

XV The Fourth Issue

First Period: 1879-1883	221	Third Period: 1888-1902	236
Essays	222	New Currency, New Plates	236
Proofs	223	New Denominations: 10pi and 3m.	238
Date of Issue	224	Uses	239
Colours	224	Fourth Period: 1902-1915	240
Watermark	225	Chalk-surfaced Paper	240
Colour Changes	225	First Booklet Stamps	240
Control and Current Numbers	226	The 1906 4m.	241
Quantities	227	Coil Stamp	241
Plate Varieties	228	Imperforate Proofs	242
Uses	228	Uses	242
Second Period: 1884-1888	231	Bisects	243
The 1884 Provisional	232	References	244
New Colours and an Aborted New Value	234		

The Fourth Issue of Egyptian postage stamps has a special place in Egyptian philately because it began with a change from the Italian/Arabic inscriptions of the issue it replaced to French/Arabic, and ended with a change to English/Arabic in 1914, after a life of 34 years. It also embodied a change from the rather primitive stamp-printing technology of the preceding issue to the most sophisticated technology of the times. In its long life it straddled the centuries and saw major expansion and innovation in the Egyptian postal service, as well as three military campaigns having philatelic consequences.

The life of the issue can be divided into four periods:

First Period, 1879-1883, characterized by the initial colours and currency.

Second Period, 1884-1888, characterized by a change to the colour scheme recommended by the UPU.

Third Period, 1888-1902, beginning with replacement of currency in paras by milliemes and the introduction of a new style of printing plate.

Fourth Period, 1902-1915, marked by conversion to chalk-surfaced paper and introduction of a third style of printing plate.

First Period: 1879-1883

On August 18th 1876 A. Caillard Pasha succeeded Giacomo Muzzi as Director General of Posts. He soon set in motion the transition from Italian to French as the European secondary language of the postal service, the earliest result being seen in certain date-stamps (designated Types VI and VII by the Egypt Study Circle) inscribed POSTES EGYPTIENNES instead of POSTE EGIZIANE, or ALEXANDRIE instead of ALESSANDRIA. These were introduced in July and August 1878. At the same time, Caillard approached Thomas De La Rue & Co. about a new issue of postage stamps,² After some negotiations about cost, size of sheets, etc., an agreement was reached to produce new stamps in essentially the same denominations and colours as the Third Issue, with elimination of the now unneeded 2½pi. Value. The sheets were to be of 240 stamps so as to conform to De La Rue's usual practice and thus keep the cost low. Egypt provided drafts of the frame inscriptions (in French and Arabic) accompanied by samples to show the colours desired. For the 5pi., an example of an essay by Westfehling in a light emerald green was used for the sample. It was De La Rue's suggestion to have the frames of different design for each value, and to use the new fugitive inks as a protection against fraud from cleaning stamps and reusing them. The firm undertook to provide an initial supply of stamps in "a few weeks" beyond the six months required to complete the preliminary work.

Essays

De La Rue submitted essays, painted in watercolor, dated August 1878 (Fig. 1). The set of essays for the six values shown by Easton¹ includes designs for the 20pa. and 2pi. that differ substantially from the ultimate designs. Another painted essay for the 2pi. having the issued design also exists (Fig. 1). Only the 5pi. essay is listed in the Zeheri Specialized Catalogue of Egypt (no. 54b). These essays have since been distributed in the philatelic community.

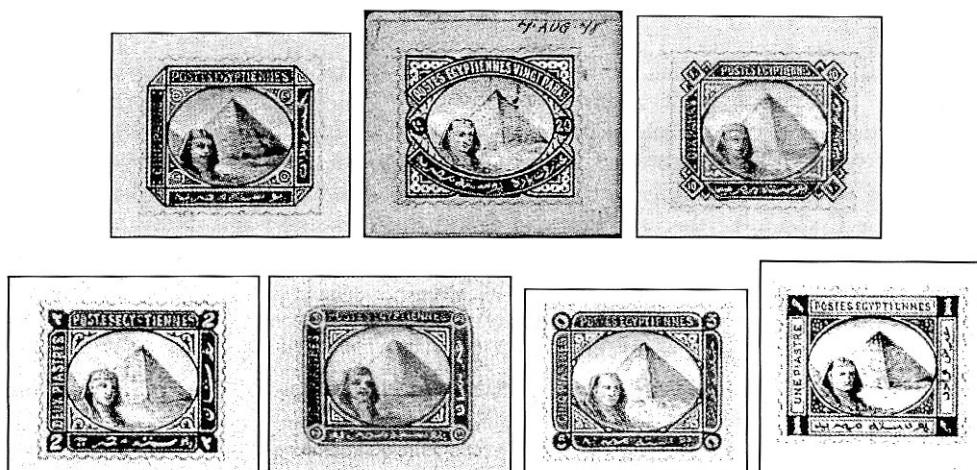


Fig. 1 De La Rue painted essays (courtesy of the late V. Andonian).

Unsolicited essays include a design from Westfehling, of Zurich, in 1877 (Fig. 2). These are usually perforated on one horizontal edge only. The colours I have seen are green, pale green, ultramarine, pale grey-blue, dull brown, grey-lilac, pale salmon pink, rose-red, and vermillion. Another essay, of unknown origin, is purported to date from 1879 (Fig. 3); it also comes in a variety of colours.



Fig. 2 Westfehling essay



Fig. 3 Essay of unknown provenance

De La Rue had some difficulty finding a good model for the sphinx from which to make the engraved vignette and eventually borrowed a “cast taken from a very perfect representation”, owned by the Duke of Northumberland³. They requested (and apparently received) permission from Egypt to “restore” the sphinx to its presumed original appearance since a satisfactory engraving would be difficult to produce if all the blemishes of the millennia were to be reproduced. The result was a “restored” image. Over the life of the issue different engravings of the vignette were made, having small variations of the expression and the relation to the pyramids, for use when new values were required. A well illustrated study of these and other die proofs has been published⁴, with commentary on the evolution of the design, by Byam and Danson, and by Chaftar.

Proofs

The process adopted was typography, and De La Rue engraved the dies, made the plates, and ordered the gummed, watermarked paper, in addition to designing and printing the stamps. A master vignette die was made for the initial issue and six transfers from it were made onto soft steel hubs upon which the frames for the six denominations were then engraved.

Die proofs in black on glazed card exist for all values; the earliest are dated in November 1878. Many of them are handstamped BEFORE HARDENING, AFTER HARDENING, BEFORE STRIKING, or AFTER STRIKING. These proofs were a way of monitoring the condition of the dies during their history of manufacture and use. The steel had to be soft during the engraving, and then was hardened by heat-treating with carbon. In use, the die was struck with great pressure into leaden slugs to make the molds for building up the plates, and there was always the possibility of damage to the die. The AFTER STRIKING die proofs appear to be the commonest.

One sheet of plate proofs of each value, imperforate on watermarked paper, in the issued colours, including both the pale claret and lilac (violet) versions of the 10pa. were sent to Egypt on January 2 1879. These were broken up long ago and are rare today, even as singles; I know of no multiples larger than pairs.

A set of specimens, overprinted CANCELLED in sans serif capitals, apparently the same as seen on some later issues, was offered by Stanley Gibbons Ltd. in 1996 (the 10pa. of unspecified colour). They were without gum. The 1pi. and 5pi. had upright watermark, indicative of a later printing. Their status is uncertain; they may be trade specimens to show examples of the printers' work. A specimen 5pi. gray exists perf. 12, unwatermarked.

Date of Issue

The new stamps (Fig. 4) were announced by a multilingual notice, of which the English version read as follows:

DECREE

The General Post Direction has the honour to inform the public that the postage stamps at present in use will be replaced by postage stamps of a new design, which will be put into circulation the 1st April, 1879.

The postage stamps at present in use will continue to serve either by themselves or in conjunction with those of the new issue for the franking of correspondence until the 31st of October next. From that date they cease to be accepted for any postal matter whatsoever.

From the 31st October to the 31st December, 1879, all post offices are authorized to exchange the present postage stamps against others of equal value of the new issue. After that time they will not be accepted at all.



Fig. 4 The 1879 designs.

Colours

There was thus the possibility of mixed use with the outgoing Third Issue for a period of seven months, but I have not seen an example other than one fragment. However, Third Issue stamps cancelled with dates in the grace period, especially in the first month, can be found by diligent searching.

The stamps were issued when announced. The colours were only roughly like those of the previous issue. Various catalogs describe them differently, so I will use the terminology of the Gibbons Colour Guides determined by direct comparison with the stamps. The 5pa., which had a life of nine years, ranges from pale brown to sepia, the former being the scarcer. The 10pa., curiously called "maroon" by De La Rue, and "lilac-rose" by some catalogs, was actually pale claret. The 20pa., sometimes called "ultramarine", was in shades of cobalt blue. The 1pi. was in shades of rose, but a small quantity was made in a deeper, more intense colour, rose-red. The 2pi. was yellow-orange, pale to deep, and the 5pi. was issued in green and light blue-green.

