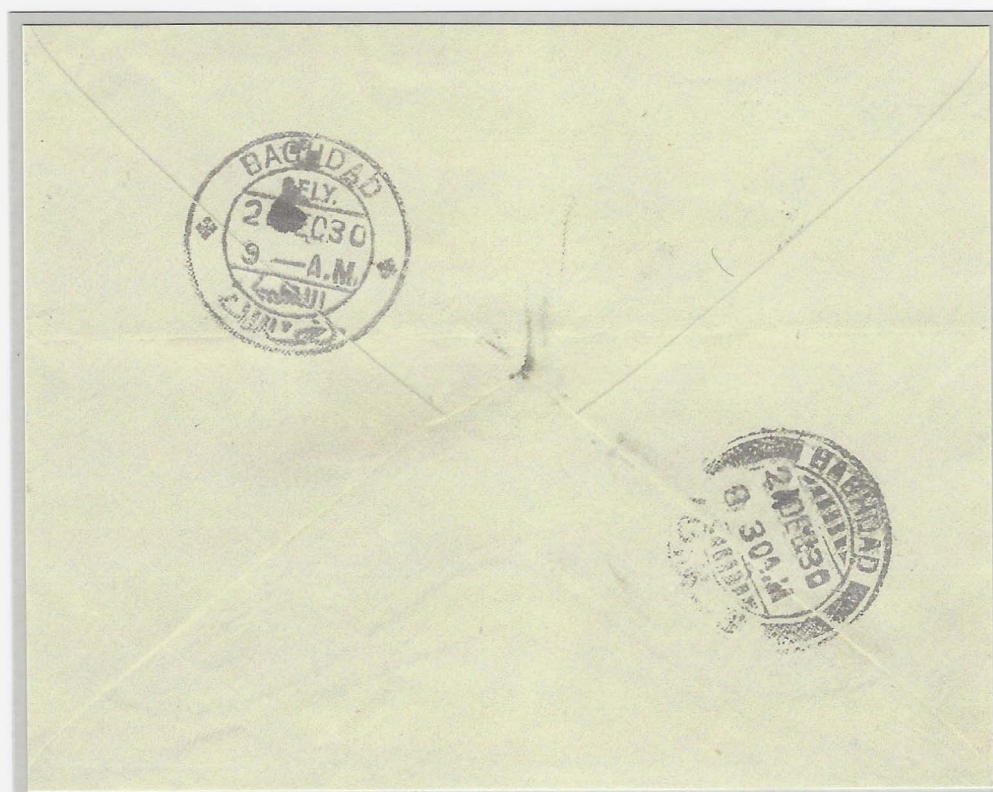
Sulaiman Beg

The Station- / City name can be recognised by the visible letter combination **"MAN BEG"** which is possible only with Sulaiman Beg.

With the exception of Iftikhar from which 2 strikes are reported, these are the only reported strikes of these Railway Post Office postmarks.

3e: The Railway Post Offices of the North-Eastern Railway Line Qaraghan – Kirkuk
Kirkuk

Cover from Kirkuk (20 December 1930) to Baghdad, franked with a stamp of the 1st issue, upper stamp of the booklet pane. Also, here the unusual blue colour of the postmark.



Reduced image (80 %) of the reverse side of the cover with Transit Postmark Baghdad (21 December 1930 / 8:30 AM) and Delivery Postmark Baghdad (21 December 1930 / 9 – AM).

3e: The Railway Post Offices of the North-Eastern Railway Line Qaraghan – Kirkuk
Tuz Kurmato

Tuz (Kurmato) (12 October 1928) to Baghdad, Railway Post stamp of 1st issue, upper stamp of the booklet pane. The Iraqi Post stamps denomination of 1/2 Annas and 1 1/2 Anna are also cancelled with the Railway Postmark and represent the inland postage fee of the Iraqi post at the time of mailing of the cover.



Reduced (80 %) image of the reverse side with Transit Postmark Baghdad (October 1928 / and Delivery Postmark Baghdad (13 October 1928 / 12 – AM).

3: Railway Post Offices

3e: The Railway Post Offices of the North-Eastern Railway Line Qaraghan – Kirkuk
I.P.C. Camp (Iraq Petroleum Company Camp)

The Post Office Guide No. 55 von 1930 of the Iraqi Post the Railway Post Office "I.P.C. Camp" (Iraq Petroleum Company Camp) is listed, however, the camp itself has been connected to the Iraq Railway System in January 1947 only. The shown cover carries a violet rectangular framed marking with inscription "I.P.C.". It is assumed by the exhibitor that the Railway Post Office I.P.C. Camp was not a fully fledged Railway Post Office but a Postal Agency located within the I.P.C. Camp only and was therefore not equipped with the usual octagonal Railway Postmark.



