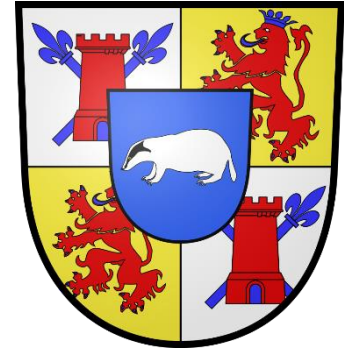


Thurn and Taxis

The first and most important thing to know about Thurn and Taxis is that there is no map. Why should there be? This is an entity that has no kingdom. Instead Thurn and Taxis was a private company that was successor to the Imperial Reichpost of the Holy Roman Empire. It was operated by the Princely House of Thurn and Taxis between 1806 and 1867.



Throughout the course of the 16th century the Taxis dynasty was entrusted as the Imperial Courier of the Holy Roman Empire. And in 1650, they were able to rename themselves to the house of Thurn and Taxis from the French derivation of their title (*Tour et Taxis*).

During the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, the Imperial Reichpost of present-day Germany lost more and more postal districts over time. When the Holy Roman Empire was dissolved by Francis II after the terrible defeat of the Third Coalition by Napoleon, the Imperial Reichpost was dissolved as well. This led naturally to the house of Thurn and Taxis taking over the remaining postal routes of this area. After the Napoleonic wars ended, German nationalism in general was such that the Germans began thinking about trying to unify some services. The postal service was one of those areas, and none of the German Federal Act of 1815 many postal services operated under the Thurn and Taxis postal system were formally recognized. Frankfurt was its headquarters.



Deutsche Bundespost stamp depicting an 1852 cariole of Thurn and Taxis

In 1847 a regional postal conference met in Dresden, and that resulted in the establishment of the German–Austrian Postal Association. This did not sit kindly to the kingdom of Prussia especially Otto von Bismarck who wanted to begin to separate the Germans from the Austrians. Thurn and Taxis routes expanded into Austria.



After the Prussian victory in the Austro–Prussian War (or the Seven Weeks' War of 1866), the Prussians occupied Frankfurt, and with it, Thurn and Taxis postal headquarters.

1965 Deutsche Bundespost stamp featuring at far left the Southern District Stamp and center and right, Northern District stamps

Thurn
and
Taxis

transferred its contracts to Prussia for the sum of 3 million Thaler and handed over control on July 1, 1867.

The stamps: More than 60 issues were made, and it is not the intention of this website to go over every stamp in detail. Suffice it to say that two districts existed, the Northern District and the Southern District, starting in 1852.

It's easy to tell the difference between the two districts. For the Northern district, 30 Silbergroschen, which is equivalent to one Thaler, is the currency that is used. For the Southern district, 60 Kreuzer being equivalent to 1 Gulden is used.

In the Northern District, only one kind of design was done, that of the denomination being prominently displayed. The first stamps were un-watermarked, typographed, and imperforate. and range from one quarter Silbergroschen to three Silbergroschen and were used exclusively for six years. Reprints made in 1910 have "ND" on the back.

The next stamps were printed in 1859 to 1860, going from one-quarter Silbergroschen to 10 Silbergroschen. Since used copies of the five and 10 Silbergroschen are fairly rare while the unused are plentiful, forgeries exist everywhere. Excellent copies of the five and ten Silbergroschen exist, according to the Scott guide. These stamps in particular would have to be authenticated. The working assumption is that if you see one casually, you're probably looking at a forgery.



A Prototypical (rouletted) Thurn and Taxis Northern district Stamp

Thurn and Taxis printed the next set in 1862, which started at $\frac{1}{4}$ Silbergroschen and ended at 3 Silbergroschen. These have also been reprinted in 1910, with the "ND" on the back of the stamp signifying that.

In 1865, the next set was issued. These are very similar to the ones of 1862 in both denomination and color, but these were rouletted.

Thurn and Taxis issued the final set in 1866. They are very similar in denomination and color to those of 1862 and 1865, but these are rouletted in colored lines. These are also examples where the unused are

very plentiful and easy to find, with the used copies being incredibly rare. Forged cancellations on these would be considered the norm and not the exception.

The Southern District. The Southern District used 60 Kreuzer equals one Gulden.

Like the Northern District, the Southern District used only one major design with the denomination prominently displayed.



*A prototypical (rouletted in color lines)
Southern District Thurn and Taxis stamps*

The Southern District started producing stamps in 1852. These first issues were un-watermarked and imperforate with full margins being at ¼ mm. They range from 1 Kreuzer to 9 Kreuzer. Reprints of the stamps were made in 1910 and are clearly marked with a “ND” on the back. These stamps were used exclusively in the Southern District for about seven years.

The next issues came out in 1859, and they run from 1 Kreuzer to 30Kreuzer. The 15 and 30 Kreuzer are often forged because used 15 and 30 Kreuzer stamps are very difficult to find, while the unused are plentiful. It should be noted that the 1,3,6, and 9 Kreuzer issues actually have reprints made of them in 1910, again with the “ND” on them.

In 1862 a three, six, and nine Kreuzer were produced. These were also unwatermarked and imperforate, and again, 1910 reprints were made with the “ND” marked on the back.

The Southern District issued the next series in 1865 a 1, 3, 6, and 9 Kreuzer were produced. As with the Northern District’s 1865 issues, these were rouletted. By 1867, Thurn and Taxis issued the final set. Keeping with the Northern District theme, these were also rouletted in color lines. The same 1, 3, 6, and 9 Kreuzer issues of 1965 were produced.

This is the only other design of Thurn and Taxis, used only in 1859 issues. In the Northern District, the 5 and 10 Silbergroschen issues sported this design, while in the Southern District, the 15 (to the right) and the 30 Kreuzer issues showed this design.

