

★ THE LEVANT ★
Journal of the Ottoman & Near East Philatelic Society

APS Affiliate 247

January 2017

Volume 9

number 1

President: Robert Stuchell

Editor: Richard Rose

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From the President

The Officers have designated Yavuz Corapcioglu's *Postal Rates of the Republic of Turkey 1920-1960* as the **Best Article** in 2016. The author receives a free membership for 2017.

Our next **Annual General Meeting** will be held at NAPEX in Falls Church, Va. on Saturday June 10, 2017. I hope that many members will be able to attend and exhibit. Contact me for details.

From Martin Lovegrove <martin@weatherings.fsnet.co.uk> we received this announcement: The **Stampex Spring Exhibition** will be held in London, 15-18 February 2017. Main subject is Ottoman Empire and collections invited from all around the world and will be judged by FIP/FEPA judges. Go to <www.abps.org.uk/Exhibiting/Exhibitions/National_Exhibitions/16-02-17_Spring-Stampex.xalter>

Our **new membership rates** go into effect this month. Please review the details on the next page.

Bob Stuchell

rstuchell@msn.com

image courtesy of Uzey Togay



THE OTTOMAN and NEAR EAST PHILATELIC SOCIETY

The Society was established in 2000 and is an affiliated organization with the American Philatelic Society. New members can join by sending a completed application plus appropriate dues to the Secretary (checks only in \$US payable to ONEPS). Applications can be obtained from the Secretary or downloaded from our website www.oneps.net. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the Treasurer. Dues are payable by Dec. 15 each year.

Membership dues are in two classes: A) paper Journal + on-line North America - USD \$20, all other countries \$25, € 25 or £20. B) on-line Journal only, USD \$12, € 11 or £ 9. If paying by check

In UK, send checks to Mr. Michael Fulford, Ruth Cottage, Main Street, East Langton, Leics. LE6 7TW. mikefulford@eastlangton.com>

In Turkey, send checks to our Representative in Turkey (see below).

Our Treasurer has set up a payment option using **Paypal**. If you use the "gift" feature, Paypal charges the sender a small fee and the Society receives the full amount. Otherwise Paypal charges 4.5% which is subtracted from the payment we receive. If paying by Paypal without using the gift option, please add \$1.50 for paper copy level or \$0.50 for online membership. Payments go to <oneps@tccincinnati.com>. Members should indicate their name in the "note" area and mention that the payment is for ONEPS dues. ONEPS now has a **eBay** account, which is another avenue for membership. Subscription to The Levant is included in the cost of membership. Members who join in mid-year pay the annual dues and receive all issues of The Levant plus any special issues for the calendar year. Changes of address, email, etc. are to be sent to the Secretary

SOCIETY OFFICERS

Elected Officers

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The Levant is published three times a year and mailed at First Class Rates in the USA and Canada, and at Airmail Rates to Overseas members. Advertising Policy: Members are allowed free ads in The Levant's classified section. Formal advertisements and notices are charged \$100 for a full page, \$50 for a half-page, \$30 for a quarter page. Camera-ready material is required. ONEPS reserves the right to reject and/or limit advertisements. Articles appearing in The Levant may be reprinted with the approval of the Editor, unless personal copyright by the author is claimed. Back issues can be obtained from the Editor for \$4.00 each, plus postage.

Articles, Letters, Reviews, Announcements, Questions, and Information related to any aspect of Ottoman, Turkish, and Near East philately should be sent to the Journal Editor, Dr. Richard Rose. The next issue will appear only when YOU write up something about your collecting interests, or encourage another collector to do so. We also reprint articles, so please bring to the Editor's attention any article which has appeared in another journal or magazine (permission will be sought).

The Internet ---- Log on to our Society ONEPS Web page <www.oneps.net> and find links to The Oriental Philatelic Association of London (OPAL), Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft Osmanisches Reich/Türkei (AROS), and Tughra Net, the online link among collectors.

