

XVI

The 1914 and 1920–22 Pictorials

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From 1879 to 1914 Egypt used stamps of the same fundamental design (a vignette of the sphinx and pyramid), differing from one value to another only in the treatment of the frames and duty panels. These stamps, the Fourth Issue, with some variations in colors and denominations, were in use for over a third of a century, but eventually a major change, with a new design concept, swept the venerable Fourth Issue aside, and the 1914 pictorials, the subject of this chapter, began a new era of Egyptian philately (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 The issued stamps.

The De La Rue Printings (1914)

In July 1912 the Egyptian Postal Administration approached Thomas De La Rue & Co. about preparing a new series of ordinary postage stamps with new designs¹. A list of suggested subjects was submitted, but the selection was left to De La Rue, as was much of the work in obtaining illustrations to work from. It was also required that the format be vertical rather than horizontal as was the previous issue, and that the inscriptions be changed from French to English. All the denominations of the issue in use were to be retained, and a 200-mill. value added. The denominations were to be expressed only in milliemes (not piasters) for all values, unlike the stamps in then use.

Designs and Essays

Work proceeded rapidly. A standard frame design was drawn (Fig. 2) (about four times normal size), and by August 16th De La Rue had submitted essay designs using photographic manipulation of it (and thus all denominated 5m.)²; they were photographic prints in monochrome, variously blue, green, maroon, or brown. Most were upright rectangles, each with a different vignette (Fig. 3), but some were also prepared in horizontal format. Other essays with more elaborate frames are in the Egyptian Postal Museum, Cairo. The subjects selected were:

- 1m. sepia: feluccas sailing on the Nile.
- 2m. green: head and shoulders of Queen Cleopatra, from a bas relief of the temple of Dendera, wearing a crown composed of motifs of three deities: the vulture of Maut; the horned disk of Hathor, and the throne of Isis. The cartouche contains Cleopatra's name.
- 3m. orange: The royal palace at Ras el Tin, Alexandria.
- 4m. scarlet-vermilion: The pyramids of Gizeh.
- 5m. carmine-red: The sphinx, seen full-face (a side-face view was rejected).
- 10m. deep steel blue: The Colossi of Amenophis III at Thebes.
- 20m. yellow-olive: The portal of Ptolemy III at Karnak.
- 50m. maroon: The Citadel of Cairo, with the mosque of Mohammed Ali.
- 100m. slate black: The rock temple of Abu Simbel.
- 200m. brown-purple: The dam at the First Cataract, Assuan.



Fig. 2 Drawing for the frame for the low values.

Printing, Proofs, Specimens, Imperforates

The Arabic inscription of value (right-hand panel) was at first expressed in tenths of a piaster, although De La Rue realized that Egypt might prefer to use milliemes. Egypt sent an annotated proof designating the proper plural forms of milliemes to be used in the

Aug. 16th 12.

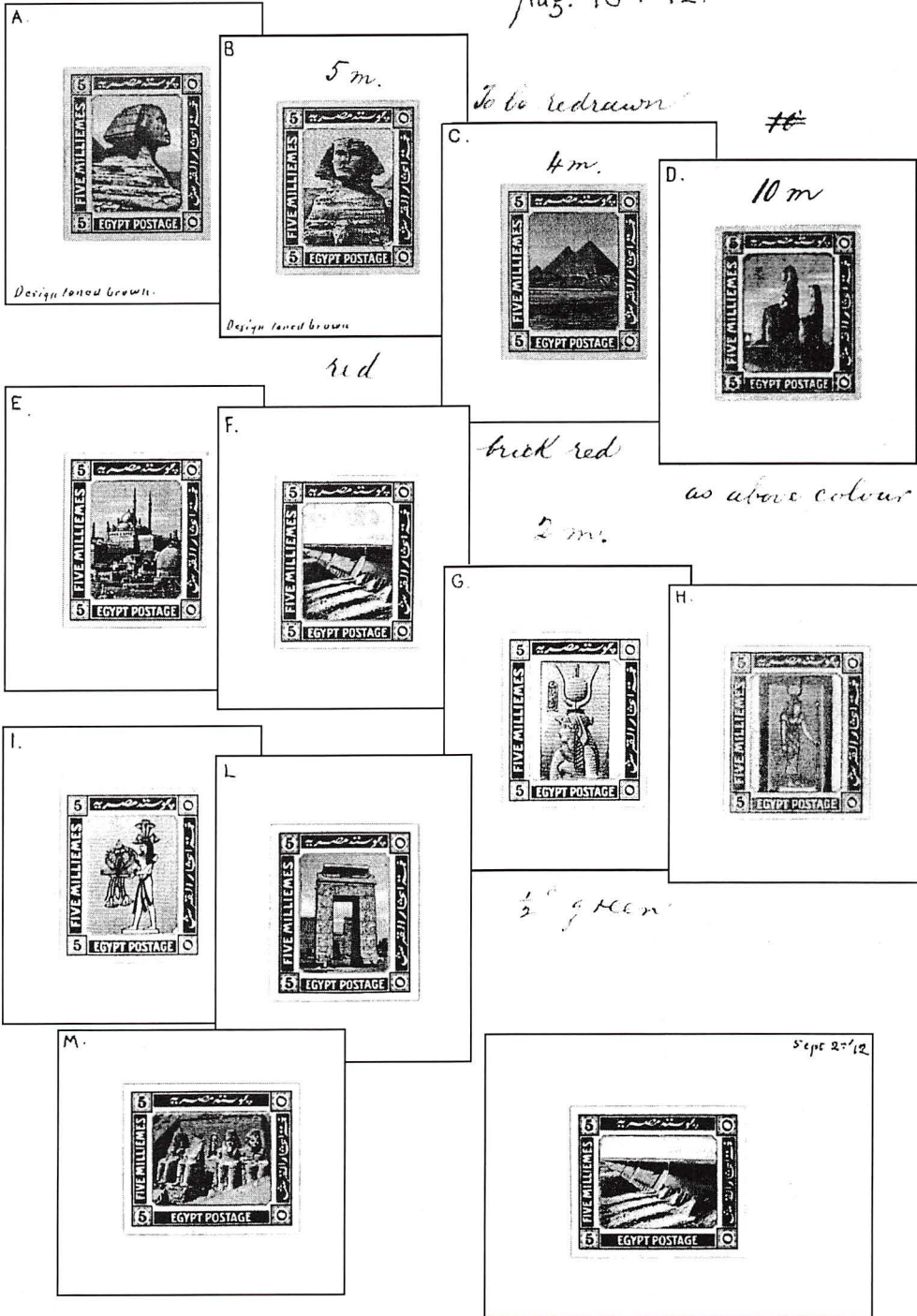


Fig. 3 Photographic mock-up essays by De La Rue (courtesy of the late V. Andonian).

