

5-Paras 1879 - THE "JOINED CHARACTERS" FLAW (Zeheri 23b & 23d)by **Ibrahim Chaftar**

I came across this important variety in the shop of my dear friend Mr E. L. Angeloglou in 1943. Together we immediately went rapidly through the sheets and panes which this helpful Egypt stamp dealer had in stock. We found two sheets of 4 panes of 60.

The first sheet, in the light brown tint, had its four corner blocks missing, these having been sold previously as control blocks, but the variety was still in place: number 7 of the right upper pane of 60, narrow watermark inverted. This, in a block of four with upper edging attached, was then removed and, later on, was housed in the famous Egypt collection of Mr A. Ceysens.



The second sheet (of 4 panes of 60) was on toned (light buff) paper, in the dark brown tint, and its four corner blocks were missing also. The variety did not appear on number 7 of the right upper pane. I confess that we gave no special attention to the kind of watermark on this sheet.

Later, Mr Angeloglou, whose loss is so regretted, found a specimen in his used stock. This had narrow watermark upright and was also passed to Mr Ceysens.

I kept, for my personal collection, the used example with narrow watermark inverted which I had first discovered and I used it to illustrate the 1950 Zeheri Catalogue which I edited, as President of the Philatelic Society of Egypt.

That illustration* shows clearly the details of the variety: the joining of the bottom Arabic characters, the signs of horizontal scratches below and in the bottom frame, and the curved white line under the first "re" of "masriya" I described the variety as "caracteres arabes lies" (Arabic characters at bottom connected).

The study carried on by A.J.Revell: "THE WATERMARKS OF THE DE LA RUE ISSUES OF EGYPT 1879/1914," and the comments of G.T.Houston of Australia, first published in Q.C. Vol. IV, Nos 41/42 and 44, of December 1953/June 1954 and January 1955, interested me and, in my opinion, called for further investigations. My personal collection was poor in these items, as I had sold them 'en bloc' in 1942, but I was hoping to go through the A. Ceysens collection. This was the only reference collection which we had in Egypt, the whole stock of Mr Angeloglou having been destroyed in the Cairo fire in January 1952. Unfortunately, this proved not possible as Mr Ceysens died suddenly in 1957 and his collection was no longer available.

In his good article on "THE DE LA RUE FLAWS", published by Mr Lars Alund in L'O.P. No. 123 of April/Oct 1970, page 351, he gave a good description of the variety "joined characters" of the 5-paras, 1879. The author reports that he was successful in acquiring two copies, one with upright, and the other with inverted, watermarks, also a block of four with upper edging attached, including the variety. Unfortunately, we have not been informed of the colour of the stamp, paper, gum, whether watermarks narrow or wide, etc. The same author reported also that, at Belgica 1972, Mr Marzouk of Egypt showed a 5 paras 1879 with joined inscription, but again there was no information as to colour, gum, watermark type, or whether mint or used.

* See 1972 Zeheri, page 55; this is not the illustration above – Editor

Our late Keeper of the Philatelic Record of the Egypt Study Circle, Mr Charles W. Minett, reported in Q.C. Vol. VII, No. 83, September 1970, pages 189/190 on the acquisition of sheets, panes and blocks of the De La Rue issues 1879/1914 by our late Life President, Lt. Col. J.R.Danson. Our late colleague kindly made this material available to any member of the Circle wishing to study these stamps.

Mr Minett, accompanied by our late Chairman, Mr J.H.E.Gilbert, whose loss we so regret, studied the Dan on material and took notes. I give below in extenso their paragraphs concerning the 5 paras 1879:-

" 5 Paras 1879 - The "Joined Characters" Flaw (Zeheri 23b and 23d) "This occurs on stamp, no. 7 of the upper right hand pane of 60 (10 x 6) from the sheets of 240 (4 panes of 60 each) bearing the plate number