ORIENT EXPRESS

The Orient Express was the name of a long-distance passenger train originally operated by the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits. Its route has changed many times, and several routes have in the past concurrently used the name, or slight variants thereof. Although the original Orient Express was simply a normal international railway service, the name has become synonymous with intrigue and luxury travel. The two city names most prominently associated with the Orient Express are Paris and Istanbul, the original endpoints of the service.



A cover dating from 1890. The front bears two pairs of 10 paras and Orient Express red railway label tied by "CONSTANTINOPLE GARE-SIRKEDJI" cancellations dated 13 February 1890 sent to Harburg Herr Gustav Meyer. This kind of red label usage is seen on the same person's letters and 1890 dates.



Registered cover bearing two 40 paras British Levant stamps correct rate and red Orient Express Label tied by "CONSTANTINOPLE BRITISH POST OFFICE" cancellation to Germany dated 6 April 1899. The British post offices were allowed after 1832 when a treaty was signed between the two countries. They remained open until 1914. This kind of red label usage is correct. The cover took 3 days to arrive in Munich. **Extremely rare.**

ROUMELIA ORIENTAL RAILWAYS (Chemins De Fer Orientaux)

BARON DE HIRSCH'S CONCESSION

After the Crimean war, the Ottomans started an internal debate about the opportunity of a rail link from Istanbul (then known as Constantinople) to Western Europe. Such a land bridge would greatly facilitate transportation of troops in this area. It would also facilitate trade between the Ottomans and Europe and would provide an alternative to the near monopoly of British sea transportation. On the other hand, this railway would also bring Austrian influence to the Empire's outer territories and perhaps encourage these territories to secede. In September 1871, following a government change, the new grand vizier Mahmud Nedim Pasha started to renegotiate the Hirsch concession. The aim of the Ottomans was to delay further line building and to reduce the drain on the budget caused by the first concession. Through completion to Vienna was no longer a priority. Under the new agreement signed on 18 May 1872, the operation of the railways was still conceded to the CO. However, The Ottoman government took charge of building all the new lines. The work that was ongoing at the time were now subcontracted to Hirsch. As a result, Hirsch was no longer responsible for the completion of the initial network. In 1874, Hirsch completed the work and the CO was now operating a network of about 1300 km comprising three distinct yet unconnected lines: Istanbul to Edirne, Plovdiv and Belovo, with branches to Yambol and Alexandropolis, Thessaloniki to Mitrovica, Dobrolin (Dobrljin) to Banja Luka. Upon the completion of the railway, Hirsch decided to retire from business altogether. Under the mediation of Oscar S. Strauss, the USA ambassador in Istanbul, Hirsch and the Ottoman government entered yet another round of negotiation to settle all the accounts, including the outstanding Ottoman claims towards guarantee funds held by Hirsch. An agreement was reached on February 25, 1889 and Hirsch repaid 60 million francs to the Ottomans. Having cleared all his liabilities, Hirsch started to plan his retirement after nearly twenty years of building railways in the Balkans. In April 1890, he sold the shares of the company to a group of German banks led by the Deutsche Bank.



Baron Moritz von
Hirsch auf Gereuth

KARABOUNAR



Postcard sent from Karapounar to Adrianople (Edirne) during EASTERN ROUMELIA district of Ottoman Empire (1880-1885) with 20 paras Eastern Roumelia stamp and blue "KARAPOUNAR *C.O*" (Chemin de Fer Oriental) railway seal dated 29 April 1884. The arrival date is illegible. The linear KARABOUNAR railway cancellation is on the reverse.

Unique



Dated 11.01.1884, an entire letter sent from Edirne to Haskovo bearing the correct railway folded letter rate (20 paras) and tied by an Arabic double-circle 'Edirne' cancellation with a very rare Cyrillic "ROUMELIAN POST TRAIN I-II" and "ROUMELIA ORIENTALE-DU TRAIN" railway cancellations as the letter was carried by train.



17.05.1880 An entire letter sent from Timurtaş to Haskovo bearing on reverse 20 paras+1 piastre in train rate used and tied by Arabic negative blue "TIMURTASH POST OFFICE" seal and Cyrillic "EAST ROUMELIAN POST FROM TRAIN" cancellation.



