

XXX

Consular and Territorial Offices

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An early review of this subject was written by Charles Fox¹; although it is somewhat out of date, it is still useful for historical detail.

The topic "Egyptian offices abroad" is comprised of two distinct situations. The Consular Offices were Egyptian post offices at the Egyptian Consulates in ports of the Ottoman Empire, in which the civil administration was Turkish. The Territorial Offices were civil post offices in the southern territories of the Sudan and the African coasts of the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Indian Ocean, the civil administration of which was turned over to Egypt by the Ottoman Sultan in 1868. It is practical to consider them separately.

Consular Offices²

The ambitions of Mohammed Ali the Great, who became the *de facto* ruler of Egypt after the departure of the French Napoleonic forces, led to widespread developments, many of which were continued by his descendants, who constituted the royal family of Egypt until the abolition of the monarchy in 1953. Among the developments was the establishment of Egypt as a naval and mercantile power in the eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea (Chapter XXXII). It fell to his grandson, Ismail Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt, to take advantage of the services of the national steamship company, Azizieh Misri (which became the Khedivial Mail Line) to carry the Egyptian mails between Alexandria, Smyrna, and Constantinople³. This entailed opening post office counters in the Egyptian Consulates in the two Ottoman cities, a curiously anomalous situation when one considers that Egypt was at the time under the nominal suzerainty of the Ottoman Sultan. The post office at Constantinople was opened on June 13th 1865 and that at Smyrna on November 14th. Egyptian steamships also plied the Red Sea and a post office was established at Jiddah, Arabia, a port of great importance in connection with the Hajj, on June 8th 1865. These events took place a few months before Egypt issued its first stamps; pre-stamp covers from each of these three offices should exist, but I know of none except a large fragment from Constantinople⁴, dated SETT 1865.

The Egyptian steamboats made weekly trips. In June 1868 two more offices were

opened: Dardanelles and Gallipoli. By that date the First Issue of Egyptian stamps had been supplanted by the Second Issue; consequently, only the cancellations of Constantinople, Smyrna, and Jiddah can be found on First Issue stamps. The Second Issue, however, was used not only at the five offices abroad mentioned, but at a substantial group of new ones opened in 1870 (July 14th)⁵. This development was part of the expansion of the Khedivial Mail Line's routes to include two feeder loops, one leaving Alexandria eastwards to serve the coasts of Syria and Cilicia, and the other leaving Dardanelles westwards to serve the coasts of Thessaly and Macedonia (Fig. 1). The first loop made calls at Jaffa, Beyrout, Tripoli, Latakia, Alexandretta, Mersina, and Chios. At the same time, stops at Mytilene and Tenedos were added. The second loop

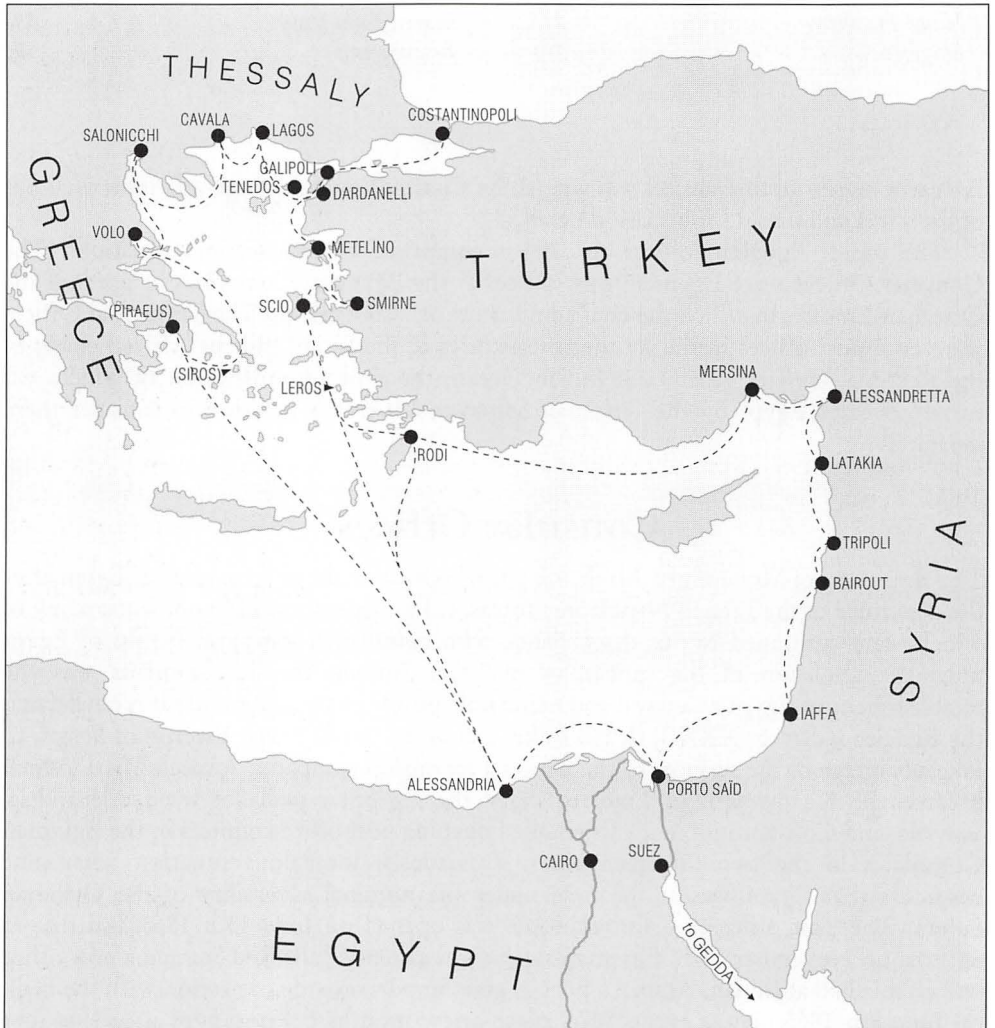


Fig. 1 The Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean Seas, showing the location of the Egyptian Post Offices in the Ottoman Empire. (Spelling of the names is that used in the postmarks.)

made stops at Lagos, Cavala, Salonika, Volos, Piraeus, and Syros (the last two ports were Greek territory, however, and no Egyptian post offices were established at them). Although these post offices were officially announced as being opened on July 14th, there is evidence that Chios, at least, was opened earlier, perhaps on a trial basis.

The two feeder loops were not the commercial success that had been hoped for and they were abandoned in February 1872. The official notice gives the sailings of February 14th as the last on which mail would be accepted (at Alexandria and Constantinople) for offices on the loops, but the actual date of closing of a particular office was presumably the date of departure of the steamer from it. The last voyage may have taken more time than normal, for the effects of the post offices would have had to be loaded and final accounts made. However, a cover exists from Volo to Syros postmarked 15 FEB 1872, which is probably the last day of operation since the sailings were only once a week, southbound. There was a separate sailing for the Syria-Cilicia loop from Alexandria northbound. The latest date for a postmark from some of the offices on the feeder loops might have been a day or two later than February 15th. Tenedos, however, was closed earlier (March 1871).

In the remainder of this chapter a different set of spellings for the foregoing post offices will often be used interchangeably. They are the ones actually used in the date-stamps of the Egyptian post offices and are mostly transliterations of the Arabic names into Italian phonetics rather than English or French. The reason for this choice is that Italian was the administrative language of the Egyptian Postal Administration under Muzzi Bey. Most of them are easily recognizable, except perhaps "Scio" for Chios.

