

Collecting on a Shoestring –

Dumex Ad Postcards to Nordic Countries

by Roger Cichorz

Dumex Company conducted a brief advertising campaign from September 1971 through March 1973 for its tetracycline antibiotic drug, Dumocycline, that targeted doctors in Denmark, Finland, and Sweden. This campaign consisted of pictorial postcards with printed script messages on the address side of picture postcards. Strangely, the script messages were in the written language of the country represented on the picture side and it was unlikely the recipient physicians could read nor understand them. Thankfully, for the recipient's sake, below the script message appears a printed five-line text message in the addressee's language. For example, for a card posted to a doctor in Sweden, this five-line message is in Swedish.

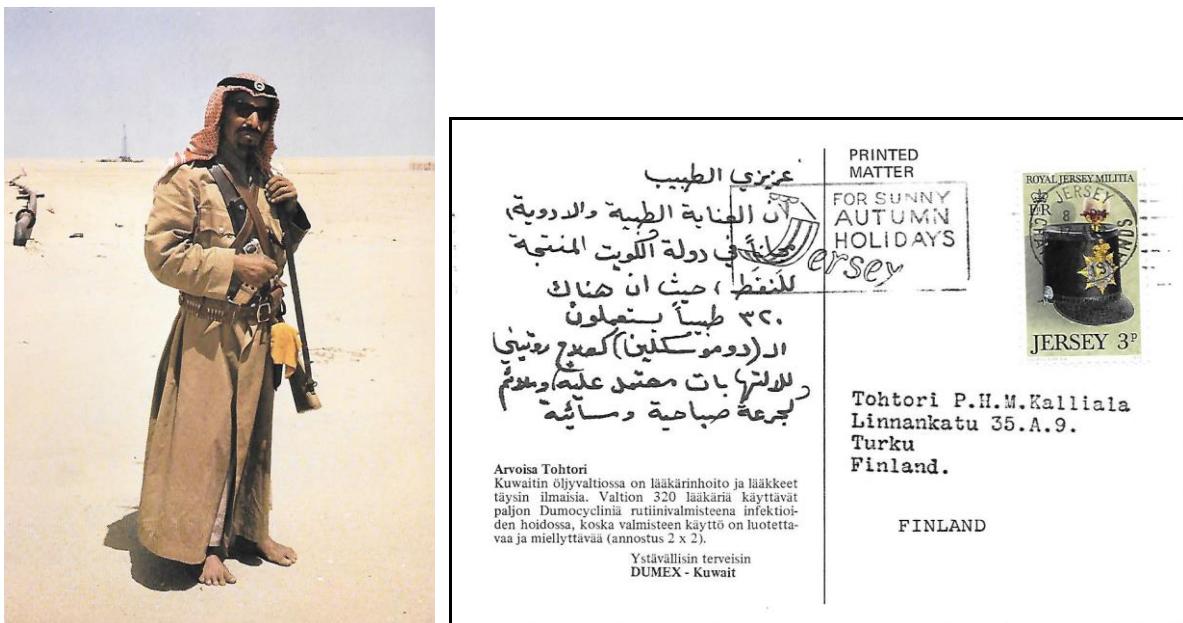


Figure 1

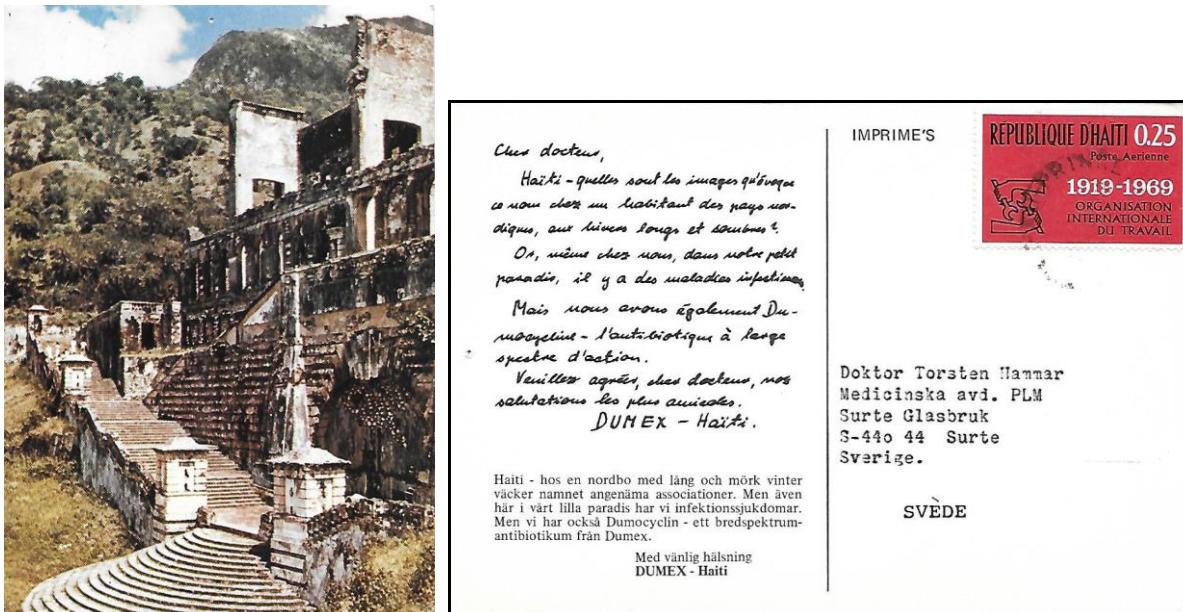


Figure 2

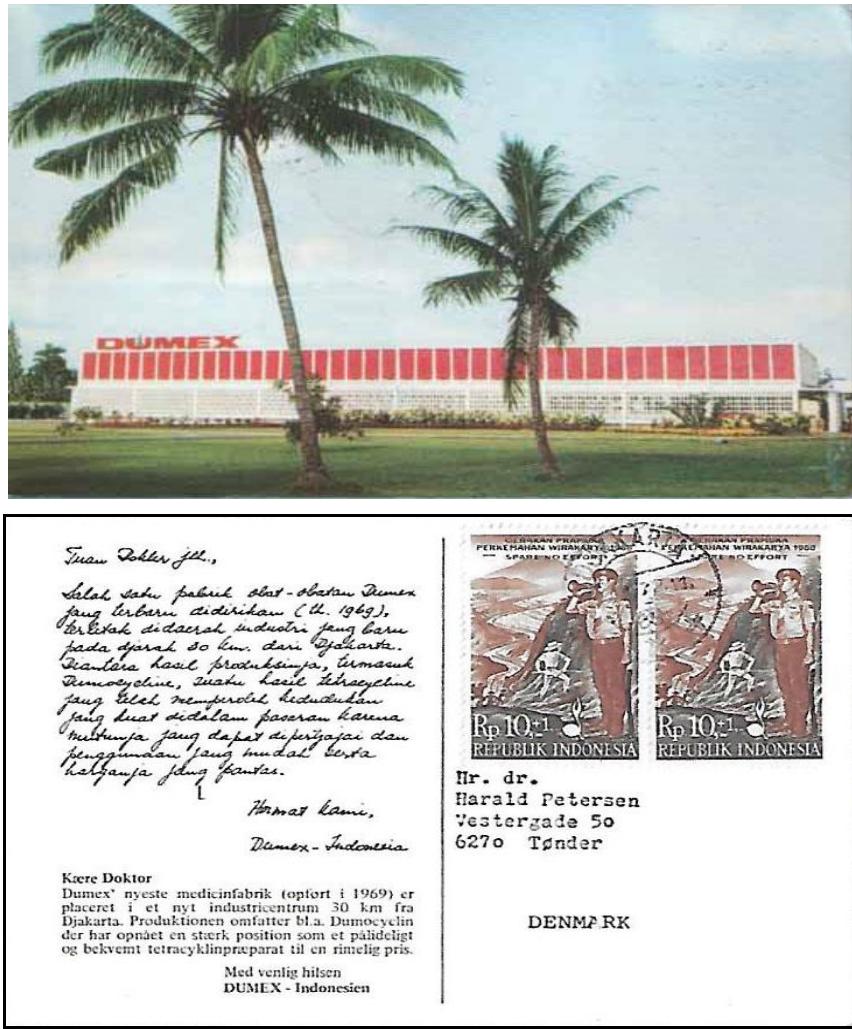


Figure 3

Generally, these cards would be posted from the country whose picture and script message appears on the card, but not always. The card showing a Kuwaiti soldier guarding an oil well pipeline from DUMEX – Kuwait (Figure 1) and posted to a doctor in Finland has an Arabic message but was posted from Jersey, with the Jersey 3d postage stamp bearing a Jersey slogan postmark dated August 17, 1972 cds. The DUMEX – Haiti card to Sweden (Figure 2) is franked with a Haitian stamp canceled by an indistinct postmark, and the DUMEX – Indonesian card to Denmark (Figure 3) is franked with two Indonesian stamps tied by a 1972 Djakarta bridge type postmark.

