

XLI

Unissued Stamps: Phantoms and Fantasies

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This chapter deals with aborted issues, essays for stamps that were not issued, essays not assigned to a particular issue, certain officially produced labels, and fantasy stamps of unofficial origin.

Aborted Issues

The "Phantom" UPU Issue of 1876

When the UPU (originally General Postal Union) came into being it established new international postal rates, which in the case of Egypt were 1 piaster 20 paras (60 paras) for letters up to 15 grams and 20 paras for printed matter up to 50 grams. Although both of these rates could be paid with the existing stamps (1pi. and 20pa.), it was decided to create special stamps for them¹. The printer of the Second Issue, V. Penasson of Alexandria, was chosen to produce the stamps, no doubt in a desire to have stamps for international mail of a more professional quality than the Government Printing Works at Bulaq was able to produce. Penasson agreed to print the stamps by lithography on the premises of the Government Printing Works, an arrangement stipulated by the Postal Administration in a letter² dated 11 August 1875. A contract was drawn up for five million stamps of 60 paras and one million of 20 paras.

The subsequent internal correspondence on the matter is as amusing as it is revealing. After all arrangements had apparently been settled, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Commerce, Nubar Pasha, spoke with Hussein Bey, Director of the Printing Works, and found much to his surprise that Hussein Bey had not been consulted. On October 6th Nubar Pasha wrote to the Assistant Director of the Posts to ask for an explanation, for Hussein Bey was evidently greatly upset and insisted that his works could do the job by itself. In the end, the entire production was consigned to the Penasson works in Alexandria.

The terms of the contract, delivery to be made within 90 days, implied that the stamps were intended for issue at the beginning of 1876. Penasson produced essays and then moved on to production, but the squabbles over where the printing was to take place had delayed completion of the order. By August 1876, however, two million of the stamps had been printed. At the critical time, shortly before delivery to the Postal Administration was to take place, a disastrous fire destroyed the Penasson printing works and the stamps that had already been printed. The projected issue had to be aborted.



Fig. 1 UPU designs of Penasson.

The design is unusual for being printed on paper having an overall printed tint, with an untinted star and crescent in the middle of each stamp. Several color combinations exist for the 60pa.: wine-red on grey; red, brown, blue, and orange, all on white; bright red and brown on green (vertical format); red-brown on green; greenish blue on green; and orange on green (horizontal format). Some examples are perforated $13\frac{1}{2}$, and others are imperforate. Although Moëns described the horizontal stamps as being perforated 15, I know of them only imperforate (three such were in the Palace Collections of Egypt). The 20pa., in vertical format, is rarer than the 60pa., and no description of its color(s) appears to have been published; a perforated example was in the Palace Collections.

The 20pa. and some of the 60pa. have a blank tablet at the bottom and are probably of proof status. Other proofs of the 60pa. are mentioned by Moëns as being on white paper without the tinted background.

By April 1878 the need for 60pa. stamps vanished, when the UPU letter rate was reduced to 1pi., and the whole project was abandoned.

The Nile Fête Stamps

In 1894 correspondence began between Egypt and De La Rue about an issue of "special stamps" for the occasion of the establishment of the Winter Festivals at Cairo. An attractive design showing a pharaonic goddess seated among papyrus, with the bow of a ceremonial boat near her feet (Fig. 2) was agreed upon. The proposal was carried right through to the final stage of printing the stamps in sheets, on gummed, perforated, watermarked paper: 3m. orange, 5m. red, 1pi. blue. At the last minute the issue was cancelled, for reasons that have not been published. Die proofs, in black on glazed card,

A very few examples of these proposed stamps survived, probably deriving from samples sent to Cairo. There are three designs for the 60pa. stamp, two of which are presumably essays, and one for the 20pa. (Fig. 1). They are well executed, but it is hard to praise them for artistic quality. Apart from esthetics, the

exist for the vignette and for the three value frames. A large variety of bicolored color trials were sent to Egypt, but the final decision was for monocolor. A small quantity of the unissued sheets came on the market with the liquidation of the De La Rue archives.



Fig. 2 The Nile Fête design.

