

Winter 2011

# Araña

THE JOURNAL OF THE SPANISH PHILATELIC SOCIETY

## Palacio de Comunicaciones



**AN INTRO  
TO POSTAL  
FORGERIES  
SEMI-OFFICIAL  
AIRMAILS OF  
ANDORRA  
AND MORE!**

# Auction News

By Hal Shelton

Happy New Year to all SPS members and your families

In the current auction there is a wide range of offerings, so most should be able to find something of interest. Of particular note are the following:

- In the classics/regular issue section, most of the lots through #23 are stamps from the generous donation from Mr. Joaquin Ruhi. These are “priced to sell” and would make excellent gifts to young family members in starting or building their collections. We can all do more to encourage younger collectors to participate in a hobby we enjoy so much. The purchase price for these lots goes directly to the SPS club and helps fund publication and mailing of the Arana magazine.
- I have included a new reference catalogue—”Spanischer Burgerkrieg Die Lokalkarten Nationalspaniens 1936-38” (SCW Nationalist Patriotics 1936-38) by Peter Litzinger. Peter is a SPS member and he discussed his catalogue on the SPS forum web site (<http://www.spsforum.net>). It is a hard bound 185 page book, following the material primarily in Galvez with some Sofima. I know Jerry Wells and I have copies and find it an excellent reference book for SCW items. The pictures are in color, book is in German, but Peter has prepared an English introduction. You can email Peter at [hp.litzinger@t-online.de](mailto:hp.litzinger@t-online.de). The price is 45 Euro, 2.50 Euro for PayPal and 12 Euro shipping to US.
- From time to time, I receive comments about an “over emphasis” on SCW material included in our auctions. We offer what is provided and what “sells.” For those who feel this is the case, please provide items in other collecting areas.
- If you are interested in monetizing some of your collection, even if just your duplicates, please contact me at [h.shelton@verizon.net](mailto:h.shelton@verizon.net) and we can discuss how to provide material to include in our auctions—it is a simple process.

In early summer, I was in Barcelona and visited Senor Llach. While I have made purchases over the years we had never met. He expressed his warm greetings to all SPS club members he has dealt with over the years. We discussed the status of the quality Spanish stamp market and he noted prices keep increasing, in spite of current economic conditions (this was before the Irish bailout and potential for Portugal and Spain). His biggest challenge is to find good material to include in auctions and other sales channels. Unlike our SPS club demographic of older members whose families are not interested in continuing with one’s collection so they are being sold; he said there are many younger active buyers worldwide who buy up collections and large lots, pick out the few issues they want and resell the remainder on eBay or other internet service. It is difficult for a “bricks and mortar” business to compete with internet marketing. He noted the largest concentration of Spanish stamp collectors/buyers are in Spain, Switzerland and the US.

# Letter From The Postal History Foundation

Dear Editor:

I'm at the Postal History Foundation (PHF) in Tucson ([www.postalhistoryfoundation.org](http://www.postalhistoryfoundation.org)) and we are working with the Kino Heritage Society (KHS) ([www.padrekino.com](http://www.padrekino.com)) also in Tucson, on a project that we feel may interest your readers.

On March 15, 2011, we will celebrate the 300th anniversary of the death of Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, in Magdalena (now Magdalena de Kino), Sonora, Mexico. Father Kino's autobiography can be found on the web at [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eusebio\\_Kino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eusebio_Kino). As you can see, Father Kino was born in Italy, and after his education as a Jesuit came to Mexico where he worked in the Pimeria Alta (Northern Mexico and Southern Arizona).

In 1987, Mexico issued a stamp (Scott 1474) on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of Padre Eusebio Francisco Kino's arrival to the Pimeria Alta. It's an interesting stamp depicting a profile of Padre Kino against a background of the map of the Pimeria that Kino made as a cartographer.

Kino was the founder of San Xavier del Bac Mission just outside of Tucson. A stamp of the San Xavier Mission (Scott 1443) was issued in 1971 as part of the Historic Preservation set of that year.

March 15, 2011, will be the 300th anniversary of Padre Kino's death in Magdalena, Sonora, Mexico; and the Kino Heritage Society, under the auspices of the Diocese of Tucson, is commemorating this event ([www.padrekino.com](http://www.padrekino.com)).

As part of the celebration, the Postal History Foundation is working together with the Kino Heritage Society to create two cacheted covers and a commemorative cancellation. The cachets promote two monuments dedicated to Padre Kino that are found in Tucson. One is a bas-relief bronze monument that shows Padre Kino with a Pima Native man that was dedicated in 1936. The other is a large scale "Kino on Horseback" bronze statue inaugurated at the Kino Parkway in 1989. The equestrian statue has examples in several other cities and countries.

