

SWEDEN - THE 4 SKILLING BANCO

BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVE AND RARITY

The first Swedish stamp series with values in Skilling Banco was issued July 1, 1855. It was replaced already July 1, 1858, by a similar issue with values in Öre. However, the Skilling Banco stamps remained valid, and were even possible to purchase from the post offices, for many years afterwards. They were not invalidated until 1910.

The objective of this exhibit is to describe the first Swedish stamp issue, its use, and its reprints, through the 4 Skilling Banco stamp. Where applicable the stamps on display are assigned to a specific (sub-)printing and, when relevant and possible, their positions in the stamp sheet are given. When applicable, references to sources in the literature are stated adjacent to the items of interest.

The exhibit comprises a large share of the most important material related to this topic.

CONTENT

1. Introduction. The background to the stamp issue is explained with e.g. a **black print of the never issued design "Type A", a proof from the development of the mother stamp die for the finally chosen "Type B" design, and an imprimatur pair for the first printing.** (p. 1-5)

2. Production technique. Crude techniques for the paper production and the printing were used. This section shows the consequences thereof, including **rare examples of set-off and double prints.** Over time clichés were damaged and had to be replaced. Sometimes the entire printing material was upgraded. This is evidenced by flaws that appear and disappear between the printings and by flaws that, from the perforation, can be traced to varying positions in the stamp sheet. (p. 6-40)

3. The printings. The printers delivered 14 printings of the 4 Skilling Banco stamp to the Swedish GPO. Based on color, paper quality, and printing result, stamps can normally be assigned to a specific printing. In order to facilitate this, the printings are divided into sub-groups, all demonstrated in this section. (p. 41-88).

In articles in the Swedish stamp magazine "Filatelisten" and in the recent catalogue FACIT Classic 2022, the exhibitor has, based on personal research, published revisions of the previously accepted descriptions of the printings 2, 7, 8, and 9, and also identified that the 9th printing was printed in two distinguishable parts. Hence, these revised descriptions are used here.

5. Postal use. This section demonstrates 9 out of the 10 recorded domestic rates (10 of the 15 recorded stamp combinations), and 8 out of the 12 recorded foreign destinations that includes a 4 Skilling Banco stamp. The foreign destinations include **the unique destinations Turkey and Cuba.** Rare examples of franked postage due letters and unconventional competition on foreign destinations are also demonstrated as well as the only privately owned blockade breaking letter to Finland during the Crimean war. (p.89-120)

6. The period after July 1, 1858. On July 1, 1858, the Skilling Banco stamps were replaced by stamps with values in Öre, but they still remained valid until 1910. In order to cover the demand from sales to the public and the need to supply foreign postal authorities with demonstration stamps, very small amounts of reprints (400-1600 copies per reprint) were made at different occasions later in the 19th century. In the final section, the reprints are demonstrated including some very rare reprint proofs. Also, the continued use is exemplified, including the latest known use of a Skilling Banco stamp on a single stamp and on a cover and **the only known letter with a combination of a 4 Skilling Banco stamp with a stamp from the subsequent stamp issue in Öre.** (p.121-128)

RARITY STATEMENTS AND DEFINITIONS

In the Swedish philatelic literature there are few sources to base rarity statements upon. Here, the FACIT catalogue is used for proofs and domestic covers. For destinations the recently published book "Katalogisering av Försändelser från Sverige till utlandet" is used and for cancellations on letters a data base formed over many years by Dr. Sven-Börje Ewers. For cancellations of single stamps, rarity statements are based on the exhibitors personal knowledge from more than 25 years of specialized collecting, and in some cases on records kept by specialized collectors of a certain postmark or geographical region. Rarity statements for cancellations always refer to their numbers on Skilling Banco stamps and franked covers.

The printings are defined based on original work made by Mr. Lars-Erik Thorsson, published by the magazine "Skillingtrycket" in the 1980ies, with modifications based on later research as described above. Cancellations are generally abbreviated as Type XX:YY, where XX refers to the main group of postmarks, "Normal cancellations", and YY to a serial number for each post office as defined in Facit Postal X.

REFERENCES

1. Sveriges Francotecken 1855-1963, Sveriges Filatelistförbund (1964).
2. Facit Special Classic 2022, FACIT Förlags AB, Sweden (2021).
3. Facit Postal X, FACIT Förlags AB, Malmö, Sweden (2020).
4. M. Ingers, Tryckningen av Sveriges första frimärken (The Printing of the First Swedish Stamps), Postryttaren, Year Book of the Swedish Postal Museum, 2005, pp. 165-180.
5. R. Mattsson, Skilling Banco - Sveriges första frimärken (Skilling Banco - The First Swedish Stamps), Postryttaren, Year Book of the Swedish Postal Museum, 2005, pp. 127-164.
6. Å. Rietz, Katalogisering av försändelser från Sverige till utlandet (Cataloging of covers from Sweden to foreign destinations), Svenska Frimärken, Skövde, Sweden (2014).
7. G. Persson, 4 Skilling Banco av leverans 2 - en omvärdering av beskrivningen (4 Skilling Banco from the 2nd printing - a reevaluation of the description), Filatelisten, 109 (5), 2008, pp.14-16.
8. G. Persson, 4 Skilling Banco, a revision of the descriptions for printing 7-10, Facit Special Classic 2022, FACIT Förlags AB, Sweden (2021), pp. 54-63.
9. M. Ingers, Försök till rekonstruktion av våra första frimärksark (An attempt to reconstruct our first stamp sheets), Postryttaren, Year Book of the Swedish Postal Museum, 2010, pp. 61-80.

