




Kingdom of Hejaz 1924

The Caliphate Commemorative Issue

Introduction and Plan

King Hussein proclaimed himself Caliph of all Islam in March 1924, but it met with a mixed reception in the Islamic world. **In order to add credibility to his action**, he ordered that a quantity of the current postage stamps be overprinted in gold, thus creating the first commemorative issue of the Hejaz. The overprint, printed in three lines of Arabic:

  	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Commemorating the Caliphate</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Shaaban</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>1324</i></p>
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Shaaban 1324 is the Islamic month and year, equating to March 1924.

The printing in gold of this typeset overprint, was achieved by an initial print in black followed by gold dust being sprinkled over the stamp while the ink was still wet. Black overprints do exist and may be proofs, overprints where the gold has failed to adhere to the black ink because it had already dried, or the gold deliberately removed.

This exhibit shows the development of the overprint and its use during the limited life of the Hejaz Government. It starts with the initial release of the overprint followed by the two states of the widely used modified version on the 1922 definitive. Finally, examples of stamps produced during the siege of Jeddah where the Hejaz Government three-line overprint was applied to remaining stamps of the Caliphate issue. Very few examples are known with the overprint from the second Jeddah three-line plate produced (known as plate B); **one example is in this exhibit** (page 12).

Exhibit Plan

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The reference catalogues provide only a brief overview of this issue and **important discoveries have been made by the exhibitor and written up as articles in Random Notes, the journal of the Arabian Philatelic Association International (APAI).**

Records as to the design and printing process, including numbers printed, are not known to exist so many details had to be deduced by study. No essays or proofs of the overprint are known to exist.

The main philatelic **discoveries made by the exhibitor** have been the existence of **the narrow first line overprint on the ½ and 1½ qirsh values** (page 2) found in a hoard of Hejaz stamps, most suffering from storage in adverse conditions. Only six copies of the ½ qirsh in rose with the normal first line (page 7) have been recorded by the APAI; although catalogues list this stamp without the overprint, all are silent with regard to the Caliphate issue. The discovery of the missing character on the 5 qirsh value (page 4), **made by the exhibitor**, adds to the catalogue listings.

Covers of this issue are almost unknown. The one in this exhibit (page 9) is **one of two known** genuinely postally used covers that have been recorded by the APAI and is the only one written by H. St J. B. Philby, father of spy Kim Philby; it has been described as '**an exceptional cover**'.

The stamps in this exhibit have all been plated in order to show that the overprint plate position matches the stamp. If the overprint position is not stated, then the stamp and overprint plate positions are the same. Plating is essential in Hejaz philately because of the numerous forgeries. Special items are **highlighted by double-line frames**.

References:

Catalogues by Mayo, Scott, Stanley Gibbons, Wilson.
 The Postal Issues of Hejaz, Jeddah and Nejd, D. F. Warin
 APAI Random Notes numbers 30, 58. Articles by the exhibitor are in 81, 82, 89.

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Initial State of Printing Plate

The top line has the two words close together and clichés measure $15\frac{1}{2}$ - $17\frac{1}{2}$ mm.

Overprint in Gold on Black



Normal stamp as
issued.
(position 33)



Stamp with backing paper
adhering to the gum and
showing evidence of having
been stored in adverse
conditions.
(position 9)

Overprint in Black



(position 13)

A sheet of the $\frac{1}{8}$ qirsh and a block of the $1\frac{1}{2}$ qirsh with staple holes in the top margin and backing paper adhering to the gum have been seen by the exhibitor. It is evident that the sheets had been inserted in books for distribution to post offices. It is not known whether any were placed on sale.

Initial State of Printing Plate

Overprint Errors

Extra character on top line and
one missing from middle line.

Occurs on position 3.

تذكار الخلافة
تعمير



Missing 'alef' in top line.

Occurs on position 10.

تذكار الخلافة
تعمير



Letter 'alef' (vertical line) from line 2 placed in
line 1 and 'beh' (short horizontal line with dot
below) in line 2 displaced vertically upwards by
about 2 mm.

Catalogues refer to this as 'extra character on
top line', ignoring the errors in the second line.

There are numerous examples of missing dots and incomplete characters on the plate.

Intermediate State of Printing Plate

The original plate was modified by correcting the errors and by increasing the space between the words on the top line so that clichés measure 19 - 19½ mm. Unfortunately the Arabic character 'raa' did not show in positions 14 and 17. This error has only been recorded on the three values shown below.

تذكار الخلافة

Normal

تذكار الخلافة

Missing 'raa'

Stamp position 14



Stamp position 17



The length of the first line in positions 14 and 17 is correct, which suggests that the character was not missing but was not set 'type high', resulting in it not receiving ink.

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Intermediate State of Printing Plate

Complete sheet showing missing character in positions 14 and 17.



Final State of Printing Plate

The type was adjusted so that all characters received ink.

