The First Coil Stamp of the World

The One Dinero Rose of 1862 from Peru

Unused strip of 3 with incomplete 'A' variety, original research documented in this exhibit for the first time ever

Purpose
To demonstrate that around 40 years before the first attempts made by private coil stamp machine vendors in USA, Peru Post had produced in Lima, coils of stamps in strips of paper in a highly efficient manner using for this purpose a printing press machine manufactured in Paris by the Emile Lecoq Company.

Scope
It encompasses all aspects of this stamp including the unique error-on-error Double Printed Frame Sideways. Production, characteristics, varieties and errors as well as usages, including a very scarce unauthorized fiscal usage showing the only recorded document with a mix of this stamp and the first revenue stamp of Peru. The infamous "clandestine reprint" (or "forgery" as it is known as well) of the late 1890s is studied in detail.

Methodology
The first half of the exhibit focus on the stamp production process, characteristics of the Lecoq Press and the distinctiveness of it as seen on the stamps. The second half centers around usages, displaying several EKU/LKU along some of the scarcest pieces recorded.

Research
This exhibit contributes with new information from original research related to usages: both postal and the previously unverified fiscal, characteristics of the Frame Sideways error, detection of the marks to spot the "forgery", census information of the most important pieces, and a detailed study of the Incomplete 'A' variety of 1865, a discovery of the exhibitor.

Historic Context
In order to comply with a legal ordinance that required the printing of stamps by the postal administration, Postmaster General Jose Davila Condemanin purchased in France in 1860 a Lecoq printing machine installing it at the main Post Office building in Lima. Carlos Fallis was the official machinist responsible for its operation. The Lecoq press was in use from 1862 to 1873, producing six different Peruvian stamps, the first of those is the subject of this exhibit. A superb piece of workmanship with highly scrutinized levels of quality control by the Peruvian postal authorities that resulted in very few errors known by philatelists today.

About the Lecoq Press
Capable of producing one stamp per second, operated by just one person, it was basically a train-ticket printing machine modified to use an embossing device to print stamps one by one on ribbons of paper. Activated by pedals and utilizing a flywheel to keep an steady moment-of-force, a piercing-pulling mechanism carried the strip of paper 23 millimeters to continue the printing of the next stamp. By pasting ribbons of papers one end to the next, this process was repeated continuously resulting in long strips of stamps.

Historical evidence confirms that the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies acquired one Lecoq press with the intention of printing its first stamps in 1858, however it never produced any beyond the proof stage. Peru was the only country that successfully employed one of these elusive machines for the printing of stamps.
Lateral view of the printing head mechanism of the Lecoq Press. The single die mounting arm demonstrates that the stamps were printed one by one on strips of paper released from the paper feeding device. Peru used a Lecoq press between November 1862 to March 1873, producing millions of stamps on six different issues.

**ONE DINERO ROSE**

This is the first of six stamps produced by the Lecoq Press at the main post office building in Lima. It was printed in horizontal ribbons of paper of an unknown length. It is estimated that the distribution unit was strips (or rolls) of 40 stamps. The One Dinero value corresponds to the former currencies, the Real and the Peso, at a rate of: 1 Sol = 100 centavos or 10 Reales [1 Real = 1 Dinero, 8 Dineros = 1 Peso].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total printed</th>
<th>3'200,000 stamps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>21mm x 21mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earliest use</td>
<td>December 5, 1862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latest use</td>
<td>August 1868</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A small number of proofs were produced in France and later sent to Lima together with the Lecoq Press, printing dies, ink & paper.

**Proof in Black**

Unused strip of 5 with original gum and coil join on the most right stamp, printed on thin paper brought from France.

**COLOR SHADES**

- Dull rose
- Rose
- Dull Orange Rose
- Orange Rose
- Red
- Dark Red
- Carmine
- Dark Pink
- Pink
- Dull Pink
INDENTATIONS

These are pin holes made by the Lecoq’s piercing-pulling mechanism, they were done from the gummed side of the strip of paper. The 2 perforations are 7mm apart from each other, they allowed the paper feeding device to release a printed stamp carrying it out of the printing cylinder and pulling 23mm of the paper strip to print the next one.

