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Vermeil Medal, (Cairo 1946). Bronze Medal, (Imaba 1948). Silver Medal, (Reinatex Mte. Carlo 1952). Vermeil Medal (Stockholmia 55), (Finlandia 56).

Content of This Number

	Pages
Great Bitter Lakes Association	3
Egypt – The 1915 Provisional.....	8

Great Bitter Lakes Association

Adel Hanna

Fifteen commercial ships were trapped in the Egyptian Suez Canal due to the outbreak of the war between Egypt and Israel on June 5, 1967, and orders were issued for these ships to anchor in the bitter lakes and not move.

An American ship did not comply with the order and continued sailing until it stopped in Lake Timsah in the north, and it was, in my opinion, a failed attempt by the captain to escape to the Mediterranean, while the rest of the ships complied and docked in the bitter lakes.

With the conditions resulting from the war and the closing of the canal, it was impossible for the ships to sail again and they were held in the lakes indefinitely.

The sailors on the ships of eight countries coexisted with the new situation, and everyone began to face the situation, so a new entity was established that included the 14 ships in the name of the Great Bitter Lake Association "GBLA"

It was also called the "Yellow Fleet" due to the accumulation of yellow dust and sand on the ships. Then the presidential and administrative teams were formed and the regulations were written and a club was formed in the name of the new association and competitive matches were held between the ships and even they held their own Olympics.

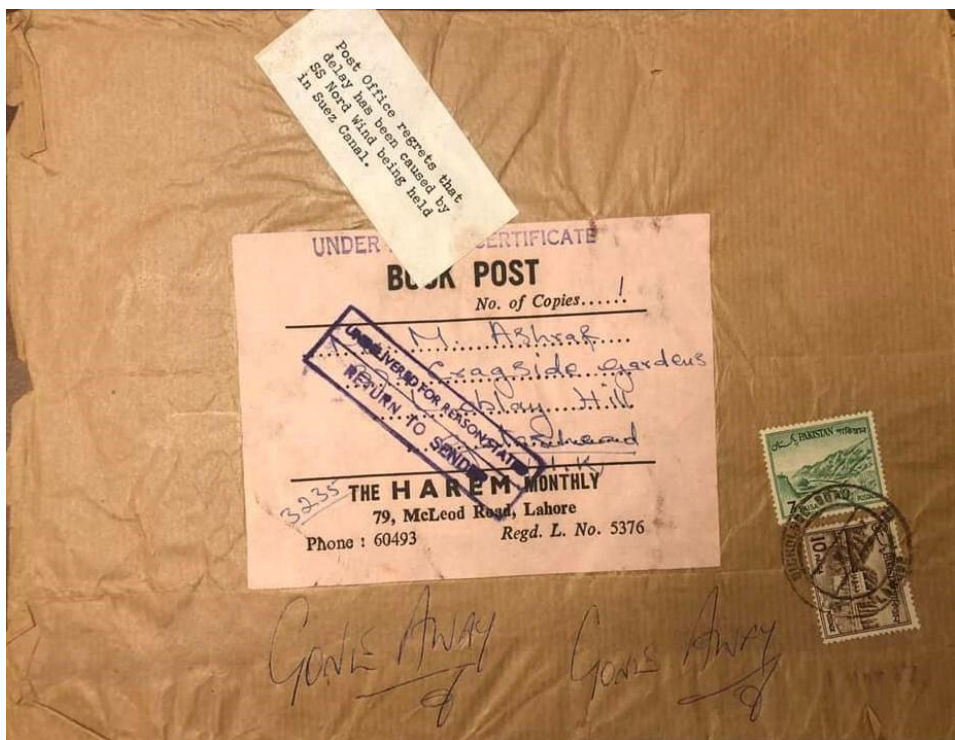
The international authorities began to recognize the new institution, which in turn issued its own postage stamps, and the new stamps were recognized and given the authority to use in the Egyptian and international post.

190 postage stamps with a total of 887 copies were designed in the period from 1967 to 1974. The stamps were drawn by hand or printed on the board of the English ship Melampus, whose head was Captain Malcolm Lees, who had the idea.

