

Exhibit Name

Dates
The Genus Phoenix
The Story of the palm genus Phoenix with the emphasis
on the date palm (Phoenix dactylifera) and its relation to man.

Author

Phillip J. Stager

Awards: This one frame exhibit has been awarded several national Platinum medals and two or three FIB one frame gold medals..

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DATES

THE GENUS *PHOENIX*

A brief study of the palm genus *Phoenix* with the emphasis on the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) and its relation to man.



Several date palms grow within the walled village on this trial color die proof with blank value tablet.

	Page
I. Title and Plan of Exhibit	1
1. Classification & Distribution	2
2. Varieties of <i>Phoenix</i>	3
3. The Date Palm (<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>)	4
3.1 Origins	
3.2 Cultivation	
3.3 Palm of Life	
4. Symbol of the Middle East	12
5. Education	16

1. CLASSIFICATION AND DISTRIBUTION

Let us give our due to Carl von Linne who developed the binomial system of nomenclature for living things - boring, maybe, but quite necessary.



This method uniquely identifies our palms:

- KINGDOM: Plantae (plants)
- DIVISION: Tracheophytes (vascular plants)
- CLASS: Bilopsida (vascular plants)
- ORDER: Principes - the prince of plants
- FAMILY: Palmae - i.e. Palms
- SUB FAMILY: Coryphoideae
- TRIBE: Phoeniceae
- GENUS: Phoenix
- SPECIES: Approximately 17

The sharp spines at the base of the fronds are an easy recognition feature - clearly visible on this postal card's *Phoenix sp.*



The palm on the indicium is an African Oil Palm (*Elaeis guineensis*).



DISTRIBUTION : Palms in the genus *Phoenix* are strictly Old World palms. Their natural range is from the -

Canary Islands
in the West

through N. Africa
and the Mid East

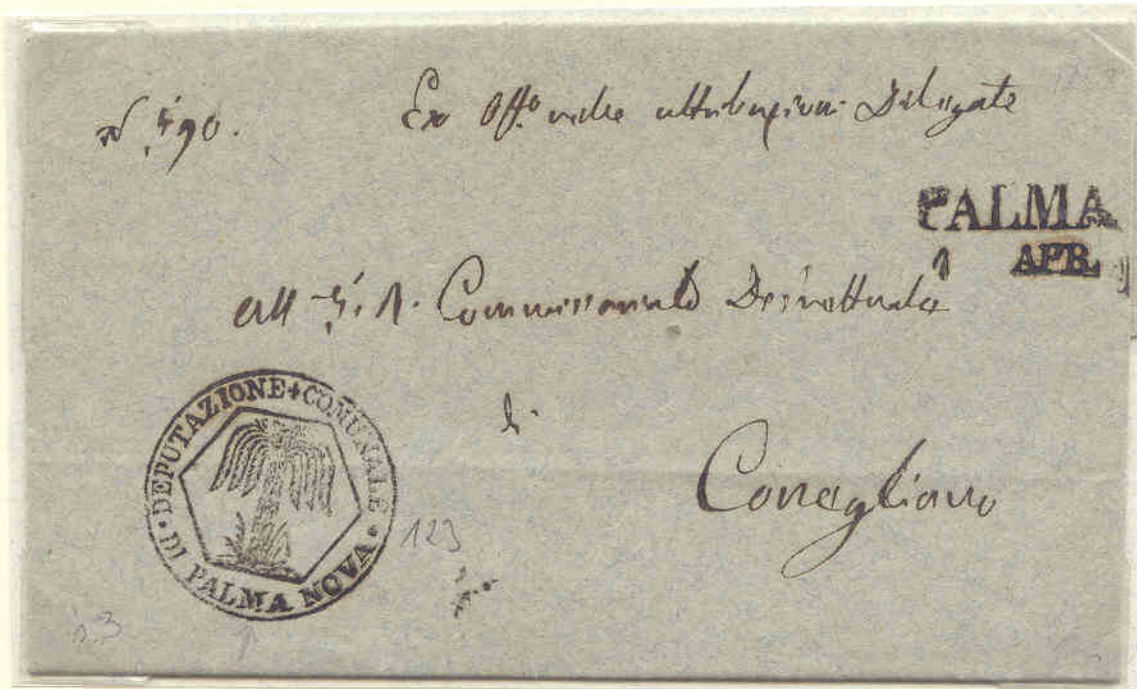
Eastward
to a few
Pacific
Islands

and South
into Africa



2. VARIETIES OF PHOENIX

A stylized date palm graces the town seal of Palma Nova (Lombardy-Venetia) in 1858 and also justifies the free postage.



The Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) is very cold hardy and is found throughout the Mediterranean where it is an important landscape tree.



2. VARIETIES OF *PHOENIX* (contd)

The Reclinata Palm (*Phoenix reclinata*), a African native and a vigorous clumping palm, has been introduced throughout the temperate world ...



Many clumps line the Molindi River above.

...and the Wild Date Palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*) is found in Africa and the Indian sub-continent where it is an important source of sugar, thatch, and lumber.



Die Proof without denomination



Booklet Pane

3. THE DATE PALM (*Phoenix dactylifera*)

The most important palm, economically and historically, in the genus *Phoenix* is the Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*).

3.1 ORIGINS AND DISPERSAL The Date Palm originated in the Middle East at least 6000 years ago as man developed agriculture.

The importance of the tree was recognized in the Code of Hammurabi ...



... and by frequent references in the Bible ...



... and later in the Koran.



Date palms were well known to the ancient Greeks as evidenced by references in Homer's *Odyssey*. A date grows in the shadow of the Acropolis even today.



Copy of Indicum

Homer



3.1 ORIGINS AND DISPERSAL (contd)

Date palms are a design element in the capitals of this temple at Thebes.



The ancient Phoenicians gave us the Greek word *Phoenix* & spread the tree on their expeditions.



Darius of Persia featured date palms on his royal seal over 2500 years ago.



Date palms were cultivated in pharaonic times as far south as modern Sudan, and they can still be seen around General Gordon's statue in Khartoum.



Plate Proofs

The scene on the stamps below has changed little in over 3000 years.



Port Sudan Mails 13 Nov 1942 Sudanese Civil Censorship Δ
 Khartoum 16 Nov 1942 Nigerian Censorship \circ

3.1 ORIGINS AND DISPERSAL (contd)

With the Muslim conquest of North Africa came new date cultivars,



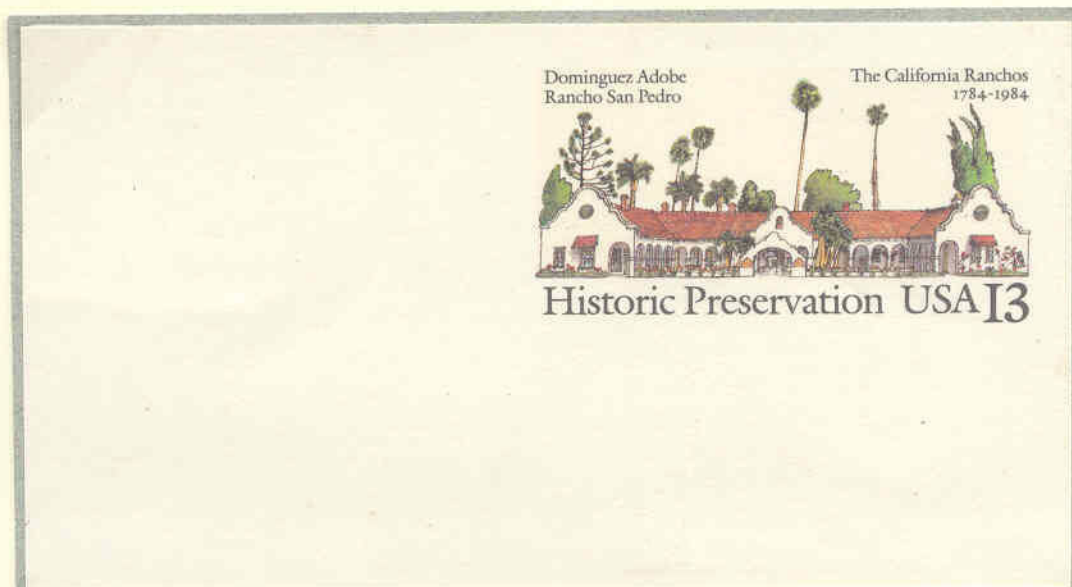
Essay

which were later established in Southern Spain.