Official postage free cover sent from Tirnova to Loule-Bourgas dated 30 August 1898 displaying circular "TIRNOVA C.O." (Chemin de Fer Oriental) railway station cancellation and the "CONSTANTINOPLE C.O." railway transit seal. Unique



Registered cover sent from Timurtas (Demirtache) to Istanbul tied by Arabic negative green "TIMURTASH POST OFFICE" cancellation. The correct registered letter rate of 2.5 piastres was used. Value declaration is seen on the cover.



Cover sent from Filibe to Pera, Constantinople with double 20 paras stamps registered railway rate, tied by ISTOCH RUMELIIS POSCHTA OT VLAKAT 1; EAST ROUMELIAN POST FROM TRAIN 1.



Dated March 1884, a semi-folded cover sent from Philippopoli to Constantinople with 10 paras stamp, tied by ISTOCH RUMELIIS POSCHTA OT VLAKAT 2; EAST ROUMELIAN POST FROM TRAIN 2.



1898 official postage free cover sent from Demotica to Istanbul showing circular "DEMOTICA "C.O." (Chemin de Fer Oriental) railway station cancellation. Unique

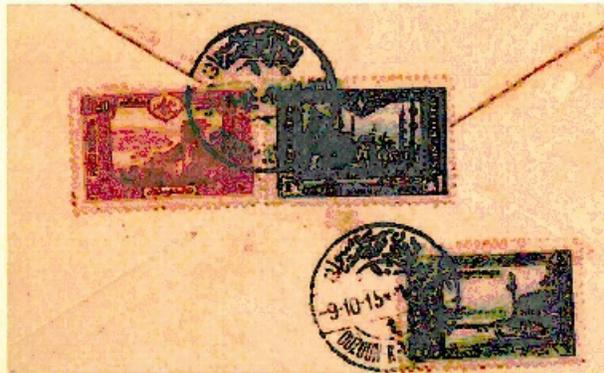
According to our records, these types of cancellations were used between 1874-1906. On cover; Mr. Heinz Honorat was a German railway supervisory and worked on this line for a long period.



Demotica linear and C.O. star and crescent type cancellation noted on railway Chemins De Fer De La Turquie D'Europe document and on bill of loading document. The document is dated 26 June 1878 and Station San Stefano (Suburban railway station at Istanbul) and Class III permission is noted. Unique



Correct 20 paras rate postal stationary sent from Cesir Ergene to Istamboul dated 5 March 1896 with black negative cachet of "CESIR ERGENE STATION POST OFFICER". It was sent from Cesir Ergene to Istanbul within two days.Unique



09.10.1915 date marked 1 kuruş Ottoman postal stationary plus 10 paras+10 paras+20 paras+1 kuruş totalling 3 kuruş postal rate sent via registered post tied by bilingual UZUNKÖPRÜ İSTASYONU Ouzoun-Keupru (Gare) cancellation. Also all Arabic negative Uzunköprü Gare censorship seal. Unique.

The 1892 Imprimé Overprints

Otto Graf

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The German humorist Karl Valentin once said: "everything has been said, just not by everybody." So I would like to come back to the 1892 Imprimé overprints, because even if no new information has come up, some illustrations have. I hope these will help future collectors of this issue to have an easier approach than collectors of the past.

The Michel catalogue has a very profound footnote to this issue which I will use as a compass to address the different aspects: "Bei echten Aufdrucken fehlt immer der rechte Rahmen, meist sind sie nur teilweise abgeschlagen. Gut zentrierte, saubere Aufdrucke bis 100% Aufschlag. Von MiNr. 74 und 75 wenige Stücke postalisch verwendet, höhere Werte mit zeitgerechten Gefälligkeitsstempeln werten wie ungebrauchte Stücke; es existiert ein überfrankierter Brief mit MiNr. 74 - 78, gestempelt Konstantinopel 2. August 1892. Aufdrucke auf MiNr. 70b, auf ungezähnten Marken und farbige Aufdrucke immer falsch."

