

XXIII

Official Stamps and Services

| | | | |
|---|-----|---|-----|
| <i>The Early Period (before 1893)</i> | 369 | <i>The 1922–23 O.H.E.M.S. Overprints</i> | 386 |
| <i>Introduction of Official Stamps:</i> | | <i>The 1924–25 Overprints on the First</i> | |
| <i>1893–1914</i> | 373 | <i>Portrait Issue</i> | 391 |
| <i>Official Stamps Issued 1893–1952</i> | 377 | <i>The 1926 Definitive Official Stamps</i> | 393 |
| <i>The “miri” (no-value) Stamp</i> | 377 | <i>The 1938 Issue</i> | 397 |
| <i>The 1907 Overprinted Issue</i> | 380 | <i>“King of Egypt and Sudan” Overprints</i> | 399 |
| <i>The 1913 Provisional</i> | 381 | <i>Issues of the Republic</i> | 400 |
| <i>The 1914–15 Overprints</i> | 382 | <i>References</i> | 403 |
| <i>The 1922 Overprints</i> | 385 | | |

The Early Period (before 1893)

Historically, carriage of letters by government courier was not a public service but was a function reserved for the use of government officials. The public rarely had need for correspondence except for merchants, who used private and opportunistic means to send essential letters. The system did not change when Mohammed Ali Pasha, the Viceroy and effective ruler of Egypt from 1805 to 1848, regularized the government courier function, creating what has become to be known as the “Post of Mohammed Ali”, perhaps better called the Government Courier Post (Chapter III).

The Government Courier Post carried official letters by runners in relays, later incorporating camel riders¹. It eventually was opened to limited public use. No postal markings are known for the early period and none would have been needed. Letters would only be recognizable by their address or content and recognition would not be easy, considering that such letters would be written in Arabic and in an old style of handwriting.

The success of the *Posta Europea*, organized in 1832 in the European style for carriage of public mail, was eventually recognized by the Government and an agreement was reached in 1862 for the *Posta Europea* to carry the official mails in the regions it served². In return, the *Posta Europea* was allowed to use the State Railways without charge. Official letters carried under this arrangement may well have been carried in closed pouches, not requiring postmarking. I have not seen a convincing example.

When the Egyptian Government bought the *Posta Europea* and soon issued stamps, official mail was presumably carried in the same way. It is very doubtful that stamps were required on official mail and I have seen no example. It was once speculated that red datestamps were used in 1866 to identify official mail, but that idea has been discredited³. The few known items of official mail of the classic period are stampless and bear either an intaglio seal impression in Arabic, a handstamp IN FRANCHIGIA, an undated circular handstamp of various types (PS Types), or a printed identification of the sending office, in Italian⁴. The intaglio seal postmarks read “post office / official Egyptian / (office

name)” or similar wording (Fig. 1). They could equally well function to make an official signet in sealing wax to seal letters or bags. The seal handstamps are quite rare, but examples are known on stamps as well as stampless letters. Byam has suggested⁵ that use on stamps might have been on mail addressed to foreign destinations, after formation of the UPU in 1875, but no cover has come to light. Intaglio seal postmarks do not necessarily indicate official mail, however, and some also appear to have been used as temporary cancellations at newly opened post offices.

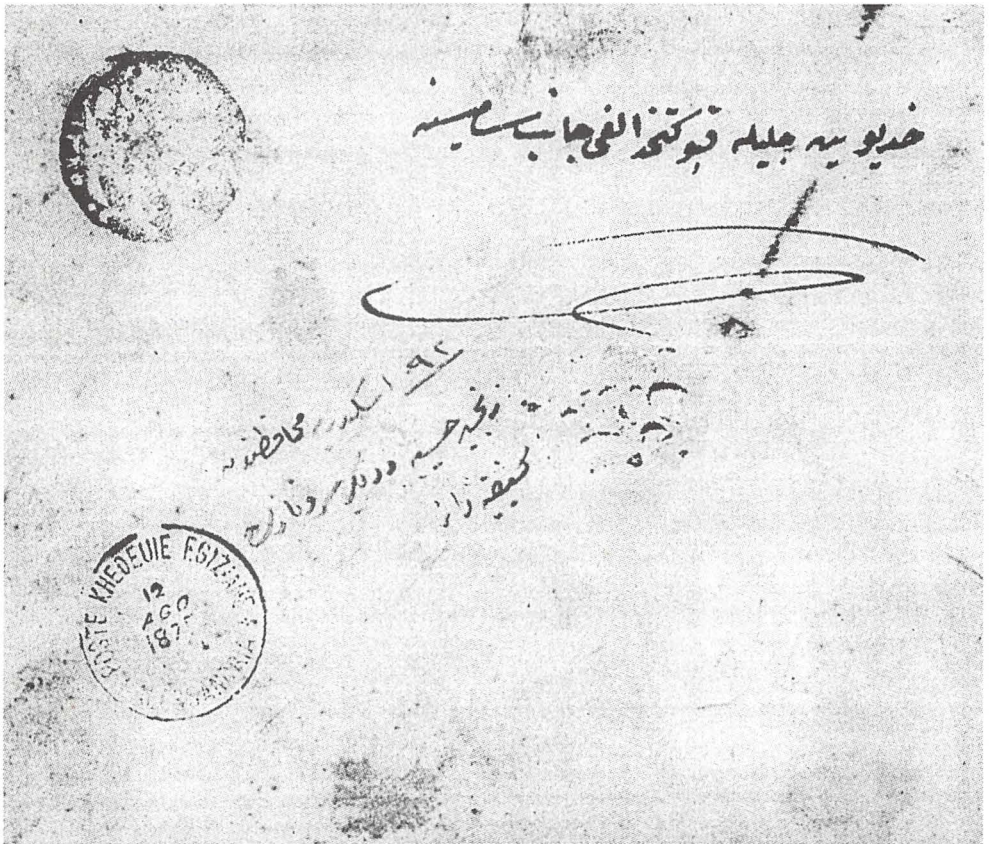


Fig. 1 An official cover with an intaglio seal postmark.

A document, “Free Postage of Government Correspondence”, giving the regulations for handling official mail, has been described by McNeill⁶ and Byam⁵, but unfortunately it is not dated. However, a circular dated March 6th 1884 refers to it. The document reads:

To pass free by post, each item must bear the imprint of a special handstamp containing the official designation of the sending department, see specimen in the margin.

The example is a large circle inscribed in French: CORRESPONDANCES OFFICIELLES across the center and MINISTERE DES FINANCES / EN FRANCHISE around the circumference. The document goes on to state:

A letter sent to an official should be addressed to him in his official capacity and should bear the signature or facsimile seal of the sender in the lower left-hand corner of the cover. Specimens of facsimile seals must be deposited with the Postal Authorities for reference. An item not bearing a signature, when necessary, will be taxed as an ordinary unfranked letter. The handstamp will be struck in the right-hand top corner of the address side of the letter. When possible, senders will use envelopes marked Service du Gouvernement.

It is significant that no mention is made of interpostal seals or "tickets", which belies the widespread supposition that they were official stamps.

The fact that the specified handstamp was in French dates it no earlier than 1877 and probably about 1879 or 1880. An example is shown in Figure 2.

Much of the detailed information presented here on the regulations for handling official mail from the 1880s to the 1930s must be credited to Douglas McNeille⁶, who

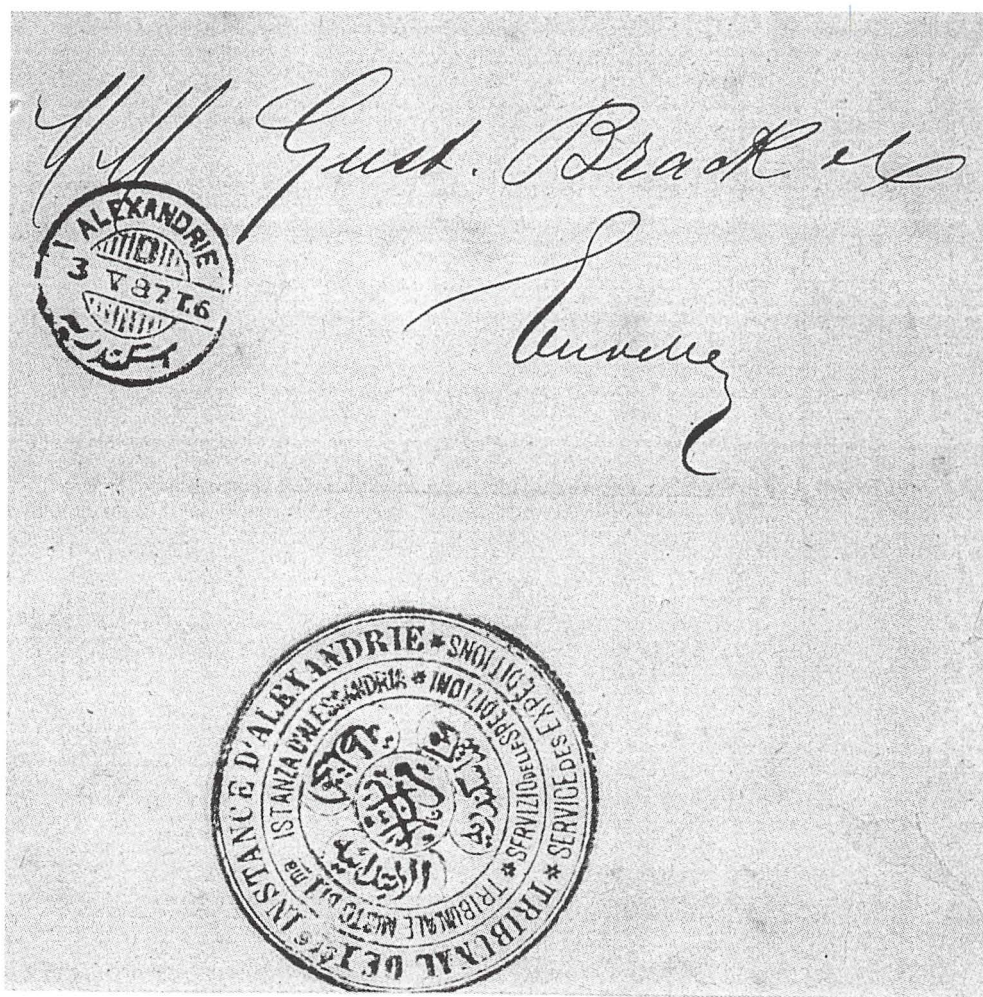


Fig. 2 The trilingual handstamped frank of the Court of Mixed Appeals, Alexandria.

resided in Egypt and was able to consult the government archives, the Postmaster General, and various other knowledgeable officials and local residents. Where no other reference is cited, McNeille's writings are implied as the source.

Although internal official letters did not require postage stamps, mail to foreign countries did (Fig. 3), according to instructions dated 27 October 1887. If the sender did not affix stamps, the Post Office did so and then billed the sending agency. The amount of official mail justified setting up special sections for handling it in the larger post offices (Alexandria, Assiut, Beni Suef, Cairo, Damanhour, Mansura, Suez, Tanta, and possibly Manfalut and Zagazig). These were known as the "miri" sections (*miri* is an adjective borrowed from Turkish, meaning "governmental"). These sections had their own datestamps, which were inscribed GOUVERNEMENTALES plus *miri* in Arabic, and are known as early as 1881 (Fig. 4). They are found as cancellations on stamps and as



Fig. 3 A registered official cover to Germany in 1880, franked with stamps (one has been lost).

Fig. 4 An 1892 cover from Suez to Cairo bearing a GOUVERNEMENTALES datestamp.

backstamps of arrival. The miri sections were eventually abolished (in the period 1910–1915) and the handling of official mail was merged with the public mails.

The method of handling official mail is indicated by the text on a form consisting of a combination receipt and schedule of accounts (the example seen bears the handstamp of Sohag, dated 3 AV 84 T1):

NB. Tout envoi de correspondance du Gouvernement et des Dairés d'un bureau à un autre devra être accompagné par cette formule, qui portera un numéro progressif annuel pour chaque bureau.

Lorsqu'une seule formule est insuffisante pour un envoi, on pourra se servir de deux ou de plusieurs de ces mêmes formules qui dans ce cas devront toutes porter le même numéro d'ordre.

