

# TELEGRAPH

## STAMPS OF THE

# SUDAN

Even before the British completed their reconquest of the Sudan in 1898, plans were being made to provide distinctive stamps for use in the vital telegraph service. In the interim, however, provisional stamps were issued. These were handoverprinted with the letters TEL in an oval applied to the first postal stamps of Sudan, which were themselves provisional overprints applied to Egyptian stamps.

After a year in service, the provisionals were replaced by the camel train stamps (whose issue dates are disputed in some cases).

Throughout the exhibit, 10 milliemes equal one piaster.

The major references for this exhibit are two books by E.C.W. Stagg, *Sudan, the Postal Markings 1867-1970* and *Sudan, the Stamps and Postal Stationery of 1867 to 1970*, as well as articles from *The Camel Post*.

### PLAN OF THE EXHIBIT

- p. 2 the provisional Sudan overprints
- pp. 3-4 the TEL overprints; colors, varieties, inverts, fakes
- p. 5 an early partial reconstruction
- pp. 6-13 telegraph cancels by location
- pp. 14-16 the camel train issue



The earliest known usage of this scarce type of cancel at Kerma (not listed by *Stagg*), 22 Oct. 1898, on a block of overprint types II, III, and IV. The stamp at lower left shows the small A variety.



# THE BASIC SUDAN OVERPRINTS

Sudan's first postage stamps, issued March 1, 1897, were Egyptian stamps overprinted with the name Sudan in Arabic and French. The overprints were applied by a stereotype plate which had ten columns of six overprints, each of which was distinctive.

Shown below is a transliteration of the Arabic overprint, which reads from right to left. Below that, a block of 12 shows the six types of overprints, which are designated types I through VI.

السودان  
N A D O O S L A

- |      |   |    |  |
|------|---|----|--|
| Alif | = | A  | Is a short vertical downstroke often out of alignment and not constant in thickness.           |
| Lam  | = | L  | Is a longer vertical stroke with a short hook at the foot attached to:—                        |
| Sin  | = | S  | Normally crinkled, but in this overprint is practically a horizontal straight line, joined to: |
| Waw  | = | OO | A tadpole shaped letter which in some cases is broken off short.                               |
| Dal  | = | D  | Resembles a comma  |
| Alif | = | A  | Same as the first letter   |
| Nun  | = | N  | Is a crescent-shaped letter like a large U with a dot in the middle.                           |



The upper left and lower right stamps show the broken nun variety.



# THE TELEGRAPH OVERPRINTS, COLORS AND VARIETIES



About four months after the first Sudan stamps were issued, a provisional hand-overprint was applied for use on telegraphs. It consisted of the letters TEL in an oval, as shown here. A single hand-stamp device was used, so there are no varieties. The vertical of the T is long, and the vertical of the E has a knick in it. Early overprints were applied at Halfa late in 1897 and were nicely executed, as shown here. Later overprints were more haphazard.



Above, black TEL overprints on the four most common values, on basic overprint types VI, III, V, and I, respectively. Below, blue overprints, shown on basic overprint types III, II, and II, are much scarcer than black.



Earlier examples of the TEL overprints were cleanly struck and well centered, like those below and on the previous page. At lower left are two strips of type V overprints, with the first stamp in the upper strip showing a broken lam, and the middle stamp in the lower strip showing the missing dot in the nun. The block of types V and VI overprints at lower right shows a bent lam in position 5 and a short alif in position 6.





OVERPRINT VARIETIES AND INVERTS; A FAKE OVERPRINT

The block of eight at right, types III through VI, shows a weak dot in the nun of position 6. Below, two inverted TEL overprints.



Lower left and lower center stamps in block of six, and also both stamps in the pair at right, show broken nun variety in type VI overprint.

Fake TEL overprints, like this one in blue on a type V overprint, are typically identified by the short vertical in the T of TEL.





