



The Quarterly Circular of the Egypt Study Circle

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Omar Wassef (ESC 632), of Toronto, Canada, introduces the main article of the first digital issue: Collecting Egypt's Interpostal Seals is a passion of mine. Over 150 years old, each is a portal to another time. They memorialize small, forgotten villages, their names like poetry. Seeing a faded postmark from a hamlet on the Nile transports me. I can feel the sun, smell the dust, hear the distant call to prayer, just as in my childhood. These "stamps ?" are a tangible thread connecting me to my grandparents' heritage, preserving the enduring charm of a lost Egypt.



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Editorial and Welcome!

A year ago, the Egypt Study Circle stood on the brink, short of volunteers, short of ideas, close to having to decide to close after 90 years. Hit by the absences Covid imposed on our ranks, we could barely gather a quorum for face-to-face or Zoom meetings. Action was necessary. Your Officers called a members' ballot that returned an overwhelming response in favour of a switch to a digital future.

That's where we welcome you all today. After painstaking efforts by several Committee members, today we present the first glimpse of a transition to a new-look and more efficient digital website and magazine, sent to you by email. As we find our feet and expand and develop anew there will be changes. Watch this space.

The Circle once more faces an exciting future. But it cannot do it without YOU. Please make every effort to support your colleagues. How? With articles, comments, attending meetings, presenting meetings, hosting Zoom meetings, volunteer for a role, *invent* a role. Any reaction you provide on the website or Facebook will be much appreciated.

Last year's overwhelming ballot was a turning point in Circle affairs. Let's all work together in the immediate future to make sure that the momentum is not lost and we go on to expand and flourish.

Mike Murphy

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For up to date Meetings Schedule, please see website

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The Sphinx in the Cloud

The ESC Website – fit for purpose, welcome to the 21st century

Neil Hitchens (ESC 651, Webmaster)

When our much-missed colleague Edmund Hall, for health reasons, asked for a volunteer to take over the Egypt Study Circle website, I had little sense of what I was stepping into. I did not imagine that, a decade later, I would still be stewarding his legacy - or that I would have acquired the skills to take the foundations he built and rebuild the site from the ground up.

The catalyst, as so many good Circle initiatives are, was a typically astute comment from Mike Murphy. He observed - gently but unmistakably - that perhaps the time had come to update the website, so it matched the standards of other leading philatelic organisations. That single remark set off a chain of events that led to a complete transformation of our digital presence.

What followed was a crash course in HTML and the wider web ecosystem, alongside Python and modern frameworks that did not exist (or were not mature) when Edmund built the site. Those who have coded will remember how early HTML could be clunky and browser dependent. What Edmund achieved with the tools of the day was genuinely pioneering. But technology moved on and the old site was left increasingly out of step with modern expectations and ever harder to maintain without unintended side effects.

After many late nights, occasional moment of the new ESC website: ***This is more than a technical upgrade; it is a shift in how we present ourselves to the world*** experiments, and the despair, we have arrived at faster, cleaner, more resilient, and - most importantly - more focused on what members need.

One of the most significant changes is that the site is no longer “fixed”. Improved expertise and advances in web technology mean that it can now evolve quickly. Whether the change is a committee update, a new discovery in Egyptian philately or a member’s correction to an older reference, revisions can be made in minutes rather than hours or days.

That is more than a technical upgrade; it is a shift in how we present ourselves to the world and to each other. The improvements fall into several practical areas.

First, the site now has a modern, responsive design. The old site was built when desktop screens dominated; today, many members browse on phones and tablets as readily as on laptops. Pages now adapt automatically, so members can read articles, browse material, or check meeting dates wherever they are, without tiny text, broken columns, or endless sideways scrolling.

Second, navigation has been rebuilt to reduce friction. The previous site could make it unnecessarily difficult to find specific content quickly. The new structure introduces clearer menu hierarchies, consistent layouts, improved search and faster loading across all sections. The aim is simple: less time hunting for information, more time enjoying it - because philately is detail-rich, and a digital home for philatelists should help you reach the detail, not hide it.

Third, the archive engine has been rewritten. The Circle’s greatest asset is our collective research, and it deserves a platform worthy of its depth. The archive is now designed to handle larger volumes,

support richer metadata, and improve cross-linking between articles, studies, exhibits and reference pages. Good research is rarely linear. A stronger archive makes it easier to trace themes across decades and discover connections you were not originally looking for.

Fourth, visual presentation has improved because philately is unavoidably visual. The new site supports higher-resolution images, better galleries and more flexible formatting for long-form work. That lets us present material with the clarity it deserves—whether it is a subtle shade variation, a cancellation detail, or a full-page exhibit scan that previously would have been awkward to display.

Fifth, there is greater editorial flexibility behind the scenes. The platform allows rapid updates without complex re-coding each time. News can be posted quickly, corrections can be made instantly, and new pages can be created without rebuilding whole sections. In short, the site can now keep pace with the Circle’s activity rather than lag behind it.

It is also more robust: modern hosting, cleaner structure and routine backups reduce outages and accidental loss, while performance gains mean pages and images load faster, even on slow connections.

This enables a more member-driven model. Any member can submit a request for a new page, a content update, or a correction, and - when the request is clear and the material is to hand - we can often meet a “one-hour” standard and push it live the same day. The website is designed to be maintained, not merely endured.

All of the above would still be only remained trapped in physical back forward for members is therefore the research material: a digital treasury research, education, and community, accessible from anywhere.



*Neil Hitchens, right,
and his predecessor,
Edmund Hall*

half the story if the Circle’s content issues. The most significant leap vastly improved catalogue of supporting the ESC’s mission of and providing a world-class library

Several major digitisation milestones now underpin that library. The QC has been fully digitised, making decades of articles, research notes and announcements searchable and readable in high definition. One of the most ambitious undertakings - *L’Orient Philatélique* - now stands at 99% per cent digitised and available, representing an almost complete record of one of the most prestigious journals in our field. In addition, the entire run of *Egyptian Topics* has been uploaded, ensuring that even niche lines of research are preserved and usable by the next generation of collectors and students. Alongside these, research monographs continue to expand, adding depth month by month.

Looking ahead, this rebuild is not an endpoint but a foundation. The architecture is modern, modular and maintainable, which means future enhancements are feasible without another “once in a decade” overhaul. The underlying structure is finally fit for purpose.

The Circle has always valued both tradition and progress. This website honours Edmund’s pioneering work while embracing the tools of the present and the opportunities of the future. If there is one message I hope members take from the relaunch, it is that the site is now alive -capable of growing, adapting, and reflecting the Circle’s best research as it develops.

Jon Aitchison honoured as Distinguished Philatelist

Jon Aitchison (ESC 661), our Committee member and former Chairman, has been asked to accept stamp collecting's highest honour by signing the renowned Roll of Distinguished Philatelists (*Mike Murphy writes*). Signing the Roll recognises significant levels of achievement, research, publication and service in many areas of philately.

Jon, Keeper of the Roll since 2016, joins 16 other ESC members in achieving this top-level honour in 90 years. Unusually, the Board of Election met during the summer of 2025 to discuss his nomination rather than at the main February meeting which he would have attended. His honour was unanimously agreed by the Board, along with three other signatories, Dr Andrew Cheung, Hong Kong, Alexander T. Haimann, USA, and Ding Jinsong, China.

Active in many areas of philately over many years, Jon includes collecting aspects that do not receive the attention of many collectors. Several of his collections would come under the heading of Cinderellas, including local posts, revenues and telegrams. He is a signatory of the Roll of Notable Cinderella Philatelists.

He is particularly known for his collection of the Channel Islands, ranging beyond the main centres to the many lesser islands around the Channel Islands and French coasts, including Herm Island, Les Iles Chausey and the Isle of Man. He has written extensively on these subjects, including producing the standard catalogues for several of those collecting fields.

His catalogues of Channel Island locals and the local issues of the Isle of Man are the main catalogues on their subjects, and he has published two editions of *The Stamps and Postal History of Lundy Island*. He is working on more catalogues including franking meter marks, telegrams and British parcel carrier stamps.

Jon, a prolific exhibitor, has won several gold and large gold medals for a range of subjects, including the inaugural Association of British Philatelic Societies' award for British gold medals in at least five classes. Parts of his Egypt collection have gained high awards nationally and internationally for postal stationery and officially sealed mail, as have his exhibits of Siege of Paris mail.

Apart from his competitive exhibiting, Jon has displayed to many societies, including the Royal Philatelic Society London, Collectors Club New York, Monacophil and national and international philatelic exhibitions.

His involvement in international philately extends into organisational aspects. He is managing director of Stamp World Exhibitions, the organising body behind UK philatelic exhibitions, and was chairman and principal organiser of EuroPhilEx Birmingham 2025. Jon has been British commissioner to more than a dozen international exhibitions and continues to be a regular at such events.

The Roll was instituted in Harrogate, Yorkshire, in May 1921 and the signature of King George V appears at its head as its first signatory. The four new signatories join 92 current living RDPs from 31 countries. More details on the background and history of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists can be found at:

<https://www.abps.org.uk/roll-of-distinguished-philatelists/>

The signing ceremony will take place on Thursday May 28 during the Boston 2026 World Stamp Expo.



Jon Aitchison addressing fellow collectors at the Circle's most recent Cairo visit in 2019

Treasures of the Toutounji collection

Because he's a thoroughly nice man, and a true gentleman of the old school, Lucien Toutounji (ESC 264) occasionally sends your Editor a page from one of his collections with the notation "Perhaps this might do for the QC?" We have collected together several of these pages and can think of no better way of launching our new presentation than by offering members some of the treasures from his many years of collecting.

EGYPT – FRENCH POST OFFICE

A unique cover sent from the French post office in Alexandria on 22 August 1915 to Cairo.



French Office surcharge stamps were invalid for local mail but were nonetheless cancelled by the consular office. To reflect the misuse, the cover was marked by a boxed-O alongside a cancel of the Alexandria civilian office the same day. And also the boxed-T to indicate postage due.

On arrival at Cairo next day, one piastre postage due stamp was added with CAIRO cancellation.

Delivery postmark 23 VIII 1915.

EGYPT – EARLY AIRMAILS

The Zeppelin Palestine Flight

CAIRO – BEIRUT



Cover from Cairo 11 April 1931, addressed to "Poste Restante" in Beirut. Carried on the Palestine flight with Beirut arrival handstamp 14 April 1931. There charged poste restante fee of 1 1/2 piastres, confirmed by three Lebanese postage due stamps on the reverse. Egyptian franking 150 mills for the 100 mills required, so as to use both surcharged Egyptian airmail stamps.



ONLY TWO COVERS ADDRESSED "POST RESTANTE" TO LEBANON RECORDED

EGYPT – HOTEL MAILS

Inaugurated in 1909, the 400-room Heliopolis Palace Hotel was for a long time the largest and most luxurious in Egypt. Hence, often used for international conferences. Converted to hospital during World War II. Now closed.



1938 – temporary post office in the hotel

At the time, the hotel did not have its own post office. From covers recorded, we have established that in February/March 1938 a temporary post office was set up in the hotel to serve the International Telecommunications Conference held there.



Printed cover with hotel letterhead, mailed from the temporary hotel post office on 1 February 1938, opening day of the conference.

Commemorative postmark. Sweden arrival (reverse) 18 February.

Franking: at the 20 mills international surface letter rate per 20 gm.

EGYPT – HOTEL MAILS

Cairo – Continental Savoy Hotel

Registered mail, Type IV cancellation + “R” in circle



By mid-1918, use of the hotel registration cachet ceased and generic registration labels were used. A circular cachet with the letter “R” was additionally used by the hotel and other post offices to identify registered mail.



