



THE SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY

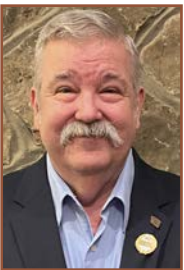
Bulletin 76, Winter 2026

Steve Volis, Nik Sorokin - Bulletin Editors

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President's Letter



Greetings from Alabama!

I hope everyone had a great holiday season and got that number-one cover you were hoping for. The weather here has been all over the map, just like in the rest of the country. Our Christmas week was very warm - temperatures in the 70s during the day and 60s at night. This New Year's week, however, we are seeing daytime temperatures in the 30s and 40s and nighttime temperatures in the 20s. At least we did not get snow like the Northeast.

As you are reading this, February will be almost over and we will already be looking ahead to March.

The year 2025 was a good one for Rossica. The exhibits at shows have been excellent. If you did not get out to see a few this year, you missed some very fine material. The show at WESTPEX was well attended, and

we had many visitors. The Great American Stamp Show (GASS) was also excellent (see my letter in the last journal for a full write-up). Our membership has held steady, as has our treasury.

We also held an officers' election, and you chose to keep the current board for another three years. Thank you for voting. One takeaway from the election process is that we need to find ways to attract new members who are interested in board service and allow them to participate in a meaningful way. This is on my 2026 list of things to do.

The year 2026 is shaping up to be another busy one. We are planning three membership meetings to be held at the Southeastern Stamp Expo (SESE), PIPEX, and BOSTON 2026. For SESE and PIPEX, we will be doing things a little differently. We will be convening as a society but will not have a booth. Instead, we will hold a membership meeting and present a program. Unfortunately, we simply do not have enough volunteers and officers to staff multiple booths each year.

I will be attending SESE, as it is just around the corner from where I live, and I will also be at PIPEX serving as a judge. If you have not yet submitted an exhibit to PIPEX, please do so now. As for BOSTON 2026, Rossica will have a full presence: a booth, exhibits, a membership meeting, and a program. Please plan to attend. Exhibits are already closed, but it is an international show and promises to be outstanding.

Please do not forget to pay your dues ASAP!

That's it for now. As I write this in January I am still not quite through the holiday season and still have much to do. I wish you a healthy, safe, and prosperous New Year. Take care of yourself and your family and enjoy our great hobby.

*Your President
Raymond Pietruszka*

New Rossica Members
We welcome the following new applicants into the Rossica Society:

- 2265 - Jan Huys, Liechtenstein
- 2266 - Yevgeny Shiryaev, Russia
- 2267 - Oleg Ulyanov, Germany



The Dubai 2026 World Stamp Exhibition was held on February 4–8, 2026, at the Sheikh Maktoum Hall in the Dubai World Trade Centre. Organized by the Emirates Philatelic Association (EPA) under the auspices of the Federation of Inter-Asia Philately (FIAP), this premier event features rare stamps, international dealers, and competitions, marking the first FIP Specialized World Stamp Exhibition in the UAE.

A total of 452 exhibits were presented and 44 of them were awarded Large Gold (LG) medals. Another 101 exhibits received Gold (G) medals.

The Rossica Philatelic Society was well represented at the exhibition by its members who received numerous high honors from the show's international jury. What follows is a list of medals won by Rossica's present and recent members at that exhibition and photographs taken at the Dubai Exhibition. Note that the list of medalists includes the points awarded for their exhibit. "SP" at the end of some listings denotes Special Prizes given for specific, exceptional components of an exhibit.

Traditional Philately - Europe

Liechtenstein: **Huys-Berlingin Jan** *Belgium: the 'Epaulettes' and the 40c Imperforate 'Medallions'* 96 LG

Russia: **Igor Kirzhner** *R.S.F.S.R. 1918-1923* 90 G

Russia: **Igor Ryss** *Postal emissions of Georgia 1919-1923* 91 G

Russia: **Sergey Tomskikh** *PERFINS: Russian Empire and Soviet Union. 1890-1928.* 86 LV

Ukraine: **Dmitry Frenkel** *Airmail stamps of RSFSR and USSR 1922-1940.* 95 LG

Postal History - Asia, Oceania, and Africa

Russia: **Alexander Mramornov** *Turkestan 1868-1917* 95 LG

Postal History - Europe

USA: **Semyon Brayman** *Zemstvo Postal History of Russian Empire 19th Century* 93 G SP

