

# The Rare Newspaper Mail Stamp

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Figure 1

One of the most interesting and important aspects of Postal History in the Holy Land during the Ottoman period, is the “Newspaper Post” and its rates. The importance is due to two reasons. Firstly, such material is scarce since newspapers are generally thrown away after being read. Secondly, the low special newspaper rates which are much lower than those of regular letters, and even lower than those of printed-matter items. To date very few samples of this “Newspaper Post” exist.

Shown in Figure 1 is the Jewish Weekly Newspaper “HABAZELETH,” dated 27<sup>th</sup> February 1874, published by Israel Dov Frumkin. The newspaper is franked by the 2 soldi Austrian Levant stamp, paying the low newspaper rate. The stamp is canceled by the Austrian circular “GERUSALEMME” postmark of the same date. Only two

such items from the Austrian Post in The Holy Land are recorded.

Shown in Figure 2, is the same newspaper sent 25 years later, but this time by the Turkish Post. The newspaper is dated 11<sup>th</sup> December 1899, sent from Jerusalem to



Figure 2

The low 5 para newspaper rate of the Turkish post in Jerusalem.

Safed, in the northern part of Palestine. The newspaper is franked by a 5 para overprinted Turkish stamp, paying the low newspaper rate. This rate was the lowest on the rate scale, the next one being the 10 para rate for printed matter mail. The stamp is canceled with the "JERUSALEM" bilingual Turkish postmark (Collins PM 7), of the same date. The addressee was Joseph Hirsch Geiger of Safed, who was the grandfather of Dov Geiger, who became the Postmaster of Safed in 1948.

The newspaper dated 14th January 1901 shown in Figure 3, was sent from the OLD CITY, franked with the newspaper rate of 5 para by an overprinted Turkish stamp. The stamp is canceled by the postmark "QUART ISRAELITE" (Steichele 33/02, Collins PM 3) of the branch post office in the Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Both Steichele and Collins note the 11.2.1901 as the first date of use of this postmark. However the "Habazeleth" newspaper shown in Figure 3 appeared on the 14th of January 1901, 28 days earlier. According to the Internet site of The National University Library the dates on which the "Habazeleth" newspaper appeared during January 1901 were: 7, 14, 25. This could mean that the newspaper was posted between the 14th and the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 1901 and that the postmark canceling the stamp on the newspaper is of the earliest date known so far by at least 21 days before the date mentioned by Steichele and by Collins. This assumption is however, non conclusive as it could have happened that the original recipient of the newspaper has sent it to a third party at a later date. A definite conclusion could perhaps be reached from relevant information from the Turkish PTT Records. Those are not available to the author or to the editor.



Figure 3

Newspaper sent from the Jewish Quarter in the Old City, apparently bearing the earliest date of the "Quart Israelite" postmark of the Turkish Post.

In addition this copy of the "Habazeleth" is the only one known so far that was dispatched from the Jewish Quarter of the Old City in Jerusalem.

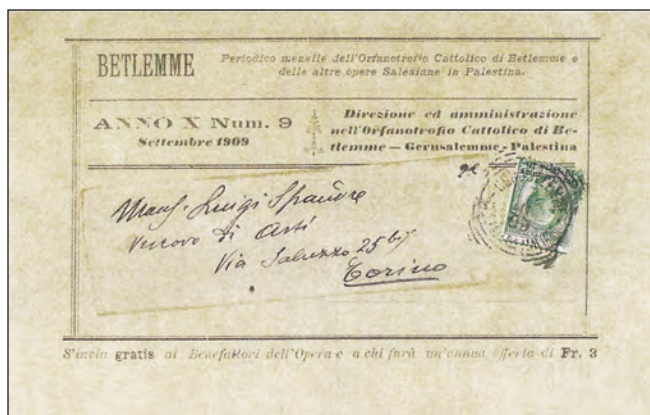


Figure 4

One of two known newspapers sent through the Italian Post Office in Jerusalem.

The newspaper shown in Figure 4 is the monthly "BETLEMME," dated 7<sup>th</sup> November 1909. The newspaper was sent from Jerusalem to Torino Italy. It is franked with a 10 para Italian Levant 1909 issue, paying the single printed matter rate to Italy. The stamp is cancelled with the "GERUSALEMME UFF. POSTALE ITALIANO" postmark. This is one of two newspapers recorded so far that were posted through the Italian Post Office in Palestine. ■

*Editor's note: This article first appeared in the Holy Land Postal History Journal, vol. VI no. 107-108, p. 301-303.*