

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Independent Ethiopian Posts

INCOMING MAIL TO DIRE DAOUA

1904

Starting in 1903, travelers to Ethiopia arrived in Dire Daoua by train from Djibouti as did the mail which was given to the mail couriers of the French PO in Harar since Dire Daoua did not have a post office until November 1, 1906.



June 9, 1904

Oxford, U.K. to Dire Daoua
via Aden and Djibouti
Registered

FIRST DIRE DAOUA CANCELOR (Never Introduced)

1905

Michel, Director of the Ethiopian Posts, ordered a cancelor in 1905 for a post office he planned for Dire Daoua, but it was never opened. However, he used it to cancel a few philatelically prepared covers and cards.

March 22, 1906

10c "Menelik I" issued in
1906 CTO with Dire Daoua.



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MAIL FROM OUTSIDE ADDIS ABABA AND HARAR

1903 / 1904

There were no post offices outside Addis Ababa and Harar until November 1, 1906 when one was opened in Dire Daoua. In 1903 into 1906, French, Italian, and other employees of the railway, and visitors, gave their mail to someone on the train franked with Djibouti stamps to be mailed in Djibouti. This mail sometimes originated in villages along the railway. Unless dated in a villages this mail cannot be identified as having originated in Ethiopia.



January 6, 1903 and November 30, 1904: Adagalla, a village on the railway inside Ethiopia, to Italy. Franked 10 centimes Somali Coast with black center (1903 issue)
Cards handed to someone on the train and posted in Djibouti.



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INCOMING MAIL—RETURN TO SENDER

1904

The statistics of the Ethiopian Posts indicate that 4,009 incoming letters were received in Addis Ababa in 1904, but only four of them have been recorded as preserved. If the incoming mail was undeliverable, it was returned to the sender marked "RETOUR A L'ENVOYEUR" - Return to Sender.

ONE OF ONLY TWO RECORDED "RETURN TO SENDER" COVERS FROM 1895-1908



November 5, 1904

Grossalmerode, Walburg, Germany to Addis Ababa

Cover marked "Parti" ("has left") in manuscript and marked in French "Return to Sender."

Arrived back in Grossalmerode on December 17.

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Ethiopian Posts Managed by Michel

FOURTH OVERPRINT: "MALEKATH" (Unauthorized & Unissued)

NOVEMBER 1904

The Director of the Ethiopian Posts, Mühle, had died from small pox in July 1903. Harar's Postmaster, Michel, was made Director in October 1904. One of his first acts was to make a new overprint "Malekath." Alfred Ilg did not authorize it to be issued. A very small quantity of stamps (initially 100 sets) were handstamped in light blue and in later years in violet. Only two philatelic covers Michel sent in 1906 with the entire set are known.

ONLY RECORDED COMMERCIAL USE OF "MALEKATH"

June 1, 1906
Harar to Porrentruy,
Switzerland

Franked with
1/4 g "malekath" and
1/4 g "melekt" = correct
postage of 1/2 g and
10 centimes in Djibouti
stamps.



ONE OF TWO COVERS WITH FULL SET OF "MALEKATH"

February 18, 1906,
Harar to Hamburg
Registered philatelic
cover franked with
blue and violet
"Malekath."