The colour of the 10pa. was criticized by the Egyptian authorities when examples reached them in January 1879 as being too much like that of the 1pi. However, 720,000 had already been printed and they had to be accepted. A further printing later in the same month was in a new colour, a strong lilac (often called violet), in a quantity of 1,284,000. The pale claret stamps were issued along with the other values, and as supplies

began to dwindle, the lilac stamps were put on sale (January 1881). The two colours were then apparently sold and used concurrently.

Watermark

The watermark, a single crescent and star falling on each stamp (Fig. 5), was a close match to that of the previous issue, but a new dandy roll was required to fit the De La Rue sheet size, 240, compared to the single panes of 200 printed before. Each of the four panes of 60 making up the sheets was surrounded by a continuous frame-line watermark which often falls on stamps from the edge of the panes. The vertical gutter between the panes was watermarked POSTES EGYPTIENNES reading upward (Fig. 6); the narrower horizontal gutter was unwatermarked. There were no coloured buffer bars (“jubilee lines”) around the panes. Gutter pairs, and even cross-gutter blocks, exist. The sheets were perforated with a comb machine of gauge 14x13½.



1884: narrow



1884: wide
Fig. 5

Watermarks

The first consignments of stamps to reach Egypt had inverted watermarks (that is, the star and the horns of the crescent were toward the bottom). Inverted watermarks are thus the norm for the 1879 stamps and the 10pa. lilac of 1881; only the 5pa. and 2pi., which had longer lives, are somewhat scarcer with inverted watermark. Dealers occasionally offer these inverted watermarks as scarce errors, and at a substantial premium; they are either displaying ignorance, or are trying to mislead.

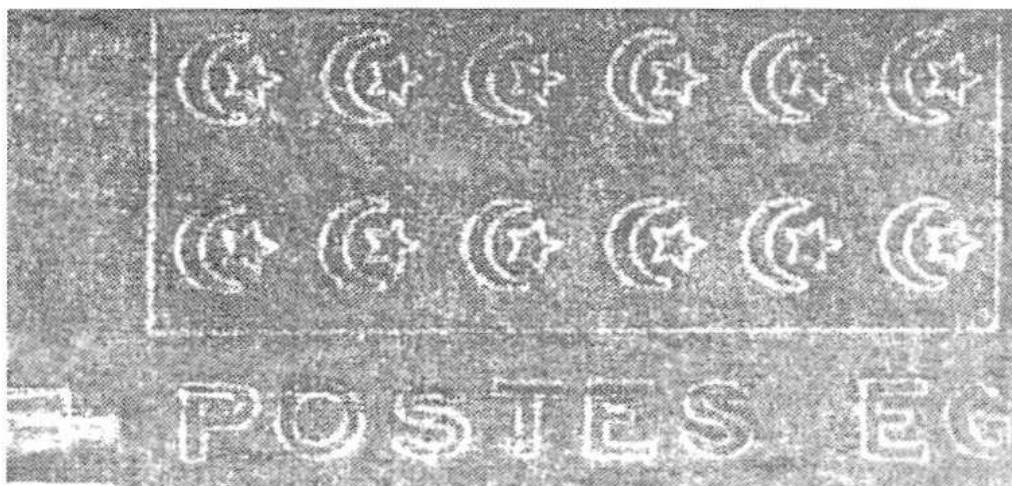


Fig. 6 Vertical gutter watermark.

Colour Changes

In an order for further supplies of stamps sent in 1881, the new Director General of Posts, W.F. Halton Pasha, specified that the colour of the 10pa. was to be changed to grey⁶; no reason was given. The stamps in the new colour, supplied in a quantity of 2,551,200, were issued on January 25th 1882. They had upright watermark. The usual shade ranges from slate to pale slate with only a faintly bluish cast. A rare shade, a light bluish slate, also exists, but the difference is not highly pronounced, and confusion is easy. This shade may have been the first printing, for the De La Rue archival sheet dated 8 DEC 81 is in this shade, but the archival sheet dated 9 MAR 82 is in the slate-grey shade. I have not seen a clearly identifiable used example. One needs the experience of seeing a quantity of the grey 10pa. in order to be able to recognize the bluish shade with confidence.

Although the grey 10pa. normally has upright watermark, inverted watermarks exist, and are quite scarce. A rarity, on unwatermarked paper and perf. 12, is said to be a printer’s sample⁷; it may, however, be a colour trial.

Control and Current Numbers

Control numbers, printed in the colours of the stamps as part of the plate, appear four times in the sheet of all values in the side margins near the corners. They are of two forms: a colourless numeral on a circular solid

background and a colour numeral in a rectangle with concave corners. Both occur on the same sheet, the circular one at upper left and lower right and the rectangular one at upper right and lower left. For example, 1 in a circle and 2 in a rectangle on sheets of the 10pa. (Fig. 7). The reason for such arrangements⁸ is found in De La Rue's custom of assigning two types of numbers to a plate: a simple plate number, starting with 1 for the first plate made for the particular stamp, and a "current number", starting with 1 for the first plate of any sort made for each country. The numbers in round frames are the plate numbers and those in rectangular frames are the current numbers. This system was used until the late 1880s, when the use of current numbers was abandoned.

Each denomination of the 1879 series has only the plate number 1 except for the 1pi. for which a second plate, numbered 2, was eventually made. The current numbers, however, were assigned in the order of manufacture, which was initially the order of the denominations. Thus the 5pa. was given current number 1; the 10pa., 2; the 20pa., 3; the 1pi., 4; the 2pi., 5, and the 5pi., 6. When the second plate for the 1pi. was made at a later date, it acquired the current number 7. With the currency change of 1888 current numbers were no longer applied and the simple plate number appeared in all four positions. There was some confusion at first, and the plates for the 1m. and 2m. had their plate numbers (1) printed in the rectangular frames previously used for current numbers. I do not know of this anomaly on the 5m. The plaster values, however, continued to be printed from the old plates, regardless of changes in the colours, until wear required new plates. These were made with only simple plate numbers. The 2pi. orange-brown of 1893, for example, was still being printed from plate 1, current number 5, but when a second plate was eventually required, it had only the plate number 2 in all four positions. Similarly, the 5pi. grey of 1884 was printed for some time from plate 1, current number 6, until a new plate, number 2, was later made. From this description it can be seen that even the latest edition (1972) of the Zeheri catalog is erroneous and confused, as a consequence of not understanding the difference between plate numbers and current numbers.

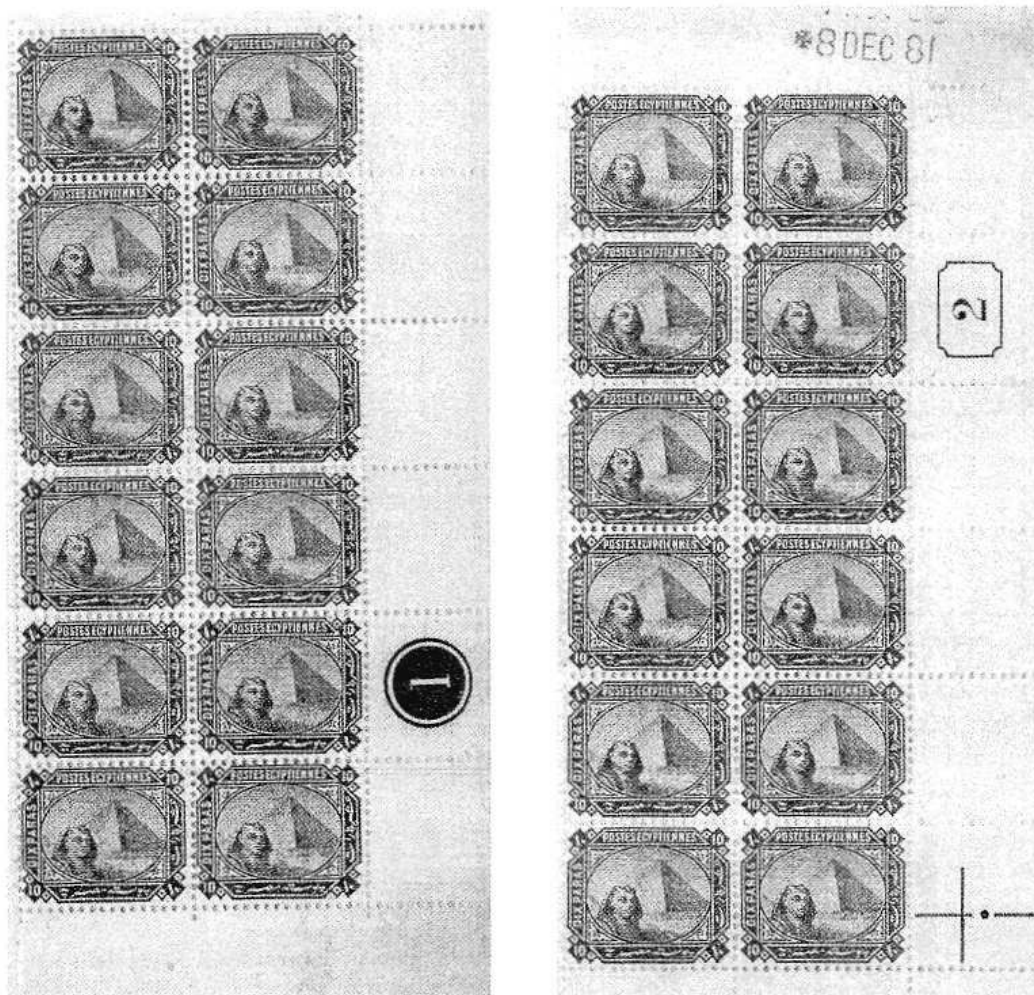


Fig. 7 Control numbers: plate (circular), current (rectangular).