The designs of the stamps were innovative and creative, chronicling the period of the detention of ships and their social events, so they celebrated the establishment of the institution and the alliance between them in the first postage stamp, followed by documentation of all occasions such as holidays and end-of-year celebrations, and even women had a share as well. Sailors requested women to join the family enterprise.

After the end of the war, the authority of the institution was terminated, and 12 ships were withdrawn to her country, where they had lost the ability to move as a result of the lack of maintenance and the spread of rust in her bodies. As for the two German ships, they sailed to Germany relying on their own engines only.

In the first picture, a magazine rapper sent from Pakistan to England, it was detained for 7 years in the Suez Canal with an apology from the English mail for the delay, then some samples of the sailors' letters.



مؤسسة البحيرات المره الكبرى

احتجزت ١٥ سفينه تجاريه فى قناة السويس المصريه بسبب قيام الحرب بين مصر و اسرائيل فى ٥ يونيو ١٩٦٧، و صدرت الأوامر لهذه السفن بالرسو فى البحيرات المره و عدم الحركه.

لم تمتثل سفينه امريكىه للأمر و أكملت الابحار حتى وقفت فى بحيره التمساح فى الشمال و كانت فى اعتقادى محاوله فاشله من القائد للهروب بالسفينة الى البحر المتوسط بينما امتثلت باقى السفن و رست فى البحيرات المره.

مع الظروف الناتجه عن الحرب و إغلاق القناه كان من المستحيل على السفن ان تعاود الابحار و تم احتجازها فى البحيرات الى اجل غير مسمى.

تعايش البحاره فى السفن التابعه لثمانية دول مع الوضع المستجد و بدأ الجميع فى مواجهه الموقف فتم تأسيس كيان جديد يضم السفن ال ١٤ باسم مؤسسة البحيرات المره الكبرى "Great Bitter" "GBLA" "Lake Association"

و سُميت أيضا بالأسطول الأصفر "Yellow Fleet" نظراً لتراكم الأتربة و الرمال الصفراء على جسم السفن ثم تشكلت الفرق الرئاسيه و الإدارية و كتبت اللوائح و تم تكوين نادى باسم المؤسسه و إقامة المباريات التنافسية بين السفن و بعضها، حتى انهم أقاموا أوليمبياد خاصه بهم.

بدأت الجهات العالميه فى الاعتراف بالمؤسسة الجديده التى أصدرت بدورها طوابع بريد خاصه بهم، و تم الاعتراف بالطوابع الجديده و إعطاءها الصلاحية للاستعمال فى البريد المصرى و العالمى.

