



The Quarterly Circular of the Egypt Study Circle

June 2026
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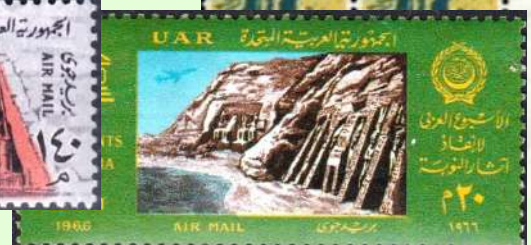
Members praise research supremos for MacArthur Award *Delaying the vote for the QC best-writing award during the transition period paid off fully - and with an unusual result. The Belgian writing team of Ronny Van Pellecom (ESC 618) and Alain Stragier (ESC 241) were the runaway winners not for one article during 2025 but for three. All of them - Fayoum Light Railway, Siwa and Seamen's Home - gained votes for the wonderful team combination of deep research and beautiful covers. Congratulations to the winners! It was impossible to divide them.*



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Egypt and Sudan

Thinking of buying? Nothing but the best, specialist material always available at the most competitive prices from these two fascinating sources. Retail for proofs, classic stamps and postal history of the world.

Thinking of selling? Quality stamps, proofs and rare postal history always required for stock or on a confidential private treaty basis.

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The second month - how is it going?

You are looking - on screen, phone or tablet - at the second edition of the new digital *Quarterly Circular* of the Egypt Study Circle. Making the change away from the well-established paper version of the QC and moving to much greater concentration on the [website](#) and the [Facebook page](#) has been an enormous challenge for several Committee members. It is still fresh and settling down - so how do you feel? How have we done?

Clearly it can be a hostage to fortune to ask the question. But members voted overwhelmingly for the transition; now it has happened we hope you will give us some idea of your reaction. Many will no doubt be a little less than happy to see the paper version go - but is the digital version and its back-up articles posted on the website a fitting substitute - even an advance? Does the new website work well for you? Is it faster, cleaner, easier to navigate? Are our Facebook novelties keeping up the challenge?

We would be delighted to hear from you, and hope to be able to publish a selection of reactions in the September issue. Remember that change is continuing and there is more to come. But the truly important element is that YOU are the Egypt Study Circle. What you deliver in the way of articles, notes, meeting reports, discoveries, photographs, research, observations... is what fills our pages. We appeal to all members to give us your opinion - and your potential article for the next edition.

-- **Mike Murphy**

STUDY CIRCLE COMMITTEE - 2026

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Committee	Jon Aitchison, Hertfordshire UK	jonaitchison.uk@outlook.com

Life members: Stephen Bunce - Pierre Louis Grech - G Paul Green - Mike Murphy - Trenton Ruebush
- Lucien Toutounji - Vahe Varjabedian - Antoine Winter

For up to date Meetings Schedule, please see the [website](#)

Annual General Meeting report for 2025

Annual Meeting, 7 March 2026, Union Jack Club, Waterloo, London

There was a promising attendance of eight at the meeting, which was designed to coincide directly with the launch of the new website and the digital QC. The reaction was unanimously positive, and happily echoed by a long list of apologies for absence from 19 members who regretted that they could not attend but sent messages of goodwill and enthusiasm for the new arrangements.

Those attending: Daid Ogden (Chairman), Mike Murphy (Secretary / Editor), Neil Hitchens (Webmaster / Librarian), Sami Sadek (Treasurer / Auctioneer), Jon Aitchison (Committee), John Clarke, Atef Sarian, David Sutton, Maya Campbell (guest).

Attending his first meeting for a year, the Secretary expressed profound gratitude to David Ogden for having held the Circle together during his absence, and presented him with a first edition of TE Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* given to the Circle by Mrs Pat Sears from the library of our former President, John Sears.

Chairman: David Ogden welcomed those present and congratulated Jon Aitchison on his invitation to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists, stamp-collecting's highest accolade. He also congratulated Neil Hitchens and Mike Murphy for setting aside demanding domestic and health issues and turning their strenuous labours to ensuring that the transition to a digital society took place largely as planned.

Election of Officers: The meeting was delighted to confirm the addition of Dr Ahmed Abouesh of California (ESC 761) to the Committee as Membership Secretary and thanked him enormously for volunteering to act in any role that might be suggested. He will find dealing with two categories of member easier than the ten necessitated pre-transition, and will undoubtedly breathe new life into the experience of newcomers to the Circle.

Minutes of the last AGM: (10 May 2025, QC 293, pages 217-222) and matters arising were approved.

Webmaster: Neil Hitchens reported on a year's hard work and lamented the sad lack of support he had encountered during that period. As a result, the new website was virtually completely his own work, with suggestions bouncing back and forth with only one other committee member. The result, however, is astonishingly efficient, fast, intuitive, easy on the eye, with excellent Search and capable of being updated within seconds. For the moment, the password is a sticking point, but that means only that all site pages are temporarily open rather than in some cases restricted to full members. All changes will be advised.

Librarian: Neil reported that there were plans to rehouse the massive Circle Library in his home, and as soon as that is complete members will be encouraged to borrow books much more regularly. Plans to deal with postage problems, in the UK at least, are under active consideration.

Secretary: Mike Murphy reported a very busy year, which he is confident can be relieved by the welcome addition of Ahmed Abouesh, and appealed to members anywhere in the world - now we are digital it is so much easier to communicate - to join the conversation. He confirmed, however, his notice to the meeting of two years ago that ill health will not allow him to continue at the same level. He will step down either as Secretary or Editor at the next AGM; and in the meantime will work only two days a week on Circle affairs. To do more would be to risk serious injury to health.

A couple of areas of bureaucracy need to be updated to confirm the status quo – the application form should no longer require two Circle "sponsors"; and the Circle Rules will need to be amended to take account of a less time-consuming procedure for accepting membership applications. Both of these are in hand, with the meeting agreeing (proposed Mike Murphy, seconded Sami Sadek) that Secretary and Membership Secretary (rather than full Committee), should confirm a new member once the subscription

was paid. Overall during the year we lost eight members and gained ten; we now stand at 169. Sadly, we decided it was time to end the connection with Charles Hass, our excellent and knowledgeable friend whose subscription we have maintained ever since he disappeared without word some 8-10 years ago.

QC. Now no longer printed on paper but digital, a seemingly popular decision, with grateful thanks for the design capabilities of Jos Strengtholt; we hope to see more of his layouts. The connection and transfer of material between magazine and website is still being worked on, but we are confident that it will please all members once settled. The meeting expressed its profound gratitude to Michael Ryan (ESC 722) and Ali Abdelmehgeid (ESAC 746) for volunteering to take on the thankless task of QC delivery over the past few paper issues. We owe both an enormous debt of gratitude in terms of both efficiency and money. Meanwhile, the perennial call - please **please** PLEASE write something interesting and entertaining!

MacArthur Award: Voting was again desultory, so much so that the Secretary has extended the voting date to June 1 in the hope of new ballots. What should we do to encourage members to support their writing colleagues: add a cash incentive to the award winner? Would that encourage votes? No? Then what will?

Meetings: David Ogden spoke of the difficulties of finding speakers and appealed to any member with adequate technological experience to come forward and help us with zoom meetings. It is an area which could become popular if only members were not so shy about presenting their material. He mentioned the major world exhibition in Boston, USA, in May at which Jon Aitchison will sign his RDP invitation. Members from UK seem unwilling or unable to make the trip -we have had wonderful well-filled rooms at the past two ten-year events in 2006 and 2016 – and there has been interest from members around the world. But at present we are still waiting to confirm a venue for our meeting at the event.

