



Popular Guides to Stamp Collecting.

# SUDAN

BY

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## Specialism.

**T**HE older generation of philatelists have always maintained that the best training a beginner can have is to start as a general collector. They contend, and rightly, that an all-round knowledge of the stamps of the world familiarises him with all kinds of varieties of engraving, printing, paper, perforation, &c., and that such knowledge, so necessary for a thorough philatelic education, is not to be had in the circumscribed issues of any one country. Moreover, once a collector begins to specialise the desire to collect everything dies a natural death, and there is rarely a return to general collecting.

He who has had a grounding in general collecting can always examine with intelligent interest the treasures of a fellow collector, whatever may be the country of his choice; whereas he who has begun as a specialist, as some do, has, by his too early restriction, limited his opportunities of understanding and enjoying those countries that lie outside his own speciality. Specialism unfortunately means exclusiveness in collecting, in sympathy, and in

philatelic sociability. Nevertheless, it is a necessity of the times. It is, indeed, unavoidable. The stamps of the world are now so numerous that very few can even pretend to collect everything. As a matter of fact, general collecting for most people resolves itself into picking up odds and ends of a miscellaneous lot of countries, and making but a poor show at the best. The specialist, on the other hand, by concentrating his attention on a single country or group may hope to reach some sort of completeness. The stamps of the world, like the coins of the world, are now far too large an order for any collector to manage with credit. But the modest one country collector who is content to select a country within his means, may, by close study and patient and judicious collecting, win the admiration of his fellow collectors for completeness and condition, the high water marks of all collecting.

### **What is Specialism ?**

Specialism is the concentration of attention on the stamps of one chosen country, or group. It means the collection and study of all clearly defined varieties of engraving, printing, paper, watermark, perforation, and shades of colour, and some add cancellations, proofs, essays, reprints, and forgeries.

From a specialist's point of view a postage stamp is liable to many variations in the process of production. First the design is engraved. That engraving, in after years, may be retouched by the engraver to repair wear and tear, or to effect some improvement. Then the stamps are printed, first it may be from steel plates, then

from lithographic stones. The paper used may be changed from wove to laid, from thick to thin, from plain to coloured. Printing ink, even in the best printing establishment, varies in shade. Perforating machines wear out, and have to be changed. And all these changes, to which a postage stamp is liable, give rise to varieties that are duly collected, chronicled, and classified by the specialist.

### **How to Choose a Country.**

The choice of a country must be determined either by the money the collector is prepared to spend, the time he is able and willing to give to its collection and study, or by the facilities he may possess for securing such stamps as he needs, or by all three combined.

If the postal issues of a country stretch far back into the early days of postal history, then quite a little fortune may be needed. Some countries are easy to understand and classify, but when the issues of a country are complicated much time will have to be expended in its study.

Our older Colonies, such as the Australian, and some of the West Indian, make heavy calls upon the collector's purse, even in their cheapest form. But there are many of our newer colonies and protectorates whose issues have been few as yet, and are, therefore, still within the reach of modest expenditure. It is from these that the young collector should make his choice for his first experiment in specialising.

As issues and varieties multiply the collector of limited time, or means, will have to make his choice from some of the smaller countries.

Fortunately, there are several suitably small countries, many of them full of interesting and historic associations.

It is better to tackle a small country that one may reasonably hope to complete than to start with a country that must be sprinkled throughout with hopeless blanks.

A little country may seem insignificant at first, but as time goes on, and series follows series, with now and again an unavoidable provisional or two, the country grows in importance, its first issue gradually gets absorbed, prices rise, some values ripen into rarities, and the possessor of the complete collection of the once little country prides himself upon the wisdom of his early choice.

## The Stamps of The Sudan.

By way of an elementary lesson in specialising let us take one of those newer countries, and go through its issues, and examine and classify them as for a specialised collection. For this purpose it would be hard to make a better choice than the stamps of the Sudan, an important territory under British administration, and ranking as a British Colony. Its postal history commences with 1897, in which year the then current stamps of Egypt were overprinted in native characters, and in English with the word "Soudan," for use in the reconquered territory. Then followed in the next year stamps of special design with a camel and its rider, and inscribed "Sudan Postage," perf. 14, watermarked with a cross. The "cross" of the watermark was said to be objectionable to the Mahometan population, and it is being changed to a multiple crescent and star. And there is just one provisional, a 5m. on 5 pias, issued in 1903. Very little attention has yet been paid to the stamps of the Sudan, for they are regarded as being too recent, too few, and too lacking in varieties to attract the specialist. It will, therefore, be news to many that the stamps of the first issue are, like many other first issues, full of interesting minor varieties that have passed unnoticed and uncatalogued.



## 1897.

The first postage stamps issued for use in the Sudan were the current stamps of Egypt overprinted in black with the word "Soudan," and over it the equivalent in Arabic characters. These stamps were designed for use in the post offices between Wadi-Halfa and the Egyptian frontier, under the management of the British authorities. The chroniclers at the time rather hastily announced that the overprint differed in type on every stamp in the sheet. On every row of the sheet would have been nearer the mark. There are six well-defined types of the Arabic overprint. What I shall term the normal setting has the comma-like characters in the centre and the last characters level. The types are as follows :—

1. Normal, *i.e.*, commas and last character level.
2. Commas level, but last character dropped.
3. Second comma and last character, both dropped.
4. Second comma tailless.
5. Last character wider spaced.
6. Central dot omitted from first character.

The stamps of Egypt which were overprinted were in sheets of 120, in two panes of sixty, one above the other, each pane consisting of six rows of ten stamps. I have had the opportunity of examining complete panes of each value. Each row in each pane is made up throughout

**TYPE I.**

Normal, i.e., commas and last character level.

**TYPE III.**

Second comma and last character both dropped.

