

# The Quarterly Circular of THE EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE



December Quarter 2023 – Vol XXV No 4 – Whole Series No 287 – Pages 73-96

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**Happy and successful collecting to all  
members in the holiday season**





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## Meetings Programme Early 2024 - Provisional

Sunday January 7	Zoom meeting	Topic(s) to be announced	Hosted London
Saturday Mar 2	UK meeting	Annual General Meeting	Venue to be confirmed
Easter weekend March 28-30	UK National Exhibition	Hosted at the Royal Phil Soc London	Informal meeting?
Saturday April 6	Zoom meeting	Topic(s) to be announced	Hosted USA
April 18-21	Derby Hotel	Joint meeting with Sudan Study Group	Details from Sec
Saturday June 1	UK meeting	Topic / venue to be announced	
Sunday July 7	Zoom meeting	Topic(s) to be announced	Hosted London

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**Facebook**

### **Report of a Zoom meeting hosted from London, 26 August 2023**

There was a good turnout for this Saturday evening meeting, with more than a dozen members from around the world attending and one of us, Ramez Atiya of Salt Lake City, claiming, with only a hint of exaggeration, that he had been waiting 50 years to attend a Study Circle meeting. His presence was very much welcomed.

After a couple of announcements, Sami Sadek took over the screen with some fascinating pages on Egypt's TPO service and its markings, noting that though the railway system carried mails from its inception in 1854 there is no sign of post being sorted on a train until 1875. Sorting out the combination of State Railways' wide gauge and a plethora of narrow-gauge railways, especially in the Delta, was at once a chore and a blessing, he said.

Sami explained the TPO markings coding developed by the late Peter Smith, and felt that we should follow Professor Smith's wish that the now-developing extensions to the system should maintain the same basic order, adding newly discovered variants only as a- and b-numbers rather than changing the central core.

He then showed how co-ordinating the railway timetables of the day with the train numbers in the datelines allowed a cover's full journey to be detailed from station to station and members were in awe at the dexterity with which train movements were arranged so that mail transfers were quick and efficient, with every route change recorded in turn.

Using Mataria-Mansura and Alexandria-Cairo routes as examples, he pointed out that even-number trains invariably travelled in one direction, odd numbers in the opposite, regardless of the town names at the head of the CDS, so Mansura-Dumiat with an odd number was in fact travelling Dumiat-Mansura. Linking handstamps and timetables has cast entirely new light on the study of TPOs, which can now be followed every minute of the way.

Sami showed only a few pages from his five-frame exhibit, but indicated just how much extra knowledge could be gained, and how mails were shuffled from a slow stopping train to an express to ensure an early arrival. His talk excited a great deal of interest and discussion from the members present.

### **Report of a meeting at Stampex on 30 September 2023**

Despite rail strikes affecting most of Britain, there was a pleasing turnout including three overseas members at the meeting. Attending were: David Ogden (Chairman), Neil Hitchens (Vice-Chairman / Webmaster), Mike Murphy (Secretary / Editor), Jon Aitchison (Committee), John Clarke, Herb Cowley (New Zealand), Keith Nickol, Steve Schumann (USA), David Sutton, Ronny Van Pellecom (Netherlands), Richard Wheatley. Guest: Letty Nickol. Apologies were received from John Davis (President), Sami Sadek (Treasurer/Auctioneer), Tony Cakebread (Committee), Brian Sedgley (Committee), Sue Claridge, Peter Grech, Paul Green, Tony Schmidt.

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming especially our foreign members, and wished John Davis a speedy and comfortable recovery from prostate cancer. The meeting sent all good wishes to John and to John Clarke, who was present, on recently fighting off lung cancer.

The Secretary reported that Auction 67 had been completed within the previous 36 hours, with unsold items still available until Monday night. More than 160 of the 365 lots had been sold (about 45%), with bids totalling £4400 and so a commission for the Circle of £650. Many thanks to all vendors and bidders.



***Richard Wheatley, left, exploring the Pyramids plateau; Herb Cowley hoping for a lottery win***

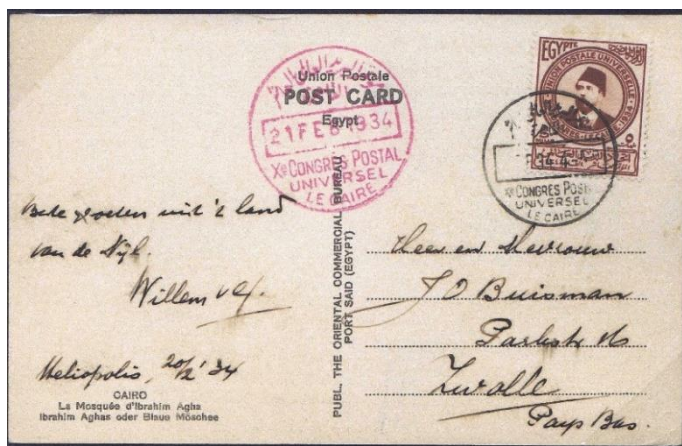
QC 286 was now in everyone's hands, thanks as ever to Michael Ryan in Cheyenne and Sherif Samra in Cairo for their efforts in distribution, both saving us lots of postage pounds. The Editor was happy to see new writers emerging, but also had to apologise deeply to Peter Grech, one of our foremost authors, for the gaffe of an enormous brain explosion that ruined Peter's hard-worked layout in the last issue.

Meetings have been haphazard in the wake of Covid, and to put matters back on an even keel we are trying hard to develop a regular schedule – say the second Saturday of alternate months – for future face-to-face and Zoom meetings alike. Our American colleagues are seeking a new host for their Zooms, but we aim in future to ensure that all members are invited to attend all Zoom meetings.

A new development was reported from our Facebook page, where we have agreed that auction houses might advertise Egypt-only material in return for payment to Circle funds. Feldmans is first cab of the rank, and Corinthia will follow. We shall continue to email all members when a fellow member's collection comes up for sale. Rumours of a Cairo exhibition and therefore potential visit early in the new year rumble on. Nothing yet concrete. Watch this space.

The Ten Sheets section was led by **Richard Wheatley**, on George Reisner. In presenting a brief history of Dr Reisner, best known for excavating the myriad non-royal tombs surrounding the Pyramids on the Giza Plateau from 1903, Richard was able to show covers to and from the Harvard Expedition's members, and delighted in the story of *baksheesh* having to be paid – via a young Howard Carter, no less – to the thieves who stole a statuette from the diggers.

**Paul Green** – UPU issue. Although beaten by the train drivers' strike, Paul showed scans of the 1934 UPU issue on cover with the two special anniversary strikes in three colours, starting with the proofs, displayed on an official specimen sheet with an error postmark – 1943 for 1934. He had queries on postal rates that members found difficult, and no light was shed on two postcards, to the Netherlands (*right*) and Czechoslovakia, with 5-millième stamps when the foreign rate should have been 15mills.



**Jon Aitchison** – Cinderellas. An intriguing display of tax and charity stamps, ranging from government tax vouchers for kerosene fuel used for heating to Singer sewing machine labels (probably a hire-purchase system). He travelled on to stamps sold to aid a women's health improvement fund and winter help for the less financially able and eventually exhibited charity labels backed by the royal family. He also presented two unidentified stamps. Happily, the single Arabic speaker present was able to say with conviction: not Egyptian.

**Herb Cowley** – NZ Forces mail. Herb showed a plethora of memorabilia, including mails of the Anzac servicemen fighting the Turks, but also such remarkable oddities as a creased and folded 1940 charity lottery ticket (1 piastre) which unfortunately will not reproduce, and a 1942 EPP37 registered cover from a soldier sent to South Africa with postage including NZ 2-shilling, 3-shilling and 5-shilling stamps, plus a rare Health stamp. A standard air letter at that time was 9d (South Africa 10d). The 5s NZ Arms stamp used in Egypt is very uncommon, but was available at NZ Base HQ in Cairo and this is philatelically inspired. Who in the desert trenches of 1942 had 12s 9d to stick on a letter?



**Registered Cairo to South Africa – at a pricey 12s 9d**



### **Regular schedule of meetings for 2024**

After the destruction of our Meetings List by the covid virus in recent years, we have moved recently to create a regular programme of Circle events so that members can be confident of placing them in their diaries. Our December 2 meeting confirmed that a regular year might centre on the first weekend of alternate months with four meetings in London, plus four Zoom meetings – all members welcome – hosted on Saturdays or Sundays in turn by the USA and London. Nothing is set in concrete, and we will welcome observations from all members. It is envisaged that 2024 might look like this:

UK in-person meetings: Mar 2, June 1, Sept 7, Dec 7

UK Zoom meetings: Jan 7, July 7

US Zoom meetings: Apr 6, Nov 2

We have omitted the Stampex meetings from the list because details are not yet clear, and the Derby meeting is also outside the schedule. Many details have yet to be completed, but we earnestly ask members with Zoom experience to volunteer to host and/or present their topics. See Page 73 for the first half of the year.

