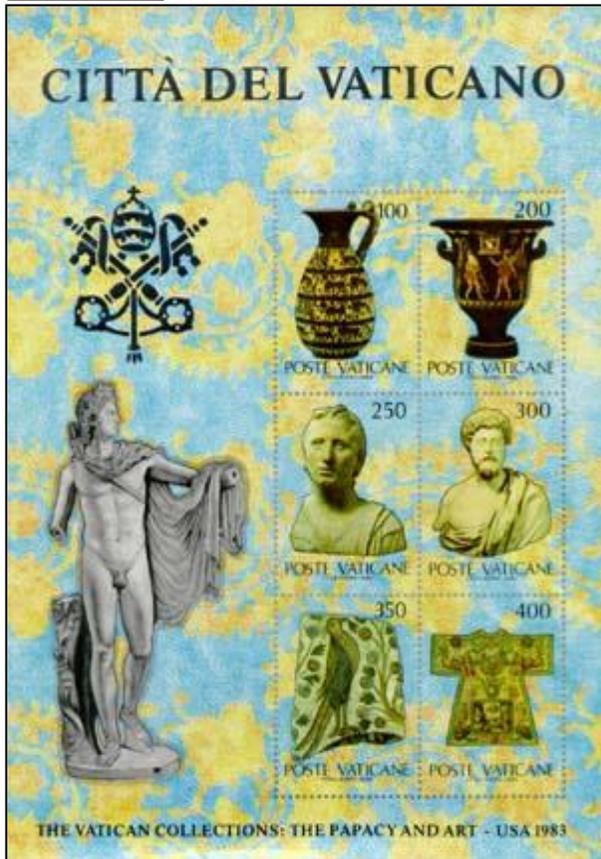


Marcus Aurelius

by Jason Wells

Figure B1



Roman emperors are a popular subject for postage stamps with Marcus Aurelius being no exception. Born in 121, Marcus Aurelius is the last of “the five good emperors” that ruled from 96-192. The time period from 96-180 was known as the “Pax Romana” or the Roman Peace. Marcus Aurelius was known as the philosopher king. He was a leading commentator on the stoic philosophy. His book “Meditations” is still read to this day. It stated that one knows their place in the universe, sacrifice happiness (for it is fleeting) for contentment, and above all else the importance of emotional control. Marcus Aurelius died in 180, to be succeeded by his son Commodus (from the movie “Gladiator” and the movie did not exaggerate, for Commodus was as unbalanced as his father was balanced).

Marcus Aurelius has been commemorated on numerous postage stamps. First is Vatican City (Scott# 718d), issued in 1983 [Figure B1], featuring artwork from Italy and Greece through the ages. Next is Italy (Scott #2130), issued in 1983 [Figure B2]. This stamp commemorates the 40th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. This treaty, signed by most of the countries in Western Europe, was the beginning of the European Economic Community, an early precursor to today's European Union.



Figure B2

Figure B3



The following stamp is a semi-postal issue from Belgium (Scott #B905) printed in 1983 [Figure B3]. The stamp features coins of Hadrian (left) and Marcus Aurelius. Hadrian was another distinguished emperor of the “Pax Romana”.

There are other countries that commemorated Marcus Aurelius. This emperor was probably the closest the world ever seen to Plato's vision of a philosopher-king and proof positive that absolute power does not always corrupt absolutely.

A Look Back at Buying from H. E. Harris & Co.

by Phil Fetting

Like many of us, I got my start in stamp collecting by sending a hard-earned dollar to H. E. Harris & Co. to obtain a packet of stamps and something called “approvals”. Money was not plentiful, so these purchases from Harris (and Jamestown, Kenmore, etc.) were slow but continued from the mid-1950s until 1964. That year I had a job that paid well but collecting came to a halt as a submarine is no place for stamps!



Figure B4

In 1966, Ann & I had our 1st home together so the collection came out. I remember making orders for U.S. modern commemoratives from a Harris catalog. I knew the Harris list contained high catalog items but for years I continued to link them with approvals and low value material

Recently I found a 1958 Harris pamphlet titled “Rarities, Classics, Unusual Items...”. **Figure B4** shows an item shown on the front cover. It is a block of 4 of U.S. CE2a. This item is imperforate vertically with horizontal guidelines and was listed for \$2,850. Scott 2019 CV is \$8,500 for two pairs. This unique block would bring a hefty additional amount due to having guidelines and sheet margins on a block.

This 28-page price list is full of better U.S. & Worldwide items that today you would expect to find in auction catalogs. This little list has caused me to greatly reconsider the part of philatelic history that H. E. Harris & Co. played.

Figure B5 shows another aspect of stamp dealing in times past. Notice the dress code that ruled in the 1950s. All I can say is how relieved I am that while I was filling mail orders in 1992/3 for

Michael Rogers, Inc., that Mike did not require me to be in a coat and tie!



Figure B5