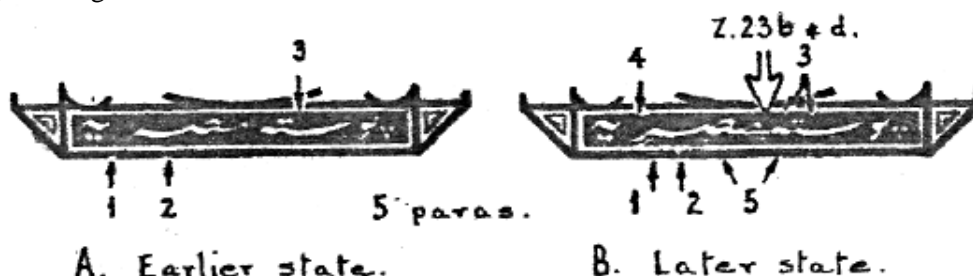
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"Col.Danson has this flaw on a sheet printed in brown on white paper with the narrow watermark inverted (Z 23d) and with white gum. In the MacArthur collection this variety occurs on a similar stamp in a top marginal block of 6 (3 x 2), only in this case the colour is very slightly deeper shade of brown.

"These two examples show also the curved white line under the first 're' of 'masriya' which, so far as I am aware, was first reported by Lars Alund (ESC No. 105) in L'O.P. No. 123 (April/October 1970) page 351. He has specimens with both normal and inverted watermark and it would be helpful if he would let us have details of the colours of the stamps, paper, watermark type and gum.

"However these flaws together with other nicks and scratches must have developed after the plate has been in use for some time since in the Danson collection there is a second sheet which shows the same stamp in an earlier state with only 3 nicks. The peculiar thing is that this sheet (which has the same plate numbers) is printed in sepia (Z 23) on heavily toned paper (light buff) with toned gum and with the wide watermark (upright), which we have considered was used for later printings. Dates of used copies would be most useful.

"The following drawings illustrate the two states :-



"A. - The earlier state shows (at 1 and 2) nicks in the bottom frame line, and 3 is a short white scratch to the right of the two dots of the 'te' of 'Postal'.

"B. - The later state shows (at 1 and 2) the curved line, but only one of the nicks in the bottom frame line. At 3 there are two nicks, one being a development of the earlier scratch. At 4 there is an additional nick. At 5 there is the joining of the Arabic characters with signs of horizontal scratches below and in the bottom frame line.

"In addition a number of flaws have been observed on Danson's sheets but only two of them occur on both sheets."

Another mention about the 5 Paras 1879 was also reported during a meeting, of the Circle O.C. Vol VII, March 1971, page 66)

" . . . Ron Potter produced a complete sheet of the 1879 5 Paras (control 1 in circle at top left and bottom right; 1 in rectangular box at top right and bottom left) - of which stamp No. 33 (No. 13 in the right pane) had the Arabic characters nearly joined somewhat resembling the variety listed and illustrated by Zeheri as 23b. He was not sure that this had any connection with the more pronounced catalogue variety but it could reasonably be an early state of such. Other sheets, or panes, with the same control numbers have been seen

without any trace of this flaw. It will be remembered that Liars Alund reported a top marginal block of four with the joined Arabic characters variety in the top row (L'O.P. No. 123 page 351). Is there any connection ?
- No pun intended . . ."

Dr Cantel Boy, an eminent Egyptian philatelist of the last century, quoted in "CATALOGUE OFFICIEL DE LA SOCIETE FRANCAISE DE TIMBROLOGIE - 1905/6" that the Egyptian G.P.O. gave as presents to notabilities 40 imperforate sets, seven values only, the 10 paras grey being missing. This event probably took place some time before this last value was issued, 25 January 1882.

All the imperforate sets offered for sale in auctions were with narrow watermark inverted: the collection of Mackenzie Low, Dr Cecil Rix, Hinde, Dr W. Byam, Koubbeh Palace and others - all were, from the bottoms of sheets.

Moustapha Pasha Fathy was the bidder for the Egypt portion of the Ferrari collection auctioned in Paris in 1925. When the Pasha disposed of it in 1942, Mr. A. Ceysens acquired the unique imperforate pair set, bottom of sheet, narrow watermark inverted, which was found amongst this wonderful accumulation. Another imperforate set, bottom corner of sheet, same watermark, was added to my collection.

