



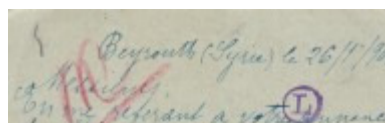
Medical advertisement on postcards from Lebanon

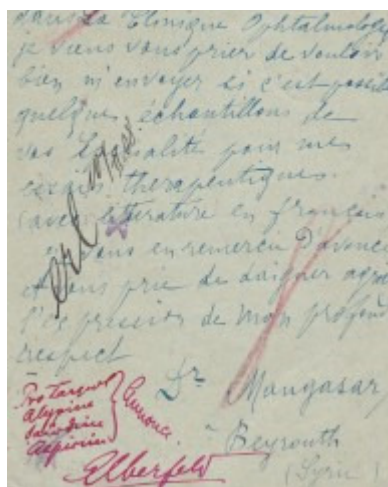
May 19, 2016 / in Lebanese Postal History / by fadi maassarani

The communication on drug and medicine, especially pharmaceutical advertising, seems to be born with the pharmaceutical industry in the late nineteenth century. With the growth of written communication and the emerge of first scientific journals and techniques, rapid dissemination of information is performed. The advertisements for drugs will greatly multiply in the press.



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/1.jpg>]





<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/1a.jpg>

Fig.1-Levant postal stationary 1908

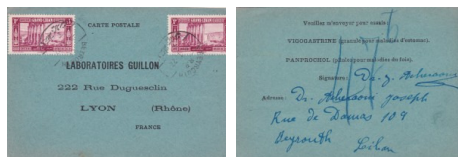
"In reference to your announce in the clinics of ophthalmology, I would be grateful to receive samples of your specialty in order to use them in my practice. Thank you in advance, Dr Mangasar-Beirut".

Regarding the promotion of these new drugs, the pharmaceutical industry looked first to pharmacists then to doctors. These became very important intermediaries between the pharmaceutical industry and patient, through prescription. Faced with the low costs of the specialty manufacturing at the time, the pharmaceutical industry will not hesitate to invest in advertising to promote his medicine. Labs thus began to send promotional brochures and advertising postcards to physicians. Samples of drugs were also sent to clinicians so that they attest to their effectiveness and establish used certificates subsequently to advertise.



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Fig. 2



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Fig. 3



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Fig. 4



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Fig. 5

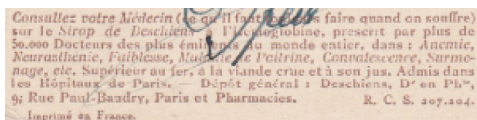
Fig.2-3-4-5 Various pharmaceutical laboratories reply postcards with different outgoing cancels: Baabda (1925) – Beyrouth (1925) – Saida (1933)

- Military Bureau 600 (1937). Advertising is sent from the country of production to domestic and foreign customers. The advertising for pharmaceuticals often borrowed postal items: cards, cards letters illustrated.



[\http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2 <http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2>

Fig. 6



[\[http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/6b.png\]](http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/6b.png)

Fig. 6a

Fig.6- Private laboratory Deschiens postcard depicting Marechal Ney during the retreat of Napoleon's great army in Russia. It was not unusual for these pharmaceutical postcards to represent military campaigns, great monuments, celebrities or various topics as childhood. Fig.6b- On reverse we find the request for samples and on the lower left corner an advertisement for **Sirop Deschiens**: "A hemoglobin syrup that is supposed to fight Neurasthenia, weakness and sickness of the chest (Tuberculosis?). Its high content of iron makes it superior to any other raw meat juice!

That's why it's prescribed by more than 50.000 doctors!" This prescription reference was usual at that time and was meant to add credibility to this medicine.

After WWII, Biomarine, a french drug manufacturer, will innovate by shipping its advertisements to french prescribes from lush places which have no direct relationship to the product. For various reasons, the advertising campaign was a success. Postal relations between France and overseas were again effective and sure again.



<http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2> <http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2>

Fig. 7

The purpose of this company is to bring the therapeutic virtues of the ocean to those who cannot get access to it, using seawater under different forms of medication with pleasant taste. The Dieppe factory would produce three products from water collected on the high seas: Marinol (1912), Ionyl (1929) and Plasmarine (1934).

From 1947 to 1966, Biomarine mailed from 6 to 16 cards per year to 30,000 doctors in France and North Africa with a well-established pattern: A series represents a circuit or a journey, a first route map announces the

program and sharpens the curiosity of the recipient. A correlation exists between cards, postage, and the place of shipment outside France. The printed message personified the product. Among the 19 “tours” organized by Biomarine, two used Beirut as a port of call.

The images were of quality; Biomarine widely appealed to museums, libraries, etc. The cards are ordered to specialized printers. Each receives back a text message imitating handwriting, the company logo and then the drugs. The addresses of the recipients are maintained up to date through the medical delegates. Workers from the drug manufacturer in Dieppe affixed the postage stamps on the postcards. The stamps were acquired from post offices abroad and arrived under customs by temporary importation. After packaging the items in bundles, Biomarine then forwarded them by surface (railway) to its destination in order to be dispatched.

First tour including Beirut: La croisière en méditerranée d'Ionyl (1950-1951):



<http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2/> <http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2/>

Fig. 8 and 9

Fig.8- Postcard depicting the Mediterranean cruise. Fig.9- Stop-over

of the cruise and picture illustrating the postcard view.

These cards are of equal interest to the cartophile or the philatelist. They were shipped by surface mail, at printed matter – lowest rate.



