

85 Years Ago in Mekeel's:

Early Stamps of Brazil

by Philip H. Ward, Jr. (From Mekeel's, Feb. 28, Mar. 14, Apr. 18 & July 4, 1938, with photos added)

Part One

The serious thoughtful collector of today is in many instances gradually turning more and more to the early classic issues. They were prepared in comparatively small quantities with the one idea of their postal use rather than any thought of sale to collectors or speculators. They are well seasoned, for the available supply is known with no possibility of large supplies being held. Then, too, unlike most of our late issues they are only to be found in the condition wanted after much correspondence and limiting. It is not simply a question of being able to pay the price, one must search for the unusual early piece. The classics are generally masterpieces of the engraver's genius and are really miniature works of art.

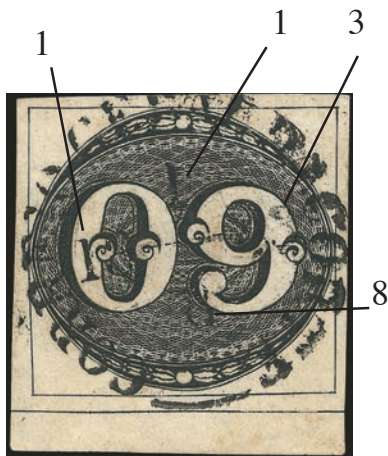
...While we still believe early United States issues are the philatelic market's premier investment, the early classic imperforates of South America, British Colonies, and most European countries offer excellent investment opportunities. A block of the beautifully engraved penny black of Great Britain or a similar piece of the Brazilian Bulls Eyes would attract attention in any exhibition and are likely to be pieces sought after as long as postage stamps are collected.

...We have had the opportunity of picking from one of the finest collections of Brazil ever gotten together. Formed in that country by one who had ample funds to acquire the finest the market afforded, it was a partial guide of what existed in those early numeral issues, the Bulls Eyes, the Slanting Figures and the Small Figures which are seldom seen except in single copies.

Brazil was the second nation of the world to issue postage stamps, its first series appearing on July 1, 1843, just four years to the day before our own first governmental emission appeared. Their postal system may be said to date from April, 1798, when the first post office was established in Rio de Janeiro although previous to that time letters were distributed in the public square.

Cancelling of the stamps was ordered at either the office of origin or office of delivery. Instructions called for the cancellation

1843 60r deep black (Sc. 2), first composite plate, State A, Position 1—the first stamp in the 60r pane—cancelled by a full clear strike of “Correio Geral da Corte 1/8/1843” first day of issue datestamp. In this photo we picture the stamp upside down with arrows pointing to the “1” (day) at the top within the cancel frame, “8” (month) bottom (showing only the right side of the numeral), “1” of 1843 center left, and “3” of 1843 center right. For a clearer cancel, see the cover below. Reminder: for a closer look, use your pdf magnifier.



to be part on the stamp and part on the cover. One official decree stated that “Cancellations should bear name of locality, day, month and year”. In cases where the cancellation lacked the date the postmaster was instructed to fill in the date by hand. As a result, we often find early Brazil with manuscript date on the stamp or cover. We have seen these early cancellations in red, green, blue, magenta, black and brown. Black, however, is the commonest.

The first issue of 1843, known as the Bulls Eyes, consist of three values, the 30,



60 and 90 reis. Engraved in black with large figures of value in the center they show no other letters or figures to indicate what they are and where issued. The three denominations are printed on the same plate in blocks of



The unique cover with all three values of the first issue. Each stamp with sheet margins and frame lines top and bottom, all tied by Rio de Janeiro 22 8 43 double circle date stamps

eighteen (six horizontal by three vertical) with frame lines around each block of eighteen (image, page 2). They were evidently separated at the post office into miniature sheets of eighteen, for but one pair is known showing two values.

Later the 60R which was required in larger quantities was printed in sheets of sixty (six horizontal by ten vertical). Blocks from the larger plates are exceedingly desirable. In fact, all denominations in larger multiples than pairs are scarce and blocks are really rare.