Although the 1870-72 period represents the high point for Egyptian offices abroad, two additional offices were opened after the feeder loops were shut down: Leros and Rodi (Rhodes). Leros was not far off the route from Alexandria to Smyrna. It had no commercial importance, but it was a summer haven for well-to-do Egyptians and the Khedive himself was occasionally in residence. The post office was open only when the population of Egyptians warranted it, and that appears from official documents⁶ to have been from July 1873 to January 1874 and from May to October 1874. Rhodes, however, was an important port and merited the small deviation from the direct route needed to serve it. The official opening was August 13th 1873. It remained in operation until all the Consular Offices were closed down at the end of June 1881.

In addition to the stationary offices, the ships of the KML for a time carried a "floating office" (Uffizio Natante) on board. Official records have not been found, but philatelic evidence puts the period of operation as 1876-79. Letters brought to the ships or posted on board were cancelled with a special date-stamp, which contained an abbreviation of the port of departure. This was either ALES. for Alessandria or COSP. for Cos'poli, the commonly used Italian abbreviation for "Costantinopoli" (see also Chapter XXXII).

Service on the main line was interrupted from May 2nd 1877 to June 25th 1878, owing to the Russo-Turkish war. During that time, mail to and from Egypt was handled by the Austrian and French postal services⁷.

The Consular post office at Gedda (Jiddah) was served by steamers from Suez on a line that was later extended southwards to call at Hodeida and the territorial ports of Suakin and those on the coasts of Eritrea and Somaliland. Service was approximately weekly, and was well used.

After the General Postal Union (later the UPU), to which Egypt was a founding signatory, came into operation on July 1st 1875, offices abroad in general became

unnecessary from a postal standpoint. However, for some countries such offices were a profitable business and for others they were viewed as instruments of political prestige and influence. For these reasons many countries endeavored to continue their offices abroad. On the other hand, countries in which extra-territorial post offices were operated considered their existence to be an affront to national pride. Egypt found itself trying to be on both sides of the fence at the same time, and by 1881, when its Consular offices as a whole had lost much of their profitability, the decision was made to close all of the Consular offices at the end of June⁸. This event had the beneficial effect of strengthening Egypt's position with regard to having the post offices of other countries removed from its own territory. Thus ended a fascinating chapter of Egypt's postal history.

Although all of the Consular offices were in the Ottoman Empire, the dissolution of the Empire following World War I put most of the locations in new countries. On the Syrian coast route, Iaffa (Jaffa) became part of Palestine/Israel, Bairout and Tripoli are now in Lebanon, and Latakia is now in Syria after having been a stamp-issuing entity of itself in the late 1920s. Furthermore, Alexandretta, which eventually reverted back to Turkey, was for a brief period a political entity to itself and issued its own stamps and was followed by a name change to Hatay. Mersina was the primary port of Cilicia, which was for a short time a stamp-issuing entity during the French occupation. On the western loops, Salonika, Volos, Cavala and Lagos are now part of Greece; from 1912 to 1913 and 1916 to 1918 the latter two were under Bulgarian occupation. Finally, the Aegean islands of Chios and Rhodes were under Italian administration from 1912 until 1944, when they were allotted to Greece. It can be seen that the Egyptian Consular offices are part of the postal history of many countries and have a proper place in their philately. The philatelic demand for forerunners varies considerably in strength from one country to another and may strengthen the market mildly to intensely.

Postal Markings and Stamps

The postal markings, nearly all of which were used as cancellations, are of the same types as provided to the domestic post offices of the period (Chapter XXVII). However, only a limited variety saw use in the offices abroad; for convenience, they are shown in Figure 2 and listed in Table 1. Like the domestic offices, those at Costantinopoli and Smirne at first used a retta as an obliterator, with the date-stamp struck alongside. Presumably the same practice



Fig. 2 Date-stamp Types used in the Consular offices.



Fig. 3
A cover from Latakia.

was followed at Gedda, but I have not seen a cover to confirm it (the earliest recorded postmark date, October 1866, is after the retta obliterator was generally abandoned). After about April 1866 the retta was no longer used and the date-stamps (in rare cases, seals) were used to cancel stamps. The names of the offices were the Italian forms except for the one instance of Jiddah, which used the Italian spelling “Gedda” until May 1880, and thereafter used Type VIII-1 with the French spelling “Djeddah”. In contemporary correspondence (i.e., addresses) Costantinopoli was commonly abbreviated “Cospoli”.

TABLE 1 — CONSULAR OFFICES: DATES, POSTMARKS, AND INTERPOSTALS

Office	Opened	Closed	Postmark Types	Interpostal Seals
ALESSANDRETTA	14 JY 70	FE 72	III-1.5, A6	IV?, IVA
BAIROUT	14 JY 70	FE 72	III-1.5, A6	IVA (BAIROUTH)
CAVALA	14 JY 70	FE 72	III-1.5	IVA (CAVALLA)
COSTANTINOPOLI	13 JN 65	30 JN 81	I-1, III-2, III-2.5, PS-1	III, IV?, V
DARDANELLI	10 JN 68	30 JN 81	II-5, A4	IVA, V, VB, VIII
GALIPOLI	10 JN 68	30 JN 81	III-1, III-1.5, A4	IVA
GEDDA	8 JN 65	30 JN 81	I-1, IV-1, IV-1.1, VIII-1	III, VB
IAFFA	14 JY 70	FE 72	III-1.5	IVA
LAGOS	14 JY 70	FE 72	III-1.5	IVA
LATAKIA	14 JY 70	FE 72	III-1.5	IVA, V
LEROS	JY 73	OC 74	III-1.5	
MERSINA	14 JY 70	FE 72	III-1.5	V
METELINO	14 JY 70	30 JN 81	III-1, III-1.5, A5	IVA
RODI	13 AU 72	30 JN 81	III-1, III-1.5	VB, VIII
SALONICCHI	14 JY 70	FE 72	III-1.5	IVA
SCIO	14 JY 70	30 JN 81	III-1, III-1.5, A5	IVA, VB
SMIRNE	14 NO 65	30 JN 81	I-1, III-2, III-2.5, III-4	III, IIIA, Vc, Vd
TENEDOS	14 JY 70	MR 71	III-1.5	IVA
TRIPOLI	14 JY 70	FE 72	III-1.5	IVA
VOLO	14 JY 70	FE 72	III-1.5	IVA

NOTE

Variants of spellings in postmarks: DJEDDAH (VIII-1)

Variants of spellings on interpostals: CONSTANTINOPOLI and KONSTANTINOPOLI (III), DARDANELLES (VIII), LATAKIA (IVA), RHODIS (VB), RHODES (VIII), SALONICCO (IVA), SMIRNE and SMYRNE (VIII). These are the only spellings used in the names indicated.

Black was the color ordinarily used at all of the offices. Blue was used very briefly at Costantinopoli in 1865 and 1868 and at Smirne in 1881, and examples are rare. Type IV-1 of Gedda, however, was struck in blue extensively (March 1874 to June 1875 and again in mid-1877). The rare intaglio seal of Chanak-kile (Dardanelles) was generally struck in blue, and the date-stamp II-5 is often seen in blue. Red has been reported used at Cos'poli, but I have seen no example.

Handstamp PS-1 has been seen on the first three issues for Gedda and only on interpostal seals for Cos'poli: the lack of a date and the absence of covers make it impossible to establish the period of use with any precision. This type was most probably used on postal administration mail. Although only Cos'poli and Gedda are known to have had this type of handstamp, it would be surprising if it was not supplied to other offices, especially Smirne. Type PS-1 of Gedda has two variants, differing in the size and length of GEDDA. The commoner one has a short GEDDA and a slightly irregular star⁹.

