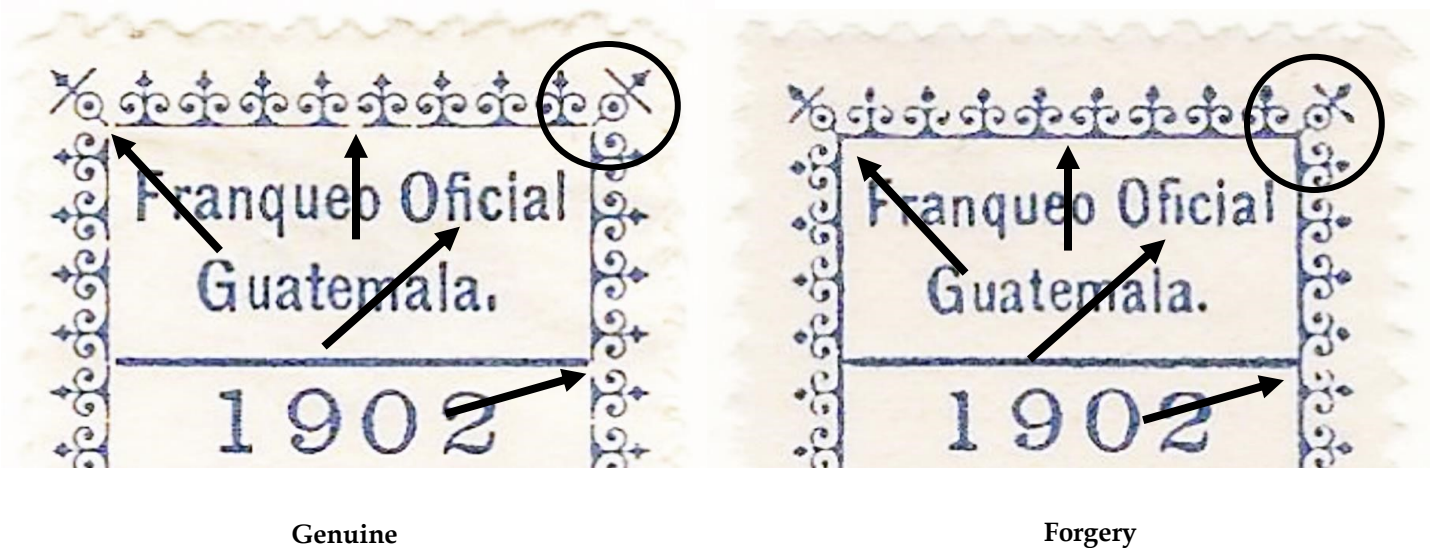


GUATEMALA FORGERIES AND FAKES 1902 SCOTT O1-5

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The 1902 official stamps were intended for use on mail to foreign destinations. Guatemala did not require official stamps on interior official mail. Covers bearing these stamps properly used are rare. Genuine stamps with original gum are much scarcer than their current catalogue values suggest.

The genuine stamps were printed in sheets of 100 on several different watermarked and unwatermarked paper. They are perforated 12. The "f" and "i" of the word "Oficial" are connected by the crossbar of the "f". The ornaments making up the borders are separated by spaces at intervals. The most visible characteristic is the inner corners, where the horizontal and vertical inner ornamental frames do not meet. The ornament at each corner points outward ending in a clearly defined sharp point.¹



The forgeries of these stamps were printed in sheets of 50 on unwatermarked paper and perforated 11 and 11.5. These forgeries are very common and are a favorite of internet sellers because of the catalogue values of the genuine stamps. Five fakes are known. It was reported that these originated in Paris in the late 1930's² but it is likely they were created prior to that. There are no breaks in the inner frame line and all four corners are closed.³ The "f" and "i" in "Oficial" are separate except in the 2c where they are joined as in the originals. The lettering and numerals are not as sharp and the arrows which make up the ornamental borders are not uniform and are blunt instead of sharp as on the genuine.³

Footnotes

1. Goodman, Roland A., ed., *Guatemala 2*, pp. 347-9, Robson Lowe, Ltd., London (1971).
2. Aretz, Frank, *Know Your Stamps*, p. 28, Marks Stamp Co. Ltd., Toronto (1941).
3. A more extensive description of the differences between genuine and forgeries is found in Spying Eye, "Guatemala 1902", *SPA Journal*, p. 248.-9, Society of Philatelic Americans (Jan., 1949). See also Serrane, Frenand, "The Serrane Guide", *The American Philatelist*, p. 640, American Philatelic Society (July, 1994), reprinted in *El Quetzal*, Vol. 45, No. 281, p. 9, International Society of Guatemala Collectors (1995).

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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