Germany: **Malov Vitaliy** *USSR, 1939-1941. Postal*

Service on incorporated Western Territories 90 G

Ukraine: **Dmitry Frenkel** *Postal history of foreign agencies Russian Society of Shipping and Trade (ROPiT)* 92 G

Ukraine: **Dmitry Frenkel** *Postal History of Odessa 1798-1900* 92 G SP

Thematic Philately - Nature

Australia: **Charles Bromser** *The Copernican Revolution - A History of Cosmology* 86 LV

Traditional - One Frame Exhibit

Poland: **Bogdan Pelc** *First Polish Republic. Military shipments exempt from fees and military censorship 1764-1795* 95 points

Philatelic Literature - Philatelic books and research papers

Russia: **Igor Ryss** *History of Kronstadt in postal documents 1704-1945* 92 G

Russia: **Yurii Obukhov** *Perm post. From yam chase to trains and steamships. 1598-1917* 90 G

Ukraine: **Vitaliy Katsman** *Famous collectors and researchers of the Zemstvo post. Brief biographies.*

Fragments of collections. in 2 volumes 86 LV

USA: **Semyon Brayman** *Disinfection of Correspondence in the Russian Empire* 92 G

Catalogs

Russia: **Valery Zagorskiy** *Catalog of postage stamps 1857-1965. Russian Empire, RSFSR, USSR* 80 V

Russia: **Valery Zagorskiy** *Revenue Stamps of Russia, Vol 1. Russian Empire and the Grand Duchy of Finland* 87 LV

Russia: **Valeriy Zagorskiy** *Revenue Stamps of Russia, Vol 2. Russia and Related Areas, USSR (1918-1991)* 87 LV

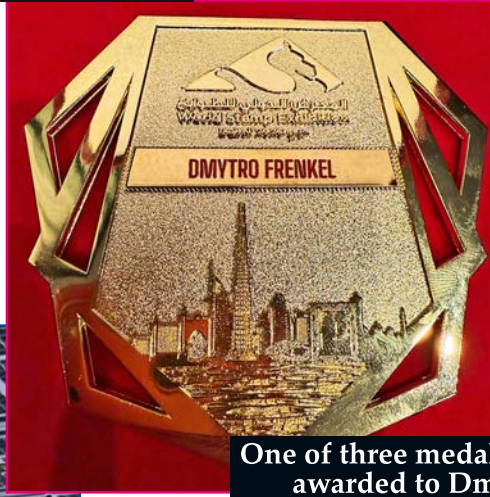
Ukraine: **Anton Shatylo** *RSFSR and USSR postage stamps. Special catalogue (1918-1940). Volume 1.* 90 G

Ukraine: **Michael Kramarenko** *Russika. Specialized catalog of Postal Signs 1845-1924* 91 G

NOTE: The Revenue Stamps of Russia catalogs were authored by Rossica's Librarian **Greg Mirsky** and **V. Zagorsky**.



Igor Ryss receiving his National Commissioner award. Also shown are his two competition gold medals along with their award certificates.



One of three medals, LG and two G, awarded to Dmytro Frenkel.



Large Gold medal awarded to Alexander Mramornov for his Turkestan exhibit.





Rossica's VP Semyon Brayman receiving a Gold medal award for his Zemstvo Postal History exhibit.



Large Vermeil awarded to Sergei Tomskikh for his perfins exhibit.



Gold medal awarded to Vitaliy Malov's study of the USSR's postal service on incorporated western territories from 1939 to 1941.



S. Brayman, D. Frenkel and others at the Dubai exhibition's banquet.

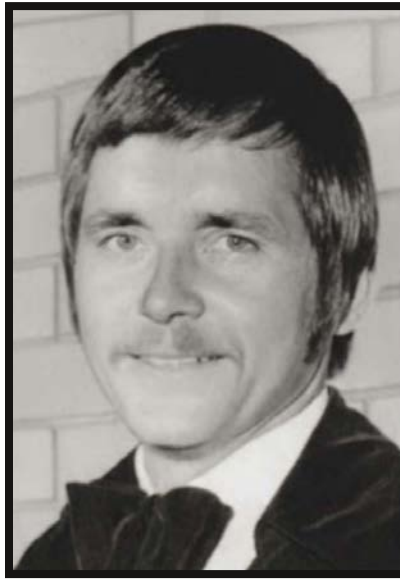
OBITUARY

John Bodnar 11.3.1950 — 20.4.2024

John was a dedicated member of the Rossica Society of Russian Philately for 30 years, holding membership number 1547.