Quantities

The invoiced totals, as best as I can determine from the available records (which have some ambiguities or gaps) are as follows:

5pa. -	5,572,000 (+?)	1pi. -	18,444,000
10pa. pale claret -	720,000	2pi. -	2,063,520 (+ +?)
10pa. lilac -	1,284,000	5pi. -	1,212,000
20pa. -	2,516,160		

These figures do not include the undisclosed quantities found in the De La Rue archives, amounting to at least one sheet (240 stamps) each, and for most, more than one sheet. Consequent to these remainders being put on the market, unmounted mint examples and multiples are widely available.

Plate Varieties

Plate flaws are not common on this issue, but some interesting ones exist and one of them has achieved catalog status (Zeheri no. 23d). In the bottom panel the Arabic words *bosta* and *masriya* are joined (Fig. 8). This is a progressive flaw, resulting from chipping or cracking of the printing surface during use^{7,9}. It occurs in position 7 of pane II (i.e., the upper right pane) of sheets having plate number 1. It exists with narrow watermark upright and inverted and with wide watermark (see Second Period) upright⁷. On examples from indubitably late printings (ix., with wide watermark), the flaw is reduced to an almost invisible thin line. The

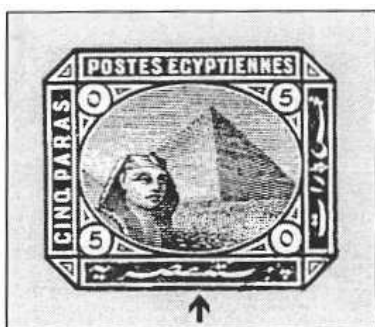


Fig. 8 Flaw: joined Arabic letters

conclusion reached by Ibrahim Chaftar Bey⁷ is that the damaged inscription was noticed and repaired, presumably by repoussage, before the late printings (lesser flaws on the same subject, such as nicks in the frame line, remained). Another nice flaw on this stamp is a protuberance in the form of a small loop on the Arabic letter *ra'* of *masriya*, making it into a *wau*, and the word into *maswiya* (Fig. 9).

Two substantial white flaws have been reported on the 20pa. blue¹⁰. One of them affects the RA of PARAS and the other affects the upper part of the Arabic inscription in the right-hand panel. Another flaw on this stamp is a white circle attached to the left side of the P of PARAS¹¹. The positions and constancy of these flaws are yet to be determined. Some small plate flaws have also been reported on

other values^{9,12}.

Fig. 9 Flaw: loop on *ra'*.



Uses

There were no changes in rates during the First Period so the uses of the several values are the same as for the Third issue, with one exception. Parcel post service, utilizing parcel cards (dispatch notes), came into use with this issue; very few have survived from this period, but they usually bear high values, especially the 5pi. (Fig. 10).

The 5pa. value was intended to pay the rate for domestic periodicals (principally newspapers). Although it was used by the millions, old newspapers, and especially their wrappers, were not usually saved, and the 5pa. is consequently a rarity used alone for this rate (Fig. 11). It can be found in multiples or in combination with other values to make up higher rates (a block of 8 would make the letter rate of 1pi.), but even such uses are extremely scarce.



Fig. 10 The 5pi. Green used on a postcard.

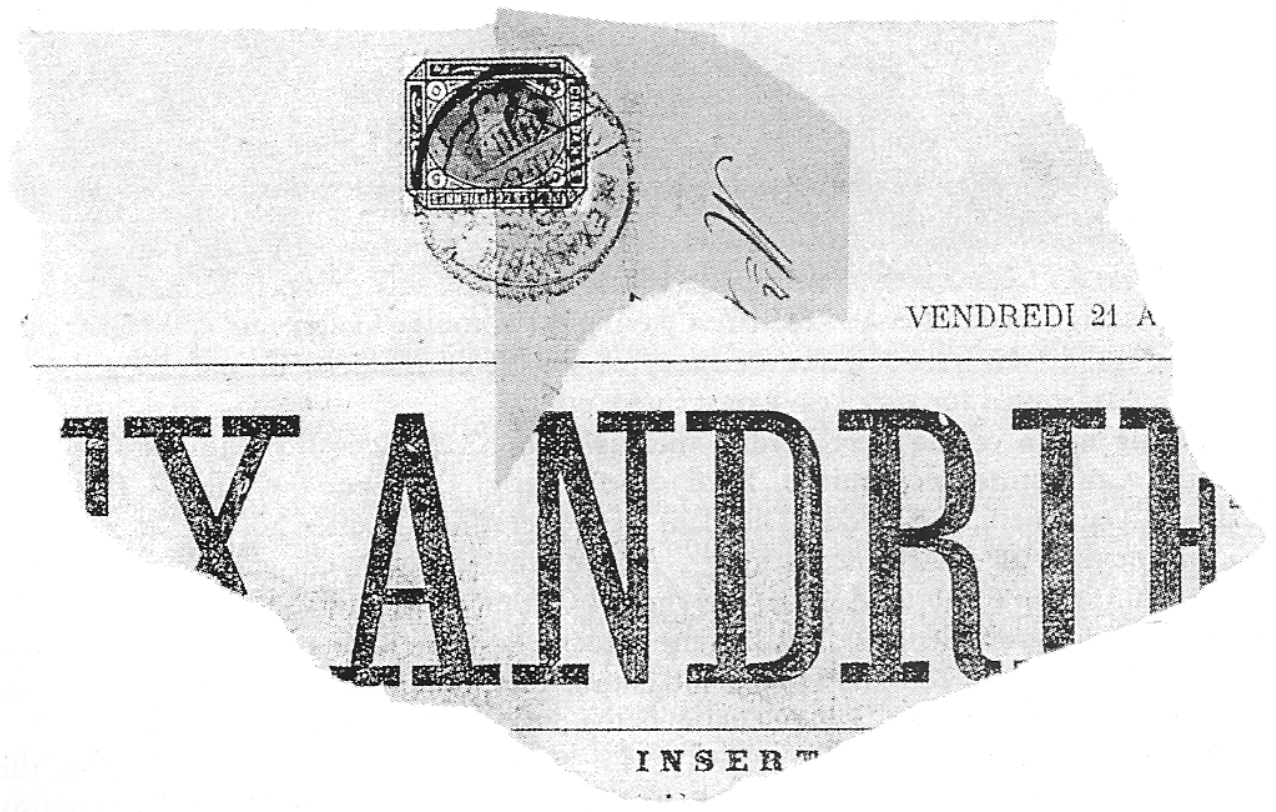


Fig. 11 The 5pa. used on an internal newspaper.

The rate for non-periodical printed matter was 10 paras; the most frequently seen example is on unsealed envelopes containing greeting cards. The short lives of the several colours of the 10pa. stamps contribute to making them extremely scarce on cover, whether used alone or with other stamps to make up the letter rate.

The 20pa. value is scarce on cover and is mostly found used in pairs to pay the letter rate; singles used alone for the local (*en ville*) letter rate are surprisingly scarce (Fig. 12). Although 20pa. was the rate for postal cards, the adhesive stamp of this denomination was not intended for such use. Only the imprinted postal cards (20pa. brown of 1879) were allowed and privately printed postcards were not accepted.



Fig. 12 The 20pa. paying the local (*en ville*) letter rate.

The 1pi. and 2pi. are the commonest values on cover, the former paying the internal and the foreign letter rates and the latter paying the combined letter rate and registration fee. The 5pi. on any sort of cover is a rarity; it was used principally for parcels, although it could also be used for very heavy or insured letters.

During much of the First Period, the Egyptian Consular Offices in the Ottoman Empire, Costantinopoli, Smirne, Rodi, Scio (Chios), Metelino (Mytilene) (Fig. 13), Galipoli, Dardanelli, and Gedda (Djeddah) were operating (Chapter XXX), and all values can be found with their cancellations¹³. All but the first two are very scarce to rare. These stamps were also used in the Territorial Offices in Somaliland: Barbara, Zeila; in Eritrea: Massawah, (Senhit?); and in the Sudan: Barbar (Berber), Dongola, Gedaref, Hartum (Khartoum), Kassala, Suakim (Souakin), and Wadi Halfa. Examples of such use are scarce to rare, Wadi Halfa and Souakin being the most frequently seen.

