

The First Postal Issues of Spanish Antilles (1855-1865).



April 1855 - loops watermark



September 1855 - loops watermark



1856 - crossed lines watermark



1857-1863 - no watermark

Table of Contents

| | Page |
|--|------|
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1. Historical Background | 1 |
| 1.2. Stamp Production | 1 |
| 1.3. Official Canceler | 3 |
| 1.4. The 90% Rule | 3 |
| 2. Archival Material | 3 |
| 2.1. Essays | 3 |
| 2.2. Proofs | 3 |
| 2.3. Printers Waste | 4 |
| 3. Loops Watermark | 4 |
| 3.1. Watermark Variations | 6 |
| 3.2. Half Real | 6 |
| 3.3. One Real | 7 |
| 3.4. Two Reales | 7 |
| 3.4.1. Carmine Red | 7 |
| 3.4.2. Orange Red | 8 |
| 3.5. Y¼ Surcharges of 1855 | 8 |
| 3.5.1. Carmine Red - Tall & Narrow Y | 9 |
| 3.5.2. Carmine Red - Short & Wide Y | 10 |
| 3.5.3. Orange Red - Tall & Narrow Y | 11 |
| 3.5.4. Orange Red - Short & Wide Y | 11 |
| 3.5.5. Mixed Pairs | 11 |
| 4. Crossed Lines Watermark | 12 |
| 4.1. Half Real | 12 |
| 4.2. One Real | 12 |
| 4.3. Two Reales | 13 |
| 5. No Watermark | 13 |
| 5.1. Half Real | 14 |
| 5.2. One Real | 14 |
| 5.3. Two Reales | 14 |
| 5.4. Y¼ Surcharges of 1860 | 14 |
| 6. Use on Revenue Documents | 17 |
| 7. Use as Postage Due Stamps | 17 |
| 7.1. Internal Mail | 17 |
| 7.2. Incoming Foreign Mail | 18 |
| 8. Foreign Destinations | 18 |
| 8.1. Paying the Internal Postage | 18 |
| 8.2. Paying the Local Post Office Fee | 19 |
| 8.3. Paying the Postage by Spanish Steamer | 21 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 9. The Anglo-Spanish Postal Treaty of 1858 | 21 |
| 10. Usages Abroad | 22 |
| 10.1. Military Interventions | 22 |
| 10.1.1. Veracruz (1862) | 22 |
| 10.1.2. Dominican Republic (1861-1865) | 25 |
| 10.2. Unintended Uses | 27 |
| 10.2.1. Spain | 27 |
| 10.2.2. Elsewhere | 28 |
| 11. Plate Varieties | 30 |
| 11.1 Non-Constant Varieties | 31 |
| 11.2. Constant Varieties | 31 |
| 11.2.1. Initial Varieties | 31 |
| 11.2.2. Acquired Varieties | 31 |
| 11.2.3. The Replacement Stamps | 32 |
| 12. Postal Counterfeits | 32 |
| 12.1. Half Real | 33 |
| 12.2. One Real | 33 |
| 12.3. Two Reales | 33 |
| 13. Demonetization | 34 |
| 14. Bibliography | 35 |

A Very Brief Overview of These Postal Issues

1. Introduction

The stamps with the common design of the first postal issues of Spanish Antilles comprise the classic philatelic period of the Caribbean islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico, the last Spanish territories in the Americas. They are probably the most studied postal issues of these islands with the longest period of use, about a decade. This paper deals with the common design stamps shown in the front cover.

1.1. Historical Background

Cuba and Puerto Rico were discovered in the late-15th century by Christopher Columbus, and the Philippines were found by Ferdinand Magellan's expedition in the early-16th century. After the independence of most of the Spanish possession in the Americas in the early-1820s, Spain was left with these three groups of islands in the New World. Figure 1 shows a map of the West Indies, Central America and parts of North and South America in the 1850s. The location of Cuba and Puerto is encircled in red. The smaller insert shows a map of the Philippine Archipelago in the Pacific Ocean.



Figure 1. 1850s map of the West Indies, Central America, and parts of North and South America in the 1850s. Cuba and Puerto Rico appear inside the red ovals. The smaller map shows the Philippine Archipelago.



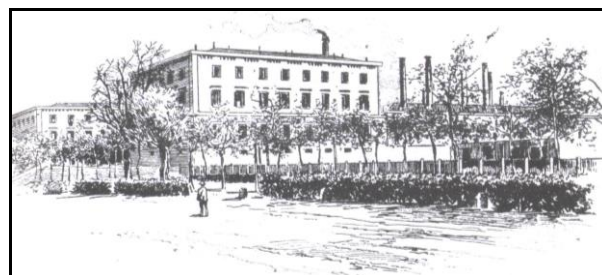
Cuba is the main protagonist of this story. From the beginning of Spanish involvement in the American Continent it enjoyed a privileged strategic position. It is located in the heart of the American Mediterranean. It was at the crossroads of communications between the east and west coast of North America, North and South America, and Europe and a large part of the Americas. In the second quarter of the 19th century, Cuba experienced an unprecedented industrial development and economic growth. In only 30 years, Cuba's sugar production rose from 13% to 40% of the world's output¹. The addition of tobacco and coffee production made Cuba the richest colony in the world by the 1850s². Some of the latest technological advances of the time reached Cuba much earlier than they got to Spain. For instance, the railroad started operating in Cuba ten years before it did in Spain.

Cuba is the sixth largest island in the world, measuring about 111,000 km², slightly less than England. Puerto Rico has only about 9,000 km², and the Philippine Archipelago, with over 7,000 islands, spans nearly 300,000 km².

1.2. Stamp Production

The first stamps of Spain and the Spanish Antilles were produced at the *Fábrica Nacional de Moneda y Timbre* in Madrid (figure 2). They were engraved by José Pérez Varela and printed by typography.

Figure 2. The *Fábrica Nacional de Moneda y Timbre* in Madrid.



¹ Garrido Buj, Santiago. Introduction to Adolfo Sarrias' *Catalog of Cuban Forwarding Agents* (in preparation).

² Thomas, Hugh. *Cuba, the Pursuit of Freedom*. and *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440-1870*.

The first Spanish stamp was placed in circulation in January 1850. The first stamps of the Spanish Antilles were introduced in 1855. The design of the latter, shown in the front cover of this manuscript, was identical to the contemporary Spanish stamps, with the same frame and circular portrait of Queen Isabel II in its center (figure 3).



Figure 3. Portrait of Spanish Queen Isabel II and the circular engraving of her likeness that appeared in the center of some of the stamps of Spain as well as in the first postal issues of Spanish Antilles.



The main difference between the stamps used in Spain and those of the Spanish Antilles, in addition to their colors and periods of use, was their denomination. The value of Spanish stamps was expressed in Cuartos and Reales (*de vellón*). Eight Cuartos was equivalent to one Real de Vellón. The Spanish colonial currency was the Real de Plata Fuerte (hard or strong silver real), worth approximately two and a half Reales de Vellón, although for postal accounting purposes, at times it was exchanged at the rate of only two Reales de Vellón. The different denominations appear in the rectangle at the bottom frame of the stamps, shown in figure 4. Spanish stamps simply read “REAL” or the plural form “REALES” whereas the text of the colonial stamps is “R^L PLATA F.” or its plural “R^S PLATA F.”

Figure 4. Different denominations that help distinguish the stamps of Spain and those of the Spanish Antilles.



The first issue of Spanish Antilles postage stamps consisted of three different denominations (half, one and two hard silver reales) printed in sheets of 170 stamps (seventeen columns by ten rows) and in three different types of papers (watermarked loops, watermarked crossed lines and un-watermarked). For the sake of this monograph's brevity, from now on we will refer to the denomination of Spanish Antilles stamps simply as “real” or “reales,” instead of the longer “real de plata fuerte.” The colors of the sequential printings show distinct variations that generally make them fairly easy to differentiate without having to check them for watermarks.

At least two printings were made in 1855 on hand-made bluish paper with loops watermark, one in 1856 on hand-made coarse paper with crossed lines watermark, and multiple printing were made between 1857 and 1863 on machine-made un-watermarked white paper. We will refer to all the printings on un-watermarked paper as “the stamps of 1857.”

The same plates were used to print Spanish Antilles stamps for nearly a decade. Although some constant variations in the individual clichés were obvious from the beginning, toward the 1860s many stamps begin to show multiple plate flaws that make them much easier to identify, particularly the most often used half-real values. Twelve of the damaged clichés of the half-real stamps were replaced in 1863. There were three plate settings of the half-real stamps. The first one was in use approximately from 1855 to 1858, the second one in 1861, and the last one was briefly used in 1863. There were two plate settings of the one-real stamp and only one plate setting of the two-reales stamp. The latter value was seldom used.

Sometime in 1862 the half-real and one-real plates were cleaned with an acid solution to remove the buildup of dry ink and dirt that had accumulated over many years. The stamps printed after the plate cleaning have much sharper features, but they also show numerous additional flaws that were not always evident before.

By late-1864 the number of counterfeit stamps circulating in Cuba was so high, that in order to try to stay a step ahead of the forgers, postal authorities decided to demonetize the stamps and issue a new annual design, beginning in 1865. Old stamps could be returned during a given period. The new stamps did not reach Puerto Rico and parts of the Philippines before 1865 for which the old stamps of the first postal issue of Spanish Antilles were accepted in these

places early during the year, and due to shortages sometimes they were used in combination with the new stamp issues. In the Philippine Islands a few remnant stamps of the first issue of Spanish Antilles were overprinted “HABILITADO POR LA NACION” and used in late-1868 and early-1869, but they are outside the scope of this work.

1.3. Official Canceler

In early-1855 an official canceler was created to obliterate these stamps, shown in figure 5, known as “parrilla oval” (oval grill). One hundred forty six copies of these canceling devices were made at a cost to the post office of 1,022 reales (7 reales each). However, there were several hundred post offices in the Island of Cuba alone, for which many smaller post offices used whatever they had available as cancelers, mainly markings from the stampless period. The latter consisted of straightline or circular undated name-of-town handstamps, or the circular date stamps known as “Baeza” first introduced in late-1842. Some Baeza markings were used to cancel stamps in Cuba until 1888. Later on several large cities obtained additional cancelers in different styles, but some also reverted to the use of the stampless era markings as cancelers. A few small towns had no canceling devices at all, and simply pen canceled the stamps.

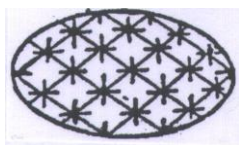


Figure 5. The official canceler which measures about 18 x 30 mm.

The vast majority of oval grill cancelers were applied in black or dark blue ink. A handful of examples are known applied in dark green or red ink.

1.4. The 90% Rule

This rule of thumb is not the result of a scientific study, but my observations for more than three decades, and the experience of other students of this issue who collectively have collected it for more than a century, leads to the following conclusion. This applies to covers franked with stamps of the first issue of Spanish Antilles, 90% of them were used in Cuba; 90% of them are franked with a single half-real stamp; 90% have un-watermarked stamps of 1857; 90% are addressed within Cuba or to Spain; in 90% of cases the stamps are obliterated with the oval grill; and 90% of the time the envelopes are in bad condition.

2. Archival Material

The amount of archival material of these issues is very limited. No early artwork or design trials are known.

2.1. Essays

There are a couple of large versions of these stamps printed in black in the collection of the Cuban Postal Museum in Havana that some have considered essays. However, several long time students of these stamps and I are not convinced of their authenticity.

Figure 6. Small selection of proofs showing a wide diversity of ink and paper colors.



2.2. Proofs

There are several dozen distinct proofs of the three values printed in a variety of non-issued and issued colors, and on several different types of un-watermarked papers. However, the numbers of surviving copies probably does not

exceed a couple of hundred. Many a traditional collection of Spanish colonies, and even some that have specialized on the first issue of Spanish Antilles, have had but a few examples, if any. Figure 6 shows a very small selection of proofs. The majority of existing proofs with this design show evidence of cliché wear consistent with the stamps that were printed between 1857 and 1863 on un-watermarked paper.

