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A 172-year-old Mystery Solved!

Iconic classic stamps are often surrounded by an air of mystery, sometimes based on fact, often on fantasy. The **Spanish 1851 2 Reales error of colour** is certainly iconic, as to date **only three examples** have been recorded. At first, the stamp, printed in blue instead of the normal brick-red, was deemed to be either an essay or a colour proof. Other early philatelists believed it to be an error (later proven by the discovery of another example in a pair with a 6 reales – the correct value issued in blue) but none could explain how this had come about.

Now, 172 years later, a Spanish philatelist and researcher, has **discovered official documents** in the Provincial Archive in Zaragoza, Spain, **that reveal** not only the contemporary official correspondence relating to the discovery of the printer's mistaken **inclusion of the wrong value** and the recall of the stamps concerned, but also **the error's exact position** on the sheet.

José Antonio Herraiz reveals the results of his research **for the first time in English**, in the March edition of **THE LONDON PHILATELIST**, the journal of the Royal Philatelic Society London.

Richard Scott Morel, Curator, British Library Philatelic Collections—which includes one of the three known examples of the error in the **Tapling Collection**—commented:

"This amazing discovery provides important new insight into one of Spain's most significant philatelic rarities and amply demonstrates the value of archival holdings for original research. Well done Señor Herraiz, what an absolutely amazing find!"

For further information, contact
Tony Bard FRPSL, Editor, THE LONDON PHILATELIST,
on +44 (0)7977 989812 or lpeditor@rpsl.org.uk