

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS

TURKISH POST

Holy Land postal materials prior to the date 1914 are normally referred to by the term FORERUNNER. During the 19th century and up to 1918 the country was part of the Turkish (Ottoman) Empire. Forerunners during this time include not only the Turkish post offices in fifty locations across the country, but also the offices of some of the major European nations whose citizens in business or visiting Palestine, preferred their mail to be carried by their own postal administrations. This was mainly because the Turkish government was corrupt and inefficient. French, German, Italian, Russian, and Austrian governments were given extraterritorial rights to establish post offices under capitulation treaties with the Turkish government. These European post offices used their own stamps and postal stationery, or overprinted stamps for offices in the Turkish Empire (Levant). They existed until Turkey entered World War One in 1914.



Turkey - Postal card issue of 1901 with JERUSALEM postmark dated 10/9/01 used locally in Jerusalem.

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS
TURKISH POST



Turkey - issue of 1913 with JERUSALEM postmark dated 4/27/13 on piece.



Turkey - issue of 1914 with JAFFA postmark and partial censor's postmark on piece.



Turkey - issue of 1908 with two CAIFFA (Haifa) postmarks on piece.

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS
TURKISH POST



Turkey - issue of 1892-1898 with BUR. AMB JERUSALEM-JAFFA railway postmark dated Dec. 4, 1898.



Turkey - issue of 1914 with SAFED postmark.



Turkey - issue of 1914 on piece with JERUSALEM postmark dated 3/29/14.

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS AUSTRIAN POST

The most important of all the powers which maintained postal services in Palestine was Austria. It was the most widely used service. The earliest postal service from Austria to the Middle East was provided by the Austrian Lloyd Steam Navigation Company. Starting in 1854, steamers of the Austrian Lloyd picked up mail at Jaffa. Mail was brought there from Jerusalem by courier or coach. The exact dates of the opening of the various Austrian post offices are not known. It is known that the Jaffa post office was opened sometime in 1854, as was a post office in Haifa. The Jerusalem post office was opened sometime later in 1859. These offices were in existence for quite some time, and were all closed at the outbreak of World War I. A large number of cancelling devices were in use during the existence of the Austrian postal services. The post office in Jerusalem had the largest number of different types of date stamps. This is attributed to the large amount of mail processed. The use of postage stamps on Austrian mail in Palestine was started in April 1864. The first stamps used were the Austrian Lombardy-Venetia issues of 1863 and 1864. These were replaced in June 1867 by the Austrian Offices in the Turkish Empire stamps and stationery. Austrian stamps and stationery issued for use in Crete were also valid for postage in Palestine.

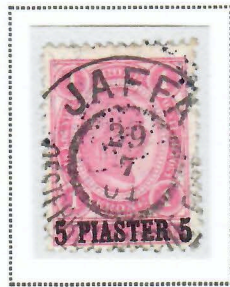


Austria Lombardy-Venetia issue of 1863 with GERUSALEMME (Jerusalem) postmark.



Austria - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1867 with GERUSALEMME postmarks.

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS
AUSTRIAN POST



Austria - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1900 with JAFFA postmark dated 7/29/01.



Austria - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1908 with JERUSALEM postmarks.

