

# A new type of delivery charge mark

By Dr. Giovanni Bonello

Two types of delivery charge marks have been recorded on mail coming into Malta from overseas during the first half of the nineteenth century. These consist of a straight line handstamp, which includes the date (month, usually abbreviated, and day) and the charge levied. They are also improperly known by Postage Due marks.

Up to late in 1825, the charge was indicated in the traditional Maltese currency: Tari and Grani – abbreviated to capital “T”. (T.4.10, for instance, stands for four Tari ten Grani).

Early in 1826, the charge started being indicated in Sterling currency: “d” for pence, and when applicable, “s” for shillings. Both the straight line markings, in Maltese currency and in sterling, are well known.

There is however, a third type of charge mark which has not yet been recorded. The charge is in sterling currency, but for some peculiar reason, the “pence” are indicated by a capital P instead of a “d”. This is an intermediate type, seen used only for a short while immediately after the markings were switched over from Maltese currency to Sterling late in 1825.

One likely explanation for this intermediate type is that the Postal Authorities may have anticipated that local population would at first have found difficulty in associating “d” with “penny”. To facilitate matters, in this transitional phase, “P” was used for “Pence” instead of the illogical “d”. “P” suggests “Penny” much more obviously than “d” to anyone not conversant with sterling notation (£.s.d. – Libra, solidus, denarius).

There is no doubt that, on the three examples I have personally examined, the mark is a capital P and not an inverted “d”.

I am publishing and illustrating two examples of the intermediate type of charge marks.

*Figure 1:* A four pence (4P) charge mark on the back of a letter from Alexandria to Malta, dated 16th December, 1825, stamped in Malta on January 5, 1826. This letter, in Italian, is from Captain Gaetano Grixti to Messrs. Saverio Giacomo and Gabriele Zammit. It has two seals – the sender’s closing seal, and a disinfection wafer bearing a faint embossed imprint of a fouled anchor.

*Figure 2:* An eight pence (8P) charge mark, on the back of a letter from Alexandria to Malta, dated 10th December, 1825, stamped on arrival in Malta on January 5, 1826. This letter is from Salvatore Cortis to Captain Saverio Giacomo, and is written in Italian. The embossed disinfection wafer seal, is sharper on this letter.

*Figure 3:* shows examples of all the types of delivery charge marks: the Maltese currency first type; the intermediate type now being recorded; and the final Sterling currency type.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

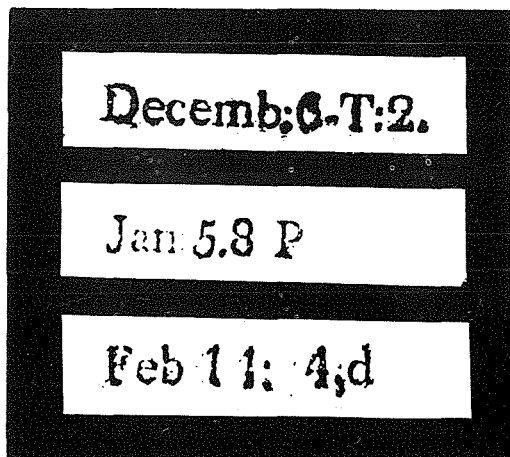


Figure 3.

First type: Maltese currency

Intermediate type: Sterling, but "P" for "Pence"

Last type: Sterling currency.