## Sergio Sismondo

Philatelic Expert Syracuse, New York & Ottawa, Canada

Syracuse, New York, 2012.06.06.

## ETHIOPIA, 1896.

I have examined the six cards bearing each eight impressions of postage stamps of Ethiopia, "Menelik II" ¼ guerche green, ½ guerche salmon, 1 guerche blue, 2 guerche brown, 4 guerche red-brown, and 8 guerche mauve, each impression overprinted in black in small sans-serif letters "SPECIMEN", the cards being off-white, of 200 x 136 mm dimensions, and thickness of 0.132 mm, related to Higgins & Gage # 1-3, a colour reproduction of which is on the reverse side of this certificate, reduced to 35% of true size, and I am of the opinion that:

The six 'Specimen' cards submitted are genuine in all respects. The Ethiopian Post, represented by Leon Chefneux (a trusted French agent for Menelik II), decided to supplement the issue of postage stamps with an issue of postal stationery, which would include inscriptions and denomination in Roman characters to better meet Universal Postal Union requirements. The project was entrusted to the Atelier de Fabrication de Timbres-Poste, in Paris, and the already successful artist and engraver E. Mouchon was placed in charge of design and production. The design, using elements of the postage stamps issued, and elements similar to those utilized for the Greek Olympic Series of the same year, showing Menelik II facing to the right, was approved. In the absence of clear instructions, a set of seven denominations sharing the basic design was prepared: 1/4g, 1/2g, 1g, 2g, 4g, 8g, and 16g. Samples were prepared printed directly from the dies (a set of die proofs exists). These six cards, bearing each eight typographed impressions, and overprinted 'Specimen' were printed by the Atelier as normal part of the production of the postal cards (I am not aware of any similar card bearing the 16 guerche stamp). Eventually the three lowest denominations were issued and part of the stock sent to Addis Ababa (1/4g for local postcards, 1/2g for internal postcards, and 1g for foreign postcards), while the higher four denominations were not produced. A rare set of archival proofs and specimens, in excellent condition.

Sergio Sismondo

AMERICAN HELVETIA PHILATELIC SOCIETY • AMERICAN PHILATELIC CONGRESS • AMERICAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY • AMERICAN SOCIETY OF POLAR PHILATELISTS • AMERICAN STAMP DEALERS ASSOCIATION • ASSOCIAZIONE FILATELISTI ITALIANI PROFESSIONISTI • AUSTRALIAN STATES STUDY CIRCLE • BRAZIL PHILATELIC ASSOCIATION • BRITISH CARIBBEAN PHILATELIC STUDY GROUP • BRITISH NORTH AMERICA PHILATELIC SOCIETY • BNAPS NEWFOUNDLAND STUDY GROUP • CANADIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN • CANADIAN STAMP DEALERS ASSOCIATION • CEYLON STUDY CIRCLE • CHAMBRE S. FRANCAISE DE NEGOTIANTS ET EXPERTS EN PHILATELIE • CHINA STAMP SOCIETY • COLLECTORS CLUB OF NEW YORK • COPAPHIL • DISINFECTED MAIL STUDY CIRCLE • FRANCE AND COLONIES PHILATELIC SOCIETY • HELLENIC PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA • INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE PHILATELY • INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PORTUGUESE PHILATELY • IRAN PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE • MOROCCO & TUNISIA PHILATELIC SOCIETY • NATIONAL STAMP DEALERS ASSOCIATION • OTTOMAN AND NEAR EAST PHILATELIC SOCIETY • PHILATELIC TRADERS SOCIETY • P.S.G. SOUTHERN AFRICA • POLAR POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN • POSTAL HISTORY FOUNDATION • ROSSICA • R.P.S. CANADA • ST. HELENA, ASCENSION and TRISTAN DA CUNHA PHILATELIC SOCIETY • SCANDINAVIAN COLLECTORS CLUB • SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIAN SPECIALISTS • SOCIETY FOR THAI PHILATELIC CLOSSICS SOCIETY • WEST AFRICA STUDY CIRCLE • WESTERN AUSTRALIA STUDY GROUP

upo demant