The number of travelling post offices was increased during the First Period from the one previous route (ALES-CAIRO), and their cancellations are a scarce but interesting aspect of the issue¹⁴ (Chapter XXXVII). Those recorded with dates in this period are: Alexandria-Rosetta, Benha-Suez, Benha-Zagazig, Chibin el Kom-Tanta, Damiatat-Tanta, Dessuk-Tanta, and, of course, Alexandria-Caire. Others may exist. Stamps of this period (and the later ones) are also found with foreign cancellations of arrival (London Foreign Branch, Marseille, Naples, Constantinople, Beyrouth, etc.) or cancellations of mail boats (Chapter XXXII). Intaglio seal cancellations (in Arabic or Latin lettering) exist but are quite rare. The *retta* (a lozenge of diamond-shaped dots) is uncommon; its use was to cancel stamps that had escaped cancellation at the point of original mailing. Pen or pencil cancellations, apparently postal, can also be found. The First Period saw the phasing out of the Italian-language postal markings in favour of those using French inscriptions or phonetics. Thus

“Alessandria” became “Alexandrie”, “Cairo” became “Caire”, “Gedda” became “D)eddah”, “Raccomandato” became “Recommandee”, etc. The change-over was nearly complete by 1882.



Fig. 13 Stamps of the Fourth Issue used at the Consular office on Mytilene.

Second Period: 1884-1888

The defining feature of the Second Period is the adoption of the colour scheme of the UPU agreement (this colour scheme was optional at the time and only became a requirement at the Washington Convention in 1897). The agreement defined three basic classes of international mail: printed matter (½d., 1c or 5 centimes), green; postal cards (1d., 2c or 10 centimes), red; and letters (2½d., 5c or 25 centimes), blue. The colours of the corresponding Egyptian stamps, 10pa., 20pa., and 1pi., did not correspond. At the same time, a new watermark dandy-roll was brought into use, creating a recognizably different, albeit similar, watermark (see below).

The order for stamps in the new colours, which was sent on December 24th 1883, included a colour change for the 5pi. as well. It was changed to grey because its erstwhile green colour was adopted for the 10pa. The order was shipped in five consignments between February 20th and June 27th 1884. Easton records a total delivery of 3,030,000 of the 10pa. green and 1,764,000 of the 20pa. red. The former stamp is very common unused, much less common used. It may be that a substantial quantity remained unsold when currency and stamps denominated in paras were abolished in 1888.

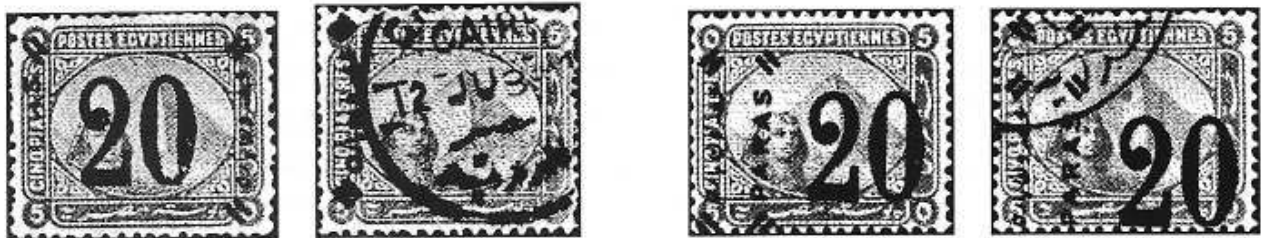
The 1884 Provisional

In the interim, as a transitional measure, a provisional, made locally, was issued. It was perhaps feared that the stock of the 20pa. blue might run out before the new 20pa. red arrived, and it was probably also thought wise to use up the large stock of the 5pi. green insofar as feasible before the arrival of the new 10pa. in the same colour. Two birds could be killed with one stone by converting the 5pi. stamps to 20pa. by surcharging them.

Accordingly, the stock of 962,880 5pi. stamps (ca. 80% of the total printed) was surcharged by the Government Printing Works in Boulaq. The surcharging was done by lithography, apparently on unseparated sheets of 240. Proofs of the overprint exist in two forms: on thin, white, unwatermarked paper, perforated

131/2x13 in the dimensions of the stamps, and on thicker paper with an aged appearance, imperforate¹⁵. The evidence of minute but constant features, such as specks of colour, indicates that the lithographic stone was built up of transfers of horizontal strips of ten. The upper right pair of bars (to cover the old value) is thicker than that at upper left on all positions and the alignment and spacing of all parts of the surcharge appear to be identical. These facts suggest that a single subject was set in type and imprinted ten times onto transfer paper to generate the intermediate stage. A folded sheet of 240 and a pane of 60 of imperforate proofs exist; I know of no other examples, even as singles. I have been able to study only the pane of 60. The perforated proofs are not known in large multiples and I have seen nothing larger than a pair. Minute flaws on the pair I have seen match those of the issued stamps.

Both the proof panes and the issued stamps have lithographic guide lines (crosses or tees) between each of the subjects on the entire perimeter of each pane, including the corners. Part or all of these guide lines may appear on a stamp depending on the centring (Fig. 14). The stamps were issued on February 1st 1884. It has been stated that 2,880 of them had the surcharge inverted; it is a scarce, but by no means rare, variety, and blocks, used and unused, and examples on cover, are known. The basic stock came from both printings of the 5pi. and stamps with both upright and inverted (scarce) watermark were therefore surcharged. The inverted surcharge is found with both upright and inverted watermark (the latter is quite scarce). Some sheets had the surcharge badly misplaced, in some cases so severely that one column of stamps was without the left inscription and the numerals 20, and thus had only the right side inscription, placed on the left side of the stamp (Fig. 15). Other varieties and curiosities have been described^{7,16}.



Inscription extreme displacement: a cheval missing displacement
Fig. 15 Displaced surcharges.

Examples of a double surcharge, one strike of which is faint and d cheval and may be a kiss print or a double set-off, have been reported¹⁶.

These provisionals were used mostly in pairs to pay the ordinary letter rate. Substantial quantities of them must have been sent to the military front in the Sudan, for cancellations of the Territorial Post Offices Wadi Halfa, Korti, Dongola, and Tani, which figured in the campaign to relieve the siege of Khartoum, seem to occur on this provisional more frequently than on the regular stamps. The provisional could have been used to pay the reduced letter rate for letters under 15g from soldiers and noncommissioned officers “on the frontier” to Egypt or the United Kingdom (and from Egypt to them), but I have not seen an example of such use. The provisional was declared obsolete as of June 30th 1888 when the para currency was abolished (see Third Period).

New Colours and an Aborted New Value

The stamps in the new colours were finally announced by a notice dated 20 November 1884:

The General Postal Direction has the honour to inform the public that this administration is issuing to the public new stamps of 10 paras and 20 paras, and 1 piastre, and 5 piastres, in the following colours:

10 paras green	20 paras pink
1 piastre blue	5 piastres grey

This new issue will come into circulation on December 15 next. The stamps of similar values now in circulation will continue to be available either solely, or in conjunction with the new ones, for franking correspondence up to December 15, 1885, after which date they will no longer be current and will cease to be accepted by the Egyptian post offices.

The stamps of 5 paras and 2 piastres will continue to be the same as those actually current.