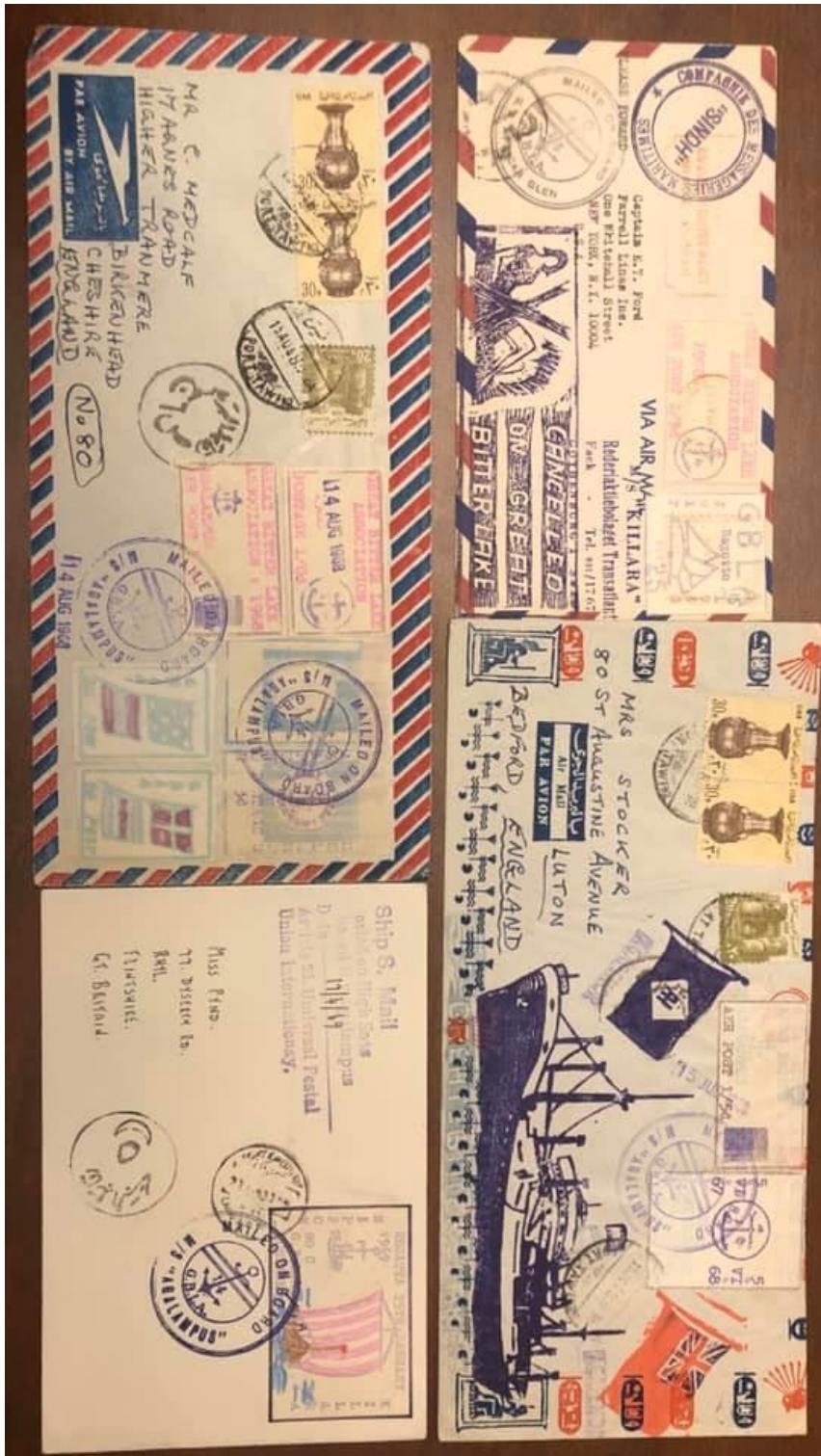
تم تصميم ١٩٠ طابع بريد باجمالى ٨٨٧ نسخه فى الفتره من ١٩٦٧ الى ١٩٧٤ و كانت الطوابع ترسم باليد او تطبع على ظهر السفينه الانجليزيه ميلانباس Melampus التى كان قائدها كابتن مالكوم ليز صاحب الفكره.

كانت تصميمات الطوابع مبتكره و خلاقه تؤرخ لفترة احتجاز السفن و أحداثها الاجتماعيه فاحتفلوا بقيام المؤسسه و التحالف بينهم فى اول طابع بريد و تلاه توثيق لكافة المناسبات كالأعياد و احتفالات نهاية العام و حتى النساء كانت لها نصيب أيضاً فصدرت بعض الطوابع الطريفه التى تطلب القبض على النساء لصالح البحاره او لطلب نساء للانضمام لأسرة المؤسسه.

بعد انتهاء الحرب تم إنهاء صلاحية المؤسسه و تم سحب ١٢ سفينه الى بلادها حيث كانت قد فقدت القدره على الحركه نتيجة قلة الصيانه و انتشار الصدأ فى أجسامها اما السفينتان الألمانيان فقد أبحرتا الى ألمانيا معتمدين على محركاتهم فقط .

في الصورة الأولى حافظة مجله مرسله من باكستان إلى إنجلترا تم احتجازه لـ ٧ سنوات في قناة السويس و عليه اعتذار من البريد الإنجليزي للتأخير ثم بعض نماذج من خطابات البحارة.





