

CONSTANTA - ALEXANDRIA – CONSTANTA 1907 - 1939
Serviciul Maritim Roman (S.M.R.) - (Romanian Maritime Service)

The S.M.R. was established 7 June 1888, as a department of the Romanian Transports Ministry, to provide sea transport from Constanta, to and from the Levant, carrying general cargo, maritime mail and passengers. Over the years, the following five steamships served on this line : Romania, Imperatul Trajan, Dacia, Regele Carol I and, Pricipesa Maria.

The first Constanta to Constantinople service was on 26 September 1895. It was extended to Piraeus in May 1897 and then to Alexandria in June 1899. Haifa was added in May 1924 and Beirut in 1933. The route was then as follows : Constanta-Istanbul-Piraeus-Beirut-Haifa-Alexandria-Piraeus-Istanbul-Constanta. On 27 September 1914, at the onset of World War I. the Black sea entrance to the Bosphorus was mined by the Russian fleet and the service to the Levant suspended until November 1921. Except for minor interruptions, it continued, mostly on a weekly sailing basis, until the beginning of World War II.

Mail carried by S.M.R. ships was either regular post office mail, or mail taken to the company's offices to be carried by the next departing ship, or passenger "on board" mail. From 30 December 1906, a postal clerk went on each ship and mail received a postmark "Constanta-Alexandria" or "Alexandria-Constanta", depending on the direction of the ship. Different types of hand stamps were used over the years, sometimes for overlapping periods. No postmarks are recorded from 27 September 1914 until 9 October 1924. Mail posted on board, franked with Romanian stamps, was treated as internal mail.

This exhibit shows chronologically to the date of issue of postmarks, mail carried by the Constanta-Alexandria-Constanta S.M.R. maritime service. from 1907 to 1939, bearing the various postmark types in use during this period.

Bibliography : "Posta Maritima in Romania" by Eng. Calin Marinescu. Also exhibitor's research uncovered postmarks with new earliest and last dates of use (Pages 7,8,9); errors of direction (Pages 6,8,9): error of postmark date (Page 15) and, mixed franking (Page 16).

Items of particular philatelic importance are highlighted by a red mat.

FLAG OF THE SERVICIUL MARITIM ROMAN (S.M.R.)



Description : Blue with a red canton bearing yellow letters S.M.R. with an emblem near the fly edge, consisting of a crowned yellow anchor with a white funnel at top and a narrow black band all around. (Ref. Brown's Flags and Funnels).

1907 - CONSTANTA - ALEXANDRIA



TYPE I CANCEL

In use from 30 December 1906 to 26 September 1914

OTTOMAN MAIL TO EGYPT

During 1907, the frequency of sailings was generally weekly, except for the period 12 to 25 July, when the Ottoman government imposed a quarantine in Constantinople. Ships had to be diverted to Smyrna and only one sailing took place during this fortnight.



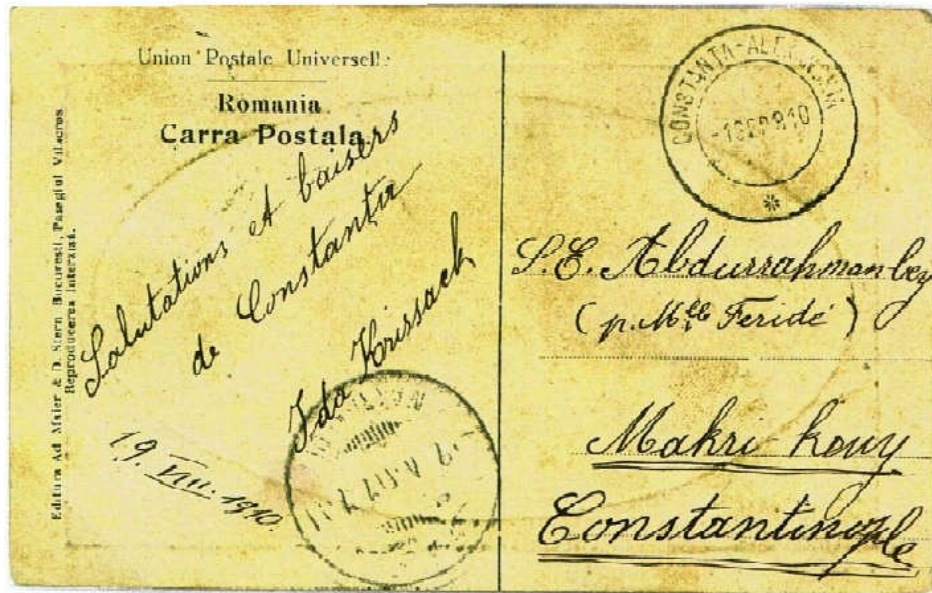
Postcard mailed on board the “S/S Rumania”, built in Saint Nazaire, France, in 1905. Type I cancel, dated 1st February 1907, originally from Constantinople, addressed to Cairo. Alexandria transit postmark dated 5 February 1907.

