

E G Y P T S T U D Y C I R C L E

T H E Q U A R T E R L Y C I R C U L A R

Volume VIII No. 7

September 1974

Whole Series No. 91

FUTURE MEETINGS

5th October 1974	Discussion on 'The Book'.
7th December 1974	Interpostal Seals Part 2. D.Clarke and B. Conway.

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EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE

THE QUARTERLY CIRCULAR

Volume VIII No. 7

Whole Series No. 91

September 1974

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EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE

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The Chairman's Notes

I have just returned from visiting Peter Smith at Ann Arbor, Michigan. It was a most interesting and educational time. Abdallah Mishrick came up from New York and we really had a philatelic session. Abdallah brought some wonderful material he had lately picked up, complete sheets as usual, and said he intended to photograph all of it and would supply the Circle Record with copies.

Peter has agreed to write up the chapter on Post Offices Abroad, and Abdallah the Proofs and Essays. We can look forward to two brilliant chapters from them, and members are requested to give them all assistance.

In the report of the 3rd August meeting you will have noted that Jean Boulad d'Humieres has completed his article on the Hotel Postmarks. This, with his article on the Posta Europa, will provide us with two more authoritative articles for our chapters. Jean is such a great philatelist and when you add to this his skill at writing we can look forward to other articles of the same high standard.

I was discussing with Charles Minett and Ron Potter the possibility of copying earlier numbers of the Quarterly Circular. From our preliminary talks it seems feasible to provide these in complete volumes. We do, however, need to know how many? So if you require them please advise Ron so that we may go ahead with the idea. The cost will be advised later but you can rest assured we will keep it to a minimum.

In this number you will find a note from Pip Whetter which is self explanatory. I would remind members that we have always had a very close and special relationship with the Philatelic Society of Egypt, and would earnestly recommend joining the Society, if you have not already done so. Members in America please contact Peter Smith (Prof. P.A.S. Smith, 811 Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103).

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The Civil Censorship Study Group

This new society has so far published four interesting bulletins, and has devoted one whole page to Egypt Censor Marks. The scope of this Study Group may be extended to include Military Censorship owing to the near impossibility of placing the two categories in watertight compartments.

The Secretary is Tony Torrance, 10 Mylne Road, Dollar, Clacks., Scotland. The annual subscription £1.

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REPORT of the 153rd Meeting of the Egypt Study Circle, held at 'The George', 2 George Court, Strand, London WC2, on the 3rd August 1974.

Our Chairman presided and the following members were present:-

C.W. Minett, P. Andrews, G.P. Green, P.E. Whetter, D.H. Clarke, A.C. Crew, D. Grover and J. Sears.

Apologies for absence were received from R.A.G. Potter and S. Horesh.

Unfortunately, the principal speaker J. Benxians - and the Secretary were unable to attend due to illness.

Charles Minett had fortunately brought his collection with him, so took over the concluding talk on the Hotels of Lower Egypt and of Simon Arzt at Port Said. The talk he gave was most interesting, especially as it was illustrated with his beautiful hand-drawn maps, and also photographs.

At the end of the talk Charles informed us that our senior member, Jean Boulad d'Humieres (E.S.C. No. 16) had written to him on the subject of the Hotel Postmarks. Jean had just completed his final article, and Charles said he would provide some clearer drawings the better to illustrate it. The Chairman was very pleased to know of this as, when completed, it would go to complement the cancellations chapter of the book. Finally, Charles asked that members check their early and late dates of the Hotel Postmarks, especially of the Simon Arzt cancellations, and inform him of anything interesting.

New acquisitions were shown by members and some very interesting pieces were seen. From the information given it appears that there is still much worthwhile material around and that the discerning and knowledgeable member can pick up bargains.

Members expressed disappointment at the cancellation of Presidents Day. By popular demand it was agreed that, for 1975, the first Saturday in May would be the most suitable day to have it. The Chairman agreed to look after the details and would advise later.

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NOTES FROM THE KEEPER OF THE PHILATELIC RECORDCharles W. Minnett (E.S.C. No. 77)The Italian Consular Office in Alexandria

1) We are grateful to Erich Häffele (ESC No. 116) of Memmingen for sending a photo-copy of a double rate ~~Sally~~ letter from Alexandria to Genoa which he has in his collection.

It is franked with two Italian 60 centesimi stamps of 1863 cancelled by the framed "PIROSCAFI/POSTALI/ITALIANI" cachet (Type I-1, 24 x 12.5 mm.) in black, applied at the Italian Office at the same time as the circular date stamp "ALESSANDRIA d'EGITTO/POSTE ITALIANE" (Type III - 1) dated 28 (?)/GEN/65, also in black, which appears elsewhere on the front. On the back is the arrival cds of GENOVA/4/FEB/65 10-11 in black.