In 1963/64, I investigated with my friends, Me Gabriel Bouland and M. Tsamis, all the used and unused blocks or singles (several hundreds) available of the 5 paras 1879 with large watermark and we came to the conclusion that no used stamp with large watermark is dated prior to 3 February 1885. This particular stamp and another copy used 21 April 1885 are actually in my collection. No copies have been found with inverted watermark.

The paper used for the 1879/84 issues was with the narrow watermark. In the middle of the Post Office sheet, if the watermark is viewed upright, appears (reading upwards) the inscription "POSTES EGYPTIENNES" in watermark style. No student of the scene has informed us if the sheets of the 1884/68 issue have a similar watermark inscription.

This has to be investigated, and I beg the Egypt philatelists who can help to report to our Keeper of the Record, or to the Editor of L'O.P.

The details of the "spacer watermark" given by A.J. Revell (right-angled brackets in each corner of each pane to enable the printers to position the sheets) are correct regarding the issues 15 December 1864 and later.

These spacer watermark brackets are not connected one with another: the left one to the right one, neither is the left upper one with the lower left one, nor the upper right with the lower right, nor the lower left to the lower right one. The upper wing of the bracket is just a few millimetres longer than the width of the corner stamp and the side wing of the bracket is just a few millimetres longer than the side of the same corner stamp.

The spacer watermark mark appears on all sheets of regular postage stamps supplied by De La Rue in sheets of 240 (4 panes of 60), as from 15 December 1864 to 7 January 1914. This is the case also for the Postage Dues of 1889 and successive; overprints, the "No Value" official stamps of 1893 in sheets of 240 units, and the Official overprints on regular issues of 1884/1913.

We have to emphasize that the description of the "spacer watermarks" is not valid for the 1879/84 issue, there were instead straight watermark guide-lines surrounding each pane, but having the same purpose as the right-angled brackets above described.

I have in my used collection several blocks, pairs and singles which, after benzine treatment, demonstrate this fact, a corner block of four 10-Paras mauve, which in fact is a left upper pane corner; a block of four 10-Paras grey, which is a left upper corner pane; a block of four 1-Piastre rose which is a right corner bottom panes several pairs and singles from different positions of edges of panes; two blocks of 5-Paras 1879; one of six (3 x 2) containing the variety "joined characters" and another block of eight (4 x 2), these two blocks

show the continuous watermark guide-line all along the upper row of stamps. All this material shows that the watermark guide-line runs continuously all round the panes.

This fact is important for the demonstration I intend, regarding the differences between the two 5-Paras 1879, one with the narrow watermark, inverted or upright, and the other with large watermark, which has been found upright only.

The details quoted in the 1967 Zeheri Catalogue relative to the issue of 1879 to 1884 give, in fact, the quantity ordered on De La Rue in July 1878*. In the outcome we see that the needs went beyond the estimates. Two and a half years after this issue appeared, the 2,000,000 stamps of the 10-Paras mauve (all inverted narrow watermarks) were exhausted and the 1 January 1881 10-Paras lilac-rose (all inverted narrow watermarks) followed. Less than a year later, the 27 January 1882 10-Paras grey was in circulation (narrow watermark upright). The 10-Paras green was issued on 15th December 1884 (large watermark upright), less than three years later.

In January 1884, fearing a shortage of the 20-Paras, a huge stock of unwanted 5-Piastres green, 1,000,000, were overprinted 20-Paras and these were issued on 1st February 1884. We draw attention to the first quantity ordered for the 5-Piastres in 1878, which was 150,000 stamps only.

The volume of postal business had doubled in Egypt from 1880 to 1885, according to official G.P.O. statistics and certainly, after the start, additional supplies of the other values were ordered, received and used: 5-Paras, 20-Paras, 1-Piastre, 2-Piastres and 5-Piastres. This explains the different shades and position of the watermarks, upright or inverted.