The respective English translations for the five-line texts of the cards shown as Figures 1, 2, and 3 are:

- **Mr. Doctor** / In the oil state of Kuwait, medical care and medicines are completely free. Dumocycline is widely used by 320 physicians in the state as a routine remedy for the treatment of infections because it is reliable and pleasant to use (2 x 2 dosage). / Regards / **DUMEX – Kuwait**
- Haiti - in a northern country with a long and dark winter, the name evokes pleasant associations. But even in our little paradise we have infectious diseases. But we also have Dumocycline - a broad-spectrum antibiotic from Dumex. / Sincerely / **DUMEX - Haiti**
- **Dear Doctor** / Dumex's newest medicine factory (built in 1969) is located in a new industrial center 30 km from Djakarta. Production includes Dumocycline, which here obtained a strong position as a reliable and convenient tetracycline preparation at a reasonable price. / Yours sincerely / **Dumont – Indonesia**

These Dumex cards are infrequently encountered today but when they appear sporadically in eBay auctions or as “Buy It Now” (net-priced) items, there is little demand for them and they generally can be purchased in the \$4 to \$6 range, which qualifies them for my “under \$10 criterion” as suitable subjects for this “Collecting on a Shoestring” article series. These “junk mail” advertising cards of the early 1970s can be pleasing additions to Nordic modern-postal-history collections and to medicine, drug, and pharmaceutical topical/thematic collections.

The informative Website (<http://www.deardoctorpostcards.com>) titled “The ‘Dear Doctor’ Postcard Collector Page,” maintained by my friend Tom Fortunato, lists ten face-different cards in the Dumex series. However, of the three cards shown here, only the Kuwaiti card is on the list, so at least 12 and possibly more Dumex cards exist. Consequently, there is more “research” required for a complete listing of the Dumex cards.

Besides these advertising postcards to Nordic doctors, Dumex Company has a historical Scandinavian connection as A/S Dumex was established in 1946 by the East Asiatic Company (EAC), which came into being in 1897. EAC was established by the firm of Andersen & Co., which had commenced trading in Thailand 13 years earlier. The founder of EAC was the then sea-captain H.N. Andersen, who naturally looked upon shipping as the main activity, but from the start he pursued a policy of mutually beneficial interplay between shipping, trade, and industry. Over the years, EAC grew into a large international conglomerate and by the end of 1920s, EAC and its subsidiaries had over 20,000 employees on six continents.

EAC continued to expand after WWII and diversified even more and founded A/S Dumex in 1946. The Dumex business was based on pharmaceutical and nutrition products and by 1960 had manufacturing facilities in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. It subsequently grew and opened operating subsidiaries in several Asiatic countries and elsewhere by the 1970s. Production of Dumex’s core product Bacitracin, an anti-bacterial agent classified as an antibiotic, began in Oslo in 1954, and in 1961 A/S Dumex in Denmark began production of its tetracycline antibiotic.

During the intervening years from when its advertising postcards were distributed to present times, Dumex, like so many other companies and corporations, was divested from EAC and subjected to a number of acquisitions and mergers. Its pharmaceutical products divisions are now part of Xellia Pharmaceuticals, a specialty pharmaceutical company developing, manufacturing, and commercializing anti-infective treatment against bacterial and fungal infections. Xellia is headquartered in Copenhagen, Denmark, and according to its Website “has a global footprint with manufacturing and commercial operations across Europe, Asia, and North America.” At least, Dumex’s pharmaceuticals operations still retain a Scandinavian presence unlike its nutritional products operations.

Dumex’s food and nutritional products divisions are now Danone Dumex, part of Groupe Danone, a Fortune 500 company that began operations in 1958. Headquartered in Paris, France, Danone Dumex is now regarded as one of the most successful food companies in the world. Danone Dumex manufactures infant and child nutritional products in Singapore and Malaysia, with exports to twenty other countries in Asia, Middle East, Africa and Europe. According to its Website, it is the market leader and ranked number one in overall customer satisfaction in a study conducted by A. C. Nielsen among medical professionals and the retail trade. Danone Dumex was also named as a Top Three Brand Family by Nielsen in 2002 and 2003, as well as Best Employers in Malaysia for 2003 and 2005.

So now, you know the rest of the Dumex story!