

PERSIAN GULF (9) Linga By MAJOR T. L. C. TOMKINS



I CANNOT find any early references to Linga, which I suppose is not surprising, as until it was occupied and used as a base by the Jawasmi in the late 18th century, it was a very small fishing village ; geographically, it lies about 96 miles west from Bandar Abbas, on the Persian shore of the Gulf, and nowadays is a rather straggling town covering about a mile of the coast, but with far fewer inhabitants than it used to have. It has a good anchorage just under a mile off shore, and a small ship-building and repairing industry, but even this has declined from the flourishing concern it once was. I think Linga was passed over by the early Merchant Adventurers on account of the high mountains behind the coastal belt, as these would have made trade difficult with the Persian interior. However, this did not worry the Jawasmi, who were not concerned with legitimate trade anyway, and simply took the town to use as a suitable centre from which to carry out their piratical raids on the Gulf shipping. Linga was one of the pirate strongholds which was attacked by the East India Expedition in 1809 under the command of a Captain Seton, who occupied the town without undue resistance. Unfortunately, on the return to Bombay of this punitive expedition, in 1810, the Jawasmi who had been "Scotched but not killed" raised their ugly heads again, and by 1816 it was estimated that they had a force of about 100 vessels of varying sizes, of which a number were based on Linga. Their depredations, carried out as far away as the coasts of India, led to the expedition of 1819 under General Keir, which, as I have related, finally put an end to piracy as a pastime in the Gulf.

Actually, it was largely due to this expedition that we began to gain some knowledge of the various out of the way parts of the coast, as in the previous expedition many of the pirate vessels escaped by hiding in the various rocky inlets and creeks along the coast, and the thorough exploration of these, with the intent to wrinkle them out, resulted in the eventual charting of the whole coast line.

After the general treaty of Peace, the inhabitants of Linga turned their attention to the more lawful occupation of pearling, and for a time in the 19th century it was the chief market for pearls for Persia and the East. Eventually it lost much of its former importance as Bahrain became the centre of the industry, and today the population has shrunk from about 25,000 to under 3,000. There is however, a British political agent there, and the Intermediate B.I. Boats call at the port once a fortnight.

An Indian post office opened about 1867, and the first cancellations I have seen are Type A with dates in the late 1860's. These were followed a few years later by Type 2A used by itself or in duplex with 2B, which had the office number 21 in the centre. In common with the other Gulf Ports, Linga was for a time in the 70's under Karachi, and used Type 3 in conjunction with 3 (1). This has K-5 between horizontal bars with the sub-office number 2 over the central stroke. Linga being sub-office 2 under Bushire. Later when Linga came under the Bombay circle, Type 3 can be found with either 3A or 3B either separately, or in duplex. During the 90's Type 5 came into use with three thick bars outside the circle, and this was followed in the early 1900's by Type 7 ; this I have on the last issue of Queen Victoria, and on Edward VII up to 1912. With the introduction of the K.G. V issues, a new cancellation was employed, Type 8, with the usual killer, and this appears to have remained in use until the post office closed in 1923. Type 11a, a single circle of 25 mm. diameter has been seen on the issues of K.G. V with dates during the latter part of the 1914-18 war and just after. Whilst few of these markings are really rare, many of them, especially the earlier ones, are hard to come by, and not nearly so common as some of the other ports. Early examples on entire are distinctly scarce however, and even some of the later ones want a bit of finding.



(To be continued.)

Next Port : MAHOMMERA.



Transjordan Notes

Our Beirut (Lebanon) correspondent, Mr. A. E. T. Gelat, informs us that a fourth overprint of PALESTINE has been applied on the 5, 10, 12, 15 and 20 mils. The 5 and 20 are very closely matched to the earlier prints, but the others are crimson—a very distinctive shade. In addition to the PALESTINE error on the 50 mils, already described in our pages, the 1 mil of the overprinted Palestine U.P.U. has been found with inverted overprint, and the PLAESTINE error appears on stamp 35 of the 4 mils. This was, however, spotted early in the "run" and corrected.

PERSIAN GULF



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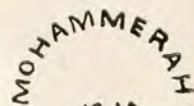
7



7a

(10) Mahommera

By Major T. L. C. TOMKINS



10 JA

20

7b

Crossing the "Ts" (Continued from page 177.)

The South African cover does not conform to pattern (or rule, presumably), for it is very bold in its request for sixpence more to pay. This may have been handstamped at either end for all the evidence it affords, but the amount is collected in full.

On the top right I have shown a 5 cent Belgian stamp used as a postage due "label" by being handstamped with the ubiquitous "T". The amount of surcharge is thus automatically recorded, as the face value is also the due amount to be collected.

