

Holy Land VI

Postal History 123-124



Air mail letter from France sent 4th. May 1948 and surface letter from Germany sent 3rd. March 1948, both shipped to Naharia from Haifa by the Naharia Sea Boat Emergency Post. Each taxed upon arrival 11 Mil, local incoming delivery fee by the red local council stamp, cancelled Naharia Minhelet Ha'am postmark, (in use 6th. – 20th. May 1948).

(page 738)

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HOLY LAND POSTAL HISTORY



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Editorial

Our collecting field has many facets. Traditional, Postal History, Thematic, postal Stationery, Marcophilia, etc. Each of these is subdivided into various classifications. Traditional collecting for instance could be collected by country, Postal History by period, Thematic by subject and so on. This structure of Philately calls for specialization that requires knowledge and research, which in turn enrich collectors through the hobby.

All this is said because two articles in this issue are devoted to special collecting areas namely, Pigeon Post and Consular Post in the Holy Land. These collecting fields are relatively limited in scope when compared with other collecting areas.

In fact original messages delivered by the pigeon post in the Holy Land are extremely rare. Most of these are of military nature and are kept in museums. Perhaps, this is the reason why no articles on these subjects have been submitted to the Editor for publication during his "term of office" as of 2008. Therefore, It is a pleasure to publish two articles about these collecting fields, one about Pigeon Post, the other about Consular Post. Both articles represent our aim to publish a wide array of philatelic subjects.

Archives, particularly those which contain material from older times are a treasure trove for the research of postal History. Known archives are the Datini archive in Prato Italy, the Corsini archive, the Medici the Venturini/Livorno archives in Italy and in the Holy Land the Governmental archive, the National Library, the Hagana and Army archives and many others. Postal History was fortunate that the Corsini, Medici and the Venturini/Livorno archives were subjected to research and to commercial activity by Robson Low.

The Livorno archive contained 50 letters which were sent during the 17th. Century, by the French merchants from Acre to Livorno and only one sent in the opposite direction. These are discussed in an article on the subject

"To keep the post going" was one of the undertakings during the war of Independence in 1948. Emergency post arrangements were established in Jerusalem, Tiberias, Rishon Letzion the Negev Settlements and Naharia. As the road approach to Naharia was blocked by the Arab forces a Sea Boat Emergency Post Service was established. The service used special slogan cachets and labels which were applied to the letters. Some of these are extremely rare, in fact unique. It is a privilege to present these in an article.

During the fourth week of May we have a Multi National Stamp Exhibition in Tel Aviv. We understand that excellent Holy Land Exhibits will be exhibited. We are excited about the opportunity to see these collections. It should also prove to be a way to learn and to enrich our philatelic knowledge. We look forward to participate in the various venues and of course to meet friends and readers.

Yehuda Kleiner, FRPSL

Editor



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Isolated Naharia 1948. The Sea Boat Emergency Post Service - Foreign Links.

Itamar Karpovsky, Tel Aviv, Israel

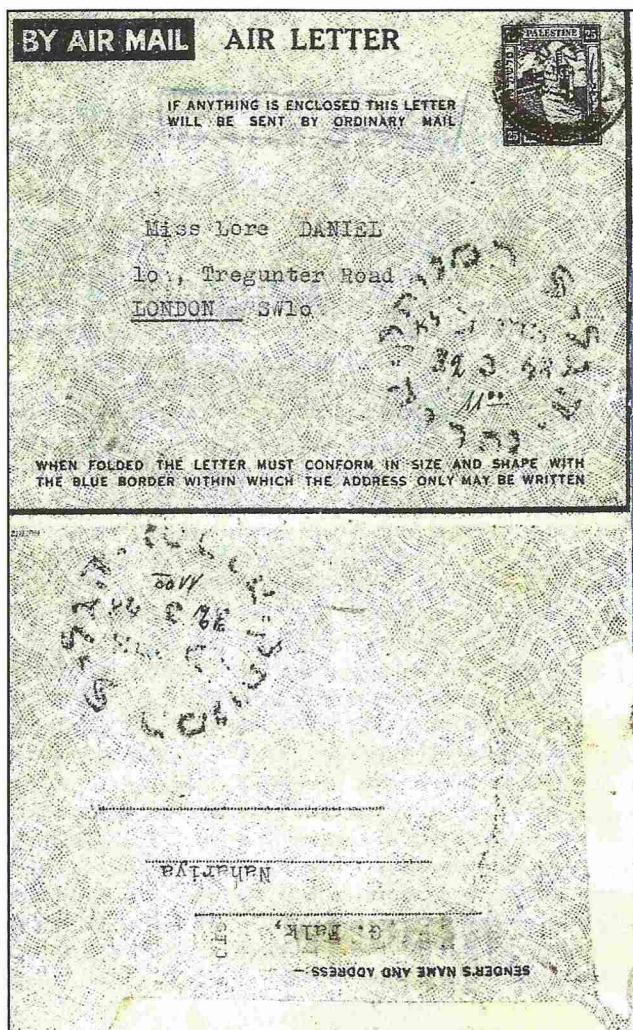
The British Authorities closed the post office at Naharia on March 15th.1948. On March 17th the Arabs of the town of Acre blocked the only northbound road from Haifa to Naharia and to other Jewish settlements in Western Galilee. Communication with them was cut off.



Fig. 1: The section of the northbound road from Haifa to Naharia and the spot at which it was blocked.

Consequently, the only way that Naharia could have contact with the rest of the country was through the sea by boats, which sailed from Haifa and back. On the 22nd. of March 1948, Naharia Local Council in liaison with the "Mishmar-Ha'am" of the Hagana underground forces, decided to use the sea route to Haifa as ***an emergency postal service***. Postal fees were established namely; 20 Mil for outgoing mail and 10 Mil

for incoming mail. All outgoing mail was stamped with *a special slogan cachet* to mark the payment of the postal fee. There were several types of this slogan cachet, some of these exceptionally rare as shown in the illustrations below. The fee of 10 Mil for incoming mail was collected by cash from the addressee until the 25th. of April 1948.



*Fig. 2: Air letter from Naharia to London via Haifa, (family correspondence). Imprinted Mandate 25 Mil stamp, the air letter rate to England. Transferred from Naharia to Haifa by the "Sea boat emergency service". Charged 20 Mil for the sea fare to Haifa and stamped on the front and back of the letter with the first Naharia slogan cachet (type-a), - "Isolated" [disconnected] Galilee 22.3.48". **The only known letter to a foreign destination bearing this slogan cachet.** On March 23rd. the letter was further forwarded from Haifa to England.*

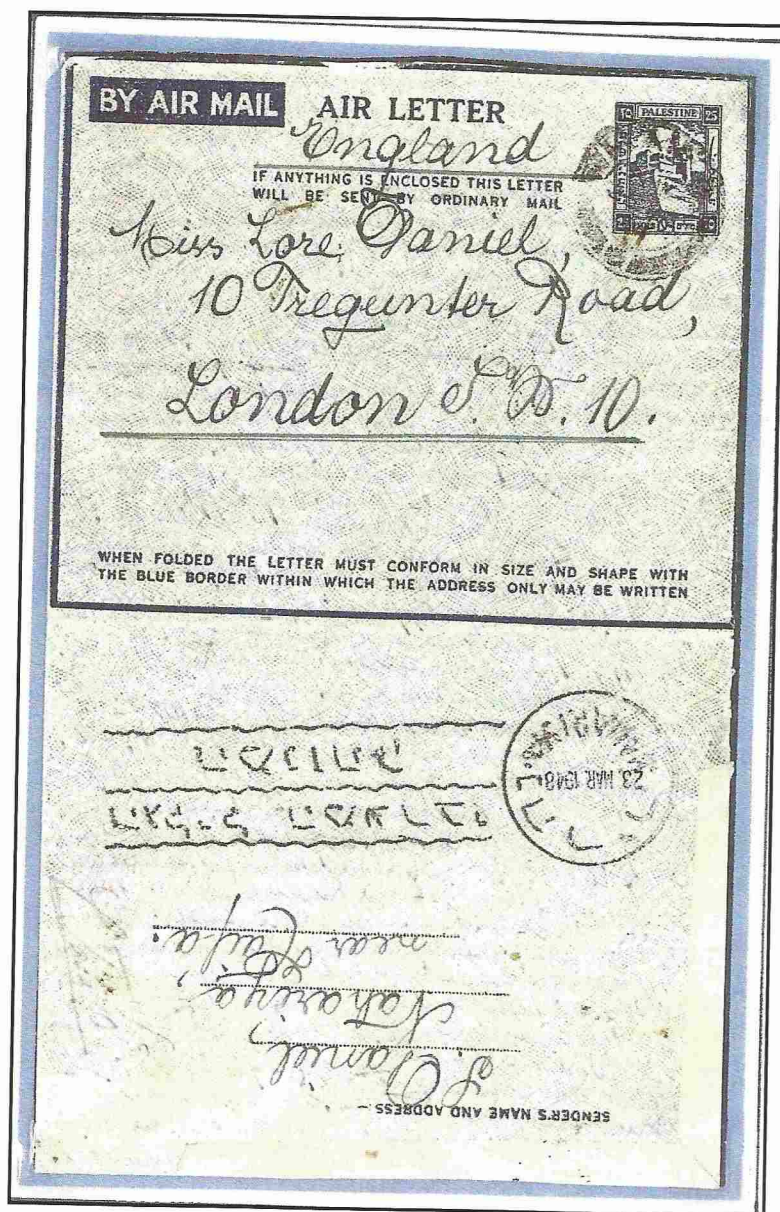


Fig. 3: 25 Mil imprinted air letter to London transferred by the sea boat emergency service. Cancelled on the reverse of the letter with the 1st day of use of the Naharia second type emergency slogan cachet dated 23.3.48 (used only for two days). Posted at Haifa and cancelled by the Mandate post mark 26.3.48. *The only known letter destined to a foreign destination which bears the second type Naharia emergency slogan cachet.*



*Fig. 4: Letter from Naharia to London via Qiriat Haim. Franked with 25 Mil Mandate stamps to pay the letter rate to England. The letter was to be transferred from Naharia to Haifa by the Sea-Boat Emergency Service. However due to stormy weather it was posted from Qiriat Haim on 28th March 1948. The third type Naharia Emergency slogan cachet for outgoing mail is applied on the back of the letter. **The only letter known travelling this route abroad.***



Fig. 5: Letter from Naharia to the U.S.A via Tel Aviv. Franked 65 Mil Mandate stamps to pay the airmail letter rate to the U.S.A. The letter was transferred by the Sea-Boat Emergency Service from Naharia to Haifa. Cancelled with the sixth type Naharia Emergency slogan cachet for outgoing mail, which was in use 21st – 25th April 1948. In Tel Aviv the Mandate stamps were applied and cancelled twice with the last day S.C.Mandate postmark of 5th.May 1948 and with the first day Tel Aviv Minhelet Ha'am postmark, on reverse of the letter.

