

EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE .

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THE QUARTERLY CIRCULAR,

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Vol. V. No. 9. Page 93. May 1961. (Whole Series, No. 57.)

THE BYAM COLLECTION OF EGYPT.

It will be with mixed feelings that our members learn that this famous collection is to be broken up and dispersed. It has taken thirty-seven years to build and contains many items of extreme rarity as well as demonstrations of the original research work for which the collection is well known. The work on the First Issue gained for Dr. Byam the Taplin medal of the R.P.S.L. in 1930. The same year saw him receive his first gold medal for Egypt at Berlin. Since then the collection has won twelve gold medals or higher awards at International Exhibitions, the main prize for original research at New York in 1956 and the Tilleard medal of the R.P.S.L. for work on the Third Issue.

The Foreign Consular Posts are represented by no less than six albums full of ontires and covers. Postal History is covered by Studies of the Napoleonic invasion, the seal franks of the early Government Post, the Overland Post to India, the Suez Canal, the Posta Europea, the Egyptian P.O.s abroad, and the military campaigns in Egypt.

There are many other detailed Studies and a wealth of material dealing with the production of adhesives - essays - artists' drawings - colour trials and proofs.

The task of disposing of the collection has been entrusted to Robson Lowe Ltd. and the auction will take place at 50 Pall Mall, London, S.W. 1. during the latter half of October next.

Since it became known that this collection was coming on the market, Dr. Byam has received three substantial offers to buy it by private treaty. These, he has rejected, believing Egyptian philately would be best served by the distribution of his treasures. Much research is still needed to complete our knowledge of the stamps and posts of Egypt; the vast amount of material collected by Byam should, in other hands, enable this work to be done.

An elaborate illustrated catalogue is in process of preparation which should enable the store of information embodied in this collection to be preserved for the guidance of those who collect Egypt now and in the future.

This collection has done much to make our Study Circle a success and we must hope its distribution will enable the Circle to continue to flourish, for such is the sincere desire of the student who created both the collection and our Circle.

MARKET JOTTINGS.

by

W. BYAM.

The collection of Egypt auctioned by H. R. Harmer on December 5th, 1960 was extensive enough to provide pointers to market trends today. All told there were 220 lots; of these only twelve were listed as containing covers or entires. Some of the covers were modern and obviously philatelic, with no evidence of having been handled by the Post, but some of the others were outstanding. The biggest price of the sale (£550) was realised by a cover bearing a single copy of Suez Canal 20c with R.P.S.L. certificate, clearly cancelled 5129 at Port Said, on 12th August 1868, four days before the service ceased. Another Canal Coy cover bearing two copies of the 20c, both slightly defective, a double weight letter from Port Said to Ismailia dated 6th August 1868, fetched the £300 Harmer estimated to be its value.

All the Suez Canal Coy material sold well. A mint block of nine of the 1c went for £155 - Harmer having valued it at £90. Three mint corner blocks, with margins, of the 5c, 20c, and 40c fetched £52-10-0.

On the other hand a good Alexandria Crown Circle cover estimated to fetch £30 went for £26. Of the lots of 1881 G.B. 2½ blue, none on cover, one only fetched the estimated value and two lots (six and three stamps) of Plate 22 remained unsold. Plates 21 and 23 were represented by single copies, the latter, a good specimen, went for £12-10-0. The 26 British Military Telegraph stamps all used in Egypt, estimated at £125 to £150, remained unsold.

Two other covers were worthy of note, 1866 2 P.T. bisect, used at Cairo, 27th July 1867, fetched £30. Second Issue 10 para, dull lilac, two pairs, one stamp creased, went for ten guineas. As usual there was no example of the 2 P.T. bisect used at Alexandria.

A fairly well centred copy of 1866, 10 para brown, perf 12½ X 15, sold for £12, which I consider cheap for this very rare variety.

A badly centred used copy of 1866 20 para, pale blue, with part of the top black inscription missing (Zeheri 3b) realised £16 which was above its estimated value and more than it was worth. Prices realised by 1866 5 P.T. errors of black inscription were low. £18 for a fine unused copy of the perf 12½ X 15 and £24 for an imperf copy with clear margins. A really badly centred unused copy of the 10 P.T. compound perf fetched £11.

