

The  
Quarterly Circular  
of  
**THE**  
**EGYPT**



# STUDY CIRCLE

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

**EGYPT.**

**De La Rue Ipi. ultramarine used on Advice of Receipt form #39, cancelled at Alexandria (June 8, 1886) with 'Tripoli/Syrie/Turquie' confirmation of arrival datestamp below (June 11, 1886). Reverse showing further Alexandria datestamp of distribution to sender (June 17, 1886). Rare.**

(نمبر ٣٩ ٨٩)  
ADMINISTRATION DES POSTES D'ÉGYPTE  
مصلحة البوستة المصرية

**AVIS DE RÉCEPTION** علم التسليم

L'Expéditeur de l'objet suivant (1) *Lettre recommandée*  
موسل لارسالية الاتي بيانها وهي (١)

portant le N<sup>o</sup> *24489* et l'adresse de M. *Ch. Saporio*  
*à Tripoli*  
بوسم جناب روضو عليها نمرة

désire savoir s'il a été reçu. يوجب الاستعلام عما اذا كانت تسلمت ام كيف

L'Employé des Postes.  
مستخدم البوستة

*J. Saporio*

L'envoi ci-dessus désigné m'a été remis contre reçu le *11 Juin 86*  
لارسالية الوصحة اعلاه تسلمت بالاىصال اللازم بتاريخ  
1886 سنة ١٨٨٠

Signature,  
لاعضا  
*مروسي*  
*مروسي*

(1) Indiquer la nature de l'envoi, si c'est un objet recommandé, une lettre de valeur déclarée, ou un colis postal avec ou sans valeur déclarée.  
Cet avis doit être renvoyé, sous recommandation d'office, au bureau d'origine, muni de la signature du destinataire; si ce dernier ne consent pas à le signer son refus et la remise de l'envoi doivent être attestés par l'employé du bureau de destination, lequel utilise à cet effet la formule ci-dessus en la modifiant. Le bureau d'origine se charge, ensuite, de le faire tenir à l'expéditeur, comme objet recommandé.  
Au moment de l'expédition on doit attacher cette formule à l'envoi avec une épingle, excepté pour les colis postaux, pour lesquels elle doit être attachée au bulletin d'expédition.

(١) يتوضه نوع الارسالية اذا كانت مسجلة او خطاب ذا قيمة مقررة او طرد بوستة مؤمن او غير مؤمن عليه  
يصبر رد هذا العلم مسجلا رسميا للمكتب المرسل الاصلى بعد امضائه من المرسل اليه فان لم يقبل امضاه يتوضه من مستخدم المكتب المرسل اليه عن ذلك وعن تسليم الارسالية على هذا المطبوع بعد اجرا تعديله به ثم على المكتب المرسل الاصلى ان يسلم هذا مسجلا للمرسل منه  
يحال تصدير الارسالية يرفق بها هذا المطبوع مشموكا بدبوس انما تستثنى من ذلك طرود البوستة اذ يقتضي ارفاق المطبوع المذكور بحافظة ارسال

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### Meetings dates for 2014

We regret that for operational reasons we have had to dispense with the January meeting in 2014. Two meetings will be held at 2pm in the Allenby Room at the **Victory Services Club**, Seymour Street, Marble Arch, London. The February and September meetings are at 2.30pm at **Stampex** (Feb 19-22 and Sept 17-20). The July meeting is from 1-5pm at the **Royal Philatelic Society**, 41 Devonshire Place, London.

<b>Feb 22, 2.30pm</b>	<b>Stampex</b>	<b>Live Auction</b>	<b>All members</b>
	<i>Stampex Feb 19-22</i>		
<b>May 10, 2pm</b>	<b>Services Club</b>	<b>AGM, Ten sheets and mini room auction</b>	<b>All members</b>
<b>July 19, 1pm</b>	<b>Royal Phil Soc</b>	<b>Egypt First Issue</b>	<b>Greg Todd</b>
<b>Sept 20, 2.30pm</b>	<b>Stampex</b>	<b>(1933 Railway Congress</b>	<b>Armen Varjabedian</b>
	<i>Stampex Sept 17-20</i>	<b>(Simon Arzt</b>	<b>Richard Wheatley</b>
<b>Nov 1, 2pm</b>	<b>Services Club</b>	<b>To be Advised: Study? Queries? Volunteer?</b>	<b>??</b>

### EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE OFFICERS

<b>President:</b>	John. Sears, FRPSL, 496 Uxbridge Road, Pinner, Middlesex HAS 4SL. john.sears@btinternet.com
<b>Chairman:</b>	Peter Andrews, 10 Hatches Mews, Braintree, Essex CM7 9FZ. ancientone@btintemet.com
<b>Deputy Chairman/ Librarian:</b>	John Davis, Church View Cottage, Church Rd, Upton Snodsbury, Worcs WR7 4NH davisatsnodsbury@tiscali.co.uk
<b>Secretary:</b>	Mike Murphy, 109 Chadwick Road, Peckham, London SE15 4PY egyptstudycircle@hotmail.com
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Brian Sedgley, 6 Mullberry Way, Ashtead, Surrey KT21 2 FE brian.sedgley@talktalk.net
<b>Editor/Webmaster:</b>	Edmund Hall, 6 Bedford Avenue,, Amersham, Bucks HP6 6PT edmundhall@chalfont.eclipse.co.uk
<b>Publicity Officer:</b>	David Sedgwick, 9 Eastlands, High Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7YD -ann.david_@tiscali.co.uk
<b>North America Agent:</b>	Trent Ruebush, 6704 Donegan Court, Alexandria, Virginia 22315, USA trenton_ruebush@hotmail.com
<b>Egypt Agent:</b>	Dr Ibrahim Shoukry, Apt 1, 10 Kamal El-Tawil St (Ex-Montaza), Zamalek, Cairo, Egypt ishoukry@link.net
<b>Antipodean Agent:</b>	Tony Chisholm, 13 Arden Way, Wilton, Wellington 6005, New Zealand j_t_chis@clear.net.nz
<b>Committee:</b>	Dr Sami Sadek, The Oaks, 19 Sinah Lane, Hayling Island, Hants PO11 0EY sami.sadek@ntlworld.com Vahe Varjabedian, 6 Mohammed Galal St, Apt 61, Heliopolis 11341, Cairo, Egypt vahev@hotmail.com

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**Website: [egyptstudycircle.org.uk](http://egyptstudycircle.org.uk)**

### Report of the Meeting, September 21, 2013: Hotel Posts of Egypt

PRESENT: John Sears (President), Peter Andrews (Chairman), John Davis (Deputy Chairman/Librarian), Mike Murphy (Secretary), Brian Sedgley (Treasurer), Edmund Hall (Editor/Webmaster), Mike Bramwell, John Clarke, Cyril Defriez, Ted Fraser-Smith, Pauline Gittoes, Paul Green, Alan Jeyes, Martin Lovegrove, Alan Rothwell, Stephen Schumann (United States), Alan Smith (United States), Ronny Van Pellecom (Belgium), Armen Varjabedian (Egypt), Vahe Varjabedian (Egypt), Richard Wheatley, David Worrollo. Guests: Mrs Pat Sears, Mrs Yvonne Wheatley.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Sami Sadek (Committee), Angela Child, Mostafa El-Dars, Peter Grech, David Sedgwick, Tony Schmidt.

It was a delight to see such a good turn-out for our autumn Stampex meeting, with 24 members and guests present, five of them from overseas, and at least two of them attending their first meeting. As it happens, those present had made a wise choice: the display, on the Hotel Posts of Egypt, was outstanding.

The meeting was presented by Richard Wheatley (ESC 168), of Leeds, who prefaced his presentation with an explanation that he had prepared the sheets “in my way” – that is, intended not for formal competitive exhibition but to bring out the story behind the material, using postcards, scans of the reverses of covers, even newspaper cuttings ... all of these frowned on by international exhibition judges.

Richard also said that he took note of incoming as well as outgoing material, and to whom the covers were addressed – thus extending the interest of what proved to be a fascinating and wide-ranging display. And that is ignoring for the moment the standard of material on show, some of it unique or close to it, much of it scarce and difficult to find, with many elusive postmarks and frankings in display.

The tour started in Cairo and moved down the Nile – with one important excursion to Alexandria – covering all those hotels with post offices and some without. Among the delights: from Shepherds he showed an 1889 cover addressed to an American visitor before the first hotel postmarks were issued, an incoming Ceylon letter-card, a cover double-censored in Egypt and the US during the Second World War, and a 1951 air mail cover adorned with a BOAC Air Mail label – with the BOAC indication cut out. Remember, this was at the time of the height of anti-British feeling.



Richard regretted not having Registration cachets from the Semiramis Hotel – but who does? But he recalled a visit to the Mena House Hotel and showed a delightful piece of illustrated stationery with a coach and horses to the left of the Pyramids. A similar cover a few years later displayed no such method of transport – by then the hotel was served by the new tramway out from the suburb of Giza. And he used Baedeker of 1908 to shed some more light on the actual whereabouts of the Mena House Post Office.