On April 25th 1948 the local council started to use 10 Mil yellow local tax labels and later 11 Mil red local tax labels for the payment of the

incoming letter fee. It should be noted that the fee remained 10 Mil even though 11 mil labels were affixed to the letters due to the shortage of the 10 Mil ones (Figs:.6 & front cover).



Fig. 6: Airmail letter from Holland, franked with a 40c. Dutch stamp to pay the airmail letter rate to Palestine, cancelled 20th. April 1948. Arrived at Naharia by sea in early May and taxed upon arrival with the 10 Mils yellow local council delivery fee label, canceled by the Naharia Minhelet Ha'am postmark, (in use 6th. – 20th. May 1948).

On May 21st. Acre was conquered by the Israeli Army and the road blockade to Naharia and to the Western Galilee was lifted. Transport and communications with the rest of the country were resumed.

The Naharia Sea Boat Post Service operated from March 22nd. till May 21st. 1948, a relatively short period of 60 days. The service operated under war conditions. Not many letters survived. Those which did are Very scarce, particularly to and from foreign destinations. Most of these were posted at Haifa a few from Qiryat Haim and a few from Tel Aviv and all of these are especially rare.

Consular Mail – Holy Land¹

Compiled by Yehuda Kleiner. Raanana, Israel

Introduction

“Consul” is the title given to the official representative of one state based within the territory of another. His function is to provide official assistance and protection to the citizens of his country when they visit or stay in the host country. In addition the Consul is expected to promote commerce and friendship between the host country and the country which he represents. Consuls are not Ambassadors, as the nature of their work greatly differs. This distinguishes the Consul from the Ambassador who is technically a representative of one head of state to another. Unlike the Consul who is daily involved with administrative, commercial, touristic, etc., matters the Ambassador deals mainly with political/diplomatic issues and meets with head of states and top senior officials. While there can be but one Ambassador of a given country in another, there may be several Consuls concurrently in the same country.

The physical office of the Consul is termed Consulate, and is usually subordinate to the Embassy in the capital city of the host state.

Although it is never admitted publicly, Consulates may also gather intelligence information from the assigned country.

All these activities result in vast letter correspondence which is posted via the ***Consular Mail services***.

History

Representatives of one country in another are known from early history. They did exchange messages with their mother country, usually through their own courier service. Venice had a Consul, a “Balio” in Alexandria, from the twelfth century, who would send his messages to Venice with the Venetian galleys.²

¹ *The Author wishes to thank Mr. Ed Rosen from the House of Zion stamp Co. for providing the illustrations for this article .*

² *A History of Venice-J.J.Nowich p.28-29*

In the Holy Land we know that the **Consulate General of France in Jerusalem** (*Consulat Général de France à Jérusalem*) began its tumultuous history in the early 17th century, following the first Capitulation between France and the Ottoman Empire, in 1535, when France was granted the right to appoint Consuls in the cities of the Empire. The Capitulations constituted the legal basis of the French protectorate over the Holy Places, Catholic Christians, and by extension, Orthodox Christians. ***In 1623, King Louis XIII appointed the first consul in Jerusalem***, “for the Glory of God and to relieve the pious pilgrims whom by devotion visit the Holy Places.” The presence of consuls in Jerusalem was intermittent until 1843. Amidst the growing competition between European powers over the exclusive protectorate that France was entitled to exercise over Christians, the rank of the French Consul in Jerusalem was raised to that of a Consul General in 1893.¹

During the 19th Century with the growing interest politically, economically, and religiously, of the European and American (American Colony Jerusalem) in the Holy Land, Consulates in addition to the French one were set up as follows:

Country	City	Year	Remarks
America	Jaffa	1832	
America	Jerusalem	1844	Provisional
America	Jerusalem	1856	Permanent
Austria	Jerusalem	1849	
Britain	Jerusalem	1838	
Germany	Jerusalem	1871	*
Germany	Jaffa	1872/74	
Italy	Jerusalem	1861	**
Prussia	Jerusalem	1842	*
Russia	Jaffa	1857	
Russia	Jerusalem	1857	

¹ The Holy Land 3000 years of Prephilatelic Postal History-J. Aron P.78+Internet.

Country	City	Year	Remarks
Spain	Jerusalem	1853	
Sardinia	Jerusalem	1843	**

*Prussia represented the interests of the various German States. In 1871 it became the German Consulate following the unification of Germany in 1871.

**Sardinia represented the interests of the various Italian States except those of the Holy See which had its own envois. In 1861 this Consulate became the Italian one following the unification of Italy in 1861.

The Russians had a form of diplomatic representation in Jaffa already in 1820, but a proper official Consulate as of 1857.

In addition to the above there were Vice Consulates of some of the countries in Jaffa, Haifa, Acre (Akko) and sefat.

Diplomatic vs. Consular Mail

Consular Mail can be dispatched in various postal forms as shown later. In this respect it is important to note the difference between Consular and Diplomatic Mail.

The diplomatic bag, also known as the diplomatic pouch, is a container used for carrying official correspondence or other items between a diplomatic mission and its home government or other official organizations. The physical concept of a "diplomatic bag" is flexible and therefore can take many forms e.g., a briefcase, duffel bag, large suitcase, crate or even a shipping container. Additionally, a diplomatic bag usually has some form of lock and/or tamper/evident seal attached to it in order to deter interference by unauthorized persons. The most important point is that as long as it is externally marked to show its status, the "bag" has diplomatic immunity from search or seizure. It is often escorted by a diplomatic courier who is similarly immune from arrest and detention.

Consular Mail is not immune. It does not necessarily need to contain official correspondence. For instance, Consulate employees may use it in

writing to family members and send it through the post of the host country and paying the postage fee.

Thus when a Consul is to correspond on a delicate issue he will use the Diplomatic mail service. Consular mail like Diplomatic Mail may come in various postal forms.

Types of Consular Mail.

1. Mail forwarded by consular service, acting as forwarding agent, (Fig. 1).

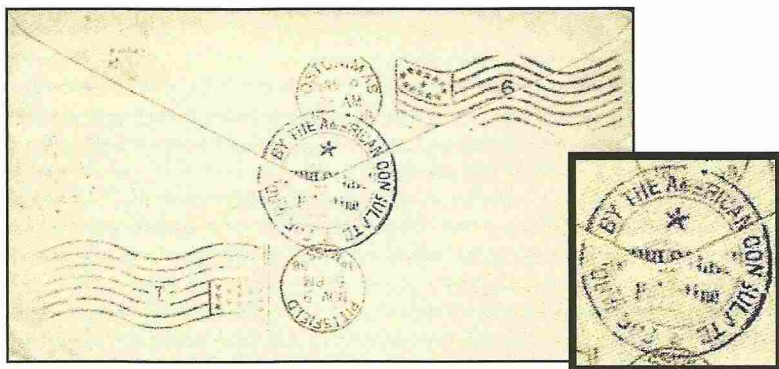


Fig. 1: United States Consulate Jerusalem double ring consular cachet "Forwarded By American Consulate Jerusalem Palestine" The letter was forwarded to Pittsfield U.S.A, on 21.10.1898.

2. Consular Mail sent outside the postal organization of the host country, by courier and bearing Consulate cachet, (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Dutch Vice Consulate Jaffa, undated stampless cover delivered by Courier to Jaffa court of appeal. Vice Consulate cachet.

3. Consular mail sent by regular postal services, with consular seal but free of postal charge, (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3: Austro-Hungarian Vice Consulate Jaffa, stampless cover to the Consulate in Jerusalem, sent through the Austrian P.O. Jaffa, 30.VII.08 arrival Austrian P.O. Jerusalem 31.VII.08. Inverted Consular seal on back of cover. No postal charge.

4. Consular Mail sent by regular postal services, paid and franked, (Fig.4).



Fig. 4: German Consulate Jerusalem to Hannover Germany. Franked by two each 5 & 10 cents Austrian Crete stamps, canceled Jerusalem 20.III.09, Hannover arrival 28.3.09. Consulate seal on back of cover. Two interesting points are about this cover. First, that the German consulate chose to send the letter through the Austrian post office in Jerusalem rather than the German one.

As seen, consular mail will usually be signified by a cachet applied on the front of the cover or/and by a seal affixed on the back of the cover. Also, when postal forms are used the consulate will use the postal forms of the mother country and apply the consular cachet/seal to it to mark the origin of the dispatch, (Fig. 5).



In conclusion a few illustrations of consular cachets on rare consular letters of the Holy Land are presented (Figs: 6 -10).



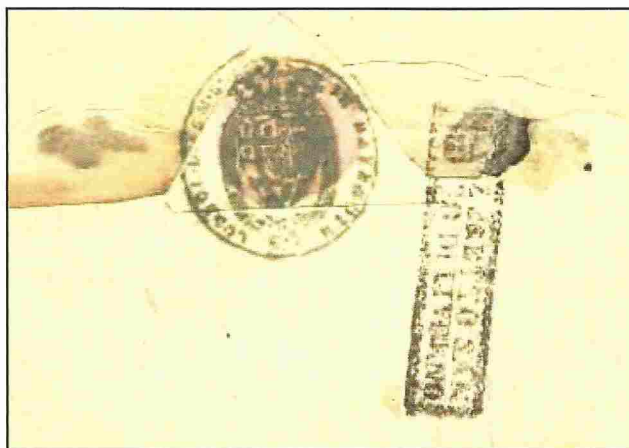


Fig. 7: Sardinian Consulate in Syria and Palestine which was located in Beyrouth to Livorno, dated 30th.November 1830. In the letter Acre, Jaffa and Jerusalem are mentioned. Disinfected in Livorno (boxed two lines cachet). Circular Royal Crest Consular cachet on the extract of the back of the letter.