Side view shows the paper storage tray on the lower right side and the direction (red arrows) the strips of paper moved up to the printing head.

Unused strip of 4 showing the 2 indentations left by the machine. Curiously this strip also shows the case where there is only 1 pin hole between the stamps, not an unusual case considering that the paper fed to the machine might have been a bit warped or in an angle.

DOUBLE PRINT - FRAME IN NORMAL POSITION

It was the result of a lapse in the piercing-pulling mechanism by moving this strip of paper just 2mm making a second print over the stamp on the left. This pair is the only recorded double-print multiple in private hands. A second pair exist at the National Postal Museum at Washington DC.

COIL JOINS

The pasting of the coil strips took place before the printing process, when large pieces of paper were cut into ribbons of 23 mm wide. The length of the cut ribbons is unknown but estimated to be 400 mm. Therefore a coil join print existed every 17 stamps.

LIMA to TACNA, November 23, 1865, One Dinero red printed on an uncommon coil join made of two strips of paper of different widths, 22 and 24mm respectively
DRY EMBOSsing OF COAT OF ARMS

The lower, non-inked, die on the printing cylinder, provided the negative punch to imprint the coat of arms in the middle. Natural wear out overtime caused parts of the arms not to display its outline clearly, to the point of leaving almost no signs of presence.

Closer view of upper part of the paper piercing-pulling device that fed the embossing cylinder with the continuous strip of paper and provided the ink reservoir.

Sheets of paper were cut prior to the printing process into ribbons 23mm wide and later joined one end to the next to form long paper coils used to feed blank paper into the printing cylinder. Since the cutting of paper process was done manually, the width of the ribbons varies, with the wider ones being less frequently used. Single stamps printed on narrow strips look cut-to-shape, however this is not the case. The thickness of the paper is also variable.
They are the result of gum adhered on the printing side of the strip paper when the coils were prepared. When used stamps were soaked to remove them from the cover, the gum on the front also diluted washing away the ink printed on them, therefore revealing the white portion of the stamp previously covered by the gum. Bottom parts of large overlapped coil joins also create this effect when the top part of the splice is removed.

A characteristic of this stamp is noted on the outer horizontal frame lines of the coil which received more ink than the inner part of the die. The result is heavy coloring of the top and bottom horizontal coil edges. This characteristic is relevant as one way of identifying on the Frame Sideways error the exact orientation of the frame die on single stamps.

TRUJILLO to LIMA, August 18, 1866. The stamp shows an extreme case of the outer frame over inked with a very distinctive heavy coloring on the “Porte Franco” top side line.
FRAME EMBOSSED SIDEWAYS

Used between June 1865 and August 1866, this error was due to the wrong mounting of the frame printing die, 90 degrees anticlockwise in reference to the arms embossing die. At a first glance it is rather logical to believe that the arms are sideways to the frame. Nevertheless, there are four ways to corroborate that it is the frame that has been turned sideways in reference to the embossing arms, as follows:

[1] In pairs or multiples the words "Porte Franco" are on the left side

[2] Indentations left by the Lecoq are on the same side as "Porte Franco"

[3] Due to coloring characteristics the outer horizontal coil edges are heavier at top and bottom

[4] Paper Join, the overlap is parallel to "Porte Franco"

ERROR ON ERROR

DOUBLE PRINTED FRAME SIDEWAYS

Considered the single most outstanding item of this issue, it was the result of a lapse in the piercing-pulling mechanism by not moving the strip of paper the 23 mm to print the next stamp. As of November 2011, a total of 8 double print copies are recorded. 7 of those [5 singles & 2 pairs] have the frame printed in normal position. The stamp here is the only one recorded with a double print of the Frame Sideways error.

Signed: Jose Caceres Portugal
A characteristic of the stamps printed between May-December 1865 (estimated) is missing the lower left vertical line in letter 'A' of 'Franco'. The first print showing this variety is the Frame Sideways error, which was in production for several months and distributed nationwide without being noticed.