Après avoir été vérifiés par les bureaux destinataires ces bordereaux munis de reçu seront retournés aux bureaux expéditeurs qui les enverront divisés par bureaux destinataires à la fin du mois au Chef de la 1re. Division (Section Mouvement) à la Direction Générale.

La Présence dans une dépêche d'un envoi de Correspondances Gouvernementales ou de Dairés sera signalés dans la colonne à ce réservée sur la feuille d'avis qui accompagne la Dépêche.

Although not every detail is explicit, it appears that, in effect, all official correspondence was thus systematically registered, with return receipt. (*Dairés* – Dairas, the personal estates of the Khedive.)

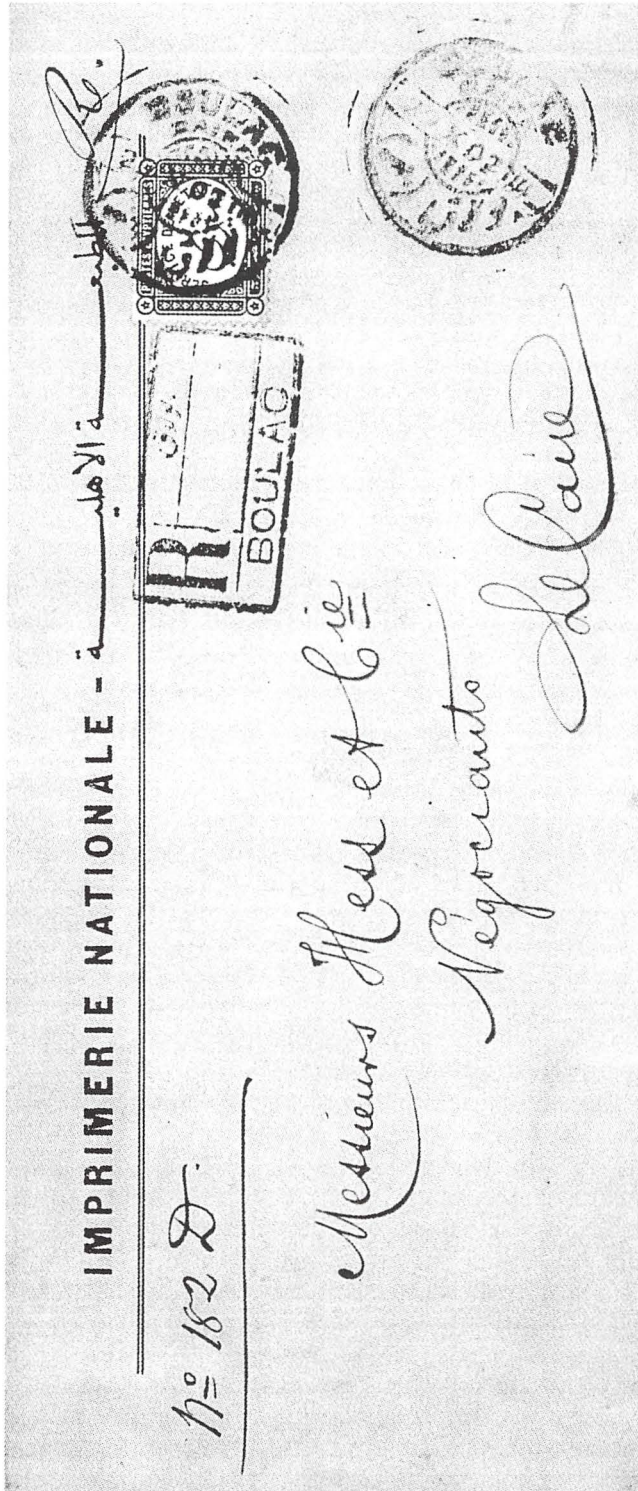
Introduction of Official Stamps: 1893–1914

Meanwhile, a change in the method of franking internal official mail was put into effect on January 1st 1893 with the issue of Egypt's first stamp for official mail. This stamp had no expressed face value and had the word "miri" in Arabic as the most prominent feature of the design. Initially, just one "miri", or "no-value", stamp was sufficient to frank any piece of internal official mail regardless of weight or whether registered (Fig. 5). As an exception, Ministers and Under-Secretaries of State were allowed to send mail without the miri stamp, franked only with their signatures. In 1894, Financial and Judicial Advisers to the Ministers were added to the authorization. Collectors were allowed to buy the miri stamp for 1pi. Curiously, this privilege was effectively revoked in 1912 when it was ordered that the stamps were to be cancelled before sale.

Regulations issued in August 1893 noted that each item of official correspondence was to be endorsed with the name of the Department or official sending it.

The miri stamp was withdrawn for a short period when a series of denominated official stamps was introduced on February 1st 1907. With this event, official correspondence became subject to the same charges as public correspondence (Fig. 6); that is, postage was to be prepaid according to weight, and registration required a separate fee. However, the exception for Ministers, etc., remained in force. The new Official stamps were also required to be used on correspondence to foreign countries.

From March 8th 1908 official stamps also functioned as official postage due stamps. In such use they were to be affixed to the claim form for insufficiently prepaid mail and immediately cancelled. Unfortunately, I have never seen an item showing such use and can only suppose that the forms were retained, either by the Post Office or the receiving agency, and eventually destroyed. However, the postal service of the Sudan followed



almost exactly the same regulations as Egypt and a few such claim forms, liberally embellished with O.S.G.S. or Army Service stamps, have survived. In general, one form covered the cumulative postage due on all items of mail in a particular delivery.

The no-value miri stamp was re-introduced on January 1st 1909. This time it was to be used to frank each item of unregistered internal official correspondence and denominated official stamps were to be used to pay any registration or insurance fees and parcel post (Fig. 7). The miri stamp continued to be used in this way until perhaps 1915; on August 10th 1918 all stocks were returned to Postal Headquarters and sales to collectors ceased.

The intention had been to replace the miri stamp with a franking handstamp (made of steel) to be issued to each government department, inscribed with its name, in September 1914 (Fig. 8). However, delivery of the handstamps was not made to all offices in time and a dispensation was allowed for

Fig. 5 The miri stamp as sole franking on a registered internal letter in 1902.

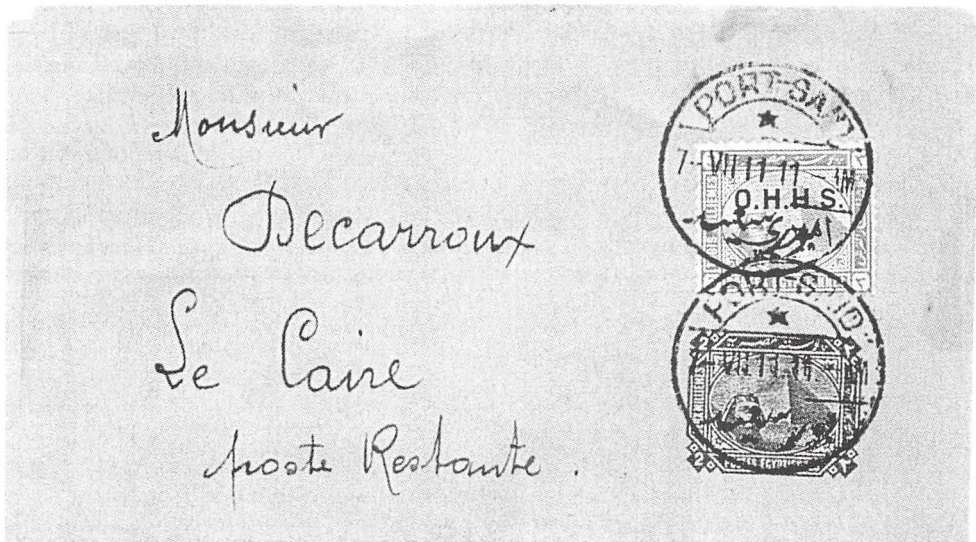
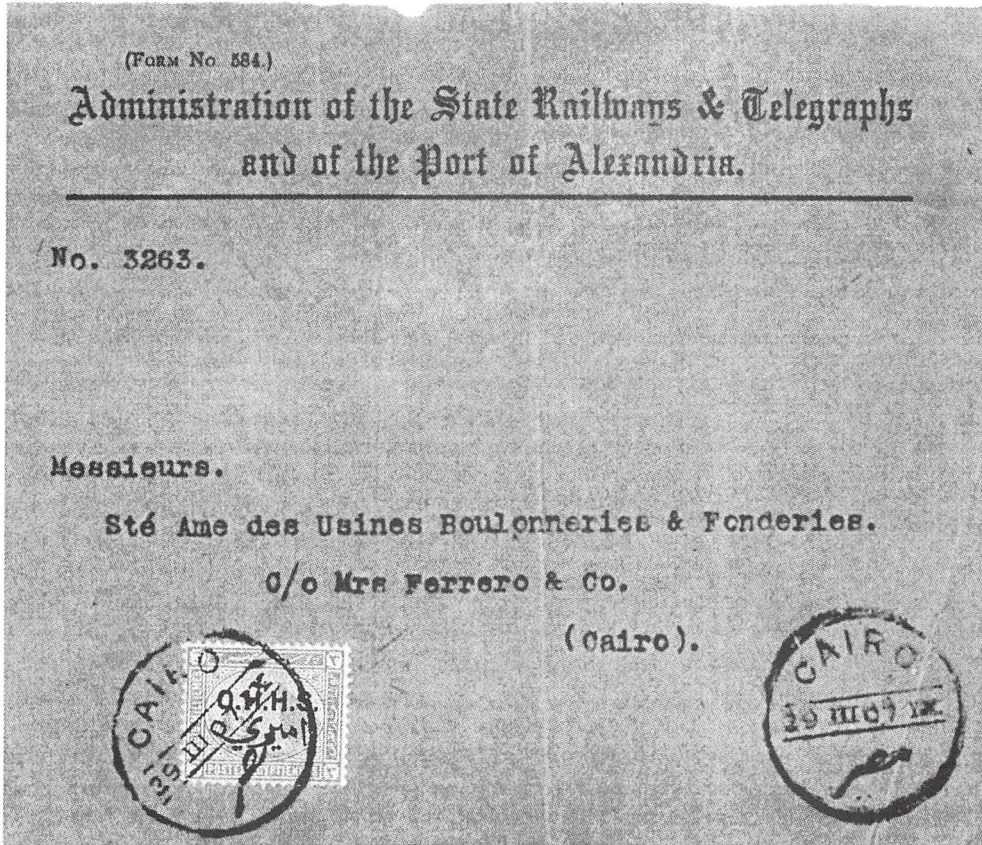


Fig. 6 A cover franked at the local rate in 1907 with the 3m. Official stamp and one used on a wrapper.



Fig. 7 A cover franked with the miri stamp plus a 5m. Official stamp to pay the registration fee in 1909.

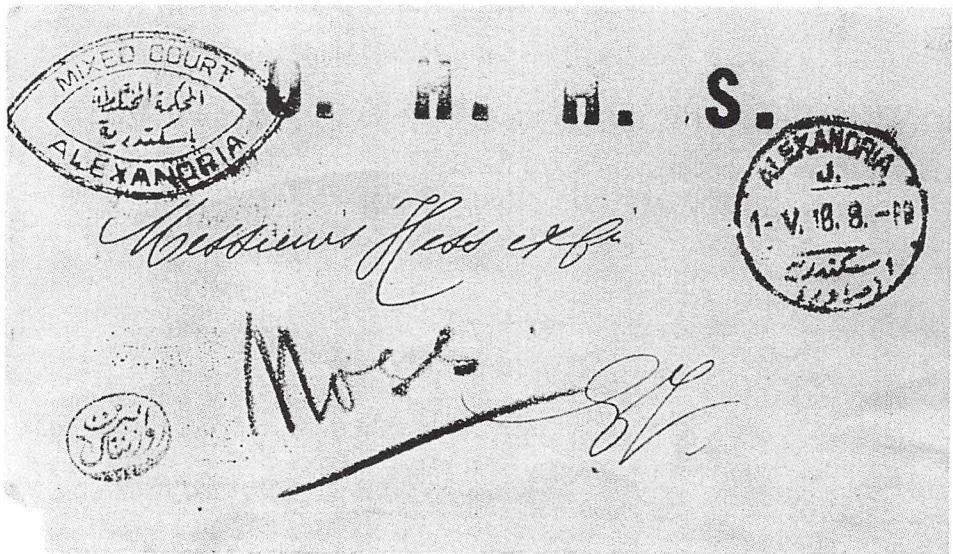


Fig. 8 An example of the oval metal franking handstamps.

offices to continue using the miri stamp until franking devices were available. Stamps were still required on foreign mail (Fig. 9).

