

STUDY VI - The POSTMARK STUDY - E Hall (ESC 239)

It is nearly two years since I issued the rehashed postmark data sheets and 'threatened' at the time a series of articles. In that interval I have not been totally idle, but have been collecting and photocopying as many articles as I can on Egyptian Postmarks, for the Record - four inches thick to date. Nor have the many recipients of the data sheets (two printings were required to satisfy demand !) been idle either. Many thanks for the data already sent in and apologies to those I have not yet individually replied to - mostly those who sent in the greatest amount of information. It does indicate the interest in the Circle for this Study.

I still have not resolved the knotty problem of numbering, etc., and I receive as many different ideas as the number of people I ask. So abandoning all thoughts of classification at present I am using the same temporary numbers as on the data sheets as these have proved to be a satisfactory way of passing on information.

As was my intention two years ago I hope to include in each QC an article covering one aspect of the postmark study. In it will be the Record as it now stands, with some précis of the published articles from various philatelic magazines and the odd note added by myself. I will then in a future QC, one or two issues later, publish all the data that will flood in on that particular subject. It is here that the success or failure of the exercise rests. Everyone can add something. This is not a study of the exotic; here the commonest Cairo postmark has as much importance as a "used abroad, inverted date slug in rare puce". I am no more knowledgeable about postmarks than anyone else, in fact much less so than many in the Circle, so do not treat my reports as Gospel and please do correct any errors I make. "It is well known that postmark type XYZ is not as you say. The article by that well-known and expert philatelist ABC in the renowned magazine Stamp-Wotsit clarifies the point. I fail to understand why you have missed this and continue to mislead the Circle." Wonderful stuff - just keep it coming ! I emphasize that this is not my study, it is Study VI of the Circle.

I have had some difficulty in deciding where to start. My first attempt clashed with what some one else was doing. I have no wish to cut across what anybody else is doing and in this case I stated he had six months in which to publish - that was a year ago. There will be no pattern in the order of subject treated, it's as the whim takes me, and I have chosen the 'POSTMEN' Postmarks to start off with. I have done so because I have to date only found one article on them, in French, and since I am not conversant with that beautiful language, I have managed to persuade Mike Murphy (ESC 240) to do a translation. The descriptions of the postmarks are my own. I also wish to give more weight to the Arabic used and will be seeking help along these lines. With ten per cent of our members being speakers of Arabic I can see no excuse now for not doing so. I also wish to extend the study beyond 1952 and see today's postmarks as having as much a place in this study as any.

POSTMEN Postmarks, Sheet U

The 'POSTMEN' Postmarks were written about by Gabriel Boulad in L'OP for October 1954, pp 456-468. He refers to an earlier article in 1939 by himself and also to a similar thing in Switzerland where a Geneva postmark has 'FACTEURS' in it. He then continues with :-

/ Continued . . .

POSTMEN Postmarks, Sheet U - continued

"In Egypt, Cairo seems to have been the first town to inaugurate this type of cachet, with a bilingual marking; my example dating from March 2, 1918. This appears on an Avis de Reception (receipt); in the upper half it reads in English: "Cairo Postmen" and below, the Arabic text "as-sa'alah bi-Misr" with date and hour indication (fig U.2)"

He says this was used until about 1930, often cancelling the stamps. A second type U.5 appeared on February 9, 1936, and continued to the end of 1941. Type U.8 appeared on March 13, 1937, for a short usage. U.11 appeared from June 21, 1941, and he says ". . . has the addition of the words "Express Delivery" in English and Arabic (barid al-mast'gil), which indicates that it was especially created for the Express courier service". He says type U.8 appeared in 1953 and that these are the only types known to him for Cairo.

For Alexandria he says the first type known is U.2 with the letter "B" first seen for March 2, 1922, continuing to 1927, used on Postal Administration cards notifying reception at the Post Office. For U.2 with the letter "A" he gives the period November 11, 1924, to 1929. Type U.3 appeared in 1936 and continued until 1942. Type U.6 he dates as "at least from 1940 ." and has the Arabic "Iskandria sal'ah" and ". . . the English words 'Postmen', 'Alexandria' are relegated to the lower half". He illustrates one for 1949.

For Port Said he says: ". . . my evidence on this subject is not as strong. I hope that a philatelist from Port Said might complete the information I shall give on its cachets". He points out that 'Facteurs', the French for postmen, is used and the earliest use, type U.7, known to him is July 31, 1933, and the latest, August 22, 1940. U.10 containing 'Qism Sani' (the third quarter, a district of Port Said) he states only having seen one example dated June 14, 1938, and continues: ". . . and even that is not very clear . . . I wonder if there is not an error of orthography in the word 'Facteurs'. I leave to others the task of resolving this problem."

Gabriel Boulad concludes his article with: "It remains to define the use of the 'Postmen' and 'Facteurs' cachets in Egypt . . . it seems that they started by having a postal use within the service, for use on Avis de Reception receipts, or to give notice to the addressee of the arrival of certain envelopes or objects. Later they became used on letters returned from sender or for cancelling stamps paying for the return. Finally they also served for the deliveries of the Express courier and, on occasions, for the Registered courier. If other information on the subject should be forthcoming from fellow philatelists, I should be happy to hear of it."








So, fellow Circle members, please report all the dates of the types illustrated and any other that contain any of the key words for this group. Report how you see fit and send photocopies if you think it beneficial. I would suggest something along the lines:-

U.1 date 5. Ap. 99

or: as U.2 with letter D in place of A

etc.

POSTMEN Postmarks, Sheet U

	TEMP No.	CDS TYPE	CONTENT, UPPER SEGMENT	CONTENT, LOWER SEGMENT
	U.1	Ring & Bar	Curved POSTMEN Straight town name	as-sa'alah bi-Misr
	U.2	Ring & bar	Curved town name with letter	curved POSTMEN
	U.3	Ring & Bar	Curved town name	curved POSTMEN
	U.4	Ring & bar	straight-line as-sa'alah bi-Misr	curved POSTMEN & town name
	U.5	Ring & bar	straight-line as-sa'alah bi-Misr	curved POSTMEN over town name
	U.6	Ring & bar	straight-line town name in Arabic above sa'alah	straight POSTMEN above curved town name
	U.7	Ring & box	as-sa'alah above straight-line town name in Arabic	FACTEURS above curved town name

POSTMEN Postmarks, Sheet U

	U.8	Ring & bar	as-sa'alah bi-Kahira	straight-line town name above curved POSTMEN
	U.9	Ring & bar	straight-line as-sa'alah el-Kahira	straight-line town name above curved POSTMEN
	U.10	Ring & bar	as-sa'alah above town name & district in Arabic	straight-line FACTEURS above curved town name & district
	U.11	Ring & bar	sa'alah qozea(?) el-Kahira above barid al-mast'gil	straight-line town name & POSTMEN above EXPRESS DELIVERY

KEY WORDS: Postmen - Facteurs - sa'alah

NOTES ON ARABIC USEDUSED IN (temporary numbers)

sa'alah	Postman	U.1/4/5/6/7/8/9/10/11
Misr	Cairo	U.1/4/5
bi	with/of	U.1/4/5/8
el-Kahira	Cairo	U.8/9/11
barid	post	U.11
mast'gil	express delivery	U.11

Query: qozea' (?) - is this Arabic for swift ? U.11

N.B. I may have been inconsistent in either saying "town name", or actually quoting it; I have quoted the actual town name if it has a prefix, e.g. bi- .