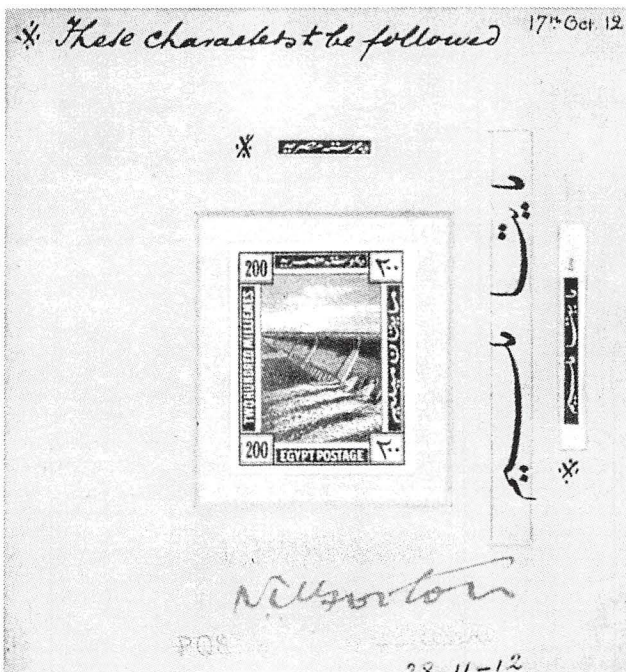
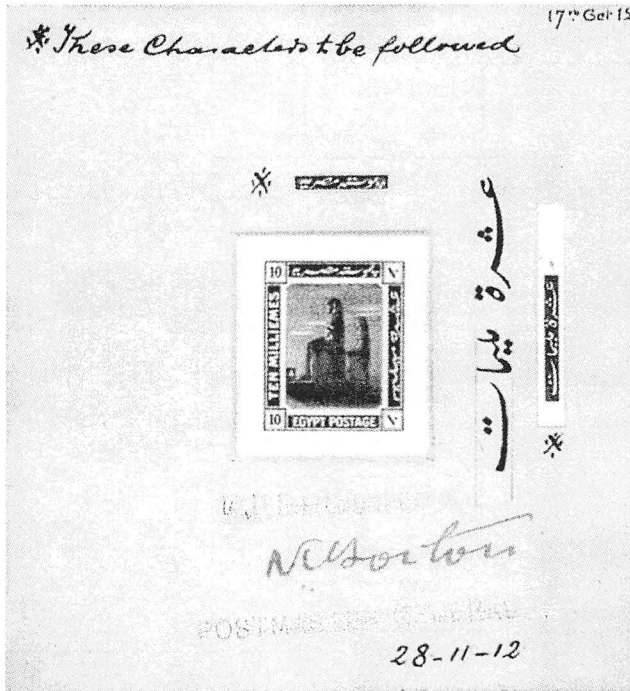


Fig. 4 Proofs with annotation correcting the Arabic inscription of value (courtesy of the late V. Andonian).

Arabic (Fig. 4). The printing plates were made by the process customary with the firm for typographic printing: a hardened steel die was struck into uniform slugs of lead type-metal to form molds, which were locked into a form, lightly coated with graphite, and then electro-plated with copper (or nickel)³. The resulting shell was removed from the set of molds and was backed for strength by pouring metal into the hollow side. The printing plate thus formed was then ready for use. (The possibility of using copper dies, which were cheaper to engrave but not as durable, was discussed in correspondence with De La Rue.) The 20m. value as first engraved was deemed too dark and lifeless by Egypt, and the die was lightened (possibly by etching) before production began. At the same time, the color chosen was changed from light grey to the issued olive. Die proofs and color trials are known. Trial die impressions on recessed thick card are illustrated in the catalog of the Byam collection⁴ for the 2, 5, and 50m. values; these proofs were made in color. Working die proofs in black on glazed card also exist. Plate proofs, imperforate on unwatermarked paper in the issued colors, are fairly common; they arise from a request by the Egyptian Postal Administration that ten sheets be

sent to Egypt⁵. Complete panes still exist.

As was the Egyptian custom, the supply of new stamps required to be sent to the UPU for distribution among the member countries was exactly as issued, without any overprint. However, some of the receiving countries applied their own “specimen” handstamps to the stamps they received for their archives. In addition, imperforate, watermarked stamps exist with the word SPECIMEN (Fig. 5), in small, sans-serif capitals, handstamped in black or dark blue⁶. On the high values, it is usually applied diagonally near a corner. At least four sets of four values, 5, 20, 50, and 200m., have been recorded, and probably a number more exist. These specimens were prepared as needed to respond to requests for samples of De La Rue’s work. Even the 5m. from the special plate prepared for booklet panes, with sideways watermark, exists with this overprint. A similar overprint, in purple, has also been reported.

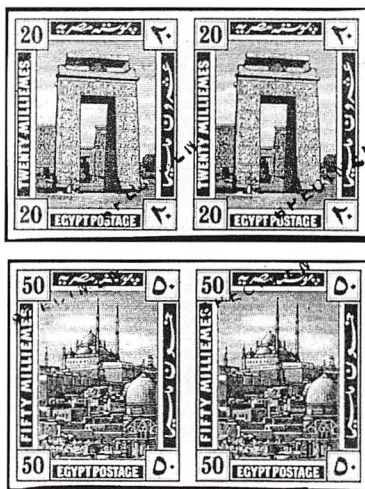


Fig. 5 SPECIMEN overprint.

Imperforate stamps of the entire set exist on gummed, watermarked paper, and are noticeably scarcer than the unwatermarked imperforates. The origin of these is disclosed in a letter⁷ dated January 5th 1918 from the Acting Postmaster General, A. Goldstein, who ordered “four sheets of each of the ordinary Egyptian postal values in current use (excluding tax stamps). It is desired that these sheets should bear the usual watermark, but there should be no perforation between the stamps”. The order was acknowledged on March 4th, and presumably was filled in due course. The Acting PMG may not have realized that such an order would amount to twice as many of the low values (sheets of 200) as of the high values (sheets of 100). No reason for the order was offered and the fate of the stamps is not recorded. However, a substantial quantity must eventually have reached the philatelic market. Since it is virtually certain that they were not intended to be sold over the post office counter, they should be regarded as proofs, like the earlier unwatermarked imperforates, although some imperforates have slipped through on philatelic covers⁸.

Date of Issue, Sheet Size, Gutters

The stamps were issued on January 8th 1914, the 22nd anniversary of the accession of the Khedive Abbas III to the throne (Fig. 6). The event was given unusual publicity, with examples of the new stamps being sent to major newspapers. The London papers reported the issue in detail, with illustrations. Fred J. Melville, the well known philatelic writer of those times, had a long article in the London *Daily Telegraph*, which included a summary history of Egypt’s previous stamps as well. Pictorial subjects for general issues were considered unusual in those days! Unlike previous issues, the new stamps did not render the outgoing issue obsolete, and mixed frankings with the older stamps can be found used into the 1920s.

After the initial order, the annual orders were confined to the low values, 1 to 10m. (1915) or 1 to 50m. (1918 to 1921), with the 4m. being omitted in 1918 and 1920. (I have been unable to locate the delivery records for 1914, 1916, and 1917.) The quantities were



Fig. 6 The 20m. used on a registered cover on the first day of issue.

generally in the millions, except for the 3m. and 50m. (variously 100,000 to 600,000). The low values (1m. to 10m.) were at first printed in sheets of two panes of 100, arranged vertically. The higher values must have been printed in sheets of 200 also. The existence of die proofs bearing notations "200 leads" implies that plates of 200 (two panes of 100) were made (or two plates of 100). The two printed panes were arranged horizontally, with a blank vertical gutter (imperforate gutter blocks exist).

For the low values, other plate sizes were also used, although the De La Rue records are silent on the subject. The evidence derives from the fact that the panes were separated by a gutter, of width corresponding to the size of a stamp, imprinted with "pillars" that were a feature of late printings of the previous issue, and of contemporary De La Rue work generally. The gutters thus differ from the outer margins of the sheets, which were left blank except for a buffer bar (a plain, thick frame line, interrupted at intervals of one stamp length). The gutter therefore can appear at the top or bottom of the panes from two-pane plates of 200, but not at the sides.

The fact is, however, that gutters do exist at the sides on some printings of the 1, 2, 5, and 10m. values, and pane-corner blocks are known having gutter margins at the bottom and side together. The latter situation could only arise from a larger plate. In view of the fact that De La Rue's later printings of the 'no value' official stamp are known to have been in sheets of 600 (panes of 100 arranged 2 x 3), and that one die proof of the 5m. bears a notation "600 leads", some of the low values (presumably the 1 and 5m.) must also have been printed in such sheets (panes arranged 3 x 2). Similar die proofs of the 4m. and 10m. exist with the notation "400 leads", which implies plates of 400 (four panes 2 x 2)⁹.