Treasurer: Sami Sadek made clear from the accounts so impeccably produced (*see below*) by Andy Gould – to whom very many thanks! – that the Circle's financial fortunes are closely tied to those of the auction... and holding two auctions a year is very much of a burden. Auction 70 in 2025 realised a commission for the Circle of £1,734, but accounts for a second auction often run on past the end of our financial year, causing further complications. Again, this is a period of settling down. Reducing the subscription fee from £20 to £15 will have a knock-on effect, and so - in the opposite direction - will cutting QC printing and postage costs. Income for the year 2025 was £2,955, mainly from subscriptions, with expenditure at £4,297, mainly costs involved with the QC, which have now ceased. They left an overall deficit of £1,342 however, which we are confident will balance out in a year of two auction and no QCs. The Circle remains financially sound, with net reserves of £28,462 in the bank.

Philatelic Society of Egypt HQ in Cairo. There has been no further news of the PSE's seeking our support with a cash donation to part-fund their suggested move to a new headquarters, and the meeting agreed that no decision could be considered until we had a document from Cairo setting out all the detail and pointing up any potential legal hurdles.

There was no other business, and the date and venue for the 2027 annual meeting will be decided later.

Seven honoured with ESC Life Membership

Traditionally those who have served long and well are honoured with life membership of the Circle on retirement... Well, we have no retirees at the moment, but the meeting greeted with acclaim the Committee's suggestion that **Peter Grech** (ESC 266, UK), **Paul Green** (ESC 128, UK), **Trent Ruebush** (ESC 179, USA), **Lucien Toutounji** (ESC 264, Egypt/France), **Antoine Winter** (ESC 149, France) and **Vahe Varjabedian** (ESC 390, Egypt) should be so recognised for their long and invaluable service. During the discussion came a voice from the floor suggesting that **Mike Murphy** (ESC 240, UK) might be added to the list. He is honoured to accept.

EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT (GENERAL ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

	2025	2024
INCOME		
Subscriptions	£2,571.72	£2,446.49
Auction account ¹	£171.52	£4,468.80
Donations	£20.00	£87.96
Advertisements	£192.02	£0.00
	£2,955.26	£7,003.25
EXPENDITURE		
Meeting room hire	£0.00	£701.35
Cost of Quarterly Circular	£2,537.96	£2,815.02
Website costs	£151.66	£0.00
Officers' Expenses ²	£1,390.10	£458.73
Insurance	£125.31	£126.55
ABPS subscription	£92.00	£77.35
	£4,297.03	£4,179.00
Surplus for the year	-£1,341.77	£2,824.25
Surplus as at 1 January	£29,804.13	£26,979.88
Surplus at 31 December	£28,462.36	£29,804.13

BALANCE SHEET (GENERAL ACCOUNT) AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

	2025	2024
ASSETS		
Stamp collection	£500.00	£500.00
Circle Library & records	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
Cash in PayPal	£2,749.22	£3,845.59
Cash at bank on current account	£23,867.10	£24,317.51
	£29,116.32	£30,663.10
LIABILITIES		
Members subscriptions in advance	£653.96	£858.97
	£653.96	£858.97
Representing		
Accumulated surplus	£28,462.36	£29,804.13

I have prepared the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet from the records and explanations provided to me and confirm that they are in accordance therewith.

Note¹: The Auction Account income is reduced for 2025 due to settlement of cash held over from sale 69 in 2024.

Note²: The Officers' Expenses include flowers for Pat Sears and Egyphila 2025 expenses.

(signed) A W Gould FRPSL, 20 February 2026
Accounts Examiner

Membership Matters

By **Mike Murphy** (ESC 240)

Mike Bramwell, ESC 448: An Appreciation: The Circle is truly saddened to have to record the death on April 20, just a few days before his 88th birthday, of Michael Clifford Bramwell, our Circle member 448. He had been an active member since June 1994.

A virtual ever-present at our meetings despite his ill-health, Mike wore his maroon Circle tie with pride and was always to the fore in asking pointed and incisive questions - from safety at the back of the room - of the speaker of the day. Invariably his observations led to a change of direction in the display's parameters.

His collecting interests ranged widely, concentrating on postal paper and ephemera as much as "proper" philately, and he was delighted to be able to present markedly unusual material... a WWI passport belonging to a staff member of the Cairo consulate, for instance, or Instructional markings, TPO markings, duty labels on flown mails to the USA, a cover from Accra to Egypt signed by Kingsford-Smith.



Born in Darlington in 1938, he served his National Service in Wales and Gibraltar, followed by university in Glasgow. But Egypt always held a fascination for him, and he joined the Circle before retirement at 65, somehow finding the time later to complete a music degree at Goldsmiths. His career was academic, a senior lecturer in mathematics who kept track as Woolwich Polytechnic metamorphosed into the University of Greenwich, where he spent virtually all his working life.

For several years he was librarian of the National Philatelic Society, a connection from which the Circle benefited, and served for a long period as a crucial member of our auction team as despatcher of lots won. But he was always an enthusiastic recycler, and several members expressed surprise at receiving costly material through the post in what were patently re-used envelopes.

Mike Bramwell was always enthusiastic, always ready to consider - and to challenge if necessary - a point of philatelic fact. And acted always with patience and good humour. We have lost a good friend. We shall miss him greatly.

Paul Green (ESC 128, right), our longest serving member, was not well enough to receive the Association of British Philatelic Societies' award of merit in 2025 but has now been presented with the certificate by Len Stanway, of the Essex Philatelic Societies. Paul has served Essex Philately with distinction since at least 1964.



David Brigden (ESC 508, left): It's been a busy start to the year for David, the new President of Bolton PS, who has given displays on the Egyptian tobacco industry in the early 1900s, with colourful advertising ephemera, postcards and tax stamps, both to Bolton and to Lostock PS, where he is Treasurer.

Welcome to our new Members:

- ESC 779 Anthony Hendzel**, 67 Grenville Way, Broadwater, Stevenage, Herts SG2 8XZ
Special interest: Japan primary, Egypt secondary
- ESC 780 Andrew Briscoe**, PO Box 402492, Gaborone, Botswana
Special interest: Postal history, World War I
- ESC 781 Emile Habib**, 169 Silver Rose Circle, Markham, Ontario, Canada L6C 1W6
Special interest: Philately of the Royal period

Resigned: ESC 638 Khaled Moustafa ESC 713 Ahmad Nabil

Congratulations to our 1,000-member Facebook page

The Circle is delighted to announce that membership of its lively Facebook page - ESC members and non-members alike - passed the 1,000 members mark last month, an amazing feat for a niche specialist society that started as a brave step into the unknown only in 2014. The brainchild of Hani Sharestan (ESC 595), who continues as its admin co-ordinator, and the late Edmund Hall, it enjoys fascinating daily updates of new discoveries, announcements and queries from members around the world. You can find it [here](#); if you are a Facebook member wishing to move to full ESC membership the application form is [here](#)

Book your place now for Egyphila 2026 in Cairo!

Hot on the heels of the massive Boston 2026 Expo, Study Circle members are gearing up for another fascinating international. This is the Egyphila 2026 exhibition in Cairo: a **message from Jon Aitchison** (ESC 611), the UK Commissioner, explains details for UK members.

The exhibition takes place from September 17-19 at the Egypt Digital Creativity Centre in Giza, a wonderfully refurbished former annex to Giza Palace and close to Cairo University. It has FEPA patronage and can accept exhibits for all FIP classes. For those members who cannot attend, Jon will transport all UK exhibits to and from the exhibition, and will bring back medals, certificates and special prizes.

Single frame entries are \$50, with 5 or 8 frame entries at only US\$40 per frame. Members of the Philatelic Society of Egypt (Egyptian Philatelic Society) get a 50% discount, so single frames will be US\$25 and multiple frames US\$20, a real bargain! These discounts do not apply to membership of the UK-based Egypt Study Circle, unless they are also in the PSE.



