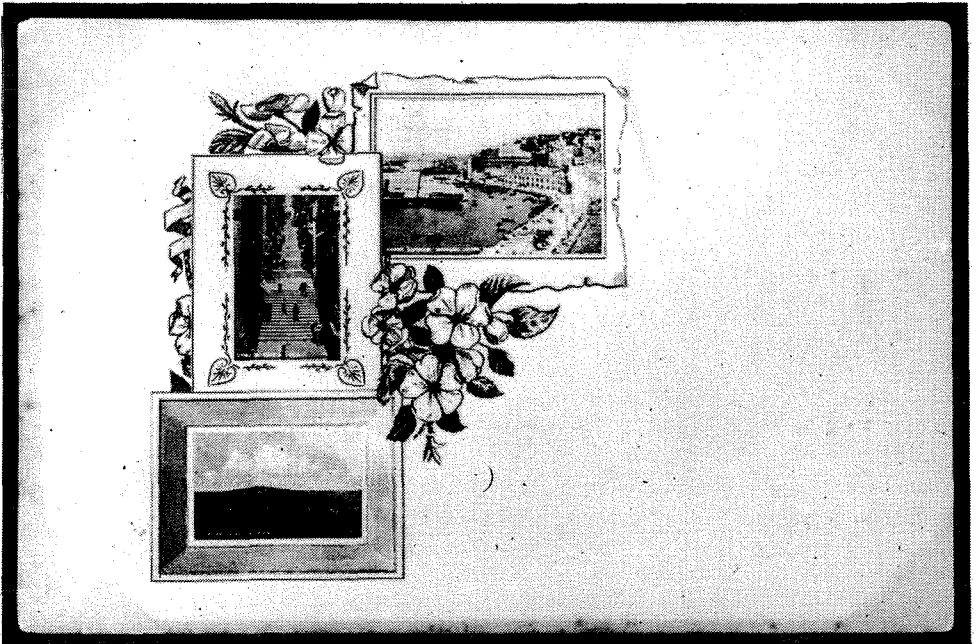


WHEN DID MALTA FIRST PRINT ITS OWN PICTURE POSTCARDS?

By
Hadrian Wood

Which were the first picture postcards printed in Malta, and when were they issued? These are questions occasionally asked by serious collectors and students of old Maltese postcards. In the absence of any known records, one can only speculate.

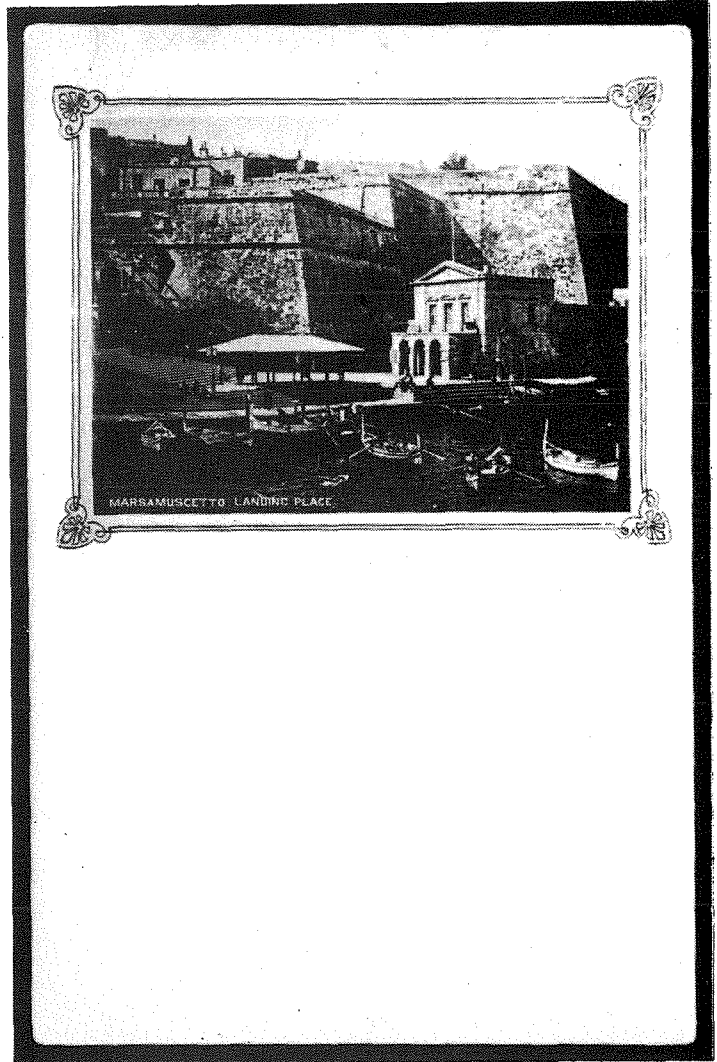
The picture quality of four early postcards in my collection suggests that they may have been locally produced. Three of these come from one series and the fourth, which is smaller than the normal postcard, and roughly the size of what is termed a court card, appears to be a one-off. None of these cards have been postally used, so it is difficult to date them accurately. But since all have "undivided backs", it would be safe to assume they were issued prior to March, 1906. None give any indication of printer or publisher.



