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Today's Collector part 2  
Finding Answers

Going Over Things Almost Forgotten.



This block of twelve 1861/68 Dos Reales is from Plate Three.

The penciled-in notes are Turnburke's notation of the plate positions.

My title is about things almost forgotten; this may make it seem like I'm unaware of something I have in my stamps. Of course, I can't remember everything I have accumulated, but some things have been put away and untouched for years. This story is about other collectors and a famous dealer of Mexican stamps. I started collecting in the mid-nineties. Soon after I became interested in Mexican Philately, my new friends, John Kordich and Doug Stout, told me about a stamp dealer named Dr. Ray Armeen. They said I needed to visit his table the next time he was at a stamp show in the Los Angeles area. At that time, we had a number of good stamp shows in Southern California each year. I was excited about one to be held near LAX Airport, about 60 miles from my home. It was so long ago; all I can remember is that I had to wait until Sunday to go to the show. When I finally arrived, I introduced myself; it was afternoon, and I discovered I was almost too late to meet him because he was getting ready to close to catch his homebound plane. He did let me look at one of his red boxes of Eagles, and I was taken aback that the whole box was full of these stamps. I pulled out a couple, but my search was cut short by his apologies as he had to leave. I bought the two stamps and vowed to be at the next show on opening day.

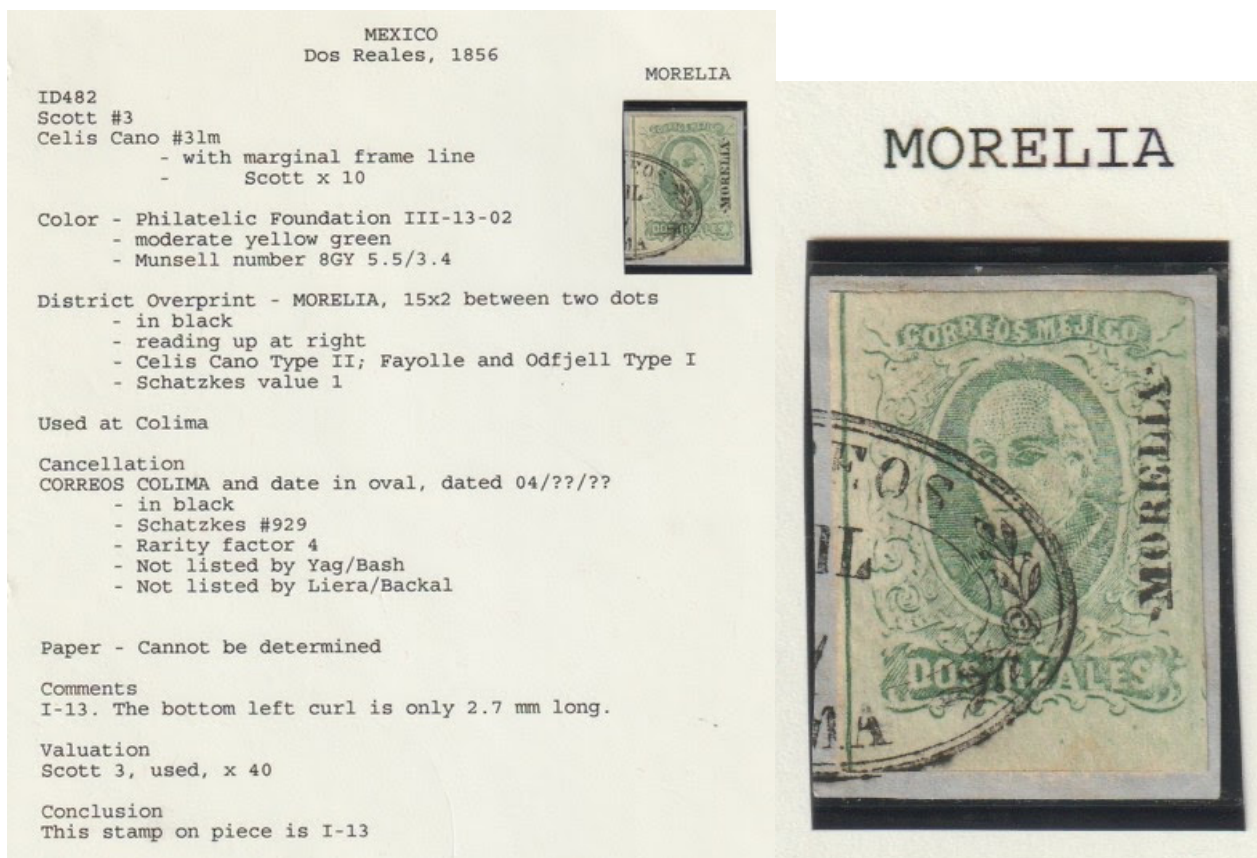


This is the famous Plate One position 54/ and the repeat of the value tablet below position 48.

Some philatelists consider this error might have been removed on later use.