A first-day cover exists franked with a 10m. from a pane corner, having a gutter

margin on the left. Therefore, at least some of the larger printing surfaces must have been used from the beginning along with the plates of 200. The unwatermarked imperforate proof panes of the 2m. and 10m. that I have seen have pillars at the top and right side, and therefore must have come from the larger plates. The 1m. and 4m., however, have pillars only along the top, and therefore come from 200-subject plates.

The mystery about the size of plates is compounded by the fact that the De La Rue archives, which contain periodic inventories of the plates in their possession, never mention plates larger than 200 subjects for the low values, and of 100 for the high values. The records of deliveries always mention sheets of 200 or 100, as does a packing chart in the archives. It may therefore be that the larger printed sheets were cut apart before being shipped to Egypt, and that the occasional blocks that have vertical interpane gutters have come from the archival holdings of the De La Rue Co., which were liquidated in the 1970s and later. An alternative to plates of 400 or 600 would be two or three plates of 200 locked side by side with spacer pillars between them, but that is not really different. The high quality of the printing makes plating studies an unpromising means to a solution of the question.

The 1954 sale of the Palace Collections¹⁰ contained sheets of 200 of the low values, and of 100 of the high values, imperforate on watermarked paper, but additional examples were on the market long before this sale. Only the 200m. is illustrated in the catalog; the control number 2 appears on the left margin. No imperforate or partly perforated errors are known on the issued stamps.

Watermark

The watermarked paper had the same crescent and star design as the previous issue, but since the sheet size was different, a separate dandy-roll was required. In the 1950s it was discovered that there are two types of the watermark, wide and narrow¹¹: 14x13mm and 13x14mm (Fig. 7). Since no cases of setenant watermark types are known, two kinds of paper appear to have been used. Possibly the original dandy-roll had to be replaced, or a new one was required for making the paper for the larger plates. Alternatively, a dandy-roll large enough to impress several panes at each revolution might have had different-sized bits on the several panes. The high values, the paper for which required a separate dandy-roll to accommodate the wider spacing, are known only with the wide watermark.

The De La Rue inventories¹² record only three dandy-rolls for the paper for this issue: one for the low values, one for the high values, and one for the sheets of 240 made for manufacture of booklet panes. Two paper mills were used: one at St. Mary Cray, and one at Chartham, near Canterbury, each of which is stated in the archival records to have possessed a dandy-roll¹³. Although it is tempting to conclude that the three may have differed in the dimensions of the watermark bits, the records also imply that only one watermark die was used to generate all the bits. Furthermore, it is not unreasonable to suppose that one paper mill was given the contract for the paper for the low values, and the other the contract for the paper for the high values, which was of different dimension. A solution to the question awaits further evidence.

Although all the imperforate low values have been reported with wide watermark¹⁴,

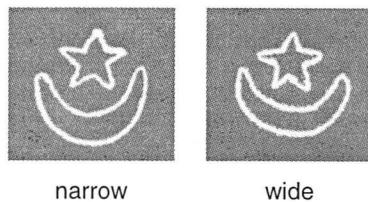


Fig. 7 The narrow and wide watermarks.

all but the 10m. have also been seen with narrow watermark (probably the 10m. also exists, but has not been reported through oversight). The 5m. value with sideways watermark is also known imperforate, but is much scarcer than with upright watermark. Since stamps with sideways watermark were not explicitly ordered in the 1918 letter from the Acting PMG, such imperforates presumably originate from the De La Rue archives.

Inverted watermarks are recorded in the Zeheri specialized catalog (1972 edition) for all values 1m. to 50m., but the size is not specified. Revell¹¹ records the 1m. and 5m., and Potter the 3m., with narrow watermark inverted.

Booklets

The 5m. value was issued in booklets containing four panes of 6 as well as in sheets^{14, 15}. Booklet stamps have a sideways watermark, facing left or right with apparently equal frequency. Since sheets of paper designed for producing panes of 100 could not be used efficiently for preparing booklet panes of 6, each of which required a selvedge for affixing into the booklet, sheets having four panes of 60 watermark impressions were needed¹⁶. Although paper remaining from production of the previous issue may have been used for booklet printing¹⁷, the De La Rue records for 1914 and 1915 imply that the 240-subject dandy-roll was still in active use¹².

Control Numbers

Each sheet of the low values, as issued, had two control numbers printed in the top or bottom margin; these numbers were white on a solid circular background: 1 – all values, 2 – all values except 4m., 3 – 1m., 2m., 5m., 4 and 5 – 5m. only. The 2, 5, and 10m. that have been seen with gutter margin at the side have control 2. The control numbers of the high values are always in the side margins. The larger sheets (400 and 600) had different control numbers for each vertical pair of panes, according to the evidence of part sheets. For example, a member of the Egypt Study Circle has a pair of panes of the 1m. joined horizontally, with plain sheet margin at left, and pillars in the interpane gutter and at right. The left pane bears control 1, and the right, 2. Presumably there was a third pane at the right originally, having control 3.

Perforation, Shades

The perforating was done with a comb machine, with a gauge of 13½x14 for the low values, and 15 for the high values (the Gibbons catalog erroneously gives perf. 14 for the low values; the Zeheri and Scott catalogs give the correct measurement). The comb apparently traveled from the bottom upwards most of the time, for the perforations do not extend through the bottom margin, but they do extend through the side margins. However, pieces are known with perforations cutting through the top sheet margin as well as some not cutting through it. In view of the uncertainties about the size of the printing plates, further explanation is not possible at this time.

Color control was excellent, and only two values show a significant variation in shade. The 2m. is mostly green to deep green, but a distinct turquoise green also exists, and is quite scarce (Byam^{4b} termed it “rare”). The 3m. comes in orange or orange-yellow with about equal frequency. The 20m., described variously as olive or olive-green, is essentially constant in color; a distinctly green shade that occasionally turns up may be a color changeling caused by exposure to strong sunlight. (The olives and browns used by

De La Rue were composed of a red and a green component, the former of which was more sensitive to bleaching by light).

Plate flaws are few; two prominent ones on the 3m. are shown in Fig. 8.



Fig. 8 Plate flaws.

right frameline

left top frameline.

The Gibbons catalogs have listed a double impression for the 3m. for over 30 years, but I have never seen a copy, and know of none.

The 1915 Provisional

On October 15th 1915 a provisional surcharged stamp, 2m. on 3m., was issued. The overprinting was done by the Government Printing Works, Boulaq, which was responsible for an essay of the surcharge as well. The essay has the surcharge arranged almost vertically, tilted slightly to the left (Fig. 9); it was apparently printed as a single strip of ten, set from loose type.

The reason for the provisional is not known with certainty, but it is most likely that the supply of 2m. stamps was running out, either as a result of delayed

deliveries because of the outbreak of war, or underestimation of the demand for 2m. stamps before the internal postcard rate was raised to 3m. (January 1916). The overprinting was done by typography, the plate being made up of stereotypes made from an original matrix of ten subjects set up from loose type. These ten subjects were not quite identical, and thus are the origin of ten types of the issued stamps (Fig. 10). The plate was produced by reproducing the original matrix twenty times. Any horizontal row of ten shows all ten types, and each vertical column contains only one type. The details of the types have been described by McNeille¹⁸ and illustrated by Hass¹⁹. An important feature is that two different fonts of Arabic type were used, differing in the letters *lam* (ل) and *meem* (م). On all types except no. 6, the *lam* is taller (3.3mm) and slightly thicker; on type 6, it is only 3.0mm tall. On types 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 10, the letter *meem* is slightly higher, tipped upwards from the base, causing the angle of its back to be 69°, whereas on types 4, 8, and 9, it is slightly lower, nearly level at the base with the base of the *lam*, the back is at an angle of 60°, and the stem joining the loop of the

Fig. 9 Essay for the surcharge.



