

THE PREVIOUSLY UNLISTED FORGERIES
BRITISH POST OFFICES IN THE LEVANT

1909 1 Piastre 30 Paras Overprint (Photographic Plate A)

Sperati's archives had a proof impression of the 1909 1 PIASTRE over 30 PARAS overprint for use on the 4d Great Britain Edward VII. It is unclear why Sperati would forge this overprint, given the low and similar value of the basic and overprinted stamps. Keith Harmer has speculated that it could have been offered for sale by Sperati as a proof. In *Sperati I* on page 37 and in Plate 2 two impressions of Sperati's Smyrna registered date stamp are described, with no suggestion as to its possible use. The mystery grows.

Sperati's forgery of the overprint is lithographed and lacks the typographic wave of the genuine. From the back the genuine clearly show the embossing of the typographic impression. Sperati's forgery does not. This is the main test.

The forgery is a good match in size to the genuine. If there is any difference it is that the forgery is larger, but by less than two and a half percent.

The Sperati proof is a rougher impression than the genuine, though it should be remembered that only one copy has been examined and that Sperati often retouched his forgeries. The proof seen has many white spots in its letters and numbers.

- (i) The left of the vertical of the "1" is bumpy, as is the left side of the vertical of the "P" of "PIASTRE" and the left side of the left leg of the "A".
- (ii) The "P" of "PIASTRE" has the bottom of its foot sloping down from left to right.
- (iii) The bottom of the left leg of the "R" of this word slopes up, from left to right.
- (iv) The "30" shows many weaknesses around its edges.
- (v) The "R" of "PARAS" is bumpy on the left side of its vertical.
- (vi) The "S" of this word has bumps on the left side of its diagonal curve.



CANADA

1851 Twelve Pence

In 1953 Vincent G. Greene, as a lark and anonymously, sent a genuine 12d, or more likely a proof, to Sperati to imitate. Through the courtesy of Kenneth W. Pugh, author of *Reference Manual of BNA Fakes, Forgeries & Counterfeits*, Sperati's letter with the returned forgery is illustrated, as well as the forgery itself. The illustrations are from Pugh's *Manual*. The forgery was first written up in *BNA Topics* (January 1963, page 14) in an article by V. G. Greene. It is possible that Sperati made only one copy. At least no evidence of further copies has surfaced.