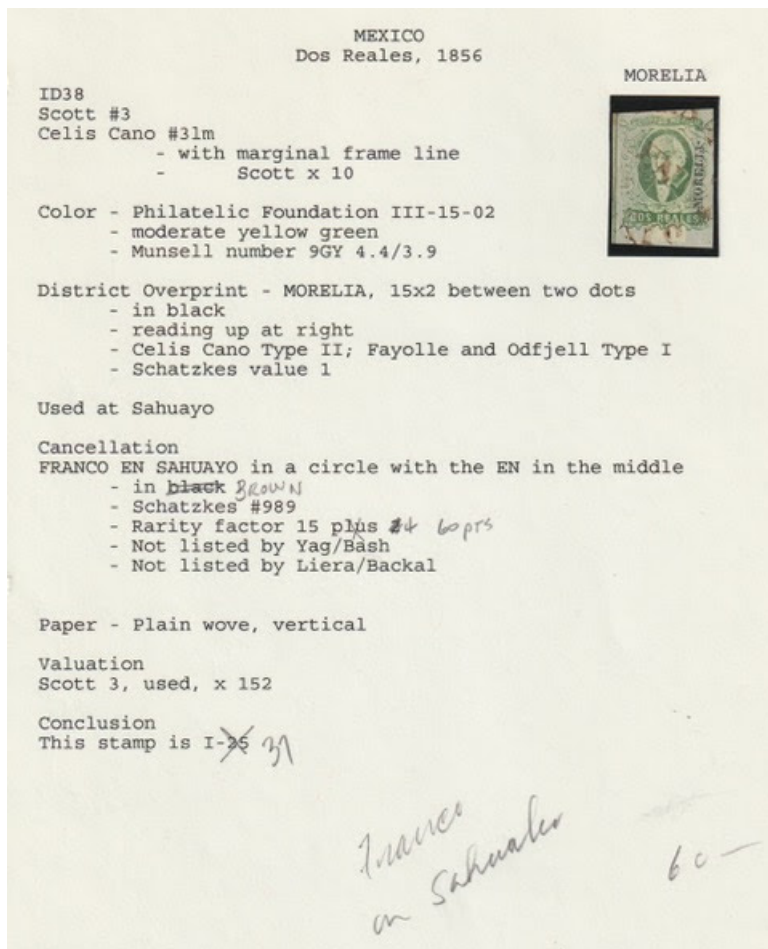
In the coming years, I met with this friend I made, called by all "Doc". I was deep into collecting my favorite Mexican stamps, the Dos Reales of the first design. He knew this, and he also knew I needed to build my stock for eBay sales of the other issues. Sometimes I would buy different albums of Mexican stamps or large groups of the early classics. At one show, he arrived with hundreds of Un Reales of 1856 and told me he had purchased Vernon Turnburke's collection of the 1856 issues. He complained that he had to remove stacks of pages those Un Reales issues were placed on. A lightbulb went off above me as I was fully aware of Vern's project of plating all the minor issues of 1856. My heart sank when I told him those pages had the information on each stamp, which had been the collector's hobby. I told him that it was very important not to remove any of the stamps from the pages of the Dos Reales. I promised to buy all the Dos Reales if he could send them with the pages.

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This page and stamp are a good example of the work Turnburke went to for each stamp position.

Understand, I had known Vern for some years and tried to find as much information as I could from him, and indeed he did communicate with me, but he did not use email, and at the time I could not talk to him on the phone, because it was years before I had my Cochlear Implants that gave me hearing. Vern also used an old word processor for most of his early work, doing each page for each stamp. As a separate note, Vern eventually started saving all his information on an early computer. These were filled with amazing color details and more. He then recorded his best estimate of each stamp's position on the plate. Unfortunately, when Vern passed away, the computer data was all lost to a garage sale, so no digital records were saved. When I look over these pages, my heart aches that the only data I have is in my hands. What he recorded is unique, and what I have are his years of research on the Dos Reales issues I collect. Because all the early plates, including the Dos Reales plates, have each position image pressed into the plate one at a time, each plate has details and placement that set it apart from the adjoining stamps. That alone is enough to address, but no existing sheets or large blocks of stamps exist for the first and second plates. The second plate has no framelines like the first, so the outside margins don't show the importance of the framelines found on the early first plate. The third plate has a few sheets and some large blocks from the late and poorly printed Gothic issues.



I am showing this page because Turnburke made two mistakes, because they may not have been applied when he did his research. First, the color is brown, not black; second, the position was 37, not 25. The first mistake may be the catalog he used for the cancel. The second mistake may have been a change in position from Andersen's research.

Now, the fortunate end of this story is that "Doc" sold some of the Dos Reales first plates, better examples, to another good friend of mine, Yesper Andersen, which helped him do something most thought was impossible: plate the first plate of the Dos Reales. I didn't mind missing out on the stamps Yesper worked with, but I wound up buying hundreds of the sheets with each stamp attached. So, the story gave me a great resource, but between selling stamps and having little time to work on my own collection, the binders have sat on my shelf for much of the last couple of decades. With my collection binders of other Dos Reales bulging, I started placing their pages into a second binder to make two less normal-sized binders. I needed more room on the shelf, so I pulled off the binders I had from the Turnburke/Armeen holdings. As I flipped each page, and the pages turned, another story was telling me about each of these little stamps. I spent hours looking through these stamps and wondered why I had neglected them for so long. Now my collection beckons me to incorporate this wonderful group of stamps into my collection. Another task to add to uplifting my collection of these stamps I favor; what joy awaits me at a task I will gladly do.

Enjoy!

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