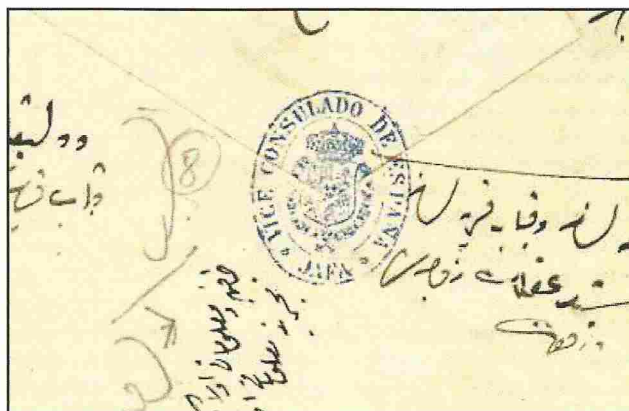


Fig. 8: Spanish Vice Consulate Jaffa to the Chief Justice Court in Jaffa, by courier, dated 8th.June 1909. Royal Crest Consular cachet on the extract of the back of the letter.

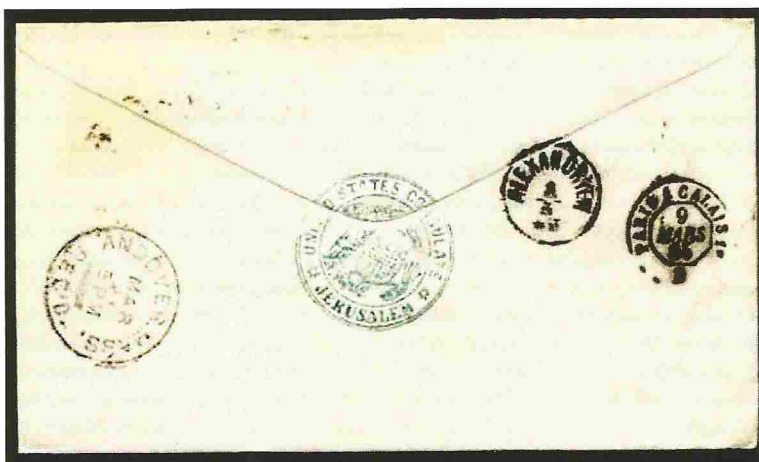


Fig. 9: United State Jerusalem to Andover MA 25.2.1895 transit Boston. Consular cachet on the back of the letter.



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Fig. 10: An “assortment” of cachets and seals of consulates in the Holy Land.

Pigeon Mail In The Holy Land

Izik Barak, Rishon Lezion, Israel

Editors Note: We apologize for the poor quality of the Pigeonotes pictures. As we could not find, except one, such items in private hands we used those which are placed in transparent cases in Museums. We could not arrange their removal from the cases in order to take pictures.

* * * * *

The first “pigeon Mail” in history is described in the Bible: Noah released a dove from his Ark, and when the dove returned with an olive branch – it was a sign that the water subsided and the Ark landed on Mount Ararat. (Ararat is today in North Turkey), (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1: On April 23, 1974, Vatican City issued two stamps to commemorate the centennial of the Universal Postal Union. The 50-lire stamp depicts a mosaic of Noah's ark with a rainbow and a dove with the olive branch. The mosaic pavement is in a church in Jordan.

During the ages, homing pigeons were used by emperors and army commanders to send messages from the battle field informing victory or

defeat. In ancient Greece homing pigeons brought the news from Olympia to Athens about the victors of the contests.

Joseph Aron in his book 3000 Years of Prephilatelic Postal History in the Holy Land notes that the Pigeon Post which was operated by the Mameluks during the mid Twelfth Century in the mid east, covered also the Holy Land. The pigeon mail route from Cairo to Damascus and further north east, served also Gaza, Jerusalem, Djenin, Nablus and Beisan (Beth Shean), (Fig. 2). This was an elaborate system. Relay stations were established along the horse post route (which served concurrently with the pigeon one), and the pigeons only flew 8 miles before being replaced. (Pages 56-58).

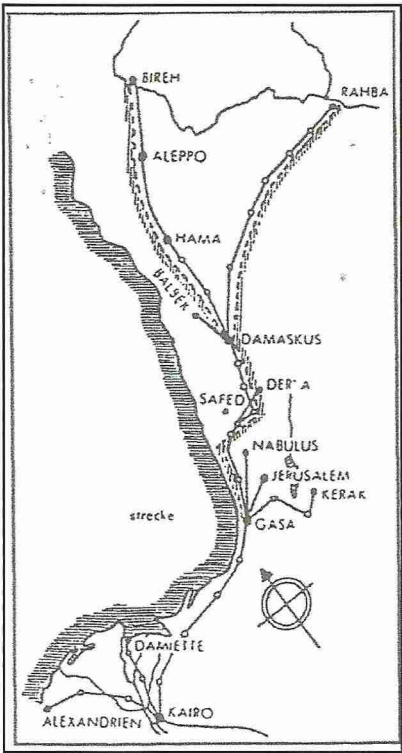


Fig 2: The route of the Mameluk pigeon post (single line) and the route connecting the signal (relay) stations (shaded line).

In 1870, during the Prussian Siege of Paris, homing pigeons were carried out of Paris by balloons, and released from the Province carrying official messages and private mail back to Paris. Official mail was usually

coded, while the private one was not (Fig. 3). This was a massive operation organized by the Postal Administration, and for the first time ordinary citizen could officially use pigeon mail.

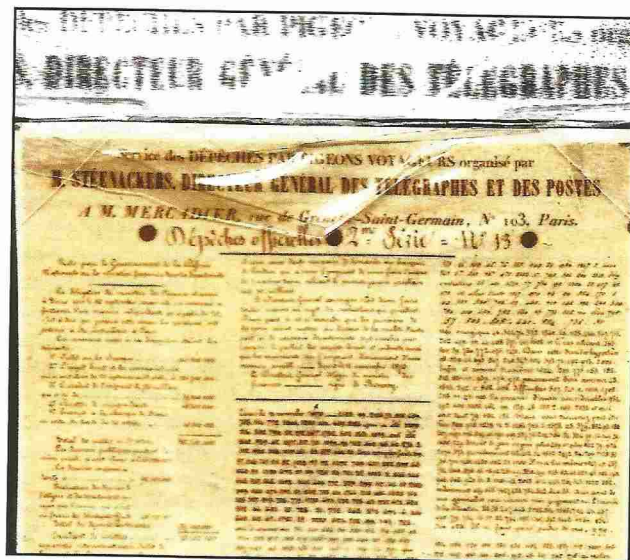



Fig. 3: A microfilmed newspaper that was carried by Pigeon Mail out of besieged Paris during the 1870/71 war.

At the turn of the Century, the idea was adopted by the New Zealand Post Administration, allowing residents of the Great Barrier Island to send messages carried by homing pigeons to Auckland on the Mainland.

The British, German and French armies adopted this method, established Pigeon Mail Units, which were stationed mainly on board Navy Ships, enabling dispatch of urgent messages to shore, at times when wireless communications were still not available, (Fig. 4).



P.S.—Form No. 8.		H.M. NAVAL PIGEON SERVICE.	
Date	Time of Liberation	Lat. & Long. or Position	Weather
16 4 24	10 4 5am	7° 15' N	13 6
From Lt. Belos		To Pigeon loft	
<p>Received from Destroyer & carrier all present one bird has got its eye shut out 7° 12' 00" blue Dunes wind down at 20am this morning I believe they are going to let her again this afternoon Capt Bacon is out here H. Smith</p>			

Fig. 4: British Navy pigeon mail from ship at sea, informing about a sunken submarine. *This is the only Navy pigeon mail dispatch, known in private hands.*

Once wireless communication established itself as a common means of transferring messages around the world, the use of homing pigeons remained mainly as a private hobby.

In the 20th century in Palestine, pigeon mail was used for military or semi-military applications, for instance during the Ottoman occupation, an underground group, known as “Nili Spies” carried out intelligence activities for the British. Starting in 1915, a small group, headed by the Ahronson Family of Zichron Yaakov, conveyed messages to General Allenby’s headquarters in Cairo. These included information on military plans, locations and movements of the Ottoman forces.

Some of the messages were delivered to British ships which were sailing along the coast, but quite a few messages were carried by homing pigeons directly to Cairo. One known example of a useful piece of information brought to the British forces was the location of a Turkish troops concentration near Beersheba. Consequently, these troops were heavily bombed by British artillery.

In September 1917, during WW1 one of Nili's pigeons was captured by the Turkish Chief of Police in Caesarea. The pigeon carried a coded message, which the Turks could not decipher.

This provided to the Turks the proof about the existence of a spy network in Palestine. As soon as the news reached the Nili members, all pigeons were killed, all documents destroyed, and the group dispersed. The Turks started a hunt for the Nili members, which ended with the capture of some the heads of the group, including Sara and Aharon Ahronson and Avshalom Feinberg. They were tortured and executed.

There is no known surviving pigeon message from this group.

In 1938, during the British Mandate in Palestine, Mr. Abraham Etz-Hadar suggested the use of homing pigeons by the Hagana Organization. Being an underground, semi-military organization, the use of wireless communications was out of question. The idea was adopted, and Etz-Hadar acquired a number of homing pigeons in Belgium. A dovecot was constructed in Jerusalem in 1939 under the pretext that it would be used for hobby purposes. This was approved by the British since it provided them with pigeons for use in Palestine and Egypt.

Another, secret, dovecot was established in the Tel Aviv Zoo. The Haganah recruited a group of volunteers, mainly young women, who were secretly trained to care for the pigeons. Special guide booklets were printed, teaching the inexperienced trainers about the daily care of the pigeons, (Fig .5).

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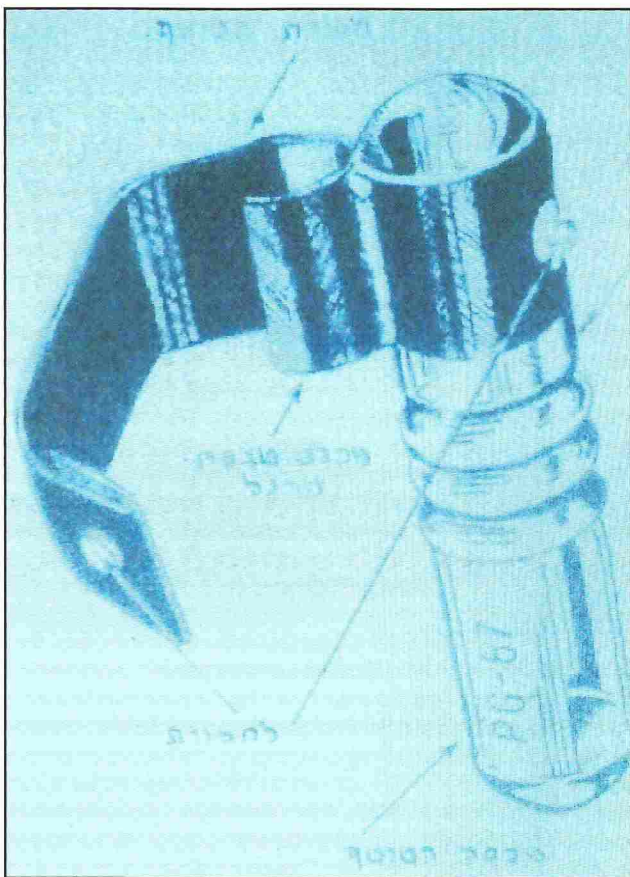


Fig. 5: A picture from the Hagana "Pigeoner Guide Book" showing a tiny capsule containing the message, which was to be attached to the pigeon's leg.

