

# Holy Land VI

## Postal History 105-106

OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE SOCIETY OF THE  
POSTAL HISTORY OF ERETZ-ISRAEL

### מכתב ליושבי ירושלים.

עורך נכבד ! נבקש לתת מקום בעתונך היקר למכתבנו זה :  
בשם חברינו בבתי הספר פה עיר הבירה נבקש מאחינו  
יושבי ירושלים, השולחים מכתבים לחוץ, לשלחם על ידי הדואר  
העברי, אשר בירושלים, ולבקש מפקיד הדואר להניח את  
החותם על המרקא באופן, שיהיה שם „ירושלים" עליה, כי נעים  
לנערי ישראל שם ירושלים עיר הקדש בשפת ציון על המרקאות,  
הבאות מארץ ישראל, והמרקאות האלו תהיינה להם היותר יקרות  
באלבומיהם. בברכת ציון האחים בני אריה.

A note which appeared in the Hebrew newspaper *Hamelitz* of April 26, 1903.  
It is a request by some Jewish children from Petersburg to put a note in the  
newspaper begging the people of Jerusalem, who send letters abroad, to use the  
"Hebrew Post of Jerusalem" and to ask the post clerk "to put the handstamp on  
the Marka" so that the name "Jerusalem" in Zion language (Hebrew) will be seen  
on stamps coming from Eretz-Israel, and these stamps will be for them  
the most precious in their album (See article on p. 230 )



# HOLY LAND POSTAL HISTORY

## Official Bulletin of the Society of the Postal History of Eretz-Israel

Affiliated to the Israel Philatelic Federation

*The Founders: Shaul Ben Haim, Emanuel Glassman, Bernardo Grosser*

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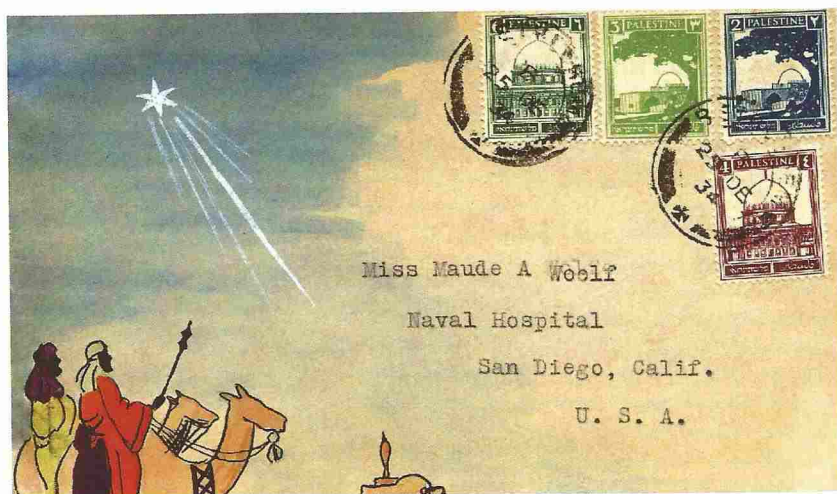
## 'Illustrated Covers from Palestine, by Karl Lewis?' \*

*Leslie A. Bard*

About thirteen years ago, I purchased a couple of illustrated covers from Palestine by a local stamp dealer in Sacramento, (Figs. 1 & 2).



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

\* First Published in The Israel Philatelist, Vol LV, No 4 (Aug 2004).



The hand-painted watercolor scenes obviously have a Christmas theme, but the dates of posting are 29 Dec 34 and 8 Jan 35.

The 2, 3, 4, & 6 mil stamps paid for first class foreign surface mailing at 15/10 mils per 10 gr. There is no return address, and there are no original markings on the back. Both had been opened, and one (Fig. 1) had an enclosure. It is a folded 6 x 6.8 in. piece of pink hard-surface paper with advertisements on both sides. One side (Fig. 1a) has an application for a subscription to the Weekly Philatelic Gossip in Holton, Kansas, and a reproduction of an illustrated cover similar in style to those in Figs. 1 and 2, but the scene is not from the Middle East. The other side (Fig. 1b) has two advertisements for the Mercantile Stamp Co. of Ventura, Calif. one of which touts hand-painted watercolor covers from Oriental and U.S. ships, Oriental countries, and "South Sea Islands". Neither the artist nor the company responsible for the covers is given.

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Send direct to GOSSIP PRINTERY, Holton, Kansas

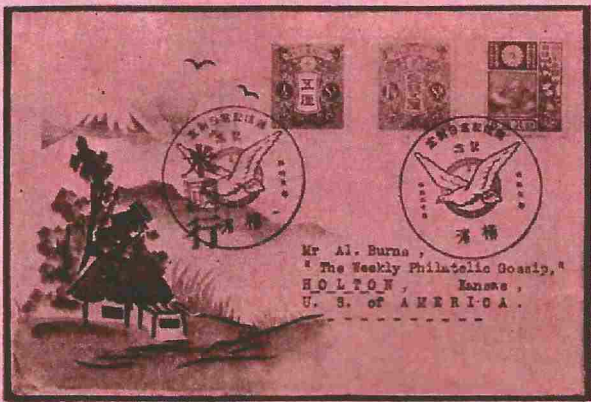


Figure 1a

# **TANNOU TOUVA 1934 REGISTRATION AND AIRMAIL ISSUES**

The most popular stamp issue of the year.  
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Government.

## **AIRMAIL**

Complete set, 1k to 2r. 9 varieties ..... \$5.50  
Short set, 4 varieties, 1k to 15k ..... .50

## **REGISTRATION**

Complete set, 1k to 20k, 8 varieties ..... 1.00  
Short set, 5 varieties, 1k to 5k ..... .25  
Postage extra under \$1

# **BEAUTIFUL BI-COLORED MINT GREECE 1933 AIRMAILS . . .**

We have a limited quantity of these beautiful  
short sets of four varieties which we offer at 35c  
per set. The Grecian art in engraving and  
printing is clearly brought out in this issue.

**ORDER YOUR SET NOW AT 35c.**

# **AIRMAILS — COMMEMORATIVES — NEW ISSUES!**

\$6 CATALOG VALUE FOR \$1 — all in su-  
preremely popular stamps! The "A-C-N" Packet  
contains 75 different guaranteed genuine  
stamps, including many 20th Century Airmails,  
Commemoratives, and New and Recent Issues.  
Any of these that you do not need for your col-  
lection can easily be traded or sold to your  
friends. Don't miss this opportunity to acquire  
such a wonderful collection, at a price of less  
than one-sixth catalog value!

"A-C-N" Packet ..... Only \$1.00

## **PRECANCELS. Bureau and local prints**

Assorted in packets of 100. In this array you  
will find many good ones which you may not  
have at the present time. We offer these to the  
collector for only

30c, plus postage

## **MERCANTILE STAMP CO.**

Drawer B-8

Ventura, California

# **Have You Any of These Covers In Your Collection?**

If not we can supply you one with  
**HAND-PAINTED** water colors,  
franked with various issues of for-  
eign stamps and cancelled **PICTORI-  
ALLY** in color. Mailed direct to your  
address.

## **SOUTH SEA ISLANDS**

6 different  
**ORIENTAL**  
SHIP covers  
(each) ..... .25

8 different U.S.  
ship covers  
(each) ..... .25

— o — **KOREA** ..... .25

**BORNEO** ..... .35 **SAGHALIEN** ..... .25

**GUAM** ..... .35 **ITSUKUSHIMA** ..... .25

**NEW ZEALAND** ..... .35 **HASE** ..... .25

**NEW GUINEA** ..... .35 **FORMOSA** ..... .25

ALL covers are hand-painted with vari-  
ous scenes typical of Oriental art. ALL  
cancellations will be pictorial, and each  
cover will be franked differently, with vari-  
ous combinations of stamps. They may all  
be sent to one address or to various ad-  
dresses if preferred.

Any 3 items listed on left ..... \$1.00

Any 6 items listed on right ..... 1.00

## **Mercantile Stamp Co.**

Drawer B-8,

Ventura, Calif.

**Figure 1b**

I subsequently acquired 3 more covers from various sources: Fig. 3 (25 Dec 34; face only), Fig. 4 (8 Jan 35), and Fig. 5 (25 Dec 34). Although the scenes are similar to those in Figs. 1 & 2, each is individually hand-painted, and no two are identical. None have enclosures or markings; so they provided no further evidence as to their origin or purpose.

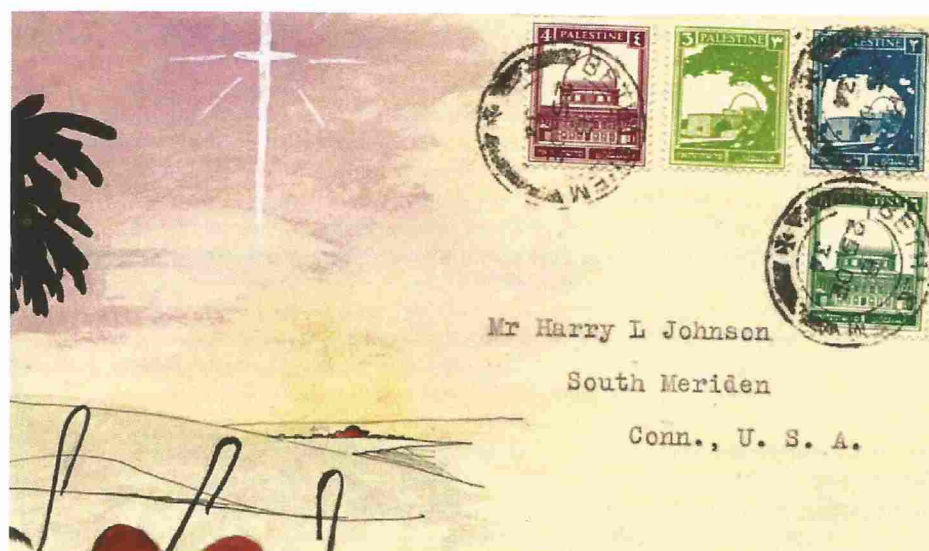


Figure 3



Figure 4



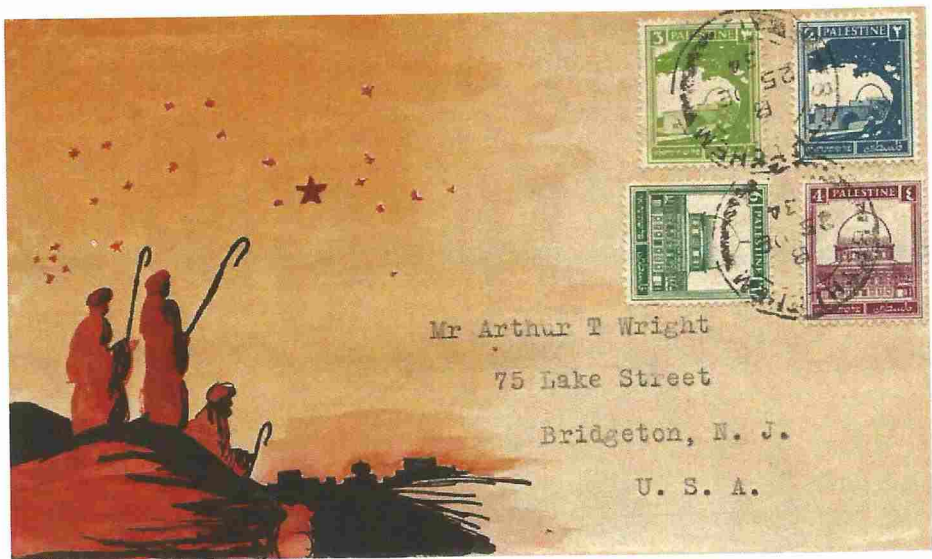


Figure 5

The covers in Figs. 6 and 7 (both 8 Jan 35) are more interesting. They each have what appears to be a “p” in pencil on the far right corner of the flap (Fig. 6a).



Figure 6

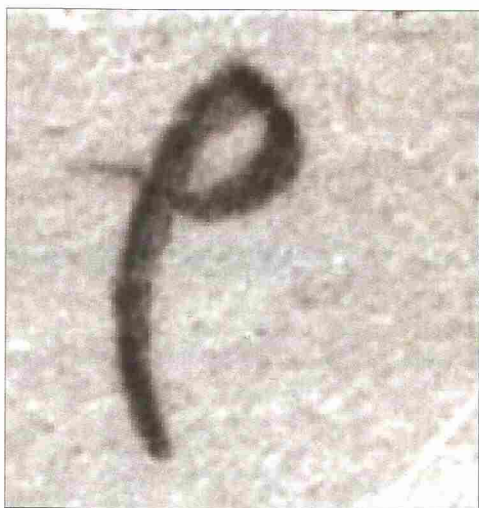


Figure 6a

This may actually be a rapidly stroked “O” that stands for “open,” or it may be a new discovery. The scenes are similar to those above, but no two identical paintings had yet appeared.



Figure 7

Both covers also contain an enclosure. It is an advertisement for the Mercantile Stamp Co. printed on both sides of dull off-white paper, 8.5 x 11.0 in. Three of the fourteen sections concern hand-painted covers. Fig. 6b is an



advertisement for "Beautiful Hand-Painted covers (from) South Sea Isles... Oriental ships...U.S. ships in trans-pacific service (and) trans-pacific mail boats... in water color...".

Beautiful Hand-Painted covers, franked with various issues of foreign stamps and (in most cases) pictorially cancelled. Mailed direct to you from the following points of interest:

**South Sea Isles:**

Rarotonga .....	35c	Six different Oriental ships covers	
Fiji .....	35c	Each .....	.25
Tonga .....	35c	11 different U. S. ships covers in	
Niue .....	35c	trans-pacific service; franked	
Pitcairn .....	35c	with foreign stamps but can-	
Sumutra .....	35c	celled in U. S. mail service.	
Borneo .....	35c	Each .....	.25
Guam .....	35c	"Paquebot" covers from trans-	
New Zealand .....	35c	pacific mail boats. (10 var.)	
New Guinea .....	35c	Each .....	.25
Java .....	60c	All these covers are hand painted in	
Korea .....	25c	water color and are excellent for gifts	
Saghalien .....	25c	as well as treasures in the cover col-	
Itsukushima .....	25c	lectors' album.	
Hase .....	25c		
Formosa .....	25c		
Hokkaido .....	25c		

Figure 6b

Fig. 6c is an advertisement for Oriental Ships' covers and Oriental covers from South Sea Islands, all hand-painted in water color. These are much the same as in Fig. 1b. Fig. 6d touts "an unexcelled cover service from other parts of the world." Specifically mentioned are Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Lake Tierias (sic), the Dead Sea, Tell (sic) Aviv "the only 100% Jewish City in the World," and others in the Middle East that were outside of Palestine.

**HAND-PAINTED IN WATER COLORS  
COVERS—PICTORIAL CANCELATIONS**

#1—6 different Oriental ships' covers mailed to your address .....	1.00
#2—3 different Oriental covers mailed direct to you from different South Sea Islands .....	2.00
#3—3 Oriental ships' covers and 1 from South Sea Island .....	1.00

Each cover has different hand-painted pictorial picture typical of the radiant islands of the South Seas. All have pictorial cancellations.

Figure 6c

Despite consulting other collectors of Palestine postal history, the origin of these covers was still a mystery to me.

The next cover (Fig. 8, 25 Dec 34) was sealed when I acquired it on ebay.com. The advertisement I found inside was identical to that in Figs. 1a and 1b. In addition, there was a separate typed notation on a piece of white paper: "1934 Palestine cover...w/ Watercolor Design (Possibly a Karl Lewis Hand Painted Cover)." Typing "Karl Lewis" into [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and yielded a list of 1,930 citations. Clicking on "the Legendary Karl Lewis" took me to [www.japan-japan.com/lewispage3.htm](http://www.japan-japan.com/lewispage3.htm) where I learned about him and his involvement with hand-painted philatelic covers mailed from Oriental countries, South Sea Islands, and ships. The style of the illustrations is identical to Figs. 1 - 8. However, nothing about Palestine or the Middle East is illustrated or mentioned. A brief history follows, as abstracted, paraphrased, and quoted from this web page.

