

THE STAMP FORUM NEWSLETTER

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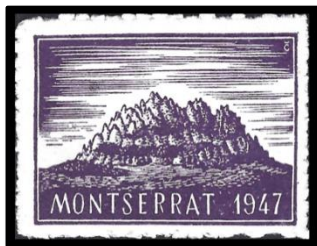
ONE COLLECTOR'S STORY: FAMILY & STAMPS



SEEKING SAGE ADVICE: A STUDY OF THE FRANCE PEACE & COMMERCE ISSUE, 1876-1900



EVENTS: STAMPEX INTERNATIONAL 2023, LONDON



TSF TIPS: COLLECTING VENEZUELA

PLUS:

STAMPING A CREATIVE FUTURE: A NEW ERA OF APPLIED PHILATELY
CINDERELLA CORNER: CATALONIA 1947: THE MONTSERRAT ISSUES
CALENDAR OF SELECTED UPCOMING PHILATELIC EVENTS
2024 APS ARTICLE OF DISTINCTION SELECTION

THE STAMP FORUM NEWSLETTER

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Editorial and Forum staff may be contacted using the Forum's personal message (PM) system. The Editor may also be contacted at: ckdorn47@yahoo.com

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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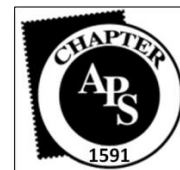
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The Forum & APS Chapter 1591 Update

By Steve Tomisek (@tomiseksj)

I hope this issue of our Forum/Chapter Newsletter finds you well this holiday season. The colder weather and shorter days experienced by much of our membership provide a great opportunity to spend more time with our stamps, our friends on the Forum and most importantly, our families.



As this calendar year ends, I’m pleased to report that our membership has continued to grow with many recent joins having begun to post without hesitation. The substantive posts being made on the Forum enhance TSF’s value as a sought out philatelic resource. On any given day we’ll see significant traffic on our site. As I write, 80 members and over 2,000 guests have viewed our site within the past 24 hours, demonstrating a significant advantage that our virtual club, meeting 24/7/365, has over a physical one.

The APS is working toward the next Great American Stamp Show in Hartford, Connecticut on August 15-18, 2024. APS StampStore has worked with HipStamp to improve that site’s search capability. In February, APS will launch a free, quarterly digital magazine, *StampEd*, which invites the digital generation to connect with stamp collecting in new and exciting ways. Our Chapter has paid its dues for 2024 and we now have 7 Articles of Distinction on the APS website. I urge all of you to support organized philately by joining either the American Philatelic Society or one of the other national philatelic organizations.

Steve Tomisek
 Forum Admin/APS Chapter Ambassador

One Collector's Story: Family and Stamps

By Jerrold I. Bodoff (@jerryb)

This is the story of how one collector started on the path to collecting a specific country and area related to family.

As a child, on a visit to New York City, an aunt took me to Gimbel's department store and the Minkus stamp counter. She purchased a Minkus Worldwide album, a Scott U.S. album, and stamp collecting essentials of the day. In addition, to get me started, she bought me my first stamp: an Israel Scott 9 (see Figure 1). Israel was a popular country to collect in those days. The aunt was in the millinery business, and there were many foreign stamps to be had. Every time she would visit, she brought a huge bag of used foreign postage stamps. So, I became a foreign stamp collector with an Israel "specialty."



Figure 1: Israel, Scott 9, 1000 mils, black blue on pale blue paper. Design: ancient Judean coins. Issued 16-May-1948.

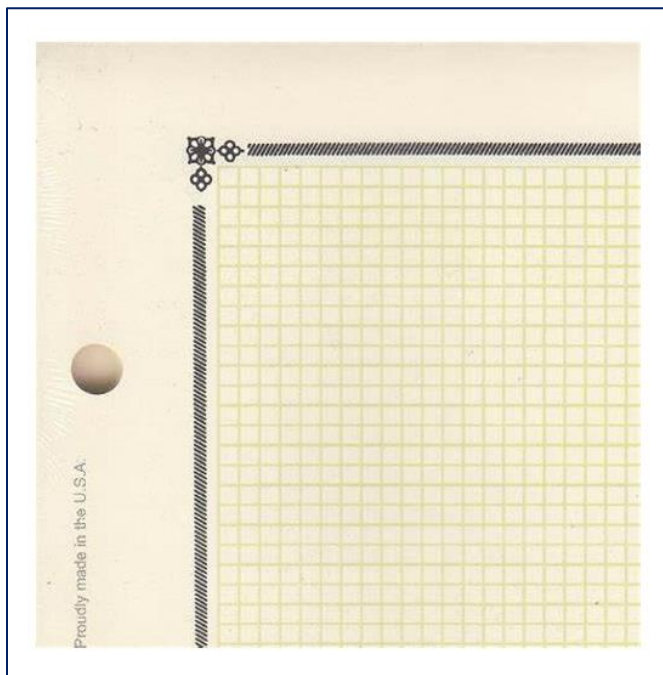


Figure 2: Close-up photo of the corner of a typical pre-printed quadrille page made for loose-leaf stamp albums.

A stamp dealer in my hometown had started a stamp club in the school and I joined. He taught us how to soak, mount, etc. An additional perk was that club members could buy stamps at a discount. Following his suggestion of not using albums but rather quadrille pages, I have used quadrille pages exclusively ever since (see Figure 2). In those years, when a new U.S. stamp was issued, I would buy a block of four. I was also still collecting foreign stamps.

After high school graduation, I joined the U.S. Air Force. My last year in service was spent in French Morocco. I spoke a little French, and I was friendly with some local people, one of whom was a stamp dealer. He and I made a deal in which I would purchase new U.S. stamps at the base post office, and we would swap them for French stamps. Thus, I started my second specialty collecting area in addition to Israel: France and colonies.

As the years passed, I graduated as an MSEE (Master of Science, Electrical Engineer). Engineering jobs were hard to find. I began working with computer software and obtained a position in a small company. Next door to the company was Friedl Expert Committee, consisting of Herbert Bloch and Alex Rendon. One day I went into the office to ask Alex a question about a stamp I had. Mr. Bloch asked why I collected that "junk." Alex then gave me an envelope of stamps from Colombia, his area of expertise. I brought the stamps home and showed them to my wife, who is Colombian. My wife picked a stamp out of the envelope, and it was an image of *her* house in Tunja, Boyacá, Colombia (see Figure 3)! As we went through the stamps in the envelope, we also found images of some distant relatives.

I then sold my French collection, stopped collecting Israel, and purchased a Colombia starter collection. Later, my wife and I found that one of the stamp consultants for designs on Colombian stamps was my wife's cousin. After I learned a little more of Colombian history, I added Ecuador, where my sister-in-law lives, and Venezuela. The three (3) countries formed Gran Colombia. Thus was the path which led me to collect South America exclusively (and to learn a little Spanish). To my wife, the collection is a type of photo album. Many stamps depict the Colombia of her childhood and some distant relatives.

As a note, I still have the Israeli collection and the original foreign collections of my childhood days, but I'm not actively adding to them.



