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The French initiative received mixed reactions. Some postal administrations were positive, and the decisions made by, for example, Switzerland and Portugal to allow divided cards in late December 1903 were probably a direct consequence of the French inquiry. Yet many countries wanted to await the UPU congress rather than make bilateral agreements between individual postal administrations. Some were also sceptical regarding the divided address side, primarily because they felt it gave too little room for postmarks and postal notes.

If the UPU congress had been held as scheduled, one might nevertheless assume that the French proposal would have been accepted and divided postcards allowed for international use in 1904. But that did not happen. The congress was postponed, for administrative and political reasons, first to 1905 and then again to 1906 (Ref. 11). During these years more and more countries accepted divided cards and, inevitably, more and more cards were also sent abroad. As a consequence, large numbers of correspondents all over the world had to pay postage due for divided cards that were charged as letters.

The situation was becoming untenable and the solution, as the French Post Office had already suggested, was ultimately bilateral agreements. From 1904 onwards, an intense correspondence about the exchange of divided postcards took place between national postal administrations. Agreements to accept divided cards at the postcard rate were made between different pairs of countries at different points in time, depending on how early the countries accepted divided cards for inland use and how willing they were to enter bilateral agreements. The result was a situation reminiscent of pre-UPU conditions. In the absence of common UPU rules, the exchange of divided postcards came to depend on a constantly changing set of bilateral agreements between national postal administrations.

The regulations regarding the international exchange of divided postcards during these years were therefore extremely complex. France, which had initiated the bilateral agreements, is an illustrative example. In May 1904, a first round of bilateral agreements was announced in the *Bulletin Mensuel*, which stated that divided postcards could be sent from France to 13 different countries and, in addition, to all French colonies (Ref. 12). Subsequently, 34 additional agreements were announced at 16 different points in time from June 1904 to October 1906. The situation was similar in several other European countries, but also in countries such as Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

Several postal administrations also made unilateral decisions in order to facilitate the international exchange of divided postcards. Many countries did, at some point in time, decide to abstain from charging postage due for incoming divided cards that arrived without tax marks from the sending country. A few countries even chose to ignore tax marks on incoming divided cards, provided that the correct postcard rate was paid and the cards in other respects followed UPU regulations for postcards. In addition, several countries also decided to stop applying tax marks to outgoing divided cards, thus leaving it to the discretion of the destination country whether or not the card should be surcharged. Divided postcards might therefore in certain cases avoid postage due because of unilateral decisions made by the sending and destination countries, even if no bilateral agreement was in place.

Yet another factor to consider is the Imperial penny postage scheme, in force since 1898. The UK and most of its colonies, dominions and protectorates adhered to this scheme, which allowed the exchange of not only postcards but also letters weighing up to ½ oz at a unified one penny rate among its members (Refs. 13 and 14). This meant that from their introduction in 1902, divided postcards could already be sent within most of the British Empire for 1d, which was the ordinary foreign postcard rate.

The following pages provide a number of examples and illustrations of divided postcards with postage due marks and of the different agreements, decisions and regulations that explain why postage due was charged – or not.

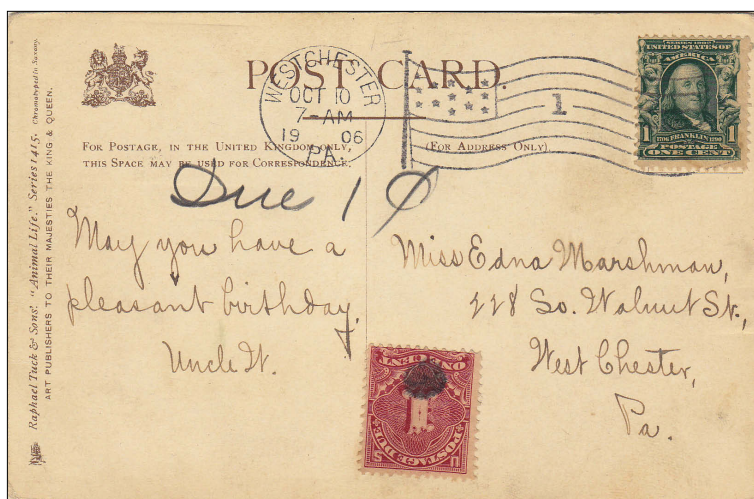
## Domestic Mail with Postage Due

To begin with, divided cards in domestic mail might have been surcharged if they were sent before inland use was allowed. Such cards are rare in most countries, as divided postcards were normally not for sale in places where they were not permitted. Figure 2 shows an interesting example – a British postcard used in New South Wales. A message from the Australian Postmaster-General, dated 6 December 1904, announced that divided cards were allowed for inland use in the Commonwealth of Australia (Ref. 15). This postcard was sent the day before this, 5 December, at the 1d domestic postcard rate, but was charged as a letter. The inland letter rate was 2d, so “2D MORE TO PAY” represents double the deficiency.



