

PORTE de MAR STAMPS of MEXICO 1875 to 1880

WHAT WERE THEY: Porte de Mar stamps were used by the Mexican Postal Service from 1875 to 1880. Their purposes were 1) to compensate packet ships for carrying mail to foreign ports, 2) to allow postal patrons to prepay maritime postage fees, and 3) to provide visible evidence that these fees had been paid. Three sets of stamps were produced between 1875 and 1879, and there are two types of stamps in the second set. Only the second set (IIA and IIB) was put into service. The first set was not issued because the Postmaster General did not like the design, and in 1879 Mexico joined the UPU and issued regular stamps for foreign mail, rendering Issue III unnecessary, although some Porte de Mar stamps were still used in 1880.



Issue I: Not Issued
Unlisted



Issue IIA: Small
Numerals (JX9-19)



Issue IIB: Larger
Numerals (JX20-25)



Issue III: Not Issued:
(JX26-31)

WHY WERE THEY NEEDED: The Mexican Postal Service had to rely on foreign ships, chiefly British, French and American packets, to carry mail to foreign countries. In many cases the packet services were not paid for mail carriage, particularly if the ultimate destination was a third country. In January 1875, the British and French packet services announced that their ships would only carry mail destined for their home countries, unless the 'sea postage' was paid in advance by the Mexican Postal Service.

The Porte de Mar system was designed to ensure that the postal patron paid for maritime transport, since Mexican postage stamps only paid for carriage to the port. Initially there were no Porte de Mar stamps - the postal customer simply paid an additional fee - but the public disliked paying these charges without any proof of payment, so Porte de Mar stamps were introduced in mid-1875.

HOW THEY WERE USED: At the time of mailing, Porte de Mar stamps were placed by postal clerks on the backs of letters, in an amount equal to the required overseas postage. Maritime mail was then sent to the Gulf Coast port of Veracruz and put on foreign ships. The total value of the Porte de Mar stamps in each ship's mail packet was calculated and that amount was paid to the captain (or his agent) for carrying the mail. Arrangements were made with both English and French ships, and since the rates were different, the postal patron had to specify which service was to be used, at the time of mailing.

These stamps were not sold to the public. However early stamp albums provided spaces for them, so the resultant philatelic demand resulted in many forgeries which are an integral part of this exhibit.

PLAN OF EXHIBIT

Introduction and Plan: 1-2

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Especially noteworthy or important items are indicated with red boxes and text. A Mexican flag introduces a new topic, and a small open-book icon in the left lower corner indicates significant **original** research.



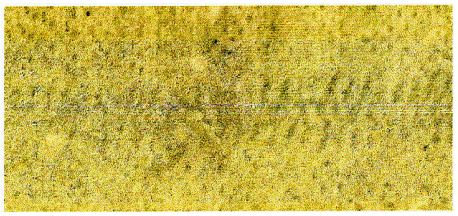
Issue I - 1875:

Lithographed on thin yellow paper in sheets of 49 stamps (7 x 7). Each composite sheet contained multiple copies of all stamps so only one type of sheet was printed. No watermark except for an occasional stitch caused by the joining of the wire mesh belt used in papermaking.





STITCH WATERMARK – Resulting from papermaking process.



To simplify the printing process, a **transfer stone** was used containing two rows of seven stamps as shown below. Each stamp can be distinguished from others of the same denomination by small imperfections. Thus there are four transfer types of the 10 centavo stamp (A-D), two types of the 25 (E-F), 35 (G-H) and 50 centavo (J-K) stamps, and one type of the 60, 75, 85 and 100 centavos stamps (See plating data). The transfer stone was replicated three times on the printing stone and the 7th row was identical with the 1st, 3rd and 5th.

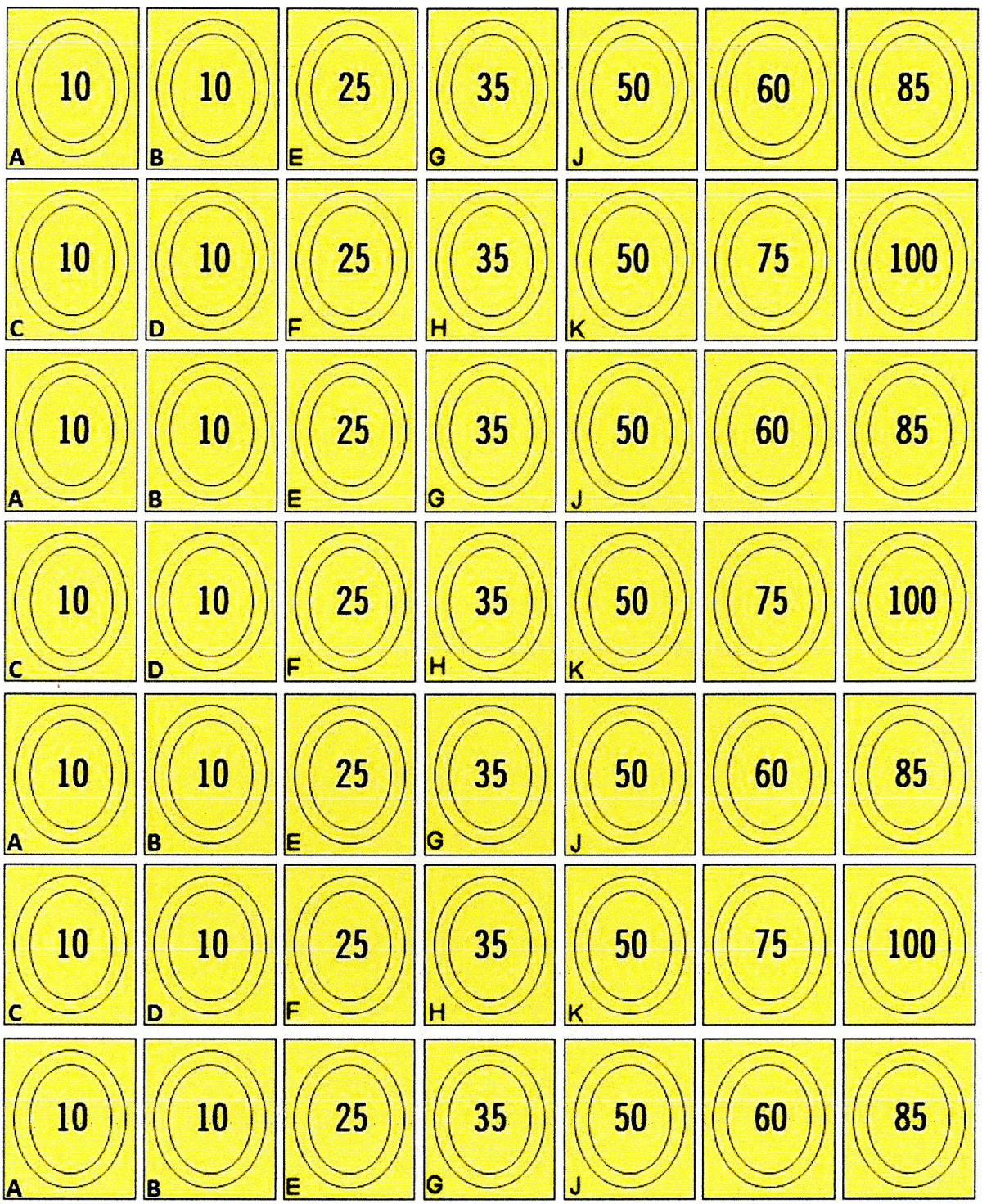
Transfer stones were used for printing all of the Porte de Mar stamps and substantially reduced the time required to prepare a printing stone.

10 A	10 B	25 E	35 G	50 J	60 -	85 -
10 C	10 D	25 F	35 H	50 K	75 -	100 -

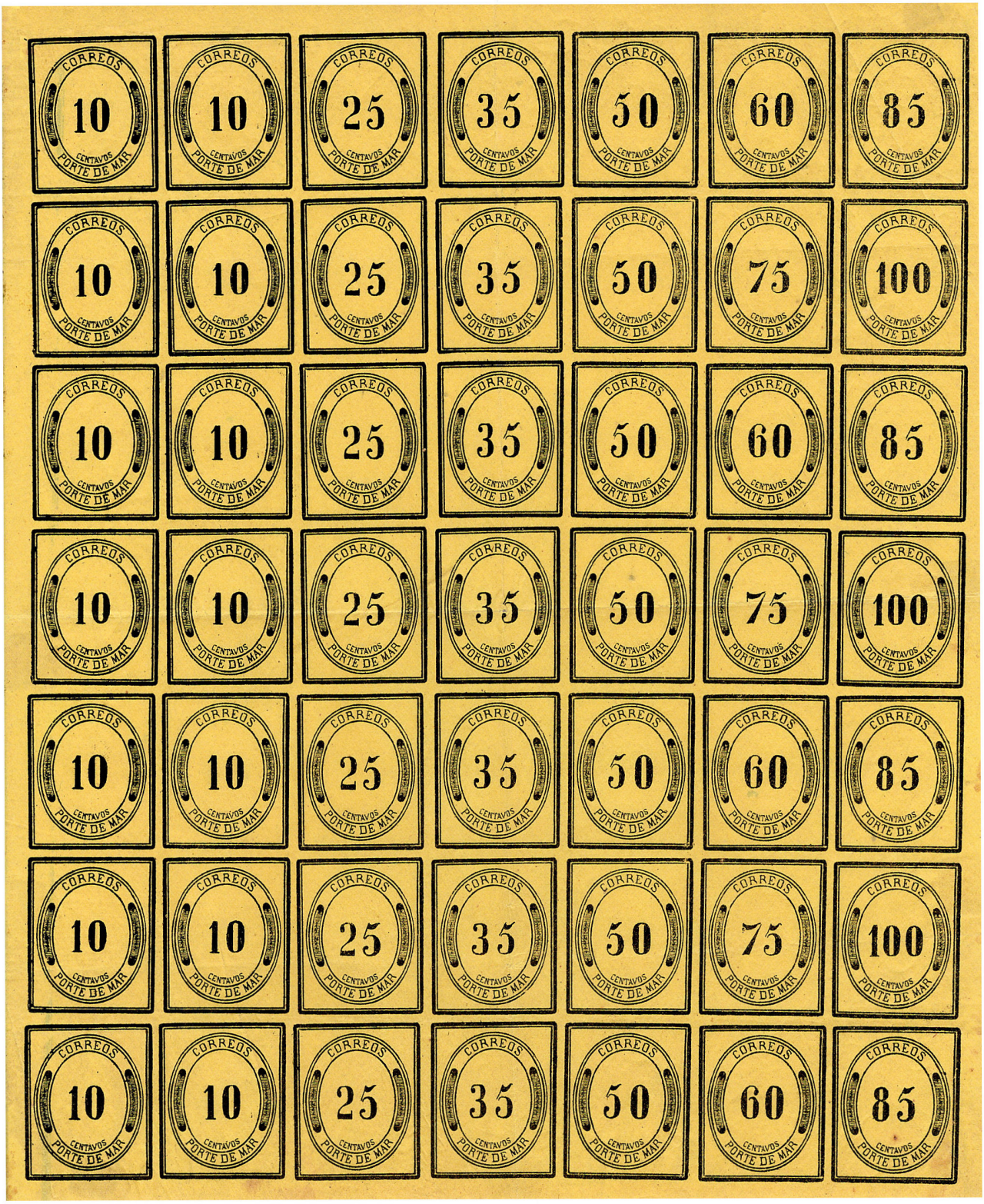
Although only one configuration of composite sheet was printed, two printing stones were used. No complete sheet of the second stone exists, although portions of it can be identified. The same transfer stone was used for both printing stones.

Issue I: Plating Data:

Layout of composite sheet showing denomination of each stamp in center, with **transfer type indicated in lower left corner of each stamp**. The stamps in the two right columns have only one transfer type since only one copy of each was on the transfer stone.



Issue I: Composite Sheet (Stone 1): (Image Slightly Reduced in Size):



Issue I - Transfer Types:

10 CENTAVOS: Four types:



A. Small break in outer oval near upper left corner



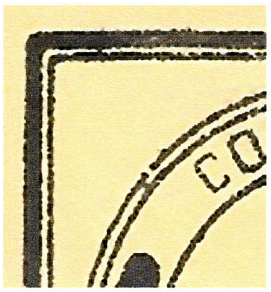
B. Minute dot over left side of 'V' in Centavos



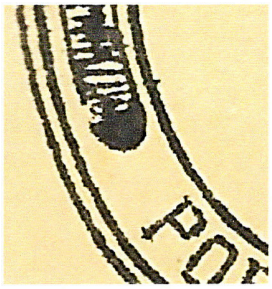
C. Broken frame on lower left side of left 'sausage' ornament



D. Small black dot inside larger colorless dot in left outer frame line











A-B



C-D

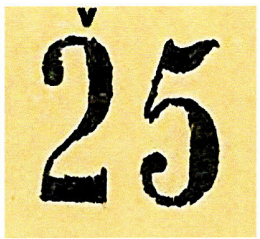
Numerals of types A and B are slightly taller than those of types C and D (7.5 mm vs 7.0 mm).

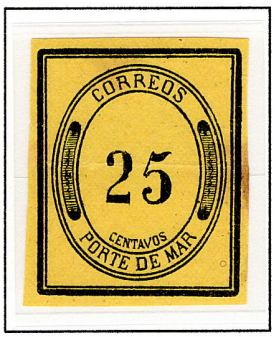
25 CENTAVOS: Two types:

E. Small dot under 'O' of 'Centavos'









F. Break in numeral '2' at top

RESEARCH

Issue I - Transfer Types:

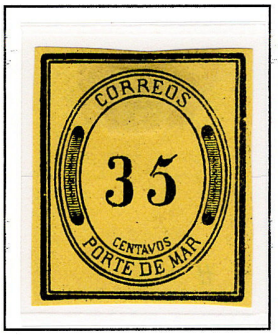
35 CENTAVOS: Two types:

G. Small dot outside inner oval at base of left 'sausage' ornament









H. Outer oval broken below 'A' of 'MAR'

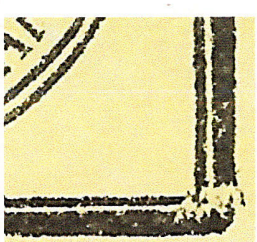
Type G numerals are slightly taller than Type H (7.3 mm vs 6.8 mm)

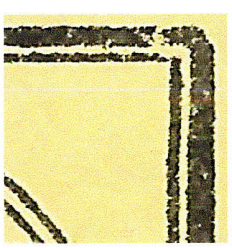


50 CENTAVOS: Two types:

J. Break in inner frame line at lower right corner



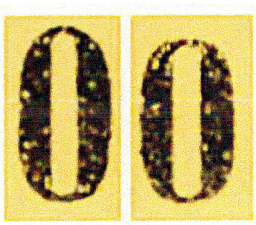






K. Break in outer frame line in upper right corner

Type J numerals are slightly taller than Type K (7.5 mm vs 6.8 mm)



RESEARCH

Issue I: Transfer Types:

There is only one transfer type for the 60, 75, 85 and 100 centavos stamps, since only one example of each stamp was on the transfer stone.



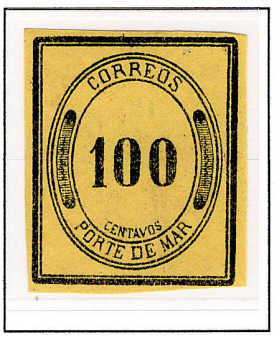






Flyspeck Philately at its Finest: Identification of Individual Plate Positions

Each of the 49 plate positions on stone I can be identified by minute, but consistent, printing variations. As an example, the 100c stamp appears three times on this stone, and each plate position can be identified as follows:



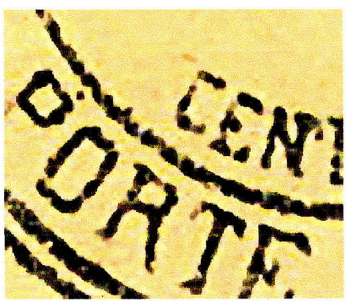
Position 14: Small dot above 'P' of 'PORTE'.

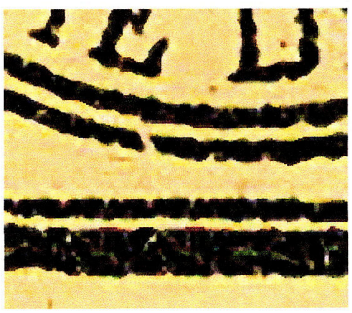


Position 28: Small opening in outer oval below 'E' of 'PORTE.'



Position 42: Small dot below the 1 and first '0' in '100.'

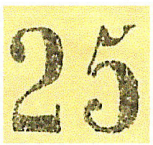






Issue I: Varieties:





Shape of flag on '5' abnormal (Stone II, Position 17)



Indentation in mid-portion of '2' (Stone I, Position 24)

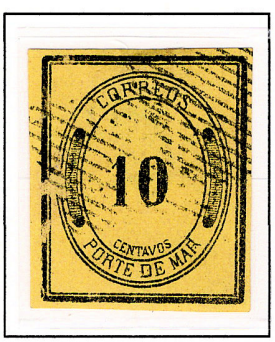


Break in inner oval on right side (Stone II, Position 40)

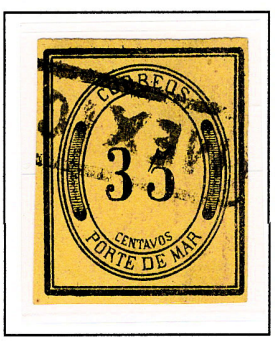
FORGED DISTRICT OVERPRINTS AND CANCELLATIONS ON GENUINE STAMPS:

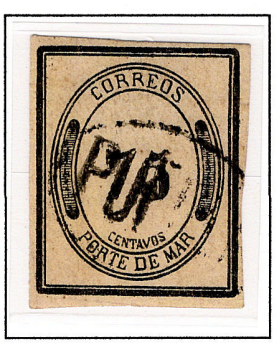
All used examples and stamps with district overprints are fakes.















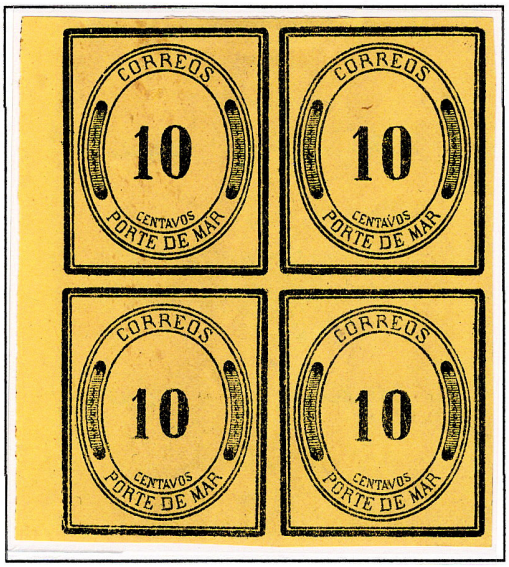
Issue I: Stone 2:

Little is known of this stone. No complete composite sheet is known to the exhibitor, but portions can be identified from plate flaws and previous research:

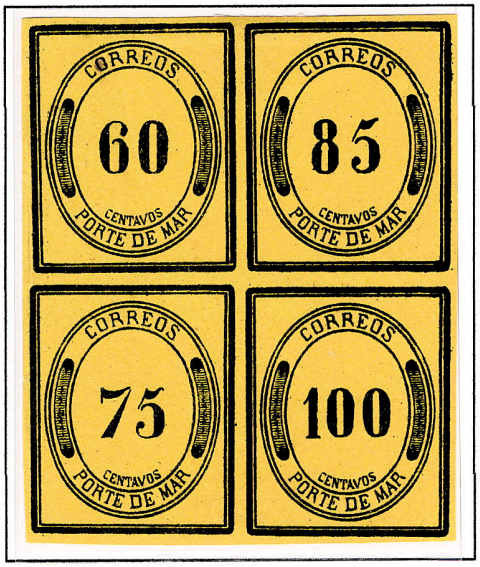
Stone 2: Break in upper right portion of inner oval on stamp in upper right corner (position 40) identifies this block as positions 38-40 / 45-47.





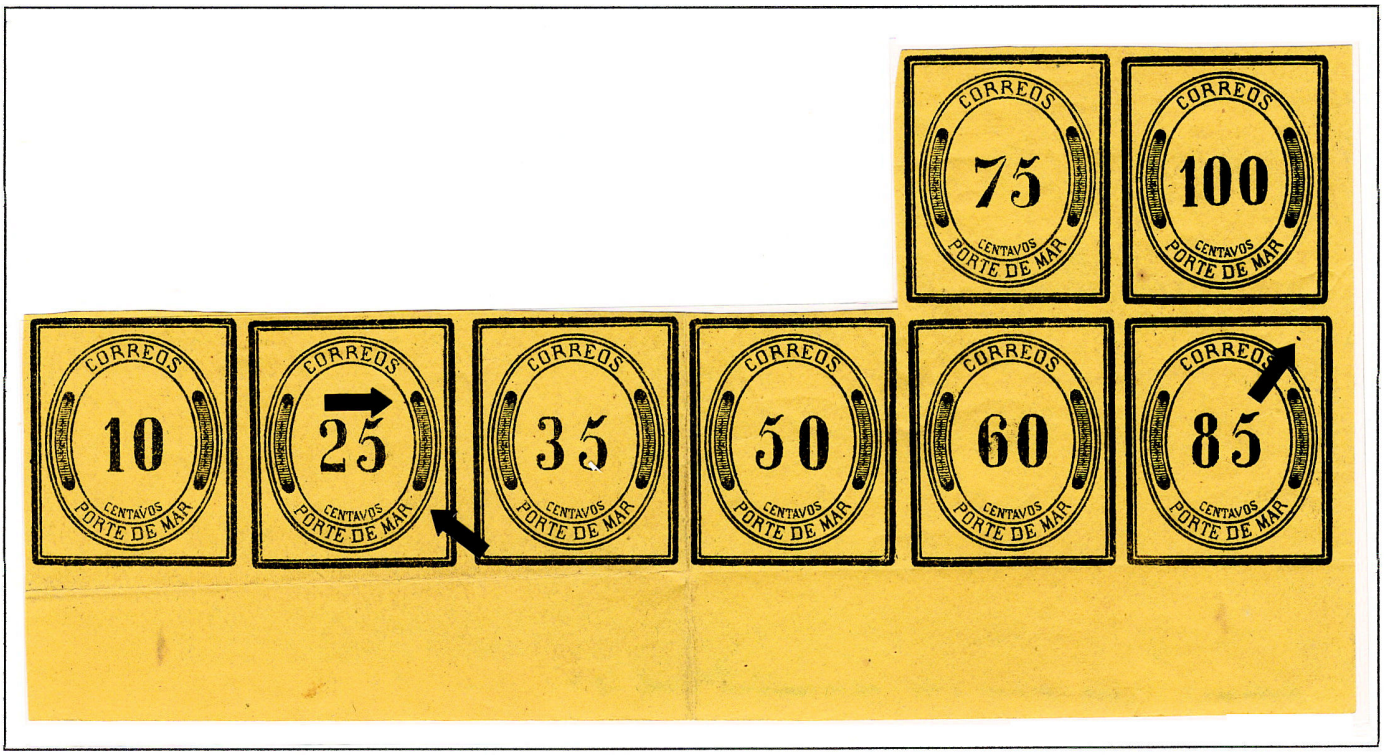


Stone 2: White lines in '0' of '10' on stamp in lower right corner (position 37) identifies this block as positions 29-30 / 36-37.



Stone 2: All plate positions on stone I can be identified, so the absence of these marks identifies this block as being from stone II, but not the exact position on the sheet.

Issue I: Stone 2:



Stone 2: Second stamp from left shows small dot on inner oval, and dot between 'R' of 'MAR' and lower end of 'sausage,' indicating it is position 45. Also stamp in lower right corner has a small dot in its right upper corner, indicating it is position 49. These flaws identify this block as positions 41-42 / 44-49.

Issue IIA and IIB: Printing History:

Both types are similar but numerals are larger in Type IIB, and the word 'CENTAVOS' is longer. All of the IIA stamps were printed from altered dies of the 10 centavo stamp, and show evidence of the 'insertion' of one or both numerals, except the 10c value. No 'insertion box' is seen with the IIB stamps.



IIA - Small Numerals



IIB - Large Numerals

Examples of Type IIA stamps showing insertion boxes:



10c - No Insertion Box



Both Numerals removed - 2 Inserted



1 Replaced with 2



0 Replaced with 2

TIP: In the exhibitor's opinion, the easiest way to differentiate Type IIA and Type IIB stamps is to look at the position of the letter 'c' in 'centavos.' If it is over the 'R' of 'PORTE.' the stamp is Type IIA, if it is over the 'O' of 'PORTE' the stamp is Type IIB.

Issue IIA and IIB: Printing History:

1st Printing: **Composite sheets** containing 10c, 25c, 35c, 50c, 60c, 75c, 85c, and 100c. Three stones were used with different arrangements of values. All stamps were type IIA with insertion boxes (except for the 10c value).

2nd Printing: **Full sheets** of single stamps (2c, 10c, 12c, and 20c). Often multiple stones and states. All stamps were type IIA with insertion boxes (except for the 10c value).

3rd Printing: **Full sheets** of single stamps of Type IIB (5c, 25c, 35c, 50c, 60c, and 100c). No insertion boxes.

VALUE	2c	5c	10c	12c	20c	25c	35c	50c	60c	75c	85c	100c
COMPOSITES			X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
SHEETS (TYPE IIA)	X		X	X	X							
SHEETS (TYPE IIB)		X				X	X	X	X			X

All printings were done in 1875, all imperforate sheets of 56. The 75c and 85c stamps were rarely used and only available from composite sheets. The 25c, 35c, 50c, 60c, and 100c were printed with both large and small numerals.

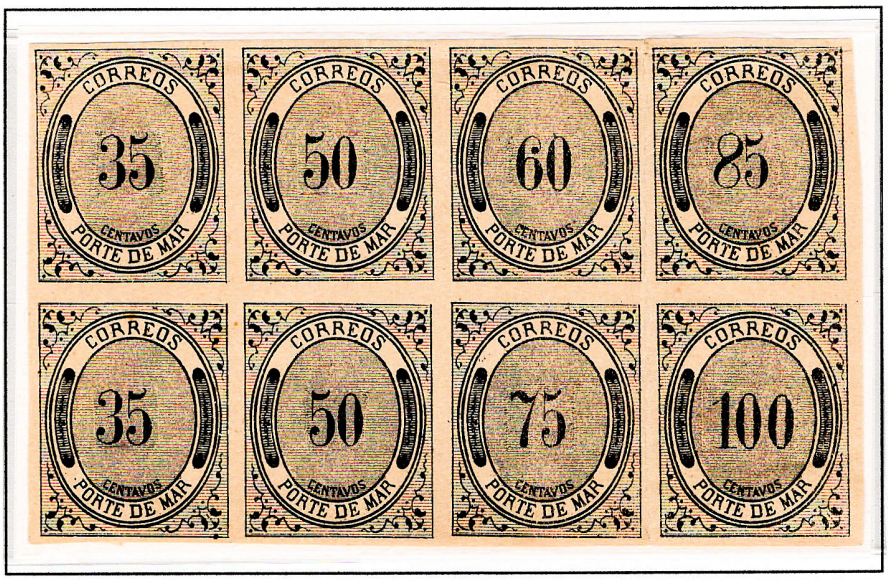
Issue IIA: Composite Sheets:

Very little information is available about the three composite sheets - no complete sheets are known. Each had a different arrangement of values.

COMPOSITE STONE 1:						
10	10	25	35	50	60	85
10	10	25	35	50	75	100
10	10	25	35	50	60	85
10	10	25	35	50	75	100
10	10	25	35	50	60	85
10	10	25	35	50	75	100
10	10	25	35	50	60	85
10	10	25	35	50	75	100

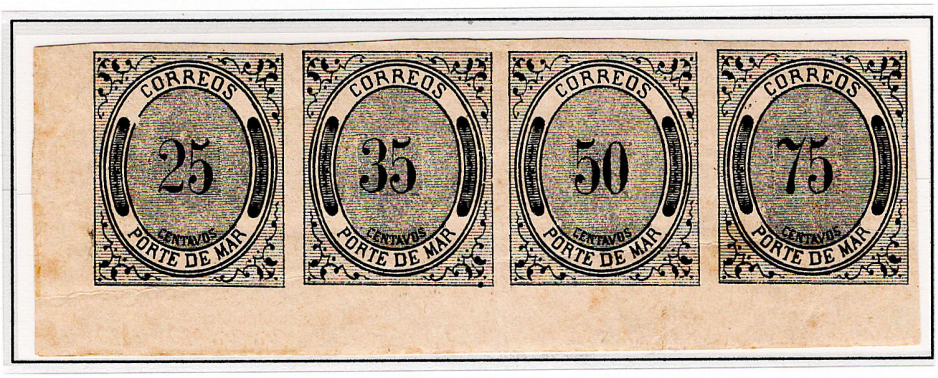
COMPOSITE STONE 2:						
25	35	50	60	60	85	85
25	35	50	75	75	100	100
25	35	50	60	60	85	85
25	35	50	75	75	100	100
25	35	50	60	60	85	85
25	35	50	75	75	100	100
25	35	50	60	60	85	85
25	35	50	75	75	100	100

COMPOSITE STONE 3:						
25	35	50	60	60	85	85
25	35	50	75	75	100	100
25	35	50	60	60	85	85
25	35	50	75	75	85	100
25	35	50	60	60	85	85
25	35	50	75	75	85	100
25	35	50	60	60	85	85
25	35	50	75	75	85	100



Since this block includes the sequence 35-50-60-85, it can only have come from composite sheet 1, although its exact position on the sheet cannot be determined.

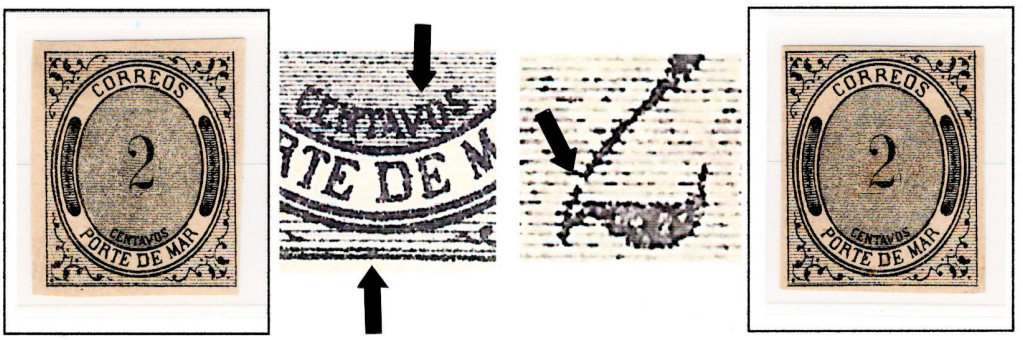
This block can only have come from the bottom left corner of composite sheet 2 or 3.