Time requirements have not allowed an official United States stamp to be issued by the United States Postal Service, so the KHS has created a personal postage stamp that has postal validity within the United States. Illustrations of the cachets, the cancel, and the personal postage stamp are available for your viewing and use at <http://padrekino.com/index.php/upcoming-events/kino-stamp/>

There is a good chance that the Vatican will release a stamp for the occasion, and it's also possible that Spain, Italy, and Mexico will have stamps as well. The date of this event to be held at the Postal History Foundation, 920 North First Ave, Tucson, AZ is March 15, 2011, from 10 am to 1 pm.

My best personal and philatelic wishes, to you and your society's members.

Paul A. Nelson

# An Introduction to Postal Forgeries

By Jaume Balsells

Every collector searching for Spanish stamps online these days is familiar with lot descriptions including terms such as “falso postal” (postal forgery) or “falso de época” (period forgery). A lot of unprofessional sellers apply these terms incorrectly to philatelic forgeries, to mislead collectors into thinking that they are more collectable and valuable than they truly are. This practice generates a lot of confusion, especially to beginner collectors, who are not familiar with the highly collectable, and usually valuable, true postal forgeries.

The term postal forgery refers to counterfeit stamps that were created to be used in the mail, thus defrauding the Postal administration. A period forgery essentially refers to the same thing. Forged stamps that were created during the time when their equivalent genuine stamps were valid for postage, to be used in the mail. The forgers would use their counterfeit stamps as postage or sell them to the general public as genuine.

The practice of counterfeiting stamps to defraud the post office was more prevalent in Spain than in any other country, and started in 1850 with the very first stamp that Spain issued. The XIXth century period, when the mail was still a relatively expensive service, is the golden age of postal forgeries. In contrast, as the mail service became more affordable compared to the cost of living, counterfeiting stamps

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ceased to be a profitable crime. As a result, very few postal forgeries are known during the XXth century and, some of the few we know, are philatelic in origin. Still, some countries nowadays incorporate safety measures such as elaborate perforation designs, holographic images or watermarks in their high denomination stamps to prevent counterfeiting.

Postal forgeries were bought and sold amongst the genuine stamps of the period. They were used to pay postage or telegraph service. When an issue was demonetized, some postal forgeries even made it into the Postal Administration as remainders and, as such, were bar cancelled. They are an integral part of Spanish Postal History which makes them as collectable as their genuine counterparts.

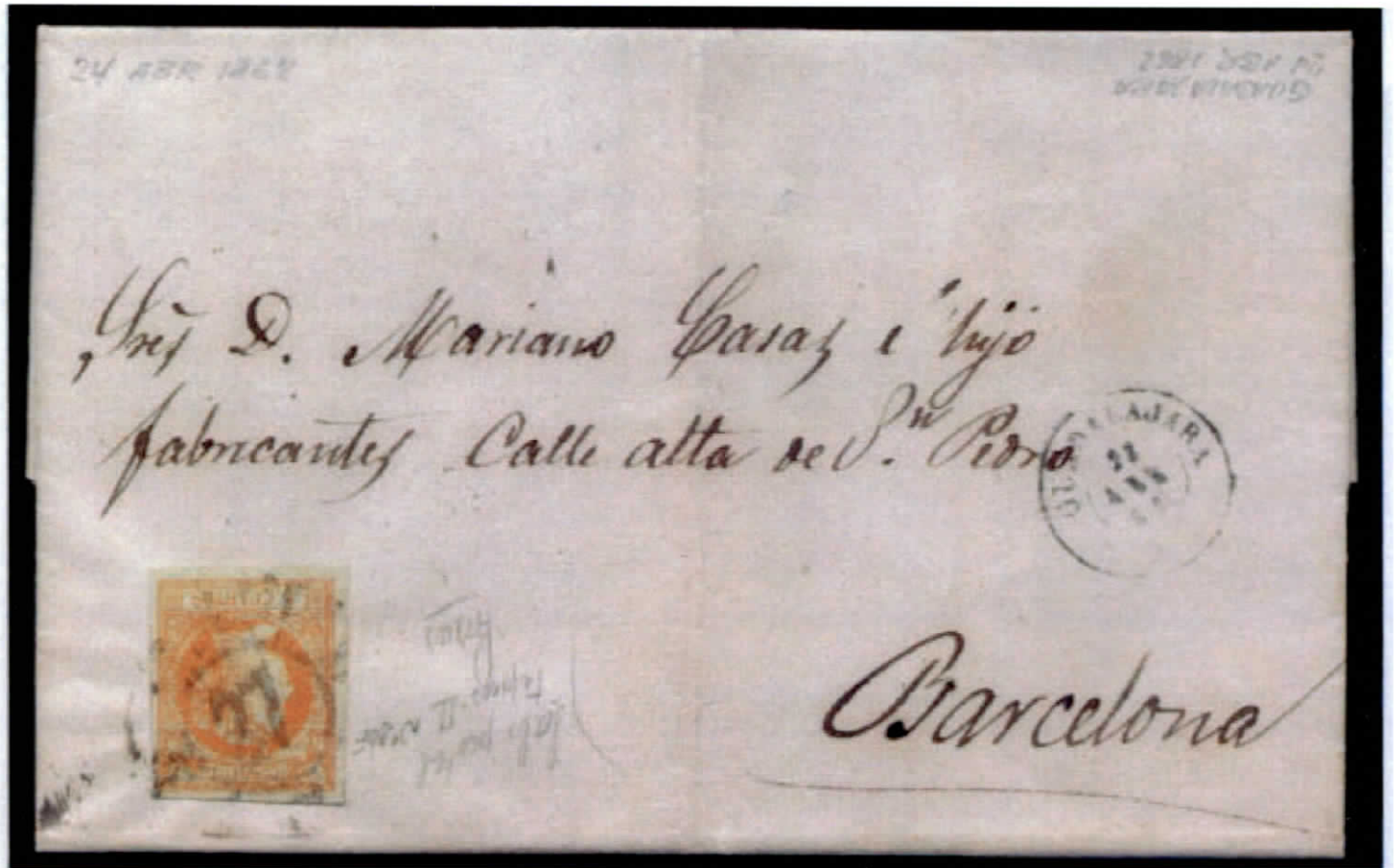
Three different methods were used to produce the majority of the postal forgeries we know. A great number of postal forgeries were created from **original designs**.