Quite a number of essays were included in the sale and several of them sold well. Two blocks of four (Zeheri Type 19) each went for £31.

The very rare 1 P.T. essay in red, with big margins, of Zeheri 55 realised £25.

This, in my opinion, is probably a product of Boulae. The "Renard" essay (Zeheri 32) estimated at £20 fetched only £9; it had no clear margin. The U.P.U. 20 para, without Arabic inscription, though thinned and with a small tear, realised £17. I wonder do all our members appreciate the interest of this series by Penasson? Two copies of the 60 para, both defective, were bought for £16. The essay for the 10 paras on $2\frac{1}{2}$ P.T. of 1879, the stamp badly rubbed in the centre of the surface, sold for £20 which was full valuation.

Thirteen Die Proofs of the De La Ruse 1879 issue realised an average of £5 each - a considerable drop on the prices of ten years ago.

To me, the gem of the collection was a nearly perfect mint horizontal tête-bêche pair of the 10 paras on PT. $2\frac{1}{2}$ (S.G. 67b). It sold for £70.

The popularity of cancellations was well illustrated by three singles bearing the numerals 28, with bars above and below, which realised £15. The stamps were 1 PT. rose of 1879 and 10 para bluish-grey of 1881-82. This was an arrival mark applied at London to mail from the Forces in Egypt during the early stages of the 1882 campaign.

A single used copy of the 5 mills with overprint "O.H.H.S." between inverted commas sold for £10 whereas the 4 mills, vermillion, with inverted overprint, used, fetched only £5-10. These two stamps are of about equal rarity.

There were no used copies of the Crown Overprint errors but a mint block of four of the 100 mills with overprint double sold for £28. Only the used copies of these errors are worth such prices as this but collectors still do not realise the fact. Most of the mint errors now in circulation never were issued for use - the one exception is the 1 mill with overprint inverted of which a block of twenty four was bought at the P.O. in the old Continental Hotel - Three used copies of this stamp are recorded.

Good prices were obtained for some of the modern material but I think I have written enough to prove that Egypt is still a good market. Really good early material holds its own; essays seem on the upgrade; Suez Canal items are booming. It is doubtful whether the modern stamps will hold their present prices.

THE REFERENCE COLLECTION OF THE EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE .

A Reference Collection is being formed by the Egypt Study Circle which, it is hoped, will be housed at the R.P.S.L.

The Curators are to be E. A. Piprell and G. D. Turton.

The Collection is to be contained in albums under the following headings :-

1. Photographs of Genuine material.
Photographs of Forgeries.
Cuttings from Catalogues.
2. Forgeries of the Adhesives.
3. Forged overprints.

4. Forged cancellations,
5. Bogus cancellations,
6. Forged covers,
7. Re perforated stamps,
8. Re gummed stamps.

The Expert Committee to consist of three members :-

The Chairman and the Keepers of the Records,

Any material can be submitted and an Egypt Study Circle Certificate will be given, together with a photograph of the item submitted and will be signed by the above three members.

The Treasurer will keep a separate fund for this expertizing and the charge for each item will be as follows :-

- To members of the Egypt Study Circle 10/- each item.
- To non members of the Circle 20/- each item.

NOTES ON THE BRITISH O.H.M.S. MAIL IN EGYPT .

by Chas. W. Minett.

The Notes on the Posts of the British Forces in Egypt published in the "Q.C." for November 1958, Vol. V, No. 4 gave an historical outline of this Study and covered a period of upwards of one hundred and fifty years. Recorded covers (with the postal markings which they bear) were the personal correspondence of the private soldier and his officer.

Whilst there are one or two references to O.H.M.S. mail all references to Official Military Mail were omitted as it was felt that this facet of Military Postal History should first be introduced on it's own as a separate study. What follows is therefore a companion study to that describing the mail of the private soldier and the whole military picture will be built up in due course, it is hoped, along these parallel lines.

These notes do not include official and private mail which passed through the Diplomatic channels.

Information concerning O.H.M.S. mail prior to World War I is sought.

All examples referred to in these Notes are official covers bearing the printed words "ON HIS (HER) MAJESTY'S SERVICE". Often they bear an official or Military Unit frank, usually endorsed by an authorising officer. Sometimes they bear a file reference in manuscript and / or a "certified official" mark in manuscript or handstruck stamp.

