



ALL PERIODS & ASPECTS OF PHILATELY OF THE HOLY LAND
 כתב העת לבולאות של ארץ ישראל | مجلة حول الطوابع من الأرض المقدسة

THE JERUSALEM STAMPS BULLETIN

Of Research and Information On
 All Periods & Aspects of Philately and Postal History of the Holy Land

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Early Mandate postage rate change “grace period” mail: 2 October 1921 postmarked cover, sent from Jerusalem to Suez and franked 10 mils – **2 days after the rate change to 13 mils for overseas letters** (including Egypt), in effect from 1 Oct. As posted from the head post office and untaxed subsequently this must have been accepted postage during a grace period which we have yet to uncover (and not a clerical error).

דואר למצרים שנשלח ב-2/10/1921 עם ביול של 10 מיל – שהתקבל בדואר ירושלים יומיים אחרי שהתעריף עלה ל-13 מיל; כנראה “תקופת חסד” זמנית

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THE OPENING 'VORT'

A byproduct of being a cataloguer of philately is the research required to write the article-descriptions; a byproduct of that research work is the discoveries that it uncovers and the new information that it generates.

In this era I've often heard the remark that [philately] collecting is disappearing and that the big collectors of days past are no longer with us, and then then the oft heard concern – what will be the future of this field? I assure the readers of these lines that this assertion is incorrect: the philatelic collecting community is alive and well, and growing – but it is scattered:

The 30-year old era of the internet has had an unintended consequence of splitting up rather than binding together communities. The internet affords everyone their own personalized experiences: in its simplest expression this takes the form of users choosing to visit one website over another; joining one hobby forum over another; shopping at branded websites versus at marketplace sites, like eBay and Amazon. 'Drilled down' as it were, within the internet there are various standalone 'ecosystems' – places like Facebook wherein some people spend all their time socializing and shopping (and traveling back in time), or LinkedIn (offering the same but for the unemployed); ebay and the like for shopaholics; news sites' reader comments sections for perpetual arguments, etc. And then there is the split between surfing on the internet at all versus being logged into 'apps' (applications) on your 'smart' phone.

The internet is a parallel 'virtual' universe to the "real world"; it's based on the English language but accessible by any language. Nevertheless with the proliferation of different experiential outlets – what they call now 'social media' (and this blurs into 'online commerce' as well) – if you have a message to communicate, it's not sufficient to merely disseminate it in English. You have to suit yourself to address those various channels and speak to their audiences according to those channels' idiosyncracies: Facebook-ese with short messages and icons, Twitter-ese in 140 characters or less, Instagram with an image (text is optional), Tik-Tok with pornography (using postage stamps to cover-up the untidy bits), etc.

What all these hundreds of outlets have in common is that they've split up humanity across their different platforms and simplified, reduced communication to images and icons and so also reduced attention-spans. Oceania (from the novel "1984") couldn't have done a better job.

A side effect of this splitting up of people is that organized communities of times past – like stamp circles – have gradually eroded as their members shuffle off to their own individualistic lifestyles, and the consequence of this erosion is that – like in the case of philatelic societies – organized channels for assembling and disseminating information have petered out owing to dwindling membership and so run out of material to share. There are standalone hobby groups on the internet, within Facebook and other social media – even down to video sites like YouTube, or by phone on WhatsApp and other apps... each split further fracturing unity and fragmenting the collation of knowledge.

The perpetuation of organized hobby groups requires discipline and persistence, but the ease of surfing and being distracted by the attractions of the internet erodes those both. Online hobby chat boards and social media outlets encourage people to rely on crowd reactions to questions; people accept instant responses they receive and stop straining to research questions on their own. In the last year or so at least two important philatelic bulletins – pillars of Holy Land philatelic academia and research – officially closed down, the Israeli "Holy Land Postal History" bulletin and that of the British Association of Palestine-Israel Philatelists, the "BAPIP bulletin".

My 'day job' is that of an information miner, and every day produces some kind of a nugget of important information. Although I publish articles and findings on my blog and social media accounts I'm aware that another facet of individualized experience is that some people find reading and learning easier done the old fashioned way by reading printed pages and organized searchable files rather than scrolling through website pages or social media "posts". With this new bulletin in document form I hope to better disseminate information that I believe will be of benefit to fellow researchers, collectors and dealers.

I plan to produce a bulletin roughly 2-3 times a year at intervals of a few months. These are purely academic and contain no promotional material – and no subscription fees. The emphasis is on research and discoveries, and not on self-explanatory 'show-and-tell'. These are on American sized 8½x11 pages to make them printable for readers in the States and elsewhere.

Afterthought: those interested in a hardcopy please contact me. Cost will be production (as per the printer) + shipping

My motives are two-fold: to help spread greater professional knowledge and interest in this field, and thereby bring about greater interest and further research in it; and to help make some sense & order in the various subjects of our field,

meaning - to tie loose ends, to research subjects more deeply in order to gain a more complete picture of them, and to correct mistakes and inaccuracies in the existing information.

The cornerstone of my research work is a continuously updated compilation of information I call the “**Handbook of Holy Land Postal History & Philately**”: this is a two-part illustrated and searchable document containing raw information mostly from primary resources, organized in chronological order, covering all aspects of the posts – rates, routes, procedures, processes, historical circumstances and much more; the second part of the handbook contains guides and abstracts based on that raw information. It’s presently 830+ pages long and will only grow. **The handbook is free and available [here](#)** – I encourage everyone to access it and become familiar with the information it contains; while it can’t replace specialized literature, by virtue of it being organic and based on primary sources it can supersede other literature or at the least augment it. For shorthand, and to keep the texts here shorter, wherever I refer to a date in connection to a philatelic matter, fuller details and citations are available in the Handbook according to that date (or very near it).

The Handbook is nexus of my research work but its cultivation spawns additional resources such as collated postage rate and route information: I’ve established a “**Postal History & Philately Resource Center**” [here](#) to give visitors organized and free access to various sources, and I encourage you to visit and browse the information that will be published there.

Philately is a bizarre hobby: in order to understand a single stamp or piece of mail we spend our precious time trying to reconstruct entire postal systems, printing methods, production processes, and transport networks that existed with full documentation and completeness some time ago; sometimes due to a change in postage rates or services or routes or postal administration, the whole enterprise changed - sometimes from the ground up. All the information and procedures existed in their times but these are now unavailable to us and we are left groping in the dark trying to reconstruct what was in order to interpret an object that in its time was completely understandable to those who used it. In many instances we dedicate valuable time from our lives to enter the shoes of an average postal clerk from generations ago to try and divine why he charged a certain postage rate, applied a certain postal mark or handled a postal article in a certain way. Philately is reconstructing a washed away sand castle, sand grain by sand grain – with pincettes.

Here as I’ve experienced since becoming a philatelist, **much of the information we’ve been working with is either – knowingly or not – incomplete or incorrect, and requires review and further research.** Similar to that novel “1984” we don’t actually know very much after all these years: much of our philatelic knowledge is fragmentary, or from secondary (not primary) resources, and much of it is based on incomplete research handed down to us over the years.

Readers of these bulletins will find in time that much of my effort is spent trying to create – or correct – conceptual frameworks and analytical methodologies, to better equip us to understand the philately we’re dealing with. The guiding principle of my work, and of the research presented in these bulletins, is that **everything is interesting if you examine it closely enough; everything has significance if you understand it well enough.** That’s the journey – enjoy the ride.

The research I conduct and the bulletins it will produce are thanks to early guidance I received from the distinguished philatelist and dealer, **Yaakov Tsachor**, who generously sat with me at the start of my journey, and helped me understand what philately is about (and how little I understood about it); to my teacher **Dr. Craig C. Howard z”l** who taught me how to think and learn (the research and ideas in these bulletins may lead to many “paradigm shifts” – read your Thomas Kuhn; people tend to defend existing beliefs rather than accept new ones); to **Bob Caplan** - the proverbial stranger who rode into a troubled town and set things right - whose invaluable advice to me was the fulfilment of the Mitzva of teaching a man to fish; and to **my customers**, whose continued patronage enables me to find the time to research and write materials for everyone’s benefit.

“...now let me geev it to yoo in inglish...” – Meir Ariel (*Avarnu et Par’o*)

כתב העת הזה פועל יוצא מעבודות מחקר שאני עושה במסגרת עבודתי כסוחר בולים. אני מציג פה ממצאים מעניינים לטובת קהילת החוקרים, הסוחרים והאספנים, ואומנם הבטאון לא כתוב בעברית משיקולים של זמן, אשתדל לספק סיכום קצר בעברית בראש כל מאמר בו. ליבת העבודה היא מאגר מידע – “מדריך” – על פעולות שירותי הדואר לכל תולדותיה בארץ בקובץ שמתעדכן כל כמה שבועות, שניתן להוריד **פה**. בנוסף פתחתי ומרחיב “**מרכז מחקר**” לתולדות הדואר בארץ בו אקבץ מידע שימושי נוסף. אחת התובענות מכל העבודה היא שיש לא מעט אי דיוקים בספרות המקצועית והרבה מידע מסר בו, והסרים האלה הם בדיוק המטרה שלי לתקן. אנא פנו אליי להזמין עותק מודפס (לפי עלות ההדסה ומשלוח).



11 HEADLINES FROM YESTERDAY'S NEWS

(Information of note from the compiled information in the [Handbook](#) | כותרות מ"המדריך")

Air Mail (post WWII): per 25 July & 12 Dec. 1947 + 20 Jan 1948 sources, **BOAC had exclusive rights to carry Palestine's outbound airmail**; only neighboring countries' national carriers could transport Palestine airmail to those places.

Air Mail (1948 interim period): per a 7 May 1948 press report, South African 'Suidair' airlines began a scheduled route (Johannesburg-London via Haifa) on 6 May, facilitated by Peltours; per a 12 May 1948 press report **Cyprus Airways** began a weekly flight run between Nicosia and Haifa from 13 May.

Air Mail (end of Mandate): as per a news report of 8 July 1948, in the period of April to mid-May 1948, **4 Arabian airlines continued flying to Palestine** via **Haifa** airport, making 25 landings there (roughly 1 airline per week) – Egyptian MISR Airlines, Lebanese Middle Eastern Airlines, Transjordan Arab Airways, and the Arab Contractors Company.

Air Mail (domestic – Israel): with the opening of the post office in **Eilat** on **26 Dec. 1950**, all inland mail to or from that locale was carried by air. Domestic postage rates remained the same but the **weight tranches were different**.

Paper weight: on how to quantify "10g weight", per Palestine Gazette of 3 Aug 1933 the postmaster general notes: "Special attention is drawn to the fact that the rates of [air mail] postage are for letters of a weight of 10 grammes. A letter containing **more than the ordinary sheet of notepaper** is **likely to be over 10 grammes in weight**". Today's A4 paper weighs 5g...

Sea Mail: per 5 May 1948 advertisement, the ship **SS Kedma** announced its departure from **Tel Aviv** on **6 May** & added that it will take mail abroad at the cost of 150 mils per letter (and that these can be delivered until 10am on the 6th at the Palatine building) – until now the specialty literature did not mention either a Tel Aviv stop-over or the special mail service offered.

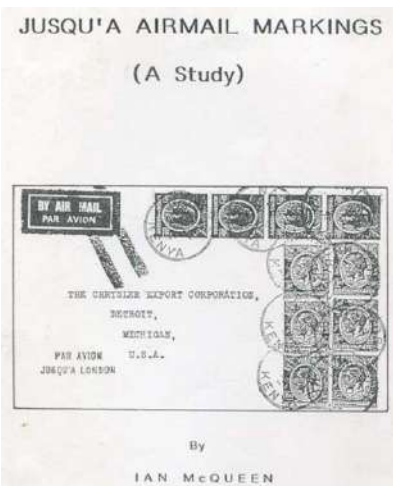
1948 British mail to Arab locales: a 10 Sept 1948 report mentions that **as of 9 Sept.** the British postal service will now send surface and air mail to Arab cities, including Beer Sheva, Bethlehem, Faluja, Gaza, Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah & Tulkarm.

1948 postage rates: reports from 27 Oct. 1948 emphasize **special printed matter air mail rates** to 'America' (also Canada?) and Europe entering effect on 1 Nov. – this shows that **prior to that rate change there was no such service**, and thereafter we should be on the lookout for special lower postage rates which may indicate that an item is actually airmailed printed matter.

Yishuv 'Petach Tikva' stamp accepted by Turkish post: a letter to the editor published 31 May 1948 (listed in the Handbook at "1901") reports that **the 'Petach Tikva' stamp was valid also for the Holyland Turkish Post** & describes a cover such franked, mailed from his father in **Jaffo** to someone in Petach Tikva, postmarked by the **Jaffa Ottoman Turkish post**.

British military mail: per information from Oct. 1935 it seems the postage rates for military personnel **from** Palestine was the same as the standard British post office rates to Palestine.

The **Jerusalem Main Post Office** reopened on **28 June 1948** and not on 21 June as written in JSPS & widely elsewhere



AN OPEN CALL to pre-order copies of "Jusqu'a Airmail Markings" by Ian McQueen – **the 1993 original edition** (109 pages) + **the 1995 supplement** (pages 110-273); circa. 276 pages in total.

This is the only work known to me that addresses the subject of the odd looking bars and obliterations that we often see on mail from the first half of the 20th Century. These markings indicate that air mail service ended and surface mail transmission began, and a study of their designs & colors reveals at which locations these markings were applied – and roughly in what period of time.

An invaluable resource – and as with all of these, now impossible to obtain. Please contact me at bulletin@jerusalemstamps.com if you want to pre-order a copy. These are 2-sided black and white pages; originally published as a spiral bound book. **Once I know how many orders to place the cost will be simply the photocopying cost + shipment** (or additional cost if there is one for having a copy spiral bound)



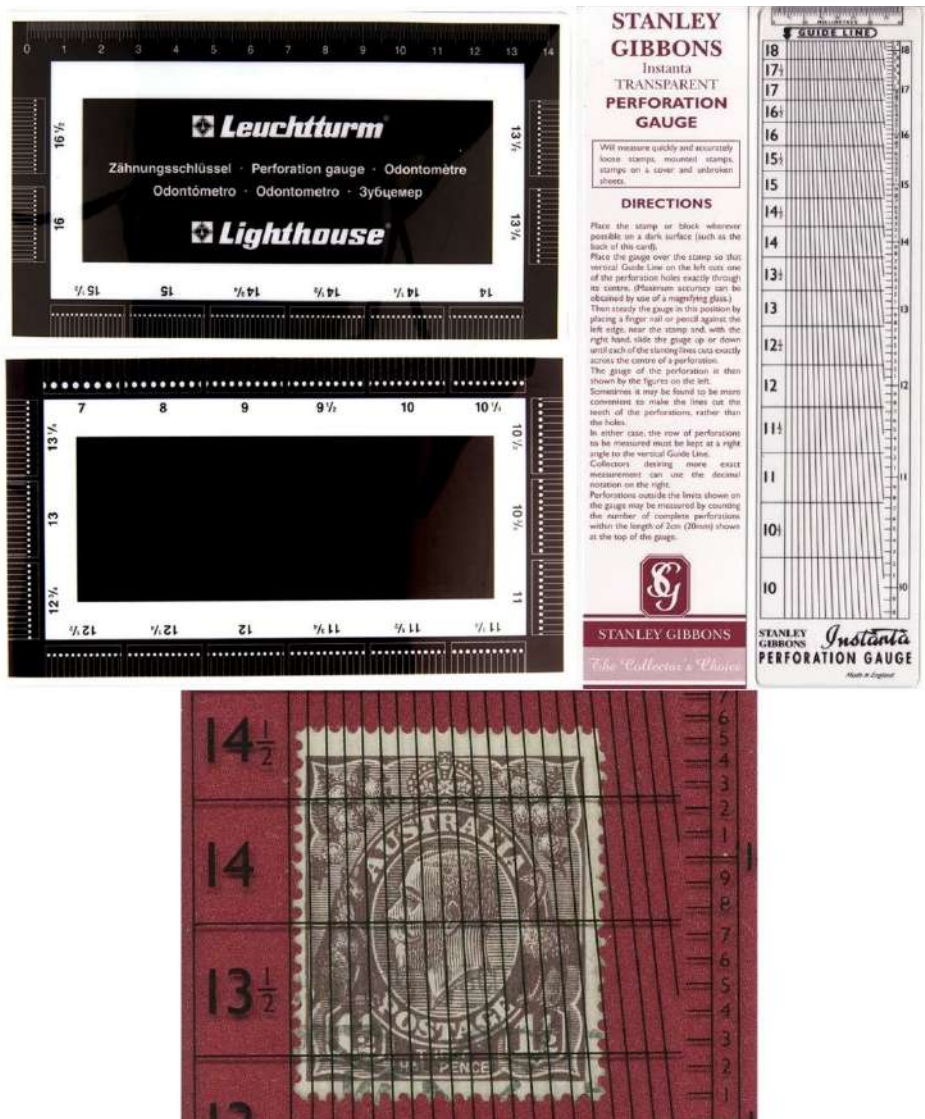
‘PRO TIP’

STAMP GAUGES & MEASURES

For some people this may be elementary knowledge but for some of us this really isn't: hand-held stamp gauges are great tools for checking stamps that are affixed to pieces of mail; there are expensive electronic gauges available in the market – but these only work if the stamp is loose (and some users also complain that these gauges are not entirely flawless; for some insights see the forum post [here](#)).

The manual gauges are cheap and easily accessible (except in Israel, where nearly every stamp dealer has closed down) – except that it turns out, astoundingly, these are not all accurate. I don't mean even that one “made in China” is less good than one which is not, rather I mean that those produced usually by the German philatelic company Leuchtturm (“Lighthouse”) have inaccurate measurements whereas others are fine.

I have used two different Leuchtturm gauges (see images at left for one of them) and in both instances have unhappily discovered major inaccuracies on their measurements for different perforations (and each one was inaccurate on different perforations!). The solution as I discovered is to use a type of gauge called “Instanta”, produced by Stanley Gibbons (image at right). The method for checking the perforations is a little different than the traditional approach used on the Leuchtturm (see [here](#) for some insights), but the results are exceptionally accurate (image at bottom), even more so than the perforations reported in the catalogues...



...on that last point, I direct the reader to an eye-opening article in The Israel Philatelist #47 vol. 1-2 of 1996 ("The Perforation Dilemma or Where Have All the Perf 12's Gone?" by Gerald Cohen, p.31-33): specifically in regards to using an accurate perforation gauge like Instanta, the user is likely to receive measurement readings that differ from those listed in the catalogues: this is because the **catalogues have traditionally rounded the actual measurements to the nearest base measure**. See these comments from that article:

Although the field of Separation is fairly extensive and complicated, Stanley Gibbons' 1980 catalogue defined its perforation policy as follows:

Perforations are normally given to the nearest half, and the Instanta gauge is our standard. Where perforations are exactly on the quarter or three quarter measurement, the catalogue quotes the **higher** figures, i.e., $11.75 \times 12.25 = 12 \times 12\text{-}1/2$. The gauge of a perforation is measured by the number of holes in a space of two centimeters, indicated by a perforation gauge.

A number of years ago it was discovered that some postal issues consistently seemed to be $11\text{-}1/4$, among them the 1950 First Airmail definitive set of six. This enthralling revelation was communicated to Yacov Tsachor, the noted philatelic expertizer and editor of Israel's Official Philatelic Services catalogue. His answer at the time was startling and unexpected: the quarter perforation was rejected and in fact, Mr. Tsachor indicated that the set(s) in question were actually machined at 11.4, further adding that 11.4 is closer to 11.5 than to 11.25, hence justification for the $11\text{-}1/2$ designation in the catalogue. As policy, and fortified by logic, nothing further was pursued.

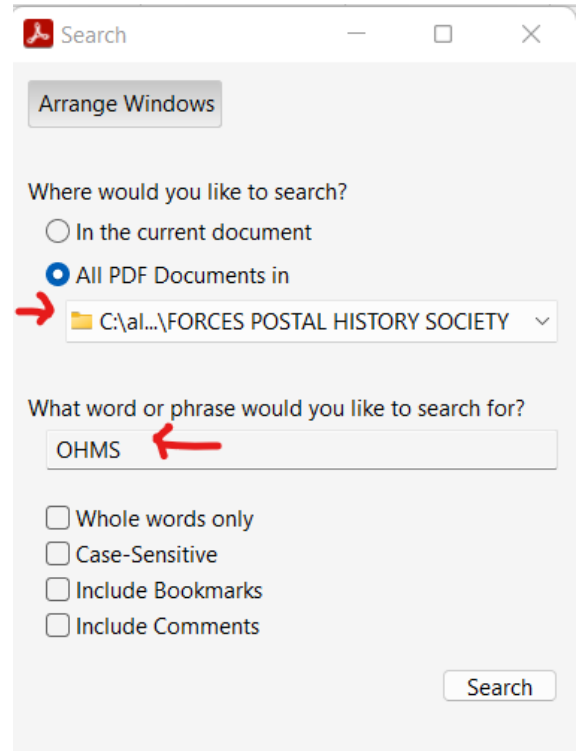
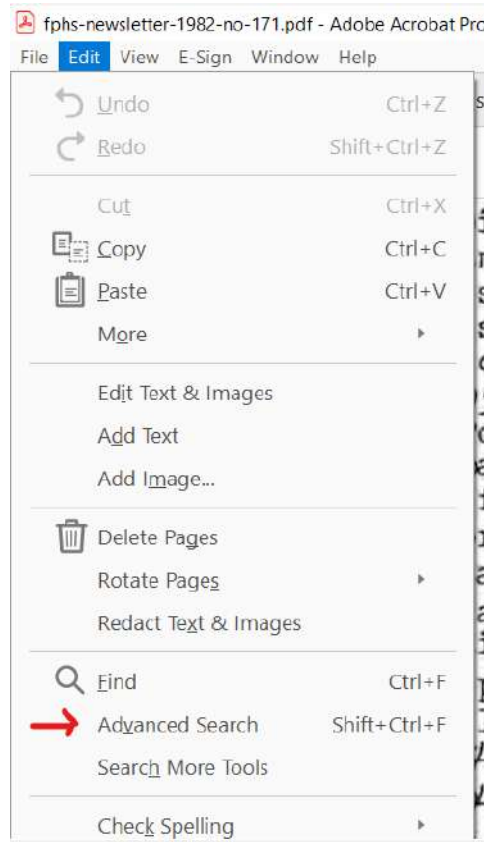
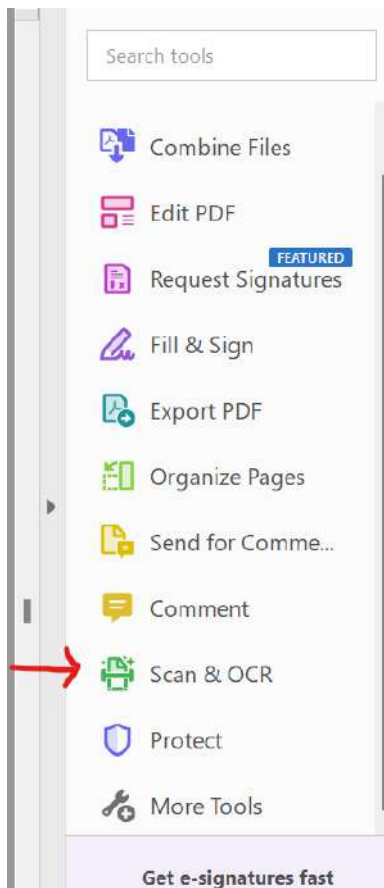


‘PRO TIP’

MASS SEARCHING FILES

As this bulletin focuses heavily on research it’s only fair to address a common concern (and solve it) – how do you ‘mass-search’ lots of files on a computer? This is the approach I take:

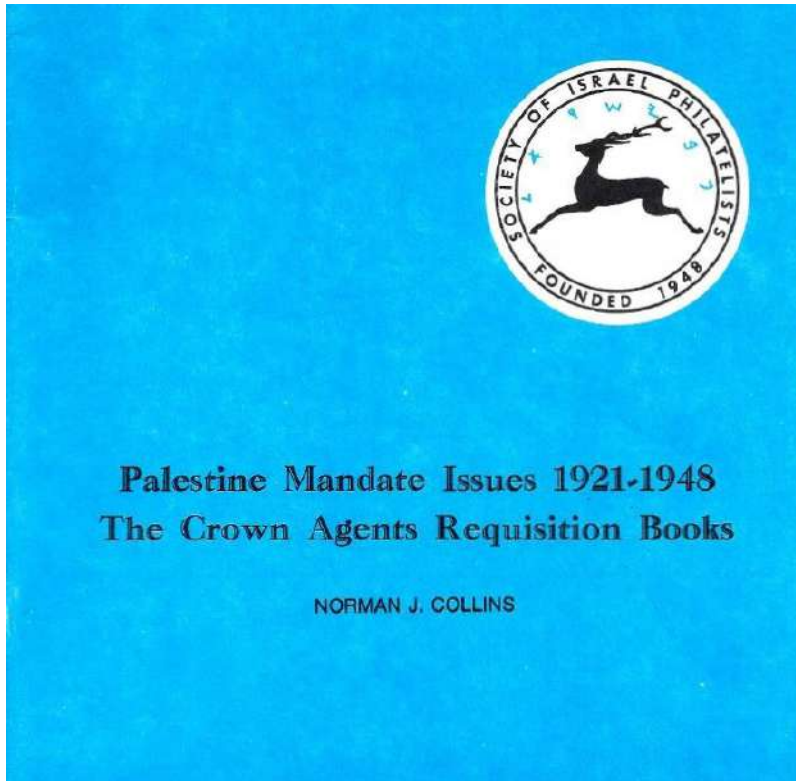
- a) Whether the material you want to search is actually in file form or not, you will want to make sure that it ‘becomes’ a pdf file: if you have files in other formats like “Word”, use the “save as” function to save them as ‘pdf’ files; if your files are in some format that can’t be easily converted to pdf using Microsoft office ‘save as’ functions search the internet for ways to save your files as pdf – many free sites that do this exist.
 - ⇒ If the material you want to search is not in online form at all:
 - i. Scan or photograph it (i.e. with your phone) – even if it’s many pages long – and then by virtue of it being in electronic form,
 - ii. convert those scans/images into pdfs or just paste them into a “Word” document and convert the whole document into a pdf
 - iii. if you can afford it (not expensive) for larger documents take these to a printing shop and ask them to scan it for you; then go to the sub-step just above.
- b) Unless your cursor can actually highlight words and letters in your file, you’ll need to make your pdf files ‘readable’ using an ‘optical character recognition’ (OCR) program: the paid-for Adobe Acrobat includes these feature; there are also websites that can do this for free (although the quality of the OCR readability may be mediocre). The monthly paid-for Adobe service runs about \$15 a month and I get my value’s worth from it [[see the image at left, below](#)]
- c) However you passed step b) once you have your materials as readable (searchable) pdf files, gather them together into one directory (file); make sure you have Adobe Acrobat installed on your computer (the free version is fine)
- d) Now, follow these steps:
 - i. Open one of those files in Acrobat
 - ii. Go to the top menu bar and select EDIT > ADVANCED SEARCH [[see image at center, below](#)]
 - iii. In the panel that pops up, select the search option “All pdf documents in” and choose the location of the directory you created with all the files; in the search field enter the term you are looking for + press SEARCH [[see image at right, below](#)]
 - iv. The search process will run, file by file, and display the relevant files with the search term in a clickable list; once the search process ends you can click each listing and it will display a list of the sentences in which you search term appears – every time you click on one of those results the display in Acrobat will move you to the page and sentence where that term appears
 - v. You can have up to c.40 files open at any time in Acrobat; if you are trying to open more than the limit, try closing some of the open files in order to free up space from new files to open.
 - ⇒ The position of the search result panel is static: if you position it in a certain place on your screen it will remain there and all you’ll have to do is click the search result, scan them with your eye for relevance – and continue clicking through the rest of the results.





The “Crown Agents Requisition Books” Compilation is Incomplete – Use with Caution

לאחר שבחנתי מספר פריטים בולאים מהמנדט שלא הופיעו בקטלוגים וגם לא בקובץ של הזמנות של שירות הדואר המנדטורי, אימתתי את הנתונים של קובץ ההזמנות אל מול נתונים שנתיים על דואר שעבר דרך שירותי הדואר וגיליתי סטייה גדולה במספרים, כשרק בין השנים 1921-1937 שירות הדואר טיפל בכ-40% יותר בפריטי דואר מכמות הבולים שכביכול הודפסה באותו עת, דבר שהוכיח שחסרים הרבה הזמנות וסוגים של בולים בקובץ ההזמנות. לכן יש להיזהר ממסקנות מרחיקות לכת מהקובץ הזה ולא לשלול פריטים על הסף כי הם לא מופיעים בהזמנות שם.



The primary source book by Norman Collins, “The Crown Agents Requisition Books” - a compilation of postal supply orders from the Mandate era - was one of the last books I acquired, just a few months ago. Until then I’d built my philatelic library piece by piece, subject by subject, sparing no expense or effort in acquiring the books I needed to progressively understand different periods and subjects. Here though was a book whose name I came across from time to time but felt that as a compilation of orders it contained information that I wouldn’t really need know.

However as I became more immersed in philately and began specializing more in very specific subjects, like Mandate coil stamps, booklets and paper types, I found this source mentioned more and more, not just as a source of order quantities **but as a primary - almost exclusive - source from which information was being**

extrapolated and conclusions inferred, sometimes by way of linkages between specific stamp types and orders which appeared in the compilation. Particularly **when I began encountering stamps that didn't match the published data, such as dates of use or paper types used, I felt I had to get the book - urgently** - and I did, but quite quickly I **found many inconsistencies with the information and upon further research I reached the conclusion that this source is vastly incomplete** and that at a minimum we must be very careful drawing conclusions from it. This article shares my research and findings:

Since the contemporary discovery of documents from the Mandate postal service in 1979-1980 by Emanuel Glassman (reference Marvin Siegel in the Israel Philatelist 1980 & 1981 vol. 31-32) and the subsequent assembly of the orders placed by the Crown Agents for the Mandatory Posts and Telegraphs department together paired with the recovered documents and carbon copies held by Arthur Hochheiser by Norman Collins, this compilation of orders published as the Crown Agents Requisition Books has become the cornerstone for first-hand research of the postal history of the Mandate.

By way of its simple and concise listing of orders by purchase order number, date, breakdown of items ordered plus additional comments, the compilation has lent itself to making easy and intuitive linkages between specific orders and their dates on the one hand, and philatelic material under observation on the other hand. **Its influence is widespread:** from the practical side it forms the basis for establishing dates of usage, quantities ordered and paper types used – and more influentially, catalogue classifications; and by extension the subsequent conclusions drawn by

this assembly of raw information and derived conclusions has crystallized and defined our conception of Mandate postal history and the parameters of its scope, permeating virtually any book or article that has been published since.

The Crown Agents' Requisition Book Entries				
REQn. No.	DUTY	DESPATCH DATE	SHEETS SENT	REMARKS
384	1 mil	31st Aug. to 20th Oct. 1922	5,978	Postage Stamps 'EEF' overprinted Palestine. New Plates to be proposed for all duties. Stamps to be despatched in the following order: - 1, 3, 13, 5, 7, & 8 millimes then remainder. Supplies of 1, 3 & 13 milliemes to be despatched by letter post (Regd) on 31/8/22 (from GPO) Waterlow & Sons
	2 mils		4,196	
	3 mils		5,251½	
	4 mils		2,955	
	5 mils		6,176½	
	6 mils		2,981	
	7 mils		2,780	
	8 mils		5,264	
	13 mils		8,114	
	1 Pt.		3,943½	
	2 Pts		1,026	
	5 Pts		393	
	9 Pts		501	
	10 Pts		486	
	20 Pts		437	
671	1 mil	1/5/23	3,150	Waterlow & Sons Ltd. Postage Stamps 'EEF' overprinted Palestine.
	2 mils		1,540	
	3 mils		3,504	
	1 Pt		997	
756	1 mil	14/9/23	3,234	Postage stamps 'EEF' overprinted Palestine.
	2 mils		2,036	
	3 mils		2,119	
	4 mils		2,199	
	5 mils		3,278	
	6 mils		2,151	
	7 mils		2,029	
	8 mils		2,166	
	13 mils		6,544	
	1 Pt		2,164	
	2 Pts		550	
	5 Pts		1,027	
	9 Pts		576	
	10 Pts		501	
	20 Pts		523	

The Bale and Dorfman Mandate catalogues are among the specialized literature that rely heavily on this source to draw inferences, publish production figures by stamp type, and establish their categorized delineations of paper type usages for stamps. Among the articles that have been published, David Dorfman for example links the existence of 7m and 8m Pictorials stamps on thin vertically ribbed paper to being part of a 1934 order (#6082) for 5m coils (reference "The Postage Stamps of Palestine 1918-1948 - 2nd Update" in Israel Philatelist issue 42 p.28, 1991); and Arthur Hochheiser (and others before and since) draws the conclusion that there was only 1 order of a 3m coil stamp (#2932) in 1928 (reference "The Palestine Paste-Up Coils: An Enigma" in Israel Philatelist issue 50 vol 2 p.8, 1999). These are a miniscule sampling of examples just for illustration.




Nevertheless, as illustrated above, I have an April 1933 postmarked 8m stamp on thin vertically ribbed paper which **pre-dates** Dorfman’s published first dates of use of July-Aug. 1934; I also have a 3m stamp on thin vertically ribbed paper postmarked Sept. 1932 – **over 4 years after** the only recorded order of this denomination on this paper. **Clearly there is a problem** – either with the empirical evidence or with the source information. And the empirical evidence, wider than shown here, is entirely genuine and legitimate.

Dr. Hochheiser, for whom I have tremendous respect as a researcher who always examined the critical technical-philatelic aspects of “how things work” and whose research work is both unique in its insight and groundbreaking in its conclusions, nevertheless made a disingenuous (and unfounded) comment in his article to help explain why only 1 order for a 3m coil stamp would exist: “The need for additional rolls was deemed unnecessary since this supplied the postage for printed matter only”. This probably unintended attempt to speak on behalf of unknown entities without documentary basis, **in order to rationalize clearly seen but subconsciously accepted shortcomings in the records is a phenomenon that recurs in regards to conclusions drawn from the data** in the Requisition Books. By contrast on this point, the philatelist Irwin Math wrote a piece extolling that 3m denomination as the ‘Workhorse of the Mandate’, summing up “No other stamp without change of color has been used for a greater period of time during the Palestine Mandate than the three mils of the Pictorial issue - twenty one years” (Israel Philatelist vol. 60 issue 5 p.22, 2009), and Math’s position on this point is more persuasive given the genuinely useful and ubiquitous use of the 3m denomination throughout the years of this stamp issue.

With Hochheiser’s comment as a segue way the greater problem is, **empirical evidence of stamps existing on different paper types than those listed in the Crown Agents Requisition Books, or existing before or beyond dates listed in that source call into question the completeness of this source**. Furthermore, on closer study - even superficially - of the listings, **a number of peculiarities immediately arise**: we know from the documentation that Palestine’s stamps were produced in the UK and imported from abroad, but

- a. the record of orders often shows **large time gaps between the stamp orders**, sometimes as much as 6 months to a year or more; (ref: p.10/17/35/38)

1924 POSTAGE DUE ISSUE (DE LA RUE)



There were only three printings of the second issue of postage due stamps. The first issue was printed in Palestine by the Greek Convent Press and were of a different design. Figure 23, shows the essential part of the original tender submitted to the Crown Agents by De La Rue. The tender is in the De La Rue correspondence books, housed in the National Postal Museum, London.

The Crown Agents' Requisition Book Entries.

REQn. No.	DUTY	DESPATCH DATE	SHEETS SENT	REMARKS
1014	1 mil 2 mils 4 mils 8 mils 13 mils 5 Pts	3/10/24	395 590 610 1,516 504 300	NEW ISSUE - SURFACE PRINTED
1884/2	2 mils	28/6/26	125	Sheets 200 set.
2415	2 mils 5 Pts	18/5/27	142 57	

REQn. No.	DUTY	DESPATCH DATE	SHEETS SENT	REMARKS
2397	2 mils 3 mils 4 mils 5 mils 6 mils 7 mils 8 mils 10 mils 13 mils 20 mils 50 mils 90 mils 100 mils 200 mils	13th April to 25th May 1927	5,037 8,234 1,787 12,953 815 3,160 535 1,511 8,860 1,080 360 105 199 105	New Series - Harrison & Sons. Specimens required for GFO of all duties. Stamps required for Dealers as under: 2 mil 96 sheets 10 mil 48 sheets 3 mil 80 sheets 13 mil 48 sheets 4 mil 72 sheets 20 mil 40 sheets 5 mil 72 sheets 50 mil 45 sheets 6 mil 60 sheets 90 mil 35 sheets 7 mil 60 sheets 100 mil 30 sheets 8 mil 60 sheets 200 mil 25 sheets 3 & 13 mils to be printed first. Sheets of stamps to be numbered 1 up each duty, except those reserved for dealers.
2506	2 mils 3 mils 4 mils 5 mils 6 mils 7 mils 8 mils 10 mils 13 mils 20 mils 50 mils 90 mils 100 mils 200 mils	5th April 1928	6,342 3,800 1,784 7,336 1,217 4,098 756 1,256 4,069 756 315 158 158 158	Sheets of stamps to be numbered 1 up each duty.

- b. in specific areas such as the coil stamps – whose research is heavily reliant on this compilation – we see **no orders for coil stamps between 1930 and 1933 and again between 1936 and 1938**, a period of tremendous growth and development in the postal services domestically and abroad; (ref: p.27)

REQn. No.	DUTY	DESPATCH DATE	ROLLS SENT	REMARKS
2932	3 mils 5 mils	1/8/28	400 400	Postage stamps in rolls of 500. Stamps to be supplied on thin water-marked paper, to fit machines made by Hall Telephone Accessories Ltd.
3205	5 mils	25/4/29	800	To be in rolls of 500.
4090	2 mils	7/10/30	668	To be in rolls of 500. Rolls to fit machines supplied by Messrs Hall Telephone Accessories Ltd.
5629/1	15 mils	2/9/33	1,050	In rolls of 500 stamps each.
5734	5 mils	13/10/33	420	In rolls of 500 stamps each.
6082	5 mils	217/34	600	In rolls of 500 stamps each.
6954	4 reels of C.A. Postage paper, each 4 1/2 inches wide & 600 yards long, for the printing by Messrs Harrison & Sons, of stamp rolls. To Harrison 8/8/35 (balance to store D.L.R.).			
6954	5 mils	29th Aug & 13/9/35	678	In rolls of 500 stamps. (Author's note: 1st Continuous Coils)
7884/2	8 reels of C.A. white thin postage paper, each 4 1/2 inches wide & 600 yards long, for the printing by Harrison & Sons of stamp rolls.			
7884/1	5 mils	17/7/36	735	Rolls containing 500 stamps each.
9629/1	5 mils	26/8/38	200	Each roll containing 500 stamps.

- c. in another specific case the high denomination Pictorials (250m/500m/£1P) were **only ever ordered two times, in Sept. and Oct. 1941** – and then never again (p.22); from data I will show below, 158,000 parcels were mailed that year, with an average of 170,000 a year up to 1947 (peaking that year at 230,000) – no additional high denomination stamps were needed?
- d. as regards a seeming inconsistency in the regularity of orders, the 200m Pictorials for example are recorded being ordered once in June 1933 and again **six years later** in June 1939 (p.19/21);
- e. No consular fees stamps were ordered for two years, between 1923 and 1925 (p.39);
- f. Almost **no orders are recorded for 1948**, although the post office continued to function apace until its wind-down in mid-late April.

Indeed for a record which should be recording the purchase history of a postal service - considered the best in the Middle East - for 30 years, the **40 or so pages** of actual orders (some of which are filled up by images of documents, leaving the net space allotted for the orders to less than 40 pages) is thin to say the least. Obvious postal articles are missing from its scope: the actual vending machines for the coil stamps, the pillar boxes for the submission of mail, postmarks, any office supplies and equipment required by the network of post offices in Palestine, vehicles for the transport of mail, and any of the vast network of telecommunications equipment that was part of the Posts and Telegraphs' domain. I understand that certain subjects in total may not appear in the compilation but I mention these omissions to draw the readers' attention to the fact that much material is missing here - including in the areas that the compilation does cover. If I sharpen this point just a little more, I should mention that in [British] stamp production, one source provided the stamp sheet paper, another source printed the stamp, and another source watermarked the paper – three contracted sources of which only one, sometimes, is listed here; all required purchase orders from the Crown Agents.

Here we stumble upon a delicately presented - but overt - oversight, perfectly capturing my concerns about the Requisition Books, and this will serve as the jumping board for my research:

a glance at the section on Mandate postage stamp booklets reveals that only 4 orders are recorded, one for each year of 1929-1932, representing what the catalogues presently classify as Dorfman's 1st series and Bale's 1st and 2nd series of booklet stamps - but omitting the subsequent issues that are known to have been produced until at least 1939 (i.e.

series 3 and 4). Addressing this absence Collins notes dryly that “other booklets are known and listed in specialized catalogues”.

Delicately deflecting potential concerns for the omissions - as Hochheiser presumed to speak on behalf of the involved authorities - so too Collins concludes authoritatively “**There were only four printings of stamp booklets in England** as will be seen from the Crown Agents’ Requisition Book entries... **All booklets other than those sent out to Palestine by the Crown Agents, must have been made up locally in Palestine**”. **This is a clever but disingenuous formulation:** without documentary basis Collins is stating conclusively that a) only these 4 orders were sent to Palestine; b) other booklets albeit are known - but these weren’t sent to Palestine, they were produced there and therefore these would naturally not be recorded in the Requisition Books. **Collins sees the deficiency in the record but subconsciously rationalizes it.** In his opening remarks on this compilation he alludes to information only being as complete as the surviving records, but **he doesn’t leverage this awareness to confront the information** and test if it’s reliable enough to draw conclusions from it.

His statement implies that there is in fact no omission in the records at all and that the subsequent issues (presently catalogued as issues #2-4) “must” not have been imported in any specially prepared form but rather cut out from scratch, presumably from standard shipments of stamp sheets. **That deft summarization – and all that it represents in allaying fears that the compilation may be incomplete – has worked for the last 40 years and amplified the far-reaching conclusions drawn from this record... except for one tiny oversight which undercuts both the point in question and so the completeness of this record:**

Collins, Dorfman and Bale illustrate both **stitch-bound** and **staple-bound** booklets as having been part of these documented orders of 1929-1932 – but British-made stamp booklets of this period (1917-1976) were all stitch-bound except one staple-bound booklet issue produced in 1969 (Scott #BK126); the British also produced stamp booklets throughout the Second World War even though Dorfman writes that due to paper shortages booklet production ceased with WWII – how does he know that? A search through the press archives (search the National Library in English & Hebrew: <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/search>) reveals that **stamp booklets of various agencies and bodies existed in Palestine throughout the War...**

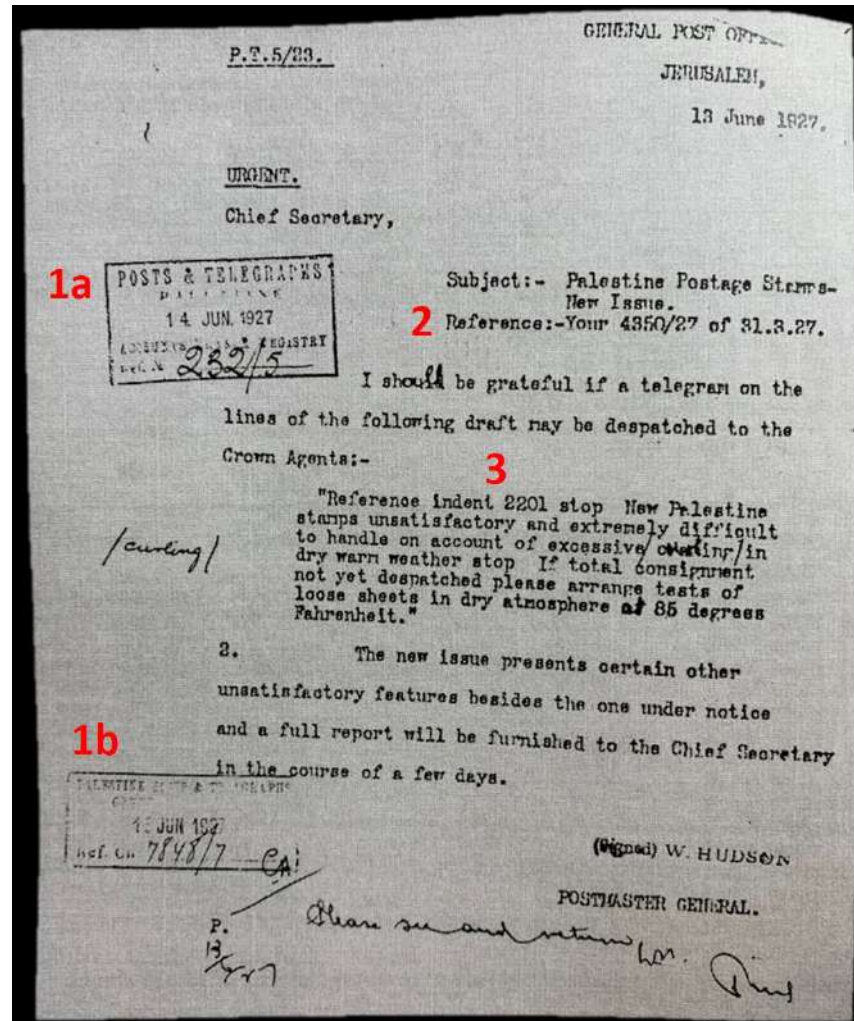
As such the Mandate booklets bound by staples – even these early ones – were domestically assembled from shipped guillotined panels of stamps and would therefore be “locally made” like all the others that are unlisted in the Requisition Books compilation. Indeed the Palestine Post of 4 Aug. 1949 (p.2) credits a local company “Near East Advertising Company” and its owner Gabriel Roos (who won the franchise to produce Israel’s first stamp booklets) with being the driving force behind the Mandate’s stamp booklet initiative. **A difference in using stitching versus staples is a change in specifications, not a trifling detail.** And if we relying on the habit of the published record to document for instance that booklet orders included both guillotined booklets/panes as well as excess sheet columns to be used as regular postage, if booklets really were produced from scratch in Palestine we should expect to see a breakdown of a standard stamp-sheet order indicating how many sheets are being earmarked to the production of stamp booklets and how many for regular use. Such information is not in the compiled record.

The absence of the orders of the known subsequent stamp booklets from these records shows clearly that the record is incomplete, and if this record is incomplete we cannot make far-reaching conclusions based on the [few] orders that are recorded.

And how many orders are missing? A momentary aside:

Initially I thought it may be the number of purchase order numbers that are missing in the sequence of those that are listed. I mention this briefly as a lesson for the reader, because it’s incorrect but instructive: the error in my assumption was that the purchase order numbers were not issued by the Palestine Government or its departments but by the Crown Agents themselves. As such these numbers as they appear in the compilation are random and entirely the product of the CA and their numbering system.

To understand the various document numbers observed in the pipeline of correspondences for purchase orders, in broad strokes, each correspondence sent by a government department or the Crown Agents or a solicited business was issued its own serial/filing number (number “1a” in image): this was written and date-stamped by the sender; the receiving office would likewise date-stamp the received letter and issue it its own departmental filing number (number “1b” in image). Any future references to this specific letter would reference it by its assigned filing number (and those letters referencing it would themselves be date-stamped by both the issuing and receiving offices, each one assigning that subsequent letter its own filing number – behold, bureaucracy) – see number “2” in image.



Here then when the Mandatory government (or a department thereof, such as Posts and Telegraphs) approached the Crown Agents with a request for the purchase of material, they would refer to this request as an “Indent” – ‘an official request for goods’, in British parlance (the word is both a noun and a verb) – and give this Indent a number (number “3” in image). Subsequent correspondences between the Mandate Government and the CA on a certain “Indent” would reference its number (all the while generating new filing numbers between each office for the letter exchanged on the matter).

The purchase order number itself was generated by the Crown Agents as “Palestine [purchase order number]” **from the moment the CA approached businesses for tenders** (see number “4”): in other words this number existed even before a tender was accepted and a contract signed. Both tenders by the companies and the purchase orders issued by the CA reference the purchase order number, the indent number (issued by the Mandate Government) and the relevant Department in the Government, here “P & T” (Posts and Telegraph).

