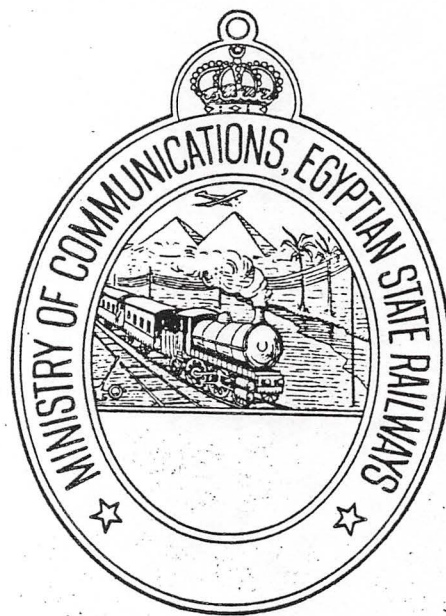


THE TRAVELLING POST OFFICES OF EGYPT

By
PETER A.S. SMITH



Mobile Post Office Society

1983

COVER : Essays for logos for the Egyptian State Railways

" THE TRAVELLING POST OFFICES OF EGYPT " is essential for all who study or collect TPO markings.

It is available from :-

Mr Peter R Feltus (ESC 114) P.O. Box 5339,
Berkeley, California 94705, U.S.A.

Vera Trinder Ltd,
38 Bedford Street, London W.C.2.

Mobile Post Office Society, RFD No. 1,
Box 91 Contoocook NH 03229 U.S.A.

UPDATA - THE TRAVELLING POST OFFICES OF EGYPT

New Information - by Peter A. S. Smith (ESC 74)

The appearance of a book or comprehensive review of any subject almost always stimulates further study; in fact that should be part of the purpose of a review. In the roughly three years since the appearance of the book on Egyptian TPO's, quite a few members of the Egypt Study Circle and the Mobile Post Office Society have bestirred themselves to uncover and report new bits of information, all of which help to fill in holes in the book. There have been too many contributors to acknowledge here, but one, Lars Alund, deserves special mention for having not only provided many new dates, but having discovered two unreported routes, SEMANA - ZAGAZIG and ARMANT - ISNA. Furthermore, Peter Feltus and Charles Hass found proof strikes of some TPO datestamps in the Postal Museum in Cairo, and communicated a list of them to me. Because they were without dates, and it is not known whether they were strikes made before issue or after retirement, they are indicated in parentheses in the following lists of data. We cannot be sure at present if these devices were actually issued; a fact that is especially important because some unrecorded routes are included in them.

Section VI: List of Routes

"PM proof" in the date column means that no dated example on stamp or cover has been seen

<u>ROUTE</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Types of Date-stamp</u>
ABOU HAMMAD & ABOU KEBIR		(7A3.4)
ABOU el MATAMIR & DAMANHUR		(7A3.5)
ABOU el MATAMIR & Kafr dawwar		(7A3.5)
(AGAMI & FAYUM) (FLR)	PM proof	(7A3.4)
ABOU KEBIR & SALHIA		(7A3.7)
ALEXANDRIA & EDFINA		(6A1.4)
ALEXANDRIA & CAIRO		TPO-1 variety, year in two ciphers
ALEXANDRIA & MARIUT		(7A3.4)
ALEXANDRIA & RAMLEH		(7A3.4)
ARMANT & ISNA	OC '30	6A1
ASSIUT & CAIRO		(5A2.6)
ASSIUT & NAG HAMADI	'09 or '99	7A3
ASSIUT & SOHAG	VI '12	
(BENHA & KAFR EL ZAYAT)	PM proof	(7A3.4)
(BENHA & MINUF)	PM proof	(7A3.4)
BENI SUEF & LAHUN	1921-43	6A1a
BILBES & MINA EL QAMH		(7A3.4)
BIRKET EL SAB & SAMANUD		(7A3.4)
BIRKET EL SAB & ZIFTA		(7A3.4)
CAIRO & MINIA		(6A1.3)
CHABRAKHIT & DAMANHUR		(6A1.4)
CHABRAKHIT & ITYAI EL BARUD		(7A3.5)
CHAWACHNA & FAYUM		(7A3.5)
CHIBIN RL QANATER & EL BARUD	1913	
CHIRBIN & KALLIN		(7A3.7)
DALANGAT & DAMANHUR		(7A3.7)
(DALANGAT, YAHUDIYA & ITYAI) (DLR)	PM proof	(7A3.4)
DAMIATA & TANTA	II '17	