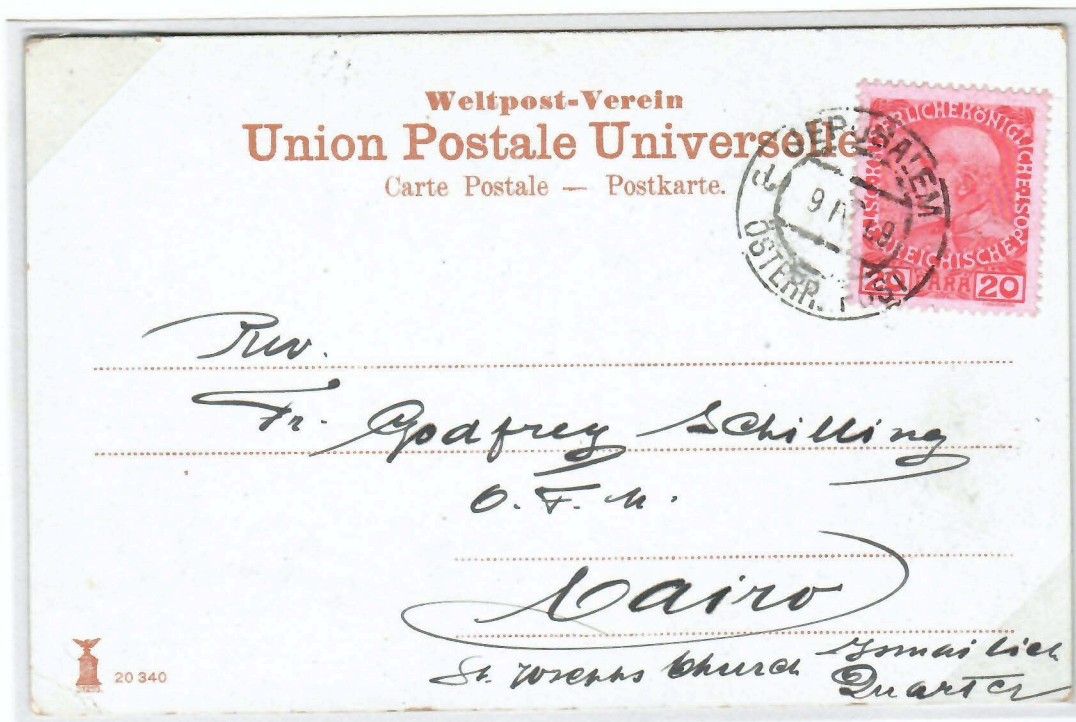


Austria - Offices in Crete issue of 1908 with two CAIFA (Haifa) postmarks on piece.

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS
AUSTRIAN POST



Austria - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1890 - 1892 postmarked with bright purple JERUSALEM cancel dated 12/25/99 and WIEN, Austria receiving mark.



Austria - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1908 on picture postcard postmarked with JERUSALEM cancel dated 4/9/09 to Cairo, Egypt.

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS
AUSTRIAN POST



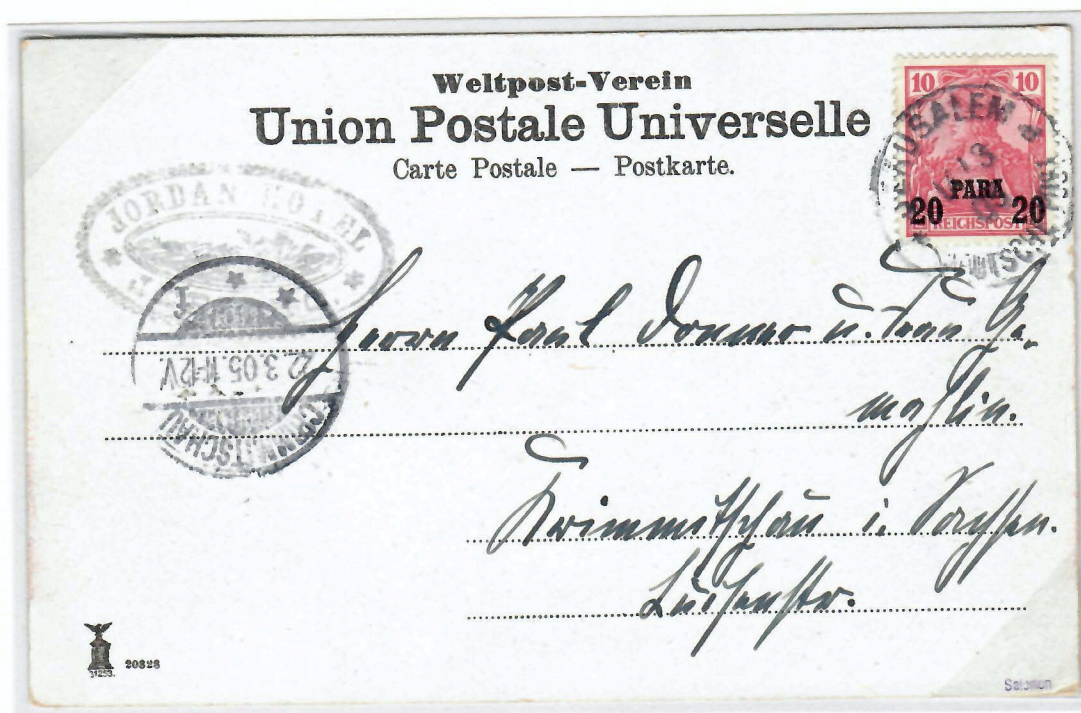
Austria - Offices in the Turkish Empire postal card issue of 1888 with JAFFA postmark and STUTTGART receiving mark. Dated on reverse 3/29/90.



