

The  
Quarterly Circular  
of  
THE  
EGYPT



STUDY CIRCLE

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Study Circle exhibits 'Africa' at Stampex, Sept 28-Oct 1  
ESC marks Tutankhamun centenary at the Royal, Nov 17

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# *Egypt and Sudan*

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## Meetings Programme 2022

[See also page 244](#)

|                          |                                 |  |                                   |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Wed 28 Sept to Sat 1 Oct | Autumn Stampex                  | ESC members' exhibits around general theme 'Africa'                    | All members                       |
| Sat 1 Oct 2-4pm          | Autumn Stampex                  | ESC meeting Queries and acquisitions                                   | All members                       |
| Thurs 17 Nov 1-5pm       | Royal Philatelic Society London | Major ESC presentation marking 100 years since Tutankhamun's discovery | Contact Jon Aitchison for details |
| November 2022            | Date to be confirmed            | Postal members-only Auction  | All members                       |

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### Exciting meetings scheduled for 2022-2023

**Wed 28 Sept – Sat 1 Oct 2022:** The Egypt Study Circle will be exhibiting at Autumn Stampex at the Design Centre, Islington, London N1 0QH. The exhibition topic, "Africa" will include a range of exhibits from the Circle. (Nearest Underground station is Angel on the Northern Line).

**Sat 1 October 2022, 2pm-4pm:** Autumn Stampex meeting at the Design Centre. Topic is "Queries and acquisitions" (ie, "Ten Sheets"). Please bring something to show, part of your collection or a prized item on any Egypt subject.

**November 2022:** Postal members-only auction. Date and details to follow.

**Thurs 17 Nov 2022, 12 noon-6pm:** Meeting, Lunch and display. A major presentation by the Egypt Study Circle at the Royal Philatelic Society London to mark the centenary of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. We hope that as many members as possible will display on any subject. Please contact our Chairman, Jon Aitchison, at britishlocals@gmail.com to reserve display space. There is still just time, but please hurry.

Exhibits are put up during the morning and then we have a Circle lunch and informal meeting from 12 noon at the pub next door. **The lunch is free and provided by the ESC.** Our display is open 1pm to 6pm followed by free buffet and drinks for those who want to stay. A commemorative brochure will be produced. Do come and see this excellent display in the fabulous new home of the Royal. Everyone is welcome, including spouses, but try to let the Chairman know if you are coming, at britishlocals@gmail.com. (Closest Underground stations are Bank, Cannon Street or Monument).

**Saturday 18 February 2023:** Meeting and AGM at the King's Head pub, 13 Westmoreland Street, Marylebone, London W1G 8PJ. Meet for lunch and/or drinks from 12.30pm. Meeting 2pm to 4.30pm. Topic: anything beginning with A,B,C,D,F,G,H and I. (Note, no 'E'!). Please try to bring something to show. The AGM will take place. (Underground stations Regents Park, Great Portland Street or Baker Street).

**Fri 14 – Sun 16 April 2023:** Joint weekend meeting with the Sudan Study Group at the Morley Hayes Hotel, Derby. All welcome including spouses and day visitors. Booking forms available soon.

**Saturday 1 July 2023:** Midpex 2023 at the Warwickshire Event Centre, Radford Semele, Leamington Spa CV31 1FE, 10am-4pm. The ESC will have a stand.

### Report of the meeting, July 2, at the Victory Services Club

Sadly, the turnout for another interesting meeting on the rocky road from lockdown again proved very disappointing, with only seven members present on a glorious sunny Saturday afternoon. Poor attendances were discussed at length as we attempt to regain our former position of fully attended meetings, with both Officer and Members suggesting alternative ways to make meetings more popular. Those in attendance were Jon Aitchison (Chairman), Mike Murphy (Secretary), Neil Hitchens (Webmaster), Sami Sadek (Treasurer), Mike Bramwell, John Clarke and David Sutton. Apologies: Paul Green, John Davis, Brian Sedgley.

Wearing his Meetings Secretary cap, Jon Aitchison regretted the fact that costs of hiring a suitable room were increasing all round, and especially at the Services Club. Delightful though the surroundings obviously are, it seems uneconomic to be handing over more than £50 per person to attend when meetings are so poorly attended. Suggestions for attempts to boost attendance ranged from the venue to the topic, the speaker to the proximity of public transport – an important facet in light of our membership's advancing age.

There was concern that the long pandemic shutdown had led to a change of habit among members, less inclined to venture out, especially in central London with its potential traffic crowds. After much discussion, it was agreed that, as Spring Stampex, for years an attraction for overseas members, had been abandoned, we would change the schedule for 2023 to one meeting at Autumn Stampex, one with the SSG at Derby, and move two meetings to the King's Head pub in Marylebone, much less expensive although with admitted drawbacks. We shall also go to Midpex next year, and make solid attempts to arrange Zoom meetings.

The Secretary announced that the residue of the late Keith Pogson's collections, donated by his family, had produced over 100 lots for our November Auction together with a mass of photographs of classic-era sheets and plating. Some have gone to Ramez Atiya, who is keen to establish on the website a vast catalogue of all known flaws on the first four issues. This will be a massive undertaking, and is an exciting prospect that deserves much discussion.

Members voted Mike Murphy the 2022 Club Competition winner for his Nile Dams' Postal Services.

The speaker for the day was Sami Sadek, whose display developing the study of TPOs far beyond what Peter Smith imagined attracted enormous admiration and discussion. He paid tribute to his early collaborators, Peter Heim in Germany and especially Dr Ibrahim Shoukry in Cairo, who is now ailing but placed all his knowledge and material at Sami's command.

The review of rare material started at the start – with the first Cairo-Ales TPO of 18 NOV 75 – but then ranged through markings carried not only by trains but also from vessels across the Mediterranean (Constantinople, Constanta, Trieste) and the Red Sea, together with the Nile and its larger navigable canals. There was a breathtaking display of the rare EEF TPOs of the Allies, changing their designations as the troops advanced the railhead across Sinai and eventually to Haifa.

But there were mysteries too, especially in his developing relationship between train numbers and the route actually travelled by a cover, leading sometimes to problems... why, for instance, would a cover posted from Mitubis to Cairo in 1940 travel north and west via Rashid and Alexandria before picking up the Express to its destination? This



was a cover marked with a single-town TPO (Alexandria / T.P.O.; there are also Cairo, Mansura, Suez, Fayoum, Tanta, Port Taufiq), which most definitely requires research: what could TPO use be within a single town? Copies of others' similar covers would be gratefully received.

Following up on the recent article on the "katt" خط TPO marking (Antoine Winter, *QC* 280, p.212), Sami showed (left, above) a hitherto unrecorded TPO, a variant on Type 8B1, Alexandria-Cairo, but with the train number T.24 most unusually repeated in Arabic in the lower section as "katt 24".



By chance, Antoine Winter himself has been able to report another example (left), this time complete, of the variant on Louxor-Sohag Type 8A1 he mentioned in the *QC*. The town-names are now clear on this very nice card to Constantinople, and the earliest date recorded is extended



back from 1902 to 19 III 01. Both enthusiasts, and the Circle, would be grateful to see more examples.

## Samuel Shephard: Hotelier and Forwarding Agent

Richard Wheatley (ESC 168)

Over the years there have been several articles about this remarkable man, indeed there have been books too. However, none of them that I have read mentions the ship from which he was ejected at Suez; by looking through the East India Company (EIC) shipping schedules I am now able to correct this omission. I also list details of the 15 covers that I am aware of that bear his oval Forwarding Agent cachet.

### **Hotelier**

Samuel Shephard was born on 21 January 1816 at Preston Capes, near Daventry in the English Midlands. Unfortunately, he was an orphan by the time he was four years old, and was brought up by an aunt and uncle who ran the Crown Inn at Leamington.

As he came from farming stock it is not surprising that his first job was on a farm. This did not last long before he was apprenticed to a pastry cook in Cheltenham, but this was not to his liking. Next, he went to sea as a cook on board a P & O vessel and in the late 1830s and early 1840s he was sailing on the mail boats between Bombay and Suez. By now he was a steward, and one of the EIC ships he served on was the *Bangalore*.

Later he found himself on the EIC's *Cleopatra* and there was a mutiny on board by some of the crew which the captain, Lieutenant F P Webb, brutally quelled. Some of the officers thought the men had a point, but all of them fell in line with the captain – apart from Shephard. For this act of rightful stubbornness he was put ashore at the next port of call, Suez. He had one shilling in his pocket and no personal possessions! This memorable date was 30 January 1842 and he had just turned 26.

He found work in a Greek café and before long his skill and determination led to him running the establishment. Later in 1842, this flair for organising was tested when he became assistant manager at Hill's British Hotel, which was in the French Quarter of Cairo. This hotel provided overnight accommodation for the Overland travellers and by 1844 he had been promoted to manager! The year was unforgettable for another reason, for he married Mary Rangecroft (*Figure 1*). Two years later he was a father, and the hotel was being referred to as Shephard's Hotel!



**Fig. 2 - The first Shephard's Hotel, 1851**



**Fig. 1 – Samuel Shephard, in 1865 after retirement, and Mary Rangecroft from a painting in 1844, the year they married**

These were busy times in Egypt, for the European nations had awakened to the realisation that the Overland Route from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea (i.e., from Alexandria to Suez) was so much shorter and quicker than sailing around the Cape of Good Hope. Furthermore, the months between September and April were an ideal time to escape the European winter, bask in the reliable sunshine and perhaps, to coin a line from a song, *See the Pyramids along the Nile*.

