

XLV

Palestine: Egyptian Administration

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Introduction

The withdrawal of British administration from the Palestine Mandate having been announced in advance, plans were made in Egypt, as elsewhere, for an attempt to take over control, necessarily by military means. The plans included provision for civilian postal service, for which stamps would be needed. The Egyptian Army crossed the border in May 1948 and Egyptian stamps overprinted PALESTINE and *falastin* were put on sale on May 15th. Two weeks later they were also put on sale in Cairo¹ for the convenience of stamp collectors and dealers (this may be the basis of the "1 June" date stated in the Stanley Gibbons Middle East catalog).

Stamps

1948 Overprints on Monarchy Issues

Ordinary Stamps

A bilingual overprint (Fig. 1) was typographed on King Farouk definitive stamps from 1m. to £E1; the 3, 6, and 13m., and 100m. to £E1 were of the Boy King series (i.e., 1937-39 issues) and the other values were of the Marshal series (1945 issues). The overprint was applied to post office sheets (i.e., panes) rather than the larger printing-press sheets.

Color trials were prepared as follows: black on 4m., 15m., and 50pi.; green on 5m. and 15m. One sheet of each (100 of the low values, 50 of the 50pi.) was in the sale of the Palace Collection. The 4m. had control number ~~B/44 A/46~~ A/47 A/48, the 5m. control number A/48, the 15m. control number ~~A/44 A/46~~ A/48, and the 50pi. control number ~~A/45~~ A/46. The sheets have long ago been broken up and widely dispersed, and examples are quite difficult to find. The issued stamps had overprint colors chosen for contrast with the background of the stamp: green on 1, 2, 3, and 13m.; black on 5m., 6m.; and red on 4m., 10m., and 15m. to £E1.

The control numbers known with overprint are:

A/39: 13m.

A/41: 3m.

A/42: 6m.

~~A/41~~ ~~A/42~~ A/43: 3m.

~~A/44~~ ~~B/44~~ A/46: 200m.

~~A/44~~ A/45 A/46: 1m.

~~A/44~~ ~~B/44~~ ~~A/45~~ A/46: 100m.

~~A/45~~ A/46: 50m., £E1.

A/46: 17m.

A/44 A/45 A/46 A/47: 1m.

B/44 A/46 A/47 A/48: 4m.

A/47 A/48: 30m., 40m., 50m.

A/48: 2m., 5m., 10m., 15m., 20m.

The overprinting was probably done hurriedly, for several values exist with the overprint *à cheval* (3, 6, 50, and 100m.), commonly as a vertical displacement such that PALESTINE falls near the top of the stamp and the Arabic at the bottom. In such cases, the stamps from the bottom row would have only PALESTINE with the Arabic part in the top margin when the displacement is upwards, or vice versa when the displacement is downwards (Fig. 1) (the catalog of the sale of the Palace Collections describes the 50, 100, and 200m. with “misplaced overprints”, presumably a sheet of each). The 1, 2, and 3m. exist with inverted overprint (four sheets of 100 each of the 1m. and 2m. were in the Palace Collections), and the 6m. with double overprint. It is necessary to be aware of forged overprint errors, which are quite dangerous.

The 6m. alone is known with inverted watermark.

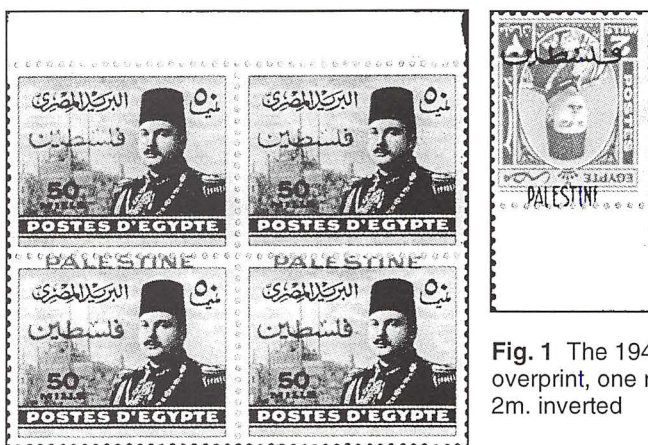


Fig. 1 The 1948 overprint: 50m. shifted overprint, one row showing *filistin* only; 2m. inverted



