Ukraine: Postal History 1900-1945

A thorough rendering of the postal history of Ukraine in the beginning of the 20th century requires a marophilic study. Today being a country 10 years young, and having been largely lumped together with Russia in the eyes of philatelists for the past 50 years, an unravelling of the significant events that led to Ukraine’s condition in the latter half of the century is eye-opening in hindsight. The political and postal boundaries were not defined singularly; the political upheaval of the time resulted in no less than 28 postal administrations, many running simultaneously. A marophilic study is therefore the correct method of understanding Ukraine in this period. The names of places are extremely important. names of places on postmarks distinguish mail used in Ukraine. The logic of this study is defined by Ukraine’s present day boundaries. Markings of each postal administration are in turn broken down into basic types, and illustrated. By many accounts, this is the first comprehensive survey of Ukraine of its kind.

To accurately display a highly complex subject, the 1900-1945 period is broken down into four smaller historical groupings: The first period, Ukraine at the Turn of the Century examines the markings of the empires. Empire, Revolution, Sovereignty and War elucidates military markings and the various political reconfigurations. The third period, Ukraine Between the Wars, examines postal developments within and as a result of the new boundaries that were created. The postal markings of World War Two in Ukraine readdress Ukraine’s ethnic status, and examine Ukraine as a geopolitical nerve center in the war. The marophilic study assumes a basic knowledge of these events. Where necessary additional historical notes are present in the text. A map heralds each of the four new sections, enabling the viewer to get a bearing on the places and changing situation.

Postal markings are the thrust of Ukraine Postal History 1900-1945; the markings themselves tell a complex story of postal services, language, politics and culture. The players in the story are the cities and towns that make up present day Ukraine. The postal markings are associated with places that define Ukraine geographically. The postal administrations that served those cities and towns changed frequently, and a rich variety of postal products and services emanated from them. For the people who lived there and used the mails, despite the stamps that were used or the faces and places depicted on them, the necessity to move the mails yielded a rich palette which painted the story of Ukraine Postal History 1900-1945.

1.0: Ukraine at the Turn of the Century 1900-1918
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2.0: Empire, Revolution, Sovereignty, and War 1914-1920
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1. Ukraine at the Turn of the Century

Ukraine at the Turn of the Century was not a single political entity in this period. Its administration was split between Austria, Hungary, and Russia. The division between east and west was also linguistic and cultural. These differences are reflected in the postal history. Postmarks in Austria are often written in both German and Polish, although postmarks in Hungarian Ukraine remained solidly Hungarian. In Russian Ukraine all postmarks are in Russian.

1.1 Hungarian Ukraine

Turn of the century Hungarian Ukraine represents a small land area. Although politically joined to Austria under the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the two countries operated separate postal systems. Hungarian Ukraine is also known as Carpatho-Ukraine, Transcarpathia, Subcarpathia or Ruthenia. Later the area will become part of Czechoslovakia in the interwar period, and will gain independence, and return to Hungary for a short period during WWII.

1.1.1 Box-type handstamp postmarks

1915 Munkacs to Naustadt registered reply card. Box-type napostmark, Munkacs GY. 1. This is the original half of a reply card that cost 10 filler. Paid the 5 filler domestic postcard rate plus the 25 filler registration rate for a total fee and franking of 30 filler.
1.1.2 handstamped postmarks

Though similar, the two postmarks on this one packet card are different designs and serials; Beregszasz B and E, respectively.

1906 Beregszasz to Budapest packet card paid 90 filler plus 10 filler for the imprinted card, based on distance at 30 filler increments, and weight. About 225+ kilometers.
1.2  Austrian Ukraine

Turn of the century Austrian Ukraine evidenced an advanced postal system. Austria had earlier introduced the postal card to the world. Many postmarks of the era in Austrian Ukraine are bilingual: German and Polish, and the imprinting on the cards show use of the cyrillic alphabet for Ukrainian and Russian speaking areas. The Austrian Empire connected Ukrainian province, Galicia, and its capital, Lemberg, to places such as Venice, Verona, and Czernowitz via its domestic mails.

1.2.1 Octagonal handstamp postmarks


1.2.2 Three-line date handstamp postmarks

1906 Lemberg to Kamionka-Lipnik postcard. Three-line date bilingual Lemberg Lwow 3 serial k handstamp postmark. Paid the 5 heller domestic postcard rate.
1.2.3 Handstamp postmarks

1907 Lemberg to Berlin, Germany, postcard. Bilingual Lemberg Lwow 2 serial d handstamp postmark. Paid the 5 heller treaty postcard rate.

1914 Czernowitz to Bacau, Romania, postal stationery. Czernowitz serial 4a handstamp postmark. Domestic rate was 5 heller, but this card crossed the border to Romania.

1906 Czernowitz to Bacau uprated postal card. Czernowitz 1 serial 3a handstamp postmark. Paid the 10 heller international postcard rate.
Burdujeni postmark from reverse (left). Significant because it defined the cross-border postal route between Austria and Romania. Later Czernowitz (right) would become the border town itself, and part of Romania. Czernowitz 2 serial a handstamp postmark.

1907 Czernowitz to Bacau, Romania, money letter. Per the notations, it contained seven 100 kroner notes and four 20 kroner notes. Paid the 2 heller envelope price, 10 heller letter rate, 25 heller registration fee plus 48 heller insurance fee for a total fee and franking of 85 heller.
1907 Kolomea to Bacau, Romania postal stationery. Bilingual Kolomea Kolomyja 1 serial a postmark. Paid 10 heller international postcard rate.

1914 Kolomea to Bacau, Romania postal stationery. Bilingual (reversed top to bottom from above) Kolomyja Kolomea 1 serial 3a postmark. Paid 10 heller international postcard rate.