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/10.jpg>]

Fig. 10

Fig.10- Stamps were removed from postcard by collectors to garnish their album.



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/11.png>]

Fig. 11

Fig.11- On this first tour, the side view shows "*le Krak des chevaliers*" erroneously situated in Lebanon by the editor. "*Krak des Chevaliers*" also known as "*hosn al akrad*" is a Crusader castle in Syria (Tell Kalakh) and one of the most important preserved medieval castles in the world (sic).



[\[http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2016/05/14.jpg\]](http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2016/05/14.jpg)

Fig. 12 and 13

Fig12-13 : On the back of the postcard, a simulated hand-written text to advertise IONYL and a machine postmark canceling a colorful set of Lebanese stamps. The machine postmark is an advertisement that says : "Lebanon equals health" which gives the item a plus as a health topic collected item.



[\[http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/14.jpg\]](http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/14.jpg)

Fig. 14

Fig.14 - Postcard heading to Switzerland with the agent address typed in red. Same set of stamps by a "Beyrouth" hand cancel strike over the stamps.

Apparently postcards were spread out over several months and can be found with different stamps and postmark types on them.



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/15.png>]

Fig. 15



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/16.png>]

Fig. 16

Fig.15 and Fig.16 represent the most common set of stamps issued from Lebanon or overprinted in 1950, that were affixed on these postcards. Maybe other combination exist but they have not been seen yet. Total franking of the card is 5 piastres.



[<http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2>] [<http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2>]

Fig. 17 and 18

Examples using the set of figure 16.

Each was mailed the cheapest way by surface (boat) mail using colorful stamps of the period. Some were mailed in bulk and postmarked all on the same day. Others were spread out over several months and can be found

Second tour including Beirut: "lonyl en route vers l'orient(1961-1962)" :

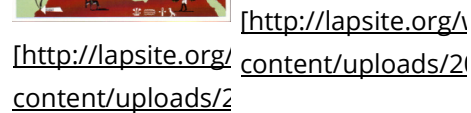
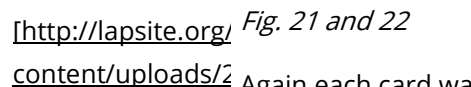
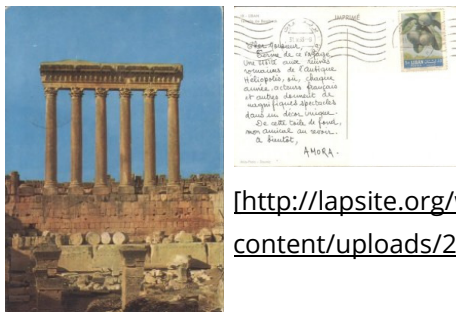


Fig.19: Postcard depicting the Oriental cruise. Fig.20: Stop-over of the cruise and picture illustrating the postcard view of the cruise.



In 1952, Biomarine creates the Agency Publimer to commercialize knowledge about other products than pharmaceutical products. The same maps travel to Amora, Philip, Maggi, Nestlé...



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content/uploads/2/](http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2/)

[http://lapsite.org/
content/uploads/2/](http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2/) Fig. 23

That's how we can find this postcard depicting the six columns of Jupiter temple in Baalbeck with a typographic text in french advertising for Amora.



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content/uploads/2/](http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2/)

[http://lapsite.org/
content/uploads/2/](http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2/) Fig. 24

Another Baalbeck postcard sent from Beirut with an advertisement text in German for Maggi.

Later on, the idea is taken up on a "grand scale" by Abbott Laboratories, for their flagship product, Pentothal, an anesthetic made famous by espionage films as a truth serum. Its giant mailings are sent to 220,000 physicians or U.S. hospitals in addition to shipments in ten languages to 21 foreign countries. These cards will receive the nickname of Dear Doctor postcards.

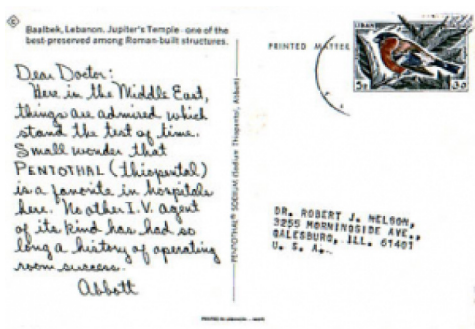
Biomarine has stopped its activity in 2000 after having sent 200 postcards and 60 maximum cards.



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/25.png>]

Fig. 25

Fig.25 : Typical "Dear doctor postcard" depicting Byblos and an advertisement text for Pentothal on the back.



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/26.png>]

Fig. 26



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/27.png>]

Fig. 27



[<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/28.jpg>]

Fig. 28

Fig.28 An Arabic advertisement text for Pentothal on a postcard issued from Saint-Pierre et Miquelon heading for Beirut. But this is out of subject.

With regard to a change in legislation which now prohibits advertising of drugs on short, readable postcards, the following shipments are enveloped.



<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/29.jpg>

Fig. 29



<http://lapsite.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/30.jpg>

Fig. 30

Fig.29-30: Illustrated covers with pharmaceutical advertisement from the sixties.



<http://lapsite.org/content/uploads/2016/05/31.jpg>

Fig. 31

Despite regulations prohibiting open advertisement for pharmaceutical drugs in order to protect the consumer, doctors still received in the seventies such postcards as seen in fig.31.

The real objective of pharmaceutical advertising is not to improve public health, nor to educate physicians or to allow the medical press to survive ; It is to publicize and to sell as much as possible medicines.

Fadi

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