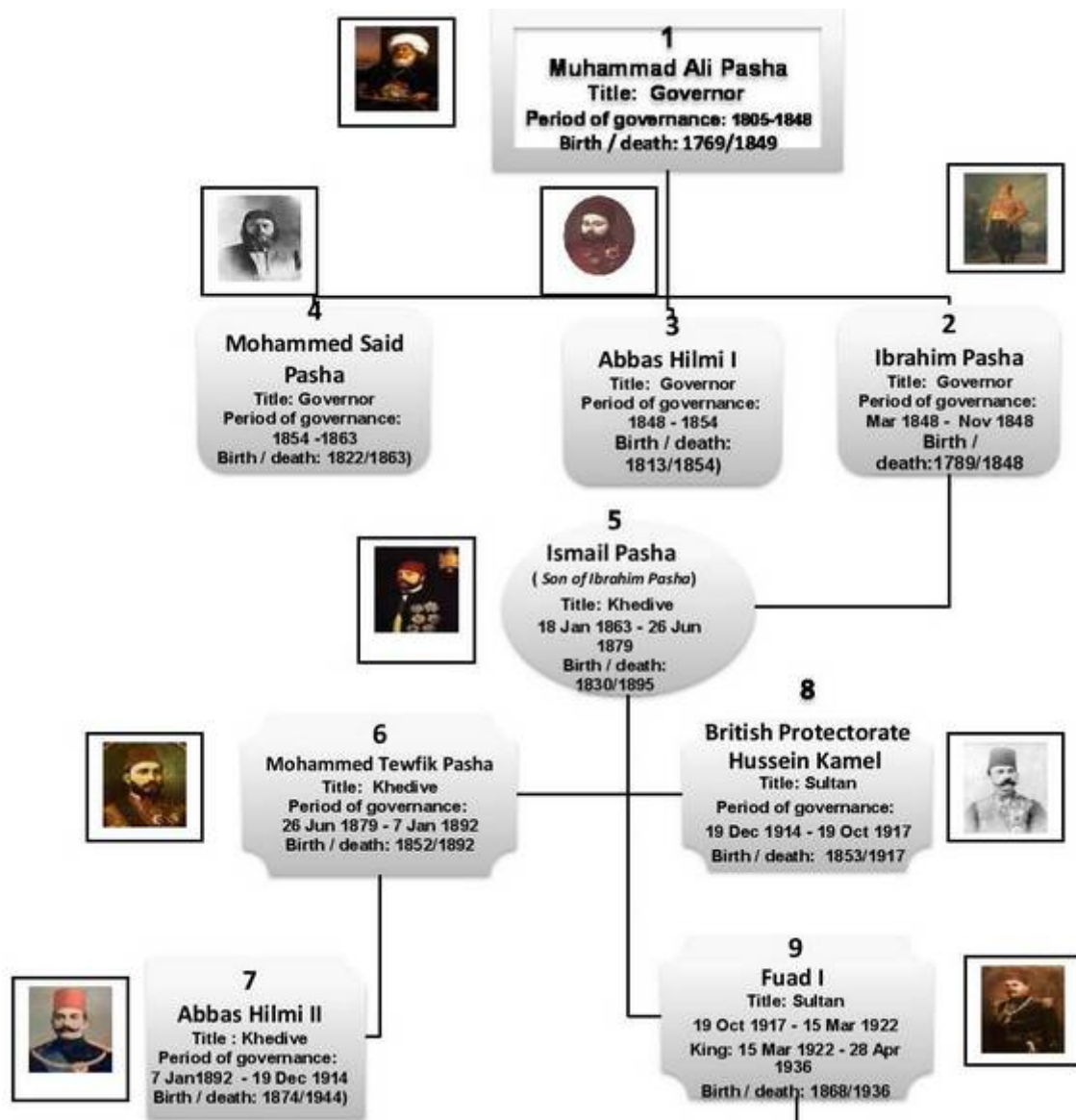


New Research into Egypt's Postal History

Sami Fereig (ESC 569)

The main objective of my new and large-scale piece of research is to document the postal history of Egypt under the dynasty of the Mohamed Ali family, which extended from 1805 to 1953. My eventual intention is to publish bilingually, in English and Arabic, in CD form, making the research available to young would-be collectors, and also allowing virtually instant updates as and when required.