In 1848 Shepherd moved the business of the British Hotel to much needed larger premises overlooking Esbekieh Square and in the same year he was beginning to establish a reputation as a Forwarding Agent.

The real turning point came in 1849, when the Viceroy of Egypt, Abbas Pasha, handed to him an even larger building just around the corner opposite the Esbekieh Gardens. This was the old palace of Alfi Bey (*Figure 2*), where the French General Kléber was assassinated in 1800 and which more recently had been a school of languages.

By 1851 Shepherd had converted the old palace into the first named Shepherd's Hotel, opening on 3 July. The hotel was filled with Overland Travellers from Calcutta, who had been landed at Suez by the P & O *Orient*. One writer described the journey from Suez to Cairo as "*the scramble across the desert*" and Shepherd was involved from 1850 in arranging the provisions on this route.

Another type of adventurer passing through the hotel's doors was the tourist heading for the ancient tombs and monuments up the Nile valley. Samuel Shepherd, in his words, "*provided the grubbing*" in 1852 to four steamboats sailing up the Nile.



**Fig. 3 - Shepherd's Hotel postmark on hotel stationery 1911**

The drums of war were beating, however, up in the Black Sea with British and Colonial troops using Egypt as a transit point before departing to the Crimean War. Many of them stayed at Shepherd's Hotel and the years 1853-55 were extremely profitable, as Shepherd had obtained the victualling contract for the troops. This enabled him to pay off all his debts incurred in refurbishing the old palace. After this kerfuffle came a new movement of troops through Egypt, this time towards India to quell the Indian Mutiny.

By now his wife Mary was spending most of her time back in England with their children and Shepherd's health was suffering. So, despite the potential good business to be had in Egypt, he reluctantly decided to sell up. The hotel was sold on 20 January 1860 to another hotelier, Philip Zech from Alexandria, for £10,000. Shepherd sailed from Egypt for the last time on 26 April 1860 on board the P & O steamship *Massilia*.

He retired to his estate at Eathorpe Hall, which he had bought a couple of years previously. It nestles in the West Midlands about 14 miles from where he had been born and five miles from Leamington, so he had returned to his roots. Sadly, his hard-earned retirement came to an early end, for on the 12 June 1866 he died on his estate aged only 50.

Zech was to rebuild the hotel in 1891 and on 1 November that year a post office was opened inside the building, with the postmark reading Shepherd's Hotel (*Figure 3*). Samuel Shepherd's name and reputation would live on.

## Forwarding Agent

As Shepherd had been working on ships for some ten years, he had made many trips to England and back to Egypt, and so was well equipped to understand the shipping routes and timetables. In his letters home he frequently mentions routings, for instance on 4 March 1856 he writes to his wife from Cairo “*I write this by the French mail*”. The paquebot *Hydaspe* of Messageries Imperiales on La Ligne d’Egypte sailed from Alexandria on 15 March for Marseilles, arriving on 19 March, and two days later the letter would have been delivered to Mary in England.



Like many other forwarding agents, Shepherd placed a cachet on the letters he dealt with, in his case in an oval shape of 30 x 20mm (*See right*). This mark is not common, for Cairo was well inland, so this service was provided for customers in transit. The cachet has been recorded by Rowe (Ref. 6) from 1848 to 1853. I can now extend the dates of use to 1857. Here is a table of the items known to me bearing this cachet:

| Number | Date          | Cachet colour | Destination      | Source              |
|--------|---------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1      | 1848 Dec. 18  | Black         | London           | Ref. 11, Dec. 2008  |
| 2      | 1849 Feb. 7   | Black         | Philadelphia     | Ref. 10, Sept. 2012 |
| 3      | 1849 Sept. 22 | Black         | Leamington       | Ref. 9, May 2015    |
| 4      | 1850 Jan. 6   | Black         | Leamington       | Ref. 11, March 1970 |
| 5      | 1850 Oct. 27  | Black         | Leamington       | Ref. 10, Sept 2013  |
| 6*     | 1850 Dec. 20  | Black         | Leamington       | ESC records         |
| 7*     | 1851 Jan. 3   | Black         | Leamington       | Mike Murphy         |
| 8      | 1851 Jan. 21  | Black         | London           | Mike Murphy         |
| 9      | 1851 Feb. 19  | Black         | Bangalore, India | Ref. 10, Feb. 1999  |
| 10     | 1851 Nov. 20  | Black         | Bombay, India    | Richard Wheatley    |
| 11     | 1853 Apr. 19  | Blue-green    | Aberdeen         | John Allan          |
| 12     | 1854 Dec. 8   | Black         | Bath             | John Davis          |
| 13     | 1857 Jan. 8   | Blue          | Glasgow          | Kidston archive     |
| 14     | 1857 Mar. 16  | Blue          | Glasgow          | Kidston archive     |
| 15     | 1857 April 5  | Blue          | The Hague        | Ref. 12, June 2021  |

\* These two letters are addressed to John Stanley (at the Crown Hotel, Leamington). He was the cousin of Samuel Shepherd and they were brought up together.

As we have seen, Shepherd moved premises on 3 July 1851 and at the same time changed the name of the hotel to Shepherd’s Hotel, but he did not change the name of the hotel in his Forwarding Agent cachet.

From this table we see that black ink was used up to 1854, and blue on three of the items from 1857. This was in line with current practice in Egyptian post offices, where the ink used on postmarks was black from about 1840 up to the early 1850s when it was changed to blue. Furthermore, all the black impressions are on the front of the item, while the blue ones are on the reverse. The 1853 letter does not conform, however, for that cachet is on the front and in blue-green ink! In the auction catalogue of Peter Smith’s collection (Ref. 9) it states that his example (Item 3) is “one of the 5 or 6 known strikes of this rare marking”!

There is a gap in the use of the cachet between 1854 and 1857, which would have been due to the Crimean War. During that war 11 P & O ships were involved in supporting the British Army in the Black Sea by moving troops, equipment, supplies and the wounded. This affected the timetables of P & O shipping lines.

Of these 15 covers, eleven are to Britain, two to India, one to USA and the last one to Holland. All were posted during the so-called Winter Season (September to April), when you would expect that Shepherd would have been in Egypt during his busy part of the year.





**Fig. 4 – Entire to Bombay forwarded by Shepherd and bearing his cachet, 20 Nov 51**

Illustrated above is a commercial letter to Bombay between two Parsees, sent on 20 November 1851 (Item 10). Manuscript charge 1/- the Red Sea postage = 8 annas to pay. Suez transit cds in blue ink 20 November 1851. Per EIC steam frigate *Feroze* from Suez to Bombay, arrived 9 December. Details courtesy Max Smith. I would welcome a scan of any more covers bearing this elusive cachet.

\* This article has been adapted and extended with much help from Mike Murphy from an article of the same name that I wrote for the Postal History Society and published in their journal *Postal History* in September 2021.

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### **Egypt winners in Jakarta**

Many congratulations to our members who won medals in the Indonesia World Stamp Championship, which took place in Jakarta from August 4-9. Among the winners were:

**Adam Hafez** (ESC 747), 86, Large Vermeil – French PO in Alexandria 1832-78 (5 frames)

**Aly Gabr** (ESC 726), 85, Large Vermeil – Egypt: the 1933 Airmails (5 frames); **Samir Nabih Attia** (ESC 505), 85, Large Vermeil – Helwan, Haven for Healing (5 frames)

**Sami Fereig** (ESC 569), 85, Large Vermeil – Postal History of Egypt under the Mohammed Ali Dynasty (four volumes). Non-member Mamdouh Mosley, 90, Gold – the Delta Collection (Egyptian Postal History 1798-1879 (8 frames).

Single frame: **Amr Laithy** (ESC 681) – Graf Zeppelin LZ 127 Egypt Flight 1931 (85); **Aly Gabr** - 1926 Geographical Congress (81). Non-member Hassan Ahmed Badry – Egypt's 1918 Official issue (80); and Postal History letter-sheet (80).

In addition, our member **Brian Callan** (ESC 694) win a Large Vermeil (88 points) for his five-frame Ireland Postal Stationary 1922-47.

## Egypt's Forwarding Agents: An update

Mahmoud Ramadan (ESC 358)

This study is based on the books of the late Peter A.S. Smith (*Egypt: Stamps & Postal History*, 1999), Kenneth Rowe (*The postal history of the forwarding agents*, 1984) and Luca D. Biolato (*La 'Posta Europea'*, 1996). The writer has also taken into consideration the works of Luciano De Zanche and Jean Boulad d'Humières. May all their souls rest in peace.

The books mentioned above will be referred to by the writer's surname: Smith, Rowe and Biolato. The purpose of the study is to refresh our knowledge and awareness, as well as to add recent updates and discoveries. I illustrate examples of the three additions to the combined list that I have been able to make

First, however, some general observations on the published works of the three reference scholars. The breakdown and classification of forwarding agents differed between the researchers. Rowe focused on location (city/country), while Biolato examined the nature of the destination (international/local). Smith, who focused on those who used the term "Forwarded By" in their cachets, did mention some of the others, and also added Hess & Co.

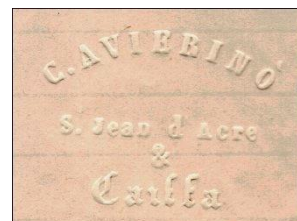
The references also mention whether the forwarding agent used a cachet or a manuscript notation on the letters, the manuscript notation in many cases being difficult to detect. Some forwarders were noted to have use both.