Back in central Cairo, he developed the tangled history of the New Hotel on Ezbekieh, followed by the Continental, which became the Continental-Savoy after the First World War, when the British military left their temporary HQ in the Savoy in complete disarray and unsuitable any longer for an hotel. Among much colourful and important material, from the Continental he showed a quite remarkable and unrecorded Registered luggage label (*above*) addressed to Cork and dated 27 XI 20. It is franked with the 50,20,10 and 5-millièmes of the De La Rue pictorial issue cancelled by the Type HC8 Continental-Cairo / Cash CDS.



From the Savoy came a display of illustrated stationery, together with an astonishing seven-colour franked piece of postal stationery (left) uprated with no fewer than seven additional De La Rue stamps for registration to Germany and with a neat and clear strike of the Cairo: Savoy Hotel Registration cachet (fewer than a dozen known), the stamps cancelled with a Type HSA2 CDS of 26 II 09.

Showing his interest in the story behind the cover – in which the Google search has played quite a part – Richard was able to show a cover

addressed to Frank Parkinson, a generous benefactor to his hometown University, Leeds; and even more personally, a cover printed for AC Cars, which he was able to illustrate with an advertisement found on the web for one of the company's vehicles from the mid-Thirties – his father's first car!

Returning to strict hotel themes, he made an excursion to Alexandria where he regretted that the old San Stefano no longer stood in seaside splendour, but again was able to show wartime use with a cover bearing the hotel's CDS addressed to Sydney. And a true delight despite its philatelic nature: the San Stefano Hotel Registration cachet, stamped on the face of another colourful cover, printed for the hotel and bearing no fewer than eight stamps of the De La Rue issues to Belgium. The postmark itself, Type HSS3, is difficult to find on cover; but the Registration cachet, as far as we know, is unique. If anyone has another example, please let the Secretary know!



At the end of a remarkable afternoon, the Chairman, Peter Andrews, praised the speaker's "very fine display", mentioning particularly how much the anecdotes and asides had embellished a quite wonderful collection of excellent material. Members were suitably generous with their applause.

Earlier, members – especially those from overseas - had been welcomed and the Secretary mentioned the hard work of Edmund Hall and Mike Murphy in preparing the recent *QC* and the present Auction 52, urging members to bid often and bid high. He urged members to visit TexPex in Dallas at the end of February 2014 (see *QC*); and sought help with the Meetings List for next year. All offers by speakers and general help with where and when meetings should be held will be gratefully received at [egyptstudycircle@hotmail.com](mailto:egyptstudycircle@hotmail.com).

**Report of the Meeting, November 9, De La Rue First Issue**

PRESENT: Peter Andrews (Chairman), John Davis (Deputy Chairman/Librarian), Mike Murphy (Secretary), Brian Sedgley (Treasurer), Edmund Hall (Editor/Webmaster), Sami Sadek (Committee), Jon Aitchison, Mike Bramwell, John Clarke, Sami Fereig (Canada), Peter Grech, Paul Green. Guests: Mrs Catherine Fereig, Mrs Helen Grech.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: John Sears (President), Angela Child, Mostafa El-Dars, Pauline Gittoes, Anton Jansen, Tony Schmidt, Lucien Toutounji, David Worrollo.

Members were treated to a research lesson at the experimental meeting in the Royal Philatelic Society's Committee Room, which proved large enough to accommodate our needs, and was finally supplied with frames thanks largely to the good offices of Jon Aitchison (ESC 661).

John Davis (ESC 213) provided an astonishing display of the Sphinx and Pyramid issue printed by De La Rue in London after the poor local printing of the Third Issue. The new stamps enjoyed a very extended life from 1879 until the Pictorials issue of 1914, during which the basic designs went through an extensive series of changes, not only in face value and colour, but also in watermark, type of paper used – and even currency when Egypt switched from paras to millièmes in January 1888.



*Die proof of 1pi value 1 SEP 88: typical First Series with dark eyes and large part of shoulder visible*



*Die proof of 5 mills value dated 22 JULY 87: typical of Second Series*



*Third Series die proof for 3 mills 11 MAY 91: except for the eyes, it looks similar to the second series*



*Fourth Series: die proof of the 4 mills value dated 20 SEP 06, showing sky design modified as issued*

Designs also developed through the period, in points of fine detail, but John was able to trace that development, paying full tribute to the exploratory work of the late John Revell (ESC 78, who died in 1998), who was first to recognise and detail these differences, based on a series of illustrations of various die proofs (he was also first to recognise the two types of star and crescent watermarks, using the X-ray machine at his wife's hospital in those long-lost days before scanners!).

The full range of stamp issues was shown, including (almost all) blocks of four of all values of the 1879-83 issue and a 10-para green of December 1884 with narrow watermark, printed on paper remaining from the 10-para grey. The 1884-88 issue, available until 1914, experienced considerable colour variations as well as the change in currency and the issue of chalk-surfaced stamps in 1906. John was able to also show a block of 60 of the 5-para and two blocks of 30 to illustrate how the sheets appeared from the printers.

In August 1893 the 2-piastre value, originally orange or orange-yellow, was reissued in orange-brown, and in this period of currency change a 10-piastre stamp was issued for the first time since the First Issue in 1866. This stamp is easily available loose and used, but is not easy to find on cover or parcel card.

The full range and extent of these various issues are explained (not entirely without complications) in any good catalogue, and John was able to show many rare and wonderful usages and a wide range of postmarks, including overseas usage, the 5 mills used on a soldier's rate card in 1897 and the 1-mill En Ville rate for Cairo and Alexandria.

Most fascinating of all, however, was the explanation of the design changes (see previous page), which took everyone by surprise in their meticulous attention to research detail. John listed John Revell's original observations as follows:

**First series:** Sphinx has darkened eyes and flat left cheek, shading of right cheek continues on ear lobe, much of right shoulder shown. The desert foreground is different for each value. **Applies to:** All stamps issued before 1888, and all 1,2 and 5-piastre values until replaced by the Pictorials in 1914.

**Second series:** wide open eyes (represented by hook lines), chubby left cheek (upward curved shading), no shading to right cheek except curves near ear, less shoulder than in Series 1. **Applies to:** One, two and five mills, and new 10-piastre value

**Third series:** combination of Series 1 and 2 characteristics: eyes and left cheek as Series 1, shading of right cheek stops at ear, shoulder as Series 2, lines on head-dress slope less than on other millième values. Applies only to: 1892 3-mills stamp, issued first in marone and later reissued in yellow.

**Fourth series:** similar to Third series, but with sky modified (ie largely disappeared), lines above pyramid (except top two) interrupted by vertical cuts, lines at right of the pyramids do not touch its side, head-dress outline accentuated. Applies only to the new 4m value.

Earlier in the meeting members were told of the interesting new research project set up by Professor Sami Fereig, originally from Egypt, who now lives in Canada. Based so far on his own collection, he is exploring the post offices of Egypt, mapping their positions, exploring their histories and those of the town in which they are found, and detailing the various postmarks used at each office.

It is a massive piece of work, intended as an introduction not only to the stamps and postal history of the country but also to set the record straight in relation to the development and great advances made during the period of Mohammed Ali and his successors on the throne of Egypt. He seeks the help of all members in carrying through this research, and intends eventually to publish on CD with a view to a) enabling younger enthusiasts in Egypt and overseas to afford such a comprehensive body of work, and b) to allow almost instant updating as new material comes to light. For more details see his introductory article on page 284.

Members were happy to hear from Peter Grech (ESC 266) that the second volume of his masterly *The French Post Offices in Egypt* has now been published despite continuing problems with his sight. Detailing the period from 1876 to the closure of the offices in 1931, the second volume takes the total pagination up to 350, filled

with Peter's typically detailed research and an astonishing number of illustrations of all aspects. You will find more details on page iv.

Wearing his Librarian hat, John Davis was most grateful to announce a gift from Peter Heim (ESC 384) in Germany of various valuable and valued items for the Library: they could easily form the heart of a research into postal history, post offices and place names, and can of course be borrowed from the Library, John's full Report can be found on page 288.

The Secretary announced earlier that our President, John Sears, and our New Zealand Agent, Tony Chisholm, were both recovering from surgery, and the meeting wished them well for a speedy return to full health.

He announced that the Auction closing on October 5 had been completed entirely without hassle, with half of the 55 lots sold to 44 bidders (did you bid? 44 is not a lot out of 190 members!). All winners have their material, all vendors have their cash, and on sales of just under £7000 there is a grand total of £889.66 commission for the Circle. A close eye is being kept on postage costs.

He mentioned problems with shortage of volunteer speakers and other difficulties with next year's meetings list (see page 265) and sought a volunteer to act as Meeting Secretary: a novelty for the Circle, but an interesting and valuable position. Partly as a result of the proximity of Christmas and Spring Stampex, a decision was taken to abandon the regular January meeting for 2014: this decision will be kept under review. The two-hour meeting at Stampex will take the form of a Live Auction (lists to the Secretary by January 15 please: we can take a maximum of 200 lots); and the AGM will move to May.