**Figure 2.** New South Wales, inland use, 5 December 1904.  
1d postcard rate, 2d postage due.

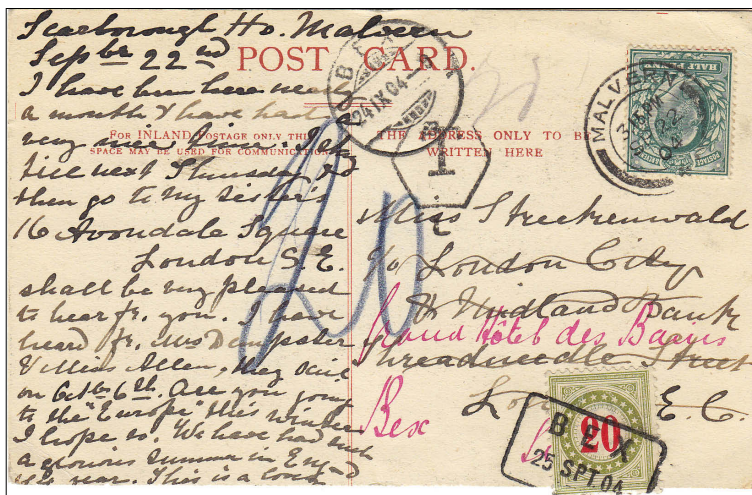
Postage due corresponding to double the deficiency was the UPU standard for international mail exchange, and this formula was often also applied to domestic mail. But there were exceptions, as shown in Figure 3. For inland mail in the United States, postage due was only single deficiency. This card was sent at the 1 cent postcard rate, and the addressee was consequently charged an additional cent to account for the 2 cents domestic letter rate. The United States was among the last countries in the world to accept divided postcards. They were not allowed for inland use until 1 March 1907 (Ref. 16).



**Figure 3.** United States, inland use, 10 October 1906.  
1 cent postcard rate, 1 cent postage due.

### Postage Due when Forwarded Abroad

Initially, divided cards were sometimes accepted for inland use at the postcard rate but required a letter rate when sent abroad. Figure 4 provides a nice example of this. The card, dated 22 September 1904, was first sent within the UK at the halfpenny postcard rate, but was then forwarded to Switzerland. A bilateral agreement with Switzerland was announced by the British Post Office in December 1905 (and by the Swiss Post Office in late November), but before this agreement the letter rate was required (Refs. 17 and 18). The card was therefore charged with the difference between the inland postcard rate (½d) and the foreign letter rate (2½d). A note above the hexagonal London 'T' mark indicates a deficiency corresponding to 20 French centimes.

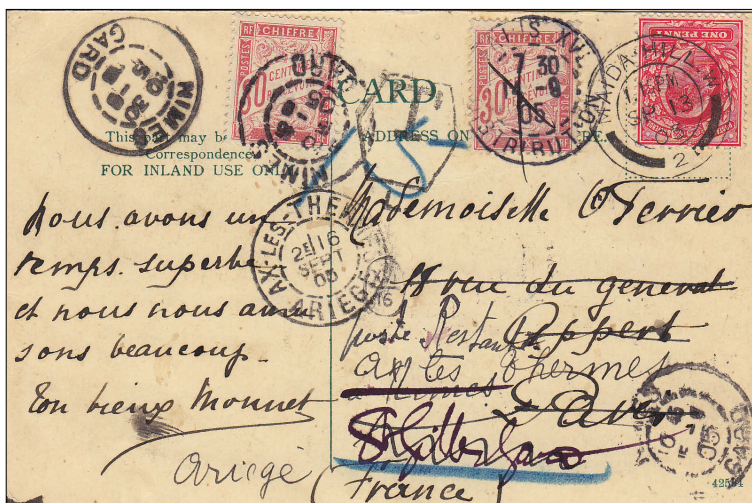


**Figure 4.** UK, inland use, 22 September 1904, forwarded to Switzerland. Halfpenny postcard rate, 20 centimes postage due.

On arrival, the Swiss Post Office charged 20 centimes postage due. This illustrates a special UPU rule, which stated that postage due should be single rather than double the deficiency for forwarded mail if correct postage had been paid for the original destination (Ref. 19).

### Postage Due before Bilateral Agreements

Before bilateral agreements were made about accepting divided cards at the postcard rate, the letter rate was required when divided cards were sent abroad. If only the postcard rate was paid, the addressee was charged postage due. Figure 5 shows a card sent from the UK to France at the



**Figure 5.** UK to France, 13 September 1905. 1d postcard rate, 30 centimes postage due.

1d foreign postcard rate. A bilateral agreement between the UK and France was announced by the British Post Office in a circular of 12 December 1905 (Ref. 17). As this card was sent in September 1905, it was charged as a letter. British tax marks indicate 15 centimes deficiency and on arrival the French Post Office charged double the deficiency, 30 centimes, in postage due. As the card was forwarded within France, the card has two 30 centimes postage due stamps, one of them crossed over.