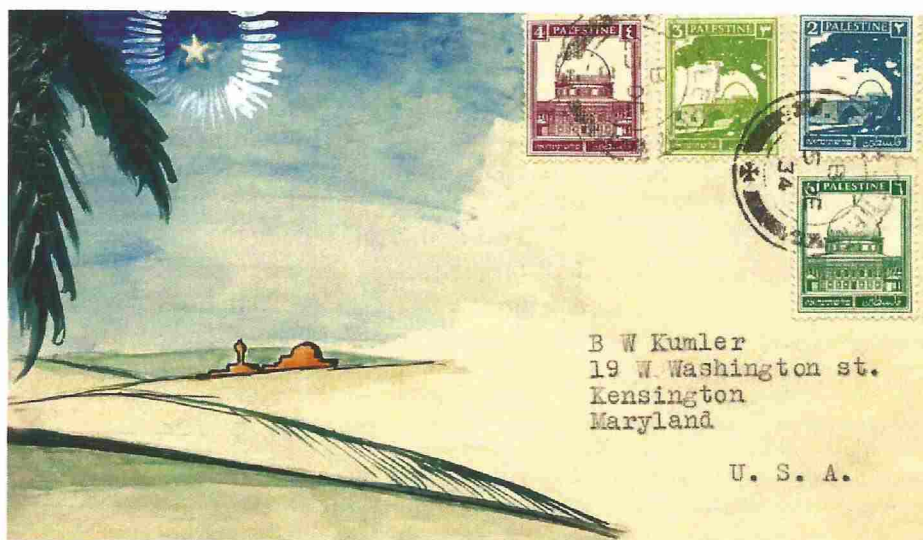


Figure 8

Karl Lewis was born Sept. 10, 1865, in a log cabin in Kentucky. He traveled west with his father until they settled in the San Francisco Bay area. Just short of 13 years old, he went to sea. He lived at various times in Australia / New Zealand, Europe and Japan while continuing work as a shipmate. During this period, he also developed considerable skill in English and became a prolific letter writer.

He finally settled in Yokohama in 1901, and married a Japanese woman in 1903. Their home had a view of Mt. Fuji, which was featured later on many of his painted covers. He operated a photographic studio and specialized in photographic postcards, many of which were hand colored. After several

other business ventures and jobs, Lewis apparently became interested in the possibility of selling stamp specialties, and in 1934 he advised the American vice consul in Yokohama that he was supporting himself and his wife by the sale of such items. In 1934, he mentioned in a letter that he had sent a photo of himself while working at his typewriter to the *Weekly Philatelic Gossip*.

“Lewis is best known in America for his beautiful hand-painted watercolor covers that he started to produce about 1933 when he was 68... The beautiful covers Lewis produced were hand painted, not by Lewis, but by Japanese artists whom he hired to paint for him... The covers fall primarily into four distinct categories: (1) Ship Covers, (2) Covers franked with the stamps of foreign countries (other than Japan), (3) Scenic Postmarks or Scenic Datestamp Cancellations (SDCs), and (4) First-day covers... He made arrangements for covers franked with foreign stamps to be mailed from various exotic islands of the Pacific and from other Asian countries.”

Lewis had devised a code so that his customers could determine if a cover should be opened because it contained correspondence. Initially, the flap on the back of these letters bore the inscription “OPEN THIS.” This required extra effort and gradually changed to “) O (“ with a penciled annotation “open this” directly below. This also required extra work and was finally simplified just to the symbol “) O (.” When a letter contained no correspondence it was marked with the symbol “) N (“ - occasionally “( N )”- and the recipient knew not to open it.” Other codes were developed to indicate a combination of particular stamp denominations to be used on the face of the envelope “C-7”, first day covers with a full set of stamps on the face “20”, and first day covers with a single stamp on the face, supplementary postage added on the back “15.” Perhaps the “p” in Fig. 6a was derived from this system, possibly indicating “part” of a set.

At this point I sent the above observations for review by the Northern New Jersey Palestine Study Group. One of their members, Earl Kaplan, kindly forwarded color copies of the faces of two more covers (Figs. 9 & 10). Neither had markings on the back or enclosures. Both were postmarked 8 Jan 35. Their style and colors match those in Figs 1-8. Their design elements, i.e., camels, “wise men,” shepherds’ crook, Arab town with mosque, stars in the sky, etc. are repetitive within this group of 10 covers, but no two covers are identical.

Recently, I found another cover (Fig. 11) on ebay.com. It was mailed on 8 Jan 35, addressed to the USA. The back is clear, the face shows a hand-painted scene containing one “wise man” pointing at a large star and sitting on a camel, and the top of a mosque. The rate was paid with the same combination of 2, 3, 4, & 6 mil stamps, all showing the Dome of the Rock. However, its enclosure (Fig. 11a) was different from those previously described: a 5.4. x 3.5 in. embossed card printed in gray, black & white. It has a similarly themed and illustrated message: “Christmas Greetings and / Best Wishes for Health and Happiness / in the New Year.”

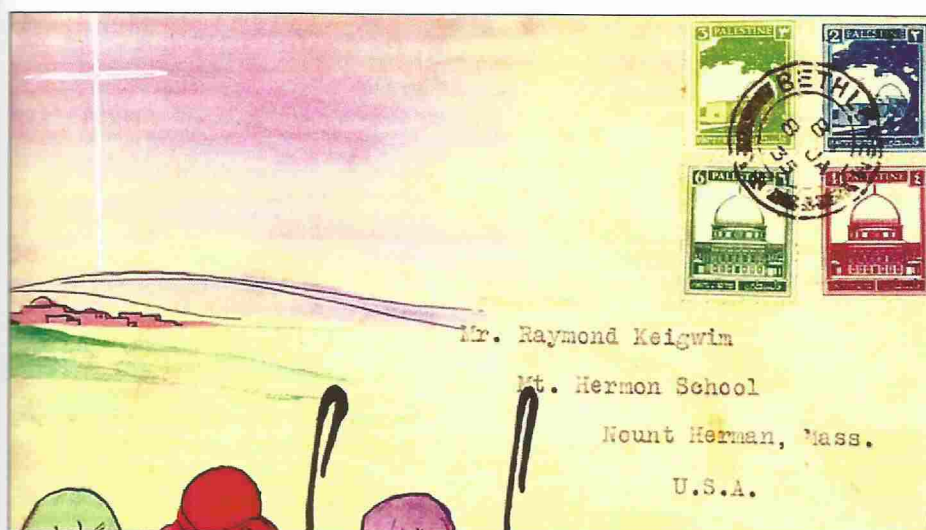


Figure 9



Figure 10



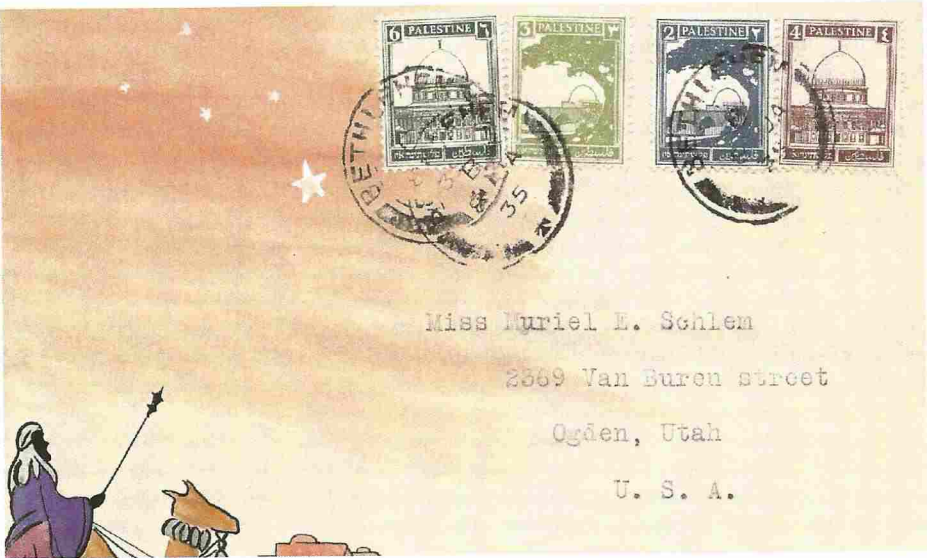


Figure 11



Figure 11a



Despite the fact that all of these covers were mailed from Bethlehem, it is evident that they were sent as philatelic collectibles to current or prospective customers, not primarily as holiday greetings. First, the surface mailing dates of 25 and 29 Dec 34 and 8 Jan 35 assured a late January to early February arrival. Second, none of the enclosures precluded mailing the covers as printed matter at the 3 mils/50 gr. rate; so the use of a group of four different stamps, each showing the Dome of the Rock, served primarily as a complementary design element. Finally, there is the predominantly commercial nature of the known enclosures. I assume that these covers, and others referred to in their enclosures, were sold to other dealers and bulk mailings containing advertisements could be arranged for them. It is also possible that they were sold directly to collectors.

I believe that there is sufficient circumstantial evidence to identify these covers mailed from Palestine as Karl Lewis creations. Further opinions and/or documentary evidence would be welcome

\* \* \* \* \*

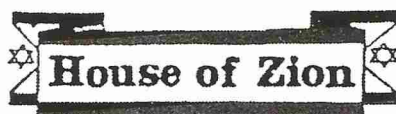
In response to this reprint, Gary Watson writes to the author:

"I've had a look at all your scans and read your article. My Assessment is that they are done in the style of Karl Lewis but are not from his "stable". The classic Lewis covers are delicately coloured in the Japanese manner, whereas many of yours use quite florid colours.

They may well have been organised by one of the promoters of the Lewis covers but I think you are drawing too long a bow with your speculations.

Whatever the story, they are pretty covers.

Best Wishes, Gary Watson, Prestige Philately.



Israel, Palestine  
Judaica  
Interim Period  
Forerunners, Synagogue Postcards  
Gaza & West Bank

Send for our next sale Catalogue

P.O.Box 5502, Redwood City,  
CA 94063, USA

## Isolated Sodom in 1948

*Levi Aloni, Shoham*

### Introduction

The only road connecting the Dead Sea area with the rest of the country was the road to Jerusalem. Vehicles had been under attack on the road since the beginning of 1948 and travel was restricted to armed convoys. The road was finally completely cut off on April 10 th, and since then the only contact with the Dead Sea area was by air.

From the beginning of 1948, both the northern area of the Dead Sea and the Sodom area in the south had been subject to constant harassment by irregular Arab bands and also by Transjordan Arab Legion forces. Water supplies were sabotaged and cut off, workers were attacked and jailed in Jordan and shots were fired from ambushes.

Following the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel on May 14th and the invasion by the Arab armies which followed, it was decided to evacuate the northern sector of the Dead Sea. On May 20 all of the members of Kibbutz Beit Haarava, the Potash Company workers and the Hagana and Palmach contingents were evacuated by sea from the northern part of the Dead Sea to Sodom at the southern end. Before the evacuation, they succeeded in sabotaging the Potash Plant and equipment prior to its occupation by the forces of the Arab Legion of Transjordan.

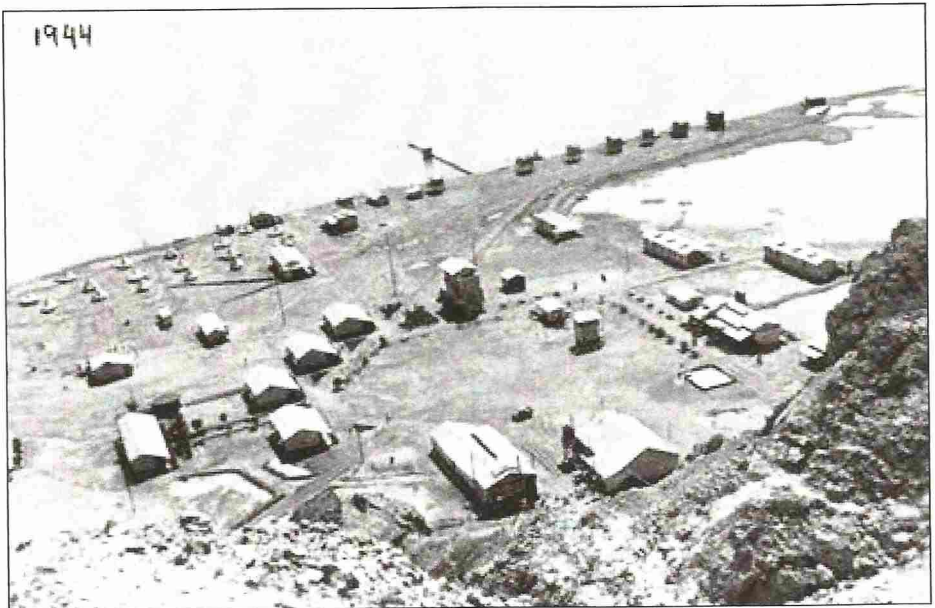


Fig. 12: The Potash Plant at Sodom (1944)

The concession for exploiting the Dead Sea minerals, potash and bromide, was obtained from the British government in 1930 by Moshe Novomeyski, who had previously negotiated the concession with the Turkish government in 1911. A British registered company was formed which covered the northern part of the Dead Sea in Palestine and Transjordan. As there was not enough room for expansion of the evaporation pans in the north, the concession was extended to include the southern end of the Dead Sea - the Sodom area. The first contingent of workers for the remote southern area, composed of 19 volunteer kibbutz members and eight officials of the Potash Company, arrived at Sodom on May 1st, 1934.

Kibbutz Beit Haarava was established in 1939 in the northern sector, near the Abdullah Bridge. The kibbutz was destroyed by the Arab forces after its evacuation in May 1948. After the arrival of the evacuees from the northern sector on May 20th, the total population at Sodom numbered 700 souls. During May and June, mothers and children, members of Kibbutz Beit Haarava, were evacuated by air and temporarily housed in Kibbutz Shefayim, north of Herzliya. On June 6th, Sodom was heavily shelled by Arab Legion forces. There were additional skirmishes with local Arab forces throughout the period of isolation, which lasted until November, 1948.



**Fig. 13: Kibbutz Beit Haarava, by the Dead Sea**

At first Sodom suffered from neglect by the GHQ of the Israeli Army, as a result of pressures of the war for survival on the other fronts. Except for daily flights of supplies and evacuation of non-combat personnel, nothing was done in the Sodom region. A General Headquarters mission, which did finally arrive in Sodom on the night of June 29th, submitted its report on July 4th. In their report, they list the number of people in Sodom as follows: 86 members (67 men & 19 women) of Kibbutz Beit Haarava, 73 members of the Palmach,

including 20 women, and 152 Potash Company workers. They state in their report:

"The morale in Sodom is very low....The area has been forgotten by the army from an administrative point of view. It has never received GHQ orders and regulations and no administrative contact has been established with them".

## Postal History

Up to 23rd December 1947, a class C postal agency operated at the "Kalia Hotel" (see Fig. 14)

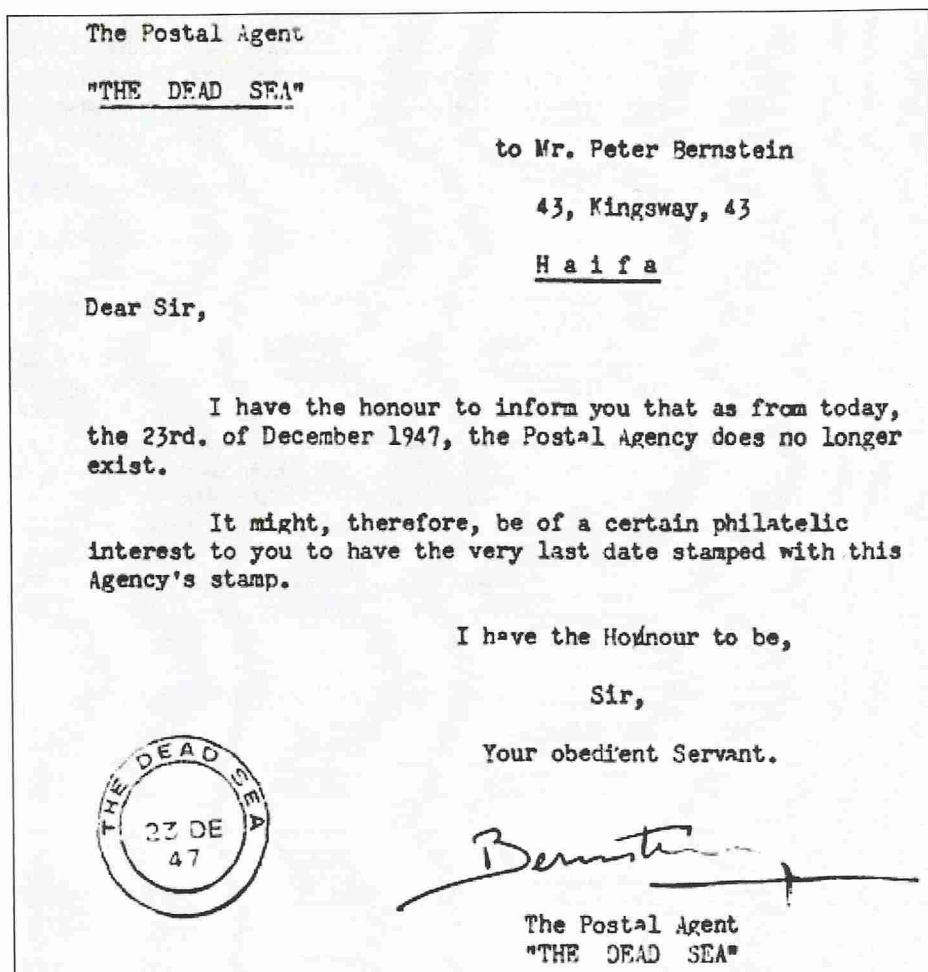


Fig. 14: Letter sent by the Postal Agent at "Kalia Hotel", Sodom, about the termination of the "The Dead Sea" Postal Agency, 23 December 1947.