Franked: At the 10 para Turkish card rate.

1910 - CONSTANTA - ALEXANDRIA

TYPE I CANCEL

ROMANIA TO TURKEY



Card from Constanta, mailed aboard the "S/S Imperatul Trajan" built in Saint Nazaire, France, in 1906. Type I cancel dated 18 September 1910, addressed to Constantinople. Arrival postmark.

Franked: At the 10 ban i Romanian card rate.

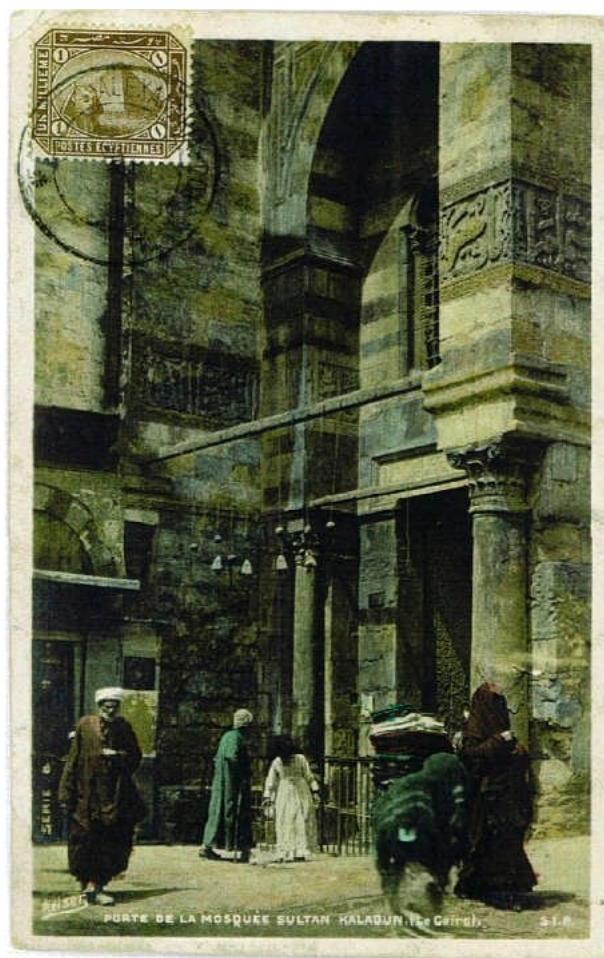
1908 - AILEXNDRIA - CON ST ANTA



TYPE II CANCEL

In use 30 December 1906 to 26 September 1914

EGYPT TO ROMANIA



Postcard mailed on board from Egypt, type II cancel dated 10 April 1908, addressed to Romania

Franked: One mill Egyptian printed matter rate, written message not exceeding five words.

1909 + 1914 ALEXANDRIA - CONSTANTA

TYPE 11 CANCEL

EGYPT TO ROMANIA



Card from Alexandria. Type II cancel 20 October 1908. to Constanta. Franked: At the two mills Egyptian card rate.

