

GUATEMALA FORGERIES AND FAKES 1916-7 SCOTT 154-7

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The four surcharge issues of 1916-7 were faked in far more varieties than any other issues of Guatemalan stamps. This was facilitated by the government using low value stamps to surcharge higher values and with war-time inflation ravaging the economy, sheets of 1c and 2c stamps could be bought for pennies. Fakers included Reinoso & Sons and Joaquin A. Torres. When the authors of *Guatemala 2* ("G2") were compiling their work it was thought that there were only 3 genuine errors. As they proceeded they found that other errors appeared genuine despite not having been issued and their conclusion was that unissued (not sold at the post office windows) errors were 'mid-night' printings in the government printing plant which made their way out the back door. In addition a portion of at least one printing plate fell into private hands and was used to illegally print the normal and 'error' stamps.¹ Despite their dubious status the editor felt compelled to list these errors.

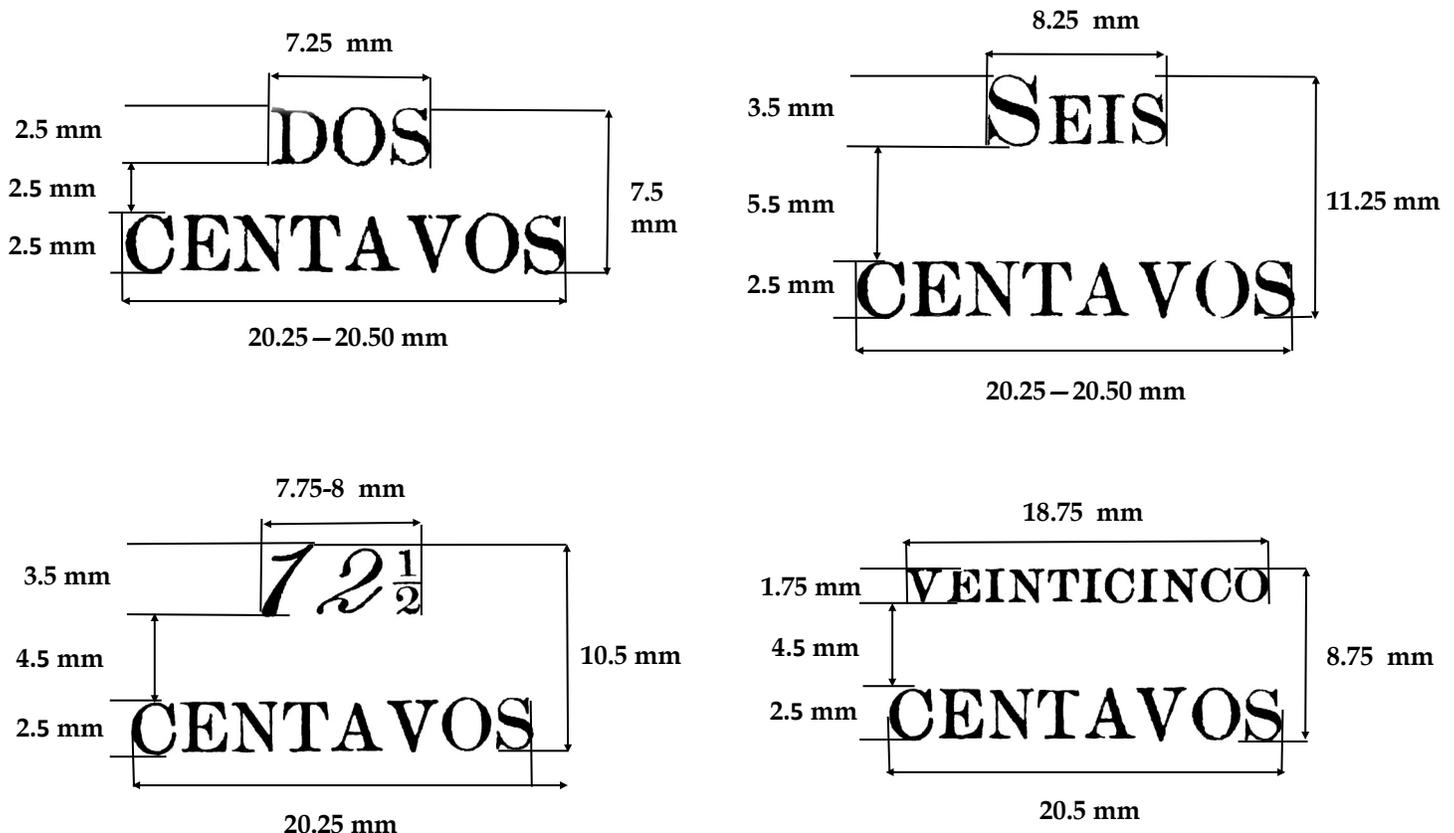
Dimensions of the genuine surcharges are shown in the illustrations below.² There were many flaws in the printing type and thus the individual letters in the illustrations are not determinative of authenticity.³ Kerry Kearton-Gee's studies of these issues looked at and relied on the printing plates used in conjunction with the surcharges, which method produces definitive conclusions but is beyond the capability of most collectors.

