

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

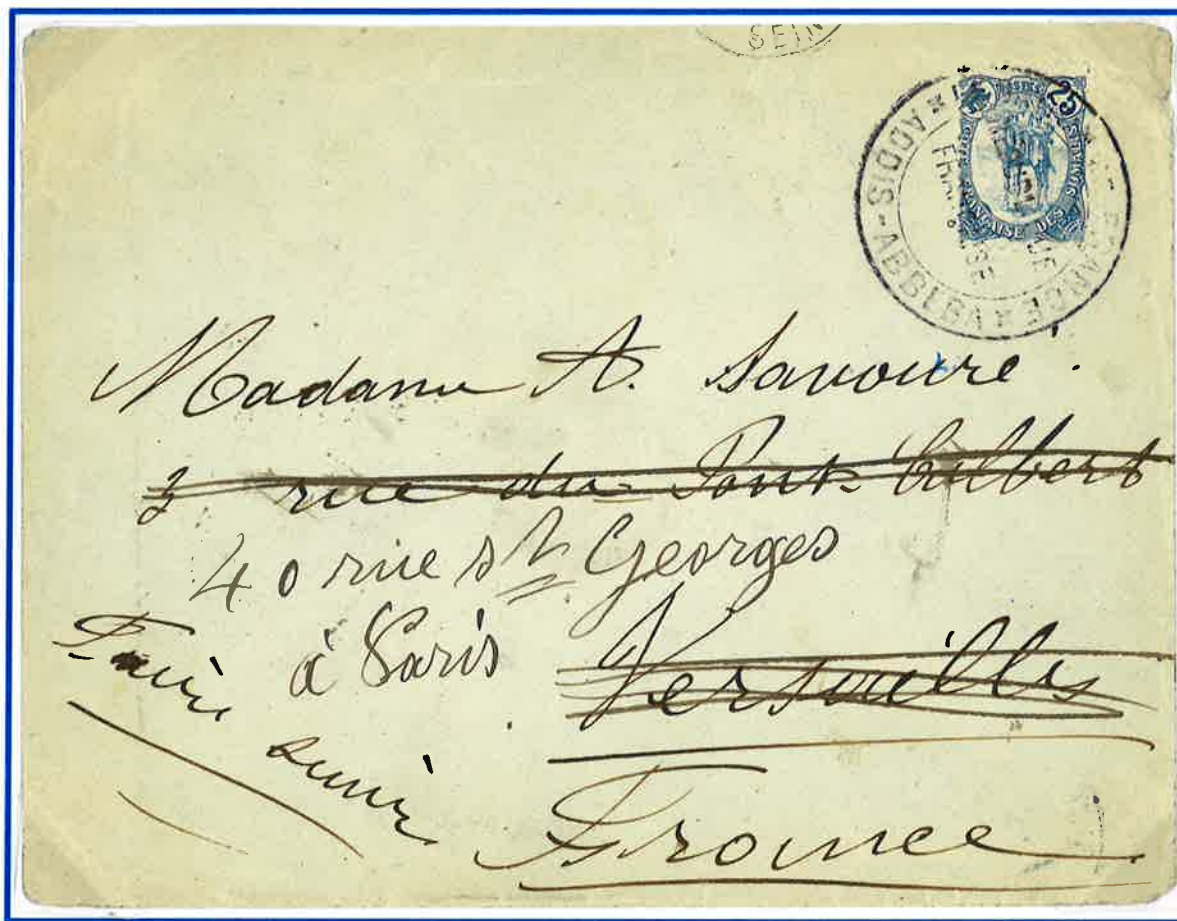
Imperial Ethiopian Posts

FRENCH LEGATION IN ADDIS ABABA POST MARK

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1907

In the very last months of 1907, when the Ethiopian Posts was about to close, the French Legation in Addis Ababa used a postmark that read "Legation de France * Addis-Abbeba" with "République Française" in its center and without a date to cancel the mail from the public that was carried by its private couriers to Dire Daoua.

ONE OF THREE RECORDED COVERS CANCELED WITH THE RARE "ADDIS-ABBEBA * LEGATION DE FRANCE" POSTMARK



Early November 1907, Addis Ababa to Versailles, redirected to Paris.