The pigeons were gradually trained to return to their home base from long distances.

They were then taken by Haganah members on various operations, like communicating with illegal immigrants ships, when the wireless communications had to be silenced; or during the operation known as "The Night of Bridges" when several of these across the country, at strategic crossings, were demolished by explosion.

In May 1948, after the declaration of the newly founded state of Israel, the Haganah Pigeon Unit was recruited into the IDF, under the command of the Communication Unit.

A large dovecot was constructed in Kibbutz Givat Brenner. Special command cars were equipped with travelling dovecots, (Fig. 6).

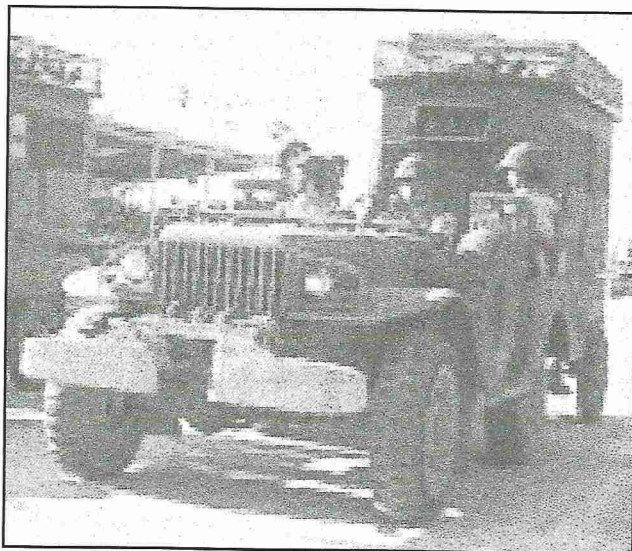


Fig.6: Transportable military dovecot carried by a command car.

Pigeons were taken mainly to the battle fields in the south (the Negev), as well as to settlements under siege, carrying messages back to headquarters in Tel Aviv. Usually, incoming messages were transcribed onto special forms ('Pigeonotes') and forwarded to the relevant unit, (Figs. 7 & 8).

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Fig. 7: Decoded “Pigeonote” Reading: “I am at(coded). Have no contact since leaving. Did not confront any forces on main route. No movement. East of us we hear sound of tanks and cars. Aerial force passed between Hazerim and main road. Starting to move back. Will try confronting the enemy.”

VI/761

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Fig. 8: "Pigeonnote" reading:

"After consideration Lookout at Nevatim where I am now a convoy of armored cars is making its way from Omer to In 15 minutes I will make my way in direction of this convoy. I have no wireless connection. Maybe you can call me. I am constantly in reception state. Will send on 12 O'clock another Pigeonnote."

No date indicated. Courtesy of IDF archives.

The Palmach organization (special Hagana units), prior to their integration with the regular Israeli Armed Forces also used to send pigeon notes from the battle field. Such two, rather sad ones are presented in Figs (9 & 10).

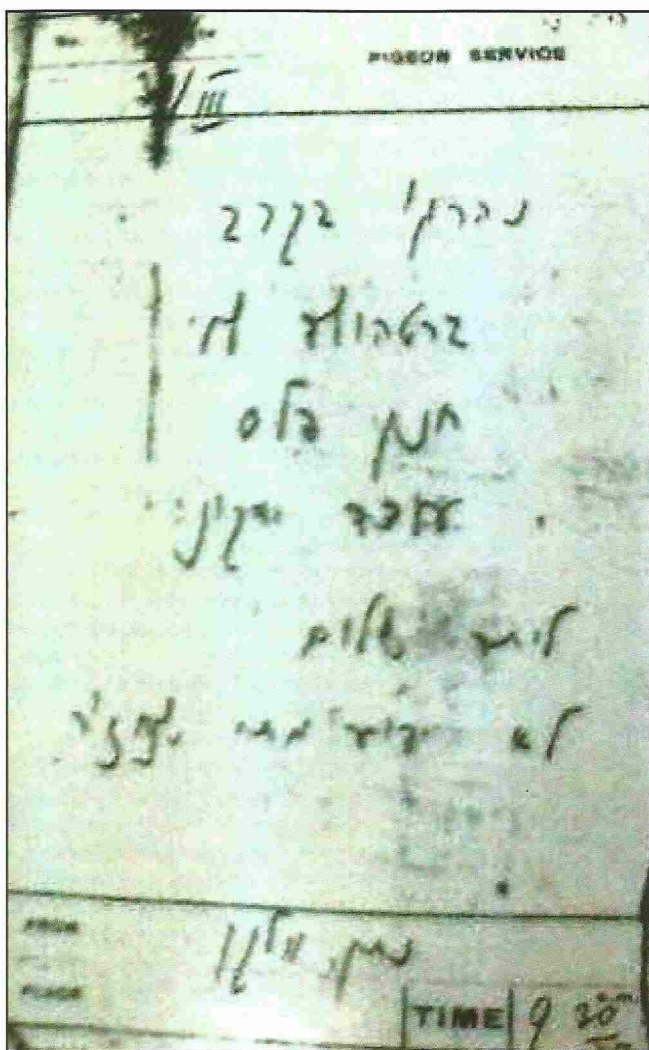


Fig. 9: Pigeon Message reading:

Date: 30 III ? (probably 1948)

“Killed on duty”

Berthold Levi

Hanan Peles

Oded Yarkoni

The others are well.

Do not know when we are coming back.”

Signed ‘Natan Vulkan’

Time: 9:20

*Courtesy
Museum*

Palmach

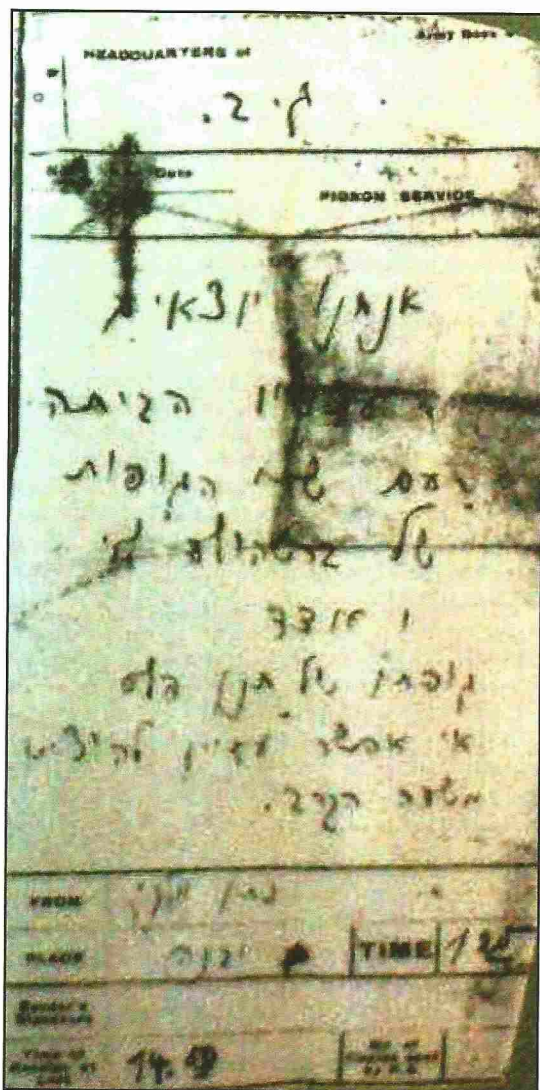


Fig. 10: Pigeon message reading:

“We are going back home, bringing two corps, of Berthold Levi and Oded. Hanan Peles’ corp’s could not be taken out from the battle field” !!!!!!!

Date and place is not clear.

Courtesy Palmach Museum

Only a very few original messages and ‘Pigeonotes’ that survived, are kept at the IDF and Palmach and Haganah archives.

We could not find any such Holy Land items in private hands. We believe that at least a few exist. We shall be pleased to hear from collectors who own these and promise to publish their story.

In 1953 the Pigeon Unit which was 1000 pigeons strong, was spread in a number of dovecots around the country. Secret agents and pilots were

sometimes equipped with a homing pigeon before leaving for a secret mission

The Pigeon Unit was finally shut down in 1957, when technology kicked out the use of “old fashioned” techniques. A memorial statue was placed at the Communications Unit headquarters of the Israeli Army, (Fig. 11).

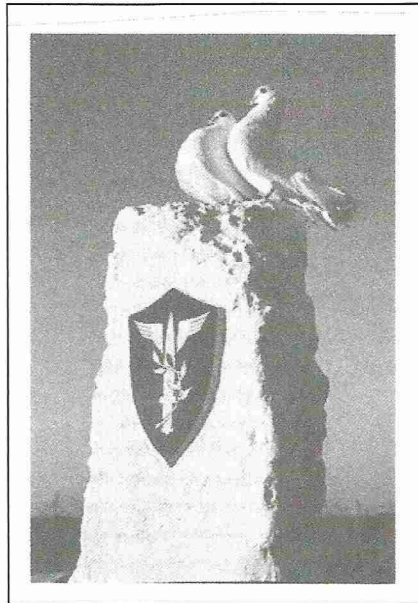


Fig. 11: ‘Pigeoners’ Memorial at the Communications Unit headquarters of the Israeli Army.