Cover registered to Cairo 11 February 1945. Type IV cancel, generic registration label, letter “R” in circle. Same-day Cairo arrival backstamp. Franked at local rate, 10 mills, plus 20 mills registration fee.

EGYPT – HOTEL MAILS

CAIRO – NEW HOTEL

CAIRO – GRAND CONTINENTAL HOTEL



Cover from "New Hotel / Cairo". Handstamp at lower left. Addressed to New York. British Post Office in Egypt: "Cairo / Dec. 28 1872" also Alexandria "BO1". London "Paid" of 6 January 1873, New York arrival 21 January 1873. Franked: Letter rate 10d in British stamps.

THE EARLIEST MAIL RECORDED FROM THIS HOTEL



Photograph of an engraving from the *Illustrated London News* dated 4 February 1872 showing the New Hotel, Cairo. Site was later used for building of new Continental Hotel.

EGYPT – EARLY AIRMAIL

Development period : Egypt - Lebanon

1926-SURVEY FLIGHT ; FRANCE – MADAGASCAR - FRANCE
FRENCH NAVY PILOT ; GUIBAULT

Flight Route : France – West Central Africa – Sudan – Egypt – Lebanon –
Turkey – Greece – Malta – France

The French Navy arranged for two seaplanes to survey an air route from France to Madagascar via West and Central Africa. The flight started on 12 October 1926 near Marseilles. The seaplane piloted by Guibault broke down at Lokoja (Nigeria). He could fly out only on 20 January 1927, crossed Central Africa to the Sudan, turned north flying up the Nile to Egypt. Arriving in France on 7 March 1927.



Only seven covers are recorded flown from France back to France. All covers flown bear a special flight cachet "Voyage Aerien FRANCE – MADAGASCAR". The cover above, flown from Alexandria 13 February 1927 to Beirut, arrival postmark 23 February 1927.

Franked with 63 milliemes in stamps from the French post office in Alexandria.

THE ONLY COVER RECORDED MAILED FROM EGYPT

EGYPT – HOTEL MAILS

CAIRO – CONTINENTAL-SAVOY HOTEL

Type IV Cancellation with Type II Registration Cachet



Type I

Type II

Both 40 x 22mm

In Type II the first Arabic word from the left reads *qahira* “Cairo”. Type I reads *masr* “Egypt”. Earliest date recorded for Type II is 11 Oct 1933. Because the difference is only in the Arabic and because Registration cachets at the hotel are poorly struck, it went unmarked for 70 years until its discovery in 2003.



Cover registered to Switzerland 26 November 1935 with Type IV hotel cancel and Type II registration. Flown from Cairo by KLM, arrival 30 November. Franked: Base 30 mills, registration 10 mills, KLM air rate 25 mills. Total 65 mills.

TYPE II REGISTRATION CACHET FIRST DISCOVERED 70 YEARS POST-FACTO. ONLY FIVE COVERS RECORDED WITH TYPE IV CANCEL AND TYPE II REGISTRATION COMBINATION, OF WHICH THREE ARE IN BLACK AND TWO BLUE.

What were the Interpostal Seals?

Omar Wassef (ESC 632)

Between 1864 and 1890, the philatelic community was hit with an influx of colourful circular adhesives produced by the Egyptian postal administration. With more than 800 printings, some on papers of various colors, the total exceeded one thousand and philatelists actively sought these circular wafers worldwide. The early stamp journals referred to them first as tickets, labels, or Egyptian Officials. But later, known to have been applied to mail sacks which are transferred between the various Egyptian post offices, philatelists called them 'Interpostal Seals', a name adopted by all philatelic circles until today, although the originator of the name is not known.

Interpostal Seals were created by the Posta Europea, the private Egyptian postal service founded in 1821 by the Italians Carlo Meratti and Tito Chini. The company held a monopoly on inland mail until its acquisition by the Egyptian Government in 1865. During the Posta Europea's short reign, 16 Interpostals are known to have been issued on different coloured papers, bearing the names of those post offices operating at the time. These are known as Type I, and none is recorded as having been used or postmarked by the Posta Europea offices. Later postal administrations continued printing more seals when new post offices were opened or when the language of the postal administration - initially Italian, then French and finally Arabic and English - changed. No official records exist of numbers printed or even why they were created in the first place.

Their postal use or function has been unclear ever since their inception and they represent one of the most controversial chapters in early Egyptian philately. Many collectors have seen them as official stamps but today there is widespread agreement that the circular seals were not used to defray postage but to seal packets of bulk mail, re-seal damaged, opened, undeliverable or censored letters and to attach official circulars to post-office bulletin boards. Some sources believe that the official records were lost in a fire in 1894.

Within the philatelic world a struggle over their intended function has long existed between those



The first Interpostals were issued by Posta Europea in 1864

who consider them genuine postal stamps with real franking powers and those who consider them simply letter-sealing labels.

- One group assures us that they were actual postal stamps in the real meaning of the word.
- The other sees Interpostal Seals as simple official labels used for sealing postal administration covers in a more convenient way than wax seals as well as showing the cover's origin.

The fact is that no official postal authority document defining the use of the Interpostal Seals has survived to clarify the situation. Perhaps none was ever published!

Ever since their introduction in 1864 by Posta Europea their postal status has been closely debated by the authors of books and articles published in stamp catalogues and philatelic magazines. Many authors have presented theories on their function and provided credible explanation for their opinions. Let us look at the two schools of thought, which have historically waged bitter warfare against each other.

First theory: Official stamps with an actual postal value

Supporters of this idea appeared as soon as the circular wafers appeared on the philatelic scene. A short article in the March 1867 edition of *The Stamp Collector* illustrated the Alessandria Type III Interpostal Seal, which was issued that same year, and described it as:

The large circular stamp is official, and franks the letters, whatever may be their weight, of the postal authorities of the different towns.

This same theory was advanced by Ludwig Merlander in *Der Philatelist* of February 1890. A German collector living in Alexandria, Merlander published an eight-page review of the seals "[*Die Administrationsmarken Aegyptens*](#)" (*The Egyptian Officials*), in which he claimed that they were official stamps in the full sense of the word. The earliest recorded philatelic exhibition of Interpostal Seals appeared in Vienna in 1890 when Merlander's review was distributed by G. Koch, another German collector, alongside a collection of seals.

Early philatelic catalogues of the 19th century included full listings of the Interpostal Seals, describing them as "Official Stamps". The 1891 and 1901 issues of Henry Collin and Henry Calman's [*A Catalogue for Advanced Collectors of Postage Stamps*](#) featured a full listing. Their description, on page 187 of the 1901 edition, reads: *These stamps are issued by the Egyptian government to the different post offices to frank all registered official correspondence between those offices.*

Early philatelic catalogues of the 19th century included full listings of the Interpostal Seals, describing them as "Official Stamps". The 1891 and 1901 issues of Henry Collin and Henry Calman's [*A Catalogue for Advanced Collectors of Postage Stamps*](#) featured a full listing. Their description, on page 187 of the 1901 edition, reads: *These stamps are issued by the Egyptian government to the different post offices to frank all registered official correspondence between those offices.*

The fact that they were mostly used on the flap of the envelopes has led many people to believe that they were only seals, instead of stamps; the reason for this is to be found in the custom prevailing among the Orientals of placing the stamps on the back of the letter instead of on the face, as was also the case with the Turkish and the early Russian envelopes. That the Egyptian Government considered them as having



franking power instead of being merely seals is clearly established by the fact that the postal clerks were required to cancel them."

Colin and Calman's 1901 assertion that the seals were used to "frank all registered official correspondence" is astonishing given that no official documents on their use was published by the postal administration.



Between 1864 and 1890 more than 28 types were printed

The most outrageous defence of this theory appeared in a somewhat sarcastic announcement in the October 1880 issue of *The Philatelic World* of a collector of Interpostal Seals being awarded a prize for presenting an article concluding that the Birket-El-Sab seal "is intended to pay postage on letters between two places called respectively, Birket and Sab!"

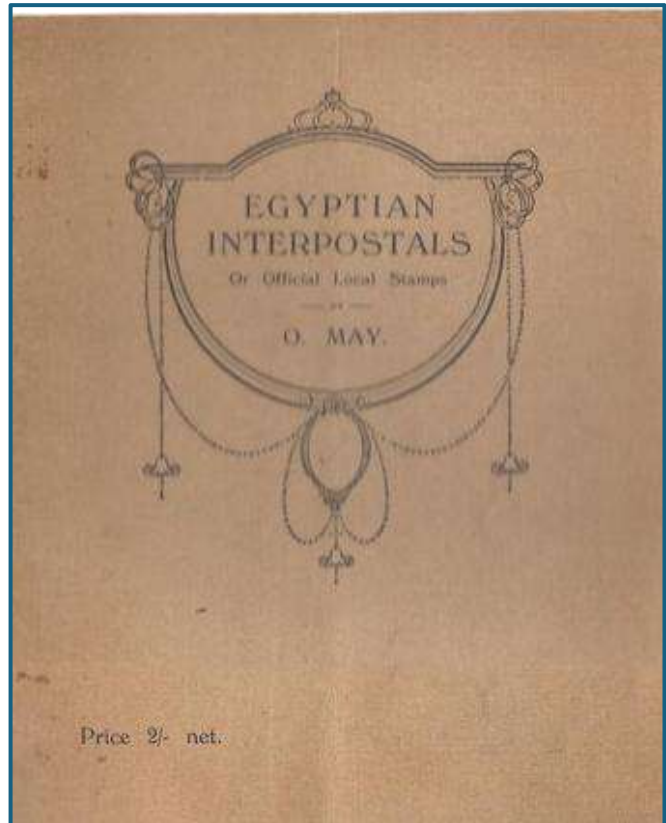
The Philatelic Review for August comes enlarged and printed in smaller type, thus giving much more matter. Several departments are opened on "Fiscals," "Post Cards," "Local Stamps," and "Envelopes and News Bands." The idea of keeping the stamps, envelopes and post cards separate is not bad, and is to "enable every reader to peruse the news relative the branch he reserves for his own study without finding sundry announcements entirely uninteresting to him intermixed." A prize is offered for the most complete list of Russian Locals, and Mr. Ash is awarded the prize for the best article on the "Egyptian Interpostal Stamps," he being the only competitor. A portion of his article is given, in which he comes to the remarkable conclusion that the stamp inscribed "Birket-el-Sab" is intended to pay postage on letters between two places called respectively, Birket and Sab!

In 1914 the first stand-alone catalogue of Interpostal Seals appeared on the philatelic stage, titled *Egyptian Interpostals, or Official Local Stamps*, written by O. May, who presented them as "Official Stamps" but hesitated to confirm their function. His introduction to the catalogue read:

"A better name for these stamps would appear to be 'Egyptian Official Locals', but in the absence of any sworn testimony as to their place in philately, no doubt the old title will continue to serve. The stamps consist of circular official labels, issued between the years of 1864 and 1890, from many of the towns and villages of Egypt, and also from a few seaports in Turkey, Palestine, Somaliland, Greece and the Aegean Islands. The

majority are known with a town and dated postmark, the obliteration being almost invariably that of the town for which the particular emission was prepared. No face value appears on the stamps, so the question as to whether they are really official frank stamps or seals remains a question as before."

We know little about O. May, except that he compiled his catalogue with assistance from other collectors and philatelists and that, according to Luca Biolato, author of the 1996 book on the Posta Europea, "O. May" may perhaps have been a pseudonym of the great philatelist Fred J. Melville. Credit must be given to him for being one of the earliest philatelists to sow doubt on the theory that Interpostal Seals were actual postal stamps which held sway among future philatelists until 1984, as we shall see later.



O. May's catalogue of Interpostal Seals

An ardent proponent of the theory of the seals being actual stamps was Ernst Kehr, an internationally renowned philatelist who was brought up and lived in Egypt and was one of the Circle's longest-standing and best respected members.

