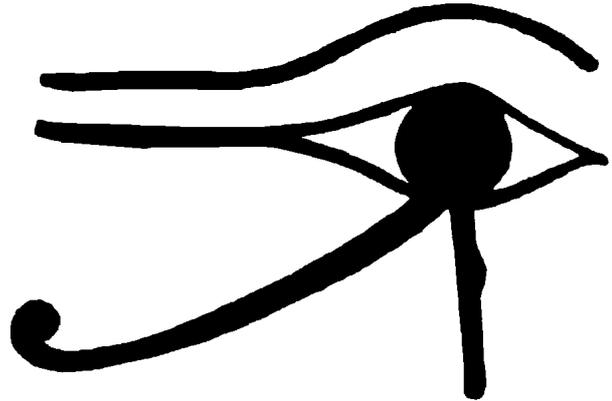


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STUDY CIRCLE

June Quarter 2005

Whole Series No. 213

Volume XIX No. 2

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Cover of the Month: EGYPT. 1878 (March 23rd). Registered cover to a village near Posen (now Poznan, Poland, then in Prussia) bearing 1874-75 2 1/2pi. violet tied by scarce short-lived 'Postes Egyptiennes/ Helouan' datestamp (Feltus #VI-2n) with framed unrecorded usage of Helouan standard type 'Raccomandato' registered handstamp alongside. Reverse with Cairo cds and further transts of Brindisi (March 28th) and Bologna. German Travelling Post Office label "Vom Ausland/uber/B-P 5 (Oderberg-Breslau)" with Jaotschin cds of receipt. Registration rate of 1 piastre + 1 1/2pi Postage-the last week of use of this rate prior to the overseas postage being reduced to 1pi. per 15 grams in April 1878.

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Forthcoming Meetings

| | | |
|--------------|---|-----------------------------|
| July 9 | Discussion: The future of the ESC plus, time permitting, Postage Dues (Part 2) | All members P.R. Bertram |
| September 10 | New Acquisitions & Queries | All members |
| November 12 | 'Meridian postmarks' and Zeppelins | D. Clarke J. Davis |

Cock-up corner. The last *QC* was the first of Volume nineteen. The number nineteen was incorrectly shown on the cover as XIV (fourteen) and not as XIX (nineteen). Please amend your copy if you so wish. I also forgot to start the page numbering at Page 1 but continued on from the previous issue. It was decided, after some deliberation, to start this issue with page 25 to bring the pagination back into line. Pages 293-316 in the last issue should be renumbered Pages 1 to 24 for Volume XIX. - Editor

Meetings are normally held at the Victory Services Club, Seymour Street, Marble Arch, London. Members usually congregate in the ground floor bar from 1pm onwards and meetings commence at 2pm.

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Report of the Annual General Meeting, May 14 2005

PRESENT: John Sears (President), Stanley Horesh (Deputy Chairman), Brian Sedgley (Treasurer, acting Secretary), Dennis Clarke (Committee), Mike Murphy (Committee), Peter Andrews, Mike Bramwell, John Clarke, Cyril Defriez, Mostafa el Dars, Alan Jeyes and Lewis Said.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were received from: Robin Bertram (Chairman), Sami Sadek (Secretary), John Davis (Librarian), Edmund Hall (Editor) and Margaret Chadwick.

The Deputy Chairman opened the meeting in the unavoidable absence of the Chairman, and apologised to members on behalf of the Victory Services Club: there had been a mix-up in bookings, and we had to be accommodated at the last minute in the Committee Room. He welcomed members present.

Minutes of the last meeting (2004): These had been published in the QC of June 2004, and were approved (proposed Stanley Horesh, seconded Brian Sedgley).

Matters arising: Mike Murphy brought up three points: 1. Planning for the ESC 70th Anniversary Display at the Royal Philatelic Society went well and the display was a great success. 2. Members had been requested to advise the Secretary of "ongoing studies and their co-ordinators" so that a list could be circulated: it was not clear at the meeting if this had been done. 3. The projected circular requesting whether or not members were willing to have personal address details and collecting interests published, as required by the Data Protection Act, was still awaited.

Chairman's Report: In the absence of Robin Bertram a printed copy of his report was given to all those present as follows:

I apologise for not being present today but domestic issues (youngest daughter's wedding) must take priority!

I think you will all agree that we have had another successful year with many interesting and diverse topics being studied/displayed at the meetings. I really do appreciate members volunteering their services in leading the meetings. Many tirelessly come forward, but I wish I could see some "new faces" standing in front displaying their material. Our membership stands at around 190, which appears to be a fairly constant figure over the last few years, always hovering just below the 200 mark. I do not intend to individually name them but I must thank all the members of my committee who have worked hard for the Circle in their various roles and supported me as Chairman. Much of their work goes unnoticed and often unappreciated, but without them the ESC would collapse! During the year we appointed a new Agent in Egypt (Dr Ibrahim Shoukry), a new Agent in the United States (Mr Dick Wilson), and at the last AGM elected a new ESC Secretary and Treasurer, and the new incumbents are now well into the swing of things. As usual I thank our President for his continuous advice and guidance, and to my Deputy Chairman for his most constant and gratefully received assistance.

The auctions are doing well and are a source of much-needed income. I give my grateful thanks to those members involved in the various aspects of these auctions. With regard to the QC, we have tried partial colour production with several of the numbers and I think this is a success and appreciated by all members. Cost permitting, I should like us to continue with this, and overall I thank the Editor for the production of the QC. However we must give him our continued support with articles/items for future editions.

In 2004 some members of the ESC, including myself, attended the Antipodean ESC meeting held every two years in New Zealand. I have visited twice and on each occasion enjoyed every minute, especially the hospitality and "the philatelic side". I hope these meetings, in one of our distant outposts, continue in future years and wish them every success.

Because we are an international society many overseas members cannot regularly attend the meetings in London but it is always pleasing to see many of them at the Stampex ESC meetings. I note from

reading the QC and the philatelic magazines that many are entering competitions throughout the world with their collections and winning prestigious awards. I congratulate them on their achievements. At home in England the London meetings have been reasonably well attended by 15 or so members but there is room for improvement here and I wish more of our members living in the UK would attend the meetings.

On a sad note, some of our members passed away during the year and I was especially sorry to lose one of our previous Editors, John Grimmer (ESC 164), who died after a long illness. Their contributions to the ESC will not be forgotten.

I should be honoured to stand again as your Chairman for the next season, but I would ask Committee members to begin considering my replacement, as I will have served some nine years in my current role and it is time for “new blood”.

Robin BERTRAM (ESC 137)

Accounts for 2004: Brian Sedgley reported a profit of £284.54, but noted that this was due only to a transfer of £1,000 from the Auction Fund. Our subscription total of £2,820 just covered the cost of printing and posting the QC, with our other major cost (£617.25) being room hire. With regard to this amount, the Union Jack Club has been approached but proved even more costly. It was decided that further discussion on this subject was best left until the July meeting.

A query was raised as to the value to the accounts of the club’s stamp collection, as this might give a false impression of our Accumulated Surplus, but Alan Jeyes (former Treasurer) explained that the value represented a replacement cost for insurance purposes. Our deposit account of £4,676 would be reduced this year to approximately £3,000, because of the expense of the most successful 70th Anniversary festivities. It was decided after discussion that the Auction accounts should continue to be dealt with separately from the main accounts as, for currency exchange reasons, they included funds held by overseas members towards potential future purchases. The Library account had been received from John Davis.

The accounts were unanimously approved by members, who also voted with acclamation for a special vote of thanks to Stephen Bunce (ESC 272), who again audited the accounts without fee.

Secretary’s report: In the absence of Sami Sadek no report was forthcoming. Members, while understanding his reasons for absence, were gravely disappointed and deplored the lack of information.

Treasurer’s report: Members discussed the pros and cons of a possible increase to subscriptions because the Circle’s accounts are so dependent on monies transferred from the Auction account. Stanley Horesh was not in favour of any increase, and it was decided that the July meeting would provide a more appropriate forum for this and related matters. Brian Sedgley agreed to seek more advertising for the QC.

Editor’s report: In the absence of Edmund Hall, there was no report. Brian Sedgley reported, however, that the next QC was due very shortly; it had been withdrawn from the printer at the last minute for an amendment to the copy.

Auction report: John Sears reported that the last Auction turnover totalled £6,000 and so far there had been no returns of misdescribed material. The accounts will appear in the QC as usual. Auction No 40, the next one, will represent an anniversary of 20 years since the first: the President and Mike Murphy appealed to members to supply top-quality material for this auction in particular, since Auction finances were so important to the Circle. As an experimental gesture the fee for illustrations (£5 per page, and pro rata) will be waived for Auction 40. Colour illustrations will be transferred to the website as soon as it is launched.

At Brian Sedgley’s request, John Sears will look into the possibility of Auction invoices being paid via PayPal, as this method had proved very successful with overseas subscriptions.

MacArthur Award: Since there was no information from the Secretary, this matter was deferred to the July meeting.

Election of Officers: No nominations were received for Deputy Chairman and Stanley Horesh agreed to continue in office.

Proposed meeting in Italy. This suggestion, by Luca Biolato (ESC 417), was discussed at length, and members decided eventually that before any firm decision could be taken further details were required: specifically, dates, duration, air fares etc. The Chairman, it was hoped, would be able to report on these matters on his return from Italy.