Austria - Offices in Crete (50 Centimes) and Offices in the Turkish Empire (2 Piaster) issue of 1908 with JAFFA postmarks (2-types).

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS
GERMAN POST

The German Postal Service in Palestine operated offices in Jaffa and Jerusalem. The establishment of postal service coincided with the visit of the Kaiser Wilhelm II to the Holy Land in 1898. The post office in Jaffa was opened on October 1, 1898 during the Kaiser's visit and the office in Jerusalem was opened on March 1, 1900. Both of these offices were in operation until September 30, 1914 at which time they were closed because of World War I. Because of the heavier postal load at the Jerusalem Post Office a greater variety of cancels were issued there. Three main types of cancels were used in Jerusalem during those 14 years. A single circle cancellation was introduced on the opening day, and remained in use until the post office was closed. This cancellation is known with and without an oblique stroke between the day and month. A second single circle cancellation with an additional letter "a" on the right hand side of the cancel was used during the same period. A Swiss type cancellation was introduced in February 1907 and, for at least six months, the hour of posting was added to the date. After August 1907, this cancellation remained in use until Sept. 30, 1914 without the hour of posting. The stamps used in these post offices most frequently were the German Offices in the Turkish Empire stamps; which were the regular issues of Germany surcharged in Para and Centimes. Also in use was a good deal of postal stationery which also was regular issue surcharged in Para and Centimes.



Germany - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1903-1905 on picture postcard postmarked with JERUSALEM cancel dated 3/14/05 and CRIMMITSCHAU receiving mark dated 3/22/05.

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS GERMAN POST

From October 1, 1898 to September 30, 1914 two types of cancellations were used in the German post office in Jaffa. A single circle cancellation and a double circle cancellation. Both types of postmarks are known with and without the oblique stroke between the figures of the day and month. The single circle postmark was used in Jaffa for the entire sixteen years of operation of the post office. The double circle postmark was introduced in 1906, and it remained in use until the German post offices in the Holy Land were closed down.



Germany - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1900 (No bar across top of letter "A" in surcharge and unwatermarked) with JAFFA single circle postmarks.



Germany - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1903-1905 (Bar across top of letter "A" in surcharge) with JAFFA single circle postmarks (oblique stroke between day and month on left stamp and without stroke on right stamp).



Germany - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1907-1912 (diamond watermark) with JAFFA double circle postmark dated 3/25/08.

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS FRENCH POST

The French maintained three post offices in Palestine; Jaffa, Jerusalem, and Haifa. The French post office in Jaffa was opened during 1852. Prior to that time the French consular agent in Jaffa forwarded mail via Beyrouth to its destination. The official post office in Jerusalem was opened during the late summer of 1900. A double ring cancel was put into use at that time. The inner ring was interrupted and the obliterator was inscribed "JERUSALEM" at the top and "PALESTINE" at the bottom. The month was set in letters and the year was indicated by its last two digits. The French Post Office at Haifa was opened during 1906. Its sole date stamp was a single interrupted ring type. The cancel read "CAIFFA" at the top and "SYRIE" at the bottom. This cancel was in use until the office closed in 1914. The postage stamps used in those offices included all of the regular stamps of France in use until 1885. Then they were replaced with stamps designated for use in the Levant. French Postal Stationery was used until 1902/03 when it too was replaced with material especially issued for French Offices in the Levant.