African Games of 1929

A group of seven artist's essays by Hewitt for 10m. and 15m. stamps inscribed JEUX AFRICAINS were sold at an auction by Robson Lowe International in Basel in 1979 (lot 2449). One of the designs is illustrated in the catalog.

Royal Birth Issue

A stamp was proposed in 1938 and artwork put in hand for the birth of a Crown Prince. Since instead a Princess was born, the issue was cancelled.

Dynasty Commemorative of 1941

Preparations for an issue to commemorate the dynasty founded by Mohammed Ali, of which King Farouk was the last crowned representative (his son, Prince Ahmed Fuad, never assumed the throne), were begun in 1941, but the stamps never came to fruition, presumably for political reasons and the circumstances of World War II. Lot 2487 of the Robson Lowe International auction in Basel in 1979 contained artist's essays by Hewitt (illustration included) (Fig. 3).

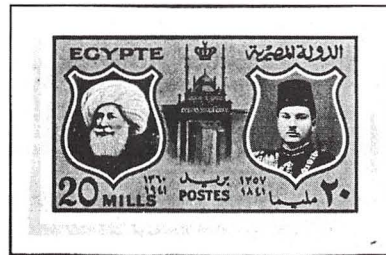


Fig. 3
The dynasty commemorative
(photographic essay).

The El Azhar Millenary Commemoratives of 1942

The El Azhar mosque and its associated theological school was founded in AH361 and its millenary in the Muslim calendar therefore occurred in AH1361 (AD1942). A set of four stamps was printed by the Survey Department and was ready for issue, but was withheld because of an anticipated inflammatory effect at a time of war³. The values were 6, 10, 15, and 20m.; the stock of the last three values was later overprinted 1957 and regularly issued (Chapter XXII)⁴. A set of sheets of 50 of the unoverprinted stamps and imperforate proofs on card stock, and double sheets with skewed perforations were in the sale of the Palace Collections and were subsequently dispersed. The 10, 15, and 20m. in imperforate sheets are in the Cairo Postal Museum.

The Farouk Canal Stamp of 1951

A by-pass canal accessory to the Suez Canal was inaugurated on July 23rd 1951, to be named the Farouk 1st Canal; in the event, it became known as the Ballah By-pass. A



Fig. 4 Unissued Farouk I Canal stamp.

commemorative stamp was prepared up to the final proof and color-trial stage (Fig. 4), but the official ceremony was cancelled and the stamps did not reach the sheet stage⁵. Five imperforate color trials on watermarked paper without gum were in the sale of the George Lee collection: brown and violet, brown and green, green and blue, green and chestnut, blue and chestnut (portrait in second color).

National Union

In 1961 a design like that of the issued National Union stamp was prepared without the interlocking circles below the eagle: 10m. light brown. It was also prepared for Palestine: 10m. turquoise.

Unassigned Essays

Classifying an essay as unassigned or assigning it to a particular issue is somewhat arbitrary. The essays that are described here are not obviously connected to an issued stamp, however.

Essays of 1895

Two designs, differing only in the inscription panels (black on white or white on black), of unknown attribution are known in the form of careful artist's sketches, in vertical format featuring the sphinx and a pyramid, denominated 5 milliemes and inscribed POSTES EGYPTIENNES (Zeheri essay numbers 61 and 62).

Essays of Bradbury Wilkinson

Two magnificent bicolored designs printed in recess were produced by Bradbury Wilkinson & Co. Ltd. in 1906 (Fig. 5). They were probably made to demonstrate the firm's capability. The known examples appear to have come from sample books. The horizontal design (10m.) exists with several treatments of the sky, which was apparently entered by hand in a separate color. There exist several color combinations. These are usually perforated SPECIMEN; the 5m. is considerably rarer.

