

The Green and Red 'Full Eagle' Sunburst Registry Seals of Mexico

Aim: This exhibit shows (a) the die and die-cut varieties of Mexico's green and red 'Full Eagle' sunburst registry seals, (b) how the different varieties can be distinguished, and (c) uses of the seals on commercial mail.

Background: In 1913, Mexico authorised the use of die-cut adhesive seals over the back flaps of envelopes for registered mail for security. The centre of the seals shows an eagle on a cactus devouring a snake. There are two designs – one shows the eagle's front view with the wings open ('Full Eagle') while the other shows its side profile. There are 12 types of 'Full Eagle' seals, with each type showing differences in design or colour. All are in blue except for Type 2 (green) and Type 3 (red).

Importance: The seal was integral in the handling of Mexico's registered mail but its critical role was largely unsung. Little official records about it exist and little research about it has been published, and it is still not known why Type 2 is green and Type 3 red instead of blue. Both seals are known to be in use for very short time periods – Jun 1918 to Jul 1919 for Type 2, and Oct 1918 to Nov 1918 for Type 3.

Treatment: The exhibit starts with the Type 2, then the Type 3 seal. Shown are (a) the die varieties and their distinguishing features; (b) the die-cut varieties of each die variety (if any) and their distinguishing features; and (c) uses on commercial mail. High-resolution enlarged scans of the centre of the seal for each die variety are shown and the distinguishing features highlighted to aid identification. Exceptional items are framed in red.

Highlights:

- Complete for the Type 2 seals, with uses shown for all die and die-cut varieties, including two covers each bearing two Type 2 seals of different die varieties.
- Uses shown for three of the four Type 3 die varieties (less than ten covers bearing any Type 3 seal are known), including one cover bearing two Type 3 seals of different die varieties

Reference: The 'Sunburst' Registry Seals of Mexico (Nicholas Follansbee, 1993)

Green (Type 2)

Major Die Varieties

This seal, the only Type which is green amongst all the sunburst seals, was a product of the same master die used for the Blue Type 1 and Red Type 3 seal. Four similar dies were used in its production – Die C and Die D as used for the Blue Type 1 seal, as well as two new Dies – Die E and Die F. The table below highlights the distinguishing features of the seals produced from the four different dies.

Die	Features	Seal	Enlarged centre (x2)
2C	a) Space between snake and eagle's neck rounder and more open than on other dies b) One of two long feathers at end of same wing is closer than other to one of cactus leaves		
2D	a) Space between snake and eagle's neck is narrow b) Contour of underside of that wing forms more of an angle c) Two feathers at tip of right wing are both close to upper right cactus leaf d) More space between bottom right cactus leaf and circle enclosing emblem than on other Dies		
2E	a) Hyphen thicker and shorter than on other dies (2mm vs 2.5-2.8mm) b) Tips of two feathers to right not as close to upper right cactus leaf compared to Dies C and D c) Contour of underside of left wing arched and rounded d) Last feather on right wing much higher up as compared to all other Dies (not mentioned in reference)		
2F	a) Right wing-tip's feathers even further from cactus leaves which are smaller than on previous types b) Contour of underside of left wing sharply angled		

Green (Type 2)

Die C: Die-cut varieties and uses

There are three die-cut varieties of the Die C seal, arising from the use of three different die-cut knives. The key distinguishing features are the points to the right of the top center point, as articulated in the table below.

(In the reference used, the distinguishing features were mentioned in writing but not illustrated. Here, the distinguishing features are highlighted on high-resolution enlarged scans of the relevant portions of the seals to facilitate identification.)

Die-cut knife	Features	Scan
a	Top and bottom center points narrow	
b	Same points a bit wider with the three points to the right of the top center (above the letters 'M', 'E', and 'X') leaning slightly in towards the center point	
c	Broad center points at top and bottom, the two points to the right of the center (above the letters 'M', 'E', and 'X') leaning left (towards the center), and the short ones to their immediate right (above the letters 'X', 'I' and 'C') pointing more to the right	



2x Type 2C(a) seals
Used on registered cover from Salina Cruz, Oaxaca to San Francisco, California, USA
Posted 4 Apr 1919, arrived 15 Apr 1919
Underpaid by 10c the 30c registered mail rate to the USA