Bibliography

1. Pigeon Mail Through History; Salvador Bofarull, 2001
2. Palmach Museum
3. IDF Archives
4. Wikipedia
5. Private collection

17th. Century Acre Letters in the Livorno Archive

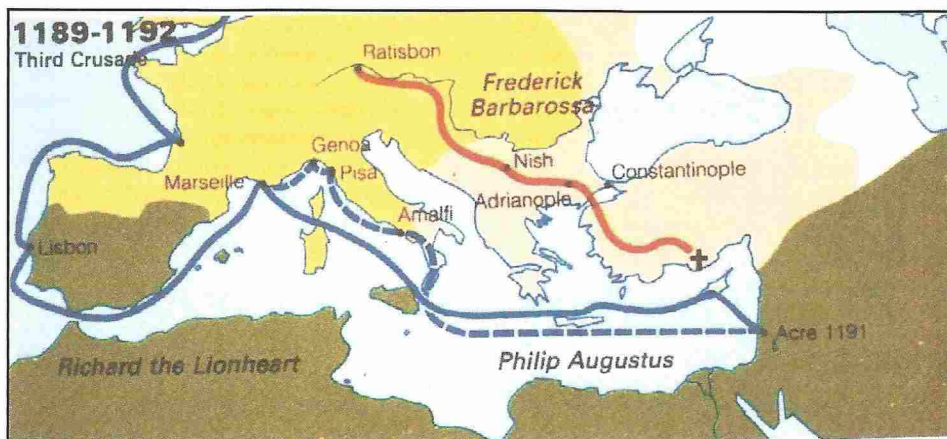
Yehuda Kleiner, Raanana, Israel

Introduction

From early times Acre served as one of the major ports in the Holy Land due to its topographic position of being located on a half island facing the sea. The waters around it were clear of rocks and of other obstacles on the seabed.

The port served many nations during its history. The Phoenicians, Byzantines, the Crusaders, the Arabs and the Ottomans. As of the 18th. Century, its importance declined and its function as a commercial port ceased entirely when the port of Haifa was built by the British during the time of the British Mandate in Palestine.

European commercial, political and religious activity in Acre began during the third crusade in the 12th. Century, mainly by the Italian city states of Venice, Genoa and Pisa. These States were fighting among themselves for the hegemony and commercial control of the city. Eventually the Venetians prevailed.



Map of the third crusade route to Acre. (Broken line from Italy)

Commercial letter correspondence from and with the town abound. A relatively early Venetian letter from Acre is shown in figure 1.

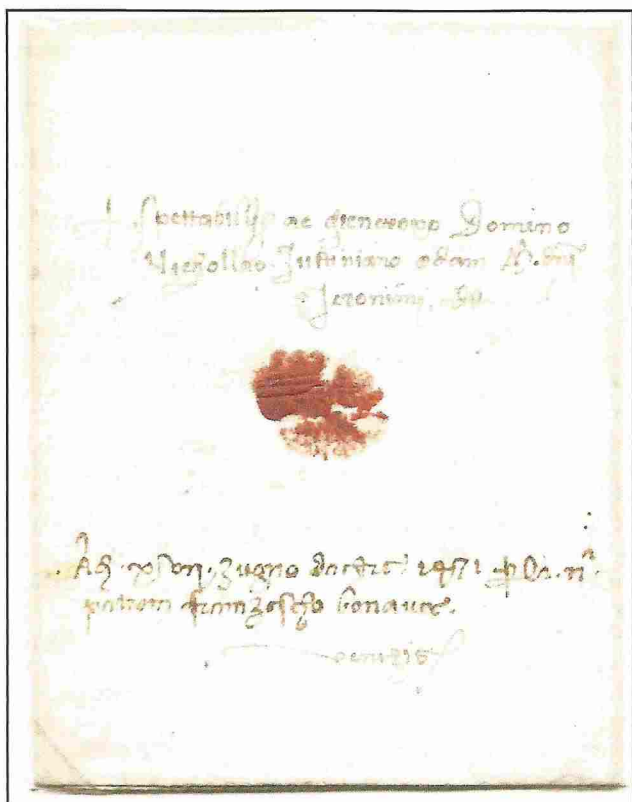


Fig.1: 1471, Venetian commercial letter from Acre to Venice. The recipients' endorsement says: "Ad Acron jungo drodit 1471 per ne patron Franzecha Bonavia" = From Acre the young Spicer (merchant) by patron Franzecha Bonavia. Acron=Acri, as we learn for instance, from a citation by the traveler Beowulf in A.D. 1103 "....next Caesarea of Palestine then Cayphas (Haifa), next after these is a very strong city of Acre which is called ACCRON then Sur and Tyre..." Ref. page 48 of *Early Travels in Palestine* edited by T. Wright, London 1838.

In later centuries, Venetian supremacy weakened due the wars with the Ottomans and the rise of new trading nations French, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese.

It was the French merchants that replaced the Venetians in Acre. Their letters which were are stored in the Livorno Archive are the subject of this article.

The Livorno Archive

During the 1980's, several old letter archives were offered by Christie's-Robson Lowe at their auctions in London and Zurich. Prominent amongst these were the Corsini, Medici and Livorno archives. All contained correspondence from several cities bordering the Mediterranean.

The Livorno Archive had many letters originating in the Middle East, including fifty from and one to the town of Acre (Acri, Akko) in the Holy Land.

The Livorno Archive covers a period of about forty years, from 1668 to 1707. Most letters in the Archive are addressed to Francesco (Francisco) Venturini, merchant, banker and ship owner. His death was reported in 1690. The letters addressed to him cover over twenty years, 1665-1689.

Another principal in the Company was Raffaello Vernaccia, who was the recipient of letters from 1685 to 1700. Vernaccia was taken into partnership by the aging Venturini in 1689. His correspondence continues until 1702.

Other partnerships represented in the Livorno Archive are:

Vernaccia & Maglietti	1692 -1706
Vernaccia & Davanzatti	1698 -1704
Vernaccia, Davanzatti and Pietrasanta	1704 - 1707

These Companies pursued their trade in many far flung locations, but mainly in London, Lyon, Marseilles, Amsterdam, Lisbon, Madrid, Tunis, Malta, Tripoli in Syria, Aleppo, Smyrna and **Acre**, as well as various German and Austrian cities.

The Archive contains letters from all these locations, but this article deals solely with correspondence with the town of Acre in Palestine, known as Akko in today's Israel.

This correspondence constitutes of 51 letters sent during 1674 to 1706.

While Cosimo I de Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany (ruled 1537-1574), began the conversion of the fishing village at Livorno to an important harbor, his son, Ferdinand I (ruled 1587-1609) took up and finished that great project. In a burst of great liberality, Ferdinand I also declared that there be universal religious toleration in Livorno. This decree had the effect of attracting many talented foreign merchants and traders, thereby greatly increasing the commerce, business and prosperity of the new port.

Acre and the French Merchants

The town of Acre at the second half of the seventeenth century was part of the Ottoman Empire. It was mostly ruined and neglected, except for the port area that was a busy trading post. The Italian travelers Domenico Laffi and the “abbate” (abbot) De Burgo, who visited the town in 1679, report that “only 200 houses in the town are inhabited. Assuming one family per house this gives a population of about 800-1200.”

This community included a small number of European merchants, mainly French. According to a report written in 1674 by the Marquis De Nointel, the French ambassador in Constantinople, most of the trade was done by French ships. Occasionally, Venetian vessels would visit. The merchandise exported from Acre consisted of cotton; ashes from local plants burnt to be used in the manufacture of glass and soap; and nut-galls, used in making black dyes to paint textiles. The report also mentions an active French vice consul and two agents, one Venetian and one Dutch.

We should note that France was not at war with the Ottomans, like the Austrians, the Poles, the Russians and the Venetians that were so for a long period, from 1663, until the Peace Agreement of Karlowitz.

During this period, France was nominally an ally of the Ottomans. So there was no problem trading with the French. Also, the Capitulation Agreement which was signed with France on 18 February 1536 was still being observed. The Agreement granted French merchants virtual freedom from Ottoman law, being subjected only to the rule of the French representative in Constantinople in accordance with French law. French vessels were, however, still subject to customs fees and port duties payable to the Ottoman harbor authorities at Acre.

The Letters

Owing to French trading dominance in the town as described above, it is not surprising that most letters from Acre in the Archive are from French merchants or French ship owners. The letters are written mostly in French and occasionally in Italian. Apparently, Venturini and the other partners were Tuscans, who traded with and through French merchants, who knew French.

The letters were sent entirely by sea mostly directly to Livorno or Marseilles where the firm also had an agency. Sometimes via Cyprus, and rarely via Tripoli in Syria.

The time taken for a letter to reach Livorno varied from 39 to 133 days. As indicated in Table 1, it took one letter 126 days to arrive at Livorno, when it was sent via Tripoli of Syria and 133 days when sent via Marseilles.

The earliest letter from Acre in the Archive is dated 20 December 1674, and the latest dates 9 March 1706. Most letters are endorsed with the name of the ship or the name of the ship's captain who carried them. Details of routes and forwarding agents appear infrequently, as does the talismanic inscription "Q.D.C.", meaning "Quem Deus Conservet", whom or which God preserve, referring to the captain, or the ship, (Figs. 3 & 5). Some letters are endorsed with double crossed lines as well, supposedly to indicate prepayment.

The Archive contained a total of 51 letters. Only one of these was sent from Livorno to Acre while 50 letters were sent from Acre to Livorno, (Figs. 3 & 5).

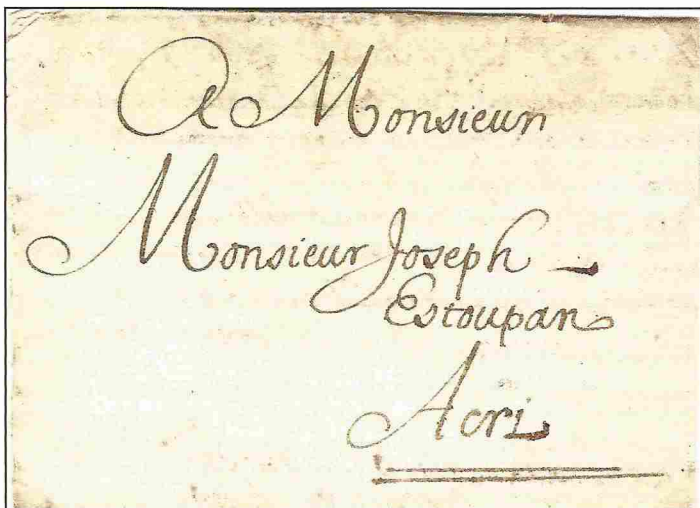


Fig. 2: 1682, letter from Livorno to Joseph Estoupan in Acri, delivery by ship captain. **This is the only letter in the Livorno Archive known so far which is addressed to Acre.** A letter in the opposite direction by Estoupan to Livorno is shown in figure 3.