1918 Drohobycz to Vienna registered mourning letter, a late civilian usage, probably June 1918. Drohobycz serial 3a. Paid 15 heller domestic letter rate and 25 heller registration fee for a total fee and franking of 50 heller.
1. Ukraine at the Turn of the Century
1.2 Austrian Ukraine (Galicia)


1918 Tlumacz to Berlin, Germany, postal card. Tlumacz handstamp postmark. Paid the 8 heller treaty postcard rate.
1.2.4 Railway Postmarks

1910 Stryj-Czortkow RPO to Bacau, Romania uprated postal stationery. Stryj-Czortkow 521 RPO handstamp postmark. This was probably an extension of an older line that connected Lemberg with Jassy in Romania. Paid the 10 heller international postcard rate.

1902 Wiznitz-Czernowitz RPO to Bobolic postcard. Wiznitz-Cz.-Czernowitz 560 handstamp postmark. Paid the 5 heller domestic postcard rate.
1.2.4 Machine postmarks


1908 Lemberg to Wien, Austria, postcard. Bilingual Lemberg Lwow machine postmark (killer bars not readily visible). Paid the domestic postcard rate.
1. Ukraine at the Turn of the Century
2. Austrian Ukraine (Galicia)

1914 Czernowitz to Bacau, Romania, uprated postal card. Czernowitz 2 serial 4c machine postmark with wavy killer bars. Paid the 10 heller international postcard rate.

1910 Czernowitz to Bacau, Romania, uprated postcard. Czernowitz 1 serial 3b machine postmark, and Czernowitz 1 serial 3 handstamp, lower left. Paid the 10 heller international postcard rate.
1.3 Russian Ukraine

Nearly eighty-five percent of Ukraine was a part of Russia at the turn of the century. The Russian postal system operated several types of post offices. The kontora, or main post office in large cities directly controlled the otdelenie, or sub-offices in the surrounding regions. Ekaterinoslav, Kiev, Kharkov, and Odessa were the four district main post offices. Odessa in particular, also had a pochtamt, or chief office which handled much international mail, and was under direct control of the postal department. Some offices were combined post-telegraphic offices.

1.3.1 Three-line date postmarks

Reverse of postal stationery below, at 70%, showing registration label and additional postage. Label reads “Elisavetgrad pocht. tel. kont. Cherson gub.”, showing this label came from a combined post-telegraphic office.

1902 Elisavetgrad to Stuttgart, Germany, uprated postal stationery. Two three-line date Elisavetgrad Cher. Gub. handstamp postmarks (upper right has month in English, lower right has month in Russian). Paid the 10 kopeck international letter rate plus the 10 kopeck registration rate for a combined fee and franking of 20 kopecks.
1.3.2 Crossed date postmarks

1909 Kiev to Lund, Sweden, postal wrapper. Crossed date Kiev 2 pochtov. kontora handstamp postmark. Paid the 2 kopeck international printed matter rate. The text reads “If the effective postage rate is greater than two kopecks, additional stamps are required.”
1. Ukraine at the Turn of the Century
1.3 Russian Ukraine

1910 Pohar to Kiev postcard. Pohar Chern. serial a handstamp postmark. Paid the 3 kopeck domestic postcard rate. Chern. is an abbreviation for Chernigoc Guberniya.

1908 Bacmuth to Munich, Germany, letter. Bacmuth serial b handstamp postmark. Paid the 10 kopeck international letter rate.
Reverse of postcard below showing additional postage. The 2 kopeck printed matter rate was valid for groups of postcards if they paid a minimum of 10 kopecks total and each held less that 5 words handwritten text.

Tracing of Perekhod Batum - Odessa 10 crossed date handstamp postmark. R.O.P.I.T. operated several steamship lines within the Black Sea and inland rivers as part of a local service.

1906 Odessa to Batum postcard. Perekhod Batum - Odessa 10 crossed date handstamp postmark. Paid the 3 kopeck domestic postcard rate.
1. Ukraine at the Turn of the Century
1.3 Russian Ukraine

1904 Kiev to St. Louis, Missouri, postcard. Kiev serial 3 pochtov. kontora crossed date postmark. Paid the 4 kopeck international postcard rate.

1904 Kiev to Wien, Austria, postal card. Kiev serial 45 pochtov. kontora crossed date postmark. Paid the 3 kopeck domestic postcard rate, but this card went to Austria.
1901 Kharkov to Stamford, Connecticut registered uprated postal stationery. Crossed date Kharkov pocht. tel. kont. serial 24 postmark. Paid the 10 kopeck international letter rate plus the 10 kopeck registration rate for a total fee and franking of 20 kopecks.
1. Ukraine at the Turn of the Century
1.3 Russian Ukraine


1910 Ostrog to Tempelhof, Germany, registered money letter. The letter contained 478 rubles. Ostrog Volyn.G. serial 3 Pocht.Tel. Kontora crossed date handstamp postmark. Paid a multiple of the 10 kopeck per 15 gram international letter rate, plus the 10 kopeck registration rate for a total fee and franking of 64 kopecks.
1.3.3 Handstamped postmarks - larger municipalities

1908 Odessa to Piree, Greece, postcard. Odessa serialized handstamp postmark. Paid the 4 kopeck international postcard rate.

1904 Kherson to Weinberg, Austria, postcard. Kherson serialized handstamp postmark. Paid the 2 kopeck international printed matter rate.
1908 Kiev to Gomel postcard. Kiev 5 serial b handstamp postmark. Paid the domestic postcard rate.