Cover mailed from I.P.C. Camp, manuscript date 6 March 1931, to Canada. On reverse side Transit Postmark Baghdad (6 March 1931). Red "Air Canceled / Jusqua" marking applied in London. The cover has been forwarded from Baghdad by flight (Imperial Airways) IW100 to Athens and from there by Railway (Simplon Orient Express) to France. Because of an earthquake in Yugoslavia that railway connection was interrupted for some days and the cover has reached Paris only on 13 March 1931. From Paris he was forwarded to London where the red "Air Canceled / Jusqua" marking has been applied and sent by the regular ship route to Canada.

The framed violet marking (applied inverted) with Inscription I.P.C. is struck very weak.
Image manipulation however made the marking visible.



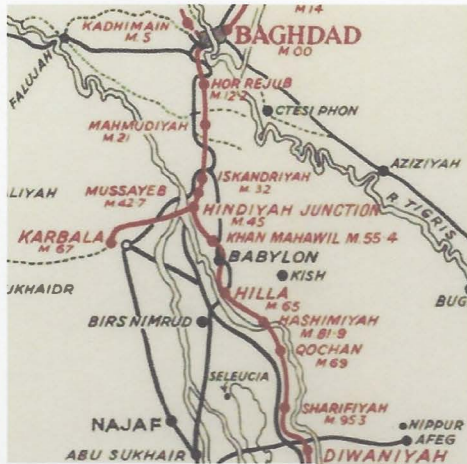
The shown cover is the only proof of the existence of the I.P.C. Camp Railway Post Office.

3: Railway Post Offices

3f: The Railway Post Offices of the Southern Railway Line Baghdad – Maqil

This Railway Line is the longest line of the Iraqi Railway. It started in *El Juwaidhan* (in the north of Baghdad) and run via *Baghdad West*, Hor Rejub, *Mahmudiyah*, *Iskandriyah*, *Mussayeb*, *Hindiyyah Junction*, *Karbala*, *Khan Mahawil*, *Hilla*, Hashimiyah, *Qochan*, Sharifiya, *Diwaniyah*, *Hamza*, Abu Tabikh, *Rumaitha*, *Samawa*, *Khidhir*, *Bathah*, *Ur-Junction*, *Nasiriyah*, *Tel-Al-Lahm*, *Jalibah*, *Laqit*, *Ghubaishoyah*, Artawi, *Tubat*, *Shuaiba Junction*, Shuaiba, Basrah and ended in *Maqil*.

The Railway Station El Juwaidhan (Located in Baghdad) is not indicated on the map, the stations/halts which had a Railway Post office are marked in **bold**. 25 Railway Stations/Halts on that line had a Railway Post Office of which to date from 15 of the 25 stations/halts usages are known.



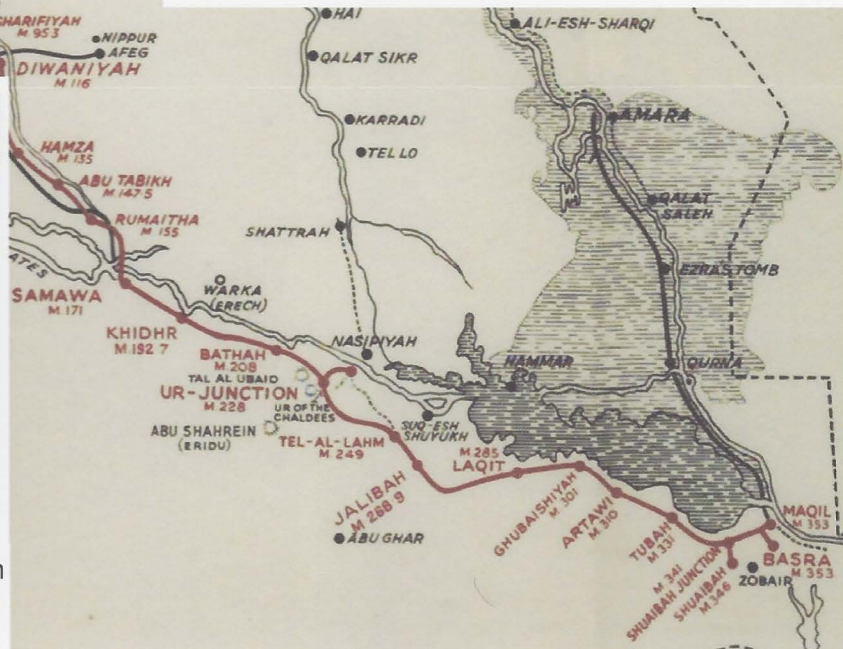
Hillah



Bat-Hah



Hamza, 7 June 1932. Late usage from the time after the currency change on 1 April 1932



Extract from the Railway Map (Chapter 3a) showing the southern Railway Line from Bagdad to Maqil.