75% scan of front

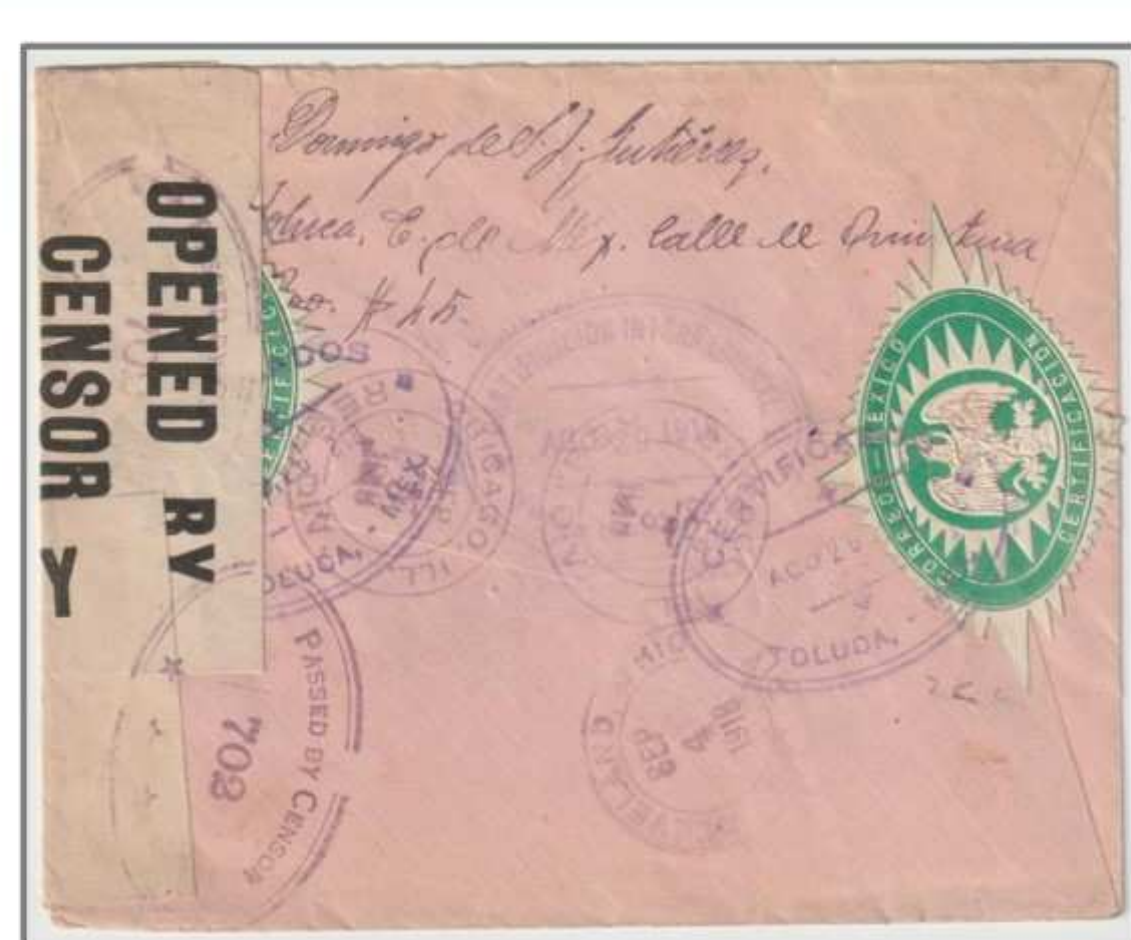
Green (Type 2)