Occasional shortages of denominated official stamps, especially the 2, 3, and 5m. values, were met by authorizing ordinary stamps to be used. On one such occasion, November 1909, even the ordinary stamps became unavailable at Gezira and the 3-mill. rate was made up by using a diagonally bisected 4m. stamp plus a 1m. accompanied by a miri stamp. The reason for this use is unclear, for official stamps other than the miri stamp should not have been necessary for local unregistered letters.

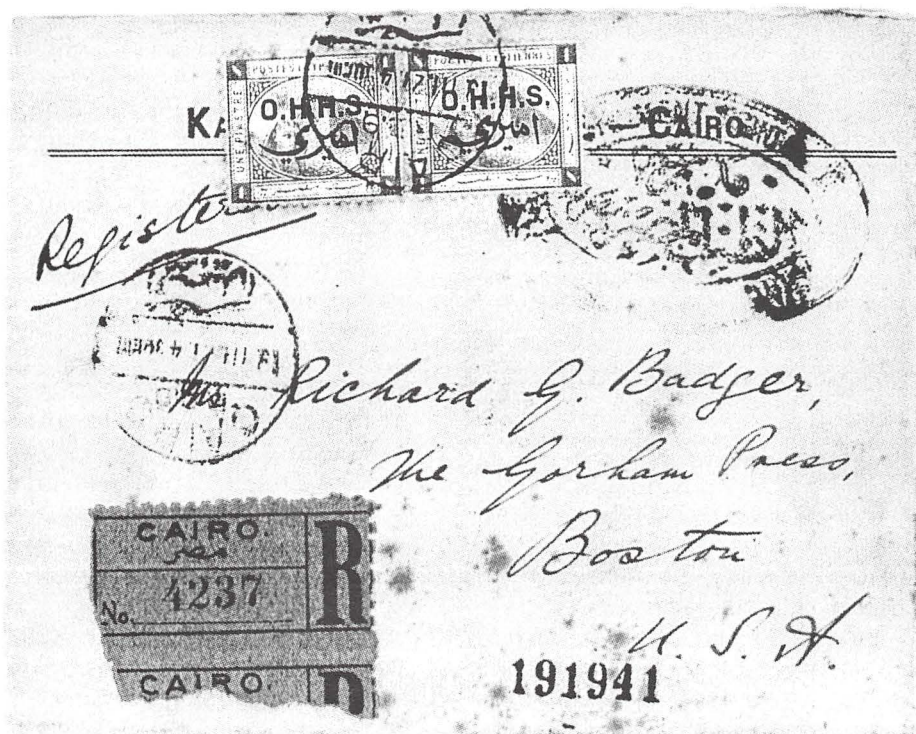


Fig. 9 Use of Official stamps with an oval handstamped frank on a registered letter to USA in 1921.

Official Stamps Issued 1893–1952

The “miri” (no-value) Stamp

Negotiation with Thomas De La Rue & Co. about preparation of official stamps was initiated by a letter⁷ from Egypt, dated February 5th 1889, that carried a proposal to issue a full set of values, omitting only the 1m. They were to “be of the same colour and would have the same border as the postage stamps of the same values at present in use, but in the centre instead of the Sphynx and Pyramid, they would bear the inscription ‘Service de l’Etat’, in French and in Arabic . . .” However, less than a month later, the Egyptian authorities changed their mind and asked for a single stamp only, without expressed value.

Meanwhile, De La Rue had sent six designs (one for each value) to Egypt; these appear not to have survived. The firm responded with admirable promptness to the revised request and on March 14th sent three proposed designs to Egypt. Two of them were upright and included the sphinx and pyramid as the central motif (Fig. 10). These

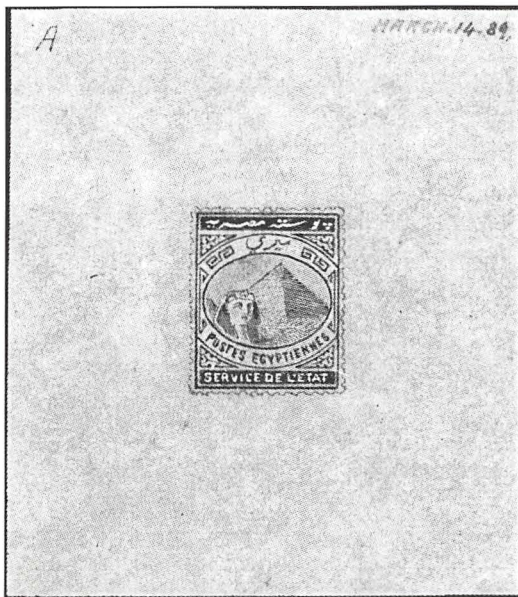


Fig. 10 An essay for the 1893 miri stamp.

were hand-painted on buff, semi-translucent paper. The third design was a mock-up made from the ordinary 5pi. stamp then in use, with the center replaced by Arabic and French inscriptions and the side panels replaced by columns of eight small stars. This was the design accepted. De La Rue also suggested overprinting the ordinary stamps with "Service de l'Etat" as an economical alternative and submitted a sample, using the 2m. stamp.

Matters moved slowly and the stamps did not materialize until over three years later when a supply of 2,654,400 stamps was invoiced on July 8th 1892 (Easton⁷ gives the year as 1893, but that is surely a mistake, for the stamps were put in use on January 1st 1893). They were printed in sheets of 240 (four panes of 60), just like the ordinary stamps, with the

same watermark and perforation. Inverted watermarks exist and are scarce, but not rare. The paper was, of course, unsurfaced.

For the next several years, through 1905–06, the annual orders were for 2,400,000 stamps. None at all were ordered for 1906–07, the year when the overprinted official stamps were introduced, but orders resumed for 1910–11, by which time chalk-surfaced paper had been introduced. The inventory lists supplied to the Egyptian authorities from time to time included "1 die and 1 plate of 240 set" until 1914, when a ledger entry refers to the destruction of "2 plates, 240 set each, Nos. 1 and 2".

The reason for destroying the plates was the change to sheets of 200 (two panes of 100) for the 1914 pictorial definitive stamps, which necessitated a different format for the watermarked paper. Accordingly, new plates for the miri stamp were prepared having panes of 100. The 1914 and 1915 inventories⁸ of devices on hand included "1 working die and 3 plates of 200 set". For the actual printing, these three plates were joined together so as to produce sheets of 600, the panes being arranged 3x2. The gutters were filled with 'pillars', just like the ordinary stamps. These unwieldy sheets were evidently cut into sheets of 200 before shipment to Egypt, but some uncut sheets (or large parts of them) eventually came on the market when the De La Rue archives were liquidated. Although three control (plate) numbers should exist, I have seen only 1 and 2.

Since the watermarked paper was designed to fit the ordinary stamps of 1914, which had an upright format, the watermark necessarily appeared sideways on the

1914 printing of the miri stamp. It may be found facing either right or left. Since such stamps were issued only in the last year of use of the miri stamp, they are fairly scarce.

Proofs

Press-run perforated proofs bearing manuscript initials or names of the press men, but otherwise indistinguishable from the issued stamps, are known from the De La Rue archives. The later proofs, however, were left imperforate and are therefore quite distinct. They exist from both the 240-subject sheets with upright watermark and the 200-subject sheets with sideways watermark (both directions). Die proofs in black on glazed card also exist.

Fiscal Overprints

The 1914 sideways-watermark stamp was overprinted at an unknown date, perhaps as early as 1915, with specific denominations⁹: 1 P.T., 2 P.T., 3 P.T., and 5 P.T., each with Arabic equivalent (Fig. 11). The overprint was typographed in bold, black characters. Presumably the purpose was to make use of the stock remaining after the miri stamp was taken out of use. Some of the surcharged stamps were used postally on official covers (seen from 1919 to 1922), but most of them were used fiscally on documents. On covers, they seem to have been used to pay the simple letter rate of 5 mills., notwithstanding the expressed face value.

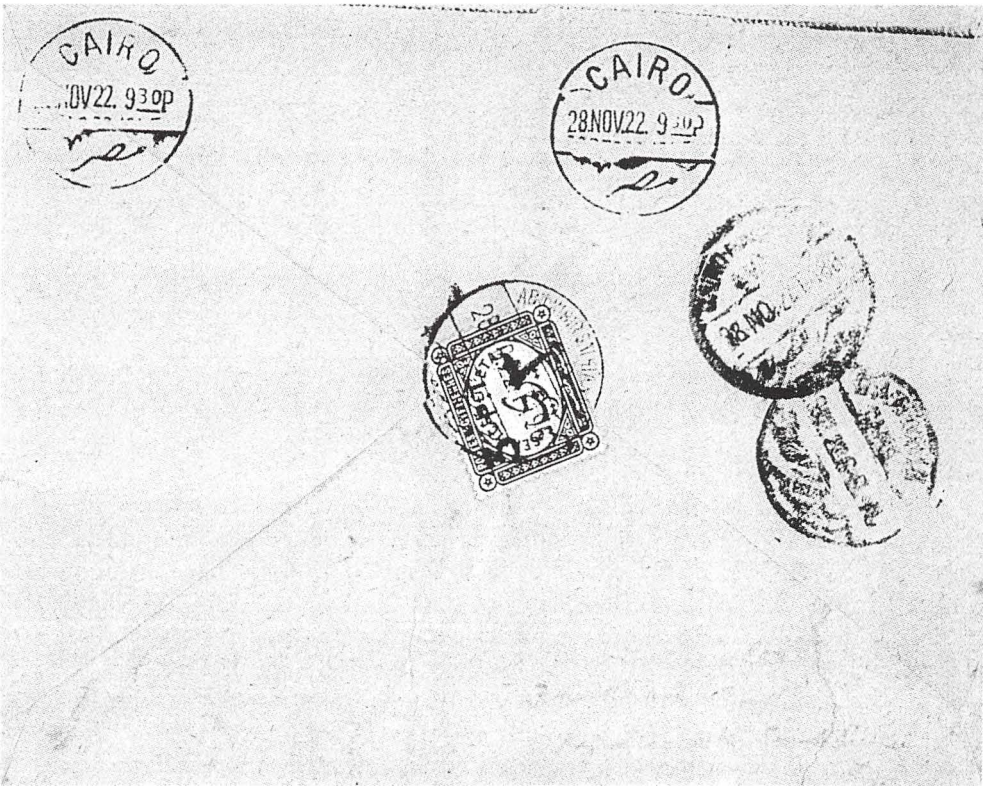


Fig. 11 Fiscal surcharge on the miri stamp.

The 1907 Overprinted Issue

The stamps to implement the decision to prepay the actual postage on official mail were ordered in November 1906; a specimen of the 5m. ordinary stamp accompanied the order¹⁰. De La Rue promised delivery of the 1m. and 5m. in one month and the other values in two months¹¹. On December 21st the partial order was shipped¹² and on February 18th 1907 De La Rue wrote¹³, "We have despatched . . . the whole of the Postage Stamps overprinted O.H.H.S. ordered by you on the 25th ultimo." The overprint (Fig. 12) was initially ordered to be applied to but five values:

| | | | |
|-----|---------|------|-----------|
| 1m. | 480,000 | 5m. | 1,920,000 |
| 2m. | 480,000 | 1pi. | 1,560,000 |
| 3m. | 240,000 | | |

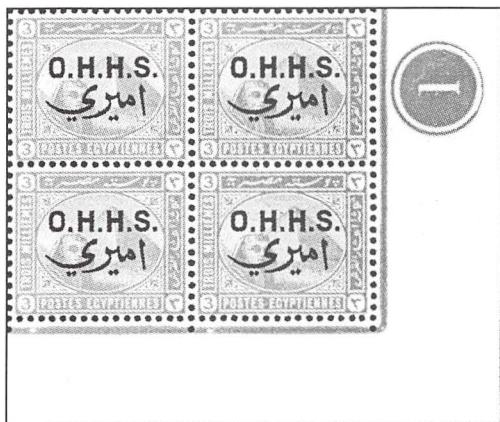


Fig. 12 The 1907 overprint.