Figure 3: Colombia, Scott C247, 60 centavos, dark brown, depicting the Little Boy Fountain at Tunja. Stamps of this set were issued on 15-Jan-1954.

Know of an Upcoming Philatelic Event that You are Planning to Attend, Either Online or In Person? Tell Us about It!

On page 22 of this issue of the Newsletter, you will find a new feature, which is a calendar of upcoming philatelic events that TSF members have either attended in the past and/or are planning to attend in the future. If you know of such an event, please tell us about it, so that we can include it in the next issue! Please send the relevant info to the Editor (@berylliumguy) by Forum PM or by email: ckdorn47@yahoo.com. Thanks for your help!

Stamping a Creative Future: Pioneering a New Era of Applied Philately

An Essay by Linda (@deldal)

In my last article, I came up with the notion of *applied philately* that refers to the repurposing of philatelic materials for artistic exploration and social causes as part of my collecting experience. Enriching personal journey aside, I also see this applied approach as having public value and the potential to impact the broader community and the world at large.

Application in Arts

From the standpoint of an individual artist like myself, stamps which offer a window into a country's heritage, landmarks, traditions, events, and important figures, provide a clear source of inspiration for one's creative activity. The process of finding new ways to integrate stamps, which may not have an obvious connection to specific themes or narratives, can also be a rewarding artistic endeavor.

As artists and collectors continue to experiment with stamps, innovative techniques, styles, and multimedia approaches, the fusion of philately and artistry has the potential to lead to the creation of epoch-defining works of art that not only transform both disciplines, but also encourage others to appreciate stamps in a new light, thanks to their associated works of art.



Figure 1: The very first philagraph I created for my Europe Tour in 2019 features Franz Schubert and his birth house in Vienna, with matching Austrian stamps and cancels of Vienna. The block of apartments depicted here has been transformed into a museum dedicated to the Austrian composer.



Figure 2: This philigraph paying tribute to the legalization of same-sex marriage in Canada was “painted” using a straw through which I blew the color inks within a maple-leaf shape that was delineated by masking tape. The composition of a rather abstract nature was clearly inspired by the odd-shaped matching stamp issued in 2017 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Canada. This was a novel technique I tried for the first time.

Application in Social Advocacy

While I have been mainly focusing on creating artistically worthy ‘philagraphs’ that integrate stamps and postmarks into coherent visual storytelling, I do not see philagraphs or their more generalized sister-products of the Mail Art movement as the sole possible outcomes of applied philately. Another meaningful dimension is added to all sorts of applications humanity has hitherto imagined when the materials are used to tackle emerging societal challenges, such as climate crisis, human rights, poverty, and more.

The *Stamp Out War: Support Ukraine* project which originated from the Forum is one example that uses stamps, postmarks, and postcards to support social causes for purposes beyond conventional collecting, with more than \$2,000 (CAD) raised for Ukraine humanitarian relief. This way, the proper objects of a philatelist’s contemplation, which are maxicards in the preceding example, become vehicles of expression having the transformative power to raise public awareness about critical issues and to initiate a positive change to the world’s toughest problems.



Figure 3: Like all the Ukraine Support Maxicards realized in 2022 as part of the “Stamp Out War: Support Ukraine!” project, this Japanese variety was postmarked on 24 August—Ukraine’s national day—with specially chosen stamp to represent Ukraine. This maxicard is particularly special as it is the only one that features a sunflower-related cancel.

A Vision for Educational Outreach

Besides uniting individuals with different backgrounds for a common cause at the time of ubiquitous political polarization, by-products of applied philately can also encourage learning, scholarly research, cultural preservation, and foster a sense of community amongst fellow enthusiasts who join group discussions, attend exhibitions, and participate in social events.

Stamps not only as historical artifacts but now also as creative artworks and powerful advocacy tools for social causes provide excellent educational opportunities to learn about different aspects of a culture and what’s happening in the world. Various educational tools, interactive AR/VR (augmented reality/ virtual reality) installations and gameplay can be invented to enhance students’ and the public’s learning experience about geography, art, science, etc., thereby bridging theoretical philatelic knowledge and societal needs like any technology transfer.

Conclusion

As my transition from appreciating stamps for their historical and aesthetic value to using them as a medium for artistic expression and social causes testifies, the nature of collecting hobbies is dynamic and ever changing. Different disciplines can intersect and influence one another to generate societal benefits.

More than 180 years ago, the invention of postage stamps revolutionized the mail delivery system, communications, and trade. We may now anticipate a broader manifestation of the multi-faceted charm and enduring appeal of applied philately. Beyond the confines of a collector’s album, we foresee the meaningful utilization of philatelic materials in the development of impactful projects that transcend traditional boundaries.

Seeking Sage Advice: A Study of the France Peace & Commerce Issue, 1876-1900

By Stanley Brown (@stainlessb)

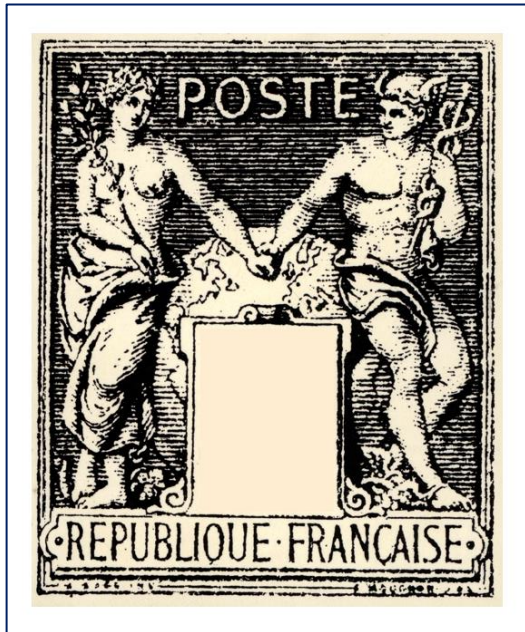


Figure 1: Design of the France, Peace & Commerce definitive series, issued 1876-1900.

Anyone who ventures into the nuances of the stamps of France soon discovers things can get rather complicated, rather quickly. A sizable number of France's stamps come in more than one color shade, may have more than one distinct trait from the plate etching/printing process, and are often divided into types and sub-types. There are numerous references available, and while there is agreement in some areas, there seems to be no widespread consensus regarding colors or varieties. If you have gone "down the rabbit hole" like I have, you will understand immediately!

I do not consider myself an "expert" when it comes to the philatelic mysteries of France, but after four years, I have gained some insight into the many twists and turns in the complexities of these stamps. I have come to rely on the *Catalogue de Timbres de France* [1] as the main source on which to base my collecting. Often, the catalogue images are small and pixelated, making it difficult to understand what the very brief descriptions really mean. Yvert & Tellier [2] are considered as the flag bearers for the most accepted numbering system. I have also found the works of Brun, Françon & Storch [3] to be highly useful, as they have some very detailed analysis of the early definitives, which includes dedicated drawings showing the variants. There are others, and all seem to have their own "take" on a specialized approach.