Egypt – The 1915 Provisional

By EPS member Amr El-Etreby

National Awards

*3rd Continental Philatelic Exhibition 31/12/ 2015: 6/1/2016 (GOLD-90 points)

International Awards

*PhilaTaipei 21-26 October 2016 (Vermeil - 83 points)

*Finlandia 24-28 May 2017 (GOLD-90 points)

*MonacoPhil 2019 29th November 2019 – Treasures of Egypt

An article based on this exhibit has been published in the Egypt Study Circle QC No 255- 2015 and the article has been awarded the following:

*MacArthur Award 2015

*PhilaTaipei 21-26 October 2016 (Literature Class -Large Silver)

*Spring Stampex 15-18 February 2017 (Literature Class -Large Silver)

*London 2022 19-26 February 2022 (Literature Class -Large Silver)

Egypt - The 1915 Provisional

This provisional is very scarce used alone on cover or card; its principal use, on postcards, had a life of only two and half months. Even examples of use in multiples or with other values are scarce to find. The full lifetime of the 1915 provisional issue took place during World War I. The outbreak of war (August 1914) had three major impacts: establishment of military postal services; the nearly complete suppression of the tourist industry, and introduction of rate increases at various times.

Historical Background: On October 15th 1915 Egypt issued a provisional surcharged stamp, 2 millièmes on 3 millièmes. The overprinting was done by the Government Printing Works, Boulaq, which was also responsible for an essay of the surcharge. As Peter Smith notes; the reason for the provisional is not known with certainty, but it is most likely that the supply of 2m stamps was running out, either as a result of delayed deliveries because of the outbreak of World War I, or underestimation of the demand for 2m stamps before the internal postcard rate was raised to 3m. (January 1st 1916).

Exhibit Plan:

- | | | |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| 1. Essay | pages 2 | |
| 2. Types | pages 2-4 | |
| 3. Varieties | | |
| • Recorded | pages 5-8 | |
| • Unrecorded | pages 8-9 | |
| 4. Usage | | |
| • Largest recorded used block of 20 and 1 st Day cancellation | | page 10 |
| • Printed Matter, Periodicals and Samples | | page 11 |
| • Postcard | | page 12 |
| • Letters | | page 13 |
| • Military | | pages 15-16 |
| • Registered Letters | | page 14 |
| • The new postcard rate | | page 16 |

Based on the exhibitor's research, all items are considered scarce, but items of particular philatelic interest and rarity are framed by a Gold-Orange frame.

Published Research: based on the materials used in this exhibit several articles have been published;

1- A. El-Etreby, "The 1915 Provisional: A Centenary Celebration" *Quarterly Circular of the Egypt Study Circle*, December 2015, Vol XXII No. 8, (Whole series No. 255), p. 173-185.

2- A. El-Etreby, "The 1915 Provisional: The Largest recorded used multiple" *L'Orient Philatelique*, June 2019, Vol X No. 2, Issue No. 144, p. 46.

3- A. El-Etreby, "Egypt 1915 Provisional 1st Day Cancellation" *L'Orient Philatelique*, September 2019, Vol X No. 3, Issue No. 145, p. 89-91.

Surcharge Essay

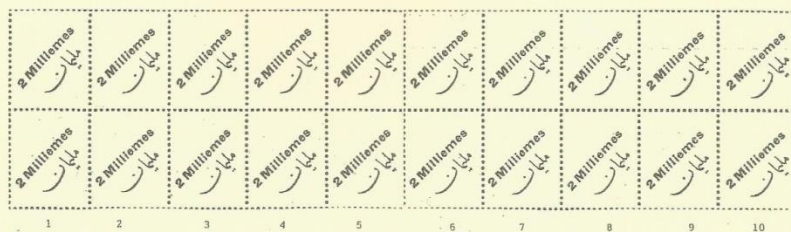
The overprinting was done by the Government Printing Works, Boulaq, which was also responsible for an essay of the surcharge. The essay has the surcharge arranged almost vertically, tilted slightly to the left ; it was apparently printed as a single strip of ten, set from loose type.



The surcharge essay (Ex Peter Smith Collection)
ONLY Ten printed and **ONLY** four recorded

Types

The original stamp was typographed on chalky paper by De La Rue and issued in sheets of 200, arranged in two vertical panes of 100 (10x10). It was surcharged "2 millièmes", in French and Arabic, by typography. The surcharge was applied in complete sheets of 200 without removal of any margins and the stamps were so issued. The surcharge setting is 10 x 1, i.e., loose type was arranged for ten stamps in a horizontal row. From this row a mould was made and reproductions obtained by casting. Twenty castings formed a printing plate of 200. Thus any horizontal row shows all ten types, and each vertical column contains only one type.