Cancels on Frame-Sideways error stamps demonstrate their use throughout the country

Arequipa  Caraz  Iquique  Lima  Pasco

The wrong mounting of the embossing die was probably corrected between July-August 1865 (estimated) as new One Dinero stamps dated since early August, present the exact same characteristics of the incomplete ‘A’ variety as the ‘frame-sideways’ but this time with the frame in the correct position.

Incomplete ‘A’ in normal stamp

Aug 4, 1865  December 1865  unused

Incomplete ‘A’ on cover from PASCO to LIMA, May 21, 1866, late usage of this variety
**COMPLETE ‘A’ and MISSPELLING VARIETIES**

**Complete ‘A’ timeframe** - At no other time during the printing period of this stamp, the incomplete ‘A’ in ‘Franco’ variety was recorded as it is demonstrated by the dated samples below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sample 1</th>
<th>Sample 2</th>
<th>Sample 3</th>
<th>Sample 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Stamp 1863" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Stamp 1864" /></td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Stamp January 1865" /></td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Stamp 1867" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MISSPELLING VARIETIES**

Wear-out of the embossing dies and variable ink density created some alterations in the letters, causing a number of dissimilarities in the words “PORTE FRANCO”, “CORREOS” and “UN DINERO”.

![Sample Stamps](image5.png)
THE INFAMOUS "CLANDESTINE REPRINT" or "FORGERY"

In 1896 the Peruvian Postal Administration sold by tender, what it was considered obsolete postal material and stamps demonetized after 1880. It is believed that in a package of rusted metal scrap were included the Lecoq machine & printing dies, within other important items. The "Steiger gang", stamps forgers of that time, had access to this pile of metal loaded with printing material. The hypothesis is that the printing dies of the One Dinero and the One Peseta were brushed to remove the rusted particles adhered on them. During the cleaning process distinct marks were left in the dies, in the case of the One Dinero modifying the shape of letter S of Correos at left, and creating a protruding line on top at the upper right corner. These and in some cases, fake or out of period postmarks applied, facilitate the identification process of this 'clandestine reprint' or 'forgery' as it is considered by many specialists. Other characteristics include: the paper color is beige and often thicker than normal, the pin holes made by the Lecoq machine are missing or don't cut through the paper. Only single canceled 'forgeries' are recorded.

Some of the Known Forged Cancels

Out of Period cancels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambo</th>
<th>Aplao</th>
<th>Arequipa</th>
<th>Caraz</th>
<th>Cuzco</th>
<th>Lunahuana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eten</td>
<td>Ilo</td>
<td>Juli</td>
<td>Lima</td>
<td>Mollendo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(PO opened in 1872)</td>
<td>(cancel of late 1868)</td>
<td>(PO opened in 1874)</td>
<td>(cancel of mid 1870s)</td>
<td>(PO opened in 1876)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
POSTAL RATES of JANUARY 15, 1863

Reduced by half to any destination regardless of distance, except less than 25 leagues or carried by sailing ships, both remained at One Dinero rate.

ILAY to AREQUIPA, November 8, 1865. Two Dineros, double rate for letters from 1/2 to 1 ounce. Stamps with incomplete ‘A’ variety.

TACNA to LIMA, March 18, 1864. Three Dineros, triple rate for letters from 1 to 1 1/2 ounces.
HUANCAJO to LIMA, October 12, 1863, One Dinero, single rate for letters up to 1/2 ounce

The Carmine shade of this stamp was produced for just few months in 1863

CALLAO to LIMA, November 9, 1863, the stamp traveled uncanceled to Lima, upon arrival it was applied the grill of Lima postmark. Earliest Known Usage of Conduccion del Cartero Gratis postmark, with very few samples recorded in blue. In addition the Lima 2nd Distribution postmark was applied to indicate it arrived on the second daily train from Callao
DROP LETTER IN LIMA

Circa 1865-66. Double rate intra city mail. Judicial notification sent to a Franciscan priest in Lima, on the upper right corner the '1 Oz' indicates the weight, corresponding to the 2 Dineros postage paid for a double rate letter. In addition the stamps are canceled with a previously unrecorded Lima dot matrix postmark.

