

The Quarterly Circular of THE EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE



March Quarter 2019 – Vol XXIII No 9 – Whole Series No 268 – Pages 195-218

CONTENTS

Meetings 195, Meeting report 196-97, Member changes 197, Obituary 198, Review iii

ARTICLES

Railway stations during 1879-1914: Part 5	Ronny Van Pellecom / Alain Stragier	pp. 199-209
Cancelled-back: Discovery or fake?	John Clarke	p. 210
Swedish Zoological Expedition to Egypt of 1901	Richard Wheatley	p. 211
The water sellers – Saqqayeen	Roman Rimonis	pp. 212-216
BBC's 2011 anthrax check	Bill Johns	p. 216
Query: French warships in Alexandria		p. 217
Echoes of the Byam family	John Davis	p. 218
Wadi Halfa train revisited	Herb Cowley	p. iv



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

Massawa, November 11, 1879: Cover, written in the hand of General Charles 'Chinese' Gordon, docketed at top 'No. 323, C.G.' in manuscript addressed to Colonel Harvey of the Royal Engineers, Gibraltar. Massawa 'Maktab Bosta Khedewiya Masriya' negative seal handstamp in black (Egyptian Khedevial Post Office) and 'Poste Khedevie Egiziane / Massawa' datestamps at left. Suez transit (Nov 25) and cover awaited forwarding and mailed with 1879 2pi. orange cancelled at Port Said (Dec 8). Rare.



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Meetings Programme for 2019

April 15	ESC postal Auction 58	Closes midnight UK time Apr 15	All members
April 26-28	Morley Hayes Hotel, Derby	Joint meeting with SSG	All members
May 29-Jun 2	Stockholm, Sweden	ESC meeting at Stockholmia	All members
July 6, 2pm	Victory Services Club	AGM, Competition, TPOs II	Sami Sadek
September 9-16	Cairo Exhibition Centre	PSE 90 th Anniversary	All members
Nov 7, 1pm	Royal's new premises	Egyptian Hotels	Richard Wheatley
Nov 9, all day	Victory Services Club	ESC Auction 59	All members
December 4-7	Monte Carlo, Monaco	Monacophil celebrates Egypt	Hany Salam plus
<i>For further details please contact Jon Aitchison (see below)</i>			

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Facebook

Report of the February 16 meeting – Revenues and Fiscals

The Chairman welcomed those present, and especially our overseas visitors, Dr Sherif Samra (ESC 311), Vahe Varjabedian (ESC 390), Mats Edstrom (ESC 691) and Ronny van Pellecom (ESC 618). A minute's silence was held in memory of our late member Dr Mostafa El-Dars (ESC 556).

Those in attendance: John Davis (Chairman), Jon Aitchison (Vice Chairman), Mike Murphy (Secretary), Brian Sedgley (Treasurer), Neil Hitchens (Webmaster), Vahe Varjabedian (Egypt, Committee), Mike Bramwell, John Clarke, Mats Edstrom (Sweden), Peter Grech, Paul Green, David Jones, Sherif Samra (Egypt), Ronny van Pellecom (Belgium), Richard Wheatley. Apologies were received from Sami Sadek, Ibrahim Shoukry, Trenton Ruebush, Tony Cakebread, Greg Todd, Anton Jansen, Hany Makram, Costas Kelemenis, Tony Schmidt, Cyril Defriez.

The Vice-Chairman reminded members that application forms for the joint weekend meeting with the Sudan Study Group (April 26-30 at the Morley Hayes Hotel, Derby) were due in by the end of the month and ran through the exciting list of meetings planned for the rest of the year (*see previous page*). Dr Samra was asked to elaborate on a request by the Philatelic Society of Egypt for financial help in connection with the 90th Anniversary exhibition in Cairo in September and after some discussion it was agreed unanimously (proposed Richard Wheatley, seconded Brian Sedgley) that the Circle would donate £5,000 to our Cairo colleagues. We all look forward to the September visit.

The meeting decided to take no action for 12 months on an appeal by the Royal Philatelic Society of London for financial help for its new headquarters, and that no action should be taken on an "in principle" request from a member for help with publishing his book on Egyptian philately. The Circle is eager to help member-authors, but will judge requests only when, as with the Rossiter Trust, the work is virtually complete.

After 15 years as Treasurer, Brian Sedgley (ESC 268) handed over to Sami Sadek (ESC 559), though he will continue to accept 2019 subscriptions from members for the immediate future. The meeting congratulated Dr Sadek on his new post and thanked Mr Sedgley by acclaim for his excellent and efficient work.

There was some discussion on the Secretary's suggestion that Alain Stragier (Belgium) be restored to membership after an absence of 19 years, and it was unanimously agreed (proposed Mike Murphy, seconded John Clarke) that such an offer be made, to recognise his recent work in the Delta railways series of articles and offers to help with *QC* feedback.



Royal gems from David Jones's collection: above, imperf pairs of the Agricultural Syndicate, only one sheet of each recorded; below, part of the misperforate set of the First Egyptian Tax Issue, 1939-1949



The Secretary announced that ESC Auction 58 (postal only, members only) will be held in springtime (closing date April 15), containing further gems from the Peter Andrews collection and over 500 lots of members' material including a good many books.

It is some years since we had a meeting on Revenues and Fiscals, and the display on Saturday, led by a new member in David Jones (ESC 716), was a real eye-opener, with comprehensive and massive material beautifully and clearly displayed, with full explanations throughout. The classic work on Egyptian revenues is the late Peter Feltus' catalogue of 1982, and here was a full-colour and classically-displayed version, with virtually every stamp on show. Quite remarkable.

David was at pains to explain – even though he had to rush through his presentation for lack of time – that he was indebted to several ESC members for the chance to assemble such a difficult representative collection, including cancelled-backs, royal misperforates and even Palestine bilingual overprints that members had not had the good fortune to see before.



The 50 mills of the 1938 Finance Ministry issue, first tax stamp overprinted for use in Gaza. Fewer than ten recorded mint

After the general taxes, the syndicate stamps issued for what we would today call trade unions, taxed on paying subscriptions and so on: medical, agricultural, acting syndicates, all present including their counterparts from the Farouk collection. One problem in collecting revenues is that the stamp is often too difficult to separate from the document and so the *raison d'être* is lost. Here was a magnificent display with just a hint of document. But magnificent.

Vahe Varjabedian faced the same problem with his consular revenues post-Feltus. He has gone to enormous effort to detach the adhesives from (usually) passport pages, and showed an astonishing range of values, with similar stamps reissued a year later with an added five or ten piastres on the value. The explanation came from Sherif Samra: during the 1960s, with exchange rates fairly stable, tax stamps were issued strictly according to the new annual rate. But still a passport stamp for £E5080 came as a surprise.

Mats Edstrom took a different tack, showing paper forms pre-printed with tax values so that stamps were not necessary, taking his research pre-Feltus to the Ottoman period, and extending both dates and values recorded in the Feltus catalogue. Fine displays throughout the afternoon showed that there is clearly more to research in this area.

Membership changes

New Members:

- ESC 723 Bill Barclay**, 1370 Spring Hill Road, South Londonderry, VT 05155, United States
(Sudan pre-1954 and Provisionals, Egypt first three issues, Shepheard's Hotel, Revenues)
- ESC 724 Don Molinari**, 3100 Millwood Terrace, Apt M104, Boca Raton, Florida 33431, United States
(United States stamps, Egypt stamps)
- ESC 725 Miroslav Stotka**, Bolaticka 286, cz-74722 Dolni Benesov, Czech Republic
(Egypt First Issue, Used Abroad, Interpostal seals)
- ESC 726 Dr Aly H Gabr**, 22 Ibn Zanki Street, Zamalek 11211, Cairo, Egypt
(Egypt stamps and covers, flaws and errors)

Resigned: **ESC 230** Richard S Wilson **ESC 384** Peter Heim **ESC 430** Tariq Awff **ESC 478** Norayr Agopian **ESC 541** Jack Graham **ESC 550** Sherif Hesni **ESC 662** Pauline Gittoes
ESC 706 Michael Florer **Deceased:** **ESC 556** Dr Mostafa Kadry El-Dars

Change of address:

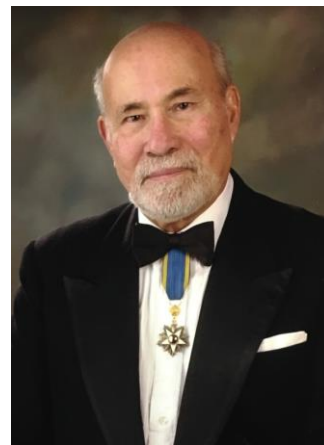
- ESC 391 Hisham Bassyouny** - Villa 307, City View Compound, Sec D, Gate 7, Kilo 19 Desert Road, Giza, Egypt
- ESC 605 Yasser Omar** - 38 Mohamed Mokled Street, Nasr City – 8th District, Cairo 11762, Egypt
- ESC 686 Moheb Rizkalla** - 56 Stansmore Avenue, Prestons, Sydney, NSW 2170, Australia

Mostafa Kadry el-Dars, ESC 556, 1926-2019

The Circle is sad indeed to have to record the passing on January 20, at the age of 92, of Dr Mostafa Kadry el-Dars, a thoroughly nice man, a raconteur, an excellent friend to his colleagues, and a most enthusiastic philatelist. In accordance with Islamic tradition he was buried near his home in Bournemouth a few days after his death.