1913 Kiev to Kroppelshagen, Germany, postcard. Kiev 7 serial a handstamp postmark. Paid the international postcard rate.
1. Ukraine at the Turn of the Century
1.3 Russian Ukraine

1904 Simferopol to Plovdiv, Bulgaria, postcard. Simferopol serial L handstamp postmark. Paid the international printed matte rate.

1913 Simferopol to Tiflis postal stationery. Simferopol serial L handstamp postmark. Paid the 7 kopeck domestic letter rate.
1910 Yalta to Riga postal card. Yalta serial b handstamp postmark. Paid the 3 kopeck domestic postcard rate.

1914 Yalta to Bingen, Germany, letter. Yalta serialized handstamp postmark. Paid the international letter rate.
1916 Ekaterinoslav to Moscow letter. Ekaterinoslav 1 serial b handstamp postmark. Paid the 10 kopeck domestic letter rate (10 kopeck stamp on reverse).

1.3.4 handstamp postmarks - smaller municipalities.


1913 Zenkov to Eden, New York, postcard. Zenkov Polt. serial a handstamp postmark. Paid the 2 kopeck international printed matter rate.

1912 Livadia to St. Peterburg postcard. Livadia T-- handstamp postmark. Paid the 3 kopeck domestic postcard rate. The T-- abbreviation is for Taurida (Crimea) Guberniya.
1.3.5 Machine postmarks

1910 Odessa to Soroni postcard. Odessa serial a wavy dashed line machine postmark. Paid the 3 kopeck domestic postcard rate. Small-town Soroni hadn't stamp receiving postmark.

1913 Kiev to Zizkov, Austria, postcard. Kiev serial a straight-line machine postmark. Paid the 4 kopeck international postcard rate.

1. Ukraine at the Turn of the Century
1.3 Russian Ukraine

1910 Odessa to Piree, Greece, postcard. Odessa serial a wavy dashed machine postmark. Paid the 4 kopeck international postcard rate.

1911 Odessa to Athens, Greece, letter. Odessa serial b wavy dashed machine postmark. Paid the 2 kopeck international printed matter rate.
1910 Odessa to Berlin, Germany, letter. Odessa serial b wavy dashed machine postmark. Paid the 10 kopeck international letter rate, bottom.

1911 Odessa to Athens, Greece, letter. Odessa seria b wavy dashed machine postmark. Paid the 10 kopeck international letter rate, top.

Tracing of Odessa serial b wavy dashed machine postmark, below.
1.3.6 Ship markings

1903 Odessa to Smyrne, Turkey, postcard. Odessa Odessa crossed date handstamp postmark and R.O.P.I.T. Smyrne receiving postmark. Paid the 2 kopeck international printed matter rate.
1914 Kharkov to Zhelznovodsk postcard. Kharkov vokzal serial u handstamp postmark. Paid the 3 domestic kopeck postcard rate. Wonderfully topical as the destination, Zhelznovodsk literally translated means “travel by rail.”

1913 Kharkov to Chicago, Illinois registered letter. Kharkov vokzal serial L handstamp postmark. paid the 10 kopeck international letter rate plus the 10 kopeck registration rate for a total fee and franking of 20 kopecks (on reverse, not shown).
1.3.6 Railway markings

1903 Kharkov station to Zurich, Switzerland, postal stationery. Kharkov vokzal poch. tel. kont serial 5 crossed date handstamp postmark. pazid the international 10 kopeck letter rate.

Tracing of Kharkov vokzal poch. tel. kont. serial 5 crossed date handstamp postmark. This is a combined postal and telegraph main office at a railway station.
1. Ukraine at the Turn of the Century
1.3 Russian Ukraine

1.3.7 - dispatch offices

1907 Odessa to Piree, Greece, postcard. Odessa 4 expeditia handstamp postmark. Paid the 4 kopeck international postcard rate. Expeditias were dispatch offices associated with chief offices.

1908 Odess to Piree, Greece, postcard. Odessa expeditia serial b handstamp postmark. Paid the 4 kopeck international postcard rate.
Tracings of markings from Lugansk postcard. Kontrol handstamp postmark (left), Lugansk postage due handstamp postmark (center), Lugansk handstamp postmark (right).

1916 Lugansk local postcard. Lugansk postage due handstamp postmark in red, Lugansk handstamp postmark, and Kontrol handstamp postmark in red. Paid the 3 kopeck postcard rate plus 1 kopeck postage due fee. The 2 manuscript marking assessed double the deficiency of 1 kopeck.
The Empire Revolution Sovereignty and War period is by far the most complex section. It encompasses the war censorship in Ukrainian land, the units of the Hungarian, Austrian, and Russian armies, the Russian provisional government, the Austrian German, and Hungarian occupation forces, Western Ukraine, Ukraine, the White Army and the Russo-Polish war. Some military marks are further grouped into censor markings and field post office markings for units in the field. Most military had free franking privileges. Russian free frank privileges ended in 1917.

2.1 Hungarian Military

Reproduction of detail of reverse of Munkacs letter at 125%, showing K.U.K. Militarzensur Sitz Der Kommission: Munkacs. censor mark in purple.

2.2 Austrian Military

ZNSR. KOLOMEA Nr. 36
III. Ersatzkompagnie.

Tracing of Znsr. Kolomea Nr. 36 III. Ersatzkomagnie censor mark from Lipnik card.

2.2.1 Austrian censor markings

2. Empire Revolution Sovereignty and War
2.2 Austrian Military

1916 Stanislau to Podkamien postcard. Kuk Militar Zensur Kommission Stanislau handstamp censor mark in red. Paid the 5 heller domestic postcard rate, plus 2 heller semi-postal tax.