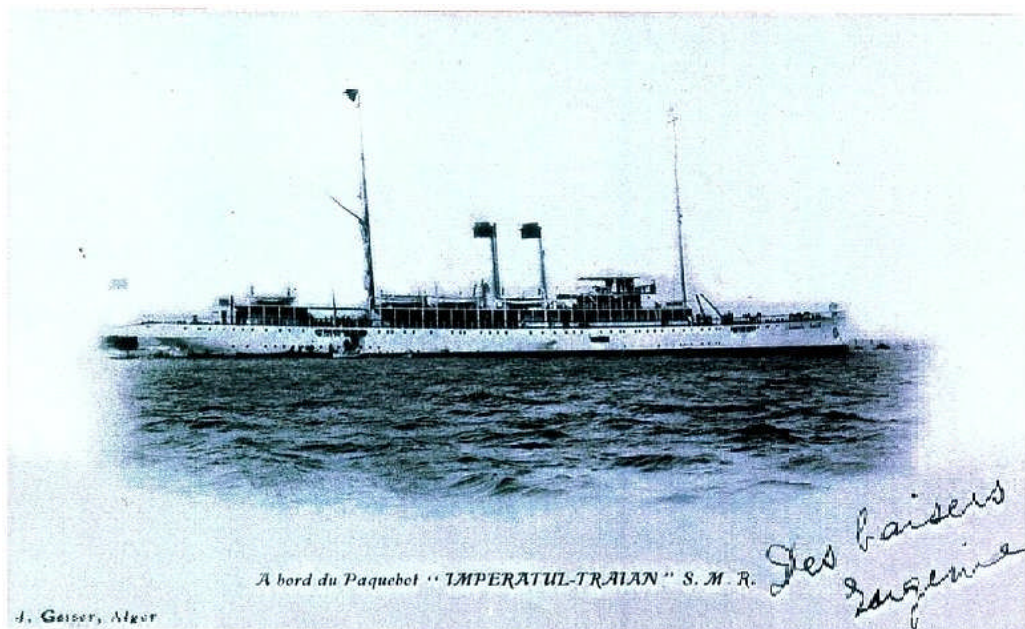
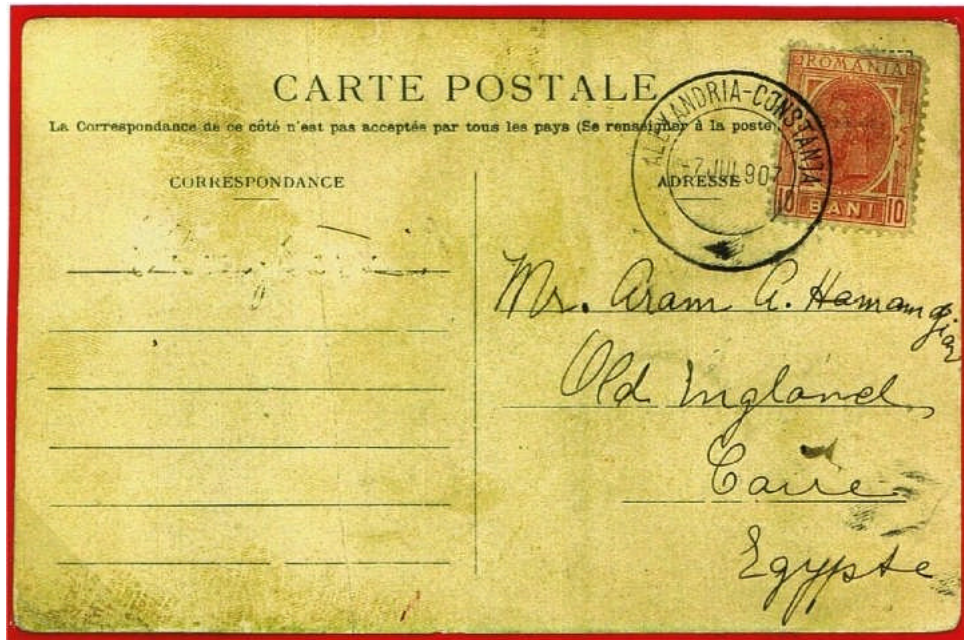


Card mailed on board the `S/S Dacia; built in Saint Nazaire, France in 1907; while crossing the Aegean sea en route to Constanta. Type II cancel dated 4 January 1914. Addressed to Rome. Franked: At the 10 bani Romanian card rate.