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE CROWN AGENTS FOR THE COLONIES. THE FOLLOWING REFERENCE AND THE DATE OF THIS LETTER BEING QUOTED

4 G/Palestine 3377

TELEGRAMS: "CROWN, LONDON"
TELEPHONE: 7730 VICTORIA

4. MILLBANK, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W.1.

21st August 1929

Gentlemen,

We are preparing for issue in Palestine a supply of stamp books containing advertisements, and I have to enquire whether you would be disposed to take this opportunity of advertising your products in this Territory. The books are of the same size and type as those sold in the Post Offices in this country, and the details of issue and charge for advertisement are as follows:-

Advertisement charge per page.

15,000 Booklets containing 18 - 5 mils
12 - 3 mils
12 - 2 mils
postage and revenue stamps

25. 5. Od.

I shall be obliged if you will let us have an early reply, and if you are interested please send a draft advertisement. The proof of this would be submitted to you before going to press.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

G 4

1876/1

TENDER for the supply of Steel faced printing Plates for New Palestine Postage Stamps and for supply of 2 stamps.

Messrs. Thomas & Co., Ltd.
110 Bunhill Row,
LONDON, W.C.2.

19.11.26.

Special A/C (1/100)
38637/250fl.9.
10.11.26. 10.25

3

ITEM	DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ARTICLES	RATE	AMOUNT
1	Steel faced, surface printing plates for new issue of Palestinian Postage Stamps, to the following particulars:-	225 each	322
DUTY.	DESCRIPTION OF DESIGN.	Approx. Size of Stamp to centre of perforation	Set of Printing Plate
2	Mils Reuel's Tomb.	13" x 15"	250
3	" " "	ditto	250
4	" Dome of the Rock.	ditto	250
5	" Citadel of Jerusalem.	ditto	250
6	" Dome of the Rock.	ditto	250
7	" Citadel of Jerusalem.	ditto	250

A detailed list of the contents must be enclosed when possible in each package.

19

Cost of articles specified on continuation sheet (if any)

Cost of packing for export

Cost of delivery f.a.b.

ALTERNATIVE: Cost of packing and postage

Total f.a.b.

Trade and shipping allowances

per cent. on £

Cash discount for prompt payment

per cent. on £

Net amount payable (including all charges) on receipt of bills of lading, parcels receipt or certificate of posting

ALTERNATIVE: Total net cost f.a.b.

ADVICE OF ORDERS PLACED.

OFFICE OF THE CROWN AGENTS FOR THE COLONIES.

4. MILLBANK, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W.1.

10th July 1928.

The Crown Agents for the Colonies present their compliments and beg to state that the following supplies have been ordered from Messrs. D. S. L. & Co., Ltd., in accordance with the instructions contained in the indent noted in the margin hereof.

Package addressed:-

4 Req. 2932. **O.H.M.S.**

3 Ref. No. G/ Palestine 2932.

Indent No. 2732.

Service P & T.

Inspector.—Crown Agents

Posts & telegraphs, Jerusalem, c/o Transport Officer, Haifa.

Delivery is promised by the 8 August.

Item	Quantity	Duty	Description	Table	Rate per 1000 including paper.	Cost
1	200,000	3 mils	Palestine Postage Stamps	}	1/6	30. 0. 0.
2	200,000	5 "	in rolls of 500 stamps.			

Brought forward from continuation sheet (if any)

TOTAL £ 30. 0. 0.

That closes the cautionary tale of mis-interpreting the purchase order number sequence, **but...**

...how many orders then are missing from the compilation?

Here I'm aided by the first-hand data assembled by Daniel Rosenne in his book "Communication in Eretz Israel During the British Mandate" (2019 ed., published by the Association for the Commemoration of the Fallen Soldiers of the IDF Signals Corps): he mercifully culled the department's annual reports and assembled a table of statistics showing the annual processing of mail from 1920 to 1947 (although for certain years and mail types the data is incomplete). I display it here for the benefit of the reader who may not have seen these statistics before (p.287-289):

	מכתבים Letters	גלויות Postcards	דברי דפוס Printed Matter	צורות Small Packets	מברקים Telegrams
1920	212,000				40,950
1921	530,000				49,063
1922	5,529,700	747,300	3,120,600		259,800
1923	4,917,000	660,500	3,030,100		241,000
1924	6,655,000	713,000	3,258,000		252,300
1925	9,909,900	661,600	3,620,000		307,165
1926	11,496,900	737,760	4,410,574		296,530
1927	11,996,470	980,158	4,607,608		275,165
1928	11,564,261	931,812	5,284,812		248,717
1929	11,625,742	942,259	5,750,000		336,902
1930	11,763,770	932,080	6,194,900		264,378
1931	10,787,750	819,559	5,839,902		256,350
1932	12,389,400	918,700	6,446,700		252,600
1933	17,716,800	1,376,400	9,604,000		307,000
1934	21,484,100	2,081,300	9,604,400		399,000
1935	28,960,959	2,874,014	18,552,877		508,332
1936	33,736,968	3,309,904	20,786,808		482,886
1937	33,068,000	3,300,900	21,372,100		406,992
1938	33,723,500	3,803,500	19,900,800		401,326
1939	24,258,622	2,578,186	8,206,423		462,128
1940	14,049,703	2,151,526	6,229,022		680,761
1941	13,902,042	1,381,614	5,635,914		817,594
1942	16,452,337	1,329,016	5,618,312		1,023,566
1943	15,788,100	1,355,800	5,562,500		924,159
1944	29,906,000	1,772,500	13,647,900		963,760
1945	40,596,800	2,035,400	22,423,500		1,120,300
1946	48,089,300	2,851,600	32,953,800	211,900	1,190,100
1947	55,297,600	2,386,300	24,511,700	261,300	1,373,200

לוח 2: חבילות – Parcels

	חולק Delivered	נשלח Posted	מסמך ארצי Inland	בין לאומי – Foreign		מכירת – Cash on Delivery		
				חולק	נשלח	בין לאומי, חולק Foreign Received	בין לאומי, נשלח Foreign Dispatched	מסמך ארצי, נשלח Inland Posted
1920	6,210	2,338						
1921	10,350	2,750						
1922	136,000							
1923	117,200							
1924	127,500							
1925	162,761							
1926	158,755							
1927	146,461							
1928	173,859		35,000	100,900	37,000	1,387		
1929			33,517	86,455	32,028	1,451		
1930			36,800	93,197	33,990	1,424	15	
1931			31,772	77,780	36,026	1,430	40	
1932			32,200	72,600	28,500	2,000	24	167
1933			39,900	86,800	27,300	2,500	44	329
1934			44,000	112,100	31,200	2,800	29	490
1935			46,648	127,742	30,556	2,903	27	748
1936			63,096	116,193	39,457	2,520	38	1,574
1937			42,300	121,145	29,858	2,540	52	1,391
1938			38,600	105,375	29,048	2,340	59	1,012
1939			28,300	124,749	27,216	2,523	67	899
1940			50,200	71,576	18,597	2,195	50	1,502
1941			139,802	34,131	16,980	3,072	134	1,528
1942			143,026	78,211	25,220	3,904	37	1,667
1943			84,000	24,100	28,100	940	28	2,517
1944			119,000	40,300	41,000	780	77	4,010
1945			129,500	107,800	51,200	1,198	35	4,124
1946			85,000	247,200	79,500	4,000	5	2,900
1947			95,900	238,500	129,800	4,580	5	4,550

I compared the postal service's annual data on mail processed to the quantity of stamps and stamped postal stationary ordered (i.e. produced) each year, as shown in the Requisition Books, converting sheets and rolls into their equivalent number of stamps (based on the denominations involved, some being 200 stamps per sheet and others 250, or 500 in a roll etc.):

TABULATED STAMP PRODUCTION DATA FROM CROWN AGENTS ORDERS + ANNUALIZED MAIL SENT*								
Year:	Regular stamps	coils (as individual stamps)	booklets (as individual stamps)	postage dues	postal stationary	TOTAL Stamp Production (orders)	Annual Mail Sent (incl parcels)	Total Stamp Production as % of Mail Processed
1921	5,642,880					5,642,880	532,750	1059%
1922	17,389,680					17,389,680	9,397,600	185%
1923	9,669,120					9,669,120	8,607,600	112%
1924	5,236,560			783,000		6,019,560	10,626,000	57%
1925	7,783,440			-		7,783,440	14,191,500	55%
1926	7,742,400			25,000		7,767,400	16,645,234	47%
1927	11,839,920			972,600	40,996	12,853,516	17,584,236	73%
1928	15,305,550	400,000		-	64,300	15,769,850	17,852,885	88%
1929	17,897,200	400,000	630,000	-	58,320	18,985,520	18,383,546	103%
1930	13,471,650	334,000	1,260,000	-	99,170	15,164,820	18,961,555	80%
1931	10,181,750	-	924,000	81,000	155,800	11,342,550	17,515,049	65%
1932	28,718,950	-	1,260,000	362,200	104,580	30,445,730	19,815,691	154%
1933	13,273,700	735,000	0	563,600	194,600	14,766,900	28,764,773	51%
1934	21,102,500	300,000	0	-	487,800	21,890,300	33,245,519	66%
1935	22,928,200	339,000	0	243,000	457,350	23,967,550	50,465,829	47%
1936	33,860,300	367,500	0	120,000	746,450	35,094,250	57,937,845	61%
1937	35,336,250	-	0	-	429,100	35,765,350	57,814,601	62%
SUM TOTAL	277,380,050	2,875,500	4,074,000	3,150,400	2,838,466	290,318,416	398,342,213	73%

* Production is calculated as recorded orders in Requisition Books except postage due and revenue stamps; mail sent includes parcels (but data lacking for 1922-27) but not "small packets" (data lacking) - taken from Daniel Rosenne - "Communication in Eretz Israel During the Mandate" p.287-288.

Although Rosenne tabulated data until 1947, I stopped my tallies at 1937 because I began seeing that the total amount of annual stamp production was consistently not keeping pace with the quantity of mail being processed annually.

What I found – as we see – is that **the amount of mail processed each year outpaced the quantity of stamps being produced that year**. A rational assumption would be, allowing for stampless (i.e. "Official") and metered mail to be considered statistically insignificant, that **there should be at a minimum parity between the quantity of mail sent and the number of stamps and stamped postal stationary produced** – that there should be enough stamps to frank the mail sent at a basic rule-of-thumb rate of at least **1 stamp for every piece of mail sent**. Here we see, other than oddly wild variations in stamp production from year to year, that on an almost annual basis, **stamp production was usually 40-50% below the amount of mail sent**. Over 17 years I tallied – even with clearly incomplete mail processing data, like for 1921 – we find that if we rely on the compilation of orders, the Mandate postal service was **110 million stamps short of supplying franking to the mail it was sending**. Clearly something here is amiss.

NOW: is this possible? Is this the norm? I tried to compare the Mandate to her mother, the UK and even to the US, expecting that detailed statistics would be forthcoming. For the US this information was much easier to find, whereas for the UK I was able to establish a link between mail processing and stamp production for just 1 single year (1939-1940).

For the purpose of drawing conclusions let's look at the tabulation of similar annual US stamp production versus annual mail processing – here for certain years the data is aided by an extrapolated value representing metered mail, and this indeed helps complete the picture for the US:

UNITED STATES ANNUAL STAMP PRODUCTION RELATIVE TO ANNUAL MAIL PROCESSED, 1920-1940								
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Year:	ordinary postage stamps issued	Stamped Envelopes & Wrappers Issued	Postal Cards Issued	Total Postage Stamps & other postal stationary issued	Pieces of matter of all kinds handled	production as % mail processed	Metered mail as a % of annual revenue, as supplement to production	Total Production as % of mail processed
1940	16,381,427,000	1,649,549,000	2,256,520,000	20,287,496,000	27,749,467,000	73%		
1939	15,073,796,000	1,605,076,000	2,170,572,000	18,849,444,000	26,444,846,000	71%	27.75%	99%
1938	14,912,093,000	1,648,815,000	2,186,721,000	18,747,629,000	26,041,979,000	72%		
1937	15,108,639,000	1,663,818,000	2,226,153,000	18,998,610,000	25,801,279,000	74%	24.92%	99%
1936	13,835,400,000	1,647,891,000	1,917,793,000	17,401,084,000	23,571,315,000	74%		
1935	13,610,497,000	1,617,677,000	1,754,030,000	16,982,204,000	22,331,752,000	76%		
1934	12,525,717,000	1,580,820,000	1,590,257,000	15,696,794,000	20,625,827,000	76%		
1933	11,917,442,000	1,644,993,000	1,389,524,000	14,951,959,000	19,868,456,000	75%		
1932	14,650,970,000	2,384,793,000	1,334,753,000	18,370,516,000	24,306,744,000	76%	14.87%	90%
1931	15,559,164,000	2,847,439,000	1,531,246,000	19,937,849,000	26,544,352,000	75%		
1930	16,268,856,000	3,164,127,000	1,643,212,000	21,076,195,000	27,887,823,000	76%		
1929	16,917,275,000	3,228,587,000	1,783,897,000	21,929,759,000	27,951,548,000	78%		
1928	16,676,493,000	3,201,459,000	1,872,040,000	21,749,992,000	26,837,005,000	81%		
1927	15,999,701,000	3,145,946,000	1,834,456,000	20,980,103,000	26,686,556,000	79%		
1926	16,333,410,000	3,001,858,000	1,668,241,000	21,003,509,000	25,483,529,000	82%		
1925	17,386,556,000	2,997,177,000	1,497,367,000	21,881,100,000		N/A		
1924	15,954,475,000	2,964,464,000	1,293,185,000	20,212,124,000		N/A		
1923	15,478,095,000	2,721,475,000	1,253,196,000	19,452,766,000	23,054,832,000	84%		
1922	14,261,949,000	2,364,373,000	1,111,124,000	17,737,446,000		N/A		
1921	13,869,935,000	2,738,934,000	1,081,207,000	17,690,076,000		N/A		
1920	13,212,790,000	2,850,078,000	986,156,000	17,049,024,000		N/A		

* sources: Columns B-F come from "Chapter R Communications - Bicentennial Edition Historical Statistics of the United States Colonial Times to 1970", part2 p.804 | Column H comes from the Postmaster General's Annual Reports for 1932 (p.40), 1937 (p.46) and 1939 (p.49); I extrapolate its original measure as a "percent of revenue" as being relatively proportional to "postage used" that year. The Postmaster General's Annual Reports' tabular totals of "Statement showing the number of stamps, postal cards, stamped envelopes, and other stamped paper issued to postmasters" includes a few more categories of postal items yielding a slightly higher total - this may account for the 99% totals rather than 100% totals shown here for 1937 and 1939

Here, with almost perfectly complete information we see that indeed it was possible for stamp production to be substantially less than the quantity of mail being processed in a given year - usually 25% less on a consistent basis, up from 15-20% in earlier years - **but that shortfall was almost perfectly made up by the quantity of [stampless] metered mail sent through the posts** (as per my comments below the table, I extrapolated metered mail's "percent of revenue" as being like "percent of stamps produced" implying one-for-one parity between the number of metered mails and their face value - for 1937 and 1939 that worked; 1932 is anomalous as the total calculated production of stamps is 90%, where the metered mail is 14.87% of that total, but this merely means that the nominal value of that metered mail was low so that 14.87% "share of revenue" is not equal to the missing "share of production" of 24.87%. In all likelihood metered mail really was almost 25% of the mail processed but only accounted for almost 15% of the stamp revenue that year).

By contrast, Palestine's stamp production is bombastic in its fluctuations, and although we don't have a statistic for the amount of metered mail sent we do know (from Sacher in "The Postal Markings of the Palestine Mandate", 1995 p.86/170/216-217/239-249) that **it was small**, only being used from 1930 (until 1948): 25 machines in Jerusalem, 19 in Haifa, 4 in Jaffa and roughly 40 in Tel Aviv. Just from mail that I myself examine I doubt that 5% - one out of 20 pieces of mail - of what I see is metered mail (and even that may be an exaggeration): at best, **that still leaves roughly 23% of the franking for mail on aggregate for 1921-1937 unaccounted for** - and in some years much more.

From this alone we know that **almost 25% of the postage used for this period is missing** from the Requisition Books compilation.

And if we throw the proverbial "spanner in the works" by referring for a moment to the single British statistic that I found, for 1939-1940 we find that 7,360,000,000 items were processed by the British post (source: Royal Mail

statistics compiled by postalmuseum.org), and 8,395,000,000 stamps produced that year (source: "The British Post Office - A history" by Howard Robinson, 1948 p.444: "by 1939 the Post Office was finding it necessary to print an average of 23,000,000 stamps every day"). That comes to a **114% relation of stamp production to mail processed that year** (14% more stamps produced than mail processed) – far in excess of the US and not yet accounting for the effect of the more widely used meter mail in the UK.

I should add, as a curiosity, that when I first assembled the US data I came cross production figures mentioned in terms of "sheets" only and extrapolated their number of stamps on the basis of 200 stamps per sheet as I had observed (Scotts Catalogue in their own introduction to US stamps, 2006 ed. P.21A/22A write that actually 400 subject sheets were used for the majority of regular postal issues, and references 200 subjects per sheet for some of the commemoratives): had my extrapolation been borne out by the subsequent stamp production figures I found, US stamp production relative to mail processing would have been anywhere between 115% and 124%. Nevertheless and quite oddly the documents which provided the actual stamp production figures yield an average of about 105 stamps per "sheet" – as if the word "sheet" actually means "pane" from a standard US stamp plate (sheet). **[August 2021 inline postscript:** it had occurred to me that my calculated results for US stamp production versus mail processing in the table above is **a little "too exact"** (i.e. for 1937 and 1939) - it would appear that there was no excess stamp production, no margin of error in production, for collectors, dealers, natural overproduction etc. I would submit that perhaps my extrapolated measure of metered mail is too stringent and that perhaps the value of the metered mail may be less than the quantity of mail sent (I was using parity of 1:1 as explained above; perhaps 25% share of revenue is really, say, 30% of the mail processed). It may also be that, as I wrote just above here, there is something odd about how "stamp sheet" and "stamp quantity" as provided in the sources cited yields such a low stamp count per sheet - a small margin of error in that data multiplied against a few hundred million stamp sheets may be enough to generate the "excess stamp production" that seems to be missing from my table above.]

As we can see stamp production data – orders – are indeed missing from the Requisition Books. If we try to quantify how much is missing I would take from the 1921-1937 data an average of the production to mail processing for the years which do not have an extreme result of 150% production or more, and **that would leave us with a relation of 64% stamps produced to mail processed**. Allowing for as much as 6% of the volume to be accounted for as stampless (Official mail and metered mail), this would bring us to 70% - and then at a minimum, without allowing for any excess production, **30% would still be unaccounted for, for the mail that was sent: 119.5 million stamps**. In other words **at least 41% of the orders are missing from the Requisition Books - just for the period 1921-1937 alone**.

Parting Shots

All this was in aid of testing the completeness of orders for **postage stamps**. **But what about revenue stamps?** For the **US in 1939, almost as many revenue stamps as "ordinary postage stamps" were produced** – 14,684,696,000 to 15,073,796,000 (reference p.586 of "Treasury Department Appropriation Bill 1940", 1939); for Palestine in 1937 - the last year of my data examination - the requisition books record... **none** - no duty stamps were needed to generate income for the Mandate. For 1936 we see 4.2 million revenue stamps in the documented orders (as **13% the quantity of ordinary stamps produced that year**). Those revenue stamps represented a nominal value of £7,127... as against the year's liquor license fees, alcohol excise fees, business registration fees, patent fees and trademark fees totaling £7,497... plus broadcast license fees of £10,473 and any applicable fees paid with revenue stamps from the year's excise duties totaling £359,498 (source: "United Kingdom Report on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1936", 1937). **Again, the compiled stamp orders seem to be coming up short.**

A late edit (Nov. 2021): For the sake of an interesting comparison, I found the following information in the Palestine Post of 6 April 1939, reporting that the Kofer HaYishuv initiative ("Jewish Redemption Fund") of the Jews in Palestine - indirect contributions in the form of voluntary taxes on entertainment, cigarettes, transport, liquors and other various commodities) - **raised £58,655 on 17,699,000 revenue stamps issued, for the 6 months ending in February 1939**, and that each Jewish inhabitant in Palestine contributed an average of **130 mils**. As the Requisition books list an order for revenue stamps on 25 Feb. 1938 and another for 14 July 1939, if we consider the value of the order from 1938 it comes to **1,380,400 stamps representing a nominal value of £201,190** - assuming (riskily) that this was the entire

production of revenue stamps for the year. Kofer HaYishuv did not replace the Mandate's revenue charges, it was an additional taxation to them (for the Jewish community, the "Yishuv"). Here we see that as a community numbering about a third of Palestine's population, in the space of half a year on a smaller scale of taxable activities, it generated about **30% of the nominal value** of the revenue stamp order for 1938 intended for the country in total for [almost] the full year.

There are many other critiques and observations that I have about the Requisition Books compilation but I think with the information I've shared above I've made my point. This is an incomplete primary source from which we have to be careful in inferring conclusions, and as a general proposition **we do have to release ourselves from preconceptions formed from its information and go back-to-the-basics and do our own homework researching issues from scratch, from the bottom on up.**

Update Sept. 2022: while doing research in the State Archives I found the following Feb. 1947 post office document referencing in the section "Item 9: Office Furniture and Equipment", stamp vending machines. According to all the specialist literature, relying heavily on Collins' compilation of orders, there were no coil stamps orders after 1938...¹

REFERENCE
PT. 65/46/2
No.

CHIEF SECRETARY'S OFFICE
(Chief Clerk)
20 FEB 1947
TELEGRAMS, S. POSTS, JERUSALEM.
JERUSALEM

General Post Office.
Jerusalem.
19th February, 1947.

Chief Secretary,

Subject :- XXVII Posts and Telegraphs Application for Special Warrant No. 468 of 27. 1. 47 for LP20,800

Reference:- Your letter 2/45/27/45 of 13. 2. 47.

I furnish hereunder, as far as possible, further details regarding the factors necessitating the issue of the supplementary provision applied for :-

Item 8 Maintenance Stores

The expenditure is for the maintenance of departmental plant. The stores for this purpose are withdrawn mainly from the Unallocated Stores and the general increase in cost of stores cannot be specified or compared with previous consignments item by item as many and varied items of stores are affected.

I may, however, quote one or two items recently observed from advice of orders placed through the British Post Office and the Crown Agents, committed against the vote for maintenance stores:-

Bags canvas	80% increase
Calico	136% increase

The supplementary provision required in connection with these two items alone is LP1,730. In addition a further indent for LP1,930 was placed recently but I cannot at present state whether delivery of this order will be effected during the current financial year. There is an average increase in the cost of engineering maintenance stores of 50% - 60%. I should like to point out that my original estimate was for LP41,155 which was reduced arbitrarily in Estimates Committee by LP4,155.

Item 9 Office Furniture and Equipment

Apart from the slight increases amounting to LP150 observed in the cost of stores ordered through the British Post Office and the Crown Agents, such as Scales and weights, clocks mechanical, extinguishers, wall letter boxes, pillar posting boxes, stamp vending machines and locks, the whole provision for part of the above stores costing LP978 was not included in this year's Estimates as indents were sent during the first quarter of 1945/46 and in the absence of advice of execution they were inadvertently omitted at the time the Estimates for 1946/47 were submitted.

? but this is not the furniture & Equip.

¹ See page 20 of this file: <https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/1102554>



Discoveries in Domestic Airmail of 1938-1940

בשונה ממה שכתוב בספרות המקצועית שירות הדואר האווירי המקומי של 1938 התקיים על פני יותר זמן, עד 1940, ונבע משיקולים של יעילות ולא של ביטחון; השירות האווירי היה תקף למכתבים אך לא לדברי דפוס ועיתונים, וכלל לא רק את חיפה ותל אביב אלא גם דואר מירושלים.

The Palestine Post, 17 November 1938

P6



Air Progress

It may not be generally known to the public that the experiment recently inaugurated of a **Palestine Airways** Service has already proved to be justified. At yesterday's meeting of the Rotary Club in Jerusalem Mr. Eliashar, a Director of the new enterprise, stated that in the first seven weeks of the operation of the new service a thousand passengers had been carried. The winter rains and winds have not deterred travellers, and additional facilities are already required to meet the demand on the young service. The railway has long been superseded by the road for most travellers; now it appears that the air route is to prove a strong competitor of the motor car. This is interesting, for it shows that not only over long distances, but even for short journeys the aeroplane is proving convenient and practical. The progress of Palestine will be along intensive lines in many directions, and its communications must follow suit. We cordially endorse the proposal for a civil landing-ground at Jerusalem, which today is virtually cut off from the air service.

There is another supplementary advantage of our own airways service. "**Palestine Airways Ltd.**" have entered into a contract with the Government for carrying our mail inside the country. This direct air service only applies to the Haifa-Tel Aviv route, but the mail from Jerusalem is also handed to the company at Tel Aviv Post Office daily. Not the least beneficial feature of this contract is that the public is not charged any extra postage on air-bound letters. This suggestion was made by the Company and the Postmaster-General, who showed every sympathy with the project, readily accepted it. Twice daily mail is carried between Tel Aviv and Haifa by air and reaches its destination in an hour. Jerusalem correspondence with Haifa also takes less time, and as another service is contemplated between the two ports, the whole mail transport between the principal centres will be speeded up. Now the company is negotiating for the carrying of mail from and to the Lebanon and Syria, and it is satisfactory to know that the Postmaster-General in Beirut is also willing to waive any surcharge for such mail. It will be carried once, and possibly twice, each day both ways. The Postmaster-General of Palestine and his Assistants are to be congratulated on their progressive outlook in taking full advantage of the latest facilities. It will no doubt have the effect of bringing other services into line with this up-to-date amenity. For it must be admitted that in some respects there is an unaccountable backwardness in transporting mail. For example, the letters which arrive by air from Warsaw at 11 a.m. at Lydda (having left Poland the previous day at 8 a.m.) are not taken to Tel Aviv until the next day when they are distributed at 5 p.m. They take 27 hours to reach Palestine from Poland, and 30 hours to reach Tel Aviv from Lydda. Letters between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem seldom reach the addressee in less than two days. Special circumstances are no doubt the cause of these strange jars in an otherwise smooth running machinery, but it ought not to prove beyond official ingenuity to remedy them.

New research shows that the domestic air mail service that existed in Palestine a) **lasted much longer than previously known**, and b) included not just mail between Tel Aviv and Haifa, but **also mail from Jerusalem**.

Until now we've been accustomed to reading that air mail service between Haifa and Tel Aviv existed from 28 Oct 1938; the mail was carried without any special surcharge – but the manner of the service was quite different to what appears in the literature and certain auction catalogues.

Sources such as Zvi Aloni's survey of airmail in Israel write that the domestic air mail service was launched as a result of the Arab Revolt (1936-1939) which affected transportation in Palestine²; the Bale Mandate catalogue implies that the service functioned for half a year, until May 1939³, while some philatelic dealers write that the service existed for less a month⁴ and that very few letters were carried.

The press archives reveal a different story.

The air mail service was published in the Hebrew and English press on various days, from 28 October 1938. The service was run by Palestine Airways between Tel Aviv and Haifa (and vice versa) using the Tel Aviv Municipal Air Port (i.e. Sde Dov) and the Haifa airport. The service was presented as an innovation similar to the period British "All Up" empire-wide airmail service run by Imperial Airways, whereby mail would be carried by air – without

surcharge – regardless of whether the sender had a preference for surface transport; air transport was simply more practical and economic in this period. Domestically the charge was 5 mils; internationally by "All Up" it was 10 mils.

² "Chapters in the Aerophilately of Eretz Israel", Page 90: https://www.erezmuseum.org.il/h/1/&mod=download&me_id=1186

³ Bale Palestine Mandate catalogue (2010) p.256

⁴ Example - TAS #42 lot 292: <https://telavivstamps.com/tel-aviv-stamps-auction-42-292-postmarks-jerusalem-lydda-tpo>

Less well known in our collecting community is an important aspect of the service that, as with the British "All Up" service, this domestic airmail service was valid only for "first class mail" (i.e. letters, registered mail; not printed matter, newspapers or bulk printed matter); all other type of mail continued to be transported by convoy between the two cities (and non-1st class Empire mail continued to be carried by surface mail) – and in any case there was no need for "air mail" etiquettes or routing instructions as the manner of transport was by default based on the type of mail being handled.

Of note, this air mail arrangement was not promoted and publicized by the Post Office to the general public: apart from the initial press releases, the arrangement was an established fact and default method of work for the postal service. No surcharge was required and no routing method needed to be indicated - as such, the few "first day" covers we sometimes see bearing an airmail etiquette are obviously philatelic as those stickers were entirely unnecessary, and this also helps explain why we won't be spotting domestic air mail covers in a pile of covers between the affected cities, because no such outward distinction was needed.

The Palestine Post, 30 October 1938 P2

← [icon] →

BY AIR MAIL TO HAIFA

TEL AVIV, Saturday. — Improved postal service between Tel Aviv and Haifa began yesterday when the Palestine Airways carried mail in accordance with their contract with the Government.

All first-class matter was sent by air at the ordinary rate.

It is expected that arrangements will be made during the week to have Jerusalem-Haifa mail also flown between Haifa and Tel Aviv.

The northbound airmail leaves Tel Aviv at 10.45 a.m. and 3.45 p.m. while south-bound mail leaves Haifa at 8.30 a.m. and 1.55 p.m. Until yesterday there was only one mail a day by convoy between the two towns.

All mail, other than first class matter, will be sent by convoy as hitherto.

In connection with their extended services, the Palestine Airways have engaged another Imperial Airways pilot, Captain Pentland, who arrived in Palestine on Wednesday and has already been pressed into service. A four motor, ten passenger monoplane has been ordered from England to augment the Palestine Airways fleet.

Also unknown in our community is that in early November 1938 (prior to the 6th) the service was expanded to include **Jerusalem**: first class mail to Haifa continued to be transported by convoy to Tel Aviv – but then it was transferred directly to the airline at its offices (i.e. it didn't go through the posts here) and was flown to Haifa (and vice versa).

Also of note, this was not a contract between the Mandate government and a private Zionist company: Palestine Airways had been taken over by the British Air Ministry already in 1937 so this arrangement was basically between governmental bodies.

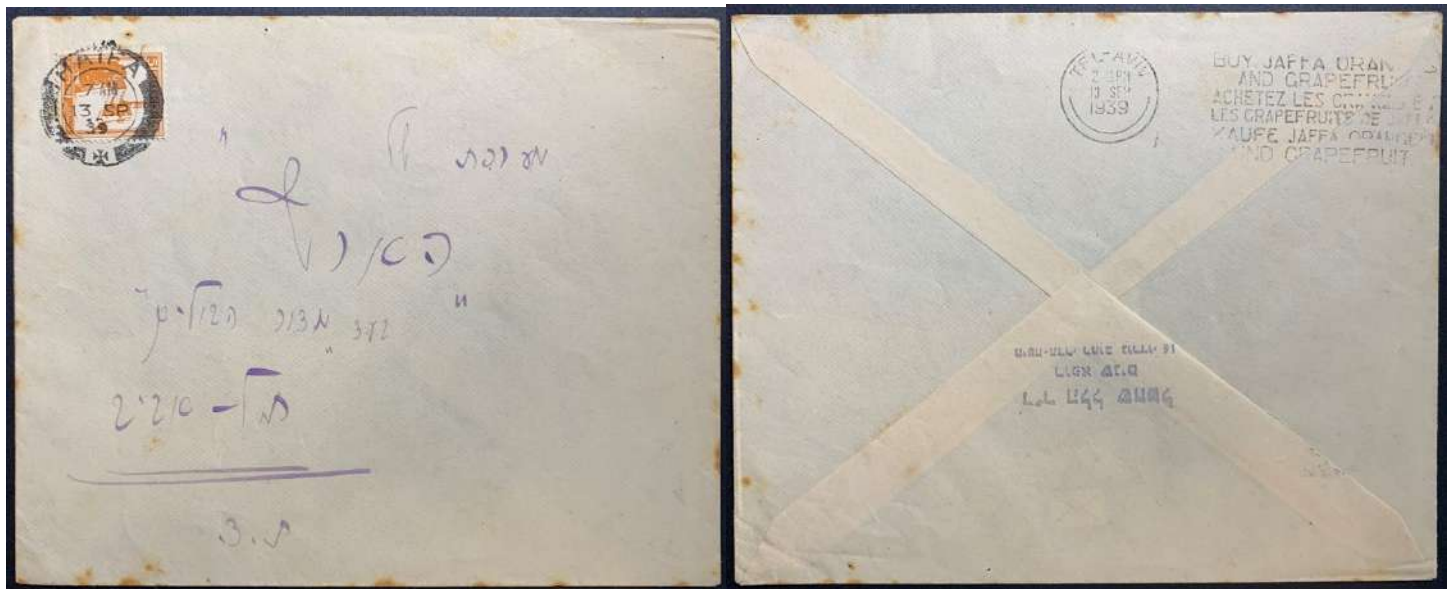
This arrangement was not the result of transportation problems arising from the Arab Revolt taking place at the time: the press reports focus on the effectiveness of domestic airmail and the enthusiastic support the Palestine Postmaster General gave to the initiative.

In addition, it appears that this air mail arrangement lasted until the demise of the airline around July-August 1940 (having lost its aircraft by repossession to the war effort). In other words domestic air mail existed for almost 2 years (one year before WWII and one year during the war).

Timetable: non first class mail was sent between Tel Aviv and Haifa (and vice versa) once a day by convoy; air mail was dispatched twice a day northwards from Tel Aviv (10:45 & 15:45) and twice a day southwards from Haifa (08:30 & 13:55). Already by 6 November the press was reporting 100kg of mail being transported daily between Tel Aviv and Haifa.

Nevertheless these covers are not that easy to come by nor do many of them bear same-day dispatch and arrival postmarks (see the issue of “unaccountable backwardness” in the article below - it seems to have persisted even here). I’d like to see a late fee domestic air mail cover... One big question is: how was mail to smaller locales routed by Tel Aviv and Haifa handled – were these also flown between the cities and then transported by surface? To be determined...

Here is a same-day domestic airmailed cover, from Haifa to Tel Aviv, posted on 13 Sept 1939 at 7am: it was taken on the 10:30 flight departing Haifa and arrived in TLV at 11:05 (as per the timetable), at the Palestine Airways office. From there it was transferred to the postal service where it was backstamped 2:15pm arrival. Oddly these same day dispatch/arrival covers are not so easy to find...



This is an example of an “air mail” etiquetted “1st day” cover – philatelic; several are known sent to the same addressee Hans Kaufmann in Tel Aviv on this day, all with etiquettes. Another “1st day” philatelic type – similarly labelled – is addressed from Tel Aviv to the Haifa stamp dealer, Hans Zirker.





Legalized Taxi Mail & the Hidden History of the Haifa Head Post Office in April-May 1948

מאמר פורץ דרך: בדיקת פריט דואר מחיפה לתל אביב בתקופת הביניים, עם ציון אופן משלוח דרך "טקסי קשר" (מגלה א) שמשרד הדואר הראשי בחיפה אכן עבר לניהול מנהלת העם ב-6 במאי 1948 כמתוכנן ולא ב-10 כפי שנכתב בספרות המקצועי; ב) שהיה תופעה באותה עת שדואר ממוען לדרום כולל ירושלים עבר מיון בתל אביב דווקא ולא בחיפה – הדואר הועבר לתל אביב מבלי שטופל בחיפה; ג) שהיה מחסור בכוח אדם ובמשאבים במשרד הראשי החיפאי באותה עת ושמאט דואר טופל שם בכלל, לרבות ריקון תיבות דואר על ידי מדור המיון; ד) שמוניות "קשר" הפעיל שירות קבלה ומשלוח דואר כנראה באישור הרשויות. תוך כדי נלמד על אופן ניטוב ומיון בדואר, באיזה מקרים דואר קיבל חותמות מעבר; שהיו חותמות רבות ברשות המשרד הראשי עם קום המדינה ולא רק אחד כפי שנהוג לחשוב. בדרך נעשה סדר באי דיוקים רבים ותפיסות שגויות במה שקשור לדואר לשעת חירום בנהריה וקבוצת השליחים החיפאי, בשיטות קינוס דואר בחיפה ובקשרי דואר ימי ואווירי פנימי באותה תקופה.



Synopsis (of a 30-page article): an examination of a simple-looking interim period cover postmarked at the Haifa head post office on 6 May 1948 reveals extraordinary findings. First, we learn that the Haifa head post office came under interim control as scheduled on 6 May – contrary to what has been written in several key books of specialized postal history literature. Second, by way of investigating an unusual “via Taxi Keshet” routing notation on that cover, we learn that there was a phenomenon of mail from northern Mandate Palestine / interim Israel that was sorted in the north but postmarked in the south, at Tel Aviv, without any sorting office or transit markings – this we glean by observing Nahariya “emergency mail” whose unusual instances as these are sometimes called mail “carried by taxi”, but why?

To understand that phenomenon we first learn how mail entered the posts and was processed, we further learn that some cornerstone information from first-hand sources is inaccurate and that we need to study matters from the bottom, up: we learn about the types of postal markings used by the public counters and sorting offices, and we learn about postal routes and handling which would explain when and why we would see these markings; we learn that mail of the Nahariya type that was postmarked in Tel Aviv entered the mails through the Haifa head post office; we also learn – by studying situations in which we should expect to see sorting office and routing marks – that from the Haifa HPO there was a marked decline in these markings from about mid-April 1948, indeed that the sorting office markings ceased completely around that time.

We factor in historical circumstances to get a better sense of what occurred in the city at that time, and how this may have affected postal operations. We then consider how postal operations were handled here as opposed to at head post offices in the rest of the country: by studying mail we see clear and overt signs that there was a backlog of work at Haifa and that various postal functions were either curtailed or stopped altogether. A byproduct of our study reveals that there were multiple postmark devices of the same type in use at the HPO during the Israeli postal administration.

Marshalling documentary evidence from press reports from the period we uncover that indeed there were staffing and service shortages specifically at Haifa; that taxi services had been contracted in the past by the Mandate for the transit of mail – but that here in April-May 1948 – there was a special connection between the Haifian postal service and the Taxi Keshet company, and that the use of external transport services to augment the nascent Israeli Haifa postal service continued well into 1948. We end with the case of a cover return addressed from Tel Aviv and addressed to Haifa – but postmarked in Haifa, and posit that this may be mail of the same taxi transported kind, sent in the reverse direction.

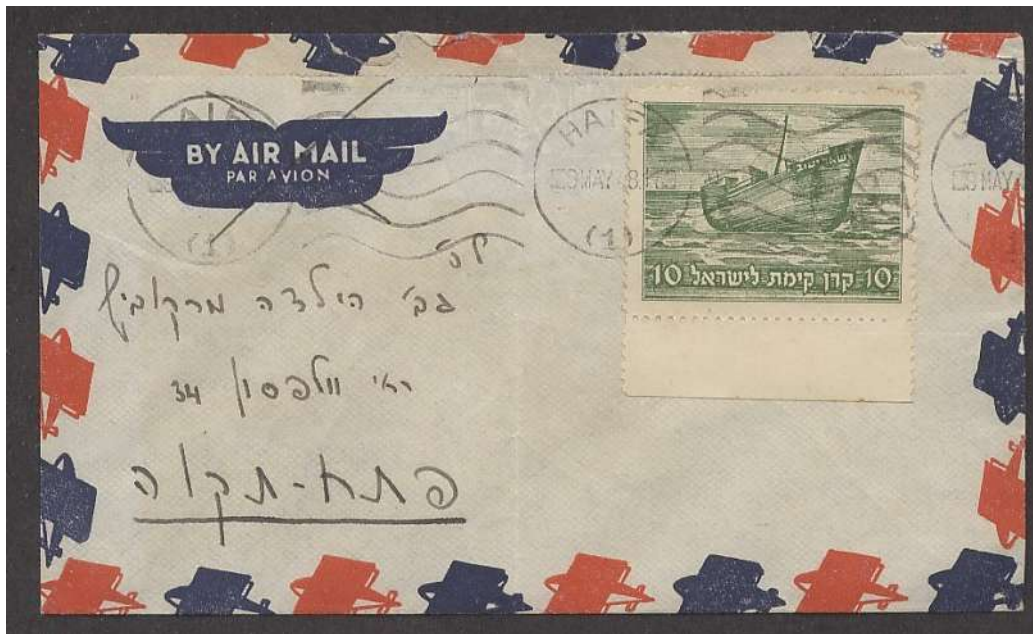
This article is an expose of remarkable discoveries I uncovered while researching what initially appeared to be a very specific, finite point, for the sole purpose of being precise in an item description. As often happens in the world of philately, something remarkable could exist under our noses and remain undetected for all time unless we're alert and spot it out. A fitting subtitle to this article would be that **everything is interesting if you examine it closely enough; everything has significance if you understand it well enough** - but you'd be surprised how many critical but seemingly mundane aspects of philately we see every day go by unexamined...

When did the Haifa Head Post Office become part of Minhelet Ha'am?

At first glance this cover looks unremarkable: typewritten, with an interim frank and Haifa machine cancel. I happened to unearth it because I got tangled in an unusual quandary trying to write the description for another cover: I was about to spice it up by writing – as an extra piece of trivia – that uniquely at Haifa the head post office remained under British control until Sunday 9 May 1948, 4 days past the scheduled date of Thursday May 6th for the transfer of the head post offices to the Minhelet Ha'am interim postal administration. It then occurred to me that this, **implicitly, made no sense – why should the HPO have continued existing independently under the Mandate for 4 more days, in a city liberated by Jewish forces two weeks earlier, as a parallel postal administration with Minhelet Ha'am which itself entered force on 2 May at the secondary towns and the city's branch offices?** – and, I asked myself, **where did I get that information from?** After all, the cover here was posted on May 6th with an interim stamp, and its sole sin is that it was postmarked by the Mandate machine cancel at the head post office.

I consulted Zvi Aloni's book on the interim period where it was written ("Postal Administrations of British Mandate, Minhelet Ha'am and Israel", pg. 52/211) that the HPO opened to the public on May 10th and operated for only 5 days during the interim period, until the 14th; in Shimony-Karpovsky-Aloni in the chapter on Nahariya emergency mail ("The Postal History of the Transition Period in Israel, 1948 – Part 2, Vol. II: The Emergency, Local and Private Postal Services", referenced in this article as 'TPHTPlp2v2', pg. 45) it was written that the head post office passed into Jewish control on May 10th, and the interim postal service began to operate there. Mystified still further I asked myself who originated the idea that the HPO was either closed before 10 May or not part of the interim postal service, and rolled on over to Ernst Fluri (1973 pg. 55/58) who wrote that the HPO was "re-opened to the public on 10th May 1948". I spent a solid day researching the press archives, which documented every esoteric detail of history in those days – and found nothing to back up the claim that the HPO had not passed into interim control on schedule.

I haven't been able to find an earlier source for this assertion but as we see on this cover the interim postal service actually operated from the 6th – on schedule – but simply lacked an interim cancelling device until the 10th, when it received a specially designed dateless canceller commonly called the "split oval" type. The image below shows an interim-franked cover tied by the same machine cancel on May 9th – evidence that the HPO was open and running also then (Sunday), and that mail was indeed being processed by the interim postal administration. The HPO never "re-opened" because it hadn't been closed down in the first place.



A 9 May 1948 postmarked cover from the Haifa HPO, with interim franking & Mandate machine cancel – Doron Waide auction 29, lot #80.

One practical outcome of this revelation is that it would appear to **overturn a position held by Ernst Fluri** (“Spurious Interim Material of Haifa”, BAPIP Bulletin #58, March 1958, quoted by Bruno Forscher in “The Interim Period Postage Stamps of Israel” p.117 – but not expressed so explicitly in Fluri’s 1973 book), **that the un-numbered HAIFA registry label of the HPO could not have been used on mail before 10 May** because the HPO was closed during the interim period prior to that date.

The lesson here is, other than being alert to empirical evidence, we have to always be thinking critically and asking ourselves “why?”

Unravelling a Mystery which begins with “Taxi Mail”

But that’s child’s play. Let’s discuss something more ground-breaking: at first glance nothing else about the headlined cover seems untoward... addressed to Tel Aviv and franked 10m for the period inland letter rate. Everything’s fine. There is a notation at the bottom about Taxi Keshet, but that’s probably where it’s addressed – or is it?

The notation is actually a routing request “via Taxi Keshet”: the sender addressed the cover to a specific person, a Dr. Oskar Jehoshua Gruenbaum at 101 Yehuda HeLevy Street – a well-known Austrian-Zionist activist in his time, and that’s his own address. Taxi Keshet’s address in Tel Aviv was at 33 Rothschild Street, between Allenby & Yavne streets. Taxi mail – the transport of letters by taxi – was illegal, and drivers heavily fined if caught; **this cover is both submitted in-person at the head post office and the sender is telling the post office to send it by taxi(!)** So what’s going on?



DRIVERS FINED FOR CARRYING LETTERS

Several drivers employed by transport agencies were yesterday brought before the Jerusalem Magistrate, Hassan Eff. Makawi, on charges of contravening the Post Office Ordinance by carrying letters and parcels from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv and Jaffa.

Ernest Brenner, a driver of the "Zion" Taxi Service Company, and Mohammed Tayasir, of the National Bus Company, pleaded guilty to charges, the first of carrying two letters, and the second of carrying two letters and two parcels; they were sentenced to fines of 750 mils and LP.1.- respectively, and warned that the sentence would be increased if they were caught again.

Moshe Bibi and S. Zachs, drivers of the "Aviv" Taxi Service, were tried in two separate cases on similar charges but their cases, and that of "Egged" drivers also on trial have been adjourned.

Police Inspector Gordon prosecuted, and Mr. A. Levitsky appeared for the "Aviv" drivers.



TAXI COMPANY FINED FOR CARRYING MAILS

TEL AVIV, Wednesday. —For the first time, the managers of a transport company were fined today for permitting mail to be in their taxis. Up to now, the driver had always been brought to Court.

Joseph Kapellner and Alfred Kronwill of the Management of the Keshar Taxi Cooperative were fined LP.3 and LP.4. respectively, because their taxis had transported mail from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

The case was heard by the Magistrate, Mr. Kantorovitch. Inspector Ben Ephraim appeared for the prosecution.

DRIVERS AGAIN FINED FOR CARRYING LETTERS

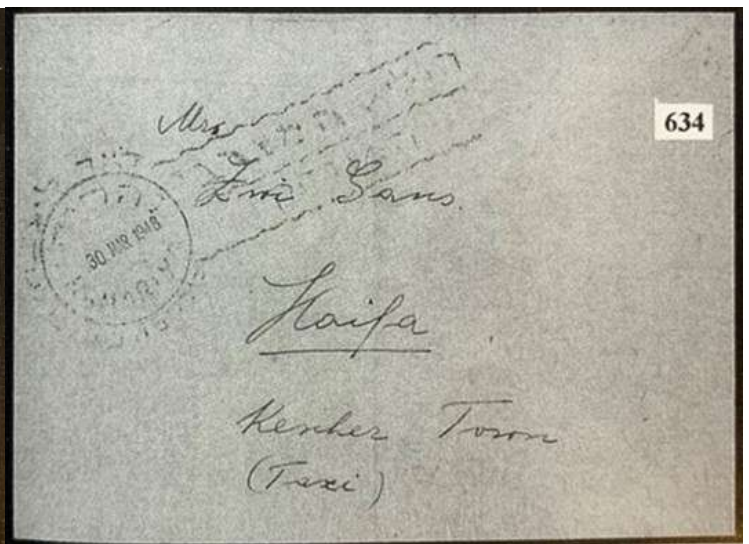
Fines to a total of LP.1,200 were yesterday imposed by the Jerusalem Magistrate, Mr. M. Landau, on drivers who carried letters from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Tibori Label was fined 900 mils for carrying three letters and Benzion Kastini, 300 mils, for carrying two letters addressed to *The Palestine Post*. Both pleaded guilty. Mr. A. Levitsky, for the accused, said that negotiations had taken place with the authorities in connection with the carrying of letters between the cities. An express postal service of this kind was most essential for the public.