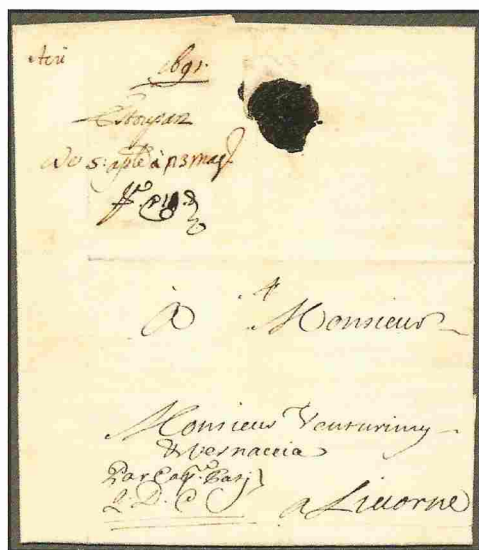


Fig. 3: 1691, letter from Estoupan in Acre to the partnership Venturini and Vernaccia in Livorno. Written April 5th. arrival May 3rd. carried by Captain Baty Q.D.C (Quem Deus Conservet – Whom God (will) preserve)

A Breakdown of the 51 letters by writer is given in Table 1:

Table 1. Breakdown of Letters by Writer

Writer	No. of Letters	Period	Route*
Arnaud, A.	14	1687-1706	
Arnaud, A.	1	1693	via Tripoli
Arnaud, J.	4	1691-1693	
Baretta, B.	1	1683	
Beaumier	2	1691-1692	
Beaussiers	2	1691	
Brue, G.	2	1693-1694	
Brunet, F.	1	1688	
Deidier, F.	3	1690	
Deidier, F.	2	1689-1691	via Marseilles
Deidier, F.	1	1689	via Cyprus
Estoupan & Marin	1	1674	
Estoupan, J.	6	1682-1684	
Estoupan, J.	1	1682	via Marseilles
as recipient	1	1682	to Acre
Estoupan & Co.	1	1691	
Fauvre, H.	3	1700- 1702	
Gastaud, G.	1	1702	
Gurthemy, C.	1	1702	
Marin, B .	2	1682	
Marin, B .	1	1682	via Marseilles
	51		

* All letters traveled directly to Livorno, unless otherwise indicated.

As can be seen, the names of most letter writers in Table 1 are French, thus substantiating the reports that the French were dominant in the trade between Acre and Europe at the time.

We are unsure whether the letters have any indication concerning rates or the payment of postage fees. One theory is that the double crossed lines on many letters indicate “ship mail”, which later became the “via di mare” endorsement. A second theory argues that the double crossed lines mean prepayment.

In other instances, the ships may have belonged to or were chartered out to a merchant house and the captain was obliged to carry letters for his commissioners. Usually in this case the name of the Captain was recorded on the address panel of the letter.

The author was able to purchase several letters sent from Acre at these Christie’s-Robson Lowe auction sales, but it was only years later that his search for the **letter sent to Acre**, seen in Figure 2, was fruitful.

This letter from Livorno to Acre intrigued the author so much that he decided to search for some historical background, something hopefully containing a direct reference to Estoupan the recipient of the letter and to the other French merchants in Acre.

After a long search, a book entitled *A History of Acre*, by the Israeli writer, Nathan Schur, provided a clue. One of the references mentioned in Schur’s book is a traveling account written by an Italian abbot named De Burgo. De Burgo visited Acre in 1679 and subsequently published a book, “*Viaggio de cinque anni in Asia, Africa, et Europa de Turco*”, (A five year journey in Asia, Africa and Turkish Europe). The book was published in Milano in 1686 and was said to have a list of all the Europeans living in Acre at the time of his visit.

Although, the Acre letters from the Livorno Archive offered in the Robson Law sales are, except for one, of a later period than De Burgo’s visit, the author decided to try to locate a copy of this book and search for the list of the Europeans living in Acre at the time.

It was quite an undertaking to locate a relatively unimportant book published over 350 years ago. Initially, several Italian libraries, museums

and universities were contacted, but to no avail. By chance, the author heard that the town engineer of the municipality of Acre, Mr. Bruno Dichter was an ardent collector of books about Acre. Enquiries at the town municipality revealed that Mr. Dichter had retired many years ago. At the time of inquiry, he would have been over 90 years old. His whereabouts were unknown, and it could not even be said if he was still alive. Mr. Dichter had never married, and any relatives he might have had were unknown as well. The search had reached another dead end.

Years later, the author came across a publication that mentioned that the library of Bruno Dichter had been bequeathed to the University of Haifa. Once more, there was hope of finding De Burgo's book. A visit to the university library produced the volume, now part of the rare books section. Imagine the joy of seeing on page 229, a list of the fourteen Europeans living in Acre at the time of De Burgo's visit! (See Figure 4.)

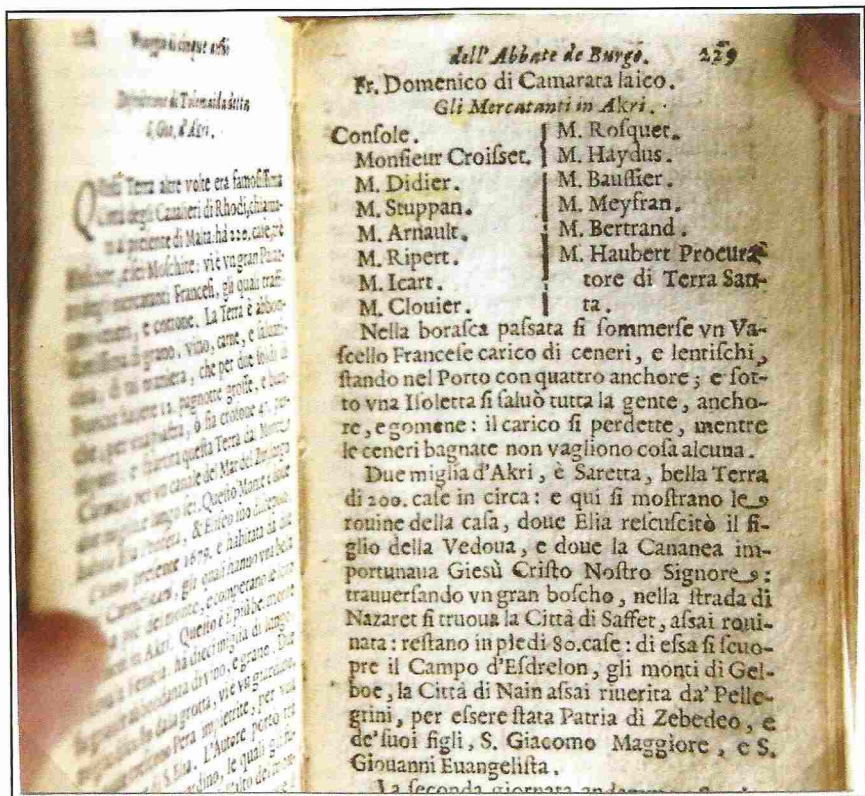


Fig. 4: Top of page 229 from De Burgo's book listing the Europeans in Acre.

Of the fourteen names listed, one was the French vice consul, one was a "procuratore", an agent administrator who managed affairs, though in this case, probably religious matters, and one was a lay priest. The other eleven individuals named, were merchants of those, four were also correspondents represented in the letters of the Livorno Archive. Since De Burgo uses surnames only, we may look at these names as those of merchant families or merchant houses. It then transpires that the names on De Burgo's list are responsible for about 72% of the correspondence from Acre in the Livorno Archive. Table 2 shows how this calculation was arrived at.

Table 2, Calculation of Percentage of Merchants Letters Whose Names Appear in both De Burgo's List and the Livorno Archive

Names in De Burgo's Book	Names on Letters in the Livorno Archive	Number of Letters in Livorno Archive
Didier	Deidier, E	6
Stuppan (Estoupan)*	Estoupan & Marin	1
	Estoupan, Joseph	8
	Estoupan & Co.	1
Amault (Arnaud)*	Amault, Antoine	15
	Amault, Joseph	4
Baussier (Beaussiers)*	Beaussiers	2
4	7	37**

* As spelt in Christie's-Robson Lowe catalogues.

** Thirty seven out of 51 letters equals 72%.



Fig. 5: Letter from Francesco Deider, the first one on De Burgo's list, dated 24 January 1691, to Livorno. Delivery by Captain Joseph Manarin. Note the origin manuscript "Acrid" top left side of the letter

Since 72% of the letters in the Livorno Archive were from names mentioned by De Burgo, the following observations and queries can be made:

1. Letters in the Archive by merchants which are not listed by De Burgo are:
 - a. From occasional visiting merchants, or from ship captains, or,
 - b. From merchants who came to live in Acre later than De Burgo's visit.

The author tends to accept the first assumption, because the correspondence by each of those merchants in the Archive is limited to a maximum of three letters, thus possibly indicating temporary stay.

2. Where is the earlier correspondence from those four merchants who are named in both sources, De Burgo and the Archive?

De Burgo visited Acre in 1679, yet the earliest letters in the Archive from the names mentioned in Table 2 are year-dated as follows (except for a stray 1674 letter from Estoupan & Marin):

Estoupan 1682, Arnaud 1687, Deidier 1689, Beaussiers 1691.

This means that those merchants were present in Acre at the time of De Burgo's visit but their letters in the Archive are of later dates.

Three possibilities come to mind:

- a. Either somewhere there are additional parts of the Archive which have not come to the philatelic market as yet.
- b. That the names of those four merchants who appear in both lists, but which we have no earlier correspondence from, began trading with the Venturini firm in Livorno later than De Burgo's visit.
- c. The earlier letters are no longer in existence.

What about the other seven merchants in De Burgo's list from whom there are no letters in the Archive? Is it possible that they did not do business with Venturini?

More research is needed to answer these questions and others entailed in this important Archive.

