

THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS



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THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS



Vol. XI, No.1
JULY 1963

Henry M. Goodkind, Editor
Philip Silver, Assistant Editor

URUGUAY Official Air Mail Stamps

By PHILIP SILVER

(Continued from Vol. X page 80)

How The Punches Were Applied

In discussions with students of Uruguay official air mail stamps, one is struck by the unanimity of opinion about the method of applying the punches to the basic stamps. First, they were applied by hand rather than by machine. Also, the punching mechanism, similar to hole punches which may currently be purchased in any stationery store, were made with only *one* punch die.

Since each of the official air mail stamps has two punched holes — stars or quatrefoils — one might expect that the punching mechanism would have been made with two dies so that both punched holes could be made at the same time. However, examination of many punched official air mail stamps and



Fig. 17. Pair of 16c indigo punched with two quatrefoils. The left stamp has 5mm. spacing between punches. The spacing between punches on the right stamp is 6½mm. (All photos by Boutrelle).

the punches applied to the earlier postage stamps overprinted "OFICIAL" indicates that this is not the case. There is no similarity in spacing of the punches when several copies are compared. On some stamps, both punches are fairly close together; on others they are spaced quite far apart. Note the pair of 16c indigo official air mail stamps punched with two quatrefoils shown in Fig. 17. The space between the quatrefoil punches on the left stamp measures 5mm. On the right stamp, the space is 6½mm. If the punching device was made with two dies, side by side, such differences in spacing could not exist unless several such devices, each with different spacing between the dies, were in use. Even then, differences in spacing in a pair of stamps could only be caused by one stamp being punched with one device and the other with the second, a rather unlikely procedure. In any event, Dr. Hormaeche is the authority for the statement that the star and quatrefoil punches had only one die, that he has personally examined them and, that the same star and quatrefoil punches in use since 1915 on the postage stamps were used again to punch the air mail stamps.

It is presumed that stamps were normally punched in full sheets of fifty. However, if that were so, the quantities shown in Table IV should all be in even numbers. Since many are not in even numbered quantities, one may conclude that part sheets of some of the denominations were punched although, in most cases, full sheets were used.

The "Catalogo De Los Sellos Aereos Del Uruguay" states on page 60 that the stamps were punched *two at a time*, the sheets being folded along the horizontal row of perforations. This is only partly correct. The implication is that having folded two rows of five stamps each along the horizontal perforations separating them, the ten stamps would then be punched. Next, the process would be repeated for the following two horizontal rows. Thus, for a sheet of 50 (5x10), there would be five separate operations before all fifty stamps had been punched. Actually, all ten horizontal rows of stamps were first folded together along the nine rows of horizontal perforations between them, the first on the second, the second on the third, etc. The punch was then applied to ten stamps at a time, a method calculated to save time and labor.

The distance from the circumference of the die to the point of union of the two arms, which operate the punching device was quite small, probably about ⅜ inch, as determined from measurements of punched stamps. The writer has never found a punched stamp which measured more than slightly over ¼ inch from the punch to the stamp's perforated edge. As a consequence, the punch never appears in the center of the Pegasus air mail stamps which measure slightly over an inch in height.

Another item of interest is that whereas the punches appear towards the bottom of stamps on rows 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9, they are near the top of the stamps on



Fig. 18. Pair of official stamps (Scott O125) showing punched stars at side edges, the stamps having been folded along the vertical perforations.

rows 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10. Also the stars appear in normal position on the odd rows and inverted on the even rows. This is true of the stamps with quatrefoil punches as well. This happened because after the sheet had been completely folded along the horizontal perforations, the punch was applied at the bottom of the first row, the stamps being in normal rather than inverted position. It must be remembered that the sheets of 50 stamps had a selvage on all four sides. Thus, when all ten rows had been folded, the top and bottom selvages would protrude at the top of this completed folding. Of necessity, this would obviate punching of the stamps at the top unless the selvages were removed or folded under. This latter was apparently not done. The stamp on the cover shown in Fig. 9, in the writer's collection, still has the top selvage attached, although it is not apparent in the photograph. Illustrations (Figs. 20-21) show full sheets of 50 stamps of the 24c claret and 60c emerald green punched official air mail stamps with both top and bottom selvages intact. Therefore, it can be stated, with almost complete certainty, that stamps punched near the bottom margin are from the odd rows, while those punched near the top margin come from even rows.



Fig. 19. Block of four of the 2c Centenary of Independence stamps of 1930. Punches are placed along side edges of stamps. Note upper pair punched with two stars; lower pair has three. (Collection of Robert Hoffmann).



Fig. 20. Full sheet of fifty stamps, 24c claret, punched with two quatrefoils. Three different size quatrefoil punches may be distinguished. (Collection of Dr. E. Hormaeche).



Fig. 20. (con't.). The last five horizontal rows.

Some students of the punched official air mail stamps conjecture that the stamps may have been folded along the vertical rows of perforations before punching. This theory is hardly tenable since, because of the small distance from the die to the arms of the punching device, the holes would then be found either at the left or right margins of the stamps rather than near the top or bottom. This was the method used to punch some of the postage stamps overprinted "OFICIAL." (See Fig. 18). This type of punching is also seen in Fig. 19 on a block of four of the 1930 Centenary of Independence postage stamps. It will be noted that the two top stamps are punched with two stars while the bottom pair is punched with three. However, no official air mail stamps punched near the side margins have ever been seen by the writer or by other students with whom he has been in contact.

