

EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE

QUARTERLY CIRCULAR

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THE QUARTERLY CIRCULAR .

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EDITORIAL.

At the present time, the principal activity of the Circle would seem to be directed towards an orderly arrangement of the results achieved in the various Studies and their presentation to the Philatelic World in the Circle's proposed book :- " EGYPT, Its Stamps and Postal History." The field to be covered, being extremely wide, it has been thought wise to divide the subject matter into four distinct parts each of which will, as far as possible, deal comprehensively with the postal history of the period under review, including the stamps issued, the process of their production and the postal markings found on them or in conjunction with them. These parts are as follows :-

PART I. The period of the early Government Post before the purchase in 1864 of the Posta Europea from which was developed the modern postal system of Egypt; the private Italian Courier Post known by 1842 as the Posta Europea which came into being as a means of collecting and delivering mail handled by the foreign consular posts; and the Consular Posts, their location, duration and the stamps of the various countries they represented which became current in Egypt.

PART II. The period of the Italian influence, dating from 1865 to 1878, during which time the postal administration of Egypt was largely controlled by the personnel responsible for the Posta Europea who became Egyptian official when that service was purchased by the Government.

PART III. The period of British influence, dating from 1879, when the printing of Egyptian stamps was entrusted to the firm of De La Rue in London, to 1922 when the Kingdom of Egypt was proclaimed.

PART IV. The period of the independent Kingdom of Egypt from March 15th 1922 to the present day.

In addition, two appendices will be added which will deal with :-

1. Postal Stationery.
 2. The carriage of Official Mail and the Interpostal Seals.
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SOME NOTES ON THE FORTHCOMING SALE OF THE " RIX " COLLECTION.

By Dr. W. Byam.

The sale of the Cecil Rix collection of Egypt by Harmers of Bond Street, early in 1943 will be a philatelic event of importance to all those who are anxious to acquire unusual material in exceptional condition. Dr. Rix collected his stamps during the early years of the present century and his albums have remained untouched since his death during the last war. He apparently had been engaged in the making of a collection which would enable him to take part in the writing of a book on the stamps of Egypt in collaboration with his friend Nankivell, but he had obviously been a most discriminating buyer as only specimens in usually fine condition were allowed to find a home on his pages. Most of the stamps are unused and in mint condition, as apparently the study of postal history was not to be included in the scheme contemplated by Rix but there are a few used specimens and some interesting covers which add variety to the display.

The collection opens with a complete set of the proofs of the 1866 issue, in entire sheets of 200 with full margins. The only known similar set of sheets formed part of the Mackenzie-Low collection which was bought by King Fuad of Egypt and which is therefore no longer available for philatelic study. It was only by means of these complete sheets of proofs that the mystery of the lay-out of the lithographic printing stones was eventually solved and now again comes within reach of the student. The stamps of the 1866 series are represented by a number of superb mint singles, centred in a way that is most unusual. There are also two blocks of four of the 1 P.T. and one of the 20 para in imperforate condition. Other imperf. stamps worthy of note are pairs of the 20 para and the 2 P.T.

Of the 1867 issue the most notable piece is a proof sheet bearing two blocks of six of essays by Penasson of Alexandria : these are in rose-red and are of the unadopted designs bearing in one case a lion and in the other the sphinx and pyramid. The stamps open with mint blocks of six and nine of the 5 para, to be followed by a mint block of six of the 20 para in yellow-green from Stone B., and a perfect block of nine, in full mint condition of the 1 P.T. This last block is a rare item. The 10 para is represented by a used block of four, from Stone A., in the third state, postmarked Suez in April '69.

Of the third issue there are many highly desirable mint blocks, including several from the 1872 printings with margins showing the coloured rule. A left hand top corner block of twelve of the 10 para, perf 13½, a particularly nice piece, and there is also a block of twelve of the 2 P.T. with this same perf, and a plain side margin on the right. The compound perfs. of this printing are well represented by blocks of nine of the 5 para, bearing the coloured rule on the side margin, and by one of six of the 20 para with coloured rule along the margin at the top, but the rarest item of all is a mint strip of four of the 1 P.T. Of the 1874 printing, mint blocks of twelve of the 20 para and 2 P.T., compound perf., and 5 P.T., perf 12½, at once catch the eye. The last has full margins on the left and below and is in the shade of the early printing.

The De La Rue issues are also well represented and after them the collection passes on to the Sudan. Here the outstanding items are mint vertical columns of six of the 2 P.T. and 5 P.T. of the first issue, both among the great rarities of this country. A similar vertical column of the 10 P.T. follows but this is far less uncommon.

One of the most interesting aspects of this collection is a careful record of the price paid for each item, to be seen entered by Dr. Rix on the hinges with which he mounted his treasures, and I shall be much surprised if the prices now to be realised do not prove most encouraging to those who like to feel, and who does not, that money well invested in stamps brings due reward.

THE RIX SALE (contd.)

