Forgeries of the Hejaz Mecca Arms Stamps.

Introduction

The Hejaz Mecca Arms stamps form an important part of Transjordan philately; they received Transjordan overprints in order to fulfil the requirement for postage stamps during the period 1923 to 1924. As with the stamps of Hejaz, Transjordan stamps were produced in small quantities and could not satisfy the demand from collectors and genuine postal use. Large quantities of forgeries were produced for sale to collectors. Many forged Transjordan overprints were applied to genuine Hejaz stamps as well as forgeries and if a forged stamp can be detected, the overprint placed upon it must also be a forgery. Studies of these forgeries leads to the identification of bad items even when the underlying stamps are genuine. It becomes obvious that a knowledge of Hejaz forgeries is essential to the student of Transjordan philately of this period.

This document describes various forgeries of Hejaz stamps that have been used for Transjordan overprints and illustrates many shades of these stamps. It is not known whether all of the shades shown have been used for such overprints, but it is obviously important to be aware of them.

Forgery Groups

There were three different groups or forgery types used for Transjordan stamps. The description of each group will include images comprising the genuine stamp, a sample forgery, shades of forgeries and a complete sheet to assist with plating these stamps.

The main images for the forgery shown at the start of the description for each value, are shown at 150%, the remainder are at 100%.

Forgery Group 1

This is the forgery usually seen and is often referred to by Hejaz collectors as 'reprints' due to the fact that many of the flaws found on genuine plates can be found and the lines of the design are generally thicker, giving the appearance of a worn plate. The fact that they are not reprints made after the fall of the Hejaz government was determined by the fact that the ⅛p is a copy of an early state of the plate. It would appear that the plates were produced from photographs of genuine sheets and that a certain amount of detail was lost in the process. These stamps are never found on genuine covers neither are any overprints they may have received in any way genuine.

Care must be taken with this group, for although many stamps have colours varying from the genuine and many have the 'worn plate' look, many closely resemble the genuine stamp. There are some clues to help the collector, but it may require an attempt to plate the stamp against a forgery sheet. The stamps were line perforated by hand, but the perforator had one tooth missing and thus there are several stamps on the sheet showing this feature; if you are lucky, the stamp will have one perforation missing from each side of the stamp. Because the perforating was done manually, these missing perforations do not necessarily appear opposite one another. Another feature is that the ink is not always spread evenly across the plate, giving areas of pale and darker shades across the sheets. There was another problem with the printing process; it would appear that the conditions of the print room were not the cleanest in the world and sheets will often show patches of colour from inked debris. All of these features are rarely, if ever, found on genuine stamps.

Group 1 - ⅛p Brown



Forgery



Genuine

The loss of detail in the text areas is noticeable and although the images above are from different plate positions, this loss of detail is valid for all positions on the forgery sheet.

Many shades of this forgery exist, but that also applies to the genuine stamps! Some examples of forgeries are shown below.











Strip showing large area of contamination on the centre stamp

Group 1 - ⅛p Forgery Sheet



Note the many areas of contamination caused by a dirty plate and also the variation in ink intensity across the sheet.

Group 1 - ¼p Green



Forgery



Genuine

The loss of detail in the text areas is less noticeable in the images above and illustrate that identifying forgeries can be difficult.

Many shades of this forgery exist, but the colour of genuine stamps is reasonably consistent. Some examples of forgeries are shown below.













Group 1 - ¼p Forgery Sheet



There are some areas of contamination caused by a dirty plate but the variation in ink intensity across the sheet is quite noticeable.

Group 1 - 1p Blue



Forgery



Genuine

The forgery shown above shows some loss of detail, but is good enough to fool the unwary.

A few shades of this forgery exist as with the genuine stamps. Some examples of forgeries are shown below.











Group 1 - 1p Forgery Sheet



Group 1 - 3p Red-Brown



Forgery



Genuine

Apart from some loss of detail the colour is the main weakness of this forgery; it mostly is too orange or red although red-brown examples do exist.

Several shades of this forgery exist as with the genuine stamps. Some examples of forgeries are shown below.











