

Persia: Early Airmail (1911-1927)

Purpose of this one frame Air Mail exhibit is to present the establishment and development of airmail service in Persia. Exhibit begins with the first airmail addressed to Persia, and ends with expansion of airmail usage by small towns and to destinations across the oceans, concluding with issuance of first airmail stamps in 1927.

Introduction – By 1900 Great Britain had established a strong foothold throughout South Persia, providing its own mail service through the port cities of the Persian Gulf. Britain's implementation of airmail service into India and Australia included service through the Gulf cities of Persia. Hence, the British pioneers had a key role in establishment of airmail in Persia. Due to lack of trust of Great Britain, Persia later teamed with Germany to establish domestic airmail routes as well as foreign routes through Russia and Germany.

Importance

- **Origins of British, German, and Persian Airmail**
- **ALL Earliest Recorded Airmails:**
 - Addressed to Persia [Pioneer Flight]
 - Mailed from Persia [Pioneer Flight]
 - Mailed from Persia [Commercial Flight - Indian P.O.]
 - Mailed from Persia [Commercial Flight - Persian P.O.]
- **ALL Key Pioneer Flights; ALL Recorded Discovery Flights**
- Airmail usage of **ALL** nine (9) Persia Issues (1922-27)



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Sep 1911 – Prologue to Airmail in Persia



SP 18 11
Postmark Back
of Cover

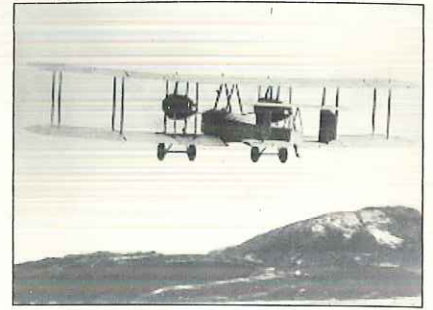
First leg
Air Mail;
remainder
standard
ground and
sea

[Sep 16, 1911] First Airborne Letter addressed to Persia [Middle East] - UK Coronation Air Letter, mailed to **Bushire (Persia)**. Standard mail service; Postage 2 ½ Pence ; Postmark FIRST UNITED KINGDOM AERIAL POST SP 16 1911 WINDSOR. Demonstrates interest of Britain in creating airmail in Persia, less than 8 years after Wright Brothers' First Flight! Note: British considered Bushire as part of the British Empire!

Jan 1919 - Pioneer Flights

One of the most significant pioneer flights in all aviation is the "First Through Aerial Mail from Great Britain to India", flown on the "Old Carthusian" by Gordon Anstee. In the leg between Bandar Abbas (Persia) and Karachi, additional mail was picked up, two (2) of which were Persian postal stationery cards. All items were stamped with the three line cachet in red in the British Embassy in Bandar Abbas.

FIRST THROUGH AERIAL MAIL
GREAT BRITAIN TO INDIA
KARACHI 14. 1. 1919



"Old Carthusian" in Flight

The date on the handstamp was changed to 17.1.1919 by pen when the aircraft was forced to make a landing on the Mekran Coast, which resulted in the mail's arrival to be delayed, as the mail was transferred to HMS Britomart. The "Old Carthusian", was repaired, reaching Karachi on 17 January 1919, the same date as the ship.

First Recorded Airmail Out of Persia – 13 January 1919



13 January 1919 - 2 Shahi Persian Postal Stationery Card with additional 1 Anna stamp, cancelled Bandar Abbas (Persia) 13 1 19 (date unclear); Karachi received 17 JAN 19. Magenta flight cachet, date altered from 14 to 17. Karachi Censor 2, still active after WWI. Postcard is featured in Ref. 1, L. Kimpton, page 37.

Indian
1 Rupee = 16 Annas
1 Anna = 12 Pies
Persian
1 Kran = 20 Shahis

Bandar Abbas 10/19.

My dear Coutinho,

Wish you all a very happy & prosperous New Year. Hope alls with Slams.

Reverse [reduced 50%]
Dated January 10, 1919
New Year's Greeting

Francis

Nov 1919 - Pioneer Flights

Poulet and Benoist in front of their Caudron G4 at Bandar Abbas



Etienne Poulet and Jean Benoist entered the £10,000 challenge by the Australian Parliament for the first to fly from England to Australia. Their airplane was a converted fighter from the Great War.