Nahariya Emergency Mail as a Methodology

To understand this, I propose we take a look at an example contemporary to this cover – surprisingly, Nahariya sea-transported emergency mail, as it provides a clue to this puzzle. The company "Taxi Keshar" specifically appears frequently in the annals of Nahariya emergency mail of this period, usually as an occasional paid-for service within Haifa; some mail is also addressed directly to it, in Haifa and Tivon in this period.

Here too, a number of Nahariya covers are known cancelled in Tel Aviv without any Haifa postal markings and one AIEP-certified dealer (I try to be discreet) describes these as having been "carried by taxi" - though lacking any such markings, and the dealer providing no evidence to back up his claim: nevertheless roll with this, you'll soon see why.





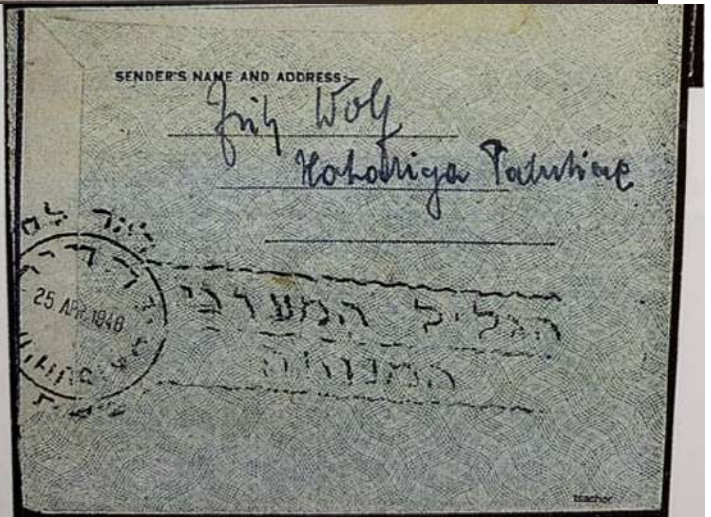
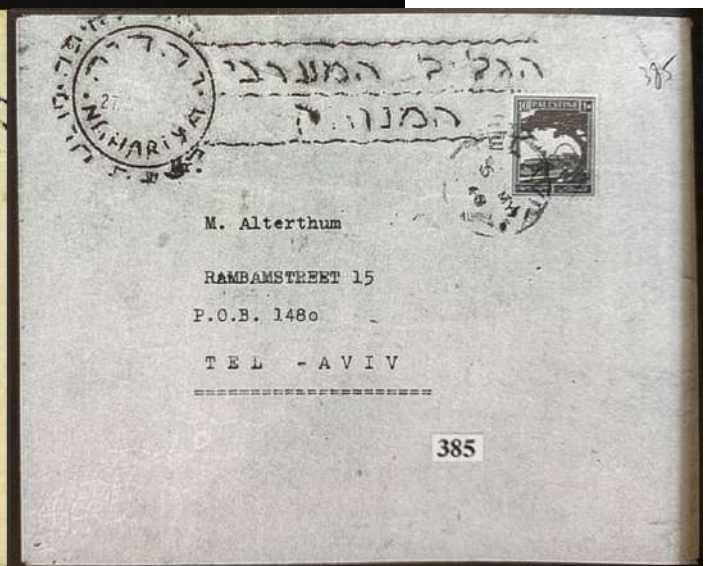
Covers carried privately by Taxi Keshet [top, left] or addressed to its offices and sent through the mails; TAS #32-877, #T35-634, #45-145.

The Nahariya emergency sea-mail service, which ran from March-May 1948, was a privately run service which accumulated mail from besieged Nahariya and sent it by sea to Haifa in exchange for a surcharge; incoming mail was similarly carried also in exchange for a surcharge. The average transit time, from dispatch to transit-receipt, in either direction was 3-4 days. The benefit of studying specifically Nahariya mail for this inquiry is that her emergency service, which employed special slogan cachets, provides us both with dispatch dates as well as transit-arrival dates (something we usually have the benefit of seeing only on registered mail): the special slogan cachets served only as postmarks for the purpose of collecting fees for the use of the mail service, thus leaving the franking initially untouched until cancelled by the receiving post office which entered the mail into the posts - either at Haifa or as we shall see, also Tel Aviv; from 6 May when the Nahariya post office received its own interim cancelling device, this mail was then cancelled locally in Nahariya and we no longer see the effect I want to focus on.

Bypassing the Haifa Head Post Office - The Tel Aviv Connection

Based on a study and census of mail sent from Nahariya in April-May 1948 it seems that mail posted at Nahariya from April 23rd to addresses in Tel Aviv or nearby towns - even Jerusalem - was withheld and the franks were subsequently cancelled in Tel Aviv in almost all cases by a device dated May 5th⁵, bypassing the Haifa HPO; prior to the 23rd the mail was postmarked at the Haifa HPO, and in any case if the address was outside Haifa but north of Tel Aviv, like Givat Brenner (in the center of the country), or addressed abroad - then the cover was also postmarked in Haifa (though also observed with Tel Aviv postmarking - depending on the situation at Lydda airfield which closed on April 25th while Haifa airport took over in its stead). As of now the latest dated postmarked cover I've seen with a [5 May] Tel Aviv cancel is from 27 April. Of a population sample of mail displayed in Shimony-Karpovsky-Aloni, Zvi Aloni's own book, Yaakov Tsachor's auction catalogues (photo-credited here as TAS) and my own inventory I find no less than 12 covers with Tel Aviv cancellations in the dispatch period of 23-27 April - a significant and surprisingly large sample population for mail (emergency mail) which in principle is deemed scarce.

⁵ I phrased the expression "device dated May 5th" deliberately in passive voice to place emphasis on the device being dated such and not the mail being cancelled that date because at the Tel Aviv HPO during the interim period (6-14 May) "frozen-dated" Mandate postmarks were used to indicate that mail had passed through the HPO - and these were fixed-dated May 5th (the last day of the Mandate postal administration at the HPO), although they may have been used any time later during the interim period. As such, a 5 May cancellation does not necessarily mean that these covers were cancelled on that specific date (**and most likely they were not**) - they could have been cancelled any time between 5-14 May (on the last day of the Mandate service, 5 May, or anytime subsequently during the interim administration).



At top the latest observed postmarked date of 22 April of mail for Tel Aviv cancelled still in Haifa on the 26th - TAS #T40-52; middle row: at left, the earliest observed postmarked date of 23 April of Nahariya mail, for Kfar Sava, subsequently cancelled in Tel Aviv on "5 May" & bearing the interim dateless postmark - TAS #42-377; at right, the latest observed postmarked date of 27 April, for Tel Aviv and cancelled there on "5 May" - TAS #31-385; bottom row: 25 April postmarked air mail cover to the US cancelled 26 April in Tel Aviv - TAS #37-64.

Now, why should that finding matter? To better appreciate it we need to be aware of how the postal system works and then to understand how the Nahariya mail service interacted with it.

Postmark Types Have Critical Meaning

Let's first review how mail enters the mail stream. Mail can enter the postal service in one of two ways: either by being deposited at the public counters or by being brought in through the 'back end' - in mail bags, as mail emptied from letter boxes or mail in transit, and subsequently being handled by a 'sorting department'. In the Mandate era, although certain classes of post offices sorted mail, special designated sorting offices existed only at the 'Head Post Offices' of the 4 major cities of Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa.

Each channel into the mail stream – public counter and back-office – marked the mail the processed in differing manners. The public counters used a double-ring cancelling device (with Maltese Cross at the base) whereas the sorting office used a plainer, simpler type with a single ring. The HPOs also had machine cancellers. Thanks to the acclaimed philatelist Jonathan Becker (Indiana, USA) who kindly replied to my questions, we have some important insights as to the location and use of these machines: these were typically in the work area behind the public counters and were used to process quantities of mail coming from mail carriers, boxes, stacks of mail from walk-in customers; a single letter handed to a clerk might receive a hand stamp at the counter or at times of heavy traffic get set aside for machine (or hand) canceling later, with other collected mail. The public would never have access to the machines - or seldom even see them from a distance in most offices. And from what we can observe on Mandate mail as well as foreign mail, machine cancels were rarely used here as [sorting office] transit marks (unlike in some other countries), but rather to cancel franking. From this we can infer that although the cancellation machines may have served both the public counters as well as the sorting office as a shared resource, these were overwhelmingly used for the mass cancellation of mail brought in through the public counters. As such, as we will see, these are not markings of the sorting office.

Having understood in broad strokes how the postal system worked, we can now turn to the operation of the Nahariya emergency mail service to see how it interacted with it. As is often the case, objects with which we have frequent contact are not necessarily objects which we understand with any great depth (as in the case of machine cancels). Here too, with the published research of the Nahariya mail service we don't really know exactly how that post entered the mail stream – this is a learning point, again emphasizing the need to be precise in our understanding of things. Consider what we learn from Shimony-Karpovsky-Aloni – and take note of the details: on page 18 we learn that letters from Nahariya were delivered to Haifa harbor and then taken to the office of a Nahariya resident, Shaul Finzi, who worked in the Hadar HaCarmel neighborhood; he would take the mail to the "Mandate Post Office" where they were cancelled and entered the postal system (a simple reading would suggest that the mail was handed into the Hadar HaCarmel branch post office). On page 20 we're told that the initial consignment of mail was addressed to Finzi, who posted it at the Hadar HaCarmel branch post office on HeHalutz Street, and on page 21 we're told that mail from this service "was posted at the Haifa Post Offices". My point is, in the narrative the mail's point of entry into the mail stream keeps changing – was the mail deposited at numerous post offices or at one specific place? Was it always brought in through the public counter or was it bagged? From what I've seen for this research the mail was handed in at the Haifa Head Post Office; of mail with the rare 1st Slogan cachet (i.e. the initial consignment alluded to above) I also see only postmarks of the HPO and not of the Hadar HaCarmel branch office – branch offices had their own unique postmarks bearing their name. And the referenced article here (and auction catalogues elsewhere) does not illustrate any covers addressed to Shaul Finzi. I say this not out of criticism of the article but rather to re-emphasize that we should always be thinking and re-thinking, checking and re-checking; accuracy and precision are paramount to understanding postal history, one misstep and we risk misunderstanding a complete idea. Not everything that has been recollected or written down is necessarily correct (see the footnote on Finzi below, on page 49 of this bulletin). We have to approach the empirical evidence too and see what it reveals to us.*

* SIDESHOW: A Lesson in Thinking Critically - and Being Released from Dependence on "Personal Recollections"

Of the estimated 14 known covers bearing Nahariya's rare 1st Slogan cachet, existing with 2 different time stamps on 22 March 1948 - between TAS auction catalogues #39-49, the cited article above & Daryl Kibble's displayed cover in his book – 8 items in all, none bear Finzi's address, and between them we have examples of mail from both consignments sent that first day of operation.

I don't say this lightly, recollections can be erroneous: if we cast a glance at emergency mail services contemporary to Nahariya's, like the inner-city "Haifa Messengers" delivery service we find its founder, adv. Israel Amikam, writing already in 1951 that over a period of around 100 days between Feb-May 1948 his circuit's 9-11 collection stations and 4 drivers – through increasing tumult and turbulence, and the death of one driver - carried 35,000 pieces of mail.

How can we quantify “35,000”? That’s the about the equivalent (and possibly more) of all the transatlantic mail carried by the emergency ‘PEDI’ (“Palestine Emergency Deliveries Inc.”) private air mail service run by the Jewish Agency from the US, as air freight, between May-July 1948 – the only airmail link from the US to Israel until postal relations were renewed in late-June; 25,776 mail items are serial numbered to the end of June + whatever else was posted unmarked throughout July (source: IFPL p.94).

We need to see this figure, alleged and recorded, of 35,000 in proportion to the population sizes: Haifa numbered 145,000 residents in 1947 (declining to c.98,000 by Feb-May 1948, of which 83,000 Jews as of April per Palestine Post report of 12 Nov. 1948 p.5), while America’s population that same year was 100x times that (ref: “Haifa” on Wikipedia & US data on countryeconomy.com).

Amikam’s estimate is likely – highly – over-estimated. Press reports from 1951 (‘Herut’ newspaper of 18 April 1951, p.4), quoting Amikam’s then recently published monogram on the Messengers service, mention a monthly income per driver of 20 Pounds; Shimony-Karpovsky-Aloni (p.226) give a monthly income figure per driver of 70 Pounds: the average annual income per capita among the Jewish community in Palestine for 1947, before the War began, was 63.27 Pounds – 5.8 Pounds a month (Angus Maddison in “The World Economy” p.211), making both the quoted messenger salaries highly unlikely.

If the circuit’s participating stations kept changing owing to storekeeper “complaints” that the service was “interfering with business” – even with their receiving 10% of the turnover – and Arab attacks limiting and restricting both the service’s operations as well as its customers’ (p.225-226), it seems the service was not as large or profitable as suggested. And in light of the market values for standard non-1st Flight PEDI mail running between \$30-60 a cover versus \$300-5,000 (yes, with three zeros) for a Haifa Messengers cover, the actual quantity of mail it carried is probably closer to a tenth or even a fifth of Amikam’s estimate.

For this we can compare it to the contemporary Rishon Le Zion armored car mail service, who with all the publicity its 12,000 stamps received in the press - according to a census of existing covers – carried between 1500-2000 letters, of which only 10 are deemed genuine commercial covers (Shimony-Karpovsky-Aloni p.103). In short, we need to research everything from the bottom up in order to understand our postal history.

Establishing a Conceptual Baseline for Understanding Nahariya Mail

Now, having established that the Nahariya mail was mostly/exclusively handed in to the public counters we can better appreciate the significance of the postmarks that we see on that mail: of the 50+ mail items I observed, with the exception of one, all the Haifa-marked mail was cancelled either by the HPO’s double-ring canceller or by the machine cancel. In other words, the mail was either cancelled on the spot by the clerk or set aside by him during rush-hour and cancelled later en-masse by machine. Of the single item with a different Haifa postmark, this is the single-circle canceller of the sorting office, dated 15 April – the latest dated cancel of this type that I have seen on any Haifa mail at all (not just the Nahariya mail).



TAS #42-376: an 11 April postmarked postcard cancelled by the Haifa sorting office on 15 April – **the latest dated such cancel that I have seen** and one of the very few observed in this period on any Haifa mail. This is likely device GD #31 with un-parallel bars on the ‘H’ and an extended ‘F’.

This is an extraordinary observation. In this specific instance it may be that the consignment of Nahariya mail this postcard was part of was uniquely added to a bag of mail; perhaps it was the only item from Nahariya that day and for convenience

the carrier of that mail was allowed to insert it into a mail bag. What we have to appreciate is the consequence of this finding: the mail we learned about above, which was segregated into mail addressed to locales in the north as opposed to those addressed to the south, which was retained and cancelled in Haifa, passed some kind of sorting process – but the Haifa mail continued to be marked by double-ring and machine cancels of the public counters whereas the Tel Aviv bound mail was not cancelled by the Haifa HPO's sorting office or public counter and transited but rather it was skipped over and transited – and cancelled in Tel Aviv by the sorting office there instead. As we know about the operation of the Nahariya mail service there was no direct link to Tel Aviv, it had to go to Haifa first – so what happened?

The Sorting Function as the Source of the Mystery

I want to propose two ideas: 1) sometime close to 15 April the sorting office cancellers were decommissioned and removed, and moreover 2) around this same time the operation of the sorting office was severely curtailed. By contrast, and although serving as routing and arrival markings, the Haifa REGISTRATION postmarks of the registry department were not decommissioned, as we continue seeing these in use through to mid-May – but these are rarely seen in the period of mid-April to mid-May, and this observation will be addressed further down.

Regardless of how other mail may have (or not) been sorted at the Haifa HPO prior to 23 April, from that date on when we begin seeing the Tel Aviv sorting office's postmark cancelling Nahariya mail, I believe that the mail was sorted by the clerks at the public counter and that whatever was relevant for transit in the northern part of the country was cancelled by them (on the spot or thereafter by machine) or set aside uncanceled as south-bound mail and entered into mail bags for transfer to Tel Aviv.

Factoring in Historical Circumstances

Certain historical circumstances may help explain what happened to mail service in general and the Haifa HPO specifically at this time. Broadly, in the background there was the scheduled winding-down of the Mandate postal service together with the growing intensity of armed conflict between Arabs and Jews: the postal wind-down began already in early 1948 reaching a critical period which began on Thursday April 15th with various limitations, from the closing of rural post offices to restrictions in mail dispatches in general; when handled clumsily or deliberately heavy-handedly and shortsightedly, the Jews termed this era of the Mandate government wind-down "Government Tohu Vavohu" ('chaos government'). In the specific period of April-May, there were problems with the function of the railway between Haifa and Rafah, with the service being suspended altogether on the 12th; transport arteries were affected by the British evacuation for the termination of the Mandate as well as by military attacks, to the point where by April 18th letters to the editor in newspapers were suggesting use of private transport companies to carry mail. The period press reports are replete with examples, and the following notices from Jerusalem merely convey the atmosphere as it existed nationwide:

The Palestine Post, 10 March 1948 P1

Postal Services Curtailed In Jerusalem Jewish Sectors Cut Off

The Jewish sectors of Jerusalem have been cut off postally, the Post Office announced last night, as a result of the theft of six postal vans by the I.Z.L. on Monday.

Until the vans are returned, there will be no repair, transfer, removal or installation of telephones in the Jewish sectors, and all engineering services have been stopped. Vans will not be sent to clear letters from the collection boxes, it was revealed, because the Post Office "fears they may be stolen" as well.

Mail received at the Main Post Office will not be distributed to the branch offices in Rehavia, Mahne Yehuda and Mea Shearim, nor will mail be collected from these offices. Dead letters will remain "dead" until the vehicles are returned, it was reported, not as punishment, but because it was "physically impossible" to carry on. Asked whether postal services in the Arab sectors had been similarly cut following the theft of two vans by Arabs last week, the Post Office last night said that the stolen vehicles were not vans, but station wagons, and that one had already been returned.

A spokesman said that to use the remaining vans and stagger collections by collecting in the Arab and Jewish sections respectively on alternate days would be "impractical."

The Palestine Post, 1 April 1948 P3

MAIL SERVICES LIMP AGAIN

Letters were not accepted at Branch Post Offices in the Jewish Quarters of Jerusalem yesterday. Mail was collected from boxes, however, and taken on foot to the Main Post Office. Telegrams and money orders were accepted.

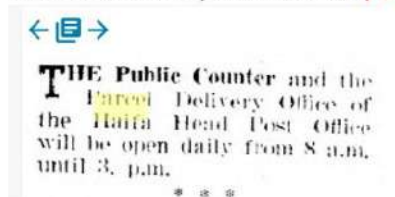
The partial breakdown in service was attributed by the Post Office to the theft of batteries from three of its vans in the Mahne Yehuda garage on Monday night. The batteries could not be replaced, the Post Office claimed, and unless they are returned the vans may not be put back into service.

The military/security situation in Haifa, between Jews and Arabs, dangerous already as far back as January and affecting the operation of the HPO as well (causing it to close and re-open), came to a head with the sudden withdrawal of British troops from Haifa between 18-20 April and the launch of the Battle of Haifa by pre-State Jewish forces on 21-22 April. This was followed by martial law, restricted zones and mopping-up operations – all affecting the movement of people and traffic in the city - which lasted from the 23rd until 4 May; the main road between Haifa and Tel Aviv was reopened to public transport on May 5th. As such, for almost two full weeks the city and transport around it was in turmoil.

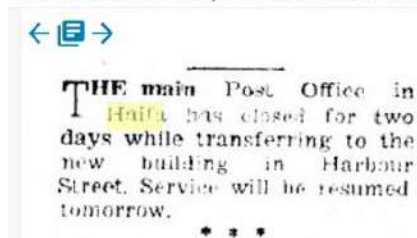
There was also an 8 day period of the Passover/Hol MaMoed holiday, running from Sabbath/holiday eve on Friday 23 April until Saturday 1 May, with Thursday the 29th also being holiday eve for the 7th Day of Passover; Orthodox Jews would not have taken pen to paper and in religious areas the post offices would have been shut throughout.

Press reports from the period ('HaTzofe' newspaper of 14 May, p.2) mention that on the eve of Independence (14 May) the national postal service numbered 3,868 employees – of whom 75% were Arab, "mostly employed in transport and workshops"; indeed there were whole professions in the service whose staffers were either mostly Jewish or Arab, and in some cases as in Jerusalem – in this period of "civil war" - whole floors of the HPO were staffed either by one or the other ethnic/religious group and they avoided contact with each other. The 'Herut' newspaper of 18 April 1951 ("The Private Mail Service of Haifa" about the Haifa Messengers service, p.4) describes a work environment at Haifa in the period of Jan-Apr 1948 in which Arab postal workers didn't come to work for days at a time while others eavesdropped on Jewish telephone communications or stole mail intended for Jewish neighborhoods. The military operation in Haifa caused a mass exodus of Arabs from the city, and though followed by an appeal for Arabs to return, assuredly affected the operation of businesses and offices in the city. For any of these reasons functions of the HPO, like the sorting office, may have been affected.

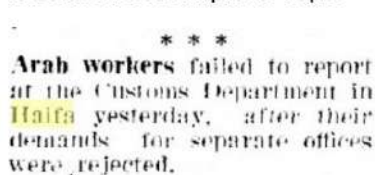
The Palestine Post, 14 March 1948 P3



The Palestine Post, 31 March 1948 P3



Palestine Post 14 April 1948 p.3



מספר העובדים
חבר העובדים המשרת כיום את מחלקת הדואר, הטלגרף והטלפון הוא בסך הכל 3,868
מזה כ-75% ערבים. רוב הערבים עסוקים בתנועה ובבתי המלאכה אך במחלקת ההנדסה מהווים היהודים מ-40%—50% ובעמדות הגר בוחות ביותר. עם העברת השירות של הדואר, הטלגרף והטלפון לרשות יהודית, נצטרך לנקוט בצו הלאומי היסודי: כל המקצועות והשחורים והפשוטים ביותר ועד העליונים והמקצועיים — לרשותו המלאה של העובד היהודי!
אין לדעת כיום באיזה מידה נוכל לקיים את שרות הטלגרף והטלפון הבינלאומי. ידוע לבס שאנו עומדים להקים תחנת ראדיו-טל-גראף וטלפון וע"כ נף לפתור את הבעיה.

Empirical Evidence from Examined Mail

As we will see the consequence of these events is visible on Haifa mail: a marked lack of Mandate postmarks at the HPO - as if either a function or a sorting activity was curtailed; and unusual processing times for mail - suggesting that there was backlog or logistical problems.

Here, even from the sample population of observed Nahariya mail we see something odd: two covers addressed no less to the same person, dispatched on the same day (25 April) – but processed in Haifa several days later (the standard transit

time was 3-4 days at most), and days apart from one another; one (at left) on 2 May and another (at right) on 4 May (reference: TAS #T35-638 & #44-173):



To make sense of these observations we need to understand when and why we would see postal markings of the HPOs on mail – for this we need to understand how mail was routed (and sorted), and for that we need a conceptual map of how the various national post offices interacted with one another:

Understanding the Interaction of Post Offices and Mail Routings

The country had 4 main cities – Jerusalem, Jaffa, Tel Aviv and Haifa, and each of these had a ‘Head Post Office’ which acted as an ‘international office of exchange’, functioning 12-14 hours a day every day of the week (except Tel Aviv, which closed on Saturdays; as per the press notice above, in Haifa the times were curtailed to 7 hours from 31 March), offering all of the available postal services and including various specialized departments such as the money order and registry departments, and ‘Sorting Offices’; at these cities there were subordinate ‘branch post offices’, which operated according to the same hours as the HPOs - but did not handle delivery services. Outside the 4 major cities there were smaller ‘Post Offices’ and ‘Class B’ postal agencies, which offered all the postal services (the latter being all delivery offices) but operated on a shorter schedule of 6 days a week – the former for 7 hours and the latter for 4; ‘Town Agencies’ existed only in Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem, and operated the same hours as ‘Post Offices’, though offering more limited services and only sometimes serving as delivery offices; and ‘Class C’ postal agencies operated for only 2 hours a day and offered a more limited range of postal services. These 4 latter classes of post offices took one day off a week in accordance to the tradition of the locale they served – Fridays in Moslem areas, Saturdays in Jewish areas, and Sundays in Christian areas. The larger of the secondary post offices maintained cancelling devices for both over the counter as well as transit/arrival markings and even special dateless cancels for bulk mail.

During the interim period of 2-14 May, with Jerusalem and Jaffa under siege, the areas controlled by the Jewish-run interim administration divided postal operations into the Northern region overseen by the Haifa HPO and the Southern region overseen by the Tel Aviv HPO (sources: Dorfman p.10 & original post office document in Aloni p.144-5).

Here we have a rough outline of the constellation of post offices that operated in the country, and their hierarchy and functions (or lack thereof) in turn created the system by which mail was transported within the country or into/out from it.

As a basic rule of thumb ordinary domestic mail (unregistered etc.) - letter or printed matter - passed through the posts without additional markings to the original postmark of the dispatching office. That said, there are periods in Mandate postal history where such mail was consistently stamped with routing and arrival marks and this is seen specifically in the era of the Great Arab Revolt, from the mid-1930s to 1939 - possibly as a way of allaying fears that mail was going missing; we also see such markings on mail of the domestic air mail service between Tel Aviv and Haifa of late 1938-1939.

Nevertheless this is technically unusual on ordinary mail and these additional markings are precisely what give added value to registered mail service - the requirement for that mail to be monitored and tracked along its journey. With this type of mail we can learn very specific procedures by which mail was sorted and routed:

Most fundamentally any incoming or outgoing international mail had to be handled by the HPO; it could originate from any locale but its journey into the country or out from it had to be through one of the HPOs. As such, at a minimum we should see the oval postmarks of the registry division serving as transit or arrival marks on this type of mail. Here we can see a variety of postmark combinations: for instance mail carried by rail, if outbound, would be stamped by the HPO and then by the relevant traveling post office (TPO) postmark; air mail at various periods was dispatched and received at Gaza, Haifa, Tel Aviv and Lydda from where it would be routed by the HPO servicing that airport – though specifically at Lydda, which had a registry division of its own, we would see its oval registry postmark followed by another of the HPO serving the region to which that mail was addressed. In other cases involving pure road transport we would see incoming mail handled at the initial HPO servicing that route followed by any other HPO handling the mail in domestic transit; the mail could be subsequently marked by additional post offices (in descending order of their size/classification) along the distribution route – or not at all, if the destination address was handled in the proximity of the last HPO handling the mail.

With regards to domestic registered mail we see a number of patterns: within the 4 major cities, if mail was sent from a post office which was also responsible for the area of the delivery address (eg. the mail was sent to addresses handled by the same post office), it was not backstamped; if mail was sent to an area handled by a different branch office then we would see that branch office's backstamp as an arrival mark. Registered mail sent between locales in the same region was not routed via an HPO, such as mail from Rosh Pinna to Tiberias (TAS #49-134) or Kfar Yona (class C PA) to Netanya (PO; TAS #46-173) or Kiryat Motzkin (PO) to Kiryat Hayim (PO; TAS #45-171). Registered mail from large towns to small ones (and vice versa) could have transited secondary cities along the route, for instance mail from Tarshiha (class B PA) to Haifa (HPO) routed via Acre (PO; TAS #49-139) or June 1948 Safed (PO) to Haifa (HPO) routed via Rosh Pinna (PO; TAS #45-153). Mail from one region to another would transit via the HPO servicing the region/s, for example mail from Hijaz Street (TA) in Haifa to Jerusalem went via the Haifa HPO and onto the Jerusalem HPO (TAS #44-169).

In some cases, seen especially during the interim period, mail from one locale to another transiting an HPO may not have received an arrival marking, such as examples of mail from Kfar Sirkin (class C PA) to Givatayim bearing a Tel Aviv transit marking but none at the destination (TAS #46-172) or mail from Rishon LeZion to besieged Jerusalem bearing a Tel Aviv transit marking but none at Jerusalem (TAS #46-193) – in these two instance (plus most others) the Tel Aviv transit marking was effected using a 'frozen dated' Mandate era registry or sorting office canceller serving as evidence the mail had passed through that HPO.

Focusing on the Role of HPOs in April-May 1948 Mail Routings

Nevertheless, from mid-April we see almost no instances of the Haifa HPO's sorting office marking any kind of mail, and specifically in the interim period we see virtually no cases of the HPO backstamping registered mail coming from other areas of the city – either with Registry or sorting office markings; we only see branch office backstamps. Likewise with mail to or from other locales: we see many instances of branch office backstamps, but almost none with Haifa HPO backstamps.



A typical interim period registered cover to Haifa: posted from Petach Tikva, but not backstamped by the Haifa HPO in transit but rather only by the receiving post office, here as per the deformity and the street address, the Hadar HaCarmel branch office.

By contrast – virtually overnight – from the first day of the Israeli postal administration, Sunday 16 May, we begin seeing Haifa HPO transit and arrival markings: TAS #44-511 (reverse unillustrated) describes an Israeli 16 May Haifa arrival marking on an interim registered cover from Alonim; and in a more egregious case, (TAS #39-80 – reverse unillustrated) on an interim era registered cover from Tel Aviv to Safed, there is no Haifa HPO transit marking but there is one from Rosh Pinna – nevertheless, on its return back to sender (as the addressee was unknown) there is an Israeli Haifa transit marking.

What could have affected the processing of mail at the Haifa HPO at this time? To understand that we need to get a better sense of how mail was handled at the other HPOs from about mid-April 1948 when the Mandate postal service started to wind down, and see if something unusual occurred specifically at Haifa:

in Jaffa precisely at this time, the city was under siege by Jewish forces and the status of its HPO is unclear; in Jerusalem the public counters and the processing of mail ceased around the 27th of April; we see from the mail shown above and cases in general that at the Tel Aviv HPO postal functions continued normally until May 6th, when the interim postal administration took over. At Haifa we see that the sorting and registry departments mostly stopped marking (and possibly also processing) mail sometime around 15 April...

...but in the interim period of 6-14 May, when the HPOs came under the control of the interim administration, do we know anything about the function of the sorting offices? This is a question that I haven't seen posed for some 70 years in our literature.

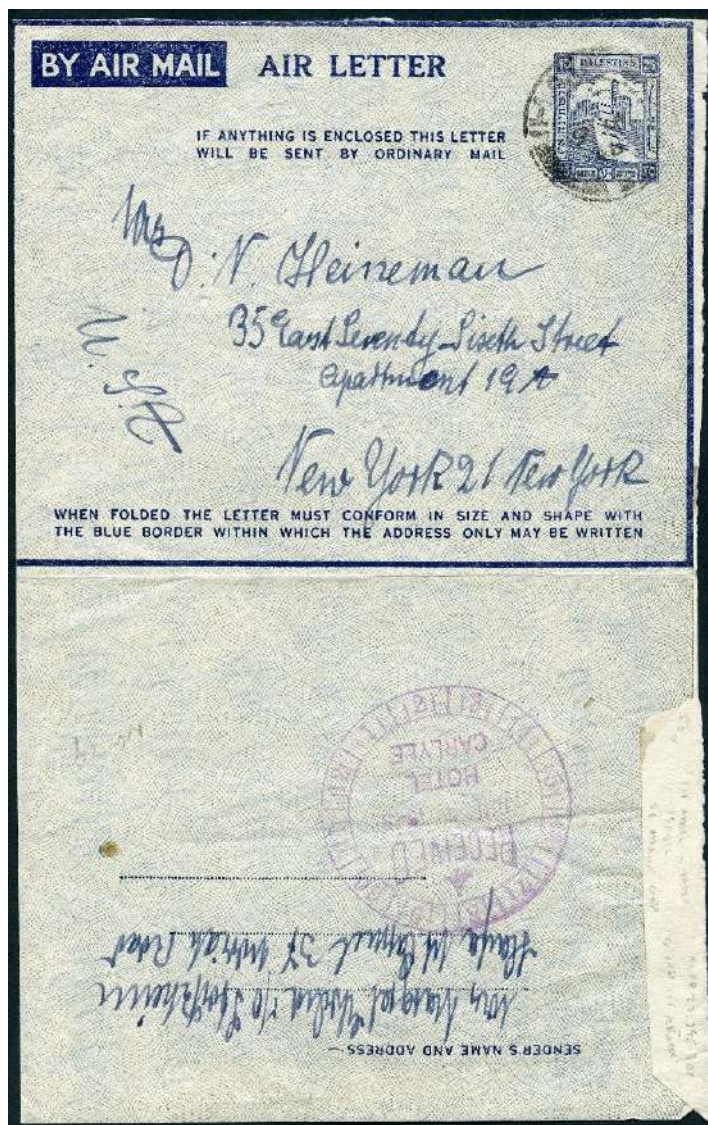
Jaffa, still being under Arab control at this time, was not part of the interim postal administration so that settles the question of the Jaffa HPO. In Jerusalem postal operations ceased completely between 27 April and 8 May, resuming partially on the 9th under the aegis of the interim administration. Per Aloni (p.212) "The sorting office that was in the Main Post Office had to be moved to a more secure location amidst the Jewish districts... on the verge of Rehavia and the City Center. On the first few days between 9 & 12 May a single circle Mandate postmark was used in the sorting office to process mail found in the mailboxes around the city, that was deposited between April 26 and May 9"; a special interim-styled canceller with rosette devices came into use thereafter on the 13th – this means that the mail in the letter boxes sat untouched for exactly 2 weeks before an organized sorting function got established.

On this point, I just want to momentarily address a disingenuous comment that I've seen before in the specialist literature, to the effect that this rosette postmark is extremely rare as a canceller on registered mail: taking into account what we learned about mail markings above, quite clearly we shouldn't expect to see any sorting office postmark cancelling franks on registered mail - implying that the cover was deposited into a mail box rather than at a public counter - because that defies the whole purpose of using registered mail, which is to receive in-person a postmarked receipt slip confirming the dispatch of that article of mail(!) If entered into a letter box, the sender obviously receives no proof of dispatch - so what's the point of [spending extra money and] sending the mail registered?

Examining Postal Activity at Haifa HPO by Way of Postal Markings

But what about Haifa (and Tel Aviv)? No special interim period sorting office markings are known for either city, so we have to study their use of Mandate devices as auxiliary post office markings – were any available? Let's consider the absolute minimum circumstance where these may be seen: as per the interim period's postal regulations, mail destined abroad needed to be posted from the HPOs, franked with UPU complaint postage stamps (the Mandate stamps) and cancelled by UPU compliant postmark devices (those of the Mandate) - at a minimum, we should be able to observe this on mail of the period.

Although overseas mail in this period is very rare, at Tel Aviv these markings are observed but at Haifa it seems that their use at the public counters ended around 9 May. Below on the left (TAS #47-231) is an air-letter properly franked and cancelled on the 9th, but on the right (TAS #44-126) we only see Mandate franks: based on the application of the 'split ovals' dateless postmarks of the HPO we see a cover posted sometime between 10-14 May; though patriotically franked with interim stamps which are invalid for overseas postage, the sender or HPO correctly added the needed Mandate stamps to make this a UPU compliant cover for overseas mailing... but then the HPO undercut this effort by epileptically cancelling the stamps with its UPU non-compliant interim canceller. In such a specific instance, where absolute adherence to procedure was required, the HPO could not muster the necessary Mandate postmark to complete the task.



NOW, this is odd because the Haifa HPO actually still possessed the Mandate oval REGISTERED HAIFA device: although this is virtually unseen on mail of this period, this is the marking that should have been used to cancel the franks on the interim cover above. I haven't seen a single instance of an arrival-stamped cover at the HPO – by interim or Mandate device - and in spite of much period mail which would have transited Haifa to other locales I have only seen one instance of genuine usage, as a 12 May dated transit marking using the Mandate oval REGISTERED HAIFA device on a domestic registered cover from Tel Aviv to Rosh Pinna (below); TAS #41-409 describes a 12 May Haifa transited domestic registered cover but does not illustrate the Mandate marking; Aloni (p.29) illustrates an express registered airmail cover from Austria to Tiberias, blurry and with unclear circumstances, but bearing a 9 May oval Haifa registered cancel. Thus far we have one case of the Mandate oval in use while the HPO still employed Mandate postmarks (prior to 10 May), and two cases with the same date during the period where the HPO reverted to the interim postmark (10-14 May). The rarely seen use of the Mandate marking, especially in an overt case like the overseas interim cover above, suggests that it may not have been available throughout. In any case the application of the Mandate postmark to mail suggests that a formal sorting office/function did exist at the HPO but that its scope, work methods and staffing were limited.



Warning – Beware of Drawing Conclusions from Philatelic Mail

I am aware of cases where there are Mandate postmarks on Haifa mail of this period but on close inspection these all appear to be philatelic: either the sender/addressee is a known philatelic personality, like Leo Better, Max/Mordechai/Sara/Zehava Brisker, Edward Bowman or Zrubavel Shaltieli, whose covers bear many questionable 'favor cancels' or the covers have received 'favor treatment' whereby certain markings are applied (or not) or certain postal procedures are followed (or not); or the markings used are spurious, misused and patently not related to the cover at hand. As noted above "Haifa Registered" oval handstamps do not appear to have been used as a practice on mail in the interim period, as daters or transit marks, and on the few covers where I've seen these the covers are philatelic or bear hallmarks of being such. Likewise instances where the single-circle canceller appears, those that I've seen are unlike the Nahariya postcard example above, and have a wide H letter – likely GD #35 - which Goldstein-Dickstein assign to the Telegraphs department.



A classic philatelic cover, TAS #47-253: addressed to the philatelist Max/Zehava Brisker and franked with Mandate stamps – 3 days after they became invalid for postage; passed through 3 post offices (via Tiberias), untaxed including at Haifa where backstamped – which as we will see below, taxed 'everything'. With covers of this type we cannot learn anything or draw conclusions about postal routes and procedures. Sold for almost \$1200 including the buyer's fee...



Apropos taxing everything - a border-line case either of excessive due diligence or a philatelic cover [T40-189]: a 2nd convoy cover from besieged Jerusalem, franked correctly using Mandate stamps - which prior to 9 May were the only type available there; likely entered into a letter box and so uncanceled; received at Haifa & taxed on account of the demonetized stamps. Incredulous, as the HPO assuredly knew that 2 convoys of interrupted, backdated mail from Jerusalem were arriving, and other such covers had been handled - correctly - untaxed. Here even the penalty is excessive as in this time non-business addresses were normally charged just the deficiency and not twice that, as ordinarily charged. A glance that the address is Shiloach Street [#2a] where Brisker lived [at #9] leads me to suspect that this is a philatelic cover... which cost the lucky winner c.\$3800



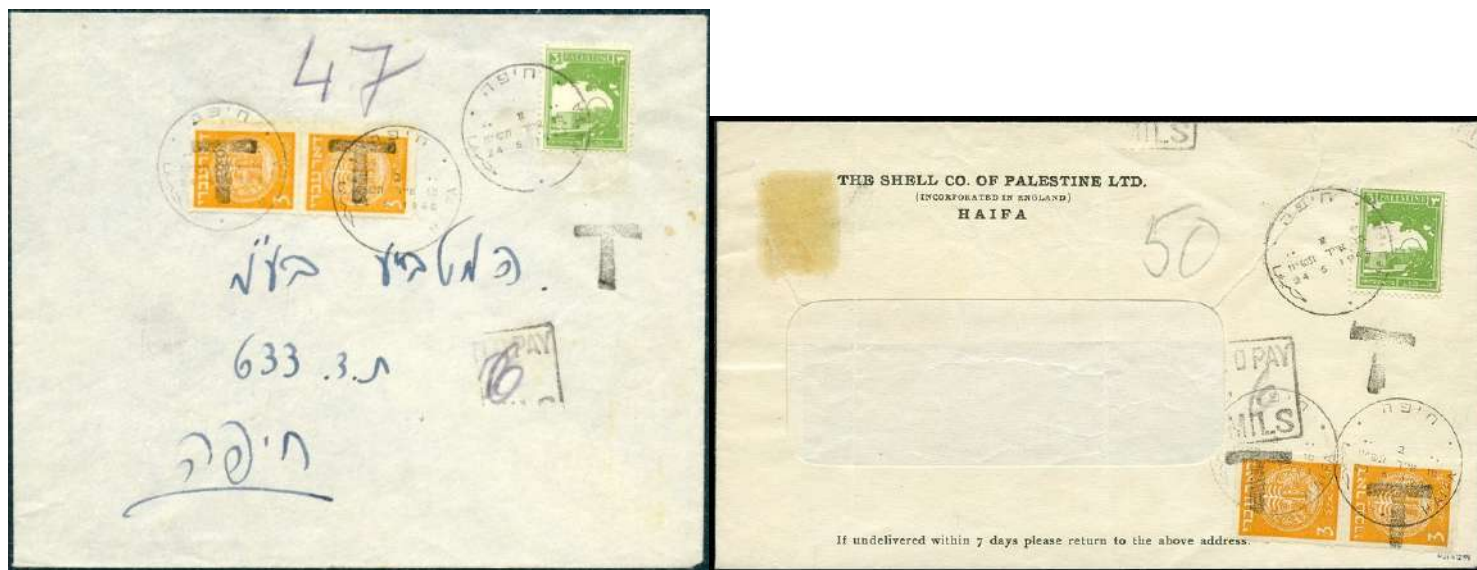
A typical type of philatelic cover with a spurious single circle Mandate postmark, presumably of the sorting office but with the **wide "H"** this is GD #35 assigned to the Telegraphs department - and return addressed to **Zrubavel Shaltieli**.

Indications of Postal Activity Curtailment

Although sorting work could not of course be stopped, for otherwise no mail would have passed through the HPO, there are hallmarks on Haifa mail suggesting that certain activities were stopped for an extended time and/or that there were problems with transport between Haifa and other locales. An easy way of spotting these cases is by examining taxed mail, because the taxation flags alleged errors and problems which distinguish these items from the norm.

For instance, there is an unusually large amount of mail handled in Haifa during the Israeli postal administration still franked with Mandate or interim stamps and processed as late as June and July 1948, and most is taxed postage dues. In Tel Aviv by contrast it's extremely rare to see a Mandate franked cover handled by the Israeli postal administration, and of the covers still bearing interim stamps the majority were processed there around the start of the Israeli postal administration, on 16 May, and so most passed through the mails untaxed (these stamps were valid until 22 May inclusive). This would suggest that the mail in Tel Aviv was processed in a timely, regular manner whereas in Haifa the processing was tardy. This is especially marked as most of this mail in Haifa bears the un-numbered Israeli trilingual postmark of the head post office – as would be expected of mail from letter boxes being processed at the sorting office; it's unusual to see a period taxed cover in Haifa from one of the [numbered] branch offices, i.e. a real-time instance of mail being processed and then taxed.

My suspicion is that in Haifa the HPO stopped collecting mail from the city's letter boxes as early as the Mandate period, judging by the abundance of taxed mail bearing [presumed] demonetized franking. The examples that easily arouse this suspicion are those bearing Mandate franks and processed after the establishment of the State, especially when the cancellation marks are those of the HPO (as expected for mail processed from letter boxes) and the space of time between the mail being postmarked and then being taxed is as short as 1 day or less. Consider these examples (TAS #44-321 & #43-441):



These are two out of a series of Shell Oil Company covers, hand-numbered in the #40s to #50 – all franked at the printed matter rate, all using Mandate stamps, and all processed in late May – the 24th and 31st. They are mostly cancelled with an “Alef” indexed un-numbered HPO device on one of those dates and then taxed later that same day with a “Bet” indexed un-numbered HPO device. These covers and others like them were not deliberately franked 10+ days after independence (14 May) with [supremely unpatriotic] stamps that had stopped being sold over the counter 12 days (and 2 postal administrations) prior, 2 and 5 May – especially not an international firm like Shell. These were deposited into letter boxes sometime prior to the interim Minhelet Haam postal administration in the city and were not duly processed by a mail collection function. To “cover up” the mismanagement (however justified it may have been), the covers were treated as contemporary invalidly-franked mail and taxed as if a misdemeanor had been committed by the sender.⁶

The cession of mail collection from letter-boxes was not a unique occurrence in the late Mandate era - here is a press report from January 1948 about mail in Jerusalem not being collected from the boxes for several days (and regular mail service being restricted to just express or registered mail):

⁶ These findings serve to negate a theory proposed by Aloni (TPHTPI Vol. 4 “Minhelet Haam”, p.102) that the latest known commercial covers taxed with a Haifa T cachet are from 28 May and that later dated covers so marked “are probably postal favors”. Here we see the source of the phenomenon.

Davar - דבר, 5 January 1948 **פ3**

← →
 ירושלים ללא דואר רגיל
 זה ימים אחדים שלא מדיקים בירוש-
 לים את ארגזי הדואר ואי אפשר לשלוח
 מירושלים מכתבים, אלא "אקספרס" או
 באחריות.



Just above (TAS #46-187) we have solid proof of the non-collection and non-processing of mail from the Haifa letter boxes: a cover purportedly postmarked on 30 May 1948 with a demonetized interim frank, and taxed in Tel Aviv on 2 June – except that the sender patriotically addressed the cover to a correspondent in “Eretz Israel” (“Land of Israel”) - the popular name for Israel before the establishment of the State, which letter-writers would subsequently address as “Medinat Israel”, indicating that he posted it before Israel’s independence was declared on 14 May. The cover was likely entered into a letter box – and then left unprocessed for 3 weeks, only to be disingenuously flagged by the Haifa HPO for postage due and taxed thereafter by the unsuspecting Tel Aviv HPO.

We can also see indications of work overload and logistical constraints on the Haifa HPO: instances of incoming mail with franking that was valid at the time of dispatch being taxed well after those franks were demonetized, one or two postal administrations later. We cannot of course rule out the deliberate use of invalid franks, but their preponderance specifically in Haifa suggests that they were legitimately posted but processed much later:





On the top (TAS #46-183) we see an Afula originating cover to Haifa franked with a Mandate stamp: this was properly used and cancelled during the interim period by the local device – but the cover was subsequently taxed in Haifa on 23 May – 10 days after the stamp was demonetized (i.e. the latest possible date for the combination of the frank and interim cancel), and the transit time between these two northern cities was not more than a day...

On the bottom (TAS #43-442) we have solid evidence of workload or logistical problems at the Haifa HPO: a properly franked and postmarked Mandate-era cover from the Tel Aviv HPO (Mandate stamp tied by the double circle postmark of the HPO's public counter, whose last possible day of use was 5 May) – invalidated and taxed by the Haifa HPO some 2+ weeks later, on 20 May.



Just above (TAS #47-349) we have a stunning instance of mail handed into the counter on 10 April, during the Mandate, properly franked and cancelled - without any indications there was an attempted delivery (like a ladder cachet) in the intervening time - and taxed almost 2 months later due to the now demonetized stamp.

Similarly, the referenced Tel Aviv to Safed cover (TAS #39-80 – reverse unillustrated), mentioned above in regard to the initially lacking Haifa transit marking, was posted 13 May – 2 days after the liberation of Safed and the end of the siege – yet reached Rosh Pinna in transit only on 4 June(!) By then the return journey via Haifa was much faster, with the Haifa transit being stamped on 7 June, and Tel Aviv return-arrival the following day...

As we see, there was a significant disruption to postal work handled by the Haifa HPO and a marked absence of [Mandate] postal markings attesting to sorting or transit of mail, from at least mid-April 1948. Now we're in a better position to understand why the Nahariya mail destined for Tel Aviv was not cancelled by the Haifa sorting office.

Tying a Loose End – and Learning About Multiple Postmark Devices

NEVERTHELESS astute observers may take issue with the examples I put forward of mail handled by the newly installed Israeli postal administration in Haifa – on the surface a trivial point, but critical nonetheless to allaying concerns and also learning something new about the Israeli processing of mail in Haifa: it may seem that my displayed examples are mixing instances of Israeli administered mail being postmarked on the spot at the public counters with mail being belatedly processed (and taxed) by the sorting office - after all during the Mandate each function had its own postmark devices, and here all the covers bear the same un-numbered “dot” trilingual postmark of the HPO... or do they?

From postmark strikes I've observed specifically in Haifa I've noticed subtle differences between postmarks of the same type, for instance with the un-numbered issue assigned to the HPO.

