



A most interesting money transfer receipt sent during the waning months of First World War in present day Israel - Palestine; a 100 Piaster (i.e. Guruş) sum pre-paid in gold currency (i.e. Mecîdiye) by "Edîbe Şerif Hanım", no doubt a close relative of the recipient, was sent on the 1st of July, 1334 (i.e. 1918); through the auspices of one "Mustafa Çavuş", a resident in the Bowstring Manufacturers Market (i.e. Kirişçi'ler Çarşu'su) in downtown Sivas. The recipient indicated to be "Ahmed Ağa" the Saddler (i.e. Sarac) of the 4th Company of the 9th re-enforced Brigade absconded to the 2nd Caucasian Cavalry Regiment; was recorded to be part of the 4th Army but was apparently on loan to the 8th Army according to the address. As to the dated cancellation of Sivas; one must remember that ever since the early days of the war, the dating system within the Empire and particularly the Post Office and the Army had reverted to the Gregorian Calender as far as days and months were concerned with the exception of the Year which had remained to be expressed according to the Hegira. This sudden change initiated to accomodate the German and Austrian Allies having been ill received and certainly not understood properly; resulted in many a mistake when transliterated in far away postal centers of the Realm. Thus the Arabic 1 / 7 / 34 date which is in full correspondence with the hand written note on the left hand lower side of the receipt, was erroneously transcribed as 25 - 6 - 19 in Latin characters.

A further note that I would like to add in line with pertinent remarks of our PostMan circle of friends, is about the monetary system in the Ottoman Realm which were mirrored by the Money Transfer Receipts accordingly. We should remember that the pre-printed line where the denomination of the funds to be sent are noted as "Para", "Guruş" and "Altun"; the "Altun" i.e. "Gold" section is crossed over by a pen stroke in our example since the sender had paid in Silver currency known as the "Mecîdiye". Even though it might appear to be an innocuous detail; the reason why the Sivas Post Master had seen fit to remark was based on the fact that the Gold Currency was not calculated on the same basis throughout the Empire. According to a List published in 1910; the then current gold piece known as the "Reşâd" was valued at 96 Guruş in Istanbul whereas in Jerusalem it was transacted for 124 Guruş. In the same list, the silver "Mecîdiye" worth 19 Guruş in Istanbul, fetched about 23 Guruş in the

Holy Land. Due mostly to regional demands and economic variations in trade balances based on precious metal currency, these differences in coinage value meant that the 100 Guruş worth 5 pieces of Silver "Mecîdiye" deposited in Sivas might end up by being re-imbursed as 124 Guruş instead of 115 Guruş at the Theater of War; had it been paid in Gold i.e., if the word "Altun" had not been struck out on the Receipt in question.

The reverse of the receipt is a much more interesting document



since it clearly shows the already apparent disarray of Ottoman Forces in Palestine, no doubt due to continuous loss of man power and the lack of new recruits from the main Anatolian sources of conscription. Thus to follow the itinerary of this money order, is a distinct travel through the Ottoman Military Relay System still in place even at such an inopportune moment during the final days of the conflict.

The receipt in question was first received by the Stationary Field Post Office (i.e. Sâbit Sahrâ



Posta'sı)

at Halab in present day Syria on the 12 / 7 / 34 where a hand written note to the effect that it should be sent to the 7th Army was added and must have been loaded on a Hijaz Railway train in destination to Amman Station in present day Jordan where the 2nd Army Corps was in position to control the Bedouin inroads and to safeguard the military shipments in transfer to the theater of war south of Nablous. Having been thus stamped in Amman Station with the proper Field Post Office // 79 (i.e. Sahrâ Posta'sı // 79)



used by the said 2nd Army Corps h/q on 21 / 7 / 34; the receipt must have been sent by mule train to arrive at Nablous, the h/q of the 7th Army on 27 / 7 / 34 according to the Field Post Office // 72 (i.e. Sahrâ Posta'sı // 72).



The final note on the travels of this money order appears as a manuscript note on the middle of the receipt as 17 / 8 / 34 - 7th / Army / 4156 which indicates when the Rifle Master, the Trustee of the 9th Regiment (i.e. Dokuz'uncu Alay Mukaddem'i Tüfenk'ci Usta'sı) one "Gâlib Sâlih 288"; put his seal as the recipient of the said sum on the lower left hand side of the card, no doubt for and on behalf of Ahmed Ağa the Saddler. Let us hope that he lived long enough to receive and spend those 100 Piasters to return home in good health since the Front south of Nablous was to collapse about a month later.

Osman Levend