In the northern end of the Dead Sea; it is likely that Kibbutz Beit Haarava and the Potash Company received postal services at this post office. When the postal agency was closed, and even before, Kibbutz Beit Haarava and the Potash Company used post office boxes in Tel Aviv and/or Jerusalem as did the Negev kibbutzim that did not have regular Mandate postal services. This assumption is based on the contents of a letter written by David Koren, then a member of Kibbutz Beit Haarava, to his mother in Jerusalem, on 26 April:

"...The road from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea has been cutoff for the last three weeks. Now we hear that the road between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv is cutoff, and who knows for how long. Nevertheless, I am sending this letter by airplane, which will arrive tomorrow. They will post it in Tel Aviv. If there will be a connection between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, you could write to me to the following address: Beit Haarava, P.O.Box 2086, Tel Aviv, Secretariat of the Kibbutz Movement. You could also write to Hanna in Shefayim who will be able to transfer your letter to me".



**Fig. 15: Map of the Dead Sea area. Airstrips were in the north end at Beit Haarava and in the south end at Sodom.**



In the vicinity of the plants of the Potash Company there were two airstrips, one at the Sodom plant and the other at the northern end of the Dead Sea (see map), both of which served the needs of the Potash Company. Until the start of the war, or more accurately until mid-April, when they have been denied free passage on the road to Jerusalem, there was no special significance to these two airstrips -- but they suddenly became the only connection to the rest of the country

## Outgoing Mail

The physical siege of Sodom imposed a “postal siege” in the full meaning of the word, even though before the physical siege that started on 10 April, when the British stopped escorting the potash convoys to Jerusalem, we assume that at least part of the mail was sent on airplanes, piloted by the Air Division of the Palmach and later by pilots of the Air Service (Sherut Avir), in addition to civilian flights made to and from the Potash Company.

The grave situation in Sodom, as described earlier, and the detachment from the rest of the country made it necessary to send outgoing mail by airplanes of the Air Service that brought a daily load of 500 kg of supplies and ammunition and took back to Tel Aviv, women, children, wounded soldiers and mail. Only light airplanes could land at Sodom until the end of June, at which time the runway was enlarged and rebuilt to allow DC-3 “Dakotas” to land.

The period of isolation, that lasted until 25 November 1948, can be divided into two postal phases:

### **(1) From Mid April to (ca.) early July (when the Army Post Office “KBA 192” was established in Sodom).**

This period is characterized by letters that were carried from Sodom by the pilots, and entered the civilian or army postal systems, with or without stamps. The letters were subject to taxation, but were probably never taxed. Examples of such letters are shown in Figure 16 – Figure 17.

The letter in Figure 16 was sent from Sodom (return address – P.O.Box 221, Tel Aviv), franked 10 mil Mandate stamp, addressed to Kibbutz Maagan, Kineret Post. It was flown from Sodom to Tel Aviv, where the Doar Ivri stamp was added to ensure postage, and both stamps were cancelled by Israeli trilingual postmarks of 28 May 1948.

The letter shown in Figure 16 was sent from Sodom (return address – P.O.Box 221, Tel Aviv) to Jerusalem, flown twice - from Sodom to Tel Aviv and from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem – it has the arrival postmark of 22 June 1948 in Jerusalem and Renan’s (the postmaster) signature, probably to avoid taxation.



Fig. 16: Courier letter from Sodom, flown to Tel Aviv, return address P.O.Box 221, Tel Aviv. P.O.Box used by the Potash Company. Franked with 10 mil Mandate and 10 mil Doar Ivri stamp to ensure postage, cancelled by Israeli trilingual postmark dated 28 May 1948.

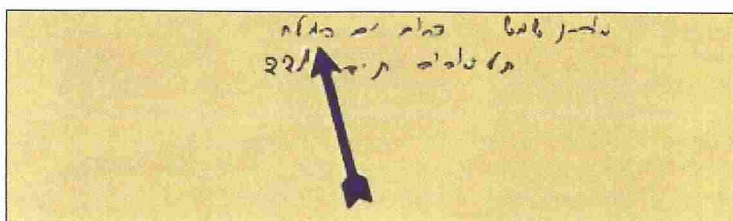
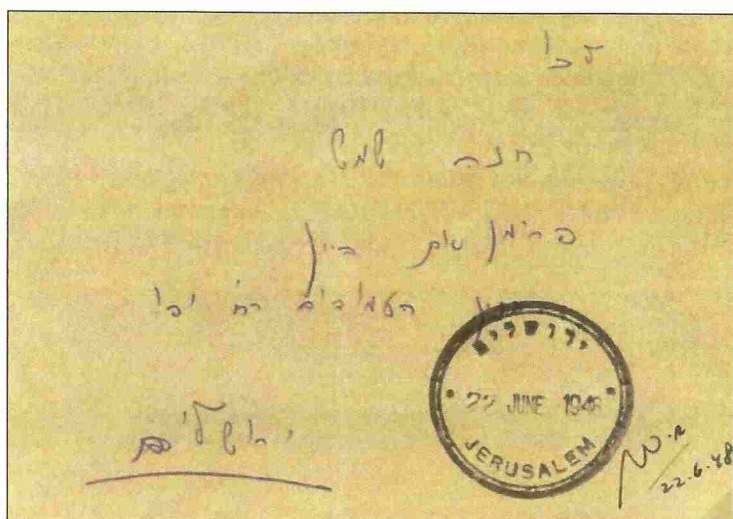


Fig. 17: Courier letter from a soldier serving in Sodom. Flown twice - from Sodom to Tel Aviv and then to Jerusalem, return address P.O.Box 221, Tel Aviv. P.O.Box used by the Potash Company.

Towards the end of June, we find few letters sent from besieged Sodom, marked with an army-unit cachet "KBA 216" (Fig. 18); since the Sodom area was under the military command of Jerusalem, KBA 216 was allocated to the "Dead Sea area" as early as 9 May 1948, (Appendix 2). The device found its way to the Sodom area - it was brought by one of the Palmach units reinforcing the area, and was used by soldiers and civilians as well. Because the area was cutoff from Jerusalem, none of the letters marked "KBA 216" from this period, which were sent from besieged Sodom, had the APO 5 transit mark. Instead they had the characteristics of a courier letter that was posted in Tel Aviv.

Army letters are characterized by 3 elements: (1) the soldier's return address and his army No ; (2) the triangular KBA cachet of the army unit. (3) The cachet of the Army Post Office (APO) in charge of the unit. Very seldom do we find civilian postmarks on regular army mail.

Courier letters, no matter the origin, civilian or military, are generally posted at mail boxes and therefore bear civilian postmarks.

The direct air connection between Sodom and Tel Aviv made it just natural to connect the Sodom KBA to the Tel Aviv district and not to besieged Jerusalem. Therefore a new allocation of KBA 192 was made in June 1948 (Fig. 19).

(KBA 216 was allocated to Shekem Base 486 Jerusalem District, but this allocation was done only after January 1949, as unit Shekem 486 was given its name and number only in January '49).

## (2) Early July – 25 November ("KBA 192")

As mentioned above, the special GHQ mission commanded by Major Bob Hendler came to Sodom on 29 June, and it seems that this was the starting point



**Fig. 18: Letter from Sodom written by a member of Kibbutz Beit Haarava, marked KBA 216, entered the civilian postal system in Tel Aviv on 18 June 1948. (no army transit marks)**

of a chain of events that resulted in the organization of the postal connection to and from Sodom.

From 9 May 1948 and on, KBA (כוחות ביטחון ארציים) numbers were allocated to army units; whenever necessary, additions were made with the use of special forms (Fig.19). The allocated numbers can be found in notes and lists published by P. Kanner & Y. Spiegel, Z Berest and by B. Hurwich.

At this point, a simplified explanation of the structure of the Army Postal System is in place. Under the Headquarters of the Army Post were two Army Post Bases - Base A in Tel Aviv which was in charge of the central and southern part of the country and Base B located in Haifa, in charge of the northern part of the country. On the next level were the APOs (Army Post Offices) (משורדים). They allocated numbers by a geographical key: Office 3 for Tel Aviv, Office 5 for the Jerusalem district and so on. Each office was in charge of mail of the units' KBAs in its district, every unit received a KBA number and some units received secondary KBA numbers, for example, "KBA 219/13".

According to the document in Fig.19, it seems that KBA 192 was already allocated to Sodom on 10 June 1948. On the other hand, in a letter (Appendix 3) dated 29 June 1948, the person in charge of the mail in Sodom asks about the army postal services. Kanner and Spiegel, in the chapter on Sodom, mention the fact that the 192 device had to be flown twice because the first one was not delivered. This is probably the reason that KBA 192 started to operate from Sodom only at the beginning of July, and all the mail prior to that was handled as flown courier mail.

ד.צ. 1604

שדרות הדוד המצבי

כטב"ר דוד היחידות - תרומת רגלינו ל-בלידן מס'.....

מס' היחידה	מס' היחידה	מס' היחידה	מס' היחידה	מס' היחידה
192	P120	P120	שדרות הדוד המצבי	מס' היחידה

192

10 יוני 1948

מס' היחידה

מס' היחידה

מס' היחידה

Fig. 19: Official army post form 1604, allocating KBA Number 192 to Sodom on 10 June 1948.



The earliest letter with a KBA 192 cachet is shown in Fig. 20. It has KBA 216 and KBA 192 cachets. The letter was sent to Tel Aviv arriving 7 July 1948; the sender's address is Sodom, Post No 192, Base No 1, KBA. From the return address, we learn that the sender already knew the KBA number and its APO connection to Base A (א.ס.א.).

It was not until 9 July 1948 that the headquarters of the Army Postal Service notified the General Manager of the Post Office about the postal service to besieged Sodom (Appendix 4). On 15 July 1948 the General Manager of the Post Office sent a letter to the postmasters of Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem asking them to transfer mail destined for the Sodom area to the Army Post Office (Appendix 5).

Since the connection to remote and isolated areas was mainly by air, there was a need for a coordinating officer between the army and the remote locality. This officer was called a "Consul"; the main Consul for the Jerusalem district was Yaacov Pat.



**Fig. 20: The earliest use of KBA 192 on flown courier letter to Tel Aviv 7 July 1948.**

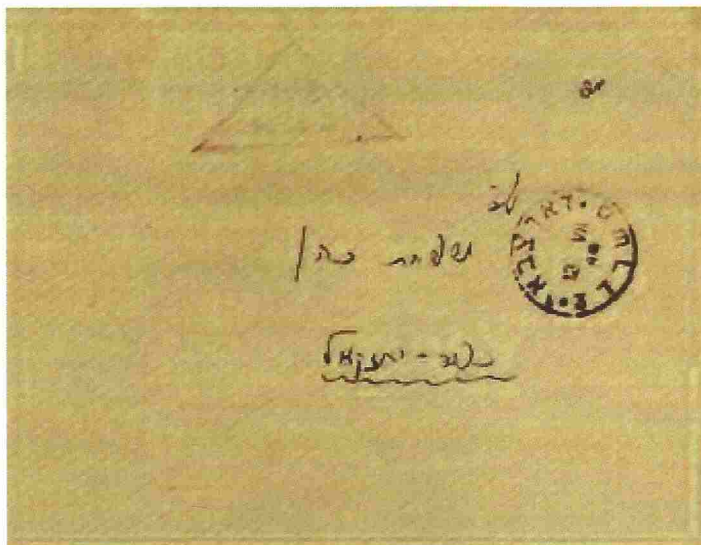


Eliahu Pasher, a member of Kibbutz Beit Haarava, writes in one of his letters:

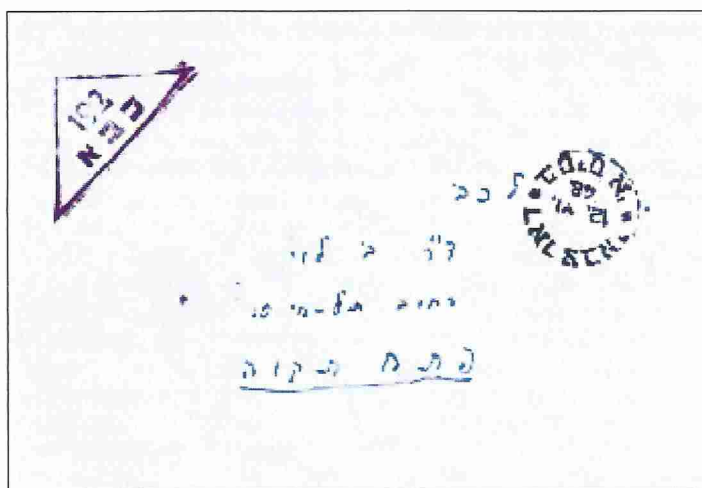
"In July 1948 I came (by air) to Tel Aviv for medical treatment... David Coren called me and asked me to become the Sodom Consul. My first task was to deal with a terrible tragedy that took place on the flight from Sodom, which made a forced landing near Nebi Rubin, where four of the passengers, including two members of Beit Haarava, were murdered by the Arabs...(17 July 1948). My task was to be the **Consul of Sodom** at the airport. I was attached to the Jerusalem Consulate which was located in Beit Romano, Jaffa Road No. 9, under the command of Yaacov Pat. Together with me was the Gush Etzion Consul - Hanoach Chmelnik... We (the Consuls) dealt with all matters relating to the settlements that were captured by the Arab Legion. But since all the members of Gush Etzion were POWs, while their families and the families of the settlers of Atarot (North of Jerusalem) were resettled in Jaffa, my task was that of air communication with Sodom. In addition to sending men and arms in accordance with the demands of the Commander of Sodom - Avi Smoli - we dealt with the problems of the wounded personnel and we took care of the families of the Potash workers who remained in Sodom. Each morning at 4 a.m... I collected the mail that arrived at the Consulate (by APO 3) as well as the mail that arrived at the **Secretariat of the Kibbutz movement - P.O.Box 2086**, and took it to the Tel Nof airfield (A British military airfield which had been captured and reopened by the IDF)... I collected (at the airfield) **the mail that arrived from Sodom** and brought it to the APO (APO No. 3) which was also located in Beit Romano... We were not officially mobilized in Sodom and therefore I did not have an army serial number, or army documents. All I had was a Consular document signed by Yaacov Pat. With this document I entered the airfields in Tel Aviv and in Tel Nof... Most of the pilots were Mahal members (volunteers from abroad). Among the English-speaking pilots, the outstanding one was a pilot from India - Abie Nathan... He continued to fly to Sodom very frequently while other pilots refused to fly there. It was difficult to land at Sodom, especially during the hot summer months... I returned to Sodom after 11 weeks of "consular" service. During this whole period, I rarely changed clothes and almost never slept in a regular bed."

From a letter (Appendix 6) sent on 24 September 1948, from Base A to the headquarters of the Army Post, we learn that from this date, the mail to and from Sodom was processed through Tel Aviv airfield (Sde Dov) and not through Tel Nof as before. In the letter quoted above, the Consul states that APO 3 was in the same place where he was stationed, Beit Romano, so we can assume that the Consul brought the mail from Tel Nof directly to APO 3 for onward processing. Checking a sample of about 20 letters, marked KBA 192, sent from Sodom by air during the period July – November 1948, it was seen that all the letters dispatched from Sodom before mid-September, bear

the postmark of APO 3 (Fig. 21), and all the letters thereafter are cancelled by AP Base A (Fig. 22). Base A was located on Hayarkon Street not far from Sde Dov airfield, and it is likely that the Consul delivered the mail from Sodom directly to Base A.



