

Those South American Tête-Bêches...

by Dr. Roberto M. Rosende

No other error in philately is as striking as a tete-beche. The juxtaposition of two adjacent stamps, extremely rare nowadays, happened quite often in the past century and especially in the initial issues of many countries. Some of the outstanding philatelic gems of South America are the tete-beches of Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia, Haiti, and Venezuela, and the famous "XIFOPAGOS," which occurred on the initial printings of the first Brazilian "Bulls-Eyes" stamps of 1843.

The opportunity that we had in the last few years to examine most of these rarities is the basis for this article.

ARGENTINA

The province of Buenos Aires in Argentina prepared its first stamps - "*los Gauchitos*" - in 1856 for printing by local lithography. These stamps were never put on sale because the authorities thought they could be easily forged.

On April 28, 1858, the second issue - "*los Barquitos*" - was issued. These stamps were printed by typography in sheets of 48; six horizontal rows of eight stamps each, on *cartonée* paper with a distance of 1 mm. between each stamp. As you can imagine, it is extremely difficult to find four-margin copies, and they break apart very easily. Four peso values were released: 2, 3, 4 and 5, in blue, green, red and yellow, to be used for rates for 1/4 oz., 1/2 oz., 3/4 oz. and 1 oz.

As the use of rivers for the conveyance of mail became more prevalent, rates were reduced in October of that same year, requiring the printing of new values: 4 reales for 1/2 oz. and 1 peso for up to 1 oz. These new stamps were printed by re-touching the old plates and put on sale October 26. In order to create the 4 reales value, the authorities used the 4 pesos by eliminating

the last three letters "SOS" and changing the "P" to an "R." For the 1 peso value they used the "Cinco Ps.," erasing the first "C" and the last two letters "CO," leaving "in ps."

Since both values were printed in almost the same colors, confusion occurred. In December 1858 it was decided to print the 1 peso in blue. It was then that the first tete-beche originated. Over the years, three examples have been reported: A used horizontal tete-beche, is now in the Tapling collection at the British Museum in London. An unused horizontal tete-beche has disappeared but was mentioned by Mr. Kneitchel in his specialized catalog of Argentina, where he comments that it was made from two fragments. The third tete-beche, the best of all, is vertical, used, and comprises positions 33 and 43. This piece, now in the collection of Dr. Norman Hubbard, was exhibited several times by Gabriel Sanchez of Argentina and later belonged to Conrado Buydoso, an Argentinean investor and dealer.



The next Argentinean issue that offers a tete-beche is "*los Escuditos*." This is the first issue of the Argentinean republic, which went on sale January 11, 1862 in the city of Rosario. Three values - 5 cents, 10 cents and 15 cents - were printed by lithography by Robert Lange in sheets of 70 stamps, 10 horizontal lines of seven each. The design shows the coat of arms of the republic, the basis for its nickname. On the 15 cent value there was one inverted cliché per sheet, position 8, or the first stamp of the second row. There are three tete-beches known, one perfect, the other two having suffered alterations during the years in order to improve their appearances.

The first tete-beche is a vertical mint pair, positions 1 and 8, with ample margins, fresh color and no defects. This piece

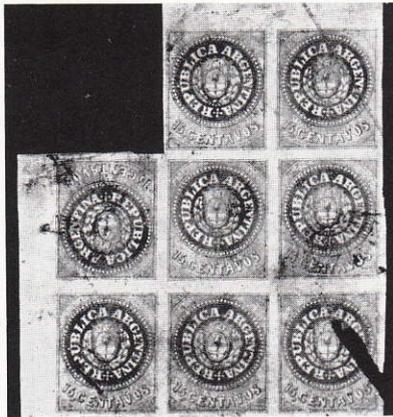


left Argentina during the last century, later being acquired by the Duke of Polignac. When his collection surfaced on the philatelic market in Paris in 1950, this tete-beche was bought by the famous Monsieur J. Schatzkes. When

Stanley Gibbons sold this collection in 1971, the tete-beche was acquired by Dr. Hubbard.