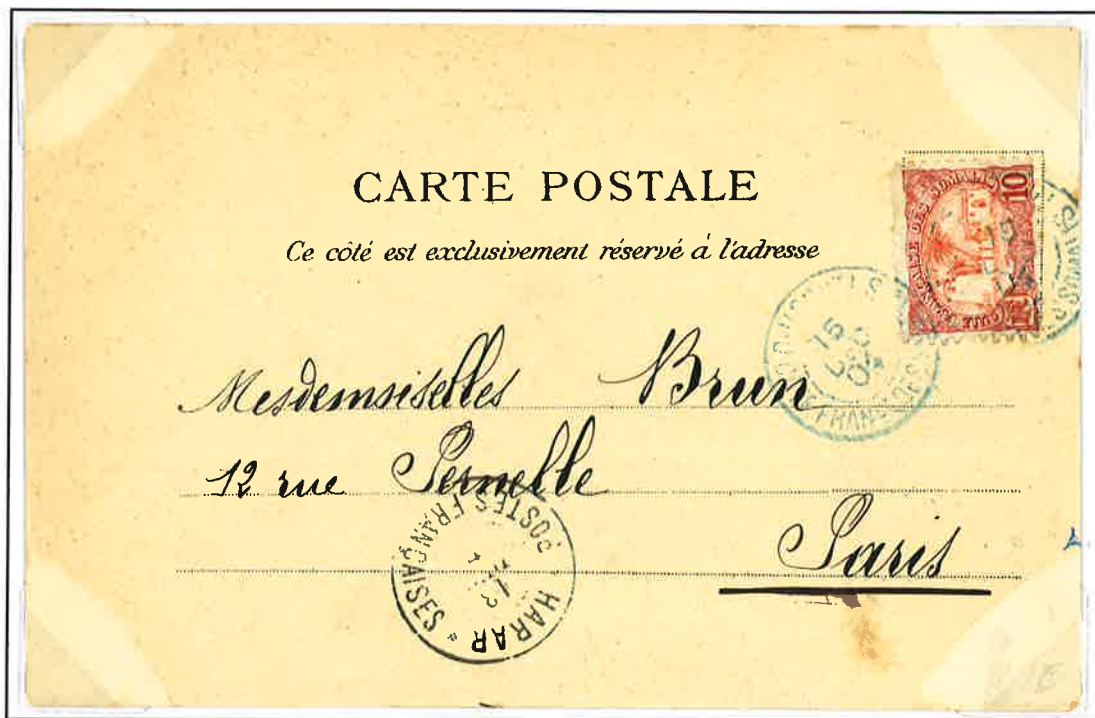
ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Ethiopian Posts Managed by Michel

MAIL FROM FRENCH POST OFFICE IN HARAR

1904

The French PO in Harar did not require Ethiopian postage on mail handed to it since the mail was delivered directly to Djibouti. This mail, appearing as if it originated Djibouti, can be identified when postmarked at the French PO.



December 13, 1904

Harar to Paris

No Ethiopian franking

Harar Postes Françaises used as departing mark.

Stamp canceled in Djibouti.

FRENCH LEGATION MAIL

1905

The French Legation in Addis Ababa had its own mail couriers to bypass the Ethiopian Posts. Unless marked as originating in Ethiopia, this mail cannot be identified. Most of this mail was between French government officials and has been destroyed or survives in official archives inaccessible to collectors.



[Reduced 70%]



December 1905

Addis Ababa to Paris

Official unfranked mail

Seal of French Legation in Addis Ababa on the back.

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Ethiopian Posts Managed by Michel

BRITISH LEGATION MAIL

1904 / 1906

The British Agency (later the British Legation) in Addis Ababa had its own couriers as of 1898 that brought its mail and that of British subjects via Harar to Zaila, and after 1904, via Djibouti to Aden where the mail, franked with Indian stamps, was posted. Unless marked as originating in Ethiopia, this mail is impossible to identify and is very rare. The British Legation's courier service continued well past 1913. As a result, less than 25 covers addressed to Britain and sent through the Ethiopian Posts have been recorded from 1895-1908.