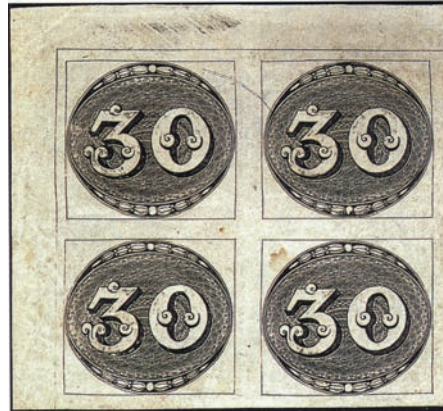
In the collection which is now being broken there were photographs of all blocks shown at the Brazilian Exhibition as well as other blocks known. As the number of blocks known are so



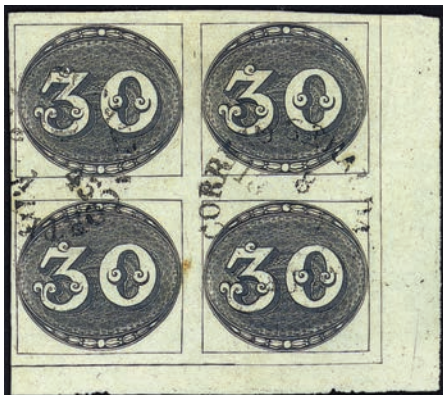
1843 90r black early Intermediate Impression (Sc. 3), complete unused pane of 18, 1st Composite Plate, State A—the only known 90r pane.

small we list those either in the collection or illustrated in the hopes that if others exist we may be so advised.

Of the 30R Bulls Eye in mint condition but two blocks are known, both blocks of four. One block is in the deep black of the first printing, early state of the plate, and comes from the upper left corner of the pane (shown) for it has the extra frame lines at the top and left. The second block is from a later printing and shows no traces of the extra frame line on any side.



30r, Sc. 1, unused block of four with upper left sheet margin and frame lines



Block of four of the 30r, Sc. 1, with right and bottom frame lines and sheet margin. Rare from the "3rd Plate". Not listed by Ward.



The famous se-tenant "Pack Strip" with two of the 30r and one 60r. Notice the "Interpaneau" (inter-pane) line along which the 30r and 60r panes would normally have been separated.

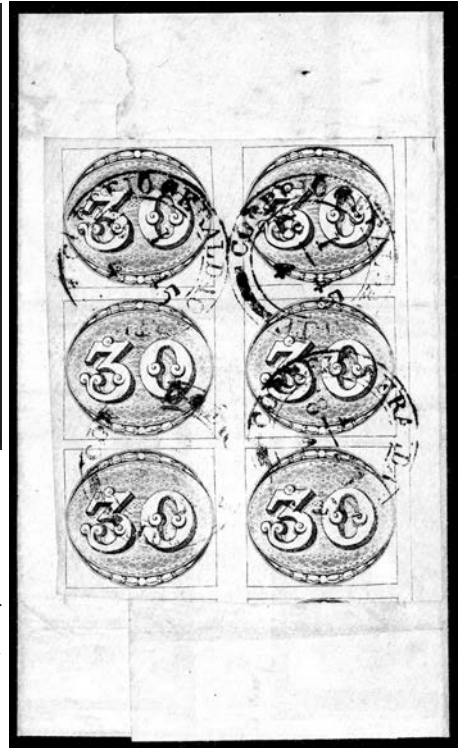
There are seven used blocks; one a block of nine, one of eight, one of six and four blocks of four. The block of nine (3x3) has the shield type Pernambuco postmark date Jan. 29, 1844, and has an extra frame line at the left. The block of eight (4x2) is cancelled with two concentric circles,

"Correio de Corytiba" without date, the marks falling in the center of each block. The block of six (2x3) is from the right end of the pane with extra frame at top, right and bottom and has three postmarks, one in the center of each pair, "Porto Sue Alege" without date. In the case of four blocks of four, one has an extra frame at the left and has two "Corte" postmarks dated 8-1845, the second "Corte" 24-1-1845, the third "Corte" 6-1849, while the fourth block is cancelled twice "CEARA" without date.

30r black Late Impression (Sc. 1), Large Plate, State A, Positions 23-24/29-30/35-36 block of six, including sheet margin and outer frameline at right (bottom in this photo), tied by one of four strikes of "Correio Geral da Corte 1/4/1845" circular date stamp on

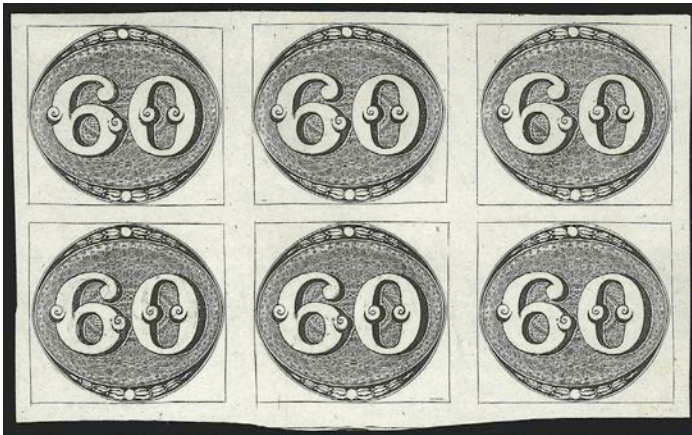
folded cover to Rio Pardo, described as "one of the top five philatelic items of Brazil and one of the world's greatest Classic Imperforate covers". The block is affixed over the backflap and was carefully opened to preserve the block.