Issue IIA: 2 Centavos: Full Sheet Only:

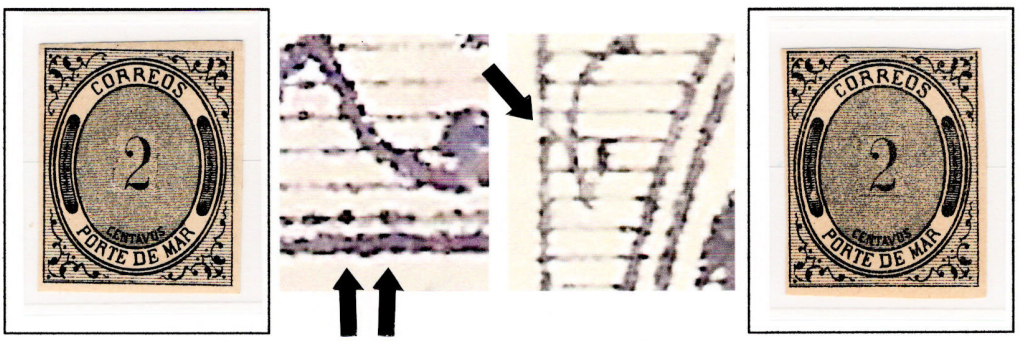
Seven Transfer Types:

1. Dot in center of bottom line. Dot between 'V' and 'O' of 'CENTAVOS'



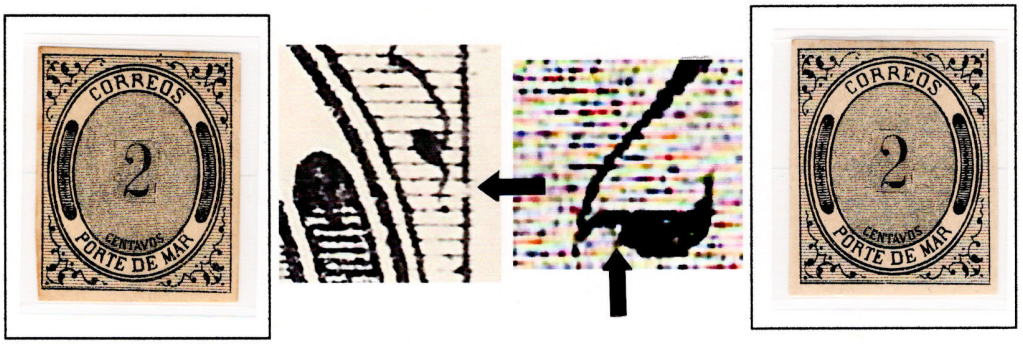
2. Minute break in downstroke of '2'

3. Two dots on bottom line under left ornament

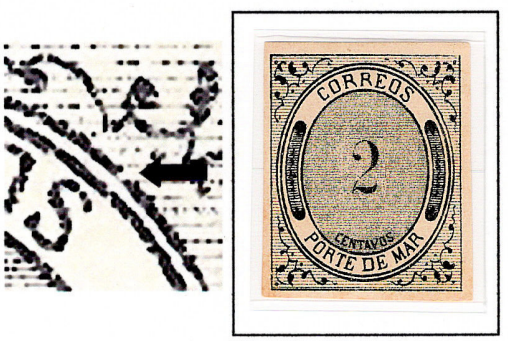


4. Minute break in left vertical frame line. Break in horizontal lines in lower portion of left sausage ornament

5. Break in upper portion of right frame line



6. White speck on foot of '2'



7. Minute break in upper outer right oval line

Issue IIA: 2 Centavos: Varieties:



Broken 'O' in 'PORTE' (Position 11)



'Leaf' in left lower 'sausage' ornament (Position 53)



Background lines in left lower oval redrawn (Position 55)



White spot in left 'sausage' ornament (Position 48)



Scratches across lower portion of '2' (Position 44; Stone 1, State 2 only).



White spot above 'O' of 'CENTAVOS' with background lines redrawn (Position 35)



'COLECCIONES'
Rare Overprint – may indicate proof copy intended for Postal Service archives.

RESEARCH

Issue IIA: Full Sheets of 2 Centavo Stamp:

The 2 centavo stamp was only printed in full sheets – it was not included in the composite sheets.

The lithographic stones were prepared from the 10 centavos value. The figure '10' was removed and '2' inserted, creating the characteristic 'insertion box.'

A transfer stone was used, with one horizontal row of 7 stamps (with 7 transfer types) and used 8 times on the printing stone to produce each sheet of 56 stamps.

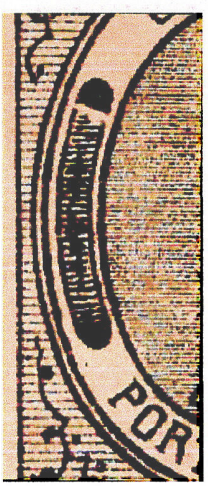
There were 2 stones used to print this stamp and Stone 1 exists in 2 states. Since the same transfer stone was utilized, all three sheet varieties show the same 7 transfer types.

Laurence Pawley identified six minor points of difference which can be used to differentiate Stone 1 from Stone 2.

The two states of Stone 1 can be differentiated by the presence (State 1) or absence (State 2) of a white spot in the left sausage ornament at position 48 (as shown below).

Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5	Type 6	Type 7
	same					
	same					
	same					
	same					
	same					
	same					
	same					

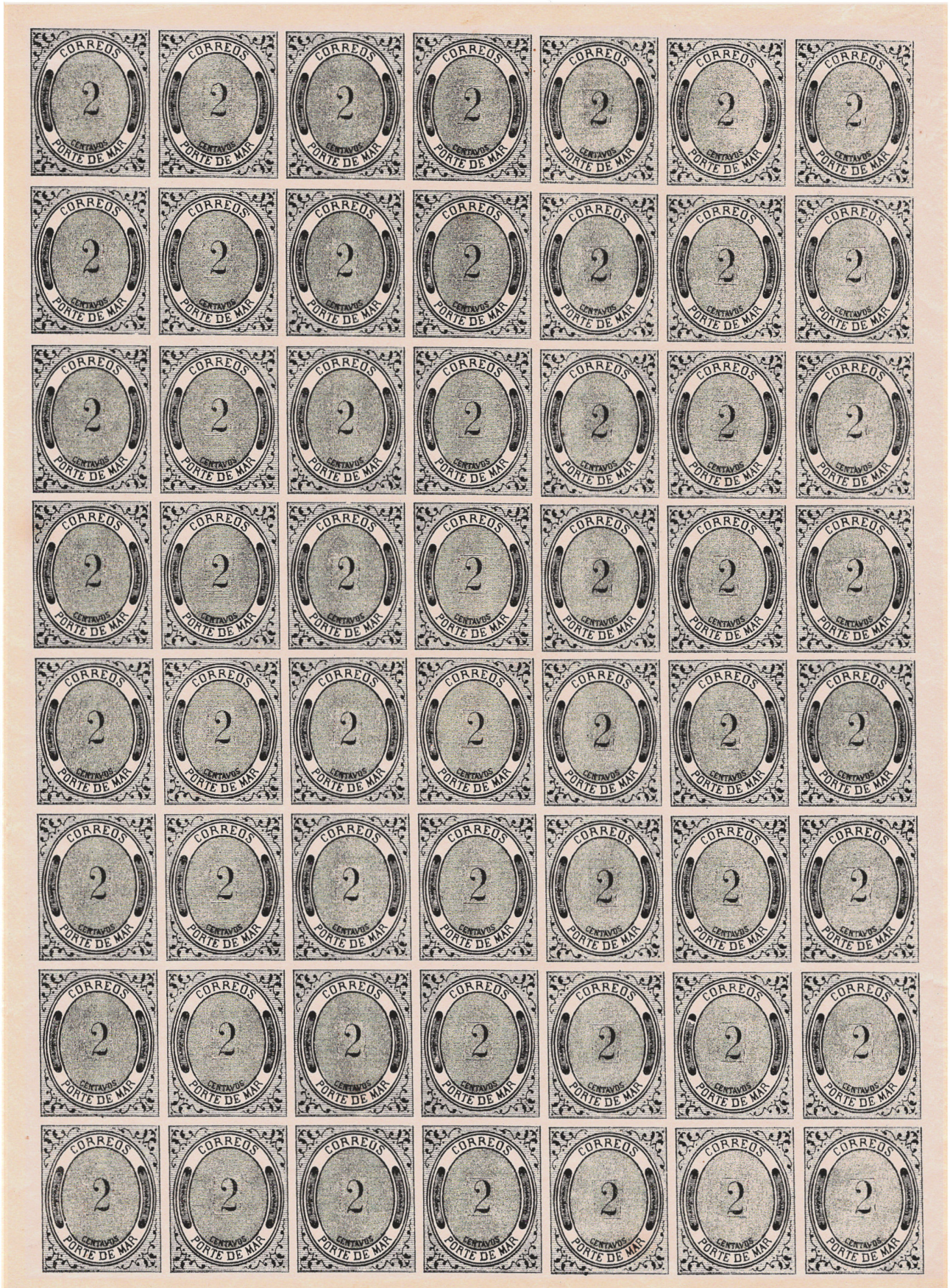
Stone 1: Defect at top of left 'sausage' ornament in position 48 can be used to identify state 1 (present) and state 2 (absent)



FULL SHEETS OF ALL THREE SHEET VARIETIES OF THE 2c STAMP ARE SHOWN ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES:

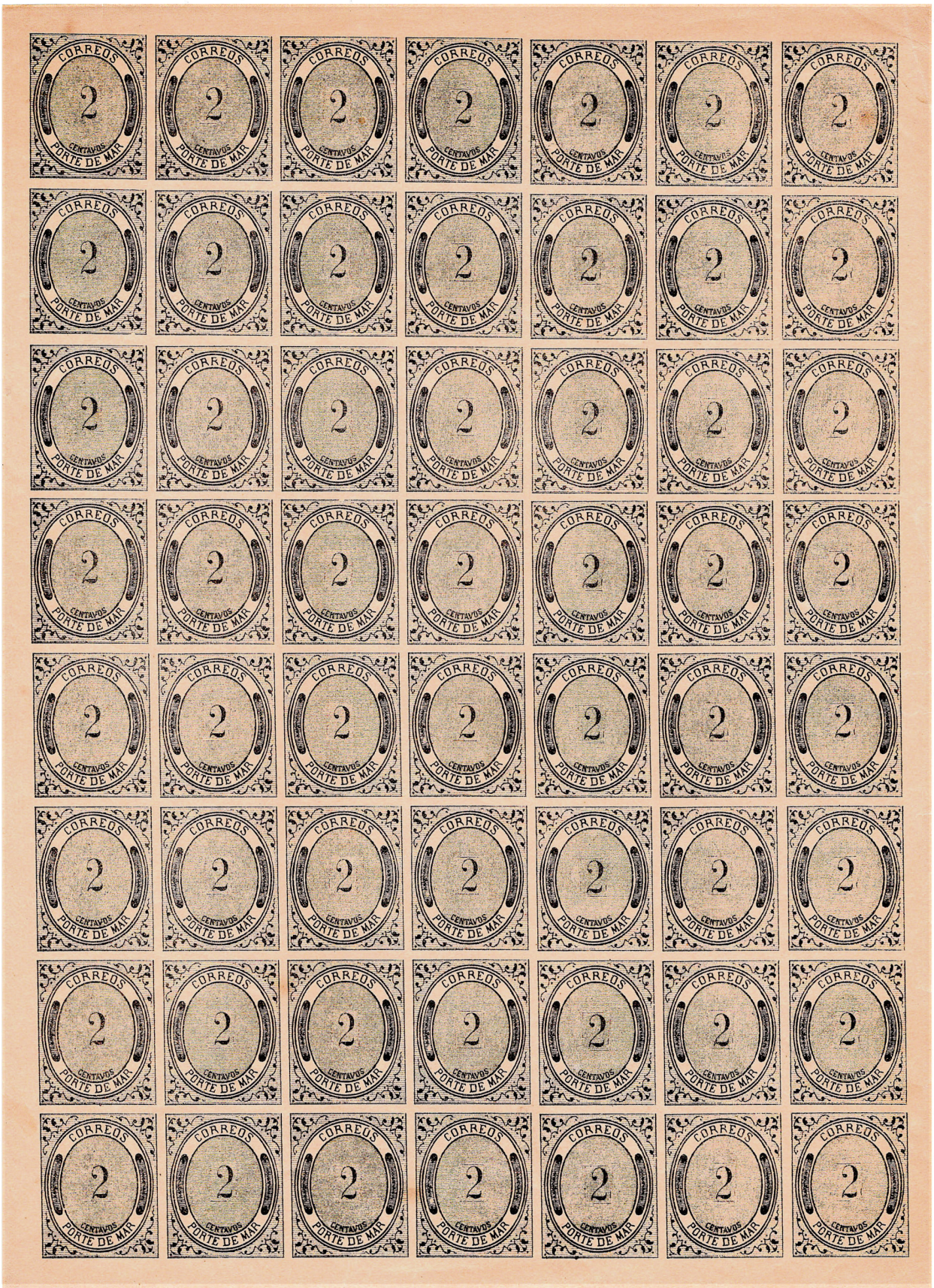
Issue IIA: Full Sheet of 2 Centavo Stamp: STONE 1, STATE 1:

Image slightly reduced in size



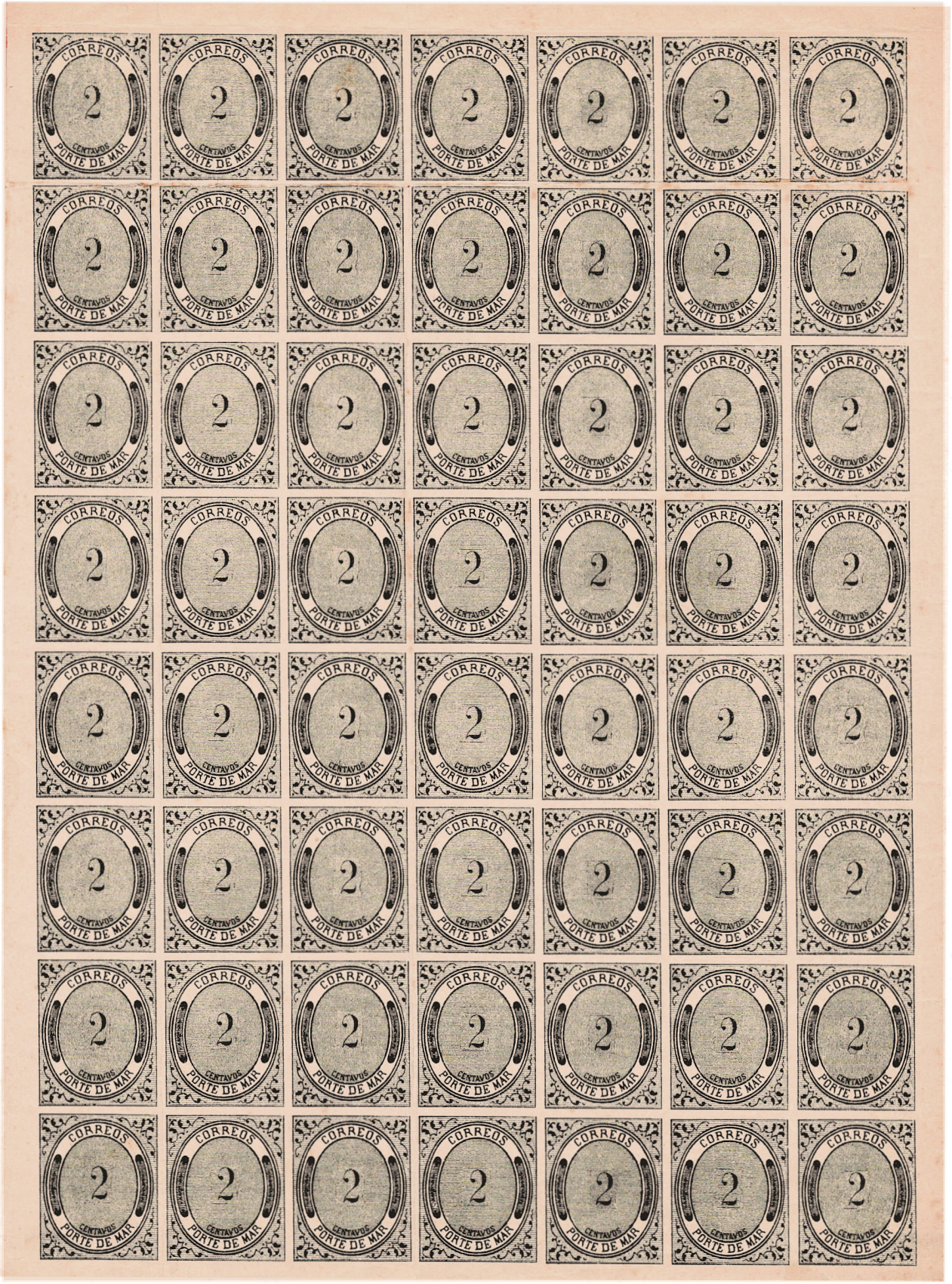
Issue IIA: Full Sheet of 2 Centavo Stamp: STONE 1, STATE 2:

Image slightly reduced in size



Issue IIA: Full Sheet of 2 Centavo Stamp: STONE 2:

Image slightly reduced in size



Issue IIA: 25c Provisional (JX9a) on 2c Stamp (Stone 1, State 2):

Image slightly reduced in size



Issue IIA: 25 Centavos Provisional (JX9a):

Each composite stone contained eight 25c stamps, however this denomination was used frequently (mostly on packages) and a shortage developed, so sheets of the 2c stamps were overprinted with the numeral '5.'

Complete sheets of this overprint are shown on either side of this page. The sheet on the left is ex-Vannotti, expertized by Schimmer, and pictured in his book Porte de Mar. It is from printing Stone 1, State 2.

For many years, it was felt that this sheet was unique, however a second sheet has turned up recently, and is shown on the right. The pattern of overprints is different, and the basic sheet is also different. It is Stone 2. This suggests that there were multiple printings.

This stamp has been referred to as the **'VERACRUZ PROVISIONAL'** because most copies bear that hand-stamped district overprint. However stamps are known without it, so the provisional stamps were probably available in multiple areas. Examples without the Veracruz overprint are shown here:



The random insertion of the numeral '5' resulted in every plate position being different, although in some cases the differences are not evident to the naked eye.



Myth Debunked: For years stamps such this one, with the numeral '2' to the left of center, have been mis-identified as 5c stamps with the numeral 2 added as an overprint. Close inspection reveals that the entire '25' is contained in a single insertion box and in addition, **there were no 5c stamps printed with small numerals** so the overprinted stamp is an impossibility. Yet even today, these stamps are offered for sale.

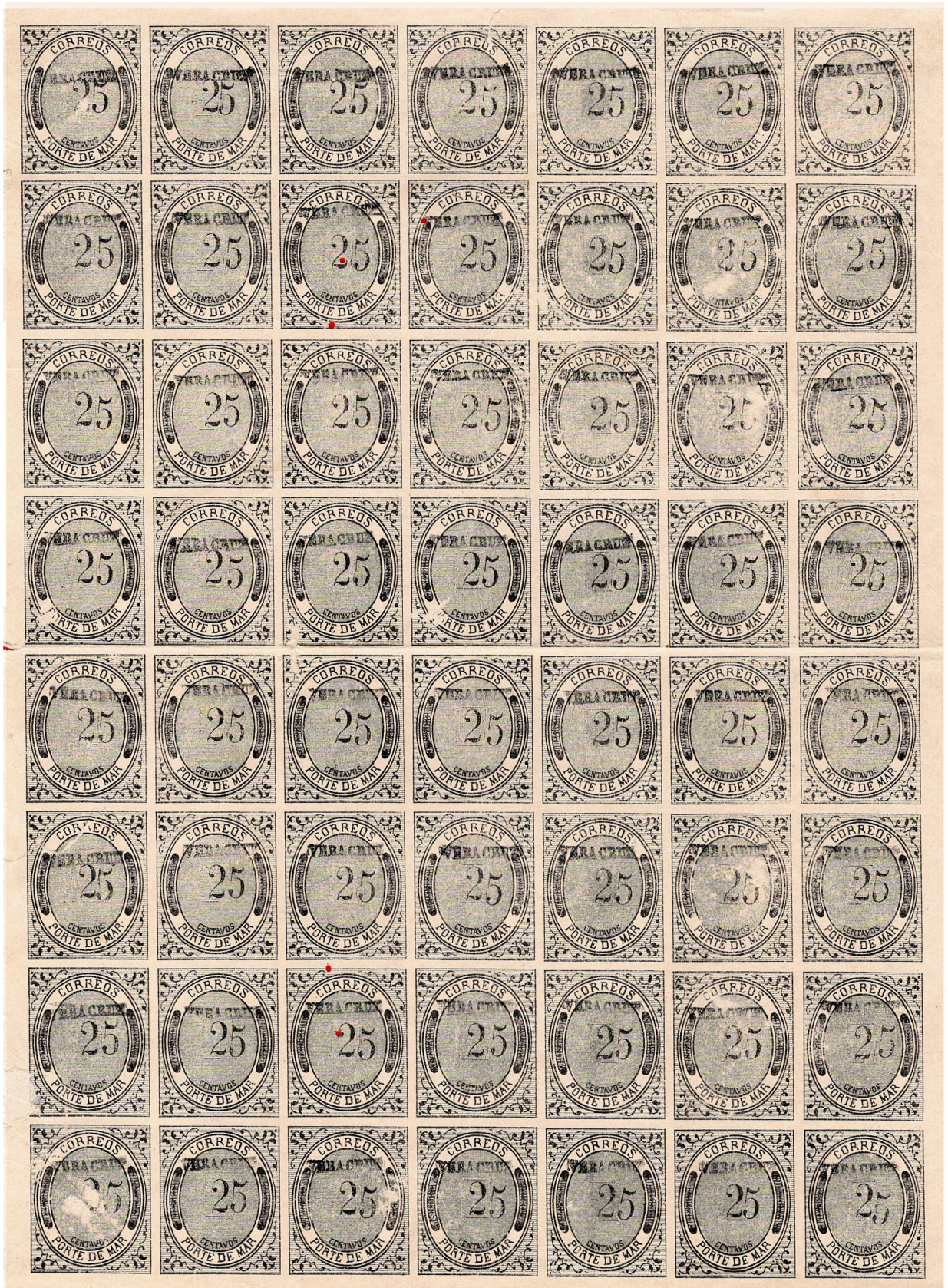
Some catalogs also list a 35c stamp produced in a similar manner, by adding the numeral '3' as an overprint. For similar reasons, this stamp is an impossibility.



RESEARCH

Issue IIA: 25c Provisional (JX9a) on 2c Stamp (Stone 2):

Image slightly reduced in size

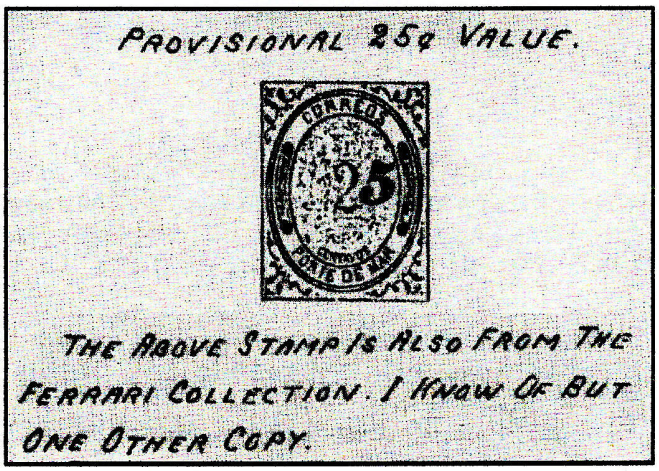


Issue IIA: 25 Centavos Provisional: Rare Variety:



This (repaired) ugly duckling is a rare stamp – only two or three copies are known. A small number of the two centavo stamps (possibly only one sheet) may have been initially overprinted with the 'short and thick' numeral five, to make up for the lack of available 25c stamps. Perhaps they were deemed unacceptable, and the 'taller and thinner' numeral was used for subsequent printings. This is a somewhat speculative explanation since very little is known about this variety.

This stamp is discussed in the Schimmer book (Porte de Mar). He noted that at least one copy had been in the Ferrari collection and suggested that it deserved a separate catalog listing as JX9b. An illustration from his text (page 56) is shown below:

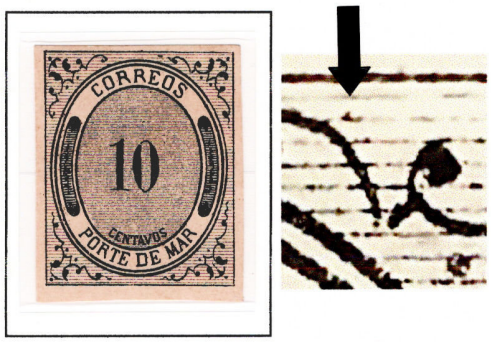


Issue IIA: 10 Centavos:

The most commonly used Porte de Mar stamp. This is the only Type IIA stamp without an 'insertion box.' Printed in composite stone 1, as well as full sheets. Four stones were used. Since a four-stamp transfer stone was used, there are only four transfer types, but with many sub-types:

Transfer Types:

1. Small dot on second line in RU corner (3 subtypes)



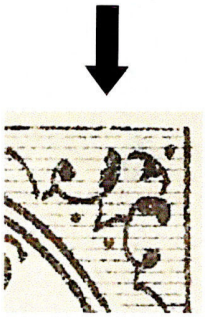


1A - Additional dot below L sausage ornament

1B - Additional dot lateral to R sausage ornament

1AB Characteristics of both 1A and 1B

Issue IIA: 10 Centavos: Transfer Types:





2. Minute break in R upper frame line



2A . Small dot on R frame line





3. Double leaf in upper left corner

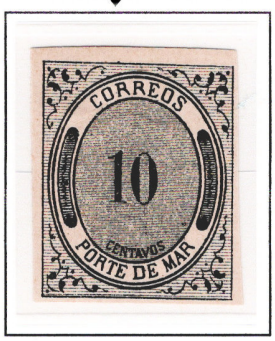


3A. Break in outer oval



3B. White flaw in R sausage ornament





4. Dot on upper frame line above first 'R' of 'CORREOS'



4A. Dot above second 'R' of 'CORREOS'

Issue IIA: 10 Centavos: Varieties:

Part of design in UR corner shifted 45 degrees (position 56, stone I)

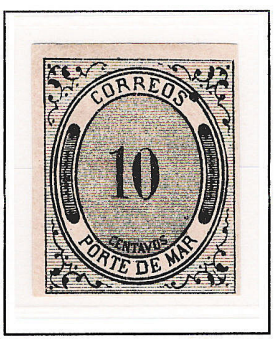




White dot on '1' (position 47, stone IV)

Two streaks on left side (position 26, Stone I)





Large black dot next to 'S' of 'CORREOS.' (position 41, stone II)

Plate Damage in left upper corner (position 44, Stone 1)





White dot on '1' (position 18, Stone 4)

RESEARCH

Issue IIA: 10 Centavos: Plating Data:

There were four stones used to print full sheets of this denomination. Laborious work over a period of more than 100 years by Regelsperger, Pawley, Cash, Schimmer, and others, have plated all four stones of the 10 centavo stamp. A four-stamp transfer stone was used (types 1-4) and repeated 12 times on each sheet with vertical pairs in the remaining column. Subtypes occupied many different positions on these sheets. By using transfer types and sub-types the plate positions of single stamps and multiples can often be determined.