Drop letters from the Peruvian classic period are very rare, with less than 6 covers recorded in total.

MAIL CARRIED BY TRAIN BETWEEN LIMA AND CALLAO

CALLAO to LIMA, February 22, 1864, One Dinero, single rate, the shell-type postmark “Lima Sexta Distribucion” indicates that this letter arrived on the 6th daily train from Callao.

Early use of “Conduccion del Cartero Gratis” postmark in color black.
Bisect Usage for Mail Carried by Train

On January 1, 1866 a 50% rate reduction for mail carried by train between Lima and Callao was announced. Because there was not 1/2 Dinero [or 5 centavos] stamp available to pay for the new rate, bisects of the One Dinero rose were allowed between January 1 to June 6 to pay the 5 centavos postage until the new stamps printed by the ABN were issued. **Covers with bisects originated from Lima are much more difficult to find as those from Callao in a 1 to 20 ratio.** This is due to 2 reasons: 1). the lack of archives from the harbor of Callao, and 2). the fact that arrival notification of vessels was the most common content of letters, theme that basically flowed from the harbor, Callao, to the main city direction.

LIMA to CALLAO
April 6, 1866
CDS postmark of Callao on the back applied upon arrival, plus oval Callao Cuarta Ditrubucion indicates that the letter arrived on the 4th daily train from Lima.

Registered Mail

HUANCAVELICA to LIMA, April 12, 1867. Double rate registered. Paid with 7 One Dinero red, 2 to pay the double rate, and 5 to pay for the registration fee in effect during Feb 1866 / Jan 1868. The peripheral fleuron postmarks are the distinctive sign used by the post office to highlight the registration category of the letters. **The most pristine registered cover of all 12 recorded with this stamp.**
All letters sent outside Peru were charged domestic postage to the point of exit, additional fees were charged to the recipient at the country of destination, depending on postal treaties valid at the time.
LIMA to NEW YORK [USA], May 1865, letter carried by the BPO from Callao to Panama sent pre-paid at 6 pence rate as noted by the manuscript 6 and the Paid-at-Callao crowned circle postmark in red. Uncanceled stamp suggest that this cover was handed over directly by the sender to the BPO at Callao which, generally, did not cancel the Peruvian stamp during this time period. 10 cents US single incoming rate charged upon arrival to NY.

IQUIQUE to ROME [Papal States during this time], December, 1866. No BPO at Peru postmarks, probably this cover was put on board the P.S.N.C. steamer at Iquique directly. A Panama Transit January 3, 1867 marking was applied in Panama to indicate that this letter did not originate there. Transit marking from London on the back of Feb 1, 1867, then turned over to the French Post for carry to Rome. Reduced British accounting rate of 1F90c. At Calais it was applied the transit postmark twice due to an error on the setting of the month [January instead of February]. The number 2 next to the One Dinero stamp specifies this as double rate letter therefore the 54 balocchi fee to be paid by the recipient in Rome. Because of the weight reference difference, this cover was single rate in Peru but double rate at Papal States, therefore the double rate fee.
The Stamped Revenue Paper was introduced in Peru during colonial times in 1640. Its purpose was to give authenticity to public or private matters as courts and other legal entities only accepted for processing manuscripts written on them. After independence from Spain in 1821, Peru continued printing Stamped Revenue Paper for the same purpose. In 1866 the first Revenue Stamps were issued in the country, the 10 centavos value was allowed to be affixed in pairs to any piece of paper to enable it as Stamped Revenue Paper of the “Sello Quinto” denomination valued at 20 centavos. Postal stamps were never authorized for any Fiscal use, nevertheless, around 15 documents from small towns, have been found with pairs of the One Dinero red stamp used as revenues in lieu of the 10 centavos fiscal stamp. Of all these cases, only one document is recorded with a combination of both the 10 centavos green revenue and the One Dinero Red stamps, to make up the Fiscal paper.

1867 - Only recorded mixed use of Revenue and Postal stamps to make up the “Sello Quinto” Stamped Revenue Paper

Cajatambo June 6, 1867 - Pair of One Dinero Red stamps used as Revenues on legal document