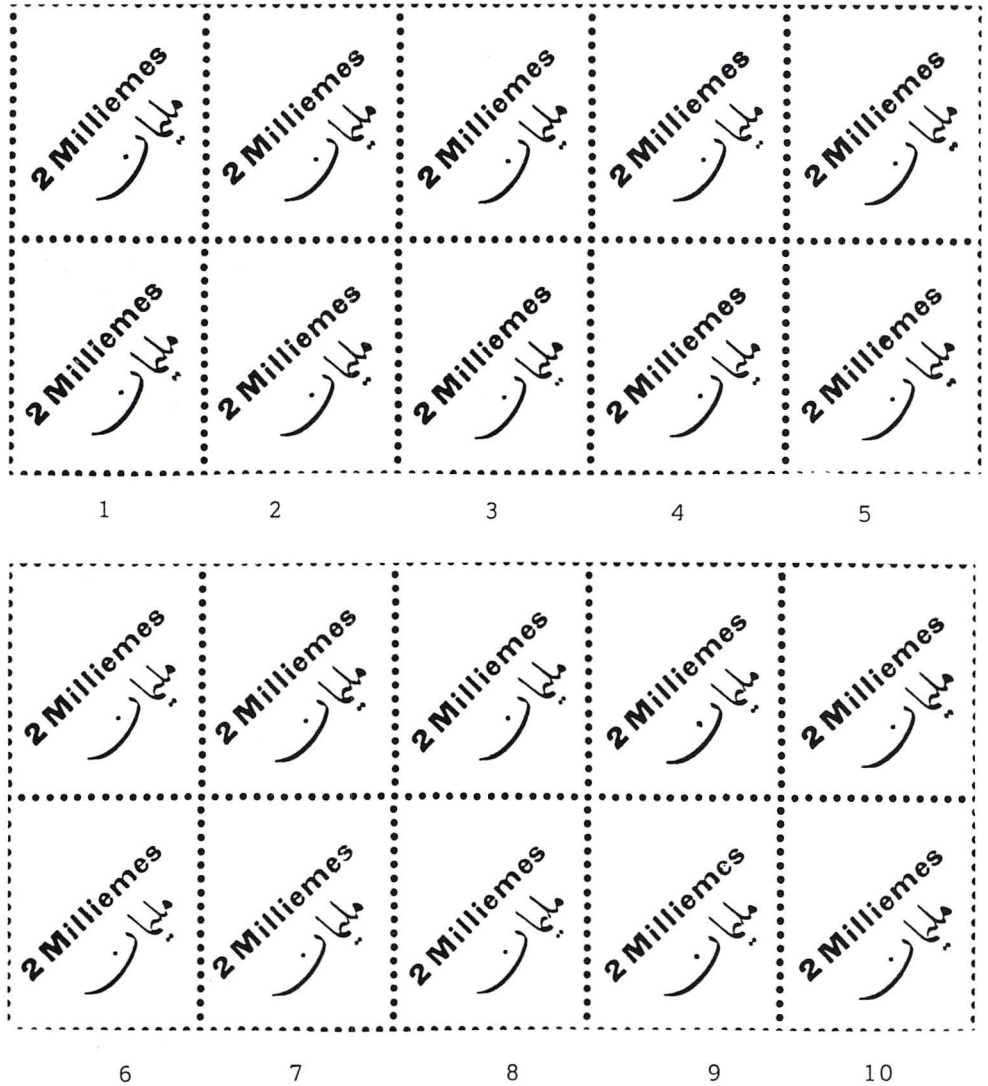
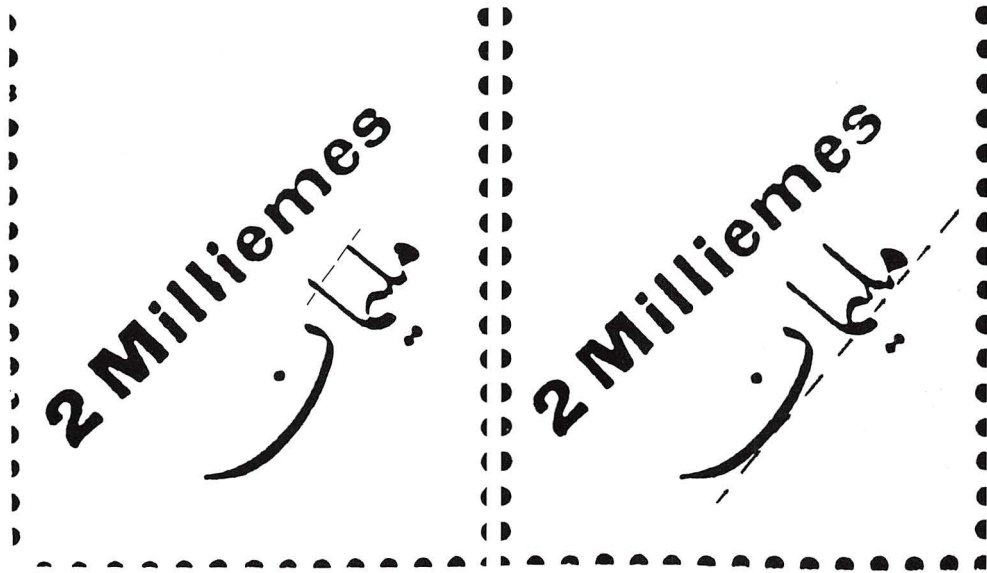


Fig. 10 The ten types (enlarged), showing the broken 'e' on one type 9.

meem to the *lam* is slightly thicker (Fig. 11).

Attention to these features gives the best protection against forgeries of the inverted surcharge error. It should be noted that the surcharge as a whole is inclined at an angle of 45° , rather than the angle of the diagonal of the stamp.

A minor variety of some interest occurs once in the sheet: position 49, upper pane. The second 'e' is broken so as to resemble a 'c' (Fig. 10); no trace of the cross bar remains. Curiously, a similar but less well developed variety occurs in position 149 (thus, the lower pane). Although this fact might suggest that the upper and lower panes were printed from the same plate of 100, other differences between the upper and lower panes (spacing, minor flaws) show that this supposition is not so, and that a single plate of 200



6

short lam ل

7

large, high meem م

Fig. 11 The two types of *meem* and *lam*
(after C.F. Hass).

was indeed used. Among the lesser flaws in the surcharge is a broken tip to the Arabic letter *noon* (the left-hand end of the word *milleeman*).

Two sheets were printed with surcharge inverted. Both were evidently sold over the counter, and used examples, off and on covers (as fronts) exist. Examples from one of the sheets are only known used at Hehya; those from the other are mostly unused (at least one block is known), but some are used at Beni Korrah. A double surcharge exists in which one impression is albino (but deeply impressed into the paper, and easily visible, especially from the back). This variety evidently resulted from a successful attempt to correct an error¹⁸. In



8

small, level meem م

the first stage, a sheet was improperly positioned in the press, so that the left-hand column of stamps remained unsurcharged (and the right-hand sheet margin received an impression of the surcharge). In the second stage, the sheet was put through the press again, this time correctly positioned, and all but the left-hand column was stopped out, so that only the unsurcharged column received an inked impression. It is thus possible to have horizontal pairs in which one stamp is normal, and the other has both an inked and an albino impression (characteristically, the original inked impression and the added one are positioned somewhat differently on the stamps, Fig. 12). All known examples of this error are unused.



Fig. 12 A pair from the left side of the sheet showing the difference in position of the original surcharge (right) and the added one (left).

Another interesting variety is a strong offset of the surcharge on the back of the stamp, probably arising from an inked plate having been closed on the bare platen immediately before a sheet of stamps was put through. Since the offset was applied on the gum, only unused examples can be identified. A further variety is a strong horizontal shift of the surcharge, such that it straddles two stamps (*à cheval*).

The provisional surcharge occurs on stamps with the narrow watermark. The watermark is known inverted, and is rare thus; only used examples appear to exist.

This provisional is very scarce used alone on cover or card; its principal use, on postcards, had a life of only 2½ months. Even examples of use in multiples or with other values are hard to find.