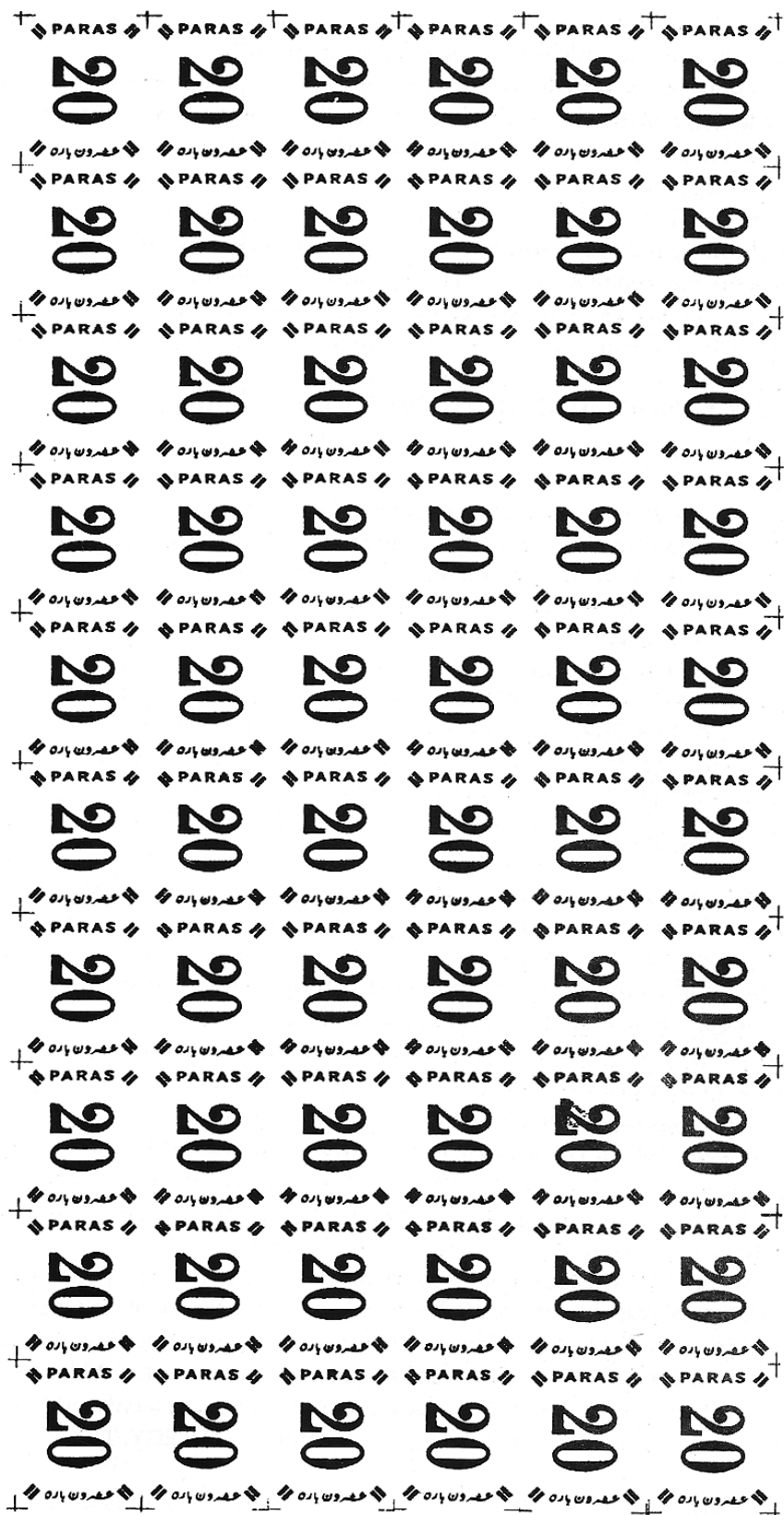


Fig. 14 Proof pane of the 1884 surcharge showing guide marks

The stamps were issued as promised, but the colour descriptions can be improved. Using the Gibbons Colour Guide terminology, the 10pa. was indeed green, but the 20pa., far from “pink”, appeared in two shades, deep rose and rose-carminé. The new 1pi., which had a long life (30 years), went through a range of shades: cobalt-blue, cobalt, blue, and deep blue. The 5pi., similarly long-lived, is known in shades of olive-grey, slate grey (earliest printings), and deep slate. The 2pi. from the printing that accompanied the new stamps had a slightly stronger orange tint than before.

The stamps of the First Period were printed on white paper of good quality, with colourless gum. In the Second Period, the 10pa. green and the accompanying new supply of the 5pa. were printed on paper of poor quality, toned pale buff with tinted gum.

The 1884 printings of all values had another new feature, unannounced. The watermark was altered, somewhat subtly, and the change was not noticed in philatelic circles at the time; it was not discovered until 70 years had passed^{7,17}. The former watermark was narrow (ca. 12x14mm), whereas the later one was wider and shorter (ca. 14x12mm) (Fig.5). There is also a difference in the marginal watermark: whereas the 1879 watermark had a continuous line outlining each pane, the 1884 version had only corner angles (brackets). These extended in an L-shape just beyond the boundaries of each corner stamp on each pane. The inscription POSTES EGYPTIENNES in the vertical gutter was kept.

Neither the change nor the need for a new dandy-roll is mentioned in the De La Rue correspondence summarized by Easton¹. However, it discloses the fact that the dandy-roll was returned to Egypt (over De La Rue’s objections) after each use, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that it was damaged in transit or storage. A dandy-roll is a large and vulnerable object, a cylinder about the diameter of the human thigh (or larger), made of wire mesh with internal bracing; the bits that impress the watermark into the wet paper pulp are soldered to the outside. If the dandy-roll had been dropped or hit with a heavy object it would have been dented and repair might not have been practical.

As a result of this change, the new printings of the 5pa. and 2pi. were different even though the colours were essentially unchanged. Chaftar⁷ records 3 February 1885 as the earliest date seen for the 5pa. with the new, wide watermark. The new 1pi. blue, which was presumably intended to have the new watermark, was also printed on a few sheets of remaining narrow-watermark papery. This variety, which is considered by some to be an error, by others to be a normal result of economical procedure, is very scarce used and rare unused. The 10pa. green has also been found with the narrow watermark; I have heard of only two copies. If the 20pa. rose-red and the 5pi. grey exist with narrow watermark, they have not been reported.

There was little change in the uses to which this issue was put in this period. The Territorial Offices in Massawa, Barbara, and Zeila, and all offices in the Sudan south of Wadi Halfa, were closed shortly after the stamps in the UPU colours were issued. New offices at Tokar, Korti, and Tani, in the Sudan, were opened, but the latter two were closed after a very brief life during the Nile campaign (the Red Sea port of Suakin remained in operation, however).

The 10pa. green, which paid the internal printed matter rate (including greeting cards), is surprisingly difficult to find on cover or card, although it is a very common stamp unused. Perhaps remaining stocks of the 10pa. grey were used up first and were sufficient to last for some time. The scarcity of the 5pa. and 20pa. used as singles on cover or wrapper is similar to the First Period. The 5pi. grey is scarce enough on cover, but its long life provided a greater opportunity for its use than the 5pi. green.

The swan song for this Period was an aborted proposal for a 2pa. provisional. Easton records an exchange between De La Rue and Edgar Vincent, financial representative for Egypt in London, in which De La Rue proposed on January 28th 1886 to print the 5pa. stamp “in a special colour of singly fugitive ink... overprinted 2 Paras”, and submitted a specimen (Fig. 16). The essay was printed in olive with black overprint from a special miniature plate of 6, arranged horizontally. One imperforate and one perforated strip are known to have been prepared; the Byam collection contained the imperforate strip. Since then, these have been broken up. Apparently, none were sent to Egypt, for none was mentioned in the catalog of the sale of the Palace Collections.



Fig. 16 Essay for the aborted 2pa. stamp

The purpose of this stamp was to pay a proposed reduced rate for newspapers (the existing rate was 5 paras, one-eighth of a piaster). However, a decision was made in Egypt to dispense with stamps and postmarks on large-volume newspapers by charging a bulk fee instead and having the newspapers bear an imprint “A L extraordinaire” (Affranchissement Libre); so the negotiations with De La Rue were annulled on February 10th.

Third Period: 1888-1902

New Currency, New Plates

A changeover from para currency to milliemes (1 millieme = 4 paras) defines the beginning of the Third Period, which also included a change in the style of printing plate. New plates made during this period had buffer bars, thick bars of colour forming a continuous line surrounding each pane (Fig. 17). This period also saw the introduction of postal stationery envelopes, some rate changes requiring a new denomination (3 m.), and the appearance of a 10pi. stamp, a value not seen since the end of the First Issue in 1867.

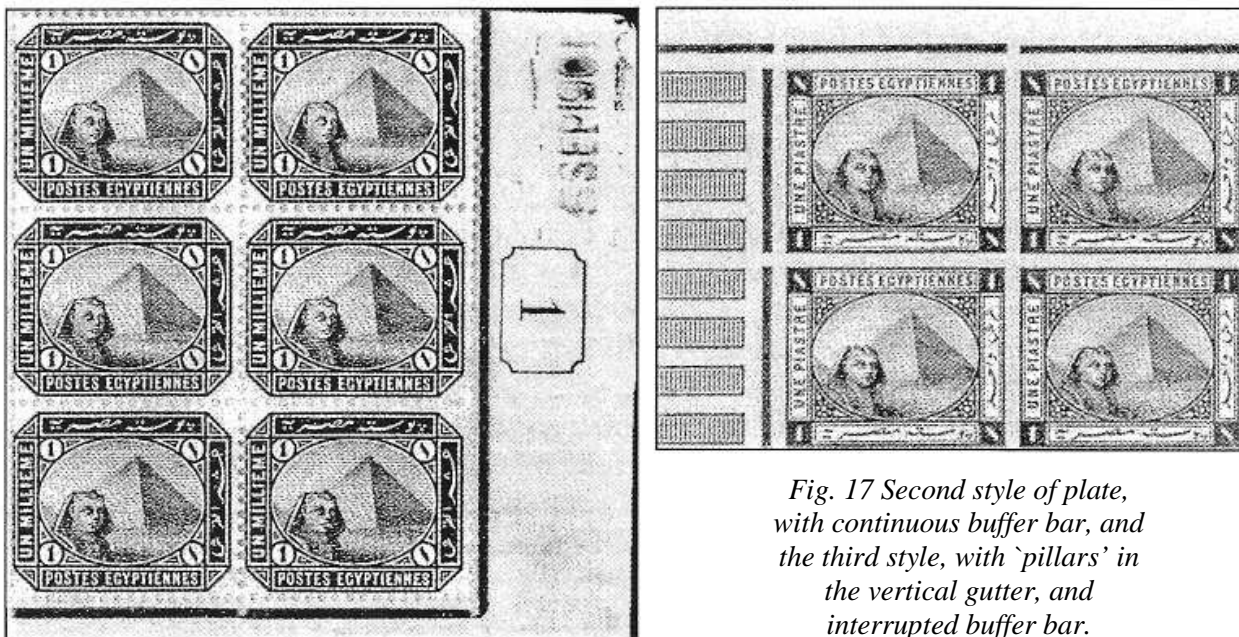


Fig. 17 Second style of plate, with continuous buffer bar, and the third style, with 'pillars' in the vertical gutter, and interrupted buffer bar.