There are two prominent plate varieties of the overprint on the low values (1m. to 22m.); both are found in control number blocks from the lower right corner of the sheet¹. On position 89 there is a strong but unwanted dot below the Arabic letter *fe'*; on position 99 a hollow bulge of prominent size is found just to the left of *lam*, having a good resemblance to a *meem* and thus making the Arabic read *famlestin* (Fig. 2). The values from 30m. to 200m. had a much wider overprint, and the 50PE and £E1 were set with greater vertical spacing; therefore these values do not show these varieties.

Fig. 2 Overprint flaws on positions 89 and 99 of the small stamps.

Air Mails

The entire set of 1947 Air Mail stamps was overprinted: black for the 2, 5, 7, 30, and 40m., and red for the 3, 8, 10, 20, 50, 100, and 200m. The control numbers recorded are :

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| A/46: 8m. | A/47 B/47: 2m. |
| A/46 A/47: 5m., 10m., 30m. | A/46 A/47 A/48: 7m. |
| A/47: 2m., 3m., 20m., 40m., 50m.,
100m., 200m. | A/47 B/47 A/48: 2m. |

The only error is an inverted overprint on the 2m., of which four sheets of 50, control number A/48, were in the Palace Collections.

Express

The 40m. express stamp (control number A/46) was overprinted in red (shades). The Zeheri catalog lists red and magenta, of equal value; they are shades rather than different colors.

One sheet received a double overprint², one impression being poorly inked (Fig. 3). At least one sheet had the overprint misplaced (*à cheval*). Some flaws have been described³.

Fig. 3
Palestine, double overprint.



Postage Due

The values of the then current postage due set were also overprinted in black (2, 6, 8, 10, and 12m.), or red (4m., 30m.). The same plate was used for the low values (2m. to 12m.) as for the ordinary stamps, and the plate flaws on positions 89 and 99 therefore occur on the postage dues. The plate variety of the 2m., three dots instead of two in the lower left Arabic inscription (Chapter XXIV), is also found with overprint.

The control numbers known are:

- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| A/26: 30m. | B/43: 8m. |
| A/40: 12m. | A/45: 4m. |
| B/40: 2m. | A/47: 10m. |
| A/41: 2m., 6m. | A/50: 4m. |

There is no real error among the postage dues, but the 4m. exists with the overprint shifted moderately to the right, so that the Arabic *fe'* falls between the stamps.

1953 3-Bar & "King of Egypt and Sudan" Overprints

Ordinary Stamps

Following the revolution, the ordinary stamps for Palestine were overprinted with three black bars to obliterate the King's portrait, as were those of Egypt proper. None of the ordinary stamps were overprinted "King of Egypt and Sudan". Most denominations are known with double overprint of bars (i.e., 6 bars), but one should be alert to the existence of forgeries.

Air Mails

Although no Air Mail stamps were issued with both PALESTINE and “King of Egypt and Sudan”, the 3-bar overprint was applied to such stamps as well as to stamps overprinted PALESTINE only. All denominations (2m. to 200m.) were issued with PALESTINE plus three bars, whereas only the 2, 3, 5, 10, 50, and 100m. were issued with all three overprints. The 3m. with additional “King of Egypt and Sudan” overprint differs from that without it in the color of the PALESTINE overprint; it is red on stamps with PALESTINE alone or with bar overprint, but black on those with the additional overprint. Stamps from more than one printing of the PALESTINE overprint were utilized, for shades of the “red” overprint have been reported for the 8, 20, 50, and 200m. (the Zeheri catalog refers to one shade as “magenta”). Shades of the PALESTINE overprint have not been reported for the stamps also having the “King of Egypt and Sudan” overprint.

The only errors are on the 2m. Without “King of Egypt and Sudan”, it exists with the PALESTINE overprint double and triple. With additional “King of Egypt and Sudan” overprint, it exists with PALESTINE double. However, several values of both groups are known with 6 bars.