The Harrison Printings (1920–22)

In 1920 De La Rue lost the contract for printing Egyptian stamps, although they continued to hold the contract for postal stationery. The Postmaster General expressed his “personal regret that the entire supply of postal values does not remain in the hands of your firm” (i. e., De La Rue)²⁰. The plates and dandy-rolls were destroyed, and the dies were handed over to the representative of the Egyptian Government²¹. These dies were apparently used by Harrison & Sons of London to produce new plates, from which the same denominations as before, excepting only the 200m., were printed. There were thus no essays, and apart from some die proofs, no other proofs are known for certain (but see the discussion of the 4m. red and the imperforate varieties, ahead).

Colors

The new stamps closely matched the colors of the old, except that the 4m. was changed from red to green. A part sheet of the 4m., perforated and gummed, exists printed in red on the Harrison paper (see below), with control number A.20. It may represent an initial printing, late enough in 1920 to be aborted because of the impending change of color in consequence of decisions made at the UPU Congress in Madrid in October to raise the rates for international mail. The part sheet, a lower left-hand corner block of 28 in the

Palace Collection of Egypt, and now broken up, appears to be the source of the only known copies. For the other values, small differences in shade can be noticed when side-by-side comparison is made: the 1m. is a slightly yellower brown; the 2m. is a slightly darker, duller green; the 5m. is slightly redder; the 10, 20, and 50m. are a trifle darker, and the 100m. is quite noticeably a more intense black.

Watermark

A new watermark was adopted for the Harrison printings; it consisted of a triple crescent and star (the flag emblem of Egypt) in an all-over format, which simplified positioning the paper in the press (Fig. 13), oriented sideways. Melville²² has suggested that the change was made for political reasons, to replace the Turkish symbolism of the single crescent and star. It is known reversed on all values, but is fairly scarce thus. The new watermark had actually been anticipated before Harrison's obtained the printing contract, but adoption was delayed²³.

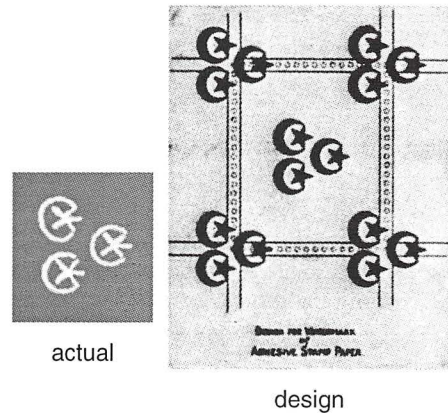


Fig. 13 The Harrison all-over watermark and the original drawing for it.

Control Numbers, Plates, Dates of Issue

Harrison's first plates are dated with control number A.20, but actual issue of the stamps appears not to have taken place until 1921, or even later with some values. The stamps were not regarded as a new issue by the Egyptian Postal Administration, and they were introduced without special notice, at unrecorded dates in 1921 (and for the 100m., possibly 1922). Most catalogs state "1921–1922" for this issue. Although the Gibbons catalogs give specific dates for some values, including the 5m. carmine lake, January 1921, all but that one are much too late, for *The Times* of London for April 27th 1921 reported that the 2, 3, 4, 10, and 50m. had already appeared. The Yvert catalog gives 1920–22 for this issue. The basis for the catalog dates is not known; they may be the earliest noted in postmarks by the compilers, or in the case of Yvert, may be a deduction from the fact that the earliest control numbers are of 1920.

The low values were printed in two panes of 100, arranged vertically, with a horizontal gutter between, printed with transverse pillars, as with the De La Rue printings. The control numbers, which appear on the side margins, differ fundamentally from those used by De La Rue. They consist of a combination of a letter (A or B) with the last two digits of the year; thus, A.20. They are in the color of the stamps. I am not sure whether they were integral with the plate, as with the De La Rue stamps, and thus identified when the plate was made, or whether they were changeable, and identified the printing run. There is no evidence that Harrison's ever resorted to plates larger than 200. The control numbers recorded are:

A.20: all values

A.21: 3m., 5m. carmine lake

B.21: 2m. vermilion, 4m., 5m. pink

A.22: 1m., 20m., 50m., 100m.

B.22: 2m. vermilion, 5m. pink

A.23: 1m., 20m., 50m., 100m.

B.23: 2m. vermilion, 4m., 5m. pink,
10m. red, 20m.

The quantities issued of the Harrison printings are not known, although that information may exist in the fragmentary Harrison records or in the records preserved in the Egyptian Postal Museum in Cairo, neither of which is easily accessible. However, the 100m. stamp is the scarcest of the entire issue, and is a difficult stamp to find unused. The De La Rue records show that the demand for the 100m. and 200m. values was low, and some of the De La Rue 100m. stamps were still in stock in 1922 and were used in manufacture of the crown overprint issue of that year, along with 100,000 of the Harrison 100m.

Color Changes

The UPU Congress of October 1920 adopted several rate increases for international mail. In order to comply with the UPU policy prescribing specific colors for each class of mail, some changes were required in the lower values of the Egyptian pictorials. The green color of the old 2m. was shifted to the 4m., and the 2m., now needed only for internal use, became vermilion. The 10m., originally required for UPU letters, gave up its blue color to a new 15m. value for the new UPU letter rate, and was itself changed to lake-red. The similarity of the new color to the carmine-lake of the original 5m. required a change in the latter, which was converted to an anemic pink. It took some time for the new colors to be supplied, and although the new rates came into effect on April 1st 1921, the corresponding stamps were not issued until the last quarter of 1921, or in 1922. The exact dates have not been recorded, and may never be known.

The 15m. New Value

Since there was no 15m. value in the original issue of 1914, a new stamp, in a new design, was needed, not only for the new UPU rate, but for the new inland registered letter rate.

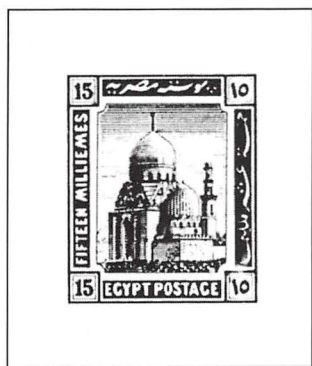


Fig. 14 Unadopted essay for a 15m. value, showing the tombs of the Caliphs.

An essay exists in the form of a die proof in blue, with the same frame design and size as the small 1914 stamps, showing the tombs of the Caliphs, Old Cairo (Fig. 14). The Zeheri catalog attributes this essay to De La Rue, but in fact, a pencil notation on the back (of admittedly unknown origin) of the only example I have seen identifies it as from Harrison & Sons. There would have been no rationale for De La Rue to produce such an essay for a stamp, for they had lost the stamp-printing contract long before the new rate had been decided on. However, since De La Rue continued to manufacture the postal stationery, it is conceivable that such an essay might have been prepared for registration envelopes to meet the new UPU registration fee. A 15m. registration envelope was indeed contemplated²⁴ but was never put into production. Plans had proceeded to the stage where De La Rue was to borrow the Harrison die for their 15m. stamp for use in

preparing to print envelopes. I have been unable to find any reference in the De La Rue archives to the design with the tombs of the Caliphs, however.

An order for a new 15m. stamp was sent to Harrison's on May 4th 1920 accompanied by a series of photographs of the statue of Rameses II in the temple of Luxor. The new stamp was to be "equal in size [to] the largest of the present series"²⁵. A proposed design

with frame exactly like that of the other values (EGYPT POSTAGE at the bottom, *bosta masriye* at the top) (Fig. 15a) was rejected because it was considered unsuited to the tall statue with its pedestal, and a new design, with all inscriptions at the sides, was agreed upon. A die without the right-hand inscriptions was engraved (Fig. 15b) and color trials in six shades of blue were sent to Egypt. Meanwhile, Egypt decided to use the smaller size of the low values for it and a new die had to be engraved.



