

Angola

Introductory Notes

For the Stamp Issues of the Popular Republic

GENERAL ISSUES

Angola's independence in 1975 was celebrated with the issue of a single stamp printed in Lisbon, as illustrated above - 500.000 copies were produced. The Angolan postal service, Correios de Angola, continued a conservative and well run service through the early years of independence, but the civil war and corruption slowly eroded its coverage and effectiveness. The service initially limited the sales of higher denomination stamps to stop the flight of currency from the country. Up till the early 90's, issues tended to be for postal usage, but then postage tended to use the definitive native art series, and later the ceramic art definitive set of 1995. After 1995, thematic agency material began to be added to the regular issues of the Angolan postal service. These issues did little postal service in Angola. By 2000 these issues dominated the postal issues of Angola, serving only to raise funds for a country suffering financially due to the implosion of socialist economic policies and civil war. The quantity of thematic issues, unrelated to life in Angola, led many traditional collectors to stop saving the stamps of Angola. Most of these thematic sheetlets and miniature sheets were produced by the House of Questa, renowned for mass-producing thematic stamps of little philatelic value. Serious collectors tend to compartmentalise the philatelic agency souvenir sheets from the individual stamp sets issued over 1997-2000. None-the-less, compared to most African countries, the quantity of thematic issues released by the Angolan Postal Service was not excessive and the quality of the issues remained high.

Used stamps of Angola have always been in plentiful supply, and this continued through the early independence years, but increasingly the definitive mask art series and later, the 1995 ceramic art series dominated postal usage, with commemorative issues receiving little use. Even the definitives receded in use as mechanical franking and mechanical franked labels began to take over. Most collectors end their used collection of Angola with the year 1995.

Both the end of the UNITA insurgency in 2002 and the adoption of a winner-take-all form of capitalism, restored the nations finances, although not for the poor. A conservative stamp issuing policy was again adopted, running through to 2017 with the release of a set of 6 stamps + 1 souvenir sheet celebrating the 40th anniversary of the introduction of the Kwanza, the currency of Angola. All these sets are artistic and well printed, usually by Cartor Security Printing, Joh Enschede, Stamperija, or INCM. These issues did little postal service, with mechanical franking and mechanical franked labels by now the dominant method of franking letters and parcels.

The damage done to collectors during the first agency period had caused an exodus of Angolan collectors and thus, a reduced sale of new stamp issues. By 2008 the production run of a commemorative stamp was down to 7.000 copies. It became increasingly uneconomic producing new issues for a shrinking market. This is a shame because the issues over the years 2000 to 2017 period were of high quality, and related to the life of Angola and Africa as a whole. This led to the Second Agency period, 2018-19 and a wave of topical issues for the philatelic

trade. The agency was Stamperija, Ltd., Lithuania, and they took control of the production and distribution of all Angolan stamps. This agency had been handed Mozambique in 2009, Sao Tome in 2003, and Guinea Bissau in 2001. As with these countries, Stamperija produced a multitude of print-on-demand thematic stamps of no philatelic value. These *labels* are well produced, but have little relevance to Angola and its people, and again, were not intended for postal use. The quantity of issues caused another flight of collectors. Serious collectors tend to compartmentalise these issues from their main collection, saving one or two sets for reference purposes. CTO examples are available for reference purposes.

Thankfully, a conservative issuing policy was again resumed by Correios de Angola but by now the few remaining Angolan stamp collectors made the production of new commemorative issues uneconomic.

INFORMATION ON STAMP ISSUES

Other than the usual commercial stamp catalogues, the definitive source of information on the stamp issues of Angola since 1975 is the catalogues produced by ENCTA, Empresa Nacional de Correios e Telegrafos de Angola: Angola Republic Postal Stamps, 1975-2003, and Catalogue of Angola Postal Stamps, 2004-2008. Although the English versions are somewhat crudely translated, they carry all the key information on issue date, printer and print numbers, but without stamp identification. These books are now out of print but can be obtained second hand through online outlets like Abe Books.