2.2.2 Feldpost postmarks

1916 Feldpostamt 295 to Krakow. KUK Feldpostamt 295 handstamp postmark and K.K. Landwher Infantrie Regiment Stryj No. 33 unit cachet. The unit cachet identifies the Stryj regiment, whose KK Landwherrterriotrialbezirk was in Przemysl.
2.3 German Military

Tracing of Deutsche feldpost postmark. The unit was in Stryj.

1917 Stryj to Posen postcard. Deutsche feldpost postmark. The location is given in the text of the card; undoubtedly against regulations.
2.4 Russian Military

2.4.1 Censorship marks

1917 Kiev to Budapest, Hungary POW card. Kiev handstamp postmark. Moscow and Vienna censor marks. The necessity of censorship caused the relatively odd route, though common for POW mail.

1915 Odessa to Stockholm, Sweden, letter. Odessa 3 serial VI handstamp postmark and D. Ts (Dozvoleno Tsenzuroi) censorship mark. Paid the 10 kopeck international lette rate plus 1 kopeck semi-postal tax to raise money for wartime activities.
Tracing of the Polev. Hlavn. Pocht. Kont. Kiev serial bpostmark. This was the Main Field Post Office in Kiev.

1915 Field Post Office No. 107 to Moscow postcard. Pol. Pocht. Kont. No 107 serial a handstamp postmark and unit cachet. This field post office was near Brody.
Kiev serial u postmark. The main field post office in Kiev handled mail to and from the front and exchanged mail with civilian post offices.

Kiev serial bpostmark. Another exchange with a civilian post office for forwarding to the front.
2. Empire Revolution Sovereignty and War
2.4 Russian Military

Tracing of Polevaya Pocht. Kont. No. 20 serial b postmark.

2.4.3 Field post markings

1915 Fieldpost No. 20 to Rakke postcard. Polevaya Pocht. Kont. No. 20 serial b postmark. Main field post office used by the 18th infantry, near Tarnopol.
2. Empire Revolution Sovereignty and War
2.4 Russian Military


1915 Zhanshov to Copenhagen, Denmark letter. Boxed 19 censorship mark. Free-franked. The piece is addressed to the Danish Red Cross.
2. Empire Revolution Sovereignty and War
2.2 Austrian Military

1916 KUK haufeldpostamt 351/II to Krzesowice postcard. K.u.K. Haufeldpostamt 351/II handstamp postmark and K. Und K. Feldtransportleitung Nr. VI unit cachet. The head field post office was with the 7th Army group near Czernowitz at the time. This was a field transport command unit.

1917 Przemysl to Krems postcard. Mark of K.U.K Militarkommando in Przemysl. Card used to raise money for Ukrainian Legion.
2.4.2 Soldiers’ use of civilian mails

1917 Kiev local postcard. Izh Dsivushchoi Armii handstamp cachet, Kiev straight line machine cancel. The cachet means “from active service army” which allowed soldiers free frank privilegess within the regular mails.

1915 Kiev local postcard. Unit cachet of the 42nd army division, Kiev machine postmark. The unit cachet allowed soldiers free franking privileges within the regular mails.
1917 New York to Kamanetz Podolsk returned registered letter. Russian 78 censor mark and French delivery impossible due to condition of war marking. Per the back stamps the round trip journey took six months. The Russian 78 censor mark proves the letter got as far as a Russian entry point, but it was undeliverable because Kamanetz Podolsk was no longer under the control of the Russian government.
Tracing of Kievskiy Voyeniy Okrug censor mark. Translates to Kiev Military District.

2.6 Austrian Occupation Forces

Tracing of bilingual Flugpost Poczta Lotnicza Lemberg Lwow postmark. It is in German and Polish.

1918 Lemberg to Vienna airmail letter. Bilingual Flugpost Poczta Lotnicza Lemberg Lwow handstamp postmark. Paid the 15 heller letter rate plus the 1 krone airmail fee plus 1 krone 50 heller for each 20 grams sent per leg of the trip. Lemberg to Krakow was the initial segment, followed by Krakow to Vienna.
1918 Field Post Office 256 to Irmrescaen, Hungary postcard. KUK Ettappenpostamt 256 handstamp postmark. Part of the 2nd Army Group. Probably near Czernowitz at the time of posting. Feldpost 256 was in Kiev two months later.

1918 Field Post Office 256 to Irmrescaen, Hungary postcard. Offiziersaspirantenkurs der K.u.K. 2nd Armee unit cachet. An officer training group of the 2nd Army. Feldpost 256 was in Kiev March 1918.
2.7 German Occupation Forces

1918 Kiev to Chemnitz, Germany, postcard. K.D. Feldpost handstamp postmark. Very early in the occupation.

1918 Kiev to Coburg, Germany, letter. Deutsche Feldpost handstamp postmark and Deutsche Kommandantur Kiew handstamp unit cachet. This non-military commercial mail piece went through the German feldpost with normal German stamps, as was allowed.
1918 Odessa local letter. Odessa 4 serial a handstamp postmarks. Savings and control stamps were valid for postage.

1918 Odessa local letter. Odessa serial L handstamp postmarks. After October 1918, Russian stamps without trident overprints were declared illegal.
1918 Zhmerinka to Kamanetz Podilsk letter. Zhmerinka Vokz. serial a oval railway postmark, Kamanetz Podilsk serial e handstamp postmark. Paid the 50 shahiv local letter rate for each 15 grams.

1918 Semenovka to Chemnitz, Germany, registered letter. Semehovka Chern. serial a handstamp postmark. Paid the 50 shahiv treaty intercity rate and the 50 shahiv treaty registration rate.
2. Empire, Revolution, Sovereignty and War
2.8 Ukraine

Tracing of Zhmerinka Vokz. serial a postmark. Zhmerinka was a very important railway junction.