Figure 6 shows another example. A bilateral agreement between Germany and the Netherlands came into force on 26 September 1905 according to a German postal circular, so the 10 pfennig postcard rate did not suffice for this card, sent in late August 1905 (Ref. 20). German tax marks indicate 12½ centimes deficiency, as the foreign letter rate from Germany was 20 pfennig. Double the deficiency corresponded to 12½ cents postage due in Dutch currency.



**Figure 6.** Germany to the Netherlands, 30 August 1905.  
10 pfennig postcard rate, 12½ cents postage due.

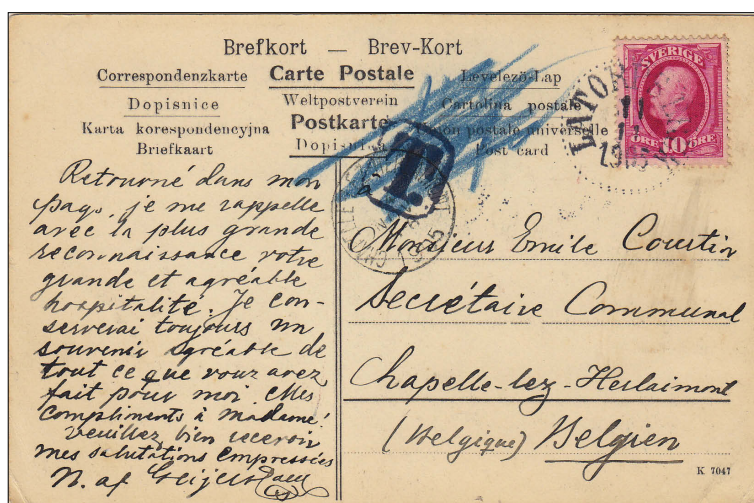
The main reason why many postal administrations were initially reluctant to accept divided postcards was that such cards provided very limited space for postal notes, postmarks, etc. on the address side. The Dutch Post Office had an original solution to this problem: the postcard was forwarded in a transparent envelope, with postage due stamps affixed on the outside.

Most bilateral agreements were mutual – once an agreement between two countries was in place, divided cards could be sent at the postcard rate in both directions. But there were a few exceptions. Germany is one example of this. Divided cards were accepted for inland use in February 1905, and over the next few months Germany also agreed to accept incoming divided cards from several countries. Yet outgoing divided postcards were not allowed until September 1905, when agreements about this were made with most European countries (Ref. 21). For example, a Swedish postal circular announced that divided cards could be sent to Germany from 1 April 1905 (Ref. 22), whereas divided cards sent from Germany to Sweden before 1 September 1905 might be charged as letters, as shown in Figure 7. The deficiency was 10 pfennig or 12½ centimes, and double the deficiency was 20 öre in Swedish currency.

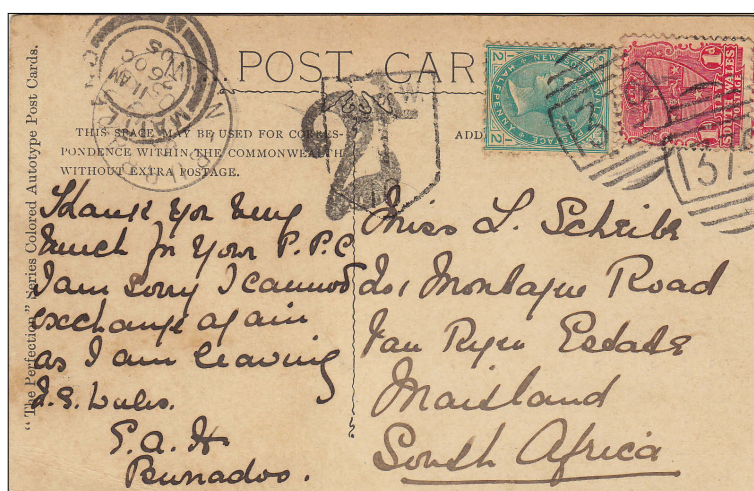
As bilateral agreements were made with different countries at different points in time, it is unsurprising that not only correspondents but also postal staff sometimes made mistakes. A bilateral agreement between Sweden and Belgium came into force on 1 September 1905 – the same day that divided postcards began to be allowed for inland use in Belgium (Ref. 22). Yet the card shown in Figure 8, sent from Sweden to Belgium in November of the same year, was initially charged as a letter, with a ‘T’ mark and a note about a 12½ centimes deficiency. However, the mistake was discovered and the tax marks deleted, and the recipient was charged no postage due.