He devoted almost his whole career to this subject, published the *Kehr Catalog of Interpostal Seals* in the October 1939 *American Philatelist* and in a series of 1942 articles in the *Weekly Philatelic Gossip*, followed a year later by a 61-page booklet *The Interpostal Seals of Egypt 1864-1891*, republished in Volume 21 of *Billig's Philatelic Handbook* in 1954. Until his death in 1987, Kehr strongly believed that the seals were official stamps with franking power. He argued in his 1943 introduction that:

"They were issued for real postal duty as may be confirmed by the actual inscriptions on the seals themselves (POSTE or POSTES), as well as the post-marks found on cancelled copies, which in all instances correspond with the obliterations used to deface contemporary postage stamps used for public service. That these round adhesives were used on the reverse side of the envelope is proven by the fact that distinctly showed the intersection of a flap."

But Kehr had no data to substantiate this theory, so he added in the same paragraph:

"It is unfortunate that no copies are known on complete cover, but under the circumstances the evidence available is sufficient. This point is one selected by cataloguers in refusing Interpostal seals admission to regular lists. They claim that their use on the REVERSE side of a cover classifies them as merely seals. Egyptian specialists, on the other hand, refute this ill-founded contention merely by referring to the custom of Oriental lands through which postage stamps invariably were, and in

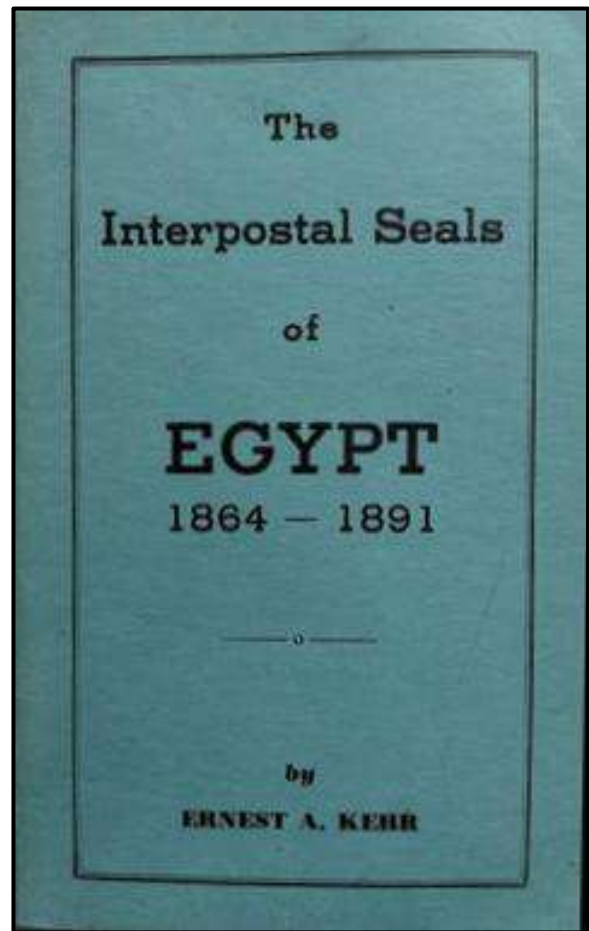
some instances, across the flap of an envelope rather than in the corner of its face still are affixed."

Kehr was aware that Egypt specialists such as those of the Egypt Study Circle and the Philatelic Society of Egypt disagreed with him so he provided some justification to support his theory:

"The fact that these postal adhesives have no inscription of value should not disturb the collector. The official franks of many nations are generally without denomination indices. Even the first official of Egypt, recognized by the catalogs (The 'Meery stamp of 1892) which superseded the Interpostals, has no denomination. One such stamp was affixed to a piece of mail simply as a matter of formality, regardless of whether the piece weighed five grams or five kilograms."

Kehr's publications on Interpostal Seals continued for 30 years, publishing the second edition of his catalogue in 1962 followed in 1984, in collaboration with Philip Cockrill, by a 59-page volume: *The Posta Europa and the 1984 Kehr Catalogue of Interpostals*, an expanded edition containing a section by Cockrill on re-plating the type II Alessandria seal. Through the wide dissemination of his published works, Kehr's cataloging and the numbering system he developed became the main reference for Interpostal Seal collectors and auction houses, to the present day.

Conflict between philatelists who see them as stamps and those who consider them labels raged even further after an article by Albert Harris, publisher of *Philatelic Magazine*, appeared in the issue of 16 July 1943 titled *The Status of The Egyptian Interpostals*. Harris described those who do not share his or Kehr's views as "absent from their popular catalogs!"

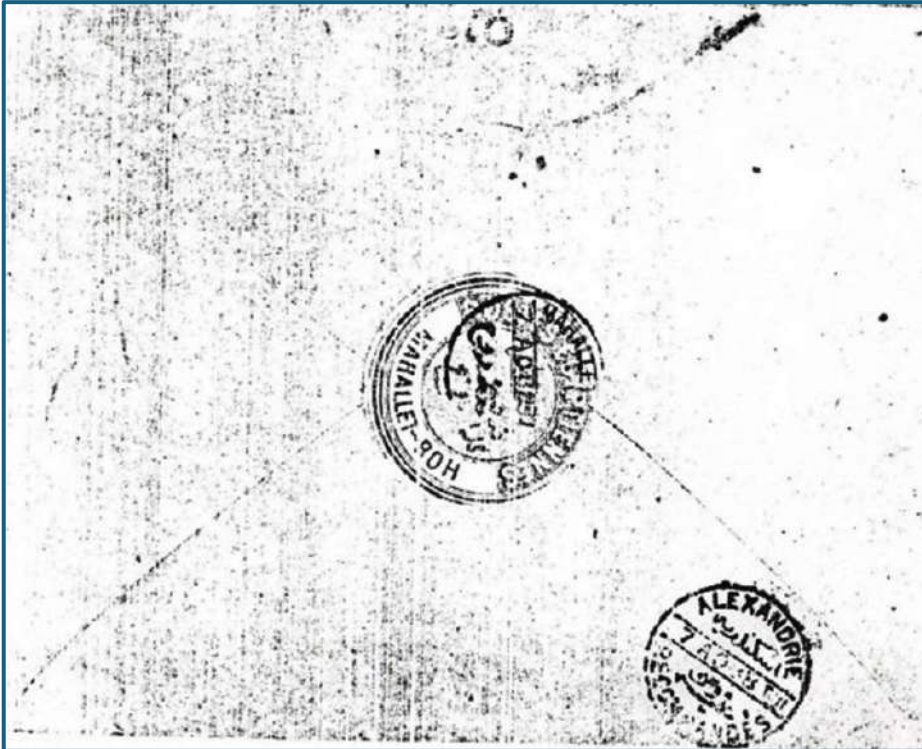


"So far as I am aware, there has never been any controversy as to the status of Interpostals, which have always been accepted by those who have studied them and written about them, as having exempted letters bearing them from being taxed. But as those who do not come within that category are apt, owing to their absence from popular catalogues, to question their status — and even on occasion to assert, albeit without evidence, that they were merely labels used optionally to stick down Post Office letters - it seems desirable that somebody should marshal the scattered evidence as to how they came about, and the circumstances of their issue and use, before it gets lost sight of."

In response to Harris's attack, the Egypt Study Circle published a letter of opinion sent to him in 1944 to ensure that his future philatelic publications described the seals accurately:

“...the opinion of the 14 members of the Egypt Study Circle was that interpostal seals are not postage stamps and did not have the power to frank, they were intended to indicate the office of departure of mail sent from one office to another, and obliterated to specify the date of dispatch, that they were used to seal the mailings, to keep fixed the official communiqués posted in the offices or other customs not yet established, but that they were worth collecting by the specialists of Egypt.” (L’OP 92 p.205).

But Harris, Cockrill and Kehr, the most influential philatelists of their time, continued publishing the same arguments. Formalities and decorum seemed to have taken a back seat when Peter Smith, president of the ESC president, criticised Kehr’s 1984 *Catalogue*:



Cover bearing a postmarked Interpostal Seal. But the postmark does not indicate franking

“This edition appears to be an example of an enthusiast hastening to write about a subject he loves without doing his homework.” (QC 128, p.303).

Within the Study Circle, the argument in favour of Interpostals having “franking powers” erupted again in 1985. A letter to the ESC was published (QC 131-132, p35) referring to photographs of two official government covers bearing Interpostal Seals duly tied by postmarks on registered mail between

post offices at Cherbin, Mahallat-El-Roh (*photo above*), and Alexandria. The owner argued:

“...at least sometimes Interpostal Seals have been used as Free Franks.”

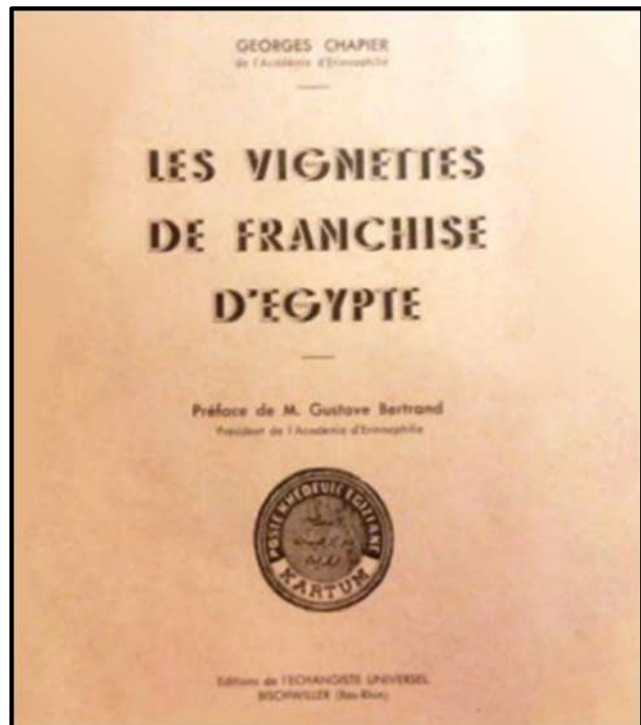
But by this time, as we shall see, this argument had been completely debunked and the reply, by Peter Smith, followed on the same page:

“A central question to consider is what evidence is necessary to establish whether an adhesive label on a cover was the franking means. The position is not decisive, for such non-franking labels as air mail etiquettes are found on the face, as are registration labels. The presence or absence of a postmark on the label is also not decisive. I have several covers having air mail etiquette tied by a postmark, for example. More to the point, the “Found Open and Officially Sealed” labels are nearly always postmarked with the same datestamps as are used to cancel stamps; in fact, a specific space is designated on them to receive the postmark. The critical question is whether similar letters without the labels were treated as unfranked.”

Smith presented examples of covers (from other countries) affixed with labels such as 'Found Open and Resealed' or 'Recommended Post' in which the stickers are postmarked by the post office, proving that postmarks on labels or stickers are not intended to indicate franking.

In France, another author who believed in seals' franking powers was Georges Chapier who was asked in 1948 by the French l'Académie d'Errinophilie (Academy for the Study of Cinderellas) to delve into the subject and find an answer to whether the Egyptian seals belong in Philately or *Errinophilie* (French for Cinderellas). In 1950 Chapier published a 23-page catalogue of Interpostal Seals: [*Les Vignettes de Franchise d'Egypte*](#) (*The Franking Stickers of Egypt*). His introduction emphasized his belief that they were real stamps, not Cinderellas. He wrote:

"These stamps were in fact real official stamps, used not only throughout the territories subject to the authority of the Viceroy, but also in all the post offices that he maintained in various cities of the Ottoman Empire. Circular in shape, they have the appearance of a large stamp similar to those used in consulates and embassies."