Die C: Die-cut varieties and uses



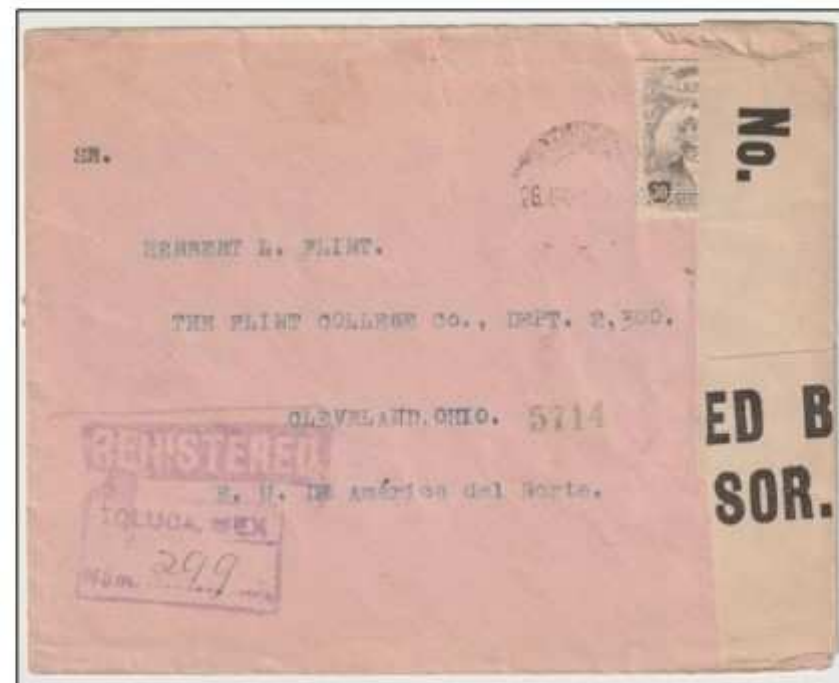
Type 2C(b) seal

Used on registered cover from Mexico DF to Racine, Wisconsin, USA
Posted 4 Oct 1918, arrived 12 Oct 1918



Type 2C(c) seal + another Type 2 seal (die and die-cut variety undetermined – obscured by censor label)

Used on registered cover from Toluca, State of Mexico to Cleveland, Ohio, USA
Posted 26 Aug 1918, arrived 4 Sep 1918



75% scan of front

Green (Type 2)

Die D: Die-cut varieties and uses

There are three die-cut varieties of the Die D seal, arising from the use of the same three different die-cut knives as in the case of the Die C seal.



Type 2D(a) (left) and Type 2D(c) (right) seals

Used on registered cover from Mexico DF to Chicago, Illinois, USA
Posted 9 Dec 1918, arrived 17 Oct 1918



75% scan of front



Type 2D(b) seal

Used on registered cover from Tezcuilan, Puebla to Puebla (the capital of Puebla state is also called Puebla)
Posted 11 Sep 1918



75% scan of front

Green (Type 2)

Die D: Die-cut varieties and uses



2x Type 2D(c) seals

Used on registered cover from Mexico DF to Chicago, Illinois, USA
Posted 18 Dec 1918, arrived 28 Dec 1918



75% scan of front

Green (Type 2)

Die E: Uses

Only one die-cut knife (knife a) was known to have been used for the Type 2 Die E.



2x Type 2E seals

Used on registered cover from Mexico DF to Cleveland, Ohio, USA
Posted 31 Aug 1918, arrived 11 Sep 1918



75% scan of front

Green (Type 2)

Die F: Uses

As in the case of the Type 2 Die E, only one die-cut knife (knife a) was known to have been used for the Type 2 Die F.



2x Type 2F seals

Used on registered cover from San Marcos, Sinaloa, to Los Angeles, California, USA
Posted 5 Nov 1918, arrived 13 Nov 1918



75% scan of front



Type 2E (left) + Type 2F (right) seals

Used on registered cover from Lerdo, Durango to Puebla



75% scan of front

Posted 19 Sep 1918, arrived 23 Sep 1918
Use of two Type 2 seals of different die varieties on the same cover

Red (Type 3)

Major Die Varieties and uses

This seal, the only 'Full Eagle' Type which is red, was a product of the same master die used for the Blue Type 1 and Green Type 2. Four similar dies were used in its production, with Die C and Die D being the same as those used for the Green Type 2 seal. The table below highlights the distinguishing features of the seals produced from Die A and Die B (the distinguishing features of Die C and Die D are covered in pages 1 and 2 of the exhibit).