25 centimes (1902 issue)

Transit in Djibouti, November 12

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Reorganization & U.P.U. Membership

REORGANIZATION OF THE ETHIOPIAN POSTS

JANUARY-OCTOBER 1908

The Ethiopian Posts closed in December 1907 or January 1908 when the French began to reorganize the Posts at Menelik's request. Michel handed over his stock of stamps to the French in February 1908, who validated the use of all old issues for postage. During the reorganization (January-October), the Ethiopian and Somali Coast stamps were, for the first time, canceled together at the Ethiopian post offices. The rate for a letter abroad was changed from 2 to 1 guerche; the rate for a letter to Djibouti was increased from 1 to 2 guerches. Ethiopian registration fee was 2 guerches.

Five French postal clerks arrived in Ethiopia in May 1908 and were assigned to the post offices in Addis Ababa, Harar and Dire Daoua. The French PO in Harar was closed in June. It gave its postal material to the Ethiopian Posts. The Dire Daoua PO was brought under Ethiopian control.

New cancelors were introduced: "HARRAR POSTES" and "ADDIS ABABA POSTES." The French had prepared them in 1904 when they planned to open post office in Harar and Addis Ababa.

"FRANÇAISES," part of the text of each cancelor was removed. The "Dirre Daoua Abyssinie" cancelor continued to be used to the end of 1912, while the "Adis Abeba" cancelor continued to be used for over a decade.



May 29, 1908, Addis Ababa to Athens; double weigh: 2g "Ethiopie" + 50c.

RATE FOR CARD WITH FIVE WORDS OR LESS

October 9, 1908
Harar to Vienna

1/4 g unoverprinted
paying "five word rate"
5c Djibouti (1903).
Both stamps canceled
with HARRAR POSTES



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Reorganization & U.P.U. Membership

INTERNAL MAIL DURING THE REORGANIZATION

1908

Preserved internal mail remains scarce in the immediate years after Ethiopia joined the U.P.U. but it is comparatively common from 1908 compared to 1895-1907: half of the 38 recorded internal covers from 1895-1908 are from 1908.



July 24, 1908

Addis Ababa to Harar

Arrival, August 2

Unoverprinted 1 guerche paying internal, single weight rate.

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Reorganization & U.P.U. Membership

INTERNAL MAIL DURING THE REORGANIZATION

1908

Recorded internal mail between Addis Ababa and Harar is more common than mail between Harar and Dire Daoua in 1908, most likely because many of the preserved internal covers were addressed to Michel in Addis Ababa.

September 20, 1908
Dire Daoua to Harar

1 guerche internal
rate, single weight

Arrival: September 20
HARRAR POSTES
on back.



June 6, 1908
Harar to Addis Ababa

1 guerche internal rate,
single weight

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Reorganization & U.P.U. Membership

FORTH POSTAGE DUE ISSUE (MID 1907)

MAY & SEPTEMBER 1908

A fourth postage due set for inland postage was issued mid 1907 using the "Taxé à Percevoir" dues overprint with values in guerche below. These postage dues have not been recorded on cover paying inland postage, but have been recorded on four covers used as normal postage during the reorganization in 1908.



May 1908

Addis Ababa to Berlin

1 guerche postage due of 1907 used to pay 1 guerche rate for single weight letter abroad.

BELOW:

September 4, 1908

Addis Ababa to Graz

Registered No. 156

1 guerche (pair of 1/2g postage due of 1907) paying single weight for abroad.

Although registration was 2g and 25c, which was not paid, the cover was not taxed, possibly because it was franked with postage dues.



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Reorganization & U.P.U. Membership

NINTH OVERPRINT: "PIASTRE & SCROLL"

AUGUST 14, 1908 - OCTOBER 1908

On August 14, 1908, the 1/2 guerche value handstamped "1 Piastre" with an ornamental scroll was issued. 1 piastre was equal to 1 guerche = 25 French centimes. The stamp was meant to be used when Ethiopia joined the U.P.U. but another piastre overprint was made for that purpose. Although reportedly 7,000 stamps were overprinted, their last recorded use on cover is in early October 1908.



