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Today's Collector
New Opportunities

Looking For A Certain Stamp



Guadalajara #3 Deep Green Strong print 1856 Plate Three

Note: this stamp may have had a slightly wetter print, creating extra ink in some lines.

My friend, Ismael Sanchez Moreno, wrote to me this week with a request about an unusual bluish-greenish shade in the Dos Reales. If my guess is right, they are the Dark Blue-Green Dos Reales, but there are also Deep Blue ones with a slightly yellow tint. The first color is listed as Scott 3a; it just doesn't show any yellow, but the one I think he has does, and most of them have outstanding prints. Not only is this a great stamp to look out for, but the printing is also amazingly well done, with almost every engraved line beautifully added. So, my feeling is that this would make a great topic for my message this week. I have way too much to tell you and, of course, my friend Ismael. This story also provides useful information about Mexico's early issues, especially in the Dos Reales. Let's begin. I only know a part of what these mysterious dark bluish-green stamps are. I have a number of them in my collection, and I can only say they are not from Plate One or Two issues.



This 1856 Dos Reales issue from Orizava shows the deep Green one would expect from the more blue tint.

The yellow tint is still apparent, but lower than the general green with a more even mix of yellow and blue.

Deep blue tint Stamp Colors:

Years have passed since these Dos Reales, with a blue tint to their deep green, started getting philatelists in Mexico talking. First, it was the Odd Plate issues, which, upon study, were understood to be the missing Plate Two of the Dos Reales. The story goes that it took some time to actually recognize that there was a second plate of Dos Reales. But then the question was, what about these other stamps that were even deeper green with a blue tint? So, the question has always been: if they are not Plate Two and surely not Plate One, are they from Plate Three? I know now that these stamps indeed are from Plate Three. My guess is they were limited in print, but wound up mixed in with the general run of stamps. I don't think very many of these were printed, but they likely served as early, high-quality printers' trial proofs from the sheet for Plate Three. Think about the 1861 Dos Reales. When they were released at the start of that issue, the print quality was deep black, followed by high-quality gray prints. So, this may be an indication that these really nice, deep-colored Plate Three deep green stamps in 1856 were just early quality of the big 190 position Plate Three stamps. First thing here is to qualify for a Deep-Blue Green Plate Three; it has to have excellent print, with all engraved lines well formed. To understand when and where these stamps were used, it will take time to do a large search. The likelihood will be higher in the larger districts that received the most stamps, though not always.

Morelia	40.00	5.00	3.00
Oaxaca	40.00	5.00	4.00
Orizava	40.00	5.00	3.50
Pachuca	50.00	5.00	15.00
Perote (x)	2,000.00	2,000.00	
Polotitlán (x)	1,250.00	1,000.00	2,500.00

In this detail from NF's catalog, you can see how common-to-rare issues change in value.

The third column to the right is for Dos Reales in used condition.

Stamp Distribution:

For a little more background on the distribution of the stamps to districts. The printer shipped the finished sheets to the Mexico City district for their use and for forwarding to the fifty-odd districts. Picture the stamps as they came out of the printer and into the office. Beginning with the printer. When sheets were finished at the drying and gum stations, they would be stacked before being shipped to the Post Office (Mexico City). These stacks would be brought into the storage room, and depending on how much or how little this added stock was, they would have wound up out of order from when they were printed. So, maybe those High Quality Dos Reales would wind up at the bottom of the stack and be sent out to the first district only after the others. From this point, I have no clue where they would go, but there are

some of the Dos Reales Emeralds through the Plate Three greens that were shipped in close colors for a particular district. Some Districts never received certain colors that others did.



This Dos Reales from Guanajuato is a good example of the deep Blue Green Scott #3a. It is completely free of any yellow tint. These are considered a special variety in these issues.

Color:

Now, there is another Color of importance. The Deep Blue-Green Plate Three issues. Those are more Blue than Green because the tint has almost no yellow. They were all printed on Linear Wove Paper in late 1856-1857. The color is seen in deep dark print, but many were poorly printed due to a lack of water in the unprinted sheets at the time of printing, and some are very poorly printed due to what appears to be dried ink in the engraving. Only those of higher quality and darker are considered worthy of this in better colored examples. A large part of these stamps is found in Veracruz. Many of these in the poor prints seem to come from the Mexico City District.



