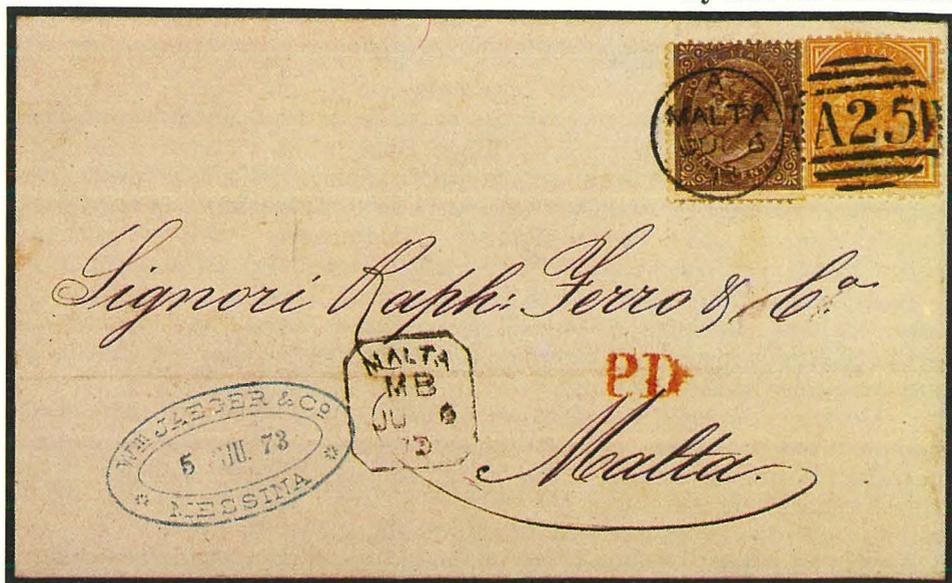


# The "BOITE MOBILE" Mark of Malta

by Dr. A. Bonnici



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The Boite Mobile (Milestone) Mark sent from the General Post Office London on the 15th October 1857 was used in Malta in 1858 having the following characteristics:

Height 19.½ mm                      Width 19.0 mm inscription in four lines.  
MALTA – MB – Month and Day – YEAR.

This cachet was normally struck in black on the front of letters posted on Packet Ships. Since the early 1820 period, Malta became a very important centre for commerce and consequently a considerable number of ships plying the Mediterranean routes called on Malta. Articles 15 and 16 of the Anglo French Postal convention of 1843 provided for the collection of mail which was posted on board ships either prior to departure or during the voyage. Arrangements were made with the owners of private ships entrusted to deliver mail for a letter box to be placed against the main mast of each "Packet" or in a most conspicuous place to receive such letters as the Public wanted to deposit in between the closing of the mails and departures of vessels entrusted with their conveyance. The "Movable Box" was called so because it was to be immediately consigned to the Post Master who opened it, and took out the letter and returned it to the Agent who brought it. This was the original rule which did not include the use of a special Posting Mark at the Malta Post Office, as was the case of certain British Channel Ports. But in 1856 there was a new agreement containing new specifications and from this period the principal ports for landing the Maritime "Boites Mobile", applied marks of a particular type for identification purposes, in the case of Malta as illustrated in the cover above. The earliest date recorded of use of this cachet is the 10th July 1858 and the latest 30th August 1879.