

The
Quarterly Circular
of
**THE
EGYPT**



STUDY CIRCLE

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**Carmichael
& Todd**
PHILATELISTS
PTS
GREGORY C.G. TODD

EGYPT.

In Peter Smith's "Egypt Stamps & Postal History", illustrated on page 759, is an Official "Service Des Rebuts" envelope with the printing code number at the top "No.125 B". I illustrate here another example with printed code number at top reading "No.125 I". This envelope however is for Insufficiently Stamped Sample Mail (Echantillon Insuffisamment Affranchi), returned to the care of Thomas Cook in Alexandria. Struck with large oval "E" in blue ink, framed "Bureau Des Rebuts" dated cachet in red, with Postage Due 4m. maroon (SG D72) tied by Alexandria cds (26.II.1892)



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2012 Meetings List

April 21	Philatex 12.45pm	Ten sheets	All members
July 7	Services Club	Post-monarchy bring and show	All members
September 29	Stampex	Instructional marks bring and show	All members
November 3	Services Club	Third Issue	Keith Pogson

For meetings at the Victory Services Club, Seymour Street, Marble Arch, London, members usually congregate in the ground-floor bar from 1pm and the meeting starts at 2pm.

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Website: egyptstudycircle.org.uk

Report of the Meeting, January 7 2012

PRESENT: John Sears (President), Stanley Horesh (Deputy Chairman), Mike Murphy (Secretary), Edmund Hall (Editor/webmaster), Brian Sedgley (Treasurer), John Davis (Librarian), Sami Sadek (Committee), Jon Aitchison, Mike Bramwell, Angela Child, John Clarke, Cyril Defriez, Peter Grech, Paul Green, Lewis Said, David Worrollo.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were received from: Peter Andrews (Chairman), Margaret Chadwick, Mostafa El-Dars, Pauline Gittoes, Alan Jeyes,

In the absence of the Chairman in Saudi Arabia, the Deputy Chairman welcomed members and wished all, present or not, a Happy a Peaceful New Year, and preferably a more prosperous one than 2011. He welcomed the day's speaker, Edmund Hall (ESC 239), and said he looked forward to a fascinating and fruitful afternoon.

He then announced the Circle's gratitude to Jack Graham (ESC 541), of Oregon, who has most kindly offered his collection to us to be sold in aid of Circle funds. The first 30 or so covers have arrived – the rest slowly, as Jack can gradually bear to part with them – based on the Pyramids and Mena House Hotel postmarks. Those who view the forthcoming Live Auction will see some of the material; more will appear in our auctions later in the year. The Circle is immensely grateful to Jack for this most generous gesture.

The Secretary mentioned that we shall also shortly be receiving the collection of our great late friend Peter Goodwin (ESC 297), which he asked to be sold via the Circle auction on behalf of his grandchildren. After being broken into suitable-size lots, it will appear in later auctions.

He reinforced the fact that three of our meetings this year would be “bring and show”, in an effort to extend the attendances, and urged members to bring suitable material, bolstering the interest in the TPOs meetings already carried out. For serious study, however, a full meeting is clearly not suitable for widespread TPO study, and a small committee will meet shortly to attempt to break the back of the update. Their efforts will be reported in the *QC* but for convenience will be published in full on the website.

He handed over to the Librarian a reprint of the 60-page handbook of *Egyptian Postal Markings of 1865-1879*, a gift from the author, Peter Feltus (ESC 114), and expressed the Circle's gratitude. Here is another study (latest edition 1982) which is crucial to our researches – but badly in need of a thorough update.

The Secretary mentioned a note from one of our members who is keen to extend his collecting in the following areas, and would welcome hearing about any material a member might have for sale: Government mail sent from a government department or person, pre-adhesive up to the 1922 OHEMS overprint; Egypt cancels of any sort showing the star and crescent; philatelic material or documents related to the Egypt-Sudan slave trade or (19th century) public health and sanitary measures, including disinfection. Please contact the Secretary in the first instance if you are considering parting with such material.

Two new members were elected, from France and the United States, and three more applications will be dealt with at the February 25 Annual General Meeting.

The Treasurer reported that subscriptions for 2012 – due on January 1 – were rolling in, but again appealed to those who can do so to pay by standing order – Barclays Bank, Wood Green Group (sort code 20-98-21, account number 60334731) – which is painless, trouble-free, and helps both the member and the Circle!

The Editor/webmaster suggested that the March *QC* might be delayed because of his pressure of work, but the meeting rallied round, and there were enough volunteers to ensure that it should be issued on time.

It was then on to the meeting proper, with Edmund Hall doing his level best to unravel the intricacies of the military and political situation of an area fought over almost continuously, with an astonishing display of stamps, postal stationery and postal history reflecting virtually constant changes of rule since Sinai became considered part of Egypt “proper” in 1906.

Since Egypt overprinted and then produced special issues for “Palestine”, meaning the Gaza Strip, an area which started life only after the 1949 war then also becomes part of the mix, and the passing parade of

authorities include Egypt, Israel and now the Palestinian Authority, all of whom reflected their interest in stamps, postmarks and special issues.

The display of over 160 sheets started with Egyptian Sinai in the 19th. century and up to 1914, later covering 1917-1956 and concluding with Egyptian Sinai from 1979 to the present. Gaza, starting with the 19th century Turkish post offices Gaza and Khan Yunis, the British Mandate, Egyptian Occupation 1948 and 1957, Israeli occupation 1956 and 1967 and finally the postage of the Palestinian Authority 1995. The military aspect covered WWI (see p110 for Turkish and German forces) & WWII, the Arab-Israeli wars 1948/1956/1967/1973, as well as the peacekeeping forces of UNEF I, UNEF II and the MFO, which included troops – and postal evidence - from over twenty countries.



Left, a cover from Um Bogma 1924, a mining site in the Sinai.



Right, a cover 1935, redirected to Abu Zenima, the port used by Um Bogma.



Left, a cover from the first period of Israeli occupied Gaza, written in Arabic to a PoW in Israel.

A postmark from Taba in 2003. Edmund, however, posed a question about the postal code used.



He reads this as 26009

(1), which is not a Sinai post code, which should start with 45 or 46. The cover does display a South Sinai post code 47579 (2). His query: was the number actually 47009, using the alternate number 4 (3).

٢٦٠٠٩

1.

٤٦٥٦٩

2.

٤٦

3.

At the end of a panoramic run-through an area that turned out to be much more than just rock and sand, Jon Aitchison (ESC 661) thanked Edmund profusely, reflecting on the multiple changes in Sinai since he first visited Naama Bay (Sharm el-Sheikh) more than 25 years ago. The display, he said, covered an enormous area both geographically and philatelically, and the amount of material displayed did full credit to the stamps and postal history of a region whose final story has yet to be told. Members showed their appreciation in time-honoured fashion.

HELOUÂN - Addendum.

Pierre Louis Grech (ESC 266)

Further to the article on Helouân-les-Bains, published in *QC* No. 239 (December Quarter 2011), the author received more information from Peter Heim (ESC 384) and Scott Van Horn (ESC 619) concerning regular postmark dates and variants, as well as some very interesting copies of rare covers with Helouân boxed Registration marks from Vahe Varjabedian (ESC 390). Many thanks for their contribution, which, together with the appearance of a HILWAN – CASH postmark, warranted these few additional pages to complement the original article.