The stamps discussed here are the 1891 overprints (Sc. P10-14, SG N132-139, Mi.64-68) on the UPU or Empire series, and the 1892 overprints (Sc. P25-29, SG N150-154, Mi 74-78) on the Coat of Arms series.

Let's begin with Michel's statement that on genuine overprints the right frame is always missing and that the overprint is mostly struck partly. Well-centered, clean overprints value up to 100 per cent more. As has been extensively written about, the Imprimé overprint was carried out with a boxwood handstamp. Boxwood in Turkish *şimşir ağacı*, which is also used for kitchen utensils, e.g. spoons, is a very fine grained wood, that allows for delicate carving. So it was a natural choice for handstamps, before the introduction of rubber. But as wood can chip and break, this is exactly what happened during use on the 1891 UPU (or Empire) issue. The right side of the frame broke away. Therefore all genuine overprints on the 1892 Arms issue show the broken frame.



But the late printings on the UPU issue also show this broken frame. There was only one handstamp used. So there are no varieties, rather signs of use on the one handstamp. In a recent Cherrystone sale, which I unfortunately missed, a major collection of the Imprimé handstamps was offered, including a very nice block with broken frame on the UPU as well as a nice block of the 1892 Arms issue. I have never seen a forgery that copied the broken frame, so this is a very safe way to recognize the genuine Imprimé overprints on the 1892 Arms issue.

Figure 1: UPU block with broken frame (Cherrystone auction)

Figure 2: Coat of Arms block with broken frame (Cherrystone auction)

Apart from the 10 and 20 para values, few stamps are postally used; the higher value stamps were cancelled to order at the time and are valued like mint stamps. This is not really the full story unfortunately. For obvious reasons the 10 Para value was the most used stamp for printed matter, as it was the rate for a single item. But packages of newspapers were sent into the country for local distribution which, being heavier, required higher values were used. Some wrappers of the 1891 issue survived, but to date I have not seen any proper usage of the 1892 Imprimé issue on cover or wrapper for that matter. But obviously these stamps were also used to send printed matter, be it single newspapers or newspaper packages.

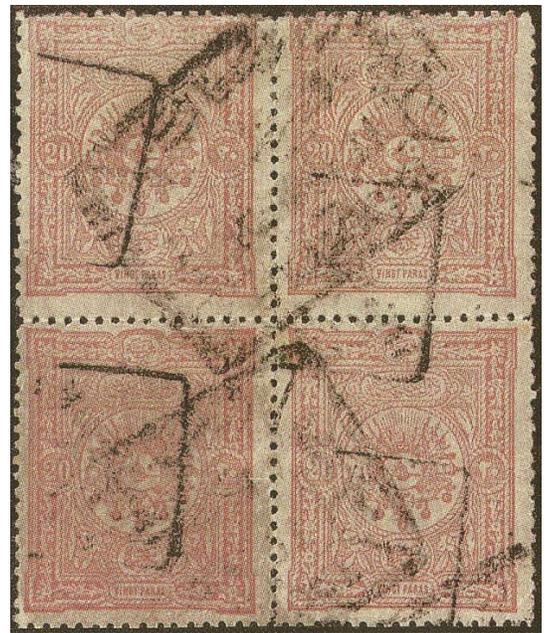


As properly printed newspaper stamps were available by March of 1894, the 1892 Imprimé issue was used for a considerably shorter time than the 1891 Imprimés. Therefore there are fewer used stamps to be found. But they were definitely also used on newspaper packages. The biggest known unit of the 10 Para Imprimé stamp is a block of eight. The biggest known unit of the 20 Para Imprimé stamp is a block of four. Both had a franking value of 2 Piasters. Therefore one could expect that properly used 1 Piaster and 2 Piaster stamps can be found. And of course it cannot be excluded that also some of the 5 Piaster stamps were postally used.



