

# French Post Office Gems

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*Editor's note: The following text and philatelic data is found in the Handbook of Holy Land Philately Volume 1, by Anton Steichele and revised by Norman J. Collins and Leopold Dickstein, M.D., p. 133, 1990.*

**F**rench postal services were chiefly utilized for correspondence to western countries such as Malta, France, the Italian west coast, the Netherlands, England, and South Africa. Forwarding agents in Palestine worked closely in cooperation with the French post in Alexandria, Beirut, and Marseilles



Figure 1

## JAFFA

After the establishment of a regular French shipping line between the Mediterranean ports of Marseilles and Alexandria, J. Philibert, a merchant and agent of the French vice-consulate in Jaffa, arranged for foreign correspondence to be conveyed from Beirut to Alexandria, Egypt. A fee of 1 decime was charged for this service of conveyance



Figure 2

In 1845, a French post office was also opened in Beirut. This port city became part of the shipping line "Compagnie des Messageries Imperiales," and later "Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes." Finally, in the summer of 1852, a French post office was established in Jaffa. The city became a regular port of call for the ships, which commuted between Marseilles and the Near East. The manager of this postal agency was at first J. Philibert, and the post office was located in the north of the quayside.



Figure 3

## JERUSALEM

Even before the opening of a French postal service in Jaffa in 1852, mailings from Jerusalem are known, which, at first, were handled by forwarding agents, later through intermediary consular clerks, and conveyed via Jaffa either to Alexandria or to Beirut for onward transmission. From 1858, the postal manager in Jaffa, David Damiani, and later his successor Martin Damiani, organized a weekly postal link between Jerusalem and Jaffa. Under the administration of the Damiani family, receiving agents were operating the postal agency in Jerusalem until 1879



Figure 4

They collected the postage fees and an extra charge of 1 Piastre, later 1/2 Piastre, to cover transportation expenses to Jaffa and to pay the cost of personnel. Such mailings were usually marked with the so-called Jerusalem Cross cachet. The emblem goes back to the Christian Kingdom, 1099 to 1187, founded by the crusaders in Palestine. Additionally, in the left upper corner of mail, the amount of collected postage fee was noted in ink, and in Jaffa the corresponding postage stamps were affixed. The cancellation of the stamps was always done in Jaffa. Occasionally, the Jerusalem Cross cachet was also applied on the back of mail arriving in Jerusalem. Damiani's postal receiving agency was closed in the summer of 1880, probably because of the strong competition from the Austrian post office which ran a comprehensive service. ■

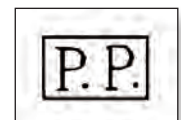


Figure 5



Figure 6

## JAFFA PEARL RING CANCELLATION



Figure 7

1864 Interpostal cover  
Jaffa to Beirut

Postal rate 50 centimes for 7½ grams  
Postal Markings  
Jaffa Syrie pearl cancellation Figure 2  
Dot rhomboid cancellation 5089 Figure 3  
P.P. (Postage Paid) Figure 5

## FRANCE VIA EGYPT



Figure 8

1867  
Jerusalem-Jaffa-Alexandria-Lyon

Postal rate 50 centimes for 7½grams  
Postal Markings  
very faint Jerusalem Cross Figure 1  
Dot rhomboid cancellation 5089 Figure 3  
PD (Paid to Destination) Figure 4

## FRANCE VIA EGYPT

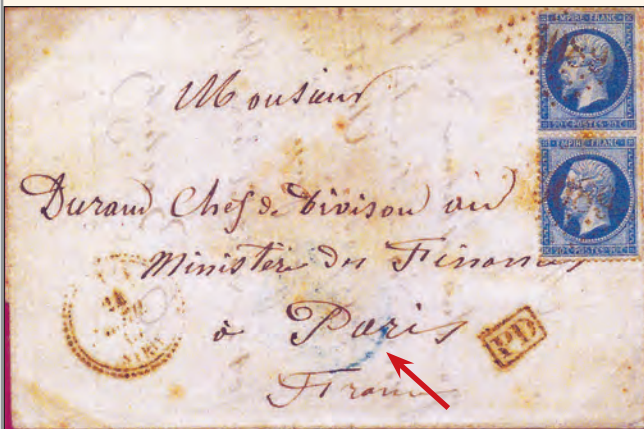


Figure 9

1867  
Jerusalem-Jaffa-Alexandria-Paris

Postal rate 40 centimes for 10 grams  
Postal Markings  
very faint Jerusalem Cross (red arrow) Figure 1  
Dot rhomboid cancellation 5089 Figure 3  
PD (Paid to Destination) Figure 4

## STAMPLESS COVER



Figure 10

May 29, 1874  
Jerusalem - Jaffa - Cannes, France  
Redirected to Paris.

Postal rate 20 centimes  
Conveyance service 1 decime  
Postal Markings  
Jerusalem Cross Figure 1  
Jaffa Syrie pearl cancellation Figure 2  
Paqueboat cachet (red arrow) Figure 6