### **Report of a Zoom meeting hosted from the United States, 21 October 2023**

There was another good turnout of almost 20 members, despite Fathers' Day in North America but undoubtedly helped by the host, Trent Ruebush, notifying members of the programme in advance. Prospects for such meetings are promising. We would welcome any member willing to make a brief on-screen presentation.

After introductions, the floor was thrown open to Ramez Atiya, who is working on a detailed catalogue of the Classical issues, intended to describe, illustrate and price every flaw and variety. Hosting on the website would not only allow for more photographs but also for new discoveries to be added as they became known with a flexibility impossible to achieve on paper.

Ramez was sanguine about the research so far carried out, but recognised that too many full sheets of the early issues had been sold at auction and cut up with subsequent loss of crucial detail. He lamented that no one had enough full sheets and made a strong appeal to any member holding full sheets or large blocks to contact him with a view to adding high-resolution photographs to the record and promote further research.

Sami Fereig of Ontario is preparing a seventh volume of his history of the stamps and postal history of the Mohamed Aly Dynasty, courtesy of new material from the Joe Chalhoub auctions, and wished to extend into Palestine. He nominated three specific periods and sought members' help with providing specialised material, either stamps or postal history, in full form or scans. Material covering Egypt's ties with Palestine was not easy to come by, he said, and especially back to the Ottoman period, when Egyptian post offices were established in much of the eastern Mediterranean. He also appealed for help with the period before and during the British mandate. And finally the establishment and workings of Egypt's postal services in the area from 1948 to 1967.

Joe Chalhoub spoke of his project to create a handbook of the Bar Overprints, based, he said, on the monumental research work of Charlie Hass, whose whereabouts are unfortunately unknown. Joe reported that Charlie had provided very large amounts of research material, and was confident that he could produce a comprehensive guide to the delights and the pitfalls of these much-forged issues.

There was enthusiasm from the meeting for an all-encompassing catalogue, but Joe's response was that the sheer volume of the material provided presented altogether too time-consuming a mountain to climb. Even photographing or scanning all the sheets in hand would be a vast undertaking, though he was urged to make copies before, like the early Classics, the sheets were sold and cut up.

It was a stimulating meeting, with a good chat and much technology learned. The meeting was recorded, and it is hoped that we might soon be able to post an edited version, with future similar events, on the website.

## A ‘lateral thinking’ pre-cancel from 1929

Nicholas Garilidis (ESC 744)

I should like to refer to a fragment of the Greek morning newspaper  $\Phi\Omega\varsigma$  (*Light* in Greek), which was issued in Cairo throughout the 20th century. It bears a one millième King Fouad stamp (SG 148) cancelled at Cairo Station on 20 June 29 6-9 A, and an address label for the subscriber, P. Kerkinos, who was Chancellor of the Legation of Greece at the time and an ardent philatelist. His son, the late Ambassador Euripides Kerkinos, gave it to me 20 years ago.



*The 1929 fragment with pre-cancel; and (below) the paper's title*



It is clear that both the stamp and the address label were placed on the newsprint BEFORE the paper passed through the press! *Αριθμός 132*, translated as “Number 132”, is clearly printed on the stamp surface. This may be why the subscriber kept this torn piece of newspaper in his stamp collection. For a brief period (1878-79) Alexandria papers applied a kind of security “pre-cancel” by placing the stamp on the paper before it was printed. The stamps, usually the 1875 and 1879 5-para (*left*), were placed so as to be printed with part of the newspaper’s publication date or other part of its text. At the post office, the stamp was cancelled with a circular datestamp (Peter Smith, *Egypt Stamps and Postal History*, p.514).

The 1m stamp had no reason to be “pre-cancelled” in 1929, since there was no regulation requiring such a practice and to the best of my knowledge no other stamps have been found with such a marking at that time. My assessment is that a printer working in the  $\Phi\Omega\varsigma$  publishing house recalled having prepared the paper by placing the address label and stamp before passing it through the press during 1878-79 - when he was a young boy - and took the liberty of reintroducing it in 1929, perhaps in his late sixties.

The  $\Phi\Omega\varsigma$  printing house was not among the major publishers, and the flatbed printing method was still in operation, that is, using the methods and technology of the 1870s. Each copy of the paper would be printed on each side in a giant sheet of some 130x170cm, and then folded by hand to produce four pages still connected. The target of the printer’s initiative was most probably an urgency to have the newspapers completed and ready in time, with the obliteration of the stamp and address label happening fortuitously, a result of the “lateral thinking” always aiming at easing the required job.

Newspapers would be ready to be sent to the post office at dawn each day, sparing the printers the task of adding stamps and address labels at the last moment and in a hurry. It should be noted that the Cairo Station cancel gives the time as 6-9 A [so early morning]. It would be good to know if any fellow philatelist has spotted such “pre-cancels” on his 1 millième stamps of the 1920s.

- The fragment discussed reveals that the Legation of Greece was housed at Villa Marsal in Bulkeley, Alexandria, in June 1929: why in Alexandria? The reason lies in Egyptian history: until 1939 the Government used to relocate from Cairo in the hottest months of the year, and diplomats followed. A legation was a representation of a third country, headed by a minister plenipotentiary rather than ambassador (today the term legation is not used).

## **Mohamed Aly Post II: MAP-PVRE integration**

**Mahmoud Ramadan (ESC 358)**

*This article continues the exploration of early Egypt mails from QC 286, pp.52-56*

With its central location between Asia, Africa and Europe, the three continents of the old world, its northern border on the Mediterranean and eastern border on the Red Sea plus caravan trails and the Nile traversing several African states, Egypt in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries was truly a land of opportunity. The vast expansion of 19<sup>th</sup> century trade between the three continents and the welcoming rulers of the Mohamed Aly dynasty, who aimed to Europeanize Egypt, led to the development of European and Levantine communities in Egypt. There are many examples of European trade houses establishing branches, opening doors for exports to Europe of raw materials and produce from Asia and Africa. Very many Europeans came to Egypt, among them the Italian Carlo Meratti. He set up a print shop and issued the *Posta Europea Journal* of vessels and cargo arriving and departing Alexandria, expanded into forwarding letters to Europe, and later reached an agreement with MAP to establish the Alexandria-Cairo post route, quickly followed by a network serving the Delta region.

Khedive Ismail acquired the *Posta Europea* to modernize postal services in Egypt, under the name of “*Poste Vice-Reali Egiziane*” [PVRE], managed by Giacomo Muzzi Bey. Opening on Monday 2 January 1865, it issued its first stamps on Monday 1 January 1866. According to surviving records, the postal services available in Egypt at the time were:

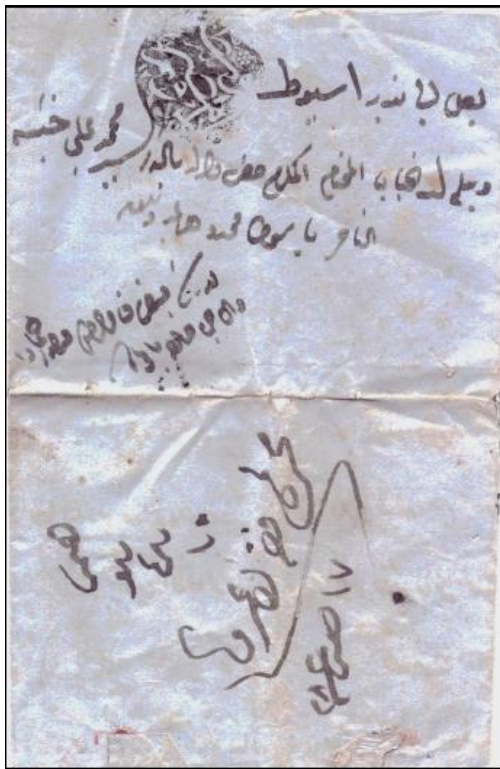
- A. PVRE took over the 16 established *Posta Europea* offices, with perhaps three further offices under construction [subject to further study]. There then followed the opening of several more offices [see Peter Feltus’ research for the Study Circle *Egyptian Postal Markings of 1865-1879*]. This service, initially between Cairo and Alexandria, reached out to several towns in the Delta region north of Cairo, and eventually to the Suez Canal area.
- B. MAP continued to carry mail between Cairo and the South [Middle Egypt, Upper Egypt, Nubia and Sudan]. The area served by MAP shrank with the progress of the railways as they moved south. Where a new railway station was constructed, a PVRE office was set up. Until 1873, motorized mail boats were used on the Nile to serve the region between the advancing railway line and Aswan.
- C. After the inception of PVRE we can trace a gradual and harmonious collaboration between PVRE and MAP in the delivery of letters between Cairo and the South until total integration was achieved. This gradual coming together was based on the expertise and capabilities of MAP, together with the linguistic capabilities of the southern Egypt correspondents.

PVRE, at 2 January 1865, had its headquarters in Alexandria. Its southernmost office was in Cairo. The Khedival decree establishing the new service entrusted it with the monopoly on all postal services in Egypt, indicating that *Posta Europea* and MAP had been merged. Each entity, however, retained its own postal rates, methodology and logistics. Achievement of total unification was a gradual one.