The 30R in block form is rarer than the 60R or 90R, at least that is what the available records show. Only two mint blocks known and as the used block of eight could be cut into two blocks of four there is a possibility of eight used blocks, making ten in all.



An additional block of 6 (not listed by Ward) of the 30r, Sc. 1, with right margin and frame line, tied on reverse of 1845 cover by "Correio Geraldcorte..." double circle date stamps





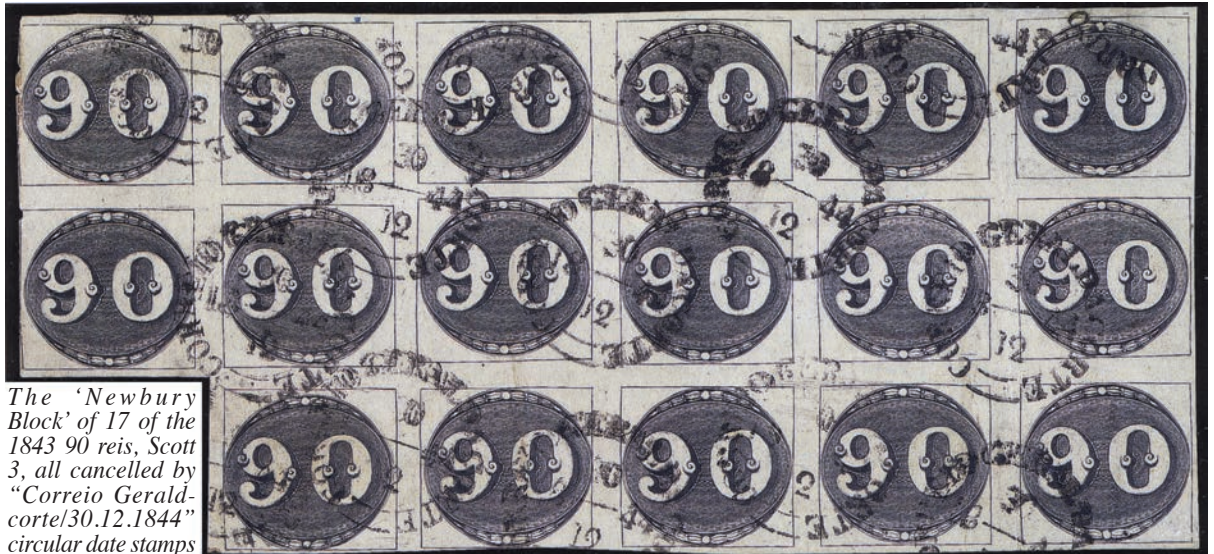
1843 60r black Intermediate Impression (Sc. 2), first Large Plate, State B, Positions 44-46/50-52.



1843 60r black Intermediate Impression (Sc. 2) first Composite Plate, State B, Positions 3-5/9-11/15-17, block of nine (the left half of the pane of 18) including outer framelines at top and bottom and interpanneau dividing line below two righthand stamps at bottom, cancelled by framed "CIDADE DE NICTHEROY" handstamp.

Bull's Eye stamps from the composite plates that show the dividing line between panes are called Semi-Xiphopagus. The 60r Semi-Xiphopagus stamps come from the top or bottom of the middle pane (twelve positions).

Of the 60R Bulls Eye undoubtedly the outstanding piece is an unused block of twenty (four horizontal by five vertical) from the large plate of sixty subjects. It is in the light black, intermediate printing, with extra frame line at the right. This is a relatively new find and was not known at the time of the Napier



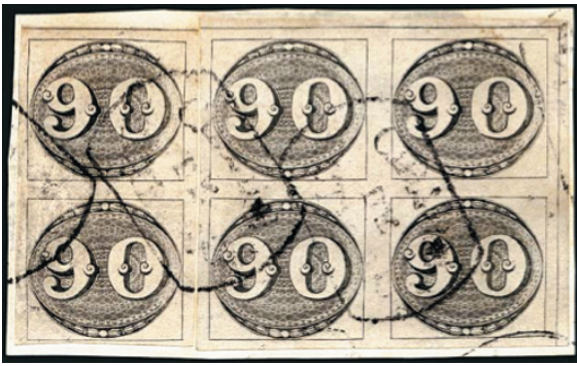
The 'Newbury Block' of 17 of the 1843 90 reis, Scott 3, all cancelled by "Correio Gerald-corte/30.12.1844" circular date stamps