**Figure 7.** Germany to Sweden, 21 July 1905.  
10 pfennig postcard rate, 20 öre postage due.



**Figure 8.** Sweden to Belgium, 11 November 1905.  
10 öre postcard rate, note about 12½ centimes deficiency deleted.



**Figure 9.** New South Wales to Cape of Good Hope, 19 September 1905.  
1½d postcard rate, 2d postage due.

## Postage Due before UPU Regulations

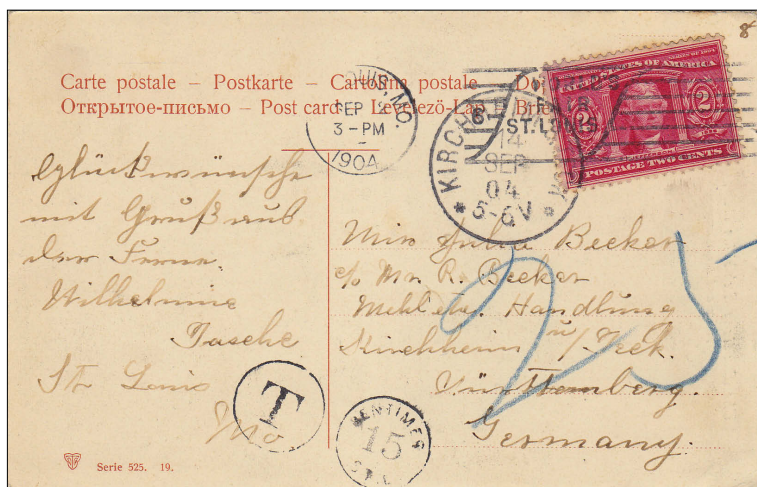
Divided postcards sent between countries that never made any bilateral agreements normally required letter postage, until UPU regulations were implemented by the countries involved. UPU member states were obliged to incorporate the decisions of the 1906 Rome congress into their national regulations no later than 1 October 1907, but could choose to implement them at an earlier date. In the case of divided postcards, several countries decided to stop surcharging outgoing and/or incoming cards shortly after the Rome congress.

Divided postcards to or from non-European countries were often not covered by bilateral agreements. For example, there is no recorded agreement between Australia and the Cape Colony, so the card in Figure 9 was charged as a letter. It was sent in September 1905 with 1½d postage. This was the foreign postcard rate that included the overseas surcharge from Australia. The foreign letter rate was 2½d and the deficiency corresponded to 10 French centimes. The addressee had to pay double the deficiency, 2d.



**Figure 10.** Straits Settlements to France, 14 February 1905.  
3 cents postcard rate, 40 centimes postage due.

Figure 10 shows another example, a divided card sent from the Straits Settlements to France in February 1905 at the 3 cents letter rate. No agreement with the Straits Settlements is recorded in French postal bulletins, so the card was charged as a letter. The foreign letter rate was 8 cents, and because of the unusually large difference between the postcard and the letter rate the deficiency was rounded up to 20 centimes by the post office in Singapore. (There is also a triangular tax mark



**Figure 11.** United States to Germany, 2 September 1904.  
2 cents postcard rate, 25 pfennig postage due.

of the Straits Settlements, covered by the French postage due stamps.) The French Post Office consequently charged 40 centimes postage due.

The card shown in Figure 11 was sent from the United States to Germany. There was no agreement between these countries, and the United States continued to surcharge outgoing divided cards until 28 February 1907 (Ref. 16). This card was sent in 1904, and was therefore charged as a letter. A tax mark from St. Louis indicates a 15 centimes deficiency corresponding to the difference between the 2 cents postcard rate and the 5 cents letter rate. The German Post Office charged 25 pfennig postage due (double the deficiency).

The card is interesting, as it has a topographical design from the United States even though it was used several years before divided postcards were permitted there. For some reason, probably by mistake, a series of postcards from the 1904 World Fair in St. Louis were printed with a divided address side.

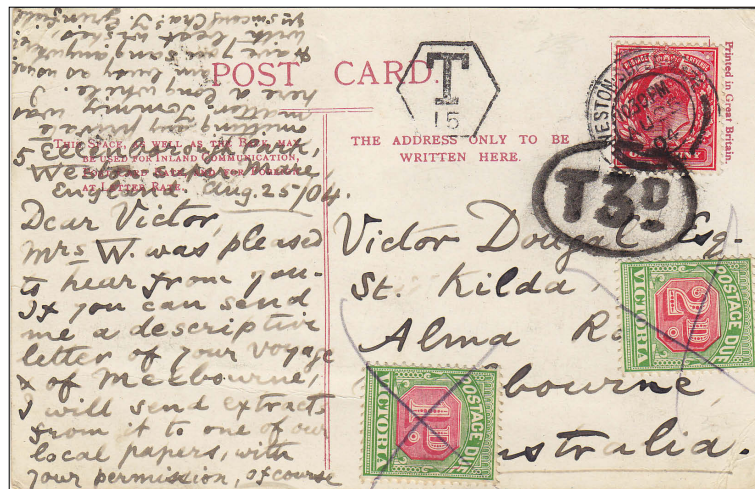


Figure 12. UK to Victoria, 25 August 1904.  
1d postcard rate, 3d postage due.