The Peace and Commerce definitive series, also referred to as "Type Sage" (named after the designer, Jules-Auguste Sage), first appeared in 1876 and remained in use until after the turn of the 20th Century. Due to a mishap while quenching the master dies (or punches), and subsequent repair of one of the two original dies, the stamps ended up differing in the placement of "INV" (for inventor or designer) following J.A. SAGE at the lower left margin. This is what many collectors know as Type I, with the "N" of "INV" under the "B" in REPUBLIQUE, and Type II, with the "N" of "INV" under the "U" in REPUBLIQUE.



Figure 2: Close-up images of Type I (left) and Type II (right) as described above. Image source: [4].

There are other traits which further divide each of the stamps into different sub-types, as well as colors, but the determination between Type I and Type II is very straightforward. That is, until 1898, when the fifth and final issues of the 5-centime stamps were printed and put into use. Changes in color came about because of the Universal Postal Union wanting specific denominations (and colors) for different mail services. The green 5-centime issues were changed to a yellow-green, as the darker green was harder to differentiate from blue stamps under the artificial light at the time. The stamps issued later would become YT106 (Types I and III) and YT102 (Type II). These two stamps share the same three (3) color varieties.

The Type I would not use the same die punch as with the first printings, even though it had been retouched for what would be the last printing of the Type I. The controller of the Banque de France, M. Chazal (who was responsible for official printing), requested that another die be retouched. It has been reported that the newly retouched plate was “essentially identical” to the original plate, such that the now Type III was the same as the first issued Type I.

A single sentence in the reference *Histoire des Timbres-Poste au Type Sage, 1875-1976* [5] stated it was “...easily differentiated ... by the design of the numeral 5, which is much wider than its predecessor.” This single sentence is what led me to compare the appearances of the numeral 5 from earlier issues. As this came near the end of the book, and almost seemed like an afterthought to me, I didn’t initially expect to find that much of a difference.

In the same paragraph as the above statement, the die punch for the Type IIB is described as “identical to that of the earlier green stamps.” As the Type II, 5-centime Sage stamps were still in production (until 1899), based on several of comparisons, it is assumed that the same die was used. This calls into question why the Type II issues were not simply added as new varieties to become numbers YT75 IIBn, YT75 IIBo, and YT76 IIBp? The Type II becomes a bit complicated by the fact that the earlier issues have one similar color nuance to that of the later stamps (YT106).

The designation as a Type III is one of those areas where there is no consensus, and most references simply lump these later stamps in as a Type I. For the sake of clarity in this article, I will refer to the stamps from the later release as Type III.

The actual 5-centime Type I stamps command a much higher price than the later Type III. However, I have seen numerous times when a yellow-green Type III is being offered as the earlier issue, or misidentified in someone’s collection, i.e., the incorrect Type III stamp mounted in the space for the Type I. As I put this article together, I found several such instances of improperly identified stamps offered on eBay!

When presented with the many possibilities, depending on whose reference you are using, it seems rather easy to understand how things become so confusing. In the chart below (see Table 1, next page), you can see the different color varieties, as well as the different sub-types.

Used stamps, cancelled with a readable date can provide some help as to when a color variety first appeared, but as it is quite possible that stamps purchased for mailing may not have been used in a timely fashion, nor is there any evidence that older stock of stamps in post offices was returned, that could easily account for late-date usage. The 5-centime green issue(s) offers the collector up to 26 possible varieties beyond a simple, single Type I or Type II stamp!

		1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	
Type I	IA Water green on pale green																										
	1Aa Dark green on pale green																										
	1B Dark green on pale green																										
Type II	IIA Water green on pale green																										
	IIAa Dark green on pale green																										
	IIAb Pale green on yellowish																										
	IIB Water green on pale green																										
	IIBa Light green on pale green																										
	IIBb Bright green on pale green																										
	IIBc Bright dark green on yellowish																										
	IIBd Green-Grey on light green																										
	IIBe Green blue on green-yellow																										
	IIBf Bright green on azure																										
	IIBg Green-black on green																										
	IIBh Dark green on green																										
	IIBi Light green on yellowish																										
	IIBj Green-Blue on green-azure																										
IIBk Dark green on green-yellow																											
IIBl Pale green on green-yellow																											
IIBm Pale green-blue on green																											
Type III	III Green-yellow on yellowish																										
	IIIa Pale green-yellow on pale yellow																										
	IIIb Bright green-yellow on pale yellow																										
Type IIB	IIB Green=yellow on yellow																										
	IIBa Pale green-yellow on pale yellow																										
	IIBb Bright green-yellow on pale yellow																										

Table 1: The complete breakdown for Sage series Types I, II, and III, showing all sub-types, as well as years of issue and primary years of usage.

How to Tell the Different Types Apart

As the original issue of the 5-centime Type I was printed in its second year with a retouched die, it exists in the same color in both the original (IA) and re-touched (IB) impressions. The differences between the original and re-touched dies are subtle, for the most part.

The lines above the hands and a consistent 3-line border are the features most readily discernible. The dies were made with an open/empty frame for the denomination, so that the numeral could be changed rather than make separate dies for each denomination. What is different is the numeral “5” used for the denomination in the YT102.

See Figure 3, next page. In the top row of the composite image, the three on the left are all YT64 (you will note the darker green color), and the four on the right are the Type III (a much different shade and background). The later (Type III) has a taller, wider, and bulkier lower “loop,” and the trunk between the loop and the head of the numeral is shorter.

The bottom row: The first image (far left) is the YT64 for easier comparison, followed by three examples of YT75, followed by YT106. As you can see, all the examples of YT75 and YT106 appear to have the same numeral, further suggesting that the same die was used (and why not, YT75 was still in production!?!). If you compare the YT75/YT106 numerals with YT102, it appears that the same numeral punch was used.

