

THE STAMP FORUM NEWSLETTER

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APS Chapter 1591

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A STUDY USING CLASSIC ERA STAMPS**



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THE STAMP FORUM NEWSLETTER

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Established in 2013, TSF is an online stamp club with a worldwide membership. The Forum is also Chapter 1591 of the American Philatelic Society. Membership is free and application is made online at <http://thestampforum.boards.net/>

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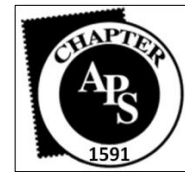
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The Forum & APS Chapter 1591 Update

By Steve Tomisek (TSF Admin & APS Chapter Ambassador)

The Stamp Forum Newsletter begins its eighth year of publication with a new Editor – Chris Dorn (@berylliumguy). I am sure that my passing of the baton to Chris will ensure that the Newsletter continues to showcase our membership and their philatelic knowledge. Please continue to support him and his editorial team by writing for the Newsletter.



Our members have selected the article that will represent our Chapter as its 2023 APS Article of Distinction. For more information on the selection process, and to learn which article and author has earned this honor, turn to page 34. Please make sure you identify your favorite from this issue once the poll has been posted.

Since 1981, October has been designated National Stamp Collecting Month in the U.S., Canada and several other countries. It is typically a time when stamp societies and clubs hold events to both celebrate and promote the hobby. The [APS website](#) provides ideas for promoting our hobby that you might consider performing in your local community.

Some may have noticed that our membership total recently crested 800 but has since dipped below that number. That happened because I delete the accounts of members who, in the span of 2 years, had only posted an introduction. If you’ve been away from the Forum for an extended period, I encourage you to sign back in and resume posting.

Steve Tomisek
 Forum Admin/APS Chapter Ambassador

To Soak, or Not to Soak: A Study Using Classic Era Stamps

By Stan Brown (@stainlessb) and Chris Dorn (@berylliumguy)

Introduction

Members of The Stamp Forum (TSF) already familiar with Stan and Chris know that they both collect stamps from the Classic era. Chris recently began a serious study of the Cape of Good Hope Triangles, while he continues to maintain his longtime collections of Hong Kong, Germany, German States and much more. Stan focuses principally on France, Belgium, and Victorian era Great Britain.

While pursuing their individual collecting interests, like many of us, both have encountered stamps in less-than-pristine condition, perhaps stuck to an old album page or envelope, heavily hinged or just plain dirty, thus requiring some method of removal and/or cleaning. Soaking would be the obvious method of choice, but the authors' concern for proper archival treatment of these stamps, as the historical artifacts which they are, has played an important role in their pursuit to find soaking methods that would result in the best outcome with the least amount of damage.

The Authors' Perspectives on Soaking: Chris

I originally started soaking stamps in tap water to remove them from their envelopes when I first started collecting back in the 1960s-1970s. I didn't take any particular care with the process back then, and I made my share of beginner's mistakes, such as ruining stamps by leaving them in water for too long or failing to separate out stamps that were affixed to non-colorfast envelopes, and thus staining all the stamps in the batch as a result.



Figure 1: Examples of album pages from old, mounted collections, sometimes with stamps almost all completely stuck down. On some occasions, the only way to remove these stamps safely from the page without risking (more) damage is to immerse and soak the entire sheet at one time.

Once I started buying stamps from dealers, as an adult collector, I thought that my soaking days were pretty much over, but I was wrong about that. In the early 2000s, I was buying old mounted collections and in order to clean up my new acquisitions, I was back to soaking stamps on a regular basis again, but now it's mainly to remove hinges or separate stamps that are stuck down to old album pages (see Figure 1 above). I am pleased to report that I have improved my technique since then and now I get good results the vast majority of the time.

Now, with more than 50 years of experience in collecting stamps, I see soaking stamps as a very valuable tool in conserving them properly by cleaning them and revealing their condition and other qualities. While all of this seems perfectly logical and reasonable to me, I note that soaking, even just in water, can be a controversial subject among philatelists. There is at least one well-known US dealer who has mentioned more than once in his monthly emails that he believes that every time a stamp is soaked in water, its color is diminished and that repeated soaking will permanently ruin stamps.

In addition, there are also well-known specialist collectors of Cape of Good Hope Triangles who have stated publicly that they do not recommend soaking these stamps in either water or dilute hydrogen peroxide, due to fears of diminishing the color and possibly the bluing of the paper, if it is present. With these claims of potential downsides to soaking in mind, I looked for references of any studies or controlled experiments that supported those opinions, but I didn't really find much.

That said, there is good, basic advice available, which warns about the beginner's mistakes mentioned earlier and which raises awareness of the existence of fugitive inks (i.e., inks that are soluble in water or other chemicals). Fugitive inks were used primarily on stamps of Great Britain and the British Commonwealth in the 19th and early 20th Centuries to prevent fraudulent re-use of stamps by removing the cancellations using chemicals. Fugitive inks are an important consideration when soaking stamps, but an in-depth discussion about them lies outside the scope of this study.



Figure 2: When soaked, the printed design of stamps with fugitive inks may completely dissolve and disappear, but it can also just fade depending how long the stamp is in contact with the solvent. This image shows a progression on Great Britain Sc117: Left: An unused copy with full gum that has never been in contact with water, showing original colors. Middle & Right: Used copies of GB Sc117 that have been in contact with water, showing a faded green central vignette compared to the pristine example.

The Authors' Perspectives on Soaking: Stan

Like Chris, I originally soaked stamps in tap water long enough for the stamp to loosen and "slide" off the paper. There was no rinsing or blotting, the stamps being placed most often on a magazine cover which

had the glossy/coated paper and then another on top with a book and left for a day. It wasn't unusual to have to cut the magazine cover apart and re-soak some of the stamps. I learned early on that red paper envelopes (common around Christmas) could turn everything somewhat pink, so for the most part, I learned to avoid those.

As I started getting approvals and dealers books, soaking was seldom necessary. Thanks to my aunt's, uncle's, and grandmother's generosity, most "new" US issues were given to me as gifts that they would buy from the post office.

Fast forward to my most recent return to stamps, which has come as a result of inheriting material from those relatives who had encouraged me in the beginning. I found myself with a great many stamps on paper, or worse yet, blocks of formerly mint stamps all stuck together from dampness. So back to soaking stamps, initially just with tepid water, blot with a cloth towel and then place between paper towels. This worked, but often aside from now being unstuck, the stamps still looked "dirty." In addition, I noticed that press-flattening the stamps between paper towels with embossed patterns in them didn't give an especially attractive result. Reading threads on TSF, I discovered that many other practitioners were using hot water and a drop of clear detergent, and some were even using hydrogen peroxide.

My familiarity with hydrogen peroxide was limited to watching it foam up on a cut or scrape in its use as a medical treatment, as well as its industrial use as a disinfectant in high-purity process systems. Based on what I read on TSF, many were diluting it, and most were leaving the stamps in the diluted solution for a minute or less. Was there a hard-and-fast rule for using peroxide on stamps?

Chris and I had a side discussion and one thing led to another with a decision to work together to determine if there was a "best practice" (more my interest) and whether blued paper, specifically COGH (Cape of Good Hope) issues printed by Perkins Bacon (more Chris' interest), would actually be negatively affected if exposed to hydrogen peroxide.

The Framework

Several back-and-forth discussions followed: which stamps to try this on? What protocols to follow? Both of us were interested in something that others could also try for themselves and basically be able to reproduce the experiments at home and confirm the same results as we got.

We felt a "control" condition of water only was essential, just in case there really wasn't that much of an advantage to using hydrogen peroxide. It was suggested that faulty material and space-fillers be used so that if the stamps were damaged due to the soaking process, we would not be destroying sound philatelic material.

So, we both set out to find two examples each from a variety of classic stamp issues to be used as test specimens. One specimen of each pair would see only water, and the other would see full-strength 3% hydrogen peroxide. Each specimen would be scanned before and after each exposure condition at as close to the same field size as possible. To show as much detail as possible, all stamps were scanned front and back at 3600dpi (dots per inch). See Figure 3 for images of the stamps in the two main groups.

With paired groups of early stamps from various countries, the next decision was to determine the soaking parameters. For the Control Group, we decided to use carbon-filtered tap water, with the idea in mind that filtration might eliminate, or at least reduce, any chlorination found in untreated tap water and the

potential impact that it might have on the results. Some TSF members had commented about concerns of using chlorinated water when soaking.

The hydrogen peroxide used was rated 3% USP. (USP stands for United States Pharmacopeia; it is a designation found on many products intended for medical use to show that it was made to reliable quality standards [1].) Each new soaking period started with fresh solution. The study was also begun with brand-new/factory-sealed bottles of hydrogen peroxide. The decay rate of a sealed/closed bottle is low (0.5%/year) [2], meaning that it can have a reasonable shelf life, but in the interest of repeatability of the experiment and consistency of the results, it made sense to begin with a fresh bottle rather than one previously opened and whose composition might have changed.

Identical silicone rubber dishes and two *Desert Magic II* drying books were used. One for the Control Group stamps (soaked only in water) and the other for the “treated” stamps, i.e., those soaked in 3% hydrogen peroxide.



Figure 3: The test specimens, prior to any soaking in this study. Left: This is the Control Group, which would only be exposed to filtered water. These test specimens are numbered W-1 through W-17. Right: This is the Peroxide Group, which would only be exposed to full-strength 3% hydrogen peroxide solution. These test specimens are numbered P-1 through P-18.

Readers please note: The reason there is one additional Cape Triangle in the Peroxide Group is because Chris only had one damaged stamp with evident bluing on the reverse. As peroxide soaking was particularly suspected to diminish the degree of bluing on these issues, it was decided that this one available test specimen would be included in the Peroxide Group rather than the Control Group. A Great Britain Penny Black was also added to the Peroxide Group near the end of the study. Because it was added later in the study, it does not appear in the scans above. Please see Table 1 below for the complete list of the test specimens.

Table 1: Soaking Study test specimen identification table.

Specimen Number	Country	Catalogue Number	Specimen Number	Country	Catalogue Number
W-1 & P-1	Austria	Sc53	W-10 & P-10	United States	Sc454
W-2 & P-2	Great Britain	Sc89	W-11 & P-11	France	Sc59
W-3 & P-3	Great Britain	Sc33	W-12 & P-12	France	Sc78
W-4 & P-4	United States	Sc213	W-13 & P-13	Austria	Sc43
W-5 & P-5	Austria	Sc75	W-14 & P-14	United States	Sc26
W-6 & P-6	Belgium	Sc6	W-15 & P-15	United States	Sc220
W-7 & P-7	France	Sc45	W-16 & P-16	United States	Sc220
W-8 & P-8	Belgium	Sc38	W-17 & P-17	Cape of Good Hope	Sc4 & 4b
W-9 & P-9	Bavaria	Sc42	P-18	Cape of Good Hope	Sc2a
			P-19	Great Britain	Sc1

Notes:

- Cape of Good Hope Sc4-4a are equivalent to SG6-6a
- Cape of Good Hope Sc2a is equivalent to SG2 (Deeply Blued Paper)
- Great Britain Sc1 (P-19) was added later in the study



Figure 4: As previously described by Stan, silicone rubber dishes of identical design were used for the study, the one on the left (yellow) for soaking the test specimen in filtered water, and the one on the right (green) for soaking its specimen in full-strength 3% hydrogen peroxide.