John has been a member of the philatelic community in Adelaide for many years. From his local club, the Woodville Philatelic Society, John's interest in the philately of his parents' homeland saw him form notable collections of Russian and Ukraine material.

This interest expanded to the airmail service that operated between Kiev and Vienna at the end of WW1. The success John achieved with this study brought him to the attention of the late Nelson Eustis and he was invited to join the Australian Airmail Society, becoming a member in 2000. In



addition to John's role in the Australian Airmail Society, he was also a member of the Philatelic Society of South

Australia, the Postal Stationery & Postal History Society of Australia, several overseas study groups, and a past member of the Woodville Philatelic Society and the Ukrainian Collectables Club. He was also an avid collector of picture postcards and a foundation member and vice-president of the Australian Postcard Society.

In 2009 the Airmail Society successfully nominated John for the South Australian Philatelic Council's award for meritorious service to philately — The Briskham Award. He also trained as a judge of philatelic exhibits achieving both state and national qualification.

John leaves a substantial gap in philately that will be a challenge for any one person to fill.



A world-class philatelic exhibition is coming to Boston in May 2026.

The previous such expo in the United States was the 2016 World Stamp Show. The

Rossica Society participated in that expo and will do so again in Boston.

We will have our own table there and hold a general Rossica meeting.

Plan to attend if at all possible!

The show will run from Saturday May 23 through Saturday May 30.

Numbered Handstamps on Soviet Postal Items: 1930s–1950s

A Call for Information

by Mikhail Dymshits

The classification of numbered handstamps on Soviet mail from the 1930s through the late 1950s remains a subject of ongoing research and debate among philatelists. Traditionally, these markings were attributed to a directive from the People's Commissariat for Communications (NKS) regarding the use of personal handstamps by postmen. For many years, the prevailing consensus was to categorize all such numerical markings as "postman handstamps," even in instances where the explicit designation "postman" (почтальон) or a similar identifier was absent.

However, as more material from Moscow has been recorded and analyzed, a distinction has emerged. In addition to the standard postman handstamps—which were typically composite markings containing both a postman's identification number and a specific post office number—researchers have identified a separate category of purely numerical markings. Evidence suggests these were perustration (censorship) marks applied during mail transit or inspection.

Notably, one specific variant of these Moscow perustration handstamps has also been documented in use in Tula during the mid-1940s.

Recent findings have expanded the geographical scope of these unidentified numerical markings. Handstamps lacking any standard postal identifiers have now been recorded from

- Leningrad: Documented on a postcard featuring a "No. 21" handstamp within a rectangular frame (Figure 1).
- Rostov-on-Don: Documented on the reverse of a cover featuring a triangular "22" handstamp (Figure 2).

The author is seeking further information to clarify the distribution and official status of these markings. If readers have encountered similar numbered handstamps from these cities or other regions, or if they possess contemporary documents or decrees related to their implementation, your contributions would be invaluable to this study.

Email: mdymshits@yandex.ru



Figure 1. Leningrad: "No. 21"

