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Fig. 3 A representative cover carried by Waghorn.

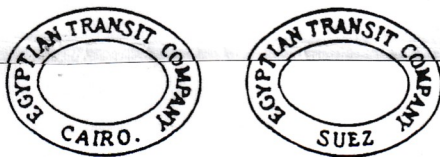


Fig. 4 Handstamps of the Egyptian Transit Company.

blue, on letters originating in Cairo in 1843 and 1849, and one on a letter from India to Vienna by way of the French post office in Alexandria in 1847. There is evidence that the Company carried some mail within Egypt, for printed receipts are known for the transport of 'groups' of specie between Alexandria and Cairo.

The Forwarding Agents

Forwarding agents are essentially business enterprises who undertake to arrange the transport of goods and correspondence, without themselves acting as carriers. Their importance was especially great in the years before the formation of the UPU. A good forwarding agent was aware of the many routes for sending mail, the frequency, speed, and reliability of ships, and which ships were soonest to depart. They agreed to set up accounts for firms and individuals making frequent use of their facilities. The general subject has been treated with thoroughness by Rowe, whose book includes a catalog of forwarding agents throughout the world¹⁰.

The first forwarding agent to consider is Samuel Briggs who settled in Egypt in 1805. He was appointed British Consul and became an agent and friend of Mohammed Aly. As Consul, he had much responsibility for handling the mails to India; he appears to have had a private enterprise in addition to his duties as Consul. In 1841 he became the P&O agent. His firm, Briggs & Co., offered a mail-forwarding service; letters so handled were struck with a small oval cachet reading FORWARDED BY / MESS^{RS}. / BRIGGS & Co. (Fig. 5).

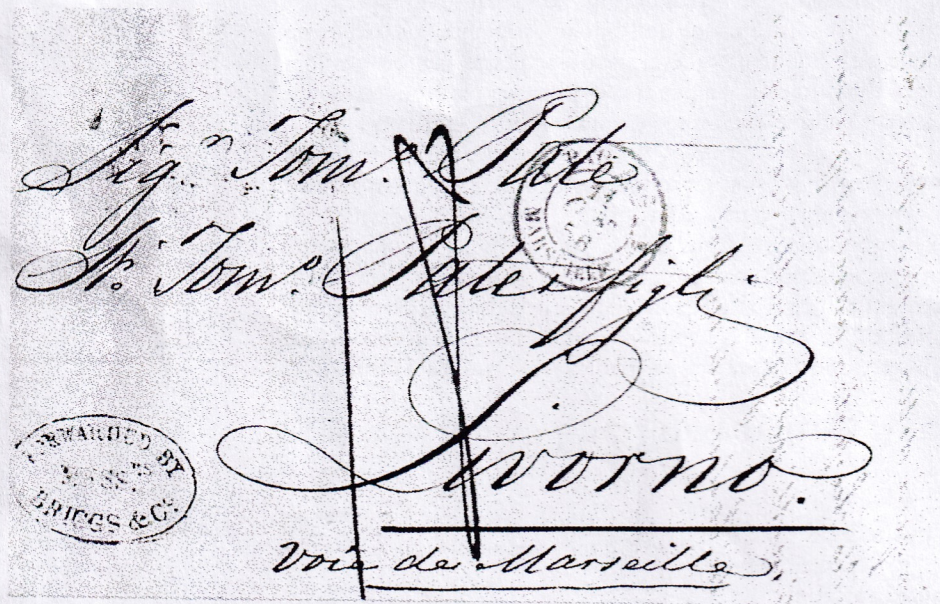


Fig. 5 A cover bearing the Briggs & Co. forwarding cachet.

mples are at least as scarce as the commoner Waghorn covers. However, one must be t to covers bearing a very similar handstamp without 'forwarded by'; this was simply normal sender's cachet of the firm, used on its own correspondence. Although not out interest, it does not command the price of the forwarding agent cachet.

Samuel Shepherd, who achieved fame as the founder of Shepherd's Hotel in Cairo, d as forwarding agent while operating the British Hotel in Cairo and appears to have 1 responsible for handling much of the early mail from Cairo destined for Great ain¹¹. His forwarding cachet is moderately rare (Fig. 6).