**Fig. 21: Army letter flown from Sodom, 12 July cancelled  
"AP Office 3" in Tel Aviv**



**Fig. 22: Army letter flown from Sodom, 12 November cancelled  
"AP Base A" in Tel Aviv**

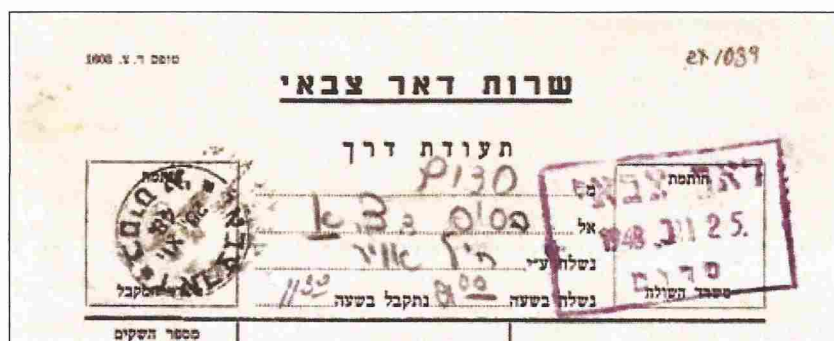


Fig. 23: Dispatch Voucher from Sodom to Base A, 25 November 1948, (the day of liberation of Sodom from the siege), probably one of the last shipments sent by the Air Force.

## End of the siege of Sodom - end of the Transition Period there (26 November - 24 June, 1949)

Following the capture of Beer Sheva by the IDF, at the end of October 1948, preparation for opening the land route to Sodom began. The operational order to free Sodom was given on 20 November and Sodom was liberated on 25 November by soldiers of the Negev Brigade. This ended the siege.

The mail from Sodom was flown to Tel Aviv as before for the next seven months as we can learn from the document in Appendix 7, and all the mail, including civilian mail, was handled by the army as it had been in the Negev settlements until 24 June, 1949 when the army post office was disbanded.

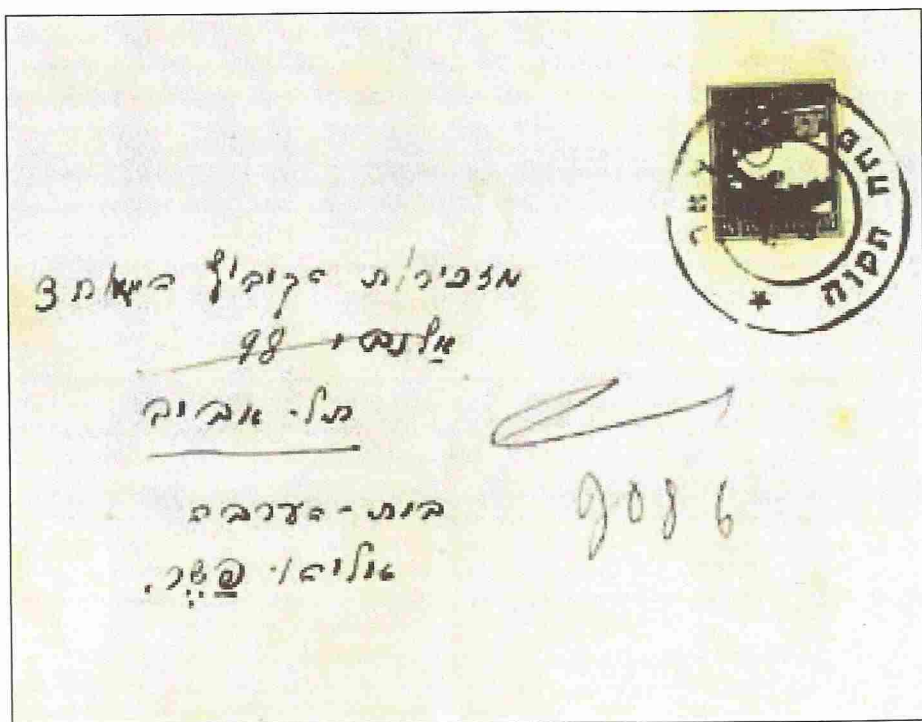


Fig. 24: Operation "Lot"- the Negev Brigade soldiers welcome by members of Beit Haarava and Sodom defenders.



## Incoming Mail

The characteristics and the forwarding division of incoming mail to besieged Sodom are very similar to those of the outgoing mail, with some exceptions. During the first period after the siege, when outgoing mail was couriered from Sodom by the pilots or the passengers, people who wanted to send mail to Sodom did not have direct accessibility to those who were going to Sodom and had to use the mail-gathering points at the P.O.B.s' in Tel Aviv - those of the Secretariat of the Kibbutz Movement, No. 2086 (Fig. 25), and The Potash Company, No. 221 (Fig. 26). Postal clerks were not always aware of the situation in Sodom. As we can see from the document in Appendix 3, not until 9 July did the army postal system notify the civilian system that a mail connection with Sodom was established, and the notification that went to the Postmasters General of Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem was sent only on 15 July, (Appendix 5) some two weeks after KBA 192 started its operation.



**Fig. 25:** Letter sent during the Minhelet Ha'am period from Petah Tiqva to Eliahu Pasher, member of Kibbutz Beit Haarava, addressed to the Secretariat of the Kibbutz Movement, 98 Allenby St, Tel Aviv, marked "2086" by the postman for direction to Sodom P.O.Box.



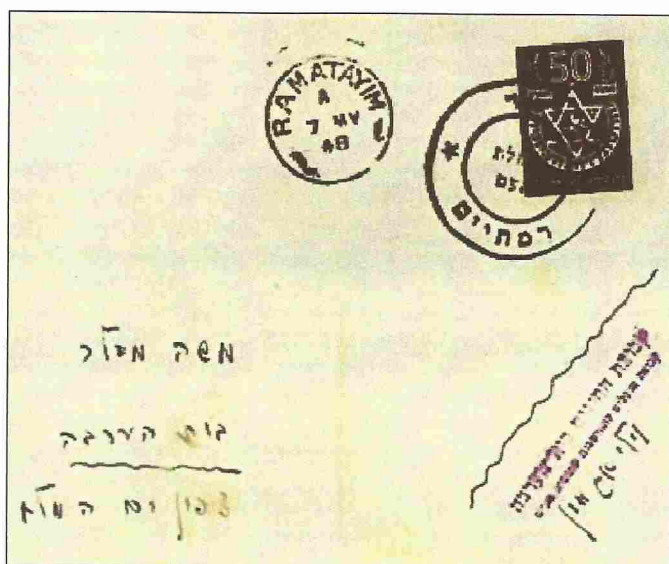


Fig 26: Letter sent during the Minhelet Ha'am period from Ramatayim to Moshe Miller, member of Kibbutz Beit Haarava, addressed directly to the Kibbutz, North Dead Sea.

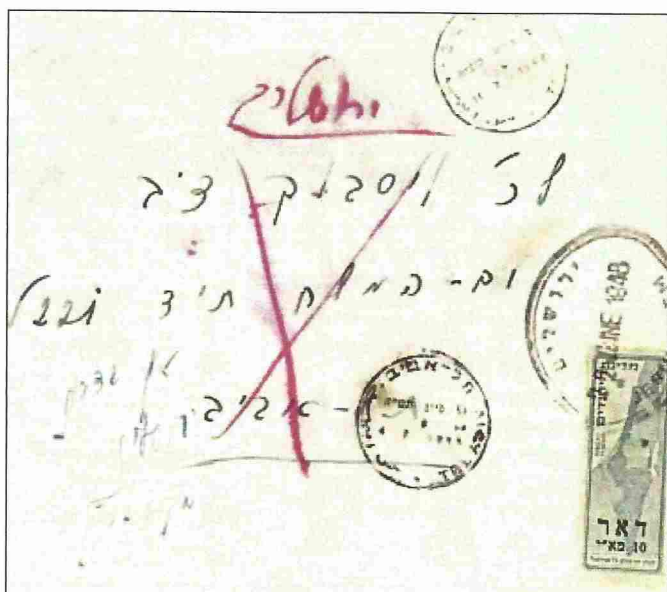
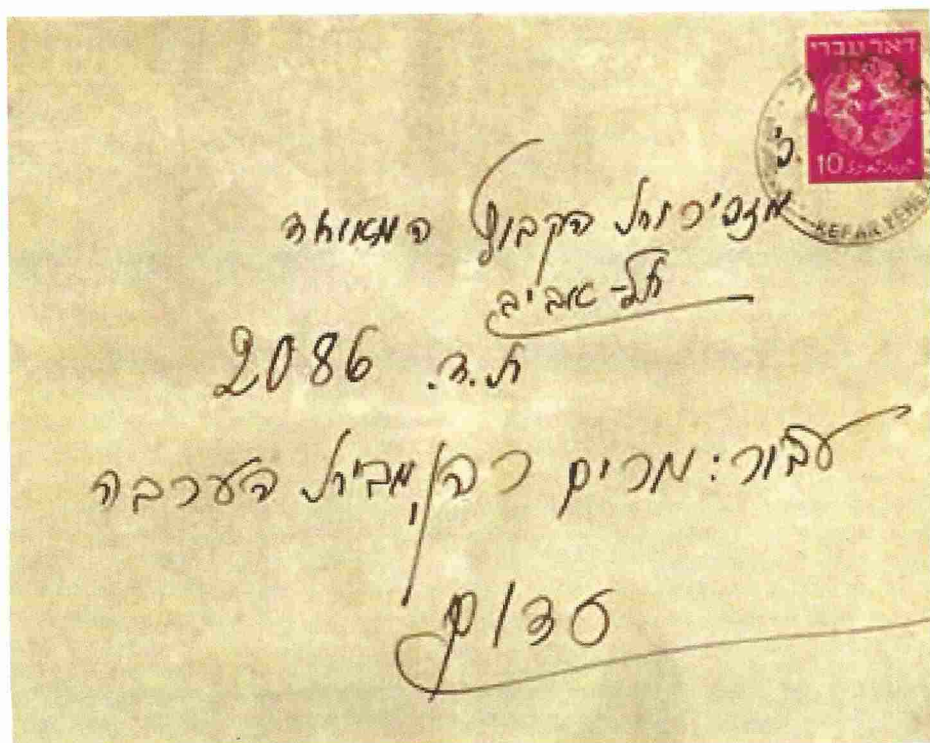


Fig. 27: Letter sent from Jerusalem on 22 June 1948, to Waisbuch Dov, Dead Sea, P.O.Box 221 Tel Aviv, reached Tel Aviv 4 July 1948 and was returned to Jerusalem on 11 July, because the postal clerk did not know he had to transfer the letter to the Army Postal Service.



**Fig. 28: Letter sent from Kfar Yeheskel, 7 July 1948, to Miriam Cohen, Beit Haarava, Sodom C/O addressed to the Secretariat of the Kibbutz Movement, P.O.Box 2086, Tel Aviv.**

As was stated in the document (Appendix 4), the Army Postal Service dealt only with regular and printed-matter mail; because of the situation, services that required the intervention of a postal clerk at any stage of the service were not available. On 16 November 1948, a few days before the lifting of the siege, the Postmaster of Tel Aviv sent a letter to the commander of the Army Postal Services (Appendix 7) on the subject of registered letters for KBA 192 that were received in Tel Aviv with the notation “No registered service to 192”. In a six-paragraph letter, with total misunderstanding of the siege situation, he asks that the letter be sent to the “nearest” post office to be collected by the addressees from Sodom (Fig. 29).



Fig. 29: Registered letter sent from Karkur to a soldier in Sodom, Army Post 192, Palmach, marked in manuscript "with advice of delivery". Returned to the sender and marked "no registered service to 192".

# Appendices

## Appendix 2

119

5/10/11  
1 MAY 1948  
כ"ה

217

רשימת מספרי דאר

1. מסנך זה נשלח לכל היחידות אשר כרשימת הכמות, בהתאם לפקודת  
משטאות מס' 91 מ-9 למאי 1948.

2. מסנך זה מחוץ העזרה סודית סיס לסמדת נעול.

3. מסנך חדר יובא לידיעת כל חדרות אשר ביחידה.

מסנך דאר	שם היחידה
145	מסכל - בנהלה
146	אכא - רסום
147	אכא - קלט
148	אחד
149	אכס
150	סרות קטר
151	מסח היל הנדסה
152	סרות רפואי
153	מסח מטפחה עבאית
154	סרות תחבורה
155	בסיס סרות תחבורה
156	סרות ציוד והספקה
157	סרות המוס
158	סרות אכסון
159	סרות מסדה וצלומים
160	מסח חמד
161	מסח קלומים
162	מחלקת תרבות
163	חיל עזר נסים
164	מסח חיל אויר
165	סדה העושה, ת"א
166	סדה העושה, עכ"ר
167	סדה העושה, פחנירים
168	מסח חיל חותמים
169	פחנה סרות ציוד והספקה
170	מסח
171	מסח חיל הים
172	בסיס חיל הים א'
173	בסיס חיל הים ב'
174	בסיס חיל הים ג'
175	בסיס חיל הים ד'
176	בסיס חיל הים ה'
177	בסיס חיל הים ו'
178	בסיס חיל הים ז'

List of KBA No's allocated on 9 May 1948 to army units where KBA 216 was allocated to the Dead Sea Area as part of the Jerusalem district.



(continued)

<u>מספר דבר</u>	<u>שם היחידה</u>
180	גולני - מסה
181	גולני גדוד 11, מסה
182	גולני גדוד 12, מסה
183	גולני גדוד 13, מסה
184	גולני גדוד 14, מסה
185	נפת תל-חי
186	נפת כנרת
187	נפת גלבוע
188	נפת יזרעאל
189	כרמלי - מסה
190	כרמלי גדוד 21, מסה
191	כרמלי גדוד 22, מסה
193	נפת זבולון
194	אלכסנדרוני - מסה
195	אלכסנדרוני גדוד 31, מסה
196	אלכסנדרוני גדוד 32, מסה
197	אלכסנדרוני גדוד 33, מסה
198	אלכסנדרוני גדוד 34, מסה
199	נפת סופרון
200	נפת חסר
201	נפת טרון
202	נפת חזין
203	קריית - מסה
204	גבעתי - מסה
205	גבעתי גדוד 51
206	גבעתי גדוד 52
207	גבעתי גדוד 53
208	גבעתי גדוד 54
209	נפת רחובות
210	נפת גדרה
211	עיוני - מסה
212	עיוני גדוד 61, מסה
213	עיוני גדוד 62, מסה
214	עיוני גדוד 63, מסה
215	גוש עציון
216	חבל ים המלח
217	בולגרים - מסה
218	בולגרים גדוד 1.0
219	בולגרים גדוד 2.0
220	בולגרים גדוד 3.0
221	בולגרים גדוד 4.0
222	בולגרים גדוד 5.0
223	בולגרים גדוד 6.0
225	בולגרים גדוד 8.0
226	בולגרים גדוד 9.0

## Appendix 3


מטה שירותי הדואר הצבאי  
דא/32/246  
ת"י יוני 1948

45  
X 32

מסמל/אמא

הנדון: דאר צבאי - סדום.

1. במטה השירות נחקבל סכתב מאת האחראי על הדאר בסדום בו הוא מבקש ידיעות בקשר לשירותי הדאר הצבאי.
2. הקשר היחידי שקיים בין שרות זה לסדום הוא באמצעות ההספקה והנוסעת.
3. נא להודיעני אם האחראי על הדאר בסדום הוא הייל, אם נמצאת שם יחידה צבאית ואם נקבע עבור מסר דאר.



ראש שירותי הדאר הצבאי

Letter dated 29 June 1948, from The Army Postal Service to the General Command, asking for information regarding the postal connection to Sodom and whether a KBA number was allocated.

## Appendix 4

45  
~~X 32~~

(379)

מסמך שירותי הדואר הצבאי  
ד/32  
9 יולי 1948.

מנהל הדואר הכללי

הנדון: שרות דאר. סדום

1. הנני מתכבד להודיעך ששרות הדואר הצבאי הפעיל  
שרות דאר של מכתבים רגילים ודברי דפוס עם  
חושבי סדום.

2. אהיה אסיר תודה לך אם תוציא הוראות למנהל/יו  
הדואר האזרחי ולתעביר את הדואר המיועד לסדום  
למשרדי הדואר הצבאי.

C

ד/פ-ד

ראש שירותי הדואר והצבאי

Letter sent on 9 July 1948 from the Army Postal Service to the Postmaster General notifying him that service of regular mail and printed matter was established by the Army to Sodom, and mail destined for Sodom should be transferred to the Army Post Offices.