I have also found that all forwarders who operated before 1840 used only manuscript notations, and no cachets. Only one 20<sup>th</sup> century forwarder in Port Said used a typeset handstamp.

It is worthwhile distinguishing between "forwarders" and "carriers" such as the Mohamed Aly Post, which carried mail in all Egyptian lands and territories, the Posta Europea, which operated as carriers inland and as forwarders for overseas correspondence, and the Egyptian Transit Company, which carried letters inland. Although Waghorn and Co. are not Egyptian forwarders, the focus of their business was forwarding/carrying letters through Egypt.



**Letter dated St Jean d'Acre 7 May 1864, signed C. Avierino (embossed logo below). Sent to Malta. Privately shipped to Alexandria where it was forwarded by C. G. Zervudachi (oval cachet on reverse, left), via the British P.O. in Alexandria, where it was charged 5d on 15 May 1864, and arrived Malta 18 May 1864 (both cancellations on reverse).**



**A similar earlier cover on Avierino letterhead paper is included in my collection. As a child, I recall an Avierino department store in Alexandria in the 1950s-1960s.**

All carriers, without exception, levied a charge for the carriage and transport of letters. Forwarding agents were employed to “organize” the carriage and transport of letters through the appropriate carriers, in order to ensure prompt and safe delivery. All forwarders in Egypt had other businesses and other sources of income. They performed this service either for a fee or free of charge, as a courtesy to their business associates, or as a mode of advertising (see Rowe, p.22).

Collectors should distinguish between commercial use of business cachets and those used for forwarding a letter. This can be achieved by checking the letter’s original source, its context, the letterhead, and/or signature.

The list on the next page is essentially a combination of those compiled by Rowe and Biolato. Rowe’s list has fewer agents, as it was written earlier. In addition, he was concentrating on writing about forwarding agents worldwide, while Biolato focused on Egypt, and hence probably examined much more Egyptian material.



**Letter dated Cairo 30 September 1860. Signed Fratelli Pinto, with black oval sender's cachet on face. Sent to the Ottoman Bank in Constantinople. Privately carried to Alexandria, and forwarded by G. Hakim & Figli with blue-green oval cachet (below) at the top, plus a Franco in similar coloured ink (attributed to the Austrian P.O. in Alexandria). Arrived October 9 and responded to on October 10. Ex Peter A. S. Smith (Corinphila May 2015, Lot 5049).**



**Entire dated Cairo 2 November 1854, signed by D. Robino, sent to Marseille. Privately carried to Alexandria, where forwarded by N. Matatia & Figli (cachet below) via the French P.O. in Alexandria on 7 November 1854, plus framed P.P. both in black on face. Arrived Marseille on 15 November 1854 [red cancel on face]. Biolato said the addressees Pastre Frères were forwarding agents in Alexandria, but showed no dates or examples.**



| Egypt's Forwarding Agents |                            |         |         | Listed by |         |                               |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|-------------------------------|
| City                      | Forwarding Agent           | Mark    | Dates   | Rowe      | Biolato | Remarks                       |
| Alexandria                | Bride, Radcliffe & Buckley | MS      | 1714    | +         | +       |                               |
|                           | Francesco Maria Gerolini   | MS      | 1728    |           | +       | Auctioned at Santachiara 1994 |
|                           | Danilo Levi                | MS      | 1743    |           | +       | Ex Wolfsbauer collection      |
|                           | D. S. Coronel (Cairo/Alex) | Oval    | 1842-48 |           | +       | Dates by M. Ramadan           |
|                           | E. Bismot                  | Oval    | 1856    | +         | +       |                               |
|                           | Dom. Barusso               | ?       | ?       |           | +       |                               |
|                           | Briggs & Co.               | Oval    | 1843-57 | +         | +       | "Forwarded by" - black & blue |
|                           | Briggs & Co.               | Oval    | 1856    | +         | +       | No "Forwarded by" - black     |
|                           | J. Brindily                | MS      | 1837    | +         | +       |                               |
|                           | James Davidson             | ?       | ?       |           | +       | Article in ESC QC 127 (1983)  |
|                           | Dawson Bros.               | MS      | 1836    | +         | +       |                               |
|                           | Dumreicher Freres & Co     | Oval    | 1859-64 | +         | +       |                               |
|                           | Escalon Freres & Co.       | Oval    | 1819    | +         | +       |                               |
|                           | J. Gliddon                 | ?       | ?       |           | +       |                               |
|                           | Hess & Co.                 | Oval    | 1874    |           | +       | As listed by Smith            |
|                           | Jos. Aubert & Co.          | Rect    | 1846    |           | +       | Edmond Walton article, 1993   |
|                           | Gsell & Bircher            | Deco    | 1870    | +         | +       |                               |
|                           | Gsell & Co.                | Oval    | 1871    | +         | +       |                               |
|                           | (Ferdinand) Krebsler & Cie | Oval    | 1864    | +         | +       | From Benna Abu Sir 3.1.1864   |
|                           | Lindsay V. Malin           | MS      | 1838    | +         | +       |                               |
|                           | T. Messersmith             | MS      | 1832    | +         | +       |                               |
|                           | Levi Moles & Co.           | ?       | ?       |           | +       |                               |
|                           | G.M.Morpurgo (Alex/Cairo)  | Deco    | 1837    |           | +       | Also known with ms only       |
|                           | Fratelli Nahman            | Oval    | 1857    | +         | +       | Also known with ms only       |
|                           | Nazzio & Co.               | Oval    | 1852-53 | +         | +       |                               |
|                           | Pastre Freres              | ?       | ?       |           | +       |                               |
|                           | A. J. Polack               | ?       | ?       |           | +       |                               |
|                           | Sto. Di. Gi. Popolani      | Oval    | 1863    | +         | +       | Also known with ms only       |
|                           | Regny & Cie.               | MS      | 1839    | +         | +       | Company cachet with ms        |
|                           | A. Riga Giro               | Oval    | 1855    | +         | +       |                               |
|                           | Sarnelli                   | MS      | 1852    |           | +       |                               |
|                           | Soma & Cie.                | ?       | ?       |           | +       |                               |
|                           | Tod, Rathbone & Co.        | Oval    | 1848    |           | +       |                               |
|                           | G. Hakim & Figli           | Oval    | 1860    |           |         | Ex Smith collection, unlisted |
|                           | N. Matatia & Figli         | Oval    | 1855    |           |         | M. Ramadan addition to lists  |
|                           | C. G. Zervudachi           | Oval    | 1864    |           |         | M. Ramadan addition to lists  |
|                           | Turin Freres               | ?       | ?       |           | +       |                               |
| Cairo                     | British Hotel, S. Shephard | Oval    | 1848-53 | +         | +       | Black and blue                |
|                           | Egyptian Transit Company   | Oval    | 1843-?  | +         | +       | Black and blue green          |
|                           | Figli Di Demetrio          | Oval    | 1865    | +         | +       |                               |
| Port Said                 | R. Broadbent               | TS/3    | 1901    | +         | +       |                               |
|                           | Henry S. King & Co.        | Rect    | 1902    | +         | +       |                               |
| Transit                   | Waghorn                    | 13 diff | 1836-41 | +         | +       |                               |

MS: Manuscript. TS/3: Typeset 3 lines. Deco: Decorative. Other: Shape of cachet.

In their various publications Smith featured only cachets of Waghorn, the Egyptian Transit Company, Briggs & Co, and Shepherd's (British Hotel). Rowe listed many more forwarders, but showed no cachets, while Biolato illustrated several more cachets. Below are illustrations of the recorded cachets other than those featured in Smith. The images, selected as being those of better quality, are sourced from Biolato, the writer's collection, and auction catalogues. Sizes have been modified.



## Electrotyping: Resolving the Flaws on the 1872 1 Piastre: Part II

Ramez Atiya (ESC 246)

In Part I (QC 281, June 2022, pp 233-239), the type of flaws found on the 1 piastre of 1872 were classified. It was concluded that:

*Every 1872 1 piastre stamp falls into one of three mutually exclusive types:*

- Type 1 – Dot in first A of PIASTRA,
  - Subgroups (Flaw Groups) of **dot in A** – not mutually exclusive
    - **Crease or “crack”** across lower right value tablet (NP D 17f, r).
    - Intact or indented thin inner frameline above top right value tablet.
- Type 2 – **Small bar of colour above the NE corner value tablet.**
- Type 3 – No dot in A, no creasing or “crack” across SE tablet.
  - Subgroups indented (Flaw Group): or intact inner frameline
  - Subgroup (Flaw Group) **Connected Letters**, intact or indented thin inner frameline (NPD22c)

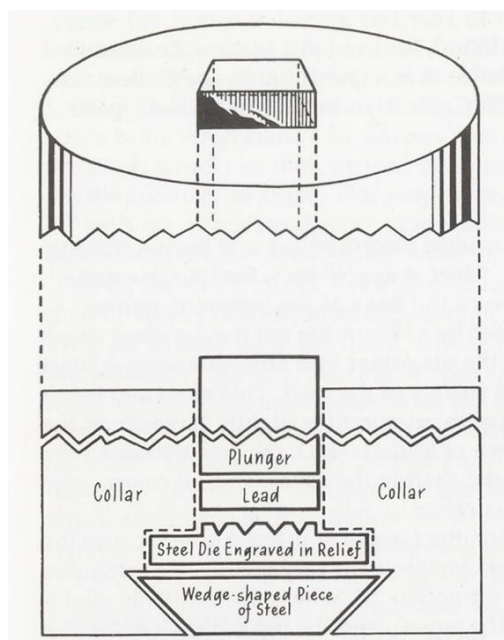
It is further known that the design was multiplied from a single die and that the sheets were typographed or surface printed as well as lithographed. We will not focus on the latter since the lithographic stone was prepared by a single transfer from the typographed printing base.

