

**GIBRALTAR**



**Morocco**

**MOROCCO AGENCIES**

**BY JOHN VALLIS**

**Agencies**

**40 CENTIMOS**



# MOROCCO AGENCIES

By "JOHN" H. VALLIS



MOROCCO is situated in the north-west of Africa, and has an area of about 314,000 square miles, with an estimated population of 6,500,000, and out of that number the Jews, who chiefly live in the cities, total 300,000. The principal ruler of this dominion is the Sultan Muley Yusef, who acceded to the throne of Morocco in 1912, but in that same year a Franco-Spanish agreement fixed the boundaries between the French and Spanish Zones, and the principal part of Morocco now forms a French Protectorate, and that is why one sees nowadays French Moroccan stamps overprinted "Protectorat Française" and Arabic inscriptions. This country is said to be rich in minerals—copper, lead and tin being found in considerable quantities; gold and silver are also found, but agriculture is greatly neglected. In 1914 the imports from the United Kingdom were £1,454,923 and the exports £408,292. I think this is the only country that contains three capitals, viz., Fez, with a population of 120,000; Marrakesh, 50,000; and Mequinez, 56,000. As there are no railways, visitors wishing to make journeys into the interior find it very costly, as, before proceeding from one town to another, they have to find a Moghrazni, that is a Moroccan cavalier who is acquainted with the routes and knows where the shelters for the night are to be found, but, before leaving, it is best for Europeans to obtain a letter of recommendation from the Consul, which will give permission to stop at the houses of Caïds, who are very hospitable. As there are no made-up roads, all goods are transported on the backs of camels.

In 1892, as there were a number of Europeans residing in various towns of Morocco, and having no facilities for postal communication from one town to another, Courier



posts (or Post runners) were established and controlled by private companies (French and Spanish) who accepted letters for transmission from one town to another, and stamps were issued and used, which we now call "local" stamps, but which in reality was the first idea of postal communication in Morocco. As the European residents wished to correspond with all parts of the world, the British, French, German and Spanish governments opened offices, as agencies in various towns, and had their stamps overprinted for use on letters passing from one town to another and also for correspondence going outside of Morocco. It is the British agency that I am going to write about.



Previous to the introduction of Gibraltar stamps overprinted "Morocco Agencies" ordinary Gibraltar stamps were sold and used at the British post offices opened at Alcazar, Casablanca, Fez, Laraiche, Mazagan, Mequinez, Mogador, Rabat, Saffi, Tangier and Tetuan, and in these eleven offices, letters, etc., were transmitted at the same rate of postage applicable to Gibraltar. In 1898 these stamps were supposed to be discontinued, but I have seen an English King Edward 1d. scarlet used at the British post office, Mequinez, July 7th, 1912, and I have the ½d. green and 1d. carmine of Gibraltar, King Edward 1907-11 issue, used at the British post office, Tangiers. There are some collectors who make a special collection of these stamps; they collect each town as if it were a country, therefore they would collect eleven sets of Gibraltar stamps from 1886 to 1898 issues with Morocco town postmarks. I might say, some of these postmarked stamps are rare. I sold one the other day for 50s., but, on the other hand,



some are not worth more than 1s. I have never yet seen the first issue, Bermuda surcharged "Gibraltar" used in any town of Morocco (see page 20).

In 1898, owing to the depreciation of Spanish money, Gibraltar was about to revert to British currency as formerly, but of course that could not be done in Morocco, so the existing issue of Gibraltar was surcharged in order that they could not be sent to Gibraltar to be redeemed, and the following official announcement of this change was published in the Gibraltar "Official Gazette" as follows:

#### GOVERNMENT NOTICE.

"His Excellency the Governor desires to notify for public information that Orders in Council have been approved by Her Majesty making British Sterling Silver, legal tender in Gibraltar, under the conditions of the Coinage Act, 1870.