The intaglio seal postmarks (Fig. 4) require special comment. They are among the rarest postmarks of the Consular offices, and so few covers are known that it is risky to generalize about their use. However, in all instances where a date can be established, it is evident that the intaglio seals were used close to the opening dates of the offices and before the use of the date-stamps. Presumably the seals, which could readily be carved by hand, were the initially provided general purpose devices and were used provisionally while awaiting the arrival of the date-stamps. They are by construction better suited for impressing in sealing wax, and inked impressions cancelling stamps are seldom clear. The printing surfaces are usually not fully inked and the depressed, non-printing areas are often partly filled in; the result is an impression that is often very difficult to read and some cannot be identified at all. There may yet be more to be discovered. I know of covers bearing intaglio seals only of Dardanelles (inscribed *chanak kile*) (two covers) (Fig. 4), Galipoli (one cover), Chios (inscribed *saqis*) (two covers), Metelino (inscribed *medilli*) (one cover with a nearly illegible strike), and Bairout and Alexandretta (one cover with a strike of each, the latter inscribed *iskanderun*).

Some of the offices had peculiarities or individual characteristics that warrant comment.

At Smirne, uniquely among the Consular offices, the postmaster took it upon himself about 1880 to rectify the inscription on Type III-2 by excising the letters V.R., thus

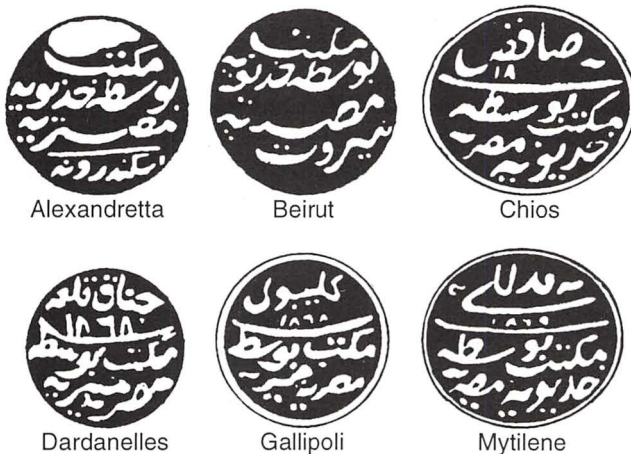


Fig. 4
Intaglio seal postmarks.

making Type III-4 (this was done in order to conform to the status of the ruler, who was no longer Viceroy, but Khedive).

Gedda was somehow neglected when Types III-1.5 or III-2.5 were distributed to the Mediterranean offices in 1870. The old Type I-1 continued in use until the end of 1872 and deterioration of the year slugs became a problem. By 1871, new year numerals, looking somewhat cobbled, were substituted, but they were evidently not changeable. Consequently, on Third Issue stamps, the year remained expressed as "71" far into 1872, until the new date-stamp in Type IV-1 was provided (about January 1873). Furthermore, the abbreviations for the months also disappeared, and numerals were used in their place. The use of numerals for the month persisted into the first few months of use of Type IV-1, perhaps because the staff had got into the habit. Type IV-1 for Gedda at first used plain numerals for the year, but in late 1874 or early 1875 numerals from a new typeface, larger and vertically shaded, replaced them. This change may have occurred in April 1875, for in that month the date-stamp was briefly used without any year numerals. Type IV-1 was treated roughly, and the circle below EDD became broken at some time after September 1873 and before July 1874. (Mazloum¹⁰ claimed that it was broken earlier, then repaired, and later was broken again, but the illustrations that he provided to support the claim are not convincing.) A further peculiarity of Gedda is the substitution of a solid lunette for the year (Type IV-1.1) at one brief period. The four known examples are dated in January or February and are on stamps of the 1874-75 printings; the year of use is unknown, but may have been 1876.

Type PS-1, a dateless circular handstamp, is known for Gedda (Fig. 5) and Constantinople. Examples are rare; that for Constantinople is known only on interpostal seals.

The date-stamp of Bairout, like that of Gedda, suffered damaged during its period of use. The undamaged state is known at least as late as January 1871, but soon thereafter the date-stamp appears with large breaks in the circle below BAIROUT and above IZ; the letter I below the break also became broken (the breaks may be partly filled in with heavily inked strikes). The Salonicchi date-stamp suffered less severe damage. About December 1870 the right side of the letter H was badly broken along with some lesser damage. The first date-stamp of Rodi, Type III-1.5, received a dent in the circle below R of RODI and large breaks over IZI as early as December 1872. The appearance of different strikes suggests that the metal of the circle may have been depressed, with the result that strikes on a hard surface show large breaks, but strikes on a soft surface, such as a stack of letters, or heavily inked strikes, would show less evidence of the damage. The damage was carried over into Type III-1 (which differs from Type III-1.5 only in the use of two digits instead of four in the year date).

The postmaster at Metelino was evidently a meticulous fellow who kept the date-stamp clean and undamaged and always struck it cleanly and properly inked. The postmark is always found centrally placed, or neatly straddling a pair, and the impressions are generally superb. In contrast, the date-stamp of Alessandretta was allowed to become dirty and strikes from it are characteristically blotted or smudgy. At Scio the postmaster commonly struck the date-stamp near the corner of the stamp and full strikes on loose stamps are especially difficult to find.



Fig. 5 Type PS-1 for Constantinople and Gedda.

Auxiliary handstamps for registration (RACCOMANDATO, known for Costantinopoli and Rodi) and postage due (AFFRANCATURA / INSUFFICIENTE, known for Gedda) exist for some of the offices, and were probably supplied to all, but are very rare.

There is no record of a post office at Hodeidah, but a cover is known from the 1870s bearing a straight-line DA HODEIDA, apparently applied at Gedda.

It appears that all denominations of the series of stamps in general use in Egypt were supplied to the Consular offices, but examples from some of the smaller, short-lived offices are so rare that only one or two denominations have been recorded (usually 1pi. or 2pi. stamps). The variety of stamps known used at a given office is a rough indicator of the relative amount of business there. Table 2 lists all of the varieties that I have seen or of which I have reliable report.

Bisection was resorted to on several occasions when supplies ran out before new deliveries from Egypt arrived. The 1pi. of 1872 is known bisected diagonally at Gedda



Fig. 6 Bisected 1 piastre.

(July 1875) and Scio (December 1875) in order to make up the UPU rate of 1pi.20pa. introduced in July of that year (Fig. 6). Examples are known only on fragments (some of them are reasonably large) and are very rare. The same stamp has been reported bisected at Bairout in February 1872 (thus at the time of closing of the office), but I have not seen an example. The 2pi. of 1872 is known bisected vertically or diagonally at Galipoli in July 1874 (on piece only) and the 2pi. of 1874 was bisected diagonally at Gedda and at Smirne. At Gedda this took place at only one mailing, April 13th 1875, at a time when the year date was inadvertently omitted from the date-stamp. All of the seven recorded examples are in blue. Four covers and three pieces with this bisect are known⁹.

The only item of postal stationery on issue during the period of operation of the Consular offices was the 20pa. brown postal card of 1879. Only three examples of use at a Consular office are known¹¹ (Costantinopoli – 2, Galipoli – 1), and these cards may not have been distributed to all of the offices.

Interpostal seals (Chapter XXXIV) were provided for all of the Consular post offices but Leros. Most of them are not unusually scarce, but the demand for them is much higher than for domestic offices. The exception is the seal for Gedda in Type VB, which is red; only about a dozen of them seem to be known and examples command the highest price of any interpostal seal. The Types of interpostal seals known for each Consular office are included in Table 1; colors are listed in the catalogs cited in Chapter XXXIV, which include some varieties on colored paper that may be color trials or proofs. It should not be overlooked that the spellings on interpostal seals do not in all cases correspond to those used in the date-stamps. Postmarked seals are known from Costantinopoli, Gedda, Smirne, Scio, and Dardanelli (all somewhat rare).

TABLE 2 contd.