1907 - ALEXANDRIA - CONSTANTA

TYPE II CANCEL

ROMANIA TO EGYPT



Postcard (above, front and back) mailed on board the S.M.R. ship "Imperatul Traian" en route from Romania to Egypt, type 11 cancel, dated 7 July 1907, addressed to Egypt. Error of direction in postmark, should be "Constanta-Alexandria" instead of "Alexandria-Constanta"

Franked: At the 10 bani Romania postcard rate.

1924 - ALEXANDRIA - CONSTANTA

There are no postmarks recorded between 27 September 1914 and 9 October 1924

The following type of cancellation, is recorded to have been used from 1924 to 1928. It exists inscribed "Constanta-Alexandria 1" of which only one item recorded and four inscribed "Alexandria-Constanta 1 - 2 - 3 and 4" of which only a couple of each are known.

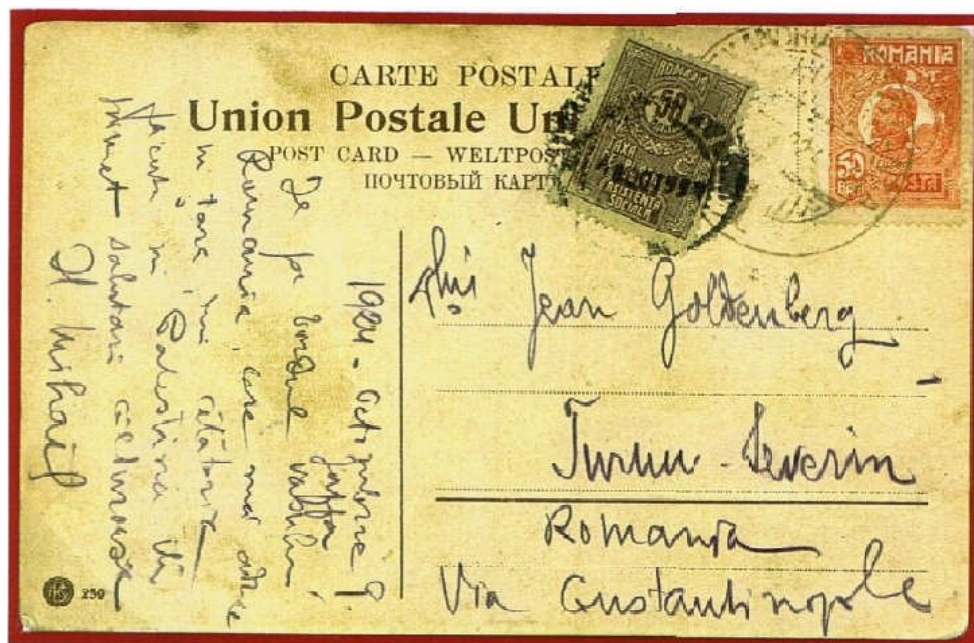


TYPE III CANCEL

Only two items recorded, dated 9 October 1924 (item below) and 2 December 1926

PALESTINE TO ROMANIA

TAXED MAIL



Postcard from Palestine, type III cancel dated 9 October 1924, addressed to Romania. Constanta postmark 18 October 1924 on aid stamp. Franked: At the 50 bani Romanian card rate. Thus, considered as local mail which should have borne a 25 bani social assistance stamp. Taxed and a 50 bani social assistance stamp added on arrival, at twice the shortage.

NEW EARLIEST DATE RECORDED 9 OCTOBER 1924

1927 - CONSTANTA - ALESANDRIA

From 1927 until 1939, four different postmarks were used concurrently, for most of the period. Two using the spelling "Alesandria" and the later two "Alexandria".