Overprints on Republic Issues

First Republic Definitives

The 1953–55 ordinary stamps of Egypt, 1m. to £E1, were overprinted for Palestine, but new plates were made for the values 30m. to £E1 on which the letters of PALESTINE are wider. Although no double or inverted overprints are known, vertical displacements exist for the 2, 3, and 35m. The displacements are downward, such that the top row has the Arabic overprint only (Fig. 4) and the rest of the sheet has PALESTINE at the top and Arabic below. Lateral displacements also exist, giving rise to overprints *à cheval* to varying degrees. On the £E1 an additional row of overprint always occurs on the bottom margin.

A more interesting error occurs on the larger stamps (30m. to £E1). On the last four stamps of the left column, the second E of PALESTINE is largely (positions 61 and 91) or entirely (positions 71 and 81) missing (Fig. 4). These varieties are easily overlooked because the last letter of PALESTINE usually falls on top of the numeral of value and is obscured. In the second printing, the E's were restored. On the £E1, the N of PALESTINE is broken on position 11.

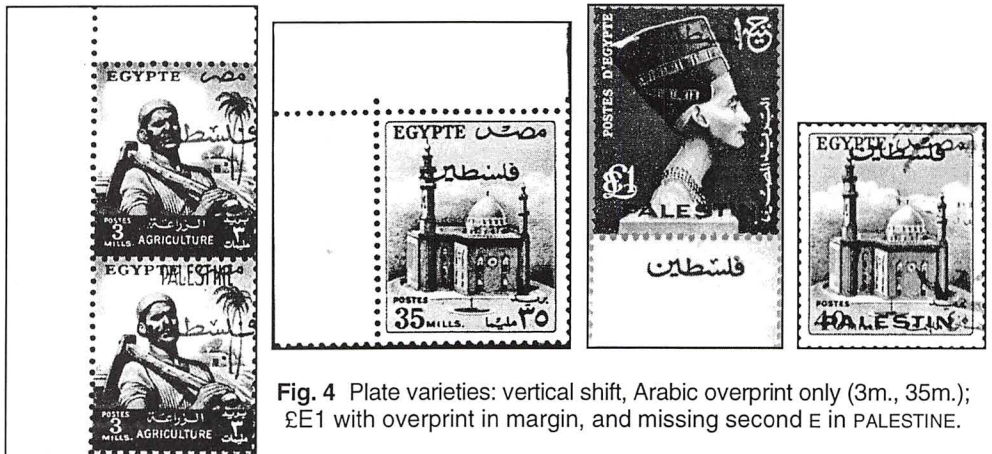


Fig. 4 Plate varieties: vertical shift, Arabic overprint only (3m., 35m.); £E1 with overprint in margin, and missing second E in PALESTINE.

The control numbers used were as follows:

A/53: 15m., 20m., 32m., 40m., 200m., 500m., £E1.	A/53 A/55: 15m.
A/54: 1m., 2m., 3m., 5m., 10m., 17m., 35m.	A/54 A/55: 4m.
A/53 A/54: 30m., 50m., 100m.	A/55: 35m.
	A/54 A/55 A/56: 5m.
	A/56: 30m., 50m.

The date of issue is given in the Zeheri catalog as "1953-1955", whereas the Gibbons catalogs give it as "1955-56". The control numbers imply that most values could not have been overprinted before 1954, and some not before 1955.

The two Air Mail stamps of 1953 were also overprinted. The 5m. is known with double overprint and the 15m. exists with the overprint displaced upward so that the bottom row shows PALESTINE only, and the rest of the sheet has PALESTINE at the top and Arabic at the bottom. Overprint *à cheval* also exists on the 15m.

1957-58

The 1957-58 1, 5, and 10m. (both watermarks) were issued with a new serifed, PALESTINE overprint, probably at about the same time as the basic stamps were issued in Egypt. Only the 10m. with the second watermark (eagle and *mistr*) is known with an important variety: overprint omitted se tenant with an overprinted stamp. The Zeheri catalog states that only "a block of six stamps at the lower left corner of a sheet" escaped overprinting, but it is not clear if this was the result of a fold or of a piece of paper overlapping the corner of the sheet. The 10m. with the first watermark (eagle and *gumburiya mistr*) exists with watermark inverted.