The second tete-beche started as an irregular block of eight - positions 2-3, 8-10, 15-16 and 17. It was in the collection of Alfred F. Lichtenstein, and later Louise Boyd Dale, his daughter, to

be sold during the 1970s by H. R. Harmer. It was considered at that time, in spite of its defects, to be a great rarity meriting full color



reproduction in the center of the catalog. The defects included thinning of position 8 (the tete-beche) and a missing piece corresponding to the letters REP of Republica of position 15. Positions 3, 10 and 17 also had major defects. Nonetheless, it sold well and then was sent to Europe for repair, coming back as a block of five with position 8 thinning repaired, position 15 hole filled, and positions 3, 10 and 17 eliminated. When we first saw this block, it was in the excellent collection of Argentina formed by engineer



Juan Mautalen of Buenos Aires. It was sold by

Corinphila and lately has been offered by Hapsburg-Feldman. We do not know if it has been sold.

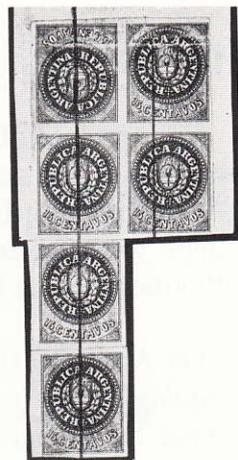
The third tete-beche is in a block of four with pen cancellations. It is on a cover fragment and

was part of the collection formed by Don Jorge Del Mazo of Argentina at the beginning of this century. Later it was bought by Mr. Schatzkes. When his collection was sold, it



was bought by the Spanish family of Llach, which for many years used the picture of this rarity in its auction publicity. Eventually it was bought and exhibited by Gabriel Sanchez. Originally, this block was formed by positions 8-9 and 15-16,

but when we saw it at ESPAMER 80 in Madrid, positions 22-29 had been added. These two stamps seem to have been part of this piece at one time. It was sold by Corinphila in October 1982 and is now in the collection of Dr. Hubbard. It shows a clear horizontal crease across positions 8-9.

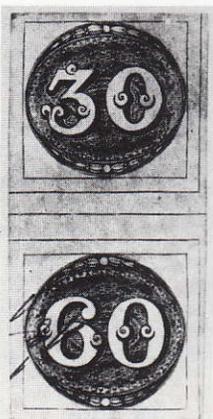


BRAZIL

The first issue of Brazil was placed on sale August 1, 1843, thus becoming the first issue in our continent and the second in the world. These stamps are well-known to all philatelists and nicknamed "Bulls-Eyes." The three values - 30, 60 and 90 reis - were printed on a common plate of 54 units at the *Oficina de Estamparia das Apolices*, the Brazilian Mint in Rio de Janeiro. The 18 stamps of each value were enclosed by four black lines forming a rectangle, and these groups were separated by white areas crossed by a horizontal black line in the middle. Since the groups were all black, they were cut apart through the white areas before being put on sale,

in order to avoid confusion. It looks as though at least one sheet escaped this procedure, perhaps since it was cut to fill special requests. Stamps of 30 and 60 reis stayed together, creating what Brazilians call "Xifopagos" (actually se-tenants). Two are known.

The first *Xifopago* is 30 + 60. Even though this pair appears mint, the 60 reis value shows pen writing on it. The pair was found in 1917 and bought by the Brazilian dealer Heitor Sanchez, who sold it to a great collector of that time, Don Arnaldo Morais Pedroso.



Beforehand, however, he sent it to Europe to be repaired, since the upper right corner of the 30 reis stamp was in bad shape. As proof of the repair, the area on the back of the stamp is marked with the letter "T".

Years later it returned to Don Heitor, who decided to auction it because of the many clients interested in it. This was in the first auction of stamps held in Brazil, with a catalog. The pair was acquired by Don Luis Moraes, Jr., of Rio de Janeiro, who sold it to Don Ivo Ferreria, the great collector of the '50s. When we first saw it in ESPAÑA '75, it was in the collection of Don Maurinho de Araujo Ferreira of Belo Horizonte. It occupies position 18 of the 30 reis and position 6 of the 60 reis.

The second *Xifopago* is 30 + 30 + 60. This piece was used to pay the rate of 120 reis and is postmarked in Rio in 1844. It was the pride of the collection of Charles Lathrop Pack and, because of that, it is known as the "Pack Strip." When Harmer Rooke auctioned Pack's holdings in 1944, it was acquired by the well-known dealer Y. Souren, who later sold it to Dr. Almeida of Rio. In 1963 it joined the collection of world rarities



formed by Lars Amundsen, later to be acquired by Dr. Hubbard. It occupies positions 11 and 17 of the 30 reis and position 5 of the 60 reis. It is without defects.

