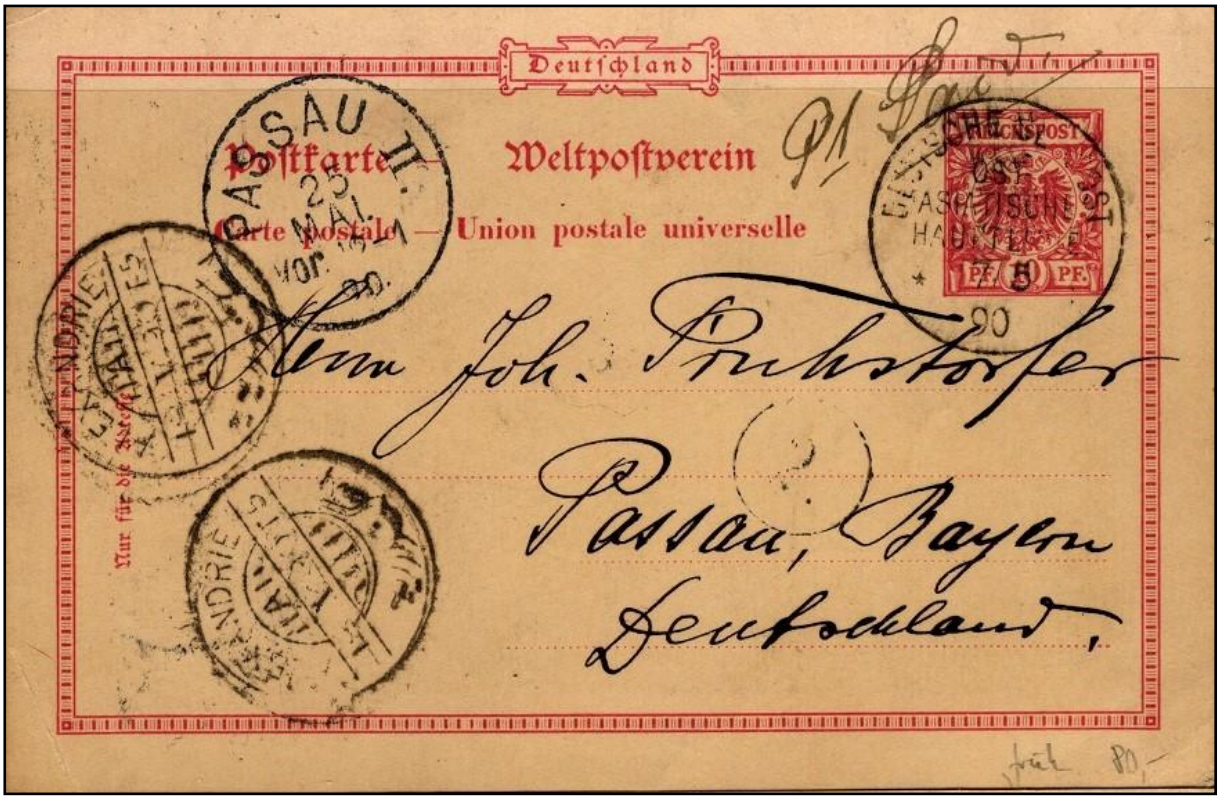
SeePost Mail

By Norman Hinds



This postcard is a wonderful example of late-19th-century **Imperial German maritime postal history** (*Seepost*). The specific vessel carrying the card was almost certainly the **SS *Bayern*** or the **SS *Preussen***, both operated by the **Norddeutscher Lloyd (NDL)** shipping line.

The circular cancel over the 10-pfennig stamp reads: **DEUTSCHE SEEPOST / OST-ASIATISCHE / HAUPTLINIE** (*German Sea Post / East Asian Main Line*).

Route and Postal Trajectory

The multiple postmarks tell a highly accurate geographical story of the card's journey:

1. **The Origin (Port Said):** The card was written on board while docked or anchoring near the entrance of the Suez Canal in Port Said. Because it was physically deposited into the mailbox on a German-flagged ship, it was legally considered German territory. It only required a standard domestic 10-pfennig German Reich stamp rather than Egyptian postage.

2. **The Processing (May 14, 1890):** The onboard postal clerk canceled the stamp using the OST-ASIATISCHE HAUPTLINIE b handstamp on **14 / 5 90** as the ship traveled through the Mediterranean Sea toward Europe.

3. **The Arrival at Port (Alexandria / Brindisi Transit):** The card was offloaded at a European transit port to speed up overland delivery via the *Overland Mail* route. The two circular cancels on the far left read **ALEXANDRIE** (Alexandria, Egypt) and **BRINDISI** (Italy), indicating it was transferred onto a rapid overland mail rail link passing through Italy to cross the Alps.

4. **The Destination (May 20, 1890):** The large, crisp cancel in the upper left is the arrival mark from **PASSAU**, a city in Lower Bavaria (*Bayern*). It reads **20 MAI 90**, meaning it took just 6 days to travel from the Mediterranean ship to the recipient's local German post office.

Rarity & Current Market Value
Early *Seepost* items from the first few years of the East Asian Main Line (which only began operation in late 1886) are highly prized by specialized collectors.

Editor's note: The postcard was apparently dropped off at the post office in the Austrian consulate in Alexandria Egypt. In the late 19th century, a direct mail route existed from Alexandria to Brindisi Italy on the Adriatic coast.

Caveat Emptor, #47

Junk by Francis Ferguson



The listing reads; "UNITED STATES 1869 Pictorials issue sc. 113-119 cv. $655 usd." Offered at AU $125.00 from "down under". Approximately US $89.61. Condition: --not specified "The stamps are ULH." (Whatever that means.) Further warning: "Due to US customs policies, the buyer of this item will need to pay import fees to the shipping carrier prior to delivery." That is a non-starter in my book! Shipping AU $5 (US $3.58). Returns accepted.

What a mess. The stamps in top row are obviously damaged or altered in some fashion. The six-cent value appears to be cut out and placed onto a "fresh" back. The only one that looks like it might be sound is the 15-cent value -- and I have my doubts.

Further looking at the listing offered by this seller show unrealistic prices and a lot of damaged stamps – missing huge pieces.

Any way you look at this listing -- it is total junk.

What do you think?