These were essentially hand engraved copies of a genuine stamp and can be identified easily because they differ greatly from the genuine stamps. A lot of them were detected by the Administration.

The 4 cuartos stamp of 1855 and the 1 real stamp from 1860 shown with this article are examples of original design postal forgeries. A cover from 1860 with a 12 cuartos postal forgery shows how the same design was often used to create postal forgeries with different denominations.

Postal forgeries were also produced from **stolen wax casts**. The process started with a worker of the Fábrica del sello (the government printing works) illegally obtaining a wax cast from a genuine printing dye. The cast was most likely sold to the counterfeiters who produced the postal forgeries from them. Since these forgeries were obtained from genuine designs, they were very similar to the genuine stamps

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1862 cover from Guadalajara to Barcelona bearing a 4 cuartos postal forgery type II (Graus 20F).



1862 cover from Barcelona to Bordeaux bearing a 12 cuartos postal forgery type II (Graus 36F).



4 cuartos stamps of 1955. Genuine stamp (Edifil 40, left) and postal forgery type I (Graus 5F, right).



Real stamps of 1860. Genuine stamp (Edifil 55, left) and postal forgery (Graus 35F, right).



50 milésimas stamps of 1870. Genuine stamp (Edifil 107, left) and postal forgery type VI (Graus 80F, right).



1862 cover from Barcelona to Paris bearing a 12 cuartos postal forgery stamp (Graus 47F).

## POSTAL FORGERIES

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and very hard to identify. The wax casting process produced only minute printing differences, usually tiny ink spots. Under normal conditions, these would appear to be printing flaws. However, when the forged stamps were duplicated to create plates, these ink spots would remain constant and all the stamps in a plate would have the same printing flaws. This made the identification of the counterfeit stamps possible.

A cover from Guadalajara to Barcelona with a 4 cuartos postal forgery from 1860 is shown as an example of a postal forgery obtained from a wax cast of a genuine stamp. Two tiny spots just above the "O" from CUARTOS are the identifying mark for this postal forgery.

Postal forgeries were also produced using **photographic methods**. This method

was not commonly used and we only find a few examples in the high denomination issues of 1862 and 1864. These were also very high quality forgeries and they are identified because they were printed by lithography and the paper is also thinner than that of the genuine stamps.

A cover from Barcelona to France with a 12 cuartos postal forgery from 1862 is an example of a postal forgery created with photographic methods. These forgeries are almost identical to the genuine stamps and well trained eyes are necessary in order to tell them apart.

Design is always the major factor to be able to recognize postal forgeries. However, other characteristics of the stamps such as paper type, printing method and, for later issues, perforations, are useful clues

to correctly identify postal forgeries.