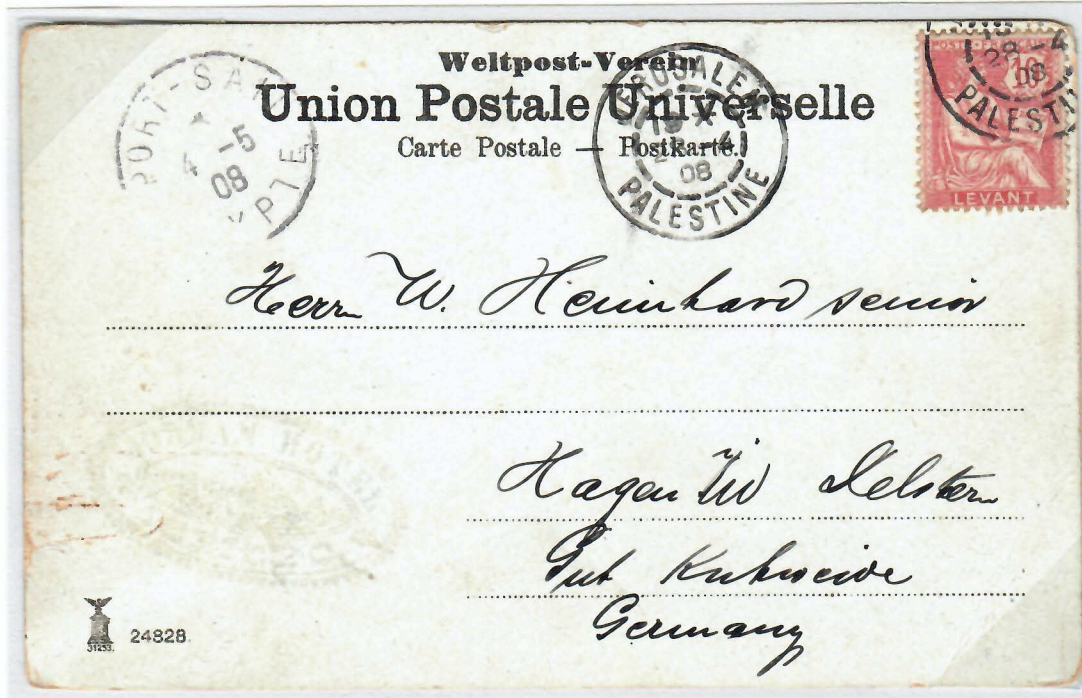


France - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1902-1907 with JAFFA postmark.



France - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1902-1907 with JERUSALEM postmarks.

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS
FRENCH POST



France - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1902-1907 on picture postcard postmarked with JERUSALEM cancels dated 4/28/08 to Germany and with transit postmark of Port-Said, Egypt dated 5/4/08.



France - Offices in the Turkish Empire postal stationery envelope issue of 1908 with JERUSALEM postmark to Paris, France.

