

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.

Jean De Sperati
Aix
les
Bains
(Savoie)

Box 71

Aix l. B. April 27 1953
Mlle "Claude Luce"

Dear Mr.

Your letter April 17 thanking at hand
enclosed please find the pieces with the
inscriptions desired.

I have never made a similar work
also I have been obliged to make
researches to obtain the results.
Erasure and acids were no permitted
to obtain a good result, therefore I have
been obliged to wait two days, to research
a mild composition permitting to obtain
a result.



Précisément en ce qui concerne votre lettre
le prix est de \$ 15.-

Please to note to send me this amount
by cheque payable at Canada (Montreal
or another town) and no pay
at Paris as before.

Concerning the best Canada first
issues the difficult to obtain here the originals
and their high price is for me an impediment
to reproduce the almost totality of the
course of the issues 1851-1864

I remain to your service
Sincerely yours
Jean De Sperati

Sperati's letter to Vincent
G. Greene (?), regarding
his fabrication of the
Canada 1851 12d.
Courtesy Kenneth W.
Pugh

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The Greene copy of Sperati's 12d forgery was auctioned by Jim A. Hennock Ltd. in Toronto on 12th December 1998, realizing \$4600 Canadian, including the commission. Hennock carefully examined the forgery and was convinced it is a total forgery, not a cleaned proof. He observed it to have the appearance of being engraved and that it was not as intense a black as an original. He could not judge whether a proof or an original had been the model. Sperati used a seven ring target cancellation on this forgery.

Measurements of originals and genuine proofs show the proofs to be about 0.3 mm taller than the originals, probably due to differences in the paper and its shrinkage or expansion. Similarly, the Sperati forgery is about the same amount taller than originals. Thus, it appears that Sperati was given a proof to copy, possibly after removing or filtering out its SPECIMEN overprint.

In the above article by V. G. Greene he wrote that "the laid lines are closer together than in the original and the lines in the background above the Queen's right shoulder are too dark".



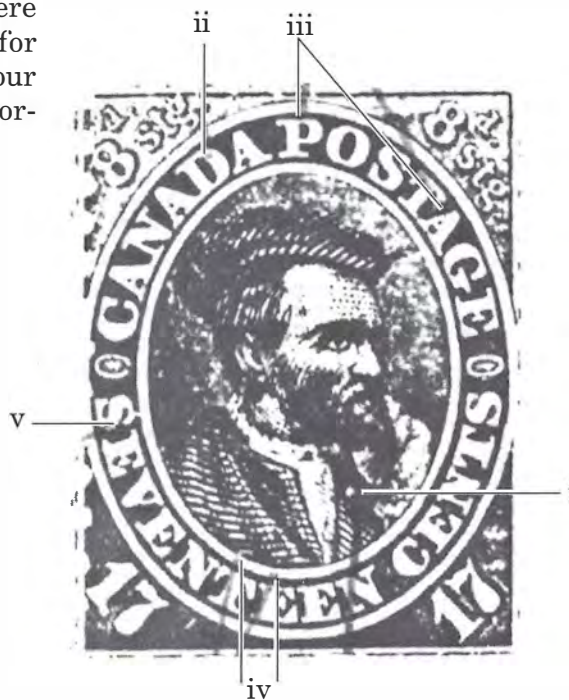
*Sperati's forgery of the Canada 12d
made for Vincent G. Greene.
Courtesy Kenneth W. Pugh*

1859 Seventeen Cents

Several black on india proof impressions of this forgery were in Sperati's archives. They are not of a finished forgery, for they show the perforations cutting the stamp on all four sides. Sperati would have had to draw in the missing portions of the stamp (on the cliché) to complete a convincing forgery.

SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS

- (i) There is a white dot on Cartier's left lapel (right side to observer).
- (ii) In "CANADA" the inside of the "D" has several white projections: two at the top, the right one being long, and three on its right side.
- (iii) In "POSTAGE" the "P" has three coloured dots along its top, and the "A" has a coloured dot in its top left.
- (iv) Over "SEVENTEEN" the white oval has a coloured dot above the third "E" and there is a white dot on this oval above the "T".
- (v) The right of the lower loop of the "S" of "SEVENTEEN" has a coloured dot toward its top; a white line joins this letter to the inner white oval.
- (vi) The shading around the head is uneven, with blurs and breaks.



Working Impression