	Alessandretta	Bairout	Cavala	Costantinopoli	Dardanelli*	Galipoli	Gedda	Jaffa	Lagos	Latakia	Leros	Mersina	Metelino	Rodi	Salonicchi	Scio	Smirne	Tenedos	Tripoli	Volo
1874-75																				
5pa.				✓	✓		✓							✓		✓				
10pa.				✓	✓		✓						✓							
20pa.				✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓		✓	✓			
1pi.				✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓		✓	✓			
2pi.				✓	✓	✓	✓						✓			✓	✓			
2½pi.				✓			✓							✓			✓			
5pi.				✓			✓													
1879 Provisionals																				
5pa.																				
10pa.							✓						✓			✓				
1879 Definitives																				
5pa.				✓		✓	✓													
10pa.				✓		✓										✓				
20pa.				✓		✓	✓							✓		✓	✓			
1pi.				✓	✓	✓	✓													
2pi.				✓	✓															
5pi.				✓																
20pa. p.c.				✓		✓														
1881-82																				
10pa. claret				✓	✓											✓				✓
10pa. grey				✓																✓

* Dardanelli including Chanak Kili.

Rates

The rates of postage from the Consular offices were the same as those in force in domestic Egypt: 1pi. per 10g for letters, 10pa. per 40g for printed matter and greeting cards, and 5pa. per 40g for periodicals mailed by the publisher. However, until the formation of the UPU, the rates applied only port to port. Items addressed to internal post offices incurred double postage. Thus a letter from Smirne to Alexandria or from Gedda to Suez, required 1pi. per 10g, but letters to Cairo required 2pi. Registration was a flat fee of 2pi. until July 1st 1875, when it was reduced to 1pi.

With the formation of the UPU, mail from the Consular offices was treated as foreign mail and from July 1st 1875 the postage was 1pi.20pa. per 15g and was the same for internal destinations as for the ports. A further change took effect on April 1st 1878 when the foreign letter rate was reduced to 1pi. per 15g.

Mixed Franking

Although most of the mail handled by the Consular offices stayed within the Egyptian postal system, there was a small amount of mail arriving from or sent to foreign countries. In such cases, supplementary franking by a foreign post office was required. Only a few examples are known. Several (three or four?) covers from Odessa to Metelino are known; each is franked by a Russian stamp as far as Constantinople where it was handed over to the Egyptian post office, which charged postage due at the destination. Covers sent to Greece (usually Syra) exist from places where there was a sizable Greek population, such as Smirne and the ports along the coasts of Thessaly and Macedonia. In each case, Greek stamps (Hermes head issues or, later, definitive postage due stamps) were added to collect postage due (usually 20 lepta). Two covers are known sent from Great Britain to Gedda via the Egyptian post from Suez. They are franked with British stamps plus a 1pi. of the First Issue, probably applied by the British Consul at Suez.

Forgeries

Since most of the cancellations of the Consular offices are valuable and unused stamps of the first four issues of stamps are not expensive (especially if they are without gum), forgery is potentially profitable and forgeries exist in surprising variety. They range from crudely made versions of date-stamps that were never supplied to the Consular offices to sophisticated, very dangerous reproductions of genuine date-stamps. Some representatives are shown in Figure 7.

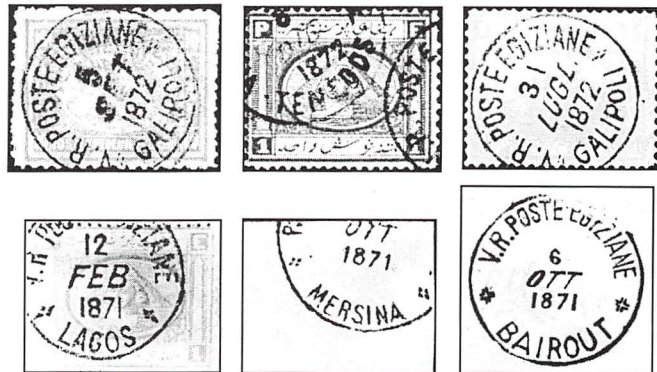


Fig. 7
Examples of
forged date-stamps.

The first point to consider when vetting a specimen is the postmark type. If it is not one of those shown in Figure 2, it is a forgery. The next point to consider is the spelling. If the name is not spelt as shown in Table 1, it is a forgery. The most naïve of the forgeries actually used the English names, such as “Rhodes” and “Salonica”. The date in the cancellation is also a valuable clue, for some forgers who were otherwise very clever were ignorant of the actual dates of operation of the rarer offices. A date later than February 1872 for any of the offices that were closed then is clear evidence of a forgery. In other cases, a forgery properly dated with respect to the particular Consular office may be inconsistent with the stamp on which it was applied. The commonest mistake of this sort was to use an 1874–75 stamp when an 1872 printing was the only valid one, but in some cases a Second Issue stamp was given a cancellation dated long after that issue was demonetized. Another aspect of the date is the way in which the month is expressed. The abbreviations used in Type I-1 date-stamps are of the Italian names for the months, expressed with three or four letters. A word of caution is necessary here: although the proper Italian name is Dicembre, in early Egyptian date-stamps it is consistently abbreviated DEC.

More subtle is the appearance of the impression. The genuine devices were of metal and the ink was generally made of carbon and oil. Some forgeries appear to have been made with rubber, linoleum, or wooden implements, and the ink used was the grey typical of rubber stamps. The best way to develop skill in such matters is to study the common contemporary postmarks of domestic Egyptian offices.

The most dangerous of the forgeries pass all of these tests, but they can generally be detected with certainty by philatelists who have extensive experience studying Egyptian cancellations. A reference collection, or photographs of certified genuine examples, is important in this respect. Nevertheless, wishful thinking may blind an owner to the obvious and it is wise to get the opinion of an expert. One type of otherwise dangerous forgery of Tripoli and Galipoli, however, is easily detected by the fact that the letter O in the name of the office is markedly shorter than the other letters. Forgeries of Dardanelli have been illustrated by Mazloun¹² along with a meticulous description of the points of difference. Lastly, forgeries have begun to appear that are made by using a photocopy machine to copy the tracing of a postmark from a book or article. In such cases, the date is the same as that in the drawing and any inaccuracies, slips of the pen, etc., are faithfully reproduced. It is therefore prudent to compare a suspect with the illustrations in substantive publications.

One should be alert to the possibility of being misled by an incomplete strike. A partial strike of ROSETTA, for example, might be mistaken for ALESSANDRETTA. Furthermore, RODA, an office in Egypt, is often mistaken for RODI, even when all letters are present.

Territorial Offices

The different circumstances of the Territorial offices (Fig. 8) are reflected in the postmarks, which are of different types from those used in the Consular offices. The story begins with the Red Sea ports of Suakin and Massawa¹³. They were nominally Turkish, without postal service, until the Ottoman Sultan formally transferred the civil administration to Egypt. Post offices were opened in November 1867 but no postmark has been recorded earlier than 1868. They were primitive places with little commercial importance, although Suakin was the port of embarkation for pilgrims from the Sudan bound for Jiddah on the Hajj.