Any other business: There was no other business.

Date of the next Annual Meeting: In the Secretary's absence a date approximating to this one in mid-May was suggested. Details will follow.

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the chair by Alan Jeyes.

Meeting of May 14

ATTENDANCE: as above for AGM. A membership application was received from Sandra Albers-Chalhoub of Canada, which was accepted.

Dennis Clarke (ESC 165), standing in at short notice for the speaker of the day, gave a talk in two parts, the first comprising something unique in Study Circle history with a glimpse into the life of the Egyptian public in dealing with the Post Office at least during the years 1939 to 1954, but possible considerably earlier and maybe since Egypt joined the UPU in 1875.

He showed a remarkable series of documents (see next page) forming a category never before displayed, a dozen or so Post Office ID cards, each complete with photograph of the bearer and, as appropriate, tax and postage stamps to defray the fee for the card. The purpose was to identify the holder when collecting postal material notified by the local office; without such a card, the registered letter or whatever had arrived could not be handed over. At that time Egypt had no national ID card as it does now.

Dennis explained that the cards, although bearing the name and details of the Egyptian Post Office, were produced by the Universal Postal Union in Switzerland and printed by Oriel Fuseli in Zurich, presumably for every country that needed such a document, and bore a UPU watermark. His sheets bore witness to a remarkable amount of individual research into these hitherto unrecorded post office documents, and showed how the tax due had been increased over the years from 10 to 30 millièmes. Illustrated is the card issued in Cairo on 11 April 1939 (valid for three years) to Shafika Abd el Malik Mansour, of Mit Bashar.



Dennis also showed a series of other documents, including wartime permits for Egyptians working with the British Forces, and as an aid to further research he would be grateful to hear from any member who might have more of either document to hand in order that a more complete picture of their use might be built up. Please contact the Secretary if you can help.

The second part of his display covered the topic “Officials”, which proved to be a wide-ranging exploration, starting with the Interpostals of 1864-90. He detailed particularly how large and detailed circular handstamps such as that of the Collegio Italiano di Alessandria Egitto (an example from 1872 was shown), used as an indicator of an “official” establishment and hence to defray postage within Egypt, gradually developed into the elliptical “Official ovals” that became a franking authority for every government ministry and department down to the most basic level.

Among the highlights was a remarkable intaglio seal of the Mahallat Abu Aly office with star and crescent (see Peter Smith, p502) perfectly struck on a cover of 1891, and an official envelope returning undeliverable mail to the UK in 1895, struck with an “E” in an upright oval, a marking which has long intrigued the Circle: Dennis imagines it might perhaps indicate “étranger”.

He showed many examples of both periods of use of the “no-value” Official stamp (1893-1907 and 1909-14), which was originally introduced to defray postage only within Egypt but later extended to cover Registration as well, the fiscal surcharges on those stamps, and blocks of four of the various O.H.H.S. issues.

Among the “no-values”, he showed a full sheet of the later issue approved for use with a De La Rue signature in the corner, perhaps indicating that it was a work sheet submitted for approval by the operator of the perforating machine. There was also a remarkable “no-value” cover of 1909 bearing the CDS of two oases, Kharga and Dakhla; and an autograph letter from Maspéro, head of the Antiquities Service, indicating that personal mail, even when “authorised” by an “official” envelope, must be properly franked rather than take advantage of the OHHS stamp system.

On behalf of members, Alan Jeyes proposed a vote of thanks both to Stanley Horesh for standing in in the role of chairman for the AGM and the meeting that followed, and to Dennis for having provided a display of “super stuff” at the very last minute. Members responded by showing their gratitude in the traditional manner.

Change of Secretary

After the May meeting Dr Sami Sadek, our first Egyptian Secretary, notified the Chairman that, because he is taking on more and more work as a surgeon, he has, with great reluctance, been forced to give up his ESC Secretary duties. The Chairman, with great regret, accepted his resignation and wrote to thank him for his period of duty on the ESC Committee and said that when things are more quiet we would welcome his support again in some future role on the Committee.

In the event, Mike Murphy, our previous Secretary, has agreed to “pick up the baton” and act as Secretary again. He can be found at 109 Chadwick Road, London SE15 4PY (telephone 020 7639 0853), and asks us to specify the following email addresses:

egyptstudycircle@hotmail.com – for Study Circle matters in general
 escauction@hotmail.com – for Auction matters only
 maalish@hotmail.com – personal

Members’ Award: Joe Chalhoub’s book *The Nile Post* won the Grand Award with the only Large Gold awarded at the biennial New Zealand National Literature Exhibition 2005. There were 56 entries in the monographs section.

Editorial. That old chestnut has arisen from several of our members in that their article did not appear, in the *QC*, soon after I received it. There is no reason to choose one article over another just the juggling to make up the required number of pages. Sometimes an article may be prepared for one *QC* to be taken out for the next only to shifted again to later one. Large articles get priority and if possible quires and their replies. It’s not until just before finalise the *QC* do I myself know what the selection will be.

Commemorative Egyptian Issues of 1951-1952 Postmarked Gaza

Mustafa Kadry el-Dars (ESC 556)

On May 15, 1948, the Egyptian Army advanced in Palestine. Many towns fell under Egyptian Military Control, which established in them a limited postal service using special Egyptian definitive stamps overprinted PALESTINE in Arabic and English. Some of these towns are GAZA, EL-KHLIL, MAGDAL, ISDUD and FALUGA. Envelopes with stamps cancelled by postmark of these towns are scarce. **Fig 1** shows an example of FALUGA cancellation dated 27 JU 48, and **Figs 2-3** two Gaza covers.

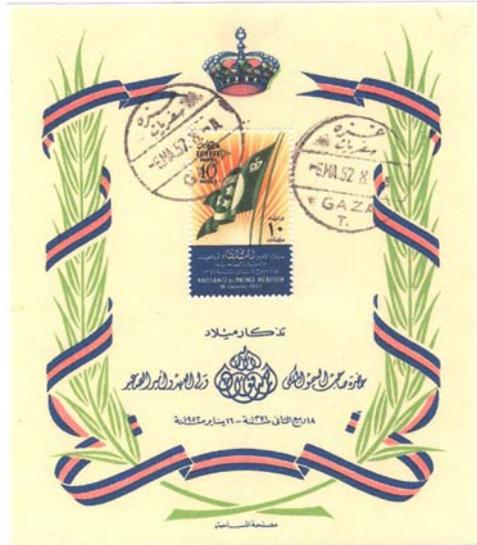
After the second amnesty in February 1949, only the Gaza Strip remained under Egyptian control. To aid communication and integration between Gaza Strip and Egypt, the Egyptian Postal Authorities established permanent post offices in Gaza Strip towns. These offices used to sell only definitive Egyptian stamps overprinted PALESTINE. No commemorative stamps were issued or sold in Gaza until May 4, 1957.

In the *Nile Post Catalogue*, Charles Hass, in his excellent review of “Issues for Palestine - Gaza Strip”, states: “Stamps of the period from 1948 to 1956 are quite frequently encountered with forged postmarks.” I found in my collection the last four Egyptian commemorative issues of the Monarchy period (pre July 1952), postmarked GAZA and some of them dated on the first day of issue. These are shown for any comments from my learned colleagues.

1. FDC and M/S – Royal Wedding of King Farouk and Queen Nariman (Bal 138-139), postmarked GAZA/T. 6 MA 51 – **Fig 4** and **Fig 7**
2. M/S – First Mediterranean Games, Alexandria (Bal 143), postmarked GAZA/T 10 OC 51 **Fig 8**
3. FDC and M/S – Abrogation of Anglo-Egyptian Treaty – (Bal 144-147), postmarked GAZA/T 11 FE 52 – **Fig 3** and **Fig 6**
4. FDC and M/S – Birth of Crown Prince Ahmed Fuad (Bal 148-149) – postmarked GAZA/T 6 MA 52 – **Fig 2** and **Fig 5**



Fig.1



Figs 2-8

The History Of Modern Egypt As Seen Through Its Stamps And Postal History

Part 1 to 1914.

John Davis (ESC 213)

A few years ago John gave a display to the E.S.C. (November 16, 2002) "History of Egypt" - from Napoleon to Revolution. This article is taken from the accompanying notes with some modification. To display all the items shown would fill several QCs so only a selection have been chosen to illustrate the article with those being likely to be less known to our members.

Background:

Egypt, having been taken in 1517 by Selim I of Turkey, became part of the Ottoman Empire from that time onwards and its Turkish influence can be seen in Egypt in the 'fez' more correctly known as the tarbouch, and in the stars and crescent emblem depicted on this postcard. A group of ex-slaves known as Mamelukes were in control of Egypt itself towards the end of the eighteenth century, with the two leaders being Mourad Bey and Ibrahim Bey; they paid but scant allegiance to the Turkish ruling authority then known as the Sublime Porte. The Ottoman Empire was decidedly ailing by the late eighteenth century and ripe for breaking up by opposing powers.

However the British and French, the two most powerful world powers at the time, were diametrically opposed to the Russian empire gaining a port on the Mediterranean coast. Naval power and empire building were at their peak at the time, and the thought of competition from the Russian navy was anathema to both France and Great Britain. In turn Great Britain's major world trading partner was the Indian sub-continent, normally reached by ships rounding the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa.