Setting Up the Study

After the test-specimen stamps were contributed by both authors, it was Stan who offered to set up the experiments and run them. Please see Figure 4 above for a photo of the experimental test set-up prior to the start of the trials.

Every effort was made to avoid introducing any external contamination into either the water or hydrogen peroxide used for the soaking process. Both liquids were used at room temperature. The dishes were cleaned in between uses, and they were also kept in a clean environment while in use. Stan kept everything used during the study separate from his “normal” stamp collecting materials and accessories, even so far as using dedicated tongs/tweezers for each Group, i.e., water and peroxide.

The Design of Experiment (DOE)

Initially, we had thought of various time periods for the soaking, starting with as little as 1 minute, and eventually progressing up to as long as 10,000 minutes (just under a week). One minute at the low end seemed logical, particularly for the 3% hydrogen peroxide, as this was a duration reported to have been used by TSF members for reversing discoloration due to sulfurization (aka sulfurettung) on affected stamps. Chris used 1-minute soaks for Cape Triangles (see Figure 5 below) based on the method used successfully by Jim Jackson (@jkjblue), on which Jim reported results in the relevant TSF thread [3].



Figure 5: Left: COGH Sc2 (SG4), 4-pence deep blue on paper more-or-less blued. The discoloration is quite uniform in appearance, which made it more difficult for Chris to identify it. Right: The same stamp with discoloration removed thanks to a 1-minute soak with 3% hydrogen peroxide. The bluing on the back did not show any adverse effects as a result of the process [4].

After further consideration, we decided that 10,000 minutes seemed well beyond the length of time anyone would be soaking stamps. As some members on TSF had mentioned soaking for an hour “or so” as a routine practice (for them), we decided that the 100-minute mark seemed a more logical upper time limit. Eventually, we streamlined the cumulative soak-time increments (in minutes) down to 1, 10, 50, and 100 minutes. A digital timer was used to determine the end of each period. Please see the breakdown on soak times in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Final Soaking Study experimental plan.

Soaking Round & Batch Number	Soaking Period (minutes)	Cumulative Time (minutes)
1	1	1
2	9	10
3	40	50
4	50	100

The Control and Peroxide Groups were broken down into four smaller batches to simplify handling. Doing that limited the time needed to remove a stamp from its soaking solution and give it a quick rinse (a one-second dip). After rinsing, blotting was done using a thin cotton towel to remove any excess liquid, and then the stamps were placed into the drying books. Using smaller batches also made scanning the fronts and backs after each time increment a bit faster (3600dpi).

The scanner used was an Epson Perfection V600 with VueScan software. The color setting (brightness) was adjusted slightly so that what each of us saw on our own monitors seemed representative. The VueScan setting was then saved and used each time. Stan discovered that placement on the scanner did make a slight difference, so a mask/template was created, so that all scans were done at the same location on the flatbed glass. Image areas were noted for each stamp and maintained through each group. Every effort was made to keep skewing to a minimum, as it slightly changes image size.

Experimental Results & Discussion

Stan: I must admit, based on what I had read and heard from others and despite trying to remain unbiased, I expected lengthy peroxide soaking to damage the stamps. This did not turn out to be the case. There was some observed breakdown of the paper itself, especially at the locations of tears, holes, and severe thins, which started to become noticeable at the 50-minute mark.

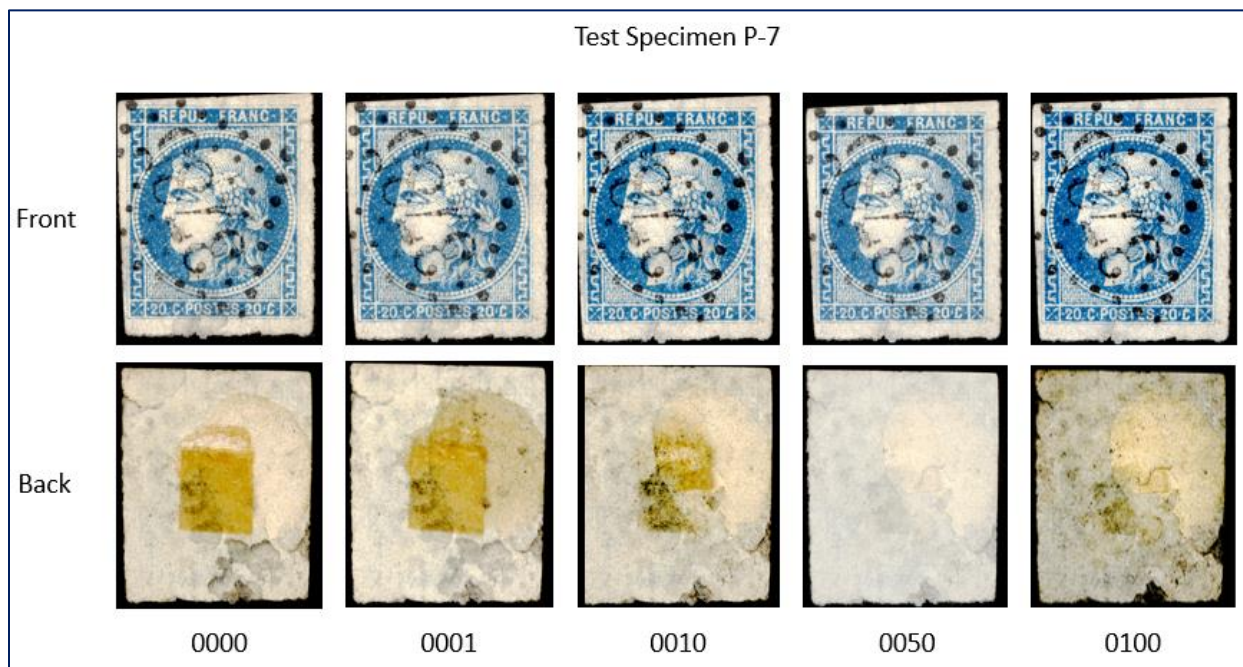


Figure 6: From left to right, progressive scanned images of fronts and backs, showing the same stamp, Test Specimen P-7 (Batch 1), and how it looked after each soak in 3% hydrogen peroxide. The “0000” designation indicates that this is prior to any soaking in this study, followed by the cumulative soak times of 1 minute (0001), 10 minutes (0010), and so on. This stamp shows some brightening of its color after 10 minutes, but the paper appears thinner and to be breaking down after 100 minutes.

On several of the damaged stamps, these effects became rather pronounced at 100 minutes. As a result, there was some hesitation after reaching 50 minutes on whether to continue to subject the Penny Black to more peroxide soaking. Although it was a damaged space-filler, it was still a Penny Black. After crossing my fingers (a time-tested technique for avoiding serious problems!), I was relieved to see that the paper of the Penny Black did not degrade any further after the full 100 minutes.

Chris: Like Stan, based on what I had read in Stevenson regarding treatment of Cape Triangles with hydrogen peroxide (he strongly advised against it [5]), I also expected lengthy peroxide soaking, i.e., more than a minute or two, to damage the stamps by degrading the ink on the printed surface. This did not seem to happen. I had also read in another source that prolonged exposure to hydrogen peroxide could dissolve a stamp's ink and destroy the printing, but this also did not happen when using a 3% solution.

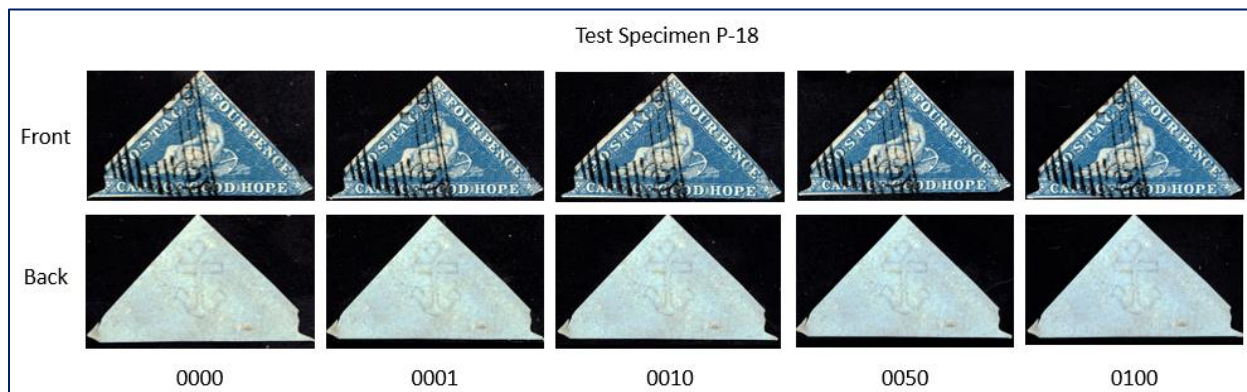


Figure 7: From left to right, progressive scanned images of fronts and backs, showing the same stamp, Test Specimen P-18 (Batch 1), and how it looked after each soak in 3% peroxide. The scans show little change, but it was observed that the printed design and watermark became more visible on the back.

My theory, which I mentioned in a previous article [6], is that in those older publications, the authors were considering what I would call “industrial strength” peroxide, which meant a formulation much stronger than 3%. I deduced that because Stevenson explicitly mentioned that peroxide was also used to remove cancellations from stamps. It is clear from my experience and again from this study that 3% peroxide is not capable of doing that.

Soaking in water after the initial removal of any hinge remnants or adherent paper had no further effects on the stamp. Most hinges released by the 1-minute mark; paper sometimes took longer, with the early Austrian stamps (Specimens W-1, W-5, and W-13) taking the longest to release their adherent bits. With the exception of a few “difficult” stamps, there seems little advantage to long water-only soaks. Whether this will hold true with the addition of a detergent still needs to be tested.

In Stan's professional experience with hydrogen peroxide (he worked with it during his career in the metals industry), he found that it is known that the solution can start to decay in the presence of other organic compounds, thus reducing its effectiveness. Therefore, soaking in water, either with or without using a drop of mild detergent, to clean the stamps' surface, is recommended prior to soaking in hydrogen peroxide.

Such a practice should maintain the 3% peroxide solution as close to its full strength as possible. Please note: it is possible to find hydrogen peroxide in solution strengths greater than 3%, but we would generally advise against using any of those for cleaning stamps. We also recommend testing the peroxide solution on damaged or low-value, expendable stamps first, before committing one's collection keepers to the soaking/cleaning process.

Visually, results after soaking in 3% hydrogen peroxide seemed the best after 10 minutes. Any improvement with a longer soaking time seemed insignificant, with the exception of some types of stains on the backs of some of the stamps. The concern that exposure to peroxide would diminish the color intensity of the blued paper on early Perkins Bacon issues seems totally unfounded when using a 3% solution.