2.3. Printer's Waste

There are only a handful of examples of printer's waste or "maculaturas" which look like double impressions. Singles, pairs and blocks of four are known. Most of them are pen canceled. All the ones I have recorded are of the half-real value. A horizontal and a vertical pair appear in figure 7.



Figure 7. Printer's waste or "maculaturas."

3. Loops Watermark

The paper used to print the first Spanish Antilles stamps was hand-made, bluish and with a continuous pattern of loops running horizontally. There is a wide range of paper thickness and of intensity of bluish coloration.

This printing was made in early-1855 and shipped to Cuba on board the Spanish steamer *Conde de Regla* (figure 8), reaching Havana on April 21, 1855. The stamps were first available for sale on April 24, but Spanish colonial stamps were not sold at the post office. They were sold by third parties (stationers, retailers, etc.), who received a commission. The earliest canceled examples are dated on the following day, April 25, which for more than half a century has been designated "stamp day" in Cuba. Coincidentally, the ship that brought the stamps from Spain to Cuba took them back to Spain for the first time. There are five recorded "first day covers" of the first Cuban stamp, all consist of the half-real value, and all but one was carried by the steamer *Conde de Regla*. Two of these letters are in the Cuban Postal Museum collection, including the only one known first day cover addressed within Cuba.

Figure 8. Spanish steamer *Conde de Regla* (ex-Cunard Caledonia).

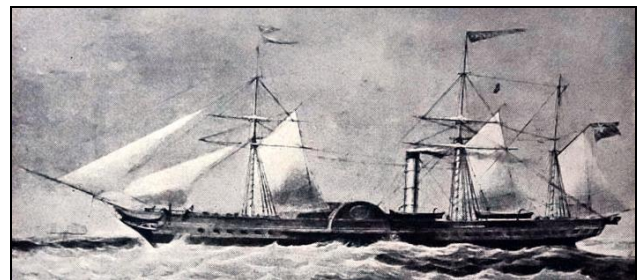


Figure 9. First day cover with the first stamp issued for the Spanish Antilles, the half-real value, on a single-weight cover from Havana to Santander, Spain, posted on April 25, 1855.

The finest of the five first day covers is shown in figure 9, and the only recorded multiple-weight letter appears in figure 10. The latter cover was depicted in a 2014 Cuban stamp, part of a set titled "the seven wonders of Cuban philately." Both covers have a stampless-era Baeza circular date stamp. The number 30 on the sides of these markings

referred to Spanish postal demarcation number 30, formed by Cuba and Puerto Rico. The Philippine Islands comprised postal demarcation number 31.

Figure 10. Triple-weight first day cover with the first stamp issued for the Spanish Antilles on a cover from Havana to Seville, posted on April 25, 1855.



Prepayment of postage was optional until January 1, 1857. When the first postage stamps of Spanish Antilles were introduced, new discounted rates were implemented for prepaid correspondence. Prepaid mail within the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico, or from these islands to Spain, was charged half real for each half ounce. In May 20, 1859, the maritime mail rates from Cuba and Puerto Rico were doubled to one real per half ounce, but the internal rates within each island did not change. The rate from the Philippines to Spain was one real per half ounce.

Later in 1855 the three values of these stamps were sent to Puerto Rico. The one-real and two-reales denominations were also shipped to the Philippine Islands. In the Philippines Islands these stamps were almost exclusively used on mail to Spain. There was no need in the Philippines for the half-real stamps. Figure 11 shows a triple-weight letter sent from Manila to Rivadeo, Spain, with the only two stamps of the first issue of Spanish Antilles that was available in postal demarcation number 31. Stamps with crossed lines watermark or without watermark were not supplied to the Philippine Islands.



Figure 11. Triple-weight cover from Manila to Rivadeo, Spain, via Marseille, franked with a one-real and a two-reales stamp of 1855.

In September 1855 a second shipment with different color stamps printed on the same type of paper was dispatched to Cuba. The color shades of these new half and one-real stamps were relatively minor. However, the new two-reales stamps were in a completely different color, orange-red, in contrast to the original stamps printed in carmine-red. The orange-red two-real stamps were only used in Cuba. The lowest rate in the Philippine Islands was one real, for which the half-real stamps were never used in these islands.

During ten years that these stamps were in use, it is surprising that so far only one cover has been reported bearing the three values of this issue, on any type of paper. Figure 12 shows an official mail wrapper weighing 8.5 ounces sent by registered mail from Cardenas to Havana in 1855. The franking of nine and a half reales, made up by a half-real, a one-real and a strip of four two-reales stamps, paid for 17 x the single rate plus the registered mail fee of one real. All the

stamps are on loops watermark paper. The framed “CERTIF.” marking indicated certified, or registered, mail. The multiple “0” around the edges, or other markings such as Xs, were applied to Spanish registered mail since at least the 16th century.



Figure 12. Official mail wrapper sent by registered mail from Cardenas to Havana. It weighed 8.5 ounces, or 17 x the single rate. It is the only known letter franked with the three values of Spanish Antilles stamps.

3.1. Watermark Variations

These watermarks were applied in groups of five rows alternating with groups of six rows in which the loops intercalate with the rows above and below. At the junctions of the groups of five and six on each sheet the upper and lower loops coincide. Figure 13 shows the main types of loops watermark variations and their approximate frequency.

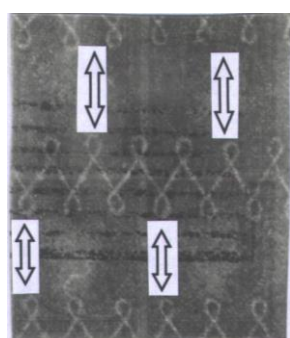
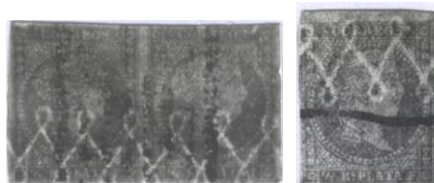


Figure 13. Four different possible types of loops watermark on a given stamp. LEFT TOP: I (~84%); LEFT BOTTOM: II (~15%); CENTER: III (<1%); and RIGHT: IV (<1%).



Only the most compulsive of collectors pay much attention to these watermark variants.

3.2. Half Real

This value was by far the most frequently used of the stamps issued in 1855. A total of 3,272,500 half-real stamps with loops watermark were printed (19,270 sheets). Quality control did not seem to be a priority for the employees of the *Fábrica Nacional de Moneda y Timbre*, for which there is a great deal of variation in the color of these stamps. They range from light greenish blue, to black green. The latter is much scarcer. These stamps were sold out within a year, but there is an example known used as late as 1863.

The cover in figure 14, a single letter sent by registered mail from Havana to Madrid in 1856, is the only known example of registered mail from Cuba sent overseas. Half real paid the single rate and one real paid for the registration. Until the late-1880s postal regulations in the Spanish colonies required the front covers of registered letters to be kept by the destination post office as a receipt. For an additional fee, the sender could request the return of the signed cover. Note the faint manuscript notation at the lower left reading “Received 22 January.”

Figure 14. Single-weight registered letter from Havana to Madrid. Only recorded registered letter from Cuba franked with the first issue of Spanish Antilles addressed overseas.



3.3. One Real

A total of 522,750 one-real stamps were printed on loops watermark paper (3,075 sheets), one sixth the number of half-real stamps. The color range of these stamps is not as wide as that of the half-real value, varying from light green to blue green.

3.4. Two Reales

Due to the different color shades, it is not possible to distinguish with certainty the half-real and one-real Spanish Antilles stamps sent in April 1855 from those sent in September 1855. However, there is a clear difference in color between the two-reales stamps from these two shipments.



Figure 15. Official mail package sent from Havana to Matanzas. It weighed under 8 pounds, or 126 x the single rate. It is the highest known multiple of the two-reales carmine-red stamps with loops watermark.

3.4.1. Carmine Red

Carmine-red two-reales stamps were the first to be printed and were distributed to Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippine Islands. A total of 182,750 of these stamps were printed (1,075 sheets), just over one twentieth of the number

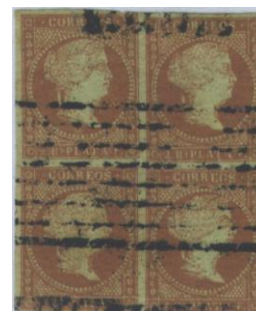
of half-real stamps. This denomination was seldom used in Cuba or Puerto Rico. The vast majority of their usage took place in the Philippines, where it paid the rate to Spain for letters of up to one ounce.

The largest recorded multiple of this stamp appears on the cover in figure 15. This cloth envelope was sent from Havana to the Military Governor of Matanzas, Cuba, in 1855. It has a block of 21 and a block of 10 two-reales stamps, plus a one-real stamp with a portion of the imprint at the top of the sheet, for a postage of 63 reales. This was 126 x the single rate, so it must have weighed just below eight pounds. The two-reales stamps were pen canceled to save time.

3.4.2. Orange Red

These stamps reached Cuba in September 8, 1855, the only island in which they were available. A total of 340,000 were printed (2,000 sheets). Even though there were nearly twice as many orange-red stamps than carmine-red stamps, the use of the former on correspondence is much rarer. Only about five covers are known with this stamp. It appears that many of the orange-red two-reales stamps were used to pay for bundles of newspapers sent in the mail. Figure 16 shows a block of four of these stamps obliterated with the typical canceler used for newspapers, a rectangle of eight long parallel bars.

Figure 16. Block of four orange-red two-reales stamps with a newspaper canceler.



One of the few surviving examples of an orange-red two-real stamp on cover appears in figure 17. The pair of half-real stamps has crossed lined watermark and was issued in 1856. This official correspondence was sent by the mayor of Pinar del Rio to a regional captain in Consolacion del Sur. It was a quadruple-weight letter sent by registered mail (4 x ½ ounce = 2r. + 1r. for registration = 3 reales). It has the typical markings applied to registered mail.

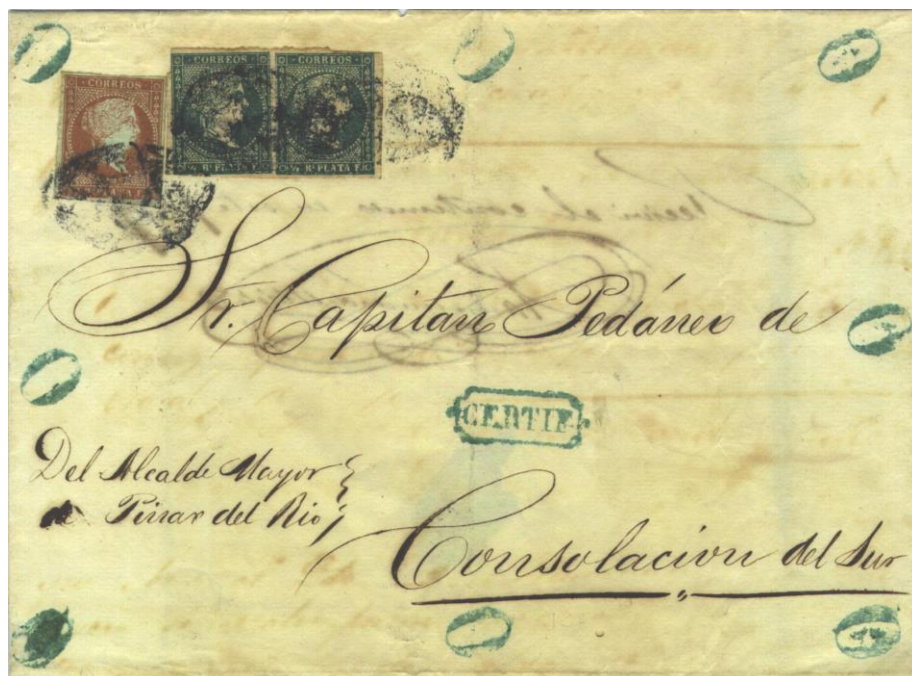


Figure 17. Quadruple-weight official correspondence sent by registered mail from Pinar del Rio to Consolacion del Sur.

