

Display to Society of Postal Historians
at London 2010 Exhibition on 6.5.10

FRENCH
MESSAGERIES IMPERIALES / MARITIMES
MAIL PAQUEBOT ITINERARIES
TO, FROM, AND WITHIN THE FAR EAST

1862 – 1880

Far East Mail Ship Itineraries
Volume 2

© *by Lee C. Scamp*

This display is a little different than what you typically see: my new book is discussed and illustrated

Some of you have probably seen my previous book, Far East Mail Ship Itineraries, Vol. 1, P&O:
An update and augmentation of Reg Kirk's P&O Lines to the Far East

My Vol. 2 is a similar effort for the French Paquebot Itineraries To, From, and Within The Far East

During 1862 - 80 period there was extensive expansion of the ocean mail service to and within the Far East

- In 1862 the French began operation of a mail packet line to Hong Kong in direct competition with the British P&O
- The MI Line was extended to Shanghai the next year,
- A branch service to Yokohama began in 1865, first via Shanghai, and then later directly from Hong Kong
- When the Suez Canal was opened in 1869, the French Line (unlike the P&O) immediately began direct service between Marseille and the Far East via that canal,
- Messageries Imperiales (MI) became the Messageries Maritimes (MM) in 1871.

My good friend, and fellow SPH member, Dr. Andrew Cheung challenged me to have this book completed in time for publication at the London 2010 show

- Book has been completed (copy for viewing here), and should be published in next few months
- Book is over 400 pages with over 300 illustrations of covers, most in color, and other postal history artifacts

The majority of the information in this book was derived primarily from original research employing microfilms of contemporary newspapers

Many details borrowed from other authors, particularly Raymond Salles:

- Author of "The bible" of French maritime postal history
- Major contribution to the body of postal history knowledge
- However, there was some room for improvement
 - As in any research work, a few errors crept in
 - It appears that specific port call dates in Salles' route tables were sometimes scheduled dates vs. actual dates,
 - or were otherwise inaccurate; e.g., conflicting port call dates on the same itinerary
 - Omission of some major Far Eastern port dates, such as Hong Kong (my specialty), left the record incomplete
 - The "bare bones" chronology was provided, but there was little "flesh" to bring the postal history to life

My basic purposes for undertaking the FEMSI series of books:

- A desire to "fill in the gaps" and correct the records of previous authors in this field,
- To satisfy my own curiosity and needs through research and writing about Far East postal history,
- To preserve and disseminate what I believe to be important and useful information in this field,
- An effort to stimulate synergism among specialists in the various related areas on which this work touches.

Re. the 3rd & 4th purposes, this book should be useful primarily to postal history collectors and students of:

- Countries and colonies in the Far East:
 - mainly Hong Kong, China, Japan,
 - the British and French Treaty Ports and agencies in China and Japan,
- France and Britain

To a lesser extent this volume should also be of value to postal history collectors and students of:

- Other places such as Egypt, India, Ceylon, Malaya, Indochina, the Dutch East Indies, and the Philippines
- Other countries in Europe

This FEMSI French lines volume provides:

- **Tabular itineraries (see 1st page of display) of the French mail ship lines to, from, and within the Far East, 1862 - 1880**
 - **Comprehensive Oriental itineraries between Hong Kong, Shanghai and Yokohama,**
 - **Eastward and westward dates at Marseille for these voyages (many from M. Salles),**
 - **Some more limited information concerning the rest of the port calls between France and the Orient:**
 - **Messina / Naples, Alexandria / Port Said, Suez, Aden, Galle / Colombo, Singapore, and Saigon.**
- **Notes explaining and expanding upon the tabular itineraries**
- **Illustrations to tell the postal history stories associated with these mail voyages (please see display)**
 - **Reproductions of excerpts from the contemporary newspapers,**
 - **Paintings and photographs of a few of the ships**
 - **Covers carried on the listed voyages selected to illustrate some point(s) of postal history significance, e.g.:**
 - **First voyages, unusual routings, problems encountered by the ships, e.g., wrecks and other mail delays,**
 - **Other similar points of interest, such as rates and markings.**
 - **Illustrations adapted from:**
 - **Auction catalogs, books, articles**
 - **Collections of Dr. Andrew Cheung, Jeffrey Bohn, Tony Ganendran**
- **Descriptions of the illustrations have been provided, where appropriate:**
 - **Postal rates, which were closely tied to the mail routes during the period covered by this work**
 - **Postal markings, often related to the specific mail lines and routes, particularly in the case of the French service**
 - **Changes in postal administrations, their regulations, and their procedures**
 - **Names of and information about postal and mail line officials**
 - **Facts about the ship lines, and the vessels employed by those companies, e.g., ship construction details**
 - **Other related historical and postal history facts**

Undoubtedly errors, inconsistencies, and omissions will be found in this work, for which I sincerely apologize in advance

- **I do not read French, so had to attempt to translate portions of M. Salles information, I thought to be of relevance, on a word by word basis, which likely led to an inaccurate understanding, in some instances.**
- **I am certainly no expert on France and French postal history, either maritime, or the more broadly defined field.**
- **Similarly, I am not an expert on Chinese or Japanese postal history, but I attempted to touch on these areas where they directly tied in with the primary subject of the French maritime postal history.**
- **I made an effort to consult pertinent references, but there are undoubtedly others of which I was unaware, or which were unavailable to me.**
- **Many instances in the illustrative cover descriptions where I noted that a postal marking, rate, etc., is the earliest known**
 - **Experts in those specific postal history areas, having a broader range of knowledge of relevant references and extant covers, will be able to update the earliest known “target” dates which I have provided.**

I invite your comments and corrections –

That is the way we move our body of postal history knowledge to greater breadth and higher levels of fidelity



You must be logged in as a member of Hong Kong Study Circle to view the rest of this document