Ghuchan



Khidhr

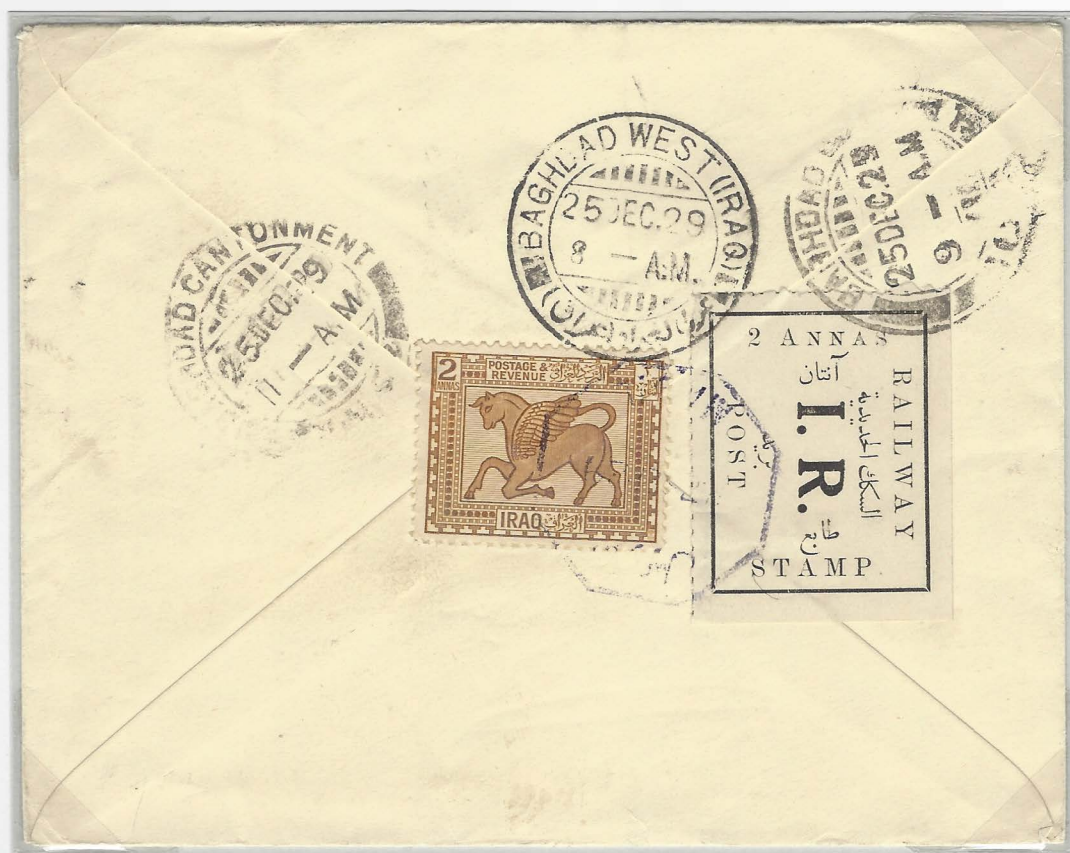
3f: The Railway Post Offices of the Southern Railway Line Baghdad – Maqil - Continuation