Since the Notes on the preceding page were written, Dr. Byam informs us that the sale is to be held on February 15th. 1943.

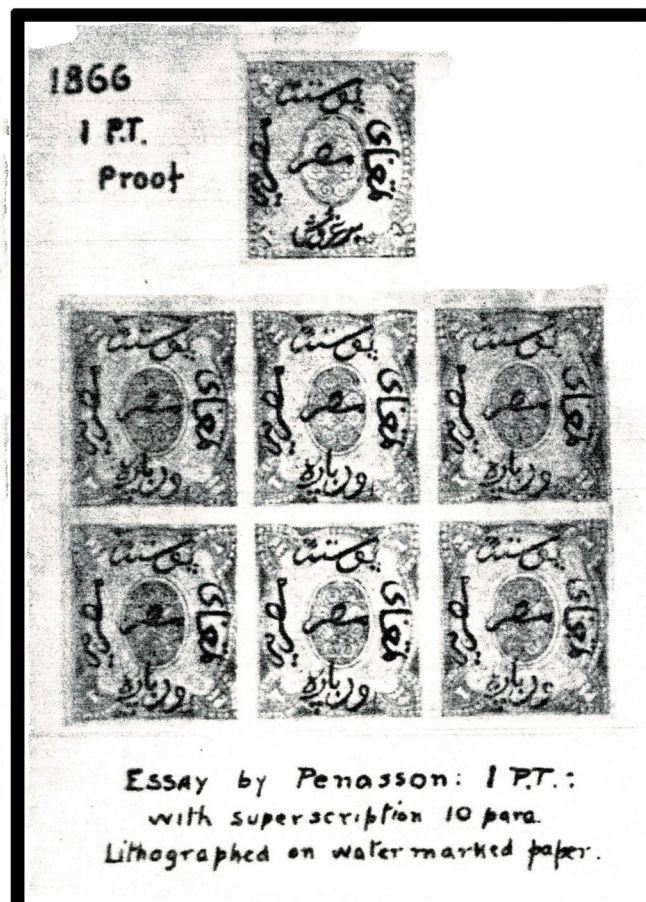
Ed.

GREETINGS FROM Mr. DOUGLAS McNEILLE.

The Chairman informs us that he has just received an Air Mail Christmas Card dated 16 - 10 -42. from Mr. Douglas McNeille. It reads :-

Dear Doctor, I am limited to four of these " cards " so I must send my sincere greetings to the Study Circle through its Leader. Yours ever,
Douglas McNeill. Financial Advisor's Staff. G.H.Q. M.E.F.

The card is franked with a G.B. 3d., postmarked EGYPT POSTAGE PREPAID. 23 OC 42 and is marked " Passed by Censor. No. 4977 " in circle surmounted by a crown. It was received by Dr. Byam on or about December 15th. 1942.



ESSAYS OF EGYPT. By Dr. W. BYAM and A. S. MACKENZIE-LOW.

ISSUE.	DATE.	ZEHERI'S NUMBER.	DESIGNER.	FACE VALE.	DESCRIPTION OF DESIGN.	PRODUCTION.	KNOWN COLOURS.	Remarks.
POSTA EUROPEA.	1860 ?		Unknown.	10, 20, 30 para and I P.T.	Triple circle 30.6 mm. POSTA EUROPEA above in serif caps; MANSURA below in serif caps; BONO PER and value in centre. Letters in black on coloured card.	<u>Lithographed</u> ; Thin card un-gummed.	10 para: Yellow buff; 20 paras slate blue; para; yellow green; 1 Piast. Tariff pale pink.	30 Only one set known. No adhesive stamps were produced.
1st. Issue 1866.	1865.		Pellas of Genoa.	I P.T. with overprint 10 para.	Similar to the issued I P.T. Except (a) The corners and outer part of the design instead of being lined are cross patched (b) The numerals and letters are smaller (c) The background of the centre is lined vertically (d) The design covering the background of the oval is different in detail though similar in appearance to that of the stamp (d) The black overprint is 10 para instead of I P.T.	Stamps and overprint <u>lithographed</u> . Watermark and paper similar to that used for the lithographed values. Gummed imperf. And perf. 13.	Mauve. Surcharge in black	It is possible that this is a stamp and not an essay prepared to complete the lithographed series and intended to replace the original typographed printing of the I P.T. This would account for the use of paper identical with that employed for the lithographed values which may not have been available when the original printing of the I P.T. was hurriedly prepared as the first value of the issue. The make up of the printing surface is unknown, but a block of six exists (Byam) so that a normal printing stone may have been prepared.
ditto	1865.		Negrioni	10 para with overprint I P.T.	Square geometrical design having in the centre an eight pointed star with rays of equal length. In the corners are N.W. & S.E. PARA and N.E. & S.W. 10, on tablets placed diagonally.	<u>Engraved</u> : white, glazed card.	Moens. Recorded having seen Flesh - Opt. carmine Black - Opt. carmine; Canary Yellow Opt. blue Canary Yellow Opt. yellow; Rose Opt. green. Blue Opt. black Blue Opt. Carmine. Orange Opt. Dark blue. Yellow Opt. red.	This essay is of extreme rarity; it is illustrated in Stamp Collectors Magazine of February 1st. 1866 where it is recorded that it was submitted to the Vice-Roy.
ditto	1865.	1 - 2	Prevost of Paris	10 para	Similar in design to the above except that the four rays of the star pointing vertically and horizontally are prolonged nearly to reach the circle of pearls. Printed with and without overprint and also with overprint alongside of design.	<u>Engraved</u> ; paper of various colours, envelopes and cards, some of which are glazed.	In a large number of colours.	The status of these essays is doubtful and Moens suggests that they were produced to the order of Commander A de T. in imitation of Negrioni's essay.
ditto		3	Riester of Paris	omitted	Oblong rectangle: a vulture with outspread wings, above which is a five pointed star & below a crescent, with a Sphinx on either side: bottom of design is blank and apparently intended for insertion of the value.	<u>Lithographed</u> ; white paper some of which bears the paper maker's watermark I - J.D.	In a large number of colours.	The designs were nearly certainly produced for collectors only and are therefore not true essays (Moens)