A follow-up order for the 1907-08 fiscal year came in April, with the requirement of a substantial partial delivery in August and completion in October¹⁴. The quantities were:

| | | | |
|-----|-----------|------|-----------|
| 1m. | 1,200,000 | 5m. | 3,600,000 |
| 2m. | 1,200,000 | 1pi. | 1,200,000 |
| 3m. | 720,000 | 5pi. | 480,000 |

It is evident that all values but the 5pi. were available in January 1907, although they were issued on February 1st, but the 5pi. could not have been issued before August. Further annual orders were presumably made, although the demand would have been reduced as a result of the altered regulations starting January 1st 1909.

The overprinting was carried out on sheets of 240, and with such care and skill that errors are not known and variations among the plate positions are mostly undetectable. Consequently, the method by which the overprinting plate was built up cannot be confirmed from the stamps themselves. However, De La Rue's general technique of striking stereotypes, locking them in a forme and electroplating a copper shell, was presumably used. A proof strike from the die was in the De La Rue archives.

A plate flaw, which may have been extrinsic, has been noted¹⁵ on the 2m., but should exist on other values. It consists of a distortion of the Arabic letter *ra'*, the tip of which is bent upwards so as nearly to touch the *ya'* following it. Another flaw consists of a notch in the inner side of the top of O; it exists on several (probably all) values and is deduced to occur in pane 2 (i.e., upper right)¹⁶.

The 1913 Provisional

The occurrence of sporadic shortages, met by use of ordinary stamps and bisection, has already been mentioned. A more serious shortage of the 5m. developed in 1913 and a provisional overprinting was made in Cairo (Bulaq). Full sheets of 240 were overprinted O.H.H.S., without Arabic equivalent, by typography, and were put into use in November. McNeille¹⁷ has presented evidence in the form of repetitive plate flaws that a setting of 2x6 was used as a matrix to build up the plate. Such a procedure in principle leads to twelve types, but only three of them are distinct enough to warrant description (Fig. 13): in position 3 of the matrix, the left leg of the second H is about 0.5mm short at the bottom; in matrix position 11, the left leg of the second H is slightly shorter, and is uneven at the bottom; in matrix position 10, the right leg of the second H extends below the level of the other letters.

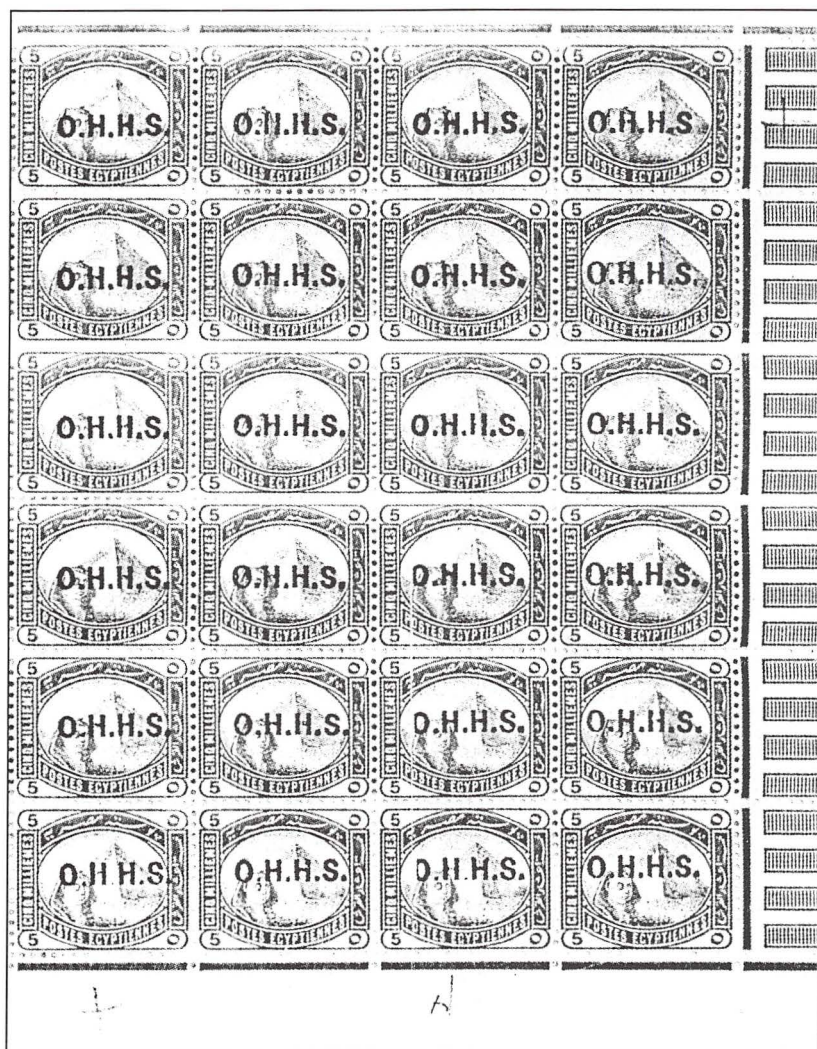


Fig. 13 Two matrices of 12 (2x6) of the 1913 overprint, the right-hand one showing three shaved o varieties.

There are many other plate varieties that resulted either from replication of the matrix or damage to a stereo at some stage. McNeille lists the following (positions numbered according to the plate of 240):

Stop after the first H is minute (nos. 115, 117, 227).

Stop after the first H is small (no. 225).

The first three stops are small (no. 231).

No stop after S (no. 130).

The left side of O is shaved (nos. 169, 189, 209, 225, 229).

The cross bar of one or both H's is faint, broken, or missing (nos. 126, 128, 163).

There are other, generally smaller, varieties.

Enough sheets were overprinted upside down that the error is not rare, but it has nevertheless been forged¹⁸. Misplaced overprints also exist, but no example of a double overprint has been reported.



Fig. 14 The 1913 "O.H.H.S." overprint.

This overprint also exists enclosed in quotation marks^{17,19,20} (Fig. 14). It is very rare, but at least two sheets were overprinted, one of them inverted (an example is known on cover). All known examples are used and the largest known multiple is a strip of 3. This form of the overprint might have arisen from a misunderstanding, if the printer was given a written instruction such as: Overprint the 5m. stamps "O.H.H.S.". In this case it might not have been realized that the quotation marks were not intended to be included. Apparently the mistake was quickly discovered and attempts were made to remove the offending marks, for examples exist that show only traces of them^{17,20,21,22}. These, too, are rare. The

plate must have been quickly rejected, for the plate from which the bulk of the issue was printed differs in other ways, apparently derived from a fresh setting.

Unused multiples of the ordinary overprint, even large ones, are reasonably abundant, as are used singles. Covers, however, are extremely scarce and forgeries are said to exist¹⁸.

The 1914–15 Overprints¹⁷

In 1914–15 the need for a 4m. value to pay the UPU postcard rate and for supplementary supplies of the 1, 2, 3, and 5m. was met by overprinting ordinary stamps in Cairo. The decision to do this may have been determined by the obstacles created by World War I against obtaining supplies from Britain. The 2m. and 4m. were made from the stamps of the Fourth Issue, in horizontal format, and the other values were of the 1914 pictorial issue.

The new overprint was more carefully composed than the 1913 provisional and included the Arabic word *amiri*. Separate settings were required to fit the two sheet sizes (240 and 200) involved. The 2m. and 4m. will be dealt with first.

The overprinting was done by typography at the Government Printing Works, Bulaq, and the process of building up the plate made use of a matrix setting of 2x6, as in 1913. There were thus twelve possible recurring types and recognition of them was the evidence that led McNeille to deduce the setting. Only three of them are prominent enough to warrant description (Fig. 15):

Position 3 of the matrix: the bottom of the left leg of the first H is not rectangular; the cross bar is not of uniform thickness, and is thicker to the right.

Position 4 of the matrix : the right leg of the first H extends slightly below the level of the left leg and of the stop.

Position 2 of the matrix: the bottom of the left leg of the second H is not rectangular.



Fig. 15 1914–15 overprint for the 2 and 4 mills: matrix positions 1, 2, 3, 4 (position 4 of this matrix unit also shows 'no stop after s').

There are also some varieties that are not derived from the original matrix, although they are constant. They provide the evidence that there were two printings of the 2m., one having the variety in pane I, the other having it in the same position in pane III. The 4m., however, appears to have had only one printing. Among the many minor varieties of this sort, McNeill describes the following as the most prominent:

No stop after S (Fig. 15): positions 38, 230, and 232 of the first setting; positions 22 and 118 of the second setting of the 2 mills.

The right leg of the first H is short at the top and is cut off diagonally: position 32 of the first setting, and position 152 of the second setting of the 2m. (i.e., position 32 in pane I or III).

The *alef* (rightmost, vertical Arabic letter) is broken near its middle: position 50 of the first setting.

The stop after S is small: positions 8, 28, 48, 68, 88, and 108 of the 4m. (thus in the same positions in each pane).

Inverted overprints exist for each value and are known used and unused. A block of 14 of the 4m. is known used at Mersa Matruh in December 1914. Pronounced displacements (*à cheval*) are known for all values. The 2m. exists with double overprint; it is one of the rarities of Egyptian philately, only nine examples having been printed. The explanation of this peculiar fact is exceptional²³. An irregular block of nine from the upper right corner of a pane became torn away and alone received the overprint. The sheet was then rejoined and passed through the press a second time in order to overprint the bulk of the sheet. The 1m. also exists with double overprint; one impression is lightly inked and lower than the other, but is nevertheless firmly impressed (both impressions show embossing on the back).

Some stamps show a partially inked impression of the head of a screw or nail used in assembling the plate. This appears as an incomplete open circle, situated above O.H.H.S. and roughly between two subjects, and so is liable to fall partly across the perforations



Fig. 16a An example of a screw-head impression.



Fig. 16b The error on the 2m. resulting from folding.

(Fig. 16a). An adventurous but spectacular variety on the 2m. is the result of part of the sheet having been folded under. Only O.H.H.S. and the top-most parts of the Arabic form the primary impression, but its mirror image, inverted, appears below

it, fully inked, resulting from a set-off from the platen of the press (Fig. 16b).

The decimal format of the sheets of the 1914 pictorials, utilized for the 1, 3, and 5m., required a matrix of ten units in contrast to the matrix of twelve used for the sheets in duodecimal format. Accordingly, a matrix of 2x5 was set from type and was replicated twenty times to make the plate of 200. The same plate was used to overprint all three values. Of the ten types, the two most easily recognized are:

Position 9 of the matrix: the stop after S is dropped below the level of the others (Fig. 17a).

Position 4 of the matrix: the left leg of the second H is short and is not rectangular at its foot.

There are also constant small plate varieties that were not on the original matrix. The three more prominent ones are:

Alef broken below its middle: position 106.

Two or three fragmentary marks to the right of the stop after S: position 160 (Fig. 17b)

No stop after S, but a small mark is close against the bottom of the S at its right: position 190 (Fig. 17a).



17a



Fig. 17a Stamp number 2 is position 190 in the sheet (stop squashed into s); number 3 has dropped stop after s (position 3 of matrix).

Fig. 17b Stamp number 2 shows fragmentary extra stops to the right of s (position 160 in sheet).

Neither inverted nor double overprints are known for the 1, 3, and 5m.