Poulet and Benoist left Bandar Abbas, Persia on 9 November 1919, carrying nine (9) pieces of mail, cancelled in Bandar Abbas.

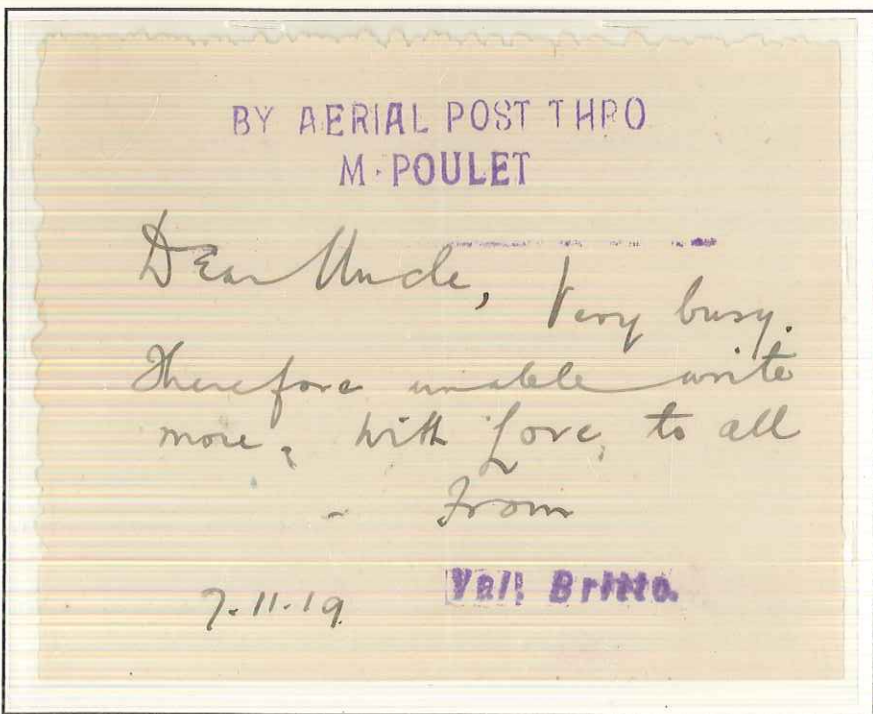


Cover and enclosed note (Nov 7, 1919)
 Franked 1 As 6 Ps GV
 Cancelled 8 NO 19
 BANDAR ABBAS;

violet cachets in English and French
 "BY AERIAL POST THRO M. POULET"

taken on board 8 Nov, arriving Karachi 13 Nov.

This cover is featured in Ref. 1, L. Kimpton, pg. 47.



Note associated with above cover, dated 7 Nov 19; with 2-line violet cachet in English.