It is intended to promulgate these Orders on the 1st prox., from which date the Order in Council of 1881, regulating the currency of Gibraltar, will be repealed, but the Spanish Coins specified therein will continue to be legal tender in payment of all engagements entered into before the promulgation of the new Orders in Council.

From the 1st October, 1898, all postage fees will be payable in British Money, and *Stamps having the duties expressed in Spanish Currency will cease to be valid in prepayment of postage in Gibraltar*, but only those overprinted 'Morocco Agencies' will continue to be valid in the Postal Agencies maintained in Morocco by the Gibraltar Government.

From the 1st to the 15th day of October next, both days inclusive, unused postage stamps having the duties expressed in Spanish currency will be re-purchased at the Post Office at their face value, provided that the stamps be not soiled or otherwise damaged, and that they are presented in strips of not less than two.

The new postage stamps, etc., with sterling duties, will be on sale on 1st October, 1898.

By command,

H. M. JACKSON,  
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office,  
Gibraltar, September 14th, 1898.

#### GIBRALTAR STAMPS OVERPRINTED "MOROCCO AGENCIES."

These stamps were overprinted at the office of the "Gibraltar Chronicle," with type which was very old and worn, and was set up to print 120 stamps in two panes of



60; there is only one error catalogued, and that is the inverted V for A in Agencies, which occurs on the 36th stamp, right pane. Now, for some reason, there were two settings of this overprint and this error occurred only in the first setting; in the second setting it was corrected. There are numerous minor varieties in the settings of these overprints, which are always constant on the sheets, and these are called type varieties, but are not catalogued, and as there are a good many collectors making collections of these, I will give a list of them, as it is by these type varieties that one can tell the difference between the first and second settings.

In the First Setting, left pane, the varieties are on stamp No. 24, broken "n" in "Agencies"; No. 40, broken "M" in "Morocco"; No. 41, dot at bottom of second "e" in "Agencies"; Nos. 6, 36, 48, 49 and 56, dot in second "c" in "Agencies"; and Nos. 26 and 45, dot in lower loop of "g" in "Agencies".

Right pane—No. 7, broken "c" in 1st "c" of "Morocco"; No. 8, broken "g" in "Agencies"; No. 13, dot over second "e" in "Agencies"; No. 36, inverted "V" for "A" in "Agencies", with dot in lower loop of "g"; No. 44, long tail to "s" and dot in "g"; Nos. 4 and 22, dot in "e"; No. 57, defective "A"; and Nos. 14 and 35, dot in "g".

Second Setting, left pane—No. 1, broken top "M"; No. 2, blurred "M"; No. 6, thick "M"; No. 43, dot under "c" in "Agencies"; No. 47, broken second "o" in "Morocco" and dot under "n" in "Agencies"; No. 48, broken "g"; and the whole sixth vertical row has no serif, or broken serif, to "g" in "Agencies".

Right pane—No. 23 has "en" joined in "Agencies"; the sixth vertical row has the left foot of "A" in "Agencies" broken off, and you will notice in this row the error inverted "V" has been corrected (No. 36).

Now these are all the constant type varieties that exist; sometimes you come across other letters that are broken, but these are not constant and were caused by something getting on the face of the type when printing the stamps.

In the second setting on the 40c., 50c. and 1 peseta, two kinds of ink were used, one a deep black and the other as Gibbons catalogues it, "in blue," which should be blue-black; these are difficult to see, but by holding them up to the light and looking through them you can see the blue tinge showing through them, and the story goes that when a 50c. blue surcharge was shown to the postmistress of Gibraltar she pronounced it a forgery, not having known that the two different inks had been used. I might say that the 50c. is more often found with the blue surcharge than with the black. It appears that there was one sheet of the 10c. and one sheet of the 20c., each of the first setting, accidentally printed twice on each sheet. I have seen a pair of the 10c. and I have a pair of the 20c.; I sold the error, "inverted "Λ", some little while ago for £5, which was a very small price for such a rare variety; as far as I know, that is the only copy in existence.

#### CHECK LIST.

Gibraltar stamps of 1889 and 1895 issues overprinted locally "Morocco Agencies."