According to Ben-Zion Fixler & Yehuda Nachtigal (and others) these trilingual cancellers were composed of two parts: the body, made of steel, included the name of the locality in Hebrew, English and Arabic; specifically the original “type A” issue of 1948-51 separately bore the Hebrew and Latin dates plus the shift index letter on 3 lines – cast as slugs. The two datelines were supplied in advance for a full month, for each postmark, and were changed daily by the postal clerk. Only with the introduction of the “type C” postmarks, in Dec. 1950, were the post offices issued actual kits with letters and digits for assembling the necessary dates (references: Ben-Zion Fixler & Yehuda Nachtigal 'Regular Postmarks of Israeli Post, Part 1', p.3/110 + Glassman 1978 p.48-49 + Yirmiyahu Rimon in Holy Land Postal History bulletin #17-18 p.870).

Their research is confirmed by way of a 30 June 1948 announcement in the weekly Postal Circular (#5), requesting that on the 15th of each month every post office has to send the Manager of the postal warehouses in Haifa a general order for all the English and Hebrew dates which will be needed for the following month: a quantity must be specified for slugs in Hebrew and in English for a) working days, and b) holidays and Saturdays.⁷ Astoundingly this was necessary even though the old date slugs had to be returned monthly as well – in other words, every post office in principle needed the same supplies.⁸

הותמות הדואר העברי

הותמות הדואר העברי עם התאריכים העבריים והלועזיים של חודש יולי ש.ז.
השלחנה בימים הקרובים לכל משרדי הדואר. יש להכניסן לשמוש מיד עם התקבלן.
את ההותמות עם האותיות והקונסאות של ממשלת המנדט צריך להחזיר למנהל
מחסני הדואר חיפה בצרוף סופס 8. ב-15 לכל חודש צריך כל משרד לשלוח
למנהל מחסני הדואר חיפה הזמנה כללית של כל התאריכים העבריים והלועזיים
הדרושים בשביל החודש הבא. יש לפרט בהזמנה את מספר העופרות הדרושות
בעברית ולועזית בשביל (א) ימות החול (ב) שבתות וחגי ישראל.
את העופרות של החודש שחלף יש להחזיר בראשון לחודש החדש למנהל
המחסנים של הדואר בחיפה בצרוף סופס 8.פ.ס.

Although the notion of how the date slugs were made and supplied sounds preposterous and uneconomical, at the height of an existential war of independence with fuel being in short supply, this indeed is how it was done – and this in fact assists us in solving the issue of how a single canceller could seemingly be used in multiple departments. By extension of their research, this means that each letter and character of the slug was unadjustable, and fixed in its place. In other words whatever quirk one may observe on a clear strike of a trilingual in one place, one must necessarily see on all other strikes by it elsewhere - unless more than one device of that type exists, and this is what I am proposing: there were multiple copies of these devices at least at the Haifa HPO, serving various functions and departments, and this is why we may observe the un-numbered type struck on both public counter and sorting office covers.

⁷ see p.3 of this file <https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461851>.

⁸ Indeed this idiosyncrasy was corrected with a cancellation of this procedure in Circular #61 of 10 Sept. 1948 – see p.104 of this file <https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461993>

Consider the strikes we see here, some from the first day of the HPO's operation under the Israeli postal administration, on 16 May 1948, and some from subsequent weeks later. No source until now has acknowledged the use of multiple devices of the same type at the Haifa HPO.⁹



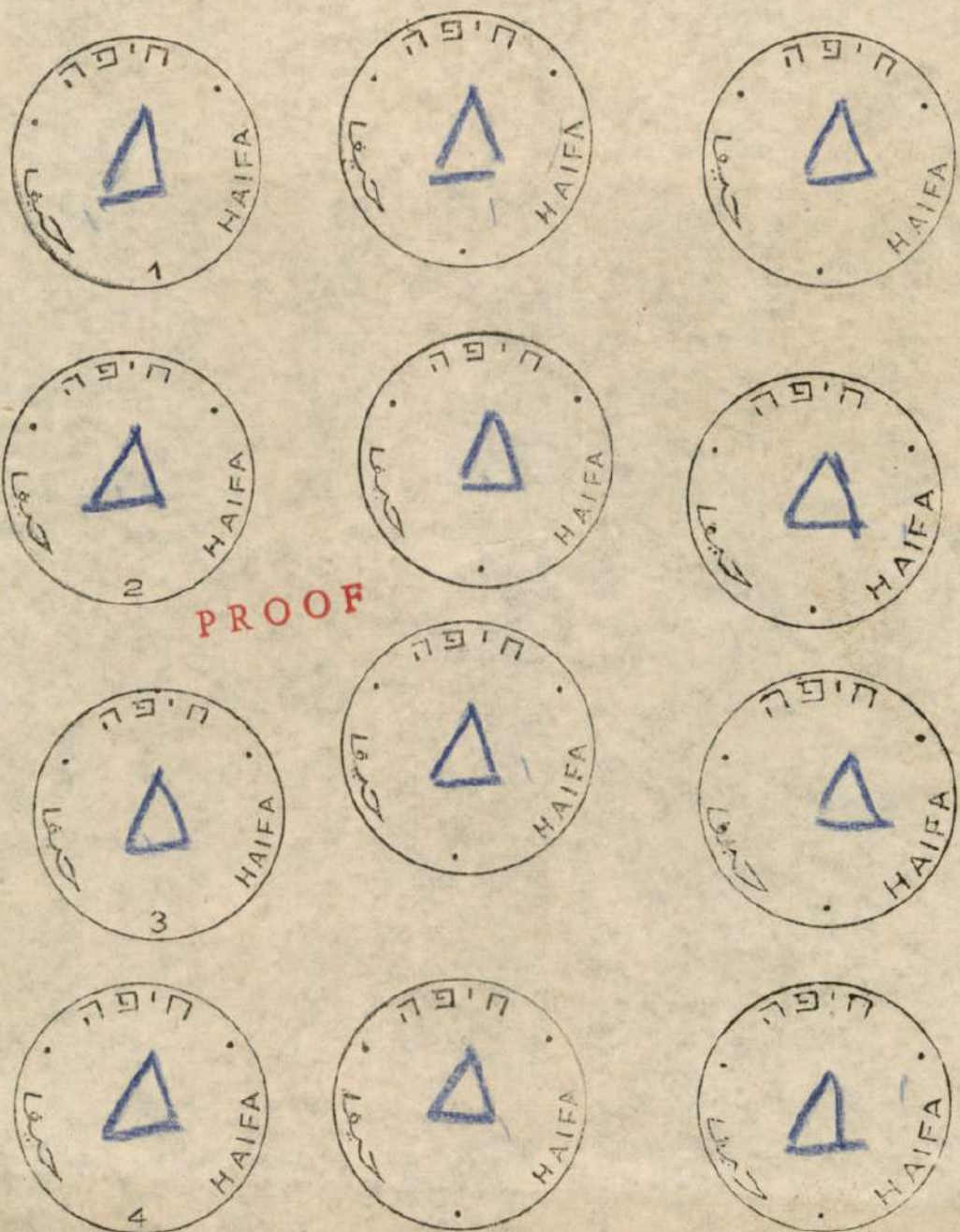
As we learned above the two sets of date slugs were ‘hardcoded’, and along with the index letter, these could be inserted and changed: on the single day of 16 May 1948 just from the “Alef” shift (per the index letter) we see multiple strikes where the Hebrew letter “Zayin” in the date (for 16 May) looks more like a “Daled” (13 May) or cases where the final Hebrew letter “Hey” in the year is missing – and in each case the ordering of the slugs is different. That same day during the “Bet” shift we also observe variations in the template of the canceller itself by way of the appearance of the Hebrew letter “Pay” in HAIFA and the spacing of the English letters for the city name. On subsequent dates we see further variations in lettering and spacing.

With all these examples from a very narrow period of time we see conclusively that various devices existed of the HPO's un-numbered ‘dot’ canceller, and this is why we may see – at a passing glance – seemingly identical cancellation devices serving both public-counter and back-office processing work.

Update Nov. 2022: the following page of proof strikes by the documented manufacturer of these trilingual postmarks, E. Rubel, came on the market recently and affords us an opportunity to conclusively see the various real, intentional

⁹ It has subsequently come to my attention that William Farber did note that multiple un-numbered cancellers existed at the Haifa HPO, although his “first dates” observed for the different types he lists are later-dated than the variations we see here already for 16 May 1948 – see “Postmarks and Post Offices of Israel (1948-1988) – part 14” in The Israel Philatelist, Feb. 2000, p.15-17.

differences between the templates of the different unnumbered devices supplied by this firm – each strike is of a different devices and variations can be seen clearly:



ממארכיון של מ. א. רובל, רובל &
חומות גומי ומחבת לדואר ישראל
From the Archives of M. E. Rubel, Rubber &
Metal Stamp Mfg. for the Israel Post

12

Tying Everything Together

By now we've understood a number of things: postal operations at the Haifa HPO in the final weeks of the Mandate were severely curtailed, certain types of postal markings stopped being used and possibly even whole postal functions ceased being handled; during the Israeli postal administration it appears that much backlogged work was processed and that the same-looking cancelling device was used for various functions (public counters, sorting work, taxation, etc.).

But is there a way we can definitely link everything together and arrive at the conclusion that taxis were employed as part of the postal administration? Actually, yes – and here I saved the proof for the end in order to take the reader first through this investigative journey.

A Remarkable Instance of Limited Postal Facilities

Firstly, I will share with you a remarkable facet of a fairly well-known story about interim era sea mail: some philatelists know that there was a Jewish/Israeli ship – the first such – called the SS Kedma, which among its various tasks, also carried mail to and from pre-State Israel. That ship arrived in Haifa from Marseille on Saturday 1 May – with a consignment of mail and departed 6 May with “the last mail from Palestine under official Mandate auspices” (according to Shamir & Siegel in “Israel Foreign Postal Links”, p.23).

The local press between 3-5 May published a series of conflicting accounts about another [French] ship called “Providence”, coming in to Haifa also from Marseille with between 90-99 sacks of mail; that ship reportedly docked on 27 April but around 1 May it seems that no representative of the Haifa HPO had come in response to inquiries to accept the mail. One report (‘Davar’ of 3 May p.3 – article on the right) says the consignment was to be returned to France and that it continued to be carried onboard until the ship docked in Tel Aviv, where it was unloaded and transferred to the HPO there; another report (‘HaTzofe’ of 4 May p.1 – article on the left), referring to ‘Tohu Vavohu’ chaos government in its title, writes that the Haifa postal administrator “for whatever reason refused” to accept the mail and a special arrangement between the shipping agency in Tel Aviv and the ship’s captain enabled the mail to be unloaded at Haifa port and transported to the Tel Aviv HPO on the 4th for sorting and distribution. This latter report may be more updated than the earlier one as it contains more specific information about the mail transfer.

שלטון התוויוזבוהו ניסה להחזיר דואר לצרפת ולא הצליח

ביום השבת הגיעה אנייה צרפתית ל-
חיפה. בין היתר היה באניה מטען דואר
גדול כתשעים שקים שהיו מיועד לתושבי
הארץ. מנהל הדואר בחיפה משום מה
סירב לקבל את הדואר והפנה אותו ב-
חזרה למרסיל.
משנודע הדבר לסוכנות האניות הצר-
פתית בתל אביב נעשו השתדלויות אצל
רב החובל של האניה, והלה הסכים לפ-
רוק את מטען הדואר שיועבר היום לתל-
אביב ויחולק השבוע בכל הארץ.

מנהל הדואר בחיפה סירב לקבל דואר מצרפת

בחיפה, אך איש לא בא מהדואר לקבל את
המכתבים, והאניה הפליגה בשבידה הורא-
להחזיר את הדואר למרסיל. בבוא האניה
לתל-אביב מחה סוכן האניה י. סגל על
הפקודה לתחזיר את הדואר לצרפת, עיכב
את הפלגת האניה מנמל תל-אביב והצליח
להעביר את כל הדואר להנהלת הדואר
בת"א.

99 שקי דואר הורדו בתל-אביב
לאחר שעמדו להתחזיר לצרפת
באניה „פרובידנס” של חברת „מסא-
זירי מאריטים”, שהגיעה לחיפה ב-27
באפריל, נועדו לארץ 99 שקי דואר מצרפת
– רובם לתל-אביב ולסביבתה. באיכות
החברה בחיפה ניסה כמה פעמים להתקשר
עם הנהלת הדואר על מנת שהשקים יורדו

In any case the local press portrayed the administrator as being motivated by anti-Zionism. Whether or not that was the reason I believe a shared element to the administrator’s lack of response was that his facility simply lacked the ability to process the mail, and this had to be transferred for treatment elsewhere. IFPL p.28 illustrates a registered cover from Romania to Haifa backstamped by the Haifa HPO’s oval REGISTERED postmark dated 3 May 1948 (the day before the transfer of the mail from “Providence” to Tel Aviv) – proving that the HPO, still under Mandate control, had accepted mail at least from the ‘Kedma’, and that the consignment from the ‘Providence’ may simply have been too much for the facility to handle at the time.



In any case it's unlikely that the outward motive was political as the Mandate postal service, which still existed nationwide until the 2nd, and then only at the HPOs until the 5th, was not outwardly a politically motivated body – its administrators were not free to decide when or under what circumstance to accept and process mail. Here for instance, the mail was merely transferred from one HPO jurisdiction (Haifa) to another (Tel Aviv) – still while the HPOs were under Mandate auspices. Furthermore if there was a legal basis to refuse the mail other agencies of the Mandate government would have been involved, such as customs or the police.

In the event, the mail from “Providence” was indeed processed in Tel Aviv but ironically none of the mail I've observed bears its sorting office or other transit-arrival mark – only the interim postmark of the post office of arrival.

Independently of researching mail for clues, having illustrated very concretely that the Haifa HPO visibly lacked the ability to not just process mail but even to receive it, how can we connect the Tel Aviv postmarked mail with taxi services?

Finding Documentary Proof of Taxi Involvement with Mail Transport

Ironically the annals of Mandate postal history are replete with references to taxi companies being contracted to transport mail, with cases seen from as early as Nov. 1922 (Official Gazette OETA South #78 p.9) through to at least 1946, involving various companies including Taxi Keshet itself:

The Palestine Post, 20 December 1935 P17

MAIL-DELIVERY BY TAXI
New Jaffa-Tel Aviv Service
Delivery of mail every two hours between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv-Jaffa will begin on January 1, as a result of the agreement between the Department of Posts and Telegraph and the Aliyah Taxi Co-operative. Letters will be distributed five times a day.

The Palestine Post, 7 September 1939 P4

MAILS BY “KESHER”
We are informed by the management of the Keshet Taxi Company, that they have been awarded the contract to carry mails on the newly inaugurated accelerated mail services between Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa and Tel Aviv (reported in The Palestine Post on Sunday).

The Palestine Post, 25 August 1946 P3

PRIVATE DELIVERY
HAIFA, Saturday. — A sack of mail containing 96 registered letters and other matter was stolen from the Post Office here last night by a daring impostor.
The sack had been brought to the Post Office from Jaffa in a car belonging to the El Alamein Taxi Company.
An unknown man then appeared and said he was a post employee, and was given the sack of mail.

NOTICE.

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS.

Conveyance of Mails.

Tenders are invited for the conveyance of mails in both directions between the points indicated below for the period 1st April, 1940, to 31st March, 1941.

Further particulars may be had on application to the Postmaster-General, General Post Office, Jerusalem, or to the Postmaster of any office on the respective routes.

The Postmaster-General will not necessarily accept the lowest or any tender.

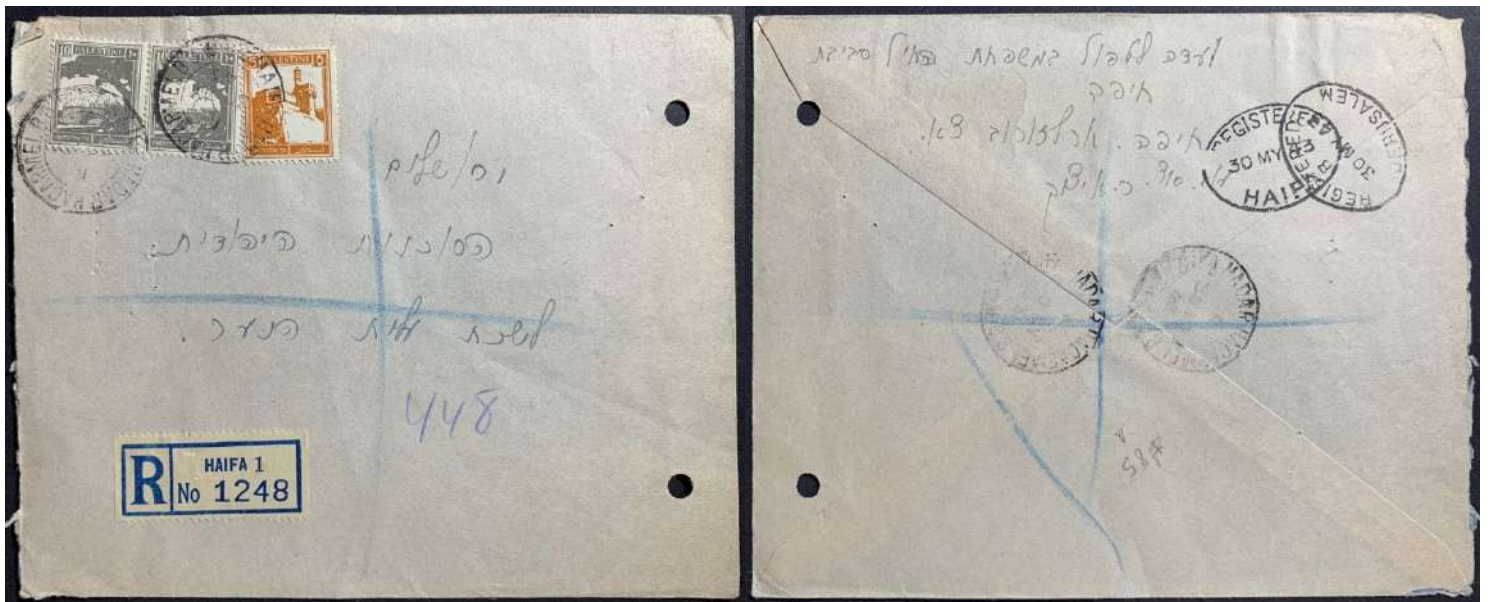
Tenders must be enclosed in sealed covers addressed to the President, Departmental Tenders Board, General Post Office, Jerusalem, endorsed "Tender for Mail Service" and posted in time to reach the General Post Office, Jerusalem, not later than 10 a.m. on the 15th March, 1940.

Tenders by telegram will not be considered.

Service	Frequency
1. Jerusalem Post Office — Er Ramle Post Office — Tel Aviv Post Office — Haifa Post Office	Six times daily except Saturdays and Jewish Official Holidays
2. Jerusalem Post Office — Bethlehem Post Office	Once daily
3. Jaffa—Ship to Shore	As required
4. Tel Aviv (Various Services)	Sunday to Friday—Schedule can be had on application to the Postmaster, Tel Aviv
5. Tel Aviv (a) Ship to Shore (b) Shore to Post Office	As required

For the general public this was a subtle distinction: under contract, carrying fully pre-paid mail handed over by the postal service - taxi transported mail was legal; privately hired and carried [un-franked] mail with fees paid directly to the taxi companies, on the other hand, was illegal.

We have then about 3 different types of taxi mail: the initial kind we saw above, at the start of the article, of privately hired service indicated by a stampless cover bearing a dispatch label from the taxi service; the headlined postage-paid cover with an actual taxi routing request; and now mail officially contracted by the postal service for delivery by taxi. How do we identify that last type? Below is a good example: a registered cover addressed to the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem, posted from the Hadar HaCarmel branch office in Haifa on 30 May 1943; it managed to get processed at the head post office that same day and still received at Jerusalem later in the day – bypassing Tel Aviv; remarkably swift transit effected by the use of taxis (see the middle press clipping above about "accelerated mail service", from 7 Sept. 1939, for reference).



Nevertheless researchers have not seen a phenomenon of mail from one region of the country being sorted at that region's head post office but then postmarked by the HPO of the region servicing the destination address. If our inquiry is to find a connection between an actual taxi routing on mail and the unusual postmarking of mail in some other location – can we find a documentary link to connect the two issues?

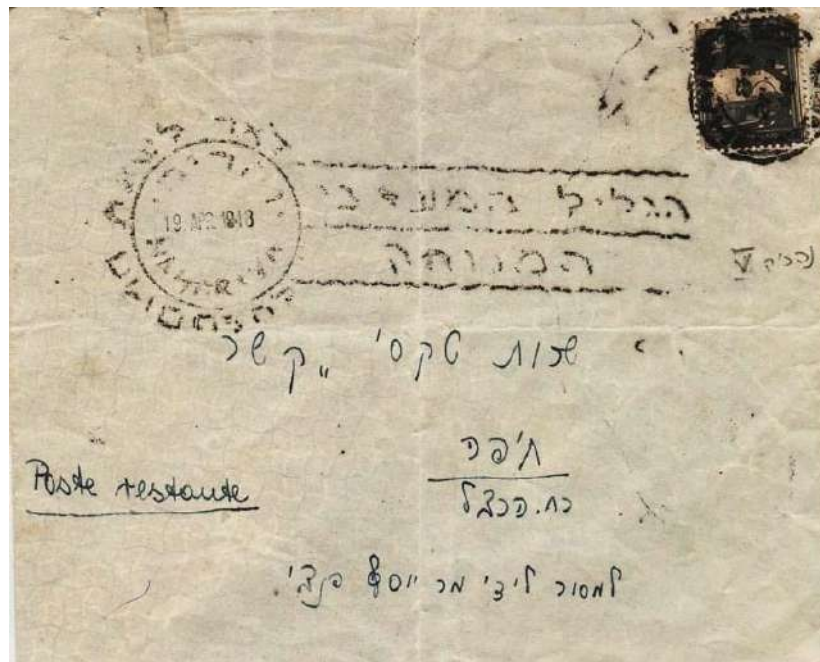
Here we are aided by an extraordinary press report which I've found only in one source – buried on page 9 of the newspaper 'Al HaMishmar' of 7 May 1948: it's titled "Information Bureau for the Western Galilee" and proceeds to report that an information bureau for the western Galilee and Nahariya is located in the office of "Taxi Keshet" on Herzl Street, in the Hadar HaCarmel neighborhood of Haifa. At the office one can obtain bus passes and information on all issues pertaining to transport, the transport of mail, newspapers and small packages. From now all dispatches of newspapers and mail will be concentrated at "Keshet" and all interested parties will be able to visit it between the hours of 6am and 730pm daily. Prices for dispatches are set by a coalition-wide (company-wide?) committee. Information on these matters is available at all offices of "Keshet" nationwide.

לשכת המודיעין של הגליל המערבי
המערבי
 לשכת המודיעין של הגליל המערבי
 ונהרייה תמצא במשרד "הקסיקשר"
 רח' הרצל, דור הכרמל, חיפה. במשרד
 זה אפשר להשיג כרטיסינסיעה ואיני
 מורמאציה בכל העניינים הנוגעים לתח'
 בורה, להעברת דואר, עתונים וחבילות
 קטנות. מצתה יתרכזו משלוחי העתונים
 והדואר ב"קשר" וכל המעוניינים יואילו
 לפנות לשם בשעות היום בין 6—19.30.
 מחירי המשלוח נקבעו על ידי ועד
 הגוש. כן אפשר לקבל את הידיעות
 בעניינים הנ"ל בכל משרדי "קשר" בא'
 רץ.

Here then we see a direct – and public - connection between the postal service and the Taxi Keshet company. We don't know who contracted them - the Haifa HPO or the postmaster general; the Mandate postal service or the interim administration - or under what circumstance the two bodies worked together, but the press report clearly shows that official mail service was being run through Taxi Keshet's Haifa office. And since we observe the odd phenomenon of Tel Aviv bound mail from the north being postmarked there at Tel Aviv from around 23 April onwards, for at least 2 weeks, it may be

that this arrangement with Taxi Keshet - which was not presented in the report of 7 May as something “new” – was pre-existing from around mid-late April. As such, we can now better appreciate why a member of the public would have known to indicate “via Taxi Keshet” on mail he deposited at the post office.

UPDATE (14 Nov. 2021): since uploading this article I've been shown an extraordinary Nahariya emergency mail cover by Dr. Phil Kass (CA, USA) - posted 19 April 1948 and postmarked at the Haifa HPO on 21 April (the day of the Jewish military operation to capture the city): the sender **addressed the cover to Taxi Keshet Service at Herzl Street** - and specified **"poste restante" mail handling** for the intended addressee, a Josef Finzi¹⁰. We see from this that indeed the public knew as early as 19 April (and likely before then) - during the Mandate postal administration - that mail could be addressed to Taxi Keshet's Haifa office, and even be given postal treatment, here to hold the mail at their premises until the addressee arrived to collect it(!) As such, the postal service's work arrangements with Taxi Keshet must have been established during the Mandate administration. The salient difference between this cover and the headlined cover in this article is that here the handling request is part of the address (i.e. the post office merely sends the prepaid cover to that address and whatever is desired thereafter is done there at the address); the headlined cover actually 'told' the post office to have the mail transported by Taxi Keshet. A subtle but meaningful difference, possibly suggesting that initially the postal work at Taxi Keshet was 'passive' and unknown to the Mandate services, whereas thereafter it was overt and so later publicized in the press.



Ironically the connection between this report and the routing request on our headline cover opens the door to a larger issue, the broader use of external transport services to augment the mail service. On the one hand we have seen documented cases of taxi companies contracted to transport mail, while on the other we have seen those same companies fined for carrying mail (without contract) – the Mandate’s overt use of external transport services was very specific and pinpointed. Nevertheless, in the final period of the Mandate it may have been much more widespread: one clue to this phenomenon may be found in the April 1948 edition of the Mandate’s “Palestine Post Office Guide”, where in the section

¹⁰ I haven't found a connection between the Josef Finzi addressed on this cover and the Shaul Finzi that the specialist literature mentions in regard to posting the original consignment of the Nahariya emergency mail. What I did find however was a startling tribute to a "Capt. Shaul (Paul) Finzi (Zioni)" (1913-1950), who most likely is the one referred to: born in Czechoslovakia and immigrated to Palestine in 1939, drafted into the artillery corps in May 1949; a gold-medal awarded stamp collector who also collected ancient coins (and whose collection attracted the attention of the Chief of Staff turned archeologist, Prof. Yigal Yadin [Sukenik]); killed in an ambush on the road to Eilat (6 Dec. 1950); initially interred in Nahariya and later reinterred (1951) at the military cemetery at Mount Herzl. He left behind a wife and two daughters. See [here](#) and [here](#) for his official memorials; and [here](#) for his mention in connection to the 'Skirmish at Kilometer 78'. What this also means is that the cited narrative above whereby the initial consignment of mail of handed to Finzi for posting - something which I couldn't see confirmed by the actual mail - is not a first-hand account, but rather passed down through others - again highlighting the problem with relying on personal 'recollections' for documenting postal history.

Update June 2022: indeed the officer Finzi is referenced by Kanner & Spiegel in their landmarking articles on the Israeli Army postal service (BAPIP #37 p.8) – there in connection to philatelic self-address mail. So again, both the accuracy of the account of Nahariya mail is in doubt as is the authenticity of the type of mail Finzi may have carried.

on Express Mail, the Postal Service subtly included mention of the use of external transport services – something that the public had been clamoring for, for years (see the letter from a newspaper reader from 1943, below):

The Palestine Post, 31 October 1943 p4

← □ →

... Bus and taxi companies are prohibited by law from handling mail. As a result, letters accepted for express delivery by the Post Office take nearly as long as those sent by ordinary mail – the only difference being that they are delivered immediately by a telegraph boy.

Why should not the Post Office despatch letters every half hour by the regular taxi services? The public would willingly pay a little extra for the increased speed and this could be used to pay the taxi companies.

“ANGRY”

Jerusalem—Oct. 10

EXPRESS SERVICES

The following Express Services are available:—

Conveyance of an article all the way by post office officer at request of sender

Postal packets for express delivery by this service are accepted at all post offices and postal agencies from which there is a delivery of telegrams.

Charges

For the first kilometre and a half, or any part thereof	40 mils
For above one kilometre and a half and not more than three kilometres	80 mils
For every additional kilometre and a half or part thereof beyond three kilometres	35 mils

(Ordinary postage is not charged.)

If the sender wishes a taxi or other special conveyance to be used throughout, the actual fare or cost of the conveyance is charged in addition to the kilometric fee.

As with the PEDI transatlantic airmail service mentioned above, the Mandate postal service appears to have finally accepted the idea that 3rd party transport of mail by its sender could be legalized – provided the postage for the mail was fully paid. Past publication of the express service had never mentioned the sender’s ability to use of taxis or “other special conveyance”, but now this was discreetly included. Here, this was not limited just to Haifa but to the country nationwide.

Even so, we can see indications of strain on the Haifa head post office well into 1948, after the establishment of the State: a 16 Sept. 1948 report in ‘Haaretz’ (pg.2) about the loss of mail bags in transit between Haifa and Hadera due to a fire caused by a lit cigarette butt, mentions that these bags were being carried on an Egged bus cooperative public transport vehicle (probably a bus). And that’s not all:

“And Now You Know... the Rest of the Story” (Paul Harvey)

The purpose of this article was to share new information but its approach was deliberately one of investigation and critical thinking. The following information came to light as I was completing this article and I saved it for the end in order to demonstrate that what we saw and learned till now is indeed based on actual events:

A retrospective piece on the Haifa head post office, published in late December 1948 (“The Haifa Head Post Office Moves to Kingsway” in ‘Haaretz’ of 27 Dec. 1948 p.3), still during the War of Independence, reveals surprising information re-affirming the premise of and observations made in this article. The report refers to the Israeli postal administrator in Haifa, Zvi Barkoni, summarizing the difficulties that the Haifa post office faced since the start of the War (29 Nov. 1947), and among the issues he raised are that:

- On 20 April 1948 a specific order was given to return mail bags back to their countries of dispatch (Barkoni does not say who gave the order or why – but the sudden evacuation of British forces in Haifa beginning on the 18th and the security situation leading to the Jewish military operation to capture the city on the 21st may have influenced the decision; as a researcher I’m not predisposed to see ‘anti-Zionism’ in everything the Mandate did);
- On 1 May all domestic mail service was supposed to stop but the Jewish workers did not adhere to these orders and did their best to continue delivering mail (this order was independent of the scheduled arrangement of transferring the HPOs to the interim administration on 6 May, and unclear why given);
- Of 405 postal employees at the HPO by the end of the Mandate, only 113 were Jews; of the 17 top-level postal officials only 4 were Jews, of whom 2 were transferred to postal branches “in order that they not consolidate key positions at the head post office”, according to Barkoni;
- 800 bags of mail from overseas accumulated at the HPO between 25 April and 1 May, and these were opened against instructions, sorted and delivered;
- In the meantime scores of the Jewish employees were drafted into the army and new employees hired in their place were not yet trained enough.

The article also mentions that a direct postal service between Haifa and Jerusalem had since been effected by way using a vehicle of the "Palestine Post" newspaper – outside assistance to help the post office fulfill its duties. The article also reveals that the Haifa postal service is under-staffed at 245 employees versus the slated 370 positions requiring workers; that many are hurriedly employed and many others are still on military duty; that 31 of 46 postmen are new; that there are only 7 telegraphists versus 43 as during the Mandate; that many employees are new immigrants lacking proficient Hebrew; and that both vehicles and drivers are lacking.

ha-Arets - הארץ, 27 December 1948 P3



משרדי הדואר הראשיים בחיפה עברו לרחוב המלכים

מאת פוסר. הארץ. בחיפה

113 מבין 405

נהוגה בימי המנדט. כן סודרה חלוקת מב' רקים ומכתבי "אכספרס" במוצאי שבת מ' עד 10. עם התפתחות חיפה רבתי סודר שרות דואר לעמק זבולון פעמיים ביום על ידי מכונית מיוחדת, דבר שמעולם לא היה קיים. אזורי חלוקת המכתבים הורחבו והם כוללים עכשיו שכונות כגון ואדי ג'מאל הליסה ועוד, מקומות שמעולם לא היתה קיימת שם חלוקת מכתבים ע"י דוור. (הע' רבים היו "מסתדרים" באמצעות חנווני בעל תיבת דואר, מוכתר השכונה או הכומר). הודש הקשר הטלגרפי עם טבריה. סודר קשר אלחוטי עם ירושלים. הונהגו משלוחי דואר ישירים לירושלים ובחזרה באמצעות מכונית "פלסטין פוסט". חודשו שרותי העברת כספים על ידי הדואר, הוצאת רש' יונת רדיו ועוד. ואחרון: ההל מהשבוע שעבר הונהגו משלוחי דואר "אכספרס" ל- הלאביב כל שעתיים, 5 פעמים ביום (מ' עד 4 אחה"צ).

כדי להעריך את שיעור המאמצים צריך לזכור, שבין 405 פקדי הדואר בחיפה היו רק 113 יהודים. בין 17 פקדים בדואר ב' דרגה, "א" היו רק 4 יהודים, שמהם הועברו 2 לסניפים, כדי שלא ירכזו בידיהם עמ' בנת הפתח בדואר הראשי. אף-על-פי-כן לא נפסקה העבודה בדואר אפילו יום אחד. בראשית השנה היו הפקידים יורדים העיר זה בסכנת נפשות ממש. אחרי כיבוש חיפה ב' 21 באפריל נמלטו הערבים ונשארו היהודים בלבד. 800 שקי דואר בחיפה, ש- הצטברו בין ה' 23 באפריל וה' 1 במאי 1948 נפתחו בניגוד להוראות, מוינו והולקו. ביינתים גויס חלק מן העובדים לצבא. עשרות גויסו לחטיבת העבודה הצבאית, דבר שהקטין את פריון העבודה (מאחר שהיו צריכים להיות במחנה בעת הארוכות). עובדים חרשים שנתקבלו לעבודה לא היו מנוסים.

בימי תוהו ובוהו

בהודמנות זו סקר מנהל הדואר בחיפה את תולדות שרותי הדואר מאז הכרזת ה' 29 בנובמבר ועד היום. הגם שמר ברקוני הכיף בדבריו רק את אזור חיפה, הרי כמיר זה שער זו היתה עיר מעורבת ואחד ה' עורקים הראשיים של הדואר הארצישראלי, אפינים הקשים ותלכטים של הפקידות ה' יהודית לכל מה שנתהווה ביתר ערי הארץ בענף זה, שחץ מתלונות בעתונות לא נר' דע עליו בצבור אלא מעט מבעט. כידוע הפנו הבריטים את מיטב חיצי "תוהו ובוהו" בעיקר כלפי הדואר כמטרה ברורה לגתק את הקשרים עם החוץ ועל ידי כך לשבש את כל דרכי המסחר הכלי כלה. הסאבוטג'ה מצד הערבים החלה מיד עם הכרזת הא"מ, אך רק עם התקרבות סיום המנדט ניתנו מגבות אף הוראות מפור' שות בענין זה. ב' 20 באפריל נתקבלה ה' ראה להתזיר את שקי הדואר לחוץ-לארץ. החל ב' 1 במאי צריך היה להפסיק את כל משלוחי הדואר בנבולות הארץ. הפקיד' דות היהודית לא צייתה להור' אות אלה ועשתה כמיטב יכולתה להמ' שכת השרות.

Here we have then the more or less complete picture of what occurred in Haifa between mid-April and mid-May 1948, why it was possible for mail to have been partially processed there (or not at all) - and why it was possible for mail to have been transported by taxi and processed elsewhere, like Tel Aviv.

The Last Word?

This article originated from a single known instance of taxi routing being specified on a piece of mail sent from Haifa to Tel Aviv; it further examined many instances of mail from northern Palestine being sorted at Haifa but postmarked in Tel Aviv. Nevertheless, was an inverse situation possible – Tel Aviv originating mail being postmarked instead at Haifa?

Below we have a curious case of mail sent from the newspaper 'Haaretz' in Tel Aviv to its Haifa branch's post office box in that city – but postmarked there in Haifa. As per the 'split ovals' dateless interim postmark we know this cover was postmarked sometime between 10-14 May 1948; as there are no signs that the cover was prepared for registry, the franking is likely quadruple letter weight (10m base fee + 3x 6m extra weight = 28m for a total of 120 grams, with 2m overpaid); unlikely to be a philatelic cover given the posting and return address.



Students of the postal history of this period will likely be familiar with the concept of franked “couriered mail” sent between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem (and vice versa) and postmarked in the city of destination, and such covers are usually folded (vertically) to be carried in a pocket – but this phenomenon is unknown along the Tel Aviv-Haifa route. Although we discussed reasons why there could have been logistical problems along that route in April-May 1948, I have not observed “couriered mail” between these cities in this period. For a business as large and powerful as a newspaper like ‘Haaretz’ it’s unlikely that the paper paid postage and then dispatched someone to merely deposit the cover at the Haifa head post office. With such an undertaking along that dangerous route it would have been more sensible to deliver the cover to the final address altogether. Indeed the paper could also have privately ordered a taxi to transport it as ‘taxi mail’ – and we’ve seen such instances in our examination of Nahariya emergency mail, above. **Here I am proposing that the taxis which carried mail southwards to Tel Aviv were probably used to take bagged mail northwards on their return journey –** although I haven’t seen other covers like this.

An Update (April 2022): having closed the original article on that note, of taxis also carrying mail on their return journeys, one tiny point still didn’t sit comfortably with me: if the Tel Aviv-Haifa road in this April-May period was either a) closed or b) dangerous – beyond the logistical limitations of the Haifa HPO we learned about – what really was the ‘big idea’ of dispatching [unarmed] taxis (land transport) to traverse that dangerous/impassible road? Isn’t that a self-negating proposition?

In the meantime I came across the following interim period cover sent from Ata Textiles in Haifa (the post office box return address is confirmed as theirs) to a transport company in Tel Aviv – postmarked in Tel Aviv using an interim device (not the single circle Mandate device we observed on similar mail above) and the return address amended to be “Tel Aviv MPO [Main Post Office]”... and then during some deep-sea fishing in the press archives I pulled up a golden nugget – a press report from Monday 26 April 1948 about **the resumption of “daily” domestic air service between Haifa and Tel Aviv using 21-seat Dakota airplanes as of the day before**; specifically here the plane which flew from Haifa to Tel Aviv the day before (the 25th) would fly back on the 27th, and that this new service would help ease the surface transport situation between the two cities. The operator is unnamed but almost assuredly the Jewish Agency-affiliated “Aviron” air company which surprisingly features quite often in the annals of air travel in the 1930’s and ‘40s (see the Handbook for the numerous references, including broad domestic air service and overseas service to Britain and France in the post-WWII Mandate era).

In light of the **domestic air mail service which operated in Palestine between Haifa and Tel Aviv & Jerusalem between 1938-1940 via “Palestine Airways”**, here we have an additional explanation of how mail – specifically in this troubled period – may have been transported between the two cities in spite of problems and dangers on the road. Specifically during the interim period, this air service could plausibly have been an improvised method for transporting mail between the cities.



ha-Arets - הארץ, 26 April 1948 **P4**

< [] >

קו תעופה קבוע בין חיפה ות"א

בפעם הראשונה בתולדות **שדה** התעופה של **תל אביב** חנה שם את-מול איירון נוסעים מטיפוס "דאקר סה", המכיל 21 מושבי נוסעים, ש-פתח קו תעופה יומי קבוע בין **תל-אביב** וחיפה.

האיירון שהגיע אתמול לתל-אביב ימריא מחר לחיפה והשרות עשוי לה-קל על התחבורה בין שתי הערים.

...And now we may really know "the rest of the story".



On the Jerusalem Interim & Rosette Postmarks

במאמר הזה אני מציג ממצאים המראים שבתקופת הביניים ב-1948 בירושלים היו לפחות 2 חותמות ביול במרכז המיון, ובדרך מראה שגם בסניף הדואר במחנה יהודה – על אף שהיה אחת במקור – היו בהמשך לפחות שתיים ואולי יותר. הממצאים באים להראות שהתפיסה לפיה הייתה רק חותמת אחת לכל סניף בתקופה שגויה ובעצם חסר הגיון. כפועל יוצא מזה נצטרך לשנות מתודולוגיות והנחות יסוד במה שקשור לתיארוך דואר – ונסיבותיו – שמשתמך במראה של חתימת החותמות.

In the annals of Israel's 1948 interim-era postal history there is a chapter about a certain improvised postmark, nicknamed the "rosette" postmark of [besieged] Jerusalem: this was a dateless Hebrew-only marking mimicking the design of the standard dateless city-designated interim period (Minhelet Haam) postmarks which entered use in the narrow space of time of 2-14 May 1948, between the termination of the Mandate and the establishment of the Israeli postal administration.

Here, in semi-besieged Jerusalem¹¹, postmarks of these types were brought in from their manufacturer in Tel Aviv to service the 3 branch post offices which continued to function in this time¹² – and so these look, in their initial period of use before wear and tear, identical to those which were in use in the rest of the country during the interim postal administration, even though the postal administration in Jerusalem only began to function from 9 May.

The book "Jerusalem and Safed Postal Services in the Transition Period" (JSPS) reproduces a 9 May 1948 dated protocol confirming that 3 postmark devices were received for use at each of the 3 branch post offices of the city (listed there as Mea Shearim, Mahane Yehuda and Rehavia)¹³, translated here:

PROTOCOL

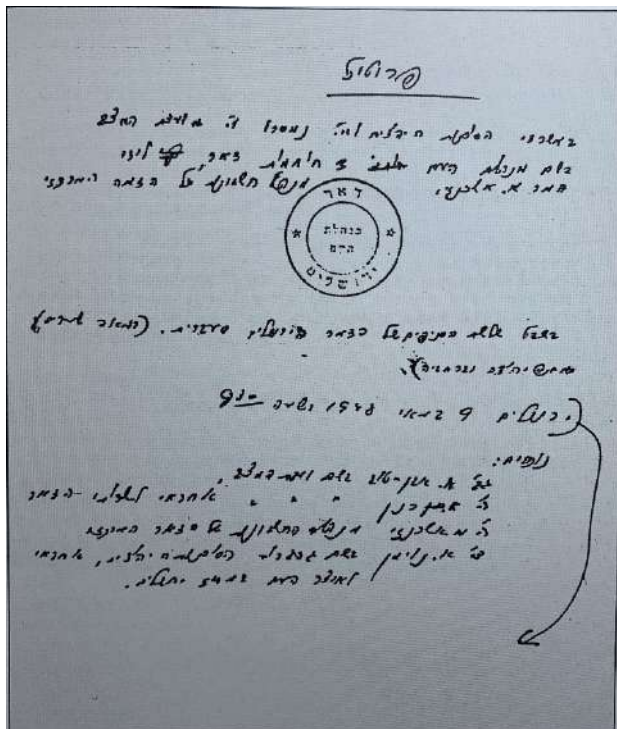
In the offices of the Jewish Agency for Palestine there were delivered by the Emergency Committee (Vaadat HaMatzav) on behalf of Minhelet Haam 3 postal handstamps to the care of A. Ashkenazi, the chief accountant of the central post office ---

---for the use of the 3 branches of the Jerusalem postal service in the Jewish area (at Mea Shearim, at Mahane Yehuda and Rehavia).

Jerusalem 9 May 1948 at 930 o'clock [presumably "am", with arrow indicating to place this line at the bottom]

Present:

- Mrs. Hanna Even-Tov on behalf of the Emergency Committee [she was its secretary and archivist]
- Mr. Avraham Renan on behalf of the Emergency Committee, in charge of the postal service
- Mr. A. Ashkenazi the chief accountant of the central post office
- Dr. A. Neuman on behalf of the treasury of the Jewish Agency, in charge of Otzar Haam in Jerusalem



¹¹ See the article in the forthcoming JerusalemStamps Bulletin #3: Jerusalem was not 'besieged' per se from 20 April until 20 June as the specialist literature writes. Access to the city was largely the result of efforts by the British Army until its departure from the area around 14 May: per archival documents haphazard surface transport continued to and from the city until at least until just after the invasion of Israel by 5 Arab armies on Saturday 15 May (eg.16-17 May), and whatever siege conditions may have existed thereafter these started to be relieved already from 1 June when the improvised 'Burma Road' started entering use. Particularly, soldiers were used to carry supplies to the city by foot using this newly created route. As such, materials which reached the city in the period were mostly brought by surface transport and not necessarily "flown" as the specialist literature strains to emphasize.

¹² "Jerusalem and Safed Postal Services in the Transition Period" by Zvi Shimony, Yeremiyahu Rimon & Itamar Karpovsky, 2004, p.106 – referenced here as "JSPS"

¹³ JSPS p.107

The specialist literature (including JSPS) writes that no such postmark/cancelling device was supplied to the city's sorting office, and past research uncovered that one bearing a similar design but with rosette devices - rather than stars - on either side, was produced locally by the Jerusalem workshop of Arie Salant, and this was the device which entered use at the sorting office on 10 May 1948 (observed in actual use from 11 May).¹⁴ Prior to 9 May the sorting office didn't function, though just at the time the interim postal administration began to function in the city, on 9 May, the office used a Mandate era single circle cancelling device to process un-postmarked mail, though very few examples are known.

I refer to JSPS with trepidation here because although they do provide information and documentation for the points raised above – and this is a widely referenced and respected specialized source, unique in its scope – the authors appear to uniquely state that this postmark was decommissioned after 20 June¹⁵; in one place they write that this postmark was replaced by the 'Liberation' type postmarks on 21 June though in another¹⁶ they write that these new postmarks serviced the newly re-established head post office's **public** counters.¹⁷

The authors made a study of the gradually deforming strikes of the rosette postmark – as is observed on other interim period devices as well – and helped instill in the philatelic community's mind that the following appearance of the postmark indicates the estimated periods of its use:

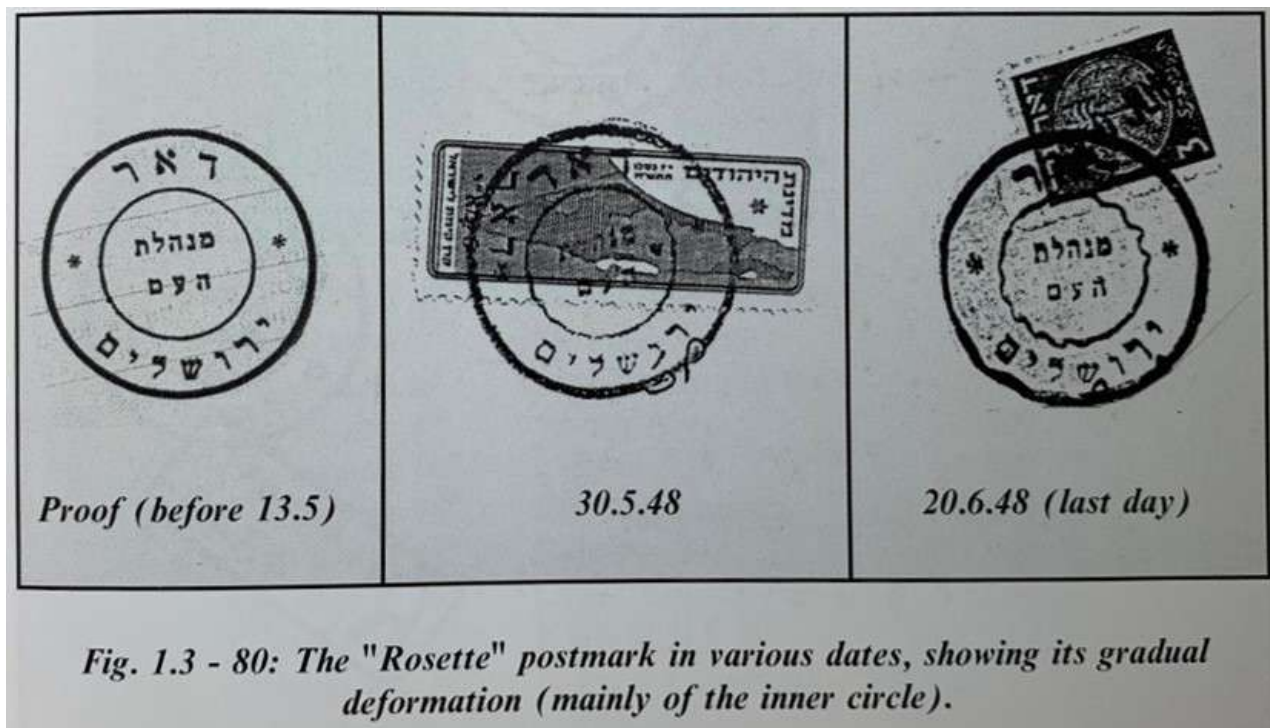


Fig. 1.3 - 80: The "Rosette" postmark in various dates, showing its gradual deformation (mainly of the inner circle).

