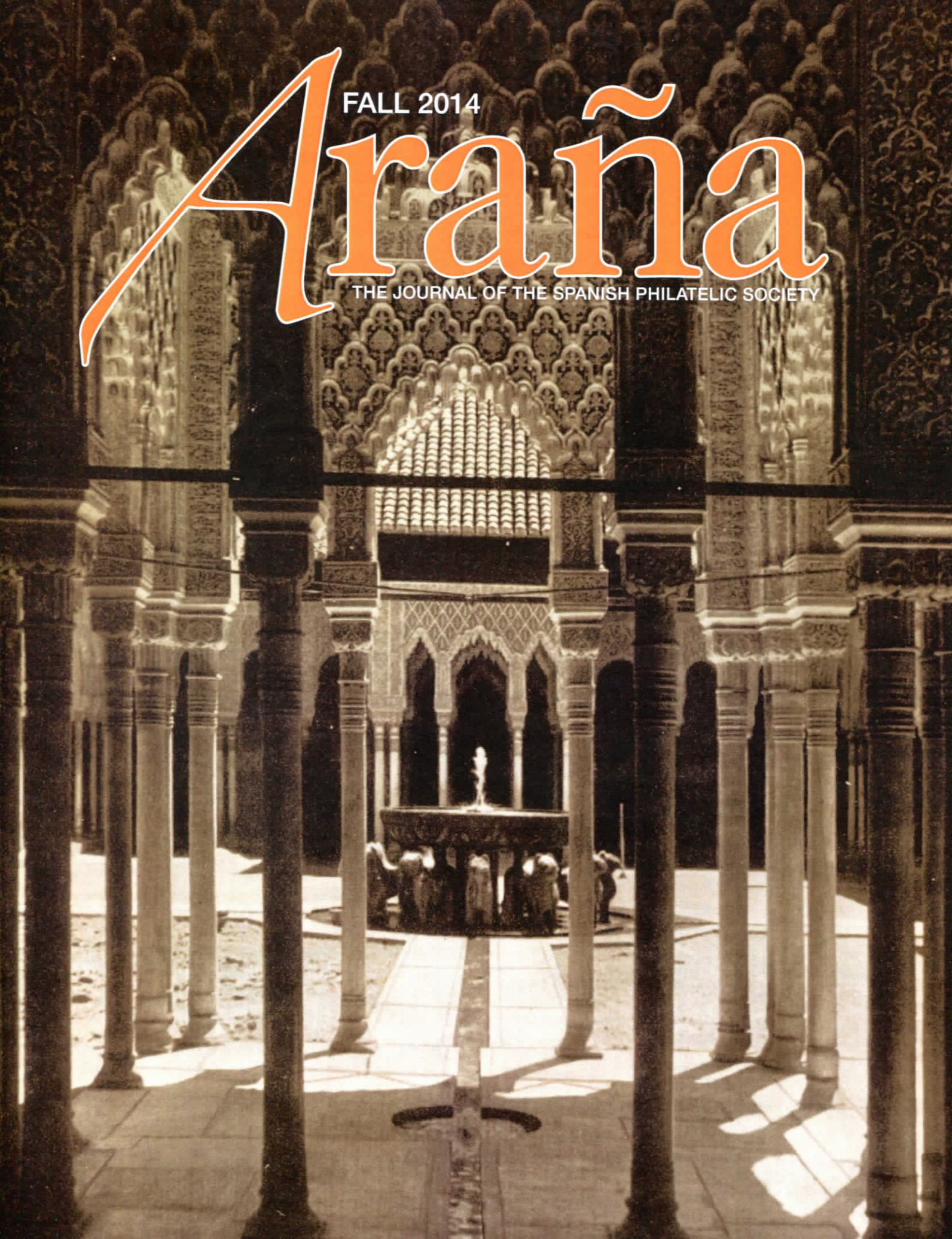


FALL 2014

Araña

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A First and Last Issue

Few collectors have ever seen, much less owned a set of these six rare stamps. They present all the conditions for rarity; very low quantities issued, limited period of use and a unique first and last issue status for a distant, small colony of Spain.

The Spanish Marianas were a Pacific islands outpost always overshadowed by the nearby Philippines. For 250-plus years Guam and the other islands of the Marianas depended on visiting ships and packet boats. In 1898, the Spanish-American war changed everything. A brief island history is given below highlighting events of the past 100 years. The stamps issued in 1899 are even more interesting given events before and after January 1900.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLANDS

The Mariana Islands are an arc-shaped archipelago created by the summits of fifteen volcanic mountains in the northwestern Pacific Ocean. They are south of Japan and north of New Guinea, and form the eastern limit of the Philippine Sea. The islands were named after Spanish Queen Mariana of Austria in the 17th century, when Spain started the colonization of the archipelago.

The Mariana Islands are the northern part of the Micronesia island group, although their government is under a different jurisdiction from much of the rest of geographical Micronesia. Today, the Marianas Islands are composed of two U.S. jurisdictions: the Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A BRIEF HISTORY

The first European to see the island group was Ferdinand Magellan who on March 6, 1521, observed two of the islands and sailed between them during a Spanish expedition of world circumnavigation. Upon first landing at Umatac, Guam, Magellan's ships received fresh supplies from the native Chamorros. The common account is that the Chamorros, assuming that they were engaged in a trade, then took one of the Spanish landing boats. The Spanish crew, however, considered this theft and in retaliation attacked the Chamorros and dubbed the islands **Islas de los Ladrones** (Islands of the Thieves). The islands are still occasionally called the Ladrones.

Magellan himself styled them **Islas de las Velas Latinas** (Islands of the Lateen Sails). San Lazarus archipelago, Jardines and Prazeres are among the names applied to them by later navigators.

In 1667 Spain formally claimed them, established a regular colony there, and gave the islands the official title of **Las Marianas** in honor of Spanish Queen Mariana of Austria, widow of Philip IV of Spain. They then had a population of more than 50,000 inhabitants, but many Chamorros died from the infectious diseases brought by the Spanish and other Europeans.