### Postage Due before Imperial Penny Postage

Under the penny postage scheme, divided cards could be sent within most of the British Empire for 1d (or the equivalent in local currency), which was otherwise the normal foreign postcard rate. Surcharging within the British Commonwealth therefore only occurred when divided postcards were sent to or from places that had not yet joined the penny postage area. The main example, at

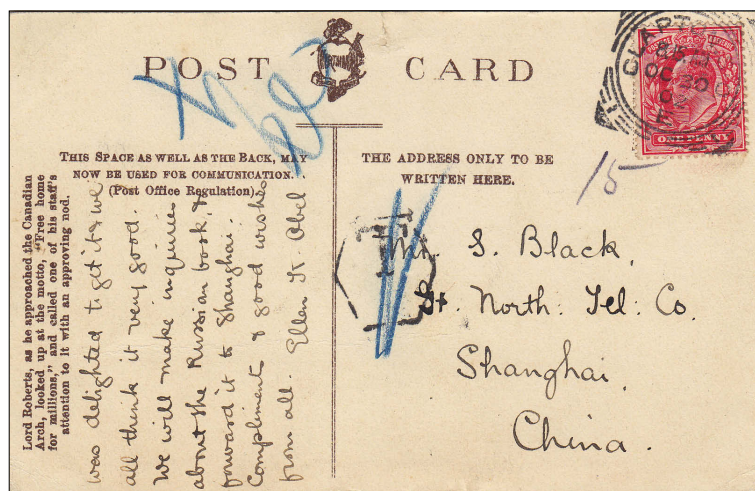


Figure 13. UK to China, 30 October 1902.  
1d postcard/imperial rate, tax mark deleted.

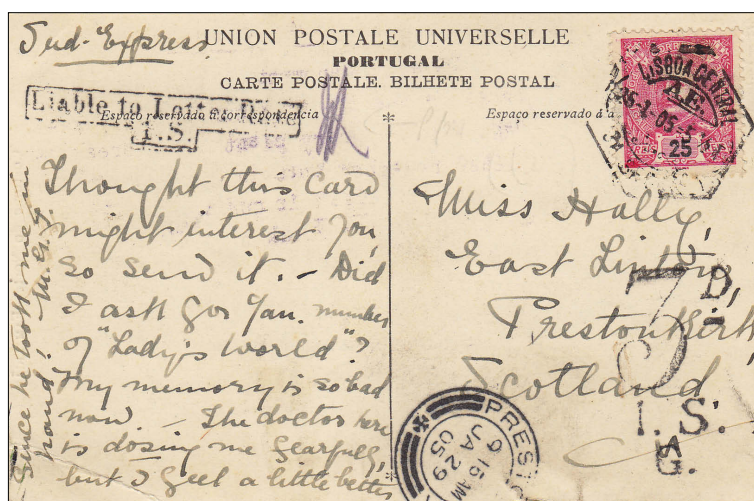
least in terms of mail volume, was probably Australia. The Commonwealth of Australia did not fully implement penny postage until 1911 (Ref. 23), although penny postage from the UK to Australia was introduced on 1 April 1905 (Ref. 14). Australia also made bilateral agreements about divided postcards with Britain and a number of British colonies prior to the Rome congress (Ref. 24). Figure 12 shows a divided postcard sent from the UK to Australia (Victoria) in August 1904, before penny postage had been introduced. It was charged as a letter, and the 15 centimes deficiency was converted to 3d postage due (double the deficiency).

Figure 13 shows an early divided card sent from the UK to China in October 1902 with 1d postage. It was first surcharged, with an indicated deficiency of 15 centimes corresponding to the difference between the foreign postcard rate (1d) and the letter rate (2½d). But the tax mark was deleted, and no postage due was charged on arrival. The explanation for this is probably that there was a British post office in Shanghai, and that penny postage from the UK “to all places in China, where there are British post offices” had been introduced earlier that year (Ref. 25; see also Ref. 14).

### Postage Due on Arrival

The cards shown above were surcharged following the normal UPU procedure: the post office in the sending country applied a ‘T’ mark and made a note about missing postage, and the postal administration in the destination country charged postage due accordingly. However, “in case of obvious error”, UPU rules allowed its members to charge postage due for incoming mail even if it arrived without tax marks (Ref. 26). Overall, such surcharging is not very common, but in the case of divided postcards several countries made use of this opportunity.