book on Brazil. It is from the famous Guilherme Guinle Collection and is one of the highlights of Brazilian philately. The next largest unused block is one of nine (3x3) with frame at bottom followed by a block of eight (4x2) with frame at the right. There is a block of six in the earliest printing (2x3) with frames at top, right and bottom and three blocks of four, one with frame at bottom, one with frame at top and the third with frame at left and bottom. We are told that one of these blocks of four was presented to President Roosevelt on his recent trip to Brazil. This totals seven unused blocks in all. Two of these blocks would be cut which could give us a possible eleven blocks unused.

Of the used blocks seven exist which could be separated into twelve blocks so that the 60R differs from the 30R in that the used block is almost as scarce as the unused block. There are two used pieces definitely from the large plate, one a block of 20 (2x10) cancelled "Corte" 8-4-1845. There are extra frame lines at the top and bottom. The second block is one of 13 (a block of 15 with the lower left vertical pair missing) cancelled "Cidade de Nicttheroy". A block of nine (3x3) with frame at right and block of four have the same postmark. A block of six (2x3) has a postmark consisting of the town name within a rectangle with rounded ends. The name we cannot decipher. There are two more blocks of four, one with frame at right cancelled "Corte" 21-1-1847, the other "Victoria" in straight line postmark. We believe the used block of nine is the largest block known from the small pane of 18.

The 90R Bulls Eye is the rarest stamp in singles but blocks are not as scarce as the 30R and in the case of used blocks somewhat more plentiful than the 60R. Only one block is known unused, a block of 12 (4x3) which could be separated into two blocks of six. This is in the early printing and has extra frame line at the bottom. We have been told this is from a miniature sheet of 18 which was sold to a well-known South American collector. As the stamps at the right and left ends were somewhat ragged, the collector took his shears and trimmed a vertical strip of three from each end leaving the block of 12.

Of used pieces, ten blocks exist, some large that could be cut into smaller blocks so that 15 blocks are possible. The largest used block is one of 17, a pane of 18 with the lower left stamp missing. It is odd but this large piece has no extra frame lines. It is cancelled "Corte" 20-12-1844. [As can be see in the photo here, the date is 30-12-1844. JFD.] The next in size is one of 12 (6x2) cancelled "Corte". A block of 9 (3x3) cancelled "Corte" 30-12-1844. A block of 8 with frame at left and bottom, a block of four with



90r Intermediate Impression, marginal block of four and vertical pair lightly tied to fragment by "CIDADE DE NICTHEROY" cancels, from second composite plate, state A, positions 4/10 (pair) and 5-6/11-12 (block), also with pane margin lines complete at top and right.

frame at bottom, one with frame at top, one with frame at right and bottom and one without frame all five blocks cancelled "Cidade de Nictheroy". Two other blocks exist, one of six with frame at top left and bottom cancelled "IQUASSA" and a block of four without extra frames postmarked "CEARA".

The collections of the world showing these three blocks used or unused could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Mr. Paulo Ayres in his excellent recently published book on early Brazilian cancellations lists 101 different postmarks on the Bulls Eyes. He does not mention colors but we have noted "Pati do Alfereio" in red, "Grampara" and "Corte" in magenta, "Campina" in both green and in brown and "Santos" in blue. Black is the common postmark.

Bulls Eyes on the cover are rather scarce especially when on the front. They are generally found on the back, used to seal the letter and quite often are torn when the letter is opened. There is a small insect of some kind in Brazil that seems to thrive on these early covers for it is not unusual to find them with dozens of small holes.

Part Two

Col. G. S. F. Napier in his excellent book published in 1923 on the First Issue of Brazil describes the plate of sixty of the 30 R Bulls Eye, but unfortunately there were no large blocks or strips in the Brazilian collection, now being broken, to prove the existence of such a plate. In fact, we know of no block or strip containing a row of four or more stamps in a vertical row. Such a piece would prove in itself without the official records that plates containing more than the usual pane of eighteen [3 vertical rows x six] 30 R were made.

We described in previous paragraphs that three such blocks of the 60 R exist which prove the larger plate of this stamp. One of these was an unused block of twenty and the other two used blocks of twenty and thirteen.