1898. Wide "M" in black.



- 5 centimos, green.
- 10    ,,    carmine.
- 20    ,,    olive green.
- 20    ,,    olive-green and brown.
- 25    ,,    ultramarine
- 40    ,,    orange-brown.
- 50    ,,    bright lilac.
- 1 peseta bistre and ultramarine.
- 2 pesetas black and carmine.



Overprint double.

10 centimos, carmine.

20 ,, olive green.

Error: inverted "Λ" for "A" in "Agencies."



5 centimos, green.

10 ,, carmine.

20 ,, olive green.

20 ,, olive green and brown.

25 ,, ultramarine.

40 ,, orange brown.

50 ,, bright lilac.

1 peseta, bistre and ultramarine.

2 pesetas, black and carmine.

Overprint double.

10 centimos, carmine.

20 ,, olive green.

1898. Overprint in blue or indigo black.

40 centimos, orange brown.

50 ,, bright lilac.

1 peseta, bistre and ultramarine.

In 1899 Messrs. De La Rue & Co. took in hand the work of overprinting these stamps, with the result that we get another font of type, and this printing is called the "Narrow M," or "London overprint." Sometimes with the "Wide M" and the "Narrow M" it is difficult to decide which is which, but a simple way of telling the difference is not by the "M" but by the "g" in "Agencies," as, where in the "Wide M" series the serif of the "g" curls above the top of the letter, in the "Narrow M" series the serif of the "g" runs in a horizontal line with the letters.

In this printing there are two errors catalogued; on No. 39 of the left pane the "M" of "Morocco" has an elongated serif at the top left side and this is termed the

“ Broad top M ”; and on No. 17 of the right pane, between the letters “nc” of “Agencies” there is a hyphen, which joins the two letters together, and this is termed the “Hyphen n-c” variety. There is also another variety which is not catalogued, on the fifth stamp in the left pane the second “e” in “Agencies” being broken; it looks like a small “co”, and this runs all through the series printed by Messrs. De La Rue & Co. The prices of all these varieties in the catalogue are ever so much too low; as when I can get them—and that is very seldom—I get considerably more for them than the quotations in Gibbons’ catalogue.

#### CHECK LIST.

1899. Overprinted in London by Messrs. De La Rue & Co.  
Narrow “ M.”



- 5 centimos, green.
- 10 „ carmine.
- 20 „ olive-green.
- 25 „ ultramarine.
- 40 „ orange-brown.
- 50 „ bright lilac.
- 1 peseta, bistre and ultramarine.
- 2 pesetas, black and carmine.

Error : Broad top “ M.”





- 5 centimos, green.
- 10 " carmine.
- 20 " olive-green.
- 25 " ultramarine.
- 40 " orange-brown.
- 50 " bright lilac.
- 1 peseta, bistre and ultramarine.
- 2 pesetas, black and carmine.

Hyphen between " n-c " of " Agencies."



- 5 centimos, green.
- 10 " carmine.
- 20 " olive-green.
- 25 " ultramarine.
- 40 " orange-brown.
- 50 " bright lilac.
- 1 peseta, bistre and ultramarine.
- 2 pesetas, black and carmine.

Broken second " e " in " Agencies."





5	centimos,	green.
10	„	carmine.
20	„	olive-green.
25	„	ultramarine.
40	„	orange-brown.
50	„	bright lilac.
1	peseta,	bistre and ultramarine.
2	pesetas,	black and carmine.

Double overprint.

25 centimos, ultramarine.

The death of Queen Victoria brought a change in the designs, Queen Victoria's head being superseded by that of King Edward VII. The stamps that were issued for Morocco were the same as for Gibraltar, with the exception that in Gibraltar the values were expressed in British currency, while those for Morocco were in Spanish currency, and also overprinted "Morocco Agencies." The same varieties existed as in the previous issue. These King Edward stamps came into use at various times, they being issued as the values of the Queen's head series were sold out.

