

## Further Notes

The 1893 New Caledonian Military  
Essay for the New Hebrides

A complete sheet (reduced by approximately one-half) showing the errors and the marginal guide-mark.

In JOURNAL No. 70, Vol. 18, No. 2, Spring 1961, we were privileged to reprint an article by James Crompton from *Stamp Collecting*, London. Subsequent to the appearance of Mr. Crompton's article in *Stamp Collecting*, there was a commentary by the Rev. Ronald Hughes, and a reply by Mr. Crompton, both of which are presented herewith, from *Stamp Collecting*, London, March 10, 1961, and April 7, 1961.—Editor.

By Ronald Hughes

James Crompton's very interesting article leaves unanswered several intriguing questions about the New Hebrides Military Essay stamp.

If it was proposed to use the suggested Military stamp for French troops from New Caledonia occupying the New Hebrides, why was Queen Victoria's head so prominently depicted on it? She would hardly have been in favour of such an occupation.

Further, if the essay really is the design for a Military stamp, why does it bear no reference to Military postage? On the contrary, the postal rate actually shown of 2½d. or 25 centimes was the normal civilian rate at that period and not the soldiers' privilege rate at all.

The New Caledonia Military stamps were fairly well produced, while the New Hebrides essay abounds in errors. My own copy, which is number three on the sheet, has the mis-spelling "Honni" in "Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense". The use of this motto, "Evil Be to Him Who Thinks Evil", makes one wonder if the essay had political, rather than military, implications.

Unless there is very substantial evidence that the essay was produced by the French authorities, it *may* be a complete phantom. It is just possible that British residents in the New Hebrides, annoyed by the appearance of the New Caledonia military stamps which would have been used in any French invasion of the New Hebrides, produced the essay themselves by way of retaliation. Some support is lent to this admittedly far-fetched theory by the use of the phrase "Anglo-Francais" instead of "Franco-Anglais", and especially by the figures of value, expressed first in pence and then in centimes. A Frenchman, one imagines, would naturally have placed his own coinage first.

Whatever the truth may be, and this essay, as Mr. Crompton has shown, offers fascinating possibilities for research, the present writer cannot on present evidence agree with the view that this badly-produced label was ever intended as a serious essay for a Soldiers' stamp by the New Caledonian military authorities.

#### Reply from James Crompton

The theory contained in the Rev. Ronald Hughes's notes . . . is quite interesting but, alas, due to the passage of time, shows little hope of being proved.

Are we to believe that the *Journal des Philatelistes* in 1906, *Le Postillon* in 1910, Yvert in 1929 and Hurt in 1936 have been the means of perpetuating a hoax on the philatelic world, and that the real truth is coming to light 64 years later?

To carry the point further, if the essay was the result of British residents venting their feelings, why include French inscriptions?

The rate of 25c. being shown could be accounted for by the fact that when the victorious New Caledonian troops had landed in the New Hebrides they would have the "free franc".

Since writing my notes I have had the opportunity of examining design trials for this issue printed in three colors, where in the case of the essay being worded in black, the three colors in the printing only are shown.

Alternatively, where "Protectorat", or "Nouvles Hebrides" are added in color, this stage is shown, e.g., "Protectorat" worded in rose, background in rose, "Nouvles Hebrides" worded in blue, vignette in blue.

Also, the essay has been printed on a variety of colored papers: light brown, granite, off-white, white and orange papers being used.

The essay was made up from separate patches, so that any word or design, such as "Protectorat", the vignette, or "Nouvles Hebrides" section could be interchanged, resulting in "Nouvles Hebrides" of Type 4, being used on Type 1 and, by virtue of separate lithographic patchings being used, slight misalignments resulted giving the impression of the resultant essay being a forgery.

Further, there are two types of "Nouvles Hebrides" letter sizes for Type 4, and Type 3. The error "P" for "R" in "Protectorat" is known corrected, lending weight to the theory that with such a multitudinous number of combinations they were a series of essays based on contemporary New Caledonian military stamps.

I am indebted to Mr. Palmer and Mr. Fletcher for the assistance that they have given me, and confirming that the error "Honni" in "Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense" applies to all copies of the essay.

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### Michaelangelo's 'Creation' on 1961 Italian Series

Italy in 1961 released a nineteen-stamp Michaelangelo definitive series replacing the "coin" stamps that had been in use since June 1953. The vignettes were taken from the magnificent "Creation" which Michaelangelo painted across the ceiling of the Vatican's Sistine Chapel. The lower values were printed by photogravure. The four high values were engraved by E. Donnini, A. Quieti, M. Colombati and V. Nicastro.