It will be accompanied by an experimental novelty in a mini room-auction: members attending may bring up to five items for sale, bidders will place the amount they are prepared to pay on a sheet, and at the end of the meeting winners will be decided. They will pay, in the room, in cash (no cheques, no credit cards) direct to the vendor, plus 10 per cent commission to the Treasurer, Brian Sedgley.

At the end of the meeting the Chairman, Peter Andrews, thanked John Davis for a comprehensive and entertaining afternoon's display, and wished all those present a happy and relaxing Christmas period. Members were generous with their applause for John.

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### **Letter to the Hon. Secretary**

Dear Sir,

My late father-in-law, John H E Gilbert, was Deputy Chairman of the Egypt Study Circle between 1949 and 1967. After that, he became Chairman until his death in 1974. I believe that, during this time, he was awarded an Egyptian head by the Egypt Study Circle as a token of gratitude and respect for his work.

The head in question is about 4in high and is presented in a Perspex case. It is made of limestone and has traces of colour still on it. It portrays a carving of what I understand may have been an official in the time of the 18th Dynasty (c1400 BC).

My family are now interested in the origins of the head and I wondered if in your records of the society you might have information about the head, or about the circumstances under which it was presented to John Gilbert, that you would be willing to share with me?

I look forward to hearing from you.

**Helen Gilbert (Mrs)**

Note: This poignant matter was mentioned at the meeting on Saturday. Although two colleagues present were ESC members at the time, nothing could be recalled of the limestone head. And a quick trawl through the QC reveals nothing. Does anyone have any knowledge of it? – **Mike Murphy**



**“Winter Palace, Cairo” – A fake postmark**

**Lucien Toutounji (ESC 264)**

Hot on the heels of Vahe Varjabedian’s reported new Mena House circular date-stamp, discovered only 92 years after its apparent use (see *QC* 245, June 2013, page 223), comes another completely unknown hotel CDS. But whereas a certain amount of doubt was cast on the Mena House offering, this one is much easier to spot as a definite fake.



The marking is used to make an attractive cancellation of an 80 millièmes example of the 1933-38 Air Mail issue on the reverse of a postcard addressed to Perpignan in France, with the message “Wishing you good luck”. There is an information strike alongside, but no arrival marking.

But whoever made the CDS did not know too much about Egyptian geography. The lower half reads CAIRO, but the two lines of Arabic in the upper half clearly form the equivalent of “Luxor / (Winter Palace)”. Merely some 450 miles apart. And is if that schoolboy bloomer was not enough to cast doubt on the CDS, the final nail in the coffin is that the card’s message is dated 12/9/30, but the postmark is 1 March 1931! Be on your guard.

**La plus ça change....**

While recently leafing through back copies of the *QC* (as Editors are wont to do), I came across the following note from a meeting report, in Vol VI, No 11 (January 1969, page 20):

The Editor of the Quarterly Circular lamented the lack of material reaching him from the newer members and hoped that more contributions (no matter how small) might be received in order that all should play their part in helping the publication of the journal. Anything even remotely connected with Egyptian philately was of interest and the Quarterly Circular was the best possible medium for airing knowledge and possibly creating discussion and/or particularly correspondence.

Unfortunately, that note from 44 years ago rings a resounding bell today, despite all the changes in technology that make it easier to write a piece in 2013 (or even 2014!). We are VERY short of articles. Please play your part in making the *QC* a lively and active magazine fit, as they say, for purpose. Send something in: your fellow members will love it. But please it must relate somehow to Egyptian philately

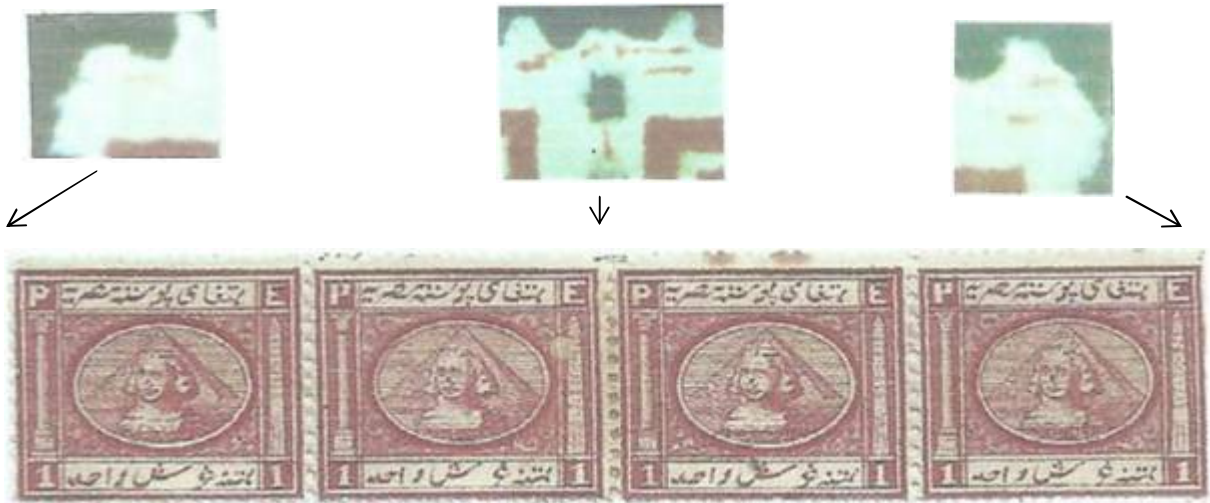
**1867 1 Piastre Guidelines**

**John Clarke (ESC 494)**

At the May 4 2013 meeting I showed a strip of four of the 1867 1 piastre red with guidelines in the top margin. The strip is mint with inverted watermark and no gum and perforated 15 x 12½, Type I, II, I, II (*Fig.1*). I can find no reference to guidelines in any published material on this issue.

I thought that perhaps they might be proofs, but again there is no mention of perforated proofs, only imperforate. I have a block of four plate proofs, imperforate, apart from the bottom margin, which is perf 11, Type III, IV, I, II: this has guidelines in the side margins (*Fig.2*), but they do not match with the guidelines on the strip of four. I also discovered a single used stamp with guidelines in the top-left hand comer (*Fig.3*): this is perforated 15 x 12½, Type I and the watermark is upright impressed on the face. Unusually, it is cancelled by three circular strikes of Alexandria? 13 LUG 1869, perhaps fiscal use? Here again the guidelines do not match with any of the others. Can anybody throw any light on these stamps?

It is interesting that Dr Byam and other leading figures and catalogues make no mention of these stamps.



*Fig.1*



*Fig.2*



*Fig.3*

## Egypt. The 5-para 1879 Provisional with Guide Marks in Four Corners

Peter A. S. Smith (ESC 74)

After more than 100 years, one would think that everything about these stamps would have been discovered and recorded in print. Therefore it was a great surprise when a new variety (actually a new type) of the 5 paras surcharge was discovered in the late 1990s. Even so, the discovery has been essentially overlooked (the description is buried in the book *Egypt: Stamps and Postal History*<sup>1</sup>, and it is not listed in any catalogue, general or specifically for Egypt). It is the purpose of this article to make the discovery better known and to amplify it.

The surcharge consisted of a large numeral 5, flanked by "paras" and the Arabic equivalent. At least one complete sheet of the normal stamp has survived, and none of the 200 positions shows registration guide marks. The new type, by contrast, has L-shaped guide marks in all four corners (*Fig. 1*). It obviously came from a different printing. This type is quite scarce, and I know of only about a half-dozen examples.

A plausible explanation is that the original printing consisted of a few sheets of 200, which were submitted to the postal authorities for approval before the bulk printing went forward. The authorities presumably objected to the guide marks and ordered them removed. These sheets were apparently mingled with the subsequently produced stock without the guide marks (a matter of simple economy). One might object that the stamps with guide marks should be considered as unissued proofs, except for the fact that at least two examples are known properly cancelled with what appears to be the normal (Cairo?) date-stamp type, inscribed "POSTE EGIZIANE" (*Fig. 2*) (definitely not the cancellation used for remainders). Unfortunately, the heavy black surcharge makes it impossible to decipher the cancellations fully.

There must have been more than one sheet of 200, more if they had to be shown to several dignitaries. Examples are known in both the perforation gauges of the parent stamp (12½, 12½ x 13½. A very rough estimate is that the type occurs on about one in 50 to 100 copies of the stamp, which would be consistent with a very small number of sheets being produced.

The sheets of the basic stamp included one inverted subject (tête-bêche), which therefore resulted in one example on each surcharged sheet having an inverted surcharge. One such example is actually in existence (compound perf. *Fig. 3*). It must not have come from a complete sheet with all surcharges inverted, for it would then be a much commoner variety. Although there are many constant flaws on the basic stamp, which was produced rather crudely, none of them occurs on the inverted cliché, so one cannot prove its position. However, the outer frame lines vary very slightly from one subject to another, as a result of trimming before assembly; the frame lines on the invert are not inconsistent with those on the inverted cliché. This error is obviously a rarity, probably only three or four having been produced.

