HAVING THE REVENUE ON A LINE

(examples of using revenues for telegraphic purposes)

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This is a somewhat unknown subject in the revnue area scarsely documented in a few known publications. Without explaination you would not recognise them being used for that purpose. With this small article I want to take a closer look at this aspect.

A small piece of history

Gian Domenico Romagnosi discovered in 1802 by conducting a simple experiment the connection between magnetism and electricity which influenced the needle of a compass. The results were published in a newspaper but the scientific world overlooked his efforts. Inspired by the Prussian Philosopher Immanuel Kant, The Dane Hans Christian Oersted (Ørsted) discovered this phenomenon again in 1819 and made the foundation for the telegraphy without designing a device for it. This was done by inventing a 5 needle telegraph from the English William Fothergill Cooke and Charles Wheatstone.
The telegraphy started for William Fothergill Cooke and Charles Wheatstone by receiving a patent for their electric telegraph on June 10th 1837. This patent was followed by one in scotland on December 12th 1837 and one in Ireland in April 1838. Finally there was the "Cooke & Wheatstone electric telegraph system". The first line was constructed in London , having the length of only 1 mile. In that time no public messages were send. In 1837 was also the start of railway telegraphy and in 1839 they finished the connection of 13 mile between London – paddington to Bristol. This line was mainy used to arrange the train traffic. The succes of it was the start to create similar lines on other tracks. In the mean time William Fothergill Cooke and Charles Wheatstone received a patent for thweir device in the USA on June 10th 1840. Half of the patent was sold to 3 US inhabitants. In the same year there was a US patent for telegraphy by using a dialing wheel. Also in 1840 there was a start for the first marine telegraphy by laying an experimental cable on the bottom of the sea in Swansea bay; new south Wales. They did not get a patent for the construction works in 1844.
It took till May 16th 1843 before telegraphy became in reach of the public. The first connection in England was between London and Slough. The Royal palace on Windsor and the houshold of the Queen were using it more and more often. The basic rate was 1/- regardless the length and destination. Delivery was extra. This rate would increase by limitation of the number of words per unit. At the time of 1868 the rates have been dropped again. The equipment was improved during the years and became simpler and more economic to use.
The first years were mainy connections for railroads. They grwe from approx. 1100 miles in 1840 to more than 6600 miles in 1850. From 1845 other providers came on the market in England by buying patents and gathering starting capital to get connections with the mainland. They introduced the first telegraph stamps in 1853. Finally the English government took over the telegraph network in 1868. The companies were closed down between 1869 and 1870.

The neddle telegraph needed, even with improvements, 2 lines to get a complete circuit. It's also slow and the design for transmitting and receiving was complex. That's why they went on another path in the USA. In 1825 the British inventor William Sturgeon demonstrated for the first time an electro-magnet. He demonstrated the force by lifting up 95 pounds with a piece of iron and wires what supposed to be the battery. Based on these facts, Joseph Henry demonstrated the working of an electro magnet in 1830 on 1 mile distance to send an electric charge to switch on a bell. The birth of the electric telegraph was a fact. Samuel B. Morse exploited this invention in commercial sense. Together with his partner Alfred Vail he developed a simple meganism that will close the circuit when turned on. A signal was send that way to a receiver on a distance and moved a marker which produced dots and lines (the Morse Code) on a paper roll. Around 1856 there was a sound key which made it for the user possible to hear the clicks of the message to write them down or typing it in a direct readable language.
The developments were going fast and the first transatlantic cable between London and New York was finished in 1858. On August 22nd 1858 the first message was send between Queen Victoria of G.B. and president Buchanan of the U.S.A. . So the success of the Atlantic Cable and Underseas Commonications, already active in 1850 became a fact. Thomas edison improved the transmission in 1874 with his quadruplex which made it possible to send 4 messages at once. Many countries and continents were connected by this company and communications speeded up. Other inventions have put this one to the background but they remained the most important one for the railways.