October 2, 1908

Addis Ababa to Puget, France

Franked 1 piastre, internal postage and 25 centimes external postage, single weight.
Very late use of the "Piastre & Scroll" - not recorded on cover after October 5.
Arrival: Puget, October 25

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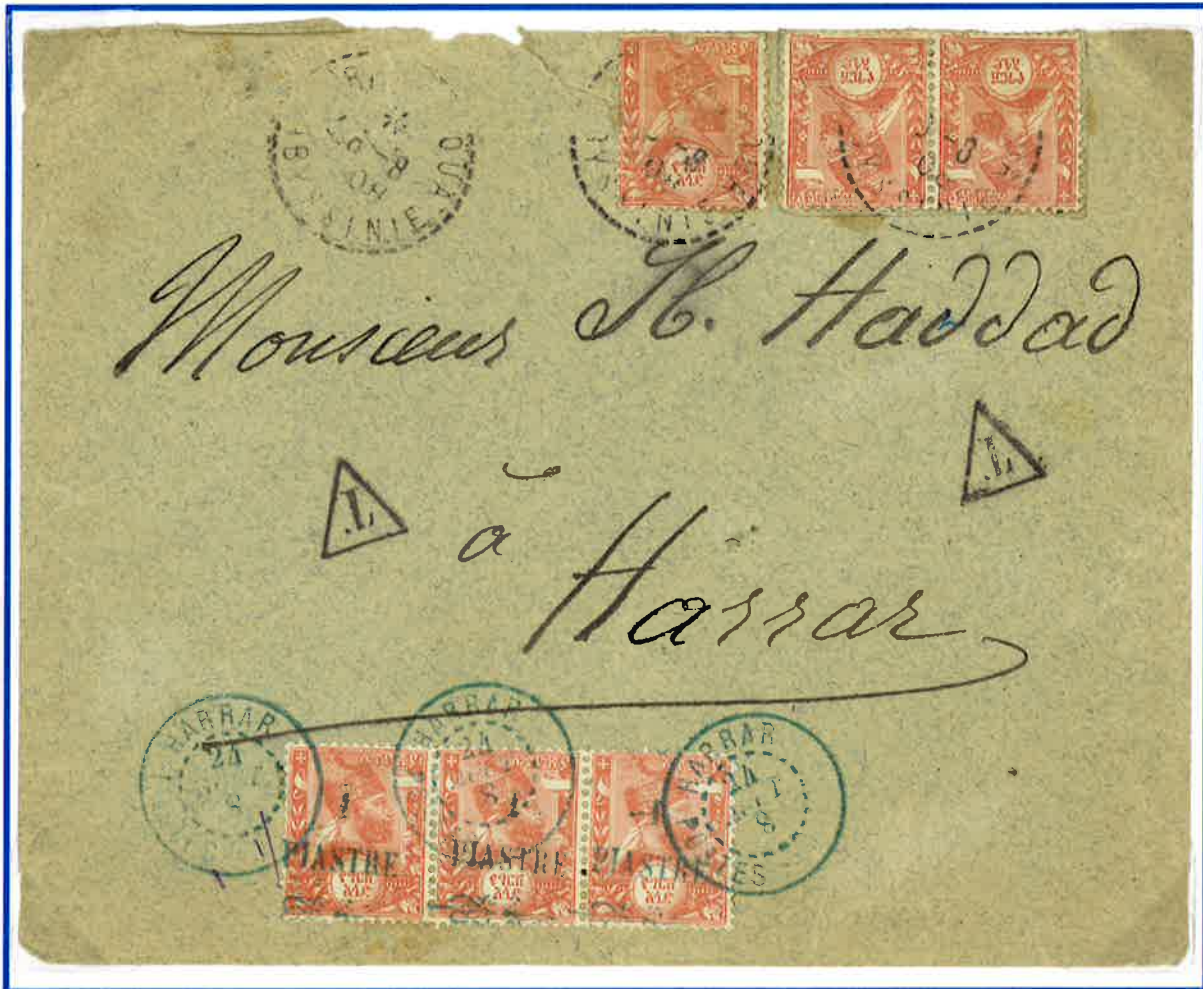
Reorganization & U.P.U. Membership