The example shown has another interesting feature. The registration of the surcharge was somewhat offset toward the lower right. This caused the guide marks of four stamps to be printed at the upper left corner (and therefore to be mostly missing at the other corners). The shifted registration also indicates the existence of yet another sheet with the guide marks.

A lingering question is why there are both unused and used examples of the new type. A possible explanation is that some were in the supply being used by a newspaper when the change-over to the new issue by De La Rue (April, 1879) came about. The unused part could then make its way to the philatelic market as remainders.

Removal of the guide marks would not have been a simple matter, for there were 200 subjects on the printing stone, and removal would have been painstaking, requiring meticulous care not to damage the surcharge and not to smudge the stone. It was probably easier to erase the guide marks on the original drawing or on the original stone made from it. Then a fresh printing stone could be built up, free of guide marks.

In summary, we have these varieties:

perforated 12½x13½ ; ditto, surcharge inverted.

perforated 12½ (perhaps an example in this perforation with inverted surcharge will eventually turn up)

Fig.1



Fig.2



Fig.3



1. *Egypt: Stamps and Postal History*. Peter A. S. Smith, 1999  
*Collectors Club Philatelist*, in press, 2013.

## Update: Instructional Markings

Mike Murphy (ESC 240)

The Circle is grateful to those members who have responded to my study article in *QC 243* (Dec 2012, *Instructional Markings: Preliminary Report*), pp178-184 by sending in examples from their own collections. The study, which is integral to a clearer understanding of how the Egyptian Post Office worked, has moved ahead with eight unrecorded markings under the impetus of this article and the reaction to it ... but there remains much to be discovered.

I urge all members to examine their covers and let me have full

details of any new markings and extensions of dates of use for those already recorded. In a few cases we are working from scans or photocopies and the size of the handstamp in question remains in doubt. These will be detailed below: please report if you have one!



Most progress in recent months has been in one of the least expected areas, that of the handstamp type known as REB-7/8, with a town name incorporated in a bilingual French/Arabic "Return to Sender" marking. This had been illustrated only for Mansura (not uncommon) and Fayoum (rare) with a note that other towns had been reported. Now we have illustrations also of Benha, Guerga, Kafr el Zaiyat and Qena (this latter, *above*, bought in ESC Auction 48 a couple of years ago: congratulations to the buyer). Benha and Guerga both came to light in the recent Auction 52.

I illustrate new markings after detailing updates not needing illustration. No comment, no change.

- AFF-1** - Affrancatura Insufficiente—early date 12 MAR 72, and approx size 38x10mm. Can anyone help with the size?
- BUR-1** - Bureau des Rebutis bilingual—late date 6 IV 98.
- BUR-2** - Bureau des Rebutis bilingual—date 29 JU 08, size 30x25mm
- FOU-2** - Found in Mail Bag bilingual—date 2 FE 62, size 45x18mm.
- FRA-1** - boxed Franco—early date 29 JL 39
- FRA-2** - no-border Franco—late date 21 X 09
- INS-1** - Inssufficient Postage for Air Mail—date 16 MR 53, size 43x16mm
- NON-1** - Non Reclamé bilingual—late date 18 AU 58 (Alexandria)
- NON-2** - Non Reclamé / Quoicque ...—late date Oct 1913 (Cairo)
- REB-3** - Rebut à Remettre bilingual—date 28 II 17, size appx 35x27mm. Help please
- REB-7** - Fayoum town name—early date clarified: 2 MA 27
- REB-8** - Mansura town name—early date clarified: 5 MR 36
- REF-4/5/6** - trilingual Refused—new dates in August 1958 reported for 5/6, but these three markings are so similar that they might in face be one and the same. Sizes of 29x20 (for 5) and 30x21.5 (for 6) are reported. Please examine your markings and measure those clearly struck.

- RET-3** - Return to Sender magenta arrow - no further evidence. Probably not Egyptian
- RET-6** - Return to Sender bilingual oval with stars–Alexandria (29 X 13) and Cairo (8 XII 17)
- RET-7** - Return to Sender bilingual oval, no stars–Cairo late date 12 DE 42
- RET-8** - Return to Sender bilingual oval with Egypt–Cairo date 6 IX 13 (red)
- TAX-1** - Taxe Non Perçue–20 diagonal bars–size?
- TAX-2** - Taxe Non Perçue–11 diagonal bars–Alex black 7 AO 37, Cairo magenta ... 8 42; 28x16.5mm
- UNC-3** - Unclaimed trilingual - early date Cairo 29 JU 08; early date Alexandria June 1916
- Ar-2** - Return to Sender all-Arabic–new dates 28 AP 49 to 4 8 66

Here are the newly-discovered markings:



**DAM-1** – Damaged in Transit trilingual, 43x20mm, Mar (Apr?) 1943



**DEC-1** – Deceased trilingual, 22.xx18mm, 5 1 63



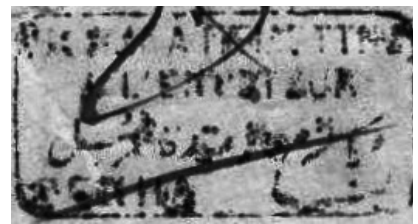
**INS-3** – Insufficiently Addressed bilingual, Alexandria 32x15mm, 21 IX 06



**NON-3** – Non Reclamé trilingual, 36x20, 19 AU 58. NB NON-1 same with line cut out?



**REB-9** – Rebut - Guerga, April 1916 – size?



**REB-10** – Rebut – Benha, 3 JU 13 – size?



**REB-11** – Rebut – Qena, 1 II 11 – size?



**REB-12** – Rebut – Kafr el Zayat – Oct 191 – size?



**UNC-6** – Unclaimed bilingual, 32x16mm, 17 AP 55. Close to UNC-1/2, but rounded box



**POS-1**, Postage Insufficient for Air Mail, 88x4, used Feb 1942



Colourful cover from Port Said Paquebot 2 FE 52 to Canada, given a clear example of FOU-2, Found in Mailbag Without Contents

Flimsy Air Mail cover franked 22 millièmes and sent from Asyut 2 FE 42 to New York. Air Mail indicator cancelled with straight-line POS-1. English only, with no Arabic, but must have been applied in Egypt since it would have been meaningless in the USA.



Registered cover from Cairo 2 VI 13 to Benha, refused and returned eventually to Cairo via REB-10, receiving oval RET-6 on arrival, 29 X 13, more than four months after despatch

### TPO Registration: Another Egyptian Mystery

**Ibrahim Shoukry (ESC 423) and Mike Murphy (ESC 240)**

For very many years the Egyptian railway system, both State Railways and the smaller light railways of the Delta and other countryside areas, shared an astonishingly successful co-operation. Train journeys large and small were co-ordinated in such a way that trains from smaller termini would arrive to find an Express train waiting to speed the mails on to the next large town so that letters were regularly delivered within 24 hours, even over long distances.

Many of the railway stations had post offices, and often a post office promoted to greater responsibilities would be recorded as being withdrawn from the hands of the stationmaster and given over to a Post Office official to run as postmaster. At the smaller end of the scale, in the countryside, a Rural postal station benefitting from the advent of a new railway line would have its affairs taken over by the stationmaster – and often the Rural route would become a TPO route.

But though it seems straightforward, many unanswered questions remain about just how the admittedly very efficient railway postal service worked. Why, for instance, do Stations not appear in the Postal Guides? Why do Post Office staff promotions and transfers to and from one Station office or another not appear in the *Postal Bulletin*, though those to and from Hotel offices do? Where were TPO markings actually applied? On the train? On arrival? Before departure?

In essence, TPO cancellations are easy to understand, signifying that the postal item in question travelled on such-and-such a train between A and B at such-and-such an hour and day. The accompanying Registration cachets are equally easy to understand once we pass the mute upright-R indicator, signifying that the item was registered at such and such an office, and that a numbered receipt was supplied.



*Bilbes-Mina el Qamh, 6 XII 17*



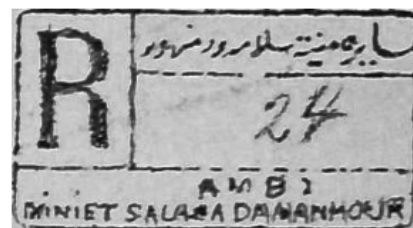
*Ambt. Miniet Salama-Damanhour 26 III ... year?*

But how does the system work when a TPO route has its own Registration cachet, bearing the names of both termini of the route travelled? Such a cachet surely points in the direction of the marking having been applied actually on the train, since it could only be specific to that journey rather than to the town at either end. This takes us into new realms ... of a “post office” at work actually on the train, able to offer receipts for Registered items that were not posted at either terminus, but on the train itself. And how could that have worked?



We know of few of these TPO Registration markings, but there are just enough, and spread over enough years, to indicate that the practice might have been more widespread than might seem likely. What follows is a brief listing:

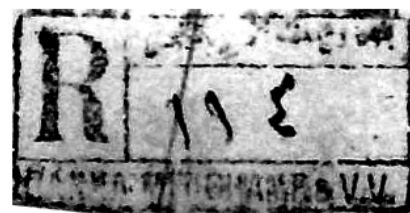
**Ambt / Miniet Salama-Damanhour**, 26 II ... (the year indicator is lost). Addressed to Cairo, and franked with 5m and 1pi of the DLR Fourth Issue, cancelled with TPO as Type 3A1 but with “saayra” below the town names (recorded 1896-1916). Receipt number 24 in Arabic and European, with the cachet apparently crossed through.