Types Of Punches

Those, who have had occasion to study the punched official air mail stamps of Uruguay, have noted a great variation in the size of the punched holes—stars or quatrefoils. The Sanabria Catalogue states that the stamps were "Punched with 2 stars or quatrefoils. The former in two sizes." In our opinion, this is incorrect. Examination of punched stamps in our own and in other collections as well indicates that there are at least three distinguishable sizes of punched stars and quatrefoils. Does that mean that several different sizes of die punches exist? The answer must be in the negative. As previously noted, Dr. Hormaeche has been cited as the authority for the statement confirming the writer's long held belief that only *one* star punch and *one* quatrefoil punch were used by the Postal Authorities to punch stamps for official air mail use.

What, then, is the explanation for the different size punches known on these stamps? The reader will recall that in the previous section—"How the Punches Were Applied"—it was stated that the ten horizontal rows of the sheet of fifty stamps were first folded along the nine horizontal rows of perforations separating them. The punch was then applied to ten stamps at a time. We are fortunate to be able to illustrate two full sheets of punched official air mail stamps; the first is the 24c claret (Fig. 20), the second the 60c emerald green (Fig. 21), both from the collection of Dr. Hormaeche. The reader will note that on both sheets the ten stamps in any vertical row are in exact juxtaposition. Where there is a variation in the distance between the two punches on a stamp from one vertical row to any other this variation is the same for all ten stamps in that vertical row. But, what is even more interesting, is that each vertical row contains several different sizes of punches. At least three different size stars are distinguishable. The same is true of the quatrefoils although, perhaps, not quite as apparent. The star punches show the variation in size more clearly probably because of the sharper points of the die caused by its shape.

The writer can report that he has had both full sheets in his possession through the courtesy of Dr. Hormaeche. Both have been folded along the horizontal perforations; all ten stamps in each vertical row match perfectly so that it appears there is only one set of punched holes in each row. How then can we account for the variations in size? Dr. Hormaeche theorizes that the boring die was conical, not cylindrical. Thus, the stamps at the farthest extremity of the borer, in row No. 10 for example, would be the smallest while those in the top row would be largest.

The theory is certainly tenable if the results would bear it out. However, it is noted that the stamps in the top and bottom rows show the smallest size punches while those approaching the middle rows have the largest. This would



Fig. 22a. Horizontal pair 40c dark brown. The right stamp is punched with one star and one quatrefoil. The left stamp is unpunched.

seem to mitigate against the die being conical. However, if the die punching mechanism were cylindrical this might account for the sharpest holes in the top rows. In such event, the bottom row punches should be larger and less sharp. Examination shows this not to be the case. The bottom row punches are also small with sharp extremities, although perhaps slightly smaller than those in the top row.

Mr. Kerst's theory is that the punching die fitted a star-shaped (or quatrefoil-shaped) hole or matrix. Thus, when the punch was applied to the ten thicknesses of paper, those at the top and bottom would have greater contact and pressure from the cutting surfaces of the punch and matrix, resulting in sharper lines and smaller holes. Mr. Kerst implies the punch in such case would be cylindrical, not conical.

Both theories are extremely interesting. We incline more to Mr. Kerst's theory than to the one advanced by Dr. Hormaeche. However, regardless of the shape and appearance of the punch device, we now know that it was responsible for the creation of different size holes in the punching process. In a row of ten stamps, at least three different size holes are distinguishable. But, if there are three different size stars and three different size quatrefoils, they were made by the same punches. It is, therefore, immaterial that one punched hole is larger than the other. This merely signifies that one is from a horizontal row which had received a different impression from the punching device.

This is the important matter. Regardless of the size of the hole in the basic stamp, the different size holes were not made with different punching devices. Thus, it would appear that the cataloguers should merely mention that the punched stamps are known with stars and quatrefoils. One can then collect one of each type. The specialist can satisfy his desires by obtaining different sizes. But they will be smaller or larger sizes, not different stamps.

Errors In The Punching Process

The "Catalogo De Los Sellos Aereos Del Uruguay" states on page 60 that some stamps are known in se-tenant pairs (the catalog says "pieces" but we have substituted "se-tenant pairs" for greater clarity) where one stamp is punched and the adjoining stamp is not. Mention is made that these varieties are found on the following stamps:

- 8c orange
- 16c indigo
- 24c claret
- 40c dark brown
- 60c emerald green
- 1P carmine rose
- 3P deep red

The catalog states further that these are considered to be great rarities.

Although not previously listed by the Sanabria catalogue, the 1960 edition finally does mention two varieties:



Fig. 21. Full sheet of fifty stamps, 60c emerald green, punched with two stars. Three different size stars are easily distinguishable. (Collection of Dr. E. Hormaeche).



Fig. 21. (con't.). The last five horizontal rows.



Fig. 22b. Horizontal pair of 60c emerald green. The right stamp is punched with two quatrefoils. The left stamp is unpunched.

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------|--|
| 68a | 40c dark brown. | Horizontal pair, one punched with star, other with quatrefoil. |
| 74a | 3P deep red. | Vertical pair, one punched with one star, other with two. |

Illustrated in Figs. 22a, 22b, 22c and 22d are varieties from the writer's collection. It will be noted that each set-tenant pair consists of one stamp with and one without punch. The horizontal pair of 40c dark brown is somewhat different from the variety described by Sanabria, although it is believed the Sanabria listing was made from the stamps illustrated here. It will be seen that the left stamp is not punched while the right one has one star and one quatrefoil. The 60c emerald green has two quatrefoil punches in the right stamp while the left stamp is unpunched. The 1P carmine rose likewise has the left stamp unpunched but the right stamp has two star punches. The 3P deep red is a vertical pair whose top stamp is unpunched whereas the bottom one is punched with two stars.