The Marianas and specifically the island of Guam were a stopover for Spanish galleons en route from Mexico to Manila, Philippines in a convoy known as the Galleon de Manila. There were never a large number of Spanish colonists. A fort was built at Guam's harbor. A small military detachment and colonial governor were the only formal representatives of Spanish authority. Communication with the Philippines and the rest of the world was via trade or packet ships. The Spanish postal administration in the Philippines handled any mail for Guam and the rest of the Marianas. No special stamps were issued but a small supply of Spanish Philippines stamps were provided for official and commercial purposes, as evidenced by a few surviving covers.

The Marianas remained a Spanish colony under the general government of the Philippines until 1898, when, as a result of the Spanish-American War, Spain ceded Guam to the United States. Guam has retained a different political character from the remaining islands since that time.

In the Treaty of February 12, 1899, the remaining Spanish-held islands of the Mariana archipelago (except Guam) were sold by Spain to Germany for 837,500 German gold marks (about \$4,100,000 at the time). Along with 6000 islands in other island groups, such as the Carolines and Pelew Islands, all formerly under Spanish control but now indefensible by Spain, these islands were now incorporated as a small part of the larger German Protectorate of New Guinea. The total population in the Northern Marianas portion of these islands around this time was only 2,646 inhabitants; the ten most northerly islands being actively volcanic, and almost uninhabited.



FIGURE 1

The U.S. Navy assumed administrative control of Guam in late 1898. Regular U.S. definitive issues were overprinted in Washington, D.C. and shipped to the Guam Naval government. Once Germany purchased and assumed control of the rest of the islands in 1900, they issued a "Kaiser's Yacht" set for their new "Marianen" colony.

Japan, a member of the Triple Entente, began to occupy the Northern Marianas in 1914. After Germany and the rest of the Central Powers lost World War I, many formerly German-controlled islands in the Pacific were entrusted by the League of Nations to Japanese control, as mandate territories (similar to modern United Nations Trust Territories). These islands included the Northern Mariana Islands, but not Guam.

The island chain saw fighting between the U.S. and Japanese forces in 1944 during World War II. Guam, a U.S. possession since 1898, was captured by Japan in an attack that began on the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The United States recaptured it in July 1944. The remaining islands were desired by the U.S. as bombing bases to reach the Japanese mainland, with Saipan attacked even before Guam. Once captured, the islands of Saipan and Tinian were used extensively by the United States military as they finally put mainland Japan within round-trip range of American bombers. In response, Japanese forces attacked

the bases on Saipan and Tinian from November 1944 to January 1945. Both the *Enola Gay* and the *Bockscar* (which dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, respectively) flew their missions from Tinian's "North Field."

In post-WWII developments, the Philippines gained independent nation status, Guam became a major military and commercial hub for the United States and the Marianas became the Northern Mariana Islands commonwealth.

MARIANAS 1899 SPANISH HANDSTAMPED ISSUE

In 1899, Spain issued six stamps for the Marianas Islands, which it had claimed as its possession since 1668, this was a first and last issue for Spain. Stamps of the Philippines, which Spain had just lost in the Spanish-American War, were crudely handstamped "Marianas Espanolas" and were used for only a single mail shipment that was transported off the island in December of 1899,

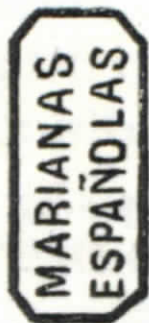


FIGURE 2

The use of a simple local handstamp to create a new issue or value was a common practice in the Spanish Colonies. The stamps were usually current postage or revenue issues. The Marianas handstamp is in violet-black ink.

before Spain sold the Marianas to Germany in 1900.

These stamps are extremely scarce, and genuine covers are as rare as those for any Spanish colony. They are occasionally offered at auction. Expertization is a necessary condition of purchase, because forged handstamps exist. Many of the Spanish Marianas stamps are poorly centered because of this stock used for overprinting. Both the Edifil and Scott catalogues list this set as #1 to #6.



Figure 3

The six values for the Marianas issue were from sheets of the twenty stamp set issued for the Philippines in 1898. King Alfonso is portrayed in profile. The stamps of this issue are not usually well centered.

The quantities issued and approximate values are as follows:

- 1 2c Dark Blue Green (500 issued; \$875.00 unused, \$325.00 used)
- 2 3c Dark Brown (500 issued; \$675.00 unused, \$225.00 used)
- 3 5c Carmine Rose (500 issued; \$1,000.00 unused, \$350.00 used)
- 4 6c Dark Blue (50 issued; \$6,500.00 unused, \$5,000.00 used)
- 5 8c Gray Brown (700 issued; \$500.00 unused, \$200.00 used)
- 6 15c Slate Green (150 issued; \$2,500.00 unused, \$1,300.00 used)

Given the quantities issued, only 50 complete sets ever existed.

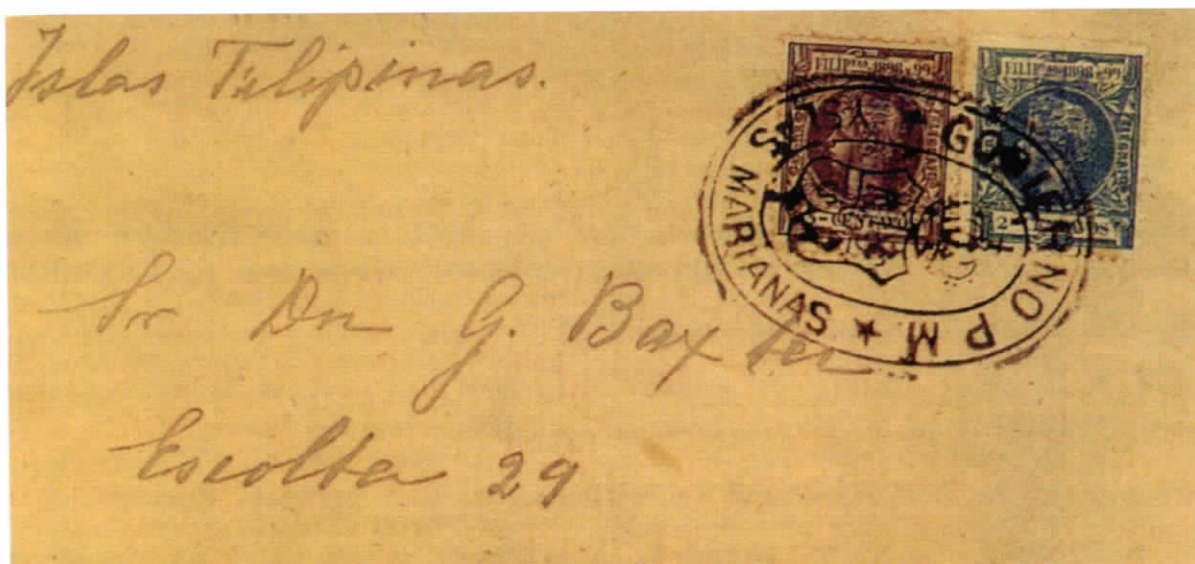
For the mint, never hinged collector fanatics, this set is the ultimate Spanish colonies challenge. For the average collector, owning a respectable used copy of one of the six stamps is a worthy goal.