Col. Napier suggests that there was a plate of 54 of the 30 R made up of three panes of 18 subjects, but there are no records to prove such suggestion. Mr. Jose Klobe in a paper read before the meeting of The San Paulo Philatelic Society on January 11, 1923, stated that the records show three plates were made of mixed values of fifty-four stamps, eighteen each of the three values, one plate of sixty 30 R and two plates of sixty 60 R. Col. Napier mentions but two mixed plates of fifty-four each in four states of the plate. Quite possibly, three plates were made and something happened to the third plate before being used. Then, too, it may not have been satisfactory and was condemned before going to press.

The large block which we previously described, namely: the

block of twenty unused 60 R is from the first plate of sixty subjects and contains positions 9 to 12, 15 to 18, 21 to 24, 27 to 30 and 33 to 36. An off-hand check with Col. Napier's plate shows that his illustrations for positions 22, 24, 28, 29, 30 and 34 are incorrectly placed.

Reading over the information which is now available on this first issue, we are led to believe that much is still to be done in reconstructing these plates. The work should not be difficult if the material is available for the frame lines were undoubtedly engraved separately from the central oval and their relations to the oval differ on almost every stamp. We note on the block of twenty of the 60 R that every stamp from numbers 15 to 18 show a position dot immediately above the center or the top frame line which leads us to believe that all stamps in the third horizontal row of this sheet show such an oddity. We do not note this dot in this position on any of the other stamps.

We would like to purchase available pairs, strips, blocks and covers of these stamps with the idea of fitting them together and seeing what we can accomplish.

The 90 R from the two composite plates have been satisfactorily plated, no doubt, due to the blocks available but certainly as much cannot be said for the 30 R and the 60 R. Records show that the number of stamps delivered were: 1,148,994 of the 30 R; 1,502,142 of the 60 R and 349,182 of the 90 R.

The stamps are believed to have been engraved at the Mint in Brazil. The dies are supposed to have been produced in New York or London. Ninety-five years is a long time back and unfortunately, the records of that period are not as complete as one might wish.

The Slanting Figure Issue

Evidently the first issue or so-called Bull's-Eyes proved to be too large and bulky for general use. The sheets of sixty were too large to be conveniently handled by the postal clerk and the panes of eighteen were too small for those buying in quantities. Then, too, large blocks of the 90 reis had to be used to pay required postage in some cases so that new and higher denominations were required.

The second series, like the first, was printed in black and had the figure of value as a design. This time the stamps were much smaller and the figures of denomination were slanting, hence, are designated as the "Slanting Figure [Inclinados]" series. Four new values were added so that the series consists of a 10, 30, 60, 90, 180, 300 and 600 reis. When the first stamps were issued it was the original idea to have a portrait of the Sovereign as a central design but it was later thought that to cancel such a portrait would show lack of respect, hence, the substitution of the figure of value.

The second issue appeared July 1, 1844, exactly one year to the day since the issuing of the Bull's-Eye. The latter were withdrawn June 30, 1844. We believe this to be an error since some of them must have remained on sale until somewhat later for Col. Napier tells us that the earliest recorded dates of cancellation of the large plate of 30 reis, early state, is October 16, 1844, the earliest date large plate of 60 reis late printing, first plate, is August, 1844, with the second plate as late as October 1, 1844. As we have stated before we believe much is yet to be discovered regarding these early stamps and many of our conclusions of today will probably turn out to be incorrect. Bull's-Eyes were used for a number of years later for we have before us as we write a copy of the 60 reis from the Guinlee Collection with magenta cancellation of "Corte 18-5-53". Corte, by the way, indicates the "Distrito Federal" that is, Rio de Janeiro.

From the scarcity of the slanting figure stamps we are led to

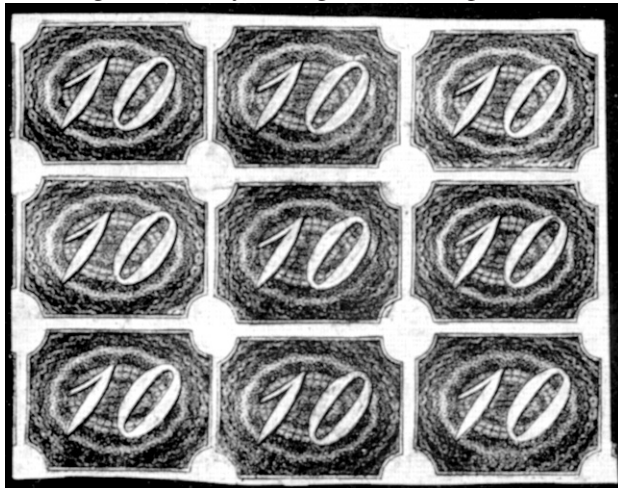
believe that they did not come into general use throughout the country until sometime after they were first placed on sale. None of the lower denominations are really common and the high values may also be classed as rarities. Certainly pairs or larger of the 180, 300 and 600 reis would be so rated.