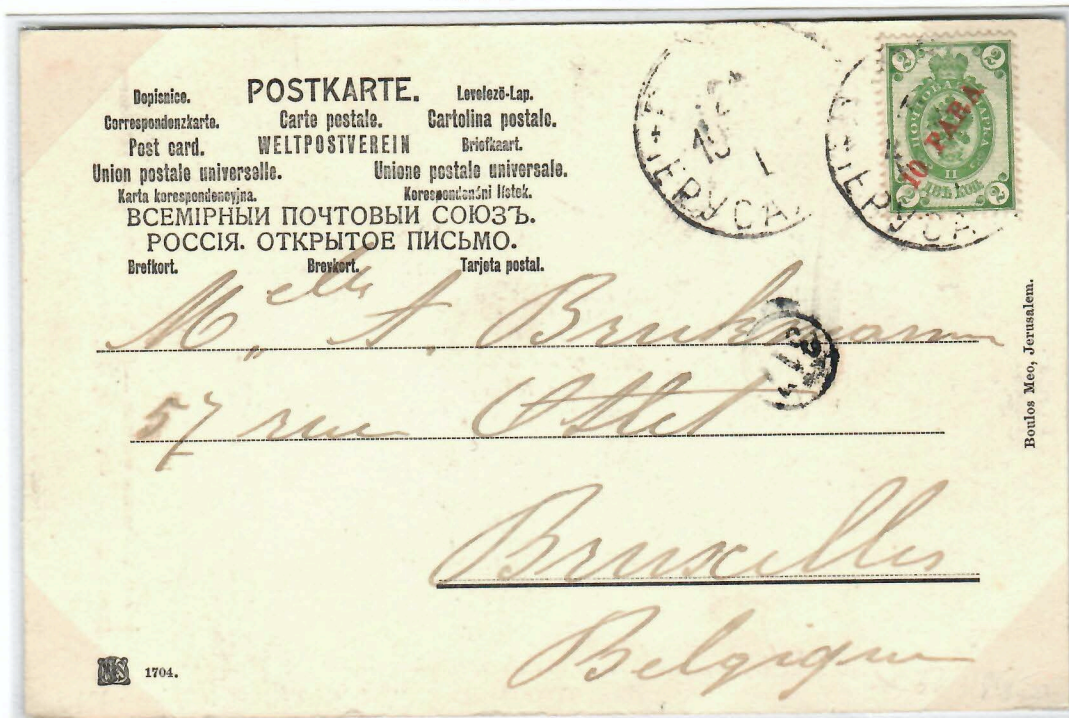
PALESTINE FORERUNNERS RUSSIAN POST

Russian post offices were opened in Jaffa in 1868. Other Russian post offices were in existence in Acre and Haifa as far back as 1860. Postmarks of the Russian post are called "ROPIT" because they are formed by the initials of the Russian designation for the "Russian Company for Steam Shipping And Trade". From the very beginning, the agencies of ROPIT and the ships operated by it undertook the forwarding of all mail entrusted to their care. The Russian postal administration recognized the reliability of this service, and from 1862 to 1864, the agencies of ROPIT acted as the official postal branches of the Imperial Russian postal administration. In 1867 Russian post offices in the Turkish Empire (Levant) were turned over to ROPIT for good. The ROPIT post office in Jerusalem was opened in August of 1901 and closed on Oct. 1, 1914. The postage stamps used were the Russian Levant issues, and the most interesting of these are the 1909 issues which were overprinted JAFFA and Jerusalem for use in those cities.



Russia - Offices in the Turkish Empire UPU postal card issue postmarked twice with ROPIT Jaffa cancellations dated December 1900 to Switzerland with BERN receiving mark. The ROPIT postmarks consist of a double circle with the initials of the Russian Company for Steam Shipping and Trade in Russian at the top of the circle, Jaffa in Russian letters at the bottom of the circle, and the date with three lines in the center of the circles.

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS
RUSSIAN POST



Russia - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1903-1905 on picture postcard postmarked twice with ROPIT Jerusalem cancellations to Brussels, Belgium. Dated 1/2/05 on reverse. The postmarks consist of a single circle with the initials of the Russian Company for Steam Shipping and Trade (ROPIT) at the top of the circle in Russian, Jerusalem in Russian letters at the bottom of the circle, and the date with three lines in the center of the circle.



Russia - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1909-1910 with "Jaffa" overprint and "ROPIT" Jaffa postmarks.



Russia - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1909-1910 with "Jerusalem" overprint and "ROPIT" Jerusalem postmarks.

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS ITALIAN POST

The last of the European powers to establish post offices in the Turkish Empire was Italy. The Italian post in Jerusalem was established on June 1, 1908. Due to the Balkan War, the post office had to temporarily close down on October 1, 1911. It reopened on Dec. 1, 1912 and remained in use until September 30, 1914. The Italian post office in Jerusalem was not a necessity, because the existing post offices of the other European countries established there were more than sufficient to handle the needs of the local population, tourists, and pilgrims to the Holy Land. But for Italy, it was a question of prestige to range equally with the big powers of pre-World War 1 days. The stamps used by the Italian Post Office in Jerusalem fall into several categories. In the initial period of service, regular Italian stamps were used; these were replaced by the Italian Levant issues. The Levant stamps were surcharged with Turkish values. The last type of stamps appeared in February 1909; these were overprinted GERUSALEMME and surcharged with Turkish values. Postal stationery items included regular Italian postcards surcharged "20 para" and the same card overprinted Gerusalemme above the stamp and "20 para 20" below the stamp.