Hereunder I give a list of these, with the dates when issued :—

#### CHECK LIST.

1903-05. Type of King Edward VII., Gibraltar, but with values in Spanish Currency and overprinted "Morocco Agencies" by Messrs. De La Rue.



5	centimos,	grey-green and green.	Jan., 1904.
10	„	dull purple on red.	Sept., 1903.
20	„	grey-green and carmine.	Sept., 1904.
25	„	purple and black on blue.	July, 1903.
50	„	purple and violet.	June, 1905.
1	peseta,	black and carmine.	19th Nov., 1905.
2	pesetas,	black and blue.	19th Nov., 1905.



Error : Broad top " M."

- 5 centimos, grey-green and green.
- 10 ,, dull purple on red.
- 20 ,, grey-green and carmine.
- 25 ,, purple and black on blue.
- 50 ,, purple and violet.
- 1 peseta, black and carmine.
- 2 pesetas, black and blue.

Hyphen between " n-c " of " Agencies."

- 5 centimos, grey-green and green.
- 10 ,, dull purple on red.
- 20 ,, grey-green and carmine.
- 25 ,, purple and black on blue.
- 50 ,, purple and violet.
- 1 peseta, black and carmine.
- 2 pesetas, black and blue.

Broken second " e " in " Agencies."

- 5 centimos, grey-green and green.
- 10 ,, dull purple on red.
- 20 ,, grey-green and carmine.
- 25 ,, purple and black on blue.
- 50 ,, purple and violet.
- 1 peseta, black and carmine.
- 2 pesetas, black and blue.

In 1905 came a change of watermark, the single Crown and C.A. making way for the Multiple Crown and C.A., and in this series ordinary and chalky papers were used; about this time the printers seem to have revised their type, as, after a few sheets of the 5c. on ordinary paper were printed, the hyphen "n-c" variety was corrected, and the broad top "M" did not occur on the 5c. and 10c. chalky paper. In this year there was a small second printing of the 25c. on single C.A. paper which had the hyphen variety corrected, but this can only be seen by having a pane, or a large block at least 4 rows from the top of the right pane showing the 17th stamp. I was fortunate at one time to get a sheet of two panes of this rare printing showing the broad top "M" on the left pane and the hyphen variety corrected on the right pane, but I could not keep it very long, as I sold it to a specialist collector of this country's stamps.

There is also another variety in this printing; a sheet of the 10c. ordinary paper went through the printing machine



the wrong way, which made the watermark inverted, and this is the only inverted watermark that I have had in the stamps of this country.

#### CHECK LIST.

1905. Watermark Single CA. Hyphen variety corrected.  
25 centimos, purple and black on blue.

1905-6. Watermark Multiple Crown and CA.

Ordinary paper.

5 centimos, grey-green and green. 1st May, 1905.  
10 ,, dull purple on red. 31st Jan., 1905.  
20 ,, grey-green and carmine. 24th Jan., 1906.

Chalky paper.

5 centimos, grey-green and green. 21st Jan., 1906.  
10 ,, dull purple on red. 8th Aug., 1905.  
25 ,, purple and black on blue. 6th June, 1906.  
50 ,, purple and violet. 3rd July, 1905.  
1 peseta, black and carmine. 27th Nov., 1905.  
2 pesetas, black and blue. 27th Nov., 1905.

Error: Broad top "M."

Ordinary paper.

5 centimos, grey-green and green.  
10 ,, dull purple on red.  
20 ,, grey-green and carmine.

Chalky paper.

25 centimos, purple and black on blue.  
50 ,, purple and violet.  
1 peseta, black and carmine.  
2 pesetas, black and blue.

Error: Hyphen "n-c" variety.

Ordinary paper.

5 centimos, grey-green and green.

Broken second "e" in "Agencies."

Ordinary paper.

5 centimos, grey-green and green.  
10 ,, dull purple on red.  
20 ,, grey-green and carmine.

Chalky paper.