ISSUE.	DATE.	ZEHERT'S NUMBER.	DESIGNER.	FACE VALE.	DESCRIPTION OF DESIGN.	PRODUCTION.	KNOWN COLOURS.	Remarks.
2nd. Issue 1967.		5.	V. Penasson of Alexandria	10 para. I P.T., 2 P.T. (two different designs) in blocks of the four designs.	In the centre of each design is the head and shoulders of the Sphinx. On the 10 para and I P.T. this is accompanied by a single pyramid; on one of the 2 P.T. two pyramids appear, on the other the Sphinx is surrounded by a small circle without any sign of the pyramid. Above and below are inscriptions in Turkish and in Arabic.	<u>Lithographed</u> ; in blocks of the four designs. Imperf. and perf. 11.	Green, red, pale blue, deep blue, bright blue, brown, orange, orange brown, yellow, black. mauve,	The position of the various designs in any one block of four differs, which proves they were not laid down on a single stone.
ditto		6.	Penasson	I P.T.	Lion in front of two pyramids.	<u>Lithographed</u> ; imperf. and perf. 13½; in blocks of six on paper without watermark.	Rose-red, brown, deep brown, yellow, green, violet, Grey, Blue, Bistre.	The frames of these three essays closely resemble that of the issued I P.T. stamp; the lower inscription is different
		7.		I P.T.	Sphinx in front of pyramid as in accepted design but smaller in size.	Ditto. Ditto.	Ditto. Ditto.	
		9.		I P.T.	Single Pyramid without Sphinx.	<u>Lithographed</u> ; in block of four.	Yellow-green.	
		10.		10 para	Single pyramid. To the left, V.R. POSTE; to the right EGIZIANE.	<u>Lithographed</u> ; in block of four.	Yellow-green.	
ditto		11.	Penasson	I P.T.	Roughly similar to the issued stamp of 1972 but with the Sphinx to the right. The inscriptions above and below are quite different.	<u>Engraved</u> ; paper of various kinds including laid paper and various shades. Also on envelopes.	Green, yellow-green, black, bright-red, canary-yellow, orange, ultramarine, bright violet, deep violet, pale blue, rose, blood red, brown, chocolate, carmine, bright rose carmine, dull red.	The inscriptions, in Turkish and Arabic, correspond with those found on the I P.T. Of 1967 but are written in more decorative script.
ditto		12.	National Bank Note Co. of New York.	20 para.	Upright format; sphinx in front of single pyramid in different frames for the three values.	<u>Engraved</u> ; printed on india paper mounted on card also on envelopes of various colours and different sizes.	Grey-bistre, rose lilac, black, pale lilac, red, blue, blue green, mauve. deep	The inscriptions correspond with those on the stamps of similar value of the Second Issue; in Turkish above and Arabic below.
		13.		I P.T.		Deep brown, bright rose red, green blue, deep red violet, bright violet, ultramarine on orange envelope.		
		14.		2 P.T.		Bright blue, bright violet, carmine violet, sea green, vermilion, red orange, black, red.		

The following notes for the various studies have been received from Jean Boulad by Airgraph letter from Ismailia. 17th. August 1942. received 5th. September 1942.

Q.C. No. VIII. Page 17. Suez-Servizio del Mare, Rosso-Marking.

The following details about this line are taken from the " Circulaire Postale ", a bulletin publishing every seven or ten days all the information about mails, stamps, post offices, new regulations etc.; it is only for the post office employees and not for the public; at that time it was published in French and Arabic.

" Circulaire " of 22nd. December 1887. Translated from the French.

A weekly service of the Italian mail boats has been established between Naples and Massawa calling at Suez. The communications between Suez and Massawa will then resume as follows :-

Once a week by the Italian mail boats above mentioned.

Once a fortnight by the Khedival mail boats.