As well as the exhibition frame fees, there is a UK handling and transportation charge of £15 per frame. This additional charge is towards the £260 UK Customs fees and excess baggage. It does not contribute towards the Commissioner's flights, hotel or other expenses.

For planning purposes it will be a great help if you could indicate as soon as possible whether you are likely to enter and how many frames you think you will want. It will not commit you at this stage and is purely for planning. Entries can be on any subject or of any country; they do not have to be Egypt exhibits.

Hany Salam, President of the Philatelic Society of Egypt, adds: We are delighted to invite our ESC colleagues to take part in Egyphila 2026, officially recognized by the Federation of European Philatelic Associations (FEPA). The exhibition is held under the patronage of the Egyptian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology and the Egyptian Postal Authority.

It brings together a select group of federations, collectors and enthusiasts from Britain, Greece, Cyprus, Croatia and several Arab countries. We are also honoured to host Mr Bill Hedley, President of FEPA, and judging will be carried out by an international jury team. This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase rare collections, exchange expertise, and highlight the historical and cultural value of postage stamps.

Dr Mohamed Omar, General Commissioner, will be happy to share details of customs, accommodation, and logistics. He will ensure everything runs smoothly for all exhibitors. Please reach out if you have questions.

UK members contact Jon Aitchison at jonaitchison.uk@outlook.com; non-UK members who wish to exhibit contact Dr Mohamed Omar at m.omar1977@yahoo.com; ESC members wishing to join the PSE contact Dr Ali Abdelmegeid at abdelmegeid2004@yahoo.com.

EGYPHILA 2026 with FEPA Recognition

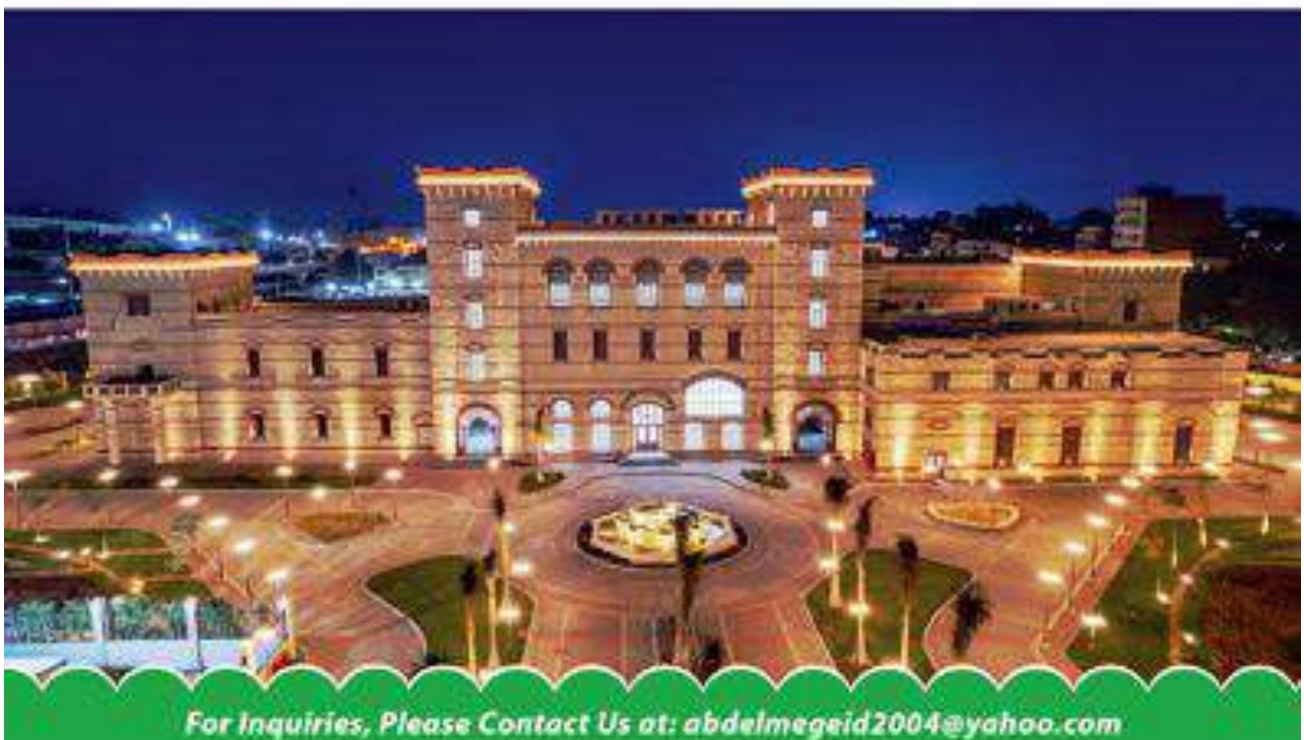
Message from **Hany Salam RDP**, President of The Philatelic Society of Egypt:
We are delighted to announce EGYPHILA 2026, held under FEPA recognition.



The exhibition will take place in Cairo from **17 to 19 September 2026**
at the Digital Egypt Innovation Center "Creativa" - Giza .

Today EGYPHILA is the largest annual multidisciplinary regional gathering
of collectors in Egypt.

This year's exhibition brings together more than 300 frames of philatelic works.



For Inquiries, Please Contact Us at: abdelmegeid2004@yahoo.com

Story of a Stamp: Abu Simbel - When geography moved a monument

David Ogden (ESC 460)



Abu Simbel temple in all its sandstone glory, on stamps of 1914, 1972 and 2025

Among Egypt's many stamps showing monuments, those with Abu Simbel are more than just attractive views of ancient stonework. They tell a story in which archaeology, geography, and modern engineering all play starring roles.

The Great Temple of Ramesses II was carved into a Nubian cliff in the 13th century BC, far from Egypt's traditional heartland. Today the site lies on the western bank of Lake Nasser, some 230 km south-west of Aswan. Its location was no accident. This was frontier country, close to the second cataract of the Nile, where temples served as bold political statements as much as religious ones.

The four colossal seated statues of Ramesses II dominate the 20m temple façade and remain instantly recognisable. Smaller figures of his queen Nefertari and their children stand at his feet, while carved reliefs inside the temple celebrate the pharaoh's military prowess, especially his much-boasted victory at the Battle of Kadesh.

Anyone sailing up-river would have been left in no doubt about who controlled this stretch of the Nile. Geography mattered: Abu Simbel was designed to be seen from the river, Egypt's main artery of power and movement.



The façade drawn by David Roberts in 1839; and preserved for ever by being cut into pieces in the 1960s



By the mid-20th century, however, the very geography that once gave the temples their authority threatened to erase them. The Nile was no longer just a sacred river; it had become an engineering system. The creation of Lake Nasser meant Abu Simbel would disappear beneath the unless something extraordinary was done. In 1968, the entire complex was dismantled, cut into ten-ton blocks, and rebuilt on higher ground as part of the International Campaign (*followed on next page...*)

A Note from our new Membership Secretary

Ahmed Abouesh (ahmed@abouesh.com)

Membership & Communications Update: The Circle has begun the gradual rollout of a new membership database designed to modernize and improve administration and member communications.

The new system will help to maintain membership records, streamlining renewals and improving electronic communication through email updates, announcements, polls, and other interactive features to encourage member participation and engagement.

As part of this effort, the Circle is exploring new ways to connect members electronically and foster a more active and collaborative Society experience.

As this transition is carried out carefully and manually, members may be asked to confirm or update their contact information. We seek your patience during this process as we work to ensure that records are accurate and properly integrated into the new system.