During World War I O.H.M.S. mail was dealt with by the British Military Postal Services but when the war was over and British M.P.O.s closed, opened or

Re-opened at various times it appears that the Egyptian Civil Post Office was called upon to fill the gaps.

Generally speaking it would appear that from 1914 until 1932 all O.H.M.S. mail, whether passing to and fro within the area controlled by the E.E.F. Command (and later by the B.T.E. Command), or being sent abroad to Great Britain and the Empire through British Military Post Offices, was carried free whilst that dealt with by the Egyptian Civil Post Office appears to have been carried free within Egypt but required franking with Egyptian adhesives when addressed to G.B. and the Empire.

The following example is exceptional since it was a free military letter to G.B., dealt with by the Egyptian Civil Post Office :-

- (1) Surface Mail to G.B. through the Egyptian Civil and British Military P.O.s and bearing a British Military Censor Mark. To Messrs. Cox & Co., London, datestamped QUWESNA (civil) 21.XI.18 through CAIRO (civil) on the same day and S.Z.10 (Cairo M.P.O.) on 2nd. (Minett)

Numerous examples of military mail being carried free by the M.P.O.s exist but the following is an example dealt with by the Civil P.O.

- (2) Inland Mail through the Egyptian Civil P.O. Bearing cachets, "Chief Account Officer", "Accounts Office" and "Certified Official/Despatch Office", all of the R.A.F., Depot M.E. (at Abuqir), addressed to the Military Cashier, Barclay's Bank, Alexandria, datestamped ABUQIR (civil) 25.SE.30 (Minett)

Following the Postal Concession of 1932, and in spite of the fact that a number of British M.P.O.s functioned at various times, O.H.M.S. mail within Egypt appears to have continued being carried free by the Civil P.O., (there are many examples) whilst that addressed to G.B. and the Empire seems to have required franking with Egyptian adhesives. However, during the Italo-Abyssinian war when Italy menaced the Mediterranean and the Libyan frontier, British M.P.O.s were opened at Mersa Matruh, Alexandria (re-opened) and Abuqir and some at any rate of the O.H.M.S. mail was dealt with solely by these offices (see example 6 below)

The following examples from 1932 to World War II are recorded :-

- (3) Surface Mail to G.B. through the Egyptian Civil P.O., bearing a British Military Mission Cachet and Egyptian Official adhesive stamps. (The cachet is oval in shape with pointed ends similar to those of Egyptian Official Departments and bears its inscription in both English and Arabic). Addressed to the War Office, London and datestamped QUEBA BRIDGE (civil) 15.FE.33, it bears Egyptian Official adhesives of the 1926 issue at the rate of 15 mills which was the normal (i.e. non-concessional) rate for ordinary civil and Egyptian official surface mail to G.B. (Minett)
- (4) Surface Mail (but see note) to the Empire, through the Egyptian Civil P.O., bearing file reference and Egyptian adhesive. To the Shell Co., of East Africa, Dar-es-Salaam, datestamped ABUQIR (civil) 13.AP.35, with civil transit markings of ALEXANDRIA-ABUQIR (T.P.O.) and ALEXANDRIA of the same date, PORT SAID (machine) 14.AP.35 and arrival stamp of DAR ES SALAAM, 29.AP.35. It is franked with an Egyptian 20 mills blue of the Fuad 3rd. issue. (Note. Although it bears an Air Mail label it would seem to have gone by surface mail in view of its routing and time taken. Was 20 mills the air mail rate to the Empire ?) (Firebrace)