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UPDATA - TPO's of Egypt

Section VI: List of Routes

Continued

<u>ROUTE</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Types of Date-stamp</u>
(DAMIATA & FARISKUR)	PM proof	(7A3.7)
DAMANHUR & EDFINA		(7A3.4)
FAYUM & LAHUN		(7A3.4)
FAYUM & SENNURIS		(7A3.5)
FUWA & TANTA	1932	7A3.4
ISMAILIA & PORT TAUFIQ		6A2, and a new type similar to 6A1.2
KAFR CHEIKH & KALLIN		(7A3.5)
KAFR HAMZA & TUKH	'0-	8A1.2
KALLIN & MORABEIN		(7A3.5)
(KENA & LUQSOR)	PM proof	(7A3.4)
KOTOUR & MAHALLA		(7A3.5)
MAHALLA & TANTA		(5A2.6)
MAHALLET INGHAC & MANSURA		(7A3)
MIT GHAMR & ZAGAZIG	1906	
SEMANA & ZAGAZIG	1932	7A3
TALKHA & TIRA		(7A3.4)
TANTA	DEC '52	

GLOSSARY OF ARABIC SPELLINGS

Aswan also spelt اسوان
 Basyun Regulator, corrected spelling تنظيم بسيون
 Biala, alternative orthography بيلا
 Galiub, corrected spelling قليوب
 Ityai el Barud, corrected spelling اتياء البارود
 Kalamsha, corrected spelling قلمشنا

Section VII: The Handstamps Used

The new dates that are listed extend the known period of use in either direction. In other cases, the new information may be a completion of the confirmed spelling.

<u>Type</u>	<u>ROUTE</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Notes</u>
TPO-1 :	CAIRO - ALES	28 DIC '7(5 or 6)	Year in <u>two</u> ciphers
TPO-4A1 :	(<u>SHIBIN EL QANATER</u> - <u>BILTAN</u>)		
TPO-5A1 :	PORT SAID - ALEXANDRIA	XII '05	
TPO-5A2 :	<u>TANTA</u> - <u>DUMIAT</u> <u>ASSIUT</u> - <u>CAIRO</u>	II '17 T 125 V '16	new spelling
TPO-5A2.4:	TANTA	DEC '52	
TPO-5A2.6:	<u>CAIRO</u> - <u>ASYUT</u> (<u>TANTA</u> - <u>MAHALLA</u>)	'3(6?)	

/ Continued . . .

UPDATA - TPO's of Egypt

Section VII: The Handstamps Used

Continued

<u>Type</u>	<u>ROUTE</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Notes</u>
TPO-5A3 :	ASWAN - LUXOR CAIRO - PORT SAID MATARIA - MANSURA <u>ZIFTA</u> - <u>TANTA</u> <u>SUHAG</u> - <u>ASYUT</u>	MA '16 X '13 V '16 VII '14 VI '12	
TPO-5D1 :	PORT SAID - CAIRO	VIII '13	
TPO-6A1 :	<u>ARMANT</u> - ISNA BENI SUEF - <u>LAHUN</u> MANSURA - CAIRO	OC '30 XI -21 III '14 T. 154 and JU '14	appears to be TPO-6A1a
TPO-6A1.25:	<u>PORT SAID</u> - <u>ISMAILIA</u> Like TPO-6A1.2, but the English inscription is in three lines :- PORT TAUFIQ - ISMAILIA / & V. V. (T.P.O.) / (S ?) A.		A new type
TPO-6A1.3:	(<u>MINYA</u> - <u>CAIRO</u>)		
TPO-6A1.4:	(<u>ALEXANDRIA</u> - <u>IDFINA</u>) (<u>SHUBRAKHIT</u> - <u>DAMANHUR</u>)		
TPO-6A2 :	(<u>MANSURA</u> - <u>AGA</u>)		
TPO-7A3 :	PORT TAUFIQ - ISMAILIA ALEXANDRIA - DABAA ABUKSA - WASTA ALEXANDRIA - RASHID <u>ASYUT</u> - <u>NAG HAMMADI</u> <u>CAIRO</u> - <u>ASSIUT</u> <u>DAMANHUR</u> - <u>IDFINA</u> FAYUM - WASTA ISMAILIA - BENHA MARG - SHIBIN EL QANATIR MINYA - ASYUT <u>MIT GHAMR</u> - <u>EL ZAGAZIG</u> <u>MIT GHAMR</u> - <u>ZAGAZIG</u> QALLIN - SHIRBIN SEMANA - <u>EL ZAGAZIG</u> (<u>SUHAG</u> - <u>ASYUT</u>) <u>TANTA</u> - <u>DUMIAT</u>	VIII '26 II '10 VIII '17 VIII '21 XI '09 or '99 T. 85 MA '16 T. 89 '16 T. 50 AP '16 T. 147 JU '18 OC '13 T. 503 VI '13 JL '22 and OC '30 delete OC '30 VII '13 -E '32 T. 55 XII '19	new spelling variant
TPO-7A3.4:	(<u>ABU KIBIR</u> - <u>ABU HAMMAD</u>) (<u>ALEXANDRIA</u> - <u>MARIUT</u>) <u>ALEXANDRIA</u> - MEX (<u>ALEXANDRIA</u> - <u>RAMLEH</u>) <u>ASYUT</u> - <u>LUQSOR</u> (<u>BILBES</u> - <u>MINA</u> <u>EL QAMH</u>) (<u>BIRKET</u> <u>EL SAB</u> - <u>SAMANUD</u>) (<u>BIRKET</u> <u>EL SAB</u> - <u>ZIFTA</u>)	'3- -C M '40 T-63	