3.5. The Y¼ Surcharges of 1855

In the mid-19th century the population of Havana approximated 200,000. It had a thriving business community which demanded an improved mail service. A local mail service following two routes, and making three daily collections and deliveries within the city of Havana and its suburbs, was inaugurated on November 19, 1855. The rate for this new service was set at ¼ real. This was a flat fee per piece, regardless of its weight or distance within the city.

Since there were no stamps available with a $\frac{1}{4}$ real denomination it was decided to apply the surcharge “Y $\frac{1}{4}$ ” (Y = *Ynterior*, $\frac{1}{4}$ real) to 200,000 two-real stamps (approximately 1,176 sheets), for which there was very little demand. The surcharge was applied at the local print shop of Arazoza & Co. The printer did not have 170 characters with the same type of letter “Y,” for which he had to use two different types. A taller and narrow “Y,” with a height of 5.75, was applied to the seven upper rows (119 stamps). A shorter and wider “Y,” with a height of 4.5 mm, was applied to the three lower rows (51 stamps). The surcharge distribution is illustrated in figure 18.

Since only 174,250 two-reales carmine-red stamps were sent to Cuba (1,025 sheets), and some of them had been used between April and November, stamps of both colors, carmine-red and orange-red, received this surcharge. There are no records of how many of each color were used, but an analysis of existing stamps shows a large predominance of the carmine-red color. There are several estimates of the color percentages. I calculate that approximately 85% of the stamps are carmine-red and only about 15% are orange-red. If it is factored that 70% of the stamps received the tall and narrow “Y” and 30% got the short and wide “Y,” the conclusions expressed in figure 19 can be reached.

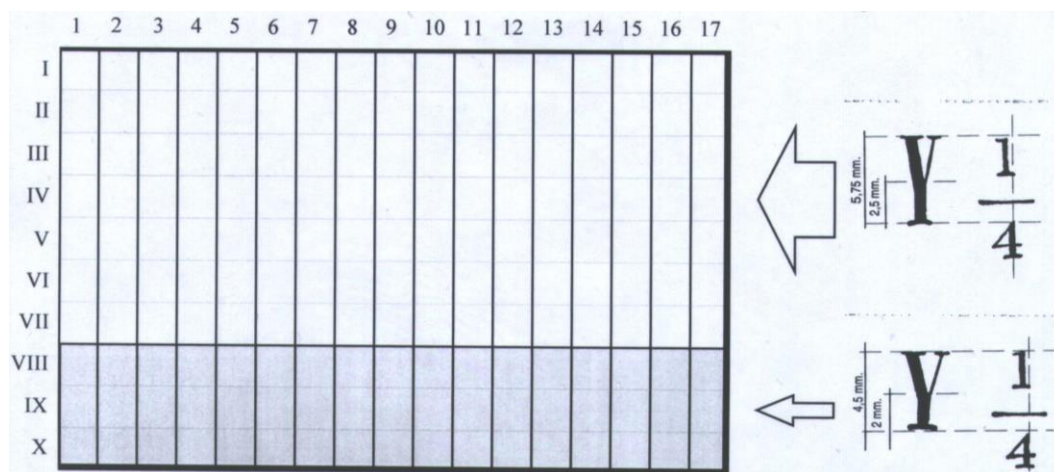


Figure 18. Surcharge distribution of the two types of Y $\frac{1}{4}$ surcharges of 1855.



Figure 19. The four types of stamps with Y $\frac{1}{4}$ surcharges of 1855 and their approximate percentages.

These stamps are considered to be the first provisional postal issue in the world. The first surcharge of postage stamps was for the City Dispatch Post in 1846, a local company operating in New York City. The Y $\frac{1}{4}$ stamps of 1855 are the second earliest surcharged issue. However, the first surcharged stamps to be valid within an entire nation or territory were the stamps of the Havana local mail service. They were not only accepted for mail within the City of Havana, but they were also used for correspondence addressed within the island and on mail posted outside of the capital.

There are numerous constant surcharge varieties, most of them relatively minor. The most striking one is the missing fraction bar. A used example is shown in figure 20.

Figure 20. Missing fraction bar surcharge variety on a carmine-red stamp with the narrow Y.



3.5.1. Carmine Red - Tall & Narrow Y

These are the most frequently found Y $\frac{1}{4}$ surcharged stamps of 1855. Mint stamps are rare and examples on cover are relatively scarce. These stamps were completely sold out in less than four years. The largest known mint multiples are vertical pairs. The great majority of covers have a single stamp and were addressed within the City of Havana, as they

were intended to be used. Printed circulars, single and double-weight letters were all charged $\frac{1}{4}$ real. There are a few covers addressed outside of Havana franked with two $Y\frac{1}{4}$ surcharged stamps. They paid the internal fee within the island of $\frac{1}{2}$ real. Their number does not exceed a half dozen. Figure 21 shows a rare cover with two stamps with the $Y\frac{1}{4}$ surcharge. It was sent from Havana to Cardenas in 1857.



Figure 21. Single-weight letter from Havana to Cardenas franked with two carmine-red stamps with the tall and narrow $Y\frac{1}{4}$ surcharge.

3.5.2. Carmine Red - Short & Wide Y

Loose canceled stamps are scarce and mint copies are very rare. The largest mint multiple is an extraordinary block of 12 in the Cuban Postal Museum. No mint multiples are known in private hands. Covers are very scarce. Figure 22 shows a normal use of this stamp on a cover addressed within the City of Havana in 1858.

Figure 22. Local letter sent within the City of Havana franked with a carmine-red stamp with the short and wide $Y\frac{1}{4}$ surcharge.



Figure 23. Single-weight letter from Matanzas to Havana franked with two orange-red stamps with the tall and narrow $Y\frac{1}{4}$ surcharge.

3.5.3. Orange Red - Tall & Narrow Y

Used stamps are relatively rare and only about five mint stamps are known. Covers are rare. No mint multiples are known. Figure 23 shows a very rare usage from outside Havana, demonstrating that these stamps were valid for postage throughout the island. It is a single-weight letter sent from Matanzas to Havana in 1858.

3.5.4. Orange Red - Short & Wide Y

This is the rarest of the four types of $Y\frac{1}{4}$ surcharged stamps. It is estimated that only about 9,000 were produced. Used stamps are rare and examples on covers are extremely rare. So far only two mint copies have been reported. Figure 24 shows the finest of the four known covers, addressed within the City of Havana in 1857.

Figure 24. Local letter sent within the City of Havana franked with an orange-red stamp with the short and wide $Y\frac{1}{4}$ surcharge.



3.5.5. Mixed Pairs

Mixed pairs are extremely rare because the vast majority of these stamps were used as singles, and in order to have a pair with both types of surcharges, it must be a vertical pair including rows VII and VIII. There are 313 possible pair combinations that can be cut from a sheet of 170 stamps. If only vertical pairs are counted, the number of possibilities goes down to 153. The chances that any given pair consists of two vertical stamps that have both types of surcharges is only 5.4%, assuming that they were cut randomly. Three mixed pairs are known, two on the carmine-red stamps and one on the orange-red stamps.

Figure 25 shows one of the two known pairs of carmine-red stamps with the two types of $Y\frac{1}{4}$ surcharges.



Figure 25. One of the two known pairs of carmine-red stamps with both types of $Y\frac{1}{4}$ surcharges.

The next item, in figure 26, is exceptional in many ways. It is a front of a letter sent from Havana to Cardenas. It was carried by railroad, where it was handled by its postal agent who applied the circular "F.C.D. CARDENAS." The vertical pair of orange-red stamps with both types of $Y\frac{1}{4}$ surcharges, the only example recorded, was canceled by two "0," as it was often the practice on railroad and coastal steamers. The chances that a given pair of $Y\frac{1}{4}$ stamps was applied to orange-red stamps and included the two types of surcharges are only 0.81%.

In 1910, Dr. Antonio Barreras, a pioneer student of Cuban philately and postal history, wrote about this piece which he called "the Jewel of Cuban Philately"³. This item was depicted in a 2014 Cuban stamp, part of a set titled "the seven wonders of Cuban philately." It is considered by many to be the most important item in Cuban Philately.

³ Barreras, Antonio. *Revista del Círculo Filatélico de Cuba*. Año 1, No. 1, Habana, Abril de 1910, pp. 2-4.

Figure 26. Single-weight letter from Havana to Cardenas handled by a railroad postal agent. This is the only known pair of orange-red stamps with both types of $Y\frac{1}{4}$ surcharges. It is probably the most important item in Cuban philately.



4. Crossed Lines Watermark

The second type of stamps was printed on white hand-made paper with crossed lines watermark in early-1856. This type of paper shows significant tropical toning and looks much darker than that of the un-watermarked issues. They were only sent to Cuba and Puerto Rico, and are the rarest basic stamps of the first postal issues of Spanish Antilles. The number of stamps printed on crossed lines watermarked paper is not known, but it is undoubtedly much lower than the earlier stamps.

4.1. Half Real

There is a range of paper thickness, from very thin to thick, but the color shades of this stamp are not as varied as that of the same value in the previous issue. Figure 27 shows this stamp used to pay the single fee on an internal cover addressed to Havana handled by a coastal steamer mail agent. The scarce oval with the initials "DM" was used on coastal steamers travelling along the north coast of Cuba.



Figure 27. Single-weight letter addressed to Havana handled by a coastal steamer postal agent. The oval marking with the initials DM was used on coastal steamers travelling along the north coast of Cuba.

4.2. One Real

Mint examples of this stamp are rare. No mint multiples are known, except for a block of four that might have ended up in the Cuban Postal Museum's collection. Examples on cover are very scarce. The cover in figure 28 has a vertical pair paying for a double-weight letter from Havana to Santander, Spain, in 1861. On May 20, 1859 the transatlantic rate

from Cuba and Puerto Rico to Spain was doubled from half real per half ounce to one real per half ounce. This cover was carried by the Spanish contract mail steamer *Tajo*.

Figure 28. Double-weight letter from Havana to Santander, Spain. It was carried by the Spanish contract steamer *Tajo*.



4.3. Two Reales

Mint examples of this stamp are rare. Only five covers are known franked with this stamp, two from Cuba and three from Puerto Rico. Figure 29 shows a double-weight letter sent in 1864 from Caguas, Puerto Rico, to New York. The two-reales stamp paid the internal fee to San Juan (one real), where the letter was sent by Spanish steamer to Havana (one real). From Havana it was sent by American steamer to New York where it was charged the double rate of 20 cents for a letter of up to one ounce.



Figure 29. Double-weight letter from Caguas, Puerto Rico to New York. It was sent overland to San Juan where it was taken by Spanish steamer to Havana. From Cuba it was carried by American steamer to New York and charged 20 cents.

5. No Watermark

The next major change in the postal reform of the Spanish Antilles, which started with the introduction of postage stamps in 1855, was the mandatory prepayment of correspondence effective on January 1, 1857. This greatly increased the demand for Spanish Antilles stamps, for which the *Fábrica Nacional de Moneda y Timbre* had to switch from hand-made paper to cheaper, mass-produced, machine-made paper. The third type of Spanish Antilles first issue stamps was printed this smooth, white, un-watermarked paper. It was printed repeated from early-1857 until 1863. They were used in Cuba and Puerto Rico, but not in the Philippine Islands. Some of the values were also used during the Spanish military expeditions to Veracruz and the Dominican Republic. In addition there were occasional illegal uses from abroad that were tolerated by postal authorities.

These are the most common stamps of the Spanish Antilles. Their exact print run is not known, but they are about ten times more common than the earlier printings on hand-made paper.

5.1. Half Real

This is by far the most common of all the stamps of this issue. Multiple color shades exist and individual flaws in the clichés make them easy to plate. They received a large diversity of postmarks over the eight years in which they were used.

5.2. One Real

These stamps are fairly common. There is a wide range of color shades. Most of them can be plated. Full mint sheets are known.

5.3. Two Reales

These stamps are relatively common, but uses on cover are very scarce. There is not a lot of color variation. Some of them can be plated. Full mint sheets are known. Large blocks were more commonly used in Puerto Rico than in Cuba. A triple-weight letter sent from Havana to Cadiz in 1860 appears in figure 30. It was carried by the Spanish contract steamer *Almogabar*. The combination of one and two-reales stamps on cover is very unusual.