It is possible that it was realised that the correct position of the watermark is to show the horns of the crescent upright, and the supplies were printed accordingly. The watermark upright started with the 10-Paras grey in 1882.

I am happy to relate here two philatelic events which I encountered in 1941 and 1944. The first one is relative to the 1-Piastre rose. During the summer of 1941, following the start of war, some foreign businessmen closed their premises, and accountancy books and furniture were on sale on handcarts in the streets of Alexandria. Mr Angeloglou bought one of these books for a few shillings, it had few pages used. When, some time later in Cairo, he was about to use the book, what was his surprise when, in its pages, he came across a brand-new brilliant mint complete sheet of 240 stamps of the 1-Piastre rose-red with the controls 1 1 with narrow watermark upright.

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This sheet was later sold at a good price to Mr Ceysens. I wonder where this sheet is now, as I think it is unique !

The other event is that, one day in 1944, I found a genuine 10-Paras grey, with full original white gum, but perforated. 12 instead of 14 and WATERMARKED. I started correspondence with my friends in London, Dr W. Byam and others, in the hope of getting information about that stamp. They were unable to give me any. During the London International Stamp Exhibition, 1950, a senior Distinguished Philatelist kindly let me enjoy viewing a unique and wonderful Egypt Collection.

On an album page we came across a second similar copy of this 10-Paras grey. full original white gum, perforated 12 instead of 14 and UNWATERMARK. This kind of stamp, the kind gentleman explained to me, was used by stamp printers as samples to be shown to potential customers. I have never come across or heard of another such 10-paras grey.

If we examine closely the Postal Notice dated 20 November 1884, announcing the issue of 15 December 1884, we can read :-

*See Document No. 7, L'O.P. No. 89, January 1955, page 55 - from the article which I published under les emissions De La Rue de 1879/1906" - Author.

"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 after 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 1885, after which date they will be no longer 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." Those I have underlined the last paragraph of this notice. It is thus established that, during the validity of this issue, the 5 paras 1879 continued to be used, from 15 December 1884 to 30 June 1888. These were nominally the same colour but in fact the colour became sepia or dark brown, printed on toned paper (light buff), with toned gum and with wide crescent watermark., As a matter of fact we see also that the new 10 paras green was printed on the same heavy toned paper.

The quantity issued of the 5 paras 1884 must have been nearly the same as for the 5 paras 1879 because, although it was in use for only 3½ years against 5½ years for the 1879, the volume of postal business continued to progress. The Statistics of the G.P.O. inform us that, if the quantities dealt with in the chapter "Newspapers, Visit-cards, Printed Matter, Samples..... increased during the 1880-85 period to double the amount of the previous period, that of 1885-1890 was at least 40% more than the previous period, 1880-85. We can now distinguish philatelically between the two printings of this 5 pares, as follows :-

5 Pares	1879
Narrow Watermark	Revell Type I

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| A - PAPER | a) White machine paper, medium wove with a well-finished surface, similar to the paper used to print British Crown Colonies during the same period. White gum, |
| | b) There were 240 stamps on the sheet, arranged in four panes containing 10 horizontal by 6 units = 60 stamps. The two upper panes are separated from the two lower panes by a margin of 10 mm, unwatermarked. A "gutter" width 25mm separates the two right panes from the two left panes. |
| B – WATERMARK | Revell Type I: NARROW crescent, width across the horns of the crescent 13mm and a five-pointed star the height of which is greater than the width; overall height from the underside of the crescent to the top of the star 14 mm. |
| C - GUIDE-LINE | 1) Continuous watermark guide-line all round each of the four WATERMARK panes. Watermark registration points: small watermark crosses appear in six positions in the sheet margins. |
| | 2) Was there a continuous watermark guide-line to assist in cutting each sheet correctly from the next ? This point has to be investigated and reported to the Circle, please |
| D – WATERMARK | At the beginning of the issue,. watermark inverted for all POSITION values. Then, further supplies upright. |
| E – POSTES
EGYPTIENNES | Inscribed in double line, sans-serif capitals, in watermark style, in the whole length of they vertical margin "gutter" between the four panes of the sheet of 240 stamps. reading up, when the watermark is upright. |

