



Notes on the "Saorstat" Issues of the Irish Free State.



OVERPRINTS OF 1922-23

Supplement No. 19

ÉIRE PHILATELIC ASSOCIATION

December, 1964

Delays in the preparation of the plates for the definitive series, necessitated another overprinting of the British stamps for use by the Irish Free State Government which came into existence on December 7th, 1922.

Between December 11th, 1922 (2d value) and January 16th, 1923 (4d value), the "SAORSTAT ÉIREANN 1922" complete series of overprinted stamps made their appearance.

They were prepared by Messrs. Alex Thom in all values with the three line overprint. Five plates were used for overprinting the low value typographed stamps.

PLATES

Plate 1. This was the earliest one apparently in use and all of the values except the 5d were at one time or another overprinted with this setting. It was also the most interesting, because the early printings from this plate disclosed that subject 180 the 12th stamp of the 15th row of the sheet of 240 stamps; that is, the right marginal stamp of the fifth row of the bottom pane was defective in

that there was no acute accent over the second "a" of the word "Saorstat". A large number of sheets of stamps of various values were accordingly returned to the printer for the missing accent to be inserted by hand. An undisclosed number of sheets with the missing accent had been sold before the error was discovered.

Many of the sheets returned were corrected by the insertion of a hand-stamped accent. The size of the handstamped accent is $1\frac{3}{4}$ mm in length, whereas the normal printed accent is just over 1 mm in length. The handstamped accent is in black while the printed accent is in blue-black. Some clever forgers have pencilled over the printed accent on a normal stamp to give it the appearance of the handstamp, so care should be observed in this respect. Since the handstamp was applied manually, it varies in size and appearance - high, low, left, right, and even double and triple as well as inverted.

The number of sheets thus handstamped has been given as follows: 1/2d. 3,867 sheets; 1d. 3,041 sheets; 6d. 623 sheets; and 1/- 489 sheets. The error was apparently corrected upon discovery because later printings do not show the error. In fact, the 1 1/2d and 2d values overprinted from this plate do not show the error.

Accent Inserted by hand



Variety - Missing Accent and t



Although the number of corrected sheets is believed to be accurate, there is no known estimate of uncorrected stamps in existence. Of the low values, the 1d appears extremely scarce and the 1/- and 1/2d. are not too plentiful. The 4d, 2 1/2d, 9d and 3d in the same order are the most commonly found. North-Bomford in Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal, November 1926 reported that particularly in the smaller postoffices of the west of Ireland, these uncorrected errors were sold across the counter, giving legitimacy to what otherwise might be considered "printer's waste obtained by favor" He reports that he purchased five copies of the 1/2d in the west of Ireland at a small postoffice and that a small boy purchased the missing "t" on the 1d in Galway

The missing accent and final "t" variety (see illustration on previous page and the used copy to the right) has been the source of considerable speculation whether this is a further development of the missing accent error on the one stamp caused by plate wear or a separate variety in another location on the same plate, or on a different printing plate. Through the efforts of our own member, Mr. Thomas E. Field, the Stanley Gibbons catalogue now reflects the separate missing "t" variety.



At our request, Mr. Field studied the question of the possible location and the plate of the missing "t" variety by reference to his own extensive collection of the overprints. He found the following items:

S.G. No. 53aa (missing accent only). A complete mint sheet of 240, with accent missing on the second a of Saorstat on row 15 number 12, stamp 180 in the sheet, and a used single. The control of the sheet is T 22 with imperforate sheet margin.

S.G. No. 53a (missing accent and t). A vertical mint block of 6 with the variety on the middle of the three at right, but without margin - and a used single. The mint example in the block does not, therefore, "prove itself" as being either row 15 or stamp 12; but the stamp immediately above it has precisely the same defective 19 in 1922, as has row 14 number 12 in the mint sheet already mentioned.

S.G. No. 53b (accent inserted by hand). Here I have the following, all in mint blocks with side and base margins, all 7 vertically, by 2 or 3 horizontally, and all therefore demonstrating the position as row 15 stamp 12. T 22 imperforate and perforated margins at base, U 22 imperforate and perforated. All these show the same defective 19 in 1922 in row 14, stamp 12. I do just notice (and wonder whether there is any significance) that in the two imperforate pieces the inserted accent, although in not quite the right position relative to the A, and in the case of T 22 reversed (with the thick end to the southwest instead of the northeast) is what postal historians would call a "clear strike"; whereas in the two perforated pieces the inserted accent is much less clearly defined, and almost "blurred".

S.G. No. 53c (accent and final t inserted by hand). Here again in a "positional piece" T 22 perforated, but once more there is the defective 19 in 1922 on row 14 stamp 12. I find also mint blocks of four and 16, and a used single. Again the blocks have side margins only but again there is the defective date in the stamp above.

CONCLUSIONS. "From the foregoing it does seem that all these varieties developed in the one plate (Plate 1 according to Meredith) although clearly Page 78 (H-2)

both T 22 and U 22 printings were involved. Personally I should not attach very much significance to that. I am unable to put my hand on anything showing the exact dates in 1922 when these printings were made but under G.B. Gibbons list the 1d S-22, T-22, and U-22, indicating 3 printings within the space of 1922, and as Thom was evidently operating before and for some little time after December 1922 (with the Saorstat overprint) I see no reason why he should not have stocks on hand simultaneously of the two later controls, and even use them indiscriminately - although I do notice that S.G.'s valuations for the two forms of C 78 are appreciably more than those of C 67, suggesting greater scarcity of the later control - although perhaps scarcity is hardly the word - one might say "less common". Of course they even used U 23 (S.G. C 84 - much more highly catalogued) - which suggests more limited usage, and possibly that overprinting continued concurrently with the appearance of the definitive, or limited printings before 23rd February 1923, the day of issue of S.G. 72. Here one would need to know not only when the British U 23 came out in the U.K., but when a consignment went to Dublin for overprintings."