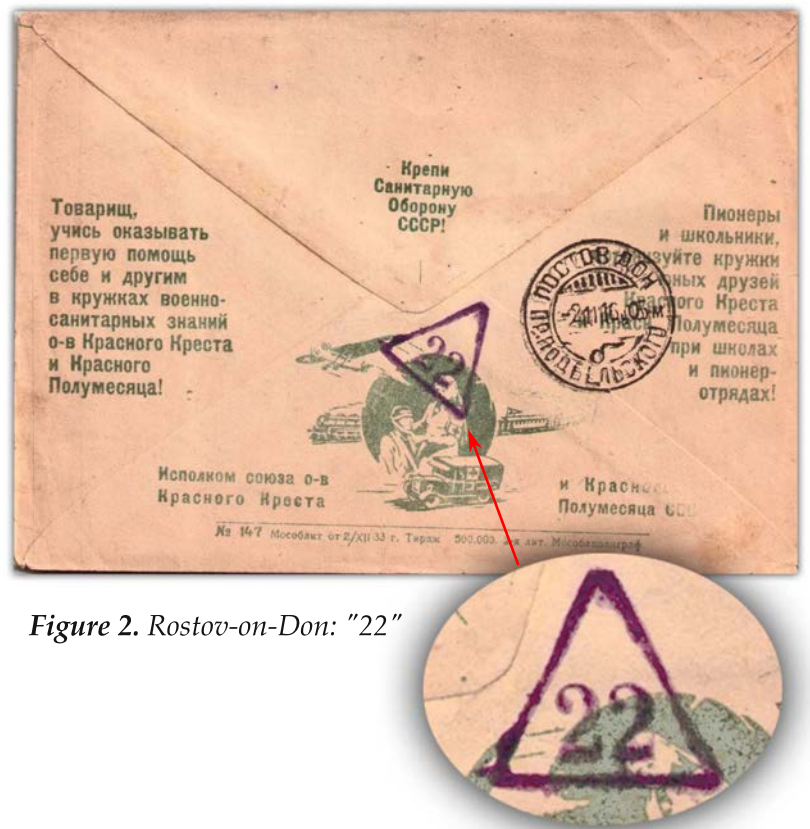


Figure 2. Rostov-on-Don: "22"

Insured/Valuable (Tsennoye) Letters Containing Travel Vouchers

by Mikhail Dymshits

Translated by Steve Volis

In Soviet postal history, Insured/Valuable (tsennoye) letters containing travel vouchers (putevki) constituted a specialized class of mail. Per Section 370 of the 1949 Postal Regulations, these items required a specific endorsement: The notation "with vouchers" (s putevkami) had to be placed on the envelope directly above the statement of declared value.

Special Handling and Delivery Regulations

The protocols for these items were significantly more rigorous than those for standard Insured/Valuable mail:

- **Notification:** The "with vouchers" endorsement was required on the face of the arrival notice (izveshcheniye) sent to the recipient.
- **Expedited Follow-up:** If the addressee failed to collect the item, a second notice was issued on the third day following the primary notice, rather than the standard fifth.
- **Chain of Custody:** Letter carriers were required to deliver notices against a signature in the Form 23 Logbook. It was strictly prohibited to leave these notices with neighbors, in PO boxes, or in apartment door slots.
- **Communal Living Context:** Delivery of the notice was permitted to adult family members or co-tenants of communal apartments (where the majority of urban citizens resided until the early 1970s) only with the addressee's explicit permission.
- **Internal Security:** Within the post office, these letters were transferred to the storage vault with a corresponding entry in the delivery bill.

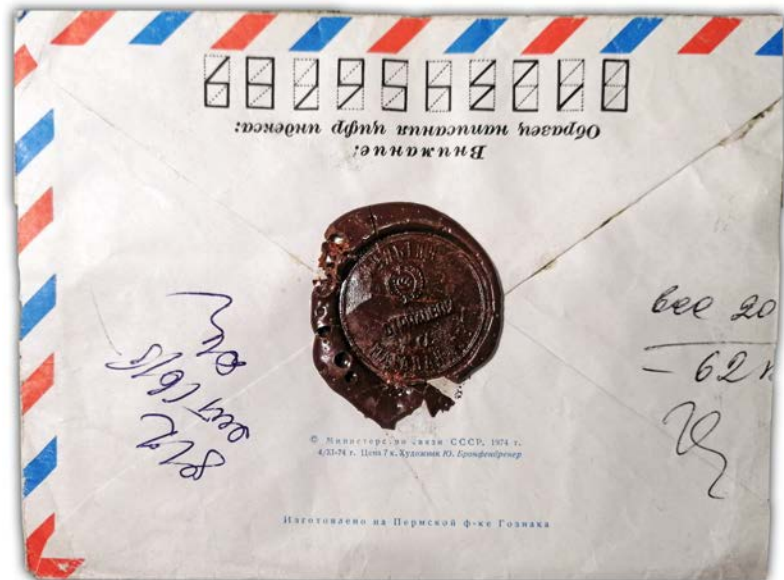
These strict security measures remained a staple of the 1962 and 1972 Postal Regulations.

A Rare Philatelic Example: Iultin to the Destination

Surviving examples of this mail category are exceptionally rare. One such Insured/Valuable (tsennoye) airmail letter was sent from the settlement of Iultin (Magadan Region) on May 5, 1975 (Figures 1a-b).