The must-have catalogue for those collecting the post Independence stamps of Angola is Antonio Romao's *Catalogo Especializado Selos Palop*, simply known as Palop. This catalogue covers the former Portuguese colonies of Africa. Although it only covers issues up to 2004, it is essential in identifying the many errors found in the independence overprints, as well as some early unlisted issues.

QUESTIONABLE ISSUES

In 1994, two sets were issued celebrating the Anniversary of the investiture of President Eduardo Dos Santos, ES.676-677, and 678-679, were released, but then withdrawn. The first set, bearing images of the president on a red background, is often not included in catalogues, or printed stamp pages. This set is commonly listed for sale and usually sells for around \$25 US.



In 2004, the South African Postal Operators Association (South Africa, Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland, Malawi and Angola) produced an 8 stamp sheetlet of birds in hexagonal format. The Angolan issue was released on October 11, but there was a dispute between the printer Joh Enschede and Correios de Angolan, with the issue withdrawn and the remaining sheetlets destroyed. The sheetlet is often not listed in commercial catalogues, although it is listed in *Catalogo de Selos Postais Angolanes, 2004/2008*, Correios de Angola. It sells for many hundreds of dollars, but it is unclear whether it is as rare as originally thought. It all depends on how many sheets were actually saved from destruction - time will tell!



PORTUGUESE ANGOLA OVERPRINTS

The following list sets out the full number stamps overprinted. Three major overprint errors occur on the 10\$00 Map issue on each full sheet of 100 stamps. A forged overprint (although possibly a test run rejected as printer's waste) is found on the \$30 shell stamps in both red and black, INDEPENDENCIA / 11 Nov 75. For a full list of the errors found in these overprints, see Palop.



1977. Map overprint - See the three major overprint errors below.
10e

1978. Map and Shells. Republica Popular de
20e
25e
30e
50e

1977 Sport overprint. S Silvestre Rep. Popular de
15e

1980 Stamp Centenary. Republica Popular de
2.50e
4.50e

1981 Satellite. Bar only
2e

1981 Shells. Bar only
1e
1.5e
2e

3.5e
4e
5e
6e
7e
10e
25e
30e
35e
40e

MARKET AND SUPPLY

Other than the 1995 gold leaf Rotary anniversary issue, Scott 937 (market price usually around \$50 - prices are estimates and are in US dollars), pre 2000 mint, and pre 1990 used, are in plentiful supply and are not very expensive. Of course, a premium price is always paid for a clean crisp cancelled stamp. Things changed when thematic agency material was added to the normal issues of the Postal service. Mint thematic material covering the 1996-2000 agency period is in plentiful supply and inexpensive for those who want to collect it (I keep an incomplete lot in a separate album). Postal sets covering Angolan topics retain value, although still inexpensive, but the topical material will often get dumped on the market and so sell cheaply. Only a few issues gain a premium, eg., the Titanic mint sheet gains a premium due to the subject, but even then it doesn't get over \$10.

Due to the quantity of thematic agency material, many collectors gave up saving the new Issues of Angola. This increased the supply of pre 2000 independence stamps on the market and suppressed prices, but conversely affected the production runs of post 2000 stamps, producing the opposite price effect. Many sets covering the years 2001 to 2017 now demand a premium. Some souvenir sheet and stamp sets are hard to find, and when offered for sale, they head for the \$20 mark, often well over the Scott value (eg., OPEC 2006, peace 2013, + \$20). Stamp World values are closer to reality, but even then, they undervalue many sets, evidenced by the fact that these issues are rarely offered for sale on their site. So, quite a few sets of this era are not immediately available, but sooner or later they are offered for sale, outright or for auction, so there is no need for panic; they are not rare.

The issues that are particularly hard to find are as follows:

1980, Unlisted. The First National Hero's Day honouring Dr. Agostinho Neto. A limited print-run by the Angolan National Press.

2006, Michel 1776. Commemorative issue for the paralympic Jose Sayovo. The print run of 5,000 was too low, given the topic.