Three values, 2, 4, and 5m., were later overprinted by lithography and are recorded as being issued in October 1915. The overprint differs from the typographed one in the Arabic, in which the *alef* is surmounted by a *hamza* (Fig. 18). McNeille, who was able to study complete sheets, could detect no recurring features that might indicate an original matrix or intermediate stone and concluded that the overprint was drawn (or set) as a single unit only. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the cross bar of the first H on every stamp is higher than that of the second H. There must have been two printing stones, to fit the two sheet formats. There are some constant varieties of interest:

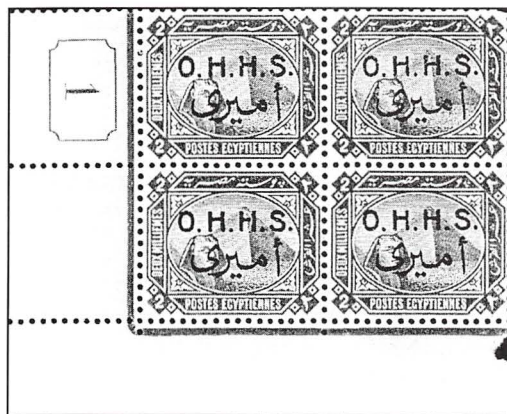


Fig. 18 The October 1915 overprint with *hamza*.

2 and 4m.: Corner guide marks, small right angles, occur on the upper left corner of position 1 and the upper right corner of position 20. On position 83, the S is broken, and on position 110, an H is broken. There is much variation in the size and clarity of the stops. A pronounced break in the Arabic *ra'* has been recorded²⁴ on position 54.

5m.: Corner guide marks on positions 1 and 10. The overprint on this stamp tends to be messy, with many flecks of extraneous ink, some of which are constant. The O tends to be filled up with ink, commonly as a large splotch. Owing to the frequency of extraneous ink, constant plate varieties are not so easy to distinguish, although McNeille has recorded several.

The printers had the same trouble achieving proper registration of the lithographic stone as with the typographic plate and misplaced overprints (*à cheval*) are not uncommon. At least one pane was overprinted with a vertical displacement such that the top row received the European only and all other stamps had the Arabic above and European below. The 2m. alone is known with inverted overprint (used and unused) and a double overprint on it has been reported in which the second impression is faint, but entirely complete, and thus unlikely to be a kiss print.

The 5m. also exists in pairs; one without overprint, and with partial overprint²⁵. These varieties resulted from a fold or pleat affecting the entire upper pane and a small part of the lower one. The top five stamps of the first column received no overprint at all and the next seven stamps received only parts of misplaced overprints. On a large part of the sheet the overprint slants downward to the right.

The 1922 Overprints^{17,26}

Further overprinting was required in 1922 when the 1, 2, 3, and 5m. of the Harrison printing pictorial stamps were lithographed with another version of the 1915 overprint (Fig. 19). This time, however, the sheets were divided into two panes of 100 and the top

and left margins were removed before printing. Stamps with control numbers in the sheet margin are believed not to exist.

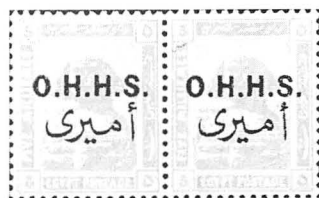


Fig. 19 The 1922 lithographed overprint with large and small *hamza*.

McNeille determined that the plate used for the 1, 2, and 5m. values, and thus presumably for the 3m. (a much scarcer stamp) as well, was made from a typeset matrix of 5x5 replicated four times. This process should give rise to 25 types, but it was carried out with sufficient skill to make such types very difficult to distinguish. McNeille described the following:

Positions 4, 5, and 11 of the matrix: the left leg of the first H is short at the bottom.

Position 4 of the matrix: the cross bar of the second H slopes downward to the right.

In addition, positions 21, 26, 71, and 76 of the sheet have a larger *hamza* on the *alef*. No other constant plate varieties have been noted.

Errors are not known. However, the more or less prominent plate varieties of the basic stamps are also found on the overprinted ones, and are considerably scarcer. These include the 1m. with a missing pair of dots in the right panel, and with a broken upper right value tablet, and the 2m. with recut lettering in the bottom panel. These varieties are described more fully in Chapter XVI.

The rare 3m. has been forged more than once. The length of O.H.H.S. varies from the genuine, which is 15mm long, in some²⁷. Any obviously typographed overprint is a certain forgery. Comparison with overprints on the cheaper values can be very helpful.

The 1922–23 O.H.E.M.S. Overprints^{25,26,28,29,30}

The declaration of the Kingdom of Egypt in 1922 called for an appropriate change in the postage stamps, which for the ordinary and postage due stamps consisted of overprinting with a crown and Arabic inscription. Such a procedure with the Official stamps, which already had an overprint, would have created stamps with an ugly, cluttered appearance. Instead, a quite different type of overprint was adopted, having the initials O.H.E.M.S. (“On His Egyptian Majesty’s Service”) and an Arabic inscription meaning “Royal Egyptian Government”. These inscriptions followed their adoption by the Ministry of Finance for its printed envelope stationery. Unlike the ordinary stamps, the Official overprint did not include the date when the Kingdom was established. However, the Official stamps were presumably put into use on the same date: 10 October 1922.

Overprinting was carried out by the Government Printing Works in Bulaq by relief printing (typography) on the pictorials printed by Harrison & Sons: 1m., 2m. red, 3m., 4m. green, 5m., 10m. lake red, 10m. blue, 15m. (both types), and 50m. This selection thus includes all the denominations of the 1907 series plus a 4 and 15m., the latter being required to meet the increased UPU letter rate. The overprinting was done on panes of 100 rather than full sheets and the top and right sheet margins were removed (the exceptional existence of examples of the 50m. with sheet margin at right has not been explained).

It is difficult to give a coherent discussion of this issue because there were four settings for use on the low values and three for the 50m., but not all of the low values are known in each setting. Byam²⁸ published the first study, in which he presented evidence for three settings and attempted to establish the order in which they were used. McNeille, who resided in Egypt, had access to the large stock of sheets held by E.L. Angeloglou and was able to carry the study considerably further. Single stamps cannot usually be assigned to a specific setting, for the differences largely lie in the presence and position of certain varieties or features. The low values will be taken up first. To describe the settings, it is necessary to consider the more prominent varieties (Fig. 20):

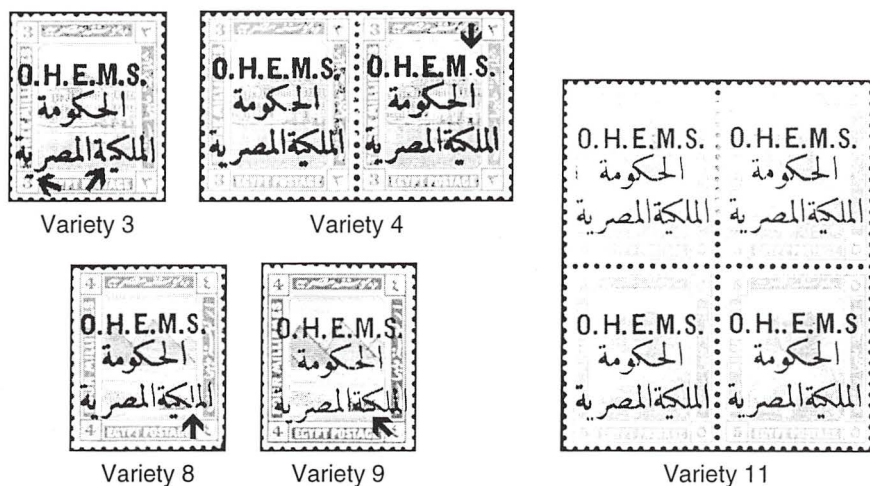


Fig. 20 A selection of the plate varieties of the O.H.E.M.S. overprint.

1. Spaced E and M. Whereas the normal distance between the stop after E and the following M is $\frac{1}{2}$ mm, the variety has a space of just over 1mm and the overprint is consequently longer. There are two versions of this variety, differing only minutely. Position 82, setting A, and position 86, setting B.
2. Low dots below the last Arabic letter (*ya'* at lower left). A *ya'* from a different font was used in a few subjects. Normally, the two dots are at the exact level of the tip of the letter *ra'* to the right; in the variety, they are markedly lower. Position 93, setting A; position 94, setting B; position 48, setting C.
3. As variety 2, but in addition there is a gap of over $\frac{1}{2}$ mm between the last (leftmost) two letters of the word *malakiyat* (the lower right word), and the overprint is therefore longer than the normal, which has essentially no gap. Positions 44, 49, 94, 99, setting D.
4. Faint (almost missing) stop after M, and the tip of the *ta' marbuta* (the letter resembling a 'd' with two dots above it) in the second line of Arabic is straight. Position 93, setting B.
5. Faint stop after M, but the tip of the *ta' marbuta* is bent to the right. Positions 43, 48, 93, 98, setting D.
6. The two dots described for varieties 2 and 3 are small or faint (but on the normal level). Positions 34, 39, 84, 89, setting D.
7. The first *lam* in *malakiyat* is defective towards the top. Position 8, setting D.
8. The second *lam* in *malakiyat* is broken at the base. Position 9, setting D.

9. The right-hand pair of dots along the bottom of the second line of Arabic (i.e., of the *ya'* of *malakiyat*) is missing. Position 31, setting C.
10. The lower part of *kaf* and all of the following *ya'* in *malakiyat* are missing. Position 26, setting B.
11. Two stops after H, none after S. Position 38, setting B.
12. The pair of dots of the *ya'* of *malakiyat* is missing, as in variety 9, but the second *lam* of *malakiyat* differs: in variety 12, its left linkage is short and thick, whereas in variety 9 it is longer and much thinner and does not connect fully with the *kaf*. Position 54, setting B.
13. The point of the *ha* in *al-bakumat*, which normally projects to the right, is broken off. Position 67, setting B (but not seen on the 5m. from this setting).
14. The stop after S is clearly circular, rather than square. Position 70, setting B.
15. Short first *alef* in *al-bakumat*. Position 40, setting B.
16. Wider space between *malakiyat* and the *alef* of *al-masriyat*. Position 12, setting B; position 55, setting A.
17. The right extension of the letter *ha* is bent downwards. Position 87, setting B.

TABLE 1
Plate Varieties in the Several Settings

| Variety | Settings | | | |
|---------|----------|----|----|----------------|
| | A | B | C | D |
| 1 | 82 | 86 | | |
| 2 | 93 | 94 | 48 | |
| 3 | | | | 44, 49, 94, 99 |
| 4 | | 93 | | |
| 5 | | | | 43, 48, 93, 98 |
| 6 | | | | 34, 39, 84, 89 |
| 7 | | | | 8 |
| 8 | | | | 9 |
| 9 | | | 31 | |
| 10 | | 26 | | |
| 11 | | 38 | | |
| 12 | | 54 | | |
| 13 | | 67 | | |
| 14 | | 70 | | |
| 15 | | 40 | | |
| 16 | | 12 | | |
| 17 | | 87 | | |

Setting D stands out by having plate varieties that recur regularly four times in the pane. The three most prominent varieties, 3, 5, and 6, correspond to positions 24, 23, and 19 of a block of 5x5 repeated four times to make up the plate of 100. The only reasonable explanation is that a matrix of 25 was set from loose type and was then replicated as a unit, presumably by casting from a mold. No recurring varieties have been detected for the other settings that appear to have been set entirely from loose type, or assembled from individual stereotypes, without an intermediate matrix. The positions of the listed varieties are summarized in Table 1.