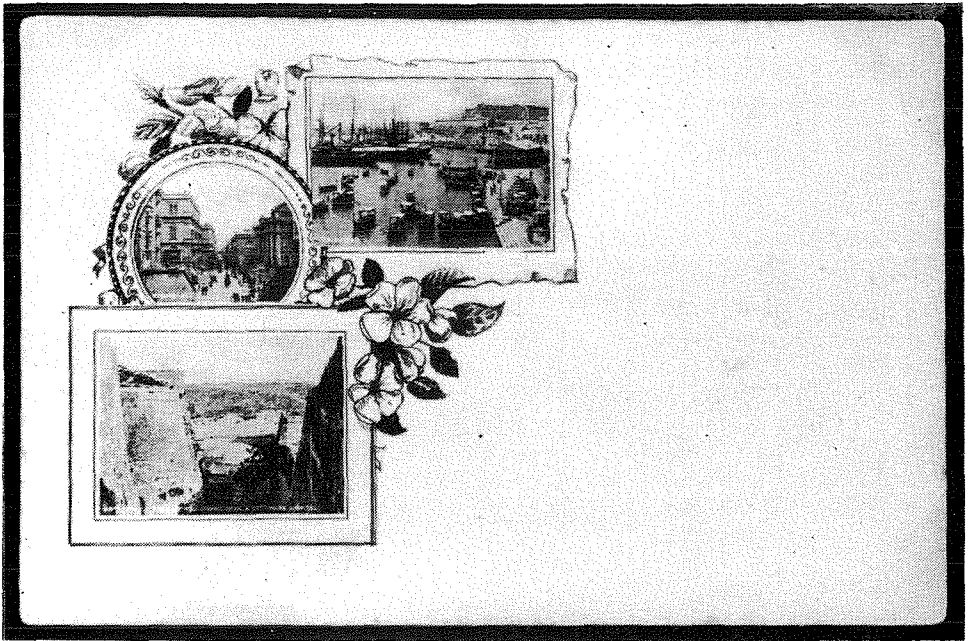
*Top insert – Grand Harbour showing Upper Barracca
Centre insert – Strada Santa Lucia
Bottom insert – St Paul's Bay and Island*

At a time when most of the picture postcards produced were of a high standard, by comparison, the printing quality of these cards leaves much to be desired. Lack of sophisticated printing equipment is evident in spite of obvious efforts to make the picture side as attractive as possible. Judging by the extreme rarity of these four postcards today, they are unlikely to have been issued in large numbers.

Could it be that an enterprising Maltese publisher, whilst trying to capitalise on the postcard boom of the time, tested the market with a few home made cards? If so, were these cards, in fact, the result of Malta's first attempt at printing its own picture postcards?