Also on the front is an "O" in a diamond struck in blue and Erich Häffele seeks information as to its significance and where it was applied, we have nothing about this in the Record but illustrate it below.



E.L. Alessandria d' Egitto - Genova.

Ancona, 1864

2) In my own collection there is a single rate ^{entire} ~~early~~ letter from Milan to Alexandria. It bears a 40c (of Italy 1863) cancelled by a cds MILANO/7/GEN (inverted)/64/4.S but since the correct rate was 60c there is a framed FRANCOBOLLO/INSUFFICIENTE. There is no indication, however, that the postage due was collected.

A framed PIROSCAFI/POSTALI/ITALIANI (27.5 x 16.5 mm.) partly ties the stamp and I assume the cachet was struck at the port of Ancona since there is a backstamp ANCONA/8/GEN/64/12M. The backstamp of arrival at the Italian Post Office in Alexandria is dated 17th (Type III - 1), all postal markings are in black.

The route of the Italian Steamship Service, Societa Adriatico-Orientale until sometime in 1864 was Ancona-Corfu-Alexandria.

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(Although understamped the letter is inscribed in Italian 'Urgent Please', it is addressed to 'The Director of Works at the New Theatre under construction in Alexandria in Egypt').

A Mysterious Cancellation of the 1867-1875 Period

Illustrated here is a cancellation about which we sought information, so far without result, in the Quarterly Circular Volume VI page 39 (August 1965). It occurred on a 1 piastre of 1867 which had also a small part of a circular date stamp of a French Consular Office, only the word "(E)GYPTE" being visible. The stamp belonged to the late George Mee (ESC No. 120). See illustration Figure 1.

Sometime later I found in the Record a photograph of a 10 para of 1872 cancelled with this same mark, that it is identical may be seen by minor variations in the spacing of the bars, unfortunately there appears to be no record of ownership. However, this very same 10 para stamp has been illustrated in a recent auction catalogue (Austrophil 100, 22-24 Oct. 1973, lot 2679).



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Whilst the framed rhombus of bars, or grille, (Figure 2) was a normal cancellation of the Italian States (e.g. Papal States, Romagna, Parma) during the 1850's and 1860's in all the examples I have seen illustrated over the years the bars join the frame lines whereas those of the one under scrutiny quite clearly do not.

However, it seems probable that this too is of Italian origin and, if so, doubtless applied at one of the ports of arrival, perhaps Ancona.

The Mysterious Pentagram of World Wars I and II

In the Quarterly Circular Volume VI (August 1963) page 19 we recorded and illustrated a World War I censor mark (Figure 3) consisting of a pentagram which is known struck in grey, black, red, blue and violet on covers with both civilian and military connections. Used in Alexandria, it is now recorded from June 1916 to June 1919.

At the same time we recorded a similar mark struck thrice in black on

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1916-19



Fig. 3

1942



Fig. 4

a World War II cover owned by R. Seymour Blomfield (ESC No. 15). Recently he very kindly sent an xerox copy for the Record and we are intrigued to note that the mark (Figure 4) differs from the earlier one in that the black and white sections are reversed, also it is slightly larger.

This registered air cover from Alexandria to New York (endorsed "Not by Clipper") passed through the Egyptian civil censorship department and has no military connections at all. The date of origin is indecipherable but the New York backstamp is dated 14th September 1942.

Was this star in fact struck in Alexandria or could it possibly be an American mark?

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Philatelic Society of Egypt

Those members of the Study Circle who are also members of the Philatelic Society of Egypt will already know that the President has agreed to recommence the New Issue Service. The service will be run on a non-profit basis and hopefully will provide the most economical way of keeping up to date with new issues. An initial deposit of £5 per subscriber will maintain a cash 'float' in Egypt which can be topped up as required.

When our Chairman was last in Egypt he asked the President M. Mehanny Eid if he could send over a selection of 'varieties' which could be offered to members. The first batch - some £50 worth - arrived about three months ago and was snapped up in a matter of days. My apologies to those who were disappointed. A second batch arrived in July and lists have been sent to all who have expressed an interest. At the time of writing about two-thirds of the stamps have been sold. Will any members who would like a copy of the recent or future lists please let me know - a stamped addressed envelope would be useful too!

It is clear from the response to these two lists that there is a lively demand for good material and adopting a suggestion made at the last Circle meeting I propose to add to the next list members 'wants' and to include particulars of any material members have for disposal. Please help to make these lists of increasing interest by letting me have particulars of your 'wants' and 'offers'. The address is:
1 Burrells, 25 Court Downs Road, Beckenham, Kent.