5 centimos, grey-green and green.  
10 ,, dull purple on red.  
25 ,, purple and black on blue.  
50 ,, purple and violet.  
1 peseta, black and carmine.  
2 pesetas, black and blue.

In 1907 there came a great change; all the overprinted Gibraltar type of stamps were discontinued, and Great Britain stamps overprinted were used in their place. There are two sets of these stamps, one set overprinted "Morocco Agencies" and value expressed in Spanish currency, and the other set overprinted "Morocco Agencies" only. Gibbons says in his catalogue that the stamps without value in Spanish currency are said to be used on parcels; now I cannot see how that can be so, as I have had these stamps used on the original envelopes, so if they were used for parcels they were also used on letters.

#### CHECK LIST.

1907-12. King Edward VII. Stamps of Great Britain, perf. 14, De la Rue printing, overprinted "Morocco Agencies" and value.



5	centimos on	½d.	pale green.	O.
10	"	1d.	scarlet.	O.
15	"	1½d.	purple and green.	C.
20	"	2d.	green and carmine.	C.
25	"	2½d.	bright blue.	O.
40	"	4d.	green and purple-brown.	C.
40	"	4d.	orange.	O.
50	"	5d.	purple and blue.	C.
1	peseta on	10d.	purple and carmine.	C.
3	pesetas on	2s. 6d.	lilac.	C.
3	"	2s. 6d.	purple.	C.
6	"	5s.	carmine.	O.
12	"	10s.	ultramarine.	O.

Watermark inverted.

Ordinary paper.

10 centimos, dull purple on red.



Overprinted "Morocco Agencies."



- $\frac{1}{2}$ d. pale green. C.
- 1d. scarlet. O.
- 2d. green and carmine. C.
- 4d. orange. O.
- 4d. green and purple-brown. C.
- 6d. dull purple. C.
- 1s. green and carmine. C.
- 2s. 6d. lilac. C.
- 2s. 6d. purple. O.
- 2s. 6d. purple. C.

The letter "O" means Ordinary and "C" Chalky Papers.

The 2s. 6d. purple, ordinary paper, was used in Mazagan 15 Sept., 1910.

In 1912 King George V. stamps appeared and  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. values, type II, were overprinted, and in 1913 the  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 4d. King Edward, Harrison printing, perforated  $15 \times 14$ , and the Somerset House printing 2s. 6d. and 1os. were also brought into use.

CHECK LIST.

1912. King George V. stamps of Great Britain, Type II., watermark Crown, overprinted "Morocco Agencies" and value in Spanish currency.



- 5 centimos on  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. green.
- 10 " 1d. scarlet.

King Edward VII. Harrison printing, perf. 15×14, with the same overprint.

25 centimos on 2½d. bright blue.

Overprinted "Morocco Agencies" only.  
4d. bright orange.

Somerset House printing, ordinary paper, perf. 14.  
2s. 6d. dull purple.

Overprinted "Morocco Agencies" and value in Spanish currency.  
12 pesetas on 10s. bright ultramarine.

1914-15. King George V. Type III.



5 centimos on ½d. green.

15        ,,       1½d. brown.

In the next series the overprint was altered; "Morocco Agencies" appeared on the left and right side and the value in Spanish currency at the bottom of the stamps.



10 centimos on 1d. scarlet.

20        ,,       2d. reddish orange.

20        ,,       2d. bright orange.

25        ,,       2½d. ultramarine.

1 peseta on 10d. turquoise blue.



1914-17. Overprinted "Morocco Agencies" only.



- $\frac{1}{2}$ d. green.
- 1d. scarlet.
- 2d. orange.
- 1s. bistre.

The following stamps are rather difficult to tell to what printings they belong. There are two printings—Waterlow and De La Rue. The Waterlow printing consists of 4 values, the 2s. 6d. sepia-brown, 3 pesetas on 2s. 6d. sepia-brown, 6 pesetas on 5s. rose-carmine, and the 12 pesetas on 10s. deep blue; these can all be identified by the shade of colour, which is entirely different from the De La Rue printing, and on mint copies the gum is thick and shiny, whereas the gum on the De La Rue printing is dull, and looks as if it had been somewhat cleaned off.