URUGUAY

Correspondence from Atanasio Lapido, Assistant of Posts in Uruguay, to Señor de Luca, Postmaster of Buenos Aires, Argentina, dated October 14, 1857, records the preparation for a new postal service between the cities of Montevideo and Buenos Aires. It was to be inaugurated on November 1, 1857, and the rates were established at 120 centesimos for a single letter, 180 centesimos for a double letter and 240 centesimos for a triple letter. Tete-beches are known in the 120 and 180 centesimo values. The stamps in these values were printed by lithography in Montevideo by the firm of Mege and Willems on a fine white paper at the end of March 1858 and placed on sale immediately. They were used through January 1861, when the post office stopped selling them.

The 120 centesimo was printed in blue, and we can find many shades, including light blue, dark blue and slate blue. It was printed in sheets of 78 stamps, 13 horizontal lines of six stamps each. The report block was formed by 30 different types arranged in five horizontal lines of six stamps each. It is probable that this group was repeated once and then three lines were added to complete the sheet.

Multiples of this value are extremely rare. Only a mint block of six, one pair and three tete-beches are known to exist. At first it was considered that one inverted cliché existed in each sheet of 78. Later on it was thought that as many as three tete-beches per sheet could have existed. Of course, the lack of multiples prevents confirmation of this theory.

Each of the three tete-beches has

an interesting story. The one reproduced on the cover [cert. 219,182] was the copy belonging to Ferrari. It was bought on June 23, 1921, by Alfred F. Lichtenstein as part of the complete Uruguay holdings of this legendary philatelist. Roberto Hoffman of Argentina acquired it directly from Mr. Lichtenstein, and it was part of his exhibit of Uruguay that won the Grand

England and the United States offering a reward of 100 pounds - quite a substantial amount at that time - for any information that would help in its recovery. Nothing happened.

When the rest of the Pack collections were sold by Harmer, Rooke in the middle 1940s, the second tete-beche was one of the pieces offered.



Ferrari



Pack



Tapling

Prix International of the FIPEX 56 exhibition which inaugurated the Coliseum in New York City. At the dispersal of Hoffman's collection in 1982, this tete-beche and many other pieces became the property of the Spanish philatelist Dr. Enrique Martin de Bustamante.

Previously it was thought that this first tete-beche came from the collection of the famous U.S. collector Charles Lathrop Pack. The Pack Uruguay collection was bought by the English philatelist E. J. Lee in 1929, but the tete-beche was not in it. In his book about Uruguay, Mr. Lee told a most interesting anecdote about this tete-beche. The intermediary in this transaction, the well-known dealer, C. J. Phillips, noted the absence of this piece and was informed it could have been withdrawn by Mr. Pack's son, either to exhibit or to show to somebody. Even without the tete-beche, Mr. Lee proceeded to buy the collection. When told that it could not be found, he put an advertisement in the philatelic press of

It was bought by Alfred Lichtenstein, who already owned the Ferrari copy. Finally, after the death of Louise Boyd Dale, daughter of Alfred, when their fabulous holdings were offered for sale by H. R. Harmer, the "Pack" copy of the Uruguay 120 centesimos tete-beche was bought on May 7, 1970, by its current owner, Dr. Hubbard.

The third tete-beche has been in the same collection for more than one hundred years. This is without a doubt a record, but one shared by many other philatelic rarities. This tete-beche is in the collection formed by Thomas K. Tapling at the end of the last century. Upon his death in 1890, his collection was donated to the British Museum, where parts of it are on exhibition in the King's Room. This collection was, after Ferrari's, the best in existence at that time. We do not know how or when Mr. Tapling acquired this piece. We do know that he consistently bought complete collections already assembled

by good philatelists. Perhaps this rarity was part of the collection formed by Don Victoriano de Ysasi, a Spanish philatelist who had an almost complete collection of Spain, colonies and ex-colonies at his death in 1881.

After carefully examining the characteristics of the three tete-beches we can say with certainty that all three are different.

The past history of the tete-beches, and the verification of the characteristics of the proper types, has allowed the Expert Committee at The Philatelic Foundation to say, after confirming that the tete-beches correspond to three different types, *that there is the serious possibility they exist in a complete horizontal row of six inverted clichés, since the three different types identified with the tete-beches correspond to the same line.*

Curiously enough, a careful study of the two known tete-beches of the green 180 centesimo, the Ferrari copy bought by Mr. Lichtenstein and



Lichtenstein

then acquired in 1970 by Dr. Hubbard, and the Tapling copy, show a common type. Therefore, we must speculate that in the 180 centesimo there was probably only one inverted cliché per sheet. ❖



Tapling