EARLIEST INSTANCE OF POSTAGE DUE PAID ON SHORT-PAID MAIL

AUGUST 1908

Ethiopia's postage dues of 1905, 1906, and 1907 were intended for inland postage on incoming mail; they were not used to pay the tax on short-paid mail. However, the French introduced a postage due service during the reorganization in 1908 but did not issue postage dues until December 1, 1908. The only recorded instance of postage due paid prior to December 1, 1908 is a usage of the "Piastre & Scroll" stamp.

EARLIEST AND ONLY RECORDED USE OF RECIENT PAYING POSTAGE DUE ON SHORT-PAID MAIL IN THE PRE U.P.U. MEMBERSHIP PERIOD



August 23, 1908

Dire Daoua to Harar

Arrival, August 23—HARRAR POSTES on back

Cover marked T for postage due in Dire Daoua, either because the sender had reused stamps, or because the unoverprinted 1/2g stamp was considered invalid since the "Piastre & Scroll" had been issued ten days earlier.

Postage due paid in Harar on August 24.

Internal rate was 1 guerche for single weight cover.

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Reorganization & U.P.U. Membership

MAIL DURING THE LAST DAYS PRIOR TO U.P.U. MEMBERSHIP

OCTOBER 1908

The "Piastre & Scroll" stamp was sold out in early October (or withdrawn) since it no longer appears on mail. Mail was again franked with unoverprinted or overprinted stamps of the 1895 issue, most frequently the 1 guerche value.



October 9, 1908

Addis Ababa to Graz, Austria
Via Brindisi, Italy.

1 guerche (1895), single weight
5 x 5c = 25c Somali Coast
All stamps canceled with
ADDIS ABABA POSTES

Sender: Von Kulmer who noted
important details about the
Ethiopian Posts in his diary
which was published by his
wife.

Von Kulmer died on the Red
Sea on his way back from
Ethiopia.

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Reorganization & U.P.U. Membership

U.P.U. MEMBERSHIP: "PIASTRE" OVERPRINT

NOVEMBER 1, 1908

Ethiopia joined the U.P.U. on November 1, 1908. Stamps from Djibouti and other U.P.U. countries were no longer required to frank mail addressed abroad. Panes of 25 stamps of the 1895 issue were overprinted with a printing press in Dire Daoua with values in piastres: 1 piastre was equal to 1 guerche.

The postal rates were set at:

Internal post card rate: 1/4g; external post card rate 1/2g (or 1/2 piastre)

Internal letter rate: 1g for first weight unit (15 grams) + 1g for each additional weight unit of 15 grams

External letter rate: 2g for first weight unit + 1g for each additional weight unit

Registration fee: 2 guerches

A new post office was opened at the market place "Arada" in Addis Ababa on July 20, 1908 as the post office near the Imperial Palace became the General Post Office in use until 1928. The two post offices were the only ones in Addis Ababa into the late 1920s. There was one post office in Harar and one in Dire Daoua. The mail continued to be carried by donkeys between Addis Ababa and the terminus of the railway in Dire Daoua.



November 11, 1908

Harar to Paris

Registered

4 piastres (2 piastres, single weight + 2 piastres for registration)

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Reorganization & U.P.U. Membership

U.P.U. MEMBERSHIP

NOVEMBER 1, 1908

The November 1, 1908 "Piastre" issue was provisional; a new set of stamps had been ordered in France but the printing was delayed. The "Piastre" stamps were used for three months through January 1909 when the new stamps arrived.



December 1, 1908
Harar to Pas de Calais

2 piastres, single weight

Cover sent by one of the
Catholic Sisters in Harar
tending to people with
leprosy.

USE OF HIGH VALUE 8 PIASTRES STAMP

January 27, 1909
Dire Daoua to Bern
Registered

2 piastres, single weight
2 piastres, registration
4 piastres for 4 extra
weight units, or
excessively franked to
please the recipient.