Nasiriyah



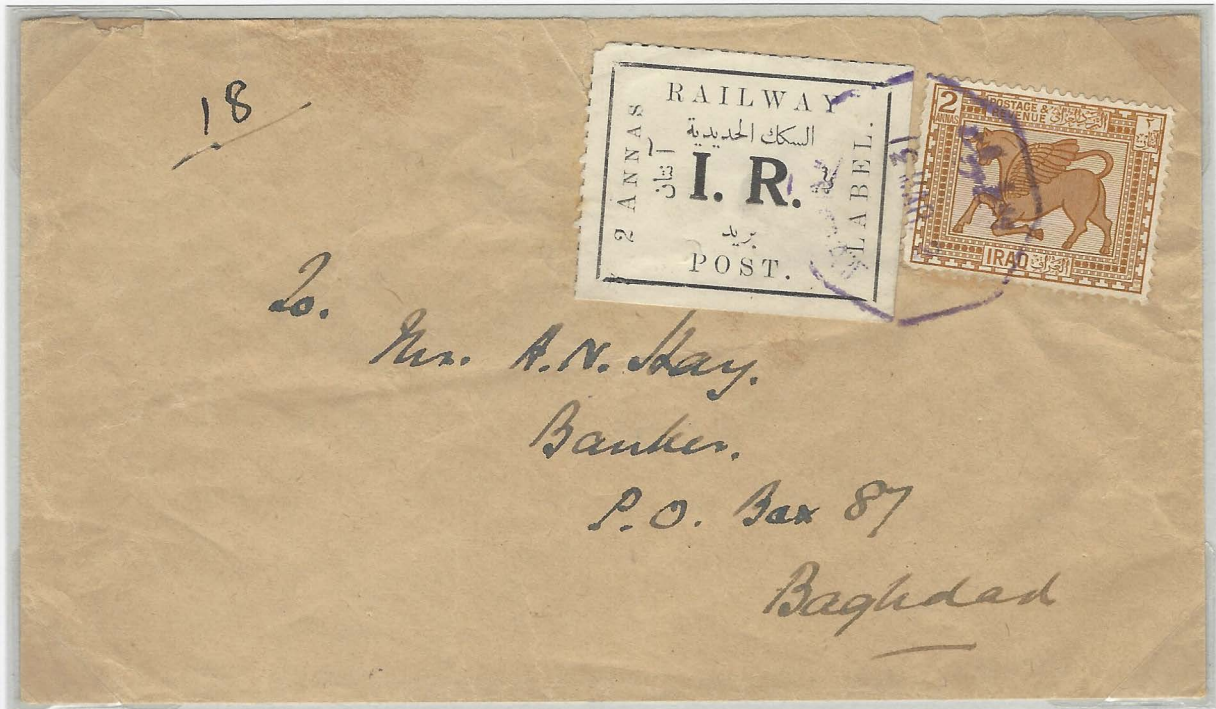
Maqil, 1932



Maqil to Hinaidi, Arrival Postmark Baghdad West (Iraq) 25 DEC 1929 / 8 AM, Transit Marking Baghdad 25 DEC 1929 / 9 AM as well as Delivery Postmark Baghdad Cantonment 25 DEC 1929 / 11 AM.

3f: The Railway Post Offices of the Southern Railway Line Baghdad – Maqil Tubat

As already indicated earlier, many of the Railway Stations /Halts were at places where the Iraqi Post did not have a post office. These were usually very small cities/villages, one of them was Tubat.



Cover from Tubat (2 March 1931) to Baghdad, Railway Post Stamp of the 1st issue, bottom stamp of the booklet pane. The Station- / City name can be recognised by the visible letter combination "AT" which is possible only with TUBAT.



Reduced size (80 %) of the reverse side of the cover with arrival postmark Baghdad of 4 March 1931.

This is the only philatelic proof of this railway station / halt which did not had a post office of the Iraqi Post.

3: Railway Post Offices

3f: The Railway Post Offices of the Southern Railway Line Baghdad – Maqil
Shuaiba Junction

Enlarged extract of the railway map (see chapter 3a) of the Iraqi Railway showing the Railway Stations Shuaiba **AND** Shuaiba Junction.



Enlarged and cropped copy of the Railway Post cancel of Shuaiba Junction.

This cancel show the variety inverted city name and the bottom side of the letters showing towards inside of the cancel whereas the other cancels show the letters towards outside of the cancel.

The Iraq Post & Telegraph Guide of 1930, issued by the Iraqi Post included a list of 54 Railway Stations/Halts which were authorised to accept Railway Post letters. In this list, Railway Station Shuaiba is included but not Shuaiba Junction.



The cover is franked with a Railway Post Stamp of the 1st. Issue of 1928, addressed to Maqil (address on front of the cover) and cancelled on 10 May 1929 in Shuaiba Junction.

Shuaiba Junction is not listed in the Iraq Post & Telegraph Guide of 1930 as Railway Station/halt, authorized to accept Railway Post letters and the exhibitor developed 3 possible theories for that:

1. Shuaiba as listed in the Iraq Post & Telegraph Guide of 1930 is in fact Shuaiba Junction.
2. Shuaiba Junction was forgotten to include in the Iraq Post & Telegraph Guide von 1930.
3. The Railway Post Office of Shuaiba Junction was already closed at the time when the Iraq Post & Telegraph Guide of 1930 has been published.