The stamps

As mentioned before the first telegraph stamps were issued in 1853 by the English and Irish magnetic Telegraph Co. And in the U.S.A. the first issue was in 1859 by the New York City and Suburban Printing Telegraph Company.

First Telegraph stamp of England (source www.Linns.com) and for the U.S.A. (auction site Eric Jackson)

On June 1st 1862 there was a proposal in the U.S.A. to charge each telegram with 1 cent for the first 10 words for a price up to 20 cents and 3 cents for the first 10 words for a price up to 20 cents from October 1st 1862. From december 26th 1862 the use of revenues for specific purposes was abandoned and most of the stamps were used for all purposes except for telegraph charges so the tax on telegrams was abandoned on August 1st 1864.


Brown 1c and greenish blue 3c tax stamp from the U.S.A.
(found on the auction site of Eric Jackson)

The first Dutch telegraph stamps came into the public in 1877 and they were discontinued already in 1920. During the 20th century the modernising of the Society will give a declining use of these stamps. The most modern one recorded is in Hiscocks publication in 1979 and issued by the Dominican Republic. During that era the following forms of telegraphic useage can be found :

1 - (private) telegraph stamps

2 - postage stamps cancelled on telegramms

3 - postage stamps overprinted for telegraph usage

4 - revenue stamps cancelled on telegramms

5 - revenue stamps cancelled on telegramms

6 - revenue stamps overprinted for telegraph usage

For the **1st group** there are fine examples on top of the page. For others I would refer to the work of Hiscocks.

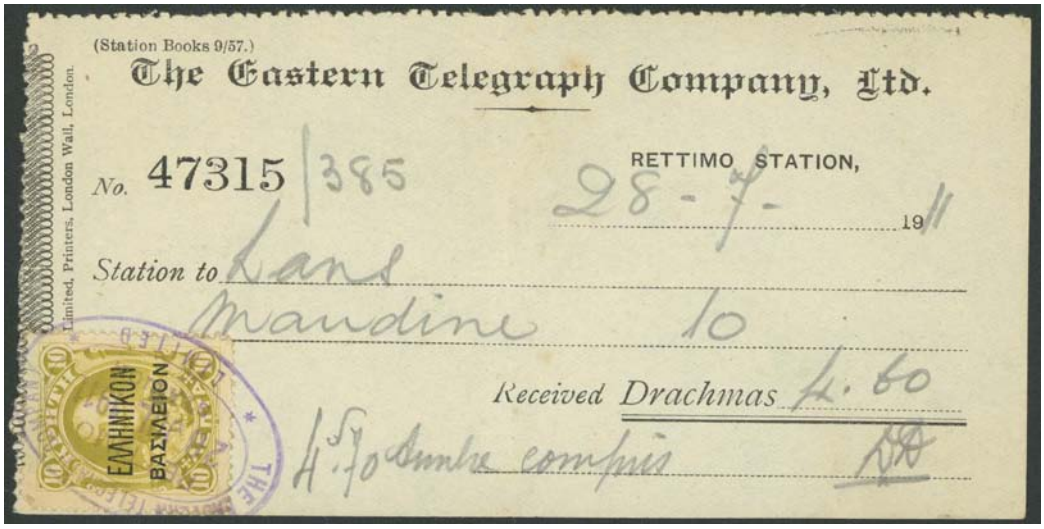
You may not recognise always the **2nd group** but there are numerous examples. An example of this was for sale at www.ebay.com .The **3rd group** is smaller was as an example an overprinted stamp from Transvaal.

Australian 2/6 postage stamp with telegraph cancel Burnie dated 1953 and overprint of series 1901on postage stamp of series 1896-97

The **4th group** is not completely listed in the works of Hiscocks, maybe bacause there was little to find about it. Transvaal is mentioned (1901) but there are older examples of usage recorded. Also from Crete during the Ottoman era and as independant State used by the Eastern telegraph Company. There are also Ottoman revenues on telegram forms. I will try to give more information later.

