
'The Arms Issue'

1892-97

by Afzal Nanjee

Compared to the earlier 'Empire Issue' of 1876-1890 and its vast range of colours, the 'Coat of Arms Issue' commonly referred to as '**The Arms Issue**' is rather simple, restricted to single colours, and Perforation 13½, which remained unchanged throughout the period of 1892-1897. Their usage has almost no philatelic ingredient and invite a true researcher to extract from what is available in the postally used material.



Five different values (10pa, 20pa, 1pi, 2pi and 5 Pi) were issued on **10 March 1892**, printed on unwatermarked paper, perforated by line perforation of 13½ guage. A '5 Para' surcharge was produced on the less used 10pa value to complete the range. The 5pi stamp is rare in used condition, the 2pi quite scarce, and so is the 10pa. The extensively produced and used values were the 20pa (postcard rate) and the 1pi (letter rate). One may see more shades in these two values than any other in the series.

SHADES OF 20 PARA:

The first appearance of the 20pa stamp was in **Rose-red**, which continued with slight variations till about Mid 1894. Shades like Bright Rose-red, and dull rose-red fall into the same category. One shade which is found to be much scarcer is the Carmine-rose. A truly rare shade is the **Rose and Rose-Pink**, which are quite lighter than the Rose-red category. These appeared at end of 1894 when the '**Brown**' category was initiated. The first shade to appear was the **Lake-brown**, followed by **Brown-Lake** and **Brownish Mauve**. **Claret & Purple-Brown** also fall into this category. The last being the rarest of all. The last phase of this category has a large span of the Rose-brown and claret, which continued til the turn of the century.

SHADES OF 1 PIASTRE:

The first appearance of the 1pi stamp was in **Slate**, which continued till about Mid 1893. Shades like **Slate**, **Greenish Slate**, **Greenish Grey**, and **Dull Greenish Grey** fall into the same category. Shades found to be much scarcer are the **Slate-Blue** and **Grey-Blue**. A truly rare shade is the **Dull Slate**, known on a cover of 1898. This is quite lighter than the **Slate** which again is the **raest of all** in this category.

SHADES OF 2 PIASTRES:

The 2pi stamp is known in **Chestnut**, **Ochre**, **Ochre-brown**, **Brown-ochre**, **Brown-Orange**, etc. and they are all equally scarce. Due to effecient postal service ofthe Ottoman Post Office, the need for registering a letter was least, hence the 2pi stamp is rarely found on a registered letter. They often served heavy letters.

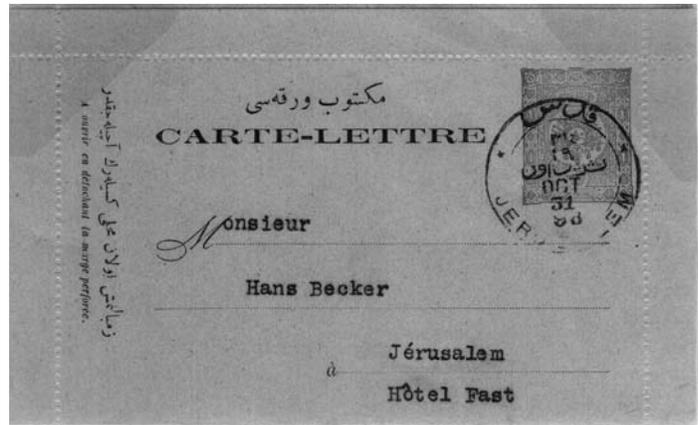
SHADES OF 5 PIASTRES:

Standard colour for the 5pi was Lake-Brown or Brown-Lake, but shades like **Rose-lilac** and **Dull Mauve** also exist and are scarcer. The 5pi value is rarely encountered in used condition.

THE LETTER CARDS:

These never got very popular as postal item hence they are now as philatelic. Seldom one encounters used letter cards of the Arms Issue. Those used from Middle East are quite rare. The first one appeared as late as January 1895, with 1pi imprinted stamp is grey. The card used was salmon. The second one almost identical was printed on creamish card, issued in April 1897.

An added value for the letter cards is the presence of the detachable perforated margins. If they are still attached even after postal transmission, it is a premium.



Appliquer le

Appliquer le

In the 2nd issue an error occurred in the design; the word 'Appliquer' was spelt wrongly as 'Appliqner'. Though a silly inverted 'u' (appearing as an 'n') but of great importance as the error was corrected soon. Comparitively the ratio of the error with the corrected version seems to be no more than 15:85.