Most influential was their assertion that the postmark stopped being used on 20 June – this gave rise to a number of theories about military mail and flown mail in this period based on the presence of the rosette marking and the physical appearance of its strikes.¹⁸

¹⁴ JSPS p.124-125 – I have reservations about the attribution to the Arie Salant workshop in spite of there existing a supposed proof book from this firm. I'm researching the matter and will publish findings as soon as I have sufficient material.

¹⁵ JSPS p.127

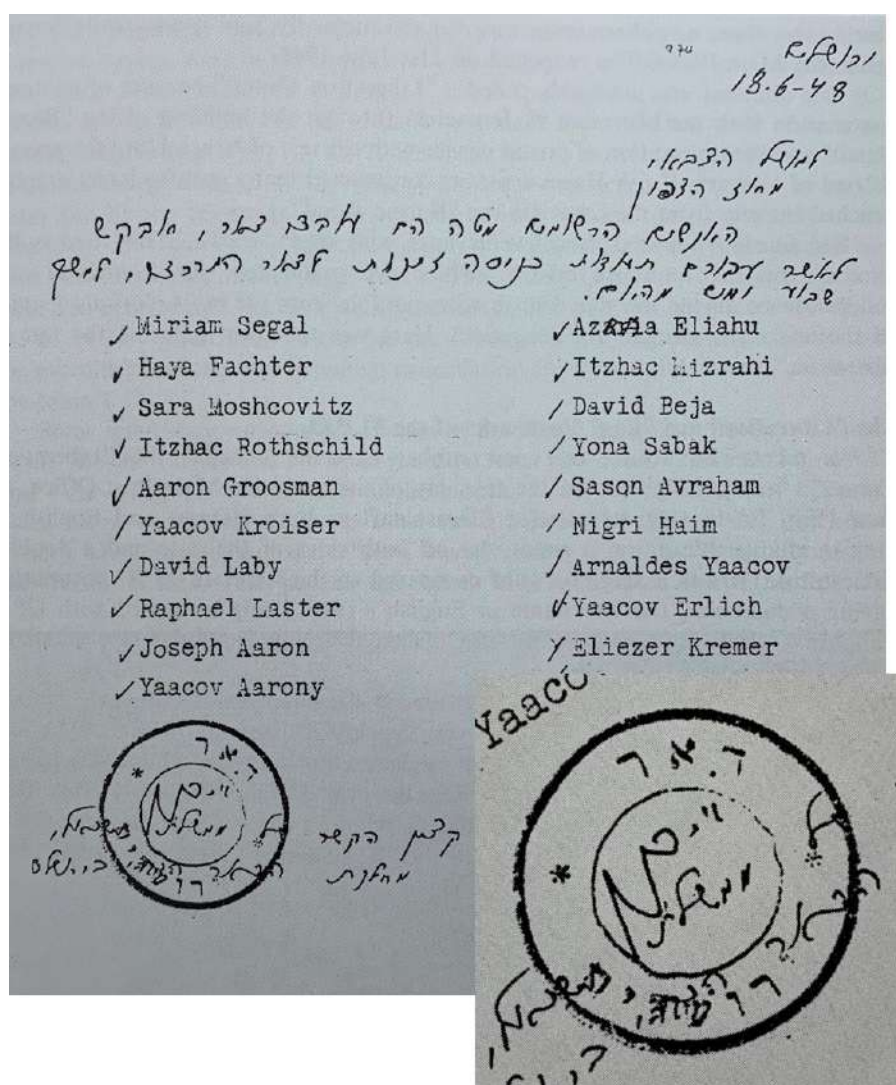
¹⁶ JSPS p.254

¹⁷ And indeed Ernst Fluri's pioneering work "The Minhelet Ha'am Period", 1973, p.59 appears to confirm this based on his census of registered mail which by necessity had to have been handed into a public counter; he does not hint at the possibility that these postmarks were used by the sorting office. **I'll double-down on my doubts over JSPS's accuracy:** they write that the Jerusalem Main Post Office opened on 21 June (eg. p.254) – **it didn't, it opened on 28 June** – see the Handbook for the press reports of 22 and 28 June.

¹⁸ Bruno Forscher's (1969) work still belongs to the era of research where the rosette was vaguely acknowledged and understood; he made no conclusions about it. Ernst Fluri (1973) more accurately stated (p.59) that the rosette is "authenticated... to 20 June" – meaning it's observed in use on mail dated up to 20 June – but he doesn't go further and say that the device was withdrawn thereafter.

In separate articles I will address issues that I have with those methodologies and theories, but here I want to present the cornerstone of my concerns by laying out 2 issues:

- 1) Based on what we see both in JSPS (i.e. p.254-259), and on mail in general, where we see very apparent over-the-counter use of the new 'Liberation' postmarks, including on registered mail – which has to have been postmarked at the counter and not through a sorting office – it's apparent that these devices only served the public counters and not a back-office function like the sorting office. (Indeed Ernst Fluri doesn't even entertain the idea that the devices served another purpose other than at the public counters, p.59.) In other words, if the rosette device was withdrawn on the 20th we presently know of no other postal device that serviced that department. Furthermore the Israeli trilingual postmarks entered use in Jerusalem starting from 4 July 1948 – it does not make sense that the sorting office would have been left without a cancelling device for 2 solid weeks.
- 2) An astounding discovery lies before our noses and those of JSPS's authors: on page 253 they reproduce a document dated **18 June** (i.e. 3 days before the supposed withdrawal of the rosette device) wherein the Jerusalem postmaster asks the Military governor to approve provisional entrance passes to 20 employees to the new head post office – and this document is stamped by a crystal clear strike of the rosette postmark (**in violet** – as observed also on mail):



Here, as in my article about the Haifa head post office in April-May 1948, I want to raise an old-new idea that perhaps there was more than 1 device of this rosette type in existence¹⁹. This is a 'concept' I'll be repeating in a few articles because it seems that there is ingrained resistance on the part of many in our community to entertain the idea that a post office or department may have had more than one postmark/cancelling device at any given time. By the same token there is equal

¹⁹ Archival correspondence reveals that at this time there were **10 employees** in the sorting and registry departments – see letter of Avraham Renan to Zvi Fridburg (Prihar) of 30 May 1948 p.102-104 in this file: <https://www.archives.gov.il/archives/Archive/0b07170680319da0/File/0b071706804d4550>

avoidance of the idea that a new device may be ordered midway through the lifetime of a certain design to augment or replace one whose strike impression is degenerating.

Indeed, as per Emanuel Glassman's research, according to his assignment of the initial numbered Israeli trilingual postmarks in 1948, the postmarks Jerusalem-1, -2, -3 and -19 were all assigned to the sorting office; Jerusalem-6 was assigned to the bulk mail section – that's at least 5 different cancelling designations (of which possibly more than one copy of each device existed) assigned to the back-room activities of the sorting office, and that's just a cursory glance (there are other numbered devices he lists vaguely assigned to the HPO or sometime later to the sorting office). Now here, according to the traditional narrative we're obliged to believe that 1 single device (i.e. one person) serviced all the activities of the sorting office in May-June 1948.²⁰

Based on JSPS's authors' own research the strike we see above from 18 June is very different from that which they display on mail either from 30 May or 20 June (although it bears light deformities from use). Fundamentally what bothers me is that I found no source cited for their assertion that the rosette exited use on June 20th, and a close reading of their research shows that they themselves don't address how it was possible for the sorting office to continue processing mail for the 2 weeks between 21 June and 3 July without a postmark, when the new trilingual devices entered local use only on the 4th.

We have to redouble our efforts to tie loose ends in our research because the consequence is that a single half-developed/half-baked idea gives rise to a crop of other theories all based on shaky or incorrect foundations, which we then have to go one-by-one and redress...

In principle, this article could have been completed here and I would have been satisfied that we've seen 'proof' that there must have been at least 2 different rosette devices in existence prior to 20 June. Nevertheless I feel that stopping here would leave this research on the cusp of making greater discoveries; it would leave us asking to learn more and keep new issues that have been revealed unresolved. So I want to go further and emphasize how much more we have to learn and discover about interim postmarks – and how much our methodologies have to change – by examining more closely that matter at hand:

I. Multiple Interim Postmarking Devices at Mahane Yehuda as a Precedent

As a segue way I'm going to draw the reader's attention to the interim postmark strikes of Mahane Yehuda. For this demonstration I'm relying only on postmarks from mail bearing the JERUSALEM-6 registry labels of that branch office; we need to use verifiable strikes that should originate from that specific branch office and not rely on any assumptions or other rules-of-thumb that may subsequently be debunked, as this would ruin the accuracy of our research.

Here, we'll recall that these interim postmarks – all of them, including the rosette type – were made of rubber, and that as we observe on mail from this period (May-June 1948), the appearance of the strikes of these postmarks gradually became distorted and deformed from use/over-use. We'll also factor in that these deformities are '**constant**': once they exist they don't go away; they repeat themselves on subsequent strikes, and go and become more pronounced and more accentuated over time.

What we know about the [initial] interim postmark of Mahane Yehuda is that very early on, from its 1st or 2nd day of use (9-10 May), it developed an outwardly protruding 'nip' along its outer ring. Readers who feel I may be unduly cautious and skeptical in my research may care to note that in collating these images from various sources, JSPS on page 274 mentions that the 2nd to last image displayed here on a mid-July cover is observed "a short time before its withdrawal (11.7.48)"; on the next page JSPS illustrates the last image on display below – dated 6 August(!), as "the latest known use of this postmark". As noted above, this source as others is replete with contradictions that go unaddressed and unresolved, and here we have to be stringent.

²⁰ "The Postal History of Jerusalem from 1948", 1978; p.54-57



10 May

11 May

On 24 June
Received mail



Late June to 3 July

1 July

2 July

c. mid-July

6 Aug

As we see from the examples above²¹ – all on JERUSALEM-6 labelled mail – the key deformities are **a nip at the left** of the outer ring and a **heavy indent** into the outer ring to the left of the Hebrew word DOAR at the top **along with a nip at the outer right** above the right star – but these deformities are not consistent over time, especially come 6 August, implying heavily that there must have been at least 2 devices at use at Mahane Yehuda (if not more).

If there is anything we can concede it's that these rubber devices do seem to exhibit similar deformities in similar places across different devices – and this may be a function of how these devices were manufactured. There is therefore a general consistency in the deformities but each set of deformities is a unique 'fingerprint' for a specific postmark device.

We now see conclusively that by using – indeed testing – the methodology of tracking deformities in the strikes we have revealed that at least 2 (or more) postmarking devices were used at Mahane Yehuda. And if this was possible there why should it not have been possible elsewhere, including the sorting office?

II. Factoring the Appearance of Linear Dater Strikes

There is a certain disingenuity in the assertion that the rosette postmark stopped being used from the 21st (or even that is it no longer observed on mail dated past June 20th): from examples of mail bearing the rosette – as indeed with the other interim postmarks of the branch post offices, from 9 May – we see that it was customary, even at the sorting office, to apply a handstamped date using an office-type dater (to clarify: in most observed instances of the rosette **cancelling** uncanceled franks these strikes **are accompanied by a date**; where the rosette appears only as a **transit mark I have never seen a dater used in addition**) – and those markings are striking by virtue of their undeformed crispness.

From 21 June onwards, at least at the head post office (of which the sorting office was a part), the new 'Liberation' type postmarks (nicknamed in the literature as the round 'Liberation' and oval 'Egg' postmarks) bore dateheads obviating the need to separately apply a handstamped date. It is possible that as part of the 'decommissioning' of these daters even the sorting office stopped applying dates to the mail it processed. It may also be that due to the wear of the dates from heavy use, we are not reading their dates correctly. Consider the series of images below with postmarks and daters: between the pair below, the 18 May date on the left bears a "1" which looks a bit like a vertical slug; on the right, the 20 June date has a smudged "2".

²¹ Source: May 10 - JSPS p110; May 11 - Aloni 'Minhelet Haam' p231; May-June 2nd convoy - T40-35; late June-July - T42-356; July 1 - T42-354; July 2 - T42-356; July c10-11 - JSPS p274; Aug 6 - JSPS p275



Among the trio below, at left we see a crisp 21 June date tied with a branch office postmark; in the center, a June era date which looks like 2 parallel slugs; and at right, a 15 June date above a heavily warped strike of the rosette (even more warped than JSPS's example of a 20 June strike, above).



Until conducting the research for this article I 'read' the date of the middle image above as being either 1 or 11 June; as we shall see in a moment, when I compare strikes of rosette marks by their date, the strike in that image looks identical to those of June 20 – but the date in the dateline looks like two parallel slugs. On closer inspection, zooming in on the image alone, the first digit may be actually be a "2", so that in light of the consistency of that decayed strike to those of June 20 (shown further down), what we're actually seeing may be a precedent-setting instance of a 21 June strike of the rosette.

The style of the daters we see in the images look similar to one another but the manner of how their digits render upon being struck may be one reason why we don't "see" dates past 20 June when the rosette is in use – until now.

Below is an image said to be a 13 May strike²² – but due to the slug-like appearance of its digits on a crisp strike of the rosette, it looks tantalizingly more like 11 May, adding credence to a long-standing argument that the rosette actually entered use that date²³: the conundrum of reading the dater strikes works both ways in trying to establish 1st dates and last dates of usage.

²² Zvi Aloni Interim Period p. 233

²³ JSPS p.123 – but they don't explain what the "mistake" was in supposing that 11 May was the real first date of use.



Indeed in preparing a 'census' of postmark strikes to identify similarities and differences I also observed numerous strikes on certain dates and no observed strikes on others, leading me to suppose that the hand-stamping work of the sorting office may have been carried out on certain dates (i.e. days of the week) and not on others, perhaps for a reason as simple as the feasibility of accessing letter boxes in the city and emptying them. (In the case of 16 May, as per a document shown in JSPS (p.108) the sorting office, like the 3 branch offices, was issued the celebratory 'Independence' postmark for use on that specific date.)

In light of our findings above, that more than one rosette postmark existed in the period 10 May – 3 July, and that when used as a transit marking the rosette is both crisply struck but not observed used with a dater, I want to propose that at least some of the clear strikes on otherwise undated mail may actually be from the period of June-July when we see from the stamped document above that another device existed relatively un-distorted in a period which according to JSPS the known device was quite deformed.

The rosette postmark is not frequently encountered but based on the reliable research that has shown its gradual deformity over time, we understand from this that the postmark was in use more often than the examples of mail known to us.

Until now the specialist literature adopted a clever methodology of extrapolating the estimated date of use of an observed rosette postmark based on the dated observation of its gradual decay – the growing and exaggerated deformities which ostensibly suggest a later-period usage of the device versus clearer strikes which imply usage closer to the device's introduction on 10 May.

The problem, as alluded to above, is that this type of methodology works only when a specific device is being tracked; when more than one device exists – unless the hallmarks of each one are known – this methodology does not work.

III. Identifying Physical Differences in Rosette Strike Templates

What plays to the advantage of the existing methodology is that in spite of me observing almost 50 different examples of strikes, few are crisp and clear enough to examine closely, and the template of each strike looks virtually identical.

Here let us distinguish between two methodologies:

- a) the existing one which tracks deformity over time – and is hard to use because many strikes are smudged or unclear
- b) looking for inherent manufacturer-produced differences in the actual template – regardless of how these strikes may appear over time due to deformity

In an earlier version of this article I had actually mapped out rosette strikes by day, attempting to identify differences or inconsistencies between them, but found in hindsight that this was laborious and tenuous due to the quality of the different strikes – and no less, the **unclear daters whose accuracy is key to such a study.**

In light of the gradually accentuated deformities developing in the postmark strikes and the frequent lack of clarity of the linear dater, I now approach this revamped examination by comparing a series of clear strikes – **perfectly horizontally aligned** – without regard to the date on which they may have been made: the idea is to identify immediately observable

differences in these strikes for these would be variations in the template itself and not differences which could be chalked up to use or unclear strikings.

Indeed the clear strikes, presumably from when the device/s is new, exhibit wide spaces between its top letters, which form the word "DOAR"; the more deformed the strike is, the more those letters specifically appear to be more closely spaced (though whether this is a function of the deformity or not I cannot presently say).

Having examined many strikes with the word DOAR, which is written from right to left in Hebrew as the letters DALED-ALEF-REISH, I see the following characteristics:

- a) The DALED appears to be consistently upward facing, in the same angle throughout all the strikes
- b) The ALEF is very slightly, almost imperceptibly vertically tilted to the right
- c) Only the REISH exhibits some variation and here we may be able to identify different templates, being different postmarking devices
 - 1) The top stroke is either **parallel to the outer ring** above it, being **downward facing**, or
 - 2) The top stroke is **not parallel** to the outer ring and **appears ever slightly flat**, or
 - 3) The letter is 'boomerang shaped', where the vertical stem is oddly stretched leftwards with the top stroke horizontal and not parallel to the outer ring; the angle of the Reish at its vortex is not 90 degrees but greater

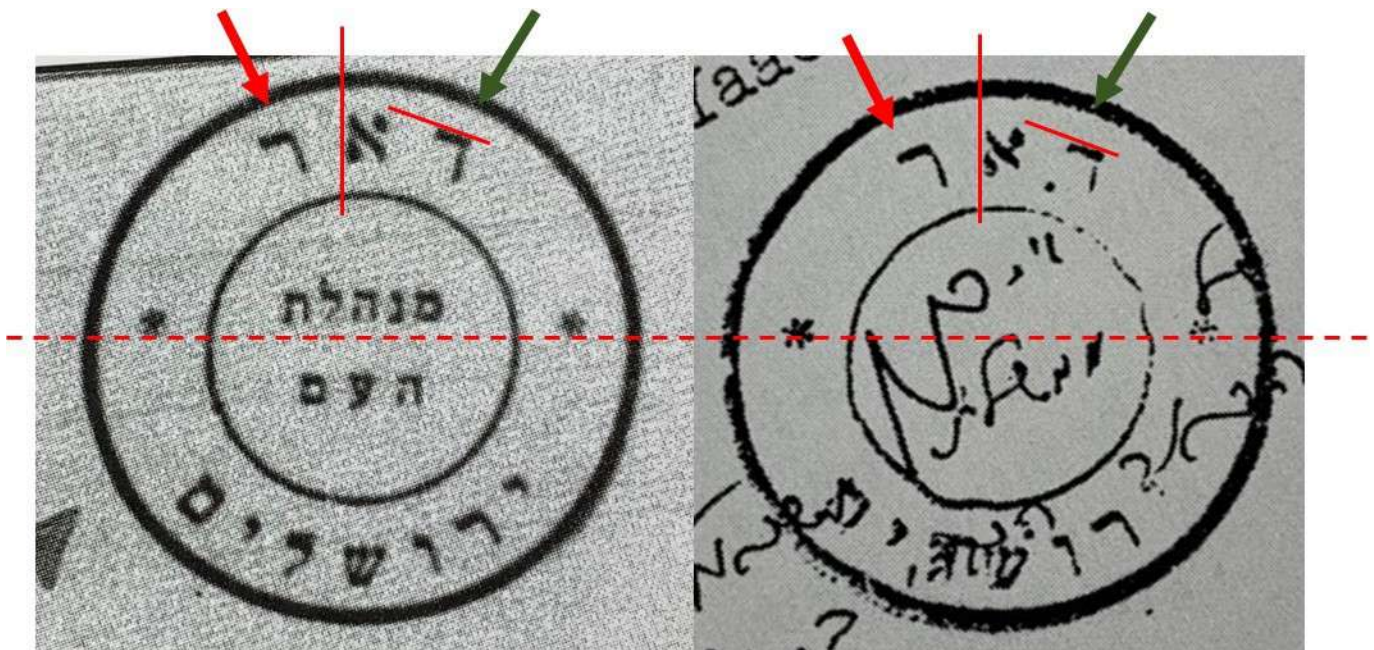
What I did find intriguing was comparing an actual strike, for example the 18 June postmark strike on the cited document, to the supposed proof strike from the Arie Salant workshop proof book; the proof strike is on the left and the 18 June strike on the right:

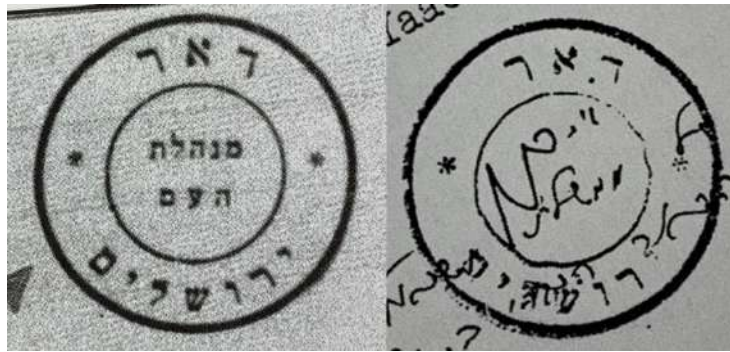
The DALED (green arrows) on both strikes appears upward facing and its trajectory would overshoot the upper tip of the ALEF by a short distance. In some cases it looks as if the DALED is either lower or flatter but having surveyed a number of such looking strikes the result is always the same.

The ALEF of the proof strike is slightly tilted rightward, so that the DALED's trajectory appears to reach its upper tip. Accounting for a slight imbalance in the image of the 18 June strike, the ALEF there too is at a slight rightward tilt – but in both cases the trajectory of the DALED overshoots the ALEF's upper tip.

The letter REISH however (red arrows) is slightly different – the REISH on the proof strike is ever so **slightly flatter** than the **downward facing** stroke on the 18 June strike, which appears to be more parallel to the outer ring of the postmark.

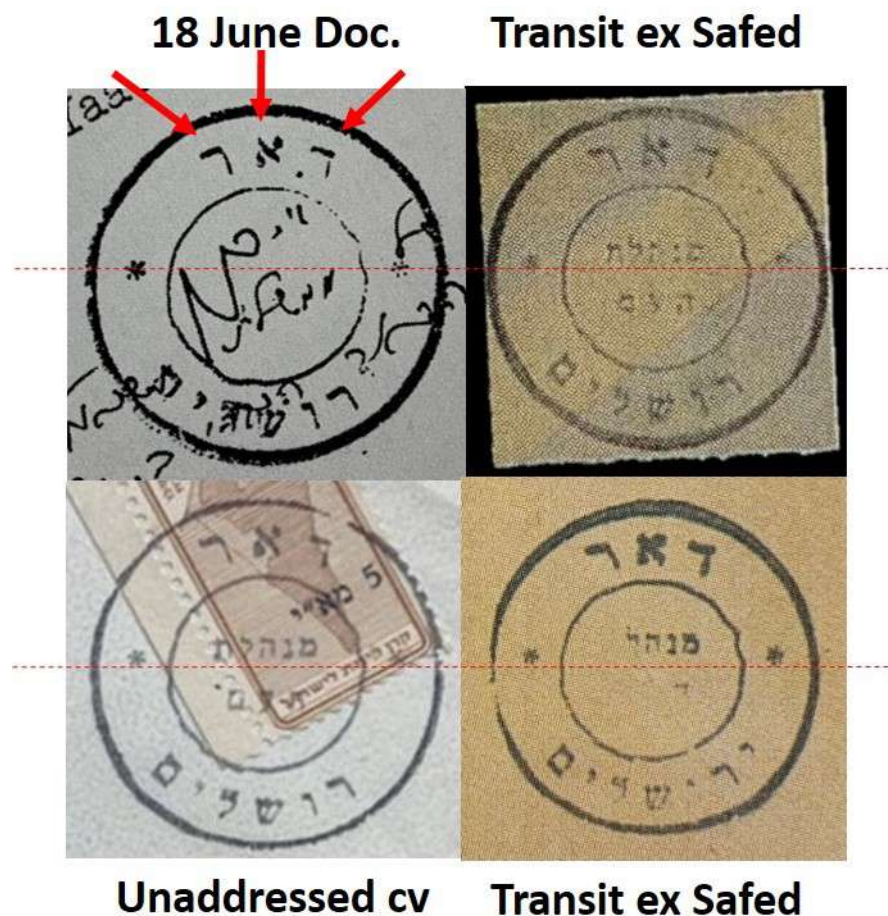
All these slight nuances are more pronounced when seeing the images in smaller size (see further below)





Applying this methodology to actual strikes as seen on mail, we see at least 2 different easily identifiable 'templates' (i.e. postmark devices) – and there may be more: below are 2 sets of strikes from 4 different sources. My purpose is merely to illustrate differences between them and no more. I tried to find counterparts for each observed pattern to demonstrate that these are not one-off cases.

I hesitate to go so far as to issue classifications, such as "type 1" and "type 2" etc. to the different templates we see because it formalizes the distinctions too much in an essay that only sets out to demonstrate that if there are clear differences between the postmarking devices – and there are – there therefore has to have been more than 1 device in use. We know this already from the 18 June strike on the document but here will apply that breakthrough to a study of strikes on mail. An actual taxonomy though is a matter for a separate article.



From left to right, top row:

- On the 18 June strike from the document above the REISH is downward facing and parallel to the outer ring. Its corresponding example below it is a strike cancelling a frank on an unaddressed envelope – unclear if philatelic or a 'proof' strike.

- The strike on the right is an undated transit mark on mail from Safed where the REISH looks like a boomerang, much wider at its vortex than a 90 degree right angle. Its corresponding example below it is another transit strike on a different cover from Safed.

Strangely I haven't found so far another strike with REISH characteristics identical to the cited Salant proof – the strikes are either downward facing and parallel to the outer ring (the vast majority) or 'boomerang' shaped.

Here then we also 'see' 2 physically different postmarking devices. We don't know if these were used simultaneously but we now know of 3 and possibly 4 different devices: the two templates illustrated just above, the 18 June dated postmark – on account of it being relatively crisp in a period where other observed strikes are deformed, and the possible proof-strike template.

IV. On Different Ink Types & Dater Typography

Beyond looking for different postmark devices based on visible differences in their templates, there is an additional dimension to this issue, and it is the simultaneous use of different colored ink and different linear dating devices:

- The **postmarks** themselves are observed in **black** and in **violet** ink on identical dates
- The **daters** are also observed in **black** and **violet** ink on identical dates – and beyond this,
 - ⇒ some daters have day-digits which are thick and serifed and others which are thin and un-serifed.

Below for example are strikes dated 13 May: on the left both the postmark and the date are in violet ink, and the dater's day-digits are thin and unserifed; to the right another postmark dated 13 May but here both the postmark and the dater are in black ink, and this dater's day-digits are thick and serifed:



Synthesis: Different Templates & Different Deformities

Notice too, that the postmarks look different if for no other reason than based on the existing methodology of tracking deformities over time: on the same date, the violet one exhibits an **outward protusion from the inner ring** (between the right star and DALED) and the black one clearly **shows no such deformity** – even if the templates look identical.

Just from this illustration, do we see here 2 different postmarking devices captured on the same date?

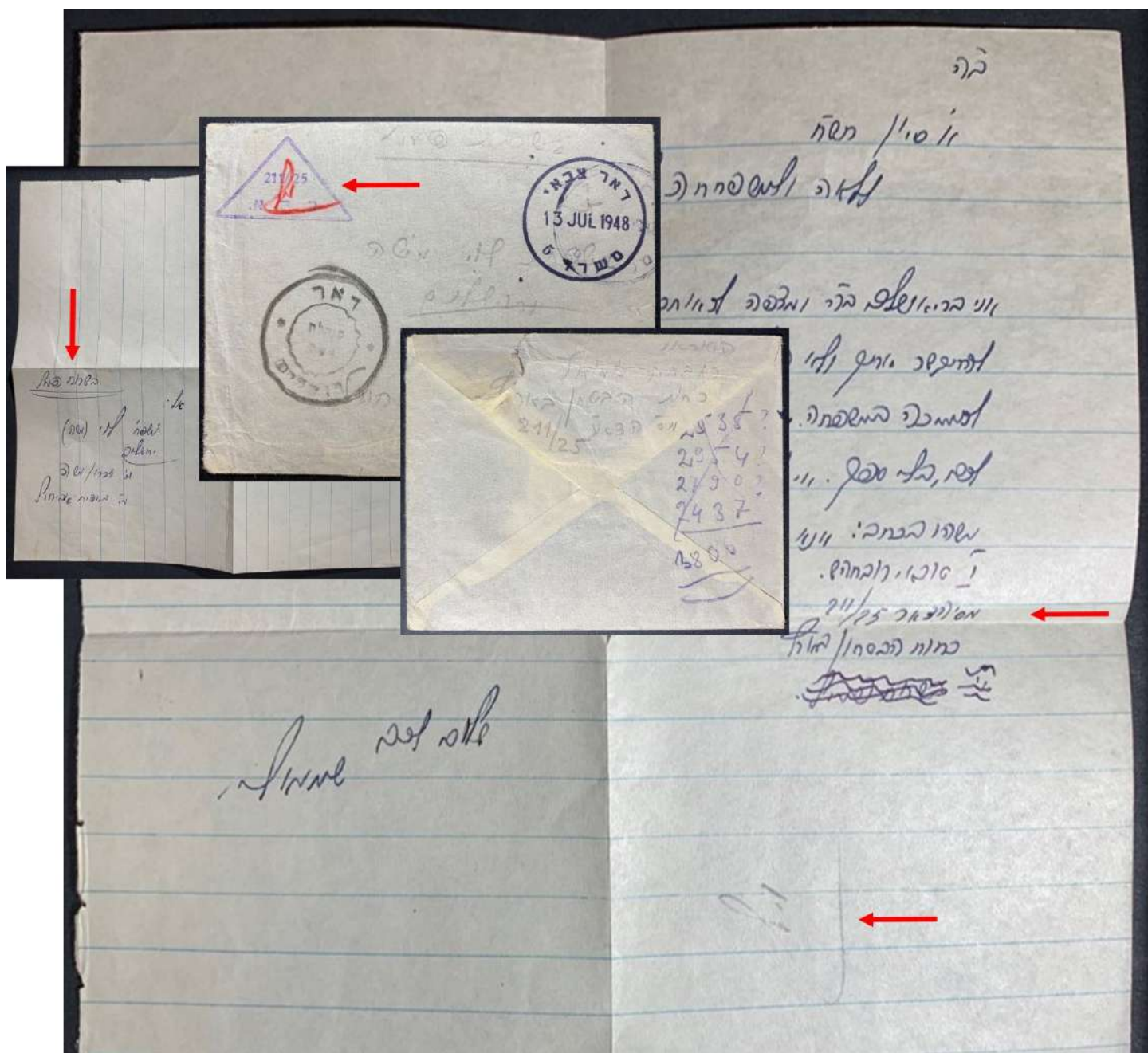
But even if the postmarks were to appear identical to one another, both as regards the template and as regards strike-deformities (and on some days they do), what can explain these ink and dater variations on the same date? Were identical-looking devices used by different clerks at different desks with different ink and/or daters, on the same day? Do these indicate different shifts? This is for further investigation but the essential intention of this investigation has been achieved: we have seen here that multiple rosette devices were used at the sorting office and apparently even simultaneously.

V. Applying What we Learned

In the specialist literature as well as at philatelic dealers, Jerusalem siege period mail with undated strikes of the rosette postmark is often presented as "flown" air mail on account of the clarity of the strike (because the postmark presumably

dates to the period of the 'full' siege on Jerusalem, particularly in May). Here we conclusively see that as long as we can determine that there was more than one postmark in use, this methodology alone on undated strikes is invalid.

At this stage, and in closing, we can better evaluate a legendary cover in the annals of Israeli army postal history: an undated "on active service" cover with an **8 June 1948** dated letter inside. This is the only known army mail with the rosette postmark and it's served as a basis for 2 different proposed theories by members in our philatelic community – one dependent on the other: on account of the large APO 5 postmark being dated 13 **July**, and a **smudged/deformed** rosette postmark strike appearing on the cover as well, some philatelists have made arguments for certain theories by using the presence of one postmark to serve as the crutch proof for explaining the presence of the other.²⁴



The current theory which this article set out to disprove – and does – is that the rosette was decommissioned on 21 June and that there was just one such postmark device in use.

Another theory whose origins are unknown to me because even the pioneering research of Kanner & Spiegel²⁵ on the Israeli army postal service does not state this, is that the large rubber APO 5 postmark was decommissioned on 18 June and

²⁴ Example – Yacov Tsachor in Tel Aviv Stamps auction #35 lot 621, describing this cover based on those two theories

²⁵ P. Kanner & Y. Spiegel "The Israeli Army Postal Services During the War of Independence, 1948-49" in BAPIP Bulletins #35-37 (1961)

replaced with the standard smaller metal device used elsewhere by the APS – and, critically, that any covers bearing the large so-called “provisional” APO 5 postmark dated “July” need to be backdated to the same day but in “June”.²⁶

Proponents of either or both these theories rely on this cover to prove their point: by their evaluation, the cover was posted by the soldier-sender (a private), processed by APO 5 on 13 **JUNE** and then handled by the civilian sorting office some time up to **20 JUNE** based on the rosette’s distorted appearance.

From the research in this article we now know that there was more than 1 rosette device in use, and that we presently have no methodology of tracking which device’s impression appears on different pieces of mail.

Separately, I have a proving cover that conclusively shows that the large APO 5 device was indeed in use in July – debunking Baruch Hurwich’s theory (which I’ll address in a future issue of the Bulletin).

Indeed the existing interpretation of this cover has been flawed: what has gone unmentioned is that **the letter** bears the endorsement “on active service” and the mailing address, in ink, on its outer enclosure plus an officer’s signature (“Weitz”) horizontally below the letter itself. The same sending information – in different handwriting, and in pencil – appears on the cover; the cover is stamped with the sender’s KABA military post office number and it is signature endorsed by the same officer, Weitz (to be eligible for free basic domestic letter postage).

The sequence of its transmission has hitherto been totally misunderstood: the letter was written in a circumstance where it could not be posted (evidenced by the OAS endorsement and address on the letter itself plus the officer’s signature there to enable it to be sent postage-free); it was subsequently entered into an envelope which was prepared for mailing **and signature endorsed** for the free postage – because it couldn’t be sent by the army at whatever location the sender (or his dispatcher who wrote the address on the cover) happened to be in:

the KABA number 211/25 is recorded by Kanner & Spiegel as belonging to the 63rd battalion of the 6th Etzioni brigade in the Jerusalem area – but the 63rd battalion was **disbanded on 21 May** owing to heavy casualties it had incurred, with its remaining members being dispersed among other units of the brigade, so we don’t know exactly what the sender’s unit was or where exactly he was stationed when he wrote his letter 3 weeks later.²⁷ Of note, the sender himself references KABA 211/25 in his letter, so this was not a spontaneous postal unit assignment initiated with the preparation of the actual envelope.

The letter was entered into a letter box of the civilian postal service (possibly outside of Jerusalem) and subsequently processed by the Jerusalem sorting office (owing to the delivery address being in that city), whereupon it was both stamped by the rosette as a transit marking and then turned over to the Army postal service for further transmission – here handled by Army Post Office 5, assigned to Jerusalem.

As Kanner and Spiegel’s articles are still the most conclusive research we have about the operations of the Army postal service in the War of Independence, when there was a separate postal service just for the army, I have to derive from their writings that the delivery of mail was handled mostly by the army in the earlier phase of the war though by November 1948 and onwards the APS relied more and more on the civilian postal transportation network for the delivery of mail from the Army.

Here then we’ve applied what we learned about the rosette postmark to elucidate the circumstances of a highly misunderstood cover that has been used to support two unfounded and highly misleading theories in Israeli postal history.

²⁶ A theory formulated by Baruch Hurwich in the Holy Land Postal History Bulletin #35 (p.844-847) & #40 (p.1155-56), also based on the [erroneous] notion that only 1 postmark device exists at a given post office. Its consequences on specialty philatelic literature are felt eg. in JSPS p.155.

²⁷ Hebrew Wikipedia entry for Etzioni Brigade:

https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%97%D7%98%D7%99%D7%91%D7%AA_%D7%A2%D7%A6%D7%99%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99?tableofcontents=0



1948 era “Doar Sadeh” Military Mail & Postal History of the Israel Police

מאמר בנושא של דואר (צבאי) עם סימון "דואר שדה", מונח שהכותב סבור שייך אך ורק לדואר של "חטיבת המשטרה", שהיא "משטרת ישראל" טרם הקמת "משרד המשטרה" ביוני 1948. לדעת הכותב המונח התייחס רק לדואר של המשטרה האזרחית בזמן שהייתה יחידת "חטיבה" תחת חסות ארגון ההגנה ולאחר מכן הצבא, עד לפיצולה מהמערך הצבאי וכינונה כגוף אזרחי עצמאי מתישהו ביוני 1948. לכן אין לצפות למצוא דואר "צבאי" ממש עם סימונים רשמיים בנוסח "דואר שדה" אלא "דואר צבא". לפי הנראה בהמשך המשטרה לא נהנתה מדואר חינם בתור "דואר רשמי".

There is a legendary cover in the annals of Israeli military history with a simple boxed Hebrew handstamp reading “Doar Sadeh” (“Field Post”). It’s appeared in a number of specialty publications and offered in the past for sale²⁸ – and no other cover like it has been seen before.



It’s an 8 June 1948 civilian-mailed letter addressed to a Natan Bren at “Training Base” of the Israel Police at the address “Army Mail 8” – not regional “APO” #8 but rather ‘post office’ #8 (unlisted in the Rosenberg/Wolman book of military unit handstamps). The cover was posted franked with an interim 10 mils stamp – 10 mils for the domestic letter rate – and sent from Petach Tikva. An incidental issue is that the stamp was demonetized as of 22 May and invalid for postage, which caused the Petach Tikva post office to mark the cover also on the field with its postmark and stamp the front with a “TO PAY” boxed instructional marking, for postage dues – twice the deficient postage (2x 10m).

The cover was re-routed and the address updated to “Haifa Police”, likely at army post office #265 - as per the triangular KABA marking. This is an important proving mark, showing that the Army Postal Service (a separate postal service from the civilian postal service) processed the ongoing transmission of this cover. The same post office also cancelled/overrode the postage dues charge, likely because the addressee was a soldier/policeman – and most likely here marked as “Doar Sadeh”

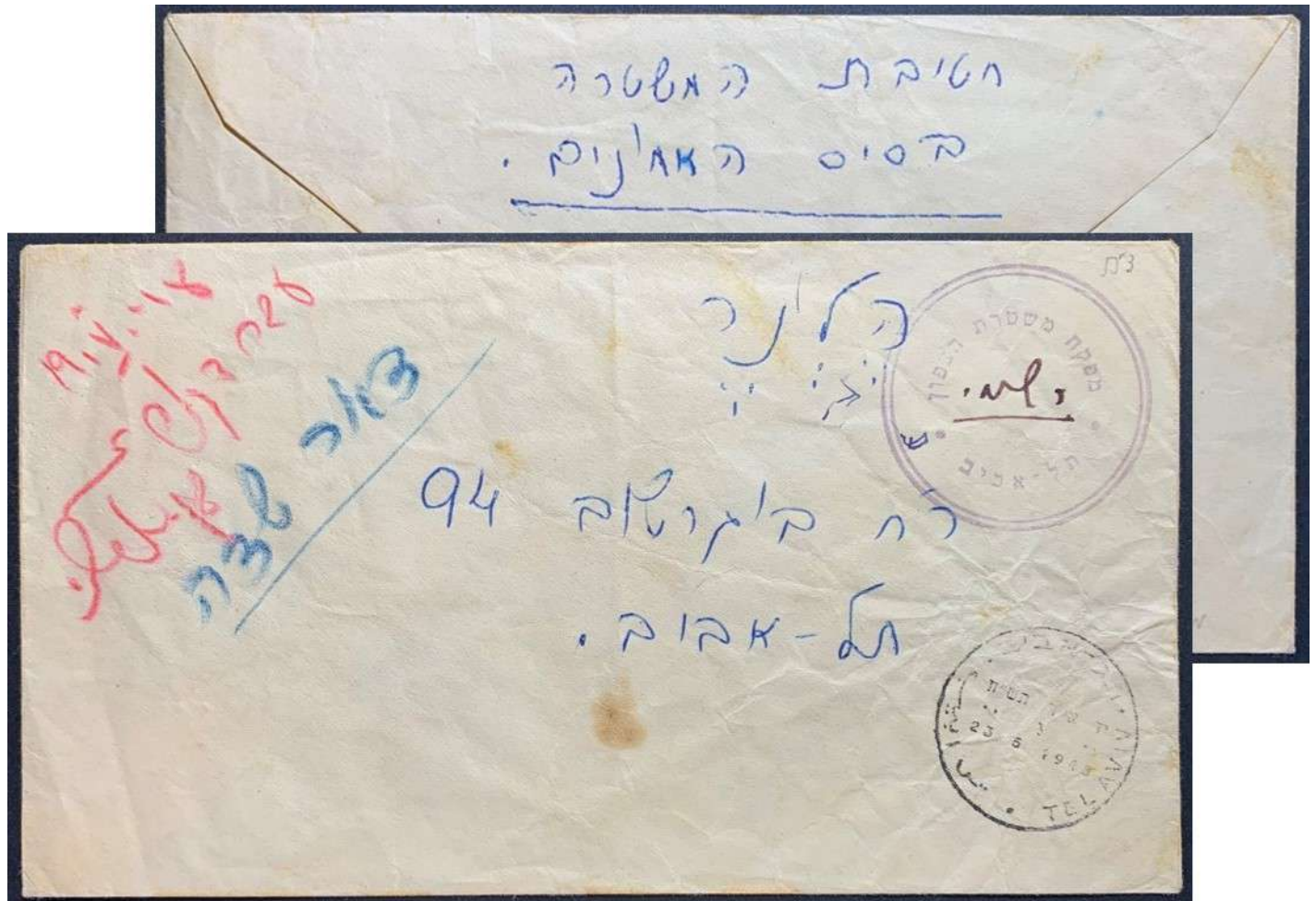
²⁸ For example, illustrated in Kanner & Spiegel in BAPIP #35 (1961), p.6; ex TAS 44/312 sale

Although the expression – ‘field post’ – seems trivial, this is not the name that Israeli military mail was given: it was called “Army Mail” (Doar Tzava / Doar Tzva’i) or simply “On Active Service” (be Sherut Pa’il) mail. Below we have such documentation from the 1st issue of the Army’s internal postal bulletin of 7 June 1948 expressly laying out how to address and return-address mail, including endorsing it as “On Active Service”.²⁹

²⁹ See mailing instructions in the last document in this file belonging to "Aloni" (Ariel Amiad), who served as the communications officer for Jerusalem and Gush Etzion in 1948 and then the IDF's chief communications officer: <http://amutakesher.org.il/Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/jerusalem.pdf>

Prior to receiving the following cover below I had wanted to script a short piece like this just to intone that I believe “Doar Sadeh” was an expression used just by the Israel Police and that this type of handstamp or endorsement is unique to the civilian police, and that as such we should not expect to see it on mail unconnected to a civilian police unit.

The cover below further strengthens my impression: here, this is a cover that was posted just prior to the establishment of the Army Postal Service on 21 May 1948 (at its Tel Aviv base at APO #3 on Hayarkon Street); it was addressed to someone by their surname “Helner” on 94 Bugarshov Street in Tel Aviv, and the return address was “Police Brigade, Training Base”. There is a postmark on the field of the Tel Aviv head post office of the civilian postal service, dated 23 May 1948 – just about the time the Army Postal Service began processing mail.



As the civilian post office did not tax this cover for not bearing postage, the envelope was likely pre-stamped by the circular handstamp of “Inspector of the Northern Police [station]” & signature-endorsed by him (Yehoshua Shamai) serving to indicate that it was eligible for free postage.

Prior to the cover’s transfer to the civilian postal service the cover was further endorsed in crayon on the top left corner dated “19 V 48” for a person whose name is hard to decipher but likely the actual sender (Ben and Partners Ben-Arzi?); below in blue crayon in different handwriting the cover is endorsed “Doar Sadeh” – ‘field post’. This would be only the 2nd known cover to me bearing a ‘field post’ endorsement, and in both cases the mail was associated with the police. **This is the only cover known to me using ‘field post’ as a dispatch endorsement to be eligible for free postage.**

Why would this term be unique to the police, and what is the police’s connection to free mail – or more broadly – to the army postal service?

To understand this cover we need to know a little police history: the civilian ‘Israel Police’ (as opposed to the army’s “military police” – Mishtara Tzva’it) was founded before the establishment of the State (14 May 1948), on 26 March 1948,

in order to proactively pre-establish an 'Israeli' (Jewish) police force which would be ready to assume public security responsibilities from the Mandatory 'Palestine Police' which was being wound up together with the Mandate.

The force's founding officers were mostly veterans of the WWII era Jewish Brigade of the British Army – and this is likely the reason why the translated ubiquitous English term 'field post' was used for the force's mail even though that expression is rarely ever used in Hebrew or in Israel in general.

The "Police Brigade" was the period name of the nascent civilian "Israel Police": it was assigned to the pre-State army, the "Hagana" (Defense Force), as a capital unit – like the other main infantry units assigned to it – and so designated a "brigade". It subsequently became a brigade level unit of the Israeli Army once the latter was established on 28 May, incorporating into it the Hagana.

The proposed plan in March 1948 was to have a force of 2600 policemen, of which 700 would be existing members of the Palestine Police; together with local recruitment, the Hagana would be responsible for releasing 1200 of its own military recruits to help supplement the manpower of the police. However 350 of the 700 existing policemen were not accepted into the newly founded force – and there was a general shortage of commanders.

To help address shortage of commanders, a public call for applicants was made of which 24 were accepted and put through the Israel Police's first "officers' training course", which ran from 14 March to 1 June 1948 at the "School for Histadrut (Labor Union) Activists" in Tel Aviv.

The referenced "training base" on the 2nd cover is likely the first and temporary absorption and training camp of the Hagana and Israeli Army at "Machane HaKelet Kiryat Meir" ("Kelet" = 'kvutzot le hachanat tironim' ==> Camp of the "squads for the preparation of recruits"), located in the open fields of the nearby Kiryat Meir neighborhood just adjoining the School grounds, in the German Templar area of Sarona, where the military ran shortened basic training courses (the "Military Police Service" also trained here initially). The Police training base subsequently moved to 'training base #1' of the Israel Police and military police at Beit Lid, and in 1949 to Kiryat Ata.

This is likely the reason why the mail here was endorsed by the commander of the Northern Police Station (Yarkon district), one of the 3 stations in Tel Aviv; Shamai was subsequently appointed to head criminal investigations in the Haifa region on 25 May (he's not the sender of the 3rd cover displayed below).

The Israel Police was detached from the army and became an independent body with the establishment of the "Ministry of Police" (headed by former policeman, Bechor-Shalom Sheetrit), in June 1948. Although I have not found in any source an exact date on which the Israel Police became an independent body of the army, in all likelihood from whatever date that was, the Israel Police subsequently lost the free mail postal concession enjoyed by the army: its mail was then processed entirely by the civilian post office and subject to full postage – the Police did not enjoy free "official mail" status as observed by the following fully-paid August 1949 postmarked cover sent by the Inspector of the Department of Criminal Investigations of the Israel Police in Haifa (15 mils base postage for an inland letter + 25 mils for the registry fee):



Here we have what may be one of the latest-dated pieces of Police mail still handled by the army postal service: a **22 June 1948** postmarked local TEL AVIV registered cover sent from a civilian to the "Inspector of the Special Police" (of the civilian police) – likely Yair Diesenhaus, the founder of the famous Diesenhaus travel agency – addressed generically to Beit HaShoeva Street in the city; a 15 mils postage stamp is missing but likely sometime after this cover was processed. The cover was subsequently transferred to the Army Postal Service and received by "BASE A" (at 121 Hayarkon Street), which processed mail for the central & southern regions, on 29 June (backstamp), and transferred to APO 3 (Tel Aviv - also at 121 Hayarkon Street) the same day (backstamped).



The address was found to be invalid and redirected by pencil notation to "Machane Yona" (Camp Yona training base) which was also located on Hayarkon Street; here too it was re-routed, being marked as "unknown" at the Camp & "Moved to Hayarkon 91" with pen notation & carmine crayon; this address was subsequently changed and the cover marked at base "HaNeviim Street - HaCarmel School"; this apparently was still incorrect and at this point, in light orange crayon, the original address was crossed out and an arrow pointing to the registry label was applied + the return address circled; the cover was returned to the civilian postal service from APO 3 on **15 July** (backstamp), whereupon the trilingual Mandate era instructional marking for reason of return was applied on the back (with "Unknown" address indicated) - and the cover was marked on front "**civilian mail**".