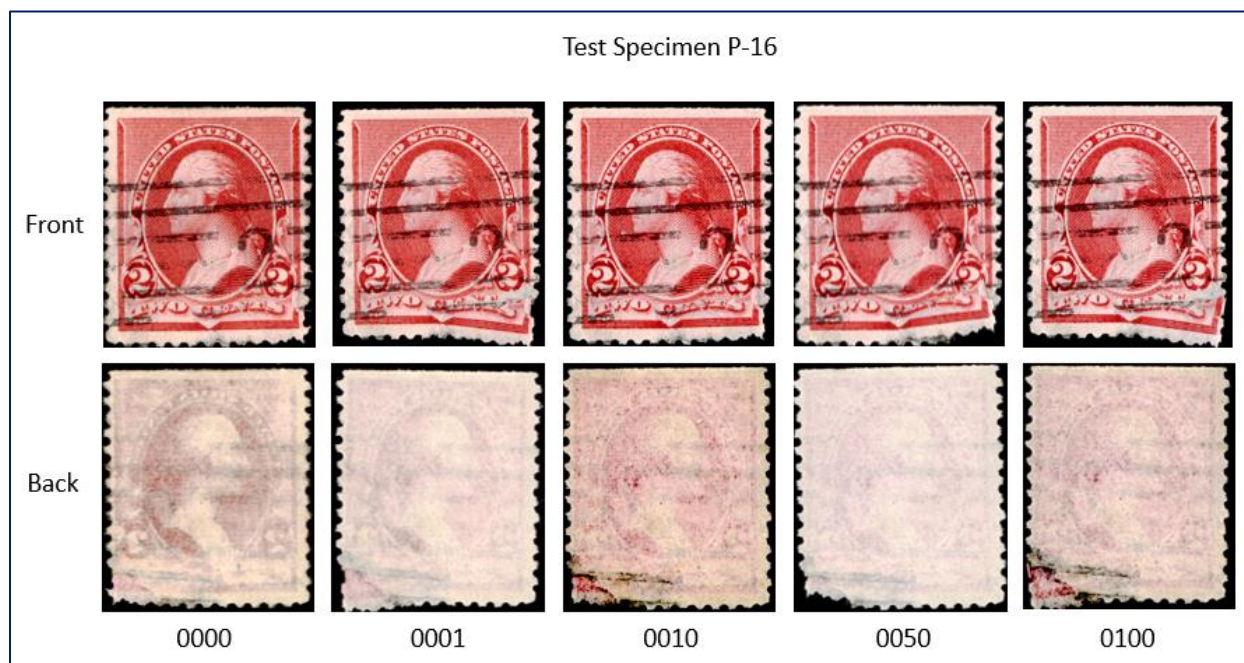


Figure 8: From left to right, progressive scanned images of fronts and backs, showing the same stamp, Test Specimen P-16 (Batch 2), and how it looked after each soak in 3% peroxide. Prior to soaking in this study (0000), the scan shows some pinkish bleeding of the red ink in the margins and on the head, which was reduced after 10 minutes and gone by 50 minutes cumulative soak time. In addition, as with some of the other specimens, the paper started to break down, in this case after just the first one-minute soak in 3% peroxide, and it became much worse where it was already thinned.

Conclusions

Stan: The study clearly demonstrates that soaking in fresh, full-strength 3% hydrogen peroxide for up to 10 minutes did not degrade the tested stamps, as previously suggested by others. For soaking periods longer than 10 minutes, the noted effect was a breakdown of some of the paper, as it generally seemed to become thinner, and any previously damaged areas were made worse. We wonder if that could be due to a reaction with the sizing agents used in some of those early stamp papers (1840-1900?). But the bottom line is that the printed design itself did not become progressively diminished or faded as we had been led to believe.

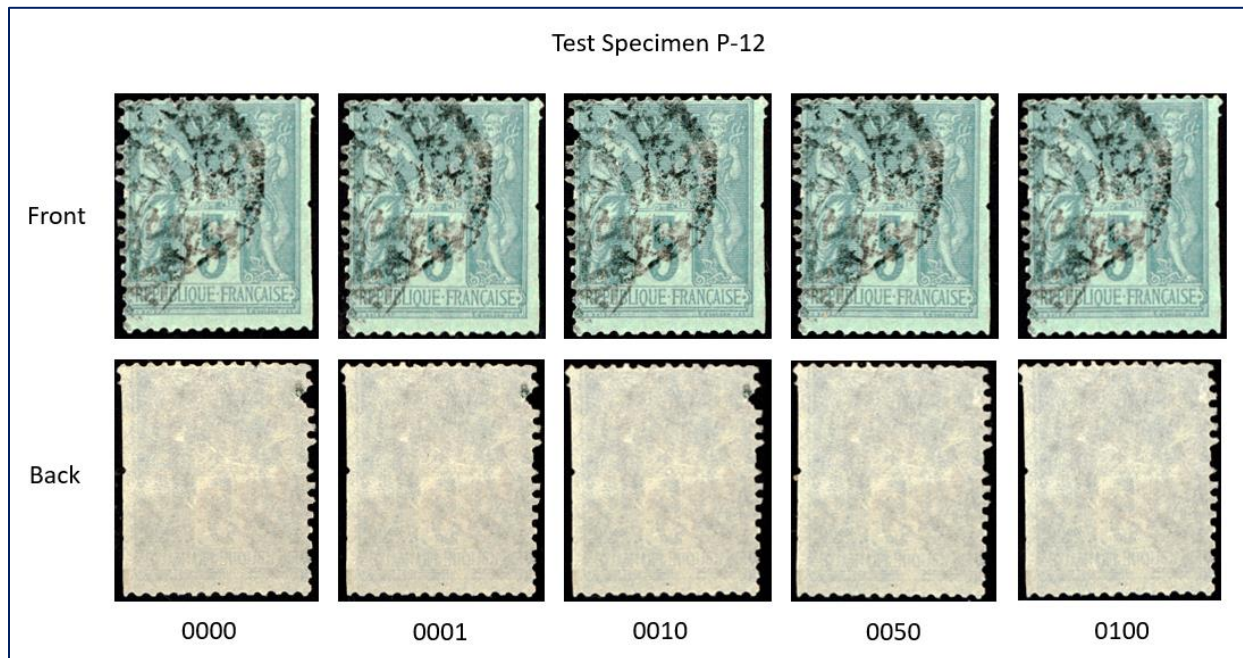


Figure 9: From left to right, progressive scanned images of fronts and backs, showing the same stamp, Test Specimen P-12 (Batch 4), and how it looked after each soak in 3% peroxide. Stan observed that this stamp showed best improvement to its color by the 10-minute mark, little change at 50 minutes, and some fading by 100 minutes of cumulative soak time. On the other hand, Chris has arrived at the conclusion that when it comes to discerning subtle color differences in these scanned images, Stan's powers of perception far exceed his own!

All Peroxide Group test specimens were given a quick rinse in fresh (filtered) water, but in fact, this was not necessary, as hydrogen peroxide decomposes relatively quickly in the presence of air. Written chemically, this is expressed as $2\text{H}_2\text{O}_2 \rightarrow 2\text{H}_2 + 2\text{O}_2 \uparrow$. As previously stated, the study seems to show that 10 minutes is a safe length of time for cleaning with 3% peroxide, but this is not a hard-and-fast rule, as it is not clear at what point between 10 and 50 minutes (cumulative) that apparent thinning of some of the paper occurred. We also did not check paper thickness prior to the study, as we had not expected that changes in paper thickness might occur. On top of that, we did not have any devices for checking paper thickness available to us for the same reason.

Chris: It is clear that I still have more to learn about soaking in general and use of 3% peroxide in particular. On the soaking side of things, I have only ever added liquid detergent to the water on one or two occasions, but I have been impressed with the results I have seen from other TSF members, especially Stan and Torbjørn (@tobben63) [7][8]. As I am now frequently working with classic stamps culled from old mounted collections, they often look dull and/or dirty to me, so a better cleaning process definitely seems in order.

As for 3% peroxide use, prior to this study, I had only ever considered it for reversing the effects of sulfurization and not for any other purpose. Stan had once recommended it to Jean (@polarbear) on TSF for removing mildew from stamps, but it was not tried, at least on that occasion [9]. These days, Stan uses 3% peroxide as part of his routine process for cleaning stamps, which had never occurred to me. I will now be reconsidering my own soaking/cleaning process to decide whether I want to include 3% peroxide use or not, but at least now I have a sound basis for believing that it is safe to do it, should I decide to go in that direction.

Future Work

With all of that said, where do we go from here? For starters, if we want to determine if the apparent visible thinning of some of the papers is real, we need to repeat the peroxide soaking sequence but take measurements of the paper thicknesses, which could probably be accomplished by using calipers of some sort or even by weighing each stamp on a very sensitive scale (balance). The cost of the tools or equipment to do that might make it unattractive, however.

Concerns regarding chlorination in tap water used for soaking were also not tested in this study, as we used a filter to eliminate chlorination as a variable. Like hydrogen peroxide, chlorine is a bleaching agent, but concentrations found in tap water are several orders of magnitude lower than the 30,000ppm of hydrogen peroxide found in the 3% solution (typically 4ppm maximum [10]). We speculate that the <4ppm of chlorine found in most tap water would not adversely affect stamps during soaking, using an extrapolation based on the 3% peroxide results, but that would not seem to be a scientifically valid proof, so we acknowledge that the specific case for chlorine would need to be demonstrated in order to justify that conclusion.

Another area of interest to both co-authors is that of stamps printed with fugitive inks, which could be aniline or other types. For a brief explanation about fugitive inks, please see Chris' comments in his Author's Perspective section early in this article. For more detailed information, including a preliminary list of stamps known to have been printed with fugitive inks, please see the resource thread on TSF [11]. Since fugitive inks were not used as test specimens in this study, that is another area for future work, and Stan is already looking into it.

Parting Thoughts (Mainly from Stan, but agreed by Chris)

Initially, our general thinking was that extended soaking in hydrogen peroxide would ultimately damage the printed image(s) on the stamp(s). We were both quite surprised when the main negative consequence of prolonged soaking in 3% peroxide was that the paper started to break down, with little, if no visible change in the printed image at all.

Additionally, while soaking in hydrogen peroxide seems like a virtual guarantee of improvement in the brightness of the color in almost all classic era stamps, a 10-minute soak is clearly safe, and it is useful for removing many types of stains, in addition to its known use for reversing the effects of sulfuretted. This study did not include a water soak with a mild detergent to remove oils and surface dirt prior to soaking in 3% peroxide, but based on available information, we believe that the results of hydrogen peroxide use have the potential to be further improved if oils and other organics have been eliminated or reduced prior to soaking the stamps in 3% hydrogen peroxide.

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Write for Your Stamp Forum's Newsletter

We are always looking for articles of a philatelic nature for publication in the Newsletter. These can vary in length from one page to several and can cover any topic imaginable, as long as there is a philatelic connection. Well-researched articles, tips for collectors, stamp collecting memories, stamp show and philatelic book reviews, etc., are all welcome topics. Just send us a text file with some supporting image files, and we will take care of the editing and layout. The Forum and its Newsletter need your support, so please considering making a contribution!