AN EARLY PARTIAL RECONSTRUCTION

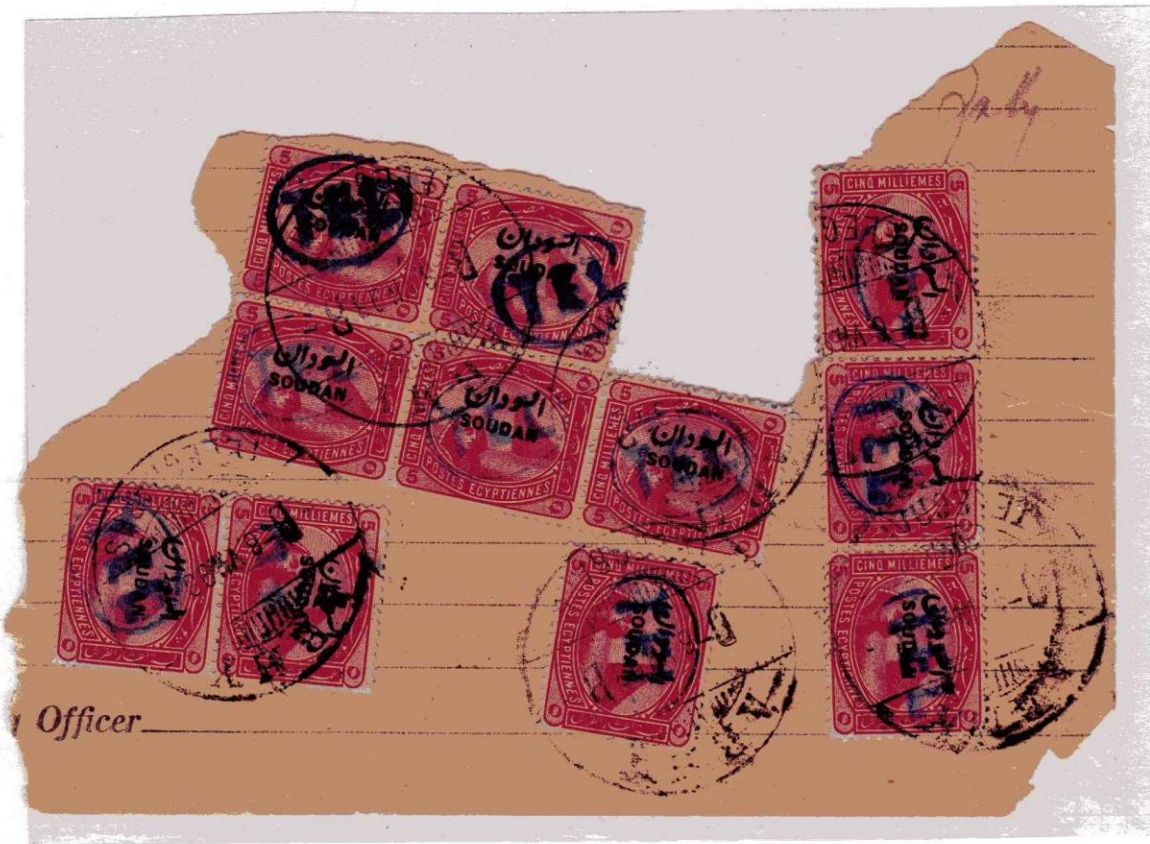
An early attempted partial reconstruction;  
notice generally poor quality of most of  
the TEL overprints, especially at lower  
right.

Type.				
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				



TELEGRAPH CANCELS: Berber (BB)

The most common telegraph cancel included the date flanked by a two-letter code to indicate the town name, as shown along the horizontal perfs in the center of the block of overprint types I and II at right. The letters BB indicate Berber, and the date 3.1.98 indicates January 3, 1898.



Blue TEL overprints canceled 6.VII.98, include types I through V, despite the lack of a vertical strip.



3.VII.98, type I overprint



13.I.98, type VI overprint



5.VII.98  
blue TEL  
over-  
print



top row,  
type VI,  
bottom row,  
type I.