The objectives of Part II are (a) to show how the three types and flaw groups and other flaws are consistent with an electrotyped printing base, and (b) to show that the archival records provide evidence that the issue was electrotyped.

### **Relief printing from an electrotyped plate**

Electrotyping is an entirely different method of preparing the printing base from stereotyping. Lead moulds are struck from the die. Electrodeposition is then used to coat the moulds with a thin copper shell.

The shell is then peeled from the mould and given a solid metal backing. The result is the printing plate. Details specific to the electrotyping of the 1 piastre are necessary to show how the process leads naturally to all the observed varieties.



**Fig. 1 - Lead mould striking**  
(Williams, *Fundamentals of Philately*)

*Moulds for Electrotyping:* The first step in electrotyping is the production of lead moulds. De La Rue employed a special process to produce moulds for electrotyping (*Figure 1*). A cylindrical collar was designed with a removable wedge-shaped piece of steel over which the steel die was inserted. A rectangular block of lead was inserted on top of the die through the shaft and onto the die. A plunger was then inserted through the shaft and struck by a press, impressing onto the lead the reverse image of the die. As many lead moulds were struck as needed. Because the unit was machined with precision, virtually identical lead moulds (or “leads”) were produced.

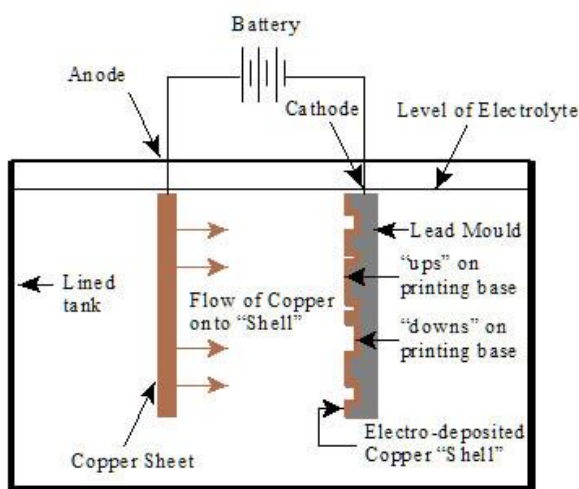
The main philatelic varieties to emerge from this process are “impacted metal flaws” where an extraneous bit of metal becomes lodged between the die and the lead. When struck onto the die, a small cavity is impressed into the lead. As we will show, such cavities would eventually emerge as the flaws characterizing Types 1 (red dot in A) and 2 (bar of colour above NE tablet) [Figure 2].



**Fig. 2 - Impacted metal flaws**

*Electrotyping:* Once the lead mould has been struck, it is immersed in an electrotyping bath. Figure 3 shows a typical apparatus that one might have found in a nineteenth century printing establishment. Usually, not one but several moulds were joined together in a chase as a unit or mould group and then immersed in the bath. The number of leads varied from two to 200 depending on the capabilities of the printing firm.

When connected to the battery, copper atoms are removed from the copper sheet, flow through the electrolyte, and are deposited on the lead mould as a thin layer of copper. The face of the copper layer or shell takes the exact shape of the mould, but with the “downs” on the mould becoming “ups” on the shell and the “ups” on the mould becoming “downs” on the shell.



**Fig. 3 - Stereotyping of a copper shell**

The “ups” (the raised lines) will print as colour and the downs will be white areas on the stamp. The thickness of the shell depends on the magnitude of the current and its duration. Before the advent of dynamos in firms such as De La Rue only low current batteries were available, permitting only very thin shells. Their thickness was typically between 1/100 and 1/25 of an inch.

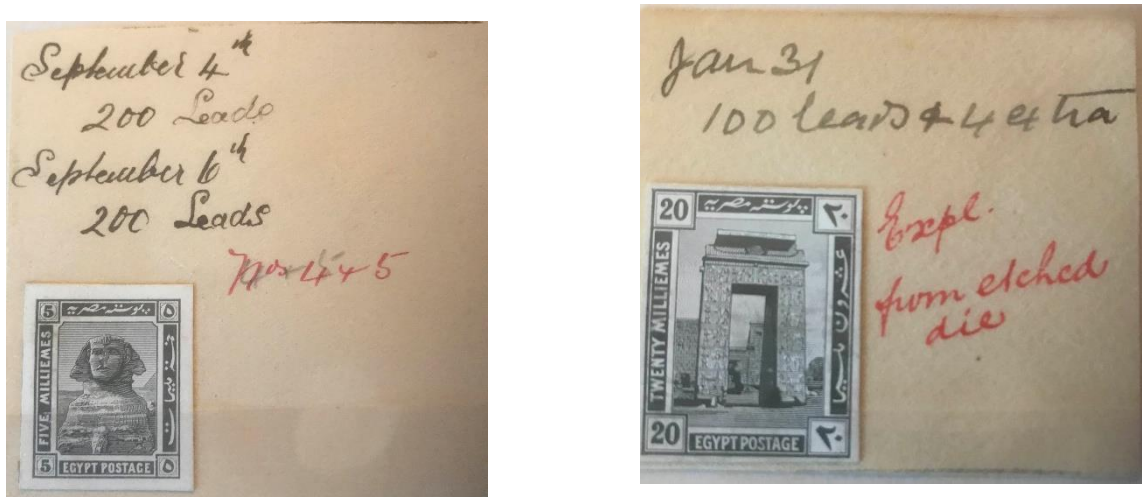
We can now account for the “creased 1” variety. Once the shell had achieved sufficient thickness, it was separated from the lead mould. Typically, a knife was placed under the corner of the shell to pry it up. Then it was peeled off, bending the corner in the process. This delicate manoeuvre

could easily crease the thin shell, especially with copper! The shell could crease upward, creating a sharp ridge which would print as an unwanted line of colour if the ridge were sufficiently high. Alternatively it could crease downward, producing a narrow valley and leaving a meandering white line where colour should have appeared. Once a shell had been removed from the mould, another would be grown. This shell would likewise be prone to creasing, but the creasing would almost certainly not be identical to the previous one. It is reasonable to assume that the printer always followed the same procedure, peeling the shell from the same lower corner, creating a corner crease. The crease would tend to follow the geometry of the shell from one to the next. This would account for the more or less same location of the flaw.

It also accounts for the diversity of shaped creases bearing a family resemblance, but not identical to each other, since the shells would crease to varying degrees and along slightly different lines. The creased variety is the result of a process and not of a single flaw on the die or mould. The “crack” is not a die flaw but the result of the removal of the shell from the mould. Because many shells are produced, the result is a group flaw just as noted.

### Mould Groups

We must next ask why the creased variety *never* appears on Types 2 or 3? The explanation requires an account of “mould groups.” Typically, an unknown number of moulds would be struck from the die; in our case at least three in order to account for the three types. These would be locked together in a chase to form a single unit or mould group. The mould group would then have been immersed in the electrotyping bath. In the nineteenth century the size of a mould group was limited by the size of the bath and the available current from the battery. For example, until 1882, Queensland stamps were electrotyped from mould pairs and blocks of four. The facilities in Queensland would have been comparable to those in Egypt in the 1870s. With the advent of the dynamo and large currents, whole sheets could be electrotyped. These were electrotyped from a mould group of 100 or more lead moulds (or “leads”) locked together in a chase. This can be seen by the instruction to prepare 200 and 100 leads respectively to electrotype full sheets of the 1914 De La Rue 5 and 20 mills (*Figure 4*).



**Fig. 4 - Instructions to produce leads for the 1914 De La Rue 5 & 20 mills** (Courtesy O. Sidhom, ESC 450)



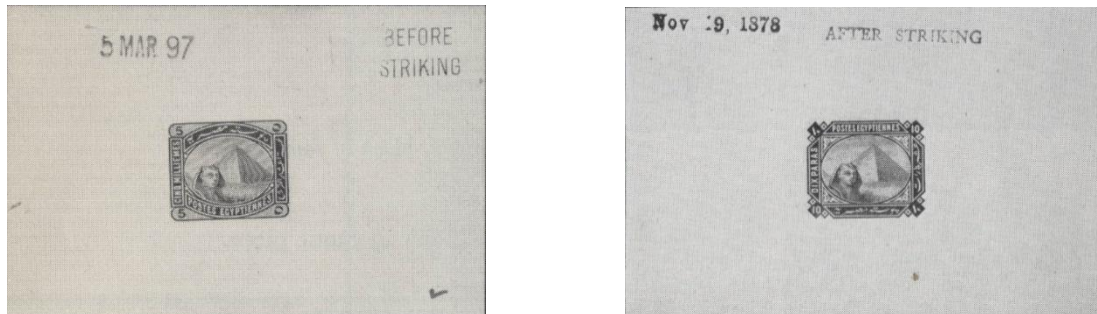
**Fig. 5 - The die: the haut-reliefs or “ups” on the surface show as light, the bas-reliefs or “downs” are dark**

The process probably followed at Boulac can be reconstructed. Since neither the original moulds or dies are available, we illustrate the process with a digital reconstruction starting with the die and proceeding to the printing plate. The process will show how electrotyping accounts for the observed flaws.

