

The Two Designs of the 1890 - 1897 Philippine "Babyhead" Issue

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The 1890-1897 issue of the Philippines is the most common and perhaps the most familiar issue of the Spanish period. It is known as the "babyhead" issue because it depicts the effigy of the four-year old Alfonso XIII. Scott lists forty-one different postage stamps (ranging from 1 centavo to 80 centavos); and sixteen different newspaper stamps, ranging from 1 *milesima* to 1/8 centavos. However, few collectors, including many Philippine specialists, are aware that there are two different designs of this issue. The purpose of this article is to describe these designs, describe how some issues can be differentiated from others by knowing these design differences, and show how to identify some additional issues not listed in Scott (most of these additional issues are not listed in any major catalogue).

The "babyhead" stamps were printed in Madrid on white, wove, unwatermarked paper. After being perforated (perf 14), they were sent to Manila where the sheets were gummed, and the stamps were officially issued. The difference in the design was first described by Bartels et al. and, later, in a revision of that catalogue, by Palmer. One of the earliest catalogues describing the issues of the Philippines, Menzarini, does not mention any design differences for this issue; nor have other specialized catalogues, such as Hanciau or Harradine.

Palmer indicates that there were two types of ornamental clichés in the stamp design. The difference between the two types is primarily noticeable in the upper right corner directly below the "s" of "FILIPINAS". In Type I, the cups of the scroll are more or less heavily shaded, while in Type II there is no shading at all and, instead of cups, the design consists of only a thin scroll line. Scott, Stanley Gibbons, Edifil, and other popular catalogues make no mention of this difference. Figure I shows the difference between the Type I and II designs.

For the 1890 and 1891 issues, only the Type I cliché was present. In 1892, the Type II cliché appeared so that between 1892 and 1897 some issues were Type I, some issues were Type II, and three issues had both types present. According to Palmer, in the case where both types were present on the same issue, the types occurred on different sheets (two—5 x 10 or 10 x 10); or one type on one 5 x 10 pane and the other type on the other 5 x 10 pane; or one type on half of the 10 x 10 pane and the other type on the other half. Table 1 shows the cliché types by Scott number for the 1890-1897 postage and newspaper issues.

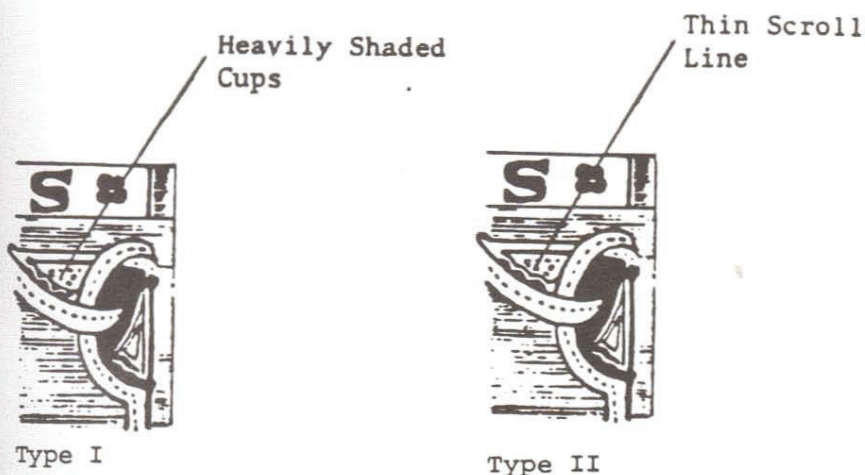


Fig. Type I and Type II clichés of the 1890-1897 Philippine issue.

Two erroneous listings were found in Palmer's data. Scott 158 (6c red-orange, 1894) and 169 (15c red-brown, 1892) were listed as Type I by Palmer, where they actually are Type II. Also, Palmer does not list a comparable entry for Scott 154 (5c lilac, 1892) which actually is a perforated proof. Further, according to Harradine, there are at least twelve other such proofs of the 1890-1897 issue known to have been placed in circulation that have not been specifically listed in any catalogues (other than by Harradine).