Although every position can be plated, that is not a sure way of determining the setting from which an individual stamp came, for most of the stereotypes appear to have been reused in the successive settings. However, the plate varieties that are common to more than one setting can usually be assigned if they are in a suitable multiple, in some cases even a pair, that allows the position in the plate to be determined. For example, varieties

2 and 4 are adjacent in setting B and varieties 1 and 2 occur in the same block of 4 in setting A. The presence of a sheet margin on a multiple containing one of the varieties may likewise identify the setting. A further help lies in the recognition of the letter *meem* of *al-bakumat* from two different fonts, one having its left side sloping at an angle of 60°, the other having an angle of 69° (slightly larger) (Chapter XVI)³¹. The positions of the 69° *meem* are:

Setting A: 5-8, 17, 21, 24, 26, 28, 32-7, 42, 49, 54, 55, 59, 62-6, 76, 77, 79, 80, 84, 86-7, 90, 92-3, 100

Setting B: 1-5, 7, 12, 14-5, 20, 23, 25-6, 28, 36, 39, 40-1, 43-4, 47, 52, 60, 62, 64, 66, 70, 73, 75, 80, 82-3, 85, 87, 94, 96, 97

Setting C: 1-3, 6, 7, 12, 16-9, 21, 23, 31-2, 37, 44, 48-9, 54, 56, 61, 71-2, 74-5, 77-8, 81-2, 85-9, 93, 95, 99

Setting D: 2, 7, 12, 14, 17, 19, 23, 25, 28, 30, 32-3, 35, 37-8, 40, 44, 49, 52, 57, 62, 64, 67, 69, 73, 75, 78, 80, 82-3, 85, 87-8, 90, 94, 99

The second *lam* of *al-malakiyyat* also appears to have come from two fonts, in one of which it is the same height as the first *lam* and the *kaf* and in the other is noticeably shorter. The short *lam* is the commoner. The tall *lam* occurs in the following positions:

Setting A: 18, 20, 36, 38, 41, 52, 59, 62, 65, 69, 70, 86, 88, 97

Setting B: 1, 2, 10, 17, 19, 20, 27, 29, 30, 33-4, 36-7, 48, 51, 53-4, 56, 61, 66, 70, 87, 90, 95, 99

Setting C: 13-16, 19, 21, 30-1, 33, 51, 56, 64-5, 81, 83, 86, 89, 92, 98, 100

Setting D: 11, 16, 45, 56, 61, 66, 72, 95, 100

The quantities produced from each setting and the order in which they were developed have been reported by Chaftar³⁰ from archival records (Table 2). Hass later deduced the procedures that converted one setting to another. The matrix of 25 from setting D was used for the lower left corner of setting B, the remainder of which was built up from loose type. For setting A, the forme was disassembled and most of the varieties were repaired or replaced; the units were then reassembled in a different order. Setting C was derived similarly, with two remaining varieties (1 and 17) being attended to. The designation of the settings by capital letters, as used by McNeille, is retained in order to avoid confusion. The first setting, D, is the only one from which all denominations were printed, and the only one that includes the 10m. blue.

TABLE 2
QUANTITIES AND CONTROL NUMBERS FROM THE SEVERAL SETTINGS
Settings and Dates

| Value | D 1 May 22 | B 8 Nov. 22 | A 8 May 23 | C 10 Nov. 23 | Total |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------|
| 1m. | 30,000 A/22 | | 20,000 A/20 | | 50,000 |
| 2m. | 60,000 B/22 | | | | 60,000 |
| 3m. | 24,000 A/21 | | | | 24,000 |
| 4m. | 12,000 B/21 | 5,000 B/23? | | | 17,000 |
| 5m. | 100,000 B/22 | 50,000 B/23? | 25,000 B/21 | | 175,000 |
| 10m. blue | 60,000 A/20 | | | | 60,000 |
| 10m. red | | 20,000 B/23 | 35,000 B/23 | 32,000 B/23 | 87,000 |
| 15m. | | | | | |
| <i>milleema</i> | 20,000 B/22 | | 5,000 B/22 | 24,000 B/22 | 49,000 |
| <i>milleemat</i> | | 7,000 A/21 | | | 7,000 |
| 50m.* | 10,000 A/22 | 5,000 | 5,000 | | 20,000 |

* The settings of the 50 mills. are not distinguished in this table other than by date.

This table is constructed from the data reported by Chaftar in which the apparent discrepancies between the printing dates and the control numbers of the 4 and 5 mills and the 10 mills red have not been explained and are presumably typographic errors.

The quantities printed from the several settings differed considerably and are reflected in the relative scarcity of the varieties peculiar to each. Setting B, which is somewhat scarce, contained the error O.H.E.M.S which is the only variety listed in the general catalogs and is a real rarity on the 15m. "milleemat" type, of which McNeille believed only five panes to have been put in use. The figure 7000 therefore might possibly be a typographical error for 700, or the quantity 7000 might actually have consisted largely of *milleema* stamps.

There is one major overprinting error in this issue: the 5m. with double overprint of setting B. Apparently only one pane of 100 was printed, and therefore each of the plate varieties is unique. This error did not come to light until 1932 in the hands of a London dealer who, McNeille thought, originally had the complete pane. A partial double, possibly a kiss print, has been reported³² on a 10m. of undisclosed color. The 4m. from setting B exists with inverted overprint, but it is thought to be a proof. It was not known until about 1970 when a complete but torn pane was discovered^{18b,33} in a bulk auction lot. A block of the 2m. with inverted overprint was also found. There is no doubt that these varieties are genuine, but there is uncertainty about their status. The 5m. of setting B exists with the overprint displaced horizontally such that the S falls on the left of the stamps.

Forgeries

The scarcity of the 15m. *milleemat* and especially of the catalogued variety O.H.E.M.S has motivated forging and examples have been reported in blocks containing one copy of the variety. The forgeries were skilfully made and are best detected by careful comparison with common stamps (preferably in large multiples) from setting B. The exact dimensions and the luster of the ink can be useful criteria.

50m. O.H.E.M.S.

It remains to consider the 50m. which had to be overprinted from separate settings owing to its larger size. Complete sheets do not appear to have survived and the settings cannot be fully described. The individual overprints are of the same size and from the same fonts as the lower values. In one setting, the maximum vertical dimension is 14mm (McNeille's setting E); in McNeille's setting F, stamps from which are equally common, the vertical measurement is 15mm (Fig. 21), the difference being due largely to a greater space between O.H.E.M.S. and the Arabic. The two spacings are not known se tenant. The data reported by Chaftar³⁰ imply that there were three settings, presumably of 50 subjects each,



Fig. 21 The two vertical spacings of the 50m. O.H.E.M.S.

since the panes were broken into blocks of 50 for overprinting. Three plate varieties have been recorded:

Wider space between E and M.

Low dots in the *ya'* at lower left.

Wider space between S and the following stop.

These are known only with the closer vertical spacing.

The only known watermark variety for the entire issue is on the 3m., of which one pane of 100 is recorded with reversed watermark.

The many plate flaws that occur on the basic Harrison stamps (Chapter XVI) obviously exist with the O.H.E.M.S. overprint; they are, of course, considerably scarcer than on the ordinary stamps.

This issue is surprisingly scarce on cover, considering that it was in use for about two years. Many of the covers are made of brown paper of low quality, often of large size, and some are window envelopes. These features apply to most subsequent issues of Official stamps, although the use of air mail envelopes made of white paper with colored border designs became more frequent after about 1960. Covers of good quality white paper and of moderate size are especially difficult to find.

The 1924–25 Overprints on the First Portrait Issue³⁴

When the crown overprints were replaced by the first series of ordinary stamps to bear a portrait of King Fuad, it became necessary to make suitable Official stamps. Preparation of a set of definitive Official stamps was begun in 1924, but an interim provisional was required before they could be produced. This need was met by overprinting the same denominations of the First Portrait Issue as had been used for the 1921–23 O.H.E.M.S. series. Following the policy adopted for the ordinary stamps of using inscriptions in Arabic only, the overprint was likewise only in Arabic: the single word *'amiri*.

The overprint was set from loose type using a mixture of two fonts. Three settings were used for the low values which were overprinted in sheets of 100. All values were overprinted in black except the 1m., which was red. The top and right sheet margins were removed. The Government Printing Works in Bulaq probably carried out the work, notwithstanding an attribution to the Survey Department in catalogs. The date(s) of issue is not known officially, but it appears that all but the 1m. and 3m. were not issued until 1925. The Stanley Gibbons catalog states 25 October 1924 for the 1m. and 24 December for the 3m.

It is convenient to consider the varieties arising from the fonts and the spacing (Fig. 22) before taking up the settings. Two letters, the *meem* and the terminal *ya'*, come in two fonts. The two types of the *meem* were first reported by Hass³¹ and have been described in connection with the 1922–23 O.H.E.M.S. overprints and the 1915 2m. on 3m. provisional (Chapter XVI). The two fonts of the *ya'* differ markedly in size, the larger one, being a poor match to the other letters, was therefore soon recognized as a misfit.



Fig. 22 The three Types of the 1924 overprint setenant.

The spacing between the terminal *ya'* and the *ra'* to the right of it occurs in two states. In one, the two letters are set so close that they nearly touch and the curve of the *ya'* overlaps the tail of the *ra'*. In the other state, the separation between the letters is wide enough that a vertical line upward from the tip of the *ra'* does not intercept any

part of the *ya'*. The type with close spacing (Zeheri Type II) is about 7mm long and the other (Zeheri Type I) is about 7.75mm, but there is some variation due to small differences in the spacing between the *alef* at right and the rest of the word. The Zeheri catalog designates the large *ya'* as Type III, but does not differentiate the types with the large (69°) and small (60°) *meem*.

Type III occurs only in the settings designated B and C by McNeille³⁴ (the alphabetical order was not intended to represent the sequence of the settings):

Setting B: positions 3, 17, 18, 24, 27

Setting C: position 3

The large *meem* also occurs only in settings B and C, the same positions in each: 1, 4, 12, 21, 27, 32, 35, 42, 46, 50, 88, and 99. Thus, the combination of large *ya'* and large *meem* occurs in only one position, no. 27 of setting B.

Type II also occurs in settings B and C only (The parenthetical positions are those of Type III):

Setting B: positions 2, (3), 4-10, 12-16, (17, 18), 19, 20, 22-3, (24), 25-6, (27), 28-30, 33-40, 42-50

Setting C: position 71



Fig. 23
The blunt *ra'*
of position 32,
setting B.
(upper stamp)

Position 32 of setting B is also really a Type II, but the end of the *ra'* is blunt so that there is a fair space between it and the *ya'* (Fig. 23), but the overall length of the word is still only 7mm. Type III should not be mistaken for Type II, even though the large *ya'* generally touches the *ra'*.

Apart from the differences in Types and font and the blunt *ra'*, there are a few other plate varieties. In settings B and C, position 52, the tip of the *ra'* is hooked (Fig. 24). The *hamza* is defective in position 75 of settings B and C (Fig. 24). In positions 33-4, 44, 57, and 75 of settings B and C, the bottom of the *alef* is level with the bottom of *meem* instead of extending below it.

Hass³¹ has concluded that setting B was the original one, undergoing partial improvement to generate setting C, and complete elimination of the several varieties to generate setting A. This is in agreement with the



Fig. 24 The hooked *ra'* of position 52 (shown on 1m and 50m) and defective *hamza* of position 75 (left stamp), settings B and C.

recorded use of the settings (Table 3) if the reworking of setting **B** took place before the 10m. and 50m. were overprinted.

For the 50m., its larger size required greater spacing between the subjects. Settings **A** and **C** were used, with adjustment. In addition to the varieties of the overprint there are many plate flaws and retouches in the basic stamps. Many of those mentioned in Chapter XVIII can be found overprinted; perhaps the best of these is the 50m. with double *lam* in *milleema* in the right panel.

The 15m. exists with reversed watermark.

The stamps of this issue are very scarce on cover, considerably more so than the O.H.E.M.S. stamps. Quite possibly substantial supplies of the latter were on hand when the portrait stamps were overprinted. In any event, the portrait Official stamps were superseded by definitive Official stamps in little more than a year. It is not known if they were withdrawn when the latter were introduced.

Forgeries³⁵

The overprinted portrait stamps have been forged, even though they are not expensive. The demand was presumably to make up cheap packets. The forged overprints are crudely handstamped and are often badly placed and of inaccurate length (in some, as much as 1.5mm short).

The 1926 Definitive Official Stamps^{33,36}

As early as 1924 the Survey Department was at work designing a definitive Official series. The design at first submitted is not known, but in September 1924 the Postmaster General rejected it and submitted "three rough sketches" as a basis for a new attempt. One of these, properly drafted out, was eventually approved and the Survey Department went to work preparing plates for printing by offset lithography. Nine values were included, seven in small size and the two top values, 20 and 50m., larger (Fig. 25). Photo-prints in the issued sizes were approved by the Ministry of Finance in January 1925. "Die" proofs of two versions of the design for the 15m. in light blue have survived (Fig. 26).

**TABLE 3 — 1924 OVERPRINTS
SETTINGS AND CONTROL NUMBERS**

| Value | Setting (Control No.) | Unidentified Control Nos.* |
|-------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1m. | A (B.23), B (B.24) | |
| 2m. | A (C.23), B | C.24 |
| 3m. | A (C.23), B (C.24) | |
| 4m. | A (C.23), B (C.23) | C. 24, C.25 |
| 5m. | A (C.23), B | B.25 |
| 10m. | A (C.23), C (C.24) | |
| 15m. | A B | C.23, C.24 |
| 50m. | A C | |

* Seen but not identified as to setting.



