

A Morocco Connection - "S" Stands for... ?

by David Stotter

[This is an article from *The Journal of the GB Overprints Society*. Jeff Turnbull brought this to my notice and asked permission to publish it in our Bulletin. If you have any comments to make on the article the best contact would be Jeff - address on the front page.]

I illustrate a clearly commercial, censored, airmail cover sent from Tangier to London in 1944 and franked with 10 x ½d Tangier overprints together with an un-overprinted 4d to make up the 9d airmail rate. What makes this cover very unusual is that the 4d stamp is a perfin!

I am satisfied that the perfin is not a fake and belongs with the cover, it being tied with the same postmark 22 JA 44 as the other stamps.

The perfin is an "S" 5mm high and made up of 9 holes. I have never seen an un-overprinted perfin used from Morocco before. Indeed, the only GB Morocco Agencies overprint perfin I have seen is "BEM", Banque d'Etat du Maroc.

It seems unlikely that the "S" has anything to do with the company sending the letter, Messod A. Benzimra, so it is probably just a stamp that came their way and was put to good use. The use of 10 x ½d stamps also seems to indicate that the company was using whatever stamps they happened to have in stock at the time. Is "S" a known GB perfin at the time, and whatever was it doing in Tangier?

The illustration is not to scale.

Our Catalogue Editor, Roy Gault, was shown the article. His comments were:- "I'm certain the "S" is inverted on the 4d GVI stamp, but can add very little more. Three different users have now been identified as having used the "inverted S". Sidney Smith (London EC3), Schweppes Ltd (London W2), and W A Sparrow (Temporarily located in Bishop's Stortford). Known dates for the inverted "S" are 6/6/41, 14/7/41, 8/9/42, 17/8/43, and now 22/1/44. Although I have the "die in use" date range down as 1939-1945 in the New Illustrated Catalogue, 1941-1945 would be a more accurate range. Slopers probably introduced this particular die after their premises were bombed in the Blitz (May 1941)."

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