



SANTELLI & MICCIARELLI

1846/1847 The Beirut-Jerusalem private postal service

February 6, 2015 / in Lebanese Postal History / by Bernardo Longo

A brief prologue: Tito Vespasiano Micciarelli was born in Senigallia (Ancona) in 1811, participating in attempted revolution in central Italy in 1831 was forced into exile in Belgium and France. Returning to Italy yielding to the government's proposals became Pontifical's secret informer. In London in that capacity, he met Giuseppe Mazzini, who to be affiliated to the "Giovane Italia" and recommended him to the Bandiera's brothers. Attilio and Emilio Bandiera having deserted the Austrian navy and made attempt to bring the republican revolution in Calabria. But their movements were controlled by Micciarelli, that inform the Popes information services and these the Bourbon's services. As we know the Bandiera's brothers were captured and executed on 25 July 1844 in Cosenza. The Micciarelli immediately discovered and chased by the Italians "Carbonari" affiliates, for a short time took refuge in Alexandria, Egypt, and by the end of 1844 to all 1848 in Beirut. Micciarelli was known from the intelligence services of half Europe and its links in the European consular environments in Middle East was very easier. In fact with the Frenchman Antoine Louis Santelli, implanted a private postal service. Regarding Santelli, after this experience in 1852 he obtained the direction of the new French post office opened in Jaffa. Micciarelli after the post adventure in Beirut depart to Malta and there since 1849 became chief editor of the official organ of the Bishop's pro-Jesuit and pro-Bourbon: "The Order" newspaper. After the advent of the new bishop at the head of the local Curia, this newspaper taken far distances from the activities of Jesuits and Micciarelli, relieved from office, founded the "Monitore Maltese" newspaper from which launched fierce attacks against the Carbonari exiles and Giuseppe Garibaldi. The news of his last presence in Malta come from his article "Responding to a Times article", reproduced in "Il Mediterraneo" the Malta Gazette on 1 February 1854".

Who is left to go to the complete reading of the passionate writings of Umberto Del Bianco on the Austrian postal system in the Levant, easily agrees with the author from the beginning that Austrian success was based on the flexibility given by the coexistence of two identities: the Consular Post in the strict sense, an emanation of the state, and the Austrian Lloyd shipping company, formally private but partially



by the Government. The Lloyd's company, mainly dedicated to the transport of goods and people, was the widespread ramifications of the system of consular representatives in the ports of the eastern Mediterranean, in addition to the role of the post collector, held various tasks, including even that of consular representative.

Unlike the Austrian Postal System, the French Levant's postal system was based on the Official Post Office and the shipping company «Les Paquebots De L'Administration des Postes» (The Steamers of Post's Administration). It too was entirely government owned and for its employees were officially prohibited "to fishing" in parallel. The company worked with this name until 1852 when it was partially privatized. It began its liaison activities between Europe and the eastern Mediterranean from May 1837 through two sections, one on the main line Marseille-Syra-Smyrne-Constantinople and a secondary, Piraeus-Syra-Alexandria. From Marseilles the main line make stops in Livorno, Civitavecchia, Naples and Malta (Fig. 1).



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/fig.1.jpg>]

Fig.1 – *The cross structure of the shipping line of the French company “Les Paquebots de l'Administration des Postes”. Operating since 1837 held the service of two parts, the main axis Marseille-Sira-Constantinople and the secondary Piraeus-Sira-Alexandria.*

In November 1845 the two lines became independent, the first on the main route Marseilles-Italian ports-Malta-Piraeus-Constantinople and back, the second Marseilles-Malta-Alexandria-Beirut and back (Fig. 2). This last city, today capital of Lebanon, was occupied by the Egyptians as all of Syria from 1832 to 1840. The Egyptians equipped Beirut with a very functional Lazareto in 1834. The opening of this health station favored the establishment of many European commercial representatives and the privileged city of consular base of the entire region. Beirut was chosen rightly from France as base for the new Post Office (Fig. 3).