Fig. 25 The 1926 definitive design.

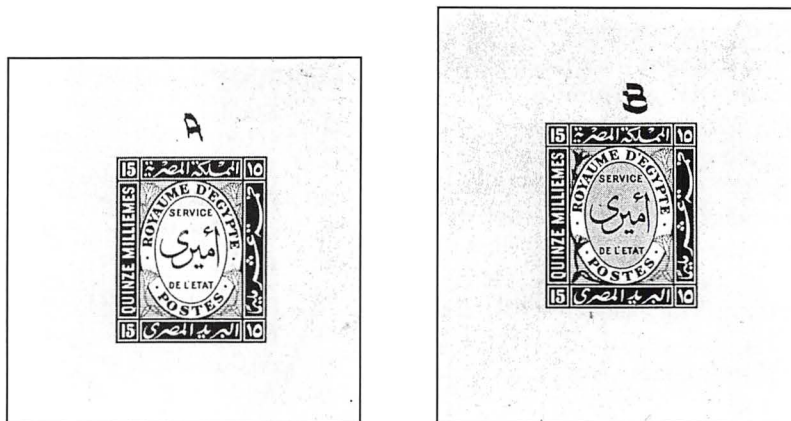


Fig. 26 Die proof essays for the 15m.

The steps by which the plates were made began with a large working drawing, copies of which were then augmented with collages of the French and Arabic value inscriptions. Photo-originals made from these were used to prepare unit positives in blocks of 25, which in turn were used to make master negatives in two panes of 100.

The colors, control numbers, quantities, and dates of delivery are shown in Table 4. The changes in UPU postage rates in November 1931 caused color changes for the 10, 15, and 20m. denominations; at the same time, the 20m. was converted to the small size.

Imperforate proofs on thin card overprinted CANCELLED on the back in English or Arabic (late printings) were prepared in one sheet of 100 for each printing. Proofs on gummed, watermarked paper with skewed perforations were similarly prepared for deposit in the Royal collection.

The only established constant plate flaw³⁷ occurs on the 4m. Position 81 of every other pane has a sloping white line from A to R of QUATRE and a white spot breaking the outer right frame, level with the TE of EGYPTE (Fig. 27). Its persistent occurrence provides proof that the same plate was used from 1926 to 1937. A flaw on the 10m. consisting of a dot under the I of DIX has been reported³⁸, but it is not known if it is constant.

This issue is not difficult to find on cover (except for the two large stamps), as is to be expected in view of its long life (ten years), but small, tidy, white covers are always desirable.

From the late 1930s official mail to foreign countries could be franked wholly with Official stamps only if sent by surface mail. The surcharge for air mail service had to be paid with air mail or ordinary stamps (Fig. 28). Owing to the late introduction of the requirement, such combined franking with the 1926–35 Official stamps and Second Portrait or Air Mail stamps is very scarce, but similar covers of the 1938 issue are not difficult to find. The requirement seems to have been rescinded later and I have not seen a combined franking dated after 1973. At about the same time, Official stamps began to be used for internal mail. The oval handstamped official franks, which had sufficed for franking internal mail without stamps from 1915, continued to be used in conjunction with Official stamps, apparently to confirm authorization to use the latter.

TABLE 4 — 1925–35 OFFICIAL STAMPS

| Value & Color | Control No. | Quantity | Delivery Date |
|-------------------|-------------|----------|---------------|
| 1m. orange | A/26 | 275,000 | 31 MR 26 |
| | A/36 | 62,000 | 27 AP 36 |
| | A/37 | 60,000 | 19 MY 37 |
| | B/37 | 75,000 | 30 NO 37 |
| 2m. black | A/26 | 275,000 | 22 AP 26 |
| | A/37 | 65,000 | 19 MY 37 |
| | B/37 | 75,000 | 30 NO 37 |
| 3m. sepia | A/26 | 295,800 | 22 AP 26 |
| | A/37 | 65,000 | 9 JN 37 |
| 4m. green | A/26 | 275,900 | 13 MR 26 |
| | A/37 | 65,000 | 19 MY 37 |
| | B/37 | 75,000 | 30 NO 37 |
| 5m. brown | A/26 | 276,300 | 31 Mr 26 |
| | A/31 | 150,000 | 16 MR 31 |
| | A/32 | 63,000 | 1 AU 32 |
| | A/33 | 15,000 | 15 JN 33 |
| | A/34 | 60,000 | 28 MY 34 |
| | A/35 | 65,000 | 25 MY 35 |
| | A/37 | 150,000 | 9 JN 37 |
| 10m. brick red | A/26 | 266,000 | 22 AP 26 |
| | A/31 | 150,000 | 16 MR 31 |
| | A/32 | 64,000 | 1 AU 32 |
| 10m. violet | A/33 | 125,000 | 15 JN 33 |
| | A/34 | 65,000 | 28 MY 34 |
| | A/36 | 63,000 | 27 AP 36 |
| | A/37 | 150,000 | 19 MY 37 |
| 15m. blue | A/26 | 260,800 | 31 MR 26 |
| | A/32 | 65,000 | 1 AU 32 |
| 15m. plum | A/33 | 125,000 | 15 JN 33 |
| | A/37 | 110,000 | 19 MY 37 |
| 20m. olive green | A/26 | 281,700 | 27 AP 26 |
| 20m. blue | A/35 | 63,000 | 25 MY 35 |
| | A/36 | 62,000 | 27 AP 36 |
| | A/37 | 85,000 | 9 JN 37 |
| 50m. myrtle green | A/26 | 272,000 | 27–29 AP 26 |
| | A/35 | 62,000 | 25 MY 35 |
| | A/37 | 75,000 | 9 JN 37 |

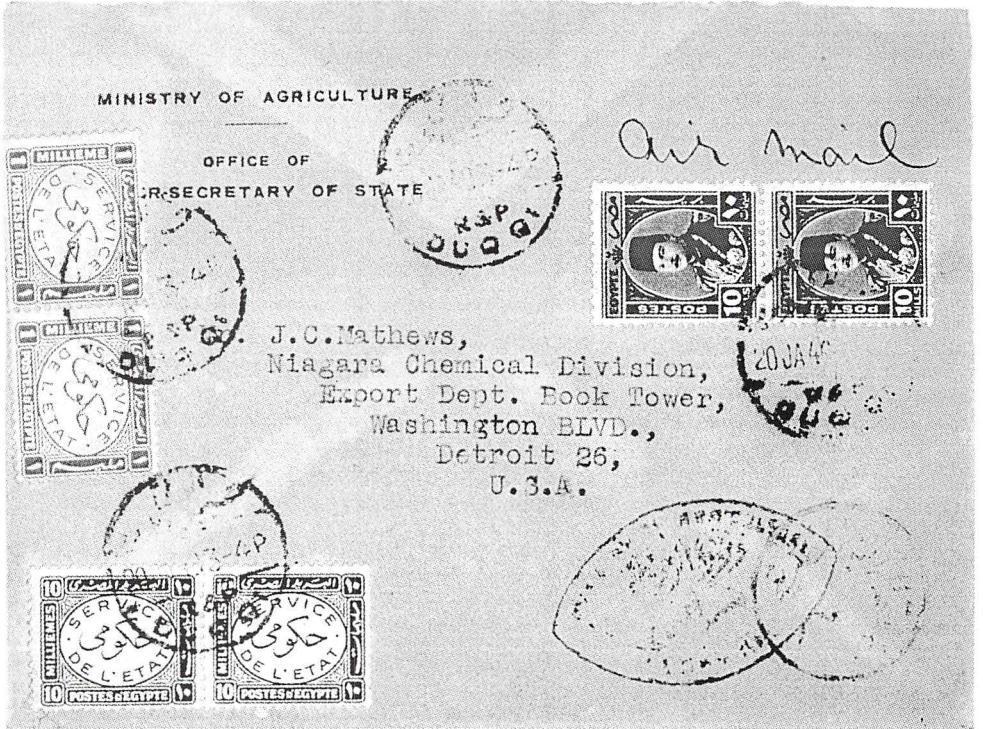


Fig. 27 Plate flaws on the 4m.

Fig. 28 Combined franking with Official stamps to pay ordinary postage and ordinary stamps to pay the air mail surcharge.

The 1938 Issue³⁵

A request was made of the Survey Department in February 1936 by the Postmaster General to change the Arabic wording on the Official stamps from *amiri* to *hakumi*, "governmental". The occasion would also be suitable for changing the overall design, perhaps including the King's portrait. The Survey Department demurred on the last feature because it would require photogravure and the facilities for such printing were antiquated and already in danger of being overtaxed. It was therefore decided to continue with offset lithography.

The first design was submitted in January 1937 but was not approved. An alternative, in horizontal format (Fig. 29), based on the original miri stamp of 1893 in concept, was approved and production was quickly begun. The process was as before except that the unit positive consisted of a single subject instead of a block of 25. The 50m. alone was printed in larger size. The entire series of nine values was delivered to the General Post Office on March 14th 1938. The actual date on which they were put in use has not been recorded, but both the Gibbons and Zeheri catalogs state December 1938. The control numbers and quantities are shown in Table 5. Perforation gauged 13½ for the low values, and 14x13½ for the 50m.



Fig. 29 The 1937–38 Design.

The watermark was as before, but sideways; the crown was to the right of the letter *fe'* as seen from the front of the stamps. However, the last printings of the 1m. (1954–56) had the watermark reversed and the printings of the 50m. from 1949 on had upright watermark. The control numbers were changed to Arabic for the printings of 1955–57 (except for the 50m.).

Royal proofs on thin card, overprinted CANCELLED on the back and stamps of similar status on gummed, watermarked paper with skewed perforations, were prepared in one pane of 100 for each printing. These stamps are easily found on cover, commonly large and somewhat untidy, paying the postage and registration charges on foreign mail. Small, white covers, however, are somewhat elusive.

| TABLE 5 — 1938 ISSUE | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|----------|---------------|
| QUANTITIES AND CONTROL NUMBERS | | | |
| Value & Color | Control No. | Quantity | Delivery Date |
| 1m. orange | A/38 | 60,000 | 14 Mr 38 |
| | A/39 | 120,000 | 27 JY 39 |
| | A/40 | 60,000 | 2 OC 40 |
| | A/41 | 65,000 | 22 JN 42 |
| | A/42 | 66,000 | 30 MY 43 |
| | A/43 | 62,800 | 19 AP 45 |
| | A/49 | | |
| | A/50 | | |
| | A/51 | | |
| | A/54 | | |
| | (A/55) | | |
| | (A/56/6) | | |

Table 5 contd.

| Value & Color | Control No. | Quantity | Delivery Date |
|-----------------|-------------|----------|---------------|
| 2m. vermilion | A/38 | 60,000 | 14 MR 38 |
| | A/39 | 95,000 | 27 JY 39 |
| | A/40 | 60,000 | 2 OC 40 |
| | A/41 | 65,000 | 22 JN 42 |
| | A/42 | 60,000 | 30 MY 43 |
| | A/43 | 63,500 | 29 AP 45 |
| | A/49 | | |
| | A/50 | | |
| | A/51 | | |
| | A/54 | | |
| 3m. sepia | (A/55) | | |
| | A/38 | 65,000 | 14 MR 38 |
| | A/39 | 90,000 | 27 JY 39 |
| | A/40 | 60,000 | 2 OC 40 |
| | A/41 | 65,000 | 23 JN 42 |
| | A/42 | 62,000 | 30 MY 43 |
| | A/43 | 66,000 | 29 AP 45 |
| | A/49 | | |
| | A/50 | | |
| | A/51 | | |
| 4m. light green | (A/55) | | |
| | A/38 | 70,000 | 14 MR 38 |
| | A/39 | 90,000 | 27 JY 39 |
| | A/40 | 60,000 | 2 OC 40 |
| | A/41 | 66,000 | 23 JN 42 |
| | A/42 | 61,000 | 30 MY 43 |
| | A/43 | 64,000 | 29 AP 45 |
| | A/49 | | |
| | A/50 | | |
| | A/51 | | |
| 5m. brown | A/54 | | |
| | (A/56) | | |
| | A/38 | 160,000 | 14 MR 38 |
| | A/39 | 180,000 | 27 JY 39 |
| | A/40 | 60,000 | 2 OC 40 |
| | A/41 | 64,000 | 24 JN 42 |
| | A/42 | 62,000 | 30 MY 43 |
| | A/43 | 63,000 | 29 AP 45 |
| | A/49 | | |
| | A/50 | | |
| 10m. violet | A/51 | | |
| | A/53 | | |
| | A/54 | | |
| | (A/56) | | |
| | A/38 | 160,000 | 14 MR 38 |
| | A/39 | 195,000 | 27 JY 39 |
| | A/40 | 55,000 | 2 OC 40 |
| | A/41 | 65,000 | 24 JN 42 |
| | A/42 | 58,000 | 30 MY 43 |
| | A/43 | 65,000 | 29 AP 45 |
| A/49 | | | |
| A/50 | | | |
| A/51 | | | |