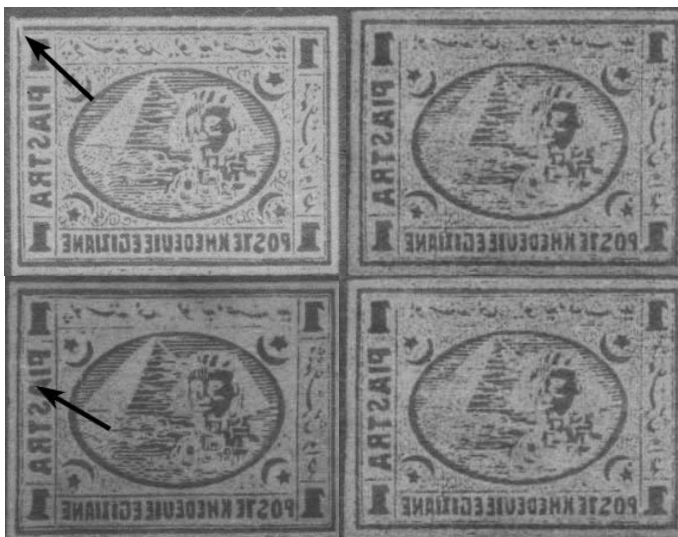
We begin with a digitally reconstructed image of the die (*Figure 5*). The next step in preparation of the plate is the striking of lead moulds. Assume that *four leads* were struck using an apparatus such as a coining press or like the one shown in *Figure 1*. After striking, the moulds would have been assembled and locked in a forme as a single mould group of four. The striking process reverses the design, flipping right to left and converting the “ups” (*haut-relief*) on the die to “downs” (*bas-relief*) on the moulds and the “downs” to “ups” (*Figure 7*).



To ascertain that there were no impacted metal flaws or other defects, De La Rue printed proof cards labelled BEFORE STRIKING and AFTER STRIKING. Apparently, the printers at Boulac did not exercise equal quality control, with the result that flaws emerging when striking the moulds were carried all the way to the printed sheet. Characteristic features of the groups of flaws would have emerged at this stage.



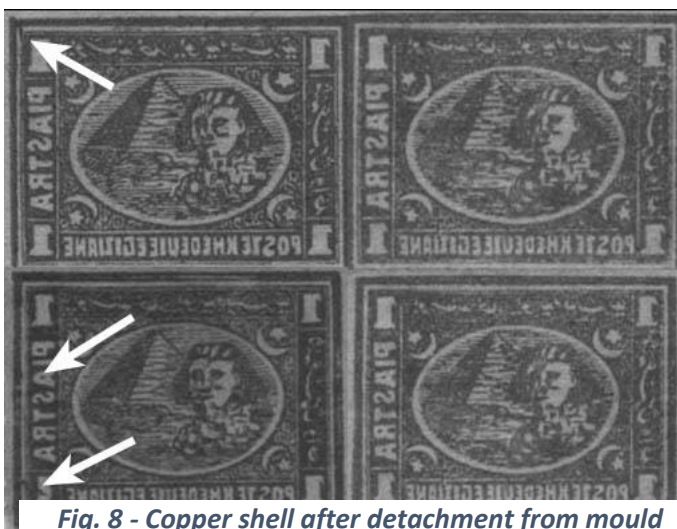
**Fig. 6 - Before and After Striking De La Rue proof cards**



**Fig. 7 - Mould group: arrows indicating the downs for the "Bar of Colour" [Type 2] and "Dot in A" [Type 1] are indicated by arrows**

Two impacted metal flaws make their appearance. A loose bit of metal seems to have punched into one of the four lead moulds, causing a small hole or down. This would become an “up” on the printing base. This happened twice, once on each of two moulds, one leading to the “bar of colour” (Type 2) and the other to the “dot in A” (Type 1) flaws (Figure 7).

Next, the four moulds would have been locked in a small chase as a single block of four, as shown. Two leads in the mould bear the impacted metal flaws: these are indicated by arrows. As “downs” on the moulds, they will appear on every shell grown from the mould group. These will appear as Types 1 and 2 throughout the sheet. The two leads at right are without impacted metal flaws. These will become the sources of Type 3.



**Fig. 8 - Copper shell after detachment from mould**

The copper shell is very tough, it is also very thin, typically 1/100<sup>th</sup> to 1/25<sup>th</sup> of an inch.

Records indicate that removing was carried out by first slipping a sharp knife at one corner to pry loose the shell. The shell could then be peeled off carefully. The corner of the shell would have been bent up as it was being extracted. Copper creases easily and the corner could easily have been creased as the shell was being pulled up from the corner. The result would sometimes be the crease shown in *Figure 8*. The degree and orientation of creasing would be different on each of the 50 shells required for the sheet of 200. Some corners would crease upward, creating the ridge that would print as a red line. Others would crease downward, creating the valley that would be seen as a meandering white line. Still more would create no crease, just a bulge in the “1”. The degree and type of creasing accounts for the great variety of creased corner flaws. The result is a flaw group whose members bear a family resemblance but are distinct, occurring on different sheet positions. Flaw groups are the result of a process.

Since it typically took days to grow a shell using battery power, printers would invest a great deal of time repairing damaged shells, or would settle for marginally satisfactory results. The printers at Boulac would probably never have discarded a shell over a simple crease.



**Fig. 9 - Creased corner - final printed subject with the image reversed when printed from the backed shell**

Because the shell is so thin, it is useless as a printing base. Therefore, once it was removed, it was given a heavy metal backing. One further step must have taken place. Apparently, the printers in Boulac cut the shell into individual subjects, a common practice. This follows from the observation that the three types are distributed throughout the sheet with no particular arrangement. Had entire shell blocks of four been backed without separation, a repeated pattern of four would be seen throughout the sheet.

This is the case for the Prince Edward Island 3 cents of 1872, where mould groups of ten were used to grow ten shells for the sheet of 100. Each shell was given a metal backing. The ten were then locked together to form the printing base. The sheet shows ten types repeated ten times in the sheet. According to Smith, the types on the 1872 1 piastre are distributed randomly. We conclude that the shells were first given a backing and then were cut into four subjects, or that the shell was first cut and then each subject backed individually. The individual stereos were then locked together to form the printing base.



Note that printing reverses the image on the base. The result is the familiar image. The crease now appears on the lower right (*Figure 9*) instead of the lower left (*Figure 8*).

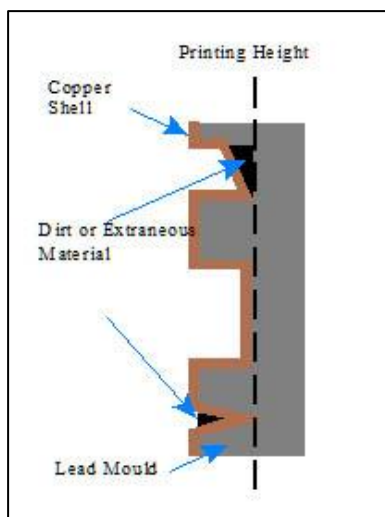


**Fig. 10 - White Spot in Frame - NP D17e**

**The White Flaws:** The sources of the numerous white flaws on the 1 piastre need to be examined for consistency with electrotyping. Some of them, such as the “White Spot in Frame” NP D 17e (*Figure 10*), are almost certainly damage caused by a tool.



**Fig. 11 – White Flaws**



**Fig. 12 - Lead mould with extraneous material**

Others, including the “joined letters KH in and VIE in ‘KHEDEVIE EGIZIANE’” (NP D 17g/s), require a more detailed treatment. The most likely source is dirt or extraneous material on the mould. Any material which lodges in the lines of the mould will cause the copper to deposit above printing height (*Figure 12*) and will leave a white area. These white flaws are common (*Figure 11*). Only great care would prevent the accumulation of dirt and other material, but especially from penetrating into the narrow recesses of the mould.

It seems entirely plausible that this is the source of the “connected characters” variety. Electrotyping further provides the source for a group flaw rather than a simple flaw. Assume that material collected on the mould in the narrow recesses between the lines in such letter as “H.” Since the mould is used multiple times, it is reasonable to expect that extraneous material would accumulate when forming some shells but be reduced while forming others.

In either case, the result of extraneous material would be that the lines of “H” would not print but rather appears as a white blur. This process would produce a series of shells showing various degrees of “joining” of the lines from one copper shell to the next. In other words, electrotyping would produce a group flaw rather than a simple flaw occurring at a single position.

A final note is a tribute to Major E.L.G. MacArthur for his pioneering studies of the Third Issue. MacArthur carried out a plating of the 1872 1 piastre, identifying a now unknown number of flaws. He further determined their positions by matching their perforations against photographs of the two existing sheets of 1872 10 paras, one perforated  $12 \frac{1}{2} \times 13 \frac{1}{3}$ , the second  $13 \frac{1}{3}$ . Unfortunately, MacArthur did not publish his study which was sold with his collection and then cut up, an irreplaceable loss!

Figure 14 shows one item from this study showing its constant flaws and its sheet position. It is left to another philatelist to reconstruct his study, now that we know that it can be accomplished.

### The Archival Evidence for Electrotyping

Although the case for electrotyping is strong, the flong hypothesis might still be maintained provided one is willing to accept a complicated account. We therefore seek archival support for the electrotyping hypothesis.