The UK is one example of this. Even though it was the first country to allow divided cards for inland use, it was not until 12 December 1905 that a Post Office Circular announced “arrangements for relaxing the regulations” on international exchange, including bilateral agreements with 17 foreign postal administrations (Ref. 17). Prior to the publication of this circular, the British Post Office surcharged incoming divided postcards as letters, whether or not they had tax marks from the sending country. The card shown in Figure 14 was sent from Portugal to the UK at the postcard rate, but has no Portuguese tax marks. On arrival in Britain, a ‘Liable to Letter Rate’ mark was nevertheless applied at the inland section (I.S.) and the addressee was charged 3d postage due, corresponding to double the deficiency.



**Figure 14.** Portugal to the UK, 25 January 1905.  
25 réis postcard rate, 3d postage due.

Another example is the United States, which consistently surcharged incoming cards, at least until after the Rome congress (late May 1906). During the summer and autumn of 1906 it seems that this practice gradually ceased, and a formal decision by the United States Postmaster-General, effective from 31 October 1906, stated that divided postcards arriving from foreign countries should not be

subject to postage due (Ref. 16). Figure 15 shows a relatively late example of surcharging. The card was sent from Austria at a 10 heller postcard rate and arrived in New York on 21 June 1906. The card has no tax marks from Austria, as the Austrian Post Office had made a unilateral decision to stop applying tax marks to all outgoing divided cards as early as February 1905 (Ref. 27). But the United States practice of surcharging divided cards on arrival was obviously still in force, so the recipient was charged double the deficiency of 6 cents.



**Figure 15.** Austria to the United States, June 1906.  
10 heller postcard rate, 6 cents postage due.

Surcharging on arrival, based on the UPU rule about “obvious error”, also occurred elsewhere. However, several countries made unilateral decisions to abstain from such surcharging at the same time as divided cards were allowed for inland use.

### Tax Marks Applied in Transit

Tax marks applied in transit represent another variant in the surcharge of divided postcards. There was no explicit support in UPU regulations for such surcharging, yet available material shows that it occurred in a few countries.



**Figure 16.** Cape of Good Hope to Norway, 4 January 1904.  
1d postcard rate, 24 øre postage due.

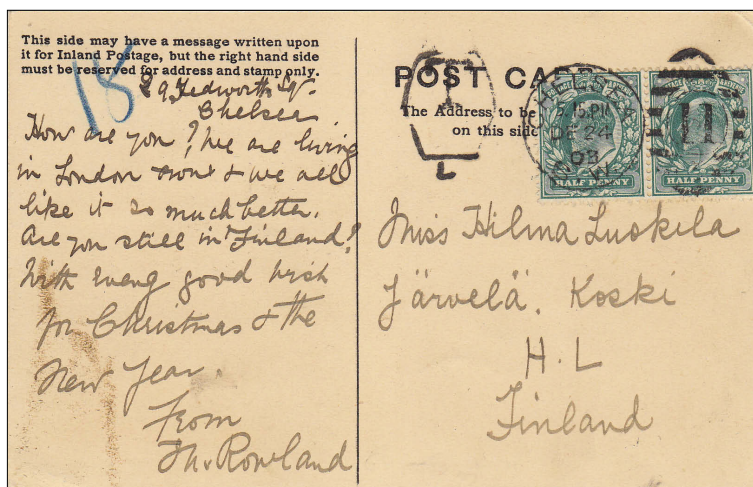
The UK is known to have applied tax marks to transit mail, mostly to or from its colonies (Ref. 28). The card shown in Figure 16 was sent from the Cape Colony to Norway at the 1d postcard rate in 1904. In London the card received a hexagonal “T” mark and a note about a 15 centimes deficiency

(under one of the Norwegian postage due stamps), which indicates that the 2½d letter rate would have been required. This was correct, as the bilateral agreement between Norway and the Cape Colony was not announced until 14 June 1906, and so 24 øre postage due (double the deficiency) was charged on arrival in Norway (Ref. 29).



**Figure 17.** Hungary to Brazil, 25 August 1906.  
10 fillér postcard rate, 240 réis postage due.

Germany is another prominent example of this. According to German postal circulars, divided cards could not be sent outside Europe until 4 September 1906 (Ref. 30). Prior to this date, it seems that the German Post Office also systematically surcharged divided postcards in transit to non-European destinations, regardless of the regulations in the sending and destination countries. Figure 17 shows an interesting result of this practice. The card was sent from Hungary to Brazil at a 10 fillér postcard rate in August 1906, and received a German 'T' mark (partly covered by the Brazilian 200 réis postage due stamp). At this time, there seems to have been no bilateral agreement between Hungary and Brazil. However, information from the UPU shows that Hungary had made a unilateral decision not to tax any outgoing divided postcards, and Brazil had made a unilateral decision not to tax any incoming divided cards that arrived without tax marks (Ref. 31). Consequently, it was only because of the German practice of taxation in transit that this card was subject to postage due. Double the deficiency, 240 réis, was charged by the post office in Brazil.