To explain the structure and objective of my work I should say first that I have divided the Mohamed Ali dynasty into different sections according to each ruler, each with a brief description of the political and economic situation at that time. An introduction of the time leading up to Mohamed Ali, and a tailpiece of what happened at the time of the Republic will be added.



A cropped version of Sami Fereig's Egyptian Royal Family tree

I should very much appreciate any help or material that any member might be willing to provide on loan, with of course appropriate acknowledgement from my side for such a contribution to the work. Similarly, I should be enormously grateful if any member might be willing to review a section or sections of the work, and again an acknowledgement would be instantly given.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to address this meeting, and hope that I shall be able to come again to present the work as it progresses.

1. The main objective is to document the range and extent of the post offices in which Egyptian stamps were used in the 19th century. In my researches I have relied heavily on the collection I obtained from Professor Peter Smith (ESC 74), as well as on the considerable number of stamps I have acquired over the last ten or 12 years.

The total number of stamps I have examined is of the order of about 4,000 from the First, Second, Third and Fourth issues, distributed over the 27 governorates of Egypt, and the total number of post offices for which I have postmark evidence is no fewer than 375.

This research has been divided into 17 binders – two of which, Alexandria and Gharbieh, I present for examination today. The binders accommodate every governorate, and I have listed all the post offices within each governorate, attaching a list of tables indicating the locations of the governorates, their capitals, and distances of the capitals from Cairo. This work is now complete.

This work will eventually be available in electronic form because it is a massive volume of information. The other advantage of the electronic format is that it can easily be updated to accommodate more relevant stamps if I find them, so I can add them to the collection.

2. The second objective is to document Egypt's commemorative stamps and their use. Commemoratives are issued to mark a special occasion, rather than simply to defray postage costs, as definitives are, so each carries a particular relevance to specific political, economic or social events of the time they were issued. This work has progressed significantly and I am thinking of adding the commemoratives of the city cancellations to this work since I have already sorted them out. Again this will be presented in CD format since the volume is otherwise not easy to handle.

3. The third objective is to document Egyptian post office cancellations of the 19th century, which will be of considerable use in complementing the work of the post offices of that period. I have brought examples of what I have done, in which I have relied entirely on the work of Professor Smith. Again I should very much welcome advice on how I should proceed in this area.

4. The fourth objective is to complete a book on the history of Mohamed Ali and his family, and the main postal events that occurred during their reign. This volume has the working title *Forerunners of the Viceregal/Khedival Egyptian Post and the Foreign Post Offices in Egypt*, although in fact it is very likely that the final work will extend beyond merely the forerunners. For each section so far written I have prepared a brief overview of the history of the period, and then described the postal events that occurred during each reign.

5. The fifth objective is to set this coverage of the postal history of Egypt at a very introductory level, directed not at the specialist but at the novice. So I have included nothing that might be considered advanced, and I should very much welcome members' guidance as to what is considered crucially essential information that must be included, to set against this information considered suitable only for an advanced collector. It is my intention to present information about the coin used in Egypt during each era, to give some sort of tangible meaning to the value of the stamps throughout the period in question.

The title of the books is not yet settled, nor whether it should be one volume or two: I have decided only on the cover. But the book, or books, will be published with a CD attached, which might potentially include other work.

Although I have a grand vision, I am still feeling my way in some aspects of this work, and have learned only recently of the potential mass of official documentation available which might augment some of my researches. I am very much open to suggestion, and should very much like to correspond with any member who might be interested in carrying this research forward. My email address is sami_fereig@yahoo.com and I should be delighted to hear from all and every one of you.