The Stamp as a Medium for Artistic Expression and Social Causes

An Essay by Linda (@deldal)

I know not by what power I was made bold as to sit down today at this eleventh hour, writing this little piece on the art of stamp collecting to an audience composed of connoisseurs whose average age is double of mine and who are much more knowledgeable than I am in anything philatelic. Bold as I may appear, I have never been bold enough to call myself a *philatelist*. In my self-introduction to the Forum, I called myself at best a “part-time stamp collector” whose collecting activities have always lain outside of the sphere of competitive exhibiting.

I started pursuing stamp collecting seriously after seeing the black-and-white print of the Czech stamp celebrating Andrew Wiles’ proof of Fermat’s last theorem in a math book while still majoring in pure mathematics at university. Before that time, buying new stamps and soaking used stamps were simply the by-products of my letter-writing hobby. For a very long time, this Czech stamp, which was not so often seen on the market, was the long-sought Holy Grail for me. I pursued it with the most ardent zeal and utmost patience. In years that followed, while waiting for its appearance on the market at an affordable price, I began to distract myself with other math-related materials, which slowly extended to include topics such as sciences, arts, architecture, then landscape, etc. I guess I have become a topical collector of some sort. However, somewhere in the dim recesses of my mind, the desire to acquire a copy of that Fermat’s last theorem stamp has always been lurking, and I would imagine myself so accomplished—in the highest sense of the word—once this goal is attained.

Alas, it wasn’t the case.

Finally adding this Czech stamp to my collection last year didn’t make me feel the sense of accomplishment I had imagined back in university, when my eyes first fell upon this stamp in print. For 20 years later, this stamp is, cleverly designed as it always is, but *useless* to my current collecting goal—for want of a better word.

In recent years, ever since I started producing artworks (called “philagraphs,” a new word coined in a vote by Forum members) using my stamp collection I would say I have become more of an *applied* stamp collector instead of a *pure* stamp collector. This is to say, nowadays I acquire stamps based on their potential of being *used* in my artworks or social causes. Instead of studying the technical aspects of stamp production, design, and identification, or appreciate the timeless aesthetic allure of stamps for their own sake, I am more interested now in how they can be *repurposed* into a canvas for artistic expression.



Figure 1: The Czech stamp celebrating the World Mathematical Year 2000.

To this end, I see the Czech stamp as useless because neither Fermat of French nationality nor the British mathematician Andrew Wiles has much to do with the country known as Czech Republic today. I can't find any artistically significant way of incorporating different philatelic elements into one coherent visual storytelling with a concordant location-specific postmark issued in this country of Slavic ancestry.

I don't know that much about past and present philatelists, but in my previous and current disciplines, there is a very clear attitude of disdain displayed by the *purists* towards the *applied* practitioners—pure math/sciences versus applied math/sciences, and even pure (fine) arts versus applied arts (design, craft, functional arts, etc.). Those who pursue something for that thing's own sake generally think less of those who treat that thing as a means to an end. As an ex-mathematician whose Erdos number is infinity, I must confess that I was—and to some extent still am—one of these purists who scorns at all kinds of “worldly” applications, when it comes to the dichotomy between the pure and the applied.

And indeed, my recent endeavor in *using* some of the rarest stamps I have ever handled, might meet with a righteous indignation from the purists. They might be vexed at my breaking up a complete Ultraman philatelic collection to realize a Maxicard that is not even FIP-compliant, or my using a 1919 set of mint stamps for a charity project that aims at promoting human welfare. These stamps of supreme beauty, a beauty cold, austere, and otherworldly like that of abstract mathematical structure, they may argue, should be best kept in their pristine condition to preserve their values. And they are most likely to be right, at least monetarily speaking.

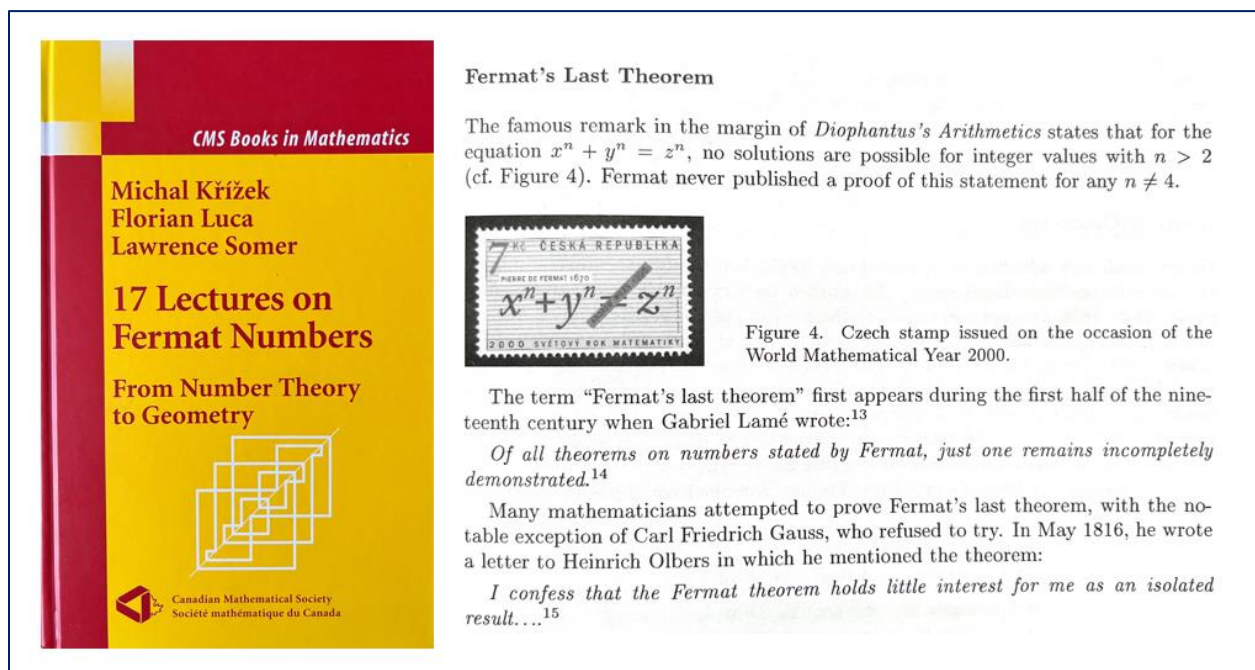


Figure 2: Left: The cover of the math book in which I first saw a black-and-white image of the Czech stamp celebrating World Mathematical Year 2000. Right: Excerpt from the page in the book showing the image and description of Fermat's Last Theorem.

Nevertheless, unlike a non-representational art that can be said to bear no relation whatsoever to the outside world or to the weaker nature of mankind, that hence is refined from all utilitarian coarseness. Stamps, on the other hand, were invented *to be used*, to serve a certain pragmatic purpose, that is to mark the payment of the due postage. In addition, we all know that a stamp is not merely a piece of paper with adhesive back. At least in the case of Canada's postage stamp program that is curated to highlight the country's culture, history, and natural heritage, a stamp is always of national, socio-historical significance. By fusing philately and artistry to convey stories and messages beyond the stamps' original intent in my works, I am also giving those stamps that were damaged by a turn of misfortune a second life, seeing that being hinged, thin, having no gum, and other defects on the back side of the stamps that void their premium values don't matter for my artistic exploration.

Although shifting cultural trends and evolution in postal service are stripping off stamps' functional utility, as they have increasingly become pure collectibles, beautiful objects of a philatelist's contemplation, no sensible people would disagree with me that making use of postage stamps is an ordinary occasion for gratifying a utilitarian spirit, insofar as postage stamps remain functional objects. I have thus made a transition across the great divide, switching between two sides at ease from pursuing stamp collecting for its intrinsic value, to the real-world-problem-solving potentiality that this hobby can bring.

Like Linda, tell us your collecting story! How did you start, why do you collect what you do, how has it changed over time....

Member support is essential if we are to continue publishing a Newsletter. Any contributions of a philatelic nature will be considered for inclusion in a forthcoming issue (e.g., a catalogue or book review, what I collect and why, a stamp show or bourse review, an intro to my local club, etc.).

Please consider trying your hand at writing something for publication. If you are not sure how to go about it, contact Chris (@berylliumguy), and he will be happy to assist. By making Chris the new Editor, we are hoping to get back on track for having each *TSF Newsletter* published the week prior to the period covered. To meet that target, please make your submissions for the next issue not later than December 3, 2023.



When contributing material, Microsoft Word files are preferred, with images submitted as separate files. Although we can work with PDF files with embedded images, it makes for a more tedious process.

Thanks for your continued support of our Forum—we look forward to receiving your Newsletter submissions!

Greece Landscape Series, 1927-35: The Unissued 50-Lepta Corinth Canal Stamp

By Michael (@michael)

In 2022, I acquired a small collection of stamps printed by Perkins Bacon from 1900 to the mid-1930s. All the stamps had been simply stuck down to the pages of a lined notebook and badly stored, so were in poor condition. Two of these stamps were examples of the 50-lepta Corinth Canal definitive from the Greece 1927 Landscape series.

Figure 1: The Perkins Bacon printings of the 50-lepta stamps, in the condition as received by the author, i.e., fully stuck down on a sheet of old standard, lined notebook paper, with handwritten notations just below.



(Original dies and plates eng by T. Macdonald, London. Re-engraved dies of 1933–1935 and No. 419e by De La Rue. Recess Aspiotis; 1d. later by Perkins Bacon; 3d. and 15d. later in Poland)

1927 (1 Apr)–35. Types 51 to 54 and similar types. P 12½, 13 and compound (Aspiotis); 13¾ (P.B.); 11½, 11½×11, 11½×12¾ and 12¾×11½ (Polish).			
410	5l. deep green.....	20	15
	a. Imperf between (pair).....	£250	£225
411	10l. scarlet.....	50	20
	a. Imperf between (pair).....	£250	£225
412	20l. violet (to purple).....	50	15
	a. Imperf between (pair).....	£275	£250
413	25l. blue-green.....	90	25
	a. Imperf between (pair).....	£275	£250
414	40l. blue-green.....	90	25
415	50l. violet (to purple).....	1-90	25
	a. Imperf between (pair).....	£275	£250
	b. Re-engraved (1933).....	5-00	1-40

Stanley Gibbons has listed the 50-lepta value in this series as a recess-printed issue supplied by Aspiotis and issued in 1927, and a re-engraved version printed by De La Rue and issued in 1933, but there is no listing for a stamp printed by Perkins Bacon.

Figure 2: Excerpt from the Stanley Gibbons Southern Balkans Catalogue 1st Edition, 2019.

Subsequent research revealed the following details about the two 50-lepta Corinth Canal stamps printed by Perkins Bacon that I had acquired. On 1 April 1927, a set of 15 definitive stamps was issued by Greece. They have become known as the “Landscape” issue and were printed by the Aspiotis Brothers of Corfu using engraved plates supplied by Thomas MacDonal, an engraving company from London.