## Appendix 5

מדינת ישראל

מזלעת הדואר הסלגורף והטלגרף - לזכות המנהל הכללי

\*\*\*\*\*

<p>ד.מ. 139</p> <p>תל אביב 15 יולי 1948</p> <p>1007</p> <p>קס</p> <p>ראש המטה</p> <p>מקום המטה</p> <p>אכסד</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">X41</p> <p>מנהל הדואר - תל אביב.</p> <p>מנהל הדואר - חיפה.</p> <p>מנהל הדואר - ירושלים.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>הנדון: - שרות דאר - סדום.</u></p> <p>הדואר האבאי הפעיל שרות דאר של מכתבים רגילים ודברי דפוס עם תוסכי סדום.</p> <p>2. כל הדואר המיועד לסדום יש להעביר למשרדי הדאר האבאי.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">העמק ל: -</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ראש שירותי הדאר האבאי -</p> <p style="text-align: right;">בהתאם למכתב דצ/21 מיום 9.7.48.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">לס/-</p>
--	---

מנהל השירותים השנימיים

Letter dated 15 July 1948 from the Postmaster General to the Postmasters of Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem, notifying them that service of regular mail and printed matter was established by the Army to Sodom, and mail destined for Sodom should be transferred to the Army Post Offices.



## Appendix 6

לוחם הפצצות הצבאיים "א"  
 פצצא/140  
 24 ספטמבר 1948

אם: מטה לוחם הפצצות הצבאיים  
 תפוז: מל"מ פצצא - 130.

החל מיום 22.9.48 מל"מ פצצא אין סבא אבסס "א"  
 תלמי בכוננים /לוחים פצצא לבה תל"מ-אבוב, מל"מ  
 אבסס מל"מ.

הקצ"ר הצבאיים אין סבא ולבה תל"מ פצצא/140  
 אבסס מל"מ.

אבסס מל"מ.

14/9/48

Letter dated 24 September 1948, from Army Post "Base A" to the headquarters of the Army Post, reporting that as of 22 September, the airmail connection to and from Sodom, is through Tel Aviv airfield and that the flights from Ekron (Tel Nof) are ended.

## Appendix 7

חיל אויר  
מטה כללי  
אגף טעוים  
(419) 169/ט  
27 נובמבר 1948

419/ט  
419/ט

מסל/אגף (שליט)  
מסל/מטה רמת דוד  
מסל/מטה 103  
מסל/מטה עקרון  
מסל/מטה ל.מ.א.  
מסל/מטה 32  
מסל/מטה  
מ.מ.מ.א.

198

הגדרות: חובלה אווירית לסדר

במשימה שנמשכה ביום 25.11.48 הוסכם בעד חורחה  
חדשה יבצע חיל האוויר כדי שבוע בשבוע מים לטורס כולקמן

א. 3 מים וקוסה (20 נוסעים).  
ב. 10 טונות אספקה ('ירקוה וכו') כל' שמי מים  
נורסמן כל 24 שעות.

חיל האוויר  
מטה כללי  
אגף טעוים  
ב/מסל/מטה אוויר

419/ט

מ/מ

Letter dated 27 November 1948, about the continuation  
of 5 weekly flights to Sodom.

## Appendix 8

מדינת ישראל.

5606-12/3 דת"א 17-11-48  
3809

המנהל הכללי של  
שירות הדואר  
במשרד הפנים  
במנהל הדואר הראשי

מסדר הדואר הראשי  
תל אביב  
ידי חשון תש"ט  
16.11.48

דטום.

מפקד דאר הצבאי.

הנדון :- מכתבים רשומים.

נתקבלו במסדר זה ארבעה מכתבים רשומים עם  
ציון עליהם "אין דאר רשום ל-192".

2. המכתבים האלו, הנושאים כתובות צבאיות, מועברים  
בזה לשם עיון ביחד עם הפתקים ממסדרים השונים שגורשו  
אליהם.
3. אני מניח כי, אם אין שרות דאר דטום למסדר דאר  
צבאי מסוים, יש אפשרות לעשות סדורים אחרים, כדי להבטיח  
שהמכתבים יגיעו לתעודתם.
4. המסדר המקובל הוא שהודעות תשלומה ממסדר הקרוב  
ביותר לבעלי המכתבים כדי שיופיעו לשם קבלתם.
5. טופס שהיה בשמוש בימי המנדט בקשר לצוררות  
מובטחים מועבר לשם עיון. דעתי שאפשר להשתמש בו גם במקרים  
אלו עם שנויים בתאריכים.
6. אשמח אם תואיל לאשר <sup>1301</sup>המכתבים ~~המכתבים~~ ממסדר  
לתעודתם. *של*

מנהל הדואר הראשי.

העתק ל :-  
משרד אגף פ"ד (נא לסמן את כל המכתבים ולאשר).  
תיק 26  
תיק 43

Letter dated 16 November 1948, from the Postmaster of Tel Aviv sent to the commander of the Army Postal Services. The subject: "Registered Letters" for KBA 192 that were received in Tel Aviv with the notation "No registered service to 192".

## References:

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2. "Classification of KBA Triangular Army Units Marks of 1948\49", Z. Berest, HLP# #20.
3. "Revised Classification of KBA Units Numbers of Israel Military Mail, 1948/49" - B. Hurwich, HLP# #47.
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# The Kaiser in Jerusalem: Some Faux Philately

*Ralph Perry*

## 1. Introduction

To commemorate the “Orientreise” of Kaiser Wilhelm II, who came to Jerusalem on October 31, 1898 to dedicate the Church of the Redeemer (Erlöserkirche), the German postcard industry sprang into action and produced more than 200 different commemorative picture postcards; they are not known to have produced commemorative covers. A few of the publishers arranged for tens of thousands of these commemorative cards to be mailed, for a fee, from the Holy Land during the Kaiser’s visit (October 25 - November 4, 1898) from either the Jerusalem Austrian Post Office or the German Jaffa Post Office.<sup>1</sup>

More than 100 years later very little of this material has survived, postally used or otherwise. Almost all that have survived are commemorative postcards. Less than a dozen postally used covers mailed between October 25 and November 4, 1898 and associated with the Kaiser’s visit are known to have survived. One was mailed from the German Jaffa Post Office to the Kaiser’s escort cruiser Hertha, anchored at Jaffa on October 28, and all the rest were mailed from Camp Imperial in Jerusalem with the Turkish Camp Imperial cancel. None of these are preprinted commemorative covers; all are standard, everyday commercially sold covers.

Authentic, postally used registered material, associated with the Kaiser’s visit, is not known to exist. However, about 19 years ago an over-franked commemorative Kaiser cover with the handwritten notation *Einschreiben* (registered) appeared in a major auction (Fig. 30). Alas, it did not have a postal registration cachet, nor did it have a registration number, or any transit or arrival cancellations. Was it a very nice philatelic hand-me-back item, a favor cancel that never went in the mail? Maybe.

In the last years, two more R covers surfaced. One (Fig. 31) was offered in two different European auctions; the second (Fig. 32) appeared twice on eBay. At first glance they all look alike, but there are important differences. So what are these items, a hand-be-back, a late creation, an enhanced fabrication or maybe all of the above. This article will try to shed some light on this enigma.

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(1) For a full and extensive article on the philately of this visit see HLPB bulletin #91-92, pages 400-436. summer/autumn 2002.

## 2. The Covers

These covers are unusually large, measuring  $7\frac{5}{8}$  x 5 inches. A commemorative statement is printed on the top front of the covers, (loosely) translated, -

*"To memorialize the dedication of the German Protestant Church of the Redeemer, in Jerusalem, on October 31, 1898, by his Majesty Kaiser Wilhelm II."*

On each cover there are seven Turkish stamps that were placed in almost the same positions. On the right-hand side we see a 5 piastre stamp (Scott #99), a stamp that is not known to have been used in Palestine. Below it is a 2 piastre stamp (Scott #98) and to the left of both is a 1 piastre stamp (Scott #97). On the left side is a 20 para stamp (Scott #96), to its lower right is a 10 para stamp (Scott #95) and below these two is a pair of a 5 para on 10 para overprinted stamp (Scott #100). All in all, a total of 8 piastre plus 40 para in value.

One should keep in mind that the postal rate was one piastre for the first 15 grams of a regular letter, one piastre for registration and one piastre for each additional 15 grams overweight. We have here enough postage to mail a letter weighing 120 grams.

On the back of two of the covers (Figs. 30&32) we see a private oval purple cachet which reads *Evangelisches Pfarramt • Bethlehen •*, the latter spelled with an "n" instead of an "m." This translates to "Protestant Priests Office - Bethlehem." This cachet does not appear on the back of Figure 31 which is completely clean. The handwriting on Figures 30 and 32 are clearly by the same person. A clear example is the word *Einschreiben*, which appears only on these two covers. It does not appear on the cover in Figure 31.

What is more puzzling is that for covers that are supposed to be rare we actually have two different commemorative overprints. The font type in Figures 30 and 32 is different from the font type in Figure 31. This is immediately noticed when looking at the capital letters. Moreover, the spelling of the month in Figures 30 and 32 is October, with the letter C, a non Germanic spelling, whereas in Figure 31 it is spelled correctly, Oktober, with the letter K. Moreover, the spelling of Erlöserkirche is also different; In Figures 30 and 32 it is misspelled using the letter Ü instead of Ö. but it is correctly spelled in Figure 31.

What we have here are two different printings of the commemorative text for an item whose existence is practically unknown. It is therefore, more than likely that these were produced by some very small private enterprises, possibly locally in Jerusalem, and it brings into question whether or not two different printers were involved and whether they were printed in the same time period.

Finally, we notice that the spelling errors are only in Figures 30, and 32, the only two covers that also have the backside cachet with the "n" of "Bethlehen" error.

### 3. The Turkish Jerusalem Postal Markings

All three covers are cancelled with the same Turkish Jerusalem cancel (Steichele 28/5 — Collins PM7). On Figures 30 and 32 there are five cancels, all dated October 31, 1898. They were applied on the stamps in almost identical positions. On Figure 31, there are six cancels where both the Gregorian and Turkish years are missing. The date on five of the cancels is October 31, but on the sixth, the one on the lower left side, the date is December 5. Strange, to say the least.

The Turkish Jerusalem R cachet, which appears only on Figures 31 and 32, is Steichele 28/28 — Collins RC1. There is no R cachet on Figure 30 even though it is clearly marked in German Einschreibe, same as it is on Figure 32.

The R cachet on Figure 31 is not numbered, i.e., the item was not recorded in the Jerusalem post office. The R cachet on Figure 32 is numbered, which may give the appearance that it was recorded in the post office, but here the plot thickens: There is not one R number but two, both the same number, which are entered next to each other in a very neat handwriting. The one on the left side, 847, is a Western numeral; the one to its right, ٨٤٧, is an Arabic number, also 847.

The combination of a handwritten European number (1, 2, 3, 4 etc.) in tandem with in Arabic number (١, ٢, ٣, ٤ etc.) to record R letters is unknown. All R cachets to non-Ottoman destinations used only one number, and that was the standard Western numerals. In rare cases, when an R letter to a non-Ottoman destination originated in some small obscure village in the Empire they may have used Arabic numbers, but always only one number, not two.

R letters mailed within the Empire used Arabic numbers, but again only one number. Certainly post offices in major cities, such as Jerusalem, used standard European numbers to record mail to Germany and other UPU countries. It should be noted that in later years some preprinted Ottoman R-labels did have two preprinted numbers, but none were for use in Palestine. Whoever entered this double R number on Figure 32 was not an employee of the Turkish Jerusalem post office.

### 4. Conclusions

At best, we may speculate that these covers are a philatelic hand-me-back. They certainly did not travel through the normal postal systems, registered or otherwise. The German postal regulations until 1905, required that all incoming mail, receive an arrival cancel. Of course, they missed a few, especially on postcards. But R letters always needed to be recorded and receive an arrival cancel, no exceptions here. None of these three covers have a German arrival cancel, nor are there any proper R numbers for control purposes, either from the Turkish Jerusalem post office or any German post office, nor are there any transit markings.

Figure 30 is the most likely to be a philatelic hand-me-back, but the misspellings in the German text is bothersome. In Figure 31, the only cancel with the correct German spelling, the December 5 date begs the question as to the actual date the hand-me-back cancels were applied; was it during the Kaiser's visit or a month later? Or did we have two hand-me-back periods. The first on October 31 cancelling the right hand stamp of the overprinted pair and the second on December 5 to cancel the left hand stamp of the overprinted pair. The R cover with the double registration number, Figure 32, looks to be a questionable hand-me-back, but also one that was tampered with, years later, adding the bogus R numbers to enhance the value of this item.

Finally, these are nice colorful commemorative covers with stamps. But they certainly did not go through any postal system.



**Figure 30: Overfranked commemorative cover: no R cachet; no transit or arrival cancels. An oval cachet below from the reverse.**





Figure 31: Overfranked commemorative cover: unnumbered R cachet; no transit or arrival cancels.



Figure 32: Overfranked commemorative cover: bogus R numbers; no transit or arrival cancels. An oval cachet below from the reverse.

# Analyzing Airmail Covers from Palestine, 3 Aug '33 to 30 Apr '48

(With Observations on Etiquettes and Markings)\*

*Leslie A. Bard, Carmel, CA*

## Introduction

**Caveat:** My approach to the information found on airmail covers is derived from my focus on airmail rates, my curiosity as to why mailers chose a particular rate to pay, and how airmail covers were actually handled by the postal service. The categorization I use for understanding these covers is based on function, not lexicology. Readers interested in postal history very likely use a similar approach to categorizing their covers and related materials, but their categorization may be quite different depending on their focus, even if they also collect airmail covers. For a discussion of this topic see Jim Graue's editorial\*\* in the Airpost Journal.

Some general remarks are needed in this stage: (a) For readers not familiar with Palestine philately - No airmail stamps were ever issued in the British Mandate Palestine. (b) Lydda Airport cancelations were usually transit marks, not indicators of the sender's intentions or an air route that was followed.

(c) All Figures in this article are scans modified in the computer program PhotoShop in order to accentuate the **etiquettes** and markings on the covers. When the scans are adjusted for brightness and contrast, the colors of the stamps are often not perfectly true to the originals.

**The definition of an airmail rate is most important:**

The total value of postage required per first weight interval (and subsequent intervals if different):

- (1) To send a cover (sealed envelope, registered entire, post(al) card, letter
- (2) all or partially by air, to a specific country (rarely to a specific city),
- (3) via a specific route (allowing for small changes that did not significantly affect transit times),
- (4) during a specific time period.

Therefore, the **"primary information"** on an airmail cover consists of:

- (1) The addressed country,
- (2) the date of mailing,

---

\* Apology: Due to a technical last minute mishap, this article is printed without its illustrations (would have been Figs. 33-47). It is considered by the author to publish shortly an approved version of the article with even more colour illustrations.

\*\* Jim Graue's editorial in the Airpost Journal Aug 2005, p.313 and the Letters to the Editor in response to that editorial in the September and October issues.

- (3) the route intended by the sender, and
- (4) the total rate actually paid.

The **addressed country** is occasionally absent, erroneous, or ambiguous due to handwriting and/or spelling. This may lead to misdirection. Figure 33 would show a postcard mailed 25 May 45 with the correct rate to the U.S.A. via the U.K.. However, the sender mistakenly placed Oakland, California in Hawaii ("HI"), and the postal card was sent eastward, evidenced by the censorship handstamp applied in Iran.

The **route intended by the sender** (by air, by what carrier, and/or how far) may be expressed on the cover by:

- (1) An etiquette of blue and red decorations printed on the edges. Figure 34 would show a cover which has rather artistically placed stripes in addition to an applied airmail label. It was mailed 10 Mar 42 to Egypt at the correct rate of 15/10 mils/10 gr.
- (2) An "airmail" etiquette (print or label) anywhere on the cover, with or without a specific route or carrier included.
- (3) Script endorsement of "airmail," with or without a specific route and/or carrier included.
- (4) A rate paid that is unmistakably for airmail to the addressed country.

Although "Airmail Directional Handstamps," (acronym ADH) has been suggested for a categorization of markings on airmail covers, it is important to note that ink or pencil script was often used in place of or to modify handstamps or etiquettes by mailers or by postal authorities. In addition, some handstamps were adapted to uses different from their original intent, and mailers' script endorsements were often absent or incorrect. Regardless, any one or a combination of these is generally less reliable than the **airmail rate actually paid**. This is most evident in the economy/convenience use of "airmail" envelopes for surface carriage, domestic or foreign.

The handling of covers when the rate paid was insufficient evolved over time. The UPU postage due system was used routinely before the War. The tax due was indicated by a hand-stamped or script "T" with a script notation of the deficiency in French gold "c"entimes (bearing no decipherable U.P.U. relationship to any currency's monetary value). Recorded "c" values were usually between 5 and 40 and roughly correlated with the fraction of the weight interval that was deficient. The postage due was paid by the addressee with stamps in the currency of the addressed country. The next cover, 27 Aug 37, was paid with 15 mils, meeting the first weight interval for Imperial Air's rate to France, 15/10 mils/10 gr. "T"40ct, in pencil script, indicated a deficiency for the second weight interval. This cost the addressee 2 Franks and 80 Centimes, supposedly twice the value of the deficiency in French currency. This protocol

was still officially in effect after 2 Sep 39, but it was rarely used on outgoing airmail during or after the War.