**Figure 18.** UK to Finland, 24 December 1903. 1d postcard rate, tax mark indicating 15 centimes deficiency, not surcharged on arrival.

### Tax Marks Ignored

In contrast to the previous examples, it also happened that tax marks were ignored by the post office in the destination country. A few postal administrations made unilateral decisions to ignore tax marks on divided postcards arriving from abroad if the correct postcard rate had been paid by the sender. Such a decision was made by the Russian Post Office as early as 23 December 1903, probably in response to the French inquiry about the international exchange of divided cards (Ref. 32). The postcard shown in Figure 18, sent from the UK to Finland (then part of Russia) was therefore not surcharged on arrival despite the British tax marks.

In addition, it seems that several non-European countries did not take foreign tax marks very seriously in the case of divided postcards. Figure 19 shows a divided card sent from Queensland to Egypt at a 1½d postcard rate in March 1906. There is no recorded agreement between the two countries, and the card was consequently charged as a letter in Queensland. The letter rate was 2½d, so the deficiency was 10 centimes. Yet there is no indication that postage due was charged in Egypt.



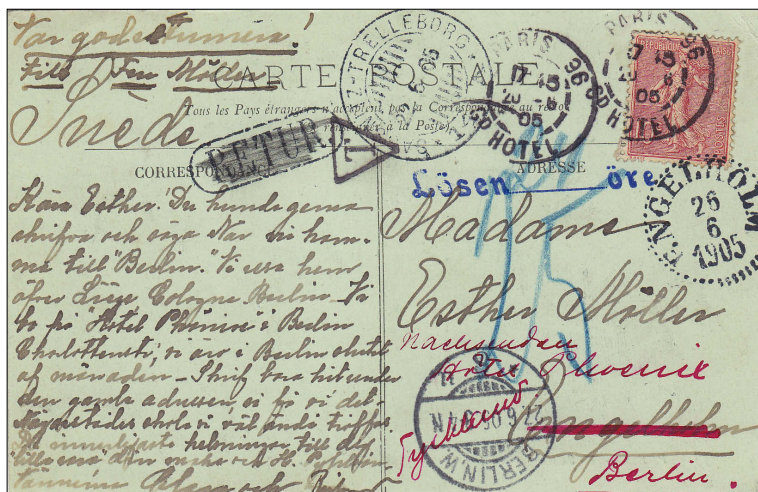
**Figure 19.** Queensland to Egypt, 9 March 1906. 1½d postcard rate, tax mark indicating 10 centimes deficiency, not surcharged on arrival.

### Postage Due because of Specific National Regulations

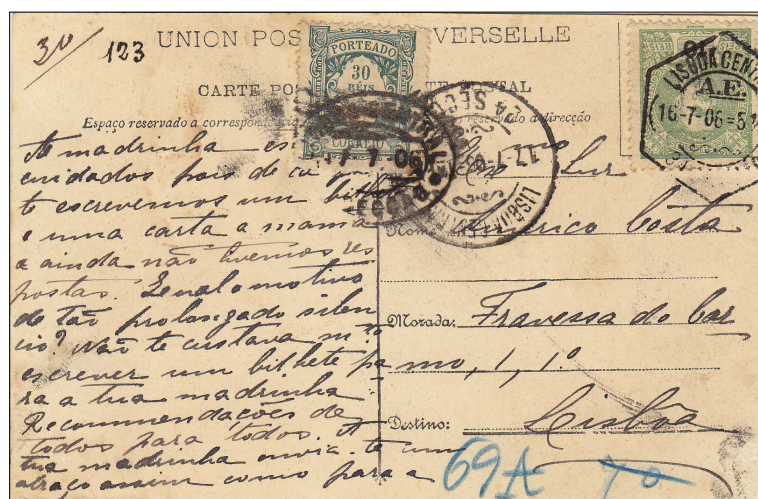
The UPU regulations established in Rome in 1906 made it clear that the sender had free use of the picture side and the left half of the address side of the postcard. But before these regulations came into force, national postal administrations sometimes applied more restrictive rules regarding the layout and use of divided cards. Such rules might also have given rise to postage due, as shown in the following three examples.

Initially, the French Post Office had stricter rules regarding the space for personal messages. The address side was to have the word 'Correspondance' on the left and the word 'Adresse' on the right, and personal messages were only to be written below the word Correspondance. If handwriting appeared above this word, the card might be charged as a letter. However, French postal bulletins from both June and August 1905 urged postmen to adopt a more tolerant attitude in this respect, due to numerous complaints from the public (Ref. 33). The card shown in Figure 20 illustrates this reason for surcharging. The French Post Office applied a "T" mark (but for some reason made no note about deficiency). The Swedish Post Office surcharged the card as an underpaid letter, with 24 öre postage due representing double the deficiency. When the card was forwarded to Germany and no postage due had been paid in Sweden, the German Post Office charged the recipient 25 pfennig.