Figure 4 (left)

This mint set of the Spanish Marianas 1899 Issue demonstrates typical Perforation and centering conditions. The 8 centavo value has no gum. Despite these defects, this set was valued at \$12,000 and sold at auction for \$7,800.

Figure 5 (below)

A rare cover circa 1899; Islas Marianas to Manila, Filipinas. The postmark is a double oval with "GOBIERNO P.M." at the top, Spain's Coat of Arms in the center and "ISLAS MARIANAS" at the bottom. This cover sold for several thousand dollars at a 2009 Spanish auction.



SPANISH STAMP MARKET

Interview With Ignacio Llach

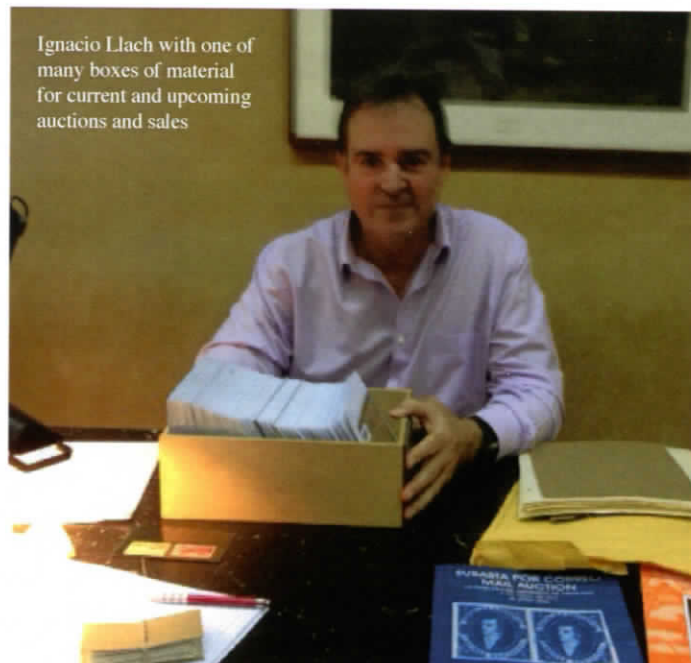
BY HAL SHELTON

In late May, while in Barcelona, I had an opportunity to visit with Ignacio Llach, head of the stamp dealer firm Filatelia Llach, S.L. with offices in Barcelona and Madrid and website <http://www.filateliallach.com>. We discussed many aspects of the Spanish stamp market and following are my notes.

1. Impact of the "crises" on material availability
 - a. Wealthy collectors with excellent collections do not need to sell and are not, hence for the best material there is a shortage of supply and an abundance of demand.
 - b. Less wealthy collectors with primarily newer material are selling, leading to an oversupply and fewer bidders. Much of this more common material is sold on eBay.
2. Spanish Stamp Market
 - a. The very expensive and the cheap stamps are doing OK, but the large middle ground is having difficulty. A barbell result.
 - b. Russians and Chinese are a relatively new entrant to the high end stamp market.
 - c. eBay is setting the price at the low end of the market where it has supply. Ignacio cautions to be careful in purchases as quality and authenticity can be in question. It is good to know the seller or follow the eBay ratings.
 - d. The rare, best quality material is best sold in Spain where collectors look for this kind of material. However, other material is best sold in the U.S. where there is more of a focus on filing in the catalogue page.
3. Changing nature of stamp dealers
 - a. It is rare today for a collector to walk in the stamp dealer's door and offer his collection for sale or auction; therefore, dealers must seek out material which involves much travel especially to South America, U.S. and major European auction houses. And with each country having their own customs, duties and export regulation there is paperwork and cost to obtain this material.
 - b. With fewer amounts of good material, dealers less often offer big collections as one lot, but break apart the collections and list as separate lots. This adds to the number of lots and the heft of the catalogue.
 - c. In the past, a dealer might have focused just on one country like Spain, but today the dealer needs to offer all countries and even expand beyond philately to other collectibles.

- d. Marginal dealers or dealers not willing or able to undertake the international travel are closing their doors.
 - e. Even in what might be considered a more competitive dealer environment, dealers are able to maintain their fees—15% to sellers and 20% to buyers, which includes taxes.
4. Stamp Price Trends
 - a. Rare classics in excellent condition are increasing in price
 - b. Material since 1950 is decreasing in price
 - c. All other material such as postal history, SCW locals and labels, colonies and revenues are flat to decreasing in price except for exceptional items.
 - d. For example, a complete set of the submarines imperf, in good condition while having an Edifil catalogue value of over 1000 euros, sells for about 250 euros through a dealer.
 - e. Ignacio says that stamps typically sell for about half of Edifil values; our experience in SPS auctions is more like 40-45%.

I asked Ignacio if there are any young collectors in Spain, thinking of the U.S. definition of young = children. He responded that in Spain, young collectors are considered to be in the 35-50 age group; should make all of us feel good.



Ignacio Llach with one of many boxes of material for current and upcoming auctions and sales

THE DEFENCE OF MADRID ISSUE

BY DAVID H. JAMES

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The 'Defence of Madrid' postal issue, one of the most fascinating of the Spanish Civil War, was conceived by the Republic during some of its darkest days in 1937/38 when its territory was close to being cut in two by Nationalist armies at the east coast village of Vinaroz. Introduced in the hope that it would match the propaganda and foreign currency generated by the Nationalist miniature sheet celebrating the liberation of the Alcázar of Toledo, the issue also sought to lionise the 'heroic defenders of Madrid' in the battles that raged around the city in November 1936. The project was driven by the American philatelic dealer Arthur Barger who visited Madrid in 1937 at the invitation of the Republic's ambassador to the USA and it was at Barger's suggestion that the Agencia Filatélica Oficial (AFO) was established in order to sell the issue and stock its remainders. To aid non-Spanish speaking Barger in his efforts, an interpreter and assistant was appointed, Cristóbal Amengual, who was employed in the American Consulate in Barcelona.