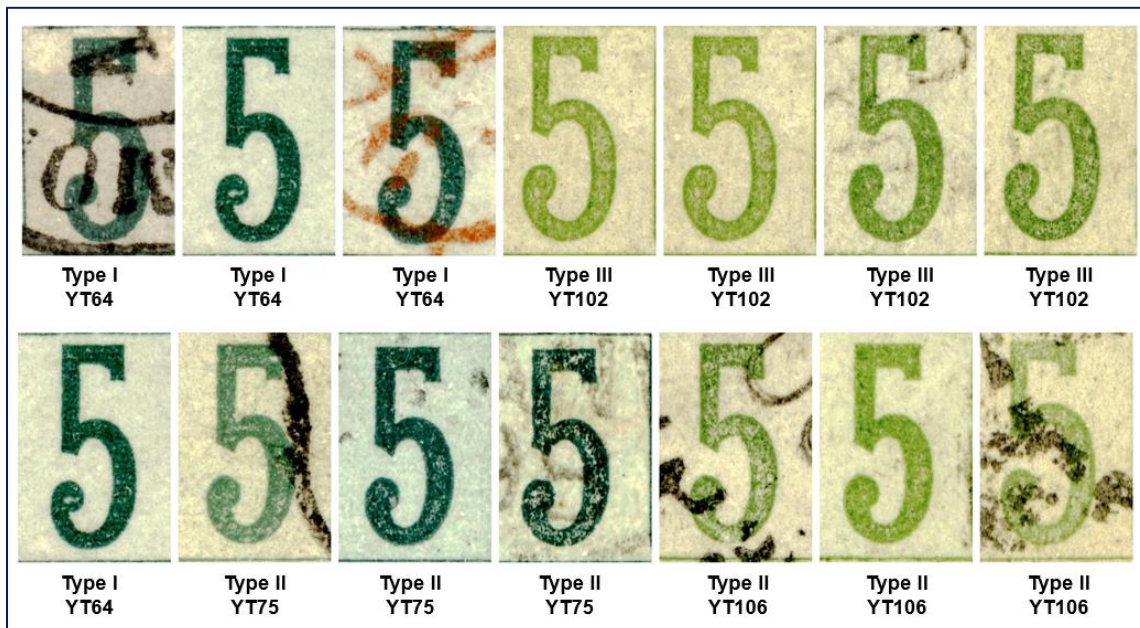


Figure 3: Close-ups of magnified images of the numeral "5" from the Sage series Types I, II, and III, also showing the corresponding Yvert & Tellier catalogue numbers.

Conclusion

To sum it all up, as the differences seem obvious to me, I am frankly surprised that this is not pointed out in any of the well-known references. As it is also a difference between the YT64 and YT75, due to the misalignment of perforations, it is not uncommon to find stamps on which the location of the "INV" under "U" or "B" cannot be determined. Some difficulty remains in the proper color shade recognition on YT75 IIBI (pale green on green yellow) and the later YT106. Alternatively, a postmark dated before 08-Dec-1898 can be used to identify the color shade as that of the earlier YT75.

Although I have looked through a large amount of published material, I have not been able to acquire all references, and perhaps the difference in the appearance of the numeral "5" is clearly stated somewhere. If any reader of this article knows of such published information, I would welcome the chance to learn about it. Additionally, please feel free to contact me directly at the following email address to discuss in further detail: stainlessbrown@comcast.net



Figure 4: Images of the major Yvert & Tellier Catalogue numbers and design Types (I, II, and III) for the 5-centime France, Peace & Commerce definitive issues.

Author's Note

Except where otherwise indicated (see Figure 2), the images for this article were made on an Epson Perfection V600 photo scanner using VueScan software. All scans were made using the same resolution, crop size, and color setting.

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- [1] Maury (Editor). *Catalogue de Timbres de France 2009, 114th Edition*. Maury, Cérés, and Dallay, 2009, pp. 514, 518-519.
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- [5] Joany, Robert. *Histoire des Timbres-Poste au Type Sage 1875-1976*. Published by Yvert and Tellier, 1980, pp. 25, 79-81, 156-158, 171-172.
- [6] Cérés Philatélie (Editors). *Catalogue de Timbres-Poste de France, 2003 Ceres, 60th Edition*. Cérés Philatélie, 2003, pp. 38-43.

Like Stan did, tell us what you are learning about in your collecting experience!

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. With Chris as 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 4 March 2024.

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!



Philatelic Events: A Visit to STAMPEX International 2023 in London

By Chris O'Prey (@cjoprey)

After four years of COVID-19 cancellations, work, and personal obligations, I was finally able to attend STAMPEX, even if it would only be for a single afternoon, and on the payable day at that! But £10.00 did not strike me as a major cost, especially compared to what I would probably spend on stamps!

An early start from sunny Suffolk took me through Cambridge and finally to Kings Cross, after which it was a brisk 20-minute walk to Islington and the BDC (Business Design Centre). I must admit I was wondering what I would find as I had only ever attended small regional stamp fairs, where there might be a few dozen tables, and I had been hearing how STAMPEX was no longer as grand as it once was, even though I would have no means for comparison as a first-time attendee.



Figure 1: The entrance to London's Business Design Centre on 27th September, the opening day of STAMPEX International 2023.



Figure 2: The strikingly beautiful stained-glass window panel from the original 19th Century Royal Agricultural Hall, around which today's Business Design Centre was built.

Initial reactions were that it was quiet. There were only a few staff at the door and the odd person trickling in through the main doors. In the entrance hall, there was a large selection of auction catalogues from most of the larger exhibitors, and more impressively, a beautiful stained-glass panel from the older hall, around which this building was constructed. Having received my wristband in the post, there was no need for me to queue (not that there was one anyway), and I was quickly in the main hall.

The ground floor had two small enclosed lecture areas—one on each side—where talks would be held, the ticket desk, the British Philatelic Society, and Leuchtturm. A staircase led up to the first floor, where all the other stands could be found. The official stands were occupied by all the usual large exhibitors: Spink, Dauwalders, Stanley Gibbons, etc. It struck me that some of these desks didn't have a single stamp displayed, just auction catalogues, and in some cases just people to talk to. Other main stands did have stamps, which in many cases were exorbitantly expensive, certainly out of the range I would be willing to pay! They were all heavily focused on United Kingdom or British Commonwealth with virtually no other countries available. Only a few had an interesting selection to browse through.



Figure 3: Photo taken by the author from just inside the entrance to the exhibit hall showing a view of the main floor.

I ended up having a great discussion about some interesting Belgian stamps with one stall holder who asked me to check some of the stock he had acquired as his expertise was British Commonwealth. I identified an interesting piece which had once been a tête-bêche with gutters, where the gutter had been overprinted later with an advertising seal. And before you ask, no I didn't buy it! I focus very specifically on what is listed in the COB/OBP Belgium Catalogue, and this was clearly a custom design.

In the middle of the floor was a small guarded booth that held the British Guiana 1-cent magenta. Of course, I had to have a look! There was no one waiting, so I was able to spend quite a bit of time admiring the small faded stamp, and to marvel at the \$8.7 million price tag for a square inch of colored paper! By the time I left, a small queue had built up which was nice to see.

Figure 4: The Stanley Gibbons' booth where the famed British Guiana one-cent magenta was on display.



At the back of the main floor were all the smaller stalls, and I must admit this was the area I found most interesting, and where I would end up spending the rest of the day. There was a large selection of collections, postcards, on-piece stamps, and FDCs (first-day covers) from all over the world. I must admit I was surprised that there were virtually no loose stamps anywhere. I think I found one small box of interesting sets on a single stall. Right at the back was a lovely stall geared towards children, with a

tombola raffle, boxes of loose and on-paper stamps to pick through, and lots of small starter sets. The staff were amazing but sadly had virtually no visitors in the entire time I was there.



Figure 5: Photo of the smaller stalls at STAMPEX taken by the author from the upper level just above the main floor.



One of the main reasons I went on the Wednesday was because I was hoping to catch Graham Beck's talk. Just as he appears on his YouTube videos, Graham was erudite, pleasant, and informative. He talked about his experiences in building up an online presence, the work involved, and what he enjoys most about doing it. His talk concluded with an excellent Q&A session, with a great deal of interaction from the attendees. Graham is, of course, also a member of our Forum! I got the chance to have a quick chat with him after the presentation, and he was kind enough to let me get a photo, which he said I could use for this article—thank you, Graham!