I hadn’t heard of Thomas MacDonal prior to this reference, but the company engraved stamps for North Borneo, El Salvador, Chile, and Great Britain (notably the 1924 British Empire issue), and it worked as a contractor to John A.C. Harrison.

The 50-lepta value in the series featured a view of the Corinth Canal, the same design of which also was used for the 5- and 80-lepta values.

In 1930, new plates were required for 7 of the values in the series, but Thomas MacDonald had since died and his company no longer existed.

Consequently, new plates for the 7 values were supplied by 3 different printers, De La Rue (50L, 2d, 10d & 25d), a Polish company PWPW (3d & 15d) and Perkins Bacon & Co. Ltd (1d).

The new plate for the 50-lepta value was supplied by De La Rue, and the stamps were issued in 1933 (see Figure 3). The De La Rue collection at the RPSL (Royal Philatelic Society of London), contains progressive die proofs and a final die proof of the stamp (see Figure 4).



Figure 3: Greece, 50-lepta violet, SG415 / Scott 326 / Hellas 472.

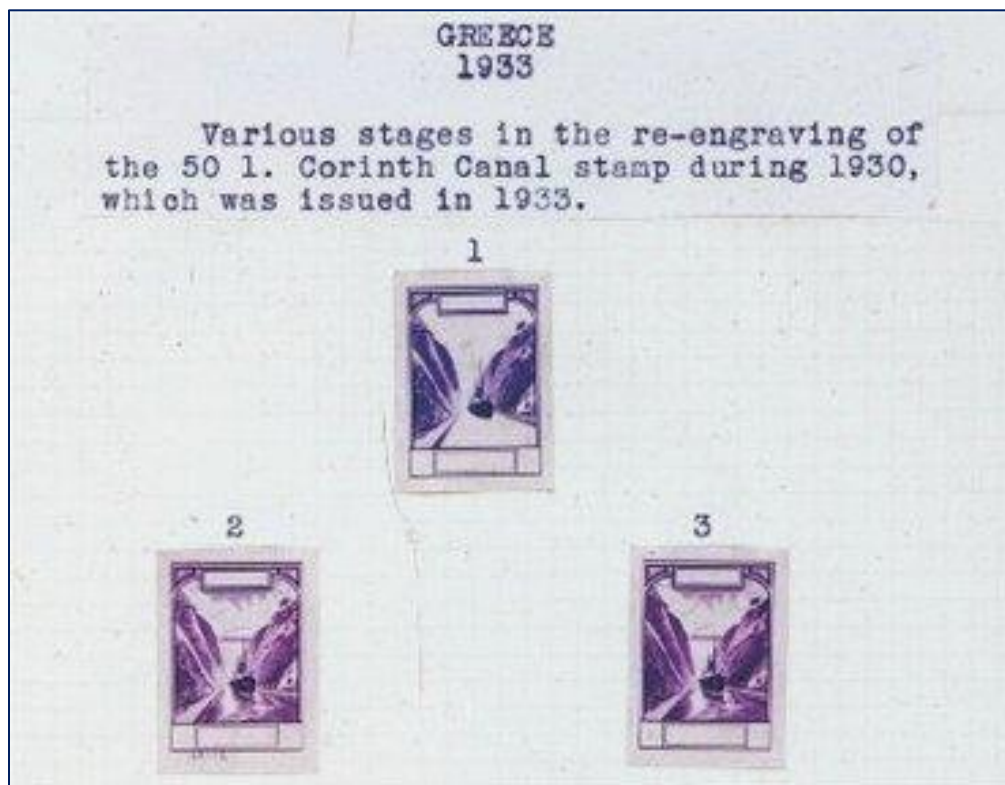


Figure 4: Some of the stamps from the De La Rue collection at the RPSL, showing the progressive die proofs in various stages of the re-engraving process in 1930, prior to the stamp's eventual issue in 1933.



Figure 5: The Issued Stamp, Greece, SG415b / Scott 364 / Hellas 516.

In 1937, stamps from the De La Rue plate were overprinted in red with a cross and NΠΟΝΟΙΑ (postal tax) and are listed in Stanley Gibbons catalogue as a charity stamp, C499. There is an interesting footnote in the catalogue:

On one or two sheets of No. C499, the overprint was accidentally inverted, and these stamps were sold at post offices before the mistake was discovered. To prevent speculation, the Postal Authorities deliberately printed a supply with inverted overprint and put them on sale at the chief post offices.

Perkins Bacon's contribution to the re-engraved plates was the 1-drachma "Temple of Theseus," which was issued in 1931. However, along with De La Rue, they also engraved a die and produced a plate for the 50-lepta Corinth Canal stamp. It is unclear why the De La Rue design and plate were chosen rather than those prepared by Perkins Bacon, but as a result, the Perkins Bacon plate wasn't used.

The details about this situation are found in references [1] and [2]. In particular, the RPSL Standing Display by Akis Christou from April 2018, includes progressive die proofs dated between 18th and 30th December 1930, a block of 12 imperforate proofs with a Perkins Bacon imprint, a die proof, and a perforated copy of the unissued stamp. The unissued perforated stamp was accompanied by the comment, "There are only 2-3 examples of this stamp known to exist." See Figure 6 below.

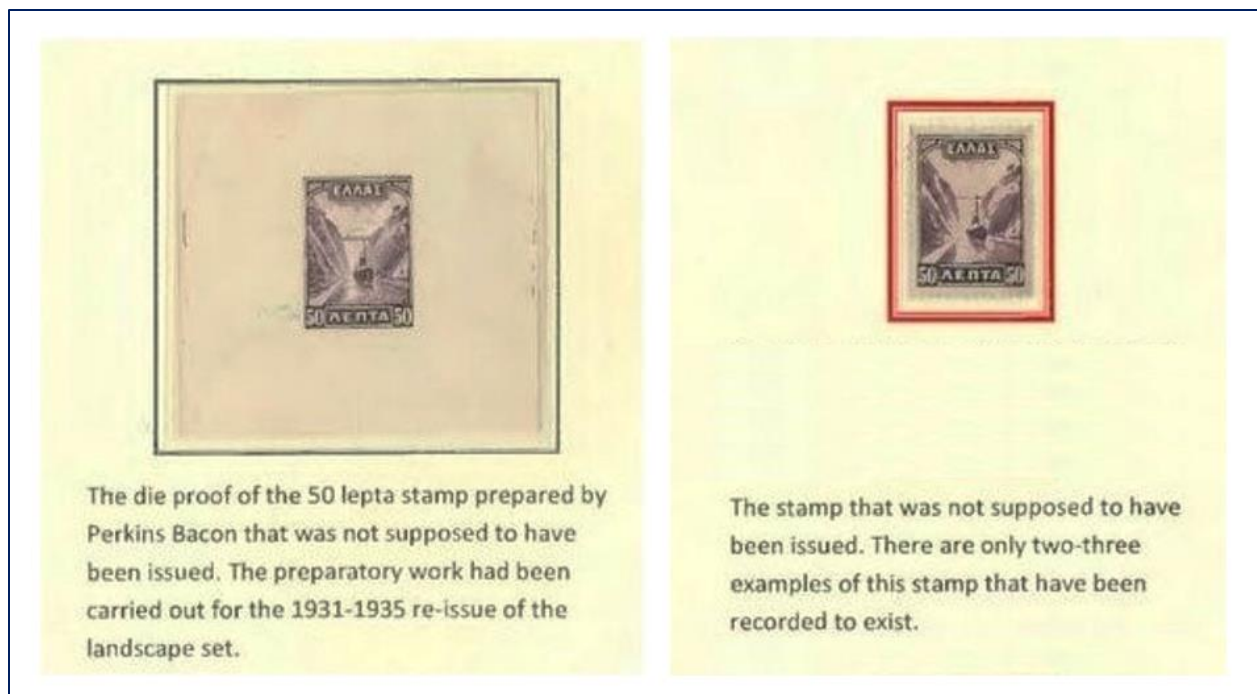


Figure 6: Images from the 2018 Standing Display by Akis Christou, including informative descriptions for each item, available for viewing and research at the RPSL.



Figure 7: The two unissued Perkins Bacon stamps after soaking and removal from the notebook paper page, which was originally presented in Figure 1.

Unfortunately, the engraving of the die and plate are not mentioned in either of the Perkins Bacon Engraving or Hardening Books and there are no invoice or correspondence archives for that period. Comparison of the three stamps reveals that the Perkins Bacon unissued version can be easily distinguished from the others by the design of the anchor on the right-hand (starboard) side of the boat.

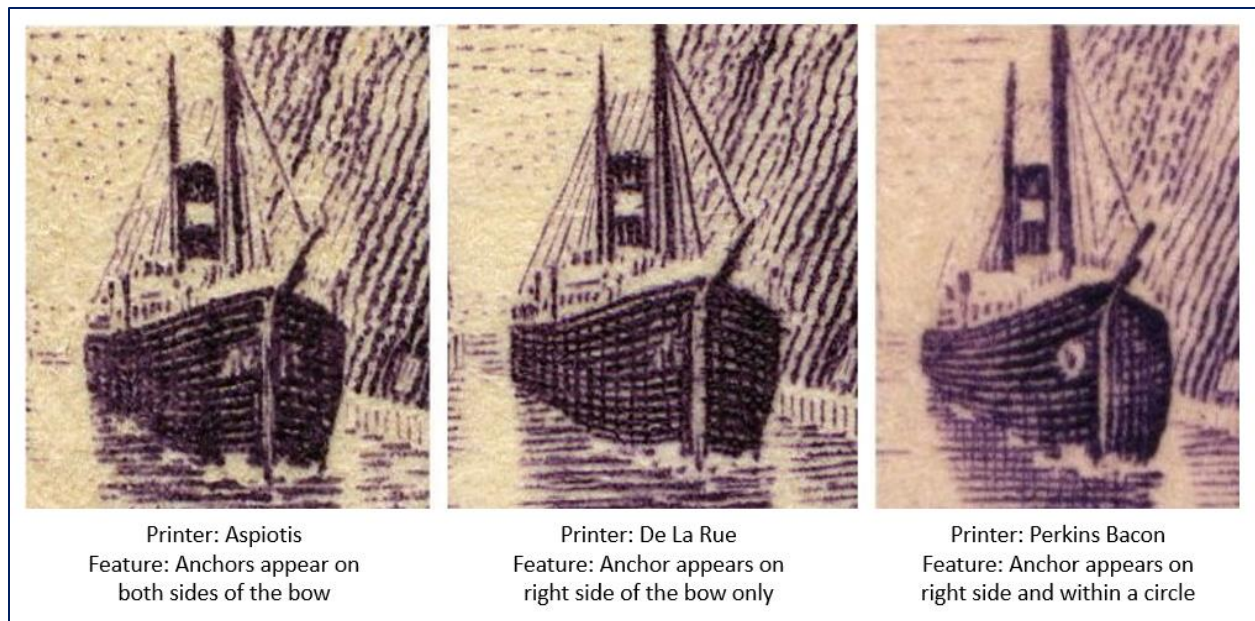


Figure 8: Side-by-side comparison of close-up scans of the three printings reveals the key differences.