- (5) Surface Mail to G.B., through the British M.P.O.s bearing a Concession Seal, To a London firm, bearing the red Crowned Circle No. 22 and e.d.s. of M.P.O./ALEXANDRIA, 28.JA.36. On the reverse is a 1 PT. red Letter Stamp cancelled by a retta. (There is no endorsement to indicate that it is not just a case of misuse of an official envelope). (Revell).
- (6) Inland Mail through the British M.P.O.s, free. Bearing cachets, of the R.A.F., Mersa Matruh, and "certified official" and the letters "C.F." (Chaplin to the Forces?). Addressed to O.C. R.A.F., M.E., Abuqir, datestamped MERSA-MATRUH (M.P.O.) 17.S.E.36, ALEXANDRIA (M.P.O.), 18.SE.36, 4_P and ABU-QIR (M.P.O.) 18.SE.36. 9.30 P. (Firebrace)
- (7) Air Mail to G.B., through the Egyptian Civil P.O., bearing a H.Q./B.T.E., cachet and Egyptian adhesives. To the War Office, London, datestamped CAIRO (civil) 6.MA.37, franked with ordinary Egyptian adhesives of the 2nd. Fuad issue at the rate of 28 mills. which was at that time the normal rate for Egyptian civil and official air mail to the U.K. and the Empire. (Minett)
- (8) Surface Mail to G.B., through the Egyptian Civil P.O., bearing an Army Post adhesive. Addressed to one S/Ldr. Gordon, a philatelist (?) in Sussex, datestamped ABUQIR (civil) 1.MR.38, and franked with a Fuad 10 mills Army Post stamp. (It may be that this was a case of an official envelope being used, improperly, for private mail.) (Minett)
-) Surface Mail to G.B., through the Egyptian Civil P.O. bearing an Egyptian adhesive. To the Bristol Aeroplane Co., Ltd., Bristol, datestamped ALEXANDRIA (civil) 24.IV.39, franked with a 15 mills investiture stamp. (This again shows normal non-concessional surface mail rate, but unless it is another case of improper usage, it seems odd that O.H.M.S. mail should cost more than the troops' private mail). (Minett).

During World War II, O.H.M.S. mail within the M.E.F. Command appears to have been carried free by the British M.P.O. Services and, when addressed to civilian destinations, by the Egyptian Civil P.O. One example of the former being :-

- (10) To Palestine. Bearing an Army Unit Censor Mark and endorsed "E.S.Hope C.F." (Chaplin to the Forces?) It is datestamped F.P.O./E.605, 18.AU.40 and has the green oval handstamp of the Deputy Chief Field Censor. It also has the transit mark M.P.O./E.601, 20.AU.40 and is addressed to the Command Paymaster, Jerusalem. (Firebrace).

Exceptions, when postage was paid, exist and two examples follow :-

- (11) A local O.H.M.S. cover, addressed to the Manager, Royal Exchange Assurance, 50, Shari Kasr-el-NIL, Cairo, is datestamped CAIRO (civil machine), 9 FEB 1940 and backstamped M.P.O./E.601 (Cairo) of the same date. This bears a 5 mills investiture stamp (the current internal letter rate for civil mail (Gilbert)).
- (12) A local O.H.M.S. cover, addressed to Captain M.M.J. de Termes, 4 Gezira House, Gezira, Cairo, is datestamped M.P.O./E.601, 28.MR.40 and bears a 5 mills investiture stamp, (Gilbert).

Franking was necessary for O.H.M.S. mail to G.B. (and the Empire?) although it was dealt with by the British Military Postal Services. However, the following exception passing through the Civil P.O. is recorded.