1959 55m. on 100m. provisional

Stocks of the basic stamp with two control numbers (~~A/53~~ A/54 and A/55) were overprinted with the serifed overprint of 1957-58 in green and issued on January 20th 1959. A fine group of errors resulted: PALESTINE double; PALESTINE double, one inverted; 55m., etc. double; and displacement of the 55m., etc., overprint upwards. The consequence of the displacement is that the bottom row of ten stamps is without the Arabic overprint *al-gumburiya al-'arabiya al-mutahadda*, and the remainder of the sheet has the Arabic inscription near the bottom and the new value near the top. There is also a less important variety of displacement in which the PALESTINE overprint is printed too high. Most sheets, of course, had the plate-flaw variety UAP on position 99.

Air Mails

The 5m. and 15m. Air Mail definitives of 1953-54 (control number ~~A/53~~ A/54) overprinted PALESTINE are listed in the Zeheri catalog under the date "1953-1954", but the Gibbons catalogs give the date as 1955. The 5m. is known with double overprint, and the 15m. with the overprint displaced upwards so that the bottom row received PALESTINE only and the rest of the sheet had PALESTINE at the top, Arabic at the bottom. An overprint *à cheval* is also known.

Commemoratives of 1957-58

The "GAZA Part of Arab Nation" commemorative was issued on May 4th 1957 with serifed PALESTINE overprint in red, and the "Struggle for Freedom" commemorative similarly overprinted was issued on June 18th. No varieties are known for either.

The set of two stamps for the Tenth Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights was issued with PALESTINE overprint in green on December 10th 1958. The 10m. exists with double overprint (one sheet of 50) and the 35m. with inverted watermark.

One sheet of each value exists without overprint; these are distinct from the set issued in Egypt because of the different colors. The 35m. also exists with the overprint in brown (one sheet of 50). This error (?) may be a color trial that was issued by mistake (the Zeheri catalog lists it used).

Definitive Issues

The definitive issues, ordinary, commemorative, and Air Mail, require little comment. They are all derived from the corresponding issues for Egypt, with the addition of PALESTINE in Arabic and English to the design. Some of the stamps issued up to 1961 exist imperforate on gummed, watermarked paper. Their origin is obscure and it seems very unlikely that any of them were sold to the public over the counter.

The 10m. commemorative for the World Refugee Year, normally issued in orange-brown, exists in the slate black of the 35m. Presumably it is a color trial proof.

The dates of issue are given in the Zeheri catalog simply as "30 August 1959-1960" for the four-value first definitive set, but the Gibbons catalogs are more specific: 1m. - 15 DE 60, 4m. - 21 NO 60, 5m., -15 SE 60, 10m. - 26 JN 60. There is better agreement on the second definitive set, which is listed in the Gibbons catalogs as follows: ; 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 15, and 35m. - 1 JN 64; 5m. - 1 JY 64; 20, 30, 40, 60, and 100m. - 1 JA 64.

There are no known varieties of the 1963-65 Air Mails, but it is worth noting that the quantity of the World Meteorological Day stamp was unusually low: 57,385.

Consequent to the Six-Day War (June 5-10 1967), the Gaza Strip came under Israeli administration. Only Israeli stamps, without special designation, were thenceforth used, and new postmarks inscribed in English, Arabic, and Hebrew replaced the Egyptian ones.

Postal Markings and Use

When the Egyptian Army advanced into Palestine it thrust north along the coast toward Jaffa and northeast toward Jerusalem. It did not reach its goals, but for a short time was in occupation of territory that was ultimately relinquished to Israel. Egyptian postal service was established quite promptly, however, and Egyptian stamps with PALESTINE overprint were used in the principal towns that were temporarily occupied⁴. The date-stamps of the Palestine Mandate were first put in use⁵ (Fig. 5), but were quickly replaced with Egyptian ones, which were inscribed in Arabic as well as English (Fig. 6).