Figure 30. Triple-weight letter from Havana to Cadiz. It was carried by the Spanish contract steamer *Almogabar*.



LOCALIZATION OF THE 24 TYPES OF SURCHARGES IN THE SHEET OF 170 STAMPS.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| I | A | A | A | A | A | A | B | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | M | A |
| II | C | C | C | W | C | C | C | C | C | C | D | C | C | C | I | C | C |
| III | A | A | A | K | A | A | X | A | L | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| IV | A | A | A | E | E | F | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| V | J | A | J | A | A | A | A | A | A | G | R | S | A | A | A | A | A |
| VI | T | A | P | A | H | J | A | A | A | A | A | Q | A | A | A | A | V |
| VII | K | A | A | A | U | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | O | A | A |
| VIII | A | A | A | N | N | A | G | A | B | A | A | A | A | Z | A | A | A |
| IX | A | A | M | A | A | A | A | T | A | A | A | A | A | Y | A | A | A |
| X | U | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | G | A | A | A | A | A | A | A | A |

NUMBER OF EACH TYPE OF SURCHARGE.

| TYPE | # | TYPE | # |
|------|-----|------|---|
| A | 120 | M | 2 |
| B | 1 | N | 2 |
| C | 14 | O | 1 |
| D | 1 | P | 1 |
| E | 2 | Q | 1 |
| F | 1 | R | 1 |
| G | 5 | S | 1 |
| H | 1 | T | 1 |
| I | 2 | U | 2 |
| J | 3 | X | 1 |
| K | 2 | Y | 1 |
| L | 1 | Z | 1 |

Figure 31. Diagram of the sheet of 170 stamps showing the location of the twenty four different types of $Y\frac{1}{4}$ surcharges. The table on the right shows their frequency.

5.4. $Y\frac{1}{4}$ Surcharges of 1860

In late-1859 Cuban postal authorities were caught by surprise when they realized that the stamps surcharged $Y\frac{1}{4}$ in 1855 had almost sold out. Another provisional $Y\frac{1}{4}$ surcharge was hastily prepared. This time the un-watermarked two-reales stamps of 1857 were used. 200,000 stamps received this surcharge in January 1860. The printer did not have 170

identical characters for which 24 different surcharge types exist. Their location on the sheet has been plated. Most of the stamps, 120 of them (70%) have the same surcharge, type A. The next most common types are C with twelve (8%) and G with five (3%). All the other types of surcharges are rare, with no more than three stamps per sheet. Fourteen of the surcharges only occur once per sheet.

This provisional surcharge was highly criticized by high level postal authorities, but in spite of orders to withdraw it from circulation in 1860, a more pragmatic approach was followed and its use was allowed until 1864. A new $\frac{1}{4}$ real stamp was issued in 1863, but with one exception it did not circulate until 1865.

In general, these stamps are at least twice as common as the $\frac{1}{4}$ surcharged stamps of 1855, especially mint copies. Some of the rarer surcharges are not known on cover. Figure 31 shows the localization of the different types of surcharges on the sheet of stamps and a table with their frequency. Several mint large blocks exist. The largest one, with 22 stamps, appears in figure 32.

Figure 32. Largest known block of $\frac{1}{4}$ stamps (22). It comes from positions IV-3 to IV-7, V-3 to V-7, VI-3 to VI-7, VII-3 to VII-7, and VIII-6 to VIII-7. In addition to seventeen type A surcharges, it contains types E (2), F, P, H, J, and G.



The first few covers with these stamps, sent in May 1860, also bear a straightline marking reading “*Correo interior*” in cursive characters. Only about half dozen examples of this marking have been reported⁴. There is one stamp known canceled by this handstamp. Figure 33 shows a letter sent by the local mail service of Havana on May 13, 1860 with a rare example of the straightline marking. The type of local mail service and its postal rates did not change in 1860, only the stamps. The $\frac{1}{4}$ stamps of 1855 remained valid until 1864, but they were seldom used after 1860.



*Figure 33. Letter sent by the Havana local mail service franked with the new $\frac{1}{4}$ stamp of 1860 and the rare marking reading “*Correo interior*.”*

⁴ Prats, Ignacio and Kouri, Yamil H., Jr. “The Use of the $\frac{1}{4}$ Stamps and the ‘Correo Interior’ Marking,” *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. X, No. 28, April 1998, pp. 59-62.

As was the case with the $Y\frac{1}{4}$ stamps of 1855, the new provisional stamps could be used on mail addressed and originating outside of Havana. The cover in figure 34 was sent from Havana to Santiago de Cuba in 1861. One quarter real paid for the printed matter rate within the island. This example contained an open circular. Only a handful of examples of this type of usage are known.

Figure 34. Printed matter sent from Havana to Santiago de Cuba, franked with a $Y\frac{1}{4}$ stamp of 1860.



Another rare usage of these stamps appears in figure 35. In this case two $Y\frac{1}{4}$ stamps of 1860 were used to pay for the single rate of a letter addressed within the island of Cuba. It was mailed from Havana to Puerto Principe in 1862.



Figure 35 Single-weight letter sent from Havana to Puerto Principe. It was franked with two $Y\frac{1}{4}$ stamps of 1860 paying the internal rate within the island.

Figure 36. Letter sent by the Havana local mail service with the only known surcharge error “Y 4/1” (ex-Ferrary).



Figure 36 shows one of the most interesting items of this provisional issue. This cover front was sent by the Havana local mail service franked with a stamp with a surcharge error “Y 4/1.” It was part of Ferrary’s collection and has been the subject of intense debate over most of the 20th century and the first decade of this century. No other stamps have been recorded with the transposed numerals 4 and 1. This is known as a composition error. The stamp belongs to the left lower corner of the sheet. It has four certificates of authenticity, including two recent ones. I believe that the printers quickly

realized their mistake, which is quite striking, and soon corrected it. Therefore, not many of these stamps were printed. There are other postal composition errors produced in colonial Cuba that were quickly corrected. The stamp was used relatively early, less than ten months after it was first released. The addressee was a well-known Havana merchant to whom other letters franked with Y¼ stamps of 1860 were sent. It represents the first major surcharge error of the world.

6. Use on Revenue Documents

The information in this section applies to stamps printed on all types of papers. There are several dozen legal documents that bear postage stamps of the first issues of Spanish Antilles, as early as 1855. In some cases the postage stamps are the only adhesives on the documents but most often they appear in combination with revenue stamps. In all but one reported example the postage stamps were used to pay for postal charges incurred throughout the course of the legal proceeding. That is, they served a postal function, not fiscal, but were applied to a legal document as a receipt instead of on the envelope of wrapper. The partial document in figure 37 shows the use of two horizontal strips of three of the half-real stamps with loops watermark along with Judicial Right stamps amounting to 914 reales. In most cases of postal/fiscal stamp combinations, the revenue stamps received different manuscript cancelations than the postage stamps.



Figure 37. Part of a legal document bearing the combination of postage stamps and revenue stamps.

7. Use as Postage Due Stamps

In Puerto Rico stamps of the first issues of Spanish Antilles, and subsequent postal issues as well, were sometime used to indicate the payment of postage due. This happened on both domestic correspondence and incoming foreign mail. The latter is much rarer.

Figure 38. Official mail from San Juan to Luquillo, Puerto Rico. The postage due of one and a half reales was paid with stamps at the receiving post office.



7.1. Internal Mail

Most of the internal correspondence with postage stamps applied at the receiving post office to indicate the payment of postage due consisted of official mail. It typically dealt with legal matters in which one of the parties had the means to pay or the postage charges incurred during the legal proceedings. Figure 38 shows the front of an official correspondence sent by the Political Governor and General Captain of Puerto Rico, in San Juan, to the Mayor of Luquillo. "R.S." stands for Royal Service. The postage due of one and a half reales was paid at the receiving post office by one of the involved parties in a legal proceeding. The one-real stamp is on loops watermarked paper and the half-real stamp is on un-watermarked paper, an unusual combination.

7.2. Incoming Foreign Mail

Cuba and Puerto Rico charged specific fees on all incoming foreign mail depending on the correspondence's origin. This is equivalent to ship letter charges in other countries. In contrast to the way ship letter rates were calculated in places such as the United States or the United Kingdom, where there was a ship fee plus an inland fee, the incoming mail fees in the Spanish West Indies were flat fees with no inland component. This practice was in effect from 1818 until the entrance of these islands to the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in 1877, and occasionally even later if the mail came from non-UPU-member countries. The cover in figure 39 was sent prepaid from Manchester, England, to San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1864. The addressee was charged the incoming foreign mail fee of half real, which he paid with a stamp. All three values of the un-watermarked first issue of Spanish Antilles are known used as postage dues. These usages are rare because in most cases the fee was paid in cash.



Figure 39. Single-weight letter sent from Manchester, England, to San Juan, Puerto Rico. The incoming foreign mail fee of half real was paid with a stamp.

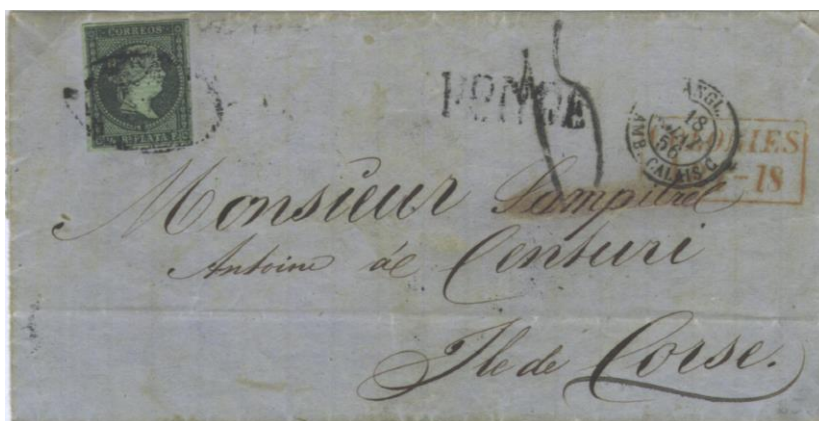
8. Foreign Destinations

The information in this section applies to stamps printed on all types of papers. Foreign destinations are defined as places other than Spain or its possessions. There are three ways in which Spanish Antilles stamps were used on letters addressed abroad. The first one, by far the most frequent usage, was to pay for the internal postage of letters originating in the interior of Cuba or Puerto Rico that had to travel to the capital to be put on board foreign vessels. The second scenario was a fee charged by the Spanish post office at the islands' capitals to handle letters that were taken to a foreign vessel or its mail agency. The third way was to pay the fee for a letter carried by Spanish contract steamers travelling to Mexico, the Caribbean, or rarely, the United States. The last two circumstances occurred infrequently.

8.1. Paying the Internal Postage

Figure 40 shows a cover sent from Ponce, Puerto Rico, to Corsica, franked by a half-real stamp with loops watermark. The stamp paid the single rate to San Juan, where the letter was sent unpaid by British steamer to France. It received the framed Franco-British exchange accountancy marking "COLONIES / ART - 18." The addressee was charged fifteen decimes postage due.

Figure 40. Single-weight letter sent from Ponce, Puerto Rico, to Corsica. It was prepaid to San Juan and carried by British steamer to France.



The cover in figure 41 was sent from Manzanillo, Cuba, to Apalachicola, Florida, franked by a half-real stamp with loops watermark. The stamp paid the single rate to Havana, where the letter was sent unpaid by the American contract

steamer *Isabel* to Savannah, Georgia. In Savannah it was rated ten cents postage due, and it received the small straightline “HAVANA.” There are 20 examples of the latter marking, used between 1848 and 1861, four in red and sixteen in black.



Figure 41. Single-weight letter sent from Manzanillo, Cuba, to Apalachicola, Florida. It was prepaid to Havana and carried by American contract steamer to Savannah, Georgia.

Figure 42 shows another usage of a single half-real stamp with loops watermark. It was sent from Santa Cruz del Sur, Cuba, to Aalborg, Denmark. The stamp paid the single rate to Havana, where the letter was sent unpaid by American contract steamer to New York. It was then sent by Prussian closed mail to Aachen. Twenty eight cents was the debit to the United States for the conveyance from Cuba to New York and for the transatlantic crossing, both by American packets (5 + 23). It was assessed 15 ¼ sgr. by Prussia = 20½ Hamburg schillinge. This was approximately 66 sk. + the Danish foreign share of 9 sk. = 75 sk. due from the addressee.