1919 Stanislau local registered letter. Stanislau 1 Stanislawow 1 handstamp postmark. The postmark is the former Austrian type.
1919 Peczenizhyn to Kolomiya letter. Peczenizhyn serial a handstamp postmark. Paid the 60 heller rate for a valuable letter. Postmark is the older Austrian type.
2.11 White Army

Reproduction of obverse of Kharkov letter, showing Kharkov vokzal handstamp postmark, and additional 5 kopeck franking.

2.12 Polish Military

Tracing at 120% of Wojskowa cezura Lwow censor mark.

1919 Zakopane to Lwow postcard. Wojskowe Cezura Lwow censor mark. Paid the 15h domestic postcard rate.
1919 Lwow to Polish legion. Lwow 2 handstamp postmark and Wojskowa Cenzura Lwow censor mark. Active duty unit cachet allowed free franking.

3. Ukraine Between The Wars

The new Czechoslovakia, Romania, the new Poland, and the new RSFSR and Soviet Union moved Ukraine's mail through the heart of the century. Postal history of the period is characterized by inflation and oppression. In Polish Ukraine and RSFSR, especially, wildly rising postal rates yielded examples of large multiples on cover and bizarre surcharges.

3.1 Czechoslovakian Ukraine

The postal system of Carpatho-Ukraine (a.k.a. Ruthenia, Transcarpathia, Subcarpathia, Hungarian Ukraine) was administered by Prague during the interwar period. Prague recognized the Ukrainian cultural element under its administration. Thus, postmarks were changed from Hungarian to bi-lingual Czech and Ukrainian. Ungvar postmarks changed to Uzhhorod and Munkacs changed to Mukacevo. In both cases the cyrillic spelling was also used.

3.1.1 Handstamped postmarks - larger municipalities

1933 Mukacevo to Kerecky postal stationery advertising card. Bilingual Mukacevo serial H handstamp postmark. Paid the 50 halieru domestic postcard rate.
3.2 Polish Ukraine

The postal system of Polish Ukraine (Galicia, Halychyna, western Ukraine) was administered by Poland in the interwar period. Warsaw was hostile to Ukrainian nationalism and this is reflected in the postal markings. All the postal markings are in Polish; no Ukrainian, Russian, German, or use of the Cyrillic alphabet was evident. This contrasts with earlier multiculturalism (and bilingual postmarks) under Austrian rule.

3.2.1 Obliterated postmarks

1921 Stanislavow to Tauberbischofsheim, Germany, postal card. Nadstamped postmark is Austrian type with German spelling obliterated.

3.2.2 Handstamped postmarks - larger municipalities

1926 Kolomyja to Wien, Austria, postcard with Kolomyja 1 serial f postmark paid a 20 groszky international treaty postcard rate to neighboring countries. This represents a change from domestic to international routing due to boundary changes.
1930 Lwow to Berlin, Germany, postcard. Lwow 1 serial 29 handstamped postmark. Paid double 30 groschen international postcard rate for airmail for a total fee and franking of 60 groschen.

1922 Lwow to Anamosa, Iowa registered letter. Lwow 8 handstamped postmark. Paid the 100 mark international letter rate plus the 100 mark registration rate for a total fee and franking of 200 groschen.
3.2.3 Handstamped postmarks - smaller municipalities

1938 Dobromil to Lwow postcard. Dobromil serial c handstamped postmark. Paid the 15 groschen domestic postcard rate.

1935 Brody to Prague, Czechoslovakia registered letter. Brody serial 2C handstamped postmark. Paid 90 groschen international registered letter treaty rate to neighboring countries.
3. Ukraine Between The Wars
3.2 Polish Ukraine


1934 Stanislawow to Lwow postcard. Small-type Stanislawow 2 serial G handstamped postmark. Paid the 20 groschen domestic postcard rate of 1933 (right).

1924 Stanislawow to Dvuv Kralove, Czechoslovakia, postcard. Stanislawow - 2 serial d handstamped postmark. Paid the 250,000 mark effective treaty postcard rate to neighboring countries. Postal charges were actually expressed in tariff units, 1/100 gold franc; at the time 1 franc = 956506 marks. The currency had been revalued in December 1923.
1938 Drohobycz to Tarnow postal stationery. Drohobycz 1 serial 4a handstamped postmark. Paid the 15 groschen domestic postcard rate.

1932 Tarnopol to Drohobycz postal card. Drohobycz 1 serial 5b handstamped postmark on postage due stamps, effectively underpaid the 25 groschen domestic postcard rate by 10 groschen.

1926 Drohobycz to Pfarrkirchen, Germany, registered letter. Drohobycz 1 serial 3a handstamped postmark. Paid the international registered letter rate.
1925 Luck to Mexico City, Mexico, postcard. Luck serial b handstamp postmark. Paid the international printed matter rate.

1931 Kamionka Strumilowa to Zakopane express delivery letter. Kamionka Strumilowa serial b handstamp postmark. Paid the 25 grosche domestic letter rate plus the 80 grosche express delivery fee for a total fee and franking of 1 zloty, 5 grosche.
3. Ukraine Between The Wars
3.2 Polish Ukraine

Bobrka is a small town closer to Lwow than to Stanislawow. Perhaps the card was misdirected.

1937 Lwow to Stanislawow postcard. Bobrka transit serial d handstamp postmark. Paid the 5 grosche domestic postcard rate.