THE POSTCARDS:

They hold the true wealth of the postal history and postal markings of the empire. First issued with the stamps on 10 March 1892. First one were printed on creamish white cards in Red-Brown, basically to match in colour with the corresponding 20pa adhesive. Issued in singles as well as in pairs (with Reply cards).

By December 1892 the colour of the cards had changed to Buff. Again both singles and pairs were issued. Later by Mid 1893 another shade of card was introduced. This time it was on Greenish Buff finally adjusted to a brighter Greenish Buff.



Avec réponse payée UN

réponse payée UN

Text Type A (left) and Type B (right) in Pair Cards.

The Front card of the Pairs are rare in any case. The first issue showed inscription Type A and the 2nd on Buff showed inscription as Type B, which also continued for the 3rd Issue on Greenish Buff. If the card is will centred, and they are usually not, it a great premium.

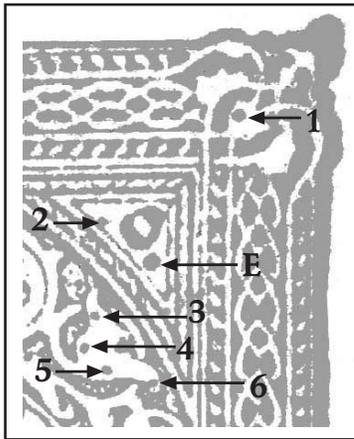
Impressions on all the three issues can be seen in various shades like Rose-brown, Red-brown, Brown-Rose, Lilac-Brown, Claret, Purple-brown, Brown-Purple, etc. **Brown-Rose and Red-Brown are scarcest.**

THE 5 PIASTRES '50' VARIETY RE-DISCOVERED:

The famous variety of a '0' for '0' occurring on one stamp in a sheet of 150 stamps of the 5pi has now been **properly studied** to show that there are three progressive states of printings. Before we move on to the Printing States, one should also learn that beside the Extra '0' in the value making it a '50' instead of '5', there are six more extra dots and a large flaw to be found on the same stamp, illustrated below as Dots (1-6) and Large flaw (10). The Dot 'E' is the Error Dot that makes the '50'.

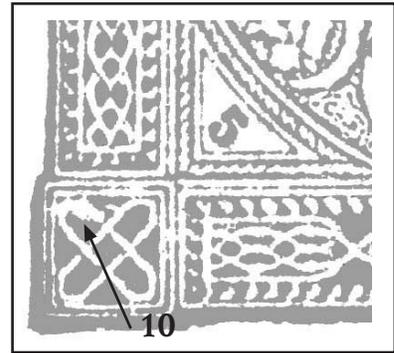
Permanent Features

Top Right Corner



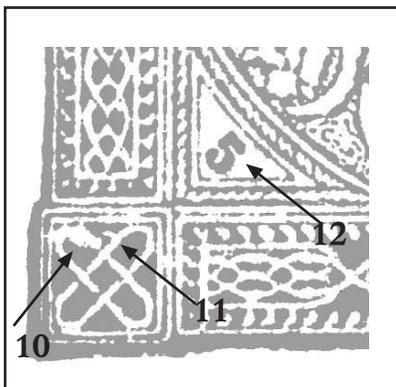
Dot¹, Dot², Dot³,
 Dot⁴, Dot⁵, Dot⁶,
 Dot^E (the main dot)
 Large Flaw¹⁰

Bottom Left Corner



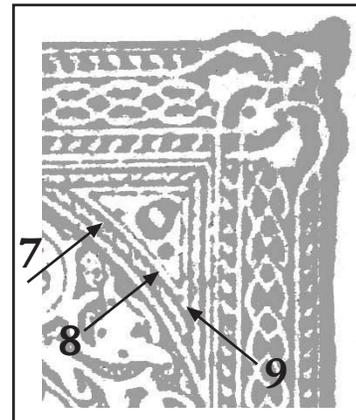
STATE 1:

In the first state, beside the permanent features of the stamp, a new dot appears at position 9 just at the lower right tip of the value triangle and a hook-like flaw appears near the large flaw, at position 11. Other features absent in this state will appear in the next.