Designed by Gabriel López and engraved by Camilo Delhom, the stamps were printed in offset litho (perf.11½) in the confiscated print works of Rieusset, Barcelona, during the adverse war time conditions prevailing at a time when even gum and paper were scarce and were announced somewhat prematurely in the Spanish press on 29th December '37.

The initial issue or 1st printing as it became known (figure 1), comprised a blue-green 45cts + 2pts stamp for ordinary surface mail, overprinted 'AEREO + 5Pts' for airmail use and supported by miniature sheets of both formats. The stamp design was based around a stylised view of Madrid's Toledo Bridge on the left, church of San Francisco el Grande in the background and Republican troops in trenches in the foreground.

During the first months of 1938 Barcelona was subjected to frequent bombing raids by the Italian Legionary Air Force based on Mallorca and the Rieusset works were often hit, eventually being damaged to a point where the majority of the first issue of stamps and miniature sheets were completely destroyed. It is recorded that only 1,000 of the blue-green stamps plus perhaps, 100 miniature sheets in the same colour survived the bombing.



Fig 1. Gálvez 1013. 1st printing in blue-green. Only 1,000 thought to have survived the bombing. CERT. Roig.



2nd printing in sky-blue. Imperforate. Only 1,000 printed.

Fig.3. Gálvez 1012s. 2nd printing in sky-blue.



New plates were hastily prepared and the 2nd printing in the more familiar sky-blue colour was added to the remainder of the 1st printing for issue on 15th April '38 (figure 2). Ideas vary concerning the actual quantities printed but Gálvez lists them as: 1,550,000 perforated ordinary postage stamps plus 1,000 imperforate (figure 3) and 250 imperforate vertically.

Miniature sheets (figure 4) totalling 100,000 with control numbers on the top right hand corner were also printed as were 200 imperforate sheets and 1,000 imperforate and gumless stamps overprinted diagonally with the word MUESTRA (specimen) in lilac rose (figure 5). Miniature sheets were produced in a single run of around 5,000 pages of 20 sheets each, using a stamp from plate 5. A single plate defect occurs intermittently on the stamps of some sheets in the form of an apparent acute accent on the 'E' of 'DE MADRID'.

Fig.5. Gálvez 1012M. MUESTRA overprint on imperforate type.



Fig.4. Gálvez 1. 2nd printing miniature sheet.

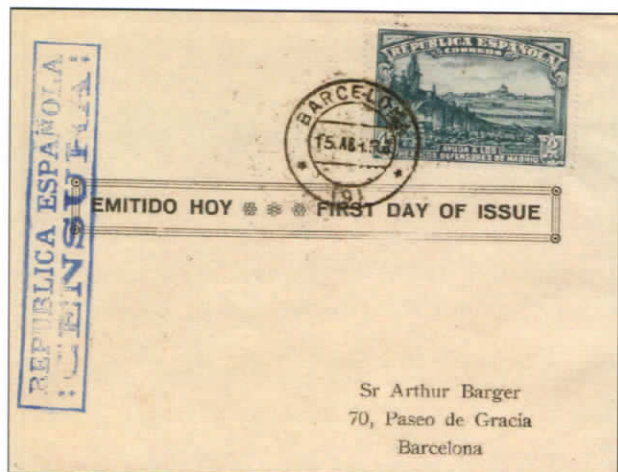
The Rieusset print works did not possess machines capable of perforating miniature sheets and were therefore obliged to construct them. The effectiveness (or otherwise) of their efforts can be gauged by the way the perforations applied to the sheets wander, breaking down from the horizontal at the bottom left and up from the horizontal at the upper right of the stamps.

First Day of Issue Covers

In his stupendous 800 page Magnum Opus "Sellos Y Hojitas Defensa de Madrid 1938-39" SSC member and acknowledged expert, Dr. Oswald Schier, states that Cristóbal Amengual himself probably created up to 500 FDCs and maybe more, of the ordinary 45Cts + 2Pts issue. Some of these, perhaps 20 or 30, had been cancelled by error in advance with a BARCELONA / 14 ABRIL .38 / • (9) • date stamp and on their discovery the correct BARCELONA / 15 ABRIL .38 / • (9) • cancellation was also added. This is thought by Dr. Schier to be a genuine error and these covers bearing both cancellations are, of course, extremely rare.

Most of these FDCs were franked, cancelled and stamped with a standard REPUBLICA ESPAÑOLA CENSURA rectangular boxed censor mark but remained unaddressed. Almost as rare are 30 or so correctly cancelled FDCs with the 1st blue-green stamp, also produced by Amengual and addressed to Barger (figure 6).

Fig. 6. Gálvez 1013. 1st blue-green printing on FDC addressed to Arthur Barger. Only 30 or so thought to exist. CERT. R.G. Shelley.



However, most of the 500 or so FDCs produced by Amengual, which were franked with the later sky-blue stamp (figure 7), also carried the printed address:

'Sr. Arthur Barger
70 Paseo de Gracia
Barcelona'

including the very rare imperforate FDCs (figure 8). An exception to this is a FDC addressed to the well known philatelic dealer Nicolàs Sanabria in New York. Interestingly, this cover has a pencilled hand written note by Barger himself stating "Only 500 issued." Naturally, forgeries of the FDC do exist, a particularly clumsy example showing the false cancellation BARQELONA instead of BARCELONA.

Genuine commercially used FDCs were cancelled ESTAFETA SUCURSAL No.8 / BARCELONA and were also 'franked' with a 5cts Barcelona tax stamp (figure 9) intended to help offset the losses incurred by the Barcelona International Exhibition of 1929. A number of clearly philatelic examples exist, franked well after the issue date and usually addressed to so called 'friends' of the Republic. These included high ranking military officers such as Generals Miaja and Matallana and a number of foreign based dealers and prominent collectors.

These covers were mostly posted to addresses abroad, including Belgium, Holland, Germany, France, Switzerland, the UK and USA and philatelic personalities such as Serebrakian and Gálvez etc. and even Barger himself, are frequently found among the recipients.