The airmail rate paid may consist of stamps initially placed on the cover, but insufficient for the route available or requested, plus stamps later added to the cover after consultation with a postal clerk. Figure 36 had to show an unusual prewar example. Submitted to a mail clerk on 15 Jul 39 with no postage, it was "T"axed "40c" (transillumination). It was brought back the next day with a 10-mil stamp covering the blue script tax marking and meeting the all-up rate of 10 mils/10 gr. to the UK, canceled, and sent on its way by air. Added stamps in this context may be suspected by their placements on the cover and confirmed by one or more of the following:

- (1) A jusqu'a handstamp indicating "Insufficiently prepaid..." with or without the amount of deficiency noted in script;
- (2) A different canceling device used on the added stamps,
- (3) The same canceling device used on the added stamps, but one to three days after the first attempt to mail the cover.

This was an uncommon method of handling underpaid letters during WWII and thereafter. The most frequent wartime alternatives were to either cancel airmail carriage altogether, limit air carriage to an intermediate exchange office on the route, or change the route.

Two other observations make it more complicated to determine what the official rate actually was for an individual cover. Due to the frequent changes of rates and routes during WW II, people were not always up-to-date on the correct rates, and there was a tendency to pay the last rate that they recalled to their usual destination country or even to other countries with which they were familiar. I call this "**perseveration**," a neurological term used for an uncontrolled speech repetition related to a brain dysfunction. Applied to the payment of more or less than the correct airmail rate, it implies a reflexive way of dealing with a lack of information and/or memory. This was a frequent phenomenon during the many "Transition" periods directly due to WWII: the beginning in Sep 39, the entrance of Italy in Jun 40, the entrance of Japan in Dec 41, and the end of the Mandate in Apr 48. During these short periods, there was no airmail available for at least part of the time, and one sees perseveration over-or underpayments, depending on the circumstances.

From Sep 39 airmail rates increased markedly and changed frequently, and it became customary for postal clerks to send covers with the clear intent of air carriage, but short-paid  $\leq 5$  mils, onward without further attention. An overpayment occurred when rates were generally going down, from Jan 1942. This phenomenon created a problem in the study of specific airmail rates based solely on observed covers. However, the discovery of documentary evidence for most airmail rates substantially reduced the uncertainty and supported the concept of perseveration.



The **total rate paid** consists of the airmail rate paid plus any other payment for ancillary services such as registration, express service, or late posting.

I use the term "**secondary information**" to mean any additions to the cover that indicate what airmail route was actually followed, if any; what happened to the cover on its way; and why. "Airmail Directional Handstamps" is a two-volume study by Ian McQueen that supplemented his previous two volumes entitled "Jusqu'a Airmail Markings" published in 1993 and 1995. All four are indispensable for anyone interested in airmail covers during the 1930's and 1940's. I divide the **secondary** information also into 4 parts:

(A) Information about **how the cover was handled within Palestine:**

(1) Returning the cover to the mailer as a result of:

a. Censorship with a PC23 label covering the address and an enclosure explaining the reason for returning the cover to the sender. The cover to be shown as Figure 39 was mailed 14 Feb 40, and paid with 30 mils. That met the ALA rate/10 gr. to Europe via Rome and surface to Germany (trans-illumination). Figure 40 would be its explanatory enclosure

b. "RETURNED TO SENDER/NO SERVICE": Figure 41 would show a cover mailed 6 Jun 40, paid 25 mils, the correct rate/10 gr. via ALA to Rome since 6 May 40. However, Italy's threat to declare war on the Allies resulted in closure of the route to Rome on 3 Jun.

c. Need to add sufficient stamps to meet the airmail rate.

(2) Cancellation or limitation of "airmail" from Palestine.

a. Mute, i.e. 2-or 6-bar London cancelations, etc..

b. Worded, "insufficient" *handstamps*, etc..

(3) Rerouting due to :

a. Insufficient payment,

b. Temporary obstruction of the route,

c. Disappearance of the route, or

d. Postmaster's discretion to send airmail the most expeditious way.

(B) Information about **what happened to the cover along the way.**

(1) Cancellation of air service from an intermediate exchange office, according to a "jusqu'a" applied in Palestine.

(2) Cancellation at the discretion of the postmaster at the intermediate exchange office, i.e., Marseille, London, New York etc.

(3) Affirmation of air service from an intermediate exchange office according to an "**au dela**" applied at the point of original mailing. "au dela" = au delà de = French for "over," but philatelically used in the sense of "from beyond." McQueen (1993, op. Cit.) defined them as

“...markings of origin, placed upon covers to show that airmail treatment is to be given to a particular letter, not immediately, but from beyond...a certain place.” None has been described as used on airmail from Palestine, but there is an example. It was mailed from Chicago June 15, 1939 to Palestine by air to New York, surface across the North Atlantic, finally air “From Europe,” following the *au dela* stamped on the cover in Chicago.

- (4) Affirmation of air service from an intermediate exchange office according to an “O.A.T.” or “AV2” applied at the intermediate exchange office.
- (C) Information about how the cover was handled at the **first and subsequent exchange offices in the destination country.**
- (1) The first exchange office marking in the destination country reveals the city and confirms or indicates a change in the intended route. Its date is used to calculate the transit time, which may also affirm or cast doubt upon the route actually taken.
  - (2) Markings and sealing tapes associated with censorship or airplane crashes may confirm routes taken or document alterations to the intended route.

The reader must keep in mind that, regardless of the rate paid, the intended carrier and/or route were never guaranteed. Postmasters always had the discretion to change either or both to facilitate the efficient handling of the mails.

**Auxiliary information:** Avis de Reception, returning the cover from the country of destination, or forwarding it to the addressee, customs duty due or paid, poste restante service paid, taxes paid for original underpayment, or misrouting in the addressed country. All are of interest, but they do not reflect on the essentials of payment for air service and whether the sender got what was paid for.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \*  
 \* **Short Notes and Discoveries** \*  
 \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

## The Ottoman Period

### The Kaiser's visit to the Holy Land: (1) A rare cover from Jerusalem, and (2) A rare postcard from Jaffa

*Ralph Perry*

#### (1) A rare cover from Jerusalem

Kaiser Wilhelm II traveled to Jerusalem with an entourage of some 50 knights and many assorted government functionaries, one of whom was Fürst von Bülow, the German foreign secretary.

Among their many duties, von Bülow and his staff were responsible for the reviewing and editing of both the verbal and written presentations given by Herzl and his delegation to the Kaiser. There were two meetings one was in Constantinople on October 18, 1898 and the other was in Jerusalem on November<sup>2</sup>, 18981

One of von Bülow's assistants was a person named O. Gerloff, a Geheimer Kanzleidiener<sup>2</sup>, an old title for a trusted government functionary. Gerloff, while at Camp Imperial in Jerusalem, mailed a letter to a Hermann Gerloff, a relative, maybe his brother, who was a Geheim Sekretar in the German Navel offices in Berlin (Fig. 48). The letter unfortunately is not enclosed in this cover.



**Fig. 48: Cover from Camp Imperial to Berlin.**

(1) See HLPB Bulletin #91-92pp. 406-408

(2) See "Das Deutsche Kaiserpaar in Heiligen Lande" page 412, published by E.S. Mittler & Sohn, Berlin. 1899.

The cover is properly franked with 40 para, the correct letter rate, 2x20 para Turkish stamps, and is cancelled with the Turkish Camp Imperial cachet. (ST. 29/01. OR-104). It is back-stamped upon arrival in Berlin on November 17, 1898 (Fig. 49), indicating a Camp Imperial mailing date between November 1 and November 4, 1898.

By itself this cover is a rarity since less than a dozen authentic, postally mailed covers are known to exist from either Camp Imperial or the Kaiser's visit in general. But, what is even more fascinating about this cover is Gerloff's handwritten 'return address' on the back flap of the cover (Fig. 49), viz:

"Abs: O. Gerloff/ Im gefolge seiner Majestat des Kaisers und Konigs / z.Z. in Jerusalem.", translated into English:

"Sender, O. Gerloff/ In the retinue of his Majesty/ the Emperor and King/ At moment in Jerusalem".



Fig. 49: Back cover of Figure 48 with sender's name, part of the Kaiser's retinue.

## (2) A Rare Postcard from Jaffa

Kaiser Wilhelm II rode into Jaffa on Thursday Oct.27.1898. This event was probably known by the local population and the many tourists as the "Kaiser's Day".

The German postcard publishers, who were instrumental in arranging the mass mailings of commemorative postcards from the German PO in Jaffa, used the post office between Oct.28 and Oct.31. The few known commercial and bona fide tourist postal history pieces from Jaffa generally have a cancel dated between Oct.28 and Nov.4.1898. Thus, an item mailed by a known Jaffa resident as early as Oct.27 and associated with this event, is a rarity.

Figure 50 is such a postcard: not only was it mailed from the German PO on Oct.27.1898, but it was mailed by none other than Heinrich Loewe, the well known Jaffa publisher, who used one of his own (now rare) black and white Gruss aus Jaffa postcard (Figure 51).



Loewe's own dateline in German "Kaisertag" i.e. "the day of the Kaiser".  
is possibly one of its kind.



Fig. 50: German PO in Jaffa, cancel ST.221 dated Oct. 27, 1898.

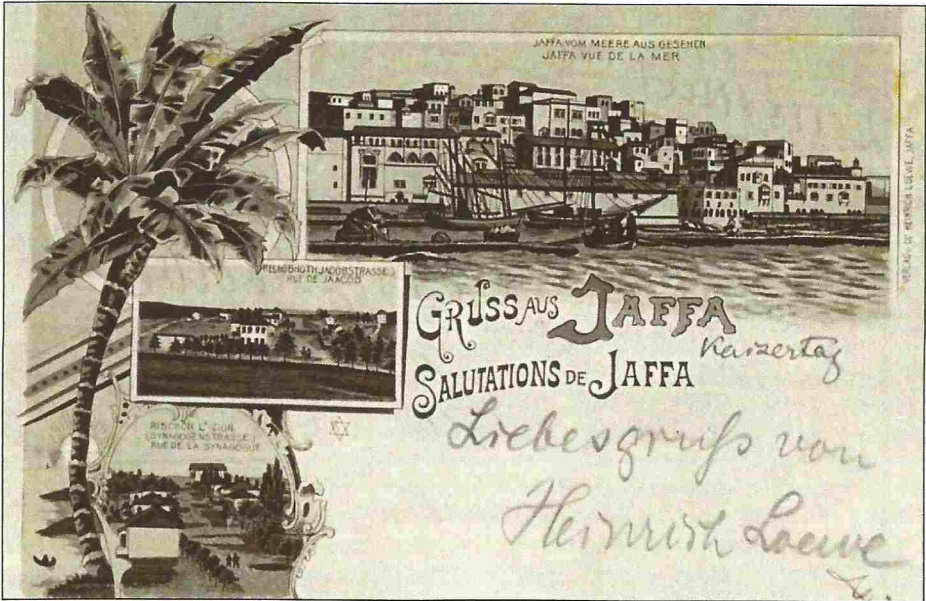


Fig. 51: Picture Side of Fig. 50, with Loewes signature and dateline "Keisertag".

## Mail from the Jewish Colony Mes'ha (Kfar Tabor)

*G. Karporvsky*

The Jewish Colony Mes'ha (later called Kfar Tabor) was founded in 1901 in the lower Galilee near the road Afula-Sejera and Mount Tavor. The first settlers were Jewish immigrants from Romania. The colony served as a center of the "Hashomer" organization, and an important stage in the history of the new Jewish colonization of Palestine. As a small community, Mes'ha did not have a local post office or postal agency of its own, but had to use the postal services of the city of Tiberias, which was located near by.

Almost no postal items are known from the early days of the colony. Recently a family correspondence was found in Romania, mainly letters which were written between a son who immigrated to Palestine and settled in Mes'ha, and his family in Romania, in a place called Frumusica. Most of the mail are postcards written in Yidish, covering the years 1912-1914 \*. All the letters were posted at the Turkish post office of Tiberias. Although the writer wrote in all his mail the return address : "Mes'ha-pre-Tiberias-via Caifa" none of the letters found so far carried a Haifa transit mark.

Figures 52 and 53 show postcards sent from Mes'ha dated 19/9/1912 and 21/11/1912. They are franked 20 Para Turkish stamps cancelled by Tiberias Turkish postmarks. The only transit mark on both of them is from a place called Harlau, and the arrival is from Frumusica, dated 20/10/1912 and 4/12/1912 respectively.



Figure 52



Figure 54 shows the most important letter of this correspondence. This is the only known registered letter from this colony. The letter is franked with 4 twenty Para (= 2 Piasters) Turkish stamps, the correct rate for a registered letter to Romania, and cancelled with Tiberias Turkish postmark dated 30/10/1912. The R-label “TIBERIADE / Palestine” printed in violet is extremely rare.



Figure 53



Figure 54

\* Two incoming postcards to Mes'ha from 1906-1907 are illustrated by V.D. Vandervelde in an article "Jewish Colony Mes'ha by Tiberias", The BAPIP Bulletin #154 (Dec. 2005)

## A Letter to the Residents of Jerusalem

*Levi Shimony*

The following note appeared in the Hebrew newspaper *Hamelitz* of April 26, 1903 (see photocopy on the front cover).

In short, it is a request by some Jewish children from Petersburg to put a note in the newspaper begging from people of Jerusalem who send letters abroad to use the "Hebrew Post of Jerusalem" (הדואר העברי, אשר בירושלם - sic) and to ask the post clerk "to put the handstamp on the Marka" (להניח את החותם) \* so that the name "Jerusalem" in Zion language (Hebrew) will be seen on stamps coming from Eretz-Israel, and these stamps will be for them the most precious in their albums.

This funny styled letter (especially the Hebrew), apart from amusing, is amplifying our knowledge of the Postal History of Jewish Jerusalem in those years. It is worth while to retrieve this part of the Postal History, after showing the response to the first letter by Mr Eliyahu Honig (Fig. 55) in the same newspaper, *Hamelitz* No 83 of June 9, 1903.

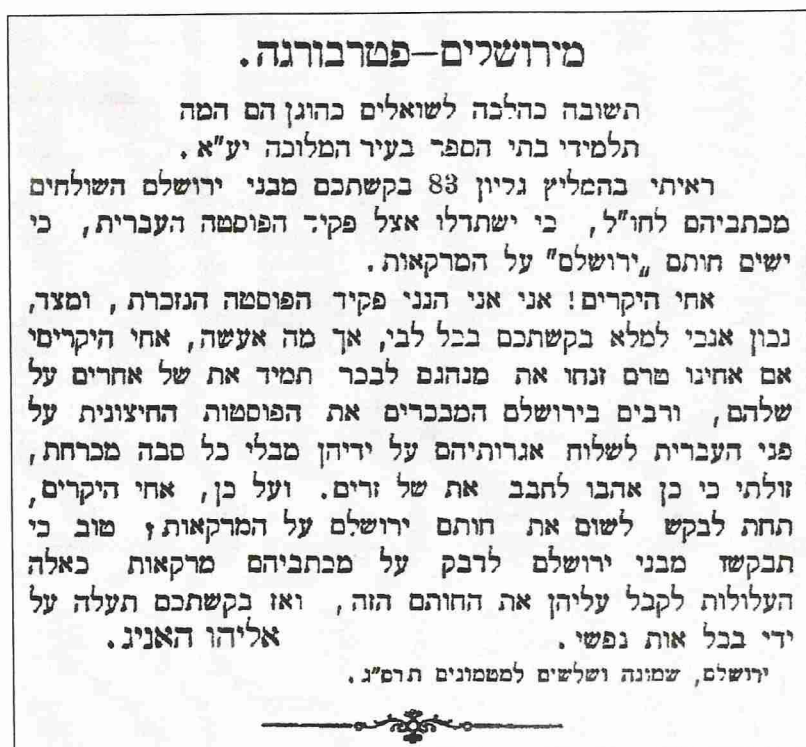


Figure 55

\* They did not have yet the word "stamp" (postage stamp) in Hebrew (כול), and they used the word Marka from the German or Yiddish language - and the plural then was made very funnily "Marka'ot" (מרקאות) - a mixture of German and Hebrew.

