

MEXICO 1ST POSTAGE STAMPS: THE 8 REALES STAMP AND ITS POSTAL USAGE (1856-1861)

Purpose of the exhibit.

Mexico issued its first postal stamps on August 1st, 1856 and ended their use on April 17th, 1861. The purpose of this exhibit is to show the 1856 8 reales stamp of Mexico and the 8 reales postal usage during this period. The stamps and usages are described according to district names and the 2 postal rates in effect: the first from August 1, 1856 to December 15, 1856, and the second one from December 16, 1856, until the appearance of the 1861 second Hidalgo issue. The covers presented define rates prevailing in each period.

Historic background.

Don Ignacio Comonfort, president of Mexico, authorized the introduction of prepayment of postage using adhesive stamps by decree of February 21, 1856, commissioning the state office to design and print the corresponding values. Only 5 values were supplied: ½, 1, 2, 4 and 8 reales. In that year, Mexico was just beginning to organize itself as a nation after long years of wars and shortages. Communications routes were very precarious. Mail was delivered by postman on foot, on horseback, on the backs of mules or by stagecoach. Very often the mail was assaulted by gangs of outlaws, stealing the consignments of stamps destined for the interior of the Republic. To remedy this situation, the central postal administration proposed as a solution that the stamps would have no postage value without the overprinting of the district name. This overprinting would help to identify the origin of the mail and consequently the calculation of postal rates based on the distance and weight of the correspondence.

Importance of the exhibit.

All Mexico 8 reales stamps are considered scarce. With 100k delivered to districts and a surviving rate between 2 and 4 percent, indicates, in the best of the scenarios no more than 3,700 examples at our disposal. Many of these stamps were cut into halves, quarters and even eighths. Research has determined that to consider 1000 stamps in existence could be more than optimistic. This collection includes pieces of singular rarity such as the red colour proof of the 2 reales stamp, the block of 40 stamps of 8 reales Victoria district, the letter from Mexico to Guadalajara franked with four different stamps, a letter with an incredible franking of 20 reales paid with 10 stamps of 2 reales, cover of the Lagos district with a franking of 8 reales paid with 8 one-real stamps with the largest known strip of one-real stamps on a letter; last but not least, a letter franked with one strip of 4 cuatro reales stamps (lack of 2 single 8 Reales) as well as other 8 Reales pieces of which only a handful of examples have survived.



1859 BLOCK OF 4@

As the conservative Mexican Army approached to Guadalajara, the liberal postmaster cancelled a sheet of 60 stamps of the 8 reales issues with the single-ring "FRANCO EN GUADALAJARA" circular date stamp so as to devalue the stamps

Very few blocks of 8 Reales are recorded without district name

Exhibit plan and index.

The collection is made by presenting the 8 reales in the context of its creation as part of the first serie of Mexican stamps issued. Next, a technical analysis of the 8 reales issue is introduced following with examples of the stamp in the main districts where it circulated. The exhibit ends with a serie of letters circulated at rates of 8 reales or higher rates with stamps of that denomination or combinations of stamps. The scarcity of 8 reales stamps led post offices to make use of other values to cover this shortage. As part of the research work carried out in this exhibition, investigation is highlighted in italics, postage rates and routes described in blue and rarities and scarce examples are identified with a double frame in lilac. @ indicates MEPSI certificate.

Index of the exhibit is as follows:

- First Mexican stamps.
- The 8 reales of 1856.
 - Specifications & varieties
 - Postal districts
- Postal rates
- Other postage usages

Bibliography research.

1. The Postage Stamps of Mexico. **Samuel Chapman**
2. Las primeras emisiones de México. **Smeth & Fayolle**
3. México 1856-1874. **Schatzkes**
4. Mexican Maritime Mail. **Schimmer & Heath**
5. Rosenthal Collection.
6. A catalogue of the stamps of Mexico. **N. Follansbee**
7. Tres siglos de filatelia en México. **AMEXFIL.**

THE 8 REALES OF 1856.

First Mexican Stamps

The first series of 5 Mexican stamps was issued on August 1, 1856, and was used until April 17, 1861. Throughout the five years that the serie was in effect, 987,264 stamps were inventoried for the blue 1/2 real; 1,417,508 for the yellow 1 real; 1,623,483 for the green 2 reales; 167,160 for the red 4 reales; and 100,784 for the lilac 8 reales. The stamps were issued without district overprint.

From August 1 to August 29 the stamps were only issued to Mexico City. After that date, the stamps were distributed to their places of destination in stagecoaches, and the corresponding endowments were delivered to each post office. By the year 1856 a total of 59 offices were constituted.