2006, Michel 1768-71. Domestic animals, issued for Lubrapex. Sets issued for Lubrapex are sought after by Portuguese collectors and so the 7,000 print run was not large enough to meet demand.

2006, Michel BL 117. Souvenir Sheet for the National Bank is in very short supply, the reason is unknown.

2008, Michel 1817-9. Mangroves along the Rio Chiloango River.

2009, Michel 1820-1. Neto anniversary. The Souvenir sheet is easy to source, but the associated pair of stamps is hard to find.



The most expensive stamp of this period is the 2012 Lubrapex issue, part of the AICEP Portuguese language omnibus issues from Portugal, Brazil and the former Portuguese colonies. These issues have become popular with Portuguese collectors who like to buy a full set to link in with the Portuguese issue. For the 2012 Lubrapex Stamp Exhibition issue, all participated in the omnibus issue for the first time.



For the 2015 AICEP issue, all but Angola and Timor Leste participated, with the Mozambique issue ending up in short supply. Since then, participation has fallen away. So, the 2012 set is the highpoint and is highly sought after. The Timor Leste, Guinea Bissau and Sao Tome are expensive (under \$100) and as for Angola, it never seemed to hit market. One Portuguese dealer I spoke with said he had only ever seen two of the stamps in recent years. For some reason, they were not released through the normal agency channels, but were released locally. The same happened with East Timor, as a collector happily discovered when he visited the Dili Post office. So, they didn't even get listed in some catalogues. The stamp is best viewed as an anomaly.

The second agency period occurred in 2018 when issues produced by Stamperija hit the market. These present as a mint sheet + 4 stamps illustrating every African animal you can think of, and then some (threw in a dinosaur for good measure) plus a few trains and ships for the kiddies. They are well produced, but virtually print on demand amounting to some 30 sets, Scott 1420-1569. A similar format ensued in 2019, some 57 sets of 4 stamps + 1 souvenir sheet, Scott 1576-?, covering the usual thematic topics. The sets are in plentiful supply, but overpriced, although some thematic issues are trending. It is unclear what will happen to the value of these issues in the ensuing years, given that many serious collectors are simply not adding them to their collection. If Angolan collectors continue to ignore them, they will not trend, but then, as sometimes happens, if collectors decide in the future to collect them, they will be in short supply and gain a premium - such is life! My personal view is that these issues should be ignored, treated as an anomaly. The only issues of this period with any relevance are a seasonal set of personalised stamps, Scott 1570-1573, a UNESCO issue for the Luanda Biennial Pan African Forum, a sheetlet of 4 + 1 souvenir sheet, 2019, and possibly the MS and sheetlet celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Moon landing. Again, it is worth remembering that compared with Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, or Sao Tome Principe, the Stamperija agency period for Angola only lasted two years; theirs is ongoing.

Stamp issues from the Correios de Angola since then have been very limited. For many countries, the damage done by the Covid virus has hastened the death of the production of postage stamps for ordinary mail. The production of stamps is no longer profitable, as is the delivery of letters itself. Postal authorities around the world focus on parcel delivery now and happily watch letter delivery wither on the vine.

Issues since 1019:

2020, None

2021, Flora, the Baobab Flower, set of 3 + 1 souvenir sheet; The 3 issues are available as an 8 stamp sheetlet with a central no-value label.

2021, Suspension of Sport due to Covid 19, 2 stamps, 2 souvenir sheets.
+ Sheetlet and booklet, and imperf.



2021, Covid Pandemic, 1 set of 4, 1 set of 2, each with a souvenir sheet.
+ Sheetlet and booklet, and imperf. These issues, The Struggle Against Variants of Sars, and a Tribute to Corona Health Workers, were a joint issue of many African countries, including former Portuguese territories, Sao Tome and Principe, Guinea Bissau, and Mozambique.

2021, Dubai Expo 2020, 1 sheetlet of 4 + 1 souvenir sheet.

2022 /23, None

2024, The carnation revolution in Portugal, a pair of stamps issued in conjunction with Portugal and Cape Verde (it is interesting to note that Cape Verde has continued to this day with a conservative stamp issuing policy).