PVRE initially used *Posta Europea* handstamps on letters dispatched from any of its offices from 2 January 1865 until the PVRE dated-cancellers had been produced centrally and distributed to offices during April-July 1865. At the same time MAP continued to use its own rates, negative seals and the characteristic MAP script on letters sent from its offices. The overlap between the two services was in Cairo. Thus, southbound letters originating from Cairo [the overlap zone] must be examined first before those originating from the South [Middle and Upper Egypt, Nubia and Sudan].



No document has been discovered specifying the location of the first PVRE office in Cairo [presumably somewhere close to the Musky], or where or when the Posta Europea and MAP occupied the same premises. However, examination of the surviving examples is fairly revealing and conclusive of the gradual integration.



**Folded letter from Cairo to Asyut. Written 7 July 1865, but dispatched 11 July 1865.**

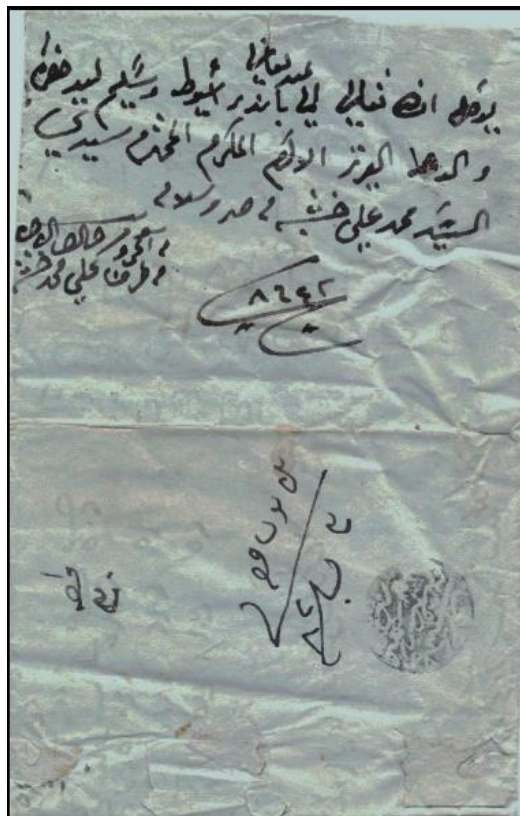
**Front [top] shows the Cairo 6 MAP Negative Seal, reading: Cairo Post at Transport 1281 [MAP Book p. 65]. Addressed to: Mohamed Aly Khashaba.**

**The reverse [below] shows typical MAP-script: weight 1/3 dirhem, charge 10 para [the rate to Asyut was 30 para per dirhem], and date 17 Safar 282 [Hijra] = 11 July 1865.**

**This letter indicates that MAP continued its operation normally at least up to 11 July 1865**



**The Cairo 6 Negative Seal**



**Folded letter from Cairo to Asyut. Written 20 November 1865 dispatched 21 Nov 1865.**

**Front [top] shows address as Mohamed Aly Khashaba. Lower left corner states "from Cairo fee paid / From Aly Mohamed Khashaba".**

**The reverse shows a statement of the charge paid, 30 para [numeral and in script], and date 3 Ragab 82 [Hijra] = 21 November 1865. There is no indication of weight! Presumed to be 1 dirhem, according to the charge. Also shows the Cairo 7 MAP Negative Seal.**

**This letter indicates not only an obvious change in MAP script, but an interesting analogy with the negative seal classified by Smith (p.502) as A2 of Alexandria, marking the beginning of the integration.**



**The Cairo 7 Negative Seal**

On page 502 of the Peter Smith book he illustrates a group of negative seals that are quite distinct from the MAP negative seals revealed by the 2016 Asyut Find. Several points lead to this distinction from the earlier MAP seals. In the classification below class A means text is “Arabic only”.

1. Negative seals A2, A3 and A4 on page 502 all carry the Arabic word “*mireya*” meaning “Official” or “Governmental”.
2. None of the MAP negative seals carry the word “*mireya*”, except Cairo 7 recorded between 11 July and 21 November 1865, that is, after the establishment of PVRE on 2 January 1865.
3. None of the negative seals on page 502 ever appeared before the establishment of PVRE.
4. All the readable seals A2, 3 and 4 carry the word “*maktab*” meaning “Desk” [or possibly “Office”, though at the time “*Qalam*” or “*Diwan*” was used for “Office”].
5. Only seals Cairo 7 and A2 [of Alexandria] carry the word “*Arabi*” meaning Arabic.

The wording of Cairo 7 and A2 is identical, apart for the town name. This indicates that the Cairo 7 seal, which was discovered among the Asyut Find, should fall among those of page 502 rather than among the original MAP negative seals. The minor variations in the order of words between Cairo 7 and A2 are as a result of local engraving of the seals [one in Alexandria, the other in Cairo].



**A2 – Alexandria**  
*Date of engraving eroded*



**Cairo 7**  
*Engraved 1282 Hijra = between  
26 May.1865 and 15 May 1866*

During integration MAP adopted some aspects of PVRE, such as the negative seal above and later adhesive stamps and cancellers. But only in Cairo, and it kept its rates unchanged till August 1867.

Unfortunately for philately, most of the franked covers from the Asyut Find have had their stamps brutally removed, leaving the researcher with very few stamped covers, and most of them badly stained.



**Folded letter sent from Cairo to Asyut**  
**dated 12 Rajab 1283 = 25 June 1866.**  
**Franked 20 para. Manuscript left of stamp**  
**reads Fee Paid / from Abdel Jawad Qasem**  
**/ from Cairo. Reverse is blank.**

**It is noticeable that no weight is written,**  
**as before, but by deduction from**  
**the franking rate, this letter**  
**weighed 2/3 dirhem.**

**No PVRE offices existed between Cairo and Asyut,**  
**so no transit postmarks are expected.**  
**Nor any arrival postmark,**  
**as the Asyut office opened in 1872.**



The second set of Egyptian stamps was issued on 1 August 1867. A one-month grace period was allowed to consume the remainder of the first issue. So during all of August both issues were in use. The latest letter recorded franked with MAP rates was posted on 22 August 1867.



**Folded letter Cairo to Asyut. Franked at MAP rate for 1 dirhem of 30 para. Second Issue 10 para lilac + 20 para green. Cancelled PVRE Cairo on third day of issue, 3 August 1867. Reverse blank**



**Folded letter Cairo to Asyut. Franked at MAP rate for 1 2/3 dirhem of 50 para. First Issue 5 x 10 para brown with PVRE canceller. Dated 22 August 1867. Latest known MAP rate from Cairo. Reverse blank**

The latest recorded MAP rate used from Cairo to Asyut, the issue of Egypt's second set, and the operation of the Minia post office, all took place in August 1867.



**Folded letter from Cairo to Asyut. Franked 2 x 1 piastre Second Issue. Cancelled PVRE / 27 AGO 67 1 / CAIRO. With the straight-line place-name handstamp MINIE and manuscript 28/8/67 as transit [Feltus study states earliest recorded is in April 1868]. Dispatched 4/5 days after the above [right] cover, dated 22 August 1867.**

The two-piastres franking continued for all Cairo-Asyut letters until 13 July 1872 with a Minia transit [the latest from the Asyut Find]. In terms of date, the next cover is franked with only 1 piastre and cancelled with the Cairo double ring [Smith Type IV-3.1 page 494] on 25 March 1873. There is an arrival mark for Asyut 26 March, but no Minia transit.

Some covers are known between July 1872 and March 1873, but rates cannot be established because their stamps were removed. The precise date on which PVRE changed the rate from Cairo to Asyut from two piastres to one remains to be determined.



By August 1867 MAP's Cairo office was fully integrated with PVRE with evidence supporting the conclusion that MAP staff were employed to manage the “*Arabic Desk*” in both Cairo and Alexandria – as well as at other post offices where such a desk was needed – to handle letters addressed in Arabic, and perhaps also Government Official Mail.



*Two folded commercial letters from Zifta & Mit Ghamr to Alexandria. Upper dated 15 March 1867; lower is 6 May 1867. Both are officially certified, and to date the only two recorded. Both are franked with First Issue 1 piastre.*

*But for this article it is important to note that both covers are addressed in Arabic. A directional handstamp ALESA<sup>A</sup> [that is, ALESSANDRIA] was applied to both, indicating the destination to the Italian/European staff employed by the PVRE at the time. The handstamp must have been applied by Arabic-reading staff of the “Arabic Desk”.*



Also by August 1867, PVRE had issued its second set of adhesive stamps. The Egyptian Railways had reached Minia, with PVRE offices opened along the Nile as the railway extended to Wasta [Uasta], Benisuef, Fashn [Fescne], Maghagha [Magaga] and Minia. And there was an office at Medinet-el-Fayum [Faium]. These offices in Middle Egypt were PVRE post offices using PVRE cancellers, adhesive stamps, and postal rates. The original MAP continued to serve areas further south of Minia, using their own systems and rates, until PVRE opened an office.