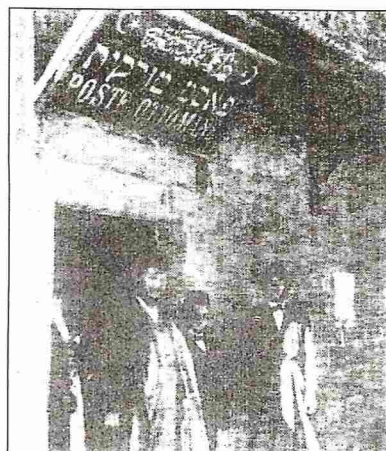


Mr. Honig says in this letter, responding to the children's note, that "It is I, myself the clerk of the noted post office" and he is ready to fulfill their request whole heartedly, but what could he do about the habit of their brethren always to prefer the foreigners upon their clan's. "Here also they chose to go to the foreign post offices to send their letters, not to the Hebrew one, without any significant reason, but their love of strangers". He therefore ask those children to first request the residents of Jerusalem to put on the letters such "Markaot" that can get this postmark (with the Hebrew ירושלים), then he would fulfill their request very willingly (Fig. 56).



**Figure 56**

Although it is certain that most all of the readers of this magazine are familiar with this piece of Postal History, it seems worthwhile to remind ourselves of the details of the events to which these letters relate - it seems best to refer to the description of those events by Mr. F.W. Pollack, in the first issue of his monthly\*\*:



**Figure 57: Mr. Eliyahu Honig in front of the Turkish Post Office in Jerusalem**

\*\* The Holy Land Philatelist No. 1 (Nov. 1954), p. 15.

“It must have been a proud moment for the Jewish community of Jerusalem when one of its members, Mr. Eliyahu Honig, was entrusted by the Ottoman Government with the task of opening up a branch of the Turkish Post Office in the “Street of the Jews”, in the Old City of Jerusalem at the end of 1895.

There was an additional reason why they took a special interest in this achievement. The new post office was to use a trilingual rubber stamp with the word “Jerusalem” in Hebrew. This rather modest way of playing up to the Jews, even to the point of recognizing their national language, may appear a petty matter to the Israelis of today. But it meant a great deal to the tiny group of Jews who lived in the Holy Land at the end of the last century, and this minute incident echoed all over the world. As testified by statements published elsewhere on this page, Jews and Gentiles alike were eager to acquire letters and postcards from the Holy Land cancelled in the “Quartier Israelite” of Jerusalem.

The various foreign post offices in Palestine competed furiously with one another, and the Turkish Postal Administration was even fiercer in its efforts to secure “patronage” than all the others bundled together. We shall, in the course of time, reveal many instances in the Postal History of the Holy Land when the Hebrew language was used by the various postal services as a means of attracting Jewish customers, for Jews were the principal letter writers in the country, even though they constituted a tiny minority group.

Notwithstanding the advantages derived by the Ottoman postal authorities from permitting the use of an obliteration containing a Hebrew word. This was later replaced by a rubber stamp with the words “Quartier Israelite” in French. Contemporary observers are of the opinion that this was due to pressure exerted upon the Government in Istanbul by circles of the Court who were bent upon nipping all Jewish national aspirations in the bud. On the other hand Registration labels, also of a later period, carried the word Jerusalem in Hebrew”.

I would like to thank Mr. Yehoshua Mondshine for submitting the above interesting cutouts from the “*Hamelitz*” newspaper.

## The Transition Period

### Courier mail from besieged Jerusalem 1948 *Levi Aloni*

When the normal postal services in besieged Jerusalem were suspended, (end of April, 1948) people tried very hard to find immediate practical solutions to transfer mail out of the besieged city. One of the most common ways to achieve this aim was to hand the letter to a "courier" - someone who somehow went out of Jerusalem - and ask him to mail it where postal services existed. In a sense, the courier is a one-time forwarding agent.

The use of couriers to transfer mail out of Jerusalem may be divided into two main periods. The first is that of the flown courier letters when Jerusalem was under complete land siege and the only way to get out of the city was by the Army's light airplanes. This period lasted until the "Burma Road" started operating, around 6 June '48. Very few courier letters exist from this period because only a very small number of people were able to leave the city or come into it. Figure 58, shows the earliest known courier letter with a Jerusalem stamp, which was cancelled in Tel Aviv not later than 14 May, this being the last day of use of the Minhelet Ha'am postmarks there. This letter's departure date from Jerusalem, on the other hand, was not earlier than 10 May, which was the first day of use of the Jerusalem Second Issue. Therefore it is certainly a flown courier letter from besieged Jerusalem, which was sent and delivered in the period 10-14 May - a period which is a part of the so called "Minhelet Ha'am" Period (1-14 May).

The second period started when the "Burma Road" became operative, until some time in mid July. In this period the volume of traffic to and from the city increased considerably, first by jeep and command-cars only, and then by trucks and other heavy vehicles. With this increase many more potential

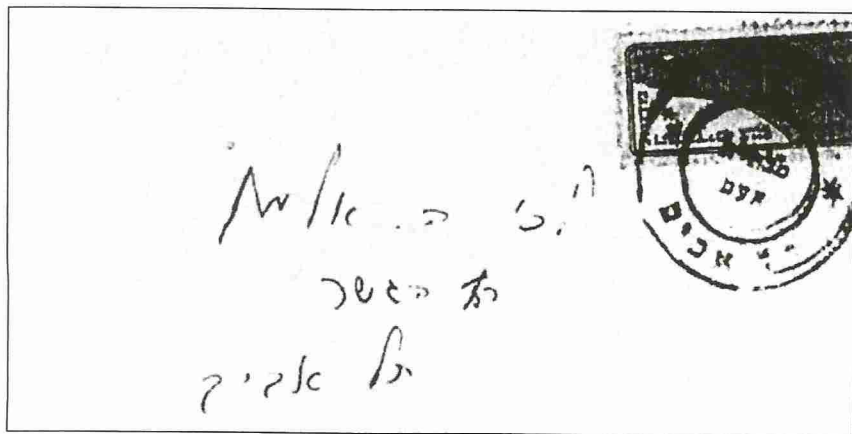


Fig. 58: The earliest known courier letter franked with Jerusalem 10 mil stamp, cancelled in Tel Aviv not later than 14 May.



couriers were available to the population hence the main bulk of courier letters comes from this period. It is interesting to note that this practice did not cease with the re-establishment of the Israeli regular postal services on about 23 June. Apparently people did not know yet about the reactivation of the service which was anyway inefficient and not reliable. So if there was an opportunity to send a letter with a courier, they would take advantage of it. This explains the fact that courier letters from Jerusalem up to mid July, and even later, have been found.

Most of the letters reaching the rest of the country in this way were franked by Jerusalem Stamps, but some did not have any franking. Sometimes the courier himself or the postal clerk added Doar Ivri stamps either to complete the necessary tariff or to pay it all.

Most of the courier letters, as much as 90 %, were mailed in Tel Aviv. Most all of the rest were mailed in the central region places like Rehovot (see Fig. 59), Rishon LeZion, Petach Tikva, Kfar Sava, and they are very scarce as such.

Once inside the regular postal service the treatment of courier letters varied from place to place and sometimes even from branch to branch in the same city. In Tel Aviv the postal clerks were acquainted with the Jerusalem Stamps and therefore accepted them as valid. In smaller places the clerks were not always aware that the Jerusalem Stamps were still valid postage stamps and they taxed most of the courier letters bearing Jerusalem Stamps.

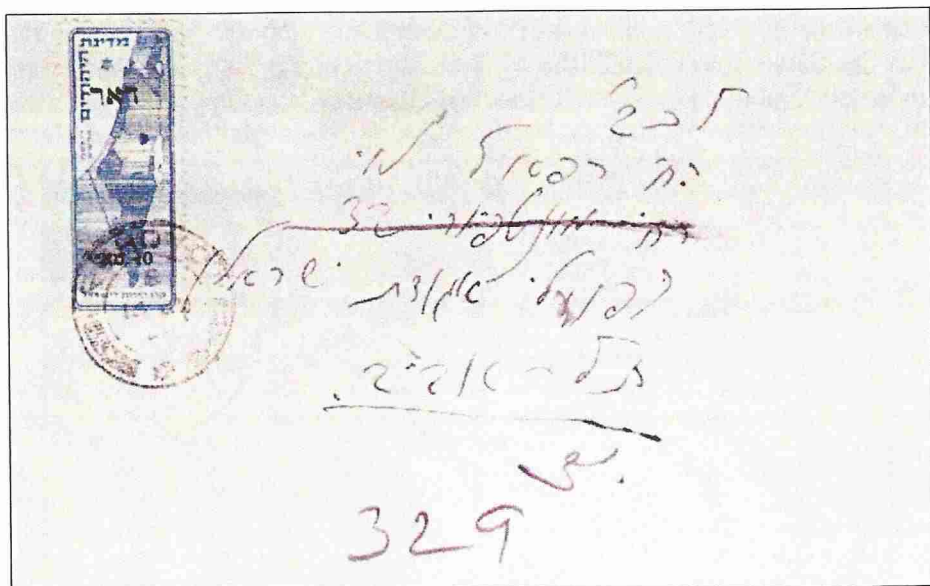


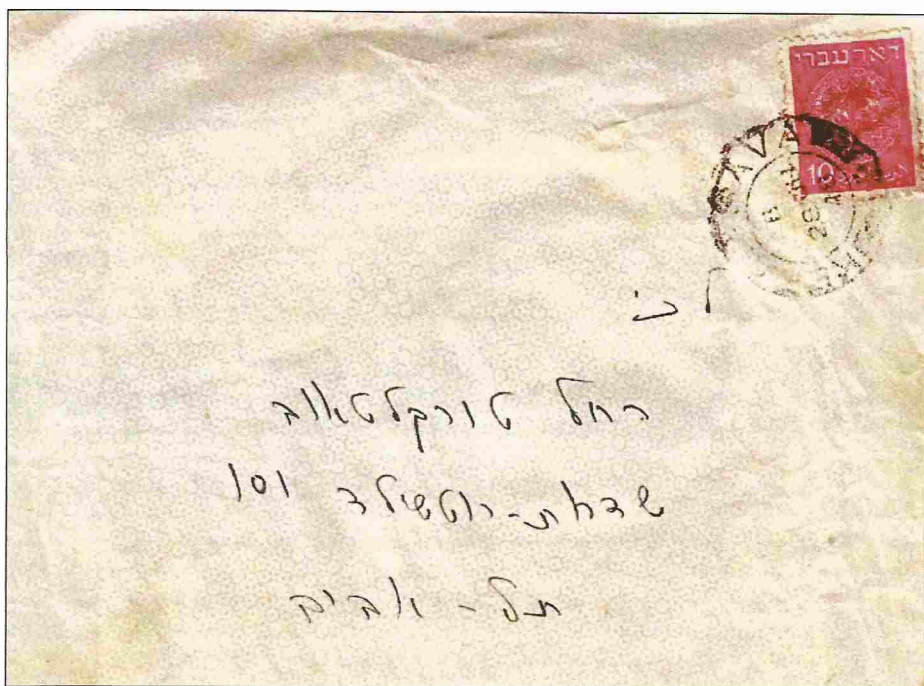
Fig. 59: Courier letter franked with Jerusalem 10 mils stamp, cancelled in Rehovot, 16 June 1948 and not taxed.



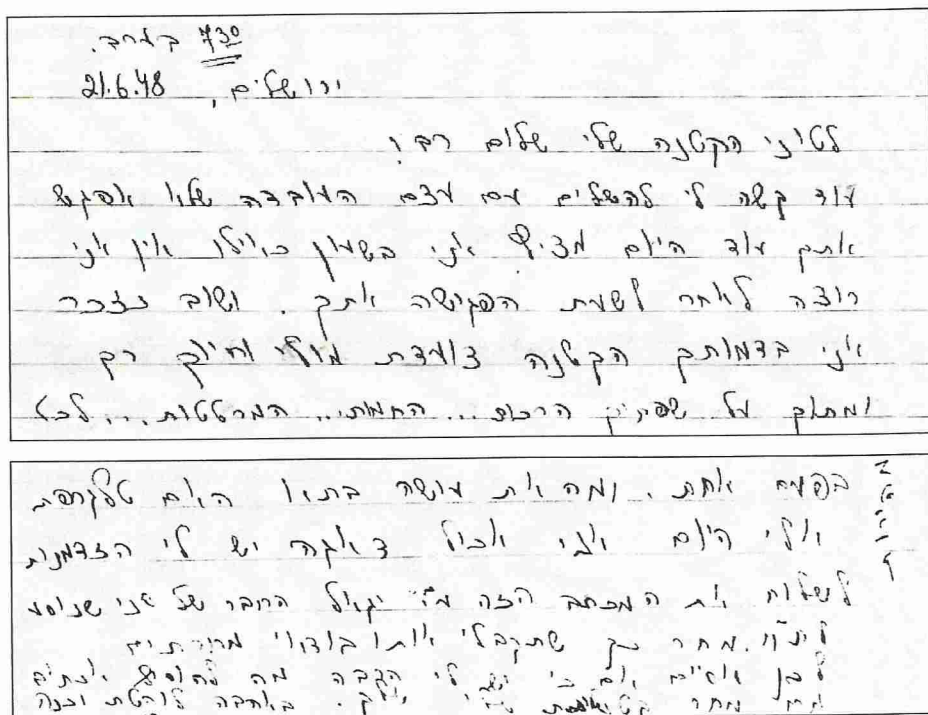
The following cover, found with the letter sheets inside (Figs. 60 and 61), is especially interesting, proving the process of a "Courier Letter" both by its cover and its letter inside.

The letter, obviously a passionate love letter to a girl-friend in Tel Aviv, ends like so:

"...I have an opportunity to send this letter by Igal Sany's friend who goes to Tel Aviv tomorrow, so you will surely get it the day after tomorrow..." (very optimistic thinking).



**Fig. 60: Courier letter to Tel Aviv, franked with 10 mil Doar Ivri stamp, cancelled in Kfar Sava, 28 June 1948 by Mandate reintroduced postmark.**



**Fig. 61:** Two parts of the letter mailed by the courier in Kfar Sava, inscribed on the top left "Jerusalem 21.6.48, 7:30 in the evening".

**Reference:** – Shimony, Z et al, "Jerusalem and Safad Postal Services in the Transition Period", Chapter 1.4.4-, Published by HLPH, May, 2005.

## Kfar Yedidya – In search of the Minhelet Ha'am Registered covers

*Yaacov Tsachor*

This small locality in the Hefer Valley near Nathanya was founded in April 1935 as a cooperative settlement. The settlers were German and Dutch immigrants.

Kfar Yedidya is named in honor of the classical Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, who lived during the first century C.E.s

Class C postal agency was opened on March 26, 1944. In 1947 the population was only 300.

From the Minhelet Ha'am period, 2-14 May 1948, Fluri (2) records only one registered cover, No. 0061, which is also reported by F. Pollack (3). I do not have any details about this cover nor of its whereabouts. Although Fluri estimates that 10 Registered covers exist, I do not know of any collection holding such an item.

Lately I have found two registry receipts (Fig. 62) for two commercial letters mailed from Kfar Yedidya: No. 0055 dated in manuscript 3/5/48 to the Tel Aviv Head Post Office and No. 0057 dated 12/5 to the Kfar Vitkin local Council. This find opens a sequence of 7 covers between the Nos. 0055-0061 and shows that Fluri's assumption was quite accurate.

Any reader who can add information on the very rare registered covers from Kfar Yedidya is requested to send it to the editor or the author at [tapas @netvision.net.il](mailto:tapas@netvision.net.il)



**Fig. 62: 2 receipts for Registered letters Nos. 0055 & 0057 sent from Kfar Yedidya on 3 May & 12 May 1948, respectively.**

#### References:

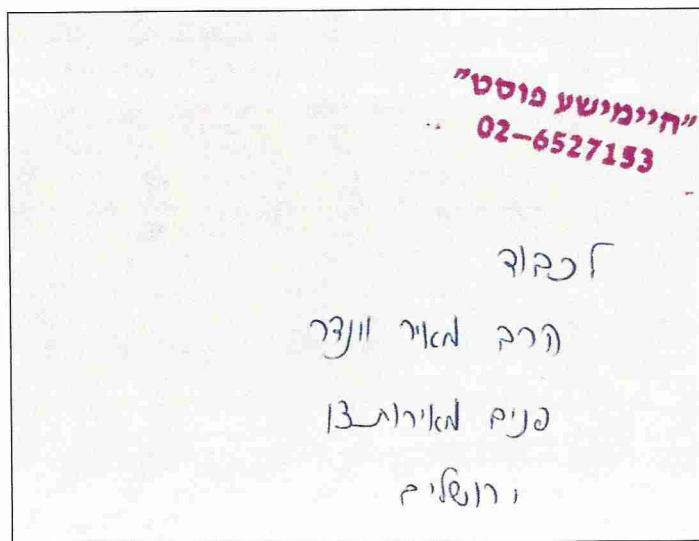
- 1) Palestine Mandate Postmarks - David Dorfman
- 2) Handbook of Holy Land Philately - The Minheha Ha'am Period - Ernst Fluri
- 3) The Holy Land Philatelist - F. Pollack

## The State of Israel

### A Private Mail Delivery in Orthodox Suburbs of Jerusalem

*Levi Shimony*

One day, quite recently, when browsing through a bunch of used covers, I was surprised to meet a group of about 5 covers without stamps or any other usual form of franking, but otherwise they appeared to be "Kosher" commercial used mail items. Focusing my eyes closer, I was attracted by a vivid brilliant red handstamp composed of a line of Hebrew characters and a Jerusalem telephone number, looking like a logo and appearing on each of these covers on the top right (where the postage stamp should be located) (See Fig. 63). But even stranger was the fact that the line of Hebrew letters was not at all Hebrew: "היימישע פוסט" what could it be? I wondered, is there a language other than Hebrew which uses Hebrew letters? After a minute contemplation I said to myself, "of course, there is the Yidish, which is still the main language of some Jewish Orthodox communities, and the meaning of these words (pronounced Heimeesheh Post) is Local Post.



