

The Posta Europea

Prior to the first issue of adhesives, the Egyptian Postal Service was, to all intents and purposes, contracted out to Giacomo Muzzi's private 'Posta Europea' postal service.

In 1862 the Egyptian Government had awarded the mail contract to the Posta Europea service with the proviso that Egyptian Government mail was to be carried free of charge, in lieu of payment for the use of the Egyptian State Railways in distribution of the mails.

The Posta Europea service opened up Offices where the newly built Railway reached larger towns and these offices were later to become Egyptian Post Offices.

Initially Giacomo Muzzi, Director of the now thriving Posta Europea Postal service, with Vittorio Chioffi, requested permission, on June 7, 1864 from Ismail Pasha, the Viceroy of Egypt, to issue and sell Postage Stamps. They wished to carry mail at a uniform charge within the Country instead of mail being charged by distance carried.

The time taken to mark the rate paid or due on a letter could thus be saved.

The Viceroy's reply must have startled Muzzi & Chioffi, as instead of granting permission to their Company he purchased their business outright on behalf of the Egyptian Government.

A deed of sale was signed on October 29, 1864 the transfer of ownership was effective from January 2, 1865. Giacomo Muzzi was made Postmaster General of the new 'Government Post' service.



July 10, 1862: Internal cover from Zifta to Alexandria.
Handstamped 'Posta Europea/Zifta' and dated in manuscript.

Rated in crayon '120' = 1 piastre 20 paras.

(There were 40 paras to each Piastre).

The rate would be lowered to 1 piastre on January 1, 1866.

Sixteen 'Posta Europea' Offices were opened: Alexandria and Cairo in 1844, Atfe, Benha, Berket El Sab, Damanhour, Damiata, Galiub, Kafr Zayat, Mansura, Mehalla, Samanud, Suez, Tanta, Zagasik and Zifta between 1857 and 1860.¹

1. Peter Smith 'Egypt Stamps & Postal History'.