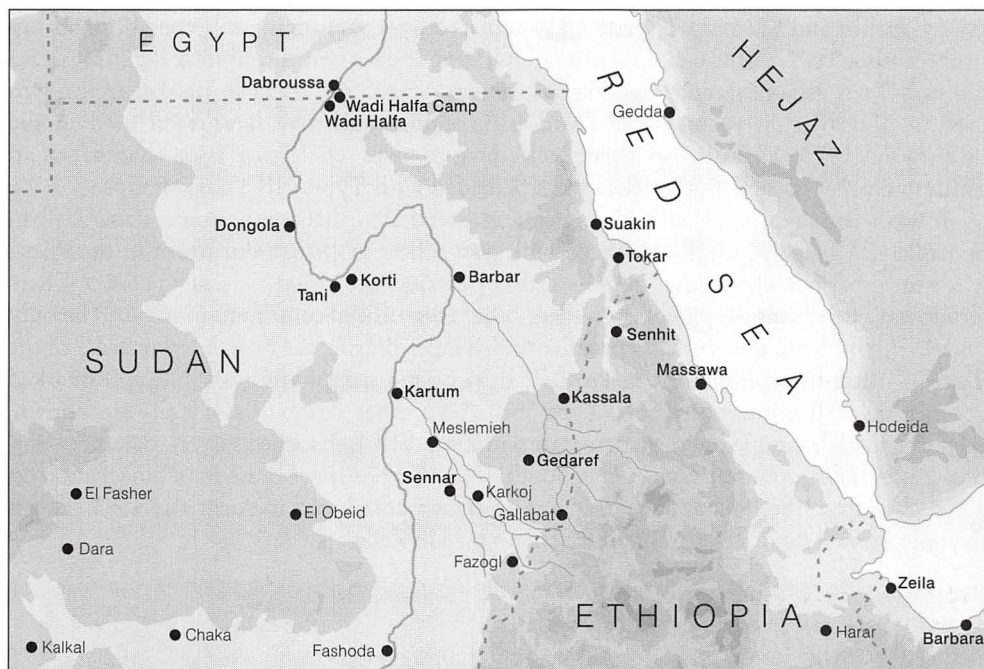


Fig. 8 Territorial and Red Sea offices (stamps known only from offices indicated in bold type).

Postal Markings and Stamps

At the time these offices were established, date-stamps of Type II, inscribed REGIE POSTE EGIZIANE, had just been introduced in Egypt and were issued to the two territorial offices as well (Fig. 9). Only a few loose stamps of the Second Issue are known and covers are unknown.



Fig. 9 Type II date-stamps and intaglio seals.

At Suakin and Massawa Type II-2 was replaced by a date-stamp of Type IV, probably in December 1872. Although Suakin used its Type II date-stamp well into 1872, Massawa did not. Two very different intaglio seals, one in Arabic, the other in Italian, are known used at Massawa on Second and Third Issue stamps and may have been used in the interim in 1872. Suakin also used such intaglio seals on Third Issue stamps at an unknown time. In 1880 both offices were provided with Type VIII-1 date-stamps.

It was a decade before the KML service was extended further south. Berbera and Zeila in Somaliland¹⁴ were apparently provided with post offices in 1876; a document in the Postal Museum in Cairo advises that commercial correspondence could be sent via Suez. There would have been very little mail from them other than official communications and the only philatelic item from that year is a peculiar folded letter bearing the only known strike of the Type V-1 date-stamp (inscribed ZEJLA)¹⁵. It is without a stamp, but bears an unpostmarked copy of the ZEJLA interpostal seal (Type V-B). Two other postmarks of Zeila are known, each in a single example only¹³: a date-stamp in Type VIII-1, inscribed ZEYLA, date not clear, on a ZEJLA interpostal seal, and an intaglio seal (Fig. 10). The latter is used as a cancellation on a 20pa. stamp of the Fourth Issue, franking an Indian postal card to Austria in 1882. This is the only known example of an Egyptian stamp used in Zeila.

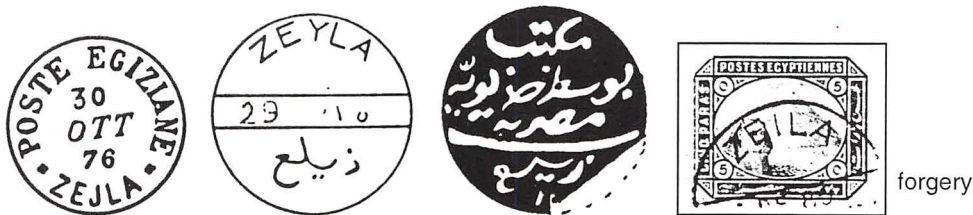
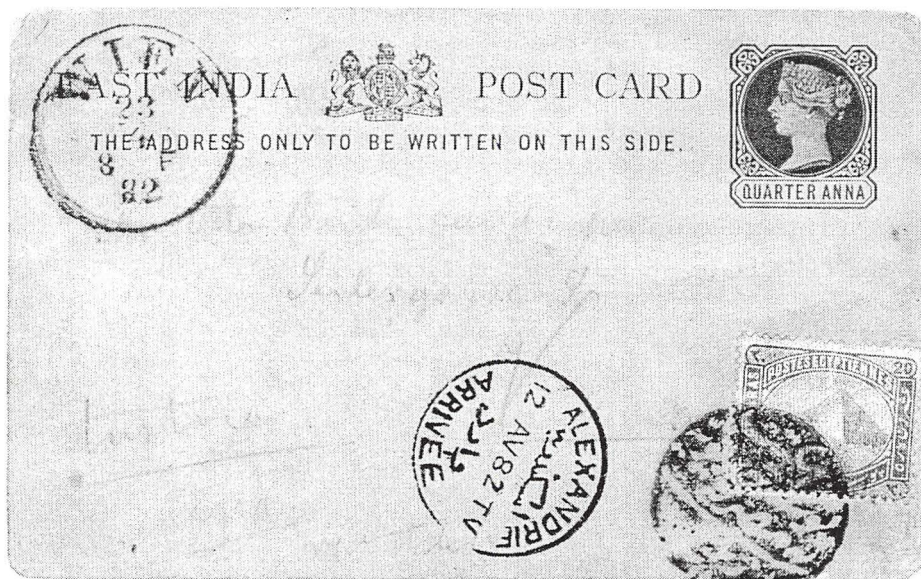


Fig. 10 Postmarks of Zeila, and a presumed forgery.

Less is known about the office at Berbera (spelt Barbara in the Egyptian postal system). It was provided with an interpostal seal, but it is of Type VIII-A, which did not come into use until 1882. A single loose stamp, 20pa. blue of 1879, is all that is known of the postal markings; it is cancelled with an incomplete strike in Type VIII-1, and is dated AO 83 (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11
postmark of Berbera.

A post office notice of 1878 states that letters from Berbera, Zeila, and Harar (Harrar) did not require postage stamps and were to be marked "franca"; when received in Egypt, they should not be taxed. This clearly accounts for the absence of stamps of the Third Issue cancelled at those offices. However, some stamps were eventually supplied and it is not known when the regulations changed.

The archives state that a postal agency of some sort was also established inland at Harar, reached from Zeila, but not even an interpostal seal was issued to it. No authentic postal marking from Harar is known, but a framed straight-line handstamp reading HARAR has been reported¹⁶ on a loose 1pi. rose of 1879 that bears no other cancellation. However, several fantasy covers bearing Egyptian stamps of the Fourth Issue cancelled with a Maltese cross composed of stripes once created a stir on the philatelic scene¹⁷. They were purportedly correspondence from the French poet Rimbaud, who exiled himself in Harar in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The reason for use of such an abnormal cancellation was said to be that it was a handstamp belonging to a French missionary establishment in Harar (this device was actually used to cancel the first stamps of Ethiopia, much later). However, the covers were eventually exposed as a fraud, made by J.-A Michel in Paris¹⁸.

The offices south of Suakin were closed down late in 1885. The Italian colonial expansion that led to the occupation of Eritrea was the cause for the suppression of the Massawa office. For a short time in 1885 an Italian post office operated there at the same time as the Egyptian, a most curious situation! The latest date I have seen for the Egyptian office is December 19th 1885. The other three offices appear to have been simply abandoned. Somaliland came under British Indian administration in 1884 and eventually Indian stamps were put into use there.

The post office at Suakin¹⁹ (also spelt Suakim, Souakin, Sawakin) has been in continuous operation since it was first opened and its importance grew substantially from 1884 when it became a base for military operations as a result of the Mahdist rebellion (Chapter XXXI). Consequently, other date-stamps were issued to it as time progressed. It continued to use Egyptian stamps well into 1897, after stamps overprinted SOUDAN had been supplied elsewhere.

