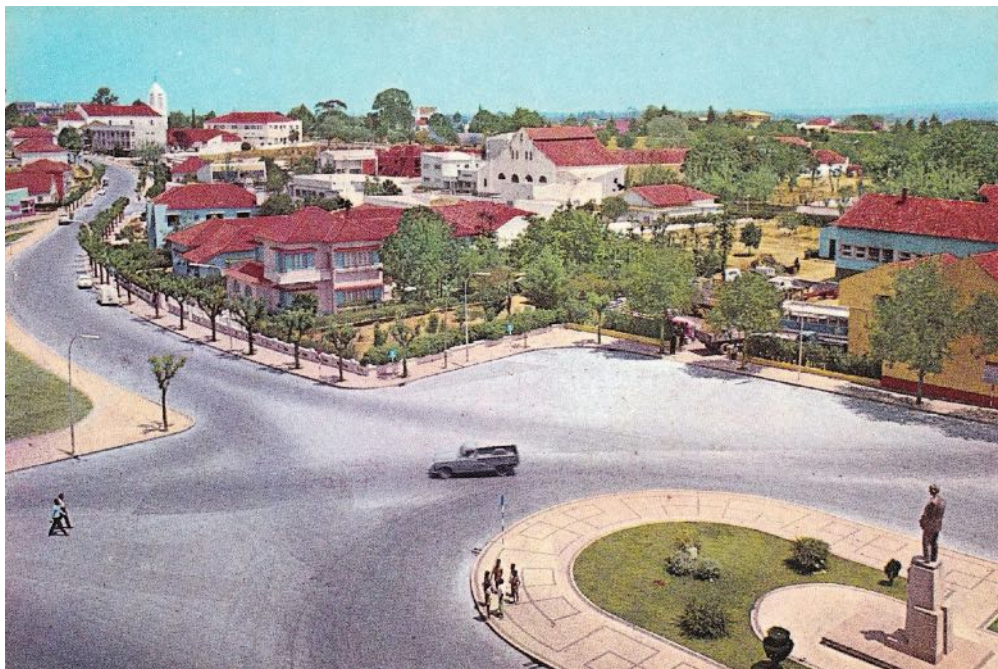


Angola

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 - 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 the coverage and effectiveness of CA, and it has continued in decline to this day.

The postal 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 virtually no 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, given that used commemoratives past this date were primarily produced for philatelic purposes.

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. All these sets are artistic and well printed, usually by Cartor Security Printing, Joh Enschede, Stamperija, or INCM. These issues did no real postal service, with mechanical franking and mechanical franked labels by now the dominant method of franking letters and parcels. By around 2010, other than for philatelic purposes, stamps were no longer used to frank letters and parcels.

After the civil war, there were some 50 post offices throughout Angola, 10 in Luanda. Small villages held a post box at the nearest post office. There was no door-to-door delivery. Added to this inconvenience, postal services were expensive, and increasingly so. Africans are quick to take up technology and so prioritised the purchase of devices for communication and financial transactions. Increasingly, the postal service withered, struggling to adjust to the new technologies and to compete with commercial parcel delivery services and couriers.

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, and by 2011, 5.000 stamps and 3.000 commemorative sheets. It became increasingly uneconomic producing new issues for a shrinking philatelic 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, even though they saw little postal service.

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 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. The Angolan *labels* are well produced, but have little relevance to Angola and its people. Although authorised by CA, they were not authorised for postal use. The quantity of issues caused another flight of collectors. Serious collectors tend to compartmentalise these issues from their main collection, saving a few sets for reference purposes. CTO examples are available.

The covid pandemic only made things worse for CA. Thankfully, a conservative issuing policy was again resumed by Correios de Angola but the few remaining Angolan stamp collectors made the production of new commemorative issues uneconomic.

INFORMATION SOURCES ON MODERN ANGOLAN 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 each 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. Correios e Telegrafos also published information sheets in English and Portuguese on stamp issues in the early years, and in later years a series of year books (2010-15), colourfully produced with some

technical information. Both the information sheets and year-books come up for sale on Delcampe from time to time.

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, Vol.I 2008 and vol.II, 2011, although it is not as technical as the AFINSA Palop, 1998. Palop covers the former Portuguese colonies of Africa. It is very helpful in identifying the many errors found in the independence overprints, as well as some early unlisted issues.

One of the best sources of information on post independent Angolan stamps is the free digital magazine "Modern Angolan Philately" (Moderne Angola-Philatelie) published by the editor in German (translate with Google) Reinhard Kuchler,
< reinhardkuechler@yahoo.de >.

PROBLAMATIC ISSUES

In 1994, two sets were issued celebrating the Anniversary of the investiture of President Eduardo Dos Santos, ES.676-677, and 678-679, these 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 officially released on October 11, but there was a dispute over payment 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 of Angolan colonial stamps overprinted at independence:

Three major overprint errors occur on the 1976 10\$00 Map issue on each full sheet of 100 stamps.

REP POPULAR: repeated, replacing DIA DO SELO
15 Juno 1976: repeated, replacing REP POPULAR
REP POPULAR: repeated, replacing 15 Juno 1976

Some sheets of the 20c Map issue received the same overprint, probably as a test run. This error is very hard to find, and is best classified as printer's waste.

An overprint, often classified as a forgery, although more likely a rejected test run best classified as printer's waste, is found on the \$30 shell stamps in both red and black, INDEPENDENCIA / 11 Nov 75. It is rarely offered for sale.



For a full list of the minor overprint errors found in these stamps, see Palop.