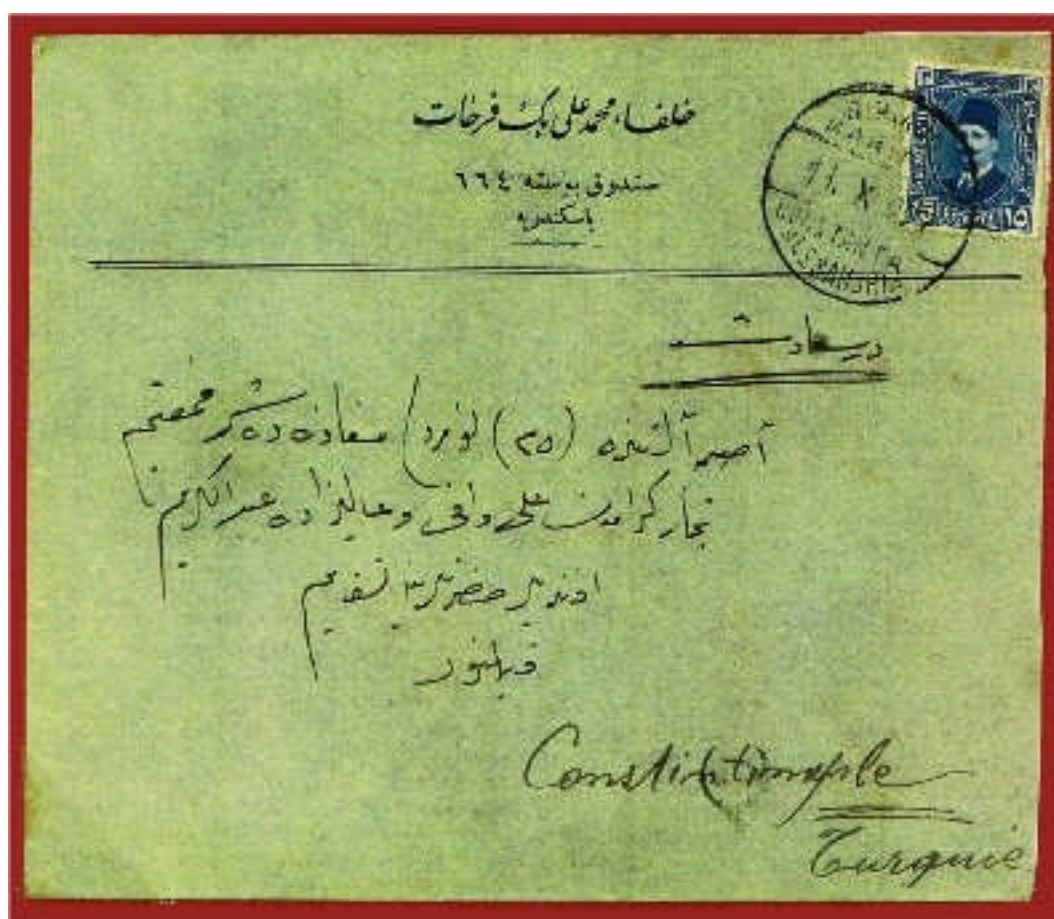


TYPE IV CANCEL

11 October 1927 to 27 September 1937

EGYPT TO ROMANIA

Postmark with error of direction 'Constanta-Alesandria' instead of "Alesandria-Constanta".



Business letter taken to S.M.R. office at Alexandria. Type IV cancel dated 11 October 1927. to Turkey. Istanbul arrival 15 October 1927. Franked : At 15 mills Egyptian letter rate.

