

Portugal's Vasco da Gama Issue of 1898

This is a traditional exhibit of the Portuguese 1898 commemorative set for the 400th anniversary of the discovery of a sea route to India by Vasco da Gama. These stamps were issued as part of an omnibus issue that included Portugal and six Portuguese colonies.

The stamps of this issue were only valid for use during the months of April, May and June 1898 and no other stamps were available for purchase during the same period. The stamps were line-engraved on lozenge paper. There are no paper varieties of the stamps but because there are at least two printings for each value, colour varieties are known. The latter printings were after the issue date of the 1st April 1898. It would appear that every available perforation machine was pressed into service including machines with mismatched perforating pins apparently assembled in haste for the purpose.

This exhibit proceeds in denominational order of the issue and contains at least one singly-franked cover of each denomination.

The printer, Waterlow & Sons, produced sheetlets of eight in an unissued colour using the master dies and containing one stamp from each of the colonies and two from Portugal. The sheetlets were perforated except for the 25 réis denomination. Each denomination was hole-punched and overprinted in a variety of styles and colours. These samples are included at the end of the exhibit because it is believed they were produced after the original issue.



A clearly philatelic cover franked with the entire set that passed through Paris en route to Belgium two days after being postmarked in Lisbon (28th June 1898). **The 2½ réis stamp has a re-entry error** evidenced by a doubling of the elephant and frame (upper right of stamp).