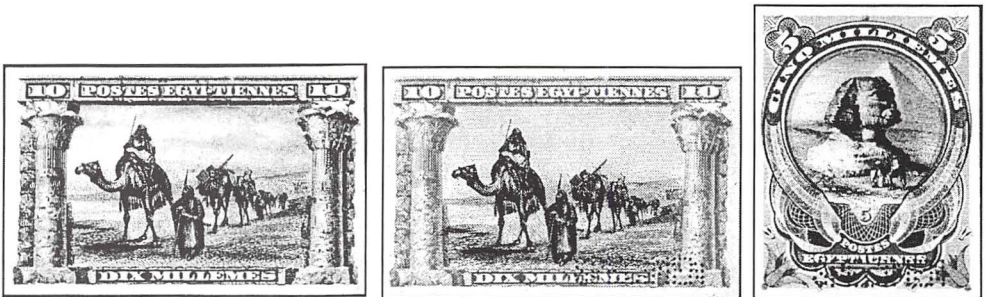


Fig. 5 Bradbury Wilkinson essays.

Essay of the Republic Era

In experimenting with the newly acquired facility for recess printing, an essay showing a small child was produced, printed as a die proof in blue (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6
Recess printed essay.



Fantasy Stamps

The “Sellschopp ?” Non-essays

A design combining features of the Second and Third Issues, but differing in some details and crudely typographed in two colors in twelve combinations in blocks of four (Fig. 7), is thought to have been produced by W. Sellschopp, a dealer of San Francisco and Hamburg⁶, but doubt has been expressed about the attribution. They cannot be considered a serious attempt at forgery and are probably more in the nature of a “Cinderella”, prepared as souvenirs or as a promotion⁷. The earliest report seems to be 1936⁸. However, from time to time they are offered by the ill-informed as “rare essays”. They are not at all rare. They are printed on fresh, white paper, most of which is unwatermarked, but some stamps show part of a large watermark reading NATIONAL BANK and BOND, with a capitol dome between, suggesting an American origin.

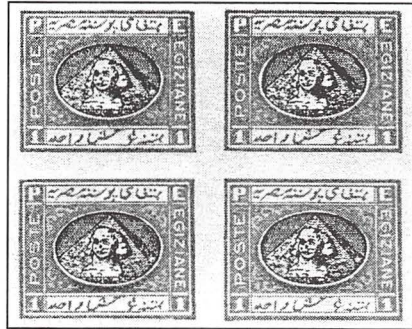


Fig. 7 Fantasy of ca. 1930.

Turkish Occupation Stamps of World War I

A set of multicolored stamps inscribed only in Turkish consists of seven values (10pa., 20pa., 1pi., 60pa., 2pi., 5pi., 10pi.) in two designs, each picturing the Ottoman flag and that of the Caliphate, typographed in four colors (Fig. 8). Some are perforated, some imperforate, and some partly perforated. The Turkish inscription translates to “captured territories” and “postage stamps of the Islamic Army for the liberation of Egypt”; in the crescent of the Caliphate flag is written “holy war”. These stamps have been thought for many years⁹ to have been prepared for use in the anticipated occupation of Egypt by

Fig. 8 Turkish Occupation fantasy.



Turkey in 1915. Although Turkish troops occupied the Sinai for some time, they did not succeed in capturing African Egypt. It had been asserted that the stamps were eventually burned in Gaza, with only a few surviving. More recently, evidence has been presented that they were in fact fantasies produced by a stamp dealer¹⁰. A notice in the Turkish Post and Telegraph Magazine of January 1918 states that they were seized from a Greek dealer by the Hijaz expeditionary force and were burned, and that they were not printed by the Post Office Department or any other government department. They are all fairly scarce, but the surviving quantities are quite uneven and some are much scarcer than others.

A somewhat similar design, showing a crescent and star in a shield between two flags and with denominations expressed bilingually has been described by Ertughrul¹⁰; presumably such stamps have the same origin.

Siwa Oasis Occupation

In 1942 Italian forces from Libya occupied the Siwa Oasis in western Egypt. Some stamps of the 'Boy King' design were captured, and a lieutenant from Bologna in the Ariete Division, an ardent philatelist, had a small quantity ("a few sheets")¹¹ crudely overprinted OASI DI SIWA / OCCUPAZIONE / MILITARE / ITALIANE (Fig. 9). The denominations 1m. to 6m., 10, 13, 15, and 20m. were used. The device was then destroyed. These stamps had no authorization and were never used; however, they are interesting as souvenirs of the military event. They are quite scarce.