We do not believe the exact size of these plates is known but we have seen blocks to prove that there were at least eight vertical and eight horizontal rows. Offhand, we would assume the sheet consisted of one or two hundred stamps. Experience in the sale of the earlier stamps evidently made known the desirability of having the stamps in multiples of 100 so that the stock could be counted more easily.

The stamps in many cases had little or no margin between so that copies not cut into design on one or more sides are unusual. There are numerous double transfers and recutting to be found on this issue. The well-known oily red ink came into use on this issue on February 1, 1849, at Rio de Janeiro.

These notes on the early stamps were mainly to record for future students existing multiples in a collection now being broken. Having been made by a well-known collector in Brazil with unlimited resources it naturally contains many of the outstanding items existing.

Of the 10 reis there are no large blocks present. Unused seem to be somewhat scarcer than used and we find two blocks of four and a square block of nine. Used there are four blocks of four, two horizontal blocks of six, one of ten and a vertical block of eight. Undoubtedly there are many more in other collections. These are all picked with four margins. One block of six with red cancellation shows a vertical guide line at left which leads us to believe that the sheet consisted of two panes of 100 each which were separated before being delivered by the engravers to the post office.

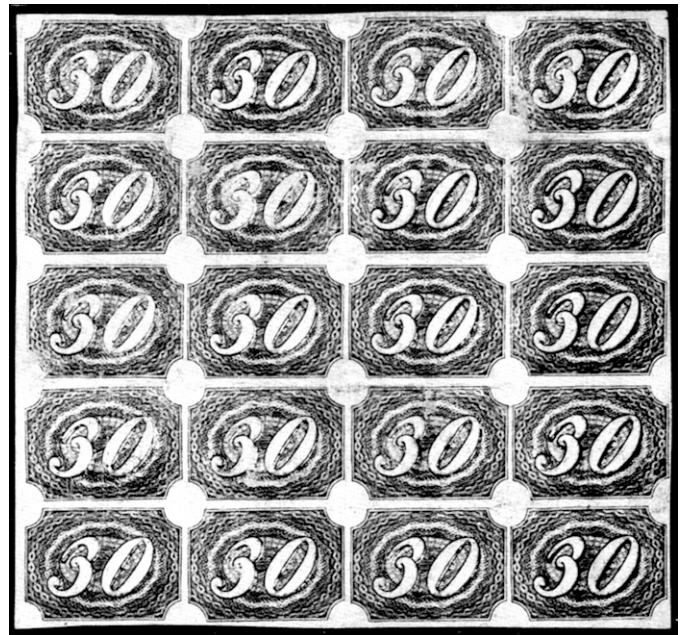


The 10r, Sc. 7, in an unused block of nine

Of the 30 reis larger blocks are to be found. We note an unused block of 48 (8x6), a block of 30 (5x6), a vertical block eight and one of four. Used blocks are represented by one of 32 (4x8) and two of four. These all have fine margins which leads us to believe that inferior blocks offered this collector were evidently refused.

Judging from the collection the 60 reis must be an uncommon block unused for there are only two blocks of four. There is a used block of four and two magnificent blocks of 12 (3x4), one with a bright red cancellation.

Multiples of the 90 reis in fine condition must be rather scarce. There is no unused block present and whether such blocks exist elsewhere we cannot say. There is a used block of 24 (6x4)



The 30r, Sc. 8, in an unused block of 20, not listed y Ward



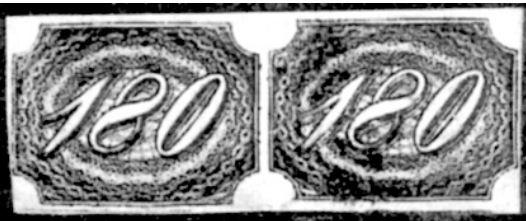
The 60r, Sc. 9, in a used block of 35 with framed "Cidade de Nictherory" cancels, not listed by Ward



A magnificent piece, a fragment with a 60R Bull's Eye, Sc. 3, in combination with a block of 18 of the 90R Slanting Figure, Sc. 10, all tied by "Ro.Grde.Nte" ovals in red, not listed by Ward.

with the black "Nichteroy" cancellation, a block of 12 (3x4) with black postmark and a magnificent block of nine (3x3) with sheet margins at left with bright red "MACEIA" cancellation. These black stamps with red postmarks, like our own early issues, are most attractive.

The 180 reis in multiple is a real rarity. Unused the collection contains a vertical strip of four and pair.