**Folded letter, sent from Minia to Cairo. Dated 8 September 1866. The PVRE office in Minia opened a year later. The MAP characteristics are on reverse.**  
**Weight 1 dirhem, Fee 20 para, and the Minia Negative Seal.**  
**The letter received Cairo circular datestamp upon arrival on 16 September 1866.**



**Folded letter. Asyut to Cairo, dated 28 April 1868**  
**The Asyut PVRE office opened 1872 [November].**  
**MAP script on back [bottom].**  
**Weight 1 1/3 dirhem, Fee 1 piastre, signed on 20 Baramoda 1584 [Coptic] = 28 April 1868, the Asyut 3 Negative Seal.**  
**The letter transited via Minia, backstamped with REGIE POSTE EGIZIANE / 29 APR 68 2T / MINIA and departure cds 30 APR 68 1T.**  
**Cairo arrival cds same day.**

In both cases no adhesive stamps were applied because PVRE offices had not yet been opened at the point of origin. Another cover dispatched on 28 December 1870 from Korosko [Nubia] to Cairo, transited via Minia on 11 January 1871 and arrived next day [see MAP Book, p.47].

Integration in the Sudan was hindered, most probably on account of geographic logistics and the low volume of written correspondence, and then completely halted by the Mahdi uprising in the early 1880s.

*This series of articles will be concluded with Part III in QC 288*



## Canal mail powered by horses

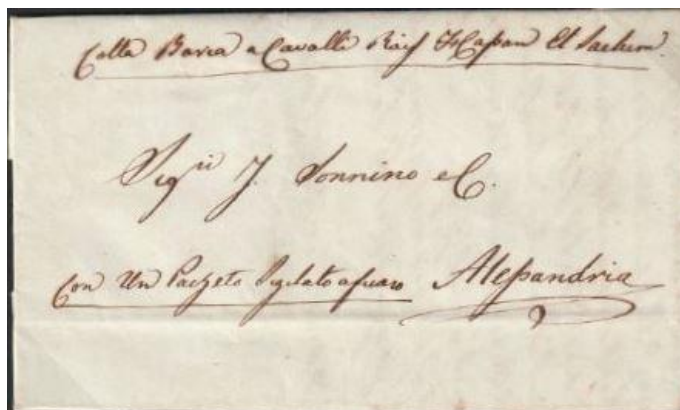
Antoine Winter (ESC 149)

Many collectors, at least those interested in maritime items of Egypt, know of the fascinating business covers that were sent to and fro between Alexandria and Venice in the 18th century. They were usually entrusted to a specific vessel and specific captain with prayers for the letter's safe delivery via the protection of God himself.

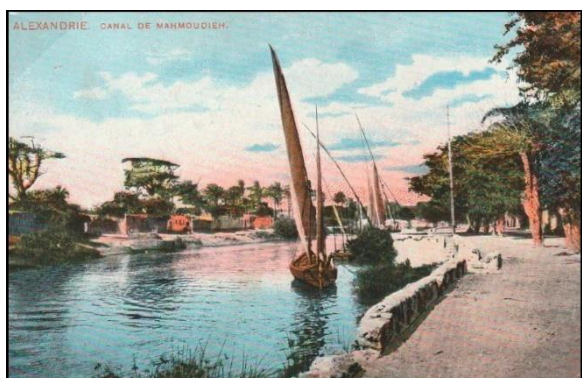
The sender wrote in Italian, in the lower left corner of the folded letter, such formulaic phrases as *Con Captain Manuel, che D S*, that is, the name of the captain followed by an invocation for a safe voyage: *che Dio Salve* (may God save). Several examples of these rare covers are illustrated in an article on the Circle website titled "The Venetian Post" (see right for an example to Venice, 1729).

The letter I have found travelled more than a century later, not across the Mediterranean but on the Mahmoudieh Canal, which was crucial to early transport and completely within Egypt. Like the Venetian mail, it was also entrusted to a captain with full indication in Italian. Let us look at details of our folded letter (*top right*), which is commercial mail dated 20 August 1841 between a dealer in Atfe (at the very end of the canal) and a well-known wholesale trader in Alexandria, Signori Sonnino & Co.

The specific information is in the top line of manuscript, reading in Italian: "Colla Barca a Cavalli Rais Hassan el Saalem". This must be understood, according to specialists, as "With the horseboat of Captain (Rais) Hassan el Saalem". Horseboat must be taken to mean a horse-towed barge, with the four-legged engines guided by a man on the towpath.



*Via horseboat ... the 1841 cover above is very similar to a Venice example of more than a century before*



*Sailboats on the Mahmoudieh Canal were slow, and the French example may have produced better speeds*

There is no invocation here for safe travel, but a factual indication (in the lower line): "In a bag closed by a wax seal" (*con un pacchetto sigilato a fuoco*). So we have the first example, as far as I know, of a letter carried by a vessel towed by horse(s) in Egypt.



The word “Cavalli” indicates that several horses were involved, so it is likely – as in the French example illustrated – to have been two, to allow them to be used alternately, one staying on board to rest. Only larger barges needed two horses towing together. A French traveller in Egypt in 1845 writes that he has seen a boat towed by a group of men along the towrope.

The route of the canal has altered many times as it snakes around Egypt’s Ptolemaic capital and then turns east and south for 45 miles (75km) until joining the Nile at Atfe. Long known as the Alexandria Canal or the Nile Canal, its primary aim was to provide Alexandria with fresh water. For centuries vessels could reach Alexandria only during the Nile flood but Mohamed Ali made navigation possible all-year round by ordering deeper digging to extend the canal between 1817 and 1820. After those major works the canal was 30m wide and 3.65m deep. Further digging remained necessary because of the constant deposit of Nile silt.

The waterway received its new name in honour of the Sultan of Istanbul, Mahmoud Khan II, in recognition of Egypt’s position as a dependant province of Turkey. Even the town Atfe lost its precedence in favour of the newly established town of Mahmoudieh.

Boats on the canal normally used their sails to travel down to Alexandria – as in the coloured card shown - but it was very slow, with only a slight current, if any. The average speed was 3km/hour, so the letter must have arrived in less than one week, depending on length of a working day. This very unusual and expensive way of transporting mail on a canal was of course abandoned when the railways made their appearance in the 1880s.

#### **TPO 8A9 – Update and clarification - Antoine Winter (ESC 149)**

TPO 8A9 is one of the very few Egyptian travelling post office marks to be carried on only a single line – between Assiout and Assouan (still the period of French spellings for postal towns). The railway line reached Assiout in 1883, and Assouan only very much later in 1898. So for many years Assiout-Assouan was a steamer line. The journey of more than 500km was covered in four days, including stops at the larger cities such as Louxor. The mailboats traversed two journeys each week, and the extreme dates for this very scarce postmark are recorded as 1883-1892.

This update concerns two different types of 8A9, which is not accurately recorded by Peter Smith in his *Travelling Post Offices of Egypt*, nor in the ESC update (both on our website), which uses the Smith illustration and refers to the second subtype as “not seen”. Both references also describe the two subtypes, but the illustration (*right*) does not properly reflect either of them, apparently being a mix of both types. It shows the month in French, no T after the date, the number of bars as 14, with the Arabic town names in two lines, the lower curved. My observations show the actual subtypes are:



**8A9b**, diameter 2.5, month Euro, 9 bars, no T, Arabic text in one line. Recorded as a transit mark on the reverse of a stationery letter from Louxor to Cairo 17 AO 92 (AO for AOUT). Of course, any remarks that fellow members might have would be really appreciated.

**8A9a**, diameter 2.5, month Euro, about 25 vertical bars (not easy to count) in the upper half, T after date, Arabic text in two lines, the lower one curved (recorded 1891-1892). Seen as part strikes on two DLR 5-millime stamps.



## Marc Pourpe Cairo-Khartoum: The first 'airmail'

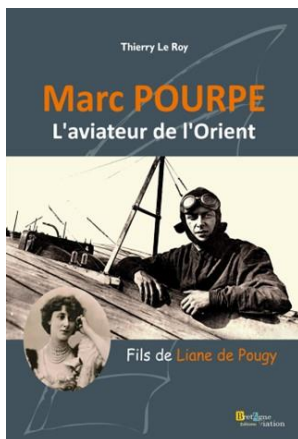
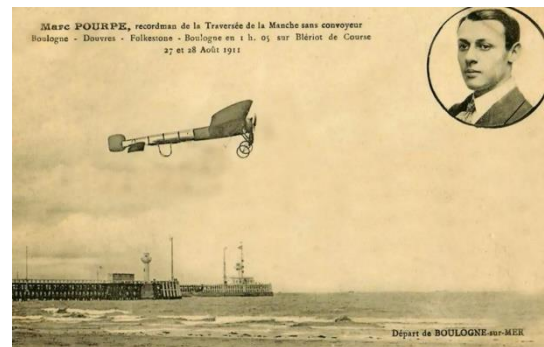
Jos Strengtholt (ESC 606)

In January and February 1914, mail was carried for the first time in an aircraft from Heliopolis (Egypt) to Khartoum (Sudan) and back. It was also the first time that an aircraft had made this trip. The mail was given a large cachet with the name of the daredevil who undertook the flight, the French aviator Marc Pourpe. He himself placed his cachet on the postal items.