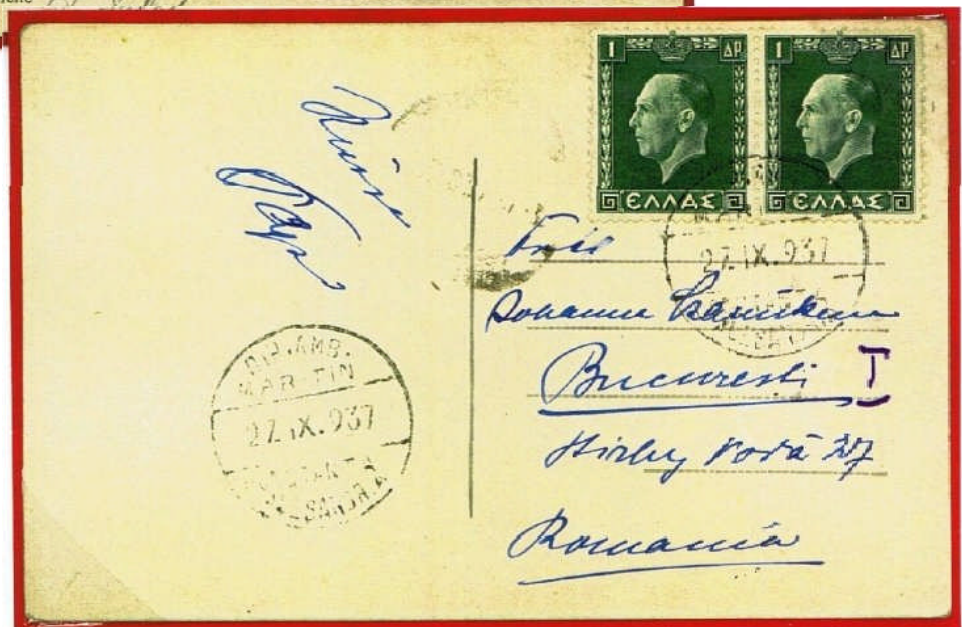
NEW EARLIEST RECORDED DATE

1935 + 1937 CONSTANTA. - ALESANDRIA

TYPE IV CANCEL

Both items showing error of direction of handstamp though correct handstamp "Alesandria-Constanta" was available.