We aim to create a more efficient, connected, and engaging experience for members while preserving the Circle's scholarly and sharing spirit.

(.... From previous page)

to Save the Monuments of Nubia, overseen by the Polish archaeologist Kazimierz Michałowski. An artificial, domed hill was built to recreate the original setting — a remarkable feat in its own right.

Several Egyptian stamps have featured Abu Simbel, beginning with the 1914 issue (SG 81). My favourite is the 1972 airmail 85m stamp (SG 1171), which shows the relocated temple beside Lake Nasser. The setting, and the rich mix of brown, yellow ochre and greenish-blue tones, make it especially appealing.



Nations as far distant as Korea and Ghana issued charity stamps in aid of the international appeal to save the temples

Many other countries around the world supported Unesco's appeal by issuing stamps featuring Abu Simbel, highlighting the need to save the Nubian temples.

Yet the rising waters did not threaten only monuments. Dozens of Nubian villages were also submerged. Between the late 1950s and early 1960s, tens of

thousands of Nubians were relocated, many of them moved north to planned settlements such as Kom Ombo. Modern though these villages were, they were often ill-suited to traditional river-based ways of life. While Abu Simbel's temples were carefully saved and reborn, Nubian communities experienced a quieter, far less celebrated displacement.

French mails to Egypt during Posta Europea

Alain Stragier (ESC 241)

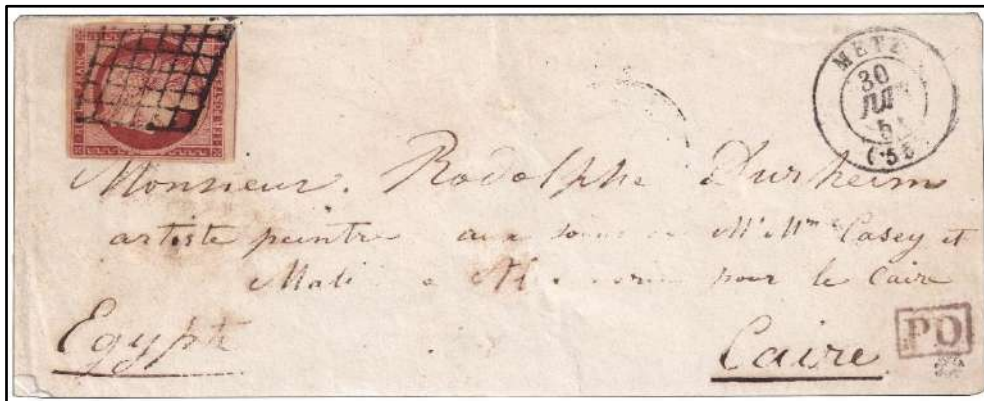
The covers illustrated belong to the Alain Stragier collection "Postal relations France-Egypt before UPU"

In search of information about letters sent from France via Alexandria and the Posta Europea to the interior of Egypt, I consulted first Pierre Louis Grech's two remarkable books, *The French Post Offices in Egypt*. In his chapter on the Posta Europea he mentions the articles by Jean Boulad d'Humières (QC 109-113, March/Sept. 1979), but no mention or illustration of incoming letters franked in France is found in these articles.

Pierre Grech also mentions Luca Daniele Biolato's book (*La Posta Europea nel contesto della storia postale dell'egitto nel sec. XIX (1820-1865)*, 1050 pages, published by Foligno in 1996), which he describes as "the standard work" on the Posta Europea.

A careful reading of this masterpiece revealed details of three envelopes from France to Egypt, combined with arrival stamps from Posta Europea, but none of them belongs to Biolato himself. The illustrations are from the Khouzam (pages 747 and 752) and Fikry (page 749) collections.

This introduction confirms, if necessary, the real scarcity of such covers. I am pleased to show you three of them in this article.



Cover from METZ 30 JUL 51, with a 1 Franc (Cérès) to Cairo via LYON 2 AUG 51, MARSEILLE 4 AUG 51 and the French Post Office ALEXANDRIE 11 AUG 51, transferred to the Posta Europea in Alexandria DIREZIONE DELLA POSTA EUROPEA / 11 AUG. / ALESSANDRIA D'EGITTO (Type 4) for onward transport to Cairo.

Postage 1 Franc for a single letter (Grech page 81). Carried by the ship *Alexandre* of the Société des Messageries Nationales, departing from Marseille on 4 August 1851 (Raymond Salles, *Paquebots de la Méditerranée*, page 182).



Cover from Marseille 1857, franked with Empire stamps 80c + 3x 20c + 10c, total of 1F50. Arrival Posta Europea (type 4).

Postage of 1F50 for a triple weight cover (Grech, postal rates, addendum).

Carried "*par Vapeur anglais*" on the ship *Valetta* of the P&O line, departing Marseille on 28 November 1857 (Kirk, *P&O lines to the Far East*, page 401).



Cover from Sedan 1865 franked with Empire stamps 40c + 10c, via GIVET à PARIS and PARIS à LYON, Marseille and the French Post Office Alexandria and there transferred to the POSTA EUROPEA (type 6).

Postage of 50c for a single letter (Grech page 81).

Carried by the ship *Phase* of the Compagnie des Messageries Impériales, departing Marseille 8 April 1865 (Raymond Salles, *Paquebots de la Méditerranée*, page 189)

This letter is remarkable not only because there are very few examples of postal items sent from abroad to Egypt and then forwarded inland by the Posta Europea upon arrival in Alexandria but it bears a Posta Europea cancel of 16 April 1865 while the circular handstamp inscribed POSTE VICE-REALI EGIZIANE came into use on April 15 (P.A.S. Smith, *Egypt – Stamps and Postal History*, page 16).



Feltus gives April 18 as the date of first use of the new Poste Vice-Reali handstamp in Alexandria. (Peter R. Feltus, *Egyptian Postal Markings of 1865 through 1879*, page 24). This combination was therefore possible only for a few days (April 15, 16 and 17).

To conclude, we illustrate another cover which travelled after the closure of the Posta Europea and the takeover by the Egyptian postal administration.



Cover from LYON LES TERREAUX 27 MAI 1865, franked with Empire 80c + 20c, via MARSEILLE à LYON and via the French post office ALEXANDRIE to the Egyptian post office POSTE VICE-REALI EGIZIANE ALESSANDRIA (in black) and finally to destination [POSTE VICE-REALI EGIZIANE CAIRO](#) (in blue).

Postage of 1F for a double weight cover (Grech page 81).

Carried by the ship *Saïd* of the Compagnie des Messageries Impériales, departing Marseille on 29 May 1865 (Raymond Salles, *Paquebots de la Méditerranée*, page 180).

- The author would welcome any new contribution or comment on this subject.

15th International Cotton Congress, Jan 25-Feb 5, 1927**Jos Strengtholt (ESC 606)**

Representatives of the worldwide cotton industry gathered in Cairo (January 25-31) and Alexandria (February 1-5) for the 15th congress of the International Federation of Master Cotton Spinners' and Manufacturers Associations. This was a recognition of the very high importance of Egypt in the global cotton industry.



On January 25, the conference was opened by Egypt's Minister of Agriculture and President of the Congress Organising Committee, Mohammed Fathallah Barakat Pacha. *(Left, photograph reproduced from the Official Report published after the Congress.)*

On the same day, a set of postage stamps was issued both at the congress site and in post offices throughout Egypt. Special first-day cancellations and cancellations for each day of the congress were available at the congress venues in Cairo and Alexandria, with a distinct cancellation for each city. Each city also had a special registration cachet.

The set of three was printed in two panes of 50 each by offset lithography by the governmental Survey Department, Cairo. Their usage was valid from 25 January to 24 April 1927. The stamps were watermarked with a crown and the Arabic letter F for King Fouad. All sheets bore the control number A/26.