Fig. 14 - From MacArthur's unpublished plating study (constant flaw unlisted)

In the 1940s Ibrahim Chaftar unearthed the archival records regarding the then new 1872 issue. In a Report to Muzzi Bey, L. Guarnieri, chief clerk of the Khedivial Postal Administration, reports that the stamps of 1872 had been delivered together with the sum total of sheets for all seven values. He then states:

“...the lead forms of all seven values of the series, as all the proofs of the said stamps ... were destroyed by fire. All steel dies numbering seven, were placed in a wooden box which was closed and sealed and together with the stamps was delivered to the Ministry...” [*L'Orient Philatélique* V. No. 63, July 1948]

A similar translation is given by MacArthur in a major article printed in the *QC* (Vol. VII Nos. 9,10, &11). Nevertheless, he states at the beginning of the article (No. 10):

The next step in our investigation was the methods by which stereotypes were produced We considered many methods including Electro-typing, Clay, Punch, Flong and Plaster of Paris. The first three were discounted as there was no serious evidence to support them.

In view of the selection from Guarnieri's Report, I find such a statement mystifying. What else could Guarnieri have meant by “leads,” if not lead moulds and therefore electrotyping? The process for disposing of the lead moulds by melting them was in general use. Further support is provided for this contention in a letter written by De La Rue to B. Bartlett, the Inspector to the Crown Agents, in 1896. He writes “*regarding control in making plates for copper-plate printed Stamps*”:

Taking the lead impressions is only a matter of a few minutes each. Your assistant would see the lead impressions put into the battery for the working plates to be grown, and he would see them taken out of the battery and *the leads destroyed*. The working plates ... should be taken under your control. [John Easton, *The De La Rue History of British & Foreign Postage Stamps*, p.586]

The leads were destroyed by melting, the fate called for on the proofs shown in Figure 4. These standard security measures are exactly those followed by Guarnieri. The leads were melted in the furnace and the steel dies were handed to the authorities. In conclusion, both archival records and the character of the flaws support electrotyping.

We note that Guarnieri refers to “the leads of all *seven values* of the series”. The natural conclusion is that the entire 1872 issue in its entirety was electrotyped, not just the 1 piastre! This would be a remarkable result indeed. We leave it to another philatelist to make the case.

\* It is regretted that in the listing of flaws in the settings of the 1874 1-piastre (*QC* 277, June 2021, p. 239) reference was made to a Setting B flaw on stamp 121. This should have read position 141.

## Postage Paid – an initial exploration

Mike Murphy (ESC 240)

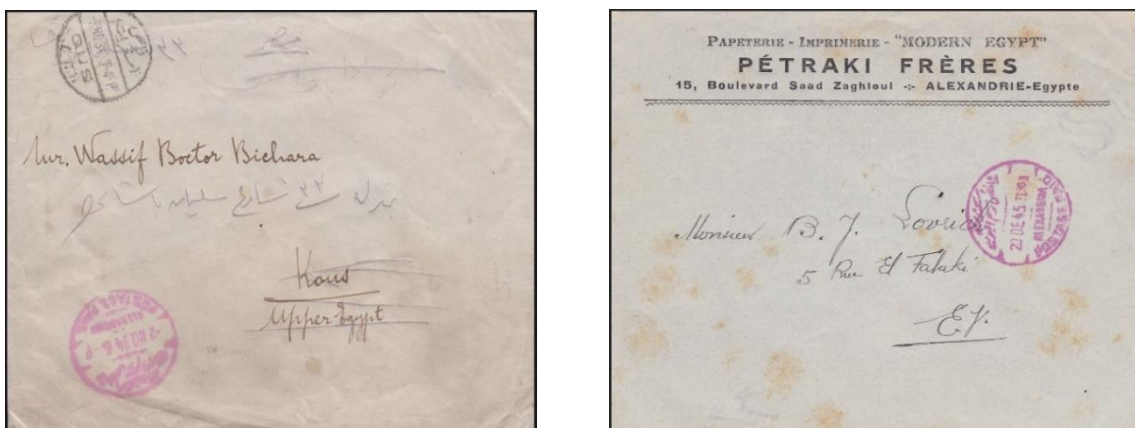


**Advertising material sent from Alexandria (postcard, 11 NO 37, Type A1) and Cairo (large envelope, 8 JU 55, type C7) via the postage-paid system**

One of the myriad aspects of Egyptian postal history that has long intrigued me – though without attracting me so much as to actually investigate it too deeply – has been the “postage paid” (خالص رسم البريد) system. Now seems a suitable time to correct that omission – but after some research I am still fairly well mystified.

With access to several Postal Guides, together with many early years of the Postal Bulletins, I expected that it would not be difficult to find regulations for the system’s usage in among the hundreds of pages of official instructions. But no. The phrase does not seem to occur. Though the definition of “printed matter” is dealt with at length in the Postal Guides, I cannot find any detailed definition of the treatment of “unsealed” envelopes, though both categories would seem to qualify for postage-paid treatment.














So without any official guidance, I set out on a trawl for the distinctive postal markings, and have come up with a total of 30 examples, only eight of which are scans from the internet and therefore unable to be examined for transit markings on the reverse or whether sealed or not.



**Two Alexandria A1 markings: 3 NO 34, addressed to Kous, undelivered, and returned to Cairo; and 20 DE 45 (latest date) addressed En Ville**

But first, let’s list some assumptions long-held about the postage-paid system: confined to Alexandria and Cairo, available only within those cities, restricted to printed matter (or unsealed?). How did my 30 examples score? I have postmarks only from Alexandria and Cairo, 20 with a recognisable address are sent En Ville (or suburban addresses), 15 unsealed, others would qualify as printed matter if the regulations were applied.

On the other hand, in cases in which the material is still in its envelope as evidence, the variety is surprising, ranging from schedules of sailing times to invitations to new stores opening, information about new cars to purchase, two postcards advertising the season's clothing range or new medical products to doctors, and actual printed matter in the form of booklets and pamphlets.

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>ALEXANDRIA /<br/>POSTAGE PAID</b></p> <p>22 JA 27 to 20 DE 45<br/>Dm 30, datebars 7.5<br/>Black</p>                   |  <p>A1</p>   | <p><b>ALEXANDRIA /<br/>POSTAGE-PAID</b></p> <p>15 5 57 to 31 OC 60<br/>Dm 35, datebox 24x8<br/>Black</p>                |  <p>A2</p>   |
| <p><b>ALEXANDRIA /<br/>PAYE</b></p> <p>5 FE 66<br/>Size?<br/>Black</p>  |  <p>A3</p>   | <p><b>CAIRO /<br/>POSTAGE PAID</b></p> <p>1 JU 26<br/>Dm 30, datebars 7.5<br/>Red – (<i>misr</i>)</p>                   |  <p>C1</p>   |
| <p><b>CAIRO /<br/>POSTAGE PAID</b></p> <p>22 NO 33 to 28 MA 34<br/>Dm 28, datebars 8<br/>Red – (<i>qahira</i>)</p>          |  <p>C2</p>   | <p><b>CAIRO /<br/>POSTAGE PAID</b></p> <p>17 DE 36 to 3 JU 37<br/>Dm 30, datebars 13<br/>Magenta – (<i>qahira</i>)</p>  |  <p>C3</p>   |
| <p><b>CAIRO /<br/>POSTAGE PAID</b></p> <p>14 SE 42<br/>Dm 31, datebars 9<br/>Red – (<i>qahira</i>)</p>                      |  <p>C4</p>  | <p><b>CAIRO /<br/>POSTAGPAID</b></p> <p>9 MR 52-25 DE 52<br/>Dm 31, datebars 10<br/>Black, violet – (<i>qahira</i>)</p> |  <p>C5</p>  |
| <p><b>CAIRO /<br/>POSTAGPAID</b></p> <p>11 JU 54<br/>Dm 28, datebars 9<br/>Red – (<i>qahira</i>)</p>                        |  <p>C6</p> | <p><b>CAIRO / T /<br/>POSTA GEPAID</b></p> <p>8 JU 55<br/>Dm 29, datebars 10<br/>Red – (<i>qahira</i>)</p>              |  <p>C7</p> |
| <p><b>CAIRO /<br/>POSTAGE PAID (2)</b></p> <p>5 4 55<br/>Dm 34, datebars 10<br/>Black – (<i>qahira</i>)</p>                 |  <p>C8</p> | <p><b>CAIRO /<br/>POSTAGE PAID (2)</b></p> <p>? 2 61 (64?)<br/>Dm 34, datebars 12<br/>Black – (<i>qahira</i>)</p>       |  <p>C9</p> |
| <p><b>POSTAGE PAID /<br/>POSTAGE PAID CAIRO</b></p> <p>19 OCT 195? To 26 DEC 1958<br/>p-p 40, overall 80, ht 18<br/>Red</p> |   |  <p>C10</p>                         |   |