A: Crete

During the Ottoman era there were 2 attemps made by the Atlantic Cable and Underseas Communications in 1859 but both failed. In 1866 there was a report about a new cable from Chios to Crete. Place: unknown. In 1871 there was the construction of a cable from Canea – Rettimo and Sitia to Rhodos. In 1889 another report of a cable between candia and canea. These actions were carried out by "The Eastern Telegraph Company Ltd." I couldn't find anything in catalogues of Vlastos and Karamitsos. Even the book for Crete has no special chapter and examples of cancellations appear only if in combination with another subject. As far as I know there are cancellations from Canea ; Sitia and Rettimo ; all of them coastal places at the North side of the island.

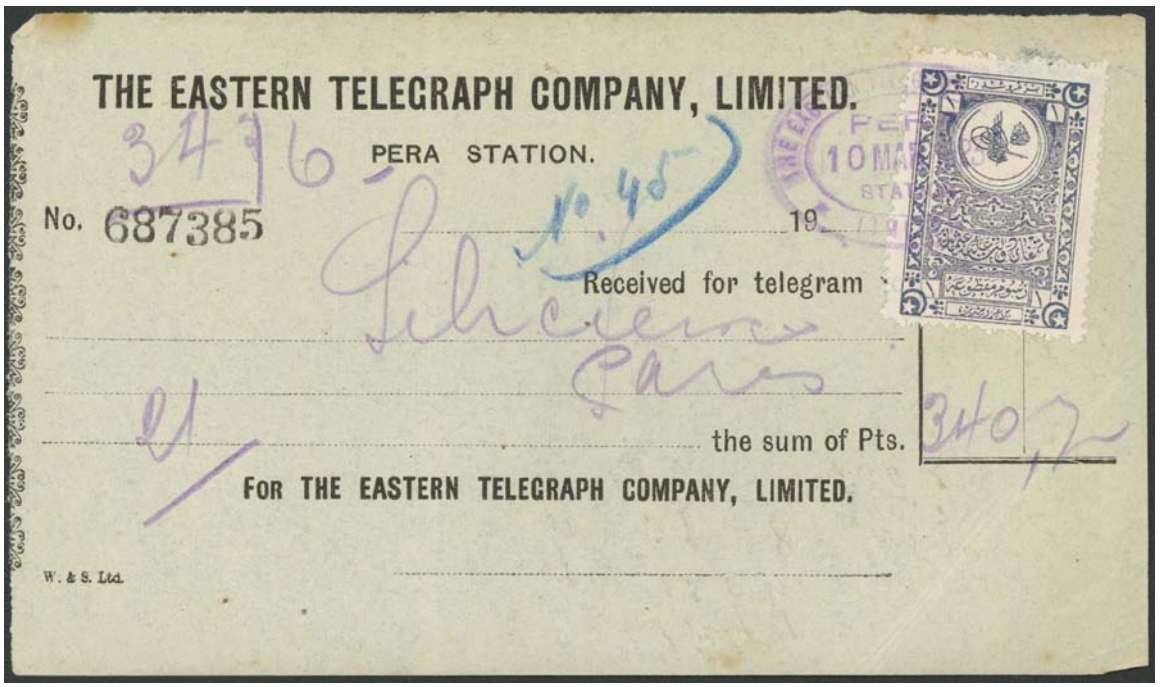


example of cancel; on Ottoman 10 paraProportional Fee of 1891 with handstamp type VI and an example of a 10 lepta with overprint type III (1911)

B: Ottoman Empire

Maybe there is literature of this area for telegraph stamps and telegraph usage of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey but considering the fact that I only collect the revenues, the chances of getting connected with this literature is small. That's why I liked the purchase of 2 totally different documents. The first one was affixed on a document and the back side shows paper traces and parts of the gummed side. It has been torn off roughly or rudely cut off. The used language is partially Arab and French. The 2nd document is torn from a booklet, similar to the one shown from Crete. And also like Crete from "The Eastern Telegraph Company Ltd". The amazing site of the Atlantic Cable and Underseas Commonications reports the construction of a cable to Constantinople in 1855, directed by the Ottoman Government. (see also http://www.atlantic-cable.com/). Beyond that date I can't trace anything in that direction. That concerns also for "The Eastern Telegraph Company Ltd". In both cases they may had various offices with a vast network throughout the country.
The first formular for 16 words was dated 21-10-1907 and does not show a station.. The tax stamp, a 10 para type "fixed fee"of 1900 had probably the same usage as for the U.S.A. as a tax for a telegram or a rceipt stamp. The value of 10 para has been in use on Crete for a long time.