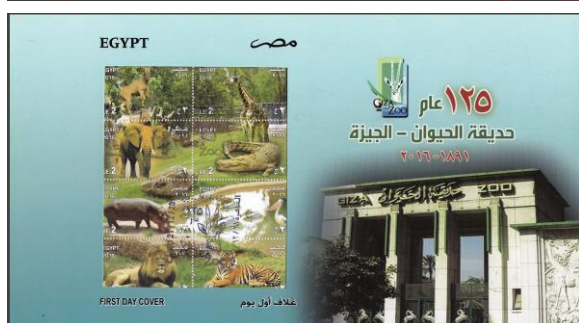
He joined the Circle in March 2002 as Member 556, and quickly made his mark with his *joi de vivre*, the intensity of his interest in all things Egyptian and especially in its philately and postal history.

And he loved telling his stories of the good old days, when Egypt was very different from today, a world of elegance and leisure. And he knew what he was talking about. Dr El-Dars served as a personal physician to King Farouk, and sailed away to Naples on the *Mahroussa* with his sovereign when Farouk was ejected by Nasser's Free Officers. Mostafa clearly loved the royal yacht, built in 1865 for Khedive Ismail, and was full of stories about life on board. He had plans to write a series of articles about that life; unfortunately we shall have to do without them.



Born in Damietta on April 15, 1926, Dr el-Dars took two medical degrees from Cairo University and was awarded the Order of the Nile (*see above*) by Farouk for his work as a physician. On starting a new life in England he served in hospitals in London and the South East for years, while also devoting time to research into the ageing process and the function of the vertebral artery.

He and his family – wife Elizabeth, children Natasha, Leila and Tarek – made regular visits back to Egypt, and on his return Mostafa was invariably delighted to show off his purchases from the Ataba Square Philatelic Office. He was bemused by much of what Egypt Post is doing today, but always saw the funny side when material he needed was “sorry - sold out yesterday”.



He wisely made a point of sending home covers franked with the stamps of Egypt's last booklet, to have the stamps properly used, and was more recently really amused by the post office's novel practice – presumably intended to attract children to the world of collecting – of making first-day covers more and more bulky and wildly illustrated, far removed from the original purpose. He recently sent me a packet for publication illustrating these oddities (*see left*). It was typical of the man that he was amused rather than upset at the practice. We are sad to have a lost a good collector, a true gentleman, and an excellent friend.

Mike Murphy



Railway stations during 1879-1914: Part 5

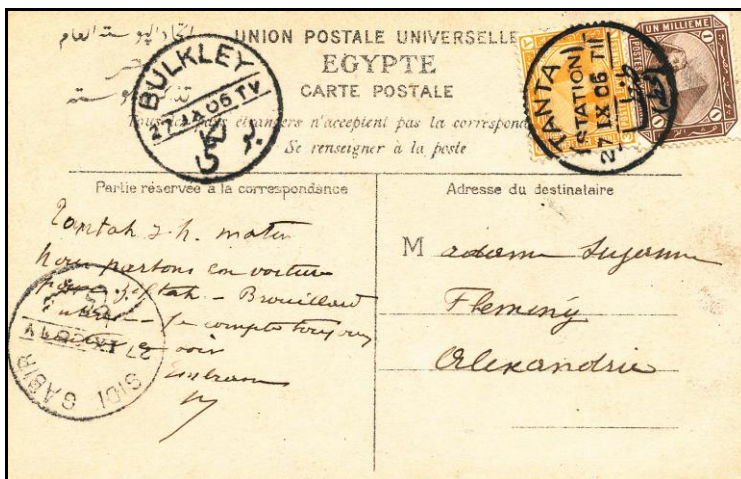
Ronny Van Pellecom (ESC 618) and Alain Stragier

We continue our survey of Egyptian railway stations and their postmarks (see *QC 267*, pp. 175-185) by following up on the statement (page 182) that no STATION cancels are reported for Tanta between 22 VIII 02 and 3 V 06. In 1906 a new type came into use with three versions:



Postcard:
Alexandrie
Boulevard Ramley

TANTA (STATION)
-0 VII 06
with large oval "O"



TANTA (STATION)
27 IX 06 to
Fleming/Alexandria
via
SIDI GABER 7 IX 06 and
BULKLEY 27 IX 06

Large circular "O"



Postcard:
Port Said
Boarding of the camels

TANTA (STATION)
10 V 07
with small oval "O"



ABA EL WAQF 11 NO 07 via ASYUT-CAIRO T.P.O. 11 XI 07 and MINYA-CAIRO T.P.O. to Tanta with arrival TANTA STATION 12 XI 07



TANTA STATION 27 III 08 to Cairo

TELEGRAPH

T_TA_01			
	TANTA MAHATTA	First Date 9 V 10	Single ring 27.5 mm Seen in black and lilac
	9- V. 10.	Last Date 21 V 10	
	TANTA-STA.		
T_TA_02			
	TANTA (MAHATTA)	First Date 17 DEC 1912	Bridge 32 mm Lilac
	17. DEC. 1912	Last Date 18 APR 1913	
	TANTA (STATION)		

Form No. G 14. (Receiving) قسمة وارد نمره ١٤ G

EGYPTIAN STATE TELEGRAPHS.—TÉLÉGRAPHES DE L'ÉTAT ÉGYPTIEN.
تلغرافات الحكومة المصريه

—McC. & Co., Ltd., London.—80,000.—1909.

No. <u>273</u> نمره	Station <u>TANTA-STA</u> محطة	Transmitted to <u>الى</u> ارسل الى
Original No. <u>273</u> نمره اصل	Date <u>21 V. 10.</u> تاريخ	Date <u>الى</u> تاريخ
Words <u>كلمات</u> كلمات	Time received <u>10 26</u> وقت الورد	h. m. <u>الساعة</u> دقيقه
Remarks <u>ملاحظات</u> ملاحظات	Clerk <u>اسم العاطي</u> اسم العاطي	Remarks <u>ملاحظات</u> ملاحظات
Clerk <u>اسم العاطي</u> اسم العاطي	Route <u>طريق</u> طريق	

RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM:— Reçu le Télégramme suivant:—
 Station from Credit Foncier Canal Date 10 12
 De من محطة الساعة دقيقه تاريخ
 To Mohab Pacha الى Tanta

From Cairo to
TANTA-STA
21 V 10

Form No. G 14. (Receiving) قسمة وارد نمره ١٤ G

EGYPTIAN STATE TELEGRAPHS.—TÉLÉGRAPHES DE L'ÉTAT ÉGYPTIEN. 30
تلغرافات الحكومة المصريه

—McC & Co. Ltd., London.—80,000.—1912.

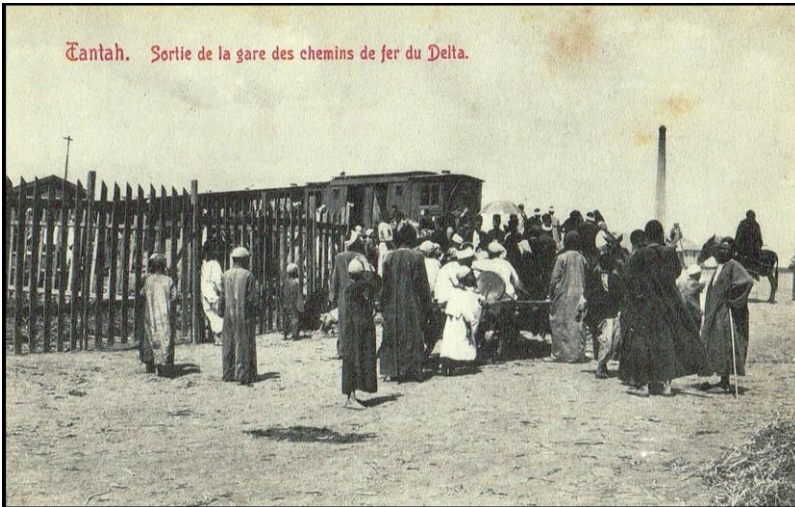
No. <u>5647</u> نمره	Station <u>TANTA (STATION)</u> محطة	Transmitted to <u>الى</u> ارسل الى
Original No. <u>5647</u> نمره اصل	Date <u>17 DEC 1912</u> تاريخ	Date <u>الى</u> تاريخ
Words <u>18</u> كلمات	Time received <u>6 25 pm</u> وقت الورد	h. m. <u>الساعة</u> دقيقه
Remarks <u>ملاحظات</u> ملاحظات	Clerk <u>اسم العاطي</u> اسم العاطي	Remarks <u>ملاحظات</u> ملاحظات
Clerk <u>اسم العاطي</u> اسم العاطي	Route <u>طريق</u> طريق	

RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM:— Reçu le Télégramme suivant:—
 Station from Alex Date h. 6 m. 15 pm
 De من محطة الساعة دقيقه تاريخ
 To Terkuis Tantal. الى

From Alexandria to
TANTA (STATION)
17 DEC 1912

6.1. TANTAH – TANTA (Private Railway)

EGYPTIAN DELTA LIGHT RAILWAYS



Tantah. Exit of the station of the Delta Railways
(Papeterie Universelle – Philipp & Taufik Cods, Tantah)



First-class railway ticket for the Delta
Light Railways from Manzalah to Tanta

As at Mansourah, private railway companies have separate railway stations

Bulletin Postal 09.08.1910: Postal Service on the trains of the Egyptian Delta Light Railways - Travelling staff on the Egyptian Delta Light Railways are reminded that they must not carry out any transactions with the public before the complete stop of the train at the stations.



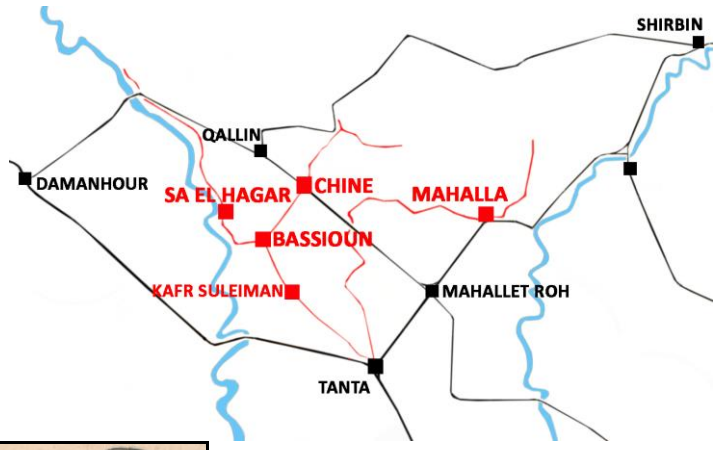
Two warrants for 1 and 5 shares in
the Egyptian Delta Light Railways



The company merged in 1900 with
the *Compagnie des Chemins
économique de l'Est.*
(see also QC 266)

The property of the railway company
was seized by the Egyptian
Government in 1953.

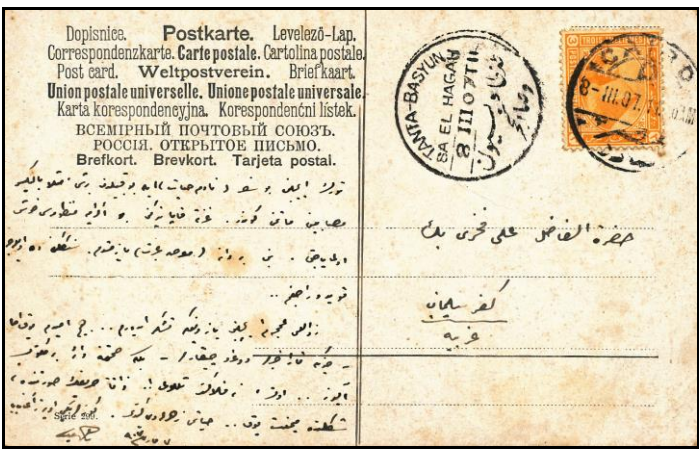
The lines of the Egyptian Delta Light Railways connected Tanta with, among other places, Mahalla, Chine, Sa el Hagar, Bassioum ...



BENHA 23 VIII 03
to KAFR SULEIMAN
(handwritten "Via Bassioum" at Tanta)
Arrival
TANTA 24 VIII 03
And via TANTA-BASSIOUN CHINE
24 VIII 03 to BASSIOUN 24 VIII 03

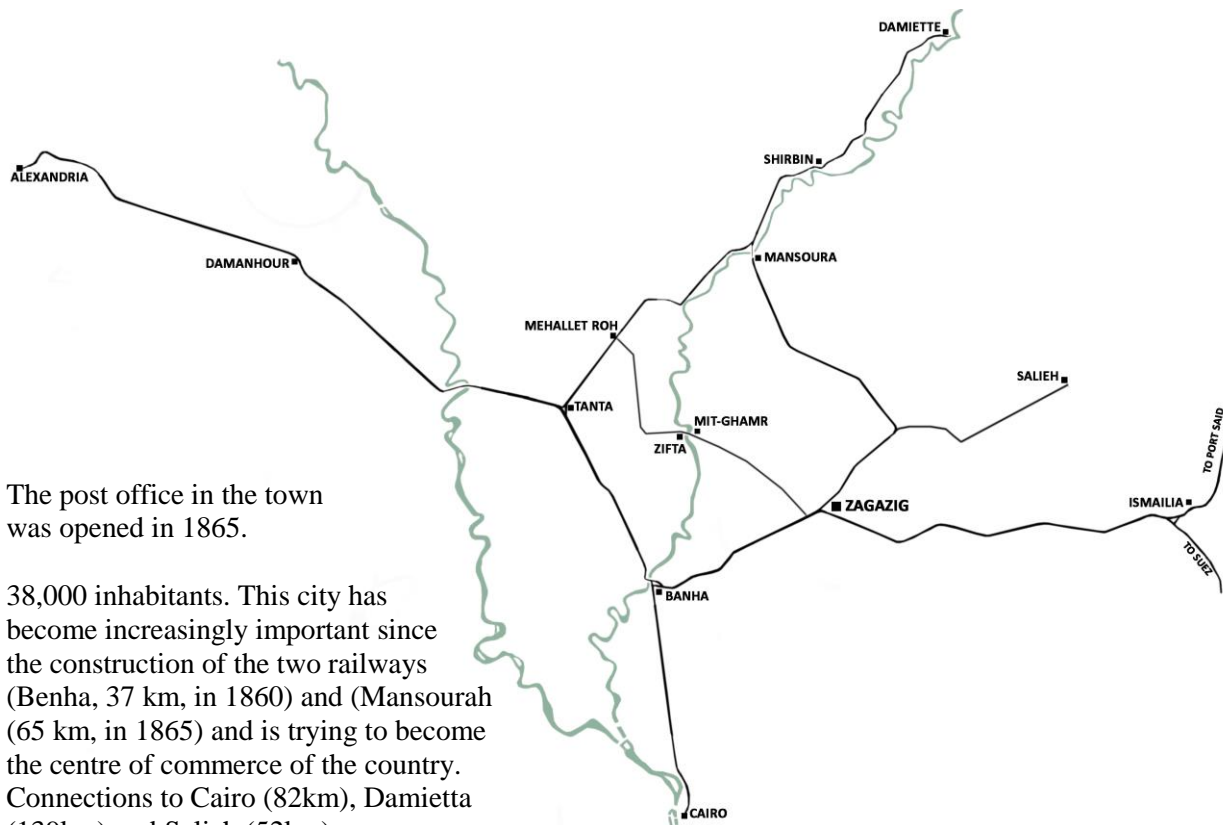


CAIRO 17 IX 07
to
KAFR SULEIMAN
via
SA EL HAGAR-TANTA
T.P.O.
17 IX 07



CAIRO 8 III 07 to
KAFR SULEIMAN (West)
via
TANTA-BASYUN SA EL HAGAR
8 III 07

6.1. ZAGAZIG



The post office in the town was opened in 1865.