TELEGRAPH CANCELS: Debbah (DB), Dongola (DN), Egyptian Corps (EC)



Debbah, 10.VI.98  
types III, IV, V;  
note partial TEL  
strike at lower left



Dongola, 20.II.98,  
types II and III  
above; 8.I.98,  
type I below.

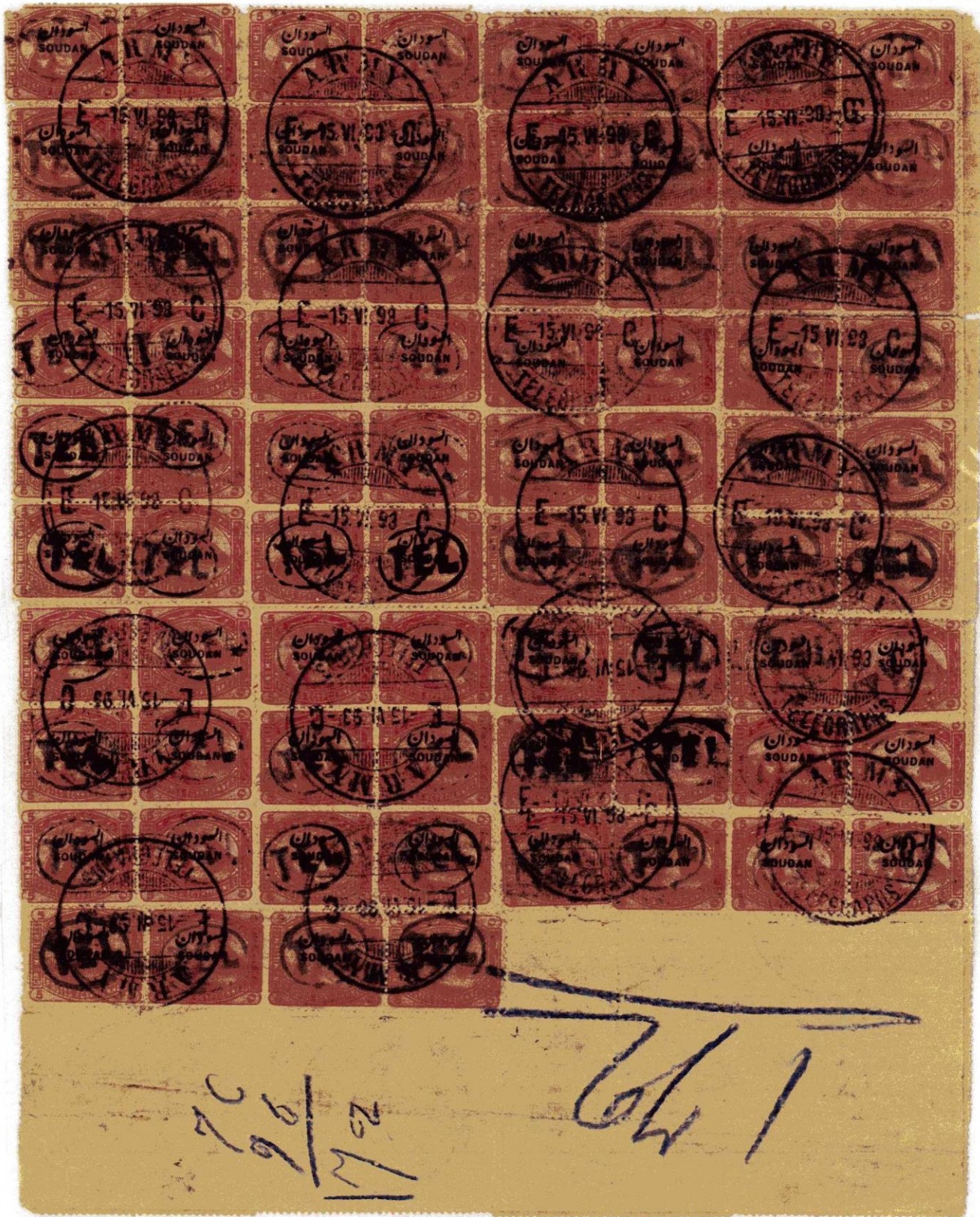


Egyptian Corps, 16.VI.98, overprint types  
V, VI, and I on the first three stamps in  
each row, and I and II on the pair at right.  
Varieties include small N in position 4 of  
the top row, broken nun on the two middle  
stamps of the middle row and first two stamps  
of the bottom row.