Figure 3: Used block of eight of 10 Para Coat of Arms = 2 Piaster postage (Karamitsos and Isfila auctions; unique item)

Figure 4: Used block of four of 20 Para Coat of Arms = 2 Piaster postage (Isfila auction)



Recently I purchased a used set of the 1892 Imprimé stamps. Most were obvious forgeries, but the 1 Piaster stamp had a broken framethe overprint. Checking it with genuine stamps I could not find anything wrong with the overprint, so I can affirm that the 1 Piaster stamp has a genuine overprint and is postally used. It shows the same type of cancellor to be found on many other genuine stamps. This find is completely in line with the theoretical argument above.



Figure 5: Postally used 1 Piaster Coat of Arms (Graf collection)

Michel values the 1 and 2 Piaster stamps used as "cancelled to order" (CTO) with the same value as mint stamps. To date I have not seen any CTO stamps of this issue (with the exception of the set cover I will discuss below) In over twenty years of collecting these stamps, all used 1 and 2 Piaster stamps – with the exception of this/e 1 Piaster (Fig. 5) and the stamps on the set cover (Fig. 6) – have been forgeries..

Figure 6: Cover with full set of Coat of Arms Imprimé (Cherrystone Auction)

An overpaid cover with all values from 10 Para to 5 Piaster exists, cancelled Stamboul and dated 2 August 1892. I knew of this item for over twenty years, but I had never seen this cover and did not expect to see it. However, it was sold at the Cherrystone auction already mentioned, with an illustration of this beauty. As long as no wrapper with an 1892 Imprimé stamp comes up, this is the only cover known from this issue.



Michel concludes that overprints on the rose coloured 20 Para, on imperforated stamps and coloured overprints are always forgeries. Here everything is said and I do not have to add anything.

* * * * *

The Editor has found these similar items from a recent Schuyler-Rumsey sale:



First Ottoman International Mail

Robert Stuchell

< rstuchell@msn.com >

In September, 2016 I received an email from Mr. Zvi Aloni who is researching the date of the first Ottoman international mail service. He found a 2003 Turkish M.A. paper which states that international air mail began on 15 September 1876. I then contacted Dr. Andreas Birken who replied :

“The U.P.U. treaty was signed 9 October 1874 and came into force on 1 July 1875. Up to that date, letters to foreign countries had to be sent through the foreign Levant post offices. Ottoman stamps could only frank mail to the frontiers. From 1 July 1875 it was theoretically possible to send foreign mail via the Ottoman post, but the Ottoman post office was not yet prepared for this”.

As was required by the UPU, the first bilingual stamps (overprints on Duloz) were issued 13 January 1876 but were apparently not used on international mail right away. The second bilingual stamps (Scott type A7) were issued 27 September 1876 (Gregorian calendar date) and were intended for use to countries belonging to the UPU. This issue date coincides closely with the 15 September date given in the M.A. paper. In fact there is no difference if 15 September is a Julian calendar date.

Mr. Aloni sent a picture of what he believes is the earliest recorded international Turkish cover . It was posted to England on 19 October 1876. If anyone has an earlier cover, please contact Mr. Aloni directly at zaloni@gmail.com with a copy to me.



1876 (19 October) cover to London franked with 50pa. U.P.U countries postal rate and tied by Constantinople dispatch and red London arrival date stamps.

Earliest recorded cover

Cover with Hand-Made Registration Label

Robert Stuchell

< rstuchell@msn.com >

I recently purchased a registered cover from Camaran (Yemen) to Paris, canceled 13 (?) October 1900. When I received it I was very surprised to see that the “UPU – R” registration marking had been drawn or more likely traced on thin paper and then cut to shape and glued to the cover. The cover shows a Turkish negative seal reading *Taahutlu Olunmushtur* (registration has been done) with *numero 94* in Turkish manuscript alongside. Also, *R No. 94* is written at upper left. The postal clerk may have thought that he needed to include a UPU-R label because the letter was going abroad. *No.*

94 is written in red ink at the bottom of the label, in the same hand as the writing in the upper left corner. Perhaps the clerk had an example of such a marking but no hand stamp itself and so attempted to reproduce the label.

