

Bar Gaps on Narrow-Bar Panama Overprints of the C.Z. Third Series

by Geoffrey Brewster

The stamps involved are CZSG Nos. 12.A (12.Aa and 12.Ab), 13.A, 13.B, 14.A (14.Aa and 14.Ab), and 14.B (14.Ba and 14.Bb). The bar gaps represent spaces between the pieces of metal type called rules that were manufactured or cut in different lengths. Scrutiny indicates that for these narrow-bar stamps Panama used single rules or bars of a length that covered five stamps in each of Rows 1, 2, and 10, and hence these rows have no bar gaps; but Panama used two rules or bars of various lengths to cover five stamps in each of Rows 3–9, and hence these rows each have a gap between the ends of the two bars where they should meet. The gaps are usually narrow, sometimes wide, and may be partly filled-in. They are usually easy to see, especially with a magnifying glass, although they may be less easily recognizable in lightly inked overprints, and less obvious in overprints that are dark and/or heavily inked as CZSG No. 14.B may be. (Although apparently not applicable to the narrow-bar stamps, when two bars meet tightly end-to-end, as sometimes occurs on the Third Series wide-bar stamps, there is of course no bar gap, but their joint may be recognizable by a thin, vertical line of darker (or extra or "doubled") ink and/or by one or more angled corners. These no-gap joints have the equivalent significance of bar gaps and hence are listed with them despite not actually showing a gap.)

The bar gaps often are an important plating tool, revealing or helping to reveal a stamp's row and narrowing down the position in the row to two possibilities, which plating of the C.Z. overprint usually can determine which of the two positions it is.

Plating the PANANAs of the narrow-bar stamps indicates that they were all printed from the same basic form but in two different major stages, CZSG Nos. 12.A, 13.A, and 14.A from one stage, and CZSG Nos. 13.B and 14.B from another stage. The data on bar gaps suggest that CZSG No. 14.A was printed from a slightly different stage than that used for 12.A and 13.A, and that CZSG Nos. 13.B and 14.B were printed from two rather different stages. This suggests that the Panama narrow-bar form had two major stages, with two minor stages in each major stage, for a total of four stages.

The bar gaps are listed in the accompanying Table 1, from data compiled from the author's collection as of 3/18/2012.

Table 1

The Recorded Bar Gaps

Row 1, None : All stamps

Row 2, None: All stamps

Row 3, Pos. 22, 27:

4 mm to left of right PANAMA (or 14 mm to R. of L. PAN.) on 13.B
4½ mm to left of right PANAMA (or 13½ mm to R. of L. PAN.) on 14.A
5½ mm to left of right PANAMA (or 12½ mm to R. of L. PAN.) on 12.A,
13.A, and 14.B. A variety of 4½ mm is recorded on 12.A (from one copy,
12.Ab, Pos. 22, used, ex-Salz)

Row 4, Pos. 33, 38:

5 mm to right of left PANAMA (or 13 mm L. of R. PAN.) on 14.B
6 mm to right of left PANAMA (or 12 mm L. of R. PAN.) on 12.A, 13.A, & 14.A
6½ mm to right of left PANAMA (or 11½ mm L. of R. PAN.) on 13.B

Row 5, Pos. 43, 48:

5–5¼ mm to right of left PANAMA (or 13–12¾ mm L. of R. PAN. on 14.B
5½–5¾ mm to right of left PANAMA (or 12½–12¼ mm L. of R. PAN.
except 12 mm when gap is ½ mm wide) on 12.A, 13.A, & 14.A
6 mm to right of left PANAMA (or 12 mm L. of R. PAN.) on 13.B

Row 6, Pos. 53, 58:

8 mm to left of right PANAMA (or 10 mm R. of L. PAN.) on 12.A,
13.A, 13.B, & 14.A. On 12.A some are at 8½mm to left of right PANAMA. 13.B
has a narrow gap 0.1 mm wide [SEE ALSO POS. 63, 68]
8¾ mm to left of right PANAMA (or 9¼ mm R. of L. PAN.) on 14.B; the top corners
of both bars are right angles or squared [SEE ALSO POS. 63, 68, and 73, 78]

Row 7, Pos. 63, 68:

8 mm to left of right PANAMA (or 10 mm R. of L. PAN.) on 13.B, which has a wide
gap ½ mm (0.5 mm) wide [SEE ALSO POS. 53, 58]
8¾ mm to left of right PANAMA (or 9¼ mm R. of L. PAN.) on 14.A
9 mm to left of right PANAMA (or 9 mm R. of L. PAN.) on 12.A, 13.A, & 14.B.
On 14 .B the left bar's top or UR corner appears cut off or angled downward,
not squared, and the right bar's bottom or LL corner is squared [SEE ALSO POS.
53, 58 and 73, 78]

Row 8, Pos. 73, 78:

5 mm or $5\frac{1}{4}$ m or $5\frac{1}{2}$ m to right of left PANAMA (or 13 or $12\frac{3}{4}$ or $12\frac{1}{2}$ mm to L. of R. PAN.) on 12.A

5 mm to right of left PANAMA (or 13 mm to L. of R. PAN.) on 14 .B, with the left bar's top or UR corner angled downward , and the right bar's bottom or LL corner angled upward [SEE ALSO POS. 53, 58 and 63, 68]

$5\frac{1}{4}$ mm to right of left PANAMA (or $12\frac{3}{4}$ mm L. of R. PAN.) on 14. A, with an 0.4 mm-wide gap

$5\frac{1}{4}$ mm or $5\frac{1}{2}$ mm to right of left PANAMA (or $12\frac{3}{4}$ or $12\frac{1}{2}$ mm L. of R. PAN.) on 13.A

$5\frac{1}{2}$ mm to right of left PANAMA (or $12\frac{1}{2}$ mm L. of R. PAN.) on 13. B

Row 9, Pos. 83, 88:

7 mm to left of right PANAMA (or 11 mm R. of L. PAN .) on 13 .B

$7\frac{1}{4}$ mm to left of right PANAMA (or $10\frac{1}{2}$ mm R. of L. PAN. with an 0.3 mm-wide gap, explaining why $10\frac{1}{2}$ mm instead of $10\frac{3}{4}$ mm) on 14.A

$7\frac{1}{2}$ mm to left of right PANAMA (or $10\frac{1}{2}$ mm to R. of L. PAN.) on 12.A & 13.A

$8\frac{1}{2}$ mm to left of right PANAMA (or $9\frac{1}{2}$ mm to R. of L. PAN.) on 14.B

Row 10, None : All stamps