	STONE 1:					
1	2	1	2	1	1	2
3	4	3	4	3	3	4
1	2A	1	2A	1	1	2A
3A	4B	3B	4	3B	3	4B
1	2A	1	2	1	1	2
3A	4	3	4	3	3A	4
1B	2A	1	2A	1	1B	2
3	4	3	4	3	3	4

	STONE 2:					
1A	2	1A	2	1A	2	2
3	4	3	4	3	4	4
1A	2	1A	2	1A	2A	2A
3	4	3B	4	3	4B	4B
1A	2A	1A	2A	1A	2A	2A
3A	4	3A	4	3A	4A	4
1AB	2A	1AB	2A	1AB	2A	2A
3	4	3	4	3	4	4

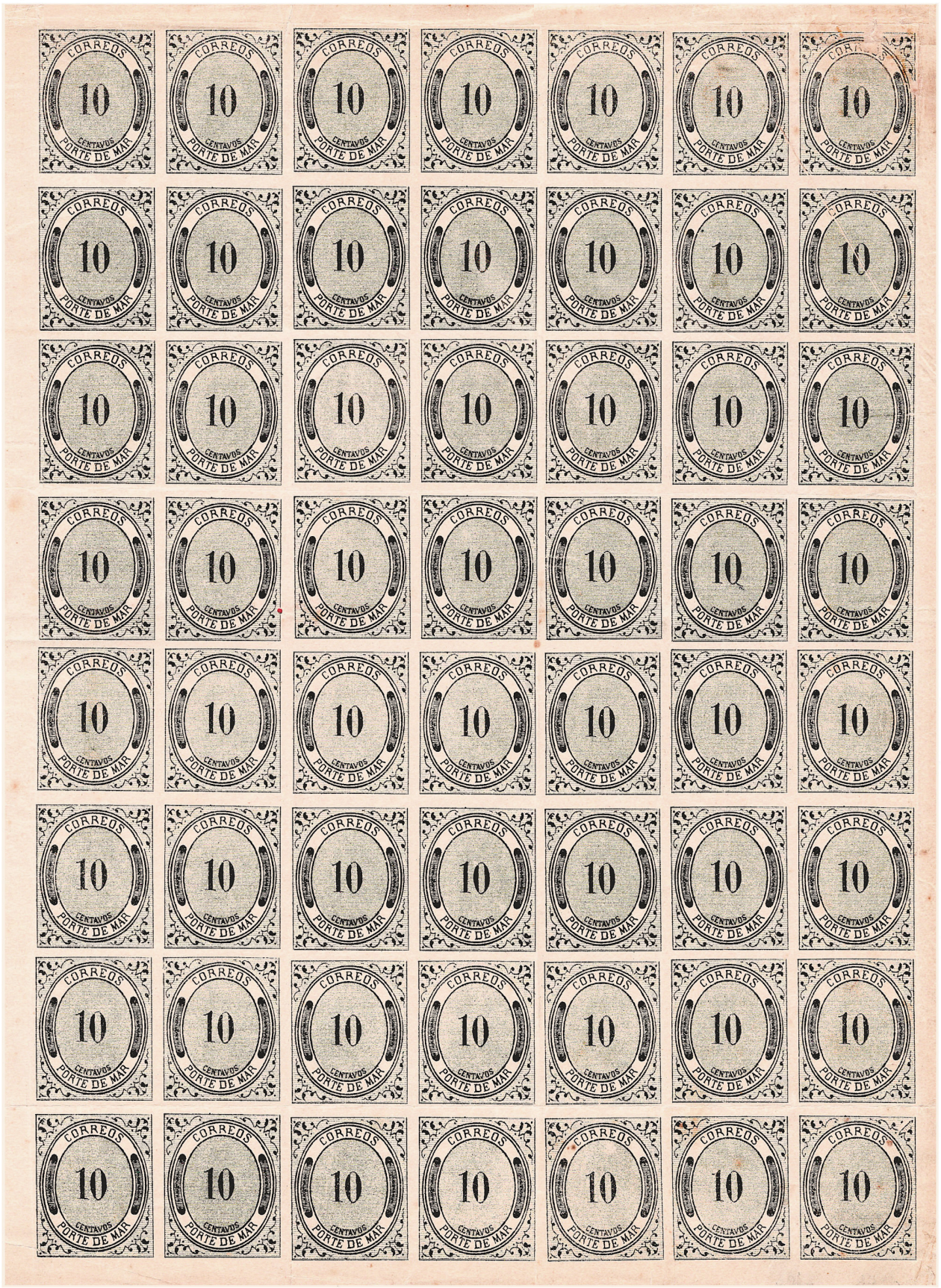
	STONE 3:					
1A	1A	2	1A	2	1A	2
3	3	4	3	4	3	4
1A	1A	2	1A	2	1A	2
3	3	4	3	4	3	4
1A	1A	2A	1A	2A	1A	2A
3	3	4	3	4	3	4
1A	1A	2A	1A	2A	1A	2
3	3	4	3	4	3	4

	STONE 4:					
1A	2A	1A	2	1AB	2A	1A
3	4	3	4	3	4	3
1A	2A	1A	2A	1A	2A	1A
3	4B	3	4B	3	4B	3
1A	2A	1A	2A	1A	2A	1A
3A	4	3A	4	3A	4	3A
1AB	2A	1AB	2A	1AB	2A	1AB
3	4	3	4	3	4	3

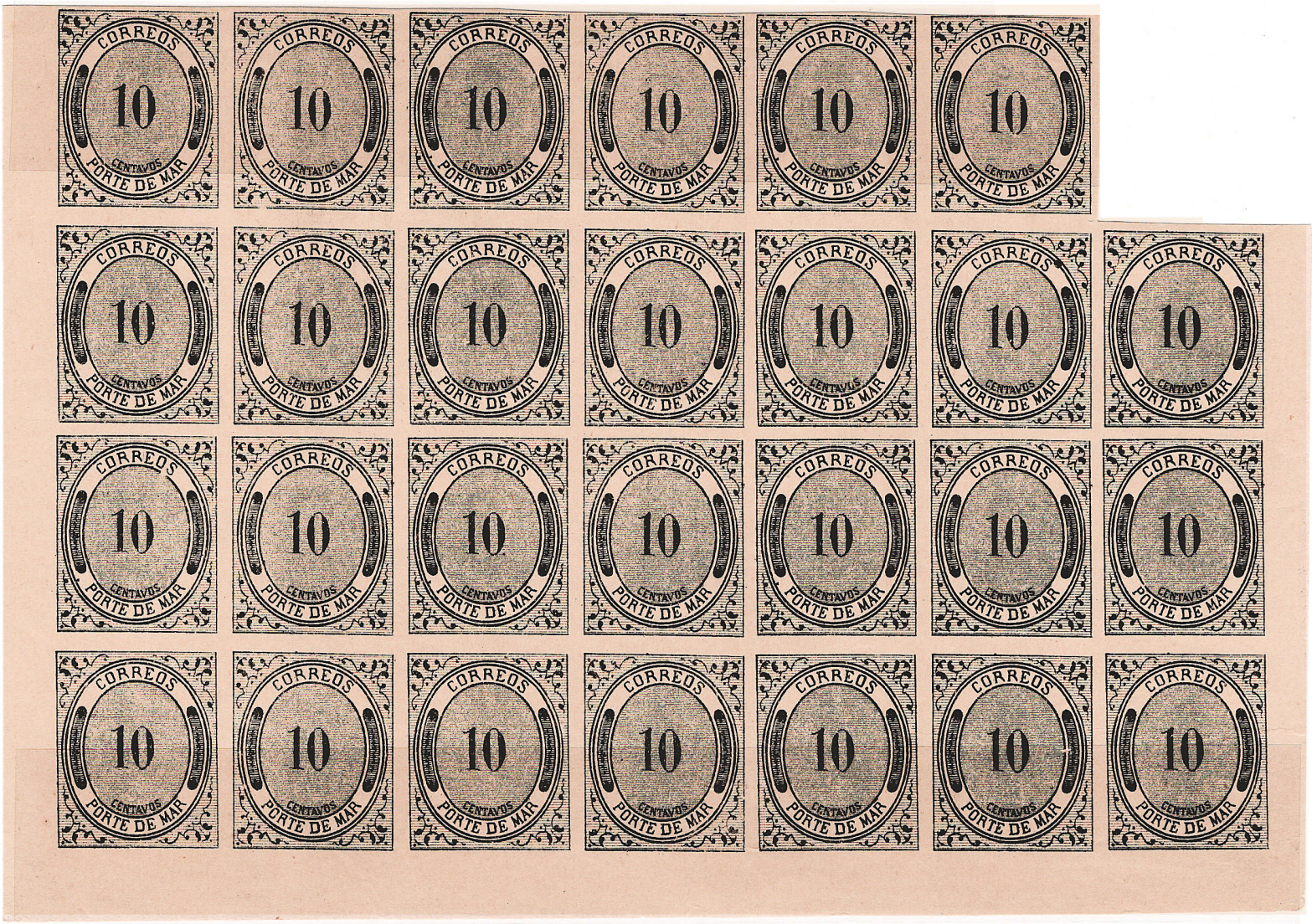
The full sheet shown on the next page is Stone 1. Subsequent pages show blocks from Stones 2, 3 and 4. No full sheets from Stones 2 and 3 have survived.

Issue IIA: Full Sheet of 10c Stamp (Stone 1):

Image slightly reduced in size



Issue IIA: 10 Centavos: Stone 2:



SHEET POSITION:								TRANSFER TYPES:							
29	30	31	32	33	34			1A	2A	1A	2A	1A	2A		
36	37	38	39	40	41	42		3A	4	3A	4	3A	4A	4	
43	44	45	46	47	48	49		1AB	2A	1AB	2A	1AB	2A	2A	
50	51	52	53	54	55	56		3	4	3	4	3	4	4	

Issue IIA: 10 Centavos: Stone 2:

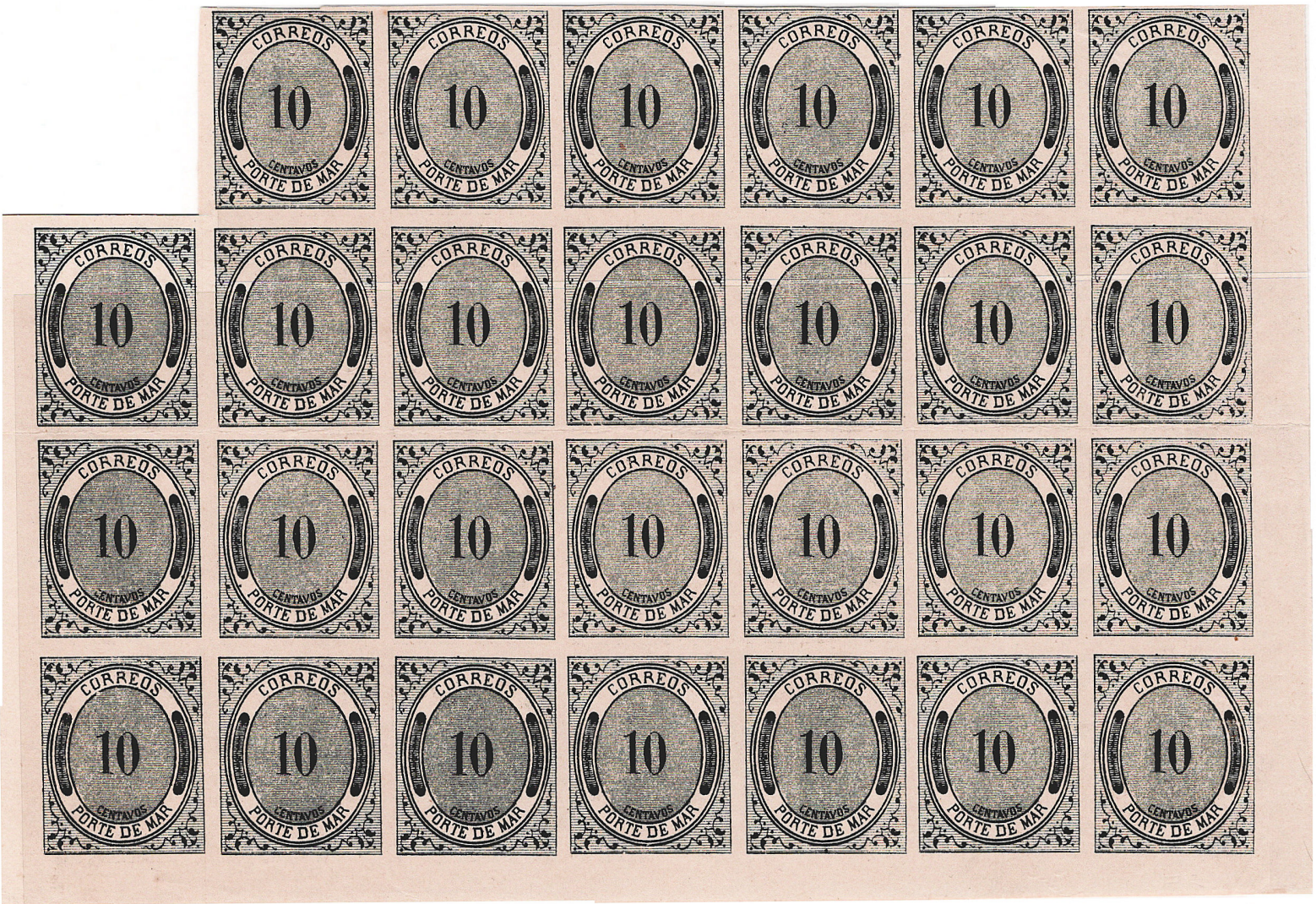


This block contains stamps of types 4 (UL and UR), 2A (LL) and 2A (LR). Comparison with plating data reveals that it could only have come from positions 13-14 / 20-21 on stone 2.

SHEET POSITION:		
19	20	21
26	27	28
33	34	35
TRANSFER TYPES:		
1A	2A	1A
3	4A	4A
1A	2A	2A



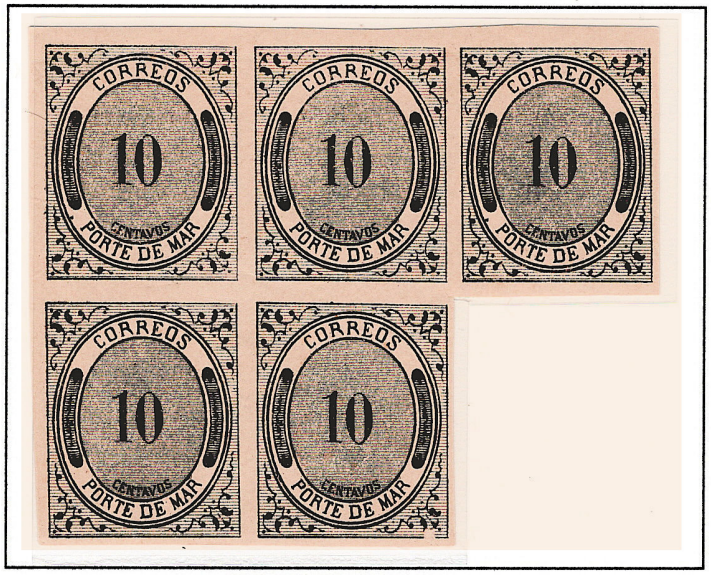
Issue IIA: 10 Centavos: Stone 3:



SHEET POSITION:						
	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48	49
50	51	52	53	54	55	56

TRANSFER TYPES:						
	1A	2A	1A	2A	1A	2A
3	3	4	3	4	3	4
1A	1A	2A	1A	2A	1A	2
3	3	4	3	4	3	4

Issue IIA: 10 Centavos: Stone 4:





SHEET POSITION:		
1	2	3
8	9	

TRANSFER TYPE:		
1A	2A	1A
3	4	

SHEET POSITION:	
45	46
52	53

TRANSFER TYPE:	
1AB	2A
3	4

SHEET POSITION:						
43	44	45	46	47	48	49
50	51	52	53	54	55	56

TRANSFER TYPES:						
1AB	2A	1AB	2A	1AB	2A	1AB
3	4	3	4	3	4	3



Note 'white dot on 1' variety at position 47.

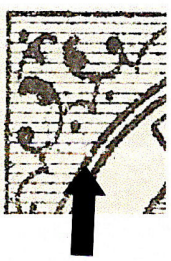
Issue IIA: 12 Centavos: Transfer Types:

A seven stamp transfer stone was used eight times, to produce sheets of 56 stamps. All seven transfer types are shown here:

1. Curved line does not touch left leaf in LL corner









2. Minute break in outer oval in LU corner

3. Dot beneath leaf in LU corner









4. Break in left upper frame line

5. Break in curved line of 'D' in 'DE' and break in frame line





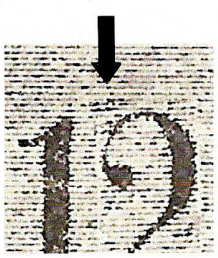




6. Small dot under '12'

7. Curved retouch lines above numeral '2'





Issue IIA: 12 Centavos: Varieties:

Diagonal dash in right lower corner. (Position 7)





Retouch in left lower portion of inner oval. (Position 32 - Second state of printing stone only)





Major retouch below and to the right of numeral '2' (Position 35)



Diagonal scratch across oval (Position 1)

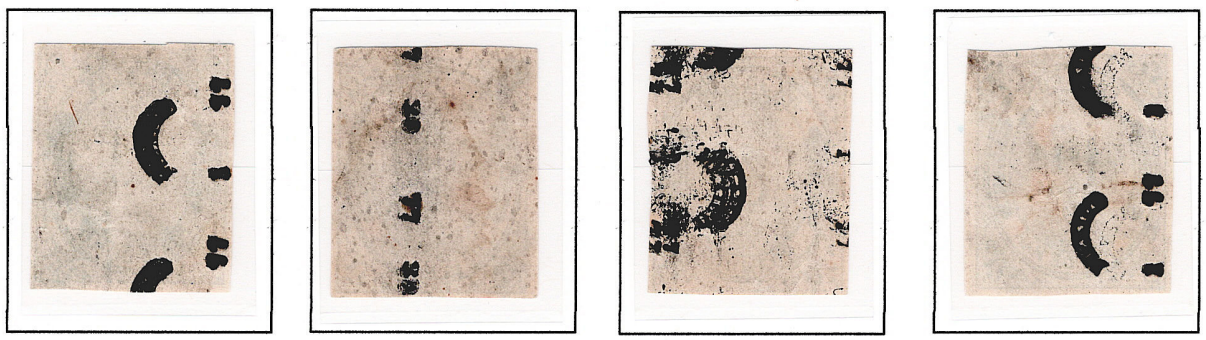


White spot in left 'sausage ornament' (Position 56 - Second state of printing stone only)



'COLECCIONES'
Rare overprint – possible proof copy for postal archives.

Trial printings on reverse of 12c stamps



RESEARCH

Issue IIA: 12 Centavos: One Stone - Two States:

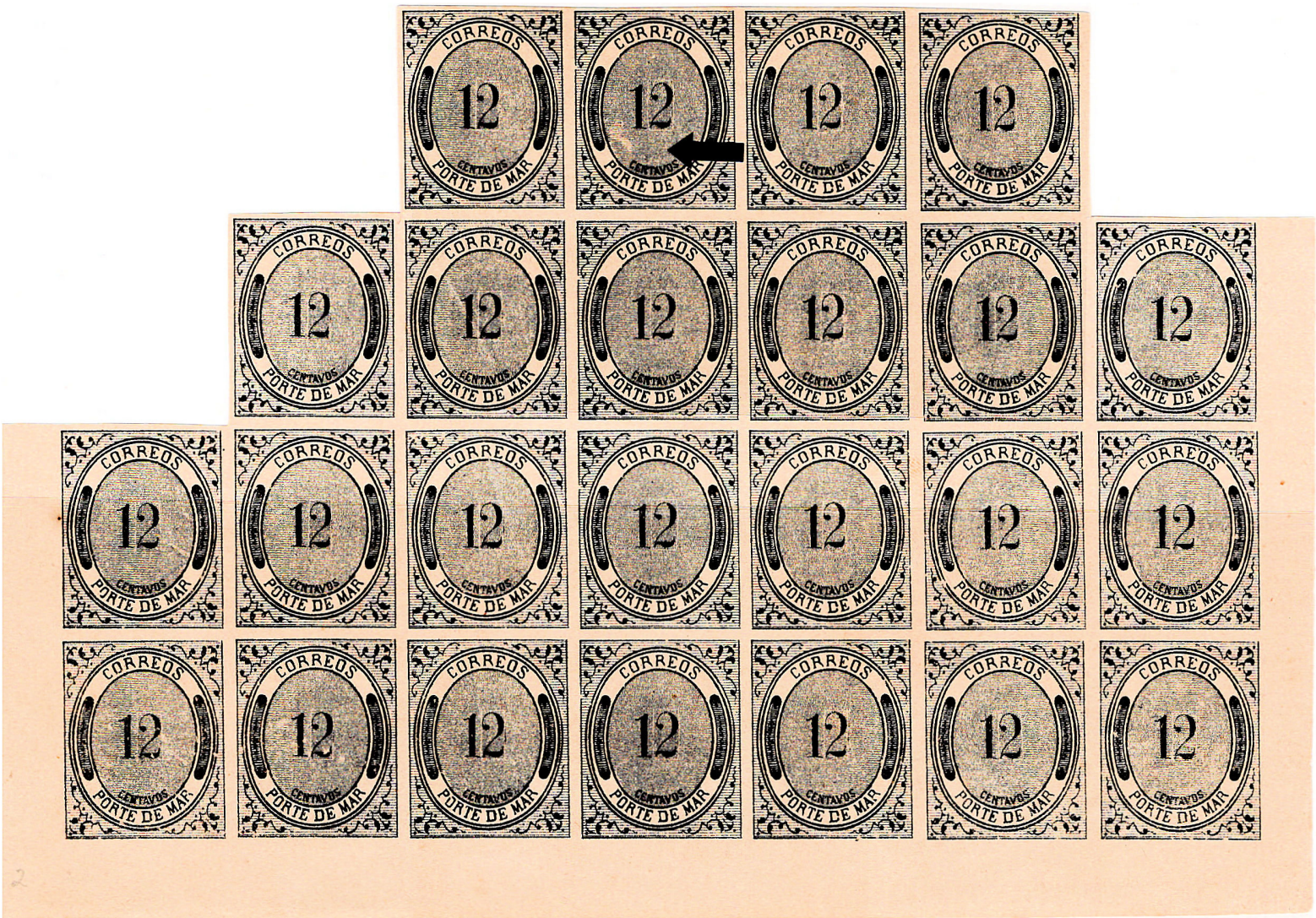
Although only one printing stone was used, there were two states. Regelsperger documented an extensive retouch at position 32. Its presence indicates a sheet or block is from the second state.

Position 32 from **FIRST** state of stone. No retouch. (scan)





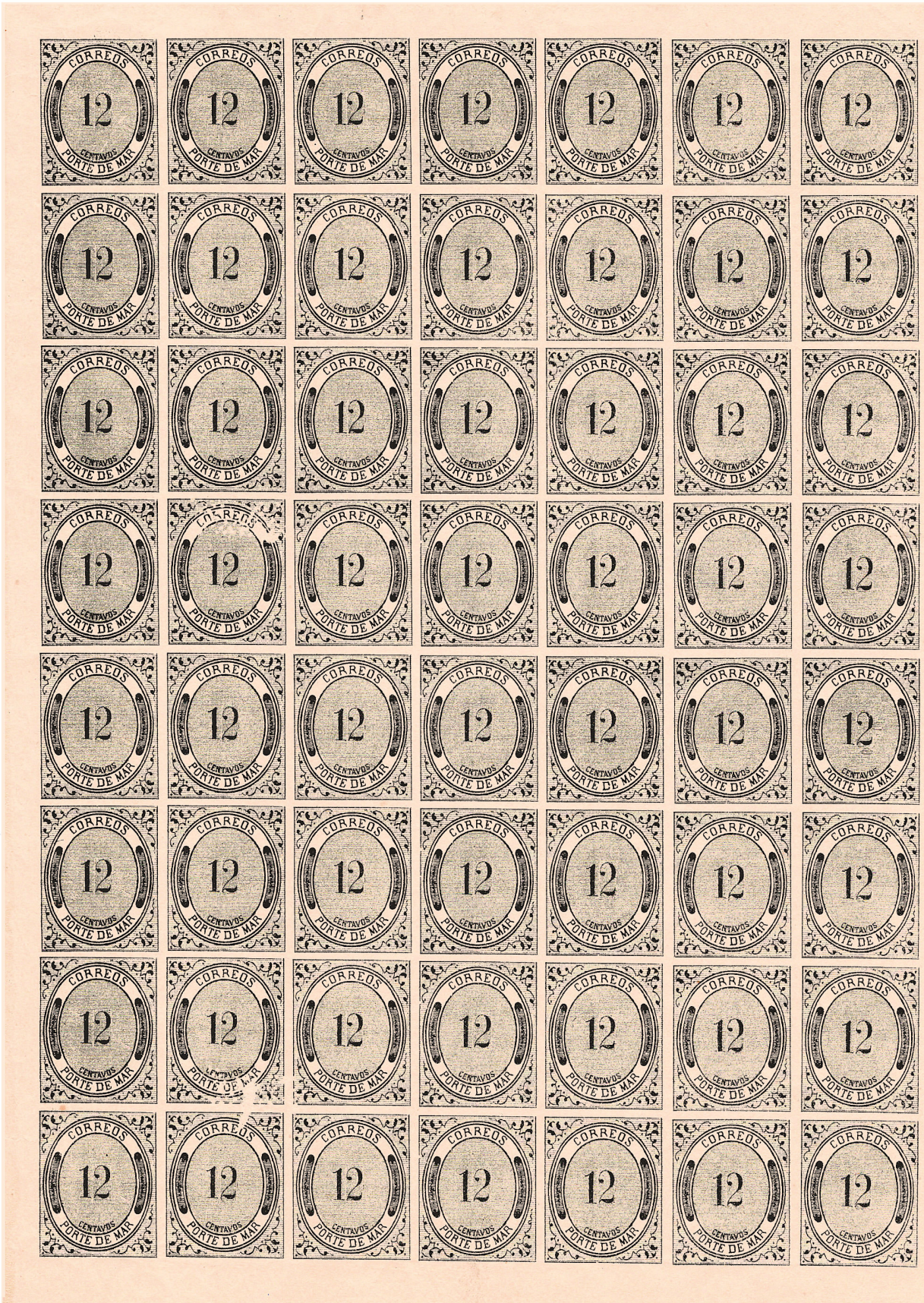
Position 32 from **SECOND** state of stone. Note extensive retouch in left lower portion of inner oval (scan).



Block of 24 from bottom of sheet of second state. Note retouch at position 32.
A full sheet of Stone I, State 1, is shown on the next page.

Issue IIA: Full Sheet of 12c Stamp (Stone 1. State 1):

Image slightly reduced in size

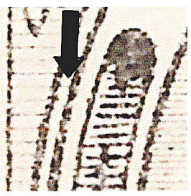


Issue IIA: 20 Centavos: Transfer Types:

A seven stamp transfer stone was used eight times, to produce sheets of 56 stamps. All seven transfer types are shown here:

1. Background line cuts through two outer ovals at left









2. Numerals are unusually close

3. Left lower section of numeral '0' has a rough appearance









4. Minute dot between 'R' of 'MAR' and right sausage ornament

5. Spot on inner oval line below left sausage ornament









6. Minute dot in upper section of 'E' in 'CORREOS'





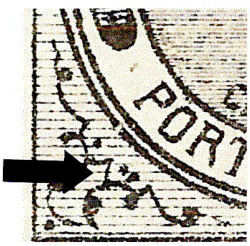
7. Break in outer oval frame line in left lower corner

Issue IIA: 20 Centavos: Varieties:

Broken 'R' in 'PORTE' (state 1 only)









Extra dots in LL corner and UR corner Position 49 (state 2 only)

White dot on inside of numeral '0' (Position 53)

Break in oval at left (Position 43)







Open 'O' at top in 'CORREOS' (Position 25)

White dot on outside of numeral '0' (Position 12)







Retouch under 'VO' of 'CENTAVOS' (Position 39, state 1 only)

Black dot in front of 'C' in 'CORREOS' (state 1 only)



'COLECCIONES'
Rare overprint – possible proof copy for postal archives.

RESEARCH

Issue IIA: 20 Centavos:

Additional Varieties:



Dot near bottom of right 'sausage ornament (Position 21)



Thin curved line in front of 'CORREOS' (Position 15)

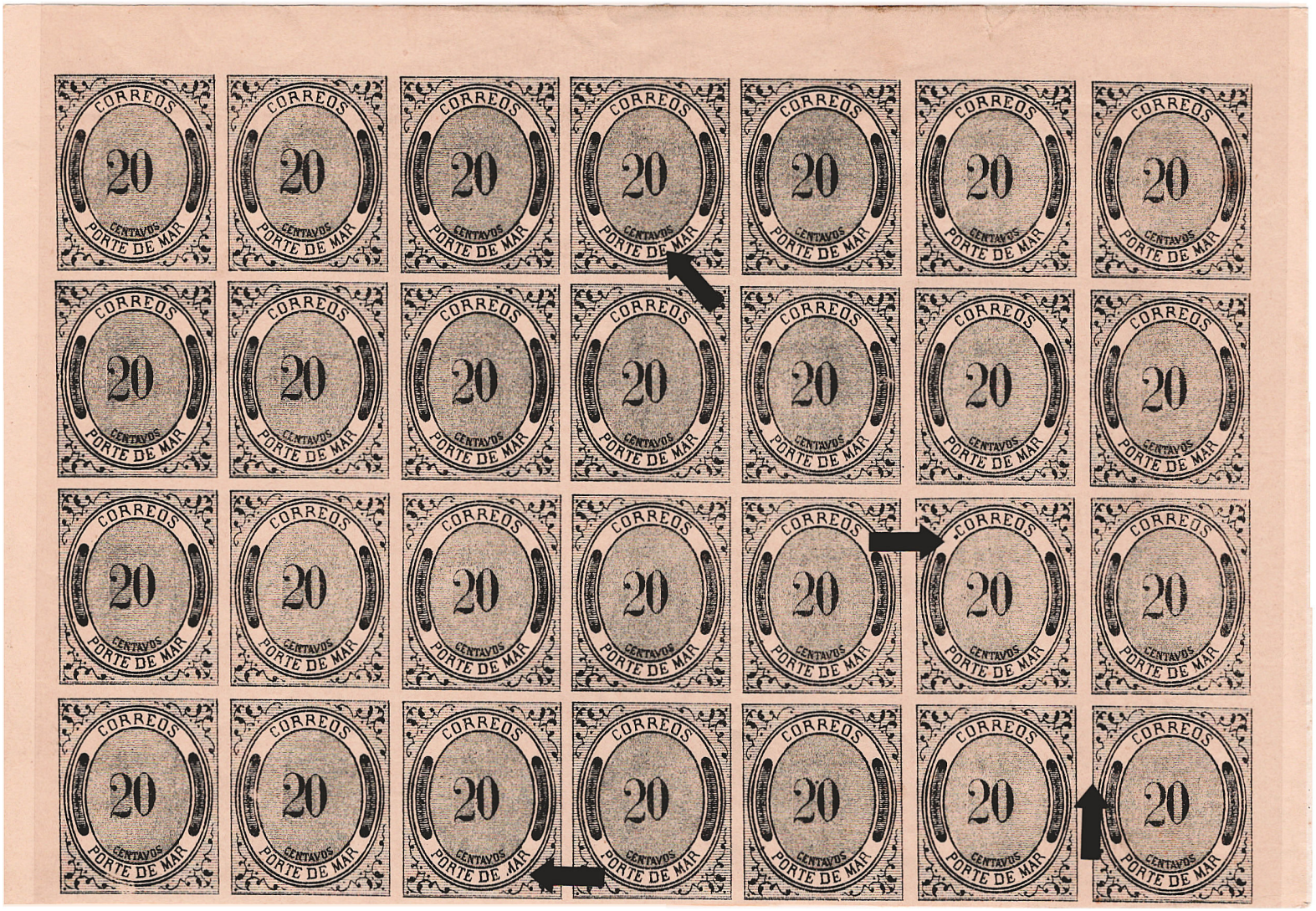


Flaw at right side of oval with retouch (Position 47)

One Stone - Two States:

This stone was prepared from the 10 centavos die. The figure '1' was removed and '2' inserted resulting in a single digit 'insertion box.' One horizontal row of seven stamps was produced for transfer (with the seven transfer types) and used 8 times to form a sheet of 56 stamps. Only 1 printing stone was used, but it exists in **two states** with minor differences seen at some plate positions. A partial sheet of State 1 is shown on the following page, and a complete sheet of State 2 follows.