However, Gustave Bertrand, president of l'Académie d'Errinophilie who wrote the preface to Chapier's catalogue, was not so sure, describing the Interpostals as: "... *n'étant ni spécialement erinophiles ni spécialement philatéliques*", Translation: "...it is neither specially a Cinderella nor philatelic."

But French philatelists were not deterred by Bertrand's pronouncement. Pierre Nicolas authored a review titled [*Les Interpostaux d'Egypte*](#) in the September 2008 issue of *l'Echo de La Timbrologie*, in which he listed three uses of the Interpostals: "1 - As seals to repair damaged mail, 2 - as labels on mail sacks and, 3 - most importantly, as official stamps."

Another French philatelist who echoed the theory of Harris and Kehr is J. B. Parenti, who wrote two articles, both titled *Vignettes de franchise d'Egypte*, in December 1998 in *Le Monde des Philatelistes* and in 2008 in another French journal, [*Documents Philatéliques*](#), which he prefaced with the following:

"Halfway between Cinderellas and philately, the status of round Egyptian stamps has long been the subject of heated debate. For many years, these stamps, devoid of any face value, most often appeared on the back of envelopes, leading many philatelists to believe that they were closing stamps. This idea was reinforced in the early 1920s, as the use of these stamps to seal letters and personalize mailings became fashionable. It was only after the Second World War that a few philatelists took their investigations a little further and allowed the status of these stamps to be reviewed. Albert Harris and, above all, Ernest Kehr were true pioneers in this field. Based on their work, they established that these stamps were issued by the Egyptian

government to all post offices, to serve as postage for all official correspondence between two offices or services. These labels therefore constituted genuine service stamps."

His straightforward acceptance showered Harris and Kehr with praise for their mistaken belief in the franking powers of Interpostal Seals.

Second Theory: Used for sealing letters or official notices

This is the thesis that has won the greatest following, prevailing and being accepted by modern philatelists. Many philatelists held this view right from their first appearance, regarding Interpostal Seals as stickers rather than as actual stamps.

The earliest comprehensive review appeared in 1868. *The Stamp Collector Magazine* devoted two pages of the issue of [August 1 1868 \(pp.118-120\)](#), to a listing and description of all types and colours printed by the Egyptian postal authority at that time. The editors believed they were seals, not "official stamps", concluding:

"These stamps are termed official stamps and very probably if placed on official letters would be taken to indicate the nature of such letters and free them from charge. But we take it that they are also used as a species of seal and that it is indeed their principal employment to show simply whence comes the packet of letters to which they are affixed. The idea of these stamps was borrowed from the Italian post office in which similar labels are used to seal the bags of letters, and it will be in the remembrance of our readers that a large number of more or less ornamental designs were offered for these stamps when the emission of a new type was decided on. We believe that the Egyptian are put on all official letters emanating from the office whose name they bear and indeed it is only on the supposition that they are intended to indicate the place of origin of the letters to which they are affixed that the emission of stamps for each office can be explained."

The 1875 *Illustrated Catalogue of Stamps* (p.259) also followed this theory, calling Interpostal Seals "office furniture":

"These circular designs are given as specimens of the official seals, of which over a hundred varieties exist. They are not entitled to be considered as postage stamps, but simply forms of Office Furniture. Each chief office has its own seal."

In 1880 J.B. Moens described the Interpostals as mere seals, intended only to replace sealing wax for sealing parcels, stating on page 88 of his French-language *Catalogue of Egypt and the Suez Canal Company*:

"Before the post office passed into the hands of the Egyptian government, the so-called 'Posta Europea' office, undoubtedly inspired by the practice in Italy, used administrative stamps to seal official letters. These stamps, which are an economical substitute for sealing wax, do not grant any franking to the letters; they indicate the origin of the sending office, which has no need for a franking stamp, as administrative letters remain in the hands of the post office."

A colourful defence of this theory appeared on page 31 of QC 39 (1952), in an article on the postal history of the Sudan. Lt Col J. R. Danson described how the seals were used by Sudanese post offices, several of which were opened before 1890, the time when the seals were being printed and used. See below some of the Sudan Interpostals:

"In the absence of any official list of Post Offices, the best evidence that an office existed at any particular place is a postage stamp or cover bearing the postmark of the town but apart from Wadi Halfa, Massawa and Suakin, Egyptian stamps used in the Sudan are very rare indeed and I doubt whether examples exist from some of the smaller places. Other evidence must therefore be sought, and this is found in the existence of interpostal labels bearing the names of various places in the Sudan.

The use to which these labels was put is somewhat obscure but contrary to the note in Volume II of Robson Lowe's Encyclopedia they were not official franks and had no franking value. They were certainly used on occasions to seal up packages which had burst in the post and I show you an example of this usage at Alexandria; and they were probably, almost certainly, used for sealing packages of letters being sent in bulk from one post office to another in order to show at a glance the origin of the package. I am showing several pages of these labels with the names of various towns in the Sudan, also an official registered cover from Wadi Halfa, which has neither postage stamp nor interpostal label on it, but which was apparently delivered at destination without surcharge. This cover goes to show, I think, that the interpostal labels were not official franks."



Interpostal Seals of the offices of the Sudan in 1890

The ESC and the Philatelic Society of Egypt held the view that the seals were not actual stamps, but most philatelic publications continued to disregard or disagree with this view. The question seemed to have been put to rest in 1956 by Mehanny Eid, president of the Egyptian Philatelic Association. He wrote in the July *L'Orient Philatélique* an article titled *The question of Interpostals is now settled*, based on his research within old post office archives. He wrote:

"Few months ago, and by a mere accident, I came across an official document, which I believe will clear up this question and put an end to the long discussions about these circular adhesives. This document is a register of a rather large size comprising 200 pages on which the high officials of the Postal Administration used to write their instructions in the form of circulars and circulate them among their subordinates in the same office, to note and sign.

When these instructions were intended to be sent also to the various post offices, they were then printed in letters. Some of these were found fastened to the pages of the register: but by what means? It was surely amazing to notice that the fastening was made by the Interpostals themselves. This proves one of the ways in which these Interpostals were employed. I was able to trace in the register few

written and one printed circular relating to these Interpostals. The name given to them in the circulars is 'Ticket' in French and 'paper ticket' in the Arabic alphabet.

The text of a circular written in French and dated 15.11.1879 is given hereunder:

'Les correspondances chargées d'Office, à l'adresse de la Direction Générale doivent porter le timbre « Recommandâtes » et les lettres, chargées ou non, « doivent être fermées avec un Ticket. La négligence à ces formalités, qui est cause d'un grand embarras à cette 2e. Division pour la distribution de la nombreuse correspondance qui arrive chaque jour, sera puni d'une amende qui varierait de 5 à 20 piastres.

Le Chef Comptable, G. B. Vascotto.'

Translation

'Correspondence which should be dispatched registered, to the address of the Director General, must be stamped « Raccommandate » and letters either registered or not must be closed with a Ticket. Any negligence in following these instructions, which causes a great trouble to this Second Division in distributing the enormous correspondence arriving every day, will be punished with a fine of 5 to 20 piastres.

Chief Accountant, G. B. Vascotto.'

This proved that the Interpostals were used as wafers to close letters addressed to the Director General of the Administration; but some years later, instructions were given to stop using this method for closing letters. A written circular dated 9.4.1885 was issued for this purpose, the text of which is as follows:

'Contrairement au règlement pour la confection de dépêches (Article 15), plusieurs bureaux continuent à fermer leur dépêche avec Ticket. Il est rappelé aux Agents que toutes les dépêches doivent être scellées à la cire,'

Translation

'Contrary to the regulations in force for handling correspondence (Article 15), it has been noticed that many offices continue to close their mail by Ticket. Agents are therefore reminded that all correspondence must be sealed with wax.'

What is more important is a typed circular letter in Arabic dated 24.9.1885, which was found fastened to the register by Interpostals. It is a long and detailed circular letter to the post offices instructing them how to fill in the different Postal forms for the registered and official letters and how to dispatch their mail in bulk with other regulations relating to the various activities of the post offices. In item 15 of the circular, instructions were given that the linen bag containing the mail should be tightly closed with a string and either the wax or the (Interpostals) should be fastened to the two ends of the string to receive the stamp of the office."

Eid concluded his article by declaring that:

"The Egypt Study Circle, London, has been of opinion that the circular adhesives known as Egyptian Interpostals.

- (a) had no power to defray postal charges and are not postage stamps.
- (b) were primarily intended to denote the office of dispatch of all mail transmitted in bulk between one post office and another, being postmarked to record the date of departure.
- (c) were also employed as seals, wafers and in other ways, included among which are transit markings and to fasten postal documents to notice boards.
- (d) are eminently collectable and worthy of study.

This opinion is now totally confirmed by official documents.

M. Eid, 1956."

However, the opinions of the ESC and Eid were dismissed by Ernest Kehr, Albert Harris and Philip Cockrill, influential and prominent philatelists of their time, who continued to view seals as true official stamps as late as 1984 in the Cockrill Series booklet *The Posta Europea and the 1984 Kehr catalogue of Interpostal Seals* and other Harris publications.

The work most credited for cementing Eid's thesis, that the Interpostal Seals had no franking powers, is that by Ibrahim Chaftar, the prominent Egyptian philatelist. Chaftar authored a series of articles in *L'Orient Philatélique* between 1965 and 1973 in which he examined archives of the early postal system and was the first philatelist to publish photographs of every Interpostal Seal known at the time. In the [April-July 1965 issue of 'L'Orient Philatélique'](#), he listed all instances in which an Interpostal Seal was known to have been used by the postal administration. At the time he wrote, these amounted to only six different usages of Interpostals fixed to covers or bulletin boards and none used for franking a cover or correspondence. He provided illustrations of each usage, as shown below [*Click the link to go to the original publication*]:

"1. Covers between a post office and another post office. (See Photo No. 2).



Photo No 2. – This cover is an example of an official envelope bearing the printed heading "POSTE KHEDEVIE EGIZIANE / DIREZIONE GENERALE" (It was Alexandria at that time). Written on it is:-

"No. (3) *Trois lettres recommandées France*".

Securing the flap on the reverse is a single Interpostal seal Type VI. There is no postmark on any part of this container, which has been neatly slit open half way up the flap so that the seal is undamaged.

(Collection J.R. Danson)

2. Covers sent by the Postal Administration to individuals. These are rare cases. (See Photo No. 3).

Photo No. 3. – The earliest cover seen is dated "19 Marz 67" and passed between Benha and Cairo. The envelope is an official one, headed "REGIE POST EGIZIANE" with the word "Servizio" printed diagonally across the left lower corner. On the front are also struck the postmark of Benha and the marking "RACCOMANDATE" in a frame.

On the reverse are five Interpostals, all of Benha, placed as though to secure complete closure of the letter. One of these seals has been just touched by the Cairo arrival postmark.

In this instance the Interpostals were used as seals, pure and simple, and were applied to the cover in the five positions ordinarily fastened by sealing wax when a letter was registered at this date.