Pourpe took an estimated 85 pieces of mail to and from Khartoum or on parts of that flight; of course, not all have been preserved, so these postcards and envelopes are fetching between €2,000 and €6,000 at auction. It is, after all, the earliest mail transported by air in Africa.

Close examination of some of the mail carried, however, reveals an unexpected feature that puts into question the accepted version of just what these covers and cards represent. Though they were undoubtedly “carried by air”, many of them lacked post office accreditation and so could be considered not officially “airmail” as the term is generally understood. We will detail this examination in part 2 of this article.



Pourpe was already a celebrity before his flight from Egypt to Sudan and back. He had been the first to fly from France across the Channel to England and back without a stopover in 1911 in a Blériot (*above*), making him a national hero in France and famous overseas. He then competed in air shows in Europe and Asia. His biography by Thierry Le Roy, *Marc Pourpe, L'aviateur de l'Orient* (2021), provides useful background context for his mail flight, as well as information specifically related to this postal event.

In April 1914, after his successful Cairo-Khartoum flight, Pourpe spoke to the French magazine *Je Sais Tout* and described the flight (*right*) as “the dream of my life”. For him, flying was not just for pleasure, but had “a more serious and important aspect”, and he wanted to make this clear with his aerial adventures. He was, of course, referring to the military use of aircraft: all over Europe nations were fiercely competing to become strong in the air. World War I was at hand.



On 2 December 1913, Pourpe embarked in Marseilles with a new plane, a single-seater Morane-Saulnier with a 60hp engine. He also brought his own mechanic, the French American Raoul Lufbery, known as Lafberg. They arrived in Port Said on December 5 and travelled by train to Cairo, then by the electric train to Heliopolis and residence at the Heliopolis Palace Hotel.

On 7 December the aircraft arrived from Port Said in parts, to be assembled by Lufbery at the aerodrome just north of Heliopolis. A major air show had been held there in 1910 and there was still a grandstand and a hangar, but the site had not been used for four years and was full of desert sand, says Le Roy.

He also describes the fierce competition for attention, fame and money between various aviators. This played a large part in Pourpe's endeavour to achieve his flight to Khartoum, but it also had to do with the need of France and England to strengthen their control by developing African air links.

Through the French ambassador to Egypt, Albert Defrance, and Antoine Bianchi, president of the Egyptian section of the French Ligue Nationale Aérienne (L.N.A.), Pourpe arranged a meeting on 8 December with the Consul-General, Lord Herbert Kitchener, who ruled over Egypt and Sudan on behalf of London. Pourpe needed his political and military support for the trip.

Kitchener, who dreamed of an air link between Egypt and South Africa, had followed Pourpe's adventures and proved very helpful. They discussed the route to Khartoum and Kitchener promised that the British Army would prepare landing sites along the route and that fuel would be waiting there. Pourpe would follow the railway lines and stations would be ready to assist if the plane should run into trouble. He had to promise to be in Khartoum by January 17 because Kitchener wanted to see him there; Kitchener would go by train to Khartoum and leave for Cairo on January 17.

Pourpe hoped to be able to December 11, but there the aircraft, which took expected because of conditions. The engine of had to be modified and prevented an attempt to

Le Roy writes that when late December he had with from Lord Kitchener and to Sir Reginald Wingate, governor-general and Army. We are aware, other pieces of mail dated given to Pourpe by a businessman, L. Kramer, and addressed to two senior officers in Khartoum. These envelopes are hastily scribbled greetings which must have been handed over very shortly before the flight. They do not have any sort of formal datestamp, but they do have Pourpe's cachet.



***Kitchener ... dreamed of South Africa air link. Borton Pacha ... granted Pourpe right to carry mail***

leave Cairo on was delay in preparing much longer than Egypt's sandy the Morane-Saulnier technical problems leave on December 22.

Pourpe hoped to fly in him two envelopes, Ambassador Defrance, who ruled Sudan as sirdar of the Egyptian however, of at least two December 22 that were

After the failed attempt on December 22, Pourpe met the director of the Egyptian postal service, Neville Borton Pacha, in Cairo.

Le Roy emphasises that Pourpe decided only after December 22 that he wanted to carry mail. Perhaps the few envelopes he already had with him made him think of expanding and becoming more formal. According to Le Roy, he would have seen the envelopes as a way to finance his flight to some extent, but how this could yield a profit is not clear. Because Borton Pacha granted him the right to carry mail, Pourpe was able to advertise the opportunity from 1 January 1914 in the great hotels of Cairo, Shephard's, Continental, Savoy, Gezira Palace and the Heliopolis Palace where he stayed.

According to Pierre Saulgrain, in his important study *Un Pionnier de l'Aviation et du Service Postal Aérien, Marc Pourpe* (n.d.), Borton [he calls him Gordon] made the decision to give Pourpe his special cachet, which Borton and the L.N.A. president had supposedly produced. Le Roy contradicts this, saying that Pourpe himself had this cachet made.





The cachet contains the text: "POSTE AERIENNE - L.N.A. - MARC POURPE - 1913-1914 - CAIRE-KHARTOUM." That 1913 is mentioned is because the idea of the flight came up in that year and because Pourpe had in fact wanted to fly on 11 December 1913. Peter Smith says that "black to purple" ink was used for the cachet. I have also noted blue on one cover. By the way, Smith's mention of 1918-1914 as the years in the cachet is simply a typographical error.

On Sunday 4 January 1914 at 9.07 am, Pourpe left for Luxor from the aerodrome south of Heliopolis near the Heliopolis Palace Hotel. That he was not leaving from the aerodrome to the north was probably because the polo field used for the take-off was close to the Heliopolis

Palace, giving more potential for local attention. Lufbery had meanwhile gone by train to Luxor to await Pourpe, but technical problems forced Pourpe to land at Menshah (Minsha) after 467km, 20km short of Luxor. Lufbery came out that evening by train to make repairs. The flight can be followed on the map at right.

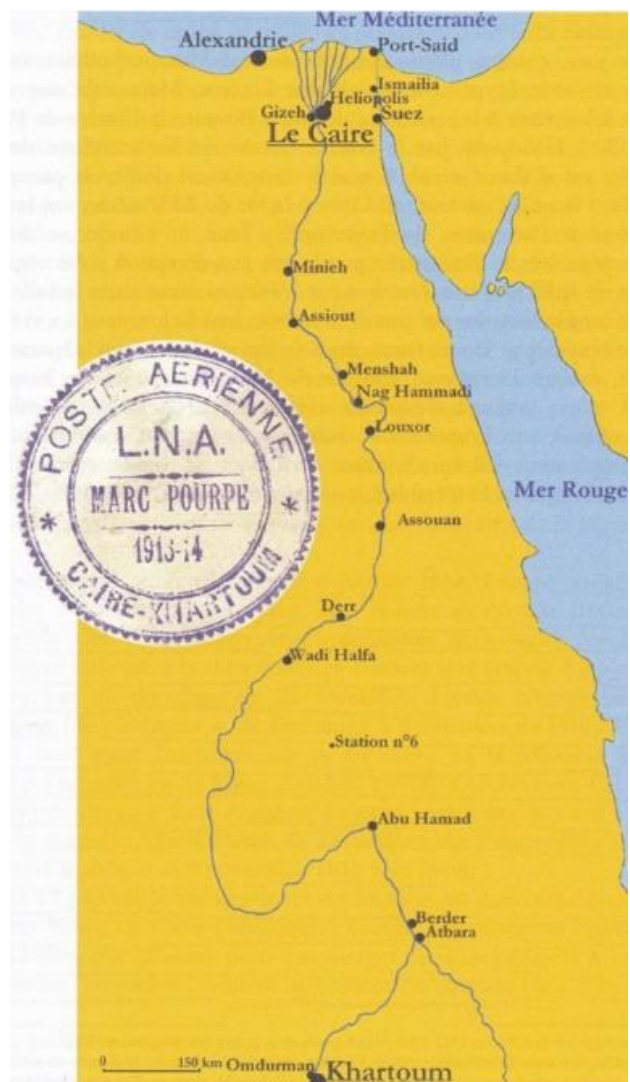
On Tuesday 6 January, after an extra day of rest needed for repairs, the flight continued to Luxor. A large crowd greeted Pourpe, who spent the night in the Luxor Winter Palace Hotel.

Next day he flew 570km from Luxor to Wadi Halfa in Sudan. With no problems, he landed at 2.15 pm and rested for a day. That was necessary because Lufbery needed time to catch up with him; unexpectedly, the railway line from Shallal (Aswan) to Wadi Halfa was unusable, so he travelled by steamer from Aswan to Wadi Halfa.