A 50 milésimas stamp from the 1870 issue postal forgery type VI with a remainder bar cancel is shown as an example, next to a genuine stamp. This forgery type was obtained from a stolen wax cast and there are no printing flaws that could help determine that this stamp is a forgery. However, genuine stamps of this issue were perforated 14 while the type VI postal forgery were perforated 13.

It is out of the scope of this brief introduction to describe all known postal forgeries in detail. The best work to date in this regard is the book *Falsos Postales de España – Postal Forgeries of Spain* by Francesc Graus and edited by Filatelia Pedro Monge in 1977. The book can be found for sale from time to time in auctions.

# The 1932 “Semi-official” Airmails

By Carlos Romo

## A private, non-controlled issue

30 years or so ago I had seen a set of stamps listed in the Sanabria Air-post catalogue, which I had never seen previously listed in any other catalogue I knew. These stamps were supposed to be an air mail series for Andorra. In later years when my interest for stamps had been reduced to a few countries - Andorra being foremost among them - I began to run into more mentions of

Andorran correspondence. ... The stamps are very aptly inscribed “sobre-taxa”, that is to say that a letter bearing normal franking had no need of any further stamps, and that the “airmail stamps” were only a sort of receipt from a private party to show payment of air transportation for a given item. ... I don’t think these stamps have any real value - other than historic-. They exist with ‘Franquicia del Consell’ and ‘MUESTRA’

“It was another one of the numerous attempts to profit from Andorra Philately. ... I don’t think these stamps have any real value — other than historic-.

this issue which was supposed to have been a “Semi-Official” - never issued series. I became quite curious about their status, since after more than 40 years of being practically unknown “Cinderellas” of marginal interest even for collectors specializing in Andorra, more and more they started to appear in dealer’s lists being offered at quite handsome prices; this curiosity led me to a series of fortunate contacts with several very knowledgeable gentlemen of Andorra Philately. The first one was Mr. Ramón Jové Llavaneras of Lérida, Spain, and from him I received the following impressions concerning the series;

“It was another one of the numerous attempts to profit from Andorra Philately. A South American Gentleman sought a concession for the transportation by air of

overprints, with double overprint, imperforate, double perforation, etc Nothing is genuine - although with the passing of time the least suspected items come to have value - for lack of the real thing. ... I wouldn’t ignore them completely, but neither would I place an exceeding worth upon them.”

Along with this information Mr. Jové also enclosed for my examination a sample of a - to me - previously unknown cancelling device, similar to the one illustrated here.

Further, Mr. Jové suggested that I should contact Mr. D. W. Tanner for further information, which I successfully attempted, and from Mr. Tanner I received the following opinions about the items in question:-

“I’m quite sure that Sr. Jové is right that no mail was ever carried, despite what

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The bogus “first flight” cachet with forged CORREUS ANDORRA cachet.

# ANDORRA





"Els Infems Aerodrome - La Seo de Urgel 1932." Canudas Busquets, 6th from the right; Jaume Aguadé, 8th from the right; José Galán, 2nd from right.

## ANDORRA

Continued from page 7

Galvez said (in an article in "Madrid Filatélico" of 1934). I have seen blocks of four of this series (all with their full gum!) cancelled with the cachet which you illustrate. That might have been done many years after 1932. I think the printing equipment was sold, as well as the original stock of stamps, and that many thousands have been reprinted during the years".

(Mr. S. Nathan of Barcelona, who also assisted in the investigation states that he had seen the stocks of these stamps „It lay in two very large cupboards at the shop of Francisco Tarré in Calle Layetana in Barcelona. He showed me kilos of sheets. ... literally tons of errors, etc.“).

From Mr. Parke, one of the deans of Andorra Philately I obtained another opinion which read thus:

"I have always felt that the promotor printed these wholly on his own, as the airline was to be wholly in Spain. At that time

I was watching foreign first flights closely, and there was nothing in the press about the service which was supposed to have been started, and I am sure that no mail was carried, as it would have been reported in the largest French Stamp Paper, L'Echo de la Timbrologie, to which I subscribed. The stamps could have been printed in just as large numbers as the promotor and his heirs desired; at one time a US dealer was offering these at \$1.00 as an approval premium. It is a shame for these now to be promoted as real philatelic property. The length of the set also indicates that these were entirely for sale to collectors. They are interesting Andorra items, but at a moderate price as novelties, just as with the 19th Century 'stamps' which were printed for dealers."

Thanks to Mr. Bishop who provided me with copies of relevant pages of "L'Echo de la Timbrologie" we find that it is in the "Echo" where we find the most convinc-

ing proof of the final status of this issue. A mention of the stamps is given for the first time in the March 31st 1932 issue, page 301:

"The 'Champion Bulletin' gives details of the imminent organization of an air postal service between Barcelona and Andorra, and it also announces that the stamps for franking the mail transported through this service have already been printed. The series consists of 12 values with a total cost of 24 pesetas."