New Helouân Postmarks & Correction

 <p><u>HLWN-9/1</u> HILWAN, Ø 26mm, date ≠ 8mm. No accent on A, month in Arabic numerals, year in 3 digits. Seen: ? . 9. 921. 12.00 - 12. 9. 923.</p>	 <p><u>HLWN-10/1</u> HILWAN LES BAINS, Ø 28mm, date ≠ 8mm. Month in Roman numerals. Seen: 13. XII. 24 500 - 28. VIII. 40. 1130AM. <i>It is obvious that HLWN-10, -10/1 and -11 were used simultaneously during their time in service.</i></p>
<p>CORRECTION: in the original HELOUÂN article, HLWN-11 should have stated “year in 3 digits”.</p>  <p><u>HLWN-11</u> HILWAN LES BAINS, Ø 28mm, date ≠ 8mm. Month in Arabic numerals, year in 3 digits. Seen: 24.12.924 5... - 20.11.935 3PM</p>	 <p><u>HLWN-12/1</u> <u>HLWN-12</u></p> <p><u>HLWN-12/1</u> ? . ? . 38 7- - 25 JA 40 4-5 P HELWAN LES BAINS, Ø 27-28mm, date ≠ 11mm. HELWAN letters 2mm high, versus 3mm in <u>HLWN-12</u> and LES BAINS letters are neater and smaller than in <u>HLWN-12</u>. Also smaller diameter CDS.</p>

Helouân Interpostal Seals

Listing numbers were accidentally omitted from the section on Helouân Interpostal Seals, *QC* 239, page 85. They should be respectively : **HLWN-IP1** (Type VIIA), **HLWN-IP2** (Type IX). Subsequent Types (X & XI), being anonymous and for general use, are not given a Helouân classification.

Scott Van Horn (ESC 619) reports a Kehr Type X Interpostal Seal (similar to Type IX, but with a blank centre for individual datestamps), with a **HLWN-TPO1** (CAIRE-HELOUAN) postmark dated 19. I. 91 T1.

Helouân Postmarks: New Extreme Dates



HLWN-2 3 (?) MR 82. TI - 9 (?) MA 92. TI HELOUAN Ø 25mm, date ≠ 5mm	HLWN-3 19 VII 93. T I - 16 II 03 HELOUAN Ø 30mm, date ≠ 4mm – Type IX.
HLWN-4 30 III 00. T 2 - 30 XI 03. T4 HELOUAN Ø 26mm, date ≠ 4mm	HLWN-5 20 VII 06. TV - 27 VIII 06. TIII HILWÂN Ø 26mm. date ≠ 4mm
HLWN-8 ? IV 09. 7.30 PM - 23 IV 10. 9.30 AM HILWÂN Ø 26mm, date ≠ 8mm	HLWN-9 12. III. 13. 11 ³⁰ AM - 24. XII 19 HILWÂN Ø 25mm, date ≠ 8mm (This latest date from Scott Van Horn, ESC 619)
HLWN-10 11 FE 30 4. - 28 FE 35 HILWAN LES BAINS, Ø 27mm, date ≠ 8mm	HLWN-12 6 DE 41 - 7 NO 46 2-3 HELWAN LES BAINS, Ø 29mm, date ≠ 11mm

For Postmark types refer to the HELOUÂN article in QC 239, page 80.

Omission: The original article failed to specify that the study relates to pre-1950 markings.

New HILWÂN CASH Postmark

This very scarce postmark appears on the document illustrated below, received from Vahe Varjabedian, who also provided details of another important new postmark, classified here as **HLWN-9/2**.

HLWN-CA1 HILWÂN CASH Ø 25mm, date ≠ 8mm Seen: 19. XII 18. 9 00A.M.		HLWN-9/2 NEW CDS HILWAN, Ø 29mm, date ≠ 8mm. No accent on A, month in Arabic numerals, year in 3 digits. Seen: 31. 5. 924. 7 55 AM. Reported to be known from : 31. 5. 924 to 24. 7. 926.	
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(P.O. No. 1 H / بوسطة نمرة)

POST OFFICE.—ADMINISTRATION DES POSTES.— مصلحة البوستة 2997

No. 10 نمرة Série No. — مجموعة نمرة

Receipt for Foreign Postal Money Order.—Récépissé de mandat de poste international.— إيصال عن حوالة خارجية.

For the sum of } *pro 30* } equal to } *157*
De la somme de } *30* } égal à... } *157*
بمبلغ وقدره } *30* } عبارة عن } *157*

Remitter } *J. Zamarian* } مرسله من جناب
Expédié par } *J. Zamarian* }
Payee } *Jeanne Vigneau* } تدفع الى جناب
Payable à } *Jeanne Vigneau* }
At } *Bordeaux* } البلد المرسل اليها
Country } *France* }
Pays } *France* }

أدفع (1) } Notice of payment. } الوكيل
Avec (1) } Avis de paiement. } *[Signature]*
Commission. } Mill. } الرسوم المحصلة }
Taxe perçue. } *15* }
Pratmaster. *[Signature]*

N.B.—This receipt should be kept by the remitter. The money order must be sent to the payee by the Post Office.
Ce récépissé doit être gardé par l'expéditeur. Le mandat est expédié au destinataire par les soins de l'Administration des Postes.

(1) } "With" or "Without" } « مع » أو « بدون » } يجب حفظ هذا الايصال بطرف المرسل منه — الحوالة ترسل للمرسل اليه بواسطة مصلحة البوستة
"Avec" ou "Sans." }

19 December 1918 – Egyptian Post Office receipt for the sender of an International Money Order of 30 Francs, from Helouân to Bordeaux, France, with HILWAN / CASH datestamp, type **HLWN-CA1**.

Helouân Registration Cachets

From the early days, when the Helouan Post Office was opened, there were instructional postal markings to designate registered mail. At first the simple anonymous RACCOMANDATO cachet, in an oblong box, with the registration number written near by; then towards the end of the 19th century, a rectangular box cachet with the name of the post office and space for the registration number within it. The wording of these cachets followed the evolution from HELOUAN, to HILWAN, to HILWAN Les BAINS. All are very scarce.

<p><u>HLWN-R1</u> RACCOMANDATO Size: 32 mm x 5.5 mm Seen: 23 MAR 78</p>		<p>A legacy from the Posta Europea, the word RACCOMANDATO in Italian is masculine, and was initially used for “un plico Racc^omandato” (a registered despatch/ parcel). However “letter” in Italian is feminine, hence “una lettera Racc^amandata”. The earlier cachet was modified to have a final letter A or E. (Plural RACCOMANDATE).</p>
<p><u>HLWN-R2</u></p>  <p>HELOUAN Seen : 30.I. 01 TI</p>	<p><u>HLWN-R3</u></p>  <p>HILWAN Seen: 12. III. 13. 11.30A</p>	<p><u>HLWN-R4</u></p>  <p>HILWAN LES BAINS Seen: 28. VIII. 40. 11.30AM</p>



12 March 1913 – Registered letter from Hilwân (CDS **HLWN-9**) 11.30 AM, to Cairo. Faggâla arrival 6.00 PM same day. Boxed HILWAN registration cachet **HLWN-R3**. Franked 8 mills: 3 mills internal letter rate + 5 mills registration fee.

Opened but Uncensored: An unreported Egyptian censorship label of WWII.

