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Authoritative Expertizing, Since 1970, of the Stamps and Postal History of Egypt and Sudan

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After a thorough and careful study of the item submitted to me for authentication as EGYPT, 1913, 5 mills rose-carmine regular issue stamp (chalk-surfaced printing of 1902-1913), with black, typographed, monolingual, Official Governmental Service overprint, .....

THE "O.H.H.S." VARIETY - OVERPRINT IN QUOTATION MARKS ('INVERTED COMMAS'), USED WITH "NO-VALUE" STAMP ON 1914 COVER.

*Nile Post #08d var., Baltan #113 var., Zeheri #8f var., Stanley Gibbons #079 var., Scott unlisted, of which an exact-size, color photograph is affixed and embossed to the reverse of this document, I hereby certify it to be .....*

GENUINE IN ALL RESPECTS

*Charles F. Hass*

12<sup>th</sup> August, 2009

The stamp on the submitted Registered Official cover is one of a very small number of surviving examples of this very rare issue, which is known only postally used. Only three covers are known, all sent by the Alexandria Ports & Lighthouses Administration (one of which shows the stamp with an inverted overprint). The overprinted stamp is used to pay the 5 mills Registration fee (the adjacent "no-value" adhesive indicating that the inland letter postage is paid). Unlike the similar 1913 (November) issue, without quotation marks flanking the letters of the overprint, the details of this "O.H.H.S." issue are somewhat clouded in mystery. Although stamps of the non-quotation-marked issue were overprinted in full sheets of 240 subjects (four panes of 60), by a forme composed of 20 stereotyped groups of 12, it now appears to be certain that this "O.H.H.S." overprint was applied to individual, 60-subject panes by a forme composed of 60 loose stereos, randomly blocked together into a chase. It is probable that these "O.H.H.S." panes were the first to be produced, and that the quotes were found to be objectionable after only several panes were overprinted (the presence of the quotation marks is thought to be the result of a misinterpretation of the instructions to the typesetter). The offending quotes were subsequently chiseled or machine-routed off the forme (some incompletely), and overprinting continued on a small number of panes (stamps overprinted by this 'corrected' forme — some of them inverted — are known used as early as December of 1913, and are also quite rare). At this point it was probably decided that a larger overprinting surface was needed — hence, the 240-subject forme. It appears that most of the rejected "O.H.H.S." panes were held back until 1914, and were then placed into very limited use. One such stamp is recorded with a 1913 (month illegible) "TANTA" postmark, while the remaining recorded examples are postmarked in 1914, at "ALEXANDRIA" (Oct.-Nov.), "BANI SUWEF" (Sept.), "MINA-EL-QAMH" (Feb.), "PORT TAUFIQ" (Sept. or Oct.) and "SOHAG" (month illegible). The stamp on the submitted cover is fully sound, and is from one the minor varietal positions on the 60-subject pane, its left-most-inverted comma missing most of its tail (appearing more like a square stop), its final stop being incomplete. The adhesives on the cover are tied by an "ALEXANDRIA / R.5" postmark of "14. X. 14. 2 10PM". Additionally, the cover bears the bilingual (English / Arabic official chop of the "ALEXANDRIA / PORTS & LIGHTHOUSES ADMINISTRATION", struck in blue. The 5 mills stamp with the "O.H.H.S." overprint is one of the significant rarities of the Egyptian 'Official' issues. On the reverse of the cover, I have struck my "C. F. Hass" authentication mark (in purple ink). The cover, once in the collection of Dr. William Byam, has also been certified as "genuine" by The Royal Philatelic Society, London (cert. #22,156, 26 May, 1939). C.F.H.

Certificate No. 2009-011 (\*©2009)

Submitted by Mr. Joseph H. Chalhoub