Even today, Elche remains the center of the Spanish date industry.

Spanish colonizers introduced the date palm to the dry South West of the Americas - which produced such town and city names as -



The taller palms are *Washingtonia* sp. The shorter are *Phoenix* sp.



3.2 CULTIVATION

Successful cultivation of the Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) requires a climate that is -

hot
sunny
&
dry



and with an abundant supply of ground water or irrigation from local wells...



or from an oasis



or from aqueducts



...since tropical humidity causes the fruit to rot before maturing.



3.2 CULTIVATION (cont'd)

Once the inflorescences are pollinated, the fruit matures in the summer heat...



... and turns a golden color and is ready for harvesting...



... and packing and transport to world and local markets.



(political correctness had not been invented when this brand was popular)



BACK COVER 1935 George V Silver Jubilee Booklet

3.2 CULTIVATION (cont'd)

Date palms produce fruit most prolifically when planted in groves where one male tree can easily fertilize one hundred female trees.



Suckers from mature trees are used for propagation.



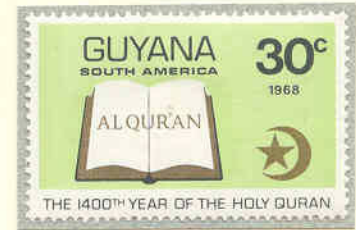
Note the many young trees on the air letter sheet.

3.3 PALM OF LIFE

The Holy Family pauses in a date palm grove on the flight into Egypt.



Of the 26 references to palms or dates in the Koran, sixteen mention them as evidence of Allah's bounty.



Dates have sustained travelers throughout the ages, whether going by ...

foot



camel



motorcycle



land rover



Even a solitary date palm could be a welcome sign at the end of a long journey.



4. SYMBOLOGY
4.1 WAR AND PEACE

The hated swastika appears over a date palm on this Afrika Corps parcel stamp.