Die	Features	Seal	Enlarged centre (x2)
3A	a) Space between snake and eagle's neck is open b) Two feathers at end of right wing close to cactus leaves c) Bottom-right cactus leaf quite close to edge of circle d) Top and bottom center die cut points are wide		
3B	a) Space between snake and eagle's neck is narrow b) Feathers of lower portion of right wing slightly curved and form a contour that is a very shallow inverted 'V'. c) Two long feathers at end of same wing are close to only one of the cactus leaves d) Top and bottom center die cut points are narrow		



Type 3B (left) and Type 3C (right) seals

Used on registered cover from Mexico DF to Chicago, Illinois, USA
Posted 12 Oct 1918, arrived 21 Oct 1918

Use of two Type 3 seals of different die varieties on the same cover



75% scan of front

Red (Type 3)

Major Die Varieties and uses



Type 3C + Type 1B seals

Used on registered cover from Mexico DF to Chicago, Illinois, USA
Posted 18 Oct 1918, arrived 26 Oct 1918



75% scan of front



2x Type 3D seals

Used on registered cover from Mexico DF to New York, USA
Posted 20 Nov 1918, arrived 30 Nov 1918



75% scan of front

Official mail from the Mexican's Currency Commission (Comision Monetaria), which was established in 1916 to regulate and guarantee monetary circulation in the country

The Green and Red 'Full Eagle' Sunburst Registry Seals of Mexico

Aim: This exhibit shows (a) the die and die-cut varieties of Mexico's green and red 'Full Eagle' sunburst registry seals, (b) how the different varieties can be distinguished, and (c) uses of the seals on commercial mail.

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Importance: The seal was integral in the handling of Mexico's registered mail but its critical role was largely unsung. Little official records about it exist and little research about it has been published, and it is still not known why Type 2 is green and Type 3 red instead of blue. Both seals are known to be in use for very short time periods – Jun 1918 to Jul 1919 for Type 2, and Oct 1918 to Nov 1918 for Type 3.

Treatment: The exhibit starts with the Type 2, then the Type 3 seal. Shown are (a) the die varieties and their distinguishing features; (b) the die-cut varieties of each die variety (if any) and their distinguishing features; and (c) uses on commercial mail. High-resolution enlarged scans of the centre of the seal for each die variety are shown and the distinguishing features highlighted to aid identification. Exceptional items are framed in red.

Highlights:


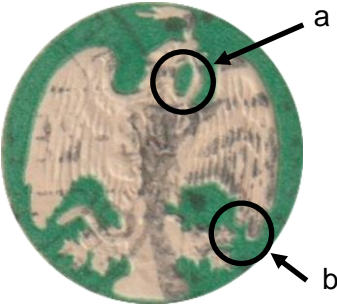

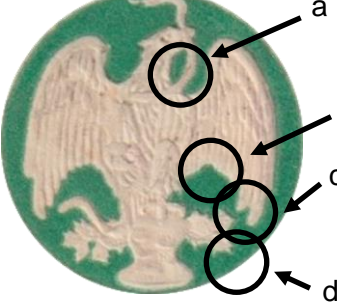

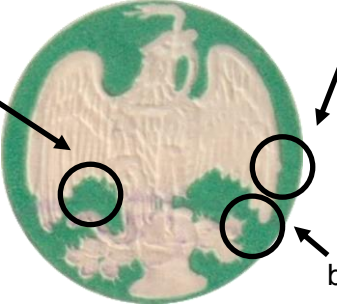


- Complete for the Type 2 seals, with uses shown for all die and die-cut varieties, including two covers each bearing two Type 2 seals of different die varieties
- Uses shown for three of the four Type 3 die varieties (less than ten covers bearing any Type 3 seal are known), including one cover bearing two Type 3 seals of different die varieties

Reference: *The "Sunburst" Registry Seals of Mexico* (Nicholas Follansbee, 1993)

Green (Type 2)