Issue IIA: 20 Centavos:



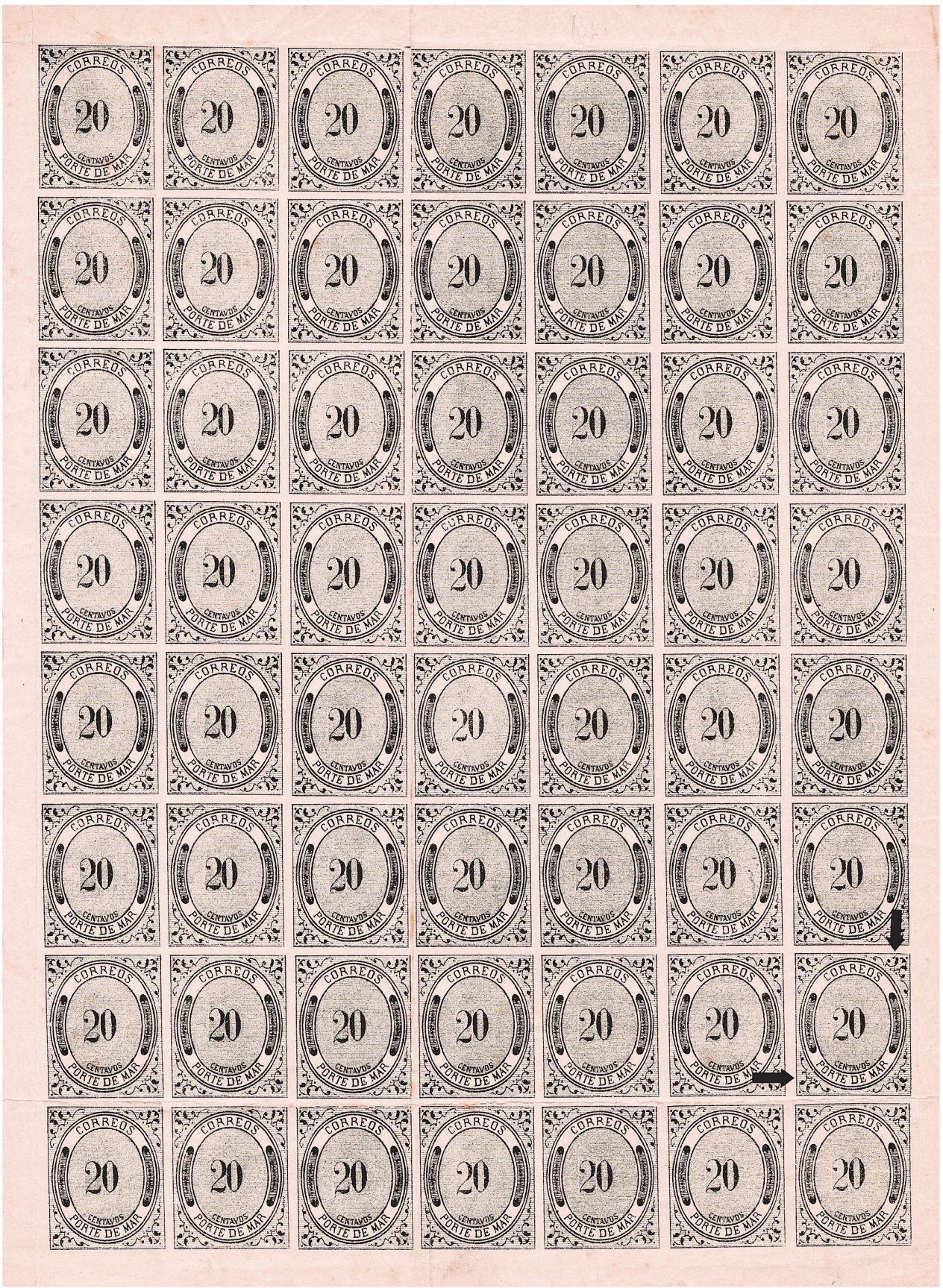
UPPER HALF OF SHEET OF STATE 1. A number of minor variations identify this as the first state of the printing stone: Retouch under 'VO' of 'CENTAVOS' (Position 4); Black dot in front of 'C' of 'CORREOS' (Position 20); Missing portion of 'M' in 'MAR' (Position 24); and small dot below left upper corner ornament (Position 28).

Sheets of **STATE 2** can be identified by the presence of an extra dot in the right upper corner and an extra dot in the left lower corner at Position 49 (see arrows on following page).

Since only one printing stone was used, the transfer types are the same for both states.

Issue IIA: Full Sheet of 20c Stamp (Stone 1, State 2):

Image slightly reduced in size



Issue IIA: 25, 35, and 50 Centavos:

Two transfer types of each value. Printed in composite sheets only.

25 CENTAVOS (2 TYPES)

1. White dots in ball of '2' and '5' (odd rows)









2. Small dash in left side of right dot of LL corner ornament (even rows)

35 CENTAVOS (2 TYPES)

1. Scratch in right sausage ornament (odd rows)









2. Large dot in right lower corner (even rows)

50 CENTAVOS (2 TYPES)

1. Two extra dots near lower right oval (odd rows)









2. extra small dot in right upper corner (even rows)

VARIETIES

Break in oval at left upper corner





Break in inner oval on right side

Issue IIA: 60, 75, 85 and 100 Centavos:

One transfer type of each stamp. Printed in composite sheets only.









Varieties:

Scratch across lower portion of stamp





Dot in LL corner

Line in 'S' of 'CORREOS'





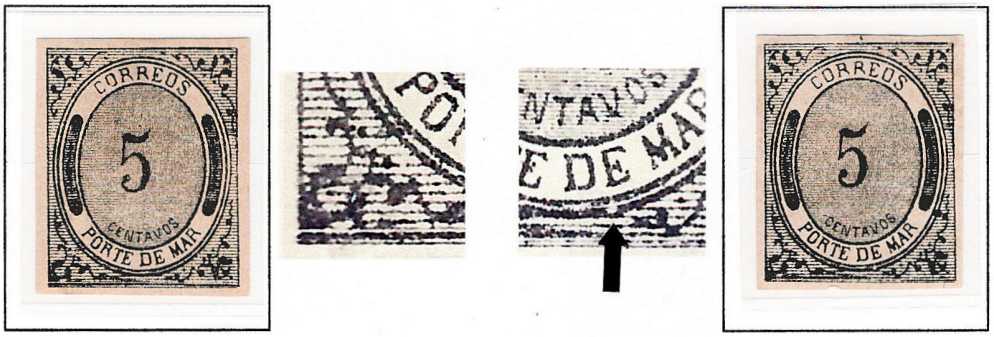
Damaged 'R' in 'CORREOS'

Issue IIB: 5 Centavos:

Type IIB stamps were printed in late 1875, in response to a need for more of certain values, in full sheets of 56 (7 x 8). Similar to Issue IIA but 'CENTAVOS' is longer (10 mm vs 8 mm; 'C' of 'CENTAVOS' is over 'O' of 'PORTE'), numerals are slightly larger (8.5 mm vs 7 mm) and background lines have been redrawn. These stamps do not show an insertion box. Although the Type IIB stamps are considered by catalogues to be a separate issue, in reality they were used concurrently with the Type IIA stamps.

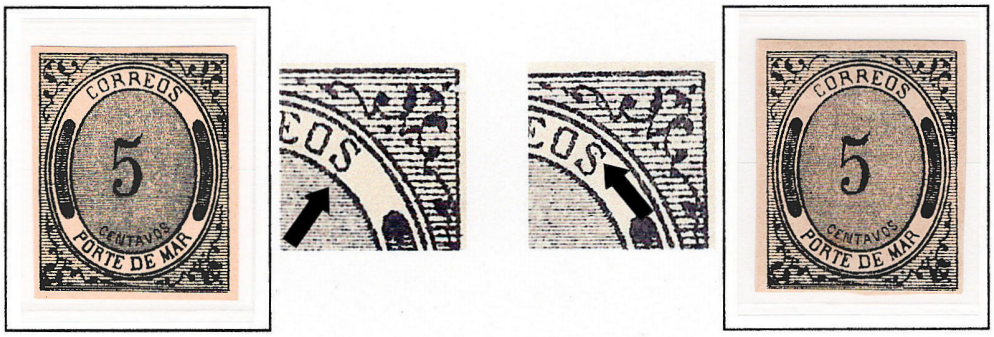
5 CENTAVOS: Seven Transfer Types:

1. Break in frame line at LL corner



2. Dent in frame line below 'E' of 'DE'

3. Dot on frame line below 'S' of 'CORREOS'



4. Dot inside upper curve of 'S' of 'CORREOS'

5. Minute dot in oval frame, above background line



6. Minute dot above 'E' of 'PORTE'

7. Dent in oval frame line, below 'R' of 'PORTE'



Issue IIB: 5 Centavos: Varieties:



Retouch: RU Corner (Position 4)



Retouch: Both Upper Corners (Position 5)



Defect in LL corner (Position 28)



Vertical tear across stamp (Position 34)



Missing frame line at top right margin (Position 36)



Missing frame line at top left margin (Position 37)



Retouch: LL Corner (Position 50)



Trial printing of district overprint on reverse

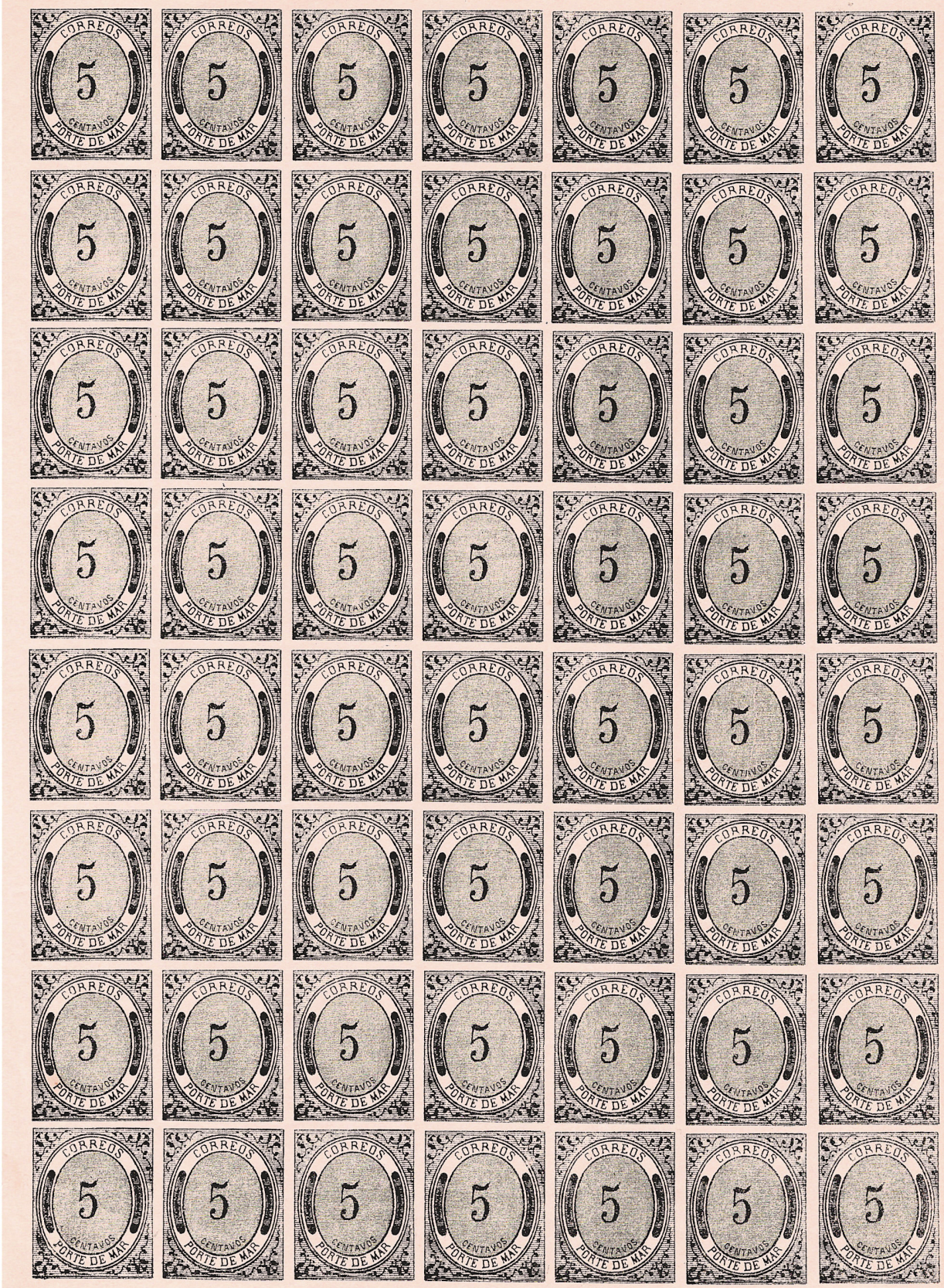
Complete Sheet of 5 Centavo Value

This stone shows multiple retouches and plate flaws, as noted above. One horizontal row of seven stamps was produced for transfer (with the seven transfer types) and used 8 times to form a sheet of 56 stamps.

RESEARCH

Issue IIB: Full Sheet of 5c Stamp:

Image slightly reduced in size



Issue IIB: 25 Centavos: Transfer Types:

1. Broken 'T' in 'PORTE'





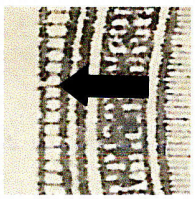




2. Minute notch in right frame line

3. Break in middle of left frame line









4. Minute dot above right sausage ornament

5. Break in middle of 'E' in 'DE'

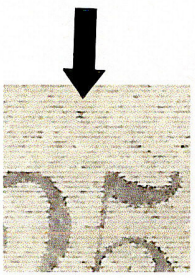








6. Minute dot in 'C' of 'CORREOS'





7. Minute dot above numerals

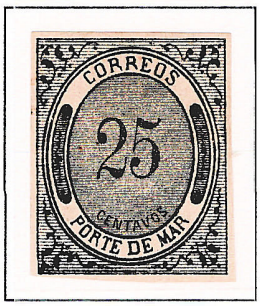
Issue IIB: 25 Centavos:

Complete Sheet of 25 Centavo Value

One horizontal row of seven stamps was produced for transfer (with the seven transfer types) and used 8 times to form a sheet of 56 stamps.

Proposed Second Stone of 25 Centavo Stamp:

One author (Walter Widmaier, 1987) has proposed that a second stone of the 25c value exists, based on the configuration of the three horizontal lines below the oval:



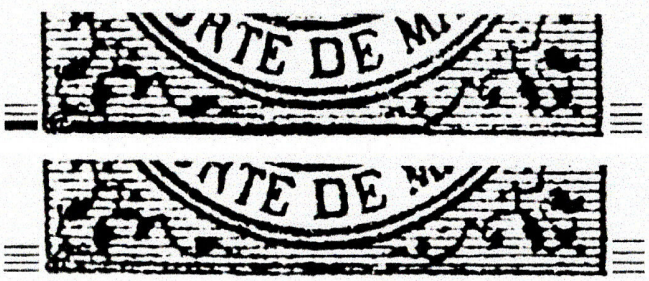




Vertical crack on face



Numeral 3580 printed on back



Stone 1: Bottom two lines are fused into a single thick line for most of the bottom margin.

Stone 2: Bottom two lines are separate.

The exhibitor has identified a total of seven 25c stamps which meet these criteria (from an accumulation of several hundred stamps plus one full sheet). None of these stamps show any of the usual transfer types for this value, and there are imperfections on these stamps which are not seen on the full sheet (next page). Therefore, the exhibitor supports the proposal that there was a second stone prepared for this stamp. Based on their relative scarcity, it seems likely that only a few sheets were printed. More research is needed.

RESEARCH

Issue IIB: Full Sheet of 25c Stamp:

Image slightly reduced in size



Issue IIB: 35 Centavos: Transfer Types:

Rarest of regular issues, not known used. Very little is known about this stamp. Some believe it was never issued. The exhibitor has seen several of these stamps which he believes are genuine but which do not match any of the transfer types.



1. White dot between letters 'V' and 'O' of 'CENTAVOS'



2. Break in oval below 'T' of 'PORTE'



3. Smudge in left lower portion of oval



4. Break in side of right 'sausage ornament'



5. Thickening of left upper serif of 'MAR'



6. Small dot above '5'



7. Hook on mid-section of '5'

Probably genuine but does not match any of the published transfer types





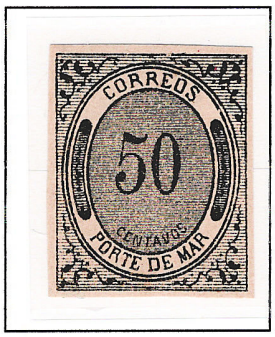
Trial overprint on reverse of stamp

Issue IIB: 50 Centavos: Transfer Types:

1. Break in oval line below 'A' of 'MAR'







2. No special markings noted

3. Dot on upper end of left sausage ornament









4. Dot on top of 'S' of 'CENTAVOS'

5. Defective letters 'EN' of 'CENTAVOS'









6. Thinning of midsection of 'C' of 'CORREOS'

7. Small dot below numeral '5'





Issue IIB: 50 Centavos: Varieties:



Retouch above ball of '5' (Position 36)



Break in base of 'T' in 'PORTE' (Position 47)



Defective second 'R' in 'CORREOS' (Position 30)



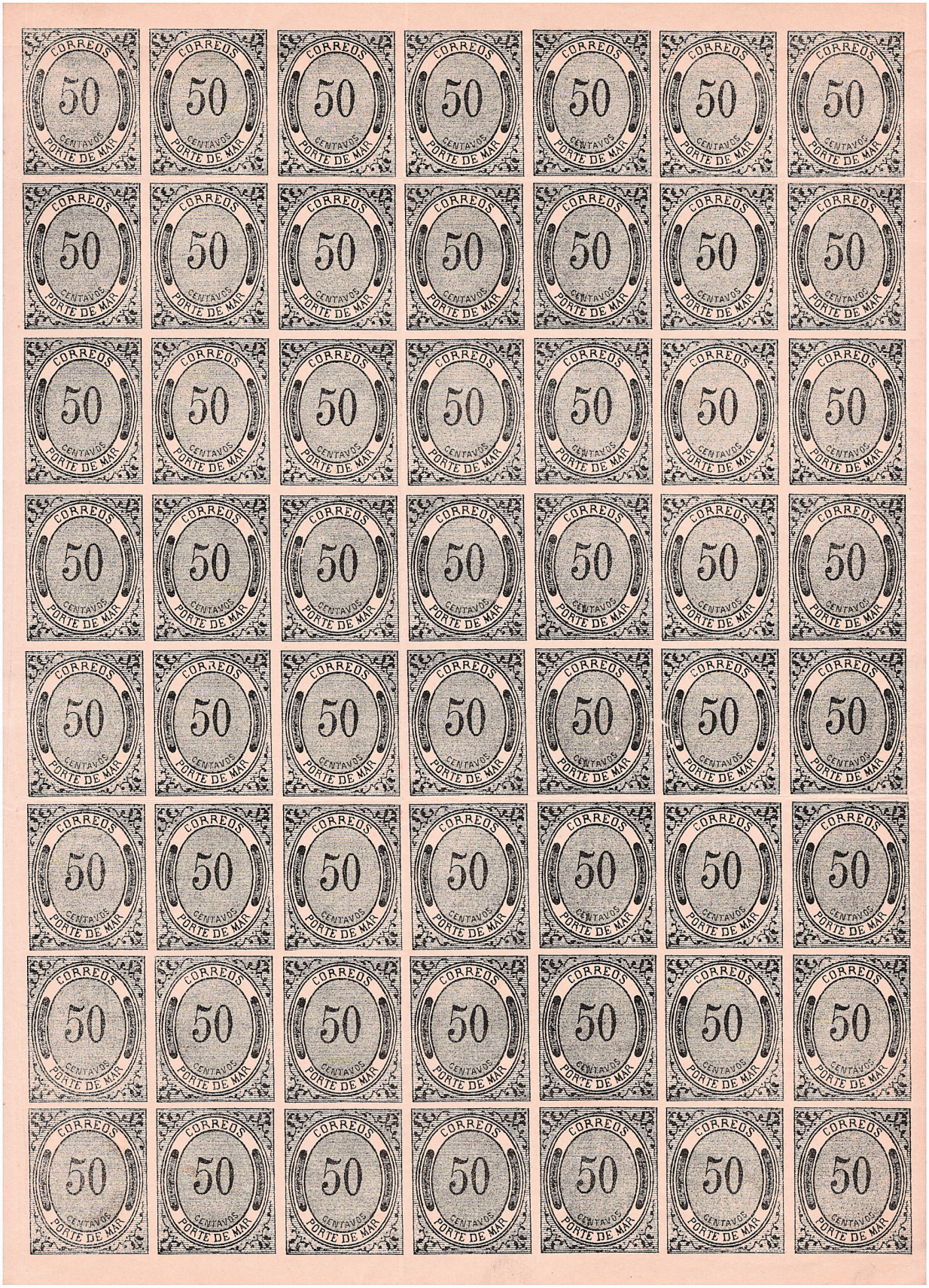
Background lines retouched (Position 56)

Complete Sheet of 50 Centavo Value

One horizontal row of seven stamps was produced for transfer (with the seven transfer types) and used 8 times to form a sheet of 56 stamps.

Issue IIB: Full Sheet of 50c Stamp:

Image slightly reduced in size



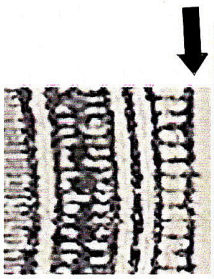
Issue IIB: 60 Centavos: Transfer Types:

Scarce: May not have been issued; not known used. Several stamps have been seen which are probably genuine but do not match any known transfer type.

1. Line crossing downstroke of second 'R' of 'CORREOS'





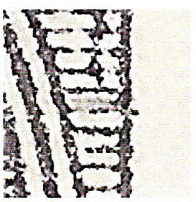




2. Short black dash through R frame line

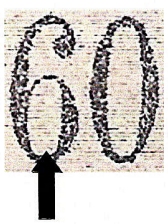
3. Background line cuts through frame

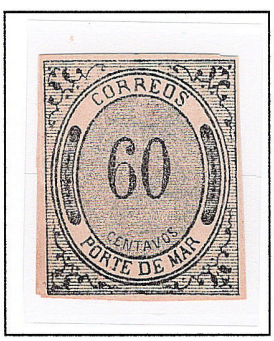




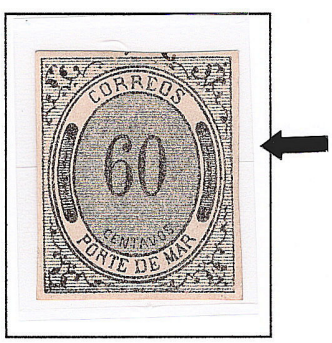


4. Clear area above 'O' of 'CORREOS'



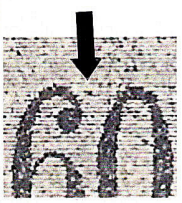


5. White spots in closed portion of '6'

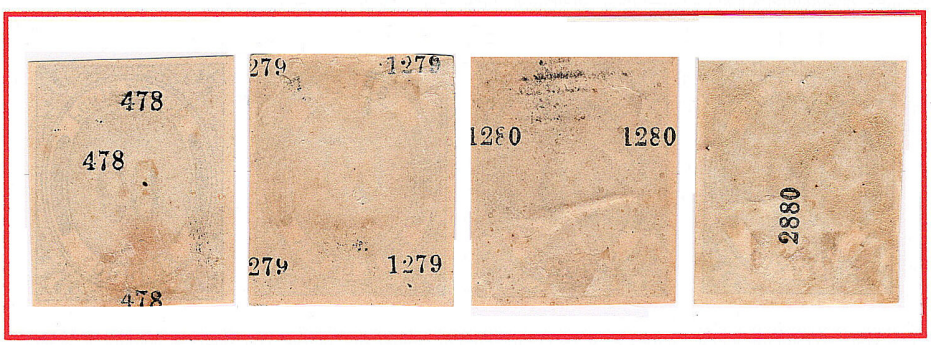


6. Break in shade lines to right of '0'





7. Black dash between numerals



Trial printings on reverse: Since these stamps were probably not issued, they were essentially available as printers' waste. Numerals refer to postal districts and years. 478 = Ures-Hermosillo-1878; 1279 = Tepic-1879; 1280 = Tepic-1880; 2880 = Matamoros-1880.

Issue IIB: 100 Centavos:

Two stones were used for this issue. The second printing stone is distinctive because it was produced using a different transfer stone and thus has it's own set of transfer types. In addition the second stone transfers were done vertically, so horizontal multiples repeat types while vertical multiples differ. The stamps from each stone are easily identified.



STONE I:
Break in lower curve of second '0.'
Two small dots below 'E' of 'PORTE'
Bottom two lines appear as one thick line.





STONE II:
Second '0' is normal,
No dots below 'E' in 'PORTE'
Two bottom lines are separate.

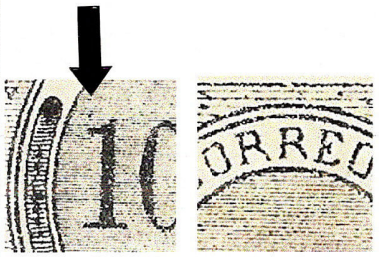


Issue IIB: 100 Centavos, Stone I:

Transfer Types and Varieties

1. Black dot above '1'



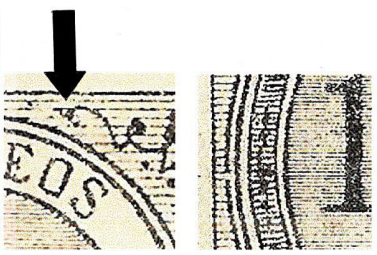


2. Break in center of top frame line



3. White dot in top ornament



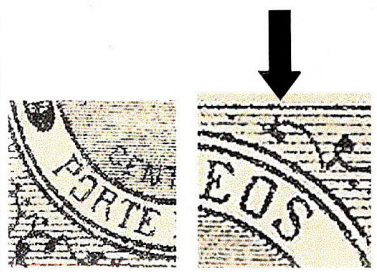


4. Break in oval at left



5. Break in 'O' of 'PORTE'





6. Small vertical dash on top of scroll



7. Minute dot on top of left sausage ornament





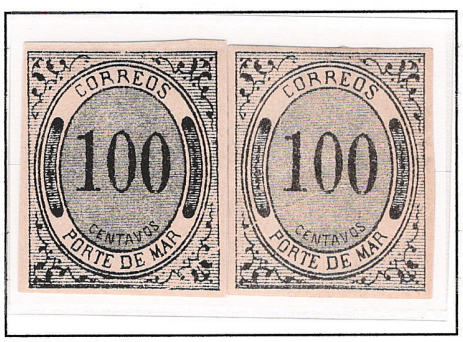


Plate scratch in right lower corner (positions 30 - 31).

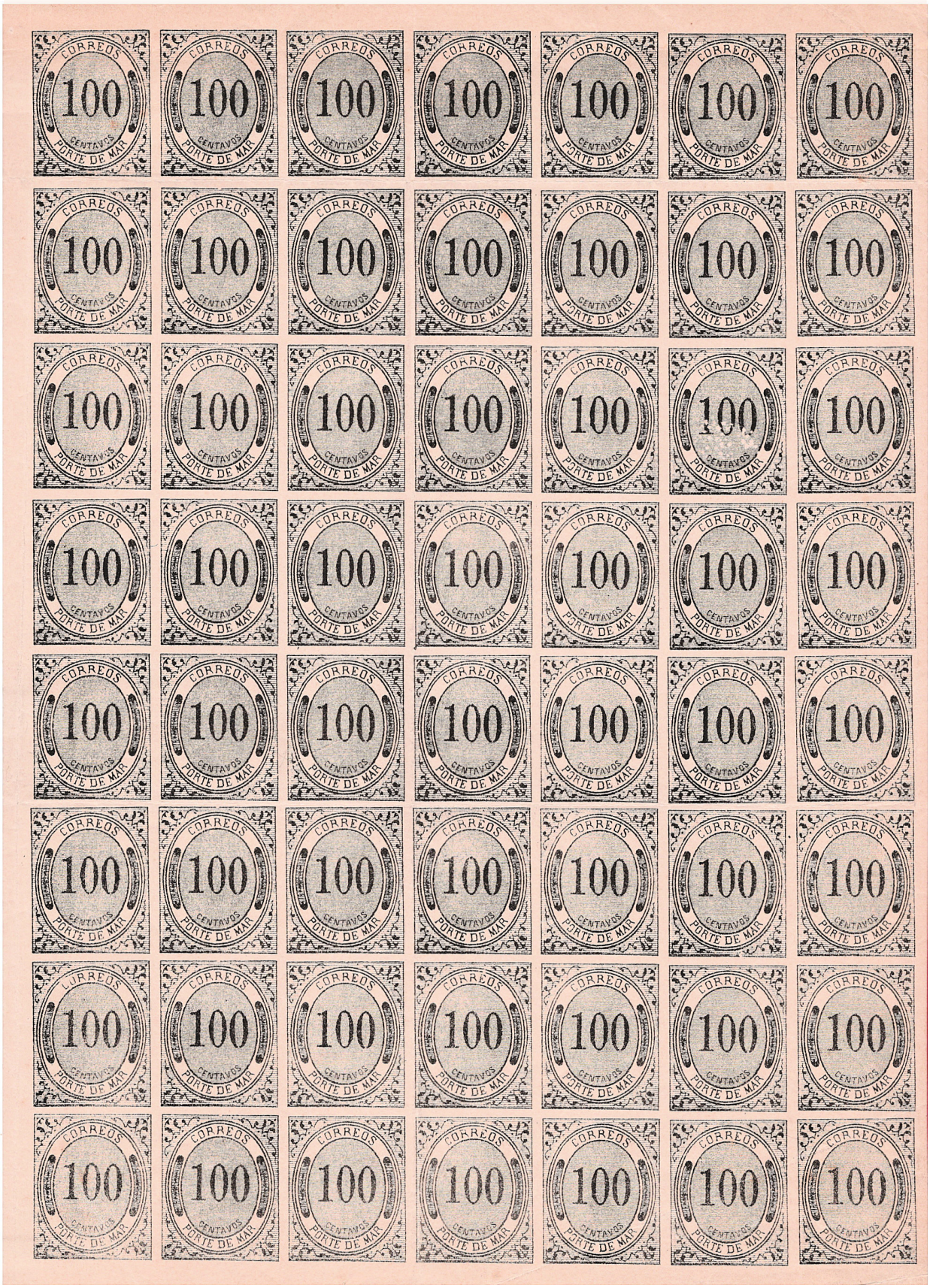


Position 43: Missing top of 'C' in 'CORREOS'

Complete sheet of the 100c stamp - STONE 1 is on the next page

Issue IIB: Full Sheet of 100c Stamp, Stone 1:

Image slightly reduced in size



Issue IIB: 100 Centavos, Stone II:

In 1964, Lawrence W. Pawley wrote that he had found some blocks of the Type IIB 100c stamps which were markedly different from those previously identified. The transfer types on these stamps were different from those seen on the first stone. Karl Schimmer, in 1987, confirmed his findings from studying the same material.

Stamps from this stone are **scarce** and the complete configuration has not been worked out. The chart below shows what is known (so far) about the plating of this stone:

SHEET POSITION:						TRANSFER TYPES:					
1	2	3				8	8	14			
8	9	10				9	9	13			
15	16	17				8	8	8			
22	23	24				9	9	9			
29	30	31	32	33	34	10	10	10A	10	10	10
36	37	38	39	40	41	11	11	11	11	11	11
43	44	45	46	47	48	12	12	12A	12	12	12
50	51	52	53	54	55	13	13	13	13	13	13

On the left are shown the sheet positions for which transfer types are known, and on the right are listed the transfer types. While most of the other values had transfer stones applied horizontally, it appears that with this particular stone, the transfer stone was applied vertically, so that horizontal rows all are of the same transfer type. Positions 3 and 10 seem to be exceptions.