Karachi received 13 NOV 19 on reverse

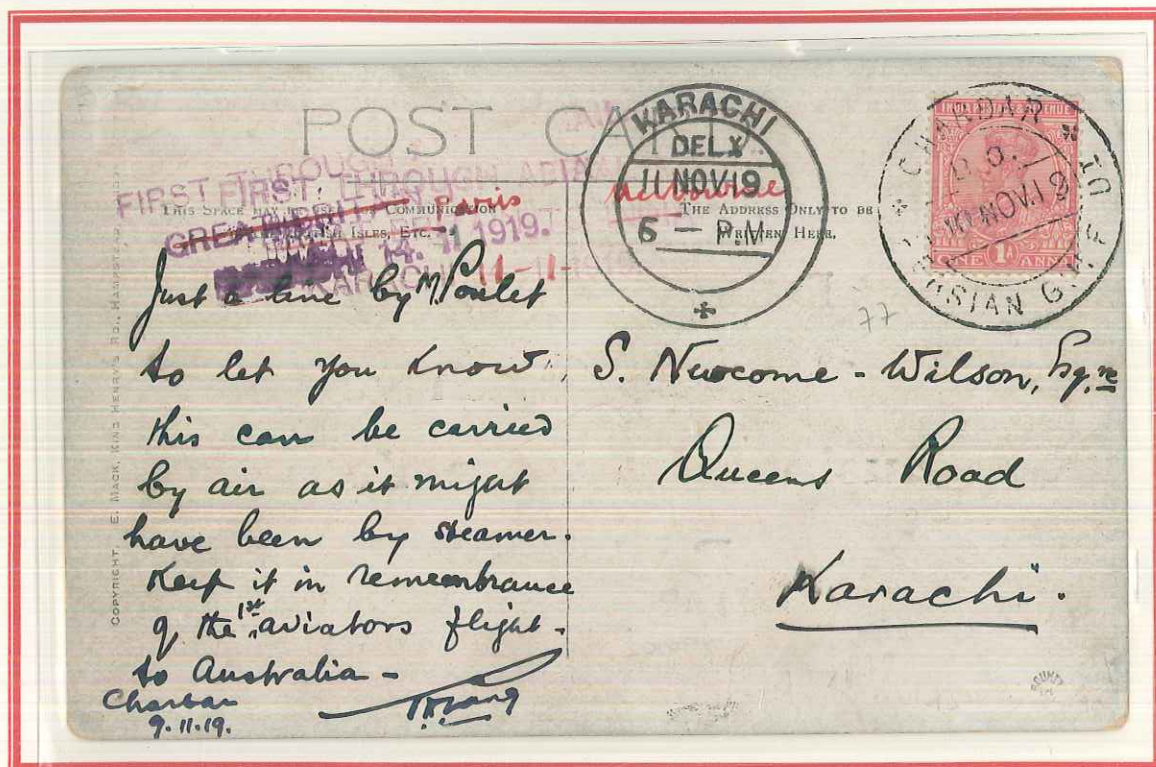
1919 - Pioneer Flights

The Pioneer flight by Poulet and Benoist stopped in Chahbar, Persia on the way to Karachi, where it picked up additional mail, 8 of which were franked (all Indian). All items were cancelled 10 November.

Poulet and Benoist's goal of Australia was later cut short after mechanical failure of their airplane in Burma in December, 1911.

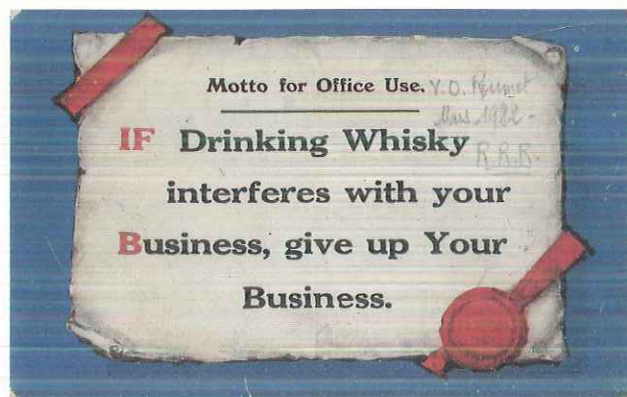


Poulet and Benoist



November 10, 1919 –Picture postcard addressed to Queens Road, Karachi bearing KGV 1 Anna, cds CHAHBAR PERSIAN GULF 10 NOV.19; violet cachet **FIRST THROUGH AERIAL MAIL / GREAT BRITAIN TO INDIA / KARACHI 10-11-19**; modified "Paris" & "Melbourne".

This cover is featured in Ref. 1, L. Kimpton, page 48.



Reverse side of picture postcard [red. 60%]

1922- British Commercial Flights

Britain had set up a network of Indian Postal Agencies throughout South Persia, serving a link between India and Mesopotamia. By 1921 an air mail subnet was created, linking Baghdad and Cairo into the link between Australia and Europe.

Persia was reticent to tie into this network due to their distrust of the British. Hence, the earliest commercial airmails from Persia were in the Great Britain (Indian) mail system. The first cities in Persia (Abadan and Ahwaz) to tie in were in Southwest Persia, closest to the network.

Earliest Recorded Commercial Airmail Out of Persia 31 Jan 1922

Abadan; Half Anna
Indian Postal Stationery;
8 ½ Anna (6+1+½)
added KGV stamps.
Total 9 Anna airmail rate;

Cancelled Abadan Indian
Postal Agency 31 JAN
22. Directed Baghdad –
Cairo to Keighley,
England.