Marc Parren and Konrad Morenweiser (non-members)

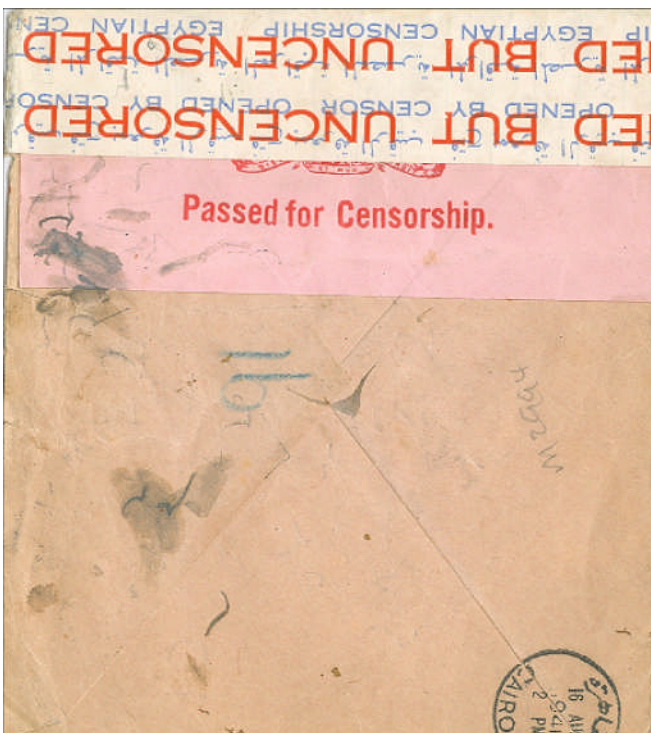
A most interesting cover was offered on eBay toward the end of the year 2010, which at first raised more questions than answers. The cover showed the well known blue/white Egyptian resealing label, but this time with a red overprint OPENED BUT UNCENSORED; offered at an asking price of \$245, it remained unsold. This type of re-sealing label had never before been reported (Little 2000), so most collectors probably believed it concerned a forgery in which the red overprint had been added at a later date. After it remained unsold, we had some correspondence on this item and MP decided to acquire it as it still appeared to be genuine. Accordingly, the seller was contacted, he had been surprised that it had not sold on the internet, so the item was acquired.



Let us now have a closer look at this cover, which was franked with an Indian 3a6p stamp for Malta, and cancelled Kurseong 17 MAY 1941 (left). Kurseong forms the southern terminus for the steam-powered trains of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway. The cover was written by a Maltese Jesuit, Scicluna, residing at St Mary's College, founded in 1889, which concerns a theological college providing seminarians with training for the priesthood. It is not surprising to find a Maltese here, as Maltese Jesuits were trained in Italy too when the war broke out (Galea 2002).

The cover passed Indian censorship where the Indian red on pink resealing label "OPENED BUT UNCENSORED. / (Lion and Unicorn coat of arms) / Passed for Censorship" was applied since the letter was written in Maltese, as was also noted on the front of the cover. The Indian label should be either type 9A13 (below left) which is known from Calcutta, or 9D (below right) which censor station is still unknown (Morenweiser 2007). So this cover passed through censorship in

India uncensored because there was no censor with knowledge of its language. Next the letter was forwarded to Malta via Egypt, where it arrived three months later in August of that year as the backstamp Cairo 16 AUG 1941 proves. Here the same problem arose, since after opening the cover once more, none of the censors could read the Maltese language. Accordingly the so far



OPENED BUT UNCENSORED.



Passed for Censorship.

9A13

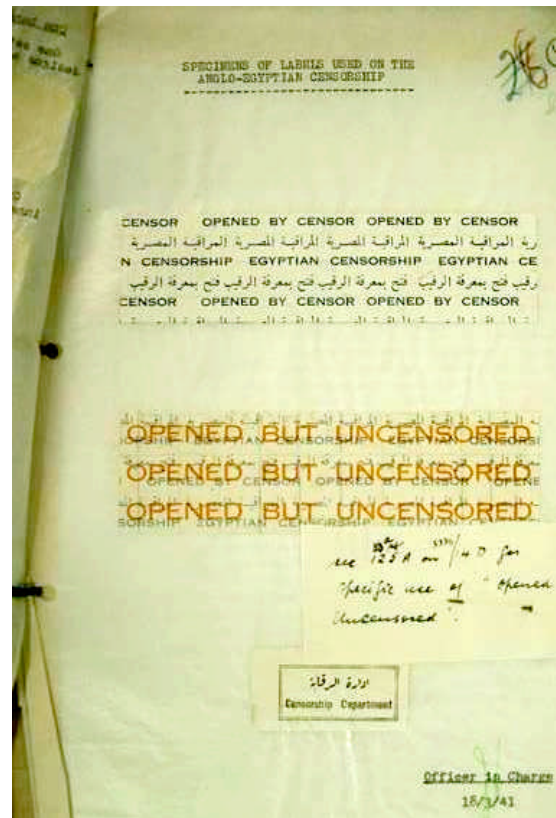
unreported blue / white Egyptian resealing label with red overprint OPENED BUT UNCENSORED was applied. Censorship was left to the Maltese censors, but obviously it was no longer opened at Malta. So the application of these labels might have to do with the usage of an unusual language which could not be read in India nor in Egypt.

While checking pages from file DEFE 1/227 of the National Archives, which KM got from John Daynes some years back, he found an official record of this mysterious Egyptian resealing label. Specimens of both the normal blue/white Egyptian resealing label and the overprinted blue/white Egyptian resealing label with red overprint OPENED BUT UNCENSORED were presented and signed by the Officer in Charge on 18 March 1941 (right).

This confirms the official introduction of this resealing label around that date and since it had never been reported in the 70 years which passed by in the meantime, it can be considered to be a great rarity, most likely thanks to the rarity of unusual languages that passed the censorship office.

References.

- Galea, Anthony T. (2002). *Maltese Jesuits interned in Italy WWII*. Melita 15(8): 239-245.
 Little, D.J. (2000). *British Empire Civil Censorship Devices, World War II: Colonies and Occupied Territories - Africa, Section 1*. UK: Civil Censorship Study Group.
 Morenweiser, Konrad (2007). *British Empire Civil Censorship Devices World War II: Colonies and Occupied Territories - British Asia, Section 4*. Fifth and revised edition. UK: Civil Censorship Study Group.



Heliopolis Hotel.

Lucien Toutounji (ESC 264)

I recently acquired this special postcard, mailed from HELIOPOLIS HOTEL / TR on 20 FE 56, with an Egyptian censor mark, for Salzburg (Austria). From there, it was flown by the balloon "OMO" on April 29, 1956, to Laa an den Thaya (Austria), with a same-day arrival postmark. This is an unusual and scarce item which will go in my hotel mail collection.



Letter-sheet Postal Stationery for Soldiers (1960s)

Peter A. S. Smith (ESC 74)

A few years ago I acquired an unused letter-sheet imprinted with the Egyptian eagle logo and the inscription (in Arabic) “army post”. Inquiry of collectors in Egypt gave no information (but I may not have asked the right collectors). The matter remained dormant until this year, when I acquired two used examples (*Fig. 1*) The logos are in different sizes. A third variety, unused (*Fig. 2*) also turned up. The red inscription below the logo reads “management of public affairs of the armed forces” (I am indebted to Rida Bazzi for this translation). The other red inscription (*lower left*) reads “army post”.

We now have dates: July and December, 1963, and the location of use of two of them: Hodeida and Sana’a, Yemen (from the headings of the messages). One of the two is used as a letter-sheet with the message written on the inside. The other served as an envelope for a message written on another sheet of paper. The messages have no philatelic consequences, and deal only with personal matters.

The origin cancellations are typically poorly struck, and reading them completely does not seem possible. The Egyptian campaign in Yemen supported the republican faction against the royalists, 1962 to 1970, and it is said that there were as many as 70,000 Egyptian troops engaged at one time. With so many troops and such a time span, there must have been a large amount of mail, so it is surprising that examples are so uncommon. Perhaps these letter-sheets were only an experimental measure, and may not have been widely used? However, the fact that one of them (unused) was found in Tel Aviv suggests that they may also have been used in the Sinai during the Six Day War (1967), perhaps having been looted from an overrun Egyptian position.

The logo obviously served as a free franking indicator, although one cannot state for certain that soldiers were not charged for them, or that they were not rationed.

Can anyone, especially in Egypt, give us more information about these significant but neglected items of postal stationery?