**Bilbes-Mina el Qamh**, 6 XII 17, addressed to Cairo, franked with a pair of 5m Pictorials, cancelled with TPO as Type 7A3, but with month indicator in Roman figures, previously recorded only 1921-23. Receipt number 735 in Arabic only.

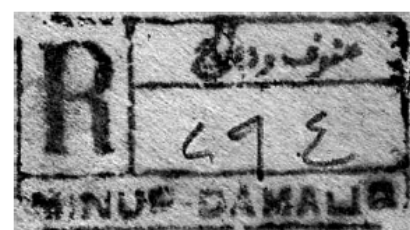
**Banha-Mit Ghamr & V.V.**, 27 AP 23, addressed to Cairo, franked with an irregular block of 3x5m Fuad, cancelled with TPO 7A3.7, previously recorded 1929-37. Receipt number 114 in Arabic only.

**Fayum-Gharaq**, 4 OC 27, addressed to Fayum, franked with a strip of 3x5m First Fuad, cancelled with TPO as Type 7A4, but with the month indicator in European, previously recorded only 1914-22. Receipt number 342 in European only.



Remarkably, we are also able to record another two-termini Registration cachet but this time from a Rural source rather than a railway TPO. This is:

**Minuf-Damalig**, 17 NO 30, addressed to Cairo, franked with a single and a pair of 5m Fuad, cancelled with the Rural Service CDS Minuf-Damalig after collection from the Rural station of Damallig (cartouche). The CDS is recorded as Type RS X200.101, from 1918-33, though we can find no earlier mention of the route than 1920. No TPO marking is recorded for this combination.



There may well be more of these markings out there. Please let the writers know if you have any similar Registration cachets, either on TPO or Rural covers. To add credence to the fact that these really are “travelling” markings, two of them – Miniet Salama-Damanhour and Fayum-Gharaq – include the word “saayra” in their Arabic inscription.

It is not easy to understand why these Registration markings should have been created. In all cases the journeys involved are far from lengthy, and in the cases of Bilbes-Mina el Qamh and Banha-Mit Ghamr they are connecting large towns. Setting aside the Rural, the other two examples both link small towns (Miniet Salama and Gharaq) with regional centres (Fayum and Damanhour).

There seems to be no regional or provincial connection between the markings, spread as they are all over Lower Egypt, so they are unlikely to have been of local manufacture but must have had central sanction.

What is more likely to be significant is that the first three are all on lines of the Delta Light Railways, and the fourth on a route of the Fayoum Light Railways Ltd. But even the extra autonomy given by the one step removal from the State Railways cannot have been a passport to changing the way the Post Office worked.

And even if that were the case, how could it possibly apply to the Rural postman? He was originally called upon to carry the upright-R Registration indicator and to give receipts, but nowhere in the regulations or the official published directions can we find any mention of a named Registration cachet, single terminus or dual, though there are examples where a town Registration cachet has been applied on the cover's arrival at its parent office.

In which case, where was the Registration fee paid, and how did the village sender get his receipt back from the parent office? The same questions of course apply when/if the dual-termini cachet was applied on a train.

These markings remain an intriguing mystery, adding to the multiplicity of questions that remain about the workings of the Post Office. We the Study Circle have travelled far since our foundation in 1935. But there is still far to go.



*Banha-Mit Ghamr & V.V., 27 AP 23, with TPO 7A3.7. Receipt number 114 in Arabic only.*



*Fayum-Gharaq, 4 OC 27, with TPO as Type 7A4 but with month indicator in European. Receipt number 342 in European only.*



*Minuf-Damalig, 17 NO 30, with Rural Service Minuf-Damalig and cartouche of Rural station Damallig. Type RS X200.101 no TPO marking for this route*

**WWII Civilian Airmail : U.S.A. - Belgian Congo – Egypt**

**Lucien Toutounji (ESC 264)**

1941 - FIRST FLIGHT: SAN JUAN - LEOPOLDVILLE – CAIRO

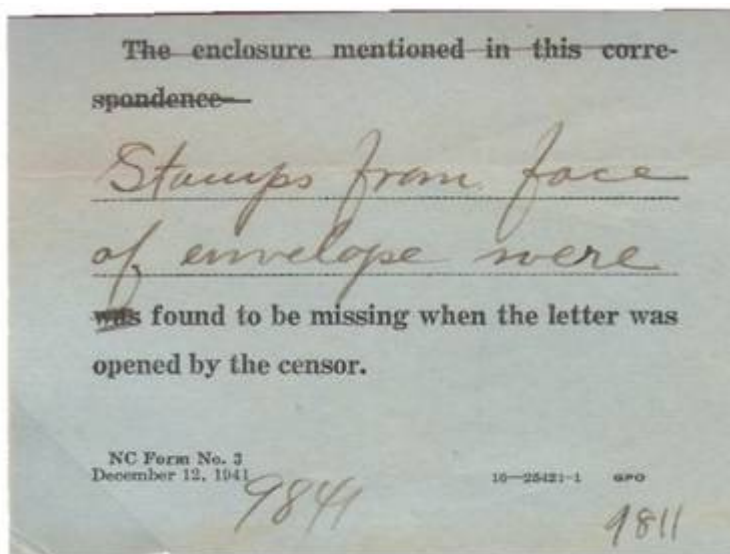
On December 6, 1941, one day before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Pan American Airways, using a Boeing 314 flying boat, inaugurated a fortnightly service from Miami to Leopoldville via Brazil, to fly war materiel to the British in Egypt and provide a South Atlantic airmail connection to the US.



*Believed to be the only cover from this flight reaching Egypt*

This cover, sent from San Juan in Puerto Rico on that day, addressed to the Philippines via Leopoldville, carries a First Flight cachet. It arrived in Leopoldville on December 11, and was flown to Cairo by Sabena, receiving a circular bilingual Egyptian censor handstamp and Cairo backstamp

On January 3, 1942, after Pearl Harbor, transpacific flights via the Philippines were cancelled, and the cover was returned to sender from Cairo and censored on return to US. The franking is unknown, though the airmail rate Puerto Rico-Philippines was \$US60c: see Censor 9841's note about missing stamps.



\* The above article is closely similar to those in Lucien's recently published *Egypt Early Airmail 1910-1936*, a printed version of the collection for which he has won several awards at international exhibition. It received a Large Gold at Portugal 2010 in Lisbon, the first time an Egypt airmail exhibit had won such prestigious recognition. Lucien has produced a book of the exhibit in colour and included several further pages. As he says in the foreword, he does not pretend that this is a totally accurate and complete record for the period covered but it is undoubtedly an essential addition to the library of any Egyptian philatelist.

He is offering the book (160 pages, A4, spiral bound) at €50 (including postage) by PayPal. However there is a very small print run so be quick with your requests: please contact the Hon Secretary.

## Military Matters - Czechoslovak Forces in Egypt during WWII.

**Edmund Hall (ESC 239)**

The Munich Agreement of September 30, 1938, allowed Germany to annex part of Czechoslovakia. German forces occupied the remaining territories in Operation Southeast on March 15, 1939. Poland had annexed Zaolzie in October 1938, Hungary and Carpathian Ruthenia March 1939. The remaining Czech territories became the German satellite Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia with the remainder of Czechoslovakia becoming Slovakia as a German satellite. Slovak troops took part in the invasion of Poland.

Many Czechoslovakians soon left for Poland, hoping to join the Poles in the impending with Germany and some went to France. Several crossed from France to Britain to join the RAF and other technical units of the British Army, especially after the fall of France in 1940. Sergeant Josef Frantisek, flying with No 303 Polish Fighter Squadron, had 17 confirmed kills, which made him the highest scoring pilot in the Battle of Britain.

Like the Poles, many Czechs/Slovaks made their way to Beirut via Romania, Hungary and Cyprus. As the Czechoslovak Government in Exile intended to form their army in France, many were shipped there. With the fall of France and the French colonies siding with Vichy France, the remaining 200 or so Czechs crossed over into Palestine on July 29, 1940.

On November 1, 1940, the Czechoslovak Infantry Battalion No 11 East (Czech: *11. československý pěší prapor - Východní*) was formed at Gedera under the command of Lt.-Col. Karel Klapalek. In early December 1940, after being equipped by the British, the battalion underwent 11 weeks of training in desert warfare. In February 1941 they moved to Sidi Bishr and Agami camps where reinforcements joined them with new arrivals from Russia. Here they performed guard duties until coming up to full strength.



*One of six propaganda stickers issued in Jerusalem October 1942*

Attached to 23rd Infantry Brigade, the battalion moved on May 30, 1941, to the Sidi Hanaism area near Mersa Matruh during Operation Battleaxe. They were held in reserve and took no part in the fighting. In April 1941 the Czechs and Slovaks moved to Palestine, with 23rd Brigade, for the impending invasion of Vichy-held Syria, Operation Exporter. The French surrendered on July 11 and the 23rd Infantry Brigade was then assigned the task of guarding the Syrian border with Turkey. The Polish forces declined to be part of this operation for fear of antagonising the French.