38,000 inhabitants. This city has become increasingly important since the construction of the two railways (Benha, 37 km, in 1860) and (Mansourah (65 km, in 1865) and is trying to become the centre of commerce of the country. Connections to Cairo (82km), Damietta (139km) and Salieh (52km)

(Égypte – Notes et Itinéraires, 1882)

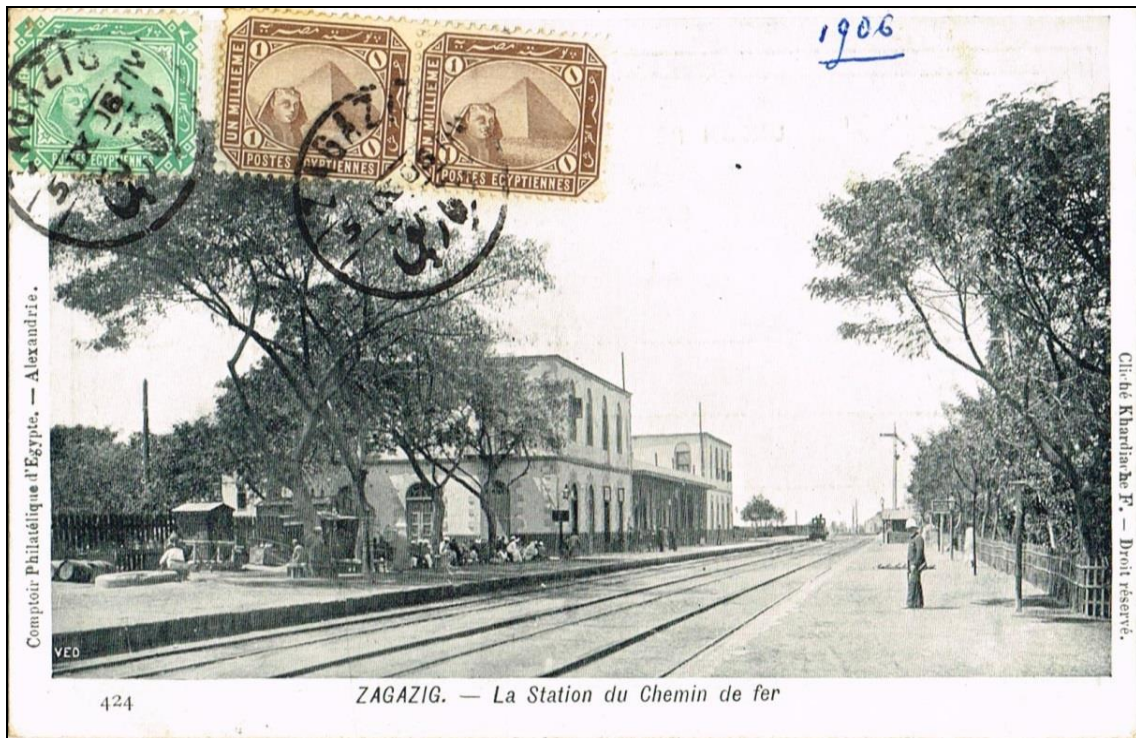
The Zagazig-Mansourah-Damiette line was ready in 1865-69, followed by Zagazig-Ismailia in 1868.

Work on the connection to Zifta was started in 1904, and the railway line was completely in use in 1914.



Zagazig — La Station du Chemin de fer

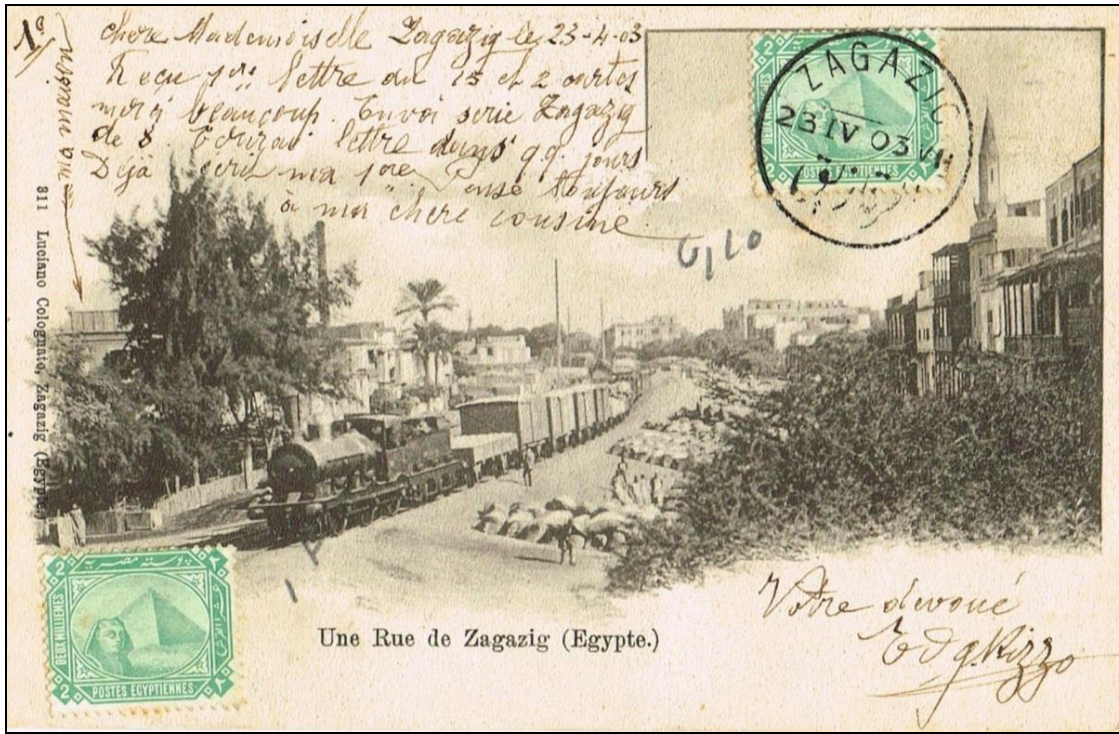
Zagazig – The Railway station (Phot. Rocca, Privativa Corecco)



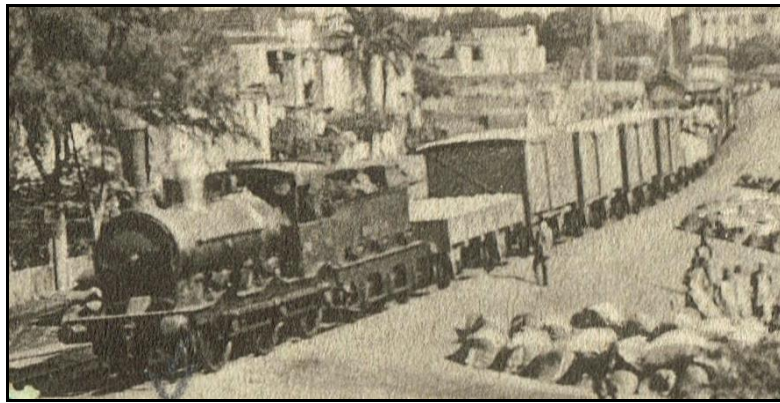
Zagazig – Railway Station (Comptoir Philatelique d'Égypte)



Zagazig – The Railway Station of the Governmental Railway (LL)



A street in Zagazig (Egypt) (Luciano Colognate, Zagazig)



ZAGAZIG STATION
1 SE 84

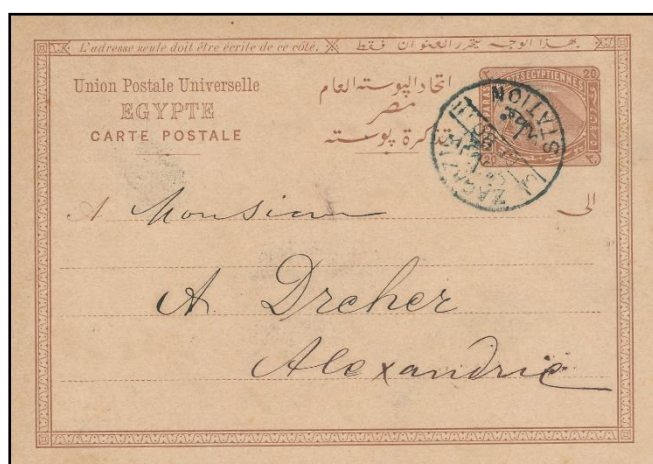
to Lyon

TPO
MARSEILLE A LYON
8 SEPT 84

ST_ZA_01			
	ZAGAZIG ZAGAZIG	First Date 3 DE 80	Single ring 24.5 mm Seen in blue in 1881
	1 SE 84 TII	Last Date 3 JA 86	
	MAHATTA STATION		
ST_ZA_02			
	ZAGAZIG STATION	26 VIII 01	Double ring 28.5 mm
	26 VIII 01 TII		
	MAHATTA ZAGAZIG		
ST_ZA_03			
	ZAGAZIG STATION	First Date 13 XI 07	Bridge 28 mm
	17.VI.08.7. - PM	Last Date 20 IV 14	
	ZAGAZIG MAHATTA		

Seen as		
DEPART	ARRIVAL	TRANSIT
X		X

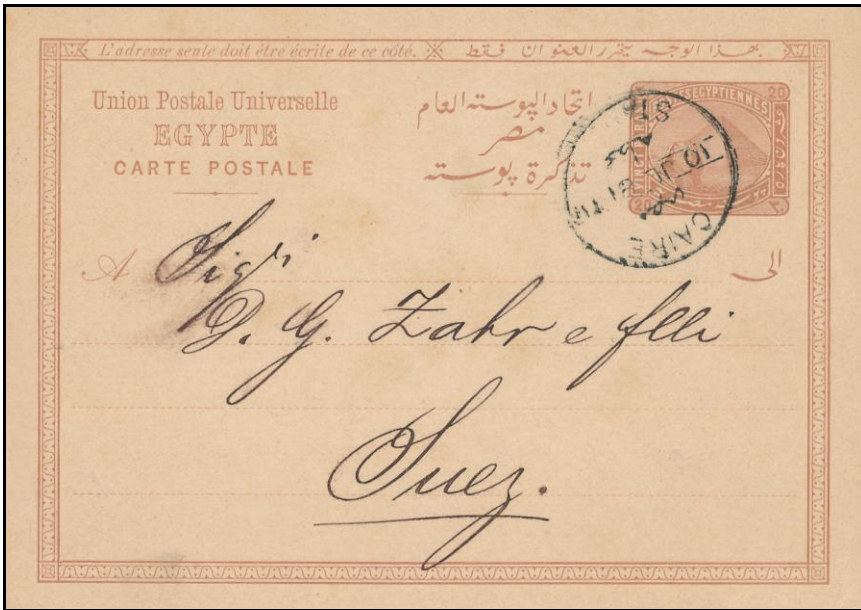
Only a single cover has been recorded between 3 JA 86 and 13 XI 07. Nor does the city post office seem to have been used as transit during that period. We have not seen any example.