11 Apr 1922
Abadan, Persia

Half Anna Indian Postal
Stationery; 8 ½ Anna
(6+2½) added KGV
stamps. Total 9 Anna
airmail rate;

Cancelled Abadan
Indian Postal Agency
11 APR.22. Directed
Baghdad – Cairo to
Keighley, England.
Baghdad transit PM 14
APR 22

Abadan air mail
covers are scarce;
Abadan Indian Post
Office was closed
15 March 1923

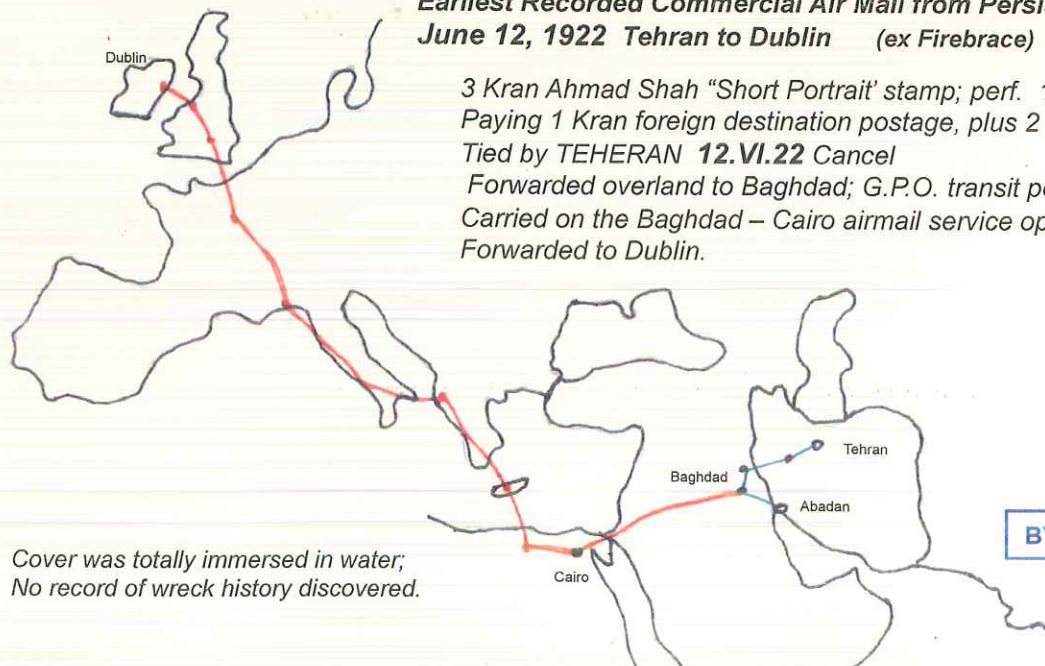
1922 - Persian Commercial Flights

The Persian mail system was eventually connected to the Baghdad-Cairo Airmail network. Mail from Central and Northern Persia was taken through regional P.O. of Hamadan, to Khaneghin (Iraq), and then by rail to Baghdad.



Earliest Recorded Commercial Air Mail from Persian Post Offices June 12, 1922 Tehran to Dublin (ex Firebrace)

3 Kran Ahmad Shah "Short Portrait" stamp; perf. 11 ½
 Paying 1 Kran foreign destination postage, plus 2 Kran Airmail Fee
 Tied by TEHERAN 12.VI.22 Cancel
 Forwarded overland to Baghdad; G.P.O. transit postmark of June 24
 Carried on the Baghdad - Cairo airmail service operated by the R.A.F
 Forwarded to Dublin.



Cover was totally immersed in water;
 No record of wreck history discovered.

Three Airmail Cachets:

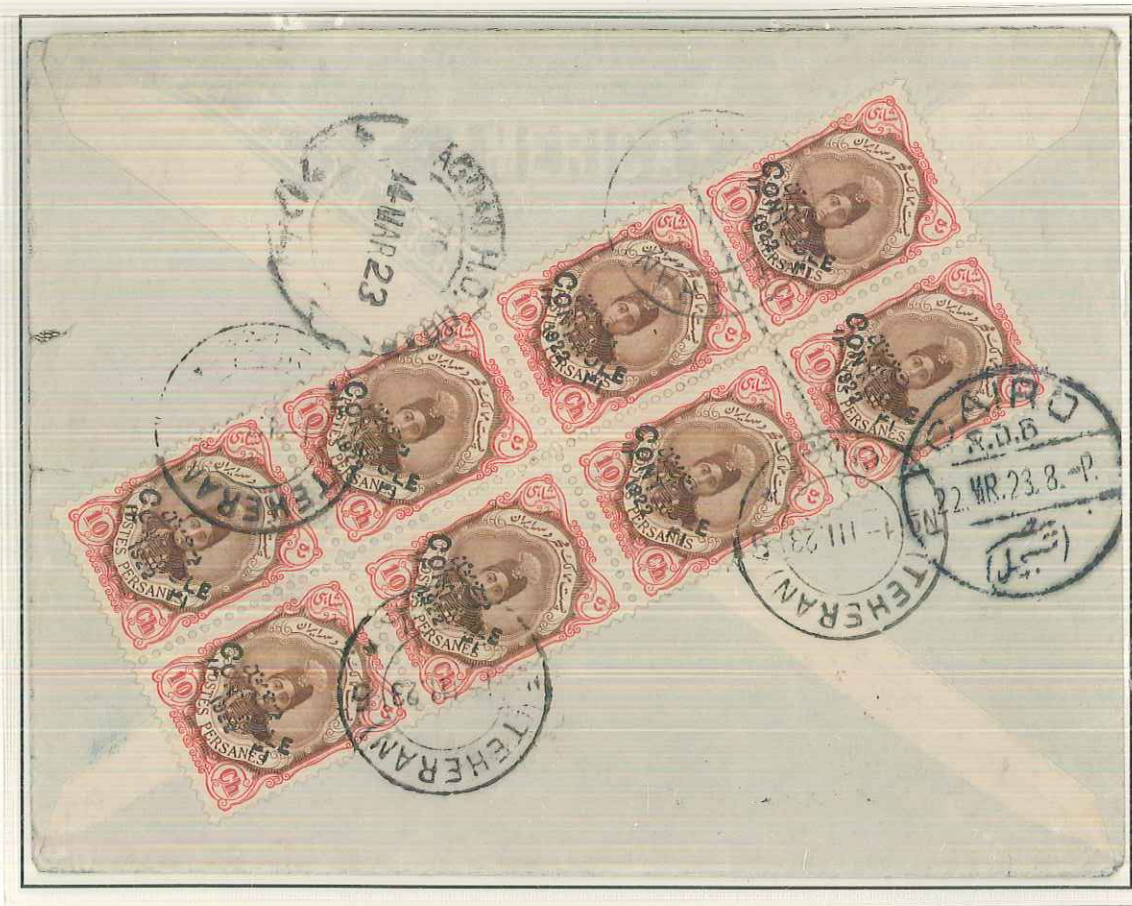
POSTE AERIENNE
 BAGDAD - CAIRE

BY AIR SERVICE

BY AIRMAIL BAGHDAD - CAIRO

1923 - Persian Commercial Flights

Usage of Persian Air Mail on the Baghdad-Cairo network increased substantially in 1923, as the delivery time was reduced and service was improved. Tehran-to-Cairo typical transit was reduced from 6 to 3 weeks.



Mar 1, 1923 **Registered Tehran to Paris** –
 Block-of-8 Ahmad Shah 10 Shahi with "Control" overprint
 Total rate of 4 Kran [Postage 1Kran; Air Mail Fee 2 Kran; Registration 1 Kran]
 Tied with TEHERAN No.5 1-III.23; TEHERAN Registration cachet No. 1396
 Directed "Poste Aérienne"; with purple cachet
 Baghdad transit 14 MAR 23; Cairo transit 22.MR.23.

**POSTE AERIEUNE
 BAGDAD - CAIRE**



RATES 1 Kran = 20 Shahi	Postage (per 20 grams)	Air Mail Fee (per 20 grams)	Total
1922 - 1923	1 Kran + 10 Shahi per weight step	2 Kran	3 Kran
From Jan 1924	1 Kran + 10 Shahi per weight step	1 Kran	2 Kran
From Oct 1925	15 Shahi + 9 Shahi per weight step	1 Kran	1 Kran 15 Shahi

Registration Fee: 1 Kran; 15 Shahi after Sep 1925.