I spent quite a few hours wandering around the smaller stalls digging through box after box, looking for anything that would catch my fancy. I found a few Belgian stamps which would fill gaps in my collection, as well as some very interesting Polish Corps in Italy stamps, and a few Ottoman Empire stamps, some with British Occupation in Iraq overprints. Finally, I decided to buy a decent set of Tanganyika, Tanzania and Zanzibar stamps (at half price!) that would fill a lot of gaps in my East Africa collection.

Figure 6: From left to right: TSF members Graham Beck (@grahambeck) and Chris O'Prey (@cjoprey) at STAMPEX.



Figure 7: A favorite acquisition at STAMPEX: Special commemorative cover using Belgium, COB 938 (Scott B555), issued in 1954, to mark the 20th anniversary of the death of King Albert I. The cover is postmarked on 25th September 1955, to mark the official inauguration of the King Albert I National Monument in Namur.

When my feet decided I had spent too much time standing, I found the café on the top floor. For a large venue like the BDC, I was expecting quite some trade going on there. I was surprised at the incredibly small selection of sandwiches, drinks, and cakes. It struck me as underwhelming and overpriced. That didn't stop me from finding a cake and a coffee and sitting down to rest my weary feet, though!



Figure 8: Other favorite acquisitions at STAMPEX: Left: Zanzibar, Scott 38, ½ anna, yellow green and red, issued in 1896. Right: Turkey (Ottoman Empire), Scott 260, 1 piaster, blue, issued in 1914.

Overall impression? I loved the venue—it still has a lot of Victorian steel and glass on show, which has been blended well with the more modern architecture. I enjoyed the talk by Graham, seeing the 1c magenta in person, browsing through the myriad of stamps, and talking with the stall holders. I wasn't overly impressed with the venue's catering or the supposed "larger" trade stalls.

Bottom line: would I go to STAMPEX again in London? No, probably not. The parts I enjoyed, I could find at my local stamp shows. Did I enjoy myself? Yes, absolutely, and it was an experience to attend.

TSF Tips: Collecting Venezuela

By Theresa Young (@philatelia)

Editor's Note: This article is the second 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>) I really liked this idea and wanted to introduce these tips in the TSF Newsletter first.

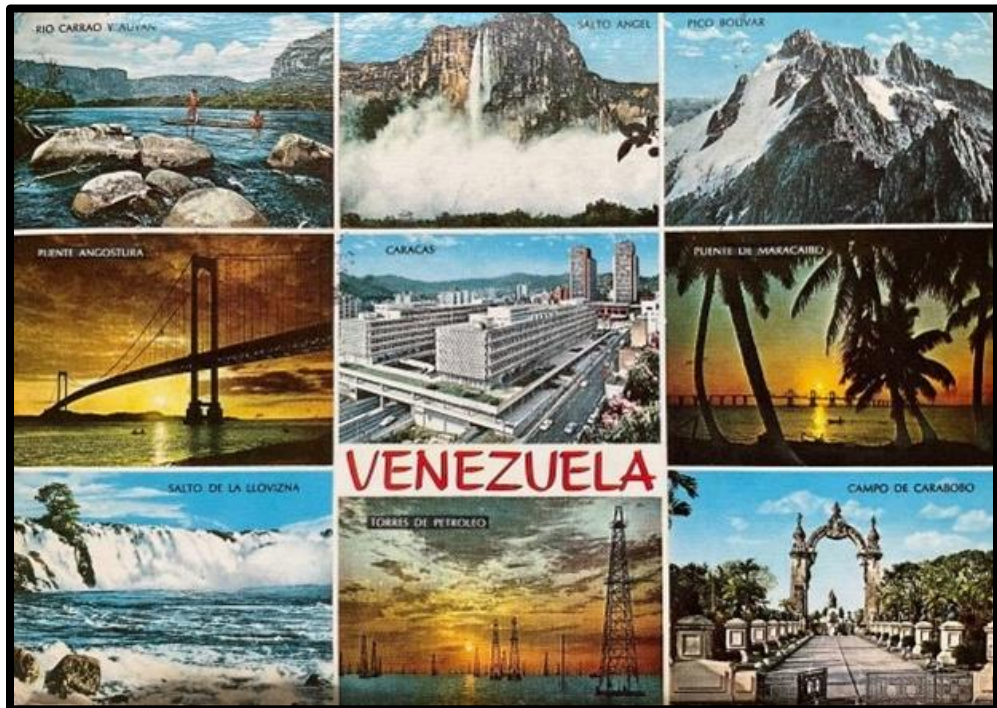


Figure 1: Picture postcard showing nine major sights in Venezuela.

¡Bienvenido a Venezuela! Welcome to Venezuela!

Quick! Can you name one of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's favorite stamp collections? Did you think of Venezuela? If not, that's not too surprising. For some strange reason, most of South and Central America is woefully underrepresented in the philatelic world. Well, let me tell you, I heartily recommend that it is time to take a fresh look at this part of the world, starting with Venezuela.

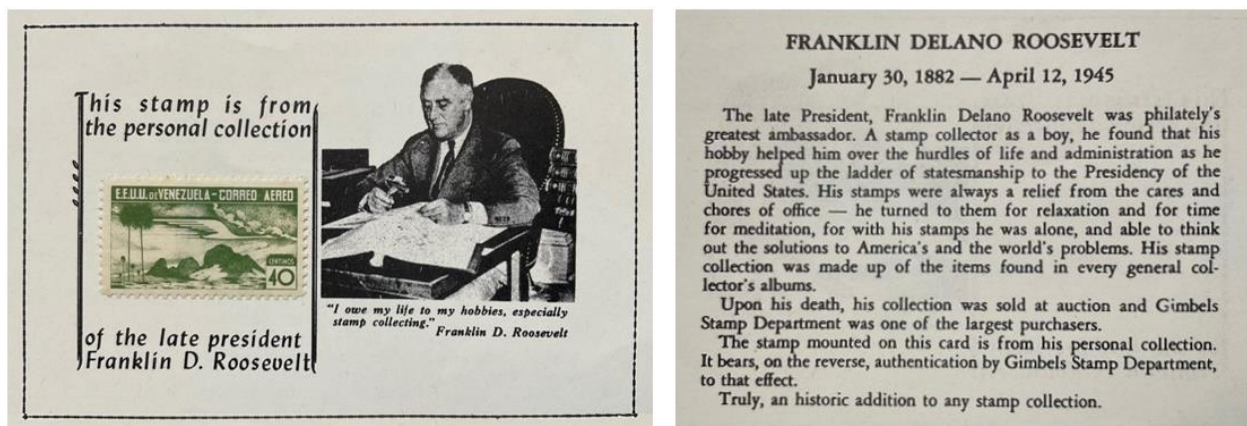


Figure 2: Front and back of an FDR souvenir card, featuring a stamp from the late President's personal collection. In this case, it is a mint copy of Venezuela, Scott C51, 40 centavos, yellow green, an airmail stamp issued in 1937.