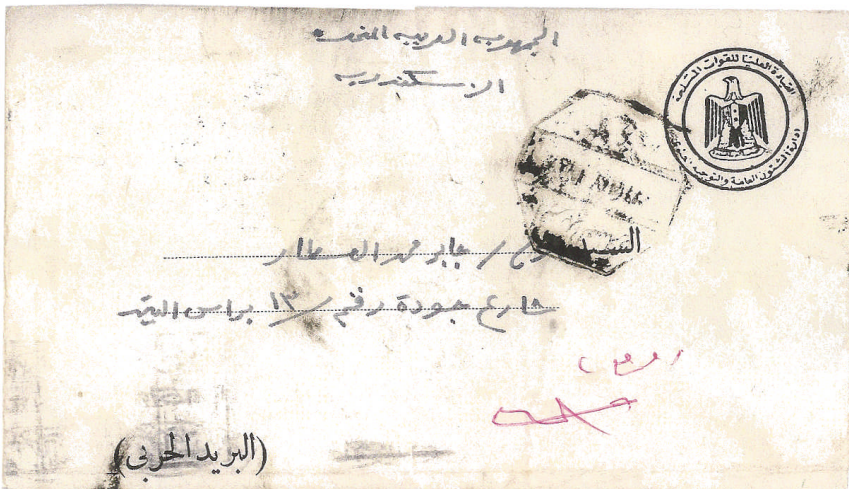


Fig. 1

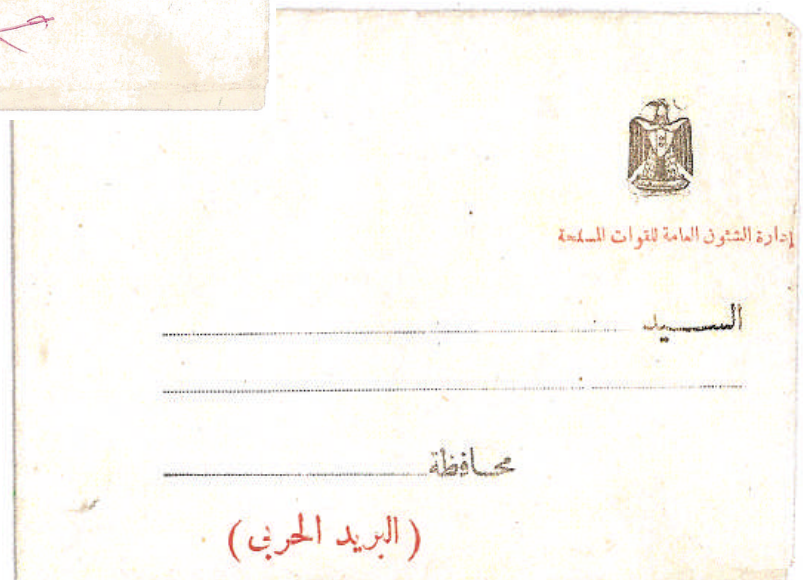


Fig. 2

High “T” Numerals

Scott Van Horn (ESC 619)

There have been several opinions concerning the meaning of the “T” markings on Egyptian postmarks from the early 1880s through the mid-1900s, but there isn’t any hard evidence in support of one over another. From the available literature, there seem to be five main opinions on what the “T” markings indicate:

1. to distinguish between the postmarks handled
2. a zone or circuit of delivery
3. the collections of the day
4. a time of delivery
5. a time or working shift in which the postmark was applied

Currently, the fifth opinion seems to be favoured by many, based mainly on the idea that no large “T” numbers (e.g., greater than 6 or 8) have been seen, or at least recalled, and that all postal items seem to have a larger “T” number on the receiving postmark than on the departure postmark for items processed during the same day.

The fifth opinion seemed to make perfect sense until recently, when I acquired and began studying several hundred postal cards from the period 1880-1925, of which a large majority were sent and received between locations within Egypt.

By comparing the “T” numbers with the associated post office, it was also discovered that only Cairo and Alexandria had numbers greater than 6 or VI, but that these main centres employed “T” numbers up to 15 or XV.



In addition, to counter the statement that the “T” number of the departing post office is always lower than that of the arrival post office when the item was sent and received on the same day, a number of cards (albeit small) displayed the opposite of that numbering scheme ... four of which follow:

CAIRE 8 XI 93 T4 to GALIOUB 8 NO 93 TIII
 CAIRE 19 II 93 T5 to ALEXANDRIE 19 II 93 T3
 ALEXANDRIE 29 III 95 T5 (or 3) to CAIRE 29 III 95 TII
 ALEXANDRIE 30 IV 95 TIV to CAIRE 30 IV 95 TII

I wonder whether fellow members have knowledge of a “T” number higher than 15? It would be interesting also to hear of other instances where the arrival “T” number is lower than the dispatch “T”.

Unrecorded Bisect

Scott Van Horn (ESC 619)

I recently came across this cover (*right*) bearing a pair of First Fouad 2m and a bisect of the same issue (which together make up the local 5m rate). The stamps are tied by two Salah El Din CDS (23 MA 25), with a receiving Alexandrie CDS (23 MA 25) on the reverse.

Was this bisect authorised? Or was it an emergency method of making up an odd-number rate? Or simply someone joking with the Post Office?

**Why not a Bisect?**

Greg Todd (ESC 585)

This cover is, on the face of it, a rather uninteresting but fine quality 1866 First Issue cover from Cairo to Alexandria. However, it may well be unique!



For the latter possibility one has to focus on the date of the cover. The 1866 1 piastre claret stamp is boldly tied by the “Poste Vice-Reali Egiziane - Cairo” datestamp in blue with a repeated strike alongside, each dated July 27 1867. This was “slap in the middle” of the period when the Cairo Post Office was bisecting the 2 piastre yellow to pay the internal rate as a result of a shortage of the ubiquitous 1 piastre value.

I would ask ESC members if they have another example of the 1 piastre stamp used during the shortage period between July 16 and August 1, 1867, in Alexandria or from July 20-31, 1867, in Cairo.

Query 101 from Edmund Hall (ESC 239) - First Day Covers for Graf Zeppelin overprint

Most catalogues give the day of issue as April 6, 1931, i.e. Zeheri, Gibbons, Balian, Nile Post, while the Magdi Moukhtar Handbook gives no date but states April 6-11 for the visit. Sears gives dates seen as April 9/10 for cancels. However, on the website the section of the Zeppelin flight shows examples for April 7 for Alexandria and April 11 for Cairo. When I made up a section on the website for first day covers I left blank the one for this issue – based on the idea that an FDC should have the date April 6. Is it correct to say that the date of issue is April 6? And if so, are there any FDCs?

Query 102 from Ms Joan Soriano (ESC 636) - South Africa/Sud Afrika Overprint on Boy King

A colleague has asked me if I know anything about the attached SA overprints. I have never seen or heard of them and am hoping you might be able to assist. If they are not bogus, surely they should be catalogued somewhere? The cancels on the 5 and 20mills seem to be genuine.



Query 103 from Scott Van Horn (ESC 619) - Inverted Dateslug

This 1889 SLS1 letter sheet (*right*) is cancelled with a DEP-4 CDS dated 4 X 90, which is common, but looking at the day slug it was noticed that the numeral 4 is inverted.



Query 104 from Scott Van Horn (ESC 619) – Missing Perforation

This 1976 O93b Official stamp (*left*) was discovered recently to have a missing perforation (lower right). Has anyone seen other examples?

Reply to Query 82 from Nasr ed-Deen Abou Taleb (ESC 641)

The Arabic reads Al-Azhar Al-Sherif, that is, the Azhar mosque/university in Cairo, which because of its long and strong religious connotation is known as “the noble”.