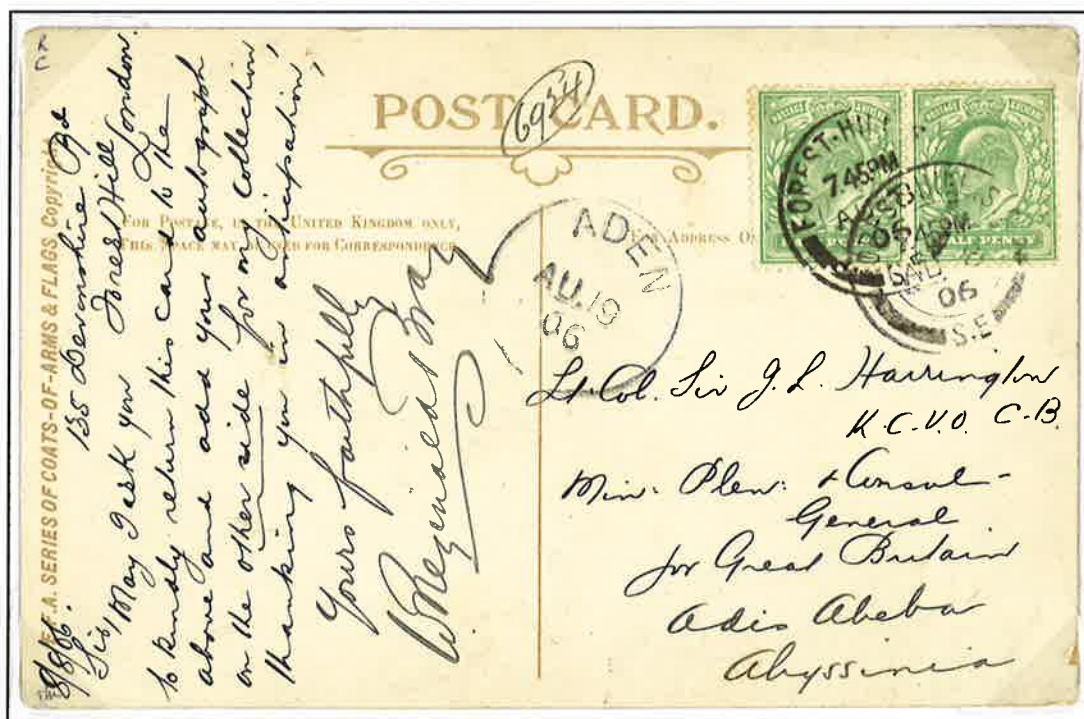
ONE OF TWO RECORDED BRITISH AGENCY MAIL COVERS

October 2, 1904

British Agency courier from Addis Ababa
to Djibouti and Aden
then by mail from Aden to Bombay



[Reduced 50%]



ONLY RECORDED INCOMING BRITISH LEGATION MAIL

August 8, 1906

Forest Hill to Aden.
Aden to Addis Ababa via
British Legation courier.

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Ethiopian Posts Managed by Michel

FIFTH OVERPRINT: "NUMERALS" - VALUES IN CENTIMES

JANUARY 1, 1905

The silver-based Ethiopian thaler was divided into 16 copper guerches. Silver fell against copper in 1904; 1 thaler was now worth 12 guerches. The French franc was gold-based. In 1905, 1 thaler = 2.40 francs; 16 guerches = 3.60 francs; 1 guerche = 20 centimes. To restore the relationship in postal rates, the Ethiopian letter rate for abroad was reduced to 1 guerche (20 centimes). The internal letter rate remained at 1 guerche. The internal post card rate was 10c and 20c for abroad, but not systematically applied. An Ethiopian registration fee of 20 centimes was introduced. The new rates necessitated overprinting stamps with values in centimes. The 1g postal card was overprinted 10 and 20 centimes.



August 2, 1905

Addis Ababa to Zurich

Single weight

20 Ethiopian centimes +

25 French centimes



POSTAL CARD "10"

March 10, 1905

Harar to Zanzibar

Posted at French post office in Harar.

10 Ethiopian centimes +

10 French centimes

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Ethiopian Posts Managed by Michel

POSTAL CARDS OVERPRINTED "5 c/m"

1905

A small quantity of the 1 g cards was overprinted "5 c/m." Only three cards have been recorded used in the mails.



**A RARE ITEM
ORIGINATING FROM
OUTSIDE HARAR AND
ADDIS ABABA**

**Pre-canceled March 20
July 12, 1905**

Aoura Malka
(a plantation on the
route to Addis Ababa)
to Bern

Franked 10 centimes
Djibouti (black center)
issued in 1903.

HARAR'S BOXED REGISTRATION MARK

FEBRUARY 1905-OCTOBER 1906

Michel introduced a boxed registration mark for registered mail from Harar. A similar mark was not made for Addis Ababa, where registration continued to be indicated with a handwritten "Recommandée." Use of the boxed Harar registration mark ended in October 1906 when Michel moved to Addis Ababa.



September 15, 1905, Harar to Hamburg; Registered, philatelic franking. Correct Somali Coast postage.