Some of the older members of the SSC will perhaps, remember the hilarious "Fleeing Swastika" bogus cover, exposed and debunked by Ron Shelley many years ago in "Cruzada." Having tracked down the issue of Cruzada in question, I had hoped to include a scan of this piece of pure fantasy but space restrictions pre-

clude it. Briefly, the cover purports to be one of 100 intercepted by a Nationalist officer after the defeat of the Italian CTV at Guadalajara. It is dated 2nd June '38 and bears the supposed blazon of the Republican 33rd Division as well as a forged administrative mark of General Franco's Headquarters and a Defence of Madrid ordinary postage stamp, cancelled by a bogus Badalona postmark. On the front is a large 'running' Swastika, symbolising Nationalist supporting forces fleeing from lost campaigns at Guadalajara, Madrid, the South and Euzkadi. But by 2nd June '38 the Republic had been heavily defeated in Euzkadi and the region had been firmly under Nationalist control for some time! On the back is a fake sealing strip proclaiming 'Enemy Correspondence, Examined and Destroyed', allegedly by a Nationalist military censor.

There are so many things wrong with this item of whimsy it could take a whole page to describe them. But the final insult to the intelligence of experienced collectors is that this supposedly rare item went on sale at the ludicrously low price of \$2.95. That I guess, sums it up.

Fig.9. Gálvez 1012. 2nd printing on commercially used FDC.

Miniature sheets of the 2nd printing ordinary postage issue with control numbers between 94501 and 94700 were affixed by Amengual to FDCs addressed to Barger (figure 10). Since no miniature sheets on FDCs to Barger have appeared with control numbers outside this range it is thought that only 200 were produced.



Fig.7. Gálvez 1012. 2nd printing FDC addressed to Barger.

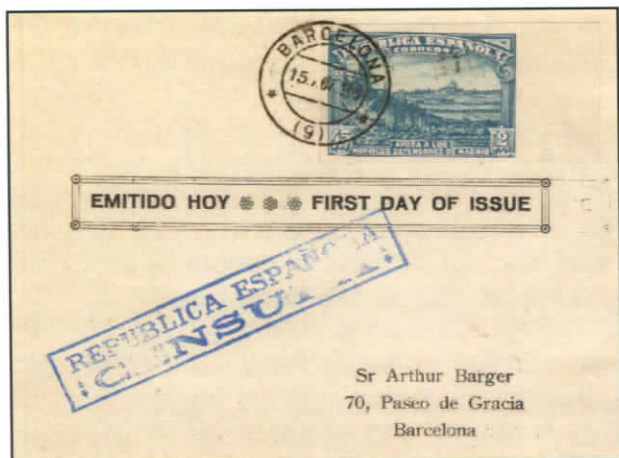


Fig.8. Gálvez 1012S. 2nd printing imperforate on FDC addressed to Arthur Barger. Only 30 or so are thought to exist. CERT. R.G.Shelley.



Fig.10. Gálvez 1. 2nd printing miniature sheet on FDC addressed (on reverse) to Arthur Barger. Only 200 thought to exist. CERT. R. G. Shelley.



Varieties

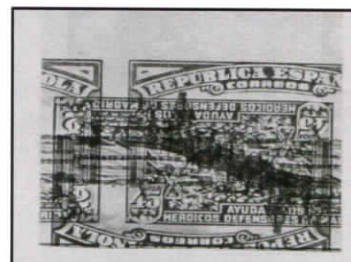
Deliberate 'errors' incorporated during printing have been mentioned earlier but over and above these a number of genuine varieties in both the stamp and miniature sheet exist. By this I do not mean the myriad minor printing blemishes dismissed by some collectors as 'fly specks' but rather the more significant and clearly visible faults. These include the joined 'AY' in 'AYUDA' (figure 11). Others, including the 'blue blob' in the middle of the 'D' in 'AYUDA', the broken 'D' in 'AYUDA' and the miniature sheet accented 'É' of 'DE' plus incomplete or misplaced perforation varieties, will be covered along with the airmail issue, forgeries, fantasies, 2nd Anniversary and private issues in Part 2, España 2012-1.

Fig.11. Gálvez 1012.
Joined 'AY' variety.
2nd printing only.



The joined 'AY' variety is the result of a genuine plate defect and is found only on the second plate used solely for the first run of the sky-blue printing of the 4,911 sheets numbered 00959 to 05870. According to Dr. Schier, the defect occurs only in position 6 (1st stamp on the left of the 2nd horizontal row). Sheets of stamps were printed in 10 horizontal rows x 5 vertical rows and each sheet has 50 stamps, so a maximum of 245,550 stamps were printed from this plate. It follows therefore, that this variety exists on 4,911 stamps.

Examples of printers waste or maculatura (figure 12) also exist with double, triple etc. impressions. These were produced in the proving run of the printing machine prior to the first run proper. They are not of course, genuine proofs, although they are listed in Gálvez 'Pruebas y Ensayos de España' as number 3241M. They can be found in blue and black, often with other printed material on the reverse.



References: Dr. O. Schier and R.G. Shelley.

Ordinary postage issue varieties

Part I of this article in España 2011-2, dealt with the major plate fault variety found on the stamps of the ordinary postage issue in the form of the 'joined AY', which occurs at position 6 on the 2nd plate of the 1st sky-blue printing. Further major plate fault varieties also exist in the form of a large blue blob on the 'D' in 'AYUDA' (figure 13), which has the effect of making the 'D' look more like a 'J' and the somewhat smaller blue blobs at the top right of the 'U' and bottom left of the 'D' in 'AYUDA' (figure 14). The first of these occurs at position 25 on the 5th plate of the 2nd sky-blue printing and the second at position 24 on the same plate.



Fig.13. Gálvez 1012aa.
The broken 'D' in AYUDA



Fig.14. Gálvez 1012bb.
The blue blob on 'UD' in AYUDA

One other major plate fault variety (not shown here) exists in the form of a large white blob above the 'A' and first 'D' of 'MADRID', occurring only at position 47, also on plate 5 of the 2nd sky-blue printing. Many less significant varieties such as the misplaced perforation example can be found throughout the 5 separate printings of the sky-blue stamp but space restrictions preclude their inclusion here.