/ Continued . . .

UPDATA - TPO's of Egypt

Section VII: The Handstamps Used

Continued

<u>Type</u>	<u>ROUTE</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Notes</u>
TPO-7A3.4:	(<u>DILINGAT</u> - <u>YAHUDIYA</u> - <u>ITYAI</u>) (<u>FAYUM</u> - <u>AGAMI</u>) (<u>IDFINA</u> - <u>DAMANHUR</u>) (<u>KAFR EL ZAYAT</u> - <u>BENHA</u>) <u>LUQSOR</u> - <u>SHALLAL</u> <u>MANSURA</u> - <u>CAIRO</u> (<u>MINUF</u> - <u>BANHA</u>) (<u>QENA</u> - <u>LUXOR</u>) (<u>SA EL HAGAR</u> - <u>TANTA</u>) <u>TANTA</u> - <u>FUWA</u>	NO '38 T. 70 JA '27 '32	
TPO-7A3.5:	(<u>ABU KIBIR</u> - <u>DIARB NIGM</u>) (<u>DAMANHUR</u> - <u>MAHMUDIA</u>) (<u>FAYUM</u> - <u>SHAWASHNA</u>) (<u>KAFR DAWWAR</u> - <u>ABU EL MATAMIR</u>) (<u>KAFR SHEIKH</u> - <u>QALLIN</u>) (<u>QOTUR</u> - <u>EL MAHALLA EL KOBRA</u>) (<u>SHABRAKHIT</u> - <u>ITYAI EL BARUD</u>)		
TPO-7A3.7:	(<u>ABU KIBIR</u> - <u>SALHIA</u>) (<u>DILINGAT</u> - <u>DAMANHUR</u>) (<u>DUMIAT</u> - <u>FARISKUR</u>)		
TPO-7A4 :	<u>CAIRO</u> - <u>TANTA</u> <u>DAMANHUR</u> - <u>TANTA</u> <u>DUMIAT</u> - <u>TANTA</u> (<u>EL FAYUM</u> - <u>LAHUN</u>)	DE '16 t. 165 I '17 spelling now complete V '16 T. 50	
TPO-8A1 :	<u>ABOU HAMMAD</u> - <u>DIARB NIGM</u> <u>MIT GHAMR</u> - <u>ZAGZIG</u> <u>SIMBELLAWAIN</u> - <u>MIT GHAMR</u>	XII '08 IV '08	
8A1a :	<u>CHALLAL</u> - <u>LUQSOR</u>	III '00	new spelling variant
TPO-8A1.2:	<u>TOUKH</u> - <u>KAFR HAMZA</u>	V '0-	
TPO-8A4 :	<u>ABUKSA</u> - <u>WASTA</u>	IV '16 T. 143	
TPO-8A6 :	<u>MORABEIN</u> - <u>KALLINE</u>	OC '9-	
TPO-8A7 :	<u>CHIBIN EL KOM</u> - <u>TANTA</u>	I '93	

SCARCITY

The newly reported routes obviously fall into the scarcest category, VI. Since the original compilation, a number of additional examples of Port Said-Alexandria have turned up, and its scarcity factor must be reduced to perhaps IV; it appears to be rarer on stamps than as a transit mark.