1976. Map overprint: DIA DOS SELOS, 15 Junho 1976, REP. POPULAR, DE
10e

1976 Sport overprint: S Silvestre Rep. Popular de
15e

1977. Map and Shells: Republica Popular de
20e
25e
30e
50e

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). 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 sheets 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, there are some stamps that 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 difficult to find are as follows:

1977, National Reconstruction tax, 1st overprint set - the lower values served a similar function to the colonial *Assistencia* stamps. They were not used for postage, but as a postal tax used on certain days to raise funds for the reconstruction of Angola after the colonial war. The prime function of these stamps was stamp duty on financial transactions. They were replaced the next year, so their short life makes them hard to find. 1978 50c and 1Kz are easily sourced. This set was itself replaced in the early 2000s.



1980, Issued for the 1st National Congress of the MPLA in Luanda, in three values, 5, 20 and 100Kz. The stamps were a limited print-run by the Angolan National Press for the MPLA as a fundraising / promotional label to be attached letters. Although listed by Palop, they are not an official Angolan postal issue and could not properly do postal service (even though creative examples exist!!).



2006, Michel 1776. Commemorative issue for the paralympic Jose Sayovo, is hard to find but not expensive. The print run of 5,000 was too low, given the topic.

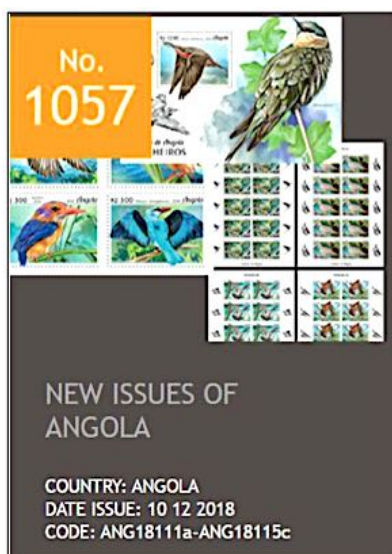
2006, Michel 1768-71. Domestic animals, issued for Lubrapex. Sets issued for Lubrapex are sought after by Portuguese collectors and so the 5,000 print run was not large enough to meet demand.

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, hard to find, but not expensive.

2009, Michel 1820-1. Neto anniversary. The Souvenir sheet is easy to source, but the associated pair of stamps is hard to find, but not expensive.

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 and printed for the AICEP organisation. 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, an issue representing all former colonies was planned, designs submitted and proofs printed. Both Portugal and Brazil prepared separate issues on the same theme, Champions of Literature. 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 release of the stamps was spasmodic. The East Timor example was issued locally, as a collector happily discovered when he visited the Dili Post office. So, the Timor Leste, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome stamps are expensive (some topping \$100), but as for Angola, it never hit the market. Its first appearance was in 2017 (a known sale of two on eBay fetched over \$100 some years later). One major Portuguese dealer I spoke with said he had only ever seen two of the stamps. There is no record of its release nor authorisation by Correios de Angola, or the UPU. The few stamps that exist are nothing more than remaining examples of the original proof sheets. Correios de Angola never went on to issue the stamp, so it is best viewed as an anomaly - a proof example of an unissued stamp.



The second agency period occurred in 2018 when issues produced by Stamperija, Lithuania, 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. Like the many forgeries of Angola and Cabinda, collectors will often purchase examples when offered at a low price. Some 2018/19 sets are found CTO, rubbish of course (definitely not a Luanda cancel), but can serve as useful examples of these issues. Probably produced (illegally??) to get rid of unsold stock. A price of 2 Euros sees them out. The Stamperija contract was most likely set for 5 years, but thankfully Correios de Angola took control and ended the glut of issues by 2020 - probably December 2018 to December 2019. It is worth noting that none of the issues have been listed by the Universal Postal Union as authorised by Correios de Angola. They could not be purchased in

Angola and cannot used for the franking for post. They were authorised by Corrios de Angola to raise funds, but not authorised to do postal service. They are simply collector labels.

Again, it is worth remembering that compared with Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, or Sao Tome Principe, the Stamperija agency mass production for Angola only lasted a year; theirs is ongoing.

Stamp issues from the Correios de Angola since then have been very limited. Like many countries, the Covid pandemic severely damaged the postal service, forcing the closure of many post offices. The production of stamps is no longer profitable, as is the provision of a local mail service. Postal authorities around the world focus on parcel delivery now and happily watch letter delivery wither on the vine.

Issues since 2019:

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, booklet, postal card, and imperf.



2021, Covid Pandemic, 1 set of 4, 1 set of 2, each with a souvenir sheet + Sheetlet, booklet, postal card, and imperf. These issues, The Struggle Against Variants of Sars, and a Tribute to Covid Health Workers, were a joint issue of many African countries, including former Portuguese territories, Sao Tome and Principe, Guinea Bissau, and Mozambique. Stamperija is the source. Official UPU authorisation is lacking, ie., same status as 2018/19.



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).

FAKES

From 1999 fake issues for Angola and Cabinda have flooded the market. The original culprit was identified as a former executive of Gibbons who went rouge and set up a printing operation using a well-known stamp producer in England (or so the story goes!!!). Today, fake issues flood out of central Europe. They stand out like a sore thumb and are rubbish. The solution is simple, work with a reputable catalogue.



Page 1 Illustration: A Post Card of Nova Lisboa, renamed Huambo at Independence, before it suffered major damage during the civil war. Redevelopment began after peace was declared in 2002.