3.2.4 Machine postmarks

1933 Lwow to Kamicnica uprated postal card. Lwow 2 serial a machine postmark. Paid the 20 grosche domestic postcard rate. The year date is the slug is incorrect. The dull violet 5 grosche stamp release date and the rate both date the card to 1933, not 1932.
3. Ukraine Between The Wars
3.2 Polish Ukraine

3.2.5 Pictorial postmarks

1925 Lwow to Cernauti, Romania, postcard. Lwow 2 pictorial postmark. Paid the 15 groschy treaty postcard rate. This route before 1914 would have paid an Austrian domestic rate.

1930 Lwow to Warsaw postcard. Lwow 2 serial a pictorial postmark. Paid the 15 grosche domestic postcard rate.
3. Ukraine Between The Wars
3.2 Polish Ukraine

Nadoszta poczta lotnicza

Tracing of marking on reverse of airmail letter

Top: 1925 Lwow to Warsaw airmail, paid double inland letter rate. Reverse handstamp and handwritten note on front read “poczta lotnicza” for airmail.
3. Ukraine Between The Wars
3.2 Polish Ukraine

Reverse of Stanislavow bulk rate letter at 70%. Sender was Municipalality of Stanislavow. Posted on the 1st day of the new rate.

3.2.6 Special markings

1926 Stanislavow to West Olive, Michigan registered bulk rate letter. Oplata ryczaltowana rozporzdeniem M.P.I.T (bulk payment by agreement of the Ministry of Post & Telegraph) marking, indicating postage paid. Paid fractional multiple of 40 grosche letter rate, 40 grosche registration rate, and additional 20 grams at 20 grosche for a total fee and franking of 80 grosche.
3. Ukraine Between the Wars
3.2 Polish Ukraine


Reproduction of reverse of Lwow letter at 130%  This letter was returned for postage. Since the currency had been revalued, these stamps, expressed in pfennigs were no longer valid. Uniważniono is Polish for "cancelled / no longer valid."
1939 Lwow to DeKalb, Illinois, letter with small Lwow 2 postmark. Paid the 10 groschen international printed matter rate.

1937 Lwow to Wien, Austria, registered letter. Lwow 1 handstamp postmark serial 29 and small-type Lwow handstamp, lower left. Paid the 45 groschen international letter rate plus 55 froschen registration rate for a total franking of 1 zloty.
3. Ukraine Between The Wars
3.2 Polish Ukraine

1924 Lwow to Berlin, Germany, postcard. Lwow handstamped postmark. Paid the 30,000 mark international postcard rate of 1923.

1934 Lwow to Wolodimierz postal stationery with Lwow 25 serial d postmark. Paid the 1933 20 groschen international postcard rate (the rate was reduced to 15 groschen in 1936).
3.3 Romanian Ukraine

Romania took over the area known as Bukovina after WWI. The multitude of registration marks in small towns bearing the towns name suggests postal advances and a robust postal system. Cernauti (formerly Czernowitz) was the largest city in the area. The name changed due to linguistic considerations imposed by the new government. Before the war, Czernowitz and Bukovyna were part of the Austrian empire.

3.3.1 Handstamped postmarks

1939 Bucarest to Cernauti registered letter. Cernauti serial 34 receipt handstamp postmark. Paid the 7 lei intercity letter rate plus 2 lei for 2nd weight unit, plus 8 lei registration for a total fee and franking of 17 lei. Franked obverse not shown.

1921 Cernauti local postal card. Cernauti handstamp postmark. Paid the 20 bani domestic postcard rate.
3. Ukraine Between the Wars
3.3 Romanian Ukraine

Reverse of Milie letter at 70% showing postmarks and stamps.

1923 Milie to Cernauti registered letter. Milie handstamp postmark. Paid the 1 lei letter rate plus 50 bani additional weight unit plus 2 lei registration rate for a total postal fee and franking of 3 lei 50 bani. 10 bani social tax fee paid applied and cancelled.
1921 Mamaiesti to Cernauti registered letter. Mamaiesti handstamp postmark. Paid the 30 bani domestic letter rate plus the 1 lei registration rate for a total postal fee and franking of 1 lei 30 bani. The 10 nbani social tax stamps were also applied and cancelled.

1922 Vranceni to Poland registered letter. Vranceni handstamp postmark. Paid most of the 2 lei 25 bani treaty letter rate plus the 3 lei registration rate for a total fee and franking of 5 lei 25 bani. Franked with 5 lei and 25 bani stamps on reverse (not shown).
3.3.2 Machine postmarks

1940 Cernauti to Berlin letter. Cernauti 2 wavy line machine postmark. Paid the 12 bani international letter rate.

3.3.3 Special postmarks.

1933 Cernauti local letter. Cernauti 1 handstamp postmark. Scututia de Timbru mark indicating free rate for state sponsored cultural institutions. Cachet of state-sponsored cultural musical entity.
1921 Pojorata to Cernauti registered letter. Pojorata handstamp postmark. Paid the 30 bani domestic letter plus 50 bani 2nd and third weight units plus the 1 lei registration rate for a total postal fee and franking of 180 bani 1 lei, 80 bani). The 10 bani social tax was also collected and stamps applied and cancelled.
3.4 Soviet Ukraine

By an act of war, Ukraine became part of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic and then part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Leftover postmarks from the pre-revolution era were first used. Eventually, identifiable Soviet markings were used, in a wide variety of styles. Kharkov became the capital of the Ukrainian SSR until 1934. Then the capital was moved to Kiev. The spellings of Kharkov and Kiev varied. Kharkiv is the more Ukrainian spelling, as is Kyiv. Use of roman and cyrillic alphabets in handstamp postmarks varied often. The interwar period in Soviet Ukraine is characterized by inflation and poor quality of paper materials.