On Friday 9 January Pourpe followed the railway line from Wadi Halfa to Abu Hamed. This flight of about 400km was very difficult because of the strong wind and clouds. He landed at 12.25 and rested for two days, allowing Lufbery to rejoin him.

The journey continued on Monday 12 January. After 580km he landed in Khartoum at 13.45, with a crowd of 20,000 - who had never before seen an aircraft - waiting for him. Pourpe had covered the 2,202 kilometers from Cairo in 16 hours and 18 minutes of pure flying time.

He was met in Khartoum by Sir Reginald Wingate and his cabinet, an indication of the political and military importance attached to the development of aviation. Pourpe immediately gave Wingate the two letters from Cairo, says Le Roy. He probably handed in the rest of the mail to the postal authorities, because Le Roy tells how a week later Pourpe received a package of mail from the postal service, including what he had brought with him on the outward journey, for transport to Cairo.



In Khartoum, Pourpe met Kitchener again. He wanted Pourpe's advice on organizing a fixed line service between Cairo and Khartoum, for both civilian and military use, and discussed setting up a school for pilots. Kitchener hoped to achieve this in 1915, which was visionary but far too optimistic.

The Inspector General of the Sudan, the Austrian Rudolf von Slatin, a close friend and confidant of Kitchener, was also present. It is likely that in Cairo Kitchener had urged Pourpe to be in Khartoum before January 17 because he wanted Von Slatin to hear the discussion of these strategic plans. Kitchener had to return to Cairo on January 17 by train.

He mentioned specifically in his conversation with Pourpe that he wanted to develop an airmail service between Cairo and Khartoum, but also further to Obeid and other southern oases in Sudan. Nevill Maskelyne Smyth, who had recently received his pilot's licence in England and was present at Pourpe's reception in Khartoum on January 12, would lead that service.

The day before Pourpe's return journey, Wingate wrote a letter to Kitchener, who was already on his way back to Cairo by train. He gave this letter to Pourpe on 18 or 19 January 1914. The cover is not franked, probably because it was official mail. The envelope is illustrated by Saulgrain and its contents are known. Wingate wrote only a scribble about Pourpe taking this letter to Cairo the next day.



***Pourpe is welcomed by the mayor of El-Derr***

Before he left Khartoum the postal authorities gave Pourpe a package of at least 65 letters. Thirty of those had already made the outward journey, according to Le Roy, based on J.H.E. Gilbert's article "Lieutenant Marc Pourpe" in *L'Orient Philatélique* (Vol IX No 93, Janvier 1956). So had 30 people in Cairo given letters to Pourpe to just carry them back and forth for them? This total does not take into account the number of letters that Pourpe received on the way home. The post office in Khartoum, Le Roy says, explicitly gave him the right to take mail on his way back through Sudan to Egypt.

On Monday 19 January, after a week in Khartoum, the return journey started. From Khartoum to Atbara was 330km. The next day, January 20, Pourpe flew 220km to Abu Hamed.

He set out on 21 January for Wadi Halfa, but after 220km landed at Station 6, flying next day the remaining 200km to Wadi Halfa.

On Friday 23 January Pourpe flew from Wadi Halfa to El-Derr. Here, as elsewhere, he was received with admiration by a population that had never seen an aircraft. The mayor of this Nubian village welcomed him.

Next day Pourpe continued to Aswan, a flight of 220km. A day's rest was taken at the Cataract Hotel. On Monday 26 January the journey continued from Aswan to Luxor, 150km to the north. Pourpe stayed here for three days and then flew to Nag Hammadi (150km). Next day he continued 230km to Assiut and here had the aircraft completely checked by Lufbery.





On Tuesday February 3 Pourpe flew the last 370km to Heliopolis in one go. He arrived at 10.30 at the Aerodrome beside the Heliopolis Palace Hotel. Later that afternoon, the mail he had brought was handed in at the Heliopolis post office near by (*above*).

The postal items were datestamped there, 3 II 14, 5-6pm, for further transmission by train and boat. Within a week of his return to Cairo, Pourpe's unique journey was reported in the international media, including (*right*) the *Illustrated London News*.

Next issue: Part II examines queries posed by the mail Pourpe carried

The return journey was made in significantly more and shorter stages than the outward flight. This was due to the tougher conditions and because the Morane-Saulnier needed more maintenance after the long flight, the wind and the heat. It is also clear that on his return journey Pourpe wanted to enjoy the archaeology of Egypt more now that he no longer had to prove himself.



### A legacy of Alexander the Great?

**John Davis (ESC 213)**

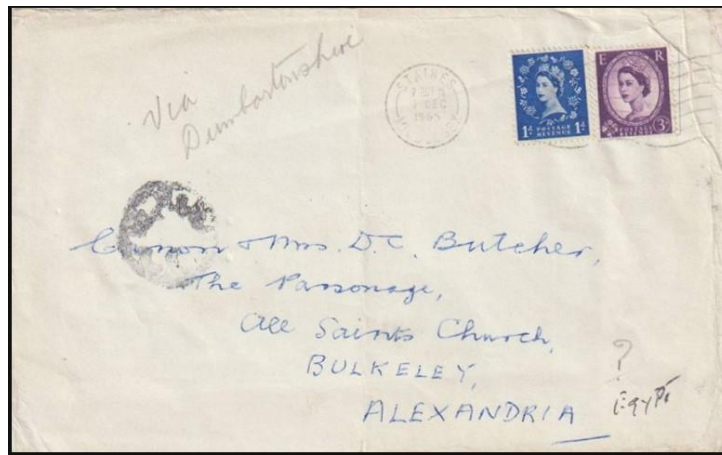
The late great Alexander died in around 332 BC, and it must be said that there have been precious few such “Greats” ever since: our own King Alfred, Tsarina Catherine, to name but two, but only the Macedonian military commander Alexander is credited with having ‘founded’ some one hundred cities.

These were scattered across what perhaps would have been the largest “empire” possible by the time of his death, spreading across the whole of the known world as far as India. And – perhaps to confuse future postal historians - most of them were named after him.

I was about to write up a cover, posted from Staines, Middlesex (though the return address on the back is Ashford in the same county), addressed to Bulkeley, Alexandria, when I noticed that it had initially been sent by the British Post Office to Alexandria in Dunbartonshire, arriving in Scotland four days later! Even Alexander the Great did not get that far.

After the helpful addition of a pencil marking “EGYPT?” (opposite page) the letter did eventually arrive in the Egyptian Alexandria however, but only some time later in the same month judging by the receiving postmark on the reverse of the cover.





**Front of cover from Staines to Bulkeley, Alexandria, in 1965.  
Below, part of the reverse, showing postmarks**



The receiving mark, apart from the date-bridge, is all in Arabic and it is thanks to Sami Sadek that I find it reads *tawzeee* (Distribution) Sidi Gaber 42 / *tawzeee* with the date 31 1 65 (also unclear). Interestingly, the wavy line cancellations in both England and Scotland resemble the wavy lines used from time to time at both Cairo and Alexandria.

That brings me to another item that has been in my collection for many years. The auction description, under the heading "Italian Post Offices Abroad," was:

"1899 Sardinia 40c brick-red, 2 large margins but just touched at bottom left and top left, clearly cancelled ALESSANDRIA 12 MAG 59 SG 51."

These Sardinian stamps were used by the Italian Consular Post Office at Alexandria in Egypt, which was originally housed in Giacomo Muzzi's *Posta Europea* offices before moving to the offices of *Adriatico-Orientale* shipping line at 9 Rue de la Poste and later still to *Via della Posta Italiana*. The office closed on 31 January 1884.

The illustration at right shows a sheet from my Italian Consular Post Office pages on which the story is told; the postmark bears no resemblance to that used at Alexandria in Egypt but does resemble closely other Italian postmarks of the period from Turino, Genova and so on.

I concluded many years ago that the Alessandria in this case was the one in Liguria in the far northwest of Italy, and can only assume that the auctioneer made the same mistake as I did when I bought it, albeit not from his auction. I now know better, but did Alexander the Great ever reach Liguria?



## Jusqu'a markings help solve franking problem

Vincent Centonze (ESC 571)

As we have heard so many times, *there's always something new to be learned in philately*. It never fails to amaze me how certain things right under my nose have escaped inquiry for many years. When analyzing covers, sometimes these things can provide answers to perplexing questions. Such was the case with the first cover described below.

This commercial printed envelope was sent from Cairo to Frankfurt on 12 October 1934. It is franked with one 5 millièmes and one 40 mills stamp from the 1933 airmail definitive issue (NP A8 and A16) for a total franking of 45m. The stamps are cancelled with a Cairo slogan machine cancel (Type XIII-5 variety).<sup>1</sup> It can be challenging to determine the correct franking on early Egypt air covers on account of sparse records, rules that were not always strictly adhered to, and varying rate and weight units between the airlines, which sometimes differed from the concurrent surface rate weight units.