OVERPRINTS WITH "ACCENT HANDSTAMPED"

← (normal)

(inverted) →

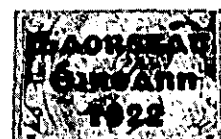


Plate 2. This plate was likewise used to overprint all values, except the 2 1/2d and 4d, both in red. An interesting variety appeared on this plate due to a shifting of the overprint. The S of Saorstat appears directly over the E of Eireann on the 10th stamp of the 7th and 10th rows of the sheet. These appeared on the early printings, but the shift on the 7th row was quickly corrected on later printings.

except
on this

SAORSTAT
ÉIREANN
1922

Plate 3. This plate was used to overprint all values, except the 1 1/2d, 2d, and 3d. The overprints from this plate appear heavier and thicker than on the earlier plates.

SAORSTAT
ÉIREANN
1922

Plate 4. This plate was used only to overprint the 1/2d, 6d and 1/- values and has no distinguishing features, except that the second stamp of the 20th row has a large first "t" in Saorstat.

SAORSTAT
ÉIREANN
1922

Plate 5. This plate was used only to overprint the 1/2d, 5d and 6d values and its only distinguishing feature is that the second stamp of the 20th row has a normal first "t" in Saorstat, but it is generally split.

SAORSTAT
ÉIREANN
1922

VARIETIES IN THE SAORSTAT LOW VALUES

Setting of Low Value

two S over E.

1. Missing Accent and Missing Accent and Final "t" (Plate 1)

1/2d. Scott 44a Stanley Gibbons 52a	Meredith V-35
1d. Scott 45a Stanley Gibbons 53a	Meredith V-36 (missing accent)
1d. Scott 45c Stanley Gibbons 53aa	Meredith V-37 (missing t)
2 1/2d. Scott 48a Stanley Gibbons 56a	Meredith V-38
3d. Scott 49a Stanley Gibbons 57a	Meredith V-39
4d. Scott 50a Stanley Gibbons 58a	Meredith V-40
9d. Scott 53a Stanley Gibbons 61a	Meredith V-41
1/-. Scott 55a Stanley Gibbons 63a	Meredith V-42

2. Handstamped Accent & Handstamped Accent and Final "t" (Plate 1)
 - 1/2d. Scott 44b Stanley Gibbons 52b Meredith V-46
 - 1d. Scott 45b Stanley Gibbons 53b Meredith V-47 (missing accent)
 - 1d. Scott 45d Stanley Gibbons 53c Meredith V-50
 - 6d. Scott 52a Stanley Gibbons 60a Meredith V-48
 - 1/- Scott 55b Stanley Gibbons 63b Meredith V-49
3. S over E. (Plate 2). See separate listings below.
4. Line Over Saorstat.

This consists of a bar line over the word Saorstat which shows on the stamp and occurred on some sheets of the 1/2d, 1d, 9d values, and possibly on the 2 1/2d. (see listings below).

5. Blanket Prints of Overprint on Back of Stamp.

Some sheets of stamps with the overprint on the back of the stamp in addition to the regular overprint on the front. This is believed to have been caused in the printing. The overprint was impressed from the type while the sheet rested upon a pad or blanket in the press. It is presumed that the type was allowed in some cases to be impressed on the pad or blanket without the intervention of a sheet of stamps. In such case, the pad would receive an inking and if not cleaned off, the next sheet of stamps would receive an impression on both sides.

6. Guide Blocks.

Occasionally, guide blocks between the type would work their way up to the line of the type and receiving ink left an impression on the stamp.

- 1/2d. In front of Saorstat 5th row, 12th stamp.
- In front of Eireann 2nd row, 11th stamp.
- 1d. In front of Saorstat 19th row, 1st stamp. (Plate 1)
- After 1922 2nd row, 1st stamp
- In front of 1922 20th row, 1st stamp.
- 1 1/2d. After 1922 1st row, 8th stamp. (Plate 1)
- 2 1/2d. After Saorstat 7th row, 11th stamp.

Meredith Listings

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1/2d	V-55	V-104	V-415	V-448	V-436	V-460	V-472
1d.	V-56	V-105	V-416	V-449	V-437	V-461	V-473
1 1/2d.		V-106	V-417	V-450*		V-462	V-474
2d.		V-107	V-418	V-451		V-463	V-475
2 1/2d.	V-57		V-419	V-452	V-438	V-464	V-476
3d.		V-108	V-420	V-453		V-465	V-477
4d.			V-421	V-454*	V-439	V-466	V-478
5d.		V-109	V-422	V-455	V-440	V-467	
6d.		V-110	V-423	V-456	V-441	V-468	V-479
9d.	V-58	V-111	V-424	V-457	V-442	V-469	V-480
10d.		V-112	V-425	V-458	V-443	V-470	V-481
1/-		V-113	V-426	V-459	V-444	V-471	V-482

* 7 x 10 on the 1 1/2d. ; 12 x 12 on the 4d.

A-Line Over Saorstat Plate 1.

B-S over E 10th stamp, 7th and 10th rows. Plate 2.

C-SACRASTAT 10th stamp 2nd row

D-EIRCANN 7th stamp 11th row. Plate 1.

E-SAORSTAT 4th stamp, 2nd. row; 8th stamp. 8th and 12th rows. Plate 3.

F- No serif to 1 in 1922. 3rd stamp, 15th row. Plate 1.

G- Short 1 and Dropped Second 2 in 1922. 1st stamp, , 20th. row. Plate 1.