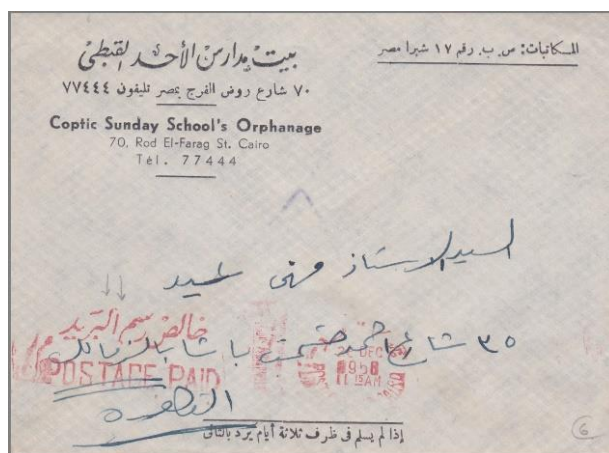
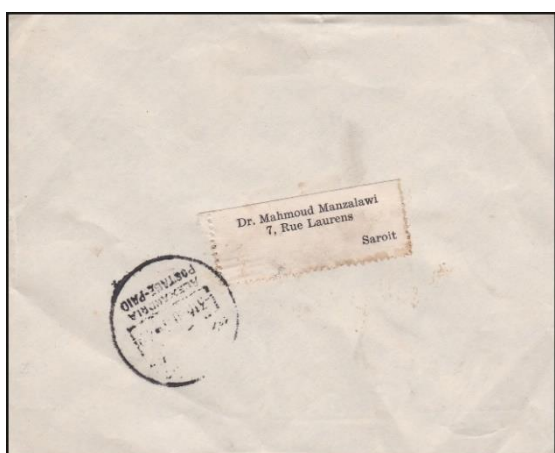
There is another surprise in the number and variety of postmark types revealed on an initial examination bearing in mind that dates are not always clear and may need to be modified – only three types from Alexandria over a range of 39 years from 22 JA 27, but ten clearly different types from Cairo, varying in shape and spacing of the wording (and spelling!) and the size of the cds and its datebars, between 1 JU 26 and 1961.

To review these briefly, the general cds has city name and Postage Paid in the lower segment, with the Arabic equivalent above. Cancels are struck mainly in red or magenta, but also occasionally in black or violet. Alexandria has a single type recorded from 1927 to 1945, a second with two straight lines of text below (1957-1960), and one example of PAYE / ALEXANDRIA recorded from 1966.



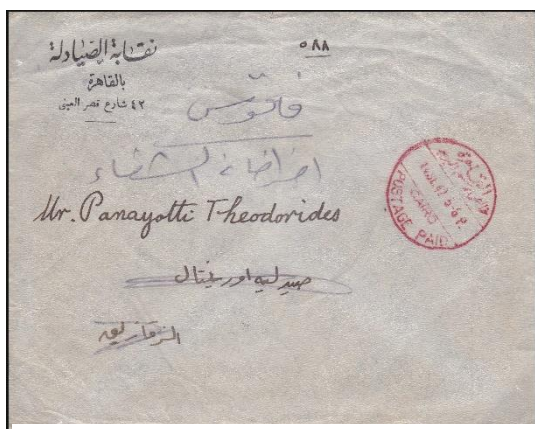
**Greatly enlarged sections of Type C5 showing what appear to be Arabic numerals**

For Cairo there is a series of seven variations on the basic type from 1926 to 1955, then a straight-line type (two varieties, 195?-196?), and finally a machine roller cancel (195?-1958). There is further variation in type C5, with apparent Arabic figures for 1 and 2 set between the Cairo and the Postage Paid (*see above*). This may be explored further if more examples come to light. Similarly, C8-9 both show the figure (2) in European and Arabic, indicating that perhaps a (1) has yet to be recorded.



**Alexandria A2, 31 OC 60, addressed En Ville; and machine cancel C10 on a Cairo school cover**

In today's world, a postage-paid agreement would require the sender to deliver to the post office counter an agreed number of items to be cancelled... no need for stamps, of course. But the only hint I can find in the regulations of anything similar for Egypt is an arrangement (Smith p.554, based on Postal Guides) for newspapers to be handled in this way if given an address label by the publisher and provided to the post office en masse. Postage for the bulk mailing would be paid in cash at 1 millieme per item.



**Cairo C4, 14 SE 42, addressed to Zaqaziq, redirected to Faqus**

The advantage for the sender in this system would be ease of handling, but one presumes it would also have saved him money. Which, since there are no stamps for guidance, raises the question of the postage-paid price for other items. In the years under review the postcard rate varied from 3m to 6m, first weight letters from 6m to 20m, periodicals (ie printed matter) 3m to 5m.

There would be advantage to the sender in having the post office handle a large mailing, but could 1m have been charged for all these levels of posting? I can find no regulation, but it is tempting to believe that all of these categories might have travelled at 1m each.

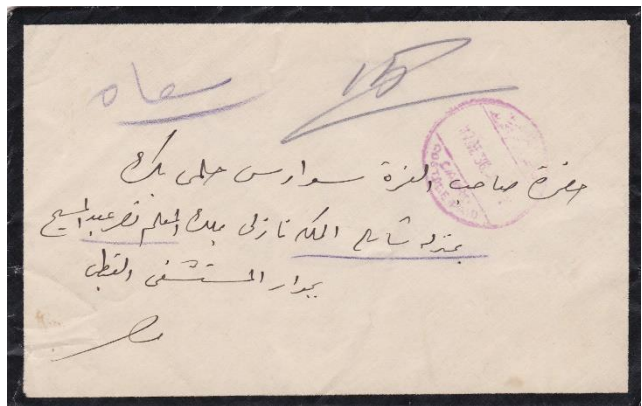
En Ville, 1 millieme might have been attractive to the post office because delivery would be simple, but not everything remained in town. Two Alexandria envelopes were addressed to Cairo, one to Kous (Qus) and returned (to Cairo), and one from Cairo was addressed to Zaqaziq, and redirected to Faqus.

Advertising cards to doctors all over the country or notices to would-be shoppers of new delights on sale might clearly have qualified, but could the single (handwritten) letters to Kous and Zaqaziq both have been part of bulk mailings?

Mysteries remain. It would be heartening to think that somewhere in all those regulations I have missed the details of how the system worked, and at what price. If any member can winkle it out I should be delighted to read the regulation. And I hope that fellow members might also seek out their examples of these unheralded pieces of postal history and provide the Circle with a scan and brief details.

**Memorial service courier cover**

While trawling for Postage Paid items I came across this cover (*right*), Arabic addressed and cancelled within Cairo (*Mike Murphy* writes). It appeared to be an interesting funeral notice, so I sought the offices of my good Cairo friend Dr Sherif Samra (ESC 311) to help with the Arabic.



Postmarked 17 DEC 36 (Cairo type C3), it contains an ornate invitation (*below*) to the 40-day memorial service for Miss Isabelle Salama, daughter of the late Morcos Salama Bey, to take place on December 19. Addressed to H.E. Suares Helmy Bey at his home in Queen Nazli Street close to the Coptic Hospital in Cairo, the cover carries a pencil note “15” in European figures and another pencil marking reading *soaa*, which Dr Sherif translates as “messengers”.

**Funeral notices.** Notices of funerals are delivered by a special postal messenger on payment of a fee of L.E. 1.500 milliemes, in Cairo and Alexandria, and of L.E. 1 in other localities; these fees are exclusive of the ordinary postage on such notices which must be prepaid as usual.

All this rang a bell with me, and I recalled a notice in the Postal Guide (*see left*) offering an express courier service for funerary notices at a charge of £E1.50 (this example

extracted from the 1932 guide, page 52). Given the necessity of speedy burials, such a service might well have been popular, though I have never knowingly seen another example. Has any other member?

Though the cover did not actually contain a funeral notice, it just seems to fall into the right category. Urgency was required ... the memorial service was only two days away ... hence the extra fee paid (in my view 15 is ‘shorthand’ for £E1.50), and because the contents were printed matter (as well as unsealed) the cover qualified for Postage Paid service.

Dr Sherif is not convinced, saying that “15 milliemes is more likely. £E1.50 was a lot of money in 1936”. So it was – but perhaps it was considered a reasonable price to pay for having a member of the influential Suares family attend your daughter’s memorial service.





## Gabriel Boulad's Cairo FDCs

**Mike Murphy (ESC 240)**

As a leading Alexandria lawyer for a generation or more, the late Gabriel Boulad (ESC 66) had to be fastidious in noting the arrivals and departures of his correspondence – a case could hinge on the late arrival of a letter. So he developed the habit of noting the date on each arriving envelope; more than half a century on, his immediately recognisable handwriting leaps off the cover.

As well as noting the date for legal reasons, he was also a postal historian with a real eye for detail and the scribbled date was often accompanied by other notes (in French) - sometimes of great consequence, other times less so - that remain interesting to those who have followed in his footsteps.



***Boulad's Cairo FDC for the low values of the KES overprint issue; and he noted that the A/36 control for the Fuad 5m Postes was issued a day earlier in Cairo than Alexandria***

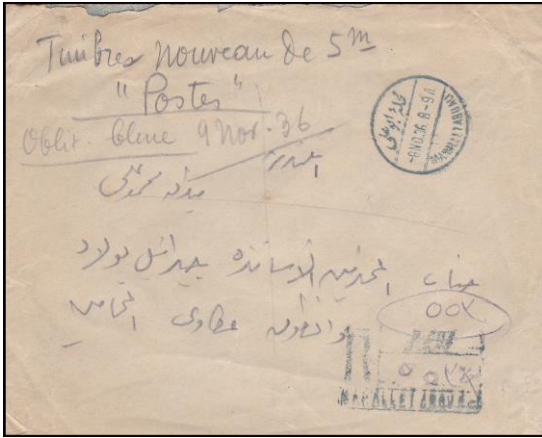
Boulad was also keen, it seems, on producing his own special souvenirs. I illustrate two remarkable first-day covers whose creation required specialist local knowledge of stamp issue dates. To celebrate, he has marked each with a simple straight-line handstamp in blue reading FIRST DAY COVER.