I am classing all the high value Georgians together, although they were issued between 1914 and 1920. There was one value issued in 1920, the De La Rue printing, 12 pesetas on 10s. grey-blue, of which there were only 800 printed, and although only issued in March last year it is now classed as one of the rare stamps of Morocco. I notice that in the new Gibbons they price this stamp at 20s., but I have sold them for a much higher price, so the price in Gibbons is somewhat wrong for this stamp.

There is a rare variety on the 2s. 6d. sepia brown Waterlow printing, the 1st stamp 2nd row on the sheet having the re-entry which has lately been discovered.

Stamps of King George V. overprinted.



1914-17. Waterlow printing.

2s. 6d. sepia-brown.

3 pesetas on 2s. 6d. sepia-brown.

6 " 5s. rose-carmine.

12 " 10s. deep blue.

1917-20. De la Rue printing.



2s. 6d. chestnut.

3 pesetas on 2s. 6d. chestnut.

2s. 6d. grey-brown.

3 pesetas on 2s. 6d. grey-brown.

6 " 5s. pale carmine.

12 " 10s. grey-blue.

Error: Overprint double, one in "Red," the other "Albino."  
12 pesetas on 10s. grey-blue.

There are many shades of colour in the De La Rue printing. I have as many as seven different shades of the 2s. 6d. chestnut, and I have two interesting errors in the same stamp. In overprinting "Morocco Agencies" the 1st "c" in "Morocco" has been filled in, which makes it "Moroooco"; the second has the 2nd "c" filled in, which



reads "Morocco". I have not yet been able to find what Nos. these are on the sheet; they might be constant on one printing only, but certainly not on all printings.

1917. Stamps of King George V. overprinted "Morocco Agencies" and value in Spanish currency.



3 centimos on  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. green.

Overprinted "Morocco Agencies" and value in French currency.



- |               |                  |                          |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 3 centimes on | $\frac{1}{2}$ d. | green.                   |
| 5             | "                | $\frac{1}{2}$ d. green.  |
| 10            | "                | 1d. scarlet.             |
| 15            | "                | $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. brown. |
| 25            | "                | $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. blue.  |
| 40            | "                | 4d. grey-green.          |
| 1 franc on    | 10d.             | turquoise blue.          |

In this set with French currency there are several shades of each value.

Now I have come to an end, and, as far as I can remember, this is a full list of all the varieties that exist in the stamps of Morocco Agencies, and I might add, with the introduction of the French currency, all the high value stamps have become obsolete, and cannot be obtained in any of the Post Offices in Morocco; the highest value on sale now is the 1 franc, and as these high values have suddenly disappeared from issue, they will become rare. Nowadays, as it is almost impossible to make a general collection, collectors want to specialise, and if they do, and should specialise in the stamps of Morocco Agencies, I hope this little article will be of some use to them in getting their collection together, so as to write it up in a proper and business-like manner.

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NOTE.—Since writing this article, Mr. Alf. G. Johnson says:—"I have two copies of the  $\frac{1}{2}$ c. green Bermuda surcharged 'Gibraltar,' one used in 'Tangier' and the other 'Casablanca'; and Mr. A. Williams has  $2\frac{1}{2}$ c. used in 'Tangier.'" A member of the J.P.S., No. 3674, says that on Oct. 30th, 1919, permission was given for a small number of the 20c. on 2c. orange to be cut diagonally and used on this date as the 10c. value. Mr. Beanland says there is an error on the 15 centimes on  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d., the 2nd "c" being "o," which reads "Moroccoo" instead of "Morocco."

Mr. F. L. Monkhouse has two of 10c. and  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 10c. Multiple C.A. on piece of original used at Rabat, 9th May, 1905, for the 25c. rate.

"JOHN" H. VALLIS.