In France the Revolution had commenced in 1789, the royal family having been beheaded by the infamous Madame Guillotine; the subsequent Republic was controlled towards the end of the century by an outfit calling itself "the Directory", and an army general, one Napoleon Bonaparte, had fallen out with them. He had grown up with a personal interest in the little that was then known of Egypt, ancient or otherwise.

For the main sections of this article I will illustrate it with material which is largely, but not exclusively, to do with the posts.

1798: Napoleon invades Egypt and defeats Murad and Ibrahim Bey at the Battle of the Pyramids. Nelson defeats the French fleet at Aboukir Bay, shown on this little map of the coast and environs of Alexandria, and here is a 1915 postcard of Aboukir. Another shows the bay itself as well as a circular datestamp of Abuqir. Aboukir is near Alexandria and the French fleet was defeated in the so-called Battle of the Nile: there is an engraving of this battle in the corridor outside this very room in the Victory Services Club.

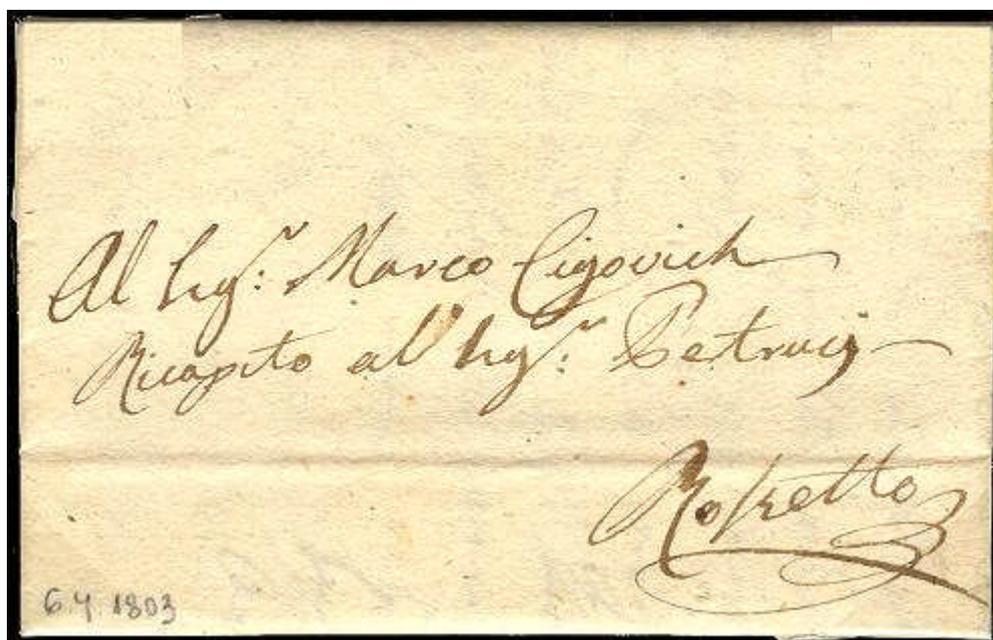
1799: Napoleon leads part of his army into Syria-Palestine and besieges Acre where he once more falls foul of the British Navy. Captain Sir Sidney Smith led the Turkish resistance within the Crusader fort at Acre, and Napoleon, having lost many men through dysentery etc., was forced to return to Egypt. Meanwhile Generals Menou and Kleber continued to hold Egypt where the 'savants' virtually invented the science of Egyptology. The 'savants' were a group of intellectuals, artists, engineers etc. who had accompanied Napoleon's army to Egypt. The Rosetta Stone is found by a Monsieur Boussart, one of the French army engineers about four miles from Rosetta at the western mouth of the Delta. General Kleber is assassinated near what will become the British Hotel, Cairo which eventually becomes Shepherds Hotel when taken over by Samuel Shephard.

1800: Napoleon sets up a postal system for military mail and also mail between the savants.

1801: The British defeat the French army and force them to return to France; the Rosetta Stone is removed to the British Museum and of course Napoleon's postal system is terminated.

1803: Here I am showing a bit of a mystery: we have an internal letter from Alexandria to Rosetta; how was it transported and by whom? There are no postal markings. **Fig.1**

Fig.1



1807: The British led by Lieut. General Sir Ralph Abercrombie are defeated by a Turkish and Mameluke army at Rosetta, and Abercrombie is killed. I took a photograph of the **painting of the battle Fig 2**, from the Military Museum on the ESC trip in 2003. Abercrombie picture was used on the **frontispiece** of the Official Report for the British government of the time. Fig.3. This event leaves Muhammad Ali in charge of Egypt but still

ostensibly under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire. Muhammad Ali, Pasha of Egypt sets up an internal postal system but for official mail only. He also started the dynasty that would eventually end with Ahmed Fuad, the infant son of Farouk.

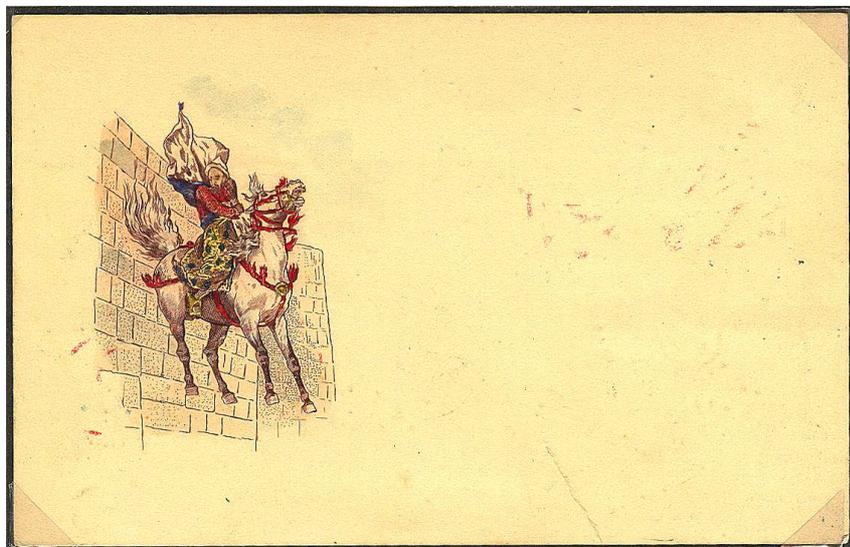


Fig.2



Fig.3

A few years ago I went to an Oxford conference of an organisation called "Travellers in Egypt" and even gave a display of the 19th century postal history of Egypt. Present at the conference were descendents of some of the travellers, and on the final evening at dinner I sat opposite a rather distinguished gent and his Egyptian wife. He was unable to attend the following day and asked me to pass something to an American research student: she was not present the next day either, so I had to send it to her. It was returned to me some time later marked 'gone away' so I still have it. The distinguished Oxford gent was a direct descendent of no less than Muhammad Ali! The lineage is on the back of the sheet.



1811: Muhammad Ali calls the remaining Mamelukes to the Cairo Citadel and assassinate them all.. One perhaps escaping by riding his horse over the battlements as illustrated on the postcard. Fig.4.

1818: Ibrahim Pasha 1818 - 1848, adopted son of Muhammad Ali leads an army that includes a French officer Soliman Pasha el-Faransaway (Suliman Pasha the Frenchman), an ex-Napoleonic officer who trained the Egyptian army in European military tactics, with the ultimate aim of attacking

Constantinople. Ibrahim's victories are recorded near the Military Museum in the Citadel as follows:

| | | | |
|------------|------------------|------------|----------------------|
| 9.9.1818 | al-Diriyia | 22.4.1825 | Messalongii (Greece) |
| 16.6. 1825 | Navarin (Greece) | 23.6.1825 | Tripolitra |
| 27.5.1832 | Akka (Palestine) | 30.6.1832 | Pillau |
| 8.7. 1832 | Homs (Syria) | 24.12.1832 | Konya (Turkey) |
| 24.6.1839 | Nizeer | | |

1835: Lieutenant Thomas Waghorn R.N., having done a deal with Muhammad Ali to allow transmission of mails and passengers across Egypt, commenced his Overland Mail Service from Suez or Cuseir, across the desert to the Nile and up the Mahmoudieh Canal to Alexandria, where it was met firstly by British Naval packet boats and later by those of P.&O. The first eastbound mail left Falmouth on February 8th, 1835. I show a portrait of Waghorn and a Sidebottom type 10 on which the legend reads Care of Mr. Waghorn. Samuel Shephard, by now proprietor of his own hotel at Cairo, catered for the comforts of the passengers across the desert. A statue to Waghorn erected in the street at Suez named after him, was pulled down in 1956 during the war with Britain, France and Israel.

1837: P.&O., whose representative and agent in Egypt was consular official Samuel Briggs, obtained a contract to carry mail across Egypt in competition with Waghorn. I show a letter from Briggs with his company logo and another with the scarce cachet **Forwarded by Briggs & Co. Fig 5.**



1844: Although the Posta Europea had been set up in about 1820 by Carlo Meratti, he died in 1843, and his nephew Tino Chini ran the business and expanded it with offices that followed the expansion of the Egyptian railways. The use of handstamps commenced around 1844.

1848: Though Muhammad Ali had not died, he was ill and very frail and, in January of 1848 he was succeeded by Ibrahim. However Ibrahim died the same year and he in turn was succeeded by Abbas Pasha, son of Tulun.

