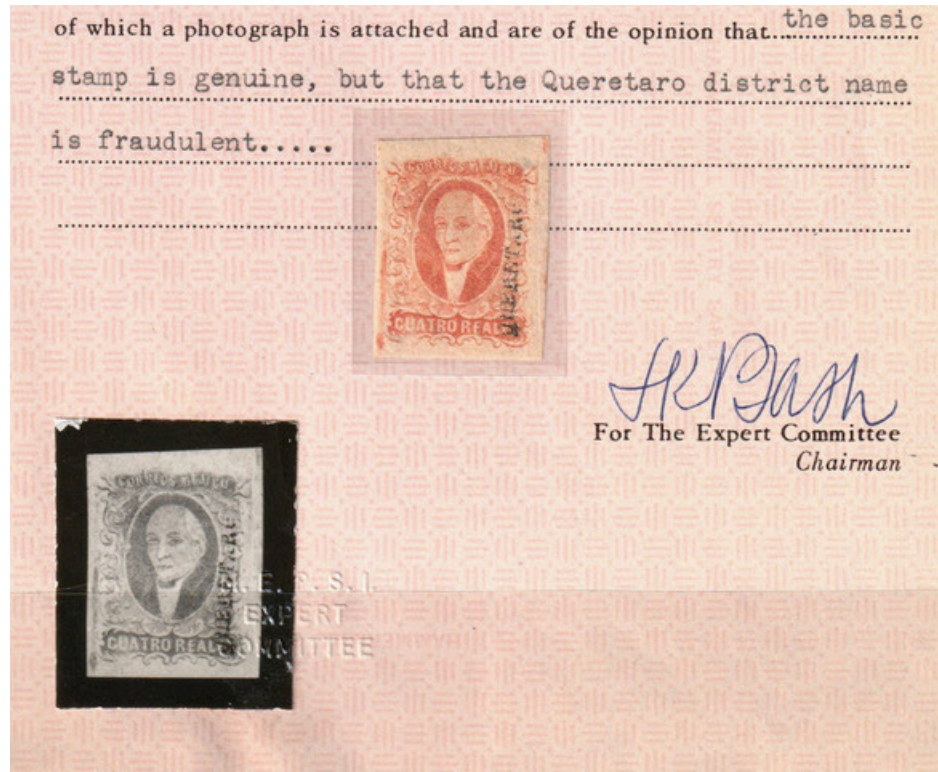


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Today's Collector  
New Opportunities

### Some Quick Methods for Finding a Fake



This 1971 MEPSI Certificate for a genuine 4R with a fake overprint.

In the early days of printing and sending out stamps, remainder examples of genuine issues were saved,  
They were later forged by adding bogus District overprints.

As you already know, if you read my last message, I showed you a number of genuine and fake examples of the 1856 Stamp Issues. I also told you which were fake and which were not. The one thing missing was how to tell the good from the bad. Outside of asking another collector who might know the differences or sending it in for a certificate, there are some tricks that will help you tell firsthand. There are several things all stamps have in common; if they don't match the genuine example, they are either a different issue or a fake. First things I look for are Paper variations, printing style, color differences, image differences, and anything missing or added. In the Mexican Classic First, Second, and Provincial Issues during 1867-8, each issue has distinct features. A special tool you can have is a known genuine example of the real issues. This may be any denomination, but I prefer the Dos Reales in a strong color with good detail, and they are rarely faked. Just the eye can tell the obviously counterfeit examples of packet trade fakes from the genuine examples.



In the late 19th century, forgers acquired original plates in whole or in part. With original or fake overprints and postmarks, they fooled thousands of collectors and even dealers. The use of incorrect paper was the flaw that helped the collector weed out these fakes.

So, we shall start with the first issues of 1856, five different values, five different primary colors, about fifty different Districts overprints, and almost all used the same paper types. So, let me set these out in what to look for first. Because fakes were made from stolen original plates, many of the 1856 and later 1861 issues show little difference in the images, good or bad. For the 1856 issues, the paper is the most different thing from the Reprints. First, the 1856 paper is relatively thin and easily bends, but don't bend your stamp; just hold it lightly between your fingertips and see how easily it bends with a light flick of your tongue. But you will not find this in a Reprint, and they are also less transparent. Lay your genuine test issue face down on a piece of white paper. Then lay down the subject stamp the same way, and if the subject transparent image looks like your trial stamp, the questioned stamp is likely good. But if the subject stamp shows little or no image of the print, it is likely a fake reprint. Generally, the Medio, Un, and Dos Real issues were fairly easy to find in those years, so the scarcer fake reprints are generally the higher values.



These 1861 stamps likely fool the owners into finally having an inspection of the paper that has the incorrect vertical grain.

Overprints and cancellations are also faked.