Membership changes

New members:

ESC 665 Alan Smith, 7011 Anjou Creek Circle, San Jose, California 95120, USA
(Fuad definitive issues, Egypt pre-1952 Revolution, GB)

ESC 666 Jean-Francois Duranceau, 2 rue de Berry, 86170 Avanton, France
(Interpostals, British military in Egypt, Egypt officially sealed)

Restored to membership:

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Sinai & Gaza - Part 2* : World War I, Turkish, German and Austro-Hungarian Forces

Edmund Hall (ESC 239)

This article is dedicated to Zvi Alexander, who died in Switzerland on November 30, 2008, at the age of 86. Zvi won many awards with his Holy Land material, including the best and most extensive collection of Turkish Military mail in the Sinai and Palestine. He donated his collection to the Ha'aretz Museum in Tel Aviv. He had a flat a few minutes away from our Saturday meeting place and a few years ago I would often pop round after a meeting where Zvi sought my advice on matters Gaza and Sinai. He was under the illusion that I knew something about the subject, but it did not take long before the student became the teacher. It was not unusual to receive a phone call from him about something, with the request: could he come over immediately to discuss it? Often this involved him asking about some definitive point - he was in contention with someone else, and my response of certainty was required. It usually, at best, brought forth only that I saw he had a point that maybe I could support. He knew I had planned a series of articles on the Sinai and gave his generous approval to use several of his delicious pieces for illustration. This may have been some fifteen years ago and I have assumed that this offer still holds true. I do not believe that any other philatelist will ever be able to assemble a collection of Turkish military mail of this area again.

When I set out to find information about Turkey and her allies some 25 years ago it was somewhat sparse, comprising a few articles in *OPAL*, the *BAPIP* bulletin and some foreigner philatelic magazines in German and a slim monograph by Pollack. However, in the last dozen years much has been published, notably the two excellent books, one by Norman Collins, *The Ottoman Post and Telegraph Offices in Palestine and Sinai* (2000) and the other by Zvi Alexander, *The Ottoman Field Post Offices Palestine 1914-1918: The Alexander Collection* (2000).

In part 1* I put forward my arguments for including Sinai and to some extent the area now known as the Gaza Strip. In the case of Gaza and its surrounds, before 1948 there could be no reason to justify its postal history as part of Egyptian Philately, but ignoring that fact I give a brief account of the Turkish post in an attempt at completeness.



Before the war only Gaza and Khan Yunis had post offices in what was to become the Gaza Strip, with Gaza of some importance, having 40,000 inhabitants at the outbreak of war. Above are shown most of the recorded postmarks of the civil post office, which opened in May 1865, and Turkish postmarks are known until the town was taken by the British in 1917. There are also recorded a boxed type and a negative seal, both very rare. I have given no numbers or types, as the literature has no common nomenclature. For further information, see Collins or Coles and Walker. None of these marks are particularly common either on stamps or covers, of which I only have one.

Khan Yunis post office opened in 1909 and its postmark is quite rare, with only a few covers known, I have only a part strike on stamp and have seen only a couple offered in 20 years.



Soon after the war began the Turkish army, with German and Austro-Hungarian troops in support, crossed the Egyptian border into the Sinai and so, as they were on Egyptian soil, it can legitimately be said that postal material from them rightfully deserves a place in Egyptian philately. Most philatelic accounts deal with all of the Eastern Army, based on Damascus and covering Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Sinai, and some also the Hejaz and southern Turkey. But here I will cover only Gaza and the Sinai, and that not to the depth found elsewhere, and touch briefly on some of the other areas. This is of course quite an artificial distinction - but our story concerns only those areas as seen from an Egyptian viewpoint.

* Sinai & Gaza Part 1 pre World War I, September Quarter 2001 *QC*. 198, Volume XVII No.11 Pages 255-268.

After the Turko-Italian war (1911-1912) and the equally disastrous two Balkan wars (1912-1913) Turkey was not looking to embroil herself in another. Her army was in a poor state with the loss of equipment and troops and it was apparent that she had not yet come to terms with the new equipment from Europe despite the efforts to modernise the military after the 1909 revolution.

In 1913 many senior officers were retired and replaced by younger men, many of them trained by the German military mission of Von der Goltz during 1886-1895. At the same time power was seized by the Committee of Union and Progress led by three army officers from the Young Turks movement, Enver Pasha (1881-1922), Mehmed Talaat (1874-1921) and Ahmed Djemal (1872-1922).

Under threat from within and outside its borders, the Turkish Government sought a protective agreement from one of the two European power blocs: the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. Initially she turned to Britain, but only secured an order for two warships, and seeing Russia as her main enemy leaned towards the central powers and invited the German Liman von Sanders to help to modernise her army.

With the outbreak of war after Austria's declaration of war against Serbia on July 28, 1914, followed rapidly by further declarations by Germany on Russia and France and Britain on Germany on August 4, the Ottoman Government, acutely aware of its military weakness, remained neutral for several months. The only member of the ruling triumvirate in favour of action was Enver Pasha, who was party to a secret treaty with Germany though this did not commit the Ottomans to declaring immediate war on Germany's enemies.

Two modern battleships, the *Sultan Osman I* and the *Resadiye*, partly paid for by public subscriptions and built in British shipyards, were nearing completion when the war started. The British Admiralty's seizure of these ships for the Royal Navy had a devastating impact in Istanbul, even among pro-British groups. Within a few days two large German warships, the cruisers *Goeben* and *Breslau*, arrived off the Dardanelles seeking sanctuary from a pursuing British fleet. They were permitted to enter Ottoman waters, where they were soon transferred, by a fictitious sale, to the Ottoman Navy, becoming the battle cruiser *Sultan Selim Yavuz* (normally abbreviated to *Yavuz*) and the light cruiser *Midilli*. Their crews put on Ottoman uniform and their commander, Admiral Souchon, became head of the Ottoman Navy.

British vessels patrolling off the Dardanelles then gave notice that henceforth any warships venturing into the Aegean Sea would be regarded as hostile. The Ottoman Navy promptly closed the strait to foreign shipping and laid further mines. Even so, the Ottoman Empire remained neutral, until October 29, 1914, when the *Yavuz*, *Midilli* and other Ottoman warships suddenly opened fire on Russian naval bases in the Black Sea.

The reasons for the attack remain a matter of debate. The main responsibility lay with Enver Pasha, without the knowledge or consent of the Sultan's Grand Vizier and most other government ministers, supported by a pro-German faction within the ruling Committee of Union and Progress. On November 2 Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire, followed three days later by her alliance partners Britain and France. The outbreak of war was greeted in Istanbul with deep gloom, with Cavit Pasha, one of four ministers who resigned in disgust at their country's entry into the war, declaring: "It will be our ruin - even if we win."

Until Britain declaration of war Egypt was a political anomaly caught between two worlds. The British, though at war with Germany and Austria-Hungary, were officially unable to expel enemy diplomats and agents from Egypt. Turkey was still neutral, and such a dismissal on her technically sovereign soil would have provoked a diplomatic incident. Things began, however, to change rapidly. Lord Herbert Kitchener left Egypt in early August, having been promoted Secretary of State for War, followed shortly by Byng leaving Lieutenant-General Sir John Maxwell in charge of the Force in Egypt. Maxwell's fame at the Battle of Omdurman had been enhanced by a command of the Force in Egypt from 1908-12.

A series of troop embarkations, disembarkations and transfers progressed throughout autumn as troops from India arrived in Egypt and were sent on to the battlegrounds of France. While the pressing need was for troops on the Western Front, the Turkish threat to the all-important Suez Canal meant that Egypt could not be denuded of too many of its forces.

A conference in August between Turkish and German representatives had proposed that the Turks adopt a strictly defensive posture toward the Russians on the Caucasus front while seizing naval domination of the Black Sea. But all such plans were academic while the positions of Bulgaria and Romania remained undecided. However the Austro-Hungarians were having problems on the Galician front and requested an

urgent Turkish seaborne invasion of the Ukraine to divert the Russians. The Germans promised huge territories in the Russian-ruled Caucasus and Central Asia, and even neutral Iran, in return.