1924 - German / Russian Route: Development of Alternate Airmail Service

Persia, being suspicious of Great Britain, was open to alternatives for airmail to Europe. Unbeknownst to Persia, Germany was exploring air service from Germany to Moscow, with intent of expansion into Persia.

In the second half of 1924, **Junkers**, the German aviation company, brought personnel and aircraft into Persia and began survey and exploratory flights, not yet having a contract with the Persian Government.

A "First Flight" was conducted by Junkers between Moscow and Tehran. Moscow departure was **November 12, 1924** {30 October 1924, Julian Calendar}. Two Junkers aircraft left Moscow with 465 pieces of mail and arrived in Baku about a week later. The aircraft and mail were transported by ship to Caspian Sea port of Enzeli. On Dec 14th the aircraft flew from Enzeli to Tehran, carrying passengers and the mail.



First Flight Moscow to Tehran -

*Addressed to Mr. Jarolimek, Junkers representative in Tehran.
Two Russian airmail stamps with overprints 20K30p and 15K30p;
Canceled Moscow No.3 30.10.24; Tehran NO.2 14 XII.24
Russian red Airmail cachet and German Violet Airmail cachet.*

1925 - German / Russian Route: Comparison with British Route

Two airmail letters from Junkers German representative in Tehran to Konstanz, Germany, comparing the Junker route through Russia with the British Poste Aerienne route through Baghdad – Cairo.

Tehran to Konstanz Russian/German Route

Teheran 20 VIII 25

Reg. Cachet No. 2570
2 Kran Registered
airmail rate

Junkers German red
cachet on front
Konstanz red cachet on
back

Konstanz arrive 4 9 25



Tehran to Konstanz Baghdad/Cairo Route

Teheran 15 X 25

1 Kran 15 Shahi airmail
rate [1 Kran Airmail and
15 Shahi postage fee]
New rate Oct 1915

Poste Aerienne Black
cachet in the front

Baghdad transit 22 OCT
25 on back;

Konstanz arrival date
unknown

First Junkers survey flight for was flown by Walter Mittelholzer, covering the route from **Tehran to Isfahan**, and Shiraz, ending in **Boushire**.

The postage was 6 Shahis, which was the domestic letter rate, **not the airmail rate**.

The cancel date was **TEHERAN No.1, Persian calendar 12-12-03, 12 Esfand 1303**, which is **3 March 1925**.

Mittelholzer used an old caravan route for guidance, taking over 500 photographs, which were later used for contour maps.

رستم میرزا



**Premier vol postal
Téhéran - Isfahan
Chiraz - Boushire**



**Par avion
Téhéran - Bouchir**

Mr. Willnow

Boushire

Second survey flight was flown by Junker pilots from Tehran.

The flight covered the route from **Tehran to Khanikin**, just across the border in Iraq. From there the mail (228 pieces) was taken overland to **Baghdad**.

Postage was 20 Shahis. Cancel date was **TEHERAN No.5, 6-IV.25; April 6, 1925**. Note that this cancel is **Gregorian Calendar**, while Tehran No.1 was **Persian Calendar**.

Khanikin cancel is 5 APR 25; cancelers not updated every day.



**Premier vol postal
Téhéran - Khanikin (Baghdad)**

Mr. Erich Schäfer

Khanikin (Baghdad)

1925 - Survey Flights

Another survey flight was conducted between **Tehran and Meched**. This flight was flown by Junker's chief pilot **Wasserthal**.

The postage was 12 Shahi [1 Shahi from Ahmad Shah large portrait issue plus 9 and 2 Shahi stamps from the Ahmad Shah 1924 Provisional Issue].

The cancel date was TEHERAN 20-2-03;
May 10, 1925

Cover marked with red AIR MAIL cachet, in Persian and French.



Jusuf H. Haimon
Meydan

Mr. Wasserthal
Teheran

اولین پرواز پستی از مشهد به طهران
Premier Vol Postal
Meched - Teheran

بیتوسط طیاره
PAR AVION



A return **Meched to Tehran** survey flight was also conducted. This flight was flown by Junker's second chief pilot **Mossbacher**.

The postage was 12 Shahi [3+3+1+1 Shahi from Ahmad Shah large portrait issue plus two 2-Shahi stamps from the Ahmad Shah 1924 Provisional Issue].

The cancel date was MECHED 12-3-04;
June 2, 1925.