After identifying the stamp as the Perkins Bacon unissued one, I was lucky enough to acquire an imperforate pair at an auction, at a very reasonable price, since it had been misidentified as a more common Aspiotis proof (see Figure 9 below).



Another interesting aspect of the stamps are the reference to one being rotary printed and the other flatbed printing. This confirms that Perkins Bacon were using both types of printing for their stamps in the 1930s. However, I was unable to find any differences in the two stamps that would indicate that they were printed differently.

Figure 9: Imperforate pair proof printed by Perkins Bacon.

Just before this article was submitted to the *TSF Newsletter*, additional information was found in the Perkins Bacon archives in a folder of black and white photocopies of die proofs (see Figure 10 below). I do love researching stamps, as it seems that there is always something new to find!

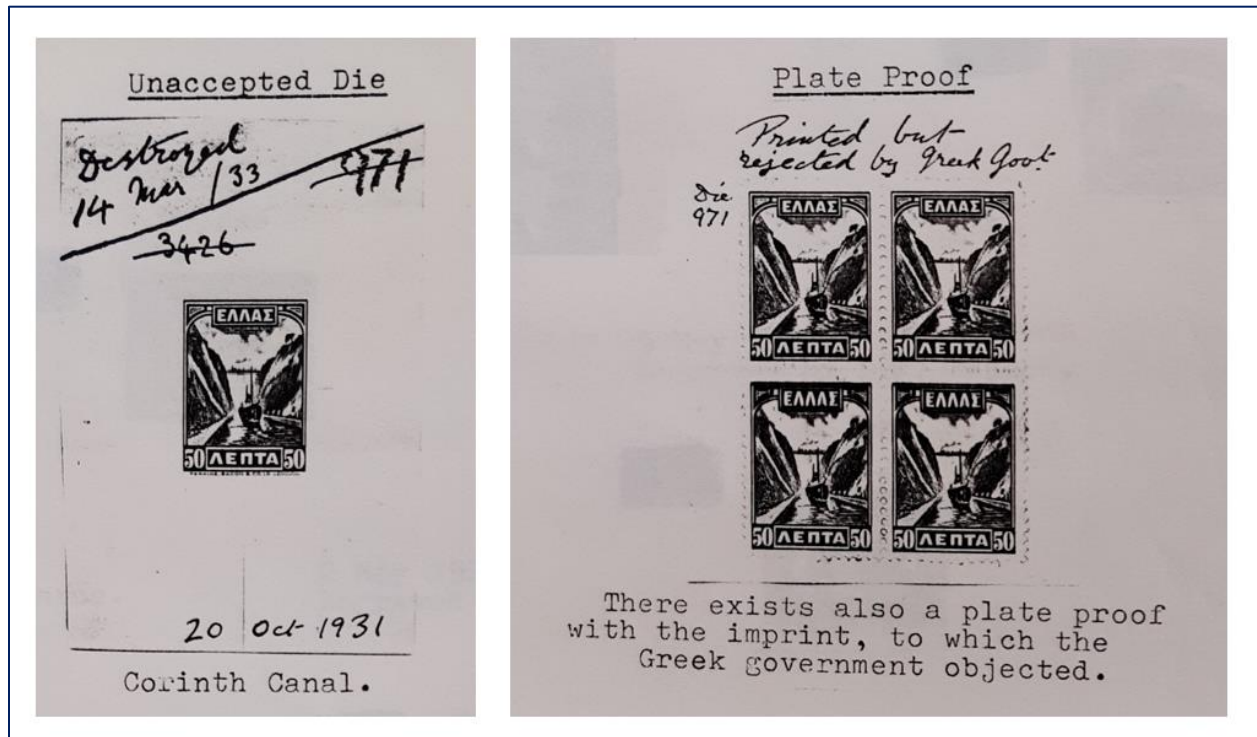


Figure 10: Documentary evidence of the Perkins Bacon plate/die proofs found by the author after having completed the rest of the investigation.

The copy of the die proof provides additional important information. The die number is 971, the roller number is 3426, it was created on 20 October 1931 and destroyed on 14 March 1933. The copy of a plate proof confirms that the Greek Government rejected the design both with and without the name imprint at the bottom of the stamp.

After all that effort, it's nice to know that I can legitimately claim to own a couple of rare stamps. Rare doesn't necessarily mean high value, however. I doubt if any of these has a high monetary value, which doesn't matter anyway, because they're not for sale!

References

- [1] Christou, Akis, FRPSL. *Standing Display: (Greece) Landscape Issues, The Design and Varieties 1927 and 1931-35*. Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL), April 2018.
- [2] van de Mortel, Marco and Meijer, Joost. *The printing plates of Thomas de la Rue*. Netherlands Hellenic Society. No publication date listed. URL: <https://pvgriekenland.nl/publications/19-Delarue-UK.pdf>
- [3] Spears Museum of Philatelic History. *The De La Rue Collection and Perkins Bacon Archives*. Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL).
- [4] de la Feuillade, Clare (Editor). *Stanley Gibbons Foreign Catalogue: Southern Balkans, 1st Edition 2019*. Stanley Gibbons Ltd., London and Ringwood, 2019.
- [5] Kloetzel, James E. (Editor). *Scott 2009 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue, 165th Edition, Volume 3, Countries of the World G-I*. Amos Media Inc., Sidney, Ohio, U.S.A., 2008.

As Michael did while doing research for his article, TSF members should consider visiting "The Royal" when in London....



Excerpt from a message from the RPSL President: We take pride in showing what philately is and how we do it and we invite surfers, members, and anyone from anywhere who might have landed here to take a few minutes and find some of the gems we offer:

- Great displays of collections and previous lectures and presentations.
- A library and museum catalogue second to none of books and periodicals from the very start of the hobby, also linked to the Global Philatelic Library where the search becomes worldwide and covers information in other languages, outside of our collection, which is, in itself, very substantial.

We are in London in a wonderful building that is a stone's throw from the original London Letter Office established in 1653, and we welcome visitors. For more information, please visit our website:

URL: <https://www.rpsl.org.uk/TheSociety>

TSF Tips: Collecting Vatican City

By Theresa Young (@philatelia)

Editor's Note: Hopefully, this article will be the first in a series of helpful tips for beginners or those looking for new areas to collect. The idea was originally raised by Terri (@philatelia) in a thread on the Forum, titled "A Suggestion to Help the Forum and Newer Collectors." (Link: <https://thestampforum.boards.net/thread/10650/suggestion-help-forum-newer-collectors?page=1>) As Newsletter Editor, I thought it might be nice to start by introducing a new set of tips in the TSF Newsletter first, so here we are. Members should feel free to contact me by PM or to post in the thread to express their opinions about whether this feature should be continued or not.



Introduction

Collecting Vatican City can be as easy or as challenging as any collector could wish. It has it all. It is a rather unique entity, a small country but with a vast worldwide "citizenship." If you are looking for a new, but not overly complicated or costly area to collect, why not try Vatican City?

Background

The Vatican didn't start issuing stamps until 1929, so it is a good area for beginners since there are no complex (or expensive) 19th Century issues. All of that said, those interested in more of a challenge can opt to expand the collecting scope to include the Roman States issues, which were used from 1852-1868 (see Figure 1 at left.)

Figure 1:
A nice range of Roman States accumulated on a stock page.

In addition, Vatican stamps are generally easy to identify, as only a few require using a perforation gauge to determine correct identification (ID), and very little watermarking is necessary, which makes this a great area for beginners or those choosing a more straightforward collecting style.

Vatican stamps are rather unusual in that while they do their job as postage on mail, they are also sold in great numbers as souvenirs for visiting tourists. That's why you can so easily find philatelic confections such as picture postcards, First Day Covers (FDC), Maximum Cards, and presentation folders containing

issues that have been courtesy cancelled, along with a description of the stamps. As a collector, you will be free to choose to collect all or none of those formats as you wish, and most are readily available at very affordable prices (see Figures 2 and 3).



Figure 2: First Day Covers (left) and Maximum Cards (right) are popular souvenirs with the tourists, so are fairly easy to find for most issues.

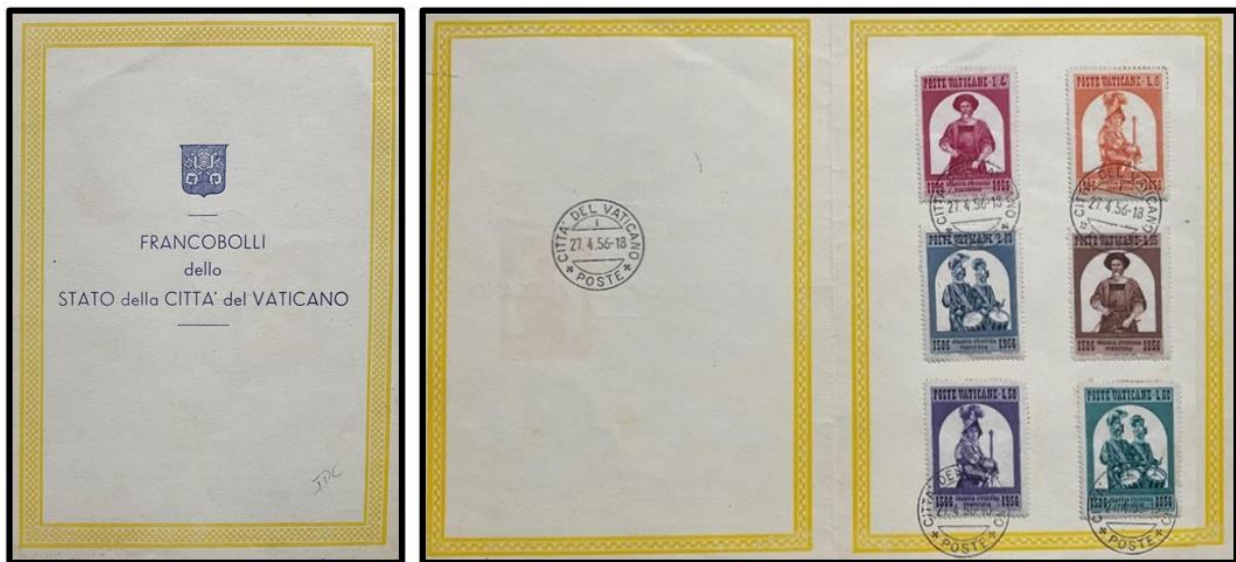


Figure 3: Above is an example of a souvenir presentation folder with canceled stamps. These are a common source for the canceled copies found in most collections.

Considering Mint vs. Used

It's relatively easy to create a mint Vatican collection. The issues from 1960 through 2000 can be purchased easily and inexpensively in post office fresh condition. Collections from those years can often be found available in auction format, which is a great way to start. New issues are released in moderation, typically around 40 stamps per year. However, sets containing high values can sometimes push the annual cost up to nearly €100 (about \$110 USD at current exchange rates).