5 Pares 1884 Wide Watermark Revell Type II

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| A – PAPER | Nearly the same paper as for the 5 paras 1879, except that it is toned (light buff) |
| | a) gum toned. Paper at least used also for the 10 pares green, same issue. |
| | b) Same arrangement in four panes of 60, and same disposition for the "gutter" and |

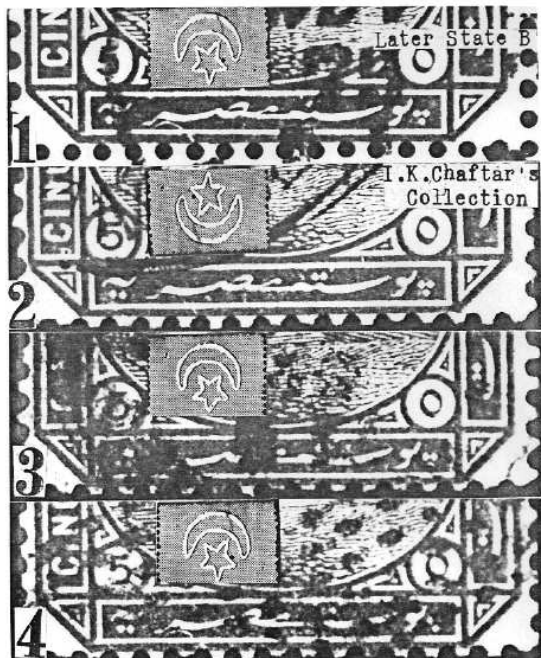
- the separation between the panes.
- B – WATERMARK** Revell Type II: LARGE crescent. Dimensions the reverse of Type I width across the horns of the crescent 14 mm, and a five-pointed star the width of which is greater than the height. Overall height from the underside of the crescent to the top of the star 13 mm.
- C – SPACER WATERMARK**
- a) Right-angled brackets as spacer watermark at the four corners of each pane. Registration points: six small crosses watermarked in the corner of each pane.
 - b) Continuous watermark guide-line to allow registration for correctly cutting each sheet from the next one.
- D - POSITION OF WATERMARK** Always upright - never met inverted.
- E - GUTTER** I have no definite information on the "gutter" margin between panes of the sheet with wide watermark. This has to be investigated and reported to the Circle, please!

N.B. For information: De La Rue introduced the use of "Jubilee" lines and "Pillars" in G.B. only in 1887. It is probable that these improvements were applied to the Egypt stamps as from 1888 issue.

 5 Paras 1879 "Joined Characters" Flaw

From among the few stamps put aside during the last fifteen years, I have found four used specimens of the variety "Joined Characters". The variety occurs, in its full development, only on stamps with narrow watermark; Revell Type I (See next page for photograph of 'Later State B').

These four stamps, numbered in large figures '1, 2, 3 & 4' show the curved line under the "re" of "Masriya" and all the different nicks described by C.W. Minett.



They are all with narrow watermarks, Revell Type I: Nos 1, 3 & 4 inverted; No. 2 upright.

All of them are obviously light brown. No. 1 is dated 2 NOV 79 TI SUEZ, Poste Egiziane, V.R. removed, type Blomfield III-5, and the variety is the left top stamp in a used block of six (3 x 2). The three upper stamps show a continuous thin watermark guide-line on the top of the body of the inverted crescents.

Stamp No. 2 shows this thin watermark guide-line, on the horns of the crescent of the upright narrow watermark, for the whole width of the stamp.

On the narrow inverted watermarks of Stamps 3 & 4, this thin watermark guideline is on the whole width of the stamp and on the top of the body of the inverted crescent.

When the registration watermark crosses of a sheet are incorrectly slowed down before printing, the watermarked guide-line becomes visible on the sheet. This fact helped me to recognise the variety "joined characters" as this line proves that the 'patient' under examination is a top-edge stamp.