Quantity printed:
 5 millièmes: 302,000
 10 millièmes: 202,000
 15 millièmes: 202,000

In 1926, a Cotton Museum had been opened to the public in Dokki, Cairo, as yet another testimony to the importance of the cotton industry in Egypt. Remarkably, the museum remains open a century later, having successfully preserved much of the atmosphere of its early years.



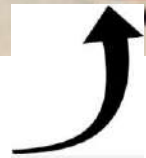
"It was the unanimous opinion of the delegates that no other country possessed anything like as complete a cotton museum..." *(Official Report of the International Cotton Congress, Egypt, 1927, p.53)*

Photo of the Cotton Museum from the Official Report



The control number A/26 indicates that the plates for each of the sheets were completed in 1926.

Notice the corner guidelines in the lower-left corner of each of the stamps. Identical right-angle guidelines appear in all four corners of the sheet.

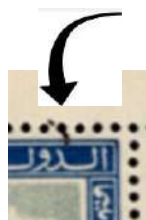


In printing the vignette of the green cotton stem in the centre of the stamp, the same plate could be used for all the three denominations. For the brown, red and blue frames other plates were used, in each case including the control number A/26.

Shown at right are samples from the upper-right corners of the sheets, each bearing the standard guidelines.

The black guidelines are difficult to make out on the dark blue 15-millime value, especially if the printer had not done his work with utmost precision.

In the case of this particular 15 millièmes stamp (*right*), notice the black ink above the *الدولة*.



The congress was held under the patronage of King Fouad I (*right, reproduced from the Official Report published after the Congress*), who also attended the opening of the conference at the Khedivial Opera House.

As a serious stamp collector, King Fouad was able to order the printers to provide sheets of all new commemorative issues, including the cotton-stamp issue. His son Farouk inherited the collection when Fouad I passed away in 1936.

After the Revolution of 26 July 1952 the stamp collection of King Farouk was sold by auction at Farouk's former Koubbeh Palace in Cairo from February 12-15 1954 by H. R. Harmer of London.

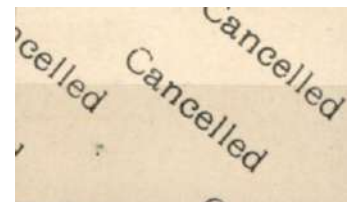
The collection contained two unique versions of each commemorative stamp, printed especially for the King, as seen below. The existence of these stamps was unknown until the overthrow of Farouk.

Since 1926 Fouad received his private version of each stamp that was issued, and this habit was continued under Farouk. The cotton stamps of 1927 exemplify the special stamps the kings received of every new commemorative issue.



Imperforate stamps in the kings' collection were printed on stout paper with no gum or watermark. On the reverse of each stamp, the word "Cancelled" was printed diagonally in English. Only one sheet of 50 stamps was produced.

Of the obliquely perforated stamps, gummed and with watermark, two panes of 50 (hence, a total of 100 stamps) were produced for the royal collection.



There was great interest in the auction of the stamps of the royal collections in the Koubbeh Palace in 1954. This photo is a still taken from the British Pathé cinema film of the auction, titled: Farouk's Hoard - Going, Going...



The surprise appearance of print proofs for this set of cotton stamps in 2022 (!) - along with many other sheets of proofs from 1926 to 1952 - confirms that the plates for the sheets were produced in 1926 and so bear plate number A/26.

The Arabic text in the lower right margin of the final proof of the 5 millièmes stamp reads 150/26. The number 150 is probably linked to the numbering of print runs of stamps printed in 1926.



The Arabic at lower right of the final proof of the 10 millièmes stamps reads 151/26.

On (Thursday) 30 December 1926 the OK was given for printing the sheets of the 10 millièmes stamp.



The Arabic in the lower right margin of the 15 millièmes proof is 152/26, presumably meaning that this proof was printed in 1926.

On (Sunday) 2 January 1927 approval was given for printing of the 15 millièmes stamps.



The handwritten approvals were given by Henry Charles Allen (H.C. Allen) after he had surveyed the proofs. He had served as Superintendent of the Printing Office for the Survey of Egypt, which was recognised by his appointment as a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE). Evidence for this was found in The Edinburgh Gazette, 27 August 1920, page 1939. At the time of his death (1938) he was living at 13 Bustan Street in downtown Cairo.

During the Congress, a commemorative coin was minted; this was probably given to some of the major participants or speakers.



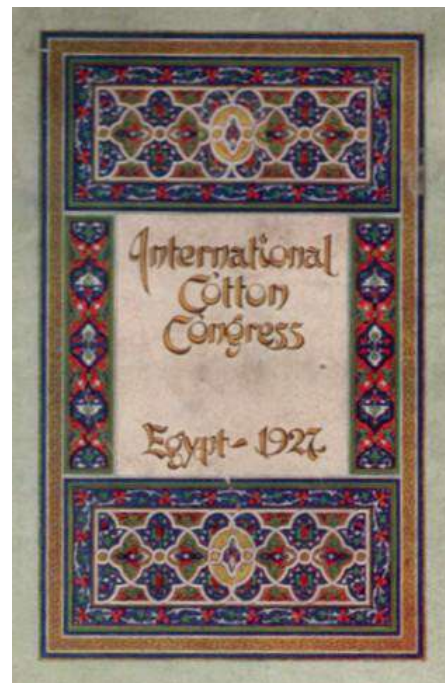
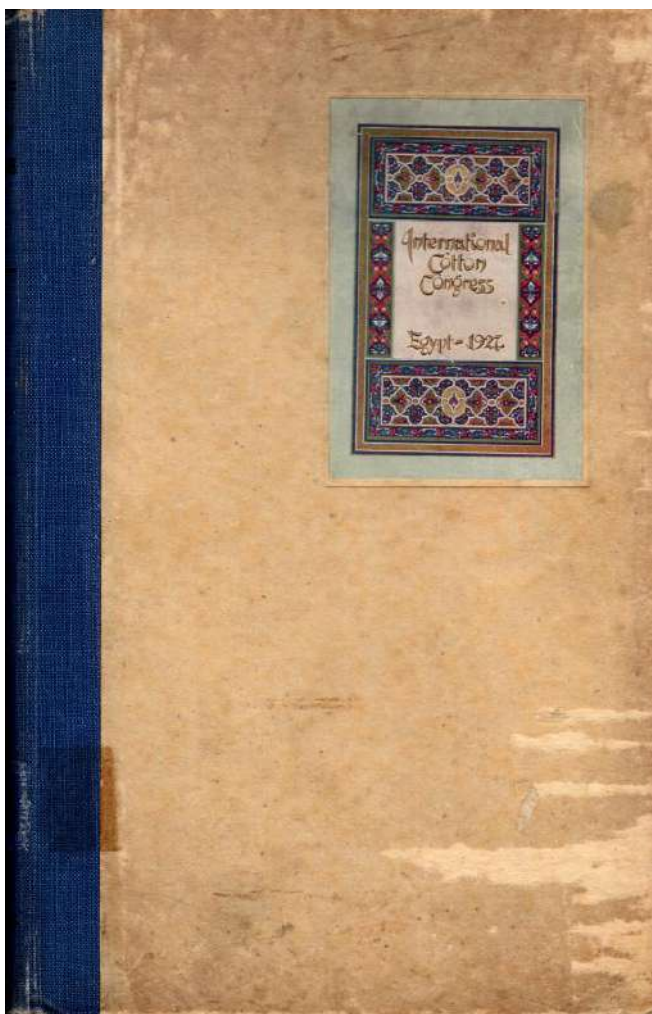
**MEDAILLE COMMEMORATIVE
DU CONGRES INTERNATIONAL
DU COTON
EGYPTE
1927**

The inscription on the reverse of the coin, translated from Arabic, reads:
King of Egypt, Fouad I



Participants in the Congress were provided with a badge to be worn during Congress days.