Venezuela has been issuing stamps since 1859. The early issues are a gold mine of philatelic interest. There are numerous forgeries for those who enjoy sleuthing those out (see Figure 3 below), and they also have one of the most unusual series, possibly unique, with the tiniest lines of overprinting I have ever seen, with phrases such as “Estampillas de Correa - Contraseña.” See Figure 4 below for an example of this unusual overprint.



Figure 3: Left: Cover of the reference book, “Introducing Venezuela’s 1871-1880 Escuelas Stamps” by Williams Castillo. Right: Some examples of the numerous forgeries of the early issues of Venezuela.

The 1871-1880 Escuelas issue is also particularly interesting. A member of The Stamp Forum, Williams Castillo (@will), has written an excellent book on this series titled *Introducing Venezuela’s 1871-1880 Escuelas Stamps* (see Figure 3 above). Read with caution.... his enthusiasm is infectious!



Figure 4: Above is an example of the tiny running overprint, “Estampillas de Correa – Contraseña,” which translates to “Postage Stamps – Password.” It is imagined that this was an early measure to guard against forgeries.



Figure 5: A sampling of some Escuelas issues. Note the fine horizontal lines running across these stamps, which are, in fact, the microfine overprint, “Estampillas de Correa – Contraseña,” shown in a magnified view in Figure 4.

Areas of Interest & Specialization

Venezuela is a rich source for philatelic errors, freaks and oddities, including imperforate pairs, misplaced, doubled or inverted overprints, and more—just about anything can be discovered. The best part is that you can often find these kinds of errors in auctions at very modest prices. Pictured below are a few imperf pairs and an example of a double overprint (see Figure 6).



Figure 6: Left: Venezuela, Scott C191, 20c ultramarine, overprinted AEREO in dark carmine, issued in 1944; this example is an error with double overprint. Right: Venezuela, Scott C701, 5c yellow, C704, 30c gray, and C705, 50c green, issued in 1959; these examples are all errors due to missing perforations in between the stamps.

The Venezuelan postal system also allowed the use of bisects when stamp supplies were inadequate. These are most common from the 1880s to the turn of the 20th Century. Figure 7 on the next page shows several different types of bisects including diagonal, vertical, and horizontal stamp sections.



Figure 7: Assorted examples of bisects on piece from Venezuela. Examples are shown with stamps cut horizontally, vertically, and diagonally. Generally, collecting bisects on cover or on piece is essential.



Figure 8: A digitally cropped top-half of a full sheet from the States Issue. Shown is Venezuela, Scott C339, 7½c gray green, issued 1951.

If you enjoy engravings, Venezuela is one of several South American countries that have many beautiful intaglio issues printed by the American Banknote Company. The themes are vast, but they stay strongly centered on Venezuela’s geography, people, scenery, and history. Looking at a Venezuelan collection can sometimes feel a bit like an homage to their great hero and liberator, Simon Bolivar. His face, name, and attributed actions permeate both Venezuelan stamps and their currency, too.

One of the longest commemorative series ever issued is the Venezuelan States set from the 1950s. Each state issued a set with their coat of arms with values for both regular and air mail usages. Scott lists 168 regular and 216 airmail issues. It can be a huge challenge to find a complete set of this issue, either mint or used. Warning!

Use caution with these as the paper is a bit soft, making it very easy to create thins on them when trying to remove a hinge. Soaking hinges off is by far the safest way to remove any adherent bits!

Speaking of airmail issues, if you're a fan of those, few countries issued as many airmails as did Venezuela. They finally ceased producing airmail-designated stamps in 1971, but by then, the total airmail issues exceeded 1,060 stamps, so there is a plentiful number to collect.

Venezuela has many local issues, officials, and many fiscals and other back-of-the-book issues, too. One of the most elusive and highly desirable are the "La Guairá" series, which were used for ships' mail from the cities of La Guairá and Puerto Cabello to Saint Thomas, which was then part of the Danish West Indies (DWI). Today, Saint Thomas is part of the U.S. Virgin Islands, which were purchased by the United States in 1917, and they later became an unincorporated U.S. territory in 1927.



Figure 9: A digitally cropped photo of a stock page showing examples of the famous "La Guairá" local issues, as described in greater detail in the paragraph to the left.

This situation means that sometimes you will find the La Guairá issues in both Venezuela and DWI collections. These issues are also rife with forgeries, so "caveat emptor" (buyer beware) applies! Figure 9 shows selected stamps from my small collection, but—warning—I have not yet found the time to label all the many forgeries, so these are likely not all genuine.



Figure 10: Digitally cropped photo of a miniature sheet of Venezuela, Scott 1587a-f, issued on 29 May 1998.

Venezuela had its "Golden Age" in the 1950s and 60s, when the oil industry revenues fueled great progress. Stamps from this era and earlier are most common and fairly easy to find at very reasonable prices. Sadly, as the country began to develop political problems, there appears to be a corresponding decline in their postal system.

Today, "Ipostel," the Venezuelan national postal system, is almost non-existent. So, perhaps the greatest challenge to collecting Venezuela is really the modern issues, produced after the 1990s. Finding postally used copies of stamps from the last 30 years can also be quite challenging. The format for most issues after 1985 is miniature sheets of 10, frequently having all different designs. It remains to be seen what the future holds for the postage stamps from this beautiful, once quite great country.

Parting Thoughts

So, perhaps you might consider adding a Central or South American country to your list of interests! Venezuela is a fascinating country to collect and well worth a second look. Key advantages include: its stamps can be had inexpensively, it has a wealth of interesting philatelic challenges, and it is a perfect collecting area for those who are not particularly enamored with new issues.

¡Feliz coleccionismo de sellos! Happy stamp collecting!

Author's note: All materials pictured in this article are from my personal collection.

Upcoming Philatelic Events: Opportunities for Stamping & Meeting TSF Members

By Editorial Staff, based on Member Involvement

11-Jan-2024

British Empire Study Group (BESG) hosts Claire Scott, *A Journey through Brunei's Postal System from 1895*.

Time: Zoom online event at 18:00-19:00 Eastern Time (23:00-00:00 GMT, UK Time)

To register: <https://bestudygroup.org/events/> or contact TSF member Rob (@REL1948) by Forum PM.

12 through 14-Jan-2024

OrcoExpo Stamp Show. Location: 8530 Stanton Avenue, Buena Park, California, USA

Time: Friday & Saturday 10:00-18:00, Sunday 10:00-16:00 Pacific Time; free admission with registration.

For more info: <https://www.istampshows.com/Annual-OrcoExpo-Stampshow>

History: TSF members @cephus, @philatarium, and @berylliumguy attended this show in 2023.

19 & 20-Jan-2024

York Stamp & Coin Fair. Location: The Grandstand, York Racecourse, York, England, UK

Time: Friday 10:00-17:00 GMT and Saturday 10:00-16:00 GMT

For more info: <https://stampshows.net/york-stamp-coin-fair/>

07-Mar-2024

British Empire Study Group (BESG) hosts Robin Harris of Unitrade.