Extension of Egyptian postal service up the Nile took a big leap in 1873 when offices were opened on October 1st at Wadi Halfe, Barbar, Dongola, Hartum (Khartoum), and Kassala (the last may not have been opened until a little later). These places were not only far distant from Egypt, but they were difficult to reach, for the railway had not gone beyond Assiut and navigation on the Nile was interrupted by cataracts. Mails to Cairo required roughly a month.

The Sudan had little interchange with the outside world and almost no foreign inhabitants. Consequently, business and correspondence was conducted entirely in Arabic and only a few Government officials used Italian or French. This situation is

reflected in the postmarks issued to the new offices (Fig. 12); they were bilingual, Italian and Arabic. The first ones, Type IV-6, were ungainly and the use of two languages left no room for the date. Not surprisingly, they were replaced in late 1874²⁰ by date-stamps in Type V-4. Somewhat inaccurate drawings of Types IV-6 and V-4 for these offices have been published by Chaftar²⁰ and repeated by others; they are useful only for the general appearance and the Arabic versions of the names of the offices and the months. All of this group were closed in 1884 or 1885 as they were overrun by the forces of the Mahdi, except for Wadi Halfe (Halfa) (Fig. 13), the closest to the Egyptian border.

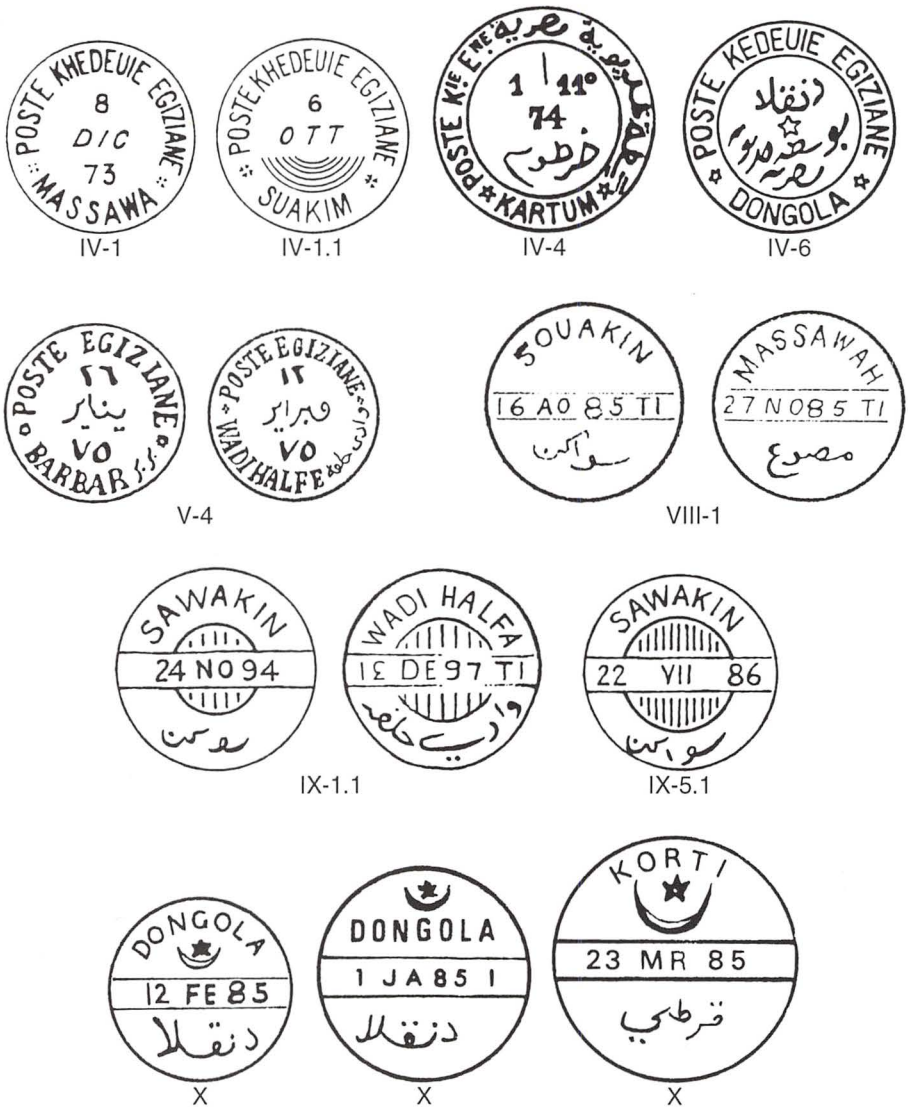


Fig. 12 Date-stamps of later types.



Fig. 13 Cover from Wadi Halfa showing cancellation Type VIII-1

During General Charles Gordon’s tenure as Governor General of the Sudan, a considerable number of new post offices were established about 1877, according to official records²¹, confirmed by the existence of interpostal seals: Adaref (Gedaref), Chaka, El Abiad (El Obeid), Dara, El Facher, El Kalabat, El Meslemieh, Fachouda, Fazoglou, Kalkal, Sennar. A group of subsidiary offices was also established: Abu Hamed, Amedib, Debba, Fodja, Gallabat, Halfaie, Karkoj, Kobkobie, Kordofan, Metemmeh, Om Durman (the spellings are those used in the records and not all of the names are recognizable). Intaglio seal cancellations are known for Gedaref and Sennar, but no postmark whatsoever has been seen from any of the other offices in spite of the fact that official archives record expenditures for personnel and supplies for the offices. Forgeries (or fantasies) of many of them have been made, however (Fig. 14). It might have been that virtually all the mail was official correspondence and stamps were never supplied.



Fig. 14 A selection of fantasy cancellations and forgeries.

A postal agency subsidiary to Massawa was open at Senhit (Senekhit) in 1879 and was possibly inaugurated as early as 1877. A single cover with a curious hand-drawn cancellation is the only item identifiable as originating in Senhit with certainty²²; it is franked with a 1pi. stamp of 1875 and is backstamped at Massawa on June 8th 1879. Another cover from the same correspondence is franked with a 1pi. of 1879, cancelled with an illegible intaglio seal and backstamped at Massawa on November 16th 1879; it cannot be determined if it originated in Senhit, or perhaps Keren or Kassala.

Still later (1885), post offices were opened at Korti and Tani in connection with the troop movements in the campaign to relieve General Gordon and the siege of Khartoum (Chapter XXXI). At Tokar, south of Suakin, an office was opened about 1891 (Fig. 15), about the same time as were offices at Ishkeit, Dabroussa, and Saras, on the Nile just north of Wadi Halfa. Only from Tokar and Dabroussa are date-stamps known; they are very rare. Finally, in 1896, at the start of the campaign for the reconquest of the Sudan, a post office was opened at Wadi Halfa Camp.

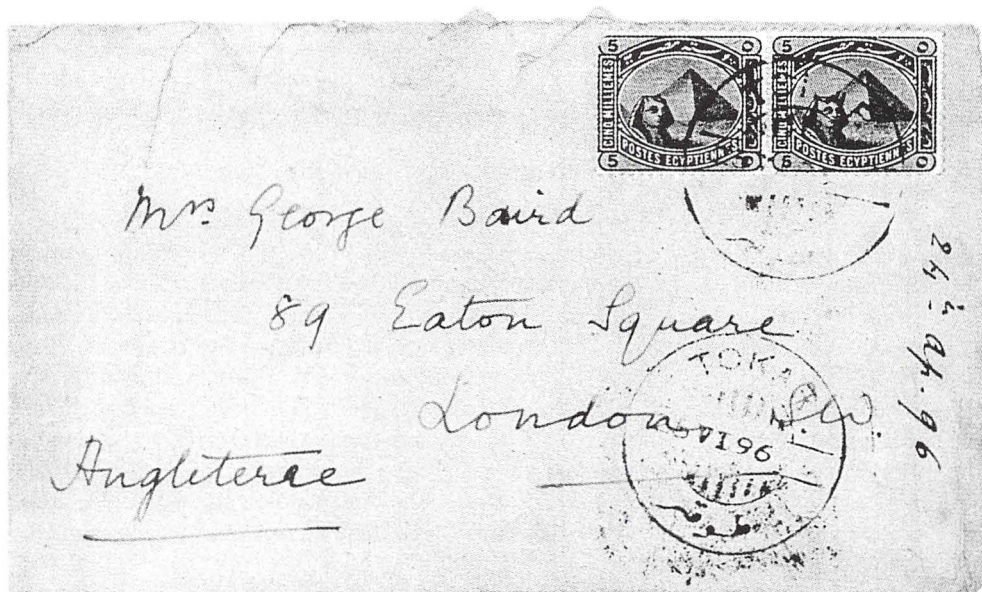


Fig. 15 A cover from Tokar.