Image: British Museum piece 2009,4007.748



Official Report of the International Cotton Congress Held in Egypt, 1927.

This book contains the detailed programme, minutes of all speeches, photographs of cotton production, and advertising for businesses in the cotton industry.

Many participants in the International Cotton Congress used the opportunity to buy the newly issued stamps and mail them with a conference postmark to friends and family. Others just asked for the stamps they bought to be cancelled and never mailed the cover.

FDC: CDS Cairo 25 JA 27

Mr Weinstein in Cairo mailed this cover with 'Compliments' to an acquaintance in Cairo. One stamp of 5 millièmes would have been enough.



'Last Day Cover' CDS Cairo on 31 JA 27

This was the last day of Congress in Cairo before the whole company moved to Alexandria.

Addressed to Director Schier of
the Bremen Cotton Exchange



FDC: CDS Alexandria 1 FE 27

Addressed to The Egyptian Stamp Mart, a well-known stamp dealer. It is unlikely that this cover actually went into the mailbox.

All Congress cancellation in Cairo were in black ink. In Alexandria blue was used.



'Last Day Cover' CDS Alexandria 5 FE 27

This was the last Congress day in Alexandria.

Though addressed to Miss Bird in England, the cover shows no sign that it was actually sent by mail.



CDS Aswan 26 I 27, to Zurich, Switzerland

Properly franked: the Congress stamps are rare on cover when properly and not philatelically used.

On the reverse is the machine transit mark of Cairo, 27 JAN 27.



CDS Cairo R.D. 3 MR 27

Addressed to Signe Täckholm in Stockholm. Sender: Prof. G. Täckholm, University of Cairo.

Gunnar Täckholm was Professor of Botany at Cairo University (1925-1929). He died young, and his wife **Vivi Täckholm** (1898-1978), also a botanist, devoted her life to studying the flora of Egypt.



Prof. G. Täckholm
University
Cairo.

Another new Hotel CDS: MASAIF EL-LIDO MARSATROUH**Vahe Varjabedian (ESC 390)**

Postal markings used by Egypt's hotels - for long classified by the Circle as "proprietary" markings until it was recognised that to the Post Office they were no more than normal branch offices - have been a popular collecting area for well over 75 years. All the more astonishing that a new hotel postmark should come to light after all this time.



The unrecorded CDS of the MASAIF EL-LIDO / MARSATROUH (diameter 30mm) is faint, admittedly, but undoubted and is used as an arrival or transit mark on an incoming air mail Express cover from Yaoundé, Central Africa. Posted on August 19 1965, it was given an indistinct censor mark on arrival, and transit markings of A / CAIRO AIR PORT on the 20th and MARSATROUH / CASH at 5-6pm the same day.



Three days later, at 8.00AM, it received the unrecorded marking, which reads in English the Lido Summer Resort in Marsa Matrouh (300km west of Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast). Whether it was an arrival or a departure marking is not clear, because the cover was returned according to Arabic handwritten instructions either by the sender or a postal worker.



The cover was addressed to The Honourable (السيد الفاضل) Engineer Ghali Al-Sarki (المهندس غالي السركي) at the resort, using the more usual word - *funduq* - for a hotel. The red markings amount to "Please return" and the script reads:



"If the recipient is not found at the address, please send it to Sharikat Bakarisyah wal-Handasa, 14 Sharia Ittihad al-Din, Yalbaghat(?)".

Marsa Matrouh Lido resort (1958 postcard, left, of the veranda) was opened in 1932 by Ismail Sidki Pasha, Prime Minister of Egypt during the Fuad era, and ranked among the top hotels on the north coast for many years under the ownership of a Greek citizen named Lephtheri.

Its guests included aristocracy, diplomats, ministers and British military including General Bernard Montgomery during the Second World War. It was demolished in 1980.

French P.O. at Cairo: Earliest Reported Cover

Christopher C. Smith (ESC 702)

Pierre Louis Grech, doyen of the study of the French post offices in Egypt, noted in 2012 that the “earliest seen date” of a cover posted at the French Post Office in Cairo was 25 January 1866 (*Note 1*). Of course, he would readily acknowledge that, in the study of postal history, earliest known dates are often subject to revision as new discoveries are made.

The Opening of the Office

The French Post Office at Cairo opened on 1 January 1866 as a *Bureau de Distribution*. The post office was issued a French date-stamp with an outer ring of dots (often referred to as “pearled”) to indicate its status. The Cairo office also received an obliterator handstamp, consisting of a diamond of dots with the number 5119 in the centre (*Figure 1*).



***Datestamp of the
Cairo French P.O.***



***Obliterator of the
Cairo French P.O.***

Figure 1

The datestamp in *Figure 1* includes the date of despatch of the cover pictured in *Figure 2*. That date, 8 January 1866, is now the earliest reported date of a cover posted at the French Post Office in Cairo.



Figure 2. The earliest reported letter posted at the French P. O. at Cairo

An Overpaid Letter

From 1 January 1862, the rate for a letter of 10 grams or less between the French offices in Egypt and France was 50 centimes. On 1 January 1866, the rate was reduced to 40 centimes for letters not exceeding 10 grams (*Note 2*). At the time the letter in *Figure 2* was posted, either the staff of the French Post Office at Cairo had not been made aware of the rate reduction and applied 50 centimes postage to the letter, or the sender, unaware of the change, had come to the post office with the letter already franked with 10 and 40 centimes French perforated Empire stamps. In either case, after the recent rate reduction, the letter was overpaid by 10 centimes (*Figure 3*).



Figure 3. 40 centimes (the stamp at right) was sufficient postage. The stamp at left (10 centimes) was not necessary

The postal clerk cancelled the stamps with the 5119 obliterator, applied the Cairo “pearled” date-stamp of 8 January near by, and added the boxed “PD” auxiliary handstamp (*Figure 4*). In France and at French post offices abroad, the PD handstamp was to be applied at the point of origin to indicate that postage had been paid to the final destination (*Port payé jusqu'à Destination*).



Figure 4.
Payé à Destination
Paid to Destination

The Route

Having been posted at Cairo on 8 January, the letter travelled via train to Alexandria. The next day, it was processed at the French Post Office at Alexandria (*Figure 4*) and placed aboard the French Paquebot *Peluse* of the Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes (*Figure 5*). The *Peluse* had been launched in 1863 and operated on the Egypt line in conjunction with identical steamships, the *Moeris* and *Saïd*.



Figure 4. Alexandria transit datestamp



Figure 5. Paquebot Peluse.
Courtesy L'Encyclopedie des
Messageries Maritimes

The *Peluse* departed Alexandria on 9 January 1866 and followed the route illustrated in the map in *Figure 6*. The vessel made stops at Messina (12 January) and Naples (13 January), before arriving at Marseille on 15 January (*Note 3*).



Figure 6. Route of the letter on the steamship Peluse from Alexandria to Marseille and then overland by rail across France

The reverse of the letter (*Figure 7*) traces the route the letter travelled in France to reach its destination: After arriving at the port of Marseille, it was transferred to the train running the *Marseille a Lyon* travelling post office (16 January) toward Paris, where it arrived on 17 January. From the capital, on a westward train, the letter traveled to Lorient in Brittany. An 18 January receiver backstamp provides the date on which the letter arrived there, but an additional Lorient receiver indicates that it was not delivered until Friday, 19 January, 11 days in transit.

