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## The Practical Collector II

The Treasures We Over Look  
The Importance of Knowing Your Stamps



Salamanca pre-stamp postmark never used on stamps, found on 2R reprint, prove the stamp bogus.

Genuine Blue Un Real from the Gothic period with unlikely Medio split with a fake Diligencia cancel.

The story of Pandora's Box is that once the box is opened, the demons escape. Later in the 19th Century, plate pieces were stolen from Mexico's Postal Archives. According to reports, this happened sometime in the late 1880s, and by the early 1890s, reprints from this material started to surface. By the early decades of the new 20th Century, the market was flooded with these bogus reprints of issues from 1856, 1861, and the 1867 Mexico Gothic issues, filling the market for collectors looking for inexpensive, high-priced issues. Previously, one of the most desirable countries to collect had turned into a country that was shunned due to all the fakes on the market. The early counterfeits that were being made, with their crude details, were only meant to fill packets of cheap stamps that never really fooled collectors and were only space fillers. Now, with the reprints made from original plates, there were little differences between these and the original genuine stamps. Collectors had not found out what to look for, and most novice collectors were not suspicious of these high-quality stamps. The district overprint and cancel look close to the original, and only a few people even suspected these stamps as unauthorized reprints.



Genuine 2R, Fake Reprint 2R, Back of Reprint Opaque, and Crude Counterfeit Dos Reales  
 Genuine 2r 1856 is semi-transparent

Word reached collectors in periodicals that Mexican reprints from original plates were circulating, and the masses of collectors either put their albums of Mexico away or were too leery of these bogus issues that they never attempted to collect Mexico. Dealers started to have little trust in their stock and avoided buying any more issues of early Mexico. Over the years, many collectors started to trust Mexico's stamps because there were simple tests to understand whether a stamp was genuine due to mistakes the forgers had made. The reprints have been narrowed down to common and scarce produced over a hundred years ago. The largest mass of these are from the Cuatro and Ocho Reales issues, followed by the Medio Real issues. Most of the other issues were so common in genuine examples the forgers made very few of them.



Reprints of the 4R and 8R issues of 1856 with fake cancels and overprints.  
 Opaque paper on another 8R Reprint.

The forger's basic mistake was that the fake 1856 issues were too thick and opaque for the printed image to show through the paper. They also made another mistake by not making the heavy grain paper of many 1861-type fakes following the same direction used in the genuine examples. Those two tests have helped many collectors tell the differences between the good and the bad. Nevertheless, collectors have remained skeptical of diving into Mexico. The good news is that MEPSI, Mexico Elmhurst Philatelic Society International, formed one of the world's best expert committees to detect Mexico's issues. Hundreds of Certificates and simple observations of stamps have helped collectors worldwide be confident that their stamps are genuine.



1861 style both 4Rs and last 8R Reprints with incorrect vertical grain. Puebla 8R Reprint has the correct grain, but a fake cancel and overprint.

This story is not over because many collectors have little idea how to tell if the overprints and cancels are good, whether the stamps were done in the right colors, or if there are other things to look for in the stamps they already have. Marc Gonzales, the Chairman of MEPSI's Expert Committee, has studied these forged reprints, other bogus Mexico issues of 1856 and 1861, and Gothic issues for years. Marc has compiled a wonderful research book, *"REPRINTS COUNTERFEITS AND FORGERIES OF MEXICO, " along with other advanced collectors of Mexico,"* including those three issues. He has just released a reference catalog covering these issues, districts, cancels, etc. I will tell you more about this in next week's message.

Enjoy!

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