Colour proof in red of the 2R. @
Plate I. Copies Printed 60
No more than 10 copies in existence



Stamps were distributed to postal districts in stagecoaches. To avoid the thefts of consignments of stamps on their way to the agencies, it was determined that the pieces would not have monetary value until the agency marked it with its district overprint. This system remains until 1883.



Monetized the stamp, the sender used it to pay for the mailing. This criterion generated more certainty as to the payment of the postage weight and distance. Before august 56, payment had to be made at destination and in many cases, letters were returned for non-payment.



Once the correspond rate was paid, the stamp was cancelled with a postmark or canceler to deface the stamp, demonetize it, and prevent its reuse.



SAN FELIPE (USED 240)

POLOTITLAN (USED 360)

MISUSE OF POSTAL REGULATIONS

REMAINDER

Stamps without district overprint. This responds to a misuse of postal regulations; emergency mailings to localities in which, the mailing of the stamps from the central agencies to the sub-agencies was interrupted; or, to cancel remaining stamps.

THE 8 REALES OF 1856.

Specifications & Varieties



Hard wove paper. One plate of 60 subjects arranged in 6 columns and 10 rows.
 Frameline present.
 All stamps were delivered from the same printer on July 30th and December 30th, 1856.



NO MONETARY VALUE



MEXICO@
 CLICHE STAMP SZ 824A
 Cancel in blue not recorded.
 Illustrated in **Schatzkes**
ONLY KNOWN

Yag Bash M26; Sz 824A

We now know that both Schatzkes in his first book and Yag - Bash in their catalogue picked up what is known to us as Sz 824A or Y/B M26. Since this cancel was not in Wilson's book I thought that it probably does not belong in this later period of stamp use. I also suspected that the

To this rarity, was dedicated an article in the Mexican philately specialized magazine MEXICANA, dated October 2011.

MEPSI certifies the example as

"Genuine in all respects."

| Surviving stamps could approach: | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Survival rate | Quantity surviving |
| 2% | 1,889 |
| 3% | 2,834 |
| 4% | 3,778 |

| Issue quantities from Chapman | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Quantity sent to districts | 100,784 |
| Returned from districts | -6,324 |
| Total issued | 94,460 |



Left **FRAMELINES** Right

COLOUR VARIETIES



Pale Violet
Thin paper



Violet



Lilac
Oxidized tone



Lilac



Red lilac

SPLITS

The scarcity of stamps at the end of the period forced the fragmentation of the higher value stamps. From a 4 reales stamp it was possible to obtain up to 4 fragments of its value. The same with the 8 reales and even with the 2 reales stamp. This was due, among other things, to the fact that the higher values were little used and the number of 2 reales (the main use after the new tariff change) was scarce.

Splits were never officially authorized by the central administration.



Morelia. 1856. 4 reales carmine colour fractioned to pay a rate of 1 real and stamp of 8 reales fractioned to pay a rate of 2



Morelia and Zacatecas. 1856. Stamp of 4 reales and 8 reales with double district overprint printing and prepared to be subdivided in halves or quarters.



Zacatecas. quadrisection of 4 and 8 R to pay a rate of 3 reales.



Zacatecas. 2 quadrisections of 8 reales to pay a rate of 4 reales. VERY SCARCE USAGE.



2 reales rate @ Fragment of a 8 real Zacatecas - Mexico. October 4, 1858. Cancellation Franco Sain Alto SZ 1910. Corresponds to a letter weighing ½ ounce and distance greater than 16 leagues.

Zacatecas received in 1858, dated April 22 and November 3, only two shipments of stamps. The post office had for a long time a shortage of 2 reales stamps. Fractions of half and quarter stamps were used until the arrival of the second shipment.

RARITY RATIO

Given the low survival rate of 8 reales stamps, they can all be considered rare and scarce. However, some are more exceptional than others according to different criteria. We consider, for these purposes, the rarity coefficient as the number of specimens issued in a district versus the total number of stamps sent to all postal districts. 1 equals the most common postal district at the time, which corresponds to Mexico City. Even rarer are the copies cancelled in the subordinate district sub-offices.



APAM

Total sent August 8, 56: 840

Total used: 840.

Rarity ratio: 28.5

Mute cancel and Otumba cancel. Both known as remainder cancels. Since APAM never return any stamp to the main office all remainder were cancelled with postmarks never used in the period 1856-1861.



CHIAPAS

Total sent October 18, 56: 840

Total used: 782.