The blocks from stone II on the following three pages include all of the seven transfer types (and two sub-types).

Issue IIB: 100 Centavos: Stone 2: Upper Left Portion of Sheet:

This block of 12 contains transfer types 8, 9, 13, and 14, as shown below:

SHEET POSITION				TRANSFER TYPE		
1	2	3		8	8	14
8	9	10		9	9	13
15	16	17		8	8	8
22	23	24		9	9	9

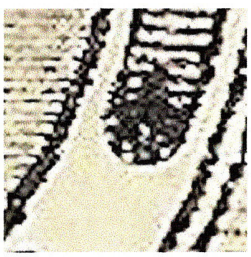




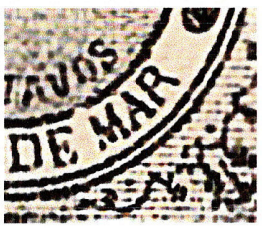
Transfer Type 8: Indentation on inner oval



Transfer Type 9: Break in bottom frameline



Transfer Type 13: Small white dot on right 'sausage' ornament



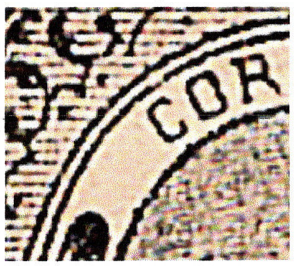
Transfer Type 14: Indentation on inner oval above 'M' of 'Mar'

Issue IIB: 100 Centavos: Stone 2: Lower Left Portion of Sheet:

This block of 12 contains transfer types 10, 10A, 11, 12, 12A and 13, as shown below:

SHEET POSITION				TRANSFER TYPE		
29	30	31		10	10	10A
36	37	38		11	11	11
43	44	45		12	12	12A
50	51	52		13	13	13





Transfer Type 10: Break in outer oval.
Transfer Type 10A: Break in outer oval + thickening of 'S' in 'CORREOS'



Transfer Type 11: Break in oval below 'R' of 'MAR'



Transfer Type 12: Break in frameline at top left
Transfer Type 12A: Break in frameline at top plus break in inner oval below 'C' of 'CORREOS'

Issue IIB: 100 Centavos: Stone 2: Lower Right Portion of Sheet:

This block of 12 contains transfer types 10, 11, 12, and 13, as shown below:

SHEET POSITION				TRANSFER TYPE		
32	33	34		10	10	10
39	40	41		11	11	11
46	47	48		12	12	12
53	54	55		13	13	13



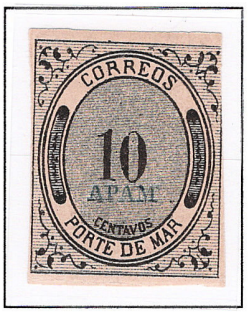
All of the transfer types in this block are shown in the previous two pages.

District Name Overprints:

Not required but used in some districts. Hand stamped. Not all known overprints are shown here, and forged overprints are common, on both genuine and fake stamps.

APAM















CHIAPAS









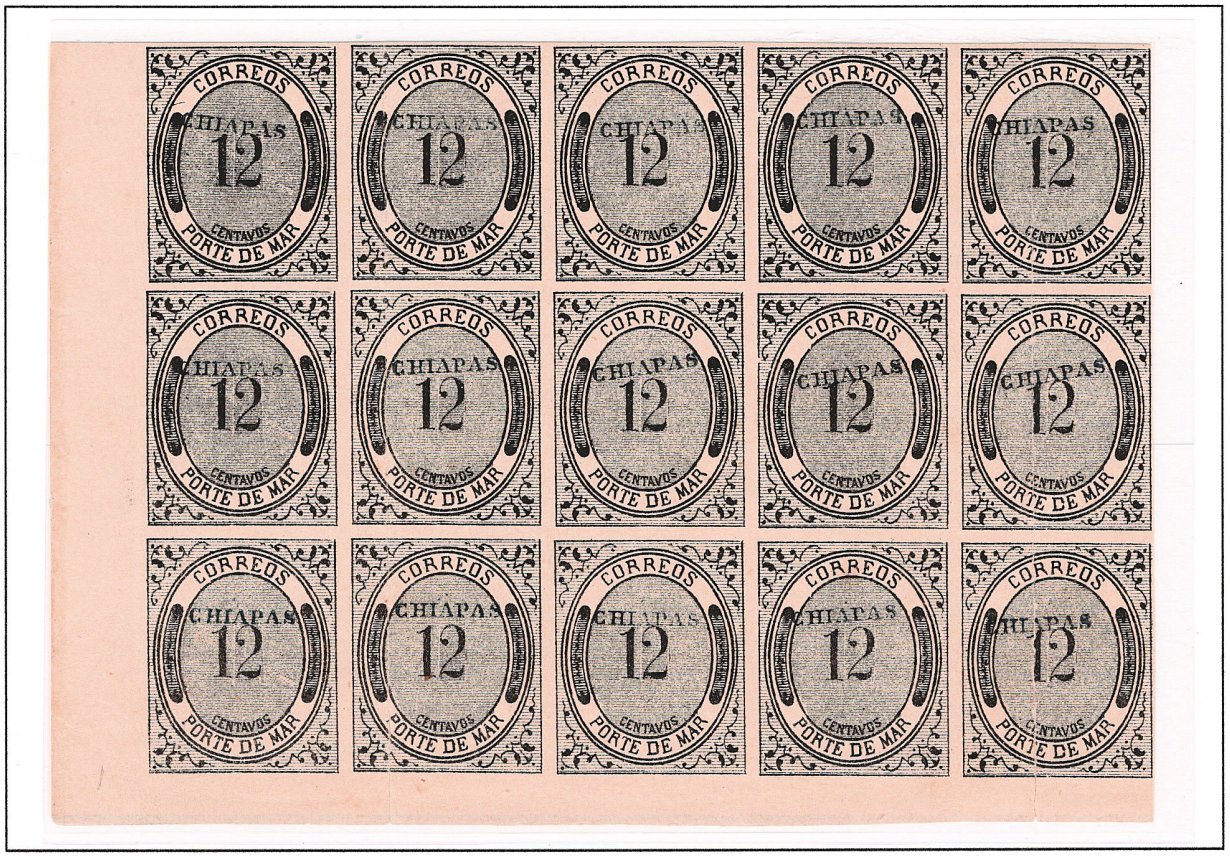
Tuxtla cancel





District Name Overprints:





GUANAJUATO

Previously Unrecorded



HUEJUTLA



Scarce

District Name Overprints:

QUERETARO







Small Numerals



Large Numerals









TACUBAYA









SALTILLO





TAMPICO



TEHUACAN



District Name Overprints:

TULA



TULA DE T. (Tamaulipas)



VERACRUZ - Overprint 1.6 mm high



District Name Overprints:

VERACRUZ - Overprint 2.0 mm high



JX9a

Inverted

ZACATECAS





Inverted Overprint

ZAMORA



Double Overprint Only a Few Known Copies

District Name Overprints Multiples:

Veracruz

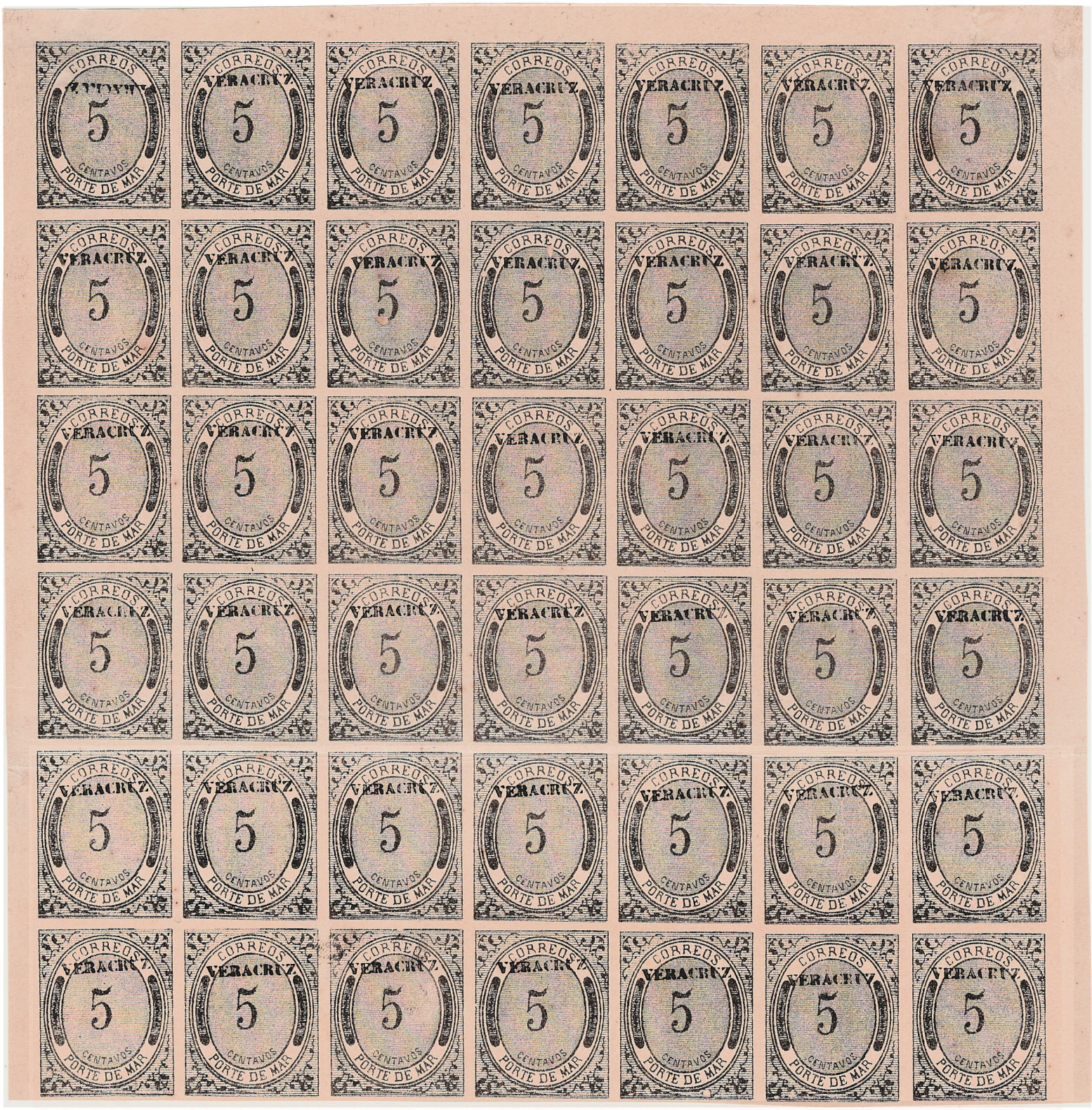


Zamora (scarce)



District Name Overprints:

Block with VERACRUZ district overprint (Positions 1-42) (Ex Vannotti).
Note inverted overprint in position 1.



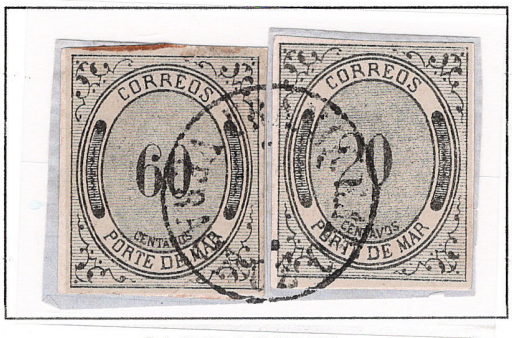
Cancelled Stamps:

There was no requirement that Porte de Mar stamps be cancelled, but many were - at posting, in transit, or on arrival. **There is no way to tell with 100% certainty whether or not a cancel is authentic unless it is on cover and forged cancels abound.** Those shown here have readable locations and/or dates and are felt by the exhibitor to be most likely genuine.

MEXICAN CANCELS



MONTERREY
JUN 23, 1875



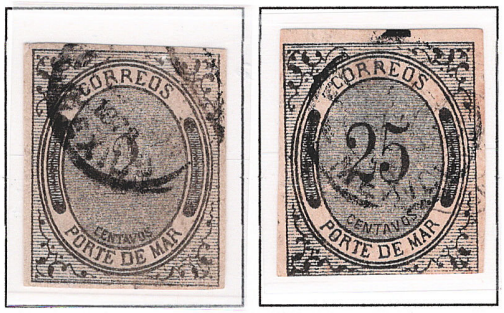
VERACRUZ



QUERETARO
1879



TEHUANTEPEC



MEXICO CITY



TOLUCA



TALPA



GUADALAJARA



STA. IFIGENIA

Cancelled Stamps: Mexican Markings:



TAMPICO



GUAZAPAREZ



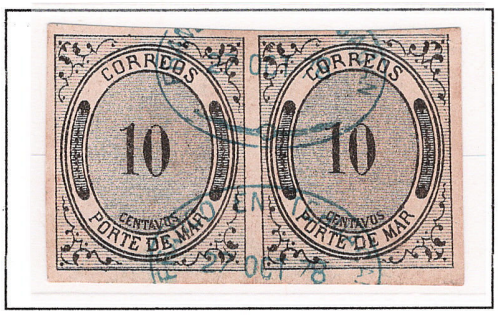
EJUTLA
manuscript date



ATLIXCO



MATEHUALA



TEHUACAN



AGUASCALIENTES



CUERNAVACA



ISLA DEL
CARMÉN



TEOCALTICHE



ZUMPANGO

Cancelled Stamps: Foreign Markings:

LONDON - most commonly seen transit mark:

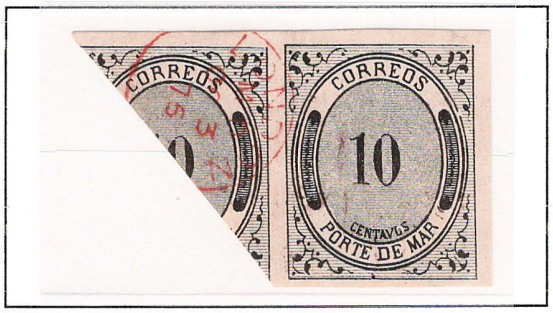














OTHER FOREIGN CANCELS





PARIS



HAMBURG



BUENOS AIRES

MADRID

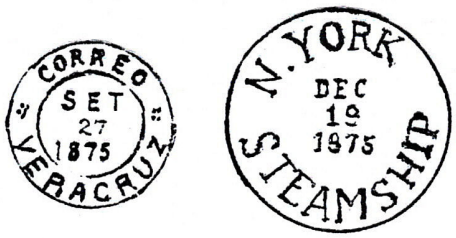




JACHAL, province of San Juan, Argentina. Only recorded example.

Cancelled Stamps: Largest Known Used Porte de Mar Multiple:





1875 five centavos stamp (JX 20) with VERACRUZ district overprint, left upper corner block of 10 (plate positions 1-5 and 8-12). Postmarked 'CORREO / VERACRUZ / SET 27, 1875' and 'N. YORK / STEAMSHIP / DEC 19 1875.'

The fact that this item was used in September 1875 indicates that the Type IIB stamps (JX 20-25) were printed in that year and used concurrently with the Type IIA stamps.

LARGEST KNOWN USED MULTIPLE OF ANY PORTE DE MAR ISSUES

Ex-Vannotti, ex-Shelton, ex-Schimmer; MEPSI certificate on reverse.

Forgeries: Introduction:

Porte de Mar stamps were not sold to the public. They were applied by postal clerks at the time of mailing, so the only way a collector could obtain them was by removal from covers. Nevertheless, there were spaces for them in early stamp albums.

This created a 'philatelic vacuum' which many forgers were happy to fill by producing 'facsimiles.' Many were sold as genuine stamps and they are still in the philatelic marketplace. **A recent survey, done by the exhibitor, found that 94% of the Porte de Mar stamps offered on eBay, 58% of the material on the Delcampe site, and 52% of the stamps found on other internet sites were fakes.**

While early collectors would often accept a reproduction in place of the genuine stamp, modern collectors are more discriminating. Thus, it is important for collectors to be aware of forgeries, and this is the main reason for including them in this exhibit. All known Porte de Mar forgery types are shown here.

The history of Porte de Mar forgeries is sketchy, inconclusive, and speculative.



Portion of page from the *Fournier Album of Philatelic Forgeries*, produced by the Philatelic Union of Geneva after the Fournier stock was purchased in 1928. The three stamps shown all have bogus cancels and two have forged district overprints. Two of the stamps (left and center) are 'Second Spiro' fakes while the forgery on the right is attributed to Bonasi, but was sold by Fournier.

RESEARCH

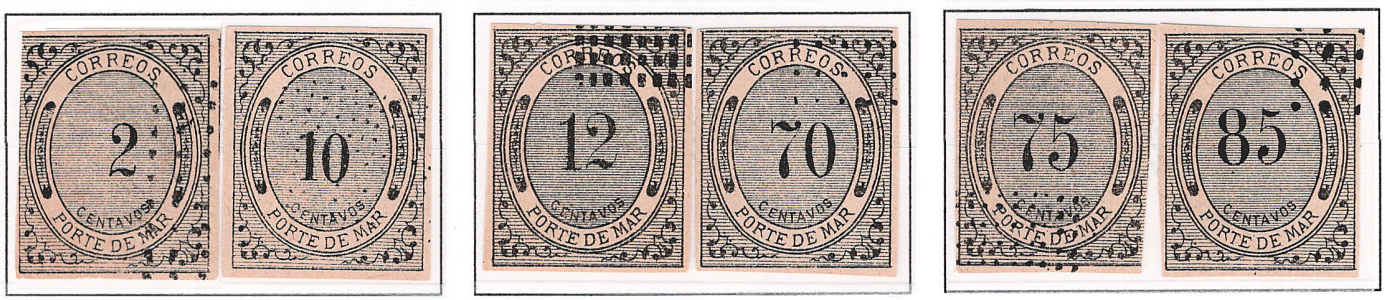
Forgeries: First Spiro:

Common, attributed to Spiro brothers in Hamburg. Bottom tip of left upper corner ornament ends in straight line. Dot cancels were usually printed with the stamps. All are type IIB with wide 'centavos.'

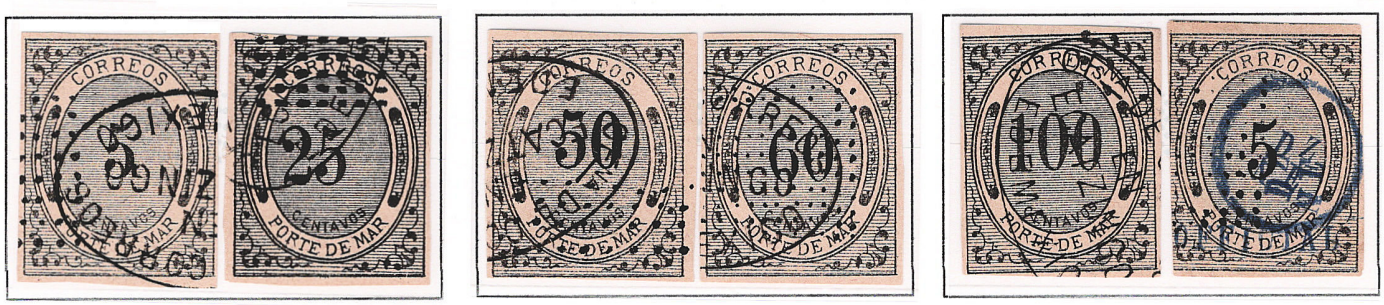


Forgeries of Un-issued Stamps:

The 2, 10, 12, 75 and 85 centavo values were never issued with the 'long' centavos (Type IIB). The 70 centavo value was not issued in **either** format.

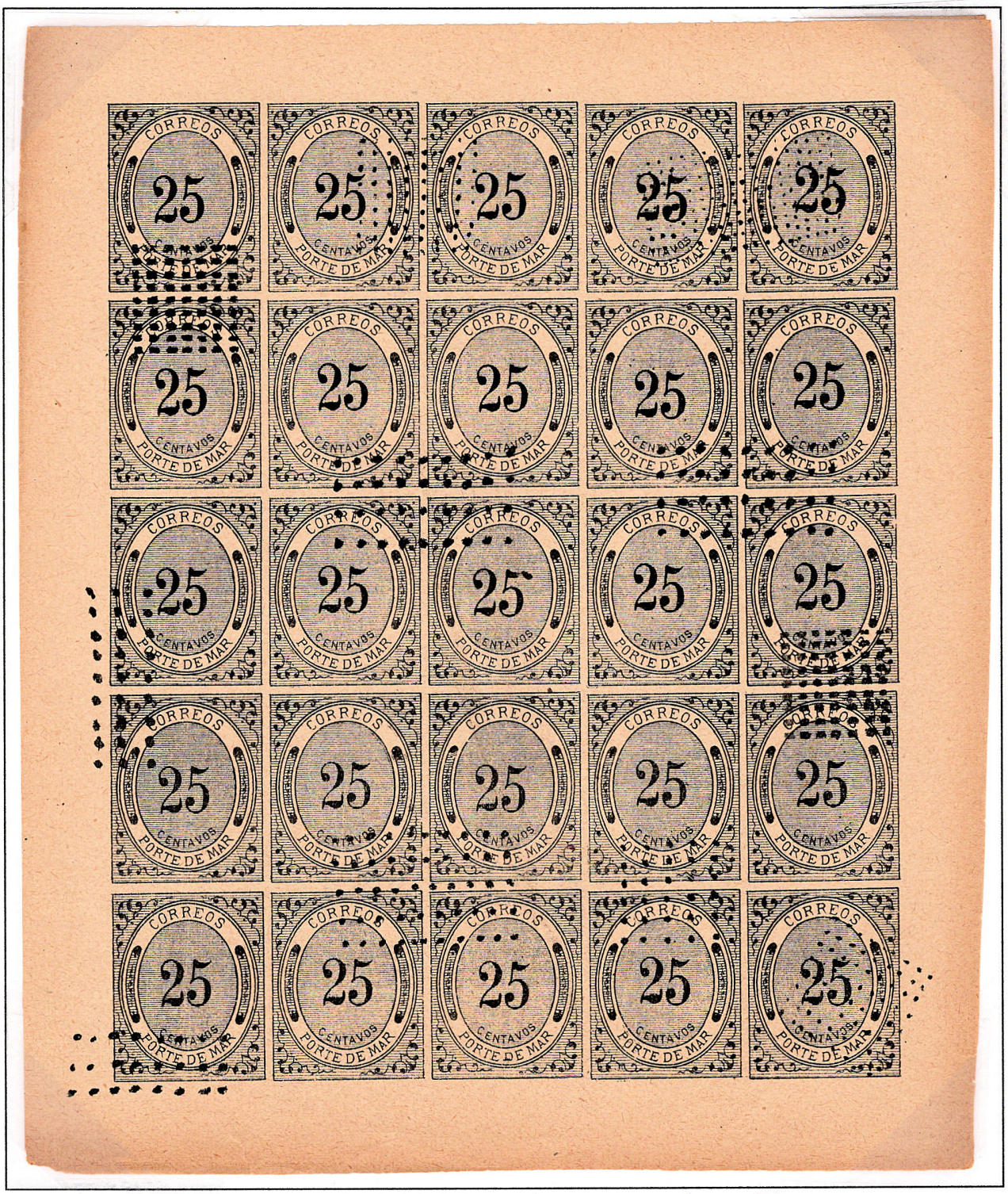


Forged cancels: 'Ecatzingo' cancel applied by Cottilla in Missouri, using an authentic device.

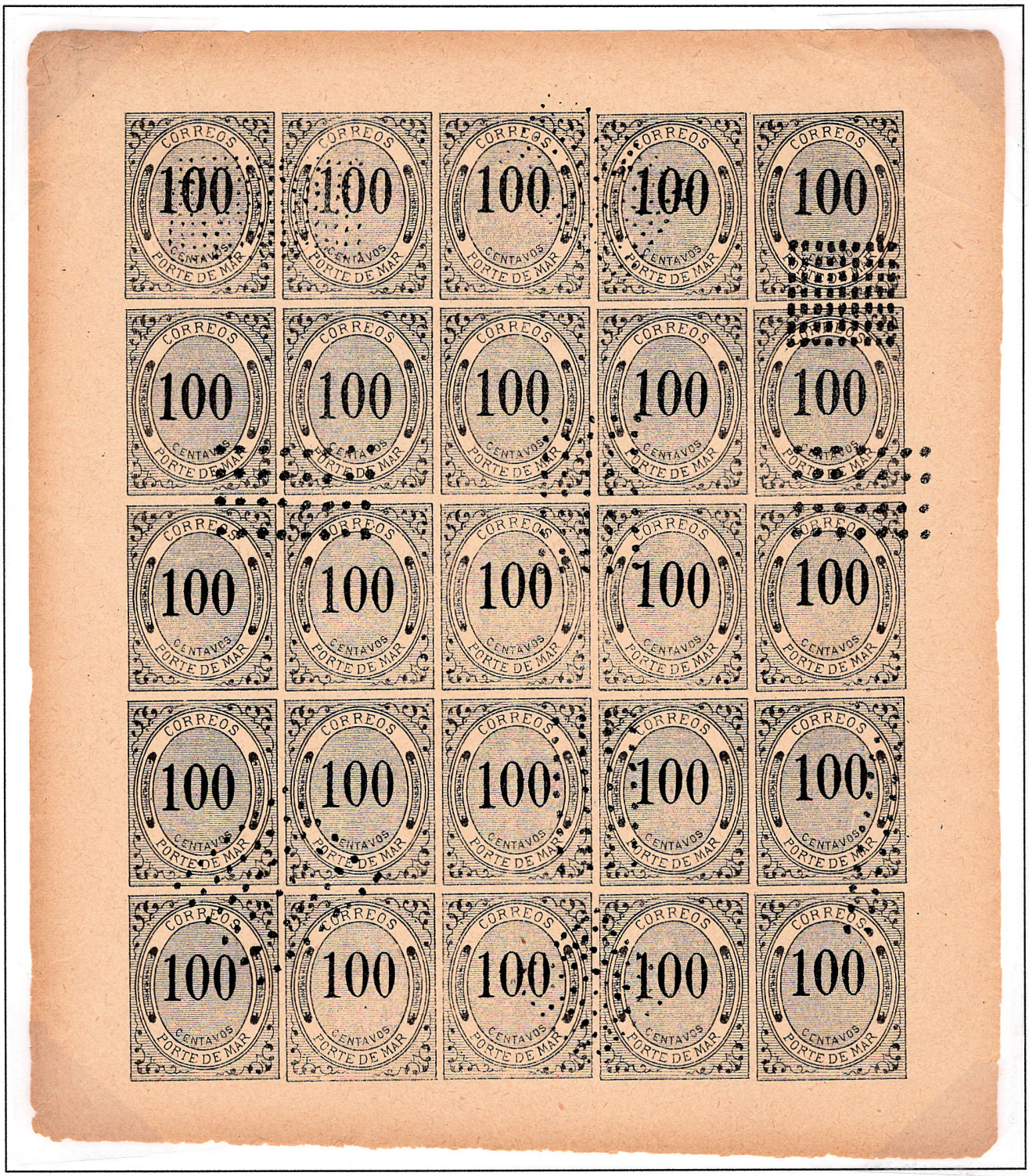


First Spiro Forgery: Full Sheet: 25 Centavos:

Many full sheets of this forgery, in various denominations, are available on the internet, even today.



First Spiro Forgery: Full Sheet: 100 Centavos:



Forgeries: Second Spiro: Basic Stamps:

'Improved' Spiro brothers forgery, distributed by Mercier and Fournier. These are the most common forgeries seen. Printed on smooth, thin, white paper. Often seen with forged cancels or in impossible gutter pairs. **These are missing a dot in the LL corner** and have no 'insertion box.' All values are shown here:



















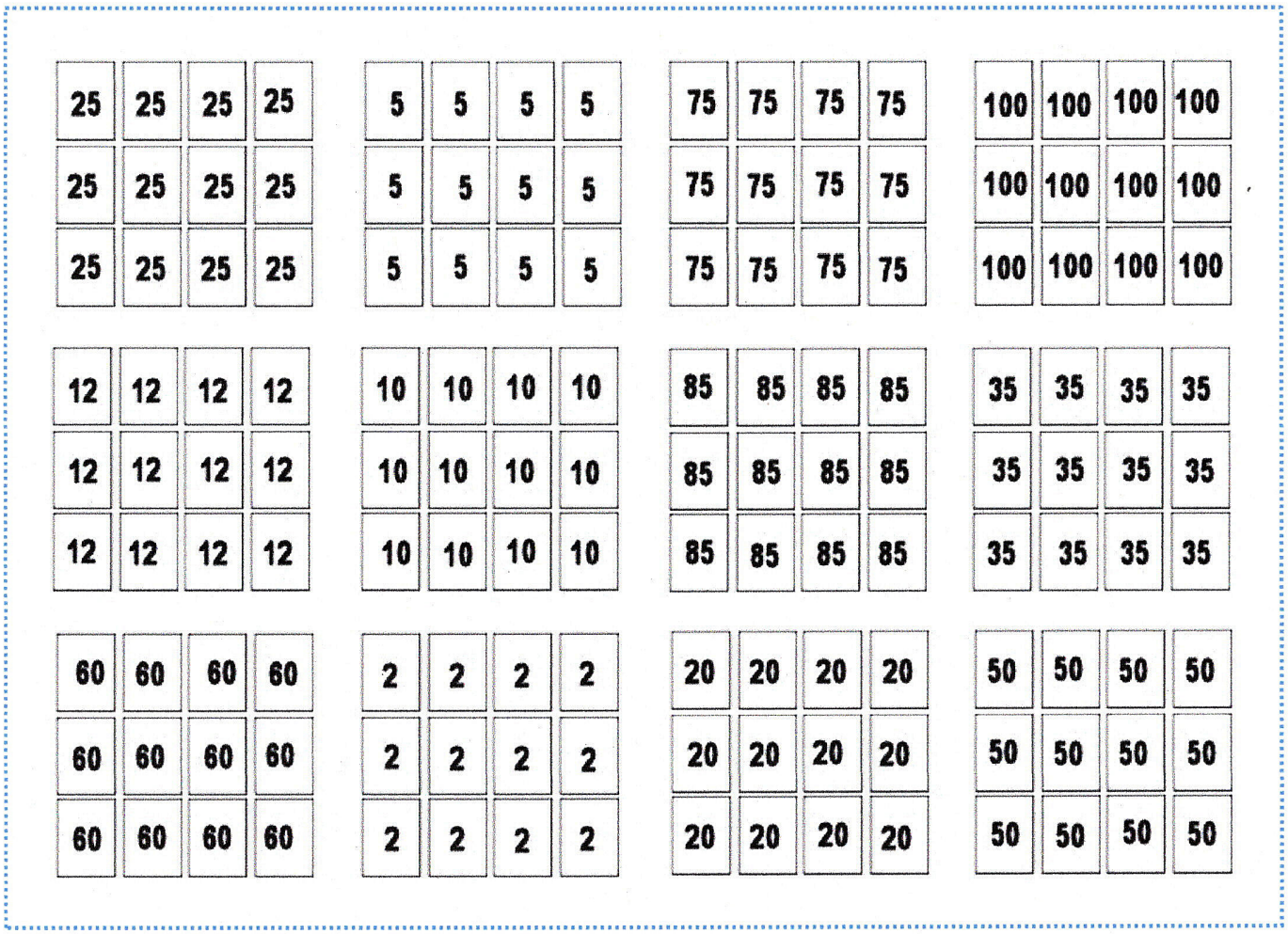






Forgeries: Second Spiro: Printing Scheme:

Extensive research (by the exhibitor) has established that the twelve values of this forgery were printed in one composite sheet, as shown below:

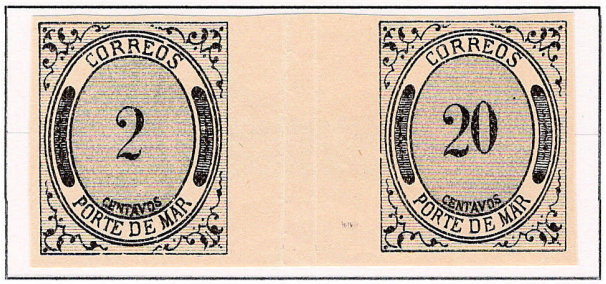


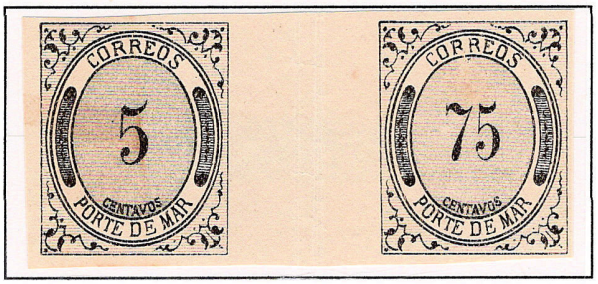
This arrangement results in the possibility of nine different horizontal gutter pairs, eight different vertical pairs, and six cross-gutter blocks, each with four different stamps. Some are shown on the following pages. None of these are possible with the genuine stamps, since they were never printed with gaps between individual stamps. (Reference: Termini, Benedict, *Mexicana,* Vol 73 (2), April 2024, pages 54-6).