If, as previously discussed, the sheets were folded along the horizontal rows of perforations, it is perhaps understandable that a vertical row would accidentally remain unpunched. This would account for the varieties on the 60c emerald green and the 1P carmine rose. Even the error on the 40c dark brown is explainable. The operator may have put down the star punch for a moment and then picked up the quatrefoil punch by mistake. Even though far-fetched, the explanation is somewhat tenable. However, how can the vertical pair of the 3P deep red be explained? It is barely possible, though not too probable,



Fig. 22c. Horizontal pair of 1P carmine rose. The right stamp is punched with two stars. The left stamp is unpunched.

Fig. 22d. Vertical pair of 3P deep red. The upper stamp is unpunched. The bottom stamp has two star punches.



Fig. 23. Strip of three of the first Newspaper Stamp (Scott P1). The two stamps at left have two star punches. The right stamp is punched with two quatrefoils. (Collection of Robert Hoffmann).

that one horizontal row of stamps was not folded under. Thus, the protruding row would not be punched. Another, perhaps more likely explanation, is that this variety was the result of design rather than accident. Perhaps it would soften the criticism if it were said these varieties are the result of complaisance.

There is one factor which seems to support the "complaisance" theory. It will be noted that, on each of the four pieces illustrated, the stars and quatrefoils are always placed near the bottom edge of the stamps. The stars and quatrefoils are in upright position rather than inverted. Thus, they would come from the odd horizontal rows. It seems too much of a coincidence, therefore, that none are from the even rows and, thus, in inverted position. It may be that other varieties may be submitted by our readers showing punched stamps from even, horizontal rows which will tend to refute this. Note the strip of three of the "Prensa 3 Centesimos" overprint on the 4c orange stamp of 1921, Scott No. P1, the first Newspaper Stamp of Uruguay, (Fig. 23). The two stamps at the left are punched with two stars; the right stamp has two quatrefoils. Although these punches are placed at the top of the stamps and obviously from an even horizontal row — the last on the sheet — it is possible these were punched at the top because the bottom selvage would have mitigated against punching in any other position.

The writer would like to stress the point that, even though some of these varieties may have been the result of complaisance, they are, nevertheless, highly desirable for the specialist. Although he has specialized in the air mail stamps of Uruguay for many years, additional examples of these varieties have not been encountered. They are not common; we merely hesitate to call them "rare."

Scarcity Of Multiples

In passing, it should be noted that the official air mail stamps of Uruguay are not common in used multiple pieces. For that matter, even single copies used or mint are not plentiful. The only multiple piece ever seen by the writer is the pair shown in Fig. 17. Obviously, others may exist in the collections of Uruguay specialists. One possible explanation for the scarcity of multiple pieces is that in practically every instance where a double rate might have been required it would have been possible to pay it with higher denomination stamps rather than with multiples of lower ones. Thus, the 16c could be used instead of a pair of 8c, 60c instead of a pair of 30c, 80c for a pair of 40c or 1.20P rather than a pair of 60c. Triple rates could also be accommodated; the 90c would take care of a triple 30c rate, the 4.50P of a triple 1.50P rate, etc.

Scarcity Of Covers

Covers with Uruguay official air mail stamps are also quite scarce. After many years of searching, the writer is quite happy to have garnered three flown covers, two cover fronts and one wrapper. Correspondence with other Uruguay students confirms this scarcity. It is this absence of material which makes



Fig. 24. The 60c emerald green with two quatrefoil punches on official envelope of the Department of Posts, Telegraph and Telephone. Note rectangular boxed **FRANQUEO OFICIAL** handstamp at top center.

extremely difficult the establishment of earliest or latest usage of these stamps.

Most covers examined have printed corner cards indicating the department using the mails. In addition, some departments used rubberstamp cachets which usually appear at the upper right of the cover. Note the cachet of "Banco Hipotecario Del Uruguay" in Fig. 9. Others noted by the writer are "Direccion De Agronomia" (Department of Agriculture), "Facultad de Medicina" (Faculty of Medicine), "Ministro De Relaciones Exteriores" (Foreign Ministry) shown by Fig. 16 and several others.

In addition, most covers bear another marking indicating official usage. Most common is the familiar "SO" which is found in a number of printing styles. The letters stand for "Servicio Oficial" (Official Service). Most times, this marking is printed directly on the envelope. In some, it is applied with a rubber handstamp. Covers have also been seen with handstamps which have the words "SERVICIO OFICIAL" completely spelled out. A not too common marking is "FRANQUEO OFICIAL" (Official Franking) in a rectangular frame (Fig. 24).

Counterfeit Punches

It should be stated, at the outset, that not enough is known about counterfeit punches on the official air mail stamps of Uruguay. As a matter of fact, there is an apparent disagreement among specialists as to whether such counterfeits actually do exist. Thus, Llull, on page 40 of his book "Catalogo De Los Sellos Y Del Correo Aereo Del Uruguay" says he believes that there are counterfeit punches of European origin. Dr. Hormaeche, on the other hand, believes that counterfeits do not exist; in any event, he has never seen any.