In August 1941 the Czechoslovak Ministry of National Defence repeated its request for the battalion to be transferred to the Czechoslovak forces in Great Britain. The British commander-in-chief rejected the request and, after a meeting with Lt-Col Klapalek, agreed to transfer the battalion to the besieged Tobruk. By now it was 785 men strong with four companies. On October 20 the battalion was shipped in to Tobruk where it served for the remainder of the siege under the Polish Carpathian Brigade, until around December 13, 1941. During the siege the battalion lost 14 soldiers killed and 81 wounded: it had become part of the "Tobruk Rats". Following the siege, the battalion stayed in the Tobruk area, first under XIII Corps, then 38th Indian Infantry Brigade, until that brigade left for Egypt on March 27, 1942.

On April 7, 1942, the battalion departed for Palestine. It was decided to convert from an infantry unit to an anti-aircraft one, and the battalion became part the 4th Anti-aircraft Brigade at Haifa. On April 21, 1942, it was reorganised into the 200th Czechoslovak Light Anti-aircraft Regiment - East. Equipped with Bofors anti-aircraft guns, it grew in strength 1,547 men in three battalions, each of four companies, a signal platoon and a repair section. On July 21, 1942, it was given the task of the anti-aircraft defence of the port of Haifa, its oil refinery, and the port of Beirut.

In December 1942 the 200th Czechoslovak Light Anti-aircraft Regiment - East was subordinated to the British 17th Brigade and again transferred to Tobruk, where it remained until June 23, 1943. With the war in

North Africa over, the 1,333 Czechoslovak soldiers boarded the *Mauretania* on July 4, 1943, in the port of Tewfik and left for Great Britain.

I have seen only a few covers from Egypt that came from the Czechs. Those from Palestine are, while still rare, rather more easily found. Hornung (2003) states that the Czech forces had no handstamps of their own and used the British FPOs. I have seen only FPO 38 and 242 on cover. He also states that the Czechs were very security conscious, the fear being that the Germans could possibly use information for reprisal purposes in occupied Czechoslovakia. Use of the civilian postal services was forbidden. The covers were to be endorsed, in pencil, "Written in Czech". Wagner (1992) states that the Czechs made use of the Polish FPO PP111 when at Tobruk.



*FPO 38, 20 DE 41, then at Tobruk*



*FPO ? 23 DE.?, inscribed "Written in Czech"*

References: *Czechoslovaks in the Middle East*. Vratislav Palkoska and Otto Hornung. Monograph No.16 Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of Great Britain 2003.

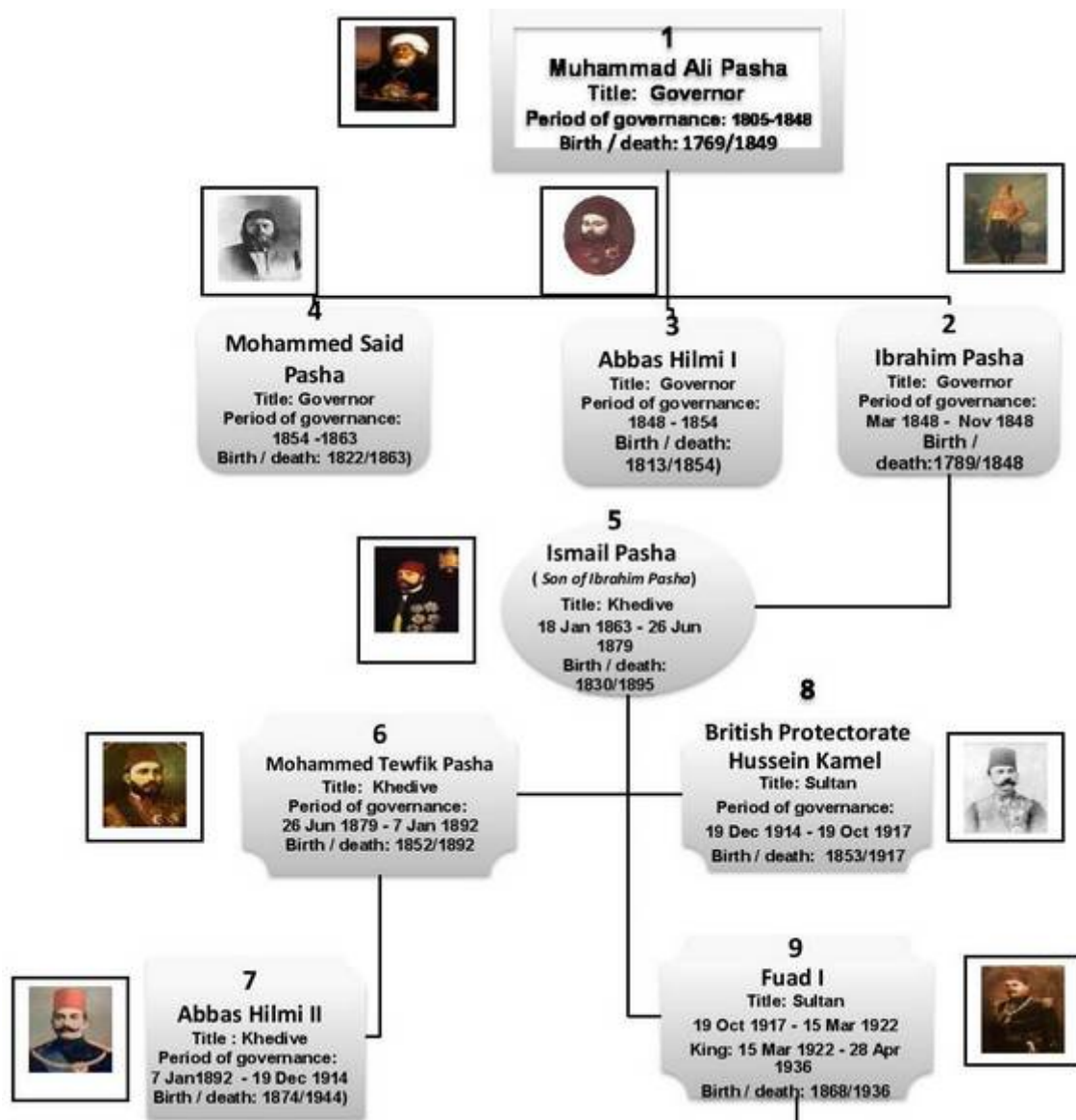
*History of the Polish Army Postal Service Middle East and Italy 1940-1940*. Ryszard Wagner. Caldra House 1992.

## New Research into Egypt's Postal History

**Sami Fereig (ESC 569)**

The main objective of my new and large-scale piece of research is to document the postal history of Egypt under the dynasty of the Mohamed Ali family, which extended from 1805 to 1953. My eventual intention is to publish bilingually, in English and Arabic, in CD form, making the research available to young would-be collectors, and also allowing virtually instant updates as and when required.

To explain the structure and objective of my work I should say first that I have divided the Mohamed Ali dynasty into different sections according to each ruler, each with a brief description of the political and economic situation at that time. An introduction of the time leading up to Mohamed Ali, and a tailpiece of what happened at the time of the Republic will be added.



*A cropped version of Sami Fereig's Egyptian Royal Family tree*

I should very much appreciate any help or material that any member might be willing to provide on loan, with of course appropriate acknowledgement from my side for such a contribution to the work. Similarly, I should be enormously grateful if any member might be willing to review a section or sections of the work, and again an acknowledgement would be instantly given.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to address this meeting, and hope that I shall be able to come again to present the work as it progresses.

1. The main objective is to document the range and extent of the post offices in which Egyptian stamps were used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In my researches I have relied heavily on the collection I obtained from Professor Peter Smith (ESC 74), as well as on the considerable number of stamps I have acquired over the last ten or 12 years.

The total number of stamps I have examined is of the order of about 4,000 from the First, Second, Third and Fourth issues, distributed over the 27 governorates of Egypt, and the total number of post offices for which I have postmark evidence is no fewer than 375.

This research has been divided into 17 binders – two of which, Alexandria and Gharbieh, I present for examination today. The binders accommodate every governorate, and I have listed all the post offices within each governorate, attaching a list of tables indicating the locations of the governorates, their capitals, and distances of the capitals from Cairo. This work is now complete.

This work will eventually be available in electronic form because it is a massive volume of information. The other advantage of the electronic format is that it can easily be updated to accommodate more relevant stamps if I find them, so I can add them to the collection.

2. The second objective is to document Egypt's commemorative stamps and their use. Commemoratives are issued to mark a special occasion, rather than simply to defray postage costs, as definitives are, so each carries a particular relevance to specific political, economic or social events of the time they were issued. This work has progressed significantly and I am thinking of adding the commemoratives of the city cancellations to this work since I have already sorted them out. Again this will be presented in CD format since the volume is otherwise not easy to handle.