Major Die Varieties

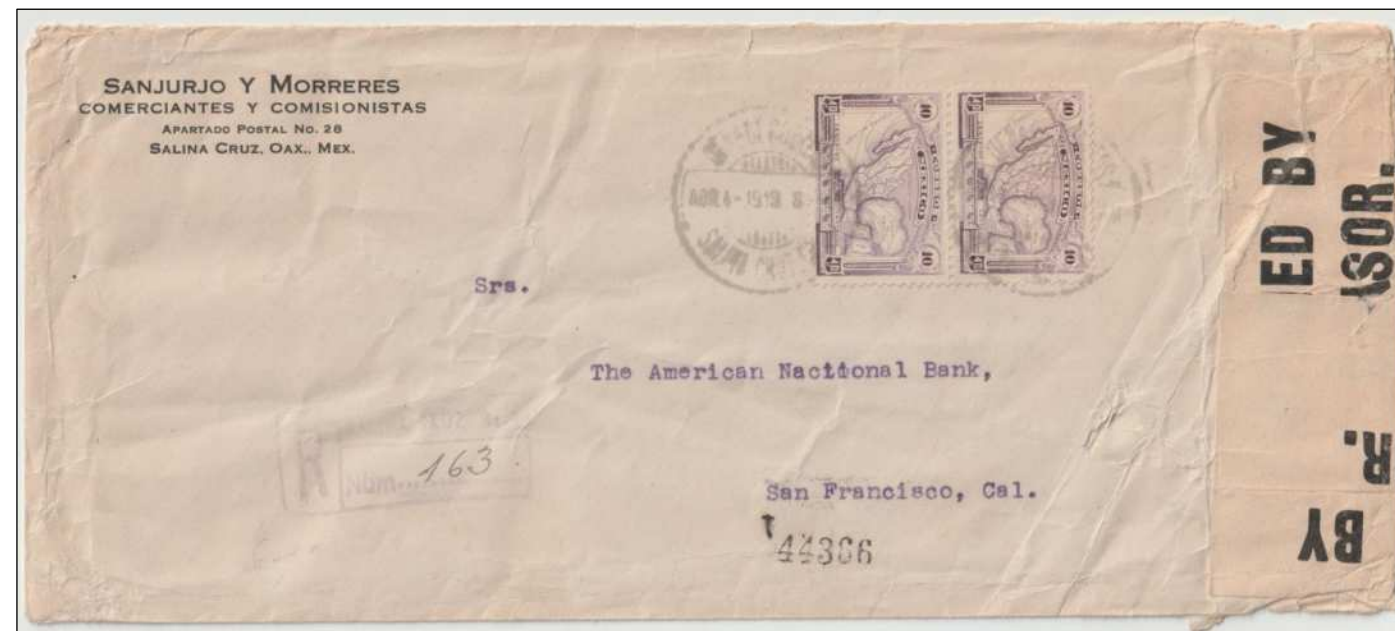
This seal, the only Type which is green amongst all the sunburst seals, was a product of the same master die used for the Blue Type 1 and Red Type 3 seal. Four similar dies were used in its production – Die C and Die D as used for the Blue Type 1 seal, as well as two new Dies – Die E and Die F. The table below highlights the distinguishing features of the seals produced from the four different dies.

Die	Features	Seal	Enlarged centre (x2)
2C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Space between snake and eagle's neck rounder and more open than on other dies b) One of two long feathers at end of same wing is closer than other to one of cactus leaves 		
2D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Space between snake and eagle's neck is narrow b) Contour of underside of that wing forms more of an angle c) Two feathers at tip of right wing are both close to upper right cactus leaf d) More space between bottom right cactus leaf and circle enclosing emblem than on other Dies 		
2E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Hyphen thicker and shorter than on other dies (2mm vs 2.5-2.8mm) b) Tips of two feathers to right not as close to upper right cactus leaf compared to Dies C and D c) Contour of underside of left wing arched and rounded d) Last feather on right wing much higher up as compared to all other Dies* (not mentioned in reference) 		
2F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Right wing-tip's feathers even further from cactus leaves which are smaller than on previous types b) Contour of underside of left wing sharply angled 		

There are three die-cut varieties of the Die C seal, arising from the use of three different die-cut knives. The key distinguishing features are the points to the right of the top center point, as articulated in the table below.

(In the reference used, the distinguishing features were mentioned in writing but not illustrated. Here, the distinguishing features are highlighted on high-resolution enlarged scans of the relevant portions of the seals to facilitate identification.)