The front and back sides of the cover.



A cover with this standard type of registration marking is illustrated for comparison.

Has anyone seen a similar label? Comments from readers would be appreciated.



MEMBER NOTICES

My **Overland Mail Baghdad-Haifa** Exhibit received a Gold Medal plus Special Award (88 points) at a recent German stamp show. This exhibit can be viewed at the "Exhibit Online" site of the German Philatelic Society: < www.exponate-online.de/e_verteiler.asp > and you can view the exhibit itself at < www.exponate-online.de/e_exponat.asp?a=1&e=144 >

I will purchase any kind of items related this topic and Iraqi Railway stamps.

Rainer Fuchs, Am Burkardstuhl 33, 97267, Himmelstadt, Germany. < rainer@fuchs-online.com >

Yemen & Persia. Will purchase philatelic material from Yemen up to around 1950: stamps, covers, postal and official documents, revenues. Will also purchase Persia/Iran covers & ppc's. Bjorn Sohrn. < bjornsohrne@gmail.com >

Navy League Revenues. Will buy perforated color essays, color essays, Immigration (red overprint) and Matches (black overprint), on documents, etc. Send description or images to Rolfe Smith. < xbow2@mac.com >

WANT LISTS Filled: **Ottoman, Turkish Republic, & North Cyprus.** Very reasonable prices. Rolfe Smith, 705 SE Sandia Drive, Port St. Lucie, Florida. 34983 USA. < xbow2@mac.com >

TRADE my **Middle East & North Africa** duplicate stamps for yours. Richard T. Barnes, 11715 - 123rd St. NW, Edmonton, Alberta, T5M 0G8 Canada. < rtbarnes@shaw.ca >

Wanted: **Russian perfins.** Even if you have only one Russian perfin to offer, consider trading it with me. I have perfins of many countries for trade, incl. China, Japan, and UK. Dick Scheper, Hogeland 1, 2264 JX.

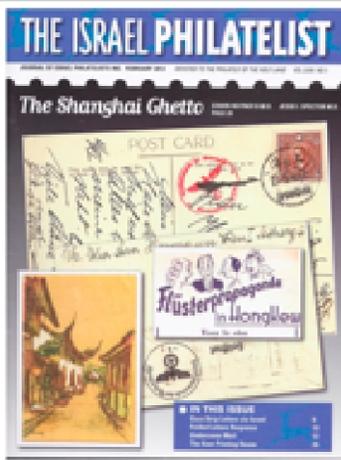
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Anatolian Government/ Turkey-in-Asia.

Will purchase postal material sent abroad from the Nationalist zone.

< kemalgiray@gmail.com >



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The Middle East Philatelic Bulletin 4

(Winter 2016)

..... available for free download:

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

Contents include: Two Rare Ottoman Holy Land Covers at Auction, Post for Baron Krobotin, Unknown Ottoman Censor Marks, Overland Mail Baghdad-Haifa Route Instruction Label, The 'one & only' Postcard of Jordan, Prisoners of War Censorship Middle East, World Cultural Heritage Destroyed: Yemen. Reviews: Guide To The Postal Stationery of Iraq (Rubec/Al-Manaseer) and Foreign Post Offices in Palestine 1852-1914 (Itamar Karpovsky). In Queries & Research Notes: Uprating of International Reply Cards, Le Timbre Levantin, Iraqi and Jordanian Occupation of Tulkarm 1948/49. Archive Section: Postal History and Related Notices from the Official Gazettes for Palestine 1925.

**POSTAL RATES
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
1920-1960**



Opening of the Grand National Assembly *Meclis* in Ankara, 23 April 1920.
The beginning of a new country, the Republic of Turkey.

M. Yavuz Corapcioglu, Ph.D.
ycorapcioglu@gmail.com

ONEPS recently published this 24 page study **Postal Rates of The Republic of Turkey 1920-1960**. Copies are available for \$8 in North America and \$10 to all other countries, post paid. If interested, please contact our Secretary, Mr. Rolfe Smith.