Figure 42. Single-weight letter sent from Santa Cruz del Sur, Cuba, to Aalborg, Denmark. It was prepaid to Havana and carried by American contract steamer to New York. It was sent by American packet by Prussian closed mail to Aachen and then via Hamburg to Denmark.



8.2. Paying the Local Post Office Fee

There are several examples of covers handled by the Spanish post office, typically in San Juan or Havana, carried by British steamers that show the payment of a local fee with Spanish Antilles stamps as well as the payment of the British fee to the final destination. The full postage seems to have been paid by their senders. This took place much more frequently in Puerto Rico. It is likely that the local post office charged a fee to facilitate the transfer to the British consular office that also acted as a postal agency. An example of this dual payment appears in figure 43. This cover was sent from San Juan, Puerto Rico, to Palma de Mallorca, Balearic Islands, Spain, in July 1858. The pair of half-real Spanish Antilles un-watermarked stamps probably paid the local post office fee. This double-weight letter was prepaid four shillings and four pence and sent by a Royal Mail Steam Packet steamer to England. It reached its destination via France and mainland Spain.

Figure 44 shows the payment of a local post office fee with a one-real un-watermarked Spanish Antilles stamp on a letter sent unpaid by French steamer from Santiago de Cuba to Paris. This happened to be the first eastbound trip of the French Compagnie Generale Transatlantique's steamer *Louisianne* that left Santiago on May 21, 1862. The octagonal marking was applied by the ship's postal agent. This is considered a “first day cover” of the first French consular post

office in Cuba. As a double-weight letter, over 7½ grams, it was charged sixteen decimes postage due. To the right of the cover a block of four one-real un-watermarked Spanish Antilles stamps obliterated by the French packets' diamond-shaped anchor and dots canceler is shown. The latter item confirms that these stamps were used on other covers handled by French packets, probably in combination with French stamps.



Figure 43. Double-weight letter sent from San Juan, Puerto Rico, to Palma de Mallorca, Balearic Islands, Spain. A one real fee was paid to the local post office and it was then sent prepaid by British steamer via England and France.



Figure 44. LEFT: Double-weight letter sent from Santiago de Cuba to Paris, on the first sailing of the French steamer Lousianne. The local Cuban post office charged a handling fee of one real. It was sent as an unpaid letter charged sixteen decimes postage due. RIGHT: Block of four one-real stamps canceled by the French packet diamond-shaped anchor and dots.



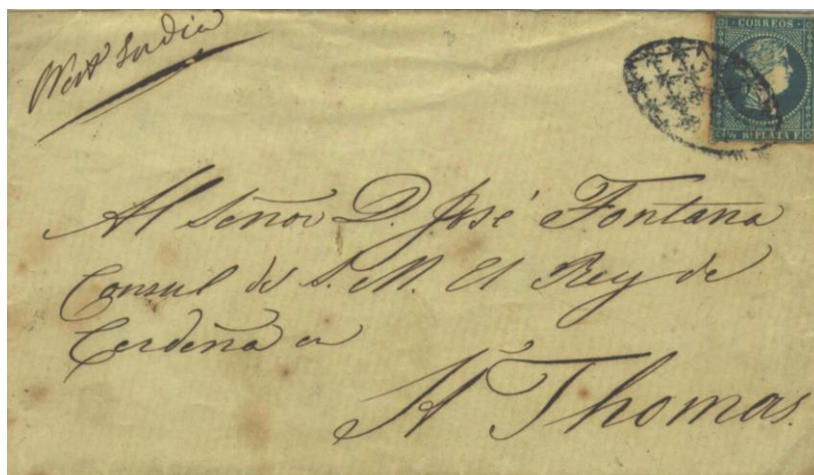
Figure 45. Double-weight letter sent from Havana to Mexico carried on the Spanish steamer Alava.

8.3. Paying the Postage by Spanish Steamer

Spanish steamship companies with mail contracts travelled between the Spanish West Indies, Mexico and other Caribbean islands. Figure 45 shows a double-weight letter sent from Havana to Mexico, prepaid two reales with four half-real Spanish Antilles stamps in 1862. It was carried on the steamer *Alava* of Antonio Lopez's Compañía Transatlántica Española.

The cover in figure 46, a single letter franked with a half-real un-watermarked Spanish Antilles stamp, was carried from Havana to the Consul of the King of Sardinia in St. Thomas on a steamer operated by Ramón Herrera's company.

Figure 46. Single-weight letter sent from Havana to St. Thomas, DWI. It was prepaid by a Spanish contract steamer of the Ramon Herrera Company.



9. The Anglo-Spanish Postal Treaty of 1858

On October 1, 1858 a postal treaty between Great Britain and Spain came in effect. It allowed for correspondence to be sent prepaid from Spain, and its colonies, in sealed pouches through France and Great Britain to every place served by British steamers. Great Britain agreed to pay Spain two pence per prepaid letter for each $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce or fraction. For unpaid correspondence Spain was charged two schillings per ounce plus an additional ten pence an ounce (the amount charged by France for transit). This was a bulk weight amount, not for individual letters. For accounting purposes, Great Britain considered letters prepaid with Spanish or Spanish colonial stamps as unpaid correspondence. The fee from the Spanish West Indies to Spain, and vice versa, was four times the normal postal rates, for which this route was seldom used. Fewer than a dozen prepaid letters from Cuba to Spain sent through England have been recorded.

Figure 47 shows a single-weight letter sent in 1859 from Havana to Santander, Spain. It was carried by a Royal Mail Steam Packet steamer via Great Britain. Four reales was four times the normal rate directly to Spain by Spanish steamer. It was treated as fully prepaid in Spain, where the ornate FRANCO was applied at the border with France.



Figure 47. Single-weight letter sent from Havana to Santander, Spain, prepaid four reales. It was carried by a Royal Mail Steam Packet Company steamer via England.

Evidently the rate from Cuba to Spain via England was the same regardless of how the letters reached Great Britain. The cover in figure 48, sent from Havana to Cadiz in 1860, was carried on board the Spanish steamer *Pájaro del Océano*

(Ocean Bird) to England. This steamer was owned by Cuban merchants and sometimes operated with a mail contract. This letter was short paid one hard silver real and was charged two reales (de vellón) postage due in Spain.

Figure 48. Single-weight letter sent from Havana to Cadiz, via England. It was short paid one hard silver real and charged two reales de Vellón postage due in Spain.



Figure 49 shows a most unusual cover front that originated in the interior of Cuba. It is a single-weight letter sent from Trinidad, in south central Cuba, to Santander. Like the previous cover it was carried by the Spanish steamer *Pájaro del Océano* to England. The one-real stamp overpaid the rate from Trinidad to Havana, and the two two-reales stamps paid the fee to Spain via Great Britain. The full prepayment was accepted in Spain.



Figure 49. Single-weight letter sent from Trinidad, Cuba, to Santander via Havana and England. It was prepaid all the way to Spain.

10. Usages Abroad

Spanish Antilles postage stamps were used outside the islands for which they were originally intended either as a result of Spanish military expeditions or due to unauthorized usages which were sometimes tolerated by postal authorities.

10.1. Military Interventions

The uses in this section were officially sanctioned during the Spanish military expeditions to Veracruz and the Dominican Republic. Nevertheless, loose Spanish Antilles stamps cancelled in these places range from very scarce to rare. All the uses on cover from these locations are quite rare.

10.1.1. Veracruz

At the end of a three year long civil war in Mexico in late-1860, the nation's treasury was depleted and a triumphant Benito Juárez was forced to suspend payments of the public debts. The main creditors were Spain, France and Great Britain. The United States was in the midst of a bloody civil war and thus unable to enforce its Monroe Doctrine that barred European military interventions in the Americas. On October 31, 1861, after severing diplomatic relations with Mexico, representatives of these three European governments met in London and decided to launch a punitive military expedition against Mexico to force it to pay its debts⁵.

⁵ Miquel y Verges, J.M. *El General Prim en España y en México*. Editorial Hermes, México, 1949.

The first foreign troops to reach Mexico were a group of Spanish soldiers and sailors that arrived in Veracruz on December 17, 1861⁶. The Spanish took over the local post office. The rest of the 6,000 Spanish troops, commanded by General Juan Prim, had arrived by January 8, 1862, from Havana. Almost immediately there were disagreements with Count Dubois de Saligny, the French Minister, and the leaders of the other invading powers. It became evident that the French were interested in a prolonged occupation of Mexico and in an expansion of their overseas empire. On February 19, 1862 a preliminary accord was signed between Mexico and the foreign allies. However, the French did not keep some of the agreements made at the meeting in London and continued to increase their military presence. For these reasons on April 9 British and Spanish troops decided to withdraw from Mexican territory. The last Spanish troops left Veracruz during the first week of May 1862. The French intervention in Mexico ended disastrously in 1867.

On November 14, 1861, anticipating the military expedition's departure from Cuba, the island's Governor General created the position Director of Posts for the expeditionary force in Mexico. A total of 10,000 pesos in stamps were taken from the Cuban Post Office to be used in Mexico, or about 470 sheets of one-real Spanish Antilles stamps (170 stamps per sheet). A handstamp with the legend "DIVISION ESPEDICIONARIA A MEJICO / CORREO" was created to use on troop mail. A mute canceler was to be made to obliterate the stamps, but it is evident that instead two captured Mexican postmarks and the previous marking were used for this purpose. Official correspondence and troop mail enjoyed postal franchise.

During the approximately four months that the Spanish military occupation of Veracruz lasted, three types of cancelers were employed to cancel correspondence processed in the city. These three markings were not used simultaneously to cancel stamps and are found in a specific sequence. The aforementioned first marking was primarily used on troop mail, which enjoyed postal franchise. It was also used initially as a canceler in early-January 1862. As of January 31, and until March 3, a negative circular handstamp "CORREOS VERACRUZ" has been recorded. A circular grill was used from March 6 until mid-April. These last two postmarks belonged to the Veracruz Post Office and were used to cancel Mexican stamps prior to the Spanish military intervention. Only eleven stamped covers during the Spanish occupation of Veracruz have been reported: two with the marking "DIVISION ESPEDICIONARIA A MEJICO / CORREO;" six with the negative postmark "CORREOS VERACRUZ;" and three with the circular grill⁷. The known covers are mainly commercial in nature and were addressed to Europe or Mexico. Figure 50 shows one-real Spanish Antilles stamps with the three types of cancelers used during the Spanish military occupation of Veracruz.



Figure 50. One-real Spanish Antilles stamps with the three types of cancelers used during the Spanish military occupation of Veracruz. From left to right: DIVISION ESPEDICIONARIA marking, circular grill canceler and negative CORREOS VERACRUZ canceler.

One of the earliest covers from Veracruz handled by the Spanish postal service is shown in figure 51. It was sent on January 3, 1862 to Langnau, Switzerland, by a Royal Mail Steam Packet steamer via England and France. It was treated as a prepaid single letter by the Spanish, but was considered an unpaid double-weight cover by the French. The one-real Spanish Antilles stamp may have satisfied the Spanish handling of this letter in Veracruz, and nothing further. The addressee was charged one Swiss franc and thirty centimes postage due. There is only one other stamped cover known with this marking.

The only reported combination of Spanish Antilles stamps and the PAID AT VERA-CRUZ crown circle appears in figure 52. The Spanish Antilles stamps were canceled by the negative CORREOS VERACRUZ marking, the most frequently found Mexican canceler on these stamps. It was addressed to Barcelona on March 13, 1862. It is unclear if the sender paid one shilling plus two hard silver reales, or if the Spanish Antilles stamps were enough to cover the postage, and one shilling was credited to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, whose steamers carried this letter to England. The Anglo-Spanish postal treaty of October 1858 allowed full prepayment of mail from the Spanish colonies to Spain on board British steamers via England (and France in closed bags), at four times the rates by Spanish steamers. This rate, from Cuba, was initially half silver real, but in 1859 it was increased to one real. Most likely the sender paid one shilling

⁶ Fernández-Xesta, A. "Estudio Postal Sobre el Ejército y las Guerras de España," *Militaria*-85. Tomo II, Sociedad Filatélica de la Coruña-Banco Pastor-Ayuntamiento de la Coruña, Galicia, 1985, pp. 37-40.

