

## Robin Hood gets a mention

As we all know, once in a while a really interesting item shows up. Imagine my delight when this piece, originating in Mostaganem, Algeria and sent to Zagreb, Croatia, showed up in the marketplace. To describe the envelope and contents, the letter was written May 6, 1835, and prepaid to Marseille. Prepayment is indicated by the "P.P" in the fourth line of the cancel. Lettered cancelations were used by the military mail service until the civilian mails started later that year. Letter "E" was used at Oran, which was the only city to regularly use blue for the cancels.<sup>1</sup> Another indication of prepayment is the large "X" across the face.

The reverse shows a rate calculation, three décimes second weight letter rate plus one décime to pay the *voie de mer*, the fee for carrying mail across the Mediterranean. While hard to see, there are two slits in the envelope that indicate disinfection. On the reverse is a handstamped "Purifiée à Marseille" confirming disinfection.

The remaining postal markings are a m/s "18" kreuzers collected from the recipient, a notation from the sender that he wants the letter routed through Marseille and Trieste, and a receipt mark on the reverse. Routings were important because rates could vary. For example, letters to Austria through Switzerland or Sardinia were less costly than letters routed through Germany (1851 rates).

Oh yes – the title of this piece. As you can see, the writer mentions Robin Hood in the sixth line, a very intriguing reference. My Italian vocabulary is about ten words, so I have no real idea what the letter is about. I would be happy if someone in our society could tell me at least the general contents of the letter, which goes on for six pages. I would gladly send a scan of the entire letter to anyone who can help.

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<sup>1</sup> See Sauvage, J., "Le service des Postes en Algérie après la prise d'Alger," *Les Feuilles Marcophiles*, 1<sup>er</sup> Trimestre 2000 (Whole No. 300), p.53 ff.

1852  
LAPRILE  
P. I.

→ Mastaganem

All' ~~Illust. Signor~~ Illust. Signor  
Signore Carlo Conte Vojkovich de  
Vojkovich & C.

Conte. in  
per Marsiglia Lagabria  
di Trieste in  
Croatia

Mastaganem li 6. majo 1834.

Illustrissimo Signore Conte.

Col Repugnanka vado a notificarvi il triste caso di uno mio piu grande  
Benefattore, il quale siccome vedo dalle sue rilasciate Carte  
era anche Vostrò Amigo. - 3<sup>o</sup> Januario d. e. salio il mio Barco  
un Brigantino di 18 vettille di canoni, ben armado, e ben equipaggiato,  
e comandato da Capitano Antonio Mathkovic, sotto il nome  
nome Robin Hood, in corso. - avendo 146 persone d'Equipaggio  
fra quali anche io me trovavo. - al 9 di Jan. l. a. c. disbarcavimmo  
il Barco di Gibralta col vento fresco di North. - In corto -  
Jan. Feb. e Mar. abbiamo fatto 15 prese ben ricche, ed il mio  
Barco era ben carico, e tutto Equipaggio sollicitava il  
Capo di ritornare, che anche lui fece. Essendo in Parallel  
lo di Senexiffa scoprimo col fare del giorno di 1<sup>o</sup> Aprile a.  
due Fregate, il nostro capo ma infelice capo in instante <sup>comando</sup> per  
attaccare gli dette Barchi spicando tutte le Velle al vento, essen  
do gia poco piu di un Miglio lontani scoprimo sotto vento un  
Barco che colle piene Velle veniva contra noi, tutto Equipaggio fu  
plicava il Capto di non torse in Combato con due Fregate ed un  
Brig: tutti tre superiori di forza di noi, ma lui temendo di non  
scampare, e fidandosi troppo in Barco, ed Equipaggio, lui col  
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