

Lebanese forgeries?

Mr. Robert Hudson, who contributed the article on the Palestinian Propaganda Labels, informed the Editor several years ago of the existence of counterfeit Lebanese stamps. He stated he discovered their existence while living in Beirut and has assembled a reference collection of such material for the Stanley Gibbons firm in London, England.

It is his contention that the counterfeit stamps were not printed to defraud stamp collectors, but the Lebanese Post Office. Evidently the stamps were sold to businesses to circumvent large postal costs. He believes he knows who is responsible for them.

Mr. Hudson states that an entire stamp can be counterfeit, an overprint, or both. The paper on some issues appears different and the printing on others is of poor quality.

I have a small assemblage of seventy-some stamps obtained from Mr. Hudson several months ago and am including the Scott catalog numbers below. Nearly all are postally used and bear Beirut cancellations.

In the next issue of the *ARAB WORLD PHILATELIST* the only article on the subject will appear. The subject will certainly be controversial, as the dealers I have spoken with claim no such counterfeits exist. Having lived in Beirut, and been a dealer of Lebanese philatelic material, Mr. Hudson has had the opportunity to acquire information most dealers did not have access to.

✓ # 50	178	✓ 203	✓ 215	✓ 235	✓ 257	C138	✓ C162	✓ C175	C182	C206	J 76	J 76	J 76
72					C120								
✓ 86	✓ 179	✓ 204	216	✓ 236	C119	✓ 139	✓ 163	176	✓ 200	✓ 233	J 77	J 77	J 77
107			211A		C121								J 77
115	180	✓ 205	✓ 228	✓ 237	✓ C122	140	164	177	✓ 201	✓ 234			J 77
114					C123								
✓ 137A	✓ 197	✓ 210	✓ 229	✓ 245	✓ C123	✓ 146	✓ 165	✓ 178	✓ 202	✓ 235	J 71	J 70	J 70
				246		147							
✓ 137B	✓ 198	✓ 211	230	245	C124	✓ 159	✓ 166	✓ 179	✓ 203		J 47	J 61	J 61
			212								J 48	J 62	J 62
✓ 138A	✓ 199	✓ 213	✓ 231	✓ 247	✓ C125	160	167	180	✓ 204		J 41	J 63	J 63
	200			247									
✓ 177	✓ 201	✓ 214	✓ 234	✓ 256	C137	161	✓ 168	181	✓ 205		J 50	J 64	J 64
				258			169				J 51	J 65	J 65
				259			170					J 66	J 66



Lebanese counterfeit stamps discovered by Mr. Hudson.

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LIBAN

lebanese forgeries: AN UPDATE

by George W. Brown

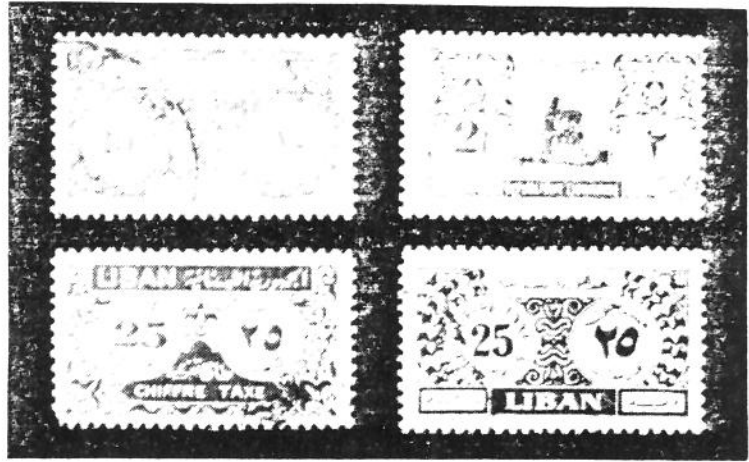


Figure 3

I was encouraged to see Robert Hudson's article on Lebanese forgeries in the Fall 1978 issue of this journal. I have had a number of these items in my collection for some time, and have long suspected that they were forgeries, but have not had confirmation of their existence. I would like to add more stamps to the listing published in his article: (*Scott numbers*) 107, 138, 227A and J29.

As stated by Hudson, the printing quality of the forgeries is poor. The borderlines are frequently irregular and are over- or underinked and the marginal inscriptions are almost illegible. The paper is usually of low quality and is yellow-brown, whereas the paper of the genuine is grey or white. Of those forgeries that are printed on white paper, the wove pattern is vertically oriented whereas that of the genuine is horizontally oriented, or vice versa, depending on the issue. In a couple of cases, i.e., J62-68, the perforation of the fakes is different (perf. 14 x 13½, as opposed to the genuine perf. 13 all around). Because of the crudeness of the forgeries there are cases in which it is not easy to tell which stamp has been forged, as with *Scott* type AP30, the 1947 and 1949 definitive airmail issues.



Figure 1

Hudson also states that these reproductions were intended for sale to private mailers to avoid postal costs; however, I do not have sufficient evidence that this was the case, I have yet to see an example postally used on cover. I do, however, have copies with hexagonal *Zahle* postmarks and others with *Beyrouth B* or *Beyrouth 3** branch postmarks (Fig. 1), indicating possible widespread use.

On the other hand, there is strong evidence suggesting that these forgeries were produced in large quantities to be used as packet fillers for sale to collectors, similarly to the "Seeback" issues of the Latin American countries in the 1890's. Almost half of the varieties in my possession have an identical cancellation resembling a type actually introduced for postal use in the mid- to late 1950's (Fig. 2). The positioning of the cancellation is often the same on different stamps or sets, suggesting that they may have been cancelled in large quantities at once. Many of the legible strikes have a single, seemingly arbitrary date of "16. 2. 57", including strikes on forgeries of issues as old as the 1925-30 low-value Cedar Tree stamps. Perhaps all the forgeries were prepared at one time? I have seen topical packets containing these fakes, single-country packets of Lebanon in which more than 50% of the stamps were fake, as well as a few cases of used or "mint" sets unknowingly being sold as genuine.



Figure 2

The fact that many postage due stamps were forged (Fig. 3) further casts doubt on the

*Editor's note: This statement may be in error. Illustrated in Fig. 1 is a hexagonal *BEIRUT B* cancel and a circular *BEIRUT* cancel. In checking my collection of forgeries I only find hexagonal *BEIRUT* and circular *BEIRUT* cancellations.

postal forgery theory. Why would large quantities be faked for sale to private mailers of stamps authorized for Post Office use only?

Similar forgeries also exist of the 1946 Independence commemorative issue of Jordan *Scott* #221-229 (Fig. 4), and of several regular and airmail definitive issues of Syria between 1946 and 1952. Unfortunately, no copies of these forgeries were available for photographing. One notable coincidence between these and the Lebanese forgeries is that the Jordanian and Syrian issues in question, as well as the Lebanese forgeries, were all printed by firms in Lebanon, usually Imprimerie Catholique of Beirut, and U. Saikali. Forgeries of Latakia also exist, and fakes of Latakia *Scott* #4 and #6 are illustrated (Fig. 4); there are very likely others.



Figure 4 showing forgeries of Latakia and one value of the Jordan Independence issue that was also forged.

This article should not be considered the last word on the subject, as it is very possible that the forgeries were indeed intended to defraud the Lebanese Post Office. Other collectors of Lebanon will undoubtedly be able to shed more light on the subject. ■

Mr. Brown prepared this article shortly before he left for graduate study in the Soviet Union. He should be returning to the U.S. in the Spring of 1979. Those wishing to contact him should wait until that time and then contact the editor for Mr. Brown's current address.

EGYPT

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