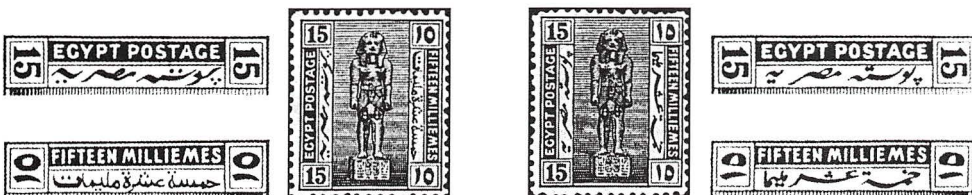
Fig. 15a The first design by Harrison's, reduced.



15b Die proof of the 15m.

Sketches of the inscriptions were submitted to Egypt in July 1920, but Harrison's "omitted to mark the sketches"²⁶. A comedy of confusion began, and Harrison's received a cablegram on July 15th 1920 reading "YOU ARE PROCEEDING WITH THE WRONG DESIGN", and a correct design was sent by mail. The confusion was not so simply resolved, and incredibly it persisted for more than a year! The then Acting Postmaster General finally had to send a letter to Harrison's on September 30th 1921 explicitly setting out the details of the desired Arabic inscriptions. Meanwhile, a supply of stamps with the wrong inscription had been printed (having control number A.21) and subsequently delivered to Egypt. The die was altered, and new proofs were sent in October. An order for 5,000,000 of the revised design was sent (control numbers B.22 and B.23). In the event, the stamps with the corrected inscription were put into use first, and those with the offending inscription were not pressed into service until later²⁷. It is no wonder that the general catalogs have had trouble keeping the order of issue straight.

The two versions of the Arabic inscriptions in the side panels differ in style and orthography, including grammatical endings, (*khams(eh)*, *'ashr(eh)*) and the plural form (*milleema*, *milleemat*) (Fig. 16). Although there was no objection to the Arabic inscription at the left, it was altered in style slightly to give a less crowded appearance. The Arabic figures of value were also revised; the principal difference is that the Arabic numeral *khamsa* ('5') is more like O in the first version, and more like D in the revised design. The revisions were made on the die, which had first to be softened, and rehardened after the changes were made. The whole process left some traces, the most noticeable of which is a



Milleemat

Milleema

Fig. 16 The two versions of the 15m. with differing Arabic.

weakness (almost a break) in the line separating the left Arabic inscription from the vignette, level with the Y of EGYPT.

A die proof of the corrected (*milleema*) design, in dull black on glazed card, is known. Plate proofs in black, on heavy, toned paper, exist for the *milleemat* type. A pane of 100 (now broken up) was in the Mishrick collection (presumably a full sheet of 200 was actually printed).

Gibbons gives the date of issue of the *milleema* stamps as March 1922; other catalogs are noncommittal. Both types are known with inverted watermark.

Perforation

The perforation of the Harrison printings is in the same gauge as that of the De La Rue stamps. However, the perforator was a different machine, having slightly irregular alignment of the pins. By careful matching with a large enough multiple, it is possible to assign a loose single stamp to its position in the strike of the comb. The comb apparently traveled from left to right (at least on the low values), and the left and bottom margins are not crossed by the perforations. Most values exist imperforate, on watermarked paper (2m. green, 3m., 5m. carmine-lake, 10m. blue, 20m., 50m.). A lot in the catalog of the sale of the Palace Collections of Egypt is described as containing "imperforate plate proofs", with 3m. (35 copies), 5m. (9), 10m. (15), all without gum, and 20m. (16) and 50m. (4) with gum (the size of the pieces, singles or multiples, is not stated). The Zeheri catalog also lists both types of the 15m. imperforate. I have not seen multiples of any Harrison imperforates larger than a block of four, and no full pane appears ever to have been reported. All are rare, and this fact implies that no more than one sheet of each was prepared. The status of these imperforates is not unequivocally established, but none is known used.

The 10m. exists as a horizontal pair, imperforate between, and perforated 14 on all four sides. The perforations meet perfectly at each corner, a characteristic of a comb machine, but such a variety could not arise by misuse of the comb perforator used on the normal stamps, which in any event have a different horizontal gauge (13½). It may be a perforation trial, from a machine designed for stamps of larger dimensions. The 5m. exists in similar condition, and the 3m., 10m., and 50m. exist as analogous vertical pairs²⁸. Gibbons lists the 2m. green and 5m. carmine-lake as "pair, imperforate between". Whatever the origin of these varieties, they are quite rare.

Plate Flaws

Plate flaws, virtually absent on the De La Rue stamps, are prominent among the Harrison stamps^{29, 30, 31}. They may be classified into two groups: those having small to large white areas, arising from a faulty, incomplete printing surface, and those having recut areas involving the inscriptions or numerals of value. The former may have been formed by chipping of the printing surface, or, if casting from moulds was used to make the stereotypes, from air bubbles caught in the mould. Recutting appears to be the result of repair to a damaged area, accomplished by repoussage (hammering from the back) or by adding metal to the front, and then re-engraving the area by hand³²; a recut Arabic numeral '٤' (position 79, lower pane) provides a prominent example. Examples of the two kinds are shown in Figures 17 and 18. Both kinds are constant, but the first kind may also be progressive.

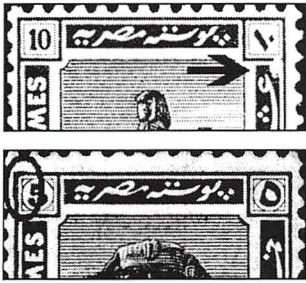


Fig. 17 Representative plate flaws of the 10m. red: area of missing color; 5m. lake: recut frame at upper left.

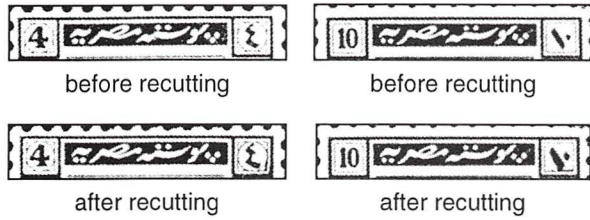


Fig. 18 Recut Arabic 'ا' (upper right) and Arabic 'و' (upper right).

These flaws occur most commonly on the 2m. vermilion, 4m., and 10m. red, but some are known on other values. The best known, but not necessarily the most prominent or most interesting, is the "missing dots" variety in the right panel of the 1m. (the dots are part of the letter *ya'* in the Arabic spelling of *milleem*). The variety occurs on stamp 100 of the upper pane. The stamp immediately above it (no. 90) also has a marked flaw: the lower right corner of the value tablet in the upper right corner of the design is filled in (Fig. 19). A prominent variety on the 2m. vermilion is a recutting of EGYPT, accompanied by a break in the frame of the medallion immediately above E. The adjacent stamp on the left shows recutting of the last letter of the top Arabic inscription; it is slightly thinner and the two dots below it are dropped so as almost to touch the white area defining the panel.

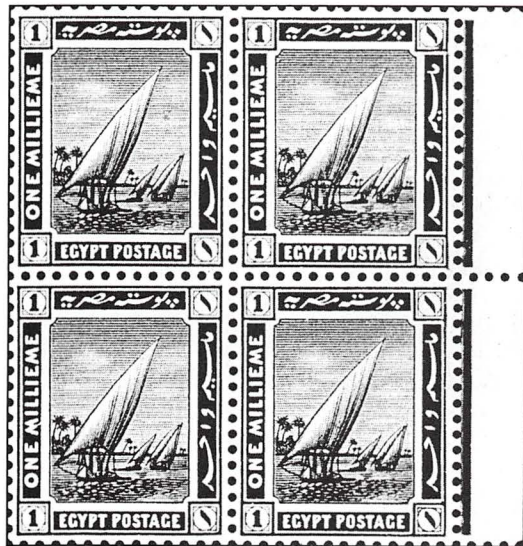


Fig. 19 Plate flaws on positions 90 (upper right corner) and 100 (missing dots in right panel) of the 1m.