The Airmail Issue

The airmail stamp (figure 16) with its 20mm single line overprint 'AEREO + 5 Pts.' was issued in a limited run of just 5,000 in 100 sheets of 50 numbering 00001 to 00100.



Fig.16. Gálvez 127. CERT CEM.
Position 43 on sheet.



Fig.17. Gálvez 127s. Imperf.
Only 250 thought to exist.

The airmail stamp was also produced imperforate, possibly in 5 sheets of 50 (figure 17) and also with inverted overprint (figure 18) in 4 sheets of 50 according to some experts but 5 sheets of 50 according to Dr. Schier and with imperforate inverted overprint (2 sheets).

Fig.18. Gálvez 127i. Inverted overprint.
Only 250 thought to exist.



Fig.19. Imperforate
MUESTRA overprint.
Experts suggest only
250 or so printed.



For presentation purposes, to the U.P.U. for example, sheets of gum-less imperforate stamps were overprinted with the familiar diagonal lilac rose MUESTRA cachet (figure 19) and although the quantity of these is not known, experts suggest a figure of 250. The airmail stamp is hard to find on authentic commercial covers but since its face value did not match any of the postal tariffs existing at that time, this might well have influenced its rarity when used in this manner.

Since the airmail stamps were run from the same 2nd plate of the 1st sky-blue printing used for the ordinary postage issue, each sheet features the 'joined AY' variety (see España 2011-2) just once at position 6. As only that plate was used, no other major plate varieties exist on authentic overprinted airmail stamps. The overprint itself is a different matter and there are more than 50 minor imperfections in the impression of its letters and numbers – far too many to list here. Typical examples, authentic but each differing slightly (figure 20), illustrate just three of these.

Fig.20. Shows authentic overprints on stamps from position 49 on sheet (top), position 9 centre and position 43 bottom. Position 49 overprint is almost perfect, position 9 shows faults to the '5', the 2nd 'E' in AEREO and the lower part of the 'P' in Pts. Position 43 shows faults to the 'R' and 2nd 'E' in AEREO, to the '5' and the 'P' and 't' in Pts. Also there is a dot above and to the left of the + sign.



It is unfortunate that the airmail stamp was probably the most heavily forged of any of the Civil War issues of either combatant and forged examples are frequently found on eBay offered as genuine to unsuspecting collectors. In fact, I myself have identified several in the last few months, listed at prices of up to 500 euros. The reason for this is not hard to determine since only 5,000 individual stamps were overprinted and the overprint itself, produced via offset was not – in theory at least – difficult to reproduce.

Many of these forgeries (figure 21) feature poorly produced and incorrect type-faces and can be easily identified with the use of a decent magnifying glass. The cover illustrated (figure 22) is a blatant example of this inasmuch as not only is the airmail overprint forged but the cancellation (14 ENE 38) is dated 3 months before the stamp itself was issued! Some forged overprints are set typographically and leave a slight 'dented' impression on the back of the stamp. Also, it is always worth checking the distance between the vertical leg of the first 'E' in 'AEREO' and the full stop after 'Pts', which measures 18.5mm on authentic overprints.

Fig.21. A badly forged overprint with incorrect and ragged type-face, which is too thin, spindly and far too faint.



Fig.22. Bogus cover with forged overprint, forged 'MADRID' cancellation and censor marks, dated three months before the issue date of the stamp !



Other forgeries however, were professionally prepared and require much closer examination, including the 'Valencia' forgeries (figure 23) opposite page, named after and printed by the Ortega print works in that city on sheets of 50 stamps. In many cases these are clearer and better produced than some of the authentic versions and were also circulated widely. They are among the most common airmail overprint forgeries found on the market today.

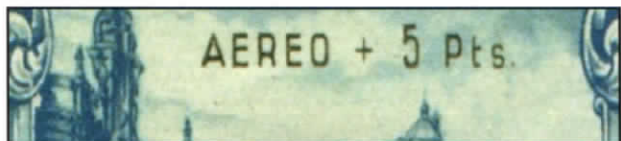


Fig. 23. 'Valencia' forged overprint.

Although the type of the 'Valencia' overprint looks clean and authentic overall, the 'give-away', seen clearly only when enlarged, is the increased curvature of the upper and lower arms of the 's' in 'Pts' which, on the genuine overprint are much flatter (see figure 20).

Forged overprints were also applied to stamps from plates other than the 2nd of the 1st sky-blue printing and are therefore, found on all stamps with the blue blobs on the 'D' and 'UD' of 'AYUDA', shown in figures 13 and 14. These then, are some of the pitfalls that 'dog' the airmail stamps of this issue – unfortunately there are others. To 'muddy the waters' still further, the 'expert accreditation' sometimes found on the back of the airmail stamps cannot always be trusted.



Fig.24.



False



Authentic AFO mark

The Agencia Filatélica Oficial (AFO) symbol (figure 24) shown above left and centre for example, is also a forgery – the authentic symbol (shown on the right and heavily retouched to improve its clarity) is usually much less sharp than illustrated and has a small curved line running from the bottom right of the 'O' through the rim of the outer circle, which has the effect of making it resemble a 'Q' and a similar line from the top left of the 'A' through the outer circle.

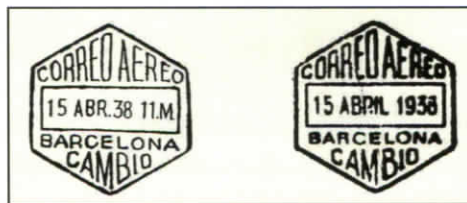
First Day of Issue Covers

As was the case with the ordinary postage issue, identical format FDCs (figure 25) franked with the airmail overprinted stamp were prepared by Cristóbal Amengual, addressed and mailed to Arthur Barger. Dr Schier considers that, at most, 100 examples from 2 sheets of 50 stamps were produced and naturally, these are extremely rare. Similar covers were also mailed to personalities in Spain and elsewhere. Authentic FDCs are cancelled with the same hexagonal Barcelona postmark (figure 26) and most feature the standard REPUBLICA ESPAÑOLA CENSURA censor mark.

Fig.25. Authentic FDC addressed to Arthur Barger.



Fig.26. Below. Barcelona FDC cancellations, authentic on the left and bogus on the right.