ZAGAZIG STATION 3 DE 80
to Alexandria

ZAGAZIG STATION 26 VIII 01 to Cairo
with arrival the same day





CAIRE STATION
10 JL 81
to
SUEZ ARRIVÉE
10 JL 81





Transit
ZAGAZIG STATION
10 JL 81
(Blue)



ZAGAZIQ STATION
13 II 08
to Gand (Belgium)
CAIRO ALEXANDRIA
& V.V.
13 II 08
and arrival
GAND
21 FEVR 08
ARRIVEE

TELEGRAPH

T_ZA_01			
	ZAGAZIG STATION	23 IX 909	Single ring 29 mm
	23 IX 909		
	ZAGAZIG MAHATTA		
T_ZA_02			
	ZAGAZIG MAHATTA	First Date 17 JAN 1912 Last Date 27 MAY 1914	Bridge 33 mm
	27. MAY. 1914		
	ZAGAZIG STATION		

Form No. G 14. (Receiving) شهادة وارد نمرة ١٤ G

EGYPTIAN STATE TELEGRAPHS. - TÉLÉGRAPHES DE L'ÉTAT ÉGYPTIEN.
تلفرات الحكومة المصرية

McC. & Co., Ltd., London - 80,000 - 1908.

No. ٥١	Station	محطة	Transmitted to	ارسل الى
Original No. ٧٠٤	Date	تاريخ	Date	تاريخ
Words ١٤	Time received	الساعة	h. m.	دقيقته
Remarks	Clerk	اسم الموظف		
Clerk	Route			

RECEIVED

Station from

152 Reg. 152

E.S.R. MEDICAL SERVICE ZAGAZIG DIST.

كك جديد وتلفرات الحكومة المصرية

اورنيك نمرة ١٠٠٠ الزقازيق

17 JAN 1912

ZAGAZIG STATION

Form No. G 44. (Receiving) شهادة وارد نمرة ١٤ G

EGYPTIAN STATE TELEGRAPHS. - TÉLÉGRAPHES DE L'ÉTAT ÉGYPTIEN.
تلفرات الحكومة المصرية

Imp. J. C. Legouabal - Alex. - 90 000 - 1913.

No. 15	Station	محطة	Transmitted to	ارسل الى
Original No. 1019	Date	تاريخ	Date	تاريخ
Words 34	Time received	الساعة	h. m.	دقيقته
Remarks	Clerk	اسم الموظف		
Clerk	Route			

RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING

Station from *Alex.*

To *Quartier*

١٥

من فام الزقازيق
الى حكيم فام الزقازيق
اسم المريض *روحه افرى*
وطيفته *كوزاخي*
داخل الهبة لمخرج الهبة بالتمهيد او باليوم
منقطع عن العمل من تاريخ *١٧*
نحري في *١٧* سنة *١٩١٢*

Form No. G 14. (Receiving) شهادة وارد نمرة ١٤ G

EGYPTIAN STATE TELEGRAPHS. - TÉLÉGRAPHES DE L'ÉTAT ÉGYPTIEN.
تلفرات الحكومة المصرية

Imp. J. C. Legouabal - Alex. - 90 000 - 1913.

No. ٧٨	Station	محطة	Transmitted to	ارسل الى
Original No. ١٤٨٢	Date	تاريخ	Date	تاريخ
Words ١٥	Time received	الساعة	h. m.	دقيقته
Remarks	Clerk	اسم الموظف		
Clerk	Route			

RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM: - Recu le Télégramme suivant: -

Station from *D.* Date *١٤* h. *١١* m. *٤٧*

To *البي*

١٥

١٧

١٧

Cancelled-back: Discovery or fake?

John Clarke (ESC 497)



Lot 39 in the last Egypt Study Circle Auction, number 57, caught my eye: Farouk Marechal, 17 mills green, top left-hand corner block of eight with “Cancelled Back” in Arabic. Blocks of this size are very rarely seen in auction. I copied the illustration provided in the Auction listing on our website (*above*) for my records, and then noticed something odd: at the right end of the wide upper margin there was part of a cross-shaped printing guide mark. Normal sheets of this issue were printed in panes of 100 (10x10), with the cross-shaped guide placed at the centre of the sheet, ie, between stamps 5 and 6. But the guide mark on this block is between stamps 4 and 5. Why?

The lot was not sold, and the Auctioneer very kindly let me borrow the block for examination. And here the mystery deepens. The stamps are printed on very thin card, not the usual thicker card as with normal Cancelled-backs, and apparently in a sheet of eight stamps wide, and we don't know how deep. Forgeries of these stamps are unknown and I cannot imagine any faker making the elementary mistake of putting the guide mark in the wrong place.

So I shall now offer my own humble opinion/explanation. In early 1947 King Farouk decreed that in future the “Cancelled” should be printed in Arabic rather than English. The Survey Department would now have to produce new sheets printed with “Cancelled” for future use. Is it possible that they produced a proof mini sheet of “Cancelled-back” in Arabic on thinner card for approval before committing to printing a quantity of sheets on thicker card as usual?

Replies, comments or opinions from members will be gratefully received.

The Swedish Zoological Expedition to Egypt 1901

Richard Wheatley (ESC 168)

This large expedition was directed by Professor L. A. Jägerskiöld under the patronage of His Highness King Oscar II of Sweden and Norway. Most of the academics came from Scandinavia, Germany, France and Britain, and this diversity meant that the reports were written in German, French and English. They were published at Uppsala in four volumes in 1904-05.

When the expedition arrived, its members had a letter of introduction to the Earl of Cromer, the Controller-General of Egypt, who took a keen interest. They also met Sir Reginald Wingate, the Sirdar and Governor-General of the Sudan, who also lent his support. The aim of the expedition was to study the fauna of the Upper Nile and the White Nile. So we read in the Results all about: mites and termites, birds and butterflies, snakes and lizards, even the water beetles of the White Nile!

For practical purposes, in Egypt the project was called the Carl Hangen's Expedition. The main study took place between December 1900 and July 1901, the River Nile and its steamers providing the means of transport.

Two items at least have amazingly survived from this Expedition.

Item 1: An 1890 Egyptian 5 mills postal stationery Envelope Letter, addressed to a member of the expedition staying at the Continental Hotel in Cairo. Posted at Louxor on 21 February 1901, it carries on the reverse the transit TPO mark Beni Souef-Caire / Ambt on the 22nd and arrived the same day at the Grand Continental Hotel Cairo. Also on the reverse is a blue and white circular seal of the Imperial German Vice-Consul in Mombassa (British East Africa).



Item 2: This is an illustration of auction lot number 2885 from the collection of our former member Jürgen Fricke sold by Köhler on March 27, 2010. It is an Eastern Telegraph Company telegram envelope (with contents) initially addressed to Alexandria and then forwarded to the Assuan Hotel. The 5 mills stamp is tied by Grand Continental Hotel Cairo Post Office cds of 19 III 04. On the reverse is an arrival cds of the Cataract Hotel the following day.

The water sellers – *Saqqayeen*

Roman Anthony Rimonis (ESC 486)

Egypt's water sellers once provided an essential service for many households since many homes had no running water, especially in large cities such as Cairo. There were many wells within the city, but as the water drawn from them was brackish, a door-to-door delivery service for cleaner water was established.

The water sellers can be regarded as one of the oldest and best respected of Egyptian professions, traced back to the Islamic period, when the service was organised in Cairo by a sheikh of water sellers in the Kafr Sheikh Rihan district, which became known as *Haret al-Saqqayeen* ("Water Sellers' Alley").