**Fig. 63**

I then made a short research, including a talk with a person from Mea She'arim (the most extremely religious Orthodox suburb in Jer) who told me that he was responsible for these red handstamps on the covers, and he himself (sometimes with some help of youngsters of his kin) was this Himeesheh Post—he uses to collect letters from families in his vicinity and to deliver them to addressees who live nearby, collecting a small charge "for his good will to



help". He has no other duties in his Heimeesheh Post nor any organization or plans to proliferate. Nevertheless I noticed that some of the letters were sent from Benei-Beraq, a town near Tel Aviv, where many Orthodox people live.

As a philatelist I could not refrain from asking him about fine details of subjects that as a non-philatelist he did not quite understand what I wanted from him. Examining again those covers, I noted that there were two types of the handstamps ("postmarks") – that of Figure 63, and a more sophisticated probably later one (Fig. 64), which has an additional Hebrew inscription, דיור אמין וזול (credible and cheap delivery). Unfortunately, I could not get more information about this unusual private postal enterprise.

About a year later I found another cover similar but different from the previous covers (Fig. 65). It also has a "Logo" composed of two lines of Hebrew, and a third giving a cellular telephone No. handstamped in black on a local cover sent from and addressed to addressees in Orthodox Jerusalem. The Hebrew lines are: "דיור ישיר וזול לציבור החרדי" (Direct and cheap delivery to the Orthodox public). It remains to be seen whether this mark was just a new form of the "Logo" of the former one, or was it made by a new company wishing to corner the market, which should not be difficult, considering the small volume of the potential users of the service.

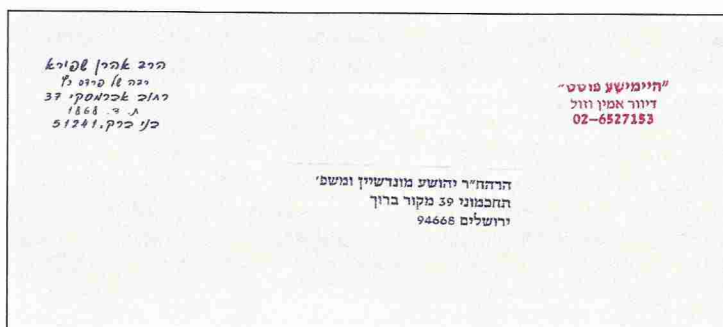


Fig. 64

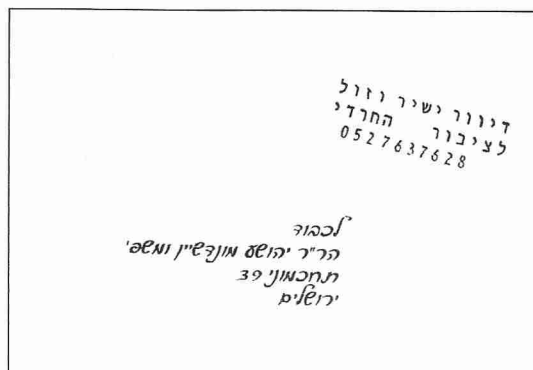


Fig. 65

## THE AUCTION CORNER

*Yaacov Tsachor*

### 1873 Jaffa, the Philadelphia cover

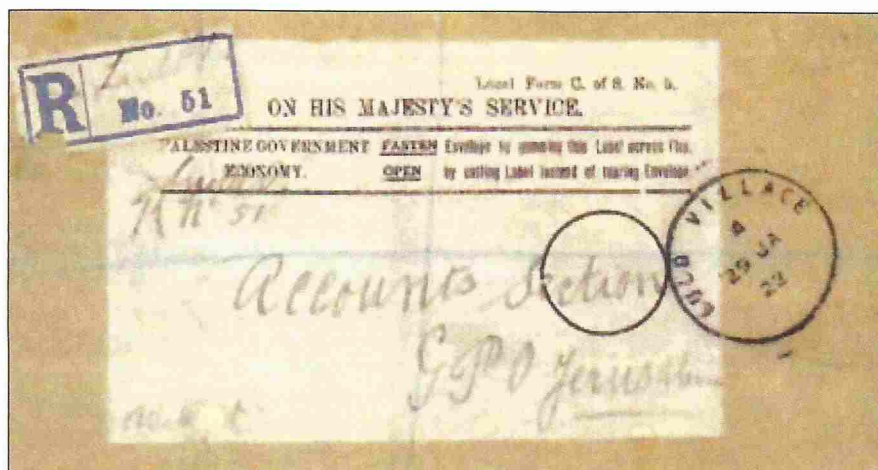
The French Post Office in Jaffa was officially opened in June 1852. Most of the mail sent was destined to Europe and other Levant destinations. Mail to other destinations is rare. The cover in Fig. 66 was mailed in March 1873 to the United States and is 1 of 3 covers recorded with the rate of 1.40 Fr. in effect as of 1 July 1871. The stamps of 2x30c and 80c, all of perforated Ceres issue, are tied by the Large Figures "5089" of Jaffa with the dated pearl ring postmark and the boxed PD alongside. London transit, Newlin and Patterson arrival postmarks all shown on front together with numeral "2" for US internal charge. Beyrouth and Paris transit postmarks on reverse. The start price was \$2500 and finally sold for total of \$12,300.



**Fig. 66: 3/1873 cover Jaffa to Philadelphia franked 1.40 Fr. Rate.**

### Mandate Postmarks – 2 of the rarest

a) LUDD VILLAGE – this small Arab locality was situated 2 miles northeast of Ramleh. A post office opened there under the above name on 21 December 1921 and was changed to Lydda Village on 25 May 1925. Fig. 67 depicts the only known cover with LUDD VILLAGE skeleton postmark (Dorfman #1) dated 29 JA 22 bearing also rare LUDD (#5) transit on back and Jerusalem arrival. Registry blank label No. 51 has handwritten "Ludd v" repeated below the label. The cover was exempt from postage as OHMS. With a start price of \$3000 it reached a total of \$6150.



**Fig 67: 1/1922 LUDD VILLAGE skeleton postmark, the only recorded cover.**

b) SEMAKH – this postcard mailed to the USA via Haifa is properly franked 13m London I stamps (#60,61 and 65) tied by 2 clear strikes of the extremely rare double circle postmark SEMAKH (Dorfman #1) dated 8 FE 22 – latest recorded. (Fig. 68).

Samach was a small Arab village 6 miles southeast of Tiberias at the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee. A post office was opened on 10 May 1921 also serving the nearby Jewish settlements. The postcard fetched a total of \$1600.



**Fig 68: SEMAKH 2/1922 postcard to USA – latest recorded date.**

## Israel - 1950's Varieties

Omitted colors during the printing process create some of the most spectacular errors, two of the most popular of these are:

a) 1955 Ambulance (Magen David Adom) Sc 104v and Bale 117b. The missing Red color resulted in the Magen David omitted on the Ambulance and the tab (fig. 69). This tab was a steal at \$300.

b) 1957 Independence Day, Sc 128v and Bale 142a. Here the missing Black forms the Airplane Omitted at the edge of the figure 9. This rare variety also found on a few official FDCs. The unmounted mint tab fetched \$560.



**Fig. 69: 1955 Ambulance – Magen David Adom omitted (right), on stamp and tab regular stamp (left).**



**Fig. 70: 1957 Independence – Airplane omitted (right), regular stamp (left).**

## References:

Palestine Mandate Postmarks – David Dorfman  
Itamar Karpovsky collection  
Zvi Alexander collection



# PHILATELIC NEWS

## New Special Cancellations

This section is reprinted here courtesy of "Shovel", Israel Philatelic Federation Magazine. The Hebrew notes under the slogans give: The date of use, the type, which is generally either a First Day (of a new stamp) or a commemorative special postmark (of something) the subject, and the place of use. Most of this information appears also in English in the postmark itself.



25.7.2006 — חתונות  
יום ההופעה — יז'ניסה



4.7.2006 — חתונות  
אירוע — היריד הבולאי,  
נוזל סרטן



28.5.2006 — חתונות  
יום ההופעה — ילדי  
אמריקה מצירים את  
ישראל



21.5.2006 — חתונות  
אירוע — אוניברסיטת  
תל-אביב, פרס דן דוד



5.9.2006 — חתונות  
אירוע — היריד הבולאי,  
בתולה



1.8.2006 — חתונות  
אירוע — היריד הבולאי,  
חול אריה



25.7.2006 — חתונות  
יום ההופעה — 100  
שנה לחינוך הציוני דתי



25.7.2006 — חתונות  
יום ההופעה — רבנים  
ירושלים



12.9.2006  
חותמת יום ההופעה  
100 שנה לביצת אל



12.9.2006  
חותמת יום ההופעה  
מועדים התשס"ו



12.9.2006 — חתונות  
יום הפועה — רחובות,  
דאר-נוט



11.9.2006 — חתונות  
אירוע — פסטיבל  
השחמט הבינלאומי,  
אשדוד

 <p>7.11.2006 חותמת אירוע ידיד הבולים נובמבר 2006</p>	 <p>8.10.2006 חותמת אירוע תערוכת בולים ספרד 2006</p>	 <p>3.10.2006 חותמת אירוע ידיד הבולים אוקטובר 2006</p>	 <p>3.10.2006 חותמת אירוע 60 שנה לכארי</p>	 <p>12.9.2006 חותמת יום ההופעה אבא אבו</p>
 <p>17.12.2006 חותמת יום ההופעה 120 שנה לאספירנטו</p>	 <p>11.12.2006 חותמת אירוע 60 שנה ליוניסף</p>	 <p>5.12.2006 חותמת אירוע חג המולד נצרת</p>	 <p>5.12.2006 חותמת אירוע ידיד הבולים דצמבר 2006</p>	 <p>26.11.2006 חותמת אירוע יובל לאשדוד</p>
 <p>24.12.2006 חותמת אירוע חג המולד ירושלים</p>	 <p>24.12.2006 חותמת אירוע חג המולד נצרת</p>	 <p>17.12.2006 חותמת יום ההופעה צמח: תבלין ומרפא</p>	 <p>17.12.2006 חותמת יום ההופעה אתרים צלבניים בישראל</p>	 <p>17.12.2006 חותמת יום ההופעה אופנה בארץ ישראל</p>
 <p>7.1.2007 חותמת אירוע 70 לקרית טבעון</p>	 <p>2.1.2007 חותמת אירוע ידיד הבולים ינואר 2007</p>	 <p>19.12.2006 חותמת אירוע הכנס ה-20 של בולאי ישראל</p>	 <p>19.12.2006 חותמת אירוע שנת ה-50 לנצרת עילית</p>	 <p>19.12.2006 חותמת אירוע הכנס התערוכה אי על פי</p>

 <p>20.2.2007 חולמת יום ההופעה חינוך גופני וספורט בישראל</p>	 <p>20.2.2007 חולמת יום ההופעה הטלוויזיה החינוכית הישראלית</p>	 <p>15.2.2007 חולמת אירוע 70 שנה לחברת מקורות</p>	 <p>6.2.2007 חולמת אירוע ידיד הבולים פברואר 2007</p>	 <p>1.2.2007 חולמת אירוע 100 שנה לשובר התשובה הבין לאומי</p>
 <p>20.2.2007 חולמת אירוע פתיחת טרמינל המחודש לטיסות פנים ארציות</p>	 <p>6.3.2007 חולמת אירוע ידיד הבולים מרץ 2007</p>	 <p>20.2.2007 חולמת יום ההופעה חולת דארמט</p>	 <p>20.2.2007 חולמת יום ההופעה פיתוח הנגב והגליל</p>	 <p>20.2.2007 חולמת יום ההופעה פיתוח הנגב והגליל</p>
 <p>1.5.2007 חולמת אירוע ידיד הבולים מאי 2007</p>	 <p>17.4.2007 חולמת יום ההופעה 100 שנה לתנועת הצופים העולמית</p>	 <p>17.4.2007 חולמת יום ההופעה ערי הפיתוח ציונות מובילה</p>	 <p>17.4.2007 חולמת יום ההופעה 120 שנה לנחל צדק</p>	 <p>17.4.2007 חולמת יום ההופעה יום הזיכרון לחללי מערכות ישראל התשיס"ז</p>

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## New Stamps and Postal Stationery

### New Stamps

The following stamps were issued in the period July 2006-May 2007.

- 28.5.06: Souvenir Sheet composed of the 4 stamps, "Children of America paint Israel" (which were issued in February).
- 25.7.06: Khamsa (1.50, 2.50, 7.40); Rabbis of Jerusalem (Jacob Saul - 1.50, Samuel Salant - 2.20, Jacob Meir - 2.40); 100 Years of Religious Zionist Education (3.60).
- 12.9.06: Abba Eban (7.30); Festivals 2006 (3 of the 6 Orders of the "Mishnah" part 2 - 1.50, 2.20, 2.40); Centennial of Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design (Sheet of 9 stamps, 3 tabs, each IS 2.50).
- 12.9.06: Do'armat label "Rehovot".
- 20.9.06: Booklet with one pane of 10 self-adhesive Zehavit stamp, same stamp as issued before but booklet variety – the new logo of Doar Israel Ltd. instead of the Postal Authority Logo (see Fig. 72).



Figure 72

- 16.10.06: Zehavit (Gagea Commutate) late printing of this definitive stamp which has a significant variety (see Fig. 73) – two more leaves on the stem and regular perforations.



Figure 73



- 5.12.06: Do'armat label "Christmas 2006".
- 17.12.06: Medical herbs and spices (1.50, 2.50, 3.30); Israeli fashion (1.50,2.50,3.30,7.30); Crusader sites in Israel (4 x 2.50); 120 years of Esperanto (3.30).
- 20.2.07: Israel educational television (3 x 2.50) – printed in irregular sheets of 9 (3 rows of 3 se-tenant stamps and ornamented margins - see Figure 74), also booklets with one pane of 6 (2x3) se-tenant self-adhesive stamps; Development of the Negev and the Galilee (2.50, 3.30); Physical Education and Sport in Israel. (2.90, 3.00, 7.30);



Figure 74

- 20.2.07: Do'armat label similar to a previous one (depicting the new Logo of the Israel Post Co.), but greater in width (62mm instead of 60mm).
- 17.4.07: Memorial Day 2007 (1.50); Development Towns in Israel (2.50,3.30,7.30); Centenary of World Scouting (2.50); 120 years of Neve-Zedek – Souvenir Sheet containing 3 stamps (2.20, 3.30, 5.80).

### New Postal Stationery\*

- 25.7.06: Air Letter, Non-denominated, imprinted “stamp” (the Globe planar map) (now priced IS 1.50).
- 17.12.06: Postcard “for inland use only”, with imprinted stamp, the Zehavit (now priced IS 1.50).
- 26.1.07: Two envelopes “Post 24 hours”, much the same as issued before (in May, 2005) but differing in the design (the Logo of the new Israel Post Ltd). The same dimensions, the same imprinted stamps and the same duty.
- 1.2.07: Commemorative IRC (International Reply Coupon ) for 100 years since the introduction of IRC by the UPU, (Fig 75).



Figure 75

\* It is pity that frequently the Date of Issue, First Day, etc. of new postal stationery items are ambiguous and not considered accurately by the Postal Authorities (Services).

# תולדות הדואר של ארץ ישראל

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# תולדות הדואר של

## ארץ ישראל

### VI

### 105-106

בטאון רשמי של האגודה לתולדות  
הדואר של ארץ-ישראל

