

**Stamps and Rates: The Surcharged Agricultural Set on, August 24, 1926**

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Egypt's second set of commemoratives was issued to mark the Twelfth Agricultural and Industrial Exposition, held in Cairo during March 1926. Whether to heighten interest among collectors or unashamedly to fleece them, as well as the 5, 10 and 15 millièmes values, which could be used for normally expected postal rates, there were three higher denominations of 50, 100 and 200 millièmes. The 5m paid the inland postage, the 10m the overseas letter rate to the UK or internal registration, and the 15m paid the overseas rate or overseas registration. There would have been some difficulty in using the 50m genuinely and almost impossible to use the two higher denominations other than on perhaps a parcel card. Bear in mind, though, that the then definitive set, First Portrait Fouad issue, included these high-value stamps and an £EI value as well.

The original high values were printed in optimistic quantities identical to the three lower values, that is, 202,500 of each. For the 200m value this compares reasonably with the Fouad 200m stamp, of which 235,000 were printed. It would seem indicate that the Post Office was expecting collectors to buy the complete set of the commemorative issue. In fact only 52,500 stamps of the 50m stamps were sold and 35,000 each of the two higher values. This may have caused some embarrassment somewhere with only 18 per cent sold overall. The commemoratives were on sale between March 1 and April 30

To avoid wasting the unsold higher-value stamps, they were later surcharged, the 50m, 100m and 200m becoming 5m, 10m and 15m respectively. On cover, these surcharged stamps - if not rare - are far from common and genuinely used as opposed to philatelic covers are certainly not found easily. I have the 5m on cover but used with other stamps and obviously philatelic. Illustrated (*below*) is the 15m/200m surcharged stamp being used to pay the registration rate at the tune of 5m postage and 10m registration fee. While used, it is from a known stamp dealer to a well-known collector of the time, but has been opened so may in some senses been sent for a genuine purpose.



As occasionally happens, I find I have a spare moment, and use it to do the QC: the usual thought is, do I have enough material? When I gathered together all the bits and pieces this time, I found that I am in surplus. In fact, I have enough to fill almost a whole QC. Normally I hold back my own articles, some of them having been written as much as two years ago. So apologies if your article is not here: it will appear soon! But that is no reason not to keep them coming. Their range and depth never fails to surprise me. Thank you.

**Editor**

A second cover (*below*) shows a horizontal strip of three of the 10m/100m to pay the overseas registered rate of 30 millièmes to Greece – 15m postage plus 15m registration fee



The third cover illustrated (*below*) shows two 15m stamps of the original commemorative set covering the same rate. While my research is essentially to show definitives illustrating specific rates with a single stamp, I just felt that these two covers made a nice complementary pair, hence their inclusion in my collection. Early commemoratives properly used on cover, as these appear to be, are not at all common, I find.

