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The 1924 High Values: A New Addition

There are two values: 5 Kran and 5 Rupee, which differ only in their colour and the inscriptions in the top panels. Each were issued in sheets of 4 and there are two types of each value within the sheet.

5 Kran



5 Rupee



The 'common' value is the 5 Rupee but 'common' is, as ever, a relative word and it is not that easy to find. When one digs a little deeper there are actually some scarce variations. It comes in two markedly different shades: dull reddish purple and bright violet. The initial dull reddish purple printing had margins all round, but a later printing had a margin at the left side only rather like a booklet pane, with the other three outer edges imperf. The 'perf all round' stamps are decidedly difficult. The same stamp in bright violet is usually found imperf on one or two sides, but a single example has now also been reported perf all round.

The five Kran is truly rare. No sheets are known, indeed at the time of writing the *1900-1933 book*¹ only three copies had been reported—two mint (one with margins right and bottom) and a single used example (margins top and left). I now know of a third mint example (no margins), and a second used (margins top and left).

¹ *Afghanistan 1901-1933*, Jack, 2011.

The 5 Kran mint and used.



Gibbons footnote² another stamp in this series – a 15 Rupee rose – but say that there is no evidence that it was issued. This value is not mentioned by either Patterson or Uyebara/Dietrich in their books³, suggesting that they had not seen examples. It was omitted from the 1901-1933 book for the same reason. However, since that was published in 2011 two examples have surfaced and one is illustrated below for the first time–



It should be noted that both the 5 Kran 'used' stamps have negative seal type postage due cancellations which could well have been applied as a CTO cancellation. In which case the reason for listing the 5 Kran but not the 15 Rupee disappears. These were after all very high face value stamps, presumably intended for parcels but with no inscription to say so. It is therefore not surprising that used examples have not survived.

² *SG Part 16, Central Asia*, 4th Edn, p.7, footnote below SG 183c.

³ *Afghanistan: Its Twentieth Century Postal Issues*, Patterson, 1964; *Afghan Philately*, Uyebara/Dietrich, 1979.

1930's Publicity Material

The publicity sheet below was found in an envelope sent on the 1st May 1938 to the USA by "A. Kayoum, Vice-Directeur au Ministere des P.T., Kaboul". It shows the 1932 Definitive, National Council, Newspaper, and Liberation Monument sets in ascending face value.



Germany was active economically in Afghanistan throughout the 1920's and '30s so the German inscription perhaps indicates where the majority of enquiries received by the Ministry of Posts at that time were coming from. The portrait of King Nadir Shah would appear to be the same as that used for the 1938 20th Anniversary of Independence stamp.

The 1906 Petitions Revenue Stamp



This stamp has previously only be seen as a single but a strip of 3 (next page) and a sheet of 5 have recently come to light.

The stamps have been recorded on wove paper imperf, perf 8, and imperf x perf 11½; and with or without the Howard & Jones watermark.

These multiples are on wove paper, perf 8 (either once or twice between the stamps) and without watermark.

It seems that there was only one die as all stamps appear to be identical.

The sheet shows that the stamps are arranged with the bottom two tête-bêche in relation to the others – an arrangement similar to that used for the 1907 postage stamps. The variation in colour is also similar to the 1907 postage stamps. With the 1907 stamps each pane was printed one at a time and the plate only re-inked after every other pane was printed so giving alternate light and dark panes. Here it seems each stamp was printed individually without the plate being re-inked at all so that the impressions get progressively lighter. The sequence for the sheet would have been–

stamp 3

stamp 2

stamp 1

then turn the sheet and – going by the shade –

stamp 5, then

stamp 4

as 4 appears to be the lightest shade.

This practice would seem to be borne out by the shades of the strip of three.

The perforation is very irregular. The wonky left vertical ‘line’ on the sheet is particularly noticeable, especially between stamps 2 and 3; and the left vertical line of the strip of three is also rather bendy. Was it a ‘sewing machine’ type of perforation, or a line perforator that just ‘jumped’ and ‘wandered’? Whatever it was, it wasn’t used for the postage stamps where the first attempt at perforation was the short-lived zigzag roulette, followed by perf 11¾.

That all seems plausible, but there is a problem with the theory. The strip of three illustrated below shows a different sheet arrangement as here it is the middle (lightest shade) stamp which is tête-bêche. If the paper had to be turned to fit the press in order to make the final two impressions, how can one of them be upright?



One possible answer is that some sheets were fed into the press from the front (as the 2 Abasi of 1907), and some from the side (as the 1 Rupee of 1907). Feeding in from the front, the press would only take two 1907 panes then the paper had to be turned for the third pane. Feeding in from the side, all four panes of the 1 Rupee could be upright. The size of the paper meant that to print the three 2 Abasi panes in the same way as the 1 Rupee would have been a very tight squeeze and so it seems it was decided that was not practicable.

The paper size for the 1906 Revenue stamp is almost identical to that of the 1907 postage stamps – so they could have been fed in to the press either way provided the plate was set up correctly. By way of comparison, the next page shows complete sheets of the 1906 Revenue stamp and the 1907 2 Abasi and 1 Rupee postage stamps placed side by side. The Revenue sheet has been printed in the same manner as the 2 Abasi postage – as can be seen three stamps can be printed in one direction, but the paper has to be turned for the final two.

The strip of three above could not have been printed in that way. But if the plate had been set up sideways and the paper had been fed in to the press from the side, as the 1 Rupee, then if the paper was turned, whether by accident or design, impressions could appear in either direction. If that was the case for the above strip, then the bottom stamp was printed first, the paper was turned and the middle stamp was printed next, then the plate was re-inked, the paper was turned again and the top stamp printed last.

That explanation contains an awful lot of conjecture so alternative theories are welcome!



(Illustration reduced)

On the revenue front there have been many new finds since the *Revenue Stamps and Printed Paper of Afghanistan* was published. A Second Edition is now being planned for 2018 – which will be ten years after the 1st Edition. If anyone has any additional information that could be included, I'd be delighted to hear from them.