Along the coast, the short-lived offices were Isdud, Faluja (Faluga), and El Majdal (Magdal). Isdud was held for only a short time, but both the Mandate postmark and a bilingual Egyptian one were used. El Majdal was under Egyptian control until November 1948. The postmarks of this group are among the rarest of the Egyptian Occupation of Palestine. Elsewhere, Egyptian post offices operated in Hebron, Beit Jala, Beersheba, and Beth Lahem (the Beit Jala date-stamp is distinctive). I have third-party reports of Beit Jibrin, Nablus, Ramallah, and Yibna, but I cannot confirm them. The Egyptian forces in the east became cut off by an Israeli thrust to the south, and after the armistice they were withdrawn across Israeli-held territory (early-1949) and the post offices were turned over to Jordan. These Egyptian post offices thus had a life of only about eight months (Fig. 7).

The "Gaza Strip" remained in Egyptian occupation from 1948 until October 19th 1956 and from March 7th 1957 until June 1967. The gap was due to the war over the Suez Canal in 1956. Egyptian occupation ended as a result of the Six-Day War. A variety of postmarks⁶ was in use over the years, mostly in the towns of Gaza, New Gaza (Gaza el

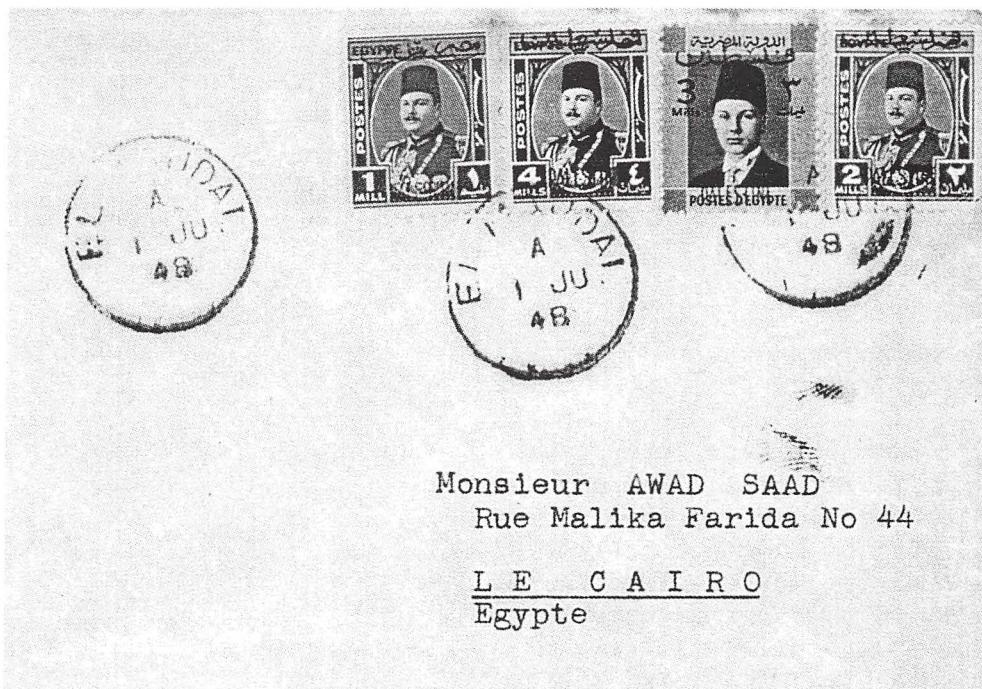
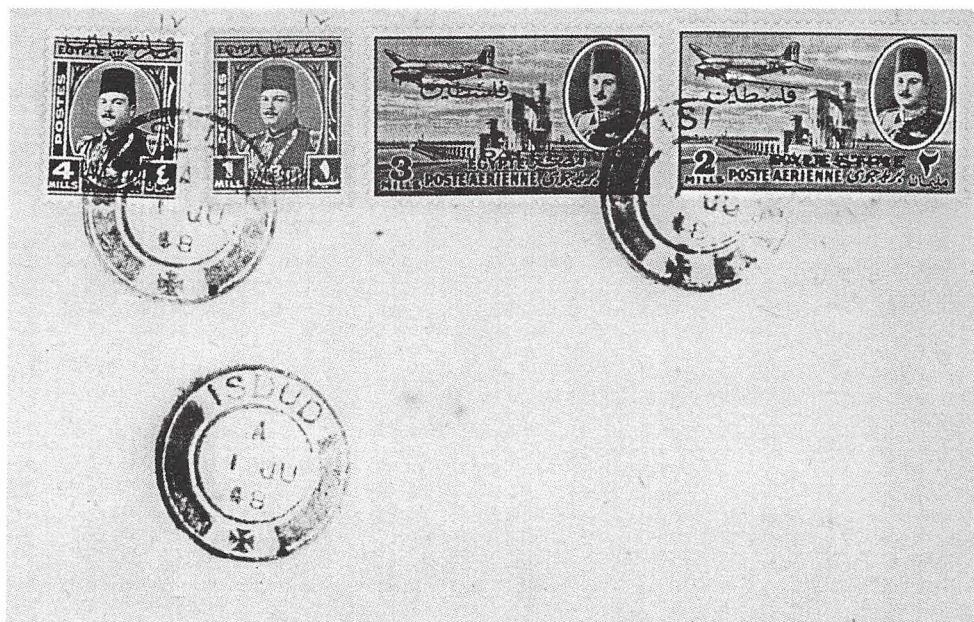