3. The third objective is to document Egyptian post office cancellations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which will be of considerable use in complementing the work of the post offices of that period. I have brought examples of what I have done, in which I have relied entirely on the work of Professor Smith. Again I should very much welcome advice on how I should proceed in this area.

4. The fourth objective is to complete a book on the history of Mohamed Ali and his family, and the main postal events that occurred during their reign. This volume has the working title *Forerunners of the Viceregal/Khedival Egyptian Post and the Foreign Post Offices in Egypt*, although in fact it is very likely that the final work will extend beyond merely the forerunners. For each section so far written I have prepared a brief overview of the history of the period, and then described the postal events that occurred during each reign.

5. The fifth objective is to set this coverage of the postal history of Egypt at a very introductory level, directed not at the specialist but at the novice. So I have included nothing that might be considered advanced, and I should very much welcome members' guidance as to what is considered crucially essential information that must be included, to set against this information considered suitable only for an advanced collector. It is my intention to present information about the coin used in Egypt during each era, to give some sort of tangible meaning to the value of the stamps throughout the period in question.

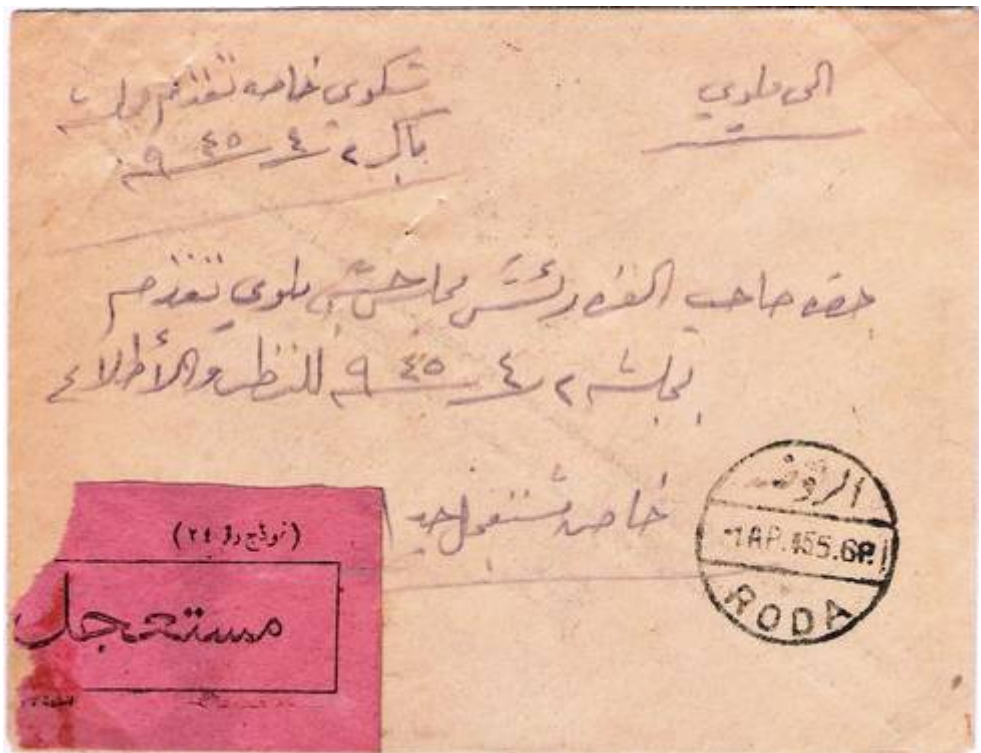
The title of the books is not yet settled, nor whether it should be one volume or two: I have decided only on the cover. But the book, or books, will be published with a CD attached, which might potentially include other work.

Although I have a grand vision, I am still feeling my way in some aspects of this work, and have learned only recently of the potential mass of official documentation available which might augment some of my researches. I am very much open to suggestion, and should very much like to correspond with any member who might be interested in carrying this research forward. My email address is [sami\\_fereig@yahoo.com](mailto:sami_fereig@yahoo.com) and I should be delighted to hear from all and every one of you.

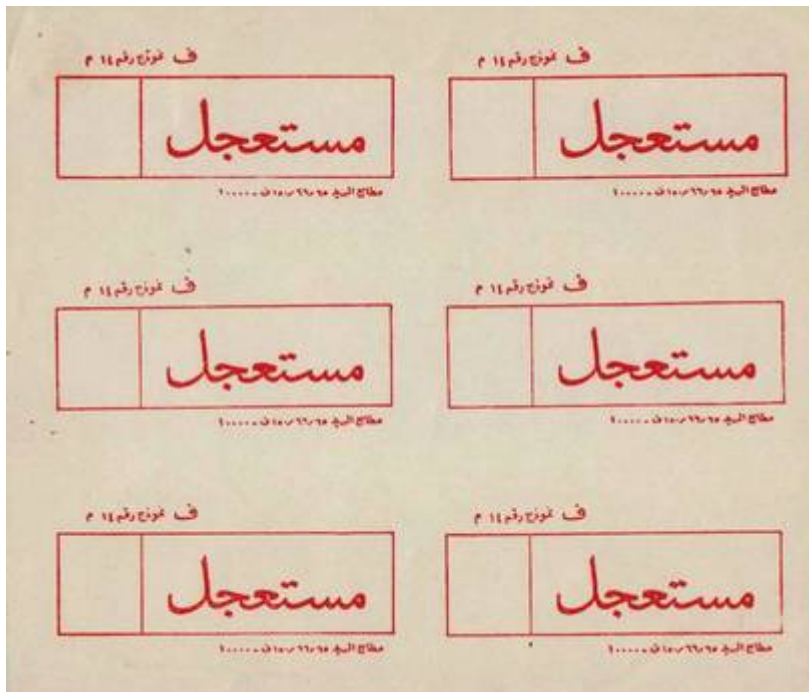
Official Express Mail

Lucien Toutounji (ESC 264)

Official express mail between governmental administrations was unknown until the year 2000, when three covers surfaced, recovered from discarded official archives, sent from a government administration in Roda, the Cairo district, to other arms of government. All three carry the hitherto unrecorded Official Express pink label, inscribed in Arabic with the one word *moustaagel*, meaning simply "Express".



The cover illustrated was sent from a governmental body in Roda on April 1, 1945, between 5-6 PM, and received a distribution backstamp of Mallawi at 7AM the next day. The cover is unfranked, as all official mail addressed inside Egypt was for years exempted from postage charges. This is one of only three covers known to bear the Official pink label.



**Mike Murphy adds:** Lucien's note rang a bell with me, and it is a great pity that the example he shows has suffered in such a way that the peripheral printing notes underneath the label itself can no longer be read. My small mint sheet of six examples, imperforate like the original above, has the Post Office administration number 14 rather than 24 on Lucien's example, and was apparently printed in 100,000 copies for the year 1965-66.

It does look remarkably like a more modern version of Lucien's pink label.



## Army Post Stamp Oddity

### Edmund Hall (ESC239)

On our Circle website I have placed my collection showing the use and abuse of the Army labels and stamps.

I recently came across this cover, and at first glance thought it nothing unusual.

It appears to be 4x10 millièrre stamps cancelled by an FPO.



On closer inspection, however, the FPO proves to be a cancel of Manchester 21 dated 1 JA 40. The letter arrived in South Africa with a receiver mark of 23 1 40.



I don't for a moment believe that the stamps were valid for postage in the UK. Had the sender recently returned from Egypt, maybe he or she had brought the already correctly franked letter with them. Or perhaps the fact that the addressee was a Lieutenant Colonel and OBE persuaded the post office to ignore the irregular use of these stamps. At any rate, it passed successfully on its journey halfway across the world.

## New Definitives

### Edmund Hall (ESC 239)

In *QC* 243 p185 of last December I portrayed three new definitive 50pt, £E1.5, and £E2.5. Since then a £E3 (Ramesses II) and £E4 (Akhenaten) have been issued. The 50pt has been issued with a colour change along with a new colour for the £E3 although it was issued only in the last year.



As before I cannot make any rhyme or reason for the values chosen – do they match any meaningful rate and why the colour change? Could any of our Egyptian members enlighten us?

Note the spelling of the names are as they appear on the stamps.

**Librarian's Report, November Meeting 2013**

This report is by way of a THANK YOU to our distinguished member in Germany, Mr Peter Heim (ESC 384).

Peter kindly offered a list of books for the ESC Library, one of which was a very expensive volume on Egyptian Railways that, following a discussion with the Hon. Sec., was offered and sold in the recent Auction 52. The proceeds were therefore returned to Peter, and one of our members obtained a rare book.

Having written to thank Peter for his generosity, it now remains for me to advise what has been donated, mostly maps and lists of post offices. These will undoubtedly help in the study of postmarks and the like.

*Index to Place Names; Appearing on the Normal 1:100,000 Scale Map Series of Egypt* by Survey of Egypt. Published by the Ministry of Finance and printed by Government Press, Cairo, 1932.

*Egyptian Postal Guide No. 46* By the Ministry of Communications, General Post Office, Cairo and printed by Government Press, Cairo, 1932.