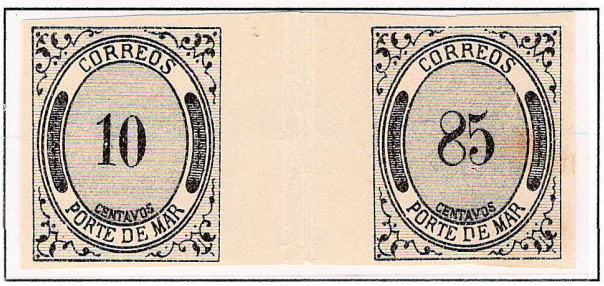
RESEARCH

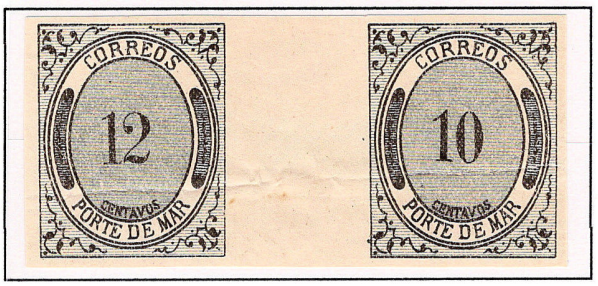
Forgeries: Second Spiro: Horizontal Gutter Pairs

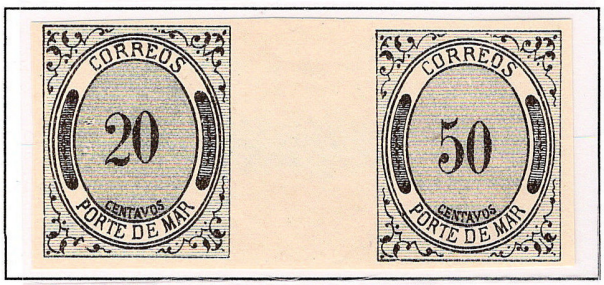
All of the nine possible combinations are shown here:

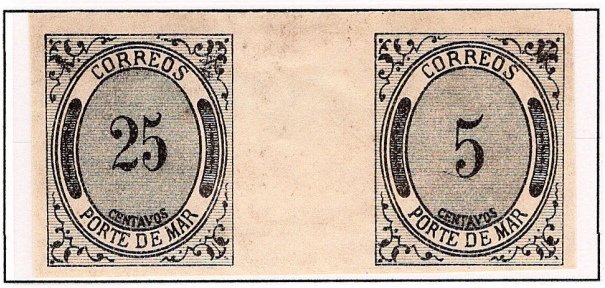


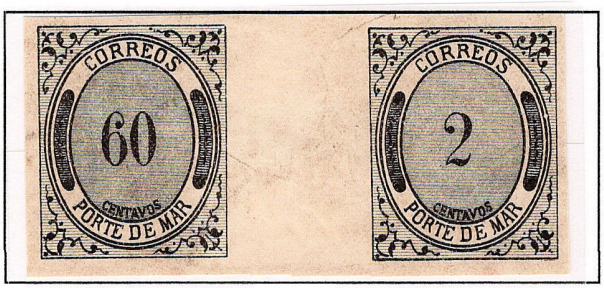


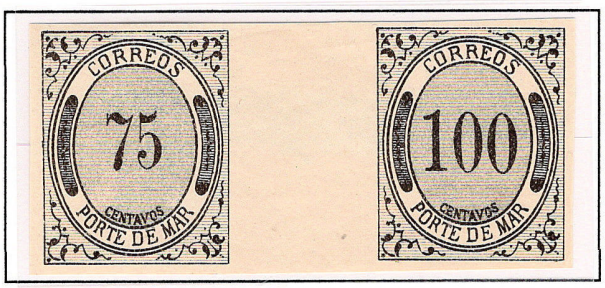


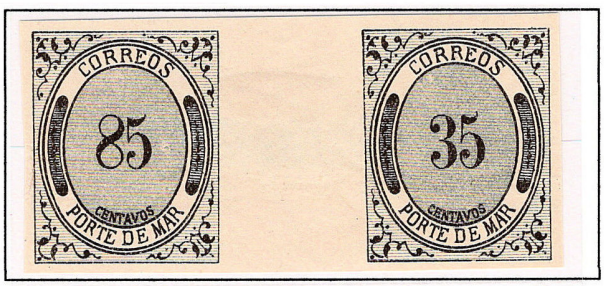






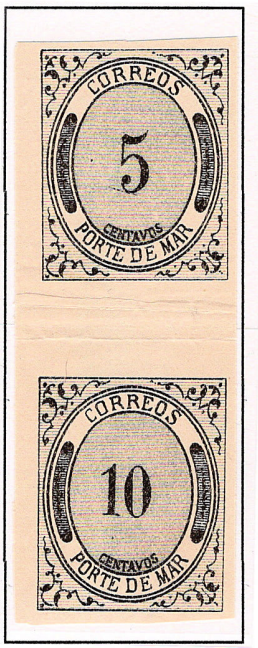




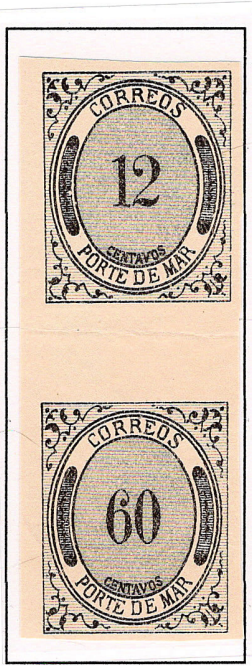


Forgeries: Second Spiro: Vertical Gutter Pairs:

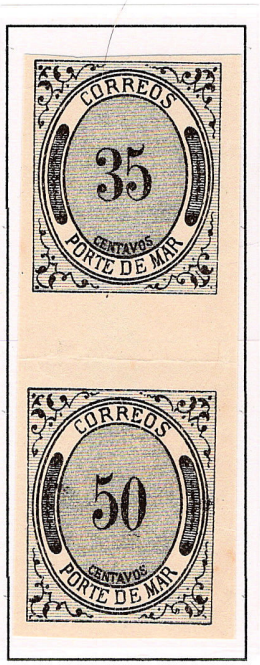
All of the eight possible combinations are shown here:

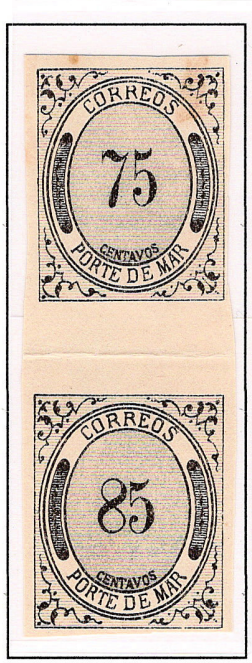


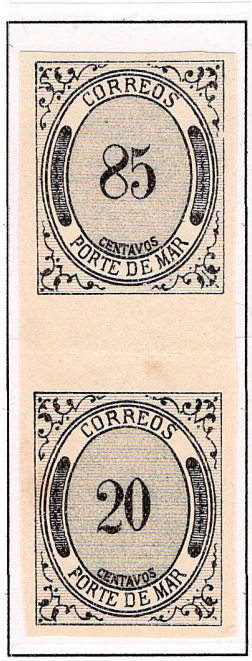














Forgeries: Second Spiro: Cross Gutter Pairs:

Four of the six possible combinations are shown here:









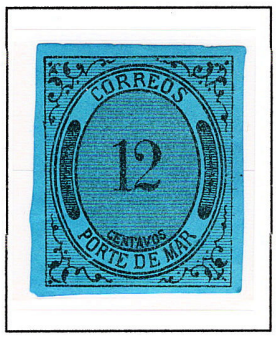
Forgeries: Second Spiro: Turquoise Paper:

Printing on bright turquoise blue paper (scarce)

























Forgeries: Second Spiro: Forged Cancels:

Forged cancels are plentiful:











Spiro forgeries with fake 'FRANCO EN TUXTLA CHICO' cancel and fake district overprints.







Forgery of a never-issued stamp. The 5c stamp was never issued as a Type IIA variety with small numerals.





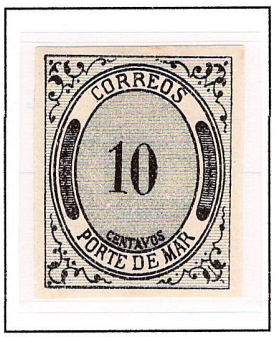


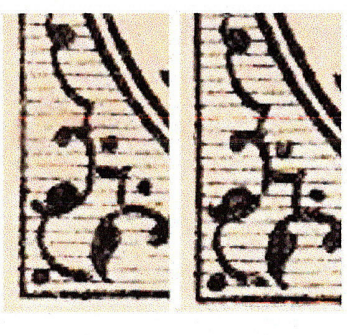












Variants of Spiro forgery with two dots in LL corner (above) - second dot added by hand. Magnification of left lower corner of pair of 100c stamps above shows that the second dot is in different positions, confirming that these were added after printing.

RESEARCH

Forgeries: Bonasi:

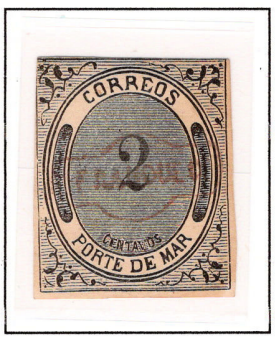
Attributed to Bonasi in Italy. Sold by Fournier. Numbers not 'inserted' and numerals often abnormally shaped. White or yellowish paper. Always 'cancelled' with red, black, blue, or purple ink or with red or blue crayon. Note variation in shape of numerals and variety of cancellations.





Lawrence Pawley (1957) distinguished two types of this forgery, based on the presence or absence of a spike on the lower of the two center leaves in the left upper corner ornament. Left = no spike; Right = spike present.













Fake 'COZACO DE VERACRUZ / FRANCO' cancel. The 5c value was never issued with small numerals.









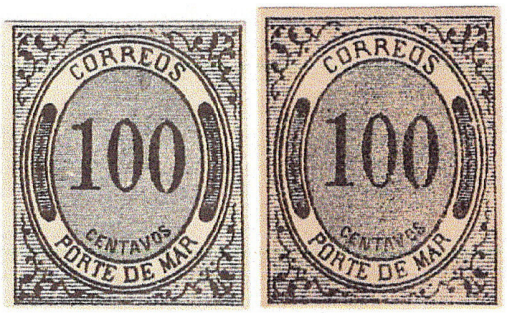


Forgeries: Bonasi:



Forgeries: Moens:

Produced by Jean-Baptiste Moens in 1877. **Dangerous**. **Forged stamps are 31.0 mm tall (genuine are 31.5 to 32 mm).** Printed on yellowish-white paper in black, red, and greenish-blue. All are Type IIB. Not known used. The 2, 10, 12, 20, 75, and 85 centavo stamps are forgeries of unissued stamps since these values were not produced with large numerals.



Forgery Genuine



Forgeries: Moens - Identifying Marks:

Based on a limited sample, the exhibitor has identified small imperfections which can be used to identify the forgeries. Some are shown below:



2c: Small dot under 'N' of 'CENTAVOS'



10c: Diagonal stroke of "N' in 'CENTAVOS' extends downward



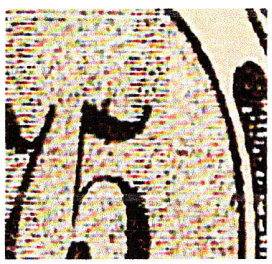
12c: Left stroke of 'N' in 'CENTAVOS' extends down



20c: Thin vertical line above '2'



25c: Dot in front of 'P' of 'PORTE'



75c: Small vertical line on flag of '5'



85c: Smear under first 'R' of 'CORREOS'



100c: Smear under 'E' of 'CORREOS'

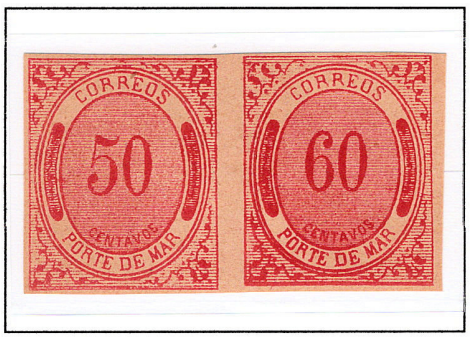
RESEARCH

Forgeries: Moens: Red and Blue-Green Printings:

These are the only copies known to the exhibitor:





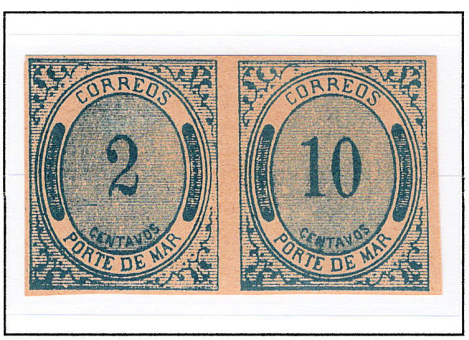


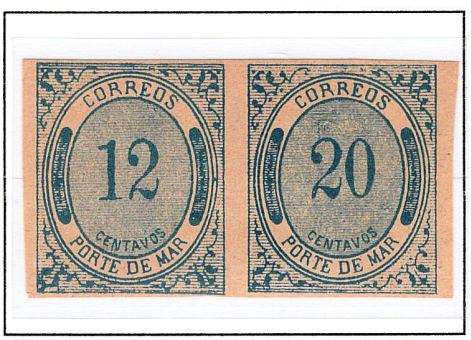


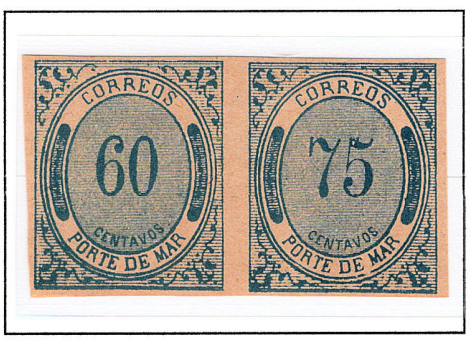


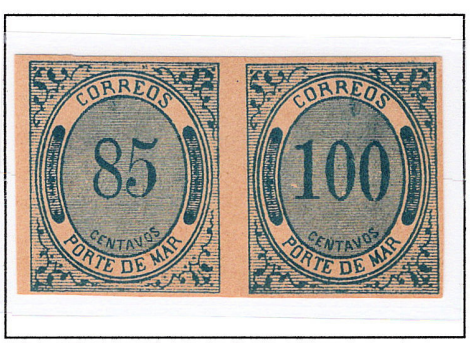








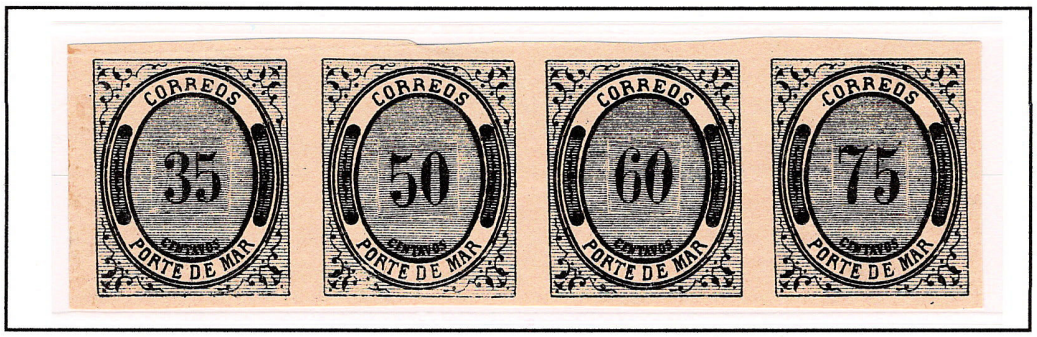






Forgeries: Unknown Origin:

Unknown Forgery - Scarce. Left upper corner ornament ends in down stroke, 'Insertion boxes' are faked. Three dots in left lower corner. Intense black printing. Printed as a composite sheet of 63 (7 x 9). All values shown here.

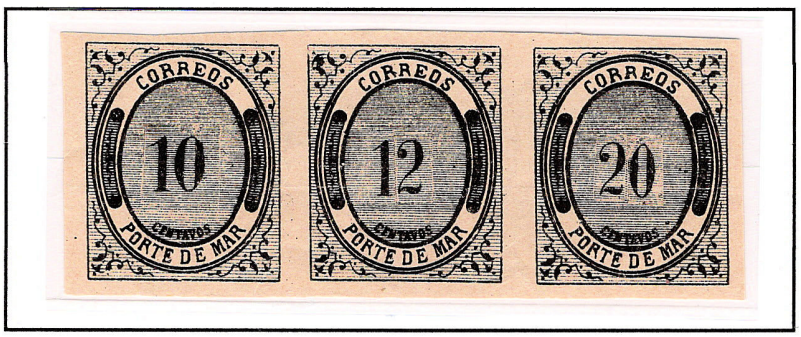


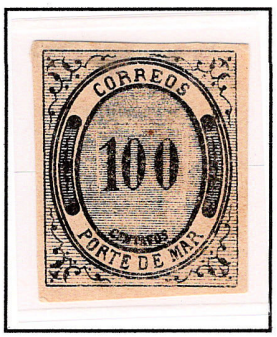




















These are rarely seen with faked cancels.

Forgeries: Plácido Ramón de Torres:

This Spanish forger started by engraving illustrations for stamp catalogs and philatelic reviews, and later used his original lithographic stones to produce and market fakes. Left upper corner ornament ends in short downstroke which is difficult to see. Only known in 10c value, type IIA, these are scarce to rare. Earée, in Album Weeds (Vol 5) uses this as his example of a genuine stamp (below).





White Paper: These two stamps show differences in minor details and the stamp on the right is slightly smaller, suggesting that more than one die was used.



Thin Yellow Paper

PORTE DE MAR STAMPS.

Issue of 1875. 2, 10, 12, 20, 25, 35, 50, 60, 75, 85, 100 Centavos, black on white.

Genuine.

Typographed (?), in black, on white or yellowish-white wove paper. Most of the numerals are evidently on movable plugs, as a rectangular piece, enclosing the numeral, can generally be plainly seen; because its own horizontal lines, and those of the rest of the background, do not join accurately. Taking the values in order, my specimens show movable plugs where I have put the brackets: [2], 10, 1[2], [2]0, [25], [35], [50], [60], [85], [100]. Thus it would appear that the 10 c. alone is normal, that the 12 and 20 c. are made from the 10 c., and that all the rest are movable. The central oval is filled with fine, horizontal lines, a hundred and one in number, the top one being no thicker than the rest, and the bottom one running clear below the lowest letters (NTAV) of



Issue III: 1878-79:

Lithographed on white wove paper in sheets of 100 (10 x 10), but not issued because Mexico joined the UPU in 1879 and Porte de Mar stamps became unnecessary.

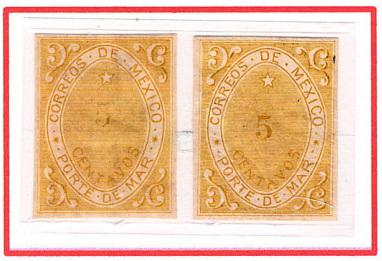
Watermarked 'ADMINISTRACION GENERAL DE CORREOS MEXICO.' Watermark covers about half of each sheet, but stamps with portions of watermarks are scarce, suggesting that the stamps were printed on both watermarked and unwatermarked paper. Imperforate, many shades.



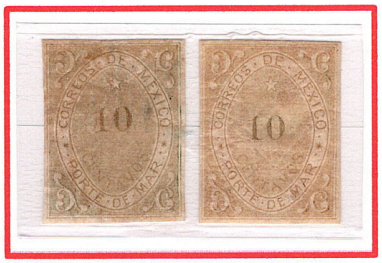
Illustration from Schimmer text, *Porte de Mar*

Essays:

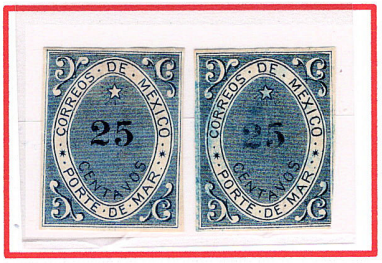
Engraved on thin vertically-laid paper. Only a few sets known. Note variation in position of numerals.



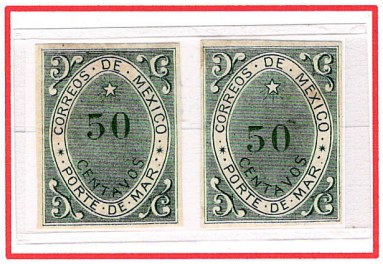
5c Yellow



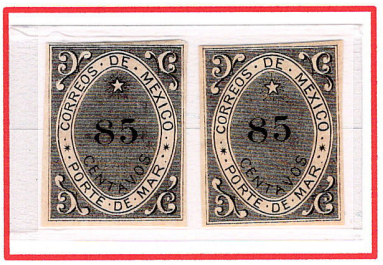
10c Pale Brown



25c Blue



50c Dark Green



85c Black

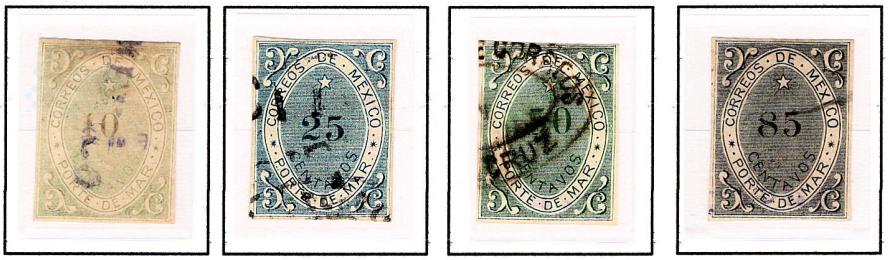


100c Pale Green

Issue III: Essays: Fake Cancels and Forgeries:



Genuine essays (left) were engraved, printed on thin vertically laid paper, and have faint lines radiating from the star at top. Forged essays (center) were lithographed, printed on thicker wove paper and do not have lines radiating from the star. The actual stamp (right) is much coarser than the essays, is slightly larger, and does not show the star at all.



Fake cancels on genuine essays



Lithographed forgeries of essays. All of these known to the exhibitor are of the 50c value, but they appear to have been printed from several different plates. More research is needed.

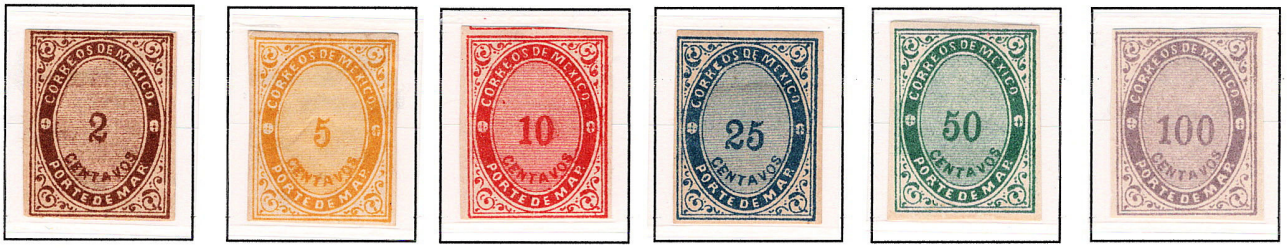
Issue III: Proofs:







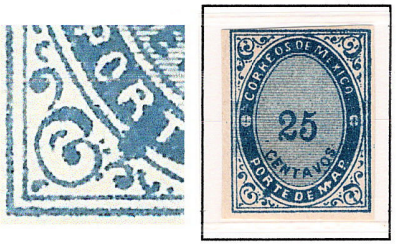
Issue III: Basic Stamps and Varieties:



Varieties: Printing was poor for this issue:

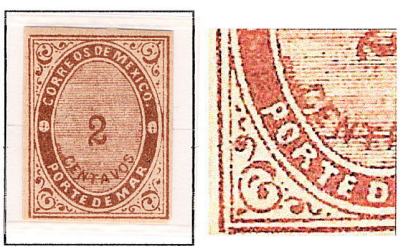
Thick downstroke of 'R' in 'MAR'

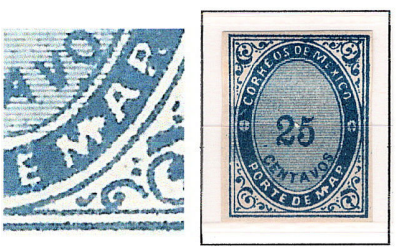




Colored Dot on oval between 'R' and 'T'

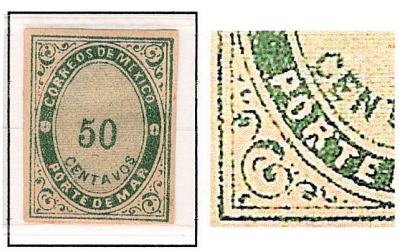
Brown blotch next to 'C' of 'CENTAVOS'

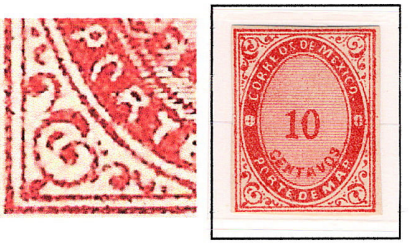




White spot on 'M' of 'MAR'

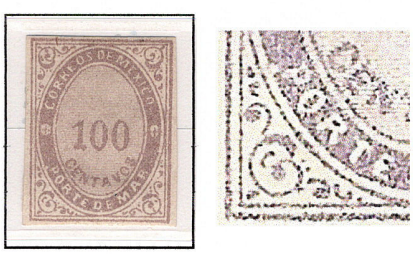
Dot below 'R' of 'PORTE'





Broken 'O' in 'PORTE'

White dot at base of 'P' in 'PORTE'