TOP: 1935 - EGYPT TO ROMANIA
BOTTOM : 1937 - GREECE TO ROMANIA



BOTTOM ITEM 27 SEPTEMBER 1937 NEW LAST DATE RECORDED

1927 - ALESANDRIA - CONSTANTIA

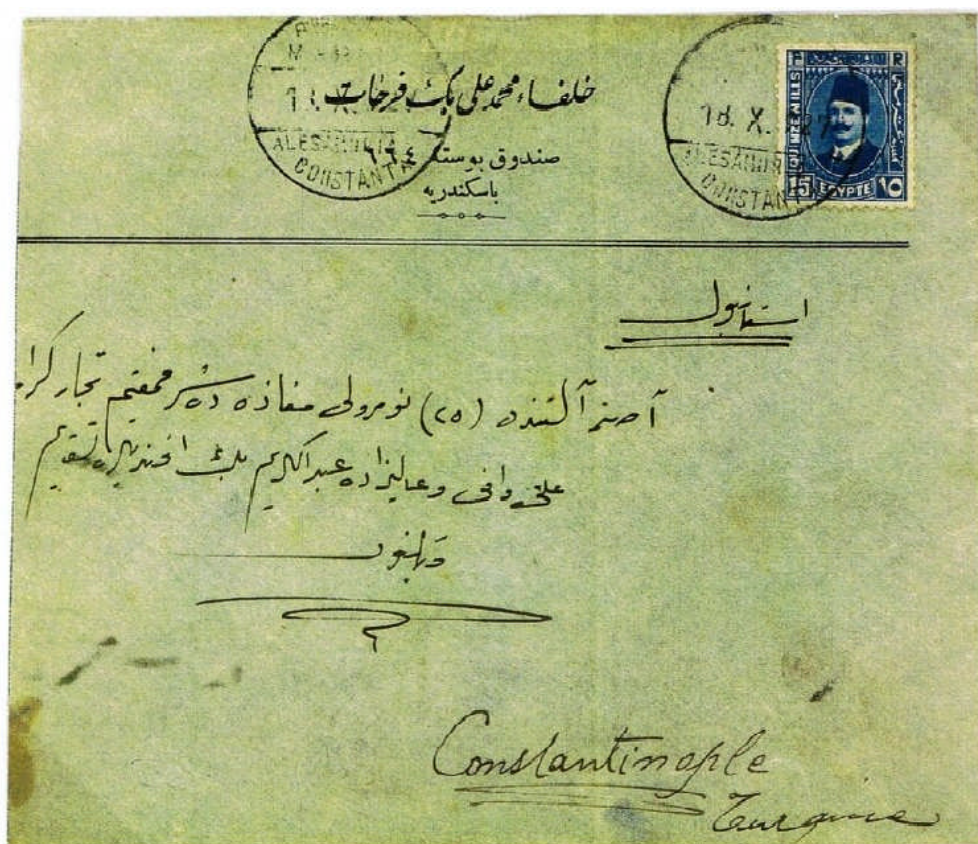


TYPE V CANCEL

7 June 1927 to 23 September 1936

This postmark is not recorded in Philip Cockrill's "Ocean Mails" and is very seldom seen

EGYPT TO TURKEY



Commercial business cover from Egypt, taken to company's office at Alexandria port to be mailed on board. Type V cancel, dated 18 October 1927 to Turkey, arrival 22 October 1927.

Franked: At the 15 mills Egyptian surface letter rate.

1932 - ALEXANDRIA - CONSTANTIA

Type V Cancel

EGYPT TO TURKEY



Commercial business cover, taken to S.M.R. office at Alexandria to be mailed on board. Type V cancel dated 1st June 1932, addressed to Turkey. Istanbul arrival backstamp dated 4 June 1932.

Franked: Total 10 lei letter rate, in Romanian stamps.

FOUR COLOUR FRANKING

1931 - CONSTANTA - ALEXANDRIA



TYPE VI CANCEL

In use from 14 November 1930, last date recorded 26 April 1936

ROMANIA TO EGYPT



Registered cover from Turnu 3 March 1931, to Egypt. Type VI cancel 5 March 1931.

Franked: At 10 lei base rate foreign letter, plus 10 lei registration fee. Aid stamp of 50 bani, obsolete and no longer required.

1931 + 1932 - CONSTANTA - ALEXANDRIA

TYPE VI CANCEL

ROMANIA TO TURKEY + EGYPT - FRANKED WITH PERF-IN STAMPS



TOP : Card from Galatz 11 March 1931, to Turkey. Type VI cancel dated 12 March 1931. Franked : At the 6 lei Romania card rate. Stamps perf-in "M B & Co" for Banque Marmorosch, Blank & Co. BOTTOM: Card from Bucharest 31 May 1932, to Alexandria. A Type VI cancel dated 1st June 1932. Alexandria arrival 8 June 1932. Franked : At 6 lei Romania card rate. Stamps perf-in "S R" for Steaua Romaneii. SELDOM SEEN.

1934 - ALEXANDRIA - CONSTANTIA

TYPE VII CANCEL

In use from 28 November 1930 until World War II

EGYPT TO ROMANIA



Postcard from Port Said 16 June 1934 to Romania. Type V11 cancel dated 17 June 1934. Braila arrival postmark 23 June 1934.