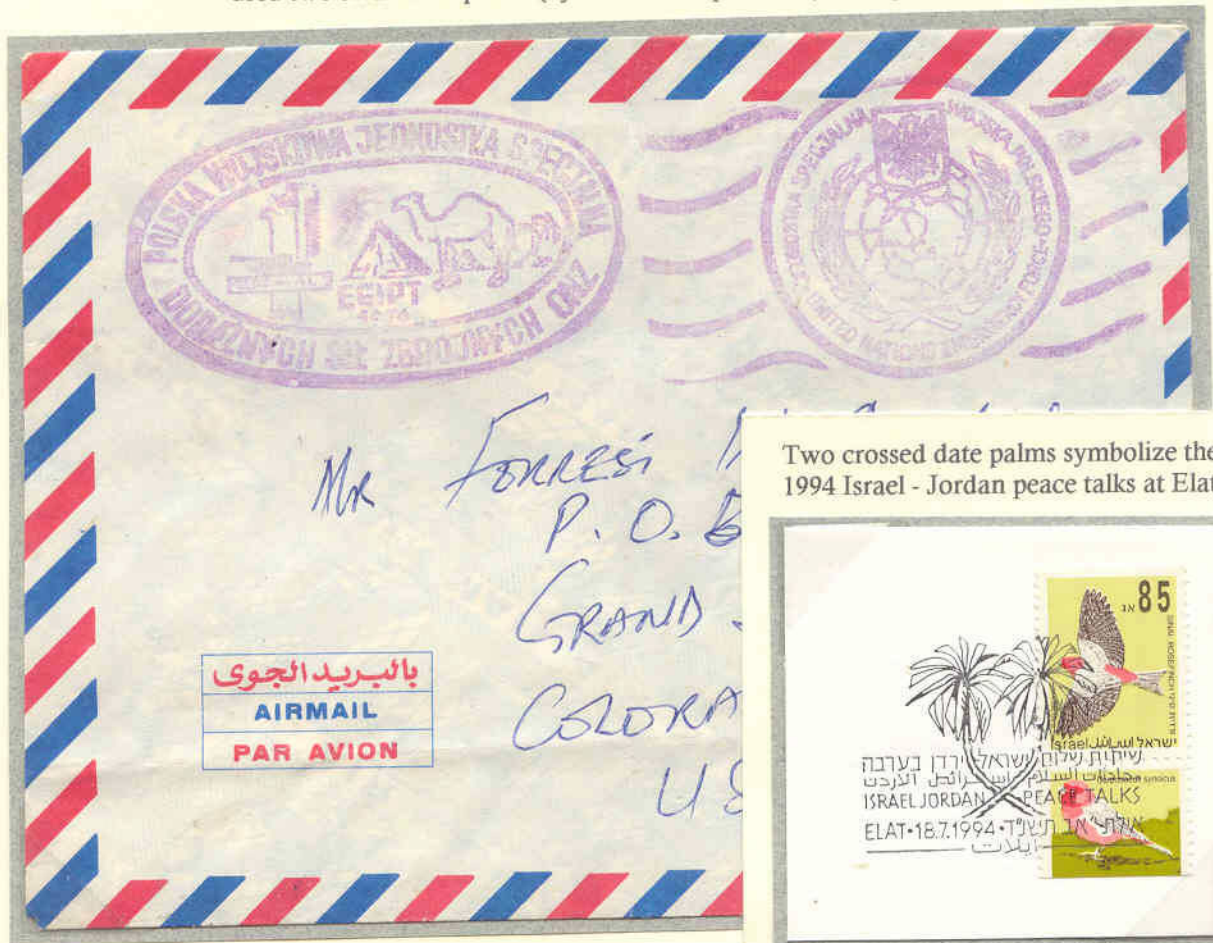


(Forgery)

And in a timeless scene, a fierce Mujahid warrior rides from a date palm grove ready for battle.



In 1976 the Polish contingent of the U.N. Emergency Force in Egypt used two small date palms (by the camel's posterior) in its postmark.



Two crossed date palms symbolize the 1994 Israel - Jordan peace talks at Elat.

4. SYMBOLOGY
4.2 POLITICAL

From an ancient Hebrew coin to a modern Iraqi Official stamp, the date palm serves as a symbol of authority .



The Saudi coat of arms features two crossed swords over a date palm,



and the State of Qatar coat of arms features two date palms next to a dhow.



The booklet is a model of simplicity compared to the customs document with its bureaucratic & authoritarian:

- .1 Revenue stamp
- .2 Two handstamps
- .3 Embossed stamp
(under rectangular handstamp)

4. SYMBOLOGY (cont'd)

4.3 COMMERCIAL Date palms have been used to advertise all sorts of products including...
German cigars...



a radio station in sunny Monaco...



a Grade B adventure movie...



and the 1929 Mediterranean Flight of the Graf Zeppelin.



4. SYMBOLOGY (cont'd)

4.4 TRAVEL

The date palm suggests warmth and a subtropical Mediterranean climate

So join us on the M.S. Monte Rosa for a voyage to...



a palm festival in Hyeres...



or to Palermo at the Hotel et des Palmes,



or the beach at Cannes



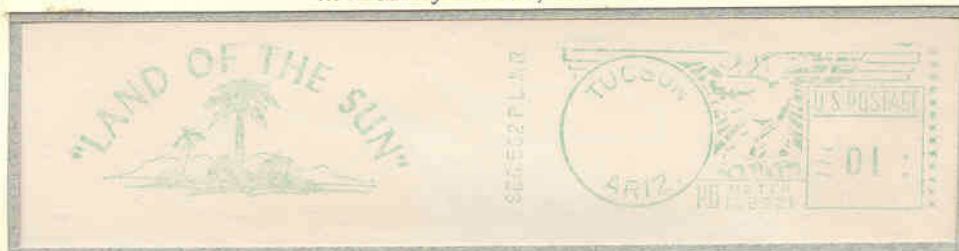
... or onto sunny Monte Carlo for the winter.



Those of us in N. America may prefer to spend winter by the date palms in Death Valley, California or...



... in sunny Tucson, Arizona.



5. EDUCATION

To learn more about palm trees and especially date palms, may we suggest you -

... contact the California Date Growers Association,



... visit the Palm House at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Adelaide, S. Australia where a Pygmy Date Palm (*Phoenix roebelinii*) graces the lawn...



... or the Jardin de Nouzha in Alexandria, Egypt with its tall *Phoenix dactylifera* in the background ...



...and when in England be sure to visit the Palm House at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew.



£7 4p for airmail postage of large book on palms