A diagram showing the ten types. (After P. Smith)



Types

Details of the types according to the positioning of the French words in relation to the Arabic have been described and illustrated by Douglas McNeill in the following table and diagram.

Type	Point at which prolonging the right edge of the right-hand vertical character 'lam' would meet 'Milleimes' above.	Columns where the types appear
I	Slightly to the left of middle leg of the second "m"	7 th & 10 th
II	The left corner of middle leg of the second "m"	2 nd , 3 rd , 6 th & 9 th
III	The centre of middle leg of the second "m"	5 th
IV	Right corner of the middle leg of the second "m"	1 st & 4 th
V	Slightly to the right of middle leg of the second "m"	8 th



The five types according to McNeill



Recorded positional varieties

Red arrow: Broken Arabic letter *noun* (ن) position number 10

Blue arrow: Broken letter 'e' position number 49

Unrecorded positional varieties

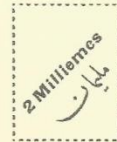
Green arrow: Closed letter 's' position number 55

Black arrow: Broken middle leg of the second 'm' position number 22, 52, 72, 82, 92

Recorded Varieties

Broken letter 'e'

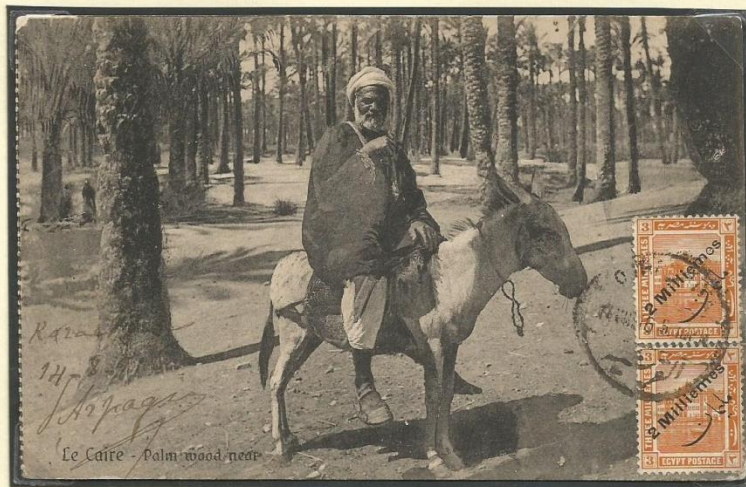
A minor variety of some interest occurs once in the sheet: position 49, upper pane. The second 'e' is broken so as to resemble a letter 'c'.



Broken 'e' variety position 49



Broken 'e' variety in upper left stamp, Mansura Station cds.



1916 Postcard sent to France on Aug 14th 1916 Qurashia cds, with broken 'e' variety in upper stamp.
Correct franking of 4mil for external postcard surface rate. (Type III surcharge)

Recorded Varieties

Broken Arabic letter noon (ن)

Among the lesser flaws in the surcharge is a broken tip to the Arabic letter *noon* (ن), position 10 (at the left-hand end of the word 'milleeman')



Broken 'noon', position 10



Inverted surcharge

Two sheets were printed with the surcharge inverted. Both were evidently sold over the counter, and used examples exist off and on covers (as fronts). Examples from one of the sheets are known only from Hehya; those from the other are mostly unused (at least one block is known), but some have been found used at Beni Korrah. The inverted surcharge is scarce in singles and extremely scarce in blocks. The largest seen is a block of four.



Only TWO sheet exists

Surcharge offset

Strong offset of the surcharge on the back of the stamp, probably arising from an inked plate having been closed on the bare platen immediately before a sheet of stamps was put through. Since the offset was applied on the gum, only unused examples can be identified.



Recorded Varieties

Arabic letter lam (ل)

Large Lam (ل): The letter measures 3.3mm in height, left leg thinner than its right leg with a pronounced indentation between the two legs.