But Turkey, fearful of diverting the Russian Bear against itself, preferred a strike against the Suez Canal to disrupt Britain's communications with its Indian Empire. Eventually the Germans acquiesced and so the Turkish invasion into the Sinai, and even the conquest of Egypt, was put in train. The British had pulled out of Sinai the few Egyptian manned police posts and established their defensive line at the Suez Canal.

Turkish forward positions were established at El Arish and Nekhl. There were only three possible routes across the expanse of the Sinai desert: by the coast (the advantage being water and desert tracks, but it was within fire of British ships); a southern route from El Kosseima to Suez (quickly discarded by the Turks); and finally the central pass from Beersheba to Ismailia. Chief responsibility in both planning and execution lay with General Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein, with Djemal as the expedition's figurehead. The central route was chosen because it would provide the Ottoman troops with better access to Cairo.

The expedition left Beersheba on January 14, 1915. The advance across the Sinai took ten days, tracked all the way by British and French aircraft of an Anglo-French naval squadron and a small air reconnaissance force. With the Turkish expedition heavily reliant on total surprise for any possibility of success, when on February 2 advance elements of the Ottoman Fourth Army reached the Canal and began the assault they were met and beaten back by an Indian force, subsequently reinforced by Australian infantry. Djemal persisted with his assault until the next day but after losing some 2,000 casualties (to the British 150) authorised a full retreat to Beersheba. The entire Turkish force withdrew, unmolested by the British, who did not follow them in any force, back across the Sinai. There was no sign of Arab insurrection in Egypt - the expedition had been a failure - and this was the only Turkish attempt of the war to capture the Canal.

A small Turkish force under the German General von Kressenstein (*right*) remained in the Sinai and carried out several nuisance raids at points along the Canal. Whilst these maintained pressure on the British and kept them guessing about another attack, they were insufficient to halt the movement of troops away from the Canal defences to Gallipoli throughout the summer of 1915.



In December 1915 there was a change of plan on the British side. A Commission under Major-General Sir Henry Horne recommended that the defensive line should be moved forward from the west bank of the Canal to the east, and far enough away from the Canal for it to be beyond the range of the enemy's heaviest guns. Three new defensive lines were constructed and the supply railways from Cairo were doubled in capacity. This construction effort was largely undertaken by locally-recruited workers, organised as the Egyptian Labour Corps. The Egyptian theatre was placed under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir Archibald Murray, recently arrived, who proposed to the War Office to undertake limited offensive action to be able to control the area of El Arish. Sir William Robertson, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, gave cautious approval in March 1916. A visit in November by Kitchener also thought Egypt's defence should be based within Sinai, to place the Canal beyond artillery range.

The British made a careful advance across the Sinai, taking El Arish on December 21, 1916, Rafa on January 9, 1917, a minor victory that ended the Sinai campaign of 1916. A small Turkish presence remained inside Egypt. The first, at Magdhaba, was captured on December 23, 1917.

Three battles of Gaza followed. In the Third battle of Gaza, October 31-November 7, 1917, the British under General Allenby finally forced the Turks out of their strong positions. Allenby's successful breaking of the Gaza-Beersheba defences opened the road to Jerusalem, which he occupied on December 9, 1917.

Turkish Civil Post offices.

In preparation for the expected conquest of Sinai the Turkish authorities had made datestamps for 38 locations within the peninsula. Questions have been raised as to why they should do so, as the locations chosen were nearly all uninhabited. A list, with illustrations of the intended postal points, appears in *BAPIP* 110 in an article by Anton Steichele, though nine of these are classified as being “in the Negev” i.e. Gaza. Two types were produced for each postal point, one negative seal, the other with the place name and usually the figure 1 in the lower half. Most had the figure 1 and the place name in European script, i.e. Quossemer. From early in 1915 the whole of the Sinai peninsula was classified as a new administrative district based on Qala’at en Nachal.



In *OPAL* (circa 1984) Avraham Zakai gives a tabulated list, after Steichele, and suggests that the intended postal points were politically motivated, to indicate ownership and dominance of the region. My own ideas, as normal, subscribes to the cock-up theory: when some official was given the task of preparing the offices he acquired a map of the Sinai, and passed it on to his junior. With little knowledge of the area, he simply took for granted that the major place names on the maps must be inhabited, at least to some degree.

Some 35 years ago I crossed part of the Sahara in Niger, going west to east with the guide pointing out our destination on the map. Being some 400 miles away from our starting point and the only place name on the map given prominence, I imagined the suq and other delights that awaited us. After a day’s steady journey we arrived in late afternoon to find the “importance” was that the 1m-wide well had a protecting wall two bricks high. There was nothing else but stone and sand.

What I do find intriguing is the fact that no handstamps were prepared for South Sinai. Did the Turks have no intention of occupying it, or was it simply that places like Tor remained in British hands? The Turks did attack Tor, but a small garrison of Egyptian and Indian troops, mainly Gurkhas, repulsed them.

Three unaddressed covers with clear cancels were sold at Feldman’s in 1984 at a high price and stamps on piece with cancels can be found also fetching high prices. At the stamp show Tel Aviv 83 a whole sheet with 26 of these postmarks was exhibited, to much acclaim. But many of the dates don’t make sense, made in periods when the places were not occupied by the Turks. Dates as late as 1920 can be found. It is now agreed that few of the datestamps were ever issued and that these pieces and covers were all probably prepared ready for someone to supply the philatelic market sometime after the war. I had longed cherished a piece with the cancel for Qatia with a date when it was occupied for three days by the Turks. I had not thought to question the fact that in the heat of battle it was unlikely that a civil post office had been set up.

For some time it was agreed that only two post offices actually functioned; El-Arish and Qussima. However in April 1987 a question was posed in *OPAL* 164, by K.R.Jung, about a postmark of Ibin dated 25.5.15. He referred to the Coles and Walker article in *PJGB* Jan/Feb 1985 in which it was stated that Ibin was the Jordanian place of that name. There were responses in *OPAL* 165, 167 and 168. Two of the respondents



pointed out that the Arabic spelling for the two places were quite different عيبين for the Jordanian and ايبين for the one in Sinai. Other pieces have surfaced and it is now accepted that a Turkish post office operated here for a short while with a civilian type postmark. Ibin was uninhabited, but after the retreat from the attack on the Suez Canal von Kressenstein was ordered by Djemal Pasha to form a special camel corps. Ibin was chosen as the headquarters by virtue of its many tracks leading into the Sinai. As civilian staff were probably stationed there for specialist tasks, it make some sense that a post office was opened there. Collins illustrates a cover with the Ibin datestamp.

He also states that a datestamp for Kalaat el Nahal has been seen on piece. As this was proclaimed the official capital of the Turkish Sinai and featured the end of a telegraph line, it is conceivable that a postal station was positioned there.

Qussima was a major military campment for the Turks and Germans and the light railway from Al-Auja was extended to it. Nearly all the known covers were part of the Alexander collection, coming from the same correspondent.



El-Arish was an obvious candidate for a post office, which opened soon after the Turkish occupation. Initially two types of postmarks are found, but now **EL ARICH OTTOMAN** is considered a fantasy made by Major Weltch, a German philatelist who served in Palestine.



One thing all these markings have in common is their scarcity, with only a few covers or pieces recorded. I have none in my collection. Having made a few futile bids over the years, I now consider them way beyond my price range.

Turkish Military Post.

Like most military organisations of the period, Turkey provided a postal service for its forces with the aim of maintaining morale. I often hear among philatelists, Egyptians among them, that there was little post because countries like Egypt and Turkey had high levels of illiteracy. While this is so, there existed professional letter writers and the receiver could most probably find someone to read his letter.