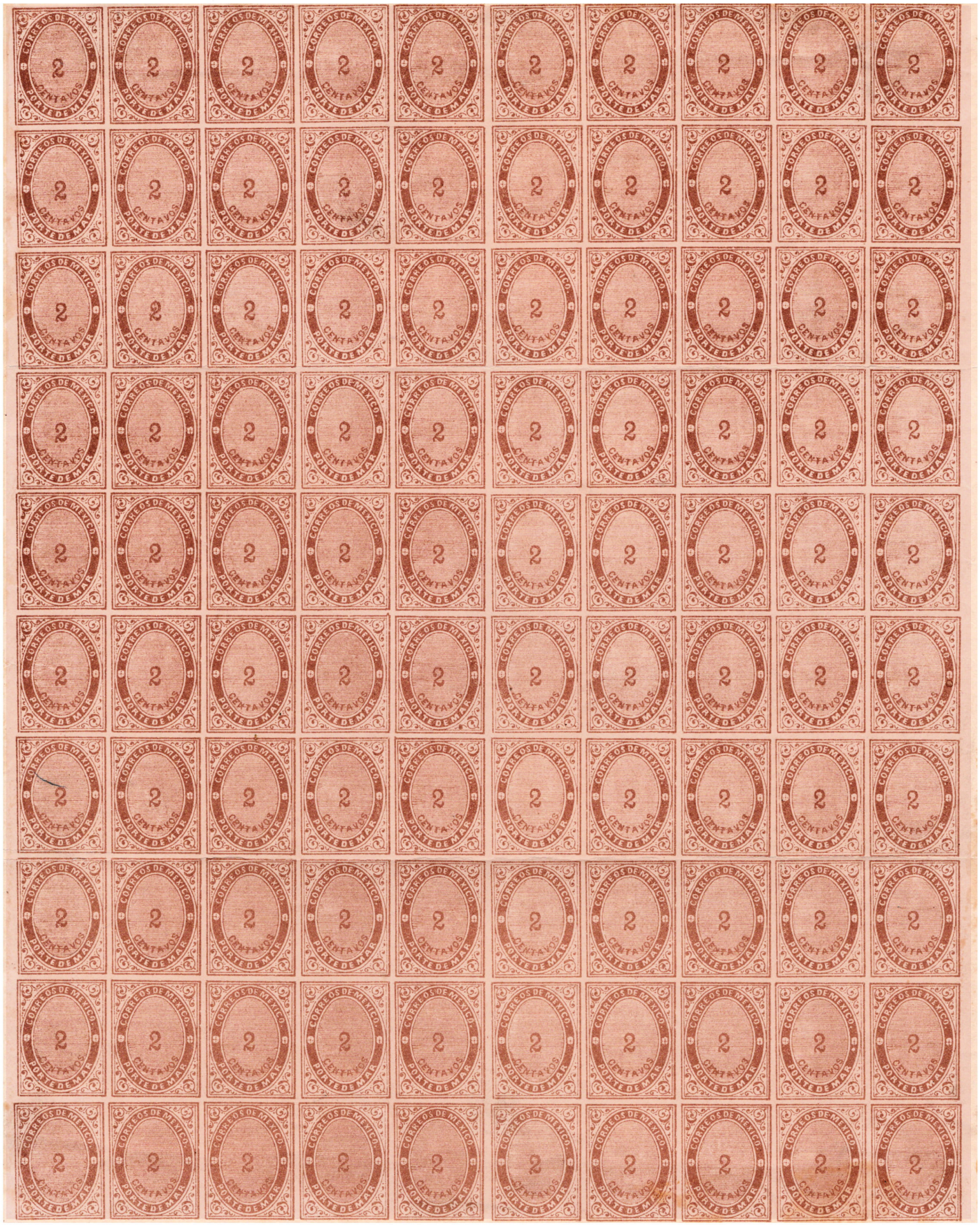




5c Printed on reverse - printer's waste

RESEARCH

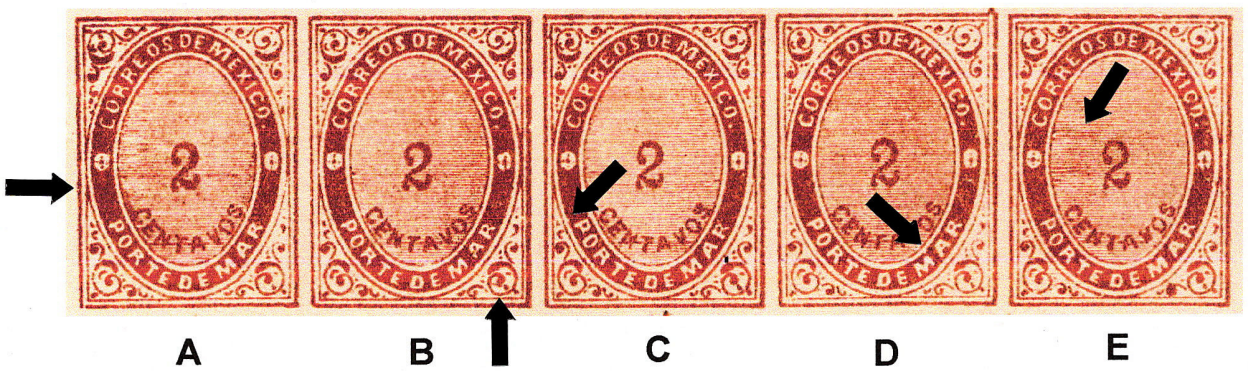
Issue III: Complete Sheet of 2 Centavo Value:



Issue III: New Research Data:

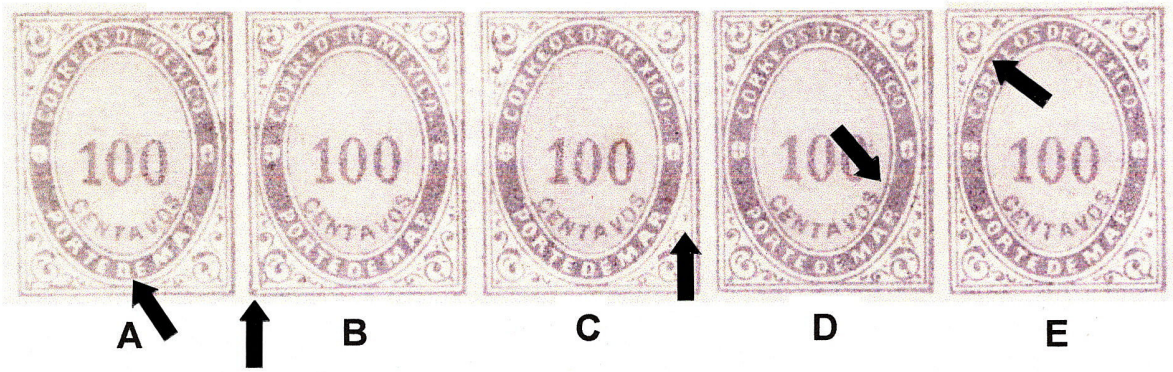
The use of a transfer stone for printing Types I, IIA, and IIB stamps is well known, however this aspect of the printing of Type III stamps has not been previously studied, possibly because of the difficulty in obtaining full and part sheets.

On the left is a full sheet of the 2c stamp. A study of this sheet shows that it was printed with a five-stamp transfer stone, which was applied **twice** for each row and used a total of 20 times to produce a sheet of 100 stamps. This would have reduced the number of transfers required from 100 to 25, including those used in preparing the transfer stone. A scan of a strip of five stamps is below:



Minute variations identify different positions on the transfer stone:

A. Smudge on left side of inner oval.
B. Diagonal line in right lower corner ornament.
C. Dot on outer oval, above 'P' of 'PORTE.'
D. White dot above 'M' of 'MAR.'
E. Heavy lines in oval to the left of numeral '2.'

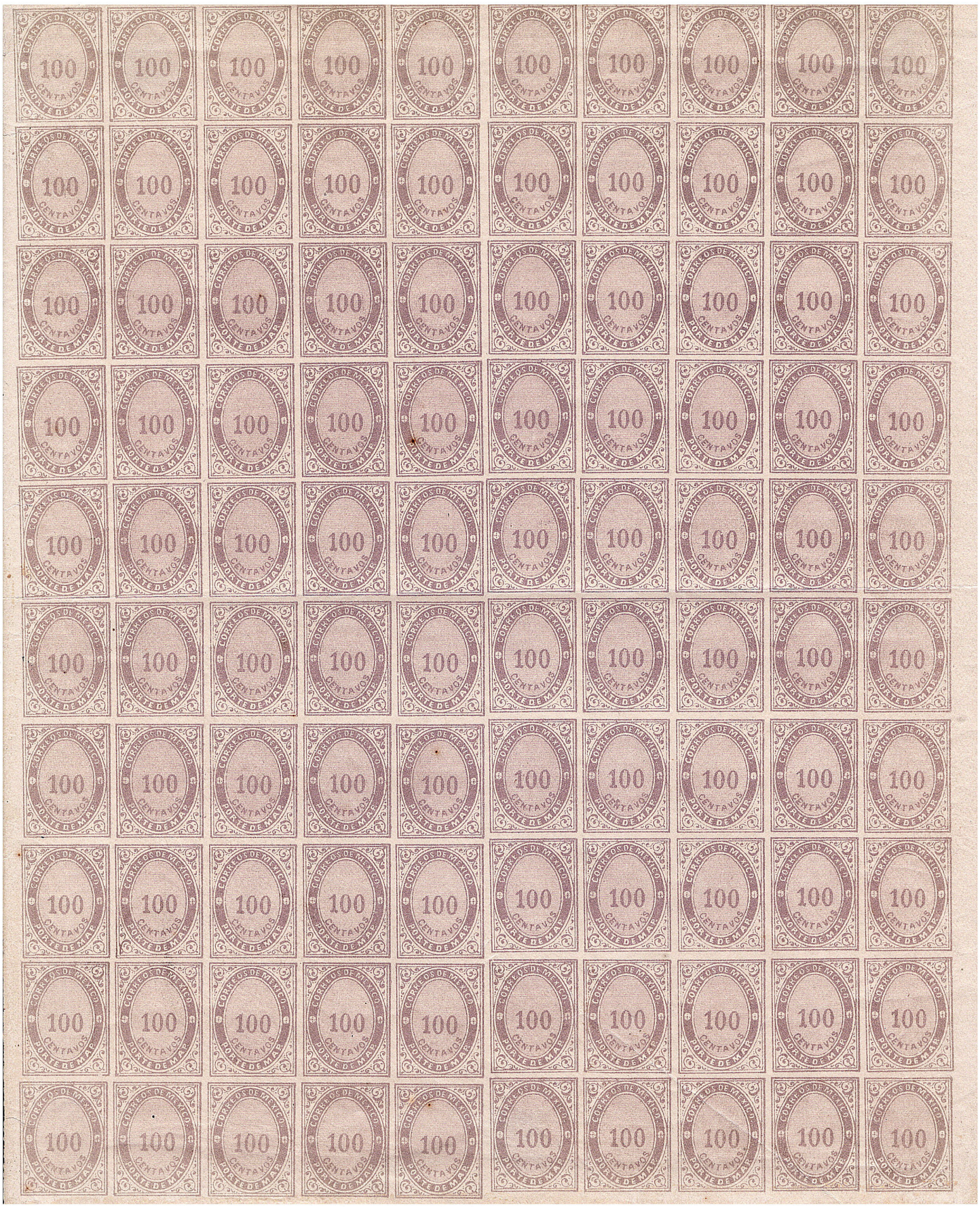


Similarly for the 100c stamp (Full sheet at right):

A. Dot on 'D' of 'PORTE DE MAR.'
B. Dot in left lower corner, between lines.
C. Shortened curved line to the right of 'R' in 'MAR.'
D. Small dash above 'S' of 'CENTAVOS.'
E. Thin line above second 'R' of 'CORREOS.'

RESEARCH

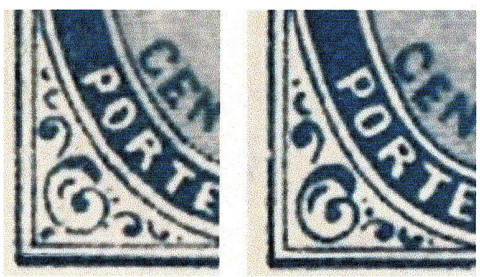
Issue III: Complete Sheet of 100 Centavo Value:



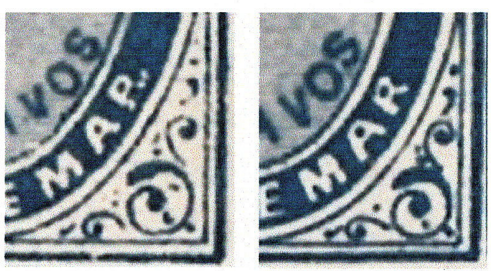
Forgery of Issue III: Mercier - Fournier:

One forgery of these stamps is known, attributed to François Fournier (or possibly Mercier whose stock was purchased by Fournier). Common and easily identified:





1. Genuine (L) have dots of color in all four corners. Almost all forgeries (R) lack this dot in the left lower corner.



2. Letters are crude in originals (L), better formed in fakes (R).Especially noticeable in the 'R' of 'MAR.'

3. There is also a slight color difference between the genuine stamps and the fakes, although this may be hard to appreciate unless they are side by side.

Genuine



Forgery

4. The horizontal background lines in the oval usually spill over into the space between the two lines which make up the border of the oval in the genuine stamps.

Forgeries of Issue III: Mercier - Fournier:

Forgeries are often seen with fake district overprints. SALTILLO, VERACRUZ, AND URES have been noted. Often cancelled with oval 'FRANCO EN TUXTLA CHICO.' Fake consignment numbers are also common.



Genuine stamps with forged cancels:

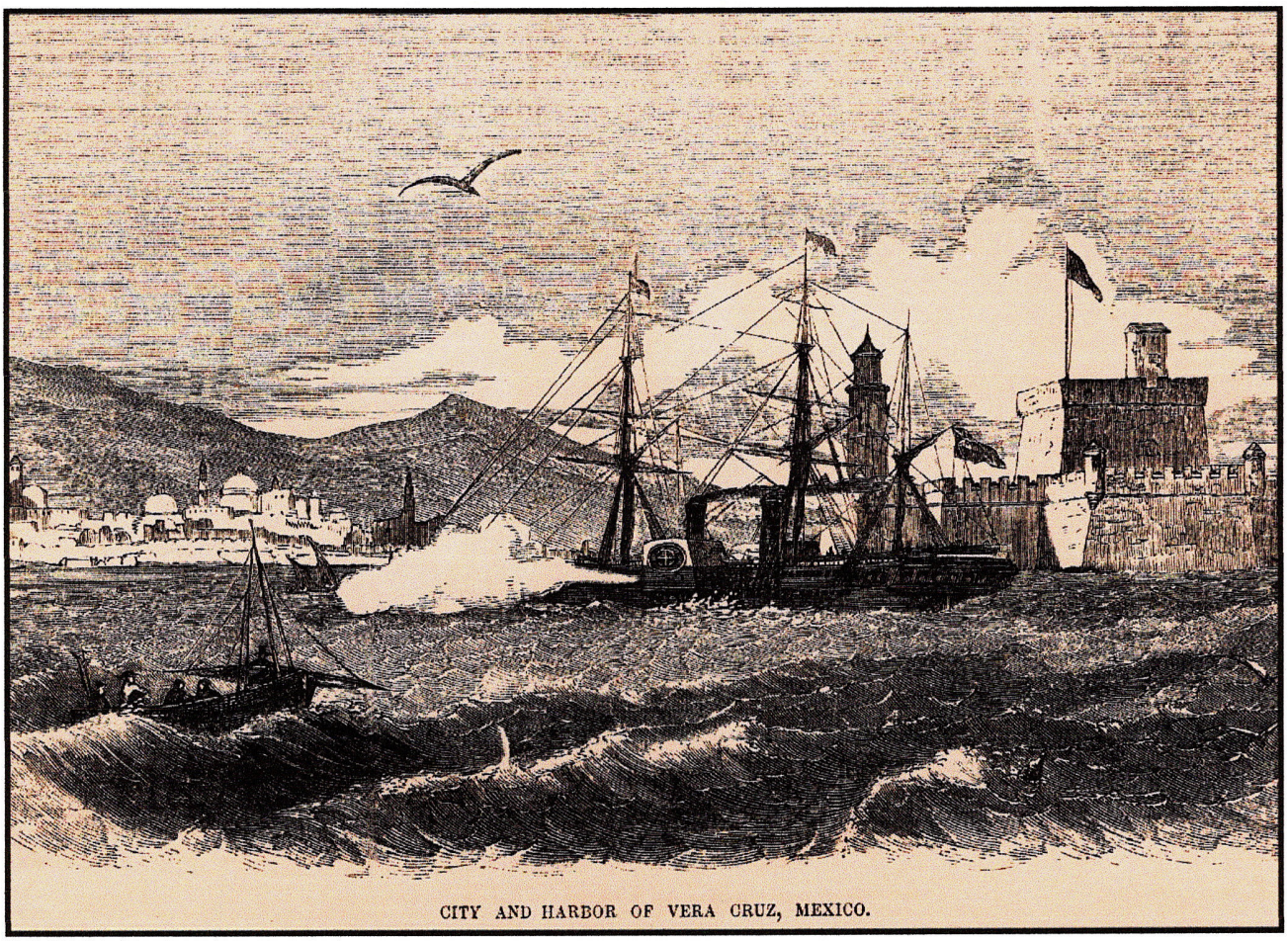




Mystery Stamp: Note '8s' on both sides of central numeral. The exhibitor has seen several other stamps with a similar, but not identical, design. Any information about this stamp would be appreciated.

Porte de Mar Postal History: Introduction:

The remainder of this exhibit is designed to showcase Mexican postal history during the Porte de Mar period. Porte de Mar covers are scarce. At the time these stamps were used, cover collecting was not in fashion and many of the stamps were removed or destroyed. It has been estimated (Herbert Strauss, 1973) that fewer than 100 covers survive, while Schimmer could only list 49 covers he considered genuine in his 1987 registry.



CITY AND HARBOR OF VERA CRUZ, MEXICO.

Most Mexican maritime mail during the Porte de Mar period passed through the City of Veracruz. This 1855 engraving, from "Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion." shows the Castle of San Juan d'Ulloa on the right, with a British mail steamer firing a gun as she enters the harbor. A small boat approaches the packet, perhaps to off-load the mail before the ship docks.

European Postal Agencies in Mexico:

The British and French governments maintained postal agencies in various Mexican cities, and they were bitterly resented by the Mexican Postal Service as an infringement on their sovereignty. Foreign agencies in port cities were visited regularly by British and French packet boats which transported mail to various overseas destinations. Once the Porte de Mar system was established, the Mexican postal authorities were able to deal directly with the packet ships, so the foreign postal agencies became unnecessary and were closed.

The British agency in Tampico was authorized to handle postage stamps, although the agency in Vera Cruz was not. Rare covers are known with mixed franking, such as the one below which was sent from Tampico to Veracruz on a British packet.



1872, Tampico to Veracruz. Franked with a Mexican 12c blue Hidalgo stamp tied by an oval Tampico cancel, this cover was sent to the British Agency in Tampico where a 4d British stamp (Scott 43a, plate 12) was added and cancelled with the 'C63' killer. Four pence was the single-weight tariff for maritime carriage.

A rare example of mail with mixed franking carried by the British Postal Service within Mexico (Cabotage Mail).

Forwarding Agents:

Although foreign postal agencies and consulates were sometimes used as forwarding agents (see previous page), there were many private companies which performed this function, since they were familiar with shipping schedules, the safest and fastest routes, and lowest costs.

Forwarding agent markings were usually hand-stamped on the fronts of covers with the company name, location, and date of posting, although sometimes manuscript notations were utilized. This service was often performed free or as part of an ongoing business relationship.



F. FORMENTO & CO; VERA CRUZ; Oct 30, 1869



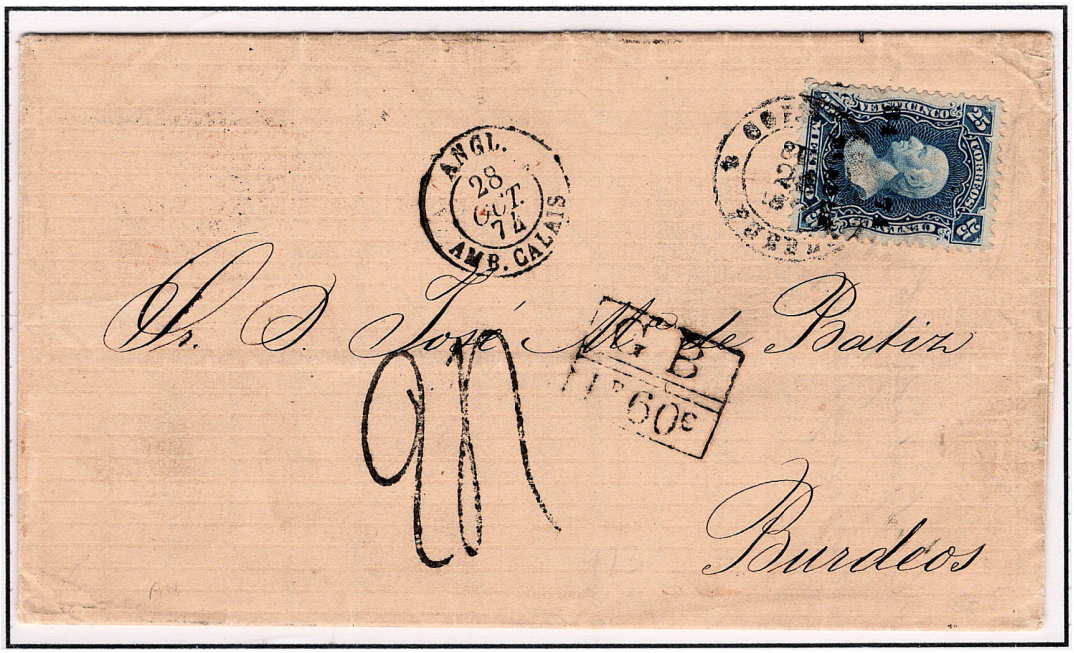
FRANCISCO GUMA & CO; MATANZAS

Why was the Porte de Mar System Necessary?

Mexican mail service was tumultuous in the 1860's and 70's. Mexican postal tariffs only paid for carriage to the port. The government had no ships to carry mail overseas and relied on arrangements with foreign shipping companies. In some cases mail carriage was subsidized with cash or remission of port fees, but the bulk of Mexican maritime mail was sent on British, French, and American ships which made periodic stops at the port of Veracruz, and most of these ships were not subsidized.

Mail to the home countries of the packet ships was not a problem - their postal services could charge recipients for maritime transport. However mail to a third country, such as the letter below, which was carried on the English packet to France, was often carried free, since the shipping company had no way of collecting fees from the recipient.

In January 1875, agents of both the British and French packets notified the Mexican Postal Service that they would not carry mail addressed to third countries unless the maritime transport charges were paid in advance. The Mexican Postal Service responded by setting up the Porte de Mar system, whereby the sender would pay both the internal charges (Mexican postage stamps) and the sea post charges (Porte de Mar fees), at the time of mailing. Initially there were no Porte de Mar stamps, but the public wanted some indication on the mail that sea postage had been paid, so Porte de Mar stamps, which the Postal Service referred to as 'contraseñas,' were issued, beginning in August 1875.



1874, Puebla to France (Bordeaux); Franked with Mexican 25c Hidalgo, cancelled Puebla 28 September. Sent on the British packet (London transit mark dated October 27 on reverse). Anglo-French accountancy tray (GB 1F 60c) indicates credit to British by weight - but this credit did not include any charges for maritime transport. Calais exchange marking is dated October 28, and the Bordeaux arrival marking (on reverse) is dated October 29. Probably a double-weight letter since 24 decimes were due from recipient (usual rate for single letters was 12 decimes).

This cover was carried free on the British packet since the British Post Office had no way to recover the cost of maritime carriage, and no compensation was provided by the Mexican Postal Service.

Porte de Mar Period Covers: SUMMARY:

List of covers shown on the next twenty pages

COVER NMBR	DATE	DESTINATION	MEXICAN POSTAGE	PORTE DE MAR POSTAGE	COMMENTS
1	Mar 1875	France (Grenoble)	25c	none	Porte de Mar fee collected but no
					stamps available.
2	May 1875	France (Le Havre)	none	none	Triple weight letter, sent before
					stamps were available.
3	May 1875	France (Bordeaux)	10c	none	No stamps available at this time.
4	**Sep 1875**	**Spain (Madrid)**	**25c**	**20c (JX 12)**	**Additional postage added at French**
					Postal Agency in Veracruz.
5	Dec 1875	France (Toulouse)	25c	10c (JX 10)	Usual fee for English packet.
6	**Mar 1876**	**Cuba (Habana)**	**10c**	**50c (JX 9a x2)**	**Rare Usage of scarce stamps**
7	Aug 1876	USA (New York)	25c	10c (JX 10)	Porte de Mar stamp not necessary.
					Probably #32 in Schimmer Registry.
8	Mar 1877	France (Paris)	none	10c (JX 10)	Mexican postage stamp removed.
9	Mar 1877	France (Bordeaux)	25c	10c (JX 10)	
10	April 1877	Spain (Madrid)	25c	10c (JX 10)	
11	April 1877	France (Toulouse)	25c	Probably 10c	Porte de Mar stamp partially
					removed. Small fragment remains.
12	Dec 1877	France (Toulouse)	25c	10c (JX 10)	Almost identical to cover above, but
					with entire Porte de Mar stamp.
13	May 1877	Spain (Madrid)	50c	35c (JX 10 +	Overweight letter. Rare postal rate.
				JX 21)	Schimmer Registry #41.
14	Mar 1878	France (Bordeaux)	25c	10c (JX 10)	
15	June 1878	France (Paris)	25c	10c (JX 10)	Possibly #35 in Schimmer Registry.
16	July 1878	Spain (Pendueles)	25c	10c (JX 10)	Sent directly from England to Spain.
17	Aug 1878	Spain (Madrid)	25c	10c (JX 10)	Sent to Spain through France.
18	July 1878	France (Versailles)	25c	10c (JX 10)	
19	Oct 1878	France (Mende)	25c	10c (JX 10)	Schimmer Registry #14.
20	**Mar 1880**	**France (Chambery)**	**5c**	**10c (JX 20 x2)**	**Protested Porte de Mar Period**

Cover numbers in left-hand column correspond to numbers in lower right corners of the following pages. Most covers have certificates of authenticity, mounted on reverse of page.

The Schimmer Registry is a listing of 49 covers that Karl Schimmer considered genuine and is in his text, *Porte de Mar,* on pages 130-33.

Porte de Mar Covers: Before there were Stamps:

The Porte de Mar system started in February 1875, however the first Porte de Mar stamps were not available until August of that year. This cover and the ones on the next two pages were posted when **Porte de Mar fees were collected but there were no stamps**.

It is easy to understand why the sender would be reluctant to pay Porte de Mar charges, since there are no markings on any of these covers which would serve as proof of payment. The postal patron would be (justifiably) concerned that his payment for sea postage might be pocketed by the postal clerk. This need to document that maritime postage had been paid, and hold postal employees accountable, was one reason why Porte de Mar stamps were introduced.



1875, Mexico City to Grenoble (France) via English packet. Franked with 25c Hidalgo profile stamp (Scott 109) bearing a Mexico City district overprint, this cover was carried on the Royal Mail steam packet *Corsica* which departed Veracruz on March 3 and arrived at St. Thomas (Virgin Islands) on March 17th. The cover then travelled on the *Elbe* which docked at Plymouth on March 30. It bears a London arrival mark on the reverse dated March 31,1875 and a French transit mark on the front with the same date. Twelve decimes was collected on delivery.

Note routing endorsement at lower left (Por el Paquete Inglesa) and Anglo-French accountancy tray (GB / $1^{F}60^{C}$), indicating bulk maritime credit due the British.

Porte de Mar Covers: Before there were Stamps:



1875, Tampico to Le Havre (France) via English ship. Triple weight letter, evidenced by '3' in upper left corner, and postage due of 36 decimes, three times the single rate. Both local and Porte de Mar fees were paid at the time of mailing, and it was carried on the ***Chilian*** (West India and Pacific Steam Ship Line) to Liverpool. It bears a 'LIVERPOOL SHIP' Arrival mark on reverse, dated May 3,1875 as well as a London ship letter marking dated May 4,1875. Note GB / $1^{F}60^{C}$ accountancy tray on front indicating bulk maritime credit to the British Post Office. 'PARIS AU HAVRE' and 'LE HAVRE' arrival markings on reverse.

There is no indication that the Porte de Mar fee was charged for this cover, since Porte de Mar stamps were not available at the time of mailing (probably March or April, 1875) however, the fee SHOULD have been charged, and probably was, in accordance with Mexican postal regulations issued in January 1875.

Porte de Mar Covers: Before there were Stamps:



1875, Veracruz to Bordeaux (France) via English packet. Franked with 10c Hidalgo profile stamp (Scott 107) with a faint Veracruz district overprint, this letter was carried on the Royal Mail Steam Packet *Ebro* which left Veracruz on May 4, 1875 and arrived at St. Thomas on May 16th. It was then sent on the *Moselle* which left St. Thomas on May 16th and arrived at Plymouth on May 29th. There is no London arrival mark, but it was undoubtedly carried on a British ship as evidenced by the Anglo-French accountancy marking (GB / $1^{F}60^{C}$) and the French transfer marking at Calais, dated May 31st. It bears a Bordeaux arrival mark (June 1, 1875) on the reverse.

Initially this cover was rated at 15 decimes due from the recipient, however this was obliterated by a dot cancel (AC lozenge used in Calais) and replaced with a hand-stamped marking of 12 decimes.

The standard Porte de Mar fee for a single letter on the English packet was ten centavos. It is interesting to note that the Mexican Post Office charged the same amount to carry this letter across the City of Veracruz as the British packet charged to carry it across the Atlantic. After Mexico joined the UPU (1879), its internal postage rates were drastically reduced.

Porte de Mar Covers: Additional French Stamps Added:



1875, Mexico City to Madrid via French Packet. Franked with Mexico 25c Hidalgo (Scott 109) and 20c Porte de Mar on reverse (JX 12), this cover was delivered to the French Postal Agency in Veracruz where a strip of five 40c French stamps (Scott 59) was applied, totaling 2 francs. (The 5th stamp in the strip is a scarce Type II).
It was cancelled with three strikes of the 'rhomboid anchor' device, and an octagonal French Consular cachet dated September 18, 1875 was applied.
Eight reales (red marking on front) was collected from addressee.
Markings at top are partially covered by the French postage. Left = España; Right = Vapor Française.

Only a few Porte de Mar covers with additional French postage are known. This cover represents a late usage of the 20c rate which was subsequently increased to 25c for maritime transport on French ships.

Certificate on back of page.

Porte de Mar Covers: Mexico City to Toulouse, France:



1875, Mexico City to Albas - Redirected to Toulouse - via English Packet.
Folded letter with internal date of November 30. London arrival mark (orange) dated Dec 30, 1875, with 'GB/1^{F} 90^{C}' accountancy tray partially covered by the cds of the receiving office (ANGL. AMB. CALAIS). Other receiving marks include Albas, Castelfranc, and Toulouse. Fifteen decimes due on delivery. Ten centavos Porte de Mar stamp tied by French transit marking.

The 'GB/1^{F} 90^{C}' accountancy marking was applied by the exchange office in Calais, and indicates that the British were due a credit of 1 franc 90 centimes for this mail in bulk, per 30 grams. This marking was normally used on mail from Peru via Panama between 1866-75, and may have been applied in error.



This is the only Porte de Mar cover bearing this marking. It is ex-Schimmer, and described in *Mexican Maritime Mail* (Schimmer and Heath, pages 299 and 302-3).

Porte de Mar Covers: Vera Cruz to Habana, Cuba:



1876, Vera Cruz to Havana via English packet. Endorsed 'Vapor ingles Eider' and franked with a joined pair of the scarce '5 on 2' overprint (JX9a), this cover illustrates the 50 centavo rate for a 1 to 2 ounce letter to Cuba on the English packet. Note smudged 'HABANA' arrival marking on reverse.

Porte de Mar covers to Caribbean destinations are rare. **This is the only cover known (to the exhibitor) which was carried by the English packet to Cuba, and the only cover known (to the exhibitor) which is franked with overprinted 2c stamps (JX9a).**

This cover is a good example of why the Porte de Mar system was necessary. Since Cuba was a Spanish possession, the Royal Mail Packet Service would have had no way of receiving compensation for maritime transport unless the Porte de Mar tariff was paid by the sender at the time of mailing.

MEPSI certificate on reverse of page.

Porte de Mar Covers: To the United States on an American Ship:



1876, Puebla to New York on American Ship. Posted from Puebla with a 25c inland postage stamp and a 10c Porte de Mar, without declaring which packet service should be used. The 'SHIP' and 'DUE 6' indicate that it was transported to New Orleans on an American ship and charged double the US inland rate for a letter addressed beyond the port of arrival. The addressee could not be found in New York so the letter was sent to the Dead Letter Office on September 27th.