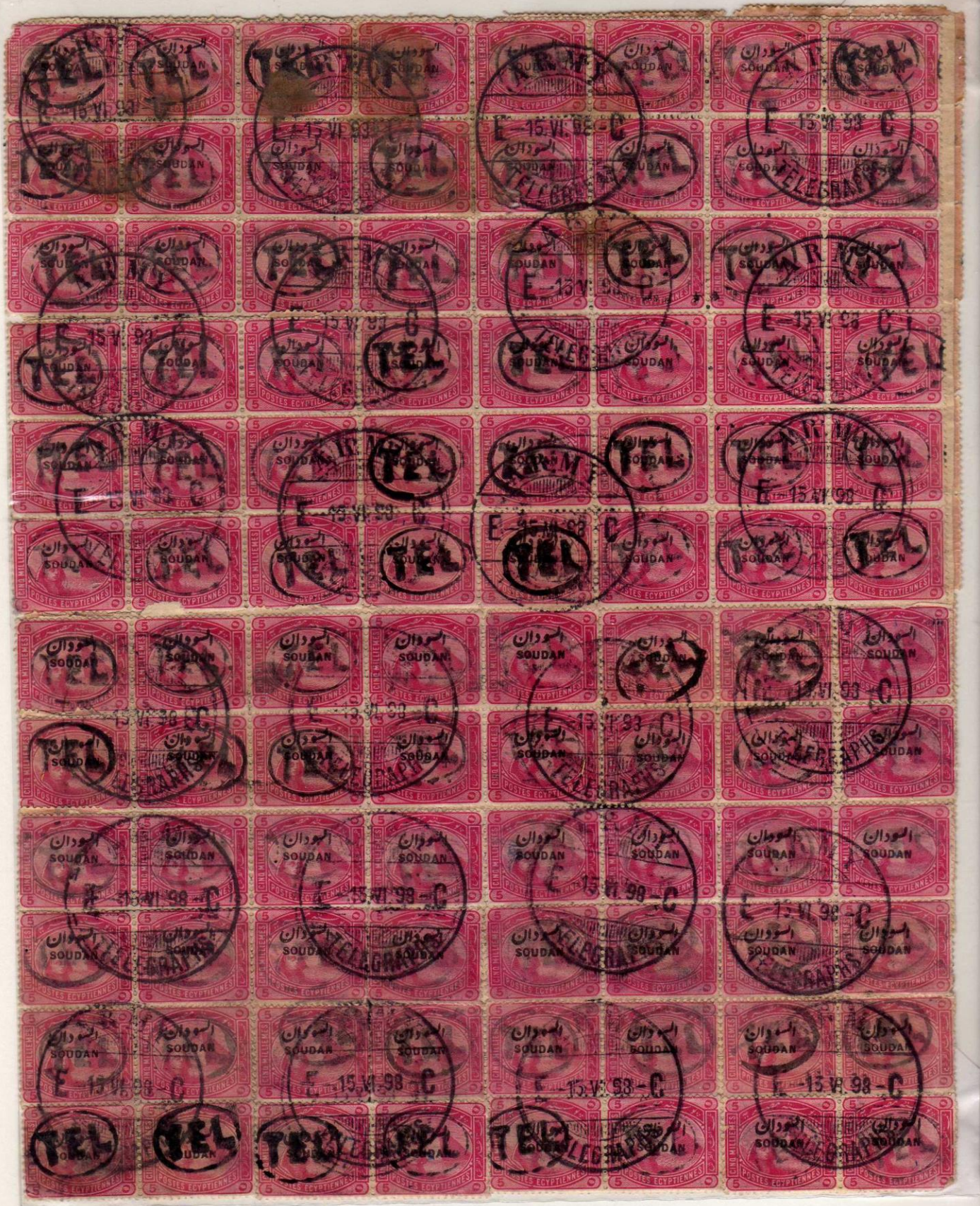
TELEGRAPH CANCELS: Egyptian Corps (EC)

