

### Q8 Ras Mallap January 2, 2006 Member ESC 384

In *LOP 125* there is under many others a postmark of Ras Mallap. In no postal guide from 1889 and 1922 I could find this name. Where was it situated and what is the story of this post-office. Furthermore I have postmarks of Safaja and Safaga. Is this the same name for one place? The arabic letters are somehow different at the left side

### **R1 January 26, 2006 ESC 240**

Question 8 is interesting because it illustrates well the problems of transliteration from Arabic to European languages. There is no letter P in Arabic, so Ras Mallap is a mistaken attempt to transliterate the Arabic Ras Mal'ab (ending in a B, ب), which is a small settlement on the eastern coast of Sinai between Suez and Abu Zeneima (see map for precise indication: this Department of Survey and Mines map of 1938 is at 1:100,000). Ras Malab, described by the *Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Pilot* of 1944 as "low and sandy", was the site of a gypsum factory; the update of 2001 says "the old mine building has gone. A new building has replaced it surrounded with high fencing and floodlights." UNEF troops had a base there in 1994, and I imagine postmarks must be exceedingly rare.

Safaga and Safaja are the same place: it is a working port, and increasingly a holiday centre, on the western bank of the Red Sea south of Hurghada. The letter ج is pronounced either hard (*geem*) or soft (*jeem*) in different parts of Egypt; hence the problem for the transliterator in making up the postmark handstamps.