Small Lam (ل): The letter measures 3.0mm in height, the two legs are nearly equal in size, and the indentation between the two legs not as deep as in its corresponding letter. On all types except no. 6, the lam is taller. On type 6 it is only (3.0mm) tall i.e. short lam

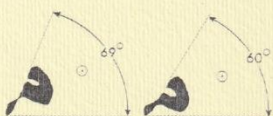


Used block of 10, March 9th 1916 "Alexandria R" cds.
Large Lam (Blue arrow) - Small Lam (Red arrow)

Arabic letter meem (م)

Large meem (م): The body of the letter is larger than its counterpart, squared in appearance and its foot is usually thin at the point where it joins the body.

Small meem (م): The body is smaller, with a rounded appearance, and its foot is thicker at the point where it joins the body.



Large meem (Green arrow) and small meem (Black arrow)

Surcharge à cheval verticalement

Strong vertical shift of the surcharge, such that it straddles two stamps (à cheval). The vertical surcharge à cheval, known from one sheet of 200, on which the surcharge was printed diagonally, caused it to become misplaced downward, with increasing severity towards the right-hand edge of the sheet



Only ONE sheet exists

Recorded Varieties

Surcharge à cheval horizontalement

Strong horizontal shift of the surcharge, such that it straddles two stamps (à cheval). The horizontal surcharge à cheval, known from one sheet of 200.



Only ONE sheet exists

Albino (double) surcharge

A double surcharge exists in which one impression is albino (but deeply impressed into the paper, and easily visible, especially from the back). The albino (blind) impressions are a little higher than those made by the inked impressions. It resulted from a successful attempt to correct an error of improperly positioned sheet in the press.



albino (blind) surcharge and the inked surcharge shows horizontal shift (*à cheval*)

Only ONE sheet exists

Unrecorded Varieties

Closed letter 's':

I found this variety in position 55, showing the upper tip of the letter 's' closed.



Broken figure '2':

position as yet unknown



Unrecorded Varieties

Broken frame:

of the panel around the upper right number '3'
and a **White Cloud** above the letter 's'



Perfins:

Agricultural Bank of Egypt: company code **A B / E**



Societe Anonyme Du Behera: company code **S B**



Broken 'm':

the second 'm' in the word "Milliemes", position as
yet unknown



Credit Lyonnais Cairo: company code **C L / C**



Misperforation:

however slight, that leads to horizontal or vertical
shifting of the stamp



Broken middle leg:

of the second 'm' in the word "Milliemes". I found this
variety in positions 22, 52, 72, 82, 92



The 1915 Provisional Usage



Largest Recorded Used Block of 20, cancelled on December 8th 1915, Minya-Cairo (T.P.O.) cds

ONLY RECORDED Cover with 1ST DAY Cancelation (15. X. 15.)



1915 Registered Cover sent to Cairo on October 15th, 1915 Cairo R.D.7 cds, with registration label, received on same day Cairo R.A.2 cds (Type I, II, II, VI and V surcharge)

The 1915 Provisional Usage Printed Matter



1916 Greetings cover sent to Zeitoun, Cairo, on January 1st 1916, Cairo cds. Correct franking of 2mil for internal printed matter. (Type V surcharge)