Mail to the USA was not supposed to be charged Porte de Mar fees. It is likely that the Porte de Mar stamp was added by mistake, and the cover was simply handled in the usual manner by the postal authorities when it reached Vera Cruz. In fact, if this cover had been sent on either the British or French packets, it would have been sent back to New York from Europe.

This cover is discussed in the Schimmer text, Porte de Mar (page 104) and is number 32 in the Schimmer registry. MEPSI certificate on reverse of page.

Porte de Mar Covers: Mexico City to Paris via English Packet:



SCAN OF FRONT

1877, Mexico City to Paris via English Packet. Overland to Vera Cruz, then carried on the *Ebro* to St. Thomas, then on the *Don* to Plymouth, arriving March 30th. Original Mexican stamp has been removed from the front (probably a common 25c Hidalgo, Scott 109) and top of cover has been trimmed. Ten centavos Porte de Mar stamp on reverse tied by March 31st London arrival marking. T/1-10 indicates maritime credit to the British. Seventeen decimes due from recipient.

This cover is #9 in the Schimmer Registry. MEPSI certificate on back of page.

Porte de Mar Covers: San Luis Potosi to Bordeaux, France:



1877, San Luis Potosi to Bordeaux, France, via English Packet. Probably franked with 25c Mexican stamp (previously removed and replaced with similar stamp) which was canceled 'FRANCO EN SAN LUIS POTOSI'. Carried overland to Veracruz, then sent on the Royal Mail Steam Packet *Ebro* to St. Thomas, arriving March 15th. Transferred to *Don*, which departed March 17th and arrived in Plymouth on March 30.

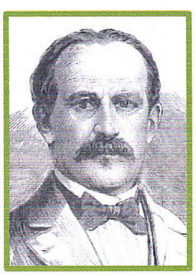
Note red London arrival marking (March 31), Calais transit mark, and Bordeaux arrival cancel (April 2). Black UPU accountancy handstamp (T/1-10) indicates credit to the British postal service. Seventeen decimes were due from recipient.

Most Porte de Mar covers were carried on the English Packet, which was less expensive than the French service. Since mail to the service's 'home' country was not charged Porte de Mar fees, most surviving covers were carried on the English packet and are addressed to France or Spain.

Porte de Mar Covers: Mexico City to Madrid:



1877, Mexico City to Madrid on English Packet: Carried on Royal Mail Steam Packet *Ebro* which departed Veracruz on March 3, and arrived at Saint Thomas on March 15. Transferred to *Don* which departed Saint Thomas on March 17, and arrived at Plymouth on March 30. London arrival mark dated March 31. T/1-10 marking indicates transfer to France with credit to the British and it was subsequently sent to Spain where 1.30 Reales was collected from the recipient. MEPSI certificate on reverse of page.



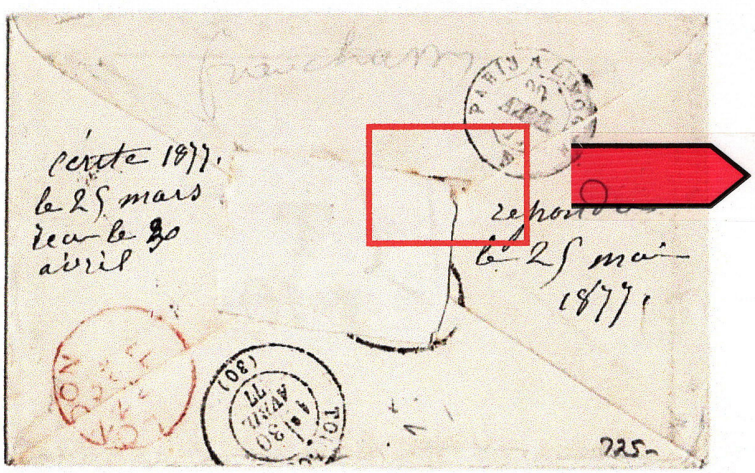
Who was Francisco Mendoza-Cortina? Four covers in this section were sent to this individual. He was born in Asturias, Spain, in 1815, emigrated to Mexico at the age of 20, and made his fortune in farming and trade. He returned to Madrid in 1859 and devoted himself to business, politics, and philanthropy. He constructed a large mansion in his home town of Pendueles and was elected deputy to the Cortes three times, as well as senator for life. He died in 1880. Most of the Mendoza-Cortina correspondence concerns family matters and information about his friends and business acquaintances.

Porte de Mar Covers: Stamp Incompletely Removed:

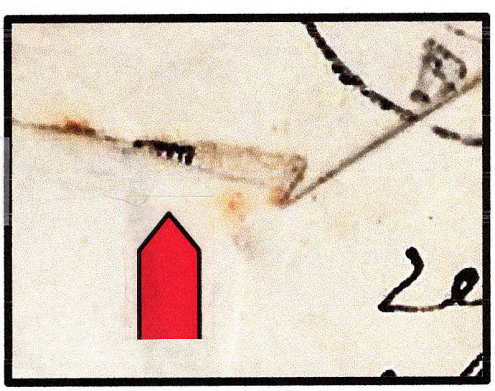
Porte de Mar stamps were not sold to the public but early stamp albums included spaces for them, so they were avidly sought by collectors and often removed from covers, as in this example. A scan of the reverse of this cover (lower left) shows that a Porte de Mar stamp was cut away, but a small portion of the stamp remains (enlargement at lower right), proving that a Porte de Mar stamp was originally present.



1877, Queretaro (Mexico) to Toulouse via English Packet. 'Franco en Queretaro' on front (two slightly different oval cancellations dated March 25), red London arrival mark on reverse, Calais arrival mark on front, Paris to Limoges transit mark on reverse, and Toulouse arrival mark on reverse (April 30). "T/1-10" exchange marking and 17 (decimes) postage due marking on front.



Scan of Reverse



Enlargement of area outlined in red, showing the right lower corner of a Porte de Mar stamp (vertical arrow).

This is an example of a cover from which the **Porte de Mar stamp has been incompletely removed**, probably by a collector trying to fill an album space. It is virtually identical to the cover on the next page, which is from the same correspondence and has retained its Porte de Mar stamp.

RESEARCH

Porte de Mar Covers: Queretaro to Toulouse via English Packet:



Front



1877-78, Queretaro to Toulouse, via English Packet. 'Franco en Queretaro / December 26' on front, two different strikes, one tying Mexican adhesive paying internal postage (Scott 109, 25c Hidalgo). Endorsed, 'Paquete Ingles' on front. Reverse franked with 10c Porte de Mar, tied by oval Queretaro postmark.

Note London transit mark on reverse (Jan 28, 1878), Calais transit mark on front, and Toulouse arrival mark on reverse. 'T / 1-10' indicates credit to British service, and 17 decimes were due from the recipient.

This cover is ex-Schatzkes. It is virtually identical to the interesting cover shown on the previous page. MEPSI certificate on reverse.

Porte de Mar Covers: Mexico City to Madrid: 35c Rate:



1877, Mexico City to Madrid via English Packet. Overweight letter franked with Mexico 50c Hidalgo (Scott 110), with 35c in Porte de Mar stamps (JX10 and JX21) on reverse. Stamps probably damaged when letter was opened. There is a London transit mark, and a Madrid Exchange Office marking dated June 1, 1877. Absence of an Anglo-French accountancy tray or any French postal markings suggests that this cover went directly from England to Spain. The manuscript '2' and '220' in blue crayon may have been added in the exchange office to indicate weight, and credit due the British Postal Service. Two Reales 60 Pesetas were due on delivery.

Probably carried on the Royal Mail Steamship Company ship *Ebro* which departed Veracruz on May 3 and arrived at St. Thomas on May 14th. Then transferred to the *Nile* which arrived at Plymouth on May 29.

The rare 35c Porte de Mar rate is probably a consequence of the weight. This cover is number 41 in the Schimmer Registry. MEPSI certificate on back of page.

Porte de Mar Covers: Tesiutlan to Bordeaux via English Packet:



1878, Tesiutlan to Bordeaux (France) via English Packet; Endorsed 'Vapor Yngles' and franked with a blue 25c Hidalgo (Scott 109, Jalapa district name) and 10c Porte de Mar (Scott JX 10), this cover is docketed as written on March 25, 1878. It was sent on the Royal Mail Steamship Company ship *Tiber* which left Veracruz on April 3, arriving at St. Thomas on April 15. From there it was transferred to the *Don* which reached Plymouth on April 26. There is a London arrival mark (April 27), a Calais exchange cancel (April 27), and a Bordeaux arrival mark (April 28). The T / 1-10 marking indicates bulk credit to the British, and 17 decimes were collected from the recipient.

Both the 25c stamp and the 10c Porte de Mar stamp are tied by boxed 'FRANCO TESIUTLAN' handstamps, although there was no requirement that the Porte de Mar stamp be cancelled. Tesiutlan was a sub-office of Jalapa (also spelled Xalapa). MEPSI certificate on reverse of page.

Porte de Mar Covers: Mexico City to Paris:



1878, Mexico City to Paris via English packet. Inland postage (Mexico City to Vera Cruz) paid with 25 centavo Hidalgo issue (Scott 109) and maritime transport paid with 10 centavo Porte de Mar (JX 10). Endorsed 'Paquete ingles.' Red-orange London transit mark on reverse dated June 27 and Calais arrival mark on front dated June 28. T / 1-10 indicates bulk maritime credit to the British. Sixteen decimes collected from recipient. MEPSI certificate on reverse of page.

Carried on the Royal Mail Steamship Company ship *Ebro* which departed Vera Cruz on June 2, arriving at St. Thomas on June 13th. Then transferred to *Medway* which left St. Thomas on June 15th and docked at Plymouth on June 27.

Porte de Mar Covers: Mexico City to Pendueles, Spain:



1878, Mexico City to Spain via English Packet. Franked with Mexican 25c Hidalgo and 10c Porte de Mar, the usual single letter rate for English ships. Carried on the *Ebro* which departed Veracruz on July 4, arriving at St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands, on July 14, then on the *Moselle,* which left St. Thomas on July 16, and arrived at Plymouth on July 28. Note orange-red London transit cancel dated July 29.

The accountancy handstamp (T / 1-10) which indicates bulk maritime credit to the British (from France) has been crossed out and there are no French arrival markings, indicating that this cover went directly from England to Spain. On arrival in San Sebastian, the 'IRUN / SAN SEBASTIAN / 1 AGO 78' and 'R^da via DE INGLATERRA' markings were applied and the cover was rated at 1.30 Spanish pesetas due. MEPSI certificate on back of page.

Porte de Mar Covers: Mexico City to Madrid, via France:



1878, Mexico City to Madrid via English Packet. Franked with 25 centavo Hidalgo and 10 centavo Porte de Mar on reverse, tied by Madrid exchange office arrival cancel (August 1). Sent via English packet with 'T / 1-10' British maritime credit (in French francs) and 1,30 Spanish pesetas collected on delivery.

It is interesting that this cover and the one on the preceding page were both carried on the same Royal Mail Steam Packet vessels (*Ebro* from Veracruz to St. Thomas and *Moselle* from there to England). However, they were handled differently after arrival in London, perhaps because the destination of the cover on the previous page (Pendueles) is on the northern coast of Spain, whereas Madrid is an interior destination. MEPSI certificate on reverse of page.

Porte de Mar Covers: Puebla to Versailles (France):



1878, Puebla to Versailles, France. Franked with 25 centavo blue Hidalgo (Scott 109) with 'PUEBLA' district overprint, and 10 centavo Porte de Mar (Scott JX 10) on reverse. Endorsed 'Por el paquete Ingles' on front.

Note orange-red London arrival mark dated July 29, 1878, French exchange marking (ANGL / AMB.CALAIS), and Versailles arrival mark dated July 30, 1878. 'T / 1-10' indicates British maritime credit (in French francs).Sixteen decimes collected from recipient.

Probably carried on the same Royal Mail ships as the preceding two covers – *Ebro* to St. Thomas, then *Moselle* to Plymouth, docking on July 28, 1878. MEPSI certificate on reverse of page.

Porte de Mar Covers: Mexico City to Mende, France:



1878, Mexico City to Mende, France, via English Packet. Carried on the *Tiber* which left Veracruz October 3 and arrived at St. Thomas (Virgin Islands) on the 13th. Then on the *Para* which arrived in Plymouth October 27. Note red London transit mark (Oct 28) and Mende arrival marking dated Oct 29. 'T / 1-10' shows bulk credit to the British (in French francs), and '16' on front indicates postage due (in decimes). This cover is ex-Schimmer (#14 in his registry). Certificate on reverse of page.

Porte de Mar Covers: Protested Porte de Mar Period:

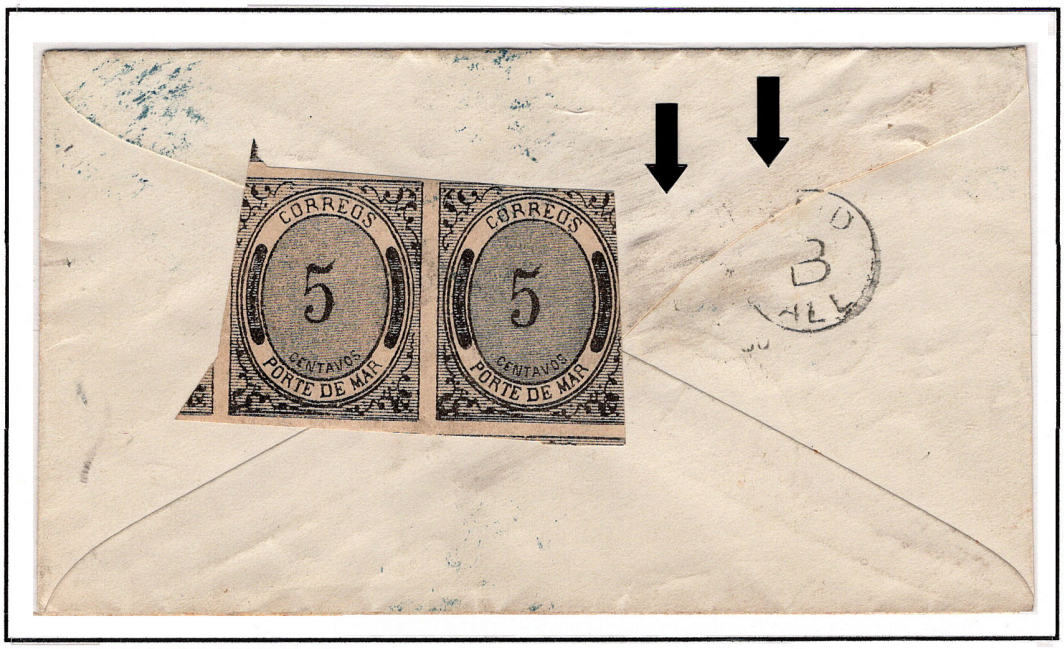
When Mexico joined the UPU, they did not expect to continue the Porte de Mar system. However, in January 1880 the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (RMSP) announced that they would not carry mail from Mexico to countries other than Britain unless the payments were continued. Mexico appealed to the UPU, but allowed the charges to be collected and paid to the RMSP in the interim. In June 1880, the UPU ruled in favor of Mexico and no further Porte de Mar fees were collected.

This period, from January to June 1880, is known as the **Protested Porte de Mar Period**. Letters were sent at the lower UPU rates, using the newly-issued 'foreign mail' stamps, but in some cases, Porte de Mar stamps were still required. Only five covers with this combination franking are known (Schimmer & Heath, 1997).



1880, Mexico City to Chambéry, France.
Franked with 5c foreign-mail stamp (Scott 125) and two 5c Porte de Mar stamps (JX 20), this cover was mailed in March 1880, during the protested Porte de Mar period. It is endorsed 'Via Southampton' indicating its intended transit on a British ship, and arrived in London on March 30. It was transferred to France at Calais, and reached Chambéry on March 31. This cover is ex-Koenig and ex-Behr. It is signed by Pascal Behr. Certificate on reverse of page.

Faked Porte de Mar Cover:





SCAN OF FRONT

This cover was mailed from Mexico City to Worcester, Massachusetts, via Havana (faint purple oval cancel on front). It was sent in March 1880, during the 'protested Porte de Mar period,' and is franked with a 5c Mexican foreign mail stamp (Scott 125), which is the correct UPU rate.

The basic cover is genuine, however on the reverse there are two Porte de Mar stamps and a New York 'PAID / B / ALL' marking (arrows) which should consist of a pair of circular marks applied together and which should have been **ON TOP** of the Porte de Mar stamps. Much of this marking has been erased. This is a legitimate 'foreign mail' cover, which has been modified by the addition of Porte de Mar stamps, and partial erasure of a New York arrival cancel. **Caveat Emptor!**

RESEARCH

Exempt Mail: To Home Countries of Shipping Companies:

Not all maritime mail required the use of Porte de Mar stamps. This section presents examples of correspondence which, for a variety of reasons, was sent without Porte de Mar stamps.

Mail sent on British or French ships **to their respective countries** was not subject to Porte de Mar charges, since their governments had arrangements with their own ships for mail carriage and could collect maritime fees from the recipients.



1876, Veracruz to Lyon, France, carried on the French packet *Ville de St. Nazaire*. Posted in Veracruz, WITHOUT any Porte de Mar charges. Note octagonal 'PAQ FR. B No 1' marking. Twelve decimes (single rate) charged to recipient, which included maritime fees.

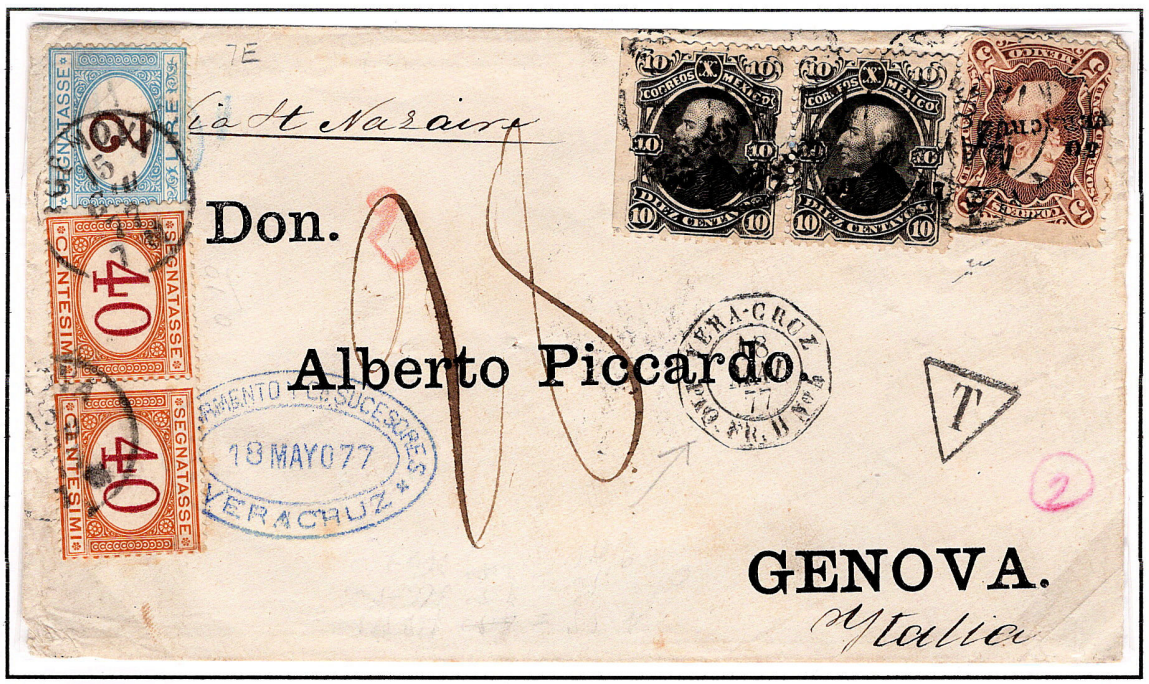
1879, Mexico City to Nantes. Double weight cover carried on French packet. 'PAQ. FR. B. No 4' octagon on front (*Ville de Brest*); Orange St. Nazaire arrival cancel (faint) on front. Twenty-four decimes charged to addressee (rate after January 1, 1876). No Porte de Mar fees were charged since letter was carried on French packet to France.



Exempt Mail: To Certain European Countries:

Mail carried on the French Packet to European countries other than Spain was not subject to Porte de Mar charges. Presumably the French Postal Service had arrangements with other European countries to collect payment for maritime transport.

This exemption did not apply to letters carried on the English packet.



1877, Veracruz to Genoa, Italy, Franked with 25c Mexican postage (Scott 106 and 107 X2). Sent via St. Nazaire (French Packet). Note octagonal 'VERA-CRUZ / 18 MAI 77 / PAQ. FR. B No 4' marking. Manuscript '28' on front probably represents credit to the French of 28 decimes. Recipient in Genoa was charged 2 lire plus 80 centesimi (Italy J9 and J14). **Since this cover was sent on the French packet to a European country other than Spain, it was not subject to Porte de Mar charges.**

Although it is difficult to see, the second stamp of the joined pair of 10c stamps is missing the Veracruz district overprint.

Exempt Mail: Carried on Subsidized Ships:

The Mexican Postal Service had contracts with the Alexander & Sons Shipping Company which made periodic trips between Sisal (in the Yucatán), Vera Cruz, Havana, and New York. The company was subsidized with cash payments as well as remission of port and lighthouse fees. Most mail to the US was carried on these ships to New York or New Orleans, and Porte de Mar fees were not required.



1877, Vera Cruz to Havana. Franked with Mexico ten centavo stamp (Scott 107) bearing VERACRUZ district overprint. Three reales collected from recipient. Endorsed 'Por 'City of Havana,' a ship of the Alexander & Sons line.



1876, Mexico City to New York, (Steamship mark on reverse), charged three cents US currency. Addressee could not be found so letter was sent to the US Dead Letter Office and subsequently to the Mexican Dead Letter Office (numeral 127 in RU corner on front).

Exempt Mail: To Europe THROUGH the United States:

Porte de Mar fees could be avoided on mail to Europe if it was sent through the United States.



1875, Tampico to Liverpool, via New York. No Porte de Mar fee was required. This cover travelled from Tampico on the Alexander & Sons ship, *City of Havana* (endorsement at top right) and arrived at New York on September 1, 1875. It was transferred to a British ship and arrived in Liverpool on September 12. It was rated at 6 pence, however the recipient could not be found.

In accordance with British postal regulations, it was sent to the 'Returned Mail Office' in London (arrival mark on reverse), and the reason for its return - UNKNOWN - written in red ink on the front. It was subsequently returned to Mexico. The numeral '391' on the front was applied by the Mexican dead letter office.



1877, Vera Cruz to France via New Orleans and New York. No Porte de Mar fee was required. 1.05 francs due on receipt in Sainte-Foy-la-Grande. (Front of cover only).

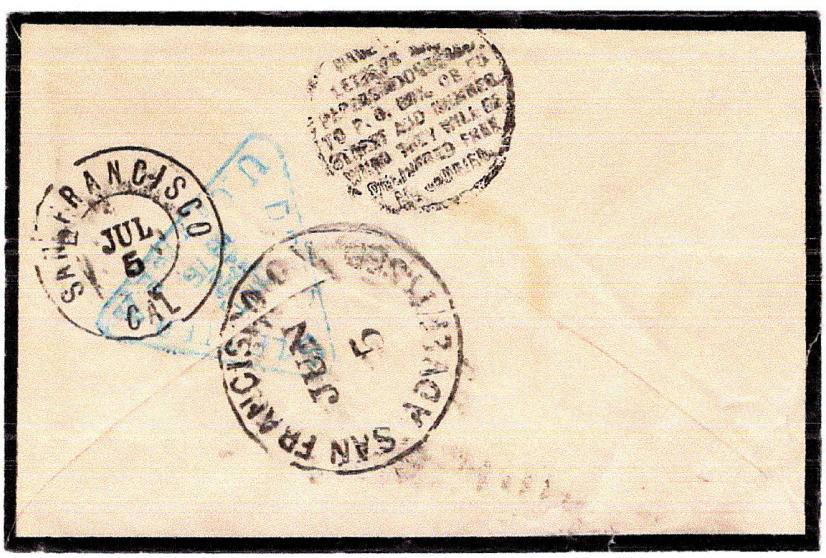
Exempt Mail: Sent from West Coast of Mexico:

Porte de Mar fees were only required on mail sent through the port of Veracruz.



1876, Mazatlán to San Francisco. Scan of reverse is shown below. Franked with common 25c Mexican stamp (Scott 109) with Mazatlán district overprint, this interesting mourning cover arrived in San Francisco on May 23 (steamship marking on front). The recipient could not be found, despite it being advertised, and it ended up in the Dead Letter Office (triangular marking on reverse). The '5' in orange crayon may be an uprated postage due charge after the cover was advertised.

The reverse shows an interesting circular marking, urging senders to address mail to a specific post office box or street address where it would be delivered free.



Scan of reverse

Historical Parallel: United States Freight Money Mail:

In the first half of the nineteenth century, it was common for transatlantic ship captains to carry mail for a fee, which was referred to as 'freight money.' The usual rate from New York to the United Kingdom was 25c for covers carried on steamships and 12½ cents for sailing vessels. Starting in 1838, postmasters in selected US cities were authorized to collect this fee at the time of mailing, and forward it to the New York Postmaster, who would give it to private non-contract ship captains as payment for mail carriage. Later, postmasters were allowed to forward the fees directly to the shipping companies. Thus, US postmasters were acting as collection agents for private enterprises. This practice was discontinued after only a few years.

This system was similar to what the Mexican Postal Service did almost forty years later, with the Porte de Mar system. **In both cases, government postal officials collected funds which were paid to non-contract ship captains for transatlantic mail carriage.**

A variety of markings were used on these covers, which are scarce. Often the postmasters would list the separate or combined charges in the upper right corner of freight money letters. One such example is shown below.

A comprehensive discussion of this subject is in the book, Understanding Transatlantic Mail, Volume 1 (pages 87-92), by Richard F. Winter.



RESEARCH

1841, Triple-rate letter from Baltimore to London, via New York and Liverpool, sent on a sailing ship. The freight money fee was 12½ x 3 = 37½ cents, while the inland postal charge was 18¾ cents x 3 = 56¼ cents. Both of these amounts were written in the upper right corner, and the total was paid by the consignor. The cover and freight money were sent to New York and given to the captain of the 'Liverpool packet of July 7th' as indicated on the front. This was probably the Red Star Line ship 'Roscius' which was known for its fast transit times. On arrival in the United Kingdom, it was stamped 'LIVERPOOL / SHIP LETTER' twice (on reverse) and forwarded to London where it received a July 29,1841 arrival marking (also on reverse).

The British postmaster crossed out the US postage marks in the upper right corner and rated it as 8 pence due from recipient.

EPILOGUE: Mexico and the UPU:

Mexico signed the Convention of Paris in 1878, however UPU membership required a re-organization of the postal service which was not complete until 1883. Since UPU postal rates to foreign countries did not require payment to ships for maritime transport, the Porte de Mar system became obsolete.

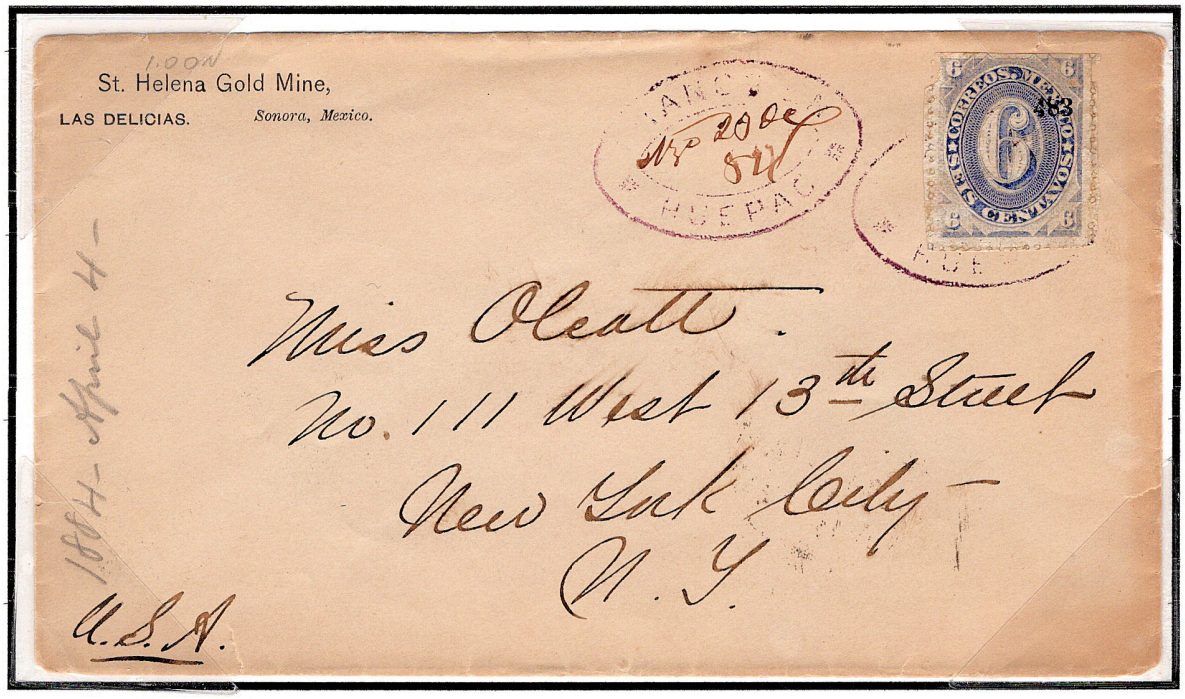
Special stamps were issued between 1879 and 1883, to be used exclusively on foreign mail, with special cancels, and separate post office accounting. There were only two designs (see scans), but there are many paper, perforation, and overprint varieties:



Benito Juárez



Numeralito



1884, Las Delicias to New York, via Huepac (Sonora). Late usage of a six centavo foreign mail stamp (Scott 149), which paid the single UPU rate. Sent from Huepac on March 20, arrived in New York April 4.

EPILOGUE: Mexico and the UPU:

In accordance with UPU regulations, postcards were introduced - initially for foreign mail only - at a reduced rate. This early example, known as a 'formular (or formula) card' was printed without stamps and had no postal validity until stamps were added by the postal clerks.



1880, Veracruz to Egypt via London. Arrived in Alexandria Dec 7, (back stamp). Postage was two centavos (basic UPU rate from 1879) plus the 'second tariff' of one centavo added in 1880 for maritime transport. **Possibly the earliest recorded Mexican postcard to Africa.**

In 1884, the Foreign Mail stamps were replaced with the Hidalgo Medallion issue, which was used for both foreign and domestic mail.

After Mexico joined the UPU, maritime mail became a lot less expensive, a lot less complicated, and - in this exhibitor's opinion - a lot less interesting.

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