Not surprisingly, bogus FDCs abound, exhibiting a variety of forged airmail overprinted stamps, false Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona (figure 26) cancellations, false censor marks and addresses and false first day of issue cachets! The cancellations are easily identified but authentic 'FIRST DAY OF ISSUE' cachet boxes (broken in 2 places on their lower border) and authentic censor marks (the jaws of the 'E' in REPUBLICA are slightly wider apart than on forged examples) are more difficult to spot.

Airmail Miniature Sheets

Printing quantities for the airmail miniature sheets (figure 27) were established by Gálvez at 1,000 perforated with control numbers from 00001 to 01000, 100 imperforate with control numbers from 01001 to 01100 and 100 with inverted overprint 01101 to 01200, although it is thought that the latter is most likely a 'private' issue. Gálvez also states that in most cases, the inverted overprint runs into the lower part of the stamp design, making it difficult to see clearly. Some 20 to 30 sheets also appeared without control numbers.



Fig.27. Airmail overprinted miniature sheet. 1,000 printed with control numbers from 00001 to 01000. CERT Roig, COMEX.

Airmail miniature sheets were not produced by the Rieusset works on an individual basis but on large printing stock sheets of 20 or 18 -- depending on the overall size of the printing stock -- which were then guillotined and perforated in the same way as those of the ordinary postal issue. Therefore the position of the stamp relative to the edges of the sheet varies. MUESTRA overprints in lilac rose were applied before guillotining took place.

Miniature Sheets on First Day Covers

Miniature sheets were affixed to FDCs, the first 10 with control numbers 00001 to 00010, prepared by Cristóbal Amengual and addressed to Arthur Barger, each one cancelled by the Barcelona hexagonal postmark. Readers will not be surprised to learn that sheets can be found with authentic overprinted stamps and false cancellations. Authentic FDCs also exist with control numbers from 00473 to 00538 and Madrid first day of issue cancellations, mailed from Gálvez to addresses in Barcelona. Some imperforate and inverted overprint sheets were also prepared by Amengual and mailed to Arthur Barger at his Flushing, USA address. When the print run was completed a number of large sheets (about 50) without control numbers remained in stock and these were filtered onto the market, although they were considered to have a lower value, Gálvez 1950 listing them at about one third of the value of the numbered sheets.

Forged miniature sheets have also appeared on the market over the years, including sheets with authentic airmail overprints and false control numbers, possibly stemming from the large sheets remaining after the print run. In these examples the false control numbers are generally blurred, too heavy or incorrectly positioned on the sheet. Cases also exist in which stamps on ordinary postage miniature sheets still bearing their original control numbers, have been 'doctored' with a forged airmail overprint. However, Dr. Schier's book "Sellos y Hojitas Defensa de Madrid 1938-39" contains an illustrated register of over 500 authentic airmail miniature sheets and is an invaluable source of reference for any resolute (and wealthy!) would-be collector of this much maligned but interesting, modern Spanish philatelic classic. The final part of this article, dealing with fantasies, private issues and the 2nd anniversary issue will appear in España 2012-2.

References: Dr. O Schier, Gálvez 1950.

The bogus cover shown as Figure 22 is reproduced by kind permission of SSC member, Cliff Kirkpatrick.

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Fantasies, fakes and private issues

Parts 1 and 2 of this article dealt with the ordinary postage and airmail versions of this controversial Republican Civil War issue. The first section of this third and concluding part covers the 'so called' fantasies, fakes and private issues. I use the words 'so-called', advisedly, since controversy over some of these items keeps the argument simmering even now, over 60 years later!

Figure 28 (right) is a fantasy, although it is offered on eBay, in auction catalogues and dealers' lists from time to time as a private or local issue. However, figures 29 and 30 (below) are a different matter altogether. The miniature sheets and individual stamps in question are surcharged in black "CORREO SUBMARINO 15Pts." on the left and "CORREO AEREO 5Pts." on the right. These surcharges, which are beautifully and apparently professionally produced, can also be found inverted and doubled. The stamps exist in blocks of four and also (figure 31) with a rose coloured diagonal "MUESTRA" overprint running from bottom left to top right.

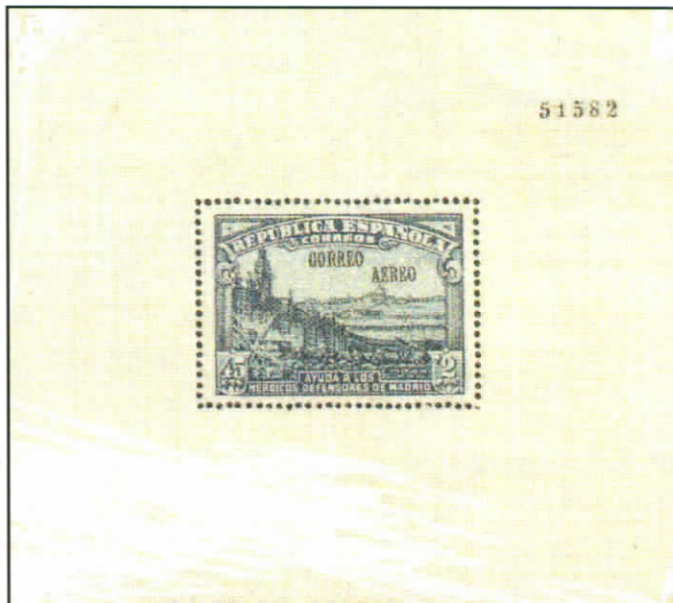


Fig.28.



Figs. 29 and 30. Still enjoy considerable controversy among experts as regards their authenticity.



The first time that these items came to light, according to Sr. Francisco Aracil, was in 1962 via the dealer, Sr. Josef Arias who claimed that 250 miniature sheets, numbered 25801 to 26050 of the original ordinary postage issue were overprinted as shown, each also carrying a number in red in the top left hand corner relating to the last 3 numbers of the sheet minus 800 – thus, the number '197' appeared on sheet 25997.



Fig.31. MUESTRA overprint.

However, Dr. Oswald Schier – the acknowledged expert on the Defence of Madrid issue – gives the miniature sheet number ranges as 23952 to 24100 and 25801 to 26000. Sr. Aracil was apparently shown a number of these sheets by the philatelist son of the Republican General Rojo, who claimed they had been given to his father in the last months of the war and were essays for a non-circulated issue. Some years later, a few sheets turned up at philatelic auctions but were presumed fakes since their red numbers did not match the stated sheet numbering system (figure 32).

