

ESSAYS, PROOFS, AND IMPERFORATES --
POINT OF CLARIFICATION

by

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Numerous catalogues of Spanish Philippine stamps from the early part of the 20th Century, beginning with Bartels et al (1904), and including the early Scott catalogues, refer to various essays, proofs, and imperforates of Spanish Philippine issues.

In a recent article in Linn's Stamp News (January 23, 1989), the basic differences between essays and proofs were described. The current use of these terms in the above-mentioned catalogues is cause for confusion. Hopefully, this article will clarify these terms as they apply to Spanish Philippine stamps.

An **essay** is a proposed design for a stamp. It is generally preliminary to the final design, and therefore, is not the same design as the issued stamp. Although essays are reported for some Spanish Philippine stamps (e.g., the essays that preceded the design of the 1854 issue), they are very rare.

A **proof**, on the other hand, is a trial impression of the final die or plate (i.e., exact design) of the issued stamp. However, the impression may be printed singly on separate paper, be a different color, be printed on a different paper type, or it may be imperforate if the issued stamp is perforated. When the proof is printed in a different color than the issued stamp, it is referred to as a color or trial color proof. Imperforate proofs (sometimes called die or plate proofs) in the issued color are known for the 1871, 1872, 1875-1877, and 1878-1879 issues. These proofs can also occur on card stock or on thin, onion skin-like paper.

Trial color proofs exist for several issues from the 1870s and 1890s. These trial color proofs include Scott #'s 43 (blue instead of rose), 46 (rose instead of violet), 58 (blue instead of green), and 58 (brown on green paper). Another is the 5c lilac issue of 1892 (Scott # 154), which, although not indicated in the Scott catalogue, is a trial color proof, one of twenty such perforate and imperforate trial color proofs of the 1890-1896 issues. Further information on the 1890-1896 trial color proofs is found in Harradine (1987).

The **imperforates** of the 1890-1898 postal and newspaper issues in normal colors are not considered proofs, but are simply imperforate panes of the issued stamp. It is speculated that they were produced at the Stamp Factory in Madrid as "samples" or "favors," and generally, were never used in the Philippines. These issues, even today, are far more prevalent in Spain than anywhere else.

Further clarification regarding these issues would be helpful in the Scott catalogue. The Scott catalogue and other current major catalogues should footnote the Spanish Philippine issues as follows: (1) perforate trial color proofs exist for Scott #'s 43, 46, and 58; (2) Scott # 154 is a trial color proof; (3) perforate and imperforate trial color proofs exist for many of the 1890-1896 issues; and (4) imperforates in normal colors exist for most of the 1890-1898 issues.

REFERENCES

- Bartels, J.M. and F.A. Foster and F.L. Palmer. The Postage Stamps of the Philippines. 1904. Boston.
- Harradine, P.W.A. Philippine Postage Stamp Handbook, 1854-1982. 1987. London.