From time to time, Egyptian stamps cancelled TAOUFIKIA in a Type IX date-stamp are represented as examples of use in the Sudan in the belief that the cancellation was used at the place of that name just north of Wadi Halfa, about where the Wadi Halfa Camp post office was opened. Although there may have been a post office at Taoufikia (Tewfikia) in Sudan before 1897, there is no evidence for it, and the date-stamp in question most definitely does not belong to it. It was used at a village in the Delta, close to Kafr Zayat. The evidence is in the form of covers sent to Alexandria and backstamped there on the same day, an impossibility for a letter from the Sudan. Furthermore, letter messages in covers postmarked there refer to events in the neighborhood of Kafr Zayat.

The Territorial post offices are listed in Table 3 with the dates of opening and closing, the Types of interpostal seals known for each and the kinds of cancellations used.

TABLE 3 — TERRITORIAL OFFICES: DATES, POSTMARKS, AND INTERPOSTALS

Office	Opened	Closed	Postmark Types	Interpostal Seals
BARBAR	1 OC 73	DE 84?	IV-6?, V-4	VA, Vc, vD, VIIIA
BARBARA	76?	85?	VIII-1	VIIIA
DABROUSSA	90?	—	IX (11 bars)	XI
DONGOLA	1 OC 73	JN 85	IV-6, V-4, X-1, X-3	VA, Vc, Vd, VIII, VIIIA
GEDAREF	77	late 83?	A8	VIIA, (Adaref)
HARTUM	1 OC 73	MR 84	IV-6?, V-4, VIII-1, GS-15	VA, Vc, Vd, VII, VIII
KASSALA	1 OC 73?	late 83?	IV-6?, V-4	VA, Vc, Vd
KORTI*	JA 85?	MR 85*	X-1	
MASSAWA	NO 67	DE 85	II-2, II-4, IV-1, VII, VIII-1, A7, R2	IV, VII, VIII, VIIIA
SENHIT	77?	83?	hand-drawn	
SENNAR	77	late 83?	A8	VII, VIIA
SUAKIN	NO 67	—	II-2, IV-1, IV-1.1, VIII-1, IX-1.1, IX-5.1, A7, R2	IV, Vd, VIII, VIIIA, XI
TANI	MR 85?	MR 85?	X-1	
TOKAR	91	—	IX-1 (7 bars)	
WADI HALFE	1 OC 73	—	IV-6, V-4, VIII-1, IX-1**, RA-5 (Type PS-5 has been reported but I cannot confirm)	Vc, Vd, VII, VIII, VIIIA
WADI HALFA CAMP	96	09	VIII-1.1†	
ZEYLA	76	85?	V-1, VIII-1, A6	VB, VIIIA
CHAKA	}	77	82–83?	VIIA
DARA				
EL ABIAD				
EL FACHER				
EL KALABAT				
EL MESLEMIEH				
FACHOUDA				
FAZOGLOU				
KALKAL	}	76 (81?)	84	none known
HARAR				
KARKOJ				
KORDOFAN				

* Seen 26 JA to 23 MR 85. **Two types: 7 bars or 11 bars.

† Two types: 27mm or 28 mm diameter

NOTE

Spelling variants on interpostals: KARTUM (VA, Vc, Vd), KARTOUM (VII, VIII), MASSAOUA (VIII), MASSAOUAH (VII), SAOUAKIN (VIII), SAWAKIN (VIIIA), VADI HALFE (VII), WADI-HALFA (VII, VIII, VIIIA), VB (ZEJLA).

Spelling variations in date-stamps: HARTUM (V-4), MASSAWAH (VIII-1), SUAKIM (IV-1, IV-1.1, R2), SOUAKIN (VA-1X5.1), WADI HALFA (VIII-1, IX-1).

These spellings are the only ones used in the Types indicated.

Since the date-stamps used in the Territorial offices were the standard Egyptian types, shown in Chapter XXVII, not all are illustrated here. The Type X date-stamps of Dongola, Korti, and Tani are described in Chapter XXXI in connection with the military campaign.

The remarks about the stamps used at the Consular offices apply *mutatis mutandis* to those used at the Territorial offices. Table 4 lists those that have been recorded²³. The 20pa. brown postal card of 1879 appears to have been distributed to all of the offices then

TABLE 4
contd.

	Barbar	Barbara	Dabroussa	Dongola	Gedaref	Kassala	Khartoum	Korti	Massawa	Senhit	Suakin	Tani	Tokar	Wadi Halfa	Wadi Halfa Camp	Zeyla	ASN-WHF TPO	CHL-WHF TPO	WHF-CHL TPO
1879																			
Definitives																			
5pa.	✓								✓		*			*					
10pa.	✓					✓	✓		✓		✓								
20pa.		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		*					✓			
1pi.	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓					
2pi.				✓			✓		✓		✓			✓				✓	
5pi.							✓												
1881-84																			
10pa. claret							✓		✓										
10pa. grey	*			✓					✓		✓			✓					
10pa. green				✓				✓	✓		✓			✓				✓	
20pa./5pi.				✓			*	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓				✓	
20pa. red				✓				✓	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓	
1pi. blue				✓				✓	✓		✓			✓	✓				
5pi. grey							✓												
1888 & later																			
1m.											✓			*					
2m.											✓			✓	✓				
3m. maroon											✓			✓	✓				
3m. orange											✓			✓	✓				
5m.			✓								✓			✓	✓			✓	
2pi. brown											✓			✓	✓				
10pi.											✓								
Postage Due																			
1884																			
10pa.				✓				✓	✓		✓			✓					
20pa.				✓					✓		*			✓					
1pi.								✓			*			✓					
2pi.											✓			✓					

TABLE 4
contd.

	Barbar	Barbara	Dabroussa	Dongola	Gedaref	Kassala	Khartoum	Korti	Massawa	Senhit	Suakin	Tani	Tokar	Wadi Halfa	Wadi Halfa Camp	Zeyla	ASN-WHF TPO	CHL-WHF TPO	WHF-CHL TPO
1886																			
20pa.											✓								
1pi.														✓					
2pi.											✓								
1888																			
2m.											✓								✓
5m.											✓								
1pi.											✓			✓					
2pi.											✓								
1889																			
2m.											✓		✓	✓	✓				
4m.											✓		✓	✓	✓				
1pi.											✓		✓	✓	✓				✓
2pi.											✓								✓
1893																			
Official miri											✓			✓					
Postal Stationery																			
Postal Cards																			
20pa.				✓			✓		✓		✓			✓					
5m.											✓								
Envelopes																			
1m.											✓								
2m.																			
5m.											✓								
5m./2pi.														✓	✓				
1pi.														✓	✓				
2pi.														✓	✓				
Letter Card																			
1pi.														✓					

* Reported by Mazloum, but not seen by me.

and 2pi. envelopes listed in Chapter XXXIII were used at those offices. The 2m. greeting-card envelope is known used at Wadi Halfa Camp, but the 1m. envelope, for which there would have been little or no need, has been recorded only for Suakin. Similarly, the various postal cards issued before 1897, including reply cards, saw use at Suakin and Wadi Halfa.