The occurrence of both cliché types on the same issue is found on three 2-centavos stamps—Scott 144, 145, and 146. In Scott, 144 is shown to be issued in 1890 in claret. However, according to Mencarini, there were actually two issues—one in 1890 in light red carmine, and a second in 1894 in dark red- carmine. According to Palmer, the 1890 issue was Type I and the 1894 issue was Type I and II. For the 1894 issue, two printings were made, each with a different plate. The first printing had two panes (5 x 10 each), the left pane being Type I and the right pane Type II. In the second printing, there was only one pane (10 x 10), the left half being Type II and the right half being Type I. Palmer further states that in the second printing (10x10), one cliché of

Table 1
Cliche Types of the 1890- 1897 Philippine Issue

Scott No.	Value	Cliché Type	Scott No.	Value	Cliche Type
140	1c	II	169	15c	II
141	1c	II	170	15c	II
142	1c	II	171	15c	II
143	1c	II	172	20c	I
144	2c	I, II	173	20c	I
145	2c	I, II	174	20c	I
146	2c	I, II	175	20c	I
147	2c	II	176	20c	I
148	2c	II	177	25c	I
149	2 4/8	I	178	25c	I
150	2 4/8	I	179	40c	II
151	5c	I	180	80c	II
152	5c	I	P5	1/8c	I
153	5c	I	P6	1/8c	I
154 (proof)	5c	I	P7	1/8c	I
155	5c	I	P8	1/8c	I
156	5c	I	P9	1m	I
157	6c	II	P10	1m	I
158	6c	II	P11	1m	I
159	6c	II	P12	1m	II
160	8c	I	P13	2m	I
161	8c	I	P14	2m	I
162	8c	I	P15	2m	I
163	10c	I	P16	2m	I
164	10c	I	P17	5m	I
165	10c	I	P18	5m	I
166	10c	II	P19	5m	I
167	12 4/8	I	P20	5m	I
168	12 4/8	I			

Type I was accidentally placed among those stamps with the Type II cliches on the left half of the pane. It is the second stamp from the left in the seventh row (position 62).

To aid the collector in identifying these issues, the Scott catalogue and others should describe the differences in cliches, and indicate the type for each stamp. For Scott 144, the entry in the catalogue should be revised as follows:

144 (1890) I light claret
144A (1894 I, II dark claret

In Scott, 145 is shown to be issued in 1892 in violet. According to Mencarini and Palmer, there were two issues in 1892; one in light violet, and a second in dark violet. According to Palmer, both cliché types were known for both of these issues. Palmer further states that this is the first appearance of both types on the same sheet. The sheet consisted of three panes of 50 stamps each pane being 5 x 10. The center pane was Type II and the two outer panes were Type I. The stamps with the Type II cliché would be one-third as common as stamps with the Type I cliché.

Scott 146 is another interesting issue because, based on color, it is actually very similar to Scott 148. Scott lists 146 (which was issued in 1894) as dark brown, and 148 (which was issued in 1896) as gray-brown. However, light shades of Scott 146 and dark shades of 148 are indistinguishable. Actually, Scott lists 146 darker than it really is—deviating considerably from Mencarini, which describes 146 more like the gray-brown 148. According to Palmer, both cliché types are known on Scott 146 whereas, only Type II occurs on 148. As with Scott 144, there are two plates. The composition of those plates was also similar to 144. Because of the similarity or color between 146 and 148, the entries in Scott for 146 and 148 should be revised as follows:

146 (1894) I, II	gray-brown
148 (1896) II	light gray-brown

Although Scott lists fifty-seven different postage and newspaper stamps of the 1890-1897 issue, over ninety different stamps could be listed if the different cliché types were included, in addition to the major color variations, second printings, and proofs. It is unfortunate for the collector that the accuracy and completeness of coverage of the Spanish Philippine issues has declined over the years in major catalogues like Scott and Stanley Gibbons as a result of condensing and simplifying for economy. If demand for greater accuracy in the listing of the stamps of the Spanish Philippines increases, the "babyhead" issue would be a good place to start.

References

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