The gum on some of the older mint issues may darken over time. Variations in gum appearance can occur as a result of how they were stored. Stamps with very dark gum should sell for much less. Most mint-

hinged Vatican stamps are highly discounted, with the early issues (pre-1940) being exceptions. You can expect to pay a substantial premium for some of the earlier stamps in never mounted condition, sometimes as much as four times the price of mounted examples.

Mint Vatican stamps issued after 2000 and denominated in Euros (€) are still valid for postage and are rarely found selling below face value. Stamps denominated in Lire (L) are no longer valid for postage and consequently are less expensive. There are many Vatican souvenir sheets, but fewer booklets.



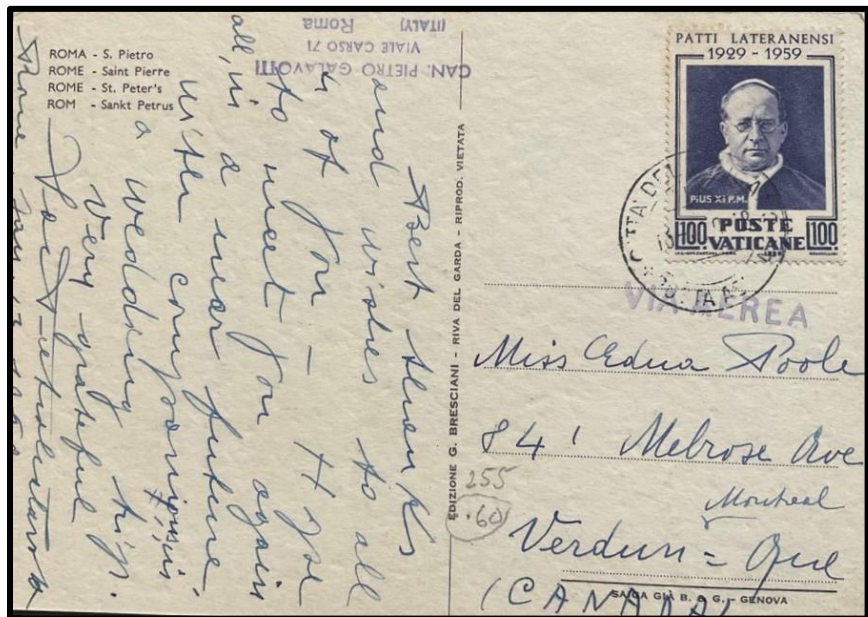
Figure 4: Some Vatican issues have unusual marginalia or sections of mint sheets printed like these.

Creating a collection of *postally used* Vatican stamps is more challenging. Used Vatican stamps are most often found as Canceled To Order (CTO), typically with courtesy cancels, and they are often mounted on informative pages or in folders. Genuine postally used copies of Vatican stamps are found much less frequently than CTOs. Sometimes, it can be tricky to differentiate between a CTO and a postally used example, especially if the CTO stamps have been removed from their folder.

Cancelled stamps with full gum are obviously CTOs and should sell for less than postally used examples.

Wavy line cancellations, while perhaps not as interesting as a Circular Date Stamp (CDS) are a good indicator that the cancel resulted from postal usage rather than CTO. I strongly suggest keeping postally used covers and postcards intact.

Figure 5: Tourists have sent millions of postcards from Vatican City over the years. It is highly recommended to keep genuine, postally used examples intact when possible.



Vatican kiloware is rarely available, but occasionally you might see an ounce or two. These are almost guaranteed to be FDC clippings, but you never know!

Exercise caution before purchasing the most expensive Vatican set: Scott #35-40, the 1934 Pope Pius XI provisional issue with surcharges. There are many forgeries of these overprints, so buying a set with a certificate of expertization is highly recommended.

Assembling a complete Vatican City collection through 2021 is quite possible and not too difficult. However, at least one issue released since then was withdrawn, and it is now in “catalogue limbo” awaiting a determination if the withdrawn stamp will receive a major catalogue number or not. Of course, you can always opt to ignore some stamps when displaying your personal collection, but a completionist might not be happy with a situation like this.

As I mentioned earlier, you can later expand your collection to include the stamps of the Roman States. These stamps are much more challenging. Be aware that reprints are very common, and there are forgeries as well. When you’re ready to flex your philatelic muscles a bit and take a deeper dive, give these a go!

Collect whichever varieties or period you prefer. It is your collection, after all! If you are looking for a new area to collect, why not give Vatican City a try?

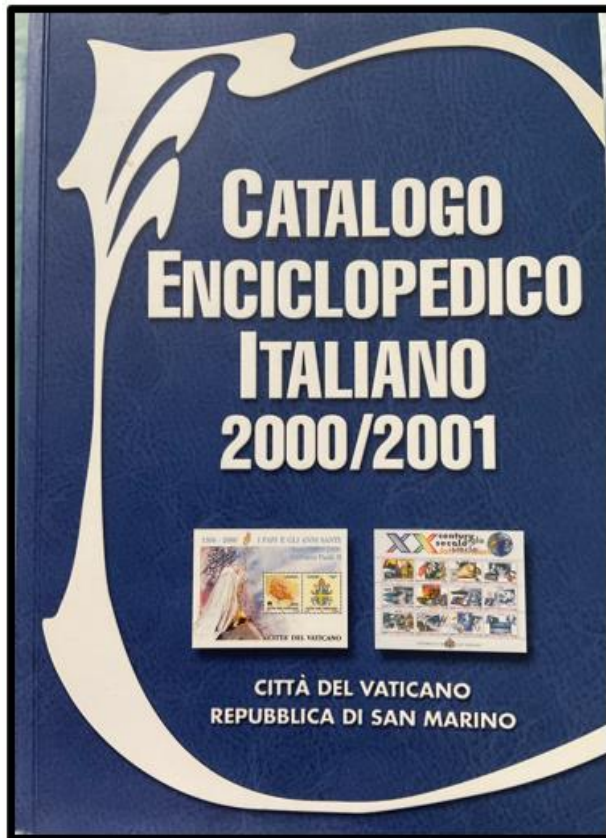


Figure 6: Cover of the Catalogo Enciclopedico Italiano (CEI) catalogue and sample page of Vatican City listings.

References & Recommended Reading

Colnect website, for cross references to Vatican specialty catalogues and a large amount of additional data: https://colnect.com/en/stamps/list/country/95-Vatican_City

The Vatican Philatelic Society website provides extensive information on Vatican stamps.

Society website URL: <http://www.mrbstamps.com/VPS/>

Quarterly publication, *Vatican Notes*. URL: <https://www.vaticanstamps.org/homepage/docs/index.php>

The Vatican Philatelic Society article describing various Vatican stamp catalogues:

URL: <https://vaticanstamps.org/vaticannotes/ideisplay.php?p=62-CB-24-25&r=3>

Catalogo Enciclopedico Italiano. The CEI Catalogue of the stamps of Italy also includes the issues of San Marino and Vatican City. URL: <https://www.francobolli-italia.it/catalogo-francobolli-italiani>

Editor's Note: Thanks for reading along as Terri has shared her knowledge about collecting Vatican City for those who might be interested in collecting it, too. What about you? Do you have a particular country or topical area that you collect on which you could offer some helpful hints to others? If you find yourself thinking "if only I had known about this before I started, I would have done things differently..."

Well, here's your chance to share the benefit of your experience with others, to help them choose new areas to collect, and once decided, how best to pursue them. If you are willing to offer your advice, please contact any member of the Newsletter editorial staff by Forum PM or email to discuss your ideas. We would love to have members share collecting tips in the areas in which they are most interested and experienced. Please volunteer to write a short piece on your favorite area. Thanks again!

The Stamp Forum is a Chapter of the APS

The Stamp Forum was founded in June 2013, and we became a Chapter of the American Philatelic Society on February 28, 2014. A requirement of that membership was our obligation to abide by APS's [Philatelic Code of Ethics](#).

While most of the benefits of Chapter membership are best-suited for physical stamp clubs, there are several that are applicable to us. For example, we are listed in the APS club directory, are able to participate in the [Articles of Distinction](#) program, and receive a copy of [The American Philatelist](#), the monthly journal of the Society.

If you are not an individual APS member, please consider [joining](#) the organization. If you are going to apply for membership, please indicate Chapter 1591 as your sponsor.



**It's Time
for a Stamp
Club Meeting**

Join us!

- Would you like to join a stamp club but you either can't find one or its meeting time doesn't fit your schedule?
- Would you like to discuss stamps with other collectors at any time you choose, day or night?
- Do you have questions about your stamp collection that you'd like to have help in answering?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, we can help! The Stamp Forum, Chapter 1591 of the American Philatelic Society, meets online, 24/7 at thestampforum.boards.net. Feel free to check us out. If you have questions, please send them to us at stampforum.net@gmail.com.

Cinderella Corner: Posthumous Montenegrins

Edited and updated by Jim Moore (@cinderever)

Editor's Note: The following article originally appeared in "The Stamp Magazine" in October 1969, but that article was published without images. After more than 50 years since its first publication, this article is now presented with images of some of these hard-to-find Cinderella stamps.

This series, consisting of 12 "postage," five "postage due," and two "acknowledgement of receipt" stamps, appeared on the philatelic market in late 1920 or early 1921 from an Italian source. The "postage" stamps show the portrait of King Nikita enclosed in a circle of pearls, the "postage dues" have the Montenegrin crown, with AR in the upper corners and the figures of value in the lower corners.

According to available information, published in an article by F.P. Renaut in *Stanley Gibbons Monthly Circular*, No. 47 (July 1923), an issue of stamps was ordered during the summer of 1920 by the Montenegrin government-in-exile in Italy, where it was domiciled after it had become apparent that Montenegro had been incorporated permanently into the new state of Yugoslavia.

The stamps were described in a decree dated September 1920, as having the head of King Nikita I and an overprint reading "Slobodna Cerna Gora!" The postage due and acknowledgement-of-receipt stamps were to be unoverprinted (sic). Here it may be mentioned that some values of the king's head type exist without overprint.



Figure 1. From left to right: 1, 5, and 10-para stamps intended for postage, depicting King Nikita I, and with the "Slobodna Cerna Gora" overprint, which translates to "Free Montenegro". At far right, a 30-para stamp intended for use as acknowledgement of receipt, depicting the Montenegrin crown, and without overprint as expected.

These stamps were to be issued in all parts of Montenegro except those under foreign occupation, where the circulation of the stamps would be prevented. Seven hundred sets were to be sent to the Universal Postal Union at Berne.

In view of the fact that from that date to this Montenegro has not re-emerged as a sovereign state, it is obvious the stamps never came into postal use, and no authentic covers bearing used examples of the stamps have been found. This is not surprising, seeing that there was no postal service on which they could have been used. The author of the article mentioned stated that it is more than probable that the stock never left Italy.

Months later, the first specimens trickled onto the philatelic market, handled by an astute dealer who disposed of considerable quantities at moderate figures. The issue cannot, perhaps, truly be regarded as bogus, although the fact that the stamps never reached their country of intended use places them in a category akin to phantoms.