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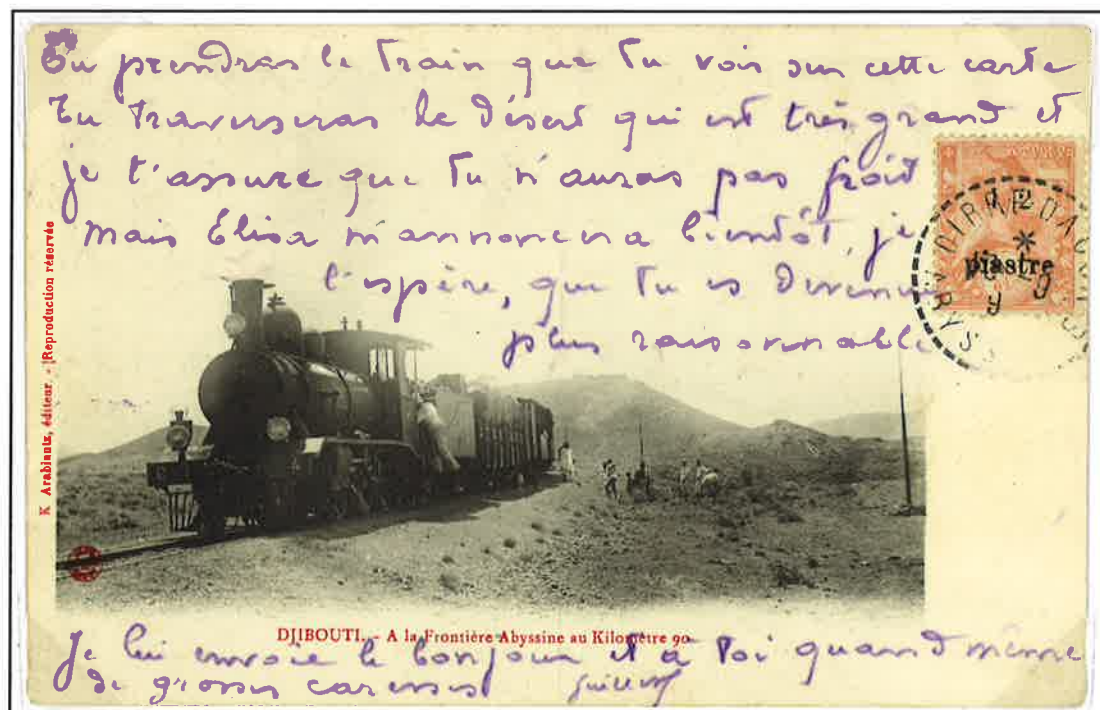
U.P.U. MEMBERSHIP

1908-1909

The November 1, 1908 "Piastre" issue was not declared invalid when the new set of stamps arrived from France and they were used for the first time on January 29, 1909. The "piastre" stamps continued to be used to frank mail as late as in 1912, most commonly used on post cards sent by the Postmaster in Dire Daoua.



December 18, 1908, Addis Ababa to Shrimm, Germany
1/2 Piastre (1908) paying post card rate—late use in 1908.



September 10, 1909, Dire Daoua to France
1/2 Piastre (1908) paying post card rate—late use after 1909 Definitives had been issued.
Photo: The train from Djibouti that transported all mail.

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Reorganization & U.P.U. Membership

FIFTH POSTAGE DUE ISSUE

DECEMBER 1, 1908

One month after joining the U.P.U., a set of postage dues was issued; the overprint, "ASKEFIL" in Amharic ("Make Him Pay") inside a triangle with a large T, was handstamped on all values of the 1895 issue. These postage dues were used to pay the tax on short-paid mail.

ONLY RECORDED INTERNAL COVER WITH POSTAGE DUE PAID FOR MISSING POSTAGE



September 6, 1909

Harar to Addis Ababa

1 guerche internal postage missing.

2 guerches (double the single weight internal rate) paid September 15 in Addis Ababa with postage due of December 1, 1908.

ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Reorganization & U.P.U. Membership

ROYAL ITALIAN COMMERCIAL AGENCY MAIL

1908-1913

Italy had been defeated at the Battle of Adwa in 1896 and had recognized Ethiopia as an independent nation, but Italy continued to have political interest in Ethiopia. In 1908, Italy negotiated to establish Royal Italian Commercial Agencies in a few towns in Ethiopia, including Dessie on the telegraph line from Addis Ababa to Eritrea. The agencies provided education and medical services, but their primary purpose was to advance Italy's interests in Ethiopia. They had their own mail couriers to Eritrea and used stamps and postal cards from Eritrea. They were issued cancelors with the town name and "ETIOPIA" below that were rarely used since it was offensive to the Ethiopian government. Most of this rare agency mail was post marked in Eritrean border towns like Adi Caie and Adi Ugri.

ONLY RECORDED COVER WITH THE RARE ITALIAN "DESSIE (ETIOPIA)" POSTMARK



September 14, 1913

Dessie, in Northern Ethiopia, to Piacenza, Italy
Redirected to Gropparello

Franked 15c Colonia Eritrea in Ethiopia with an additional 10c stamp likely placed on the missing cover-flap for single weight postage of 25c. Stamp canceled in Adi Caie, Eritrea on October 12. Arrival: Gropparello, October 18.

Sent by the Head of the Italian Agency in Dessie.

[Reduced 60%]



ETHIOPIA 1895-1913

Reorganization & U.P.U. Membership

INCOMING MAIL TO ITALIAN COMMERCIAL AGENCY IN DESSIE

1908-1913

The Royal Italian Commercial Agency couriers continued to operate into the late 1920s since small towns north of Addis Ababa and across Ethiopia did not receive Ethiopian post offices until the late 1920s. The Italian couriers also brought incoming mail that had arrived in Eritrea addressed to Ethiopia.

ONE OF TWO RECORDED INCOMING COVERS TO DESSIE'S COMMERCIAL AGENCY



February 18, 1913

Livorno to Dessie, via Asmara in Eritrea

Registered

40c Poste Italiane

Postmarked in Livorno

Transit: Adi Ugri, Eritrea, March 6, 1913.

Addressed to Filippo Marazzani Visconti, Head of the Italian Agency in Dessie.

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Reorganization & U.P.U. Membership

ROYAL ITALIAN COMMERCIAL AGENCY MAIL: DESSIE

1908-1913

The Royal Italian Commercial Agency mail that originated in Ethiopia was usually post marked in Eritrea. It is therefore unrecognizable from mail from Eritrea unless dated or otherwise marked as originating in Ethiopia.



January 9, 1908
Dessie to Piacenza

Colonia Eritrea postal card
franked with 10c Italian
stamp overprinted
"Colonia Eritrea."
Card addressed in Dessie,
carried to Adi Caie in Eritrea
where it was postmarked
January 30.



March 2, 1909
Dessie to Piacenza

10c Colonia Eritrea postal
card post marked in
Adi Caie on March 16.

Arrival: Piacenza, April 1

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Reorganization & U.P.U. Membership

ROYAL ITALIAN COMMERCIAL AGENCY MAIL: MACALLE / ASSAB

1908-1913

Macalle is a small town north of Dessie that the Italian mail couriers passed on their way to Eritrea. Two "Colonia Eritrea" postal cards addressed in Dessie have been recorded with the rare "MACALLE—ETIOPIA" postmark.

ONE OF TWO RECORDED CARDS WITH THE "MACALLE (ETIOPIA)" POSTMARK

November 3, 1908
Dessie to Piacenza

Card dated in Dessie,
post marked in blue with
"MACALLE (ETIOPIA)"
dated November 14.



ONE OF TWO RECORDED CARDS THAT LEFT ETHIOPIA VIA ASSAB ON THE RED SEA

February 10, 1910
Dioita to Piacenza

Dioita is a small village in
the Ethiopian Danakil
Desert, which at the time
was the autonomous
"Sultanate of Aussa."

Card written as the Italian
Agent explored a route
from Dessie to Assab in
Eritrea on the Red Sea.

Card carried to Assab
where it was canceled
February 28, then to
Massawa with transit
March 2.