Below, a reduced copy of one side of a telegraph form canceled 15.VI.98, bearing all six types of overprints. The blue numbers on the bottom show the addition of 76 (stamps on this side of the form) and 96 (stamps on the other side of the form, next page) for a total of 172 stamps, one of the largest such multiples known. Next page, the other side of the form.





TELEGRAPH CANCELS: Egyptian Corps (EC)





TELEGRAPH CANCELS: Halfa (HL)



Canceled 2.V.98, overprint types V and VI, with blue TEL overprints. Note the broken nun variety in positions 5 and 6.



Canceled 9.VII.97, type II overprints. The first three stamps from the left show the small A, damaged O, and missing crossbar in the A varieties.

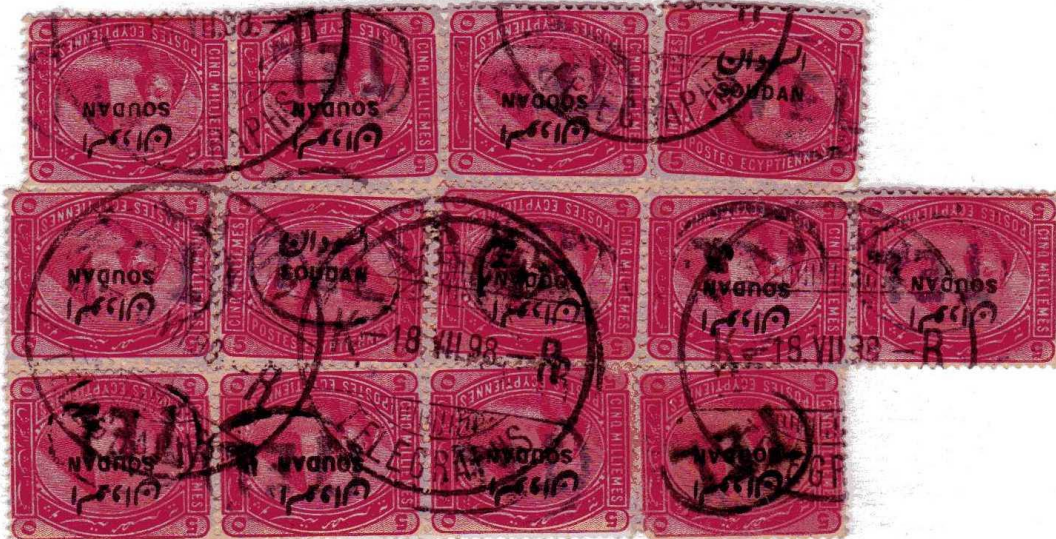


Strip at left, canceled 9.XII.97, types I through V, with broken nun at top. Center, canceled 10.XII.97, types I, II, III. Right, canceled 19.IX.97 (formerly acknowledged as the earliest known usage of telegraph stamps), types IV, V, and VI.



TELEGRAPH CANCELS: Kerma (KR), Ishkeit (IT)

Kerma, 24.VII.98,  
top row, type I  
bottom two rows,  
type VI. First  
two stamps in  
middle row show  
broken nun.



Kerma, 18.VII.98, type III across top row plus positions  
6 and 13, with type VI filling the rest of row 2 and type  
V the rest of row 3.



Ishkeit, 17.VI.98, type I and II  
overprints. Upper left stamp shows  
broken nun.