According to Easton, Egypt sent an order to De La Rue on March 29th 1887 for a total of 10,300,000 stamps, accompanied by sketches and instructions to replace the inscriptions on the 5, 10, and 20-paara stamps by new ones of 1, 2, and 5 milliemes, respectively, owing to suppression of para currency (Fig. 18). The Postal Administration also ordered that the relative positions of the French and Arabic inscriptions be reversed so that Arabic would be at the top (Fig. 19). De La Rue objected that any changes would require new dies and plates and therefore would be costly, but Egypt knew what it wanted and was insistent. The new stamps were sent on November 18th and were put on sale on January 1st 1888.



Fig. 18 Pen-and-ink designs for the low values (courtesy of T.K. Ruebush).

Die proofs in black on glazed card for the new denominations were prepared as before, usually with handstamped and manuscript notations. The Zeheri catalog lists “Proofs: All values, imperf., unwatermarked”. It is not clear whether these are in the issued colours or black (perhaps the Zeheri catalogue was referring to die proofs). However, I have not seen or heard of such proofs other than die proofs, with the exception of the 5m.; a plate proof in black, on unwatermarked paper, stuck onto pink cardboard, with plate number

2, and the year 1897 stamped on the margin, came on the market in the 1970s, and has since been broken up. The De La Rue archives contained imperforate plate proofs in the issued colours, on gummed, watermarked paper, of the 1, 2, and 5m., in quantities ranging from a part sheet to several sheets. Printing-run record

sheets, perforated, bearing handstamped dates and signatures or initials of the press men on the margin, but otherwise essentially as issued, also exist.

Fig. 19 Rejected painted essay (June 29th 1888) and corrected pen-and-ink design, the new painted essay, and the issued stamp, plus an earlier (1881) essay design (courtesy of the late V. Andonian and of T.K. Ruebush).



The new stamps were supplied in sheets of 240 (4 panes of 60) as before. Although the stamps in new currency were from plates with buffer bars, the old values (1, 2, and 5pi.) were printed from the old plates which had none. Later in the life of the issue, when new plates were needed to replace those that had become worn, buffer bars appeared on them as well.

on them as well.

The three values in millieme currency had the same colours as the para values that they replaced, but their long life (26 years) resulted in an expected variation in shades. The 1m. varies from brown to sepia, the 2m. comes in shades of bluish green or pale green, and the 5m. colours can be classified as rose-carmine, deep rose, carmine, and aniline rose-carmine (Gibbons Colour Guide terms). The last colour requires comment although it is not rare. The so-called “aniline” colours result from use of an ink that penetrates the paper sufficiently to impart a blush of colour to the back of the stamp; they may also fluoresce differently under ultraviolet light. The new supplies of the 2pi. were somewhat darker, more orange, than the earliest ones. Much later, in 1904, Egypt complained to De La Rue that a consignment of 5m. stamps was too dark in comparison to previous supplies. De La Rue wrote in explanation that “the difference in shade is due to the printer having used too much ink on the darker stamps”¹⁸.

The watermark, a wide crescent and star upright, remained unchanged. Inverted watermarks have been found on all values and are fairly scarce. As a rarity, some values can be found unwatermarked. These varieties result from improper placement of the paper in the press so that a row of stamps falls on the unwatermarked sheet margin (usually a small part of the watermark may be detected at an edge of the stamp). However, one should be alert to the existence of very weakly impressed watermarks that do not show up by conventional detection means, but are revealed by the Signoscope detector.

New Denominations: 10pi. and 3m.

Increasing use of parcel post, especially to foreign destinations, was no doubt the motivation for a request for a new high value, 10pi., sent to De La Rue on June 8th 1888. A 7pi. value was also considered, and hand-painted designs for both had been prepared in 1881, but in the end only the 10pi. was produced. De La Rue’s first painted essay, dated June 29th 1888, had the French inscription at the top (and, incidentally, the Arabic for “five piasters” at the right). On August 10th. Egypt sent a pen-and-ink drawing revising De La Rue’s initial design, and a new painted essay was prepared (Fig. 19). The first supply of the new stamps, 54,000, was produced on December 20th 1888. It is evident that the date of issue stated in the Gibbons and Zeheri catalogs, January 1st 1888, cannot be right. A date early in 1889 (Jan 1st) would correspond to the actual possibilities. I do not know of the existence of any imperforate plate proofs. Demand remained low, and although in some years orders for 120,000 were made, in many years no new supply was ordered. The colour of the 10pi. covers a range from deep lilac to purple (aniline mauve to aniline reddish purple, by Gibbons Colour Guide). Inverted watermarks exist used at Assuan.

Three years later yet another denomination, 3m., was issued (January 1st 1892); the date coincided with the reduction of letter postage to 3m. for letters posted in and addressed to Cairo and environs or Alexandria and environs. Although the De La Rue records imply that negotiations had begun on February 9th 1891, the first design, hand-painted, with French at top, Arabic at bottom, is dated “Jan. 23 1891” (Fig. 20a). Egypt required that the positions be reversed, and a new essay was prepared by painting the frame and inscription panels around an impression printed from the master vignette die (Fig. 20b). The design was accepted on March was also agreed that the same design would be used for an accompanying 3m. postal card. The colour was specified to be that of the then-current 4m. postage due stamp, maroon, also printed by De La Rue. On

August 22nd, 252,000 of the new 3m. stamps were invoiced. I know of no imperforate plate proofs. Inverted watermarks have not been reported on this stamp.

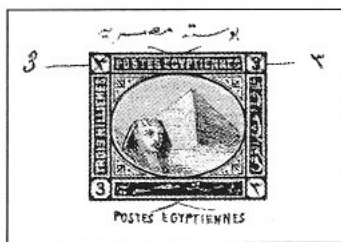


Fig. 20a Rejected design for 1892 3m.



Fig. 20b the Accepted essay

The choice of colour was not well considered, and when the order for the 1893 stamp requirements was sent, Saba Pasha, Director General of the Postal Administration, wrote "I have decided to devote the yellow colour of the P. 2 stamps to the 3 milliemes, . . . submit a fresh colour for the 2 P., quite different from that of the existing 3 milliemes, which too much

resembles the P. 10". Colour proofs of the 2pi., including lilac, were sent in March and rejected. New ones were sent in May, from which a brown was selected. Meanwhile, a further 300,000 of the 3m. in the old colour were ordered (311,520 were actually sent).

The first supply of the 3m. yellow was invoiced on June 10th. 1893. Both the 3m. and the 2pi. went through many subsequent printings, and variations in shade were inevitable. The former varies from orange-yellow to yellow-orange, and the latter from chestnut to orange-brown (Gibbons Colour Guide terms). Both of these stamps were issued on August 1st 1893. I know of no imperforate plate proofs. Both stamps are known with inverted watermarks; such varieties are quite scarce.

It has often been stated that the 3m. maroon was withdrawn in 1893 and reissued briefly at the 1894 Alexandria Exposition exclusively¹⁹, but I do not know the authority for this assertion. It may indeed have been withdrawn, but it was widely used later, well into the 20th century, and as for the Exposition post office (Fig. 21), other values are known to have been used there as well. Perhaps the stock of the 3m. at the Exposition post office consisted only of the maroon version; souvenir covers would mostly have required the local rate. Such circumstances could have given rise to the belief that the 3m. maroon was specially reissued for the occasion. The evidence of many covers and dated examples shows that the two colours of the 3m. were used indiscriminately for many years²⁰.



Fig. 21 The 3m. maroon postmarked at the Alexandria Exposition.

Uses

The 3m. maroon used alone on cover is very scarce indeed, and even the 3m. orange-yellow is difficult to find used by itself on an envelope. However, the latter is relatively common used alone on postcards. The 2pi. brown is common on cover; it paid for a single-weight registered UPU letter as well as for double-weight ordinary letters. The 5pi. grey is quite scarce used alone (a single would have been correct for a quadruple-weight registered letter, internal up to 1890, and UPU throughout the Third Period). The 10pi. is a rarity used on an envelope; such use would have been needed only for an exceptionally heavy object (really too large for an envelope), or for a letter insured for a content of substantial value. The major use of the 10pi. was on parcel cards, which are themselves quite scarce and are usually in poor condition. Most of them seem to have been used on exports of cigarettes, which were generally posted at the Customs post office in order

to obtain reimbursement (“drawback”) of the duty paid on the bulk tobacco originally imported. The cancellations commonly include the word DOUANE or COLN POSTAUX, and sometimes DRAWBACK.