The temptation to counterfeit these stamps is obviously great because of the chance to enhance the value of a cheaper stamp. To illustrate the point, shown herewith is a comparative table of prices taken from the 1963 edition of the "Sanabria World Airmail catalogue:"

Table V

Denomination	Normal Air Mail Stamps		Official Air Mail Stamps	
	Mint	Used	Mint	Used
8c red orange	2.50	2.50	50.00	50.00
16c indigo	2.00	2.00	25.00	15.00
24c claret	2.00	2.00	25.00	10.00
30c bistre	2.50	2.00	100.00	30.00
40c dark brown	5.00	2.50	15.00	15.00
60c blue green	4.00	4.00	7.50	7.50
60c emerald green	5.00	3.00	15.00	10.00
80c dark ultramarine	5.00	5.00	20.00	10.00
90c light blue	5.00	5.00	50.00	20.00
1P carmine rose	3.75	3.75	7.50	7.50
1.20P olive green	15.00	15.00	75.00	30.00
1.50P red brown	10.00	10.00	7.50	7.50
3P deep red	20.00	20.00	15.00	15.00
4.50P black	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00

A quick glance at the above will indicate to the reader why no one would want to counterfeit the 1.50P red brown, the 3P deep red or the 4.50P black air mail stamps. However, in the case of the others, the application of a counterfeit punch could increase the catalog value to at least twice that of some unpunched stamps, and to twenty times and forty times the catalog value in others. The difficulty of detecting counterfeits is compounded in the case of the official air mail stamps because of the manner in which they were made. Examination, for example, of the previously illustrated 24c claret and 60c emerald green full sheets indicate great variety not only in size but in shape

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#C1 World's first air mail stamp, flown Turin-Rome	2.00
#C1 do. error in arrival pmk. 22.IV. instead 22.V. 1917	4.00
#C1 do. return flight Rome-Turin cover	2.50
#C2 World's first sea-plane st., Naples-Palermo	2.00
#C2 do. Naples-Palermo posted in Rome	4.00
#C2 do. return flight Palermo-Naples	2.00
1925, Special flight LEGHORN-ROME with unused 1/2 off. air st.	2.00
1925, Same flight, 1/2 off. air st. cancelled	3.00
1926, "NORGE" airship Polar cover with 1/2 off. air stamp, Rome-Kingsbay	14.00
1926, do. Cover flown across North Pole to TELLER, Alaska, where Italian franking has been cancelled upon arrival, autographed by a member of the Crew, few known	60.00

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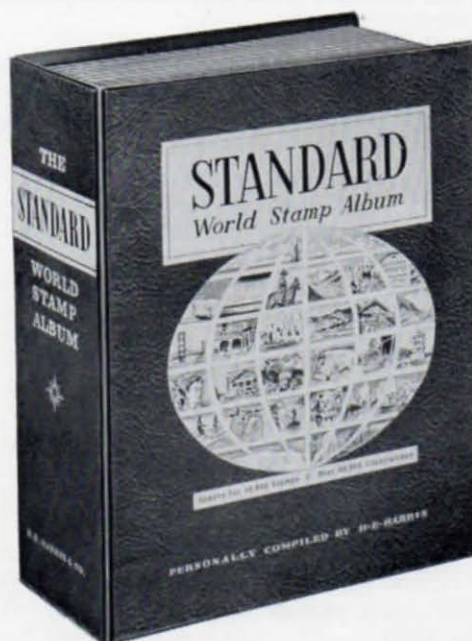
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Fig. 25. 40c dark brown and 80c dark ultramarine, each punched with two stars. Both stamps show characteristics which indicate the punches may be counterfeit.

of the punches. Only one characteristic has been firmly established by the writer. Practically every impression of the punching device resulted in clean edges for the punched stars and quatrefoils. Used copies clearly show this characteristic, as well.

Illustrated in Fig. 25 are copies of the 40c dark brown and 80c dark ultramarine, each punched with two stars. The irregular formation of the points of the stars and the fuzziness around the edges of the punches are not characteristics normally found on punched official air mail stamps. Accordingly, they are considered suspect as counterfeits by the writer. However, it is admitted that too little is known about possible counterfeits; thus, a firm opinion on the stamps shown in Fig. 25 cannot be stated. Far more additional study is necessary before positive results can be established and published.

Additional Material Examined

This study of the official air mail stamps of Uruguay was begun several years ago. Since the publication of the early installments in the *AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS* starting in the July 1962 issue, additional material has come to the writer's attention bearing on early dates of usage of these stamps.

In Fig. 26, there is shown part of a cover from the Foreign Ministry sent to the Uruguayan Consul in Genoa, Italy. The cover is franked with a pair of the 8c ultramarine Olympic stamps of 1928, each punched with one quatrefoil. This cover was not sent by air mail. The rate of 16c is obviously too low for an air mail letter to Italy. However, two conclusions may be drawn from this piece. First, punching of stamps for official use continued until at least the latter part of 1928—the Olympic Games stamps were first issued on July 29, 1928. Second, the date of the cancellation is May 28, 1930. It is thus possible, if punched stamps were being used at that early date, that official air mail stamps may also have been in use in 1930. The earliest date of use was previously established as October 19, 1930. (See Fig. 4).



Fig. 26. Part of cover franked with pair of 8c ultramarine of 1928 Olympic Victory Stamps, each punched with one quatrefoil. The Porte Pago cancellation is dated May 28, 1930. (Collection of Robert Hoffmann).



Fig. 27. The 30c bistre punched with two quatrefoils. The cancellation is the EXTERIOR type dated December 27, 1929. (Photos b Boutrelle).

Shown in Fig. 27, is the 30c bistre punched with two quatrefoils. It is cancelled with an "EXTERIOR/December 27, 1929" handstamp. The punches and the cancellation appear to be genuine. Thus, we now have a possible earlier usage than the October 19, 1930 date previously mentioned.