⁷ Kouri, Y.H. "A Census of Spanish Military Expedition Covers from Mexico – 1862," *Mexicana*. MEPSI, Vol. 42, No. 1, January 1993, pp. 216-221.

to cover the fee from Veracruz to Havana, plus two reales for the fee to the Peninsula via Great Britain. Upon entering Spain the letter was marked FRANCO, accepting the full prepayment to its destination.



Figure 51. Single-weight letter sent from Veracruz to Langnau, Switzerland. It was placed in the local post office controlled by the Spanish who charged one real for its handling. It was sent unpaid by RMSPC via Havana, St. Thomas, England and France. One Swiss franc and thirty centimes postage due charged to the addressee.

Figure 52. Veracruz to Barcelona via Havana and London. It was prepaid all the way to its destination, one shilling for the single-weight rate from Mexico to Cuba by RMSPC, and two reales (with Spanish Antilles stamps) from Cuba to Spain by RMSPC steamer via London and France.



Figure 53 shows a single-weight letter sent to Bordeaux on February 1, 1862. It has a one-real Spanish Antilles stamp, for the handling by the Spanish, and was carried by British packets to England. In France it was charged eight decimes postage due.



Figure 53. Single-weight letter from Veracruz to Bordeaux via Havana and London. It was placed in the local post office controlled by the Spanish who charged one real for its handling. It was sent unpaid by RMSPC via Havana, St. Thomas and England. Eight decimes postage due charged to the addressee.

The largest multiples of the one-real Spanish Antilles stamps used in Veracruz are blocks of four. There is one large cover recorded, addressed internally to Puebla, that bears two blocks of four canceled by the negative CORREOS VERACRUZ postmark. The prepayment of this letter was not accepted by Mexican postal authorities, still in control of most of the country outside of Veracruz. The other known partial block of four is shown in figure 54. It was also

canceled by the negative Mexican obliterator. It also has a portion of a crayon rate marking that seems to be the British 1/- (one shilling).

Figure 54. Partial block of four one-real Spanish Antilles stamps canceled by the Veracruz “negative” circular postmark. The right upper corner stamp also has an orange/red crayon marking (1/).



The stamps sold by the Veracruz Post Office during the Spanish occupation consisted exclusively of the one-real Spanish Antilles issued in 1857 on un-watermarked paper. Several examples half real un-watermarked stamp are known canceled with two types of Veracruz postmarks. It is likely that a Spanish soldier carried these stamps to Veracruz from Cuba to be used on his personal correspondence, before the troop free franking privilege was announced, in late-February 1862, or that merchants in this important port purchased them from Cuba. There was an important trade between Cuba and Mexico in those days and it was very easy to send or to carry stamps between these two places.

The only cover of the Spanish military occupation of Veracruz franked with a half real Spanish Antilles stamp appears in figure 55. This double-weight commercial letter was sent on March 6, 1862 from Veracruz to Barcelona, where it was received on April 7. It was carried to Spain by a steamer of the Compañía Trasatlántica Española by way of Havana and Cadiz. In my opinion this item is the rarest of all the covers from the Spanish military intervention in Veracruz.

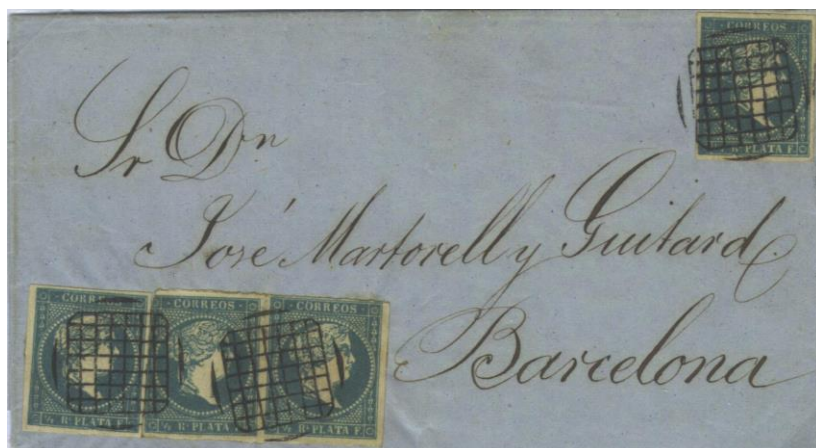


Figure 55. Double-weight letter sent from Veracruz to Barcelona by Spanish steamer via Havana. It was prepaid all the way to its destination, two reales, with four half-real Spanish Antilles stamps.

Also, there is one horizontal pair of postal counterfeit half-real stamps (see section 12) known canceled by the negative circular “CORREOS VERACRUZ” postmark⁸. This means that just as with the genuine half real stamps, a soldier or businessman obtained these counterfeits in Cuba and took them to Veracruz where they were used on this city’s correspondence. So far these are the only postal forgeries that have been reported canceled in Veracruz.

Figure 56 shows a genuine half-real stamp canceled with the circular grill on the left, next to the postal counterfeit pair canceled by the negative postmark.

Figure 56. Half-real Spanish Antilles stamps canceled by the Veracruz circular grill and “negative” circular postmark. The stamp on the left is genuine. The pair on the right is a contemporaneous counterfeit.



⁸ Type II, in the classification of: Armengol, M. & Rosell, F.X. *Falsos Postales de Antillas, Cuba y Filipinas*. Publiafinsa, España, 1992.

10.1.2. Dominican Republic

In 1860 General Pedro Santana became President of the Dominican Republic, for the fourth time. Afraid of being invaded by the Haitians, in control of the western third of the island of Hispaniola, who had repeatedly launched aggressions into Dominican territory, Santana contacted Queen Isabel II of Spain to ask for the country's Annexation to her kingdom. Following a series of exploratory expeditions to the Dominican Republic, the Spanish agreed to assume control of this Caribbean nation. After a succinct notification to government authorities in the island, the Spanish flag was raised on March 18, 1861. Santana, who never sought the people's opinion about his move, was named Governor of this new Spanish province (Santo Domingo). The Dominican population did not give the Spanish a warm welcome. Within weeks of the annexation, anti-Spanish revolts broke out across the country. By late-1863 the restoration movement had gained momentum and Dominican troops forced the Spanish Army to retreat to coastal cities. After long and difficult negotiations the Spanish Queen signed a decree of abandonment on March 3, 1865. On July 11, 1865 the last Spanish troops departed from the Dominican Republic. More than 31,000 Spanish soldiers were deployed to the island during the four years of annexation. Of those troops, only 48 died in combat, but 6,785 died of disease, mainly yellow fever⁹.

When the Spanish took over the postal system in the former Dominican Republic they instituted the same postage rates and stamps that were in effect and valid in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Prepayment of postage with adhesive stamps was made compulsory in the Spanish Antilles as of January 1, 1857. Internal mail was charged half real and mail to Spain and Cuba was rated at one real, both per ½ ounce. Mail to the United States by Spanish steamers was also charged one real. Printed matter was also rated at half real per piece (mainly printed circulars). In early-1864 Spanish troops in Santo Domingo were granted postal franchise for letters not exceeding ½ ounce. Letters over ½ ounce in weight were charged one real.

Correspondence from this period is very scarce. So far only sixteen genuine covers franked with stamps of the first issue of Spanish Antilles have been reported, seven with the half-real stamp and nine with the one-real stamp¹⁰. There are several other covers that in my opinion are at the very least questionable, including one with a two-real stamp, and two others whose stamps have been removed (addressed to New York).

Figure 57 shows an unusual example of internal mail during this period. It is a single-weight letter sent from Puerto Plata to Santo Domingo. It was franked with a half-real Spanish Antilles stamp canceled by a small circular date stamp on January 27, 1866. This represents a late usage of this stamp. Only three internal letters within Santo Domingo franked with this stamp have been recorded, two were sent from Santiago de los Caballeros to Puerto Plata, and this one.

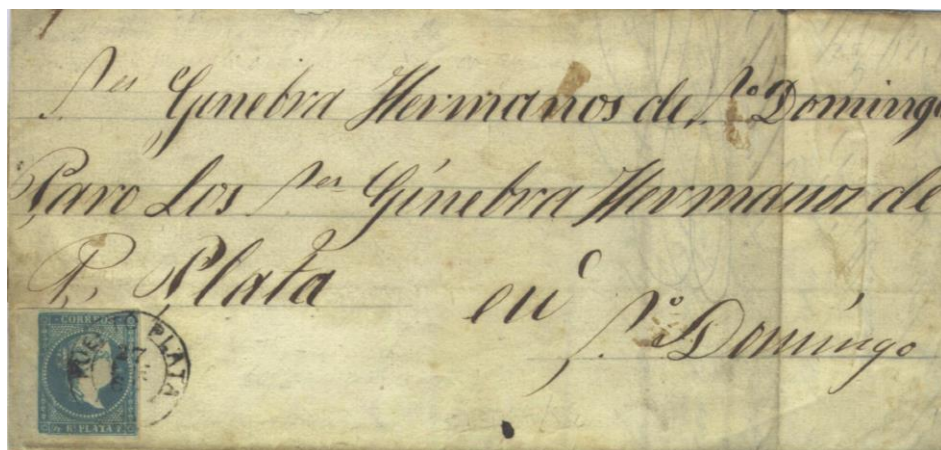


Figure 57. Single-weight letter sent from Puerto Plata to Santo Domingo during the Spanish military intervention.

The single-weight letter in figure 58 was sent from Santo Domingo to Madrid on June 1, 1863. The one-real Spanish Antilles stamp was canceled by a simple four parallel bars grid, one of the most frequently recorded obliterators used in the capital. The cover also has the large Santo Domingo circular date stamp.

Half and one-real Spanish Antilles stamps canceled with the six different postmarks used in the Dominican Republic during the Spanish military intervention are shown in figure 59.

⁹ Mueses, Danilo. *The Spanish Postal System in Santo Domingo*. 2013, p. 54.

¹⁰ Op. Cit., pp. 105-139, and this author's personal records.

In addition to the colonial stamps of the first issue, Spanish Antilles stamps of 1865 (second issue) were also used in the Dominican Republic, but only the half and one-real denominations. The latter stamps are outside the scope of this work.

Figure 58. Single-weight letter sent from Santo Domingo to Madrid. It was sent prepaid by Spanish steamer to its destination during the Spanish military intervention.



Figure 59. Half-real and one-real Spanish Antilles stamps canceled in the Dominican Republic. From left to right: Santo Domingo large cds, Santo Domingo three bar grid, Santo Domingo small cds, Santiago de los Caballeros large cds, Puerto Plata small cds, and Puerto Plata oval.

10.2. Unintended Uses

Rarely Spanish Antilles stamps were used in places where they were not intended to. Illegal, accidental, or convenience uses were occasionally accepted. Postal authorities appear to have tolerated this practice in the few instances that have been recorded. Most of these usages occurred in Spain, but they also took place at a few other unusual locations.

10.2.1. Spain

Spanish Antilles stamps have been recorded used on letters from Spain to Cuba, from Cuba to Spain (entering the mail at Spanish ports), and between two Spanish towns. Figure 60 shows a single-weight letter sent from Jativa (Valencia), Spain, to a government officer in Havana, on July 6, 1860. The single rate from Spain to Cuba was one *real de vellón*, so the Spanish Antilles half-real stamp slightly overpaid the transatlantic fee.

Figure 60. Single-weight letter from Jativa (Valencia), Spain, to Havana, with an illegal use of a Spanish Antilles half-real stamp (Fernando Iglesias Collection).



The cover in figure 61 was written in Havana in 1859 but it does not have any Cuban postmarks. It was a double-weight letter franked with a one-real un-watermarked Spanish Antilles stamp carried privately to Cadiz, where it entered

the mail. The stamp was canceled with the numbered *rueda de carreta* (cartwheel) obliterator which was widely used at the time. It is likely that it missed the closing of the mail in Havana and that it was carried by a passenger on board the ship and posted in Cadiz, since there was no financial advantage of sending it this way. This is the most common type of usage of Spanish Antilles stamps in Spain.