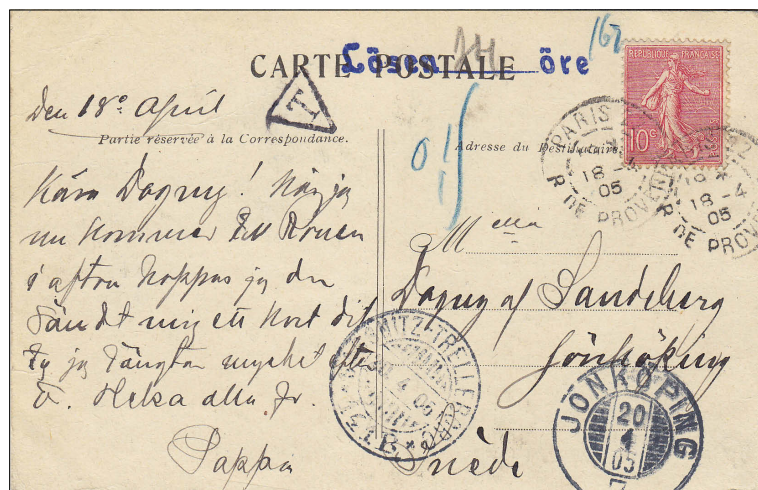
A peculiar rule regarding personal messages was implemented by the Portuguese Post Office: on divided cards, such messages were only permitted on the address side. If hand-written messages also appeared on the picture side, the letter rate was required. This rule was announced in the official decree of late December 1903 that introduced divided cards in Portugal, and was repeated



**Figure 20.** France to Sweden and Germany, 20 June 1905.  
10 centimes postcard rate, 24 öre postage due not paid in Sweden,  
25 pfennig postage due in Germany.



**Figure 21.** Portugal, inland use, 16 July 1906.  
10 réis postcard rate, 30 réis postage due.



**Figure 22.** France to Sweden, 18 April 1905.  
10 centimes postcard rate, 24 öre postage due.

in a decree of April 1905 (Refs. 9 and 34). It seems that the rule was applied until UPU regulations came into force. The card shown in Figure 21 was sent within Portugal at a 10 réis postcard rate, but was charged as a letter because there was writing on the picture side. The inland letter rate was 25 réis, and postage due was double the deficiency.

As a final example, Figure 22 shows an even more peculiar reason for postage due. In order to avoid the surcharging of divided postcards sent abroad, the French postal authorities decided that a warning should be printed on divided cards, saying that all foreign countries did not accept correspondence on the address side (Ref. 12). A perverse consequence of this decision was that French postal clerks started taxing postcards without this cautionary text as letters, as they did not conform to current regulations for postcards. This card, sent from France to Sweden in April 1905, would otherwise have been accepted at the 10 centimes postcard rate according to a bilateral agreement of December 1904 (Ref. 35).

## **Conclusion**

Many collectors of postcards and postal history are familiar with the phenomenon of early divided postcards sent abroad and charged postage due because of correspondence on the address side. This article has looked into the less well-known story behind this reason for postage due. In particular, it has highlighted that the surcharging of divided postcards depended on a complex interplay between national regulations regarding inland mail, bilateral agreements between national postal administrations, unilateral decisions made in order to facilitate the international exchange of divided cards and, finally, UPU regulations.

Correct interpretation of divided postcards with (or without) postage due may therefore require detailed knowledge of postal regulations, sometimes for both sending and destination countries. In certain cases, as shown above, even the rules or practices of transit countries need to be considered. This information may be difficult to find. For a few countries more or less detailed accounts have been published in recent philatelic or postal history literature, but in many cases one needs to consult contemporary sources – national postal publications, newspapers or archival records.

An additional source of knowledge is in fact provided by the UPU. In November 1905, its international bureau sent out a number of questions to its members about their international agreements and other regulations regarding the use of divided cards (Ref. 36). In subsequent months, from December 1905 to May 1906, replies from 48 member states were published in a series of messages from the international bureau. These replies do not tell us when various regulations came into force, but they do provide useful snapshots of the situation when the replies were sent to the UPU.

In current philatelic literature, divided postcards with postage due are usually treated – at best – as a minor footnote in national accounts of postal history. However, the intense communication among postal administrations and the numerous agreements and decisions that were made in order to manage the growing international exchange of divided cards show that this was an issue that was taken seriously by the postal authorities in the early 20th century. Even the international bureau of the UPU became involved, in an attempt to collect and disseminate information about the array of agreements and diverging national practices. Moreover, the large number of postage due items that resulted from the constantly changing regulations and practices caused confusion and frustration among thousands of correspondents across the world. Taken together, this makes the introduction of divided postcards a fascinating episode in international postal history.

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