Here, as the cover never seemed to reach an actual police unit (eg. identified by a triangular military KABA handstamp), the "Doar Sadeh" endorsement was not applied.

With a 15 July army transit mark this might be one of the last pieces of mail handled by the army for the police once it became an independent non-army body.

For further reading see:

- Various entries in the Handbook for the dates & periods referenced in this article
- <https://www.policemuseum.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/4.5.%D7%94%D7%A7%D7%9E%D7%AA-%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%98%D7%A8%D7%AA-%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C-%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%91%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%9D.2004.%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%98%D7%A8%D7%AA-%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C.pdf>
- <https://www.policemuseum.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/4.1-.%D7%A1%D7%A4%D7%A8-%D7%94%D7%90%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%A2%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%9B%D7%A8%D7%9A-%D7%90-1948-1973.1998.%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%98%D7%A8%D7%AA-%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C.pdf>
- <https://www.policemuseum.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Police-History-1-2019-Shlomi-Chetrit.pdf>
- <http://din-online.info/pdf/mhi2.pdf>
- https://www.ybz.org.il/Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/6_Zipora_Rubin_Cat_164_LR.pdf



PAINLESS POSTAGE DUES (A PRIMER)

A 3-part article on a) understanding the basic concept, b) understanding the gold standard, c) Israel

מאמר ראשון – פרק – בסדרה של שלושה פה על הנושא של דמי דואר: בפרק הזה אני מסביר בצורה כללית מה הוא "דמי דואר" (קנסות על פריטי דואר או דמי שירות מיוחדים שגובעים שירותי הדואר) ושיטות חישובו, כשהדגש בסדרה הוא על דואר לחוץ לארץ במיוחד מ- או ל-ישראל. בפרק השני אני מנסה להסביר איך להבין את הנושא של "תקן הזהב" בענייני דואר וחשובי קנסות מבוססים על תקן הזהב, ובפרק האחרון אני מסביר איך חישוב דמי דואר בארץ על פני הזמן ושיטות החישוב המשתנות.

Part A: Postage Dues Primer

Most philatelists try discreetly to avoid this subject, believing it to be complex and opaque – a black box, like calculus. They will describe a piece of taxed mail broadly, circumventing its intricate circumstance and write simply that it was “taxed 10c” or something. The truth is, they’re right.

While postage dues are a universally agreed upon set of taxes applied to mail of various types, the method of calculating those taxes – or worse yet, trying to unravel the reason for them afterwards – is intricate, and sometimes not consistent or clear. This is a function of the specific countries (or colonies/territories) involved, the type of mail in question, the postage rates (and conditions/stipulations) involved, the time period in question, postal agreements and conventions (eg. special bilateral agreements versus international conventions), and so on – many factors compounding the complexity.

This primer is not an in-depth article about postage dues and their origins – I don’t know what they are; what this article is, is an attempt to try and explain in layman’s terms what it is, what in principle are the various methods for calculating it, and then as regards Israel/Palestine to decipher how postage dues here specifically were calculated. Owing to the scarcity of documented information, as regards the Mandate and Israel, this article focuses on the period 1946–1965 when ‘gold centimes’ were used, and a little more broadly on the period of the ‘taxe fraction’ thereafter, 1966 to the present day.

In broad strokes, just to give a survey of the concept:

- when a postal item has been sent short-paid (with the postage paid being less than the needed amount – and this includes situations like the use of invalid stamps for postage) or,
- when a special postal service has been requested when a postal item reaches its destination (like “poste restante” – holding the item at the arrival office for pickup, or “return-postage guaranteed” – for articles that couldn’t be delivered and the sender requests their return) or,
- as in times past, a postal item is found to contain undeclared valuables and a penalty is imposed (called back then “compulsory registration”),

a fee called “postage dues” is imposed. This is a duty regarded as a kind of tax in the world of mail. **For as many postal services that exist, there exist postage dues for them – and then some.**

Specifically on the matter of short-paid/under-franked mail, the standard approach to charging “postage dues” (established at the 1906 UPU Convention in Rome) is to charge twice the deficiency in the postage³⁰: if a letter cost 8 cents to mail and only 5 cents were paid, provided that it wasn’t simply returned to the sender for extra postage or refused acceptance at the counter or even sent by surface mail rather than air mail (as sometimes occurred), the letter would be dispatched – but the receiver (the addressee) would be liable to pay twice the missing postage – here, $2 \times 3 \text{ cents} \Rightarrow 6 \text{ cents}$ in total. This in principle is the outward expression of “postage dues”. There are many types as I alluded to above, but the specific application requiring twice the deficiency is the most common type and this is the one I want to focus on here.

As a procedure – again, in broad strokes – what would happen in a case like the example above, the dispatching post office (or ‘postal administration’, if another country is involved) would take notice of the underpaid postage and mark the cover with some kind of postal marking indicating that postage dues need to be charged [by the receiving post office/postal

³⁰ Every rule has an exception: in **Germany** (for example), from March 1923 through the Third Reich – until 1963 in West Germany, and until reunification (1990) in East Germany – **the method was $\times 1\frac{1}{2}$ (1.5x) the deficiency** rather than the standard $\times 2$ approach. Source: Postage Dues Mail Study Group Journal #73 (2015) p.23 - Michael Furfie “Postage Due During the German Inflation 1921-1923”

administration]. This normally takes the appearance of the letter “T” for the French word “taxe” – an internationally accepted practice – and may be written on the cover in manuscript or with a handstamp. The receiving post office (or postal administration) would take care of charging the required short-fall by doubling it and applying adhesive stamps or meter franking (as in the US) to indicate the actual collection of the tax.

Nevertheless, as we unfortunately encounter with any postal procedure (and postage dues notwithstanding), even these basic steps are not always followed and sometimes only one of the two steps above will occur – and sometimes none at all, and an under-paid letter or a letter franked with invalid stamps (i.e. revenue stamps) will simply get through the system.

That aside, delving a little deeper into the example above, what should also happen is that the dispatching post office/administration should also mark the piece of mail with a calculation of the tax to be collected, including the doubling of the deficiency – the postage that is due, the “postage dues”. The receiving office/administration is supposed to convert that calculation into the local currency and then charge the amount that is owed. On domestic mail the calculation may be done entirely by the receiving post office and then charged in the national currency.

As mentioned above, here too on this level, procedures may vary: a) the method of calculating what is owed may be done according to various approaches; b) the receiving post office/administration may likewise use a different method for converting – or calculating from scratch altogether – the amount to be paid; c) the fee charged may go uncollected and then have to be annulled; d) and even if paid, it may be done without the application of postage due franking on the piece of mail. In some cases the dispatching and receiving post office – even transit post offices – may disagree with one another as to whether to tax or even charge the tax to the cover.

On the matter of applying adhesive stamps to collect the postage dues, this may be done using a) regular postage stamps (or other stamp types), or b) specifically designated postage dues stamps – this in itself is a sub-category within the study of postage dues and postal history, an example of which is the various types and formats of stamps used for postage dues charges in Israel in May 1948.

This in broad strokes is the lay of the land of postage dues, and for those looking to jump ship now as regards postage dues on domestic mail, the rule of thumb above, of applying twice the deficiency as the tax is generally all you need to know – in addition to the applicable postage rates and provisions(!) As regards international mail though, continue reading:

Backtracking to the critical issue of methods for calculating and charging postage dues, I lay out the main methods as kindly summarized to me by Bob Medland of the [“Postage Dues Mail Study Group”](#) which I highly recommend everyone to join.

For this, I should first mention that since 1874 there has existed an organization called the “Universal Postal Union”, which over the course of its existence has established international postage rates, rules and procedures which its member countries have promulgated and accepted – and since virtually every country is now a member of the UPU, and also for the period covered by this article, the methods we will learn about below are those instituted by the UPU. There are of course rates, rules and regulations enacted by each country’s own postal administration – and this affects our study – but these all operate within the umbrella arrangements laid down by the UPU. As this article is an overview I will focus on key periods of postal history, specifically the 20th Century.

- I. As such our outline begins with the implementation on 1 Jan. 1921 of an international currency called the ‘gold franc’ adopted at the 1920 UPU Convention held in Madrid (article 12): in the wake of the financial turmoil resulting from the First World War (1914–1918) and the fluctuating currency values it caused, the idea was to adopt a universal ‘currency standard’ in the form of a ‘gold franc’ whose value would correspond “in weight and fineness to the gold coins established by the legislation in force in the various countries which have adopted that monetary unit”³¹; the postage rates of the UPU member countries would be set in their local currencies at rates defined by the Convention in terms of ‘gold centimes’.
 - a. By extension, for overseas mail, if postage dues were calculated on a piece of mail (as twice the deficient postage) these would be written by the dispatching postal administration in terms of ‘gold centimes’ so that

³¹ As expressed in Article 12 of the UPU Convention of Madrid 1920 (p.18)

the receiving administration would merely convert that international currency into their own local currency (rounded to the nearest suitable figure), for the charging of those postage dues. [To remind the reader of the ever present complexity of this subject I should mention that at this Convention, for example, a minimum postage dues surcharge equivalent to 30 gold centimes, was adopted.]

- b. That was the intention, and in practice it worked; nevertheless in this period there was another approach whereby the tax was calculated by the receiving postal administration on a proportionate basis: for example if the surface letter rate from Britain was 3d (3 pence) but a postal item was only franked 2d, the resulting deficiency was 1d; expressed in terms of deficiency as a proportion of the letter rate this was $1d/3d \Rightarrow 0.33$ (i.e. 33%). This factor was then multiplied by that **receiving administration's** own surface letter rate in local currency – and **then doubled** to account for the penalty. So for example if this piece of mail was sent to Palestine, whose surface letter rate was 20 mils, the calculation would be $0.33 \times 20 \Rightarrow 6.6$ mils; doubled for the tax this would come to 13.2 mils, rounded to the nearest possible franking in local postage – here 13m for the actual charge (in some countries the rounding could also be to the nearest fifth or tenth). Additionally, in some countries, if the calculated postage dues was a small amount, a minimum fee was sometimes charged (this amount varied by country) – more complexity.

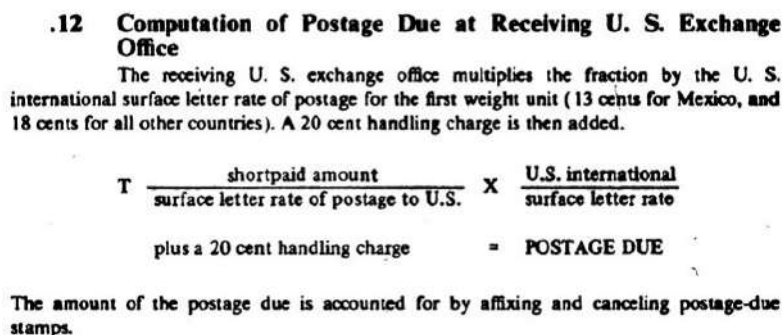
The era of the 'gold centimes' ran from 1 Jan. 1921 until 31 Dec. 1965.

- II. From 1 Jan. 1966, following the adoption of the 1964 Vienna Convention, the UPU changed the method of calculating postage dues to a fraction mark, whereby underpaid items – regardless if sent/franked for air or surface transmission – were to be marked "T a/b", where "T" indicated that a tax was being charged, "a" was double the deficiency, and "b" was the country's base letter **surface** postage rate. This factor was then to be multiplied by the receiving country's equivalent **base surface postage rate**.



Example from the US - source: Federal Register vol. 37 #204 - 20 Oct 1972, p.22588

- III. Further, from 1 Jan. 1976 the basis of the fraction was changed so that the "a" represented the deficient postage alone (without being doubled for tax), and "b" continued to be the base **surface** postage rate of the originating country. The fraction would then be multiplied by the receiving country's equivalent base surface postage rate – and the tax would be factored in as an added 'handling fee' rather than as double the deficiency. This system is essentially still in place.



Example from the US - source: Federal Register vol. 41 #242 - 15 Dec 1976, p.54876



POSTAGE DUES: THE 'GOLD SYSTEM'

2nd part of a 3-part article

Part B: Understanding 'Gold Centimes', the "Gold Standard", "Bretton Woods", the British Pound & the US Dollar

This may seem highly academic but for those of us who truly want to understand "how things work" we need to understand what these commonly used terms mean and how they interact with each other – ultimately affecting how postage rates and dues were calculated. The following essay is a synthesis of information, whose core narrative is taken directly from the publications of the UPU, with annotations from additional cited sources; this I think is the best synthesis of otherwise complex monetary history, whose point of view is taken straight from the source of our worldwide postal system:³²

Amounts intended for international comparison require the use of a common denominator. This is the case with charges, fees and compensation, at least in so far as it is considered essential that their value should be the same in all countries (1920 Madrid Congress, II 782). Similarly, transit charges and terminal dues owed by postal administrations to each other necessitate uniform rates fixed in stable currency.

During the 19th century and up to 1914, national economies and international economic relations developed under the system of free exchange and gold standard currency. The "gold standard" was used to back currencies and the international value of currency was determined by its fixed relationship to gold; gold was also used to settle international accounts. The gold standard maintained fixed exchange rates that were seen as desirable because they reduced risk when trading with other countries.³³

Imbalances in international trade were theoretically rectified automatically by the gold standard: a country with a deficit would have depleted gold reserves and would thus have to reduce its money supply; the resulting fall in demand would reduce imports and the lowering of prices would boost exports - thus the deficit would be rectified. Any country experiencing inflation would lose gold and therefore would have a decrease in the amount of money available to spend. At that time stable rates of exchange and adequate stability of each national currency's purchasing power within the country were automatically ensured by the free movement of gold.

One such currency was, up to 1914, the "franc" - namely the French franc - the weight and gold value of which had been fixed by the French law of 7 Germinal, year XI (28 March 1803), and which was, for that reason, also known as the "Germinal franc".

Stable within the limits of the gold points, this was one of the great currencies frequently used in the settlement of international accounts. The First World War, however, which completely disrupted existing economic conditions, prevented the normal operation of this monetary system. During that time, the "franc" was devalued de facto while still nominally preserving its legal gold parity.

After that war, when efforts were made to re-establish the former economic equilibrium (1922 International Conference at Genoa), it was assumed that a return to the gold standard would be one of the surest ways of achieving this aim. While waiting for currencies to return to the gold standard, the 1920 Madrid Congress therefore restored the Germinal franc as the monetary standard of the Universal Postal Union (see Representative of the Subcommittee on the Monetary Standard, 1920 Madrid Congress, II 343-380 and "Union Postale" 1938, 352 et seq), subsequently expressed "The franc adopted as the monetary unit in the Acts of the Union shall be the gold franc of 100 centimes weighing 10/31; of a gram and of a fineness of 0.900."³⁴

³² The main body of the following text and footnote on 7 Germinal is taken from the text of Article 7 with footnotes 1 and 2 as published in "Acts of the Universal Postal Union – Revised at the Hamburg Convention 1984" vol. 1, Berne 1985; p.14-15:

<https://www.upu.int/UPU/media/upu/files/aboutUpu/archivesCongressesAnnotatedActs/Congress1984Hamburg-AnnotatedActs-Vol-1-En.pdf>

³³ These two sentences and the next paragraph from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bretton_Woods_system#Previous_regimes

³⁴ The gold content was based on the French law of 7 Germinal above mentioned, which laid down that gold pieces of 9/10 fine could be manufactured at the rate of 155 twenty-franc pieces per kilogram. These 155 gold twenty-franc pieces, equaling 3100 francs, thus represented 1000g of gold 9/10 fine. Hence one gold franc equals 10/31g of gold 0.900 fine, or 9/31 of a gram equals 0.29032258g of pure gold. It is in this sense that the gold franc is used as a unit of account by the Bank for International Settlements at Basle, the joint stock of which is actually fixed in gold francs. The gold franc of 100 centimes, with a weight of 10/31g and a fineness of 0.900 was definitively fixed as the monetary unit of the Union by the 1924 Stockholm Congress (I 14, II 171, 857) and has remained unchanged.

These hopes did not materialize. However, under the name of "Swiss franc", confirmed in that country by a new monetary law dated 3 June 1931, the Germinal franc continued in existence until 1936. Its existence terminated finally on 27 September 1936 as the result of a de jure devaluation of about 30 percent, which had become necessary in order to reduce the disparity that had developed between the excessively high external value of the money (exchange) and the considerably reduced domestic purchasing power (price levels). This resulted in the drawback that all amounts fixed in gold francs, the monetary standard of the UPU, must, for purposes of settlement, be converted into a different currency.

Experience showed that the gold standard is not the means of restoring equilibrium to a disorganized economy, but that, on the contrary, it can only operate normally in a balanced economy. Admittedly, a number of countries, including all the big countries, returned to the gold standard after 1922. Eighteen countries were again operating this monetary system when in 1930 the gold standard crisis began. As a result of it, certain currencies, such as the pound sterling (in 1931) and the French franc (in 1936), entirely abandoned gold parity. Others, such as the US dollar (in 1933), while maintaining the principle of gold parity, were devalued, with the proviso that they would be further devalued if need be at any given moment. Consequently, the stability of currencies has since then no longer been guaranteed solely by the legal monetary system. Although the gold franc, as defined in Article 7 of the UPU Constitution, no longer exists anywhere as a national currency, it nevertheless continues to render useful service in international relations in which gold as such has retained its importance in settling accounts between countries.

In the interwar period (1919-1939), supplementing the use of gold was the British pound. Based on the dominant British economy, the pound became a reserve, transaction, and intervention currency - but the pound was not up to the challenge of serving as the primary world currency, given the weakness of the British economy after the Second World War.³⁵

Since the Second World War international payments have been greatly influenced by the agreements concluded at the Monetary and Financial Conference held at Bretton Woods from 1 to 22 July 1944.

The rules of Bretton Woods, set forth in the articles of agreement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF, officially established on 27 Dec. 1945) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), provided for a system of fixed exchange rates. The rules further sought to encourage an open system by committing members to the convertibility of their respective currencies into other currencies and to free trade.

In principle each member country of the IMF declared the official gold parity of its currency and undertook to intervene in the financial market to ensure that exchange rates did not fluctuate by more than one percent around this parity recognized by the IMF; adjustments of these parities by more than 10 percent required the approval of the IMF.

In practice, what emerged was the "pegged rate" currency regime: members were required to establish a parity of their national currencies in terms of the reserve currency (a "peg") and to maintain exchange rates within plus or minus 1% of parity (a "band") by intervening in their foreign exchange markets (that is, buying or selling foreign money). The U.S. dollar was the currency with the most purchasing power and it was the only currency that was backed by gold. (Additionally, all European nations that had been involved in World War II were highly in debt and transferred large amounts of gold into the United States, a fact that contributed to the supremacy of the United States.) Thus, the U.S. dollar was strongly appreciated in the rest of the world and therefore became the key currency of the Bretton Woods system, serving as its "reserve currency". This meant that other countries would peg their currencies to the U.S. dollar, and—once convertibility was restored - would buy and sell U.S. dollars to keep market exchange rates within plus or minus 1% of parity. Thus, the U.S. dollar took over the role that gold had played under the gold standard in the international financial system, making gold - at least in theory - the kingpin of the international payment mechanism.

To bolster confidence in the dollar, the U.S. agreed separately to link the dollar to gold at the rate of \$35 per ounce. At this rate, foreign governments and central banks could exchange dollars for gold. Bretton Woods established a system of

The 1979 Rio de Janeiro Congress linked the gold franc to the SDR by means of a linking coefficient of 3.061 gold francs for 1 SDR, which corresponds to the relative gold values of these two monetary units when the SDR was still defined in terms of gold ($0.290323/0.888671 = 0.326693 = 1/3.061$) (il 493 and 494, ill 904). Since then, the definition of the gold franc is only of historical value. The gold franc in the Acts of the Union is not convertible through the value of gold on the financial markets, but through the SDR (see UPC, article 8 and 1984 Hamburg Congress, Congress/C3-PV2).

³⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bretton_Woods_system#Previous_regimes

payments based on the dollar, which defined all currencies in relation to the dollar, itself convertible into gold, and above all, "as good as gold" for trade. U.S. currency was now effectively the world currency, the standard to which every other currency was pegged. As the world's key currency, most international transactions were eventually denominated in U.S. dollars.³⁶

Now, postwar world capitalism suffered from a dollar shortage: the United States was running large balance of trade surpluses, and U.S. reserves were immense and growing; it was necessary to reverse this flow. Even though all nations wanted to buy U.S. exports, dollars had to leave the United States and become available for international use so they could do so. In other words, the United States would have to reverse the imbalances in global wealth by running a balance of trade deficit, financed by an outflow of U.S. reserves to other nations (a "financial account deficit"). The U.S. could run a financial deficit by either importing from, building plants in, or donating to foreign nations. From 1947 until 1958, the U.S. deliberately encouraged an outflow of dollars, and, from 1950 on, the United States ran a balance of payments deficit with the intent of providing liquidity for the international economy. One of the ways in which this was accomplished was by sending Dollars out through various U.S. aid programs.³⁷

By 1960 economists began to notice that holding dollars was more valuable than gold because constant U.S. balance of payments deficits helped to keep the system liquid and fuel economic growth – but the consequence of this was a catch-22 ("Triffin's Dilemma"): if the U.S. failed to keep running deficits the system would lose its liquidity, not be able to keep up with the world's economic growth, and thus bring the system to a halt; but incurring such payment deficits also meant that, over time, the deficits would erode confidence in the dollar as the reserve currency created instability.³⁸

In August 1971 the United States suspended the official gold convertibility of the dollar and the other member countries abandoned their gold parities, which had been agreed with the IMF. In January 1976, the IMF approved the principle of demonetizing gold and that decision officially came into force on 1 April 1978. Since then, the member countries of that United Nations specialized agency may no longer make any reference to gold in fixing the value of their currency. As a result, the gold franc can no longer fill in the same way the role that it previously played in international postal accounting, whether in the field of fixing charges and rates or in the preparation and settlement of accounts. However, proposals to change the monetary standard of the Universal Postal Union or to amend Article 7 of the Constitution were rejected at both the 1979 Rio de Janeiro and 1984 Hamburg Congresses (see 1979 Rio de Janeiro Congress, il 1088, 1265-1270 and 1277-1286; 1984 Hamburg Congress, Congress/C 3 - PV 2, il 272-275).

As a result, the monetary standard used in the Universal Postal Convention (UPC) Agreements and in their 'Detailed Regulations' remained the gold franc, although even the 1979 Rio de Janeiro Congress recognized the need to base rates and charges as well as international postal accounting in general on the actual relationship of national currencies to the IMF accounting unit which is at present the Special Drawing Right (SDR) (see UPC, Article 8 and UPC 'Detailed Regulations' articles 102, 103 and 104). In another development, the 1984 Hamburg Congress decided that amounts expressed in gold francs and gold centimes in the Acts of the UPU would be supplemented by their exchange value in SDR calculated on the basis of the linking coefficient of 1 SDR = 3.061 gold francs (resolution C 52) (see also UPC article 8, note 4).

The 1989 UPU Washington Congress subsequently abolished the gold franc and replaced it with the IMF accounting unit (il Congress/C 3 - PV 3) in Article 7 of the UPU Constitution: "The monetary unit used in the Acts of the Union shall be the accounting unit of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)."

That decision was not only consistent with the wishes of the great majority of Union member countries, but corresponded to a fact widely observed in most of the postal administrations. Only a few postal administrations still continued to use the gold franc for preparing accounts, the totals of which were then converted into SDR (Special Drawing Right) for settlement. Introduction of the SDR into the Acts of the Union shortened the text of the provisions while simplifying the procedures for settlement of accounts.³⁹

³⁶ The above 4 paragraphs: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bretton_Woods_system#Fixed_exchange_rates

³⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bretton_Woods_system#Dollar_shortages_and_the_Marshall_Plan

³⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bretton_Woods_system#U.S._balance_of_payments_crisis

³⁹ Taken from the text of Article 7 as cited in "UPU Constitution General Regulations subsequent to 1989 Washington Convention" vol 1, Berne 1991; p.14: <https://www.upu.int/UPU/media/upu/files/aboutUpu/archivesCongressesAnnotatedActs/Congress1989Washington-AnnotatedActs-Vol-1-En.pdf>



UNDERSTANDING ISRAELI POSTAGE DUES

3rd part of a 3-part article

Part C: Understanding Palestine Mandate & Israeli Postage Dues, 1946–1980s

Having created the conceptual framework for understanding the idea of postage dues, specifically on international mail, and the various ways in which these were calculated and charged, let's now put on some rubber gloves and approach the seemingly untidy matter of understanding how these were calculated here in Israel.

Understanding Israel's postage dues "system" is an exercise in wading through incorrect – but seemingly reasonable – basic assumptions; confronting inaccurate primary source information, even from the postal services; getting misled by the seemingly intuitive relationship between the local currency and its basis, the British Pound; and the surprising difficulty of confirming seemingly ordinary information such as period exchange rates. As with most of the universe of philately, what has hampered our understanding of Israeli postage dues is a lack of **reliable** first-hand information – a conflict between correct and incorrect source information as well as theoretical versus actual policy.⁴⁰ **The State of Israel's currency and postal services were literal continuations of the Mandate's existing branches as of 15 May 1948 but as we shall see, just below the surface – as regards postage dues – everything fundamentally changed from that day.**

Until now students of early Israeli postal history (1948–1953) wondered how it was possible for the calculated postage dues on incoming mail to be so high: if a cover was marked "T30c" for instance, it was charged locally 30 mils rather than the supposed local value based on converting the gold centimes back into Israeli mils (the fractional currency of the Israeli Pound). In more egregious cases a cover might be marked "T60c" ... and charged 200 prutot (the equivalent replacement fractional currency of the Israeli Pound).

One popular idea, based on actual circumstances, is that the Israeli postal administration suffered from a 'brain drain' and poor training – as attested to by press reports from 1948–49. In the most blatant form, about 75% of the Mandate's postal service was staffed by Arabs; the senior and professional management was mostly British. With the establishment of the State (15 May 1948), most of these staffers were lost and for months thereafter the Israeli postal administration suffered understaffing and lack of experience. The implication of all this was, postage dues on foreign mail were being miscalculated either because postal clerks didn't understand how to calculate them or they were being rounded to an easy sum on automatic parity with gold centimes. An extension of this notion is that as Israel was not a member of the UPU until admitted formally on 24 Dec. 1949, perhaps she was employed a unique method of her own for calculating postage dues.

These notions are incorrect: though understaffed, Israel was trying to join the UPU right from the start – she had to have been adhering to certain standards in order to effectively be integrated into the Union.⁴¹

The source of our quandary was that the supposed exchange rate between Israeli fractional mils/prutot and the gold centimes (at a rate of 1m to 2g ctms) was seemingly being ignored by the Israeli post office. The problem as we shall see is that our calculated rate was incorrect – until now.

1. Understanding the Local Currency

The source of our problem was a misunderstanding of how to extrapolate the Israeli equivalent of gold centimes: there was no apparent published information and we had to find a workabout, and this was based on the fact that the Mandate's and early Israel's currency was pegged to Britain's at parity – presumably the cornerstone for approaching our subject:

The "Palestine Pound" (LP) was the currency of the Mandate from 1 November 1927 to 14 May 1948, and of the State of Israel from 15 May 1948 to 23 June 1952, when it was formally replaced with the Israeli Lira.

⁴⁰ Indeed even with access to the Israeli postal guides ("מדריך הדואר") as late as 1961, we have no concrete information beyond the mere "doubling of the deficiency" – these official publications provide no details how overseas postage dues were calculated and charged, see the July 1957 edition (p.92 - <https://www.archives.gov.il/archives/Archive/0b071706800416b8/File/0b0717068955b55d>) and Sept. 1961 edition (p.100 - <https://www.archives.gov.il/archives/Archive/0b071706800416b8/File/0b0717068955b732>).

⁴¹ In principle Israel could have joined the UPU from the moment she became independent, the reason this did not happen is because of UPU procedure to not accept new members ("act of adherence") to a Convention about to expire (30 June 1948) – see pg.99 here: <https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2308866>

To be precise, the Palestine Pound was replaced on 17 Aug. 1948 with the Israeli Pound (also known as the Israeli Lira – IL) but remained set at the same exchange rate, with the existing Israeli coins and banknotes still being used, so the change was largely nominal until the coins and banknotes were replaced in 1950 (coins) and in 1952 (banknotes) with actual Lira denominated pieces.^{42 43}

The Palestine Pound (and Israeli Pound) was divided into 1000 'mils' (and later, as of 24 Dec. 1948 Israeli 'prutot') – this was the only fractional currency to the local Pound, both during the Mandate and in Israel until 31 Dec. 1959.⁴⁴

With the launch of the Palestine Pound in 1927, the Palestine Currency Board (based in London) decided to link its value to the British pound – fixing it on parity in value. The one pound gold coin would contain 123.27447 grains of standard gold.⁴⁵

The Israeli Pound (formally renamed the 'Israeli Lira' on 1 May 1951) became the official sole currency of Israel from 9 June 1952 until 23 February 1980; its symbol was "IL" (or IL). It replaced the Israeli adopted Palestine pound and was also pegged to the Pound Sterling at par until this was abolished on **1 January 1954**. The Israeli Lira was subdivided into 1000 Prutot.

On 1 Jan. 1960 the subdivision of the Lira was changed from 1000 Prutot to 100 Agorot. The Lira currency was replaced by the [Old] Shekel (IS) on 24 February 1980, at the rate of 10 Israeli pounds = 1 Shekel. On 1 January 1986, following a period hyper-inflation in 1985, the old shekel was replaced by the current "New Israeli Shekel" (NIS) at a ratio of 1000:1.⁴⁶

2. Understanding Britain's Currency

Until its decimalization on 15 February 1971, when the British pound (£) was divided up into 100 pence, from the year 1066 until then, the Pound had been divided into 20 Shillings (noted by the letter "s", each worth 12 pennies aka 'pence', noted by the letter "d"), or 240 pence; a 'halfpenny' was composed of 2 'farthings' (and 2x halfpence constituted 1 penny).

If a multiple denomination is written, such as "£1–1s–0d (£1/1/-)", this is 21s (21 Shilling) – also worth 1 'guinea'. The notation £4–8–4d (£4/8/4d) is read: 4 pounds, eight shillings and fourpence.⁴⁷

3. Associating the Two Currencies

As such, the Mandate/Israeli currency's basic unit was 1/1000 of the main unit (Pound/Lira) but the British was just 1/240 of £ Pound Sterling.

To establish an association between them, where $1/1000 = 0.001$ and $1/240 = 0.004166$, meant that $240d/1000 = 0.24d \Rightarrow$ 1pruta: **0.24 pence = 1 mil/pruta**, and **1 pence = 4.17 mils/prutot** – and **this association was valid for as long as Mandate/Israel's currency was on parity with the British Pound**.

4. The First Fallacy – there's no connection between the local currency & British currency for postage dues

The fallacy in our postage dues calculation stemmed from the fact that in order to create a workabout formula for establishing the local currency's worth in gold centimes, we relied on the corresponding value of the British pence in gold centimes: if in 1946 1d = 8g ctms, using the above association between Palestinian and British currencies (4:1), 4 mils should also be worth 8g ctms, or **1m = 2g ctms**.

And in light of the fact that the Israeli postal administration, as of 15 May 1948 (and the interim administration prior) adopted the Mandate's postage rates and procedures which had been in place until its termination on 14 May, we would expect that postage dues calculations would similarly be based on the exchange rates between British pence & gold

⁴² Palestine Pound in Hebrew: https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%94_%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%A5-%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%AA

⁴³ On the replacement of the banknotes, in Hebrew:

https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%94%D7%97%D7%9C%D7%A4%D7%AA_%D7%A9%D7%98%D7%A8%D7%99_%D7%91%D7%A0%D7%A7_%D7%95%D7%9E%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%95%D7%94_%D7%97%D7%95%D7%91%D7%94,_1952

⁴⁴ Israeli Agora: [https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%90%D7%92%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%94_\(%D7%9E%D7%98%D7%91%D7%A2\)](https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%90%D7%92%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%94_(%D7%9E%D7%98%D7%91%D7%A2))

⁴⁵ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestine_pound

⁴⁶ https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_pound

⁴⁷ <http://projectbritain.com/moneyold.htm>

centimes and British pence & Palestinian mils. In principle, a genius extrapolation – but in practice this was profoundly incorrect.

Foreign postal documents can shed valuable information of postal matters of local concern: the United States Official Postal Guides (“USOPG”) of 1946–1953 (discontinued in 1954) contain standardized tables of postage rates of foreign countries – in the local currencies and in gold centimes – on mail items sent to the US. These guides were published annually in July; in some editions all the rates were displayed in both local and gold centimes currency, in others only for some of the postal items, and in a few cases the gold centimes equivalent was not published at all (as in 1949; I haven’t been able to obtain the guides for 1947 and 1952).

This recently uncovered information shows that the gold centimes equivalents for postage rates were not consistent with standard currency conversions – **at least for postage dues calculations**: as we see from the Postal Guide for July 1946 (p.43), for Palestine, the ratio between 1 mil and 1 gold centimes was either at parity (as per column 5 for “other articles”) or even 0.8m:1g ctms as per the conversions for the other columns – this is not 1m:2g ctms as calculated above (based on the relation of 1d:8g ctms as documented for this period and even shown for Britain in this Postal Guide on p.41).

A seemingly small difference is a factor of 100% or more, and the result is a complete miscalculation of postage dues.

55. RATES OF POSTAGE IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES ON ARTICLES MAILED TO THE UNITED STATES—Continued

[5 gold centimes is the postal equivalent of 1 cent, United States currency]

[Rates for prints in relief for use of the blind—the postal equivalent of 3 gold centimes per 1,000 grams]

[Weight unit (see column below): for letters from countries and colonies marked (a) 1 ounce; (b) 20 grams (about ¾ ounce); (c) 15 grams; (d) 25 grams; (e) ½ ounce]

1 Countries	2 Letter rates for the first weight unit		3 For each additional unit			4 Single post cards each*		5 Other articles per 50 grams equal to 2 ounces		6 Small packets—minimum charge, equivalent to 50 centimes		7 Charge for registration and return receipt	
	Currency of country	Centimes	Currency of country	Centimes	Weight unit	Currency of country	Centimes	Currency of country	Centimes	For each 50 grams or 2 ounces	Centimes	Registration	Return receipt
Nevis with Anguilla	3 pence	30	2 pence	20	a	2 pence	20	1 penny (note 3)	5	2 pence	10	3 pence	5 pence
New Caledonia and dependencies	4 francs	25	2.40 francs	15	b	2.40 francs	15	80 centimes	5	1.60 francs	10	4 francs	6 francs
Newfoundland	5 cents	25	3 cents	15	a	3 cents	15	1 cent	5	2 cents	10	5 cents	5 cents
New Guinea, British (Papua)	3 pence	25	2 pence	15	a	2 pence	15	1 penny**	5	1½ pence	10	3 pence	3 pence
New Hebrides	30 gold centimes	25	20 gold centimes	15	b	20 gold centimes	15	5 gold centimes	5	10 gold centimes	10	30 gold centimes	30 gold centimes
New Zealand with Cook Islands and Western Samoa	3 pence	30	1 penny	10	e	1½ pence	15	See note 24		1½ pence	10	4 pence	3 pence
Nicaragua	10 centavos	4	10 centavos	4	b	8 centavos	1	See note 4		See note 17		20 centavos	10 centavos
Niger	4 francs	25	2.40 francs	15	b	2.40 francs	15	80 centimes	5	1.60 francs	10	4 francs	4 francs
Nigeria	4 pence	18	3 pence	14	a	3 pence	14	½ penny	5	1 penny	10	3 pence	3 pence
North Borneo (State of)	12 cents	25	8 cents	15	a	8 cents	15	3 cents	5	6 cents	10	15 cents	12 cents
Norway	40 ore	25	20 ore	16½	b	25 ore	16½	10 ore	5	15 ore	10	40 ore	40 ore
Nyasaland Protectorate	3 pence	25	2 pence	15	a	2 pence	15	1 penny	5	See note 17		4 pence	4 pence
Palestine	20 milliemmes	25	13 milliemmes	15	b	13 milliemmes	15	5 milliemmes	5	8 milliemmes	10	15 milliemmes	15 milliemmes
Panama (see note 25)	2 centesimos	10	2 centesimos	10	b	1 centesimo	5	½ centesimo	5	See note 17		10 centesimos	5 centesimos
Paraguay	5 centimos	5	5 centimos	5	b	5 centimos	5	See note 8		See note 18		20 centimos	20 centimos
Peru	15 centavos	13	10 centavos	9	b	4 centavos	3	See note 27		See note 17		20 centavos	20 centavos
Philippines													
Poland (including Danzig)	10 zlotys	25	6 zlotys	15	b	6 zlotys	15	2 zlotys	5	4 zlotys	10	10 zlotys	10 zlotys
Portugal, including the Azores and Madeira Islands	1.75 escudos	25	1.00 escudo	15	b	1.00 escudo	15	35 centavos	5	See note 17		2.00 escudos	2.00 escudos
Portuguese colonies in Africa, Angola, Cape Verde Islands, Portuguese Guinea, Mozambique, St. Thomas and Prince Islands	do	25	do	15	b	do	15	do	5	do		do	Do.
Portuguese colonies in Asia and Oceania:													
Portuguese India	2½ tangas	25	1½ tangas	15	b	1½ tangas	15	½ tanga	5	See note 17		4 tangas	4 tangas
Macao	20 avos	25	12 avos	15	b	12 avos	15	4 avos	5	do		30 avos	30 avos
Timor	do	25	do	15	b	do	15	do	5	do		do	Do.
Reunion	4 francs	25	2.40 francs	15	b	2.40 francs	15	80 centimes	5	1.60 francs	10	4 francs	4 francs
Rhodesia, Northern	3 pence	30	2 pence	15	a	2 pence	15	½ penny	5	See note 17		4 pence	3 pence
Rhodesia, Southern	do	30	do	20	a	do	20	do	5	do		do	Do.
Rumania	1,500 lei	25	900 lei	15	b	900 lei	15	300 lei	5	600 lei	10	2,200 lei	1,600 lei
Salvador, El	8 centavos	25	6 centavos	20	b	5 centavos	15	See note 16		See note 17		15 centavos	15 centavos
Sarawak	15 cents	25	8 cents	15	a	8 cents	15	3 cents	5	4 cents	10	15 cents	15 cents
Saudi Arabia (Kingdom of)	3 grouch	25	2 grouch	15	b	2 grouch	15	½ grouch	5	2 grouch	10	3 grouch	3 grouch
Senegal	4 francs	25	2.40 francs	15	b	2.40 francs	15	80 centimes	5	1.60 francs	10	4 francs	4 francs

For notes or references see pp. 45, 46 and 47.

Postal Union (regular) mails

In other words – *at least for calculating postage dues* – there was no connection whatsoever between Palestine/Israel's currency link to the British Pound, and Palestine/Israel's currency link to gold centimes – each was independent of the other. Remember, Palestine and later Israel's currency were linked to the British Pound until 1954.

BASIC CONVERSION RATES BETWEEN LOCAL CURRENCY & GOLD CENTIMES PER USOPG								
	July 1946	July 1947	July 1948	July 1949	July 1950	July 1951	July 1952	July 1953
US	1c = 5gc		1c = 3gc	?	1c = 3gc	1c = 3gc		1c = 3gc
UK	1d = 8gc		1d = 8gc	?	1d = 7gc	1d = 7gc		1d = 5gc
Palestine/Israel	1m = 1gc		N/A	N/A	1m = 1gc	1m = 1gc		4m = 1gc

Source: USOPG 1946–1953 except where blank

As Israel was not a member of the UPU in the period July 1948/July 1949 – and data is missing for 1947 – we do see that in 1946 it was 1m = 1gc and likewise in 1950, so it may be safe to reason that this rate stayed the same for the intervening years – **but actually it's not, see just below**. We will get affirmation of that with some information on currency rates, just below – but here we have a sort of 'proving cover' showing that in Dec. 1948 the rate was indeed 1:1, as **confirmed by the post office in Hebrew manuscript "40 mils"** just below the [South African] T 40c tax cachet (the period base airmail postage rate to Israel is observed on mail as "1/" – 1 shilling or 12 pence – which means here it was deficient 3d, taxed 6d and charged 40g ctms at a rate of 6.66g ctm per 1d):



Source: Michael Furfie in PDMSG Journal #85 p.20

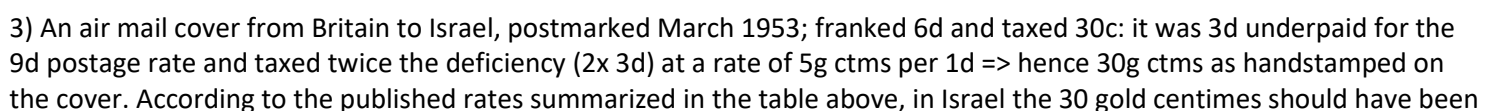
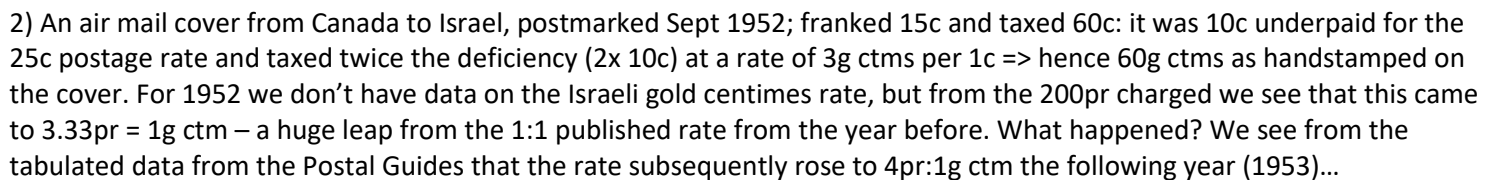
5. The Second Fallacy – the published gold centimes rates “don’t work”

NOW, it may seem that we solved the problem for calculating postage dues in Palestine and Israel – a simple 1:1 ratio from 1946 to 1951, something blank there for 1952 and then a jump to 4:1 in 1953. Unfortunately the reality – as we see from actual examples of taxed mail – is much different.

We’ll start with the cornerstone proposed supposition, mentioned just above, that the exchange rates in the late Mandate era leading into Israel were 1:1 between gold centimes and local mils – **this is incorrect**. In a future article about **Mandate** postage dues we will see that **from 1941 onwards the rate was actually 1.66 gold centimes per mil**, which **underscores that even original documents from the postal services are not to be taken at face value without verification(!)**

As for the basis for **Israel's** initial exchange rate of **1:1** with gold centimes, we will shortly learn about the basis for her postage dues exchanges rates and then this will be understood; we will see in a moment that the nation's **exchange rate was based on something other than what we would intuitively think, for a Sterling-linked currency.**

1) An air mail cover from Britain to Israel, postmarked in June 1950; franked 3d and taxed 42c: it was 3d under paid for the 6d postage rate and taxed twice the deficiency (2x 3d) at a rate of 7g ctms per 1d => hence 42g ctms as written on the cover. If the Israeli gold centimes exchange rate was really 1:1 with the local Pruta, we should expect to see 42pr postage dues charged rather than 50pr – “42” could be constructed from the denominations of the 2nd postage dues stamp series observed used here. According to this cover the rate was 1.19pr per 1g ctm.



converted to 120pr at a rate of 4pr to 1g ctm – but only 100pr was charged. According to the charged fee the rate was about 3.33pr per 1g ctm. What's going on??



The answer is, it was **the US Dollar** and not the Pound Sterling or gold that affected the rates.

6. Behind Everything Lies the US Dollar

At this juncture I want to marshal in insights from the book “Israel’s Foreign Exchange Rate System” by Michael Michaely (1971), p.10–12⁴⁸ – this is going to open our eyes to the influence of currency exchange rates, and specifically ‘alternate’ exchange rates on matters such as the setting of postage dues:

As we learned above, Israel inherited the Palestine Pound pegged at the value of the British Pound, and in August 1948 replaced it with the Israeli Pound as the country’s legal tender currency. It remained *officially* on par with the British Pound, meaning that in US Dollar terms it was worth about \$4 (or 0.25IL per Dollar). **However in practice the direct exchange rate between the Israeli Pound and the US Dollar was higher, and stood at 0.333IL (or \$3 per 1IL).**⁴⁹

The distinction between these two rates is that one served as the “official” exchange rate of Israel and the other was the “formal” rate of Israel. As Michaely expresses it (p.4), “When the official rate is not the one actually used in foreign currency transactions, it soon becomes confined mainly to accounting and statistical uses”. Further, “Exchange rate linked obligations generally refer not to the official, but to the highest of the formal rates” (p.4). **As such, the country’s ‘real’ exchange rate in this period of 1948–49 was 0.333IL per Dollar.**

In a further development, on 18 September 1949 the British government devalued the Pound Sterling by over 30%, giving a rate of \$2.80 per British Pound; the Israeli Pound consequently was equally devalued yielding a revised exchange rate of 0.357IL per US Dollar. At this juncture the previous special rate for hard currency was abolished and this new rate became the country’s single exchange rate.

Israel’s Pound was further devalued in the course of the following years, but now not in a single maneuver but rather over the course of a “long drawn-out process in which a multiple formal exchange rate system entered existence: the gradual

⁴⁸ <https://en.falk.huji.ac.il/sites/default/files/falk/files/foratesystem.pdf>

⁴⁹ The International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) 1950 Annual Report (p.89 note ‘d’) is more blunt on this point in regard to Israel: “**The effective dollar rate before September 19 had been around \$3.03, while the sterling rate was at par**, so that there was at that time a depreciation of about 7 per cent in terms of the dollar and no change in the sterling rate. There has subsequently been a further decline in the effective dollar rate.” A nice resource, especially the table on pages 88-89: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/ar/archive/pdf/ar1950.pdf> (Israel/Palestine do not appear in the IMF’s 1948 & 1949 annual reports).

devaluation was carried out by introducing new rates and gradually shifting foreign currency transactions from lower to higher rates”.

The process began on 14 Feb. 1952 when three rates replaced the single rate in force until then: the lowest of these, rate A, was the old rate of 0.357IL per Dollar and this was declared the “official” rate; rate B was set at double the lowest rate, at 0.714IL per Dollar; and **rate C was fixed at 1IL per Dollar. It was this highest rate, rate C, that was used for most transactions**, with rates A and B applying to certain types of imports (such as rate A for diamond exports and rate B for exports of certain types of fruits and commodities).

During the year of 1952 up to the beginning of 1953 transactions were rapidly shifted from lower to higher rates. Then in April 1953 a “premium” rate of **1.80IL per Dollar** (rate D) was introduced, and rapidly became the new “formal” rate by the end of the year. Then in July a new rate of 1.30IL per Dollar was introduced for the transactions of public institutions. By December 1953 the two lowest rates (A and B) were abolished; rate C at 1IL by then represented only a small proportion of transactions, and this became the new “official” rate. By year end there were then 3 formal rates: 1.00IL, 1.30IL and 1.80IL per Dollar.

By August 1954 the bulk of Israel’s transactions took place at the highest rate (1.80IL), and rate C (1.00IL) was abolished. Except for the transactions of public institutions, for which the 1.30IL rate remained in force, a single “formal” rate of 1.80IL per Dollar was declared (becoming the official rate of exchange in July 1955). Then in October 1955 the institutions rate for foreign currency receipts was raised to 1.50IL per Dollar. In April 1958 institutions transactions were shifted to the official rate of 1.80IL per Dollar, and with this a single formal exchange rate was again established.

The gradual devaluation, from 1952 to 1958 represented a devaluation of over 400% (from 0.357IL to 1.80IL), ostensibly over a six year period but in fact mostly accomplished by 1954.

Another significant devaluation – the third – by 67% took place on 9 Feb. 1962, when the single exchange rate rose to 3.00IL per Dollar. Thus, from 1949 to 1962 the exchange rate went up by 800%, from 0.333IL to 3.00IL per Dollar.