P. E. Whetter.

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1923 - 1926 FIRST PORTRAIT ISSUERETOUCHES AND FLAWS

by

Ibrahim Chaftar (ESC No. 42)Continued from Volume VIII - page 79

Prof. Peter Smith in an interesting article published in "L'Orient Philatelique" No. 125 of April 1972 wrote on "Double Impressions" on the Second Portrait Issue 1925/34 and subsequent stamps printed by the photogravure process in Egypt.

He noticed these varieties as far back as the late 1950's and he corresponded with other philatelists including Mehanny Eid and Dr. Byam. No one had noticed these varieties before and no good explanation was forthcoming. But in August 1959 he received a letter from Dr. Byam in which was stated referring to the 3 milliemmes photogravure double impression, that "at the Philatelic Congress at Torquay he had the opportunity to ask about these "doubles" at the end of a talk given by the head of the printing works at Harrison's. The explanation of that expert is: they are apt to arise if the roller printing has to be stopped for any reason - e.g. some defect in the machine. The paper may then run backwards for a short distance so that when the machine is restarted a portion of the paper may run through a second time - normally in perfect register but not always so."

Prof. Smith comments: "The explanation is convincing for it explains why the second impression is always very pale - the plate had not been inked a second time. The plates for the type of printing are of course cylinders, which rotate as the paper passes through, only a strip being in contact with the cylinder at any given moment. It is also clear from the above explanation why the second impression is displaced in one direction only: it is the direction of travel of the paper through the press along which very slight slippage can occur during the roll-back when the machine is stopped in the middle of a printing operation."

He gives then the illustration of a 100 milliemmes used together with a normal for comparison. The effect is particularly evident in the arabic inscription at right, in the arabic numerals and in the oval of ornaments surrounding the portrait. Whereas the ornaments are normally hollow and show fine details, on the double impression they are blurred and the hollow spaces are filled up.

He pointed out also that he should make it clear that although the explanation came from Harrison's who printed the First Portrait Issue, he has never seen an example of the effect on that issue, he knew of them only on the Second Portrait Issue and the 'Boy King' Issue. The values he had seen are Second Portrait 15 milliemmes, 20 mills. blue large format,

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50 mills. pale centre, 100 mills. pale centre and 'Boy King' 3 mills..

I take the present opportunity to publish what we know here in Egypt on this subject. Although I understand the reasons given, which are convincing, I must add that these happenings are congenital to the photogravure process itself.

A long time ago I gathered some stamps of the First Portrait Issue giving the appearance of double impressions and I give some enlargements of a few of them. I may add that the doubling on the 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 15 and 20 milliemes is striking, the effect is more visible on the 1, 3, 5 and 15 milliemes. It is to be noticed that the effect of the doubling is visible on a block of four of the 15 milliemes on the lower pair only.

Douglas MacNeille in his display at the 'First Philatelic Exhibition Cairo 1946' showed:

"1923 - 2 milliemes - Mint sheet of 100 without control.
The shading to the left on the base of the figure 2
is so strong that the outline appears duplicated on
stamp 92." **

We noticed then as far back as 1945, the doubling effect, but we had not any idea on any kind of explanation.

On photograph No. 5 the effect on the oval is certainly not due to a double impression. The oval is very thick on its N.E. part and, I believe, is due to a clever retouch. There is evidence of rejoining. Under the photograph I write an explanation trying to explain how that defect happened.

Photograph No. 6 gives reproduction of six 5 milliemes stamps, the left side of each showing evidence of double impression. The left label containing the words in arabic EGYPT POSTAGE has the white area of the arabic letters narrower, and the border of the outer frame doubled strongly.

Photograph No. 7 gives the same variety on the right of two stamps. It will be noticed that this variety of the doubling on the RIGHT is scarcer than when on the LEFT. The two stamps on the left show a curious variety of doubling of the left outer frame which is very scarce, only four stamps have been picked out from 8,000 used I examined. I must add that these four stamps differ from one another.

Photograph No. 8 shows the double impression on the left side of the two stamps, and here I succeeded in finding the same variety on two different stamps. These units show the same defects, so it is evident that their origin is from the same unit of a printing surface. How can a double impression happen on the same place? Here we need more explanation, unfortunately I am unable to advance any.

**Catalogue of "Iere Exposition Philatelique du Caire, 28 Fevrier 1946"
page 26, Participation of Douglas MacNeille, 2 frames

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205-215.