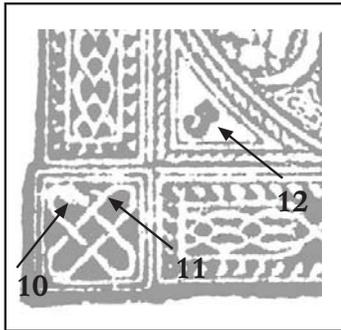
State 1

No Flaw⁷
 No Break⁸
 Dot⁹
 Hook Flaw¹¹
 Clean '5'¹²



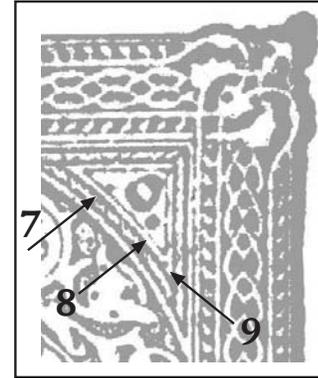
STATE 2:

All features remain same as State 1, except that the '5' (position 12) now appears like a '3' due to a flaw inside.



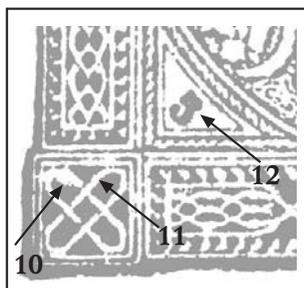
State 2

All features
Same as
State 1 except that
'5' appear like a '3'¹²



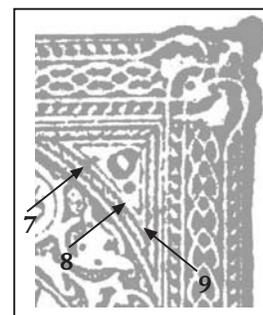
STATE 3:

In state 3 everything is same as in state 2, but the hook flaw has disappeared, a new coloured flaw appear under dot 7, and a break in line at position 8. Besides this the dot at position 9 is fading out.



State 3

All features
Same as
State 2 except that
Coloured Flaw⁷
Large Break⁸
Faded Dot⁹
Hook Flaw¹¹
disappears



THE '5 PARAS' SURCHARGE OF 1897:

To cater the need for a 5pa stamp risen in 1897, the Ottoman Post Office found it a better idea to surcharge the less used 10pa stamps rather than printing a new 5paras.

Unconsumed stocks of the 10pa stamp that was overprinted were in shades unrecorded in the original stamp, like the **Myrtle Green**. This colour is even rare with the surcharge.

The red ink of the overprint can be separated into three types; Transparent, Opaque, and Thick & Opaque. The **transparent** and the **Thick & Opaque** are **rare** while the opaque is common. The overprinting is near to perfect, and no breaks or flaws are seen, except a major Spelling Error that occurs on Row 6 stamp 14, of 'Cniq' for 'Cinq'.



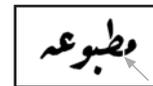
Cniq 'Cniq' for 'Cinq'

Just one 'broken letter' variety has been discovered, on a cover. It is a **Thinned 'i'** in 'Cinq' and a **Shaved trunk of 'r'** in 'Paras'.

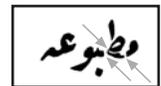


THE '5 PARAS' SURCH. WITH مطبوعه :

Similar surcharge of '5 Paras' was done on the 10pa with the word 'مطبوعه' added between Arabic '5's. This overprint was done in black. The stamp is much scarcer than the ordinary red one. The overprinting is again near to perfect, and no breaks or flaws are seen, except the same Spelling Error on Row 6 stamp 14, reading 'Cniq' for 'Cinq'. In the 'Cniq' Error there are two states of the overprint plate. The breaks in letters of 'مطبوعه' are bigger in state 2. (See illustration at right).



State 1



State 2

THE مطبوعه /IMPREME' HANDSTAMPS:

The boxed 'مطبوعه/IMPREME' handstamp used in 1891 on the Empire Issue continued on the Arms/Tughra series from mid 1892 to early 1893. The handstamp had already worn-out showing no traces of the right side of the box (frame). The 20pa, 1pi and 2pi were issued first and the 10pa and 5pi were added almost near the end. Hence the latter two are **rare!**

In the boxed 'مطبوعه/IMPREME' handstamp issue of 1892 multiples, even blocks of 4s of 1pi are **very scarce**, and the 2pi is **very rare** and 5pi **Extremely Rare**, in mint or used. The 5pi exists in more than one shade, all being **very rare**.