In truth, however, this stamp arouses grave doubts. First, the date is almost sixteen months earlier than previously established dates of usage during April 1931. Second, it will be noted that the cancellation is the same EXTERIOR type found on the October 19, 1930 discovery copy shown in Fig. 4. It has previously been stated that this EXTERIOR cancellation is known on much flown mail during 1929 and 1930. It is conjectured that perhaps a postal clerk had access to the punching device. The application of the punch to a 30c bistre stamp would make it fifteen times more valuable judging by the 1963 Sanabria Catalogue prices. Taking the prices from the "Catalogo De Los Sellos Aereos Del Uruguay" of 1948, it is noted that a used copy of the normal air mail stamp is listed at 1.20 pesos while the same stamp punched for official use has a price tag of 80 pesos, almost sixty-seven times higher. The temptation to increase a stamp's value merely by punching it is obviously very great. This is not to say that it happened. But, serious thought must be given to such a possibility. Therefore, this date of December 27, 1929 will not be regarded as evidence of the date of earliest known usage. Also, doubts may have to be entertained about the October 19, 1930 date on the stamp shown in Fig. 4.

The 1928 2P Artigas Stamp Punched For Official Air Mail Use

In this study of the official air mail stamps of Uruguay, we have purposely omitted reference to the 2P postage stamp of 1928 showing the Equestrian Statue of Artigas, Scott No. 386. Llull includes this on page 39 of his catalog listing. The "Club Filatelico Del Uruguay catalog," on the other hand, is strangely silent on the use of this stamp for air mail purposes.

The basic stamp was issued on May 1, 1928 with a total printing of 8,000. Llull states that 1,000 of these were punched with one quatrefoil in March, 1932. He states further that he has seen a variety of this stamped punched with one star and one quatrefoil. We do not doubt this latter statement; as noted previously, such varieties exist on the officially punched Pegasus air mail



Fig. 28. The 2P Artigas postage stamp of 1928 (Scott No. 386) punched with one quatrefoil. The stamp at left is mint, the one at right used. (Collection of Herman Kerst).

stamps. We do, however, take exception to the date of March, 1932. Our previous discussion relative to the period of use would indicate 1931 as the year of usage with possible earlier use, as well.

Shown in Figure 28 are two copies of this 2P Artigas stamp, each punched with one quatrefoil. The stamp as left is mint, the one at right used. The mint copy with quatrefoil punch at top in inverted position is probably from an even horizontal row. The used stamp has the quatrefoil punch at the bottom and is from an odd row. The cancellation is not too clear on this stamp; thus, the type of cancellation cannot be determined nor the date when the stamp was used. This is unfortunate, in view of the omission of this punched 2P Artigas stamp from the 1948 "Catalogo De Los Sellos Aereos Del Uruguay." Thus, the use of this stamp for air mail purposes cannot be firmly established. It is hoped that air mail covers bearing this stamp will be submitted for our examination so that its use for official air mail may be definitely proven.

Conclusion

The writer hopes that this study has achieved a synthesis of information previously available and that his conclusions based upon known facts have added to the fund of knowledge about the official air mail stamps of Uruguay. Some hypotheses tentatively advanced during the writing remain to be tested against further material which, it is hoped, will be made available by our readers. One thing is certain; the last word about these issues has not been printed. As additional facts become available, we hope to publish same in future issues of this magazine.

Acknowledgments

This study could not have achieved its degree of completeness without the help of many interested philatelists who made available material for examination and study. Special thanks are, therefore, due Miss Beatrice M. Berner, Robert Hoffmann, Dr. Estenio Hormaeche, Herman Kerst, C. Y. Pfoutz, Sam Rodvien and Jules L. Waecht. Grateful appreciation is extended to Messrs. Hoffmann and Kerst, and to Dr. Hormaeche for advice and information. Our correspondence with Dr. Hormaeche has been especially productive in information about the punching method. Some of this information will appear in a revised edition of the "Catalogo De Los Sellos Aereos Del Uruguay." We look forward eagerly to its publication.

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CILICIA 1920 AIR MAILS

The Long, Long Trail To Success

Over twelve years ago in the *Aero Philatelist's News* (Vol. 6, No. 12, June 15, 1951) the following was written as the preface to a five page article:

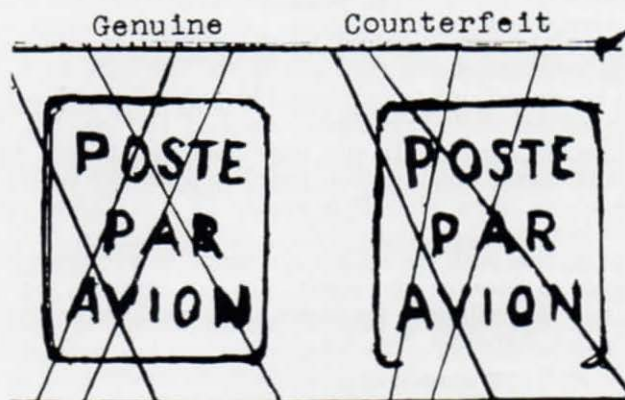


Fig. 1. The handdrawn sketch for the determination of genuine and the counterfeit as published in the "*Aero Philatelist's News*" of June 15, 1951.

"Of all the air mail stamps to be collected, none have been as baffling as those of Cilicia (Scott C1-2, Sanabria 1-2). It would be a great accomplishment to write that the mystery has been solved at last. Actually, it has not, so that this will be a story of frustration. On the other hand, the writer has spent many years investigating and studying these Cilicia air mails. Much useful information has been unearthed, which allows for certain opinions. The progress of this work has been told to some, who advised that the present results be recorded in order to throw at least some light upon these unknown stamps.