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Fig.2.jpg>]

Fig.2 – *In November 1845 the system was split into two separate lines. The Egypt's line was prolonged up to Beirut. In the map the green line corresponds to the existing coastal road at the time used by the Ottoman Postal Service.*



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Fig.3.jpg>]

Fig.3 – *Wrapped of letter sent on 16 December 1845, an important and rare witness of the Beirut French Post Office opening. The letter addressed to Alexandria, was sent exactly one month after the first day of opening. The tax of 9/10 franco (90 cents) was fixed because of its weight of 6 grams within the first port. Quite expensive so if consider that the ports were operating just 7.5 grams. The letter traveled on board the French steamer "Louqsor". Arriving in Alexandria, Egypt, on 18 December 1845 was disinfected by the canonical two vertical cuts.*

As mentioned the steamers of the new line, connected Alexandria to Beirut, bypassing Jaffa, Haifa, Acre, Tyre and Saida. Potentially interesting so, the connection of these cities to the French Post «reseau», stimulated the creation of a private company that would use the coastal road between Beirut and Jaffa. Created for the



the company Santelli & Micciarelli, could do service between the cities mentioned, and Beirut. So by here, through the French post office, the letters departing could be routed. All this with the tacit approval of the French Post Office, perhaps in an attempt to imitate the Lloyd's strategy. Tacit consent because, in agreements to implant an office post on its territory, the Ottoman government demanded to foreign postal administrations, do not operate between towns and towns located within its territory. Afterwards these agreements were easily bypassed, not only by French, but from foreign postal administrations operating in that area, especially between places served by foreign post offices.

Returning to the private postal service I can officially say the name at that time was Santelli & Micciarelli, as deduced by letter coming from Marseille (Figure 6) where on the back, a note handwritten show the day of arrival in Beirut and the day delivering to the private postal company. From the Postmark Collection point of view the only postmark used involves a laconic "BEYROUTH" (Fig. 4).

BEYROUTH

[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Fig.4.jpg>]

Fig.4 – *The linear postmark was used in Beirut for letters addressed to the coastal town of Saida, Tyre, Acre, Haifa and Jaffa, not excluding other locations nearby. It is known in blue, red and black. At the front of the letters is handwritten the required fees, expressed in para or Piaster.*

It is a linear in "Bodoni" character always accompanied by handwritten digits that indicate the tax expressed in para or Piastres. I know the postmark in red, blue and black, has a length of 25 mm and a height of 4. I recorded nine letters. Seven of these jealously guarded in an historic archive, all addressed to Dr. Gaillardot, responsible of public health in Saida. Another, which I do not have pictures, armored become legendary for years in an old collection. The last, a real jewel, has recently appeared on the market. The first date recorded is 11th March 1846 and the last in 8 January



first, in chronological order (Fig. 5), is the only one I know with the "BEYROUTH" in blue, followed by the use of red color (Fig. 6 and 7) to finish (Figs. 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12).



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Fig.5.jpg>]

Fig.5 – Charles Gaillardot (1814-1883) arrived in Syria with Egyptian troops in 1837 and remained there even after their withdrawal took place in 1840. He was then appointed by the Ottoman government to oversee the management of the health of the Syrian coast based in Saida (Sidon). In this capacity he also directs the cord of health prevention. This letter was sent from Beirut on 11 March 1846. It has the only recorded blue "BEYROUTH" postmark. The letter he must have weighed 2 dirhem (6.4 grams) paid fees equivalent to 10 paras.