Zoom online event at 18:00-19:00 Eastern Time (23:00-00:00 GMT, UK Time)

To register: <https://bestudygroup.org/events/> or contact TSF member Rob (@REL1948) by Forum PM.

12 & 13-Apr-2024

Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies (ASPS) Congress. Hosts: Aberdeen Philatelic Society.

Location: Dewars Centre, Perth, Scotland, UK; Friday 10:00-17:00 GMT, Saturday 10:00-15:00 GMT

For more info: <https://scottishphilately.co.uk/>

TSF member Alex Walker (@vikingeck) is Chair and may be contacted by Forum PM with questions.

26 through 28-Apr-2024

WESTPEX Stamp Show. Location: San Francisco Airport Marriott Waterfront Hotel, Burlingame, California

Time: Friday & Saturday 10:00-18:00, Sunday 10:00-16:00 Pacific Time; \$5 admission good for all 3 days.

For more info: <https://www.westpex.com/> History: @berylliumguy attended many times, last in 2017.

19 & 20-Jul-2024

York Stamp & Coin Fair. Details are the same as for the January event listed above.

History: TSF members @vikingeck, @michael, @berylliumguy, and @drblade all attended in July 2023, and some are planning to attend again in 2024.

Cinderella Corner: Catalonia 1947: The Montserrat Cinderellas

By Joan Molina (@cursus)

Editor's Note: The following article is an expanded, rewritten version of an article by Joan that originally appeared in "The Cinderella Philatelist" in January 2020. The "TSF Newsletter" is delighted to be the first periodical to feature the updated version of this article, with new historical information, not published before. Catalan Cinderellas constitute a substantial and fascinating area of collecting that is generally not well known outside of Catalonia. Please enjoy this glimpse into their previously untold story!

Foreword

Catalonia is a country of 32,000km² (about 12,355 square miles) in area and 8 million inhabitants in the northeastern corner of the Iberian Peninsula, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, although its language (Catalan), culture, and historical area is somewhat larger: 70,500km² and 14.2 million inhabitants in the eastern Iberian Peninsula (Valencia). This greater area also includes the Balearic Islands, Andorra, the French department of Eastern Pyrenees, and the city of Alghero ("l'Alguer" in Catalan) on the Italian island of Sardinia. Since 1714, Catalonia belongs to the kingdom of Spain, but it keeps a very strong national identity. Its capital and largest city is Barcelona.

Catalan History & Use of Cinderella Stamps

From the late 19th Century to the present day, Catalonia has used Cinderellas as a way of promoting itself, its people, and its cultural heritage, but they're hardly known outside our borders. In this article, we will deal with the 1947 Montserrat Cinderella issue, a very nice one issued during what were difficult times for Catalonia and the Catalan people.

Montserrat Mountain, which lies in the center of Catalonia (about 70km [43.5 mi] NE of Barcelona) has a very distinctive shape, which is the reason for its name, as in Catalan "Montserrat" means "sawed mountain." Lying West of the Llobregat River, it reaches an altitude of 1,236.4m (4,056 ft) at the Sant Jeroni peak. Since the 9th Century, a Benedictine abbey sits on its slopes, housing the shrine of Our Lady of Montserrat, a black Madonna who is Catalonia's patroness, and she is affectionately known by us as "la Moreneta" ("the little brunette" in English).

The 1936-39 war, started by the right-wing military uprising (backed by most of the Spanish Catholic Church) against the democratic government of the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939) and the anti-religious reaction that it brought on the republican side, divided Catalan society into two factions that seemed irreconcilable. The rebels' victory, early in 1939, unleashed very harsh repression against Catalonia, which was considered the stronghold of the defeated republic. The Catalan language was banned from public life, and its use faced prosecution, as was any expression of Catalan national identity.

Montserrat Monastery survived the war with little damage, as it was protected by the Catalan Government, who turned it into a war hospital. Occupied by Franco's Spanish army in January 1939, the monastic life was restored. By 1944, the monastery proposed the idea of building a fine throne for Our Lady of Montserrat, paid for by popular donations. In view of the initiative's success, Montserrat's Abbot Dom Aureli Maria Escarré (who later opposed Franco's dictatorship), saw the possibility of organizing a mobilization of the people to celebrate the placing of the image on the new throne, and he appointed a commission to organize the event. Its name was "Comissió Abat Oliba," and the chosen date for the event was 27 April 1947.

Although the Commission was controlled by the regime, and some of Catalonia's bishops (all of them appointed by the Spanish regime) objected to the use of Catalan language, the hundred members of the "Comisió" ignored the repression and addressed Catalans in their own language. Among the Commission

members, there were some who would play an important role in Catalonia's political and cultural future, such as Fèlix Millet, Josep Benet (senator from 1977-1982), Josep Maria Ainaud de Lasarte, Jordi Bonet (Sagrada Família's architect), Jaume Carner, Alexandre Cirici (a man of the arts and senator from 1977-86), and Joan Raventós (Catalan Parliament President, 1995-99).

The event was a complete success, with an audience of 70-100,000, together with all the bishops of Catalonia and authorities of the regime. The Catalan language was used in a public, mass meeting. Thousands of people gathered in the monastery square to listen to the Commission secretary, Fèlix Millet, when he read, in Catalan, the "Spiritual Visit to Our Lady of Montserrat" by Bishop Josep Torras i Bages (late 19th Century). Authorities were unable to prevent those in attendance from singing "El Virolai" (Montserrat's hymn) to drown out the words of the Spanish Foreign Affairs Minister. At the end of event, messages from exiled Catalans were read, among those one from the world-famous cellist, Pau Casals.

The nationalist and/or Christian underground political forces were active in the process of getting the event ready, as well as in the territory network, which had been created to advertise it. Catalonia's National Front (FNC) took advantage of the event to spread thousands of Catalan-written leaflets. On the day of the event, under the name of "Resistance National Groups," two members of the FNC hung a huge Catalan flag on the rock named "The Phrygian Hat," in such a way that the Spanish police were unable to remove it for the entire day. A few days later, the governor of Barcelona province, where Montserrat is located, was dismissed from his position.

Historians consider this event a turning point in the reconstruction of Catalan society after the schism brought by the war, and a reconciliation of the two wings of the Catalan National Movement, the Catholic and the leftist, which has continued to the present day.

The Cinderellas

To pay for the event, 13 Cinderellas were issued. Ten of them, numbered as Figures 1-10, were the work of Antoni Ollé Pinell (Barcelona, 1897-1981), a prestigious wood engraver. The other three, (numbers 11-13) were the work of Enric Cristòfol Ricart Nin (Vilanova i la Geltrú, Catalonia, 1897-1960), another renowned wood engraver who used to work for the printer, being from the same town. The stamps were printed by Oliva de Vilanova (Barcelona), a well-known company that printed postage and revenue stamps for several entities, as well as high-quality illustrated books.