There was apparently another reference about the series in a later issue of "L'Echo" because on page 814 of the August 31st, 1934 issue we find the following "clincher" about their status;

## CORRECTION

This is the first time that we have had the pleasure to receive a communication from the Minister of Posts, therefore it is with great pleasure that we reproduce the letter below, signed by the hand of M. Mallarmé himself, Minister of Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones of the French Republic.

Paris, 30 August, 1934

Sir,

In your issue of April 15th, No.919 of L'Echo de la Timbrologie, under the feature column "Chronique", you give indications concerning a series of airmail stamps, issued by the Spanish Office in the Valleys of Andorra which you also mention had been overprinted "Franquicia del Consell".

I am pleased to be able to inform you that the Spanish Administration has been consulted through my offices, and they have stated that they never issued these items; moreover, the General Council of the Valleys of Andorra, to whom one of this series have been shown, has denied the authenticity of the issue.

I would be most thankful if you would be so kind as to bring to the attention of your readers the fraudulent character of the labels in question.

Yours very truly,  
Minister of Posts, Telegraphs  
and Telephones,  
A. Mallarmé.

## The Story Unravels

The following step came about through certain remarks in one of Mr. Tanner's letters which brought about a series of fortunate developments. Mr. Tanner stated: "In 1953, when I was in Andorra, Sr. Estanislau Sangrà, (currently Andorra's First Sindic - Attorney General), owner of the hotel Balne-

ary Muntany, Les Escaldes, told me that he knew the Pilot of the 'plane used in 1932 for the experimental flights. From memory, Sr. Sangrà told me that the pilot had told him that the real profits would be made from the stamps rather than from carrying freight. (This puzzled Sr. Sangrà, as he knew nothing of philately or stamps). As far as I can recall, Sr. Sangrà told me that the pilot later flew for the losing side in the Civil War, and that he finally settled in Canada (or possibly USA). He visited Europe some times, but did not dare enter Spain, so he stayed in Andorra at Sr. Sangrà's hotel." Mr. Tanner went on to suggest that perhaps I should attempt contacting Sr. Sangrà myself for further information about the pilot's whereabouts; I did, and fortunately I received a prompt response with the information that the aviator had indeed been a resident of the US, but had passed away in Switzerland four years before. Sr. Sangrà also provided me with the address of the pilot's widow, in case I wished to get in contact with her for further information. Lucky once more, I was able to acquire another fountain of very accurate information.

## The Pilot - Josep Canudas Busquets

Through my communications with this gentleman's widow I was able to put together the following story:

Sr. Canudas Busquets was a civil aviation pilot in Lérida, still fondly remembered by people of the days when he performed aerial acrobatics from the primitive air fields of the time. Before his death Sr. Canudas had been preparing a book about civil aviation in Catalonia (Spain) between the years 1916 to 1936 for publication, and from his manuscript we extracted the information concerning the "experimental flights of 1931-32 which pertain to our study.

"On January 7th, 1932 the first experimental flights, which would last 12 weeks, took place. And on April 29th the last flight was taken in order to satisfy the requirements for the acquisition of the Spanish Government's Concession, according to the conditions stipulated. The aeroplane used for the first flights was a two-seater Moth Cirrus; afterwards a bigger plane - a six-seater Farman with Hispano motor - was acquired. Several newsmen; Sr. Jaume Agudé, Mayor of Barcelona; José Galán, Civil Aeronautic Lines Inspector, and councillors of the Generalitat (Provincial Government of Catalonia) went along on the experimental flights."

"... the Spanish Administration has been consulted through my offices, and they have stated that they never issued these items; ... the General Council of the Valleys of Andorra, to whom one of this series have been shown, has denied the authenticity of the issue."

# Palacio de Comunicaciones

## Postal History in a Building

By Bob Penn

In the heart of Madrid is a world famous square called the Plaza De Cibeles. The Plaza gets its name from the beautiful new-classical fountain and marble statuary located in the middle of square. This fountain is named after Cybele, Roman Goddess of Nature. The Goddess is depicted sitting on a chariot pulled by two lions. Built in the late 18th century, the fountain originally stood outside Buenavista Palace but was moved to its present site in the late 19th century. Today the fountain and another fountain next to it depicting Neptune, create a magnificent centerpiece for the Plaza.