No other postmark either from Shuaiba or Shuaiba Junction is known to date to proof any of the 3 possibilities.

4: Usages

4a: Local Covers

Railway Post Covers could be local and foreign covers including onward transmission by Airmail or the Overland Mail Baghdad-Haifa and the service was permitted for covers and postcards up to a weight of 80 grams. Registration or other special handling services were not permitted.



Khanaqin City (5 September 1928), to Baghdad, arrival postmark Baghdad (7 September 1928).



Baghdad West (14 September 1928) to Basrah, on reverse transit postmark Basrah and delivery postmark Basrah, each dated 15 September 1928

4: Usages

4a: Local Covers - Continuation

Local cover from the German consulate at Baghdad to the leader of the German archaeological excavation expedition in Warka/Uruk, c/o Railway Post Office Khidhr.

This cover is a fine example for how the Railway Post Covers must have been addressed as per the regulations of the Railway Post in case the receiving Post Office did not have a Post Office of the Iraqi Post. This regulation had been published in the "Iraq Post & Telegraph Guide of 1930".

Address:	Explanation:
Dr. A. Nöldeke / Warka	Addressed to Name / City
Post Khidr	Railway Post Office Khidr: Correctly written it should be Khidhr. That place did not have a post office of the Iraqi State Post but a Railway Post Office only.
c/o SM KHR	Care of SM = (Station Master) KHR (Khidhr)



Cover franked with a 8 Fils stamp, the postage rate of an ordinary local cover of the 1st weight class up to 20 grams. In addition, an Iraqi Railway Post stamp of the 5th issue of 1932 for the transport by the Railway Post. Both stamps are cancelled with the octagonal Railway Postmark of Baghdad West, dated 27 January 1937 which is a proof that the cover has been posted at the Railway Post Office of Baghdad West directly, otherwise the Iraqi stamp would have been cancelled by the normal round Postmark of the Iraqi Post.

4: Usages

4b: Foreign Covers, Iran

For foreign covers the Iraq Railway Post Stamps could be used as well but their postage did only cover, as with local covers, the Railway Transport in Iraq. Very few foreign covers are reported.



Cover from Khanaqin to Abadan, Iran, franked with a 2 Anna Railway Post Stamp of the 1st issue, cancelled with octagonal Railway Postmark of Khanaqin, dated 19. September 1928. The additional 3 Annas Iraqi Post stamps, cancelled at Baghdad dated 20 September 1928, relate to the correct postage rate of a foreign cover with a weight up to 20 grams.



This cover carries the manuscript routing instruction „To be posted in Baghdad“ as routing instruction that the cover must be handed over from the Iraq Railway Post to the Iraq Post for onward transport to Abadan, Iran. Departure Postmark Baghdad (20 September 1928, Transit Postmark Basrah (20 September 1928), Mohammareh/Iran (24 September 1928) and arrival postmark Abadan/Iran (27 September 1928).

A local Railway cover from Khanaqin to Basrah would not have been postmarked by the Iraqi Post in Baghdad, but international sorting and routing was done for this letter in Baghdad, hence the Baghdad Postmark. Then the mail was again transported by Railway, which was the usual way, to Basrah from where it was sent to Iran.