Italy - Offices in the Turkish Empire postal card issue of 1908 postmarked twice with GERUSALEMME (Jerusalem) cancellations to Paris, France dated 11/27/08. The postmarks consist of a single circle with the words GERUSALEMME and (UFF. POSTALE ITALIANO) separated by two small square dots.

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS
ITALIAN POST



Italy - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1908 on picture postcard postmarked with GERUSALEMME (Jerusalem) squared circle cancellation to Rome. The postmark consists of a single circle with curved lines forming a square, the words GERUSALEMME and UFF. POSTALE ITALIANO separated by two five pointed stars, and the date with three lines in the center of the circle.

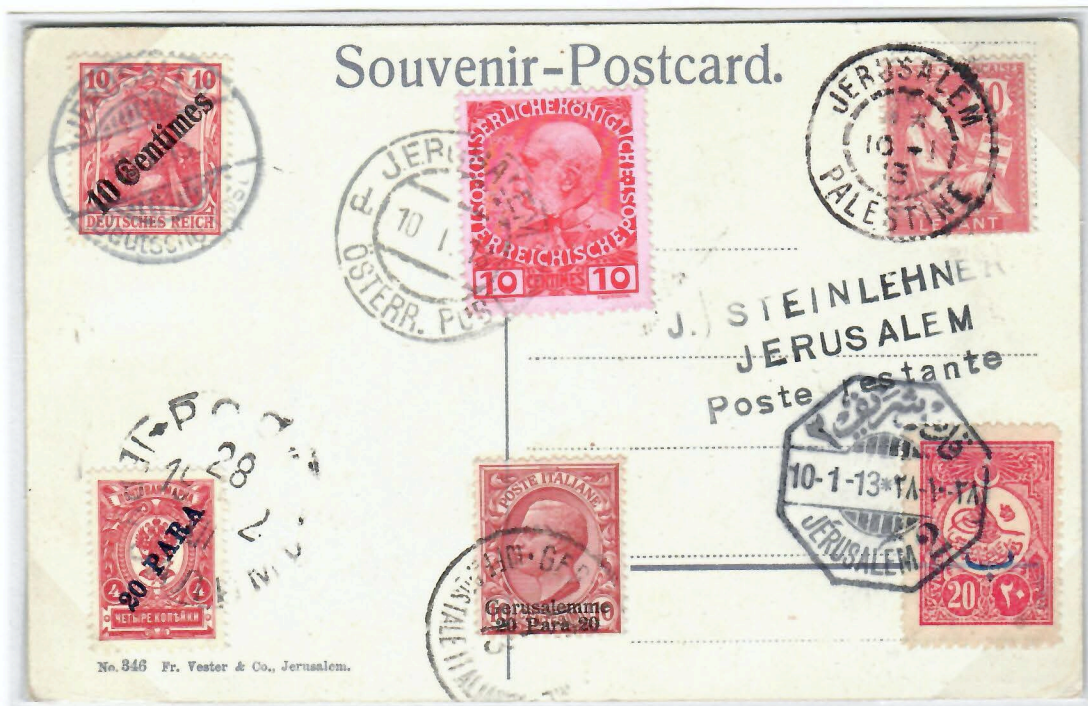


Italy - Offices in the Turkish Empire issue of 1908 with GERUSALEMME (Jerusalem) single circle cancellation.

PALESTINE FORERUNNERS
COMBINED USAGES



JERUSALEM receiving postmarks of Russian, German, and French post offices in the Holy Land on a French Post Offices in Egypt picture postcard with French Port Said stamp and originating postmark dated 4/19/03.



All European post offices in the Holy Land - with appropriate stamps of Germany, Austria, France, Russia, and Italy Offices in the Turkish Empire, and Turkey with JERUSALEM postmarks dated 1/10/13 on a contrived philatelic souvenir picture postcard.