Many countries have issued these overprinted stamps for use in this service. Ethiopia uses a round-cornered triangle, apex down, bearing an Amharic inscription, and the prescribed letter "T". Albania used some curious specimens, one of which is an ornamental letter with floral adhesions overprinted on a current definitive; Bulgaria used a very bold "T" overprint within a circle (bottom centre); and I have a Danish definitive handstamped with the "T", very similar in appearance to the Belgian specimen depicted. As both these latter countries have regular series of postage dues, these examples are probably only used when such "labels" are not available for some reason. The catalogues give very many examples of curious and interesting "dues" that well repay study, and a specialist collection should prove very well worth while.

At the bottom left I have shown a typical French stamp. Many of these are pen-cancelled, and an extraordinary number seem to have been deliberately torn in addition, either through careless separation, or as further means of cancellation. I find it very difficult to make a collection of French unmutilated copies. Our own are often cancelled by the postmen with an indelible-pencil cross or stroke, but many pass through without being cancelled in any way at all.

Reference has been made in these columns to the difficulty in obtaining mint specimens of British postage dues. I have seen it in print that they are readily obtainable from the G.P.O., London, and all that one has to do is to send a remittance for the exact amount of the face value, plus a self-addressed registered envelope, and a set will be sent. The Editor will no doubt confirm this. (Dealers only.—Ed.)

Finally, I am not responsible for the currency conversions exemplified above. I have always understood that U.P.U. based all their calculations upon the franc on the old gold basis of an exchange value of 10d. per franc. The 138 centimes (not 1.38 frs., you will note) would thus be about 1s., not the 2s. 6d. assessed. The condominium stamps of the New Hebrides occur to me in this connection. In this series, it will be remembered, the gold basis is used, and the 1d. stamp is valued at 10 centimes French.

But, perhaps, the numbers are not a values assessment, but the "office of origin" number, and I may be entirely wrong in my surmise, but if so, some acute reader will not hesitate to put me right.

Here then is a most intriguing field for further research, and the result may be that other readers and contributors will have additional information (and corrections!) to add to these notes.

THE historian Pliny, writing in the first century A.D., in his description of the coasts of the Gulf, mentions the city of Charax, founded by Alexander the Great, as a "city situate at the furthest extremity of the Arabian Gulf . . . having the Tigris on the right, and the Eulaeus on the left, and lies on a piece of ground three miles in extent, just between the confluence of those streams". A description which fits Mahommera, or as it is known in Persia, Khorramshahr, standing as it does at the confluence of the Shatt al-Arab, and the Karun River. Indeed it has so been identified by writers, notably Schoff, in his translation of the Periplus.

However, nothing is known for certain, and the town seems to have been overlooked by the rival European countries during the centuries when they were engaged in the race for trade supremacy, and it is not until the Anglo-Persian War of 1856-57, when a naval force under Commander Rennie bombarded Mahommera on March 26th, 1857, prior to occupying the town. Later it came into more prominence as a port of call for the service run by the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Co., and with the development of trade a British Vice-Consulate was established in 1890. This was followed by an Indian Post Office in 1892.

The modern Mahommera is now the chief port of Persia, and is about 52 odd miles upstream from the mouth of the Shatt al-Arab, near Abadan, the terminus of the oil pipe line.

Cancellations

The first type I have seen cancelling Indian stamps is Type 4, a circle of 25 mm. diameter with three thick bars outside. This cancellation is spelt "Mohammera". Type 4 also exists with the alternative spelling of "Mahommera". This cancellation apparently lasted for a good many years, as I have it on the later issues of Queen Victoria and some of the early Edward VII's.

In the early 1900's Type 7 came into use, and can be found on all the Indian issues up to the time when the Post Office was closed in 1923. During the period of the Great War of 1914-18, Type 7a is found; this is a single circle of 26 mm. diameter, with the office name curved round the upper portion, spelt either "Mohammerah" with the final "h", or "Mahommera" without. Copies of this last cancellation have also been seen where the surrounding circle has hardly printed, which gives the appearance of a curved name only, as in 7b. All these cancellations are scarce on values over 2½ annas, and some of the earlier ones are not nearly so common on even the lower values as compared with others of the Gulf ports.

Bavaria One (Continued from page 171.)

(Bibliography:—A. Bungerz: Numbers Printed, Demand, and Catalogue Value, 1916; Johann Brunner: The Postage Stamps of Bavaria (1849 to 1920), 1924; Dr. H. Munk: Kohl Handbook of Postage Stamps, 1926; Mueller-Mark: Old Germany Under the Magnifying Glass, Vol. II, Bavaria, 1947; Fritz Sebastian: 350 Years Thurn and Taxis, 1948; Professor Dr. E. Stenger: Sheet Arrangement and Numbers Printed of the Postage Stamps of Bavaria, 1921; Teubner: Postal History Items of Bavaria, 1916.)