Fakes - General Comments

Caveat Emptor! There are good reasons why the Scott catalogue does not list any errors of these issues, despite G2's listing inverted and double surcharges for each of the four issues.

All red surcharges and all red and black surcharges are fakes. Surcharges on Scott 155 and 156 with violet centers rather than claret are fakes.

Any stamp with incorrect measurements is not genuine.



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Fakes - Specific Characteristics

Scott 156, 12½c on 2c. The 13½c error, normal, inverted, double, double with one inverted, and the error in pair with one normal 12½ exist in large quantities and are regularly offered on internet auction sites as genuine. Kerry Kearton-Gee, the pre-eminent expert on the Waterlow issues, concluded that the authenticity of all of these is questionable at best. After an extensive study he states that "...this 'error' was created after the printing of the regular stamps." Further, as to the existence of the genuine 13½c surcharge, "...my own view is that it is not proven."⁴

Scott 157, 25c on 2c. This stamp was also extensively faked and comes in many varieties. Additionally, part of the original printing plate passed into private hands and was used to create 'genuine' surcharges. G2 lists two errors, the inverted surcharge and double surcharge.

Kerry Kearton-Gee studied this issue in detail. As to the inverted surcharge he concluded that "...perhaps a genuine inverted surcharge exists but I have strong doubts." Describing the double surcharge, he did not rule out a genuine error, but did provide this caveat: "I believe that all vertically shifted impressions [separating the two impressions] are suspect." Thus, when looking at a double surcharge, if one impression is above the second, it is suspect; if the two impressions are overlapping horizontally, they may be genuine.⁵

Conclusion

Measure the surcharges to eliminate all obvious fakes. Few if any errors are genuine, and a prudent collector will not pay a high price for an error unless certified as genuine by an expert.

Footnotes

¹This information is contained in the editorial notes and correspondence of Roland Goodman, Editor of *Guatemala 2*, the handbook of Guatemala stamps published by International Society of Guatemala Collectors, which documents are located in the Society archives (Eric Dyck, Librarian). Goodman often referred in these notes to the Luff collection which he had personally viewed and which remains available for viewing and in the custody of the Philatelic Foundation.

²Goodman, Roland A., ed., *Guatemala 2*, pp. 380-85, Robson Lowe, Ltd., London (1971).

³The images for the measurements were provided by Eric Dyck.

⁴Kearton-Gee, Kerry, "The 1916 13½ Centavos Surcharge on Waterlow 1c of 1902," *El Quetzal*, Vol. 70, No. 382, pp. 14-16, International Society of Guatemala Collectors (2020).

⁵Kearton-Gee, Kerry, "The 1916 Veinticinco Centavos Surcharges on the 2c Issue of 1902," Vol. 64, No., 357, pp. 10-13, *El Quetzal*. International Society of Guatemala Collectors (2014).

SELECTED FORGERY IMAGES



Scott 154 Violet Center



Scott 155 - Fake Red Surcharges



Scott 156 - Fakes on Violet Center Stamps and Red Fakes



Scott 157
Accent on 'E' of
"VEINTICINCO"

Scott 157 - Fake Surcharges



Scott 157 - Bogus Surcharge