Group 1 - 3p Forgery Sheet



Group 1 - 10p Brown-Purple and Mauve



Forgery



Genuine

This forgery can give problems. There are shades of the genuine stamp that are similar to the forgery shown above. The quality of the print can be a useful guide, but for this value the forgeries closely match the genuine. It is best to get a collection showing the missing perforation and study them, after that it will be experience that counts

Several shades of this forgery exist as with the genuine stamps. Some examples of forgeries are shown below.











Inverted centre

Group 1 - 10p Forgery Sheet



The format of the forgery sheet is the same as the genuine, 3 rows of 6 stamps.

Forgery Group 2

This forgery is a much more realistic copy of the genuine stamp despite having the different format of 2 rows of 6 stamps. Some printings are in similar colours to the Hejaz stamps and have fooled Hejaz experts for many years. Plating the stamps is a task that is essential in order to determine the status.

Transjordan forgeries in this group are rare, possibly because they have all been mistaken for genuine stamps!

Group 2 - ⅛p Brown

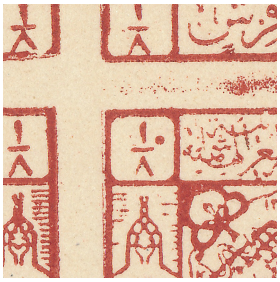


Forgery with Hejaz overprint and showing missing perforation



Genuine

Stamp position 9 has an interesting flaw; a dot appears after the number 1 in the top left value box, making the value appear to be $^{10}/_{8}$ p. Auction listings seem to delight in announcing this as an important error.



The only recorded ⅛p stamp of this group from position 2 of the 12 cliché sheet. A clue as to its doubtful status is given by the Mecca postmark.



Group 2 - ⅛p Forgery Sheet



Group 2 - 3p Red-brown

As with the ⅛p, this is a good quality forgery but can be plated against the 12 cliché sheet shown on the next page.



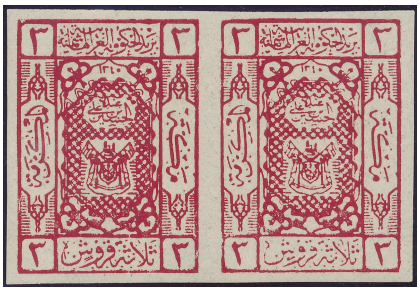
Forgery



Genuine

No Transjordan stamps of this forgery type have been recorded, but there is a good possibility that some exist.

Too few of the stamps have been seen to give any idea about shade variations; below is an example in a deep rose-red shade.



Group 2 - 3p Forgery Sheet



Forgery Group 3

This group of lithograph printed stamps and overprints is so bad that it should not be a problem. The whole of the production of these stamps seems to revolve around creating errors and many of these are shown on the next page. Just some of the differences are:

Perforation 10½ instead of 11½
Design shows screening dots
Colours are not accurate and some were not used for genuine stamp
Sheet format 5 rows of 6 stamps for all values instead of 6 x 6 for values other than 10p which was 3 x 6
¼p stamp has all rows upright; the genuine has top 3 rows upright and lower 3 inverted



Forgery



Genuine

The variant text and screening dots can best be seen in enlargements of the value panel:



Forgery

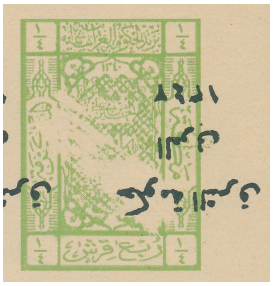


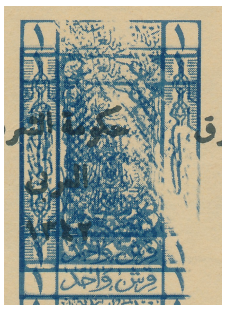
Genuine

Group 3 - Examples

The examples below all show Transjordan overprints but the stamps also exist in many of the varieties with the Nejd second handstamp forgery.



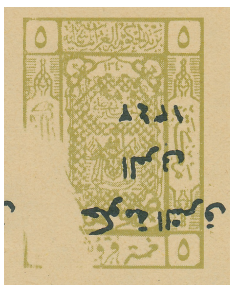












Group 3 - Example Forgery Sheet



Sheet of 2p with inverted overprint