Once a month by the Austrian mail boats.

" Circulaire " of 30th. August 1888.

There is going to be established between Suez, Massawa and Assab a weekly service of Italian mail boats of which the departures from Suez will be each Tuesday evening starting from 4th. September next and the arrival at Suez each Wednesday evening starting from 7th. September next.

" Circulaire " of 22nd. November 1888.

The Italian mail boats make the service of the Red sea leaving Suez for Massawa and Assab Tuesday 10 a.m. instead of Tuesday evening

" Circulaire " of 31st. July 1890.

The departures from Suez for Massawa and Assab will take place fortnightly at 5 a.m. starting from the 2nd. August and every second Friday starting from the 8th. August at 10 a.m. The arrivals at Suez from Assab and Massawa take place every second Sunday starting from the 3rd. August and every second Tuesday starting from 12th. August next.

" Circulaire " of 31st. December 1891. (Sheet 2.)

From 15th January next the departures from Suez for Massawa and Assab will take place every second Friday.

" Circulaire " of 27th. January 1919.

The weekly service of the Suez-Massawa line was closed at the end of 1918

Note by Boulad in English.

As this last information is dated 27 years after the previous one, it is not certain that it concerns the same service, but no information has been issued between these two dates.

STUDY I.

The following information is taken from " Histoire du Regne du Khedive Ismail" par G Douin, Tome III. L'Empire Africain. 1st Partie (1863-1869)

Page 140. A regular postal service was established by Said Pasha to unite the Sudan to Egypt. The post left Khartoum twice a week on Mondays and Fridays. It was free. The mails took thirty days to reach Cairo. Ismail saw the necessity of accelerating these communications and from the first month of his reign (1854) he ordered to be established a telegraph line to join the capital of Sudan to Egypt.

Page 215. Now in the act of joining Egypt to the Sudan, the Mudir of Keneh received the order to establish a land postal line (service) between that town, Kossein and Suakin. As part of the same scheme, Ismail Pasha decided several months later, to appropriate a ship for the postal service of the Sudan. A departure was made from Suakin each week and the Governor General was to send his mail in such a way that the letter took less than eight days to go from Khartoum to Suakin (Superior Order of 26th. March 1866).

Page 217. The Vice-Roy then gave his attention to the construction of roads wherever the nature of the ground permitted the use of vehicles and for this purpose he had sent to Gaafar Pasha the necessary specialists to blow up the rocks with dynamite which obstructed the passage and levelled the road between Kassala and Suakin (Superior Order of 17th. November 1865).

The terminal point of the road was the post of Souakin. The Vice-Roy saw the importance of his new possession; from the month of October 1865 he ordered the appropriate maritime department to inaugurate a regular call at Souakin by the boats sailing between Suez to Teddah.

Page 222. The postal service does not work as desired. Frequent delays in the transport of mails occasion a considerable handicap to the despatch of business. Gaafar Pasha decided to create the post of Inspector General of Sudan Posts and nominated Toussouf Agw to this position. His duty was to travel over all parts of the country, in order to expedite the working of the service (letter 21st. December 1865.)

According to instructions of the Vice-Roy (see page 215) Gaafar Pasha made these arrangements in order to establish a regular postal service between Khartoum and Souakin: the post was to take four days from Khartoum to Berber, and six from Berber to Souakin. (letter of 7th. May 1866).

The following information is taken from du Regne du Khedive Ismail" by G Douin, Vil. III L'Empire Africain. 2nd Part (1869-1873).

Page 599. At Khartoum the Foreign Consuls and the Catholic Church sent their mails free to Egypt with those of the Government; this privilege ended October 1873.

STUDY II.

" Circulaire Postale" of 31st. May 1898. Biographical Notice of Muzzi Bey.

It was when Muzzi Bey was Director General of Posts in Egypt that conventions for the exchange of correspondence were drawn up with Austria-Hungary in 1868 : Italy in 1872 and Great Britain in 1873.

" Circulaire " of 26th. September 1889.

From the 1st. October next the Austrian Post Office at Alexandria will be closed and its service transferred to the Egyptian Post. The office at Alexandria will be authorised until 30th. December of the current year to exchange for Egyptian postage stamps the postage stamps of Austria that are presented for this purpose.

" Circulaire " of 3rd. October 1889.

Following the arrangement concluded with Austria-Hungary for the closing of the Austrian office at Alexandria, the official correspondence of the diplomatic agent of Austria Hungary and the Consuls and Vice-Consul of Austria-Hungary in Egypt shall continue to enjoy free postage in the interior of Egypt and similar correspondence shall enjoy free postage to Austria-Hungary.

Q.C. No. 6. Page 9. Russian P.O. in Alexandria.

The date of the closing of this office is given as 1st. November 1875 in the " Circulaire Postale " of the 31st. May 1898. This information is embodied in an obituary notice detailing the most important acts signed by Muzzi Bey on behalf of the Egyptian Postal Administration.

Q.C. No. 4. Page 4. French P.O. In Cairo.

