

1884 20 PARAS/5 PIASTRES**VARIETIES AND CURIOSITIES by DR. SAVA MICHEL VESTARKIS**

In 1884 Egypt issued the provisional stamp 20 pa/5pt (Zeheri No. 31, Yvert No. 31, GIBBON No. 84, Scott. No. 42). Needless to say, overprinted stamps are prone to show varieties due either to the over print itself when first set or through its wear and tear after continuous printings. Consequently the 20 pa/5 pt. is no exception.

To start with, Zeheri Catalogue 9th Edition (1972) mentioned one variety for this overprint viz Zeh 31d (Photo 1) i.e. the highly misplaced overprint with both «PARAS» and the equivalent Arabic.

«عشرون باره» shifted towards the lower left corner. This stamp was housed in the highly advanced collection of MR. ALBERT CEYSENS S. It was offered for sale by the firm J.A.L. FRANKS (about 1965/6) under Lot 1683 at the price of 7½ sterling.

Photo 1.



Other varieties that have come to my knowledge during my philatelic span of life are worth mentioning chronologically before recording those in my collection.

A. DAZZI and JEAN BOULAD in their study «NOUVEAUTES ET VARIETES D'EGYPTE» (L'Orient Philatelique No. 59 July 1947 page 135) mentioned the following:

«MR. GABRIEL BOULAD possesses: a vertical pair of Zeheri 31 with a double overprint. The second surcharge, which is faint, is placed «a chevron» in the middle of the two stamps. The upper border of the upper stamp shows the lower portion of the overprint «20», whereas the lower border of the lower stamp is without any trace of the upper portion of the overprint».

This same pair was afterwards offered in the auction sale of MR. BOULAD'S collection which took place in Alexandria (Egypt.) on 18/20 and 25/27 November 1949 under Lot 361 and fetched at that time L.E. 8½.

It is interesting to mention that in the same sale Lot 364 contained a mint block of 4 of 20 pa/5 pt with one stamp having the figure «0» of «20» with a white speck. It fetched L.E. 2¼. Sorry, I do not know the position of this defect on figure «0» to compare it with those in my collection.

After that, the collection of COUNT ZIZINIA was offered for sale on the 7th & 8th November 1953 in Alexandria (Egypt). Lot 132 contained: : 20 pa/5pt, a mint copy with both inverted overprint and inverted watermark i.e. Zeh. 31c, also a simple used pair i.e. Zeh. 31 and a used single with figure «2» of «20» broken. I know neither the position of this break nor the realisation of this Lot..

Reference is given again to ALBERT CEYSENS' collection. The previously mentioned firm J.A.L. FRANKS offered also for sale Lot 1682 (Photo No. 2) the description of which is : «Single stamp which has been folded during printing, partial overprint on reverse and invalidated for 5 pt by pen stroke on face. The estimation was 27½ sterling».

Photo 2.



Lastly, LARS ALUND in his study «SOME NOTES ON THE DE LA RUE ISSUES 1879-1906» that appeared in L'O.P. No. 123 April/ October 1970 pages 350-357 included some hints about this Overprint. It is advantageous to transcribe what is written, viz:

«As often with provisional stamps several defects occur on this value. Most of them are not very prominent, however. I might mention a little variety, where the upper bar of the surcharge in the SE corner is mutilated, thus showing only 1½bars in that corner. Some stamps in the sheet show guide-lines in one or more corners. The guide-lines usually form a thin cross (+) and such a cross can be seen on the illustration of No. 31d in the Zeheri catalogue. I have found one copy with the horizontal bar of this cross clearly doubled (±) but cannot so far explain the significance of this anomaly. Perhaps one more variety on this stamp should be mentioned although it is not obviously constant. Due to a paper fold, «accordion» in the original sheet just between the figures 2 and 0 in the surcharge, the right side of the 2 is missing and the left-hand vertical text PARAS is entirely missing as it must have fallen on the adjoining stamp to the left of my copy. Perhaps, similar copies exist, as I think that the whole vertical row of stamps in this sheet above and below my copy should show the same defect.»

The above review - and perhaps other may exist and unknown to me --- shows that some anomalies of this overprint have been known. It gives me a great pleasure to describe those in my collection. Such varieties or curiosities - which are depicted as white patches - are divided into two major sections viz those found on the figure «2» and those found on figure «0». All copies are used except one (that with inverted overprint, Photo 9).

VARIETIES ON FIGURE 2

1 - PHOTO 3 shows a crevice in the right margin of the upper left turn of figure making (N.B. I have another similar copy, although the white patch is smaller).

2 -- PHOTO 4 depicts a crevice in the left margin of the upper right turn of figure «2» forming a quite identical patch to that described in Photo 3.



Photo 3.

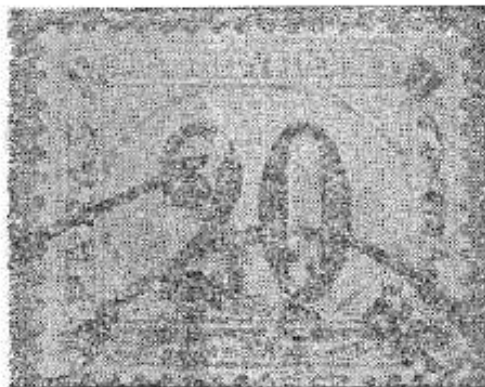


Photo 4.

3 - PHOTO 5 illustrates a slightly larger crevice in the right margin of the right turn of figure «2» placed lower to that described in Photo «4». The white patch is, oval.

4 --- PHOTO G shows a small crevice found, as well, in the right margin of. the right turn of figure «2» but at a lower distance to that illustrated in Photo 5.



5 -- PHOTO 7 shows a crevice in the left margin of the leg of figure «2» just at the corner formed by the attachment of the vertical and horizontal bars.

VARIETIES ON FIGURE «0»

1 -- PHOTO 8 illustrates a crevice in the upper right margin of the right elliptical part of figure «0» depicting an irregular white patch.



2 -- PHOTO 9 depicts a large crevice found in the same place shown in Photo 8. I presume that this larger white patch is due to more wear of the margins; of the same crevice previously described (i.e. in Photo 8). It is a nice coincidence that the stamp is MINT, the overprint INVERTED and the crevice LARGE.



Photo 8.



Photo 9.

3 - PHOTO 10 shows a crevice in the lower left margin of the right elliptical part of figure «0».

4 - PHOTO 11 illustrates an extensive crack extending to both the right and left margins of the right elliptical part of figure «0» This breach of continuity resulted in obliterating the third quarter of the overprinted right ellipse of «0».

5 - PHOTO 12 shows a vertical pair of 20 pa/5 pi, the right stamp depicts an oval crevice in the upper left margin of the elliptical part of figure «0».



Photo 10.



Photo 11.

6 - PHOTO 13 shows a crevice in the lower right margin of the left elliptical part of figure «0».



Photo 12.



Photo 13.

I hope that the above list may be completed by other philatelists. As well, it will also be advantageous if those who have large block: may aid in locating the position of such varieties if found or the sheet.