The postal charges for this item reflect a complex tariff calculation:

- **Theoretic Rate:** For a 20-gram airmail letter, the fees should have consisted of a 6-kopek weight surcharge, a 6-kopek registration fee



Figures 1a-b.

(totaling 12 kopeks), and a 40-kopek insurance fee (equivalent to a double money order fee), for a total of 52 kopeks.

- **Discrepancy:** In practice, 62 kopeks was collected. Research suggests the total should have actually been 46 kopeks if the 6-kopek indicium on the cover had been properly credited (Dymshits, 2021, p. 34).

- **Clerical Error:** During processing, a "Registered" (zakaznoye) handwritten notation was applied and subsequently crossed out, an action specifically prohibited by Postal Regulations for Insured/Valuable mail. Nevertheless, the letter reached the destination PO on May 16, where arrival notice No. 812 was issued.

References

1. M. Dymshits. *Domestic and International Rates for Written and Money Correspondence of the Russian Post, 1665–1991*. Moscow 2021, 78pp.
2. Postal Regulations. State Publishing House for Communications and Radio Literature, Moscow, 1949, 512pp.
3. Postal Regulations. Approved by Order No. 670 of Nov. 26, 1962, of the USSR Minister of Communications, Moscow, 1963, 349 pp.
4. Postal Regulations. Approved by Order No. 770 of Dec. 18, 1972, of the USSR Minister of Communications, Moscow, "Svyaz" 1973, 336 pp.



PIPEX 2026

This year's PIPEX show will be celebrating the 175th anniversary of Portland, OR. The Rossica Society will be participating in this event. The dates are May 1-3, 2026. PIPEX will take place in the Hilton Garden Inn in Clackamas, Oregon. Please plan to attend!

UKRPHILEX 2025, Odessa, Ukraine

The XXI National Philatelic Exhibition, UKRPHILEX 2025, was held in Odessa, Ukraine, from November 19–23, 2025. The event was dedicated to the Day of Dignity and Freedom. The show's catalog contained a section featuring some of the philatelic rarities that were exhibited at the show. We present a few of those items here in English language translation.



Exhibition Highlights

RARITIES FROM EXHIBIT COLLECTIONS

From the collection of Dmitry Frenkel.

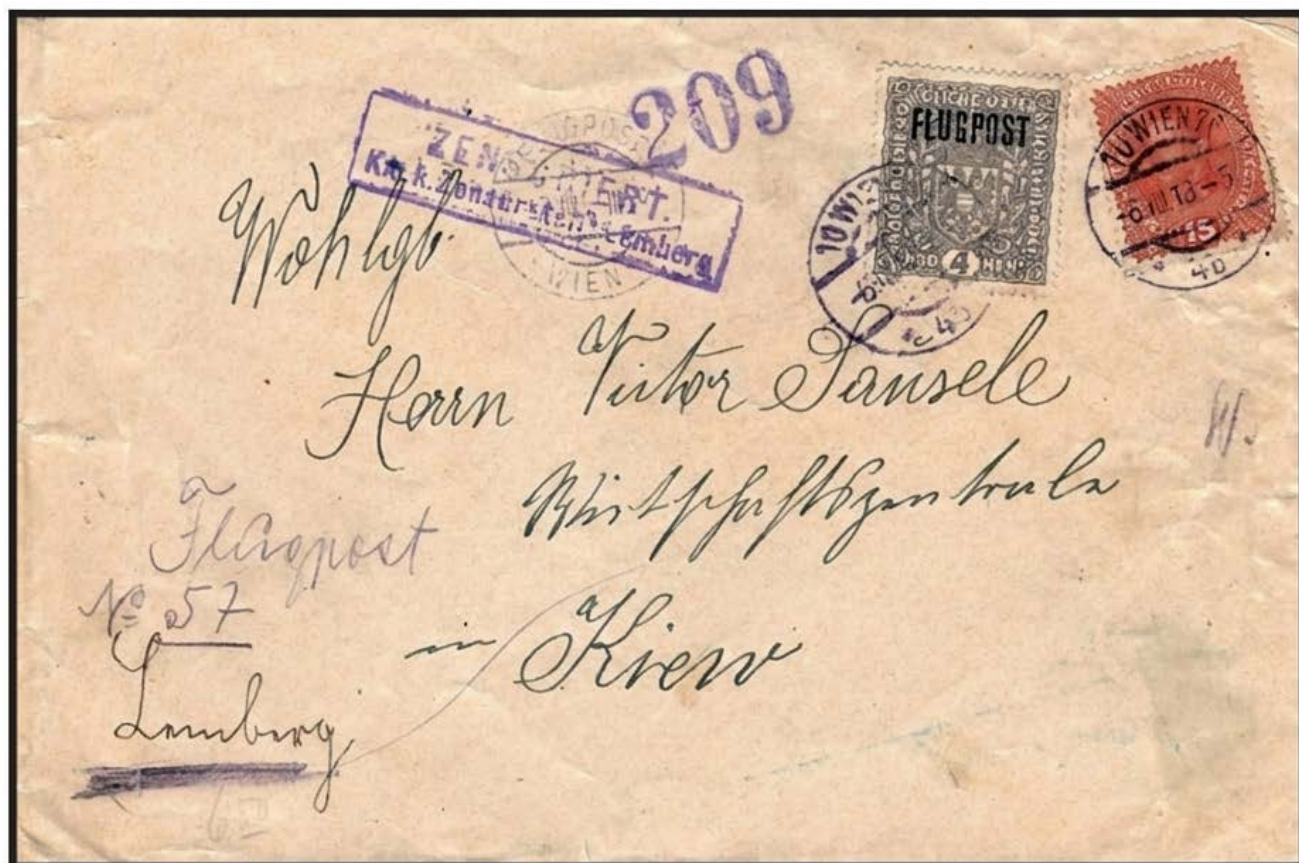
Stamps of the courier-field post of the Ukrainian People's Republic in 1920.