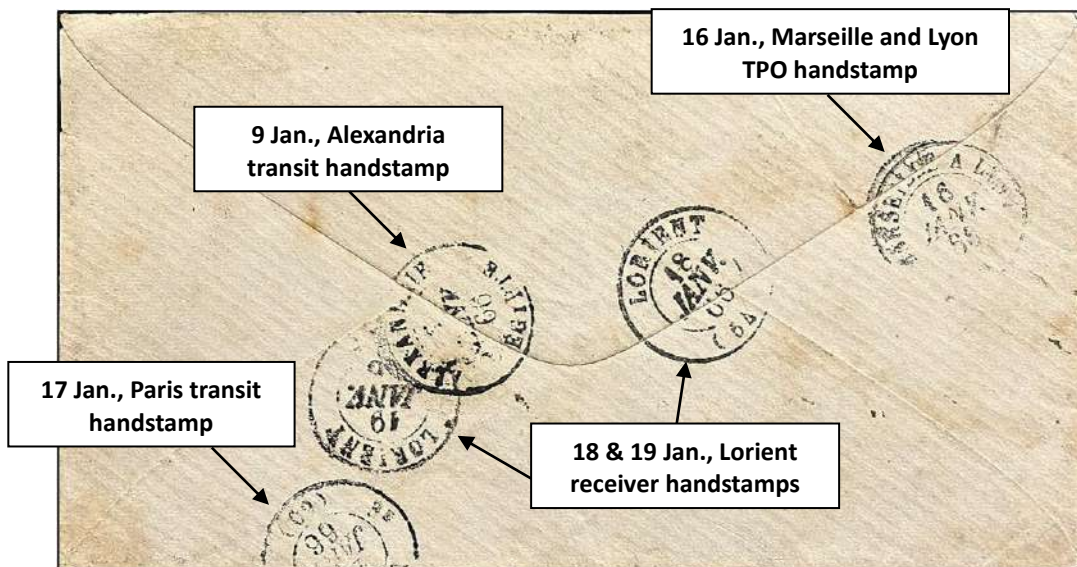
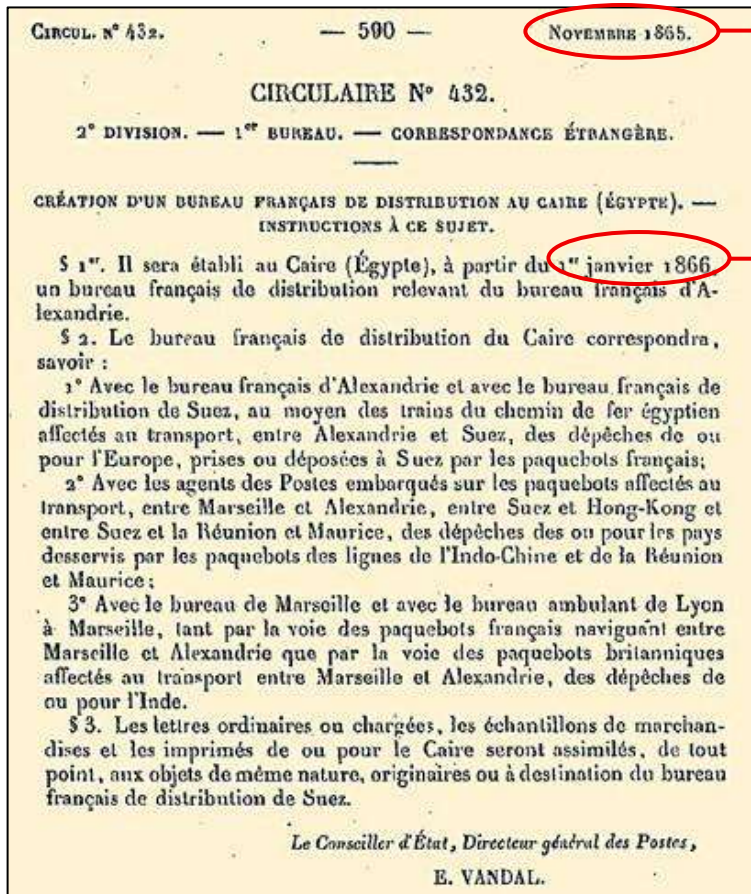


Figure 7. Reverse of the cover despatched from Cairo on 8 January

A Note and Reminder

Collectors of the French post offices in Egypt may recall that, in his magisterial work, Peter A. S. Smith stated that the French office at Cairo opened in 1865, an error (*Note 4*). Pierre Grech correctly notes that the date of opening was 1 January 1866 (*Note 5*). The *Bulletin Mensuel* of the French Postal Administration announcing the opening was published in November 1865, a date reference that no doubt accounts for the errant conclusion (*Figure 8*; *Note 6*).



Circular No. 432 was published in November 1865...

...announcing the opening of the French P.O. at Cairo on 1 January 1866

Figure 8. Bulletin Mensuel des Postes Number 123, Circular 432, announced the opening of the French Post Office at Cairo. Courtesy Digital Archives of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Collectors of the French post offices in Egypt are reminded to check their collections for dates of postmarks on their covers. Perhaps one carries an earliest known date of despatch.

NOTES

1. Pierre Louis Grech, *The French Post Offices in Egypt* (Self-published, 2012), Part 1, p. 114.
2. Grech, *The French Post Offices in Egypt*, p. 81.
3. Raymond Salles, *La Poste Maritime Française, Tome II, Les Paquebots de la Méditerranée de 1837 à 1939* (Limassol: James Bendon, 1992), p. 189.
4. Peter A. S. Smith, *Egypt: Stamps and Postal History, A Philatelic Treatise* (Limassol: James Bendon, 1999), p. 91.
5. Grech, *The French Post Offices in Egypt*, p. 114.
6. The *Bulletin Mensuel de l'Administration des Postes* of November 1865 can be accessed in the digital archives of the Bibliothèque nationale de France at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5512989z/f78.item> (accessed 8 March 2026).



The Eye of Horus - Beginners' Corner 8 - with David Ogden. It's difficult enough to learn the secrets of a new country's stamp designs, but when the language and even the figures are completely unfamiliar the task is even more troubling. Here are some clues about finding your way in Egypt

Numbers and Dates, a quick reference for English-speaking collectors

Egyptian numbers at a glance: Egyptian (and most Middle Eastern countries') stamps use a decimal (nought to nine) system and Eastern Arabic ("Arabic-Indic") numerals. These represent the same numbers as Western numerals. But remember that numbers are always read left-to-right, even though Arabic text reads right-to-left (see their opposite directions below).

Numerals chart

Western: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Egyptian: ٠ ١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥ ٦ ٧ ٨ ٩

Numbers 1 to 10 in Egyptian Stamps				
واحد wāhid 1	إنين itnèn 2	ثلاثة talāta 3	أربعة 'arbā'a 4	خمسة khamisa 5
ستة sitta 6	سبعة sab'a 7	ثمانية tamānya 8	تسعة tis'a 9	عشرة 'ashara 10

These delightful fantasy stamps are taken from Wiki Commons

Some numbers look similar (the equivalent of 1 and 9, for instance), but common pitfalls are ٥ = 5 (often mistaken for zero) and ٤ = 4 (often confused with ٢).

Reading Denominations on Stamps: Egyptian currency commonly found on stamps includes:

- Millièmes (m or mills; 10 millièmes equals one piastre)
- Piastres (*qirsh*, P or PT; 100 piastres equals one pound)
- Egyptian Pounds (*guinea*, £E, LE or Livre)

Illustrated examples



Example: Sphinx definitive

5 = ٥ مليمات milliemes

Found on early Sphinx and King Fuad definitives right up almost to modern times, uses the plural ending -at (milliem-at). Singular has no special ending so you may see millieme wahid مليم واحد (one millième) or just millième مليم



Example: King Farouk issue

10 = ١٠ مليمات 10 mills (millièmes)

Although intended for the use of British troops in Egypt, the value is expressed in millièmes

Dates on Egyptian stamps: Which calendar?