Booklets

Both colors of the 5m. were issued in booklet form, with four panes of 6, prepared from special plates having fourteen rows of 12 across³³. Unlike the De La Rue booklet stamps, the watermark is not sideways, and booklet stamps differ from ordinary stamps only in the guillotined tips of the perforation teeth on the outer edges of the panes. Complete booklets are rare.

Uses

Nearly the full lifetime of the 1914–21 issue took place during World War I and the period of disruption immediately following. This had three major impacts: the establishment of military postal services; the nearly complete suppression of the tourist industry, and the introduction of rate increases at various times³⁴. This issue is harder to find on cover than the issue that it supplanted; its life of about eight years was only a third that of the former issue (1888–1914).

The 1m. value initially paid the internal rate for newspapers and the local rate for prints (such as visiting cards) up to March 1915. It is quite scarce used either way, because much of such mail went under a stampless franking arrangement (newspapers) or in postal stationery wrappers or envelopes. The 2m. value paid the internal postcard rate up to December 31st 1915 and the internal rate for prints (Fig. 20), as well as the foreign rate

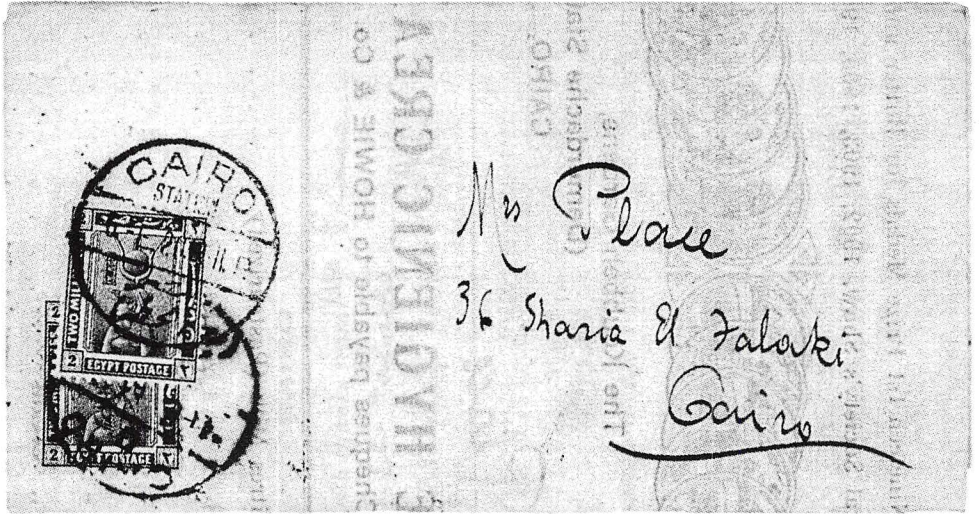


Fig. 20 The 2m. green on a twice-used item of printed matter. A bill, it was first sent to a customer, who returned it in an envelope with payment, whereupon the bill was endorsed "paid" and mailed again to the customer as a receipt.

for newspapers. It is somewhat scarce on any sort of cover except picture postcards sent at the printed-matter rate. The 3m. was originally needed to pay the local (*en ville*) rate for letters, which was abolished on March 1st 1915. After then, it paid the internal postcard rate that came into effect on January 1st 1916 (Fig. 21). It is scarce used either way. The 4m. value was originally intended primarily for the UPU postcard rate (up to

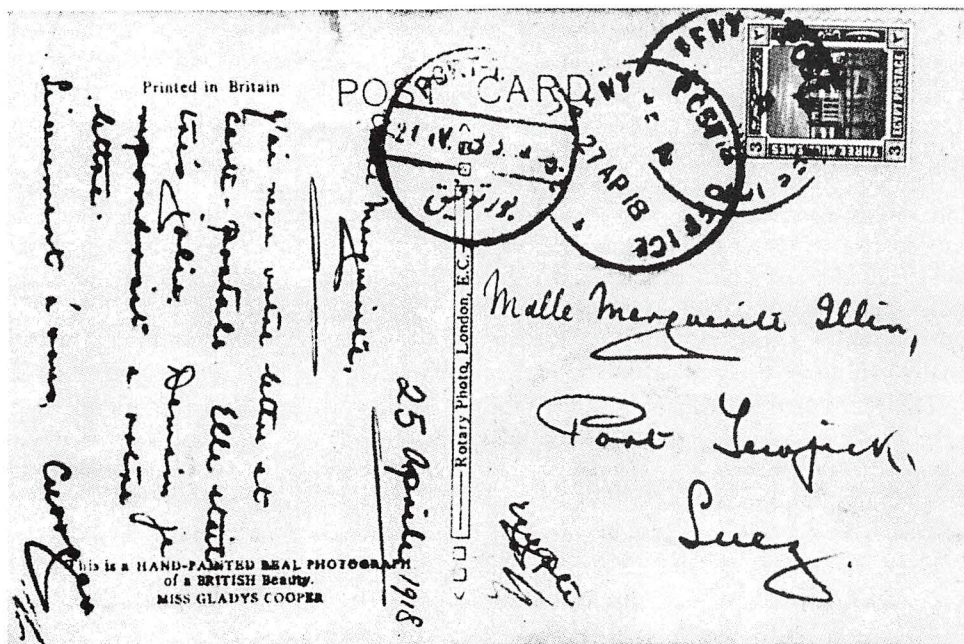


Fig. 21 The 3m. paying the internal postcard rate in 1918 (mailed from an A.P.O.).



Fig. 22 The 4m. used in a strip of four to pay the 16m. rate for double-weight UPU.

April 1st 1921), but the demand for it dropped drastically with the outbreak of war in August 1914. It also paid the minimum rate for UPU samples of merchandise, and the UPU rate for prints and periodicals from April 1st 1921. It is scarce used alone, or with other stamps to make up higher rates, such as the 16m. rate for UPU letters weighing from 20g to 40g (Fig.22).

The 5m., which paid the internal letter rate throughout the life of the issue, and the 10m., which paid the UPU letter rate up to April 1st 1921, and after that date, the special reduced rate to Great Britain and the Empire, are quite common on cover. The 20m. value paid the combined postage and registration charges on UPU letters, and is not really scarce on cover. On April 1st 1921 the single UPU letter rate became 15m., plus another 15m. for registration. There was never a 30m. value and the combined rate was usually paid with two 15m. stamps.

The 50, 100, and 200m. values were mostly used on parcels, and examples used on parcel cards (*bulletins d'expédition*) or other covers are quite scarce. Figure 23 shows an example of the 50m. exactly paying the combined charges for a triple-rate UPU letter (over 40g) and registration according to the increased rates that came into effect on April 1st 1921 (15m. registration, 15m. for the first 20g, 10m. per 20g thereafter).

Uncommon uses include the special reduced rate of 5m. for letters to Italy, Austria and Great Britain and the Empire (valid for Italy only up to April 1st 1921) (Fig. 24). A



Fig. 23 The 50m. paying the postage and registration on a UPU business letter, October 1915.



Fig. 24 The reduced treaty rate to Italy (5m.) plus 10m. registration in 1916.

return-receipt registered UPU letter required an additional 10m., making a 30m. rate (Fig. 25) up to April 1st 1921 (thereafter the fee was 15m.).

During the war, outgoing letters were generally censored (Chapter XL). An especially interesting and very rare use was on letters from Palestine in the short period (January and February 1918) between General Allenby's entry into Jerusalem and the issue of the first Palestine (EEF) stamp. Civilian letters were accepted at the military post office, and were sometimes treated as franked, and in other cases were provided with an Egyptian stamp (whether by the sender or the postal service is uncertain) (Fig. 26). Egyptian stamps so used were properly cancelled with the dumb 'retta' (a grid of dots), according to the general Egyptian practice with stamps that had not been cancelled at the point of origin.