Size-wise, Cinderellas 1-9 and 11-13 measure 30mm x 39mm, in both portrait and landscape orientations, and are perforated 10¾, although the perforations are often found to be defective or missing. On back of the stamps, the value of 25 cents (Figures 1-8 and 11-13) and of 50 cents (Fig. 9). They were printed as 50 stamps per sheet (5 rows of 10) with a heading in the upper margin in Catalan, "Donatiu de 25/50 cèntims per al tro de plata de la MD de Montserrat" (Gift of 25/50 cents for the silver throne of Our Lady of Montserrat).

Cinderella no. 10 (size: 20mm x 29mm) was issued in sheets of 100 (10 rows of 10) with the marginal wording in Spanish "Donativo de 10 céntimos de los niños y niñas catalanes para una lámpara para la Virgen de Montserrat" (Gift of 10 cents to Catalan boys and girls for a votive light for Our Lady of Montserrat).

Face values were in "peseta" (a word of Catalan origin meaning "little piece"), which was the Spanish currency between 1868 and 2001. The exchange rate was set at 166.86 peseta per euro.

The Cinderellas are inscribed in Latin, which was by then the ecclesiastical language of the Catholic Church, as a clever way to avoid using the Spanish language, which had been imposed in Catalonia by Franco's regime, but which most Catalans did not feel was their own.



Figures 1-4: From left to right:

Fig. 1: **Saint Benedict of Nursia** (Nursia, Italy, ca. 480; Montecassino, Italy, 547). A religious man, who founded the Benedictine Order. Patron Saint of Europe and the Western World. Monks of Montserrat are Benedictines.

Fig. 2: **Saint Francis of Assisi** (Assisi, Italy, 1182-1226). A religious man, who founded the Franciscan and Clarisse Orders. Patron Saint of the environment.

Fig. 3: **Saint Ignatius of Loyola** (Loiola, Basque Country, 1491; Rome, Italy, 1556). Founder of the Society of Jesus (S.J., more commonly known as Jesuits), who had a mystical religious experience in a cave near Montserrat.

Fig. 4: **Saint Antoni Maria Claret** (Sallent, Catalonia, 1807; Fontfreda, France, 1870). Catalan priest who founded several monastic orders.



Figures 5-8: From left to right:

Fig. 5: **Saint Joseph of Calassanç** (Peralta de la Sal, Spain, 1557; Rome, Italy, 1648). Spanish priest who often visited Montserrat.

Fig. 6: **Bishop Josep Torras i Bages** (Les Cabanyes, Catalonia, 1846; Vic, Catalonia, 1916). Catalan priest. As Bishop of Vic, he was very influential in Catalan society in his day. Known for his famous pronouncement, "Catalonia will be Christian, or won't be!"

Fig. 7: **Mossèn Jacint Verdaguer** (Folgueroles, Catalonia, 1845; Vallvidrera, Catalonia, 1902). Catalan priest and poet. One of the greatest names in Catalan literature. Author of the "Virolai", Montserrat's most popular song.

Fig. 8: **Abbot Oliba** (Besalú, Catalonia, 971; Sant Miquel de Cuixà, Catalonia, 1046). Catalan religious figure and politician. Abbot of Ripoll and Cuixà, and Bishop of Vic (all are locations in Catalonia). In 1025, he founded the Monastery of Montserrat. Oliba was one of the most influential persons in Catalonia of his time and was also the main driving force behind the Peace and Truce Meetings, a forerunner of the Catalan Parliamentary System.



Figures 9-11: From left to right:

Fig. 9-10: **Our Lady of Montserrat.** A 95cm (37.4 inches) tall, 12th Century Romanesque beech and poplar wood sculpture. It shows Our Lady of Montserrat with Jesus seated on her lap. We have this image on a bicolor (brown/yellow) 50-cent value and on another smaller reddish violet one, with a 10-cent value.

Fig. 11: **Montserrat Mountain.** A view from the east of this very distinctive mountain that rises dramatically on the west of Llobregat River up to an altitude of 1,236.4 meters (4,056 ft.) at its peak, which is called Sant Jeroni.



Figures 12-15: From left to right:

Fig. 12: **Holy Cave.** The place where Our Lady of Montserrat's image was found in 880 A.D. The cave became a pilgrimage site and led to the building of the Montserrat Monastery, which is pictured in the stamp.

Fig. 13: **Cavall Bernat.** At 1,110 meters (3,642 ft.) of altitude, Cavall Bernat is the best-known Montserrat peak, which was climbed for the first time in 1935. Three climbers can be seen in the design of the Cinderella stamp.

Fig. 14-15: Examples of the backs of these stamps, where the prices and printer's name are indicated.

Author's Afterword

I like these Cinderellas very much, for both their background and aesthetic. They can be found at reasonable prices at our local markets in Barcelona, although completing the set can be challenging. But challenges are what collecting is all about...

When putting the final touches on this article, I stumbled onto a copy of the leaflet for this event in a Barcelona thrift shop (see Figure 16, next page). The info in the leaflet was not about the Cinderella stamps, but still, it was quite a nice coincidence, anyway! Happy holidays to all my friends at TSF!

—Joan Molina: TSF member, Cinderella lover and researcher

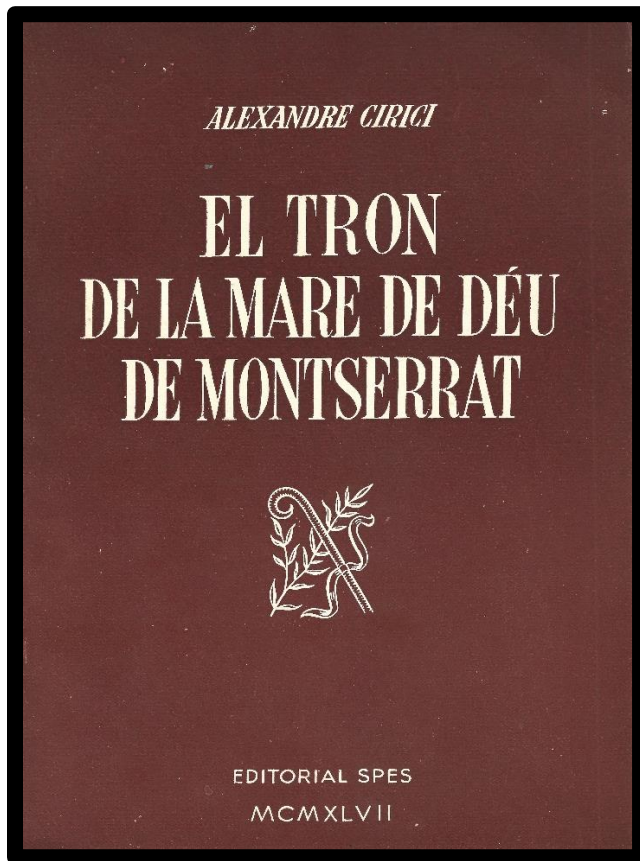


Figure 16: Photo of the cover of the 1947 event leaflet recently found by the author in a Barcelona thrift shop. The cover legend in Catalan reads “El Tron de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat.” English translation: “The Throne of Our Lady of Montserrat.”

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.

The Stamp Forum'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](#). Each has been posted there, and each of those has a link that will bring readers to our Forum. Our 2023 submission is currently featured on the APS 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.