Ishkeit, 29.VII.98,  
type V and VI over-  
prints, broken nun



TELEGRAPH CANCELS: Merowe (MR), Tewfekia (TI)



Merowe, 10.XII.97, types V and VI.  
Note the nice strike of the TEL  
overprint on this early usage.



Merowe, 3.V.98, types V and VI.



Merowe, 13.II.98, type  
VI. Broken nun at right.



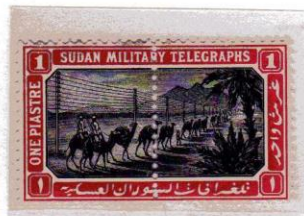
Merowe, 1.VI.98, overprint types V and VI.  
Position 7 shows broken nun, position 8  
shows missing TEL overprint.



Tewfekia,  
7.VII.98,  
types III  
through VI



Four values of the camel train stamps, on paper watermarked with a rosette, were issued on March 1, 1898. The double-width stamps, with perforations down the middle, were supposed to be affixed to the telegraph in such a way that one half could be detached as a receipt for the customer.



A carefully canceled unsevered pair is likely a favor cancel



A 10p value was added several months later, but with the crescent and star watermark. The 1p was reissued in 1899 with the new crescent and star watermark.





THE CAMEL TRAIN ISSUE, 1899

The other three original values were also reissued in 1899 with the crescent and star watermark, and a new 25p value was added. The 5m was issued in new colors (buff and Cambridge blue) because the original 5m colors were too similar to those of the 5p.



Used pairs, with gum, are favor cancels.



A counterfeit cancel appears to be Kerma, 16.III.98

Usage of telegraph stamps was generally discontinued by 1902, and the stamps were demonitized at the end of 1914. They were supplanted by regular postage stamps, which had been used in parallel with the telegraph stamps.





BB?  
type I

type I 14. 1. 98.



DN, V, VI

4. XI. 98.



BB

type I 7. 1. 98.



EC  
III, IV

27. 1. 98.



HL

7. XII. 97  
I, II

BB

III  
and  
IV

15. 1. 98.





HL IV  
V

28. IX. 97.



HL  
I  
II

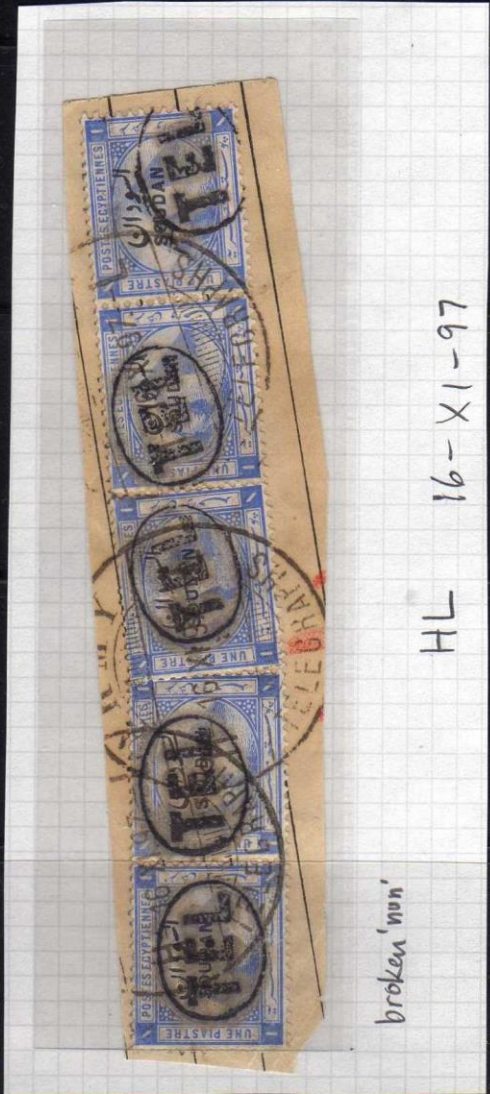
13. XII. 97. HL



HL  
I, II

14. V. 98.

Blue, HL



HL 16-XI-97

HL

broken 'non'