**TYPE II.**

Commas level, but last character dropped.

**TYPE V.**

Last character wider spaced.

**TYPE II.**

Same as third row.

**TYPE IV.**

Second comma tailless.

of one of the varieties in the above list, as follows :—

1st row, all type I. Normal.

2nd row, all type 3. Second comma and last character, both dropped.

3rd row, all type 2. Commas level but last character dropped.

4th row, all type 5. Last character wider spaced.

5th row, all type 2. Same as 3rd row.

6th row, all type 4. Second comma tailless.

Type 6. Central dot omitted from the first character. This omitted dot variety is the first stamp in the fifth row of the bottom pane. I have found this variety in the 2m. and 3m. only. It is not to be found in any of the top panes that I have examined.

The accompanying photographic reproduction of a vertical row illustrates each variety.

Wmk. Crescent and Star. Perf. 14.

Type 1. Normal.

1 mil. brown.  
2 mils. green.  
3 mils. orange.  
5 mils. carmine.  
1 pias. ultramarine.  
2 pias. orange-brown.  
5 pias. slate.  
10 pias. violet.

Type 2. Commas level, but last character dropped.

1 mil. brown.  
2 mils. green.  
3 mils. orange.  
5 mils. carmine.  
1 pias. ultramarine.  
2 pias. orange-brown.  
5 pias. slate.  
10 pias. violet.

**Type 3. Second comma and last character, both dropped.**

- 1 mil. brown.
- 2 mils. green.
- 3 mils. orange.
- 5 mils. carmine.
- 1 pias. ultramarine.
- 2 pias. orange-brown.
- 5 pias. slate.
- 10 pias. violet.

**Type 4. Second comma tailless.**

- 1 mil. brown.
- 2 mils. green.
- 3 mils. orange.
- 5 mils. carmine.
- 1 pias. ultramarine.
- 2 pias. orange-brown.
- 5 pias. slate.
- 10 pias. violet.

**Type 5. Last character wider spaced.**

- 1 mil. brown.
- 2 mils. green.
- 3 mils. orange.
- 5 mils. carmine.
- 1 pias. ultramarine.
- 2 pias. orange-brown.
- 5 pias. slate.
- 10 pias. violet.

**Type 6. Central dot omitted from first character.**

- 1 mil. brown.
- 2 mils. green.
- 3 mils. orange.
- 5 mils. carmine.
- 1 pias. ultramarine.
- 2 pias. orange-brown.
- 5 pias. slate.
- 10 pias. violet.

**Overprint inverted.**

It is stated that only one pane of sixty stamps of the 1 millieme value was issued with the overprint inverted. It is of course to be found with all the varieties noted above.

1 mil. brown.  
In all six varieties of the overprint

1898.

The *Journal Official* published at Cairo on the 28th February, 1898, contained the following announcement:—

“New postage stamps of 1, 2, 3, and 5 mill., 1, 2, 5, and 10 piastres, will be issued on the 1st March, 1898, for the prepayment of postage of letters, &c., originating in the Sudan. A stock of these stamps will also be kept at the Financial Secretary's office, War Office, Cairo, where they may be purchased.”

In accordance with this notice, new stamps of the size and design illustrated were put into circulation.

They were printed by Messrs. De la Rue, watermarked with what has been variously termed a Maltese cross, a quatrefoil, and a flower, and perf. 14.

They were printed in two colours, the centre in one colour and the frame in another, and were arranged in two panes, one above the other, each pane consisting of sixty stamps in five horizontal rows of twelve.

Each pane was surrounded on the three outer sides by two lines of colour, the inner line of the colour of the centre, and the outer line of the colour of the frame of the stamp. Across the centre of the sheet there is a single line to each pane, formed of the two colours, in alternate slips the width of a stamp; and in the space between the panes are two

narrow labels, extending across the sheet, composed of vertical lines in a frame, all in the colour of the centre of the stamp.



**Wmk. Quatrefoil. Perf. 14.**

- 1 mil. frame carmine; centre brown.
- 2 mil. frame deep brown; centre green.
- 3 mil. frame green; centre mauve.
- 5 mil. frame black; centre carmine.
- 1 piast. frame brown; centre blue.
- 2 piast. frame blue; centre black.
- 5 piast. frame green; centre brown.
- 10 piast. frame mauve; centre black.

**1903.**

Having run short of the 5 millieme value 50,000 of the 5 piastres value were surcharged "5 millieme," in black across the centre of each stamp.

One sheet of 120 was found with the surcharge inverted.

The overprinting was done in Khartoum.

This provisional was probably caused by the change of watermark, a new supply with the crescent and star watermark being ordered but not received; the hiatus was made good by using up a number of the 5 piastres.

**Wmk. Quatrefoil. Perf. 14.**

"5 milliemes," on 5 piastres, green and brown.

**Surcharge Inverted.**

5 milliemes, on 5 piastres, green and brown.

**1902-4.**

It is stated that the Soudanese sheikhs objected to the watermark cross on the stamps, and brought the matter to the notice of the Sirdar. Lord Kitchener thereupon is said to have given immediate orders that the star and crescent watermark was to figure on the next issue.

Whether this story be true or not the Maltese cross watermark has been changed for a multiple crescent and star watermark. The change was effected as the supplies of the objectionable watermark were exhausted. The colours remain unchanged.

**Wmk. Crescent and Star. Perf. 14.**

- 1 mil. frame carmine; centre brown.
- 2 mil. frame deep brown; centre green.
- 3 mil. frame green; centre mauve.
- 5 mil. frame black; centre carmine.
- 1 pias. frame brown; centre blue.
- 2 pias. frame blue; centre black.
- 5 pias. frame green; centre brown.
- 10 pias. frame mauve; centre black.



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