Periodicals and Samples

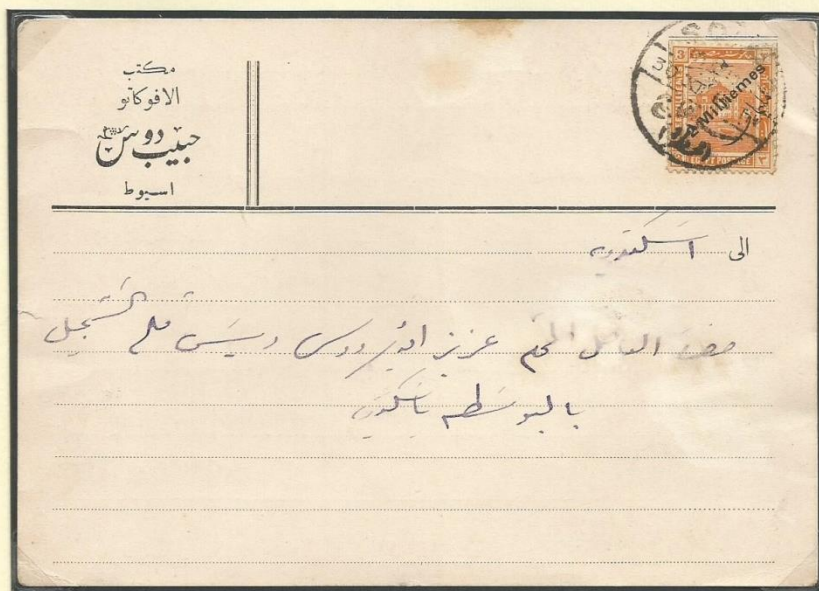


1916 Wrapper addressed to Cairo with Alexandria cds February 1st 1916. Correct franking of 2mil internal rate for samples 2m/100g. (Type III surcharge)

The 1915 Provisional Usage Postcard



1915 Postcard sent to Switzerland on December 11th 1915 Alexandria C ds, alongside "Passed by Censor No 7" oval handstamp. Correct franking of 4mil for external postcard surface rate. (Type III surcharge)



1915 Postcard sent to Alexandria on December 30th 1915, Sohag Station cds. Correct franking of 2mil for internal postcard rate. (Type III surcharge)

The 1915 Provisional Usage Letters

1915 Cover sent to Cairo December 29th 1915 "Tresor et Postes 507" cds (French army base post office at Alexandria for the Russian troops), Alexandria cds. Censored with "Passed Censor B" and "Alexandrie FR Corr d'armees" handstamp. Received same day, Cairo cds on reverse. Correct franking 5mil Internal letter rate. (Type III surcharge)



1916 Cover addressed to France on February 14th 1916, Cairo cds, received February 22rd 1916, Loire cds on reverse. Correct franking of 10mil external surface rate for letters. (Type III surcharge)

The 1915 Provisional Usage Registered Letters

1916 Cover addressed to Switzerland on July 5th 1916, Alexandria cds, received July 21st, Unterageri cds on reverse. Correct franking of 20mil external rate for registered letters (10mil + 10mil for registration).



1915 Cover addressed to England on December 30th 1915, Cairo cds, received January 13th 1916, London cds on reverse. Correct Franking: External rate for letters 10mil (reduced to 5mil for GB) + 10mil for registration. (Type III surcharge)

The 1915 Provisional Usage Military

Letters and postcards mailed at military post offices were liable for postage, to be paid by Egyptian stamps, at the outset of war. Examples are scarce and include British, Australian, New Zealand, Indian, and French military post offices



New Zealand Advanced /
Base Army Post Office cds
of November 2ND 1915
(Type I and II surcharge)



1915 2m/1m surcharge stationary cover uprated to pay the 5m UPU special rate for letters to GB instead of 10m (but the sender most probably failed to recognize the surcharge and used it as 1m value cover or out of convenience), sent to London on March 15 1916, Army Post office SZ10 cds (British Forces in Egypt). Overrated 1m (6m instead of 5m) (Type IV surcharge)



1916 cover sent to England on 20th March 1916, Suez cds, along side with Military censor "Passed by censor No 2218" and "INDIAN EXPEDITION FORCE 1" hand stamp. Received on 26th March 1916 Base Army Post Office cds on the back.

The 1915 Provisional Usage Military warship Facilities



1916 Cover addressed to England on January 10th 1916 Alexandria Seamen's Home cds, Transit Alexandria cds on reverse same day. UPU special letter rate for GB 5m instead of 10m. (Type IV surcharge)

On January 1st, 1916, the internal postcard rate was raised to 3m. Hence, the use of the provisional for postcards was no longer needed.



1916 Postcard sent to Zagazig, Egypt on January 9th 1916 Alexandria cds. Franked 3mil internal postcard surface rate. (Type II surcharge).



The members of the Philatelic Society of Egypt, PSE, have for some time noticed that Arabic texts whether on covers, postcards, documents ... etc. are being erroneously translated into English in catalogs, magazines, websites and even private collections, with serious consequences to the interpretation of the item in question.