Rarity ratio: 30,6

Chiapas with the exceedingly rare sub-office Pichualco cancel. Chiapas had 8 sub-offices: San Cristobal, Comitán, Chiapa, Pichualco, San Bartolomé, Tapachula, Tonalá and Tuxtla.



1857, April 25. DURANGO to Mexico @

Quadruple single letter rate originating in Santa Catalina being posted, out of the mail service, in Durango for México.

8 reales for 1 and ¾ ounces and over 16 miles.

Total sent 1,140 (August 30, 56: 780; May 18, 58: 300 and July 12, 58: 60.) 3 consignments.

Total used: 1,034.

Rarity ratio: 23,1

THE 8 REALES OF 1856.

Postal Districts



GUADALAJARA

Total sent: 7,540 (14 consignments)
 Total used: 7,420.
 Rarity ratio: 3,2



GUANAJUATO

Total sent: 3,520 (10 consignments)
 Total used: 3,520.
 Rarity ratio: 6,8



HUEJUTLA

Total sent: 600. (Sept 10, 56: 420;
 Jan. 29, 58: 180) 2 consignments
 Total used: 600. Rarity ratio: 39,8



GUADALAJARA

No district name.



1858. GUADALAJARA. Registered fragment@

8 reales corresponds for payment of registered mail and 6 reales for 1 1/4 ounces and payment on delivery up to 30 leagues.



JALAPA

Total sent: 1,970. (8 consign.)
 Total used: 1,970; R. R: 12,6

1857, December 3. LAGOS to Guadalajara

Extraordinary vertical strip of four 2 reales, a pair of 1 reales and 1 reales. 11 reales for 2- and 1/2-ounces weight, for 50,2 leagues



LAGOS received a first
 consignment of 600 8 reales on
February 27, 57. It was on **April
 28, 58** when received a second
 one with 300 stamps. By
 December 57 none 8 reales was
 in existence being replaced with
 large strips of 1 and 2 reales



Front with a Strip of four Guadalajara, JALISCO 2 reales, used in Tepic, NAYARIT, to cover the 8 reales rate.

THE 8 REALES OF 1856.

Postal Districts



MAZATLAN

Total sent: 5,760. (9 consignments)
Used: 5,243.; Rarity ratio: 4,6



MEXICO

Scarce Registered cancel



MEXICO

Total sent: 24,040.
(138 consignments)
Total used: 23,909.
Rarity ratio: 1



1857, February 18. MEXICO to Veracruz

8 reales lilac and 2 reales green. Quintuple single letter second rate of **10 reales for 2- and 1/4-ounces weight, for distance of more than 17 leagues or 51 miles.**



MORELIA

Total sent: 3,820.
(8 consignments)
Total used: 2,932.
Rarity ratio: 8,2



PACHUCA

Total sent: 990. (4 consignments)
Total used: 951.
Pachuca with Mineral del Monte sub-office cancel. Pachuca has 6 sub-offices: Actopan, Atotonilco, Mineral del Chico, Mestitlán, Mineral del Monte y Zacualtipán.
Rarity ratio: 25.1



PUEBLA

Total sent: 2,360.
(7 consignments)
Total used: 2,261.
Rarity ratio: 10,6



QUERETARO

Total sent: 3,870.
(11 consignments)
Total used: 3,644.
Rarity ratio: 6,6

THE 8 REALES OF 1856.

Postal Districts



SALTILLO

Total sent August 30, 56.: 420.
(1 consignment)
Total used: 420.
Rarity ratio: 56.9



SAN LUIS POTOSÍ

Total sent: 3,420.
(9 consignments)
Total used: 2,990.
Rarity ratio: 8



TABASCO@

Total sent: 1,500.
(4 consignments)
Total used: 1,500.
Rarity ratio: 15,9. **SCARCE.**



TAMPICO

Sent: 1,560. Sept 10, 56: 780;
Oct 22, 56: 780. (2 consignmt.)
Total used: 1,560.
Rarity ratio: 15,3



1858, April 26. SALTILLO to Camargo

Following the next route:
La Rinconada, Santa Catarina, Monterrey, Arroyo Hondo, Cadereita, Los Aldamas, Rancho de las Mujeres, Rancho del Cojo, Rancho de la Quemada, Hacienda de la Azucar, Villa de Camargo for a total of 87 leagues.

8 reales corresponds for payment of registered mail rate. The weight of the letter was less than 1/2 ounce.