The 180r, Sc. 11, in a rare unused pair

Here again we know of no unused block. There are two horizontal blocks of six used, one with a red cancellation and the other with a black "NICTHEROY". We know of no other blocks.

The 300 reis in multiple may be classed as the rarest of the rare. Only one block of four is known and this is unused. It has four margins and is from the Duveen, Gibson, Guinlee collections. Undoubtedly, it is the rarest and most desirable philatelic item known from Brazil. Not even an unused pair is recorded. Outside of this block there



The 300r, Sc. 12, unused with four margins



Scott 13

is a vertical used pair on small piece of cover. If other multiples exist we would like to record them. Single copies with margins are rare.

Of the 600 reis only one unused block is known, this having margins all around and with guide line at the left. The only other unused multiple in the collection is a vertical pair. In cancelled condition, there is a block of four, a vertical strip of six (shown) and a strip of three. Here, too, fine singles are scarce but not so much so as the 300 reis. A vertical pen-cancelled block of 12 (2x6) of the 600 reis is known.

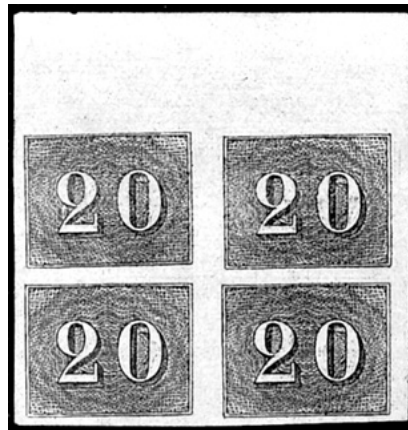
All denominations are to be found in deep black and the lower values in gray-black. Covers seem to be scarcer than the Bull's-Eyes but they do not command as much.

We would like to be advised of any other outstanding multiples or cover.

The Small Numeral Issue

The first issue of Brazil, the so-called Bull's Eyes, remained in use exactly one year. The second series or Slanting Figures listed by all catalogues as 1844-46—why we do not know for they were in use until replaced by the Small Numeral series in 1850—were used for five and a half years.

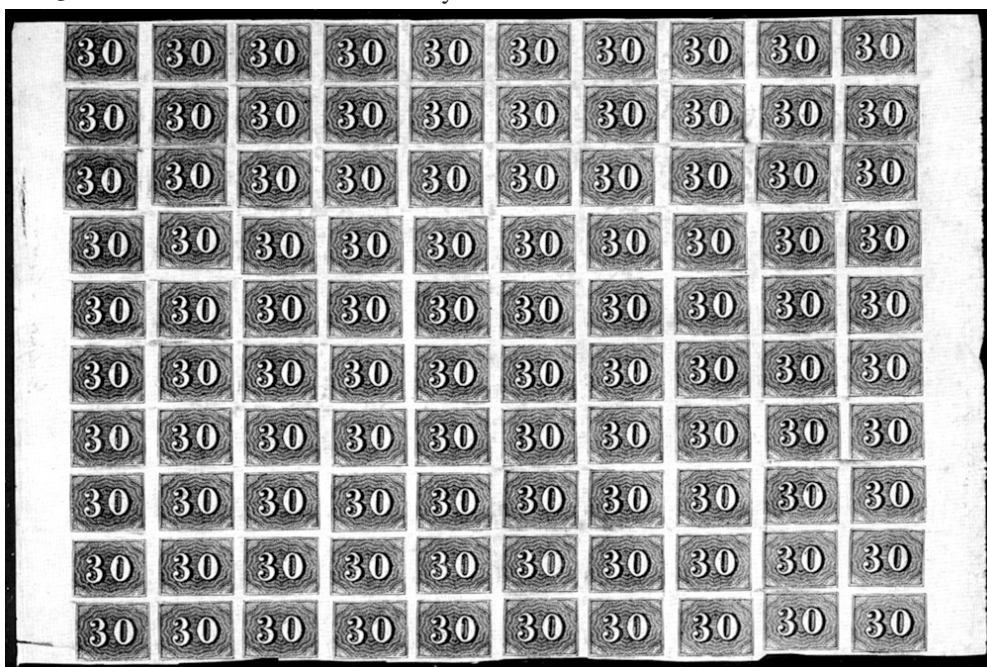
The third series or Small Numerals were placed on sale January 1, 1850. They were engraved



An upper right sheet margin block of four of the 20r, Sc. 22

from steel plates at the mint in Rio de Janeiro and were printed in sheets of two hundred, twenty rows of ten and cut into panes of one hundred. Like the two previous issues, all values were printed in black. The denominations issued on January 1st were the same as the previous series, the 10, 30, 60, 90, 180, 300 and 600 reis. The new value of 20 reis did not appear until August 23, 1850, and being little used has been the scarcest of the low denominations. The stamps can be found on both grayish and yellowish paper. We have even seen the 60 reis on what might be described as bluish paper but we believe that gum and time have had their effect in giving us these varieties. The shades run from a deep black to a light gray, the variations being especially noticeable in the 30 and 60 reis.