THE TRAVELLING POST OFFICES OF EGYPT, by PETER A. S. SMITH*

Review by J. M. Murphy, ESC 240

One of the paramount aims on the formation of the Egypt Study Circle more than half a century ago was the compilation and production of "The Book" - the definitive work on Egypt philately. Changing times and changing financial circumstances, together with the break-up of many of the great collections, seem to make such a publication sadly less likely with every year that passes.

But there is more than one way to bring a feline to an untimely demise; if, as seems likely, "The Book" is not for the immediate future, then our minds may be concentrated wonderfully by what may one day be its individual chapters, in the coming to fruition of various siblings. Just such a sibling is *The Travelling Post Offices of Egypt*, published in 1983 by our President, Peter Smith, under the auspices of the American Mobile Post Office Society; and certainly that is what the late Jim Benians and I had in mind in embarking on our *Egyptian Hotel Post Offices*. It will soon be evident just how much Jim and I owed to the inspiration of Professor Smith's trail-blazing work.

His volume of 65 pages is an ideal example of what might be done to ferret out the history of a service which, like so many others in Egypt and elsewhere, was not written down at the time simply because there was no need: it worked, it served the needs of a rapidly-growing population, it expanded naturally wherever the railway tracks went down, and it left jigsaw-piece clues to its existence with every thud of the *khitm* (hand stamp) as the express rattled along.

Fitting together those pieces has been a masterpiece of patience resulting in a fascinating picture of the growth of the service from its beginning in 1875 (though the first mails were carried in Egypt 20 years earlier). Introductory chapters deal in intimate detail with the spread of the rail system - still the basis of today's routes - not only for the Egyptian State Railways but also for the extensive light railway system which served farming in the Delta and the Fayum, the Western Desert oases service, the military TPOs, and that special factor of Egypt's TPOs, the steamer services which served the Nile and the canals.

But, detailed as those chapters are, the great boon of the work, which draws as the author acknowledges on the ESC studies of Gabriel Boulad and R. Seymour Blomfield, is the comprehensive listing of types and dates of handstamp. Each known type is drawn and coded according to markings - they total over 80 - and for each type the towns and dates of known use are recorded. It is a prodigious and fascinating work of scholarship.

The book is well supplied with maps, a rough guide to the rarity of each TPO route, most usefully a section on Arabic town names (for use on part strikes), and, remarkably, an Essay believed from the de La Rue Archive, detailing a pair of TPO handstamps corresponding most closely to type 8A1.1. Also drawn from official sources is a list of TPOs thought likely but not yet recorded on stamp or cover - an area of potentially fruitful hunting in which I believe I might have two part strikes of the Tanta-Basyun there mentioned.

Lest anyone imagine that TPO study is now a closed book, I illustrate a recent find of my own: an unrecorded Mansura-Kafr Saqr / & V.V. / T.P.O. of the type 6A1.6, on the reverse of a 1929 returned Registered cover from Bab el Luq to Burg Nur; and mention that in Cairo last year, in examining some 10,000 modern commercial covers, I came across a single TPO - Suhag-Asyut, type similar to 6A1.4, dated 17.3.58 (an error for 85), a poor strike, but unquestionable. TPOs live on! It is to be hoped that Professor Smith will honour the QC with UPDATA from this book, which sets the pattern for the way ahead in publication of "The Book".

*Peter Smith still has a few copies of the book, at £4 each (plus \$2.62 for overseas Air Mail); copies also available from the Mobile Post Office Society, RFD No 1, Box 91, Contocook, NH 03229, United States (\$6, plus 27c surface or \$2.89 air overseas); from Peter Feltus, PO Box 5339, Berkeley, Calif. 94705, United States; or Vera Trinder Ltd, 39 Bedford Street, London WC2.

" THE TRAVELLING POST OFFICES OF EGYPT " by Peter A S Smith
- discoveries reported by Mr J M Murphy in his review of this book

(above) MANSURA - KAFR SAQR / & V V / T.P.O. (type 6A1.6)
(below) T.P.O. / SUHAG - ASYUT (type similar to 6A1.4)