VERACRUZ@. Sent 9,820; (13 c) Used 9,458. RR 2,5



VIOLET@



LILAC



87 leagues of distance, following the route Saltillo - Monterrey to Camargo



COSCOMATEPEC – VERACRUZ. No district name.
For its authentication, the stamp was removed from the piece of paper and reattached with a hinge.
Prephilately cancel. YAG-BASH VC 70. **ONLY KNOWN**



VICTORIA
Total sent Aug 30, 56: 780
(1 consignment)
Total used: 770.
Rarity ratio: 31,1



ZACATECAS@
Total sent: 6,600.
(10 consignments)
Total used: 6,188.
Rarity ratio: 3.9



ZACATECAS@
Double Overprint tête bêche

THE BLOCK OF 30 STAMPS VICTORIA DISTRICT

The postal administrator of Victoria, for unexplained reasons, kept 6 whole sheets of the 8 reales, pieces that were found in 1926. Some sheets have been preserved, others, were portioned into blocks or individual stamps.



8 reales, bottom half of one of the 4 sheets with district overprint VICTORIA, showing framelines on three sides.

Another top half block of thirty examples is in the Rolf Dieter Jaretsky Collection. Probably, from the same original sheet. (Page 37 Corinthia; R. D. Jaretsky EDITION D'OR)

ONE OF THE MOST RELEVANT PIECES OF THE MEXICAN PHILATELY.

THE 8 REALES AND THE POSTAL RATES

The Postal rates for letter and newspaper mailings were determined based on distance and weight. The rates remained stable, with slight changes, over the last 100 years. When the issue was issued, its use was regulated, according to the Supreme Decree of February 29, 1856, as follows.

RATES INTRODUCED ON JULY 15, 1856, TO PREPAY FOR THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

| DENOMINATION | Prepaid letter up to 30 leagues | Payment on delivery up to 30 leagues | Prepaid letter over 30 leagues | Payment on delivery over 30 leagues | Newspaper |
|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| ½ REAL | < ½ ounce | | | | 1 to 15 ounces |
| 1 REAL | ½ ounce | < ½ ounce | < ½ ounce | | |
| 2 REALES | 1 ounce | ½ ounce | ¾ ounce | < ½ ounce | 1 to 4 ounces |
| 4 REALES | 2 ounces | 1 ounce | | ¾ ounce | |
| 8 REALES | | 2 ounces | | | |

Starting at 2 ounces, for each ¼ of ½ real ounce up to 10 ounces. From 10 ounces ½ real per additional ounce.

This rate was approximately half of that charged before the use of the stamps. This was expected to increase the use of the correspondence, which did not occur as the country was plunged in a constant civil war which resulted in a new rate change dated December 15, 1956; effective December 20, 1856.



1856, September 20. MEXICO to Puebla @

8 reales corresponds for payment of registered mail. 7 reales and ½ for 2 ounces and payment on delivery up to 30 leagues. From Mexico to Puebla there is 28 ½ leagues, following by stagecoach the next route: Ayola, Venta de Ixtapaluca, Venta de Córdoba, Riofrío, Puente de Tsmelucan, Hacienda de San Bartolo, Río Prieto, and destination Puebla.

Extraordinary first-rate tricolour postage with manuscript cancellation and a secondary Mexico registered cancel.

Exceedly rare and only known.

THE 8 REALES OF 1856.

Postal Rates

NEW RATE EFFECTIVE SINCE DECEMBER 20, 1856

| DENOMINATION | 1 A 16 LEAGUES | >16 LEAGUES |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1 real | < ½ ounce | |
| 2 reales | ½ ounce | < ½ ounce |
| 3 reales | ¾ ounce | ½ ounce |
| 4 reales | 1 ounce | ¾ ounce |
| 5 reales | 1 ¼ ounce | 1 ounce |

| DENOMINATION | 1 A 16 LEAGUES | >16 LEAGUES |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| 6 reales | 1 ½ ounce | 1 ¼ ounce |
| 7 reales | 1 ¾ ounce | 1 ½ ounce |
| 8 reales | 2 ounces | 1 ¾ ounce |
| 9 reales | 2 ¼ ounces | 2 ounces |
| 10 reales | 2 ½ ounces | 2 ¼ ounces |

Same progression up to a weight of 10 ounces. After 10 ounces, ¼ real is added per ¼ ounce regardless of the distance. With the change of tariff, the ½ real becomes the reference value and letters with 2 reales become more common.

Irapuato to Mexico 82 ½ leagues: Irapuato, Buena Vista, Salamanca, El Guaje, Celaya, Apaseo, La Calera, El Rayo, Estancia las Vacas, Querétaro, La Noria, El Colorado, Arroyo Seco, El Sauz, Las Troges, San Juan del Río, Palmillas, San Antonio, Ruano, Encinillas, Arroyo Zarco, Soyaniquilpan, Tepeji del Río, San Miguel, Cuautitlán, La Lechería, Tlalnepantla and Mexico.