The books of Alexander and Collins give almost identical accounts of the Turkish military post, either done in co-operation or copied from the same source. In *OPAL* 173, which preceded the two books by a decade, an article by Ünal Karakaş gives a more complete picture. Combining the three sources, but drawing mainly from Karakaş, a slightly confused picture emerges, with all three agreeing that various difficulties make it almost impossible to reach a definitive conclusion. The story goes something like this.



Permanent FPOs were formed, with first and second post centres and postal dispatch offices. These were allocated at divisional, corps and army level under the control of the Post and Telegram Directorate, one of the inspectorates of the Army General Command. At Army level there was a director, five clerks and a postal inspector. A more local Field Postal Service arrangement existed for mobile units, each given a numbered FPO with no connection to the unit's recognition details for security reasons. The FPO service handled both private and official mail as well as parcels, registered mail and money orders. Post was free up to the rank of sergeant; officer and private mail was paid.

The numbered FPO read in Turkish SAHRA POSTASSI (military post) and the number below (*left above*) is No. 46, used in the Sinai by the 1st Expeditionary Force.

From an article in *Die Postmark*, 1929, Adolf Passer states that the military marks were distributed along the following lines: numbers below 25 were given to the division of the same number; numbers 25 to 36 were given in ascending order to Army Corps i.e. 1st Army Corps had FPO 25, up to the XIIth with FPO 36; 38 onwards were issued to the First Army and so on. Okay and Steichele also subscribe to this idea, but later Ünal Karakaş and others think it unlikely. What is known that each handstamp was used by several units,

making it very difficult to pinpoint where cancelled covers originated. By using transit markings or identifying the unit which had a particular FPO its whereabouts at that time can be guessed at.

Similar to the civil postmarks, negative seal and normal datestamp were issued for each number. Some 92 numbers, 1 to 92, have been recorded, with the negative seal type being extremely rare. Only a few are known used in the Sinai and Gaza area and the actual placement and dates of use are open to some speculation. For this area, and anywhere within the old Turkish Arab empire, covers are scarce, well sought after and command high prices.

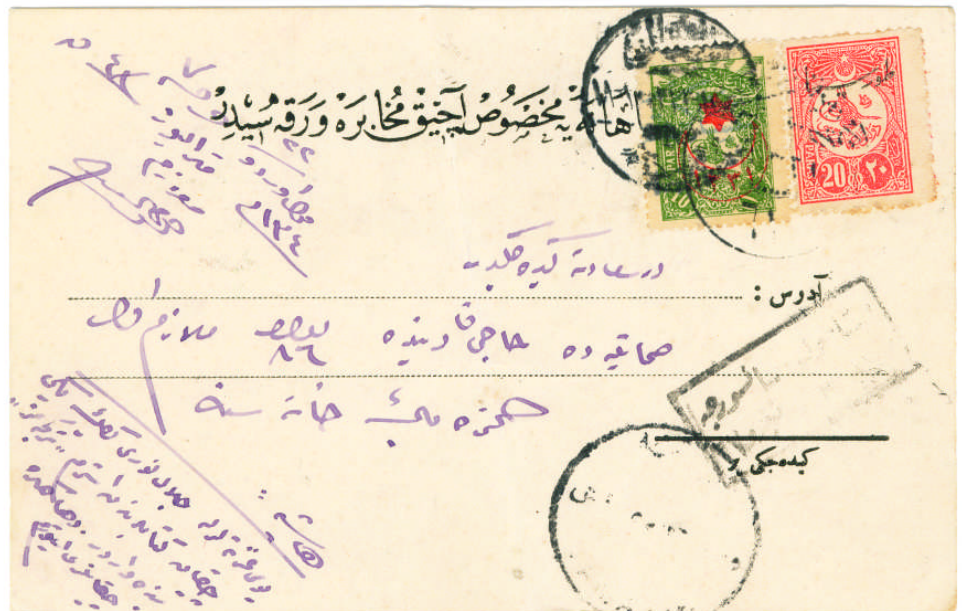
Numbers report to have originated in the Sinai:

No 27. El-Arish 1915. No 46 from El-Arish used by the 1st Expeditionary Force mid July to Sept 1916, later at Gaza. No 48 Kossaima 10.5.1916.

Used in the Gaza area:

No 22. March-April 1917. No 23 Oct 1917. No 59. April-May 1917. No 61. 1917.

FPO 61, the only one in my collection not recorded at Gaza or in the Sinai.



However, this card with a lovely FPO 61, was recently in auction and clearly endorsed Gaza. Perhaps mine may also have been from Gaza.

Stamps

In 1916 a set of six stamps was overprinted Tor Sinai on 1901-1913 issues for general use.



3x10 para stamps cancelled
Quds 1 (Jerusalem 1)



Another set of six stamps had been prepared in the hope of the conquest of Egypt, five of which had a small vignette showing the Sphinx and Pyramids: 10 para - Dome of the Rock, 20 para - The well at Kossaima, 1 piaster - Guard at Beersheba, 5 piaster - Sultan Mehmed, 10 piaster - El Arish, 25 piaster - camel troops (possibly crossing the Sinai). These stamps were never issued, but can be found imperf and perforated, and recently some sheets of colour trials were offered in auction. Later, after the war, due to a stamp shortage, some of these were overprinted with the Sphinx and Pyramids blotted out for general use in Turkey.



During the third battle of Gaza there was a shortage of 5 para stamps for use on money orders. Several sheets of the 10 para were locally surcharged.

When I was actively collecting these areas, some 20-30 years ago, another set of stamps was purported to have been prepared for the conquest of Egypt. I proudly obtained a set at auction during the big stamp show in 1980 at a large sum. The stamps even made an entry into Pulhan's *Turk Pullari Katalogu XII* 1974. It is now recognised that they were fantasies and are now readily obtained on eBay for a few dollars.



Known as the Cihadi Mukaddes - Holy War Stamps, these were first reported in *L'Orient Philatelique* April 1954 by Ernest A. Kehr.

He tells how he chanced upon these adhesives quite by accident when he interviewed a Turkish pasha who owned some. The pasha spun a lovely tale:

I'm not a collector myself, but I do have the only unused set of four stamps issued for use by the Army to which I was attached during World War I. While the army was assembling, the Minister of War and the Minister of State authorized the production of postage stamps to be taken to Egypt and used to replace the ones found in Sinai in Post Offices there. To prevent any leak of the plans for sending an occupation force from Turkey to Egypt, the designing and printing of the stamps was undertaken with the strictest security measures. After the attack on the Suez Canal, because of the defeat by the British forces it became necessary to completely destroy the cases of stamps before the British captured the pasha's forces. I had not the slightest interest in postage stamps, and I still cannot account for my reason in doing so. But even as those cases were being emptied and the sheets of stamps were fed into the flaming blaze I took this single set and put it in my pocket.

The full set, however, is of seven stamps rather than four.

German and Austrian Forces.

Germany had a Military Mission to Turkey, having been the main European power to arm and train the Turkish Army before the war. From early 1916 the numbers of German troops grew considerably to bolster the Turks.

The first fighting forces sent to Palestine consisted of some 1,200 men, who arrived on April 1, 1916. They comprised mainly artillery and heavy machinegun companies and included the Flying Corps Unit 300. They were placed under the command of Kress von Kressenstein, along with the 3rd Turkish Infantry Division, and formed the 1st Expeditionskorps. Units were posted in the Sinai, including El-Arish. An air unit operated from an airfield at El-Arish between April and September 1916 until the British pushed the Turko-German forces back to Gaza.

After the disastrous Gallipoli campaign the command structure in Egypt was simplified with the formation on March 19, 1916, of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force under Sir Archibald Murray, who had pushed into the Sinai with patrols out as far as Jifjaffa during April and May and implemented the defence into the Sinai.