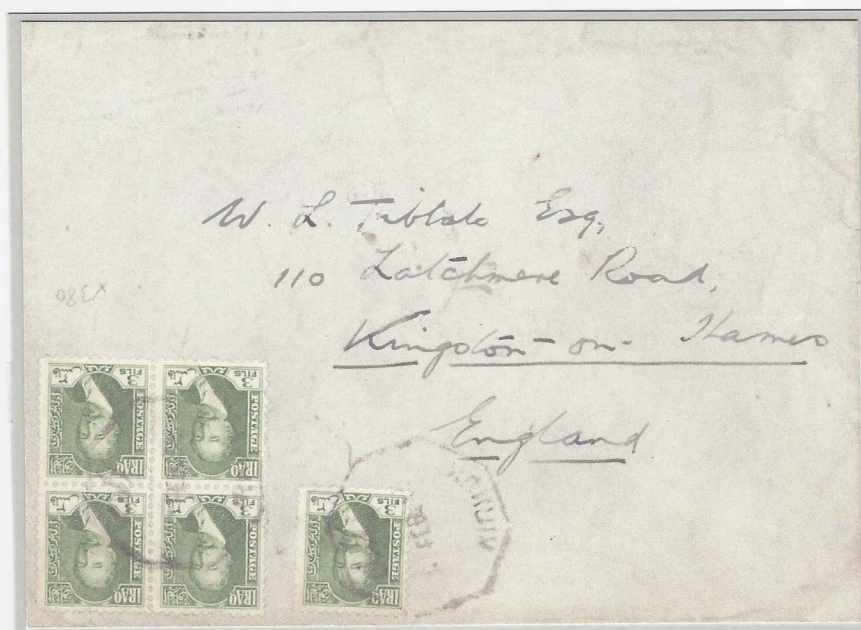
4: Usages

4b: Foreign Covers, England

For still unknown reasons, covers franked with a 10 Fils Railway Post stamp of the 4th issue are very rare. So far only 3 covers are reported. Here on a foreign cover to England.



Kirkuk to England, Railway Post stamp of the 4th issue on reverse side of the cover, cancelled Kirkuk, 1 February 1933, on front Iraqi postage (5 x 3 Fils), also cancelled with the octagonal Railway Postmark. Transit Postmark Baghdad, 2. February 1933 from the international sorting office.



Reduced size copy of the front of the cover showing the address and the Iraqi Post stamps with the total rate of 15 Fils. On 1 April 1932 the Iraqi currency was changed from Rupees/Annas to Dinar/Fils.

4: Usages

4b: Foreign Covers, British-India / Karachi

Most of the few Railway Post covers known covers sent abroad are addressed to England or Iran. Very few covers were sent to other countries.



Baghdad West to Karachi / British-India, franked with Iraqi Railway Post Stamp in yellow from the 5th issue, in addition a 15 Fils definitive stamp from the Iraqi Post for the onward transport to Karachi, cancelled with the violet Railway Post cancel Baghdad West, transit marking MAQIL, 27 October 1934, and BASRAH (SOR) 27 October 1934 from the Iraqi Post. In Basrah the cover has been transported by the usual mail route by ship to India where it has arrived in Karachi as per the arrival postmark KARACHI on 1. November 1934. Contrary to the cover the cover sent to Abadan/Iran shown earlier, this cover was not sorted for International Mail in Baghdad but was sent to Basrah directly where the international sorting was done in this case.



Reduced size copy of the reverse side of the cover.

The shown cover from Baghdad West to Karachi (at that time part of British-India) is unique.

4: Usages

4b: Foreign Covers, Onward Transport by the Overland Mail Baghdad-Haifa

The use of the Railway Post in connection with the Overland Mail Baghdad-Haifa was explicitly allowed and was indicated in the "Post Office Guide No. 55", issued in 1930 by the Iraqi Post.



Railway Post cover sent to Hunts, England, franked of the 15 Fils Railway Post stamp of the 5th issue (red background) with a 15 Fils stamp of the Iraqi Post, the correct postage rate at the time of posting for a foreign cover of the first weight slap up to 20 grams. Overland Mail surcharge was not required anymore as that had been abolished on 1 March 1929.

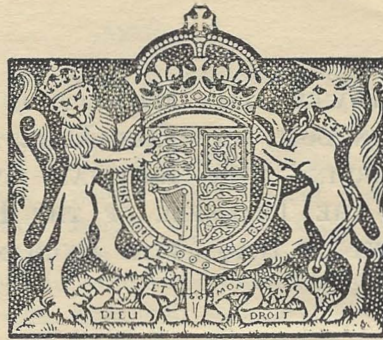


Reduced copy of the reverse side of the cover with postmark Baghdad and transit postmark Baghdad Al Mansur dated 21 March 1933.

Only two Iraq Railway Post covers forwarded by the Overland Mail Baghdad-Haifa are recorded.

5: Contract for the sale of the Iraqi Railway from England to the State of Iraq

On the 31 March 1936 the Railway System of Iraq which was owned and operated by the United Kingdom (British Mandate in Iraq) had been sold for the price of £ stg 400'000,00 to Iraq, the, at that time, Independent Kingdom of Iraq. The Railway Post however was in operation for a few years longer up to 1942.



Iraq No. 1 (1936)

Agreement

between His Majesty in respect of the United Kingdom
and His Majesty the King of Iraq

regarding the

Railway System of Iraq

including the Transfer of the Railways to
the Government of Iraq

[With Exchange of Notes]

Bagdad, March 31, 1936

[The Agreement has not been ratified by His Majesty]

*Presented by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
to Parliament by Command of His Majesty*

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