1857, August 20. IRAPUATO to México

8 reales Guanajuato (showing frame line in left margin) corresponds for payment of registered mail for 2 ounces and payment on delivery up to 30 leagues.



10 reales for 2 ¼ ounces weight, for distance of more than 17 leagues or 51 miles. 60 leagues are the distance between both cities following the next route: Zapotlan, Tonila, Alcaraces, Loma Alta, Zapote, Trapiche, Garita y Colima.

1857, December 10. GUADALAJARA to Colima



TEPIC to Guadalajara.

Strip of four 4 reales Guadalajara district stamps. 99 ½ leagues is the distance between Guadalajara and Tepic.

16 reales for 4 ounces weight, delivery within 16 leagues distance.

Large units of the 4 REALES are quite unusual, as for high franking the 8 reales was used.

Exceedingly rare.

1857, January 5. MEXICO to Veracruz

Strip of three 8 reales postage paying 24 reales for 5 ¾ ounce heavy weight, for distance of more than 17 leagues or 51 miles.

Route Mexico to Veracruz:

Puebla, Amozoc, San Bartolo, Acacingo, Quecholac, San Agustín del Palmar, Ixtapa, Puente Colorado, Aculcingo, Orizava, Córdoba, El Potrero, Chiquihuite, Paso del Macho, Paso Ancho, El Camarón, El Temascal, Paso de la Soledad, La Pulga and Veracruz. 93 ½ leagues.

Exceedingly rare.





1857, January 5. MEXICO to Guadalajara

12 reales postage for 2 ¾ ounce weight, for distance of more than 17 leagues or 51 miles.



1861, February 3. MEXICO to Guadalajara.@

19 reales, four colours postage, for 4 1/2-ounce weight, for distance of more than 17 leagues or 51 miles.

ONE OF THE MOST RELEVANT PIECES OF THE MEXICAN PHILATELY.

POR EXTRAORDINARIO

To guarantee the timely arrival of the correspondence at port or to preserve the contained goods, the couriers employed by the English consulate in Veracruz made the trip between Veracruz City and Mexico City. This form of transport was much safer than the traditional or "ordinary" Diligence. The tariff included the payment of the transit mail in Mexico by Law plus the payment of the carriage fee by the consulate employee. This unique type of mail between the cities of Mexico, Puebla and Veracruz is called **POR EXTRAORDINARIO**.



1857, January 5.
MEXICO to Veracruz

8 reales postage paying double the normal rate "por Extraordinario" (Express Mail) for $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce weight, for distance of more than 17 leagues or 51 miles.

REGISTERED MAIL

The registration fee was 8 reales, it included the postage for a letter up to $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce. The receipt of registered letters had to be acknowledged by signature of the addressee on the reverse of the cover front. The size of the cover had to be demonstrated by



1860, February 9. SANTA ANA DE TAMAULIPAS to Soto de la Marina

Official registered items paid only the franking due to weight, not paying the 8 reales charged for registration.

Extraordinary Pieces Gallery (page 371). Exceedingly rare.

MARITIME MAIL

Mexico had not mercantile marine to carry mail overseas. Spain, France, UK, Germany and US operated maritime mailing services. As a reference for the 2 letters below, the steamship US postage rates, from 1 July 1851 until 30 June 1864 were 10 cts for distances less than 2,500 miles and 20 cts for distances over. Effective on 1 July 1864 a uniform 10 cts rate was introduced regardless the distance.



1859, May 19. MEXICO New Orleans. Double use as Express and Maritime Mail.

8 reales postage paying double the normal rate per Extraordinario (Express Mail) for $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce weight, for distance of more than 17 leagues or 51 miles. Mexico to Veracruz route via Puebla, Orizava, Córdoba to Veracruz: 93 $\frac{1}{2}$ leagues.

Circular Steamship 20 CTS US postage due for distance over 2,500 miles.; Arriving to New Orleans May 27 by the Tennessee, steamship in service from november 1st 58 until february 4th, 61 in this route.



1858, December 21. MEXICO to New York.

Franked with 2 reales and 8 reales paying 10 reales quadruple rate for inland rate, sent by Tennessee steamship to New Orleans with 11th, 1858 and circular "Streamship" markings, departing New Orleans on Empire City via Havana, arriving on 1st February. Manuscript "40" (Cents) US postage due.

Only a very few covers abroad are recorded with a 8 Reales stamp. If not sent by "Extraordinario" they had to be heavy mail about one ounce of weight.