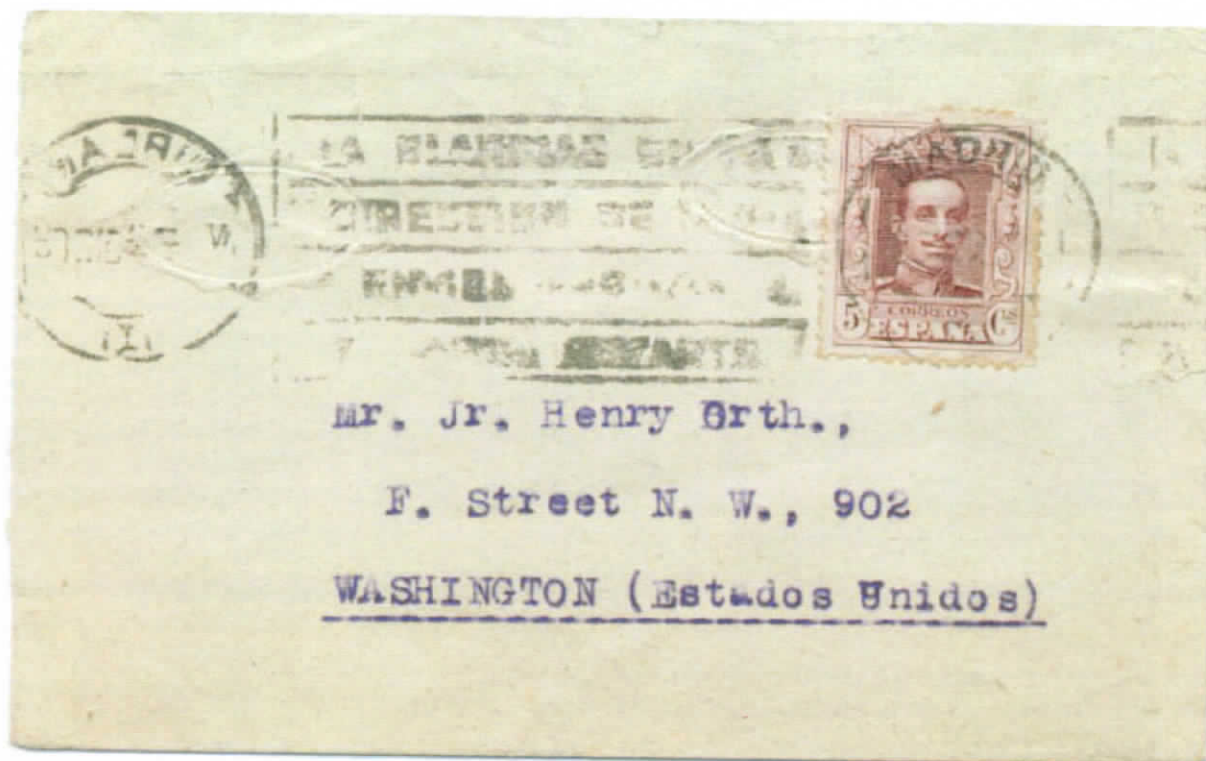
Standing on one side of the Plaza is a building that most tourists would identify as a palace. It is a palace, but not a home for kings or queens. It is the Palacio De Comunicaciones or Communications Palace. Built in 1909, it was designed to be the headquarters of the postal service. Ornate, palatial in size and scope, this building served as the postal headquarters and main post office of Madrid for over 60 years.

The "Palacio" survived W.W.I., the Spanish Civil War and W.W.II. Eventually it became obsolete for modern postal service purposes and was converted to a postal and telegraphic museum. And finally, in 2007, the "Palacio" became Madrid's official city hall...a new life for a building that may still be described as the grandest post office ever built.

It may be argued that the "Palacio" was intended to be an elaborate, impressive structure so that Spain's European neighbors would be envious. Most of their postal facilities were dull and drab and emphasized function. The Spanish postal authorities were presented with a great opportunity to show off their "new" headquarters when Spain hosted the Seventh Congress of the U.P.U. in 1920. For that event, a set of stamps was designed and issued featuring King Alphonso and be-

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low his profile, a front view of the Palacio De Comunicaciones.

During the U.P.U. Congress the Spanish postal authorities set up a special sales office in the Palacio. There U.P.U. attendees and collectors could purchase sets of the stamps. Special cancellations were applied if customers wanted to mail items from the convention.

In later years, the now famous postal building became the subject of other stamp designs. For example, the 50 cts value of the 1931 Postal Union Issue. It shows the Cibeles Fountain with the Palacio in the background. There is also a 1937 Beneficia miniature sheet with an unusual stamp in the center featuring the Palacio. This sheet comes in a brown, perforated version and a green, imperforate version, both with a 5 P. value.