This cover is also an example of an official sending by the Postal Administration to an individual.
(Collection J.R. Danson)



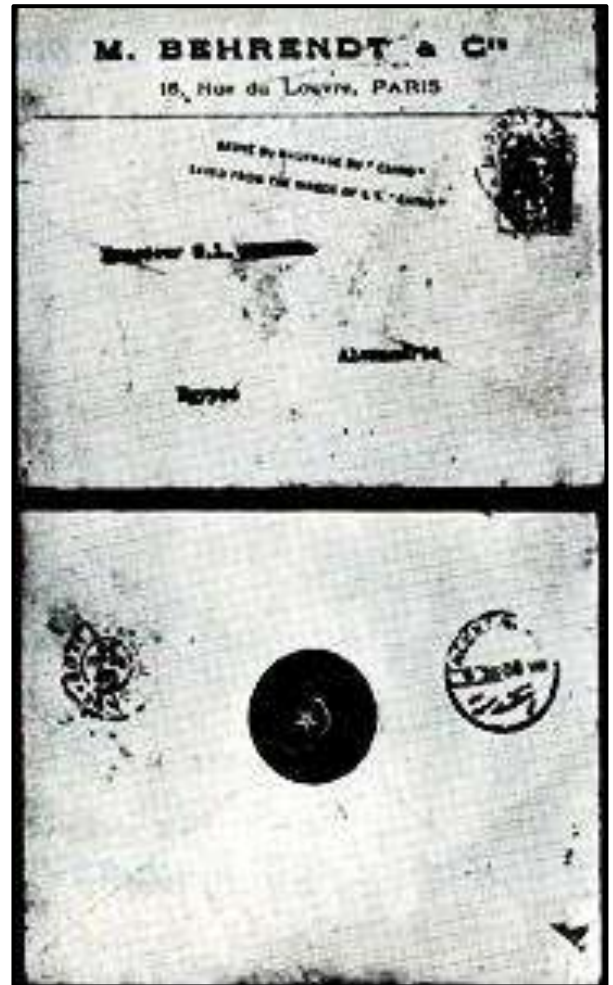
3. Covers sunk in a shipwreck and then when saved were closed by Interpostal Seals because they had been damaged (especially the shipwreck the SS Cairo in 1905). To be noted in this last case, the covers bear different types of Interpostal Seals as if the Postal Administration had used all the remaining stock at hand for the said operation). (See Photos No. 4 & 5).

Photo No. 4. – Letter that was saved from the shipwreck of the SS 'Cairo' and re-closed by an Interpostal Seal type 6: "POSTE KHEDIVIE EGIZIANE – GABINETTO DEL VICE DIRETTORE". Probably despatched from Asnières (Seine), it lost its stamps in the water. It is delivered to an address in Schutz-Ramle / Alexandria on 7 III 06 VII

(Collection Ibrahim Chaftar)

Photo No. 5. – A wreck cover from Paris 25 2 05 franked with 5c France type Blanc, addressed to the exchange firm of Mortera at Alexandria by Behrendt & Co, 15 Rue du Louvre, Paris. Having been salvaged from the wreck of S/S. 'Cairo' it reached Alexandria (6 III 05) and was stamped with bilingual "Sauve du naufrage du S/S Cairo". To the back was applied the Alexandria Interpostal Type VI b inscribed "Direzione Generale delle Poste Khedevie Egiziane. Alessandria".

(Collection Ibrahim Chافتar)



4. Covers opened by the Postal Administration to trace the name of the sender and re-closed by Interpostal seals. An illustration of a cover of this kind is shown. (Photo No. 6)



Photo No 6 – A letter addressed in Arabic and French by Hadjy Mirza Abdel Gawad to Mr Christrillaki at Alexandria franked with a 2pi stamp of 1879 postmarked Cairo 25 OTT79 and handstamped "Raccomandato". The Alexandria arrival marking is dated the same day. On the back is written in French "Not claimed although punctually notified" signed by the postman. That the letter was returned to the sender in Cairo is indicated by a marking which reads Rebut a remettre a l'envoyeur" dated by hand beneath in red ink 5 1 80. It is resealed with the Alexandria Interpostal Type O, May VII. There is also a postmark with a double circle inscribed POSTE K.E. DIREZIONE LOCALE ALESSANDRIA with a large star and crescent in the centre (ESC Type). There are two Cairo arrival markings dated 11 GEN 80 and 11 JAN 80.

This letter was undoubtedly returned to the sender Abdel Gawad as it was found in 19421 among the archives of this important Persian trader. *(Collection Ibrahim Chافتar)*

5. Covers censored during the Arabi Pasha campaign of 1882 and sealed by the Interpostal Seals. The military censorship opened the mail addressed to Ismailia. In case it did not deal with political matters it was re-closed and delivered to its destination (See report of the Postal Administration for year 1882). An illustration of covers of this category are given here (see photos 7 and 8).

Photo No 7. – A letter bringing another echo of Arabi Pasha's campaign. Sent from Ghouria Cairo sub-post office 3 AO 82, it is franked with a pair of the 1 PT rose 1879. It is addressed to Hadji Mirza Mohsen Ispahani Smirne. On the back is written "Arrivee a Port Said a cet état a suppose ouvert par ordre d'Arabi Pacha". The signatures of both the local postal official and his clerk are appended and the cover has been closed by the Port Said Interpostal Type O May VII. There is also the Port Said Caisse marking 6 AO 82. (General Wolseley arrived in Alexandria on 15 August 1882). On arrival at its destination the letter received the Turkish Smyrna postmark dated 15 August 1882.

(Collection Ibrahim Chافتar)

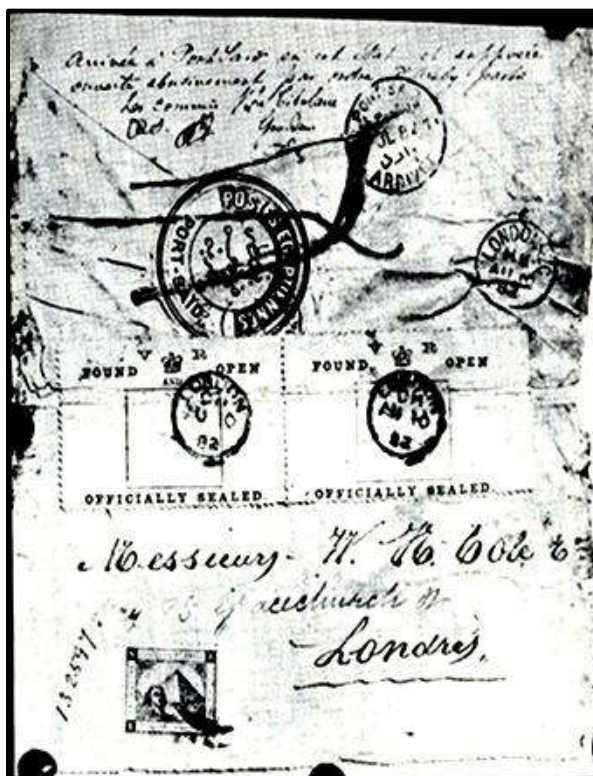


Photo No. 8 – A letter addressed to Messrs. W.H.Cole & Co, London, franked with an 1879 1pi rose, the cancel of which is impossible to determine. Arriving at Port Said open, it was reinforced with string and sealed with a Port Said type VII Interpostal Seal postmarked Port Said JU i82.

Port Said postal officials attest on the reverse that it arrived open and assumed that it was thus treated by order of Arabi Pasha.

The curious thing is ... that it arrived in London open again and that the English post office had to reseal it with two "FOUND OOPEN AND OFFICXIALY RESEALED" LABELS WHIXH WERE DATESTAMPED London 10 April 82

6. For sticking the "Notice to the Public" on the notice boards of the local post offices or repairing the torn mail between a post office and another. I (Chافتار) have seen two similar cases between the Assiut and Aswan post offices and the Money Orders Department Main Office at Cairo. (See Photos No. 9 and 10).

Photo No 9. – Envelope 1885 from Korti to Cairo, with manuscript "arrive au bureau du Caire en cet état" and initialled. Postmark of Cairo on arrival 23 MR 85 T VII. Cairo Interpostal Type on reverse affixing two pieces of string to close and consolidate the envelope.

(Lot 812 of Byam's Egypt sale)



Photo No 10 – A particularly interesting cover, addressed to M Henrie Barriere at the Direction Generale of the Egyptian Post at Alexandria (via Port Said). It bears on the front the circular postmark of ATFE 29 JL 82. On the reverse DAMANHOUR 2 (MONTH?) 82, CAIRE 30 JL 82, PORT SAID 2 AO, ALEXANDRIE 3 AO 82. It is impossible to say whether the letter originated at Atfe because the left top corner of the cover has been torn away in such a manner which suggests the removal of an adhesive stamp by some previous owner, as beneath the lower torn edge is a minute portion of what appears to be a postmark. The circuitous route followed was necessitated by military operations then proceeding, Alexandria having been bombarded by the British Fleet on 11 July 1882; the battle of Tel el Kebir was fought on September 13 of the same year. On the back of the envelope is written

"Arrivée ouverte a Port Said", followed by initials. Folded around the top margin of the cover is the red Interpostal for CAIRE headed "POSTE EGYPTIENNES". The seal is not postmarked. It is noteworthy that someone at Port Said felt obliged to endorse the letter as having "arrived open", even though it had apparently been previously closed by the Interpostal Seal. This does not appear to be an official envelope though it is addressed to the head post office. This seal may have been used to close mail "found open in the post" or the letter may have been subject to censorship at Cairo. (Collection J. R. Danson)"

With Chافتار's list covering every known use of Interpostal Seals, he demonstrated to the world of philately that the seals were never intended for use as official or franking stamps. He concluded, in the same article:

"Apart from the (..use by) Postal Administration, no cover bearing an Interpostal Seal used to frank mail has ever been seen till now, whether sent by a certain government administration to one of its departments, or to another government administration or

to private individual which will prove, without ambiguity, the general franking status of these Interpostal Seals."

After Chaftar published his article, and until recently, several other covers bearing Interpostal Seals have appeared in philatelic publications and stamp auctions, but none has been shown to have been used for the franking of correspondence.

Conclusion; the Interpostals were used 'as needed' but never to frank covers



Ibrahim Chaftar and Ernest Kehr, specialists on each side of the long Interpostals argument

In 1996 Luca Daniele Biolato, an Italian diplomat and author who lived in Alexandria, chronicled in detail the history of the Posta Europea in an Italian book written in Italian, *La Posta Europea Nel Contesto Della Storia Postale Dell'Egitto Nel Sec. XIX 1820 to 1865*" (The Posta Europea in the Context of the Postal History of Egypt in the 19th Century 1820-1865). Biolato was witness to the disagreements philatelists had on the subject. He reviewed the history

behind the two theories on the use of Interpostal Seals and sums up with the following observations:

" ...Looking closely at the reported analyses and, if we want to add a bit of logic to them, we feel that the great dispute on this subject could be overcome by a more realistic view of things: the Interpostals were designed and put into operation for multiple uses by the Postal Administration. So, the supporters of both theories might be right, only in part.

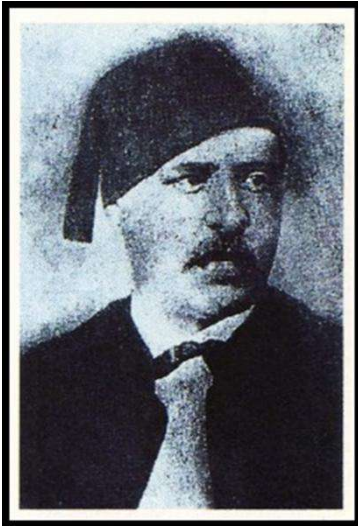
Let's explain why 'in part'. There is no firm evidence of the use of the Interpostals as government franking stamps or for official correspondence. In 1864, when the managers of the Posta Europea invented them, they had been under obligation to carry government mail free of charge for two years. Certainly, there was the problem of how to identify those entitled to this service by the postal officials at the arrival locations, who had to apply the postal fee, whenever applicable. We know of no example of correspondence of such services carried by the Posta Europea between 1862 (the act granting the monopoly) and the end of 1864 (the sale to the Egyptian government), so we can only infer that some system may well have been in place.

The earliest Interpostals bore the words "Office of...", and therefore their use must have been designed only for the needs of the Posta Europea Office, in the sense that it must be ruled out that the labels were in the possession of the public offices benefiting from the franchise: they were applied only by the Post Office and its employees."

