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The Practical Collector II

The Treasures We Over Look

Printed on Back Issues (POB)



Scott #37a 2R 1868 Mexico Gothic Issue POB variety used

While flipping through the material I have collected in my Mexico Dos Reales of the first design, I now see what I might have written in the past and reflect on what an in-depth study might bring to light. My friend Marc Gonzales has just finished his book on the fakes and reprint of the first issues of Mexico. Of course, this aligns directly with what I collect in those issues. Recently, he contacted me about the unusual Dos Reales in very yellow-green that is found printed on the back. He wanted to know whether I thought they might be fakes or genuine because they are, to our knowledge, never found in used condition. In the Gothic Dos Reales, the dark gray on light paper is sometimes found printed on the back and is rarely found in mint condition. So, why is the Yellow-Green stamp with this odd variety so different?



Scott \$3g 2R Yellow-Green Printed on Back Mint No Gum lineal wove paper

At first, I gave Marc the usual answer that it was likely a mistake and could be the printer's waste that made it out the back door. Marc pushed me that this is the ordinary answer that has been used for a long time. With this nudge, I decided to do a little more to study my stamp and a couple he had with the MEPSI collection. He also noted that very few of these have ever been certified by the Expert Committee. I never expected the low turnout of certs for this interesting variety, but Marc suggests it is a no-brainer that the stamp is printed on the back. He wanted to know if this variety might be a reprint.



Scott \$3g 2R Yellow-Green Printed on Back Mint Original Gum

Going back to the scans, I found that one clearly showed the use of Linal Wove paper, a type only used on the three types before 1857. I now knew it could be from plate one to plate three, so a deeper study of the features pointed to plate three, Dos Reales. Next, I examined the three stamps to see if they matched the reprints. There are four different possible prints found from a plate strip of four. Over the years, I have accumulated many reprints and likely have one of the largest number of these scarce reprints. Yes, they are scarce because few were printed because of the numerous genuine amounts available when the reprints were made. Most Dos Reales Reprints were printed with colors close to the scarcer Emerald. So, with close details of these POB examples, I knew the earlier plates were not the same. Besides, the reprints are not found on linal woven paper. Without going further, I knew that the reprint idea would not work, but an odd, different paper might be used with these POB issues. So, I check very carefully the reprint next to the POB example. No match. Looking

at the backs of these three examples, I discovered that the print on this side was not the same and that the spacing points to these images were coming from the third plate with fairly close margins. With 190 positions, the idea of a full sheet with an inferior outcome might have been printed again.



Scott \$3g 2R Yellow-Green Printed on Back Mint Original Gum

The question arises regarding these issues: "Why are these stamps only found in mint condition?" I have spent some time thinking about the possibilities of the answer. One case scenario would be that they were found to be insufficient in quality to be delivered to the Postal Administrators due to lack of quality. The printing on the back may be explained by the really poor quality of the print. It is possible that the printer decided to try a different ink mix, add less or more oil, or possibly change the wetness of the paper. The second run may have proved a lack of quality again, as well. The officials might have rejected the end product. These stamps may have been set aside and, sometime in the future, found their way into collectors' hands.

I have concluded that the printing on the back might all be due to the color of the ink and the rejection of its use. I could write an interesting story about how these found the hands of collectors, but that is only speculation. What should they be called since they never reached the post offices? How about Trial Color Plate Proofs done on both sides of the paper? The sheet even went to the point of being gummed but still unused. It may have wound up in a pile of rejected stamps sold years later by the postal authorities to a stamp dealer. The bottom line is that these are genuine stamps, an important variety, and were not lost to Mexico's interesting Philatelic History.

Enjoy!