Figure 2. Examples of cover images of "The Stamp Magazine" from September 1953 and February 1954, respectively. This article on the Posthumous Montenegrins originally appeared in this UK publication in October 1969.

Philatelic Events: A Visit to the Great American Stamp Show (GASS)

By Chris Dorn (@berylliumguy)

Cleveland, Ohio is my hometown, but after living in Europe from 2018 through 2022, I hadn't been there in some years, and a visit was long overdue. Happily for me, my youngest sister was having her birthday in early August, and my wife and I decided to make the trip to help her celebrate the occasion. Then I realized that the American Philatelic Society (APS) was hosting its annual national-level show, the GASS, in Cleveland just a few days after my sister's birthday celebration, so we extended our stay to include one day for me at the show.

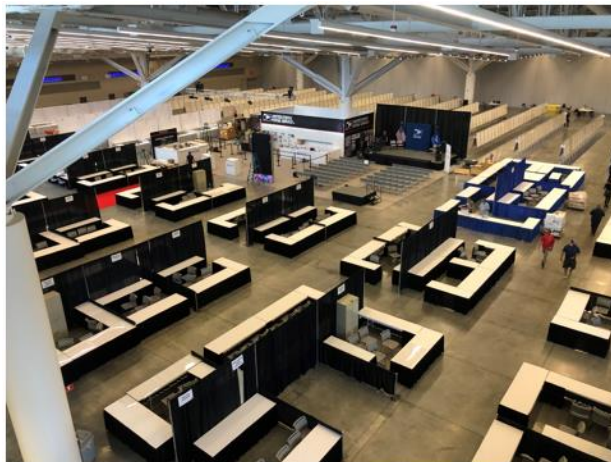


Figure 1: Before-and-after photos taken from the Huntington Convention Center's ground-level entrance, which has a balcony that overlooked the show floor. Left: The show floor as it appeared on 9th August, with the furniture in place, but awaiting the good stuff. Right: The show floor shortly after opening on the morning of the 10th, now replete with stamps and people. The show became much more crowded as the day went along.

Prior to this year's GASS, I had never attended a US Postal Service (USPS) first-day-of-issue ceremony, so this was my first experience. While I don't collect US new issues, I still have some interest in current stamps, as I periodically buy them to use as postage on envelopes that I send to other TSF members and trading partners. New TSF member and APS Executive Director Scott English (@scottenglish), presided over the ceremony, where he took a selfie from the podium at the beginning of his talk! See Figure 2 for a candid photo taking during the event.

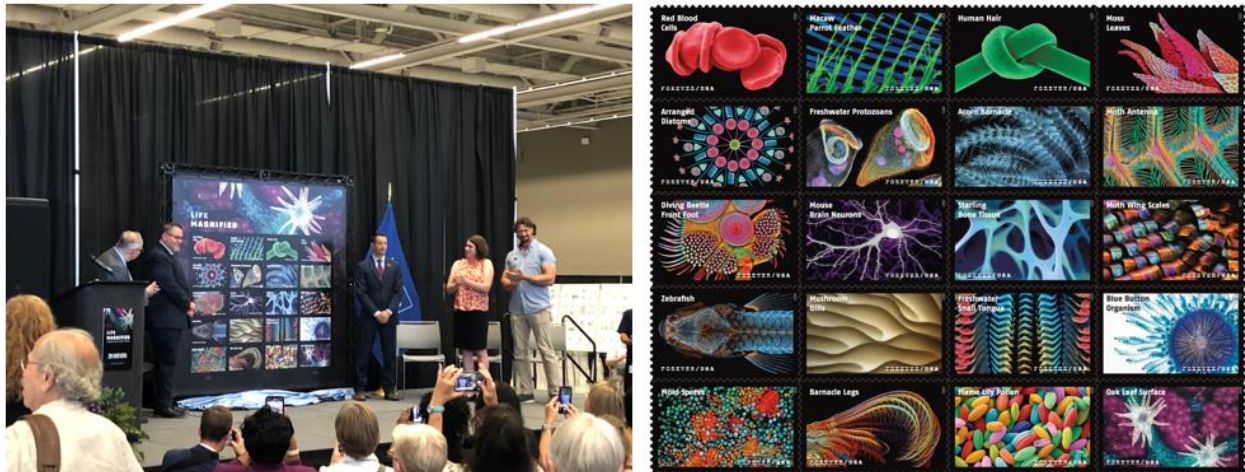


Figure 2: Left: A view of the official unveiling ceremony on the First Day of Issue for the USPS release of the “Life Magnified” stamp series. APS Executive Director Scott English, shown here standing just to the left of the screen, presided over the event. Right: A closer look at the “Life Magnified” stamps. Image credit: Virtual Stamp Club, URL: http://virtualstampclub.com/lloydblog/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/lifemagnified_large.png

In the end, I took advantage of this opportunity not only to experience as much of the show as I could in one day, but also to reconnect with an old collecting friend and trading partner, who lives in Ohio, not too far from Cleveland. My friend and I started by going through the exhibit area, but it quickly became clear that there was much more there than we would have time for, if we were going to check out the bourse. So, we curtailed our stroll through the exhibits and got down to business!

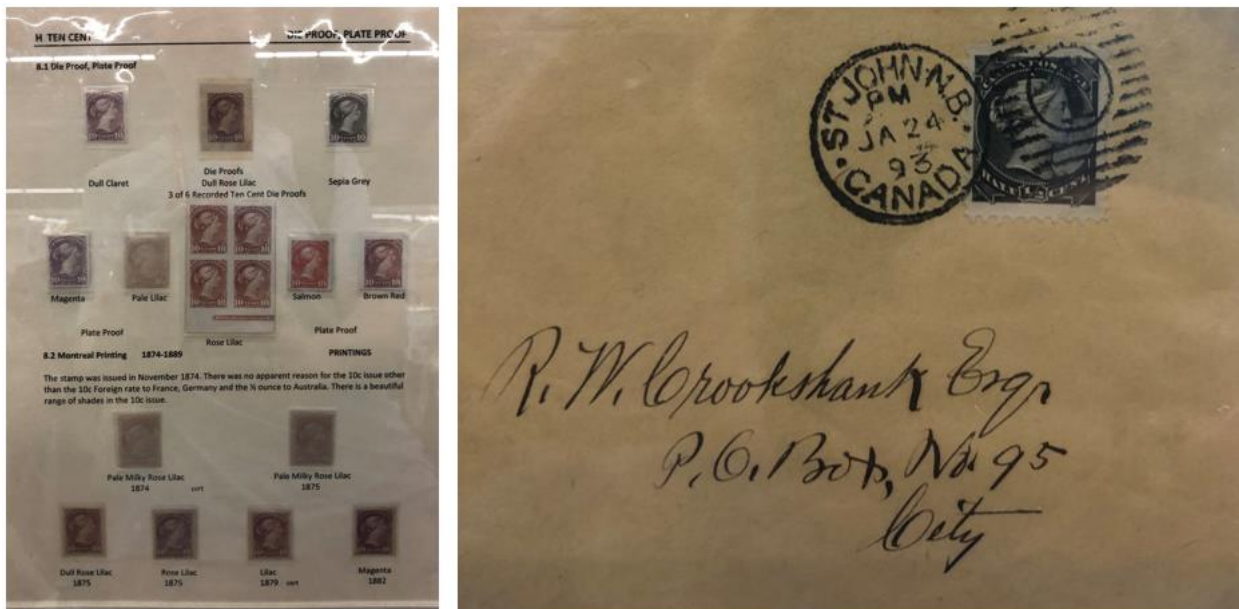


Figure 3: A brief nod to the exhibits. Left: A nice page of Canada “Small Queens” showing a single sheet on one frame about color varieties. It was a fabulous collection and beautifully documented and displayed. Right: A close-up photo of a cover (digitally cropped) mailed from Saint John, New Brunswick on 24 January 1893. I just liked this one for its obvious connection to two TSF members: René (@renden) and Reid (@nbstamper), both of whom live in New Brunswick. Photographing exhibits at shows is always tricky due to reflections from the overhead lighting.

Last, but not least, readers are probably wondering, “All of that is fine, but what did you buy?” Of course, I did indeed make some purchases. Despite promising myself that I didn’t need to keep buying collection lots and that I should focus more on specific stamps, I did make a few lot-type acquisitions. Sometimes, I just can’t get out of my own way, it seems!



Figure 4: A sample from my GASS purchases. Shown are two sides of the same Hagner stock sheet, filled with mint and used examples from France Offices in China. These are mostly stamps of French Indo-China overprinted with various inscriptions and surcharges for use in French Post Offices in China. Condition of the stamps in this lot is mixed, but the price was right, and I think that this lot will fill many gaps in my collection.



Figure 5: US, Sc238, 15-cent dark green, depicting the scene of “Columbus Announcing His Discovery”.

I bought only one pricey single stamp, and oddly enough (for me, at least), that turned out to be a classic US stamp. It’s only odd in that I haven’t bought anything for my US collection in years. One open goal for me is to complete my set of unused Columbians, and I found one of my needs that was just too nice to pass up.... So, I didn’t!

After the big money was spent, I went off to the APS donation area, where they were offering a bucketful of stamps for only \$5.00, but that, as they say, is a story for another time. Stay stampy, all!

TSF's APS Articles of Distinction

By Editorial Staff

With the completion of the most recent poll, our Forum has now submitted seven articles for publication on the American Philatelic Society's [website](#). Six have already been posted there, and each of those has a link that will bring readers to our Forum. Our 2023 submission is currently in process, but it should be featured soon on the website's [Collecting Insights](#) page.

In addition to the recognition given our Forum, the authors receive a certificate of achievement from APS.

The articles chosen by the membership to represent our Forum/APS Chapter in each of the annual competitions conducted thus far are shown below, and each may be viewed by clicking on the respective link.

- 2017 [The 1926 Madrid-Manila Flight – A Pioneering Journey](#)
- 2018 [Visiting Stamp Shops Around the World](#)
- 2019 [USS Constitution – America's Ship of State](#)
- 2020 [Philatelic Travelogue: Paris and Its Stamp Market](#)
- 2021 [SAMOA, 1840-2000: Transition from Chiefly Fiefdoms to Nationhood](#)
- 2022 [Philatelic Travelogue: Hunting British Postboxes](#)
- 2023 [Stamp Out War: Support Ukraine!](#)

The 2023 selection process closed with four articles competing for the distinction of being selected as The Stamp Forum's 2023 APS Article of Distinction—one from each Volume 7 issue published. For 2024, the same selection process is being followed. A poll will be created to allow you to select your favorite article from this issue. That poll, and the ones created for the subsequent issues, will close on August 31, 2024 at Midnight, New York time. A final poll will be posted in September to select the article that will represent our Chapter in 2024. The polls will be posted on the [Article of Distinction board](#).

If you enjoy reading the *TSF Newsletter*, please show its contributors your appreciation of their efforts by making your selections known in the polls for each of the issues.