Biolato then describes what he thought a normal day for the Director-General of the Postal Administration, Giacomo Muzzi, would have been like, managing the day-to-day activities:

"Let us also try to imagine the scenario here. Muzzi has before his eyes packages containing correspondence to be sent sealed with sealing wax and seals of the postal administration. The same seals were used to close official correspondence which is destined to be carried free of charge.

Muzzi then most probably decides to have circular and gummed paper seals made, separated by office, to close the packages containing correspondence of the same



Giacomo Muzzi

origin in a simplified and inexpensive way and to facilitate the identification of their origin, especially for the purpose of rapid and precise sorting. Then he thinks of sealing his correspondence with outlying offices containing directives, instructions, notes, or anything else, with these labels; and he instructs postal agents to do the same with their replies, so that such correspondence is at once identified as official and forwarded without the problem of levying charges. He finds it convenient to identify with an 'ad hoc seal' office correspondence officially received. Finally, he tolerates Interpostals being used for repairs of deteriorated mail or for resealing authorized openings. All this casuistry is encompassed in one concept, beyond doubt: the Interpostals were intended exclusively for the service and use of the Postal Administration.

We have no examples of the use of Interpostals in the Posta Europea period, but their later use confirms this diagnosis, also because it was always Muzzi who reigned."

This vivid description of a typical day at the post office leaves us with a logical explanation of why the Interpostal Seals were created and used. And it is clear that they were not used as official stamps to defray the cost of mail delivery.

The Interpostals today

Collectors have relied mainly on the Kehr catalogue, which lists more than 1,000 items, to identify their Interpostal Seals. In the absence of official records, Kehr relied on his own collection and those of others to list and describe each entry of his catalogue, which he revised three times between 1943 and 1984. He marked with an asterisk any item he has not seen but was listed by others such as Moen in 1880 and May in 1914. Several Interpostals described by Kehr, however, have never been seen while a few others proven to exist are missing from his catalogue. The Egypt Study Circle and the Philatelic Society of Egypt have commented on several of his catalogues until its last revision in 1984.

None of the general stamp catalogues include a listing of Interpostal Seals, perhaps because of the sheer number and variety of colours, but also no doubt because they are no longer considered regular or official stamps. Zeheri's *Catalogue* listed the various British Forces seals but was silent on Interpostals, and others such as Feltus, Balian and Smith provide no more than a few pages or a table of Interpostal types against the issuing post office. May, Chapier and Kehr catalogues are all long ago out of print.

But this void was filled when eBay appeared, It was instantly embraced by the worldwide philatelic community, delivering a convenient alternative to the local stamp shop or auction house where Interpostal Seals were rarely on offer. Rich and often rare material appeared

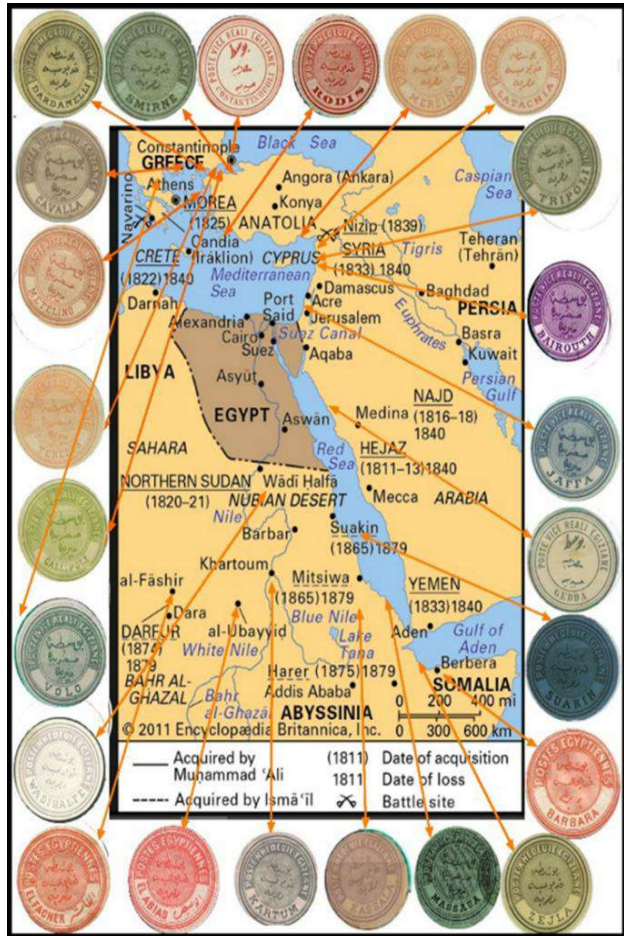
on this auction site and forums of eBay buyers and sellers connected online to exchange Information.

This was when this writer decided to create a website dedicated to Interpostal collectors in which catalogues and information are freely accessible. The owner of Philip Cockril's copyrights granted me permission to use Kehr's work on the website which was registered in 2006 as www.interpostalseals.com or www.interpostals.com. Soon after, Google.com delivered a stream of collectors searching for information or providing input. Interpostals never seen before were posted, literature long ago lost or out of print became available and the findings of the Egypt Study Circle and the Philatelic Society of Egypt were incorporated in the online catalogue.

And finally, in 2025, a complete body of information was elegantly put on paper when in March Joseph Chalhoub issued his second edition of *The Nile Post, Handbook and Catalogue of Egyptian Stamps*, featuring a comprehensive 33 pages listing every Interpostal known to collectors, with current and realistic price estimates.

With the 19th century foreign post offices of Egypt scattered across several countries, today's collectors hail from Egypt, Greece, Turkey, Eritrea, Somalia, Israel, Sudan, Ethiopia, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and an island or two in the Mediterranean, all looking for seals with the name of their town, often misspelled and in several colours and languages.

Regardless of the struggle over their function and the mystery behind their creation, these colourful circular adhesives will continue to attract wide interest among philatelists and have aroused the curiosity of collectors who continue the search for that phantom Interpostal Seal known by Ernest Kehr but seen by no one else.



**Foreign post offices of Egypt
in the 19th century**

Story of the Stamp: 1947 Exhibition of Contemporary Art

David Ogden (ESC 480)

In March 1947, Egypt hosted the International Exhibition of Contemporary Art in Cairo - a philatelic and cultural landmark event that aimed to place Egypt at the crossroads of ancient heritage and modern art.

To mark the event Egypt issued four beautiful stamps (SG 334-337) on 9 March 1947, each of them showing an iconic ancient figure or monument. The stamps celebrated Egypt's artistic past but also reflected its hopes for cultural modernity. They were issued as charity stamps with half the face value contributing towards exhibition costs.



The stamps combine Egypt's ancient artistic brilliance and its modern creative vitality

The 5+5 millièmes stamp features the Triad of Mycerinus, the westernized name of Pharaoh Menkaure. Its three schist statues, unearthed by the Egyptologist George Reisner in Menkaure's valley temple near his pyramid at Giza, highlighted Egypt's reverence for the sculptural sophistication of the Old Kingdom.



The FDC echoes the style of the exhibition set

identification of Ramesses II's titles in the vast temple complex. Choosing this spectacular ruin for a stamp indicated Egypt's pride in its monumental architectural legacy.

The 30+30 millièmes stamp bears the famous bust of Queen Nefertiti, a masterpiece of painted stucco-coated limestone. Excavated in 1912 at Tell el Amarna by a German team, it portrays Akhenaten's Great Royal Wife with timeless elegance. Its presence symbolized aesthetic refinement and Egypt's global artistic influence.

The 15+15 millièmes stamp shows the Temple of Ramses II, widely known as the Ramesseum, on the west bank of the Nile across from Luxor. Its name was coined by Jean François Champollion, whose 1829 visit led to the first



Mahmoud Mokhtar's 'Reveil de l'Egypte' unites ancient and modern

The 50+50 millièmes issue shows the funerary mask of Tutankhamun, discovered by Howard Carter in 1925 in the Valley of the Kings. The image conveyed Egypt's unrivalled mastery in gold craftsmanship and the everlasting allure of its royal burials. The decision to highlight ancient rulers for a contemporary art event presented Egypt as a centre of ancient creativity whose visual language resounds across the centuries and a modern cultural hub, playing an active part in a worldwide artistic conversation. This was especially visible in Cairo of the 1940s.



Active between 1938 and 1948, Art et Liberté (the Art and Freedom group) was a Cairo Surrealist and antifascist collective led by such figures as Georges Henein (poet and author, *see left*), Kamel El Telmissany (artist and film maker), Ramses Younan (painter and writer), and Inji Efflatoun (painter and activist). The group championed artistic freedom and political criticism, and redefined Egyptian modernism during this turbulent decade.

At the same time artists including Mahmoud Saïd and Mahmoud Mokhtar followed the Neo Pharaonic Revival, blending modern artistic techniques with Pharaonic motifs, reinterpreting ancient Egyptian symbolism to express modern national identity.

Egypt's 1947 Exhibition —and the stamps issued to celebrate it— beautifully encapsulated a moment when the nation asserted both its ancient brilliance and its modern creative vitality.

Members' Matters

Many congratulations to our members who were successful in winning top awards at the Dubai 2026 World Stamp Exhibition held at the World Trade Centre from February 4-8: Greg Todd (ESC 585) won a remarkable third Large Gold with 95 points for his *Egypt 1866: The First Issue*; Atef Sarian (ESC 639) scored Gold with special mention for *The Third Issue 1872-79*, which scored 92 points; and Hisham Bassyouny (ESC391) took Gold with 90 points for his *British Forces in Egypt issues 1932-39*.

Let's welcome our new members ...

ESC 775 **Carol Dunbar**, 2220 Pleasant Drive, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613, United States
(Special interest: Amateur collector since childhood)

ESC 776 **Eric Welvaert**, Boghemansstraat 20, 1090 Jette, Belgium
(Special interest: Egyptian TPOs)

ESC 777 **Alp Aziz Torun**, 50 Colfax Avenue, STE CF8230, Clifton, New Jersey 07013, USA
(Special interest: Egypt, Sudan, Canada, Bermuda, Cyprus, Nauru, Turkey)

ESC 778 **Laurent Bierny**, rue Charles Catala 37, 1460 Virginal-Samme, Belgium
(Special interest: Belgian Congo, Waterlow & Sons, Waybills, Thailand, Guatemala, Chile)



... and recall those who have left

The Circle is very sorry to have lost two senior members in recent weeks, both of them to advancing years and health problems:

Robert Schoenstene (ESC 566), of Chicago, whose membership was recorded in the March 2004 QC.

Mahmoud Ramadan (ESC 358), *left*, since June 1988 one of our leading Cairo collectors, expert in early postal history, and a true gentleman. He made a gift of his book on the Mohamed Ali Post, full of ground-breaking original research, to all members.

Egypt First Issue Multiples, an Update

Gregory Todd (ESC 585)

Once someone dares to go to print, faults inevitably seek the light of day alongside the few further gems that surface. As Egypt Study Circle members alone were given my original monograph, *Egypt First Issue Multiples* (2025), this update too shall be published only within the Study Circle.