"Our investigations are not over and it is vowed that the final solution will be achieved (it is hoped by us), perhaps sooner than expected. The work up to now has required much correspondence, here and abroad, days of reference work in libraries, examination of hundreds of stamps and photographs as well as consultation with top-grade philatelic students, such as members of the Expert Committees of the Philatelic Foundation and the Friedl Committee, and highly respected dealers.

"The problem, briefly, is this. These Cilicia air mails are extremely rare, in fact, far rarer, if genuine, than any catalog price indicates. They were made under emergency conditions with a handstamp, making expertization exceedingly difficult. Sharp disagreements among leading dealer authorities here and abroad have existed about them for years. Those which one reliable dealer in this country vouched for as genuine are branded by an equally reliable foreign dealer as the counterfeit overprints. Frankly, the whole matter was and is still one big mess!

"This, however, never disturbs the persistent student. It is the complex philatelic problem which intrigues him. The challenge is accepted. It is not easy, however, to sort out only that information believed authoritative and present it at this stage in a coherent, properly understood story. But we shall attempt it."

This 1951 article did get action and a second article on the 1920 Cilicia air mail stamps was published in the *Aero Philatelist's News* of September 1, 1952.

This was a much shorter article of one page, giving the results of the reactions to the 1951 article. 23 sets of Cilicia C1-2 had been sent to the writer for examination, but *not one set met the standards established for the genuine*.

On April 1, 1953, the *Aero Philatelist's News* ran a third article on these stamps. It covered three pages and some of the most relevant parts are repeated as follows:

The Problem

"Certain procedures are required by the student in philatelic research. A theory must be established and then put to the test with as many copies of the stamp as can be secured. A theory tested by only a few copies is not proven. Many copies are needed including mint, cancelled and covers. Every single copy must fit into the theory. If one copy does not, then a new, amended theory must be established which is then tested in a similar manner. A theory can only become a conclusion when it is *proven by a sufficient amount of material without one exception*.

"In order to do this with the Cilicia air mails, in our previous articles we appealed for copies to examine and study. In our opinion, the response was exceptionally large. According to the count made, we have received the following Cilicia Scott C1-2, Sanabria Nos. 1-2:

26	unused sets
14	used sets
9	used sets on pieces of cover
..	covers

Total 49 sets or 98 individual stamps.

"Some of the theories set up about these stamps were: 1. The best authorities should be the old-time aero-philatelic students, especially those in France who were familiar with the issue from the very beginning in 1920.

"2. Any authority on the Cilicia air mails should have recorded something about the stamps or had some Reference Collection with stamps and photographs.

"3. Used copies should be in greater supply than unused because the stamps were not on sale at the post office windows but only affixed to the letter by the postal clerk after payment of the postage rate, similar to Syria Scott C1-6 or Chile C1-5.

"4. The proper cancellation dates must be July 16-29, 1920 when the only known two flights took place.

"5. The overprint being a *handstamp*, not type-set, must conform in general to other handstamps, especially contemporary ones used in other Middle Eastern countries.

Testing The Theory

"In Part 1 of these articles, *three different types* of handstamps were illustrated, each considered and sold by reputable dealers here and abroad as genuine. Those who sold one type as genuine believed the other two counterfeits.

Establishment Of The Standard

"As for the material examined so far, *not one has met the standard shown*. Using a further test of lines which is shown again, all copies seen so far in this country tally with the *counterfeit*.

"But it is believed that there must be *genuine* copies in this country according to the above standards because photos have been found in auction sale catalogs of past years which clearly show a handstamp seeming to tally in all respects to that shown in Fig. 3. We feel confident that we shall have the opportunity to study such copies in the future to confirm our theory with actual

material. When that time arrives, all who contributed to this study can share the satisfaction that comes with the results from an important philatelic research as this. A long-standing controversy will have been settled."

The Hunt For Genuine Continued

A regular correspondence abroad, especially to French philatelic students, was maintained for three years after the 1953 article appeared. Information received from abroad stressed two matters. First, the French stamp experts felt sure that they could pass upon genuine Cilicia air mail stamps. Two, the standards that we published in 1951, 1952 and 1953 were correct, and that all of the sets being sold at auction in America, including those of the leading New York dealers, were the counterfeits.

Most disappointing, however, was that not one person with whom we were corresponding in France could produce a genuine stamp for our study and records. One can have a very good idea of a genuine overprint, but without actually seeing it, the problem of expertizing remains.

Also the services of a member of AERO PHILATELISTS' was sought when we heard that he was travelling to Europe and a visit to Paris, France was included. We would outline to him the Cilicia air mail problem, give the name of French philatelists to contact and particularly to try to get the loan of one stamp considered genuine over there. Some of our good members took the time in Paris to do this but the answer was always the same. They were told: "The set is very, very rare. I do not possess a genuine set at present. Tell Mr. Goodkind that as soon as I see one, I shall contact him."

FIPEX (1956) In New York

There were several air mail collections from France exhibited in the New

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York City Coliseum at FIPEX in 1956. As one of the judges, we had to carefully study all the exhibits. But we paid particular attention to those exhibits from France looking for the Cilicia air mails.

One entry from a French collector had a set of Cilicia C1-2 that seemed to have the characteristics of the genuine overprint. After the judging had been completed, we mentioned this Cilicia set to several American stamp experts, such as Mr. Herbert J. Bloch, and suggested that they examine it and report their opinion. All agreed that this one set in the exhibit from France appeared to have the genuine overprints.