Table 5 contd.

| Value & Color | Control No. | Quantity | Delivery Date |
|--------------------|----------------|----------|---------------|
| 10m. violet contd. | A/53 | | |
| | A/54 (A/55) | | |
| 15m. plum | A/38 | 120,000 | 14 MR 38 |
| | A/39 | 120,000 | 27 JY 39 |
| | A/40 | 60,000 | 2 OC 40 |
| | A/41 | 63,000 | 25 JN 42 |
| | A/42 | 53,000 | 30 JN 43 |
| | A/43 | 64,000 | 29 AP 45 |
| | A/49 | | |
| | A/50 | | |
| | A/51 | | |
| | A/53 | | |
| | A/54 (A/55) | | |
| 20m. light blue | A/38 | 95,000 | 14 MR 38 |
| | A/39 | 120,000 | 27 JY 39 |
| | A/40 | 60,000 | 2 OC 40 |
| | A/41 | 65,000 | 25 JN 42 |
| | A/42 | 62,000 | 30 MY 43 |
| | A/43 | 64,000 | 29 AP 45 |
| | A/49 | | |
| | A/50 | | |
| | A/51 | | |
| | A/54 (A/55) | | |
| | 50m. | A/38 | 67,000 |
| A/39 | | 85,000 | 27 JY 39 |
| A/40 | | 60,000 | 2 OC 40 |
| A/41 | | 64,000 | 25 JN 42 |
| A/42 | | 61,000 | 30 MY 43 |
| A/43 | | 66,500 | 29 AP 45 |
| A/49 | | | |
| A/50 | | | |
| A/51 | | | |
| A/53 | | | |
| (A/55) | | | |

Note: Control numbers in parentheses are actually in Arabic.

“King of Egypt and Sudan” Overprints

The Official stamps were overprinted with the same inscription (Fig. 30) as all the other stamps in January 1952 and presumably put into use at the same time. Color trials were prepared in panes of 100 for each value³⁹: black, blue, red, green (except for the 50m.), and brown. The 1 and 2m. were issued in brown, the 3 to 15m. in blue, the 20m. in black, and the 50m. in red. Both watermark orientations of the 1 and 50m. were overprinted. The only error was a horizontally misplaced overprint (*à cheval*) on the

10m., known unused and used. The recorded control numbers are:

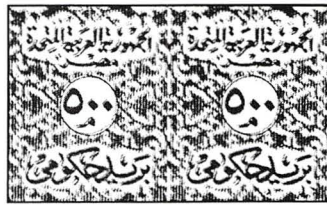
| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1m. - A/40, A/43, A/50 | 10m. - A/38, A/50 |
| 2m. - A/40, A/50 | 15m. - A/39 |
| 3m. - A/43, A/50 | 20m. - A/50 |
| 4 m. - A/39 | 50m. - A/50 |
| 5m. - A/39 | |



Fig. 30 The 1952 overprint, *à cheval*.

Owing to the revolution late in 1952, these stamps had a short life and covers are very scarce. Even used stamps are difficult to find and the demand has been filled by means of forged cancellations.

Issues of the Republic



Imperforate double impression

Fig. 31 1958 design.

Replacement of the Official stamps of 1938 did not begin for twenty years from the original date of issue and they remained in use unoverprinted after the monarchy was overthrown, notwithstanding the royalist nature of the watermark. A new series began in 1958, having a totally new design and an upright format (Fig. 31).

Two values only, 10m. dull purple and 35m. grey-blue, were printed by lithography and issued on August 1st 1958. The central feature was the value in Arabic; the other inscriptions were in Arabic only, reflecting the xenophobia of the times, and read "United Arab Republic" at the top and "government post" at the bottom. The paper was watermarked with a heraldic eagle and *misr* (Egypt) in Arabic, in multiple, and the perforation was 13x13½. The control numbers, in Arabic only, were A/58. The 35m. exists with inverted watermark.

Four years later the watermark was changed, becoming a multiple of the letters UAR (for United Arab Republic) and the Arabic initials for *al-gumburiyat al-arabiyat al-mutahadda*. The 10 and 35m. on the new paper had their colors revised and three new

high values were added:

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------|------------|
| 1m. orange-yellow | 1963 | 50m. green (shades) | 18 AP 1962 |
| 4m. yellow green | 1963 | 100m. purple | 1963 |
| 5m. light brown (shades) | 3 MY 1962 | 200m. light red | 1963 |
| 10m. purple-brown | 1962 | 500m. brownish grey | 1963 |
| 35m. violet-slate | 1962 | | |

No record of the control numbers has been published. Inverted watermarks exist on the 4m. and 50m.; examples are scarce.

The 1, 5, 10, 35 (dark blue), 50, 100, and 200m. exist imperforate and the 500m. exists imperforate with double impression, all on gummed, watermarked paper. It is not known how these varieties came on the market, so it cannot be said whether they are regularly issued stamps, proofs, printer's waste, or clandestine productions. A plate variety of the 200m. shows a broken head to the Arabic numeral "two", said to be constant.

This issue is not especially scarce on cover.

The year 1967 saw a return to bilingual inscriptions (English and Arabic) and a change to a more pleasing design featuring a heraldic eagle (Fig. 32). On the low values the lettering is in color on a white background, whereas on the three high values it is colorless on a solid background. The shield on the eagle's breast is also different on the high values. Offset lithography was no longer used; the new stamps were printed by photogravure by the Postal Authority Press instead of the Survey Department. Unwatermarked paper was used for the low values and the three high values were watermarked with a large heraldic eagle in multiple. Perforation was 11½x11. Control numbers were no longer used; instead, the date of issue and a serial number were printed on the sheet margin in black.



Fig. 32
1967 design.

Reflecting changes in postal rates, new colors and a new denomination were introduced:

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1m. ultramarine | 35m. deep violet |
| 4m. sepia | 50m. orange |
| 5m. olive green | 55m. violet |
| 10m. sepia | 100m. green and vermilion |
| 10m. red-violet (1969) | 200m. blue and vermilion |
| 20m. light red violet | 500m. olive-brown and vermilion |

The general date of issue was January 1967 according to Zeheri, or July 1st according to Gibbons; Scott lists 1966–68 for the set. The 10m. red-violet was issued on January 1st 1968 according to Gibbons, but Scott gives 1969 as the date. Scott specifies paper watermarked heraldic eagle, in contrast to the unwatermarked listing in Gibbons and Zeheri (I have seen it only unwatermarked).

With the dissolution of the UAR in September 1971 new Official stamps became desirable. A new set was prepared with the inscriptions changed to AR EGYPT and equivalent Arabic (Fig. 33). The stamps were larger than before and the eagle was drastically redesigned. The values were issued piecemeal according to some reports:

| | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| 1m. blue and black | 21 JN 72 |
| 10m. carmine-red and black | 4 OC 72 |
| 20m. olive green and black | 20 JY 72 |



Fig. 33
1971 design.

20m. dark brown and red-violet 15 AP 73 55m. red-violet and black 21 NO 72
 50m. orange and black 31 OC 72

Scott lists the date for the entire set as June 30 1972 and it is so recorded in *Egyptian Topics*⁴⁰. Perforation was 11x11½. The situation with regard to watermark is confused; Scott lists the entire set watermarked, whereas Gibbons lists it unwatermarked. I have seen all values unwatermarked, and it may be that every value exists both ways; the 55m. appeared with watermark in 1979 and the 50m. in 1982. The unwatermarked stamps are from sheets dated 1972 and were obviously issued early, but the report in *Egyptian Topics* states that they were watermarked, even though some watermarked stamps are dated 1976 (marginal imprint).

Color changes and additional values followed in succeeding years:

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|----------|
| 1m. light blue and black | 13 MR 75 | 60m. dull orange and black | 24 FE 82 |
| 10m. rose red and black | 7 AP 76 | 70m. emerald and black | 8 MY 79 |
| 20m. light brown and slate lilac | 1979 | 80m. emerald and black | 18 FE 82 |
| 30m. light brown and slate lilac | 12 FE 82 | | |



Fig. 34 The differences in impression of the inscriptions of 1972–85.

The watermark situation remains confused, but I have seen all values unwatermarked and the 1, 10, 20, and 70m. watermarked. There are differences in the impression of the inscriptions (Fig. 34) which may be due either to new plates or to differences in inking. There are three categories: thin lettering, medium lettering, and bold lettering; the color is light grey (fine impressions only) or intense black (usually thick). The last is more usual. The 20m. exists in markedly different shades, from light brown to sepia and slate lilac to purple.

The stamps of this issue occur on white paper which fluoresces white under ultraviolet and on cream to pale cream paper which appears cream under UV without fluorescence. There are at least three varieties of the basic paper, plain wove, mottled wove, and fine laid, which may be white or pale cream. However, the carmine shade of the 10m. appears to be on pale pink paper under UV, although it is pale cream in ordinary light. Watermarked paper, for the 20m. at least, can be either white and fluorescent or cream and non-fluorescent. Unwatermarked, wove paper appears to have been used until 1976 or 1977, when watermarked paper came into use. By 1979, unwatermarked, laid paper succeeded it.

The gum is generally glossy and quite smooth, or dull glossy and not quite smooth, but the 10, 30, 60 and 80m. have been seen with matte gum (polyvinyl alcohol), on white, unwatermarked paper⁴¹(1982 printings). The general situation with this issue is fluid and much remains to be elucidated.



Fig. 35
1985 design.

By 1976 another political change led to the reversion to "Egypt" instead of "A.R. Egypt" as the name of the country, but this was not reflected in the Official stamps until 1985. New, monocolored stamps were produced with adjusted inscriptions and a much redesigned eagle (Fig. 35). The effect of inflation was reflected in

the abandonment of millieme currency in favor of the piaster (= 10m.). The first values appeared on May 1st 1985: 1pi. vermilion, 3pi. sepia, 5pi. orange-yellow, 8pi. green, 15pi. dull violet. In April 1988 two more values appeared: 20pi. blue and 50pi. green. On December 1st 1989 a 10pi. brown-olive, 30pi. dull violet, and 60pi. myrtle green were added to the set and later, in 1989, 2pi. brown and 25pi. red completed the set. All were unwatermarked and perforated 11x11½. Most values were on white, fluorescent paper, but some were issued on cream, non-fluorescent paper and the situation is not yet sorted out. I have seen only matte gum.

A new set in essentially the same design (Fig. 36), but smaller (18x22mm) began in 1991 and appears to be growing in stages. A 1pi. brown-violet and 30pi. dark violet came out on July 1st, followed by a 50pi. green on December 1st. Additional values came out in 1993: 5pi. orange-yellow, 15pi. brown, 25pi. purple, 55pi. red. In 1994 a £E1 light blue and £E2 light green were added to the set. All are perforated 11.4x11.1. All of these small stamps have been seen on watermarked paper only; it is white in ordinary light, but yellow, without fluorescence, under ultraviolet. The gum is dull glossy. There are two types of design, differing in the numerals of value. On the 5, 10, 30, and 50pi., the numerals are small and P. is to the right, whereas on the 15, 25, and 55pi., the numerals are large and P. is above them. The pound values have large numerals and LE above them.



Fig. 36 Designs of 1991 *et seq.*

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