Letters and postcards mailed at military post offices³⁴ were liable for postage, to be paid by Egyptian stamps, at the outset of the war, but free franking for soldiers on active service was introduced in 1915. Examples are fairly scarce and include British, Australian, New Zealand, Indian, and French military post offices (Chapter XXXI). Civilians using such post offices always had to use stamps, of course. Some of the military postmarks can be found on stamps cancelled by favor (often in blocks).

The principal tourist hotels had branch post offices on their premises, using cancellations bearing the name of the hotel (Chapter XXVIII). Use of them was much curtailed during the war. Traveling post offices (mostly on trains) were an important



Fig. 25 A 1916 return-receipt (A.R.) cover to USA.



Fig. 26 A cover from Army Post Office SZ 44 (Jerusalem) on January 25th 1918, with postage paid by an Egyptian 5m. stamp cancelled with the retta.

feature of the Egyptian postal service, but since some of the branch lines were suppressed during the war, examples on the 1914 pictorials are not common, especially on cover (Chapter XXXVII). A rural postal service, operated to provide postal facilities to villages not having post offices of their own, was also an important feature³⁵. Covers with rural service cancellations are scarce and much sought after.

The pictorials can be found in mixed use with the outgoing Fourth Issue, the following royal portrait issue (Fig. 27), or the intervening crown overprints. This was legitimate commercial usage, but examples of the first two kinds are especially scarce.

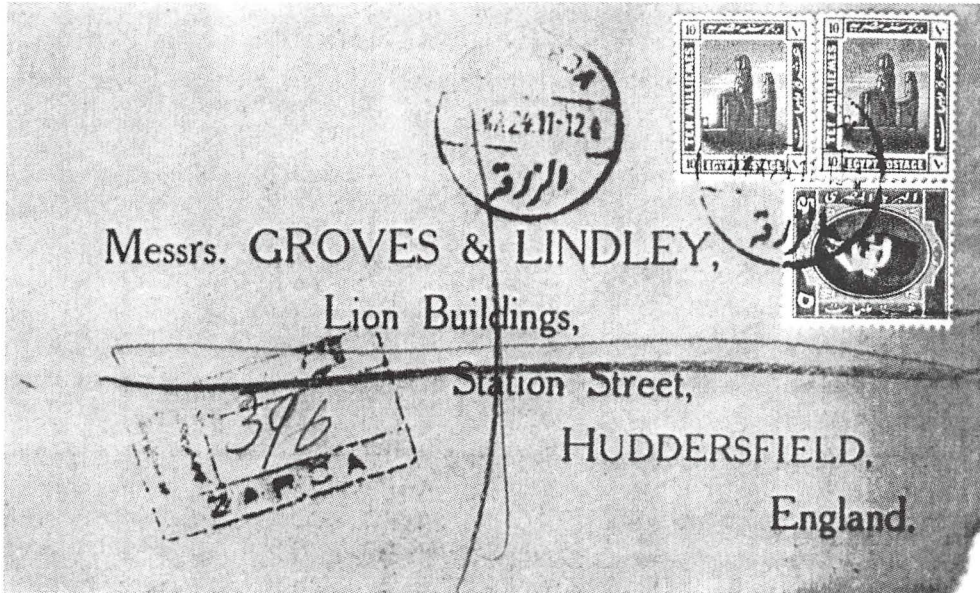


Fig. 27 Mixed use with the succeeding issue in 1924.

References³⁶

Abbreviations: NPM,L = National Postal Museum, London (De La Rue records)
 PMG = Postmaster General
 DLR = De La Rue

1. Letter from N.T. Borton, PMG of Egypt, to DLR, 3 July, 1912 (NPM,L).
2. Examples of these and other essays are in the Egyptian Postal Museum, Cairo.
3. Letter from DLR to PMG Borton, 20 Feb., 1913 (NPM,L).
- 4a. V. Andonian, QC IX (6), 60 (whole no. 102, June 1977).
 b. *Byam's Egypt*, Robson Lowe Ltd. auction catalog, London, 24–25 Oct., 1961.
5. Letters from PMG Borton to DLR, 27 Nov., 1912, and from DLR to Borton, 14 Dec., 1912 (NPM,L).
6. P.A.S. Smith, *L'OP* No. 120, 98–100 (Oct. 1968); *ibid.*, No. 122, 259–60 (Jan. 1970).
7. Letter from Acting PMG A. Goldstein to DLR, 5 Feb., 1918 (NPM,L).
8. G. Boulad, *L'OP* No. 89, 9–11 (Jan. 1955); M. Eid, *L'OP* No. 89, 11–14 (Jan. 1955).
9. D.H. Clarke, QC X (4), 77–82 (whole no. 108, Dec. 1978).
10. The Palace Collections of Egypt, auction catalog, H.R. Harmer, Ltd., London, Feb., 1954.
11. A.J. Revell, *L'OP* No. 94, 355–8, and G.T. Houston, *ibid.*, 359–61 (Apr. 1956).
12. DLR inventory of August, 1915, and letter from DLR to Sir A.L. Webb, 26 March, 1914 (NPM,L).
13. Letter from DLR to PMG, Egypt, 18 Mar., 1914, and from DLR to Sir A.L. Webb, 29 Jan., 1914 (NPM,L).
14. QC X(3), 53 (whole no. 107, Sep. 1978).
15. J. Boulad d'Humières, *L'OP* No. 127, 291–308 (Oct. 1973).
16. Letter from DLR to PMG, Egypt, 9 Feb., 1914 (NPM,L).
17. An imperforate double pane of 120 was included in the Robson Lowe International auction sale in Basel, 23 March, 1979 (lot no. 2431).
18. D. McNeille, QC IV (2), 14–17 (whole no. 38, May 1952); F.A. Smith, *L'OP* No. 31, 17–18 (Jan. 1937).
19. C.F. Hass, QC X (10), 277–86 (whole no. 114, June 1980).
20. Letter from PMG Borton to DLR, 16 Jan., 1920 (NPM,L).
21. Telegram from PMG to DLR, 20 Oct., 1920 (NPM,L).
22. F.J. Melville, *Egypt*, Stanley Gibbons Ltd., London, 1915 (he predicted the change in the watermark for the reason stated).
23. Memo from “Chennell” to “Hayes”, 1 Dec., 1919 (NPM,L).
24. Letter from PMG Borton to DLR, 10 Mar., 1922 (NPM,L).
25. Letter from PMG to Harrison & Sons, 4 May, 1920 (Harrison archives).
26. Letter to “Mr. Lovett, c/o Harrison & Sons”, 2 July, 1920 (Harrison archives).
27. G.S. Thompson, *L'OP* No. 77, 284–6 (Jan. 1952).
28. P.A.S. Smith, *L'OP* No. 120, 129–140 (Oct. 1968); G.T. Houston, *ET* 7 (4), 82–4 (July/Aug. 1975).

29. G.T. Houston, *L'OP* No. 124, 36–41 (Jan.–Apr. 1971); *QC VII* (6), 90 and 114 (whole no. 78, June and Sep. 1971).
30. I.K. Chaftar, *L'OP* No. 126, 228–41 (Jan., 1972); *QC VII* (10), 171–7 (whole no. 82, June 1972).
31. A.J. Revell, *QC XIV* (3/4), 86–93 (whole no. 155/156, Sep.–Dec. 1990).
32. L.N. Williams, *Fundamentals of Philately*, Revised Edition. American Philatelic Society, State College, PA, 1990. p. 492ff.
33. M. Murphy, *QC XIII* (3/4), 72–4 (whole no. 133/134, Sep.–Dec. 1987).
34. A table of Egyptian postal rates has been published: P.A.S. Smith, *QC XIV*, 6–10 (March 1990); see also Chapter XXIX.
35. G. Boulad, *L'OP* No. 80, 512–16 (Oct. 1952).
36. This chapter is a revised version of an article that appeared in *CCP 72*, 23–34, 91–4, 153–66 (Jan./Feb., Mar./Apr., May/June 1993).