

## Egypt: The First Issue.

Some Comments and Notes.

BY DR. EMILIO DIENA.



WITH interest I have read the first portion of your study on the stamps of Egypt which has appeared in *STAMP COLLECTING*.

Allow me to make a few remarks. You say that the stamps were printed at Genoa by Pellas Bros. but that the overprint was applied locally.

With regard to this statement I should like to mention that some proof sheets of these stamps in the adopted type (white paper, unwatermarked, imperf. with overprint, etc.) found their way out from Pellas Bros. several years after they were printed, and it therefore seems hard to explain how these proofs bear the black overprint, if such overprint was applied in Egypt.\*

Another point: it is necessary to consider a proof sheet of the 1 piastre which was also found many years ago at the old establishment of Pellas Bros. This sheet bore the regular perforation, and this would seem to prove that the perforating was also carried out at Genoa.

You have had the goodness to mention my name regarding the method of production of the black overprint, which is in reality lithographically applied to all values, except in the case of the 1 and 2 piastres, which are overprinted by typography. Moens in his monograph says that the overprints are printed by typography without making any distinction for the different denominations; but a critical examination not only of the proofs but also of the stamps themselves, whether mint or used, and the impression on the back of the 1 and 2 piastres *only*, entirely uphold my theory.

Regarding the stamps themselves, Moens says<sup>s</sup> (page 25) that they are lithographed, which assertion is correct with the exception of the 1 piastre, which is typographed (surface printing).†

Allow me to recommend you to examine your own specimens, and I have no doubt you will agree with my views. I suppose typography was first used, but that lithography was afterwards resorted to, as it is simpler and less expensive.

As to the pairs of the 10 piastres, first issue, with surcharge *tele beche*, I remember having

examined this variety in the collection of Mr. Eid of Cairo during the Exhibition of Turin in 1911, and I then expressed the opinion that it was a fake, although it must be admitted that the paper and watermark had been well imitated. Finally Mr. Eid agreed with me, as also did the late Mr. Cantel Bey of Cairo. It is a very successful imitation.

I should feel very much obliged if you could find room for this letter in *STAMP COLLECTING*.

We have much pleasure in publishing Dr. Diena's letter with his comments upon the first portion of our article. The questions raised by our correspondent we will answer to the best of our ability.

\* We have no *proof* that the overprint was locally applied, and we made the statement on the authority of our late friend M. Cantel Bey, who in answer to our question as to how and where the overprint was applied, wrote; "All the surcharges on the 1866 issue were lithographed, not typographed, *in Egypt*."

† Again our statement was made from an assurance by the same gentleman that "the imperforate sheets were delivered by Pellas Bros., and the perforations were added upon arrival."

Dr. Diena's arguments about the proof sheets carry conviction with them, but is it not possible that some proof sheets were struck off or submitted with the overprint and others with the perforation? A few extra sheets would probably have been struck off and kept by Pellas Bros. as records. Upon the receipt of the overprinted and perforated proofs in Egypt, it might have been decided to do the overprinting and perforating locally—there is nothing to show (so far as we are aware) that the *stamps* were *not* sent to Egypt without overprint and imperforate. These two points may possibly ever remain shrouded in mystery.

‡ We agree that the stamps of this issue are lithographed with the exception of the 1 piastre, which is typographed. We have always held this view. In stating just the reverse in our article we were voicing the assertions of such specialists as Messrs. Mackenzie Low, C. J. Phillips, and Leonce Colussi. We did not, therefore, care to disagree with such students, although we were not convinced.

The overprint on the 1 piastre is certainly typographed. As regards the 2 piastre value we are inclined to think that there were two overprints—the one being lithographically and the other typographically applied. We have seen specimens which seem to prove this.—[Ed. S.C.]