According to Sr. Francisco del Tarré, of the AFO, the issue was a private one. But Ron Shelley, writing in 'Cruzada' volume 20 No 2, considered it to be an essay for a proposed submarine service between Barcelona and Mahón and an airmail service between Madrid and Valencia, stating "although clearly philatelic, it was typical of the era." Ron also said that Arthur Barger had obtained a number when he was philatelic adviser to the Republican Government. Theo Van Dam however, commenting in the same issue of 'Cruzada', reckoned that the issue was a fake and possibly "the most dangerous (fake) of all."



Fig.32. A fake (?). Red numbers and sheet numbers do not match.

The matter is clouded further by Dr. Schier who maintains a position of some doubt concerning the authenticity of the issue but states that an American stamp magazine claimed that the dealer, Sr. Serebrakian, had sent in an example, alleging that it had been prepared in 1938 but never issued by the Republican Government. Apparently Sr. Serebrakian also told Dr. Schier in 1965 that an ex-postal official of the Republic had taken the sheets and stamps to Cuba in 1939. Finally, Dr. Schier points out that the MUESTRA overprint was always used in Spain to present examples of stamps already issued rather than on essays. For the record, the sheets and stamps were included in the Sanabria catalogue of 1946 but omitted in 1950.

These then, are the 'pros' and 'cons' relating to these much discussed miniature sheets and stamps. Are they merely fantasies, officially prepared but unused essays or privately printed? The fact seems to be that none of the experts quoted is absolutely certain. Members' input would be welcome here.

The "Madrid Liberated" local issues

Shortly after the surrender of Madrid at the end of March 1939, ordinary Republican and Nationalist definitive postage stamps and Defence of Madrid ordinary postage miniature sheets were circulated bearing the overprints "Madrid/Liberado/28 Marzo/1939" and "Madrid/Liberación/28 Marzo/1939" plus a number of colour and positional variations thereof. However, only the overprinted Defence of Madrid issue concerns us here and its individual stamps were produced bearing the latter overprint in red or red and brown, with or without a "0.50Cts" surcharge. The sheets (figure 33) appeared with the same basic overprint (also found inverted) with an additional "10 pesetas" surcharge but also with several different variations of coloured surrounding images including the words "Arriba España" and the Falange and Requeté motifs.

In fact, they originated via the Haitian Embassy and Cuban Consulate, which both occupied the same building in the city. Sponsored on behalf of Nationalist refugees sheltering within these diplomatic enclaves throughout the war, they were issued individually and also in 40 to 50 books dedicated to the wife of the Haitian Consul in Madrid and bearing the note “Sin valor postal” (Without postal value) on the front cover.

Nevertheless, the individual stamps and sheets were listed in the 1960 Gálvez Specialised Catalogue as ‘private issues’ and Edifil Unified Specialised Catalogue as ‘patriotic issues’. A few stamps were indeed used on mail for a day or two after the ‘liberation’ but as is the case with all this issue, are extremely rare in either used or unused form.

Fig. 33. Originated privately in the Haitian Consulate in Madrid and sponsored on behalf of Nationalist fugitives sheltering there during the war. The sheet exists without the ‘Arriba España’ overprint, with overprint inverted and without the images that surround the stamp.



The Second Anniversary issue

On 7th November 1938, the AFO introduced its ‘Second Anniversary of the Heroic Defence of Madrid’ stamps, printed in Barcelona by Oliva de Vilanova and perforated 11½ line. Intended no doubt, as an attempt to extend the success, perceived or otherwise, of the fund-raising original issue, it comprised sheets of 50 sky-blue stamps in 10 blocks of 4 (figure 34) in 2 vertical rows of 5 blocks, overprinted “7 NOV. 1938 – SEGUNDO ANIVERSARIO DE LA HEROICA DEFENSA DE MADRID”. Each of the right hand blocks of 4 was attached on its right to a vertical strip of 2 individual stamps, similarly overprinted except for the date, which was repositioned in the middle of the overprint (figure 35).



Figs. 34 and 35. The Second Anniversary issue block of 4 and individual stamp.



Although fairly easy to find in both blocks and individually, it is thought extremely unlikely that more than a few examples exist today in their original combined format, although more than 50% non circulated remainders still existed in the AFO by the end of the war.

Several easy-to-spot plate varieties exist, the most prominent being the individual stamp dotted 'D' of 'DE LA' (figure 36) and the block of 4 joined 'EN' of 'DEFENSA' (figure 37), each occurring just once per sheet. Both varieties are quite hard to find and are accredited by Gálvez and Edifil with much higher values than normal examples.



Fig.36. The dotted 'D' in DE LA.



Fig.37. The joined 'EN' in DEFENSA.

A few fantasies and local issues have also been produced and figure 38 is one of the former, which appears on the market from time to time described as a 'local issue'.

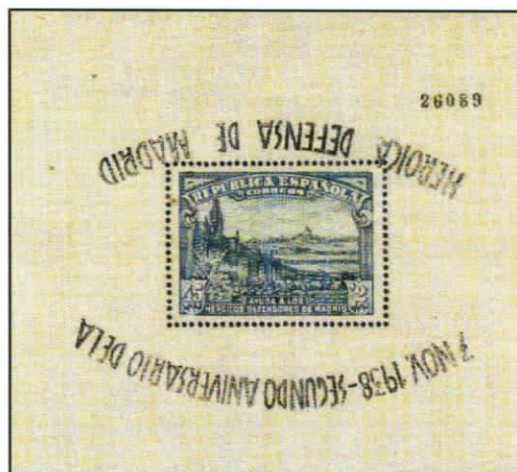


Fig.38. A frequently encountered fantasy.

Considerably more attractive, also circulated immediately after the surrender of Madrid and emanating from the Haitian/Cuban diplomatic source at the same time as those discussed earlier, are the privately produced 'Madrid Liberado' and 'Madrid Liberación' overprints on the blocks of 4 (figure 39) and individual stamps respectively. Unlike the earlier discussed private issues (figure 33) however, these were not listed in either Gálvez or Edifil. All these blocks currently command wildly high prices.



Fig.39. In Dr. Schier's opinion there may have been as few as 30 examples printed.

References: Dr. O.Schier, Sr. Franciso Aracil, R.G. Shelley and Theo Van Dam.

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