The French exhibitor did not personally come here to FIPEX. Therefore, the French Commissioner was contacted and requested to relay a message to the owner of this genuine set of Cilicia air mails upon his return to France. We asked if this exhibitor would be so kind as to send us here the stamps for a short inspection and that they would be returned to France in good order with all costs paid. The Commissioner promised to do this. We were hopeful for success because the exhibitor should have been in a receptive frame of mind, having won a FIPEX gold medal with his air mail exhibit.

Disappointments Continue

A year went by with no word from France, so in the Fall of 1957 we wrote to the French Commissioner to FIPEX reminding him about the Cilicia air mails. No reply was received to this letter.

Finally, in May 1958 a letter arrived here from the French Commissioner advising that this FIPEX gold medal collection had been sold privately in France. The new owner was a very secretive man, so that it would be out of the question to approach him for an inspection of the Cilicia air stamps.

Nothing transpired on this problem until the summer of 1960. We had planned to attend the 1960 London International Stamp Show and knew that we would meet some of the British air mail dealers, who had been in the stamp business for many years, and might be in a position to help on this Cilicia problem. Also we might meet some philatelists from France.

This did happen. We spoke at length with the well-known British air mail dealers and also met two from France. Also we spoke to Mr. Cyril Harmer of H. R. Harmer, Ltd. knowing that his auction house had sold some of the finest air mail collections and might have some helpful reference material.

The problem turned out to be the same in England as it was in the United States. The Cilicia air mails of 1920 were exceedingly rare. Probably not one out of 100 sets was genuine. As Mr. Francis J. Field said: "It is important that this matter be solved. I know that I have sold Cilicia air mails that were in collections for many years and that I considered genuine. People in America thought them forgeries, while over here we do not look favorably on most all of the sets sold in the States."

We returned home from London, England disappointed not to have located one genuine Cilicia air mail stamp.

Paris, France In 1961

High hopes for success were anticipated during our visit to Paris after the CURIOSA exhibition in Holland had closed in 1961. Being on vacation in Paris, we would have time for philately.

Upon our arrival in Paris, the well-known air mail dealer, Mr. Henri Trachtenberg, welcomed us and most graciously placed his services at our disposal. During our stay in Paris, nearly every afternoon Mr. Trachtenberg escorted us to many stamp dealers' offices or stores, where Cilicia air mail stamps were sought. Not one set was seen! Every Parisian said what was heard time and again in previous years, i. e.: "the stamps are exceedingly rare."



Fig. 2. A clear example of the customary type of overprint seen on copies in the United States, many with signatures of leading dealers. But this type of overprint has turned out to be counterfeit.

Only a few genuine sets exist, all in private collections.”

Attempts were made to contact two of the collectors, who, we were told, owned the Cilicia air mails certified as genuine by the top French experts. Both were away on vacation as was the leading authority. We left Paris in September 1961, wondering if we would ever have the chance to examine and closely study a genuine overprint on the 1920 Cilicia air mail stamps.



Fig. 3. One of the genuine overprints as studied and analyzed in 1961.

Success After 25 Years Of Searching

Arriving back in New York, it was never anticipated that in about a week, we would be able to study the genuine overprint, ending a search that began in 1937.

Mr. Herbert J. Bloch of the Mercury Stamp Co., New York phoned to tell us that he had been sent a set of Cilicia C1-2 to expertize and after careful examination he believed the stamps to be genuine. At once, we dropped everything to visit Mr. Bloch in his office.

When we arrived, he had before him a number of previous articles and many reference photographs, setting forth the characteristics of both the genuine and the counterfeit overprint. Along with his reference material, Mr. Bloch handed us a set of Cilicia Sanabria #1 and 2.

Using the past published tests for a genuine overprint, the ones before us passed every test. At last, the genuine stamps had been seen to be recorded!

As this account is closed, the most appropriate way to do it will be by quoting substantially what Mr. Bloch told us: "You see in philately, you must be patient. You can never tell when the material to solve a problem that existed for many, many years will show up. You and I worked for nearly twenty years on this Cilicia air mail mix-up. Actually it goes back forty-one years, because they started arguing about Cilicia air mail stamps almost from the time they were issued in 1920."

Although we have received enormous satisfaction from the results of our long writings and search on Cilicia that finally was successfully resolved, it must be admitted that this success probably would not have resulted were it not for the philatelic acumen, interest, reference records and cooperation of Mr. Herbert J. Bloch. (H. M. G.)

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AEROPHILA 1963

53 Exhibits From The United States & Great Britain



The coming international air mail exhibition to be held in Brussels, Belgium from September 1 to 10th should turn out to be the strongest one staged in Europe since the end of World War II. The facts for this statement are based on the exceptionally fine combined entries from the United States and Great Britain. There will be 53 from these two countries alone.

The British Commissioner, Mr. John W. Field, sent us the list of the twenty-seven exhibits from Britain. In the last two European exhibitions, the maximum number was six. Here are the British entries:

Story Of Aviation by Mrs. C. M. Gray

Story Of Flight by Mrs. M. Scott Morris

Air Mails by Mrs. M. I. Watson

Aerial Propaganda Leaflets by R. G. Auckland

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Danzig by D. W. Langley
Belgium & Belgian Congo by Peter Minnekeer
Sarawak by Garrett O'Brien
Famous Long-Distance Flights by Anthony Okin
Aerograms by R. G. Parsons
Latvia by O. Pilants
China by Stuart A. Robertson
Dropped Leaflets by P. H. Robbs
British Inland Air Mail by H. Eric Scott
Crash Covers by C. H. Smith
Famous Flights by G. L. Solomon
Early Europe & Scandinavia by Alan J. Scott
Colombia by J. Swales
Sarawak by C. M. C. Symes
Air Mails by Max Weldon
Air Post by W. Colling White
Scottish Air Mail by J. Wotherspoon