Fortunately, this cover bears a typed magenta "PAR AVION K.L.M." notice; so we know that it was sent via the Royal Dutch Airline. The foreign letter rate from 1 November 1931 to 15 August 1940 was 20m per 20 grams, to which the airmail surcharge was added.<sup>2</sup> KLM had different "Summer Schedule" and "Winter Schedule" routes from Cairo to Amsterdam. In 1934 the Summer Schedule via Athens and Budapest started on 7 May, and the airmail surcharge to Germany was 20m.<sup>3</sup> As per John Sears' indispensable work *The Airmails of Egypt*, on 7 November the line reverted to the Winter Schedule, via Athens, Brindisi, Rome and Marseille, and the air surcharge was increased to 25m.<sup>4</sup>

The surcharge paid on this cover is 25m, which suggests the Winter Schedule, but it was posted almost a month before the published start of the Winter Schedule. Was this cover overpaid by 5m, or did it travel the Winter route before the official start date? The surcharge would have been predicated upon costs associated with the route flown, rather than with the dates.

I despaired that this was one of those philatelic conundrums for which I would never have an answer and would have to let it go at that. But the answer is hidden in plain sight in a marking to which I never paid much attention: the thick black crossed bars that partially obliterate the typed "PAR AVION K.L.M." notice. Markings that obliterate airmail notices or etiquettes are called "Jusqu'a" markings. Jusqu'a is French for *until* or *up to*. The purpose was to indicate that air transport for the cover had terminated, and that it was sent on from that point by surface transport. These markings were in use from 1919 to the mid-1950s, when airmail had developed so much that most mail was carried by air close to its final destination.<sup>5</sup>

Jusqu'a markings are very collectible, and the crossed bars handstamp on this cover is catalogued in *Jusqu'a Hand Stamps and Other Route Indications*, by Jan C. ter Welle, as type JCW: ITA-C-2.3 used in Brindisi, Italy, from 1933 to 1939.<sup>6</sup> As it was applied in Brindisi, the cover must have been carried by air to Brindisi and continued via surface transport to destination. The Winter Schedule was indeed in effect when this flight left Cairo in October 1934; so the 45m franking is correct.

Brindisi was a logical place to unload mail for surface transport north of Italy if the aircraft was continuing west into France. The Adriatic Railway ran the length of Italy and into Austria and Switzerland. Perhaps the route had changed to the Winter Schedule two weeks sooner than the official date



**Cairo to Frankfurt 1934, but flown only as far as Brindisi**



because poor flight conditions had developed over central Europe earlier than expected. Whatever the reason, it is clear from this cover that in 1934 the KLM Winter Schedule was applied as early as 4 October. In this case the Jusqu'a marking proved the route and franking.

Jusqu'a markings are an interesting adjunct to airmail collecting but for those unfamiliar with them it can be challenging to differentiate subtle differences. Most frequently they form two parallel bars handstamped over the airmail etiquette. An example with a typical marking is shown below. This cover, sent from Cairo to Rochester, New York, on 13 September 1940, is franked with a 2m Young Farouk definitive and a 50m airmail (NP D137 and A17) for a 52m franking on printed airmail stationery. The Jusqu'a handstamp, two parallel bars in red ink, was applied over the "VIA AEREA" notice on the cover.



**Destined for New York in 1940, but flight ended in South Africa**

In late June 1940 Mediterranean air routes from Egypt were no longer available.<sup>7</sup> The only safe and practical way to send mail to Britain and the Americas was by air to South Africa, then by sea up the west coast of Africa and on to the UK. This cover probably travelled this route. Interestingly, it did not receive the Jusqu'a markings in South Africa, even though the air transport terminated there. The handstamp was applied in Great Britain; no parallel-bar Jusqu'a handstamp is recorded from South Africa and these bars correspond most closely to the M-series catalogued for GB. The device contained both bars rather than a handstamp with a single bar that was struck twice.<sup>8</sup>

The parallel double-bar handstamps are catalogued based on bar lengths, widths

and the distance between them. It is still difficult, however, to narrow down the types because many are very similar, and the catalogue probably lists the same markings multiple times erroneously as they wore out after repeated use. None listed correspond exactly to those on this cover. Even though there are new discoveries to be made, it may be impossible to recognize the original size and shape of many parallel bar handstamps.<sup>9</sup>

As well as parallel and crossed bars used to obliterate airmail designations, a multitude of printed routing instructions contain the word "Jusqu'a" or otherwise imply that air transport had been or would be terminated at a particular point.

For anyone exploring the world of Jusqu'a markings, two important references are *Jusqu'a Airmail Markings (A Study)* by Ian McQueen, published in 1993, and *Jusqu'a Hand Stamps and Other Route Indications (2nd Edition)* by Jan C. ter Welle, published in 2018. Unfortunately, both are out of print and difficult to come by. There is however a free online adjunct to ter Welle's book at [www.jusqua.org](http://www.jusqua.org). As you can see from the first example above, there are always new things to learn in philately, some of which may have been overlooked for years... and sometimes they can be the key to solving old problems.

#### References:

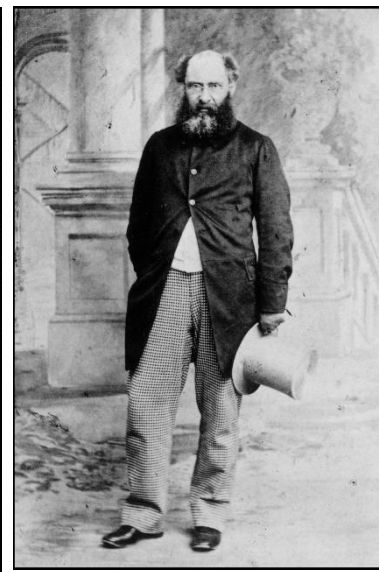
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## When Trollope met Nubar Bey: a Victorian postal story

David Ogden (ESC 480)

Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) was an English novelist and civil servant of the Victorian era. He joined the General Post Office in London as a junior clerk in 1834 and remained in the postal service for more than 30 years, earning a steady income and security while pursuing his writing. He published his first novel in 1847. From 1834 to 1841 he was unhappy as a junior post office clerk but was then transferred to Ireland, where he began to enjoy life. As a postal surveyor, Trollope was sent to Egypt, Scotland, the West Indies and the United States on postal and copyright missions.



***Nubar Pasha (left) and Anthony Trollope ... negotiated railway affairs daily over coffee in the author's hotel***

He was despatched to Egypt in 1858 to advise the government of the then Khedive Said Pasha on the country's overland postal routes. Mohamed Said Pasha (1822-1863) was the *Wali* (governor) of Egypt and Sudan from 1854 until 1863, officially owing fealty to the Ottoman Sultan but in practice exercising virtual independence. Construction of the Suez Canal began under his tenure.

In February 1858 Trollope journeyed across France to Marseilles, and then took a rough voyage to Alexandria, writing his self-allotted number of pages every day. He finished writing the novel *Doctor Thorne*, indisputably one of his greatest achievements according to the Trollope Society, on the sea voyage to Egypt and while he was there.



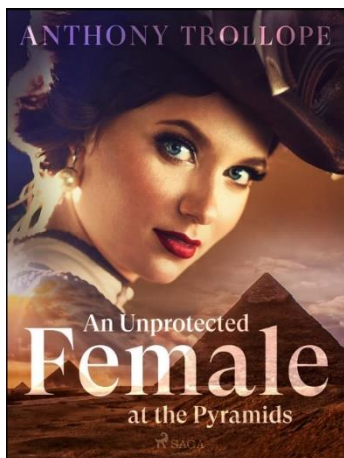
***Alexandria's first railway station in the 1850s***

His *Autobiography* says: "I was asked by the great men at the General Post Office to go to Egypt to make a treaty with the Pasha for the conveyance of our mails through that country by railway. There was a treaty in existence, but that had reference to the carriage of bags and boxes by camels from Alexandria to Suez. Since its date the railway had grown, and was now nearly completed, and a new treaty was wanted". The first part of this railway route between Alexandria and Kafr el-Zayyat, in the Delta, had opened in 1854 and the entire line followed two years later.

The postal mission was a success. Trollope negotiated with the Khedival Secretary, Nubar Bey, an Armenian who had come to Egypt from Ottoman Turkey as a teenager. He was born Nubar Nubarian, later Nubar Pasha, and as one of the major political figures of the time would go on to be three times prime minister of Egypt under the Khedives Ismail, Tawfik and Abbas Helmi.

Trollope explains: "I never went to his office, nor do I know that he had an office. Every other day he would come to me at my hotel, and bring with him servants, and pipes, and coffee. I enjoyed his coming greatly... but on one point he was firmly opposed to me. I was desirous that the mails should be carried through Egypt in twenty-four hours, and he thought forty-eight hours should be allowed".

The English negotiator got his way in the end. “At last his oriental tranquillity seemed to desert him, and he took upon himself to assure me, with almost more than British energy, that, if I insisted on the quick transit, a terrible responsibility would rest on my head. I made this mistake, he said - that I supposed that a rate of travelling which could be easy and secure in England could be attained with safety in Egypt.”