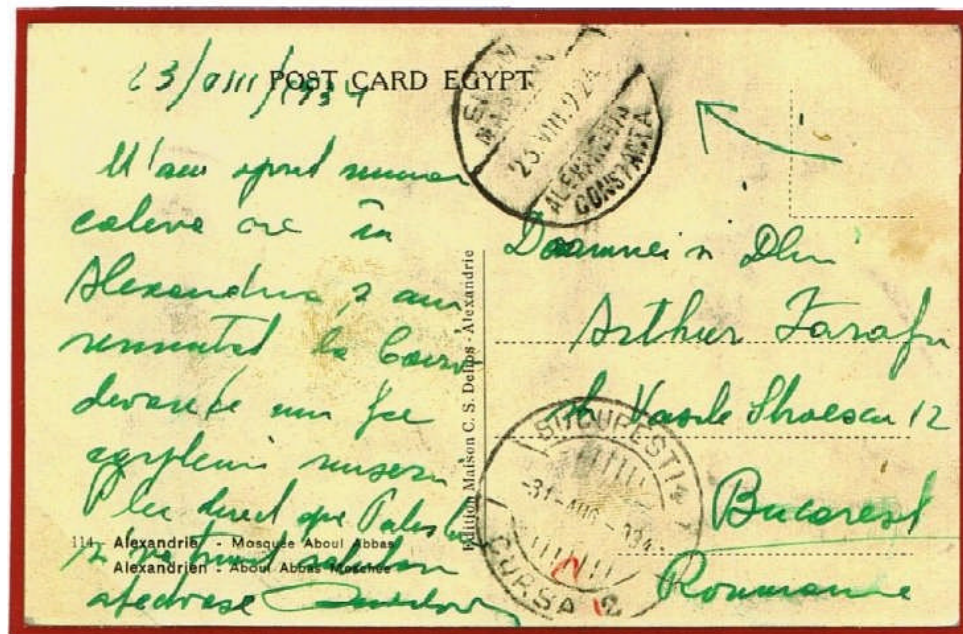
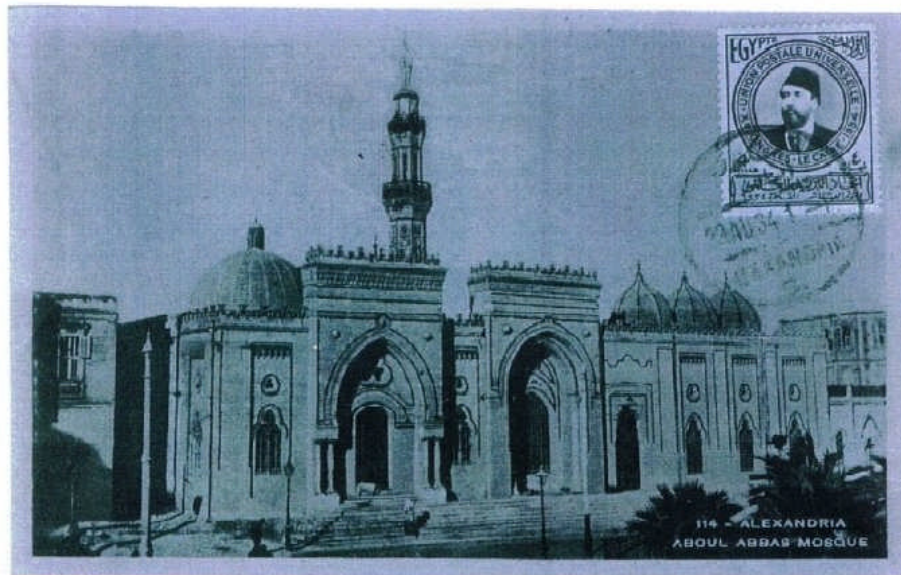
Franked: At the 10 mills Egypt foreign card rate.

1934 - ALEXANDRIA - CONSTANTA

Type VII cancel

EGYPT TO ROMANIA

ERROR OF DATE : 1924 FOR 1934



Card from Alexandria 23 August 1934, addressed to Romania. Type VII cancel dated by error 231 August 1924 instead of 1934. Bucharest arrival 31 August 1934. Franked: At 4 mills Egypt printed matter rate. Should have been 10 mills card rate. Not taxed.

VERY SELDOM SEEN ERROR OF DATE

1939 - ALEXANDRIA - CONSTANTIA

Type VII Cancel

LEBANON TO EGYPT



Letter from Lebanon to Egypt. Routing instructions "Beyrouth-Alexandrie / Par bateau de la / Ligne Maritime Roumaine". Type VII cancel dated 26 April 1939. Alexandria arrival backstamp 27 April 1939.

Franked : At 6 piasters in Lebanese stamps, plus 75 cents in French stamps, to complete the 7½ piasters Lebanon foreign letter rate. Lebanon was at the time under French Mandate.

MAIL FROM LEBANON CARRIED BY S.M.R. SHIPS IS SELDOM SEEN