Egyptian stamps may use:

- **Hijri (Islamic)** calendar, based on Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina, and so its dates start from 622;
- **Gregorian calendar**, introduced under British influence to standardize timekeeping with the international calendar, most widely used today;
- **Both together.**

Hijri (Islamic) dates — most common pre-1950. These dates use the lunar calendar (12 months of 30 days in a year), are written in Arabic-Indic numerals, and almost always start 13xx on Egyptian stamps. Rule of thumb 13xx = Hijri, not AD

Gregorian dates (later issues) — more common from the 1940s, especially on international commemoratives and post-monarchy (Republican) issues.

Illustrated examples



Example: 1931 Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition



Example: Declaration of 1952 Revolution

١٩٥٢ = 1952 AD

1930-31 AD equates to ١٣٤٩ Hijri

Hijri years overlap two Gregorian years. Precise conversion is not usually necessary.

To summarise, do learn the ten numerals (0–9), recognise 13xx = Hijri and use catalogues for Gregorian equivalents. Don't panic about exact Hijri conversion, don't assume that dates on cancellations equal issue dates, and don't expect all stamps to show dates numerically.

Collector's Cheat Sheet! - if it starts with 13 or 14, it's Hijri. If it starts with 18 to 20, it's Gregorian. Numbers read left-to-right. Catalogues do the rest.

WANTED!

The transition to digital means the QC and the website have more space to display members' collections - more room for text, illustrations, covers, cards, discoveries, queries. Anything that is attractive, meaningful and connected to Egypt stamps and postal history. Don't be shy, we look forward to accommodating what interests you ... don't worry about formatting: we can design the pages to best suit your material (but if you want it to look your way, please contact the Editor for some basic pointers!) The message is: please send us articles to entertain and educate in the QC. If it interests you, it will interest your colleagues. No article too long, no article too short...

2468... The Djinni's safe delivery: A Follow-Up

Scott Van Horn (ESC 619)

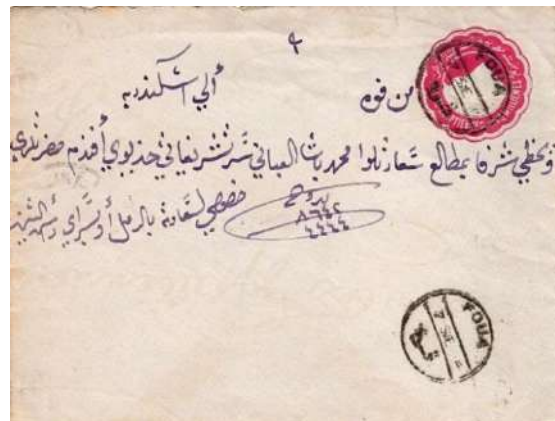
Jos Strengolt's article in QC 295 (pages 270-273), about the handwritten number 2468 on certain covers, prompted me to look again at my covers; I knew I had seen this annotation, but had failed to realize its significance. Jos, he prompted me by email to write a follow-up on a couple of my covers. The first two - both Posta Europea covers - push back his early date of use from 1875 to at least 1862.

**Cairo to Alexandria
with faint type IV
Posta Europea
handstamp (POSTA
EUROPEA CAIRO /
20 AGO 62)**



**Another Cairo to Alexandria
with type IV Posta Europea
handstamp (POSTA
EUROPEA CAIRO /
14 MAGG 63)**

**7 SE 94 cover from FOUA to
Alexandria. This example
displays an additional 4444
(٤٤٤٤) notation below the ١٦٤٢,
which is thought to represent
emphasis or intensification of
wishes for a safe delivery,
above and beyond the 2468**



I have been able to locate a short discussion, *The Talismanic Numbers*, by JM Wilson in *Random Notes* 5 (August 1947) of the Arabian Philatelic Association, which is reproduced in part below. It adds new information about other numbers, including 4444, which carry similar talismanic messages:

"In recent issues of *OPAL*, the journal of the Oriental Philatelic Association of London [now sadly defunct - SVH], the editor, Major E. C. W. Stagg, and Mr. H. Hibbert, a well-known collector, have written articles about the so-called talismanic numbers that appear on old covers. The most common is "8642" written in Arabic script. Mr. Hibbert lists also 2468, 4825, 6284, 4444 and 6666. This "8642" is found on many covers from 1850 to about 1930 from the Middle East."

Mr. Wilson goes on to state that the "4444" number is scarce, and "6666" is rarest of all.

Invitation to a local stamp society competition led to an unexpected victory and paved the way to a lifetime enthusiasm for Egypt sparked by a hidden bonus in a father's reward for academic success



Why I collect Egypt – Neil Hitchens (ESC 651) – Woking, Surrey

Like many of our members, my love for Egyptian philately happened almost by chance. Today it seems comical that Central London and The City - where my father worked - were once dotted with physical shops selling stamps from every corner of the globe. I was fortunate to enjoy the final years of this "Golden Period," which flourished from the turn of the 20th century before vanishing almost completely a decade later.



For me, the local "mecca" was the premises of Healey and Wise at St Paul's Churchyard. I was doubly lucky that the old General Post Office and the National Postal Museum were just up the road with current GB and presentation packs easily accessible - a moment in time soon to be erased from living memory.

The reward for passing my Common Entrance exam was a special visit to Healey and Wise, where I was allowed to spend £10 on "something new". My father had "helpfully" set aside eight album pages of mixed Ottoman Turkey and tucked at the back were two pages of Egypt: mint Farouk commemoratives. At just £1 a sheet, it was a bargain. That Christmas I also received the Gibbons Central Asia catalogue and a photostat of 30 pages of Egypt SG listings.



The summer holidays that year were hot and spent mostly outdoors. The defining moment came however when I received my City Library card and found a section on stamp collecting, with Gibbons catalogues from the 1950s and 60s, back issues of *Stamp Monthly*, and a collection of other stamp books marked by charm and eccentricity.

This grounding in the basics helped me understand the stamps of a single country. I learned how to mount stamps

properly - **never** use a hinge on a mint stamp - and grasped the importance of colour variations, perforations, centring and clear presentation. Through these stamps I discovered the history of Egypt from the Napoleonic era, seeing how major events were celebrated through commemoratives.

That spring the local stamp society held a single-sheet competition. A school staff member mentioned my interest to the local society, and I was invited to enter even though not a member. My enthusiasm had been noted, so I spent the weekend scouring my small collection for two sets that interested me.

I trotted off to the local stamp shop for guidance, bought a small packet of SG Simplex pages, and, in my best schoolboy handwriting, wrote up a presentation, combining SG listings with details from the 1972 Zeheri and *Stamp Monthly* articles. My display featured the 1946 Arab League Congress at Inshas (*left above*) and the 1947 25th International Exhibition of Fine Arts.

●We welcome all members' stories for this intriguing column

Next issue - September 2026

(published on about September 2-3)

The Editor would be very grateful to receive members' articles/discoveries/queries/notes on any topic, any length, any level from beginner to Large Gold - all are welcome, the only measure being that they are interesting, and they concern Egypt.

Those received early may be published on the website. Closing date for appearing in the digital QC of September will be August 31.

Please don't worry too much about formatting your article. As a guide, our pages are A4 with a 2mm margin all round, text is in Calibri 11pt and pictures should be sent as jpgs. But all formatting can be converted if necessary.

We look forward to learning about aspects of your collection - and sharing them with fellow members the world over. - (editor@egyptstudycircle.org.uk)