Overprint upright.



Position 31



Position 18



Position 28



Position 9



Position 30



Position 9



Position 26

Final State of Printing Plate

Unusual shades.

Venetian red



Position 5

Brown-olive



Position 13

Deep rose



Positions 5, 6, 11, 12

Only 6 copies in this shade have been recorded by the APAL.

Final State of Printing Plate

Overprint errors

Overprint inverted.



Stamp position 17
Overprint position 20



Stamp position 34
Overprint position 3



Stamp position 18
Overprint position 19

These are the only values known to have received an inverted overprint.

Overprint double, one sideways reading up and additional part overprint on back, sideways reading down



Stamp position 26
Overprint position 26



Reverse

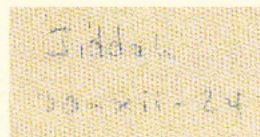
This is the **only known copy** of a stamp having the Caliphate overprint sideways. The relative positions of the parts of the overprint on the reverse identify it as being from positions 5 and 11.

It has not been possible to determine whether the sideways or normal overprint was applied first, neither can it be explained why the erroneous sideways overprints, on front and back, have the gold dust applied.

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Final State of Printing Plate

Cover from Harry St. John Bridger Philby, father of spy Kim Philby,
to his mother (May Beatrice Philby) in Camberley.



Manuscript by Philby on reverse (125%)

Posting date 30-xii-24 on reverse in manuscript by Philby, backstamp PORT TAWFIK 5 JA 25,
manuscript arrival on front Jan 15th 1925.

Cover showing vertical pair of 1/8 qirsh (positions 7 and 13) and one 2 qirsh (position 34) Caliphate stamps.

Very few Philby covers during this period exist. He arrived in Hejaz on 28th October 1924 and was evacuated to Aden with dysentery on 3rd January 1925. This is **one of the two known** Caliphate covers and **the only one known** to be sent by Harry St. John Bridger Philby.

The DJEDDAH postmark has an incorrect Gregorian date 28-3-934. The Hijra date of 5-5-343 is also incorrect; it equates to 2 December 1924. Erroneous postmark dates in Hejaz philately are not uncommon.

The 2 1/4 qirsh franking suggests an overweight letter; the normal rate to England was 2 qirsh.

Final State of Printing Plate

Printer's waste.



Stamp position 21
Overprint position 27



Virtual reconstruction of sheet (60%)

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Postage Due

The Caliph overprint was applied to a few sheets, possibly only five of each value, of the standard postage due stamps using the intermediate state. There were several settings of the boxed 'mustahiq' plate.

Missing character on the first line

Only recorded copy of
½ qirsh value



Stamp position 17
Overprint position 5
(Setting B)

One of three known
copies of 2 qirsh value



Stamp position 14
Overprint position 1
(Setting B)

Complete first line



Stamp position 20
Overprint position 32
(Setting B2)



Stamp position 33
Overprint position 15
(Setting B2)



Stamp position 13
Overprint position 13
(Setting A)



Stamp position 2
Overprint position 20
(Setting B)

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Large 3-Line Jeddah Overprint on Caliphate Issue

During the siege of Jeddah, the Hejaz Government overprinted their stamps in order to identify the stamps as being those issued by the legitimate government.

Two plates of the large 3-line overprint were produced, of these plate B was normally used on only the ¼ and 10 qirsh stamps which were printed after the use of the caliphate overprint has ended.

Three-line overprint from plate A, printed in red.



Position 16



Position 28



Position 23

Three-line overprint from plate B, printed in red.



Position 30

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Large 3-Line Jeddah Overprint on Caliphate Issue

Three-line overprint from plate A, printed in blue.



Position 30



Position 13



Position 20



Position 24



Position 10



Position 15



Position 8

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Large 3-Line Jeddah Overprint on Caliphate Issue

Three-line overprint from plate A, printed in blue.

Intermediate Caliphate plate
missing character in first line



Position 17

Three-line overprint double,
one inverted



Stamp position 34
overprint position 28 (upright),
3 (inverted)

Three-line overprint inverted



Stamp position 10
overprint position 27



Stamp position 14
overprint position 23



Stamp position 10
overprint position 27

These are the only values known with an inverted three-line overprint in blue.

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Large 3-Line Jeddah Overprint on Caliphate Issue

Three-line overprint from plate A, printed in black.



Position 14



Position 14



Position 34



Position 27

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Large 3-Line Jeddah Overprint on Caliphate Issue

Three-line overprint from plate A, printed in black.

Three-line overprint inverted



Stamp position 30
overprint position 7



Stamp position 11
overprint position 26



Stamp position 16
overprint position 21



Stamp position 20
overprint position 17

These are the only values known with an inverted three-line overprint in black.

Hussein abdicated following the fall of Taif. He was succeeded by Ali on 4 October 1924 and new postage stamps for the Hejaz Government were produced.