N.B. - it should be noted that the nicks Nos 1, 2, 3 & 4 developed in the upper and lower white frame lines. This means that some "ink crust" must have formed and then been cleaned with an instrument, which is the origin of the damage to these frames in the creation of the nicks.

On no other stamp, amongst the hundreds examined, have I found such nicks or differences in the evenness of the frame width, as is seen on the stamp having the "joined characters" flaw, both earlier and later states.

The printing base used by De La Rue was a plate to print a Post Office sheet of 240 stamps, divided into four panes of 60 units. It was the practice of this firm, at that time, to take as many separate lead moulds from the die, as there were to be units of the printing plate of 609 these were then clamped together in a special chase and built around with solid metal furniture, and a shell of copper was deposited by electrolysis. After further operations, this first pane of 60 was strengthened and used to make other identical panes of 60 by electrolysis, Four panes were then assembled to form a printing plate, which was then strongly backed, trimmed and finally coated with steel facing to resist wear.

When I started to study the "joined characters" variety, and bearing in mind the De La Rue method of building the pane of 60 units, and when I found the Earlier State A of the variety, showing not only the different nicks described but also a thin, nearly invisible, white line joining the characters, I thought it was a "primary" defect which should be repeated on the other three panes. After scrutinising a good number of the 5 paras 1879%1884, I came to the conclusion that it was a defect which came "abruptly" only on stamp No. 7 of the upper right pane during the printing operation.

After running off a quantity of sheets, the plate slowly became cracked and scratched so that the printing surface (the 'ups' between the Arabic words "Bosta" and "Masriya") was bent inwards, so becoming a 'down' non-printing surface, thus creating the Earlier State of the variety, State A, and then the Later State B on that particular stamp, with watermarks of the narrow Revell Type I.

I must add that the printing of a small quantity, such as was ordered for the 5 paras 1879, involved printing only about 8,000 sheets of 240 units, and this would have been done 'in no time', so to say, by the team of the De La Rue handpress workmen, and this in several batches as necessary during the life of this particular stamp, 1879 to 1884.

I give here enlargements of the lower panels of five stamps, number 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, which I have collected, showing the Earlier State A of this interesting variety (please see illustrations on next page).

Here we come to a puzzle which needs some effort to be properly understood. I will describe these stamps separately and I would draw attention to the fact that numbers 3, 4 and 7 are on the paper I called previously the "5 paras 1884" with the new large crescent watermark, Revell Type II (always upright). The other two stamps, number 5 and 6, have the characteristic narrow crescent watermark, Revell Type I, of the first printings of the 1879 issue. I have recently come across another used copy, identical to No. 6. which I have not illustrated here,

Stamp No. 3 - A mint stamp, printed in brown with WIDE upright watermark on a heavily-toned paper (light buff), toned gum. This specimen shows the nick No. 3 of the Earlier State, also the 'sui generis' curved line and all the three nicks Nos 1 & 2 in the bottom frame line.

I must add that there is visible, although faint, a white line joining the Arabic characters, which

developed in subsequent printing to form the variety "joined characters".