Typography overprint: "Courier-field post 40 hryvnia" on a UNR 20 hryvnia stamp, lithographic print, on regular paper, with gum, imperforate. The overprint was made from a cliché of 5 stamps on 20 hryvnia stamps. Today, two stamps are known to exist. From the Zelonka collection.



Inverted typography overprint: "Courier-field post 10 hryvnia" on a UNR 10 shahov stamp, lithographic print, on regular paper, with gum, imperforate. On the margin of the sheet there is a serial number of the shahov stamps sheet. A unique pair of stamps with an inverted printed sheet number on the margin, known to date. From the Zelonka collection.



Registered private airmail envelope, sent via airmail on 06.08.1918 from Vienna to Kiev, via the Vienna – Krakow – Lviv – Kiev route. Postal airmail tariff: 4.15 kr., 15 hellers for delivery of third weight, for airmail delivery 3 crowns, for second weight, courier delivery 1.00 crown, paid with stamps of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The envelope has Vienna violet censorship stamps, additional '209', Lviv censorship stamp and etiquette. **One of the two commercial or private airmail items**, sent from Vienna to Kiev, along the airmail route Vien-Krakow-Lviv-Kiev, known at the given moment.

RARITIES

FROM THE EXHIBIT COLLECTIONS

From the collection of Mikhail Kramarenko.
Russian Post in the Levant. 1863-1914.



Trial stamp of 3 kop. issue Eastern Correspondence, pink on pale-pink background. The trial stamp for the 1884 series was made in this color scheme according to the decision of the Congress of the Universal Postal Union of 1880 on a single color scheme of basic tariff stamps, but was not released for postal circulation.

This trial is the only one known today in private hands.

A second known trial stamp was in the collection of Kesslin and was donated together with the entire collection of postage stamps to the museum of the Smithsonian Institution (USA) in Washington, where it is on display today for visitors.



1864. Vertical strip of 4 trial stamps of the 1st and 2nd issues of ROPIT. The stamp issues of ROPIT were printed in Odesa at the Fesenko printing house. On the left margin of the strip is the personal facsimile of the printing house owner. To this day,

this is one of two known complete strips of trial ROPIT stamps and the only one known with a facsimile on the margin. ROPIT stamps are the first postage stamps issued on the territory of modern Ukraine.

This is the first trial of postage stamps on the territory of modern Ukraine!



1910. 29 December. ROPIT Post.
 Illustrated postcard sent from Beirut to New York. Paid for at the 20 par (4 kop.) tariff with a block of four ROPIT stamps overprinted 'Beyrouth' from the so-called "Towns" issue. The illustration depicts the steamship of the company "Princess Eugénie of Oldenburg" from the series "ROPIT Fleet". The postcard is cancelled with a postmark of the ROPIT agency in Beirut with an inverted date of the year—the only known item in the world with such a postmark—a unique piece!