Down the years, the water sellers have been well represented by many early postcards and in 1956 a black and white Egyptian film was made, "Street of the Water Carriers" (*Haret-al-Saqqayeen*), telling of a village water carrier who almost became a film star in an important role only to have to return to the countryside when the part was instead given to someone else.

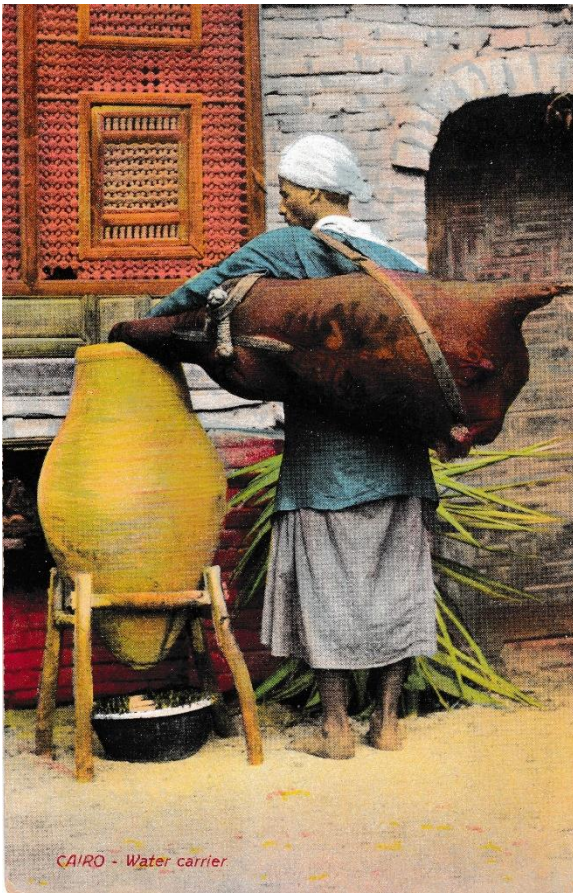


YOUR WATER SELLER CALLING
Lichtenstern and Harari Postcard No L53

The selling of water to people in the street was known as *saqqa sharbe* ("cold drink"), with the *saqqa* calling out: *Ya ma'auwad y'Allah* ("May God compensate (me!)") as he approached. Officially controlled sellers were licensed and monitored by the government, with a strictly enforced code of conduct and set of regulations.

They were expected to be honest and to respect the privacy of the household. The cups must be clean and all water containers must have corks to avoid contamination of the water, the flavour of which could have been enhanced with mint, rose water or the like, or mastic gum. While out and about, the sellers were even expected to try to put out any fires if they were called on to do so.

There were essentially two types of container for the water. Unfiltered water was simply dispensed from a large skin vessel, usually made from goat or camel skin, a large earthenware vessel or a ceramic jug. Other drinks such as lemonade or limeade with sherbet were carried in a large glass bottle.



CAIRO - Water carrier.



Typical goatskin water containers

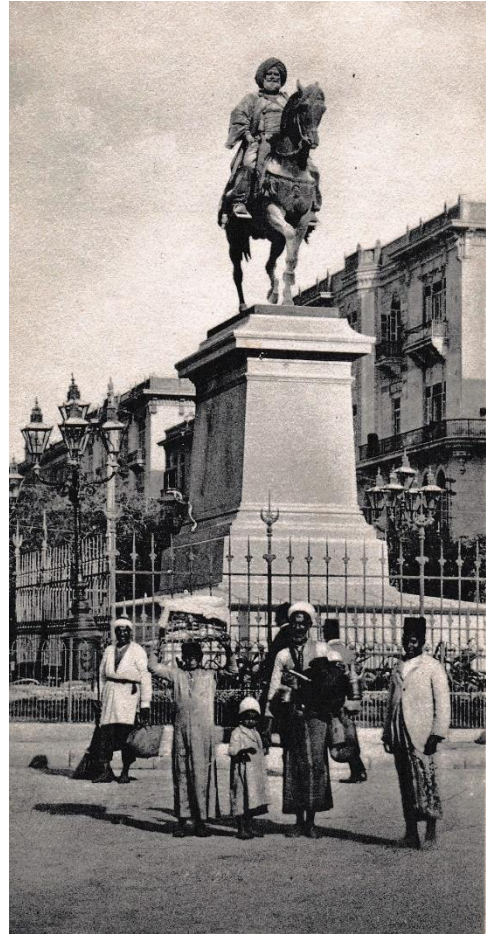
A daily morning ritual involved collecting the water from the Nile, even though it was known to contain deadly dangers in the snail that hosts the bilharzia blood fluke. Households buying the water would first need to let it stand for several days and then have it boiled to ameliorate the danger.



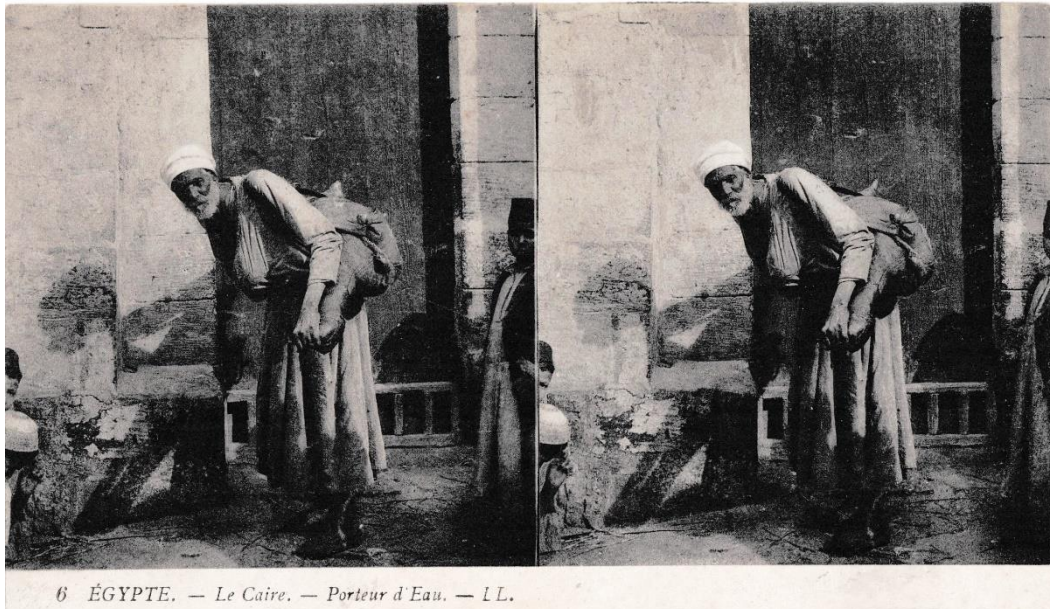
A GROUP OF WATER SELLERS FILLING AT THE NILE TOGETHER WITH THE LOCALS
Lichtenstern and Harari Postcard No 204



*A WATER SELLER IN CAIRO
Castro Brothers Editors*



*A WATER SELLER IN ALEXANDRIA
Lichtenstern and Harari No 5*

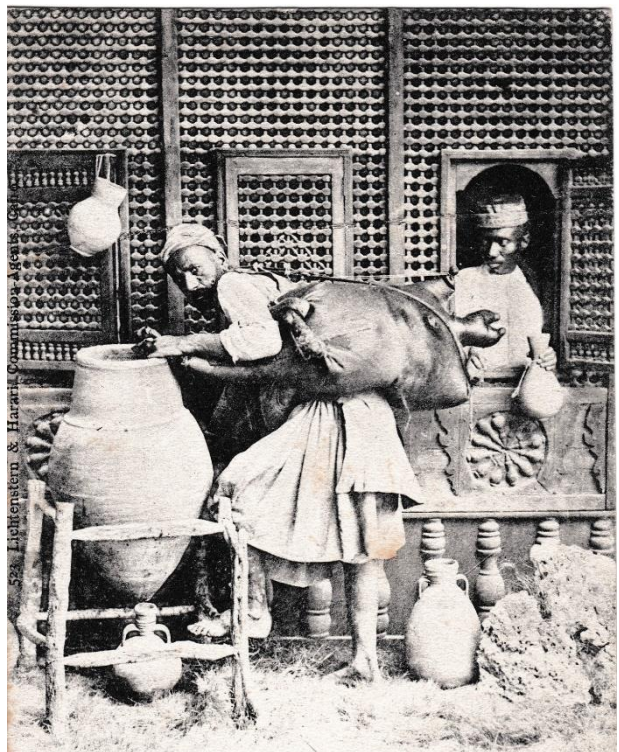


*"SEEING DOUBLE"
A stereo card by L Levy. "6 EGYPTE- Le Caire - Porteur d'Eau"*



Sakkas.

285 Lichtenstern & Harari, Commissions-Agents, Cairo.



SAKKA

SAKKA

Both cards are by Lichtenstern and Harari. The originals, taken between 1860 and 1890 as albumen prints, were later reprinted several times and included colour versions.

