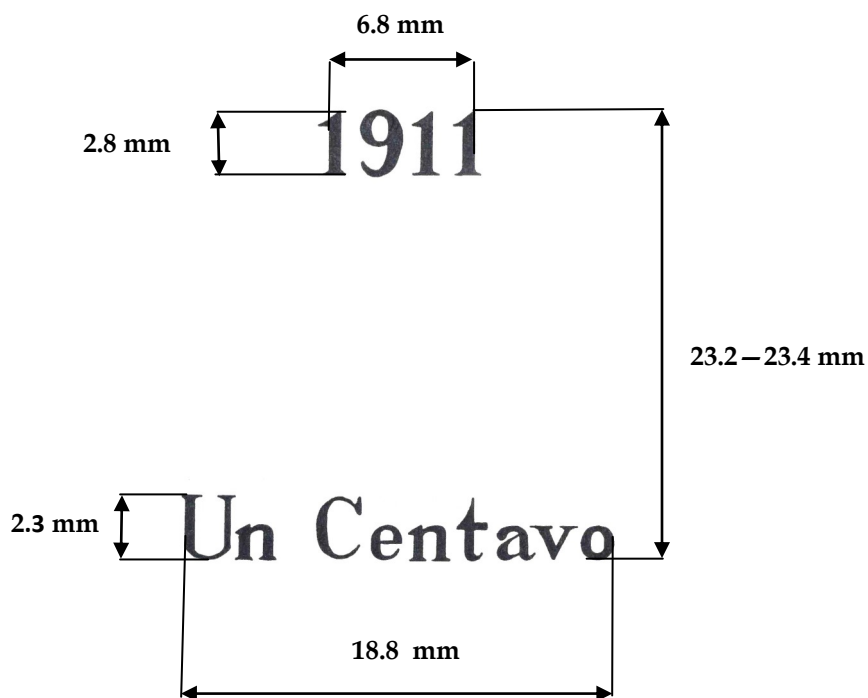


GUATEMALA FORGERIES AND FAKES 1911 SCOTT 143

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The 1911 provisional issue was printed in quantity of 20,000 to meet a shortage of 1c stamps. The stamps were issued on December 24, 1911, and were reportedly applied directly to mail by postal clerks in an effort to ration the limited supply, according to *Guatemala 2* ("G2"). [1] The issue has been extensively faked. Harvey Beagle, an expert on this issue, stated that "75% to 85% of the copies examined in collections and on the market are fakes." [2] This certainly remains true for offerings on internet websites, especially regarding the error varieties. The genuine surcharged stamps are significantly more rare than their catalogue prices indicate.



Dimensions of the genuine surcharge are shown in the illustration here. The print type was in excellent condition. The stamp was printed in black ink, the spaces between letters and numbers are uniform and the surcharge is centered. The measurements as illustrated are the best way to verify a genuine surcharge [3]. There are several dangerous fakes, with measurements varying only slightly, sometimes only one of the measurements being incorrect.

There two recognized genuine errors, double surcharge and vertical pair one with double surcharge (the sheet of 100 stamps was printed in settings of 50 stamps applied twice to each sheet resulting in the possibility of one surcharge being double printed on only one half of the sheet). Any other error variety is a fake!

The faked varieties are often listed as 'uncatalogued' or 'rare' or some other description, but they are not genuine and were not printed or sold by the government.

Guatemala 2 lists 7 basic forgery types (see examples on following page), characterized by incorrect measurements, fonts, and ink. These also exist inverted, one line missing, double, double inverted, double with one inverted, and various sorts of se-tenant pairs, and also some with red ink. [4]. The G2 listing is not complete; there are many more types of fakes. Sometimes the fake is added to a genuine surcharge to create an error variety.

Beagle gives the following general danger signals on the fakes: blurry printings, an embossed appearance on the back of the stamp caused by too much pressure in overprinting, and un-aligned numerals in '1911'. Two quick guides can be given: (1) If the vertical measurement is more than 23.5 mm, you probably have one of the fakes. (2) If the horizontal length of 'Un Centavo' exceeds 18.9 mm., again you probably have one of the fakes. [5] Every surcharge which is not perfectly horizontal is suspect.

Continued on following page



G2 Fake 1
Top line 8 mm
Height 23.5 mm
Heavy blurred ink
Tail of 'e' is broken



G2 Fake 2
Similar to 1 but
'o' or 'vo' missing



G2 Fake 3
Top line 2.5 mm high
Bottom line 18.5 x 2.5 mm
Height 23 to 23.25 mm



G2 Fake 4 var
Like Fake 3 but one 9 raised
Height 19.75 mm
Second Surcharge height 23.5 mm
'1911' numerals not aligned



Fake
Bottom Line 19 x 2.5 mm
Height 23.25 mm
Blurred letters

References:

- [1] Goodman, Roland A., ed., *Guatemala 2*, pp. 370-1, Robson Lowe, Ltd., London (1974).
- [2] Beagle II, Harvey, "Project 140-143", *El Quetzal*, Vol. 33, No. 235, p. 27, International Society of Guatemala Collectors (1982).
- [3] The illustration with the measurements is the author's based on Beagle's work (See Beagle, *op. cit.* p. 28; also Beagle II, Harvey, "Project 140-143", *El Quetzal*, Vol. 23, No. 191, pp. 49-51, International Society of Guatemala Collectors (1972). I use a thin clear plastic ruler with units graduated to ¼ mm and a 5x or 10x magnifying glass. ISGC member Eric Dyck's color separation assisted in creation of the image..
- [4] Goodman, *ibid.*
- [5] Beagle, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

The International Society of Guatemala Collectors was formed in 1948 and is Affiliate No. 38 of the American Philatelic Society. The Society is committed to assisting everyone interested in collecting Guatemala. Its award winning journal El Quetzal is published quarterly. Membership levels include a US\$10 online membership which includes access to most society publications including its two award winning handbooks, and the electronic version of the journal. If you collect Guatemala you will find much more information available on the society website:

www.GuatemalaStamps.com