Figure 61. Double-weight letter from Havana to Madrid. It was carried privately to Cadiz where it entered the mail, franked with one Spanish Antilles one-real stamp illegally used.

Figure 62 shows the rarest type of usage of a Spanish Antilles stamp in Spain, on a letter sent between two Spanish towns. This mourning cover was sent in 1861 from Algeciras (Cadiz), the westernmost European town in the Mediterranean, to Jerez de la Frontera. It may have been a double-weight letter, or simply a convenience overpayment.

Figure 62. Mourning cover from Algeciras (Cadiz), Spain, to Jerez de la Frontera, Spain, with an illegal use of a Spanish Antilles one-real stamp.



There are also very rare examples of Spanish Antilles stamps used in combination with Spanish stamps on mail addressed within Spain.

10.2.2. Elsewhere

Aside from the uses in Spain, there are only a handful of examples of foreign usages elsewhere. The cover in figure 63 represents what is probably a unique usage of the half-real Spanish Antilles stamp. This single-weight letter was sent on February 1858 from New York to Havana. The stamp was canceled in New York but not accepted as postage. The sender paid ten U.S. cents in cash (pencil notation under the postmark that looks like a "0"), the contract steamship rate to Cuba on board the steamer *Cahawba*. In Havana the Spanish Antilles stamp was not recognized as prepayment and the letter was charged one real postage due. "NA" was applied in Havana to indicate its origin in North America and justify the charges.

Why was the Spanish Antilles stamp affixed to this letter? We have seen similar letters with the same franking and from the same correspondence, but not postmarked in New York. It appears that the sender intended to prepay the letter and to send it privately to Cuba, to be posted in Havana.

The cover in figure 64 was sent on October 21, 1857, from St. Thomas, Danish West Indies, to Havana. The combination of the red handstamp " $\frac{1}{2}$ " and a Spanish Antilles half-real stamp indicates that the stamp had been applied to the cover before it reached Havana and that it was carried on board a non-contract Spanish vessel. In 1856 a fee was imposed on letters carried by Spanish ships that were not subsidized or contracted by the post office, to be paid to their captains. The fee per letter, regardless of its weight, was half hard silver real, when received in the Spanish Antilles, or one real de vellón, when received in the Peninsula. The stamp on this single-weight letter was accepted and canceled in

Havana. Merchants in St. Thomas were able to obtain foreign stamps for their use, including postage from Great Britain, France and the United States.



Figure 63. Single-weight letter from New York to Alquizar, Cuba, via Havana. Prepaid ten U.S. cents by American contract steamer to Cuba. The half-real Spanish Antilles stamp intended to pay for the Cuban internal fee but it was not accepted and the letter was charged one real postage due in Havana.

Figure 64. Single-weight letter sent from St. Thomas to Havana. It was prepaid with a half-real Spanish Antilles stamp on board a non-contract Spanish vessel. The addressee was charged one additional half real, the private ship captain's fee.



Figure 65 shows a single-weight letter sent from Veracruz, Mexico, to Bocos, Spain, probably routed via Havana. It was posted in Veracruz, on December 30, 1855. It was then likely carried by Spanish non-contract merchant vessel to Cuba or directly to Vigo, Spain. It was not received in Burgos until May 1, 1856, four months later! The long delay in transit raises the possibility that the letter was held in Cuba until the addressee or his agent paid the postage to Spain. There are no forwarding agent markings. The half-real Spanish Antilles stamp may have been applied in Mexico (less likely) or Havana, and it paid the transatlantic fee to Spain. But the stamp was not canceled until the letter reached Vigo, with the parallel bar oval only used in Spain. The markings YNDIAS and 1Rl. (vellón) were applied in Vigo. The latter fee was paid to the captain of a non-contract ship (similar to the cover in figure 64).

There is only one other reported cover with the combination of an YNDIAS marking, used to identify mail from the Americas since 1764, and a Spanish Antilles stamp.



Figure 65. Single-weight letter from Veracruz, Mexico, to Bocos, Spain, probably via Havana. It may have been carried by merchant ship to Cuba and from there by Spanish non-contract vessel to Vigo, Spain. The half-real Spanish Antilles stamp may have been applied in Havana, and paid the transatlantic fee to Spain. In Vigo the stamp was canceled with the parallel bar oval, and the markings YNDIAS and 1Rl. (vellón) were applied. The latter fee was paid to the captain of a non-contract ship.

In 1857, Spanish and French priests and other Catholic missionaries in the kingdom of Annam, Cochinchina (present-day Vietnam), were assassinated, among them the brutal beheading and mutilation of the Spanish Bishop in Tonkin. In 1858 a Franco-Spanish punitive military expedition was launched against the main strategic cities in the region, including Saigon. Sixteen hundred Spanish troops were sent from the Philippines. Their officers were all Spanish but the main contingents were Tagalog, well acclimated to the tropical conditions. In June 1862 a treaty was signed between the Annamites and the French ending this conflict. But within months of the signing of this treaty, even before the Spanish troops had left, a new uprising forced the Spanish to remain in Saigon. It wasn't until September 1, 1863 that the last Spanish soldiers returned to Manila.

The postal testimonies of the Spanish presence in this region are minimal. An exceptional cover sent by a Spanish priest working in Cochinchina to Sant Feliu Sasserra (Catalonia), Spain, shown in figure 66¹¹. The letter was written on December 15, 1858. It was franked with a pair of one-real Spanish Antilles stamps, canceled with the cartwheel marking of La Junquera (number 61), northwestern Spain. La Junquera, near the French border, had a foreign exchange post office. The sender mentions that a French steamer (*Pregent*) that was leaving for Macao taking some of the missionaries to a safer location, was carrying his letter. He also describes the ire of the Mandarins, the sacking of towns settled by Europeans, and the cruel torture and murder of those who refused to renounce their Christian faith.

Figure 66. Single-weight letter sent from Cochinchina to Sant Feliu Sasserra (Catalonia), Spain. Prepaid to its destination with two one-real Spanish Antilles stamps (courtesy of Jose Maria Sempere).



Somewhere along the route this cover must have been given to a British vessel and was sent via the Suez canal to Great Britain. It was sent to Spain inside a sealed bag via France. The Spanish Antilles stamps were accepted as full prepayment and canceled upon entering Spain, in La Junquera, near the French border. The oval PD stamp indicating "paid to destination," and the manuscript red "2" possibly a two pence credit to Spain.

The sender of this letter, Dominican Father Pedro Almató, died as a martyr of the Christian faith and was canonized by Pope John Paul II.

It is possible that other covers sent by Spanish missionaries or military personnel from Southeast Asia have survived, but so far they have not surfaced.



Figure 67. Several non-constant printing freaks. TOP (over-inking): CORR OS, CI REOS, CORRECS, CORPEOS, and missing rosette in right lower corner. BOTTOM (under-inking): missing mouth, missing mouth and nostril, and truncated right side

11. Plate Varieties

This is a very extensive topic which will be described briefly. There were both non-constant printing varieties and constant varieties which have been extensively studied and collected.

¹¹ Sempere, Jose Maria. "La carta de un Martir," *Filatelia Digital*. <http://www.filateliadigital.com/la-carta-de-un-martir/>.

11.1. Non-Constant Varieties

These consist of a number of freaks that happened infrequently. They were usually caused by over inking, under inking, paper folds, foreign matter inclusions during the printing process, etc. Figure 67 shows several of these printing abnormalities.

11.2. Constant Varieties

There were many constant and progressive printing varieties on the three different values. Some are subtle and others are very dramatic. These individual characteristics allow the identification of the positions of most individual stamps in the plate or sheet of 170, particularly the half-real values. Half-real stamps were printed in three different plate settings. The first one was in use approximately from 1855 to 1858, the second one in 1861, and the last one was briefly used in 1863. There were two plate settings of the one-real stamp and only one plate setting of the two-reales stamp.

11.2.1. Initial Varieties

The most common initial variety on the half-real stamps was the so-called “CORRFOS” in which the lower horizontal bar of the letter “E” is poorly defined or missing, giving this letter the appearance of an “F.” There were fourteen different “CORRFOS” stamps in the sheet of 170. The position of five of them was changed in the second plate setting. Figure 68 shows the detail of the upper part of a stamp with the “CORRFOS” variant, which can be more or less pronounced, depending on the printing.

Figure 68. A “CORRFOS” variant.



11.2.2. Acquired Varieties

There were dozens of acquired plate varieties in all the values of this issue, too many to enumerate and describe in detail here. All of these varieties were the result of some type of damage to the clichés that occurred during the printing process. The half-real stamps had the most printings for which they sustained more damage. Some of the unique characteristics were progressive and others were relatively constant after they initially appeared. Some were present early on when the stamps with loops watermark were printed, and others did not appear until about 1863. When the half-real and one-real plates were cleaned with acid in 1862 many additional defects became obvious and others appeared more pronounced. There is an entire book and a monograph dedicated to the study of these defects. Only the two most notorious variants affecting the half-real stamp are succinctly described here.

Undoubtedly the most striking plate variant occurred in position III-4. This was likely caused by a defect in the metal frame that surrounded the cliché, which was evident in 1855, and lead to the gradual sinking of the stamp’s left upper corner. The first corner changes become apparent in 1857 or 1858. In 1858 there was an attempt to repair the defect by raising the clichés upper corner with a metal instrument. It failed and the defect quickly became more pronounced and progressed, leaving an conspicuous empty space on the stamp’s left upper corner. Eventually the cliché’s frame was broken. Figure 69 shows a stamp of the second plate setting with an advanced defect on a triple-weight letter sent from Puerto Principe to New York in 1861. The stamps paid the internal fee to Havana, where the letter was taken by an American steamer to New York. The insert shows a mint stamp with the most advanced defect recorded.



Figure 69. LEFT: Broken corner variant on a triple-weight letter from Puerto Principe to New York. BELOW: The most advanced defect.



Another striking variant occurred relatively late, on the plate's second setting. The cliché in position VIII-17 was scratched. The defect, under the queen's eye and over the nose, progressed rapidly and produced the "Pinocchio" nose variety shown in figure 70.

Figure 70. "Pinocchio" nose variant in position VIII-17.



11.2.3. The Replacement Stamps

In 1863 it was decided to replace the damaged clichés of the half-real stamps with new ones. A total of twelve clichés were replaced, including the two described above. The new clichés are easy to identify because they are missing a pearl in the edge of the left upper triangle, shown in figure 71.



Figure 71. The new clichés used in 1863 with a missing pearl in the left upper triangle.

12. Postal Counterfeits

This is also a very extensive topic which will be described briefly. A few months after the un-watermarked stamps were placed in circulation in January 1857, counterfeits made by unscrupulous individuals to defraud the post office began to appear¹². Over a dozen different types of postal forgeries of the half real value are known, and several others of the one real value. Eventually the use of postal forgeries was so prevalent that beginning in 1865 postal authorities were forced to issue new stamp designs annually to try to prevent the production of counterfeit, with relative success. The forgers were never caught.

Counterfeit stamps were used by merchants and private individuals, who in some cases possibly did not know they were not genuine. This could happen because, although it sounds hard to believe nowadays, Spanish colonial stamps were not sold at post offices but at other government agencies and private stores whose owners received a 5% commission for their sale.

Some postal forgeries were relatively crude, like the so-called "Havana" forgery of the half-real and one-real stamps which were detected by postal authorities very early (shown in figure 72 next to a genuine stamp). Other counterfeits are much more difficult to spot by the untrained eye. A careful count of the number of pearls in the periphery of the inner circle and a look at other characteristics may be necessary to detect them. Postal forgeries are known used mainly in Cuba, but also in Puerto Rico. They were also rarely used in Veracruz and the Dominican Republic during the Spanish military interventions. They were used on internal mail as well as on correspondence to Spain and Mexico. All the known counterfeits were produced by lithography in contrast to the genuine stamps printed by typography. For the sake of brevity, only a couple of unusual examples of postal forgeries on cover in combination with genuine stamps will be shown. No more than a half dozen such combinations have been reported, counting both, the half-real and one-real values.