part that was affixed on a telegram on 21-10-1907. Station unknown.



receipt for a telegram on Pera Station on March 10th 1923

The 2nd document is better to identify ad reports the station of Pera. Pera (being now Beyoglu) was the station at the European side in the Bosporus in British territory and connected with Üsküdar at the Asian side of the Ottoman Empire. Beyoglu is now melted with Istambul. They used a similar type of cancel like the ones for Crete. The use of a 1 piaster revenue type "fixed fee" of 1916 on March 10th 1923 is shortly before the proclamation of the republic on October 29th of that year. The difference with the last document is the sum of points or "parts". On the internet you will find these documents now and then for a reasonable price.

C: Orange Free State

For this chapter it's better for me to refer to a special issue for telegraph stamps of the Orange Free States Study Circle. This was issued some years ago and almost in full colour with many illustrations. I can't show many examples of the unoverprinted revenues because I do not have many of them. The left one below is a similar cancellation that can bbe found on postcards but in a larger diameter/ The right one has a better appearance to explain it's usage.

telegraphic cancellations on the 1/- revenue of series 1878.

D: Transvaal.

The best reference for cancellations ; periods of usage etc is the work of Drysdall. He describes the history of telegrapy ; offices and cancellations. The first line was constructed during the British occupation and connected Utrecht with newcastle and a line to Pietermartizburg and Durban with a marine cable. This line was completed on June 12th 1879. later on they extended the connection to Pretoria (september 18th 1879 and Marthinus Wesselstroom (1880).

Rates: for Transvaal and later by a treaty in 1879 they were signed by Natal ; Orange Free State and later on the Cape Colony.

Announcement of the National Government No 131 on **september 1st 1879** in the Transvaal Government Gazette:

Normal message:	1/- first 10 words+ 6d for each 5 words maximum.
Encrypted messages:	double rate of normal messages
Press releases:	1/- first 20 words+ 6d for each 10 words maximum

Examples below are used during the 2nd South African Republic (1881 – 1900) were they used up the old stock of the 1st British occupation (1877-1881). Despite of that telegraphic used revenues of that era are scarsely found.

Transvaal 1878: Telegraph cancels from pretoria (3-4-83) and Marthinus Wesselstroom (16-4-83)

At the 2nd British occupation in 1900 the British used up the old revenue stamps issued in 1886 and proveded them with the overprint "V(ictoria) R(egina) I(mperia). During that time you will find almost ony ARMY TELEGRAPH cancellations with a kapital code for each station that was opened during the Boer war. Examples of cancellation fragments below show f.i. "P"and "PR" (pretoria) at the left and "M" (Military station) at the right. The most known data vary from may 31st 1900 in Johannesburg to August 15th 1902 in Belfast.

Transvaal 1900: Revenue stamps of 1886 overprinted "V.R.I." and ARMY TELEGRAPH cancels

The **5th group** is well documented by Hiscocks but only existing for a few countries:

Ecuador (several series 1895 - 1944); El Salvador (1899) ; **India (1881-1882)** ; Marocco- Marruecos (1935-38); **Natal (1902)** ; Nicaragua (1908-1912) ; **Orange Free State (1886-1888)** ; **Orange River Colony (1901)** ; Panama (1919) ; Philippines (1881) ; Portugal-Macao; -Afrika en - India (1919) ; **Sarawak (1933-1935)** and **Transvaal (1901-1903)** .

I have found only examples of the bold printed areas so I will discuss them briefly.