The date of the closing of this office is given in the above notice as 1st. March 1875.

Greek Post Office at Alexandria.

Preliminary historical notes of " Les Rapports de la Grece et de l'Egypte pendant le Regne de Mohamed Aly. (1833-1840) " par Ath. G. Pelitis.

This independence of Greece was not recognised until 1830 and it was only from this date that this country could have Consulates and Legations abroad. Never the less the Consulate at Alexandria was not established until towards the end of 1833.

Until then the French Authorities had charge of Greek interests. The official reports of Greece and Egypt ate from 1833.

There reports, of a general nature, were very friendly thanks in part to the sympathy of Mohamed Aly for Greece and thanks also to the friendly way he honoured the representative of Greece in Egypt, Michel Tassizza. The Greek Government had good fortune in selecting for their first Consul in Egypt, Michel Tassizza, a merchant who had been established for many years at Alexandria, and was honoured by the friendship of the Vice Roi who knew him before his appointment. The establishment of a Greek Consulate in Egypt was necessary not only for the protection accorded to its Nationals but also to develop commercial relations between the two countries.

In a letter dated from Naples 18/30 August 1833 written by S. Tricoupos, Minister of Foreign affairs, to Mr. Tassizza he informs the later that the Greek Government has decided to nominate him Consul-General of Greece in Egypt. Detailing the duties of his new mission he informs him among other things that "You can use on your official correspondence a cachet or seal having as its inscription the words (in Greek) Greek Consulate in Egypt."

By letter of 21st. November 1833 to H.H. the King of Greece and K.S. Tricoupis, Boghos Youssef Pasha informed the Greek Government that the choice of M. Tassizza " is most agreeable to the Egyptian Government and to H.M. the Vice-Roy " and stated that the customary privileges had been accorded him.

The establishment of a Consulate can be fixed somewhere between the 1st. October and the 15th. November 1833.

AIRGRAPH LETTER FROM JEAN BOULAD.

The Postal Services in the Isthmus of Suez from 1859 to 1869.
and the Postage Stamps of the Suez Canal Company.

On the 25th. April, 1859 Monsieur de Lesseps struck the first blow with the pickaxe in the work of cutting the Isthmus of Suez on the site of the future town of Port Said.

At that time the postal service to the interior of Egypt was carried on by the well-organised private service of the POSTA EUROPEA, authorised and recognised by the Egyptian Government. The offices nearest to the Isthmus were Damietta, first seat of the Office of Works of the Canal; Zagazig, terminus of the railway from Alexandria via Benha; and Suez, port of transit on the route to the East which had increased in importance since Waghorn developed the Overland Route to India.

Between the different workshops and these three post offices, the Company transported its own mail and that of its employees by messengers on foot or on camels.

As a result of the constantly increasing growth of the mail service to the provinces and Cairo and Alexandria - Head Offices of the Posta Europea which acted as intermediaries between the Canal Zone and the Central Administration in Paris - the company signed at Alexandria on 7th. April, 1860 an agreement, by the terms of which the Posta Europea undertook for an annual payment of 6,000 francs to handle the Company's mail in Egypt.

This state of things lasted until 1866. the Company perfected its transport in the Isthmus; Damietta was vacated in 1862 for Timsah, which was renamed Ismailia on 6th. March 1863; postal steamers were put into service between Ismailia and Zagazig, and Ismailia and Suez on the completion of the Ismailieh Canal (Cairo - Zagazig - Ismailia - Suez). The postal service of the Company became most reliable and was organised in great detail.

When in 1865 the Posta Europea was purchased by the Egyptian Government, new regulations had to be drawn up and promulgated; they come into force on 1st. January 1866 when Egyptian postage stamps were introduced.

The Agreement between the Canal Company and the Posta Europea ceased to be valid from 31st. December, 1865.

At that time the Egyptian Government repeatedly attempted to extend its postal service to the zone of the future Canal; various high officials were sent to the area to study the possibilities of this extension and each time their reports pointed out the inadvisability of such an undertaking and recommended the continuance of the independent service of the Canal Company as it was giving entire satisfaction. The agreements between the Egyptian Post and the Canal Company made arrangements for the interchange of facilities in connection with the transport of courier mail.

In 1867 M. Gustave Riche, Director of the Postal Service of the Company, suggested, as a means of adding to the revenue of the Company, the conversion of the " free service " to a " paying service " organised and regulated on the lines of the French Postal Service. This suggestion was well received and was adopted. Rules for the

Post were drawn up and circulated throughout the Canal Zone; at the same time they were communicated to the press in Egypt.

The Tariff was :-

- 1 Centime for printed matter, circulars, etc, pre 50 grammes;
- 20 Centimes for letters;
- 20 Centimes for manuscripts and samples, per 100 grammes;
- 40 Centimes for ordinary letters delivered at the house - a surcharge of
20 Centimes on the ordinary rate of franking.

The sending of money could be effected for a charge of 2%.