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

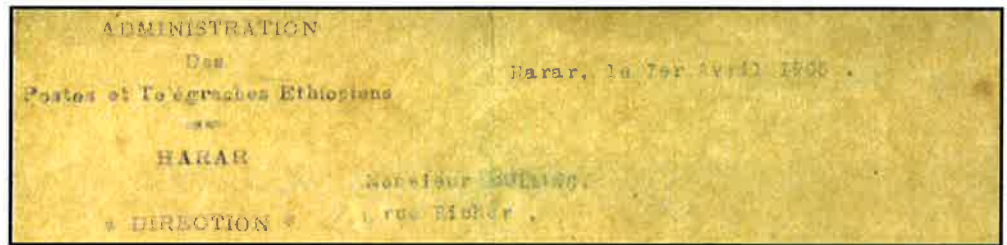
Ethiopian Posts Managed by Michel

THE HARAR PROVISIONALS—MICHEL'S LETTER TO BOLLING

JANUARY-MARCH 1905

On April 1, 1905, Michel wrote to Bolling, a dealer in Paris, listing all stamps issued by the Ethiopian Posts since 1895 to April 1, 1905. Stamps with the various overprints were added to the letter. Its purpose was to announce "The Harar Provisionals," stamps overprinted "Ethiopie," "Bosta," and "Melekt" to which Michel had added "05" claiming a shortage of low values had developed in Harar in early 1905 even though the "Numerals" had just been issued. In February, the 1/2 g was overprinted "5 c/m" and bisected; on March 30, 500 stamps each with "Bosta" and "Melekt" were overprinted "5 Centimes." There was no shortage; it was Michel's excuse to sell provisionals to collectors for personal profit. He even described an error—a "Bosta" stamp with O5 instead of 05!

[Letter head reduced 70%]



Par erreur, la valeur sur quelques timbres fut impressionnée à l'envers.

Fin janvier, février et mars les timbres de 0,05 faisant défaut furent remplacés par des timbres de 1/4 de guêrche à surcharge successive d'Ethiopie, *፬ኛው*, et *መልክት* portant la surcharge 05; quelquesuns avec *፬ኛው* furent surchargés à titre d'essai avec 05. Enfin après épuisement de ceux-ci les timbres orange de 0,10 furent coupés en deux de la base droite au sommet gauche et chaque partie surchargée de 5 c/m.

Le 30 mars, les timbres de 0,05 faisant de nouveau défaut, l'Administration des Postes Ethiopiennes décida de surcharger 500 timbres de 16 guêrches de l'émission 1902 ainsi que le même nombre de 1903 avec 5 centimes.

Ici s'arrête pour le moment l'histoire des

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Ethiopian Posts Managed by Michel

HARAR PROVISIONALS—VALUE DECLARED COVER

JUNE 1905

The Harar Provisionals were made for collectors. Michel used some to frank covers to his brother, who sold them in Switzerland, and to frank covers to stamp dealers to demonstrate that the stamps were used in the mails and to get them catalogued. Only the bisected "5 c/m" overprinted stamp was used commercially in Harar.



RARE VALUE DECLARED COVER WITH HARAR PROVISIONALS

June 18, 1905
Harar to Berne
Registered
Value Declared
"500 Francs"

The rarity of value declared covers has made it impossible to determine what the Ethiopian fee was.

Ethiopian franking:
30 centimes (under-franked) / not matching any current rate since mailed by the Director of Posts.

Note 05 "error stamp"



French franking:
2.20 francs, but one stamp missing.

Rare use of 1 franc Somali Coast stamp (1903 issue).

Cover was damaged in transit and resealed by the Swiss authorities noting the declared weight of 91 grams had declined to 89.5 grams.

[Reduced 50%]

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Ethiopian Posts Managed by Michel

HARAR PROVISIONALS – RARE COMMERCIAL USE

1905 / 1906

The “Bosta” and “Melekt” stamps with “5 Centimes” are known used in the mails by Michel only. However, the rare “Bosta + O5” error was used in 1906 on a post card also franked with a stamp of the “Menelik I” issue of 1906.



June 4, 1905

Harar to Bern

Registered

Ethiopian franking:

“Bosta” + “5 Centimes”

“Ethiopie” + “05”

Front of cover that had other stamps on its back.

In 1905, Michel began to under frank his own mail while using correct Djibouti postage.

ONLY RECORDED
COMMERCIAL USE OF
“BOSTA + O5” “ERROR”

May 26, 1906
Harar to Port-Said

Ethiopian franking:
“Bosta + O5” error
With a 05 “Menelik I”