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Fig.6.jpg>]

Fig.6 – Interesting that this letter arrives with no post sign. Written in Marseille on 3 May 1846 nonetheless arrived in Beirut on May 16 with the French steamship, as shown by the handwritten note "Reçu le 16/5/46 par le vapeur fr." (Received on 16.5.46 by French steam). The letter of a private nature, was addressed to Gaillardot



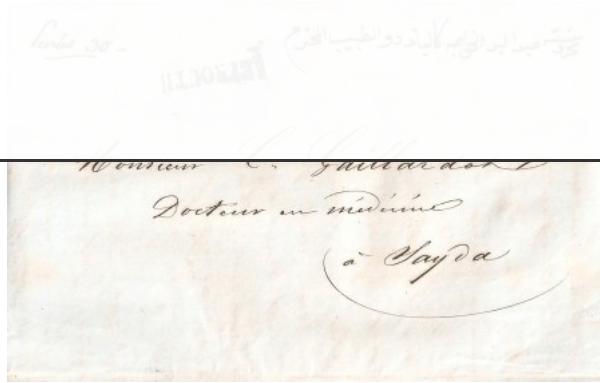
... and passing to Santelli & Micciarelli was affixed the red postmark and written the rate 10 (paras).



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Fig.7.jpg>]

Fig.7 – This time the envelope was regularly routed from Marseille on 20 May 1846, it weight rate up to 7.5 grams, was paid by 0.90 French Francs. The mark “PP” must be interpreted not as “Port Paye” but as “Port Partial”. Arrived in Beirut on June 6 was taken over by Santelli & Micciarelli with a charge of 10 paras, then the letter weighed less than 2 dirhem (6.4 grams). The linear postmark affixed is in red oily.

The fees is 5 paras for Ottomans dirhem (3.2 grams), but surely also affected distance, eerily similar to the Turkey postal rate system. In fact would not make sense the disproportion between the rate of the letter transit in Beirut and direct to Jerusalem (Fig 11) and all others departing or transit from Beirut to Saida. In fact the maximum tax was 30 paras equivalent to the weight of 6 dirhem (19.2 grams), for the direct one in Jerusalem, which weighed up to 15 grams (5 dirhem), equivalent of two French rates, was handwritten the taxation of 3 Piasters, corresponding than 120 paras. Let us now turn to the question of the system transport of letters. Must first point out, at the time all coastal cities mentioned above were populated by a few thousand inhabitants, such as Beirut in 1842 there were only 12,000 inhabitants. All were also equipped with city-walls and through the customs duty the goods were controlled and eventually taxed before entering or leaving the city.



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Fig.8.jpg>]

Fig.8 – Sent from Beirut on 17 July 1846 to Saïda this letter must have weighed of 19.2 grams (6 dirhem) up to justify the port had of 30 paras. The linear postmark was affixed in black.



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Fig.9.jpg>]

Fig.9 – 15 Paras, equivalent to three rates (3 dirhem = 9.6 grams), paid Dr. Gaillardot on arrival of this letter to his home in Saïda. Sent from Beirut on 27 July 1846 was marked with black linear postmark of the private postal Company Santelli & Micciarelli.





[http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/fig_10.jpg]

This letter was delivered to the post office in Marseille on 1 December 1846, and on 2 December was sent on 4 December and embarked on "Egyptus", a steamer of the French company. Reaching Beirut on December 16, was not affected by the cancel of that post office. He must have weighed around 12 grams and then be a double French rate (1.80 francs) and quadruple rate for the S. & M. (4 dirhem = 12.8 grams). This would justify the charge of 20 paras, the linear postmark continued to be affixed in black.



[http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/fig_11.jpg]