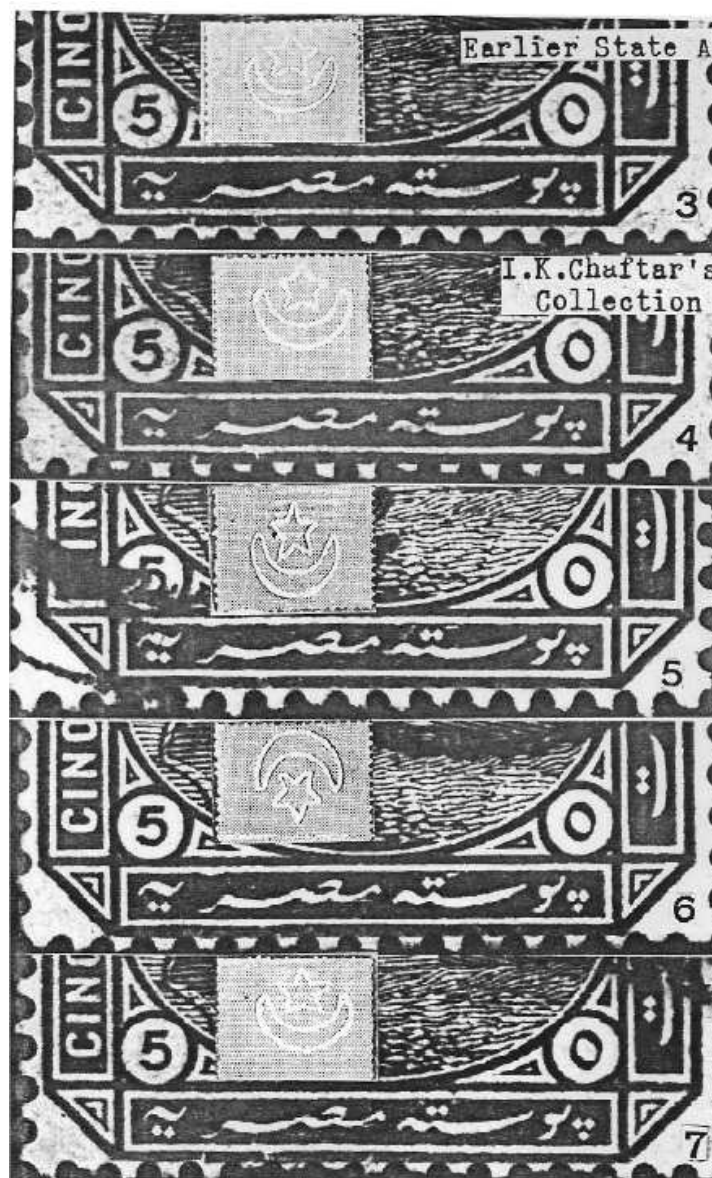
A new feature to be noted; letter 'sad' of 'masriya' is open on its left side, transforming this letter into 'ha'. The word now reads 'mahriya' which, has no meaning. There is NO THIN WATERMARK GUIDE-LINE.

Stamp No. 4 - A mint stamp printed in brown with WIDE upright watermark on a heavily-toned paper (light buff). Same description as Stamp No. 3. One faint nick at No. 3. Opened 'sad' as on Stamp No. 3. NO THIN WATERMARK GUIDE-LINE.

Stamp No. 5 - A used specimen printed in light brown, NARROW upright watermark. Two nicks at No. 3 and another at No. 4, which shows only on the later state of the printings. The 'sui generis' curved line is showing faintly. Nicks Nos. 1 & 2 show. The faint, but visible, white line joining the Arabic characters is there. Here the letter 'sad' is intact. THIN WATERMARK GUIDE-LINE, the whole width of the stamp.

Stamp No. 6 - A used specimen printed in light brown, NARROW inverted watermark. Two nicks are visible at 4; the 'sui generis' curved line and the nicks Nos 1 & 2 are showing. The white line joining the Arabic characters is present. Two nicks show at No. 3. Opened 'sad', as stamp No. 3. THIN WATERMARK GUIDE-LINE, the whole width of the stamp.

Stamp No. 7 - A used specimen printed in brown on white paper, WIDE upright water mark. Two nicks visible at No. 4. . The 'sui generis'. curved line and the nicks Nos. 1 & 2 are showing. The white line joining the Arabic characters is present; there are two nicks at No. 3. Opened 'sad', as stamp No. 3. NO THIN WATERMARK GUIDE-LINE

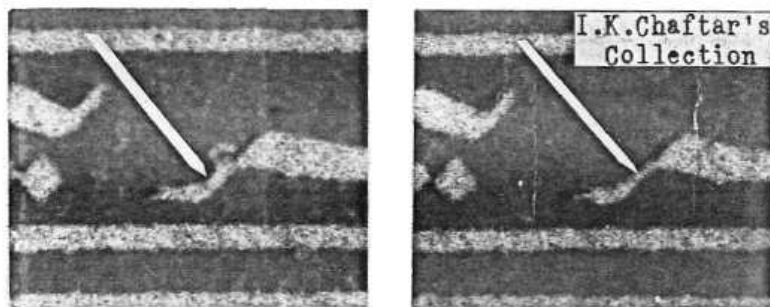


A New Minor Variety

Three used specimens, Nos. 8, 9 & 10, illustrated below, show a new minor variety, now reported for the first time. The Arabic letter 're' of 'masriya' shows a white protuberance with a printed dot in the colour of the stamp in the middle. Also, this letter 're' is thicker than the normal. This protuberance changes the pronunciation of the word 'masriya' into 'masweya', because it transforms the letter 're' into 'waw'.