1854: Abbas was assassinated by two slaves at Benha so Said Pasha, Muhammad Ali's third and favourite son, succeeded as viceroy. It was Said who gave the firman to his friend Ferdinand DeLesseps allowing the building of the Suez Canal. Port Said was named after him of course.

1863: The second son of Ibrahim Pasha whose name was Ismail, succeeded Said in January 1863. It was during his term of office that the Posta Europea was bought by the state and became the Egyptian Postal Administration.



1865: Giacomo Muzzi, the main shareholder of the Posta Europea at that time, became the first Postmaster General of Egypt in 1865. The new Government post thus commenced in 1865 taking over the reigns from the Posta Europea. It was called the **Vice-Regal Post** and postmarks remained in the Italian language, which read Poste Vice Reali Egiziane - I show three such items, two from Alexandria to Cairo addressed to the American Mission there, and a third from Mansura to Cairo. **Fig 6**

1866: The first postage stamps of Egypt were produced in 1866 by Pellas Bros. of Genoa; they were only issued overprinted in Old Turkish.

1867: The following year a second issue was printed at Alexandria by Penasson & Cie. with a couple of colour changes in 1869.

1869: Ismail was viceroy when the Suez Canal was opened by the French Empress Eugénie in 1869. The new town of Ismailia, partway down the canal, was named after Ismail. The **Ghesireh Palace** at Cairo, of which I show a postcard **Fig 7** was built for Eugenie to stay on this occasion; it became the Ghesireh Palace Hotel, now the Ghesireh Marriott. Ismail was also responsible for the building of the Cairo Opera House in Opera Square near the Ezbekiya Gardens, and for which Verdi wrote his opera Aida.



Fig.7

The Suez Canal itself was built by Frenchman Ferdinand De Lesseps of whom a statue was erected at Port Said only to be pulled down during the 1950s. Special stamps were issued for carriage of mail on the canal that ran between Port Said and Suez with the main offices at Ismailia. I show postcards Suez Canal Company's offices at Port Said and Port Tewfiq **Fig 8/9**. The Egyptian Postal Authorities objected to the use of the stamps



Fig.8



Fig.9

1871: Ismail was appointed Khedive, usually translated as viceroy or governor, by the Sublime Porte in Constantinople following some heavy bribery which, along with his other major expenditure, financed at high rates of interest by European banks, would eventually bankrupt Egypt. Apparently he was not satisfied with this title of Khedive, because postmarks started to appear, still in Italian, reading Poste Regie

Egiziane. Bearing in mind that the Egyptian Post Office had many offices throughout the Ottoman Empire, it was not long before the Turkish authorities were alerted to Ismail's implied claim to royalty which appeared over the door of every such post office. The word Regie thus had to be excised from the postmarks to be replaced in due course with the word Khedivie. Fig 10



1872: The third issue of Egypt was introduced that year, more of this in a moment. The Khedivie legend also appeared on circular interpostal seals in use at post offices both in Egypt and abroad, even as far as Constantinople, Gallipoli and Smyrna in Turkey itself. The Penasson company also printed lithograph versions of two values of the Third Issue and I show a photograph of the company personnel as well as two of their essays for the Third Issue. **11,12 & 13**



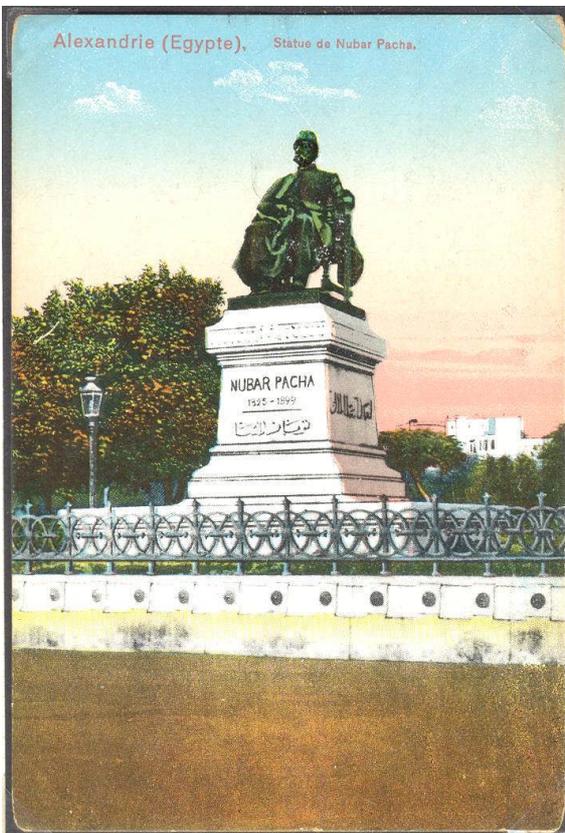
Fig. 11.



Figs. 12 & 13



But the contract passed to the Government Printing Works at Boulac, Cairo. The stamps, particularly the 1874-5 printing, were not well received. The firm of Penasson would continue to print the postage dues however. Here I show just two sheets, the first with a set of proofs in black, and the second with an unused set of the 1884 issue.



1878: Following the Commission of Enquiry into Egypt's finances which took place in January 1878 with both British and French officials involved, Nubar Pasha 1825 - 1899, an Armenian born in Smyrna, was recalled from Europe to head a cabinet within the Egyptian government which, for the first time, included Europeans. In August that year a Khedivial Decree formally delegated responsibility of government to that cabinet. Nubar Pasha was the last, and probably the best, of the Prime Ministers of Egypt during the reign of Ismail, who continued to undermine Nubar, so he resigned on 18th February 1879. He is commemorated on this statue in Alexandria **Fig 14**. Nubar was succeeded as the prime minister by Crown Prince Tewfik when Ismail, who had been attempting to shake off the last vestiges of Turkish suzerainty, was deposed by the Turkish Sultan.

The Commission forced Ismail to forfeit his lands and property to the state in 1878 and he was actually deposed by the Turks on 26th June 1879 and exiled to Naples. Ismail was thus succeeded as Khedive by his son Tewfik who was 'advised' by a resident British consul-general, the first of whom was Sir Evelyn Baring, later Lord Cromer, who quite literally ran Egypt from 1883 until 1907.

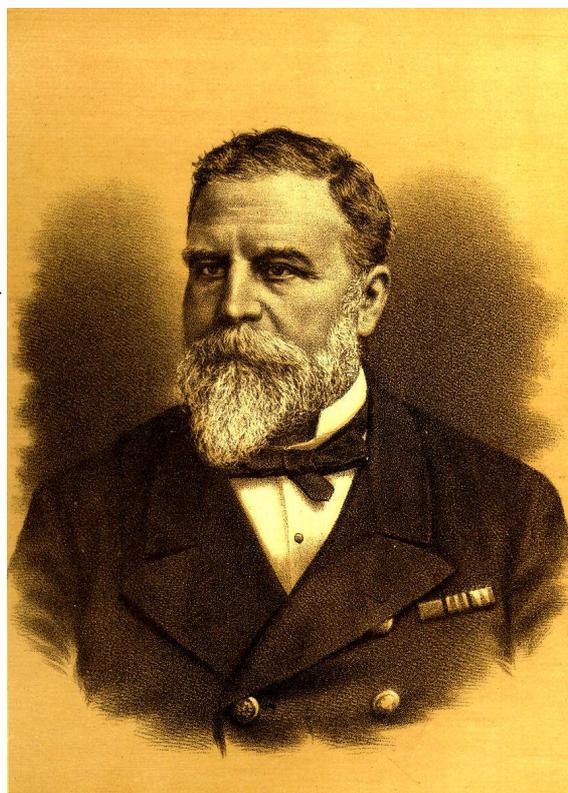
1879: Following much distasteful comment, particularly in the philatelic press, concerning the definitive stamps printed by the Government Printing Works, - compare the twenty paras of 1872 with those of 1874 - the contract for printing Egyptian definitive stamps passed to Thomas De La Rue & Co. of London, until 1921-22 when it passed in turn to Harrison and Sons. In addition to stamps, postal stationery was issued for the first time. They were colour changes of 1881 and 1882, and the issue was caused by the currency change from paras to milliemes in 1884.

1882: The revolt of the Egyptian army against the Khedive, led by Colonel Arabi Pasha, brought the intervention of the British "to ensure the security of the Suez Canal in protection of her own communications and trade interests in India." Here I show a photograph of a painting from the Military Museum located at Cairo Citadel **Fig 15**. There is also a first day cover commemorating the so-called Arabi Revolution issued in 1957, presumably because the Free Officers' group, having been successful with their own revolution, held Arabi to be a forerunner and thus a hero.



Following the bombardment of Alexandria's naval defences by a naval expedition led by Admiral Frederick Seymour pictured on an engraving **Fig 16** on 11th - 14th July, 1882, the British Expeditionary Force landed at Ismailia on the canal, defeated Arabi at the Battle of Tel el-Kebir on 13th September, 1882, and entered Cairo where they captured the Citadel. Tel el-Kebir is the battle depicted on the stamp issued in 1957 for Arabi. The British set up camp at Kasr el-Nil barracks there were of course no postal concessions at that time so the officer paid the full rate of one piastre for his letter home. **Fig 17** ??? One penny ???