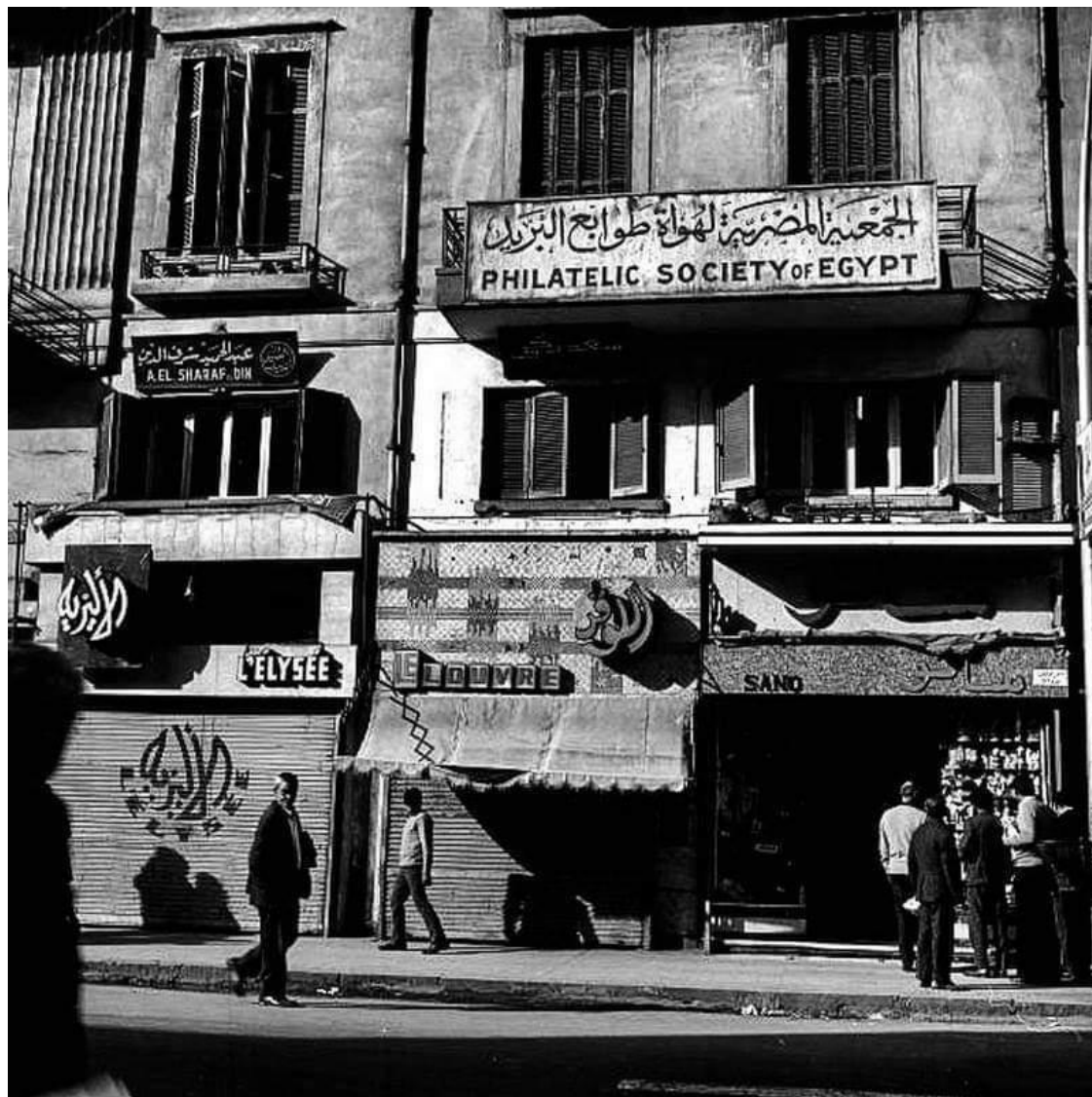
The PSE has a group of members who are fluent in both Arabic and English languages and are gladly willing to help not only with any translation required, but also with the interpretation of other aspects relating to social, historical and geographical circumstances of the time, such as familial salutations, bureaucratic jargon, handwritten annotations and talismanic markings.

This service is available to anyone, just send to this email a clear scan of the item; front and back of a cover, postcard, content of a letter or document ... etc. and we shall be happy to oblige as soon as possible.

Provisionally, this service is free of charge for single items.

Email : egyptianphilatelicsociety@gmail.com





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