

PHILATELIC BULLETIN



Sarasota Philatelic Club

2023

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Stamp Quiz



Here is this month's Stamp Quiz. Part of a stamp is shown here. Can you guess the country, stamp, and denomination? The stamp quiz stamps will always be definitives and not particularly uncommon! Here's a hint: this series had three major designs and this stamp was issued in 1921. If you think you know it, please send your guesses to the me at:

centonzevincent@gmail.com. Good luck!

A Tale of Two Calendars

By Vince Centonze

Two covers are shown here which, at first glance, seem quite perplexing. Figure 1 shows the address side of a 1907 postcard from a British Army camp in "Candia," on the island of Crete. Candia was an older name for the Cretan capitol city, Heraklion. The background to this is that the British Army was in Crete as part of an international expeditionary force sent to the island in 1897. It included Great Britain, France, Austria-Hungary, the German Empire, the Russian Empire, and the Kingdom of Italy. Because of disagreements regarding the scope of the mission, the Germans and Austro-Hungarians subsequently pulled out of the expedition. The forces were ostensibly there for peace-keeping purposes when the majority Christian Greek population of Crete aspired to independence from the Ottoman Empire. To keep Greece and Turkey from warring over the issue, and to keep opposing Cretan factions at bay, the international force divided the island into zones of responsibility with Great Britain assuming responsibility for the east-central part, including the capitol, Heraklion. Therefore, most postcards sent by members of the British forces are found with Heraklion postmarks.

The card was sent to Victoria, Australia. It is franked with a strip of five 1-lepta stamps of the first Crete definitive issue (Crete Scott 50) for a proper foreign printed matter postcard franking of 5 lepta. The stamps are canceled with postmarks with an illegible place name, but clearly dated 14 October 1907. It transited Egypt and bears an Alexandria postmark dated 1 November and a Suez postmark dated 2 November 1907. The Suez postmark is a less common type found with a star above the date band (Smith Type XI-1). According to Peter Smith's book, *Egypt Stamps and Postal History, A Philatelic Treatise*, 1907 was the first year the star postmarks were placed in use. Figure 2 on the next page shows the picture side of the postcard. The British forces encampment was on the Venetian walls, a massive bastion which surrounds Candia, built in the Fifteenth Century by the Kingdom of Venice.



Figure 1. Address side of postcard sent from Crete to Victoria, Australia. The card appears to have taken two weeks to reach as far as Egypt; however, the two countries operated on different calendars.

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The Prez Sez ...

Dear club members - apologies for the late sending of this Bulletin - 13 members enjoyed a lively Show and Tell at our last meeting; festivities started off with a bang as Fred Olsen treated us to a box full of old catalogs and albums. I for one had a great time finding out what some of my current treasures cataloged for in

Next Meeting:

Tuesday April 2nd - 6:30PM -

Program

Report on Manatee Forever stamp first day ceremony by Frank Blum, followed up by yours truly with a story of finding a "whole bunch" of covers in an unexpected place at Garfield Perry

the early 1900s.

We need a program for May - ideas and volunteers welcomed!! Please send an email if you can help out.

Vince is also looking for short articles for the news letter as well.

Happy Easter!

Pat

A Tale of Two Calendars (*Continued*)

It seems strange that the card apparently took over two weeks to reach Egypt on its way to Australia through the Suez Canal. Alexandria is only about 350 nautical miles from Crete. In actuality, the card took less than a week. Before I explain this, let's consider another postcard.

Figures 3 and 4 on the next page show the address and picture sides, respectively, of a postcard sent from Wallegama, Ceylon, to Candia, Crete. It is franked with two 3-cent Edward VII definitives (Ceylon Scott 167 or 179, depending upon the watermark). The stamps paid the 6-cent foreign postcard rate. There is a barely distinguishable Wallegama cancellation on the stamps; however, elsewhere on the address side is a Colombo double-circle postmark with medium arc broken by a cross pattee at the bottom. The Colombo postmark is dated 11 March 1906. The card bears a Suez postmark (Smith Type VIII) showing that it passed through Suez on 25 March 1906. It then arrived Candia (Heraklion) and received a Heraklion double-circle postmark on 19 March 1906. Your eyes do not deceive you; it does appear that this postcard reached its destination *before* it arrived at a transit point. Was the card sent back to Suez after it arrived at Heraklion? Did the postal clerk in Suez or Heraklion set the wrong date slug in the handstamp device?

The explanation is that Crete and Egypt used two different calendars. Crete used the Julian calendar whereas Egypt had been using the Gregorian calendar since 1875; the Julian calendar was 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar. Therefore, the card was postmarked in Crete on 19 March *based on the Julian calendar*. This would have been 1 April based on the Gregorian calendar – a week after it transited through Suez. The card in Figure 1 took less than a week to travel from Crete to Alexandria because it was cancelled in Heraklion on 14 October on the Julian calendar, which would have been 27 October on the Gregorian calendar. We can now see that it is reasonable that it was postmarked in Alexandria on 1 November.



Figure 2. Picture side of card showing British troops encamped at the base of the Venetian Walls.

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A Tale of Two Calendars (*Continued*)

Most of the Western world used the Julian calendar until Pope Gregory XIII introduced the Gregorian calendar in 1582. Thereafter, many Eastern Orthodox countries, including Russia, Balkan, and Eastern European countries, continued to use the Julian calendar. However, by 1920 most countries had switched to the Gregorian calendar. Greece, which officially incorporated Crete in 1913, was one of the last holdouts, and didn't switch until 1923. Check your collections to see if you have any postal history items with postmarks based on both calendars. Please send any comments to me at: centonzevincent@gmail.com. Happy collecting!



(Left) Figure 3. Address side of a postcard sent from Wallegama, Ceylon, to Candia (Heraklion), Crete. The card was posted on 11 March 1906, transited through Suez, Egypt, on 25 March, but arrived Heraklion on 19 March. The card appears to have arrived one week before it passed through Suez.



(Right) Figure 4. Picture side of real-photo postcard sent from Wallegama, Ceylon, to Candia (Heraklion), Crete. The card, in which the writer seeks a postcard exchange with the addressee, was written on 9 March 1906, and passed through Suez on 25 March, but arrived in Heraklion on 19 March.

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APS Chapter 353

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