Despite its architectural glory and being a symbol of civic pride, the Palacio did serve its main purpose of processing the mail. Over the decades, millions of pieces of mail were handled each month. If you collect Spanish stamps and covers, no doubt your collection includes items that went through the Palacio mail stream. An example from my collection is a simple cover franked with a 5c lilac shade of the 1922 Alphonso regular postage set. The cover is machine cancelled, Madrid with a slogan (which I have not been able to decipher). It has a typewritten address to Washington D.C.

Working at the Palacio in its early days must have been a far different daily routine than the Palatial exterior of the building would indicate. Mail sorting and processing was still largely a manual, repetitious process, involving hundreds of people. By chance, many years ago, I found an old postcard from Spain in a dealer's stock. The photo on the postcard caught my attention because it shows a panoramic view of the main mail sorting room at the Palacio circa 1928. It tells us much.

The postcard photo was "organized" – all of the hundreds of postal employees are looking at the camera. The card was most likely part of a series to be sold to Palacio visitors/tourists. Employees in the photo are wearing plain uniforms. The room itself is stark concrete and steel and a warehouse type environment. Standing at tables and sorting cabinets all day, these postal workers earned their pay checks. For them "working at the Palacio" may have had a whole different meaning.



# Your Collection Of SCW Republican Political Labels Deserves A First Class Home

## ANNOUNCING THE REPUBLICAN POLITICAL LABELS STAMP ALBUM (Based on the Gomez-Guillamon Catalog)

This 285-page stamp album uses the illustrations, numbering system and historical information contained in the Gomez-Guillamon catalog published originally by Ronald Shelley. The album is printed on heavy, archive quality acid free paper. Each label is illustrated and its value (C,S,R,RR) is listed along with its Gomez-Guillamon catalog number. Each section is organized around the union, party, charity or militia that issued the label. The history of the organization is presented at the beginning of the section.

This album does not contain the section on foreign labels, however 25 blank pages that will accommodate those labels accompany order.

Republican political labels from the Spanish Civil War are my specialty and I wanted to bring more organization and context to my collection. If you are serious about this area of Spanish philately, this album will enhance the enjoyment you gain from this fascinating specialty.

These pages will fill three Scott Specialty Albums and are punched for a three-ring binder. You are purchasing the pages only here.