To quote Professor Vatikiotis, "By 14th September, 1882 there were 10,000 British troops in Cairo. Between Kafr el-Dawar, Tel el-Kebir, Tanta and the Cairo Citadel, an Egyptian army of nearly 40,000 men had surrendered to the invaders. The Anglo-Egyptian question which was to last until the mid-twentieth century had been born with Arabi's trial based on a judicial 'deal' between his English lawyers and Lord Dufferin, special envoy of HM Government in Egypt (and Ambassador to Istanbul), and the controversy it engendered both in Europe and the East".



The British brought with them a Forces Postal Unit, part of the Twenty Fourth Middlesex Rifle Volunteers. Vatikiotis tells us: "Tewfik Pasha had succeeded his father Ismail as Khedive when Egypt was bankrupt. He came to govern an insolvent country, under foreign financial control, with a mutinous army, and a restless collection of notables clamouring for a greater share in power. Khedive Tewfik soon found himself the captive and enemy of a rebellion led by the army. He just as quickly found himself back in power with the aid of a foreign conquering power - Britain - a dubious accolade at best. From 1883 until his death in 1892, his throne was propped up by British influence and force".

1883: Concurrently Mohammed Ahmed, a religious leader later known as the Mahdi, began a so-called Holy War in Sudan. He destroyed an Egyptian army led by **Major General Hicks** once more pictured on an engraving **Fig 19** near el-Obeid in 1883. Osman Digna's revolt along the Red Sea Coast near the port of Suakin caused further British campaigns in 1884 and 1885 when General Gordon was murdered at Khartoum. British troops built the Berber-Suakin railway line and remained in Sudan alongside the Egyptian army until 1895. Stamps, both Third Issue and De La Rues, are found cancelled at Suakin and Wadi Halfa, as well as unused Interpostals for Berber, Suakin, Dongola, and Wadi Halfa, as well as Massawa in what is now Ethiopia. There are also British stamps cancelled in Egypt by the Post Office contingent and letters to and from the expedition.

Meanwhile in Egypt proper the British government would have withdrawn but the Mahdi's activities in the south, and the parlous state of Egypt's finances, forced garrisons known as the Force in Egypt to remain in Cairo and Alexandria.



1892: Khedive Tewfik, who had accepted British hegemony in Egypt and reigned at their command and by their consent, was thought of by the leaders of the movement against Britain as an English agent. He was succeeded by Abbas Hilmi from 7th January of that year, 1892. Abbas Hilmi and Lord Cromer neither liked nor trusted one another. Here is a postcard of Abbas Hilmi Fig.20.

Vatikiotis tells us: "Young and infinitely ambitious, Abbas Hilmi (or Abbas II), soon appeared to favour co-operation with the anti-British elements of the smouldering Egyptian political movement. He was impatient with a system of government whose major feature consisted of an understanding between the Khedive and his ministers on the one hand, and the British Consul-General on the other. He disliked a situation under which he had to govern not only with the advice of Lord Cromer but also with his approval"



"The accession to the Khedivial throne of the eighteen year old Vienna educated Abbas Hilmi, son of Tewfik, who was cocky, arrogant and autocratic . . . led to hysterical clashes between him and the Old Man of the Agency" (i.e. the Earl of Cromer).

Nevertheless Abbas Hilmi reigned as Khedive until 19th December 1914

when, as he wished to side with Turkey and Germany during World War I, he was replaced by Sultan Hussein Kamil

Hotels Revisited

Anton Jansen (ESC 383)

In my paper published in the *QC* of March 2003 (Vol. XVIII, No.5) I forwarded some hypotheses regarding the datestamps used in the Mena House and Ghesireh Palace Hotels. In a rejoinder to my paper, Mike Murphy, the Hotels study co-ordinator, rejected most of what I maintained. Here I intend to bring further “evidence” for my assertions, well aware that in philately “scientific knowledge” is a rare phenomenon.

Mena House: a neat succession of postmarks

Leaving aside the question of whether there ever has been a post office in the hotel, and if so for how long, my major point was that the postmarks PYRAMIDS and MENA HOUSE have succeeded each other and not overlapped as Murphy suggested. Consequently I asserted that there haven't been two post offices operating at the same time as stated by Benians in his Addendum (*QC* 204, p.110). Benians' statement, followed by Murphy, is exclusively based on a note in the same Addendum that “Prof. P.A.S.Smith has cancellations of both offices of the same date (7.III.92).” I have asked Peter Smith to confirm this and his reply was quite conclusive: there is no proof for both datestamps having been used on the same day:

“Regarding Pyramids/Mena House, I still cannot remember ever having told Benians that I had them with the same date. Perhaps I may have written ‘If I had....’, and the ‘if’ was ignored, or more likely, I was quoting a date that had been reported to me (therefore prone to error, because of a misread date). I have not been able to find any more examples of ‘Pyramids’ in my collection, and I do not recall having had more.” (personal e-mail communication 27.10.03 aj)

From the study conducted in close co-operation with Alain Stragier from Brussels, and based largely on the latter's extensive collection, I can present the following overview of the datestamps used at the Pyramids post office (which may have been temporarily located in the Mena House hotel). From these data it is quite clear that the different datestamps have been used consecutively, and also that there has been a period in between, 1895-1898 in which apparently there was no post office in or near the hotel. From late 1898 a post office ‘Pyramids’ was operating outside the hotel grounds, but still serving the hotel's guests and staff as well as tourists passing by. It continued to do so after 1913-14, the final year covered by our study. According to the Postal Guides this office was open the whole year round. See Table 1.

Ghesireh Palace Hotel: a contested postmark

In Table 2 I present the results of our study for the Ghesireh Palace Hotel. In my earlier paper I contested that there would have been before 1914 a post office GHESIREH outside the hotel, first of all because the Postal Guides of 1911 and 1914 do not mention such office, but continue to list the Ghesireh Palace Hotel as the seat of one. Why this should be, for Murphy “remains a matter for speculation”, but why not accept information from the Postal Guides as students of Egyptian postal history generally do?

As further evidence I referred to the continued use of the ‘Ghezireh Palace Hotel’ registration mark. In our listing there are five covers with this postmark after the 1901-02 winter season, thus for the period in which these registration marks were accompanied by a GHEZIREH or GIZIRA postmark. With one exception, the cover of Dennis Clarke dated 25 I 08 which bears HG1. But, in our listing of 36 covers (and we could have included more) from December 1902 this is the only cover bearing this postmark! Isn't it remarkable that while the period 1893-1902 shows in average some 3 to 4 covers with the HG1 postmark, this disappears completely after 1902, just popping up once in 1908? Why it did, pop up I mean, remains a mystery, of course, but it certainly cannot be used as “proof” in the way Murphy does when explaining the possible coincidence on three out of four covers (not five, Ott's cover is from 1901!) of the Hotel registration mark with the alleged postmark of a separate Ghesireh post office. Why wouldn't we have any other covers from the hotel bearing the HG1 postmark for this period?

According to Boulad (*Egyptian Topics* Nov/Dec 1972) “(the hotel), in 1914, was temporarily closed for remodelling and the special post office was also closed”. Also Benians (*QC* IX, 7/8, p.87) states: “The special post office was closed at the time when the hotel itself closed”. According to personal information

of Vahe Varjabedian, at the beginning of World War I the hotel was turned into the general hospital for the Australian troops and the interior severely damaged. It was sold by the Nungevich Group in 1918 to Prince Michel Lutfallah and turned into a private residence. So, all possible sources besides the Postal Guide are stating that the Ghesireh Palace hotel post office closed with the hotel itself in 1914. The new post office GIZIRA must have been opened some time after 1914. I have a postmark GIZIRA CASH dated 8-XII 17 on a loose stamp (Fig. 1) and a registered item from 1920 bearing a postmark GIZIRA (CAIRO) and a registration mark GIZIRA (CAIRO) (Fig. 3), both showing postmarks differing from the ones used in the pre-1914 period. So I remain with my conclusion: covers from before 1914 bearing GHEZIREH or GIZIRA postmarks must be considered as emanating from the Ghezireh Palace Hotel post office, and thus deserve to be included in the Study Circle list of Hotel markings and dates (see *QC* 194, September 2000, pp 153-170).



I wish to thank Peter Smith, Denis Clarke and Ibrahim Shoukry for their co-operation. I am looking forward to reactions from other members which might substantiate or undermine my assertions.