Cover marked with red AIR MAIL cachet, in Persian and French.

1925 - French Legation Special Flight

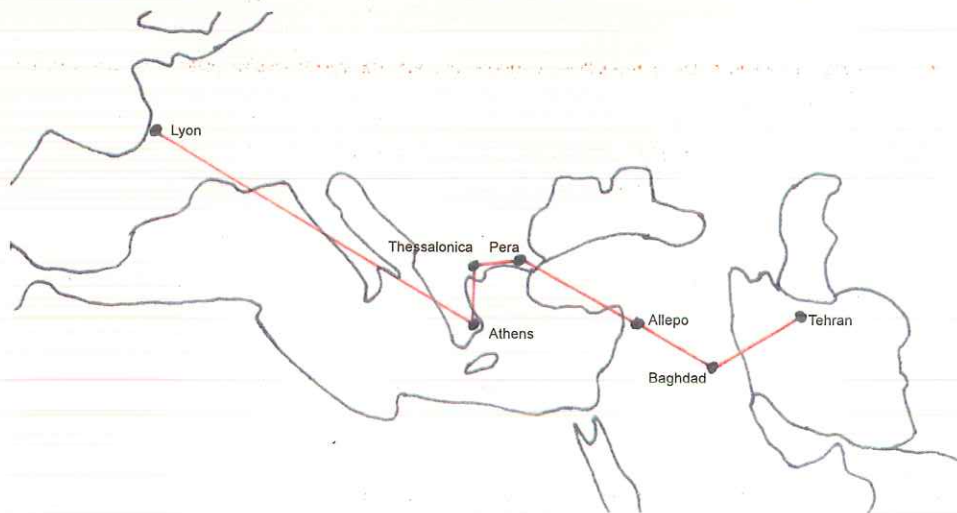


The French Air Force conducted a Paris-Tehran-Paris rally with a group of Potez-25 biplanes. The rally coincided with the overthrow of **Ahmad Shah** and proclamation of **Reza Shah** as the head of the Provisional Government of the new Pahlavi Dynasty.

On their return to Paris, a few covers were carried with **Ahmad Shah** stamps (15 Shahi total)

Cancels are **Tehran 21.XII.25**; **Baghdad, Iraq 23-12-1925**; **Allepo, Syria 23-12-1925**; **Pera, Turkey 1-1-1926**; **Thessalonica, Greece 6Jan26**; **Athens, Greece 8 Jan 1926**; **Lyon, France arriving 18-1-26**.

More details in Ref.2, Sadri page 90. These covers are extra rare.



1926 - Pahlavi Era: Early Commercial Flights



Sep 28, 1926
Tehran to Konstanz

2 Kran & 2 Shahi
"Reigne de Pahlavi"
overprint on Ahmad
Shah era stamps, plus
1 Shahi Reza Shah 1st
Portrait (total 2Kr,3 Sh);

Poste Aerienne Black
Cachet, showing
**contract between
Junkers and Persia;**

Junkers red German
cachet and
Russian red Air Mail
Adhesive;

Berlin PM 8.10.26

[10 day transit]



April 19, 1926

Air Mail
Tabriz, Persia
to Ankara,
Turkey

Franked with
five 3-Shahi
(15 Shahi rate)

1926
Provisional
Regne de
Pahlavi Issue;

Blue TAURIS
19-IV-26;

ANGORA
21-4-26

[2 day transit]

Persische Teppich-Gesellschaft
A.-G.
Täbris

Persische Teppich-Ges. A.-G.
= TAEBRIS =

1927 - Pahlavi Era: Airmail Usage from Small Town to England

British Indian Postal Agencies in Persia were closed in 1923; thereafter, mail from Southern cities was handled by Persian Post. At the time Basra was linked into the British airmail route.