Forgeries

There seems to have been little effort to forge cancellations of the offices in the Sudan, except for Khartoum and the fantasy cancellations shown in Fig. 14. However, the situation may not always be so and one would be wise to apply the precautions mentioned in connection with forgeries of Consular office cancellations. The most deceptive of the fantasy cancellations is the one that mimics Type VIII-1 inscribed ZEILA; the authentic cancellation uses the spelling ZEYLA. The Khartoum forgery is characterized by these features: the O is nearly round (it is noticeably narrow in the genuine); the R has a high cross-bar, with a small loop (the genuine has a cross-bar only slightly higher than the A); the *meem* has a sharp angle and the stem bulges to the right (in the genuine, the angle is rounded, and the stem bulges to the left); the *alef* extends well below the heel of the *khaf* (in the genuine, it stops level with the heel point). Examples of forgeries of KHARTOUM and MASSAWA are shown in Fig. 14.

Massawa has been the object of a sophisticated attempt to forge both Type IV-1 and VIII-1, perhaps because there is a strong demand for them from collectors of Italy as well as Ethiopia. The forgeries are superficially quite convincing (Fig. 14), but there are small but easily recognizable differences in the form of the lettering and in the case of Type VIII-1, in the form of the Arabic (precaution: the drawings in this chapter are not a precise rendering of the characteristics of the genuine). An experienced specialist can recognize the forgeries with certainty, but it is not feasible to describe the differentiating features here. I have not seen a forged cover yet.

The cancellation of a domestic Egyptian village in Sharkiah Province²⁴, Abu Hammad, is sometimes taken to be from Abu Hamed in the Sudan. The latter is not known to have had a post office with a date-stamp before the separation of the Sudan from Egypt. Furthermore, the spellings of the names are different in Arabic, although there can be confusion with respect to European versions, owing to different systems of transliteration (only the Egyptian name has an *alef* between *meem* and *dal*).

Scarcity and Value

In this section, the Consular and Territorial offices are treated together. An extensive census involving several serious collections of Egypt used abroad has yielded crude but useful statistics on which to base approximate scarcity factors²⁵. They are presented in Table 5. Since scarcity varies considerably with the type of cancellation, an attempt has been made to assess their scarcity relative to one another for each office. An overall scarcity factor is given for each office, independent of the type of cancellation. The factors are based on a value of 1 for Costantinopoli, the commonest of the Consular offices. These factors may be converted to the same scale as that used for the domestic postmarks by multiplying by 12, which reflects the difference in scarcity between Costantinopoli and Alexandria.

It is important to keep in mind that these factors do not correspond directly with value, for value is strongly influenced by interest and demand, and even with the same

TABLE 5 — RELATIVE SCARCITIES				
Office	Overall Factor	Canc. Type	Type Scarcity	No. of Covers
ALESSANDRETTA	150	III-1.5 A6	R	} 4
BAIROUT	20	III-1.5 A6	R	} 1½+
BARBAR	33	V-4		1
BARBARA	300	VIII-1		
CAVALA	160	III-1.5		3
COSTANTINOPOLI	1	I-1 III-2.5 III-2 PS-15	5 3 R	} many
DABROUSSA	250	IX		
DARDANELLI	15	II-5 A4	S	4 2
DONGOLA	40/20	IV-6 V-4 X-1 X-3	R 5 R	4 many 4+
GALIPOLI	100	III-3 III-1.5 A4	2 R	} 6 1
GEDAREF	275	A8		
GEDDA (DJEDDAH)	4	I-1 IV-1 IV-1.1 VIII-1 PS-1	2 S S S	} 30+
IAFFA	200	III-1.5		1
HARTUM (KHARTOUM)	20	IV-4 V-4 VIII-1 GS-15	5 R	} 6+
KASSALA	20	V-4		
KORTI	40	X-1		ca. 10–15
LAGOS	150	III-1.5		3
LATAKIA	225	III-1.5		1
LEROS	275	III-1.5		
MASSAWA etc.	8	II-2 II-4 IV-1 VIII-1 A7 R2	S R R S	4+ 4+ 1
MERSINA	160	III-1.5		1

TABLE 5 contd.

Office	Overall Factor	Canc. Type	Type Scarcity	No. of Covers
METELINO	6	III-1 III-1.5 A5	R	} 20 1
RODI	40	III-1 III-1.5	5	} 4
SALONICCHI	60	III-1.5		4
SCIO	13	III-1 III-1.5 A5	4 R	} 17 2?
SENHIT	300	ms.		1
SENNAR	300	A8		1
SMIRNE	3	I-1 III-2 III-2.5 III-4	2 2 3	} many
SUAKIN	2/1	II-2 IV-1 IV-1.1 VIII-1 IX A7 R2	S 4 S	} 1 many
TANI	175	X-1		2
TENEDOS	290	III-1.5		
TOKAR	175	IX		2
TRIPOLI	150	III-1.5		
VOLO	30	III-1.5		9
WADI HALFE (WADI HALFA)	7/2	IV-6 V-4 VIII-1 IX RA-5	R 5 R	1+ S many
WADI HALFA CAMP	15	VIII-1.1		S
ZEYLA (ZEJLA)	300	V-1 VIII-1 A6		1 1

The factors are not precise and the numbers of covers are approximate (numbers are lower limits). Incoming covers are not included.

The quantity indicated by "many" means more than ca. 25.

R means 1 to 4 examples recorded, S means 5 to 15 examples recorded.

No entry in the cover column means that none has been recorded.

A '+' sign indicates that more have probably been recorded, or that in addition, one or more incoming backstamped covers are known.

demand, does not increase linearly with scarcity. Furthermore, the topic of this chapter is a highly specialized one and the number of collectors having a serious interest in it is probably small. If there is more than enough of a particular item to satisfy the limited demand, the effect of scarcity on value is fairly flat; conversely, a rarity in which there is only weak interest merits only a low price.

Demand is greatly affected by quality, and weak or much incomplete strikes have a depressed value. With respect to cancellations, it is essential that the strike allow identification with certainty and be complete enough to make expertization feasible.

Some information on the scarcity of covers has already been given in the text. Covers are reasonably plentiful for Suakin and Wadi Halfa from about 1885, but are rare to very rare from earlier years. Covers from any of the other offices, Consular or Territorial, from any period, are difficult to find, and only those from Cos'poli can be considered anything less than rare. For many of the offices, no covers whatsoever are known. The short-lived offices of the Thessaly-Macedonia and Syria-Cilicia feeder loops used Second Issue stamps except for the last six weeks of their operation when Third Issue stamps were used. The latter are therefore very much rarer than the former and for some of these offices only Second Issue stamps have been recorded. Only one cover is known with a Third Issue stamp used at one of these offices (Volo).

Table 5 includes data from a somewhat casual census of the covers offered by major auction houses over the past 50 years as a very rough guide; the actual number of covers in philatelic hands is probably substantially larger, except for those from the very rare offices. The supply of covers from Korti and Dongola in the 1884-85 period has been substantially increased in recent decades by the liquidation of archives of personal correspondence of officers who took part in the military campaign, but the increased supply seems to have enhanced the demand rather than depressing prices (perhaps because many such covers contain letters with unusually interesting content).

At the time of writing the prices of covers vary from about \$150 for an undistinguished cover of Suakin in the late period, to well into five figures for a cover that is the only one known from a popular office (e.g., Iaffa). Another way to put it is that the prices start at about the cost of a 10pi. stamp of the First Issue or a 1938 £E1 Wedding commemorative.

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