The Postal Offices were :- Port Said, Ras-el-Eech, Kilometre 34, Kantara, Kilometre 544, El Guisr, Chantier VI, Ismailia, Serapeum, Chelouf, Kilometre 83, and Suez.

Special Postage Stamps, 1 centime black, 5 centimes green, 20 centimes blue, and 40 centimes red, were ordered from Paris; printed in lithography in sheets of 120 stamps, by the firm Chézaud Ainé, lithographic printers, 3 Rue des Capucins, St. Jaques, Paris, a firm which today has disappeared; they were dispatched on 25th. June 1868 and received in Egypt about 8th. July, 1868.

The decision of the Company aroused lively objections in the Egyptian press; the Progres Egyptien of 18th July and 1st August 1868 echoed the demands of the public whose principal complaint was that it was necessary to pay for the carriage of a letter from Port Said to Alexandria not only 20 centimes from Port Said to Zagazig (or Ismailia) by the post of the Company but also 1 piastre from Zagazig (or Ismailia) to Alexandria by the Egyptian Post.

The Egyptian Government aroused itself on account of these protestations although the service of the Company was not competing with that of the Government which had not yet any postal organisation in the Isthmus.

Earlier negotiations begun with the Company with a view to handing over to the Government of this organisation when the railway line between Zagazig and Ismailia and between Ismailia and Suez was completed, were pushed forward energetically.

These lines were opened respectively on 1st. July and 15th. August 1868 and the Government took over the Postal Service in the Isthmus from 16th August 1868. From then the Company ceased all postal activities and handed over its post offices to the Egyptian Post. The postage stamps issued by the company ceased to have currency from 16th August 1868 but could be exchanged up to 31st August, 1868.

The official correspondence on the Company was carried free on the line Port Said - Ismailia - Suez until 1st January, 1869. On the other lines it had to pay the ordinary tariff fixed by the Egyptian Post.

M. Gustave Riche, whose start had been so promising, found himself suddenly relieved of his appointment. But the Company, in recognition of his services and the efforts he had made to ensure the success of the postal service, made over to

him at cost price all the unsold postage stamps which were beginning to be known and sought after in Europe. He sold the greater part of this stock, at the face value of 66 centimes a set, to the firm Arthur Maury, stamp-dealers in Paris.

These stamps, very common up to 1905 - they were then catalogued at Fr. 3.95 the set and could also be bought in entire sheets - are actually very difficult to find in good condition. Without doubt it is the present state of affairs in the Suez Canal area which has increased demand for these stamps so that they are found only with difficulty in Egypt. These stamps which were in use for about fifty days are exceedingly rare on covers genuinely used during the period of currency.

For a reasons still not explained, these stamps were very soon forged and twelve more or less successful forgeries are known, one only is dangerous and needs careful examination by an expert.

JEAN BOULAD.

President of the Egyptian Stamp Club.

(Translated from the French by W. Byam.)

FURTHER NOTES RECEIVED FROM JEAN BOULAD.

The following information has been received by Mr. A.S.Mackenzie-Low :-

The mail between Great Britain and Egypt takes about three months by sea, 45 - 50 days by air mail and 20 - 25 days by airgraph.

This information was conveyed in an airgraph dated 4-8-42.

The British stamps overprinted M.E.F. Have been used in Erythrea in March 1942, they are the only stamps available in that country to frank the mail. I have unused sets and one stamp on cover. Angeloglou told me that he sent sets to England some months ago. by the time this message reaches you they will be already on sale in London.

A commemorative set of three values 5, 15, and 20 mills will be issued shortly for the millenary of the Azhar University. It was to be issued on the 18th inst., but owing to a short illness of H.M. the King, the ceremonies and the issue of the stamps have been postponed to a later date.

Airgraph dated - Ismailia 23rd September 1942. Received 20th October 1942.

STUDY III.

THE POSTAL HISTORY OF THE SUEZ CANAL ZONE.

Including the Suez Canal Company's Postal Service, its Stamps and forgeries of the same, and the Egyptian Government Post Offices.

by

Lieut Colonel G.R. Worthington Wilmer, D.S.O., F.R.P.S.L
and
Jean Boulad d'Humieres. M.R.P.S.L.

" APERIRE TERRAM GENTIBUS. "

Phrase with which Ferdinand de Lesseps begins his memoir to H.M. Mohamed Said Pasha, Vice-Roy of Egypt and Dependencies, 15th November 1854.

He was fond of quoting this phrase which appears on the pedestal of his statue at Port-Said at the entrance to the Suez Canal.

FOREWARD.

Sources.