Fig. 9 Siwa Oasis overprint.

The International Congress of Oral Implantologists

The Congress of Implantologists was scheduled on April 6th to 8th 1977. A purported commemorative stamp for the event was made by persons unknown, affixed to unaddressed covers bearing the cachet of the Congress, and cancelled with a FIRST DAY OF ISSUE date-stamp¹². Presumably this was an unauthorized souvenir or publicity stunt, as the President of the Egyptian Postal Organization issued a bulletin denouncing the "stamp", stating that "this stamp has been done in imitation of a model which was not issued . . ." and "has no legal or postal quality . . ." These words suggest the possibility that the Postal Organization may actually have prepared the "model", but then decided not to issue a stamp after all.

Officially Prepared Non-franking Labels

IMABA, CITEX, and BEPITEC Labels

Green labels (Fig. 10)¹³ were printed by the Survey Department of Egypt apparently for use on covers carried on the special flights made to carry the exhibits from the Royal



Fig. 10 Labels prepared by the Survey Department.

Collections to the respective international philatelic exhibitions in 1948 and 1949.

Postal Tax for Palestine

A 5m. green in small format showing a sun and a map of Palestine, inscribed in Arabic only ضريبة/التحرير (dharibat al tahrir) was produced in 1966. The circumstances of its use are unclear.



Printing Experiment Labels

Labels in the same design as the 1958 commemorative stamp for the Proclamation of United Arab States, but inscribed “printing experiment” and without denomination, were the first production of the Postal Authority Press, established in 1960 (Fig. 11). They were prepared in blue, green, purple, and vermilion. Some of them came on the philatelic market when ten sheets were given to the American Branch of the Philatelic Society of Egypt¹⁴; they are fairly easily available.



Fig. 11 Label produced by the Postal Authority Press.

Montreal Olympics

Multicolored lithographed labels showing athletes were prepared in connection with the 1976 Olympic Games held in Montreal¹⁵. They do not bear the name “Egypt”, nor have they any inscription in Arabic. However, they are denominated 5, 10, 15, 20, and 30 “MLS”. They appear to have been printed in blocks of four. They were obviously not printed by the Postal Authority Press and not authorized by the Egyptian Government, but they may have been authorized by the Egyptian Olympic Committee. The unconfirmed explanation for them is that they were produced to be sold as souvenirs at the Games in order to help defray the expenses of the Egyptian team; the Canadians are said to have denied permission.

Frivolities

Under this heading come several items that appear to be private productions prepared mostly for amusement or to perplex fellow philatelists.

The first group consists of surcharges on stamps of the Fourth Issue (Fig. 12). They are apparently made with rubber stamps, using ordinary used stamps. There is no evidence whatsoever that any such surcharges were made by the Postal Administration or any individual postmaster. They are quite scarce and probably only a very few of each were made.



Fig. 12 Bogus surcharges.

The second group consists of some more modern productions in the form of overprints, such as ISRAEL and UN, in connection with the 1954 Suez Canal Agreement¹⁶ (Fig. 13). It is not appropriate to list such items here, for they can be prepared at will with a typewriter or a child's printing set.



Fig. 13 Frivolities with ISRAEL and UN overprint, and EGYPT FOR THE DERBY.



Specimens

Some foreign postal administrations stuck the stamps of all countries received from the UPU into a record book, handstamping those not already marked. Each such country used a different device, some circular, some straight, some reading SPECIMEN or equivalent. These were generally applied to strips of three, as received.

In recent years, some of these have come onto the market. Since the handstamps were not applied in Egypt or by stamp printers, it is arguable whether they are a real part of

Egyptian philately. Nevertheless, these “Specimens” have a following, and examples appear in auctions.

Other

There are innumerable propaganda labels, charity labels, and fiscal stamps of many types, some of which can be mistaken for postage stamps. Most of the last are inscribed only in Arabic. They have been listed comprehensively in a book by Feltus¹⁷ and there is no need to describe them here. One, however, may be an essay for a stamp (Fig. 14).



Fig. 14 Essay for a stamp?

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