During the Third Period the Rural Service was established to provide postal service to villages not having a post office (Chapter XXXVII). The early postmarks, large ovals inscribed SERVICE RURAL, are an especially interesting aspect of the period. Another postal innovation was the opening of post offices on the premises of important hotels (Chapter XXVIII), beginning in 1891. Those opened in this period include San Stefano (near Alexandria), Continental (Grand Continental), Ghesireh Palace, Mena House, Savoy, and Shephard’s, all in Cairo; Luxor Hotel in Luxor; and Cataract in Assuan. Still others were opened in later years. These postmarks are a study in themselves.

Mail from the 1896-97 campaign to reconquer the Sudan utilized the civil post offices and ordinary Egyptian stamps, but was occasionally cancelled with the retta.

Fourth Period: 1902-1915

Chalk-surfaced Paper

The Fourth Period is characterized by two new features: the paper was changed from ordinary to chalk-surfaced, and the style of printing plate saw a phased changeover to one having printed “pillars” in the vertical gutter, and an interrupted, rather than continuous, buffer bar around each pane (Fig. 17b).

The date of appearance of stamps printed on chalk-surfaced paper cannot be precisely documented and the archival correspondence I have been able to consult does not touch on the subject, but catalogs have traditionally given the date as 1902, when De La Rue began using such paper generally for all its stamp printing. All values, from 1m. to 10pi., were printed on this paper, and the new supplies were presumably commingled indiscriminately with the old. The effect of the new paper was a slightly sharper image (but that is not enough for easy identification). It is said that the major justification for the use of surfaced paper was security, to combat reuse of cleaned stamps. However, the Egyptian stamps on this paper do not suffer significant damage on soaking in cold water.

A defining test for chalk-surfaced paper is the appearance of a mark resembling pencil-lead graphite when it is touched with a piece of clean silver (a piece of jeweller’s silver wire is suitable). It is best applied carefully to a single perforation tooth, to avoid marring the stamp. Examining the surface with a low-powered microscope with overhead lighting (a “dissecting microscope”), with attention not only to the unprinted areas, but also to the edges of the printed parts, can be more reassuring, for there are differences in the surface texture and in the sharpness of the edges of the inked areas (an ordinary magnifying glass is not usually good enough). Chalk-surfaced paper is likely to be more opaque than ordinary paper. Because it is difficult to convey these distinctions with precision in words, I strongly recommend spending some time with authentic examples. The 4m. of 1906 is an excellent reference stamp for it exists only on chalk-surfaced paper. For ordinary paper, any of the stamps in obsolete currency or in colours that became obsolete before 1900, will serve.

The new paper was used for printings from plates in the second style as well as the third, new plates coming into use as required to replace worn ones. I have not seen the 2m., 2pi., or 10pi. printed from third-style plates; it seems unlikely that it would ever have been justified to prepare a new plate for the lopi. considering the small numbers requisitioned. The characteristic interrupted buffer bars allow any marginal block from third-style plates to be recognized; the earliest postmark date I have seen is June 1902 on a 5m.

First Booklet Stamps

Egypt was one of the pioneers in adopting the practice of selling stamps in booklets. Correspondence²¹ with De La Rue in July 1902 refers to “the American kind of booklet”, and an order was placed for booklets of 24 5m. stamps to be sold for 121m. They were fabricated from ordinary sheets, with selvedge at the top for attaching, which could easily be cut into booklet panes of six (2 x 3). The stamps thus differed in no way from those sold in sheets except that the perforations show the effect of guillotining along the edges of the panes. Depending on the precision of the cutting, the teeth may be unusually long or extremely blunt, but always cleanly cut rather than torn. These stamps are thus most desirably collected as complete booklets, or

at least with the accompanying booklet covers. These are, alas, extremely rare. The booklets were issued to the public on January 1st 1903.

In February 1903 an order was placed²² for 50,000 similar booklets of 3m. stamps to be sold for 73m. (Fig. 22). The foregoing remarks about the 5m. booklets apply equally well to the 3m. They were issued on July 1st 1903. A third booklet was issued in 1911, essentially the same as the first 5m. booklet, but with the imprinted price reduced to 120m. and with advertising printed on the interleaves. A proposal was made²³ to prepare booklets containing three different values, 3m., 5m., and 1pi., but it never came to fruition.

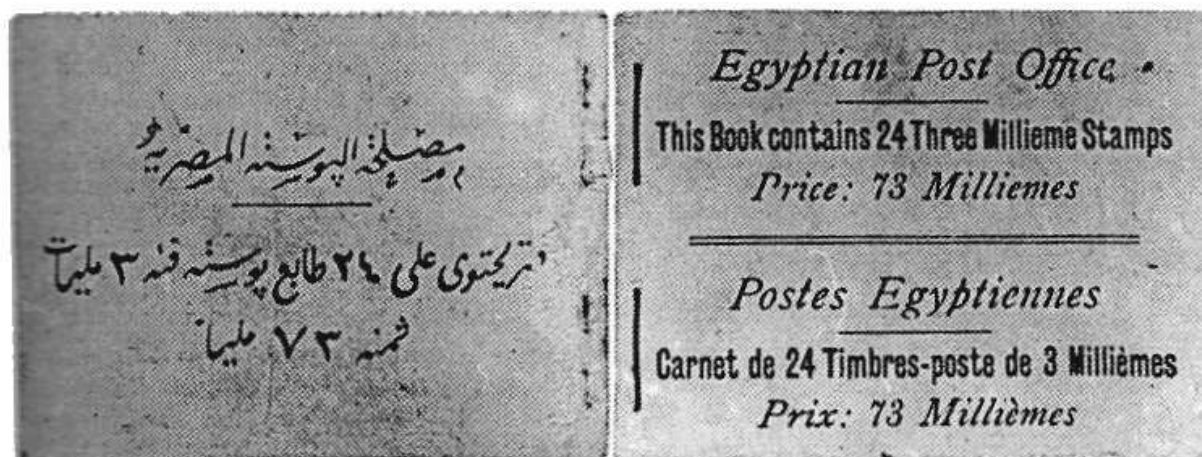


Fig. 22 Cover of the booklet of 3m. stamps.

The 1906 4m.

The last new value of the Fourth Issue, 4m., was ordered on July 8th 1906, and, for reasons of economy, De La Rue suggested using the same die as used for the 4m. postal Egypt was not convinced and proposed a different design; eventually, a design with a nearly white sky was chosen and 800,000 stamps were ordered, the colour to be "brick-red"²⁵. Die proofs are known in black and in brick-red. Delivery was promised in nine weeks and the stamps were issued at an unrecorded date in late-1906. They were printed from a third-style plate. The purpose of this denomination was to pay the UPU rate or postcards, picture postcards having become extremely popular at the turn of the century. Further orders were placed in December 1906 (2,400,000), 1910 (2,040,000), and 1911 (2,400,000).

Coil Stamp

A letter from the Postal Administration in March 1910 brings to light a hidden aspect of Egyptian philately²⁶. It plainly states, "This administration has placed at the service of the public an automatic machine for the sale and distribution of postage stamps", and goes on to specify a requirement for rolls of 500 and to ask about the cost of manufacture. No coil stamps have previously been recognized for Egypt (barring unissued trials with the first King Fuad 5m.), and the letter is therefore quite remarkable. On April 8th De La Rue sent quotes and sample rolls of 500 and 1,500, and on May 12th Egypt ordered 500 reels of 1,500 of the 5m. (thus, 750,000 stamps!). No further orders for reels appear in the records. The rolls that were supplied would almost certainly have been made up from sheet stamps cut into strips and joined in 'paste-up' fashion. The stamps would therefore be identical to sheet stamps, but might be recognizable by having guillotined perforations on two parallel edges (thus differing from booklet stamps). Quite some time ago the late George Houston found several such stamps in a wholesale mixture and speculated whether they might be unrecorded coils²⁷; apparently he was right. I have since found an example, postmarked 26 X 1 12 at Alexandria, tied to piece across the guillotined edges (Fig. 23), and a cover has since been reported. The date is right and the place of use reasonable. Furthermore, a vintage stamp-vending machine is on display in the Cairo Postal Museum.



Fig. 23 The 5m. coil stamp showing guillotined perforations at top and bottom.

Imperforate Proofs

The 1m., 2m., 4m., 5m., 1pi., 2pi., and 5pi. on chalk-surfaced paper exist as imperforate plate proofs on gummed, watermarked paper; they came onto the market from the De La Rue archives. A date, presumably that of printing, accompanied by manuscript initials, appears on a corner sheet margin. These sheets must therefore be press-run proofs, like those noted earlier, but now imperforate. The handstamped dates are remarkable in that some are as late as 1919, five years after the appearance of the succeeding issue, the 1914 pictorials! The explanation may be that they were anticipated to be required for making continuing supplies of the overprinted official stamps (first issued in 1907), but I have found nothing in the De La Rue records that sheds light on the matter.