Fig. 5 Palestine Mandate postmarks used on Egyptian stamps.



Fig. 6 Date-stamps made in Egypt.

Gedida), Deir el Balah, Rafah, and Khan Yunis⁷. Branch offices were later opened at Rafah Station and Gaza Station (Gaza el Mahatta). An office was opened at Gabalia, just north of Gaza in about 1958 (its postmark is quite scarce), a postmark of 'Abossan عيسان has been seen and one at El Buraga has been reported⁸. There were also Egyptian military camps with post offices; Moaskar el-Shatie and Muasker el Magazi are examples.

During the 1956–57 Israeli occupation, new postmarks (Fig. 8) inscribed in English, Arabic, and Hebrew were put in use and stamps of Israel were used⁹.

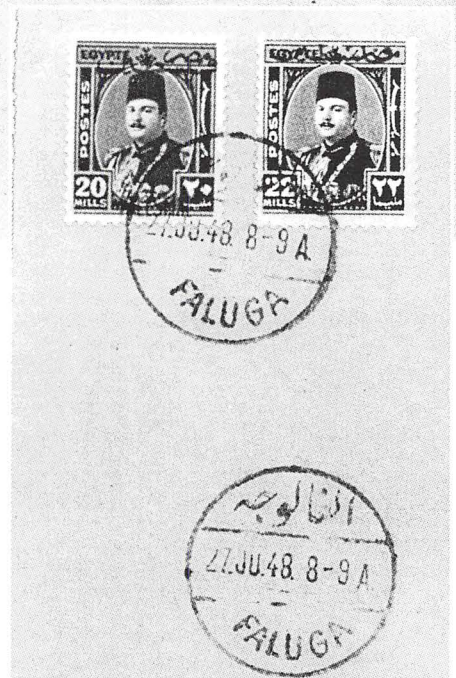


Fig. 8 Postmark used in the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip in 1956–57.





Fig. 7 Covers from Hebron and Beth Lahem (eastern area of Egyptian occupation).

The stamps of Egyptian Palestine are in general much scarcer used than unused. The high values are especially scarce used and consequently forged overprints on used Egyptian stamps are in the market. They are easily recognizable if the office name (e.g., Cairo) or the date is legible, but examples with incomplete cancellations are dangerous. The overprints were well made and they are difficult to examine against the dark background of some of the stamps. Stamps cancelled at the short-lived offices are scarce

to rare and non-philatelic covers from such offices command a high premium. Beth Lahem, however, was the site of some philatelic activity, and complete sets, especially of the Air Mail stamps, can be found on covers (but even they are scarce).

Unoverprinted Egyptian stamps were apparently tolerated, at least on occasion, and especially at Rafah, on the border. Unoverprinted postage due stamps are known used in the Gaza Strip⁸.

Mail of the Gaza Strip was subject to censorship much as in Egypt, and covers commonly bear one of the Egyptian censorship cachets, even though most letters were not opened (Chapter XL).

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Special Acknowledgement

I am much indebted to Edmund Hall for drawings of postmarks and for ancillary information.

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