Fig.11 – *The uniqueness of this letter sent from Genoa on 12 December 1846 helps to shed light on what was the post connection between Italian peninsula and the Syrian region. Transmitted via Livorno, where the French steamers stopped over, departed on December 23 by steam "Mentor", who arrived from Marseilles on December 21. Reached Malta on 28th of that month, was transshipped to the steamer "Louqsor", of the Marseilles-Alexandria Egypt line. It arrived on 2 January 1847. From here depart to Beirut on 4 January to arrive on 7 January 1847. Presumably the same day it was taken over by S. & M. and forwarded to its final destination: the Sardinian Consulate in Jerusalem. There were four monetary currencies involved: the Sardinian Lira, the Tuscany Lira, the French Franc and the Syro-Ottoman Piasters. The consignor freed the letter by paying a total of 2.80 Sardinian Lira, equivalent to the same amount in French Francs. Of these 0.80 transmitted as transit rights to Tuscany (manuscript 1.00 Tuscany Lira = 0.80 Lira Sarde/French Franc). The 2 French francs (f2 manuscript on the front) needed to carry it up to Beirut and 3 Pistre paid to S. & M. for transport up to Jerusalem. The gem? The request for information by the Genovese Magistrate of Health, about the effectiveness of the sanitarian control inside Syria.*

The Ottoman Law on Postal exclusive, had taken hold since 1840 and so it's hard to imagine a private postal system "played in the light of day." As mentioned a few inhabitants, many trades, a growing number of European merchants, placed under



tion of the respective consulates and the powerful representatives of
 ile in easy position of well-informed observers. Absurd, therefore, to
 private postal service authorized officially by the Turkish. Unless in
 diplomatic bag, the letters from Beirut to or from the coastal cities, were allowed to
 enter or leave the city disguised among other documents protected by diplomatic
 immunity. For this task must surely be an European, equipped with numerous
 diplomatic credentials (Micciarelli?). The bag had to be French, as infers by "Par la
 poste Francaise" written of an excess of zeal by the sender, on the recto of the letter
 in Fig 12.



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Fig.12.jpg>]

Fig.12 – *This is the last date I recorded of the linear postmark “BEYROUTH” used by Santelli & Micciarelli. The letter was written in Beirut on 8 January 1847, and probably traveled with the previous one. His weight was up to 16 grams (5 dirhem) and therefore was charged for 25 para. Although unofficial, the French authorship of the postal service, was made explicit routing through the will written on the front bottom left.*

The letter in question was written on 8 January 1847 in Beirut and addressed to Saida. The sender used an handwritten synonym to indicate S. & M. routing, but more realistic and equally embarrassing: “Pour la poste Francaise” (by the French Post). How long was this private service? Approximately from November 1845 until the end of January 1847. So just over a year and I opt the closing cause reason by imperative Ottoman order. In fact, the letter shown in (Fig 13), sent from Beirut on 10 February 1847 and addressed to Saida, was undoubtedly sent through the Turkish postal system. To confirms it illustrate the letter with “mixed service”, departing from Marseille on 7 February 1848 and addressed to Saida (Fig 15).



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/fig.13.jpg>]

Fig.13 – This letter was written in Beirut on 10 February 1847, always directed to Saida, provides perhaps the successful closing of a private postal service “Santelli & Micciarelli”. It was routed directly from the Ottoman Post in Beirut, as shown by the negative postal seal “An Canib-i posta i-Beyrut 257”, where the number 257 is actually abbreviated of 1257 Hegira year, corresponding to 1841, the year of the post office was opening. This confirms the availability of an Ottoman postal route since that year to transport correspondence up to Saida and beyond. The recipient paid 20 para, corresponding to the minimum cost of a letter sent to the interior of the Ottoman Empire.



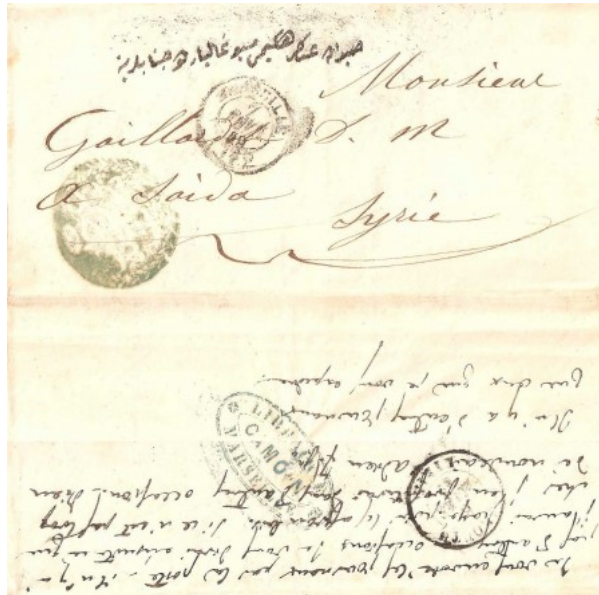
[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/fig.15.jpg>]