TABLE 2-1. *The Formal Exchange Rate: 1949-62*

	(IL per dollar)							
	0.333	0.357	0.714	1.00	1.30 ^a	1.50 ^a	1.80 ^b	3.00
Up to September 1949	*							
September 1949-February 1952		*						
February 1952-April 1953		*	*	*				
April-July 1953		*	*	*			*	
July 1953-January 1954		*	*	*	*		*	
January-August 1954				*	*		*	
August 1954-October 1955					*		*	
October 1955-April 1958						*	*	
April 1958-February 1962							*	
From February 1962 ^c								*

^a Only for transactions of institutions.
^b Officially the IL 1.80 per dollar rate was introduced in July 1955. Before that date it consisted of an IL 0.80 premium added to the IL 1.00 rate.
^c For the rest of the period covered by this study. There was a subsequent change in November 1967.

7. Tying Together the Lessons to Understand Israel’s Gold Centimes Calculations

The June 1950 postmarked cover we saw above bore a 50pr charge (rather than a 42pr charge) as against a 42g ctms calculated tax – a rate of 1.19pr per 1g ctm at around a time (July) where the USOPG was quoting a rate of 1pr:1gc: how can we explain this discrepancy in light of the fact that the 42pr sum could be assembled from the 2nd postage dues series?

Follow closely:

If we consider that in July the USOPG was quoting a rate of 1c US = 3gc, then 1gc = 0.333c US;

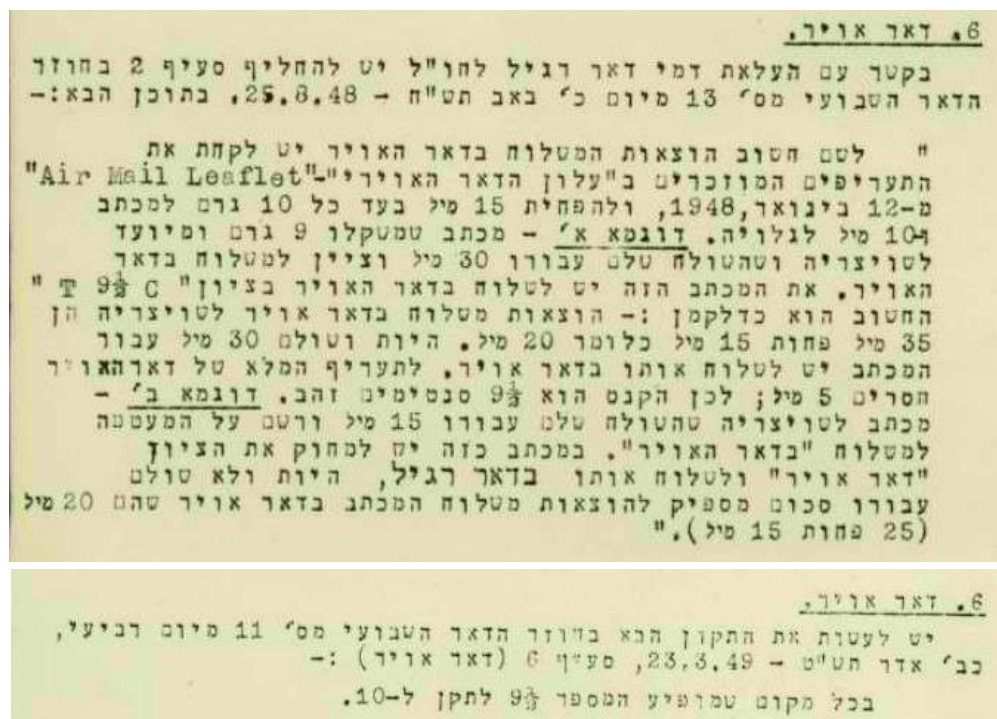
⇒ since the Israeli Pruta was 10x 1c US, this would mean that the American rate in Israeli currency was 3.33pr = 1gc;

- ⇒ the actual Israeli rate was 1.19pr:1gc;
- ⇒ if we take the proportion of the American 3.33pr per gc to the Israel 1.19pr per gc, we get 2.798 – which is exactly what the period exchange rate was between Israeli currency to the US (as mentioned above), \$2.80 : 1.00IL.

As such we now see that for all of 1950 (or at least part of that year), the Israeli rate of prutot to gold centimes as compared to the American rate of US cents to gold centimes was exactly at the US Dollar : Israeli Pound exchange rate. **This therefore must have been the basis for the gold centimes conversion rate set by Israel.**

AND by this approach, if we refer back to the IMF's 1950 annual report (footnote 52 above) commenting that Israel's actual exchange rate with the US Dollar was **\$3.03:1IP**, this would mean 1 mil/pruta = 0.30c so that if 1c US = 3gc then **1 mil/pruta = 1g ctm**. And here we have **the basis for Israel's initial postage dues exchange rate with the gold centimes**.

Sept. 2022 update: it's been almost 6 months since this article was originally written and with greater access to archival information on an almost daily basis I've now come across mention of postage dues calculations in the Israeli postal service's "Weekly Post Office Bulletin" ("Hozer HaDoar HaShvui"), which was distributed to postal employees every week. Here we have an opportunity of seeing how postage dues on international mail was communicated – and it's quite disappointing, although it confirms this research. This main snippet is taken from Bulletin #11 of 23 Mar. 1949 but the gold centimes basis quoted was incorrect and this was amended two weeks later in Bulletin #13 of 6 April:⁵⁰



The postal service doesn't explain to the employees 'how' postage dues is calculated, it only gives a base measure by way of example, that if a postal article is deficient by 5 Prutot the article has to be endorsed "T 9½ C" – this then being amended in to "10C". Unexplained to the employee is that the tax is twice the deficiency such that the ratio in this period is 1pr:1gctm.

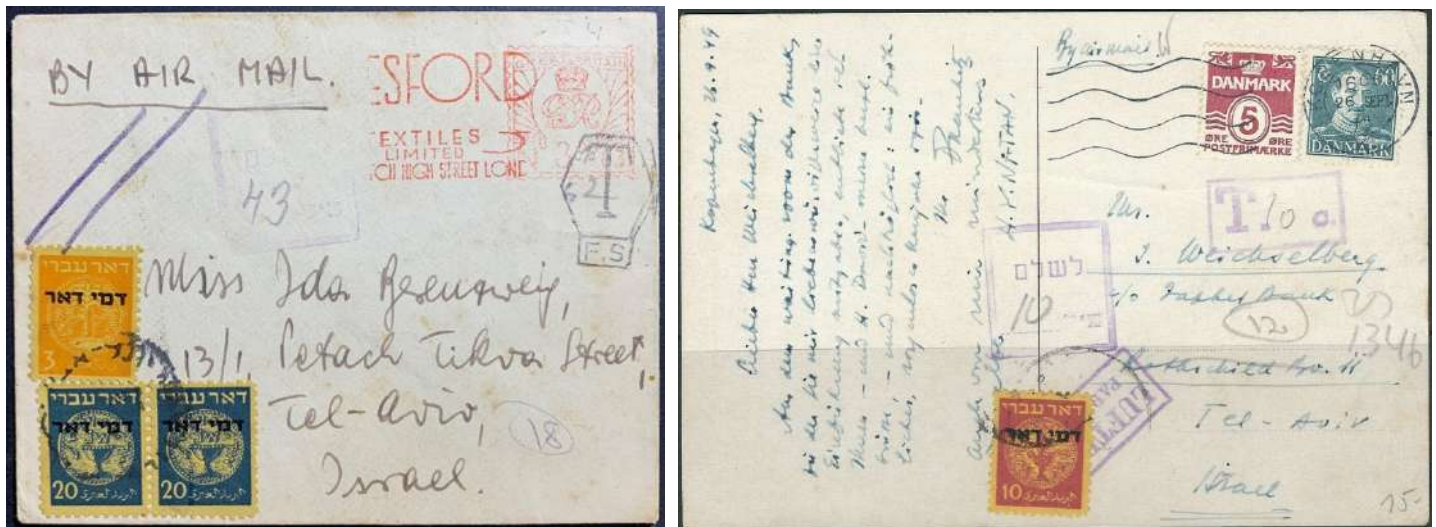
Of note, the directive explains that if an air mail item has been short paid – but paid above a certain minimum, which appears to be by way of example at least half the postage – it should be marked for tax and dispatched by air; but if the postage paid is below a certain minimum (eg. half the postage), the air mail endorsement should be obliterated and the postal item sent by surface mail. In the example used it's airmail to Switzerland whose postage was 35pr and has either been prepaid 30pr and taxed, or only prepaid 15pr and sent by surface mail. Sometime later (to be found) the policy was changed that shortpaid airmail had to be returned to sender for supplemental payment (reiterated in Letter Circular 16 term 28 of 2 July 1952, so apparently a pre-existing policy post-dating the one mentioned above).⁵¹

⁵⁰ Pages 171 & 183 of this file: <https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461970>

⁵¹ Postal Circular ("Hozer HaDoar") #13 of 1 July 1953, directive #387/12 citing earlier ones (yet to be found), revised the procedure such that if prepayment was **short-paid by 10 Prutot or less**, air mail should no longer be returned to the sender for completion of the postage but rather marked with a tax mark and dispatched to the addressee, where the tax should be calculated as **5gc for up to 9 Prutot deficiency or 6gc for 10pr deficiency**.

NOW, if Israel's currency was subsequently devalued, should we then be seeing a change in the postage dues calculations in 1949 for the period after the Sept. 19th devaluation? **The answer seems to be... no:** consider these two articles of mail, both postmarked in September but taxed in October at the existing 1:1 ratio:

- the cover on the left from the UK has no postmark date, but was taxed on 2 Oct. 1949 43pr for the 42gc amount – because the 1st postage dues stamp series had no 2pr denomination; the lowest was 3pr.
- The postcard from Denmark on the right was postmarked on 26 Sept (i.e. after the devaluation) and was taxed exactly at parity, 10pr for the 10gc indicated.

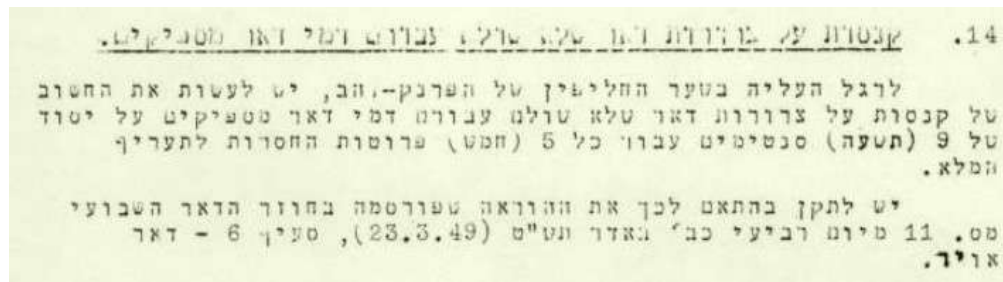


Getting a fix on the transition date of the rates from 1pr:1gc to 1.20pr:1gc is a bit tricky: an observed cover (from TAS Auction 49 lot 324) from Nigeria, taxed in Nov. 1949 (day unclear), was charged at the 1:1 rate (for 20g ctns), but below we have 2 other covers from that month taxed at the 1.19/1.20pr rate. Above (TAS auction 40 lot 176), is an **8 Nov 1949** tax-charged cover at Jerusalem (360pr for 300gc), and below that (TAS 44/347) a **13 Nov. 1949** taxed cover from South Africa, tax-charged in Jerusalem 180pr for 150gc):





Sept. 2022 update: here too some archival information has become available, a directive from Bulletin #43 of 2 Nov. 1949:⁵²



Here the bulletin actually says “In light of the rise in the exchange rate of the gold franc, it is necessary to calculate postage dues on insufficiently prepaid mail, on the basis of 9 cents for every 5 prutot deficient in the postage paid”. It’s an obfuscated way of saying that 9 gctms = 10 prutot, (twice the deficiency as the actual tax) or 1.11 prutot per gold centimes. This isn’t exactly what we observe on taxed mail and the circumstance isn’t a rise in the exchange rate with gold, which remained stable against the Dollar, but rather the change rate between the Israeli currency and gold’s enabler in this era, the US Dollar. In all likelihood the reason why we would see postage dues being charged at a rate more like 1.2 rather than 1.1 is because of the minimum denomination of the period’s 1st series postage dues stamps, which was 3pr; the 2nd series introduced later in 1949 offered a 2pr denomination.

In a similar vein, a month after the currency devaluation, the post office did issue revised telegram rates based on the exchange rate between the local currency and the “gold franc” – and then added, without any context, the current (revised) exchange rate with the US Dollar: telegrams by “Imperial” were charged 60 mils per gold franc; by “Imperial” to Holland specifically, 108 mils per gold franc; and telegrams via the Israeli postal service, also 108 mils per gold franc. The exchange rate with the Dollar was 330 mils = \$1.⁵³

⁵² Page 242 of file <https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461884>

⁵³ Per Postal Circular #85 of 26 Oct. 1948; see page 132 of file <https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2461993>

מדינת ישראל
הממשלה ה-1
מחלקת הדואר הטלגרף והטלפון - לשכת המנוול הכללי

מכתב חוזר מט' 85

הנדון: - מברקים לחוץ לארץ - שער החליפין.

עד להודעה חדשה יש לשטב את מחיר פרנק זהב כדלקמן: -

עבור מברקים דרך "אימפריאל" - 60 מיל = 1 פרנק זהב.

עבור מברקים דרך "אימפריאל" להולנד - 108 מיל = 1 פרנק זהב.

עבור מברקים דרך "שרות רדיו-טלגרף ישראל" 108 מיל = 1 פרנק זהב.

שער הדולר הוא 330 מיל = \$ 1.00.

מנהל השרות הטלגרפי

תל אביב-כ"ב בתשרי תש"ט
26.10.48

And indeed from this period onwards more 1949-dated covers are observed with the 1.20pr rate postage dues fees – though there are oddities, like this 15 Nov. 1949 13gc taxed cover, charged at Rishon LeZion, at the 1:1 rate; if charged at 1.2, the result would have been 15.6m which could have been paid either as 15m or 16m (rounded) using the denominations of the 1st Postage Dues stamp series used here (ref: TAS 43 lot 461):



Another 14 Dec. 1949 Haifa HPO taxed Canadian cover is observed (TAS 42/113) taxed & charged at parity but here the "120" tax was written over a different manuscript amount in the Canadian tax mark (appearing to be "56c" but unclear), and because of this circumstance I hesitate to say that the cover's tax was correctly calculated or charged. Nevertheless even with these 'outliers' we now have a good fix on the moment when the new rate came into use, **about 8 Nov. 1949**.



This Jan. 1951 postmarked cover from France was sent short-paid, taxed 23gc but charged 28pr on 20 Feb. 1951 – that's a ratio of 1.217pr per 1gc, the fore-mentioned 1.19pr ratio we found for a June 1950 cover was likely still the ratio but as this would have yielded a tax of 27.37pr this was clearly rounded to the nearest denomination supported by Israel's 2nd postage dues series stamps – here 28pr.

As such, we seem to have a basis now to confirm the actual tax rate of 1.19pr:1gc also for 1951 - and we also see here the developing role of '**convenience rounding**' of the charged amounts (either due to the denominations available in a postage dues stamp series or to the availability of the stamps on hand at the post office), a practice which we will see more often in later years but one which helps us understand simple anomalies in the charged amounts.



These two covers, one postmarked Nov. 1950 from the US and the other on 28 March 1952 from Canada are both taxed 72pr for a gold centimes rate of 60gc – a ratio of 1.20pr per 1gc. This would suggest that the 1.19pr rate we saw as early as June 1950 continued into at least April 1952, when the second cover was taxed at that proportion. In light of Michaely's research cited above, if 3 exchange rates were introduced on 14 Feb. 1952 with the intention of shifting foreign currency transactions to high rates, where the highest, rate C, was set at 1IL = \$1, we see here that at least as of April that year this had not yet affected the postal service (although as observed on a cover above, by September that year this rate was in effect at the post office).



In light of what we see charged as postage dues on the covers from Sept. 1952 and March 1953 (shown earlier above), where the apparent rate was 3.33pr per 1g ctm, it looks like Michaely's "rate for transactions" in this period – rate C at 1IL = \$1 – was indeed the rate being used by the postal service for hard currency transactions: if the published US rate was 1c = 3g ctm, then at parity the Israeli currency, whose fractional denomination was 1/1000 of a US cent, was almost identical: 1 cent = 10 prutot; 10 prutot = 3g ctm, so 3.33pr = 1g ctm.

Indeed, we see on an example from Nov. 1952 this rate being used as a 165pr charge for a 50gc tax (here as 3.3pr:1gc as the 3.33 conversion would have yielded a 166pr tax – likely for convenience the clerk used one 5pr stamp rather than 3x 2pr stamps of the 2nd postage dues series); this confirms on ongoing, consistent pattern of the tax rate:



At left is presently the **earliest** clearly observed cover with the 3.33pr rate (here at 3.3pr), taxed 25gc and charged 82pr on 14 July 1952 – suggesting that the transition to this rate occurred sometime between early April and mid-July 1952; on the right however is a 20 June 1952 tax-charged cover (date extrapolated from the Hebrew; TAS 42/500) at the 3.3pr rate – but the handwritten message, presumably from the postman about the charge leaves me some doubt as to the circumstance. Nevertheless, we may be able to narrow the unknown transition period to between early April and mid-June 1952...



An Aug. 1952 Canadian cover displayed in Bale's Postal History catalogue (p.227) shows a 150gc taxed cover being charged 495pr at an exact rate of 3.3pr:1gc. If the rate had been 3.33pr as I've mentioned frequently above the charge would have come to 499.50pr, easily rounded to 500pr. As such it's safe to conclude that in the period where we see rates between 3.3pr and 3.33pr being used, **the 3.30pr rate is likely the actual one that was in force** and 3.33 was the result of convenience rounding.

Although the USOPG for July 1953 quotes a rate of 4pr per 1gc, we now know to double-check: according to Michael's research a "premium rate" (rate D) of 1.80IL:\$1 entered use in April 1953, and another new rate of 1.30IL:\$1 entered use in July – this latter being for use by public institutions; by August 1954 the bulk of Israel's foreign currency transactions were being handled at the 1.80IL rate.

What we see is that at least as of June 1953, mail was still being taxed at the 3.30pr rate (the 1IL:\$1 rate C rate) – here appearing closer to 3.50pr but that's only because the lowest denomination of the 3rd postage dues stamp series was 5pr; 3.3pr would have yielded a 28pr tax which was impossible to assemble with this series.



I'll have to dig further for examples into late-1953/early-1954 to see when the rates changed, but as we see in the case below from April 1954 (taxed in May), a 17½gc tax was charged as 110pr – a rate of 6.29pr:1gc (the manuscript "17 ½" is

confirmed from other South African covers from the same period. If the existing 1IL:\$1 C rate yielded a proportion of 3.33pr:1gc, a rise of 80% in the exchange rate would yield $1.8 \times 3.33 \Rightarrow 6\text{pr}$.



Sept. 2022 update: more archival information has become available, a directive from Circular #24/54 of 4 Feb. 1954 – here showing that a **differential exchange rate** was used (on top of the ongoing currency devaluation), but providing no rule of thumb for understanding the methodology. At a minimum, we now have a better foundation for understanding observed variances in the rates charged, as seen in the illustrated examples of mail here. This directive replaces an earlier one referenced therein, from 1 Feb. 1953(!) where mistakes were made in the 2 examples provided, and corrected now here.⁵⁴

Example 1 – “a postal item from abroad has been marked with a tax of **12 centimes**; the following should be charged”:

10 centimes =	60 Pruta [eg. 6pr:1gtcm]
2 centimes =	10 Prutot [eg. 5pr:1gtcm]
The total to charge =	70 Pruta [eg. 5.83pr:1gtcm]

Example 2 – “a postal item from abroad has been marked with a tax of **235 centimes**; the following should be charged”:

200 centimes =	1180 Pruta [eg. 5.9pr:1gtcm]
30 centimes =	180 Pruta [eg. 6pr:1gtcm]
5 centimes =	30 Pruta [eg. 6pr:1gtcm]
The total to charge =	1390 Pruta [eg. 5.91pr:1gtcm]

⁵⁴ See page 348 of file <https://www.archives.gov.il/product-page/2462078>

מדינת ישראל
משרד הדואר
(דואר, טלגרף, טלפון ורדיו)

מכתב חוזר מס' 24/54

תנודות: היטל (קנס) על דברי דואר שלא שולמו עבורם דמי-
דואר סטנדיים.

אמסכתא: מכתב חוזר מס' 17/54 מתאריך 1.2.53.

ברובמאות א' ו-ב' שהובאו במכתב החוזר הנ"ל נפלו שתי סעויות
סצערות והן סובאות בזה סחדס כרי לסנוע אי הנכות.

דוגמא א'

על דבר דואר סחוץ לארץ צוין קנס של 12 סנסימים;
בהתאם לכך יש לגבות:-

10 סנסימים	=	60 פרוטה
2	=	10 פרוטות
בסה"כ	=	70 פרוטה.
=====		

דוגמא ב'

על דבר דואר סחו"ל צוין קנס של 235 סנסימים;
יש לגבות בהתאם לכך:-

200 סנסימים	=	1,180 פרוטה (590x2)
30	=	180
5	=	30
בסה"כ	=	1,390 ל"י
=====		

נא לתקן מכתב חוזר מס' 17/54 על ידי הרבקה הרובמאות סבטולי
מכתב חוזר זה בסקומן של הרובמאות הכלתי נכונות.

מנהל שירותי הדואר.
א. רנן

ירושלים, א' באדר א' תשי"ד
4.2.54
(97-ים/לז)

The small fluctuations in the observed agorot:gold centimes rates used in this period, between 6.0pr-6.5pr, are not related to changes in the Dollar : Gold-ounce prices (which remained quite stable around \$35, from 1934-1967)⁵⁵ or to the Israeli consumer price index (which has incrementally risen month-by-month, year-by-year since 1948)⁵⁶; rather these are simply the result of convenience under- or over-charging, likely the result of whatever denominated stamps were on hand at the time the postage dues were charged. The impact this variance had on the sums charged was small so that indeed at the end of the day it was simply the Dollar:Lira exchange rate which set the Israeli exchange rate with gold centimes.

Further to Michaely's research, by August 1954 the bulk of Israel's transactions took place at the highest 1.80IL rate, but the 1.30IL rate remained in force for the transactions of public institutions. **So far I have not observed this rate on postal items.**

He added that in October 1955 the rate for institutions rose to 1.50IL per Dollar and that in April 1958 all transactions were shifted to the single rate of 1.80IL. What I found is that indeed the postage due rates based on 1.80IL remained in force through to 1958; **I haven't observed any cases using the postage dues set as per lower rate for institutions:** at left a March

⁵⁵ <https://www.thebalance.com/gold-price-history-3305646> and <https://countryeconomy.com/raw-materials/gold?year=1957>

⁵⁶ See table at:

<https://www.boi.org.il/he/DataAndStatistics/Pages/SeriesData.aspx?SeriesCode=CP&DateStart=01/09/1951&DateEnd=31/01/2020&Level=3&Sid=27>

1955 Canadian cover charged 60pr for 10gc tax, and at right a Sept. 1956 Canadian cover taxed 25gc and charged 150pr – a rate of 6pr:1gc in both cases.



Here we have an example of a cover sent short-paid from Israel to Austria in January 1956, franked 1.20L rather than 1.50L for the period base airmail rate; it was deficient 30 agorot, taxed 60 agorot postage dues and this was calculated as 10 gold centimes based on the current 6:1 exchange rate; in Austria the 10 gold centimes tax was converted to 85 groschen:



Indeed, progressing onward from Michaely's outline of the exchange rates in the 1950s, I continue to see the 6pr:1gc exchange rate in use through to the end of 1959 on examined covers.



The gold centimes era continued to be used until 1 Jan. 1966 but from 1 Jan 1960 until then there were a few domestic monetary issues which affected the local gold centimes exchange rate:

- ⇒ On **1 Jan. 1960** the Israeli currency was redenominated such that the fractional 1/1000 Pruta turned into the new 1/100 Agora, and this changed the basis of the gold centimes exchange rate by a factor of 10, to 0.6ag:1gc;
- ⇒ On **9 Feb. 1962** there was a currency devaluation with the exchange rate to the US Dollar being set now at 3IL per \$1 - a 67% devaluation causing the gold centimes exchange rate in turn to fall 67% to 0.98ag - 1ag per gold ctm.

Here we have a very early redenomination period taxed cover, posted short-paid from Algeria on 20 **January** 1960, taxed locally 30 gold centimes and charged in Israel on 24 Jan. as 0.18 Lira (18 agorot) per the new 0.6ag : 1gc redenominated rate, rather than 180 prutot as would have occurred up to 31 Dec. 1959, based on the existing 6:1 ratio:



In the financially tumultuous 1962 period we have an example on the left of taxation on 9 January prior to the 9 February currency devaluation, at a rate of 0.6:1 (6 agorot charged for 10gc taxed); and on the right an instance of taxation in April, after the devaluation, at a rate of 1:1 (13 agorot charged for 13gc taxed):



The revolutionary year of 1966, with the introduction of the 'taxe fraction' affords us a few interesting cases of postage dues taxed mail: it appears that the adoption of the fraction method was not uniformly rolled out across the UPU, and although Israel appears to have implemented it from about the start of the year, other countries like Britain adopted it later, on **1 October**.⁵⁷ The fraction required inputting the sending and receiving postal administrations' base surface letter postage rate, so this also affects the observed resulting amounts charged.

Here is very early example of the tax fraction in use, on a **February** 1966 charged cover: it was sent short-paid from France and taxed by the French "20/60" – meaning it was deficient 10 French centimes and taxed 20c, and the base surface letter rate was 60c; at this time the Israeli base surface letter rate was 25 agorot – this was multiplied against that fraction and the result was a calculated tax of 8.3 agorot, rounded to the nearest available denomination at the post office which was 10ag (although 8ag and 7ag stamps of this Zodiac definitive series existed), as levied here:



By contrast here we have an early 1966 surface mailed cover from Britain, posted in March and short-paid at 4d (4 pence) for the period rate of 6d: as the British postal service was still using the gold centimes taxation method (until 1 Oct. 1966), the tax of double the deficiency ($2 \times 2d = 4d$) was converted to gold centimes at a period rate of $1d : 3\frac{1}{2}gc$, yielding a total tax of 14gc applied by the Foreign Section; in Israel this was converted to local agorot using the existing exchange rate resulting from the 1962 currency devaluation, of 0.98ag (or 1ag) : 1g ctm, and this yielded a charge of 14 agorot levied on 30 March...

⁵⁷ That nugget comes from Postage Dues Mail Study Group presentation "UK Taxe Marks and their Offices of Use in the Centimes Era" (part 8) pg.80

...Had the tax fraction method been used, double the deficiency of 4d would have been written above the base surface rate of 6d, and then multiplied in Israel by the country's base surface letter rate of 25 agorot (in force until 31 March) - this would have yielded a tax of 16.7 agorot, essentially 3ag more than actually charged in this instance.



By extension of this example, here we have an intriguing cover bearing tax marks and 2 different tax methods (of two different postal administrations):



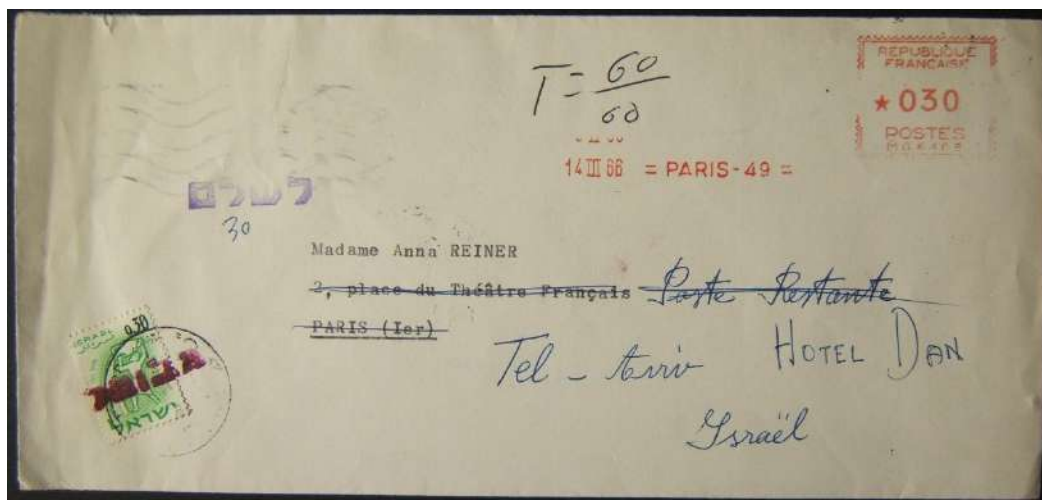
This is an October 1968 postmarked cover sent from Tel Aviv and intended for the postmaster at the Israeli Druze town of Peqiin, franked 15 agorot per the period postage rate for an inland letter: on account of the sending address and return address both being in English, the Israeli sorting office apparently misunderstood the address as being domestic and dispatched it instead abroad to PEKIN (Beijing) China by surface mail (which would have cost 30 agorot in postage).

As per the square boxed T tax mark – which most closely resembles an **Australian** tax mark – the cover was transmitted in a sealed bag to Australia whence it was handled and found to be underpaid. Here the Australian post office used the **taxe fraction method** of calculating the postage dues: the letter was short paid 15c for 30c base postage and **charged 30c** as the tax – ironically exactly the fractional sum that would have been charged in Israel, 30 agorot.

The cover was not sanctioned, and was transmitted on to China, where it was received around January 1969: here the Chinese postal service taxed the cover – but as per **the gold centimes method** – marking it with an oval tax mark (whose two characters at the top best translate to "underpaid")⁵⁸ & charging it 0.22 gold Francs => 22 gold centimes. Apparently as with Britain, China too, did not adopt the tax fraction method so quickly.

Here we see that the exchange rate between Israeli agorot and the gold centimes did change and was no longer at parity: as per the data in the table at the end of this article we see that there was a change in the Lira:US Dollar exchange rate in November 1967, where the Lira declined in value (by 16%) from 3IL:\$1 to 3.5IL:\$1 – and this is here reflected in the gold centimes rate used: the rate went down 16% from 1ag:1g ctm to 1.16ag:1gctm. Here the tax of 22gctm yielded a charge of 25.66 agorot (26ag rounded) which reflects the scale of difference we observed above with the 1966 taxed cover to Britain.

Below we have an example of a standard tax fraction postage dues cover from the post-April 1966 surface letter rate change era in Israel, which rose from 25ag to 30ag on 1 April: this cover was mailed locally in Paris in March but when the addressee was found to have travelled to Israel, it was redirected there by surface mail; as per the Universal Postal Union there was no charge for the redirection of mail⁵⁹ but any short-payment in overseas postage had to be made up – here this was an additional 30 French centimes, which the post office seems to have doubled as a penalty for the letter being 'short-paid' (I surmise this based on another identical cover to the same person in the same period, charged only 30/60), and written as a 60c charge for the 60c surface rate; in Israel, using the newly revised surface rate of 30 agorot, the postage dues came to 30ag – levied, and then annulled when the addressee had already left the country and could not collect the letter and pay the tax.

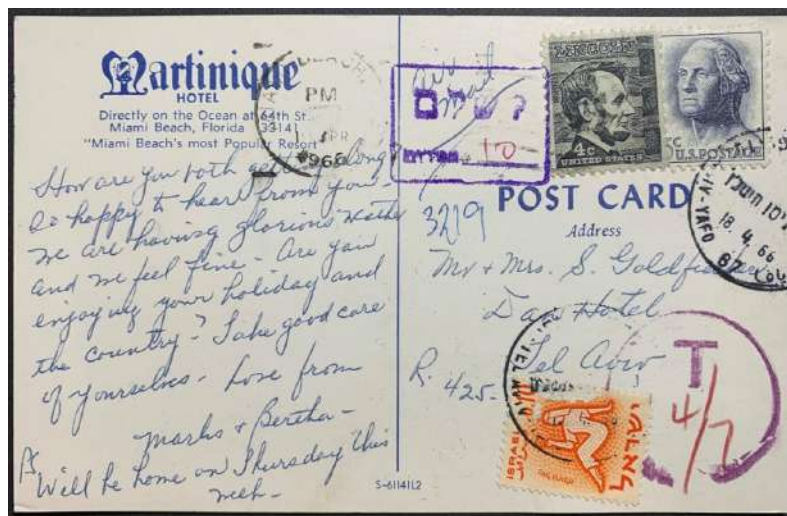


Nevertheless, there may have been a 'grace period' in Israel for the basis of calculating postage dues: here we see a 14 April 1966 postmarked air mail postcard sent from the US, franked 9 cents but short paid 2 cents; the US post office wrote the tax fraction as 4c tax for the 7c surface rate, and in Israel (on 17 April) the charge came to 10 agorot – but this was well below the amount that should have been calculated if the post office had been using 30 agorot as the basis for surface mail postage (as of 1 April), 17 agorot.

Likely what happened is that the local post office applied the now superseded rate of 25 agorot and reached a calculation of 14ag, which it rounded down to 10ag. Had the post office actually reached a calculation of 17ag, presumably it could have rounded the sum upward to the next available denomination of the Zodiac definitive series, which was 18ag and even 20ag. **Although the address is a hotel, from the sheer quantity of short-paid mail addressed there that I've seen, I have not seen conclusive evidence that the Israeli post office charged a concessionary postage dues rate for hotel-addressed mail.**

⁵⁸ That nugget comes from PDMSG Journal 73 p.52 – "Modern Macau and Hong Kong" by Steve Wells

⁵⁹ See Protocols of the UPU Convention of 1957, Article 59 provision 7 p.187 – the matter is a bit opaque in these protocols; see also the Convention of 1964, Article 27 provision 7 p.251 – more emphatic.



I'll take a moment at this juncture to shed some light on how postage dues mail was handled in Israel. In this period of the 1950s and 1960s we'll often see covers with staple holes or manuscript written numbers on the front of the mail (like the number "3219" on the postcard above) and a dated comment on either the front or back.

Regarding the manuscript numbers, as ubiquitous as these are, they usually have no identifying sign to tell us what they mean. The lower cover below addressed to the Dan Hotel in Tel Aviv is mercifully marked by the postal clerk in Hebrew "TD 3219" – Teyvat Doar (Post Office Box) 3219: what this means is that once mail was charged tax here, it was often (not always) routed to a post office box belonging to the addressee – here the Dan Hotel – where it would be accumulated; and as per dated Hebrew notations we observe on most taxed mail in this period (usually on the back side of mail, but not always), reading something like "he-etek 14/4" ('copied 14/4') as on the upper cover below, a notice to the addressee was sent out on that date. By extension this also means that in many cases **the date postage dues were applied/levied (as per the postmark tying the stamps) was not necessarily the date the tax was paid**, as evidenced by the invariably post-dated 'copied' notations we often see; barring their annulment or other relevant auxiliary markings we assume the postage dues were paid and the mail was received.



With this 1970 era taxed cover we have a rare instance of the original notice included with the cover: the postmark-dated slip is addressed to the addressee's post office box; it indicates the originating post office (handstamp); it references a number (here "150") which is also written in red on the top of the taxed cover. The slip informs the addressee that he has

article(s) of mail addressed to him but whose postage is under paid; it asks him to go to a specific counter indicated on the slip (here, #15) and pay the amount indicated (0.08L) in order to receive the waiting mail.



The tax method for postage dues changed on 1 Jan. 1976 to a variation of the ‘taxe fraction’ whereby the numerator only represented the deficient postage alone (without being doubled for tax), while the denominator continued to be the base surface postage rate of the sending country. This fraction would then be multiplied by the receiving country’s equivalent base surface postage rate – and the tax would be factored in as an added ‘handling fee’ (rather than as double the deficiency, as traditionally applied and still applied on domestic mail). This is the method in use to this day.

As we observed with Britain in the era of the original ‘taxe fraction’ in 1966, when it implemented this method later, in October, here now in Israel it appears that this new method was instituted later too, on **1 April 1976**, with the publication of a new set of inland and overseas postage rates. The ‘handling fee for postal article which came from abroad and whose postage paid was not according to the rate of the country of origin’ was originally listed as **Service #15** of Section C (“General Services for Postal Articles Sent by Sea, Land and by Air”) of the standardized official tables of foreign postage rate; from January 1983 this became **Service #8** of the same section.⁶⁰

חלק ג': שירותים כלליים לדברי הדואר הנשלחים בדרך הים והיבשה ובדרך האוויר	
השירות	התשלום בלירות
15. דמי טיפול בדבר דואר שהגיע מחוץ לארץ שלא כבייל בהתאם לתעריף של ארץ המוצא	1.65

⁶⁰ I mention this for the benefit of those who may scour the original postal documents of the period, as displayed in the [Research Center](#) on our site.

Here we have an example from early 1976 of taxed mail still handled according to the 1966 Vienna Convention method, prior to Israel's adoption of the new method: a February 1976 postmarked Belgian air mail cover, franked 10Bf and deposited unpostmarked into a letter box, as evidenced by the bilingual "found in box" handstamp at the bottom; the cover was subsequently found to be short-paid. The Belgian post office may have noted the postage due using the new method but the digit in the numerator is hard to decipher: in any case the Israeli surface letter postage rate was 1.20IL and as the resulting tax was calculated as 35 agorot, the Israeli post office apparently read the fraction as "3/10" (yielding a result of 36ag rounded to 35ag).



The first 'handling fee' used by Israel in the modern tax fraction era was 1.65IL, **from 1 April 1976**. Here we have a fairly contemporary example of such taxed mail from December 1980, postmarked from Switzerland and franked 80c, but taxed for being 10c underpaid (with the surface rate being 90c) – here written as "10/90". In Israel, as of February 1980, the inflationary Lira currency was redenominated to (Old) Shekels at a rate of 10:1 – although the postage rates and fees by the end of the year were still being listed in Lira: the fraction was multiplied by the surface postage rate of 17IL, which yielded a base deficiency of 1.89IL, and to this was added the period's handling fee of 9.50IL yielding a total calculated postage due fee of 11.38IL; converted to the new Shekel currency (note the manual adjustment to the tax mark) this became 1.14IS which the post office rounded to a charge of 1.50IS. At this time the new Shekel definitive issue postage stamps were just being issued (16 Dec. 1980) in small denominations but apparently were not available at the time of the tax charge.



Here then we have a guide to the postage dues calculations of Israel, from 1948 to broadly the present day. We have learned that of the 3 contemporary taxation periods, in the main period of the gold centimes Israel's rates were based on her currency's exchange rate with the US; in the subsequent 2 periods which employed a formulaic 'taxe fraction' we have seen that indeed Israel's base surface letter rate was a key component of the calculation, and more recently the addition of the 'handling fee' published in the official postage rate tables.

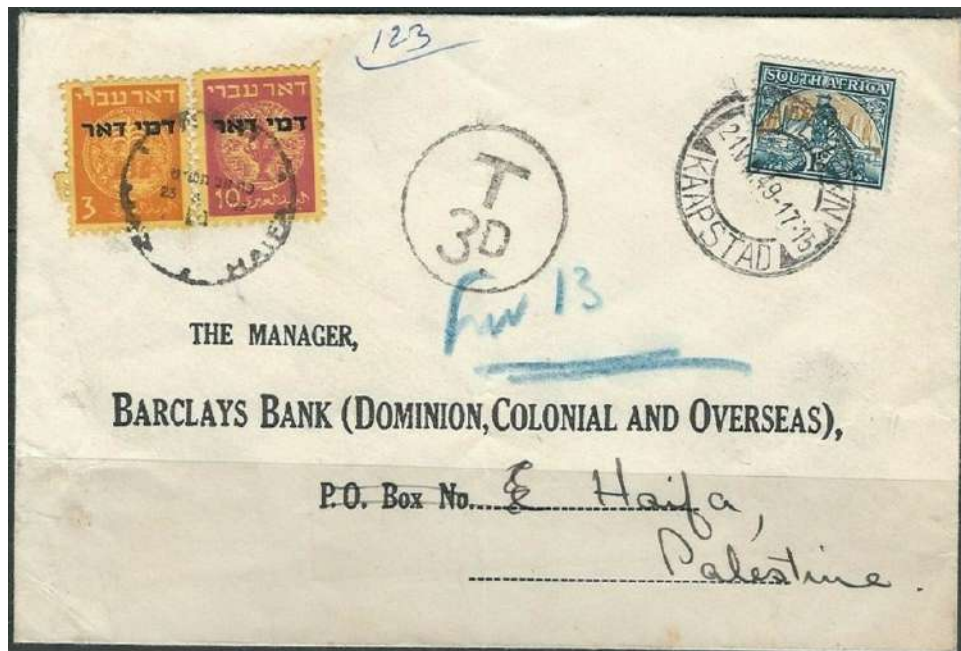
Although there presently remain gaps in determining 'first dates' and 'last dates' for the gold centimes exchange rates used, we have a fairly good idea when these occurred – and more importantly, why.

Out of the scope of this article are exceptions, oddities and curiosities – such as concessional postage dues, clerical errors in calculating the amount owed, and instances where additional postage dues were applied; these may be accumulated for a later article on these cases.

June 2022 update - a parting shot to close this article: while I summarized above the 3 main methods for calculating Israeli postage dues on foreign mail, based on the 3 standard methods used by UPU member countries, it came to my attention that **there may be a 4th "method"** lurking around our postal history but one I haven't seen before – **the use of "pence" (or even the local currency of the originating mail) as a basis**, during the gold centimes era.

Consider this surface mail cover from Cape Town, posted on 21 July 1949 (i.e. before the currency devaluation between Israeli Pounds & British Pound Sterling, and the Pound Sterling vs. the US Dollar): franked 1½ South African pence locally but charged for short payment (presumably another 1½d) and taxed 3d, expressed as "3d" postage dues rather than "20 gold centimes" (based on the rule of thumb calculation of 6.66gctm per 1d which we saw on the Dec. 1948 South African airmail cover above, taxed 40g ctms for a 6d penalty).

Here the cover was charged **3d** internationally and in Israel this was converted to 13 mils (on 23 Aug.) using the rule-of-thumb Pence:Mils conversion we learned about at the start of this article – technically a relation of **4.17 mils per pence** (South Africa's currency was pegged at parity to the British until the former's decimalization in 1961⁶¹), but as the lowest denomination of the 1st postage dues stamp series used here was 3 mils, the levy came to 13 mils rather than 12.5m (which could have been rounded either up to 13m or down to 12m). Had the gold centimes method been used here instead the charge would have come to **20 mils**, based on the period rate of parity of 1m = 1g ctm.



⁶¹ See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_pound

Here I present a table of relevant information from 1946 to 1983, to help the researcher decipher his/her postage dues covers: (This table will be available online and continually updated at the Research Center [here](#).)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Starting Dates of Event Listed: ¹	Official Israeli/US Dollar Exchange Rate	Comments	Bale's rate period ²	Base Surface Letter Rate ³	Base surface letter rate per USOPG	gold centimes value of rate per USOPG	Apparent g ctm Rate derived from USOPG	Actual g ctm Rate (as observed on mail)	Handling Fee' for improperly franked foreign mail ⁵
July 1946					20m	25gc	0.8m:1gc	1m:1.66gc	
July 1947					N/A	N/A		1m:1.66gc	
15-05-1948	0.25 (the actual rate was 0.33) ⁴	1st day of Israeli postal administration	SU-1	20m				1m:1gc	
July 1948					N/A	N/A		1m:1gc	
17-08-1948		Currency renamed Israeli Pound (Lira)							
01-03-1949			SU-2	30pr				1m:1gc	
July 1949					N/A	N/A		1m:1gc	
19-09-1949		result of the devaluation of the British Pound the day						1m:1gc	
c.08-11-1949	0.357							1.2m:1gc	
July 1950					30m	28gs	1.07m:1gc	1.2m:1gc	
July 1951					30pr	28gs	1.07pr:1gc	1.2m:1gc	
01-02-1952			SU-3	35pr				1.2m:1gc	
14-02-1952		Michaely p.11							
01-04-1952	1.00	13 Feb per Haffner p.12						1.2m:1gc	
c.20-06-1952			SU-3A	95pr				1.2m:1gc	
01-07-1953								3.3pr:1gc	
01-01-1954	1.80		SU-4	95pr	95pr	22gc	4.32pr:1gc	3.3pr:1gc	
01-02-1954			SU-5	120pr				?	
c.28-05-1954								6 or 6.2pr:1gc	
13-06-1956	1.79	Per Haffner only, p.12						6 or 6.2pr:1gc	
01-01-1957 ⁵			SU-6	150pr				6 or 6.2pr:1gc	
1957		Official declared par value as required by the IMF Article of Agreement – Michaly p.11							
01-01-1959	1.80							6.4 : 1gc	
			SU-7	180pr					
01-01-1960		Replacement of the Pruta (1/1000 of Pound) with Agora (1/100) – published prices appear 1/100 smaller 10 Pounds become 1IP						0.6ag : 1gc	
1960			SU-10	0.18ag				0.6ag : 1gc	
1961			SU-11	0.20ag				0.6ag : 1gc	
1962			SU-12	0.20ag				0.6ag : 1gc	
09-02-1962		par value/fixed rate - a 67% devaluation per Michaely p.11						0.98ag : 1gc	
1963	3.00		SU-13	0.25ag				0.98ag : 1gc	
1964			SU-14	0.15ag					
24-01-1964				0.25IL					
1965								0.98ag : 1gc	
1966								0.98ag : 1gc	
01-04-1966				0.30IL					
19-11-1967	3.50								
01-11-1970				0.35IL					
15-06-1971				0.40IL					
22-08-1971	4.20								
01-10-1971				0.45IL					
01-03-1973				0.55IL					
01-05-1974				0.70IL					
10-11-1974	6.00								
01-12-1974				1.00IL					
18-06-1975	6.12								
05-08-1975	6.24								
09-09-1975	6.36								
28-09-1975	7.00								

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Starting Dates of Event Listed: ¹	Official Israeli/US Dollar Exchange Rate	Comments	Bale's rate period ²	Base Surface Letter Rate ³	Base surface letter rate per USOPG	gold centimes value of rate per USOPG	Apparent g ctm Rate derived from USOPG	Actual g ctm Rate (as observed on mail)	Handling Fee ⁴ for improperly franked foreign mail ⁵
02-11-1975				1.20IL					
24-11-1975	7.10								
04-01-1976	7.24	Buying rate							
11-02-1976	7.38								
15-03-1976	7.52								
01-04-1976				1.30IL					1.65IL
19-04-1976	7.67								
20-05-1976	7.82								
24-06-1976	7.97	Israeli Pound							
19-07-1976	8.12								
25-08-1976	8.25								
29-09-1976	8.40								
01-11-1976	8.56								
24-11-1976	8.73	Start of creeping devaluations							
24-12-1976	8.90								
17-01-1977	9.07								
01-02-1977				1.60IL					1.75IL
02-03-1977	9.25								
21-03-1977	9.42								
25-05-1977	9.60								
04-07-1977	9.79								
18-07-1977	9.98								
01-08-1977	10.17								
15-08-1977				2.00IL					1.75IL
17-08-1977	10.37								
20-09-1977	10.57								
17-10-1977	10.78								
01-12-1977				3.10IL					2.00IL
01-05-1978				4.30IL					2.50IL
01-05-1979				7.00IL					4.00IL
02-12-1979				10.50IL					6.00IL
01-05-1980				17.00IL					9.50IL
20-03-1981				2.30IS					1.50IS
31-08-1981				3.00IS					2.00IS
01-01-1982				3.60IS					2.40IS
17-02-1982				4.00 IS					2.70 IS
12-05-1982				4.80 IS					3.20 IS
16-08-1982				6.00 IS					4.00 IS
09-11-1982				6.30 IS					4.20 IS
12-12-1982				6.60 IS					4.40 IS
14-01-1983				6.90 IS					4.60 IS
06-02-1983				7.20 IS					4.80 IS
15-03-1983				7.60 IS					5.00 IS
24-04-1983				8.00 IS					5.30 IS
01-05-1983				8.40 IS					5.60 IS
01-06-1983				8.80 IS					5.90 IS

NOTES

- Exchange rates (column B) and dates (column A) are from <https://www.boi.org.il/en/Markets/ForeignCurrencyMarket/Pages/shearim48-77.aspx> + Sylvia Haffner's "Israel's Modern Money and Medals, 1917-1970", 1970
- Bale's "Israel Postal History Catalogue 2012" rate periods and rates are displayed only as a guide - these are not all accurate (neither the date nor the rate) and there is a glitch in his period-numbering between SU-7 & SU-10 + no dates given after SU-10; all this data needs reconfirmation
- Where displayed next to a Bale Postal History rate period the rate comes from Bale; where no rate period number is shown this data comes from the Government's "Kovetz HaTakanot" ("Compilation of Regulations")
- per note "d" on pg. 89 of IMF's Annual Report 1950: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/ar/archive/pdf/ar1950.pdf>
- A correction to Bale's data; based on newspaper reports - see the Handbook
- This is term #15 of Section C "General Postal Services for Mail Sent by Surface, Sea & Air" of the postage rates published in Kovetz HaTakanot / term #8 as of KT #4452 of 20-01-1983



THIS IS PONDEROUS...