This variety is constant, but its position is unknown. These three specimens are all with the narrow watermark, Revell Type I, inverted on Stamp No. 8, but on Nos. 9 & 10 it is upright. The colour is light brown.

Since the manuscript of this article was written, a mint copy with this variety has been found: narrow watermark inverted, white paper and gum.



CONCLUSION

As I said previously, to try to analyse what happened to the printing plate used for the 5vparas De La Rue 1879 & 1884, we have the following facts to consider :-

(a) The 5-paras 1879 was first printed from a plate of 240 units, divided into four panes of 60 units, each pane of 10 horizontal units by 6 vertical rows, with two joined horizontal panes positioned adjoining two other similar panes of 60 units, Control (1) - 1

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The paper is watermarked with the narrow crescent, Revell Type I. Each pane has a continuous watermark guide-line all around.

The variety "joined Characters Flaw" is visible on that printing in State A (Earlier State), i.e. the Arabic characters not yet joined, but there are the three characteristic nicks noted as Nos. 1, 2 & 3, That noted as No. 3 consists of short scratches to the right of letter 'to' of 'Poste'. But there; is also a very thin, nearly invisible, white line joining the characters.

(b) Then, during subsequent printings, State B (the Later State) developed. This has the curved line between nicks Nos. 1 & 2, Nick No, 4 appeared and, at No. 5, the complete "joined Arabic characters", with signs of horizontal scratches, below and in the bottom frame line.

Probably, during the following years, there were further printings from the same plate but, in 1884, new colours were introduced for some values, although the 5-paras and the 2-piastros values retained the same colours as for the 1879 printing.

In the meantime, a now style paper was used and a new watermark introduced large crescent, Revell Typo II, with a new layout of the partition watermark guidelines; there are no watermark guide-lines all round the panes of 60, but a right angled bracket watermark at each angle of the four panes of 60 units: size, a little more than the width of a stamp. Query: any text watermarked in the vertical space which divided the sheet of 240 units into two adjoining vertical double panes.

However, before printing the new order of 1864, the plate of the 5-paras had to be put into expert hands to be repaired and to eliminate the crack in the electrotype shell of 60 units which was the cause of the variety "Joined Arabic Characters Flaw", Zeheri 23b and 23d, For this purpose, the back of the plate had to be stripped and cleaned, and the skilled worker had to push back the edges of the crack in the metal to the correct level, to produce a flush surface capable of printing correctly again. But because the crack was not soldered, the thin white line joining the characters remained and was reproduced on the printed sheets: thus we also have the Earlier State A on the 5-paras 1884.

We have, then, this first Earlier State A (with nearly invisible white line joining the Arabic characters) on the two types of paper of the 5-paras 1879. narrow crescent, Revell Type I, and the large crescent Revell Type II, If, by chance the paper was wrongly positioned, we can see part of the watermarked guideline on the 1879 paper, but not on the 1884 paper, But both these stamps will show the Earlier State A variety, with the thin, nearly invisible, line joining the characters.

This is my explanation of the appearance of the Earlier State A and the Later State B of the 1879 and 1884 issues of the 5-paras printed by Do La Rue. I shall be grateful to any of my readers who have any comment on the opinions expressed as to these interesting varieties and who would communicate with me at this address; Ibrahim Chaftar, 8 Rue 47, Smouha, Alexandria, Egypt; or with the Editor of L'O.P., Cairo,

November 1977

IBRAHIM CHAFTAR