'مطبوعه/Impreme' handstamp in worn-out state

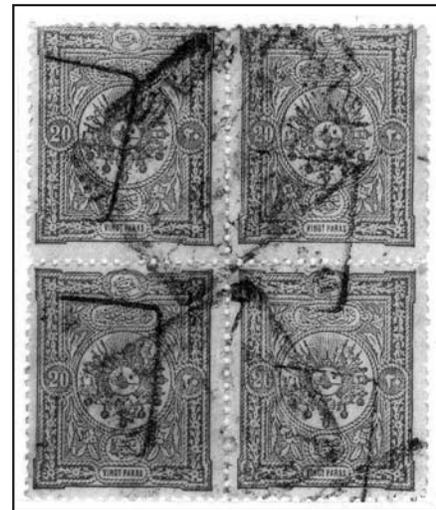
Inverted handstamps in the quite short lived 'مطبوعه' / IMPREME' Issue are **Extremely Rare**. Only 2-3 used blocks of 4s are known of the 20pa Inverted handstamp, and a few singles of the 2pi. **These Are Simply Classics!**



2pi mint, with h/s inverted!



5pi مطبوعه with '50' Variety!



20pa Block of 4, with h/s inverted!

THE 5PI '50' VARIETY WITH 'مطبوعه' / IMPREME':

The 5pi stamp with the Boxed 'مطبوعه' / IMPREME' handstamp is a rarity, and the '50' Variety makes it a Classic! No more than a few should exist.

THE مطبوعه OVERPRINTS ON ARMS ISSUE:

All the values of the Arms Issue were machine overprinted with the word 'مطبوعه' in Arabic. Initially the 20pa, 1pi and 2pi were issued. This issue completely replaced the earlier Arms Issue with 'مطبوعه' / IMPREMES' Boxed handstamps.

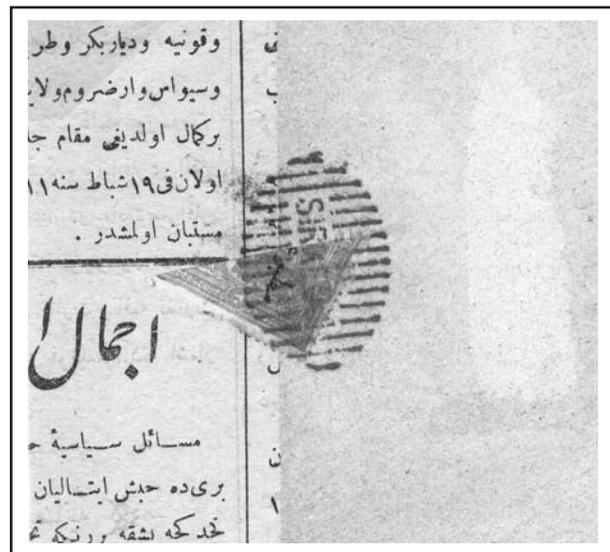
مطبوعه

The 10pa and the higher values were soon required as public wanted to utilize the discounted 'printed matter' rates. 1pi was the main value which was truly in extensive use but the authorities decided to overprint the 10pa and 5pi as well. The 5pi was hardly ever used.

Only **two major errors** are known; **10pa Imperforate** single used Sirkedji, and **20pa inverted overprint** (mint). Third rarity but an error in fact is the 20pa bisected and used as 10pa on part newspaper, tied beautifully by Sirkedji oval.



10pa Imperf and 20pa Matbua, inverted



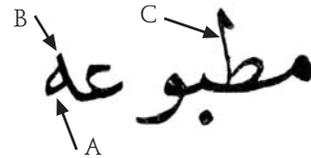
20pa Matbua, bisected on part newspaper.

THE MATBUA FORGERIES:

Three forgeries have been discovered so far, all three to deceive collectors. None of them have been seen on any low values. All three are sized accurately and measure 11.75mm like the genuine. It is only the formation or shape of the Arabic characters that distinguish them.

FORGERY 1

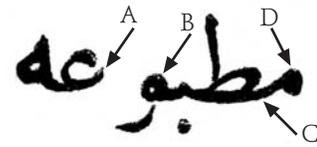
The left part of the word is more angular than the genuine. The flag and the pole (A/B) are tilted. The vertical in the right part of the word (C) is curved in a snake-like manner. Genuine is almost straight.



FORGERY 1

FORGERY 2

The left part of the word shows the C-like character with an extended lower jaw (A). The left smaller bud in the right part of the word is rounded and not coned like the genuine (B). The basic lower plate on which most of the characters rest shows very smooth curve (C). The right smaller bud at the start is again rounded not coned (D).



FORGERY 2

FORGERY 3

The left part of the word shows the C-like character with a smaller lower jaw (A). Small and rounded flag, thick and flat top pole (B). Shorter vertical without top hook in the right part of the word (C).



FORGERY 3



FORGERY 1



FORGERY 2



FORGERY 3