**Trollope set his humorous novel at the Pyramids**

While he was in Egypt Trollope visited the Giza Pyramids, Saqqara, “the howling dervishes at Cairo”, as he describes them in a letter, together with the Citadel, the Sultan Hassan Mosque, and “the tombs of the caliphs” in Cairo’s cemetery area.

He later published a short story, *An Unprotected Female at the Pyramids*. It is a humorous story about a woman who is not married or accompanied by a male, and it mocks men who think women need male protection. Trollope enjoyed meeting British tourists: one he meets in a Suez hotel he describes as suffering from “that terrible British exclusiveness,

that *noli me tangere* [don’t touch me] with which an Englishman arms himself” abroad. I’ve met a few of them!

Trollope's literary reputation grew, but his career at the post office did not progress. In 1867 he resigned his position, and died in December 1882, five months after the start of the Anglo-Egyptian war.



**Nubar Pasha’s memorial in the Alexandria Opera House**

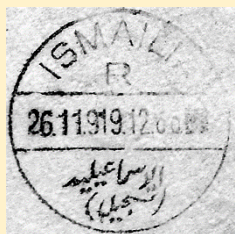
#### Footnotes

Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography*, Project Gutenberg ([gutenberg.org/files/5978/5978-h/5978-h.htm](http://gutenberg.org/files/5978/5978-h/5978-h.htm))

Anthony Trollope, *An Unprotected Female at the Pyramids*, Project Gutenberg ([gutenberg.org/files/3710/3710-h/3710-h.htm](http://gutenberg.org/files/3710/3710-h/3710-h.htm))

#### Ismailia Registered new CDS – Bernd-Dieter Buscke (ESC 533)

Following on from the excellent series on Ismailia, Stamps and Postal History, in recent QCs, our member Bernd-Dieter, of Mainz in Rhineland Germany, has come up with a discovery of his own



to add to the listing by Alain Stragier and Ronny Van Pellecom. His commercial cover addressed to Paris and franked suitably with a strip of 4x5m De La Rue Pictorial definitives, is clearly

cancelled ISMAILIA R, with the Arabic below reading *al-Ismailia* and *tasgeel* in brackets. Alongside is a roughly applied bilingual Registration cachet for Ismailia, and behind is a transit mark of Port-Said / R at 4pm the same day. Congratulations on a nice find!





## The Baron's palace reopens

Anabright Hay (ESC 600)

After reading Pierre Louis Grech's fascinating discovery of a letter to Huguette Empain, the granddaughter of Baron Edouard Empain (QC 285), I wondered whether members knew that the Baron's Heliopolis palace had been restored and re-opened.

The palace figures prominently on the 30 mills commemorative marking the centenary of the founding of Heliopolis, issued on 5 May 2005.

Also known as the Hindou Palace, it was given a multimillion-dollar restoration in 2020 and can be visited for a modest fee. Details are available on several websites. I wonder if any ESC members have yet been able to visit the intriguing former home of the Belgian founder of Heliopolis.



When I last visited Egypt about 20 years ago, and stayed in the neighbouring Baron's Hotel, the palace appeared to be abandoned although the surrounding lawns were being maintained. Now in its restored state, and given its proximity to Cairo airport, it would be top of my sightseeing list.

Designed by the French architect Alexandre Marcel and built between 1907-1910 as a Hindu temple fantasy in reinforced concrete, it has been the subject of many stories. It was certainly the setting of many banquets and parties. The book *Heliopolis, Rebirth of the City of the Sun* by Agnieszka Dobrowolska and Jaroslaw Dobrowolski, published by The American University in Cairo Press in 2006, provides more details. It says the



*The goddess Shiva on guard, left, and the restored spiral staircase*

Empain family sold the palace and its gardens in 1956, but plans by the new businessmen owners to turn it into a hotel or casino fell through and it deteriorated. It was acquired by the Ministry of Housing in 2005 and a rehabilitation project was launched.

For lovers of the history and architecture of Heliopolis, the restoration and reopening of the Baron's Palace is very exciting. Once again laughter and life fill its interior as visitors climb the

circular staircase to its rooftop terrace. This is one of a number of restoration projects being undertaken in Cairo recognising the wonder of its late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural treasures. This period of course coincides with the heyday of the Egyptian stamp, postcard and postmark items that ESC members choose to research and collect.

## Members' Matters

### **New Members:**

**ESC 761 Ahmed Abouesh**, 3386 Canyon Oaks Terrace, Chilo, California 95928, USA  
(Egypt and Sudan, stamps and postal history)

**ESC 762 Ken Sanford**, 613 Championship Drive, Oxford, Connecticut 06478-1298, USA  
(Air mails, aerophilately, Egypt)

**Change of address: ESC 723 Bill Barclay**, 89 Grant School Road, Healdsburg, CA 95448, USA

**Change of email: ESC 747 Adam Hafez** adamshafez@icloud.com



In the latest issue of our “Why I collect Egypt” column, Mick Carter tells how he chose his specialisation from a strong urge to “give something back” to the hobby that has been a passion once the chosen area was decided on...



### **Why I collect Egypt – Mick Carter (ESC 712) – Frinton-on-Sea, Essex**

I have never been to Egypt but have long been fascinated by the country and its history, architecture and engineering. But one specific area of its many philatelic fields really caught my attention. Let me explain....

I started collecting stamps (and cigarette cards) at about 7 in 1949 when I was encouraged by one of my teachers. In 1959 I joined the Metropolitan Police and its flourishing philatelic society. After marrying and moving house, with three children and a mortgage, I was unable for the next 30 years to give much time or money to collecting. Even after retirement from the police in 1996 I had little time for a further 20 years due to my own business as a fraud investigator in the insurance and heavy plant industry.



In 2009 I moved to the coast and joined the Frinton and District Philatelic Society and thoroughly enjoyed displays of stamps and postal history by members or visiting speakers. Wanting to give something back, I realised I had to specialize.

On reading an article about collecting stamps of the British Occupation of the Former Italian Colonies, I thought those countries would be interesting to collect and would allow me to form a comprehensive collection and

***Jubilee Commemoration 1935 on reverse of a cover with EPP 22 and MPO Cairo***

give my own displays. So that was it: I began collecting stamps of the former Italian colonies and British Forces in Egypt (BFE).

BFE stamps and covers range from the British campaigns in 1882 and 1885 through to 1932-51 via connections to the WWII North Africa campaign. I found the area was covered by the Egypt Study Circle, so I joined the Circle and quickly learnt of *Egypt: From the Postal Concession until Suez – 1932 to 1956* by our President, John Davis. I found his three volumes a fascinating study of the stamps and postal history of the British Forces in Egypt and a “must” for any collector of this area.

Stamps and covers of 1882 and 1885 are not easy to come by and expensive and I have only three stamps. But I have a complete collection of issues from 1932 to 1951. There are very few stamps to collect, so I have expanded my interest to postal history and have accumulated some 250 covers and am still adding to them.

I have given displays of these stamps and postal history to many Essex and Suffolk societies. Though BFE collecting has come late in my career, it is a small but important part of the Egyptian philatelic rainbow, and I now feel I have given something back to philately, which has so far given me 73 years of enjoyment.



***Censored NZ YMCA cover with Army Post stamps cancelled FPO / KW2***

- We hope to make this column a regular feature of the QC, and will welcome all members' stories

## **It's December ... time for 2024** **subscriptions**

Without your annual subscription, the Egypt Study Circle could not survive. As it is, the amounts paid barely cover the cost of printing and posting the *Quarterly Circular*, and we work hard to realise extra annual income in the form of commission paid by Auction vendors and bidders.

So it is time to remind you that the subscription season is not far away. We are grateful to have your annual £20 subscriptions – and would far rather collect, research and write than have to chase up late papers or non payers. So here's the reminder.

Payment should be made to the regular team – Sami Sadek in UK, Trent Ruebush in North America, Tony Cakebread for Australasia, Ibrahim Shoukry / Sherif Samra in Egypt, and via PayPal for the vast majority. Far and away the most convenient method would be for those with a British bank account to set up a standing order – and then forget all about it. The bank looks after a payment every year, and you can concentrate on stamps and postal history instead of payments.

If you would rather resign your membership, please let us know... but if you are happy to stick with a group of friendly and like-minded individuals, don't forget that the due date is:

**January 1 2024**

All members are given a little leeway, but if payment is not made by the date of the AGM membership will be terminated: no more QCs, no auctions, no website. And a penalty to pay if membership is to be restored. We now take into account PayPal's fees, so please choose from the amounts below when sending your subscription:

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Payment via PayPal should be made to our account at Egypt Study Circle, while cash, cheque or bank draft payments may be made to Treasurer Sami Sadek or Trent Ruebush. All addresses are on the first page of every QC.

Please do your best to keep up to date. It is painful and unnecessary to have to chase members, and then write them off. Much better that we all pay up on time.