Now we go to the 1861 issues; they use a different paper. So, comparing transparency isn't going to help. The fakers of the 1861 reprints did a pretty good job of finding similar paper, or may have stolen some from the Postal Archives, but they made a big mistake in the direction they printed it. First, the grain on the genuine Medio, Cuatro, and Ocho issues was all printed with a horizontal grain. The forgers made a major mistake in many of their prints by using the grain in a vertical direction. Some of the Cuatro fakes do have the horizontal-grain paper. Few of the Medio Real were printed, but the major printings of the Cuatro and Ocho were due to those stamps being hard to find for collectors. Like the 1856, the 1861 Medio, Un, and Dos Reales are rare in reprints because genuine examples were readily available.

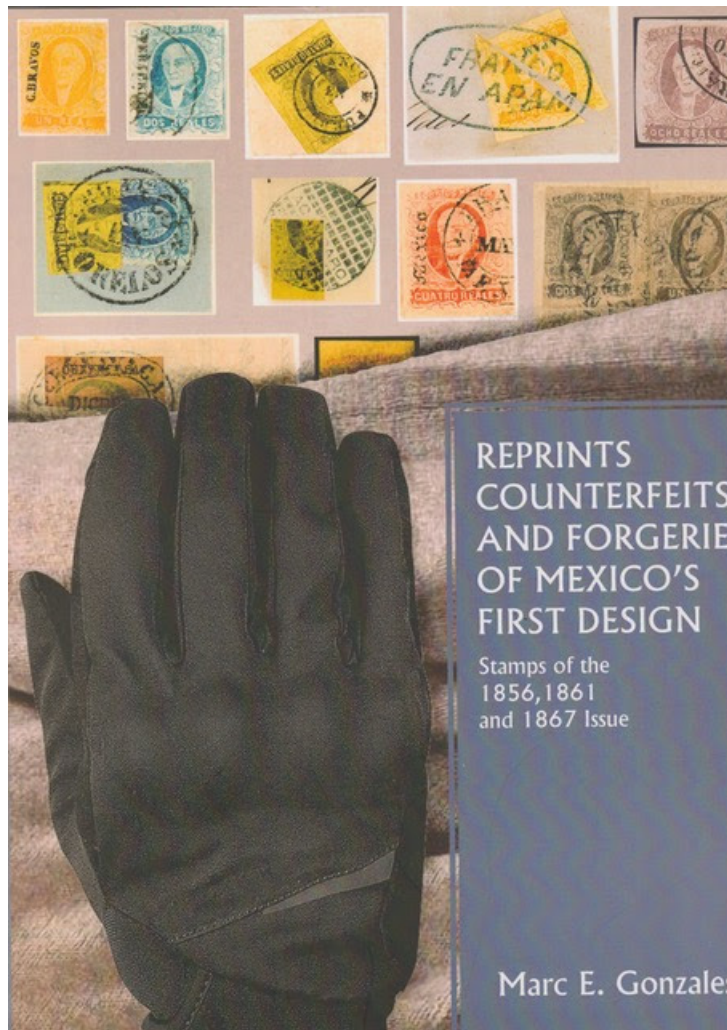


These three forged reprints have faked the districts' Gothic overprints.

The Cuatro Reales Red is a Reprint with low-transparency paper.

The middle and right stamps are like the 1861 fake with incorrect vertical grain paper.

Looking at the Mexico Gothic issues of 1867-8, they had the same plates as the earlier first two series. Reprints are rare, but some do appear. The paper for the Gothics is normal on the first issue but thin on the second, which also has watermarked paper. Some issues were from old stock on the first Gothic issues. More likely, it is to find some of the reprint plate material being used in the earlier issues that were changed for the Gothic issues. Given the difficulty of detecting the later fake, expert help would be a very good idea. The most common fake is taking the red-on-yellow paper Cuatro Real and chemically bleaching the paper to make the stamp appear as the red-on-white Cuatro Gothic issue. This was making a very low value of something that looks like a \$3,000 to a \$6,000 stamp. Other things that forgers did to the older plate scraps were to change the denominations, and mistakes were made in the new letters.



Marc E. Gonzales reference book on forged stamps of early Mexico

In all issues, since there are district names, the used ones have cancellations, and detecting these two things is often proof that the stamp is genuine or fake. There are charts of District overprint sizes. A comparison of the cancellations in the books of Schatzkes and Taylor may help you match the subject. The best book that has recently been issued is Marc E. Gonzales "Reprints, Counterfeits and Forgeries of Mexico's First Design." Marc is the Chairman of MEPSI's Expert Committee, and the knowledge he has developed has been instilled into the very best book on detecting reprints, fakes, or forgeries. The interesting part of working with stamps to avoid buying fakes or to find them in our own albums is proving that our collections are clearly genuine. It also helps you review many online stamps and determine whether each is bogus.

Enjoy!

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