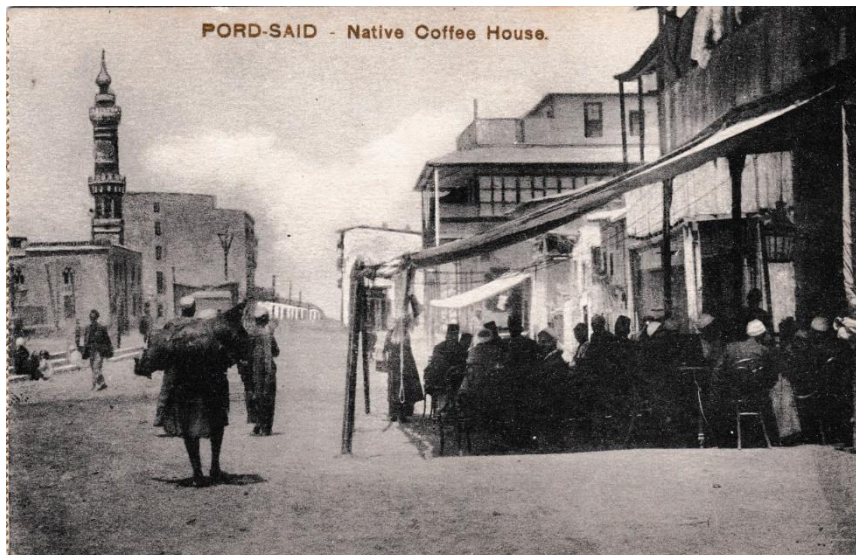


Le Caire, Groupe d'enfants Arabes.

Nr. 117. An Carto-Sport, Max H. Rudmann, Le Caire.

TIME FOR DRINKS

Max H Rudmann No 117. "Le Caire, Groupe d'enfants Arabes". An early postcard sent to Paris handstamped October 3, 1907. A delightful picture of children enjoying a drink of water while the seller looks on with a smile at the sale.



THE OLD AND THE NEW: In Port Said, a water seller passes a coffee house full of customers. The postcard is from a booklet by The Cairo Postcard Trust, serie 600.

Many other countries also made use of water sellers, including India and China, and even England had such a requirement in the 1840s, when an Exeter call was recorded: "Walthur, walthur, three buckets a penny!"

The Egyptian postcards illustrated have managed to catch the passing of time, reflected through these people going about their daily business. In some streets of Cairo the odd abandoned water fountain can still be seen, and the occasional water seller selling *ersus*, a traditional Egyptian cola-type juice, may be encountered. In many cases today glasses for serving the various drinks have been replaced by a small disposable plastic bag and a straw. The water carriers have been taken over by plastic water bottles.

While Egyptian water sellers have all but disappeared from the streets, a near neighbour, Morocco, has continued with the tradition but aimed solely at a different target – tourism. Still wearing the brightly coloured costume of wide red Berber hat and shiny black shoes, they move among the crowds with ringing bells or calling out. For a few dirhams they now pose for tourist cameras, and are paid handsomely for it.

Egypt may have lost out in this venture, but even after the water sellers have long gone the postcards bear witness to a social history and to what was once not just an important tradition but a vital requirement.

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BBC's 2011 anthrax check: One week after the September 2011 aerial attacks on the Twin Towers of New York, media and government offices in America started receiving anonymous envelopes containing white powder (*Bill Johns, ESC 287, writes*). This was found to be spores of anthrax, a powerful poison: five people died and others were infected. The alert was raised around the world, including at the BBC, which employed a company to check its mail from October 2011 to March 2012. Letters were marked with a cachet when found to be poison-free: CHECKED in large hollow capitals in red; in large capitals with a number (1-6) in red or blue; or smaller capitals, with a number 7-9 (*as here*) in red or blue.



Query: French warships in Alexandria

Anton Jansen (ESC 383) has recently made a welcome effort to help out the Editor by sending in a 1940 cover from the French Navy in Alexandria in the hope that it might help to relieve some of the trials and tribulations of filling the QC with fascinating material. Here is his note: I hope this censored cover might be of interest to our members. It was sent F.M. (Franchise Militaire) in November 1940 to Montpellier, France, by an “électricien” aboard the French cruiser *Lorraine*. At the time this warship



was part of a French flotilla of nine men'o'war interned until 1943 by the British Admiralty in the port of Alexandria. The letter was redirected to a different address in Montpellier. The reverse shows only the sender's address: “seaman-electrician Charles Rafri...., cruiser *Lorraine*, Alexandria Port”. I have no further information but



add a copy of the postmark from Bertrand Sinais' publication on mail from French warships (*Le service postal militaire français en Orient pendant la première guerre mondiale 1915-1923*, 1997).

Peter Grech (ESC 266) has been quick to supply more interesting material about the cover. He writes: Some years ago I gave all my information about this topic to our late editor, Edmund Hall, to which he added his vast knowledge of military history to produce an excellent *QC* article which should provide almost everything any member wishes to know. Entitled "French Navy in Alexandria 1940-43", it appeared in *QC* 251 (December 2014), pp. 79-83.

Briefly, after the fall of France and the armistice it signed with Germany on June 22 1940, Great Britain (standing alone at the time) was afraid that the powerful French Navy would fall into the hands of the Germans and be turned against it. The Royal Navy could do nothing against ships stationed in the French ports, but the Atlantic Squadron, about 20 per cent of the French fleet, was anchored at Mers-el-Kebir (near Oran, Algeria) and was cornered there. After several ultimatums to surrender were rejected, on July 3 1940 the British ships opened fire, destroying several of the French vessels and killing 1,297 French sailors.

At that time another part of the French fleet was stationed, with the Royal Navy, at Alexandria. To avoid a similar tragedy, the British Admiral Andrew Cunningham succeeded in convincing his superiors to let the French surrender, which they did. The eight ships and one submarine, given the designation "Force X", were disarmed and many of the crews sent back to France, except for a number who remained to maintain the ships. It is the mail of those reduced crews that produced the correspondence we are discussing.

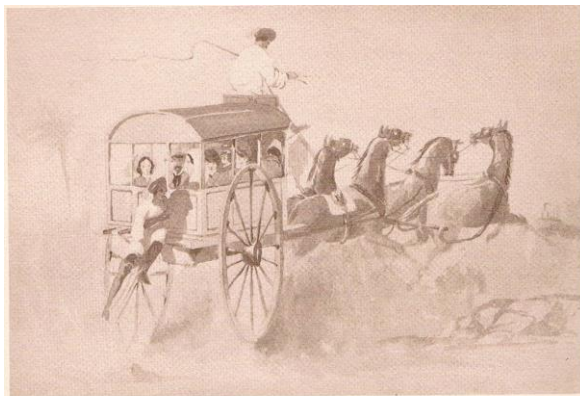
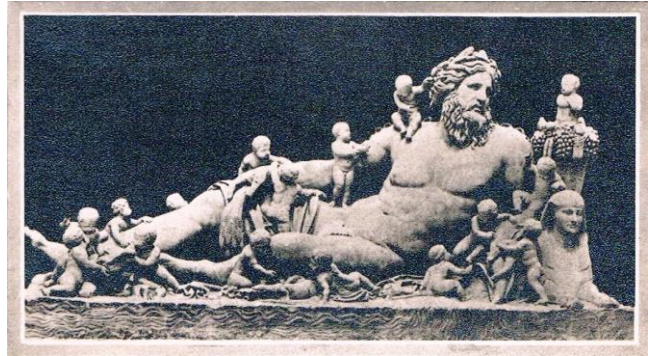
The British allowed the captured French sailors to send and receive correspondence. Mail to France went by various routes, mostly unreliable, but one such was via Spain. This could have been the case with Anton Jansen's cover. After June 1940 Montpellier falls within the Free Zone (Vichy), which has a border with Spain, avoiding German controls. Or it may have arrived by sea directly to a port on the French south coast, still possible in November 1940, and the Free Zone included the Mediterranean shoreline. The cover illustrated, as in all others emanating from Force X in Edmund's article, has Egyptian censor markings, and French censorship only when entering France. It is a pity we have no indication of how long it took to arrive.

Echoes of the Byam family

John Davis (ESC 213)

Some years ago I received a telephone call from the Secretary asking me to telephone a number local(ish) to me and I found at the end of the line a farmer in the Warwickshire village of Barford. He told me that an elderly lady in Cheltenham had some items she would like to donate to the Circle: they had been left to her by her father, who turned out to be Dr William Byam, one of our founding fathers.

It happened that Dr Byam, in practice in Harley Street, London, where he lived with his family during World War II, moved to Barford when the house opposite was bombed and his front door was blown in. He continued in practice as a doctor in Barford until he retired and moved to Guernsey in the Channel Islands. His daughter, Mrs Jean Flower, was a delightful lady who provided me with so much interesting detail about her father that I embarked on reading his two volume autobiography in our ESC Library.