SWEDEN - THE 4 SKILLING BANCO

Synopsis - Göran Persson

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of this exhibit is to describe the first Swedish stamp issue, its manufacture and its use, including the subsequently issued reprints. This is done through studies of the 4 Skilling Banco value.

TREATMENT

The exhibit has the following story line:

Introduction; The background and the design process

The design process for the Skilling Banco stamps is described using some very rare proofs.

Printing technology

Examples of the various flaws that can be found in the Skilling Banco stamps, caused by the very crude technology used for their manufacture. This includes a double printed stamp discovered by the exhibitor.

The printings

Examples from all the printings and their sub-groups are displayed with emphasis on cliché flaws within the printings. In addition unusual blue-green anomalies from the 1st and 7th printings are shown.

The presentation of printing 2 and 7-9 is based on original research performed by the exhibitor.

The use of the Skilling Banco stamps

Inland postages made up partly or in full by a 4 Skilling Banco stamp are shown as well as rare examples of franked postage due letters. A small part is dedicated to cancellations with emphasis on rare obliterations with postmarks not intended for cancelling purposes and by the GPO prohibited colored cancellations.

The foreign destinations section includes a rare franked foreign postage due letter, examples of unconventional competition with the Swedish GPO and the only blockade breaking letter to Finland during the Crimean war.

Late use and the reprints

The normal sales period for the Skilling Banco stamps was 1855-1858 but they could be purchased from the post offices long after. They continued to be valid until 1910. Examples are shown of the continued use after the nominal usage period, and the reprints made when the stock of Skilling Banco stamps had been consumed.

PERSONAL RESEARCH

Although Swedish classic philately is well investigated, the exhibitor has been able to contribute significantly.

The features of the 2nd printing has previously been difficult to define because stamps from the printings 1-3 were distributed in parallel. Using statistical methods it was possible for the exhibitor to define unique features that can be linked to the 2nd printing.

With a similar method the features of printing 7-9 has been revised and updated descriptions have been published in FACIT special classic 2022.

A significant cancelling-stamp variety discovered by the exhibitor is the Norrköping cds, type 3, with the digit 7 (in 57) removed. New date stamps were to be received before the turn of the year but did not arrive until Jan. 5, 1858. Hence, one date stamp was mutilated from the year digit and continued to be in use the first four days of 1858.

COMPLETENESS AND RARITY

The exhibit has a high degree of completeness and includes all relevant aspects of the 4 Skilling Banco stamp issue.

Archive material and multiples are very scarce in Swedish philately. The exhibit includes examples of all the three known types of proofs for the Skilling Banco issue and all printings and the sub-groups defined at present. It also includes examples from 9 out of 10 recorded domestic postages and 8 out of the 12 recorded foreign destinations with a 4 Skilling Banco attached.

Major stamp and usage rarities

- Black print of the never issued "type A" design (only known)
- Proof of mother die (9 rec.)
- Imprimatur pair for the first printing (only rec.)
- Rare double prints from printing 11 (3 rec.) and printing 13 (exhibitor's discovery).
- Stamp with blind material on two sides (2 rec.)
- Imprimatur (complete sheet) for the 4th reprint (only rec.)
- First day cancellation
- Latest known cancellation date and latest known use on cover
- 4-fold rate inland postage with a combination of 4 and 8 Skilling Banco (only rec.)
- 5-fold rate inland postage with 4 Sk. Bco (2 rec.)
- Double rate registered letter (not rec.)
- 4-fold rate registered letter (only rec.)
- Near zone rate letter to Norway (3 rec.)
- 34 Sk. Bco rate letter to the Italian states (3 rec.)
- Letter to Turkey (only recorded letter to Asia)
- Letter to Cuba (one out of two letters recorded to the Caribbean)
- Letter to the Danish Duchy of Slesvig (3 rec.)
- Blockade breaking letter to Finland during the Crimean War (only known on private hands)
- Franked foreign postage due letter (3 known)

DEVELOPMENT

At the national exhibition GOTHEX 2011 the exhibit received 95 points and the Grand Prix "The Silver Postilion". At the last international exhibit "Australia 2013" it was awarded a gold medal. At the Nordic exhibition Nordia 2015 it became third in the Championship class.

In the seven years since it was last displayed the exhibit has undergone an extensive remake and been upgraded with several important items, e.g. a double print in greyish shade, stamp with blind material on two sides (2 rec.), combination letters with both 3 and 4 Skilling Banco stamps, and several more letters to foreign destinations, e.g., a letter to the Danish Duchy of Slesvig (3 rec.). Most importantly a letter with the unique combination of a 4 Skilling Banco and a 12 öre coat-of-arms stamp has been added.