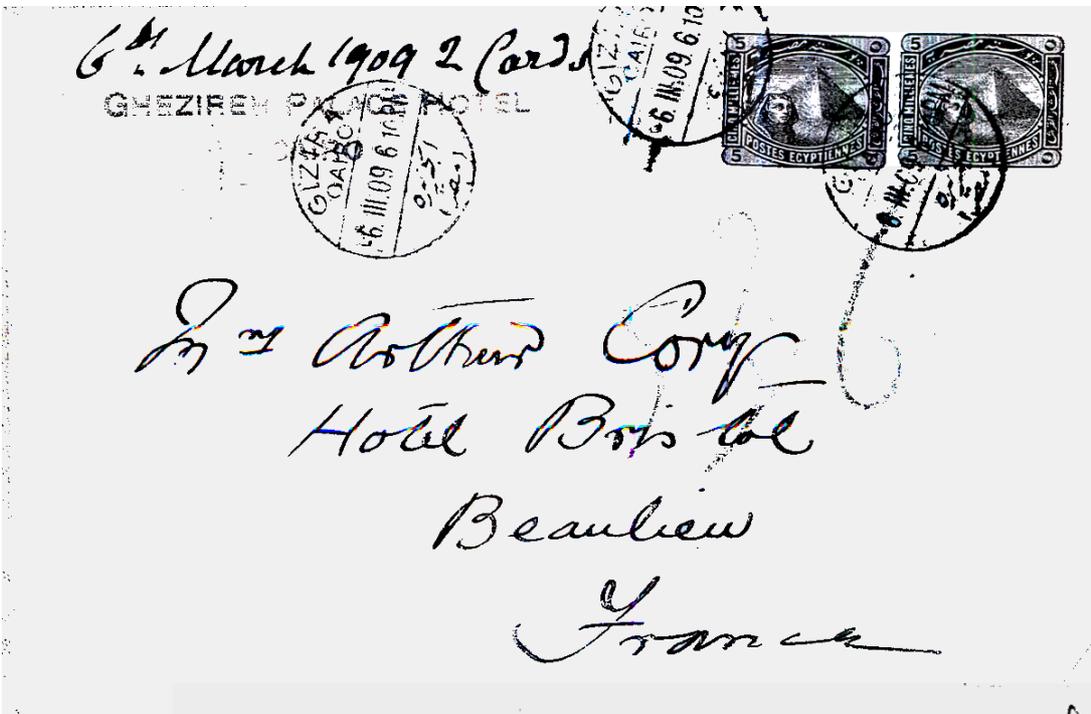


Fig.2

Fig.3

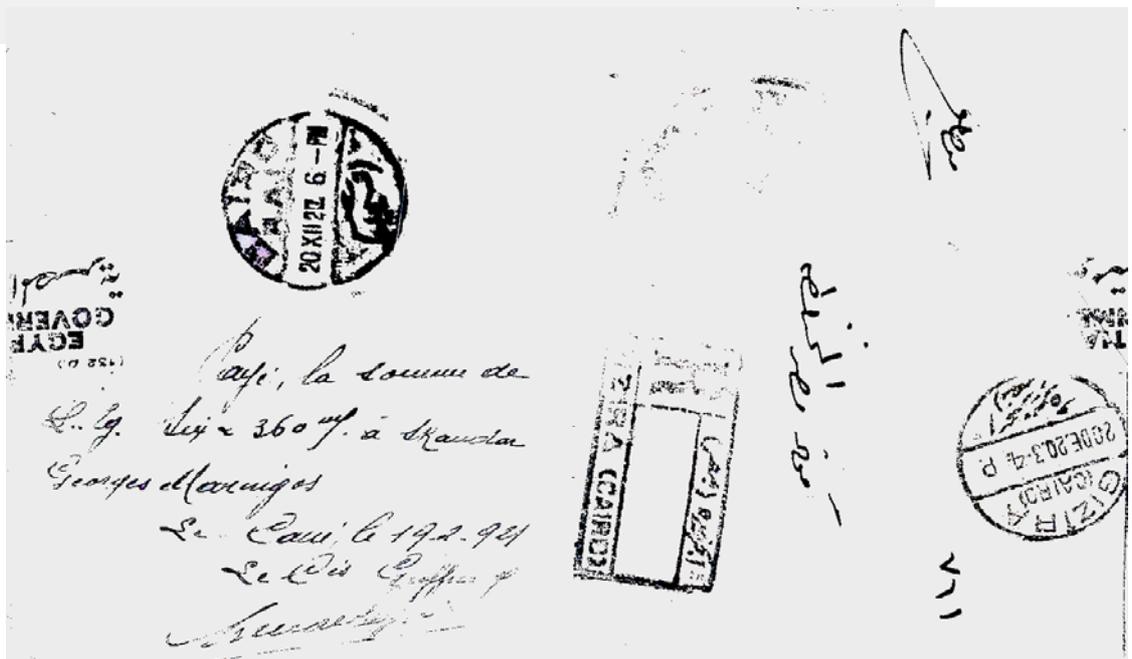


Table 1: Mail sent from PYRAMIDS/MENA HOUSE, Cairo

| Postmark type | Date | | Description | Source |
|--|------------------|-----------|---|----------|
| Private stamp* | 15 DEC 90 | | cover | Kar 3962 |
| | 20 DEC 90 | | | LDA |
| | 28 FEB 91 | | postcard* | LDA |
| “PYRAMIDS” | 21 XII 91 | | letter card | LDA |
| | 22 I 92 TI | R 97 | cover* | LDA |
| | 5 II 92 TI | | cover | LDA |
| | 19 II 92 TI | | ppc “Mena House Pyramids” | LDA |
| | 28 II 92 TI | | wrapper | LDA |
| “PYRAMIDS MENA HOUSE” | 7 III 92 I | no T ! | postcard | AJ |
| | 16 III 92 I | no T ! | postcard | LDA |
| | 20 III 92 I | no T ! | postcard | Kar 3964 |
| | 28 III 92 I | no T ! | piece | LDA |
| | 8 II 93 T I | | ppc “Souvenir M. H. Hotel” | LDA |
| | 16 II 93 T I | | postcard | LDA |
| | 1 V 93 T I | | cover (late date in season!?) | Kar 3963 |
| | 19 XII 93 T I | | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 31 XII 93 T II | T II ↓ | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 27 II 94 T I | | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 1 III 94 T I | R 191 | cover | LDA |
| | 17 III 94 T I | | newspaper fragment | LDA |
| | 21 III 94 T I | | letter card | LDA |
| | 26 III 94 T I*** | | newspaper fragment | LDA |
| | 27 IV 94 T I | | wrapper | Kar 3966 |
| various CAIRO or CAIRE date stamps | 20 II 95 | | cover ; on back private mark “Mena House Hotel Schock & Weckel, Proprietors” | LDA |
| | 4 II 96 | R 2179 | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 9 I 97 | | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 8 IV 97 | | cover with private mark! | LDA |
| | 28 II 98 | | cover with private mark!** | LDA |
| | 3 IV 98 | backstamp | letter addressed to manager MH | LDA |
| | 5 XI 98 | | hotel stationery (also enclosure) | LDA |
| “PYRAMIDS CAIRO” | 27 XII 98 T I | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 10 I 99 T I | backstamp | letter addressed to hotel | LDA |
| | 28 I 99 T I | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 27 II 00 II | no T | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 3 I 01 T I | | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 18 I 01 T I | | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 8 IV 01 T I | | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 1 II 02 T I | | picture postcard of hotel | LDA |
| | 1 II 02 T III | | ppc; second postmark T II !? | LDA |
| | 19 III 02 T III | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 19 XI 03 III | no T | picture postcard addressed to Ghesireh Palace, backstamp GHESIREH 20 XI 03 T I (!!) | LDA |
| | 13 II 05 II | no T | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 22 III 05 T I | | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 30 XI 06 ? | backstamp | cover addressed to hotel! | LDA |
| | 1 XII 06 ? | backstamp | cover addressed to hotel! | LDA |
| | 23 I 07 ? | backstamp | picture postcard addressed to MH | LDA |

| | | | | |
|------------|-----------------|-----------|--|-----|
| | 17 III 07 T I | | picture postcard written in MH | LDA |
| | 29 IV 07 T III | | postcard | LDA |
| | 7 XII 07 T III | R 48 | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 13 III 08 T I | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 11 XI 08 T I | R 24 | cover; sender's address MH! | LDA |
| | 23 I 09 T II | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 6 II 09 T II | | picture postcard | AJ |
| "AHRAM" | 8 II 10 1.35 PM | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 15 III 10 6. PM | | postcard | LDA |
| | 17 III 10 7.PM | | cover; sender's address MH! | LDA |
| | 3 IV 10 5. PM | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 23 XI 10 | backstamp | picture postcard | LDA |
| "PYRAMIDS" | 1 JA 11 6-7PM | | cover | LDA |
| | 9 JA 11 3-4PM | backstamp | picture postcard addressed to confectioner of the hotel! | AJ |
| | 3 MR 11 | | ppc; sender's address MH! | LDA |
| | 9 MR 11 6-7PM | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 4 DE 11 6-7 PM | | ppc; sender's address MH! | LDA |
| | 1 AP 12 | | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 25 FE 13 | | picture postcard | LDA |

LDA = Stragier collection AJ = Jansen collection; Kar = Karamitsos auction 158 (March 2003)

* covers with this 'private mark' bear a CAIRO cancellation; for illustration see *QC* 204, March 2003, p. 108

** for illustration see *ibid* p. 109

*** fragment ex-Revell, who wrote this up as having "no T" (see 'latest date' for HM1a in list, *QC* 194, page 164), but it definitely has a T I! So the 'no T' seems to occur only in Spring 1892.