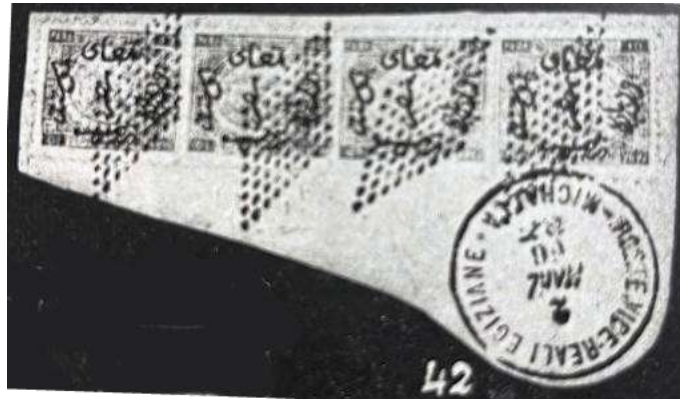
Additions and errors, following the numbering system in the book, are listed and illustrated below:



- 36A.** 1 piastre claret, perf. $12\frac{1}{2}$, an unused block of four, one tone spot, large part og. Ex Proud Bailey in London 1979. Collection T. Ruebush.
- 39A.** 1 piastre claret, an unused block of twelve (4 x 3), top row compound perf. 13 at top and at base, fine large part og. Ex Byam but never offered at Robson Lowe.
- 51.** No longer a multiple. The lower half of this pair is owned by R. Atiya, sold to him as a single by Peter Feltus, both of whom could be added to the provenance.
- 63.** Insert: 5 para grey, a used block of four on large part piece cancelled by 'PVRE-Alessandria' cds (23 July 1867). Ex Harmers, London, 3 Dec 1961, lot 25.
- 64.** 5 para grey, used block of four, cds in blue. See below. Additional provenance. Ex collection J. Kassab (1967).
- 63 and 64 were duplicated due to different auction descriptions. When one sees the pictures now, I can only apologise for the error.



- 74A.** 10 para brown, perf. $12\frac{1}{2}$, wmk. inverted, a horizontal strip of four used with two retta handstamps in black. Ex Stanley Gibbons, London, 1984.



- 75A.** 10 para brown, perf. 13 x 12½, vertical strip of four on piece tied by four strikes of the retta handstamp in black with 'PVRE-Michalla' cds (2 March 1866) below. Ex Gabriel Boulad, Galeries Nationales, Alexandria, 18-27 Nov 1949, lot 42. Collection T. Ruebush.
- 76.** Additional provenance: A.L. Cicurel, Harmers, London, 19 June 1961, lot 562.



- 79A.** Add: 20 para blue, perf. 12½, perf. 13 at top and middle rows, a used block of four, centred to base and to right, Types II-II/I-I, cancelled by retta handstamps in black. Ex Harmers, London, 3 Dec 1961, lot 36; Delcampe internet sale, Jan 2016. Collection A. Sarian.



- 81A.** 1 piastre in a used horizontal strip of three, left hand stamp perf. 13 all round; central stamp perf. 13 on three sides and third stamp perf. 13 on two sides; cancelled by very light circular datestamps in red. Ex E. Antonini, DF, 10-15 April 1983, ex lot 32429. Collection T. Ruebush.



84A. Add: 2 piastre yellow, perf. $12\frac{1}{2}$, wmk. inverted, a used block of four, cancelled by central strike of 'PVRE-Alessandria' cds (24 Oct 1866) in black. Believed unique. Ebay purchase (April 2007). Collection T. Ruebush.

86. Add provenance: Corinthia sale 227, Zurich, Nov 2018, lot 227. Embarrassing, as I described it.



88A. 10pa. brown, perf. $12\frac{1}{2}$, a vertical strip of four used on cover to Alexandria tied by retta handstamps with 'PVRE-Michalla' cds above (26 Feb 1866). Corinthia, Zurich, 27 Oct 1993, lot 3876.

97A. 10pa. brown, two horizontal; pairs with a horizontal strip of four used on double rate cover to Tanta tied by 'PVRE-Alessandria' datestamps (20 July 1867). The largest number of the 10 pa. value on letter. Collection W. Byam but never offered by Robson Lowe. Collection A. Sarian.



98. Better picture. For some reason omitted in colour, especially embarrassing as again I described it in Peter Smith, Corinthia sale 198, Zurich, 28 May 2015, lot 5115.

103. Additional provenance: DF, Geneva, 5 Dec 2025, lot 10031.

I am indebted to Trenton Ruebush and Ramez Atiya for their help with the above. Further additions were made from Atef Sarian's exhibit shown in Birmingham in May 2025. New discoveries are always welcome!

Beginners' Corner: Women on Egyptian stamps

David Ogden (ESC 480)

Stamps are far more than miniature works of art - they are symbols of national memory, cultural priorities, and collective identity. In Egypt, the representation of women on stamps offers a fascinating window into shifting narratives of gender, heritage and national pride.



How style might evolve – De La Rue's Cleopatra from Dendera in 1914, and Um Kulthum as envisaged by the artist designer Maha Hesham more than a century later



Egypt's antiquity provides a rich cast of remarkable women, many of whom often appear in philatelic issues. Among the best known is Queen Cleopatra VII, whose image appeared on the 1914 2 millièmes definitive, (SG74), marking her for ever as an emblem of Egyptian royalty and intrigue.

Even more celebrated is Nefertiti, whose instantly recognisable profile appears on many issues, including the 1952 100m (SG 429). Another honoured in Egypt's philatelic tradition is Nefertari, her appearance on a 1964

5m (SG 754) stamp affirming her as one of the great royal women of the New Kingdom. The stamp highlighted the UNESCO campaign to save the monuments of Nubia.

Egyptian stamp designers also pay tribute to modern women who have helped to shape national arts and culture. Aziza Amir, the actress and pioneer of Egyptian cinema, appears on a 2002 30 piastres stamp (SG 2258), reflecting her Arab film legacy. She founded Isis Film and produced and starred in *Laila* (1927), seen by many as Egypt's first full-length feature film.

Similarly, Assia Dagher, another foundational figure in Egyptian film, features on a 1999 2p issue (SG 2133), emphasising the early and decisive presence of women in Middle Eastern cinema development. This Lebanese-born actress appeared first in *Laila* with Aziza Amir.



***Stars honoured for very different talents:
Aziza Amir and Sameera Moussa***

Although many stamps depict individual women, some reflect the broader struggle for women's rights. One example is a 1958 10m stamp marking the 50th anniversary of the death of Qasim Amin, an advocate for women's rights and modern education in the Arab world. He played a critical role in shaping Egypt's reformist movement at the turn of the 20th century.

Sameera Moussa (1917-1952) appears on a 1999 20p stamp (SG 2119). As the first female Egyptian nuclear scientist she embarked on a life mission to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, claiming: "My wish is that the nuclear treatment for cancer be as affordable and cheap as aspirin". She was given special permission to research in secret US atomic facilities.



More recently, the £E20 miniature sheet issued last year (*left*) to mark 25 years of the National Council for Women emphasises Egypt's long commitment to support for women's rights and gender equality.

The renewed public interest in Egyptian women on stamps can be seen in contemporary design work, such as the 2019 project by the graphic designer Maha Hesham, who created vibrant, modern stamps celebrating female pioneers including Um Kulthum, Doria Shafik and Huda Shaarawi.

Her project highlights the historical under-representation of women on official stamps and seeks to restore balance by honouring female figures across arts, politics and social activism. Though not accepted for official postage, her designs have sparked public dialogue about visibility, representation and national memory.

Egyptian stamps serve as a powerful archive of women's roles across millennia—from queens who shaped empires to artists and activists who shaped modern identity. The story of women on Egyptian stamps grows richer, reflecting Egypt's long and ongoing journey of recognising the women who helped to define its past and continue to shape its future.

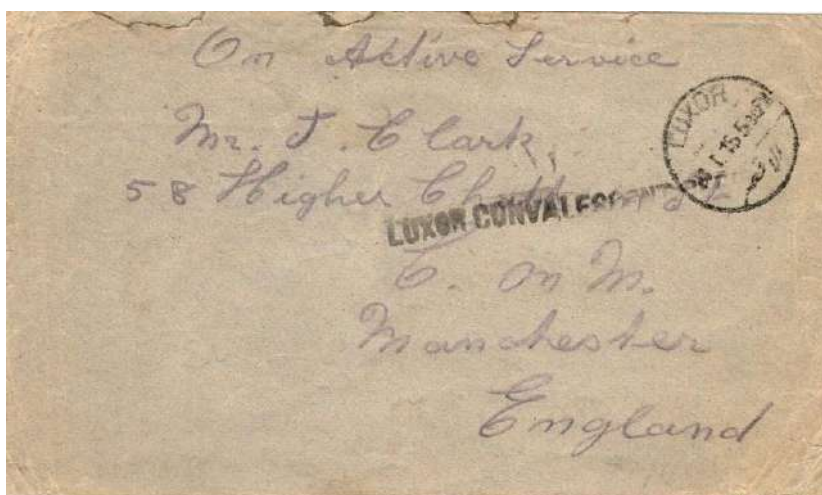
Luxor Convalescent Depot: New cachet

Scott Van Horn (ESC 619)

In QC 123 (September 1982), John Firebrace and "Jim" Benians discussed the military uses of Egypt's civil post offices during the period of 1914-16 by listing various cachets used by the military. One cachet they described – used "On Active Service" from the Winter Palace Hotel to Scotland on 10 I 16 - was a rectangular boxed "LUXOR CONVALESCENT DEPOT" marking, used by British military personnel while they recovered from injuries in a group of local Luxor hotels.

LUXOR CONVALESCENT DEPOT

They also mentioned briefly an unframed version of this particular cachet but did not go on to describe it in any more detail. After numerous searches in online auctions and other sources I think I can safely say that the boxed version appears to be the more common of the two: I could find no images or other references to the straight-line, unframed version. If any member has one the QC would love to publish a scan.

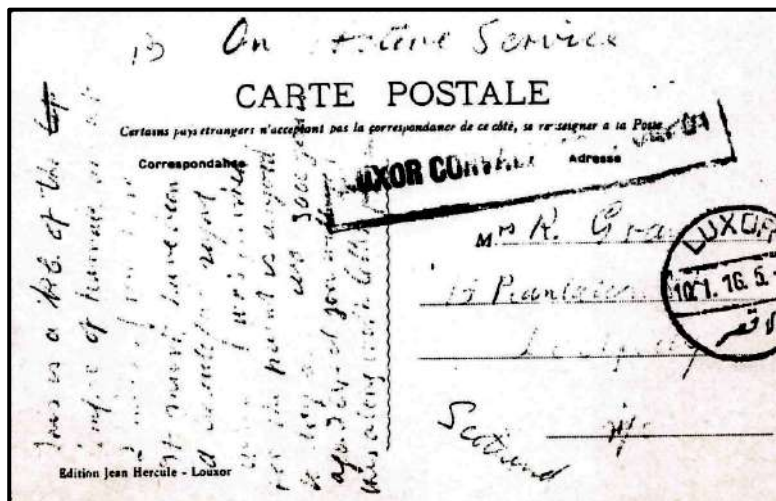


The "On Active Service" letter I show here, however, does carry a version of that elusive unboxed version. Addressed to Manchester with a LUXOR type VIII CDS of 31 Jan 1916, it bears on the face an unframed, black "LUXOR CONVALESCENT DEPOT" handstamp of 4x71mm struck across the centre of the address and fading away to upper right. On the reverse is a CAIRO-ASYUT & V.V. type 7A3 TPO dated 1 Feb 1916.

Information for the following discussion has been gleaned from *History of the Great War, Medical Services General History, Vol. III*, by Major-General Sir W. G. MacPherson, 1924.

Convalescent, or command, depots - also known as "Convalescent Homes" - were halfway houses for casualties returning to the front who no longer needed hospital treatment but were not yet fit to rejoin their units.

Medical services in Egypt during the early stages of the First War (1914-1915) were being enlarged steadily, such that by early 1915 a number of hospital units were stationed in Egypt and available to receive injured personnel. The Dardanelles campaign during April of that year forced existing units to expand to additional buildings in anticipation of the number of sick and wounded that would soon begin to arrive.