Fig.14 – Beautiful letter sent from the Sardinia consulate in Jerusalem on 9 August 1847, and routed via Beirut on the 16th of that month. Upon his arrival in Alexandria, where he arrived on 18 August 1847, the recipient paid 6/10, corresponding to 60 cents of French Franc. Unfortunately it does not seem to give us no other sign that would allow us to identify the transport system from Jerusalem to Beirut through the “Santelli & Micciarelli”, then perhaps already closed. It must be said that Europeans were increasingly reluctant to hand over letters to the Ottoman Post, because the fear of secrecy’s breaches of mail, especially when it came to consular affairs, as in this case.



in Beirut on 6 March 1848, the forwarded "added" one other message. The then delivered to the Ottoman post office in Beirut that led it to

The reader will have surely noticed that I talked about letters addressed to the coastal cities and not departing from them. It would be easy to adduce "because I've never seen" but I think the reason is even simpler: they do not carry the linear postmark "Beyrouth" and the manuscript tax. Their sender, I suppose, was obligated to pay the fees in advance until Beirut, where the S. & M. private post forwarded it to the French Post Office and from there boarded on a steam to their fate.



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/fig.14.jpg>]

Fig.15 – This exceptional letter provides us a further evidence the closing of the private postal service Santelli & Micciarelli. It was delivered to the Post office of Marseille on 7 February 1848 but for a misunderstanding of the steamer reached the French post office of Beirut only on 6 March 1848. Here it was taken over by the forwarder, who added a message before consign to Ottoman post office. On arrival, the recipient did not pay anything, because the agent in Beirut had already paid the fees gained from Marseille and the Turkish postage up to Saida. It was created as a rare mixed "indirect" mediated by forwarder since there are no agreements between the two postal administrations.

In conclusion, this "experiment" has facilitated the transport of correspondence, but transgressed the Ottoman Postal administration law and consequential the private post was deleted from this fact. Essentially the Turkish postal administration always was opposed to establishment foreign postal links on its territory, although have tolerated the French postal links Jerusalemme-Jaffa, which began in 1852, and Alexandretta-Aleppo started 1856. Remains a curiosity about the transport system by the company Santelli & Micciarelli for letters from port to port, for example from Saida to Jaffa, but also hypothesized was prepaid without stating the shipping fees on



(Fig 14A), consequently this letters are very elusive for collectors and



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Fig.14A.jpg>]

Fig.14A – Letter sent from Monte Carmelo (near Haifa) on 24 May 1847 to Jerusalem. No postal sign indicating its transport, but it was probably one of the last letters carried by Santelli & Micciarelli between localities of Palestine region.

Sources

- **U. Del Bianco**, *Il Lloyd Austriaco e gli annulli marittimi dell’Austria-Ungheria, Sorani, Milano 1978*; – **R. Livnat**, *Jérusalem, la poste française 1846-1880*, edited by the author, Puteaux 2007;
- **T.V. Micciarelli**, *Risposta a un articolo del Times riprodotto nel Mediterraneo, gazzetta di Malta, nelle sue colonne del 1° febbraio 1854, Rassegna Storica del Risorgimento, Biblioteche di Francesco II Re delle Due Sicilie.*
- **R. Salles**, *La Poste Marittime Française Historique et Catalogue, vol.2* edited by the author, Parigi 1962;
- **N. Shehadi**, *Charles Gaillardot, Archaeology and History in Lebanon, volume 12, London 2000*;

Share this entry