1922 Zhitomir to Berlin, Germany, letter. Zhitomir serial b handstamp postmark. Paid double the international letter rate.
Tracing of Simferopol Krim Aq-Meschid serial b handstamp postmark. This postmark was bilingual Russian/Tatar, but the Tatar text referred to the old Crimean Tatar placename. Before the Russians named it Simferopol', the Crimean Tatars called it Aq-Meschid, which means "little white mosque".

1935 Simferopol to San Francisco, California, registered postal stationery. Simferopol Krim Aq-Meschid serial b handstamp postmark. Paid the 15 kopeck international letter rate and the 20 kopeck registration rate for a total fee and franking of 35 kopecks.
Mariupol Ekaterin. G. serial a pin-type handstamp postmark. The pins were designed to puncture the stamp, in order to further obliterate it and prevent its reuse.

1921 Mariupol to New York, New York, letter. Mariupol Ekaterin. G. serial a pin-type handstamp postmark. While most letters were carried free, this international letter was required to pay at least some postage. Franked with three 3 kopeck stamps on reverse (not shown), which were revaulued to 100 times value.

1925 Ekaterinoslav to Ronco registered letter. Ekaterinoslav serial v handstamp postmark. Paid the 7 ruble rate international registered letter rate, a currency revaluation of the 700 ruble franking.
1922 Ilnitsi to Berlin, Germany, letter. Ilnitsi Kievsk. serial a handstamp postmark. Paid the 10,000 ruble international letter rate which had been valid for only ten days.

1924 Medvin to Moscow registered postcard. Medvin Kiev. serial a handstamp postmark. Paid the regular postcard rate of 3 kopecks and registration surcharge of 7 kopecks.
3. Ukraine Between the Wars
3.4 Soviet Ukraine

Obverse of Yampol letter at 75%.

1922 Yampol to Berlin, Germany, letter. Yampol. Pod. serial h hand-stamp postmark. Paid the 5000 ruble international letter rate valid in previous months.
3.4.1 Distinctly Soviet handstamp postmarks - large municipalities

Odessa is among the Soviet cities that received the "mysterious" triple triangle postmarks. Their meaning is unknown but it is believed that they are censorship marks of some type. This one is missing its "e", far left. The majority of the postmarks in this section are leftover from the imperial era.

1922 Odessa to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, registered letter. Odessa three triangle handstamp postmark and Odessa serialized handstamp postmark. Paid the 300 ruble international registered letter rate.
Detail of reverse of Kharkiv letter at 130%, showing franking. Note the 7 kopeck brown stamp is revaluated with an 8 kopeck overprint.

Reverse of Kiev letter at 70%, showing franking, top. Tracing of Kiev pochtamt three triangle handstamp postmark from Kiev Chief Office, top right. Tracing of Kiev serial e handstamp postmark, right.

1927 Kiev to New York, New York, registered letter. Kiev Kyiv handstamp postmark. Probably went to Germany by air, then to USA by ship, paying a combined rate of 44 kopecks.

Tracing of Kharkov Dost. Punkt. serial a handstamp postmark. Note that the spelling reverted to the Russian form after the capital was moved to Kiev in 1934. Dost. Punkt. stands for “destination point.”

1938 Simferopol to San Francisco, California postal card. Simferopol Krim Simferopol CCCP handstamp postmark. Paid the 30 kopeck international postcard rate.

1939 Simferopol to San Francisco, California, postal stationary. Simferopol Krim Simferopol CCCP handstamp postmark. Paid the 50 kopeck international letter rate.

1930 Ekaterinodon to New York, New York, registered letter fragment. Ekaterinodon handstamp postmark. Paid the 14 kopeck international letter rate and probably the 14 kopeck registration rate (letter is cut down).

3.4.5 Railway markings

1931 TPO 232 to Lawton, North Dakota, letter. TPO 232 serial b handstamp postmark. Railway Post Office line 232 was either Korosten'-Grechany or Zhlobin-Grechany in 1931.
1932 Poltava to Exposition Station, Illinois. Poltava vokz. 6 handstamp postmark. Paid the 15 kopeck international letter rate.

1931 Dnipropetrovsk to Rostov on Don postal card. Dnipropetrovsk Vokzal Ukr. serial a handstamp postmark. Paid the 10 kopeck intercity postcard rate.
1929 Kiev to Berlin, Germany, postal card. Kyiv-vokzal 2 Kiew-gare handstamp postmark. Paid the 7 kopeck international postcard rate. "Gare" is French for "railway station". This is a bilingual Russian/French postmark used on mail abroad.

1930 Kharkov to Berlin, Germany postal card. Kharkov Vokzal Kharkiv Vokzal serial L handstamp postmark. Paid the 7 kopeck international postcard rate.

1929 Kharkov to Nice, France, letter. Kharkov vokzal serial a handstamp postmark. paid the 14 kopeck international letter rate.
3.4.6 Postal code postmarks


1935 Odessa to Buenos Aires, Argentina, postal card. Odessa - Odessa 22 - y - 1 serial zh postal code handstamp postmark. Paid the 10 kopeck international postcard rate.
3.4.7 Telegraph office postmarks


1925 Kiev to Boston, Massachusetts, letter. Kiev – tekont kyiv tekont serial u handstamp postmark and Kiev privokzaln handstamp postmark. Paid the 20 kopeck international letter rate. This was from the Chief Telegraphic Office.
2. Empire, Revolution, Sovereignty and War
2.8 Ukraine


KONSULAT RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ POLSKIEJ W KIJOWIE

1928 Kiev to Kamanetz Poldolsk registered letter. Kiev 11 consular handstamp postmark. Paid the 8 kopeck domestic letter rate, the 10 kopeck registration fee and 8 kopeks for the Nalozhennyi Platezh = C.O.D.
3. Ukraine Between the Wars
3.4 Soviet Ukraine