Uses

Two uses of stamps in the Fourth Period deserve special mention.

In 1910 a pioneer air meet at Heliopolis Aerodrome was provided with a temporary post office having a special datestamp inscribed for it²⁸. Examples, mostly applied to souvenir postcards, are quite scarce and much sought after (Chapter XXV).

In 1915 troops from New Zealand were sent to Egypt following the outbreak of World War I. They brought with them a military post office, and the soldiers' letters and postcards were initially franked with Fourth Issue stamps (even though the 1914 pictorials were already in general use). They were cancelled with the appropriate military post office datestamps (Chapter XXXI). Cancellations of other forces (British, Indian, Australian, and even French "Tresor et Postes") also exist on this issue, but they appear generally to be favour cancellations.

Bisects

Although several stamps of the Fourth Issue are known bisected on covers, they are at best philatelic ally contrived, without any sort of authorization²⁹, except for the bisection of the 4m. in 1909. A shortage of official stamps was compounded by a shortage of 2m. and 3m. ordinary stamps at some post offices. Even though the use of ordinary stamps on official mail was authorized in June 1909 in cases of shortage³⁰, emergencies still arose. In November 1909 the Gizira post office resorted to bisecting the 4m. for use with an ordinary 1m. stamp to make up the local letter rate on official letters bearing the 'no value' brown official stamp³¹ (Fig. 24). Examples are very rare.

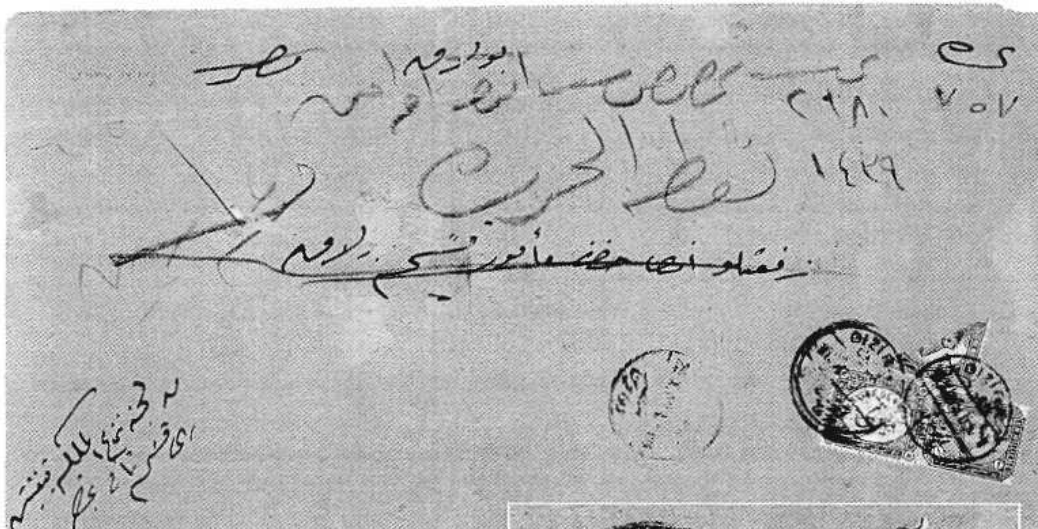
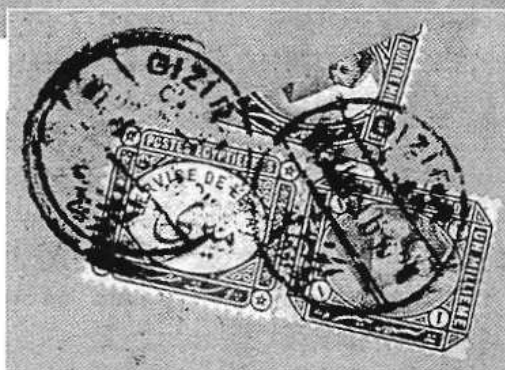


Fig. 24 The bisected 4m. used on an Official cover from Gizira to Bulaq.



References³²

Special Acknowledgment

I am indebted to the National Postal Museum, London, and especially Mr. Jones thereof, for their extensive help in making the De La Rue Records accessible and for allowing me to copy them.

In the following citations, "NPM,L" refers to the National Postal Museum, London.

1. J. Easton, *The De La Rue History of British & Foreign Postage Stamps*. Faber & Faber, for the Royal Philatelic Society, London, 1958. This work contains much of the relevant correspondence between Egypt and the printers for the period 1878 to 1900.
2. Letter from the Director General of the Egyptian Postal Administration to Thomas De La Rue & Co., March 30th, 1878 (NPM,L).
3. Letter from De La Rue to Egypt, August 7th, 1878 (NPM,L).
4. W. Byam and J.R. Danson, *LP* LIX, 94-7 (May, 1950), reprinted in *L'OP* No. 89, 54-66 (Jan. 1955) and No. 122, 261-74 (January 1970), and I.K. Chaftar, *L'OP* No. 89, 33-42 (Jan. 1955).
5. *Gibbons Colour Guide*, Stanley Gibbons, Ltd., London; P.A.S. Smith, *L'OP*, No. 116, 523-34 (Oct. 1964/Jan. 1966).
6. Letter from W.F. Halton to De La Rue, September 5th, 1881 (NPM,L).
7. I.K. Chaftar, *L'OP* No. 129, 476ff. (Feb. 1978); *QC* X (1), 3-13 (whole no. 105, Mar. 1978). These articles contain much general information on the Fourth Issue.
8. P.A.S. Smith, *CCP* 74 (4), 221-3 (July/Aug. 1995), *QC* XV (6), 149-51 (whole no. 169, June 1994).
9. L. Alund, *L'OP* No. 123, 350-7 (Apr./Oct. 1970). Many plate flaws on various stamps throughout the life of the Fourth Issue are described and illustrated here, including the 1884 provisional surcharge.
10. P.A.S. Smith, *L'OP* No. 120, 120-1 (July/Oct. 1968).
11. P.A.S. Smith, *L'OP* No. 117, 625-6 (Apr. 1966/Jan. 1967).
12. T. Dacos, *QC* XIV (7), 200-10 (whole no. 159, Sep. 1991).
13. P.A.S. Smith, *The Egyptian Post Offices Abroad in the Turkish Empire*, The Congress Book, 1959 (The 25th American Philatelic Congress), pp. 121-37.
14. P.A.S. Smith, *The Travelling Post Offices of Egypt*, Mobile Post Office Society, Chicago, 1983.
15. P.A.S. Smith, *QC* X (3), 62 (whole no. 107, Sep. 1978).
16. S. Michel Vestarkis, *L'OP* No. 128, 409 (Oct. 1974).
17. A.J. Revell, *QC* IV (5), 71-2 (whole no. 39, Dec. 1953), IV (6), 73-6 (whole no. 42, June 1954); *L'OP* No. 94, 355-8 (Apr. 1956); G.T. Houston, *L'OP* No. 94, 359-61 (Apr. 1956).
18. Letter from De La Rue to Egypt, November 18th, 1904 (NPM,L).
19. For example, A.G. Piperno, *L'OP* No. 105, 279-82 (Oct. 1961). 20. P.J. Calhoun, *QC* XIV (6), 176-9 (whole no. 158, June 1991).
21. Letter from Postmaster General Baba to De La Rue, July 29th, 1902 (NPM,L).
22. Letter from Egypt to De La Rue, February 26th, 1903 (NPM,L).
23. Letter from Postmaster General Baba to De La Rue, January 28th, 1905 (NPM,L).
24. Letter from De La Rue to Egypt, August 3rd, 1906 (NPM,L).
25. Letters from PMG Baba to De La Rue and vice versa, August 15th and September 6th, 1906 (NPM,L).
26. Letter from Postmaster General Borton to De La Rue, March 16th, 1910 (NPM,L).
27. Personal correspondence from G.T. Houston to the author.
28. J. Sears, *The Air Mails of Egypt*, self-published, Pinner, Middx., 1990, Chapter 1.
29. G. Gougas, *L'OP* No. 121, 180-2 (Jan./July 1969).
30. D. McNeille, *L'OP* No. 42, 515 (July 1939).
31. A letter written in December, 1934, to G. Seymour Thompson from a civil servant retired from Egypt reads as follows: "I was in Egypt 1904 to end of 1909. About the end of 1909 the P.O. in Gezira island ran temporarily out of 2m/m stamps & of 3's (the local rate) & to make up the necessary 3, a number of 4's were used & split diagonally. I have in my collection an entire dated 10.XI.1909 franked with Im/m brown & a split 4m/m red. It is split from NW to SE corners & both are well tied - the envelope is addressed in the vernacular to Gezira village I think & is undoubtedly quite genuine."
32. A preliminary version of this chapter appeared as an article in *LP* 102, 117-30, 167-75 (May and June 1993). Some of the essays only mentioned in this chapter are illustrated in that article or in reference 4.