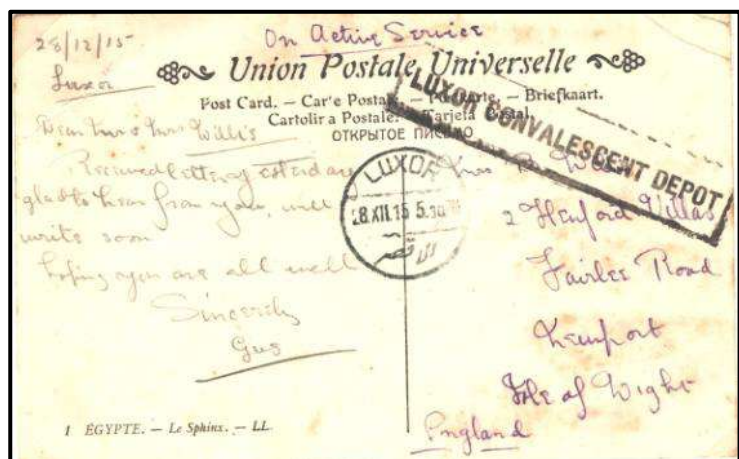
Cachet with border illustrated in QC 123 (September 1982)

As personnel no longer needed direct hospitalization but still required recuperation time, convalescent areas began to be brought into use. One of the first of these camps was at Mustapha, Alexandria, in May 1915, and the British Red Cross began to take the lead in establishing more convalescent hospitals. As an overwhelming number of wounded began arriving from Gallipoli, the general hospitals began to transfer convalescents to Cyprus, but it was soon realized that transportation issues meant it would be better to keep them in Egypt. Soon the Grand Hotel in Helwan was taken over as a

convalescent hospital, followed by a hospital organized by the Red Cross at Alexandria in the Sultan's Palace at Montazah in August 1915.

As more casualties, as well as troops suffering from dysentery, diarrhea and other gastro-intestinal conditions in the hot summer months increased in number, yet more primary hospitals were opened. And again, to relieve the pressure on hospital beds for recovering patients, yet more convalescent hospitals were required.

In November 1915 the palace of Princess Fatima, daughter of Khedive Ismail, at Boulac near Cairo was converted for use by several hundred patients, and in Luxor many hotels were requisitioned from tourist to hospital use. Because so many were transferred in Luxor the phrase "Convalescent Depot" began to be used. According to records, the Depot could accommodate 100 officers, and 2,300 enlisted men. The six Luxor hotels used were the Winter Palace, Luxor Hotel, Karnak Hotel, Savoy Hotel, Hotel du Nil, and Grand Hotel Tewfikieh. Regular hospital trains ran from Cairo to Luxor to carry patients.



An eBay card with cachet, 28 XII 15 to the Isle of Wight

Another large depot was opened at Abbassia, Cairo, in November 1915, and by the end of that year Egypt had 19 convalescent camps or depots. From early 1916 there was no opening of new depots as the number of sick and injured transferred into Egypt was greatly reduced. After the war, the convalescent camps were dismantled, and the former public and private structures were returned to their intended use.



Among the largest and most palatial of the Luxor hotels named among the Luxor Convalescent Depot was the Grand Hotel Tewfikieh

Helouan, Egypt's resort with a Kiwi connection

Anabright Hay (ESC 600)



A German-printed Christmas/New Year greetings montage of Helouan hotels, with the Grand wreathed in Ottoman-Egyptian flags. Posted by a senior official of the State Railways

Helouan was an Egyptian health resort once favoured by royalty, invalids and convalescing soldiers. Its once beautiful hotels were depicted on many postcards, with its late 19th century and early 20th century German chromo litho cards particularly fabulous. These often feature a bathhouse building of Moorish/Oriental design opened in 1899 by Abbas Hilmi II, Khedive of Egypt 1892-1914.

Easily reached from Cairo, 16 miles to the north, three miles from the Nile and 150 feet above water level, the leafy resort also known as Helwan-les-Bains is fully described by H Overton Hobson in his *Helouan, An Egyptian Health Resort and How to Reach It*, published in 1906.



The Grand Hotel Helwan before extensive extension work was carried out

He says that as a health resort it is unique in Egypt - entirely surrounded by desert, bounded by the Mokattam Hills, and at the time described as the only Egyptian health resort situated above the level of the Nile. Helouan started to thrive in the last few years of the reign of Khedive Tewfik Pasha (1879-1892), who built a palace

later converted into a hotel. After his death the town made little development progress despite the appeal of its strong mineral waters. In 1896 however the medical value of the natural sulphur springs in treating rheumatoid arthritis was recognised and the palatial building seen on the early cards was erected.

At the same time the George Nungovich Hotel Company started to improve the hotel accommodation. International tourists flocked to the area, seeking to improve their health and escape the European winter: they all needed postcards to show and tell the folks back home. Amusements on offer included golf, tennis, croquet, riding, drives into the desert, races, shooting, swimming, dances and music. All the larger hotels employed dance-bands during the season and Overton Hobson tells his readers that “many of the natives come out from Cairo to listen and drink innumerable cups of coffee with their cigarettes”.

Nearby excursions include tombs, pyramids, quarries, an observatory, Nile boat trips and native villages. For the sick or those feeling poorly there were numerous treatments on offer at the bathhouse.



The single-storey New Thermal Sulphur Baths, addressed to Germany on 31 May 1901

More recently nearby Maadi and Helwan, now with a more anglicised spelling, were important centres for military forces from New Zealand, as detailed by Alex Hedley and Megan Hutching in *Fernleaf Cairo, the fascinating story of New Zealanders in Wartime Egypt* (Harper Collins, 2009). During World War II Maadi was a base camp for the Second NZ Expeditionary Force with 76,000 soldiers passing through for training and preparation. In the First War Helwan housed a general hospital, reportedly located in the old Grand Hotel.

Maadi and Helwan were important locations for New Zealand's involvement in the Middle East, including the North Africa campaign. Postcards and art works of military camps in Egypt illustrated by the NZ Second World War artist Peter McIntyre command good prices. Recently a 1940 McIntyre work of the Maadi camp in ink on paper drew a bid of NZ\$13,000 (£5,700) at Dunbar Sloane in Wellington.

So what remains of these Victorian-Edwardian structures in Helwan today? It is hard to know exactly without a current visit. A 2014 article on the internet is somewhat pessimistic. Traces of some of these once grand hotels seem to remain and have been converted to house secondary schools and hospitals. While the original bathhouse of early postcard fame has long gone, a more recently established Sulphur Bath remains in somewhat worn condition.

Current attractions however include a Japanese Garden, a wax museum, King Farouk's rest house and a museum at the Helwan Observatory. So ... hardly a replica of Helwan's glory days, but let's hope more improvements lie ahead as Egypt capitalises on its enduring appeal as a tourist destination.

When a serving soldier from the frozen North found himself keeping the peace in the sands of the desert he turned his attention to forming a stamp collection based on his new-found love of the Middle East



Why I collect Egypt – Ole-Fredrik Olsen (ESC 530), Sandefjord, southern Norway

A Norwegian interested in collecting stamps from the Middle East is not very common [*Ole is our only member in Norway - Ed*] and especially not the way I am doing it, by concentrating on material of the British Forces in Egypt.

It all started in 1965-66, when I was sent to Gaza as part of Norway's contribution to UNEF (United Nations Emergency Force), the UN military and peacekeeping operation following the 1956 Suez Crisis. As a UN soldier, I fell in love with the people and the history of Palestine. At that time, Egypt was responsible for the postal administration of the Gaza Strip, and I spent much of my time buying stamps, sending letters home, and asking my mother to open the covers neatly and keep them in a safe place.

In March 1965 I was given a period of leave from UNEF and went to explore Egypt. I stayed for a week at the Ambassador Hotel in Cairo, then three days in Alexandria, and a week in Luxor where I stayed in the Luxor Hotel (*See right*). I travelled by train in first class, feeling just like King Farouk. I roamed all over the Vally of Kings, took a felucca on the Nile, visited Abu Simbel and the Temple of Karnak.



For a collector like me, with a love for people and history, Egypt was the ultimate cave of treasure. I bought my first Zeheri catalogue and started to build my collection as no other Norwegian had before. In the 1970s I came across a cover from Mersah Matruh with a crown cancel and some seal on the reverse. I wondered what it could be, and started searching. When I found that it belonged to the British Forces, I said Go, go, go...



Forces mail from Mersa Matruh Meal time for UN troops in Sinai Winter Palace cds with Q for X

For the next 20 years I was able to seek out all the information I needed by joining the Circle in December 1999 and in the goldmine of books and presentations written by John E. O. Hobbs (ESC 159, died 2009).

In 1999, after a chance meeting at PhilexFrance I was fortunate enough to buy almost his entire collection and exhibited nationally and internationally as it grew in depth and extent: the first part on British Forces in Egypt 1932-1936, the second Egyptian Army Post stamps 1936-1941. Working for years on this collection mean that my love for Egypt and its history will never end. I hope whoever bought it years later really enjoyed it.

From 1981 to 2002 I lived in the United Arab Emirates, working for Jotun, a Norwegian paint company with factories in many Middle East countries. I collect British Administrations in Oman, and all of the Arabian Gulf countries. Today I still collect Egypt, including French Port Said and Alexandria, together with Palestine from 1918 until today.

To all our members, I love to read your articles and comments, and I send special thanks to Mr Greg Todd (ESC 585) for all the help he gave me at the beginning of this great adventure.



Back your colleagues: MacArthur date extended

Why is it that members seem so reluctant to praise their colleagues? It may have slipped your mind, but voting for the MacArthur Award for the best article in the *Quarterly Circular* is a crucial element in supporting our writers and thus the Circle. Voting for 2005 has again been painfully slow – doesn't anyone care enough? – so the closing date has been put back to June 1, when the winner will be announced. Whether in digital or paper form, the QC depends entirely on members sending in their own research and interests. All it takes to vote are a moment's thought and a quick email to the Secretary. Here are some you might choose:

QC 292 – March: Ramez Atiya – *Proofs and Dies of the Second Issue*; Michael Knaubert – *A postcard's place in the hunt for Emin Bey*; Pierre Louis Grech – *Postmarks of the French POs in Egypt 1837-1931*

QC 293 – June: Hon Secretary - *Countdown to the Study Circle's transition*; Scott Van Horn – *The 1953 Queen Nefertiti issue*; Ramez Atiya – *1872 20 para lithographs*; Ronny Van Pellecom / Alain Stragier – *The Fayoum Light Railways Company*

QC 294 – September: Scott Van Horn – *Printing tests and experiments*; Ronny Van Pellecom / Alain Stragier – *Siwa*; Adam Hafez – *Mail from the wreck of the Atlantique 1918*.
Pierre Louis Grech – *Letter to Algeria – A puzzle for the ESC*

QC 295 - December: Hon Secretary – *Welcome to the new world*; Mike Murphy – *New stamps greet Egypt's Grand Museum*; Jos Strengtholt - *2468... Hoping the Djinni ensures safe delivery*; Ronny Van Pellecom / Alain Stragier – *The Seamen's Home, Alexandria*



Time to renew: reduced £15 subscription

ESC subscriptions are due – have been due for more than two months; January 1 is the due date – and this year the switch to digital has allowed us to reduce the annual fee. If you pay by cheque, BACS or standing order the amount due is only £15 or equivalent (\$22, €17).

Please use your membership number as a reference in all cases. If PayPal is your choice, please make a sterling payment - adding GBP to your account is an easy switch. And don't forget to add £1, \$2 or 1 euro if paying in this way (to egyptstudycircle@hotmail.com) to cover PayPal's fees.

If payment is not received by June 1, you stand a real risk of losing your member Status. If you would prefer to resign from the Circle, we very much regret your decision, but please be kind enough to let the Membership Secretary know.