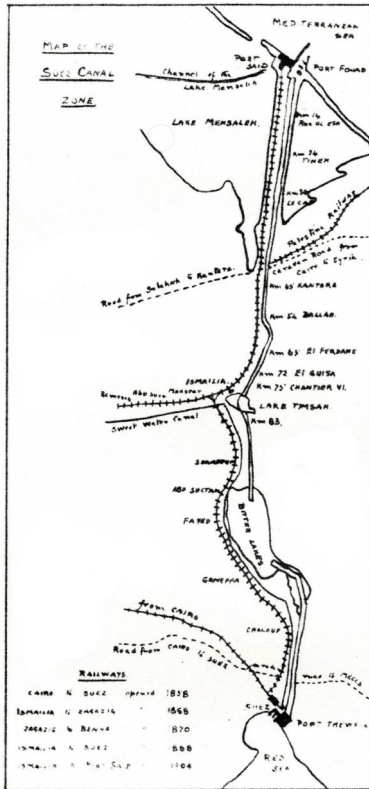
Almost all the historical facts and quotations in Parts I, II, III, V and VI are taken from the seven Vols book " Le Canal de Suez " by Voisin Bey; other publications such as Le Canal de Suez by Oliver Ritt, l'Isthe de Suez, Journal de l'Union des deux Mers 1859-1869, The Egyptian State Railways Magazine, Egyptian Newspapers and Periodicals from the National Library or from the Library of the Institut d'Egypte, Cairo, have also been of great help.

Division of the Study.

- Part I. Previous attempts to connect the Mediterranean with the Red Sea.
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- Part III. The private postal service on the Canal Company, its establishment, administration, offices, tariffs, and suppression.
- Part IV. The Postage Stamps issued by the Company, their postmarks and the forgeries.
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PART I.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO CONNECT THE MEDITERRANEAN WITH THE RED SEA.



Two or three thousand years ago the Red Sea extended far inland through the Bitter Lakes and Lake Timesh as far as Pithom or Pitum, the port of the Ancient Egyptians, the Heroöpolis of the Greeks and the Erecastra of the Romans, known in modern times by the Arabs, as Tel el Maskhuta. This place is close to the railway, not far from Abu Suweir, in the direction of El Mahsama. That the Red Sea extended as far as is proved by the geological formation and by the inscriptions found by Naville at Pithom. This end of the Red Sea was known as the Heropolitan Gulf and Agathemerus writes that the Arabian Gulf (i.e. The Red Sea) began at Heroöpolis; Artemidoros states that from this town ships started which went to the land of the Troglodytes, and Pliny confirms that Pithom was on the sea. The writings of both Herodotus and Strabe prove that the Red Sea extended much further inland in their day, than at present.

In later times Egypt was subject to tremendous earthquakes, the Mediterranean shere tipped downwards and, among other things the palaces and other buildings on the foreshore at Alexandria, sank below the sea. At the same time the land in the neighbourhoods of Pithom tilted up and the Red Sea receded south-eastwards.

Long before this upheaval, however, the Pharaoh Nekho (609-593 B.C.) conceived the idea of constructing a navigable canal from the Pelusiatic Nile in the neighbourhood of Bubastis, through the land of Goshen (Markaz Abu Hammad) to Pithom on the Red Sea. The work was abandoned because it was rumoured that the invading Persians only would benefit by it. As a matter of fact it was the Persian Pharaoh, Darius (521-486 B.C.) who actually completed this astounding engineering work, described by Herodotus as being 37 miles (55 kilohms.) long, and sufficiently wide to allow two triremes to pass each other, presumably with their three rows of oars out. From the traces of this canal excavated in modern times it is computed that it was 45 metres wide and five metres deep, a magnificent ship canal, during the construction of which Herodotus informs us no fewer than 120,000 workmen perished. The ships plying on the inland waterways of ancient Egypt appear to have been much larger than is usually believed, and they carried a very much larger crew than the modern gayassa, and many oarsman, besides steersmen and men tending the great sails.

The history of this canal continues as follows :- when the Red Sea began to recede in the reign of Ptolemy, Philadelphos, (285-247 B.C.), a new port was constructed at Arsinoe, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Lake Timsah, and the canal had to be lengthened to the point where the sea had receded.

In the degeneration of the Ptolemaic dynasty the canal was abandoned probably owing to the sand silting up and the disappearance of the Pelusiac branch of the Nile. When the canal was remade by the Roman Emperor, Trajan (98-117 A.D.) it was not less than 230 kilometres long, as it extended from the Nile North of Cairo to Klyasma near Suez. About the time of the fall of the Roman Empire the canal was abandoned for the third time, but was re-established by the great Mohammadan general and ruler Amr Ibn El AS, about 642 A.D. For transporting corn from Fostat to the ports of Arabia.

In the eighth century A.D. the canal was abandoned for the fourth and last time. Perhaps an earthquake blocked it, and about a thousand years of blown sand filled it up and hid it so that it was lost and forgotten until traces of it were found by Napoleon's engineers about 1798.

Few people realise that this old canal, between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean by way of the Nile, existed for about 1200 years. The present Suez Canal in point of age is a mere infant of 70 years in comparison with it. It is true that its life was chequered, but one can safely say that for generations ship could sail by it from sea to sea.