Von Kressenstein decided to retake the whole of the Sinai and possibly mount another attack on the Canal. 18,000 men of the 1st Expeditionskorps left Shellal, near Beersheba, on July 19, 1916, and advanced to Bir Abd. After the battles of Katia and Romani during August, with a decisive defeat for the Turko-German forces, the 1st Expeditionskorps fell back to Bir Abd, having lost 50 per cent of their troops. The British took nearly 4,000 prisoners.

The British kept up the pressure, and eventually were able to clear the Sinai of enemy forces.

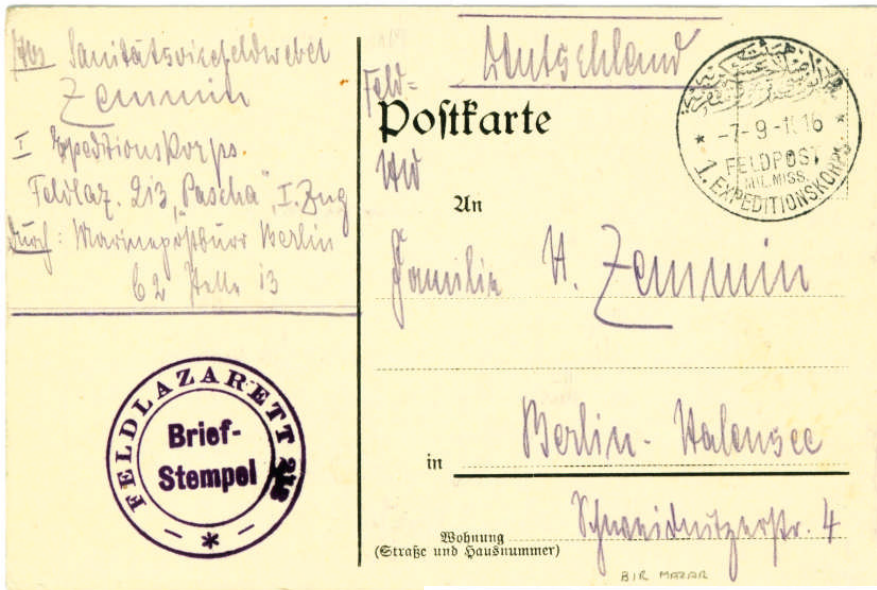
From early 1916 special datestamps FELDPOST MIL MISS were brought into use as the numbers of German forces sent to bolster the Turks grew considerably: the Germans set up their own postal service to supplement the erratic Turkish service. Some 29 handstamps were ordered for use throughout the Turkish Empire: these are illustrated with dates of use by Findeiss. Postage was free to all forces irrespective of rank.

From the time of the advance into the Sinai up to the Third Battle of Gaza, three of the German handstamps were in use with the German-Austrian forces. Like the Turkish FPOs, their whereabouts and dates of usage are not entirely clear and the philatelic articles contest the data.



The 1.EXPEDITION KORPS datestamp was used by the troops in the Sinai, with reported usage at Khan Yunis, El-Arish, and later at Beersheba. Dates of use 21.6.1916 to 2.10.1916. Findeiss gives a double valuation "Post aus Ägypten" but without dates for this period.

On the retreat of the Tuko-Egyptian forces to Beersheba the remnants of the 1.EXPEDITION KORPS were dispersed to various Turkish divisions. The datestamp was replaced by the Beersheba (Bir es Seba) one with dates reported 6.10.1916 to 1.11.1917. It is also reported used at Gaza. There has been much debate about the location of A.O.K.4 (4th Army Command) and Findeiss reports dates 20.5.1916 to 10.7.1917 with a triple valuation for usage in Beersheba 20.5.1916 to 30.5.1916. It was also used at Gaza.



1.EXPEDITION KORPS endorsed Bir Mazar.

Also has cachet of Field Hospital 213, which was at Bir Mazar for a brief period.

Later the hospital moved back to Beersheba. For some reason it has a stamp affixed. To speed the mail stamps were overprinted with a pre-censored marking. This meant the card or letter was except from censorship.



A.O.K. 4 endorsed Gaza and signed by Tilla, commander of the German forces at the date shown





A card showing the provisional handstamp.



The philatelicly inspired sheet showing all known handstamps prepared for use in the Sinai

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Editorial.

I put the cat among the pigeons slightly at the January meeting (p98) by saying that this *QC* would probably not be ready for posting by the end of April. I know that some of our members are very surprised to learn that I have a life beyond being the editor. Besides owning a small educational business, I belong to several other philatelic groups, run two U3A groups and am a member of two others, volunteer to help with adult maths and in my spare time belong to several other societies. This year I am giving four talks, two stamping and the others historical and astronomy. This is why, when anyone asks me about the *QC*, I have no idea. After the *QC* is posted, I forget all about it. Articles arriving by post or email are filed or downloaded without being read or thought about. Only when, about six weeks before you get it, do I "do the *QC*", see what I have, make it up, get it checked and sent to the printers ... that's about two weeks. Once sent out, it's forgotten about. With the live auction, I have no more time left until April for the ESC. As it happens, I found I had enough material for a *QC*, in fact several articles over. Thank you! So if your article is not here, hopefully it will appear in the June issue. And March has come early.

Story in Stamps - Joint Issues.

In 2001 Golden Masks of China/Tutankhamen set caused a bit of a stir mainly to do with the 'perceived' scarcity of the miniature sheet and the authenticity of the holographic version. Both sheets are catalogued in Egypt Stamps Handbook (ESH) at \$30 and \$100 respectively, however ebay prices might suggest differently. What with stamps such as the Mars Alam (ESH 1657), Makadi Resort & Golf Spa (ESH 1673) and the Treasures of Egypt booklet in 2003 (ESH 19) some of us were suspicious of possible nefarious goings on to 'fleece' us dear old collectors. It is fair to say, excluding the holographic sheet, these can be counted as pucker philatelic Egyptian items.

I had my own suspicions concerning the joint issue having no idea that such issues are common practise amongst stamp issuing countries that included America, Australia, Britain and in fact it seems about all of them. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_issue. I was googling for something while making up this *QC* and came across:

<http://www.jointstampissues.net/> a site for collectors just for joint issues. How could I be so ignorant about my hobby, in fact the Story behind the Stamp The Arabs, their Achievements in *QC213* was such an issue.

The Arab Post Day, August 3, 2008 (ESH 1675/76) is another joint issue with a similar release date by Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria and Tunisia. Bahrein, Morocco, Oman, United Arab Emirates release their sets during 2008 and Yemen in May 2009. The Palestinian Authority were due to participate but their issued was not released until March 17 2011 in the West Bank. See <http://www.maganstamps.co.uk/Pal.htm#2008y>.



A more recent joint issue was made between Egypt and Slovakia on October 10, 2010 with a stamp showing a canopic jar. Illustrated above is the miniature sheet for the issue.



Another intriguing story is the intended joint issue with Brazil. According to Ahmed Darwish, the ambassador of Egypt in Brasília, the initiative for the release of the stamp was taken one year ago, when he got in contact with the Correios of the Brazilian postal services, who agreed to issue the commemorative stamp. According to Darwish, the date of release of the stamp coincided with the Egyptian national day, July 22. The ambassador recalled that both countries have had relations since 1924 and that several agreements have been signed between them, as well as having promoted several visits by authorities on both sides.

Brazil duly issued its stamp on July 22, 2010 but I have not seen any evidence that Egypt has issued a similar stamp.

On October 17 last year to some acclaim Singapore issued its first joint issue with Egypt which "Commemorates 45 Years of Diplomatic Ties" the subject Significant Rivers comprising the Nile and the Singapore River. See front cover. While the Singapore set has two long stamps the Egyptian version has six normal size ones with each river divided over three stamps of 30pi, £E2 and £2.5.

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