From the United States there are twenty-six entries (two are *Not-For-Competition*) as follows:

Honduras by Irving I. Green, Newton, Mass.
Canary Islands by Herbert Bernstein, Vineland, N. J.
Latin America and Graf Zeppelins by Bernard Fink, W. Hempstead, N. Y.
Salvador by Sam Rodvien, New York, N. Y.
Papua by Harry A. Holman, New York, N. Y.
Gt. Britain 1911 Coronation Flights by Albert Philip Cohen, New York, N. Y.
Uruguay by Philip Silver, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Semi-Officials by Dr. R. H. Shrady, Englewood, N. J.
Liberia by Raymond N. Young, Philadelphia, Pa.
Italy's Pegasus by William N. Mead, Philadelphia, Pa.
India Rockets by John R. Dilworth, Philadelphia, Pa.
Zeppelin Mail by Hans Nothman, Philadelphia, Pa.
Australia by Frank E. Adams, Havertown, Pa.
F. D. Roosevelt Air Mail Stamps by Jan Bart, Belle Harbor, N. Y.
German Pioneer Flights by Max Gold, New Rochelle, N. Y.
Venezuela by Henry Kraemer, New York, N. Y.
Sports On Air Mail by Ira Seebacher, Roslyn, N. Y.
U. S. Flights by William Ronson, New York, N. Y.
Air Stamps On Cover by Stanley R. Rice, Greenwich, Conn.
Netherlands & Colonies by Fred Keizer, Brooklyn, N. Y.
United States by Edward P. Bender, Woodside, N. Y.
Italy & Colonies by Louis Staub, Jericho, N. Y.
Proofs, Essays & Artist Sketches by J. J. Britt, New York, N. Y.
Graf Zeppelin by Mrs. Florence O. Brown, New York, N. Y.

Not For Competition

Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico — a selection of pages from the John N. Luff Collection by the Philatelic Foundation, New York, N. Y.
Nicaragua by Henry M. Goodkind, New York, N. Y.

Because of the great number of requests from the European Continent, last April the Exhibition Chairman in Brussels, Belgium, Mr. Ilia Braunstein, requested that, if possible, the number of frames for the United States be held at about 100. The actual number turned out to be 101 frames.

Under the aforementioned conditions, it was learned that some European requests to exhibit either had to be refused because the exhibits were not ranked as of sufficiently high calibre for international competition, while others had to have the number of frames requested cut down. This also happened over here. Seven requests for entry in AEROPHILA 1963 were turned down because the collections were not good enough to be entered into international competition, while a few U.S. exhibitors were asked to take a lesser amount of frames. Furthermore, it was agreed last April that the maximum number of frames for any single exhibit would be six. At the last two international air mail shows, some individual exhibitors filled as many as twelve frames.

All of this certainly indicates the current strength of aero-philately. Perhaps other specialties are receiving much more notice and making a bigger "splash." But when it comes to international exhibitions, no philatelic specialty quality-wise can match aero-philately. (H. M. G.)

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Obituary

Fred W. Kessler

Thirty years surely is a long time to have known someone. This was the case with F. W. Kessler, a New York City stamp dealer for many years, and the editor of this magazine.

"The good old days"—were they really as good as the oldtimers make them out? In respect to aero-philately, they were! Thinking back to the years from about 1930 to 1945 in one of the world's great stamp centers, New York City, there were a number of stamp dealers then specializing in air mail stamps. Their offices on Nassau Street or uptown on Fifth Avenue were just like a stamp club. Whenever one visited the late Nic Sanabria, Lou Charlat, Sid Barrett at the Economist Stamp Co. or Fred Kessler, he was sure to meet with other collectors and dealers sharing a common interest.

It was hard to break away. One could endlessly "gossip" stamps. He learned what was going on—the latest news about prices, people and stamps. We look back upon those years as the period of our philatelic education.

A Kessler auction sale never ended after the auctioneer banged his gavel with the last lot being sold. Very few left. The floor bidders, both collectors and dealers, stayed on holding post-mortems over the sale. "Why did you not go higher for that cover? You know when that satchel dealer raises his hand, the lot must be good." Someone else would say; "I can't see why you went so high for that one lot. Every dealer here has that set in stock and he'll sell it to you for less."

In time one learned to gauge the conversation; to know who spoke with authority and was worth listening to, or others who enjoyed sounding off.

Fred Kessler's Fifth Avenue office was an air mail stamp headquarters. All one needed to be welcome was an interest in air mails. You would meet collectors from Cuba, South America, Europe, the Philippines, from nearly every part of the world.

Yes, the good old days in aero-philately are gone. Perhaps the practice of "no work" on Saturdays caused this change. Saturday afternoons, except in July and August, were stamp collecting times. One would meet with a few other collectors for lunch (you worked until 1 p.m. Saturdays) and then take off for calls on the dealers. You viewed lots in a coming auction sale, picked up your new issues or perhaps bought some air mail stamps. But more time was spent gossiping. The magic words were "What's new?" and the conversation began to roll.

Fred Kessler passed away at the age of 59 in May 1963. It was in his office that we met and got to know his charming wife, Alicia. Between her and Nic Sanabria, you went on a South American cruise, visiting their respective native countries, Colombia and Venezuela. It seems as only yesterday that "little Chico" Kessler was born. The young man enters college this fall.

The written word lives. Fred Kessler has left aero-philately his excellent books on Colombia air mail stamps, his Aerogram catalogue and his auction sale catalogues. They will be remembered for as long as air mail stamps are collected. (H. M. G.)

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