The King of Egypt and Sudan overprint stamps were issued, according to all the handbooks, on 16 January 1952. Next day Boulad received a cover at his Place Mohamed Aly address franked with the four low values, poorly but unmistakably machine-cancelled from Cairo ... and has proudly written on it "First day in Cairo," having presumably organised the cover in the knowledge that the stamps had been released the day before in the capital, but not yet in Alexandria. There are no backstamps to aid the researcher.

In similar manner, on 31 May 1937 it seems he had enlisted the help of his friend and philatelic colleague Jean Boulad (ESC 16, no relation) to send a simple cover via another Cairo machine cancel, franked with Second Fuad portrait definitives, and specifically the 2m pale black and 3m pale brown to make up the local rate. The 3m, however, is a corner single with the control A/36, which he proclaims as "New 3mm A/36" and the date: the machine arrival mark (right) of Alexandria is 1 June 1937. Again, presumably first released in Cairo and posted on its first day.



Needless to say, neither of these remarkable first-day covers is listed even in Hany Makram's magisterial new *Egypt: First Day Cancellations* volume, indeed he lists no FDCs for the 1927-37 definitives at all, and only scant Parliament or Palais d'Abdine unposted souvenir covers for the KES overprints. Boulad's home-made FDCs may turn out to be unique.



But he didn't only provide his own "interesting" covers. At left, for instance, on an all-Arabic cover from Mahallit Abu Aly of 9 NO 36, he observes "New 5m stamp with 'Postes'," and that the cancellations (four stamps on the reverse and also the registration cachet) are in blue. He may however have strayed off-track here, for the Fuad 5m stamp is not "new" but is recorded as having been issued on October 9 rather than November 9.

Another comment comes on a printed commercial meter mail cover used within Alexandria on 31 V 52 (right): noting the faint arrival mark GUICHET ARABES / ALEXANDRIE on the reverse, he asks "Why Arab window?", adding beneath (and then erasing it again? it is very faint): "It is special to the Express service". The datestamp is indeed very unusual, but there is no explanation here for its use. Does any member have another example of this unusual marking which might explain its significance.

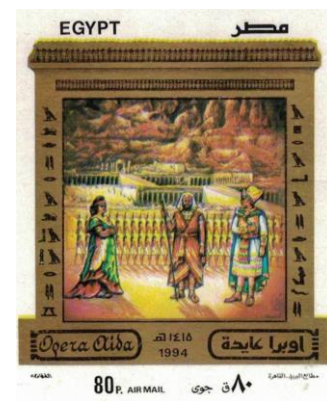


## Aida's philatelic links to Egypt and beyond

### Anabright Hay (ESC 600)

*Aida*, the opera about an Ethiopian princess held captive in Egypt and in love with Radamès, an Egyptian army officer chosen to lead the opposition to an invading Ethiopian army, has inspired a wealth of collectable philatelic treasures.

Stamps, postmarks, first day covers, postcards and trading cards have all featured Verdi's spectacular opera since it was given its premiere at the Cairo Opera House in 1871.



### **Stamps of 1997 and 1994 celebrated Aida at Deir el Bahri. and the Opera House embellished a postcard**

Numerous productions of the opera have been staged in Egypt and beyond ever since. The Egyptian performances have been held in a variety of locations, including at the foot of the Pyramids, Luxor Temple, and the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut at Deir al-Bahri. These mainly late 20<sup>th</sup> century productions have often been marked by the issuing of beautiful Egyptian postage stamps.

The story behind the creation of *Aida* is as dramatic as the opera itself and includes an equally colourful cast of characters. The popular belief that the opera was composed either for the inauguration of the old Cairo Opera House or the opening of the Suez Canal is untrue.

The excellent website of Andrew Humphreys *Egypt in the Golden Age of Travel* ([grandhotelsegypt.com/?tag=andrew-humphreys](http://grandhotelsegypt.com/?tag=andrew-humphreys)) states that Cairo's original Opera House opened on 1 November 1869 with *Rigoletto* and the Suez Canal opened 15 days later, both before Verdi had ever agreed to compose an Egyptian opera.

The opera that became *Aida* was commissioned by Khedive Ismail but the commission was not accepted until some time in 1870. Verdi declined twice until a reading of the proposed scenario, attributed to the French-born Egyptologist Auguste Mariette, changed his mind.

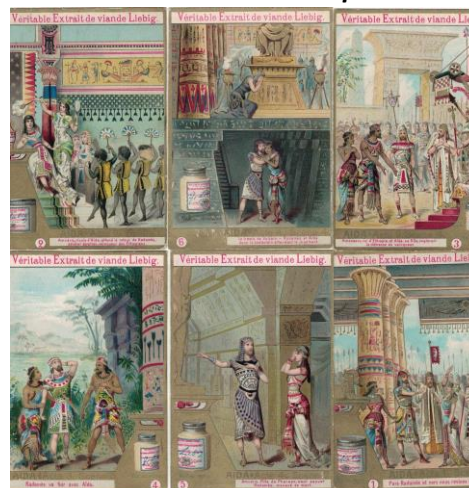
Mariette Pasha, who opened the first antiquities museum at Bulaq in Cairo in 1863, and was the founder and first head of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities, remained closely involved with the opera. He signed the contract with Verdi on behalf of the Khedive and supervised the designs for the opera's scenery and costumes.



**A first-day cover from 1987 celebrating *Aida* at the Pyramids**



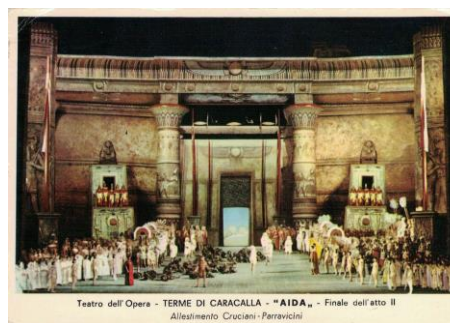
**The 1969 stamp marking the Opera House centenary shows the building and a scene from *Aida*. Below, trading cards based on the opera**



Verdi and Mariette Pasha supervised the designs for the opera's scenery and costumes.

*Aida* was originally scheduled to have its premiere in January 1871 but was delayed by the Prussian siege of Paris, which trapped Mariette in the city with all his designs. It wasn't until December 24 that the curtain finally went up, eleven months later than planned. It was a huge success, but Verdi did not attend. He saw his first performance of *Aida* at La Scala in Milan the following February. Interestingly, the design of the Old Cairo Opera House, which was burnt down in 1971, was based on the design of La Scala.

Members wanting to delve more deeply into the creation of *Aida* should read the book *Verdi's Aida, The History of an Opera in Letters and Documents*, collected and translated by Hans Busch and published by the University of Minnesota Press in 1978



**Antique Italian postcards produced for the opera featured Verdi's portrait and a performance at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome**

## Member's Query: Massawa mystery franking



**Mahmoud Ramadan** (ESC 358) writes: The envelope illustrated above was acquired as part of a large lot of covers. It was described in the lot as having originated from Suez. After careful examination, however, it was noted that the yellow 2 pi and the blue 20 pa were cancelled earlier at Massawa (7 June 1873), while the two red 1 pi stamps were cancelled at Suez on 22 June. The reverse carries transit and arrival postmarks, in chronological order: Suez 22.6.73, Alessandria 23.6.73, Italian P.O. at Alex 23.6.73, indistinct cds 26.6, Genova 28.6.73

I have no reason to doubt the authenticity of the cover or its franking. However, I need help to understand the 2x1pi stamps cancelled at Suez. The only possible explanation I can think of is that they were part of the original franking at Massawa but not cancelled. Then they were simply cancelled at Suez upon arrival. But in this case should not this have been a Retta postmark?

My questions are genuine. I do not want, when displaying this cover, to be told that my explanation is mistaken. Also I am not confident about justifying the 4pi 20pa rate. Can any member find a reason for the rate? Was there an Egyptian-Italian postal treaty?



**Richard Wheatley** (ESC 168) writes: The Arabic of this cover has me mystified. There is a poor Mansura cds for 1913. What I would like to know is: Where was it addressed to? What does it say in the boxed cachet?

**Belgian Congo at war:** Australians, Indians, New Zealanders, Poles, Mauritians ... all fought as Allies in Egypt during the Second World War. But our member **Patrick Moore** (ESC 644) in Germany has just drawn attention to a most unusual source of postal history – the Belgian Congo expeditionary force in the Middle East (1943-44).

The topic is covered extensively in the April 2022 issue of a fascinating bilingual (French/English) illustrated quarterly magazine *Les Congolâtres*, run by a Belgian group of enthusiasts for all things Congo. Available free online or by download, it can be found at [www.philafrika.be/congolatres](http://www.philafrika.be/congolatres). Well worth a look!

## Members' Matters

### **New Members:**

**ESC 750** **Lloyd Seely**, PO Box 85, Manzanita, Oregon 97130, United States  
(Egypt, Chile, Canada)

**ESC 751** **Sean Dail**, 1405 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh, North Carolina 27604, United States  
(Postal history – US, Germany, GB line-engraved, new to Egypt)

### **Change of address:**

**ESC 498** **Roland Dauwe**, Vlooswijkstraat 18, 4531 CE Terneuzen, Netherlands.