An appendix listing the 51 Acre letters in the archive, showing details of the letters is given on the next page:



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Appendix: Detailed List of Letters from the Livorno Archive Written from Acre Offered in the Three Robson Lowe Auctions. (Where the route is not indicated the letters travel directly to Livorno)

No.	Writer	Addressee	Date	Route	Days in Transit
1.	Arnaud, Antoine	Francesco Venturini	3.1.1687		66
2.	Arnaud, Antoine	Same	20.7.1687		80
4.	Arnaud, Antoine	Same	29.3.1688		65
5.	Arnaud, Antoine	Francesco Venturini & Raphael Vemaccia	7.1688		?
6.	Arnaud, Antoine	Same	12.8.1688		45
7.	Arnaud, Antoine	Same	24.9.1688		54
8.	Arnaud, Antoine	Same	16.6.1688		54
9.	Arnaud, Antoine	Same	24.9.1688		54
10.	Arnaud, Antoine	Same	28.10.1689		79
11.	Arnaud, Antoine	Same	8.4.1689*		46
12.	Arnaud, Antoine	Same	8.4.1689*		46
13.	Amaud, Antoine	Vernaccia & Maglietti	24.4.1693	Via Tripoli	126
14.	Arnaud, Antoine	Same	6.5.1698		70
15.	Amaud, Antoine	Same	9.3.1706	N/A	102
16.	Arnaud, Joseph & Les Cousins	Same	4.3.1691		N/A

No.	Writer	Addressee	Date	Route	Days in Transit
17.	Arnaud, Joseph & Les Cousins	Same	18.4.1692		N/A
18.	Arnaud, Joseph & Les Cousins	Same	11.7.1693		N/A
19.	Amaud, Joseph & Les Cousins	Same	25.3.1693		N/A
20.	Barretta, Gio Francesco Venturini Battista & Gerolemo Antiulle		2.4.1683		43
21.	Beaumier	Venturini & Vemaccia	27.1.1691		61
22.	Beaumier	Same	2.5.1692		90
23.	Beaussiers	Same	23.7.1691		73
24.	Beaussiers	Same	3.3.1691		40
25.	Brue, Gio	Venturini & Vernaccia	29.5.1693	Via Marseilles	133
26.	Brue, Gio	Vernaccia & Maglietti	20.12.1694		33
27.	Brunet, Francoise	Francesco Venturini	12.8.1688		57
28.	Deidier, E	Francesco Venturini	13.4.1689	Via Cyprus	48
29.	Deidier, E	Same	24.10.1689	Via Marseilles	81
30.	Deidier, E	Venturini & Vernaccia	24.2.1690		23

No.	Writer	Addressee	Date	Route	Days in Transit
31.	Deidier, E	Same	25.7.1690		36
32.	Deidier, F.	Same	15.9.1690		40
33.	Deidier, F.	Same	24.1.1691	Via Marseilles	122
34.	Estoupan, Joseph	Same	2.3.1682		58
35.	Estoupan, Joseph	Same	11.3.1682		49
36.	Estoupan, Joseph Same		25.6.1682**		39
37.	Estoupan, Joseph	Same	25.6.1682**		39
38.	Estoupan, Joseph	Same	22.12.1682	Via Marseilles	133
39.	Estoupan, Joseph	Same	18.3.1682		45
40.	Estoupan, Joseph	Same	15.9.1684		78
41.	Estoupan & Co.	Venturini & Vernaccia	5.4.1691		48
42.	Estoupan & Mar.	Francesco Venturini	20.12.1674	N/A	105
43.	Fauvre, Henri	Vernaccia & Davanz.	9.10.1700**		40
44.	Fauvre, Henri	Same	9.10.1700**		49
45.	Fauvre, Henri	Same	28.6.1702	N/A	102
46.	Gastaud, G.	Same	21.7.1702		45
47.	Gurthumy, Chau	Same	16.7.1702		46
48.	Marin, B., Capt.	Same	23.5.1682	Via Marseilles	124
49.	Marin, B., Capt.	Same	6.6.1682		91
50.	Marin, B., Capt.	Same	23.6.1682		62

No.	Writer	Addressee	Date	Route	Days in Transit
51.	Venturini, Francesco to	Joseph Estoupan	29.6.1682	To Acre	N/A

* Both letters were written and sent on the same day. Both are endorsed "Par Capt. Baty."

** Two letters written on the same day which travelled on two different ships. Letters are endorsed "Par Capt. Leurion" and "Par Capt. Jensson."

References:

- Aron, Joseph, The Holy Land 3000 Years of Prephilatelic Postal History, 2004.
- Christie's-Robson Lowe auction catalogues: Sale No. 8042, Zurich, 30 October 1984; Sale Nos. 8070 and 8072, Zurich, 17-18 April 1985; and Sale No. 8141, Zurich, 4 November 1986.
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- Vandal, Albert, L'odysee d'un Ambassador, Paris, 1900, (text of the report of the Marquis De Nointel, pp.309-3 1.)

Palestine Mandate Stamps Die Proofs and Color Trails

Stamps are associated with Postal History when these are part of the cover and through their denominations rates can be calculated. Thus, when the Editor received scans of die proofs and color trails of Palestine Mandate stamps from the Philatelic Department of the British Library, he thought it worthwhile to present these to our readers, as it illustrates an important part of the process of stamp issuing. The stamps which we have on our covers.

The Editor wishes to thank Yacov Tsachor, Tel Aviv, for his assistance in describing the illustrations.

THE PICTORIALS

Fig.1 (on the next page):

Designer: F.Taylor

Typographed: Harrison & Sons.

Design: The Sea of Galilee and Tiberias for the High Values.

Die Proofs in Black – 7th. May 1941

250 Mil – approved on 9th. May 1941

500 Mil - approved but a remark

About a flaw in the denomination box. 1 pound – Not approved. Two remarks about flaws in the denomination box.

Following corrections and final color trials (Fig. 2) the stamps were issued on 15 th. January 1942.

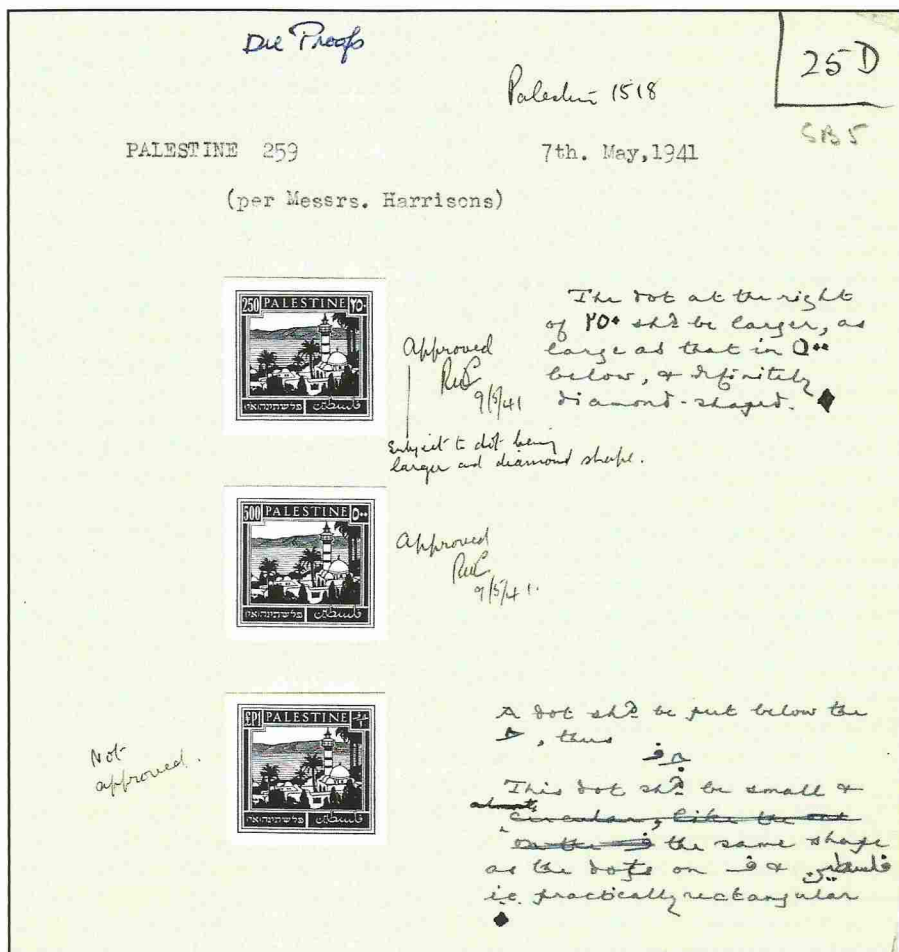


Fig. 2: Final Color Trails, High Values-Imperforate.



1 Mil



2 Mils.



4 Mils



8 Mils.



10 Mils



13 Mils



20 Mils.

POSTAGE DUE

Fig. 3: Color trails of the 1, 4, 8, 10, 13 and 20 Mil denominations, perforated as issued, on an 8 Mil value stamp mounted on chequered backrollen paper. The 50 Mil value stamp of this set is not shown in this trial. Printed by De La Rue & Co. London. Issued January 1st. 1928, except for the 6 Mil value which was issued on October 1933.

The Route From Jerusalem To The United States

Michael I. Fock, Slovenia

The first known letters from Jerusalem to the United States were dispatched around 1840. Neither all the routes nor the means of transport, of each of these letters are known. The letters were mostly carried by messengers to the coastal towns which had ship connections to Europe, like Jaffa, Alexandria and especially Beirut. Land transit routes via Damascus and Constantinople were also possible but here the same sea routes to the United States via ports in Great Britain, Prussia and France were used.

No post offices existed at the time, so letters were delivered directly to ships, sailing for Europe. The rates in force at the time are also not known, as they changed from steamer to steamer. As those times were delicate for spreading of infectious diseases the letters were disinfected *en route* (Malta, Marseille and Constantinople) but always beyond the Holy Land. Letters destined to the USA were sent to England and Bremen from which established sea lines towards Canada and USA operated (American Shuttle, Atlantic Ferry, and Cunard).

Consequently, due to this situation the postal routes that were used for the letters could not always be established and a certain uncertainty prevailed. Mr. Josheph Aron when discussing this subject in his book "The Holy Land 3000 Years of Postal History", page 146 shows in Fig. 65 a letter which I have now acquired, shown in Figure 1 saying that: "*an absence of intermediate markings makes the routing a mystery.*"



Fig. 1: Jerusalem Ship Letter to America.

This is a missionary letter dated 10th June 1841 from Jerusalem to the USA, through New York to Mary Truman in West Springfield with some address changes including New Haven. Indeed the letter has no intermediate postal markings prior to the American ones. So I would hypothesize that it travelled from Jerusalem to Beirut, from there by ship to Malta where it was disinfected (two slits), then to Great Britain and from there by a liner to New York (21st September) along the coast towards North (New Haven, Ct., 23rd September) and then by land to West Springfield, Md (27th September). This was of course not cheap. The letter was charged 12 c. postage from NY to NH, then 10 c. to WS and at the end 6 c. ship rate. This adds up to 28 c.