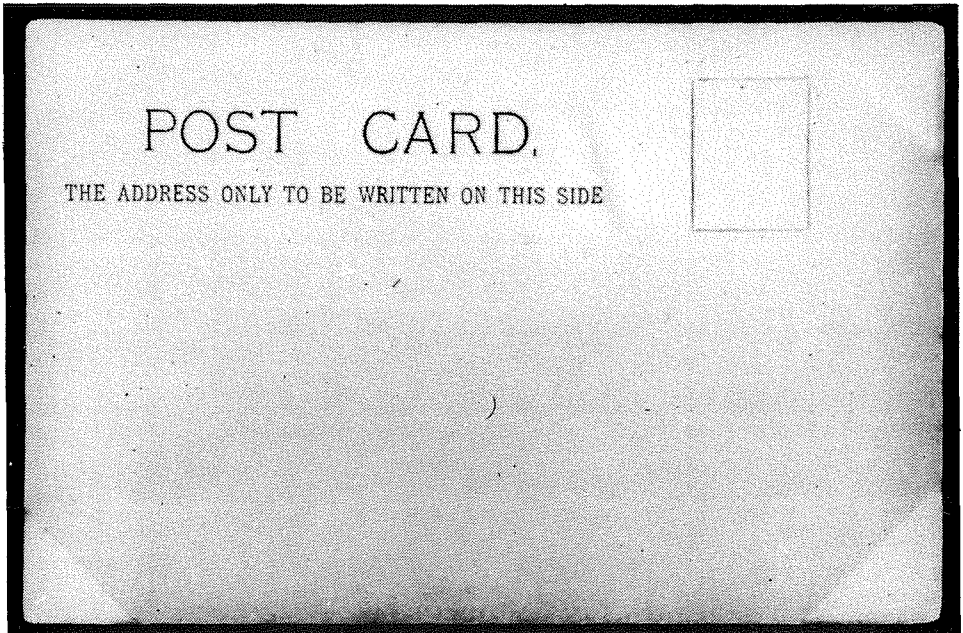
*Marsamuscetto Landing
Place*



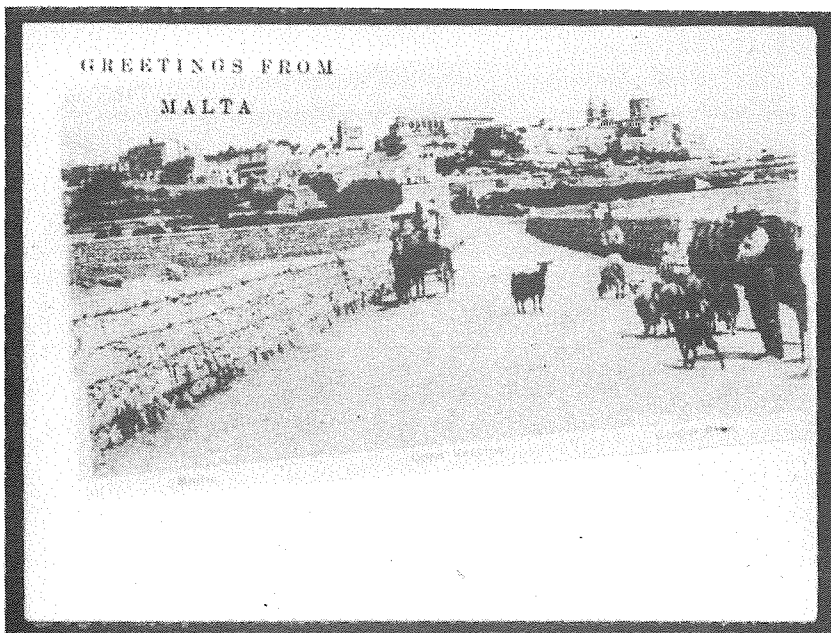
Top insert — The Marina

Round insert — Strada Reale

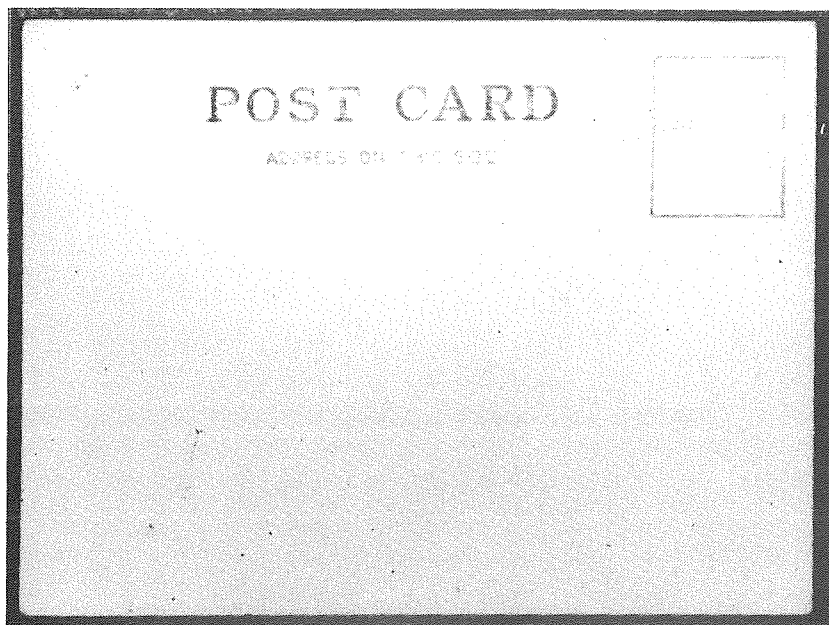
Bottom insert — Porta Reale Ditch showing Dockyard Creek and Cottonera Hospital



Style of back of the three cards illustrated



Malta Citta Vecchia (Cassar Phot.)



Style of back of above card