Table 2: *Mail sent from GHESIREH PALACE HOTEL POST OFFICE, Cairo*

| Postmark type | Date | | Description | Source |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| HG 1 | 21 XII 93 T ? | | cover | Kar 3969 |
| | 26 XII 93 T1 | | | LDA |
| | 1 I 94 T1 | | cover | Kar 3970 |
| | 1 I 94 T1 | backstamp | | LDA |
| | 12 I 94 T1 | | postcard | Kar 3971 |
| | 11 I 94 T1 | | cover | Kar 3972 |
| | 17 II 94 T1 | | | LDA |
| | 12 XII 94 T1 | | | LDA |
| | 19 XII 94 T2 | backstamp | postcard from Bavaria | AJ |
| | 24 XII 94 T2 | | | LDA |
| | 28 XII 94 T.3 | CTO? | | Clarke |
| | 5 I 95 T2 | | | LDA |
| | 14 I 95 (no T?) | | | LDA |
| | 21 I 95 T.3 | | | LDA |
| | 29 I 95 T.3 | | hotel postcard | AJ |
| | 8 II 95 T ? | | cover | Kar 3973 |
| | 12 IV 95 T2 | | hotel stationery | AJ |
| | 23 XI 95 T2 | | postcard; private mark ¹ | Clarke |
| | 11 XII 95 T1 | | | LDA |
| | 3 I 96 T2 | | | LDA |
| | 10 I 96 T.3 | | hotel stationery | Clarke |
| | 5 II 96 T.3 | | | LDA |

| | | | | |
|------------|------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|----------|
| | 17 III 96 T.3 | | | LDA |
| | 12 XII 96 T.3 | | cover | Kar 3974 |
| | 24 XII 96 T.3 | T3 ↓ | | LDA |
| | 15 II 97 T2 | R 233 | | LDA |
| | 31 III 97 T1 | | hotel stationery | Kar 3976 |
| | 1 XII 97 T.3 | | postcard | Kar 3975 |
| | 22 XII 97 T1 | | | LDA |
| | 22 XII 97 T2 | | cover | AJ |
| | 7 I 98 T2 | | | LDA |
| | 22 XII 98 T2 | | | LDA |
| | 23 XII 98 T2 | | hotel stationery | Kar 3977 |
| | 23 XII 98 T2 | | hotel stationery | Kar 3978 |
| | 23 XII 98 T2 | | | LDA |
| | 28 XII 98 T2 | | | LDA |
| | 16 I 99 T.3 | R 146 | | LDA |
| | 26 I 99 T.3 | | | LDA |
| | 3 III 99 T2 | T2 ↓ | | LDA |
| | 13 I 00 T.3 | | picture postcard | Kar 3979 |
| | 226 II 00 T2 | R 214 | cover | LDA |
| | 10 IV 00 T.3 | backstamp | | LDA |
| | 13 IV 00 T.3 | | | LDA |
| | 17 XII 00 T.3 | | | Kar 3981 |
| | 18 III 01 T2 | | | LDA |
| | 20 III 01 T2 | | | Kar 3984 |
| | 10 II 02 T II | backstamp | postcard from Italy | Clarke |
| | 26 II 02 T.3 | backstamp | | LDA |
| | ? III 02 T2 | | | LDA |
| | 11 III 02 T II | backstamp | | LDA |
| | 6 IV 02 T II | | | LDA |
| “GHEZIREH” | 23 XII 02 T? | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 11 I 03 ? | backstamp | cover addressed to hotel! | LDA |
| | ? I 03 T I | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 3 FE 03 (no T) | No T | picture postcard | AJ |
| | 12 FE 03 (no T) | No T | picture postcard | AJ |
| | 5 III 03 (no T?) | | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 9 V 03 (no T?) | R 337 | Reg cover “Ghesireh Palace”!*** | LDA |
| | 20 XI 03 T I | backstamp | ppc addressed to hotel! | LDA |
| | 16 FE 04 T I | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 27 III 04 T ? | | ppc addressed to hotel! | LDA |
| | 24 XI 04 (no T) | | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 24 XII 04 T I | | picture postcard | AJ |
| | 21 FE 05 TV | R 36(5?) | Reg wrapper “Ghesireh Palace” | Shoukry |
| | 26 FE 05 T5 | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 17 III 05 (no T) | | postcard | LDA |
| | 18 III 05 TV | | cover | LDA |
| | 28 III 05 TIV | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 17 FE 06 TI | backstamp | ppc addressed to hotel | LDA |
| | 19 III 06 T1 | R 456 | Reg cover “Ghesireh Palace”! | Kar 3968 |
| | 9 IX 07 | | picture postcard | Kar 3085 |
| HG 1!! | 25 I 08 T4 | R 152 | Reg cover “Ghesireh Palace” | Clarke |
| “GHEZIREH” | 19 I 09 TI | T I ↓ | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 19 I 09 T3 | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 14 AV 09 TI | | picture postcard | LDA |
| “GIZIRA” | 6.III.09 6.10PM | | hotel stationery | AJ |
| | 25 III 09 | R 606 | Reg cover “Ghesireh Palace”! | Clarke |

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|-----|
| | 10.30AM | | | |
| | 26 IV 09 2.15 PM/5.- PM | backstamp | cover addressed to hotel* | LDA |
| | 7 VII 09 6PM | | ppc (SUMMER date!) | LDA |
| | 22 XII 09 | | ppc of hotel with hotel label! | LDA |
| | 11 II 10 9- PM | | hotel stationery | AJ |
| | 17 II 10 10 PM | | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 25 II 10 6.10PM | | hotel stationery | AJ |
| | 9 XII 10 6 PM | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 23 XII 10 6 PM | | picture postcard | LDA |
| | 3 I 11 8 AM | | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 15 X 11 8.-AM | | picture postcard | AJ |
| | 27 XI 13 10 AM | | hotel stationery | LDA |
| | 5 XII 13 | | ? | LDA |

* Received at 2.15 PM and forwarded – within 3 hours – at 5 PM. Unlikely that another office could have been used!

** for illustration see *QC* 204, March 2003, p. 109

¹ ‘Private mark’ GHESIREH PALACE HOTEL LE CAIRE COMPTABILITÉ 22 DECE 05. Fig.2.

Top of the world in Aerophilately

Very many congratulations to Lucien Toutounji of Cairo (ESC 264) for his outstanding award – a Gold medal with Special Prize – for his five-frame entry Egypt: Early Airmail 1870-1936 at the European Postage Stamp Exhibition held at Brno, Czech Republic, between May 9-15. Lucien’s 92 points was the top mark awarded in the Aerophilately class.

Another Gold went to our newest member, Greg Todd (ESC 585), who showed five frames of his Egypt: 1866 The First Issue for the first time and was delighted to get an excellent 91 points in the Traditional Philately class.

In the same class, Hisham Bassyouny (ESC 391), President of the Philatelic Society of Egypt, won Vermeil for his British Forces in Egypt 1932-1936; while in the Postal History Class Karim Darwaza (ESC 504) won Large Vermeil for his entry on the Ottoman Post of Syria; and Ibrahim Shoukry (ESC 423), our Agent in Egypt, was awarded Silver for his Travelling Post Offices.

Among the single-frame entries there were Vermeil medals for Sherif Samra (ESC 311) for the 1879 Provisional Issue 5 & 10 paras and Abd El Maguid Mahmoud (ESC 545) on the Public Custodian; while Sherif Hesni (ESC 550) won Silver for his Egyptian Perfins.

And just to give a glimpse into the range of our members’ collecting interests, Richard Wheatley (ESC 168) was also a Vermeil winner in the Traditional class with Netherlands East Indies: The 19th Century Stamp Issues.

Congratulations to all the above, and apologies if anyone’s award has been missed, but we really do depend on members telling the Circle about their successes. Don’t be shy – send an e-mail to egyptstudycircle@hotmail.org.

Mazar "Registration cachet" in North Sinai

Mike Murphy (ESC 240)

It is absolutely clear that at the various times Israel has controlled Sinai in the past half-century or so, someone, somewhere, has always had an eye to the philatelic opportunity. One has only to consider the plethora of "Last day" and "First day" covers emanating from the opening and closing of Israeli and Egyptian post offices spread throughout the peninsula to realise that. Sometimes these fabrications have proved eminently useful, in providing examples of handstamps long lost and scarcely known. Sometimes, well, one wonders

I was recently able to obtain two covers, one of which is illustrated here (**Fig 2**, over page). Both are philatelic: unaddressed, adorned with Israeli stamps of the 1950-54 Third Jewish Coins issue (SG41 and 44, 5 and 20pr on one; SG41 and 46, 5 and 35pr - the latter the only one without a tab - on the other).

What is interesting, however, is the cancellation, struck in blue-black over all four stamps (**Fig 1**, below), which bears much of the appearance and many of the hallmarks of an Egyptian Post Office Registration cachet: the characteristic rectangular shape (36x21mm), with tall R in a panel at left, the Arabic and English versions of the town name in the upper and lower horizontal panels.

The town name, Mazar (Sinai) - not to be confused with Bani (or Beni) Mazar in Minya province - is not one that readily springs to mind. It is described in the 1898 *Dictionnaire Géographique* as a "station" without recognised population, in the governorate of El Arish and on the pharaonic "Horus road" between Kantara and Arish. Probably its best claim to fame came in 1916, after the battle of Romani. On September 16 the station and its wells were the scene of a raid by British airmen on Turkish supply depots and camel lines, and next day the British took Mazar and the Turks retreated to Arish.

Jenny Jobbins and Mary Megalli, in their magisterial *The Egyptian Mediterranean*, traverse the old road from Kantara to Arish, and offer a single line: "105.0kms (ie, from Kantara, and so 32km outside Arish): The village of Maza, set in luxuriant palm groves." Yet despite its insignificance, Mazar did have a postal history: the 1928 Postal Guide lists it as a Class 8 post office (a railway station served by Travelling Post), on the railway between Kantara and Rafa, open only to "ordinary correspondence".