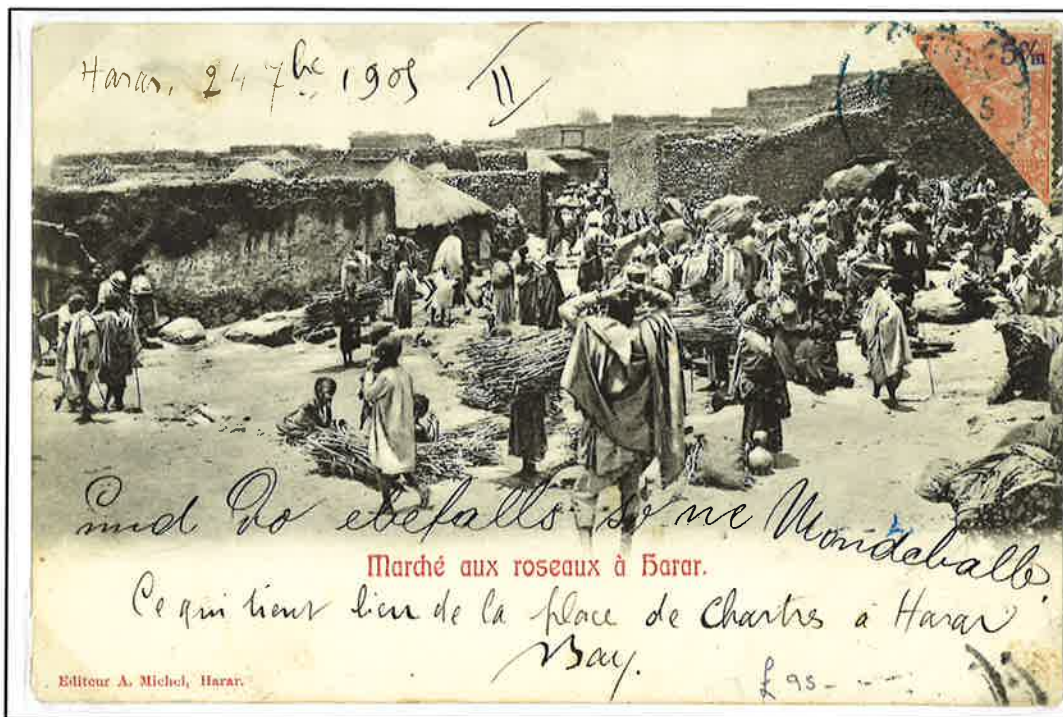
ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Ethiopian Posts Managed by Michel

HARAR PROVISIONALS—COMMERCIAL USE OF BISECTS

1905

Bisected 1/2 guerche stamps with the "5 c/m" overprint were used regularly on commercial mail at the Ethiopian and French post offices in Harar in 1905; most frequently on post cards. In 1905, Michel introduced a reduced Ethiopian post card rate of 5 centimes from Harar while it remained 10 centimes from Addis Ababa.



Top half
of bisect.

February 10, 1905, Harar to France; Franked "5 c/m" at Ethiopian PO in Harar.

Bottom half
of bisect.



April 25, 1905, Harar to Porrentruy; Franked "5 c/m" at French PO in Harar.

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Ethiopian Posts Managed by Michel

POSTAGE DUES TO PAY POSTAGE ON INCOMING MAIL

APRIL-AUGUST 1905

The volume of incoming mail was larger than that of outgoing mail. To cover the costs of carrying the mail from Harar to Addis Ababa, Michel created postage dues to collect the fee for internal postage. The fee for incoming mail to Addis Ababa and locations outside Harar was collected in Harar into October 1906 and then in Addis Ababa after Michel had moved to Addis Ababa. The postage dues were not used for short-paid mail—postage due for short-paid mail is not recorded until 1908. Two postage due issues were handstamped; with T and T with a foot. The latter was rarely used.

EARLIEST RECORDED USE OF "T" POSTAGE DUE TO PAY INTERNAL POSTAGE RARE EARLY INCOMING MAIL TO DIRE DAOUA



April 16, 1905, Djibouti to Dire Daoua, via Harar and back to Dire Daoua.

Dire Daoua, the terminus of the railway, did not have a post office until 1906.

Internal postage of 1 guerche (4*1/4 g) paid in Harar, April 20.

Only recorded use of 1/4g "T" postage due on cover.