Blocks in this issue are not as rare as in the earlier issues. The 180 and 300 reis in unused condition seem to be the rarest as there were only one of each in the Guinlee collection; these both being blocks of four. The 600 reis is scarce followed by the 20 reis which is only to be found after much search. The 10 and 90 reis are not common. The 30 and 60 reis are quite plentiful in block form, especially the latter which is to be found in large blocks both unused and used. This issue, unlike the earlier varieties, does not show as many double transfers and recuts.

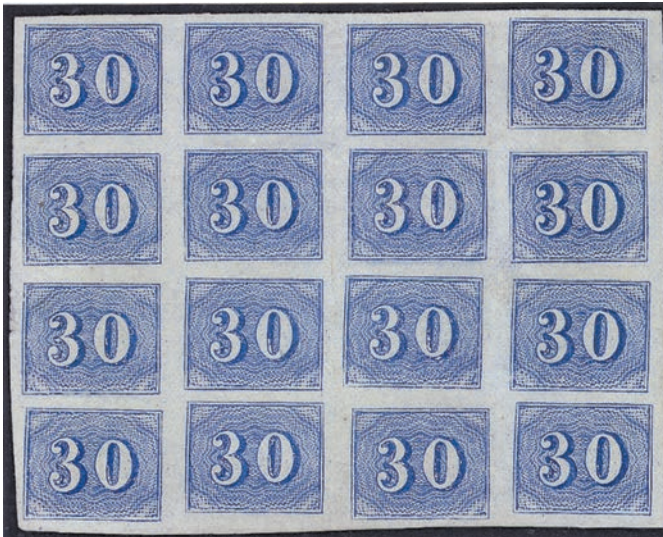


A pane of 100 of the 30r, Sc. 23



A 600r block of four, Sc. 28 with singles of the 90, Sc. 25, and 300r, Sc. 27, on registered cover from Rio de Janeiro to Bahia

The color of the 10 and 30 reis were changed from black to blue on February 27, 1854, and the two stamps may be found in deep blue, blue and pale blue. Blocks are rather scarce, both unused and used in the deep blue. Blocks of the 30 reis unused in light blue are rather common and may be found in good size. On June 2, 1861, two new denominations were added, a 280 reis in vermilion and a 430 in yellow, the former to pay postage on single letters to France and the latter for similar letters to Belgium, Holland and Germany. Mint blocks seem to be rare. There were single blocks of each in the Guinlee collection. Values other than 30 and 60 reis black are seldom to be found on cover.



A block of 16 of the 30r light blue, Sc. 38



The 430r, Sc. 40, in a strip of nine and block of seven on a large registered front from a packet sent August 24, 1870 from Rio de Janeiro to Bahia, cover missing two one 60r and two 430r stamps to make up the 7300r rate (lightly indicated in manuscript, arrows) for this cover.

The 1866 Perforated Numerals

In 1866 the entire Small Numeral series were sold in a perforate 13-1/2 condition. These were only semi-official for the perforations were not applied by the Government at the time the stamps were prepared. This means of separation was applied at Rio de Janeiro Post Office as the stamps were required. The work was done crudely so seldom are the stamps to be found centered. Faked perforations are more plentiful than the genuine varieties. Blocks both unused and used must be scarce for we have been able to locate but few.

The Don Pedro series appeared July 1, 1866 so that this year saw the last of the Brazilian numerals. They are, however, to be found on later covers in combination with the new stamps.



A block of four of the perforated 30r, Sc. 45, with vertical perfs missing down the center.

Since our recent notes on the first issue Bull's Eyes we have seen two additional blocks which we have not heretofore recorded. These are both in the wonderful collection of Brazil belonging to Mr. Saul Newbury. They are of the 90 reis denomination. One, a block of four with extra lines at top and left has a bright green "Marich" cancellation and is position 1, 2, 7 and 8 from the second composite plate, state B. The second block is one of six, cancelled in black "Cabo Frio" and is position 4, 5, 6, 10, 11 and 12 from the first composite plate, state B. This further confirms our recent remarks that while single used copies of the 90 reis Bull's Eyes are rarer than the 30 and 60 reis, in used block form, the 90 reis is much commoner followed by the 60 reis with the 30 reis much the rarer.