I am using an 1861 issue to show the heavy grain paper.

Look closely at the top margin, and where the heavy postmark is, the grain shows the horizontal direction.

Printing, Paper and Grain:

Printing processes are not fully known, but the first group of stamps was apparently printed in Medio, Un, and Dos Reales, with later printing of the Red Cuatro and Red-Lilac Ocho issues. Much of this had already been done before the first shipments to the districts in August 1856. along with the printings during the fall of 1856. Medio Reals printing took place in the early prints, with the entire run printed at once. All stamps printed during 1856 and most of 1857 were printed on two paper types: Plain Wove and Linear Wove, which were hand-laid paper. In either late 1857 or early 1858, printing was done on heavy wove paper with machine-belt-laid paper. Pre-cut sheets, the 60-position size was all

horizontal-grain paper, and the 190 and 200-position sizes were all vertical-grain paper. So, the new vertical-grain paper was used for the Un and Dos Reales from the last months of 1857 through all of 1861 printings on the 190 and 200 position plates. All 60 position plates printed after late 1857 in all colors for the other issues are found on horizontal-grain paper. Stamps with vertical grain for issues other than the Un and Dos reales should be considered forgeries or reprints.

Process of Printing:

Printing of the sheets was a rather large production. The printing press used at that time printed one sheet at a time. This meant keeping a damp sheet ready to place on fresh plates for each print. When the first printed sheet was pulled from the press, more ink would be spread and then wiped off the plate. After this process, the ready engraved plate's flat areas would not print, but the engraved lines would hold the remaining ink, giving the image on the next sheet. As each sheet was removed from the press, it was hung to complete the drying of the paper and ink. In some cases, if the sheets are piled up too soon, the unprinted side of the top sheet would show the reversed image on the back of the sheet, on top of the still-wet sheet. Later, gum would be applied to the sheets, and they would be ready for shipment to the Postal Authorities.

Ink:

Due to the lengthy process of printing these stamps, each day would have begun with another batch of ink being mixed for the next printing. As for the color of the stamps, it is not known whether any other denominations were printed at the same time. Each denomination had its own plate and, at most, likely never had more than two plates in use simultaneously. The Medio and Un Real had two plates. Dos Reales are not known to have been used with more than one plate at a time. It is doubtful that more than one printing press was in use at any time. If the process of printing these stamps required mixed ink, there was likely a lot of Dos Reales to come out in different shades of Green depending on the mix of the day or if another batch was needed. Some of the stamps, like the Red Cuatro issues, likely had much less variation in that color. The same is true for the Un Real Yellow stamps, but the changes would be measured by how much the suppliers were sending and which shades of the color the printer may have used in the mixing. Although talking about color and the ink on the first issues of 1956 is moot because most of this is unknown.



These are from my selection of Deep Green w/a light blue tint at 600 dpi.

Please notice the strong and clear print on each of these stamps.

These should be expanded on your computer for the strong details.

Quality of Print:

I realized I have gone way past the information you are now searching for, but the things mentioned above can give you a good idea.

- The quality of the Deep Green with blue tint from Plate Three should be very high.
- They are likely found in one of the two types of paper used before the heavy-grain paper in later issues.

- To my knowledge, there has been no study to determine the numbers sent, which districts they are more likely to come from, or any other details that provide a date and time.
- Because of their variety, only a few of these high-quality stamps are likely to be found in modest numbers in collections.
- For years, most of these have been incorrectly identified as issues of Plate One or Two.
- Much more study is needed to assess the value of these high-quality stamps from the very common plate. The high quality I refer to can be found in the following areas.
 - A. All areas surrounding the Oval picture will show strong, clean impression lines.
 - B. The area in front of the first letter on the Value tablet will have clean diagonal lines, with some of these alternating in the opposite direction.
 - C. The portrait of Hidalgo will be clear in the face, body, and background.
 - D. Regardless of weak margins, all the printing should be clear and without any missing print.

I know I have gone into a long explanation of the plates, printing, and colors. There is no substitute for good study and quality material to point us in the right direction for such a study of a very elusive example. It often takes a large number of examples of a subject to begin drawing conclusions from such a study. I wish I had a helper for something like this, to go through thousands of stamps and pick out the few that would be expected to surface in such a hunt.

Enjoy!

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