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

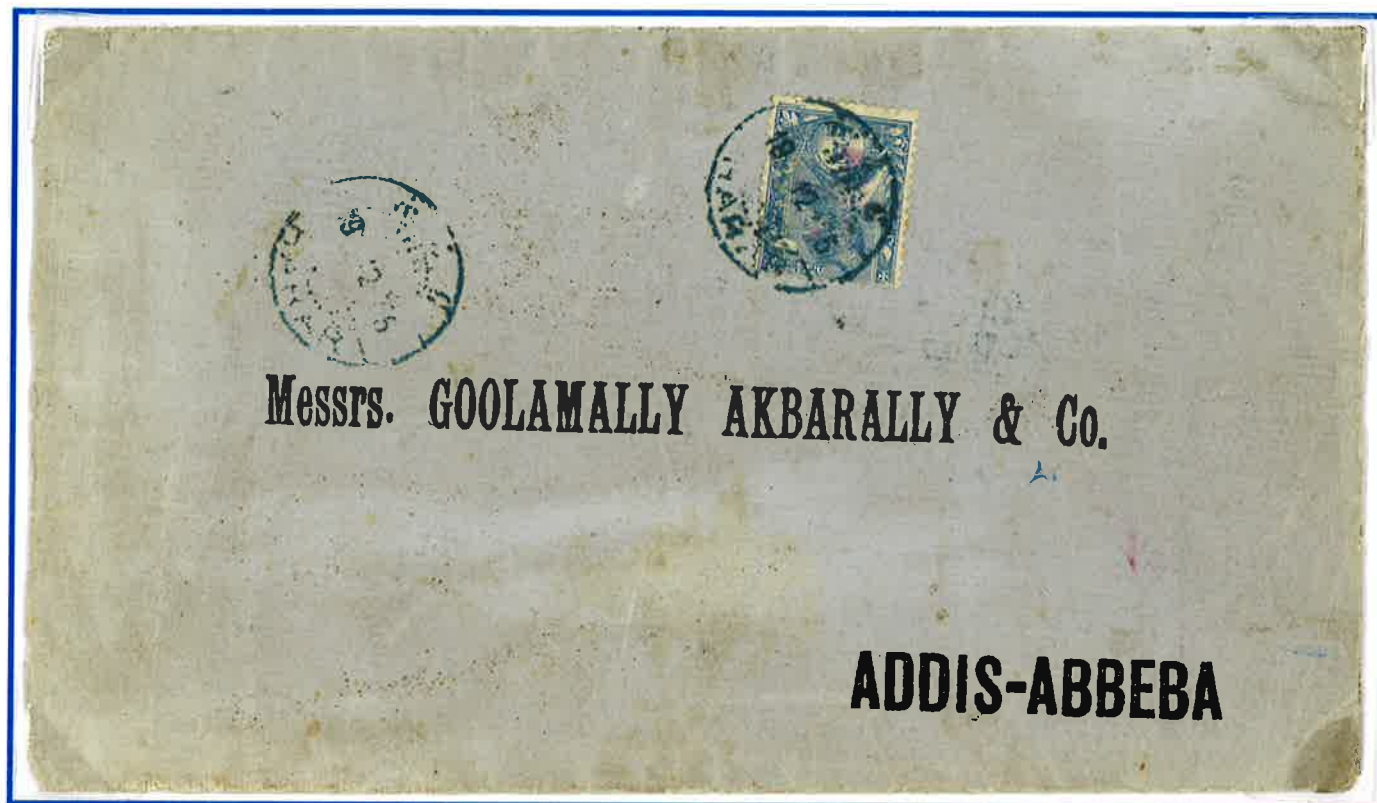
Ethiopian Posts Managed by Michel

POSTAGE DUE ON INCOMING MAIL

1905

The postage due **T** with a foot was rarely used. It has been recorded used commercially on only one incoming cover while only one philatelic cover franked with the entire set, used as regular postage, has been recorded.

ONLY RECORDED USE OF "T WITH A FOOT" TO PAY THE INTERNAL POSTAGE FEE



Above:

December 2, 1905,
Bombay to Addis Ababa

Franked 10 x 3 pies,
1 guerche Ethiopian
postage due paid in
Harar, December 19.

ONLY RECORDED
COVER WITH A
FULL SET OF THE
"T WITH A FOOT"
POSTAGE DUES

February 18, 1906, Harar to Hamburg

Registered cover philatelically franked with set of T postage dues and 75 centimes Côte des Somalis.