1922 Berdichev to New York, New York, registered letter. Berdichev serial i handstamp postmark. Paid the 500 ruble registered letter rate. By the time the letter got to New York (about one month later) the registered letter rate had changed to 7 rubles due to currency revaluation.
World War II again turned Ukraine into a battlefield with a variety of postal considerations. Technically pre-war, the Hungarian returned (Czech) territories and Carpatho-Ukrainian independence was part of the growing terror in Europe in 1938. This was followed by the partition of Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union, resulting in the Soviet occupation of western Ukraine (eastern Poland). With the invasion of the Soviet Union by Germany, two postal agencies were created, the Generalgovernment, which administered mail in western Ukraine, and the German Dienstpost, which handled Reichkomissariat Ukraine. Romanian forces operated a postal system in Transnistria. Finally the Soviet Forces beat them back, creating the modern borders of post-war Soviet Ukraine, now the familiar contemporary borders.

4.1 Hungarian Visszatert


1938 Ungvar to Budapest postcard. Ungvar Visszatert 1938 and Ungvar 1 handstamp postmarks. the name of the city Uzhhorod reverted to the Hungarian spelling. Assessed and paid the 10 filler domestic postcard rate (postage due).
1939 Chust to Irsava registered letter. Chust - Chust Vidkrittia Pershoho Soimu handstamp postmark in red. Paid the 1 koruna letter rate plus the 2 koruna registration rate for a total fee and franking of 3 koruna. Vidkrittia Pershoho Soimu is a special cancellation for the “convening of the first parliament.”
1940 FPO 1 to Nagyteteny postcard. Tabori Posthivatal 1 serial a handstamp postmark. Served unit 152, a heavy mortar battalion, per cachet. This is prior to Hungary declaring war on the Soviet Union. In March of 1939 the 8th Corps and the Mobile Corps occupied Carpatho-Ukraine. Hungarian troops that occupied parts of Ukraine after 1940 were subordinate to the German command.

1942 Beregszasz to Budapest registered letter. Magyar Kiralyi Allamvasutak Allomasfonoksege (Royal Troop Railway security) handstamp marking in purple. Paid the 70 filler domestic registered letter rate (reverse, not shown).
4.4 Soviet Occupation of Western (Polish) Ukraine

1941 Lvov to Wichita, Kansas, registered letter. Lvov CCCP Lviv 16 serial B handstamp postmark. Paid the 50 kopeck international letter rate plus the 80 kopeck registration rate for a total fee and franking of 130 kopeck. Notice the mixed Russian, Ukrainian (postmark) and Polish (registration mark) spellings of the city.
1940 Leva, Hungary, to Lwow POW card. Lviv Lvov 26 serial b handstamp postmark. Note same correspondence, slightly different circumstances, next page, top.

1941 Lvov TPO to Yoshkar-Ola postal stationary. Lviv CCCP Lvov Zh. D. L. O. machine postmark. Paid the 20 kopeck intercity postcard rate. Addressed to a barracks at Yoshkar-Ola, probably a political prisoner camp (from which few returned).
1942 Leva to Lemberg (Lwow) POW card, top. German censor machine postmark in red. Same correspondence as postcard on previous page, top.

1943 Kosow to Eisfeld packet card, right. Kosow Volyn (Dist. galizien) handstamp postmark. Paid 150 pfennigs based on weight.
4.6 Reichkommisariat Ukraine (German Dienstpost)


1941 Dnepropetrowsk to Vienna, Austria registered letter. Mute cancellation. Paid the 15 pfennig treaty letter rate plus the 30 pfennig registration rate for a total fee and franking of 45 pfennigs. Location given by registration label and return address.
1942 Nikolajew to Nordhausen registered letter. Nikolajew Duetsche Dienstpost Ukraine serial e handstamp postmark. Paid the 24 pfennig 2nd weight unit letter rate plus the 30 pfennig registration rate for a total fee and franking of 54 pfennig.

4.7 Romanian Military and Transnistria

1942 Cernauti to Berlin registered postcard. Cernauti 1 handstamp postmark and cenzurat 9 censor marking. Paid the 12 lei postcard rate plus the 20 lei registration rate for a total fee and franking of 32 lei.

1943 Oceacov to Budapest postal card. Oceacov handstamp postmark and cenzurat Oceacov No 1 censor marking. Paid the 12 lei postcard rate. According to new research, Transnistria stamps and postal stationery were valid only in Transnistria, not in all of Romania.
Reverse of Cetatea business letter at 130% showing Cetatea Alba handstamp postmark and tax tamp.

1943 Tighina to Cetatea Alba letter. Cetetea Alba receiving handstamp postmark, top. Paid the 6 lei business letter rate, where bisectioned 12 lei equals 6 lei. 2 lei non-postal "social assistance: tax stamp applied and paid, levied on 30% of the postage."
1944 Omsk-Leninsk to Dnipropetrovsk folded letter. CCCP Dnipropetrovsk small and large receiving handstamp postmark. Prosmotreno Voyenniy Censur censor mark. Paid the 30 kopeck domestic letter rate, reverse, not shown.

1945 Odessa to FPO 57051 folded letter. CCCP Odessa, etc. handstamp postmark.
1944 FPO 92080 to Kharkov postal stationery. CCCP Polevaya Pochta handstamp postmark and CCCP Kharkov handstamp postmark, and Prosmotreno Voyenniy Censor censor mark.
Ukraine Postal History 1900-1945

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This work has won an American Philatelic Society vermeil award, and a grand award from the Ukrainian Philatelic Society (Chicago).

All transliterations are my own, and follow no specific transliteration scheme.

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