PHOTO No. 5

No.5 On examining the stamp we notice that the coloured oval containing the portrait is considerably thicker beginning under the snake-like ornament and ending at the white space end of the tie. The space between the right lotus stem and the white line at the right has disappeared. The remainder of the oval is thicker than normal.

How has this defect been produced? It cannot be the result of a faulty application of the carbon tissue on the multipositive glass. We know that special attention is taken to provide close contact between the carbon tissue and the thick glass of the multipositive, even a special device is used "vacuum printing down frame", allowing the air to be drawn between them to secure contact.

If we examine the oval under the left 'snake' we can see what looks like a join of the thick part of the oval to the remaining line which is relatively thinner. Also under the white space end of the tie we see the same effect.

Are we looking at a clever retouch? By

hand or by a mechanical device?

A few copies have been found similar to this stamp, but not the same, and the thickness of the oval varies in position all round the oval.

No. 6 The stamp in this illustration shows on the left side of the outer frame a squash causing an enlarging of the white frame surrounding the whole design.

Also the left label containing the arabic inscription (Egypt Postage) seems to have a double impression. (The white space composing the arabic letters being narrower).

These varieties are scarce and represent a kind of double impression.



PHOTO No. 6



PHOTO No. 7



No. 7 The stamp on the right shows the same squash and appearance of doubling of the white space composing the arabic letters ('five milliemes') on the right. This variety is scarcer than the stamps showing similar variety on the left side (see No.6). The stamp on the left shows a fine line doubling the left outer frame line only. How has this line been produced?

It is not the result of damage to the doctor blade. Only four stamps with this variety have been found amongst 8,000 examined.



PHOTO No. 8

No.8 This stamp shows on the left side of the frame a double impression and the arabic text is also double (the white part is narrower than normal). I have two stamps with this variety, and the puzzling thing is that they are both from the same unit of a printing surface, having identical flaws in other parts of the design.

How can a printing surface have a double etching on part of it? Or, if this is a part 'double impression', how can we have the same impression? If we suppose cockling of the paper, as a result of stoppage of the machine, can the 'doubling' occur on the same place of a sheet?

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PHOTO N° 9 :

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No. 9 The 3 milliemes stamp shows the '3' narrower than normal, and there is a colour splash on the white part of it.

The left side of the outer frame is squashed to the left.

Stamps nos. 2 and 3 show the double impression on the two arabic labels, the former towards the left and the latter to the right. Also a doubling effect of the numeral '15'. All these are narrower than usual.

Stamp No. 4 shows a similar effect as Noa. 2 and 3, and in addition it shows a doubling of the oval frame on the left and right side, the blue colour filling part of the white oval itself.



PHOTO No.10

No. 10 A real example of a double impression on all the surface of 5 milliemes stamp, from top to bottom.

The doubling is particularly clear on the upper border, the snake-like ornament, the face and eyes of the portrait, the white collar around the neck.

The two numerals are strongly shaded from top to bottom by the red-brown colour. The colour 'runs out' of the bottom outer frame.

A rare stamp in 8,000 used copies!

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Photograph No. 9 shows a double impression on the 3 milliemmes, it will be noticed that the numeral "3" is narrower than normal. Then we have three stamps of the 15 milliemmes: the numerals and the whole of the arabic inscription on the left and the arabic numerals and the arabic inscriptions on the right of the stamp are narrower. It is to be noticed on one of the stamps the doubling is on the right side and on the other stamp it is on the left side. I suppose that these effects are due to the direction of rotation of the cylinder. The last 15 mils. shows also a doubling of the oval from the right and left side and the blue colour fills the left and right side of the white oval itself. The white space containing the arabic label at left and right of the stamps are narrower than normal, and the effect in blue colour is more visible and striking than the reproduction in the black and white photograph.

Photograph No. 10 gives a real double impression on all the surface of the stamp, 5 milliemmes, from top to bottom. The upper border is doubled also the snake-like ornament. The face and the eyes of the portrait, and the white collar around the neck, are evidently doubled. The two numerals are strongly shaded from top to bottom by the red brown color, and finally the color runs out of the bottom frame.

This is a striking variety, I found another copy less pronounced probably from the same sheet, but a doubling similar to photograph No. 10 must be very rare.

In conclusion I would say that I do not pretend to be an expert in photogravure printing. I have given here simply some examples of what I have gathered over the years, asking my colleagues to help with their opinions, and I repeat it is time - the stamps are still easily available - for a team of researchers to try to find how all the retouches, flaws and double impressions were caused as well as to settle the make up of the First Portrait Booklets Issue.

I am at the disposal of any volunteer willing to co-operate.

Alexandria 1972.

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