*List of Names of Mudirias. Principal Towns and Villages Forming Fiscal Units* with an introductory note explaining the spellings adopted. Published by Ministry of Finance Egypt and Survey of Egypt, printed Government Press, Cairo, 1920.

*Rapport sur L'Exercice de l'Année 1878* by Administration des Postes Egyptiennes. In French.

*Budget du Gouvernement Egyptian pour l'Exercice 1883.* Published by Ministère des Finances. Printed by Imprimerie Nationales de Boulaq. In French.

*Budget Provisoire du Gouvernement Egyptien pour l'Exercice 1884.* Published by Ministère des Finances. Printed by Imprimerie Nationale de Boulaq. In French.

What appears to be a listing of towns and villages in English with the Arabic equivalents; hardback published in 1955, with the title in just Arabic. I am at a loss! Looks official.

*Egypt Post: List of Post Offices* with what may be postcodes. Egyptian Postal Administration 1983. In Arabic.

*Egypt Post:* another similar, but shorter! Published 1991, in Arabic.

*Survey of Egypt Maps* (hardback covers), published by Ministry of Finance. Scale 1:3,000. Delta Barrage. Scale 1: 100,000: Beni Suef Sheet No. 68/60, Dairut Sheet 52/54, 52/60; Luxor Sheet 32/72, 32/78; Manfalut Sheet 48/54, 48/60; Minya Sheet 56/54, 56/60; Samalut Sheet 60/54/60/60

*International Maps of the World*, 1:100,000 Aswan 2nd Edition 1946, Wadi Halfa 2nd Edition 1946.

*Topographical Map of Egypt*, 1:100,000 1st Edition 1953: Bitter Lake, Suez

*Agypten-Egypt. Strassenkarte Road Map* 1:950,000, published Kümmerley + Frey, c1990.

Provisional Issue (Photocopies of historic maps), 1:100,000: Alexandria, Benha, Damanhur, Damietta, Kafr el-Zaiyat, Port Said, Tanta.

Unbound photocopy of Chichini. Plus a large number of *L'Orient Philatélique* as yet not listed or catalogued.

Once again my thanks to Peter Heim, and please feel free to borrow!

**John Davis**

### Some Thoughts on Obtaining Material.

I have been collecting for over 35 years now, and so have noticed how the ways in which business is done are changing. In the early days it was stamp shops ... remember those? ... trade fairs and auctions. The shops have gone and I find stamp fairs hardly worth the bother. At Stampex it's the usual dealers with the same overpriced material that has been sitting in their boxes for as long as I can remember.

And then along came the internet – I've been connected for 17 years – with eBay and others. Suddenly I could view and pay from my own home sans the elbows and the precarious balancing of a box at a stamp show. I remember buying a cover on eBay for a few pounds: it was a duplicate of a £50 cover, I had but a nicer one at that. I got a £50 cover for £4 – wow! It took a little while to sink in that because I was the only bidder my £50 cover was in fact worth only £4, or less. After a time eBay bargains began to disappear and more and more material was being offered by dealers. Amusingly, some dealers were offering the same material on eBay as in their boxes, but at a much reduced price.

Have you noticed that nowadays material keeps reappearing. I saw nice pair of Egypt military covers for sale but, tempting as they were, I thought the price a little on the high side. But they were on the circular path. They were being offered by a dealer at Midpex, so I offered to buy the two with a small discount. The dealer said that the price we agreed was his buying price from the Alan Brown sale. This sale I had bought from, some 15 years ago! Looking up the catalogue, I found that the two covers were there for about the price I paid. I asked him why the covers kept reappearing: it seems that dealers put items on eBay and if unsold they automatically roll over at only a small charge to the dealer. eBay has almost become one giant virtual dealer's box. That's why so many items are "Buy now".

One of the dealers I have bought from – not Egypt; he does Russia - has an interesting take on his website under the title: Auctions or Stamp Shows? One Dealer's Perspective (somewhat paraphrased):

"At the end of the tax year the question is, have I actually made any money? At the same time, I am looking at my results from the Corinthia auction just closed. It seems I sold 19 of the 35 lots they accepted – 54 per cent - which is in the Could Do Better class. But the 19 lots went for 57 per cent over their combined "start" prices. That is in the Good, or more likely, Quite Good, class since the "start" prices are meant to be attractively low.

The gap between what an auction buyer pays and the seller gets probably averages about a third: buyers pay 20-25 per cent in commission and VAT and so on, and sellers pay 10 per cent commission. That's a big gap. But if a small dealer like me takes a stand at a big stamp show the costs - travel, hotels, food - will easily eat up a third of the gross turnover. Big dealers aim to work on a smaller ratio of costs to turnover and some may achieve 10-15 per cent. In the past, more dealers than today probably achieved lower figures like that. Nowadays fewer collectors attend stamp shows and there is less money being spent.

There are however two big differences from a dealer's perspective between auctions and shows. At auction, prices can go UP and quite often do; at shows they can only go DOWN, because everyone wants a discount. In addition, an auction can reach a worldwide audience through catalogues and online catalogues. Provided these are precise and profusely illustrated, the cost to the buyer of taking part in an auction can be almost non-existent - it's not necessary to travel to view.

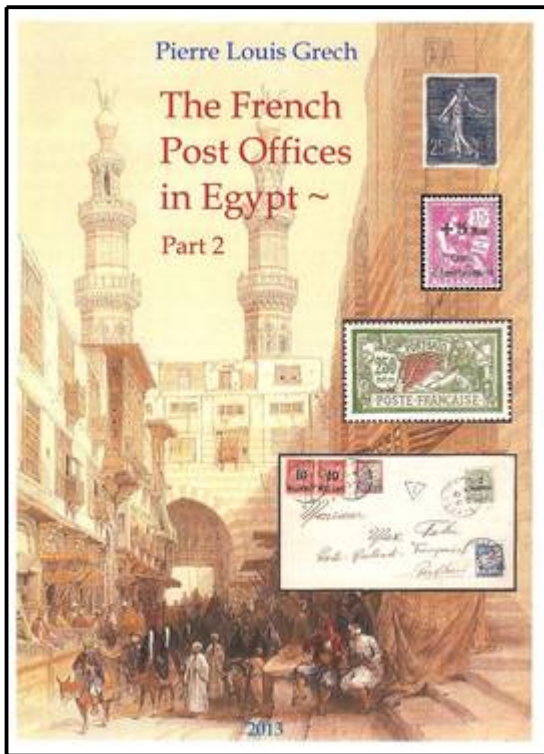
As a result, dealers now tend to shift better material to auction since they can avoid the tiresome debates involved in selling at stamp shows and they can reach a wider market. But moving material away from stamp shows creates a vicious circle ... collectors start complaining that they can't find anything to buy and so spend less, in effect pushing up expenses for the dealers who have taken stands. Of course, shows provide an outlet for material that sells for prices below those a serious auction house will accept for "start" prices. So shows remain outlets for items under, say, 100 (£, \$, €). And there is a low-cost alternative to auctions and stamp shows: this is supplying clients by post, where expenses drop virtually to the cost of postage and keeping the office warm."

So it seems for "good", that is, pricey, items, it's the auction house. For cheaper items it's the internet. Certainly parts of my collection would have been impossible without it the rare and exotic items (to me, that is!) bought for a few pounds that dealers and auction houses didn't want to be bothered with. And most certainly my all-world military collection would have been impossible for some of those "non collected" countries where locals offering material just never seen in a dealer's box. But I do miss the chat and swapping of knowledge you used to get with some of the true philatelist dealers.

**Editor**

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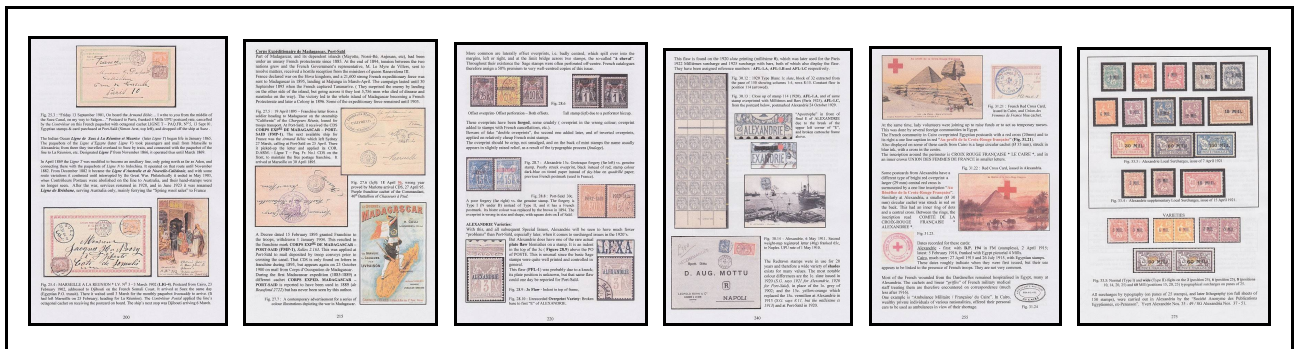
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