Figure 72. Comparison of the crudest type of counterfeit stamp (left) with a genuine example.



¹² Sarrias, A. & Kouri, Y.H. "The Auditor's Rubric," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. XXIV, No. 68, May- August 2013, pp. 20-22.

12.1. Half Real

Thirteen different types of half-real counterfeit stamps have been reported, although the vast majority of examples consist of types I to VIII. The single-weight cover in figure 73 was sent in 1862 from Havana to Barcelona. It was franked with a type II counterfeit stamp on the left and a genuine stamp on the right.



Figure 73. Combination of a type II half-real counterfeit with a genuine stamp on a single-weight letter sent from Havana to Barcelona.

12.2. One Real

Four different types of one-real counterfeit stamps are known. Figure 74 shows a triple-weight cover sent in 1860 from Havana to Santander on board the Spanish steamer *Berenguer*. It was franked with a type III counterfeit stamp on the left lower corner and two genuine stamps on the right.

Figure 74. Combination of a type III one-real counterfeit with two genuine stamps on a triple-weight letter sent from Havana to Santander.



12.3. Two Reales

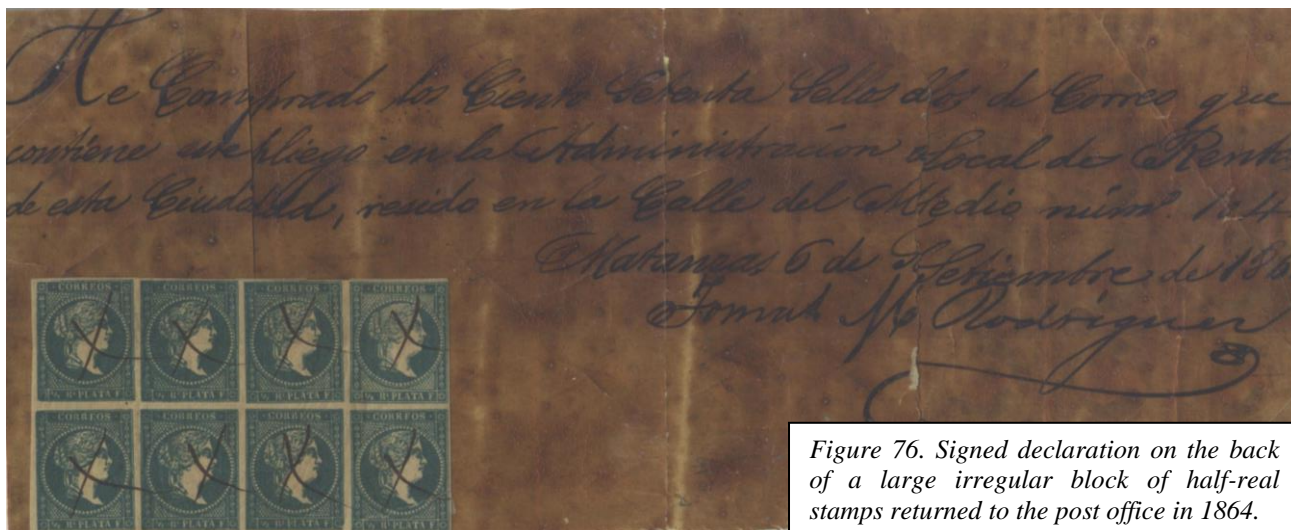
The only “postal forgery” of the two-reales stamps was created by partially erasing the Y¼ surcharge of 1860. This only took place in the city of Matanzas, and the perpetrator most likely had the complicity of a postal clerk who heavily canceled these stamps to try to cover the visible remnants of the surcharge. Still, part of the surcharge can be seen on the used stamps. About a dozen examples of this contemporary forgery are known, including a horizontal pair and strip of three. One of these postal forgeries appears in figure 75.



Figure 75. Postal forgery of the two-reales stamp created by partially erasing the Y¼ surcharge.

13. Demonetization of Stamps

To reduce the loss of revenue caused by the use of counterfeit stamps, it was decided to demonetize the stamps of the first issue of Spanish Antilles and to issue new stamp designs annually. The return of unused stamps to the post office was allowed, beginning on September 1, 1864. Those returning the stamps had to sign a declaration stating their name, address, and the date and place where the stamps had been purchased. Figure 76 shows the back of a large block of returned half-real stamps with a signed declaration.



The old stamps of the first issues of Spanish Antilles were not valid for use in Cuba as of January 1, 1865. However, some of these stamps continued to be used in Puerto Rico and the Philippine Islands for several months, sometimes in combination with the new postal issue of 1865. The cover in Figure 77 shows one such late usage on an official mail cover sent from San Juan to Ponce, Puerto Rico, on March 17, 1865. The franking of a strip of three two-reales stamps of 1857 and a half-real stamp of 1865 paid for 13 x the single rate.

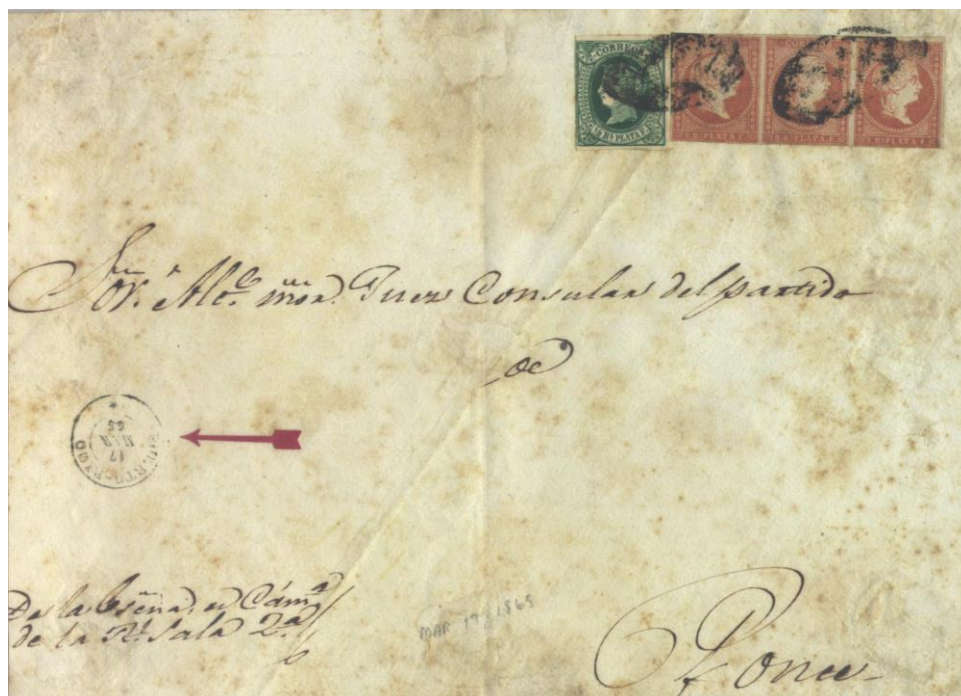


Figure 77. Official mail sent from San Juan to Ponce, Puerto Rico, franked with a combination of three two-reales stamps of 1857 and a half-real stamp of 1865.

And thus ended the fascinating and intricate decade-long run of the first postal issues of Spanish Antilles, the Spanish colonial stamps with the most diverse and longest period of use, that have delighted philatelists for more than a century.

14. Bibliography

Basic Reading:

- Armengol, M. & Rosell, F.X. *Falsos Postales de Antillas, Cuba y Filipinas*. Publiafinsa, España, 1992.
- Echenagusía, Carlos. *Tablas Simplificadas para la Localización y Plancheo de la Primera Emisión de Sellos de Antillas Españolas*. EDIFIL, Madrid, 1999.
- Echenagusía, Carlos. *Estudios Filatélicos (Primera Emisión de Antillas Españolas y de Cuba y Correo Interior de La Habana)*. CD published by its author. 2009.
- EDIFIL. *Catálogo Especializado de Sellos de Cuba, Tomo I, 1855-1958*. Madrid, 2012.
- Guerra-Aguiar, J.L. *Estudio Sobre la Primera Emisión de Antillas Españolas (1855-64)*. Cuadernos del Museo Postal Cubano, Habana 1976.
- Guerra-Aguiar, J.L. *El Correo Local de La Habana (1855-77)*. Cuadernos del Museo Postal Cubano, Habana 1977.
- Prats, Ignacio. *The Local Mail Service of Havana, 1860*. Federación Interamericana de Filatelia, 1983.

Related Works by This Author:

- Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "A Census of Spanish Military Expedition Covers from Veracruz," *Mexicana*. Vol. 42, No. 1, January 1993, pp. 216-221.
- Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "Revenue Use of the First Postal Issue of Cuba," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. VIII, No. 21, July 1996, pp. 13-15.
- Ignacio Prats and Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "The Odd Couples: Pairs of the Y¼ Stamp of 1855 with Two Types of Surcharges," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. IX, No. 23, January 1997, pp. 16-19.
- Ignacio Prats and Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "Comments on the 'Y¼' Surcharged Stamps of 1855," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. IX, No. 24, April 1997, pp. 49-50.
- Ignacio Prats and Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "The Use of the Y¼ Stamps and the 'Correo Interior' Marking," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. X, No. 28, April 1998, pp. 59-62.
- Roberto Rosende, Ignacio Prats and Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "Stamps of the First Issue of Antilles Used in the Dominican Republic," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. X, No. 29, July 1998, pp. 110-113.
- Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "Postal Forgeries of the Two Real Stamp of 1857," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. XI, No. 31, First Third 1999, p. 14.
- Ignacio Prats and Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "Certified Mail with One Real or Two Real Stamps of the First Issue of Cuba," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. XII, No. 35, Second Third 2000, pp. 59-61.
- Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "The Anglo-Spanish Postal Treaty of 1858 and Cuban Correspondence," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. XII, No. 36, Last Third 2000, pp. 92-101.
- Ignacio Prats and Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "Another Orange Red Two Real Stamp of 1855 on Cover," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. XIV, No. 41, Second Third 2002, p. 54.
- Ignacio Prats and Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "Postal Forgeries of the First Issue of Spanish Antilles Used Abroad," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. XIV, No. 42, Last Third 2002, p. 104.
- Silvia García-Frutos and Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "A Mystery Solved? The Combination of Postage and Revenue Stamps on Fiscal Documents," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. XVI, No. 46, First Third 2004, pp. 10-11.
- Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "An Anonymous Letter," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. XVI, No. 47, Second Third 2004, pp. 57-58.
- Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "The Sesquicentennial of the First Cuban Stamps (1855-2005)," *WESTPEX '05*. Exhibition Catalog, San Francisco Airport Marriott Hotel, April 15-17, 2005, p. 18.
- Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "The Earliest Known Use of the Y ¼ of 1855," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. XVII, No. 49, First Third 2005, pp. 11-12.
- Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "Contract Steamship Mail between Cuba and Apalachicola via Savannah," *Florida Postal History Journal*. Vol. 15, No. 1, March 2008, pp. 8-9.
- Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "The Half Real Stamp of the First Issue of Antilles: Position III-4," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. XXII, No. 61, January-April. 2011, pp. 5-14.
- Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "El Sello de Medio Real de la Primera Emisión de Antillas: Posición III-4," *Revista de Filatelia*. No. 481, Abril 2011, pp. 227-231. [slightly expanded version previous article]
- Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "The Second Surcharged Stamps of the World," *Revista FIAF*. No. 22, October 2011, pp. 14-20.
- Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "A Revenue Use of the First Postal Issue of Spanish Antilles?," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. XXIII, No. 66, Sept.-Dec. 2012, pp. 14-15.
- Fernando Iglesias & Yamil H. Kouri, Jr. "Postal Forgeries of the First Postal Issue of Antilles Used in Combination with Genuine Stamps," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. XXIV, No. 67, January-April 2013, pp. 12-15.
- Adolfo Sarrias & Yamil H. Kouri, Jr., "The Auditor's Rubric," *The Cuban Philatelist*. Vol. XXIV, No. 68, May- August 2013, pp. 20-22.