Sep 7, 1927 - MASJED-SOLEIMAN TO MIDDLESEX, ENGLAND

Masjed-Soleiman, the center of oil fields in South Persia (very small and **extremely rare** source city)

2 Kran air mail rate, "Regne de Pahlavi 1926" overprint on Mashrooteh stamp

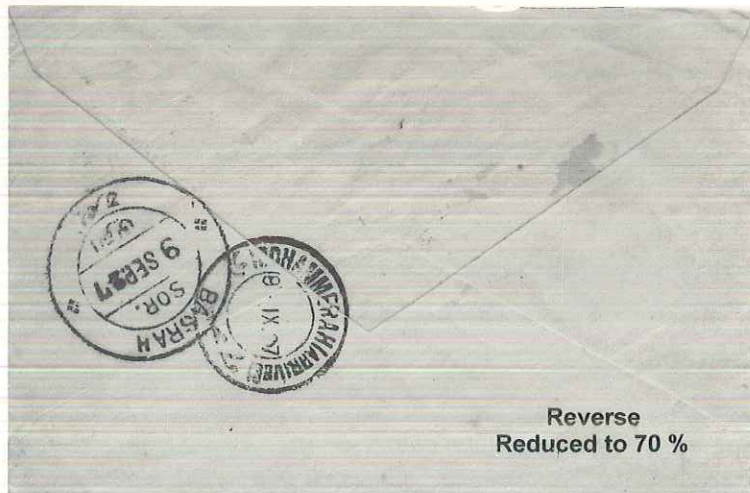
"Sandoug" "Post Box" marking

Cancel MESDJED SOLEIMAN 15-6-06 Persian Calendar [15 Shahrivar 1306], **September 7, 1927**

By land [likely] to Shushtar, and by boat [likely] via Karun River to MOHAMMERAH, transit 8-IX-27

By boat via Shat-ul-Arab to **BASRAH**, transit 9 SEP 27.

Cover was transported by air to **Cairo** and eventually to Middlesex, England.



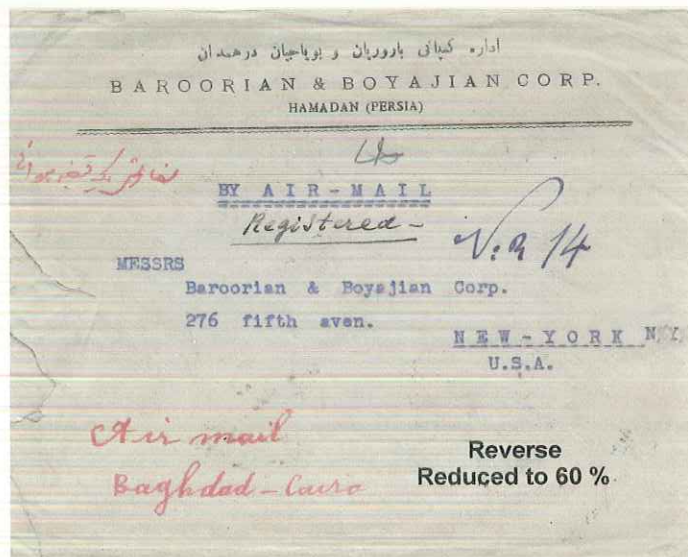
Reverse
Reduced to 70 %

1927 - Pahlavi Era: Airmail to Across the Oceans

By 1927, Air Mail usage had expanded from Persia to across the oceans.



8 March 1927 - Registered Airmail cover from Hamadan (rare airmail source in 1927) to New York (earliest known airmail from Persia to across the oceans); franked 10 Shahi and 2 Kran from 1926 "Regne de Pahlavi" issue. HAMADAN DEPART 8-III-27; by land via Gassre-Shirin to Khanegin [likely]; by rail [likely] to BAGHDAD 14-MAR-27 transit; by air to Cairo and eventually to LONDON 26-MR-27 transit; by ship to NEW YORK 4-7-27 arrival [Total 30 day transit]



1927 - Pahlavi Era: First Airmail Issue

In cooperation with the German firm Junkers, the first Persian Air Mail stamps were issued in February 1927, by overprinting the 1909 Coat of Arms Issue with the Biplane and "POSTE AÉRIENNE" inscription.



13 September 1927 Airmail cover from **Tehran** to Braunschweig, **Germany**;
Franked 4 Kran Air Mail Issue Stamp plus pair of 15-Shahi and one
9-Shahi First Reza Shah issue. Total 5 Kran and 19 Shahi
Large envelope Airmail rate;
POSTE AÉRIENNE Black cachet and Red German Airmail cachet;
TEHERAN 13-IX-27 cancel; Russian (Moscow) route
21-IX-27 BRAUNSCHWEIG arrival
8 Day Total Transit