It is possible that 28 years later, when Israel took over, it had advanced to service registered material, and hence needed a Registration cachet. But the cachet on these covers seems far from "right" - its central horizontal segment, where usually a postal official would have handwritten the file number of the registered item, has been used to proclaim a printed date - 4-11-56, presumably the date the invading troops felt needed to be recognised. My attempt to "clean up" the handstamp and free it from the 35pr stamp has not been entirely successful. But at least it gives a good idea of a handstamp which I suspect very strongly.

I wonder if any other member has any philatelic souvenir of Mazar, Sinai; and does any other member know of another Registration cachet in which the central segment bears a printed date? I should be fascinated to hear a positive answer to either question.

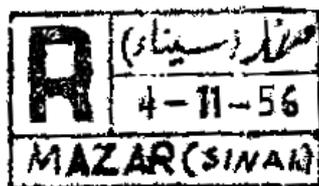


Fig.1



Fig.2

Q212/1 Moti Kremener (ESC 291)

I have a cover from Alexandria to the Chief Rabbi in Jerusalem dated 7 Feb 1922. It bears no stamps and there is no marking of payment either regular or taxed. There are no traces of a stamp having been placed in the top right corner. Perhaps someone might have an explanation way it was not charged?



THE NEW ZEALAND CHAPTER OF THE ESC INVITATION

Over the last 10 years it has given us great pleasure to welcome members of the ESC to the biennial conference of the New Zealand Chapter. The 7th Biennial Conference in February 2004 was a vintage year, with 26 members and guests and their spouses occupying four houses at Matarangi Beach. The Eighth Biennial Conference will take place at the same venue, from 19 to 26 February 2006, and it will help us in our planning if we can have an indication as soon as possible of the numbers expecting to come. Previous attendees have will reported on the ambience, which combines serious philatelic study with sightseeing in a very scenic area of New Zealand's North Island and the informality of a summer holiday at the seaside. If any members are able to plan a visit to the Antipodes this is the time to do it. We always hope that as well as members from the UK, those from Europe, Australia and the US – why not Egypt? – will be able to join us. **Tony Chisholm (ESC 288)**

Questions and firm or tentative bookings should be addressed to Tony Chisholm ESC 288, 13 Arden Way, Wilton, Wellington 6005, New Zealand; Email j_t_chis@clear.net.nz. Enquiries by phone 64-4-4729866 or fax 64-4-4729865 are welcome between the hours of 7 am and 11 pm New Zealand time.

The Editor adds: Once again the New Zealand chapter is preparing its next meeting, and, as you can note on page 27, a meeting in Italy has also been proposed. As

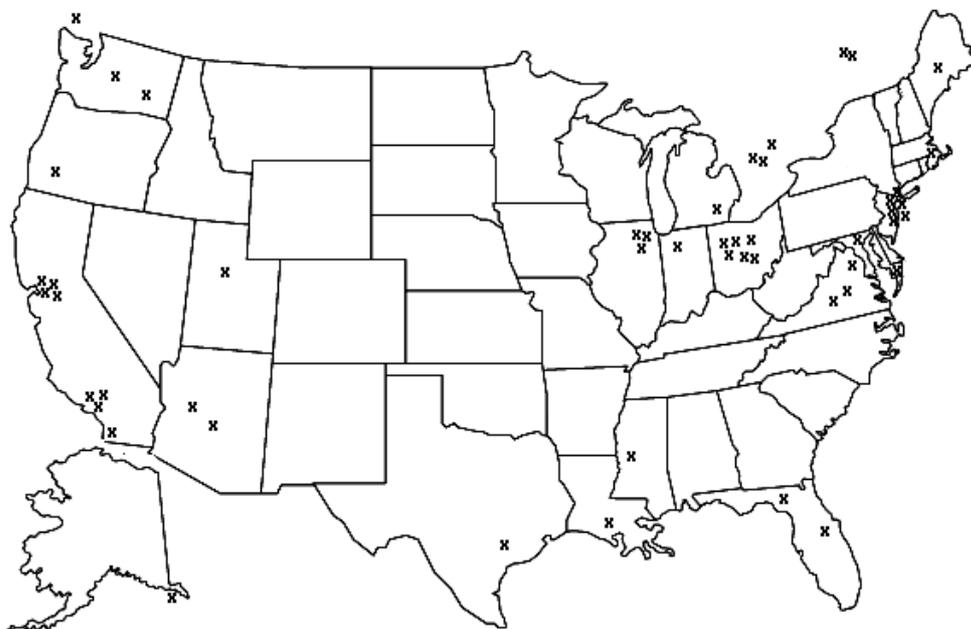


our members are spread over the world, in no fewer than 21 different countries, there might be the possibility of other ESC gatherings in far-flung places. The obvious first tactic would be to see if there are any clusters that would make a day or weekend meeting feasible. Initially, my idea was to plot members on a world map, but it soon became obvious that this would not be very legible on a single page, so only two selected areas are shown. Apologies to any member who does not figure, but six of the countries have only a single member: those missing are two in Cyprus, three in the Middle East outside Egypt, one in Costa Rica and three in Australia. Also not shown are those in Egypt – five in Alexandria and the other 30 in and around Cairo, where another ESC trip has been mooted. The five in New Zealand are of course already catered for. The positions on the maps may not be too exact, and many apologies to members in Canada who have been left floating above the United States. In

some places not all members have been given individual crosses, as adding more would have left only a black blob on the scale used! This applies particularly to the New York area and of course to the UK, but for this exercise the UK is assumed not to be part of the equation.

If New Zealand can put on a biennial show with only five members, then so might any cluster of five members. Of course this does depend on scale, but some areas do suggest themselves... the East Coast of America for one, the middle of Ohio or San Francisco as others. How about an ESC meeting in Washington in 2006, May 27 to June 3? In Europe, Osnabrück is very central, and with cheap flights from the UK to Munster at only £27 a weekend visit might draw more than a few members.

What about it?



The Story Behind the Stamp: Balian 881, March 22, 1979,

The Arabs, their Achievements.



This somewhat uninspiring stamp nevertheless alludes to one of the most interesting periods in the development of mathematics and the sciences that underpin our modern societies – that golden time between 750 and 1400 C.E. This stamp with minor changes was also issued by several other Arab countries, beginning with Iraq on March 10, 1979, and ranging to the U.A.E. on March 22, 1980. It consists of a sunburst illuminating the world and a Koran, and at the bottom of the stamp are simple line drawings depicting some of the sciences which were greatly advanced by the Arabs: Astronomy, Agriculture, Algebra, Geometry, Alchemy (Chemistry) and the Arab numerals we use today that transformed the world of calculations. They also made other

advances, notably in medical science, and possibly the outline of the head is meant to be that of Ibn Sina, whose enormous medical encyclopaedia, the *Al-Qanun fil-Tibb* (The Canon), remained the supreme authority, not simply in Islam but also in Christendom, for some six centuries.

One may question the term Arab and use Islamic instead but this itself would not be strictly true either, as this period comprised many scholars from diverse racial and religious backgrounds – Persian, Syrian, Arab, Jew, Christian, Greek, Afghan, Turk, Uzbek ... they all were involved in creative work.. What these scholars had in common, besides their interest in science, was the use of the Arabic language and most of the work was carried out under the patronage of Arab rulers so the use of the term Arab Science is quite fitting.

The Arab empire grew rapidly from 650 C.E. and was soon to stretch from Spain to the border of China including Egypt, Syria, Persia and parts of India. The early development of Arabic science was determined by the necessities of building the Islamic state and guided by the Koran, which says that true believers “*reason about the origin of the heavens and the earth*” (*Koran* 3:190-191). The Umayyads, the first dynasty of caliphs, made Damascus their capital in 661. Al-Mansur, second caliph of the Abbasids, the second caliph dynasty, moved the capital to Baghdad after 762, and his successors made it the most dynamic city of the time.

To begin with, the languages of the educated elite of the Middle East were Pahlavi (the language of the Persian empire now governed by Arabs) and Syriac (the language adopted by the Christian church). Works from the conquered world were gathered and translated into Arabic. Translating this wealth of philosophical and scientific literature into Syriac and then into Arabic required some 150 years before Arabic science was ready to build on the inherited knowledge and make its own original contributions. This phase began with the decision of caliph al-Ma'mun, who reigned from 813 to 833, to establish a House of Wisdom (*Bayt al-hikma*), the largest such institution in the Mediterranean region since the Museum in Alexandria, and bring together a team of scientists to verify Ptolemy's data of the *Almagest*. This produced the first astronomical tables made in an Arabic empire that surpassed all existing tables in accuracy.

The project was without doubt helped by another of the great achievements of Arabic science, the combination of Greek geometry with Indian arithmetic. Greek maths had by then become sterile and was in an impasse. Interestingly, books on the history of maths, up to about twenty years ago, give little credit to Arab science other than to say it preserved Greek thinking. This is a gross disservice to the great Arab thinkers and the Hindu maths itself maybe influenced by the Chinese thinking that gave the world zero and far more important ideas than came from the Greeks.

In 830 the great work of the mathematician al-Khwarizmi, whose name lives on in the word algorithm, was produced. His work *Kitab al-jabr wa l-muqabala* (literally “The Book of Reduction and Comparison”), from which our word algebra derives, was a systematic treatise of geometric problems in algebraic notation and of solutions to quadratic equations. For the next 500 years Arab science was to flourish and change the world.

Can anyone give an explanation of why so many countries issued this stamp at more or less the same time?