- (13) Surface Mail to G.B. This cover from B.T.E. addressed to the beforementioned S/Ldr. Gordon at Uxbridge, is datestamped CAIRO (civil machine) 16.OCT.1939 and is franked with two Fuad 3 mills Army Post stamps. It bears an Egyptian civil censor mark. (Again, this would appear to be "philatelic") (Minett).
Franking generally was by Army Post stamps although Egyptian Air Mail (and probably ordinary) adhesives seem to have been accepted (see example 19 below). The question of rates is somewhat complicated as may be seen from the following examples :-
- (14) Surface mail to G.B., rate 20 mills. (foolscap envelope). From Regimental Pay Office, Helipolis to Army Pay Office, Hounslow. Franked with two 10 mills Army Post stamps cancelled M.P.O./Cairo (17.SE.39) (Firebrace)
- (15) Surface Mail to G.B., rate 10 mills (small envelope) From army unit censor 19 (W.Warren, Lt/Col) to Aylesbury. Franked with a 10 mills Army Post stamp cancelled M.P.O./CAIRO (10.OCT.39) (Firebrace).
- (16) Air (?) Mail to G.B., rate 60 mills (small envelope). From army unit censor 15 (Arthur J.Wilcox) to the Chaplin General, War Office, London. Franked with six 10 mills Army Post stamps datestamped M.P.O./CAIRO (11.OCT.39) (Firebrace)
- (17) Air (?) Mail to ?, rate apparently 250 mills, (part only of a very large envelope). Franked with twenty-five 10 mills Army Post stamps datestamped M.P.O./E.601. Other details lacking. (Firebrace)
- (18) Surface (?) Mail to G.B., rate 20 mills (foolscap envelope). Philatelic ? To Mr. Gordon, Sevenoaks, from army unit censor 15. Franked with two 10 mills Army Post stamps datestamped B.P.O./E.602 (23.NO.39) (Firebrace).
- (19) Air Mail to G.B., rate 70 mills (foolscap envelope). Bearing a file reference and "AIR" (violet) cachet addressed to the Regimental Paymaster, Reading. Franked with two 10 mills Army Post stamps plus a 50 mills Egyptian air mail stamp, all datestamped M.P.O./E.601 (18.MA.40) (Firebrace).
- Information relating to O.H.M.S. mail to the Empire from the Empire Forces is scant, the following example from the Indian Forces is recorded :-
- (20) Cover to the District Soldiers' Board, Bangalore, India with file reference and "Certified Official" in manuscript was carried free and datestamped Indian F.P.O./25 (15.JULY.41). (Probable location in BAQQUSH area) (Firebrace)
- A number of covers passing within the M.E.F. Command and within the Indian Forces framework can be recorded - they were carried free.
- Following the move of the British Forces to the Canal Zone in March 1947 the British Military Postal Services continued to deal with O.H.M.S. mail until the evacuation in 1956. It was carried free and examples are numerous. There is one item of particular interest to record during this period.
- (21) Cover of November 1951. From the Air Ministry Works Area H.Q. at Kasfareet and addressed to the Air Ministry, London, it bears the violet cachet "RAF MAIL SERVICE" and the red London Official Paid machine cancellation. (Minett)

From the foregoing it may be seen that O.H.M.S. mail since 1914 has been dealt with in the following ways :-

- (a) Inland. Free through the British M.P.O.s (Examples are numerous)
- (b) Inland. Free through the Egyptian Civil Post Office, (Example No. 2 is one of a number)
- (c) Inland. Franked with Egyptian Civil adhesives at local rates through the British M.P.O.s (Example No. 12.)
- (d) Inland. Franked with Egyptian Civil adhesives at local rates through the Egyptian Civil and British M.P.O.s, (Example No. 11).
- (e) To G.B. and the Empire. Free through the British M.P.O.s. (Examples to G.B. are numerous. To the Empire see No. 20.)
- (f) To G.B. Free through the Egyptian Civil and British Military P.O.s. (Example No. 1).
- (g) To G.B. Franked with Egyptian Official adhesives at normal civil rates through the Egyptian Civil P.O. (Example No. 3).
- (h) To G.B. and the Empire. Franked with Egyptian Civil adhesives at normal rates through the Egyptian Civil P.O. (Examples Nos. 4, 7 & 9).
- (i) To G.B. Franked with Crowned Circle and N.A.A.F.I. seal (or stamp on reverse or Army Post adhesives at Concession rates through the British M.P.O. (Examples Nos. 5 and 14 to 18 inclusive).
- (j) To G.B. Franked with Army Post adhesives through the Egyptian Civil P.O. (Examples Nos. 8 and 13).
- (k) To G.B. Franked with Army Post and Egyptian Civil adhesives through the British Military P.O.s. (Example No. 19).

Of the above it may be that (f), (g) and (h) will be found to include the Empire and also (j) and (k) with World War II dates. It is probable that examples will be found with the following:-

-) x) As (c) and (d) above but franked with Egyptian Official adhesives.
-) y) As (c), (d) and (g) above but franked with a combination of Egyptian Civil and Official adhesives.
-) z) As (j) above but franked with Crowned Circle (and N.A.A.F.I. seal or stamp on reverse).

The above notes have been compiled from the collections of only a few Circle members. Although much has been recorded for the first time, the study is so far awfully sketchy in parts and it is felt that there are many O.H.M.S. covers known to members of which the Circle has no record. It is requested therefore that all O.H.M.S. covers are forwarded for recording to the Deputy Keeper of the Philatelic Record whose name heads these notes.

Finally, the author wishes to record his grateful thanks to John Firebrace for his critical checking of the early drafts.