Aron mentions two more letters in which intermediate postal markings were used to determine the routes. One was a letter from the British Missionary ex Jerusalem in 1841, that went Via Beirut and Malta by ship to New York en route to New Haven. The second letter originated from Jerusalem in 1849, overland to Cairo, then to England from where it left Liverpool on a Cunard mail packet boat Hibernia to America.

Now I wish to present a fourth letter (Fig.2).

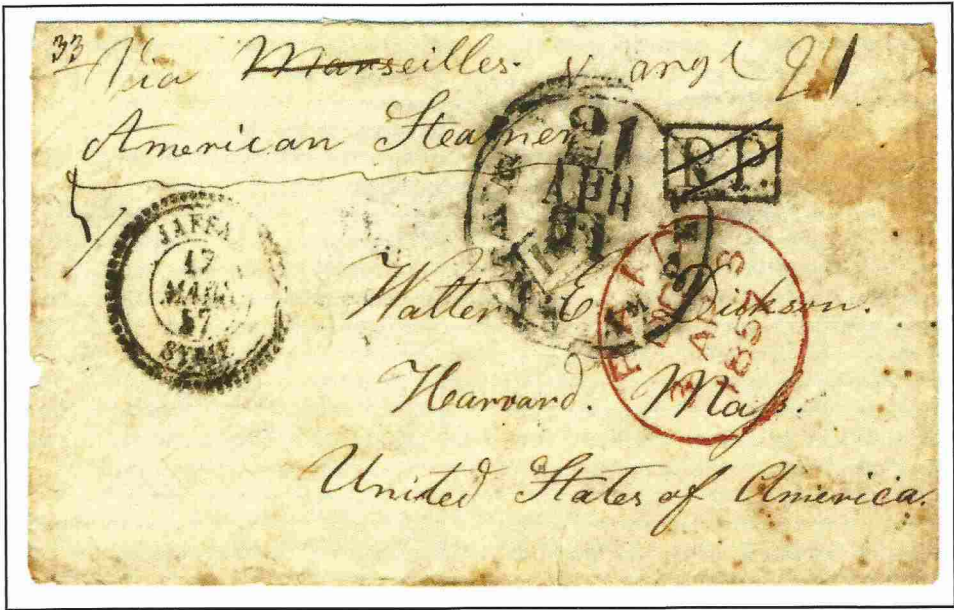


Fig. 2: 1857, letter from Jerusalem to the U.S.A by the French Post Office Jerusalem via Jaffa with intermediate post marking allowing to determine the route.

This letter from Jerusalem to Harvard Ma. U.S.A. has all the intermediate postal markings to determine the route. It was sent from the French Post Agency in Jerusalem (probably in a mail sack – manuscript “33” in the left upper corner, since no stamps were used) to the French post office in Jaffa where the March 17th, 1857 Jaffa/Syrie transit post mark was applied. Then as instructed on the letter “Via Marseille – N. ang.l American Steamer” Meaning by American steamer (this is unusual) through Marseille, and Calais to England; from there to New York and further to Harvard, Mass. PP denotes postage paid to England and PD postage of 21 c., paid by the addressee at destination to Comp. Am. Pkt. Overseas postage had also been paid proven by the red British Post cancel. The letter was sent on the Cunard’s steamer “Arabia” that sailed on 4th April 1857 from Liverpool and arrived at New York’s harbor on 18th April where it was handed over to the US Postal Service (Ref. 2).

References:

1. Joseph Aron : The Holy Land - 3000 Years or Prephilatelic Postal History (2004)
2. George E. Hargest : History of Letter Post Communication between the United States and Europe 1845 – 1875 (1971)

Since the article contains a reference to Mr. Joseph Aron's book (Ref.1 above) the article was sent to Mr. Aron for comment. He was kind enough to send a reply, which is presented below.

All credit to the writer of this article for his research. Let me however add that my work was published in 2005. Regarding these letters and any others that may emerge on the market in the future the ultimate reference for Transatlantic mail to the US generally is now Richard Winter's two volume "Understanding Transatlantic Mail".

Unfortunately despite the amazing number of entires and covers illustrated and analysed there are none originating in "Turkey" ie the Ottoman Empire.

However, there are a significant number of references to covers carried by the "Arabia" as is the case of the fourth letter referred to in the article -- and for that matter there is a valuable index listing of all the ships that carried letters described in those volumes. It is quite possible that careful reading of this monumental work may provide additional information regarding the overall subject of mail from the Levant to the USA.

At some future time I would hope to work my way through those volumes to see if I can find relevant information.

That aside I would suggest that anyone researching any Transatlantic item from the 1840's to the 1870's marked per "Arabia" could benefit by at the very least reference to that index to identify other items carried by the same vessel.

Regards Joseph Aron

Discovery: A Rare Jaffa Ottoman Censor Cachet **W.W.1 – FDC.**

Yehuda Kleiner, Raanana, Israel

Following the termination of the Capitulation agreement with Turkey at the breakout of WW1, all foreign post offices in the Ottoman Empire were closed as of 1.10.1914.

A censorship organization was set up under the control of the War Ministry. Censor officers were nominated for the troops and censor clerks for the various civilian post offices.

Three important censorship directives were enforced:

1. The writer had to indicate on the address panel of the letter/card the language in which the letter was written. (17 different languages were spoken throughout the Ottoman Empire at the time).
2. The letter had to be handed open at the post office, and then following the censor process, the letter was closed and a special censorship sticker was applied.
3. A censorship cachet had to be applied on the address panel of the letter/card.

The censorship organization in the Holy Land was organized geographically under three head branches with sub offices as follows:

AKKO	NABLUS	JERUSALEM
Haifa	Bnei Sa'ab	Beersheba
Nazareth	Jenin	Gaza
Safet	Hebron	Jaffa
Tiberias		

According to Steichle's book "The Osmanische Post in Palestine" there were 25 different censor cachets for civilian mail during 1914-1917. Collins in his book "The Ottoman post and Telegraph offices in Palestine

and Sinai” recorded 24 for Palestine proper. Some of these cachets have been in use for a few days only, like the one described below.

The cachet is on a picture post card written in Jaffa on 12.12.1914 to Berlin Germany. The post card is franked by a 20 Para stamp (correct rate), cancelled by the Jaffa 5 postmark dated **13.12.1914**, and bearing the violet one line “MUAJENE OLUNMUSDUR” i.e passed censorship, Ottoman censor cachet. (Steichele # 42/11, Collins # Jaffa CM2), (Figs: 1 & 2).



Fig. 1: The PPC from Jaffa to Berlin with the censor cachet at the left corner. The postmark cancelling the stamp is dated 13.12.1914.

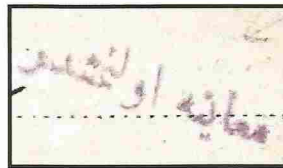


Fig. 2: The censor cachet enlarged.

Steichele recorded the first day of use as 13.12.1914 but put a question mark about the last day of use. Collins indicated also the 13.12.1914 as the first date of use and the 17.12.1914 as the final one. This means that this cachet was in use for 5 days only, hence its rarity. In addition, the postmark cancelling the stamp is dated 13.12.1914, **thus according to both Steichele and Collins this is also the first date of use of this censor cachet.**

Palestine Forerunners-Early "Jerusalem Cross" Letters

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The first French post office in Palestine was opened in Jaffa on 20th. July 1852. Prior to this date, there was a postal service, which operated through forwarding agents who conveyed the letters from Jerusalem to Jaffa and then either to Alexandria or to Beirut for onward transmission.

In 1858, the manager of the French post office in Jaffa, Mr. Santily and later Mr. David Damiani organized a weekly postal service between Jerusalem and Jaffa. Under the administration of the Damiani Family receiving agents were nominated to operate the Jerusalem post agency. Those agents in Jerusalem collected the postage fees, which included 1 Piaster to cover the cost of forwarding the letter to Jaffa. This procedure continued until 1880.

As of 1858, such mail was marked with the so called "Jerusalem Cross" cachet, which was applied to the front of each outgoing letter. The Cross with a large cross in the center of the cachet and a small cross above or under each arm of the center bar of the large cross was a symbol of the Christian Crusaders Kingdom in the Holy Land from 1099 to 1187. Once the letters from Jerusalem arrived in the Jaffa post office the relevant postage stamps were affixed and cancelled by the different Jaffa postmarks.

The earliest letter known today bearing the "Jerusalem Cross" cachet is dated 3.9.1858. Until 1861 all the letters bearing this cachet are stampless, (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1: Stampless letter sent on 22.11.1861 from Jerusalem via Jaffa, Alexandria and Lyon to London. Bearing the "Jerusalem Cross" (struck twice unusual thus), with Jaffa/Syrie pearl ring postmark used as a dater. (Mihael Foch, Slovenia, collection).

During 1861/62 we find already franked letters with stamps canceled with different Jaffa postmarks, which also bear the "Jerusalem Cross" cachet. Still during this time there are stampless letters bearing the "Jerusalem Cross". In both instances the purpose of applying the the "Jerusalem Cross" was to show the original place of origin of the letter, namely Jerusalem, (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Stamless letter to a German Baron in Bavaria, Germany, Via Marseille with the blue "Jerusalem Cross" Cachet and Jaffa/Syrie pearl ring postmark, dated 14.3.1862.

The first postmark of the French post in Jaffa was the octagonal dotted rhomboid with the small number "3768" of Jaffa inside it and the "Pearl Ring" Jaffa/Syrie dated stampmark alongside. In addition the letter bears the "Jerusalem Cross" cachet. Such letters with the two aforementioned postmarks and also bearing the "Jerusalem Cross" are very rare, (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3: Letter to Kelso, Scotland, frank 60 cent by stamp of the 1862 French issue, to pay the postage fee to Scotland, cancelled with the rare small "3768" numeric postmark of Jaffa. Also bearing the blue "Jerusalem Cross" cachet and the Jaffa/Syrie pearl ring postmark dated 12.4.1862.

More common are letters on which the stamps are canceled with the large numerical "5089" dotted rhomboid Jaffa postmark and bearing the "Jerusalem Cross" as well. Those letters with the "5089" postmark are of a later date, (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4: Letter to Marseille franked 80 c. to pay the double letter rate to France cancelled with large Jaffa No. "5089" rhomboid postmark with "Jerusalem Cross" and Jaffa/Syrie pearl ring dated 11.9.1863 postmark. Arrival Marseille 3.10.1863 postmark, all on the observe of the letter.

The "Jerusalem Cross" was also applied as an arrival postmark on the reverse side of foreign incoming letters addressed to Jerusalem. However, such incoming letters are very rare as few exist.

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