

British Palestine: The Civil Administration

This exhibit surveys the breadth of postal history found under the British Civil Government of Palestine. This was a period of tremendous growth, but also turmoil from internal and external forces. After conquest of Palestine from the Ottoman Turks, the British Military turned over rule to a Mandate Civil Administration, beginning July 1, 1920. This Mandate for Palestine was later formalized by the League of Nations on September 29, 1923. The Mandate ended with the withdrawal of British Forces, and the State of Israel's Independence, on May 15, 1948.

The Mandate Palestine Post and Telegraph took over government/civilian mail services from the Military's Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (OETA). Initially, cancellation devices were modified to delete references to military governance (i.e. OETA, OET), and were then reused. Military registration labels were replaced by Mandate labels with city/town names, but with rare exceptions improvised measures were utilized in the transition. The Military Administration's Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) adhesive design in use was overprinted by a trilingual overprint (Arabic, English, and Hebrew), in successive iterations, until replaced by the Pictorials. The Mandate postal services were developed far beyond those of the preceding Ottoman and Military Administration periods, with new offices throughout Palestine, and new postal services to augment communication, the most important being commercial air mail.

Shown in this exhibit are all important Mandate services, which highlight many rarities of the period. The most significant item is the highest known franking of the Palestine Mandate. This recent discovery represents an extreme multiple over the previously recorded highest franking. Other scarcities include: temporary Jerusalem registry handstamps; a unique Jerusalem manuscript registry; Jerusalem and an unrecorded Haifa prepaid marking(s); Narrow Setting uses: Talavera Barracks postmark; Jerusalem-Lydda Traveling Post Office postmark, registered small town postmarks; the COD procedure; first dues uses; the unique use of Pictorials for taxation; second and third Provisional Registered Envelopes; first Postal Card; first Letter Card; two of the three earliest known censored incoming covers to Palestine in World War II are shown (both previously unrecorded); catapult and LZ-127 Zeppelin Orient Flight Tel Aviv wild drop and South American mail; experimental internal air mail between Haifa-Tel Aviv via Palestine Airways. The chaotic period in the months prior to the British withdrawal is also represented, including scarce: combined courier and post office handling for Jerusalem 1948 siege mail; use of monetized charity labels or local overprints (i.e. Affula) on Mandate stamps, for locally provided services; and last, post-Mandate uses of Mandate materials is highlighted by a forced registered Israeli use of Mandate Officially Sealed labels on a much traveled 1949 Ethiopian Air Lines cover.

Exhibit Plan

1. Early Civil Administration (7/20 – 9/23)
 - 1.1 Uses of Military period adhesives, modified devices, and improvised markings
 - 1.2 First local overprint, Jerusalem I
 - 1.3 Stamp shortages (9/20)
 - 1.4 Additional local overprints: Jerusalem II, The Narrow Setting, and Jerusalem III
 - 1.5 London I and II overprints
2. The (Ratified) Mandate for Palestine (9/23 – 5/48)
 - 2.1 The Pictorial adhesives
 - 2.2 Big city postmarks
 - 2.3 Small town postmarks
 - 2.4 Traveling Post Offices
 - 2.5 Rates and Registry
 - 2.6 Unusual Procedures
 - 2.7 Taxed mail
 - 2.8 Overland and sea mail
 - 2.9 Air Mail (RAF, major carriers, Zeppelin, Catapult, Internal Air Mail)
 - 2.10 Government/Official Mail
 - 2.11 Military mail (Arab disturbances, World War II Forces)
 - 2.12 World War II censorship of civilian and internee mail
3. End of the Mandate (10/47 – 5/48)
 - 3.1 Disruption of services
 - 3.2 Irregular usages and improvised adhesives ("Second Interim" period)
4. Reuses of Mandate materials (beyond 5/48)
 - 4.1 Arab
 - 4.2 Israeli

Informational Sources

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Abbreviations

(e)= certificate; 1 Piastre = 1 Pi = 10 millimes= 10m

+++++Scarcest items are matted+++++