A: Natal

In Hiscocks these are the only type of revenues overprinted for telegraphic usage. They are less seen used but you can't see that in the quotations of this catalogue. The overprints are found in many varities and for those familiar with this key type of stamp you can distinguish 2 types with differences in a line below the chinand differences in the crown. These were probably the last telegraphs for Natal because later issues are not recorded and they probably started to use postage stamps.

Natal 1902: revenue stamps of issue 1886-91 with several overprinted types. Besides (not in Hiscocks) 2 types of the key type possible.

B: Orange Free State

For a short and detailled story you can use Hiscocks. For more information the publication of the Orange Free State Study Circle is a greatefull work to check for. Next to the possible use of postage stamps in the early years you will find the first handstamped overprints with "TELE GRAAF"in 2 rows in 1885, followed by 2 colours of the 1 shilling in 1886. The overprint can be found with several shades, positions and errors. This concerns also the 1 shilling overprints on the 7- ; 8- and 9 shilling of 1878in 1888. Due to ther treaty with other former colonies of South Africa they used the same rates as Transvaal.

Orange Free State 1886: handstamped and 1888 overprints on higher values.

After the Boer War in 1900 the existing stamps were overprinted “V.R.I.”and “T.F.”.This was not for the revenue stamps! These higher values were only used by the Army Telegraps and for that purpose overprinted “A.T.” The cancellations are equal to those of Transvaal. I do not have data of usage but they will not be that much different from Transvaal. The 10 shilling value was used in Rhenoster Ridge. There is another issue dated 1903 but they were made on the remaining postage stamps. From that date they probably used postage stamps.

Orange Free State 1901 with overprints ad example of cancel.

C: India

This provisional series was issued during 1881-1882 using Special Adhesive stamps of 1866. Hiscocks reports 2 values in different colours for the “Calcutta” overprint (24x2 ½ mm and 28x3mm with stops); 3 values with the “Madras”overprint (26x 2 3/4 mm) without stop and one value with 2 types of the “Bombay” overprints (26 x 3 mm and 24 x 2 ½ mm) with no stops. Examples below show the “Calcutta version being No 22 (type I) and No 26 (Type II). Printing figures reported are very small from 400! to 48.000.

“Calcutta” overprint types I (left) and II (right” on Special Adhesive stamps of 1866.

D: Sarawak

Issue of 1935 with “TELEGRAPH” without “S”

Based on Hiscocks there ate 2 types of overprints known on these revenue stamps issued in 1918. The first type with “TELGRAPHS” from 1933 should exist for the entire series up to $ 10,- but so far only a 5; 10 and 25c are reported. The example on the previous page issued in 1935 without “S”is only known for this value. Found on Ebay and in the mean time sold for more than $ 50,- (cat. 1982: £30)

New Republic / Transvaal

E: Transvaal

The first and last overprint on revenues of the South African republic was on a 2 Pound value in 1902. This was a provisional issue to fill up the demand. In 1903 there were overprints on the new revenues of Transvaal issued in 1903. Many forgeries are reported like those of Fournier which will sell also for a reasonalble price on an auction. The real overprint has been done by a bolder and more smudged handstamp. Examples shown below like the one at the left were overprinted afterwards on a soaked off stamp previously cancelled by the Deeds Registry Office for a transaction of property. The one in the middle has probably been affixed on a similar document but now pencancelled. The one at the right appears to be cleaned because of the colour shadings at the background.

I hope this is a first step for another aspect in fiscal philately. There is much to report in this area that seemed to have an end.....

1902: provisional with overprint for telegraphic usage and another value (ARMY TELEGRAPH cancel)

1903 FORGERIES! Of this overprint.

Bronnen: Transvaal revenue en Telegraph stamps. Alan R. Drysdall (1995); Telegraph & Telephone stamps of the World; S.E.R. Hiscocks (1982) ; British Commonwealth revenues; J. Barefoot 2003; History of the Atlantic cable Company: http://www.atlantic-cable.com/ ; Distant Writing; A story of the Telegraph Companies in Britain in 1838-68; http://distantwriting.co.uk/cookewheatstone.aspx.