The Journey through the desert of Egypt from Cairo to Suez on the way to India in 1850 (circa).
Contemporary sketch by Agnes Welthian Byam.

At a meeting early last year the Secretary handed me some correspondence from the Peter Smith archive comprising letters from Dr Byam, including two cards related to Egypt. One was of *Father Nile and his Children* (above), from a temple of Isis in Rome. It is a copy of an Hellenistic original, now in the Vatican. On the reverse Byam had written to Peter: “With best wishes for 1955 in the hope of a meeting in Stockholm in July 1955”. The engraving is reproduced on stamps marking the XVI Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition at Cairo in March 1949. The other card, with a message referring to Byam’s exhibit at Copenhagen in 1956, mentions that

the original was in his exhibit. Entitled *The Journey through the desert of Egypt from Cairo to Suez on the way to India in 1850 (circa)*, it is a contemporary sketch by one Agnes Welthian Byam (see left).

Bearing in mind that the Royal Philatelic Society has its major anniversary at the Stockholmia Exhibition in May/June this year, with an ESC luncheon and meeting therein, these two cards seemed to be trying to tell me something!

Some weeks later my wife and I visited our daughter, who had moved to a flat virtually opposite the Holburne Museum on Great Pulteney Street in Bath, and she suggested we visit an exhibition of paintings produced by Thomas Gainsborough while he was living in the city. We duly crossed the road and found there - housed permanently at the Holburne - a group portrait of *The Byam Family* painted between 1762 and 1766! I immediately wondered if the little girl pictured could be Agnes, creator of the second card. Am I obsessed with the Byam family? Not at all, but they do seem to follow me around.

• John Davis’ delightful report of his meeting with Mrs Flower appeared in *QC* 221 (June 2007, pp. 224-27).



Book Review - Egypt: From the Postal Concession until Suez, 1932 to 1956. Part II, by John Davis. A4, card bound, 220 pp, virtually all 230 illustrations in colour. £45, with £5 discount for ESC and FPHS members.

The second in a series of three books, this volume covers the period up to when the Allies serving in Egypt were permitted to use their own countries' stamps on mail, with individual military authorities handling their country's mail, up to (generally) 1946.

The book, with pagination running through from Part I, opens with Chapter 14 and page 199 and illustrates dozens of covers including "return to sender" and changes in the system from 1 May 1941. Chapter 15 covers the E600 datestamps – from E601 to E615 used from 1940, including those lent to Australian and Indian Forces, together with the Field Post Offices (FPOs) of 443 and 444, and Australian Palestine use. Indian Forces covers are also shown. Chapter 16 deals in depth with the FPOs, including BAPO 4, for British troops including late use. Chapter 17 details the Egypt Postage Prepaid (EPP) datestamps that came into use on May 1 1941, including the Krag roller cancellations, and p. 244 has a remarkable cover with mixed stamp franking. Reference is made to Jim Benians' book.



Chapter 18 has brief commentary on the Royal Air Force Post Office, 19 covers some of the history of the Second World War, and 20 discusses civilian postmarks on military mail leading to the war, principally used on 10 mill Fuad Army Post stamps. Then from Chapter 21 comes a comprehensive coverage of Commonwealth Forces' use of datestamps used, including Australian, Indian (most intriguing, as Indian Forces mail is less regularly seen), New Zealand (including the Military Post Office KW series up to KW17), South African, and, from Chapter 25, Polish (which generally used a datestamp inscribed "Poczta Polowa"), US, Free French, Czech and Greek Forces.

In an interesting change, Chapter 26 relates to Axis Forces' PoW mail, and that of Italian civilian internees, with Italian PoW mail including capture cards. German PoW mail to 1948 is covered, including the German POW working companies, with men paid by the British military authorities to stay and work (it is said that there were still 60,000 PoWs in Egypt as late as October 10 1947).

There then follow Appendices listing E600 datestamps, US Army Post Offices and EPP initial datestamp allocations.

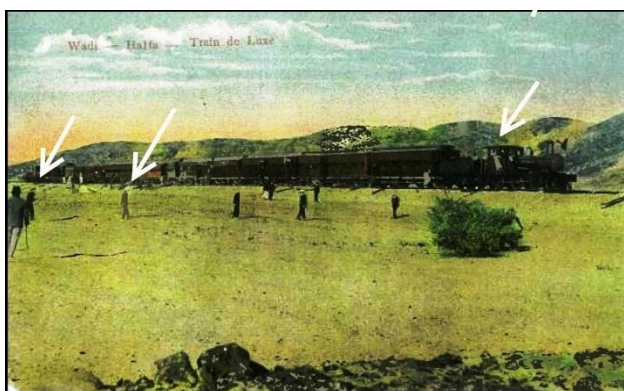
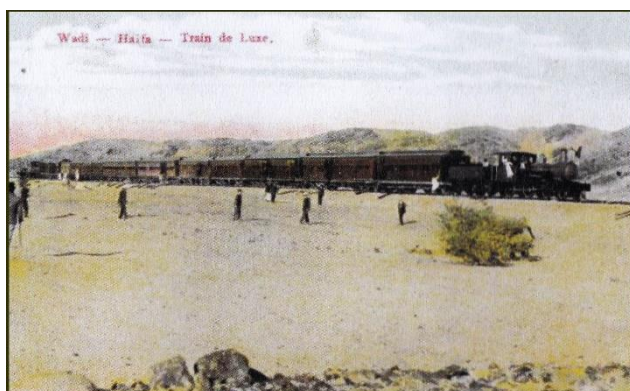
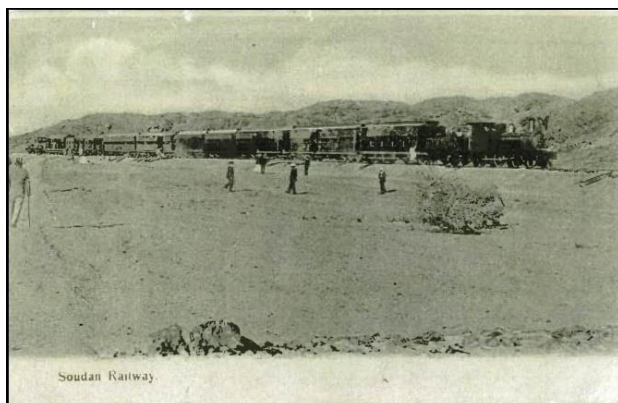
This publication is an important addition for anyone who collects or is interested in - bearing in mind its strategic significance – Egypt in the Second War. It is extensively illustrated, shows an amazing range of stamps on cover, and the text is easy to read and follow. So with Second War covers still easy to obtain, this series of volumes is a "must" to enable the study of these items.

On a personal level, I discovered information of which I was not previously aware, and the book has certainly added to my knowledge of this period. John has put a huge amount of research into it, and I eagerly await Part III, which is planned to appear in due course.

Herb Cowley (ESC 709)

Wadi Halfa train revisited

Herb Cowley (ESC 709)



I am responding to a brief article by Brian Sedgley in *QC* 266 (September 2018, page iii), in which he asks about a Wadi-Halfa postcard dated 8 3 11 showing a train with a Turkish stamp cancelled in Alexandria (*lower left*). I have two copies of this card, one of them coloured (like Brian's but mint), and the other, printed in sepia, used. One of my favourite cards (*top left*), it carries the wording Soudan Railway and has two Sudan stamps, 1 and 3 mills, cancelled Halfa 1 II 05. It travelled on the Beni Suef-Cairo TPO (4 II 05) and arrived at the Grand Continental Hotel in Cairo the same day. Four days in transit – seems very efficient.

Interestingly, however, it has no publisher (as our late friend Tony Chisholm would say), and two walking Europeans seem to have disappeared from the left side of the scene, together with another man in a white *galabeya* from the engine itself (*see arrows on my version*). Presumably the photograph was taken some few seconds, or even a minute, before the coloured picture – or has it been altered by the anonymous publisher?

As my card is cancelled in Sudan, some five years earlier than Brian's, and certainly travelled by rail, it does not help to cast much light on the original thought – that because it had no rail markings it might have travelled by sea from Alexandria. Nevertheless, an interesting card. I hope other members might share their views.



And now for something completely different: The Circle is pleased indeed to be able to congratulate our Life Member Cyril Defriez (ESC 172) on reaching just before Christmas the remarkable milestone of embarking on his tenth decade. Circle members were in attendance as he and more than 70 family and friends celebrated with a truly remarkable Egypt-themed cake, complete with the national flag and pyramids on top and camels and palm trees around the side. Cyril regularly spends a whole day travelling to London meetings from his home far away in Lytham, Lancashire. Long may he continue to do so.