Start of the WWII Army Postal Concession

מתי התחיל הטבת משלוח דואר חינם - דרך הים או בארץ - לחיילים הבריטים בארץ ישראל במלחמת העולם ה-2?
אף אחד לא יודע. מעטפה לא מבוילת מ-30/08/1940 (לאנגליה) אולי פריט הדואר הצבאי הפטור מדמי דואר הכי
מוקדם שידוע. חידון אקדמי.

Here is a classic case of frequently encountered material – poorly documented: when did the free postage concession for the military begin in Palestine in World War II? ...was the postal concession on surface mail to the UK or on mail within Palestine – or both?

Nobody knows.

Edward Proud in both his books, “History of the British Army Postal Service, vol. 3 – 1927–1963” and in his “Postal History of Palestine & Transjordan” does not say; Jim Benians (“Egypt Postage Prepaid Military Datestamps 1941–1947” p.5) only reveals that the concession began in Egypt on 1 May 1941. Thomas Boyle’s comprehensive “Airmail Operations during WWII” naturally does not discuss the concession – because army airmail required postage. Burt Adlerblum’s detailed 3-part series on the military perspectives of Palestine postal history between Sept. 1939 and Dec. 1940 (The Israel Philatelist 2004-2005) does not reveal the date either. It’s amazing how much verbiage produces little substance.

Even the authoritative “Palestine Standing Order Book #125” for 1939-1942 does not say... although it does reveal when French Forces in Syria received a free mail concession(!)⁶²

Post Office Circular No. 618 November 1, 1939

Correspondence Posted in Syria by Members of the French Military Forces

The French Military Forces in Syria have been accorded the privilege of free postage on *ordinary letters not exceeding 20 grammes in weight* addressed to their relative in Palestine.

Such correspondence will bear a stamp impression “Secteur Postale Posts aux Armes” and care should be taken that it is not surcharged in this service.

A week later the Palestine postal service published the following notice but on close reading it’s unclear: it appears to say that servicemen still need to pay full postage on their mail addressed within Palestine but that in cases where the postage is totally lacking or under paid, the mail will not be sanctioned and will be delivered. Nevertheless, what does “Serving in the Field” mean? Is all of Palestine “the Field” or only certain units / geographical areas? And what about mail addressed abroad – would that then be charged postage dues?

Post Office Circular No. 619 November 8, 1939

Unpaid and Insufficiently Prepaid Correspondence Posted by Personnel or His Majesty’s Forces

Unpaid or insufficiently prepaid correspondence posted by personnel of His Majesty’s Army and Royal Air Force Serving in the Field, are exempt from surcharge on delivery in Palestine. Such correspondence may generally be recognized by the date stamp impression of a Field Post Office or other Army Post Office.

...Over a month later the post office realized that it overlooked the Royal Navy and included it in the scope of this ordinance:

⁶² Published in the “Palestine Standing Order Book #125” for Feb 1939-Jan 1942, as reproduced in the “Israel Philatelist” of April 1994 by Donald Chafetz; these snippets are in the Handbook as per the specified dates.

Post Office Circular No. 625 December 20, 1939
Unpaid and Insufficiently Prepaid Correspondence Posted by
Personnel or His Majesty's Forces

With reference to the notice which appeared at page 2 of the Post Office Circular No. 619 dated the 8th November, 1939, it should be noted that unpaid or insufficiently prepaid correspondence posted by personnel in His Majesty's ships serving afloat is also exempt from surcharge on delivery in Palestine. Such correspondence may generally be recognized by the stamp impression "Received from H.M. Ships" or by the office date stamp impression which includes the words "H.M. Ships."

A subsequent ordinance from 24 April 1940 implies that military mail service requires fully prepaid postage – but an interesting and unusual requirement appears at the bottom: officers and "other Ranks" (presumably "non-commissioned officers", NCOs) are required to use only the Army Post Offices while regular soldiers are 'entitled' to use the civilian Palestine post office.

Post Office Circular No. 643 April 24, 1940
Army Post Offices

Facilities now exist for British and Australian troops through the medium their respective Army Post Offices for the following services:—

- (a) Posting of ordinary and registered correspondence to all destinations
- (b) Posting of ordinary parcels of United Kingdom (from British Army Post Offices only).
- (c) Posting of ordinary parcels for Australia (from Australian Army Post Offices only).

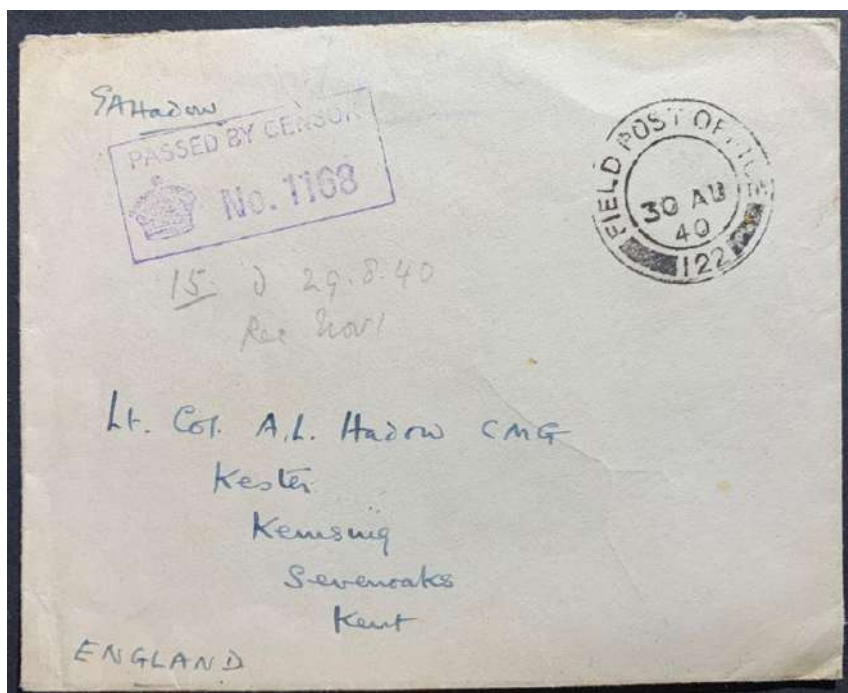
Officers and other Ranks who wish to send ordinary and registered letters to any destination and ordinary parcels for the United Kingdom and Australia through Palestine Post Offices should be politely informed that in accordance with Force Headquarters Orders, they cannot be served and they should be referred to the nearest Army Post Office.

There is no objection to the use of other Palestine Post Office facilities by the Troops.

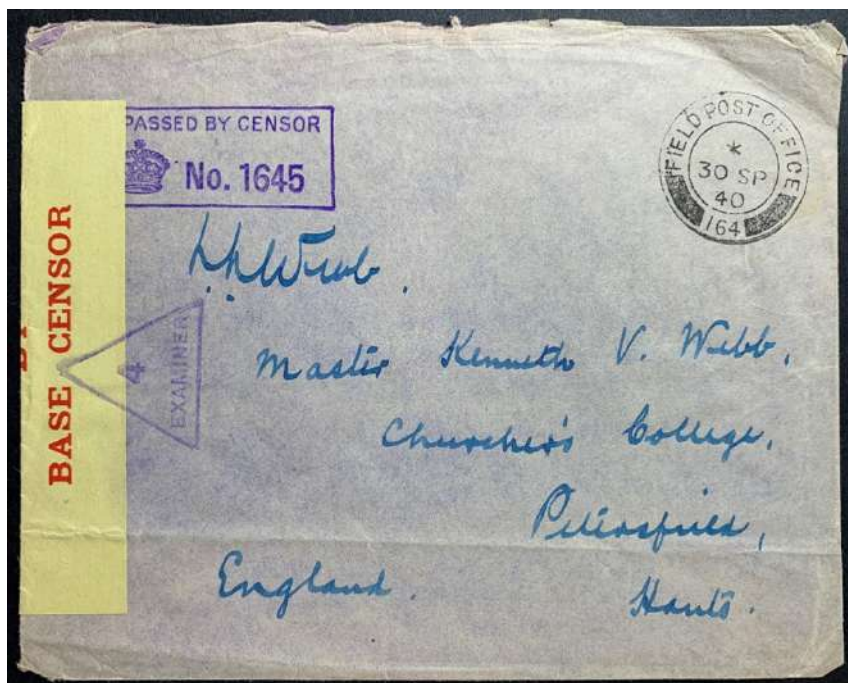
That's all there is. The press archives leave a tantalizing but apparently erroneous clue: persistent questions by the public to the British Parliament in March 1940 revealed two things – a) reported 25 March, the assistant postmaster general said it would not be fair to grant a postal concession to troops in Palestine while those in Egypt and other stations did not enjoy a similar concession; b) reported on 26 March, the matter crystalized further that only troops in "active theaters" (like France at that time) would be granted a free postage concession. What generates confusion between these reports is that we observe stampless army mail in Palestine already in mid-late 1940 whereas the concession apparently began later in Egypt, though nothing unique to Palestine occurred before enemy military operations against Egypt, namely the Italian invasion of Egypt in August-September 1940.

Nevertheless, when did this concession begin in Palestine? We see mail replete with postage stamps in the period of June 1940 when Italy entered the war; I scoured the press archive for August-September 1940 and found no information.

Shown below is a stampless 30 August 1940 postmarked army cover which may be the earliest army free-mail cover known from Palestine. The 'Verco' embossed postal stationery is that of the Royal Artillery, and it was sent from Field Post Office FPO 122 (per Proud this was TULKARM between April 1940 and Feb. 1941) to SEVENOAKS Britain tied by single strike of the FPO postmark & boxed censor mark #1168 with officer's endorsement signature for postage-free mail. As per the manuscript docketing dates on the front, the letter was apparently dated 29 Aug, and received on 1 November - 2 months transit.



And here is another stampless cover posted a month later, on 30 September from FPO 164 (in Palestine per Proud, as of 25 Sept.) & censored by the Base Censor, which may be at SARAFAND in this period (the cover above bearing a unit emblem would have been exempt on that account for an actual censor inspection). Although the censor label covers part of the censor mark, here there does not seem to be an officer-signature endorsement for free mail, and it seems this must have been part of an unannounced standard postal concession for the military, which began at least a month earlier. **Curiously, neither cover is formally endorsed as "On Active Service", as we observe on stampless mail from WWI and later in WWII.**

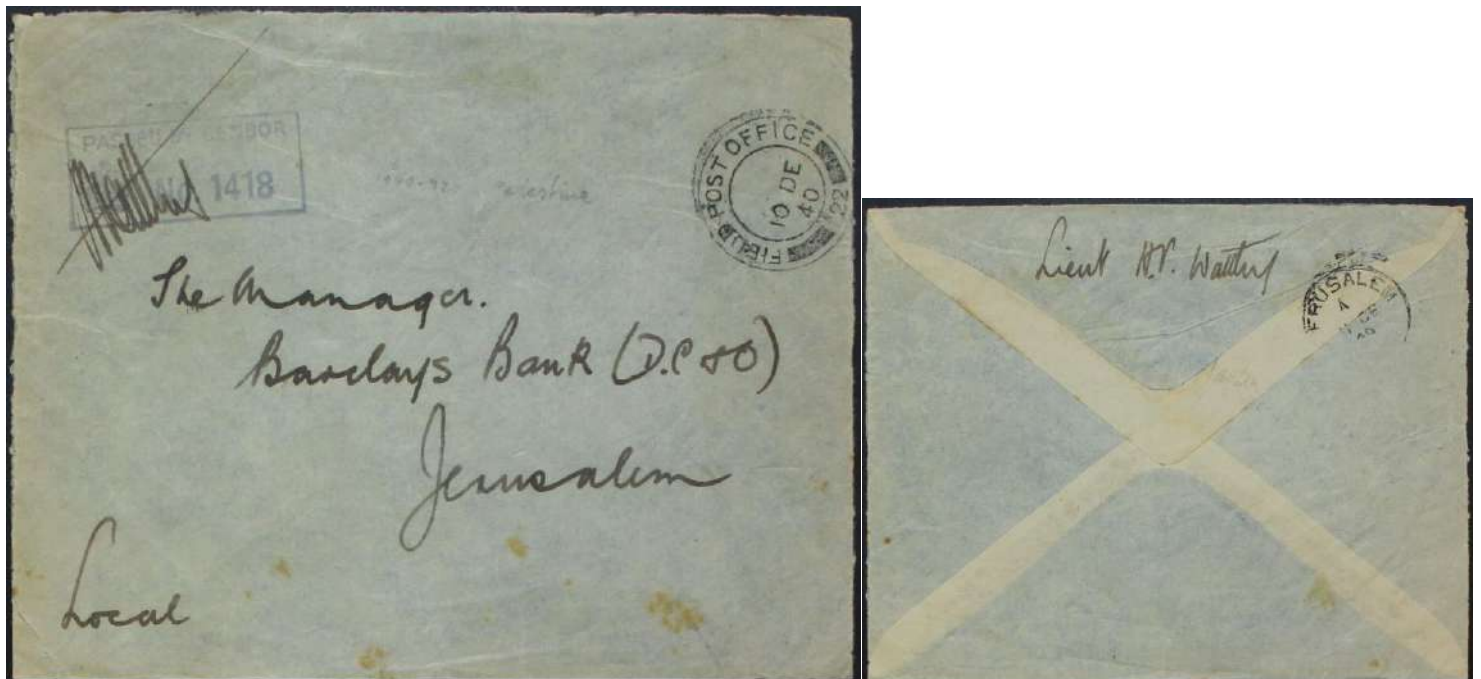


And while it may appear that we have solved the essence of the open question – Palestine free army mail appears to have started in August 1940, we do have a curious case of a domestic letter posted in between the two letters above, on 10 or 11 Sept. 1940 at an army Post Office (field post office to be precise), FPO 121 (the Rex Hotel in JERUSALEM) by a member of the 1st The Royal Dragoons to a local car company, stamped by the censor & officer-signature endorsed – but with 7 mils postage paid at the rate for a domestic letter. The cover is arrival-backstamped by the civilian post office. Interestingly, per

Proud, as of July 1940 the British Army postal service assumed responsibility for the expenses of army mail and letters from/within Palestine were to be franked with British stamps...⁶³



Nevertheless from exactly 2 months later, we do have a case of postage free domestic army mail sent from FPO 122 (TULKARM - as with our first cover above), to Jerusalem; here too censor-stamped (a different number) & officer endorsed (and sent by an officer as per the ordinance shown above):



As such, we have tantalizing clues that the free mail postal concession may indeed have started in August 1940 – but that it may have been limited, ironically, to overseas surface mail; domestic mail within Palestine seemingly continued to require postage – unless this was a function of which army post office was sending it: by some unit “in the field” or at an army post office in a hotel -?

⁶³ Edward Proud “History of the British Army Postal Service, Volume III - 1927-1963” p.145

June 2022 Update: a heavy-handed example of Army mail denied the postal concession came my way recently, underscoring that indeed until sometime in August 1940 the army was still barred from sending mail – even locally – postage free; a rare case of army mail taxed postage dues.

Here we have a cover sent locally in Haifa on **16 Aug 1940**, from the army unit “Queens Own Yorkshire Dragoons” (oval cachet on front) to a local business. The army unit used an official mail (OHMS) postal stationary envelope and dispatched it with the army’s “Despatch Rider Letter Service” (“DRLS” as endorsed on top) – this was a motorcycle-driven messenger-letter type service of the Signals Corps, used by the British Army when mail was of sufficient urgency that it could be expedited outside of the army postal service (but not of such urgency that it needed to be telegraphed). This type of mail was usually used to communicate between military units and is rarely observed on commercial mail.

Here the DRLS deposited the letter at the public counter of the civilian Head Post Office (evidenced by the double ringed postmark) – but then it was taxed by a separate department for twice the deficient domestic letter postage of 7 mils, being charged 14m as the penalty. The postage dues were levied & tied by the single circle postmark of the internal department responsible. The cover is tied at back by an instructional marking that a PT 514 form (informing the addressee of taxed correspondence for payment) was issued the same day. To the civilian postal service, in this specific case, it did not matter whether the letter was deemed “official mail” or “army mail” – as originating from the army it was still liable to domestic letter postage.

An extenuating circumstance may be that the unit involved here was assigned at this time to the **1st Cavalry Division** which was stationed in Palestine as a “**garrison force**” - that designation, as opposed to be a front-line or "active service" unit, may be the reason why the cover ineligible for free postage either as official mail or Army mail & was taxed in full...



To Be Continued...



ON JEWISH YEAR-DATING METHODS

מאמר בנושא תיארוך יהודי חלופי לשיטה הלועזית הרגילה, שסופרת את השנה מאיזה אירוע בעבר. תיארוך בסגנון הזה נפוץ על פריטי דואר מהתקופה של הישוב הישן בארץ ישראל העות'מנית.

I came up short with material for the Ottoman Turkish period of Palestine but I do have a certain 'learning' that may be of use to researchers and collectors of this period: unusual Hebrew dating methods⁶⁴. In the period prior to the Mandate, as late even as 1918 (and possibly more), Jewish inhabitants of Palestine often wrote the Hebrew year of the date on their correspondences in a manner different to the usual method of 'absolute' Hebrew year dates.

As some readers may know the Hebrew dates are based on 'numerology' (gematria) whereby a numerical value is assigned to each of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet; written as a series of letters for a year date, their combined value yields the year in question. The basis for the standard calculation of the Hebrew year is the year Jews considered to be the absolute beginning of time since Creation, what is sometimes called "Anno Mundi" – the year 3761 BCE (at sunset on 6 October).

As such, for instance, in 1918 the Hebrew year equivalent – prior to the new year (Rosh HaShana) in Sept–Oct – in Latin numerals was "5678", and in Hebrew letters it was ה'תרע"ח (yielding the numerological equivalent per letter, from right to left, of 5000 + 400 + 200 + 70 + 8 => 5678). As a shorthand approach, written Hebrew dates may omit the millennium (as something self-evident in their time) and simply be written as "678" or תרע"ח. The new Jewish century (5700) began in 1940, so the year 1948 was often written as "708" or תש"ח.



Nevertheless, there was another manner by which year dates were written and this was based on alternate interpretations of "eras of creation": here the starting point for the time measured was based on one of many historical events, specifically counting the number of years since the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE (and some Jewish communities, such as the Yemenites, continued to use this method until later in the 20th Century).

Here for example is a medal created by the Bezalel art school for Jewish volunteer soldiers of the Jewish Battalions in World War I and distributed to them in July 1918: the Hebrew year date here is אתתמ"ט (equaling "1849" – 1000 + 400 + 400 + 40 + 9), which would be added to "70" (the year of the Temple's destruction) to yield the date in question, here 1919.

This is one of the most common alternate methods for writing the Hebrew year date, but there are actually as many as 22(!) other possibilities – and these may vary amongst themselves depending on how their user chose to interpret the starting date:

⁶⁴ Sources used variously in this article:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anno_Mundi

⇒ And the Hebrew version:

https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%9E%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%99%D7%9F_%D7%94%D7%A9%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%9D_%D7%91%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%97_%D7%94%D7%A2%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9E%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%99%D7%9F_%D7%94%D7%A9%D7%98%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%AA

<http://www.cs.tau.ac.il/~nachumd/papers/HebrewDating.pdf>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gematria>

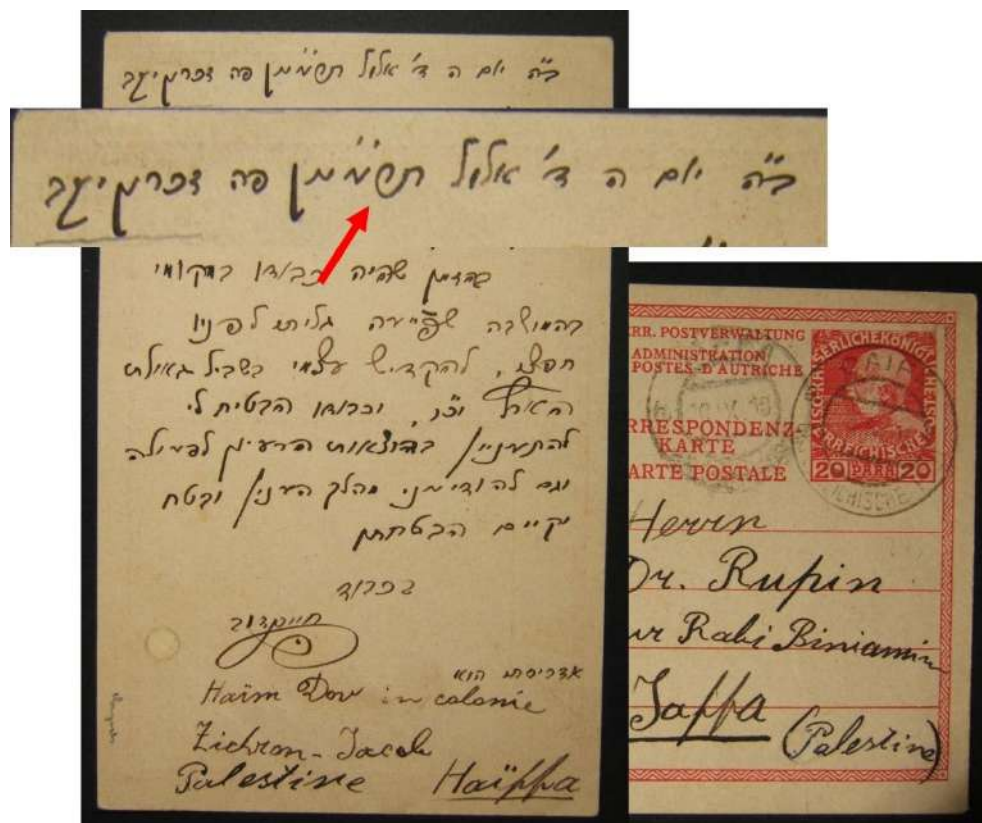
⇒ And the Hebrew version:

https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%9E%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%99%D7%9F_%D7%94%D7%A9%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%9D_%D7%91%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%97_%D7%94%D7%A2%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9E%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%99%D7%9F_%D7%94%D7%A9%D7%98%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%AA

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missing_years_\(Jewish_calendar\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missing_years_(Jewish_calendar))

An event in traditional chronology	The Hebrew Date (in Latin & Hebrew letters)	Gregorian Year - according to traditional chronology	Gregorian Year - according to historical research
The first five days of the creation of the world	1 - א	3760 BCE	
Creation of Adam	2 - ב (on Rosh Hashana)	3760 BCE	
Birth of Noah	1058 - א'נ"ח	2703 BCE	
The flood	1657 - א'תנ"ז	2104 BCE	
Birth of Abraham	1950 - א'תתק"נ	1811 BCE	
Isaac's binding	2087 - ב'פ"ז	1674 BCE	
The migration of the tribes to Egypt	2239 - ב'רל"ט	1522 BCE	
Exodus from Egypt & Receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai	2449 - ב'תמ"ט	1312 BCE	
The erection of the Tabernacle & the Sin of the Spies	2450 - ב'ת"ן	1311 BCE	
The entrance to the Land of Israel	2489 - ב'תפ"ט	1272 BCE	
Death of Joshua bin Nun	2517 - ב'תקי"ז	1244 BCE	
Establishment of the Kingdom of David	2886 - ב'תתפ"ו	875 BCE	1004 BCE (estimate based on the Scripture)
Establishment of Solomon's Temple	2928 - ב'תתקכ"ח	833 BCE	930-970 BCE (estimate based on the Scripture)
Exile of the Ten Tribes	3206 - ג'ר"ו	555 BCE	722 BCE
The beginning of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar	3321 - ג'שכ"א	440 BCE	605 BCE
Destruction of the First Temple	3339 - ג'של"ט	422 BCE	586 BCE
Declaration of Cyrus	3392 - ג'שצ"ב	369 BCE	538 BCE
The miracle of Purim	3406 - ג'ת"ו	355 BCE	482 BCE
Establishment of the Second Temple	3410 - ג'ת"י	351 BCE	516 BCE
Rise of Ezra	3415 - ג'תט"ו	346 BCE	458 BCE
The beginning of the Seleucid era	3450 - ג'ת"נ	311 BCE	311 BCE
Purification of the Temple in the Maccabi Revolt (Chanukka)	3624 - ג'תרכ"ד	137 BCE	164 BCE
Destruction of the Second Temple	3830 - ג'תתל"ל	70 CE	70 CE

This method of dating was popular in the Jewish community of Ottoman Palestine (and some continued to use it into the mid-20th Century):



The classic problem with understanding the dates – other than the fact that the postmarks are not always clear – is deciphering the handwriting.

The postcard above, sent via the Austrian post on **Saturday** 10 Sept. 1910 is dated: “Baruch HaShem (‘Thank G-d’) Yom Hey (Thursday) Daled of Elul (4th day of the month of Elul) [in the year] Tav-Shin-Mem (the year תש"מ) from here (“מן”) Zichron Yaakov”; as the sender was Chaim Dov, also known as Rabbi Kantor of Shfeya - a Mohel & Shochet, one of the first settlers of Meir Shfeya, the postcard was likely sent after sunset on the Shabbat meaning that the message was written on the 8th or 9th of September and posted on the 7th of Elul (after sunset on 10 Sept.).

The year as written is 400+300+40 for the numerological values of Tav-Shin-Mem, yielding “740”. If the millennial value is added (as a ‘prefix’ to the date), we would logically think of the present millennia and add a “5” so the date would become “5740” or the Gregorian year of 1980. Nevertheless based on what we learned above this date overshoots the known posting date of 1910 by 70 years – and there doesn’t seem to be a logical reason to calculate a year by exceeding the present date, so it may be that the sender actually intended for his date of 740 to refer to the preceding millennia, making it “4740” or the Gregorian year of 980.

Knowing the actual posting date was 930 years later, what could have been the sender’s method for dating his mail? He apparently used the earliest estimated date for the start of the construction of the 1st Temple in 930 BCE and began counting history from that date. By this approach, if we add “4740” to 930 we reach 5670 which is the Gregorian year of 1910. As if philately wasn’t complex enough.

Below is a suggestion from Mayer Ebner (Meir Avner), a delegate to the 1st Zionist Congress in 1897, here in 1948 proposing a new period from which to begin counting the years⁶⁵:

NEW ERA

The Editor, The Palestine Post

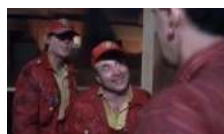
Sir,—The establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine is an event of the greatest possible significance to the Jewish people, and I suggest that it should be marked by the recognition of a new era in our history, and the year be re-named “Year One of the Jewish State.”

The Jewish people would be breaking no religious injunction nor jettisoning anything of value if they ceased to reckon time from the “creation of the world,” as has been the custom. This method of calculating is mentioned several times in the Talmud, but became customary among Jews only in the 9th and 10th centuries, and has never been accepted, for instance, in the Yemen.

Yours, etc.,
MAYER EBNER

Tel Aviv, Dec. 26.

⁶⁵ Palestine Post of 6 Jan 1948, p.4



RECOMMENDED PHILATELIC RESOURCES

With an emphasis on the Holy Land or very specialized thematic knowledge

For Specialized Thematic or Technical Knowledge

Postage Dues Mail Study Group:

<http://www.postageduemail.org.uk/>

Forces Postal History Society:

<https://www.forcespostalhistorysociety.org.uk/>

Civil Censorship Study Group:

<http://www.c-c-s-g.org/>

⇒ *Excellent reference books are produced by this group*

The Meter Stamp Society:

<http://meterstampsociety.com/>

The Perfins Club:

<https://www.perfins.org/>

GB Stamp Rolls:

<https://www.gbstamprolls.com/>

⇒ *A stunning site all dedicated to stamp vending machines & coil stamps*

StampPrinters:

<https://www.stampprinters.info/>

⇒ *Much technical information on stamp printing, production and dummy stamps*

StampBoards:

<https://www.stampboards.com/>

⇒ *The administrator can be abusive but there is much good information on the boards nevertheless*

StampCommunity:

<https://www.stampcommunity.org/>

⇒ *Mostly US-oriented but much good technical information on the boards + polite*

Regional/National Philatelic Societies

Egypt Study Circle:

<http://www.egyptstudycircle.org.uk/>

Society of Israel Philatelists:

<https://israelstamps.com/>

Cercle Français Philatélique d'Israël:

<http://www.cfpi-asso.net/>

Ottoman and Near East Philatelic Society (ONEPS):

<https://www.oneps.net/>

Publications with Specialized Articles

The Middle East Philatelic Bulletin:

<https://www.zobbel.de/mepb/mepbulletin.htm>

Informational Resources

Hebrew–English Philatelic Lexicon:

<http://israelphilately.org.il/he/info/lexicon>

Great Britain Philatelic Society:

<https://www.gbps.org.uk/information/sources/>

⇒ *Large repository of free original documentary information including postage rates*

The Horseshoe Route:

<http://www.nzstamps.org.uk/horseshoe/index.html>

⇒ *Downloadable research on this route*

Research Resources

Israel National Library Press Archive:

<https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/search>

⇒ *Includes Arabic, English, Hebrew and many other foreign languages and countries, like Australia...*

Israel State Archives:

<https://www.archives.gov.il/en/>

⇒ *Much downloadable original material, much in English*

Airline Timetables:

<https://www.timetableimages.com/>

⇒ *For researching flight routes and air carriers*

The Internet Archive:

<https://archive.org/>

⇒ *Countless free and out of print searchable books and publications*

Handbook Holyland Postal History & Philately: https://jerusalemstamps.com/Handbook_Holyland_Postal_History.pdf

US Postal Bulletins (access original documents)

<http://www.uspostalbulletins.com/>

⇒ *Excellent information on foreign countries postage rates and procedures – use the “search” facility*

The US Postal Guides & much more (original documents)

https://stampsmarter.org/learning/Home_USPOD.html

⇒ *Excellent information on foreign countries postage rates and procedures*

US Postal Service original documents http://www.cse.psu.edu/~deh25/post/Timeline_files/US-Postal_Guide.html

⇒ *As above, but better – much information on foreign countries & postal procedures*

Encyclopedia of the Founders & Builders of Eretz Israel

<http://www.tidhar.tourolib.org/>

⇒ *Great for researching [obscure] correspondents/references to people & organizations*

The Maurice Falk Institute for Economic Research

<https://en.falk.huji.ac.il/books>

⇒ *Many free research monographs – invaluable for researching economic aspects of postal rates & policies*

Primary Resources (which reference Holyland postal matters)

Hebrew access to government documents: https://www.gov.il/he/departments/official_gazette/govil-landing-page

Arabic Language access to Israeli & Mandate documents: https://www.gov.il/he/departments/units/official_gazette_arabic

Library of Congress – US Govt. documents:

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/?fa=subject+topic:government,+law+%26+politics>

⇒ *Much information on foreign countries as well as local procedures are in these documents*

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency archives

<https://www.jta.org/archive>

⇒ *Many references to philatelic events*

The Universal Postal Union – “must know” in order to understand international mail procedures

The UPU archives

<https://www.upu.int/en/Universal-Postal-Union/About-UPU/Acts> and

<https://www.upu.int/en/Universal-Postal-Union/About-UPU/Acts/Archives-of-Congresses>

⇒ *Limited in its scope going back to older conventions*

The UPU conventions <https://www.gbps.org.uk/information/sources/treaties/upu-conventions.php>

⇒ *The original convention protocols even if not all of the associated documents*

I know there are plenty more good resources on the net, many with national postage rate information, and many that I’ve probably overlooked for this issue, but I’m trying to keep this listing as focused as possible on material relating to the Holyland – “Better less, but better”.

Wherever I’ve found material of especial interest I’ve posted links to it in the [Research Center](#).



DOCUMENT OF THE DAY

Jerusalem Postal Services, 30 May 1948

This document comes from the following file of correspondence of the Secretariat of Jerusalem 25 May - 7 June 1948 at the State Archives – see 30 May letter of Avraham Renan on establishing the Jerusalem postal service (p.102-103 of the file) <https://www.archives.gov.il/archives/Archive/0b07170680319da0/File/0b071706804d4550>

Jerusalem, 21 Iyar 5708
30.5.48

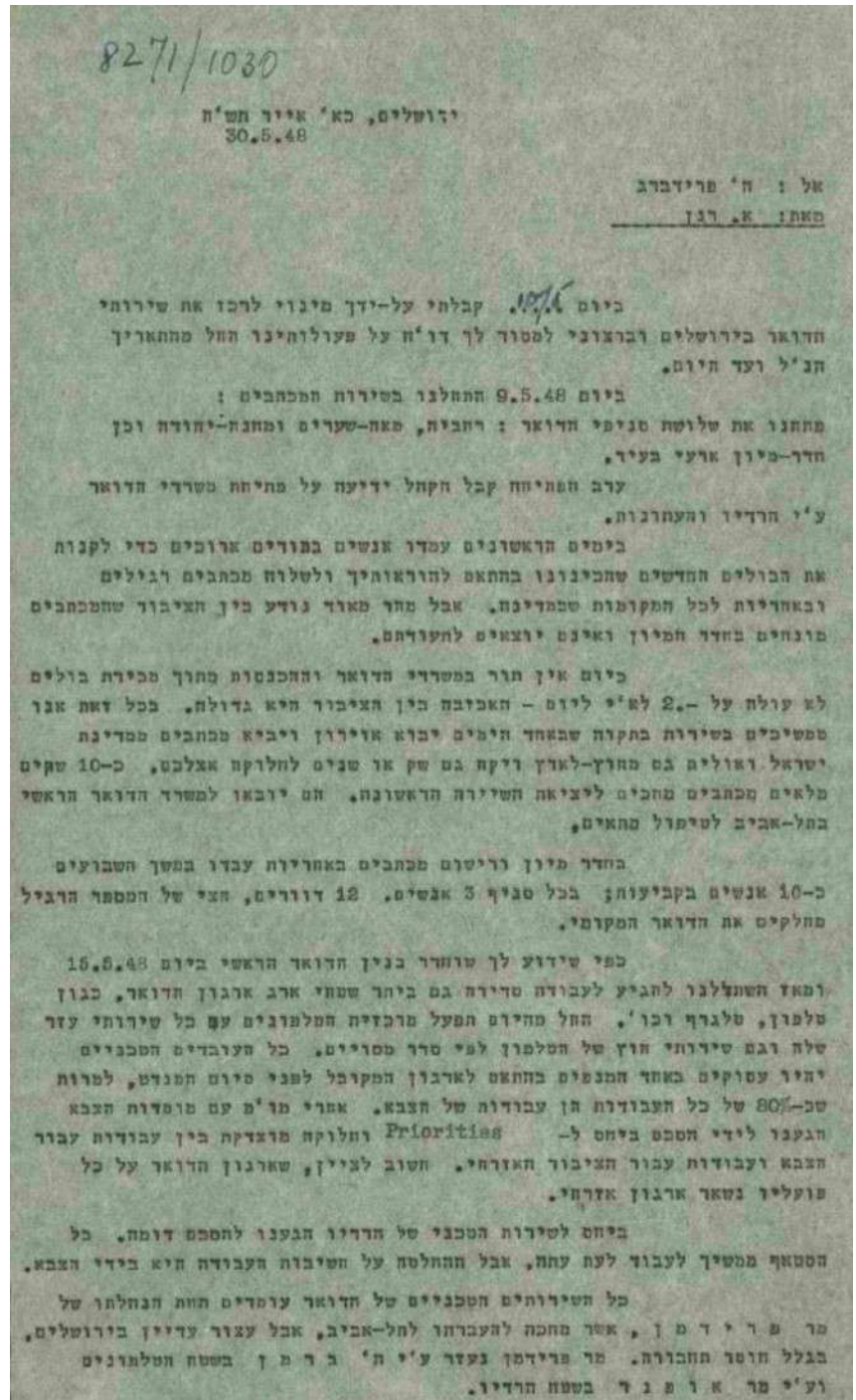
To: Mr. Fridburg [Zvi Fridburg "Prihar"]
From: Avraham Renan

On 10/5 I received from you a commission to organize the postal services of Jerusalem and I would like to present you a report of our activities as of the mentioned date until today.

On 9.5.48 we began with the letter service:
We opened the three post offices: Rehavia, Mea Shearim and Mahane Yehuda, and also a temporary sorting office in the city.
On the eve of the opening the public received a notice about it on the radio and in the press.

On the first days people waited in long lines in order to buy the new stamps which we prepared in accordance with your instructions, and to send regular and registered letters to all places in the country. However very quickly the public became aware that the letters were laying in the sorting office and were not being sent to their destination.

As of now there is no line in the post office and the income from the sale of stamps does not exceed 2 Pounds per day – the disappointment among the public is great. Regardless we continue with the service in the hope that on one of the days a plane will come to bring letters from Israel and perhaps also from abroad and will also take a sack or two for distribution by you (in Tel Aviv). About 10 sacks full of mail are waiting for the first convoy to go out. They will go to the head post office in Tel Aviv for ongoing service.



In the sorting office and at the registry department for registered mail there consistently worked about 10 people for the last two weeks; every post office has 3 people. 12 postmen, half of the usual number, are distributing local mail.

As you know the head post office building was liberated on 15.5.48 and since then we strived to achieve regular service also with other areas of the postal organization such as telephone, telegraph, etc. Starting today the telephone switchboard will work with all her supporting services and also overseas telephone services according to a certain order of priority. All the

technical workers will be busy with one of the projects in accordance to the standard organization as before the end of the Mandate in spite of the fact that some 80% of the projects are for the Army. After an agreement with institutions of the army we reached an agreement with regard to the balance of priorities and a fair distribution between projects for the army and projects for the public citizenry. It's important to note that the organization of the postal service across all its responsibilities is a civilian organization.

With regard to the radio service we reached a similar agreement. All the staff continues to work for now but the decision on determining priorities is in the hands of the army.

All the technical services of the post are under the management of Mr. Friedman, who is waiting for his transfer to Tel Aviv but is still besieged in Jerusalem because of a lack of transportation. Mr. Friedman is assisted by Mr. Berman in the area of telephony and Mr. Ofner in the area of the radio.



Navigating Israeli & American Online Archives

מאמרון על דרכי חיפוש-מידע באתרים ישראליים ואמריקאים, לרבות במה שקשור למידע אודות שירותי הדואר.

It's virtually impossible to easily obtain information on the postal services, whether from the pre-State era or after. One could try his luck at the national library, but particularly now in the "covid era", there are a number of obstacles: lockdowns (and the closure of establishments like the national library or that of the philatelic society), inaccessibility – because the desired documents like the Mandate "Postal Guides" are only accessible in-person in a reading room, or simply unobtainable at conventional locales like the libraries – because they haven't got them(!)

I tried the library and loan-network of the American Philatelic Society and was shocked to discover that although Mandate postal guides are listed as being in stock (somewhere there in the network)... the librarians couldn't locate them...

Here then is an outsider's guide to the inside world of 'roughing it' by literally digging until you find what you want: thanks to an unnavigable Israeli site called [nevo.co.il](https://www.nevo.co.il), we do have broad access to uploaded – and searchable – government documents which include much information (though not all) about the postal services. Nevo does have a search engine at <https://www.nevo.co.il/HakikaSearch.aspx> but ghoulishly the outputted results are not linked to the actual documents, so you would need to know the URLs of the displayed publications beforehand in order to reference the edition numbers produced by the search result(!) That said, for files from about the 1970s the text is not always character-scanned, rendering those files unsearchable – and leaving you to the mercy of that search engine, to pinpoint the specific files you're seeking.

(We also have the national archives at [archives.gov.il](https://www.archives.gov.il), but here too the information we see is either not available as accessible online documentation or is not accessible at all.)

I'll continue snooping around to figure out how to get these sites to work but in the meantime here is how the prospective researcher could push his own car: in all the instances below the key is to change the edition number of the document in question (see the red colored bit in the URLs) and then do a search (eg "post" or "דואר") of whatever you want to see if it's there

Mandate Era:

At the moment I've found the main links to the Official Gazette

- This is a link to the standard English language edition: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_html/law21/PG-e-1365.pdf
- And this is a link to the standard Hebrew language edition of the same:
https://www.nevo.co.il/law_html/law21/PG-1365.pdf (note that the URL is a bit shorter, without the "e-" in the ending portion)

An Arabic edition exists, but I have to find the root URL for it

Note however that the uploaded Gazettes do not include their Supplements in those files – they merely list them in their contents including those of the Supplements. Although this may not be correct for all eras of the Gazette, it appears that after the table of contents for the core Gazette are listed, any Supplements issued with that Gazette are numbered from "Supplement 2" onwards: here then is how a URL link would look for "Supplement 2" of a specific Gazette (and if that issue had a 3rd or 4th Supplement we would substitute the number "2" with "3" or "4" etc.):

https://www.nevo.co.il/law_word/law21/pg-e-1459-2.pdf

Now, unfortunately Nevo does not have all the Mandate Gazette issues: they're missing 1919-1920 and for some years like 1933 (but not just) whole months are missing too. For this there is Yale's repository here (<https://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:2845212>) but – can you believe it – it also has a few idiosyncracies: the Gazettes are either image-only or images with searchable text, but the search text recognition is not so sharp. ALSO, their repository is a bit messed up for some years and so not entirely in order as it would appear to the eye...

Israel:

Key Israeli government documents are broadly divided into the following titles:

- The Official Newspaper ("Iton Rishmi") which appears to have been published in only 50 editions, from 14 May 1948 to 11 Feb. 1949 before being replaced by
- the Government Notices ("Yalkut Pursumim") on 17 Feb. 1949, AND
- the Government Ordinances ("Kovetz HaTakanot"), on 25 Feb. 1949
- There are also a few publications detailing laws – but those publications' names have changed over time:
 - a) one publication called "Hokei Eretz Israel" (Laws of the Land of Israel), which seems limited to issue #8
 - b) another one is called "Dinei Medinat Israel" (Laws of the State of Israel)
 - c) and another one called "Sefer HaHokim" (Book of Laws)

It seems that the bulk of the information on the postal services, including rates will be found in the Ordinances ("Kovetz HaTakanot"), and prior to its introduction, in the Official Newspaper (though there were only a few issues with references to the postal services). The "Yalkut HaPirsumim" focuses mostly on citizens changing their names – good for sender/addressee research. Nevertheless, here are the URLs, and as above – just change the edition number (in red) to access different issues:

Iton Rishmi – basic issue: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_word/law12/er-001.pdf

Iton Rishmi – 1st supplement: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_word/law12/er-038-t.pdf

Iton Rishmi – 2nd supplement: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_word/law12/er-038-t2.pdf

Iton Rishmi – 3rd supplement: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_word/law12/er-038-t3.pdf

Yalkut HaPirsumim – basic issue: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_html/law10/yalkut-0001.pdf

Kovetz JaTakanot – basic issue: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_word/law06/tak-0001.pdf

Hokei Eretz Israel – basic issue: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_word/law85/h-hadash-1.pdf

Dinei Medinate Israel – basic issue: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_word/law18/dinim-0009.pdf

⇒ this may be the English version, "Laws of the State of Israel":

https://www.nevo.co.il/law_html/law150/laws%20of%20the%20state%20of%20israel-1.pdf

Sefer HaHokim – basic issue: https://www.nevo.co.il/law_word/law14/law-0001.pdf

This is the official translation of the names of the various government publications, taken from "Laws of the State of Israel" #34:

EXPLANATIONS:

<i>I.R. (Iton Rishmi)</i>	— The Official Gazette during the tenure of the Provisional Council of State
<i>Reshumot</i>	— The Official Gazette since the inception of the Knesset
Sections of <i>Reshumot</i> referred to in this translation:	
<i>Yalkut Ha-Pirsumim</i>	— Government Notices
<i>Sefer Ha-Chukkim</i>	— Principal Legislation
<i>Chukkei Taktziv</i>	— Budgetary Legislation
<i>Kovetz Ha-Takkanot</i>	— Subsidiary Legislation
<i>Hatza'ot Chok</i>	— Bills
<i>Chukkei Taktziv (Hatza'ot)</i>	— Budget Bills
<i>Dinei Yisrael (from No. 2: Dinei Medinat Yisrael) (Nusach Chadash)</i>	— The revised, up-to-date and binding Hebrew text of legislation enacted before the establishment of the State
<i>P.G. (Palestine Gazette)</i>	— The Official Gazette of the Mandatory Government
<i>Laws of Palestine</i>	— The 1934 revised edition of Palestine legislation (Drayton)
<i>LSI (Laws of the State of Israel)</i>	— The English translation of laws of which this volume forms part
<i>NV (Laws of the State of Israel (New Version))</i>	— An English edition of the revised text of pre-State legislation (see above)

A few things to note: when researching items, like postal information, these publications (Mandate and Israel) will reference in footnotes the earlier publications that the present one is altering/affecting/overriding – this is a good and easy way to catch out the relevant issues you need for your research. But note that especially with the Israeli sources, each specific subject in postal services references earlier publications related specifically to that service, eg. telephony, telex services, parcel post etc., such that a listing of new phone rates referencing an earlier publication will be referencing it specifically in regard to telephony and not necessarily because it contains actual postal information. Keep your eye on the ball...

The problem arises in the Israeli publications, from some time in the 1960s when they stop referencing the edition number and only reference the [Hebrew] year of the edition and the relevant page number. Compounding this problem is that the publications are dated using the Latin date but the actual laws – and revisions to them – reference the Hebrew year date. So for example you may see in August 1970 a reference to “revision 3” of postal ordinances of the Hebrew year 1969-1970 – it could be a revision to an edition published in 1969 because the Hebrew calendar year is usually from Sept/Oct of one Latin year to Sept/Oct of the following Latin year. Likewise you may then see in Nov. 1970 a reference to “revision 2” of postal laws for the Hebrew year 1970-1971 – this would mean that the ordinance being revised was published sometime after the Jewish new year of Sept/Oct 1970. By the same token the referenced page numbers (when an edition number is not referenced) begin from “1” as of the first issue of the new Jewish year in Sept/Oct of a given year, so if the number is something like “220” search for editions a few weeks into the new Jewish year to get in the area of that page number... drink a lot of coffee!

BUT the work is well worth it: there is A LOT of undocumented postal information in these sources and however good a source like Bale’s “Postal History” catalogue may be, a) it has inaccuracies, and b) it lacks much information that is to be found in these sources.

American Postal Documents: another good and accessible source with references either to Palestine/Israel or to assist with understanding postal handling (because it’s a popular postal link), are the US government sources. In the directory of resource links above I included some US-based resources, but below are the “hard core” official sites for those really seeking to data-mine.

It seems that the main resource is analogous to the Israeli “Kovetz Ha Takanot” and that is the “Federal Register”. The FR was launched in 1936 and covers all agencies of the US government; it’s divided into 50 standardized “Titles” belonging to the “United States Code of Federal Regulations” (CFR) - one for each agency - of which Title 39 is “Postal Service”.

With that, some other Titles may also be worth researching for additional information related to postage stamp production, routes, international relations, etc: Title 15 is “Commerce and Foreign Trade”, Title 19 is “Customs Duties”, Title 22 is “Foreign Relations”, Title 31 is “Money and Finance: Treasury”, etc.

On its official site the archived information begins from 1994, and on the US Government Publishing Office’s site the data is also from before then.

- <https://www.federalregister.gov/agencies/postal-service>
- <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/fr/1936>
⇒ these are some search tips, which may actually be helpful for a change: <https://www.govinfo.gov/help/fr#about>

I’m still developing this section as I haven’t had enough time to deep-dive into it, so more information will probably be added in future Bulletins, but for now also be aware that the key postal documents to obtain are

- the “International Mail Manual” (IMM) of the US Postal Service. The present edition is here (<https://pe.usps.com/text/imm/welcome.htm>) but I imagine back-issues are available as pdf files if we search for them. It seems this publication was launched around 1980, and preceding it was
- the “United States Official Postal Guide” (USOPG)
- There are also the “Postal Service Manual” and the “Postal Service Publication 42, International Mail”

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