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

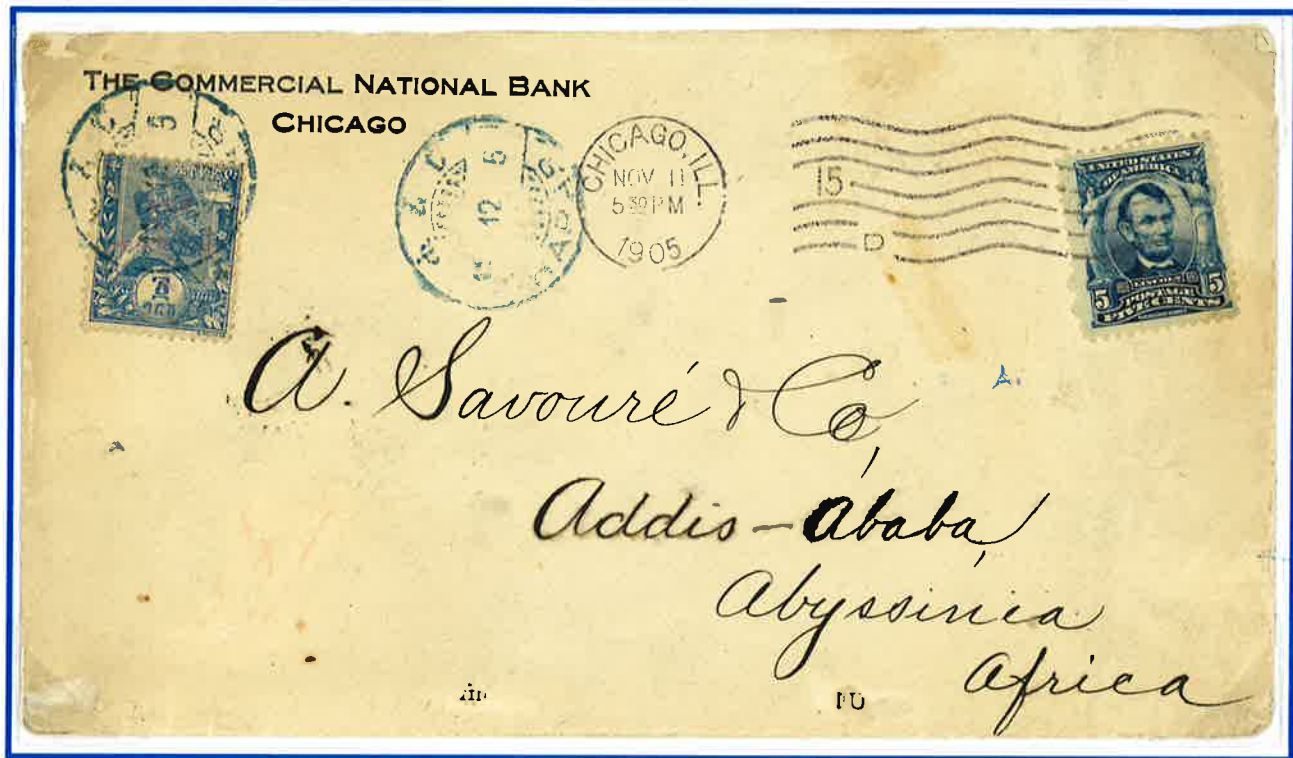
Ethiopian Posts Managed by Michel

THIRD POSTAGE DUE ISSUE – “TAXÉ à PERÇEVOIR”

SEPTEMBER 1905

In September 1905, the two “T” postage dues issues were replaced with stamps overprinted “Taxé à Perçevoir.” This third postage due issue was used in Harar into October 1906; then in Addis Ababa after Michel had moved there. It was used into late 1907 although a fourth postage due issue was introduced in mid 1907.

ONLY RECORDED INCOMING COVER FROM THE UNITED STATES TO ADDIS ABABA IN 1895-1908



November 11, 1905

Chicago to Addis Ababa

Franked 5 cents (correct, single weight rate)

1 guerche postage due for inland postage (“Taxé à Perçevoir”) paid in Harar, December 11, 1905

Travel time: 1 month

Armand Savouré was Emperor Menelik’s arms dealer.

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Ethiopian Posts Managed by Michel

THIRD POSTAGE DUE ISSUE – “TAXÉ à PERÇEVOIR”

1905

The volume of incoming mail to Ethiopia was larger than the volume of outgoing mail, but less than 70 incoming covers and cards have been recorded from 1895-1908.



September 1905

Bologna to Addis Ababa

Franked 25 centimes (correct, single weight rate)

1 guerche postage due for inland postage (“Taxé à Perçevoir”) paid in Harar, October 9, 1905