Die-cut knife	Features	Scan
a	Top and bottom center points narrow	
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c	Broad center points at top and bottom, the two points to the right of the center (above the letters 'M' and 'E') leaning left (towards the center), and the short ones to their immediate right (above the letters 'X', 'I' and 'C') pointing more to the right)	



75% scan of front

2x Type 2C(a) seals

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Posted 4 Apr 1919, arrived 15 Apr 1919

Underpaid by 10c the 30c registered mail rate to the USA

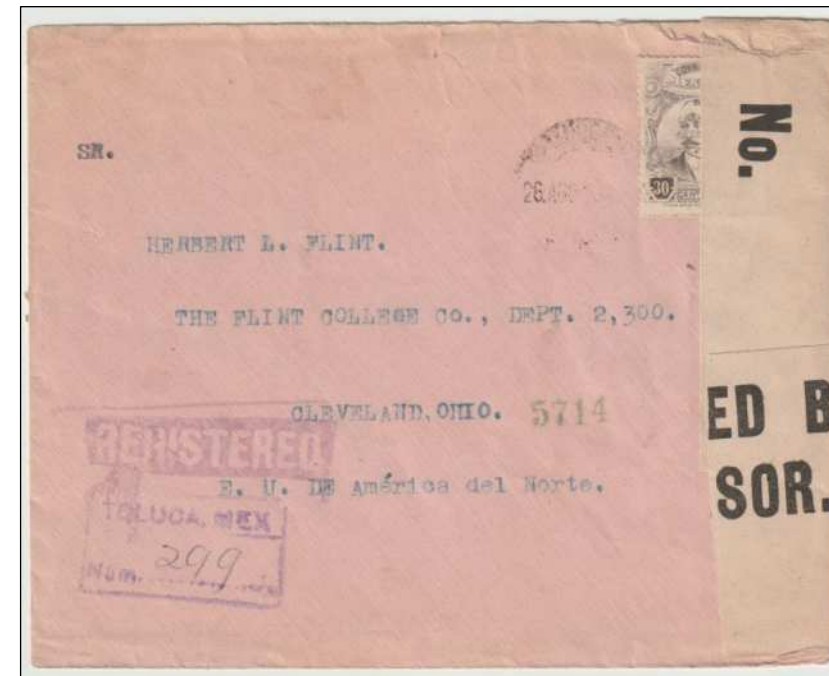


75% scan of front

Type 2C(b) seal

Used on registered cover from Mexico DF to Racine, Wisconsin, USA

Posted 4 Oct 1918, arrived 12 Oct 1918



75% scan of front

Type 2C(c) seal + another Type 2 seal (die and die-cut variety undetermined – obscured by censor label)

Used on registered cover from Toluca, State of Mexico to Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Posted 26 Aug 1918, arrived 4 Sep 1918

There are three die-cut varieties of the Die D seal, arising from the use of the same three different die-cut knives as in the case of the Die C seal.



75% scan of front

Type 2D(a) (left) and Type 2C(c) (right) seals

Used on registered cover from Mexico DF to Chicago, Illinois, USA

Posted 9 Dec 1918, arrived 17 Oct 1918

Use of two Type 2 seals of different die varieties on the same cover



75% scan of front

Type 2D(b) seal

Used on registered cover from Teziutlán, Puebla to Puebla (the capital of Puebla state is also called Puebla)

Posted 11 Sep 1918



Only one die-cut knife (knife a) was known to have been used for the Type 2 Die E.



75% scan of front

2x Type 2D(c) seals

Used on registered cover from Mexico DF to Chicago, Illinois, USA

Posted 18 Dec 1918, arrived 28 Dec 1918



75% scan of front

2x Type 2E seals

Used on registered cover from Mexico DF to Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Posted 31 Aug 1918, arrived 11 Sep 1918

As in the case of the Type 2 Die E, only one die-cut knife (knife a) was known to have been used for the Type 2 Die F.



75% scan of front

2x Type 2F seals

Used on registered cover from San Marcos, Sinaloa, to Los Angeles, California, USA

Posted 5 Nov 1918, arrived 13 Nov 1918



75% scan of front




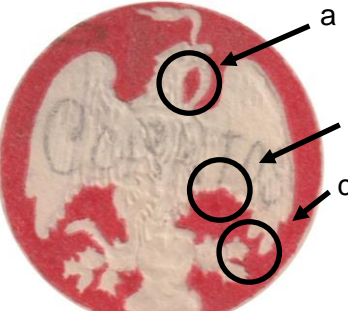
Type 2E (left + Type 2F (right) seals

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75% scan of front

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Use of two Type 3 seals of different die varieties on the same cover



75% scan of front

Type 3C + Type 1B seals

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Used on registered cover from Mexico DF to New York, USA

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