Its traffic at the beginning was the trade from and to the land of Punt and other places. One of the tablets of the Ptolemy Philadelphos, discovered by Neville at Heroöpolis, proves that the ancient Egyptian commercial expeditions left from Heroöpolis and Arsinoe for the Red Sea ports and that Pharaoh's war elephants, brought by sea from Ptolemais, into the land of the Troglodytes, were landed at Persepolis; here also was the fortress of Succoth (of Exodus) which guarded the canal-head and the road to Syria.

In the reign of Trajan, and later, blocks of porphyry and columns of granite were laboriously carried or rolled down from Gebel Fatira and Gele El Bukhkhani quarries, in the eastern desert, to the Red Sea at Myos Hormos (now Abu Shar el Qibli) whence they were shipped, via the canal, to the interior of Egypt or to Rome or Constantinople. Pliny tells us how important these quarries were, and that porphyry statues were sent to the Emperor Claudius in Rome.

Besides the stones from the quarries there was gold from the mines of the eastern desert, emeralds from Berenice, and all the merchandise to and from the ports of Africa and the East. A blow was administered to the export trade when Justinian prohibited the export of grain from every port in Egypt except Alexandria.

Arsinoe was abandoned and lost, Klyasma followed, and at the Arab invasion, Kolzum was the Red Sea port at the entrance of the canal; but in its turn, Kolzum was abandoned and Suez sprang up.

When the canal silted up and the cities decayed, there was a period of obscurity until the Arab conquest when the ports of Jedda, Mecca, Kossoir, and Suez exchanged trade with Rosetta, Damietta and Alexandria.

The way overland from Cairo to Suez became part of the great Darb el Haj, or Pilgrim's Way from the whole of the North of Africa to Mecca. Vast numbers of persons passed up and down that road in the thousand years it was in use.

As we have seen, the great canal of Trajan was finally abandoned and lost in the eighth century A.D.

" At a later period the Venetians frequently thought of constructing a canal through the Isthmus, with a view of recovering the trade which they have lost owing to the discovery of the route round the Cape of Good Hope (in the sixteenth century, eight centuries after the closing of Trajan's canal). Leibnitz, too in his proposal

regarding an expedition to Egypt, made in 1671 to Louis XIV, the greatest monarch of his age, strongly recommended the construction of such a canal. Sultan Mustafa III (1757 - 73), the admirer of Frederick the Great, Aly Bey, the enterprising Mameluke prince, and Bonaparte, all revived the scheme - "

An Baedeker, from whom this is quoted, might have added to this notable list the illustrious name of Mohamed Aly Pasha the Great, who, in 1825, commissioned his engineer Alexander Galloway to survey and estimate for a navigable canal from the Red Sea at Suez to the Nile at Bulak. The estimate was for £1,200,000 but there was no financial support at the time.

The route to be followed was probably through the Bitter Lakes, Lake Timsah, and up the Wadi Tumilat. This scheme of Mohamed Aly Pasha and Galloway was prepared before de Lesseps came to Egypt in 1831, and before Captain F. R. Chesney made his survey in 1830, proving that there was no appreciable difference in the levels of the two seas.

(From " Historical Notes " by A. F. C. de Cosson, General Traffic Superintendent, El Gabbabri, published in " the Egyptian State Railways Magazine " of March, 1934.)

(to be continued.)

STUDY XIII. The Army Posts in Egypt.

Brigadier G. Grylls, of " Green Hollow ", Bessels Green, Sevenoaks Kent would be glad if any member who is in the possession of material bearing upon the postal arrangements made for the Abercromby Expedition to Egypt in 1800 would kindly communicate with him giving details of his materials.

THE TWENTY-NINTH MEETING of the Circle was held at the residence of the Chairman, Dr. W. Byam, O.B.E., 92 Harley Street, London. W.1. On Saturday October 3rd. 1942 at 2-30pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT. The Chairman, C.G. Alterskye, D.B.Armstrong, J.C.Besley, G. Grylls, G.L.Hearn, G.C.Hoffman, E.F.Hurt, A.S.Mackenzie-Low, F.S.Sillitoe, and G.R. Worthington-Wilmer.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. Were received from J.Gilbert, W.C.Hinde, F.S.Mumford and R.J.C.Thompson.

THE MINUTES of the previous meeting were read and signed by the Chairman.

THE SCHEME OF ARRANGEMENT, submitted by the Editorial Committee, for the Circle's proposed book :- " Egypt, Its Stamps and Postal History " was discussed and approved. It was unanimously agreed that a copy of this scheme should be included with the letter to Colonel Kimble asking him to consider the publication of the book in the Journal of the American Philatelic Society.

STUDY II. Captain G.L.Hearn and Mr. D.B.Armstrong reported on the work they had done on their respective studies - the G.B. and Greek P.O.s in Egypt.

ESSAYS. A classification of the Essays of the first three issues of Egypt compiled by Dr. W. Byam and Mr A.S. Mackenzie-Low was submitted, discussed and approved.

Dr. Byam and Captain G.L Hearn passed round their essays concerning the three issues.