**Price:** \$335 postage paid.

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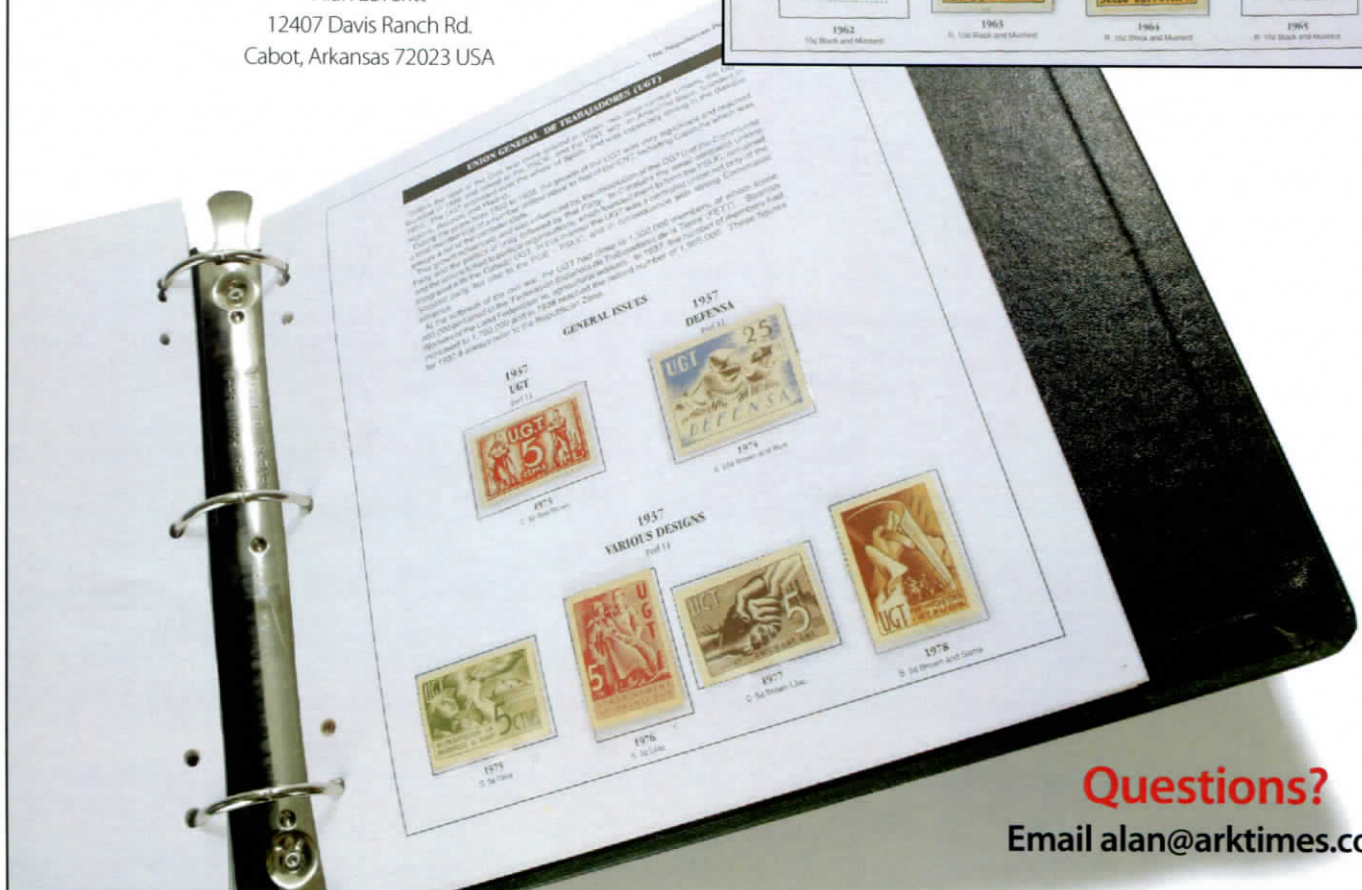
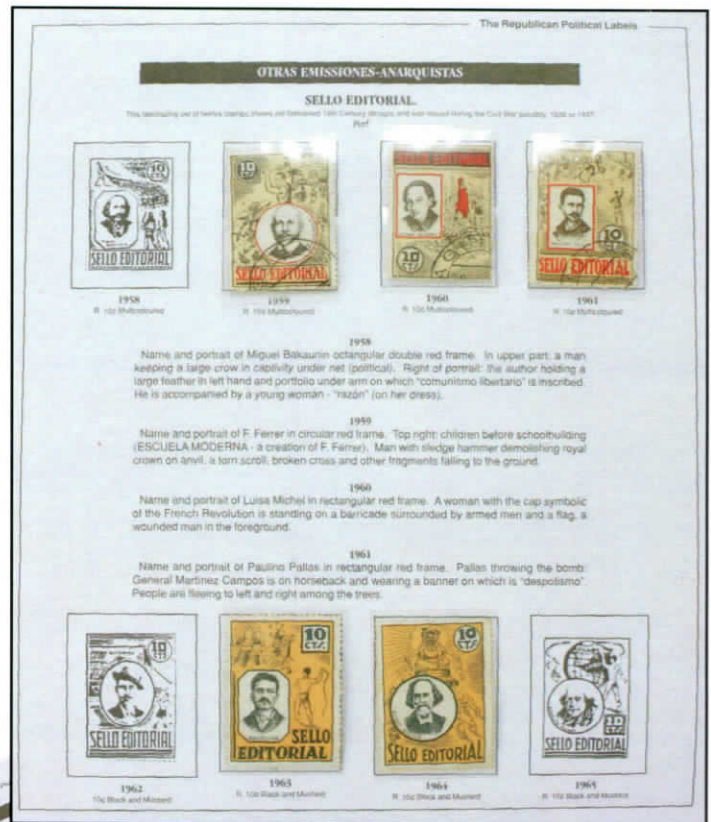
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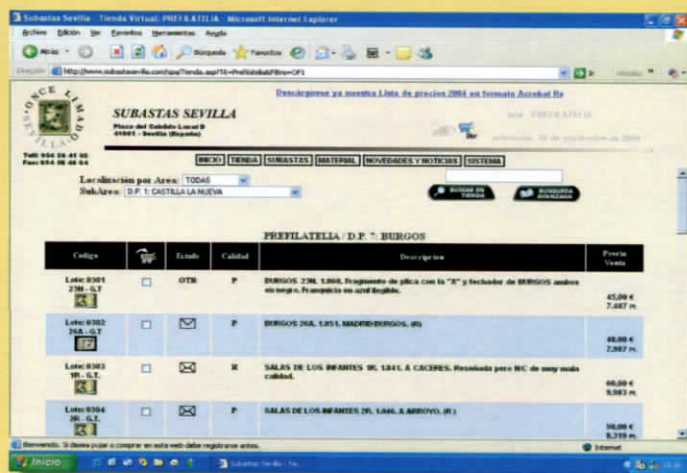
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